



Reigate Priory C C - Newsletter Autumn 2009

Welcome – Neil Coote

Hello everyone, welcome to the new format newsletter! We hope you like the update, courtesy of Martin Holland, who has taken over from Geoff Gunton to collaborate with me to produce this august publication. As this is the season end, we have tried to include a round up of all the competitions the club and members have been involved with, which turns out to be quite a few.

Thanks to all the various people who organise the Teams and various competitions throughout the year. Despite being a small one lawn club, we perform very well in the competitions we enter and as a result I'm sure the standard of play throughout the club seems to be improving, so check your handicap cards and see if you qualify for the Secretary's certificate (see below)

I had hoped to generate the draw for next season's competitions a while ago, but as the committee decided to improve the lawn, there was no longer the urgency. However, due to the excellent work by Roger and Laurence it looks like I'd better get a move on!

Finally, Geoff and I did an Association Club Coaching course earlier this year, so if anyone would like some help with their game over the close season, feel free to give us a call. A few people have asked for help already, so when the lawn is operating again we will try and get something organised on an ad-hoc basis. I mustn't forget Ian Cobbold, who recently did his coaching for Golf Croquet and of course John Taylor, for the more experienced players.

Secretary's notes- Geoff Gunton

Secretary's certificates

I plan to award the Secretary's Certificates at the AGM again. In fact, for the past two years, I have not got my act together in time and these have been presented at the annual dinner instead, so I hope to do better this year.

These are intended to recognise progress by higher-handicap players and can be awarded to people who may not have won any events – you just need to have won more individual games than you have lost to be in the running. The idea is to encourage members to take part in competitive games that count on their handicap cards, either within the club, by offering to take part in club teams for matches at other clubs or by entering external events as an individual.

So if your Association handicap was 10 or more or your Golf handicap was 5 or more at the time of the 2008 AGM, work out how much your index points have increased since then and let me know. The certificates will be awarded to the member(s) with the greatest points increase over the past year.

Because there is no central list of index points, I can't check this for you: it's down to you to let me

know. The certificates are inscribed for us by a professional calligrapher, so are worth having. Let me know by 14th November so that I can get them done.

AGM

This year's AGM will be held on Saturday 28th November at the Tennis Club in Manor Rd at 4pm for 4.30. As usual, it will be followed by supper, which is always an enjoyable social occasion. I will circulate full details in due course, but please keep the date free. As well as the formal business, the club trophies will be presented.

Club phone

The clubhouse phone continues to be a useful resource, judging by the number of calls made. If only people would pay for them! During the season from 1 March (when I topped it up) to finals weekend, less than a third of the airtime used was paid for. Calls only cost a few pence each and a scale of charges is pinned on the wall, along with full instructions. Let me know if you think they need to be clearer.

Guests

This year has been fruitful for guest bookings, with a number of members hosting groups. If you are planning to bring a large number, please check with me that the time is suitable and check, too, that the period is free in both the clubhouse diary and online and book it as a private booking. It's all explained in the Handbook.

I will put a more obvious receptacle for guest fees in the clubhouse, as guest cash has been left in two or three places this season. Most people hosting large groups send a cheque direct to Andy Gray, which works fine, so it's really just the odd ones and twos who need a cash jar. And there is a red A4 book for recording guest visits. Please fill that in, so that we can keep track of bookings made and cash received. The book asks on the cover for names of guests to be entered; that's not really necessary, so just write in your name and the number of guests. And remember to offer them copies of the yellow 'Introduction' leaflet.

Equipment loan

Please note that any club equipment that is borrowed should be authorised by the Chairman or the Secretary. Laurence has noted that one set of our spare hoops is missing, so can it be returned please or if still required, make yourself know to Mike or Geoff so a record can be made.

Work on the levelling of the lawn - Laurence Hughes

The first stage was a massive scarifying over three days to remove the accumulated "thatch" – compressed cuttings and tendrils – plus thin out the grass.

The pile below is one of many.



But we have moved on and levelling and re-seeding has begun. This, we hope, is a view of the ex-ridge. (Due to the good growing weather, the seed has now taken and everything is looking nice & green, Roger has actually mowed it as well. There are just a few patches that need attention, so overall everything is looking good. Ed)

Use of the Priory Park Lawn - *Laurence Hughes*

I have made contact with Peter Jones, the Park Manager, to discuss the club use of the Priory Park Croquet Lawn. I had hoped to gain its use during our lawn closure, but this turns out not to be possible as they are simultaneously working to improve the playing surface. An unfortunate co-incidence, but he has high hopes of a much improved lawn next spring.

He is very keen that the club makes use of the lawn and when I suggested, as has been discussed in committee, that we play some of our Saturday club mornings and even days on the lawn Peter was positively delighted. Encouraging non-members onto the lawn would also be a priority for the park authorities.

I said I would set up the lawn once mowed, i.e. boundaries marked, and use of carroty hoops would be no problem - I did say I would like a parking pass and even that didn't get frowned upon.

Not a help now unfortunately, but an opportunity for the club next spring.

Representative Games for Reigate Priory CC – *The Chairman*

This document summarises the Club's policy for representative games and has been produced in response to some concerns expressed by Members. The over-riding policy is for all Members to have equal access to all representative games whilst recognising that differing levels of play will inevitably assign players to different levels of representative games.

Invitations to Express Interest in Representative Games

Representation games divide themselves into four distinct groups:

The SECF Leagues

All Club Members are invited to express an interest in playing in these leagues when they renew their subscriptions. This should be the complete and only requirement to canvass for interest.

Friendly Matches

Friendly matches are co-ordinated by Ron Farr and are largely designed to introduce improvers to the match environment. Each match should be publicised to all Members (which will require a hardcopy notice board announcement).

SECF Inter-club Events

Interest in these events has traditionally been canvassed by the co-ordinator using E-mail, supported by direct contact to those who do not have E-mail. The co-ordinators should ensure that **ALL** Club Members have an opportunity to express interest – which inevitably means a notice board announcement.

Other Events

Two events current form this category, firstly the Southwick 14 Point Invitation, which should be treated in the same way as the SECF Inter-club Events above. Secondly the CA Longman Cup, the premier event in which the Club participates and this event will remain "by invitation" (normally we try to choose the in-form players for this competition).

Selection for Representative Games

The SECF Leagues

U-league and B-League, from the renewal notices the Team Managers, currently Jon Criddle (with assistance from John Timberlake) & Tim Hazell will decide on RPCC's participation in these leagues and then assign players to one of the "squads" and also show for which "squad" they are considered as "reserves". This should then be circulated to all those concerned so that they know where they stand. This will avoid the confusion that occurred this year over who was in which "squad". Within the confines of availability, each squad member should get a similar number of games.

For the Golf League it is currently simpler with a single "squad" but should we in the future enter two Golf Croquet teams then the above procedure should apply.

Friendly Matches

Generally speaking the players in friendly matches should when ever possible be those who do not play in other matches.

The match with the All England Club clearly will generate an exceptional level of interest and again we need to ensure that all Members get an opportunity to register their interest. As with the other events, those who have played already should take a lower priority than those who have not yet played.

SECF Inter-club Events

Everyone who expresses interest should get a game. If there are more players than spaces then those who have played regularly in previous years should be the ones left out. The teams selected should be posted on the notice board.

Other Events

The selection for the Southwick event should be in line with the paragraph above. The teams selected for both events should be posted on the notice board.

Additional Matters

Those people responsible for matches should:

- Ensure records are kept for matches and other representative games so that the principles embodied in this document can be implemented.

Ensure for a home match that:

- The lawns are booked both in the diary and in the on-line booking system.
- Freda is aware well in advance of any catering requirements.
- The Club facilities are in good order, kitchen tidy, towels and loo rolls etc etc.

Finals Weekend Match Reports

Vulliamy Salver - *John Hyde*

Roger Tedstone (3.5) versus Mike Bottomley (5)

Roger Tedstone beat Mike Bottomley in a very entertaining and hard fought final played in blustery conditions. Mike took the initiative and took Red to 4 back with a fine break. Then Roger got going with Blue and rather laboriously progressed to 2 back, needing to make several difficult angled hoops on the way. He laid up and then made a number of hoops with Black, but after several exchanges Mike established a break with Yellow and regained the lead. Roger then made a long hit-in across the top of the lawn, and took Black to Rover, but left a double which Mike hit.

At this stage it was anyone's game, and a determined Mike got yellow to 4 back, and attempted a difficult peel on Red to save the lift. The ball stuck in the hoop and the follow up jump shot narrowly failed.

Roger then took his chance and played his best croquet of the day making the necessary hoops and finishing skillfully with a peel on Black and a controlled peg out.

Creed Final – *Mike Bottomley*

Jamie Burch (-2) versus Andrew Gray (10)

Andy won the toss and Jamie opened with a "supershot" opening (close to hoop 5), Andy played Red into corner 2 and Jamie hit the tice and smoothly took the three ball break to 4-back with R & Y in R & Y corners.

Andy hit the leave, used a bisque and a half to set up his four ball break and with use of one more bisque pegged himself out (leaving 8 bisques still standing). A fine all round break apart from leaving Blue in front of hoop 1 giving Jamie a good start on the "impossible" triple peel which he surely needed to stop Andy finishing next turn.

Jamie played some brilliant shots and managed to peel 4-back before making 1-back and continued to 4-back where he didn't quite get "perfect" position for his rush to penult. Left with a 9 foot slightly angled peel he at last showed Andy a glimpse of hope when he missed the peel. He continued and pegged out leaving Andy with two balls only on the lawn, 12 hoops to make and 8 bisques standing. Three hoops later and down to 5 bisques he was behind the going rate. A further three hoops and 3 bisques left, then 2 hoops to go and 1 bisque which he used to make Rover but Andy pegged out to win (the first game Jamie has played with only three balls all the time).

A brilliant final, just over the hour, by both players, very exciting to watch and a great pity only four Members did so!

Rosamond – John Hyde

John Copper (20) versus Roger McKinnon (20).

This was a 14 point game, with each player having 5 1/2 bisques. It was played in a very good spirit with both players parsimonious in using their bisques. Roger is the more aggressive of the two, but perhaps John the more strategic.

Both players play an unsophisticated game of association, but they both hit a straight ball, so there was plenty of good hitting-in. In a close run thing, Roger held on to win plus 4.



Fuller Buckley – Geoff Gunton

Jon Criddle (8) and John Bristow (16), giving John 7 bisques.

It wasn't really Jon's day. John played out of his skin with a succession of long hits-in and some impressive hoop running which kept his bisques standing for a considerable part of the game while Jon struggled to get started.

After an hour's play, John had pocketed 15 hoops while Jon had just two to his credit. There were some tight refereeing decisions to be made: Jon overhit a croquet stroke leaving a ball so close to the line as to require Mike, as referee, to get down on the ground and sight between a pair of mallets before declaring the ball to be good.

Towards the end of the game, Jon left a possible lift and another test for the referee – this time Roger. Jon had indeed left a lift which John took and hit in, bringing the end nearer.

There was some better fortune for Jon in the closing stages, first when John managed to cross-wire his balls, allowing Jon to join up with the hope of getting going, and later when John inadvertently pegged out one of his balls, again allowing Jon to join up and have some hope of a three-ball break.

But, continuing the form he had shown for the whole game, John wrapped it up with a long shot to the peg with his remaining ball, winning +17. But there is always a silver lining and Jon spotted it: He needed another player to join the Longman Cup team for the upcoming finals weekend and he recognised John as a player in form and promptly signed him up.

Jubilee Bowl – Laurence Hughes

Roger McKinnon and Charles Harvey

This final was well contested but as the football commentators are wont to say, a game "of two halves". Be that as it may, Roger opened with flourish sweeping to a 7-2 win in record time and without using any of the two extra shoots to which he was entitled.

In the second game Charles came back with some exceptional jump shots and after a long struggle up on hoop three, which lasted about the same length of time as the entire first game, finally won 7-6.

The third game exactly mirrored the first with Charles now romping home 7-2 to clinch the match. In hoop terms the difference was that single "golden hoop" in the second game.

An entertaining match played in the very best of spirits.

Candlesticks Final – Mike Bottomley

Lucy Beach & Andrew Gray versus Tim Hazell & John Timberlake

The handicaps resulted in no bisques for either side.

The opening period was fairly slow with some excellent hitting in from both teams but few hoops being made. Eventually JT managed a couple of 3 or 4 hoop breaks to take an early lead. Andy then hit back with a good break from hoop 3 to 3-back, but Lucy then failed at hoop 2 and gave JT the opening to get to Rover. Tim was still on hoop 1 and suffering greatly from his sciatica. Lucy got in again and this time made a fine break from hoop 3 to 3-back.



Meanwhile Tim, helped by some careful setting up by JT, was gradually progressing in "ones/twos" but progress was slow but eventually he reached 3-back where unfortunately he failed with Andy on the same hoop. This allowed Andy to reach Rover, and a couple of turns later, peg. Lucy made penult and with a fine roll to Rover was also for peg. The game looked to be over but a weak rush and a failed peg out followed by Lucy choosing to peg herself out, left JT with a faint glimmer of hope with a 16 yard roquet chance which of course he made!

Some good tactical play keeping out Andy's single ball allowed Tim to reach rover but an attempted cut rush finally allowed Andy an easy finish with the final result +3 to Lucy and Andrew.

National Competitions

All England Golf Club

Jean Cobbold, Tim Hazell and John Knight won through to the next regional round. Of these John Knight successfully won through to the Finals day.

All England Association – *Mike Bottomley*

Jeff Rushby (Caterham) and I qualified from the Reigate Priory heat. Sixteen qualifiers completed with handicaps 5 to 14 playing five rounds over the two days at Compton. Five players qualified for the national final, both Jeff and I finished with won 3 lost 2 and Jeff is first reserve for the final and I am second reserve. Their lawns were disappointing for those used to the previous high standard they have provided in the past. But it didn't rain and some good croquet was enjoyed.

My most interesting game was against Ron Welch who was the then RPCC member who taught me, John Hyde, Geoff and others to play the game. We were both playing off 5 and Ron waltzed round with his first ball going all the way to peg and beautifully cross wiring me at hoop 5. He then took his second ball smoothly to 2 -back and I expected a very early bath! However he then missed a 1 yard roquet, letting me in, with a break to peg and pegging him out. He now had one ball on 3-back and I was on hoop 1. There then followed 45+ mins of very tense play, carefully limping of my second ball round the 12 hoops eventually emerging +4!

Longman cup – *John Criddle*

History was made this year when for the first time the club reached the Final of The Longman Club Team Cup. Sadly we lost to Bury C.C.

Forty one clubs from all over England entered the competition which is played on a knock-out basis. Each match comprises a doubles and two singles in the morning and four singles in the afternoon, making a total of seven games.

Although all our matches except the final were won 4-3, it was the quarter final against Roehampton and the semi-final against Cheltenham that produced the most tension.

When we played at Roehampton, we lost three games in the morning session thereby requiring that we win all the afternoon games. We won the first three but in our fourth game Geoff was ahead but his opponent was closing in quickly as time was ticking away. Fortunately a blobbed hoop by his opponent allowed Geoff to win +4T.

In the semi-final against Cheltenham we went down 1-2 in the morning session. We also lost the first game in the afternoon which again made it necessary for us to win the remaining 3 games. Two of those were won, by Neil +10 and Geoff +5, so again it came down to the final game with Andrew. He was well behind and the clock was ticking away. He had one clip on the peg and when he inadvertently hit the peg with that ball, he frustratingly knocked the ball off the lawn thinking he was down to one ball and 8 hoops behind! Realisation struck! His other ball was not for rover so he had not pegged out. Luck again as when he knocked his ball off the lawn it was adjacent to his other ball!

His opponent decided to play defensively as he believed he was home and dry but Andrew, in his usual calm manner quietly took control with some good tactical play and squeezed out a +2T win.

The final against Bury was a bit of an anti-climax. We were 1-2 down after the morning session and managed to win only one game in the afternoon thereby losing 2-5. One of their players with a 16 H/C played more like an 8 or 10 H/C. In the morning session he beat Geoff +26 with a rover peel and 5 bisques standing. Geoff had only two shots in the whole game after he had put his balls on the court!

In the afternoon he played John Bristow. John put up a good fight but went down -17 having suffered many coss-wirings! It would seem that the Bury handicapper was not doing his job.

Anyway it later transpired that the Bury team were not destined to hold the trophy for too long, as soon after the presentation they dropped it, resulting in severe damage to the base!

Incidentally the Final, which was held at Surbiton C.C, had two supporting competitions being played at the same time. On the Saturday it was the final of The Mary Rose Cup and on the Sunday the AC. Interclub Shield final. The latter featuring Fulford and Mulliner.

A summary of our matches is as follows,

- -v- Medway won 4-3
- -v- Surbiton won 4-3
- -v- Roehampton won 4-3
- -v- Cheltenham won 4-3
- -v- Bury lost 2-5

The players who took part were

Mike Bottomley, John Bristow, Neil Coote, Jon Criddle, Andrew Gray, Geoff Gunton, Roger Tedstone & John Timberlake.

Team News

U League - John Criddle

Due to the number of members wishing to play in this league it was decided to enter two teams this year. It is hoped to continue this format next season but we really need a larger pool of players for each squad. Although it may seem that 8 players in each squad is sufficient, difficulties did arise in finding 4 players available to suit the dates given by the opposition.

Team "A" comprised those that were retired and were therefore available to play matches on a week day.

Team "B" comprised, in the main, the workers whose matches had to be played at the weekend.

Team "A".

The players involved were: Mike Bottomley, Frank Burch, Jon Criddle, Ron Farr, Tim Hazell, John Hyde, John Knight, and Alan Slade.

-v- Canterbury Lost 1-6

-v- Guildford and Godalming Lost 3-4

-v- Purley Bury Won 4-3

-v- Chichester Rother Valley Won 4-3

Team "B"- John Timberlake

On 20 September our B team travelled 75 miles to Ramsgate and found our opponents hiding in a forest of bisques. Our brave quartet (Messrs Taylor, Tedstone, Timberlake and Staddon) were up against Ron Welch (5) with a 12, an 18 and a 20!! Conceding a massive total of 51.5 bisques, we lost the pre-prandial doubles and 2 singles but, fortified by a delightful lunch, our warriors battled nobly to win 3 of the 4 afternoon singles, and thus lost the match 3-4.

This completed the season for our U League B Team. Four matches played, wins against Compton (6-1) and Southwick (5-2) but losses to Caterham and Ramsgate (both 3-4), 9 different players and all very enjoyable.

B League -Tim Hazell

Our four-match season started in great style with stirring wins over Dulwich (3-0) and Preston (2-1). We eased off a little as the season progressed, to give the opposition something of a chance, and lost 2-1 at Canterbury and 3-0 at Medway. The point of the B League is to give newer/higher handicap players an opportunity to play matches, and I am pleased that eleven different members took part; our combined handicaps were often well above those of our more experienced opponents. In all the games we benefited from the enormous hospitality of our hosts, which is, I believe, a slight source of embarrassment as we are unable to reciprocate. However, it was all good fun and we look forward to next year when we might consider playing one or two home matches.

Many thanks to all those who played.

Southwick Invitation 14 point Doubles August 28/29/30 2009 – John Timberlake

We won this again with 19 wins out of 24, a very high 79%. Our team contained 12 different players, and there were another 12 who could not play for various reasons. Four pairs got maximum scores Taylor/Bristow, Knight/Gray, Criddle/Burch (Frank), and Hyde/Timberlake. Each of the other pairs also contributed. By lunch on Sunday we had an unassailable lead and the eventual 2nd was Rottingdean with 13. This was an extremely enjoyable event, very well run by Bryan Teague for Southwick.

Golf Croquet v AELTC

A most pleasant friendly match was played at Wimbledon on July 29th. Our side was Lucy Beach, Laurence Hughes, John Bristow and John Timberlake. Theirs included Mike Hann (a -½ croquet man and who once defeated a Wimbledon Tennis Champion), Geoff Ward (a former Middlesex County tennis player {as was Sylvia T}) and Roger Mackinnon.

Other club competitions

Millennium Novices Trophy, 22 August - *John Taylor*

This established tournament, now in its 9th year, is especially designed for the newest members of the Club, to give them a first feel of tournament play. A number of more established, high handicap members were also admitted this year to make up the total field of 8.

The tournament was run as a handicap golf event, double-banked on two half lawns, as a complete block of 8, so that everyone played each other during the day. The lawns were immaculate, following Roger's treatment earlier in the week, and were equally set off by the players' whites (well done everybody!). Even the weather treated us kindly after an early threat of rain, and we ended in bright, warm sunshine.

Competition was keen and well contested throughout the day, with many close matches. However, Lorna, the present holder of the Trophy, stayed well-focussed and finished with a magnificent clean sweep of 7 wins out of seven. We should also mention the two Joyces (Hampton and Carlisle), who both managed to win 5 out of 7 games. Well done both!! Joyce H was placed second, by virtue of beating Joyce C in a very tight game. A mention too to Geoff, who came through at the last moment (literally) to take the novices' prize of the new CA book on *Know the Game of Croquet* (I hope you are studying the contents carefully for next time!!). Lastly, commiserations to Colin in his first competitive outing. He failed to win any games, but contributed well to the day. It will get better, I promise you!

The players were sustained with a delicious lunch provided by Doreen, followed by tea and cake at the end of the tournament. John Taylor managed the tournament, players helping him considerably by keeping well to the tight timetable set for the games.

I do hope that more of our newest members will enter next year. It is a lot of fun, and teaches you a lot about the game and of playing in such events, both within the Club and externally.

Detailed results were as follows:

1. Lorna Jenkins (7 wins; 46 pts)* * Millennium Trophy
2. Joyce Hampton (5; 46)

3. Joyce Carlisle (5; 45)
4. Margaret Murphy (4; 36)
5. Geoff Allen (3; 31)* * Novices' prize
6. Martin Holland (2; 37)
7. Maggie Allen (2; 34)
8. Colin Swain (0; 25)



Gordon Goodchild - *John Copper*

This is a new tournament for this year consisting of 14pt handicap games. It was ably run by Tim Hazell

The final was between John Copper/Jon Criddle and John Timberlake/John Knight.

"Criddle and Copper started well peeling both balls through hoop 1 and setting up a rush to hoop 2. Unfortunately this went wrong and Timberlake and Knight, after some delay, ran one ball through to hoop 6. Criddle and Copper then got in and ran both balls through to hoop 4. By some mischance, Timberlake and Knight got black stuck in hoop1 with so little projecting that blue could not make contact. A long period of attrition then arose when Criddle and Copper kept moving blue parallel to hoop 1. Eventually they were able to peg out and win by 5"

Members section

Tunbridge Wells Handicap - *Lucy Beach*

I thought you might be interested to hear of my experience at the Tunbridge Wells Handicap Tournament on 26/27 Sept.

This was a lovely tournament and the weather was just glorious. There were 12 entrants, ranging from handicaps 6 to 18. We played 6, 18 point games on a base 7. I won 4 out of 6 games (out of interest the other 2 were very close) and was the tournament runner up, which I am really pleased about. In addition to that, I succeeded in obtaining my Bronze award, which I'm very chuffed about; and then to top it all, one of my wins was against the Croquet Association Chairman! I'm not sure this was a wise move for my future croquet career - a photo may appear in a future edition of the Croquet Gazette! My handicap remains the same at 14. If anyone from RPCC is thinking about entering any tournaments next year, this is a really good one, everyone was very friendly and it was great fun, and from Reigate it is just over half an hour away (if M25 is clear).

The Croquet Association v. Switzerland - *John Timberlake*

I had the pleasure and honour to be invited to play in this match on September 5/6 in Geneva. Having played in the same fixture at Cheltenham last year, the opponents were well known. Format was team of 4, all play all singles and doubles, level advanced, start at 9am and 3 games a day of 3 hours each. Our side was a 3, a 5 and two 9s and included Klim Seabright (former CA Secretary) and the incoming CA Chairman Barry Keen. The Swiss team (who all work at CERN) were 3 Brits and a Belgian on handicaps of -1, 1½, 3½ and 5. Tough for John but he did beat the 5 in singles and won a doubles with a 5 against the 1½ and the 3½. There are two good lawns on the CERN site with a respectable clubhouse and a chemical loo, lovely weather, hospitable hosts, two super dinners and enjoyable but serious croquet. The final result, Switzerland 11 England 9.

A surprise in Geneva - *John Hyde*

The nearest croquet to our place in France is the club at CERN outside Geneva. Having been in touch with the club I was pleased to receive an email inviting me to have a game there over the summer. So I phoned and was invited to play the following week-end at a tournament they were having there. Of course I was delighted to accept and accordingly was met at Geneva station on the Saturday morning. I had been told there was a selection of club mallets I could use, and I was looking forward to a friendly local club competition. As we drove to the club my host asked me what my handicap was. When I told him he said "Oh! I thought you were stronger than that, but never mind it doesn't matter". This made me wonder what I had let myself in for, and I duly discovered that it was the Swiss Open Championship, played level advanced, and with an entry of very good players.

I was in a group of eight, playing the other seven, on very fast lawns with the hoops set at one 32nd of an inch. Five of my opponents had minus handicaps, and included triple British champion, Steven Mulliner. It was quite an experience, Mulliner sextuple peeled me on his third visit to the lawn, and two others triple peeled me. Even when I got in I couldn't run the unbelievably tight hoops. But I enjoyed it immensely, and everyone was exceedingly friendly and not patronising at all. 2 hours was allowed for each game, which was plenty for my opponents to polish me off! In my last game I played the weakest of my opponents, (handicap a mere 3!), and surprisingly I managed to win a close game. The best part of

it being that there were quite a lot of spectators, and they were all supporting me, and cheering every hoop I made. My opponent, from Luxembourg, was a very good sport, and took it all in very good part, and seemed almost as pleased as the rest that I had won a game. It was a great experience with exceptional hospitality, and I was invited to play again next year, (invitation firmly declined! but I may go over to see next year's final).



John with Stephen Mulliner

And Finally.... – Martin Holland

If you are used to using the Internet and would like to view a video of the edited highlights of the Longman Cup final, then they are available on YouTube <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c50JBhloeOI>

If the thought of watching Reigate CC losing to Bury is too much, then you can have some light relief by watching the 2008 Longman Cup quarter final, which was rained off. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VI3wu6kJTg0>

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