

WAYZGOOSE

Bowling Clubs

Of all the sports that were played by printers, probably the most popular was lawn bowls. Many of the larger printing houses set aside ground for employees to have their own bowling greens.

What we did have was bowling, away back when I was an apprentice. That was what all the private clubs in Edinburgh started from, the printing industry.

The sport was so prevalent in Edinburgh printing firms that they had their own league called the Edinburgh and Leith Printing Establishments Association. Printers' bowling clubs could also be found in Glasgow, Dundee and Aberdeen.

Many papermills also had active bowling clubs, though often they would play at odd times of the day to accommodate their shift patterns. It was not uncommon for those coming off a night shift in the papermills to set up a game in the early morning, as one player reminds us:

They would bowl at 6 in the morning and then maybe at 8 o'clock they would go home for their breakfast and then go to bed.

Such shiftwork patterns in the general printing trade sometimes disadvantaged clubs competing in the trade bowling leagues. As the Bartholomew company history lamented in 1976:

The firm's once formidable bowling club is a casualty of the modern double shift system of work which rendered some of the team unavailable for fixtures.

Many of the bowling greens founded by the print and allied trades industry survive to this day, though the printing houses that founded them have disappeared from the industrial landscape. The Parkside Bowling Club, founded by Nelsons, with grounds under the shadow of Arthur's Seat in Edinburgh, is one such example.

