

A History of Arnside Bowling Club.

Minutes of the War Memorial Playing Field Management Committee

relating to a proposed bowling green to be situated on the Playing Field include the following digest which was submitted in support of an application for grants to various bodies;

"Towards the end of 1957 the above committee, in response to several requests, authorised the formation of a special Bowling Green committee to consider the provision and construction of a green on the Playing Field. These requests emanated from the public and the local branch of the British Legion representing ex-service men in the district. It is felt that, as there is no public bowling green in the village, or in fact any bowling green within several miles, the provision of a bowling green would satisfy a public demand, and serve a useful purpose in providing facilities for the use of residents and visitors to the village. The Bowling Green committee is composed of representatives of various interested parties in the village and its terms of reference were that they should be authorised to make public appeals for subscriptions and donations and to take active practical steps in connection with the construction of the green. Certain stipulations were given to the Bowling Green committee:

- a) that the work should be carried out in stages and that sufficient money be in hand to cover each stage before it is commenced.
- b) the estimated costs should be professionally checked before any work is commenced.
- c) the work must be supervised by someone experienced in this type of work. The question of drainage being very important and should be dealt with by an expert.
- d) effective insurance cover must be taken out to cover the voluntary labour used in the construction work.

The Bowling Green committee therefore set to work and by various appeals and efforts have raised a total of approximately £180 with further money-raising efforts continuing.

At the same time actual steps have been taken towards the construction of the green. Unfortunately the Playing Field is situated on undulating ground there being no suitable level plot available. Because of out-crops of limestone, borings were taken and it was found that several otherwise possible sites could not be used because of the difficulty in levelling due to the solid rock under the top soil. It was therefore decided that the most suitable site was in a corner of the field in a somewhat hollow situation. Even this site would require a lot of filling-in for levelling and excavating at the sides to provide a suitable area. Nevertheless it was decided that this was the best possible site on the field which would require the least expenditure in levelling.

We have been fortunate in having the work supervised by Mr. G.C. Jackson, a member of our committee who is a Chartered Architect and Surveyor, who has kindly devoted a lot of time on a voluntary basis in supervising the work.

The object of our plan is to construct a green with the maximum possible use of voluntary labour, where this is practical, in order to keep the cost as low as possible. Work on this basis has been in progress throughout 1958 and the beginning of this year, Levels were taken and the site

pegged out to give the maximum size of 90' by 105'. The top-soil was removed and drains laid. The site has been roughly levelled with rubble, shiloe and stone by tipping in approximately 450 tons.. We have been fortunate in that because of our locality we have been able to obtain the stone etc. virtually free of charge apart from the cost of carting. The labour has been provided by men in the village, and we have now roughly levelled the site and we are about to proceed with the completion of the levelling to form the crown.

We are now reaching the point where additional finance will be required and we feel that the time is now opportune to approach the Playing Fields Association in order to solicit their financial help towards the completion of the green. On the schedule of costs it will be noted that we have provided for the seeding of the green, but the alternative question of providing turfing is under consideration. Owing to the proximity of suitable sea-washed turf we may find that the green can be turfed at a relatively modest cost.... (A plan of the site was included together with costs and estimates for work done and projected.)

The letter was signed by Mr. T. (Tom) Holden and dated May 1959.

Tom Holden wrote many letters to the National Playing Fields Association for financial support and was offered loans to the value of £300, but further requested that a grant would be preferable. There is no record whether or not this materialised but later correspondence refers to the withdrawal of the offer of the loan if not taken up "immediately". The financial report shown below makes no reference to either grant or loan from the Playing Fields Association.

According to early records, the club was founded in 1960.

Previously, a group of local residents had met with a view to forming a bowling club in Arnside, the bowling green to be sited on the War Memorial Playing Field.

The group of founder members included Mr. and Mrs. C.L.(Charlie) Flitcroft, Mr. and Mrs. R.S.(Robin) Crossfield, Mrs. Blake, Mr. H.B. Lawson, Mr. Ellison, Mr. W. (Bill) Dodd, Mr. J.A. Popplewell, Mr. Coupe, Mr. F.(Fred) Harrison.

Other members joined and a committee was formed to deal with the laying out of the new bowling green. When the green was completed, all members of the committee were made life-members of the bowling club.

The committee consisted of:

Mr. C.L.Flitcroft (Secretary /Treasurer)

Mr. Arthur Green (Chairman) Mr.

Cyril Jackson (Architect)

with a Committee of Works comprising of:@

Mr. C.(Charlie) Grice, Mr. E. (Ted) Druce, Mr. G.T. (George) Smith, Mr.

C. (Cliff) Holden, Mr. A. (Amos) Charlesworth.

The Statement of Accounts produced for the period from March 1958 to May 1961, (by Chas. L. Flitcroft), lists the various sources of income towards the initial cost of the bowling green. These included events in the W.I. Hall (£26), grants from Westmorland County Council (£213 15s. 1d.), 127 individual donations (£164 8s. 2d.), £10 from each of the Founding Members (£115), and other donations from local institutions as follows:

Toc H - £2 2s., Tennis Club - £2 2s., Badminton Club - £2 2s., Cricket Club - £10, British Legion - £10, Dramatic Society - £10, and payment in kind from the W.I. as loan of premises for the functions. The Playing Field Management Committee added £90 to the above sums, making a grand total of £645 9s. 3d. The same accounts indicate the extent of the voluntary labour involved, no less than 2,590 man-hours, 1958 - 790, 1959 - 850, 1960 - 950, with no record of that expended in 1960. The recorded expenditure included; Shilloe/excavations £210 3s. 1 Id.

Cinders	£ 96 5. 4.	
Turf	£154 0 0	
Fertilisers	£ 17 7. 6.	
Mrs. Blake's seat	£ 28 7 4	
Pavilion/hut	£ 40	(per Carnforth B.C.)
Hut extension	£ 43 5 11	
Netting	£ 18 3 0	

The First Club Pavilion was erected by George Smith, Amos Charlesworth, Bob Speight and Charlie Grice. The main part of the pavilion was formed using the disused wooden bowling hut from Carnforth Bowling Club, which even at the time, was an old structure but in good condition. Originally the area immediately in front of the "new" hut was open to the elements,(but later on in 1988, it was enclosed with windows to make a comfortable sitting area). The pavilion was opened in September 1960 by Mr. Robin Crossfield, County Council member for Arnside and District and a local dignitary.

Early Times.

Amongst the early members of the newly-formed bowling club, in addition to those already mentioned above, were Harry Anderson, Bill Jones, Jock Bowman, Walter Howsley, Enid Lindsay, Marie Marshall (MM woods), Vi Metcalfe, Ada Wilson, Miss Harrison, W.R. (Bill)

Sculpher (former chief of police in Channel Islands) (WRS woods), and Harry Webb (there was a second Harry Webb later!). Still later came John and Hilda Moss, Alan Beaumont, Cliff Baldwin, Charles and Alice Bryant (he was a former secretary at Kirkby Lonsdale when we played "friendlies"), Bruce Palmer, Dorien Welsby, Greta Calver, Anne Atkinson, May Graham, Norman Longson, Harry Stone, Cliff Mayho, Harold Newell, John Ratcliffe, Michael Stern, etc.

When the green eventually opened, the original members were very keen and games would go on well after dark, and cries directing fellow partners could often be heard in the gloom. It was not unknown for cigarette lighters to be used to provide a sense of direction to the jack. In the first few years of the club's existence, the only competitive bowling was in the Club Championships. The early records of the club seem to have disappeared and there were no trophies for names to be appended. Suffice it to say that new trophies appeared after a few years.

Again at an early stage, well before 1986 when we first entered a team in the Morecambe League, a number of "friendlies" were arranged. The other clubs involved included Silverdale, Kirkby Lonsdale and Endmoor. There was great rivalry between our ladies and those at Kirkby to provide the most sumptuous refreshments for the visitors, and a good time was had by all (the bowling was also very enjoyable).

League Bowling.

The club first entered a team in the Morecambe Bowling League in the 1986 season. The team were playing in Division 7, which comprised of 11 teams, and the first match was played at Home against Bowling Green B on 9th. April of that year. The result was a win by 7 points to 5, five of the games being won, together with the aggregate. The individual results of that match were: Harry Stone 21:15, Jack Ratcliffe 21:12, Wally Dew 14:21, Alan Beaumont 21:9, Norman Longson 17:21, Bruce Palmer 17:21, Len Keen 21:19, Dorien Welsby 21:15, Anne Atkinson 18:21, Greta Calver 11:21. (no record was kept of opponents). A very promising start! The team captain was Harry Stone, later Harold Newell. There were 12 regular players, with another 5 playing one or two games. Len Keen topped the averages, which were calculated as "aggregate points scored" divided by "no. of matches played". In fact, all ten regular team members finished with "plus" aggregates. By the end of the first season of our 20 matches, the team had won 13, drawn 1 and lost 6 matches and had accumulated 148 league points, enough to ensure promotion to Division 6 in our first year.

In 1987, in Division 6, there were only 9 teams. Of our 16 matches, we won 8 and lost 8, amassing a total of 94 league points. There were 12 regular team members with 4 others playing the odd game.

Len Keen again topped the averages for the season, with Cliff Mayho, Harry Stone, Harold Newell and Alan Beaumont also having "plus" aggregates.

In 1988, still in Division 6, with Alan Beaumont as team captain, there were again 9 teams. Of the 16 matches played, we won 7 and lost 9, our league points totalling 87. Jack Ratcliffe was the top of the averages., with 3 more "plus" aggregates: Len Keen, Alan Beaumont, and Anne Atkinson.

In 1989, still in Division 6, there were again only 9 teams in the division. Of the 16 matches played, Arnside won 6 and lost 10, gaining 94 league points, which put us in 6th. position. Jack Ratcliffe again topped the averages, with 5 other final "plus" results: Harry Webb, Harry Stone, Arthur Cook, Alan Beaumont and Anne Atkinson.

However, the Heald Trophy this year, after some moderate past results, proved to be a real talking point, and the source of 1 "Visitor" comment. Our opponents in Round 1 were Warton A, a good Division 1 side. The result produced the following headline: "Cup shock for Warton", and this report - "Division 6 side Arnside produced the shock of the night when they beat Division 1 Warton by 13 chalks to register a 7-5 win"

Admittedly we received 5 chalks per man on the handicap system, and it was a home fixture, but... even so it was a good result. The details are very interesting to read and are shown;

Arnside		Warton A	
12	J.Ratcliffe	D.Green	21
17	H.Stone	R.Barnett	21
15	A.Atkinson	R.Boyd	21
21	H.Webb	D.Kirby	18
21	A.Beaumont	B.Gladwin	11
21	R.Morrell	S.Ewbank	9
20	D.Welsby	J.Foxcroft	21
21	B.Palmer	F.Tomlinson	9
21	G.Calver	M.Gilpin	18
14	K.Walker	C.Thompson	21
183	(7)	(5)	170

The next round match was against Division 2 side Douglas Park B away, the result being a less-flattering defeat 8-2.

The 1990 season saw Arnside rather unexpectedly playing in Division 5. This apparent "promotion" was caused because three more teams joined the Morecambe League, which in turn required a re-arrangement of the divisions, and meant that the top five divisions had 10 teams competing in each. The Arnside team was not overawed by the better opposition and ended the season in 5th. place with 100 league points. The match results were as follows: out of the 18 matches played, we won 8 and lost 10. We had three "plus" averages; Jack Ratcliffe, Harry Stone and Alan Beaumont.

Arnside were still in Division 5 for the 1991 Season. After the 18 matches had been played, we found ourselves in 8th. place, with 93 points, just missing "the drop" by 3 points. Our record for the season shows that we had won 7 and lost 11 matches. Len Keen had rejoined the club after a few years absence and finished with the highest average; the only others to have a final "plus" aggregate were Rose Morrell and Gordon Readyhough.

It had been rather premature to talk about "missing the drop" the previous season. In 1992 more teams joined the league, again requiring some adjustments. An eighth division was formed and because some higher divisions now had only nine teams, we were put down into Division 6 again. At the end of the season Arnside were in 5th. place, having won 7, drawn 1 and lost 8 matches, and thereby amassing 93 points. Len Keen was the top bowler with an average of 6.15, Alan Beaumont had 5.64, with other "plusses" for Harold Newell, Dave Peirce (in his first season with us), Ken Morell and Harry Wilson.

For the 1993 season, we had again been "promoted" to Division 5 because of a re-arrangement of the divisions on account of yet more teams joining the league. There were 9 teams in the division and after a very good season Arnside finished in 3rd place, just missing out on further promotion by 5 points. Of the 18 matches played, we won 11 and lost only 5. We had lost 12 games by a score of 20-21, and had won 5 games 21-20. This really proved beyond all doubt that every single point in a league match can be of great significance at the end of the season. This was by far our best year as far as the league was concerned. Eight of the team finished with "plus" averages, the leader again being Dave Peirce (3.8), with Ken Morrell (3.54), Len Keen (3.08), Harry Webb (2.64), Alan Beaumont (2.50), Peter Knight (2.42), Rose Morrell (0.83) and Denis Smith (0.64). Bruce Palmer finished on 0.0 after 10 games.

This was Peter Knight and Denis Smith's first season. 19 players had had 3 or more games over the season.

The number of teams in Division 5 was increased to 10 for the 1994 season. We held our own and ended the season in 6th. place, our 10 wins and 8 defeats gaining 123 points. The individual results were continuing to improve, with eleven players finishing with a "plus" average. Top was Gordon Readyhough with 5.0 (from 4 games), then Dave Peirce (4.9), Alan Beaumont (3.69), Ken Morrell (3.14), Harry Wilson (2.43), Margaret Armitage (2.33) (from 3 games), Bruce Palmer (2.0), and Denis Smith, Peter Knight, Harry Webb and Bob Knight (in his first season). 19 players had 3 or more games for the team.

The 1995 season was without doubt our best up to that time and saw us still in Division 5 with 8 other teams. After some excellent results, we amassed 137 points, winning 13 matches and drawing one out of 16 played in the league. We topped the division and were promoted to Division 4 for the next season. By this time the position of play was worked out using the "aggregate" points. Top of the placings was Harry Wilson (+86: 13 wins) which was also the highest across the division, second Dave Pierce (+78:10), third Alan Beaumont (+ 5Q:10), then Denis Smith (+44:9), Bob Knight (+42:8), Peter Knight {+40:10}, Ray Lee (+36:10) in his first year with the team, Bruce Palmer (+30): in fact there were thirteen players with a + aggregate that season. Not only were we successful in the league, in the Hald Trophy we beat three Division 1 sides, Station A, Trimpell A and Boot and Shoe A, and after crushing Regent Mixed A(Div.4) in the quarter finals (11-1), we met

the mighty Forbo A in the semi-final at Arkholme. The result was 5 games all, Forbo winning by 3 chalks. They had a real fright! The "Visitor" report was headed "Forbo scrape win".

The accompanying report read as follows: " The second semi-final of the Heald Trophy... saw Division 1 leaders and last year's champions Forbo A up against top of Division 5, Arnside, at the Bay Horse Hotel, Arkholme. Forbo got off to a good start with three winners out of the first four, and with captain S. Cragg winning 21-1 Q they had a good aggregate lead. Arnside, however, stepped up the pace in the middle four gaining three winners and one 20-21 loss making the tie tight again. Arnside's captain A. Beaumont then gave Arnside the lead by beating B. Thompson 21-13 which left it all down to the last game on the green, H. Wilson of Arnside versus A. Roberts of Forbo. H. Wilson was 19-13 up which meant that A. Roberts had to win to give Forbo a place in the final and he (actually she) responded superbly to come back and win 21-19 to earn (his) side a place in the final on August 7... and the chance of a hat-trick". It was not Harry Wilson's fault that we lost by so close a margin: if only four others had scored one more point each it would have been a different ending. It just shows how every single point can be vital to the final outcome of a match. The result sheet was as follows:

Forbo A (-3)		Arnside (+3)	
19	D Rhodes	D Peirce	21
21	A Roberts	H Wilson	19
21	K McQueen	H. Webb	15
21	F Williamson	R Knight	17
13	B Thompson	A.Beaumont	21
18	G Webster	B.Palmer	21
18	E Phillips	R Lee	21
16	K Elliott	P Knight	21
21	S Cragg	L Wilson	10
21	R.Palmer	A.Thompson	20
189	(8)	(5)	186

After promotion the previous season, we did not really know what to expect in 1996 in the higher Division 4. After beating three Division 1 teams in the Heald Trophy the year before (albeit with a few points start) we were not afraid of the competition at a higher level. We need not have worried. At the end of the season, we finished in second place with 118 points (to Bare with 144), having won 11 and lost 5 matches (9

teams in division). We were thus promoted for the second year running, this time to Division 3. The third-placed team, Scorton, had 106 points.

The personal results were again very good overall. Peter Knight topped the list (+68; 10 wins), second was Denis Smith (+59: 10 wins), third Dave Peirce (+58: 8 wins), Alan Beaumont (+57: 11 wins), Bob Knight (+39: 10 wins), Bruce Palmer (+35: 10 wins), Alf Thompson (+31: 7 wins), Harry Wilson (+24: 7 wins), Ray Lee and Colin Milligan also finished with +23 and +22.

Entering the Morecambe League in 1986 in Division 7, after only 10 seasons we had reached Division 3. Incidentally, our friends at Forbo A again did "the double" in 1996, winning both the Heald Trophy and Division 1 (by a clear 40 points) !

Briefly, in 1997, Arnside were very well placed at the end, finishing in third place (out of 10), and just missing out on further promotion. The table shows that we had won 11 matches, the same as Moor Hospital A who gained promotion. We were 11 points ahead of the next team.

In 1998, the first year in which the club had entered two teams in the Morecambe League, the A Team finished in eighth place and just missed "the drop". At their first attempt, Arnside B achieved promotion from Division 8, finishing with equal points (133) with City Transport but having more wins (13 against 10) and thus heading the division.

[**RETURN TO MENU**](#)