



# CONSTANTIA BOWLING CLUB

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## FALCON JUNE 2015

Arguably the bowling achievement of the year for a Constantia bowler must be Linda Stringer reaching the final of SA Women's National Singles. A tremendous effort that I am sure will live long in Linda's memory. Well done.

A little more predictable was Alan Lofthouse winning the WP Champion of Champions final against Kevin Campbell in a top class contest that was in the balance for two thirds of the game. Well done to Alan who proved once again he can still rise to the big occasion.

The Constantiaberg Tournament was held on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2015, and our thanks go to Mike Patton for representing us on the organising committee. Constantia won the tournament for the second year in succession but only on shot difference from Plumstead after both sides had the same number of points. This was my first appearance in this competition and was very enjoyable not least for the performances of the two ladies in my team. Irene led better than any lead I played with in the Flag and Jorri was also very good. We won all our three games but the least said about my contribution the better. After such a nice day I have forgiven my two partners ancestors for the rape and pillage of my ancestors along the east coast of England about 1000 years ago.

When moving from one country to another it is natural to make comparisons between the two and I was thinking of one such a contrast recently. In the early 1980's a bowling club called Downhills, based in North London, applied to joined a league that my club played in. This league was looking to replace a side that had dropped out so the Committee decided to be a bit flexible as far as the catchment area was concern and they were allowed to join the Lea Valley League. A requirement to join that league was that you needed to have a bar. This kept out all the clubs based in municipal parks who were not allowed a licence to sell alcohol and who, in most cases, had greens that were looked after as if they were part of the gardens and your shoes disappeared below the level of the grass when you stepped onto the green. All the local members of these clubs had arms like Popeye and refused to accept their green was even slightly heavy. Anyway Downhills Bowling Club joined the Lea Valley League. It was a strange name given there were no hills nearby only huge tower blocks that some bright spark in the London County Council felt would be ideal to house problem and immigrant families who had penetrated the area in more ways than one. The area was called Broadwater Farm and is now infamous in UK history for the riots in mid 1980 when a policeman was murdered whilst trying to protect firemen attempting to get control of the many fires started by the looters and rioters.

Downhills green nestled below these 20 storey eyesores but the members were a resourceful and determined bunch. On match day mornings, two chaps brought the mower on a trailer and cut the green after clearing up the mess left by squatters. Later other members brought the jacks, mats and scoreboards from their houses, given they would be stolen for certain if left in what passed for their club house. Even later wives arrived with the food for our tea plus crockery and last but not least a chap came with cool boxes full of cans of beer and a DIY bar that he rigged up. We all made donations equal to the cost of beer as sale of alcohol was not allowed on municipal property. These chaps were a complete team and they all worked for each other, on and off the green. In their second year they won the league, which shows what real teamwork can achieve and that, coupled with the riots in 1985 (they occurred in October when outdoor bowls was in closed season.) caused a rethink by LV league and their application to rejoin in 1986 was refused. This was the only possible choice given that visiting clubs refused to play there deeming it unsafe, although it must be remembered that such riots were very rare and PC Blakelock was the first policeman to be killed in a riot in the UK since 1833. The manner of his death caused outrage, given he was set upon by 30 thugs, many with machetes and ended up with a six inch knife embedded in his neck up to the hilt. This I know for sure as my wife Liz worked at the hospital he was taken to and was told the whole story by the nurses on duty that night in the Accident & Emergency department.

I now look at Constantia as a contrast to Downhills. The physical work on the green is all done for the members. Jack, mats & scoreboards are laid out with chalk on the bank and ice water provided. Players troop in at half way point of their game to tea, coffee and food and troop out again. At the end of the game they troop back in and sometimes clear away the mats, jacks etc but not always. They are then served their drinks from the bar and asked only to take their empties back, which some do and some don't. As the bowlers of both clubs glanced up from watching their match the chaps from Downhills saw rubbish heaps and tower blocks and the members of Constantia see flowers, trees and a glorious mountain backdrop. The South African term "bums in the butter" comes to mind but who would you imagine would be the club whose members had most to whinge and moan about? If the Downhills members ever found themselves in Constantia they would think they had died and gone to heaven, so when Constantia members think they have good reasons to complain just think for a moment about those guys from Downhills and reflect upon the privilege it is to play at Constantia.

My thanks to a fellow member for a suggestion that I include in each Falcon an article about the life of a Constantia BC member and Alan Lofthouse kindly agreed to be the first volunteer. Obviously for me to be able to make this a regular feature I need members to co-operate and one volunteer is worth two pressed men/women. I will call this feature "In conversation with" and any member prepared to volunteer please let me know.

### **In conversation with Alan Lofthouse.**

At the age of 5 Alan moved from Observatory, where he was born, to Bellville where he lived until moving to Chelsea Village in Wynberg in 1978. He was very active in a range of sports at school but it was at the Bellville Sports Club that he made his mark in football, baseball and to a lesser extent at cricket. Alan's father Reg was huge influence in

encouraging Alan to take his sport very seriously and try as be as good as he could be. In football Alan played through the under 9's and under 10's and onwards until he made the first side at the age of sweet sixteen. Reg, who himself played cricket at provincial level, continued to coach and support Alan through his teenage years when other attractions can derail many a sporting career. In his early teen's Alan had his first introduction to bowls, playing with his father and his uncle Len on winter afternoons on Sundays, which was a time the normally strict rules at Bellville BC were relaxed to allow non members to have a try out. Although he tried to play as many Sundays as he could bowls was not yet a big part of Alan's life but he knew from early on that he wanted to play the game seriously once his football & baseball days were behind him. He had the early encouragement of a good run with his father in WP pairs and that reinforced his determination to make a name for himself in the bowling world.

In between playing all this sport he had the extra-ordinary good fortune to meet Pam, who lived only a few streets away in Boston and two years after they met in 1971 they married. Four years later, to make it easier to commute to his new job, Alan and Pam moved to Chelsea Village in Wynberg and about this time Alan was struggling with a lower back problem and decided that the time was right for him to leave his beloved Bellville Club and give up playing football & baseball. It would not have been practical to keep playing at Bellville and he did not have any enthusiasm to join a new club. Soon after moving to Wynberg Alan looked around to find a local bowls club to join and a friend, Alan Johnston, was very keen for him to join Mowbray. However Constantia was much nearer and another friend Alastair Nicholson had invited Alan to play in his team in WP triples and fours so Alan joined Constantia. Alan was almost unknown at Constantia BC, who themselves had only been going since 1971, but an ex Springbok bowler, Brian Ellwood, had moved down to Cape Town from Johannesburg and was playing at Constantia. He saw Alan playing and quickly asked him to play WP pairs with him. Partnered by Brian, Alan won his first individual WP competition in 1984, the first of many. Only one year after joining Constantia Alan played in the side that won the Premier Division of the Flag. A repeat of that feat would be nice in 2016. In his early time at Constantia he took his young son Iain along to watch and he was happy enough to sit on a bench with a bag of chips and a coke. However when Alan tried to carry this arrangement on after his daughter Tracy was born she had he own ideas of fun that did not include sitting quietly on a bench watching daddy play bowls. (There is no pleasing some people). After that Pam came to Alan's rescue and took on much more than her fair share of the parenting. Where have all these women vanished to these days?

Alan first represented Western Province in the Interprovincials in 1987 and has played regularly ever since until he decided to play in the Seniors a few years ago. In 1992 Alan won WP singles and the National Pairs with Graham Barker, but it was his bronze medal in the 1993 SA Masters singles that drew him to the attention of the National Selectors. Alan was chosen to represent his country at the Commonwealth Games in 1994, in Vancouver. With Donald Piketh leading, Alan at second, Robert Rayfield at three and Neil Burkett at skip they won 8 of their 9 section matches which saw them play Australia in the final which they won 21-18. A gold medal at the Commonwealth Games is the highest award in Bowls that only very few achieve. Alan's international career also included playing 5 test matches as part of a six man team against England in 1995 and a series

against New Zealand a year later. They lost 3 ½ to 1 ½ to England but defeated NZ 3-0. Most of Alan's catalogue of achievements can be seen on our Club honours board so I will not repeat them again here.

Alan's attachment to Liverpool FC goes back to his love of music from that city and in particular the music of the Beatles. In 2001 Alan visited the UK with Pam having won two tickets on Air Namibia as his prize for winning the Glen Pairs with Gerry Baker. He paid an all too brief visit to Anfield having taken a taxi from Manchester. He never got to the Cavern or the many other famous places in Liverpool but who knows he might go back there one day.

In closing I would quote Alan's own words to thank Pam for letting him "fly" and making possible his success at Bowls.

***"None of my success in bowls would have been possible without the support of Pam, my wife of 41 years. In fact with my love of sport she realised she was going to be a "single parent", which is not something I am proud of. Only of late has Pam attended finals days of competitions as she always felt she her presence would bring me bad luck. However I'm certain she was always there in spirit and so I knew that I never walked alone"***

### **QUIZ**

I am offering a prize of R100 to the first member to send me by E-mail the correct answers to the following questions:

1. Which former Constantia member represented South Africa in the Melbourne Olympics' and in which event?
2. Who was the first men's president of Constantia Bowls Club?
3. On which date did Constantia Bowls Club first obtain a bar licence?
4. Three men, one Englishman, one Indian and one South African were on top of Spion Kop at certain times during a Boer War battle on 23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> January 1900. They became major historical figures of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Who were they?
5. Who won the Comrades 5 times spread over a ten year period?
6. Which father and son both captained the Springbok Rugby team?
7. Who dropped the most goals in a single international rugby match and in which year?
8. Which county in UK did David Bryant represent in bowls?
9. Which county in the UK did Ken McEwan play cricket for in UK and for how many seasons?
10. Who played in the South African fours team at the 1994 Commonwealth Games and who did they defeat in the final?

Some current Constantia members must be still in regular contact with former members who have moved away. The Falcon is an ideal way for those members who have left to let all the current members know how they are getting on since they left. I can think of Roy Vaughan, Butch Watson-Smith, Paul & Lorna Eglin, Reg Scott, Tom Knight etc. etc If you are in touch with any former member and they would like to let us know how they are, please arrange to send me a message to me at [jperryman2@btinternet.com](mailto:jperryman2@btinternet.com) and I will be happy to include it in the next edition.

Please note that Eddie Curtis has moved and his new address is:

G12 Avondrust Court, 20 Rouwkoop Road, Rondebosch 7700

Eddie's cell number and e-mail remain the same but please delete his land line number.

In the last issue of the Falcon I advised the telephone number of Charlotte Roux was 021 974 6297 whereas it should have been 021 794 6297.

Terry Hepworth has passed through the second of his four phases of recovery from a back operation and is now allowed to sit for short periods and to do a little local driving. Ronnie Carmichael is also progressing but is still experiencing some pain. These major operations are very traumatic and invasive so recovery when you get a bit older is not a quick matter. Graham McLeod is well on the way to recovery after an infection disrupted his progress, and when I saw him in the Club last week he was behaving in a manner that for him was very close to normal. We hope you will all be back on the green very soon.

### THIS MONTHS JOKES

A bloke was having a few drinks by himself at a London casino when he met up with a striking but quite short and slim young woman. They got on famously and ended up in bed. The next morning she told him she was a jockey and that if he came to the races at Ascot that day, she'd tip him the winner of each race she was riding in by giving him a sign as she rode out of the saddling paddock.

In Race 2, she rode out rubbing both her boobs. The bloke looked through the race card and found 'Two Abreast' on which he placed £100 at 5-1. It won by two lengths.

In Race 4 she rode out rubbing her fingers round her eyes. He put the lot on 'Eyeliner' at 10-1 and was then £5000 in front.

In the last race she came out standing up in the stirrups and rubbing her growler. He backed nothing.

After the races, he met up with her and thanked her for the winners in Races 2 and 4.

'What about 'Itchy Mickey' in the sixth?' she asked. 'It paid a fortune?'

'Shit!' he said, 'I thought you were telling me the favourite was scratched!'

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Aaron had just finished reading a new book entitled "You Can Be THE MAN of Your House".

He stormed to his wife in the kitchen and announced, "From now on, you need to know that I am THE MAN of this house and my word is Law. You'll prepare me a gourmet meal tonight, and when I'm finished eating my meal, you'll serve me a sumptuous dessert.

After dinner, we're going upstairs and we'll have the kind of sex that I want.

Afterwards, you're going to draw me a bath so I can relax.

You'll wash my back and towel me dry and bring me my robe.

then, you'll massage my feet and hands.

Then tomorrow, guess who's going to dress me and comb my hair?"

His wife Rebecca replied,

"The f'ing' funeral director would be my first guess".

I am off to UK for a couple of months from 24<sup>th</sup> June 2015, so will see you all in early October.

**John Perryman**

Editor

