Portland and Division representatives had another great day at Warrnambool on Sunday, landing two more Regional championships. Kerrie Alexander and Shirley Millard won the Ladies State Pairs, Peter and Wendy Webster the Mixed Pairs. Both events are now played at State level. Ron Reynolds and Jim Scott weren’t quite so fortunate when they were defeated in the men’s pairs by one shot. Sunday sees the Region triples and champion of club singles championships played at Portland RSL Memorial

More Region Champions in our Midst.

That is, find a way to derail the Memorial juggernaut. Playing at home last round the Memorial side dished out a fair old fashioned hammering to Dunkeld. All rinks won and scored the highest side score of all divisions. The Solly boys and Ken Evans rinks have kept a graph line of season wins perfectly straight for all but the first game, and then it was on shots difference. Dunkeld battled the odds given they were missing half a dozen players, but when the opposition only let you score 38 the outcome as far as bowls is concerned is pretty bleak. Memorial 94 d Dunkeld 38, K Evans 28 d B Mathews 13, M Solly 27 d S Cullinane 15, G Solly 39 d A Jackson 10.

Grangeburn gave Gold a good run to the home turn but down the straight Gold had Peter Webster and Ron Reynolds teams creeping away for an 11 shot win. Robyn Thomassen at the head as Prewey was not available, proved that persistence pays off when her rink won by a final after next week. Grangeburn 62 lt Portland Gold 73; O Ross 24 lt P Webster 27, R Thomassen 22 d G Calder 21, I Cook 16 lt R Reynolds 25.

Blue took the opportunities they had on offer and defeated the visitors Balmoral by a not too large nine shots. Phil Benbow’s combination winning by 13, Col Cumpa putting a halt to the Carey run by two. Balmoral however remains above Blue on the ladder. Portland Blue 78 d Balmoral 69; P Benbow 30 d C Officer 17, B Groves 23 lt T Simons 29, C Cumpa 25 d F Carey 23.

Hamilton’s Kennedy Street green is obviously the hot spot of Hamilton. The game against Penshurst had to be called off when the temperature reached 37.8 degrees and didn’t look like falling. Hamilton was well in front at the time of the declaration. The abandonment makes Penshursts job of making the four fairly difficult.

Division 1 Ladder: Memorial 172, Portland Gold 147, Hamilton 107, Grangeburn 94, Penshurst 85, Dunkeld 69, Balmoral 52, Portland Blue 42.

Division 2:

Two home sides won, 93 the high score and the average win was by 16. Part of the reason for the lowish average win was the fact that Macarthur ran Hamilton to three shots. Clifton Tonissen’s team kept up the good work of the last few games and won by six. However John Crane won by eight, so when Scotty got ahead by one, Hamilton put a deposit a finals berth and Macarthur stay in the lower reaches. Macarthur 62 lt Hamilton 65; L Burland 18 lt J Crane 26, R Sherridan 20 lt G Scott 21, C Tonissen 24 d G Pitman 18.

Casterton has hit a purple patch having won their last six games. This time against Heywood who they replace at the top. Sticks and Eddy Jarrad, whose rink has run up 66 shots in the past two weeks put together 14 points and the two Heywood scraped up were thanks to Lionel Pevitt. Casterton 72 d Heywood 63; G Russell 26 d R Langford 24, E Jarrad 31 d L Price 15, J Egerton 15 lt L Pevitt 24.

Figures intrigue me which is probably pretty obvious, the last game was 72, 63, this one between Portland Gold and Grangeburn 73, 62. The Jennings rink continuing along with another lazy 31 and the one rink syndrome played its’ part again as the visitors won the other two. Unfortunately for Phil Witham and Tom Eales their combined winning total wasn’t enough. Gold still in with a good chance, Grangeburn stuck in low gear. Portland Gold 73 d Grangeburn 62; M Jennings 31 d T Wilson 13, R Murphy 23 lt P Witham 24, T Alexander 19 lt T Eales 25.

Memorial rolled the div 2 sweep with 93 v Portland Blue. Without further ado introducing the high rollers of the year, oops the equal ones, Ron Robinson, John Hollien, Robert McIntyre and Simon Hein amassing 47. Bill Pike the only winner for Blue. Memorial 93 d Portland Blue 51; K Husson 25 d K Meerbach 18, R Robinson 47 d B Donnell 6, L Aitchison 21 lt B Pike 27.

One Major Objective for Prospective Division One Finalists.
**Division 2 Ladder:** Casterton 137, Heywood 130, Hamilton 122, Memorial 108, Portland Gold 102, Macarthur 69, Grangeburn 59, Portland Blue 41.

**Division 3:**
Only two games completed as Hamilton Green received a forfeit from Portland and the Hamilton Gold v Balmoral game was a melt down. So moving to the heat of battle Heywood laid out a cool green for Coleraine and the visitors made the most of the hospitality winning by 11. Don't believe it but last time they played Coleraine won by 11. All Coleraine scores mid to high twenty’s so consistency is paying off. Mick Hogan had the best outcome for the home side and again those two points could be very valuable after next week. Coleraine a close second. Heywood 66 lt Coleraine 77; M Moore 21 lt A Guy 29, M Hogan 26 d B Armstrong 24, N Campbell 19 lt D Russell 24.

Dartmoor broke through for a win after a one shot loss last week, they kept the small digit in work winning by, yep, 11 playing Memorial. A one rinker but who cares says Peter Holmes, Neil McInnes, Phil Jones and Alan Pratt when they can score a 37 and help the side win. Les Wards score the best for Memorial. Dartmoor 78 d Memorial 67; R Kerr 19 lt L Ward 27, N Murrell 22 lt P Wetherill 26, P Holmes 37 d D Garnier 14.

**Division 3 Ladder:** Hamilton Green 149, Coleraine 145, Hamilton Gold 124, Heywood 97, Memorial 84, Portland 66, Dartmoor 53, Balmoral 50.

**Division 4:**
The average side win margin this week was eight, which of course signifies close games. Macarthur had the reverse of last rounds narrow win and Casterton moved to the top of the ladder after a five shot victory. Harry Hannaford’s group a high twenty and Jean Schroeder’s saving a complete rout. Macarthur 62 lt Casterton 67 J Schroeder 23 d M Kearns 16, C Uebergang 23 lt H Hannaford 27, J Bragg 16 lt J Robinson 24.

Four shots the win by third placed Memorial over top side, no longer, Hamilton. Doug Elford and Cliff Brinkman high flyers for either side. Won’t mention one of the scores! Memorial 71 d Hamilton 67, R Hamblin 26 d F Reynolds 19, D Elford 28 d R Steff 23, P Malcolm 17 lt C Brinkman 25.

Grangeburn concocted a good score with all rinks in the twenty’s, however they were all trumped by Coleraine, especially the Troeth grouping who scored 35. Grangeburn 65 lt Coleraine 87; J Hicks 24 lt T Gleeson 27, C Holmes 21 lt S Cooper 25, T Dunn 20 lt B Troeth 35: Penshurst had the bye.

**Division 4 Ladder:** Casterton 125, Hamilton 121, Memorial 90, Coleraine 70, Penshurst 68, Macarthur 64, Grangeburn 38

**Round 14 Preview.**
Well, this is the home and away concluding game. Looking at the prospective division one finalists no one can go past Memorial for top and premiership favourites on figures. Gold are a certain second position. Hamilton appears fairly safe in third, however Grangeburn and Penshurst have the ability to shape the future albeit a narrow window of opportunity. Looking at the games, Dunkeld are at home and Grangeburn are the visitors. Dunkeld win and Penshurst win then the ‘burn season is over. Last time they met the win was to Grangeburn by eight. This round it will probably be the visitors closing the door on Penshurst. Portland Blue has a visit by Hamilton and again last round it was Hamilton by four. Blue had a win last week but Hamilton has too much at stake to fiddle while Blue burns (along). The Visitors to win.

Penshurst has defeated Gold at the mount in the past and needs to this week to have any chance of another game. Gold’s graph line has continued exactly the same as Memorial, only difference being one step lower. Penshursts’ has moved from third to bottom in round four and to various levels in between as the season progressed. The Gold machine will be in finals mode and win this time round, go for it Ali and Emmo.

Balmoral has the unenviable pleasure of hosting Memorial. Great fellowship but bowls will be a bit like scaling the Rocklands wall without a rope. Bloomin hard. The Sollys’ and Ken Evans teams have great resources, when you can name the likes of Woolley, Hoggan, Wallis, Pitts in your selection you are pretty much assured of a top level performance. Not meaning to belittle Balmoral, because they have some great players at their small club. Past records show that. However unless you can conjure up some extra terrestrial support it looks like social bowls next week.
To your correspondent it seems Memorial, Gold, Hamilton and Grangeburn to survive, let’s prove me wrong. A clarification re the heat issue, which has caused a bit of angst. The rules clearly explain the procedure. Some experiments were carried out a couple of years ago and showed that exposed temperatures on the green and at shoulder level out of the wind were around 10 degrees higher than in a properly constructed Stevenson screen positioned on the green adjacent to the test area. Wind makes a significant difference to screen temperatures and in a building enclosed area like Hamilton it can be very calm. The screen temperature is the one that decisions are made on and as stated in the rules, managers cannot take a risk with player welfare.

Division 2:
Five sides right in the running for another game in this division. Memorial at fourth play Casterton and the home sides future is completely in its’ own hands. Win and play again or the exact opposite. The visitors are right on song as stated above. Styx, Eddy and Edgy look the goods but with the knowledge that Memorial ran them to five shots up north will give Huss, and co a fair bit of confidence. A close one but Casterton to go on. The other side of the four five mix is Blue play Gold and it really should be a win to the Gold side. That would ensure a move up into the four given the above result occurs. Of course a win to Memorial and it is all academic. Gold to win.

Heywood at home to Hamilton, eight points difference to the woods, and whoever wins it looks like they will play Casterton the next week. Heywood has had a couple of glitches recently while Hamilton has quietly won its’ past seven games including over Heywood by two. On that record it should be Hamilton but it could well be another two shotter, watch out for the sea breeze.
Grangeburn and Macarthur pennant seasons are coming to a close after this game. The main outcome of the match will be the good time enjoyed by both sides. Sixth and seventh, can’t be in relegation danger. Enjoy and look forward to the rest of the bowls season.

Division 3:
Again five sides with a chance of making it. Memorial and Heywood vying for the fourth rung with a slight home green advantage to Memorial. Last meeting 11 to Memorial but they have hit the wall since then. Heywood with the better record but still losing the last couple of games. Heywood wins one rink and survive by one point that’s how close it is. Only on several past results, Heywood to survive. Hamilton sides face each other in a finals warmer. No matter what the result bragging rights will be the outcome, as positions relevant to each other can’t change. Better leave it at that.
Portland at home has a visit by Coleraine. All points to the visitors and a win to Hamilton Gold would see Coleraine as minor premiers. No matter what the result is Coleraine will play Green next week. Portland will wind up their pennant season.
Balmoral at home to Dartmoor, to put a finish to both seasons and three points separate them with possible relegation overhead. Has to be a win to the visitors unless they get lost on the circuitous trip to ‘moral.
So we see Green, Coleraine, Gold and Heywood line up for finals?

Division 4:
Two well defined leaders and three in the battle for fourth. Hamilton set up for Macarthur on B green. First meeting Macarthur by 22. Hamilton since that meeting has won three, the visitors two. Macarthur games since round seven have all been very close, as in two wins by three and two losses by four and five. Hamilton one win by 53 the others close. Sorry Macarthur you may well miss finals. Penshurst needs to fend of Casterton, which will be a difficult task. Cast take one tonne won last time by an innings and 43. Send Harry for a look around the water garden and you might just win Penshurst, but he is too nimble to fall.
Coleraine at home to Memorial, twenty points up to the visitors, but Coleraine in a much more tenuous position if the bowls tip out rather than in. Figures say no to Coleraine but stick with the home green advantage in this scenario. Therefore, Casterton, Hamilton, Memorial, Coleraine?

Other news.
Members and non-bowlers are encouraged to discuss ideas that might help us promote bowls. Several suggestions are circulating. Shorter but more engaging pennant, maybe two shorter competitions, Jack Attack type games with
subs and power plays. Pairs, triples, fours or combinations. Rotation of teams after say seven ends. Players not in fixed positions so they can play at the skips request. Much of this has come about as traditional pennant which now doesn’t go to higher levels, with promotion and relegation that can make it difficult for smaller clubs, may not be as inviting to potential younger participants as it could be. Whites, ties and blazers have pretty much gone. Look at our demographic; thinking outside the traditional box could be a good thing.

Late news; the Far Western and Western Division Past Presidents yearly challenge for the Michael Elliott trophy was contested by 48 players at Macarthur on Monday. The Western representative teams won the trophy. The competition has been going for 22 years and this is the seventh time Western has taken it home. Many thanks to Macarthur and Division officials for hosting the day.

Ray Downes