

The Fairholme Club 1928 to 2005

Introduction.

Dear Members,

I consider it a great privilege to hold office as your Chairman of a club as special and unique as the Fairholme Club.

The fact that it has survived and flourished for over 76 years is testimony to the diligence, drive and dedication of all its members throughout that period.

My thanks are extended to all, especially Ray Lawson, who have assisted in bringing together an historical account of those 76 years in such a way that can be both informative to our prospective new members and an aide-memoir to our existing members.

I trust in the club's survival for many years to come so that this fine historical record can be used as the foundation for future editions.

Yours sincerely,

A.J.F Whyman. FRICS.

Club Chairman.

Sponsors

J .J .Bennett

M. Preece

J. Allen

D. Aukett

J.H. Keith

D. Jackson

C.J. Wilson

A.J.F .Whyman

J.H. Brittain

P. Sallis

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*As written by the late John and as published in 1992

Forty Years On



**Assembly Hall Social Club
1928 - 1952**

Fairholme Club Forty Years on 1952-1992

At this, the Fortieth Anniversary, of the Fairholme Club in this building' it was felt that a brief history and some of the highlights of the Club would be appreciated, especially by the newer members.

The "Assembly Hall Social Club" as it was then known was formed in 1928 by four local people, one of whom was the then landlord of the local hostelry the "Half Moon", in premises next door to the "Half Moon" over what is now a butcher's shop and flower shop.

It continued to be known as such until April 1954 when the name was changed to "Fairholme Club." The "Fairholme" being the name of the house the club had moved to in October 1952.

Many changes have taken place since, the most notable being that of two years ago, January 1990 when the new main lounge was completed and opened, bringing with it a large increase in membership, another reason for the increase in membership could have been due to a committee decision to allow ladies into the lounge any time the club is open instead of just weekends, as was previously the rule.

In its present form the Fairholme is a unique and happy "Village" (if you can still call Littleover a village) club, unaffiliated to any other body, a point which outsiders find difficult to understand.

The building was purchased in October 1952 for £4500.00, on the death of the then owner a Mr Thurlby, a solicitor, who lived there with his housekeeper.

The decision to buy was made by the committee in February 1952 using £2000.00 saved during and after the war in "War Bonds" and a temporary overdraft with Barclays Bank of £3000.00 until a suitable Mortgage could be arranged.

This was eventually secured with the Co-operative Building Society for £2660.00, repayable at a rate of £17.85 per month over 20 years.

On acquisition of the premises, both inside and out, things looked very different from the way we see them today.

The large car park at the rear (Thornhill Road side) was a large kitchen garden with a vehicular access across the rear wall of the building from an access in Shepherd Street (since bricked up and where the club letter box was).

At the school side of the building there were a large lean-to greenhouse, coach house and stables. The front garden extended to Church Street but in 1954 some of this land was sold for £850.00 on which three houses were built.

The inside of the ground floor was also very different from the way it appears today.

Going through the front door, there was one room to the left, which for years was the only room ladies could use during the week.

To the right a passage through to what was the kitchen and dining room and is now the card room (kitchen) and billiard room (dining room), the left hand side of the passage becoming the front of the bar and the right hand side taken out to form the bar lounge.

Apart from the minor alterations that was the club until two years ago when the walls between the small lounge and the bar lounge and the entrance hall were removed to make our present large main room.

Upstairs, at the Shepherd Street end of the building is the committee room, reached by the back stairs off the card room. Apart from the ladies toilet the remainder of the upstairs is the steward's accommodation. Many of you may like to know how the Fairholme operates; therefore I have included an outline of the structure.

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The full size Billiard Table, at present in the billiard room, was bought in June 1946 for £45.00. This was too large for the old club and was kept in store until the move to "The Fairholme".

There is a story told that in setting up the table it took twenty able bodied men to lift it and that to get it level beer mats were inserted under various legs. One wonders if they are still there today?

Another story, about the old club, where a bastard size table was used, is that if a player played a ball that stopped very close to a pocket without going in, play was stopped until the next trolley bus passed Burton Road, when the vibration would cause the ball to drop in the pocket.

In the earlier days at the Fairholme there was a kitchen range in the card room, on the bar side wall, where all the club elders would want to sit in a horse-shoe style around the fire, in the same seat every night (even after the range was replaced by gas fire) and woe betide any younger member who tried to sit there unless bidden to do so by one of the elders.

One of these a Mr. Palin, used to bring his supper into the club, including spring onions, and place them in the oven part of the range, one can imagine the smell that pervaded the club!

There are many, many stories of characters belonging to the Club which can be related by our members who belonged to the Club, in the Pre-Fairholme days.

There are presently five who are still members.

- John Wittingham
- Alec Stevens
- Jack Tindall (President)
- John Barnes
- Robert Ashton (Treasurer for 38 years)

Another long serving member, Jack Cadman, Secretary for 20 years, will always be remembered by the tree planted to his memory, which can be seen in the corner by the patio area. (Alas the tree has not survived)

Reading through the old Minute Books and old records of the club brings to light some interesting points it is worth recording.

Feb. 1936. 2s 6d per week, to be paid to a member for ironing and brushing the billiard table.

June. 1936. New steward appointed to tend the bar and do all cleaning at a wage of 17s 6d per week.

June.1937. Club outing to Worcester by Trent Coach, 4s to the "Sweep" club members and 7s each to non-members, (from the authors inquiries these outings meant filling the coach with people, sandwiches, and as much beer and spirits as the coach could carry, and a good time was had by all!)

Aug. 1937. As a trial, for one month, ladies. to be admitted to the club, if escorted by a member.

Nov. 1938. Ladies escorted by a member to be admitted on Sunday nights and Bank Holidays.

Sept. 1939. Christmas club cancelled due to the outbreak of war. All members of the Armed Forces to be granted honorary membership for the duration of the war

Nov. 1939 Owing to the possibility of food rationing being introduced the Club Supper and Concert will be held immediately.

June. 1940 Letters from Derbyshire County Council were read out regarding the use of the club premises for refugees in case of emergency.

Jan. 1941. Renting of car park spaces at the rear of the club 2s 6d per week.

April.1942. Club to be closed on Saturday and Sunday Lunch times due to “**NO BEER**” (Only lasted one month).

Oct. 1946. Club received notice to quit from agents” Richardson and Linnell” but new lease was negotiated at £75 per year with a five-year lease.

April. 1952. First, mention of new premises and a sub-committee to deal with same.

It should be pointed out that during the war years the club was fully supportive of the many charities such as:

- Warship Week.
- Spitfire Week.
- Battle of Britain Week.
- The Red Cross.
- The Parish Comforts Fund.
- The Hungarian Relief Fund [in 1956].

And of course the War Bonds, already mentioned, which formed the deposit for the ‘The Fairholme’.

Among the notable people who have been, or are members of the club are five Mayors of Derby, namely Jack Bussell, Ron Longdon, Richard Keene, Les Shepley and more recently, John Keith. (1991), Nick Brown Leader of the Council (1988-1994).

The club has also played host to a number of personalities connected with Derby County, among who are:

Harry Storer (Manager), Ralph Hann (Trainer) and players Jesse Pye, Alf Ackerman, Jock Buchanan and more recently, Mel Sage, George Williams and Frank Upton.

Many well known Business and Industry “names” have also been pleased to call the Fairholme “My Club”.

Grateful thanks are extended to all who have contributed stories and hard facts and to those who have helped in any way. Special thanks go to Don Burton for the drawings on the cover and on page 3.

To all present members,

Here’s to the next Forty Years, Cheers!

John White (As written and published in 1992).

Committee of Management

The Officers and Committee Members for 1952, 1992 and 2004 are as follows.

Officers in 1952.

President H. Palin
Chairman W.C .Jones
V. Chairman H. Forsyth
Treasurer B.H .Coveney
Secretary J.Cadman

Officers in 1992.

J. Tindall
P. Reddish
R. Roberts
R.E. Ashton
C. Kinnerley

Officers in 2005

R.E. Ashton
A. Whyman
J.H. Brittain
P.W. Sallis
J.H. Keith

Committee:-

C. Brown	P. Nash	D. Aukett
F. Friar	J. White	R. Beacon
H. Maskrey	J. Brittain	I. Hutton
E. Bailey	R. Brittain	J. Williams
H. Whyman	D. Ashton	C. Wilson
F. Kirkland	V. Handley	M. Preece
E. Stokes	T. Ironmonger	G. Harrison
H. Wainscott	R. Broadfield	A. Swift
	J. Wignall	R.A.J. Lawson

All officers and committee members hold office for three years. On completion of this term they are required to stand for re-election. Should there be additional 'Nominees' a vote will take place at the AGM to decide who joins the committee. This system ensures progressive change new faces on the committee together with new ideas.

The position of Chairman has been shared by only two people over the last forty years Peter Reddish and Andy Whyman.

*Robert (Bob) Ashton is on record as the longest "appointed Officer" having held the position of Treasurer for 40 years.

** Colin Kinnerley served the club as Secretary for 22 years.

It would appear that "staying power" has not been lacking in service to The Fairholme Club.

In addition to the Management Committee we have four Trustee's who have certain legal responsibilities regarding the Club's affairs.

They are: - R.E .Ashton P. Nash
 A.J.F. Whyman C. Kinnerley

Private Functions

A recent innovation for the Fairholme Club, brought about by a growing demand, is to encourage 'Private Functions' such as Special Birthday Parties, Christenings and Funeral Wakes etc.

Any Member wishing to book the premises for a special occasion can do so by filling out a form obtainable from behind the bar.

Towards The Millennium and Beyond. (1993 to 2005).

The "Fairholme" continues to survive in this ever changing modern world. We are required to conform to ever more stringent legislation on all aspects of licensing, finance, health and safety etc.

The Club continues to be unaffiliated to any other group or body its success is down to the care and vigilance engendered by Club Members and the Committee.

In over 50 years that this Club has held a license at these premises the Constabulary has never been required to attend our premises, a claim of which we are justly proud. This reflects the responsible attitude of the Membership.

Although the Fairholme is still a Gentleman's Club, it has moved on from 1938 when ladies, escorted by a member, were admitted on Sunday nights and Bank Holidays. Although the Games Room is still a member's (male) only bastion, the lounge offers excellent facilities for members and their wives / partner's. In addition to occasional entertainment evenings the Club hosts:-

- An annual barbecue each July, usually with entertainment of some form.
- A fireworks evening in November (we are all kids at heart), bonfire toffee (without the bonfire), hot dogs etc, to cater for those of us with families.
- Carols by Candlelight at Christmas; the better singers usually help mask the attempts of the average singer.
- A New Years Eve is well celebrated, tickets are a must for this occasion as numbers need to be controlled this helps with catering and ensures the Club does not exceed the safety limit.
-

The moral is:

'Always check the notice board for forth coming events'.

Structure

The Officers and Committee Members are listed on Page 11. From those members three sub-committees are formed, these are Entertainment, Finance and House. The prime objectives of the sub-committees are as follows: -

Entertainment

Provides a programme of activities ranging from the annual competitions for Snooker, Billiards, Crib, Dominoes, Darts etc., commencing January each year. In addition quiz nights, live entertainment, and horse / greyhound race nights, Derby Magic Circle, the Club annual BBQ, Christmas and New Year celebrations and any other social activities.

Finance

Ensure adequate financial controls are in place and that we conform to Inland Revenue and Custom and Excise regulations.

Stock levels are controlled and a fair pricing policy maintained, (Oh, and of course, that we show a profit).

House

Has responsibility for the maintenance and refurbishment of the property, its furniture and its grounds.

As you can imagine large and old properties require continual T.L.C., this unfortunately does not come cheap, however we do our best!

Audit

Two stalwarts of the club (who are not committee members) affect a quarterly audit of our accounting, cash control and banking procedures.

This ensures a comprehensive overview of our finance activities and, by their professional approach to such tasks, confirms much of our accounts for the external auditors (i.e. the Club's Accountants).

The essential links are as follows:

Bar sales, with thanks to our steward Lynn and her husband Paul, are our prime source of income, yearly subscriptions and the events organized by the Entertainment Committee, plus fruit machines and snooker makes up our total income.

The Treasurer banks all income, pays all bills and what is left provides the House Committee with some funds to undertake it's tasks.

Television

Was introduced at long last (not without some opposition). When significant sporting events are featured, football, rugby, snooker etc, it encourages club members to come along to view, enjoy a tippie and share banter with their friends.

1998 The Cellar

Although the general condition only just passed the Health and Safety inspection in recent years, a complete modernization project was agreed and implemented. A gallery was installed to hold beers, which incorporated an automatic tilting

mechanism and although the total project cost £7,000.00, on completion it was considered a sound investment.

1999

The Great Fire: **November 1999 “A Dark Day”** (

2001 Security

Another step forward was the introduction of CCTV cameras, and upgrading of the alarm system which enhances the overall security of the club.

2001

Club's registered address changed from Shepherd Street to 15 Thornhill Road.

2003 Coors Brewery

Now a major supplier of refreshments, have introduced a computer style ordering system keyboard skills required all round!

Ongoing Activities

Snooker is always available, queue jumping is not allowed, chalk your initials on the board and use numbers to select partners.

Towards the end of most evenings there is invariably a game of 9 card brag to be had.

More recently, a solo school and a bridge club were started during the winter months.

Potential Problems

For many years the club premises have suffered from a badly leaking roof.

Whilst the costs to remedy this situation are likely to be expensive your Committee is currently taking active steps to resolve this problem once and for all.

Drinks License

For decades we have obtained our drinks license from the Magistrate's Courts. This will change from April 2005 when all applications will be processed by Derby City Council – final costs are not available as yet, however a significant price increase is anticipated.

Special Meeting

A special meeting was called on 31st January 2005 to consider children in the club till 9.00pm. Over 70 members attended. The proposal by Colin Tatlow was well received and following a debate a vote for the proposal was carried by a majority of 5 to 1. The club bye-laws have now been amended in accordance with the meeting's wishes.

November 1999 A Dark Day – Fire at the Club!

As we approached the Millennium, plans were laid for big celebrations for Christmas and the New Year. The club always attracts larger than normal regulars at this time of year old friends meet up, exchange cards, the games clientele enrol for their chosen sport and of course all want to know what has been arranged for the holiday period.

Everything came to a halt on 25th November 1999 it was put down to an electrical fault, fortunately there was no wind that night, some of our late members must have been keeping watch over us and saved the building from going up in flames.

However, the devastation was severe. The effect of smoke damage had to be seen to be believed, everything in the games/snooker room was a complete write-off. The old snooker table bought in 1946 for £45.00 was replaced with a second hand one which cost £3000.00.

All furniture, carpets, curtains and windows were replaced with new.

The bar and lounge fared slightly better. All bar equipment and stock suffered from smoke damage all bottles of spirits, beer etc in the cellar which had been opened had to be poured down the drain. There was not even a glass which could be saved. No matter how they were cleaned a film of muck from the smoke could not be erased. All the furniture and carpets in the lounge required specialist cleaning. In addition comprehensive remedial work was necessary. After a lot of hard work, the bar was re-opened by mid January 2000 and it was not until the end of February that the snooker and games room was opened.

It was August 2004 before the finances were sorted out. The total cost of repairs and refurbishment was £57,000. It was a difficult time, however with a good deal of help the Fairholme Club survived and long may it continue to do so.

Conclusions

In conclusion, from small beginnings (acorns) do oak trees grow! Who would have envisaged all those years ago, that the Fairholme Club would still be in existence, continuing to thrive, with a membership now of over 270 and would still be playing an important role in Littleover and the wider community?
Here's to the next 50 years!

J. Brittain, Vice Chairman.

The advent of I.T has greatly improved communications with our membership. Members with email are regularly contacted regarding forthcoming events and notices of special and AGM's. The computer has also made it much easier, using mail merge, to send letters out to members without email facilities.

J.H. Keith, Secretary.

john@hkeith11.freeserve.co.uk

We may not be a rich club however, we are not poor. When I undertook the task of producing this booklet on behalf of the Committee, we knew that one of the problems would be funding – thanks to the generosity of willing sponsors I had no need to worry on that score!

Special thanks also go to Martyn Preece for setting up this brochure on his computer. Many thanks also go to John Bennett and all who have helped with compiling this booklet and once again to our sponsors.
Good luck to one and all.

Ray Lawson