

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE HONEYDEW COUNTRY CLUB

Way back in 1950, a group of community minded residents got together and formed the Honeydew and District Farmers Association. The area fell under the control of the Peri-Urban Board, but there was no local body to fight for the needs of the community ie. a police station, a post office, a parallel medium school, electricity, telephones, tarred roads, etc. This intrepid group of 'farmers' fought for all these amenities and eventually won.

Meetings were held in private homes, but right from the inception the Association realised that it was essential to have its own ground and community hall. The Kelly family (former owners of the present Randpark Ridge area) donated 10 acres of land which was to be utilised for community recreation. This was a great start!

The main source of income in the early days was in the form of horse show-jumping, gymkhanas and home industry shows. The area was rural and residents had great fun competing against each other to see who had the best cow or who could make the best apple jelly. On these days, people came from far and wide to exhibit their livestock and homemade wares. All interests were catered for - from bantams to bulls - from baking to flowers arranging. A wonderful camaraderie existed.

Eventually enough money was raised to commence with the construction of the hall. Members of the Association did most of the work themselves and in 1963 it was completed, amidst great jubilation. Now dances, beetle drives, tape derbies, socials, bridge evenings, etc. could be organised to swell the funds.

The first sporting section was the Badminton Club, which was established in 1963 followed in 1968 by the tennis section, with the construction of two tennis courts. As membership increased, so more courts were added.

In 1971, the bowling section was formed and a handful of members played on one rink which a member had built on his private grounds, until a full sized green could be built. The pub was in the boot of the member's car and a small 'lean-to' was used as a clubhouse. As more funds were raised, it became possible to erect a small building and over the years this clubhouse has been extended several times. Two additional greens were built when the Provincial Roads Department expropriated part of the original bowling green.

As each sporting section became established, so more funds were generated to create a new section. Attempts to get funding from the local municipalities, Randburg and Roodepoort proved fruitless, so members had to do it on their own. By 1973 the sporting pattern had been established and the name of the Association was changed to the Honeydew Club. In 1997 it was again changed to the Honeydew Country Club.

Various other sub-sections were formed - equestrian, pony club, bridge club, ladies club, garden club, home industries, archery, etc. - some of which are no longer functioning, but others are going from strength to strength. The bowls and tennis clubs, in particular, are continuing in the traditions of the past.

As a community gesture, the local scout group was granted permission to erect a small hall on the Club grounds in 1969, where they are still gathering.

The Honeydew Country Club is a proud memorial to all the dedicated members who, over many years have given tirelessly - physically and financially - to create a landmark!

Shirley Young
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