



This description of an epic bowls match is from the IOW County Press, dated Saturday, September 19th 1896.



The Carisbrooke team were travelling to a match at the Ventnor Club which was then at Highport Cliff, Kings Bay Road - this picture shows the Ventnor team there. The weather that day was terrible. Travelling across the Island is a lot easier now - although from the report it seems that there were compensations for the long journeys.

*The visiting team left Newport about 9.45am in a four-horse brake supplied by Mr Fox of the Bugle. A short halt was made at Shorwell whence the journey was continued through Chale to Niton, where an excellent luncheon had kindly been provided for them at the expense of the President, Mr J C Mould . . . Mr Vice-President Whittington presided . . . and the health of the President was drunk with musical honours, on the call of the chairman.*

*In a steady downpour of rain, the drive was continued, Ventnor being reached just after 1 o'clock. About 2 o'clock there was a temporary cessation of the rain and the bowlers commenced the match, but very shortly the rain commenced and continued more or less throughout the game. Notwithstanding that the green was sodden with the corners miry pools, necessitating the "woods" being washed each time before they could be delivered, some really marvellous play was witnessed. The game throughout was contested point by point, first one side then the other gaining a slight advantage, and the result of the first two rinks was a tie, the game standing at 48 points all. It was decided to continue play in spite of the heavy showers. With the result in doubt until 15 minutes, or so, from the end, Ventnor ran out eventual winners by 98 points to 86.*

*Afterwards the home club entertained the visitors at a substantial cold collation, provided by Host & Hostess Read, at the Kent Hotel, with Mr G Parsons presiding. The friendly feeling which has existed between the two clubs since the institution of these home and away matches subsequently found expression in the usual complimentary toasts. The visitors left on their return journey at 9 o'clock amid a ringing cheer!*

The Kent Hotel (later called the Kent Commercial Inn) did not survive the second world war, when it was severely bomb damaged. It used to stand on the Upper High Street between Victoria Street and West Street. The Prince of Wales, now also gone, was on the corner of Victoria Street, and then up the hill was the Kent, with a fishmonger sandwiched between them. On the other side of the Kent was a hairdresser, a confectioner and tobacconist, a draper, a boot and shoe manufacturer, a pork butcher and bacon factor and finally a grocery store. The photograph shows the Kent in 1908. Incredibly, in this short stretch of the High Street there were no less than two inns and seven shops!

