

**WHITEFIELD BOWLING AND RECREATION CLUB  
(CAMBUSLANG AND DISTRICT EX SERVICE MENS CLUB)**

**A BRIEF HISTORY**

**WHITEFIELD PARK PRIOR TO BOWLING**

The ownership of the Club land can be traced to the Graham Barns-Graham family in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Upon the death of Allan Graham Barns-Graham the land was transferred from his estate to the trustees of Cambuslang and District Ex Service Men's Club in 1927. (listed in register of Sasines – copy enclosed)

**5000 CROWD AT WHITEFIELD**

In 1874 the land, including the current bowling green area was laid out as a football ground, called **Whitefield Park**. This was the home of **Cambuslang Football Club**, a founding member of the Scottish Football League, from 1874 until 1897. (see separate section). **The biggest recorded crowd here was 5000 against Abercorn in the Scottish Cup semi-final of 1887-1888, which saw Cambuslang go through to the Cup Final. Unfortunately Cambuslang lost to Renton, 6 -1 in the final.**

**CAMBUSLANG AND DISTRICT EX SERVICE MEN'S CLUB**  
(From old Cambuslang Advertiser newspapers)

On Wednesday **5 May 1920** a meeting was held in Cambuslang Institute with a view to establishing an Ex Service Men's Club. **Mr GREGOR HARKNESS, who presided went on to explain the object of the fund which was founded by General Byng was aimed at memorials in the shape of clubs or some such institutions for the benefit of all ex service men. The chairman and Messrs' Bryson, Eadie and Sim were elected as a provisional committee of unattached ex service men.**

The next meeting on Thursday **24 JUNE 1920**, held in the institute unanimously agreed to **form a social club in accordance with the rules laid down in the United Services Fund.**

In terms of recreation the local paper highlights that **all the local Bowling greens of the day were full** and so there was a need for further recreation facilities.

By January 1922 firm plans were in place for a recreation ground for use of Cambuslang and District Ex Service men. The stated ambition of the Club was :-

**“TO PROVIDE HEALTHY OUTDOOR RECREATION FOR THE EX SERVICE MEN OF CAMBUSLANG AND TO ERECT A CLUB HOUSE WHERE THEY COULD HAVE INDOOR RECREATION UNDER THE VERY BEST CONDITIONS”.**

### **LAYING OF THE GREENS**

The initial works to lay the greens were carried out by **unemployed Ex Service Men of the area**. On Wednesday **10 May 1922** the **opening ceremony of the putting greens**, performed by Mr Andrew Clark , J.P., The Cairns, took place, 2 years after proposals were first proposed. (Cambuslang Advertiser 13 May 1922).

**The Bowling green was also laid during 1922 but was not used that year.**

The **OPENING CEREMONY OF THE BOWLING GREEN** took place on **Wednesday 25 April 1923** at 7 o'clock in the Ex Service Men's Clubhouse. Had the weather been favourable the ceremony would have taken place in the open but as the rain was falling heavily the management decided to go indoors. There was a good attendance of ladies and gentlemen, presided over by Mr Gregor Harkness, who was accompanied on the platform by several of his colleagues from the Club. Mr Harkness called on Andrew Clark, J.P., The Cairns, to address the gathering.

A special mention should be made at this point to the contribution made at the start of the Club by the first President, from 1920 until 1925, Mr Gregor Harkness.

Mr Harkness was born in Oban about 1877. He was a shoe merchant who, at the time of the Club starting had a shop on Main Street, Cambuslang. Further details, including copies of his World War One Service Record are included in the 'More Detailed Section' of this compilation. He died in Glasgow in 1954.

### **THE SECOND WORLD WAR**

During World War 2 an anti-aircraft **Barrage Balloon** site was located within the Club Grounds. This was one of a number of sites in the local area which were intended to protect the local heavy industry (Steel works, shipbuilding etc.). The Barrage Balloons were operated by members of the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (W.A.A.F).

### **POST WAR DEVELOPMENTS**

The Club operated a Clubhouse situated just off Croft Road and a Bowl House adjacent to the green.

At the Annual General Meeting of the Club on **13 March 1968** it was decided to allow Sunday Bowling for the first time.(minutes)

## **THE WHITEFIELD BOWLING AND RECREATION CLUB**

### **CHANGE OF NAME WITH EFFECT FROM 29 AUGUST 1968**

**The minutes of the Club record that a Special General Meeting was called on 29 August 1968 to consider a proposal to change the club name from Cambuslang and District Ex Service Men's Club to The Whitefield Bowling and Recreation Club.**

The meeting was attended by 23 members, President John Welsh was in Chair assisted by Mr William Baillie, Hon Secretary.

The President advised those present that it was to facilitate them receiving grant under the Physical Training and Recreation Act 1937. Attendees included Mr Gregor McKenzie, MP. The name change had been requested by the Scottish Education Department as the '**Ex Service Men's Club**' implied an exclusive membership to ex service personnel, despite the constitution showing **this only applied for the first 3 years of the Clubs existence.**

No grants were payable under the Act to ex service organisations and **the Committee suggested "The Whitefield Bowling and Recreation Club"**. The word 'Recreation' was included at the request of the Scottish Education Department and provided a wider scope for future development. Gregor McKenzie gave the official reasons for the 'recreation' requirement.

**An alternative proposal of "Croft Bowling and Recreation Club"** was proposed and the committee recommendation was the amendment. The vote was 11 to 10 for **"Whitefield Bowling and Recreation Club"**.

### **BAR FACILITIES**

An extension to the club was built in 1970 and the club was registered to sell alcohol. The bar opened on 7 November 1970. It made the tidy profit of £253, 9 shillings and 3 pennies in the three months to the end of January 1971.

These buildings remained as the main premises for the club and for social events. In addition there was a Bowls house adjacent to the green to facilitate bowlers. The last bowl house was opened in 1976 by the late Gregor MacKenzie, M.P. The president in that year was the bar steward, Mr Charlie Gray and the cost of building the facility was £15 000. A past member (Mr George McGowan) gave the club an interest free loan to allow the work to be carried out.

The late 1970's and early 1980's saw the clubs finances boosted by the bar profits. At this time only 'Registered Clubs' such as ours were opened from all day on Sundays. Pubs had to close from 2.30pm until 6.30pm and many customers made their way to Club's for a further drink.

Equal membership was granted to Lady members in 1996.

## **CURRENT CLUBHOUSE**

In 2005 the Club made an agreement with builders , Springfield Homes of Braidwood, to sell them a plot of unused land on the site which had been acquired from Barns-Graham. As part of this agreement the builders built our new clubhouse which now stands adjacent to the green on the site of previous Bowls houses.

Gerry Boyd

Club Treasurer April 2014