



# Palm Reader

The newsletter of Palmerston Indoor Bowling Club

Issue 8 February 2004

## Under 25 International

### What did you miss?

by Roy Mudd  
*President*

For those of you who were not able to experience the exuberance of the Under 25 Home International Series on 10/11 January last you missed a wonderful display of precision bowling.



**A full house**

This club put on a great show using many helpers for dispensing refreshments, providing large numbers of meals in the restaurant, parking vehicles, designing and selling the programme, negotiating for and putting up advertisements on the walls, as well as getting some printed.

The rinks were prepared carefully, and the four countries emblems selected with care so as not to cause offence. General cleaning was undertaken in the changing rooms and on the carpet, and we provided scorers at the end of each rink for all sessions. Our bars were well stocked, and the players had soft drinks provided for them at the ends of the rinks.

We borrowed chairs and equipment from Lee on the Solent BC, Portchester BC, and Crofton School for which we were most grateful.

We have photographs taken by Dave Lolley, one of our members, showing how tight the heads were on various rinks, so when you find that your bowls go nowhere, it is not the rink or the carpet, it is YOU.



**The top team?**

Wales were the worthy winners after two long days of bowls, and because of this International, and the Denny Cup and Plate finals PALMERSTON INDOOR BOWLS CLUB after six years is well and truly on the scene for being able to stage prestigious events.

Well done to all who helped and supported the club during this week-end, and I hope that you gained something from the experience.

# Ladies Captain's report

*by Jean Evans*

As there was no entry from me in the last newsletter may I take this opportunity of wishing you all good wishes and happy bowling 2004.

Sadly we are no longer in the Vivienne competition but I am delighted to report that we are doing very well in the Riversmeet competition and to date we are in top position. Well done to all those ladies taking part - keep it up - wouldn't it be great to win this one it being the first time it has been won by Hampshire Womens Indoor Bowling Association. I know it will not be for the lack of trying.

I am very disappointed in the response I am getting for ladies to put their names down for both ladies and mixed friendlies. These matches are very important to our club and with the number of lady members we have the number who contribute is very disappointing to say the least. So come on you ladies, they are such lovely games and it gives one the opportunity of meeting people from other clubs which is always a joy.

I'm pleased to report that Betty Metherell is making slow but steady progress - she sends you all her best wishes and has asked me to say that if anyone would like to pay her a visit she would be delighted to see you.

# Ladies County Report

*by Pam Lamshead*

On 14th January following the euphoria of U 25's Weekend, the HCWIBA held a slightly more subdued event! Palmerston is honoured this year by having Janet Mudd as Indoor County President - a busy time for Janet who has to attend all matches including those against other Counties wherever they are played. Many of the games are at our own club of course with players attending from other clubs all over the County.

This particular event was arranged earlier last year - an idea forged by Janet together with Patrons' Secretary Heather Clark - in an effort to raise some much needed funds for the County. Sadly Heather Clark passed away suddenly at the beginning of the season and as a tribute to her many years of service to the County it was decided to run this special Patrons event annually.

The Winner would receive the "Patrons' Trophy" presented by Janet Mudd in memory of Heather Clark. Over 50 Patrons attended from Clubs around the County and had a well organised enjoyable afternoon of 'fun' bowling followed by a tasty afternoon tea where the new Trophy was presented to the winner - Barbara Noyce from Banister Park. Barbara and the runners up also received wood Bud vases expertly crafted by Palmerston's own Andrew Miller. With the addition of the Grand Raffle the afternoon raised the grand sum of £250 for the County. Well done Janet - keep up the good work.

All lady members are eligible to become patrons on payment of an annual fee of £1. Further events to be held at Palmerston this season include:

Sunday Feb 15th from 9:30am - Open 4's Tournament (won last year by Palmerston)

Wed Feb 18th 1:30pm for 2:00pm - HCWIBA versus Oxfordshire

Sunday March 21st from 9:30am - County Semi-Finals Day

Wed March 24th 2:00pm - County Presidents Day - Janet invites all HCWIBA Officers plus Presidents & Officers from other Clubs

Sunday March 28th from 9:30am - County Finals Day

If you want to see some expert bowling come along and watch these events! We wish Janet continued success in the rest of her Presidential Year.

# Men's update

On behalf of the men's Captain, Barry Grinaway, here is an update on this season's men's club representative competitions.

We made first round exits from the Denny Cup - beaten by Atherley, and Denny Plate - beaten by Dolphin (Poole). In the London and Southern Counties Challenge Shield we lost in the first round to Adur. However this was a fine performance by our "second 16" as our first team was playing the Bramley Bowl at the same time - well done to all.

We had a good run in the London and Southern Counties Single Rink beating both Arun and Wealden (East Sussex), both strong clubs, and this was against the handicap of playing away on much quicker greens. We eventually lost to Eastbourne, again away, one round short of the quarter finals.

This performance was however exceeded by our EIBA National Over 60's double rink who beat Dolphin, Banister and Atherley along the way, to eventually lose in the quarter final to Denton Island (Newhaven). Had we won just this one more round we would have been travelling to Melton Mowbray for the National semi final and final - well done the lads.

In the Hampshire County league (Bramley Bowl) competition, keen observers of the competitions board will know that we have been heading the table since the first game of the season and are currently 9 points clear of joint second placed Victory and Banister Park. Our last 2 games are against these two rivals and we need to take points off them to ensure winning the championship as each has a potential 16 points to gain. So if we can get the full 8 points from Banister on Saturday 21 February, Victory won't be able to catch us even if they score 8 against Atherley. Come along and give us your vocal support from 10am on the 21st.

We do believe the standard of bowling at Palmerston has continued to rise this year and the selection committee is continually impressed by a significant number of bowlers putting in good performances in the leagues, some of them coming to our attention for the first time. Of course we can't be present to see people bowl in many leagues and we hope that next year many more bowlers will come forward to test themselves in the trials. The more competitive the fight for places, the better our teams will be. We have a "squad system", currently numbering about 22 for the Bramley, 16 of which are chosen for each match based on availability, current form, compatibility in the rink, and rink results. And remember, those who shined in this season's trials and made themselves available, got their chance to play in the Bramley and some have now become regular squad members.

## Committee Notes

Tony Grant (Rink Manager) advised that the Green was stretched in December and a running speed of 17.4 seconds was measured. This is likely to settle down with use.

A considerable number of letters have been received from the Officers of the various organisations associated with the recent Under 25 International are all very complimentary of venue and the support given during the competition. The Club members did an excellent job and should be congratulated. Members who assisted during the weekend have been invited to a roll-up on Sunday 8th February 2004 in aid of charity followed by a meal as a way of the Club saying thank you.

Dave Lolley (member) took a large number of photographs during the Under 25 International. The photographs will be displayed during the charity roll-up. Copies can be ordered from Dave.

The issue of declining rink occupancy was discussed and it was decided that a list of members who do not participate in league fixtures should be generated. The purpose of the list is to contact the members and determine why they are not participating in the league programmes. There are possibly a number of valid reasons, but it is felt that as there are so many positions in the leagues not taken up perhaps a different structure for leagues is required. Empty rink space means less revenue for the Club.

There has been no response from Tony Grant's article in Palm Reader for new junior members. Due to the small number of juniors within the Club despite all his efforts, Tony has had to withdraw Palmerston from the Junior County League.

The Committee decided to stop the customary Tea Break during representative matches and this has now been implemented. (Ed: no reason has been recorded). Subsequently some members have expressed their displeasure with this decision.

Insufficient members are volunteering to do Stewardship Duties on Sundays. This is despite considerable advertising. It should be noted that the Club must have a Duty Steward available if it is to remain open. Further requests are to be made.

All unused lockers have been allocated to members on the waiting list.

## By the Treasurer

At the Annual General Meeting in March 2003, I stated that due to the amount of time that I was required to spend in the Club checking and Banking Cash, keeping the Clubs Accounts etc., I intended to stand down as Treasurer as from the AGM in March 2004, and asked for volunteers to come forward to fill the post.

By the end of August no-one had put their names forward. However a volunteer did come forward in early September to take over the task, three times a week, of checking daily Cash takings against Desk Stewards Returns, Banking and raising Computer Input Documentation. This has been a great success.

As a result I am now able to choose my own time when I am required to come into the club to pay bills, keep the Clubs Computer Accounts updated and carry out relevant tasks.

As the situation that was relevant in 2003 has now changed, it is my intention to put my name forward once again at the Annual General Meeting in March 2004 for re-election as a Director and as Club Treasurer as I feel I still have a lot to offer the Management and Members of this Club.

*Ray Morse*

*Director and Hon Treasurer*

## Thankyou

*from Roy Mudd President*

The Under 25 International held on 10/11 January was a great success.

I would like to thank all those members who helped in any way to make it so.

Many people spent long hours at the Club, others came and went, but all made their contribution to the success.

Inevitably the normal programme has to be interrupted, and so some members had a slight change of league/roll-up time. I do not apologise for this, because the reputation that the Club has gained, in the County, in the Country, and Internationally, far outweighs the slight inconvenience encountered by a small minority of the membership.

I thank a lot of members for their help, and others for their indulgence in not being able to bowl over the week-end.

Suffice it to say that I consider it a great privilege to have been the President of Palmerston Indoor Bowls Club on the occasion of this U25 Home International series.

## Editorial

We have a bumper February issue for you. I am pleased to be able to include a profile of one of our members, which was the idea of Ralph Norster who researched and wrote it (despite Gomer's embarrassment) - thanks Ralph. I would welcome other such stories or news about any of our members - please write in.

One subject coming up again is declining rink occupancy. It appears that the Board and the JMC is becoming concerned about this (see Committee Notes). I have written an article suggesting some ideas. I would welcome feedback from members. This is important - please let me have your views and other suggestions so I can print them in time for the next issue before the AGM on 27th March.

Speaking of the AGM, now is the time to start thinking about putting forward proposals for rule changes if you think there should be any. If you have an opinion that something should be changed it's no good just talking about it, a definite proposal should be put forward which forces the question to be put to members and allows anyone to air their views for all to hear. This is the way to get things changed.

Finally it was most sad to hear of the untimely passing of stalwart Committee member and Vice President Brian Cleaver. Thanks to Derek Arnold for taking over his Men's Competition Secretary duties.

*Russell Gadd - Editor*

*You can contribute to the newsletter either by writing an article or a letter to the editor. If you use a computer please email it to russellgadd@fastmail.fm (sorry the previous address has been discontinued) and I'll acknowledge receipt of emails. Or put it on a floppy disc (either plain text or a .doc file). Otherwise hand items in to the office addressed to Palm Editor.*

***All issues will be produced monthly with the deadline at the end of the previous month.***

# Gomer Jones

**There are many members of Palmerston with an interesting life history. There must be literally hundreds of fascinating stories to tell, and this is one of them, researched and written by our roving reporter Ralph Norster:**

*Full many a flower is born to blush unseen*

*And waste its sweetness on the desert air*

*Full many a gem of purest ray serene*

*The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear.*

When Thomas Grey wrote these words in his "Elegy in a country churchyard" he could well have been describing that "gem" who is our co member, competitor, colleague and friend Gomer Jones, a quiet, taciturn, wise man, little given to idle chatter but noted for his common sense and sportsmanship.

Gomer was born in the beautiful Mid Wiltshire country side in the village of Great Hinton, between Devizes and Trowbridge frequently referred to affectionately. as Moonraker country, where the Kennet and Avon canal divided the county while joining the river Thames to Bath and the west.

He was the younger of two brothers and his father was killed in action when he was four days old.

The year was 1917, the year of the Russian revolution, when great armies were still pounding each other on the Western Front, when the Royal Flying Corps gave way to the Royal Air Force and London was bombed from a Zeppelin, when the Allies gained a great victory at Passchendale and the USA finally joined the conflict.

With the average wages of £2 per week and rationing in force, things were a little difficult which the good country people alleviated by diligent gardening and the occasional rabbit or chicken to add some variety to the menu.

Beer was 2d a pint and 10 Woodbines were 4d.

Usually the first memorable event in most children's lives would be starting school, and Gomer was no exception in this regard. The difference was in the school he went to. Not today's all singing, all dancing featherbed learning establishment with accent on information technology, science, arts and languages.

4 R's was then the norm. Reading, writing, arithmetic and religion.

The first introduction to a, b, c, and numbers were on a slate with a piece of chalk and times tables were committed to memory at a very early age usually in a sing song manner which present day "musicians" would make a meal of. If "Yellow submarine" could make millions how about the twice times table set to music.

There was no restriction on class size or on ability. The clever helped the not so clever and discipline was strict, ruled by the threat of the cane mercilessly administered on any available part of the body.

School dinners were unheard of and each child brought their own packed lunch of sandwiches, a piece of cake and an apple usually in a paper bag stuffed in a pocket, or in the case of the posh kids, a satchel.

For a penny a week a child could have 1/3rd pint of milk daily in a little bottle with a cardboard disk in the top with a push out hole for a straw. Having usually stood for a couple of hours in the school lobby before being issued, the top third of the bottle would be bright yellow where the cream had risen to the top. Real unadulterated cows milk. Where has it gone?

School uniforms were unheard of and for the most part would be unaffordable.

Families were usually large making economy paramount.

Many of the boys, especially those from a farming background, wore straight hobnail boots which never wore out, and were passed from the eldest through the boys in the family. Straight boots were of a heavy leather construction with a sole thick enough to take the hobnails and shaped to be worn on either foot, and were still being worn by country folk until the outbreak of the second world war. They were usually water proof and were ideal for gardening, farming and absolutely lethal on the football pitch.

Since school buses were also unheard of and, as many children walked a fair distance to get to school, reliable footwear was essential, and here the boots fitted the bill.



The dread of every school child in those days was the monthly visit of the district nurse, or the "nit picker" as she was more familiarly known, to check all the children for head cleanliness. To be told to stay behind after all the other children had been dismissed to the playground was terrifying and probably meant the type of haircut now reasonably popular except for the fringe over the forehead. The mark of Cain.

Pastimes were so different in those days too. Computers and Gameboys were fancies of science fiction and playground games were certainly of a more rustic flavour. Both boys and girls played with a steel hoop propelled by vicious strokes from a stick or one of mothers wooden pegs and steered by bias applied to either side of the hoop with the same stick.

Marbles and allys could be very competitive and played in a variety of ways.

Tops. The "granny" which was a heavy dumpy top which would stay on the ground and the lethal "carrot" which could be sent across the playground at a height of four or five feet when whipped and were usually banned after the first or second day of the season as too dangerous.

And whatever happened to conkers? Not only a good game but an excellent exercise in mental arithmetic since, if my sixer knocked out your niner mine then became a fiftener. Come on. 6+9=15. Wake up at the back!

Oh! Happy days.

In 1928 responsibility for Gomer's education was passed to Trowbridge High School and required a daily journey of 8 miles, entailing a cycle ride of about 40 minutes each way, with the usual boys chores awaiting him on his arrival at home. There was always firewood to be chopped and a garden to be kept tidy and productive.

It was "across a crowded classroom" that Gomer's eyes locked onto the young lady who was destined to share his life.

He left Trowbridge High School in 1933 to assist, as most boys were expected to do, in the support of his widowed mother, himself and his family.

This he did by joining the Avon Rubber Co. in Melksham as a clerk and participated in all the usual pranks of apprentices and young lads suddenly propelled into a man's world, and stayed there until he was old enough and tall enough to realise his ambition to join the police force. This was achieved in 1939 when he entered the Hampshire Police Force.

After training he was posted to Eastliegh.

But 1939 was notable for other reasons. The start of the second world war, bringing with it conscription, air raids, blackout, rationing, black market, Fifth Column and many other things added to the normal peace time duties of the local coper.

1942 was a landmark year in many ways for Gomer. To get married in the Police Force on those days the hopeful groom had first to present his prospective wife to the Chief Constable for approval and vetting for suitability.

Joan charmed the Chief, and married Gomer on 1st August 1942 and in recognition of Joan's service the local Guides and Brownies formed a guard of honour outside the church.

With both food and clothes on ration it proved to be a fairly utility wedding.

Relations and friends lent and gave clothing coupons to enable Joan and two bridesmaids to be suitably attired.

The wedding cake was made by Huntley & Palmer and since icing sugar was at that time unavailable a removable decorated cardboard sleeve supplied the festive cheer.

The happy couple spent six days of idyllic honeymoon in a blacked out Wells, Somerset.

On return from his honeymoon the dreaded buff envelope awaited him

The Police Force being considered a reserved occupation Gomer was not troubled by the threat of conscription until Mr.W.Churchill played his trump card and decided that all young policeman were needed to carry the banner, and on 7th

August 1942 Gomer exchanged the dark uniform and tall helmet of the policeman for khaki battledress and beret of the Derbyshire Yeomanry. His mode of transport also changed from the copper's bicycle to a variety of armoured vehicles and, in particular, the 40 ton Sherman tank.

From then on many things changed in rapid succession for Gomer.

After a long voyage on a troopship, during which he found that sea travel and he were not compatible, the khaki serge was changed for khaki drill, shorts were the order of the day, the temperature changed from English winter to Sahara heat, the beret was swapped, of necessity, for a tin hat and Gomer found himself eating sand with his bully beef.

Fortunately the issue in North Africa had been settled before Gomer's arrival, but there was still much to be done on the European mainland.

BFPO would be Gomer's official address but a better description for the next 2 years would be "Of no fixed abode".

Working as a reconnaissance unit sometimes miles ahead of the main force, a tarpaulin cover attached to the rear of the tank became his the home for himself and four other crew members for the foreseeable future.

Without respite the fighting moved across the water to the island of Sicily, and the first Allied toehold on the European mainland.

Through Sicily and onto the Italian mainland, to meet the combined might of the German and Italian forces compressed into the ankle of Italy. To assist these advances, landings were made at Salerno and Anzio, both of which experienced heavy resistance and relied for relief on the British forces, led for the most part, by the Armoured Corps. With a brief pause around Monte Cassino, which saw the heaviest and bloodiest fighting in the Italian campaign, Gomer and his colleagues, still operating as reconnaissance for the main force, were the first troops to reach the River Po just south of Rome.

Crossing the River Po, on a floating pontoon just big enough for his Sherman tank, gave Gomer one of the most frightening moments of his life, when a large gun which had not been subdued by the troops already across, opened up when he was in midstream. He became very aware of the fact that Sherman tanks do not swim, and that he was in the observers position on top of the tank turret with no chance of escape should the pontoon take a hit. Once safely across he and his crew vented their fright and anger on anything remotely hostile.

In late 1943 Italy capitulated and a few days later declared on its former ally. This did very little to shorten the war since the Germans were in great strength in Italy and continued fighting over the Alps and up to Klagenfort in Austria.

Here hostilities ceased for Gomer when he was detailed to lead a column of armour back over the Alps and into Northern Italy.

He was informed that those people who had been recruited from the police force were to be repatriated to the UK to rejoin the constabulary, and thus began a long and tedious journey home.

From Northern Italy, for five days, in the luxurious comfort of a cattle truck, with accommodation for 8 horses or 40 soldiers, Gomer travelled south to Naples where he was offered alternative transport home. By land, sea or air. The obvious choice for a returning soldier was the quickest so Gomer chose air.

The RAF did after all have DC3's with seats and Yorks were just coming into service, so a nice comfortable journey was in prospect.

They also had Lancaster bombers which were returning to England and which had no passenger accommodation at all. And that was to be Gomer's mode of transport. 12 men to a plane, seated on the floor, with only one person to move around at a time, and a chemical toilet visible to all as a means of sanitation. Five and a half hours at 9,000 ft. in khaki drill, with no heating and a blanket if you were lucky.

He arrived home in October 45 and met his two year old daughter for the first time.

Police duties resumed when he was posted to Whitehill police station near Bordon on the Surrey border with a bicycle for transport and the luxury of his first police house.

After 6 years at Whitehill he was posted to Cowplain and changed his mode of transport to a 1.5 Riley, bought for £35 and which, fully restored in today's market would be worth 200 times that amount.

With 10 years service at Cowplain, Gomer was transferred to Fareham where he spent 8 years finishing his service in 1970 as Sergeant.

After 31 distinguished years in the Force it is reasonable to ask would he do it again. Gomer's answer is quite simple. Under the same conditions, yes, but with today's breakdown in discipline and behaviour, no.

He has 2 daughters 4 grand children and 2 great grand children to claim his attention and when not so occupied he finds time for his garden and his bowls.

He is happy in his retirement and long may it continue.

# Temperature Control System

An Extraordinary General Meeting was held on 30 November and attended by several hundred members. The Palmerston Board (not the Joint Management Committee) presented their recommendation for a Temperature Control System in response to concerns about the present heating and ventilation system and complaints of the building being either too hot or too cold. Members of the Board have put in a great deal of work on investigating this over the past year and they explained what the proposed new system does, how it has performed in other bowling clubs and how it could be paid for.

After a lively session of question and answer, the members present voted in favour of the Board's proposal. In fact on a show of hands, I could not see one single hand against the proposal, nor any abstentions. This unanimous endorsement is a tribute to the Board and I personally would like to thank them for all the hard

work they have put in on this (and all the hard work they have yet to do to implement it!)

One subject discussed was finance. Bill Jackson, the Finance Director, confirmed that there would be no need to raise the subscriptions above their present level in order to pay for this new system. However due to the need for cash to pay for other committed expenditure including paying off the loan which originally helped to finance the building of the Club, in the meantime we will need to borrow more money to pay for this. Bill recommended a bank overdraft.

One member suggested that some members might be willing to make an interest free loan to the Club to save having to pay high overdraft interest rates, particularly at the present time when interest you can get on your money in a bank or building society is at a very low level. There was significant support from many other members for this idea. Also

some members would be prepared to make a donation not just a loan. This proposal was gratefully accepted by the Board. Loans will be repaid within 2 years (by December 2006) so you would be making only a short term commitment.

Since the loan details were put into place, this facility has got off to a good start even at this early stage when many members are as yet unaware of this project. At the last Committee meeting it was reported that the total money so far raised was £7,600. This is about 10% of the amount required to fully finance the temperature control system, and we are hoping for a lot more from those able to help.

Please use the form below if you want to lend or donate money to the club to help pay for this new Temperature Control System, more copies of the form are available at the Stewards desk. Send it in by the end of February please.

## Palmerston Indoor Bowls Club Ltd.

### Loan to help Finance Temperature Control System

At the EGM held on 30<sup>th</sup> November it was decided to go ahead with the installation of a Temperature Control System to be financed by an overdraft facility from the bank rather than a loan to be repaid by December 2006.

There was a proposal from the members that members' loans could be used to minimise the interest to be paid on an overdraft. The majority of the members present indicated that they would be prepared to lend to the club, interest free, to assist in the financing of such a major project.

We would like to thank members for their continuing support and would request loans of any value (£100 minimum to ease administration) to be paid not later than end of February 2004. These loans will be repaid not later than December 2006. Should any member wish to make a donation towards the cost of the system then any value (no minimum) would be much appreciated.

If the club can afford it, some of these loans may be repaid earlier on a basis to be decided e.g. the lower value loans may be repaid first or there could be a ballot to repay lenders up to a total affordable repayment value. In the event of the death of a member the loan will be repaid to the estate on the request of the executor.

I wish to donate to the club the sum of £.....

I wish to lend to the club the sum of £..... interest free and repayable not later than December 2006.

Name (BLOCK CAPITALS) ..... Membership Number .....

Address

Signature

Date

Please return this form together with your cheque made payable to Palmerston Indoor Bowls Club to the desk or send it to Ray Morse, Treasurer, Palmerston Indoor Bowls Club Ltd., Palmerston Business Park, Palmerston Drive, Fareham, PO14 1DJ.

# Time for something new?

by *Russell Gadd*

Readers will remember an article I wrote last season suggesting some possible new playing formats. This was prompted by comments I'd heard that some people were becoming fed up with playing the same teams in the same leagues each year. And in particular some teams were heavily loaded producing very one-sided games which are not enjoyable for either winners or losers. So what has happened since then?

Not a lot is the answer. I understand some of the ladies leagues were split into two sections to avoid 30-0 type drubbings but even then this hasn't entirely silenced the complaints. No other changes have been made or planned. The main problem unfortunately is the same thing which underlies some other issues at Palmerston - lack of people prepared to volunteer to do something about it. I suggest we need to appoint someone to get this moving: to put forward some concrete proposals and sound out members opinions, then place proposals before members at the AGM. A sort of "Development Secretary" role. Any volunteers? Even then this could take years - one year to appoint someone, another to put forward proposals to the AGM and two more to implement them (as the AGM is too late to affect the next year's schedule). Don't look to the current league secretaries to do this as they have their hands full just running the leagues. Or perhaps they could appoint a deputy to do this for them?

As for the ideas, I think some leagues could be shaken up by using the "Drawn Teams", "Player Auction" or "Individual Ladder" ideas in my previous article. I can give anyone interested a copy of this article. How about arranging a meeting between league leaders (and any other interested parties) to throw these ideas around? Each league would need its own meeting as they would need to vote on proposals, perhaps only allowing changes if say a 75% majority supports it. Try it with one or two leagues to start with and see if it works.

This year I have some more ideas for you to consider. These involve adding more bowling alternatives rather than replacing existing leagues. Most people will, like me, have noticed that rink occupancy is gradually declining. Leagues are getting smaller leaving many rinks unused, and there are large slices of some weekends when little or no games at all are in progress. Besides this being an indication of reducing member interest it also means loss of revenue. We need to find more things to attract members to bowl. You will see from the Committee Notes that the Joint Management Committee has discussed this issue in their last meeting

Firstly a simple idea. The men's competitions are restricted to a single bowling session for all rounds up to the semi-finals. It may have been a practical necessity in past years, but is no longer. The ladies play full games, why not the men? A full game played competitively between keen bowlers allows you to come back after a bad start and so keeps your hopes alive when you are down. And most competition games are high quality as you are that much more keen to win to avoid being eliminated - a more intense experience than a league game, and one to be savoured over a full 21 (or 18) ends. I noticed at Loddon Vale recently they had done this.

Second, I want to suggest a singles ladder. There are few chances to play singles, there is the club knockout and the National singles, which are not everyone's cup of tea, particularly if you get knocked out early. I believe that, in the past, singles has not been promoted since it takes up rink space with only two bowlers, but surely with so much free space to use up this would no longer be a consideration. Singles is a fine game, with no-one to blame but yourself, not many bowls in the head to clutter things up, and a chance to develop your consistency with four bowls at the basic shot of bowls - the draw. Also for draw bowlers who play mainly lead in their leagues, they have the choice of playing the odd heavy shot when the situation calls for it.

In a singles ladder you can play throughout the season, as many times

as you like, whenever you like (fill those empty league slots!). New entrants could join in at the bottom of the ladder at any time in the season. You can challenge anyone up to say 5 names ahead of you on the ladder. Winning challengers jump to one above the losers spot. This is just a rough picture - precise rules need to be worked out. Losers and those not playing gradually drop down the table.

And how about, for added spice, why not adopt the TV sets format: 2 sets with a tie break if necessary. The number of ends could be tailored to allow a finish within a 2 hour session. One additional thought (at least for the men) is perhaps that the club singles finalists, who get other trophies, would be automatically dropped from the table when they reach the final in January as they are then entered into the County singles. This would give others a better chance of winning something. Maybe we could add some sort of handicap in later years.

Finally how about a "Competitive Club Night"? Say on Friday at 6:15pm. Those turning up that night would be matched into fours by the organiser to get an even and competitive game (no loaded rinks), with club team bowlers encouraged to participate. Useful for preparation for Saturday matches and also as an opportunity for aspiring Bramley / Yetton / etc. bowlers to compete with the "established names" and catch the eye of team selectors. I have personally observed many club members in the leagues playing equally well or sometimes better than the team regulars - with a bit of encouragement and a chance to pit themselves in a competitive situation they could challenge for places in the teams. We need you. And the ladies could sharpen their game against the men (and win!). But most of all this would guarantee a good competitive bowling session, playing with and against different people each time. And you don't have to make a fixed commitment, if you need to do something else that Friday, no problem.

Write in with your comments and any other ideas you have. Surely it is time for some changes to be introduced.

## Social Scene *by Rene Bowshell - Social Secretary*

**Christmas and New Year** Festivities were successful and thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended. Over 80 Members attended the New Year's Eve Dinner and from the accolades received it seems that it might be repeated for 2004!

First event in 2004 was a **Race Night** on **January 17th** - always a favourite, this time for 120 members! The horses ran well for their lucky owners and 'backers' received generous odds. Just over £200 was raised for Club Funds. A **Spring Meeting** is already being planned to run on **Saturday March 13th**. Watch Social Notice Board for further details.

**Fuchsia** time will soon be here again. Bruce never fails to keep us all agog with his demonstration of how to grow prize blooms! His collection of young plants for sale starts us all thinking about the garden. Come along on **Tuesday 9th March** at 7:00pm and you'll find his collection of healthy and variable plants hard to resist (entrance 50p).

As you know, the **Annual Coffee**

**Morning** will be held on **Saturday 20th March** at 9:30am. Help will be required to man the stalls but we also need lots of treasures to sell, especially home made cakes, preserves and other goodies. Start collecting now. We may be lucky enough to have a few of Andrew Miller's skillfully crafted woodwork items for sale just as we did last year.

To end the season Richard will present a special **Easter Dinner Evening** on **Saturday 10th April**. Menu and Booking List will be displayed on Restaurant notice board in good time.

Watch for news of our **Summer Programme** in next months newsletter.

**FUND RAISING** activities are underway again. January winners of **100 Club** were S. Quantrill (Sec A No 83) C. Terry (Sec B No 28). They each received a cheque for £25. **Bonus Ball** is still doing well twice weekly. **Friday Night Treasure Chest** is beginning to build up again - should be £120 by next Friday Feb 6th. Still 10 Keys to choose from! Remember - you have to be 'in' to 'win'!

## Notice to all members

Please be advised that, at the end of the Winter season, all items left on the top of the lockers in either changing room **WILL BE DISPOSED OF.**

**Joint Management Committee**

## Sandwiches

Some members seem to be unaware that freshly made sandwiches are available every day in the Restaurant at lunchtime as long as they are ordered in advance (before Midday)

Also a small supply of fresh pre-packed sandwiches are left in the cold cabinet at the Bar every day for the benefit of late afternoon and evening bowlers.

**Rene Bowshell - Catering Director**

## Letters to the Editor

Dear Palm Reader,

Food for thought.

Are readers aware that in the case of an applicant for club membership failing in their bid for membership, the JMC do not have to give reasons for rejection. Are readers also aware that there are no written rules which permit the JMC to take this action. The JMC have made the decision themselves not to give reasons.

To my mind this is a dangerous practise to adopt for the following reasons:

It does not give the failed applicant the opportunity to put right whatever is bothering the JMC.

It allows the JMC to overrule the wishes of the club membership. By this I mean that if there are no written objections to any applicant, the JMC can for reasons they will not disclose, overrule the majority of members who by not objecting have agreed the applicant be

accepted.

This has come to light as a result of two founder members that left the club, but were refused to be allowed to join again with no reason given.

On the subject of written objections, are such letters investigated?

What do members think.

Yours in sport

Bob Noel

Dear Palm Reader,

Dennis Whitehead's unoriginal miscellany or: A gallimaufry of singular irritations which can produce a pain in the butt.

*Members of rinks and triples, who mangle on the rink after the bell has tolled, discussing: the score, the failings of their skip, the latest offer at ASDA, their excuse for bowling badly.*

*The 'runs' on certain rinks, rink 8 in particular.*

*'Threes Up'*

*First team bowlers who ignorant of the etiquette of bowls; clutter up the 'head' and give directions to the skip when they are playing 'lead'. (Ed: I fear I know who he's talking about!)*

*The multiplicity of 'chewing gum' notices.*

*Social members who are permitted to bring more than two guests to dine in our restaurant.*

*Bowlers who put bags in the changing room on to seats meant for bottoms.*

*High Wycombe for refusing to display a notice of a forthcoming carol service, and fining me £40 for speeding on a road at midnight which was free of traffic and pedestrians.*

Dennis Whitehead