

Bray Bowling Club: 2016 Season Summary

In the 2015/2016 winter league Bray A made it as far as the quarter-finals while Bray B did not qualify for the knockout stages.

Bray A (captain: Eamonn Kennedy) consolidated their place in Division 1 finishing comfortably in mid-table. The ever-improving John Dunne became a regular in the side. One of the season's highlights was beating the powerful St James's Gate 6-1 at home in July. The Gate subsequently lost the league title to Dun Laoghaire by a single point.

In Division 2 Bray B (captain: Robert McClancy) had a tougher time of it but stayed afloat, finishing 7th out of 10.

In Division 4 Bray C (captain: Aidan Galvin) got off to a good start but then suffered a drop in form which saw them enter a relegation battle with three other teams. It went to the final day of the season when they had to win against Aer Lingus at home. In a nail-biting match they won by just 4 shots to ensure safety.

First year of the new Division 6 (two rinks, wednesday eves.). One team dropped out leaving only three teams including Bray D who were captained by Frankie Byrne. To compensate for the lack of clubs, each team played each other twice at home and twice away. Bray, with many inexperienced players, got off to a slow start. However gradually they improved and finished their campaign with two victories. Bobby Doyle was a revelation in the skip role.

In Division 1 of the LBLI, Bray (captain: Marge O' Leary) put the previous season's relegation worries behind them to finish in mid-table.

The first vets team (captain: Eddie O'Connor) finished a comfortable fourth in Division 1. The second vets team, still captained by Mick Dunne, had received an unexpected and unexplained promotion to Division 2! Unfazed by their new status, they had an excellent season and finished strongly to claim second place in the table, just 2.5 points behind winners, Ierne.

Dales came to visit the green but determined that no stretching of the carpet was necessary. It still rises up on hot days, mind you!

The aging club house got a much needed new roof and a complete internal refurbishment. This included a new kitchen, bar, flooring, disabled-friendly toilets and away team dressing room. All this was made possible by a €60,000 grant from the Irish Sports Council. The building was officially opened by local TD and Minister for Health, Simon Harris, in October. Thanks to our enterprising committee for making this happen.

Brian Walsh, with the help of Seanie Shortt, waterproofed the green's rain-lashed viewing kiosk. Well done, lads.

Our autumn visitors this year were Purley Bowls Club from South London. A friendly match was played and was followed by an enthusiastic sing-song in the bar.

In the club competitions Owen Byrne's first victory in the prestigious men's championship was a great achievement. It shows what regular practice allied with ability can do for someone who has not been bowling all that long. Owen has also coached novice bowler, Ger Mahony, who repaid him in spectacular fashion by reaching two club finals.

In November Fran Neilson received the highest recognition possible from the LBLI, honorary membership. This was for her 12 years on council as an officer which comprised six years as league secretary and six as hon. secretary of the LBLI. She will now be a guest of the association at most functions and dinners. This is the first such achievement

in the ladies section and is a great honour for the club. Congratulations, Fran. (She is also vice-president of the IWBA.)

Noteworthy this season was the ability and enthusiasm for practise of newer bowlers like Brendan Duffy, Ger Minogue and Gay Cahill. A good sign for the future of the club.



Club champions, Phyllis Brett and Owen Byrne, receive their trophies from Minister of Health, Simon Harris.

For more information see www.braybc.ie.