

Clive's Story.

It seems that for as long as we can remember, Clive Lipyeart has been associated with the work that takes place all the year round on our bowling green. At the end of last season, he announced his decision to withdraw from the greens committee.



Only by looking back into the past 20 years, can you fully appreciate the depth and importance of the contribution he has made to our club. It is relatively easy to establish that history by talking to Clive. Besides keeping a remarkable record of almost every match, he can come up with many anecdotes concerning the major events as well as some of the more light-hearted goings-on, in the life of our club. Much of this is in the form of written notes. What is striking about Clive's story is that in addition to the time and effort he has put into the green, he has also given so freely (in every meaning of the word) of his professional skills. He has been involved in most, if not all of the many building projects undertaken over recent years.

He came to live in this area of Bucks when he was just a young boy. It was 1939, and wishing to escape the social deprivation then existing in the mining communities of Wales, his father found himself a job at RAF Halton as a cook and moved the family to Monks Risborough.

When as a youth he joined Monks Risboro' Football club, two important things happened, which were to shape much of his life to the present. Firstly, by volunteering to mow the football pitch he took the initial step into the world of green keeping. Secondly, playing on the team was a certain Richard Redding. It would be Richard, who was to introduce him to the game of bowls so many years later.

After finishing Technical College, Clive took up the trade of plumbing and worked at a local company for 34 years, before going self-employed. It was in 1948, when through his work he first became

involved with the Great Hampden Estate.

His firm won the business to service the houses on that estate. In 1984, one of those dwellings became empty. It was a beautiful old thatched cottage, standing alone on a large chunk of land in the most idyllic of settings. Clive set out to persuade the estate manager that he could provide an even better service should he be allowed to take up residence. He got his way and with wife Doreen, moved into the appropriately named "The Thatch", where they remain to this day. He still takes an immense pride in improving and maintaining the cottage with its large lawned areas and massive vegetable garden.

It was in the autumn of 1986 that Richard Redding talked Clive into becoming a member of Princes Risborough Bowls Club. He recalls that Richard was vice captain that year. He got introduced to two old timers - Pete Jackson and "Wacker" Weeks - who took him under their wings and encouraged his progress as a bowler. In those days, because so many people would regularly put their names up on the board for the weekend matches, it required a wait until the end of the following season before he was eventually selected for a game. Clive will tell you that around that time it was usual for him to play in as many as 35 matches in a season.

From the onset, he started doing small jobs for the club such as changing tap washers and maintaining the toilet cisterns. He then moved onto the annual task of preparing for the wintry temperatures by draining down the water systems external to the clubhouse and salting all of the traps and outside toilets. Clive has undertaken this essential work every winter since, largely unseen and generally unnoticed by us, the membership. He also serviced both hot water boilers until such times as new regulations insisted on Corgi registration.

Throughout the 1990's and beyond, projects to improve the clubs' facilities came thick and fast. When in 1990 Brian Richardson undertook to extend the clubhouse, Clive completed the plumbing-in of the kitchen, the bar and the newly built toilets for the ladies. In the following year, Reece Weale led the work to alter the surrounds of the green by constructing sides to the ditches; Clive teamed up with Mick Pearce and together they helped lay the concrete slabs. That

year he also plumbed - in the large reservoir tank and hose reels used to water the green. It was not long before he was busy again, replacing the old heating system and fitting new radiators throughout the clubhouse - with Charlie Biggs working as his plumber's mate. He spent much of the winter of 2002, alongside Peter Pauley and Charlie, fitting the sheet metal support plates around the outer edges of the Green. In between time, came the job of fitting a grease trap and new taps to the kitchen sink.

In 2003, the water company was presenting the club with massive bills, coupled with demands to pay up. It became clear that we had a major problem with an underground leak in the mains water supply feeding both us and our neighbours at the Tennis Club. So saturated had the ground become that even the septic tank system was flooding. The stalwart trio of Richard Redding, Ray Rouse and Clive, became embroiled in many weeks of hard toil, trenching down and along the line - before locating the leak. However, with the problem finally isolated and with Clive providing the necessary plumbing expertise, it was quickly sorted at zero cost to the club and to the satisfaction of all.

A few years back, he was heard to say that the one project he would like to be associated with before he retired from the scene, would be the installation of a sprinkler system. So, when in the winter of 2004 Ray Rouse came up with a design for an automated system, Clive and Peter Pauley set about clearing the ditches around the green and plumbing-in the pipe work to the pop up sprinkler heads. The system went in on time and on cost and was ready for use in March 2005.

In addition to all this, Clive was still doing his green keeping work - a routine that he had begun back in the days when Norman Richardson was employed as Green Keeper. He began by looking after the lawn area in front of the clubhouse and the green peripheries. In those days, that was all done with a push mower. He progressed to occasionally coming onto the main area of the green with the motorised mower.

When in 1999 Norman retired, Charlie took over as Green Keeper. Clive continued as before, and worked alongside Charlie,

right up to the end of last season. Doing much of the routine mowing, he has developed a style which is recognisably his work - a double cut with a double width-mowing pattern. Whenever Charlie took a well-earned holiday, Clive was always on hand to take over. Each passing year he has been at Charlie's side, throughout the autumn and winter programmes, helping with the heavy work of hollow-tineing, slitting, scarifying and top dressing.

In addition to all of this, he still managed a stint on the GPC, sitting as a member's representative in '92, '93 and '94.

A year ago, he retired from bowling and is now a Social Member. For many seasons, he was a regular member of our Bucks Cup team and enjoyed turning out for the London Welsh. His best results in national competitions were achieved when bowling with Mick Quigley and Charlie Biggs, having managed to reach a couple of Bucks County semi finals. He supported the internal club competitions; his name is to be found on many of the club honours boards. He remains proud of his ability to 'read-the-head' - a quality for which he is renowned.

One purpose of this brief history is to remind everybody of just what Clive Lipyart has done for our Club over so many years. "Clive's Story" is also intended as a way of expressing our sincere thanks and a humble attempt at paying tribute to a special club member.

As for Clive, he regards it all as nothing particularly remarkable. He summed it up using the direct and forthright language we have come to expect from him.

"If you join a club you have got to be prepared to work and make your contribution. "

Green keeping is physically demanding work and it is no secret that of recent times Clive's health has not been so good. Have a well-deserved rest old mate. Concentrate on getting back to your normal ruddy level of fitness and thank you again for the many years of service you have given to this club.

Ted Stratford, January 2008