







# *Non Nobis Sed Communitati*

## A HISTORY OF THE BEXLEY BOWLING CLUB 1946-2022

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study presents stories of the Bexley Bowling and Recreation Club, from its earliest days to the present, focussing on the men and women who built and served it over the last seven decades.

### **IN GRATITUDE**

I express my sincerest thanks to those who assisted in the development of this project, the result of which is this research paper:

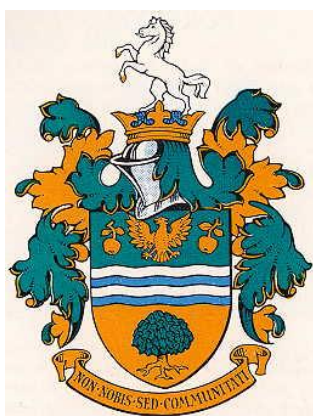
- ❖ the late Albert Mainerd, last Mayor of Bexley and Patron of the Bexley Bowlig Club 1948-1972, for his vision and drive in establishing this Club;
- ❖ the late J.E. Thompson, Foundation member of the Bexley Bowling Club, for maintaining records of the Club for decades;
- ❖ the officers and staff of Bayside Council, especially Local History Librarian Kirsten Broderick;
- ❖ the members, friends and extended family of the Bexley Bowling Club since 1946;
- ❖ my family, for supporting my obsession with history, with research and with writing.

## PAPER

### BACKGROUND

Archaeological findings support a theory that a game with biased stone balls was played almost 7,000 years ago, played in the dirt and using sticks as targets. The common belief is that the origins of the game of lawn bowls may be traced to the ancient Egyptians. A version of the game was played by the ancient Romans, similar to modern bocce. The Roman Empire brought this game to western Europe, where several variations developed over the centuries, including boules in France and lawn bowls in the British Isles. In 1848 a meeting in Glasgow Scotland was arranged to write the laws of bowls. W.W. Mitchell, along with 200 other bowlers, wrote this first set of laws, which form the basis of the modern game.<sup>1</sup>

As part of their colonisation of the Great South Land, British settlers introduced lawn bowls to their new country in the early colonial period. The first bowling green was laid at the back of Mr. Lipscombe's Beach Tavern at Sandy Bay, Tasmania, in 1844, with the first recorded game being played the following year.<sup>2</sup> Bowls Australia now counts nine state and territory bowls associations as members, with over 2,000 clubs and 240,000 registered participants, as well as many social bowlers participating in competitions.<sup>3</sup> The Bexley Bowling Club was registered under Bowls NSW from 1948 until 2018, with plans to renew the registration in 2023.



LEFT: The historic coat of arms of the Borough of Bexley, Kent, England.  
RIGHT: The coat of arms of the Municipality of Bexley NSW, 1900-1948.



The modern London Borough of Bexley in south-east England.





The 10th century Parish Church of St. Mary The Virgin, Manor Road, Bexley, Kent.<sup>4</sup>

The area that became Bexley is recorded in *Domesday Book* as *Bix*, and later as *Bixle*. This tome is Britain's oldest surviving public record, containing the results of a huge survey of land and landholding across England and Wales commissioned by the Norman King William I (William the Conqueror) in 1085.<sup>5</sup> *Bexley* translates from Middle English as 'pasture by the stream', presumably in reference to the River Cray, which still flows through the area.<sup>6</sup> Bexley was an ancient parish in the county of Kent, east of London. During the suburban growth of London in the 20th century, it was absorbed by the British metropolis.

The *Times*, a small local newspaper of the Rockdale area, carried an interesting article in its 20 March 1947 issue, titled 'Bexley has a history already'. In keeping with the social norms of the era, the First Nations' history of the area does not rate a mention. Its opening lines relate the following:

Bexley, snug, wealthy, picturesque town eight miles from Sydney, population of 26,000, stands on land only a few years ago occupied by dense forest, by the kangaroo, wallaby, bandicoot, opossum, koalas, and an infinite variety of birds.<sup>7</sup>

Such a wealth of wildlife ensured a population of First Nations' people, members of the Cadigal, Gweagal and Bidjigal clans of the Eora Nation. Known as 'Water People', they lived around what is now known as Botany Bay, including in the area of today's Bexley and Bexley North.

<sup>4</sup> *A History of the Bexley Bowling Club*. Entry for the 2022 Rathbone Prize.

British settler Thomas Sylvester was granted land in the area that became Bexley about 1812. A decade later, James Chandler (1796–1839) bought Sylvester’s Farm, as the area was known, re-naming it Bexley, in honour of his birthplace. That year Chandler was also granted 1,200 acres (490 hectares) of land which stretched from what is now Bexley North to most of Rockdale and Kogarah. The estate was heavily timbered and a track which followed the ridgeline between the slopes down to Botany Bay and the Wolli Creek Valley was used by timber-getters, thus being named Forest Road. Chandler was a well-respected citizen and became known locally as the Squire of Bexley, but his property attracted bushrangers, escaped convicts and other odd types. Chandler was not happy with his ill-assortment of neighbours and sold the land to Charles Thompson in 1836. Chandler retired to his residence on Pitt Street, where he died three years later. Thompson, in turn, sold the land to Charles Tindell, who began subdividing the land for home sites by 1856.<sup>8</sup>

The neighbourhood around what is today the Bexley Bowling Club was first subdivided and sold at auction on 9 November 1885. Then known as the Estate of Alston Park, it was the property of the Haymarket Permanent Land Building & Investment Co. Limited. The sales plan indicates that the estate was bounded by Wolli and Coveney Streets, Kingsgrove (part of the modern suburbs of Kingsgrove and Bexley North).<sup>9</sup>



The Laycock Street entrance to the Bexley Bowling Club, with the St George crest having pride of place. May 2022.

Soon afterwards, the Borough of Bexley was formed when northern parts of the Municipal District of Hurstville formally separated on 28 June 1900. The centrepiece of its coat of arms depicts Saint George and the Dragon, a symbol of the local area. The name Saint George appears to have been associated with the area since at least the 1830s, as documented in William Henry Wells’ 1840 map ‘of the County of Cumberland in the Colony of New South Wales’.<sup>10</sup> Bexley Municipal Council’s emblem was accompanied by the Latin motto it shared with its namesake in Kent, England: *Non Nobis Sed Communitati*, *Not for ourselves but for the community*. As illustrated by the surviving memorabilia, Bexley Bowling Club immediately adopted the local district’s emblem of Saint George and the Dragon upon its formation. Never

a financial success, the Bexley Bowling and Recreation Club consistently focussed on its membership and the local community, an ethos AHEPA NSW INC, the new operators of the Club, look to continue.

## LOCATION

Government records provide historians with starting points for the exploration of the stories of the people, places and events commonly lumped together as ‘history’. Minutes of meetings, official bulletins and announcements in the media. These provide a framework for reconstruction, of interpretations, of histories. Around this framework are added other forms of historical documentation including the records of non-government organisations, media reports, oral testimonies and visual sources such as photographs and films. All together, this is how the history of the the Bexley Bowling and Community Club is developed.

The Bexley Bowling Club story began towards the end of the story of the Bexley Municipal Council. As Trevor Brophy wrote in his Publicity Officer’s Report in the Club’s 1955-56 Annual Report, it was «Harry Webb (who thought up the idea) of Bexley club». Webb later served as the Club’s Publicity Officer for some time. Writing in *Cameos of Bexley*, Ron Rathbone noted that it was «shortly after» World War Two – meaning late-1945 - that ‘an approach was made to the Bexley Council to establish a lawn bowling club’ within the local government area. This approach occurred during the term of office of Bexley’s last Lord Mayor – Alderman Albert Mainerd (12 December 1944 - 31 December 1948). A group of local residents led by A. George Baker, later to serve as the Bexley Bowling and Recreation Club’s second President, expressed ‘the desirability of laying down a bowling green for the use of members of the Municipality of Bexley’. This is how Acting President Keith Perry described the early days of the Club in his ‘Foreword’ to the 1952-53 Annual Report.

Mirroring the Bexley Bowling Club’s recent history, its original path to operation was not a smooth one. The first question faced by Bexley Municipal Council was the location of the proposed bowling green and associated facilities. The search for suitable land began in earnest in late-1945. The first two sites identified were on Council-owned land bounded by Soudan and Laycock Streets, Kingsgrove (now parkland a short distance from Stoney Creek Road) and on privately-owned – though undeveloped – land bounded by Laycock, Edward and Oliver Streets.

The Report of Bexley Council’s Health and Building Inspector, A.G. Baker, regarding the «provision of playing areas – Bowling Greens», dated 22 February 1946, stated that the land adjoining the Bexley Golf Club was ruled «not quite suitable, being exposed to winds». Also – tellingly – «a more suitable site could be obtained of much lower value». The Report identified eight unoccupied lots bounded by Laycock, Edward and Oliver Streets, valued at AU£620 – as more suitable; a similar area near the Bexley Golf Course on Stoney Creek Road, would cost at least AU£2,000. The Lane Cove bowling green was presented to the Aldermen as the model to follow: that Council borrows the estimated funds required to build the bowling greens and associated facilities and «the burden of payments would be almost entirely met by revenue received from the Club».<sup>11</sup> As in 2016, when AHEPA NSW INC was awarded the tender to operate the Club, financial considerations were uppermost in the minds of the decision-makers.



The Report of the Town Clerk, A.E. Robb, on the meeting of the Works Committee held on Saturday, 23 February 1946, contains one of the earliest official references to the future Club. Item (9) was titled «Edward St. Oliver St. Area for Bowling Green». The notes read: «Inspected and report of Health Inspector considered. Recommended that matter be referred to Parks Committee for consideration and report». Three days later (Tuesday 26 February 1946), the Town Clerk presented his Report to the meeting of the Parks Committee:

Works Committee,

(4) STONEY CREEK RQD & LAYCOCK ST. - RESERVE. The Health Inspector, Mr. Baker, submitted a report as follows:-

“Council's land, bounded by Soudan Street, Laycock Street, and Stoney Creek Road, proposed to be set aside for construction of bowling greens, is unsuitable for the purpose, owing to the continued settlement which would take place, the area having been filled up with "clean-up week" refuse, further, the area is too small to accommodate more than one green."

The Committee adopted the report and recommended that the land be used for a playground or garden area”.

The surviving Council documentation makes clear that the man who served as an Alderman for seventeen years and Lord Mayor for four, Albert Mainerd, became a leading proponent of the new bowling club. He even visited the newly-established clubs at Campsie and Lane Cove accompanied by the Bexley Town Clerk and Health Inspector to explore the best way of moving the project forward. The Works Committee recommendation determined that a set of lots of land originally set aside for War Service Homes bounded by Oliver, Edward and Laycock Streets was exchanged for land along Stoney Creek Road adjacent to the Bexley Golf Course.<sup>12</sup> Nicknamed *Frog Hollow*, the low-lying land was deemed unsuitable for construction. As revealed by aerial photographs of the area from 1943, while most of the blocks had been built upon, eleven of the blocks of *Frog Hollow* remained vacant. The surrounding area drained into Frog Hollow, the space that became Bowling Greens No. 1 and No. 2, before flowing down the slope [now Gilchrist Park] towards Wolli Creek. The abundant water and the gentle slope created a perfect frog environment, hence the nickname.<sup>13</sup>

The ‘Confidential’ Mayoral Minute of 6 May 1946 record that the Parks Committee of Bexley Council considered three sites for the proposed Bexley Bowling Club: a. land on the intersection of Croydon and Stoney Creek Roads (today, across the road from Kingsgrove High School); b. land on the intersection of Laycock Street and Stoney Creek Road (today, Hannah Laycock Reserve); and c. unoccupied land bounded by Oliver, Edward and Laycock Streets. Following inspection, only one was considered appropriate. Mayor Mainerd recommended the purchase of the lots proceed at an estimated cost of AU£835.<sup>14</sup>

The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Bexley Council on 7 May 1946 record that evening’s Mayoral Minute. The matter of the purchase of lots for the Club was deferred to the Special Council Meeting of 21 May. This deferral was due, in part, to details of the sale of Council-owned land along Stoney Creek Road and the purchase of lots in Oliver and Laycock Streets still being finalised.<sup>15</sup> The Minutes of the Special Meeting of Bexley Municipal Council

on 21 May 1946 record a resolution of Council to «acquire the land for the purpose of a bowling green».<sup>16</sup>

Bexley Council representatives met with the six land owners of the ten lots in question on 24 May. The agreement reached, as ratified by Council, essentially involved a land swap. The owners of the Oliver and Laycock Street lots would sell to Bexley Council and then buy Council land along Stoney Creek Road. Both sales would be at the Valuer-General's value plus ten per cent.<sup>17</sup> Bexley Council's Finance Committee later recommended «That authority be given to effect the transfer of land in Oliver and Edward Streets, for land in Stoney Creek Road, on the basis of tentative figures submitted by the Valuer-General's Department».<sup>18</sup> In the Financial Statement of 1946 Operations, dated 18 October 1946, the Town Clerk of Bexley Municipal Council commented that the «purchase of bowling green sites» would cost AU£800.<sup>19</sup> In the *Information and a review of Activities of Bexley Municipal Council 1945-1947*, the total cost of land acquisition was stated to be AU£950, while «no expense will be incurred by the ratepayer, Council's credit only being used to establish the project».<sup>20</sup> Council approval for completion of the Memoranda of Transfer for the O'Brien, Simmons (also recorded as Symonds) and Webb lots was granted on 8 April 1947.<sup>21</sup> It was not until May 1947 that the *Memoranda of Transfer* were completed and the «application for consolidation Certificate of Title over the whole of the lots in the Bowling Green site» was filed.<sup>22</sup>

EDWARD STREET			
LAYCOCK STREET	No. 80 Percival G.J.F. WEBB	Dr. William F. SIMMONS No 77	OLIVER STREET
	No. 78 Abraham SELIG	Estate of late F.B. BRAKE No. 75	
	No. 76 Richard W. CHURCHILL	Richard W. CHURCHILL No. 73	
	No. 74 Richard W. CHURCHILL	Richard W. CHURCHILL No. 71	
	No. 72 Oscar H. O'BRIEN	Abraham SELIG No. 69	
		Julia E. BURT No. 67	

These documents raise interesting questions, as is typical of government documentation. Below is a table illustrating the ownership of the eleven lots which came to form the Bexley Bowling Club as they were in 1942, according to the Valuer General New South Wales – Valuation List. By 1948, Bexley Municipal Council had assumed ownership of all eleven lots, none of which had yet been built upon, but were owned by absentee landlords. The Valuer General New South Wales – Valuation List records Bexley Municipal Council as the owner of all eleven lots as of 19 June (Oliver Street lots) and as of 20 June (Laycock Street).

It is an interesting footnote of history that the single largest landowner – R.W. Churchill, served as Town Clerk of the Bexley Municipal Council during the 1930s. Questions also arise which are not easily answered by official documents. How did the seven lot owners feel about being 'forced' to sell the land? Did they drive a hard bargain? This is where non-

official forms of history are used by local historians to complement the official record. There is no reference in surviving Council documentation to legal action involving the transfers, so the conclusion may be drawn that the process was conducted without undue friction. However, given the process took more than two years and a substantial increase in cost, some of them must have held out for better prices for their properties.

In his Mayor's Report to Council of 31 March 1947, Mainerd outlined the process for the formation of the Club, stating: «I want a Bowling Green which, in due course, will be an amenity of the district, belonging to the people providing some measure of contribution – small though it may be – for improvements in other directions».<sup>23</sup>

Bexley Town Clerk, A.E. Robb, visited the nearby Campsie and the more distant Lane Cove Bowling Clubs, proposing an arrangement «practically the same as Council's agreement with Bexley Golf Club». This involved «annual rental» from the Bowling Club to Bexley Council «equal to the annual instalment of principal and interest paid by Council plus an additional ½ per cent over the loan interest rate», with «the total cost of maintenance and repair of greens and buildings» as well as «the total cost of any future extensions or alterations' being the responsibility of the Bowling Club».<sup>24</sup> The *Propeller* local newspaper reported in its 19 June 1947 edition that Council officers 'recommended that the Mayor be authorised to proceed with' the project. Council would carry the cost of building a clubhouse and laying two bowling greens, together with the three aforementioned key conditions.<sup>25</sup>

With the site of the proposed Club agreed, the practicalities of construction and operation came into full view. At its Ordinary Meeting of 15 July 1947, Council agreed that «the Parks Committee be appointed as a Bowling Club Committee to deal with matters in connection with the formation of the bowling club». Mayor Mainerd was also authorised «to negotiate for the purchase of an additional block of land, to be added to the present bowling green side, the lot being Section H, Lot 21, Oliver Street, owned by Mrs J.E. Burt». Who initiated this sale – the owner or Council – is unknown. The Finance Committee Report to the Ordinary Meeting of Council noted: «That application be made to the Minister for the resumption of Lot 21 Section H, Oliver Street, for the Bowling Green scheme, and that the Seal of Council be affixed to the application».<sup>26</sup> Once completed, this transaction resulted in the land holdings of the Bexley Bowling Club taking their current form, covering a total of eleven lots.



*St George Call* (Kogarah, NSW) Friday 25 July 1947, page 1

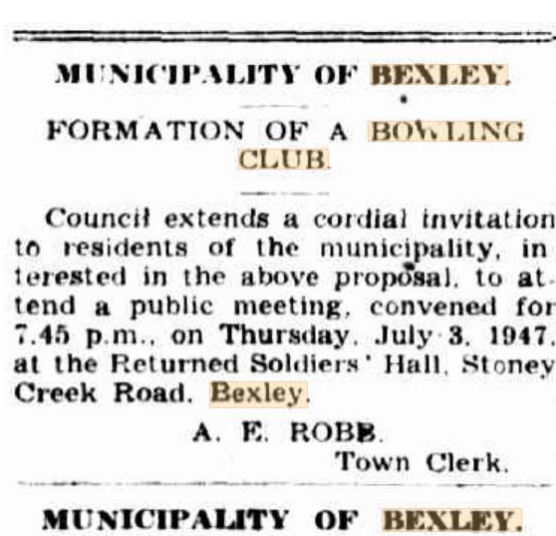
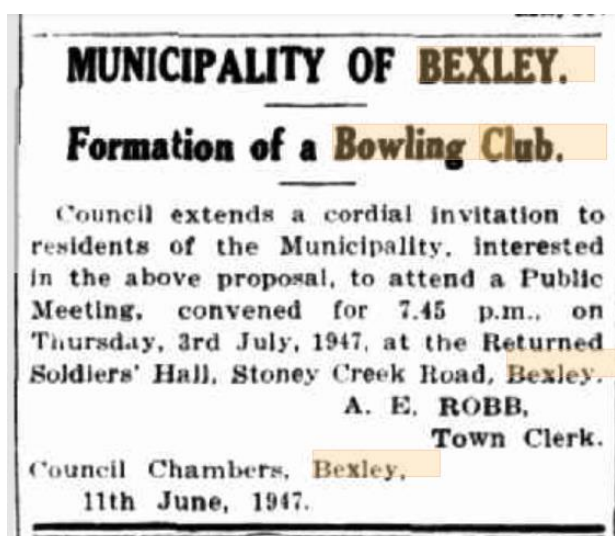
## FORMATION

It is an interesting footnote of the history of the Bexley Bowling Club that while the initial proposal for its formation came from local residents, it was local residents who worked within Council who initiated the formal procedures to make this idea a reality. At the Council meeting of 3 June 1947, the Aldermen adopted the proposal for the formation of the *Bexley Municipal Bowling Club*. The Provisional Committee formed included Keith Henry Perry (President), Richard Frederick William Ball, Lindsay Granville Jones, William George Gildea, Alfred Ernest Kershler, Eric John France, Herbert Howe and Albert George Baker – Secretary, Treasurer and Public Officer.



LEFT: A 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary lapel badge of the now closed St George Bowling Club on Harrow Road, Bexley. Formed in 1900, the St George Bowling and Recreation Club was considered the 'mother club' of Bexley Bowling Club.

RIGHT: A St George-Sutherland District Official Umpires' Organisation lapel badge.



LEFT: *St George Call* (Kogarah, NSW) Friday 13 June 1947, page 5

RIGHT: *Propeller* (Hurstville, NSW) Thursday 26 June 1947, page 4

As illustrated in the announcement above, published in one of the local newspapers, the inaugural meeting of interested «residents of the municipality» was called by Bexley Council,<sup>27</sup> on the recommendation of Bexley Mayor Alderman Albert Mainerd and Council Secretary Alderman Charles Nairn. Held at the Returned Soldiers' Hall on Stoney Creek Road, on Thursday 3 July 1947, it was attended by 44 persons, 37 men and seven women. Mrs C. Booty (Secretary of the NSW Ladies' Bowlers Association) and Mrs Ruth Preddey, representing the NSW Women's Amateur Sport Association, raised the issue of the place lady bowlers would have within the Bexley Municipal Bowling Club. This query was a clear reflection of social norms in conservative Australian society, where women's athletic pursuits were definitely seen as being of tertiary importance. Mayor Mainerd deflected the query, stating that the matter would be dealt with by the Club itself.<sup>28</sup>

The Provisional Committee of the Bexley Bowling and Recreation Club next met on 21 July, with the Town Clerk reporting to Council the following day. His report recommended Council resolve to accept the Report and Agreement with the Bexley Municipal Bowling Club. As reported in the *St George Call* (issue of 25 July 1947 page 1), Bexley Council's «parks committee was appointed as a “bowling club committee”», with Mayor Albert Mainerd being authorised to purchase Mrs J.E. Burt's land at Lot 21 Section H Oliver Street «to be added to the present bowling green site».<sup>29</sup> Almost a year later, the *Times* local newspaper later reported on the «resumption of» the lot in question, «which Council acquired for the ladies' bowling green».<sup>30</sup>

By year's end, the Club was seeking to alter the Agreement. As recorded in the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of 16 December 1947, the Club's request to lift the cap on membership (200 men) and to reduce the annual subscription of AU£3/3/- was rejected by Council.<sup>31</sup>

The *Propeller* newspaper reported that 'An informal function' was hosted by «the Mayor of Bexley (Alderman A. Mainerd) and aldermen» at the Bexley Golf Club House on 16 December 1947, «at the conclusion of council's final meeting for 1947». Apart from the political dignitaries were representatives of the Bexley Bowling Club as well as various sporting and «progress associations»,<sup>32</sup> another illustration of the special place the Club held for Council. As it turned out, this was the last ever Bexley Council Christmas Party.

The Bexley Bowling and Recreation Club was soon incorporated under the Companies Act, arguably making 14 May 1948 the Club's birthday. Indeed, the bowlers themselves considered 1948 the year the Club was formed, marking regular anniversaries with appropriate festivities. The surviving documentary record makes no reference to the issue of lady bowlers for almost a year afterwards. A meeting was held to discuss the place of lady bowlers within the Club on 14 May 1948. In attendance were Mayor Albert Mainerd, Health Inspector A.G. Baker, Mrs C. Booty (member, Arncliffe Women's Bowling Club), Mrs U. Wolinski (President, NSW Women's Bowling Association), Mrs S. Kay (Hon. Secretary, Arncliffe Women's Bowling Club), Mrs B. Layton (Vice-President, Arncliffe Women's Bowling Club) and Mrs N. Bitmead (member, Arncliffe Women's Bowling Club). The meeting resolved the following:

1. Construction of a third green, which Council would 'favourably consider';
2. The Mayor to call a public meeting for the formation of a Ladies' Bowling Club;
3. Council to consider construction of a green 'on an area adjacent to Edward Street'.<sup>33</sup>



In keeping with social norms of the time, male and lady bowlers were to be kept in separate facilities, with the ladies being reminded of their inferior status as players. There was no question of a combined club membership, nor of joint operation of the Bexley Bowling and Recreation Club. The ladies were seen to be auxiliary to the main Club. As noted in the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner program, «the first Womens' Auxiliary of the Club was formed between 1951 and 1952». [Appendix 46] It is one of the ironies of the history of the Club that the last active bowlers prior to AHEPA NSW INC assuming the operation of the facility, were a group of lady bowlers.

Following the agreement between a committee of Rockdale Municipal Council and the Club's Provisional Committee regarding the Articles of Constitution of the Bexley Bowling and Recreation Club, it was registered as a company limited by guarantee, according to the Town Clerk's Report to Council of 3 June 1949. Rent for the first three years was set as equal to the interest on the loan taken out by Council to build the bowling greens and associated facilities. The inaugural meeting the volunteers who had formed the Club's Committee was on 9 July 1948.<sup>34</sup> As recorded in the Minutes of the Meeting, it was recommended that Council approve «the Memorandum of Agreement» between itself «and Keith Henry Perry, William George Gildea and Herbert Howe (as Trustees)». Turning their attention to formalising the internal structures of the new Club, the Committee:

... further resolved that the Secretary be authorised to forward nomination forms for completion to intending members who were in attendance at the First Public Meeting held at the Returned Soldiers' Hall on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1947. These persons are eligible to become members without nomination, in accordance with Clause M of the Town Clerk's report of July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1947, of the Combined Committee Meeting of the Provisional Committee of the Club and the Bexley Council representatives...<sup>35</sup>

According to notations by Club stalwart J.B. Thompson in his copy of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Report, presented at the General Meeting on Friday 17 September 1971, the following is an incomplete Register of Foundation Members:<sup>36</sup>

Richard Frederick	R.B. Kavanagh	Charles C.W. Nairn
William Ball	R.M. Keers	Eric D. Ousley
C.E. Brown	Alfred E. Kershler	L.T. Slingsby
H.J. Bye	R. Lambeth	R.J. Smith
E.J. Carson	A. Leal	R.G. Spencer
H.G. Chapman	W. Lister	S. Tattersall
A.H. Crofts	E. McCain	N. Thomas
L.A. Deveridge	J. 'Jim' W. McCain	J.E. Thompson
R. Facer	L.E. McMillan	R.J. Todd
P.G. Fry (Life Member)	Albert Mainerd OBE	C. Walton
W.G. Gildea	(Life Member)	Raymond W. Webber
E.L. Gilmour	O.W. Marr	A.E. Weston
R.T. Gosling	L.T. Miller	
L.G. Jones (Life Member)	S.J. Moore	



The inaugural General Meeting was held on Friday 3 December 1948 at the Returned Soldiers' Hall [today the Bexley RSL Club] on Stoney Creek Road, Bexley, electing the inaugural Committee led by Keith Perry, alongside the following:

Vice-Presidents E.L. Frank, L.G. Jones, W.G. Gildea, and R. Ball;  
Committee members C. Brown, E. Tindale, C. Nairn, E.D. Ousby and  
W.H. Modgridge;  
Honorary Secretary A.G. Baker;  
Honorary Treasurer A.E. Kershler  
Honorary Auditor V. Watkins FCA.

The ink was barely dry on the lease and Constitutional agreements when the Club began seeking amendments, particularly to the membership qualifications., another echo of the later history of the Club – more specifically the Club's operators. The Club began enrolling members in July 1947. By August 1949, there were 186 'Full' Members. It is both a credit to the founding members and a testimony to their devotion to the Bexley Bowling Club that they did not wait for the construction of the Clubhouse and its playing greens to begin operating as a bowling club. Its first social event was held on Friday 8 April 1949, a lecture by champion bowler Gordon Sargeant about the history of the game. According to the report published in the *St George Call* the following month, work on the Club's bowling greens had begun and they would be ready to play on «in a year». While 28 prospective members were «awaiting consideration», 130 local residents had already been admitted to membership of the Club.<sup>37</sup>

In one of those curious coincidences with the latter history of the Club, membership qualifications were the first major issue to disrupt the relationship between the Club and Council. Clause 16 (e) of their Agreement stated that only residents or ratepayers of the Municipality of Bexley «shall be admitted to membership».<sup>38</sup> In the interim though, seven persons had been admitted as members of the Club, despite not being residents. The Committee sought Council's «concurrence» with this action, as Council had the final say on any decisions of the Club at that time. The proposal was brought before Council at its Ordinary Meeting of 18 August 1949. Aldermen decided to defer any decision to a meeting with Bowling Club representatives on 1 September, immediately prior to the next meeting of Council.<sup>39</sup> As it turned out, the scheduled meeting did not take place, with Rockdale Council citing that the new Club Committee had not yet been elected. The issue returned to Council at the Ordinary Meeting of 29 September 1949 with both President Keith Perry and Ern Tindale representing the Club. Tindale stated that while there had been applications from local residents, the number «was not up to expectation». Once again, the Aldermen decided to defer until the next Council meeting.<sup>40</sup>

A meeting of representatives of Bexley Bowling Club (A.G. Baker, L.G. Jones and K. Perry) met with Rockdale Aldermen Albert Mainerd, Enoch Jones (Mayor), H. T. Gosling and J.G. McCormac) on 20 October. The issue of membership of the Bexley Bowling Club did indeed return to the Agenda of the Ordinary Meeting of Rockdale Council on 27 October 1949. The issue was «debated extensively» by Aldermen divided between those who wanted to retain strict residential status (including Aldermen Charlie Nairn and Docos) and those more flexible (including Aldermen Gosling and Mainerd). The latter won the final vote and the new members were endorsed. This appears to have settled Constitutional issues between Council and the Club

for the remaining time before Council handed over complete control of the Club to the Committee in 1951.

## **COUNCIL MERGER**

December 1948 marked the end and the beginning of different eras. The Bexley Bowling Club was set on a more secure footing with its first Annual General Meeting, while Bexley Municipal Council closed its operations. The Local Government (Areas) Bill ‘designed to bring about extensive amalgamation of Municipalities in the County of Cumberland’ [the area of metropolitan Sydney]. The Select Committee of the Legislative Council of New South Wales [the ‘Upper House’] recommended 66 Areas ‘be reduced to 41 Municipalities. In the St George District, the recommendation is to create three Municipalities instead of the existing four’. Bexley was thus merged with Rockdale. The election of the first Council of the enlarged Municipality of Rockdale was held on Saturday 4 December 1948.<sup>41</sup>

As reported in the local media, ‘Representatives of all organisations in the district attended a “get together” social evening in the Bexley Council Chambers’ on Queen Victoria Street Bexley on 14 December, shortly before Bexley Municipal Council completed the merger with Rockdale. The toast to the «Retiring Council» was proposed by Keith Perry, President of the Bexley Municipal Bowling Club, and responded to by Alderman J. T. Barwell, a mark of the significance the new Club held for the Aldermen who had driven its creation.<sup>42</sup> The prominent inclusion of the Club in such a historic event once again demonstrated the significance the Club held for the soon-to-be former Bexley Council.

Bexley Municipal Council Mayoral Chair.

Photo: Ron Rathbone.

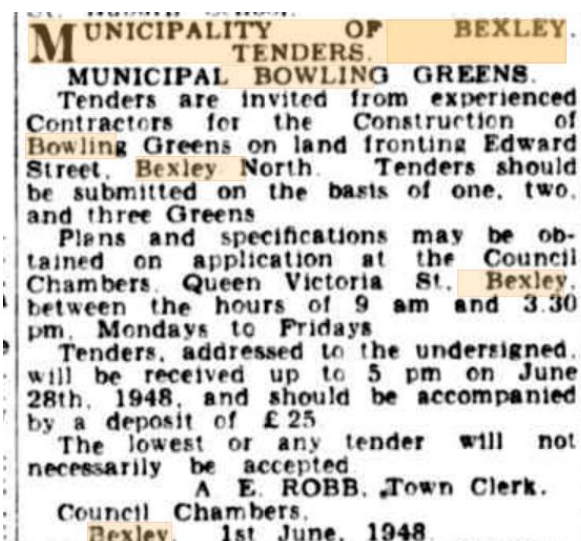
Courtesy Bayside Library Local History Department.



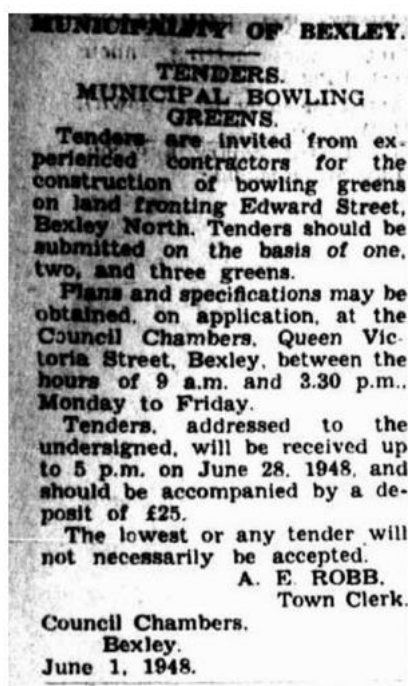
Bexley Municipal Council formerly merged with Rockdale City Council in December 1948. According to Ron Rathbone, the Mayoral Chair of the former Bexley Council was repurposed as the President's chair at the Bexley Bowling Club.<sup>43</sup> This historic piece of furniture, now at least 120-years-old, is currently missing from the Club premises where it sat for decades. It is hoped the chair is in good condition and will be returned once the Clubhouse is renovated.

## CONSTRUCTION

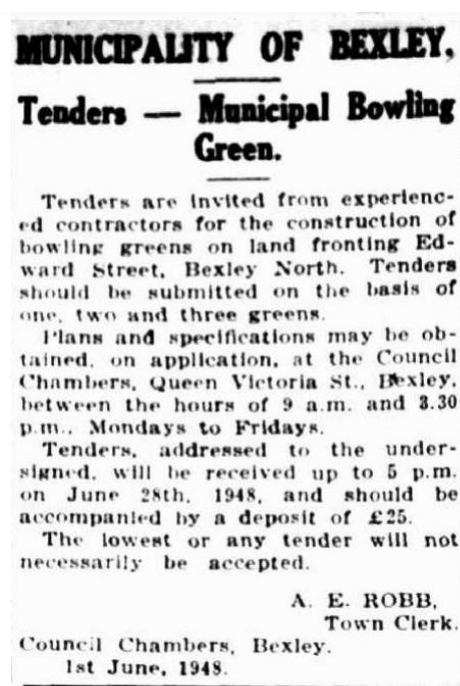
Having secured all the land deemed necessary for the proper operation of the Bexley Bowling Club, Council proceeded to issue a call for tenders to build the facilities. As may be seen in the advertisements in the *Sydney Morning Herald* as well as local newspapers *Propeller*, *Kingsgrove Advertiser* and *St George Call*, Council voted to call for tenders for the construction of the Bexley Bowling Club facilities at its Ordinary Meeting of 1 June 1948.<sup>44</sup> Tenders were due by 28 June 1948. By 8 July, six tenderers had requested photographs of the site in order to prepare submissions.



‘Advertising’ *Sydney Morning Herald* (NSW) Thursday 3 June 1948 page 10



LEFT: *Propeller* (Hurstville, NSW) Thursday 3 June 1948, page 4.



RIGHT: *St George Call* (Kogarah, NSW) Friday 18 June 1948, page 10.

It would have been disappointing therefore, when it was reported at the Ordinary Meeting of Rockdale Council of 3 August that no official tenders had been received to build the facilities. It was recommended, therefore, and later resolved by the Aldermen, that action proceed regarding the «proposed Bowling Green and Club House», with Council undertaking the construction with «hired equipment».<sup>45</sup> As part of preparations, Council advertised locally for «labourers (three) for construction of bowling greens».<sup>46</sup>

The original plans for the Clubhouse had been «drawn up by A. G. Baker», Bexley Council's Health Inspector and Hon. Secretary of the Bowling Club by October 1947. [Appendix 1] These must have been adapted following Council's assessment as they differ from what was actually built. Provisional *Consent to Commence Building Operations* was issued by the NSW Department of Building Materials on 27 August 1948.<sup>47</sup> Council was informed in October 1948 that the project included a 'brick building' including a «Residential Flat with Club Room», valued at an estimated AU£9,000, while at the Club «nearly 200 members have signed up».<sup>48</sup> As revealed in surviving documents from the NSW Department of Building Material, a «conditional permit» for construction of the Club's facilities had been granted on 9 August, followed by submission of an «amended plan» on 5 November 1948, and final *Consent to Commence Building Operations* dated 26 November, for «a Bowling Club and Residence» consisting of two bedrooms, lounge, hall, kitchen and bathroom.<sup>49</sup>

The first meeting of the united Rockdale and Bexley Municipal Councils was held on 15 December 1948. The *Statement of Fixed Assets Possessed by the Council* recorded the value of the «Bowling Green site £1,049,4,7».<sup>50</sup> The following week, the Ordinary Meeting of Rockdale Council was informed that AU£2,656 had been allocated,<sup>51</sup> part of a loan for «public works, land acquisition and construction of Bowling Greens».<sup>52</sup> Perhaps a portent of the complex future of the Club, progress was delayed for some time. In a letter from Rockdale Town Clerk J.R. Scott to Council's Chief Building Inspector A.G. Baker, dated 10 January 1949, it was confirmed that the bank loan for the construction of the Bexley Bowling Club and its playing greens had been completed and the recommendation that Council's «application be renewed to the Department of Building Materials for the erection of the Clubhouse at a cost of £7,900».<sup>53</sup> Despite the amended plans being approved by the relevant state government department, an *Application for Building Permit* was not submitted to Council until 5 May 1949. Council was informed at its 20 January 1949 Ordinary Meeting that:

approval has now been obtained for the erection of Bowling Greens and Club House, in Edward Street, from loan, and that the matter be now referred to the Building Committee of the Council to forward the question of erection of the building and construction of the greens.<sup>54</sup>

Although Council and media reports to that time refer to the Club being on Edward Street, Bexley North, and the two original bowling greens have indeed been facing Edward Street since their construction, the Club's official address has always been 72 Laycock Street. This is because the Clubhouse was built on that particular lot of land. The *St George Call* newspaper reported in its 10 December 1948 issue that «97 Bexley residents» had «made application of membership» by that time, praising the selection of the site for the new community facility.

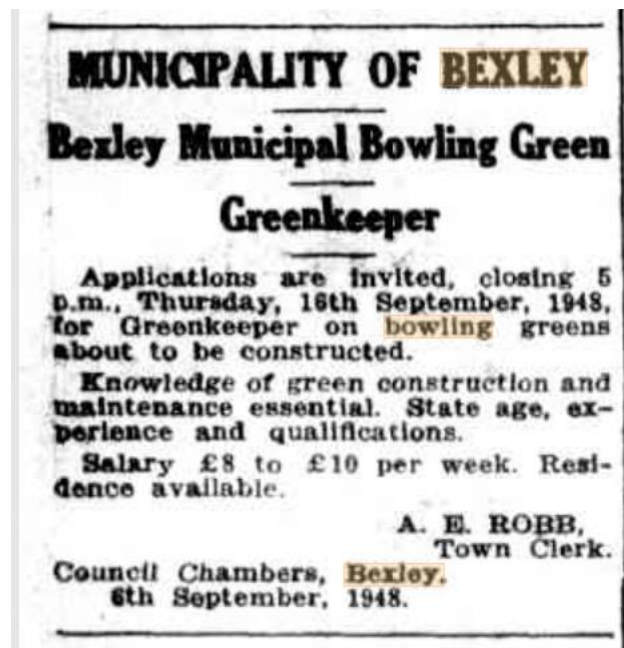
The site for the bowling green is ideally situated in North Bexley between North Bexley and Kingsgrove stations, in the midst of new residential property and adjoining the Housing Commission estate of 140 new homes. Railway and bus transport are within easy walking distance.<sup>55</sup>

In his Report, dated 20 January 1949, Rockdale Council Chief Building Inspector, A.G. Baker, stated that the 'preparatory work' for the construction phase would be 'finalised during the year', while the builder 'now awaits instruction from Council to commence construction work'. The Report 'recommended that the plans and specifications of the Club House, be referred to the Building Committee for consideration as to ways and means of carrying out the erection of the building'.<sup>56</sup>

Six months passed between the final approvals being provided and the commencement of construction work. In another 'portent' of things to come decades later, the merger of Bexley and Rockdale Councils was part of the reason for this delay. Town Clerk J.R. Scott's Report of 25 March 1949 reveals another cause. It recorded that three tenders had been tabled for the construction of the bowling greens and the Clubhouse. These were referred to Council's Chief Engineer and Chief Building Inspector for them to prepare another report.<sup>57</sup> The said Report was prepared and submitted in due course, with local builder and contractor Jim Cobban (resident on Dunmore Street Bexley) being selected to complete the construction of the Bowling Club House at an estimated cost of AU£4,111.17.6.<sup>58</sup> At this time, AU£4,000 would buy a three bedroom brick home in the Bexley area. The final *Review of Activities* issued by the Municipality of Bexley, covering the period 1945-1948, recorded the Bexley Bowling Club project in the *Health Services – Parks* section. According to this document, «Council has obtained from the Housing Commission ... 7 ½ acres on the Edward Street site ... for recreation purposes». Under the sub-heading *Bowling Green*, it was recorded that the site had been «acquired at a cost of AU£1,039». The *Review* made clear that «Council's facilities» had been «extended by way of leadership, exercising its powers of land acquisition and guaranteeing repayment of the loan in initiation of this scheme».<sup>59</sup>

Construction of the bowling greens facing Edward Street began in May. The Report of Rockdale Council Chief Engineer, dated 3 June 1949, stated that «a good start with earth works and pipes for drainage of storm water are now being laid by the Council, as agreed».<sup>60</sup> More than four years since the first proposal for the Bexley Bowling Club, construction was finally underway, with the realisation of the vision of a unique community facility in Bexley North within sight.

Once the major decisions regarding the construction of the new Bowling Club were finalised, Council turned its attention to the appointment of the staff necessary to maintain the Club's facilities. In September 1948, Bexley Council advertised for a greenkeeper with «knowledge of green construction and maintenance», offering a salary of AU£8 to AU£10 per week, with a residence being available. Seven applications were received, with two short-listed.



*St George Call* (Kogarah, NSW) Friday 10 September 1948, page 10.

By December 1948, both prospective greenkeepers had declined the position. Town Clerk J.R. Scott's Report of 25 March 1949 stated that Council would advertise for a greenkeeper at a salary of AU£8 to AU£10 per week «according to qualification».<sup>61</sup> It was June 1949 before a greenkeeper was actually appointed – Mr H.A. Keogh, on a salary of AU£10 per week.<sup>62</sup> A month later, Council was informed that Keogh had declined the offer and Mr W. Donaldson was interviewed.<sup>63</sup> A few weeks later, Donaldson was confirmed as the first greenkeeper of the Bexley Municipal Bowling Club.<sup>64</sup> In a progress report to Council, dated 7 March 1950, Donaldson stated substantial work was needed to level out the soil of the bowling greens, as well as the removal of a «considerable amount of paspalum» and other noxious weeds.<sup>65</sup>

As mentioned earlier, management of the costs of building the Bexley Municipal Bowling Club facilities was a concern of Council in both its Bexley and Rockdale forms. Aldermen were very conscious of the costs impacting Council's budget and their own electability. This is one reason this study presents the development of the project in such detail – to illustrate how the bureaucratic process, the challenges of preparing the site itself and other factors such as the post-war shortages of materials and labour – substantially extended the time and cost required to complete the project.

According to a letter from the Rockdale Town Clerk to builder Jim Cobban, dated 15 June 1949, his tender was accepted by Council, with a construction price of AU£4,111/17/6 for the Clubhouse.<sup>66</sup> The original tender from Jim Cobban had estimated AU£4,430/10/- for construction of the two bowling greens, part of a total budget of AU£9,000. The Municipality of Rockdale - Progress Payment Certificates from April to September 1950 present some in detail the progress of the works on the Clubhouse. By September 1950, the greens had cost AU£4,430/10/-, the Clubhouse AU£4,380/0/- with «fencing and improvements» costing another AU£780/16/-. As the project neared completion, the total was now AU£9,591/6/-, more than twice the price of a three bedroom brick home in the Bexley area at that time. In any event,



preparations now began for the handover of the site to the management of the Bexley Bowling Club.<sup>67</sup> According to the Minutes of the Meeting of the Rockdale Council Finance Committee of 28 September 1950, the Club would pay rent of AU£360/3/6 annually between 1951 and 1953. This would increase to approximately AU£750 per annum between 1954 and 1972. On the motion of Aldermen Macdonald and Mainerd, Council resolved to draw up a 21-year lease on that basis.<sup>68</sup>



One of the earliest photographs of the Bexley Bowling Club, circa 1950. Notice the bowling green is not yet completed. Courtesy: Bayside Library Local History Department.

The draft lease was not presented to Rockdale Council until its Ordinary Meeting of 30 August 1951. Amongst its terms and conditions was setting a minimum entrance fee and annual subscription fee, which could not be changed by the Club without approval by Council. In the interim the Club had been disputing – and ignoring – just this provision, a «matter discussed at length» by the Aldermen. Council proceeded to resolve three motions. Firstly, the original lease agreement could not be altered. Secondly, the Entrance Fee and subscription set by the Club were given «immediate approval» by Council. Thirdly, no rates were to be charged by Council on «bowling green property for the duration of the period in which the Club is repaying the capital loan» borrowed to build the facilities. The lease would not be finalised and signed until late-1951, coming into immediate effect. At the same meeting, Alderman Albert Mainerd reported on that year's Annual General Meeting of the Bexley Bowling Club, stating the Club «merited the commendation of Council» as it was «carrying out not only the letter but the spirit

of what Council desired when it undertook the bowling club venture». Rockdale Town Clerk J.R. Scott later wrote to the Bexley Bowling Club «conveying the Council's congratulations upon the success achieved».<sup>69</sup>



The Official Opening of the original Bexley Bowling Clubhouse, 28 October 1950. Courtesy Bayside Library Local History Department.

## INAUGURATION

Council resolved at its Ordinary Meeting of 12 October 1950 to conduct the official handover of the Bexley Bowling Club House on Saturday 28 October, at 2:30pm. Council would provide afternoon tea for the official guests.<sup>70</sup> In a coincidence of history, 28 October is marked as Hellenic National Day, the anniversary of the invasion of Hellas (Greece) by fascist dictator Benito Mussolini's forces in 1940. Perhaps a portent of the future of the Club within the Australian Hellenic community? The Second Anzac Corps was formed soon after the invasion to assist the Hellenic resistance against the invaders. Amongst the Anzacs of Greece was Jack Staples, a local Grade cricketer with the Bexley Christ Church Club (St. George Association). Staples served with the 2/1 Australian Machine Gun Battalion during the Greek Campaign (on mainland Hellas and the Hellenic island of Krete in the southern Aegean Sea), and was posted as «Missing» in May 1941. Thankfully Staples survived the war and was discharged in 1945.

The second phase of the Club's history was focussed on building the facilities required for long-term success, both on the bowling greens and financially. The Clubhouse was placed on the highest points of the site, with bowling greens No1 and No.2 terraced a few metres lower down the slope, facing Edward Street. The alignment of the Clubhouse and its bowling greens also maximised the exposure to the summer and winter sun. While far from complete, the clubhouse was ready for use by October 1950.

Alderman Enoch Jones, the first Mayor of Rockdale Council, presided over the ceremony at which the keys to the Club were handed over to President A. George Baker and his 148 members. The actual keys were presented to Baker by NSW Colonial Secretary, Minister for Co-operative Societies and Assistant Treasurer, the Hon Clive R. Evatt MLA, youngest brother of former Prime Minister of Australia, H.V. Evatt. Also in attendance were Rockdale Council aldermen and officers including D.D. Cross MLA and Albert Mainerd, Rockdale Town Clerk J.R. Scott, former Bexley councillors, Lionel Rossby (NSW Bowling Association), builder Jim Cobban and greens contractor W.B. Howard.<sup>71</sup>

An interesting reflection of societal norms was the separate «afternoon teas» held after the conclusion of the formalities. «Mr Baker entertained the official party», while «Mrs Baker entertained ladies of the official party».<sup>72</sup> This separation, the distinction between «Ordinary» or «Full» members and «Associate» members remained until 1985, that year's Annual Report being the first one to not refer to the distinction between male and female members.



**BEXLEY BOWLING  
and RECREATION CLUB LTD**

THE CLUB WAS INCORPORATED  
ON 14<sup>TH</sup> MAY 1948,  
AND OFFICIALLY OPENED BY  
G.S. CARSON  
PRESIDENT OF THE N.S.W.  
BOWLING ASSOCIATION  
ON 27<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 1951.

A.G. BAKER  
PRESIDENT

A.E. KERSHLER  
SECRETARY

LEFT: Twin plaques which once adorned the main entrance to the Clubhouse. PHOTO: Isabella Lettini, 2017.<sup>73</sup>

The official opening of the Clubhouse appears to have been a more low-key affair, coming almost a year to the day after the Official Inauguration of the Club itself. The dedicatory plaque adorned the main entrance to the Clubhouse for more than six decades, being removed sometime after the licensed premises paused formal operations in 2017.

Perhaps nothing underscores the value of the AU£11,980 capital cost of the Bexley Bowling and Recreation Club for the former Bexley Council and the expanded Rockdale Council than the presentation of the 1950 *Local Government Award*. This was an annual prize in recognition of outstanding local government achievement. Rockdale became one of the few councils within metropolitan Sydney to receive this honour. As reported in the *Times* newspaper, «The award was gained on a number of diverse activities, from the Council's modern garbage collection system to the newly established Bexley bowling club».<sup>74</sup>

## FULL OPERATION

The strength of the Club in those early years was illustrated by the annual ball, held at the Rockdale Town Hall. The 'well-attended' 1954 Ball was held on Friday 9 April.<sup>75</sup> The cessation of the annual Ball is also a clear illustration of the financial and other problems beginning to seriously impact the Club from the mid-1970s. One problem which faced the growing Bexley Bowling Club almost from the beginning was car parking, one of the key issues facing AHEPA NSW INC in its efforts to secure the restoration of the site as a viable community Club. The *Propeller* newspaper reported in its 20 May 1954 issue that Rockdale Council wanted to install angle parking on the three streets adjacent to the Club. The Police Traffic Branch however, rejected the proposal, claiming Laycock, Edward and Oliver Streets were not wide enough to accommodate this mode of parking. Rockdale Council resolved that the «Superintendent of parks and properties confer with the Ward Aldermen and report upon a suitable car-parking area, together with an estimate of cost and work involved».<sup>76</sup> A resolution to the problem was not found by Council staff. AHEPA NSW INC has sought to maximise on-site parking though this has yet to be approved by Council at the time of writing.

Published every September, the Club's Annual Reports from the period 1949 to 1982 included lists of members (of all categories) as well as brief reports from the Club's various committees. These booklets constitute a rich source of information about the Bexley Bowling Club, its activities and its members. They also provide a significant source of data about the community of Bexley North, as the membership lists – for example – also included personal information such as addresses, telephone numbers and occupations. Non-British and Irish family names are scarce in the membership lists prior to the late-1970s, when a few Hellenic (Greek) and Italian family names begin appearing, reflecting the changing demography of Bexley North. In the 1990s, a couple of Chinese family names appear. From the mid-1980s however, the Annual Reports ceased publishing committee reports and membership lists.

The Annual Reports allow historians an insight into evolving techniques of landscape architecture, and allow scholars to reconstruct how the Bexley Bowling Club came to its current appearance, how this block of land went from being a marsh to a valued local playground. Ceasing their publication deprived local historians of much useful data. For example, in the Annual Report for 1952-1953, C. Reynolds, writing on behalf of the Greens Committee, summarised the «considerable amount of work» completed during that year, «such as levelling



both greens, filling in the bank along Edward Street, forming banks along Laycock and Oliver Streets, also planting shrubs around Club grounds».

Bexley Bowling Club grew rapidly in those early years, partly fuelled by the arrival of large numbers of British migrants into the local area. According to the «Estimates» in the 1952-1953 Annual Report, presented by Charlie Nairn on behalf of the Club's Finance Committee, «the need for the construction of a third Green, and extension to the Clubhouse' had become evident. Having already 'investigated these two propositions', the Committee proposed the construction of «Extensions of the Clubhouse on the Laycock Street side to provide premises which would be used as the Afternoon Tea Room and Hall for Social Activities». To be built of brick, the cost was scheduled to be «approximately [AU]£3,500». In the Finance Committee's «Summary», presented by Nairn, these «extensions would allow of an increase in Club membership from 185 to 250 members», with their nomination and subscription fees covering the cost of the third Green – with basecourse of ashes.<sup>77</sup>

Club President Sydney A. Hammer wrote in his Report that «after many meetings» of its members, the Committee «eventually agreed to a plan which was adopted by members». Hammer announced that «[T]he building extension project has now commenced». Within «a few short months», the Club «should should gain the advantage of our new Assembly Hall, kitchen, tool and soil shed». House Committee Chairman C.C. Nairn estimated the extensions, to be built by Jim Cobban would cost AU£8,500, financed by a bank overdraft of AU£5,000 and excluding the donations of «furniture and kitchen fittings» from the Ladies' Auxiliary.<sup>78</sup> The easier of the two projects – Bowling Green No. 3 adjoining Oliver Street – was in use from 3 April 1955. As recorded on the dedicatory plaque below:

BEXLEY  
BOWLING & RECREATION CLUB LTD  
THESE EXTENSIONS AND No. 3 GREEN  
WERE OFFICIALLY OPENED BY  
HILTON RICHARDSON  
PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL N.S. WALES BOWLING ASSOCIATION  
ON 14<sup>th</sup> APRIL 1956

S.A. HAMMER  
PRESIDENT

A.E. KERSHLER  
HON. SECRETARY



The pride in the expanded facilities is clear from the Report of Secretary A.E. Kershler, «The much needed accommodation referred to in last year's Report is now an accomplished fact, the chief of which are a new and spacious Dining Room, a roomy and well-equipped Kitchen, and a permanent Bar». Building Committee Chairman V. Ewen described it as «remodelling the original building», even though it was less than a decade old at that time. Kershler made special mention of the key role the membership played in the development of the Club, a comment that appeared in every Annual Report, without fail. «Members have again been generous in donations of cash and kind, and have assisted very materially in the beautification and appearance of the whole of the outside area». Adding to Kershler's comments, House Committee Chairman Charlie Nairn noted «[t]he old kitchen was converted into a storeroom for the bar». Nairn also mentioned that «Chief Steward Alex McGlashan ... has occupied portion of the upstairs section of the clubhouse» since July 1955. Noting that «total capital expenditure» amounted to AU£10,635, Finance Committee Chairman Stewart J. Moore made the interesting clarification for the members: «Under our existing 21 years' lease with the Rockdale Council, the Club has no equity in any fixed capital improvements». Expenditure on such items and services were recorded «as a separate item, "Leasehold Improvements" in the Balance Sheet». <sup>79</sup> This fact in no way deterred members from continuing to invest in the development of the Club's facilities as far as Club and personal finances permitted.



Bexley Bowling Club viewed from the north-west corner of the intersection of Laycock and Edward Streets, Bexley North. Bowling Green No. 3 and the eastern extensions to the Clubhouse have been completed. Courtesy Bayside Library Local History Department.



Although the 1957 and 1958 Annual Reports have not been located, the Annual Report for 1959, together with the dedicatory plaque below illustrate that the three year period 1957-1959 saw another expansion of the Clubhouse. As recorded on the metal plaque, extensions built during the presidency of Charlie Nairn were officially opened on 27 June 1959, meaning construction would have commenced the year before and planning the year before that. The first decade of the Bexley Bowling Club was certainly an eventful one, with huge expenditure on developing a community facility of which to be proud.



BEXLEY  
BOWLING & RECREATION CLUB LTD

THESE EXTENSIONS  
WERE OFFICIALLY OPENED BY  
TOM SHAKESPEARE  
PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL N.S.W. BOWLING ASSOCIATION  
ON 27 JUNE, 1959

C.C. NAIRN  
PRESIDENT

L.M. BROWN  
HON. TREASURER

A.E. KERSHLER  
HON. SECRETARY

As noted by Finance Committee Chairman and Treasurer L.M. Brown in the Annual Report for 1958-1959, «Some alterations to the original plan were made and it was decided to have the brick fencing completed whilst bricklayers were available». This expenditure, not budgeted for in the original estimates, led the Committee «to invite members to subscribe to a 5% loan to cover any discrepancy between our requirements and the accommodation granted

by our bankers».<sup>80</sup> While this was the first time members were invited to invest personal monies into the Club, it was not the last time. Indeed, such lending kept Bexley Bowling Club afloat through some very difficult economic times over the coming decades. It is an illustration of the dedication of the members to their Club. This reliance on loans from members is also an illustration of the failure of the Club to adapt to changing social and economic conditions in the local area in the coming decades. This set of extensions were the last major structural works made at the Bexley Bowling Club for more than six decades. Over time, there were minor additions to the eastern or Oliver Street side of the Clubhouse, as well as the conversion of Bowling Green No. 3 to a petanque or boules court in 2013. However, as may be seen in the following two photographs, taken almost four decades apart, the extensions of 1959 effectively gave the Clubhouse the look visitors may still see today.



The Bexley Bowling Clubhouse, as it looked completed in 1960.



The Bexley Bowling Clubhouse, as it looked in 2017.



Throughout the 1960s, various small-scale projects were undertaken around the Clubhouse, mostly re-modelling and adapting the available spaces to the needs of the Club. Funded by a «further» bank loan, President H.G. Chapman stated in the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Report for 1962-1963 that «work is well in hand on a new Bowls Secretary's office, enlarged kitchen, new soil shed» as well as «a new Ladies' locker room and toilets for our new Associate lady members». The Club Committee also «planned for the future», with the idea being that «the wall and toilet block between the beer and dancing section can be removed, making one large clubhouse separated by a concertina screen wall».<sup>81</sup> As may be seen in the photographs of the main auditorium below, dated Saturday 5 September 1998 and Tuesday 30 November 1999 respectively, this idea was never realised. This plan was never realised, partly due to the lack of available funds and partly because the wall scheduled for removal was load-bearing (supporting the upper level and the roof) and therefore could only be partly removed without major additional expense to provide the necessary support for the upper storey residence.



The Club's main auditorium set up for a function, 30 November 1999.



Looking over Bowling Green No. 1 from inside the Club House, 30 November 1999.

New work during the 1963-1964 year focussed on the Bowling Greens, especially No. 3 along Oliver Street. As recorded by Greens Director Percy G. Fay in the Greens Committee Report for the year, «the bank in front of the club has been drained and the ditches of No. 1 and No. 2 greens have been connected to the stormwater drain», which runs beneath the lowest point on Edward Street and downhill under Gilchrist Park. «The extending of the bank of No. 3 green and the building of the retaining wall around the water tank has improved that part of the Club».<sup>82</sup> As may be seen in the photographs below, taken in July 2021, little has changed since that work was completed.



LEFT: The retaining wall and storage space built around the main water tank, built in 1964. RIGHT: The lid of the water tank, adjoining Bowling Green No. 3. PHOTOS: PD, July 2021.

The progress of the Club was not without its troubles, beyond the consistently tight financial situation. House Committee Chairman William R. ‘Bill’ Beare stated in the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Report for 1964-1965 that «[d]ue to a rather disastrous fire, the switchboard has of necessity been shifted to a new position», involving «the outlay of a great deal of money not provided for in the budget».<sup>83</sup> The details of the fire and the damage caused were not recorded, though it is clear the damage was substantial.

Subsequent to the fire, the focus returned to the bowling greens and the gardens which surrounded the Clubhouse. Greens Committee Chairman C. Lyle reported in 1965 that the gardener «has planted over 300 various types of flowers within the Club surrounds».<sup>84</sup> The following year, President Bill Beare reported the «completion of the brick fence [along] Oliver Street», a project begun two years earlier with the walls along Laycock Street (western side), then Edward Street (northern side), and finally along Oliver Street (eastern side). Once completed, the brick walls ran for «over 700 feet in length’ (214 metres), with an ‘average height two feet seven inches» (79 centimetres), utilising «over 50 cubic yards of concrete» (38 cubic metres) and «composed of over 28,000 bricks». Buiding Commirree Chairman V.C. Hood reported that the fences and concrete alone cost AU\$4,500.<sup>85</sup>

As noted in the 1967-1968 Annual Report, the Garden Committee was formed in July 1966. In addition, «the brick wall and rockeries and gardens surrounding the club», with paths, gardens, fences donated by the Garden Committee, worth AU\$2,650, according to House Committee Report Chairman Ron F. Pakes. Over the next two years, that sub-committee had spent approximately AU\$7,000 on the beautification program, of which AU\$5,000 had been



raised by the Committee and AU\$2,000 contributed from the Management Committee. These figures were recorded in the Garden Committee report by Chairman Maurice ‘Morrie’ Barry. To provide some context, Sydney's median house price stood at AU\$18,700 in 1968.<sup>86</sup> These large sums were matched by hundreds of hours of volunteer labour, testimony to the dedication of the members to their Club.



The view along the Edward Street side of the Bexley Bowling Club, June 2021. PHOTO: PD.



The view along the Oliver Street side of the Bexley Bowling Club, July 2021. PHOTO: PD.

This point was underscored by the activities of the Greens Committee across the same period. The 1964-1965 Annual Report recorded that a «new cement path was laid at the



entrance on Laycock Street» together «with two new rock gardens planted with rock plants, lucky stones and crushed bricks». This landscaping was funded «by means of donations, raffles and ‘Garden Days’». Greens Committee Chairman Clarence Lyle declared in his report in 1968 that the «acquisition of the fixed seating around the greens and the excellent layout of the gardens», in addition to ‘the renovation and painting of the old garden seats’ were justifiably a source of pride for the membership.<sup>87</sup>



The overgrown rock gardens along Laycock Street, June 2021. PHOTO PD.

Writing in the 1969 Garden Committee report, Chairman Morrie Barry stated that the year was given to decorative works, especially around No. 2 Green. Barry’s report also included reference to another plan which was never realised: to create a sloping bank facing Edward Street with the words «BEXLEY BOWLING CLUB» visible from Edward Street.<sup>88</sup> In the following year’s Annual Report, President Ron Pakes reported that «[t]he brick wall between No. 2 and No. 3 Greens has been completed», completing the project of terracing the sloping ground along Oliver Street. Pakes also thanked «Vic Ewen and his workers for the Rockery and Fountain in front of the Club House».<sup>89</sup> Although now seriously overgrown, this stonework is still visible beneath the foliage.



The rockery and fountain built by members in 1970, as they looked in July 2021. PHOTOS: PD.





Construction and maintenance work was not limited to the gardens. In the Match Committee report, Bowls Secretary W. Innes mentioned that Greens No. 1 and No. 3 were overused while No. 2 was being rebuilt between August and October 1969.<sup>90</sup> Green No. 1 was «planted in October 1977, after five inches of soil was removed», reported Club Vice-President and External Committee Chairman John Bowler in that year's Annual Report.<sup>91</sup> Such snippets provide historians with information about the intensity of the use of the bowling greens at Bexley North, as well as the management system employed to maintain and re-build these greens as required by the natural playing surfaces over time.



The view of the brick fence which runs along the rear line of the Bexley Bowling Club site, from Laycock to Oliver Streets. As seen from Oliver Street, Bexley North.

President Ron Pakes especially thanked the Garden Committee «for finalising all the fences and gardens» in the Annual Report for 1971, while Garden Committee Chairman Morrie Barrie reported that repairwork on the fences began along Laycock Street «from the driveway» and concluded «at the soil shed next to the home of Albert Lewin» on Oliver Street.<sup>92</sup> In the same vein, Hon. Treasurer G.B. Williams wrote in 1975, on behalf of the Finance Committee, that the Club «is most grateful to all of those members who assisted with their services in carrying out various work». These volunteer contributions were invaluable to the Bexley Bowling Club «as considerable expense was saved as against the use of outside labour».<sup>93</sup> Six years later, External Committee Chairman John Bowler reported that «[t]he garden beds and surround have been really appreciated by Club Members and visitors alike», mentioning that «a working bee was formed to construct concrete ditch surrounds for all greens».<sup>94</sup> In 1982, House Committee Report by Chairman J. Gaydon reported that «[m]any small repairs were carried out by members – the only cost being for materials».<sup>95</sup>

The donations to the Club from the membership extended far beyond the gardens. In 1975, «the Billiard Table Committee» was thanked «for the donation of the billiard table», as well as «our good ladies for the donation of fans in the dining room and carpet in the ladies' rest room». The combined value came to AU\$2,085.<sup>96</sup> In 1982, «our most generous members, the McCain brothers» contributed «[a]n additional honour board ... to list our members' achievements on other than Club championships».<sup>97</sup> As noted throughout this study, the contributions of the membership away from the bowling greens maintained the Bexley Bowling Club for decades, especially in the last few decades. These contributions include to the recording and preservation of the men and women who built and maintained the Club, serving it on the greens and in other ways.



The banner of the Bexley Women's Bowling Club.

### **WOMEN'S BOWLING CLUB**

The Bexley Bowling Club Women's Auxiliary was formed in 1951-1952, according to that year's Annual Report. The «Ladies' Committee» organised the «donations of a piano, table cloths and many articles necessary for the comfort of the members», noted the Finance Committee Report led by Club Vice-President Charlie Nairn.<sup>98</sup> It is one of the ironies of the history of the Bexley Bowling Club that ladies were not 'Ordinary' or 'Full' members for most of its history. This did not prevent ladies from being very active associates, providing pennants, generous donations and funding to the Club from 1948 until it paused operations in 2018. Indeed, the last active group of bowlers on the Bexley greens were a tight-knit group of five ladies (four members and one friend), who met weekly until 2018, when age forced them into retirement.

The 1953 Annual General Meeting included an interesting Agenda Item [No. 8]: «Application from Ladies' Committee for the use of one green one afternoon each week for the purpose of playing bowls».<sup>99</sup> The application was approved by the male members – a

number of whom were the husbands or other relatives of the applicants. A couple of years later, the Club Committee made a recommendation «that the Ladies' Auxiliary be given permission to affiliate with the NSW Women's Bowling Association».<sup>100</sup> The relationship was formalised on 23 October 1959 when the Bexley Women's Bowling Club was affiliated, with Mrs Dot Perry elected President. While ladies were still registered as «Associate Women' Members», they functioned as full members of the Bexley Bowling Club, except at general meetings. It would not be until the 1980s that this distinction would be formally abolished.

The 1960 and 1961 Annual General Meetings introduced, and reported on, two innovations which reflected the changing social attitudes of the 1960s. First, «The playing of mixed bowls on selected Sundays». Secondly, «[t]hat consideration be given to making vacant rinks available for women bowlers on Sunday afternoon». These were logical steps in fully integrating the ladies into the Club and, as confirmed by Annual Reports for many years to follow, proved to be very popular, attracting many bowlers to Bexley North and contributing greatly needed income.<sup>101</sup> The Annual General Meeting for 1962 was informed that «mixed bowls on selected Sunday afternoons and public holidays, Anzac Day excepted ... has proved very satisfactory» with «much better attendances» on those afternoons. This resulted in «[a]n application to the Rockdale Council for permission to increase Club membership by an additional 50 social (non-bowling) members has been granted».<sup>102</sup>

## **BOWL!**

The main form of competition between bowls clubs is Pennant, organised by the state/territory associations and representing over 80 per cent of the lawn bowls played in Australia. One idea of Pennant is to allow all skill levels of bowlers to play a regular competitive bowls match against players who are roughly of their standard. Pennant teams compete in a number of Divisions ranked on their skill level. The top competition is Premier League, and the skill levels go from Division 1 to Division 8 and a lowest-ranked six-a-side competition for clubs that cannot field another full side. Each Division has a number of Sections which are grouped in local areas. Promotion and demotion occurs at the end of each season.<sup>103</sup>

The Bexley Bowling Club entered the Metropolitan Pennant Competition for the first time in the 1952 season, entering teams in the No 4 and No 5 Pennants. While competitive trophies were not immediately forthcoming, Bexley's new facilities attracted widespread attention, as Acting President Keith H. Perry wrote in his «Foreword» to the 1952-53 Annual Report:

The amenities of the Club have been considerably improved, beside having two very nice bowling greens, which we have been highly complimented on from visiting members from all over Australia, during the Bowling Carnival.<sup>104</sup>

This confidence in the facilities built for, and by, the Bexley Bowling Club, was confirmed by its selection to host a series of high-ranking bowling tournaments between the 1950s and the 1970s. For example, one of the NSW versus Victoria Tests during the 1960 Season was played at Bexley. A statistic recorded in the 1958-1959 Annual Report underscores this pride: the numbers of «29,045 bowlers [who] played on the Bexley Greens, an increase

of over 2,000 compared with the previous year».<sup>105</sup> The figure, recorded by Greens Director, C. Reynolds, in the Greens Committee Report, also provides an indication of the popularity of lawn bowls in that period.

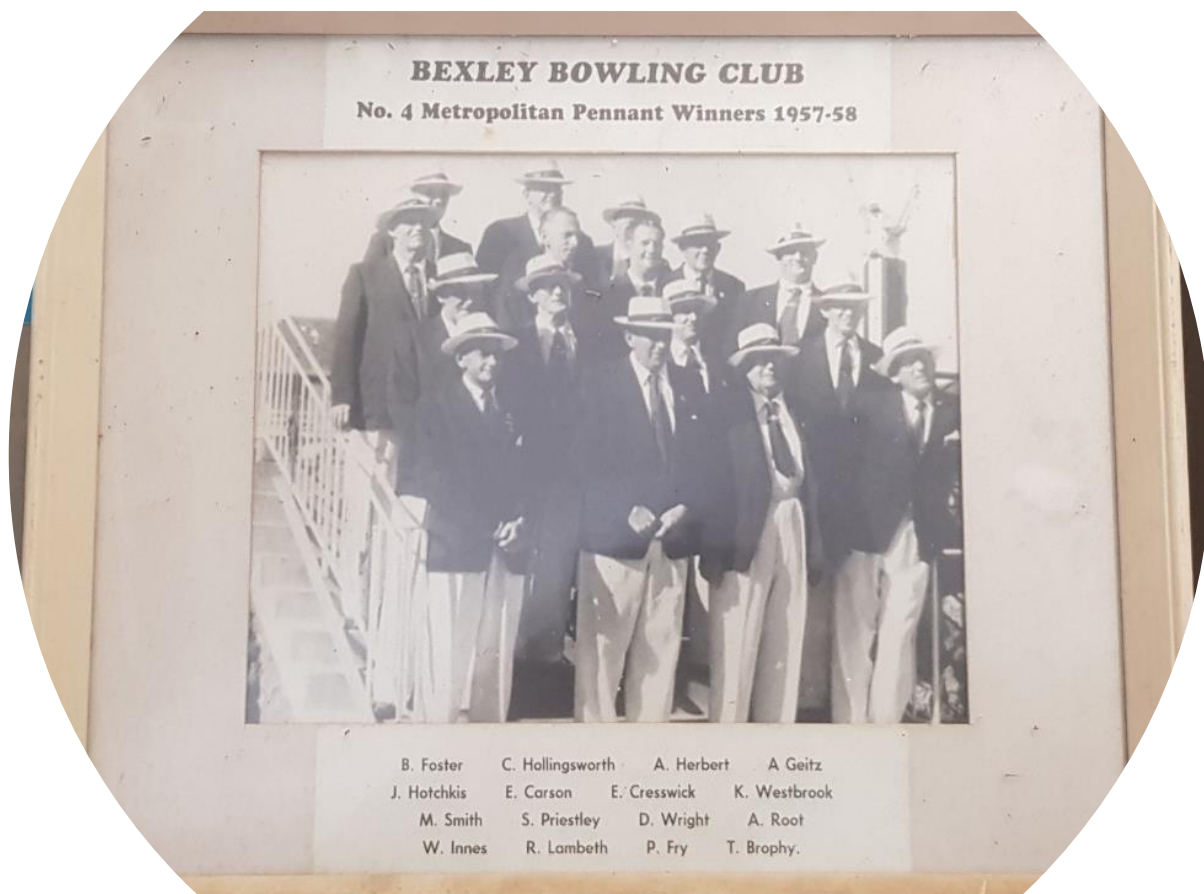
**Table 1: Numbers of bowlers playing on the greens at the Bexley Bowling Club**

YEAR	FIGURE	COMMENT
1958	c. 27,000	
1959	29,045	
1961	29,264	Greens Committee Report: 'These figures do not include morning and afternoon roll up.'
1962	30,064	Greens Committee Report: 'do not include morning and late afternoon roll-ups'.
1963	28,160	Greens Committee Report: 'do not include Saturday and Sunday morning or late afternoon roll up'.
1964	28,396	Greens Committee Report: 'do not include Saturday and Sunday morning or late afternoon roll up'
1965	32,952	Greens Committee Report. '... also an all-time record.'

A unique lawn bowls competition Bexley Bowling Club competed in was the **King Wood Trophy** for Publicity Officers of bowling clubs. It appears this competition was commenced in the early-1950s, involving teams from the clubs of the St George District and Sutherland Shire. As «G.H.» reported in the Sutherland Shire newspaper *The Observer* in the 23 September 1954 issue, the St. George Bowling Club hosted that year's Publicity Officers' Day. Fifteen teams – each led by the respective publicity officers – represented the various clubs' along the Illawarra Line.<sup>106</sup> The 1956 competition attracted entrants from 20 clubs. From the Bexley Bowling Club perspective, the highlight was the victory by Alex Coutts' team in bringing home the 1958 Trophy. The Club's 1960 Annual Report recorded over 20 visiting teams were present for the Publicity Officers' Day, while the following year's event attracted 24 visiting teams. The origins and history of the **King Wood Trophy** for Publicity Officers of bowling clubs is another of the aspects of the Club's history that awaits exploration.

The first champion team from the Bexley Bowling Club was the **No.4 Metropolitan Pennant Side** (below), winning the 1957-1958 title. This was followed next season (1959) with the team of Frank Bennett, Joe Dixon, Rupert Todd, and Peter Hannaford winning the St George-Sutherland Group Fours Championship. Indeed, five Bexley Bowling Club players were selected to represent the St George-Sutherland Group in various matches during the year: Joe Dixon, Rupert Todd, Peter Hannaford, J. Stone and C. Walton.





The 1959 Season was a watershed for the Bexley Bowling Club, marking the beginning of its 'Golden Age' on the greens. Bowlers F. Bennett, R. Cuneo, H. Dodds, Joe Dixon, P. Hannaford, F. Haynes, Stan Lockeridge, R. Le Cussan, C. Lyle, F. Menzies, Ernie McCain, J. Morton, R. Napier, A. Olley, F. Richards, J. Stone, R. Spencer, R. Todd, K. Toovey, S. Tattersall and C. Walton combined to win the Metropolitan No 1 Pennant (Second Division), defeating Ashfield in the semi-final and Cronulla in the final. This title meant that Bexley played «in the full No 1 Pennant after less than nine years of pennant play, which is something of which to be proud», wrote President Charles C. Nairn in his 1958-59 Annual Report.<sup>107</sup>

Building on the previous season's success, with «R. Napier and R. Spencer and R. Cuneo and A. Olley winning their way into the last eight in the State Pairs Championships» for 1961. The team of F. Bennet, R. Cuneo, Joe Dixon and Ernie McCain achieved 'the same honour' in the State Fours Championships.<sup>108</sup> As described by President Vic Ewen, the 1961 Season was one of the Club's most successful. «Our activities on the greens during the past season can be reflected upon with a feeling of pride», as the Second Division of the No 1 Pennant won its championship (above), while the No. 5 and No. 7 Pennant sides were both «sectional winners». As Ewen recorded, «this coupled with Jim McCain's Australian Championship win and our successes in Group Competitions has helped to make Bexley one of the leading Clubs in the State».<sup>109</sup>



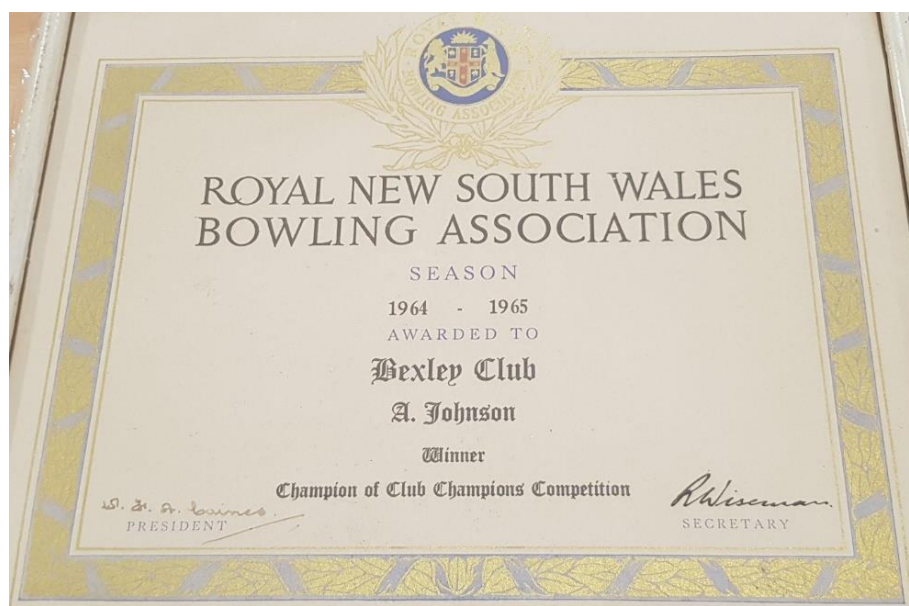
The minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Friday 15 September 1961 noted that three items raised at the previous AGM «have been carried through to finality», including «That an Honour Board be provided to record the names of the winners and runner-up of the Club Singles, Pairs and Minor Singles Championships». These Honour Boards remain in the Clubhouse (Appendices 50-51) will be removed during the coming renovations, while decisions will be taken in due course regarding the best format to return them to public display.



The Representative jacket belonging to Jim McCain, later donated to the Bexley Bowling Club.



Success on the bowling greens reached its zenith for Bexley in the period 1963-1966, as illustrated below. At the heart of this success was a single man, **Athol Johnson** (1915-1995). As recorded in the President's Message for 1963-1964,<sup>110</sup> Johnson became State Singles Champion and was selected to represent NSW in the Test against Queensland. In addition, Jim McCain was selected to represent NSW in the Test against Victoria. Lloyd Smith secured the St George-Sutherland Singles' Championship for Bexley, while Daly Adams took out the Five Dock Master Minor title. In addition, Joe Dixon, Jim McCain, Lloyd Smith, Ernie McCain and Athol Johnson were selected for the Metropolitan side versus Country. Johnson added to this amazing record by winning the NSW Singles' Championship for 1963-1964 – below is the Certificate, part of the Club's Historical Archive.



This historic set of individual achievements were followed up the following season [1965] with Athol Johnson securing the title of *State Champion of Champions*, Jim McCain being a finalist in the St George-Sutherland District Singles Championship and also being named ‘skipper’ for the NSW state team with Athol Johnson also being selected for representative honours. In another first for Bexley, Bill Innes was selected as Chairman of the St George-Sutherland Group. Finally, the 1965 Season was topped off with the No. 5 Pennant Side winning their section; the team was led by skipper Des Scott and included Joe Blacker, Max Finnimore and John Smith.<sup>111</sup>

## 1966 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

The inaugural Men's World Outdoor Bowls Championship was held at Kyeemagh, by the shores of Botany Bay, in the heart of Rockdale Municipal Council, from 10 to 23 October 1966.<sup>112</sup> As illustrated by a *British Movietone* report<sup>113</sup> (which includes some aerial footage of the Kyeemagh area), the event sponsored by petroleum company Ampol, appears to have been a major success. The Australian team won three of the five events, including the W.M. Leonard Cup for winning the overall team competition with eleven points from a maximum of sixteen, ahead of Scotland and England on six points each.



Bexley Bowling Club's Athol Johnson was part of the victorious Triples team, alongside Don Collins and John Dobbie, as well as the silver medallist Fours team with Don Collins, John Dobbie and Bert Palm, which lost the final to New Zealand. For the record, David Bryant of England won the singles which was held in a round robin format.



Athol Johnson's jacket from the 1966 World Championships, later donated to the Bexley Bowling Club and now part of the Club's Historical Archive.

### ***An introduction to bowls***

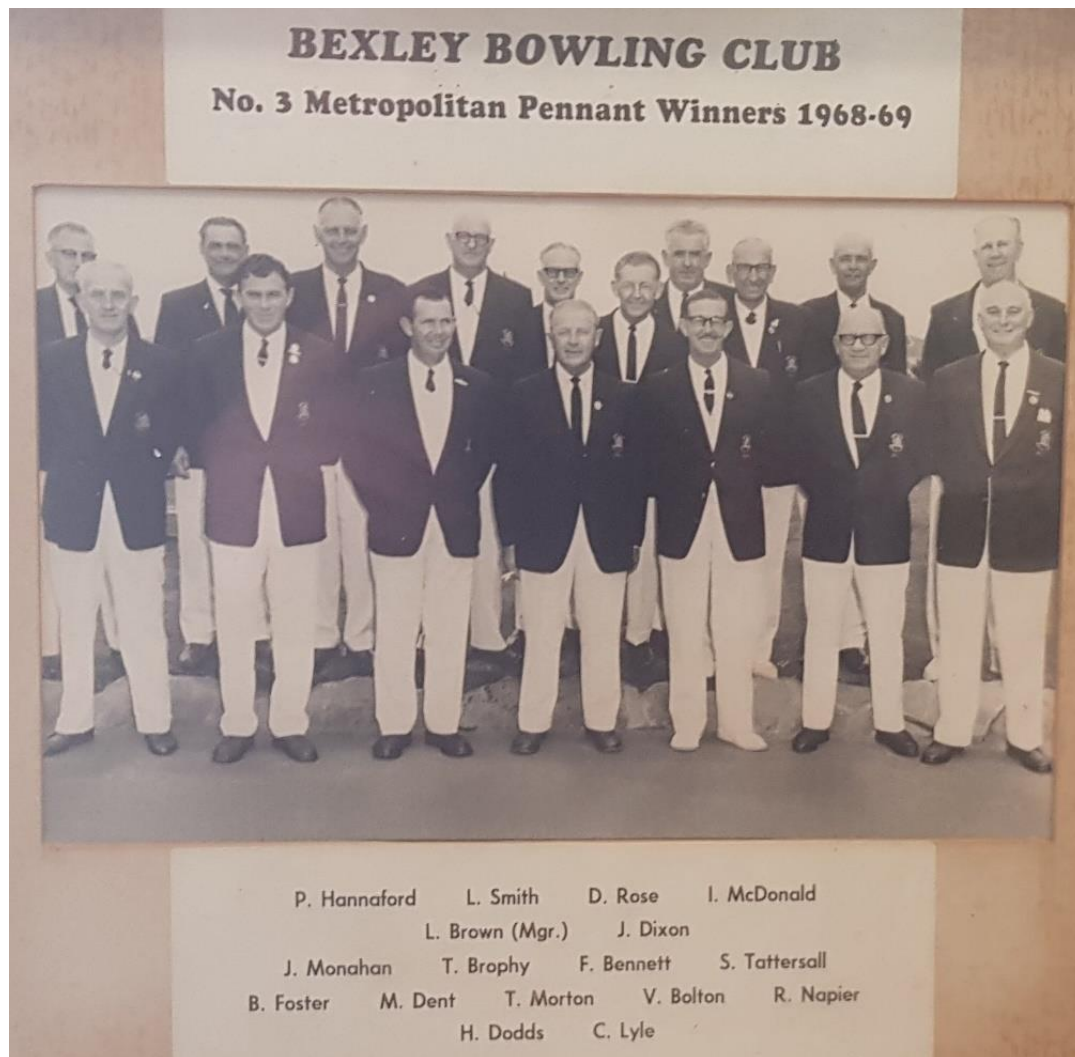
Johnson's status as the leading light of the Club and one of the most prominent lawn bowlers in the country was confirmed with the 1969 documentary *An introduction to bowls*. Produced by the Bank of New South Wales (today Westpac), the 20-minute film was described as being «for beginners and those who have forgotten the game», seeking «to promote better bowling by describing some "do's" and "don't's" and covering such points of technique as the grip, stance and delivery as well as etiquette» of the game.

Filmed mostly at the Bexley Bowling and Recreation Club, *An introduction to bowls* featured Athol Johnson, Frank Soars (Mona Vale) and NSW Champion Geoff Kelly. Between them these bowlers won major club championships, masters singles, NSW championships and three world championships, while Johnson and the Royal NSW Bowling Association provided technical advice. The film was made available by the Bank for use by bowling clubs throughout Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Great Britain with one copy even finding its way to the United States.<sup>114</sup>



## Success and Decline

The most successful period of the Bexley Bowling Club closed in 1969 with winning the No.3 Metropolitan Pennant title. (below) The 1970s and 1980s did not produced much in the way of athletic achievement for the Bexley Bowling Club, socially remaining a lively local hub, though financial concerns – compounded by geopolitical factors such as the 1974 «Oil Price Shock» - were beginnig to manifest themselves.

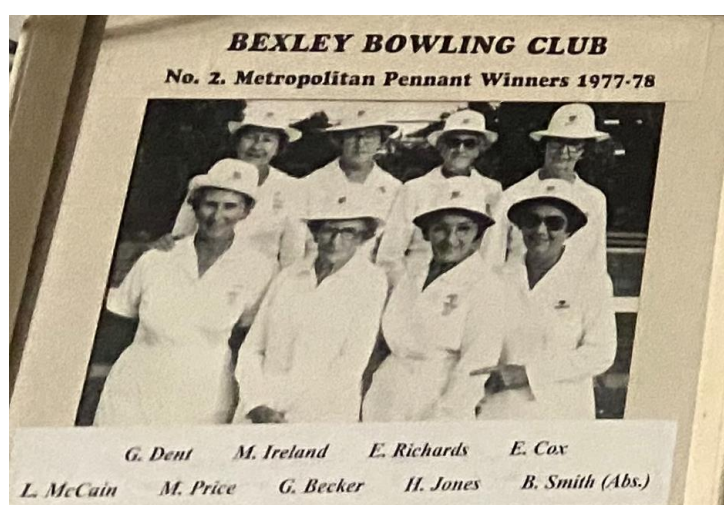


In an effort to produce much-needed income from the success on the greens and the Club's social status, members introduced «indoor bowls» competitions on Friday nights. Social Committee Chairman Stan Lockeridge wrote in the 1969-1970 Annual Report that this activity «maintains its popularity» and «kept our Club alive on Friday nights». «Indoor bowls» nights continued for a few years, were paused and resumed in 1977, for a few more years. The Annual Report for 1979-1980 mentioned that «gimmicks such as the Friday Luck Draw» ... «have proved successful» in attracting players and non-bowlers to the Club, boosting its coffers. Nor was the social activity confined to Bexley North. The *Nota* newspaper of Hawks Nest and Tea Gardens on the Mid-North Coast of New South Wales reported in its 1 July 1987 issue that about 70 Bexley Bowling Club members and friends visited that area's Returned Services and Citizens Club. «[T]he bowlers virtually 'took over the club', sang, danced, laughed, joked etc

on their way to happiness,» according to the President of the host club, Don Weekes.<sup>115</sup> As noted earlier, Anzac Day was a key point of the Club's calendar. [Appendix 61] the 1970-1971 Annual Report recorded that year's commemoration attracted 186 players who bowled across 24 rinks.<sup>116</sup> Anzac Day 1973 was marked by 168 bowlers playing «all day».<sup>117</sup> This is but one of the Club traditions AHEPA NSW INC will endeavour to revive in coming years. Despite their best efforts, the financial facts remained disheartening for the Club's members and Directors, who nonetheless continued to fight to keep their beloved Bexley Bowling Club alive.

On the bowling greens, the Club's success never again reached the heights of the 1960s, though there were some great moments from both Mens' and Womens' teams. The Men's No.7 Pennant team won their section in the 1971 Season, and went on to the Metropolitan Semi-Final, where they were defeated by the eventual winners, Mirand RSL. It is a pity the players' names could not be located. The following year, the Mens' No.4 Pennant team were crowned NSW Champions, the first state title for the Bexley Bowling Club. By that time, the Club had secured four Metropolitan Pennants. The champion team included Frank Ainsworth, Len J. Ball, H.J. 'Jack' Bye, Arthur Cooke, Milton E. Dent, A. George Dunstan, E. 'Ted' Geary, Clarrie N. Giles, Gordon V. Hitchcock, Albert V. Lewin, Tom C. McEvoy, Alex G. Price, Harold Smith, Basil W. Wardell, and Gordon B. Williams. These bowlers brought the first NSW Pennant to Bexley North, unfurled on Sunday afternoon 30 July 1972.

At the same tournament in 1972, Athol Jonson reached the Quarter-Finals of the Singles Championship. The following year, he was elected to the Selectors' Panel of the Bexley Bowling Club, where he continued to serve his beloved Club in an official capacity for a few more years. The 1975 Mens' No.5 and No.7 Pennant teams won their Sections. The Mens' No.2 Pennant team finished the 1976 season Metropolitan Runners-Up, while the Mens' No.4 team won its Section. The 1977 Mens' No.2 Pennant team won their Section, as did the Mens' No.7 team, who went on to finish the Season Metropolitan Runners-Up. The 1978 Mens' No.1 Pennant team won its Section. The 1979 Mens' No.5(1) and no.5(2) teams won their Sections, as did the Mens' No.1 Pennant team in 1981, a feat it repeated in the 1982 Season. Unfortunately, the names of these bowlers have not been identified, nor have their commemorative photographs been located.



One of the few sources on the Bexley Bowling Club from the 1970s: the commemorative photograph of the Womens' Metropolitan No.2 Pennant champions for 1978.



It is unfortunate that apart from the remaining Honour Boards, some photographs and pennants, little of the history of the Bexley Bowling Club from the period 1970-2016 survived at the Clubhouse. Snippets only may be gleaned from the surviving print media and, more recently, the digital media (especially Facebook). While ‘social media platforms’ are consistently attacked for a range of reasons, they do provide a rich source of information to historians; ‘history from below’ as it is commonly known, sources produced by persons involved who may or may not hold official positions. The history of the Bexley Bowling Club in the 21<sup>st</sup> century draws heavily from the digital world precisely because traditional historical sources are absent.



1988 was a landmark year for Bexley Bowling Club, beyond marking its 40th anniversary. A committee to organise events for the significant landmark was formed (above). The Bicentenary of British colonisation of Australia was marked with a *Bi-Centenial Community Mixed Fours* tournament. The eventual winners were the team of Gwen Barter and J Barter (Bexley) with N. Downes (Alexandria-Erskineville) and C. McLeod (Riverview). The Commemorative Medal depicts the HMS Endeavour, the ship commanded by Lieutenant James Cook as he explored the east coast of Australia in 1788 and the iconic Sydney Opera House. Cook and his men landed at Botany Bay on 26 January 1788, before sailing up the coast into what is now known as Sydney Harbour. Hence, these places were the focal points for celebrations of the Bicentenary of British Australia.

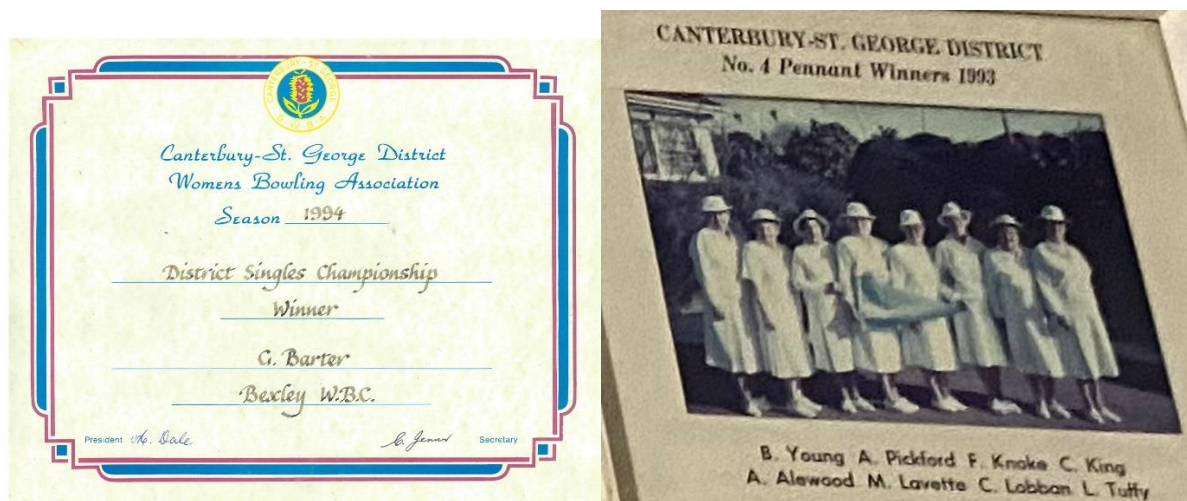
The Bexley Bowling marked its 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 1988. Apart from the 40th Anniversary Commemorative photograph of committee members Pat Hickey, Ken Brissett, Jack Gaydon, Gwen Barter, David White, Val Rymer, Stewart Moore, and Alf Randall next to the billiards table in August that year (above), little has been found about how the Club marked its 40<sup>th</sup> birthday. It is hoped that once former members, associates and their families learn about this study of the Club’s history, they will come forward with information about the Club’s activities, particularly since 1970.

The 1992 Zone 10 Triples Champions were Bexley's Robert 'Bob' Rymer, W. Krklinski and Jeff Barter. In 1997, Robert 'Bob' Rymer and Glenn Morton took out the District Zone 13 Pairs title. The following year, the No7 Pennant team won the Zone 13 title. The peak of the Club's bowling achievements in the period was Robert 'Bob' Rymer and Jeff Barter securing the title of Zone 13 Pairs Champions of Club Champions. The team of R. Madden, J. Aiken and Les Sharkey secured the District President Reserve Triples title in 2001, while the next major achievement did not come until 2010, when Bexley was named Champion Club.

As recorded in the 1987-1988 President's Report by Chairman David White, the Club was re-constituted 'to conform with statutory requirements', the first lady was appointed to the Board of Management and, there was 'the opening of negotiations for a possible amalgamation to enhance our future'.<sup>118</sup> It is worth noting that all but a handful of the Pennants and other competition titles secured by Bexley Bowling Club teams after 1990 came from ladies' teams – at least as far as the writer has been able to identify from surviving records at the Clubhouse.



Between 1991 and 1999, Bexley held the District Singles Champion title for five out of the nine years: Lorna McCain 1991 and 1992; Gwen Barter 1994 and 1999; Margaret Beatty 1996. The Canterbury-St George District Womens' Bowling Association Singles Championship, won in 1994 by Gwen Barter of the Bexley Womens' Bowling Club, as the certificate below left records. Below right is the commemorative photograph of the 1993 Canterbury-St George District Womens' No.4 Pennant Champions. The team included Barbara Young, A. Pickford, F. Knoke, C. King, A. Alewood, M. Lavette, C. Lobban and L. Tuffy.







The period 1996-2002 was a 'Golden Age' on the greens for the Bexley Women's Bowling Club, including the 50<sup>th</sup> - Golden - Anniversary Year of the Bexley Bowling and Recreation Club. This period began with the No.2 Pennant team of J. Eggleton, Joy Fox, Beryl Harris, Agnes Lowe, Hazel Mounsey, Jo McMahon, C. Stanley and Rae Writer finished Runners-Up in the 1996 NSW State Final. (above lower left) that Season, the Womens' No.3 Penannt team of M. Hickey, D. Hatton, N. Caunt, E. Thorn (Skipper), A. Alewood (Skipper), M. Lavette, P. Horn and Barbara Young secured their Division Championship for Bexley. In 1997, the No.1 Pennant team won their division and finished Runners-Up in the NSW Women's Bowling Association State Finals, arguably the highest achievement of a ladies' bowling team from Bexley. The same year, Bexley were Runners-Up in both the James Wall Shield and the Wolinski Shield competitions, with the teams of Margaret Beatty, Val Rymer, Gwen Barter, Lorna McCain, and C. Martin, Elsie Moore, R. Allen and B. Bailey respectively. At the District level, the Pairs Final was an all-Bexley affair, with P. Noonan and Eunice Oliver the winners, Gwen Barter and Lorna McCain Runners-Up. Over the next six years, these ladies brought a great number of titles to Bexley North. Some of these original Pennants have since been recovered and now form part of the Club's Historical Archive.

From the 1940s, the **James Wall Shield** was conducted by the New South Wales Womens' Bowling Association, a memorial competition named for a former president of the NSW Bowling Association. The **Wolinski Shield** was first «presented to the women bowlers of Sydney for their magnificent war effort. They formed a comforts fund amongst them, produced about 64,000 articles of clothing, collected a considerable amount of money, and generally did what they could towards the war».<sup>119</sup> The Shield was first subscribed by the NSW Womens' Bowling Association in 1946, named for then President Naomi Wolinski for her role in leading the efforts of women bowlers in support of the war effort, to be competed for annually by affiliated clubs with entrance fees given to charity.<sup>120</sup>

The Golden Anniversary Year of the Bexley Bowling Club – 1998 – was one of the most successful in its history, masking the serious financial problems which were manifesting themselves. It also included the Mens' No.7 Pennant team winning their Play-Offs on 6 June. The team was led by skipper Peter Wartie and played at the finals hosted by Huskisson Bowling Club on the South Coast of NSW. On 30 June 1998, Bexley Womens' Bowling Club emerged

District 4-5 Winners, with a team including Betty Owen, Joy Fox, Rose Wartie and Beryl Horn. The Women's Club contributed with three titles of their own. Gwen Barter and Lorna McCain secured the Canterbury-St George District Womens' Bowling Association Pairs championship, while Betty Owen, Joy Fox, Rae Writer and Beryl Harris secured the Fours title. The team of Joy Fox, Jo McMahon, A. Poulton and Beryl Harris also brought the Wolinski Shield to Bexley North. To this prestigious list should be added Runners-Up places in the Headquarters Trophy and James Wall Shield competitions for the teams of Margaret Beatty, Val Rymer, Gwen Barter, Lorna McCain, and Barbara Young, Jo McMahon, Rae Writer and Beryl Harris respectively.

The Golden Anniversary Year of the Bexley Bowling Club was marked with a week-long festival of bowling in September 1998. The festivities opened on Tuesday 1 September with a «Ladies' Friendship Day». (Appendix 45) The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration dinner was held at the Clubhouse on Saturday 5 September. (Appendix 46) The Presidents' Day event was held at the Clubhouse on Tuesday 15 September, celebrated with a luncheon with the ladies present in force.



Commemorative photograph of Bexley Bowling Club members on Green No.1 for their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The numerals and letters were formed by the bowls the players used.

The highs of 1998 were almost matched by the bowling green success of the following year. The Wolinski Shield remained at Bexley for a second consecutive year, thanks to the team of Barbara Young, M. Strauhan, May Dunstan and Eunice Oliver. The Canterbury-St George District Womens' Bowling Association Pairs championship final proved to be an all-Bexley affair, almost mirroring the 1997 Final. May Dunstan and Val Rymer emerged victorious over Gwen Barter and Lorna McCain, finalists for the third time in three seasons!

Gwen Barter also won the District Singles title. The No.1 and No.3 Pennant teams won their respective divisions, while the team of Esther Lam, Rae Writer and Beryl Harris also secured the Triples title.

The last year of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century also held success for the Bexley Womens' Bowling Club. Eunice Oliver won the Canterbury-St George District Womens' Bowling Association Singles championship, while the team of Elsie Moore, R. Allen and E. Thorn secured the Triples title and the team of Jo McMahon, Hazel Mounsey, Pam Anderson and Eunice Oliver the Fours title.



The 21<sup>st</sup> Century began brightly for the Bexley Womens' Bowling Club, with P. Anderson and Eunice Oliver combining to win the Canterbury-St George District Womens' Bowling Association Singles championship and going on to take out the NSW Pairs title for 2001. The Wolinski Shield returned to Bexley North, thanks to the efforts of the team of V. Grubmier, Barbara Young, Pam Anderson and Eunice Oliver. This was in addition to the James Wall Shield, won by the team of J. McMahon, Barbara Young, Rae Writer and Beryl Harris. Also at the District level, the No.1 Pennant team of Betty Owen, Joy Fox, Pam Anderson, Eunice Oliver, Margaret Beatty, Elsie Moore, Barbara Young and Lorna McCain. The District Triples title was secured by the combination of Elsie Moore, R. Allen and E. Thorne, while the District Fours were won by Margaret Beatty, Elsie Moore, Barbara Young and Lorna McCain.





The 2002 NSW Triples title was secured for Bexley by the combination of Jo McMahon, Pam Anderson and Eunice Oliver, following their victory in the Canterbury-St George District Womens' Bowling Association Triples championship. The Wolinski Shield remained at Bexley North, thanks to the team of Elsie Moore, R. Allen, Betty Owen and Lorna McCain. This would be the final time the prestigious trophy would be held at Bexley Bowling Club, as it was discontinued in 2011. Also at the District level, the Singles Championship was an all-Bexley affair with Barbara Young triumphing over Pam Anderson. The No.1 Pennant team of Elsie Moore, Margaret Beatty, Barbara Young, Lorna McCain, Betty Owen, Ivy Newberry, Pam Anderson and Eunice Oliver combined to secure the title. Similarly, the No.3 Pennant team of V. Grubmier, A. Poulton, Rae Writer, Beryl Harris, N. Parbery, R. Allen, M. Lavette and E. Thorn won their division. In addition, the District Triples title was won by Jo McMahon, Pam Anderson and Eunice Oliver, while the District Fours went to the team of Jo McMahon, Hazel Mounsey, Pam Anderson and Eunice Oliver. While various championships would continue to be won by players and teams of the Bexley Womens' Bowling Club, they did not again reach those heights.



The team of Betty Owen, Ivy Newberry, Pam Anderson and Lorna McCain combined to finish Runners-Up in the 2003 James Wall Shield competition. The Canterbury-St George District Womens' Bowling Association Singles championship was won by Eunice Oliver, while the Pairs title was secured by Barbara Young and Lorna McCain. The District Triples winners were the team of Jo McMahon, Pam Anderson and Eunice Oliver, the fifth year running the title had been won by a Bexley team and the second consecutive year that particular trio of players had secured the title. The District Fours was won by the team of Jo McMahon, Hazel Mounsey, Pam Anderson and Eunice Oliver. The No.4 Pennant team of Y. Madden, C. Lobban, M. Young, and C. Martin rounded out the title victories for Bexley for 2003.

Bowlers from the Bexley Womens' Bowling Club continued to compete between 2004 and 2014, securing a number of titles. In 2004, the team of Jo McMahon, Barbara Young, Pam Anderson and Eunice Oliver finished the Wolinski Shield competition as District Winners. The following year, M. Ravaillion won the Canterbury-St George District Womens' Bowling Association Minor Singles championship. In 2006, the District pairs title was secured by Lorna McCain and Eunice Oliver, while the No.1 Pennant team of Betty Owen, Hazel Mounsey, Pam Anderson, Eunice Oliver, Jo McMahon, Margaret Beatty, Rae Writer and Lorna McCain won their division. The 2011 District triples champion team of Lorna McCain, Pam Anderson and Betty Owen reached the Quarter-Finals of the NSW Championship, with Beryl Harris substituting for Lorna McCain in that match. The same year, the No.2 Pennant team of Lorna McCain, C. Martin, Hazel Mounsey, Pam Anderson, Y. Madden, J. Farrant, Elsie Moore and Betty Owen won their division. Betty Owen went on to win the 2013 District Singles title and was part of the No.3 Pennant team – alongside Y. Madden, J. Farrant, Esther Lam, J. Balk, A. Mackenzie, Elsie Moore and C. Martin, which secured the 2014 title. Unfortunately, this is where the surviving records of achievement on the bowling greens cease. These are more than lists of annual titles, championships and other achievements. These are records of the skill and dedication of bowlers – men and women – to their game, to their Club and to their community. Such dedication is worthy of remembrance. Records of achievement will assuredly resume once the Bexley Bowling Club resumes operation, scheduled for the 2024 season.

## **CLOUDED HORIZON**

The second 21-year lease expired in 1990. It appears Rockdale Council renewed the lease agreement with Bexley Bowling Club for five years, renewing this agreement again in 1995, and again in 2001. Addressing the Annual General Meeting on Sunday 18 September 1994, through the pages of the Club's 46th Annual Report, Chairman Pat Young shared his thoughts about the increasing difficulties his beloved Club faced:

In common with almost half of the seven hundred odd Bowling Clubs in NSW our Club is finding it hard to make ends meet. As pointed out by the Chief Executive Officer of RNSWBA Inc, Peter Wallace, survival depends upon becoming more professional and more enterprising about the promotion of our Club and its facilities.

Young's words were proven prophetic. Young's declaration – «For some years volunteer labour has enabled our Club to survive and our future lies with the continuation of this support»

- enabled the Club to limp along for another 14 years, with the understanding of Rockdale Council. It is in the spirit expressed by Past Chairman Pat Young that AHEPA NSW INC, the current operator of the Bexley Bowling and Community Club, seeks to restore the Club, both on the greens and as a professionally managed local community hub.

Greg Helm, chief executive of Bowls NSW, told the *Sydney Morning Herald* in 2019 that about 40 bowling clubs in Sydney «closed or amalgamated in the past decade because of declining membership and directors who lack the skills to reinvent the business».<sup>121</sup> One of those 40 was the Bexley Bowling Club. Indeed, Bowls NSW had lost one-third of its members from its peak of over 700 clubs. By 2019, there were 500 registered bowling clubs in NSW and 60,000 active bowlers - an average of just 120 for each club.<sup>122</sup> The table below records bowling club in the St George and Sutherland Shire District listed in a Bowls Report in the *St George Call* newspaper in its 31 October 1954 issue, (Appendix 10) as well as their current status.

<b>Bowling Club</b>	<b>Formed</b>	<b>Current Status</b>
Arncliffe	1935	Closed. Now Arncliffe Sports Club.
Beverly Hills	1951	Merged. Now Olds Park Sports Club, Penshurst.
Bexley	1948	Paused operations 2018; scheduled to re-open 2024.
Carss Park	pre-1954	Closed
Francis Drake	1948	Closed 24 March 2014
Hurstville	5 March 1927	Closed 1997
Hurstville Diggers	1949	Closed June 2014. Merged with Peakhurst.
Mortdale	1953	Closed late-2011
South Hurstville	1935	Closed 2017. Site now Marist College Penshurst.
Taren Point	27 July 1950	Operating

«The past year has not been a good one for Bexley and the Club Industry generally», wrote Chairman and Hon. Secretary Neil Maxwell ‘Max’ Young in his Chairman’s Report for 2001-2002. «The decline in membership has naturally affected the economic position of the Club», a situation compounded by a «recent burglary at the Club» which «certainly gave us all a shock». Young reported on «my recent discussion with the General Manager of Rockdale City Council regarding possible future problems facing the Club», expressing the hope that «the need for Council support will not fall on deaf ears». According to Young, then-General Manager Kevin Casey «agreed that we play a role in the Community and if we do not do that, then it would fall back onto the Council». «Recruitment» was another part of Young’s plan to rescue the struggling Club, declaring that this ‘must be our main objective these coming months, as we must increase our membership to survive in the years ahead’.<sup>123</sup>

The reading in the Chairman’s Report for 2002-2003 was even more dire. Young stated that he had written to Council late in 2002, «seeking financial and other support for the Club». Another meeting between Club and Council officers took place, after which Young «was advised that to give us any form of financial assistance would create a precedent» and would therefore not be forthcoming. Council «did agree to maintain the grass areas on the footpaths bordering the club commencing July 2003, which they have done».

Young's disappointment with Council's position was quite clear in the next paragraph of his Report. In July 2003, he had again written to Rockdale Council, «pointing out how generous they were with other organisations in and outside of their area» and requesting that it «reconsider assistance to us».

They again refused our request, so I can only assume they are not interested in helping our club who has played an important role in the area for the past fifty-four years and I feel this attitude should be disappointing to us all.

The extent of responsibility of local government in such situations is a matter of debate. Something to keep in mind is that around the time the Bexley Bowling Club was seeking financial support from Rockdale City Council, it should be remembered Council was embroiled in an Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) inquiry into influence-peddling and other forms of corruption within Council. The inquiry resulted in the resignations of councillors and a number of prison sentences. This context made Council even more sensitive to such requests for financial assistance from an organisation with a decades-long association with Council.<sup>124</sup> Reflecting the declining membership and the financial issues that ensued, Council extended the lease for the Bexley Bowling Club on one or two year installments from 2006 onwards. Council's offer of a two-year lease for the Bexley Bowling Club, due to its poor financial state, brought a strong reaction from members and others, as recorded in the pages of the *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader*. Its 27 December 2007 issue carried a front-page report titled «Club in fight for survival».<sup>125</sup> This triggered letters to the editor, published in the 3 January 2008 («What about us?»)<sup>126</sup> and 7 February 2008 («Site an old garbage dump»)<sup>127</sup> issues denouncing Rockdale Council as selling the Club to developers when no such proposal was being contemplated. The writing though was on the wall for the Club in its present form.

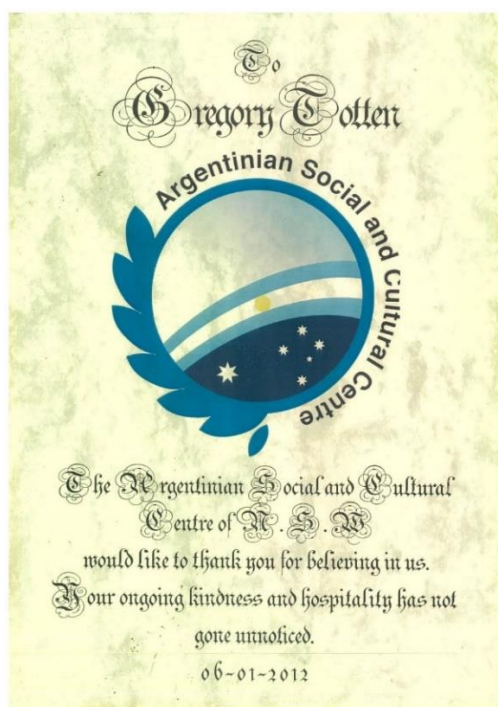
As it had since the early-1970s, the Bexley Bowling Club continued to struggle to remain financially viable, and it is worth stating that it was only the understanding of Rockdale Council which enabled the Club's doors to remain open. This is perhaps best illustrated by the statistic that between 2001 and 2010, the Club paid an average of \$6,000 per annum in rent. By 2010, the average rent for a house in Sydney was more than \$510 per week. Financial difficulties aside, Bexley Bowling Club continued 'to survive thanks to the small army of competent and willing voluntary and paid workers', as noted by Secretary Alan Kirby in the 62nd Annual Report for 2009-2010. Significant occasions including Australia Day (26 January)<sup>128</sup> and Anzac Day (25 April) were marked every year, with bowling and other appropriate ceremonies activities. 'It is an interesting irony that some of the surrounding clubs, which owned their premises, have gone either out of existence,' such as the 'mother club' of Bexley, the St George Bowling Club on Harrow Road, Rockdale, 'or are in somewhat dire straits, while we continue to "mosey along" on our leased premises.'<sup>129</sup>

2011 did not begin well for the Bexley Bowling Club. About 12:25AM of Sunday 9 January there was an attempted armed robbery at the Club. Three youths aged 17-18 years from outside the local area – one of them wielding a knife – attempted to steal cash.<sup>130</sup> One of them was later charged for attempted robbery.<sup>131</sup> There was also some good news for the Club soon afterwards. Under the NSW Government Community Building Partnership program, Bexley



Bowling Club secured a grant of \$28,479 for «new covered outdoor eating facilities», part of a number of grants totalling \$1.2 million for the Kogarah, Rockdale and Oatley electorates.<sup>132</sup>

It was at about this time that a new ‘partner’ arrived at the Bexley Bowling Club - the Argentinian Social and Cultural Centre. Drawn from one of Sydney’s newer communities, this group sought a base to build its membership and share its Latin American culture. Over the next few years, Argentinian cuisine (especially BBQ), the drum-beat of Latin American music and celebrations of Argentinian Independence Day became features of life at Bexley North.



RIGHT: Brad Forrest ‘New world vibes for an old sport’ *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* 18 April 2014. PHOTO: Jane Dyson.

For a short time between 2013 and 2016, petanque or boules was played on the former Bowling Green No.3 of the Bexley Bowling Club, an effort at reviving the flagging financial fortunes of the Club. In mid-2013, the unused third bowling green was adapted for the playing of boules petanque. The ancient Hellenes played a game of tossing coins, then flat stones, and later stone balls, called *spheristics* as early as the 6th century BCE. The ancient Romans modified the game by adding a target that had to be approached as closely as possible. This Roman variation was brought to Provence in south-west France, by Roman soldiers and sailors. Later, stone balls were replaced by wooden balls. In the Middle Ages, Erasmus referred to the game as *globurum* but it became commonly known as *boules* (balls), and it was played throughout western Europe. By the 19th century, in England the game had become *bowls* or *lawn bowling*. In France, it was *boules* and played throughout the country.<sup>133</sup>

*The Boules Artistes Petanque Club* ‘operated’ the field, while players from *France Petanque* and *AMA* also used the space. The former has a largely French membership, while *AMA* is mainly Mauritian while *Boules Artistes* are multi-cultural. Seeking to establish themselves at the Bexley Bowling Club, and to spread awareness of their ancient sport, the Australian International Open Petanque Triples were hosted at Bexley North from Friday 18

April to Sunday 20 April 2014. Teams from around Australia were joined by two teams and a delegation from Thailand.<sup>134</sup> Two years later, in March 2016, the Australian National Championships were held here.

This well-intentioned adaption by the remaining members of the Club did not provide the income necessary for it to remain afloat. The Club remained effectively bankrupt, selling its poker machine licences to the Kingsrove RSL Club in 2013 in a last ditch attempt to pay its debts and keep its doors open. The end of its second era came for the Bexley Bowling Club in 2015. The lease agreement with Rockdale Council was not renewed upon expiry. In October, Rockdale City Council resolved to use its new community facilities - occupancy renewal policy to evaluate the expired tenancies of Bexley Bowling and Community Club and other facilities. Councillors later passed a motion to open tenders for the use of the two facilities, which were tabled and evaluated over the next few months.

### **ORDER of AHEPA NSW INC**

The American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (AHEPA) was formed in Atlanta, Georgia, in July 1922. It grew out of the needs of the American Hellenic community for a secular pan-Hellenic network to support integration into American society as well as to provide a measure of protection from the violence of the Ku Klux Klan and related xenophobic groups. AHEPA was the first secular pan-Hellenic community organisation. It differed from all other Hellenic community organisations because it attracted members from all parts of the Hellenic World; membership was not restricted to those identifying with particular geographic regions. The atrocities of the Genocide of the Hellenes, which reached its zenith with the holocaust of the port-city of Smyrne (modern Izmir) in September 1922, brought the need for AHEPA even more sharply into focus.

By the early-1930s, a migrant from the port city of Smyrne in Asia Minor named Elias Bizannes, from his position of Editor of *The National Tribune* (*To Εθνικό Βήμα*) newspaper, began advocating for an Australian branch of the AHEPA to be formed. Bizannes' idea caught the attention of Australian Hellene businessmen including Nicholas Andronikos (Andronicus). Led by Andronikos and Bizannes, a group of them met at the Upper Hunter Valley town of Werris Creek<sup>135</sup> on 15 August 1934 and agreed to the formation of the Australian Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (AHEPA NSW). In January 1993, it became an incorporated association, a not-for-profit community group, dedicated to funding educational and philanthropic causes (especially medical research) across the state.

With approximately 500 financial members, and outgrowing its existing premises at 394-396 Princes' Highway, Rockdale, AHEPA NSW INC began a search for a new home in 2014. A group of local residents, members of the Association, identified the Bexley Bowling Club as a possible new home for the organisation.

When Rockdale Council put the Club up for public tender, AHEPA NSW INC prepared and submitted a tender to renovate and operate the Club, which would remain the property of Rockdale Council. At their 20 April 2016 Meeting, councillors voted to accept a tender from AHEPA NSW Incorporated for the site. Bexley Bowling and Community Club President Mary Cameron told the local newspaper, the *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader*, that the result was disappointing but not a surprise. «You have to throw your hat into the ring but we weren't

that surprised we weren't successful», Cameron was quoted as saying. «Our aim the whole way through was to keep it in the community so people can enjoy it. Hopefully with the change our community groups will still be able to use», the clubhouse and the greens.<sup>136</sup>



The Bexley Bowling and Recreation Club, as seen through its Edward Street entrance. PHOTO: Chris Lane. PHOTO: *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* 6 May 2016.<sup>137</sup>

The original re-development proposal submitted to Rockdale Council by AHEPA NSW INC included the refurbishment of the existing buildings, maintaining one bowling green, with on-site parking on former Green No. 2 and a new multi-purpose community centre on former Green No. 3. AHEPA NSW INC emphasised that it wanted «the community to know it's a public space and it will stay a community club», that the organisation had «decided to take out the pokies and just focus on the community. We want there to be something for everyone».<sup>138</sup>

In an echo of past events around the birth of the Bexley Bowling Club in 1948, the New South Wales Government announced a radical plan to forcibly merge a number of local councils across the state, including Rockdale with Botany Bay in December 2015.<sup>139</sup> Controversy and legal battles erupted, with Botany Bay Council at the forefront of opposition to the plan. Decisions on the re-development plans for the Bexley Bowling Club were therefore put on hold. At the end of August 2016, the Supreme Court of NSW threw out Botany Bay's legal case against the State Government. On Wednesday 7 September, councillors decided not to appeal the decision in the High Court and voted to end its lengthy legal battle – in addition to the fierce 'Hands Off Botany Bay' campaign. Just after 2pm on Friday 9 September, Local Government Minister Paul Toole proclaimed the new Bayside Council. Administrator Greg Wright and interim General Manager Meredith Wallace, then General Manager of Rockdale City Council, steered the new Bayside Council until elections in September 2017.<sup>140</sup> Neither the Administrator nor Council managers were prepared to approve major works without an elected Council in place. The result was a two year delay in the rejuvenation of the Bexley Bowling Club.



While the newborn Bayside Council was being formed, a revised proposal for the re-development of Bexley Bowling Club was put forward by AHEPA NSW INC that would also see an extension to the existing building for offices, seminar rooms and a cultural museum, with parking below the multi-purpose centre. The December 2016 Bayside Council meeting resolved to endorse the revised proposal as well work to amend the use from sportsground to sportsground and general community use. The revised proposal restricted the new buildings to the existing two-stories, placing additional parking «underground to make sure there is little disruption to neighbours».<sup>141</sup>



The Bexley Bowling Clubhouse, as it looked in 2017. Bowling Green No.1 in the foreground. In the background to the left of the Clubhouse is the Greenkeepers' Machine Room.

AHEPA NSW INC attempted to celebrate assuming responsibility of the Club with a Community Day event in February 2017. (Appendix 65) Neighbours and friends as well as AHEPA NSW INC members and associates were invited for a folkloric festival at the Club, featuring a four piece traditional band from the mainland Epiros region of north-west Hellas.<sup>142</sup> Unfortunately, the sun did not shine until the late afternoon and what was planned as a summer outdoors event was driven indoors and did not have the anticipated success.

In order to further secure its multi-million dollar investment in the Bexley Bowling Club, in January 2017, AHEPA NSW INC approached Bayside Council and the Minister for Local Government, The Hon. Gabrielle Upton MP, for an extended lease of 21 years. Bayside Council's Administrator advised that only the Minister could grant the extended lease. This was finally granted in March 2018. As illustrated in a number of reports included in the Appendices, the Australian Hellenic community media has maintained a strong interest in the Bexley Bowling Club as a centre of activity of the community.<sup>143</sup>

AHEPA NSW INC subsequently submitted a structural engineer's report stating the refurbishment and retention of the existing building was not viable. Instead, the organisation requested approval to replace the 66-year-old structure with a new Clubhouse. Bayside Council gave conditional approval for the knock down-rebuild, stipulated a further report be submitted



on costings and AHEPA NSW INC's financial capacity to deliver the proposed works. AHEPA NSW INC would also be required to lodge a development application within three months of the lease agreement being formalised.<sup>144</sup>

AHEPA NSW INC continued work on the Project – as much as circumstances permitted – and prepared a Development Application (DA). Under a \$7.43 million (DA lodged with Bayside Council in mid-2018, AHEPA NSW INC proposed works consisting of the demolition of the existing Clubhouse and construction of a new two-storey community club, retention of one bowling green and parking for 103 cars. The 7,231 square metre site would host a Clubhouse with a floor area of 1,446sqm and a landscaped area of 2,700 square metres. The ground-floor was proposed to have a large space for functions, entertainment, cultural and educational events. The first-floor was proposed to have a multi-purpose hall with the ability to be divided into three separate spaces as well as AHEPA NSW INC's administrative offices. The application outlined Stage 1, with Stage 2 proposed to be a multi-purpose hall over basement parking over Bowling Green No. 3, adjoining Oliver Street. According to the Statement of Environmental Effects: «The proposal will provide for a significantly improved registered club, recreational and community facility. ... The proposed development will also improve useability for users of the bowling green, members of AHEPA and the wider community».<sup>145</sup>



The proposed Clubhouse as seen from Bowling Green No. 1 along Laycock Street.



The proposed Clubhouse as seen from Laycock Street, Bexley North.

In accordance with NSW legislation, the application was sent to an independent town planner selected by Bayside Council for preliminary assessment. Predictably, the DA was met with both intense support and fierce opposition from local residents.<sup>146</sup> As demonstrated by submissions to Council as well as on the Planning Alerts portal<sup>147</sup>, local opposition was led by Ryszard and Ingrid Knopf, local residents and town planners. The independent town planner's preliminary assessment was not submitted until July 2019, thirteen months after she received the brief. An Amended Development Application for the Bexley Bowling Club site was prepared by AHEPA NSW INC and submitted to be Sydney Central Planning Panel in August 2019.<sup>148</sup> The Application was undergoing further revision in accordance with recommendations from independent town planners when it was withdrawn in October 2020.<sup>149</sup>

The covid-19 pandemic reached Australia in early-2020, triggering the first lockdowns in March that year. Over the next nearly two years, months of lockdowns and other restrictions inevitably led to further delays to the completion of the project. The epic of the reincarnation of the Bexley Bowling Club took another turn in September 2020. The result of five years of legal battles over a power struggle within AHEPA NSW INC was the organisation entering a period of voluntary administration. The AHEPA NSW INC Committee of Management considered that this was a necessary action to avoid the bankruptcy and complete disintegration of the organisation, a situation made possible by the accumulation of large debts owed to legal firms. This inevitably forced the withdrawal of the Amended Development Application then before the Sydney Central Planning Panel. AHEPA NSW INC emerged from voluntary administration in December 2020, having cleared all its debts through the forced sale of two properties it owned on Princes' Highway Rockdale. With the organisation returned to the control of the AHEPA NSW INC Committee of Management, their attention was returned to the Amended Development Application. Financial constrictions meant that the plans were scaled back, essentially a return to the original tender proposal of renovating and revitalising the Bexley Bowling Club as a community centre, without altering the footprint of the current premises.

Bayside Council and AHEPA NSW INC resumed negotiations over the Agreement for Licence and Lease, which concluded in March 2021. The Agreement was endorsed by a vote of Council in April, signed and executed in May.<sup>150</sup> While the landmark passed relatively

unnoticed by the local mainstream media, the Australian Hellenic media covered the signing of the lease with interest. *The Greek Herald's* George Tserdanis proclaimed that «The signatures have been placed for the establishment of AHEPA NSW INC at the Bexley Bowling Club», while his colleague Michael Mystakidis stated that «After the storm, clear skies and hard work».<sup>151</sup> The Melbourne-based *Neos Kosmos* national newspaper announced that «AHEPA NSW INC will relocate to new premises».<sup>152</sup> Owing to threats of legal action against Bayside Council by a small group of dissident members, Council requested a fresh vote of the members of AHEPA NSW INC regarding the Bexley Bowling Club project. Due to the prevailing public health orders, a physical meeting of the almost 500 financial members was not possible. Therefore, a postal ballot of the membership was conducted in September and October 2021. The Agreement for License and Lease was endorsed for a third time by a super-majority vote of the membership of AHEPA NSW INC, with almost 80 per cent voting in favour of the project.<sup>153</sup>

Having lost the postal ballot, the small group of dissident members launched another injunction in the Supreme Court of NSW, determined to terminate the Bexley Bowling Club project. The injunction application was dismissed – with costs to be paid by the plaintiffs – in November 2021. The same month, a separate lawsuit was launched by them, seeking that the Supreme Court of NSW invalidate the postal ballot and declare 80 per cent of the current financial membership to also be invalid. At time of writing, this suit is working its way through the legal system.

Apart from the opposition to the project by a small group of residents assisted by persons involved in the power struggle within AHEPA NSW INC, there was also fierce opposition from certain Bayside Councillors. Indeed, it is remarkable the project continues to move forward, a credit to the leadership team of AHEPA NSW INC and to the visionary Councillors (past and current) who see the local community's needs being served by a rejuvenated Bexley Bowling Club, operated by a local community organisation.

## **BRIGHT FUTURE?**

With its gaze fixed on the future, the leadership team of AHEPA NSW INC prepared and lodged a new Development Application in February 2022, one which envisages reviving the Bexley Bowling Club as a local hub, offering indoor and outdoor athletic and social facilities to the local community and to local schools (there are three primary and two secondary schools within walking distance of the Club). The completion of the remaining legal obligations on the part of AHEPA NSW INC regarding the project, the Officer Recommendation adopted by the Bayside Council City Works and Assets Committee at its meeting of 13 April 2022, and the subsequent resolution of Bayside Council endorsing the Officer Recommendation at its regular meeting of 27 April 2022.<sup>154</sup> The local and Australian Hellenic community media warmly received the votes by Bayside Councillors. *Neos Kosmos* (Melbourne) announced in its Hellenic-language issue that «AHEPA NSW INC: we are moving forward to creating a Centre for Hellenic Culture»,<sup>155</sup> while in its English-language issue two days later, «AHEPA NSW INC to take over Bexley Bowling and Community Club premises».<sup>156</sup>

Retaining its historic identity as a bowling club, the plan is for part of Bowling Green No. 3 (facing Oliver Street) to be restored as an active bowling green. Amongst the planned

community facilities are a resource centre (including an archive and reading room) as well as spaces for AHEPA NSW INC to conduct its broad range of educational, cultural and philanthropic activities.<sup>157</sup> In a nutshell, the plans are for Bexley Bowling Club to be revitalised as a local community club, a family-friendly, gambling-free space the local area currently lacks.

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Jack High Bowls «The History Of Lawn Bowls | A Helpful Guide» <https://www.jackhighbowls.com/help/history-of-lawn-bowls> Accessed Saturday 3 July 2021.
- <sup>2</sup> Bowls Australia «History of bowls in Australia» <https://www.bowls.com.au/about-ba/history-of-bowls-in-australia/> Accessed Saturday 3 July 2021.
- <sup>3</sup> «Bowls Australia» [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bowls\\_Australia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bowls_Australia) Accessed Saturday 3 July 2021.
- <sup>4</sup> «Parish Church of St. Mary The Virgin, Manor Road, Bexley, Kent.» <https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-parish-church-of-st-mary-the-virgin-manor-road-bexley-kent-132648213.html> Accessed Saturday 2 July 2022.
- <sup>5</sup> «Domesday: Britain's finest treasure» <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/domesday/> Accessed Saturday 2 July 2022.
- <sup>6</sup> «How The London Boroughs Got Their Names» <https://londonist.com/2013/07/how-the-london-boroughs-got-their-names> Accessed Saturday 2 July 2022.
- <sup>7</sup> «Bexley has a history already» *Times* (Rockdale) 20 March 1947. Advertisements and Clippings Album of the Bexley Municipal Council.
- <sup>8</sup> Frances Pollon *The Book of Sydney Suburbs* Australia: Angus & Robertson Publishers 1990, page 28.
- <sup>9</sup> «Alston Park» <https://catalogue.nla.gov.au/Record/4278227> Accessed Saturday 2 July 2022.
- <sup>10</sup> William Henry Wells *A map of the County of Cumberland in the Colony of New South Wales* (William Baker, 1840) <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-229932091/view> Accessed Saturday 2 July 2022.
- <sup>11</sup> Report of the Health and Building Inspector, Municipality of Bexley, dated 22 February 1946.
- <sup>12</sup> Ron Rathbone *Cameos of Bexley*, page 87.
- <sup>13</sup> Murray Trembath «Knock down-rebuild approved for former Bexley Bowling and Recreation Club» *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* 1 October 2018 <https://www.theleader.com.au/story/5677779/new-plans-for-frog-hollow/#slide=4> Accessed Saturday 9 July 2022.
- <sup>14</sup> «Confidential» Mayoral Minute, 6 May 1946.
- <sup>15</sup> Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Bexley Municipal Council, 7 May 1946.
- <sup>16</sup> Minutes of the Special Meeting of Bexley Municipal Council, 21 May 1946.
- <sup>17</sup> Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Bexley Municipal Council, 4 June 1946.
- <sup>18</sup> Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Bexley Municipal Council, 30 July 1946.
- <sup>19</sup> Financial Statement of 1946 Operations, Bexley Municipal Council, 18 October 1946.
- <sup>20</sup> «Bowling Green» *Information and a review of Activities of Bexley Municipal Council 1945-1947*, page 6.
- <sup>21</sup> Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Bexley Municipal Council, 8 April 1947.
- <sup>22</sup> Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Bexley Municipal Council, 20 May 1947.
- <sup>23</sup> Mayor's Report to Bexley Municipal Council, 31 March 1947.
- <sup>24</sup> Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Bexley Municipal Council, 26 May 1947.
- <sup>25</sup> «Proposed new Bowling Club. Bexley Council's Project.» *Propeller* (Hurstville NSW) Thursday 19 June 1947, page 2.
- <sup>26</sup> Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Bexley Municipal Council, 26 August 1947.
- <sup>27</sup> *St George Call* (Kogarah, NSW) Friday 13 June 1947, page 5. Also published in *Propeller* (Hurstville, NSW) Thursday 19 June 1947, page 4 and Thursday 26 June 1947, page 4.
- <sup>28</sup> Town Clerk's Report of Public Meeting for the Formation of Bowling Club, 4 July 1947.
- <sup>29</sup> *St George Call* (Kogarah, NSW) 25 July 1947 page 1. Advertisements and Clippings Album of Bexley Municipal Council.
- <sup>30</sup> *Times* (Rockdale, NSW) 20 May 1948. Advertisements and Clippings Album of Bexley Municipal Council.
- <sup>31</sup> Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Bexley Municipal Council, 16 December 1947.
- <sup>32</sup> «Bexley Aldermen Entertain» *Propeller* (Hurstville, NSW) Thursday 25 December 1947 Page 2.
- <sup>33</sup> «Proposed provision of Ladies' Bowling Green» 18 May 1948.
- <sup>34</sup> Town Clerk's Report to Rockdale Council, 3 June 1949.
- <sup>35</sup> Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee of the Bexley Bowling and Recreation Club, 9 July 1948, page 1.
- <sup>36</sup> Handwritten note by J.B. Thompson in his copy of the 23rd Annual Report of the Bexley Bowling and Recreation Club Limited, presented at the General Meeting on Friday 17 September 1971.



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- <sup>37</sup> «Bexley Bowling and Recreation Club» *St George Call* (Kogarah NSW) 27 May 1949, page 1.
- <sup>38</sup> Town Clerk's Report to Rockdale Council, 3 June 1949.
- <sup>39</sup> Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Rockdale Municipal Council, 18 August 1949.
- <sup>40</sup> Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Rockdale Municipal Council, 29 September 1949.
- <sup>41</sup> *News* 19 August 1948. Advertisements and Clippings Album of Bexley Municipal Council.
- <sup>42</sup> «Bexley Council's Finale - Re-Union Social» *Propeller* (Hurstville NSW) Thursday 23 December 1948, page 1; «Bexley Council's Finale - Re-Union Social.»; «Bexley Get-together – Retiring Council» *St George Call* (Kogarah, NSW) Friday 24 December 1948, page 1.
- <sup>43</sup> Ron Rathbone *Cameos of Bexley*, page 87.
- <sup>44</sup> Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Bexley Municipal Council, 1 June 1948.
- <sup>45</sup> Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Bexley Municipal Council, 3 August 1948.
- <sup>46</sup> «Notice of Council for laborers (three) for construction of bowling greens» 30 August 1948. *Kingsgrove Advertiser* 2 September 1948 and *St George Call* 3 September 1948, page 10. Advertisements and Clippings Album of Bexley Municipal Council.
- <sup>47</sup> NSW Department of Building Materials *Consent to Commence Building Operations*, 27 August 1948. Bayside Library Local History Collections.
- <sup>48</sup> Municipal Engineer's Report to Bexley Municipal, date 11 October 1948.
- <sup>49</sup> Letter from Bexley Council Town Clerk to the Delegate of the Minister, Department of Building Material, dated 5 November 1948. Bayside Library Local History Collections.
- <sup>50</sup> «In Possession of First Ward (Bexley)» *Statement of Fixed Assets Possessed by the Council*, 15 December 1948.
- <sup>51</sup> «1949 estimates». Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Rockdale Municipal Council, 29 December 1948.
- <sup>52</sup> «Bexley Bowling and Recreation Club» *St George Call* Friday 10 December 1948, page 12.
- <sup>53</sup> Letter from the Rockdale Town Clerk to Council's Chief Building Inspector, dated 10 January 1949. Bayside Library Local History Collections.
- <sup>54</sup> «Chief Building Inspector's Report», Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Bexley Municipal Council, 20 January 1949.
- <sup>55</sup> *St George Call* (Kogarah, NSW) 10 December 1948, page 12. Also reported in *Propeller* 30 December 1948, page 5.
- <sup>56</sup> «Chief Building Inspector's Report», Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Bexley Municipal Council, 20 January 1949.
- <sup>57</sup> Rockdale Municipal Council Town Clerk's Report, 25 March 1949. Bayside Library Local History Collections.
- <sup>58</sup> Town Clerk's Report and other documents included in the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Bexley Municipal Council, 9 June 1949.
- <sup>59</sup> Municipality of Bexley *Review of Activities 1945-1948 inclusive*
- <sup>60</sup> Chief Engineer's Report and other documents included in the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Bexley Municipal Council, 9 June 1949.
- <sup>61</sup> Rockdale Municipal Council Town Clerk's Report, 25 March 1949, in Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Rockdale Council, 31 March 1949.
- <sup>62</sup> Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Rockdale Council, 23 June 1949.
- <sup>63</sup> Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Rockdale Council, 7 July 1949.
- <sup>64</sup> Town Clerk's Report in Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Rockdale Council, 21 July 1949.
- <sup>65</sup> Minutes of the Meeting of the Rockdale Council Parks and Recreation Committee, 7 March 1950.
- <sup>66</sup> Letter from the Rockdale Town Clerk to builder Jim Cobban, dated 15 June 1949. Bayside Library Local History Collections.
- <sup>67</sup> Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Rockdale Council, 14 September 1950.
- <sup>68</sup> Minutes of the Meeting of the Rockdale Council Finance Committee, 28 September 1950.
- <sup>69</sup> Minutes of the Meeting of the Rockdale Council Finance Committee, 30 August 1951.
- <sup>70</sup> Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Rockdale Municipal Council, 12 October 1950.
- <sup>71</sup> «Bexley Bowling Club. Handing over of Greens.» *Propeller* Thursday 2 November 1950, page 1
- <sup>72</sup> *op cit.*
- <sup>73</sup> Kahlia Beichert «Bexley Bowling and Recreation Club plans released» *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* 12 January 2017 <https://www.theleader.com.au/story/4385223/photos-bexley-bowling-and-recreation-club-plans-released/#slide=0> Accessed Sunday 4 July 2021.
- <sup>74</sup> «Council's Achievements Win Local Government Award» *Times* 21 June 1951. Also reported in *News* 21 June 1951. Advertisements and Clippings Album of Rockdale Municipal Council.
- <sup>75</sup> *Propeller* 22 April 1954 page 2. Advertisements and Clippings Album of Rockdale Municipal Council.
- <sup>76</sup> «Parking Problems – Bexley Bowling Club» *Propeller* 20 May 1954 page 1. Advertisements and Clippings Album of Rockdale Municipal Council.

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- <sup>77</sup> Fifth Annual Report 1952-53, presented to the Annual General Meeting of 1953.
- <sup>78</sup> Seventh Annual Report 1954-1955, presented to the Annual General Meeting of Friday 26 August 1955.
- <sup>79</sup> Eighth Annual Report 1955-1956, presented to the Annual General Meeting of Friday 24 August 1956.
- <sup>80</sup> Tenth Annual Report 1958-1959, presented to the Annual General Meeting of Friday 18 September 1959.
- <sup>81</sup> Fifteenth Annual Report 1962-1963, presented to the Annual General Meeting of Friday 20 September 1963.
- <sup>82</sup> Sixteenth Annual Report 1963-1964, presented to the Annual General Meeting of Friday 25 September 1964.
- <sup>83</sup> Seventeenth Annual Report 1964-1965, presented to the Annual General Meeting of Friday 24 September 1965.
- <sup>84</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>85</sup> Eighteenth Annual Report 1965-1966, presented to the Annual General Meeting of September 1966.
- <sup>86</sup> Twentieth Annual Report, presented to the Annual General Meeting of Friday 13 September 1968.
- <sup>87</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>88</sup> Twenty-first Annual Report, presented to the Annual General Meeting of Friday 19 September 1969.
- <sup>89</sup> Twenty-second Annual Report presented to the Annual General Meeting of Friday 18 September 1970.
- <sup>90</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>91</sup> Thirtieth Annual Report presented to the Annual General Meeting of Wednesday 13 September 1978.
- <sup>92</sup> Twenty-third Annual Report presented to the Annual General Meeting of Friday 17 September 1971.
- <sup>93</sup> Twenty-seventh Annual Report presented to the Annual General Meeting of Wednesday 24 September 1975.
- <sup>94</sup> Thirty-third Annual Report presented to the Annual General Meeting of Wednesday 23 September 1981.
- <sup>95</sup> Thirty-fourth Annual Report presented to the Annual General Meeting of Sunday 19 September 1982.
- <sup>96</sup> Twenty-seventh Annual Report presented to the Annual General Meeting of Wednesday 24 September 1975.
- <sup>97</sup> Thirty-fourth Annual Report presented to the Annual General Meeting of Sunday 19 September 1982.
- <sup>98</sup> According to the 1952 Annual Report,
- <sup>99</sup> Notice of the Annual General Meeting of Friday 28 August 1953.
- <sup>100</sup> Notice of the Annual General Meeting of Friday 24 August 1956.
- <sup>101</sup> Notice of the Annual General Meeting of Friday 15 September 1961.
- <sup>102</sup> Notice of the Annual General Meeting of Friday 7 September 1962.
- <sup>103</sup> «What is Pennant?» Hampton Bowls Club <https://www.hamptonbowlsclub.com.au/what-is-this-pennant-thing/> Accessed Saturday 3 July 2021.
- <sup>104</sup> Presented to the Annual General Meeting on Friday 28 August 1953.
- <sup>105</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>106</sup> «Bowls» *The Observer* (Cronulla, NSW) Thursday 23 September 1954, page 5.
- <sup>107</sup> Presented to the Annual General Meeting on Friday 18 September 1959.
- <sup>108</sup> «Bowls Report» presented by Bowls Secretary J.F. Cumberland to the Annual General Meeting
- <sup>109</sup> President's Message presented to the Annual General Meeting on Friday 15 September 1961.
- <sup>110</sup> President's Message presented to the Annual General Meeting on Friday 25 September 1964.
- <sup>111</sup> President's Message presented to the Annual General Meeting on Friday 24 September 1965.
- <sup>112</sup> Alan Clarkson «Australia takes two gold medals in World Bowls Championship» *Sydney Morning Herald* 17 October 1966, page 24.
- <sup>113</sup> British Movietone «1ST World Bowls Championships – Sound» <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mFEtye6184Y> Accessed Sunday 10 July 2022.
- <sup>114</sup> «Bowls for beginners» *The Beverley Times* (WA) Friday 17 January 1969, page 8.
- <sup>115</sup> «Bexley bowlers vote» *Nota* (Hawks Nest and Tea Gardens NSW) 1 July 1987, page 4.
- <sup>116</sup> Presented to the Annual General Meeting on 1971.
- <sup>117</sup> Presented to the Annual General Meeting on 1973.
- <sup>118</sup> President's Report presented to the Annual General Meeting on Sunday 28 August 1988.
- <sup>119</sup> «Merrylands Womens' Bowling Club» *The Broadcaster* (Fairfield NSW) Wed. 24 August 1955, page 7.
- <sup>120</sup> Louella McCarthy «Wolinski, Naomi (1881–1969)» *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/wolinski-naomi-12060/text21633> , published first in hardcopy 2002, accessed online 14 July 2022.
- <sup>121</sup> Andrew Taylor «The death of the bowlo: another Sydney club closes as others struggle» *Sydney Morning Herald* 3 February 2019, <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/the-death-of-the-bowlo-another-sydney-club-closes-as-others-struggle-20190201-p50v4r.html> Accessed Sunday 11 July 2021.
- <sup>122</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>123</sup> Chairman's Report presented to the Annual General Meeting on Sunday 18 September 1994.
- <sup>124</sup> «Councillor quits and rolls over» *Sydney Morning Herald* 8 May 2002. <https://smh.com.au/national/councillor-quits-and-rolls-over-20020508-gdf9fm.html> Accessed Sunday 11 July 2021.
- <sup>125</sup> Marianna Papadakis «Club in fight for survival» *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* 27 December 2007, pages 1 and .

- <sup>126</sup> Letter: «What about us?» *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* 3 January 2008
- <sup>127</sup> Letter: «Site an old garbage dump» *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* 7 February 2008
- <sup>128</sup> «» *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* 1 February 2011, page 2.
- <sup>129</sup> Secretary's Report in the 62nd Annual Report presented to the Annual General Meeting on Sunday 12 September 2010.
- <sup>130</sup> *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* 10 January 2011.
- <sup>131</sup> «Police Beat – Robbery charges» *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* 2 February 2011, page 4.
- <sup>132</sup> Murray Trembath «Repairs, improvements thanks to \$1.2m grants» *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* 19 April 2012, page 12.
- <sup>133</sup> «Origins of Petanque» *Petanque Australia* <https://www.petanqueaustralia.org.au/about/history-of-petanque/> Accessed Friday 15 July 2022.
- <sup>134</sup> Brad Forrest «New world vibes for an old sport» *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* 18 April 2014, page 1. Also [https://www.theleader.com.au/story/2224249/new-world-vibes-for-old-sport-boule-international-triples-at-bexley-easter-weekend/?ptid=%7Bkpx%7DAAAQqjbZ9\\_zcQoKbHJBNG5aZFhwYRIQbDVmY3lybTNhNm1pcmhoaxoMRVhGNk9LUkFPQTZOiUxODBrjcwMGJlTAwMDAzMGY4YTIzajNldmo0aWFxcGhrMWVnKhdzaG93T2ZmZXJDVIJLNzdWV042OEslNjABOGxPVDcwRVRPVEFROE9SEnYtcgDwFDQxMm83OW1hOV0JMS40My42OS40YgNkd2NooM6wlgZwBHgM](https://www.theleader.com.au/story/2224249/new-world-vibes-for-old-sport-boule-international-triples-at-bexley-easter-weekend/?ptid=%7Bkpx%7DAAAQqjbZ9_zcQoKbHJBNG5aZFhwYRIQbDVmY3lybTNhNm1pcmhoaxoMRVhGNk9LUkFPQTZOiUxODBrjcwMGJlTAwMDAzMGY4YTIzajNldmo0aWFxcGhrMWVnKhdzaG93T2ZmZXJDVIJLNzdWV042OEslNjABOGxPVDcwRVRPVEFROE9SEnYtcgDwFDQxMm83OW1hOV0JMS40My42OS40YgNkd2NooM6wlgZwBHgM) Accessed Sunday 10 July 2022.
- <sup>135</sup> «AHEPA» *To Ethnic Vema* [National Tribune] (Arncliffe, NSW) Wednesday 29 August 1934, page 5.
- <sup>136</sup> Kahlia Beichert «Last drinks at Bexley Bowling and Recreation Club» *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* 6 May 2016 <https://www.theleader.com.au/story/3884339/last-drinks-at-bexley-bowling-and-recreation-club/> Accessed Sunday 4 July 2021.
- <sup>137</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>138</sup> Kahlia Beichert «St George PCYC left without a home» *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* 20 May 2016.
- <sup>139</sup> «NSW councils to merge under State Government plan for forced amalgamations; 2016 elections delayed» ABC Friday 18 December 2015 <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-12-18/sydney-councils-to-be-forced-to-merge-by-nsw-government/7039326> Accessed Sunday 4 July 2021.
- <sup>140</sup> Rebecca Franks «Botany Bay Council and Rockdale are merged together, Local Government Minister announces» *Southern Courier* 9 September 2016 <https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/newslocal/southern-courier/botany-bay-council-and-rockdale-are-merged-together-local-government-minister-announces/news-story/898a975e86fa09cdcc473a09597b73c0>
- <sup>141</sup> Kahlia Beichert «Bexley Bowling and Recreation Club plans released» *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* 12 January 2017 <https://www.theleader.com.au/story/4385223/photos-bexley-bowling-and-recreation-club-plans-released/#slide=0> Accessed Sunday 4 July 2021.
- <sup>142</sup> «Community Day» *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* 27 February 2017.
- <sup>143</sup> Yiannis Dramitinos «Η ΑΧΕΠΑ έριξε τα θεμέλια για το μέλλον» (AHEPA has laid the foundations for the future) *O Kosmos* Friday 23 March 2018, pages 1 and 22-23.
- <sup>144</sup> Murray Trembath «Knock down-rebuild approved for former Bexley Bowling and Recreation Club» *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* 1 October 2018 <https://www.theleader.com.au/story/5677779/new-plans-for-frog-hollow/#slide=4> Accessed Sunday 10 July 2022.
- <sup>145</sup> Jim Gainsford «\$7.4 million development for Bexley Bowling Club site» *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* 20 August 2019 <https://www.theleader.com.au/story/6338881/74-million-development-for-bexley-bowling-club-site/#slide=2> Accessed Sunday 4 July 2021. Also Jim Gainsford «\$7.4 million development for Bexley Bowling Club site» *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* 28 August 2019 page 7. Also Murray Trembath «Knock down-rebuild approved for former Bexley Bowling and Recreation Club» *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* 1 October 2018.
- <sup>146</sup> «Letters: Plan for bowling club site mostly welcomed» *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* 4 September 2019; «YOUR SAY: An accident waiting to happen» *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* 6 June 2020. <https://www.theleader.com.au/story/6781442/facts-misrepresented-in-carss-pool-debate/> Accessed Sunday 10 July 2022.
- <sup>147</sup> Planning Alerts «72 Laycock Street, Bexley North NSW 2207» <https://www.planningalerts.org.au/applications/1381459> Accessed Sunday 11 July 2021.
- <sup>148</sup> Jim Gainsford «\$7.4 million development for Bexley Bowling Club site» *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* 26 August 2019 <https://www.theleader.com.au/story/6338881/74-million-development-for-bexley-bowling-club-site/#slide=2> Accessed Sunday 4 July 2021. Also Jim Gainsford «\$7.4 million development for Bexley Bowling Club site» *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* 28 August 2019, page 7.
- <sup>149</sup> Bayside Council 'DA-2019/286' <http://rccweb.rockdale.nsw.gov.au/EPlanning/Pages/XC.Track/SearchApplication.aspx?id=336008> Accessed Sunday 11 July 2021.



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- <sup>151</sup> George Tserdanis «The signatures have been placed for the establishment of AHEPA NSW INC at the Bexley Bowling Club» *The Greek Herald* 11 May 2021, page 5; Michael Mystakidis «After the storm, clear skies and hard work» *The Greek Herald* (Sydney) 12 May 2021, page 2.
- <sup>152</sup> «AHEPA NSW INC will relocate to new premises» *Neos Kosmos* (Melbourne) 10 May 2021, page 4.
- <sup>153</sup> «Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Bayside Council, Wednesday 3 November 2021»
- <sup>154</sup> «Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Bayside Council on Wednesday 27 April 2022» pages 45-46 [https://infoweb.bayside.nsw.gov.au/Open/2022/04/CO\\_27042022\\_MIN\\_3954.PDF](https://infoweb.bayside.nsw.gov.au/Open/2022/04/CO_27042022_MIN_3954.PDF) Accessed 15 July 2022.
- <sup>155</sup> «AHEPA NSW INC: we are moving forward to creating a Centre for Hellenic Culture» *Neos Kosmos* (Melbourne) 7 April 2022, page 8.
- <sup>156</sup> «AHEPA NSW INC to take over Bexley Bowling and Community Club premises» *Neos Kosmos* English Edition 9 April 2022, page 6.
- <sup>157</sup> «Former Bexley Bowling Club refurbishment one step closer» *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* 29 April 2022. <https://www.theleader.com.au/story/7718500/former-bexley-bowling-club-refurbishment-one-step-closer/?cs=1507> Accessed 30 April 2022.