

Mercury, Tuesday 19th January 1892

HOBART BOWLING CLUB

THE NEW GREEN

While lovers of cricket, lawn tennis, and other outdoor games have always found facilities for indulging in their favourite sport, it is somewhat astonishing that the less energetic and quieter portion of the community with regard to exercise have up till the present been without a bowling green. In the other colonies and in Launceston bowling has, within the last few years secured an arm hold, and is now attract-ing as votaries not only men well up in years, but also young men, who find on the green a gentle exercise and relaxation from labour, which the more muscular and exciting field sports do not afford. And then the game itself is very fascinating, and skill is only attained after years of careful attention and constant practice. Time after time attempts have been made to start a club in Hobart but without success. the difficulties of obtaining ground and sufficient money to carry out the work being too great to be overcome. At last, however, principally through the exertions of Mr. James Gregory, of Sandy Bay, these difficulties have been got over, and a lawn is laid out divinely will, in the course of a year or two, be equal to anything of the kind in Australasia. The movement originated at a meeting held in the Town Hall in August last under the presidency of Mr. H.R. Nicholls, when it was stated that the Government had offered a piece of ground in the Barrack Reserve for a bowling green and the Hobart Bowling Club was then formed,, and Mr. Nicholls appointed chairman, Mr. B.H. Pascoe secretary, and Mr. James Gregory treasurer. It was resolved to proceed with the work at once, and Mr. Gregory generously undertook to superintend the formation and laying out of the green free of charge. The piece of ground presented by the Government to the club is situated at the extreme back of the Barrack Reserve, fronting south coast, with an entrance from Hampden-road. It was very uneven, well presented great difficulties in consequence, having to be raised 10ft. at the lowest corner, and brought down 7ft. at the upper end. This involved a large amount of excavation and filling up, and it was found necessary to terrace the ground, and form two greens on different levels instead of only one. But this will be a decided advantagewhen the club is properly started, for when the grass on one of the greens is not very good members will be able to give it a rest by playing on the other. The presence of a large quantity of stone at the upper end enabled Mr. Gregory to make a substantial job of the lower portion, by building heavy retaining walls to sustain the weight and keep in place the tons of earth put on the top. The filling up was very carefully performed every particle of earth being thoroughly rammed as the work proceeded, to secure a solidity that could not otherwise be obtained and prevent any subsidence, with the result that the green appears to be as solid as it possibly could be. The top soil was carefully removed before the excavations and filling up were proceeded with, and placed on one side, so that it could be put on the top when the work was far enough advanced for it. A splendid level having

been obtained on both greens, the next thing was to get a good lot of grass. Through the advice of Mr. Francis Abbott, of the Botanical Gardens, some Indian grass was obtained from Sydney, which has been planted, and tin-dish grass sown on the surface. That was done on 9th November last, and with care and attention there is a Sue thick crop of grass, although there are one or two bare patches that will soon disappear in fact, one of the greens is now in a fair state for play. On this point Mr. Gregory has received a letter from Mr. C. F. Creswell, seed and grain merchant, whose son supplied the Indian grass from Sydney, in which he says: "Accompanied by my son I yesterday paid a visit to the lawns laid down by you for the use of the Hobart Bowling Club, and I can only say that I was more than astonished at the success that has attended your efforts, which incontestably proves that the system of watering, cutting, and rolling adopted by you has been the correct one and I heartily congratulate you on the result of your labours. My son could scarcely believe that so perfect a lawn could be laid down in the short space of time it has taken you to do it, more especially when the many and great difficulties you had to contend with are taken into consideration. The club surely are to be congratulated in securing the services of both energetic and a persevering member to plan and supervise so good and necessary a work."

The greens are now practically ready for playing on, and it will be decided at a meeting to-night when they will be formally opened and active play commenced. Both greens are the regulation length of 120ft. one is 80 ft. wide, and the other 50ft., providing accommodation altogether for nine or ten rinks. A substantial boarded fence surrounds the ground, inside of which a verandah is being constructed with seats for between 70 and 80 people. At the, north-west corner a bowl and tool-house is being erected, and through time it is hoped to have aspiration for the convenience of members at the south-west end. A large flag pole has been presented to the club by Mr. John Crow, builder, and will be placed at the, bowl-house for the present, and a handsome flag has been presented by Mr. McLean, with the name of the club and the motto, "We Stoop to Conquer" in white letters on a red ground. The greens occupy a splendid site, with a commanding view of the river and surrounding country, and the immediate vicinity will be beautified by the planting of flowers, ferns, and plants. Between £300 and £400 has been expended up to the present time, and it is expected that all the work, exclusive of the pavilion, will be completed for the latter sum. The thanks of the club are due to Mr. Gregory for his gratuitous services for the past four or five months, and his untiring energy in bringing the work to such a successful issue. The club at present only numbers 40 members, but now that the green is formed, it is expected the membership will soon go up to over 200. A meeting of the club will be held to-night at which new members may be enrolled. There is still a piece of spare ground on the grant made to the club, and it is proposed, through time, to form a tennis court for the lady friends of the bowlers and a pitch for playing quoits. The bowls and other furniture for the game are being supplied to the club by Mr. T. L. Hood. They are of the best quality and make, having been secured by him from the celebrated Scottish manufacturers, Messrs. Taylor.

His consignment included 60 pairs of bowls made of lignum vitae. Some of them for presentation are silver mounted, but as a rule they are mounted in ivory and beautifully finished.