

THE MAD HATTER'S BOWLS PARTY

(An Occasional Report)

The latest Club event was organised at very short notice by Carol Wildig and Messrs Guthrie and Guthrie. Didn't they do well though?

Head gear was the suggested theme and members rather let this go to their heads. Fortunately the weather was kind and hats were not needed for their intended purpose.

I was greeted by Ian Guthrie in a rather stereotyped tall, green, Irish leprechaun type hat sponsored by Messrs Guinness and co. and only given to their very best consumers. For the bowling he later abandoned this in favour of a common or garden trilby. You will have heard of two Jags Prescott. Meet two hats Guthrie. His better (much) half sported a spangley cowboy type hat which would not have been out of place at the Calgary Stampede or Grand Old Opry.

Pam Staples had not read the small print and turned up without any hat at all. However she managed to cadge a green trilby with feather. A pair of lederhosen and she could have been let loose in Bavaria. Our own, our very own Royalty, Messrs G. and K. King turned up in hats although Gill was definitely tempted and tried out the golden crown outside the pavilion. Kelvin wore a baseball hat with a prominent "N" on the front and a very small " Huskers" on the back. Now the University of Nebraska's football team is known as the Cornhuskers, and very good they are too, but the Huskers moniker belongs to the University ladies netball team. I'm with you there, Kelvin. I'd much sooner watch nubile young ladies jumping around than 240 lb steroid hulks bashing the hell out of each other.

Joan Howard wore a rather dashing Safari type hat, pinned up at the side, the sort worn by Stewart Grainger in all those Rider Haggard 50's movies, King Solomon's Mines etc. Husband Graham's hat suggested US Navy Seal Team 6. Hooyah! Norman Healey wore a straightforward baseball hat with Adidas logo, yet I feel sure the company pay him NOT to wear it.

Our chief cook and bottle washer, hard-working Carol Wildig had unearthed a scarlet creation purporting to be a crab. Where do these things come from and who spends good money on them? Alan Knight, our import from Essex, had resurrected an ancient flat cap. You can take the boy out of Essex, but not Essex out of the boy. Carole Baker appeared to be wearing a fetching pink, spiky hat but on closer inspection I discovered it was her hair and shamelessly she did not wear a hat at all. Null point, Carole.

Sue Phillips showed up in a straw hat and I am sure I heard her mention the pound shop, although going by appearances, it might have been the 99p version. Showing a surprising and quite unexpected skill in wicking (3 or 4 of them) she started the afternoon by winning the spider.

Jeff Minty, and I think it was Liz Plumtree, both went for the Aussie look, Jeff with a kangaroo hide Jackeroo Stetson and Liz with a "I climbed Ayers Rock" cap. To be politically correct these days that should have read "I climbed Uluru". I do hope you don't mind this correction but you can't be too careful, I've even been banned from Racist and religious jokes.

By quite some margin Don Halliday won the prize for the smallest hat. Where is Seelisberg anyway? Clare Binch seems to be a Liverpool supporter and had added some leftover Xmas decorations to enhance her red hat. I am told she has now recovered from her excesses after the team's recent European success.

Andrena Brent had just about the largest hat on display. She claimed it was worn only once, wedding day, but it would have been quite at home at Ascot on Ladies' Day. Husband Mike sported a strange affair which showed what he might have looked like with hair in his prime, 50 or even 60 years ago. Eddie Edwards, who had earlier put out all the rink furniture, wore a hat straight from those 1930's gangster movies, George Raft, Humphrey Bogart et al. For Eddie he looked relatively smart, scruffy chic if you know what I mean. Tony Hewitson had gone even further back to the 1920's for his straw fedora. Another straw hat was worn by President Brian Levens. Here I recognised the hat since I passed his allotment recently and there was this life-like hatted scarecrow...

Alan Morris must have been on a Santa Claus excursion to Lapland. Otherwise I can't explain how he finished up with the sort of hat worn by reindeer herders in Finland. (Alan. I'll explain about Santa sometime). KarlIn wore an "Emirates Airways Frequent Flyer" baseball cap. I believe that Alan insists KarlIn flys Emirates as it supplies only limited alcohol to their passengers.

Alan Huxtable had unearthed a Scottish tartan cap. I cannot swear to this but I am informed it mentioned independence and Nicola Sturgeon.

Cynthia Ling, wearing a hat looking like a cross between a flower pot and a tea cosy, beat me in our game and I said I'd get some revenge... Madge Doherty is clearly an expert at crochet, her pink hat was a work of art.

Brenda Honess had gone for the Kate Middleton meets Donald Trump look for her rather splendid hat. Tony, on the other hand, in his black Stetson, looked like a baddy from a 1950's Western, Jack Elam, Dan Duryea etc. From the same era Anne Wallace went for the good guy look, white hat with only a small black band. That's our Annie. Tryan looked like an escapee from the set of "It ain't half hot, Mum" with his jungle green topee. Ann Popham had added a red bandana to her hat to produce what I believe is called the Mexican bandit look.

Turning to the action, Andrena, Bob Popham and Eddie Edwards, won the event and I was, yet again, part of the washing up gang. Mind you it's not all bad, my hands are soft and white.

Spectators include Rita Marlow recovering from a really nasty fall. It just reminds me, I really do have to get up to London to see those Pandas..

Food in vast, and I do mean vast, quantities was served. The cakes on offer may explain why the men's section is vastly overweight and generally unfit. A raffle was held with various winners. In the absence of our raffle A Team, Paul and Diane, it was good to see the family honour upheld by yet another King, Kelvin.

President Brian thanked all concerned including cooks food suppliers rink setters out but particularly the organisers Carol, Mildred and Ian.

Everyone had a really enjoyable afternoon and let us take our hats off to the organisers.

JGR