

GLASGOW AND DISTRICT CHURCHES BADMINTON ASSOCIATION
Article from the Golden Jubilee Souvenir Brochure

REMINISCENCES FOR OUR JUBILEE YEAR

While we don't intend to give a detailed history of our Association (this was done most competently in our "Coming of Age" brochure) some reminiscences were promised in this year's handbook.

With sports centres catering for present day participants it may be difficult for young players to realise the vital role that church clubs and halls played in the development of badminton in and around Glasgow. The local church hall was not only the most convenient, it was often the only piece for playing this great game. From the mainly sociable once- weekly get togethers gradually games became more competitive, leagues were formed paving the way for the country-wide S.B.U. present day organisation.

In Glasgow Churches Association we can be justifiably proud of the part we played in bringing this about. We are all indebted to the foresight, imagination and hard work of the late Andrew Wishart Swan who in 1930 convened a meeting of interested parties and within a short period organised the Glasgow Churches Badminton League as it was then called and became our first General Secretary, an office which he held until he retired in 1965 to become President. Our membership reached a peak of 144 clubs in the mid fifties. At one of the earliest meetings the format of 4 mixed doubles was agreed - a tribute to the foresight of the founders. The word district in our title is apt as over the years we have embraced clubs from Clydebank, Kilsyth, Cumbernauld, East Kilbride, Airdrie, Newton Mearns and Nitshill.

Many of the church halls provided a distinct advantage to the home club. There were the "Room and Kitchen" with its unique peculiarities giving rise to rude comments from intolerant visiting teams, Stonelaw with its stone pillars, Rockvilla with a slope which many football clubs might envy and the myriad of halls with overhanging balconies and sundry problems.

Reference has been made to the tremendous part played by A. W. Swan, but over the years there have been many others who have given great service and indeed it is remarkable how few secretaries and treasurers we have had in our 50 years, The committee responsible for organising our Jubilee Celebrations is a mixture of young and "elder statesmen" and the enthusiasm and originality of the former should safeguard the next 50 years. An endless list of names of those who expanded and ran our Association could be given, but of more interest are the many photographs throughout this booklet showing well kent faces.

As in all sports, competition is the stimulus players need to raise their playing standards and here our Individual Championships have played their part. Many venues have been used for our competitions but that remembered best by post war players must be Coplaw Street Drill Hall - surely the coldest place at least in the West of Scotland, Bellahouston Sports Centre, Palace of Arts and Cockburn Centre are idyllic by comparison.

Representative matches against other associations have formed friendships and rivalries which are cherished by those privileged to take part either actively or in an official capacity. Over the years our opponents have included: Bute, Dundee, Dunfermline, Edinburgh, Falkirk, Greenock, Kilmarnock, Langside & District, Milngavie, Mount Vernon, Newcastle and Paisley. Whenever possible we used to travel by bus and hilarious return journeys were the normal, even on the odd occasion when we lost. Perhaps the most memorable journey was to a match that never was. Setting out to play at Dundee in 1957/58 the bus eventually became completely stranded in deep snow, at this stage a foraging expedition reached a nearby farm returning with cans of tea and scones. Eventually the team plus officials had to fight through the snow, at times walking over fences and fields so deep was the snow, until reaching Blackford. With the roads still impassable, a train was sent from Dundee to get us all back to Glasgow, some fifteen hours after leaving. Naturally we have to look to our top clubs to provide the bulk of the teams for representative games and in the past these have

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come from MiIngavie B.B., Auldfield, Govanhill, Cathcart O.P., Stonelaw (all now defunct), Rockvilla and more recently St. Margaret's Polmadie and Govan O. P.

The social side of our affairs has always been in good hands, and the Annual Presentation Dance is one of the highlights of our calendar. For many years this was held in the old St. Andrew's Halls and we had little difficulty in selling 450 tickets. The abundance of silver trophies at these occasions makes quite a show even if our treasurer does wince when faced with the bill for engraving. In addition to our Annual Dance we have tried many other successful ventures. These have embraced Pantomime evenings, a rail cruise to St. Fellans, a trip "doon the water" on Queen Mary 11 (when the cost was 2/6 (121/2p) per ticket). In the 1950s we had two great weekends at Whitley Bay, travelling down by bus and enjoying a few days at the seaside during which reputations were made and lost. Over the last few summers the keen golfers in our midst have been keeping in touch by means of inter-club golf matches.

As was said at the start of this article, we have not attempted a chronological history, but as the title indicates, reminisced our way through 50 years of progress. If we have highlighted the wrong things our excuse is they are the ones which most people who read our Jubilee Brochure will want to know or to remember. This booklet is being printed as our special season draws to a close and to the many who read it we trust it will recall happy memories of the past and dare we hope - inspiration for the future to those in whose capable hands it lies.