



Stewarton Bowling Club

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THE HISTORY OF OUR CLUB

The Early Days (1861-1899)

Stewarton Bowling Club officially opened on Wednesday 7 August 1861, marking the arrival of this ancient game in the “bunnet town” long before Stewarton was granted burgh status. Despite the absence of a Provost or Town Councillors, the occasion was celebrated enthusiastically throughout the town.

The original green—located on the same site as today’s green—featured a small clubhouse that still stands on the eastern side of the grounds. Local newspapers reported on the opening the following week, thanks to Archie Chalmers who supplied a copy of the article. The green was described as being in a “very pleasant locality” on Avenue Street, situated on land gifted by John Cunninghame Esq. of Lainshaw, with turf donated by Robert Mackie Esq. of Draffen.

On the day of the opening, a delegation of Kilmarnock bowlers gathered at the Railway Arms Inn at 1 p.m. before proceeding to the new green, accompanied by an instrumental band. After a speech by David Provan Esq. of Lochridge and Wardhead, play commenced, but rain brought the game to an early close. The celebration continued indoors with a public dinner at 4 p.m., hosted by Mr Hamilton at the Railway Arms. Following the traditional toasts, A.E. McKnight, Advocate of Edinburgh, offered his best wishes for the success of the newly established Stewarton Bowling Club.

As a gesture of goodwill, the Kilmarnock bowlers presented the club with a commemorative medal, which now serves as the President’s badge of office. Fourteen toasts were made in total, ensuring thanks were fully and enthusiastically expressed.



Early Success and Challenges (1900-1959)

The early years of the 20th century saw notable achievements for the club, including a Stewarton rink winning the Scottish Championship at Queen's Park in 1907—an impressive milestone in the club's sporting history.

However, the mid-20th century brought difficult periods. The 1950s were particularly challenging, with membership falling to concerning levels and finances becoming extremely strained. It was a time that tested the resilience of the club and its members.

Revival and Growth (1960s-1970s)

The 1960s and 1970s marked a turning point. With a growing population in the town and renewed enthusiasm for the sport, bowling once again became a popular pastime enjoyed by all ages—from juniors to seniors. The ladies' section, in particular, played an important role in revitalising activity and community life at the club.

During this period of renewal, the clubhouse was extended twice and modernised to better serve members. A drinks licence was also secured, helping to establish a lively social atmosphere and strengthening the club's financial position for the future.

A Bright Future Ahead (2026 and Beyond)

Stewarton Bowling Club's rich history stands as a testament to the dedication, energy, and passion of its members—past and present. Today the club continues to thrive, offering a warm welcome to new members and providing opportunities for play, competition, and community connection.

Why not become part of our continuing story?

Join us.