

LNCDWBA HISTORY

THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS – 1955 to 2005

Unfortunately, much of the early noted history of the Lower North Coast District Women's Bowling Association (LNCDWBA), including details of many specific names and dates, has been lost in time but a few records have remained making it possible to summarise here those important events of the past.

The inaugural meeting of what was to become the Lower North Coast District Women's Bowling Association was held at Wingham Bowling Club sometime in 1955 with five delegates each from Wingham, Gloucester, Forster and Taree clubs in attendance.

It was followed by the first Annual General Meeting of the Association in August 1956 where it was decided that future meetings be held quarterly, that capitation fees would be one shilling (10 cents) per member and that the Secretary be allowed a cash float of two pounds (\$4) for stationery and stamps.

Gloucester Club graciously offered the use of their greens for Pennants to the Forster Ladies who at that time did not have the use of greens for their home games.

This offer was duly accepted.

It was also decided at this meeting that clubs should pay half of the cost of Pennant flags which was ten pounds, ten shilling (\$21) at the time.

The next three years saw the affiliation of three new clubs, namely Tuncurry in June 1957, Taree West in November 1958 and Harrington in August 1959.

Bullahdelah joined the District in August 1960 after transferring from the Northumberland Women's Association where it had been a member since July 1958.

Minutes of meetings from those days are fairly sketchy and incomplete but it was noted that the District badge was first struck in October 1963, the District Singles winner was to receive three pounds, three shillings (\$6.30) in prizemoney with the runner-up receiving two pounds, two shillings (\$4.20) and that Mrs Jo Munro be appointed the District's first official umpire.

Eight affiliated clubs became nine in August 1964 when Manning Point was affiliated which helped to bring the total membership of the association past the 500 mark for the first time.

January 1965 saw the affiliation of Tattersalls and a few months later Taree Bowling Club became Taree City Bowling Club.

In the minutes of the Annual General Meeting that year it was noted that the elected Secretary, Marj Smithurst did not have a telephone.

How things have changed.

Old Bar Beach and Black Head clubs were the next to become affiliated, the former in July 1967 and the latter in January 1969.

In April 1969 Tattersalls Club became Group 3 Leagues Club and around that time the NSW State President, Esme Dries opened a new 'Ladies room' at Forster Bowling Club.

This 1969/70 period was a landmark time for the District with the first District flag being struck, Taree City winning the District's first Country Pennant (Grade 2) and District and Club colours being officially registered as follows:

LNCDWBA – White/burnt orange lettering

Black Head – Two blues/gold

Bulahdelah – Red/black/gold

Forster – Royal blue/white

Gloucester – Mid blue/gold

Harrington – Red/white/blue

Manning Point – Green/gold

Old Bar Beach – Two blues

Taree City – Navy blue/gold

Taree West – Maroon/silver

Tattersalls – Jade green/white

Tuncurry – Red/green

Wingham – Black/gold

1972 saw the election of the District's first Life Members, Dulcie Ford (Taree City) and Gwen Woodward (Forster) who were later joined by Marj Smithurst (Forster) in 1975.

Also in 1975, Tuncurry won all five Pennant flags becoming the first club in the District to do so.

In 1977 the first Metropolitan versus Country test series was played with Gertie Bird becoming the first LNCDWBA player to represent Country.

The following year, long-serving member and one of the first District Presidents, Tuncurry's Jo Munro (1957/8) was made the District's fourth Life Member and after some discussion between those present at the AGM, a District Bowler of the Year award was inaugurated.

1979 saw Stella Cook being added to the list of Life Members bringing the total to five, a number that in 1995 would become the maximum at any one time.

The following few years were relatively uneventful with little change within the District until 1985 when in April, Group 3 Leagues Club officially became Taree Leagues Bowling Club and in November, Lansdowne Bowling Club became affiliated sporting club colours of royal blue and gold.

A further club, in the form of Tuncurry Forster Sports (green and gold) was affiliated in May of 1988, a year which saw Forster win the NSW No.4 State Pennant.

The early 1990s saw the emergence of the Lower North Coast District as a real powerhouse in NSW women's bowls, commencing in 1990 with Tuncurry being a close runner-up in the NSW No.1 State Pennant, Tuncurry's Barbara Wordsworth and Ruth Witt being runner-up in the NSW State Pairs in 1991 followed by Ruth Witt's history making win in the NSW State Singles the following year.

In 1993 Ruth Witt also won the NSW Champion of Club Champions Singles leading to her selection to represent NSW in a Test Series against Queensland in 1994.

On the club side of things, Pacific Palms (dark green and aqua blue) was affiliated in May 1990 and also that year Taree City became Taree City RSL.

In September 1992, Taree Railway Institute, with official club colours of red and green on white, became affiliated bringing the number of clubs in the District to 16.

And by 1994/5 total membership had grown to a very healthy 1545.

From 1995 through to 2003 little changed within the District until 31st December 2003 when Taree Railway Women's Bowling Club ceased operating.

This was only temporary, however, as they were able to reconvene in June 2004 after the demise of Taree City RSL whose members, in the main, were happy to transfer to their club.

2004 also heralded more success on the greens with Taree Leagues being runner-up in the NSW State No.3 Pennant and the Tuncurry foursome of Dorothy Ellis, Diane Smith, Betty Liversage and Eula Webster winning the State final of the now defunct Wolinski Shield.

In 2005 Manning Point re-registered their official colours to pale blue and white with navy trim.

Finally, at a time when the Lower North Coast District Women's Bowling Club were able to celebrate 50 years of sustained development and tempered change within the sport of lawn bowls, it could be confident that all would continue for a further 50 years and beyond, thanks to the legacy left by 20 Presidents, 19 Secretaries, 7 Treasurers and countless Vice Presidents, Match-persons, Delegates and Volunteers.

Note: If any members believe they can assist in filling in any 'blank spaces' or adding anything pertinent to the above, please do not hesitate in contacting Sarah Boddington by email on sarahbowls@optusnet.com.au.