



## Reigate Priory C C - Newsletter Autumn 2011

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### Chairman's Comments – *Mike Bottomley*

I would like to congratulate some of our Members for their achievements during the past season:

- **Freda Knight and Doreen Taylor** for being selected by the Croquet Association to receive CA Diplomas, these are given for outstanding service to a club rather than for achievement at croquet.
- Their citation, which should appear in the CA Gazette in due course, reads:  
“Over the past twenty or so years, these two ladies both being non-playing wives of Members, have, almost single-handed, managed the social side of the Club. Both have made extensive and continuing contributions to many facets of the social scene, including lunches, teas and dinners, BBQs, walks, outings and the boring side of ensuring the supply of drinks, biscuits, milk, coffee, tea, sugar, clean towels and very importantly, toilet rolls!

Both ladies have served for very many years as Social Secretary, Doreen for much of the nineties and Freda for the noughties and beyond. In addition to “managing” most of the catering, and doing much of it too, both have introduced new ideas into the social calendar and also helped the Club in other ways.

*Doreen added winter walks to keep the Members in touch over the closed season, introduced the Club's Xmas Cracker, a December event in fancy dress that has run for the past fifteen or so years. She also managed to purloin the Tennis Club's cast off kitchen that serves the Club exceeding well to this day. Doreen also manages to find time for a little gardening to fill in any spare moments.*

*Freda, along with husband John, was and still is, a mainstay of the annual BBQ, buying the meat, organising the salads, desserts and BBQ chefs. She recently introduced Club lunches that have been so successful that Members turn up purely for the lunches.”*

- **John Copper** for being awarded a “Seniors Achievement Award” by Reigate & Banstead Sports Council. More on this award later in this Newsletter.
- **John Bristow** for reaching the National Final of the All England Golf Handicap competition, also **Martin Holland, Colin Swain and John Robertson** for reaching the National Final of the Grass Roots competition.
- **Jamie Burch** for firstly being invited to play in the Presidents Cup (the Blue Ribbon competition for the top eight players in the UK), and secondly for finishing as runner-up. This is an outstanding achievement and improves his handicap to -2½, equalling the lowest held by any player at this time, and also raising his ranking into the top five UK players.

I would also like to thank **Neil Coote** and **John Hyde** for their services to the Committee (both are standing down this year). Neil has run the club tournaments very smoothly for the past three years, and John is an elder statesman, handling publicity and acting as Vice Chairman. I don't know exactly how long John has been on the Committee but I would guess it is rather more than ten years. John has also superbly hosted the Committee meetings on the majority of this period!

Finally I would like to thank the **Gardening Party** for the sterling work they have been doing under the auspices of Tim Hazell. Too many names to mention all of them but I must single out **Jon Criddle** who has done a massive amount of work in the past few months.

One final request, we have trophies for all the Club events except the All England Golf Handicap, does anyone have a spare trophy around the house which they feel would be suitable for this event and which they would like to donate to the Club?

Now a few gripes:

- Please be more careful with shutting the Club when you leave, close the combination locks and scramble the numbers – don't forget to shut up the toilet too. Too often the Club is not made secure.
- Please make sure if you borrow anything from the Club that you sign it out and back in the back of the diary. Also if you borrow books please try to return them in a reasonable period of loan – think normal library loans of two to three weeks please.
- The B-league team has been rather poorly supported this season, although quite a number of players suggested they were interested in playing. Do try to play in some of the matches if you have expressed interest. Also the B-league is really aimed at those not playing in the U-league, even if you are a high handicapper don't feel reluctant to get involved.
- Finally the friendly matches, these are going to be broadened in scope next season with rather less against Rother and more against other Clubs, again these are arranged mainly to give inexperienced players some match experience. It is absolutely for the taking part rather than the winning! Do please get involved.

See you all at the AGM where we are pleased to have Stephen Mulliner coming along to present the CA Diplomas to Doreen and Freda. Stephen is a Vice President of the CA and winner of more UK, Europe and World titles than you can shake a stick at!

## **Secretary's message – *Geoff Gunton***

As we approach our AGM, I will soon be circulating a report for the year, so I'll keep my remarks here quite brief. My most important message is to welcome three new members since the summer newsletter: Suzanne Sutton, Sue Trumble and Julia Woollard. I am sure they can be certain of a warm welcome at all club events and for all the support they need to enjoy the game.

The Finals Weekend in August went well and there are reports elsewhere of some of the matches. The draws for this season's competitions are now posted in the clubhouse and, weather permitting, it would be good to see one or two games played before Christmas.

As you know, the trophies were presented on finals weekend but will be re-presented at the AGM, now fully engraved. Come along and cheer.

If you have won any trophies in other competitions, please bring those to the AGM to add to the display of silverware.

### **'U' league- 'A' team – *Jon Criddle***

The 'A' team equalled the 'B' team's feat of last year and won all their matches. They came equal first with Surbiton and have a play-off with them in order to determine which club gains entry to next year's Secretary's Shield.

Fifteen clubs entered the 'U' league. Reigate Priory was the only club which entered two teams.

The matches they played were:

1. Purley Bury - won 4-3
2. Ealing - won 4-3
3. Rother Valley - won 5-2
4. Tunbridge Wells - won 6-0

The final game against Tunbridge Wells was abandoned as the match result was settled well within the time limit and the last game was likely to continue for the full 3 1/4 hrs.

The players who represented the club were: Lucy Beech, Mike Bottomley, Frank Burch, Jon Criddle, John Hyde, John Knight, John Staddon and John Taylor.

It is hoped that the 'A' team will hone their playing skills during the winter by playing in the 'ladder' as the play-off against Surbiton has to take place by the 30th April 2012.

### **B league team report – *Tim Hazel***

We had a mixed season in the B league. Previous reports told of the appalling weather at Worthing in our first match which spurred us on to a 3-0 victory in order to get out of the rain quickly, and a fairly convincing thrashing by the same score, in our second game, at Purley Bury. Our third match at Medway was spoiled by an injury to the captain which meant that one game had to be conceded, whilst we lost the other two games as well. Our last match against Sussex County at Southwick was originally postponed as we could not raise a team on the planned day, and then spoiled because one of their team fell out on the re-arranged day and they could not find a substitute!

Our final record was, therefore, won 2, lost 2 and we finished halfway down the league in 9<sup>th</sup> position.

It has been very difficult, this year, to find people, other than a hard-core of three or four, to play in these games which are, partially at least, intended to encourage newcomers to association croquet to play in matches. We need to do better next year.

### **Fuller Buckley final – *Geoff Gunton***

Geoff Gunton vs. Andy Gray. Geoff had ½ bisque.

Geoff planned to keep his half bisque until the end, but in the early stages, both Geoff and Andy could have used a few bisques, as they both got off to a poor start, with blobbed hoops and missed easy roquets. Geoff had made one hoop and Andy six, with both his clips on Hoop 4 when Geoff got in and took his second ball from Hoop 1 to three-back in an untidy break with some angled hoops he was lucky to score before running out of position. A period of safety play followed until Andy got in again and, with a three-ball break – though not always the same three balls – he took one ball to two-back but then over-ran his hoop approach and joined up.

Geoff hit in and took his second ball from Hoop 2 to peg and finally used his half bisque to split a rush that Andy had set up for his second ball and give himself a rush to 3-back, from where he cleared up to win +16.

### **Alan Grant Candlesticks – *Geoff Gunton***

Alan Slade/Frank Burch vs. Tim Hazell/John Knight. Tim/John had 3.5 bisques

Some spectators felt that the highlight of this game was that tea was served at about 4.30, two hours into it. This was a trifle unfair although, it has to be said, this was not a game of skilful breaks and clever leaves. Rather, it featured single hoops followed by missed roquets and blobbed hoops, with the longest break – according to my rambling notes – extending to three hoops.

Despite that, there were some impressive hit-ins, especially from John and Frank, which kept the bisques standing for some time, with the last half bisque going down late in the game.

Tim and John had some bad luck when Tim blobbed penult (who knew Tim could jump that high?) leaving his ball at Alan's mercy who took full advantage of Tim's misfortune. Unfortunately, John's progress was stalled by Hoop 3, which he finally ran after several attempts three hours into the game. But it was too late to make up the deficit and Frank and Alan made their few remaining hoops, pegging out with a +12 win. Fortunately for all four players, there were still some sandwiches left.

## **Southwick 14 point Doubles Tournament – *Jon Criddle***

**26th-28th August 2011**

7 teams entered this 3-day tournament, now in its 11th year. The rules allow for 4 different players to take part each day. Our team was represented by Wendy Dominguez, and Messrs. Bristow, Criddle, Farr, Gray, Hazell, Knight, and Staddon.

Four games are played each day by each pair making a total of 24 games. We played well and won sixteen of our games which put us equal first with Southwick. However, in the games between us and Southwick they won 3 out of 4, thereby making them the overall winners and gaining them the trophy. We have done well in previous years and have won the trophy 3 times since its inception in 2001.

The Clubs taking part were Southwick (2 teams) Reigate, Purley Bury (2) Rother Valley and Rottingdene.

## **Jubilee Final – *Ian Cobbold***

The final of the Jubilee Bowl between Tim Hazell and Laurence Hughes started off the Sunday of Finals Weekend. Tim was required to give 4 extra turns to Laurence in each game.



Tim won the first 2 hoops but Laurence took 3 and 4 and after 8 hoops the match was level without Laurence having used any of his extra turns. Laurence won hoop 9 and used his first bisque to line himself up to run hoop 10. Tim replied with hoop 11 before Laurence used his third bisque to get into the jaws of hoop 12 and so win the first game 7 – 5. In the second game Laurence took an early lead and after 6 hoops was leading 4 – 2. Tim then won hoops 7

and 8 to level the score at this point as in the previous game. Laurence again won hoop 9 and this time needed to use 2 bisques to secure hoop 10. Tim won hoop 11 but Laurence again prevailed 7 – 5 to win the trophy and bring his handicap down to 8.

## **Millennium Salver 2011 - *John Taylor, Manager***

The Millennium Salver was held on Saturday 23 July, on a mainly sunny but breezy day. It followed the usual format of golf croquet on half lawns, designed for new members and those with handicaps of 10+. Results counted on the handicap cards, which had some entrants scrambling to find them!

Disappointingly, there were only six entrants this year (including one token male!), although two other members strolled up belatedly, hoping for a game, believing that it was just a normal club morning – read your club notices, gentlemen!! As a result, we were able to run the Tournament as a single block, each player having 5 games.

There were several close matches in the morning session, which ended with Joyce Hampton in the lead with 3 wins out of 3. We then sat down to a delicious lunch prepared by Doreen.

The afternoon matches were equally keenly contested, with Joyce H the main target to beat. However, she made the Manager's job very easy by finishing with a perfect 5 out of 5 wins. A delighted Joyce was presented with the Salver before we sat down to tea. Although the more experienced players came out on top, our beginners all performed well, and were unlucky on occasions not to take a game. Better luck next year!



#### Results:

|                          |               |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| <i>Joyce Hampton</i>     | <i>5 wins</i> |
| <i>Martin Holland</i>    | <i>4 wins</i> |
| <i>Joyce Carlisle</i>    | <i>3 wins</i> |
| <i>Bridget Mackinnon</i> | <i>2 wins</i> |
| <i>Susan Lock</i>        | <i>1 win</i>  |
| <i>Freda Knight</i>      | <i>0 wins</i> |

#### **Alternative Bisque System in Friendly AC Games - *John Taylor, Coach***

Members might like to consider the following bisque system for use in friendly games. It has the advantage of producing more even games, as each player has the chance of frequent innings during a match. It is therefore especially good for games between higher handicap players during the colder winter months!

Basically, the higher handicap player has unlimited bisques, which they can use during their turn in the normal way as long as they are level or behind on total hoops run at that point. Once they are

ahead on hoops, they cannot take further bisque in that turn. Thus, a mistake at that stage is fatal, the turn ends and the opponent takes the innings.

The system can be extended, so that each player has the unlimited use of bisques in any turn as long as they are not ahead on hoops at that point. The system is particularly suitable for higher handicap players, especially if they are playing a stronger opponent.

Try it this winter, and let me know how you get on with it.

## **Club Visits to Standen and the Priory Park Lawn - *Laurence Hughes***

Our away day to Standen National Trust was somewhat more adventurous than expected. Three days before the planned visit I was informed that they had employed contractors to upgrade the croquet lawns. Unfortunately, said contractors had made a complete Horlicks of the job and had been called back to have another go. Quite why nobody had noticed prior to our imminent arrival, I know not.



As a result we were offered the use of the lawn immediately after the entrance to the garden, with an assurance that the grass would be cut and the hoops set out. When as I drove up the lane I saw a gardener making a hurried exit, I felt some misgivings. I was right. When the lawn was last cut it was certainly not very recently and the hoops were sitting in a trolley alongside the lawn.

Fortunately, I had purloined one my good lady's thread spindles to allow a rapid string boundary to be in place and hammered in a set of wire hoops, since my only setting equipment was a heavy mallet. The settings were extremely generous, which given the length of the grass was probably just as well.

One further defect was the red corner sloped away rather dramatically, resulting in some frantic chases as balls disappeared off towards the toilets.

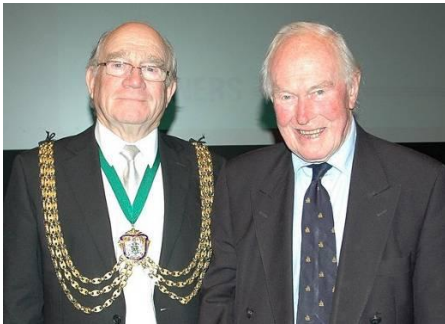
Nonetheless, the event went off in very good spirits and several visitors joined in. It was a success.

As to the Priory Park lawn, we have enjoyed excellent relations and support from the park staff. Our main problem has been finding the holes due to our infrequent usage. I will have to go round the lawn with a hoop more often. For the last visit I had to re-measure from scratch and had just laid out the first half lawn when Jonathan (head parkie) arrived, in mufti, to give the lawn a final trim. So I was chasing around in front of the mower pulling up marking out pegs and hoops then trying to find the holes again.



The park staffs have further plans to improve the lawn and are keen that we continue our visits. For us it a great advertising opportunity ({we are rather hidden away) and right we should support the efforts.

## **Mayor honours John Copper – *Geoff Gunton***



John Copper was presented with a Senior Citizens Award in September by the Mayor of Reigate & Banstead, Councillor Brian Stead. The ceremony formed part of an event held in the Harlequin Theatre, Redhill, to award trophies to the numerous winners from the Surrey Youth Games and to a number of individuals who were honoured by the Reigate & Banstead Sports Council, of which the croquet club is a member. To be considered for the Senior Citizen's Award, a club member has to be

“a sportsman and woman, aged 60 or more, who has continued to be involved actively in sport and who has achieved an exceptional degree of success.” That success had to be during the calendar year September 2010 to August 2011. Thanks to our August finals weekend, it was possible to mention John's triumphs at both this year's finals and last year's in our nomination.

So his success this year in the Rosamond Trophy and the Gordon Goodchild doubles, plus last year's Candlesticks and his involvement in the B-League all went onto the form and contributed towards his recognition. In short, the award seemed to have John's name written all over it.

It was good to see a number of club members in the audience to cheer him on, and John's son and daughter-in-law had travelled from the West Country to be with him on the front row. As the Surrey Mirror described the evening, “from an under-nine cricket team to a 93-year-old croquet player, the lives and times of athletes across East Surrey were honoured at the Harlequin.” And it mentioned “John Copper (Reigate Priory Croquet Club) who, now aged 93, gave up playing golf four years go to concentrate on improving his croquet winning this year a singles and doubles competition.”

Tim Hazell is Chairman of the Sports Council and it was also good to have an opportunity to support the enormous amount of work that he puts into encouraging sport of all types in the borough.

AGM DON'T FORGET IT WILL NOW TAKE PLACE ON SUNDAY NOVEMBER 27TH - A DAY LATER THAN PLANNED IN THE CRICKET CLUB PAVILION. THE TIME WILL BE THE SAME AS USUAL - 4 P.M. FOR 4:30 P.M., TO BE FOLLOWED BY SUPPER.



*The editors wish all members a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.*

*The next newsletter will be Spring 2012.*

Editors: Neil Coote; Martin Holland