

Norfolk Bowling Club Newsletter

Shining a spotlight on

Ian Wones



Tell us a little about yourself – your background, are you from Norfolk? Your occupation past or present. Your family? Do you have other hobbies and interests outside bowls?

Born and bred in Norfolk, worked for Norwich Union (ultimately Aviva) from age of 18 for c36 years when I retired in 2015.

I've always been interested in Horse & Greyhound Racing and, with my grandparents, from a very early age, was a regular at Yarmouth Racecourse and Yarmouth Stadium. Previously owned a few greyhounds but I now get my weekly fix walking retired greyhounds that are waiting to be homed. Currently own micro-shares in a few horses and like to attend as many meetings as possible when not bowling. Enjoy travelling, usually in May and September between bowls seasons!

When did you first begin playing bowls?

I started bowling outdoors at North Walsham New Road when I was about 17. Prior to that I would go to tournaments with my father and filled in a few times if anyone

was short. Living in North Walsham I joined the indoor bowling club at about 20 years of age.

What attracted you to the sport of bowls?

My father started to play after he gave up football and after tagging along and having a go, I soon got the bug. All other sports began to take a backseat as I found I could compete with people that had been playing many years.

How long have you been a member at NBC?

I joined NBC c2018, initially just playing indoors. After a couple of years, I came to the conclusion they weren't a bad bunch of lads so joined the outdoor team.

What do you enjoy about bowling?

It's a sport that can be enjoyed by all ages, players in their teens playing against people in their 80's and even 90's. Some people just enjoy a friendly roll up to the other extreme which sees players representing their country.

Which leagues and competitions have you played in?

I've been lucky enough to have played in Norfolk's premier leagues both indoors and outdoors since my early 20's for various clubs (Indoors North Walsham, Acle and now NBC and outdoors Norwich Union, Wymondham Dell, Freethorpe and now NBC).

What are your highest achievements?

Most of my achievements have been in the Federation world where I have won 101 County Titles (indoors and outdoors combined). National Titles are up to 25 but it's becoming more difficult to come by as younger players are becoming harder to beat.

EBA has been a nearly but not quite scenario. I've reached 7 National Finals including the Indoor National Singles but as yet not managed to win one. In addition, I had 7 International Trials but never managed to get a game (I was reserve in 1994 for the Home International Series). It would have been nice to say I had played for my country.

Have you volunteered for any roles or positions at NBC? If so, which and for how long?

I've never held any positions at NBC but try to help out when I can (ie BBQ at Charlie Boon memorial, 'A' Team updates for Newsletter indoors and outdoors, assisting Wayne with A Team notifications).

What are your happiest memories/proudest moments from bowling?

Happiest and proudest memory was lifting the Denny Cup for North Walsham as a player and captain in the 90's. Unfortunately, North Walsham was closed down

around COVID times, a real shame as it was the dominant force in Norfolk Bowls in the 90's with 12 indoor rinks.

What major changes have you seen over the years?

Relaxation of rules has seen the game slowly move in the right direction. The introduction of coloured / club shirts and shorts brings the game more into line with other sports. I can remember when I first started the officials would measure the length of the ladies' skirts before they represented their County at the National Finals.

What tips would you give to players who are just starting out on their bowling journey?

Be brave, if you want to progress don't be afraid to enter competitions just to gain experience. You will learn more playing with or against better players.

North Walsham Denny Cup Winners – Can you spot Ian or anyone else you know?!



Many thanks to Ian for sharing his thoughts and memories.