



Reigate Priory Croquet Club Newsletter Summer 2009

Welcome – Neil Coote

Hi everyone, I was away for the BBQ, but I see from the reports it seems you all had a good time.

Putting on my Competitions Secretary's hat, I see from the competition notice board that most of the comps have some games played. Those of you in the Rosamund need to get started, and one block of the Creed was looking sparse! Can I ask the overseers to check the progress of their comps and to chase as necessary; thanks.

Secretary's notes

First of all, I am sure you will join me in welcoming some new members since the March newsletter: Jean Brading, David Fanshawe, Martin Holland, Bridget Mackinnon and Colin Swain. I am in touch with a couple of others who are considering joining and I will keep you posted.

The BBQ was a great success, despite the dampness. We used the Football Clubhouse to keep us all dry and Freda and John Knight put together an excellent meal, with Rupert turning up to work the BBQ. Thanks, too, to everyone who contributed food and raffle prizes. One of our potential members came as a guest and enjoyed herself. Thank you to everyone for making her welcome. The results from the various finals appear elsewhere in this newsletter.

You'll recall from the last newsletter that I have invited applications to take on my newsletter support role. I have not had any takers, so I have stepped in again this time, but I really would like to hand this job over. It is not difficult and if you think these newsletters could be better or more frequent, then you are ideally suited to take this on.

I am also still looking for someone to organise the club outing in September. It would be a shame for it not to take place, but in the absence of an organiser that is what will happen. If an incentive is needed and I can offer this: It would provide an opportunity to display a 6ftx2ft banner we have had made to tell the world who we are. It is intended for use at such events and public displays, eg in the Priory Park at the annual sports festival or when we use the public croquet lawn in that park, if it ever becomes serviceable.

As I write, the deadline for getting club competitions complete is looming and I hope everyone has booked the finals weekend in their diaries. Before that, there is the gymkhana on August 1st, starting at 2pm. It is always an enjoyable afternoon involving a number of exercises that test a range of croquet strokes – from both Golf and Association rules – with a prize at the end of the event, not to mention lunch and tea.

Some club members have taken part in coaching courses to increase the number of qualified coaches in the club. Ian Cobbold has taken the Golf coaching course and Neil, Rex and I took part in an Association course. Before we get our badges, we have to provide some coaching sessions, so we are looking for opportunities to employ our new-found skills. The courses we have taken qualify us to provide coaching

at club level; John Taylor remains our top coach and is able to coach to higher levels.

I hope you are enjoying your croquet in between the showers.

Geoff Gunton

Chairman's Thoughts

I am sure everyone in the Club would like to congratulate Jamie for his achievements in his first World Championship appearance. He did well to reach the knock-out stage having disposed of the future World Champion in his qualifying box. We look forward to seeing his increased success in future years.

Can I remind you that we are still looking for a joint editor with Neil for the Newsletter, this is really not an onerous task, you are not required to write anything only to gather the contributions from the club members. We really do need someone to pick up this task for the next Newsletter please.

Similarly we are still looking for an organiser for the Club outing in September, again a simple task of finding a venue and publicising to the Members. Speak to Ian or Jean Cobbold if you think you might be persuaded to take this on as they have organised the event for the past three or four years.

Finally, a comment about our lawn. I have been lucky enough (or in one or two cases unlucky enough) to play at Dulwich, Purley Bury, Tunbridge Wells, Medway and Guildford and Godalming over the past few months (others have experienced the delights of Canterbury too). I can assure you that although other lawns may be more level than ours, none of them are as pleasant to play on as the RPCC lawn. The surface is green, consistent - if a little slow for some, is not infested with rabbits with a determination to dig to Australia, has no moss, does not drop away at the edges etc, etc. If only we could get rid of the d**ned ridge!

For a bit of fun (with apologies to the Luddites), look at

<http://www.mauicroquetclub.org/gallery/things/SurreyStickFigureTheatreOfDeath.htm>

New Members



David Fanshawe Jean Brading Martin Holland

The World Croquet Championships 2009 – The National Croquet Centre, West Palm

Beach, Florida 9th – 17th May

I arrived at the NCC on Friday the 8th in the evening with the main event due to start on the Saturday. The draw had already been carried out and there were 8 blocks of 10 people with the top 4 going through to the main event. There were players in the draw from all over the world including New Zealand, Japan, Spain and Sweden. I had been drawn as second seed in a tough block including Reg Bamford, 4 MacRobertson team members, a President's cup winner and a promising young 14 year old Australian who is the brother of eventual semi finalist Robert Fletcher.

The lawns were immaculate. There were 12 lawns in front of rather a grand club house. They were fast and the hoops were set to 1/32". This made playing conditions very tricky. I started well, however and won my first 4 matches. After day two, I had 5 wins out of 6. This meant I needed two wins on the third day to guarantee qualification. I managed to win all three, including a +2 win over Reg Bamford. This meant that I had qualified in joint 1st place to make it through to the knockout.

The knockout phase was seeded, so I avoided any of the big guns in the first round. I had been drawn to play a Canadian called Leo McBride, a very steady player, who has been around for a long time and has played in many world championships and British opens. Alas, his experience told and he defeated me 2-1 and knocked me out.

I went on to play in the consolation event but struggled to find my previous form and was eliminated.

Other highlights include the resident alligator that was washed into the club's pond by storms and now waits menacingly for stray balls! Also, the wild snakes, lizards and birds certainly made watching my opponent go round more interesting! But most of all it was the people who made it enjoyable. I've played in many tournaments and always found croquet players and spectators to be some of the friendliest, fun loving and generous people. This tournament was no exception. The American hosts were all very welcoming and the lunches were excellent (not as good as Freda's though). The other players were all extremely nice and laughter could be heard from all corners of the club.

It was a wonderful experience and one I am certain that it won't be forgotten. I'd like to thank the members of Reigate, as without their magnificent support I would never have been able to go. Many thanks.

Jamie

Cobbolds keep it in the family

Jean and Ian Cobbold have had some successful outings recently. Jean played in the Woking Open Handicap Golf Singles and came 2nd. And then won the Royal Tonbridge Wells Open Handicap Golf Singles, with Ian coming second!

Match Reports from the BBQ Saturday

All England Association

The Final of the All-England Association Reigate Tournament was held on Saturday 11th July in miserable conditions, with a cold wind blowing light drizzle across the lawn. Mike Bottomley dominated

the match and won comfortably plus 15. He put together a very good break and took his first ball to 4 back early on. His opponent, Alan Slade, then had a major disaster at hoop 1 and dissipated 4 bisques in making the hoop. Thereafter with no bisques he made a spirited recovery and took his first ball to 3 back, but Bottomley was relentless and steadily progressed to a rather inelegant finish. The highlights were Slade's disaster at 1, and almost immediately after the start a spectacular effort by Bottomley declaring he had played the wrong ball, un-noticed by the laid-back and inefficient referee.

John Hyde

All England Golf & Golf Doubles

In the All England semi-finals Jean Cobbold fought a close match against Lucy Beach with the advantage swinging between the pair. Jean came out the winner after a long duel 7-5. The other semi was a more one-sided event with Tim Hazell never really getting his game going and giving away 4 extra shots to John knight, who cruised in a 7-2 winner.

This match was followed by the golf doubles, organised by Ian Cobbold, between the four best finishers from the all day event. Once again John knight was on the winning side partnering Mike Bottomley, who played a couple of spectacular hoop runs, to beat the Johns Bristow and Copper 7-4.

To complete the golf croquet morning the best of three Club All England Final between John Knight, still on his feet, and Jean Cobbold started with an early win by John 7-3 but Jean immediately fought back to win the second game 7-5. The decider was also close with John securing victory 7-5.

It was an enjoyable morning and one hopes more members will watch these matches in future to discuss tactics and applaud some excellent play.

Laurence Hughes

National Comps

All England Golf Club Heats

This year we had 12 entrants for the All England Golf event allowing us to send forward three qualifiers for the next, Regional, round. Our special thanks go to Joyce Hampton who turned out despite being well out-of-sorts, enabling us to keep up the numbers after our only emergency reserve, myself, having already being drafted in to fill a vacancy - I never enter but always seem to play!

Despite the heat the quality of play was high throughout with every match closely contested. The highest number of matches went all the way to the thirteenth hoop with not a single result below 7-4.

Our qualifiers are John Knight, Jean Cobbold (who dispatched her spouse in a decider -all is fair) and Tim Hazell.

Laurence Hughes

All England Association Club Heats

The results of the play offs between the box winners and runners-up was as follows:

Jeff Rushby (Caterham) +7 (4 wins points +6) beat John Knight

Alan Slade +2T (4 wins points +12) beat Tim Hazell

Mike Bottomley +17 (4 wins points +23) beat Geoff Gunton

As last year the overall winner, rather embarrassingly me, goes through to the Regional final. We don't yet know whether we will be allowed two or three Regional finalists and I am approaching the organiser to seek his opinion. If the answer is three, then all three will go to the Regional final otherwise Jeff and Alan will play off for the second place (again as last year for the Club final).

Team News

B League

13 members volunteered to play in the B league teams this year which was most encouraging. 8 players have so far represented the club and maintained an unbeaten record! Results:

v. Dulwich

Andrew Gray (captain) and John Knight won +18

Ron Farr won + 12

John Bristow won + 6

v. Preston

John Staddon (captain) and Jean Cobbold won +5

David Connah lost – 7

John Copper won + 2

Well done to all! Our next game is against Medway on September 3rd when our team will be John Bristow (captain), David Fanshawe, Martin Holland and ANO. We are still awaiting a date for the game against Canterbury.

Our opponents have been most generous hosts to us – even providing a barbeque at Dulwich! I wonder whether the club should consider finding some way to repay all the hospitality enjoyed by all our teams, playing as we do, only away from home.

Tim.

U League

A Team

No report

B Team

My only contribution is to report, dolefully, that we lost our first B Team U League match on June 13 against Caterham 3-4. Geoff and I lost the doubles -5 against John Male (1) and Colin Best (8), Roger Tedstone lost to Rolf Koenzig (6) and beat John Male +3, Neil Coote lost to Jeff Rushby (7) and beat Colin Best +21, Geoff beat Rolf +7, and I lost to Jeff -14.

John Timberlake

Longman Cup

We have played our first round match in the Longman Cup (A national knock-out competition) and beat Medway 4-3. Jon Criddle, Mike Bottomley, John Timberlake and Geoff Gunton made up the team. At lunch, we were 2-1 down, requiring us to win three of the four afternoon games, which we managed to do. Our next game will be against Surbiton on August 15th.

Geoff Gunton

Members News

You will be sorry to learn that Emma Burch's mother has passed away. We offer our condolences to all the family at this difficult time.

Geoff Gunton

Petanque Afternoon chez Katherine and Peter Goldsmith

For the select band who attended this was a quite outstanding afternoon. A truly beautiful setting and a totally delightful garden, and a fine tea provided as well. The petanque was the only low spot as the Ladies convincingly beat the Gentlemen.

Many thanks to Katherine and Peter for this kind invitation.

Mike Bottomley

Editors: Neil Coote; Geoff Gunton