

The Early Years

It is commonly stated that Bowling started in Pentyrch when the green was officially opened in 1991, however in 2008 the club can celebrate 25 years since its inaugural Committee Meeting. This followed a public meeting in Pentyrch Rugby Club when enough interest was shown for a Committee to be formed.

The first Committee Meeting was held at 5 Field Terrace, Pentyrch – the home of Marjorie and Donald Wibley – on the 12th May 1983. Present at that meeting were George Lamerton (elected Chairman), Shirley Cox (Secretary), David George, Marj and Don Wibley.

The seed of the Club's foundation came from Norman Follis MBE who made the suggestion of the village having a Bowling Club in the early 1980's. Norman was very keen to play himself – this was quite remarkable as he had been blind for most of his adult life.

Later in 1983 a list of Founder Members was produced numbering an impressive 35 persons. This included Mike Evans of Tyla Morris Farm, who received free membership as a offer of thanks for use of his JCB to excavate the ground and also Dai 'Spin & Dry' Harwood, who won a years membership in a prize raffle draw ! Membership of Pentyrch Bowling Club in 1983 cost £20 per year. Norman Bryan of Clos Cefn Bychan and Dennis Scott of Bronhaul, Pentyrch were added to the Committee towards the end of 1983.

In February 1984 discussions took place with the Pentyrch Tennis Club to consider building a joint pavilion, but these ideas failed to materialise.

Early ground preparation – measurements and excavation were done by Roger Jones, John Berry and Russell Howell with the aid of a landscape gardener from Miskin. A 'Murphy' soil test and inspection suggested that sand be added to the top soil, but this was deemed to be too expensive for the Club's finances. In 1984 Shirley Cox was replaced as Secretary by Norman Bryan and that same year David George took over as Chairman.

The Committee investigated the creation of a suitable playing surface. Quotations of £28,000 from a contractor were not as favourable as an estimated £14,000 outlay with the work being done and financed by club members. Chairman David George recalled he spent many fruitless hours dealing with Taff Ely Council who claimed that they were not the owners of Parc Y Dwyrlyn. But club funds fell a little short and funding had to found elsewhere.

David George: "I was dealing with Taff Ely trying to get a grant. They said they would give us £3,000 if we could produce a similar amount, but we could only come up with £2,800, so we never got a penny. Taff Ely denied for long periods that they owned the ground. They insisted we produce the Deeds. It was only when Glamorgan Cricket Club played Northamptonshire in 199? That they did agree that they owned it".

In June 1985 loans from Members only totalled £600 and costs to continue the Club development could not be met. Thoughts and suggestions of disbandment of the club arose but following encouragement from Russell Howell and Roger Jones in particular, who carried on working on the site preparation, a new committee was formed – consisting of David George, Mr T. Noon, Don Wibley, Shirley Cox, John Berry, Jim Bryan, Marj Wibley, Norman Follis and Russell Howell. The new Committee set about making fresh applications for grant funding.

Russell Howell & Roger Jones: " Norman Follis made the first suggestion to form a bowling club – he even wanted to play ! We did a Murphy soil test and that suggested we add sand to the top soil. I can't remember what the cost was but it was too expensive for us. We started work clearing the area where the green is now with Lyn and a landscaper from Miskin. Dai George was

Chairman – he applied for grants from the Council but they came to nothing. A decision was made to disband the club but we decided to carry on anyway”.

An estimate in December 1985 was that it would cost £3,000 to prepare the ground and an additional £3,175 to turf it. It was decided that in an effort to preserve funds that club members would seed the green at a cost of £300.

In 1986 a Club Constitution was first discussed and a loan for £3,500 from Taff Ely Borough Council was finally offered and gratefully accepted. The interest free loan was to be spent on preparing a suitable playing surface and repayable back after 10 years.

In January 1989 Rodney Hughes was co-opted onto the Committee and a determined effort was made to compete the green and play that summer. The August 1990 minutes of the Club’s first Annual General Meeting show that Norman Bryan resigned as Secretary and David George stepped down from the Committee. The 1990 Committee had a new look about it – Mike Morgan (Chairman), Doug Ruff, John Berry, Rod Hughes, Janet Berry, Harry Rees, Don Wibley, Oscar Evans and Dave Barrett. 1990 Membership Fees were set at £25 with a £10 joining fee.

Mike Morgan: “Progress did stall for a time. We even had a meeting in the Rugby Club in what is now the lounge. We agreed to carry on and I was elected Chairman. I remember buying grass seed from ? and it paid myself and my wife Pat’s membership for that year.”

John Berry: “At the start, something like 1984/5, we started to level the area on a cut and fill basis the whole area including the tennis club with myself, Russell & Roger spending many a unhappy hour riding an old bulldozer, which had been lent by Russell to get the basic levels sorted.

After a public meeting of the interested parties at the Rugby Club a committee of those at the meeting was chosen with a mandate to get council (who were Taff Ely and their representative said there was very little chance of building a green on what we had prepared)-or anyone’s funds for the start.

There was very little action in the early years, and again after a meeting in or around 1988/9 there was a plea to get cash loans etc from the public with a view to getting started. I believe we gave a cheque for £50.00 or something like that. Once the new committee had been decided, we then as a dedicated group – me, Russell, Roger, Mansel, Dai, Glyn and many others gave up many hours to finish the green so we could start playing. To do this we imported coke/clinker from the old boiler house at the Rhydlafr Hospital by some local arrangement! This along with some basic drainage we laid soil and seed to get the grass growing with the green as we know it know being the result”.

The Green Is Officially Opened

At 2.30pm on Sunday 19th May 1991 the Pentyrch Bowling green was officially opened by Dr Kim Howells MP. This involved cutting of the tape followed by several matches between rinks from neighbouring clubs. Following the games saw the start of the tradition of Pentyrch Teas being served in the Rugby Club. At this time there were still no building around the green with little vegetation or protection from the wind. Equipment had to stored elsewhere.

A note to members regarding foot ware at this time stated: *“Only totally plain soles are allowed. This means that trainers are not allowed. It is permissible to use carpet slippers or even stockinged feet on the playing surface”.*

Following extensive discussion, the Club Constitution was adopted in August 1991. A proud and long sought-after moment arrived in September 1991 when the Club were advised that they were now affiliated members of the Welsh Bowling Association, as well as being members of the South Glamorgan Bowling Association. Membership of the Welsh Private Greens was delayed for a while because whilst the Private Greens would be pleased to accept us, the grant of a Lease of the bowling green area from Taff Ely Borough Council was a necessity. This was not granted until the end of 1992.

In 1991 membership fees were £35 per year, with family membership at £80 per year also available - club membership stood at a very healthy 61 persons. Iain Russell was elected Club Captain for the 1992 season which saw the Men playing a fixture against a select team representing the Mayor of Taff Ely – Mrs Jean Henderson – Pentyrch winning one, drawing one and being defeated on the remaining four rinks. The Ladies were now competing regularly under the leadership in 1992 by Janet Berry. The Men playing in the Taff Ely Wednesday League, achieved their first competitive victory that season.

Also of note in 1992 was the improvement of the green under the direction of Harold Evans – a ‘retired green keeper’ of some fame in South Wales. His care and diligence to improve and protect the playing surface became legendary not only in Pentyrch Bowling Club but far beyond. Conifers were planted in this year between the green and the rugby / football pitches to improve security and provide protection from the prevailing wind.

John Berry: Harold Evans arrived in Meirion Morgan’s year as captain, again we all know now what excellent work he and Malcolm Martin, Brian Jones, & current green keeper Bill Malcolm have done over the years.

The 1993 AGM commenced with a minute silence in memory of founder Tony Lamerton who had died recently and was remembered for all the development work he had done in previous years. Colin Jackson was elected Chairman with Doug Ruff continuing as Secretary. 1993 had seen the first production of a Club Fixture Card for each member, and also the decision to purchase Club ties. Marilyn Lewis and Meirion Morgan volunteered to design a Club badge – which in particular features a pied wag tail that is so commonly seen on the green. The badge design was accepted by the Committee in February 1994.

On the playing side in 1993 the Club introduced the special Pentyrch Welcome to some touring teams for the very first time. Teams from Teignmouth, Bitten Park and Long Crendon all enjoyed the hospitality of the hosts and the intricacies of the green. In April 1993 three rinks were invited to play at Pontypridd Indoor Bowling Centre, by the Mayor of Taff Ely. Membership now stood at an all time high of 79 including 3 junior members.

John Berry: “The first home matches were against St Fagans and Whitchurch – and anyone else who was prepared to visit us! Scoreboards were donated by Whitchurch Bowling Club along with the watering system, which we still have. The first cabins arrived in about 1993 and the toilets a few years later”.

Parc Y Dwrllyn

With the reorganisation of Local Authorities imminent Taff Ely Borough Council decided to offer sell the lease of Parc Y Dwrllyn to the Pentyrch Sports Association – the Bowling Club being a member of the PSA. To purchase the lease the Bowling Club had to raise approximately £7,000 as their contribution to the £42,000. This would safeguard the land for future years as a sporting venue. An extraordinary meeting in November 1993 voted unanimously to £8,000 from the Club bank. Despite expecting negotiations to have been completed by the end of 1993, it was another

18 months before the PSA learned the fantastic news that there would in fact be no purchase charge to transfer the 999 year leasehold ownership to the sports clubs of Pentyrch.

In 1994 Club membership had fallen to just 55 (37 men, 18 ladies), but was now a fully accepted member of the Welsh Private Greens. It was a family affair as David George captained the men and his wife Anne captained the ladies – the ladies competing in their first year of competition bowls. The results did not go their way but they became known throughout the Ladies League as ‘The Friendly Club’.

The Mid 90’s onwards

1995 saw the developing of the club to a greater level on the playing standards. Captained by Malcolm Martin the Men’s Team had their traditional single victory in the Taff Ely League, but for the first time ever they recorded a victory in the Carruthers Shield and similarly in the Private Greens, when Whitchurch Hospital became part of Pentyrch bowling history. It was pleasingly noted by the captain that players were now looking at the score board not to see how much they were down, but to see what they needed to win.

Alan Parsons introduced ‘Spoons Night’ to the club in 1995 and this has grown into being one of the foundations of the club.

A tradition began this year too with the first ever tour - to South Devon. Staying in Teignmouth – in split hotels as the party was too large to be accommodated – the tourists were delighted to win the match against Bitten Park, but going down against Teignmouth.

John Roberts: “I shared a room that had split levels with Tim. One morning he fell out of the bathroom, down two steps and landed, luckily, face down on the bed”. John used to laugh at the strangest things.

In 1996 results improved yet again with a best ever position in the Wednesday Taff Ely League that could have been surpassed if narrow defeats had gone Pentyrch’s way. Maximum points were gained in the Private greens match against a traditionally formidable Merthyr West End team and a Club triple lost only narrowly in the final of the Llanbradach Invitation Tournament. On the County scene Keith Davies did exceptionally well to proceed as far as the quarter finals of the South Glamorgan Singles. A touring team from Milton Regis proclaimed that their match at Pentyrch was the highlight of their tour – and this from the club that claimed to be the oldest in England being founded in 1540.

David Rogers became the Tour Organiser and was responsible for some memorable mornings in the coach, afternoons on the green and evenings in the bar. The 1996 Tour to Derby and Nottingham set the standard for those to follow.

The Coventry Tour in 1997, staying at the Hotel Leofric in Coventry’s city centre, had its memorable moments, least of all the 7am fire alarm and evacuation.

Marilyn Lewis: “My memory of the Coventry fire was I that I was in the bath having a shower when the alarm went off at about 7 o’clock in the morning. I was not very good on my feet so I ignored it. There was a knock on the door – it was Malcolm Martin ‘FIRE, FIRE !’ he shouted. I was still stuck in the bath. I eventually got out with a towel wrapped around me, and my dressing gown on. We were standing outside in the street – four of us in dressing gowns. Meirion Morgan did the judging – ‘Best Dressing Gown’ he declared “Greta Jones”. I never forgave him for that !”.

Tim Morgan: "Coventry fire...sharing a room with John Roberts and Barrie Ledbury. The alarm went off. We stayed in bed and ignored it, even with John standing there with his blazer and tie on. We eventually sent him out to see what all the fuss was about. He persuaded us that everyone was outside so we got dressed and joined them. For some reason all of the women were in dressing gowns. It was a false alarm but there was a fire engine".

John Roberts: "I shared a room with Tim and Barrie. We tricked Tim into climbing out of the window and then we locked him out on the veranda".

Although the 1997 Tour was based in Coventry City Centre the matches were played against GEC (Rugby) on the Friday evening, where the club unusually put out 4 men's and 3 ladies rinks, and against Rugby & District Bowling Association on the Saturday. Excellent hospitality was shown to the tourists at both venues although the hosts were not too generous on the green. Tourists enjoyed wandering around the historical Rugby School and the nearby Gilbert Rugby Ball manufacturing shop.

The 'homeward bound' game evoked memories for many years afterwards mainly for the smell ! Playing against Wellington Bowling Club, Hereford on an artificial pitch that caused initial problems for the tourists, the match was dominated by the overpowering smell of manure wafting across the wall from the farm yard on the adjoining property.

It is possible that 1997 saw the first experience of the ultimate Tour Coach Driver – the ever reliable Frank courtesy of G & A Coaches. In later years Frank was to become immortal for navigating roundabouts twice or three times before choosing his exit road. In Coventry he unsuccessfully attempted to get the coach into a multi storey car park.

1998 was another big stride forward for the Club with the expansion of the club and the entry of a second team into the Private Greens League. Although this would stretch the club player base it was decided that it should strengthen the numbers in the long run. At the end of April 1998 the Men's section achieved putting out teams for the first time.

Touring in 1998 was again in late August staying at the River Swan Hotel near Reading and playing against Woodley, Wokingham and stopping off for a match in Bath on the way home.

In 1999, touring in Oxfordshire, the club stayed at the "Excellent Four Pillars Hotel" in Abingdon, playing matches against Thame and Long Crendon. The Sunday match on the way home will be best remembered by some as the day that Marj Wibley slipped on the green. Torrential rain at Bradford on Avon had turned the green into a very slippery surface. Marj slipped and required an ambulance to take her to hospital for treatment.

Barrie Ledbury "It was very wet and slippery, and Marj fell on the green. She was unable to move but we carried on playing - bowling around her, using the bias – with an umbrella over Marj to keep her dry".

New Millennium

In 2000 John A. Davies created the Pentyrch 49 Club, based on the National Lottery. This continued for a great many years bringing in large amounts of much needed revenue.

Planning permission to develop the clubhouse expired and a successful application was made to renew the permission. This proved to be a good move as in March 2001 it was decided at a Special general Meeting to proceed and acquire two new cabins to be used as changing rooms. These cabins still remain today with only the main clubhouse being replaced by the excellent wooden pavilion we see today.

The 2000 Pentyrch tourists returned to the South Devon coast staying at the Bishops Court Hotel, Torquay. The club were very well received at both Queens Bowling Club in Paignton and also at Upton B.C.

Mark Krawiecki: "Torquay in 2000 was the first Tour that Margaret and I went on. I don't know who the Trolley Dollys were usually but Mike Morgan and Dai Rogers dressed up as bar maids to be the Trolley Dollys on the bus. We picked up Dai outside of his house in Bronllwyn. I think they kept their costumes on when we stopped at the motorway services!

The Friday game was called off because of the weather so we played a round robin competition of pool, table football and I think skittles in the hotel. The Saturday game was at Upton which had an 'interesting' club house. It was like a massive wooden chalet – a bit like the Walton's with a veranda. I don't think we played a match on Sunday – we played on the hotel indoor rink".

The local pubs were well frequented on this May weekend, but the hotel was in an elevated position and those not fancying the walk back up the hill were seen to be ducking into waiting taxis for the two minute ride back. Those walking often felt like they too should have used the taxi.

Barrie Ledbury: "I remember the hotel being up a hill and the pub was at the bottom. It was the first tour that Mark and Margaret Krawiecki had been on. They didn't want to join us – Tim, John Roberts, Broxy and others I think in the pub - but we persuaded them to stop for a short while. Sadly, it was happy hour and Margaret K. got happier than the rest. She managed the climb back to the hotel – singing at the top of her voice – but sadly failed to make breakfast or the match that afternoon. She never came on tour with us until many years later".

Mark Krawiecki: "Saturday evening was a bit different. It started with us upsetting Oscar (Evans) and Bill (Monington) who had ordered a taxi but we pinched it before they could get out of the hotel. They were on their way to the local British Legion club, and were not happy! They had a bit of a falling out later when they argued – the view from their room window was a brick wall. We took the taxi to a pub down the hill. Barrie (Ledbury) did stupid magic tricks and pretended to levitate".

The '49 Club' was started in 2000 by John Davies – it was a great money spinner with the aim of boosting the club funds to replace the porta-cabins presently being used as Club changing rooms with a permanent building.

In December 2000 an earlier application for Planning Permission expired and an extension to the Permission was made with Cardiff Council.

The 2001 Southsea Tour – two games were played in the Southsea area and the impressive Swindon indoor and outdoor bowling complex was visited on the way home. As usual the Pentyrch Tourists made the most of the sea front location of the Solent Hotel – some even crossed the water for a few hours on the Isle of Wight. The G & A coach broke down on the journey to Swindon and a fleet of home team cars was summoned to ferry the tourists to the green. Fortunately, a replacement coach arrived before the end of the match and the tourists enjoyed a seem-less journey home with their driver Frank.

The condition of the Club buildings was now causing great concern and there was uncertainty with the Planning Permission application. In March 2001 at a Special General Meeting, it was decided by members to follow a different route and acquire two 'off the shelf' brand new prefabricated buildings. One building would provide a kitchen and dining area, and the other two

separate changing rooms. Fortunately, the Building Fund had been boosted to such an extent by the '49 Club' that the purchase was made shortly after.

In 2002 following investigation by Chairman Alan Parsons, a long-awaited Honours Board was acquired and erected in the main Club building. The honours board was a success and a second board was purchased shortly after.

The May 2002 tour was a great event based on the seafront in Weymouth. Travel lag was the excuse used for defeat at Greenhill B.C., but Captain of the day Ian Broxton led his team from the front to a welcome rare victory for the tourists at Welworthy B.C. on a hot and sunny afternoon near Portland Bill. The usual fixture on the journey home was at the picturesque Castle Cary Bowling Club. The three-course lunch in the Horse Pond Inn proved the undoing of the tourists who never recovered and went down valiantly.

John Roberts: "We stayed on the sea front in Weymouth. We had fish and chips when we got there and played a match in the afternoon. The pub didn't have a proper bar so we went out looking for a pub. Russell got us into the British Legion by using an Irish accent. They didn't mind us being there as we spent a lot of money and bought their raffle tickets. I can't remember what the prize was but everybody gave it back – it took ages before someone won. They stopped the disco when I was dancing for a man to have his head shaved for charity. They all said goodbye to us when we left. We went somewhere else the next day. We always do the lottery on tour and bet on the Derby, but we never win".

Peter Mynett: "It's not surprising we never won at that Castle Cary place - they took us in this pub, we walked through all these bars and ended up in what looked like a banqueting suite out the back. It was done out a bit mediaeval. Anyway, the waitress gave us the starter, then the main course and then a dessert and coffee. The last thing I wanted to do was play bowls. I think some people went to another pub after."

Tim Morgan was Club Captain in 2002 and the Men's results improved a little on previous years. The Carruthers Shield results were favourable with victories over Taffs Well and Llandaff Fields, but an over confident performance at Mackintosh resulted in a massive defeat which let in Abertridwr to clinch qualification to the National Draw rounds. A record of 5 wins in the Wednesday Taff Ely League saw the team finish in their highest league position ever. The PG1 and PG2 teams were struggling for quality line ups when both sides played the same day, but still managed some creditable victories throughout the season.

2003 Plymouth Tour - by Tim Morgan (Vice Captain)

It would not be a bowls tour without the Trolley Dollys, and it wasn't the same as usual as Chief Gin Dispenser, Jan Berry, was laid up in hospital and missed the trip. Her young assistant, Marilyn Lewis, was not really up to the job, but did her best and made up for it with her heavenly singing.

Leaving the club at 8am, we made good progress before a comfort stop somewhere on the M5. Bingo and a few gins later the coach rolled up to the door of the excellently appointed New Continental Hotel, Plymouth. Despite the photos of John Major and William Hague in the lobby, the hotel turned out to be one of our better stopping places.

Although it rained for most of the M5 journey, the Friday afternoon match at Plymstock bowling club was never in doubt. A rink led by Dai Rogers won by a heavy score but it was not enough to prevent the tourists losing the match. Money changed hands at the bar for an hour or so, and with

Messrs Howell and Owen making a mess of some fine old Welsh songs, the Plymstock members waved thankfully when we departed for a bit of grub back at the Hotel.

More rain fell as the athletes did a pub crawl, the discerning drinkers visited Wetherspoons across the road, and the Octogenarians went to bed. The night club in the basement was given a hammering by Marilyn on that first night. Surprisingly they would not let her in the following evening.

Saturday breakfast came, and went and most people saw the sights of Plymouth Hoe. Some visited Drake's bowling green, the war memorial, the quayside from where the Mayflower, Walter Raleigh and the Tolpuddle Martyrs sailed. Others shopped till they dropped at Hyper Value and ToysRus. They don't have the same offers in Cardiff apparently.

All aboard the coach after lunch for the short trip to Sir Frances Drake Bowling Club. Founded in 1908, David George remembered fondly their original club house. A short break at half time for some bread and jam, and the opposition winning all the raffle prizes, and it was back out into the sun for a right stuffing. No one was stuffed more than the rink led by Margaret Farmer, who did well to score a few shots, against a former World Champion bowler called David Cutler.

With a few more friendships made, it was back to base, with a well researched and informed guided coach tour of the city by the Vice Captain, a quick change, dinner, and out with Rear Admiral Norman Poulson to show us his old haunts in Union Street.

Morning came all too early as the weary tourists loaded themselves once more onto the coach. The Morgan the Dentist family did hold up proceedings for a while as they had a late breakfast, but eventually the coach waved farewell to the New Continental Hotel for the last time. No crowds came to wave them off, and there was no tickertape parade either for the departing heroes, but Plymouth will be remembered by all who visited that weekend, as the place where Margaret Farmer met her match.

Our next destination was Burnham on Sea. The further we got up the M5, the worse the weather got. It was still sunny as Eric the driver parked the coach on the Burnham sea front. It was not to last as torrential rain fell for a full hour. With cries of "take us home Drive!" from all around, the coach slowly found its way to the Burnham green.

The sun came out on arrival. The tourists reluctantly got off the coach, and Eric returned the coach to the Burnham seafront to park for the afternoon. As a man blew leaves from the grass, some items of ladies bowling clothing were found to have been mistakenly left on the coach, the Wibleys had a wobbley regarding the location of Don's bowls bag, and rumours of a players revolt seeped out of the Ladies changing rooms.

But the sun came out again, the ladies appeared fully clothed, and Don's bowls bag came back with Eric and the coach. The sun actually shone all afternoon, and as the ground dried up so did the resistance of the Burnham bowlers. Russell Howell's rink overwhelmed their opposite numbers to record the biggest win on the Pentyrch side, and Captain Ian Broxton was ecstatic in the clubhouse when he announced to the stunned Burnham faithful that Pentyrch had actually won a game on tour.

As the coach departed at 7.30 and some old heads were seen to nod off as we crossed the Severn, the dulcet voice of Marilyn could be heard screeching "Anyone else want some nuts?"

2004 Cardigan Tour - by Tim Morgan (Captain) June 2004

THE PENTYRCH BOWLING TOURISTS this year went to the Wild West of Cardiganshire. Staying at the 'cannot be faulted' Cliff Hotel in Gwbert on Sea, they had wonderful warm and sunny weather and sea views for breakfast every day.

After an inspection of the rooms, it was off up the coast to ABERYSTWYTH to play Queens Road Bowling Club. A spot of lunch and an ice cream on the prom was followed by a closely fought game. The rinks of RUSSELL HOWELL and JOHN BERRY were victorious but the other 3 rinks failed to master their opponents and Pentyrch lost the match 72 to 78 shots.

The Black Ram (worst Pentyrch rink) was won by skip MARGARET FARMER, and a Wrong Bias Certificate was presented to tour debutant, ALISTAIR ANDREWS.

A traditional Pentyrch 'Chip Shop Stop' on the way home broke up the journey, and the Hotel residency bar licence was well used on the return to the Cliff.

Breakfast, a stroll along the coastal footpath and all aboard the coach for NEWCASTLE EMLYN. A journey break ice cream at Cenarth Falls later and the party were lodged in the various pubs of the small market town. A few pints of Speckle Hen and some dodgy pub food set the tourists up for the afternoon's education on how to play bowls on tarmac. The Newcastle Emlyn green is an artificial surface laid on tarmac. The result is that the bowls run very fast and very free. Many of the Pentyrch bowls struggled to be anywhere near the jack, whilst the home team made it look easy. Pentyrch did win one rink - skipped by JUNE THOMAS, but lost heavily on the others.

Final score Newcastle Emlyn 160 Pentyrch 54. A new record defeat for Pentyrch that may stand for some years to come.

The Black Ram was won by a rink admirably skipped by TIM MORGAN, and Wrong Bias Certificates were won by KEN SEDGEBEER, SUE RICHARDS and playing his first game ever, HOWARD RICHARDS.

Saturday evening was a first in Pentyrch Touring history as the tourists enjoyed an excellent four-course meal in the hotel restaurant, followed by Top Notch entertainment in the bar from the Crooner from the Valleys - Howard Richards and his guitar. At times it was a sing-a-long, but luckily Howard knew the words as well as the tunes. Professional Tourist, JOHN ROBERTS copped on to some married woman, half his age, and only narrowly survived a beating from her husband.

Sunday saw the Tourists looking forward to the final match at CARDIGAN BOWLING CLUB. Just 5 minutes drive away, the tourists again spent lunchtime in pubs and cafes and Woolworths, but competed much better than they did the previous day. All surviving tourist bowlers played in this match and recorded 3 victorious rinks – skipped by MARGARET FARMER, DENZIL THOMAS & OSCAR EVANS. However, the home team were a little too strong and won the match 114-102.

The Black Ram went to the rink skipped by JUNE THOMAS, and Wrong Bias Certificates were awarded to HOWARD RICHARDS and LORNA HOWELL. For his collection of Wrong Bias Certificates, Raffle Prize, Black Sheep and honorary position of Pentyrch Tour Entertainer, Howard Richards was awarded the 2004 TOURIST OF THE YEAR AWARD. The Tour was rounded off brilliantly by the hosts - Cardigan bowling Club serving up a first class buffet and entertainment.

Mark Krawiecki: "Someone pinched John Berry's shoes while he was asleep in the bar. Jan said not to wake him, but when he did wake-up he was a bit angry. The shoes turned up in the morning somewhere".

2005 Tour - Weston Super Mare June 2005 by Tim Morgan (Captain)

Early June and it is Bowling Club Tour time again - time to pack the suntan cream, bikini, paracetamol and ear plugs. Travelling in the luxury of Creigiau Travel with local boy made good, Mark Harrison at the wheel, the coach bounced out of the perfectly potholed Rugby Club car park at 9.30am on a wet Friday morning. Many tourists had given up their normal hectic Friday lifestyle to make the pilgrimage across the Bridge. Some had taken time off work, some would have been polishing their war medals, others having their legs waxed, or trying to work out how their pensions could cover yet another Caribbean holiday.

The usual on-board games of darts, Twister and deck quoits were again organised by Games Masters **Myra and Howard Thomas**, but this year the bar was closed due to the Trolley Dollies finding their advancing years a bit too much. President and Tour guru **Russell Howell** welcomed some new tourists to the trip – **Mr & Mrs Ellmes, Pearce and Thomas and Lady Gloria Evans** – wife of Evans the Gob. A bit damp leaving Cardiff, it brightened up crossing the bridge and was actually quite nice arriving at the **Royal Pier Hotel** as the sun gleamed off the mud splattered donkeys.

The match that afternoon was at the aptly named **Isle of Wedmore** – a lovely complex that included an indoor bowling green and an outdoor paddling pool. The paddling pool came into action following a downpour on the 17th end. While most rinks ran for cover, the dull people, led by **Sir Oscar Evans**, stayed on the green.

A fine performance of rinks skipped by **Janet Barry, Margaret Farmer, Oscar Evans, John Berry and Russell Howell** saw Pentyrch gain only their third ever tour win – and by a tour record 40 shots (70-110). Worst rink winners of the Black Ram was the rink boldly led by **Colleen Thomas**.

A few pints, a bit of badge swopping and it was back to the Hotel for a bit of grub – and very nice grub it was too. **Pensioner of the Day** – a new Certificate awarded to the elderly Tourist that portrayed all that is good in a Pentyrch Pensioner – forgetfulness, unsteady on feet, and weak bladder. The inaugural winner of the award for a belly flop on the slippery green was **Sir Oscar Evans**.

Entertainment that evening was a super disco interspersed by a footloose dancing exhibition of Tiger Feet by **Sue Richards and Barrie Thomas**, and Pentyrch's very own Hinge and Bracket at the pianoforte – **Sir Oscar and Dame Marilyn Lewis**. Unfortunately, the piano had not been tuned for some years and the true depth and quality of their voices was not allowed to be heard. While she sang like Charlotte Church, he played piano like Gavin Henson. Charlotte Church may have her knockers but they are not as big as Mrs Lewis'. Bed very late, via the Berry's bedroom and an alcoholic wake up call to John Lewis in China by his wife Marilyn.

The morning brought breakfast and a compulsory walk on the promenade and pier for all. A bit windy but ok. The Saturday game was at **West Backwell**, celebrating their 75th anniversary. A very nice club and a very close game – the home side gaining a 5 shot win (112-107). Pentyrch

winning rinks were skipped by **Denzil Thomas and June Thomas**. Margaret Farmer's rink, containing Captain of the Day Myra Thomas, collected the Black Ram award for heaviest losing rink. Some unusual renderings of a few Welsh songs sung by **R. Howell, B. Owen, O. Evans, J. Berry and H. Thomas** led to the departure from the Blackwell clubhouse and back to the Hotel for some more very nice grub. Following the game at West Backwell, Marj Wibley was accused of bowling a wrong bias. A very indignant Marj protested "No I definitely did not !!! but it might have been a thin one!".

Pensioner of the Day nominations were dominated by Peter Mynett, but the winner was **Russell Howell** for leaving his bowls bag including clothes and woods on the coach. The "Buck Rogers Country and Western Experience" entertained the tourists following dinner – right up till he was ejected from the stage. He did his best but when you are used to Oscar and Marilyn only the very best is good enough. Buck Rogers was replaced by **Shakin' Richards** from the Valleys, who master mixed a selection of scratched 60s LPs into some sort of acceptable entertainment. **A night to forget but definitely to remember.**

In the best fashion of an Agatha Christie hotel mystery whodunit...the tourists were bamboozled with false clues, lies, untruths and red herrings...who did steal **John Berry's** shoe while he slept on the lounge table ?, and did **Margaret Krawiecki** really feign sickness just to miss today's game? CCTV footage of John Berry asleep only showed shadows of Ledbury's long legs against the curtains; and photographic evidence with eyewitness accounts at a rapidly convened kangaroo court late that night seem to suggest that Mrs K was as guilty as sin. No sign of the kangaroo was ever seen again and the shoe was found next morning in the kitchen.

A new day, a new breakfast, the same old mud on the beach, but a new game to play at **Congresbury** – another very nice club with bags of tradition. There was time to spare before hand so the Tourists potted and shoplifted their way around the massive Cadbury Garden Centre. Congresbury won the game 130-118, with the best rink being skipped by **Margaret Farmer** and the Black ram going to **David Rogers**. **Lorna Howell** picked up a few bob for winning the Weekend Rink Scores Sweep, and the first wrong bias certificates went to **Jan Berry and Gill Rogers**. A few Welsh songs with that famous Somerset song "Danny Boy" from the hosts, and off the bus went on its final journey back across the bridge. **Pensioner of the Day** – there were a record number of nominations, but for his consistency over the 3 days and funny walk, the clear winner was the very unimpressed **Peter Mynett**.

Safe and sound back in the perfectly potholed Pentyrch rugby club car park, the tourists said their goodbyes and waved two fingers at **Glyn Thomas** while shouting "see you next year, you old sod!".

And they probably will.

In 2005, Pentyrch won the Garth Cup for the first and only time against their nearest and dearest, bitter rivals Taffs Well. Captained by Tim Morgan they held their healthy lead after the first away leg of the match, to hold on comfortably for 35 shot victory. It has been many years since that win and although coming close Pentyrch have never managed to repeat the success of that day.

CARRUTHERS SHIELD

The draw for the premier club competition in Wales has not always been kind to Pentyrch, frequently being drawn against the likes of Penylan BC. But in 2004 Pentyrch managed to top their qualifying group and earned a match away at Pembrokeshire big hitters Tenby. The Club went on masse by coach for a day at the seaside but despite an heroic performance of the rink of Bill Monnington, Denzil & Barrie Thomas and Derek Farmer, the other 3 rinks lost heavily by 74 shots to end the hopes of further glory.

The following year, Pentyrch won all 4 group matches and again qualified for the national knock out stages, again playing Tenby. This time home advantage proved decisive for Pentyrch as they recorded a narrow 4 shot victory. But the cup run ended in the next round to old rival Barry Plastics despite winning on 3 rinks.

It was not until 2012 that Pentyrch again qualified for the knockout stages after beating Cardiff, Caerphilly Social and Roath Park. Travelling the short journey to Barry Romilly they found the green not to their liking and departed the competition in Round 1.

In 2014 Pentyrch again lost away in the 1st round, this time to West Glamorgan opponents Pontardawe despite Ian Broxton's rink putting up a good fight.

2015 was Pentyrch's last forage into the National round of the Carruthers Shield, when after defeating 3 Cardiff sides, they progressed even further into the last 32 when visitors Swansea Vale withdrew from the competition. Next up were Old Landorians, a formidable side from Swansea and previous winners of the Shield. But despite enjoying home advantage, the Swansea team were too experienced and finished strongly to progress to the last 8.

2013 TOUR TO WESTON SUPER MARE

Pentyrch Bowling Club enjoyed glorious June sunshine on their Annual Tour to Somerset. Staying in Weston Super Mare, with views of Flat Holm and the Garth from their hotel, the 28 tourists played 3 matches at clubs with excellent facilities, giving the Welsh side a first class Somerset welcome.

With the Bristol Channel lapping at the edge of the green Pentyrch lost narrowly 101-111 to Clevedon Promenade, despite winning on 3 of the rinks. Day Two and Pentyrch had settled down to touring and won 120-104 at Taunton.

Another late night (for some) and the superb hosts of Ashcombe Park (Weston) held off the battling, but weary tourists, to win the very close game 101-106.

This tour was up there with the most enjoyable of all of their tours of the past 18 years, with many already looking forward to 2014.

Also in 2013, while the Ladies entered the North Cardiff League and the Glamorgan Afternoon League, the men entered the inaugural South Glamorgan league. Sadly the league did not live up to its promise and stale unexciting fixtures led to its demise after only 2 seasons.

Tim Morgan September 2021

