# HISTORY OF BOWLS

The game of 'lawn green bowls' has been traced back to the 13$^{th}$century. A manuscript of that period in the Royal library at Windsor contains a drawing representing two players aiming at a small cone or jack. The oldest surviving bowling green is the Southampton Old Bowling Green, which was first used in 1299.

As the game grew in popularity, it came under the ban of King and Parliament, both fearing it might jeopardise the practice of archery, then so important in battle. Statutes forbidding it were enacted in 1361 in the reign of Edward 111, in 1388 (Richard 11), 1409 (Henry 1V) and 1511 (Henry V111).

On the 18$^{th\ of}$ July 1588 the (probably apocryphal) legend of Sir Francis Drake was born when he refused to set sail against the Spanish Armada until he had finished his game of bowls. He would have been aware that the low tide at Plymouth would have prevented him leaving immediately anyway!!

In 1670, King Charles 11, the Duke of York, and the Duke of Buckingham drew up the earliest known laws of the game. 1864, the 'Manual of Bowls Playing', published by William Wallace Mitchell, a Glasgow cotton merchant, formed the basis of the rules of the modern game.

The game belongs to the 'boules' sport family and so is related to Bocce (in Italy), Bolle (in Denmark), Ula Miaka (Polynesia), and Petanque (France).

Crown Green Bowls is another variation of the game where the green is raised between 9" (23cm) and 15" (38cm) in the middle, the dress code informal, there is a small circular mat (about 6" (15cm) in diameter- called a 'footer'), the jack is biased and over twice the weight of the flat green version and can be rolled to any part of the rectangular playing area. Only two woods are used by each player in a singles game.