

Sport
MARCHMOUNT
BOWLING



Roll on

Marchmount Bowling Club has been welcoming enthusiasts to its green for over 110 years, with notable competition successes at local, national and international level. Green convenor **Alan Glendinning** gives an insight into the historic club and its members

PHOTOGRAPHY ALLAN DEVLIN





John Mair, David Fraser, Joe Wilson, and Jim Jardine



Where we began: Marchmount Bowling Club in 1910



The club opening in 2010

M Elliot J Elliot

Located in Moffat Road in Dumfries, Marchmount Bowling Club opened in June 1910. A meeting of local residents of Moffat, Lockerbie and Annan Roads had been called in June 1909 to gather support for a bowling club, and the rest, as they say, is history.

While the bowling club has always called Moffat Road its home, there have been many changes over the years, with the clubhouse extended on more than one occasion, always with significant input from members. These have included projects to provide year-round activities for members, including adding a function room, a games room to accommodate short mat and carpet bowls, and a full-size snooker table, and a committee room.

There are many different reasons to play bowls. It is a very sociable sport, where you can meet old friends and make new friends in a welcoming environment. The social interaction and exercise on the green, and afterwards, can contribute much to the health and wellbeing of those who play.

It caters for a wide spectrum of ages and abilities, from a “roll up” among friends to competitions in-house, interclub league and knock-out competitions, both at club and county level, and national competitions, where individuals and teams from Dumfriesshire have performed very well. We are fortunate to have members at the club who have performed at the highest levels for their country and at the Commonwealth Games.

Members have represented Scotland at various stages from 1951 to the present day, with Colin Peacock selected

‘Our great sport can be played by anyone; all ages and abilities. Bowls can be played competitively, but it’s also a very sociable sport’

for Scotland from 2000 to 2012; Zoe Kirk (née Haining) chosen for the Junior Squad in 2013/14 and 2015; and Martyn Rice, who has been a full internationalist since 2007, being selected for the Scotland squad for the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

2020 wasn’t the best year, with Covid 19 and the associated restrictions placed on people and sports having a serious impact on play at local clubs and across the whole country. The club’s committee had the health and wellbeing of its members at the heart of its decision-making, and followed national guidance throughout.

Every cloud has a silver lining, though, and if there was one in 2020, it was that the reduced levels of play allowed our green to recover and flourish in preparation for planned end-of-season work to replace timber edges around the green and level the playing surface around the edges where parts had sunk. These essential works, which have long-lasting benefits for many years to come, were undertaken in-house by a small number of club members, assisted by our greenkeeper and supported through grant funding from the Annandale & Nithsdale Community Benefit Company, which was very much appreciated.

It has been great to open up the club again this year, for a nearer normal season. Many of the challenges that have arisen from Covid 19 relate to social isolation and restrictions on activities, and as a club we are actively seeking new members of all ages to join us and take up bowls.

While bowls has traditionally been seen as a game for older people, and is indeed enjoyed and played by many



Marchmount’s centenary plaque made from badges from other bowling clubs

older people, it is also a game that can be played by almost anyone of any ability. The main playing season takes place from April to September each year.

As well as the game itself, there is a programme of

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At the opening of the new club house in 1973: President R Hogg, Lady President E Byth, Lady Vice President M Anderson, and Vice President A Bell

social events, with the annual prizegiving and Burns Supper being two of the main ones each year.

The club regularly runs ‘come and try’ events to encourage new members, but anyone interested in taking up the game, or who simply wants to have a go, can contact the club and arrangements will be made. To play, all you need is a pair of flat-soled shoes, and the club can make bowls available to allow people to try the game. There is an annual membership fee to join.

See www.facebook.com/MarchmountBowlingClub for updates. ▶

Roll of honour



MARTYN RICE

Father-of-two Martyn started bowling when he was eight, and joined an Under-16s club at Dumfries Ice Bowl.

"I had been around bowling greens since a very young age, probably since being in the buggy. My Dad, Willie, and my Papa and Nana, Willie Senior and Agnes, were keen bowlers. My younger brother Greg is also a bowler. Any time any of them went bowling, I always wanted to go just to watch.

"They used to be members at the Crichton Royal Bowling Club, which had a putting green where I would practise with a tiny set of bowls, aged four or five.

"I have been fortunate to achieve a lot more than I thought I would in the sport. Representing the Dumfriesshire County team was always a great honour, making my debut aged 15.

"Stand-outs for me are winning the Scottish National Singles in 2017, Scottish Under-25 Singles 2009, and winning gold in fours and silver in triples in the Atlantic Rim Championships in Cyprus for Scotland. I was lucky to play for the Scotland Under-25 international team and was honoured to captain the team. I have also been a full

internationalist since 2007.

"My first major event was the youth Commonwealth Games in Bendigo, Australia, in 2004 where I won silver in the team event. Being selected for the High-Performance Squad aiming towards the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games was also a highlight for me, but unfortunately, I just missed out. I was selected for the squad aiming for the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games, but with the age of my kids, I couldn't fully commit to it. I'm delighted to be asked to be part of the squad again aiming for Birmingham 2022, although it will be tough to be selected for the final five-man team.

"The thing I enjoy most about the sport is that every match is different; so many factors can change a match, especially when it is being played outdoors. Our great sport can be played by anyone; all ages and abilities. Bowls can be played competitively, but it's also a very sociable sport.

"I would say to anyone thinking of giving it a go to pop down to your nearest club, where I am sure you will be welcomed. Most clubs will provide equipment to try the sport. Anyone of any age and ability can give it a try."

ZOE KIRK

Zoe was around 12 when she first tried bowling at the Ice Bowl on Saturday mornings. She joined Marchmount Bowling Club when she was 14.

"A lot of my family bowled – my two sets of grandparents, my parents, and my uncles – and I spent a lot of time when I was younger sitting watching them. If you can't beat them, join them!

"I have won the Club Championship a few times, the first time when I was only 19. I've also represented the club at national level, where I was narrowly beaten 21-20 in the National Junior Singles Final at Northfield [the National Centre for Bowling at Ayr]. I went on to represent Scotland in the Under-25s, where I was lucky enough to retain my place for four years until I was too old. I also play for the South of Scotland women's county team, and we've been successful over the years.

"I enjoy the fun and I've made some good friends through bowling; the places it takes you to; and the achievements you can build yourself up to.

"I'd say to anyone to come and give it a try: it's not just an old person's game, it's a fun way of keeping fit and meeting new friends.

"I still enjoy it as much as when I started. I'm not on the greens as much as I would like to, but still find the time for a game or two between working on the Children's Ward at DGRI, and running around after my husband and three-year-old son.

"I look at it now as my chill-out time, although I'm still very competitive and hope to get another few trophies under my belt."



COLIN AND KATE PEACOCK

Husband and wife members, Colin and Kate, both began playing in their early Twenties, and have many relatives who enjoy bowls.

Colin says: "I started my bowling life at Thornhill Bowling Club, then when I came to live in Dumfries, I joined the Crichton Royal and eventually Marchmount in 1986.

"My father-in-law and mother-in-law were keen bowlers and my Thornhill neighbour, Dennis Thomson, all encouraged me to take up bowls. The obvious achievement for me was winning the Scottish Singles in 1994. Then I was selected to play for Scotland in 2000, which was a dream come true. I was chosen to captain the Scottish team in 2011, and was very fortunate that the Internationals were held in Edinburgh that year and had the pleasure of lifting the News of the World Trophy as Scotland won the series.

"I was selected to represent Scotland at the Commonwealth Games in Melbourne in 2006, but sadly did not do very well. I was also selected to represent Scotland at the European Championships in Portugal and Cyprus, which we won on both occasions. I also play indoor bowls and won the Scottish two-bowl pairs with Iain McLelland. I enjoy the challenge of the different greens that you play on.

"I'd encourage anyone to give bowls a try: you will be surprised how it gets a grip of you."

Kate says: "My parents introduced me to bowls. Colin and I were engaged and saving up for a deposit

'I love the social side of bowling, meeting new people. I also love the feeling when you have won a game, especially if it has been a hard-fought one'

on our house, so did not have much money. My Mum and Dad would take us both down to the Dock Park for a game. I honestly hated it at the beginning, but eventually fell in love with the game.

"My achievements are not as glamorous as Colin's, but I have been lucky in that I have been able to travel to competitions to support him.

"Getting to Northfield is a very special experience and one that every competitive bowler strives to achieve: I managed to get there on six occasions. My biggest success was with my Mum. We got through to the quarter-finals in the two-bowl pairs and in 2019 I got through to the quarter finals of the Ladies Over 55 Singles. I have also played indoors, at Carlisle and Dumfries, and was successful in getting to both the two-bowls pairs final and the Ladies 4's Scottish Finals.

"I love the social side of bowling, meeting new people. I also love the feeling when you have won a game, especially if it has been a hard-fought one.

"It's a great sport to be involved in. You don't have to be very competitive – you can elect to play at the level that suits you, whether it is just playing in sweeps, or competitions within the club, or playing further afield at other greens.

"It is also good for your mental health, being out in the fresh air and mixing with different people.

"At Marchmount, we are very fortunate that we can offer other activities during the winter months, and have regular social events that members can bring family and friends along to."