

# St. Chads Bowling Club

SPRING/SUMMER 2013 NEWSLETTER

Founded 1956

## A NEW SEASON STARTS



A new Bowling season dawns full of hope and expectation, although dark clouds loom as to the future of the club after this current season ends. Declining membership added to the proposed swingeing increases in rent charged by the local council, have put the club's future in doubt. This was eloquently explained by the president in his opening statement at the general Meeting on March 17th.

At the General Meeting, Roy Blane explained that a number of local bowls clubs had responded to the council's increases in rent by saying that they will be able pay this year's increase, but after that they will probably have to close. This statement from these clubs seemed to have surprised council officials.

Does the council assume that they can just put up the rent by 100%, and

that this will simply be absorbed, as if the local bowls clubs have unlimited sources of income?

Has it also occurred to them what the consequences for the community would be if the clubs fold as a result of the proposed rent increases? If, for example, St Chad's does have to be wound up, firstly, the council would no longer receive the clubhouse rent, but secondly, what would happen to the clubhouse? It could become a magnet for vandalism, whereby more council resources would have to be diverted to stop it. The Groundsmen who look after the green would also possibly find that their current jobs are at risk.

It is therefore seems to be a false economy to allow St Chad's to close.

The sad fact is that if Lawn Bowls clubs close then a major section of the community becomes deprived

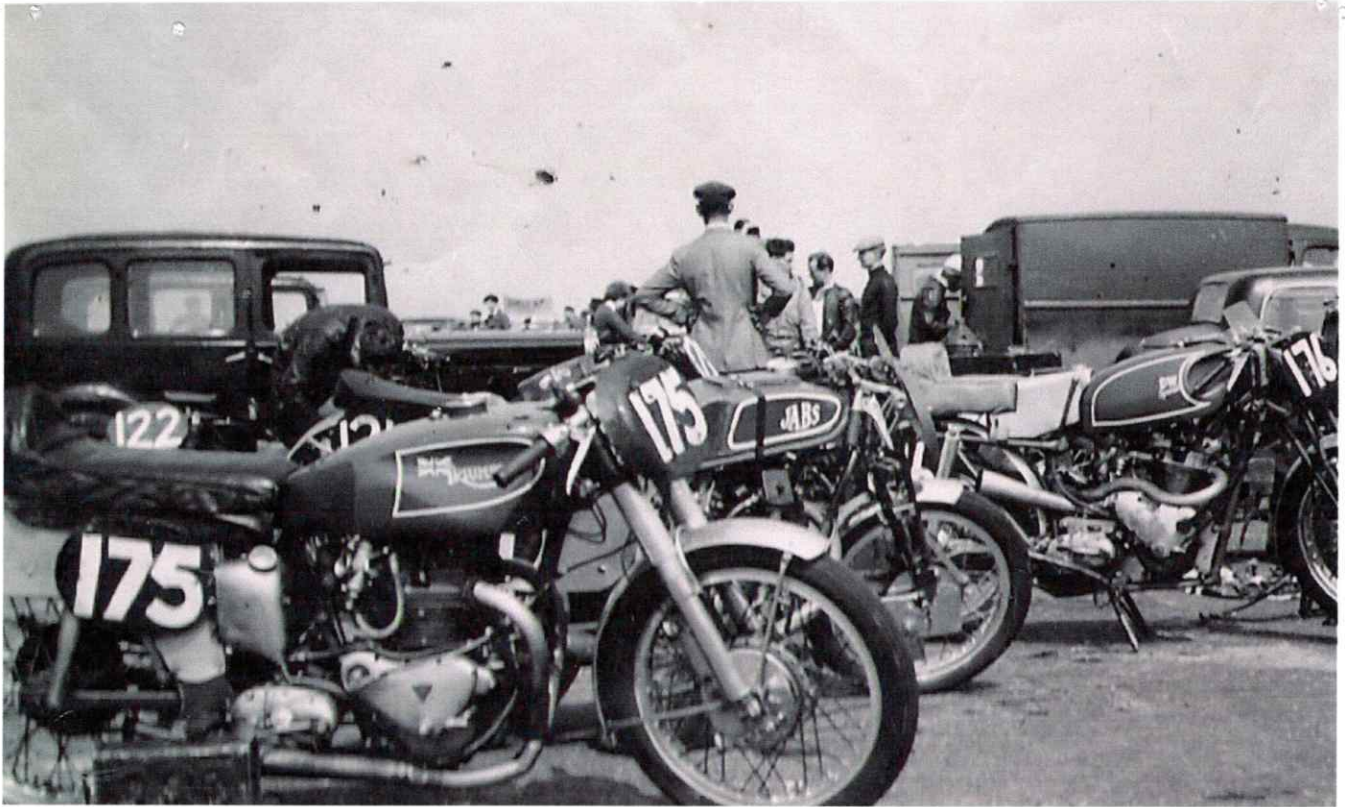
of enjoying a healthy enjoyable sport, one which keeps many senior members active and fit. Lawn Bowls is a provides gentle yet measured sport in the open air, good for cardiac and general fitness.

Lawn Bowls is also part of our British history. It was the game that Sir Francis Drake enjoyed playing all those years ago. He made sure he finished his match before setting about defeating the Spanish Armada. (See page 4)

Anyway, we must all try and work together to keep the club afloat and try encourage new membership from all sections of the community. We must endeavour to attend and support as many social events as possible to boost the club's income. It would be a pity for 57 years of history to just slip away without a battle to save it.

### **VOLUNTEER NEEDED – Fixtures Secretary**

We have an urgent need for a Fixtures Secretary owing to the future plans of Roy Blane to move in the not too distant future. Roy has done an excellent job and helpful assistance will be given to whosoever is prepared to take on this office.



# THOSE WERE THE DAYS...

The fun and excitement of being a young man with a hairy motorbike in the 1950's was relived by John Tooke. In fact as well as John there were three other St Chad's members who were also 'ton up' boys at the same time. Alan Johnson was one of the lads as also was John Jennings. John has since sadly passed on.

John recalled that there were a team of local enthusiastic bikers who were known as the 'Tenby Tigers' as they used to all meet and frequent a café that was situated in the High Road near where the car showroom is now. Bikes were parked all outside and along that part of the road. The noise of bikes revving was probably music to local ears. The prized motorbike to own was a Manx Norton as raced in I.O.W. TT races, however there were other bikes which met the standard and included Matchless and AJS. But all bikes were worthy of doing 'a ton' up and down the Avenue (the A.12)

Saturday nights were spent at the 'Woodman', a haunt that was

well known and well beloved of all bikers from far and near. The piano played and the juke box hummed and singing took place all night long. John recalled many of the characters of the biking fraternity known to all of that generation. A Dickie Payne was a 'demon mechanic' and could identify and repair most bike problems. A Georgie Littlejohn and Les from G & G Motors were characters also fondly remembered by John.

Motorbike racing took place at Brands Hatch, Silverstone and Boreham and Scrambles took place at Lambourne End. None of the local lads actually raced at any of these meetings but as John states they were 'very competitive with each other on the roads!!' Accidents did happen of course and John certainly had his share of accidents but he did recover and never lost his enthusiasm. Nor did he lose his skill at stripping down engines and modifying and repairing. He states that he could not do this today as most bike parts are now fully computerised. This has taken away

half the fun.

What was the standard dress for the biker of the 1950's? Certainly not the Health and Safety requirement of today! There was no crash helmet worn by these lads. Instead the most hilarious type of headgear was encouraged. They wore military Despatch Riders coats, R.A.F. Mark 8 Goggles, Leather Gauntlet Mittens and something called Donar Boots. They used scarves, but they didn't wear them, oh no, scarves were mostly used as tow ropes if a bike broke down or if it ran out of petrol which happened frequently. The fuel used was a 50-50 mixture of pool petrol and benzole, not dangerous but a very heavily leaded mixture – not environmentally popular today.

In the mid 50's John Tooke and John Jennings had a short break from hairy motorbikes and decided to try four wheels. John Jennings bought a 1934 Hillman Minx Drophead and John Tooke bought a 1934 M.G. They still went to the 'Woodman' every Saturday night though and had mixed reception

*“What was the standard of dress for the biker of the 1950’s? Certainly not the Health and Safety requirement of today! There was no crash helmet worn by these lads.”*



from the rest of the crowd. Although of course human nature being what it is, friends often liked to borrow their four wheeled vehicles occasionally. John recalls an incident when he had a few ‘jars’ in the Woodman and Dickie Payne was driving his car down Whalebone Lane. John was the passenger. and he remembers Dickie asking him “How do you want me to take this corner - Fangio style?” John replied “absolutely!” at which the car hit the kerb and spun round twice coming round by where Ann’s Store Mill Lane is today. Dickie managed to gain control of the car and speed off down Mill Lane.

However a few days later an Inspector Fennick from Chadwell Heath Police Station came to John’s house. He accepted a cup of tea from John’s mum and was chatting comfortably then he told them that an accident had been reported by two people and dangerous driving was implied. This matter would therefore have to go to the Crown Court. Inspector Fennick implied that he and his P.C. did not really want to go to Crown Court as they had other things to do. He also implied that he rather thought that the people who had reported the incident were trying to do his job for him. He was cross about this. He therefore prompted John to make the following explanation. He suggested that John should consider that the incident occurred because the throttle of his car had stuck open coming round the bend and that John had then managed to correct this and then driven off. He informed the Court that he supported John’s statement. Therefore there was no action taken.

Interestingly, no one checked whether John was not the driver of the car or not, or whether John had a full driving licence or not, (which he did not have!). Those were the days indeed.

After a year on four wheels both of the Johns went back to their motorbikes again.

And what of Joan? Well rumour has it that she was most frequently seen on the back of Demon Mechanic Dickie Paynes motor bike. Until of course John took the appropriate action.



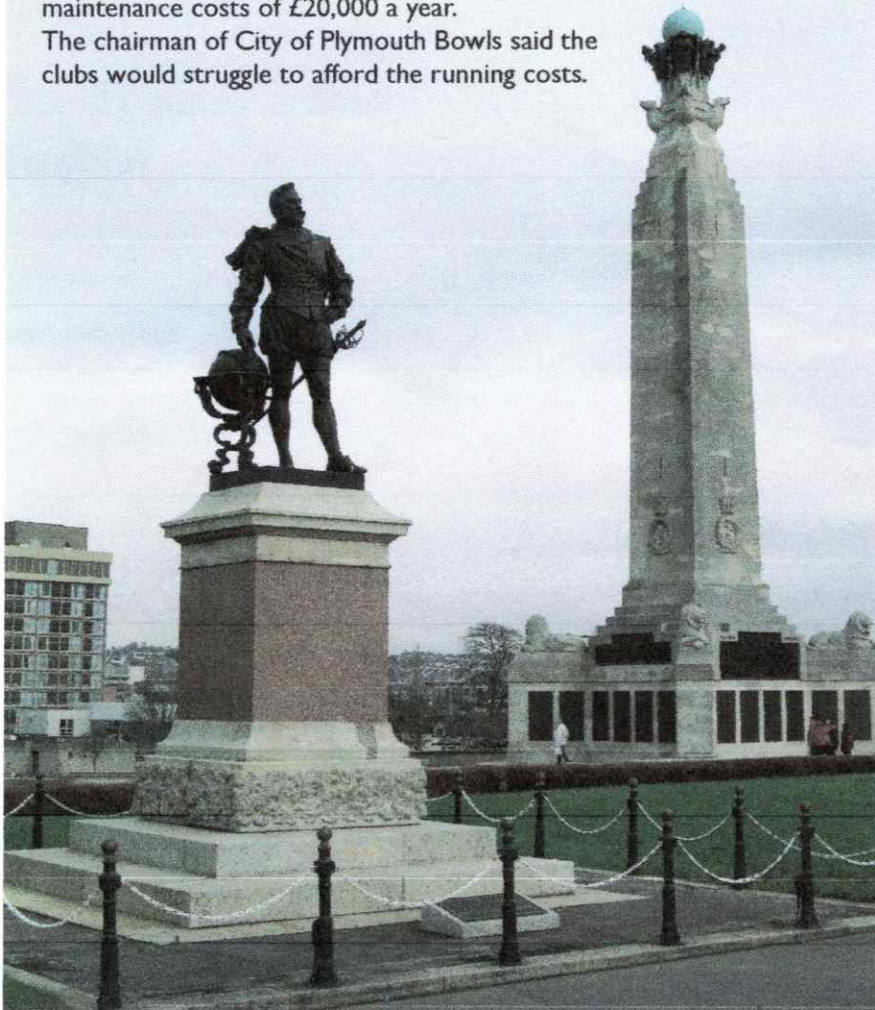
The young John Tooke (far right) and Alan Johnson (front seated) at The Woodman with friends

# It's not just us, I'm afraid...

The historic green where Sir Francis Drake played bowls before defeating the Spanish Armada is under threat.

The bowls club have a combined membership of about 100 and annual income of about £5,000 - considerably lower than the estimated maintenance costs of £20,000 a year.

The chairman of City of Plymouth Bowls said the clubs would struggle to afford the running costs.



## Charity Days

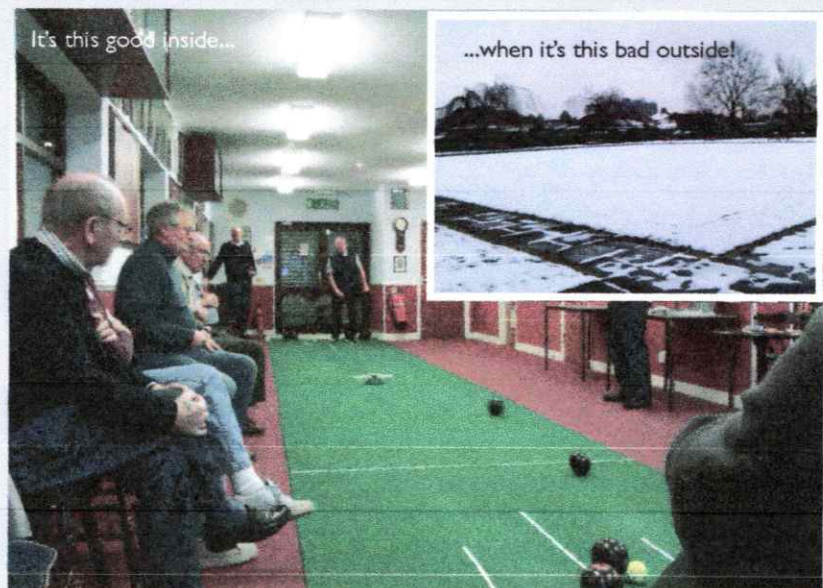
Members are reminded that our Charity Day this year is being held in memory of members Len Seager and Mike Rees on Sunday 26th May with proceeds being donated to the British Heart Foundation. There will be the usual lovely buffet provided at a nominal cost.

A Grand Summer Draw with BBQ will be held on Sunday 7th July 2013 at St Chad's with prizes worth £1000 - 12 prizes in total. Members are urged to ensure that books of tickets are sold and to support the event. This event is being sponsored by Cribbs. The prize draw will be held at 6pm.

Please check the notice board for start times.

## WINTER FUN

The Club house provided a friendly competitive environment for short mat bowls during the winter months. Although the club premises is fairly compact there were very good attendances on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons with friendly play. Thanks also to Don for excellent service at the Bar. Certainly kept the cold outside.



# WHAT FLOWERS ARE THESE?

Answers at bottom of page

1. Cathedral Chimes
2. A Foggy Romance
3. Give me your answer do
4. Sounds like they make you icy
5. Remember me
6. Stringed instruments
7. To thicken the gravy
8. Wed with precious metal
9. She is close to her pupil
10. No one dances with me
11. A capital group of Lions
12. Prickly wine
13. She doesn't live in the mountain
14. With lock and barrel
15. Christine and her mother
16. The bill for the pudding
17. Animal hand warmer
18. Say hello to her
19. One of the Golden Host
20. Choose these veg for afters



Answers  
1. Canterbury Bells, 2. Love in the Mist, 3. Daisy, 4. Freesias, 5. Forget Me Not, 6. Violas, 7. Cornflower, 8. Marigold, 9. Iris, 10. Wallflower, 11. London Pride, 12. Hollyhock, 13. Lily of the Valley, 14. Stock, 15. Chrysanthemum, 16. Sweet William, 17. Foxglove, 18. Hyacinth, 19. Daffodil, 20. Sweet Peas

# BOWLING NEWS

Having endured the wettest coldest winter for over 30 years many of us were concerned that the weather would not improve in time for the Opening Drive on Saturday 27th April, starting time at 2.30pm and played at Home.

However we have just been advised by the forecasters that we are now due to have a mini heat wave in the next week so perhaps we may have a lucky start for the season. Sunday the 28th April sees the Friendly Triples (mixed) against Dagenham Central starting time at 2.30 and played at Home.

## A well planned retirement

(attributed to article from  
The London Times)

Apparently outside Bristol Zoo there is a car park for 150 cars and 8 buses. For 25 years it's parking fees were managed by a very pleasant attendant. The fees for cars were £1.40 and buses were about £7.00. Then one day, after 25 solid years of never missing a day off work, he just did not show up, so the Zoo management called the City Council and asked them to send another attendant. The Council did some research and replied that the car park was the Zoo's own responsibility. The Zoo advised the Council that the attendant was a Council employee but the Council responded that the attendant had never been on the Council's payroll.

Meanwhile, sitting in his villa somewhere on the coast of Spain or France or Italy... is a man who had apparently had a ticket machine installed completely on his own and then had simply begun to show up every day to collect and keep the parking fees, estimated at about £560.00 per day. Assuming seven days per week, this amounts to just over seven MILLION pounds....and no one even knows his name!

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## **Indoor Bowls – the end of the line?**

The newly-formed St Chad's Indoor Bowls team played their third match in an away fixture against Barking on January 24<sup>th</sup>. Previous matches were against Barking on November 8<sup>th</sup> and against Ilford on December 9<sup>th</sup> last year.

Bearing in mind that half our players have limited indoor bowling experience, they again did creditably well against vastly more experienced opponents, which included former indoor bowls County players in their ranks.

Against Barking we fielded four teams of four, and the results were: 12-14; 12-16; 9-18; and 11-24.

As an example of the problems we faced, in the last mentioned game - the 11-24 loss - the St Chad's team consisted of Derena Reader, Keith Hutton, Bob Mead and Percy Dipino (skip), with the first three players only having played three indoor bowls matches in their lives, against a team who had a former Essex County player as skip.

However, everybody seemed to enjoy the match and the hospitality, and it is very much hoped that further matches can be arranged for 2013.