

SOUTHWOODS Tennis Club
1946 - 1992

I am not quite sure but I think the Bowling Green was seeded down in 1946 but I do know the first game was played on it in 1948 and is recorded in the minute book. The two men who thought of the idea of turning the existing tennis courts into a Green were Ted Walpole the village Postman and Norman Hilsdon a retired Sergeant Major who lived in a burgabar on Thorpe Market Road. A meeting was called and ~~it was~~ proposed to ask Mr Peter Tyler if he would be prepared to Bulldoze the site level for them, this he did voluntarily, this however did not prove to be so successful as anticipated, in leveling the site the top soil was pushed off and the seed was sown on rather a poor quality subsoil, this made matters worse shortly after sowing the seed there was a terrific thunder storm and a lot of seed was washed off, this was very evident when the seed started to germinate. This surely must have ~~the~~ ~~disheartened~~ the two persons as they abandoned the scheme. It was in the summer of 1948 when I went to inspect the site with two other men George Sandell and Bill Lubbock and thought there was hope and decided we would have a go, the grass in places was three high and in other places there was none, we cut the tall grass with sick tools and bonused an old lawn mower and eventually got it ~~stage~~ ~~stage~~ ship shape, a Club was formed Reg Dunny a retired W.O. from the Airforce a well known car tune in the village took the Secretary job, Fred was elected Grandson Reg was also Treasurer for a while

(3)

until we got going on the Bob Barnes
incl. over that post, Subscriptions were
five shillings old money that time of day
and further income was raised selling
Football Sweepstake cards, The side was
very open to all who cared to wonder
on and so it was decided to fence it
with Picket, this was quite a task, although
the side had been levelled, mounds of earth
had to also be levelled before planting could
commence, This proved to be a very fine
investment and a hedge some six feet
high and a yard thick can be seen
to-day, the bottom corner near the
footpath I used as an allotment and
it was not unusual to see players go home
with cabbages etc after a game, this went
on for a few years until one day
Lennie Durrant who worked for the
Forestry Commission brought a few saplings
he called rejects and asked me if
I would like to plant them in that
corner, again the evidence is there to
show what a good idea it was.
Our first "Pavillion" was a wooden frame
covered with corrugated iron sheets and can
be seen now in a very poor condition
at the end of our toilet block which
I will come to presently, Harry planted
the Picket Hedges, I thought to enhance
the look of ~~the~~ some landscaping was
needed and so pathways were formed
and walls were erected with bits and
pieces, our main source of supply was
an old animal which was at the bottom
of the recreation ground which the Park
wanted demolished, Reg Dunning also had
some defect Pigs Pens he wanted out
of the way and so we had them and
so the walls were erected, and gardens

Forward, those members ⁽³⁾ who have been
with us you may see what a delight
they been. The Club I forgot to mention
was all male and I didn't get going
until the women were allowed to join
this transformed the Club and really
took off from there, it wasn't unusual
to have 40 members plus in the sex
Sunday Drives, So much progress was made
it was decided to enter one of the leagues
and the Cricket and District was chosen,
this really caused some concern
Facilities were very primitive and accommodation
for visiting Players very limited, The Ladies
toilet was a night watchman's hut type of
thing need less ^{wasn't} it had a door on and
was situated by the Pavet-ledge on the
right hand side, this was only used in
extreme emergencies I can assure you
The Gents was a corrugated enclosure with
an outlet into the adjoining field ~~cross~~
around the outlet really flourished,
however it was decided that a new
Club house was to be given priority, and
so with interest free loans from the
members, and me due for a fortnights
holiday, work commenced, I helped with
the foundations and laid the blocks
Bob Barnes and Ray Tutill put the roof
on and Jack Reynolds put in the cut-
stone front. Now of course our minds were
on a New Toilet Block and Tool Shed.
Having acquired a mower of our own
Several bits and pieces needed for
Green maintenance, The Club at Evesham
was doing well, The Club House debt
was soon paid off and we thought we
could go ahead with the Toilet Block.
This we discovered could qualify for a
grant. I wrote to Lincoln Ralph who
was Sec to the Planning Fields Association

The out-come of this was he ^{was} ^{the} ^{coming}, and so
that a grant would be for the building, and so
we once again started to build my
brother 'Flin' as he was best known
I set the building out to the size we
needed and proceeded with the footings
a few other members to put the
in, covering the floor, my brother and
said the blocks Bob Barnes and
Tutill once again came to the scene
with roof, two flush toilets were
installed with ~~back~~ business for ladies
and Gerts now were really in business
The grant by the way was for the
full amount 100% of £400. Although the Club
was done well, the Playon Surfoll was
very poor with areas without any grass
at all, and so it was decided to bring
in the experts for advice, ^{twone} did a
free advisory service and so we contacted
then, and we were told what was
needed was a mixture of Peat and Sand.
One ton of Peat and 5 tons of Sand and it
thought it take at least 10 years of this
treatment to make a good playing
surface and of course we did this,
must say at this stage that the treatment
did appear to work at the base and then
places filled in and even they looked
better, it was not until we started to get
very dry summers that our problems
began. It was impossible to get the pitch
looking green, it really did suffer with
the drought and so once again we turned to the
experts and in our amazement we were
told we had too much Peat so now
we have the task of using deep hollow
tine machine to get rid of it, so much
in experts. I mentioned earlier on that
Bob Barnes had a hand in roofing
both our buildings I would like to
say a bit more about Bob, not only
our treasurer but was always on hand for
any repair work that needed doing,
I also remember that after a few seasons
the edges of Green went down badly

He came and saw ⁽⁵⁾ me about this problem
and recommended that a concrete edge be
let in all the way around the Green and
low pieces ^{littered} ^{to} ^{be} ^{removed} ^{to} ^{help} ^{me} ^{to}
with the job. You can imagine what a monumental
task this was. Bob was as good as his
word and at the end of that particular
Season Bob and I started. We cast the
concrete edge ^{4" wide} ^{9" deep} and 14 feet
long. When we had produced some 160 ft
we started to work, little did we know
that it would take most of the winter
for Bob and I to well considering he was
a carpenter by trade. I borrowed a
turkey iron and of course this was
necessary to raise the turf ^{fill} ^{at} ^{it}
round, ~~it~~ was Sat afternoon and
Sunday mornings for most of that winter
before the job was complete. The concrete
edge is there to this day and we
shall always be very grateful to Bob
not only for his stint as treasurer but
for all the work he did for the Club
I have been associated with Club since it was
formed in 1948 and have ^{only} missed
one year as far as I can remember that
in 1971 I unfortunately had a slipped
disc and had ^{long} ^{operations} on for that
I was of course unable to work in that
~~the~~ that year, however two lads, they
were young lads then Alan Holmes and
David Tuttle came along and helped
Fred to what was needed to keep going
I did return as soon as I was able and
am still carrying on to-day. Fred our
Groundsman died suddenly in 1978
and this left me in charge as it were
I had learnt a lot from Fred as so was
able to carry on. The ^{Seasons} came and went
Some good, some not so, this brings me
now to the Season 1991 again I was
hospitalised with an operation for an
infected Cysts Bladder, I was in dock

for a month and I work for further work
although members called around and helped
out with the chases, the Green determined
not only did the Green go down membership
dropped also and I thought to myself
its time for new blood as the Secretary + I
did actually say I would call it a day
Things did really look black, however
every cloud has a silver lining and
that silver lining did appear in the
form of a man ^{called} John Jones, I think John
must have got to hear about what I felt
like and to me an answer decided to
come and help us out not only did he
join the Club but brought ten other players
with him, this really breathed new life not
only into me but into the Club also
The fact that he did was ask the Club
for a traveler Spunkler, you can imagine
my delights when I saw that arrive, the
day and weeks I have spent with my
finger in the end of garden hose nobody
will ever know. The next thing he talked
about was electricity to the Club, I suppose
it was agreed that this should be done
but the cost hadn't been taken into
account. Prices for new cable, by a stroke
of luck we decided to try and get some
second hand wire through contacting a man
whom I refer to as our "supplier" we were
given enough to not only connect us to
the meter outside the Olympic Hall some
125 yds but enough to connect the flood
lights all the way around the Green
which had also been given to him by our
"supplier" this man generously provides no
bonds without his help and John's influence
the work done this year would not have
been possible, of course I mustn't forget to
mention our little Band of Volunteers, Jack Reed
Tom Buller, Sid Sexton and Mick Tim, all I have
to do is knock on their door and they appear
whether it is wheeling soil or concrete they

willingly appear and I sincerely hope that will be
the case as we embark on our winter programme.
At the end of last season the Green did look
very bad, we were infested with leather jackets
and had suffered terribly with drought, both John
and I agreed as what should be done namely it was
first and foremost to get rid of some of the deer.
This would be done by using a Hobson type machine,
to skin for the leather jackets and scarifer
and slit as often as possible, fortunately for
the Club John has all machines to do this
work, to hire them for the amount of times
we had to use them, from a Hunt Hire firm
would have been too expensive for us, we must
all be very grateful to John for the notable
us the machines but comes and uses them
himself, we also set our selves a target
for summer feeding, one bag of turf for
every three weeks. By ~~next~~ season it was
evident that this was paying off very well
and by the end of the season it was the best
I have ever seen ^{the} look. This was very
pleasing to both of us and we regard this
as our reward. Now I am rapidly approaching
70 but I think with Johns enthusiasm and
his knowledge of Green management I shall be
good enough for at least another year

David Green