

newsletter

Match results

Friendly vs Oxford University (away) 29 April

Lost 2-5

Wrest Park	H'cap	Oxford	H'cap	WP score
Tom Anderson	2½	Ian Plummer	-1	-22(A)
Tom Anderson	2½	Ian Plummer	-1	-25
Paul Sharrock	8	Guy Towlson	8	+13(A)
George Collin	2½	Alex Gray	16	-4
George Collin	2½	Ian Plummer	-1	-25TP
Tom Anderson	2½	Guy Towlson	8	-5T
Ben Ashwell	18	Alex Gray	16	+15

The F&M restrictions in operation when the match was arranged meant that this was an away fixture. Our hosts did us proud with lunch at Balliol, and dished it out on the lawns as well.

Beds & Herts League vs Enfield (home) 12 May

Lost 2-4

Wrest Park	H'cap	Enfield	H'cap	WP score
PeterNewman	14	Ken Pickett	9	-20
Elaine Newman	24	Basil Lawrence	11	
John Martin	24	Keith Davis	6	+14
Ben Ashwell	16	Paul	10	
Peter Newman	14	Keith Davis	6	-18
Ben Ashwell	16	Ken Pickett	9	+6
Elaine Newman	24	Paul	10	-11
John Martin	24	Basil Lawrence	11	-9T

Matches against Enfield have a habit of retaining some mystery after the event - last year no-one recorded the scores or the players' surnames, and this year the score sheet had us all on first name terms only. Personal knowledge and an old newsletter have revealed three of our opponents, but Paul must remain partly anonymous.

Inter Club vs Bristol (home) 2 June

Lost 3-4

Wrest Park	H'cap	Bristol	H'cap	WP score
Jon Watson	-½	Ed Duckworth	-2	+3
Howard Bottomley	0	David Goacher	-1½	
John Bevington	2	Rosemary Gugan	½	+4
George Collin	2½	Frances Ransom	2½	-24
Jon Watson	-½	Ed Duckworth	-2	-17TP
Howard Bottomley	0	David Goacher	-1½	-9
John Bevington	2	Frances Ransom	2½	-14
George Collin	2½	Rosemary Gugan	½	+16

A match played in a stiff breeze in which Ed and David started triples in their singles games. While Ed succeeded, David failed when he stuck in 3-back. The efficient Frances proved to be the difference between the teams, winning both her singles comfortably.

Beds & Herts League vs Letchworth (away) 2 June

Lost 0-5

Wrest Park	H'cap	Letchworth	H'cap	WP score
Ben Ashwell	12	Jeremy Scott	6	-7T
Ben Marchant	20	George Woolhouse	7	
David Woolley	7	Robert Staddon	10	-19
David Woolley	7	Jeremy Scott	6	-12
Peter Smith	12	George Woolhouse	7	-12
Ben Ashwell	12	Robert Staddon	10	-18

Mary Rose vs Sussex County (home) 3 June

Won 6-1

Wrest Park	H'cap	Sussex County	H'cap	WP score
Rod Ashwell	1	Roger Beyderwellen	1½	+21
John Wheeler	2	Gene Mears	4	
John Bevington	2	Jonathan Isaacs	4½	+10
George Collin	2½	Don Mears	6	+23
Rod Ashwell	1	Roger Beyderwellen	1½	-15
John Wheeler	2	Gene Mears	4	+11
John Bevington	2	Don Mears	6	+21
George Collin	2½	Jonathan Isaacs	4½	+19

In comparison with the Sussex team that played us in the final a few years ago this was a relatively weak side, and they found our lawns took a little getting used to, being much slower than those at Southwick. It turned out to be an easy win, the one loss being inflicted by Roger, who is from the Netherlands and studying engineering in Brighton. He is the current German champion and will be representing the Netherlands in this year's World Championships.

Handicap Tournament 17-19 May

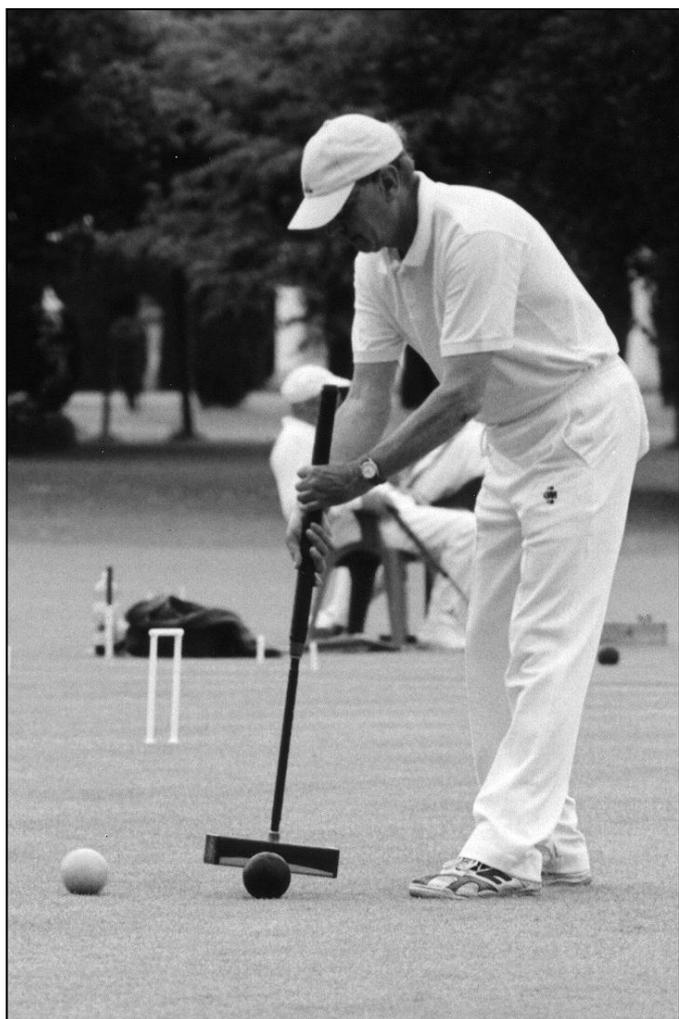
Local boys done good

There were American blocks of 10 and 13, handicaps from 1 to 16, eight and in some cases nine games each, and two winners. In block A it was Colin McKenzie, a former member of Wrest Park, now of Ealing, who won at the last by beating Ben Ashwell +9 in his final game to finish level with Ben on 7 wins. Ben, also a Wrest Park member, only started playing seriously last year and already has a clean style and an interest in strategy which, allied to an array of bisques since reduced from 16 to 12, resulted in two possibles and three more wins in double figures. One to watch.

Block B was won by Peter Newman, also of Wrest Park, who won seven games, as did Martin Leach from Ipswich. Peter had earlier commented on the pressure of tournament play as opposed to the more relaxed atmosphere of club matches, but any nerves seemed well under control and his handicap has now gone down to 12 from 14. Others showing early season form were Kevin Ham with six wins and George Collin and John Wheeler with five each.

The Park's wildlife enlivened Saturday and Sunday - a swan wandered across and cast a critical eye over lawn 4, and there were two encounters between weasels and baby rabbits right in front of the pavilion. Prompt intervention by concerned spectators prevented any casualties, and one rabbit was seen to take refuge under a chair next to the lawn before making a dash for freedom.

Water sports at the Wrest Park Aquadrome (as featured on the cover of the March Gazette) were in full swing the day before the tournament as a pump busied itself with the latest flood, so cutting the lawns had to wait until Friday evening. The recently refurbished mower was then found to have a bent bottom blade, which meant bringing out the old Atco, still going as darkness fell with two white-clad figures acting as markers a hundred yards apart.



Block winner Peter Newman in action.

Inter Counties 26-29 May

Goodbye to the First Division.

Bedfordshire were relegated after finishing bottom of the division with two wins from 10 matches. This year's champions were Northumberland, who won with a day to spare. The last day saw a frantic struggle to avoid the drop which resulted in six teams finishing on five wins. The final relegation place was decided by number of games won, and the unlucky team were Avon, who lost a vital game in their last match against - Bedfordshire!



The lads and lasses - from left: John Wheeler, George Collin, Jon Watson, Howard Bottomley, Enid Bottomley, Judy Anderson, John Bevington, Tom Anderson.

Staying up was always going to be a struggle. The standard is rising and we faced extremely good players - of the 20 players to confront our second pair (handicaps 2 and 2) 13 had minus handicaps.



Robert Fulford, playing second pair for Essex, peels yellow through rover before following through with red and completing a triple against John Wheeler and John Bevington in the first match.



A familiar sight - the bar at Southwick.

Each county plays all the others and each match consists of three games of doubles played to advanced rules with three-hour time limits. The combined handicaps of the first pair must be less than those of the second pair, which in turn must be less than those of the third pair. The lawns were fast, the hoops both tight and solid, so it was hard going.

The two Johns at second pair failed to trouble the scorers, but Howard and Jon at first pair won four games, as did George and Tom at third pair. The only times their wins coincided were in the first match when we beat last year's champions Essex (including Robert Fulford, Chris Clarke and Michael Heap) and the penultimate match against Suffolk.

Division 1			Division 2		
	Matches	Games		Matches	Games
N'umberlnd	8	20	Notts	8	22
Surrey	6	18	Sussex	7	17
Ch Islands	6	17	Middx	6	21
Dorset	5	18	Herts	6	16
Essex	5	16	Devon	5	15
Lancs	5	15	Warwicks	5	14
Gloucs	5	14	Yorks	4	14
Cheshire	5	14	Berks	4	14
Avon	5	13	Glamorgan	4	12
Suffolk	3	12	Kent	3	11
Beds	2	8	Northants	3	9

John Wheeler has compiled a record of all the games, opponents and handicaps, and these are on show in the pavilion. As for next year - well, we should be able to make more of a showing in the lower division, and there is of course the match against Yorkshire to look forward to!

Coaching Day - June 10

An interesting experience for all concerned. Only two full members expressed an interest in coaching, one of whom was unable to turn up on the day and rang to apologise "*in case my absence upsets your arrangements*". Hah! Even though the date for the coaching day was agreed at the AGM, everyone seems to have assumed that just because I had gone as far as mentioning the event in the newsletter and putting up a form in the pavilion (which had accumulated over twenty

names, for all to see) I was going to make all the arrangements as well.

In the event John Wheeler, Jon Watson, myself and Tom Anderson (summoned after bells) spent the day coaching the twenty or so attendees in some of the skills of golf croquet - hoop running, jump shots, scatter shots and the use of the stop shot, and the basics of stance and swing. Most were part of our golf croquet section from Leighton Buzzard, and there was also a group from the Dunstable U3A.

In spite of the lack of planning it seemed to go quite well. One player had had two or three unsuccessful attempts at a jump shot and had expressed a lack of belief in the possibility of ever succeeding. She was asked to have another go and up and over it went. Her look of amazement was something to see, and we hope everyone went away having learnt something useful. One or two expressed an interest in association croquet, but heavy afternoon showers had us all heading for the pavilion. We have invited the Dunstable U3A back for an evening's association croquet session to make up for time lost to rain.

Ben Ashwell, who wanted to learn about triple peels, managed to do better than a mere one-to-one with Jon Watson and was seen being given advice by Ian Burrige, a Great Britain international who was playing in the Nottingham vs Sussex County Inter Club match, which was being played at Wrest Park.

Diary

- June 21 Committee meeting
 - June 24 Silsoe Church Flower Festival
 - June 24* B&H League vs Colworth (away)
Three players required
 - June 27* Beds Scout Fellowship croquet evening
7pm (contact Dave Randle SRI)
 - June 28 Surrey University PhD group
2.15-4.15
 - June 30* Silsoe School summer fete
 - July 3 Rod Ashwell's school group
 - July 6-8 Wrest Park Advanced tournament
 - July 7/8* B&H League vs St Albans
 - July 14 Mary Rose vs Cheltenham (home)
 - July 17 Irene Davis' group
 - Aug 14* Ampthill 41 club croquet evening
- We need volunteers to participate in the events marked with an asterisk, in particular the matches and the school fete (which requires a bit of grass cutting and marking out on the day). Please let me know if you can help.

John Bevington

18 June 2001