

Brief History of the Victoria Field

The field was given to the people of Street by William Reynolds in 1897 and was presumably named after the reigning monarch of the time. There is a commemorative plaque in the club at the entrance to the Squash Courts.

The first lessees at a nominal rent of £5 per annum were the Street Club and Institute and the main users of the land were the Street Football Club, Street Cricket Club and the Tennis Club.

In the 1930's the Football Club turned professional attracting more spectators and with a permanent stand being built. This was to the detriment of the other users of the field. The Cricket Club did not have possession of the ground for long enough to prepare a decent pitch and the Tennis Club folded due to lack of interest.

From 1945 finance was provided for the Club and Institute to make two new hard tennis courts in one corner of the ground on land purchased from Street Urban District Council for £70 and the Tennis Club got going again.

It became apparent that that only about one third of the field was being usefully occupied and the use by a professional organisation did not in all probability conform to the original trust deed.

In March 1953 Bancroft Clark concluded that this was a waste of valuable land in the centre of Street and proposed that C & J Clark might be able to find an alternative site for the Football Club and pay for the levelling of the Victoria Field for 'games and sports of all kinds'. This would not be confined to use by employees only. The Club and Institute had no funds of their own.

The land was purchased from the descendants of William Reynolds. The money paid was used to pay for the commemorative plaque mentioned earlier.

The purchaser was the Victoria Field Trust, with support from the Clark Foundation who, as the Victoria Field Charity, are the owners today.

The first building on the site was a pavilion with tea room and bar.

Next came a Squash Court and the Street Squash Rackets Club was formed. Three more courts were later added with one of them eventually converted to a glass backed court to accommodate more spectators. Although Squash as a sport declined nationally, the Club continues to thrive, aided by a strong youth section.

During this period Tony Clark was instrumental in the development of family interest in the project.

The 'pavilion' was developed into a Sports Bar with an adjoining Lounge Bar. In 1971 a single rink Indoor Bowls Green was attached to the Lounge Bar. When the sport grew in popularity a new 3 rink Indoor Green was built on the side of the main field. This was partly funded by debentures sold to Bowls Club members.

In 1984-5 Street Outdoor Bowls Club moved from its site adjacent to the Bear Hotel to new site on the opposite edge of the main field.

The Tennis Courts have been further developed and there are now four courts of which two are astro turf and two hard surface. All the courts are floodlit. Sometime in the mid 1900's two grass courts were laid between the present club and the Outdoor Bowls Club. Due to the high cost of maintaining the courts they ceased to be used when the full time groundsman retired. This area is presently occupied by the Croquet Club.

The single Indoor Bowls rink was converted into a function room and in addition to functions in the evening is used by several organisations including a thriving Bridge Club and various fitness classes.