

1930 to 1939

1931 saw the first expulsion when Mr Oliver Seaman was expelled and 2 members were suspended for letting a firework off in the club. The circumstances were that a number of members had been letting fireworks off in the club and obviously run out. Oliver Seaman had a collection and got about 6/-, went off to the local shop and came back with a variety of fireworks. Some of the members got hold of a committeeman, Aubrey Pauley and let off a cannon firework underneath him. Oliver got most of the blame so was expelled. This was not the only occasion when Oliver got into trouble.

There was one occasion when some members turned the fruit machine upside down and out came a quantity of 6d pieces. Oliver together with some other members picked up a handful and threw them behind the bar so they would be safe. The whole episode was the source of much merriment in the club but not for Oliver, he got the blame and was suspended for 6 months. On another occasion Oliver had been to Leeds where he saw Table Tennis being played. He returned to Godmanchester purchased some table tennis equipment and started playing in the hut the club had at the time.

The treasurer, Mr Henshaw, saw Oliver and told him to stop but he refused and was suspended for one month. Oliver became a member of the club at the age of 17 when the minimum age for joining was 18 - he was a little economical with the truth when applying for membership. It is obvious that Oliver has either been "unlucky" or a "naughty boy", I leave the members to judge. However after 70 years membership he was made a life member in 1994 together with a Mr Tom Dighton and they were also presented with a suitably engraved tankard each.

Reverend Kitchener announced at the Annual General Meeting on Thursday 21st January 1932 that he was leaving the area and so Sir William Prescott was elected President. He was to prove a great benefactor to the club. The 1930's saw a lot of men out of work but they used the club as a meeting place and a place somewhere they could keep warm. They would sit without drinking and play cards', not for money, but for matches.

Since 1924 the club had been having difficulties with the various owners of the premises so the committee sought out their own destiny by purchasing some vacant land owned by a Mr Markham at a cost of £75. Sir William Prescott offered a hut 80" x 24" to the club free of charge. This possibly stirred the brewery owners into action and at a meeting on Tuesday 29th March 1932 they offered to sell the premises including the Constitutional Hall to the club for £800. An offer of £650 was made and accepted. Sir William Prescott very kindly offered the club to loan the money free of interest as well as providing a wooden extension costing £100.

After 1 year Sir William Prescott stood down as President to be replaced by a Dr A Greenwood. At a meeting on Wednesday 23rd January 1935 the first attempt to allow access to ladies failed when a proposal to start a ladies night failed to get a seconder. 1936 saw a further improvement in facilities provided by the club, when it was agreed to hold dances in the winter months in the club. It is not recorded if ladies were allowed? Another milestone in the clubs history occurred in 1937 when at a meeting held on Monday 1st March 1937 it was decided to make alterations to the Constitutional Hall so as to bring it into the main club premises.

This involved taking the stage down between the 2 premises and moving the bar to an area where the present bar is when you walk into the club. The cost of this was estimated at £40-50 and was carried out by the members. The club's main benefactor Sir William Prescott stepped in again with an offer of the £40 to be defrayed against the mortgage payment due to him. He also offered the club another billiard table, which is still in use today.

A dinner was held to mark the opening of the club premises and Sir William Prescott requested ladies be allowed to attend. It is not recorded if this was allowed. In June of this year the Seaman family were at it again when Mr E. Seaman was reprimanded for disorderly conduct, but to show there was no hard feelings he offered (gratefully accepted) to erect the new billiard table. The Seaman tradition has carried on down the years with our current vice-president, Basil Seaman, being suspended on a couple of occasions.

One of the occasions was when he was into horse racing and he came into the club to read the "Cambridge Evening News" to see if he had won. There was a particular member who used to "hog" the paper so Basil asked if he could look at the racing results. He was told after the particular member had finished reading the paper. Basil being Basil promptly got his cigarette lighter out, run it along the bottom of the newspaper setting light to it, making the comment, "if I can't read it, nor can you". He was suspended for 6 months.

On another occasion for swearing in the club he was suspended for one month. Dr Greenwood stood down as President at the Annual General Meeting held on Thursday 26th January 1939 to be replaced by a Mr Figg who was then Vice-President. The club continued to prosper and in July it was decided to install central heating. During the war the club contributed to the funds such as Comforts Fund, Parcels Fund, Prisoner of War Fund and Salute the Soldier. In 1940 the Home Guard were allowed use of the club