

# **THE HISTORY AND FORMATION OF COMET BAY BOWLING, SOCIAL AND RECREATION CLUB INC**

As remembered BY NOEL STONE in 2006

On July 14 1988, in response to local interest, the Singleton Progress Association convened a public meeting to discuss the formation of a bowling club. An attendance of 30 was recorded. A further meeting was held on July 28. The earliest view expressed was to establish a sporting and recreational club, amalgamating all existing clubs and a bowling club. The Rockingham Council proposed a Board of Management controlling the entire complex.

*Iris Stone*, who had previous bowling club experience, gave advice regarding WALBA affiliation for all members making it necessary to structure fees to cover this. She went on to cite the experience of Kwinana Bowling Club in breaking away from a complex type situation in order to survive. Some doubt was expressed even from the Council as to whether any one club in the area could support a complex. The most probable scenario appeared to be a bowling club with a liquor licence. All in attendance were in agreement that a huge voluntary effort would be required to carry out the considerable work involved if the venture was to be a success.

At a carpark meeting held on December 18 1988 it was resolved to form a bowling club named the Singleton & Golden Bay Bowling Club. A committee was elected on the spot consisting of *Laurie Stanford* President, *Dennis Franklyn* Vice President, *Beth Spence* Secretary and *Noel Stone* Treasurer. Additional committee were *Jim Spence*, *Jessie Fuller*, *Jack Mather*, *Gloria Franklyn* and *Margaret Taylor*. As there was no meeting place for the new committee, monthly meetings were held at members' homes on a rotational basis.

At the next meeting in June 1989, a motion to change the name of the club to ***Comet Bay Bowling Club*** was passed. Incorporation was sought to protect members. In ensuing years extensive work was carried out on formulating a constitution and this continues even to the present day especially in regard to the liquor licence. In regard to Life Membership it was resolved that December 18 1988 be recorded as the official foundation of the club.

The Rockingham council levelled the green bases and installed the ditches and backboards. The original water equipment was 3 large oscillating sprinklers on each side of the green. When watering finally commenced it was found that in strong winds dry patches appeared as the water was not reaching all areas. This problem hastened our need for a better system and so we sunk a bore and obtained some sprinkler pipes. These were not designed to sprinkle and so *Jack Mather* loaded all 21 pipes onto his truck and went to a factory in Burswood where the pipes were drilled in the recommended pattern as we know it today.



Two large hoppers of grass runners arrived, one National Park and the other Green Leas. All hands, male and female, set to and scattered the grass over the greens individually, one hopper on each. This was cut in with the use of a large plough disc on a control handle, back and forth, and up and down. The greens were then watered and kept damp to promote quick growth. As the greens grew and it approached mowing time, the small pump (7HP) in the bore could only supply water to three rows of pipe. After an hour of watering these pipes were laid on the rest of the green. This procedure was repeated for the other green making Monday's watering a long job, over almost 5 hours.

As scheme water was introduced to Singleton, the large tank supplying water to the new hall was not needed and was offered to the bowling club. Our clever men diverted our water from the bore to back fill the tank and the larger pump to the water to our greens. Extra pipes were obtained and now five rows of pipes were easily watering in one operation. It was only necessary to make one shift and both greens were watered. The calcium in the water supply played havoc with the sprinkler pipes, so the ladies conducted a clean up day. With pins and needles they cleaned the holes in all the pipes and it improved the watering a great deal!

Bowling commenced in 1991. *Jim* and *Dorothy Boxall* were our first Captains and presented us with a fixture list, which introduced us to Singles, Pairs, Triples and Fours. The emphasis was on showing new bowlers how much fun bowling could be.

It became a constant effort to develop the Club. While voluntary work went on fundraisers were hard at work as well organising raffles, cake stalls and games evenings. Our ladies were wonderful in this regard raising thousands of dollars. Much needed equipment was obtained by various means. Warnbro club assisted on several occasions by loaning special machines or passing on to us items they had replaced. I think President *Laurie* had a secret fleet of trucks from which items kept falling off the back. We were thrilled when an offer from *Tony Taylor* enabled us to purchase a top class greens mower.

We started our clubhouse with a 25 x 25 x 10 shed which was joined by another of the same size later and later still with a 12.5 x 25 x 10 section. *Wally Barron* and his crew lined the walls and put in a ceiling, what a great job they did! Initially we had a key to the toilets at the small hall – quite a walk across the paddock. *Tony Taylor* set up two building site toilets. It was a duty on some Monday workdays to dig fresh holes, shift the toilets over them and fill in the used holes. Some wag chalked 'Jacks' and 'Kitties' on the doors. No doubt Slim Dusty had our situation in mind when he penned "Redback on the Toilet Seat"! It was a big step forward for the club when we erected our brick toilet block. *Roy Marshall* used his expertise to convince the Council of our need. Part of our contribution was brickwork, plumbing, and roofing from *Colin Porter* and others.

We were fortunate in that *Jim Boxall* held a poisons licence and was able to apply 'nasty stuff' when needed. We were able to get advice from greenkeepers from time to time; *Mal Treasure*, *Warren Turner*, *Mark Walters* and *Wayne Bull* are some who come to mind.

The granting of a liquor licence had an easing effect on our financial position. *Milton*, *Wally*, *Ian*, *Reg* and *I* took on a task requiring much time and effort.

The ladies really put Comet Bay on the map with their Gala Days. The first one under the giant marquee I consider the ladies spoiled the visitors rotten with their catering. Perhaps this is why some of those very first visitors have been back every year since!



The Club's first venture into Pennant competition was in Division 7 – a two rink competition in the metro area. We were very successful, winning the pennant with our team of 8 playing the entire season undefeated! In a separate event for teams 3<sup>rd</sup> division and up, Comet Bay played Quins Rock in the final but went down 41-40. We collected \$500 for our effort and the money purchased a barbecue. A small plaque on the frame of the barbie recognises the team members who took part. We performed further in metro 5<sup>th</sup> division and won our section but missed out on the pennant gaining promotion to 4<sup>th</sup> division however.

The Club entered the Murray League in 1998 and have enjoyed success there. Like the Dockers and Eagles we had to travel in the metro league every second week whilst other clubs came to us just once. It was disappointing to learn that some clubs had complained about travelling 'all the way' to Comet Bay. The team travelled to fixtures in a hired bus large enough to take 16 players and supporters. An essential on these trips were 2 large eskies of drinks. *Cliff Baker* was the book-keeper, recording each player's intake and payment was made to me on returning to the Club. We sung our song with much gusto as we returned – win or lose!

It is worthy of mention that almost two years of hard work – without a bowl being bowled – was performed by a wonderful group of men and women. We learned of the various bureaucratic bodies that control our lives. Department of Environment handled our application for the bore, DOLMA (Department of Land Management) took their time surveying the land we needed for our lease and then the area had to be excised to the Council who were then able to grant our lease.

The Council handled all applications for cash grants – building of club house and toilet block. At times it was frustrating when a monthly meeting was missed and we had to wait for the next one.

Everyone knows that comets have tails, so it was appropriate that *Clive Hamilton's* newsletter should be titled "Comet Tales". Whatever happened to our newsletter?

In writing this account it was almost impossible to name names, as it was likely someone would be omitted. There were so many examples of commitment to the Club by so many that a simple thankyou must suffice.

Perhaps the Presidents and their committees over the years ably supported by *Beth Spence*, secretary for many years and combining this duty with running a personal business. *Ian Drummond* looked after us all for a long time, as did *Ian Pankhurst*. *Bill Jones* and *Graham White* quietly helped with outside jobs. The Club has been blessed with very capable lady Captains –*Ruth Rankin*, *Dorothy Boxall*, *Shirley Barron*, *Shirley Pankhurst* and *Val Dines*. The work force was often bolstered with lady weeding teams, gardeners and of course various clubhouse duties such as

cleaning and catering. The ladies were required under WALBA regulations to elect a President, Secretary and Treasurer. Some names recalled include *Dorothy Boxall, Eva Rowley, Iris Stone, Lesley Ackland* and *Judy Campbell*, and the ladies have also been represented on the Club's committees over the years.

The clubhouse has been the subject of many improvements. *Wally Barron* has been mentioned earlier but his effort in the maintenance program never ceases.

Though we are a small club we have an outstanding number of perpetual trophies. Display space for them was created by *Bill Pullen* who also made and put in place our Club mascot.

Our memory board donated by *Wally* and *Shirley Barron* ensures our deceased past members remain in our thoughts; whilst a memorial rose garden for members bears a commemorative plaque also donated by the Barrons. Donations from members have provided four honour boards, which hang along with pennant shields and club and team photographs.

Unfortunately we have experienced some vandalism over the years. Several break ins resulting in liquor been lost but harder to take is the damage to the greens. Most regretful was the recent burning of a hole in the new carpet with a boat flare. No doubt insurance will fix it but it is an ongoing problem the Club must face. (*2010: A high barbed fence has since been erected around the boundary of the club.*)

The last years of the old century and the start of the new one have been exciting for the Club. I started this record by telling of the meetings with the various interested bodies regarding tenancy of the Community Hall and the formation of a sport and recreation club. It seems that nothing much has changed some groups' thinking, particularly that of the Council. Our elected representatives have attended many meetings to date seeking a solution.

We were fortunate indeed when *Dorothy Burrows* was elected to the Committee and performed the duties of Treasurer, displaying outstanding ability. A submission seeking support for the installation of a synthetic carpet green was prepared by Dorothy and presented to Council. Council officers commented that it was one of the finest submissions they had received. The effort by President *Alan Gard, Dorothy* and *Lindsay Jones* was rewarded. Today we have a new international green. To all who made this possible, WELL DONE! (*note: In 2010, we are replacing the second green with carpet as well*)

The Club currently has four life members – *Eva Rowley, Noel Stone, Roy Marshall* and *Wally Barron*. (*Note: in 2010 also Maureen Drummond and Iris Stone*)

*Note: Noel was a much loved and revered club member who passed away in January 2009.*