

Friday Morning Bowls at Tranmere

What do Maureen White, John Coles, Lee Hammond and Cynthia McCreanor have in common? They all coordinated Friday Morning Social Bowls at Tranmere over the years.

It all began on Friday morning 2 October 1998¹, when 11 members² and 2 non-members³ responded to the call for players interested in a sociable morning of lawn bowls. Enthusiastically organised by Maureen White, little did they know just how popular these Friday morning affairs would become. From that humble beginning Friday morning bowls has continued to be enjoyed by many members and visitors.

Coordinators

Maureen White continued to organise the mornings from its inception to 29 October 1999. John Coles then took on the role from 5 November 1999 to 19 December 2008. Lee Hammond, who shared an interest with John Coles as a historian, assisted him in the later years and took on the role when John could no longer do so. Lee, who had transferred to the Kensington-Marryatville bowling club⁴ for pennant bowls, retained restricted membership at Tranmere, and organised Friday morning bowls from 16 January 2009 through to 3 June 2011. Cynthia McCreanor, who first began Friday morning bowls in 2007, then took on the role of organiser and has done so ever since.

Player Participation

The first few years (1998-99 to 2001-02) saw an average of 365 registrants per year. The next seven years (2002-03 to 2008-09) saw that number grow to an average of 552 registrants. With the conversion of the greens from grass to synthetic surface, the following five years (2009-10 to 2013-14) saw numbers increase to an average of 688 per year and jump to 978 per year over the next five year (2014-15 to 2018-19). In part, the increase can be attributed to

¹ This is the first recorded event. There is some suggestion that Friday morning gatherings may have begun a few years earlier, but no records exist.

² Judy and Des Butler, David Davison, Brian Barrell, Jim Fowler, Rhonda and John Abraham, Dee Murch, Maureen White, Reg Ochse and Laila Toolin

³ Ralph Jones and Einar Suneson

⁴ Lee, and husband John Hammond, re-joined Tranmere for the 2012-13 pennant season

Friday Morning Bowls at Tranmere

potentially more playing days as the greens no longer needed to be rested in mid-winter as they did each year when they were grass.

For 2019-20, playing days and hence player numbers were dramatically affected by the government's social distancing protocols aimed at containing the spread and impact of the global corona virus pandemic. All club activities, including Friday morning bowls, were suspended from mid-March 2020 to the end of June 2020.

Gradually the social distancing requirements were relaxed and eventually, in late 2022, lifted altogether. Nevertheless, with the corona virus remaining an ever-present reality, numbers for the Friday Morning bowls have not returned to their pre-Covid levels. In 2021-22 total registrants of just 517 were the lowest since 2007-08, with a sharp decline evident since the peak of 1068 in 2018-19.

Fees

Initially, non-members paid \$3 and members \$0.30 in green fees, with everyone making an extra \$0.30 contribution towards chocolates as prizes to the winning bowlers on the day. Over the years, that increased, initially to \$4 for non-members while members paid no green fees, plus an extra \$0.50 contribution from everyone. Since 18 November 2011, only a green fee of \$5 for non-members and \$1 for members has been levied, with the cost of chocolates taken out of the proceeds.

From Humble Beginnings

Several future club champions, among them Jackie Barber, John Coppe, Barbara de Conti, John Feddersen, Pam Fullarton, Con Harmer, Malcolm Miller, Dave Roberts and Rod Squire not only participated in Friday Morning bowls but, for some, that is how their infatuation with lawn bowls began.

Mike Porter Award

In 2021, at the Bowls Section AGM, Cynthia McCreanor was awarded the Mike Porter Outstanding Service Award in recognition of her dedicated service, over the previous decade, in coordinating Friday Morning Bowls.

Friday Morning Bowls at Tranmere

Friday Morning Bowls Action (Gallery):



Left: Barbara Christiansen looks on earnestly as Arthur Bailey-Thomas points to the likely shot bowl, with Kevin Dobson, Danny D'Onofrio and Kathlyn Starkie awaiting the declaration (July 2014)

Right: Harold Weidner (centre) signals one down to his skipper while Bill Leaney (left) and Luigi Cirocco (right) look on (July 2014).



Below (L to R): Bill Leaney offers suggestions on the shot to play while Bob Christiansen, Dave Roberts and Rod Fraser contemplate. (June 2016)



Friday Morning Bowls at Tranmere



Friday Morning Regulars -10 February 2023:

Back row (L to R): Joe Marafioti, Danny D'Onofrio, Frank Dalkos, Paul van Ruth, Terry Bebbington, Guido Innamorati

Middle Row (L to R): Tony Calabrese, Barbara Christiansen

Front Row (L to R): Luigi Cirocco, Jeannine Peacock, Rita Mc Cullick, Irene O'Connor, Cynthia McCreanor, Ray Kirkwood, Peter Parman, Nicky Cirocco.

Friday Morning Bowls at Tranmere

FRIDAY MORNING BOWLS							
	Year	Days	Registrants Members	Registrants Non-Members	Registrants Total	Proceeds	
\$3	1998-99	26	240	165	405	576	
	\$4	1999-00	28	148	269	417	1060
		2000-01	28	96	235	331	954
		2001-02	34	60	247	307	988
		2002-03	34	76	500	576	2000
		2003-04	33	130	604	734	2416
		2004-05	34	188	402	590	1608
		2005-06	40	111	344	455	1376
		2006-07	37	142	328	470	1312
		2007-08	31	195	272	467	1088
		2008-09	34	252	322	574	1288
		2009-10	36	234	455	689	1820
		2010-11	39	254	499	753	1996
\$5	2011-12	48	171	510	681	2377	
	2012-13	44	262	416	678	2080	
	2013-14	39	232	407	639	2035	
	2014-15	46	334	590	924	2950	
	2015-16	44	291	554	845	2770	
	2016-17	45	395	607	1002	3045	
	2017-18	42	357	696	1053	3666	
	2018-19	45	325	743	1068	3691	
	2019-20	31	294	396	690	2075	
	2020-21	42	289	498	787	2539	
	2021-22	40	212	305	517	1598	
	2022-23	41	211	326	537	1705	

INDEX

M White
J Coles
L Hammond
C McCreanor

\$3
\$4
\$5

Grass
Synthetic