

History of Trentham Bowling Club

G Percy Trentham Limited was launched in 1907 by George Percy Trentham (1881-1941). The company was a building and civil engineering contractor and grew until it spread right across the United Kingdom, with sites at Andover, Cardiff, Stoke-on-Trent, Rainham and Bathgate in Scotland, as well as, later, Purley on Thames. The company built many things, but specialised in the construction of roads, airport runways and hangers and was involved in the development of many UK airports, both civil and military, plus many WW2 defences and fortifications. The great hangar constructed by the company, at Brize Norton in Oxfordshire was, at the time, the largest of its kind in the world. At its peak Trentham had several thousand employees, though only a small number were based in Purley.

George Donald Trentham (1903-1983), the son and successor to G Percy, was a keen bowler and in 1957 founded a bowling green in the grounds of the Head Office at Purley-on-Thames, this was the beginnings of Trentham Bowling Club. Donald was the first President of the club from its founding until 1983. Initially the green was only used by management and for corporate entertainment for guests. It eventually became available for the benefit of all male employees of Trentham, but they were not allowed to play until after 5pm!



Although it is suspected that the lawns had been there previously, the development of the Bowling Club began with the provision of just 2 rinks (now the upper green - and used these days mostly as a practice lawn) followed soon after by the addition of 2 more rinks where the existing green is now situated, this

was alongside what was then the company's vegetable garden. A further 4 rinks were added in 1959. The Club was affiliated to the Royal County of Berkshire Bowling Association in 1961.

In 1974, the original wooden pavilion was moved a short distance and became 'The Barn' at Beechcroft next door and a new club pavilion was constructed, this timber clubhouse was fabricated at the company's Cardiff joinery works, and is still there, although it was clad over following the pavilion refurbishment in 1989. The original outside balcony has been incorporated inside the building; this spacious clubhouse has an

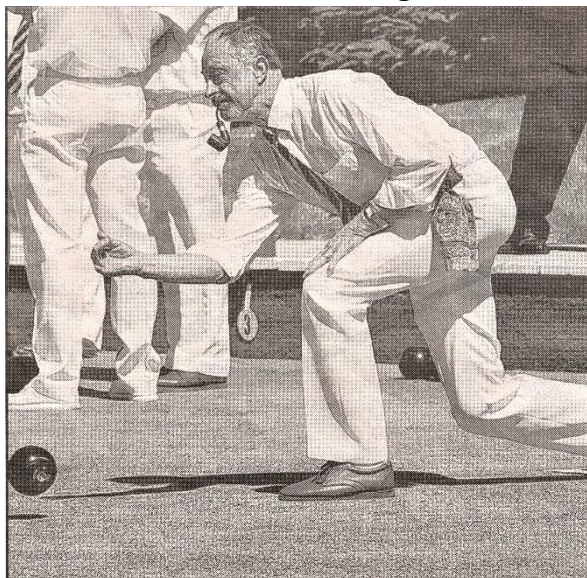


elevated position overlooking the six-rink green and affords a lovely outlook to members and players alike, from the comfort of the main lounge.

In the 1980s the club was opened to non-Trentham employees and the membership increased to about 120, although only men were allowed to become full members.

Donald was superseded as President by P.J. Trentham from 1983 until 1989.

By 1989, Trentham Ltd.'s fortunes had declined, and it was decided to sell the entire Trentham Purley site to Bryant Construction Ltd. for housing development. This should have meant the end of the Bowling Club but fortunately it was decided that the Bowling Club should be retained for the benefit of the local community, this was specified in the selling contract. In order to achieve this, the Bowling Club was sold to Purley Parish Council for a nominal



STRAIGHT DOWN THE LINE – Trentham's Brian Heath in action during his club's 40th anniversary match.

£1 on the condition that it was leased to the Trustees of the club for 40 years from 1993. The agreement also provided a capital sum given to the Parish Council to be invested so that the interest earned could be granted towards the upkeep of the bowling green. The annual rent was initially agreed as 'One bottle of Beaujolais Nouveau per annum'. This is obviously no longer appropriate and has been replaced by a standard peppercorn

rent! Trentham won two County Competitions, both in 1993.

The above arrangement worked well for over a decade but more recently the increased costs of maintaining the green to the required standard, together with the fall in interest rates has resulted in a decrease of the proportion contributed by the Parish Council. An appeal to the Council in September 2008 has now resulted in a new initiative between the Parish Council and the Trustees of the club

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Trentham go so close in anniversary match

BY STEVE WILLIAMS

TRENTHAM battled all the way in their 106-103 defeat by EBA President Dennis Grint's side, losing four rinks on the final ends.

The special match marked the 40th anniversary of the club's affiliation to the English Bowls Association.

It involved players from all over the country, representing 17 counties, including Grint who lives in Norfolk.

Trentham president Colin Howell said: "It was a superb afternoon with wonderful weather. As well as having the President we had Wayne Manley, his senior vice-president, and Albert Hockley, his junior vice-president, playing."

Trentham had two winning rinks. Ray Kirby skipped Mike

Collins, club captain Norman Clubleby and Terry West to a 19-10 win while Gof Hayden led his rink of Brian Jackson, Keith Hogburn and Les Norris to a 18-14 victory.

Trentham now turn their attention to the start of the Kennet League next Tuesday when their newly-promoted Division 1 West A team take on Newbury at home.

TRENTHAM (rinks) v **EBA** (skips): S Darling, D Pearce, D Childs, B Lambert 17, W Manley 20, N Clark, B Heath, G Simmonds, C Haslam 12, R Sutton 21. Whiteley, B Strong, T Johnson, C Howell 15, V Tabiner 17, T West, N Clubleby, M Collins, R Kirby 19, A Hockley 10, L Norris, K Hogburn, B Jackson, G Hayden 18 R Kirkpatrick 14, J Dearling, P Chapman, J Clayton, M Vickers 22 G Roper 24.

to encourage wider participation in the enjoyment of the club by local people. Purley residents are now able to have FREE use of the upper green, equipment and coaching at certain times.

Trentham Bowling Club has continued to develop and improve. We have added disabled toilet facilities, a new kitchen and revised layout of men's and ladies changing rooms. The club has also registered as a Community Amateur Sports Club and revised its rules to encourage membership. Our more skilful members continue to represent the club at County level.

The new millennium brought mixed membership to the Club, and from once struggling to field twelve players, we now regularly play 6 mixed rinks as well as fielding Kennet League, Kennet LV (over 55) and Ladies Thames Valley League teams.

Our hope for the future is that we can promote greater participation in the sport of amateur lawn bowls by the residents of Purley on Thames and the surrounding area. Everyone is welcome to give it a trial.