

## Warragul Ladies 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebrations November 15 2009. History of 70 years of the Warragul Ladies Bowling.

In November 1939 nine Ladies called a meeting with a view to forming a Warragul Ladies Bowling Club. For the previous 40 years the Ladies had just watched the Gentlemen play and provide the catering for their various events.

The initial Membership of 25 was set by the men who had the main management of the Club . It was not until 1942 that the Ladies were allowed to increase their membership to 32. Subscriptions were 10 shillings for Ladies and two and sixpence for the use of a locker.

In 1940-42 lights were installed and proved to be very popular. By 1940 the Ladies had a credit of 35 pounds in their A/C but by 1941-42 the effects of the war were being felt very strongly, causing restricted activities for several years. The very first Ladies match

was arranged against Yallourn who visited and won the day, the visitors would have had to come by train as petrol rationing was in force.

A water scheme with a petrol engine & piping was installed to give the Club greens an adequate water supply from the Hazel Creek , one wonders how they watered the greens before that.

After the end of the war Warragul joined the Victorian Ladies Bowling Association. in 1946.

Dress for Ladies was strictly controlled, dresses had to be 15 inches from the ground with

your shoes on .Hats had to be worn at all times, on the green, and in the Club House, Stockings were supposed to be white but our Ladies stayed with flesh coloured stockings and it was a great leap forward to be allowed to wear cardigans, (but not in the Club House). A belt had to be worn on frocks even if they were princess line and you were encouraged to wear a double fronted petticoat to protect your modesty just in case your

frock was a little see-thru or the sun was setting behind you. Do you have a double fronted petticoat or even a petticoat now? Very few frocks are now worn and there is a more relaxed dress code. In 1977 the men were permitted to wear shorts for Pennant but

the Ladies were not to wear shorts on the green "under any circumstances whatsoever". What would those fellows think of the slacks, pedal pushers , and shorts that we wear today? Obviously equality for women was a long way off then. Too much flashy jewellery was not allowed , nowadays you could wear a bracelet around your ankle and no one would notice.

Those women in the early days were a long suffering lot it was not until October 1947 that the Ladies asked the men to have a tap installed in the kitchen. Try telling today's younger generation to put up with that, they would go on strike very quickly (and so they should). With the war years behind them the Ladies progressed into a strong and vibrant

Club with many good players and successful teams. They laid the foundations for the

Club that, we all enjoy today.

But disaster struck in 1966 when the Club House was burnt down and most of the records and photographs were lost. So they had to start all over again. In 1943, 3 pounds 7 shillings and sixpence was donated especially for Prisoners of War and the Red Cross Comfort Fund, then after the war six pounds and five shillings went to Food for Britain and the Red Cross. Today we still raise money for various Charities and groups with special needs.

The Ladies joined the GDLBA in 1950 and took part in Pennant and Association events. Owing to the loss of records it is not possible to comment on their bowling in these years. But catering and kitchen work went on, it is noted that in 1969 the Ladies catered for a special event but were not allowed to join the men, they had to watch from the kitchen - equality was still a long way off. The Silver Anniversary was held in 1964 and Mrs Pammenter and Mrs Young two of the Foundation Members attended this event. In 1968 a two day Tournament for the Ladies was held and this was continued for many years, Now it gets harder each year to fill a one day event,

But we had some very good bowlers those days. In 1969 the Warragul Ladies were represented in the Australian Womens Bowling Carnival in Perth - 8 of our ladies took part and 2 ladies reached the last 18 in the Pairs event (out of 300 players). We had a framed photo of them standing beside the plane to Perth but unfortunately it seems to be lost. In 1969 a team of Warragul Bowlers won the West Gippsland Open Tournament - to do this they had to defeat another Warragul Team. I guess that this was not a good thing to do. Night Bowls became very popular and Old Time dances were held and it was necessary for bookings to be introduced.

There was a move to apply for a liquor licence but it was rejected by the Members three times, however it was successful in 1972. It was not popular with everyone, one conservative Gentleman announced that he would not cross the floor near the Bar to use the Men's toilets. One wonders how he managed to last all day. But things got better for the ladies with a dishwasher, hot water dispenser and a new gas stove. Also an extension on the building resulted in more ladies toilets and hand basins. By 1989 we had 132 members but this number dropped to 96 and now it is 55 affiliated players. The fact that more women work or are helping their children with baby sitting means that it is getting harder to attract new members but we are always happy to welcome ladies to our Club.

Our Golden Anniversary was held in 1989 and we celebrated 60 years of Bowling in 1999. When the Ladies achieved Equality at last it was not to everyone's satisfaction. In 2001 a 19 year old girl took the RVBA to Court because they would not let her play Pennant with the men on Saturdays and won the case. This changed the face of bowls forever and was not met with everyone's approval. However time heals everything and it is slowly being accepted. We have not had a shortage of Ladies willing to take up the duties of President, Secretary and Treasurer and this shows how the members have the best interests of the Club at heart. We had 3 Ladies serve as Secretary for a total of 30 years. It must have been a very comfortable position or else we could not get rid of them.

Every Club needs Members to serve on the Selection and Tournament Committees and we have had many willing volunteers to fill these positions. Also credit must be given to those who work on our Catering Committees, they generate so much money for our Club and money is always needed.

The Club has 5 Lady Life Members and this is an indication of the service that these Ladies have given to their fellow Members.

Our Club has been quite successful in Pennant with wins in Divisions 2,3,4,&5 over the last years. We now have coloured clothing of Green pants with a Gold Wattle logo on our Pennant shirts ,of which we are very proud as these are Australia's colours.

Warragul has held it's place in the Association with 2 Ladies - the past Glad Paynter and Alison Matthews,who served as Association Presidents, and many Members have competed and been successful in State events.

There has been a lot of change at our Club in recent times, 2 new synthetic greens along with a New Look garden.and surrounds which has brought about a flurry of enthusiasm from Members willing to be involved. There is now a strong sense of support and faith in our Club and it's future.

Happy 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday Warragul Ladies , you have given us many, many years of enjoyable Bowling.

Compiled by Helen M Thomas

For Warragul Ladies 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebrations.

November 15 2009.