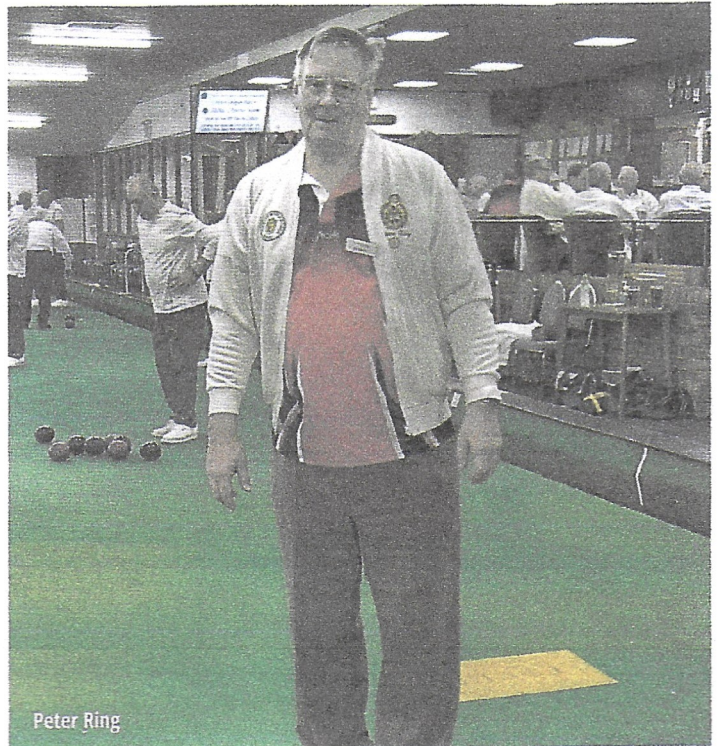


Peter makes rings at Eastbourne

I recently had the pleasure of visiting Eastbourne and District Bowls and meeting some of their members and coach Peter Ring (writes **Judy Plater**, Disability Bowls England national development and administrative officer)



Peter Ring

I first met Peter in 2022 when he attended a friendly fixture DBE had against Eastbourne Bowls Club. He was very keen to help disabled players and encourage them to play and enjoy bowls.

Since then, things have gone from strength to strength.

Eastbourne IBC have bought a full range of disability aids, wheelchairs, bowling arms etc, they loan them to players.

Under Peter's guidance, more people have been enjoying our beloved sport.

He receives great support from the club and other DBE members and they agree they have benefited from his help.

One of these, Fred explained he had taken up bowls after losing his job three years ago, encouraged by his father who was already bowling. Fred says it has made a huge difference to him;

he has taken up outdoor bowls last summer and has enjoyed making new friends and visiting new clubs. He plays competitions, leagues, friendlies for his club and at his county.

David and Jennifer are also active players. David must carry an oxygen canister as he has COPD. He enjoys his bowls in particular the camaraderie amongst the players. He was playing at another local club but moved to Eastbourne because of their friendly and open-minded attitude.

They all agreed that Peter has been the driving force behind the club and as the DBE ambassador for Sussex, promotes the DBE and its work.

"Under Peter's guidance, more people have been enjoying our sport"

Peter encourages the game to all groups. Mencap enjoy bowling at Eastbourne IBC once a month. He is working with Sussex College. They were due to take 12 occupational therapy and physiotherapists along to the club

to try bowls and explore the health benefits of the game.

The club is looking to buy an

electric wheelchair and is looking at ways to fundraise to make the purchase. Previously, they have had grants from Eastbourne council to buy equipment. They are looking to install sliding

entrance doors, for ease of access. This year the internal door and next year the outside door.

Peter not only coaches indoors, he works with new bowlers at local outdoor clubs, including Hampden Park. He is working with four other coaches to help them coach players with mobility and other issues. He is very keen to debunk the stigma some people feel about using the bowling aids and encourages anyone with mobility issues.

As he says: "They are a great way to keep older people playing and by lending them, it means players can try them without going to the expense of purchasing, until they find the one that is right for them."

The club is thriving. On the morning I visited, the rinks were all in play and the restaurant was doing a bustling trade. I am not surprised – the food was excellent.

Jo Morris, who won the senior singles at Nottingham IBC last season, is a member of Eastbourne IBC.

She uses a bowling arm. This only goes to prove how useful these aids are.

All the club members I met were friendly and supportive of all their fellow members.

Eastbourne and District IBC goes on to prove how inclusive bowls can be.



Left: Members of Eastbourne IBC, including David and Jennifer



Right: Eastbourne IBC have bought a full range of disability aids, wheelchairs, bowling arms etc