

INKBERROW BOWLS CLUB – A BRIEF HISTORY

During the 1920's the village of Inkberrow in the north east of Worcestershire had a bowling green right behind the Bull's head pub (where else?). During the 1930's the green fell into disuse and bowlers had to travel a considerable distance for a game. This situation lasted until June 1993 when the County Council made grants available to improve sports facilities in deserving villages. Inkberrow bowlers saw an opportunity to have a home based facility and a successful bid for a grant was made. The grant together with a parish council grant and much fund raising was sufficient to build a multi-function pavilion and a 6 rink bowling green. The multi-function feature was a requirement of the Council, to allow other Inkberrow Clubs to share the use of the pavilion.

In 1996, the Worcestershire Bowling Association President, Eddie Brookes, opened the green and brought his team to play the club. We lost! He commented that it was very pleasing to welcome a new club into the WBA; a rare event.

The club was dual gender, some say mixed, from the outset, a growing trend now. The initial membership was around 100 but has settled down to around 50. The green maintenance was largely done by volunteer members, using second hand equipment at first. Nevertheless visiting clubs often commented favourably on the surface. The surrounds were bare earth to begin with but more volunteers have steadily transformed these areas into attractive gardens. This DIY approach to improvements provided the momentum behind the club's rapid development.

During the late 1990's the fixture list grew steadily. Excluding competitions we were playing around 45 friendly matches per season. In these early years there were frequent demands on club funds, but priority was always given to improving the green. To this end, we used the services of a very experienced groundsman to supervise the "putting to bed" of the green at the end of the season. Several years later we still use the same adviser.

A criticism of the pavilion was the lack of a bar so a devoted group set to in the closed season of 1999 to convert a spare kitchen, and the bar was born.

Also in that season the club initiated a competitive league, for clubs in the county. The format is a 3 mixed triples per team and it proved very popular. Interberga was the medieval name of Inkberrow.

The club's financial situation was moderately healthy as a result of income from the bar and in-house short mat competition during the closed season.

In 2005, pressure on changing room space was making it difficult for the bowlers and the committee began looking for solutions. Extending the pavilion was financially impractical so the bowls club decided to "go it alone" with rooms at the side of the green. After much discussion a wooden pitched roof structure was chosen from a local contractor. This blended well with the rural nature of the area. The cost was met by interest free loans from members supported by a grant from the District Council. The bowlers-only changing rooms were first used for the 2007 season and met with general approval.

Now in 2010, the impression is of a mature bowls facility and several county matches are played at Inkberrow.