

CLUB HISTORY

THE FIRST CLUBHOUSE

Early in 1960, Ralph Andrew, formerly of Victoria, envisaged the creation of a bowls club at Coolum. Due very largely to his enthusiastic canvassing of local residents, a meeting was held in Jack Liddy's office on 29 May, 1960- This meeting was convened with 18 men and 4 women observers. This dedicated group decided to establish the Coolum Beach Bowls Club, electing John Liddy as the Club's foundation President, an appointment he was to hold for the next six years. Nine of those present at this first meeting paid their fees for the 1960/61 year, these were Ralph Andrew, W. Cooper, Ron Filer, R Huet, J. Liddy, C. McCamish, C. Murphy, H. Poon and W. Thompson.

Negotiations were then held with Council and the fledgling club secured a freehold tenure on a small area for club facilities and a 21 year lease on the area of ground now occupied by the Bill Thompson green. The price of this land — 100 pounds. The first Clubhouse was acquired from the Coolum lifesavers in 1961 for 300 pounds. The principal condition of sale was that the clubhouse be demolished and removed from the site in one working day. The job was done in the time stipulated by a diverse collection of bowlers, farmers and builders labourers. with bits and pieces of the demolished building being stored in garages all around Coolum. The clubhouse was re-erected with the aid of many and Ralph Andrew and Percy Huet began to board up the framework on weekends. The framework of this original building still exists in the club's present dining room. Tables and chairs were bought and painted by the ladies, the bar was built and laminated and the electrical and plumbing fittings were installed all by voluntary labour.



The first building

THE FIRST GREEN

In 1962, greens construction expert Bob Dickson and building contractor Arthur Wilks agreed to build the Club's first green for a fee of 1250 pounds, a far cry from the \$200,000.00 spent to install and fully complete the third green. The bank was approached to finance the building of the first green and after several knock backs a loan of 1250 pounds was eventually approved. Further funds were raised by the selling of 25 pound debentures with a proposed 6% interest return, 750 pounds were raised in this way. Most considered that this money would end up being a donation but after 5 years the club was so successful that every investor was paid out in full.

The first green was named after one of the founding and later life members Bill Thompson. Bill spent so much of his time working on the green, loads of soil were sifted, tested and harrowed into place, to be next spread and levelled. This green was planted with blue couch. that was begged and borrowed from all over Coolum. Then came the equipment necessary to maintain and water the green, a discarded mower was bought from Nambour Bowls Club for 10 pounds, a bore was sunk at a cost of 100 pounds and a second hand electric pump was purchased for 15 pounds — the Coolum Beach Bowls Club was ready for bowls. In these early days the Club was ably assisted by many Brisbane visitors including Bob Williamson and wife (who donated the brass bell which is still in use today to indicate start and end of play), Harry Schonaner, Len and Ruth Goostrey, George Russell, Ernie Powell, Bob and Vi Black and Jack and Betty Archibald.



The Bill Thompson Green

OFFICIAL OPENING DAY

It was in May 1963 that a trial run or preliminary roll-up took place and many were the apparent wrong bias sent down "the Bush Track". Also in May of that year, the Maroochy District Bowling Association was felt to be too large and unwieldy for efficient organisation, so seven clubs formed the Sunshine Coast District Bowling Association. The club had Ralph Andrew and Hunter Poon as foundation councillors of this Association.

The Coolum Beach Bowls Club was granted the 3rd of November, 1963 as its official opening day, almost 100 players gathered from all over the district and beyond to celebrate this auspicious occasion. At the luncheon over 300 people squeezed into the dining room and once in had to remain in. The Patron of the time Claude McCamish and wife could not get in to their assigned seats and were on the point of departure until intercepted and literally pulled through a window to take their rightful place in the proceedings. In the words of Hunter Poon, Club Secretary for 4 years following Ralph Andrew "such an opening day has never been experienced before or will be again". To be granted a liquor licence the club had to have a membership of 45 or more and was obtained on the day of the opening and then only by the sustained efforts of David Low (the then MLA). The Ladies put on such a wonderful spread that several visitors considered the charge too small and donated extra to help the club cover its costs.

The Coolum Beach Ladies Bowling Club was officially inaugurated on November 27, 1964 with Mrs Mel Setterfield being elected President. Ruby Ferris rolled the first bowl to officially open the Ladies Club. The Ladies have been a tower of strength throughout the years, contributing in many ways towards helping establish the club as Coolum's focal point for social and sporting activities. This mutually beneficial relationship between the men and the ladies culminated with the Club's amalgamation in 1994.

Since the Club's Official opening day on November 3, 1963, the original clubhouse premises have been steadily extended and improved. Two new greens have been added - the Jack Liddy Green was built by mostly volunteer labour under the watchful eye of the club's then Greens Director Wack Horn in January 1974. The new "Memorial Green" was built by Norm Mulley and completed in February 1995.

It is interesting to note that a Past President in his President's Report to members for 1987 advised that "Much deliberation with the Maroochy Shire Council, resulted in us being granted a lease on a section of Morgan Park at a Council meeting in December 1987. This land will incorporate a third green."

The Memorial Green has been named in honour of those who displayed the original, Forethought, drive and dedication to bring the vision of a bowls club in Coolum to reality and for everyone who has helped guide the club to grow and prosper during the ensuing years.

