



NEWSLETTER

April 2011

From The Chairman



It's that time of year again! After a terrible December the snow mould is beginning to disappear and the grass is growing enough to require mowing, so we'll shortly be starting our Official Season, despite the fact that some stalwarts have been playing a bit and we've had several 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 10th April. See below for more details.

I'd like to welcome our new Groundsman Ray Kemp, replacing David Evans who, for some reason, decided that a Project Manager role in the Construction Industry was more attractive. Ray is an avid Cricket and Lawn Tennis player and coach, and was Groundsman at the Tunbridge

Wells Lawn Tennis Club in Nevill Park.

This reminds me: we've found that this was the venue for a previous croquet club in TW. This was discovered following a Reigate Priory club member discovering a CA All England medal for someone in TW in 1923. So far I've discovered a report of a one week croquet tournament in TW in the Courier in 1923. More details of this are on our website and will be added as they're discovered.

We've scheduled Open Days on the first Sundays of May, July and August (we've got a tournament on the first Sunday in June). 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 are available in the Club House.

Another 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 signs in. Hopefully, Mick Greagsby will be able follow up local visitors to ensure that they actually join as members as soon as possible, so make sure you've got sufficient details written down!

Sadly, TWBC have put up their parking charges on 1st April again, so be prepared to put some more money in the meter (sigh). However, don't forget that parking after 6pm and on Sundays on single yellow lines and in any parking bays is still free of charge. We have talked to the Calverley Parks Residents Association and the owners of the gravel road separately, but sadly they aren't prepared to help us out in some way – understandably they're afraid that if we do start to use it then all and sundry will start parking there.

Finally, I'd like to thank Roger Morris, who retired from the Committee at the AGM, for his service to the Club. Without him we wouldn't have been able to replace our lawns and they wouldn't be in the fine state that they are.

Now it's time to oil your mallet, practise a bit, chivvy Richard for some coaching, and get stuck in. I hope to see you all on the lawns soon. Oh, and in case I forgot, invite all your friends to join too.....

Jon Diamond

Opening Day

Opening Day will be Sunday 10th April and, apart from the social atmosphere and the food at lunch time, we'll have a little competitive One Ball event in the morning, starting at 10:30am (subject to the weather of course). In the afternoon we'll be running a Pirates, or some other fun kind of event, as well as Golf and any left-overs who want to play One Ball.

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 is providing a Soup and Ploughman's lunch (cost £5) for Opening Day at about 12:30-1pm, so please phone or email Kate - (01892) 527315, ksander2008@googlemail.com to say you're coming for lunch.

Winter News

The AGM in November managed to take place without any catering diversions again. Special thanks to Kate Sanders again for her food and to her helpers with the food and drink. One major item was a Constitution change making the financial year end in December, so the next AGM will now be in February 2012. Competition prizes will probably be presented on Finals Day in future - 25th September this year.

The Winter Warmer evening at the Sanders was attended by more than 20 members. Excellent food and drink were provided and the raffle had a special prize of a Fish & Chip Supper in a box: sardines, a potato, oil, salt and vinegar! Thanks to Kate and Mike for hosting this.

Our One Balls on the first Sunday in the month have been more successful than last year; we managed to run four of them with 8 people turning up in March.

Pub lunches were attended with between 13 and 20 members, so we'll continue to run these through next winter.

Sadly, we've also had a couple of deaths of our members over the winter.

- Joan Whitehead hadn't been seen much over the last couple of years, as she'd broken an arm and had a few other problems, and had already decided not to renew this year. She enjoyed playing Association and was a special friend of Stan Oxenbury. Her death, at 95, was still a shock.
- Miriam Reader died on 19th December at the age of 82. She was well known to everyone as a staunch supporter of the club, enthusiastic Association and Golf player, team and committee member, flag raiser, parking space supplier and washer-up on many occasions, mostly unasked.

Her funeral, was standing room only, and was attended by people from many other croquet clubs in addition to her equine-loving friends and family, and we raised £450 for one of the nominated charities – Macmillan Cancer Support. Her nephew wrote after the funeral:

"I would like to say how good it was to see you and so many of the croquet club on Friday. Miriam who didn't like fuss when it came to her, would I'm sure, have been very pleased. My wife Liz & I were touched about the comments and stories we heard and we learnt many things about Miriam that we were unaware of. She always spoke very highly about the

croquet club and I can see why! We didn't get to speak to everyone as the numbers that turned up were fantastic but having spoken to so many we feel we would like to turn up one weekend to see Miriam's name in print at the club."

Miriam left us £1,000 as a bequest, which we hope to spend wisely. [As a Community Amateur Sports Club any bequest to us is free of Inheritance Tax.] As a tribute to her we've renamed one of her favourite competitions, the Association Doubles, as the Miriam Reader Memorial Doubles. She will be much missed.

Secretary's Notes

If you haven't paid your subscription yet there's still time. Please send the form, together with payment, to Carolyn Gunstone 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. The snow mould is now disappearing and hopefully we'll be able to cut them shorter soon.

Please help in the care of lawns by avoiding playing on lawns showing signs of wear around the hoops, avoiding play after heavy rain, and marking balls with the plastic markers not coins when you're double-banking. Please obey the notices on the Notice Board, showing which lawns are Open and which are Closed.

Jump shots: practising is a really good idea, but practising jump shots can damage the lawns. So we've put holes for a hoop underneath the bank on Lawn 1. When you want to practise these please put out a hoop specially into these holes, then you won't cause any damage to the main lawns!

Ray also mentioned that whoever had 'filled in' some patches had left the soil slightly too proud and his experience was that this could be a significant contributor to mower blade blunting. We don't want that as sharpening them takes a long time, and if we have to replace them it can cost £400.

He also found the Ball Store open. There has been some difficulty with the door and the lock, so could you make sure that it's locked when you leave...

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.

Jeff Chapman

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 Duncan Cox for Golf Croquet.

We have raised the issue of other clubs' handicaps at the SECF and they're trying to do something, as a first step each club now has to have a nominated club handicapper, who's responsible for their clubs' handicaps.

Coaching

We've got two one day coaching sessions planned in May organised by Daphne Gaitley on behalf of the SECF, one for Golf and one for Association in May. The Association one is aimed at handicap 18+ and will be held on 20th May. The Golf one is on 27th May.

The cost for a one day session is £15, including lunch, coffee and tea. There *may* be the option on the Golf day of a morning or afternoon session, if so the cost will be £10. Please sign up on the form on the Notice Board or let Jon Diamond know.

If you're interested in Association then Jolyon Creasey is undertaking a one day session for his Waldron beginners on Saturday 7th May in TW. If you're interested in attending please contact him directly or via Jon Diamond.

We're also planning a 6 session Introduction to Croquet run by John Hobbs, taking people who haven't picked up a mallet before into both Golf and Association. Dates haven't been sorted out, but this will start at the end of April/beginning of May, one session per week and cost £25 to non-members of the club, deductible from membership if they join at the end of the course. If you're interested in Association then this may be for you, although you won't need the first session as you know all the one ball shots already! If you know of someone who might be interested then contact John Hobbs for more details.

Other 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 or advice please approach him directly and let him know your interests.

Don't forget there are many courses being run at Southwick – see the Diary below for more details.

Competitions and Tournaments

First of all, we need all your Renewal Registrations in NOW so that we can do the draws for the Internal Year-long competitions that you will all be entering (lots, I hope ;-) We expect to publish these by Easter. *Please enter for the Miriam Reader Memorial Doubles – it's a good way for high handicap players to get some one-to-one coaching from a much better player!*

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 three South East Croquet Federation (SECF) leagues. 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. John Hobbs is arranging these, so contact him to volunteer.

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 (the team must have a total handicap of at least 48 when the match is **arranged**). Although we try to win these games, that comes

second to giving members the experience. Jeff Chapman has volunteered to organise these and, since we failed to complete all our games in this event last year, he'll need all the support you can give.

Duncan Cox will be chasing up similarly for the SECF Golf Leagues (see below).

We've entered teams into one of the SECF events at Southwick – Golf Teams on 7th August. We haven't entered a team for the Ladies Day as we don't have enough ladies playing Association to put up a team and we're haven't entered yet for the Association Team Doubles on 21st/22nd May. 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 level play event on Saturday 2nd July, our Open Handicap Association Croquet event on Saturday/Sunday 13th/14th August and our Open Advanced Croquet event on Saturday/Sunday 11th/12th September.

For higher handicap players an Open Handicap Association Croquet event will take place on Saturday 3rd September (Handicap 16+) and an internal High Bisquers on a Saturday sometime in August.

Entry forms for all our Open events will be on the website soon 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 here on 4th/5th June. The Kent Cup (Golf) will be at Ramsgate on 17th July, please see the flyer in the Clubhouse for details of how to enter.

Finally, one event you can't enter is the World Golf Croquet Championships being held at Hurlingham and Surbiton in July. Several people will no doubt want to go as spectators (the play can be spectacular) and car sharing would be good, so put the dates in your diary (18th-24th July).

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.

Duncan's trying to organise friendly games with local clubs and John Moore hopefully some visits to National Trust properties (we've visited Ightham Mote and Chartwell in the past) for demonstration games and promotion of croquet. If you're interested in participating, or have suggestions about possible friendlies, please contact Duncan or John ASAP.

One Ball has proved to be reasonably popular over the winter and is a good cross between Golf and Association, so an introduction to Association without the complexity of 4 balls on the lawn. Is there enough demand for an evening One Ball league?

We could, say meet monthly from 6:15pm and play whoever's there, allowing people to play multiple times during a season. If you don't want to play One Ball you could even play a proper Association game! Contact me if you're interested.

We've got Crowborough U3A visiting us on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays every month in the afternoon. If you're involved in another U3A why don't you publicise this? We'll welcome strays from any local U3A – contact me for details.

Jon Diamond

Golf Croquet

Tuesday teams competition

I am delighted to say that we have 6 teams for this competition which will run from 12th April until 19th July. Play starts at 6.15pm so that you can park for free in the multi-storey car park.

Everyone is welcome to come and support Hobbs Hotshots or the Reverend Rockets etc

If you would like to take part but have not yet been allocated to a team please let me know as we are sure to need reserves at some stage to cover holidays etc.

Inter-Club Matches

We have entered teams for 3 leagues this year, 2 for level play and 1 handicap. The third league is a new level play one, but with a minimum total handicap of the team of 16.

I have already contacted all those who expressed an interest in matches last year, so if you have not heard from me and would like to take part please get in touch.

Southwick Competition

On 7th August there is the annual teams competition at Southwick (in 2009 we won 2 cups but we won't mention last year). We're planning to enter two teams and you will be receiving an e-mail in early July to ask if you are interested in taking part in this enjoyable event, so please give it some thought in the meanwhile and put it in your diary.

Duncan Cox

Corporate Challenge

We'll be running our popular *Corporate Challenge* again, in the evening of Friday 10th 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 10th June in your diary.

Social

Our current ideas for the summer are to have another BBQ or some such thing 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:

- Jeff Chapman has built a splendid new picnic bench to replace the old one that is rotten,
- replaced the broken leaflet dispenser (sadly an annual occurrence) and
- Jolyon Creasey mending a burst pipe in the loft which luckily didn't do too much damage: so they've taken the opportunity to move the pipes so that we can eliminate this possibility, but leaving the Ladies out of use for the Winter.

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

We have an iron-on transfer (available in the club house), but we have some better ones – 3 inch embroidered ones and one inch enamel ones. We're handing out one of each to every member with additional ones costing £2 and £3 respectively. We'd like everyone who's representing the club to wear a badge if possible!

In addition to these badges we're offering 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 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. 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, so that I can change it for future orders.
- ◆ 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 etc.

Jon Diamond

Club Diary

APRIL

10 Opening Day

MAY

1 Open Day
7 Waldron Association Coaching
14 Golf Croquet Masterclass @ Southwick
14/15 Association – Beginners (handicap 20+) @ Southwick
20 Association Coaching Day - £15 including lunch
21-22 SECF Association Teams (4 players) @ Southwick
27 Golf Coaching Day - £15 including lunch

JUNE

4-5 Kent Cup (Association)
10 **Corporate Challenge**
? All England Handicap - Lewis Shield
28 Crowborough Probus

JULY

2 Open Golf Croquet Tournament Level play
2-3 Golf - Improvers Course @ Southwick
3 Open Day
6 Ladies Teams Day (4 players) @ Southwick
6 Lovat Corporate
9 Private Session
? SECF Golf Croquet Championship @ Compton
17 Kent Cup (Golf) @ Ramsgate
18-24 World Golf Croquet Championship @ Hurlingham and Surbiton
22-25 Association Summer School @ Southwick

AUGUST

7 Open Day
7 SECF Golf Croquet Teams (4 players) @ Southwick
? Internal High Bisquers Tournament
13-14 Open Handicap Tournament – any handicap
14 SECF One Ball Teams (4 players)

SEPTEMBER

3 Open High Bisquers Tournament - 14 point handicap to base 6:
10-11 Open Advanced Tournament - Handicap 1+
17-18 All England Handicap Final @ Sidmouth
24-25 All England Golf Handicap Final @ Dulwich
25 Competitions Finals Day

FEBRUARY 2012

? AGM

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>