



newsletter

Match results

Longman Cup vs Northampton (away) 10 June

Lost 3-4

Wrest Park	H'cap	Northampton	H'cap	WP score
Peter Smith	11	Derek Humphries	3½	-15
Elaine Newman	20	Jane Evans	16	
Tim Brewer	10	Charlie Askew	9	+6T
Peter Newman	18	John Dowding	16	+10T
Tim Brewer	10	Derek Humphries	3½	+25
Peter Smith	11	Charlie Askew	9	-4T
Peter Newman	18	Jane Evans	16	-4T
Elaine Newman	20	John Dowding	16	-19

Report by Tim Brewer

A glorious sunny day spent playing croquet. The match looked promising after the morning games: Tim's and Peter's were drawn out affairs with no real breaks from either side. In the afternoon Tim's game was short-lived, so he and Derek filled up time with an advanced and a one-ball game. Elaine and Peter Newman both had a trying time. Peter Smith's game proved to be the turning point when Charlie hit in from a glancing blow off a hoop with 30 minutes remaining - this allowed him to take a ball from hoop 2 to the peg and steal the game. A fine tea finished off the day.

The Editor adds: Many thanks to Tim for the report, and congratulations to Elaine on her Longman Cup debut. The format of this competition has been changed from its earlier three doubles, two singles format, which was presumably intended to assist beginners by having them play with someone more experienced. Quite why the format has been changed to reduce this opportunity is something of a mystery. Players should remember that the CA have also abolished the old maximum handicap of 17 in doubles, which means that in doubles you now play off the same handicap as in singles. There is a maximum handicap of 20 for CA tournaments, but this doesn't apply to league matches.

Beds & Herts League vs Colworth (home) 24 June

Won 4-2

Wrest Park	H'cap	Colworth	H'cap	WP score
Peter Smith	12	Steve Jones	8	+6
Peter Newman	18	Trevor Wilkins	9	
George Collin	1½	Judy Anderson	7	+10T
Elaine Newman	24	Laurie Aspinall	12	
George Collin	1½	Steve Jones	8	-16
Peter Smith	12	Judy Anderson	7	+14
Peter Newman	18	Laurie Aspinall	9	+8T
Elaine Newman	24	Trevor Wilkins	12	-8

Mary Rose vs Letchworth (home) 2 July

Won 5-2

Wrest Park	H'cap	Letchworth	H'cap	WP score
George Collin	1½	Nigel Gray	2	+9
Rod Ashwell	1½	Ian Mantle	2½	
John Wheeler	2½	Tony Parry	3½	-17
John Bevington	2½	David Tutt	3½	+5
George Collin	1½	Nigel Gray	2	+25
Rod Ashwell	1½	Ian Mantle	2½	+23
John Wheeler	2½	David Tutt	3½	-23
John Bevington	2½	Tony Parry	3½	+10

In the doubles Ian got to 4-back early on and George and Rod nibbled away while their opponents tried to defend their lead - indeed, they continued playing as if defending a lead when they no longer had a lead to defend. Tony was playing well and made the most of an opportunity given him when John wired himself when approaching hoop 3. The other John threw away two easy chances to finish from rover and peg before hitting in the length of the lawn.

After lunch George demolished Nigel with a triple which only failed at the last. Intending to leave the peelee in the jaws of rover and do a half-jump he actually peeled it and then failed to clear the ball. David started a triple against John before going on to win, Rod played a solid game against Ian and John took advantage of two failed hoops by Tony. Our next opponents will be either Bristol or Colchester.

Beds & Herts League vs St Albans (home) 15 July

Won 4-2

Wrest Park	H'cap	St Albans	H'cap	WP score
David Woolley	8	Terry Mahoney	4½	-3T
Peter Newman	18	David Kitchen	16	
Tim Brewer	10	Jonathan Repp	9	+4T
Peter Smith	12	Mike Gardner	11	
David Woolley	8	Terry Mahoney	4½	+24
Tim Brewer	10	Jonathan Repp	9	+13
Peter Newman	18	Mike Gardner	11	+17
Elaine Newman	24	David Kitchen	16	-13

It was good to see Terry back at Wrest Park, but sad to hear that the lawn at St Albans could be under threat from the tennis club. When 'Sphairistike', or lawn tennis, was invented many croquet courts were converted into tennis courts - it cannot be mere coincidence that two tennis courts can be conveniently fitted into a single croquet court. Peter, having partnered Tim to a win in the morning, was replaced by Elaine for the afternoon singles, where three wins sealed the match. With two solid victories in a row we must be near the top of the League.

Inter Club vs Harrow Oak (home)

15 July

Lost 1-6

Wrest Park	H'cap	Harrow Oak	H'cap	WP score
Jon Watson	-½	Phil Cordingley	-1½	-9TP
Howard Bottomley	½	Michael Heap	-1	
John Wheeler	2½	Gary Bennett	0	-17
John Bevington	2½	Richard Hilditch	3	-1
Jon Watson	-½	Phil Cordingley	-1½	+13
Howard Bottomley	½	Michael Heap	-1	-26TP
John Wheeler	2½	Richard Hilditch	3	-8
John Bevington	2½	Gary Bennett	0	-4

This match saw a new innovation in Wrest Park's catering - pre-match bacon sandwiches. The frying pan and oil await any players who would rather breakfast at the club. Our opposition arrived a little late (Phil on a brand new and extremely flash touring bicycle with triple chainwheel, indexed gears, you name it), but we soon made a start in dull but dry conditions.

John B should have sorted out Richard Hilditch, but an over-enthusiastic peg-out attempt left the forward ball well past the peg and he failed to hit in as Richard two-balled round. Jon and Howard held out for some time until Michael managed to complete a delayed triple. Jon (wine) and Howard (food) provided a substantial lunch, much enjoyed by all, and Jon then proceeded to a very creditable win against Phil. Richard, rejuvenated by lunch and his earlier win, beat John Wheeler, Howard lost to another Heap TP, and John B went down after being pegged out.

Our opponents admitted to being flattered by the scoreline, but we can't argue about the result. Michael Heap's accurate play and two triples (he was the 1977 Opens winner) amply demonstrated what we have to aim at.

Arrival of the Thatch Controller



John Wheeler with the Sisis Rotorake, fitted with the brush reel.

Our new member doesn't have a top hat, but sports orange livery, a powerful engine and (best of all) a grass box. It is a Sisis Auto-Rotorake Mk 4, generously purchased for the club by John Wheeler. It came with a

¾" spacing thatch removal or scarification reel, and other members of the club have bought the brush reel and ½" verticutting reel. Cutting edge? We've now got a shedful of them.



The verticutting reel. Side growths should be very afraid.

Silsoe School Summer Fayre

The school had asked us if we could "do something" for this event, which took place on Saturday 24 June. We came up with four tests of skill: running a hoop from three feet or so, a four-yard roquet, an easy rush into a four-foot circle, and a split roll croquet stroke, again with target circles. Four attempts at each, with a point for each hoop, roquet or ball in the circle - maximum 20 points. All for £1, with prizes for the three highest scores.

We asked for an area of 10 square yards and were allocated a space in the far corner of the playing field. This had to be gone over several times with a hand mower to get the grass down to a reasonable length. The surface was vaguely level but far from flat - more than one roquet resulted from an aerial bombardment.



John Martin awaits the punters at the Summer Fayre.

John Bevington and John Martin manned the stall, and John Wheeler paid an extended visit, enveigling various acquaintances into having a go. We ended up taking £16, those that took part seemed to enjoy it, and we might try doing something similar at the August Craft Fair.

Overseas visitor

Pierre Dunn, from the USA, paid a visit to the club on 20 June. Pierre and his wife work in Hungary teaching English, and he had come over to visit relatives near St. Albans and visit local clubs. He had a game with John Bevington and played very elegantly off 5, using the Solomon grip, and only lost through twice getting into a tangle at rover. Pierre is hoping to write up his trip as a travel/croquet article.

Site clearance

Every so often we have to clear out the small hut. . .



If there is something you cannot find it may be that it has been transferred to the hut in the woodyard (the key to this is with the key to the pavilion). If you cannot find it there then it has either been successfully tidied away or disposed of. During our labours we discovered a dead mouse, perfectly preserved. Micky was pinned up as a mascot but later removed at Pandora's insistence.



A place for everything. Micky keeps watch over the door.

Group evenings in July/August

- Cranfield University Soil Survey group, Friday 21 July, 5.30-7.30pm. If you can assist with this please call Tim Brewer.
- Croquet evening for the Ampthill 41 Club on Tuesday 8 August (contact is Gary Bedford 01525 404139). Volunteers to help out welcome.

Our charge for any group evenings is £3 per head.

Advanced Tournament 7-9 July

Report by John Wheeler

An essential part of any report includes some mention of the weather and prevailing conditions. So! The first thing the manager had to contend with was standing water on lawns 5 and 6 so that the players due to play there spent the first hour of the day helping to squeegee and pump. Their games were all completed by 12.40 including Robin Brown's only loss of the weekend, at the hands of Peter Thompson.

Robin was the only player to achieve triple peels, four of them, his first was in the second round against Tom Anderson. He also tried a couple of sextuples.

At the other end of the scale Chris Ross seemed to have trouble controlling his mallet and had threatened to give up the game. At the end of the day he attended a teach-in given by his former opponents and changed his mallet. Chris's results thereafter showed an improvement but the win would just not happen.

In the American block the eventual winner, Jim Potter, lost his first game to Richard Smith but was to win the rest.

On Friday evening lawns one and two were mown, three and four were mown first thing on Saturday and five and six were mown on Saturday evening. I have looked to see if this had an effect on play without coming to a conclusion, apart from a subjective assessment that freshly mown lawns are much easier to play on.

On Saturday we had fly-past by a lone Westland Lysander which was used extensively in World War Two to deliver allied agents behind enemy lines. Chris just lost to Tom Anderson by one on time while Robin and Jim carried on winning. Robin completed the day with a triple against Nick Evans, the eventual runner-up, and a TPO against Lionel Tibble.

On Sunday Judy Anderson took a break from leading the catering team to substitute for Richard Smith only to find that Alan Edwards was on top form. Jim Potter completed his weekend with a plus twenty six against Alan Edwards while Robin completed his with a TPO against John Wheeler.

Main Results

Block A - Swiss.

Winner Robin Brown 8/9 and three triples. Runner-up Nick Evans 7/8

Ian Mantle won a prize for the greatest gain of Lamb points.

Block B - American

Winner Jim Potter 6/7. Runner-up Alan Edwards 4/7.

John Bevington

18 July 2000