

## **Braintree Bowling Club are enjoying their centenary year**

**THE current custodians of one of Braintree's best-loved sporting institutions are proud to be celebrating a significant milestone in their club's history as Braintree Bowling Club mark their centenary year.**

The Clare Road club welcomed a team from the England Bowling Association last week for a prestigious fixture that forms part of their 100th anniversary celebrations and members are enjoying their special year.

Chairman Andy Beatty said the club's first committee in 1919 featured some notable names from Braintree's history and the current members took great pride in continuing the traditions started 100 years ago.

"It is a very proud year for us," said Beatty.

"When you look back at the club's first committee 100 years ago, there were luminaries on there such as George Hunnaball, Mr Lake and Mr Elliot of the famous Lake & Elliot firm, Mr Crittall and William Julien Courtauld as well as Sir James Fortescue Flannery, who was the MP at the time.

"They were all very important people in the town's history and having them on that first committee is very special, so it's nice for us now to be keeping history like that going. "We are still going strong; this is my eighth year as chairman of the club and it's lovely to be a part of it.

"As long as everyone gets a chance to play at whatever level they want to, then that is what we will keep encouraging."

The Centenary Day event against the Bowls England team proved a very enjoyable one for the Braintree members, especially as they edged the victory in the match held over six rinks.

"I thought the day went really well and we've had some really nice feedback from Bowls England after it," added Beatty.

"There were 12 counties represented in their team and some of the players had to travel quite a long way to be with us, so we thank them for that.

"It was quite a prestigious day from our perspective and it was nice for our bowlers that we won the match.

"It was very tight, but we edged it as they got 109 shots and we got 111.

"There were some very good players in their team so it was a good test, but it was all played in a nice friendly spirit.

"We were also fortunate with the weather.

"Had it been 24 hours earlier and it wouldn't have been good, but we were lucky to get a nice day."

Braintree members will be hoping that the weather continues to be kind for them as they continue their centenary year events through the rest of the season.

The next one is due to take place today at Clare Road when the club will be hosting the Central Midweek Bowling League's President's Day event.

Braintree's own Paul Costin is the league's president this year and clubs' from other mid-Essex clubs will be at Clare Road for the special day.

The centenary events will then continue with a visit of the Essex Executives side on July 7 when a mixed team, including senior members of the Essex County Bowling Association will be in town and the club's members will then head to Windsor later in the month for a special game against the Royal Household.

The start of August will see a trip to Sawbridgeworth, where, together with the hosts, Braintree will face a side from St Albans as three clubs who are all celebrating their centenary years will face each other in a celebratory triangular tournament.

Then back at Braintree on August 20 another centenary game will take place against the Essex Vice-Presidents team.