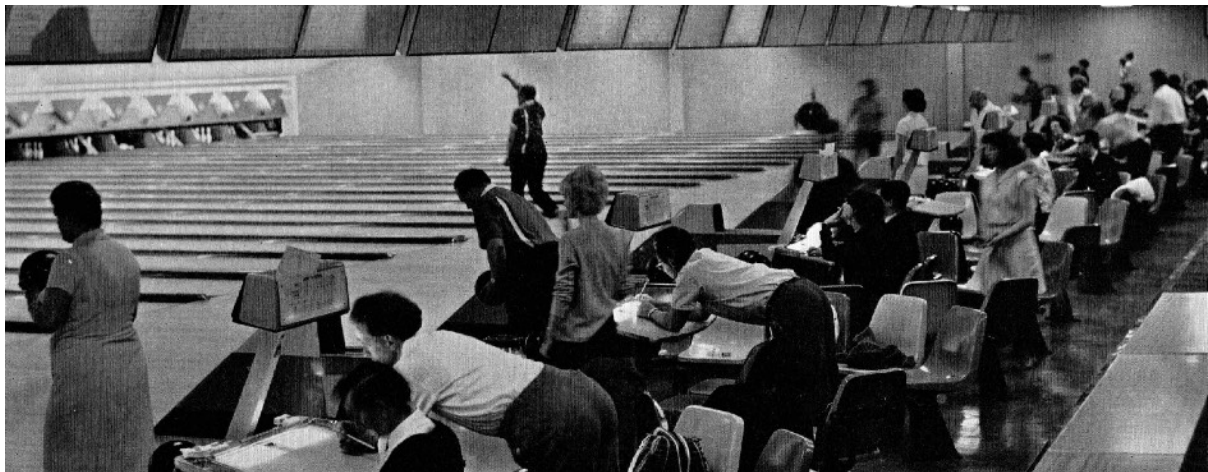




Basildon's First Tenpin Bowling Alley



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Basildon's First Tenpin Bowling Alley



In 1962 Trans-World Bowling Ltd built Basildon's first Tenpin Bowling Alley at 129/131 Southernhay. It was the first to be built in New Towns around the country that were being built after the Second World War. It was opened on 1st February 1962 and was the first centre in the UK to have 26 lanes all on one level, they were equipped with AMF lanes and machines. AMF being automated bowling equipment developed by American Machine Foundry in the 1950's.

It was also the largest in Europe on a single level and, the first Bowling Alley in the UK to have a restaurant, it could seat eighty people.

All other Bowling Alley's in the UK prior to this were converted from existing buildings such as cinemas, theatres or warehouses.



The first manager appointed was an American – Roger Osmundson. He had the support of a young assistant manager, Allan Collins.

The game of Tenpin bowling consists of 10 frames and the maximum score is 300 achieved by knocking all the tens pins down in every frame.

On the 29 September 1962 Charles Hollingbery from Canvey rolled out

the maximum score 300 at the bowl. It is thought it was Britain's first perfect game. At the time of a perfect game to go down in the records, has to be witnessed by the centre manager or his deputy from the 7th frame onwards. Unfortunately, in this instance this was not done.

However, Charles achieved the result, even though he was half blind in one eye and had a strained leg, he achieved the perfect game by bowling at half his normal speed.



Charles Hollingbery (A Canvey Builder)

•Charles Joseph Hollingbery was born in Bethnal Green on the 4th August 1909. In the 1911 census he is shown as the youngest son of George and Agnes. George was a Boot Manufacturer; a profession Charles was to follow in his early years. He married Gwendoline Knight in 7th August 1929 at Rochford Registry Office, residing at that time in a Caravan on Canvey Island, his occupation stated as boot repairer.

Their first child was born on Canvey Island in October 1930 and was Baptised by Rev Debree in St Katherine's Church in December of that year. The address given for the family was Gladsville, Fairlop Avenue, Charles was still working as a boot maker.

- Other members of the family had also moved to the island. Charles' father, George died in 1953, George is stated as living at number 10 The Avenue, Charles and Gwen were living at no. 23.*
- I have not so far been able to pin down through records when Charles started in the building trade. But by 1958 he was definitely building. He had also moved again to 'Maisonwick' in Furtherwick Road. In the local Captivating Canvey, Hollingbery first advertised his building Company in 1958 and also in the same year a notice regarding land on the Island was in the London Gazette.*
- In 1962 when Ten Pin Bowling was starting to be all the rage in the UK, Charles was a regular at Basildon and it was here that he became the all-time Ten Pin Bowling record holder and player of Britain's first perfect game.*
- When he retired his family moved to Perranporth, Cornwall where his interest lay in hotel ownership. Charles died on August 9th, 1996.*



Visting American star bowler Bruce Koch a fellow

300 club member, congratulating Charles on his achievement.

Trans-World ownership was relatively short lived with ownership passing to the new company Ambassador Bowling in 1963. In June 1975 the business was passed to Basildon Council. They removed sixteen lanes and had the building split in two. The ten lanes being operated by the council with the other part of the building leased to Coral Social Clubs. Then in May 1985 the bowling centre closed and the Coral Bingo Hall was extended to occupy the whole building and this arrangement still continues today as Gala Bingo.

In the 1970's Block S part of the Great Oaks development included a number of leisure amenities accessible either by stairway or escalator from Town Square (now only stairway) or from the top level of the Great Oaks multi-storey car park. The area is known as High Pavement. It became a Bingo Club operated by Jackpot Automatics (Essex) Limited. Then sometime in the late 1980's early 1990's it became Basildon Bowl and Quaser Centre, having been converted to a 20-lane bowling alley and Quasar indoor laser arena.



Basildon Bowl – High Payment

In September 2015 after four years of being boarded up the alley's management announced that the centre has closed due mainly to a historic dispute over rent. The area has since been converted to apartments.

Well, that's two down, but then in 1997 Festival Leisure Park in Cranes Farm Road opens. The area became known locally as "Bas Vegas" it was going to include night clubs, cinema complex, restaurants etc including Hollywood Bowl. The Hollywood Bowl Tenpin Bowling Centre actually open in May 1998. It also has 26 lanes, a games arcade, café and a licensed bar and is still operating as at today's date.



