



# Croquet Newsletter

EAST DORSET LAWN TENNIS & CROQUET CLUB

Issue 7

September 2010

**We** are pleased to have seen so many new faces on the lawns during the summer and hope all the new beginners are enjoying the game. After the playing season ends, usually early October, our winter social programme begins so you have plenty of opportunities to

continue meeting up with new friends. More information is on page 4 or do ask any of the 'older' members. Meantime some play will continue as we shall open a winter lawn. Let's hope we have the weather to enjoy using it! See page 2 for details.

## Thank you to members

Your Committee would like to express its appreciation to all those members who responded to our call for help to run the ten Visitor Events we booked throughout the summer. With a greater number of willing helpers, we have been able to achieve our aim of having one Croquet member for each group of four visitors.

Although two groups cancelled, the other eight much enjoyed both the croquet and the suppers from The Clubhouse Café. Many of you have turned out on several occasions. The income raised will chiefly benefit the Croquet Section, but the bar and the Café will also have increased their takings so the Club itself will also gain.

The Rotary Club of Poole Bay, our first ever 'customer', has already booked for 2011 and we hope that you will all be as generous with your offers of help again next summer.

## STOP PRESS Novices Competitions

Every year we run competitions for our less experienced and newer members. These are particularly suitable for you if you joined this year or last.

If your h/c is 20 or above for Association, or 9 or above for Golf, and you have not already won a competition, sign up on the notice board.

Date: Golf Croquet - Thur 23 September  
Association - Fri 24 September  
Time: 9.30am

## Mary Rose

East Dorset has reached the final of this high profile national inter-club competition for the second year running. We play on Saturday 2nd October at Surbiton against either Bowdon or Wrest Park.

The Mary Rose cup is a knock-out event. In the early stages the draw is on a regional basis and our furthest journey this year was to Southwick.

En route to the final we have beaten Sussex County, Tunbridge Wells and most recently Surbiton.

Play is level advanced and handicaps do not apply. However there is a requirement that no player has a handicap less than zero (thus excluding the Davids Harrison-Wood and Nicholson from playing) and that the combined team handicaps must total at least four. This prevents us from playing our best four players.

In the three matches to date we have been represented at times by William Ormerod, Tom Weston, David Williams, Jonathan Wood, David Price, David Kendrick, John Crowe and Roy Edwards.

Perhaps some of you will be at Surbiton to cheer us on. Like ours it's a great club with excellent catering.

*John Crowe, Team Captain*

## Edges of Grounds have been Tidied Up

You should have noticed a big improvement in the appearance of the furthest edges of the Club grounds, thanks to all the efforts of Robert Green (our Croquet Grounds Officer) and Jean Humphrey, with Clive Richardson (Tennis Grounds Officer). Robert reports that they managed to completely fill a large skip with bulky items of rubbish they cleared from the undergrowth, including sheets of corrugated iron, slabs from an old tennis court surface, and a roll of wire netting.

It is all too easy for such items to build up in odd corners as it is difficult to dispose of them on a regular basis, so it is to their credit that they took this opportunity for a major clear-up. The pretty hanging baskets of flowers around the clubhouse have also been much appreciated and give a welcoming look to the premises.

## Who's for Goquet?

On 3 July the inaugural GOQUET Competition was held with David Bayne narrowly triumphing over Sue Mathews 5-4 in the final.

Goquet is an alternative form of croquet, invented by Tom Weston, in which alternate hoops are played under Golf and Association rules. Fun was had by all the competitors who look forward to this competition becoming an annual event.

*Roger Parsons*



## Chairman's Message

This year we have seen our record membership, all of whom have taken part with the running of the section. My thanks to you all for completing and taking part in the Matrix project that we introduced last spring. We will again ask for a similar commitment in 2011.

I would like to welcome all of our new members most of whom have joined following initial training with Peggy and her team of coaches. There are already some rapid improvers emerging and handicaps are falling. For those of you who have still to dip the toe then please try and come along on a Friday morning and improve your new-found skills. Play a game under the guidance of an experienced player. If you cannot make a Friday then practice makes perfect and the courts are there for you to use. There is always someone available to ask for help and advice.

The new boundary sleeper walls appear to be working well and gone are those slopes of doom. We still have a bit to do and, if the committee agree, we will stabilise the south boundary of lawn 1. We propose to lift the turf in this area, break up and remove the compacted soil, replace with root zone, and re-turf.

Similar work will also be carried out along the south boundary of lawn 2, which has long been a problem area. Whilst we are working on this we also plan to break out the tarmac path and concrete ramp to the area on the east boundary near corner 4. This will enable us to extend the sleeper retaining wall, make up levels and extend the lawn so that we can move the whole court in the direction of lawn 1 when the need arises.

One of the lawns that is unaffected by all the work will be used as a winter lawn and will be opened as last year.

Thank you for all your support and please enjoy the rest of the season. If you are able to offer some help in the running of our Section I would be very pleased to hear from you.

*Pat Oxley*

## Congratulations David!

We are all very pleased when someone receives an award which is richly deserved, so we are delighted to tell you that David Nicholson is to be rewarded for his efforts and will shortly be presented with "The Coach of the Year Award".

David will attend the Croquet Association AGM at Hurlingham with his family to receive his award on 11 October. Pat Oxley will also be attending the ceremony; if anyone else would like to go, please contact Pat to co-ordinate travel arrangements.

We wish David well on his special day!

## Earthworks and Waterworks

Adam, our Groundsman, has worked very hard this year to get our lawns levelled and the new boundary walls in place. Everyone seems to be pleased with the improvements and the Croquet Section would like to thank Adam for his hard work.

John Pollard has covered the vertical surface of the new 'I' beams to prevent damage to the balls, and Robert Green has put in a lot of time identifying and rectifying problem areas on our lawns.

Despite a wet August, it has become evident that the sprinklers are not working at their best and they will be assessed shortly, so we should have them working properly again very soon. New turf requires frequent watering so Robert has recommended that a retractable hose be provided for ease of watering as it is hoped that members will help with this. It is expected that the reel will be fixed to the wall near the bike stand and connected to the water main.

## End of season arrangements

**Unless weather dictates otherwise,** the last Club Sessions will be on Tuesday 5 October for Association, and 6 and 7 October for Golf Croquet.

The last day of play will be Sunday 10 October. It is hoped that a Fun Afternoon will be held, perhaps Pirates, at 2pm that day. Watch for a notice.

**May we Play during the Winter Months?** Yes! A winter lawn will be made available on Court 1 when the other courts close. As it will be a  $\frac{3}{4}$  size lawn it will not be affected by the repairs on its south boundary. Essential maintenance will have to be carried out in the spring so the court will close in March.

## **A Newcomer's View**

Nigel Parkins meets "new boy" Michael Barrow

NP We met very recently – have you just joined the club?

MB I joined the Bridge section about three years ago. My wife's been a tennis member for about 25 years - so I knew a few people, and the Club generally.

NP What attracted you to "having a go"?

MB I like target sports; I play a bit of snooker; all the croquet members I'd met seemed friendly; and I like being outdoors.

NP When I joined, I was impressed by how friendly and helpful the members were – is this how you and other newcomers see the Club?

MB Yes - and I think all the people who joined when I did would agree.

NP You have played in two tournaments (I lost to you!), and a league match already – bit keen aren't you?

MB I was bullied into trying the first one, and found I enjoyed it and learned a lot. I'm enjoying the game even more than I expected to, so I'm trying to improve (maybe to run before I can walk!).

NP You appear to be making good progress. You have played other ball games and sports perhaps?

MB Only snooker. I have poor hand-eye co-ordination, so moving balls aren't my thing. Years ago I did indoor target shooting (and bit of outdoor) and I've been an archer. No real link there.

NP Any other interests/hobbies (that you would want to tell us about)?

MB I like cycling, walking and now I'm retired a bit of gardening.

NP So how did you spend your days before croquet took over your life?

MB Working, until last September! Reading, walks, bike rides, idling, beer festivals ....

NP You play Association & Golf – which would you like to excel in?

MB Not sure about excel .. do well in both. They need a different outlook and seem to be mutually supportive in skill training.

NP Favourite holiday destinations? And next season, will it be Cheltenham and Budleigh Salterton?

MB Holidays? Anywhere really, but not beaches (well, I live near one!). No croquet holidays planned - holiday is for seeing places, not playing sport (but if my wife started playing ....).

NP Favourite colours?

MB From art; I think drawings are underrated, so black & white.

NP No no, I mean, green & brown, or red & yellow etc.

MB The ones with the radio-controls inserted in them. No-one will tell me which they are, but some players definitely seem to have a control unit!

NP Michael, thank you for taking the time to chat, and I look forward to playing you again - and buying you a drink after!

MB A pleasure - are you sure you'll be the one buying?

*Many thanks to Nigel and Michael for this interesting article - Ed*

## **The Clubhouse Café**

Angela and Ian would like to thank the Croquet Section for their support during our first year of trading as The Clubhouse Café and in particular for your support during the summer season.

We hope that you have enjoyed the changes we have made to the menu, by introducing new things whilst retaining old favourites.

It has been good to see many new faces as the season has progressed and we hope to continue to have the pleasure of your company when the lawns are closed.

We will revert to Tuesday, Friday and Saturday opening once the Hoops are packed away.

On the days we are open we will continue to provide a full menu with colder weather favourites reappearing.

In October we will start to take bookings for Christmas lunches which proved extremely popular last year.

Again many thanks for your continued support.

*Angela and Ian*

## **Silver Coaching Course**

A very successful Bronze Coaching Course was held here earlier this year by Cliff Jones who has been invited to run a similar course at Silver level over the weekend of 9 & 10 or 16 & 17 April next season. This would be for Association players within a handicap range of approximately 6 to 12.

Cliff will be asked if any of our Club Coaches may take the opportunity to upgrade to Grade 1 Coach during the course.

Some of our members asked for a course at this level, so although it is not yet a definite fixture, reserve the dates in your diaries and look out for a notice.

## Something different during the winter?

Do you know that we have three Pétanque courts at the Club? All members are welcome to play and the sets of balls are kept in the mallet cupboard. If you follow the path from the far corner of the top car park you will reach the Pétanque facility.

### What will our Club be in Five / Ten Years?

A small group has formed to address this question.

While tennis is the biggest club activity, with the highest income, croquet is also important. Provided that our wishes are put forward and are realistic they have every chance of being fulfilled.

Which is where you, the croquet members, come in.

There will be members who:

Give considered suggestions to a committee member

Do nothing, but accept the outcome (probably the majority)

Do nothing, then complain about the outcome (a small minority)

Which will you be?

After just two meetings the key issues have still to be defined, let alone answered. However there are some obvious issues to be addressed on behalf of croquet.

Are we content with five lawns?

A sixth lawn? If yes, how would we fund the construction and extra ongoing maintenance?

Are the clubhouse facilities adequate for us?

As the croquet member on the group my initial stance is:

We need to keep five lawns

We need to keep open the option to add a sixth lawn later

We cannot today justify a sixth lawn when lawns are unused at many times during the day and specially during the summer evenings

We will support any tennis oriented investment provided it is financially viable and does not adversely affect croquet

Generally we do not need expensive additions to clubhouse facilities

The most important issue is - **what do you, the members want?**

So please tell me, or another committee member, so that your inputs can be included.

*John Crowe*

## Your Croquet Committee Members

Pat Oxley	<i>Chairman</i>
Ellis Raymond	<i>Treasurer</i>
Jane Bell	
John Crowe	
David Harrison-Wood	
David Kendrick	
Romy Shephard	
Barrie Turner	

## TUESDAY COFFEE MORNINGS

After the lawns have closed the coffee mornings will start, every Tuesday from about 10.30 to 12, so the first will be on 12 October (or earlier, if the courts have had to be closed because of bad weather). They continue until March with a break over Christmas. COME AND JOIN US! All Club members welcome, and newcomers especially so. You can play cards or board games or just have a friendly chat over coffee. The Clubhouse Café will be open, so why not stay on for lunch as well? We look forward to seeing you there and you will be made very welcome.

Saturday 6 November	6.30pm (time TBC)	Fireworks at the Club
Tuesday 23 November	7.30pm	Croquet Quiz
Saturday 18 December TBC	2pm TBC	Christmas Carols and Tea ★
Wednesday 9 February 2011	12.30 for 1pm	Croquet Lunch with Speaker

★ Please note that the Christmas Carols and Tea is likely to be held on this day but has not as yet been confirmed.

Editor's Desk What would you like to see in future Newsletters? All constructive criticism, comments, suggestions, and croquet related articles, will be considered. Romy Shephard