



NEWSLETTER

March 2010

From The Chairman



It's that time of year again! After a terrible winter the grass is finally beginning to grow enough to require mowing, so we'll shortly be starting our Official Season, despite the fact that some stalwarts have been playing a bit in the last week or so and we've had one of the scheduled One Ball mornings.

According to our current plans, and obviously depending on the weather, we're officially opening the season this Sunday 28th March. See below for more details.

We've scheduled Open Days on the first Sundays of May, June and July. Please invite anyone you know to these, so that newcomers can be made specially welcome. Supplies of an invitation card for the Open Days for you to hand out will be available shortly in the Club House.

Just a reminder - we're not allowed to entertain people who aren't members' guests. We've acquired some Visitors Books, so please can you ensure that everyone who comes into the Club House or plays on the lawns is signed in. Hopefully, Mick Greagsby will be able follow up visitors to ensure that they actually join as members as soon as possible, so make sure you've got sufficient details written down!

I'd like to welcome the election of Richard Mann as the new Treasurer at the AGM and Jeff Chapman, and subsequently the co-option of Carolyn Gunstone and Kate Sander to the Committee and thank Selwyn Ward, Elaine Houslop and Dan Long for their service to the club. Carolyn is looking after Membership, with Frank, and also the Club House and Kate is looking after Catering.

Now it's time to oil your mallet, practise a bit, sign up for the coaching we all need, and get stuck in. I hope to see you all on the lawns very shortly. Oh, and in case I forgot, invite all your friends to join in too.....

Jon Diamond

Winter News

The AGM in November managed to take place without any catering diversions again. Special thanks to Margaret Moore, being a non-member of the club!, for her food and to her helpers with the food and drink: Miriam Reader, Sheila Armitage, Anita Hunter, John Hobbs and Derek Heath.

Mick Greagsby has been taking advantage of the California weather in Mission Hills and doing some winning:

- Mick won the Pat Apple Tournament - named for one of the club's founders - which is an Association tournament and the only time at the club that they play with bisques. It started with two flights - A and B, Mick being put in A, the one with handicaps 4.5 to 0.5 (having been given a handicap here of 3.5!). After block play, the two flights were divided into three for the play offs, based on the block results. Mick went into the second of these, where he had to play some of the A flight players again as well as the winner of the B flight. Well, he ended up winning his flight!

- Scrambled Doubles Tournament - playing American Rules (with the 'deadness board'). Because Mick doesn't play the game much and doesn't know the rules, let alone the strategy, he was put in the high handicap block - meaning he got to play partnered with a different low handicap player in each game. He ended up winning the high handicap block and so was partnered with the winner of the low handicap block for the knock out ladder. His partner was a very good player - Bob van Tassell (handicap 0.5) - who coached him round the lawns. The two of them won the final game yesterday with both of them pegging out in the allotted time (the only pegged out game of the week).

Aaron Westerby, an occasional member at our club, has been appointed Captain of the New Zealand team for the series of test matches to be held in the UK for the World Team Championships - MacRobertson Shield. This follows on from the NZ Open which finished on the 23rd January, won by Paddy Chapman, who beat Aaron in the semi-final.

Jon Diamond played a little competitive croquet in Jamaica, but unfortunately the local rules and the local barman (pro) meant that he didn't win any games... You can see the lawn in the 2010 Picture Gallery on our website.

Jeff Chapman won our heat in the Cryptorchid Charity One Ball on 14th March beating Jon Diamond and Alex Jardine, but losing to Derek Heath, so goes through to the final at Winchester.

Opening Day

Opening Day will be Sunday 28th March and, apart from the social atmosphere and the food at lunch time, we'll have a little competitive stuff in the morning, starting at 10:30am (subject to the weather of course).

We'll be running another One Ball event and for those who aren't quite so adventurous we'll be running Golf play on the other lawns, either singles or doubles depending on numbers.

For those who don't know: One Ball is a cross between Association and Golf with, obviously, each player only having one ball each on the lawn and the first player to run all 12 hoops and hit the peg wins. There's a premium on positioning of the ball and running hoops, as in Golf, and the normal Association break play is very limited. It will be played using 1/3 of normal Association handicaps. Of course, you can always play Golf instead if that's your forte, as one lawn will be dedicated to you.

Kate Sander and Carolyn Gunstone are providing a Soup and Ploughman's lunch (cost £5) for Opening Day at about 12:30-1pm, so please phone/email Carolyn to say you're coming and let her know which event you'll be playing in.

Don't forget to look at the website for updated information on this, as in all club activities.

Secretary's Notes

In case you haven't noticed Carolyn and Frank Gunstone have fully taken over as Membership Secretaries! If you haven't paid your subscription yet there's still time. Please send the form, together with payment, to Carolyn as soon as possible, so that we can make the draw for our internal competitions shortly and get our fixtures organised.

Please see below about entering various competitions and tournaments. However, if you're playing an internal match you should reserve a lawn in advance in the Diary Book in the Club House. You may have to double-bank, especially if a match is in progress.

Please remember that ALL lawns are expected to be in use during Tournaments and on main club afternoons. On days when we've got other events scheduled at least one main lawn **should** be available. Don't forget that the master club diary is on the website, so you can always check there before turning up on spec, however it doesn't contain lawn reservations for internal matches.

Mick Belcham

Lawns Report

Our lawns have come through the exceptionally cold and wet winter reasonably well. Unfortunately, as most of you are aware, Norman proved to be somewhat unreliable and disappeared off the face of the earth. So we've recruited David Evans as a replacement. He got off to flying start on the 5th March when 5 club members turned out to help in the lawn maintenance work. Thanks to all the volunteers and a warm welcome to David.

The lawns have been slit, 90% moss killed (a few areas missed by the sprayer) scarified, cut and fertilised. They will need to be cut and white lined before next weekend and should be fine for the opening day. They may look a bit shabby due to the remaining moss and dead moss removed but should be playable.

Further work will be necessary to get rid of the remaining moss. The cut height will be reduced as soon as the grass starts to grow following the feeding.

Please help in the care of lawns by avoiding playing on lawns showing signs of wear around the hoops, avoiding play after heavy rain, only practising jump shots off the normal playing area and marking balls with the plastic markers not coins.

David and Tony, who mows the grass normally, will do the majority of lawn maintenance work but we still need volunteers to assist David with occasional tasks and perhaps with mowing during Cricket Week! If you are able to assist please contact me.

We've finally given up our lease on the Bowling Green and all the equipment from the Pavilion has been brought up to the Club House.

Finally, divot repairers are now available in the Club House, price £3. These should be a part of everyone's kit bag, so that if you (accidentally of course) break the surface of the lawn you can do what all golfers do – repair the surface by drawing the two sides of the break together again. This will prevent your fault from affecting other people.

Roger Morris

Handicapping

We want all players to keep a card, available in the Club House - White for Association and Green for Golf, and record on them all the singles games you play. For club competitions, tournaments and any external games, you will use the system of adding or subtracting points after each game. You don't need to record friendly games, but it would be helpful for adjusting your handicap if you do so (without changing the index).

This means that if you play only friendlies or doubles you won't have any automatic change to your handicap. However, if you are improving and require a lower handicap before you start playing 'serious' games, then the results of all your friendlies will help decide on any necessary adjustment to your handicap. John Hobbs (as club handicapper), will do the adjusting assisted by Frank Gunstone and Derek Heath for Golf Croquet.

Law Changes

There don't appear to be any this year - hooray!

Copies of the Golf Rules are available (price £2.50) – some people have one already, so just ask.

Just a few reminders about some of the laws that some of our lesser experienced players are not terribly good at observing:

- ◆ you mustn't hit your ball twice (a “double tap”), except this is OK when making a roquet in Association. This usually happens when balls are close together and you're not hitting at a tangent.

- ◆ you mustn't have the ball in contact with the mallet and hoop simultaneously (a “crush” shot). This usually happens when you're trying to run a hoop from a short distance and you follow through, not playing a stop shot.
- ◆ in Association it's part of the laws of the game that when placing a ball on the yard line that you do so when facing out from the lawn! *The point of this is that there is then no question as to whether the ball is placed to your advantage as you can't see the other balls.*

If there's any doubt about any shot, especially the situations above, when you're playing in a tournament or a match you should always call for a referee to observe the shot. In any other game or if there isn't a referee or experienced player around to observe, then you should get your opponent (as he is a joint referee of the game with you) to observe closely. In that latter event you must accept his decision as to whether the shot was a fault or not.

Coaching

Coaching for beginners and high-bisquers in both codes will be masterminded by Richard Clark this year. He's not planning a formal schedule, but will no doubt be around quite a lot during various club sessions. If you'd like some coaching please approach him directly and let him know your interests.

Don't forget there are many courses being run at Southwick – see the Diary for more details. In particular, there are some Golf courses on 15/16 April for which you should apply quickly.

Competitions and Tournaments

First of all, we need all your Renewal Registrations in so that we can do the draws for the Internal Year-long competitions that you will all be entering (lots, I hope ;-)

Apart from those events in the CA calendar which are already public, the South-East Federation Calendar has now been published and is on our notice-board and included in our Diary, as well as on their website. Please give these events a go as they are genuinely friendly and gentle ways of extending your croquet experience.

Next up will be the Inter-Club matches. In Association, we will be playing in the Croquet Association Mary Rose competition and *three* South East Croquet Federation (SECF) leagues, the A, U and B and John Hobbs will be chasing for some commitment from those available to play.

The A league is for the Advanced game, so we expect to put out our strongest team. The U league is Handicap, so we can put in people of any strength and the B league is intended for high handicap players (the team must have a total handicap of at least 48 when the match is **arranged**).

The SECF B league exists for beginners to have the fun of playing Association against members of other clubs and visiting their premises to see how other clubs do things. Although we try to win these games that comes second to giving members the experience.

Derek Heath will be chasing up similarly for the SECF Golf Leagues – Level and Handicap.

We've entered teams into two SECF events at Southwick – Association Doubles on 8th/9th May and Golf Singles and Doubles on 8th August. Please help if you're contacted by one of our captains. We haven't entered a team for the Ladies Day as we don't have enough ladies playing Association to put up a team. However, if you'd like to play please contact me and I'll see what we can organise.

All players are welcome to our one-day Open Golf Croquet handicap play event on Saturday 24th July, our Open Handicap Association Croquet event on Saturday/Sunday 25th /26th September and our Open Advanced Croquet event on Saturday/Sunday 11th/12th September. We also have two B-level Advanced one day events on 15th May and 7th August.

For higher handicap players an Open Handicap Association Croquet event will take place on Saturday 18th September (Handicap 16+) and an internal High Bisquers sometime on 21st August.

Entry forms for all our Open events are on the website and in the Club House on the left hand wall. Please send them in, with your payment, to me as soon as possible.

The Kent Cup (Association) is being held at Medway on 5th/6th June. The Kent Cup (Golf) will be at Ramsgate on 18th July, please see the flyer in the Clubhouse for details of how to enter.

Finally, we've offered to host the annual match of the Croquet Association v the Croquet Association of Ireland early in July and will let you know if we're successful.

Mick Belcham

Club Afternoons and Friendlies

Frank Gunstone is continuing to run, with help from others, the main Club afternoons on Wednesday and Sunday, generally starting at 2pm with tea at about 3.30 and continuing until early evening, commencing on 4th April. Golf Croquet is the primary game on these afternoons, with the overall emphasis of club afternoons being fun and enjoyment in a friendly atmosphere. We'll also be encouraging competitive singles play and trying to improve your playing skills.

We're planning friendly games with local clubs and hopefully visits to National Trust properties (we've visited Ightham Mote and Chartwell in the past) for demonstration games and promotion of croquet. We're also hoping to demonstrate at Penshurst Place again, but no date has been scheduled yet. If you're interested in participating, or have suggestions about possible friendlies, please contact Duncan Cox ASAP.

Corporate Challenge

We'll be running our popular *Corporate Challenge* again, in the evening of Friday 11th June with a maximum of 18 teams. This is a fun event for *any* organisation (company, volunteer, sports etc.) or even a family, to form teams of two players – although we're targeting companies as our marketing effort. Multiple entries per organisation are encouraged (perhaps as an internal friendly competition?) with a nominal charge of £15 per team. Full instruction is given at the start of the evening and we provide assistance during the games.

If you know of anyone who might be interested in learning about Croquet, playing in or sponsoring the *Corporate Challenge* please let Mick Belcham or Jon Diamond know. Full details and entry forms are on our website and in the Club House. Please put 11th June in your diary.

Social

Our successful programme of pub lunches continued over the winter, despite the weather on at least one occasion. Hopefully, we'll repeat these next winter.

Due to the earlier start to the season than predicted last autumn, we've decided to cancel the final pub lunch for 2008/9 on 9th April!

Our current ideas for the summer are to have another BBQ mid-summer. Perhaps also something in the evening after the Croquet Challenge? If you have any ideas or want to help in some way please let Kate Sander know.

Clubhouse Maintenance and Cleaning

We've been undertaking a few upgrades to our facilities over the winter:

- Jolyon Creasey has installed electric hand-dryers in both the Changing Rooms and fixed the dripping/difficult taps
- Jeff Chapman has painted the ceilings in the Changing Rooms (which didn't appear to have been ever done) and will be touching up in a number of other places externally, including the graffiti, now that the weather has improved

- Jeff has acquired some Lockers for the Ladies Changing Room – please don't take the keys away with you!
- New door mats
- replacing the broken leaflet dispenser (sadly an annual occurrence).

Some other things that will be attended to in the early part of the season are:

- The Ball Store door will be replaced or upgraded
- Fixing broken roof tiles
- Decking in front of the grass compost

A spring clean should have taken place by Opening Day and a Cleaning Rota sheet should be on the Notice Board shortly, based on the responses to our volunteering request with the Membership Renewal forms. If you can't make the designated week, please could you arrange to swap with someone else.

In any event please help to ensure that the club house remains a clean and tidy place by

- washing up and putting away all cups, saucers etc. (glasses upside down please to minimise dust)
- if the waste bin is full take the rubbish away and dispose of it, putting in a new liner (stocks under sink)
- if coffee, tea, sugar, milk or biscuits are running out either replace them (taking money from the pot) or let Carolyn Gunstone know

A reminder about this is in the Club House.

Club Badges

Since we changed our logo a few years ago the only item that we've been able to provide to our members with the new logo on was an iron-on transfer (available in the club house). This has been somewhat limiting, especially for those members playing in one of our teams.

This transfer is still available until stocks run out, but we have now ordered some new badges – 3 inch embroidered ones and one inch enamel ones. We'll be handing out one of each to every member with additional ones costing £2 and £3 respectively. Please watch for these to arrive in the Club House and sign the list when you collect them..

In addition to these badges we're offer a range of white tops for both men and women with the new logo already printed on. Rather than order a large stock for ourselves, with all the cost and complications that that involves, we are providing a clothing ordering service via an on-line store provided by another company (spreadshirt.net). Our particular store has been set up specifically to include items suitable for our members with our logo on - especially good as a uniform for members who are playing in one of our teams...

This store may be accessed via a new page (click on Buy... on the left hand menu) on our website that has more detail on this and some other things you may need to buy to help you play (better).

Please note that

- ◆ there is a standard delivery charge (currently £4) so it might be worthwhile for members to get together to order a number of items at the same time
- ◆ I've tried as far as possible to position the badge on the tops at a suitable size and position, but it isn't possible to see EXACTLY what it's like without getting an item delivered. So, if you get an item and think the logo should be slightly smaller/larger or moved a bit up/down/left/right please let me know as soon as possible after you receive your order.
- ◆ we're limited by the items supplied by spreadshirt.net, so can't provide wet gear or sweaters or other such stuff.

In addition to the clothing there are a few other items that members might wish to purchase with the logo on - a tote bag, mug and metal badges of two sizes (50mm and 32mm).

I'll be leaving a small number of badges (price £2 for the large and £1.50 for the small) in the club house for ad-hoc purchases.

Jon Diamond

Important Diary Dates

March

28 **Season Opening
with Soup & Ploughman's Lunch**

24 *Open Golf Croquet Tournament*
26-30 Association Summer School @
Southwick

April

17 Roehampton Golf Handicap
17/18 Dulwich Association Handicap
24/25 Association Beginners/Improvers
course @ Southwick

August

7 *Open Super B Advanced*
8 SECF Golf Teams (Singles and
Doubles) @ Southwick
21 Internal Association High Bisquers
Tournament
27/28 Association 14pt Doubles 2
Southwick

May

8/9 SECF Handicap Association teams
of 4 @ Southwick
15 *Open Super B Advanced*
15/16 Golf Beginners/Improvers Course @
Southwick
20 Golf Level play – handicap 4+ @
Surbiton

September

5 SECF One Ball Teams @
Littlehampton
11/12 *Open Advanced Tournament*
18/19 All England Association Handicap
Final
18/19 *Open Association High Bisquers
Tournament*
25/26 All England Golf Handicap Final
25/26 *Open Handicap Tournament*

June

5/6 Kent Cup (Association) @ Medway
11 Corporate Challenge

November

13 AGM @ Frant Memorial Hall

July

3/4 Golf Coaching Course @ Southwick
7 SECF Ladies Day @ Southwick
10/11 SECF Golf Croquet Championship
@ Compton
18 Kent Cup (Golf) @ Ramsgate

Finally, remember that the latest dates, information updates etc. are on the web-site, so if you're asked about Croquet or our club details just direct them to <http://www.tunbridgewellscroquet.org.uk>