

DAVID ON THE MAT

In fond memory of David "Dai" Roberts

The outlook wasn't brilliant for the Oak Bay three that day.
The score was twenty to eighteen, with one last end to play.
With but three bowlers left to roll, the outlook was quite grave,
But hope was in their beating hearts, for one could make the save.
If only Dai could get a chance, they thought he'd do just that.
We'd put up even money with Roberts on the mat.

Now Machan was the home side lead and next was Carswell-Bland.
But Jeff had put his back out, and Linda'd hurt her hand.
Upon the gloomy patrons, melancholy sat
For there seemed no chance for David to win it on the mat.

But Jeff let loose a backhand draw that nestled on the jack
And Linda fired a forehand, which stopped a mere inch back.
And when the cheering ended, the crowd did all proclaim,
"Just one more point, it's all we need; one point to win the game."

A hundred voices chattered, enthralled at what they'd seen.
Hope spread throughout the clubhouse and all around the green.
The smiles shone on their faces from the lawn chairs where they sat
For David, "The Welsh Dragon", was advancing to the mat.

The crowd was getting rowdy, as they're often wont to do.
They waved white towels; we heard the howls of all that shouted "Looooooooou..."
An octopus came flying in; it landed with a splat.
"It's not the National Hockey League!" roared David from the mat.

At David's frown, they settled down; the atmosphere grew tense.
The neighbours raised binoculars from their posts outside the fence.
The other skip stood trembling; he knew his end was near.
To lose it on the final end was more than he could bear.

Dai's first bowl was insurance; he put one at the back.
His second was the perfect block, placed to protect the jack.
And now the crowd lay quiet as round the green they sat
As it would be the final bowl from David on the mat...

Now Dai looked down the emerald rink, a curl upon his lip;
His fingers wrapped around the bowl as he wiped it on his hip.
His arm swung back... the perfect weight, delivered on the line,
In precisely right direction, just in the nick of time.

Oh somewhere on this Island, the sun is shining bright
And people cheering loudly for all their hearts are light.
And somewhere skies are bright and blue, but here it's only black.
It took just one wrong bias... Mighty David missed the jack!

By Wayne Brown, a non-bowler, who sought technical guidance on lawn bowling from Chris Slade, a member of the Oak Bay Lawn Bowling Club who was proud to call David Roberts a friend – and who added a couple of verses...

Oak Bay, Victoria, BC, Canada 2011

*After "Casey at the Bat: A Ballad of the Republic Sung in the Year 1888"
by Ernest Thayer.*

David Roberts, long-time member of Oak Bay LBC, died 22nd October, 2011, aged 82.

