



NEWSLETTER

July 2010

From The Chairman



The season is well under way, with our lawns looking in great condition this season, especially considering the weather we had over the Winter and Spring. They're definitely still flat apart from a few spots and the fastest we've ever had.

I'm slightly disappointed by the numbers we're seeing on most Club Afternoons when the weather is good – there's plenty of room for more players on the lawns on these days. On the other hand there seems to be more competition and friendly games being played at other times.

We need new members! Well of course we do, since the lawns aren't full all the time. Have you persuaded your friends to have a go? I find that whenever we have a social occasion novices always have a great time and enjoy the game. We just need to persuade them to join... The final regular Open Day for the season is this Sunday 4th July, so why don't you invite your friends then, or any other Sunday/Wednesday afternoon.

Don't forget if you bring a visitor along, or one turns up, to fill in their details in the Visitors Book in the Club House.

We've had another graffiti attack, this time targeted at the black panels on the Equipment Store. Hopefully this will be the last this season.

The new badges we commissioned have now arrived. Most people have collected theirs from the right hand drawer in the Club House. If you haven't yet then please do so soon. Each member is entitled to a small enamel one and a larger woven one – please wear them when you represent the club! Additional ones are available at a cost of £2 for the woven ones and £3 for the enamel ones. Please put the money in the tea kitty jar.

Jon Diamond

SUMMER SUPPER

8 Hungershall Park, Tunbridge Wells, TN4 8NE
Saturday 21st August @ 7pm

Cost £12 including wine

Continuing the tradition of twice-yearly fund-raising events started by Mark and Elaine Houslop, Michael and Kate Sander invite you for a summer evening in their garden to enjoy a buffet supper and wine.

RSVP - Phone: (01892) 527315
Email: ksander2008@googlemail.com

Help Needed

In addition to the help Roger needs from time to time regarding lawns etc. we've got several parties coming to our lawns in July and August (all good money for the club funds) and we need volunteers to help with these occasions. So if you can help please respond to Jon Diamond or Mick Belcham as soon as possible.

The dates/times and group visiting are:

17th July 2pm-6pm Willshire

6th August 4pm-8pm Lovat Insurance - 32 players with buffet supper

Thanks to everyone who have helped in the other visits we've had this season.

People News

We're glad to be welcoming John Hobbs back to good health after his little accident this spring. He's running our Association coaching on Tuesday late afternoons.

Due to his back problems Richard Clark has been unable to direct coaching so far this season, but is now back on the croquet lawns, so if you would like some specific advice/coaching please contact him.

Aaron Westerby, who was a member of our club when he was last resident in Tunbridge Wells, will be around doing some practice and coaching in July before he starts playing in the MacRobertson Shield in August.

This event is the premier World Team event, played between Australia, GB, New Zealand and South Africa and we're planning an outing to see two of the Tests at Surbiton on 20th August (contact Jon Diamond if you're interested in going). Aaron will be captaining New Zealand, so while we wish him well, we hope his team doesn't win...

Finally, congratulations to Alex Jardine on reaching Scratch Handicap (0 @ Association). Unfortunately he did so in his last two games at Jolyon's expense...

It's been a while since we've had such a good player as one of club members, so it's good to see that we're improving overall.

Membership

We are delighted to be able to report that our membership is standing at 60 members, despite this year losing some very valued club members.

However a number of members joined last year on a special rate, particularly Ashdown Probus members, but we have seen very little of them. We would be delighted to see you attend for club social afternoons, where we play Golf Croquet, and generally enjoy ourselves.

Tuition is available, and occasionally competitive singles is played. We make sure everyone has a game or three, and Kate often supplies us with home made goodies for tea! Remember Wednesday and Sunday afternoons from 2pm.

Carolyn Gunstone

Lawns Report

After the long wet winter our lawns have taken time to recover but are now playing very well. They are possibly playing faster than at any previous time. We are cutting to 5.5mm, which is as short as we want to go, and either verti-cutting or spiking each week in rotation. The irrigation system has proved its worth being used extensively during the dry weather helping to keep the lawns in good condition.

Due to the wet winter and lack of treatment we have had an invasion of meadow grass that is difficult to remove. Regular cutting should help to prevent it seeding and keep it under control.

Tony Field has found that work pressures have prevented him from having adequate time to cut the lawns so we have mutually agreed that he will only assist us in emergency situations. David Evans has taken on all the cutting duties together with all his other work. David would welcome any assistance from members, especially for the banking and other grass area around the lawns. So if you fancy some extra exercise please call David. Thanks to the members that helped during David's recent holiday.

We have experienced some equipment failures over the past 2 months, but all have been fixed without excessive cost.

Please remember to replace the mesh when you clear a lawn. The peg should NOT be stuck in the middle of the hoop, or in line with it, to keep the mesh down (as they were originally) since that will help create rabbit runs quicker – stick it in to one side, preferably not in to the same position as previously.

Roger Morris

Handicapping

Please remember to fill in your handicap cards for every tournament, match or competition game. Your handicap will not normally be changed by the Club Handicapper except by reference to this card. In general all handicap changes should be automatic when your index passes through a trigger point and he shouldn't need to do anything, except sign-off any automatic changes.

Filling in the Golf Handicap Cards is a little more complicated than it used to be, so we've put together a note to help you do so – it's on the Notice Board next to the Membership List and copies of it are available on the table underneath.

Coaching

The Tuesday evening sessions organised by John Hobbs are proving valuable for the three or so people who attend!

We all need some coaching, so why don't you turn up to one of these sessions or just talk to one of the other players to find out what you're doing wrong? Or why not practise? We've got a hoop that we can set on the side of Lawn 1 that you can use to practise jump shots with. We've also got a half-ball on a spike. This can be used as a target, so that you can improve the accuracy of your hitting more quickly.

Internal Competitions

These have started a little more slowly than we'd have liked, but some are well under way.

Due to lack of play we've curtailed the Lustau and Howell (High Bisquers) by deleting the Process part of the draw – sorry to those people involved.

Quite a few of the first round games that were due to be completed by 31st May are still unplayed. If these haven't been played by the date of the next round, 14th July, then we'll have to scratch the game and award the person the winner was supposed to play in the second round a walk-over. You have been warned...

Don't forget if you're looking for competitive play you can play Ladder games any time during the season. You just have to challenge someone within 3 steps above you.

Tournaments

We're still arranging most of our SECF League matches and haven't played any so far. If you want to be considered for a team contact John Hobbs (Association) and Derek Heath (Golf).

We had hoped to play Medway last Monday in the CA Mary Rose, but they cried off at the last moment, so we've got a walk-over and now play East Dorset in the Quarter Final.

Don't forget we've got a Golf Croquet Handicap tournament at Tunbridge Wells on 24th July. If you want to play please let Mick Belcham know as soon as possible as places are limited and we've got quite a large number of entrants from other clubs already.

There's also the Kent Cup (Golf) being held at Ramsgate on 18th July. Details are on the Notice Board.

Other tournament results are:

- **Ramsgate Advanced Weekend**
Alex Jardine won this early season event with six wins out of seven. Congratulations - but not quite as good as last year, though, when he won all seven games! (But then last year was a B-level and this year was totally open.)
- **Winchester One Ball**
Roger Barnacle won the Cryptorchid Handicap in this popular charity tournament. This year there were 19 club heats, some in far-flung corners - from Sidmouth to Colchester to Southport. Over 260 players participated, over £1,300 was raised for Macmillan Cancer Support.
Jeff had won our heat earlier this year and so qualified to play this year. He writes "I played at Winchester on Saturday and it turned out to be [apart from the weather] a sociable and enjoyable experience. The lawns were lightning fast with more undulations than at TW. There must be a law that accounts for the gravitational effect of some hoops when four simultaneous games are in progress. I did 'sport' the club badge on my shirt - not that anyone would know as the weather was so cold and wet that sweaters [full time] and rain gear [part time] were obligatory.
In the event I had a 50% record 4/8 - scores ranged between 0/8 and 8/8 in a good approximation to a Gaussian distribution. I played Rutgers Beijderwellen in my second game and having not seen him in his first game and having no idea what the really good players were like my tactics were abysmal and I ended up severely thrashed as he completed the hoops in two attempts. I'd wised up in my match against the next best player present [Marcus Evans], managed my bisques better and achieved a win."
- **Southwick Salver**
Alex didn't win, but performed pretty well again as the "victor of the seeds' graveyard quarter", losing in the semi-finals to the winner Jamie Burch.
- **May TW Super B**
Just four visitors entered our first one-day advanced tournament of the season, aimed mainly at the working player; three of the "usual suspects" joined by the UK's number 4 lady, Gabrielle Higgins, who took the honours with a clean sweep of 4 wins.
Alex very nearly prevailed but blobbed rover with all 3 peels done on partner ball (albeit in two turns), giving Gabrielle the "all four balls round rover" leave from which she duly finished +3.
Mick G had an exciting +1 win over Philip after having one ball pegged out and taking on the 3-ball break to the peg. He then finished with a comfortable win over our visitor Mike from Reigate.
- **Kent Cup**
Played at Medway this year our representatives Alex, Mick G and Jolyon played well, but failed to win. Perhaps next year at home we'll do better?
- **Kent at the Inter Counties**
Alex and Jon were part of the improving Kent team at the Association Inter Counties tournament, held from 28th May - 1st June at Southwick and Compton. The Inter Counties is, we believe, the largest croquet tournament in the world with more than 120 players involved,

playing Advanced Doubles matches.

Kent came 6th out of 11 in the Second Division with 6 wins in 10 matches, which is a better performance than last year. The present system of two divisions of eleven teams has been in existence since 1997. In 1997 we were fourth with seven wins, but the three ahead of us all had seven wins and were promoted. The only other time we had six wins was in 2003, we were fifth then.

The current strategy is aimed at winning on the centenary of Kent's last win (in 1912), so there's some way to go, including winning promotion next year...

- Southwick Midsummer
Jon and Alex took part in this 5 game tournament, with Jon coming second in a very even event – everyone won either 2 or 3 games.
- All England Club Final
The club's internal competition for the Lewis Trophy (and the ensuing accolade of representation at the All England Regional Finals) duly took place.
There were five entrants with the winner being Barney in a tight finish (+3) against Richard Mann, making the fifth time he's won his own trophy! Good luck to him in the Regional Finals.

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. 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.

Duncan Cox has tried to organise a number of friendlies, but without success this year. However, we have been down to the new Ivychurch lawn:

Ivychurch Opening

I was invited to the Ivychurch Opening of their new lawns. Their old lawns were sold last year and they had to find new premises.

It is amazing the amount of work they have done since last November – moving all the clubhouse facilities. They started work on the lawns in March, and you can see the result by comparing the grass outside the fence which is top hayfield standard!

Anita very kindly drove me to the club and we played 5 games each of Golf Croquet Doubles. I retired at half-time and my place was taken by Roger, an Ivychurch member.

We were served a lovely lunch and tea, shaded from the sun. The temperature was 87°, but there was plenty of iced water and stronger beverages on tap. Someone lost the bottle opener, but there were replacements!

The tournament was won by Brenda and Judy from Canterbury, with our Frank and Duncan second.

Many thanks to Ivychurch for a wonderful day and the Romney Marsh traditional hospitality.

Miriam Reader

Corporate Challenge

This year was disappointing with only 6 teams entering – perhaps the opening of the World Cup on the same evening had something to do with it? Anyway, Lovat won yet again – perhaps they should retain the trophy on a permanent basis?!

We'll probably continue with this for another year, but if the number of entrants doesn't increase then I guess we will need to try something else for marketing both ourselves and croquet.

Cleaning

Please help to keep the Club neat and tidy! We've had a number of occasions when it's been left in an unsatisfactory condition. If you follow the housekeeping rules on the wall above the sink in the Club House, then we'll all benefit.

Please don't leave glasses and plates drying on the drainer – dry them and put them away.

Someone left the oven switched on and hot. If you do use it please switch it off AND unplug it.

Carolyn Gunstone

Important Diary Dates

SECF League matches are not included – please see the website or the Notice Board

July

3/4 Golf Coaching Course @ Southwick
7 SECF Ladies Day @ Southwick
10/11 SECF Golf Croquet Championship @ Compton
18 Kent Cup (Golf) @ Ramsgate
24 *Open Golf Croquet Tournament*
26-30 Association Summer School @ Southwick

August

7 *Open Super B Advanced*
8 SECF Golf Teams (Singles and Doubles) @ Southwick

21 Internal Association High Bisquers Tournament
27-29 Association 14pt Doubles 2 Southwick

September

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

November

13 AGM @ Frant Memorial Hall

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>