

In The Loop



Issue 10 April 2017

Budleigh Salterton Croquet Club
Tel: 01395 442548 www.budleighcroquet.org

The Club's Estate – Finding the Best Way Forward

By Peter Hardcastle

Why is the General Committee submitting a proposal to the AGM concerning the Club's estate?

The GC is asking you for ideas on how to resolve a problem. At present the middle and lower pavilions will require a substantial sum, **£64K**, to maintain as they stand. The Club continues to run a deficit budget. To fund this expenditure substantial cost savings in general expenditure would have to be found or perhaps money could be taken from our bequest. The bequest is invested and produces about £9k in income annually. This is used against Club expenditure, and as such is effectively subsidising subscription income by about 20%. If the capital invested is reduced then income will fall and subscriptions will have to increase. Next year's budget already envisages rises in all subscriptions and in that of Croquet by 15%, and still the projection is for a deficit. There is no spare income to fund the pavilion maintenance.

We have to control our expenditure and find savings. In the case of the lower pavilion it is not good housekeeping to continually spend on a structure that is little used and gives no income. The middle pavilion also needs investment. The GC could have set up a sub committee to research the future of the Club's estate without asking the AGM to endorse their action. However we recognise that there are many views on this subject.

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BSCC Annual General Meeting

29th March 2017 – 5.15 pm

The Club's Estate – Finding the Best Way Forward

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The GC resolution is not about demolishing buildings but about finding a solution. We believe that asking the AGM to support our proposal would inform the wider membership that the matter is being considered, and give them the opportunity to help by putting forward ideas on how to improve the Club's estate, and perhaps ideas on how to source any grants or other funds. Any final proposals that the GC feels right to resolve the problem would, of course, be put to the membership at an EGM or the next AGM. If the membership didn't approve of any of the recommendations then obviously nothing would happen and with no funds available the buildings would continue to deteriorate until they become unsafe and unusable under Health & Safety legislation. They would then have to be demolished.

Unfortunately the problems associated with the middle and lower pavilions will not go away and a solution will have to be found in the very near future.

Please Help Yourself

By Alison Maddaford

Many people are now using the club for a variety of activities. The footfall has increased considerably, which is good news for the club. However it also means that consumables such as paper towels, loo rolls and even the soap dispenser may need replenishing more frequently, not just at the cleaning visits.

There are notices, with simple instructions, about opening the paper holders and refilling. The plastic keys are hanging by the paper towel dispensers. If you see items have run out or are getting low, it will help everyone if you can

replenish them. The stock of towels, loo rolls and liquid soap is stored in the cupboards under the vanity unit in the Ladies cloakroom. If by any chance these have run out and have not been replaced the main store is in the still room.

Please note that the rolls of paper towels need the brown cardboard centre removed as the feed is CENTRAL, and the roll should be placed upright, not on its side.

This request applies to Gentlemen and well as Ladies. Personal instruction can be given to any Gentleman who still believes in fairies!

Thank you, from the House Committee



Help Our Club Thrive Join Our Recruitment Drive!

OPEN DAYS

Thursday April 20th and Saturday April 22nd

10am – 4pm

Most new members join the club through word of mouth so we need your help.

A case of Friends, Relatives...Neighbours...Lend me your ears..... Come and join us in our sociable and life enhancing club which boasts some of the best scenery to be found in Devon. Friendship and fun, good games where the basics can be mastered quickly, the challenge of new skills, physical exercise, grey cell exercise, fresh air, superb views, the chance of a nice cup of tea (or something stronger from the bar). Croquet, bridge and scrabble – something for everyone. What's not to like?

Membership certainly ticks all the well-being boxes so spread the word and do the people you know a favour.

Croquet can be tried free of charge on the Open Days in a friendly, relaxed and supportive atmosphere with a nice cup of tea thrown in for good measure. No equipment is needed, just flat soled shoes to be worn. Information about the other games will be on hand too.

We offer temporary membership for £25. This is a great offer which includes full use of the club's facilities and equipment for four weeks and a schedule of coaching for croquet. If full membership is taken up at the end of the period, then the £25 will be deducted from the annual fee charged.

Volunteers will be needed on the Open Days to help to showcase our facilities and give tasters of playing croquet. The volunteers are crucial to the success of the days. Any help you can give will be very much appreciated and could make all the difference. Sheena Hemmings will be delighted to hear from you. (01395 443312 sheena.hemmings@gmail.com)

Displaying leaflets in cars has been an effective way of recruiting new members in the past so please help by doing this. Flyers are waiting for you in the clubhouse. Also, distribution of leaflets in your local area may bring new faces and a much needed cash injection to club funds.

By Barbara Russell

A Big Thank You to Gill Needham

By Peter Hardcastle

I am very pleased to tell you that we have recently received an extremely generous donation from Gill Needham. She has expressly asked that it be used to 'beautify' the Club estate and make the Club more visually attractive. The General Committee is very pleased to comply with the terms of the gift. Our volunteer gardeners have started on planting up and modifying the grounds, and Rob Weeks and his team of volunteers are also busy enhancing the estate. In addition the Clubhouse area is being smartened up. As you will appreciate there is a lot of work involved and it will take time to complete, but just the first year's work will really start to make the Club estate look much more attractive. It will begin to make the site look even more worthy of its fantastic position overlooking Budleigh and the sea.

Many thanks Gill. Your gift is very much appreciated.

New this Year!

We are opening up the Club as part of the Budleigh Open Gardens event for Hospiscare.

Saturday 24th and Sunday 25th June from 11am till 4 pm.

Do come along with your friends.

Bringing a Visitor to Play?

We hope you and they enjoy the wonderful surroundings and well maintained lawns. The bar is available for use but please ensure it is locked up when you leave, including the till.

A notice of charges for guests is displayed on the notice board in the foyer.

Please place monies in a brown envelope, which you can find in the box outside the office door. Complete it as required, including the name of your guest. Then put it through the office door letterbox.

Thank you.

Croquet

By Jack Smith

Club Competitions and Club Sessions

This year, our Club Competitions Secretary will be Ray Virr, who takes over from David Hicks. If you haven't yet received competition entry forms and explanatory notes, you will shortly. These notes will identify the manager of each competition. As usual, there are competitions suitable for all levels of experience, so even if you still feel apprehensive about competitions, I hope you will have a go. It is better to lose a few and learn from it when you already have a high handicap. What's to lose? You might be surprised how quickly your game improves when playing competitively. For those competitions that go on throughout the season, entrants will need to have played one or two games (depending on the competition) by 23rd July and the finals weekend will be held on 30th Sept/1st October, so you should all have plenty of time to play all your matches. If you have any questions, please ask your buddy or the relevant competition manager. They'll be pleased to help.

Following last years success, the monthly Club Sessions will, again, be in the "One Ball" format. These are great evenings where Golf and Association players are teamed up to play a mongrel variant of both codes. It's fast, fun and sociable – I encourage you all to try it! Watch out for the occasional "Speed Croquet" sessions too.

Short Croquet

For those of you that find a full AC game takes up too much of your time and stamina, I would recommend Short Croquet. It's also great for beginners in AC who want to develop their tactics and knowledge.

As well as sending a team to play in the SWF Spring teams event at Nailsea in April, and hosting the SWF Autumn Teams event, we are holding our first "Open" SC singles Tournament here in October. Details are available in the SWAN magazine and fliers will be available around the club during the summer season. As a new event, I hope one of our own members will be the first to have their name engraved on the trophy which Rosemary Bradshaw has donated to the Tournament.

Lawn Utilisation

Our lawn utilisation became the subject of a special study recently, which was kindly undertaken by Elaine Marsh, Tony Bower, Robert Tait and Adam Wimshurst. What with roll-ups, SWCA courses, internal and external tournaments, SWF league matches and tournaments, and the occasional visit by the WI and other groups, there are times when the lawns seem to be under a lot of pressure. The recently published full report from the study was submitted to both the General and Croquet Committees. A very brief summary of their recommendations can be found on page 10, but I would recommend that you read the whole Lawn Utilisation Report which is now available in the private pages members section on the website. It provides an excellent guide for the Croquet Committee when balancing the needs of members access to lawns with the full programme of events that a club of our stature needs to provide to the wider Croquet community – and beyond. It should allow us to smooth out a full and productive programme over the season without creating undue hardship for our croquet playing members.

Croquet – Dates for Your Diary

Many events take place during our summer season. You'll find information below about some of those going on in April and May. We can't cover everything here so please do keep an eye on the noticeboards in the clubhouse and the middle pavilion for information about other events and sign-up sheets.

**Start of Season
Fun One-Ball Doubles**

1st April
Meet at 9.30 for 10.00 start

A fun tournament to kick off the season. Players will be paired based on their AC and/or GC handicaps. Don't worry if you've no experience of one-ball. With a bit of luck you'll be paired with someone who knows what they're doing! Just do what your partner tells you and you'll be fine!

Watch out for the sign up sheet in the middle pavilion.

High Bisquers AC tournament

Sat/Sun 8th/9th April
Budleigh

For AC players with handicaps between 16 and 24. Five 18 point games are played over the two days. This tournament enables you to hone your skills at the start of the season. Details will be published in the SWAN and may be obtained from Phillip Shaw.

Short Croquet Tournament

Sat 22nd April
Nailsea

Once again we have entered a team of four into this tournament. We had hoped to enter two teams but numbers have restricted us.

B – Level Advanced Weekend

Fri-Sun 21st-23rd April
Budleigh

A highly recommended season-start tournament for AC players with handicaps from 1 to 8 inclusive. Details will be in the CA Fixtures book and can also be obtained from Phillip Shaw.

**Charity One Ball Singles
Tournament**

Heat – 27th April at Budleigh
Final – Sun 7th May at Surbiton

This year the tournament will be in aid of Parkinson's, UK. Entry will be a minimum of £5 per person. Last year we collected substantially over £100 and we hope to at least match that this year. Details will be issued nearer to the event.

The South West Croquet Academy

By Jack Smith

The Spring Programme

The South West Croquet Academy Spring term will shortly be upon us, opening with “Out-thinking the Opposition” – a sports psychology course run by Dr. Stewart Cotterill on 30th March. A few places are still available – if you want to seize any advantage you can to help win your games! There is still time to book on some of our other courses too. The SWCA has recently added extra courses where ones offered on the initial programme have been fully booked. The website (www.southwestcroquetacademy.co.uk) is the best place to see what is still available.

The new website seems to have been well-received by users. They have found it easy to navigate and booking on-line has proven very popular. Having a dedicated mobile phone has also proved to be a boon in that potential delegates can get their questions answered at any time.

The Autumn Programme

We are now starting to pull together an Autumn programme which is likely to address the more specialised courses. These will be directed at players who are interested in gaining a better understanding of the Laws and also those that want to become Coaches, Referees or Tournament managers. Additionally, we hope our mild climate here in Budleigh may also attract players who want to improve particular skills over the winter period.

Our Team and How You Can Help Us

The SWCA appreciates your support and depends on volunteers to help delegates have a good experience when they visit our Club. If you are interested in helping in some way, Tim Joy will be pleased to hear from you as he is coordinating SWCA administration. Alternatively, if you think that assisting the Lead Coach is the best use of your expertise, then contact Alison Maddaford. She has got most of the assisting coaches allocated for this term but your expertise might well help us in the future. However, in order to maintain our “Learn from the Best” catch-phrase, you are likely to be a low handicap player, probably with coaching experience. Alison has also been negotiating with Lead Coaches regarding their costs and has also set up a supplier for the meal package we offer to delegates.

We are always trying to identify the very best coaches in Croquet, so if you have any suggestions about who we can approach and what they can offer, please contact Peter Moore as he is the team member with this responsibility.

The Rest of the Team

So, who else is part of the steering team? Currently, Dave Tompsett is focusing on publicity material and working alongside Tim with regard to ensuring delegates get a good experience from their day with us. Maureen Smith is administering welcome packs, delegate lists and maintaining contact with delegates before their course. Roger Mills is a valuable Lead Coach and is advising on how we ensure that everything runs fine from the lead coach’s point of view. And finally me, I’m the one responsible for the website and liaising with the South West Federation of Croquet Clubs.

Between us, we are endeavouring to ensure we do provide the very best we can for SWCA delegates.

Bridge

By Sue Beresford

The first 3 months of 2017 have been a success and of note was the Devon Air Ambulance charity event we held on 2nd March. We had 44 playing and raised a very impressive **£273!** As ever, the Keith Ponsford Seminars which ran in February and March proved very popular, with around 28 attendees at each seminar. The Saturday bridge teas and teams evenings have also been very well attended and enjoyed.

Rosemary Ormerod is continuing her successful **BRIDGE CLASSES** at the club. The next 10 sessions for beginners (10am to 12 noon) and improvers (2pm to 4pm) run from 9th March through to 18th May missing out 13th April. A programme is available and you may wish to drop in for particular sessions/topics on the improvers course. For further details, please contact Rosemary on *rosemaryormerod@gmail.com* or telephone 01395 267 237.

Here are a couple of future events for your diary:

TEAMS

Tuesday 4th April

BRIDGE AGM

Tuesday 25th April 2017 at 6.30pm in the Main Bridge Room
prior to the regular Bridge session

More future events are in the planning stage. If you have any ideas for events, please do let any member of the Bridge Committee know.

Club and Section Handbooks

By Linda Hicks

The most up to date versions of the Club handbook and the handbooks for Croquet and Bridge are always available from the BSCC website (www.budleighcroquet.org). They contain a lot of useful information about how the club and the sections are run, what is available to members and what is expected of members. Just go to the homepage and click on 'Club Handbooks'. You can read them online or download them.

If you do not have internet access, printed copies are available. If you would like copies, contact me on 01395 444248.

What About The Pony?

By Rosemary Bradshaw

What indeed and what was her or his name? In fact, although we do not know the first pony's name, we do know that it was bought in 1892 soon after a new groundsman, T.Staddon, was appointed. Staddon's wages of 14/- per week in summer were reduced to 2/6 in winter when part of his duties was still to look after the pony. The pony's stable was near the south end of the Dial House garden. The pony and harness cost £9, plus £1/10/00 for leather shoes.

At the AGM of 1901 a statement that the courts were to be dressed with 'fertiliser' led to a lively discussion in which the merits of a compost dressing made from rotted turf and stable manure were extolled, together with the benefits to be gained from grazing in winter. It was evidently an example of everyone thinking they knew more about turf management than did the Sub-Committee appointed to do the work – not an unusual position even today over 100 years later!

Sheep were folded on the grounds in the winter bringing in a small monetary income for the club plus 'natural' mowing and fertilising. By 1904 the pony was 'done for' and a new one was authorised at £15, so the first pony worked here for 12 years. I wonder how that compares with our present systems?

By 1907 the new pony's food bill was £7/11/9 and he needed some new lawn boots at £1/10/0. In 1919, with WW1 over, and yet another new pony in the job, the croquet lawns were always cut with a hand mower and the horse mower was used for the tennis courts. There were ten courts available for the tennis tournament, indicating the sport's dominance at the time.

1920 saw the purchase of the first motor mower, an Atco 30. The horse mower and cart were sold. What happened to 'Pony' is not revealed in the club records. Let's hope he or she went to a good home.

Next time Sheila Jelley will give us something about Dr. Robert Walker, one of the pioneers of the Club

Summary of the Lawn Utilisation Report

The Lawn Utilisation Study reviewed several issues which are important to the future of the club and its members. Examining them thoroughly has resulted in a lengthy report which provides the background to the following conclusions and recommendations.

Issue – Competing Demands for Lawns

1. The membership is diverse in its croquet interests and the croquet committee needs to cater for all of them. We therefore provide a range of croquet activities (organised social play, club competitions, league matches, tournaments, coaching and opportunities for individual play and practice) all of which benefit our members.
2. We provide excellent opportunities for organised social play with one or more roll-ups available every day of the week. These are estimated to account for 25% of all summer season lawn days.
3. Internal competitions (19% of lawn days) and league matches (4%) are also well-catered for.
4. Tournaments are an important part of the life of the Club and occupied 15% of available lawn-days during the 2016 season. They used between 2.5 and 10 lawns per tournament, averaging 5.6 lawns per tournament. The number we hold is commensurate with other large clubs. However it is recognised that in 2016, the months of May (35% of available lawn days) and June (27%) were unusually busy.

To manage demand, we should:

- a) avoid scheduling tournaments too close together as occurred in May and June 2016;*
- b) aim for a maximum of say 20% tournament use of available lawn days in any one month (with the exception of the August tournament) where possible;*
- c) monitor the use of lawns booked for tournaments and release them for use by members when possible;*
- d) ensure that the number of tournaments (and other events) remains in step with our ability to service them.*

Issue – Under-utilisation of lawns in the evenings

Except during tournaments, the lawns are under-utilised most evenings. This is an important part of our capacity for individual lawn bookings, however, and so should be managed with care.

A trial early evening roll-up could be considered.

Issue – Use of lawns for coaching and SWCA Courses

Coaching, including use by the SWCA, amounted to 5% of lawn days.

SWCA courses and other coaching should be scheduled to avoid popular roll-up days when possible.

Issue – Maximising the use of spare lawn capacity

There is plenty of spare capacity (some 30% of lawn time) for individual lawn bookings. While mornings and afternoons can be congested on roll-up periods, there is always one lawn reserved for individual booking.

To increase use of spare lawn capacity, we should:

- a) ensure that the opportunity to book lawns for individual use is publicised effectively*
- b) encourage members to record individual play on the booking sheets*

Issue – Double Banking

Lawn capacity, as outlined above, can be doubled if double banking, which is the norm in most clubs, is employed.

Overall Conclusion

The Croquet Committee should continue to create and maintain a balance of uses over a given time span. We should also encourage members to be tolerant of each other's interests and of the lawn days which result. With 10 available lawns there is room for everyone.