



# NEWSLETTER

## October 2008

### 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 more than I would have liked, but still managed to talk and play with most of you (I hope).

The main season is now almost over and the main lawns closed, with the final of the Doubles competition being completed in the dark last night at 7:15pm! The massed spectator (Miriam Reader) was kind enough to lend her torch so that we could find the balls. The winners managed to individually peg out their balls from 10 and 15 yards without being able to see the peg... What things we croquet players do.

However, play has not stopped - when the weather is not too cold or wet I'm sure there will be hardy people still playing croquet on the Bowling Green as there were every week throughout the winter last year.

We'll be continuing with regular sessions as long as possible (perhaps only on Wednesdays or Sundays), but Alex has written below with some more thoughts. Please give us some feedback on that.

The winter pub lunches are starting again shortly (dates are in the Diary section at the end), but we need to confirm numbers for the Mark Cross and select from the menu at least seven days before we go there on 30<sup>th</sup> October. So please could you let me know ASAP if you think you'll be coming. I'll send out the menu shortly.

### Summer BBQ

We were very fortunate that our Summer BBQ took place without everyone being drenched before they even entered the house, as happened last year. Thirty eight members attended and we were able to start with drinks outside! Quite a treat in what has not been the warmest of summers.

Although a date has not yet been set, we hope you'll be able to gather together for a Winter warmer sometime in late January or February 2009. 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.

### Club and Coaching Sessions

Some of these have been a bit light of people this year (due to the weather?), so we need to think about what we want to organise next year. The committee will be doing so over the winter, but please let us know your thoughts - there will probably be some kind of discussion about these issues at the AGM.

### AGM

This will take place on 22<sup>nd</sup> November at the Frant Village Hall, starting at 11am (coffee from 10:30am) and end at 12:30pm with the annual awards presentation. Lunch is scheduled for 1pm. More information will be sent out in a couple of weeks. Please come along for this formal AND social occasion.

### Committee

You'll be aware by now that we co-opted Alex Jardine during the year and he's raring to go with new ideas on the Competition front for this winter and next year. Returning from France after several years absence Alex is a long-time member of the club and a low handicap Association player (he's also played in one of our SECF Golf matches).

John Hobbs is retiring from the committee, after 15 years(!), and so we have at least one vacancy for next year. We would be delighted to welcome 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 that will be coming out shortly or contact one of the committee members.

John Timmis is also retiring as Treasurer, after a little less time on the Committee, and Selwyn Ward has volunteered to step into his shoes.

I'm off to Beijing shortly, but looking forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the AGM.

*Jon Diamond*

### Secretary's Notes

After much angst the last competition, the Doubles, had its final played on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> October. Congratulations to all the winners and hopefully Alex will have more joy in getting them complete earlier next year.

You'll be aware that I'm trying to resign as Secretary. However, with much of the previous work now being taken from the role by Alex Jardine on the Tournaments front, Dan Long on the membership side and accounting by the new Treasurer I've agreed to stay on for another year. *[For which I'm truly grateful – Jon]*

*Mick Belcham*

## Lawns

This year our lawns have been the best the club has ever had and we have had many favourable comments from visiting players including the President of the Croquet Association. Our lawns are now comparable with those of the top clubs.

In order to achieve at least an equivalent standard next year Norman has started his Autumn maintenance programme which will culminate in over seeding and top dressing with 12 tonne of 70% sand 30% loam on or around 8th October at a cost of approx £1000. The lawns will be then closed for the winter. We have remained within our budget for lawn maintenance for the year. Thanks to Norman for all his hard work.

I am pleased to report that the drain installed at the bottom of the bank appears to be working well and is helping to clear water after heavy rain. This was funded by grants from Kent County Council, TWBC, the Croquet Association and the South East Croquet Federation.

The council have removed the rubber chips from the bowling green and we will feed, weed and cut the grass making it available for the hardy players who wish to play during the winter.

*Roger Morris*

## Winter Play

The plan being that, for the second year, we will have a lawn (the bowling green) available for play throughout the off-season, the question now is "what events do we put on?".

Some clubs have specific winter competitions, others just continue to get together on particular days (though this can be affected by the weather).

Obviously, a lot of people will play friendly games whenever they can and the weather is suitable ;-) ... but how about those who also like to meet up with others?

Some ideas are:

- Sunday morning one-ball (plus coffee & croissants?)
- Sunday morning golf croquet (10/10?)
- [or perhaps one-ball on 1st Sunday in month, GC on 3rd?]

- Continue Wednesday afternoon sessions till interest subsides
- Something special on New Year's Day
- Pre-season coaching in February/March.

Please let me or any of the other Committee members know (at the AGM or even beforehand) if these appeal or if you have any other bright ideas.

*Alex Jardine*

## 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.

With any luck the Bowling Green Pavilion will have its annual clean-up by the time you read this.

We'd like to tidy up the changing rooms over the winter, so if you have any items of clothing etc. in there please could you remove them in the next month or so. Any items left lying around are liable to be disposed of.

*Elaine Houslop*

## Tournaments

### *Open High Bisquers*

We had a total of ten competitors, five home contenders and five challengers from other clubs, Medway, Ivychurch, Hayes and Bromley. Miriam, Elaine, Stan, Dan and Ray were the local hopefuls and there were some familiar faces among our visitors. A tight schedule of six 14 point games each left everybody tired but content.

The day's laurels went to Geoff Croxford from Ivychurch. Best of the locals on the day were Miriam and Ray (Ray having been impersonated by Mick Greagsby in the first two games of the day).

### *Musk Cup*

Due to a late injury one of the players withdrew and Mick Greagsby volunteered to play and, despite being the weakest player, performed very creditably with almost all his losses being by the closest of margins 6-7.

There were several 1 handicap players, including Bill Arliss from Southwick, and several around the country demonstrating to our local spectators how good players play the game. The eventual winner, and also the event manager, was Nick Butler who didn't lose a match.

All the players were very complimentary about our lawns (although they'd like them to be faster), facilities and hospitality! Note to RTWCC members: in addition to profits from the catering we also get green fees from the CA for providing the lawns.

## Honeygrove Cup

12 brave players, including one from Cornwall, walked gingerly around our soaked lawns and played for two days in our annual Advanced. The drainage we've installed this year has obviously had a significant effect, but the north sides of lawns 2 and 3 were still so damp that puddles had all but formed.

However, it was still on with the show and eventually Mike Huxley from Guildford and Godalming ran out the winner, beating our own Jolyon Creasey in the final game. Mick Belcham (manager) won the consolation event. The chairman of the Croquet Association, Jonathan Isaacs, was one of the players and presented the prizes.

## Pegasus Plate

We had eight players, plus the manager John Hobbs, for our annual Association Handicap tournament at the end of September. All games were 18 points only and each player had bisques, which helped to speed up play. The weather was hot and the lawns were quite fast.

The winner, John Belcher came from Bromley, with Mick Greagsby third. Geoff Chapman enjoyed his first tournament and realised how much he had improved by the end, both by the play and by learning what to do and not to do. It's a good way to get your tournament experience. Mick's handicap is now 10, since he is improving so rapidly as a result of his frequent practice sessions – that's the way to improve!

## Other events

We've had quite a few of our members playing in other tournaments in the South East and elsewhere. Of note are

- Alex Jardine winning the Ramsgate Advanced with seven straight wins
- Mick Belcham was runner-up for the COWbell at Compton with 4 wins out of 6 games and

- Jon Diamond coming 5<sup>th</sup> at the German Open as well as being part of the Kent team which came second at the Golf Inter Counties.

## Inter-Club Matches and Friendlies

### SECF Leagues

A reasonable season again, but not a great one. We won two and lost two in both the Association B and U Leagues and won one and lost three in both the Golf Level and Handicap Leagues.

*Must practice more next year...*

### SECF Golf Teams

We sent two teams to this event at Southwick and our first team came 3rd out of 18 in the Singles event, which was won by Reigate, with Sussex County second.

### Friendlies

Disappointingly we haven't managed to organise any this season. Must try harder!

### Penshurst Place

At their invitation we had a very successful visit, demonstrating croquet to many people on the lawn in front of the main house as part of their 2008 programme of events. One slight fear was hitting a ball over the edge and hitting someone below, but this eventuality didn't happen thank goodness.

Penshurst have sent a very complimentary letter inviting us back next year and also contributing £150 to club funds. Many thanks to Mick and Sandra Greagsby, Derek Heath and Miriam Reader for manning the lawns.

## ADVERT

John Hobbs is offering members a 20% discount on any of his mallets that he has in stock. This offer is open until 31st March 2009 and means a saving of £34.

## Important Diary Dates

Please note that we've included the dates that Sussex County have announced here. It's possible that some of them may conflict with our Winter programme and we haven't had an opportunity to discuss how much we should participate in the Team events.

Oct 30	Pub Lunch, 12:30pm @ Mark Cross Inn, Mark Cross (advanced booking required)
Nov 15	10/10 Golf Croquet Doubles (level play) @ Southwick
Nov 22	AGM: 10:30am coffee, for 11am start @ Frant Village Hall, followed by lunch at about 1pm
Nov 30	Association Alternate Stroke Speed Doubles @ Southwick
Dec 21	"Santa" One Ball @ Southwick
Jan 8	Pub Lunch, 12:30pm @ Brown Trout, Lamberhurst
Jan 25	Team Association Speed (Teams of 4) @ Southwick
Feb 12	Pub Lunch, 12:30pm @ Foresters Arms, Fairwarp
Feb 22	Team 10/10 Golf (Teams of 4) @ Southwick
Mar 5	Pub Lunch, 12:30pm - location tba
Mar 8	Inter Club Golf (Teams of 4) @ Southwick
Apr 2	Pub Lunch, 12:30pm - location tba

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>