

Good afternoon ladies on this bright, blustery and somewhat chilly day.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy and healthy New Year. I realise that I am slightly out of time with the New Year bit, but I can at least wish you good health for now and the new bowling season.

Every year at this time, I ask myself the same question, 'Where has the time gone?' and I always get the same answer 'No idea!'

Sadly the aged aunt died in January, 16 days short of her 99th birthday.

She was a great lady who had done an amazing amount during her life and managed to get up to all sorts of mischief, if the stories told were true.

I remember her telling me that during one evening, when she and my mother were young women, there was a bombing raid and her and my mother decided they were not going to stay in the air raid shelter, so went back into the house, turned the radio on and started to dance around the house to one of the well known bands of the day. Unfortunately their elder brother, my aunt and my mother being one of fourteen children and the youngest, were caught dancing and were told in no-uncertain terms to stop being so foolish and get back into the shelter AT ONCE. The girls were 17 and 18, and when I asked what happened, my aunt just said that they drew themselves up to their fullest height, they were both about 5 foot, and the brother 6 foot, stuck their noses in the air, sniffed and ran back to the shelter giggling.

She was also a Land Army Girl, and was awarded a medal for her efforts during the war. A wonderful lady who I shall miss.

During the lock down I bought myself a new car - got an amazing deal.

Sadly my Mini-Cooper that I had over 20 years was beginning to show signs of old age, and rattled and juddered a bit, so the man who maintained the car said that I would have to start thinking about spending a lot of money to keep the car going, and my sister said it was about time I got a 'grown up car' - that remark in itself almost made me change my mind - but the new car is bigger, one can see more through the large wide windscreen and it's a hybrid electric. It has a nice big boot so that I can carry the ladies bowls bags, instead of everyone sitting on top of the bags and then on each other when we go to games. So altogether a bit of luxury and definitely more room, and ,runs as smooth as a mountain stream.

My sister and I have started to work on our allotment, getting it ready for the summer. I have a few things that I have already started. The courgettes are doing well, as are the onions, shallots, turnips, cabbage ,cauliflower, beetroot, sweetcorn and tomatoes. I set a few flower seeds, but they all seem to have taken the hump. They start to grow, look lovely and healthy, then zonck! flop over and that's it. I follow the the instructions most carefully and the seeds are new packets, but of course the seed might be out of date. But heyho, onward and upward.

As you will all know, this is the big year for me, and the 6th May is the first Presidential event. The ladies of Upminster have been fantastic, working away these last few weeks to make sure that everything goes well, and we are really

looking forward to extending the Upminster hospitality to ALL the clubs and to ALL the Essex Ladies.

Our green has been worked on over the last two years and looks beautiful. For those that have never been, and I do hope to see as many of you ladies as possible, the setting is beautiful, and the clubhouse a listed building. We have our own restaurant, where the meal will be served after the game, and there will be tea and coffee awaiting you on your arrival (I'm beginning to sound like a travel guide) but it is really worth a visit.

Sadly, it is a fact of life that because the county is divided into four areas all clubs cannot play each other or rarely get to meet unless in the County comps or The Nationals, so the opportunity for me to at least meet one person on this day, from an area that I have not visited before would be fabulous.

So ladies, I urge you to try and come to my first event of the season to visit our beautiful club, and have a really lovely day.

I must at this point mention the four ladies from Clockhouse who put Essex on the map at The Nationals last season and had some wonderful games.

Let us hope that they can repeat their success this year. A truly amazing achievement.

Well ladies that's it for now. I'm off to rescue my washing that is whizzing around the washing line like some mad fair ground entertainment.

I hope you are all successful in your bowling this year, whether it be winning or improving your techniques, putting your names down for club matches or being the important ladies behind the tea urn, a most important role in any institution in my opinion. Have fun and enjoy the day.

Best wishes to you all
Jennifer (President)