



# NEWSLETTER

## October 2009

### 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 somewhat, but have still managed to talk and play with many of you.

We've had a sudden rush of new members at the end of the season, due to our special offer. This has raised our membership to its highest ever. Welcome to you all and I hope to meet as many of you as possible at the AGM and over the winter.

The main season is now essentially over, with only one of our internal competitions still incomplete. Sadly, our competitive position in the SECF Leagues was not all we hoped for. Further details are below, as are details of our Winter Programme.

The winter pub lunches are starting again in the New Year (dates are in the Diary section at the end). If you're thinking of coming please let me know by the previous Monday.

### *Late Summer BBQ*

We had a very late Summer BBQ this year, taking place in September, so we didn't even have the chance to be outside as it was beginning to get dark quite soon after we all arrived. Nevertheless more than 30 people turned up for a very social occasion. Many thanks to Elaine and Mark for cooking and hosting this again and Carolyn for organising the raffle.

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 2010. 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.

### **AGM**

You should have received a separate invitation to this, together with our accounts. These are especially healthy due to an insurance claim as a result of the Bowling Pavilion break-in, a grant from the Gatwick Airport Community Trust and the efforts of many members in supporting an unprecedented number of events this year.

The AGM will take place on 7<sup>th</sup> November at the Frant Village Hall, starting at 11am (coffee from 10:30am) and end at 12:30pm with the annual awards presentation and lunch (cost £7.50 including wine/beer). Please come along for this formal AND social occasion. I hope to see many of you there.

### **Committee**

We are subject to several retirements this year for a number of personal reasons – Selwyn Ward as Treasurer, Dan Long as Membership Secretary and Alex Jardine as Tournaments/Competitions Manager. To help us fill these vacancies Richard Mann has volunteered as a candidate for Treasurer and John Moore as a Committee Member. One job that will definitely need to be filled next season is that of organiser of the SECF Association teams. This doesn't need to be a committee member, so if you think you'd like to fill this role please talk to Mick or myself.

We would be delighted to welcome other 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 or contact one of the committee members.

Finally, I'm sad to have to report that one of our erstwhile long-term members Eric Dennison, who was latterly Chairman of Bromley Croquet Club, died in September.

*Jon Diamond*

## **Lawns**

The lawns have been the best we have ever had and have been favourably commented on by several visitors not least by the Chairman of the CA. The drainage programme has also been successful as we've had no real problems with standing water.

In September we verti-drained, applied 12 ton 70:30 top dressing, over seeded and luted the surface to maintain the levels. Total cost approx £1500. As the verti-draining has worked very well, the lawns will remain open for light play during fine weather. We will be closing individual lawns on a rotation to give them time to recover. Please see notice board before you play.

You will notice the grass, that was cut to 5mm during the summer, is now longer at 8.5mm. This is necessary to build up growth to survive the winter. Lawn maintenance will continue throughout the winter. Please treat the lawns carefully and let me know of any signs of adverse wear.

We may need to close the lawns completely at short notice to avoid damage, especially if it's frosty. If you're planning to play during the winter, I'd like to avoid possible disappointment if they're closed when you arrive. To this end I'm creating an email list of winter players who will be emailed when the lawns are to be closed. Please let me know if you want to be included on this list.

Finally, although the Bowling Green is still notionally available, it has been unused for almost all this summer and, since we're keeping some of the Main Lawns open during the winter, we don't really need it – especially as it's not easy to maintain, with all our equipment being at the top of the hill. So we've given notice to the Borough Council that we won't be renewing our licence on it next year.

*Roger Morris*

## **Winter Play**

**Don't forget to check the Notice Board before you start playing to see which lawns are available.**

Normal club sessions, mainly Golf, will continue to take place on Sunday and Wednesday afternoons (2pm-dusk) as long as possible, but please watch the Notice Boards and our web-site for changes.

A monthly winter playing programme on Sunday mornings (the Winter Wombles) will take the form of Handicap One-Ball (a cross between Association and Golf which keeps both players on the lawn at the same time) from 10am-1pm, organised as a flexible Swiss-ish format with points for position each month leading to a series winner.

The dates are in the Diary below and it's planned to have croissants and (real) coffee, together with a hospitality suite from midday onwards – we'll let you know more details about this later.

We hope you'll enjoy playing in the cold!

*Alex Jardine*

## **Probus and U3A**

Probus Croquet sessions took place once a month from April to September for the Ashdown Probus Club. Richard C, Frank, Roger and Michael Sander and wives teamed up to help their Ashdown club mates enjoy a sociable morning of golf croquet with up to 23 attending. Several have now reached a standard of play to make us fearful, and seven in all so enjoyed the experience that they have joined the croquet club for next year.

Tonbridge and Crowborough U3As have been separately playing twice a month since April, with about 8-10 on each afternoon. One from each of these U3As have joined the club as a result of the September special offer!

There are a few U3A croquet clubs now affiliated to the Croquet Association, so perhaps we'll be seeing some inter-U3A matches or just fun events – first no doubt against Lewes since they're the closest.

## Coaching

Richard Clark organised coaching on Tuesday evenings for Golf Croquet beginners and improvers. Eleven members in total joined one or more of the sessions, spread over three sequences of four lessons and some real improvements in play were to be seen. Maybe our club success at Southwick owes a little to the tips learned here!

Later in the season, 6 of the hardier souls braved less brilliant weather to go on and begin to learn the rudiments of the Association game, and will hope to build on the experience next year.

A number of sessions were also held on Monday evenings for Association players with handicaps below 10 which seemed to go pretty well.

## 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.

We'll be decommissioning the irrigation system, removing the awnings and generally preparing for Winter as part of the Winter Womble on 16<sup>th</sup> November. All welcome to help...

For the Winter since there won't be as much usage as during the Summer we'll be trying a different tack for cleaning. We're asking you to look at the Cleaning Sheet on the Notice Board and if it hasn't been cleaned for a couple of weeks to do the necessary cleaning; then write your name and the date on the bottom of the list. Hopefully no-one should have to do this more than once over the Winter.

Cleaning of the Clubhouse is not the most sought after task! However, it's very necessary. With constant use it's all too easy for the Club to become grubby, so please come forward to ensure a rota can be prepared that covers each week of the playing season. Look out for the section on the membership renewal form where we ask for volunteers. Many hands make light work!

Our thanks also go to Kate Sander who took care of catering for us all at the AGM last year and Club Opening Day, I'm only sorry I wasn't there to enjoy the venison pie!

*Elaine Houslop*

## Tournaments

### *Internal Competitions*

Congratulations to the winners:

#### **ASSOCIATION**

<i>Spa Salver</i>	Jon Diamond
<i>Lustau Cup</i>	John Hobbs
<i>Calverley Cup</i>	Alex Jardine
<i>Howell Cup</i>	Roger Morris
<i>Doubles Goblet</i>	Jon Diamond & Chris Berwick
<i>Association Ladder</i>	Miriam Reader

#### **GOLF**

<i>Golf Level</i>	John Hobbs or Frank Gunstone
<i>Kitching Rose Bowl</i>	John Moore
<i>Golf High Bisquers</i>	Michael Gentry
<i>Golf Doubles</i>	John Hobbs & Michael Sander
<i>Golf Ladder</i>	Duncan Cox

### **Honeygrove Cup (Advanced 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> September)**

Alex Jardine beat Jon Diamond in the final of the Honeygrove Cup, despite Jon winning all six of his games in the flexible Swiss, sealing a TW name on the cup for the first time since 2002.

Following four withdrawals, the field was reduced to eight which meant that the swiss format nearly became all-play-all. Excellent weather and true-running lawns made for rapid play and an early finish each evening.

### ***Pegasus Plate (Association Handicap 26<sup>th</sup>/27<sup>th</sup> September)***

Ten players entered, with four from Tunbridge Wells and included Pat Duke-Cox, the Croquet Association chairman from Woodhall Spa. Handicaps ranged from 6 (Mick G) to 18 (Jeff and Miriam). This was played as 18-point games, to ensure as many finished with a peg-out as possible.

Unfortunately, our Autumn Maintenance Programme left the lawns full of sand, the players renamed the event the Desert Handicap... However, watering on the Sunday night restored our lawns to a pretty good playing state. In the end John Bateson from Medway turned out the winner with 5 wins out of 6 games.

## **Inter-Club Matches and Friendlies**

### ***Mary Rose Cup (Croquet Association inter-club Advanced, minimum handicap 1)***

After successes against Dulwich and Colchester we lost to East Dorset in the Semi-Finals at the neutral location of Southwick by 4 games to 3.

### ***SECF Leagues***

A not very good season this year. The detailed results are on the website, but we came 4/5 in the new A (Advanced) League with 2 wins, 15/15 in the U League with just a walk over to our name, 17/17 in the B League with a loss in our only match, 6/7 in the Golf Level Play with one win and 6/19 in the Golf Handicap League with 2 wins. For a variety of reasons we weren't able to field a team to play a number of our matches and so our results have suffered.

*Must practice more and get our teams out next year...*

### ***SECF Golf Teams***

We won both the Singles and the Doubles events, so congratulations to both of our teams!

### ***Friendlies***

Thanks to Duncan for organising two against Ivychurch (home and away) and also a visit to Bromley.

### ***Other Visits***

We were at Penshurst Place again – a very profitable and enjoyable occasion, but for the first year for some time haven't visited any of the National Trust places we usually visit, including Ightham Mote and Chartwell. *Must do better next year...*

## **Finally...**

Welcome to all our new members who've joined since our last newsletter - David and Robbie Adams, Sheila Armitage, Arthur Baker, Hugh Jackson, Alan and Yvonne Lockett, John Skates, Barbara Tasker, David and Dianne Tuckett.

## **Important Diary Dates**

November 7	AGM: 10:30am coffee, for 11am start @ Frant Village Hall, followed by lunch at about 12:30pm
November 15	Winter Womble - Fireworks
December 6	Winter Womble - Christmas
January 8	Pub Lunch, 12:30pm @ Foresters Arms, Fairwarp
January 10	Winter Womble - Frostbite
February 12	Pub Lunch, 12:30pm @ Spread Eagle, Forest Road, Hawkenbury
February 14	Winter Womble - Valentines
March 12	Pub Lunch, 12:30pm @ George & Dragon, Speldhurst
March 14	Winter Womble – Ides
April 9	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>