



CROXLEY GUILD BOWLS CLUB NEWSLETTER MAY 2026

Together we will Honour the Past, Celebrate the Present, and go confidently into the next 100 years



April 15th 2026 marked the official start to our Centenary Year and over 50 members celebrated in style with a delicious afternoon tea. It was an afternoon filled with happy memories, laughter and anticipation for the season ahead.

The Open Weekend was blessed with wonderful sunshine as we welcomed potential new members to our club. The weekend was very successful with more than 20 people coming through the gates. Hopefully many of them will join. We are running new member training sessions over the next few weeks, the first of which was very well supported. Thank you to all those who made our visitors feel so welcome.

A warm welcome to those who have already joined the club this season:
Clive Marsh, Daphne Honey and William Harrison.

Club competitions – details of the pairings for the club competitions will be put up in the men's and ladies changing rooms. Please ensure that the 1st round matches are played by the date specified.

Despite a slightly later start to the season, our green is now in good condition thanks to the hard work of the green maintenance and swishing team and John and Laura Hay. We have been very grateful for the expert advice from Trevor Collingwood, who has worked tirelessly with them over the last few months.

The first friendly game of the year was played against Harefield and despite our best efforts we lost! The next friendly games are against Berkhamsted on Sat 2nd May and Radlett on Thurs 7th May – good luck to all those playing.

William and Dave Martin played and won their 1st round Watford and District pairs match against Gerrards Cross. A close match with the added distraction of it being held during our Open Weekend.

Message from Gordon Allen – Chairman Croxley Guild Bowls Club

It is an honour and a privilege for me to be Chair of our wonderful club in this, our centenary year. I joined the club in 2000, having been invited to make up a rink with David Bass, Martin Tasker Poland and Brian Howard who sadly died aged 52.

Over the next few years, nothing to do with my arrival, the club had significant successes: the men winning the Watford & District league, the Ray and Griffin cups and best of all the Hertfordshire County League involving 92 clubs.

Our ladies have shown the way for a number of years now, winning numerous County and District competitions, putting us well and truly on the map and rightly earning a reputation as a formidable force on the green. Keep it up ladies and the men will do their best to emulate your feats in the future.

I'm sure those of us who attended our 100th birthday party enjoyed the occasion and the company. I'm equally sure that those who started the club, and everyone in between, would have been proud of the camaraderie and atmosphere they have been part of engendering throughout the decades. I'm most proud of the reputation our club has in the District and County as being welcoming and friendly to everyone. I'm consistently told by others how they love visiting us, as our hospitality and catering are second to none. What we have does not happen by accident; the green, the surrounds, the clubhouse and our catering are all the result of incredibly hard work by willing volunteers and your committee. Thanks to all concerned for your contributions.

We are current custodians of the club, so let's enjoy it and ensure we pass on to those that follow us in the future, the spirit and high standards which we have inherited.

I look forward to seeing you all on the green and participating in the very prestigious celebratory fixtures we have coming up. Please support your captains by making yourself available for selection. Thank you all for allowing me to be your chair.

May 2026

Monday 4th May – Bank Holiday Drive 2.30 – club colours

Tues 5th May – Ladies Roll Up 2.00pm

Tues 5th May – New members coaching 6.00pm

Sunday 10th May – Centenary game v The Royal Household Windsor

Tues 12th May – New members coaching 6.00pm

Sunday 17th May – Club Gala Shield – see noticeboard for further details

Mon 25th May – Bank Holiday Drive – 2.30 – club colours. This will be followed by a BBQ (weather permitting).

Thurs 28th May – hosting Quarter finals of Men's fours

Details of men's and ladies district and county games and the Veterans League are on the Fixture Card – supporters are welcome at all games.

Sign-up sheets for the following Friendly games will be put on the noticeboard soon.

Tues 26th May 2.30pm - away v Rickmansworth – 1 ladies rink

Wed 27th May 6.00pm – away v Ricky RBL – 4 mixed triples

Sun 7th June 2.30pm – away v Broadway – 4 mixed triples

Sat 27th June 2.30 – home v Kings Langley – 1 mixed rink

Sun 28th June 2.30pm – away v Bushey – 1 mixed triple

June 2026

Sat 13th June - Club Campbell Cup 2.30pm

Fri 19th June 6.00pm home match - Ray Cup Round 2 v Garston

Sat 20th June – Croxley Green Revels

Centenary events for your diary

Sun 10 th May	Croxley v The Royal Household Windsor	away
Sun 5 th July	Croxley v The Bohemians	away
Sat 25 th July	Croxley v Watford and District Men	home
Wed 5 th August	Croxley v The Chelsea Pensioners	home
Sat 22 nd /Sun 23 rd August	Hosting Watford and District Ladies Final	home
Wed 26 th August	Croxley v Herts County Past Presidents	home
Wed 2 nd September	Croxley v Herts County Team	home
Sat 5 th and Sun 6 th Sept	Finals weekend	
Sat 12 th September	Croxley v Friends of English Bowls	home
Sat 26 th /Sun 27 Sept	End of Season Celebration	
Mon 5 th to Fri 9 th Oct	Potters Hopton trip	
Sat 21 st November	Centenary Dinner and Presentation evening	

The Greenkeepers' Christmas Lunch – by Robert Simpson

I joined the Greenkeepers Team just after the new Club House was built in 2005/2006. Ken Hazell was the boss, supported by some 15 helpers. Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday mornings were work days throughout the year. There were no outside contractors or rotas – you just turned up if you could. Ken had a light touch of management but as the core members had been together for many years, everyone knew what to do. The grass cutter in chief with immaculate straight lines was Roy Toppin. Cyril Humphries cut the hedge where the fence adjoining the Tennis Club is now. I was the weeder- the paths, backs of the buildings (once a current member locked me in - he said accidentally!) and car park, but not the hallowed Green! A wise decision.

The coffee break was elastic – the less work to be done the longer the break. Ken presided, regaling us with well told stories which became more dramatic over the years. "I am never wrong. Sometimes I am not quite correct" We put the world to rights. We could have governed the country, the world and every sport, better than any professional; with the inevitable banter, these were enjoyable occasions.

The highlight of the year was the Christmas Lunch. When the new Club House, with its excellent facilities became available, the lunch moved from a local Pub to inhouse.

My first lunch amazed me. It was 5 star food with entertainment thrown in. Awaiting the call to sit down we could see (and hear!!) the team in the kitchen which included Ian McLachlan. Alan Mitchell, Roy Toppin, Des Sedgwick and Ken. Each had his own speciality. Roy Toppin was our resident gourmet. There was a battle for years about the beef. Ken used to soak it in red wine for 2/3 days much to Roy's displeasure. Cries were heard through the hatch: "my veggies are ready. Cant you hurry up !" " I need another 10 minutes!" "Get on with the carving !"

Maureen Toppin made yummy pavlovas. Les Harland provided a magnificent array of cheeses and fine wines bought at rock bottom prices. He also helped to wash up with his usual quiet efficiency! Peter Watson brought his Sloe Gin made from that tiresome tree which sheds its load by the men's changing rooms. Did he use the ones without maggots? We had as guests some retired members including Sid Page who used his inventive engineering skills around the Club and Jack Bishop. Ken made a speech. A great time was had by one and all. They were memorable and bonding times, never to be forgotten.

Why not join the current team and have fun working for a worthwhile purpose.

My Memories by Frank Potter

I joined the club in 1994. My proposer was Vic Morris – I played indoor bowls with him at Herts. I was an experienced bowler and had a Herts County Badge and also played for the London and Southern counties bowls association. I therefore immediately started playing for the club in the competitive matches, winning many!

I also joined the committee and served in many positions including Fixture Secretary and Chairman. I became Men's captain in 1997.

I was elected as the President of Watford & District Bowls Association in 2001. During my year of office, I selected the District tour location to be East Sussex and arranged 6 matches for the men and 4 for the ladies. I had wonderful support from my wife Mary, Norman and Enid Knight, Tim and Maxine Bowdrey, Les and Avril Harland and Brian and Jean Huston.

I was Chair of the club from 2004 to 2006. In 2006 I contacted Three Rivers District Council for a grant to build a new club house and was told to apply as soon as possible. The same evening I met with Vic Morris and Les Harland to compile our case and we submitted a proposal and got a grant for £25,000. In addition, the club asked members for a loan of £100 per person. Many of us gave this as a donation.

The new clubhouse was officially opened on Saturday 5th August 2006.

The last year I played in outdoor competitions was 2018 and was part of the team with Les Harland, Peter Watson and Aaron Southam that won the Watford & District Thorpe Cup for Croxley.

My serious bowling days finished in 2019/20 after Covid but I have wonderful memories of my playing days and the friendships I made.