



Palm Reader

The newsletter of Palmerston Indoor Bowls Club

December 2006 Issue 24

Marketing the Club

Dear Member, as I am new to the Board of PIBC I thought it would be helpful to use the Palm Reader to give a short introduction to myself with some of my thoughts on how we could market the club to increase our membership.

I only came into the bowling arena relatively recently when I was coerced by Bill Jackson, who was a work colleague at the time, into trying the game. Finding it both challenging and enjoyable I joined PIBC. Unfortunately work commitments at that time only allowed me to get to the club on average once a week but having now taken early retirement earlier this year I have been able to spend more time trying to improve my skills at bowling and achieve a more consistent delivery of the wood. However like golf, (which is my other main sport having given up squash and badminton which I now leave to those fitter and younger), just when I think I have made some improvement, the woods seem to take a line of their own choosing and I am back to square one! Perseverance is called for. Win or lose I have found it all great fun with games played in good spirit and in good company. This year I also enjoyed my first season outdoors at Denmead bowling club which is nearer home in Horndean and experienced what a big difference the grass surface makes, at first I thought I would never be able to reach the jack!

In my working life I trained as an engineer and moved from technical roles to commercial management spending the last 15 years or so in marketing. So when I was asked by your Board to consider helping out with marketing of the club I was very pleased to offer my assistance and accept the position. I will do my best to support you all to achieve success in reaching the club's goals. I believe marketing should be fun and very much a team effort but more about that later.

My impression is that over the past nine years PIBC has been and continues to be a success and has gained a reputation as

a friendly and competitive bowling club with excellent amenities. We can congratulate our past management teams and members for taking our club to this level but changing needs and conditions do mean that pure maintenance may not be enough to keep pace with expectations and potential improvements should constantly be under review for implementation where practical.

Understanding member's expectations and creation of goals and targets is where I would like to start.

Firstly what are the general expectations? How do you feel about your club? Does it meet your needs? Are you totally satisfied or can you think of improvements that could be made? How important and what are they?

Secondly I'd like to understand the demographics and structure of the current membership

Thirdly because we are in need of increased membership I'd like to start a fresh campaign to attract new members.

To help me out in this activity there is a brief questionnaire in this edition of Palm Reader and I would ask all readers if they could please take a small amount of time to complete this and return to reception before the Christmas holiday (or pop into the collection box by the notice Board.) These will then be collated and analysed and a summary of results will be posted on the notice Board.

You will see that the questionnaire is split into three sections:

section A enquires into the general satisfaction of the clubs current activities and amenities

section B will give some understanding of the demographics of the current membership

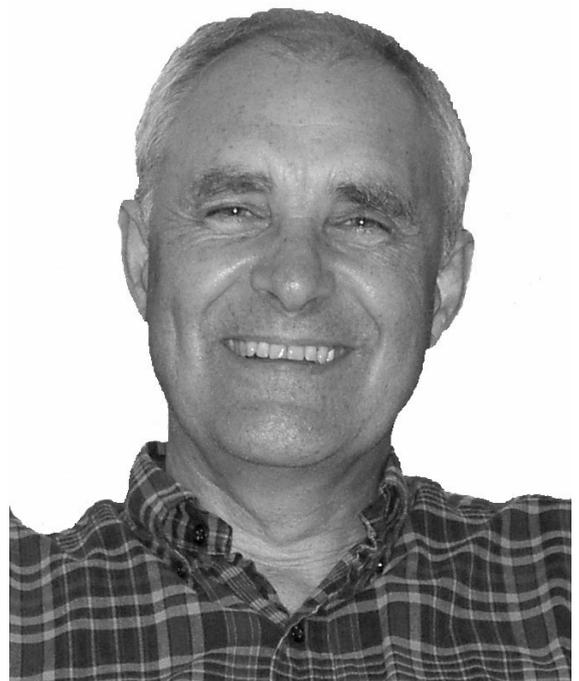
section C asks for your thoughts and ideas on how we could

increase membership.

This is where the team business starts to kick in; I would very much like to create a small marketing team to help market the club. It wouldn't be onerous or take too much time and should be fun for us. To start with we will analyse the survey returns and develop some goals and targets for approval by the JMC and Board and then work together to get agreed marketing actions implemented. We will also start the creation and placing of posters to raise awareness of the club etc. Might you be interested? No experience is needed only enthusiasm. If you think you might like to help please get in touch with me or with any member of the Board, or indicate so on the questionnaire.

Thanks in advance to all who take part in this exercise by completing and returning the questionnaire and please note that all forms will remain anonymous unless you add your name to the sheet.

Brian Le Marquer



A match made in Heaven (or was it Bournemouth?)

This is the story of one of our own members **Bill Jackson (who is the Finance Director and a regular team player for Palmerston) when he recently joined the EBPA.**

This is the English Bowls Players Association, which has been set up to organise competitive singles bowls tournaments. It has been in some decline in the past few years so there was a meeting between several top bowlers including TV star and World No 1 Greg Harlow and a few other International bowlers including Carol Ashby (three times Ladies World Bowls Champion recently seen to grace the carpet at Palmerston playing for England against Jersey). They decided on a bold initiative to set up a series of "Grand Master" singles events with substantial cash prizes which anyone can enter (See separate Press Release on this page).

Of course many of the entrants are internationals and top county players, but that didn't put our intrepid "MacJack" off. He decided to have a go. And what a reward he got for his endeavour! A first round match against none other than Carol Ashby! He was to play at Bournemouth on the weekend 18-19 November.

MacJack v Caz

The first problem he encountered was that when he studied the rules he discovered that the woods he had been using for the past few years would not comply with the tournament regulations. But with the help of Matthew Marchant a sparkling set of mottled maroon Taylor Vectors arrived on the Saturday morning, the day of the match. He managed an hours practice at Palmerston (thanks to Richard Dixon for being his sparring partner), followed by a braised steak lunch from Richard Stray. Then he picked up his son from the station who went as supporter, and set off for Bournemouth.

On arrival, he spotted Carol Ashby, who was unmissable wearing figure-hugging bright red trousers, yellow top with fashionable midriff exposure, already practising on the carpet.

Bill got changed into his Palmerston coloured shirt with a bit of yellow but with midriff well covered and managed four ends of practice. When Carol appeared ready to start the game, white trousers

were worn in accordance with the tournament rules.

Carol won the toss and commenced a startling first end. Carol's first bowl was sent 1 foot beyond the jack. Bill then drew a toucher. Carol responded by tapping Bill's bowl so the jack sprung to her wood to a smattering of applause. Bill then drew the jack to one foot beyond Carol's bowl to a similar smattering of applause. But when Carol replied by drawing the jack off on the other hand there was then an appreciative wow from the spectators for these spectacular bowls. That turned out to be the winning bowl and Carol was one up.

Bill managed to score one on the second end and was grateful to have at least scored one shot. However he need not have worried about being embarrassed by the score, as although Carol did win the first set of seven ends, it was only by the narrow margin of six shots to four.

In the second set Bill scored two twos and a single to be leading 5-3 after five ends he was then holding two shots when Carol drew for a single with her last bowl on end six.

One up and one end to play, Bill just had to avoid losing the end to go through to the tie-break. A bit of a crowd had gathered as an upset was a possibility.

Carol opened with a bowl 6 inches right of the jack. Bill was thrilled to draw one inside hers. Carol then played to tap her bowl against Bills but it wasn't quite hard enough and Bill still held shot. Bill then played successfully for best back. Carol fired on the backhand but missed by 6 inches. Bill decided not to be anywhere near the head and blocked the backhand draw. With Carol's last bowl she fired again and this time smacked the jack out of the rink. A re-spot put the jack 2 feet from a Carol bowl. Bill had one more chance to draw to win the set. It was sent down on a good line but passed between bowl and jack and came to rest one foot too far.

Carol had won by the narrowest of margins one set and a half to a half. What a splendid match!

Footnote: You too can enter these tournaments, the next is 28-30 December. Deadline for entries was 30th November, but has just been extended to 7th December. If interested contact Russell Gadd **asap**.

What is the EBPA?

The **English Bowls Players Association (EBPA)**, formed in 1982 at the start of a bowls boom, is poised to kick-start a revolutionary new programme of events for seriously competitive bowlers

In a move that is certain to attract new members, the EBPA proposes to introduce up to four major new competitions, with big prizes, and is confident that the idea will be popular with bowlers whose chances to test their skills at singles are currently severely limited.

EBPA Chairman Martyn Sekjer said: "Greg Harlow, the world number one and a leading member of the association, and our world indoor singles champion Mervyn King, have identified a yawning gap in what is being offered to ambitious bowlers."

With unanimous and enthusiastic approval of a well-attended AGM at Wellingborough, a hastily-convened EBPA competitions sub-committee will look urgently at the feasibility of Harlow's proposals for a number of high-profile events at various venues.

These events will be open to all members of the association, and will represent a massive step forward, offering keen bowlers who may have just missed out in the World Bowls Tour qualifying events a new opportunity to challenge for big prizes.

"Apart from the national championships, which bring prestige, but little in the way of financial reward, there is nothing currently available for bowlers," explained Greg. "I've often witnessed the great intensity at the PBA play-offs for places in WBT ranking events, and I'm sure that players all over the country will jump at the chance of taking part."

The events should be self-funding at first, and will involve a hefty entry fee, but the EBPA, who will guarantee that a high percentage (maybe 80%) of the income from entry fees is ploughed back in prizes, are confident that players will be prepared to pay.

If the idea catches on, and the events prove themselves, the EBPA programme should eventually attract sponsorship.

The EBPA was formed to give a voice to bowlers who are serious about improving their standard, and who would like to pit their skills against good opposition in singles play. It is not to be confused with the Professional Bowls Association (PBA) – though many bowlers are members of both Associations.

Membership (£10 per annum) is open to all competitive bowlers, male and female, old and young, entirely without discrimination.

PRESS RELEASE ISSUED 3 MAY 2006

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor

Ladies and Gentlemen, Members and Friends

I consider you all the last category. As the retired Chief Steward and a 'stand-in' on many occasions, I have met so many lovely people with whom I have been able to create, luckily, a good rapport. When you stand in for someone else, you meet so many more different people who you would not ordinarily meet. In other words, I enjoyed being on the desk.

What I am trying to say is that being a Steward not only supports the Club, which is very necessary, but also brings you into contact with a lot of lovely people.

Please don't think I am trying to upstage Bob, the current Chief Steward, but from some years of experience I know that a nudge in the right direction can encourage members to take part. Remember that if enough members take up the job you could work alternately with each other or with even more, like once in three weeks! You also get two free games for every session you do.

John Vicary

Dear Editor

I played in a friendly match against Romsey Bowling Club on Sunday 19th November and we had a good afternoons bowling followed by an equally good meal and then the day was cheapened by an empty ice cream carton being passed from table to table after the meal for hosts and guests to to put money in. This practice took me by surprise and when I enquired what it was all about I was told it was for tips for the restaurant staff. I have been playing friendlies since the club opened and I don't recall meeting this practice before neither at home or away and I must say I don't go much on it. It smacks of getting funds by stealth.

George Bird.

Dear Editor

Reading the letter about the state of the green and its runs, kicks, its consistency - that is what bowls is all about. The first thing I was taught was to read the green and play to it, not against it. Every average bowler indoors or out knows this - if things are not working for you adjust your style of play. Being able to do this is what makes a bowler above average, whether we are at home or away, on a rink we know or not. It is a day to day, game for game adjustment. If you are unable to do this you will never get above lower club standard

If you want a perfect flat green and wish to play with straight bowls then you are in the wrong game, it's skittles for you.

If you feel that things are not working out for you seek advice, a little coaching, but never put the blame on to the green or your woods. It's you who bowls them.

Ian F Dobson

Ed: I am afraid people at all levels are guilty of complaining about the green. I heard 3 times indoor world champion Paul Foster being interviewed prior to a game in the Scottish Masters last week - One question was "What do you dislike most about bowls?" - He said "Rubbish greens".

Dear Editor

Having recently spoken to members of the Palmerston committee, it does seem that the declining membership is still the main issue facing Palmerston IBC. Hopefully the appointment of the new Marketing Director will help to address this problem.

I do feel however that personal recommendation can play an important part. My wife and I and four friends all joined Palmerston this year on the recommendation of Bob Prince. Since joining the club in February of this year I have myself brought five new members into the club. However I do feel that the best vehicle we have for increasing the

membership is the excellent training program that Palmerston offers. Unfortunately these courses are subject to abuse, as many of those attending have absolutely no intention of joining Palmerston IBC. In fact all we are doing is helping to boost the membership of other clubs in the area.

This is an issue that we need to address. When one comes to the end of these training sessions you are presented with a form and invited to apply for membership. Even if you do apply you are then told that you will be informed in time as to whether you have been accepted or not. This is not good enough. When you train a person to do something it is important that you allow them to put into practice what they have been taught as soon as possible. I did my training in December but could not join until the February. This may be one of the reasons why some people decide to go elsewhere.

What I would suggest is that on the last day of training the participants be ushered into the conference room, where a member of the club could go into detail explaining all the activities and benefits of becoming a member. In other words virtually selling the club to them, and inviting them to fill out the application form there and then.

They should then be informed that once they have paid their joining fee, they would then be entitled to use the facilities of the club in a full member capacity, (albeit on a probationary basis) until such time as the committee has met to consider and accept their applications. At which time they would be expected to pay their yearly subscription, which would then be back dated to the time that they had paid their joining fee. Judging by my own experience, there is very little effort made to persuade or encourage these people to become members once they have completed their training. There are people who not only need to be encouraged to make such a commitment; they also need to be made to feel welcome.

David Hiddleston

Letter from Mens Captain

Gentlemen

It looks like my Christmas present from some of my senior team members will be a large stick. Hopefully it will be disguised as a Yule Log. Perhaps I deserve some criticism for the results so far this season. Yes, a handful of Top Ten players could have played in the Bramley side last weekend but a few have decided that they do not wish to play Saturday and Sunday on most weekends. As you all know two top team players from last year decided not to play in any matches this year. Don't forget that only 30 players came along to the trial sessions at the start of the season. Only 30 players are willing to give their valuable time on the weekends to play for this club.

Some of the players are improving year by year on our slow carpet but do not have much experience on the faster carpets at ALL the other clubs in the South of England. In previous years the policy of playing the best available 16 players in every match results in a small squad of players who gain experience on the faster surfaces. This policy has resulted in a few experienced players and a backup of players who played in one or two matches only. My policy is to try to increase the pool

of good experienced players. I would still like to win more matches. To date this season over 30 players have played in 3 or more matches.

There are two ways to overcome our problem. REPLACE, at the soonest opportunity, the underlay with a faster version (which we should have used last time). The speed of our carpet will then be similar to that in ALL other clubs and we will be able to compete on their surface without struggling for 5-10 ends. THE ALTERNATIVE is to expose our squad to these faster surfaces to gain the necessary experience. This is the only option open to me at this time. This will not be an overnight solution. I and many more of our players who play in County and National Competitions struggle every away game putting us at a great disadvantage.

The newer less experienced members of the Bramley Squad are putting everything into the games. I have been present at every game and seen some good performances. We have some great new faces who will, given the opportunity, be the players of the future. They will never get the experience UNLESS THEY PLAY IN THE TEAM AND PLAY ON THE FASTER CARPETS.

On Saturday 6th January, I would like to have a get together for all Squad members plus anyone who missed the pre-season trials and wish to be considered for the Bramley matches. A quick chat followed by a 2007 warm up game.

In addition I am considering having a regular squad practice session on Friday evenings, subject to rink space, at 6:15pm for one session (Club Night follows at 8:15pm). This will give the opportunity to try different combinations, allow interested bowlers who couldn't attend the trials to join in, and perhaps allow some more experienced bowlers to pass their ideas to the newer people. At the very least, you'll get a good game played under competitive conditions. Let me know on 6th January whether you are prepared to do this session on a reasonably regular basis.

I would like to wish you all A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR - enjoy yourselves.

Eric Brierley

Mens Captain

Hampshire

Hampshire men had a superb win against Essex in the second round of the Liberty Trophy inter-county Championship on 18th November. Four of the six rinks won in a 125 - 98 result. Essex were in the final last year, and had a massive 174 - 61 win over Buckinghamshire in the first round this year, so were no mean opponents

We made the most of a home tie playing at Victory in Portsmouth, where the atmosphere was marvellous with great support for the team. Star rink was Richard Shelley's, winning 28 - 9. Also notable was a 21 - 15 win by Peter Ward's rink against world ranked Mark McMahon (seen recently on TV in the Scottish Masters). The next round is the quarter final on January 20th against Cornwall who saw off Wiltshire by 150 - 105. Although this is a home fixture for Cornwall, we are playing at a neutral venue in Taunton Deane, Somerset (which is required by the rules where the counties are more than 150 miles apart). Come and support your team if you want to see the action.

Hampshire ladies had less fortune in their county championship Atherley Trophy match against Sussex at Wey Valley (Guildford), going down 142 - 97. We had 2 winning rinks but these could not cover the other 4 which lost. Better luck next year!

Confusion over new laws

A disagreement has opened up between World Bowls Limited (WBL), who run the sport outdoors, and the World Indoor Bowls Council (WIBC). WIBC won't agree a new Fourth Edition of the Laws of the Sport. The current Third Edition will be used indoors and the new Fourth Edition outdoors.

Liz Read, the secretary of the WIBC, said : "We have pursued all avenues to reach agreement with World Bowls Limited on matters of unification and copyright issues relating to the Laws of the Sport, but due to WBL's intransigence, negotiations have ended. The WIBC, which was formed in 1983, will continue to be the only governing body for the sport of indoor bowls. We now intend to draw up a new Law Book which will apply specifically to the indoor game."

Tony Allcock, the chief executive of the English Bowling Association (EBA), said: "What a disgrace - bowlers will be operating under two different law books."

WBL used to be known as the International Bowling Board (IBB), which governed the sport before indoor bowls was popular. WBL recently redefined their constitution to embrace the indoor game, but agreement can't be reached with WIBC. So much for unification!

Support for WBL is strong in some countries, such as Australia, New Zealand and Hong Kong, who play outdoors all year and so indoor clubs are few and far between. WIBC is supported more in the UK, which has a lot of indoor bowling clubs.

Donations

Thankyou to the members who give generously to help Club funds. **Jean Miller** gave the proceeds from the sale of Bay trees from her garden. **Pam Plant** knitted scarves and all monies received have been given to the Club. Also thanks to the family of recently deceased **Harry Haywood**, who donated 4 set of bowls. With the recent drop in membership numbers, all these contributions help to keep membership costs down.

You can see all the many Christmas raffle prizes, so don't hesitate to buy more tickets - see the board in the foyer. Also look for Rene's report on Fundraising. And don't forget our contributions to charity - see the Committee notes for a report on the President's Charity Match.

Well done Palmerston members for continuing to support all fund raising activities. Let the editor know of your efforts so I can mention these in a future newsletter.

Lesley Howell joins Board

The board is pleased to welcome Lesley Howell as a co-opted member.

Lesley is a busy lady working hard for Palmerston. Lesley is of course due to take over as President at our next AGM, is part of our coaching team and is also working as assistant treasurer. This link with Janet Gadd our Treasurer will prove useful when Lesley takes over the Membership Secretary duties from Ray Gregory. Her presence will also help to boost the number of ladies

Norman Evans-Rohrs
Chairman

Committee Notes

The EIBA (men's National indoor association) sent a questionnaire asking that the number of National areas be reduced from 32 to 16. This means one less round is played in the National Finals. However it does also mean that our National area would be doubled so that members will have to travel further afield to play some matches and also have to succeed against more players to reach the Finals. However this is partly balanced by the reduction over the last few years in National entries. The proposal was agreed by the Committee.

Information on the ladies competitions is to be displayed on the general notice board opposite the reception desk rather than in the ladies changing room. After all there are men who are interested in seeing the progress of the ladies!

The President's Charity Match was very successful and raised £134.55 for the Rocky Appeal in addition to separate donations from Bob Lacey and Peter Holmes.

Maintenance on the green will be carried out by Greengauge in accordance with the maintenance contract on 3 January and 6 August.

There was discussion of the problem of not getting enough members to play in Friendly Matches, including issues such as dress code, costs and other reasons. Consideration is to be given to having a poll of members to help solve the problem. Friendly Matches are very important to the Club.

Ray Rowe will not be seeking re-election to the position of Match Secretary at the next AGM. If you are able to consider taking on this position see Ray who can explain what is involved.

Editorial

Two clubs I have come across recently have found an interesting way of combatting one-sided league matches. I'm sure most people know the problem. There are leagues where there are some very strong teams and some relatively weak teams. When these teams meet silly scores result such as 35-4. There is no fun in this for either side - the weak team doesn't like getting hammered and the strong team have nothing to strive for. The same teams end up winning the league year after year. Teams give up and the leagues dwindle. Some leagues have been split in two to try to separate the strong from the weak, but this just means you play only half the teams 4 times a year - not a recipe for interesting variety.

Arun and Longmeadow have introduced handicaps into several of their leagues. The idea is that each team has a handicap based on last year's results. I'm not sure of the actual handicap setting details, but for example in a league of 13 teams, say the top team's shot difference is +180 having played 24 games (average +7.5 per game) and the bottom team's shot difference is -240 (average -10 per game). A game between these two could start with the bottom team having 17 shots on the board. Oh, you may protest - too much. But no, the statistics support it. The top team would have to bowl well to win.

You may want to water down the handicap a bit to avoid teams having no incentive to win the league, but this is just a matter of handicap setting - not a reason for not doing it. Different teams would win the league. If a team improves they would have a harder handicap next year.

I think it would be easy to administer (just record the scores with the handicaps added and treat it as normal). There are details to work out but surely it can work - and clubs are actually doing it. I suggest we could approach Arun and Longmeadow after Christmas and ask them how it is going - we may find a few tips to avoid potential problems. Who's in favour?

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 and I'll acknowledge receipt of emails. Otherwise hand items in to the office addressed to Palm Editor.

Russell Gadd - Editor

All issues will be produced monthly during the winter season with the deadline at the end of the previous month, next issue January.

Social and Fundraising

by Rene Bowshell - Social Secretary

SOCIAL PROGRAMME

The **Christmas Party** was very successful – the meal was excellent as usual and everyone seemed to enjoy the music and dancing afterwards. Plans for 2007 are not yet finalised. We hope to have a Race Night and/or Cheese and Wine with games and bingo in February or March as long as organisers are available.

Coffee Morning – this has to be run on different lines in March 2007, as in 2006 it became more like a Jumble Sale! Members will be requested to run stalls selling their own handicrafts e.g. greeting cards, jewellery, floral decorations or any other hobby. There would still be books, CDs, DVDs and jigsaws but no other second hand goods. The Home produce table for preserves, cakes etc. is always popular. Maybe Bruce will sell some fuchsias and Andrew some woodwork if he has time. Just a few ideas for you to think about. If you have a spare 'bottle' left after Christmas please put it aside for Harry – he would like to run a 'bottle stall' as Bill did so successfully some years ago. Let us know if you have any other suggestions.

More details next year.

FUND RAISING

Treasure Chest – Currently holding £175 with very few keys left to choose from. Make sure you get your tickets next Friday!

100 Club – November Draw winners - Mr J A Lee and Mrs D Moore. Big prizes in December – Draw will be made on Friday December 15th which is the night of the Christmas Draw

Bonus Ball – Now running twice weekly. You can't miss Rita (or one of her colleagues) sitting loyally at the front desk waiting for your £1 coins to drop into the box for a chance to win £30 on Wednesday or Saturday.

Christmas Draw – Sheets are displayed for you to choose your lucky numbers for 50p each. Four sheets have already been completed. Fifth sheet may be the last one so fill in those numbers. Harry Macartney has put on a good selection of prizes with more being added. Looks pretty impressive.

Have a very merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year. Thanks for you support.

Laser Levelling

Following comments made by members on the problems with the playing surface, it was decided to ask Greengauge Sports Ltd (who maintain our carpet under contract) to conduct a survey of the levels of the floor using their laser technology. This was carried out on 22 November and we have just received a summary of their findings.

The floor was surveyed across every rink over the entire area using 9 points along the centre line and both edges of each rink (27 points per rink). There is a detailed map of the results for them to use in correcting any deficiencies. Their overall findings were that the floor was substantially level, varying by only 2 or 3 mm from the centre reference point, except at the edge of rink 8 which is up to 5mm lower, and near the ditch on rink 4 which is 4mm lower.

There were also some loose boards which need fixing. An additional verbal comment from the Greengauge Installation Manager was that the carpet surface was "extremely good" and, with care, it has many more years of play left. (Ed: We should give generous thanks to Frank and Ron for their diligent carpet sweeping every Saturday morning - something many other clubs don't do - which removes grit and other debris helping to preserve the carpet).

The plan now is to attend to these minor deficiencies and replace the underlay during the summer maintenance period. The Club has selected the top-of-range "Duralay Gold Extra" for this replacement which runs at 17-19 seconds (over a 27m jack length) when the carpet has been stretched. They claim this is the No 1 selling underlay and has greater longevity and more stability with less chance of movement, shrinkage or splits.

Tony Grant - Rinks Manager

The Club closes for Christmas at **2:30pm** on **Sunday 24 December**

And reopens on **Tuesday 2nd January**

A merry Christmas

And a Healthy and Happy New Year

to all members