



# Croquet Newsletter

EAST DORSET LAWN TENNIS & CROQUET CLUB

Issue 7

March 2011

**L**et's hope we are about to say goodbye to an exceptionally cold winter and that the warmer weather is on its way.

In January at the AGM Pat Oxley stepped down after three years as Croquet Chairman; we owe him thanks for his leadership and commitment to Croquet and to the Club. We are fortunate that he will continue to help the Section and its members and will represent Croquet's interests on the Club Development Committee.

We would like to welcome our new Chairman, John Pollard. As many of you may not know John, Pat

introduces him in an article on this page. He joined the Committee as recently as November so has not had the opportunity to familiarise himself with the running of the Section, so please give him all the help and support you can. This is especially necessary as we still have a vacancy for a Croquet Secretary. If you think you could help in this respect, please speak to one of the Committee.

Your new Committee has a full programme of croquet ready to be put into action when the playing season starts and we look forward to seeing you out on the lawns.

## Welcome to our new Croquet Chairman

John is an active club coach and a Joint Tennis/Croquet member. He has worked hard helping out around the club generally, seeing a job that needed doing and getting on with it.

An engineer by profession, he constantly suggests ways to improve our facilities. He naturally studies and then solves design problems and arrives with a workable solution. It was John who solved the problems associated with the sharp angles of the steel RSJ which support the retaining wall timber sleepers. Next time you play, study the material he has used; it is in fact the surface used on a diving board.

His patience shows no bounds. John is a problem solver and a doer, and we are delighted to welcome him as our newly elected Chairman.

*Pat Oxley*

## Coming up in two weeks' time....

The Club AGM will be held on Tuesday 15 March at 7.30pm (bar open from 6.30pm). There may be news of possible future development so this is your opportunity to listen, find out, and have your say.

We would like a big turnout of Croquet members so that our views can be made known and our Section is properly represented. Please make every effort to attend.

## Calling last year's Beginners!

For those members who joined the Club in 2010, you will be invited to attend coaching sessions on Monday mornings in April. These sessions will be for Association and Golf, commencing at 10am. Remember to wear warm clothing.

Kath and Tess Burt will again take sessions on Golf Croquet for members who joined in 2009 and 2010, and members will be advised when those sessions will take place.

*Peggy*

## Lawn Sprinklers and Groundwork

The sprinklers system was drained down in January. In the spring before the playing season all of the filters will be cleaned and a new filter is being added to the submersible pump in the well, which should prevent debris from entering the system. The interior of the tank will be cleaned and then the system will be refilled and thoroughly tested and the club will receive a report indicating any need for remedial work, so that the system is in top condition for the start of the season.

We are changing the sprinkler heads on court 1 to evaluate the possibility of better coverage. If this is a success we will probably change the heads in one or two troublesome spots.

In the autumn the winter dressing was completed before the fireworks, which gave much improved germination across all lawns, which should be

rewarded by early growth in the spring. You will have seen the improved boundary work on the south sides of courts 1 & 2, together with the decompaction and relaying of a sizeable area of court 2 in front of the clubhouse.

We have gained authority to purchase a 24" pedestrian mower so that these new areas and any corner repairs can be cut less aggressively until the new grass is fully established. We are also going to purchase a second hand one and a half ton roller which we shall use to further improve the playing surfaces. This will be shared with Tennis.

*Robert Green*

**STOP PRESS**  
**Croquet Season Starting Soon!**  
Lawns will open  
on Saturday 26 March  
grounds and weather permitting

## Silver Coaching Course

**Do you play golf croquet but need a bit of brushing up on the laws?** Then the half day laws course is just what you need. This is being run by Cliff Jones on the morning of Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> April. The cost is just £8 for CA members and £10 for non members. Cheques should be made payable to East Dorset LT&CC.

**Want to be a golf croquet referee?** Following the laws course in the morning there will be a chance to attend our referee's course and exam on the afternoon of Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> April also being run by Cliff Jones. If you attend the laws course in the morning the cost of the afternoon is just £5 otherwise the cost is £8 for CA members and £10 for non members. Cheques should be made payable to East Dorset LT&CC.

**Do you want to become an association or golf croquet coach?** If so Cliff Jones is running a Coaches Course at East Dorset on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> and Friday 15<sup>th</sup> April. This is a qualification course

and is open to people of all levels who would like to help others learn and enjoy the sport. Also open to existing coaches who would like a bit of a refresher. The cost is £20. Cheques should be made payable to the SW Federation.

**Do you enjoy your association croquet but feel you need help to improve?** Well why not join our excellent Silver Coaching Course being run this year by Cliff Jones. It will take place on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> April and is aimed at players with handicaps between 6 and 10. However if you are a little outside this range it shouldn't be a problem as it is fairly flexible. The course includes break construction (3 and 4 ball), break management, problems around hoops, bisque taking and giving, leaves and cannons. The Rover peel is also introduced on this course. If you are a member of the CA the cost is £36. If you are not then the cost is £44. Cheques should be made payable to East Dorset LT&CC.

Contact Penny Simmonds on 01202 691646 for more details on all the above events. Payments should be sent to Penny Simmonds, 5 Birkdale Road, Broadstone, Dorset BH18 9AY.

**Who is Cliff Jones?** Cliff has been a croquet player for about 24 years and coaching for about 20. For a while he was a member at East Dorset but now plays at Cheltenham. He runs many very successful courses all over the South of England and has been a frequent visitor to East Dorset to run courses, manage and play in tournaments. When we run courses by Cliff the feedback is always excellent.

*Penny Simmonds*

## Croquet Section Quiz

### Questions

1. Who is responsible for Croquet notice boards?
2. Can a visiting friend pay a monthly Green Fee?
3. What is the Croquet Dress Code?
4. What is the subscription for a new beginner joining in July?
4. What is the Mentoring System used in the Croquet Section?
5. How do I play Pirates?

### Answers

The answers to these – and many other croquet-related questions – can be found (or soon will be!) in the CROQUET INFORMATION BOOK. This is a blue binder, kept in the croquet filing cabinet (near the mallet cupboard) and available to be read by anyone (but please don't take it away). The aim is

to eventually include any special information needed by members of the Section, including significant decisions of your Committee.

The Information Book is currently being updated and some of its sections still need to be provided by those responsible. Anyone with material suitable for it – or with proposals for its content (for new stuff or changes to existing pages) should pass them to David Kendrick. There is a contents page at the front of the binder.

*David Kendrick*

### **Drinks, anyone?**

Tournament players get thirsty and appreciate being able to buy a cold drink after a morning's game on the lawns, and are disappointed if the bar shutter is down. We therefore ask Croquet members if they will please help man the bar just for two hours on a few days each year.

Times are nominally 12md - 2pm but flexible, so if all the players are back on the courts before 2pm, there is no point in staying open. Informal 'training' will be given and you will be shown what to do.

Bar takings have gone up during our tournament lunchtimes in the last year or two as a result of you, the members, helping out; and increased bar takings means increased income for the Croquet Section. BUT we do need more volunteers.

Please would YOU offer to help behind the bar for one of our Croquet Tournaments this year? Please look out for the sign-up list of dates that will shortly be put on the notice board.

### **The Swingers!**

We Croquet Players have a few things in common with Golf Players. (Tiger Woods Golf.)

One of these topics is Handicaps, even though if you do well in a Golf Competition, your Handicap is immediately cut, but it is more difficult for a Croquet Handicapper. But both games elicit a great deal of animated talk about this subject. Just listen in at any Tournament.

Another topic is 'the Swing.' But Golfers pay Professionals, to sort out any problems with their swing. We Croquet Players tend to talk to each other, and freely give advice, hints and tips after the game over a cup of coffee. Each of us can be of assistance to another player at some time, and this is a good aspect of our game that is much admired by other sports. We have a very active Coaching Team. Check with them for availability, and suitability.

The Croquet Swing:- Picture yourself all set to swing your mallet through the striker's ball and send it on to make a roquet (AC) or a hoop/

clearance (GC). Stance correct, grip sure but not too firm, eyes focussed on the strikers ball. But, I hear you say, this is what I always do, and it goes wrong!

Now put yourself just outside the West Boundary of Lawn 3, adjacent to one of the windows into the Club Hall, and facing North (or South). Check stance, Grip, Focus on striking the ball, and swing over the ball. This is known as casting. While you are doing this, close your eyes for a few casts. This is a confidence builder! Then open your eyes and slowly turn your head (not your shoulders!), while still casting, and look at what you are 'actually doing' by watching your mirrored image in the window. Then immediately practice on the lawn.

You can use this area to practice all the Croquet strokes too! It really does help.

*David Nicholson*

### **Croquet Open Days**

**Saturday 7 and Sunday 8 May**

Please come and help potential new croquet players to "have a go" at croquet.

Volunteers needed for welcome table, basic coaching, and to give friendly advice on our game.

A list with 2 hour slots will be displayed nearer the date - please enter your name with phone number if you can assist. Thank you.

*Peggy Nutland and Beryl Saunders*



*New version of a jump shot?*

### **Croquet Websites**

It doesn't matter whether you're new to croquet or have been playing for many years, there is almost certainly something you will be able to learn from the Oxford Croquet Site. Many members will already be aware of this veritable treasure trove of

croquet knowledge. If you have internet access and you do not know this site, type [www.oxfordcroquet.com](http://www.oxfordcroquet.com) into your browser the very next time you sit in front of your computer.

You can:

Learn the basics of the game, follow a series of "Lessons for Beginners" or "Intermediate Level Play".

Study advanced topics such as the "Triple Peel" or even the "Sextuple Peel".

Learn all about the equipment - hoops, balls, mallets etc., their dimensions, properties and tolerances.

Learn how to lay out a lawn and look after it.

Study the Laws.

Gain an understanding of what it takes to make a good referee.

Gain an insight into the management of tournaments and the different types of tournament format.

If you are technically minded you can study the theoretical calculations and the experiments that have been done by those inquisitive enough to examine such matters and knowledgeable enough to convince you they know what they are talking about!

There is even material about how to manage croquet clubs and look after the paper work.

In other words there's something for everybody.

*Peter S.*

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

John Crowe wrote a piece under this title in September's issue of the newsletter. He outlined his initial stance on the number of croquet lawns

that we should have, on investment in the Tennis Section, and on provision of clubhouse facilities.

He asked ***what do you, the members want?***

And can you guess what his reply was when I asked him last month what response he had received?

The answer was ***none.***

It is somewhat dispiriting when members talk amongst themselves on this subject but don't come forward to make their views known, especially when they have been invited to. Our representative on the Development Committee is now Pat Oxley and he would welcome any helpful comments. It is difficult to be a representative if you aren't aware of the opinions of those you are supposed to be representing. So do talk to Pat and let him know the direction you think ED should be taking.

*Romy Shephard*

### Emails

More and more organisations are using emails for speedier communication and we are no exception. If you think the Croquet Committee may not have your email address up-to-date for admin purposes, please notify them by sending a quick note to [edcroquet@talktalk.net](mailto:edcroquet@talktalk.net) If you would also like to receive notices and newsletters (like this one), please mention it in your email.

*Jonathan Wood*

### Your Croquet Committee:

John Pollard	<i>Chairman</i>
Ellis Raymond	<i>Treasurer</i>
Jane Bell	
David Harrison-Wood	
David Kendrick	
Romy Shephard	
Jonathan Wood	

If you want to avoid Club sessions, the best times to play are usually these, but please check the calendar to be sure. Coaching and mowing have priority on Monday and Friday mornings, and mowing may also be carried out at other times.

Monday		Afternoon	Evening
Tuesday			Evening (a few)
Wednesday		Afternoon	Evening
Thursday	Morning		
Friday		Afternoon	Evening
Saturday	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Sunday	Morning	Afternoon	Evening

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

All constructive criticism, Romy Shephard