

West Heaton Bowling, Tennis and Squash Club

1873-2023



£5
for print version

Introduction

You may not believe it but 50 years ago West Heaton was 100 years old. That seemed an amazing achievement at the time and was marked by this quote from the then President, Graham Haslam, in comments that are as relevant today as they were then :

“ The survival throughout this passage of time reflects the spirit of those members who, for no personal gain, have given and continue to give their time and support. The outstanding characteristic of the Club is the family atmosphere, which enables all generations to share and enjoy the facilities together.”

The rest of this booklet will, we hope, be a testament to that togetherness that continues to demonstrate that spirit. Like many “families” we’ve had our bumps in the road along the way but here we are today as strong as ever.

A Word from our Presidents

To bring us up to date, here are a few words from the Presidents who have the privilege of guiding the Club in its 150th year - Jane Philpott up to the AGM in March and Steve Woosey who then took over the role until March 2024.



Steve Woosey, President 2023-2024:

As we celebrate 150 years I am reminded of the amazing people who have helped to make our club so successful over that time. My wider family have been members for over 75 years, and it has always been part of my life and I truly believe it's the people that make our club special. We are a family, we give our time and put the best interests of the club as a whole at the forefront of what we do. Thank you to all those who have contributed in the past and to those who will contribute in the future of our amazing club.

Jane Philpott, President 2022-2023:

This Club continues to stand the true test of time – to serve and to connect its community, not just through the spirit of friendship and sport, but through its history and past memories made. There have been so many loyal members and their families involved over the years we have to thank for this. Traditions remain stronger than ever and the future is exciting. So much to celebrate, share and enjoy.

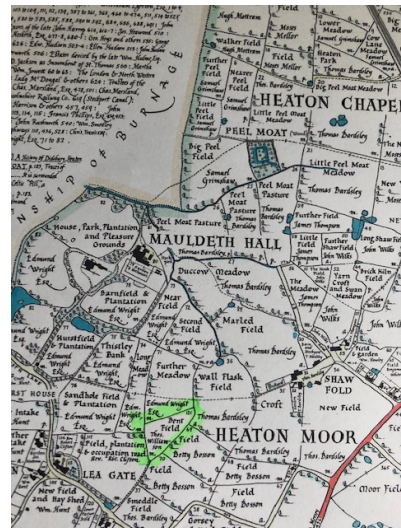


Note from the editor... if you go to our website (west-heaton.co.uk), click on the tab “Bar and Club” and then select “History” you will see more about our past including commemorative booklets from our 100th, 125th and 140th year anniversaries. You can also see a very visible part of our history with the group photos of members displayed opposite the bar.

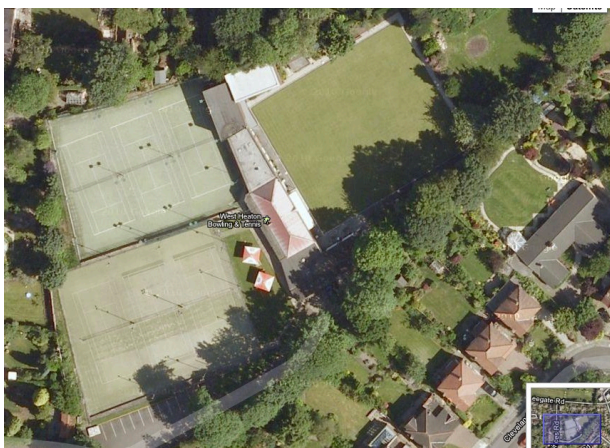
The Beginning

West Heaton Bowling Club Ltd was founded on 15th July 1873 at a meeting held in “the pavilion”. Our founders were incredibly well-organised. They had already registered the Club as a Limited Company and at the meeting they appointed Messrs Brown, Tate, Chadwick, Walker, Barlow and

Abbott as Officers. Of these, Mr Tate was to be Treasurer and Mr J. Chadwick the Secretary. He became President from 1878 to 1880. Mr W R Callender, MP, was appointed President at that meeting and he held that post till 1875. In 1869 Mr Callender had bought the land of Mauldeth Hall from the Ecclesiastical Commission when the second bishop of Manchester, James Fraser, decided to be nearer his flock in Manchester. Also in 1869 Mr Tate acquired the land which now makes up the Leegate Road part of Prince's Road. So the first President and Treasurer of West Heaton were powerful local landowners. It would not be a huge leap of imagination to think they were intelligent men of influence who were behind the well-planned beginnings of West Heaton Bowling Club.



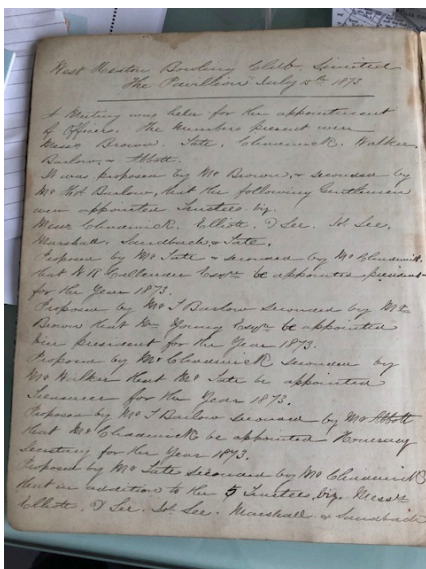
Messrs Chadwick, Elliot, Marshall, Sandbach, Tate and Lee (x2) were appointed as Trustees. Messrs Brown, Barlow and Kidd (?) were appointed as Directors and Messrs Broughton and Walker were the auditors. This wasn't just a bunch of guys fancying a game of bowls to pass the time - they meant business. After the appointment of officers, the main business was to propose and agree that "the bowling green be opened on Thursday 24th July 1873". The shares of the new club were held by local residents who had subscribed for them and the land was leased from the then owner Mr Brown. (you will see the name of Thos Williamson on the Tithe Map but he was the occupant, not the owner of Bent Field). On 24th July the bowling green and a croquet lawn opened with tent and refreshments.



The land used can be seen on the 1848 Tithe Map of Heaton Chapel and Heaton Moor (above) and on the 1848 Tithe Map of Heaton Chapel.

When you see this modern day aerial view of the club, you can clearly match it to the lopsided parcel of land seen on the Tithe Maps.

To add some more background to those early days, attached here are photos of the minutes of that first meeting along with a page from the early accounts.



The minutes show that we had a pavilion from the very start and the accounts illustrate that it cost £223 plus £110 for the "Laying of Green and Grounds" (total of about £46,000 in 2023 according to Mr Google). You will also see £4 5s 6d for Earth Closets (look it up if you don't know !) Further evidence of the meticulous planning of Mr Callender and his team.

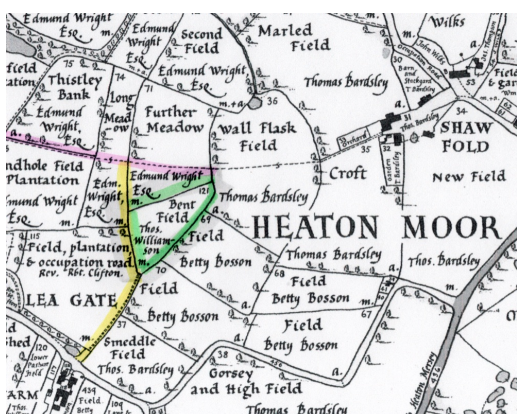
Item	Amount
Laying Green & Grounds	110. -
Pavillions and	223. -
Staircases	8 5 7
Wire fencing	2 6 6
Cart & Hacks	4 3 6
Pump	16 14 7
Roller & Mower	11. -
Seats	5 7 4
Croquet	2 10. -
Spur Bells	2 15 6
1 ^o President	1 1. 25. 6
Legal expenses	5. -
Coal fee	3 3. -
Printing &c	7 2 6
Printing &c	15 7 6
Expenses	22 12 8
	412 15 3
Exp. bowls for	5 12 6
Leeds 1873	4 8 7 9
Balanced by	2 8 14 9
Non current	4 2 2 6

The rest, as they say, is history. Our history.

- 1880: Lawn tennis started, described as “an interesting exercise” possibly with three tennis lawns and one cinder rink. (the Wimbledon tennis championships started in 1877).
- 1892: Bar first mentioned in the club minutes.
- 1921: The owner of the land (Mr Brown) died and the freehold was purchased for £450 by West Heaton Bowling Club Limited.
- 1920s: Three shale courts constructed in the mid 1920's. From then until 1979, there would be the 3 shale courts as they remained until 2003, with 3 or 4 grass courts (see article on playing surfaces). 1937: West Heaton formed an entertainment section, later renamed Dramatic Section and then Amateur Theatre Section producing 2 popular plays a year when possible.
- 1962: One men's tennis team was entered into the North East Cheshire Lawn Tennis League (NECLTL). This, despite Lancashire being the home county as the club is north of the Mersey. 1963: One ladies tennis team was entered into the NECLTL.
- 1966: A football team was formed to play friendlies, inspired by success of the England World Cup team. Table tennis – 2 teams were entered in two leagues.
- 1969: Funded by brewery and a sponsored walk – small bar and bowlers hut replaced by a true bar lounge and bowlers room. A very important development.
- 1973: Centenary Year: First squash court and at long last toilet facilities introduced at the bar end of the club supplementing those in the changing rooms.
- 1979: Conversion of 3/4 grass courts into 3 Playdek tarmacadam all weather courts (aka En Tout Cas). One men's bowling team entered in the Cheadle and District Tuesday evening league.
- 1986: Amateur theatre section no longer active.
- 1990: Top tennis courts changed from Playdek to sanded artificial grass carpet.
- 1995: Bar moved to current position and new “main” door built, with porch.
- 2002: Club name changed to include Squash. Membership structure revised.
- 2003: Second squash court built. Shale tennis courts replaced by artificial grass with all 3 of the new courts floodlit. Opened by our first female President Barbara Dunne.
- 2012: First Friday music nights begin in March. Table tennis introduced in pavilion on Tuesday nights. 2013: Awarded LTA Club of the Year for the Lancashire Tennis Region.
- 2016: Development – unkempt area by the old croquet lawn transferred into kitchen garden. Bowling Room renamed The Raymond Peile Prior room with a plaque with Raymond's name.
- 2020: Club temporarily closed for the first time since World War Two due to the Covid 19 pandemic.
- 2021: Memory Garden built for those loved ones who had passed away, especially during the painful time of the pandemic. Annual Tennis Competition recognised as the County's Competition of the Year by the Lancashire LTA.

Friends and Neighbours

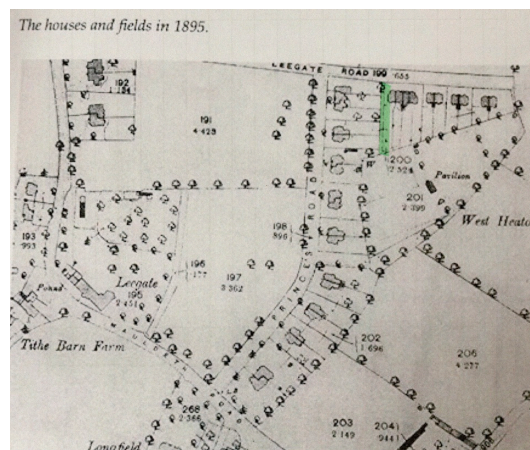
So what surrounded West Heaton in 1873 ? Thanks to some excellent research done by our friends and neighbours in Leegate Road and Prince's Road in 2011 we know that we were surrounded by green fields at that time as house building had not quite begun. You will see from the previous article that West Heaton's very own William Callender and John Tate were significant local landowners and by 1878 John Tate had sold “all the plots, buildings, watercourses etc” of the first Prince's Road



plots and they were progressively built upon and occupied in the next few years. These plots were what we now know as Nos 22 -32 (evens) although until the 1891 census the houses are known by names rather than numbers. Interesting that those first plots sold were the ones overlooking the new Bowling and Croquet Club !

The extract (left) from that 1848 Tithe Map shows what became West Heaton (green) with Prince's Road (yellow) and Leegate Road (red)

The map on the right taken from the 2011 resident's publication clearly shows those first homes surrounding West Heaton (with its pavilion on the site of today's pavilion). Marked in green is the pathway that runs from the back of Tennis Court 5 to Leegate Road between houses, that we think is an original entrance to the club.



Heritage Plaque

Heritage Plaque Not only has West Heaton been around for 150 years, it has spent ALL those years on the same site. This makes us all the more remarkable and we wondered just how special we are. We thought we may be the oldest enterprise on the same site in the Heatons (maybe even Stockport) that's not a church or a pub. Unfortunately that was too ambitious as Nelstrop Flour Mill in Heaton Norris dates from 1820. However, we are confirmed as being the oldest sports or social club in the Four Heatons and can proudly display the Heritage Plaque pictured.

For information, our nearest local rivals are Moor Club (1881), Heaton Moor Golf Club (1892) and Heaton Moor Rugby Club (1899). The Reform Club was founded in 1886 but was converted to flats a few years ago. Just to put our longevity into perspective for a moment - in 1873 none of our major local football clubs had been founded, not even in their formative names. Stockport County arrived as Heaton Norris Rovers in 1883, Manchester United as Newton Heath in 1878 and Manchester City as St Mark's West Gorton in 1880. The modern Olympic Games had not been held - that was Athens in 1896. The telephone had not been invented and Custer didn't meet his last stand till 1876.



Fields of Dreams

Absolutely essential to the health of a sports club are those surfaces we play the sports on. We are currently blessed with two squash courts and a bowling green and tennis courts that are the envy of most visiting clubs. This doesn't happen by accident or overnight.

We'll come to squash and bowling later but it's fair to say that the tennis surfaces have undergone the most change in the last 150 years.

Tennis Courts

Who better to ask about the courts than long standing member (since 1958) and Past President of 1994 Barry Oswald ? I wasn't the only one to pull his leg about him being a founder member of West Heaton ! Barry is very sadly no longer with us but we had a chat (which I now value for so many reasons) less than two weeks before his tragic passing during heart surgery. **For Barry's lifetime contribution to all that is good about West Heaton, Sue and I dedicate this history to him.**

Barry served as Secretary for the North East Cheshire Lawn Tennis League for 30 years and was the League President so it's fair to say he saw a few tennis courts in his time. For research of the very early days I am indebted to our Past President from 1949, FW (Fred) Towns, who contributed an excellent article in our 1973 Centenary booklet.

When tennis was added to croquet and bowling at West Heaton in 1880 it was decided to lay out a "tennis lawn" for the princely sum of £15. We are not sure exactly where that court was but in 1882 it was decided that a portion of land near the entrance in Prince's Road should be extended



*The grass courts were much loved - when playable!
(note the old Bowling Hut to the right of the pavilion)*

for tennis to include one "cinder rink" until the tennis facilities comprised three ordinary "rinks" and one "cinder rink" - proof that it rained in Manchester even then!

We don't know the layout of the courts with certainty but during the construction of the all-weather courts in 2003 there seemed to be some traces of a cinder base in the area of the far shale court, where Court 6 is now located.

The cinder rink eventually became unplayable and in 1923 the shale courts were laid to supplement the grass ones and we had, more or less, the court layout that we see today.

Those who were around during the shale court dates will "fondly" remember the court lines being nailed down tapes which could cause interesting deflections of the ball. Not to mention the red dust that got everywhere. I say "more or less" today's layout because the grass courts were in a 3 or 4 court formation on the area of the upper courts but extending closer to the pavilion, with only a narrow path between the courts and the pavilion. This formation enabled the courts to be moved around by about half a court width and laid as either 3 or 4 courts to "rest" those areas on the baselines that became worn. This rearrangement took place twice a year and involved not just re-marking of lines but also removal and replacement of net supports. The lines were of a water-soluble substance so they easily washed out but it was still quite a job.

Court technology moved on and by the autumn of 1979 we had planning permission to replace the grass courts with a new hard court surface known as "en tout cas", a version known as Playdek. The literal translation from the French is "in any case" but in this context was "in any conditions". Nowadays we'd call it "all-weather". It was a painted, porous tarmac surface which many clubs use to this day.

(Bizarre coincidence - the leading UK En Tout Cas company is based in Oundle, Peterborough, where our famous Oundle woods were found. (See our 140th brochure on our website for more information !)) It was fortunate we had the planning permission because our groundsman

was over enthusiastic with some fertiliser and we ended up with grass courts with no grass! This was the cue for rapid installation of the Playdek courts! (He didn't say so but our friend Baz was the leading light in persuading the club to make the investment in the new courts).



Barry Oswald serving on the shale courts



Current President Steve Woosey (on the right) on the En Tout Cas / Playdek courts and fellow junior Andy McGrath, with the shale courts behind)

These courts continued in use until 1990 when, thanks to further developments in court technology, they were replaced by an artificial grass carpet, with two being floodlit. The knees of the tennis members heaved a collective sigh of relief!

The next significant change was in 2003 when West Heaton benefited from a major development that was to improve Club facilities remarkably. With funding provided by West Heaton, Sport England (aka the National Lottery) and the Lawn Tennis Association the shale courts were replaced by an artificial grass carpet and all three courts were floodlit. We have continued to keep our surfaces in top condition since through maintenance and timely replacement.

Bowling Green

Although the green, by its very nature, requires an attentive maintenance programme it has lain pretty much as it was back in 1873. But therein (may) lie a tale!

Although the Club opened with its bowling green in 1873, the sport of Crown Green Bowling is reported as first being played in 1888. This suggests that in the 15 years between those dates the members of West Heaton enjoyed Flat Green Bowling, a much older sport - ask Sir Francis Drake ! Now, the West Heaton green is relatively flat for crown green so is infuriatingly helpful to away teams. Your editor's theory is that the green was never "treated" to the provision of a more dominant "crown" back in 1888 so what we have today are the natural undulations of a surface that has simply evolved over time. Let me know if you think otherwise!



The opening of the new squash court included a ceremonial hit between club player Nigel Geddes and (our first lady) President Barbara Dunne.

Squash

By our bowling green standards, Squash is a relatively young sport with our first court being constructed in 1973 and two men's teams entered the league the following year. The only other major change occurred in 2003 when the huge club development previously mentioned included the provision of a new, glass-backed court. This continues to be the main "match" court and the original court is not only used for squash but also to accommodate junior tennis coaching when the Stockport heavens open.

A Bit more about Squash at West Heaton

Our first squash court was but in 1973, initially to "give the tennis players something to do in the winter". Those players were soon supplemented by several University lecturers who joined the Club to play team squash during the seventies. Numbers and quality of players soon developed to the extent that we eventually had three men's teams and one ladies team in the North West Counties

league, one of the most competitive squash leagues in the world at the time, with players including Manchester City's Mike Doyle and the Greenhoff brothers from United playing regularly.

The 70s and 80s was the real boom time for squash and the West Heaton teams enjoyed much success including into the early 2000s when in 2003 we built a second court as part of the major club development. The court opening was celebrated by challenge matches against West Heaton players by Nick Taylor (then England's No 3) and James Willstrop (then British Under 23 champion who after his West Heaton experience became the World No. 1 in 2012).

During the peak squash years in the 70s and 80s West Heaton teams played in the annual Cheshire Cup when they could be matched against National ranked elite players. This period saw many social events including a charity squashathon with a relay of players keeping the ball going for 24 hours.

At one time during the 80s the demand on the single squash court was such that some members would book at rather unsocial hours, including one occasion when two otherwise very respectable club members had to be reprimanded following complaints from Leegate Road neighbours about foul and abusive language coming from the court at 2am!

Although the general popularity of Squash has waned in recent years we still have two excellent courts and a band of enthusiastic players, so maybe one day we'll get back to the heights of yesterday!

It's a Family Affair

In the scoring system for tennis, 'love' means nothing. But for many members of West Heaton, love has meant something totally different as they have "fallen in love" and met the "love of their lives" at the club. Indeed in the early 1970s the club had the reputation of being "the best marriage bureau in Stockport"!

There are many examples of long-term partners & married couples who met at West Heaton and are still both current members of the club. There are almost certainly more than we realise, so apologies to any we have missed out, but those we are aware of include :

- Irene & Nigel Burton
- Sylvia & Richard Cameron
- Chrissie & Mike Gibson
- Marina Jones & Andy Perry
- Hazel & Ken Lappin
- Carole & Steve Leigh
- Pam & Steve Lister
- Margaret & Harvey Locke
- Janet & Keith Platts
- Anne & Dave Porter
- Janet & David Sanderson
- Alison & Martin Sharman
- Brenda & Godfrey Smith
- Jo & Andy Taylor
- Diana and Tony Pinckney

Of course, the family connection is not limited to married couples. There are many examples of parents and children, and even grand-children, being members at the same time. And the highest office in the club, the role of President, provides some heart-warming examples of West Heaton being a significant presence through the generations. Our 1973 President Graham Haslam was



Future Presidents Jo & Andy Taylor



Recent Treasurer and New Members Secretary Anne & Dave Porter

followed in 2006 by his daughter Janet, Peter Jackson in 1992 was followed by his son Matt in 2017 and, appropriately in our 150th year, our current President Steven is following in the footsteps not only of his father Alan in 1989 but also his uncle Bob in 1981. Truly it has been a family affair for these and many other families over the years at West Heaton; contrary to the tennis scoring system far from meaning nothing, love has been shown to mean everything!

Martin Sharman, Past President of 2013

(PS : see Bonus last page for more pics)

Part of the Furniture

Not only did many members start building their families at West Heaton but we also have many long-standing members who have been around for up to seventy years! But who are the current members who have been around longest ? Look no further, here they are!

Our top ten are...

Tony Pinckney is our longest standing member, having joined in 1953 and wife **Diana** is second, joining in 1955. Both joined at the age of 13 with their parents and went on to enjoy the social life of West Heaton to this day. Third in our Top Ten chart is **Raymond Prior**. Raymond joined in 1956 and served in various posts for 50 years from 1967. A true legend of the Club, this being recognised by the renaming of the Bowlers Lounge in his honour in 2016.



Tony Pinckney, Raymond Prior, Diana Pinckney

Next up at joint Number 4 are **Richard Rimmington**, President in 1979, and **Alan Speakman** who both joined in 1956. Richard was a keen tennis player and attender of social events with wife Angela. Alan was 13 then and played tennis as a junior. As time passed Alan often worked away but retained his membership and he and wife Janet became very active social members. Alan was Club Secretary in the 1970s during which time he oversaw the building of our first squash court in 1973.

Neil Walmsley is next having joined in 1957. Neil is well known locally for his Neil Andrew menswear shop on Shaw Road which helped Heaton's men look fashionable from 1962 to 1999. Neil is a regular at First Friday and other social events and is a past chair of the Bar and Social Committees.

Numbers 7 and 8, **Dan Blunt** and **Fay Bravey**, joined in 1959. More of Dan later on but Fay won the Ladies Singles in 1972. At Number 9 is the longest standing member who is still regularly playing - **Liz Hawes** (Liz Mann as she is known on our Honours Boards) joined in 1960 and won the Ladies Tennis Singles in both 1973 and 1975 as well as the Squash Merit in 1975. And Liz's mother Ada was an accomplished bowler, being Lady Captain in 1969 and winning the Ladies Merit in 1971. Completing our top ten, also from 1960, is **Harvey Locke**, President in 1983.

Unfortunately the joining date of these good folk isn't more precise than the year because until 2004 the joining date was simply recorded as being 1st January of the year, because our year ran from 1st Jan to 31st December. The first current member shown with an actual date is Simon Tasker, our Bar Steward, who joined on 5th June 2004 and marginally beats Andy Tattersall due to alphabetical order!

West Heaton and Wimbledon

Wimbledon is often seen as the pinnacle of Lawn Tennis and West Heaton has had a number of contacts with it over the years.



Naomi Broady and opponent Diane Wilson before Naomi won our Ladies Singles

Two former members have actually played on the famous grass. Naomi Broady won our Ladies Singles in 2004 at the age of fourteen and her younger brother Liam acquitted himself well in club competitions when he was only eight years old. Although both left West Heaton some time ago to further their careers many members avidly watch for their results and support them.

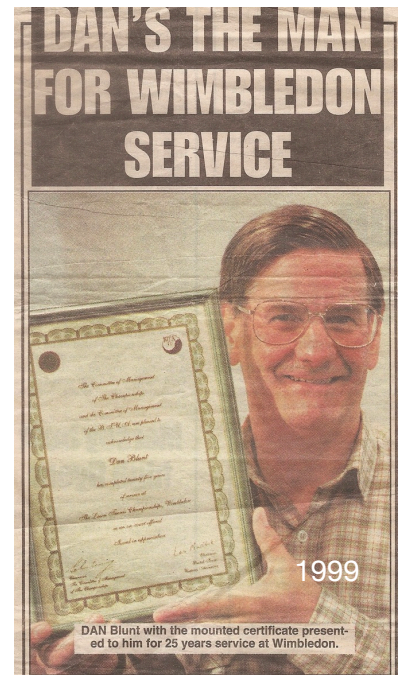
Another former member, now sadly no longer with us, performed one of the most important back-room jobs of any tennis tournament. Bill Bamforth was racket-stringer in the 80s to the likes of Jimmy Connors, John Lloyd and Greg Rusedski at Wimbledon and other tennis tournaments.

But one of our current members has appeared in as many Wimbledon Finals as Roger Federer, Novak Djokovic and Rafa Nadal combined! Dan Blunt was President in 1985 and officiated at around 25 Wimbledon Finals and many other Grand Slams and other high ranking events.

Dan started his tennis officiating career in 1973 at the age of 32 when he was asked to help officiate at a major juniors final at the Northern Tennis Club and his career progressed such that the following year he umpired a Mixed Doubles match at Wimbledon! Dan was awarded a certificate for 25 years service at Wimbledon in 1999 and in that time he umpired on every court including Centre and the old Number One.

During his 32 year career, pretty well all the well-known players of the day came under Dan's watchful gaze from either the umpire's chair or that of the line judge including John McEnroe, Ilie Nastase, Martina Navratilova and, on Centre Court, Billie Jean King. Dan also often worked locally at the then major pre-Wimbledon men's event at the Northern where in the early eighties he umpired John McEnroe. Dan was offered some useful advice before umpiring McEnroe by a Daily Express sports writer who said "just answer his questions". So Dan did - if McEnroe asked "did you see that ball?" he said "yes I did" - as confidently as he could muster! Result - no tantrums! And John Mc behaved himself also!

Dan's Top Tip for budding line judges at West Heaton's annual tournament? Focus on just beyond the line and then give a clear call and confident arm signal



Dan pictured with his certificate for 25 years service at Wimbledon

Tennis Pathways to Success at West Heaton

Throughout the rich and varied history of tennis at West Heaton everyone who has played the game here has had some success, whether it was winning a tournament title, a Summer or Winter League match, a Singles Box League match, a social game or just feeling as though you have improved a particular shot or technique at a Rusty Rackets session or in a lesson provided by the coaching staff!

So which pathway have you been on, are on now or maybe forging a new one?

Junior Tennis Pathway



Our President, in this 150th Year, Steve Woosey, started early in 1990, being presented here with the Junior Singles trophy at 15, from the then President Roger Knowles. Steve would go on to play team tennis, and then not only become 1st Team Captain but also win the Mens Singles Championships in 2010. He has encouraged his whole family to play and can be seen (right) with his daughter Grace with Richard & Alex Meadowcroft in 2013 and the Generation Trophy. Both Grace & Alex have come through the Junior Programme run by Head Coach Andy Perry, since 2010, and both became tennis leaders, then played in the adult teams, and both have reached the respective Annual Singles Finals, with Alex also captaining the Mens 2nd team for 4 successful back-to-back promotion seasons, from Division 6 to 2, 2017-2021.



In 2002 Chris Philpott (left) won the Junior Primary Cup at the age of 10 and has progressed to winning the Mens Singles Championships 6 times and has been the Mens 1st Team Captain for the last 8 years, holding a strong position in Division 1 of the NE Cheshire League.

Will Armitage and Cameron Paris (right) in 2013, were very successful Juniors, both reaching the latter stages of the Mens Singles Championships and are now regular members of the Mens 1st Team, 10 years later in 2023.



Katie Hudson-Davies (right) won Junior Competitions back in 2012/13 and is now a valuable member of the Ladies 2nd Team.

In fact, the 2012/13 year of Juniors, below has seen 6 of the 8 pictured now playing team tennis, (from l to r), Oliver Jones, Lewis Jones, Grace Woosey, Alex Meadowcroft, Harry Hallisey and Ben Fowler. Helen Taylor, Ladies 3rd team, Alan Judkins Mens 2nd team & Matt Jackson Mens 4th team are also products of the Junior Programme in the Nineties & Noughties!



Tennis Express / Rusty Rackets Pathway

A tennis programme for adult beginners to enjoy the game or reacquaint themselves with a racket & ball has also proved to be a popular pathway, with Helen Barker now a regular Ladies 1st Teamer, Marina Jones & Sophie Cochlin Ladies 2nd Team, Zoe Callan, Jo Butterworth, Helen Dobson and Helen Webley Ladies 4th Team and Neil Duffitt Mens 5th Team.

We were Juniors, we lived life, we came back as Adults Pathway

So as much as the Junior Programme has produced a conveyor belt of talent over the years, what about those Juniors who maybe left for different reasons and then returned? Players like Andy Armitage, Mike Gough, Darryl Kennedy, Matthew Moores & Mark Roberts who are now regular team players, indeed Darryl is now Mens 5th Team Captain.

So, there are different Pathways to achieve different levels of success, but ultimately it is the enjoyment of the game for everyone involved that enables players past and present to be part of West Heaton. Let us all keep playing with our families and our friends and be part of the next 50 years of Club history!

(Apologies to anyone who feels they could have been mentioned on these pathways, and have not been, but it was not possible in the framework of this article to include everyone).

Richard Meadowcroft, member of the Coaching Team and Past President 2015

And to help our youngest members on those pathways we have our Tennis Coaching Leaders...

From Reuben Cope

Coaching at West Heaton has easily been the best job I've had. From the community and friends I've made, to the experiences and responsibilities I've been given, being able to have a role delivering the same coaching lessons and camps in which I attended myself some years ago is something else! I still get the same excitement from a game of 'wipeout' or 'sin-bin' 7-year old Reuben would have got. I feel like being someone who has worked their way through the same system and coaching that I am now giving is extremely important. Just how agonising it can be to come second rather than first in dodgeball, or just how long and tiring that last ball collection can be at the end of a camp.



West Heaton's senior coaching staff have definitely taught me a lot and gave me a strong base of knowledge to go off. Andy, Richard, Johnny and Sue have all definitely been somewhat of a mentor in teaching me how to both entertain a class of children as well as improving their tennis ability. The coaches really highlight the importance of balancing fun with hard work. As well as this, coaching has certainly affected how I carry myself outside of tennis

as well. The level of responsibility held as well as the confidence required to explain and educate has improved and widened my skill set. Importantly, tennis coaching offers an escape from the stresses of being a 6th form student. With A-levels around the corner, I can confidently say that being able to either play or coach really acts as a way of clearing your mind. Having to engage younger minds and keep them focused really does take away from the stress of exams. Coaching tennis at West Heaton doesn't really feel like a job sometimes. It still baffles me that I can play and

coach tennis as part of my work, which is something I'd normally associate with my leisure and free time. By having this job I also feel much more connected to my community and the Heaton. It's lovely to be able to play with other members who live in the local area, as well as attending the social events and functions as well.

And Gabriel Nilsson

West Heaton has a special place in many of our hearts. I would like to provide a glimpse into mine, as someone who has grown up through the club. My journey through West Heaton began at four, when I began taking tennis lessons with familiar faces such as Sue and Andy! Being coached at West Heaton was fantastic. Although tennis is generally an independent sport, group sessions at West Heaton allowed me to still be part of a team and develop cooperation skills. I enjoyed my weekly lessons, slowly getting better, I still remember the unmatched feeling when moving up a group after getting proficient enough.



However, what warms my heart the most looking back is the holiday camps. Spending a whole week playing tennis was a sure way to improve, the peaks of my tennis were always during the Friday tournament. Holiday camp for me is very social. For example, being paired up with someone new and continuing your conversation into break, or starting friendly rivalry with the opponent you always seemed to go to 6-6 with. Lunches and breaks within themselves were an experience I will never forget. The quaver stuffed sandwiches, the rushing to finish your lunch to go play table tennis or table football, the crowd around the one person in the room lucky enough to bring their Nintendo. I stayed from early drop off to late pick up. There were always a few others with busy parents and who were the ones which I generally became closest to. After a whole day of tennis you would expect to tire of it, but we would continue on, playing "Wallee" or recreating our favourite games that we had played with the coaches. As I got older, I began to involve myself with the club differently but nothing beat coming down to the club for a quick match with a friend. When I was around fourteen, I became a tennis leader, working alongside those who had taught me. Working at West Heaton has taught me a lot even beyond tennis. One being able to work with children, I have come to enjoy it a lot. Having come through the system I have the ability to relate to the children. I understand the frustrated older brother forced to play their sister and the unanimous cries for yet another game of dodge-ball. Coaching at West Heaton has been a time capsule into my childhood and that fills me with sentimentality.

A little bit of Bowling History

It now seems quite remarkable that despite opening for business in 1873 we didn't enter a men's team in a bowling league till 1985 and a ladies team till 1991. Although friendly matches were held against local clubs such as Heaton Moor Park and Ryecroft, most competition was by way of friendly games and internal tournaments.

This is largely why there are quite a number of bowling trophies for internal competitions.



Doris Moores, Mary Greenhalgh, Enid Monks

Many of these were donated by generous club members but unfortunately there isn't room for all of them in the Club calendar nowadays.

The internal competitive and social bowling scene though was very active with bowling most weekend afternoons and Tuesdays and Thursday. Up to 8 "blocks" were allowed on the green at once (usually 4 in league matches) and play was up to 15 (21 in matches).



2005 President Dave Hopwood opens the new "stand", built by members of the Bowling Section

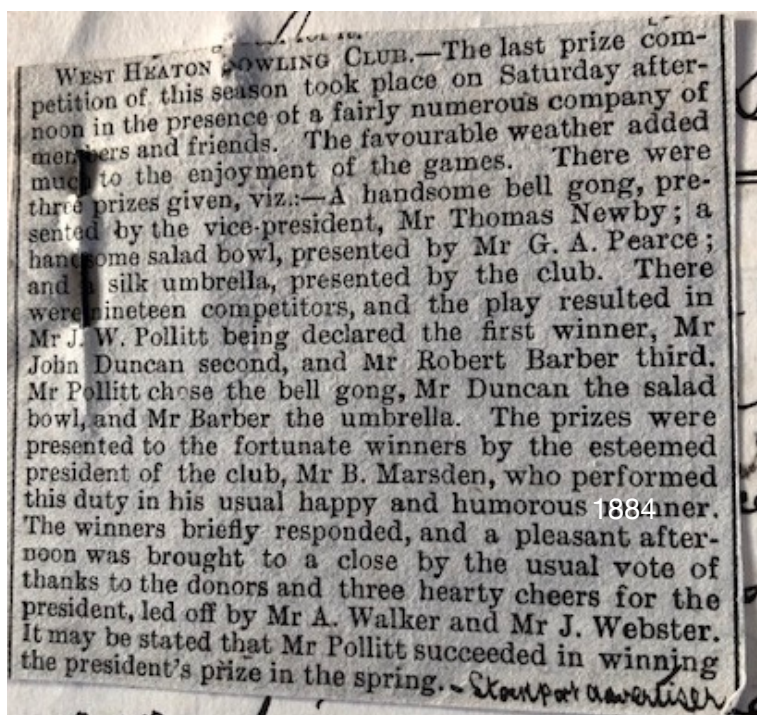
Saturday afternoon teas were also very popular and the Lady Captain was responsible for organising them, usually for over 50 players, men and ladies, plus all the prizes with a first prize typically valued at £20 - quite a lot in the 70s and 80s!

The Lady Captain also had to arrange bridge and whist drives once a month during the close season - and organise the Gentlemen's Captain's dinner!

While the men were quite happy for the Ladies to help out in these ways, many men also "did their bit" in terms of Club maintenance with jobs such as fixing the club roof and building the Bowling "stand" as pictured.

The internal competition and social scene was thriving to such an extent that there wasn't too much enthusiasm to enter external competitive leagues. In fact, some lady bowlers were not convinced that joining a league was a good idea as it could disturb the internal events that members enjoyed.

The impetus for a men's team came in the early eighties when a number of men who had previously played other competitive sports such as tennis and football started bowling and found encouragement from existing male bowlers resulting in the initial team in 1985 and other teams soon following. Team bowling was also another way of bowling in the evening as many of the male bowlers worked during the day.



PS: Enjoy this newspaper cutting of a bowling competition from 13th September 1884 describing a bowling competition and the prizes of a bell gong, salad bowl and umbrella.

More than a Game

The First World War was said to be “the war to end all wars”. Sadly that wasn’t true even after the Second World War followed relatively soon afterwards.

Oddly, we know much more about the First World War than the Second in terms of the impact on West Heaton. At the beginning of WWI, it was decided “that a roll of honour be placed in the pavilion of those who go to the war and that the subscription of those members who have enlisted shall be waived for the period of their service”.

By 1915, 17 were enlisted. These were practically all the eligible members of the club and were mostly sons of members. The groundsman was discharged because he was a single man of military age.

The remaining club members did their bit to help. Injured soldiers from the Heaton Mersey Military Hospital were invited by the Red Cross Society to the bowling green and the ladies organised the teas. This was a success and more injured men were invited on other occasions from other hospitals, including Stepping Hill.

By April 1916, with all the fit and able men involved in the fighting, it was decided that “the ladies be allowed to arrange tennis matches” and wounded soldiers became regular visitors.

Club member Sgt Robert Gill was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM) for his bravery in Gallipoli. This was a decoration for gallantry in the field by other ranks of the British Army and was the second highest award in action after the Victoria Cross. He was one of the oldest men to have been given this decoration and the club collected £6.18s for his presentation.

Every AGM told of the awful impact that the War had on ordinary people.

“The members cannot derive the same pleasure from the club as in former days. As they must be thinking of relations and friends who are fighting for us and some of the members have unfortunately had to bear sad losses during the year.” The committee reported that of the 26 who joined the army, nine gave their lives nobly. Besides the men joining the army, several lady members joined local institutions in connection with the army to help with the war effort.



On Peace Day, July 19th 1919, various competitions were held at the club and there was a concert and dance in the evening.

In September 1919, the club commissioned a copper plate memorial. This was lost for some time but was found during the demolition of a mill in the 1970s and is now displayed in the pavilion. The fallen soldiers are also commemorated on the war memorial at St Paul’s Church.

West Heaton during WW2

During the Second World War club life continued, although no presidents were elected between 1941 and 1944.

Whilst many club members served in the war, there is no record of any deaths.

On the home front, blackout rules were in force which applied to all buildings and cars. For those with cars, there was also petrol rationing. The Home Guard was very active in the area because of the proximity of Fairey Aviation and Renold Chains. As well as a unit at Renold's, there were also units based at Heaton Moor Golf Club and the Guide Hall. It is likely that some club members were involved in the Home Guard or in other volunteer services.



In the summer of 1940, the club held its tennis tournament as well as one with Heaton Mersey Club. Apart from these events there was little recorded sport, although some social events continued. Arnold Welch (a future president) and his wife Lucy (nee Mattinson) were active members of the West Heaton Dramatic Society. In 1940, Arnold wrote, produced and took the lead role in a play that received a 'first rate' review in the Alderley and Wilmslow Advertiser.

Older members kept up the necessary maintenance that enabled the club's post war revival. In 1945 the club gave a vote of thanks to the people who had "kept the playing space in such wonderful condition during the war years".

After the war, Arnold Welch was elected President for 1945 and 1946. He had been in the army before the war, serving as a Captain with the Royal Army Service Corps. In 1921 he was stationed at the RASC barracks in Chorlton. He lived at 6 Gibsons Road and was laid to rest in St Paul's churchyard.

The only other president known to have military service was Frederick William Towns who was President in 1949. In March 1941 he was 2nd Lieutenant in the Intelligence Corps and he later became a Major in the Royal Artillery. In civilian life he was a solicitor and university lecturer in law, as well as a part-time ARP. His wife, Annie Towns, was part of the mobile message corps. Frederick donated one of the club's Presidents' Honours Boards and the President's medal is inscribed with "Presented by Frederick W Towns Esq 1986".

Chrissie Gibson, Past President of 2014

Back int' Day (or "they said what ???")

1973 - Centenary mag - If all goes according to plan the first squash court should commence in March, with completion in June. Members were assured that it isn't "too fast" or "only for young people" but that "the game can be played at whatever pace and standard you choose"

1979 newsletter - could members please donate any unwanted music tape cassettes to the bar for the new piped music - but please no Max Bygraves!

1985 newsletter: The General Committee is looking for ideas what use maybe made of the area of triangular shape close alongside the bowling green (the original croquet lawn). Tennis Committee minutes 10.8.39 : Discussion about "the croquet lawn being turned into a tennis court for juniors". It was decided "not to be brought up at the Annual meeting".
(Well done to Pete Goulding and his team of gardeners for solving the problem so effectively.)

A few concerns that the membership had fallen from 980 in 1980 to 829 in Jan 1985. Plans were being drawn up to attract new members but not going as far as in 1938 when it was proposed that each Bowling member who failed to introduce a new member should pay double subs! (membership was then 314!). The gap in finances was resolved by holding a jumble sale!

Summer of '69

For many years Raymond Prior has been the unofficial historian of West Heaton, often taking pen to paper (or typewriter) to record events.

Raymond found the events described below to be especially noteworthy so as we look back on what makes / has made West Heaton the club that it is, here are those events in Raymond's (unedited) words:

If one month deserves to stand out in the history of West Heaton, it is surely July 1969.

From January to July, the work had been going on to transform West Heaton into something like the club we know today, with a substantial 1969 bar lounge replacing the former Bowlers' Hut. Normal activities took place under difficulty, even President's Day on 12th July : still, they mostly did take place.

The official opening of the lounge was set for 26th July and the President, Gordon Atkinson, was asked to officiate on what would, it turned out, be his 36th birthday. But before then the weekend of 19th / 20th July had a lot to offer.

On Saturday 19th July several members travelled to Gatley Tennis Club to support Kay Clayton who had reached the final of the North East Cheshire Girls' Singles Competition. She did us proud and won an exciting match 6-3, 3-6, 6-3. Incredibly, she still had the energy, back at West Heaton, to play and win the final of the Wrigley Cup (under 18s) against a strong opponent.

A sponsored walk, vital for financing of the building work, had been arranged for 20th July. 20 miles, yes 20 miles, taking in for 48 members the length of Kingsway to Handforth and back by a more varied route but still unrelenting pavements. 38 completed the course and the Pavilion was littered with bowls of soaking feet as the hot-pot supper was devoured.

But why, as the evening proceeded, did those bowls and those feet move into the - as yet uncarpeted -Bar Lounge? Because a TV set (black & white of course) had been brought in and there was Eagle, the lunar module, touching down on the moon. It would be next day, our time, when Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin would emerge from the vehicle , but never mind we had seen this achievement of man. The opening of the - now carpeted - Bar Lounge managed to be far from an anti-climax and the Press gave the Club good treatment. It would be hard to repeat such a month as July 1969.



President Gordon Atkinson and wife Jean open the new lounge. Architect Alan Jackson (brother of Pete and uncle of Matt) is partly hidden. Raymond Prior is on the left



The plaque was presented to the Atkinsons when it was removed during the next re-modelling of the bar lounge, in 1995. Gordon has sadly passed away but Jean is pictured proudly holding it in 2023.



That's Entertainment

West Heaton has a rich history of members providing entertainment for its members whether associated with its sports or just for the sheer fun of it. And we can see from records of the time that this tradition was set from the earliest days.

Before moving to more modern days, in September 1883 the newspapers reported that “The closing party and bowling match of the season of the West Heaton Bowling Club took place on Saturday and attracted an unusually large gathering. The excellent band of the Barnes’ House Boys was on the ground during the afternoon and evening, and after tennis, croquet and tea, the youths and maidens had a couple of hours dancing on the croquet lawn”.



On July 11th 1885 it was reported that “On Saturday afternoon last a garden party was held within the grounds of West Heaton Bowling Club, which is prettily situated off Prince’s Road, close to Mauldeth Hall. Over 200 persons partook of the enjoyable repast which was furnished by the ladies who catered for this occasion. During the afternoon a tennis match was played with the friends from the Heaton Mersey Tennis Club. West Heaton won the tennis by 17 sets to 15.”

In 1937 an Entertainment Section was formally set up and the fun has carried on in various forms since then.

The famous Penguin Club was an occasional series of events providing dining, dancing and cabaret from the late 50s to the late 80s. There were pantomimes such as Babes in the Wood in 1980 shown here and the 1940s came to life in 1987. And a long-standing Amateur Dramatic section which sadly folded in 1986.

In more recent times we’ve enjoyed regular Quiz Nights, carols every Christmas Eve, “Entertainers” Nights, various Fancy Dress including Tarts and Vicars, Summer Balls as when celebrating our 140th Anniversary, our late Queen’s Diamond Jubilee in 2013. First Fridays arrived in 2011 and are still going strong. And The Greatest Show Night in February 2023 will live long in the memory - especially the 150th Rap written by Pete Goulding!

Even Elvis (aka Bob Woosey) has often been seen in the building!



A selection of some more of the entertainment memories over the years - spoilt for choice !

1873, 1873. - 1873 what does that mean to me. A time when bowling, bowling, bowling A time when bowling started rolling. Before the Golf Course got a T That is what it means to me.
1873, 1873. - 1873 what does that mean to me. They built a green the best you've seen. A crown in the middle just like a Queen. First the club was made of sticks. Then replaced with concrete bricks. 1873, 1873. - 1873 that's what it means to me.
A bar to use with lots of booze. Three sports that we can choose. Tennis courts we have six. A game of squash in the mix. 1873, 1873. - 1873 what does that mean to me. 1873, 1873. - 1873 what does that mean to me.
The years go by and we're still here, Hitting balls and drinking beer. Rolling round a big square green. Happy Birthday WEST HEATON 2023, 2023 - ANN. I. VERSARY 2023, 2023 - ANN. I. VERSARY



Our Presidents

1873-1875	W.R. Callender, MP	1919	G.Nicholl	1958	J. O. Lupton	1991	E. Greenhalgh
1876-1877	None elected	1920	G. Mason	1959	Ernest M. Kershaw	1992	Peter Jackson
1878-1880	J. Chadwick	1921	J.N. Hopwood	1960	R. H. Sheldon	1993	G.T. Kay
1881-1889	B. Marsden	1922 - 1928	Not recorded	1961	H. Q. Mann	1994	W. Barry Oswald
1890	Mr. Newby	1929	Gerald Linfoot	1962	R. Brelsford	1995	John H. Whitby
1891	Mr Withy		Gerald Linfoot	1963	J. Marsh	1996	Peter Podmore
1892	J.W. Berra	1931	Stan H. Heighway	1964	D. N. Rothwell	1997	Keith Anderson
1893	Mr Laidlaw	1932	George Mason	1965	R. S. Brown	1998	Michael Coward
1894	J. Roberts	1933	Len Worsencroft	1966	G. M. Davies M.B.E.	1999	W. P. Henderson
1895	F.Pearn	1934	Geo. H. Byrom	1967	J.W. G. Mason	2000	Mike Gibson
1896	J. Roberts	1935	A. E. Travis	1968	R. Holt	2001	John P. Howarth
1897	J. Bowker	1936	Wm Dootson	1969	F.G. C. Atkinson	2002	Barrow Gaskarth
1898	E. Walton	1937	Wm Dootson	1970	I. R. Duncan	2003	Barbara Dunne
1899	W. Lewis	1938	Harold S. Todd	1971	K. J. Gordon	2004	Andrew M. Rayner
1900	J. Watson	1939	Wm Sidebotham	1972	R. D. Lodge	2005	David G. Hopwood
1901	S. Knowles	1940	Wm Sidebotham	1973	G. M. Haslam	2006	Janet E. Cowan
1902	J.R. Frame	1941	2nd world war - none elected	1974	J. F. Wright	2007	Elizabeth A. Jordan
1903	W. Curbstone	1942	2nd world war - none elected	1975	D. E. R. Swallow	2008	R. D. B. Stringer
1904	Mr Tomlinson	1943	2nd world war - none elected	1976	I. Lunn	2009	John R. Helliwell
1905	S.A. Jackson	1944	2nd world war - none elected	1977	G. B. Chadwick	2010	Edward Tasker
1906	N. Bradley	1945	Arnold Welch	1978	S. H. Mattinson	2011	Norma Eccles
1907	G. Jarvis	1946	Arnold Welch	1979	R.L.E. Rimmington	2012	Alan C. Mansfield
1908	Mr Binns	1947	George Ball	1980	G. N. Stephens	2013	Martin Sharman
1909	A.V. Sharratt	1948	R.A. Brittain	1981	R.W. Woosey	2014	Chrissie Gibson
1910	C.E. Thomas	1949	F.W. Towns	1982	D.W. Porter	2015	Richard Meadowcroft
1911	H. Mushlian	1950	C. H. Sheldon	1983	P. H. Locke	2016	Andrew Taylor
1912	J.H. Abbott	1951	H. K. Harrison	1984	Owen Corrigan	2017	Matthew Jackson
1913	R. Grenville	1952	J. Arthur Stewart	1985	Dan Blunt	2018	Una Goulding
1914	F.G. Smith	1953	Eric A. Todd	1986	Peter F. Mundy	2019	Joyce Barclay
1915	G.W. Wild	1954	S. Locke	1987	Bernard McGrath	2020	John Mandy
1916	J.R. Ball	1955	G. B. Mattinson	1988	Peter E. Dunne	2021	Josephine Taylor
1917	J.T. Wainwright	1956	Frank R Grieve	1989	Alan Woosey	2022	Jane Philpott
1918	J. Ware	1957	T. Bowden	1990	Roger Knowles	2023	Steve Woosey

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to all those who helped with photos and memories of our Club through the years. It's been fascinating and, at times, quite moving to hear the love that so many people have for the Club and their friends within it, past and present.

Also to the residents of Prince's and Leegate Roads whose "Celebration" booklet of 2011 provided some brilliant nuggets of information.

Special thanks to those pictured below who contributed articles of their own, with their personal insight.



Sue and Alan Mansfield



Gabriel Nilsson and Reuben Cope (both age 18)



Martin Sharman



Chrissie Gibson



Richard Meadowcroft

Dedicated to Barry Oswald - Barry Os, Baz, wizofoz.



Barry sadly died during heart surgery in November 2022. He was born in June 1941 and joined West Heaton in 1958, becoming President in 1994. Barry also served as Club Secretary in both the 1990s and 2000s.

Barry was passionate about West Heaton, served on many committees and was instrumental in getting the first All Weather Tennis courts at West Heaton. He served as Secretary for the North East Cheshire Lawn Tennis League for 30 years and was still serving as the League President.

For many years Baz was especially known as West Heaton's very own paparazzi, present at so many social and sporting events to capture the moments with his catch-phrase of "once more with feeling".

Barry was one of the most well-known and well-loved members at West Heaton and we miss him.

Compiled and edited by Sue and Alan Mansfield (Past President 2012)

But there's more....having done all the writing, editing etc we are left with a page spare cos the printed version needs to be in multiples of 4 pages. So we decided to fill it with a few items that otherwise wouldn't have made it due to space limitations. And why confine them to the printed version ? So the following bonus page is also on the digital version. You're welcome !

Bonus Page



Construction of the important development in 1969 (see Page 19). The old (1930) pavilion can clearly be seen on the left and the beginnings of the new bar lounge, built over the site of the former bowlers hut. On the right is the new bowlers lounge , further extended in 1973 to what we have today. With view through to the tennis courts.



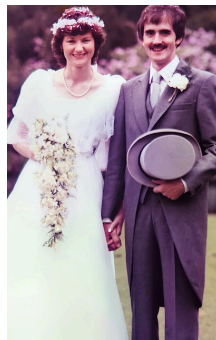
Graham Swallow and Rick Moores serve up a BBQ in 1967. Among their expectant customers are Penny Davidson (nee Bolton) , Jack Grace, Rosemary Smith, Val Moores, Marjorie Mason, Barbara Mason, Richard Rimmington (at back).



The "Royal Enclosure" end of the bar group, 1994 before the bar was relocated to its present position in 1995. Yet another departed friend, Harry Hall, in prime spot on the left. But how many more do you know? Some of these folk continue the tradition on Sunday afternoons and will happily identify themselves for a pint or a glass of wine!



Harvey Locke (member 10) met Margaret at West Heaton and married in 1983. With parents Sam and Kath, who also met at West Heaton. Sam was President in 1954.



Also met at West Heaton, long term members Jean and Keith Platts (numbers 42 and 46) tie the knot in 1983.



Janet and Dave Sanderson met at West Heaton and married in 1993. Members 49 and 124



Maggie and Stan Judkins (another much missed friend) unforgettably perform Renee and Renato in 2012



A bit less make-up next time, ladies ? Sue Mansfield, Chrissie Gibson and Liz Jordan support the 2012 Tarts and Vicars event.

Plan of West Heaton Building Developments from 1930

This plan shows how our buildings have developed in the modern era (ie since 1930).

My thanks to all who have dived deep into their memories to fill the gaps that our records didn't cover - especially the Sunday lunchtime crowd!
 The Club had a pavilion from the very beginning, for the first meeting in 1873. The centre core of the current function room was built in 1930 and this is the story since then.

