



Palm Reader

The newsletter of Palmerston Indoor Bowling Club

Issue 7 December 2003

Big Green Monster Captured

Ron Weale and Frank McAully proudly pose with the alien they spotted lurking on the premises early one Saturday morning. Well not quite, but it was just after 8am on Saturday that I found them pushing 'Dusty Bin', as they called it, up and down the green. No surprise really, as they can be found doing this vital job every week, while the rest of us are still wondering what to have for breakfast.

First they go round the edge twice so they have a double strip, then comes the up and down "mowing". Although Dusty Bin is quite heavy they split the job up, so that one starts the circuit whilst the other does the "channeling" i.e. cleaning the ditches. Getting a vacuum cleaner to do these is troublesome so they lift the rubber mats and take them outside for a good shake. They remove rubbish thrown there by a few thoughtless bowlers who treat the ditches as if they were street gutters - if you haven't heard about the chewing gum problem, read the notices! And what about the huge spiders!

They swap over about half way through the sweeping and the one who isn't sweeping fetches the much needed coffee (drunk of course well away from the carpet!). Finally the collection bin is removed and the dust gathered into a black plastic bag. Even though the carpet is 7 years old, fluff still comes off and without regular sweeping would embed itself with the dust and build up a matted layer which would impair the running characteristics of the bowls. The whole operation takes about an hour.

Ron and Frank do this every week and have been doing it since the club opened! It all started when the first "crew" who got the club going were assigned roles. Ron was "Chief Green Steward" and Frank was

"Rink Manager". These were committee posts which they held until Tony Grant took over in 2000. Although they no longer sit on the committee, they still give up their time to help Tony.

Originally Ron was responsible for all aspects to do with maintaining the well being of our precious bowling surface,



liaising with Greengauge, the firm who supplied and maintain the green. You probably know that the carpet is stretched regularly, which helps to keep any 'runs' to a minimum and counteracts the tendency of the green to run slower as the carpet gradually loses it tension. Ron negotiated this operation to be performed twice a year, whereas some clubs only do it once a year.

But it's not just the bowling surface. Who replaces light fittings when they fail? You can often see Frank on top of a ladder with a ceiling tile moved over to delve into the murky depths of the ceiling space. Many other jobs were and still are dealt with by our plucky pair.

And it didn't stop at the physical. Back in 1997, Founder members will recall being asked to do one single duty per year as steward. Large sheets were drawn up and people allocated a slot. Guess who set this up - and who worried about people not appearing when their turn came? Asking everyone to take a turn was a good idea in principle, but it gave rise to a lot of problems. So in 1998, Roy Mudd, then Club Captain, came up with the idea of a voucher system, whereby volunteers were 'paid' a voucher for a free bowling session in return for doing a steward's duty. Roy ran it for the first 2 years and then Ron took it over and still runs it today. Really it's a pity that the original system, where everyone did a session, was not practical since this at least gave people a taste of the satisfaction of doing their bit to help, and reminded people that being a member means more than just turning up to bowl.

It's not fashionable now to do an unpaid job for the satisfaction of helping others. "What's in it for me?" is more often heard than "It seems the right thing to do". But which gives more satisfaction? Pulling a wad of notes out of a cash machine or knowing you are helping people playing their favourite game on a brightly lit, well kept carpet, where their bowls are safe in their locker, where the toilets are clean, the bar is well stocked, the money is efficiently dealt with, the car park is(need I go on?) If you really need an answer to this question go and speak to Frank and Ron. They know.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Palm Reader

I do not understand why you are trying to be so controversial. The top teams who play for the club in representative games with coloured shirts and blousons "fair enough", "so be it". I would like to see them, when not wearing a tie, showing a saxe blue or yellow tee shirt under the shirt. But I do think the other members are quite happy to play in whites and greys, as all clubs indoor and outdoor do so.

As for the speed of the green, I find a slower green gives more control of the bowl. It's those who use the very narrow bowls that prefer the fast green. Anyway a bowler worth his salt can, like me, adjust to a green in just two ends.

The thing that needs our attention is the members playing in friendly matches that bring in outside money. Money the members do not have to find. We need to fill all rinks and be over subscribed for these games. This and using the restaurant will save their pockets in the long run.

Ian F. Dobson

Dear Sir,

With regard to your editorial in the last "Palm Reader" and your view on the speed of our green, there is another view. While I accept your view that our top bowlers prefer a faster green, the bulk of us rank and file members may not agree with that. I regard myself as an average bowler who plays league and friendly matches. I haven't the skill, nor do I aspire to be, a top bowler to try to impress County Selectors. I enjoy a relaxed game with a bit of banter with my team and opponents.

I have played in friendly games away on faster greens than ours and prefer our slower green. I may be stirring up some "Mudd" when I say this but we don't all aspire to winning more honours in inter-club competitions. The Bramley Bowl and other top competitions mean nothing to me.

I say let's keep our present slow green.

Barry McCann

Dear Sir

I would like to take issue with you regarding your Editorial in the recent edition of the Palm Reader, concerning dress codes in our game, and point out to you that a little more research would be recommended before making

statements like these.

You state that many people lament the lack of younger people playing bowls, but let me assure you that equally as many people, after having watched some of the younger people who do play the game larruping up and down the rinks chasing there bowls yelling like banshees, would prefer a modicum of the traditional behaviour.

Quote:- " an oasis of old values in a desert of modern degeneration ,but this is a sure recipe for obsolescence" unquote, smacks of verbal diarrhoea, but even so, what is wrong with such an oasis. The game is designed with the more senior citizens in mind and if youngsters want to play our game there is nothing wrong with them attempting to absorb some of our values.

The steady influx of new members into the game, which you consider to be in decline has for the most part, and will continue to come from those people who can no longer chase a football or run after a cricket ball but would still like to be involved in competitive sport of some kind, and long may it so continue. A little research would have told you that, of all the young people who take instruction in our game, only 1 in 20 will continue to bowl into maturity. Quite naturally, the call of more exciting and boisterous sports, coupled with other more natural attractions calls them away.

Let us then turn to your remarks on dress code. Why do we continue to play in greys? Basically because it is our "strip" and because we like it that way.

Think for a moment what could happen if dress codes were relaxed and players could turn out in what they liked. The local farmer could appear in corduroy trousers tied beneath the knee with binder twine with a straw in his mouth and a feather in his cap,

The mechanic could arrive in his boiler suit, while the mind boggles at what would happen at a miners bowls club. All perfectly normal provided they wear the appropriate shoes. No thank you. And anyway, if I happened to turn out for the local football team, I would be expected to wear their kit without question so were is the argument to anybody playing bowls being asked to wear the proper kit?

Incidentally, it might interest you to know, that there are members in the club who would rather not play in the representative games than turn out in those poncey pastel shades that seem to be becoming predominant.

In response to your closing statement I would say, come on Palmerston, let us remain proud of the game we play and the way we play it.

Well done with the Palm Reader and please keep it going. If I can help in any way please let me know.

Regards,

Ralph Norster.

Dear Editor,

It would appear from the general tone of your editorials that you are inviting reaction. Then reaction you shall have.

Are you really serious when you suggest that the speed of the green should be adjusted to suit the 5% of our "top" players who participate in major competitions at the expense of the 95% of those who play for the sheer enjoyment of the game. How selfish can you get?

Did you, by any chance, notice how the really "top" players, who took part in the Under 25 Trials adjusted to the speed of the green after only one trial end?

Why is it that all the "Johnny come lately's" who have only been playing the game for 10 minutes wish to change all the things that suited the stalwarts of the game for 30 years.

If you do not like the way our game is conducted then I suggest that you try something else. Ludo perhaps. And from your previous editorial concerning colours and our mode of dress, if you want something more colourful how about Morris Dancing.

But above all please leave our game alone.

Having got that off my chest, may I remain Yours sincerely,

R L Norster.

Dear Editor,

In reply to your comments in the October issue of Palm Reader, my thoughts are roll on December 22nd. Why you might ask, because it's the day our carpet will be stretched both ways. It will also be the day when all the moans and groans should cease.

The speed over 27 meters will be knocking on for 17.5 seconds.

Our playing surface required a deep shampoo to remove some stains which had occurred over the last 6 years. This was carried out in our last maintenance period prior to the new duralay being laid,

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the slowness this created pleased some but not all!

We have held International and National tournaments at Palmerston and there has been nothing but praise from bowlers and officials.

May you all continue to enjoy your bowling in the future.

Tony Grant – Rinks Manager

Committee Notes

Sandwiches have been provided in the cabinet and the use will be monitored over the next few weeks.

Trouble is still being experienced with the rinks lights failing. Southern Electric Contracting have been asked to quote for replacing the lamp fittings together with fitting new control equipment for the heating and car park lighting.

The membership list has now been updated and all those who did not pay their annual subscription have been removed. The Social Membership List will remain closed for the time being.

Bowlsweat will be holding a Roadshow at the Club on 11 December.

It is hoped to issue locker keys to the majority of members who have requested a locker.

There is some confusion concerning the duration of the Ladies Drawn Pairs. Should it be 21 ends or one session to the bell? The ladies committee is to discuss the matter and if necessary put forward an amendment to the Club Rules for discussion at the next AGM.

Over recent weeks there has been very little use made of the green on Saturday and Sunday after 8:15 pm. After some discussion the JMC agreed to close the Club at 8:45 with the bar closing at 8:30. This will be implemented in January.

Juniors Corner

In a special effort to recruit more juniors, Palmerston is giving free membership for one year from September 2003 with no joining fee. Along with free use of bowls and shoes we are providing free coaching from fully qualified coaching staff. All you have to do is to turn up in smart casual clothes and try it out.

Our coaches work within the English Bowls Coaching Scheme to ensure you learn the

Editorial

It seems my editorials have finally attracted several letters. Thanks to the contributors. You will have gathered that I was trying to stir up some comment, and it has worked. Please keep your letters coming. Any relevant topics would be most welcome. Getting the views of members is a major objective of Palm Reader.

First this month I just wanted to clear up what might be a misapprehension. That is that I am not convinced that our slower green is better for the majority of bowlers. I think a carpet speed more in line with other indoor clubs would be equally suitable to the vast majority of our bowlers – it's just what you get used to. However I do agree that the choice should be suitable for the majority, not just a minority, and that my personal opinion counts for only 1 out of 1000 bowlers here. Having said all this, there's little point in pursuing this topic any further now as our new underlay should last another 5 years before we need to consider this issue.

My main issue this month concerns change. Most of us resist change, until it is foisted upon us. Often for good reason, but sometimes we surprise ourselves by agreeing that the new is better than the old. The trick is to see change coming and steer it the way we want it before it's too late. What I'm getting at is that bowling membership is in decline. Some clubs are going to decline faster than the average and be forced to close. We want to see Palmerston survive and flourish. This

means we must be prepared for some change. Find out what existing members and potential new members want and don't want, and have the courage to press for change for the better. Of course we don't want change for its own sake and we don't want to lose the qualities which make Palmerston great. Ok, my article on greys was deliberately provocative. Many bowlers like their traditions. But don't let these traditions drag us down. We need a steady influx of new members of all ages, and we need to avoid members leaving through dissatisfaction.

Although we are members, we don't own Palmerston. We're just custodians until we hand over to the next generation of bowlers. I just hope we succeed and keep members happy so that we are able to hand over the most important tradition of all – being a club, which to my mind means being run voluntarily by members for the benefit of all members.

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 russell.gadd@goldserve.net 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. Due to the Christmas break there will be no January issue, next issue at the beginning of February with deadline at the end of January.

right way from the start. This is part of our Youth Development Policy run by our Youth Development Officer Tony Grant, who is also an EBCS Advanced Coach. All coaching staff are familiar with the "Child Protection Act" and "Protection of vulnerable people" and Parents/Guardians are asked to sign their agreement when membership is taken.

Once you get going, if you want to there'll be a chance to play in a team against other junior bowlers. And if you really get hooked you might later play in leagues. You can take it to whatever level you want. Goals can be achieved.

Come to Palmerston in January 2004 when we'll be hosting an Under 25 International match - you'll be amazed. But don't wait until then - try it out for yourself.

So parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc. spread the word. Our doors are open. Come on in and enjoy a wonderful sport. If it was good enough for Sir Francis Drake to keep the Spanish Armada waiting why not give it a go?

Contact Tony or Club Secretary Ray Gregory at Palmerston Indoor Bowls Club, Palmerston Drive, Fareham. Tel: 01329 232005.

Social Scene

by Rene Bowshell - Social Secretary

November events included a most enjoyable Cheese & Wine Fun Night which was very successful thanks to the hard working team who provided and prepared the Supper as well as running the various parlour games, quizzes and Bingo. Club Funds reaped the rewards of £156.

We had 80 Guests for the **Scottish Dinner** on St Andrews Eve. Richard and his staff ensured a true Scottish flavour with the menu. We couldn't get a 'Piper' but Glenda and her Drummer provided the music for Malcolm's Singalong as well as some Dancing.

December is now upon us with all the seasonal celebrations. It's a busy time for many of us which is sadly reflected in the limited support currently shown for the Ladies Xmas Dinner on **Tuesday 9th December**. It's not too late to add your name to the List and we need your support. Numbers for the Christmas Party on **December 13th** are creeping up but we could do with a few more - Tickets £10.50 see Notice Board. If you are not available for the 7.30 start you are welcome to join us after 8.30 to enjoy the Cabaret and the rest of the evening. Tickets will cost £3 and will be included in the Lucky Number Draw. All Tickets are available at the Bar - please get them as soon as possible. Where Entertainment and Catering has been booked we need

sufficient funds in advance to cover expenses. Life is much harder for the organisers if they have to chase around for ticket money at the last minute to enable them to pay the bills! We look forward to a very enjoyable evening.

New Year's Eve - The proposed Dinner as outlined in the last newsletter has proved very popular. All tables are fully booked. Members are reminded that the 'Table' must be prepaid in full. Bar staff will accept the payment and issue a Receipt. The Bowls Drive arranged for New Years Day is equally as popular and fully subscribed. Would you like more of these Drives when there is empty Rink space? All you need is a good 'organiser' - what about offering your services?!!

Events 2004 - The Bowling calendar of events for 2004 is pretty well fully booked especially at weekends and it may be difficult to squeeze in any Cabaret Dinners. However - we can run Race Nights or any other events which start a little later and do not involve too much work for the Caterer. A Race Night will be arranged for Saturday Jan 17th and lists will be displayed shortly. If you have any other ideas that would be popular with members please let us know.

Fund Raising - The Christmas Draw prize table is beginning to 'groan' under it's present collection. More prizes will be

added as the money comes in. We are grateful to members who have donated gifts. Sadly we are again finding shortages in the cash box as against the numbers sold - currently £13 adrift! Please make sure you put 50p in the Box for every square you sign. The Draw will take place on **Friday Dec 12th** at 7.00pm

Treasure Chest now contains £340 as last Friday's winner failed to open the Box! There are now only Two keys left so there will be great excitement next Friday when the total is likely to reach £375 !! (Ed: unfortunately this newsletter may not appear until after Friday)

"100 Club" November Draw was made last Friday. £25 winners were Section 'A' - Edwin Urry Member No 953 - Section 'B' E Stephenson Member No S1225. Cheques await their signature at the Desk. For the December Draw each Section will have a 1st prize of £100 and 2nd prize of £50. Draw will be made on **Friday 12th December** at approx 6.30pm. Meanwhile the lucky Bonus Ball winners continue to enjoy their twice weekly spoils. That seems to be all the Fund Raising news except to say that we hope to have a Coffee Morning on **Saturday March 20th** at 9.30am - sounds a long way off but you can start collecting your treasures in the New Year!

The Social Committee would like to wish you all a Merry Xmas and Happy & Healthy 2004!

Steering Committee

I think that it might be helpful to clear up some confusion that arose from the November issue of Palm Reader.

In the interview with President Roy, reference was made to the Steering Committee and the need for members to be prepared to take over from the current committee members who will need to be replaced as increased years and ill health takes their toll.

I have been asked about the Steering Committee as people were unaware that we had one; in fact we don't.

The Steering Committee existed for a number of years and was formed by inspired local outdoor bowlers who sought to set up an indoor club. There is no need to go into who they were or what they did as it is available to read in 'Palmerston The Early Days'.

The important point is that as Palmerston Indoor Bowls Club was becoming a reality our solicitor advised us that we should,

because of the large sums of money involved, become a limited company. This meant that our name was changed to Palmerston Indoor Bowls Club Ltd. and the Steering Committee was dissolved in June 1996 (see Palmerston the Early Days, page 8) to be replaced with a Board of Directors. The Board then proceeded to get Palmerston up and running.

The Board consists of nine members and since June 1996 the original nine have seen significant personnel change, with only three of the original members remaining. These are, Bill Bowshell (Chairman), Norman Evans-Rohrs (Vice Chairman) and Keith Newman (Company Secretary). The Board still consists of nine so as you can see, with two thirds of the Board being replaced over the ensuing years, for one reason or another, we have a good mix of experience and fresh ideas. Incidentally the Board members carry out their respective tasks without any remuneration, not even rink vouchers. I hope that answers some of the questions.

Norman Evans-Rohrs

Club Closing ?

This is an extract from the Committee meeting on 25 November.

"There has been no resolution of the problem of stewards for Sunday afternoons. Consideration may have to be given to closing the Club when a steward is not available. Member's help is URGENTLY needed."

You have been warned!