

METRO

Metropolitan Sports & Social Club for the Visually Impaired

Mr RF Smith MBE (Chairman), 23 Archdale Place,
New Malden, Surrey KT3 3RW
Telephone: 020 8255 7788 E-mail: rsmith@mdaconsulting.co.uk
Membership: 01708 456832

METRO NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2004

In this issue we have: AGM/Quiz - Fundraising – Jailhouse Rock - New Year Karoke - Skol – Footie Coaching - Our Man, Bob Mathews - Bowled Over - Brenda Simmons Tournament - Bats n Balls - Save Money on Going Out - About your Newsletter!

FORTHCOMING EVENTS;

Quick reminder from the last newsletter that the Metro Pool Tournament will be held on 16th October at Kentish Town. If you haven't yet booked your place, phone Dawn Anderson on 0208-803-9728.

MORE IMPORTANTLY, METRO AGM/QUIZ is being held on Friday 26th November 2004, at The Square Tavern near Warren Street/Euston Place. Starts at 6.30 sharp. This is a new venue for us on the ground floor and quite large with plenty of room for guide dogs. Also seating enough to organise teams of six for the Quiz. Dave Griffiths has again been kind enough to act as our Quizmaster. Prizes this year in the form of M&S vouchers!

ALSO VERY IMPORTANT FUNDRAISING EFFORT: David Mears is organising a station collection at Liverpool Street on 29/10/04 for Metro. Anybody willing to help please contact David Mears on: 020-8905-9266. PLEASE SUPPORT METRO

JAILHOUSE ROCK: London Sports have again invited Metro members to join them at their Xmas disco, back at at Pentonville. Details as below:

Date	11th Dec 2004 Saturday
Time	7pm - 12pm
Venue	Pentonville Prison Officers Club Pentonville Prison, Caledonian Road, London N7
Ticket Price	London Sports Members £6 (£5 if bought in advance) Non Members £7 (£6 if bought in advance)

KAROKE: We are planning a karaoke for 28 January to kick off 2005. Even if you don't fancy singing, come and give your support. A venue is still to be confirmed (though it will be in Central London). Please let Henry (henry.bufford@greenwich.gov.uk or 020-8921-3079) know if you intend to come so he can let you know which venue closer to the day.

SKI-ING IN NORWAY; We do not have details as yet but if you are interested in Ski-ing in Norway next year, put your name down in a provisional capacity. Contact Mike Brace on: 01708-456832. He can let you have details as they come in.

MORE SKI-ING: Also early next year, there is Ski-ing in America for Visually Impaired. Unfortunately you'll have to make your own reservations. Check out www.sfl.org

FOOTBALL COACHING: Ben Dorsett from the London FA is running a level one FA course on the 13th, 20th and 27th November. If anyone is interested contact Alan Wetherley at LSF on 0207-354-8666.

REPORTS/INTERVIEWS ETC. Thanks to those who gave the Committee some very positive feedback on the Metro Games. If you have any comments about your club, let any of the Committee/Officials know. Thanks go to David Mears, Steve Simmons and Bryn Reynolds for their contributions to this newsletter with their Bowls and Cricket reports that follow this report taken from the Telegraph on our very own Paralympian Bob Mathews:

BOB MATHEWS BY GARETH A DAVIES

BOB MATTHEWS is a legendary figure in the British Paralympic team; in Athens he will represent Great Britain at his seventh Games. Eight gold medals are already tucked away inconspicuously in a drawer at home.

Quietly spoken, modest, Matthews remains dedicated to his sport - middle-distance running - just as he was devoted to his wife, Kath, who died suddenly in her sleep

last November. Discussing his loss is a highly charged, deeply emotional experience.

Matthews, who is blind, is a great man and one who is admired by fellow athletes around the world. It is easy to see why. He is a true survivor. He had been running all his life, he was dedicated to it, and then 12 years ago he met Kath, and that dedication was transferred to his soul-mate.

'I was going to retire for good after Sydney [the 2000 Paralympic Games]. Kath and I were going to get on with our lives. She was the most important thing in my life for the past 12 years,' he explained.

'Running was my focus before that, and it has been the saving grace in the nine months since she died. I've had great help from friends and family, and without putting undue pressure on myself, I aim to do her proud in the 5,000 and 10,000metres here in Athens.'

He insists that he has not grieved yet, not truly, not deeply. He has not yet allowed himself to. He has held on to strong memories, and still feels Kath's presence.

'I'd like to think that when push comes to shove, and I'm feeling a bit of pain in the heat of the 5,000 and 10,000m, Kath will be there with me, giving me a bit of a push. It's going to be hard, it has been hard, but I've tried to prepare myself emotionally for what it will be like when my events are over.

'I've worked with a sports psychologist, a bereavement counsellor and I've tried to arm myself for the emotional wave I will feel when these events are over.'

It is almost as if he will face the harshest reality when this event is over. It is hard to hold back the tears. It has not been lost on his team-mates, either. His attitude, and his stoic, heroic nature, inspires those around him.

'I've tried to make every negative a positive since Kath left. I have just got to get on with it. She died very suddenly, and my initial reaction was that life is not worth living. I can honestly say that life is a pale shadow of itself without her here physically with me, but I know what she wants me to do. I even know what she would say. 'Go on running and show the b***!.'**

Did he contemplate suicide? 'I'm too sensible, but I can now understand how people feel like that. I would have gladly swapped places with her. She would have killed me for taking my own life.'

'Someone sent me some words, a poem, which I have clung on to. One of the lines was that 'you can shed tears that she has gone, or you can smile that she has lived'. That's really my mind-set. I've done a lot of thinking in that vein.'

'I'm a lot stronger mentally and physically than I thought I was,' said the 43-year-old sports massage therapist, who runs with his guide, Paul Harwood. 'It was physically hard making the qualifying standards because I was injured in January, February and March with tendinitis of the Achilles, but I know the value of sports massage. As my funding went down last year, because I had not won gold since Sydney, it has been costly, but I moved up a gear in the last couple of months. I am fit, and I'm ready for the challenge.'

He also believes that Britain are sending their most balanced team, which will be the key to success.

'There is no reason at all why Britain can't top the medal table. We have a strong squad and this really is a fantastic opportunity for all the first-time members of the team. The Games has changed so much since I began in 1980. The whole approach has changed, and the British team is very much more professional than we were then. In those days it was a very patronising deal. We used to get a 45-minute

programme shown on the Paralympics around Christmas time, months after the Games,' he explained.

So, to Athens. 'I'm so motivated, it's great to be here,' he says, looking up towards the gods, from where, no doubt, he feels Kath watching over him.

Metro would like to say to Bob Well Done at Athens. Same also to Team GB who did a fanatastic job. Second on the Medals Tally.

METRO TRIVIA: What does Para stand for in the term Paralympics? Not Paraplegic as some might think, but Parallel.

MORE METRO TRIVIA: Which of our Metro members were heavily involved with Team GB in Athens even though they were not competing? Our very hardworking Mike and Mo Brace. Do this couple ever stop?

METRO BOWLS 2004.

The outdoor season started, in the usual way, with a number of our members regularly arriving in White City for a practice. We are fortunate enough to retain exclusive use of a green next to the BBC. Here odd numbers mean somebody playing an end for one team, and then changing allegiance. Steven simmons, playing in such a position, can often be seen scratching his head wandering whether he is winning or losing. Early practice has always been required, as some members wish to be tuned up for the first competition which comes along very early in the season.

Naturally, we all scurry off for a few pints after roll ups. Only because we are such a sociable crowd you understand.

On to the first competition of the year held in Weston-Super-Mare. Apart from trophies winners and runners-up receive whisky, whisky and more whisky. Clearly John Sparks and Margaret Cusker needed to stock up on this beverage for the coming year. John contrived to beat Margaret in the B! singles final, they teamed up to win the B1 pairs and formed part of the triple that were runners-up in their category. Paul

Hawkes managed to win a trophy or two. However, other Metro members seemed to be waiting for bigger and better things later in the season.

Early in June there was a clash of dates which saw a few Metro members travelling to Malaysia to participate in the IPC World Bowls championship, whilst others attended the national championships in Gateshead.

Those who went to Malaysia will suggest that they went for the experience, and sweltering conditions, because they certainly did not want to win (our generous nature you know).

Meanwhile in Gateshead we enjoyed the usual good hospitality, and reasonable weather. Steven Simmons was in his element as it was a long walk to the greens, and even further to the venue for our evening meals. This was a last opportunity for Metro bowlers to reach the forthcoming World Bowls in South Africa (trials were to follow). Despite continuing to say he was not bowling well Ron Flanders proved too good for the other B1men around and booked his place, whilst John Sparks was runner up. Ron teamed up with Ruth Small to win the Pairs. It was a close run competition in both B3 categories with Myrtle Robinson just losing out, and Jim Bithel beating Steven Simmons, (I was an also ran). However, Myrtle and myself managed to put Jim Bithel in his place by winning the pairs.

They say that there is a first time for everything, and here was no exception. Gordon Bains resorted to playing his backhand in one match, something we have not seen before.

Following the Nationals Metro were certain of two representatives in South Africa, whilst others attended the trails in Pennine over two days. All three participants in the B1 mens category at the trails were Metro members. Ron Flanders and John Sparks both managed to beat a flagging Eric Gallacher on the first day. However, the second day saw rain, rain and more rain, preventing these two from playing each other. Jim Bithel was up against Paul Hawkes in a match that could have gone either way, Jim just the victor on the day. Jim also managed a narrow victory in his other match. Paul's remaining match was re-arranged due to the weather. Sadly he again narrowly missed out.

I am proud to provide a list of Metro members who will represent us in the World Bowls next April:

**Gail Hepworth - Team Manager
Margaret Cusker B1 women
Ron Flanders B1 men
John Sparks B1 men
Myrtle Robinson B3 women
Jim Bithel B3 men
Steven Simmons - Coach
Bob Robinson - Coach
David Mears - Coach**

Several Metro members took part in this year's UK singles championship, held in Skegness. I went out for a sandwich on the first afternoon and ended up on one of Steven's long walks. Unusually we spent most of evenings in our hotel as entertainment was laid on. On the greens every match was close, and every point was vital in a bid for team glory. As ever Metro had a strong hand here with seven players taking part. All of them contributed to England's eventual victory. Most notably Steven Simmons gaining revenge over Jim Bithel to gain gold whilst Jim managed silver. Gail Hepworth won her category, Ron Flanders came away with a silver medal as did Margaret Cusker. Many attendees at this competition left feeling that one of our number is grooming himself for stardom as a compare, having heard his dulcet tones at the presentation ceremony.

In July we were pleased to be asked to send a team to play against Potters Bar Bowls Club. We enjoyed wonderful hospitality, food, weather and bowling on the day. Our club was also presented with a banner to mark Potters bar's 75th anniversary. Whilst the match was very closely fought we were runners up I'm afraid.

A number of us attended the annual competition held in Lowestoft at the end of the season. Also present was a team from Israel who obviously did not just come for the ride. Sunday found us playing in the knock-out triples, and not for the first time the final was fought out between two Metro teams (although there was a ringer in one of them). the victors

were Terry Waterson, John Sparks and Steven Simmons. I don't want to bother saying who lost yet again. In the B1/B2 pairs Eric Gallacher and Ron Flanders were far too good for opposition from a higher category winning at a canter. Jim Bithel and Gail Hepworth beat Myrtle Robinson and yours truly in the final of the B3/B4 pairs. Perhaps I should stick to coaching. In the singles Ron Flanders and Eric Gallacher decided to play as B2's. They both took some notable scalps along the way, Ron reaching the semi-finals. In the B3 singles Jim Bithel came nowhere, but he did have to play against me, so it's not really surprising. I did not set the world alight either losing to an Israeli. However, Steven scraped past the same Israeli to win the final. Unusually here Gail Hepworth failed to win the B4 singles, she must be past it. Besides this Doreen Flanders was good enough to team up with Steven in the B3/B4 pairs, as Gordon Bains had to withdraw. Whilst they did not triumph I am sure Doreen is "getting better every day"

Back to White City for the club singles and the Mary Gallacher pairs. We had a very good turn out for these two competitions. They were both followed by a meal to celebrate yet another successful season for Metro, and more alcohol. On one of these occasions I was formally adopted as the Metro bowls secretary, and Gordon Bains as the assistant.

In the singles Joe Meehan had a favourable draw, but somehow contrived to lose both his group matches. Doreen Flanders showed that she is getting better by reaching the semi-finals, and Ron wasn't playing that well on this occasion. Paul Hawkes could not make it this year (or so he would say) and Steven Simmons came through to beat Myrtle Robinson in the final. In the pairs the draw is balloted which in itself brings interest and intrigue. This year Eric Gallacher found himself drawn with Paul Hawkes, which proved to be an unbeatable combination. They saw off the challenge of Peter Windsor and Gordon Bains who were runners up.

Whilst many people worked hard to ensure Metro Bowlers enjoyed their season, special thanks must go to John Moran, Bob Robinson and Doreen Flanders who were always on hand to offer invaluable assistance. Report by David Mears

"BRENDA SIMMONS MEMORIAL BOWLS TOURNAMENT"

2004

This competition allows both visually impaired and sighted people to play together under a 'sight handicap' system. This year saw 12 pairs split into 2 groups of 6 playing in a round robin with the winners and runners up qualifying for the knockout stages of semi finals and final.

The weather forecast was not good for the weekend and all the players arrived at the Lonsdale Court Hotel in Cliftonville full of apprehension after a week of heavy rain and floods. Everyone soon forgot the weather though after a hearty dinner and a few drinks, relaxing before the battles the next day.

Saturday morning was greeted with a dazzling sun and a blue sky and all of us were optimistic for a good day's bowling. After breakfast, we took a leisurely stroll down to the greens, only 5 minutes walk from the hotel. At the opening ceremony, a minute's silence was gracefully observed by all in respect for those we have lost over the year and then the competition began. The first set of round robin matches started just after the official start time of 10.00am.

Newcomers Colin Moore and Jim Goodie were well suited as a pair, and showed their intent beating the near locals Marian Stanton and Mick Worden in the first match. Jack and Ruth Small, also new to the competition, began with a close encounter against Eric Gallacher and Peter Windsor, edging the match 11-10. Other noticeable Pairs doing well were Bob Robinson with Ron Flanders and the ladies pair of Myrtle Robinson and Doreen Flanders (A case of wife swapping?). Also pleasing to see were Ann Ovenden and Ted Newins overcoming a large sight handicap and winning some very high scoring and exciting matches.

Each match lasted about 90 minutes with a reasonable break between each session allowing the bowlers to be refreshed at the Thanet indoors bowls centre, located only next to the greens. A raffle was also held on both days and numbers drawn out before the last session on each day. By the end of a long day, four sessions were played, with no rain, and 8

pairs definitely still in with a chance to reach the semi finals, very exciting stuff!

Another excellent evening dinner and entertainment was supplied at the hotel which allowed everyone a chance to recharge their batteries after 6 hours of bowling. A few drinks were also consumed as everyone mixed in and socialized.

Sunday had everyone very eager to be on the greens for a 10am start, completing the last session of round robin games. In the tightest group, John Moran and Chris Barker had to beat Ann Ovenden and Ted Newins to reach the semi finals but came up too short losing 19-3 (too much guinness I reckon John!). Colin Moore and Jim Goodie had been playing very consistently throughout the tournament and showed no mercy against Margaret Cusker and David Mears with a 21-4 victory (too much whiskey David!. The husbands and wives combinations of the Robinsons and Flanders also did well, obtaining good victories and qualifying for the semi finals.

The semi finals were played after lunch. Each match was hard fought and tense/exciting to watch. Congratulations to Colin Moore, Jim Goodie, Ron Flanders and Bob Robinson. Commiseration's to Doreen Flanders, Myrtle Robinson, Ann Ovenden and Ted Newins who all played very well,

The final was another exciting and close game with Bob and Ron gaining the upper hand in the early stages. A lead was being gradually built and at one stage 11-3. The match was slipping away from Colin and Jim but the moment they were waiting (praying) for finally arrived and Jim was able to pull off a skip's shot, converting 2 down on his last wood to 5 up. Suddenly the gap closed to 11-8 and they realized that they were back in the game. The pressure switched onto the shoulders of Bob and Ron as their woods no longer became closest to the Jack. A dramatic last end saw Colin and Jim pick up 4 shots to win the Brenda Simmons Memorial Bowls Tournament for 2004.

A plate competition was organised for those pairs not involved in the semi finals. Eric Gallacher and Peter Windsor had their revenge against Jack and Ruth Small in the plate final, winning 11-4.

It was a pleasure to have my late brother's wife, Janet and daughter Disa to present the trophies to the winners and runners up, including the plate winners. Commemorative medals were also presented to everyone and a long speech was gratefully avoided by the timely intervention of the heavens. After two days with a light shower, it chucked it down with rain and hailstones allowing all to make a mad dash to the train station/hotel or bar!

Finally, I would like to thank the following for Everyone at the Lonsdale Court Hotel for all their help and assistance during the year and at the weekend.

To the St. George's Lawns Bowling Club for use of the greens.

To Laurie, Ted and their friends for assisting us during the weekend.

To the staff at Thanet Indoor bowls club for providing the refreshments.

To Mirian for her wonderful work in organising the raffle (and finding a coach full of unknown people to sell tickets to!!)

To John Moran, Robert Coshell and Peter Windsor

To all the bowlers who were prepared to commit themselves to at least 9 hours of bowling over two days.

This year's tournament had been in doubt until June due to unforeseen circumstances and I thank all those people who rallied around me to provide help, support and commitment to the tournament resulting in a very successful weekend and enjoyed by all.

I am arranging for the Brenda Simmons Memorial Bowls Tournament to be staged again next year over the weekend of Saturday 9th to Sunday 10th July 2005 if there is enough interest.

My contact details are

Steve Simmons

Tel Work 020 8816 1249 Home 020 8857 9283

5 Alice Thompson Close, Grove park, London SE12 9PW

METRO CRICKET REPORT BY BRYN REYNOLDS

The cricket season has now closed for another year with the Metro team enjoying another successful year. Metro retained the KO Cup by beating Avon Sports at Lords on 21st August. Putting the opposition into bat Metro showed no mercy as they soon ripped through the south west side who could only muster a total of 60 runs in 12.1 overs. The pick of Metro's bowlers were Heindrich Swanepoel with 4-0-10-3 and Adam Benjamin with remarkable figures of 2.1-1-4-3. In reply Metro reached the total with the loss of only 2 wkts with Rory Field 29no and David Townley 18no. Metro has now won the Cup for the third time in 4 years.

In a closely contested league Metro finished second after an exciting battle with Birmingham Sports. The finishing positions were as follows

	Division 1						
	P	W	D	L	Bt	BI	Pts
Birmingham Sports	8	7	1	0	29	26	145
Metro	8	4	2	2	30	25	105
Sth Wales Dragons	8	1	5	2	23	16	81
London Sports	8	1	3	4	20	11	61
Eastern Vipers	8	1	1	6	12	11	41

In international cricket news if you haven't already heard England beat Australia in the inaugural Blind Ashes series which took place between 22 – 28 August. In the 5 match series England won the final match to take the series 3-2. Metro were represented with 5 players in the squad. Those being England Captain Adam Benjamin (55 runs in Game 3), Bryn Reynolds (3-51 in Game1) Matt "the Dean Machine" Dean (37no in Game 1) Heindrich Swanepoel (4 wkts in 5 matches) and David Townley (40no in Game 4) David was also voted the B1 player of the series. Further information can be found on the Blind cricket web site www.blindcricket.org

METRO TRIVIA: Do you know how often Metro have made it to the BBS finals in the 26 years the competition has been going? 18 times! Metro have won 12 and have been Runners Up 6 times.

JUNIOR CRICKET DEVELOPMENT DAY

A chance for all our keen young cricketers to attend a junior cricket development day on the 4th December 2004. Andy Dalby-Walsh of the LCCA is organising this – anyone interested should contact Andy on 01273 321297

SAVE MONEY ON GOING OUT: The Cinema Exhibitors' Association (CEA) is launching a brand new card that entitles a disabled person's companion to a free cinema ticket.

To qualify you must be in receipt of one or more of the following: Disabled Person's Railcard; Disability Living Allowance; Registered blind. The card will cost £5 and be valid for three years. The CEA Card will be available from 1 October, but you can apply now by contacting applications@ceacard.co.uk or 0151 348 8020
Checkout the website: <http://www.ceacard.co.uk/>

USEFUL WEBSITES: City Synergy's new and improved website at the address www.citysynergy.org.uk Also See photo's of Metro Members by photographer Deborah Sinai at www.deborahsinai.com (click onto projects then Voints of View)

HOW DO YOU READ YOUR NEWSLETTER?

If you would like your newsletter in email form rather than print or tape, let us have your email address. You can of course still have hard print or tape but it would be easier and cheaper for the club to use email where possible. You must remember to let us know if you change your email address!

If you have something to share with us, email dawney_a@yahoo.co.uk. Note that Keith Ottaway is no longer producing the Newsletter but the Committee would like to thank Keith for the work he put into his Newsletters. If you feel you would be interested in producing Metro Newsletters in future, come to the AGM and speak to the Committee. We are still in need of a website administrator? Help! See you at the AGM/Quiz.