

page 1

ch #01 INTRODUCTION

ver: 26/10/26

I'm Ben Aardvark.

I've designed a form of indoor bowling that differs from normal bowling in the following ways:

- more throws per hour

- more exercise per hour

- not competitive

- no timetables

- not social

- is (IMO) a meditation

I call it **kata bowling**.

This book explains it on the assumption you know nothing about bowling.

It is a transcript of a conversation with an alien reporter who calls him/her/itself Bill and works for the MILKY WAY NEWS. Say hello Bill.

Hello viewers.

Press the button for hyper coms otherwise the signals might take thousands of years to arrive.

形 **KATA** is a Japanese word associated with martial arts and means demonstration of correct form.

Why not call it "demonstration bowling" ?

It's difficult to fit the word "demonstration" on a badge.

BOWLING

When I talk about **bowling**, I'm referring to **English bowling** which is a traditional sport where you roll a small ball called a **jack** along the floor then roll objects called **bowls** or **woods** at the jack. It is competitive and is played 1v1, 2v2, 3v3 and 4v4.

The peculiar thing about English bowling is the woods don't run straight.

Bowling can be played indoors and outdoors but I play indoors because I want to play all year and not depend on the weather.

Why do woods not run straight ?

The answer to this question Bill is given in a later chapter.

FORMS OF BOWLING

I recognise the following forms of bowling:

competitive bowling aka match bowling aka match play aka normal bowling aka standard bowling is where you compete against other bowlers.

solo bowling is where you bowl on your own. It is not competitive.

match practice is solo bowling where you practice for match bowling.

kata is where you demonstrate a technique. I designed the kata and as far as I'm aware it's the only bowling kata. I call it the Ben Kata and refer to it as my kata or the kata.

kata bowling aka kata practice is where you practice for the kata.

I have been kata bowling for 2½ yrs and have not yet performed the kata. I have spent many hours analysing, measuring and testing to determine the best technique. This is slow work because I am very inconsistent. Since identifying what I think is the best technique, I have spent each session practicing a single part of the kata. The end product of kata practice is a demonstration but most of the benefits come from practicing.

MY STORY

I am 80yrs old and until a few years ago I swam weekly at the local leisure centre.

For reasons I won't bore you with, I decided to replace swimming with another form of exercise.

The leisure centre has an indoor bowling green and in Feb 2024 I signed up for lessons and joined the club. My motivation was exercise. I thought the walking would be a useful addition to my normal routine (mainly shopping).

The club gave me four free lessons to get me started. The first lesson reminded me of a Judo kata that I did over 50yrs ago. Mainly because it's very precise and choreographed.

I asked my teacher if there is a formal demonstration of bowling and he said no.

I found nothing like it on internet.

By the end of my second lesson I decided it was my sacred duty to design a bowling kata.

Very arrogant.

Yes - a kata should be designed by a black belt - but someone has to do it and perhaps a beginner has the advantage of no preconcieved ideas.

Or at least no habits that might need to be broken.

By the end of my third lesson I had an outline for the kata. More than 2yrs later the specifications for the kata remain unchanged - so I'm confident that it's "right". Unfortunately my talent is less right so I have not yet performed the kata.

I spend all my time (three 1hr sessions per week) practicing. Since I bowl alone, the kata avoids me getting bored. I calculate that I walk 1km during each 1hr session, but most exercise comes from squatting when I throw. Bowling involves a lot of bending and straightening legs.

During competitive bowling, players spend a lot of time waiting for their turn to throw. On my own I throw four times as many woods per hour as playing 1v1.

I love throwing things. When I was a boy I threw stones. Then I bowled cricket balls.

Then I threw darts and later I played basketball.

Now I love throwing woods (bowls). I love their shape and mass and the fact that they run so far with so little effort. I would be happy to throw 100 woods from one end of the green to the other, then walk to the other end and throw them back.

Competition spoils throwing. It's like making art competitive.

PYRAMID OF THE YEAR 2026



LEVEL 1: EXERCISE

Kata bowling gives you more exercise per hour than match bowling. And the worse you throw the further you walk

LEVEL 2: ENJOYMENT

Throwing woods is enjoyable.

Kata bowling allows you to throw many more woods per hour than match bowling.

LEVEL 3: MEDITATION

I believe kata bowling is a form of meditation. If you dislike meditation, ignore this.

LEVEL 4: ANALYSIS (of technique)

Explained on next page.

LEVEL 5 (THE DEMONSTRATION)

The kata can be used by an instructor to teach students, and by students to show their instructor that they have learned the technique (and give the instructor the opportunity to punish them for errors).

It can also be used by a master to attract people to the sport. This would work well if someone gives a running commentary.

HANDS UP IF YOU LIKE KATA BOWLING



You might like Kata bowling if:

> You like throwing things.

Actually you roll the woods rather than throw. Think of it as gentle throwing.

> You want gentle exercise.

Bowling involves walking, bending down and swinging your arm.

> You want a form of meditation.

Kata bowling is repetitive but requires concentration. I think this makes it a meditation.

> You don't like competitive activities.

Perhaps you don't like the idea of winners and losers.

> You don't like socializing.

Competitive bowling involves socializing which I have no objection to except it reduces the amount of throwing.

> You find it difficult to keep to a timetable.

Competitive bowling requires a timetable (eg Thu evenings for mens pairs). Solo bowling allows you to play whenever there is a lane free.

GETTING STARTED

If you have never bowled:

1) Decide whether you want to play indoors or outdoors or both. Many bowlers play outdoors during summer and indoors during winter.

There are big differences and it's takes a while to switch from one to the other.

There are more outdoor than indoor clubs.

You have to use more force to throw woods on grass. Some woods are designed for outdoors, some for indoors, some are sort of inbetween.

The markings that are on all indoor rinks are absent on grass.

2) Locate a suitable club/venue.

3) Arrange a lesson.

Most clubs require you to have some lessons (normally free). The first lesson will tell you how to avoid injuring yourself then how to grip and throw woods.

CLOTHING & FOOTWEAR

Clothing is optional but there will be a rule about footwear. At my club, you must wear shoes with flat soles that have not been worn outdoors. If you don't have appropriate shoes the club provides disposable shoe coverings.

I wear slippers but the club disapproves because they give no protection if I drop a wood on my foot.



Ask about footwear before you attend.

Don't wear a skirt or kilt if you intend to use the inside style of throw where you swing the wood between your legs.

WOODS

The club will lend you woods for your lessons. If you decide to continue, you will be expected to use your own. In 2026, a set of new woods costs about £450 but I bought a pre-loved set for £40. I'm still using them. Ask for advice before splashing out.

THE LAWS

When I refer to the Laws I mean the rules according to the English Indoor Bowls Association (EIBA). If something is **illegal** it means the Laws don't allow it. The laws in other countries and for lawn bowling are almost identical as far as this book is concerned.

<eof>