



# NEWSLETTER

## October 2010

### From The Chairman



It's been a good season, with much activity all over the place and many compliments from players from other clubs about our facilities and the quality of our lawns. I've been away somewhat, but have still managed to talk and play with many of you.

Welcome to all our new members this year and I hope to meet as many of you as possible at the AGM and over the winter.

The main season is now essentially over, with only one of our internal competitions still incomplete. Sadly, our competitive position in the SECF Leagues was not all we hoped for. Further details are below, as are details of our Winter Programme.

The winter pub lunches are starting again in the New Year (dates are in the Diary section at the end). If you're thinking of coming please let me know by the previous Monday, so that I can let the pub know how many people to expect.

### *Emergency Phone*

We have acquired a mobile phone that will be left in the Clubhouse to use, mainly for emergencies. It's left out of sight in the blue first aid bag which is normally on the shelf in the Mens' Changing Room.

As the battery will run down between uses, you will probably need to plug it into the charger when using it. The cost of all calls will be invoiced to the club, so if you use it please leave an appropriate amount of money in the tea/coffee pot, unless it's an obvious medical emergency etc, and then put it back in the bag.

If you do need to receive an incoming call the number is 07976 8404446 This diverts to my home number if not answered, so do switch it on if you're expecting a call and also answer it promptly!

### *Summer Supper*

Our late Summer BBQ transmogrified this year into a Summer Supper hosted by Kate and Michael Sander. Some 30 people turned up again for a very social occasion. Many thanks to them both for cooking and hosting this, especially as it was the day before a very early departure for a week at the Edinburgh Festival, and also to Pauline Morris for organising the raffle enjoyed by everybody, including the winner of the large home-grown courgette as booby prize.

Although a date has not yet been set, we hope to gather together for a Winter warmer sometime in late January or February 2010. The date will be posted on the website and sent by e-mail. Please phone me in the middle of January if you're not on email and would like to know the date.

### *AGM*

You should have received a separate invitation to this, together with our accounts. These are continuing to be healthy due to your donations and also a number of corporate and other events. I'd like to thank everybody who's helped with these.

The AGM will take place on 13<sup>th</sup> November at the Frant Village Hall, starting at 11am (coffee from 10:30am) and end at 12:30pm with the annual awards presentation and lunch (cost £7.50 including wine/beer). Please come along for this formal AND social occasion. I hope to see many of you there.

We're proposing to change the financial year end from 30<sup>th</sup> September to 31<sup>st</sup> December as this makes the Treasurer's life much easier and also is more understandable, as we're now playing well into the winter period. However, this means that 2010 will be the last time we have the AGM in November, as it will be moved, probably to the end of February – allowing us to look forward to the new season coming up shortly!

### **Committee**

Turnover this year has been somewhat lower than previously, however Roger Morris has indicated that he is retiring for health reasons. We'll certainly miss his assistance and management of the lawns. This leaves a vacancy on the Committee, so we're looking for volunteers to join.

One job that will definitely need to be filled next season is that of organiser of the SECF Association B League team. This doesn't need to be a committee member, so if you think you'd like to fill this role please talk to Mick or myself.

We would be delighted to welcome other new blood onto the committee, even without committing to particular jobs so, please, if you might be interested in helping please fill out the nomination form or contact one of the committee members.

*Jon Diamond*

### **Lawns**

Throughout this year our lawns have been in very good condition and have been praised by visiting players. We are confident that they are among the best croquet lawns in the country and we can be rightfully proud of the clubs achievements.

At the end of September we carried out an extensive autumn maintenance programme to prepare for the winter and ensure the lawns are in the best possible condition for 2011. Once again we were very lucky with the weather hitting the ideal weather window. This year we included over seeding with over £300 of top quality grass seed. This total treatment programme is our single largest expenditure for the year costing over £2,000, so please keep the donations coming in.

Unfortunately, Roger who has managed the lawns over the last 5 years, has reluctantly decided to resign from the Committee for health reasons and will relinquish responsibility for the lawns at the end of this year.

David Evans, who's been doing the lawn maintenance this year, has proved to be much more reliable than our previous incumbent. So, with Roger retiring, we've asked him to take on more of a management role, at a cost of course. We will be discussing this further at the AGM.

### **Winter Play**

**Don't forget to check the Notice Board before you start playing to see which lawns are available declared OPEN. We will be rotating the use of lawns during the winter period, and closing them if it's very wet, to ensure that we don't damage any of them. However, even if a lawn is shown as OPEN please don't use it if very wet or frosty.**

Normal club sessions, mainly Golf, will continue to take place on Sunday and Wednesday afternoons (2pm-dusk) as long as possible, but please watch the Notice Boards and our web-site for changes.

Once again, we cross our (possibly frozen) fingers and hope the weather gods are with us as we head into the winter season.

For your monthly delectation, we propose a Sunday morning of social Handicap One-Ball, the quick-fire version that combines some of the best features of both GC and AC. For the GC aficionado, the skills of hitting from distance and shootin' hoops; for the AC player the knife-edge of trying to make breaks off the oppo's ball!

Now, before anyone leaps in and says “Yes, but it’s AC – just half as complicated!”, I would say that most of the time, when it becomes a chase round the hoops, the average GC player, with a few bisques, has every chance of beating an average AC player. And we’ll allow advice and coaching !!

The system is that we give 1/3 the bisque difference so, by comparison with Jon D for instance, most GC players (off a 24 AC handicap) will get 7 bisques to help them run the 12 hoops – and you CAN run hoops in a bisque turn, unlike in GC. All you have to do is take on board the stop-shot croquet shot (so putting the oppo ball far away), then position to run your hoop next turn.

Each game should take about 20 minutes and it is normal to treble-bank so we should get in four games for everybody in a morning, allowing plenty of time for coffee and chat.

So please let’s see everybody giving it a go on the following Sunday mornings (10 a.m. till 1:00):

- December 5
- January 2 (New Year celebration)
- February 6
- March 6
- April 3

If the weather is impossible, or the courts unplayable, then we should be able to delay for a week at a time till we get a reasonable day.

*Alex Jardine*

## **Coaching**

Due to Richard Clark and John Hobbs injuries we've been unable to organise much proper coaching this year. However, I hope we can do better next year!

Aaron Westerby, captain of the New Zealand Test Team which came so close to winning the MacRobertson Shield in August practised on our lawns during this year and provided some coaching for our Advanced players. Sadly, this was arranged at short notice so only a few people could take up these opportunities. Maybe next time?

## **Housekeeping etc**

A big thank you to all who have contributed to the tea making, washing and drying up, Spring cleaning and weekly sprucing up of the clubhouse (and anything else I may have forgotten). It's very necessary and much appreciated by all.

We'll be decommissioning the irrigation system, removing the awnings and generally preparing for Winter sometime in November. Please let Jon or Mick know if you can help and they'll be in touch regarding dates.

For the Winter since there won't be as much usage as during the Summer we'll be trying a different tack for cleaning. We're asking you to look at the Cleaning Sheet on the Notice Board and if it hasn't been cleaned for a couple of weeks to do the necessary cleaning; then write your name and the date on the bottom of the list. Hopefully no-one should have to do this more than once over the Winter.

Cleaning of the Clubhouse is not the most sought after task! However, it's very necessary. With constant use it's all too easy for the Club to become grubby, so please come forward to ensure a rota can be prepared that covers each week of the playing season. Look out for the section on the membership renewal form where we ask for volunteers. Many hands make light work!

Our thanks also go to Kate Sander who took care of catering for us all at the AGM last year and throughout the year!

## Tournaments

### *Internal Competitions*

The finals were blessed with an absolutely fabulous day. We had 5 finals (unfortunately Shirley Jardine had to pull out the night before) and in addition to the players there were a number of family members plus some spectators. Some ladies brought cakes and we had a really sociable day with some people getting a game later in the afternoon.

Congratulations to the winners of all our internal competitions:

#### **ASSOCIATION**

<i>Spa Salver</i>	Alex Jardine
<i>Lustau Cup</i>	Jolyon Creasey
<i>Calverley Cup</i>	Geoff Croxford
<i>Howell Cup</i>	Shirley Jardine or Jeff Chapman
<i>Lewis Shield</i>	Barney Lewis
<i>Doubles Goblet</i>	outstanding
<i>Association Ladder -</i>	

#### **GOLF**

<i>Golf Level</i>	Richard Clark
<i>Kitching Rose Bowl</i>	Ray Meech
<i>Golf High Bisquers</i>	Michael Gentry
<i>Golf Doubles</i>	Duncan Cox & Frank Gunstone
<i>Golf Ladder</i>	Duncan Cox

The Association Doubles final is actually part-played, but stopped due to lack of light. Unfortunately Mick Greagsby thought that his 6 month sojourn at another croquet club in California was more important than completing this game, so we'll definitely hold this game over until next season!

### *Honeygrove Cup (Advanced September)*

This year Alex Jardine was away in Ryde, IOW playing in the Croquet Association Treasurer's Tankard and Jon Diamond had a miserable tournament. The winner turned out to be Richard Smith from Bowdon and Chester. Other far flung players came from Beverley and Kenilworth.

We hope they liked it well enough to return next year, unless they're too good for the event by then!

### *Pegasus Plate (Association Handicap September)*

Seven players entered, but none from Tunbridge Wells (where were you?). Richard Lea from Medway was the winner with 5 from his 6 games.

Mick Greagsby made his first debut as manager (he couldn't play since he hadn't been signed off by his doctor then), on the Sunday, with John Hobbs manager on Saturday.

## Inter-Club Matches and Friendlies

### *Mary Rose Cup (Croquet Association inter-club Advanced, minimum handicap 1)*

After our success against Medway (won by walk-over) we lost to East Dorset in the Semi-Finals for the second year running at the neutral location of Southwick by 4 games to 2.

### *SECF Leagues*

A not very good season this year., but still better than in 2009 except in in the Golf Handicap League. The detailed results are on the website, but we had to pull out of the A league as we had too many injured players, were 7<sup>th</sup> out of 15 in the U League with a proper win this year, 12/17 in the B League with one win, 5/7 in the Golf Level Play and 10/20 in the Golf Handicap League with 2 wins.

*Must practice more and get our teams out next year...*

### *SECF Golf Teams*

Not so good this year after winning last year, still it's the taking part isn't it?

### *Friendlies*

We failed to organise any this year, apart from the visit to help Ivychurch celebrate their Opening Day of their new lawn. *Must do better next year...*

## **Other Visits**

We weren't at Penshurst Place this year, but we hope to be there again next year. *Must do better next year...*

## **MacRobertson Shield**

Several members went to Surbiton on a very grey Friday to watch GB play Australia and NZ v USA. The play was interesting, with the commentary available online from previous day having highlighted the number of errors under pressure being made – tactical errors, missing shortish roquets and blobbed hoops. A particular example was Rutger playing a short croquet shot in one corner and then stymying himself from the ball he was then trying to rush. A jump shot to attempt the roquet then predictably didn't work, leading to the loss of that game. Hey, ho, I could play as well as that...

Finally we ended up watching Aaron Westerby making a synchronised peg-out with a fellow team member on the adjacent lawn in the NZvUSA Doubles matches.

We left having seen GB win all 4 games to have finished and NZ all three of theirs, so our support was clearly important! Surbiton provided their usual excellent catering and it was a great day out.

## **Finally - practice makes perfect...**

On 21/10/2010 22:44, Reg Bamford (sometime World Champion) wrote:

*I'm a big believer in the benefits of the Swing Trainer. John Hobbs made a couple for me, and I use it (I have one left) every 3 years as a Swing MOT.*

*You will notice a huge benefit (and some rather startling results during the practice regime itself if you follow mine) in a) your stance, b) your swing and c) your confidence.*

*The practice regime I follow every 3 years (I reckon the benefits last that long) is 5 practice sessions, each lasting 2-3 hours within a 2 week period at the start of every third season (March/April). Each practice session consists of:*

- *Shooting 16 balls on the Trainer at the side of hoop 4 from the West Boundary*
- *Shooting (the same) 16 balls through Hoop 9 from the boundary\* (without the trainer)*
- *Shooting (the same) 16 balls at the peg from the East Boundary\*\*.*
- *Repeat this series 6 times, so shooting 16 x 3 x 6 balls (288 balls) during the session*
- *Every shot is taken while practicing visualisation and pretence that the shot is the final hit-in opportunity of game 5 in the World Championship Final. Concentrate as much as you can on replicating a match situation.*

*\* Every second series of 16 balls is shot from halfway - i.e. about 4 yards, rather than 8 yards.*

*\*\* Every second series, close your eyes once you have taken aim and play the shot. This accentuates your non-visual senses, particularly touch and feel, allowing a better focus on the mechanics of your swing.*

*If you can beat my record of 64 consecutive hits on the peg AND 32 consecutive hoop shots during one session, then you know your swing is grooved. Good luck!*

John Hobbs doesn't have one any more, but does have plans for building one, so if anyone wants to make one for practise over the winter, please contact him.

## Important Diary Dates

November 13	AGM: 10:30am coffee, for 11am start @ Frant Memorial Hall, followed by lunch (£7.50 incl drinks) at about 12:30pm
December 5	Winter One Ball
January 2	Winter One Ball
January 13	Pub Lunch, 12:30pm @ Spread Eagle, Forest Road, Hawkenbury
February 6	Winter One Ball
February 17	Pub Lunch, 12:30pm @ George & Dragon, Speldhurst
February 20	AC Alternate Strokes Doubles Tournament @ Southwick
March 6	Winter One Ball
March 6	Inter Club Golf Croquet Tournament @ Southwick
March 17	Pub Lunch, 12:30pm @ Foresters Arms, Fairwarp
March 20	Singles Golf Croquet Tournament @ Southwick
April 3	Winter One Ball

All events at Southwick start at 9:30am. Soup and light lunch provided. The entry fee is £10 for singles and £7.50 per person for doubles. Contact John Low on 01273 388910 or use their website <http://www.sussexcountycroquetclub.org.uk> Please book early as the number of lawns will be limited.

Don't forget the latest dates, information updates etc. are on the web-site, so if you're asked about Croquet or club details just direct them to <http://www.tunbridgewellscroquet.org.uk>