

The Faringdon Bowler

Official Magazine for the Faringdon Bowling Club

Issue 7. Autumn 2026

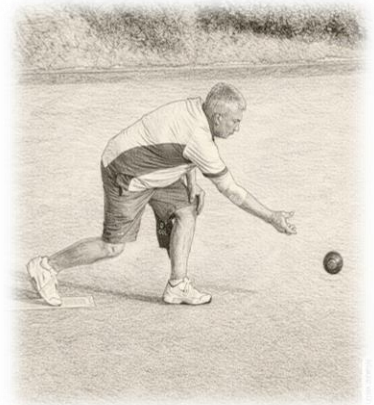


The 2026 Bowling season has drawn to a close

The past bowling season has been marked by significant activity across all areas of club life, from essential maintenance to sporting achievements and valued social events.



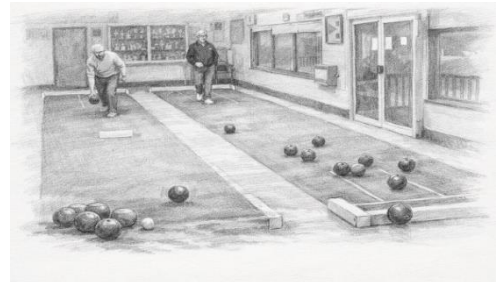
The ground team have worked with exceptional commitment throughout the prolonged periods of high temperature. With regular readings in the 30s, maintaining an accurate and consistent playing surface presented considerable challenges. Watering became a critical daily task, with rapid evaporation demanding constant attention. In addition, persistent disruption caused by digging birds required ongoing intervention. Despite these difficulties, the team succeeded in preserving a green of commendable quality, although brown replaced green at times.



The skill and discipline involved in delivering a wood continued to be demonstrated across the membership, supported by the steady expertise of those marking, whose contribution remains vital to the smooth running of matches.

We have been highly successful, attracting new members and strengthening the club's future. League and friendly fixtures were played with enthusiasm, and club competitions were well supported. The arrival of new members brought fresh energy and valuable skills to the club community.

As winter approaches, preparations are underway for the short mat season. Last year saw considerable growth in participation, and we anticipate continued interest as members enjoy this increasingly popular format.



Our social programme now moves into its busiest phase. Sunday lunches will resume, accompanied by a variety of planned events designed to foster community and enjoyment throughout the colder months. The bar will, as ever, remain a central and welcoming space for relaxation and conversation.



Our season began and ended with a beautiful lush green lawn, but in-between we suffered multiple heatwaves



The 2026 bowling season has been unlike any in recent memory. For years we've heard warnings about **global warming**, some have taken them seriously, others have pointed to history and argued that weather has always swung between extremes. Yet this year has made those warnings feel far more real.

Our season began with beautifully lush greens, cared for with dedication and skill. By early summer however, the lawns had faded to dry brown patches despite the best efforts of our green team. Prolonged heat, minimal rainfall, and relentless

sunshine created conditions that even the most diligent maintenance could not fully overcome. It was a visible reminder that changing weather patterns are no longer distant concerns; they are shaping our sport here and now.

Then, in September, the weather finally shifted. The long-awaited rain returned, and with it came the revival of the green grass. Within days, the lawns began to recover, showing just how



resilient our turf—and our team—can be when nature gives us even a little help. It was a reassuring end to a challenging summer, and a reminder that while the climate may be changing, the green still has life left in it.



The question many members have asked is whether this year's extreme heat is a one-off or something we must now expect. There is no clear answer, but the trend suggests that hotter, drier summers may become more common. If so, sensible precautions will help us protect both our players and our greens: Morning fixtures when temperatures are more tolerable, shaded areas for spectators, and hydration stations for players are all practical steps worth considering.

The dramatic drought image shown above may exaggerate the situation, but it highlights a truth: outdoor sports are becoming more weather-sensitive. Even so, lawn bowling is a resilient game supported by a resilient community. With a little foresight and a willingness to adapt, our club—and our sport—will continue to thrive, whatever the climate brings next.

Will the 2027 season be equally dry and hot? Meteorologists forecast it could be even hotter!

WINTERS HIDDEN GEM

Ode to the Short Mat

O lawn-trained bowler, proud and keen,
Now baffled by this lightning-fast green;
Your wood takes off like it's late for tea,
And smacks the **centre block** with glee.

Your trusty swing, once smooth and tight,
Now wobbles wildly left and right;
You try again—another clack—
The mat just laughs and sends it back.

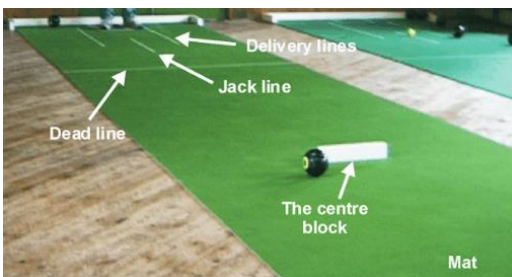
Yet slowly, surely, skill creeps through;
You tame the speed, your aim renew;
And when your bowl at last glides straight—
You cheer, relieved, you've mastered
gentle weight.



The Short Mat season is starting

Short Mat bowling may inspire the occasional humorous **Ode** (see above) from newcomers wrestling with its peculiarities, but the game itself is taken very seriously by many bowlers. Across the region there is a well-established **Short Mat league**, which we considered joining last year. In the end, we chose instead to focus our energy on developing and promoting the growing enthusiasm for Short Mat within our own club.

That decision has proved worthwhile. Interest continues to rise, and in January we will once again roll out our internal **Club Competition**. Last year's event was met with genuine warmth and enthusiasm, and this year's announcement will give everyone the opportunity to take part. Alongside this, we also look forward to the Frances Rothwell Memorial Cup, played annually with our friends from Kingston Bagpuize Bowling Club, strengthening the friendship between our clubs and adding a welcome competitive edge to the winter season.



Those anticipating a perfectly smooth, predictable carpet—free from the daily changes of grass, weather, and the occasional divot—may find Short Mat a little surprising. Short Mat has its own challenges. We have two mats, and although they appear almost identical, they certainly do not play the same. Each has its own character, and both behave differently, also depending on where they are rolled out. Our clubhouse floor, like most, is not perfectly

level, and even small variations can subtly influence the line and pace of a bowl. These quirks are part of what make Short Mat enjoyable, engaging, and occasionally exasperating.

The laws of Short Mat bowling closely mirror those of lawn bowls, with only a few key differences. Full details can be found on our website under **Laws of Short Mat Bowling**, or by scanning the QR code. Whether you are a seasoned lawn bowler or completely new to the sport, Short Mat offers a fresh challenge, a warm social atmosphere, and a chance to develop new skills throughout the winter months.



Short Mat Laws



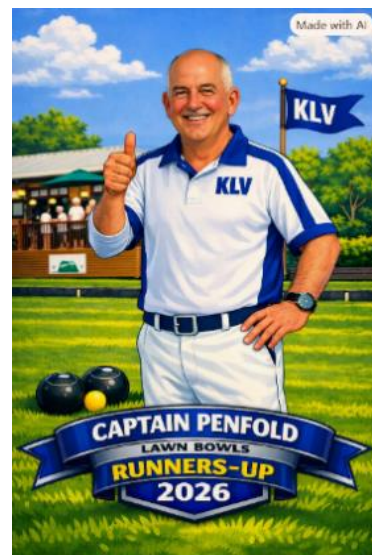
In the Winter 2025 edition of this magazine, *Mark Jackson* wrote an interesting article entitled '**Winter's Hidden Gem**' and I believe it's worth another read, new members will find it interesting. To do so, scan the QR code.

Taking on the captaincy of the KLV League for the first time

Taking the captaincy of Faringdon Bowls Club in the KLV League for the first time is not for the faint hearted. There are obvious fears: Will everyone turn up? Will selections cause diplomatic incidents? Will anyone actually listen to their skip? And most importantly will the Captain remember where he left the score cards?

In reality Friday afternoons continued to be the highlight of the week for our 'senior' men's team, when we pack the bowls and head off on glamorous away trips to the tourist hotspots of Didcot, Thatcham, Abingdon and even Shrivenham. The excitement begins with 'Who's driving?' and ends with 'Has anyone seen my bowls?'

A season of laughter, friendship and a number of close encounters came to a glorious end as our team proudly finished runners up to the run-away leaders Shrivenham. Apart from the two games we lost against them we only lost one other on the first day of the season and by just 1 point!

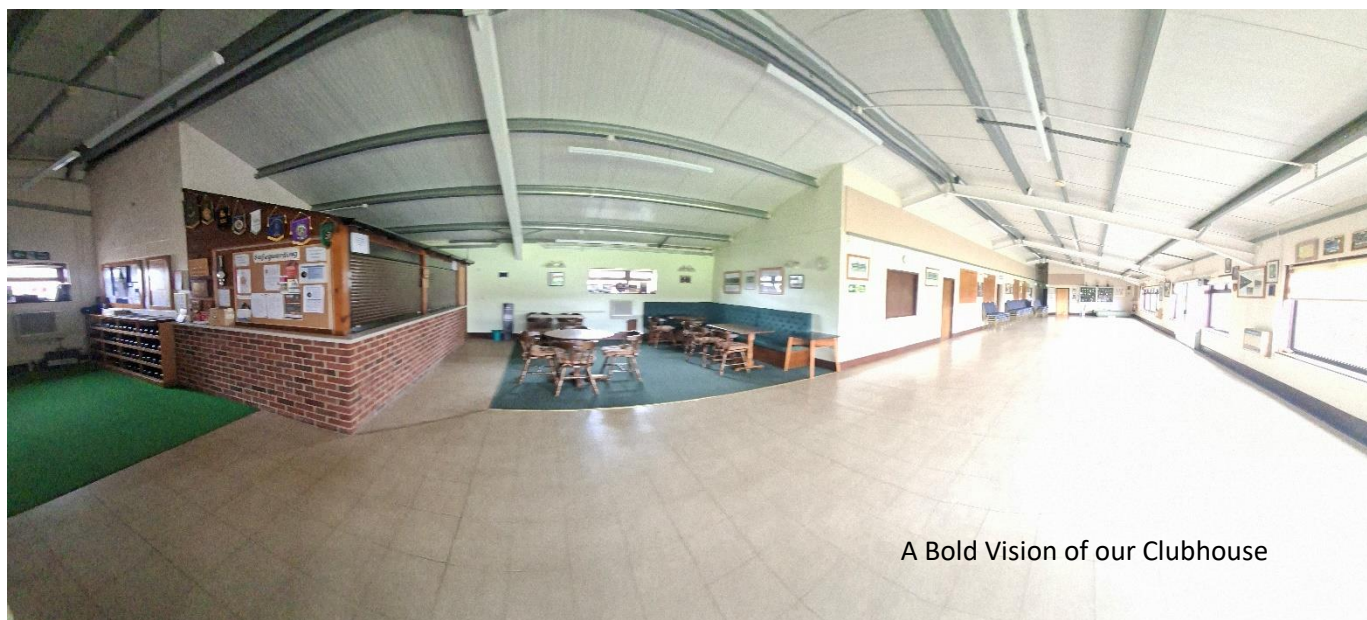


Finally to some of the characters (sorry not to mention everyone but space is premium in The Faringdon Bowler) **Dave 'Mr Dependable' Mendham** could always be relied upon and was a great help to me in my first season. **Nigel 'The A-Z of Bowls Clubs' Cox** ensured we had at least 3 routes to each away game. **Colin 'Small Change' Clarke** kept the finances jingling whilst **Ian 'I'll go straight there' Grant** always did! **John 'Never Rattled' Rimmer** remained unravelling, even when the bowls had other ideas. **Trevor 'Ever Present' Durrant** quite simply turned up every week. Together with others they made a formidable team proving that smiles and friendship make a winning combination.

So to next season where we face the terrifying prospect of KLV Division 2 where the opposition can actually play. Gone are the easy wins. Now we need stronger bowls and sharper tactics. Our biggest test next year is to avoid falling back down the ladder and getting a firm grip in the higher echelons of over 55's league bowls.

Ian Penfold
Captain KLV League

The Faringdon Bowling Clubhouse



A Bold Vision of our Clubhouse

From our new Chef John Bailey & Wife Trish

We are John and Trish Bailey, and although we've only recently joined Faringdon Bowling Club, many of you now know us from the rinks and the bar. We've lived in Lechlade for more than twenty years and have loved becoming part of the wider local community.



Trish & John Bailey

I (John) have been a chef all my life. I grew up in the kitchen alongside my mum, who was also a chef, and from the moment I was old enough to hold a knife safely, I was helping her prepare meals for the place where she worked. When I reached working age, I trained in pubs and restaurants before joining the Army as a military chef. During my service I had the privilege of cooking for members of the Royal Family and senior political figures on many occasions. After leaving the Army, Trish and I ran pubs, restaurants and wine bars together until we eventually settled in Lechlade.



This season, along with four friends from Lechlade, we joined Faringdon Bowling Club. We have been made to feel genuinely welcome, and we all agree it was an excellent decision. The inclusivity and spirit of the club are second to none.

To support the club's continued success, I've agreed to take on the catering for club functions, with Trish as my commis chef, bottle washer and right-hand woman. We already have several ideas for enhancing Sunday lunches during the winter months. We'd be delighted to hear any thoughts, suggestions or ideas from members. Your input will help us shape something enjoyable, sustainable and truly tailored to the club.

Warm regards,

John & Trish Bailey

Club B B Q on Friday 28th August

After a blisteringly hot and bone-dry summer, you'd have been forgiven for assuming our long-planned summer BBQ would unfold on a warm, balmy evening. It had been so hot that several bowling matches were re-arranged, a drought declared, and a hosepipe ban enforced. Yet on this particular evening, the sun apparently decided it had done enough overtime. The clouds rolled in, the drizzle began.

But if there's one thing Faringdon Bowling Club does well, it's refusing to let the weather spoil a good time. The turnout was excellent, proof that our members will bravely face almost anything for a BBQ, provided the bar is open and the food smells good.



Packed clubhouse at BBQ

John & Trish once again delivered the full works: juicy bangers, burgers tucked into soft rolls, onions, sauces, and all the trimmings that make a proper club feast. Their efforts were hugely appreciated — thank you both for keeping spirits high and stomachs full. The bar, naturally, played its essential role. Jane and her team kept glasses topped up and conversations flowing, ensuring that even the rain couldn't dampen the mood. A BBQ without a bar is merely outdoor cooking; with a bar, it becomes an event.

A thoughtful moment came when Darren, our President, paid tribute to Nigel Taylor as he prepares to leave the club. Darren wished him every happiness and bowling success in whichever Oxford club he chooses next. Nigel responded with warm words of thanks, expressing how much he valued the welcome and friendship he found at FBC during his time with us.

Despite the weather's theatrics, the evening was a resounding success, full of laughter, good food, heartfelt farewells, and the unmistakable camaraderie that makes our club what it is.

Much to learn but something to give

At the age of twelve, I decided I wanted to be a pilot in the RAF. Six years later, I found myself actually doing it — proof that teenage ambition occasionally survives contact with reality. What followed was a 37-year flying career in which I had the joy of piloting Vulcans, Canberra's, Phantoms and, for twenty glorious years, Hawks. I spent much of that time instructing students, training instructors, and then coaching those instructors through their upgrades. In short: if it flew, I taught someone how to break it gently.



Tony Little



Me in September 1985 in front of my Phantom

I also qualified as a motorcycle instructor and served as the North West Training Officer for a nationwide training scheme. Apparently, if it moves at speed, I feel compelled to teach people how to handle it.

After all that excitement, I retired in 2007 following eighteen months “flying a desk” at RAF Innsworth — a posting so thrilling it convinced me retirement was the safer option. But it did bring me to this part of the world, and more importantly, into the orbit of Mo Waghorn: partner, soul mate, and the woman responsible for my latest unexpected career twist.

Mo introduced us both to bowls at the tail end of the 2024 season. Through her musical escapades — ukulele and cajon, because of course — she'd played gigs at a couple of bowls clubs and rolled up afterwards. She suggested it might be something we'd enjoy together. She was right. (She usually is. I've learned to accept this.)

At our first club, team selection was... character-building. So I looked for another way to contribute. Becoming a marker seemed sensible. It quickly became clear that “learning to mark” mostly involved standing near someone competent and hoping knowledge would seep in. Being an instructor type, I went in search of an actual course.

That search led me to the English Bowls Umpires Association course at North Wilts Indoor Bowls Club on 26 July 2025. I subsequently joined EBUA with the intention of progressing to Regional Marker — and perhaps beyond. With a few marking sessions completed at FBC I qualified as an EBUA Regional Marker, receiving my Certificate of Competence on 14 June. I resisted the urge to frame it next to my RAF wings. Barely.

Given my background — twenty years as a flying instructor, I suspected I might have some transferable skills. Although I will admit that a stationary bowls rink is very different from a training environment travelling at 489mph. For one thing, nobody screams.



Me, landing a Vulcan 2 June 1976

After speaking with Di and John Morbey, I began exploring coaching. The web pointed me to a 1st4Sport Coaching Bowls course starting mid-June. It turned out to be quite the challenge: two three-hour Zoom sessions, a sixty-page portfolio written in a dialect only archaeologists understand, one practice day with thirteen pupils and one instructor, two home club practice sessions, and finally an assessment day. During one of my club practices John and Di observed me and offered invaluable guidance — thank you both, and please continue nudging me in the right direction. Preferably gently.

I passed the assessment on 12 July, qualifying as a Level 1 Coach with a recommendation to consider Level 2 next year. As a Level 1 coach, I can teach anatomically correct delivery, the pre-delivery routine (which I must also remember to use myself, lest I incur wrong bias and the wrath of Ian P), achieving line, and achieving length.

Rest assured: I will not be tapping anyone on the shoulder to tell them their delivery needs work. But if you'd like help, guidance, or simply a second pair of eyes, I'm always happy to assist.

Tony Little

Dementia, in all its difficult and heart-breaking forms, touches millions of families around the world, and an alarmingly 40% rise in cases is expected by 2040. Sadly, several of us within our club have also felt its impact. When my wife was diagnosed with Alzheimer's, our world shifted overnight — and in those early days, when uncertainty loomed large, a lifeline appeared.



Almost immediately, we received a warm and reassuring phone call from *Maria Kempson* of **Dementia Oxfordshire**. Her kindness was not only comforting but practical, timely, and deeply human. Maria soon visited our home, bringing with her valuable information about the support available, along with a sense of calm and understanding. She left us with a folder full of guidance, but more importantly, she left us with hope. For that, we remain profoundly grateful to Maria and to Dementia Oxfordshire. Sometimes in life, we all need someone or something to lean on — and they were ours.

Maria also works closely with *Cat Attewell* of **Home Instead Charities**, who runs the wonderful **Friendship & Memories Café** at Faringdon United Church. Meeting twice monthly, this thriving group offers gentle activities, sing-alongs, speakers, and moments of shared joy. Their work embodies the very best of community care.



Earlier this year, during a friendly roll-up, I met *Mo Waghorn* one of our newer members. We chatted about how welcoming she found our club, the laws of bowling, the leagues we compete in, and our beautiful green. The conversation then wandered to her love of the ukulele and her involvement with a group in Lechlade called **Memory Lane**. When I mentioned my wife's Alzheimer's, Mo didn't hesitate, she immediately invited us to join the group. That simple gesture opened the door to something special.



Memory Lane is led by the remarkably talented *Jay Mathews*, supported by a band of enthusiastic players known as the **Kencott Ukuleles**. *Mo* plays a drum called a *Cahoon*, (aka *Cajon*) alongside her ukulele. Our *Trish Bailey* is also a keen ukulele player. The ukulele, small, gentle instrument becomes something magical in their hands: uplifting, warm, and full of heart.

We now enjoy **Memory Lane** as spectators and listeners. The group perform at many local events throughout the year, and we have been fortunate to attend just a few of them — **The Riverfolk Festival at The Trout in Lechlade**, **St Mary's Church in Fairford**, and the **Stanton Harcourt Beer Festival**.

I am delighted that the **Kencot Ukuleles** will be joining us for our seasonal Christmas singing evening on **Friday 18th December**. Their music will add something truly special to our club's welcoming spirit — a celebration of togetherness, resilience, and the simple joy that community can bring.

This year, **Dementia Oxfordshire is our chosen charity**, and at the time of writing, we have proudly donated **£1,167.40** so far. It is an organisation that has touched lives within our membership both directly and compassionately. Their work and the kindness shown by groups such as the Friendship & Memories Café and Memory Lane, reminds us that community support is powerful, and that no one should ever face dementia alone.

As we continue to raise funds and awareness, we do so with deep gratitude: for Maria, for Cat, for Mo, for Jay, for Trish, and for everyone who brings light into moments that can feel overwhelming. And from those within our club who have been personally affected by dementia, we say together, with unity and sincerity, **THANK YOU SO MUCH** for supporting Dementia Oxfordshire — whether by donating items for our raffle table, purchasing tickets, or making private contributions.

John Nightingale

The Ashley Baker 2026 Season

By Vince Garrett – Team Captain

On 22nd April, the Ashley Baker team commenced their 2026 season by hosting Shrivenham, the first game in any season is one in which we walk onto our lush green lawn full of enthusiastic optimism, a quiet determination to play well, hoping our rest over the winter months will pay dividends because Shrivenham have a reputation for taking the game very seriously.

This season we welcomed some new players to our squad and their contribution was noticeable. We thank them alongside our more experienced players for producing some brilliant shots. This bodes well for the 2027 season, and will put us in a strong position going forward. Overall, the 2026 has been a very encouraging year against some strong opponents. We completed our season on 19th August, as we started, by playing Shrivenham this time in Shrivenham. There were 18 fixtures overall during this season.

Thank you Emma for your ongoing support and to Jane who sacrificed her place in home matches to manage the bar and arranging refreshments. Not forgetting Chris and the green team for giving us an excellent playing surface, during several difficult heatwaves. Thank you all.

The final league table, with points awarded were: Hungerford 139, Kintbury 106, Shrivenham 102, Faringdon 100, Kingston Bagpuize 97, Lambourn 96, Milton Hill 85, Ramsbury & Aldbourne 84, Harwell 51 and Wantage 40. I believe we did extremely well in finishing only six points behind the runners-up. And considering we lost four matches by a single shot.

The Ashley Baker 2026 Gala

By Trevor Durrant – General Secretary

Twenty-four teams — **72 bowlers from seven Ashley Baker League clubs** — gathered at Faringdon on **13th September** for this year's **Ashley Baker Gala Day**. It has been several years since the Gala attracted a full complement of 24 teams, and the atmosphere reflected that sense of occasion. With **every rink in use across all eight games**, spectators were treated to a full day of competitive, high-quality bowling.

The morning session produced some excellent matches, and the standard remained high throughout. Spectators and visiting supporters commented on the consistency and spirit of play, making it one of the most enjoyable Gala Days in recent memory.

Lunch was served in two sittings, where bowlers and helpers enjoyed an **excellent meal prepared by John Bailey and his catering team**. Their efforts were widely appreciated. Meanwhile, members and friends rallied to provide prizes for the raffle, which raised **over £300** — a fantastic contribution to club funds.

Play resumed in the afternoon with two tightly contested leagues.

- **Shrivenham A** emerged winners of the **Red League**.
- **Ramsbury & Aldbourne C** topped the **Blue League**.



A busy day at Faringdon Bowling Club

Both league winners were pushed all the way by two strong Faringdon sides: **Faringdon C** (Ian & Gill Penfold, Nick Giles) **Faringdon B** (Darren Strowger, Emma Payne, Colin Peacock)

THE FINAL proved a fitting climax. In a competitive and skilful match, **Ramsbury & Aldbourne C**, skippered by **Keith Evill**, secured victory by seven shots to two over **Shrivenham A**, led by **Colin Lomas**.

A huge thank you goes to everyone who contributed to the success of the day — organisers, our green team, caterers, raffle donors, helpers, and of course the bowlers who made the event such a pleasure to host.

Grumpy Old Men



Gordon Wilcox

A few months ago, our esteemed Editor asked me if I would write something for this issue of the Faringdon Bowler, "You can write about absolutely anything, it doesn't even have to be bowls related". In a moment of madness, I said "yes of course, John".

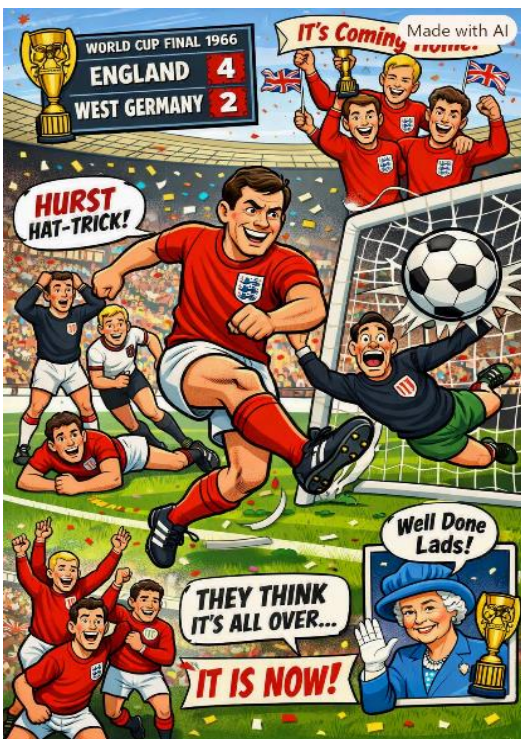
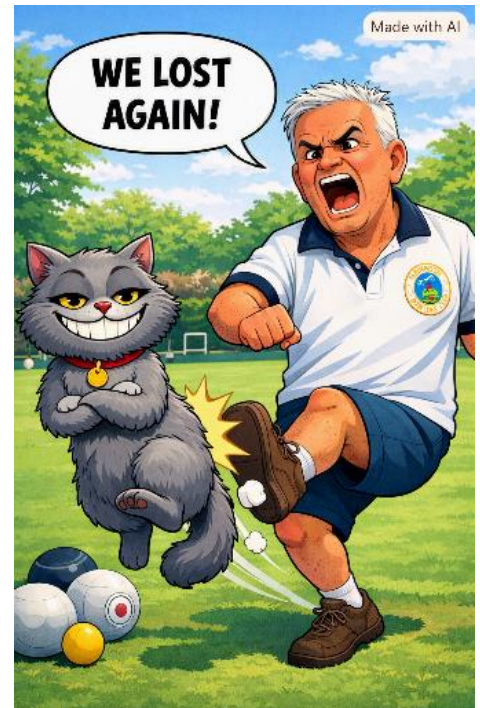
Well, you would think that having been given such a wide remit, things would be easy, but as the weeks passed by, and the long hot summer days sapped me of any inspiration to do anything constructive, so too any inspiration for an article eluded me.

Then, one afternoon in July, we played an S&D match at Highworth, a tricky place to get a result at the best of times. As was to be expected our opponents were confident from the start. However, we raised our game and by the 15th end we were leading by two shots. On the 16th end we were holding a further three shots and the Highworth faces looked really glum; but then, with his very last wood, their skip completely fluked his shot which suddenly left us five shots down. After Highworth stopped whooping and bouncing around the green they finished the game in high spirits to complete an undeserved victory.

So, why are you telling me all this you ask? Well, by and large I consider myself to be a good loser, but that afternoon I went home, slammed the front door, kicked the cat and sat in the corner and sulked. "That's it" my wife said, "why don't you write your article about grumpy old men." I lay awake in bed that night, still seething about the injustice of the bowls match but also thinking about my wife's suggestion.

In the morning I could sense I must be still slightly upset when the cat kept its distance but, as they say, "after the rain the sun always shines", so it was time to put bowls to one side and look positively forward to the World Cup semi-final in which England would beat Argentina to reach the final. So, the following evening, the lights are dimmed, the beers are ready, and my wife is sat quietly in the corner, protecting the poor old cat, and so, off we go.

It's tense and it's edgy, but there's no need to panic. Half time comes and goes, and we still look to be in control, and then, me together with the whole country erupt, we score, it's 1 – 0 to us, and we're going to the world cup final. All we need to do now is to keep the ball, tap it around to each other and play out the rest of the game.



Hang on, what's happening now? We've given Argentina the ball and we've sent all of our players back into our own penalty area!!!!!! At full-time I slam the door again, kick the cat again, and sulk off to bed. I lay awake in bed that night, still seething about the injustice of football, but again thinking about my wife's suggestion.

By morning things don't seem so bad. In fact, I feel quite cheerful. Could it be that I am quite amused that after all the hype and expectation, the England football team has once again fallen short.

Unlike the majority of those England followers, I have a memory that no one can take away. I was there on that glorious sunny day in July 66, and most of you over 65 will have been there with me, in front of your parents TV sets, and witnessing Geoff Hurst scoring a hat-trick, Nobby doing his dance at the end of the game and Bobby Moore lifting that famous trophy. Could it be that in some small way, we don't want to share that feeling with the younger generation of today? Let them have their fancy mobile phones and their 50" TV sets, because we've got something that they haven't, a World Cup Victory.

Gordon Wilcox

Chalky Woods and the Misheard Question

By way of verse, let me now tell you about an old chap called Chalky Woods. All clubs have a Chalky Woods (or two). From the outside they are seen as grumpy old men and they've been bowling for years and years. They are, by nature, pessimistic but know all there is to know about everything and have an unwavering view on any subject from sport to politics but, nonetheless they are very lovable.

Dear old Chalky Woods, who's short and rather dumpy,
A deaf but lively character, who comes across as grumpy.
Replacement hip and hearing aids, old Chalky's had his share,
Of funding from the NHS, their expertise and care.



T'was on a sunny day in June, when Chalky took a turn,
"Don't get too close his mates did say, "he might have caught a germ".
So off to JR he did rush, to get himself checked over,
With Mrs Woods right by his side, in their beat-up little Rover.

A friendly nurse took him in hand, and steered him to a bed,
"Now take off all those dirty clothes, no need to look so red".
"But only Mrs Mable Woods has viewed my manly frame",
"The last time was in 66, when we won that famous game".



"I've seen it all before", she said, "it's nothing new to me",
"And you'll feel a little better, if you let it all hang free!"
Aghast with nothing left to wear, except a worried frown,
Chalky looked a sad old sight, in backless JR gown.

The doctor poked him here and there, and said "we'll need some wee",
They drained his arm of all its blood and sent it off to see.
"You'll have to stay in overnight, so we can run some tests",
"You'll miss the Ashley game tonight, but that will be what's best.



A pill to help him sleep that night, brought back that happy dream,
Of how in 1966 Alf's England, were the greatest football team.
Recounting every single kick, and every single header,
T'was Chalky who scored the winning goal, and nothing gets much better.

When Chalky woke the friendly nurse was standing by his side,
"A bed bath's what's in store for you, there is no place to hide!"
Relax and think of England, stop being quite so jumpy,
Your wife did warn us all, that your often rather grumpy.



The friendly nurse was quick, and bathed without a fumble,
Then reading notes at end of bed, she heard our Chalky's mumble.
Whilst Chalky looked a poorly sight, his words took her aback,
Through mask in muffle voice, she heard, "have my testicles gone black"?

So, after warming up her hands she lifted up his gown,
Surprised to see when glancing up, that Chalky had a frown.
"I'm doing what you ask of me, it's all part of our service",
"I've sprayed some gel upon my hands, so no need to be so nervous".

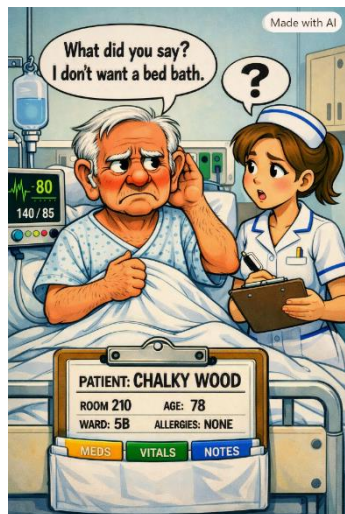


So Chalky lifted up his mask, and turned to friendly nurse,
And tried to hide his great big grin, less make the moment worse.
"I'm very pleased at what you've found, and you did it all so gently",
"But sadly, you misheard my words, despite listening intently".

“You thought I asked in muffled voice, had my testicles gone black”,
“When what I really said to you, have my test results come back!”
Upon the floor the nurse did roll, the tears ran down her cheek
I did mishear your strange request, but was glad to have a peek

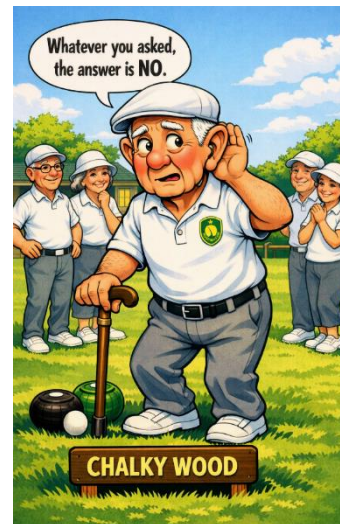


All was well with Chalky Woods, but there's a lesson from this tale,
Through mask to hear what people say, there's a chance that you might fail.
So, beware when in a hardware store, to ask for your fork handles,
Cos like Ronnie on the TV show, you'll end up with four candles.



Well good ladies of our club, you will no doubt have your own view on the subject of men being grumpy but, having given it many hours of careful consideration and having taken the views of many of my male colleagues, I have come to the conclusion that we men are not in any way, shape or form grumpy. On the contrary, in old age, we men have in fact become, placid, loveable, happy and amusing, and any deviation from this is just a mere, very short blip.

Gordon Wilcox



Presidents Message

Hello F.B.C members, as we bring the 2026 season to a close, it's time for one last roll of the pen.

“There are bowlers on the green! They think it's all OVER... It is now!”

What a season it's been. It feels only yesterday that we gathered for the President vs Captain's Match and I officially opened the green for 2026. Since then, we've enjoyed one of the hottest summers I can remember - and after **40 years** at this club, I can remember quite a few.



Darren Strowger

To all our new members, and to every experienced bowler who has returned for another year: **I hope you've truly enjoyed your bowls.** Your enthusiasm has kept the green lively from April right through to the final ends of the season.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who supported our league captains, weekend teams, and all the fixtures that make our club such a vibrant place to play. And thank you for allowing me the honour of serving as your President. It's been a privilege—and I've had an absolute blast.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the **Presentation Lunch on 18th October** and again at the **AGM on 13th November.**



ROLL ON 2027

President *Darren Strowger*



MANAGING OUR CLUB COMPETITIONS

Being the Club Competitions Secretary is an honour, and it certainly brings its own set of challenges. Most of these arise simply because we all lead busy lives. So this is just a friendly glimpse behind the scenes at what goes into keeping everything running smoothly.

I must begin by thanking Jean, my wife, whose help is indispensable. She creates the charts, assists with the draw, produces the certificates, helps gather the trophies, and generally supports every job from start to finish. Without Jean, the competitions would resemble a badly rolled wood — wobbling off in all directions.

I also rely heavily on Emma Payne, our Club Captain, who organises the ladies' fixtures, helps with the draw, and works out the Finals Weekend schedule. The ladies' competitions are a challenge most years simply because we never have enough entries. Thankfully, with our influx of new members, we managed a full programme this season.



Rules are essential, and the most important one is simple: if you enter a competition, you must be available for Finals Weekend. If you already know you'll be away, please don't enter. You can't play bowls from a sun lounger. This year's Finals Weekend was on the 5th and 6th of September, as always the first weekend of the month.

In the triples and fours, if a player can't play in the next round, we replace them with the person they beat previously. It may seem harsh, but it keeps the competitions moving and ensures no one's hard-earned progress goes to waste. The only complication is gender: in mixed events, the replacement may be the wrong gender, so I then have to find someone else. At times it feels like assembling a jigsaw with pieces from three different boxes — but we always get there in the end.

Another recurring challenge is simply timing. Summer is a busy period for many members, and holidays can make arranging matches tricky. When games are left too late, the end of the season becomes a little more hectic than anyone would like. A few gentle nudges are sometimes needed, but it's all part of the fun of shepherding the competitions along.

We also have the issue of bowlers entering many competitions — a sign of enthusiasm, which is wonderful, but it can lead to a very full Finals Weekend. Many players often end up in too many finals. Colin Peacock springs to mind, although this year he did not enter so many, and has ended up with just three. Ann Garratt tells me she once played in seven finals over two days — a heroic marathon. I myself played in five finals and lost them all. Last year, Chris Fairfull was due to be in six finals but had to withdraw due to an eye operation, which meant invoking my replacement rule and promoting the players he had beaten.

This season proved once again that we must start the triples and fours earlier to avoid congestion, and we will make sure that happens next year. Despite the challenges, organising the competitions is genuinely rewarding, and seeing everyone enjoy Finals Weekend makes every bit of effort worthwhile. With a little cooperation — and fewer last-minute panics — we can make the whole process smoother for everyone.

Ian Grant
Competitions Secretary

Finals Weekend 6th & 7th September - Our 2026 Reflections

Finals Weekend at Faringdon Bowling Club last year was our first, and we had two brilliant days full of fun, banter, nerves and a fair bit of trepidation. Cheryl won her first cup with Jill and also finished runner-up, while Ken secured a runner-up result of his own. It set the tone for how much we would come to enjoy this special weekend.

This year we bowlers have been incredibly lucky, with phenomenal weather giving us every opportunity to practise and prepare for Finals Weekend 2026. Once again, we entered everything, fully aware that our love and enthusiasm for the game far outweigh our ability and expertise. But we've never been afraid to try our best, and when the matches arrived, we enjoyed every single one — win or lose. We were both delighted to reach two finals each.



Cheryl & Ken Page

Those who know us will agree we are complete opposites. **Ken** is laid-back, calm and takes everything in his stride. **Cheryl** is a bundle of nerves and excitement, with emotions running high and enthusiasm sometimes outrunning her goals. Despite our quirks, the encouragement and support from fellow club members has been second to none.



Ken & Collin

There is nothing quite like the pride you feel when your wood sits on or near the jack and you hear club members clapping. It's immense. And of course, we both send down plenty that don't land anywhere near it — but that's bowls, and that's why we love it.

This year was Ken's moment, winning his first cup with Colin Rees and finishing runner-up in his other final to the superb Colin Peacock. Cheryl fought hard in both her finals, and the second — with Nick against Ian and Diana — slipped away only in the last two ends.



Cheryl, Nick, Di & Ian

It was wonderful to see new members (as we were last year) entering matches and even reaching finals. Whether playing or watching, new or long-standing, the support, encouragement and dedication shown by everyone was incredible. Watching others play is inspiring and motivating, and it reminds us why this game becomes so addictive.

We want to say a huge thank you to all of you for welcoming us into this fantastic community and this wonderful sport. If you haven't tried bowls yet, please do. It's addictive, it's great exercise, and the banter is unbeatable.

Cheryl & Ken Page



Nigel & Ken



To see all Final Day results, both Winners & Runners up. Scan this QR Code

Our thanks to Ian & Jean Grant for organising our Club Competitions



COMMITTEE *briefings*



Dave Mendham has decided to retire from the responsibilities of being a Captain. Dave has given so much of his time, energy, and good humour to the club. Expertly captained our **Evening S&D, Afternoon S&D (Tea & Biscuits)**, and the **KLV League** over the past ten years. We owe Dave a genuine debt of gratitude for his outstanding commitment. Although stepping back from captaincy, Dave will continue to carry out his weekly inspections of our defibrillator, ensuring that should it ever be needed, it is fully operational and ready to save a life.



It was discussed that our sound amplification system in the clubhouse was inadequate in some areas of our clubhouse. After some consideration, it was decided to purchase **2 x Yamaha speakers** mounted on stands for better sound distribution, with wired speakers and microphone. These have proved to be excellent. The cost to be funded by proceeds from future club raffles.

Sheila Weston, our Ladies Secretary suggested that due to the increasing likelihood of heatwaves in the years ahead, **Ladies Friendly** matches should consider moving to morning fixtures, this could also apply to **Club Competitions**. Ground maintenance would need to be consulted and agreed.



A suggestion was made that we mount an image of the clubs logo on a section of the new wall facing the green and carpark. This will enhance an otherwise plain area. A quote from Falcon Signs will be obtained.

With the welcome increase in player members, and after establishing sufficient players were available, a third team will enter the S & D Tea & Biscuits league the 2027 season. We now have: Team A, team B and team C. And we wish them an enjoyable and successful bowling year.

The above is a random and extremely brief account of the activities of The Committee, clearly lots more items were discussed. The full minutes of all committee meetings are printed and are available for you to read, they can be found in the front lobby area.



Editors Comments

I'm sure many of you already know, or at least suspected, that I have a little help producing *The Faringdon Bowler*. My assistant is called **Mica**, Microsoft's A.I. (other flavours of artificial intelligence are available). Trying to resist A.I. these days is about as futile as King Canute attempting to hold back the tide.

That said, recent headlines about A.I. being a threat to human existence is alarming. So let me offer some reassurance. The tiny sliver of A.I. available to the general public, including Mica, is entirely benign. It's a practical, good-natured tool that helps with grammar, producing pictures, creativity and the occasional burst of inspiration. Nothing more dramatic than that. Used wisely, it strengthens what we already do well and helps keep *The Faringdon Bowler* lively, polished and unmistakably ours.



Facebook has recently awarded **Faringdon Bowling Club** with a 'Breakout Post Achievement' because a recent post successfully reached over 500 views in the first week.

Next issue of this magazine will be available on or around 1st January 2027.

Please don't forget to visit our website www.faringdonbowlingclub.co.uk and also our Facebook pages.

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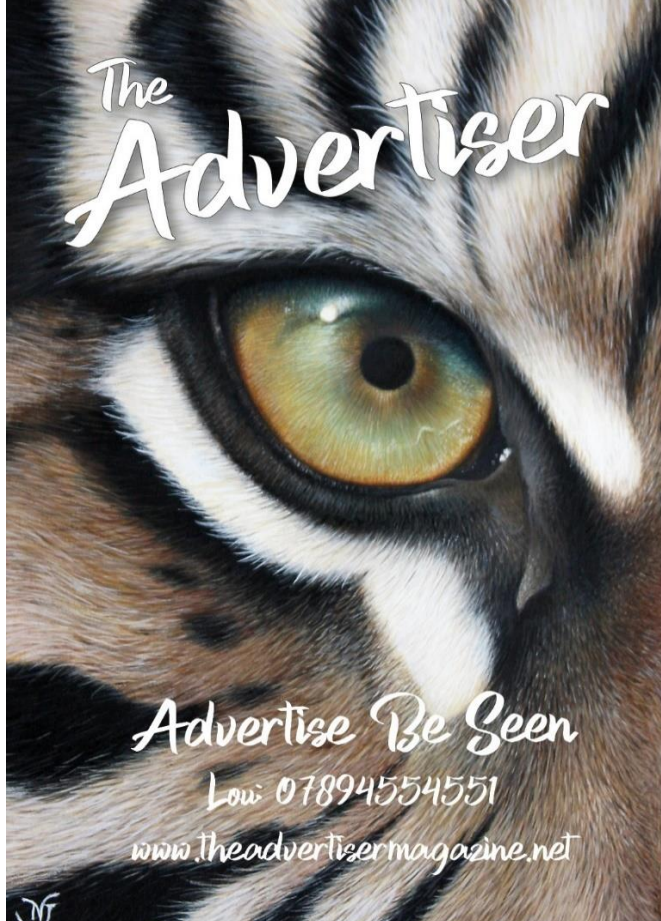
WE THANK THESE FIVE LOCAL COMPANIES FOR FINANCING THE COST OF PRODUCING THE FARINGDON BOWLER



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Responsibilities of a Skipper

*A skipper stands steady on the mat,
Reading the head like a seasoned diplomat.
They point, they nod, they calmly declare
Where each bowl should finish, and how it gets there.*

*They guide their team with a gentle voice,
Pretending each "interesting" bowl was the right choice.
They praise the good, they soothe the bad,
They smile at shots that make them mad.*

*They study the chaos the bowls have made,
A modern-art masterpiece carefully displayed.
Then with one last bowl, the pressure immense
They try to fix everything, past, present, and tense.*

*They keep the score, they keep the peace,
They keep their cool when chances decrease.
They shake hands proudly, win or lose,
For sportsmanship is the skipper's shoes.*

*So here's to the skipper, calm and wise,
With tactical thoughts and hopeful eyes.
Their greatest skill? Through all the strife
Keeping the team laughing, and loving the life.*

A lawn-bowling skipper's job is simple in outline but surprisingly rich in responsibility. At its heart, the skipper is the team's guide: steady, observant, encouraging, and tactically sharp.



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