# WADSLEY BRIDGE WORKING MENS CLUB & INSTITUTE LTD.

1929

Wadsley Bridge
Working Men's Club and
Institute Ltd.,

The Grange - - - Wadsley Bridge.

# The Official Opening

OF THE

# EXTENSIONS

WILL BE HELD ON

WEDNESDAY, MAY 8th, 1929,

AT 7.0 P.M., BY

**Councillor E. J. ROWLINSON, J.P.,**

SUPPORTED BY

**H. E. BRIDGEWATER, Esq.,**

**Councillor FRANK THRAVES, J.P.,**

and other Gentlemen.

CHAIRMAN:

E. ROBINSON, Esq., O.B.E. (President).

*W. ALLWOOD, Secretary.*

WADSLEY BRIDGE
WORKING MEN'S CLUB

# SOUVENIR

1929.

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## FOREWORD.

IN presenting this Souvenir to our readers, no apologies are offered.

The issuing of a booklet of this kind has long been in contemplation. Hence this effort!

Its contents have been compiled by working men, the details of which are consistent with the known facts affecting the every-day life of the Club.

The Wadsley Bridge Working Men's Club is seldom, if ever, spoken of in the individual sense such as, for example, "mine" or "thine," but rather is it described as "ours"—Our Club.

This is significant in so far as it points, not only to the Club being a social centre in itself, but at the same time a sort of miniature commonwealth.

Here there are no varying human stratas, or different social values, the chief characteristic being a uniform fellowship, common to all.

However, just as "good wine needs no bush," the Wadsley Bridge Working Men's Club needs no recommendation.

It invites inspection and examination in the matter of its management and general conduct; and on the ascertained results, is prepared to stand.

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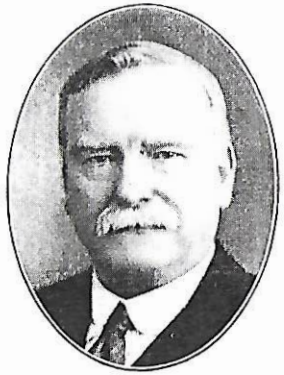

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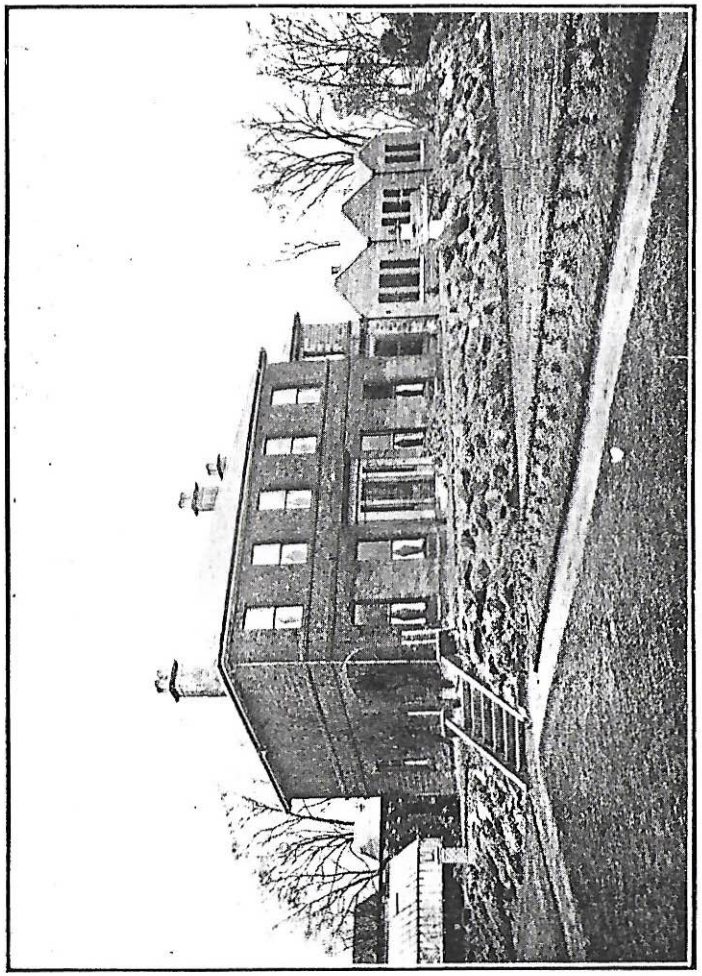

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## HISTORICAL.

During the latter days of the war, when the beer shortage was at its worst, the publicans became a law unto themselves, and each to a great extent dealt with the existing situation in his own way.

Generally speaking, on receipt of his fortnight's supply, a publican would open his house, and sell to all and sundry for two or three days and close his house until the next supply came, thus earning his fortnight's wages with a minimum expense, for labour, coal and light.

Another would dole out his supply to make it spin out until the arrival of the next, and in these cases, if you were careful to wipe your shoes on the mat and approach the great man with becoming humility you might get a glass of beer, or if he was particularly good tempered, a pint.

Others, again, kept the front of their houses tightly closed, admitting a select few to a back room by the back door, thus suiting a few, but giving offence to many.

One night, when things were in this unsatisfactory condition, some fourteen working men, driven from their darkened homes, into the unlighted streets, by the exigencies of wash-day, bath night or other domestic requirements, and finding all doors except their own closed against them, sat on the wall of a wheelwright's yard at the bottom of the village, to discuss the situation. Some of them had come from the district near Halifax, where clubs were more plentiful than in Sheffield, to work on munitions, who explained that beer or no beer, where there

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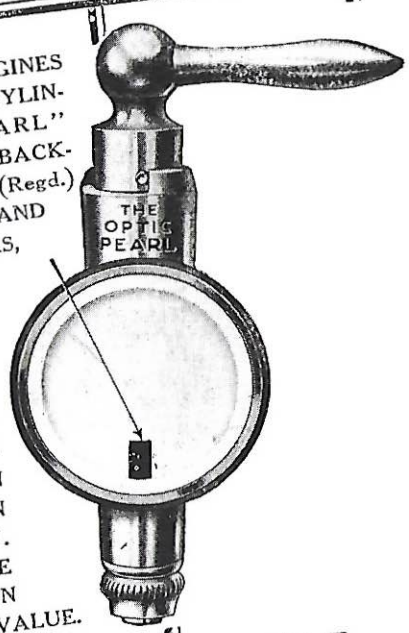


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was a club there was a comfortable room where a man could meet his fellow-men for a chat or some little break in the depressing monotony of those terrible days.

It should not be forgotten that though we at home were not enduring the mud and blood of the trenches, we were by no means on a bed of roses. The food was bad and severely rationed. Horse flesh for beef if we could get it and the fear of Zeppelin raids, the enemy being particularly anxious to find the important munition area of Sheffield, and we being always afraid they would succeed. It therefore became necessary to learn every night whether they were signalled on the North Sea, and whether or not we might venture to bed.

The idea of the club took root; each of those present agreed to take up one or more pound shares, and a whip round was made to pay the expenses of calling a public meeting in the Council School.

This meeting was duly held, some 200 people being present, and the scheme began to take shape. A number of sites were inspected, prices and particulars obtained, and it was eventually decided to lease an acre of land from the Duke of Norfolk in Southey Green Lane, adjoining Messrs. Kynoch's powder magazine, at a rental of £15 per annum.

An Army hut was bought at Grantham for £75 (lent to the club by a resident). £46 was paid for its removal to Sheffield, and it was put on the site, where for twelve months it lay a heap of lumber, at the mercy of the weather and firewood pilferers (then plentiful), whilst it was being discovered that the license of the magazine, which had been in abeyance some years, had during the war been

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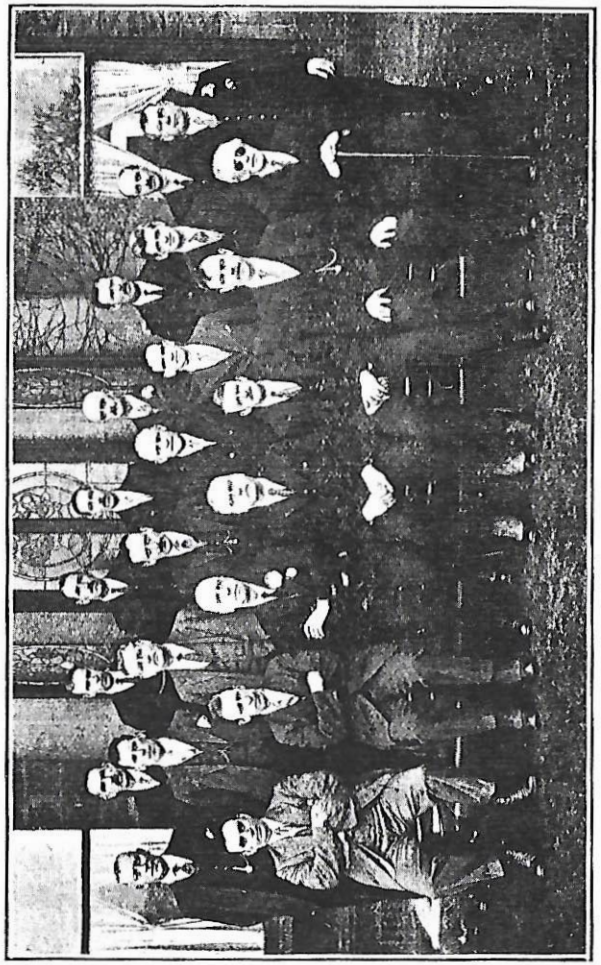

THE CLUB OFFICIALS, 1929.

*Top Row*—F. W. Rutter, H. Bailey, F. Oxley, A. Crookes, S. Dawes, Geo. Allen.
*Middle Row*—J. Barrett, J. H. Hanwell, Geo. Oxley, E. Daniels, W. Smith, E. Bates, W. Rodgers, and A. W. Gambling.
*Bottom Row*—J. Ward, J. Turner, W. Allwood, E. Robinson, W. Hurton, T. Cook, and W. Gough.

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renewed, consequently no buildings nearer than those in existence could be erected. The lease, therefore, became void, and a new start had to be made.

A casual remark overheard in a tramcar, led to enquiries being made respecting the present site, when the then owner (now our esteemed President) readily granted them time to raise the deposit and gave what assistance he could. The hut was rebuilt in the grounds at a much greater cost than was anticipated, and all looked likely for a successful opening when, in their zeal for the public safety, they decided to cut down a large and dangerously overhanging decaying tree. Unfortunately, they omitted to notify the authorities, so that when the tree in its fall fouled and broke down some overhead telegraph wires, the club was compelled to pay £65 damages, a very serious setback in the then straightened condition of their finances.

It ought not to be forgotten by present and future members that it is to that handful of men sat on a wayside wall, and those who then co-operated with them, that we owe the inception of the Club we now possess, and we cannot but admire the grit, the perseverance in face of so many formidable difficulties that enabled them eventually to win through.

In the opinion of the writer the Club is second to none, and it is now up to us, on the foundations already so well laid, to make it everything a Club should be: a centre for social intercourse, recreation and harmony; a centre for light and leading; a centre for everything beneficial or helpful, and a real "home from home," differing only in the size of the family.

ESTABLISHED 1829.

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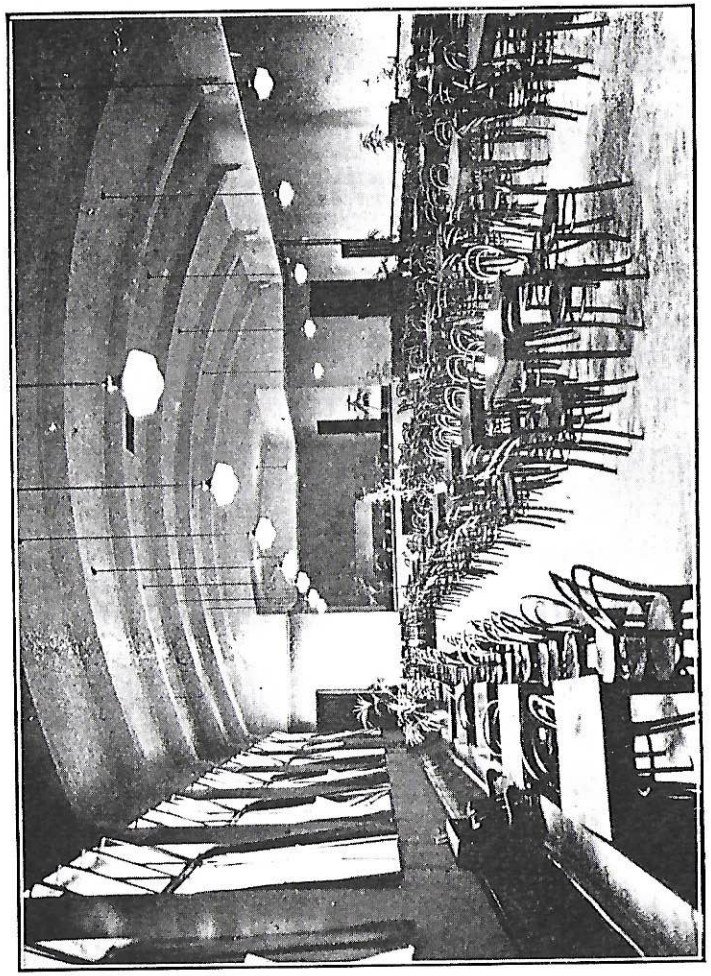

THE LARGE HALL.

With these ideals before us we can, with benefit to ourselves, aim at a benevolence of mind, a tolerance of judgment, with a range of vision that will reflect the greatest possible measure of credit to the Club of which we are proud to be members.

## THE CLUB DESCRIBED.

Our Club is known as the "Wadsley Bridge Working Men's Club." So much is proclaimed by the inscription on the diminutive door marking the entrance.

There is a significant simplicity about this door that is impressive. There is no glamour attached to it. It does not invite the passer-by to stand and gaze at its new coat of paint, or its letters in gilt.

It is the kind of door one expects to find linked up with a gentleman's private residence, bearing the distinctive device "For Tradesmen only." One can imagine a door of this kind being regarded as quite good enough for working men, "don't you know." Still, although it declines to clamour for admiration, it does seem to say "Come in!" And folk go in. Quite a large number of them. Indeed, there are from seven to eight hundred members pass through this doorway in the course of a year. How many times they pass that way is not to be recorded in this survey.

There is another entrance to our Club known as the "Drive," but this in the main is disregarded except for vehicle traffic. Always it is the Liliputian door that does the calling.



It may be likened to the "needle's eye," which, if not actually leading to heaven, certainly yields to the initiated a glimpse of enchanted grounds. It is a standing example of the utter foolishness of judging things from without.

Once through the doorway, and up the limited flight of rough chiselled steps, one finds oneself at the commencement of a long narrow avenue deeply fringed with greenery and canopied with all the rich colours at once pleasing and soothing to the eye.

Here, in the sunshine, one finds shade and delicate tracings, and the scent of earth and flowers assails the senses.

At the close of day, one can look up this avenue and allow his vision to rest upon a disc of burnished gold, and on looking upwards will see the tree tops dipped, as it were, in vermilion red.

There is a richness of colour here, fit for the painter's brush. Here is to be found variety spreading itself in wealthy profusion.

The holly has come to "age" to the extent of there being no less than twenty-one varieties.

One can, for example, in the matter of holly, allow his taste to flirt with green or golden hedgehog, green-edged silver and variegated. He may prefer to watch the Japanese holly smiling sweet tokens to its saw-toothed neighbour, or shepherd's holly casting disdainful glances at its weeping relative. Over and above all these, as if keeping constant watch upon them, are the towering poplars, oaks, chestnut, white cherry and copper beech.

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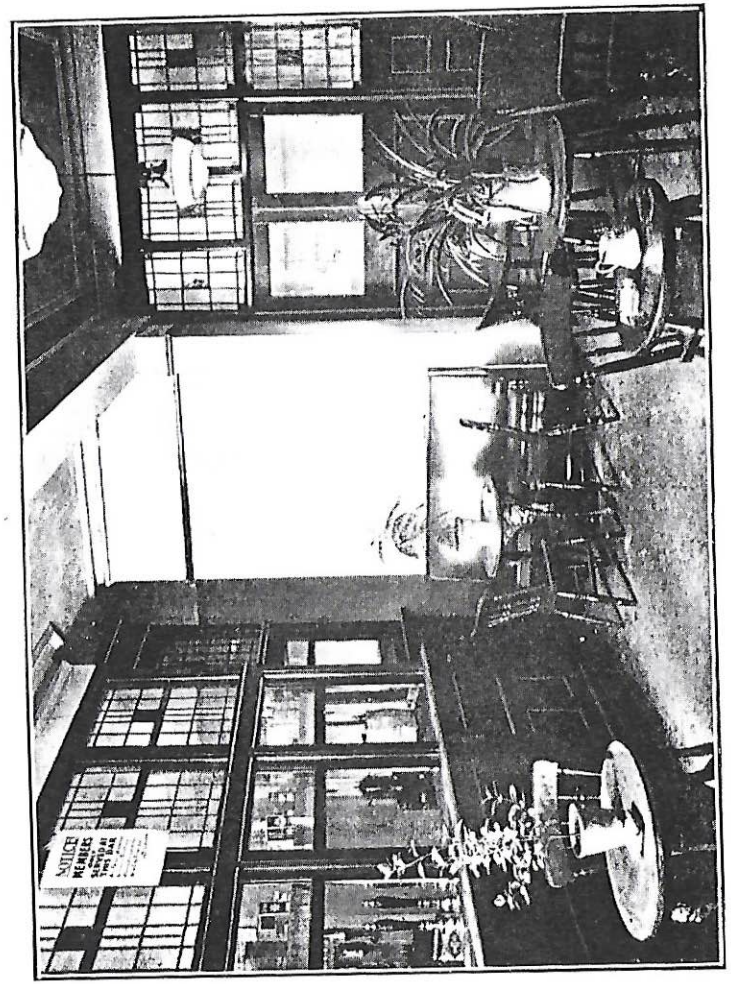


THE LOUNGE.

Our members are indebted to Mr. Chester, who takes pride and pleasure in these trees, and is always willing to pass on his knowledge.

Once through the avenue, and a vista of flower beds opens out before us. Here the flowers gleam in all their natural beauty and open their petals to the sun. Even the outside of the "House" enters into competition with the external surroundings in so far as we find it mantled in its "ornamental vine."

One wonders after all whether this is really a Working Men's Club? But such it is, and such most likely will remain. Indeed, it is essentially working-class—covered all over, so to speak, with fustian.

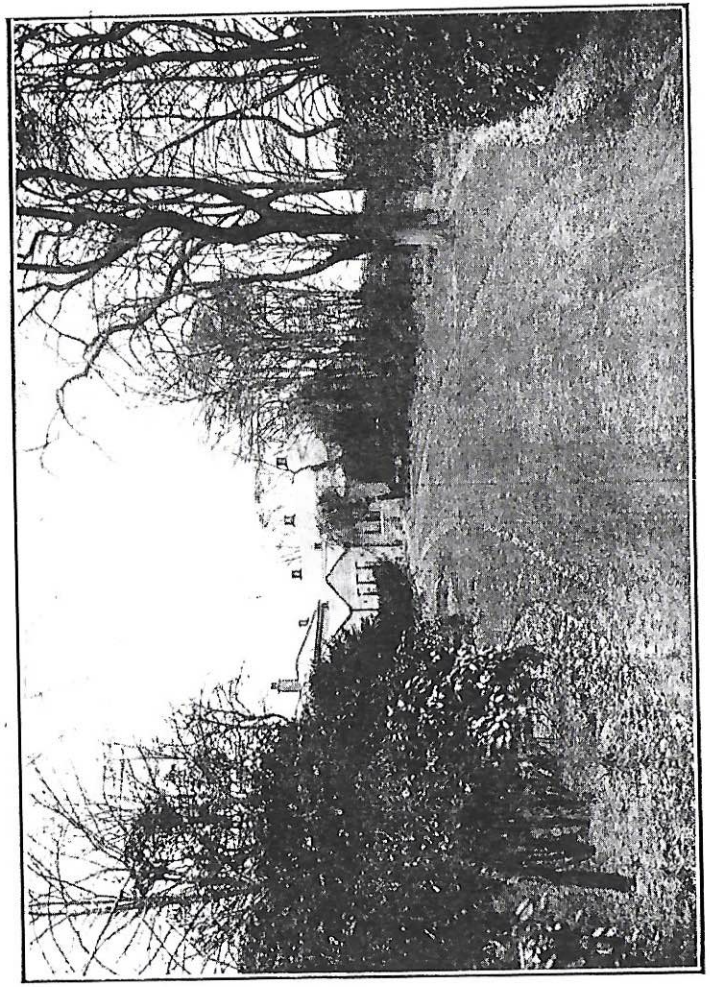
Its Secretary is a working-man, as is also the Assistant Secretary, and their work is done with admirable efficiency. Its President, though, strictly speaking, not a working man, does his best to become one, and not without success.

Our Club was formed by working men, and is governed by working men. Its members can be traced to almost every department of industry, and from their deft fingers issue almost every kind of known product, from agriculture to surgical instruments and the fifteen-inch gun.

We have often heard clubs designated as "boozing institutions." To what extent such an observation carries truth, we are not in a position to say. We are entitled to place on record the fact, however, that in respect to "Our Club," no epithet of the character indicated can justifiably be hurled.

Its rules and regulations are enforced with a rigid severity, sometimes productive of caustic comments.





THE DRIVE.

*WHAT DID EMMERSON SAY?*

Emmerson, the famous American, once said:—

"If man can build a better house, preach a better sermon, or make a better mouse-trap than his neighbour, the world would make a beaten track to his door."

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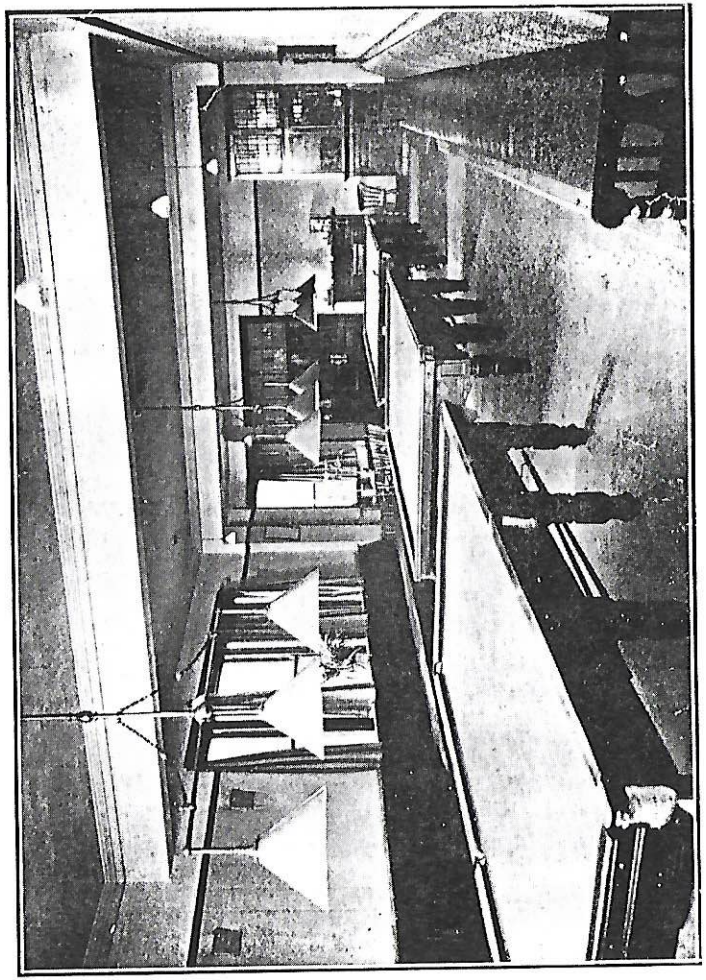
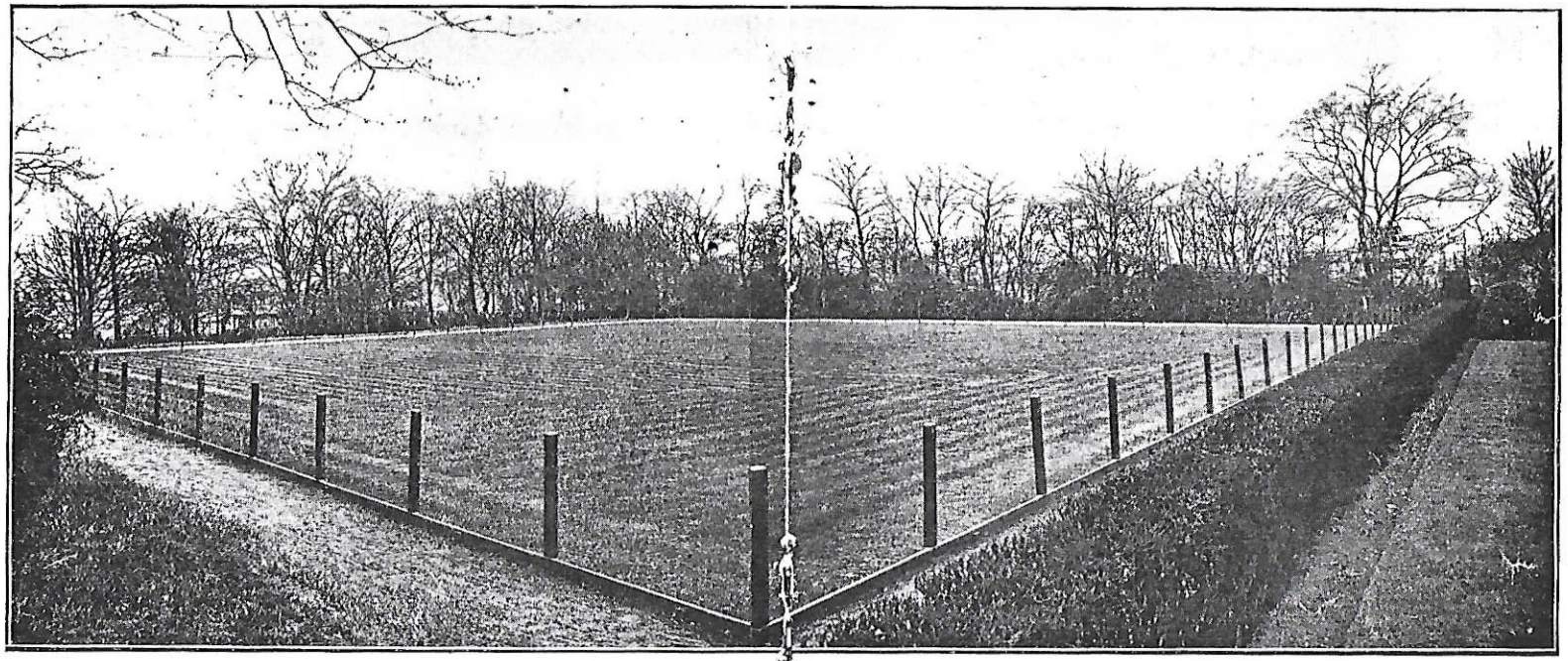


THE BILLIARD ROOM.



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We have known a member, as an experiment of course, try to heave one across "out of time," but there is no getting through the guard.

And so it ought to be! In Clubland, it seems to us, there is more wisdom in erring on the side of the strictly proper than the properly wrong.

Ours may be, and is, a Working Men's Club, but it contains as many real gentlemen to the square inch as most clubs we have visited—not excluding gentlemen's clubs.

(*Extract from*
"MAN & METAL," *Journal of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation*).

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The first club visited was High Green, with its unique pavilion attached to its bowling green. Then to Wadsley Bridge Club, a call at which I should indeed have been sorry to have missed. It occupies a mansion with 4½ acres of ground. Well wooded, with gardens, tennis courts, bowling and putting greens, and gloriously cultivated gardens, it offered an unique experience to me. I do not know wherever I have seen a club so happily placed. It transcends even High Fell Club at Gateshead.

Thus splendid as are the amenities offered outside, obviously mainly available in summer, not less are the winter months filled with usefulness. I am sorry that I have not space to give the lectures programme, one of the most attractive I have ever seen for a workmen's Club.

All lectures are given gratuitously, and all speakers are as charmed by the character of the audience as is the audience with the lecture. All leave with one



expression—"If I do not come here again it will only be because I am not asked."

Yes—Wadsley Bridge is a club confounding all club critics, and cheering the faithful.

(*Extract from*
"THE CLUB AND INSTITUTE JOURNAL.")

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## THE LITERARY AND DEBATING SOCIETY.

Perhaps in no respect can the Wadsley Bridge Working Men's Club and Institute claim, among kindred institutions, a more unique distinction than in its Literary and Debating Society. As far back as the year 1925 this organisation, capably managed and successfully operated, has been an interesting and elevating feature of Club life.

Instituted for the purpose of catering for the intellectual needs and advancement of the members, it has admirably fulfilled its mission, and incidentally merited and received the approbation not only of the officials and members, but of many distinguished visitors. It has served too, to bring the Club into public notice and fame over a wide area of South Yorkshire.

Particularly fortunate has the Society been in its selection of honorary secretaries. From 1925 to 1927, Mr. E. Clay laboured with enthusiasm and efficiency, and laid a sure and solid foundation for Session 1927-28; Mr. J. White carried on the good work with tact and geniality; and Mr. W. H. Rodgers, the present Secretary, by thoroughness and assiduity, is fully maintaining the high standard.

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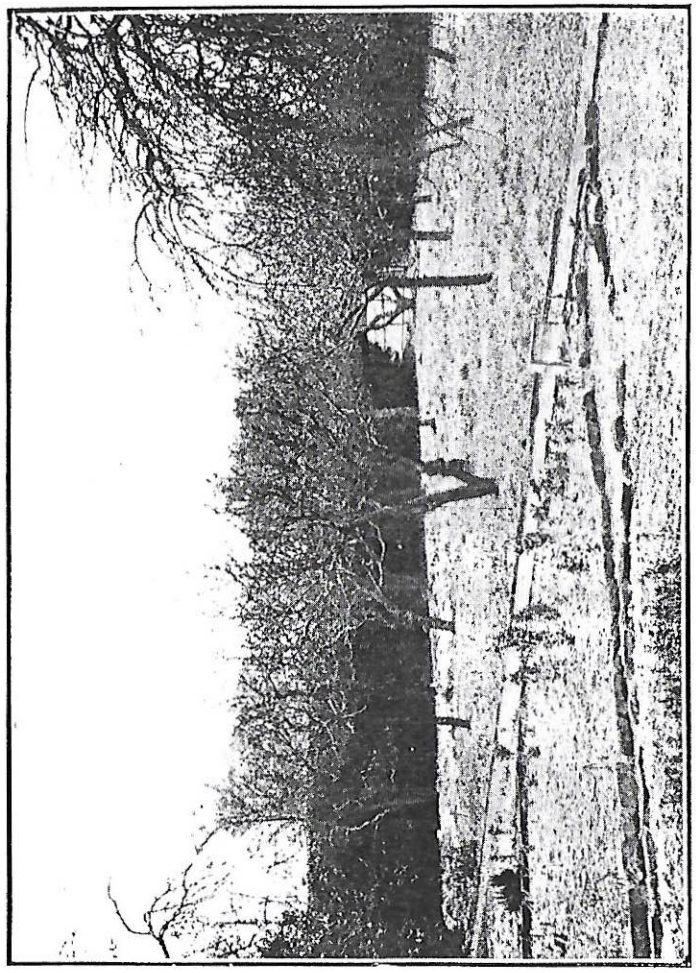

THE ORCHARD.

The successive syllabuses issued by the Society have indeed been admirable, the lecturers in many instances possessing eminent qualifications, while the subjects have been of wide and varied interest.

Alderman Lady Mable Smith, J.P., has honoured the Society each session since its inception, and given a series of charming lectures, chiefly on travel. Among other distinguished speakers have been the Lord Bishop of Sheffield (Dr. Burrows), an ex-Lord Mayor (Ald. J. G. Graves), the Vice-Chancellor of the University (Sir Henry Hadow), clergymen (Revs. J. A. A. Kelsey Bell and W. T. Groocock), Members of Parliament (Messrs. A. V. Alexander and Rennie Smith), and several Councillors and City Officials. Schoolmasters, district and parish councillors, Justices of the Peace, etc., have appeared on the syllabuses, and in some cases members themselves have given lectures, while debates on various topics have been remarkably well sustained.

Only two subjects—religion and politics—have been avoided. Literature, art, science, foreign countries, health and sanitation, wit and humour, and a multitude of other subjects, grave or gay, have from time to time come under review, and invariably the attention shown at meetings has been excellent. It was pleasing for instance, to hear Alderman Graves, who had spoken for an hour and a half on "The Holy Land," state that he had never addressed a more attentive or appreciative audience.

The Session extends from the beginning of October to the end of March, and in the past, one lecture each month (some illustrated by lantern views) has been given in the hut, and now finds accommodation in the large new hall. These have



been declared "open nights," both sexes have attended, and the audiences (generally speaking) have been very large. One cannot speak quite so satisfactorily about the attendance at the ordinary weekly meetings—on most nights there has been a creditable number present, but occasionally the attendance has dwindled to disappointing limits. On this point, we should like to emphasise the fact (not even yet generally known) that not only is the Literary and Debating Society absolutely free and open to all club members, but that a hearty welcome will be accorded to any new visitors.

Are the promoters and supporters of the Society satisfied with the work it has accomplished? An emphatic answer in the affirmative can be given, and yet it would be gratifying to see its usefulness extended. There is abundant and unmistakable evidence which proves that the Society has not only provided opportunities for social intercourse and the development of good fellowship, but that it has stimulated a desire for knowledge, encouraged research, and given confidence to several members previously unpractised in the art of public speaking. A remarkable readiness exists among the members to ask questions or to offer comments and criticisms, and this has called forth many complimentary remarks from lecturers.

May the influence and usefulness of the Society increase more and more! In a Club with such a large membership there should be ample scope for development.

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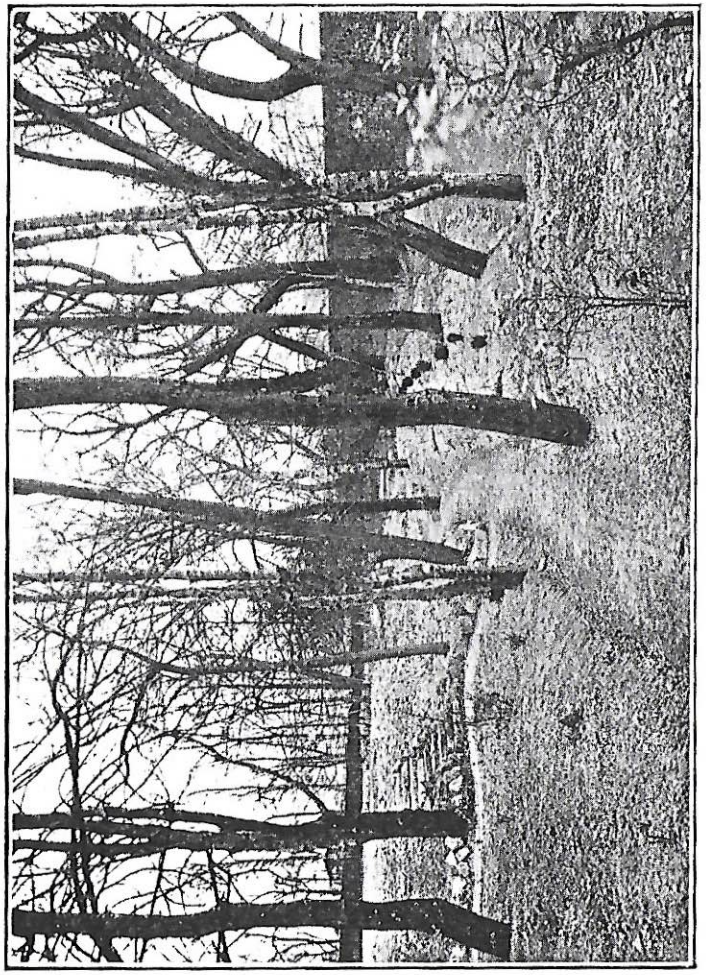


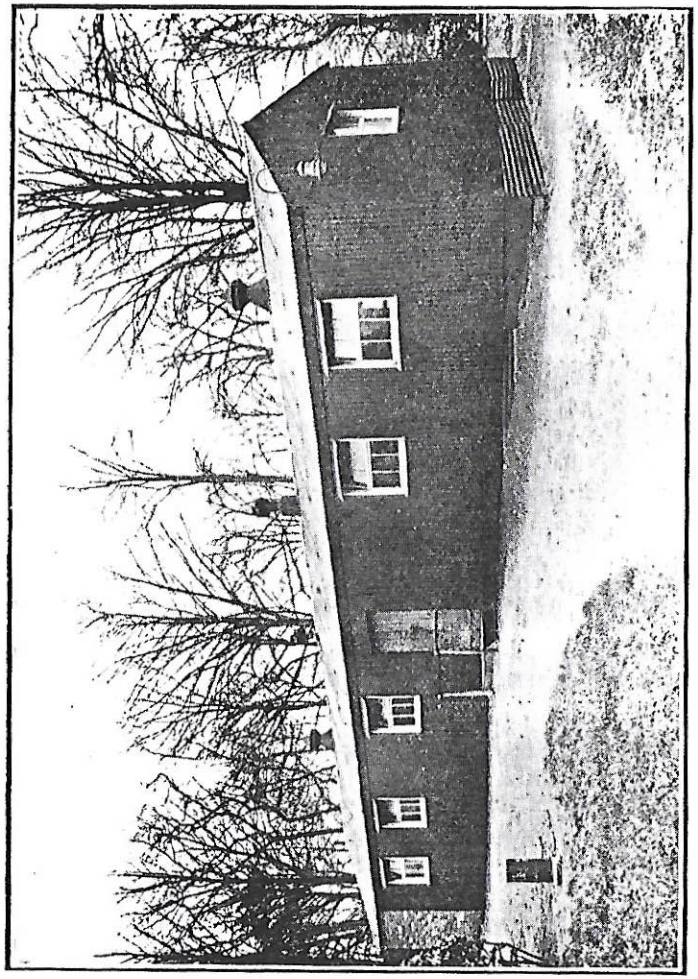
THE WOODLANDS.

## BOWLING GREEN AND CLUB.

At a time when unemployment was practically at its very worst, the Committee of that day, very bravely, but very wisely, saw the necessity of making a bowling green. Therefore, great courage was required to tackle such an expensive undertaking, especially so, seeing that in those days our exchequer was very low indeed. Voluntary assistance, however, was not long forthcoming, and very soon a party of twelve to twenty members greatly eased the financial situation by taking unto themselves to do this work. Many months of hard and strenuous work was necessary before the ground was right. All credit and praise must be accorded these members on the able manner in which they accomplished this undertaking, and it is well-known how proud they are, when admiring the results of their labour to-day.

The green, the measurement of which is approximately 40x40 yards, was opened by our worthy President in 1922. Owing to the amount of wear and tear it underwent through increased membership, it became necessary that something drastic should be done to preserve, maintain and keep it in good condition. Expert advice was sought during the close season of 1927, which resulted in our green improving fifty per cent. the following year, but not without expense. At this juncture, we must thank our General Committee for the splendid grant allocated to our section, and take this opportunity of expressing how much we appreciated their action.





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As previously stated, our Committee acted very wisely in deciding to make a bowling green, for has not our Bowling Club proved to be a most valuable asset, both financially and otherwise? Since its formation, the club has increased its membership most rapidly. Commencing with a modest thirty, we are to-day one hundred and twenty strong. Our players achieved no distinction until two years ago, when our "B" team were successful in winning their section of the Club and Institute League for two consecutive years. Hearty congratulations are extended to each and every one of our players who contributed towards the winning of this distinction.

The management of our Bowling Club is conducted in a most business-like manner, every member from the President downwards carrying out his duties in a most sportsmanlike spirit which is characteristic of bowlers generally. This section of our Club is most decidedly worthy of our appreciation and receives it, claiming approximately twenty per cent. of the general membership of our Club. It may, therefore, from a financial point of view, be regarded as one of our most valuable assets.

During the past season our ladies endeavoured to create a bowling section. They did enjoy two very convivial afternoons with their lady friends of Crookes, but, owing to general lack of enthusiasm, it was not quite the success we had desired. Now, ladies, by getting yourselves properly organised, we are confident you can make a much better success of things next season. We wish you the best of success for the forthcoming year.

Eighteen months ago our green was in a very bad condition, weeds were most prevalent, bare

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patches quite numerous, in fact, generally speaking, the green was only of a fifth-rate order. Hard work was the slogan during the close season 1927-1928, and right well it was carried out. The transformation not only surprised our own members, but visitors alike, who commended us in possessing a good green in perfect running order. The good work is still being carried on, and we are confident that season 1929 will see us with a green second to none in Sheffield and district.

Last, but by no means the least, appreciation must be given to the groundsmen and all members for their services in keeping our green up to standard condition during the past season.

We sincerely trust that all members will continue with the same interest for many years to come.

## CHILDREN'S OUTING SECTION.

Generally speaking, the world in which children live is one of enchantment, this being due to the active play of their imaginations.

There is, however, another side to the picture, *viz.*, that of stern reality, and it is in the world of reality many working-class children are called upon to experience life's difficulties.

One of these difficulties concerning the children of members attached to "Our Club" has been that of their visiting the seaside and other summer resorts. This we set out to redress with satisfactory and gratifying results to all affected.

Cleethorpes, Skegness, and other resorts have been invaded by our small army of children and their parents, the happiness of the younger generation being reflected in the happiness of the adults.

Our first venture in this direction called forth some three hundred children with two hundred adults. We can now mobilise an army of 450 children with 600 adults.

The only qualifying conditions laid down for the "Annual Outing" are that children must be over seven years of age, and under fifteen years of age, and that a nomination fee of 6d. must be paid in respect of each child. Apart from the nominal cost mentioned the "outing" for the children is free, with tea and other good things included.

Needless to say, the satisfactory results achieved have not been gained without hard work and plenty of enthusiasm, on the part of the promoters. This, however, we do not mind, our feeling being that in the happiness of the children we find our own happiness, and that in such happiness we are amply repaid.

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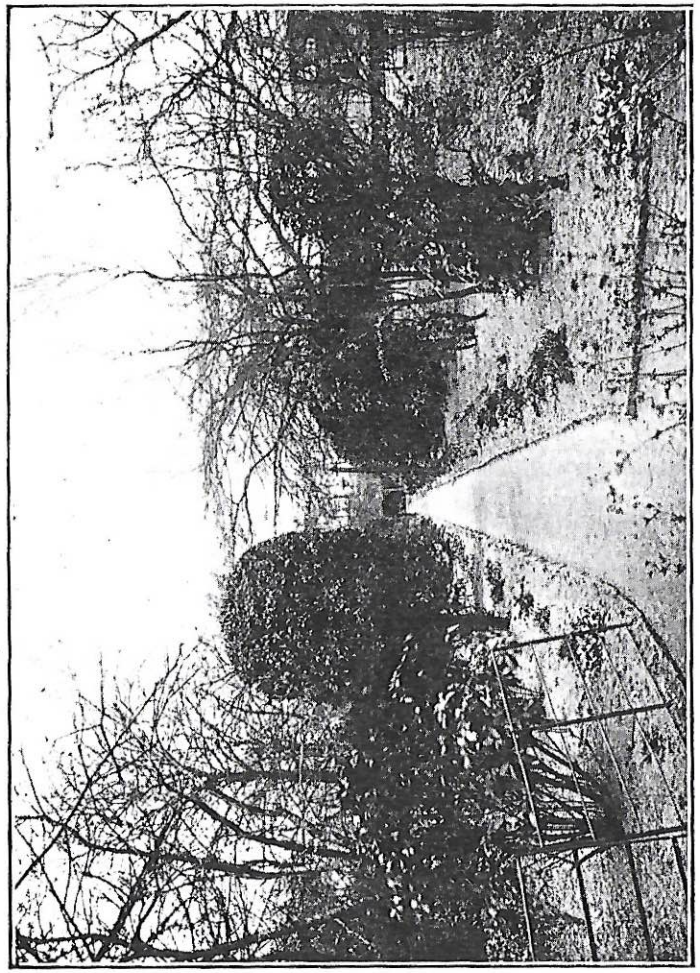
## FISHING CLUB SECTION.

What Working Men's Club would be complete without its Fishing Club? Sheffield itself is noted for its fishermen. If they cannot get fish out of a waterway, they will put fish in, if only to ensure a catch.

The fishing club section is part and parcel of the common life of our Club, and is linked up with its general activities.





THE LOVERS' WALK.

Our fishing excursions provide us with opportunities for breathing fresh air, and the quiet of the countryside is ours for the asking. These "outings" are beneficial to both body and mind to the extent that we have the advantage of an atmosphere totally different to that of the workshop, and have also time to think and exercise our mental faculties.

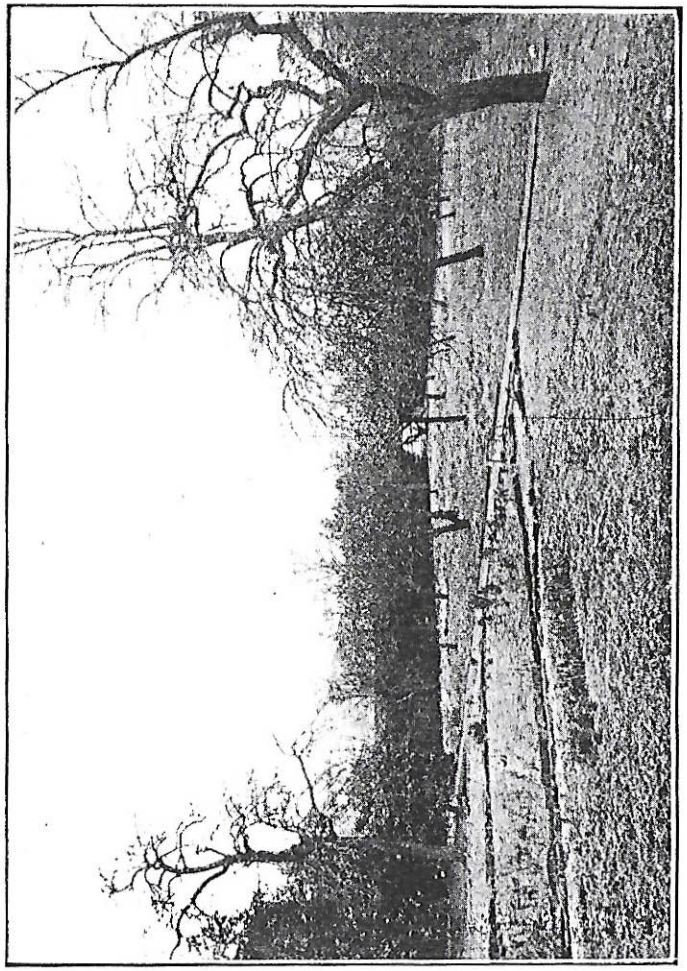
That the fishing club has developed on satisfactory lines will be agreed when it is stated that its formation took place in 1921 with a membership of sixty-five. To-day, it has a membership of one hundred and twenty.

The progress of the fishing club has been considerably assisted by one of the old members, *viz.*, Mr. G. Furniss, now in Canada, who was kind enough to present us with a cup to be competed for annually. Needless to say, this trophy is eagerly sought after, and the yearly competition for its possession is as keen as Sheffield blades.

During the past seven years the honour of winning the cup has gone to E. Roebuck, C. Hadgetts, C. Harrington, H. Harrison, J. Eadon, and J. Manifield, H. Harrison having won the coveted prize twice.

Our worst wish to the members of the fishing club is—"Health to those who go forth with rod and line."





THE ORCHARD.

## SAVINGS CLUB.

This may be regarded as the thrift department, and is by no means neglected by the general body of the Club members.

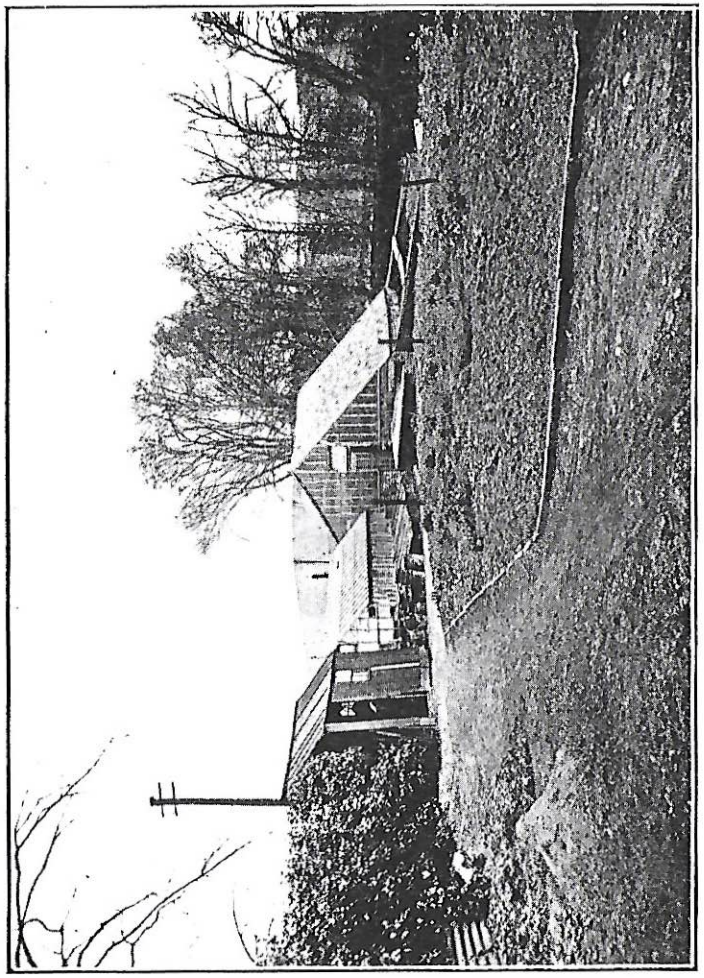
A member is appointed by the Committee to sit every Saturday night, for the purpose of accepting contributions. These, when received, are passed on to the General Secretary of the Club, and then transferred to the General Treasurer.

All monies paid into the Savings Club are banked as a separate account, the Club (General) accepting full responsibility for same.

Interest at the rate of 2½ per cent. is paid on each complete pound deposited, and members may withdraw the whole or part of their savings at any time during the year. The general "pay-out" is a fortnight prior to Christmas, and each year the Club disburses in savings sums amounting to £300 or more.

Thus is "good-will" and "good cheer" assured.





THE VINERY AND TOMATO HOUSE.

## SUMMARY OF THE CLUB'S ACTIVITIES.

Literary and Debating Society.
Bowling Club.
Children's Summer Excursions.
Fishing Club.
Games League (Billiards, etc.).
Savings Club.
Weekly Dances (Prizes for fancy dress).

In addition to the foregoing, a Library is in course of formation, of which it is hoped to make a success. This can be best achieved by gifts of books and periodicals, and gifts of this kind will be gladly received.

The formation of an Ambulance Class is also under consideration, and its materialisation is only a question of time.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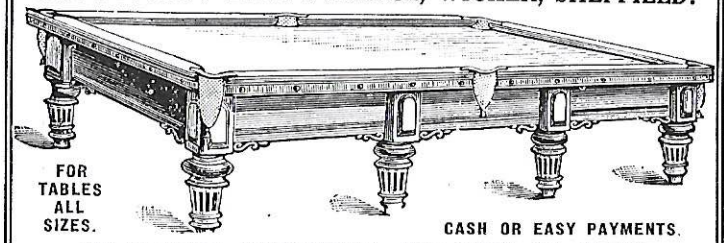

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## LOOKING BACKWARDS.

Having in this publication enumerated the various activities of the Wadsley Bridge Working Men's Club, it is a matter of common justice that some tribute should be paid to its early pioneers.

Of small and limited dimensions at the commencement, it has grown until it has reached an estate of first-rate importance.

Since its inception thousands of pounds have been spent upon improvements and extensions, and to-day it stands as a monument of wise effort and endeavour, on the part of those responsible for its formation, and those responsible for the management of its internal affairs from birth upwards.

As we pen these lines there lies before us a publication bearing the signature of W. Whitaker, and the date of November, 1919. The publication in question represents an appeal for the establishment of a Working Men's Club at Wadsley Bridge.

Associated with this appeal are the following names:

| | |
|---|---|
| Dr. Bissett. | Mr. W. Gough. |
| Mr. N. Lister. | ,, F. Dolby. |
| ,, G. Allen. | ,, C. Rackstraw. |
| ,, H. Jackson. | ,, W. Webster. |
| ,, J. W. Clay. | ,, A. Gambling. |
| ,, G. Patchett. | ,, W. Carnall. |
| ,, H. Croft. | ,, H. Wadsworth. |
| ,, W. Bainbridge. | ,, A. W. Hutton. |
| ,, H. Womersley. | ,, E. Roebuck. |
| ,, W. H. Hurton. | ,, F. Gillott. |
| ,, H. Smith. | ,, J. Eadon. |
| ,, Chas. Walker. | |

Their appeal was not in vain.

## GENERAL COMMITTEE.

Mr. E. Robinson, O.B.E. (*President*).
Mr. W. H. Hurton (*Vice-President*).
Mr. T. Cook (*Treasurer*).
Mr. W. Allwood (*Secretary*).
Mr. J. Turner (*Assistant Secretary*).
Mr. G. Allen.
Mr. H. Bailey.
Mr. J. Barrett.
Mr. E. Bates.
Mr. A. Crookes.
Mr. E. Daniels.
Mr. S. Dawes.
Mr. A. Gambling.
Mr. W. Gough.
Mr. J. H. Hanwell.
Mr. F. Millington.
Mr. F. Oxley.
Mr. G. Oxley.
Mr. W. H. Rodgers.
Mr. F. W. Rutter.
Mr. W. Smith.
Mr. J. Ward.

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## LITERARY AND DEBATING SOCIETY.

*Chairman* .... .... .... Mr. E. Robinson, O.B.E.
*Secretary* .... .... .... Mr. W. H. Rodgers.

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## BOWLING CLUB.

*Chairman* .... .... .... Mr. W. H. Rodgers.
*Secretary* .... .... .... Mr. A. Crookes.



## FISHING CLUB.

*Chairman* .... .... .... Mr. H. Harrison.
*Secretary* .... .... .... Mr. F. Oxley.

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## CHILDREN'S EXCURSION.

*Chairman* .... .... .... Mr. T. Cook.
*Secretary* .... .... .... Mr. W. Allwood.

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## SAVINGS CLUB.

*Chairman* .... .... .... Mr. E. Robinson, O.B.E.
*Secretary* .... .... .... Mr. F. Millington.

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