

# BERKHAMSTED BOWLS CLUB

*40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition*

## MEMBERS EXCUSES HANDBOOK

Only 40 years in the making



Price:- £1 (under 14 years of age, otherwise half price)

*Collins English Dictionary - definition of excuses "try to clear from blame"*

## INTRODUCTION

This short handbook attempts to address the issue that all (normal) bowlers face on a regular basis. And it is particularly opportune time to release the handbook in celebration of the 40<sup>th</sup> year of Berkhamsted Bowls Club's existence, and thousands of games where excuses have been practised and honed to perfection. It is clear that some plausible reason needs to be given after a disappointing delivery or a particularly poor game. The subject matter, in the main, applies to those of us that are of average skill and not to those in the "elite" class. Having a handy readily available list of excuses is a prime requisite for any sport and bowls is no exception.

Since we were very young we have an in-built ability to provide an excuse when we are being blamed, starting with the favourite of the youngster "*It wasn't me*". Or at school age "*The dog ate my homework*". This must be part of genetics. And as we grow older so we develop a more skilled portfolio of excuses that we can call upon, and as the average age of Berkhamsted Bowls Club members is, in the main, distinctly elderly then luckily we are able to draw upon a rich menu.

I have attempted to record the most used but there will obviously some that you may wish to add and spaces are provided for you to enter those additions. For ease of use I have provided some handy categories (again, add your own) so that you can quickly refer to what might be the most appropriate excuse to use at any given time. In order to provide some guidance as to these categories each one is prefaced with a short introduction before each topic is addressed. Typical comments (*in italics*) illustrate the sort of comments you might hear accompanying an excuse. Please add your favourites. No offence is intended and no bowlers were harmed in the making of this handbook! All proceeds from the sale of this handbook will, of course, be made towards the author Berkhamsted Bowls Club.

Finally, may I offer good luck to all those bowlers in need of a suitable excuse and I hope that this short handbook will help.

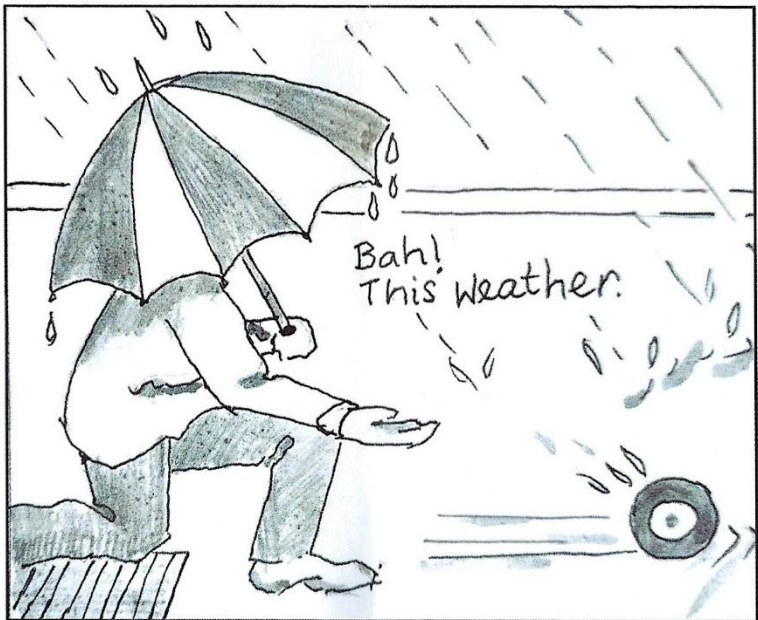
**Happy Bowling**

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## WEATHER

This is a great opportunity to use an excuse as it is usually met with agreement by all the other players. Although it relies on the actual weather at the time it can be used in anticipation of what you might expect the weather to become (*"I think it's going to get really hot"*) or what the weather might have been during a previous game (*"It was too cold to get a grip on my woods"*). Luckily, in this case, others in your team may well have forgotten what the conditions were really like so this is a great opportunity to exaggerate the actual conditions. Examples to conjure up include:-

- Too hot/ too cold *"my woods are to hot/cold to hold"*
- Too windy *"my woods have blown away"*
- Too humid *"my woods are sweating"*
- Too wet/too dry *"my woods have sunk/gone straight in the ditch"*
- Too bright sun/in your eyes/too shady *"I can't see my woods"*
- Too dark *"the jack has disappeared"*
- Too misty *"I can't see my team"*
- .....



## HEALTH

This is another great source of excuses and usually met with a degree of sympathy which is always nice. It has the great advantage that it doesn't need to be accurate and usually can't be challenged. Although caution should be given, for example, if you leap onto the green then you can't usually justify the excuse that your leg hurts. Again, your excuse doesn't have to be actual, but it can be suspected to occur (no medical knowledge is needed but a quick search on Google might offer some handy medical terms). Examples of usage include:-

- Point to a particular body part and express a degree of pain "*it really hurts just here*"
- Go into intimate detail "*the doctor said he'd never seen one as big as that*" Note:- This can embarrass fellow players (result!) and elicit surprise from your competitors
- It will be unchallenged if you have a claim that you have been told about an impending problem that might affect bowling "*medically, I shouldn't really be bowling at all*"
- Refer to a previous issue (seasons ago) therefore you can claim that it is imperative to avoid a reoccurrence "*I was warned some time ago that it would drop off if I continue bowling*"
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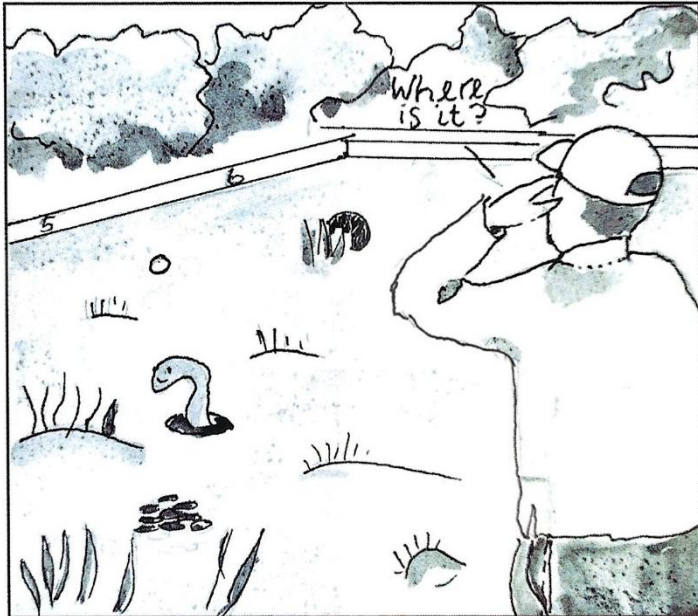
Note: If your playing partner or competitor claims a health excuse, a golden opportunity to remark that your health issues are significantly worse than theirs.



## THE GREEN

Obviously this doesn't apply to our green which is (usually) immaculate so these excuses will apply in the main to our competitor's greens but it does provide a very good source of possible excuses. The nice thing is that you can enhance your disappointment at the state of their green especially as a team you can all agree it resulted in a poor performance. For enhanced effect there can be a combination of some of the following which provides an even stronger level of excuses:-

- On rink "x" the green sloped "*my wood rolled in the ditch every time I bowled*"
- Too many divots "*my wood gave up*"
- Grass not cut/ too long "*my wood disappeared along with the rest of the head*"
- Not enough grass/no grass "*all the woods and the jack are in the ditch*"
- Unclear signage "*I bowled on wrong rink*"
- Poor drainage resulted in the bowl floating "*the bow wave moved the jack*"
- Too fast "*my wood disappeared along with the rest of the head*"
- Too slow "*my wood refused to start*"
- .....



## OTHER TEAM MEMBERS

This category can only be used with some degree of caution and should only be expressed to those that you trust. However, if someone else has made a comment that you agree with then, should there be some resulting friction, you can always blame them. It's probably best to "sample" your excuse with someone you trust and hopefully get some positive feed back. Some of the more popular excuses include:-

- Given the wrong instructions as to what you should bowl "I knew I should have bowled back hand"
- Unclear instructions "I thought you meant back hand"
- Unfair/unjustified criticism levelled at yourself "I can't believe they said that" (thus putting you off for the rest of the match and possibly a few other games too)
- Others in the team performed poorly "I felt an unfair burden which affected my play"
- Other players too shouty/ too quiet "I was affected by the noise level/lack of noise"
- Extreme dislike of other team member(s) affected play "I never want to play with him/her again. It really upset my game."
- Slow level of play "it was so slow that I nodded off as it got dark"
- Selected the wrong set of bowls "I don't usually play with that size"
- .....

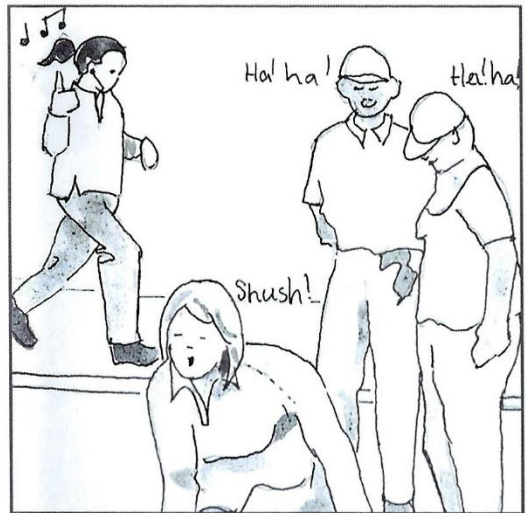
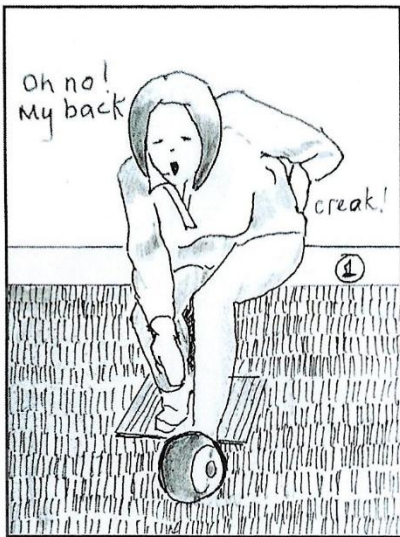
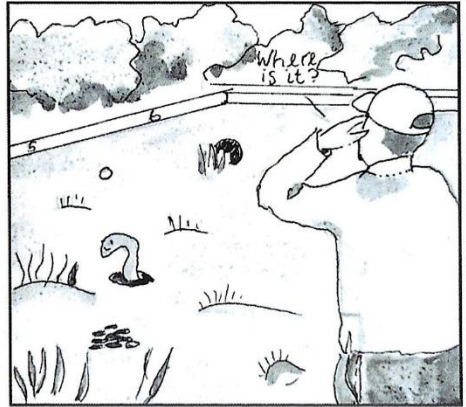
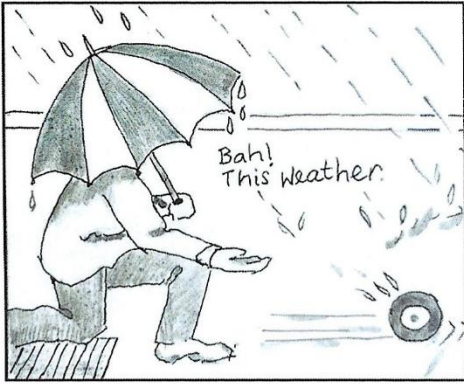


## ETIQUETTE

This is a limited source of excuse but one to watch out for if you are short of ideas and is a great opportunity to be creative. This category can be combined with some of the "Team Member" excuses and skilfully embellished, so some classic excuses might be:-

- Too much talk/chat when standing on the mat ready to deliver *"can I bowl now please"*
- An important level of gossip just out of ear shot *"I lost my balance trying to hear"*
- Someone at the far end moved (can exaggerate this) *"they put me off because they scratched their....."*
- Distracted by complete lack of etiquette on next rink *"you wouldn't believe what I saw but it ruined my game"*
- Distracted by something outside the green *"you wouldn't believe what I saw but it ruined my game"*
- Expectation not met *"I thought they were supposed to be good- even worse than me!"*
- Distracted by Team Member *"he spent all the time phoning the betting office"*
- .....





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Rear Cover