

**History of Pembroke Dock Bowling Club
(1925 – 2021)
by Ken Edwards**



The opening of the Memorial Park on Saturday 2nd May 1925 was an impressive ceremony, several thousand people assembled to pay homage to the gallant memory of the fallen heroes of Pembroke Dock who gave their lives in the Great War of 1914 – 1918. By coincidence, Gwyther Street, the adjacent thoroughfare leading to the park, contained the homes of the largest number of men from Pembroke Dock who lost their lives in the war.



Lady Meyrick wife of General Sir FC Meyrick opened the Memorial Park. The mayor presented Lady Meyrick with a silver key, suitably inscribed as a memento of the occasion. Lady Meyrick then unlocked the gates and declared the park open.

The huge throng then entered the park and proceeded to the bowling green, where his worship the Mayor, Councillor WG Lloyd, was presented with a Silver Jack by Councillor GE Manning, after which the mayor formally opened the bowling green.

During the afternoon an opening match was played between the Tenby Bowling Club and Pembroke Dock Bowling Club. The result was a win for the Pembroke Dock Bowling team by 25 shots.

The first cup to be presented to Pembroke Dock Bowling Club was the silver cup known as the 'Johnson Cup'. The cup cost 15 guineas in 1925 and was won by W Carr of Laws Street. This cup was followed by the Tallet Cup which was renamed the Sloggett Cup after H Sloggett won the Tallett Cup outright.

Bowls was starting to become a very popular sport back in the early twenties with a character by the name of Trundler writing every week in the West Wales Guardian about the games and times of Pembroke Dock Bowling Club. Eventually his mantle was taken over by a writer with the name of 'Scrutator' in the thirties. Everyone appeared to wear the full regalia at every game. Blazers never came off with some wearing Panama hats, some wearing caps, homburgs and ordinary straws; it must have looked a pretty sight!



During the thirties a match took place once a year called 'The Battle of the Roses'. It was in aid of the Victoria Nurses Home in Park Street. Many hundreds of pounds were raised at these games which were watched by hundreds of people, at one game 350 tea tickets were printed and sold for one shilling (5 new pence) each. In 1936 the club was known as *The Pembroke Dock Bowling Association*.

From 1937 onwards each game was played to 21 points not 27 points as in previous years. The annual subscription was two shillings (10 new pence). In the late thirties the club often held dances which attracted 300 to 400 people. The dances being held in the old Temperance Hall with a whist drive commencing first, imagine that happening today!

The club closed during the war years from September 1940 until July 3rd, 1944. The name of Pembroke Dock Bowling Association was changed to *Pembroke Dock Bowling Club*. Three other cups were presented to the club in this year; they were the Alfred Phillips, JE James and the Devonald Cups. It was decided in 1946 to hold an open week with two cups to be in contention, namely the Alfred Phillips Bowl and the Sudbury Bowl. The pavilion was painted and cost the staggering price of three pounds! The club won the County Shield in 1949

During the fifties jumble sales were held plus whist drives to build up the funds. AK Williams and JE James were involved in playing against the Australians at Aberystwyth, while AK Williams was often featured in the Welsh trials. The first club annual dinners were introduced to which the mayor was often invited. The annual Battle of the Roses tournament was once again held during coronation week in 1953. The club won the County Shield in 1954.

In 1960 the green was in such a poor state that all county matches were cancelled but the club still managed to win the County Shield. In the middle 60's the club stated that they would wear all white at County Shield matches. The club once again lifted the County Shield in 1966. A rota of members was made for the first time for travelling to away games in 1969; the motor car was just coming into prominence.

At the beginning of the seventies the club advertised in the local newspapers appealing for new members, this did manage to bring in a few new members. The green was vandalised and meetings were held with the local council due to the poor condition of the green.

A new club badge was designed with the use of the Pembroke Borough Crest at the start of 1980 with the ladies also forming the first ever ladies rink to represent Pembroke Dock Bowling Club. The club held its first New Year's Eve dance in 1985 with the members looking at building a new pavilion.



The Silver Jack was returned to Pembroke Dock Bowling Club by Mrs. Beryl Hall in 1985, her grandfather was WG Lloyd who first rolled the Silver Jack on the opening of the green in 1925. The ladies won the Pembrokeshire Ladies title in 1986 and obtained the same voting rights as the men. The men after a gap of 20 years won the County League Championship. In the late eighties the second men's team was formed called Cleddau and the first official club tour was

undertaken visiting Bournemouth. South Pembrokeshire District Council proposed that the club would be required to take over maintenance of the green.

At the start of 1990 the new pavilion opened following sterling work by many club members. The chairman stated that the clubs' affairs had changed dramatically with the financial turnover going from hundreds of pounds to thousands with the club becoming a business affair.

During the nineties the club flourished with the introduction of another ladies team, Pembroke Dock Park Ladies and men's team, Pembroke Dock 'B' with Cleddau being renamed Pembroke Dock 'A'. Membership rose to well over 100 with Gareth Williams and his brother Ian Williams, both gaining Welsh honours and playing for Wales.

The start of the new millennium has seen the club go from strength to strength. The Pembroke Dock Ladies winning the league championship for the years 2000, 2001 and the introduction of a youth scheme. The youngsters underwent training on Sunday mornings with the co-operation of the local schools and members of the club.

The Pembroke Dock Ladies team completed the hat trick of County Championship wins by winning the coveted ladies league championship once again in the year 2002. Not to be outdone, the men's Pembroke Dock 'A' side gained promotion from the Pembrokeshire second division to the first division by winning the division two championship in the same year.

Sadly, Pembroke Dock 'A' team returned to division two at the end of 2003 finding the topflight, a tough task in maintaining their progress from the previous year. Our ladies lost out in their bid for a fourth successive championship but still achieved the runners up position.

Emma Francis became the first woman from Pembroke Dock Bowling Club to play for Wales at international level. She achieved her recognition by playing for the Welsh indoor under 25 team, representing Wales against Ireland in January 2004. At the annual general meeting in October 2004 the Pembroke Dock 'B' team was renamed 'Pater'.

The centre of the green had to be repaired at the start of 2005 after a sudden loss of grass on the playing area. All soil was removed down to the clinker and refilled with fresh soil to establish a good growing depth.

The green was opened by the Mayor of Pembroke Dock, Councillor D Esmond. Mrs. Glenys Scourfield was President of the West Wales Ladies Bowling Association. Pembroke Dock 'A' team won the second division championship for 2005 so were promoted to division one. They also won the division two Brewers Cup so completed a double celebration for the club.

At the annual general meeting in October 2005, the Pembroke Dock 'A' team was renamed the 'Mariners'.

Ray Bastin, past Pembrokeshire County President rolled the Silver Jack to open the green in April 2006.

Representatives of the National Assembly Government of Wales Edwina Hart MBE, Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration and Christine Gwyther AM, presented plans approved by CFAP (Community Facilities and Activity Programme) and Pembrokeshire Regeneration Unit, to Pembroke Dock Bowling Club. Grant funding from CFAP of £32,155 and Pembrokeshire Regeneration Unit of £40,000 awarded for the installation of a new sewerage system and extension of the clubhouse including larger changing rooms, disabled toilet and new lounge and bar facilities.

The club toured Windsor in June 2006 and played against the Royal Household Bowling Club. The Royal Household Bowling Club was opened by H.M. King George V and H.M. Queen Mary 18th June 1921.

Pembroke Dock ladies won The Ladies County League Championship for 2006.

In April 2007 saw the opening of the new extension of the club house, with the Silver Jack being rolled by John Russell, Trustee of the club.

A fun night was held at the club raising £560 for 'Breast Cancer Care for Wales'.

The traditional rolling of the Silver Jack in April 2008 was carried out by past Ladies County Presidents from Pembroke Dock Bowling Club. This tradition has been carried out since 1925, but it was the first time that three ladies from the same club have had the privilege of carrying out this honour. They were, Diana Davies, Glenys Scourfield and Sheila Ronald.

Arthur Jarvis of Pembroke Dock Bowling Club started his year as the men's County President by rolling the Silver Jack to open the green in April 2009. The Meyrick Owen Shield was won by the club.

On the 65th anniversary of open week in June 2010, Paul Diment of Tenby Bowling Club created history by becoming the first player to retain the Sudbury Bowl and Alfred Phillips Bowl titles.

A fund-raising event was held in September 2010 with the club raising two teams of six rinks comprising of a team of club members who had either had cancer themselves or

had been touched by cancer through family members, and a team of other club members. At the presentation, Leslie Davies (Club Chairman), handed £405 to the Cancer Research Committee, being proceeds from ticket sales, raffle and anonymous donations. Tickets were also sold by committee members and a raffle organised on the day, thus making a grand total of £700.

In November, a cheque for £700 was presented to the Air Ambulance in Pembrokeshire from Pembroke Dock Bowling Club, this was raised by club members and friends during various club activities held within the club throughout the year.

The bowling green was covered in snow for the Christmas dinner on Sunday 19th December 2010.

At the start of the new season in 2011, the ladies and men of Pembroke Dock Bowling Club wore their new club shirts, sponsored by Chevron and Mrs Olga Roberts and family. Mrs Roberts being the wife of the late Dilwyn Roberts, past President of Pembroke Dock Bowling Club.

A charity fun night was held in July 2011 in aid of the HOPE Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre, Neyland when £600 was raised.

The West Wales Ladies County President, Jackie Church of Pembroke Dock Bowling Club rolled the Silver Jack to open the green for the 2012 season.

Chairman, Leslie Davies, Chairlady Diana Davies and past Club President Brian Dowling were all presented with their Life Members medallions for the sterling work carried out over many years of dedication to the club.

A charity match between Pembroke Dock Bowling Club and Tenby Bowling Club took place which became an annual event held in aid of Cancer Research UK. A grand total of £565 was raised on the day.

The 67th open week in June 2012 saw the introduction of a mixed pair's trophy played for by club members only, donated by Leslie & Diana Davies called the Les and Di Mixed pairs Trophy. It was won for the first time by Kay Cole and Gerard Thomas.

A cheque was presented to the Angle Lifeboat in December for £500 from PDBC, proceeds from a fun night held the previous September in aid of the lifeboat.

In 2013 a new trophy cabinet was built within the club house which was funded by a donation from the Pembroke Dock branch of the Royal Engineers Association in memory of Mr. & Mrs Ted Hissey who were members of both clubs.

In March 2013 the club placed adverts in the local papers and posters were distributed around Pembroke and Pembroke Dock to attract new members.

In April 2013 prior to rolling the Silver Jack, the avenue leading to the bowling club was named *Les Davies Way*, there was a minute's silence in remembrance of Les. Les was

chairman of PDBC and did sterling work. He put in many years of dedication and hard work and helped make Pembroke Dock Bowling Club into the proud club it is today. Brian Dowling opened the green in April 2013 by rolling the Silver Jack. The Pembroke Dock Ladies won the Ladies League County Championship Shield.

Diana Davies was elected President of Pembroke Dock Bowling Club at the AGM held in October 2013 and became the first lady to hold the distinguished position.

On 12th December 2013, Gerard Thomas was elected as President of the Welsh Bowling Association for the year 2014. He became the first member in the 89 year history of Pembroke Dock Bowling Club to be elected as President of the Welsh Bowling Association.

Gerard Thomas, Welsh Bowling Association President, rolled the Silver Jack to open the green in April 2014. The Silver Jack was presented to him by Pembroke Dock Bowling Club President, Diana Davies.

In June 2014 the Les & Diana Davies mixed pairs trophy was turned into an annual event of its own, with the men's open week reverting to the original line up of trophies, with the re-introduction of the Texaco Shield.

Thursday 10th July 2014, was a memorable day for Pembroke Dock Bowling Club. A commemorative game took place between a team from the club and a team consisting of Welsh Bowling Association members from many different bowling clubs in the principality and captained by WBA President Gerard Thomas. This year was the bicentenary of Pembroke Dock town and PDBC invited the Mayor, Cllr. Mrs Pamela George and Mayoress, Miss Lauren George to attend. WBA President Gerard Thomas presented Cllr. George and Club President Diana Davies with plaques to commemorate the occasion. The match ended in an honourable draw!

The 21st Annual Ladies Open Triples competition 2014 was won by Diana Bann, Margaret Lewis and Betty James.

PDBC presented the Paul Sartori Foundation with a cheque for £750, raised by club members during various club activities held throughout the year. The cheque was presented by club Chairman. Alan Yea and President Mrs Diana Davies.

Gerard Thomas President of the Welsh Bowling Association and member of Pembroke Dock Bowling Club presented the total of £1,168 to the Air Ambulance Wales. The donations were raised from bowling clubs in the WBA area. On receiving the cheque, the Air Ambulance was called out to an emergency putting the money just received into good use.

At the annual general meeting in October 2014, Gerard Thomas and his wife Betty Thomas were made Honorary Life Presidents of Pembroke Dock Bowling Club. This honour came for their dedication and sterling work they have carried out for Pembroke Dock Bowling Club over many years.



On Saturday 4th April 2015, Mr. Simon Hart, Conservative candidate for Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire rolled the Silver Jack to celebrate the club's 90th anniversary. Club president, Diana Davies presented Mr. Hart with mementos including a framed photograph of the first official handover of the Silver Jack in 1925.

On 11th April 2015, a friendly match took place between Pembroke Dock Bowling Club and Haverfordwest Bowling Club which became an annual event. Both clubs competing for the Peter Howells and Les Davies Memorial Shield, which had been presented by Winn Howells and Diana Davies. The trophy being in remembrance of their late husbands who were stalwarts in the game of Bowls, not only at their clubs but throughout Pembrokeshire.

The Les and Di mixed pairs trophy was turned into an annual event of its own, with the men's open week reverting to the original format with the re-introduction of the Texaco Shield.

It was the 70th anniversary of open week in June 2015 with all three cups being won by Pembroke Dock members namely Richard Jones, Ken Edwards and Hugh Colley. The trio were joined by Tudor Harries and went on to win the Senior County Rinks for 2015.

In December 2015 Christmas arrived early for PDBC at their annual Christmas lunch when the club was presented with a cheque for £3,000 by Mr. Dennis Taylor, branch President and Trustee of the Pembroke Dock Royal Engineers Association. Mr. Taylor explained that the branch donates money to local clubs and organisations that provide a service for the local community and raise money for various charities.



Over the years PDBC has raised several thousands of pounds for good causes and during 2015 (90th Anniversary year) raised £1000 for SNAP (Special Needs Assessment Playgroup) based in Pennar.

In February 2016 modifications were carried out within the clubhouse. The ladies and gents' facilities were extended with disabled facilities also added. The main ceiling in the clubhouse was modified incorporating LED lighting.

The opening of the green and rolling of the Silver Jack for 2016 was carried out by Mr. Simon Hart MP Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire.

A fun night was held at the end of August and Christmas dinner took place on Sunday 11th December 2016.

Pembroke Dock Bowling Club opened its green for its 92nd season on the Saturday 1st April 2017, with the honour of rolling the silver jack being performed by club member Richard Hissey who had the honour of being County President for 2017.

Pembroke Dock Bowling Club won their section of the Carruthers Shield in May 2017 and so went on to represent Pembrokeshire in the competition sadly losing to Pontrhydyfen in the last 16.

The men's County finals were held at Pembroke Dock Bowling Club on the 1st July 2017.

Pembroke Dock Bowling Club staged its 24th annual Ladies Open Triples competition on the 29th July 2017, with home trio Ann Marie Main, Margaret Lewis and Betty James winning the coveted shield.

Pembroke Dock won the Meyrick Owen Shield for 2017.

The Mariners team name was changed to the Warrior at the AGM in October 2017. The third team, Pater was abandoned in favour of an extra Meyrick Owen team called Paterchurch for the 2018 season due to membership numbers dwindling.

On 19th November 2017, Pembroke Dock Bowling Club presented a cheque for £540 to the Air Ambulance from all the members. The money was raised from the Friday night social evenings and fun nights held within the club over the past year.

At the start of 2018, the old external changing rooms were demolished ready to be replaced by a new building, the work being undertaken by Hugh Williams - a member of Pembroke Dock Bowling Club and Club Captain.



2018 brought great honour to Pembroke Dock Bowling Club. The customary rolling of the Silver Jack was carried out by two Pembroke Dock Bowling Club members namely, Ann Cole, President of the West Wales Ladies Bowling Association, and Gerard Thomas, President of the British Isles Bowls Council. Gerard was County President of Pembrokeshire in 2000 and was Welsh Bowling Association President in 2014. He was nominated by the Welsh Bowling Association for the post of President of the British Isles Bowls Council and duly inaugurated on the 10th March 2018.

Gerard became the first man from Pembrokeshire to hold this prestigious post. Not only did he bring great honour to Pembroke Dock Bowling Club but to the whole of Pembrokeshire bowls as well.

The British Isles Bowls Council was formed in 1963 by England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales and in 1995 Guernsey and Jersey – known as the Channel Islands – joined them.



On 14th April 2018 the new external changing rooms were opened with the ribbon being cut by club President Mrs Diana Davies.

The first game for the newly named Warrior team took place on the 29th of April 2018.

Pembroke Dock Bowling Club hosted a match between the West Wales Ladies Bowling Association and the South Wales and Monmouthshire Ladies Bowling Association in May 2018.

In July 2018, the final of the county senior rinks was contested by two Pembroke Dock Bowling Club rinks for the first time. The rink of John Scott, Terry Main, Reg Thomas and Dave Halward played Brian Dowling, Hugh Colley, Ken Edwards and Richard Jones. Richard's rink won the battle and went on to represent Pembrokeshire in the Welsh Finals at Llandrindod Wells.

Paterchurch Meyrick Owen team won the Meyrick Owen Shield for 2018, so once again the Shield returns to Pembroke Dock Bowling Club.



The 2019 season at Pembroke Dock Bowling Club opened on Saturday 6th April. The current longest serving member of Pembroke Dock Bowling Club, Brian Dowling (left) was invited to roll the Silver Jack.

Before the ceremony, Brian was presented with a framed 'Certificate of Achievement' to commemorate his 50 years as a club member.

Photographs were taken of all Pembroke Dock Bowling Club teams in 2019 and made into a montage of all playing members within the club.

The teams representing Pembroke Dock Bowling Club in 2019 were as follows:

Men: Pembroke Dock First Team and Pembroke Dock Warrior

Ladies: Pembroke Dock Ladies and Pembroke Dock Park

Meyrick Owen: Pembroke Dock and Paterchurch

All three cups in the open week in June 2019 were won by Pembroke Dock members namely Hugh Williams, Richard Jones and James John-Davies.

Miss Sara John-Davies was selected for the Welsh U25 team representing Wales at the UK internationals for 2019.

A fun night was held within the club in August 2019.

The Warrior team won the Division Two Championship being promoted to Division One for the 2020 season.

The club presented a cheque to the Paul Sartori Foundation at their annual Christmas lunch on Sunday, December 15th, 2019. The money was raised throughout the year from various functions held within the club. A cheque for £900 was presented to Tony Dorkings, Community Fund Raiser on behalf of Paul Sartori by Club Chairman Alan Yea.

The opening of Pembroke Dock Bowling Club's 2020 bowling season, planned for Saturday 4th April was postponed. The management committee took the decision to postpone the annual ceremony of opening day to comply with the government's advice regarding coronavirus.

Sadly, the entire 2020 bowling season was lost to the coronavirus pandemic.

During the lockdown, the management committee decided to replace the surrounding wall of the bowling green as two of the green surrounding walls were starting to lean at precarious angles.

The work was carried out by Hugh Williams' (Club Captain) company during the summer months. The new surrounding walls were covered with artificial grass with composite battens on the sides to reduce the need for regular maintenance.

In May 2021 the Welsh Government reduced the restrictions on the number of personnel that could use the clubhouse and play on the outdoor greens - this was welcomed by all bowling clubs throughout Pembrokeshire.

A single league system for the men's bowling league was initiated by the county bowling association. A few clubs were concerned about the number of personnel who would return after a lengthy lay off from playing bowls. This was borne out as some clubs struggled to raise one team. It was decided to have no promotion or demotion for the 2021 season.

The Ladies played matches with six teams taking part in a streamlined friendly league but not competing for the Ladies League trophy.

Pembroke Dock entered two teams (Pembroke Dock and Paterchurch) in the Meyrick Owen competition

The men's county competitions were contested throughout the season with several Pembroke Dock members entered in the various competitions. The rink of Hayden John-Davies, Ken Edwards, Hugh Williams and Richard Jones reached the final of the Over 55's competition and James John-Davies won the Under 25's Singles competition.

Ken Edwards
Pembroke Dock Bowling Club