



newsletter

Match results

Beds & Herts League vs St Albans (away)

4 August

Lost 1-3

Wrest Park	H'cap	St Albans	H'cap	WP score
John Bevington	1½	Terry Mahoney	5	-1T
George Collin	2	David Kitson	11	
Gordon Sampson	18	Richard Smith	3½	-18
John Bevington	1½	Terry Mahoney	5	-15
Gordon Sampson	18	Richard Smith	3½	
George Collin	2	David Kitson	11	+2

In the morning doubles George had four choices for the last shot and we decided to go for the nearest - a half-wired ball in the jaws of penultimate - and missed. Gordon struggled against Richard, but held him up for ages and the game only just finished before time.

John and Gordon used up over half the bisques before getting on the score sheet and then prolonged the game after Terry missed the pegout. David handled his bisques well but then elected not to peg one ball out, which gave George the opportunity to make two breaks from 4 and 5 and snatch a well-deserved win.

Beds & Herts League vs Watford (home)

12 August

Lost 1-5

Wrest Park	H'cap	Watford	H'cap	WP score
Rod Ashwell	1	Bill Gillott	9	+18
Ben Ashwell	12	Mark Homan	9	
Gordon Sampson	18	Robert Bateson	11	-1T
John Martin	20	David Drazin	11	
Rod Ashwell	1	Bill Gillott	9	-26
Ben Ashwell	12	Mark Homan	9	-4
Gordon Sampson	18	Robert Bateson	11	-10
John Martin	20	David Drazin	11	-18



Generation gamesmen Ben and Rod Ashwell

The rain, in contrast to the previous week, arrived early and stayed all morning. Wrest Park's new family pairing of Rod and Ben Ashwell had a good win, and John and

Gordon came close. After lunch it was a Cassiobury carve-up and we lost the lot.

There is still one more chance to record our first win. Look out for expressions of total confidence in the manager by the chairman, demonstrations by the fans and mutterings from the treasurer concerning the lack of money for big-name signings in the close season. At least we don't have to worry about relegation.

Mary Rose vs Woking (home)

16 August

Won 5-2

	H'cap	Woking	H'cap	WP score
Rod Ashwell	1	Malcolm Bigg	2	+25
John Bevington	1½	Andrew Davies	2½	
John Wheeler	2	Mike Town	3½	+8
George Collin	2	Gill McDiarmid	3½	+18
Rod Ashwell	1	Malcolm Bigg	2	+12
John Bevington	1½	Andrew Davies	2½	-20
John Wheeler	2	Gill McDiarmid	3½	+23
George Collin	2	Mike Town	3½	-11

We got off to a good start by winning all the morning's matches. John Bevington provoked some tut-tutting from partner Rod by going off near the opponents and thus allowing them to score a point, but made up for it by going round and finishing with a rover peel. John and Mike's game was adjourned for lunch with John well ahead, and was concluded soon afterwards. As it was a midweek match we took advantage of the Institute's catering facilities and were given a private room with views of the park. Main course, pudding with cream ad lib and coffee to follow, all for £4.

In the afternoon, with the sun shining as it did all day, Andrew finally got going and finished with a double peel. George went round to rover and conceded a contact, whereupon Mike did the same and pegged him out. George got position to run hoop 1 hard but was unable to make the roquet afterwards and Mike then made 10 hoops on a three-ball break and finished shortly thereafter. It was up to John W and Rod to pull us through. John, having subtly plied his opponent with wine at lunchtime, won comfortably and reduced his handicap in the process.

Advanced Tournament

18/19 August

This highly enjoyable tournament was won by Brian Hallam with a 100% record including two triples in his five games, clinching victory with a win over Howard Bottomley. Howard had three triples to his credit, and there were four others by Lionel Tibble (2), Dave Mundy and Jon Watson. Jon's came on Sunday morning when he shamelessly massaged the draw to play Derek Humphrey and finished in the seventh turn in about 45 minutes, thus gaining a handicap reduction to -1. Other handicap changes were David Tutt from 1½ to 1 and

Rod Ashwell from 1 to ½. The smooth lawns encouraged adventurous play and there were numerous triple attempts.

The 25 entrants, including six minus players, ranged from Lionel Tibble at -1½ to Rod's son Ben, playing off 9 in his first advanced tournament. Apart from the Northampton and Letchworth regulars we also welcomed Martin Gill, Gina Lewis, Austin Sherlaw-Johnson and Peter Thompson. All told there were 67 games, most players getting five or six games and a few managing seven. The rain came late on Saturday evening, which saw Nick Evans and Rod Ashwell fighting out a two-ball ending in gathering gloom at about 8.30pm, Nick finally winning +2. At the same time Ben Ashwell was discovering the finer points of advanced rules when he rolled into corner 3 when conceding a lift to Roger Ivill. He later managed to concede a wiring lift with Roger's remaining ball on the south boundary and his own balls again near corner 3, and lost by 5. During this game a hedgehog managed to stroll across from corner three to the middle of the south boundary without mishap. The rain was back on Sunday morning but cleared by 10am to leave warm sunshine.



Peter Thompson watches Austin Sherlaw-Johnson as the last game of the tournament draws to a close.

The new laws came into play. David Tutt was unable to position his ball for the pegout because a small hole prevented him lining up the croquet stroke with the peg. The hole did not constitute special damage, but he was able to wedge his ball in position with some grass clippings (see Law 19f). The opponent's right of replacement got an airing in an incident involving Ben Ashwell and Gina Lewis. Ben was faced with an angled hoop, and was attended by George Collin, the RoT. Ben demonstrated the sort of shot he was going to play and then played it before the ball had been marked. George replaced the ball as best he could. Ben ran the hoop, but the ball hit his foot after running it. George disallowed the hoop and picked up the ball to replace it, whereupon Gina opted to have the ball left where it had come to rest after hitting Ben's foot, so George again had to judge the replacement of the ball.



Jon presents Tom, whose thumb is next to hoop 1, with his clock.

At the prizegiving Jon gave Tom Anderson (recently retired) a present of a framed baize croquet lawn with miniature hoops, peg and a small clock positioned near corner 4. In view of the way certain manoeuvres come to be named after players, as in the Duffer tice or the Baillieu double, perhaps the fourth corner may in future be referred to as the Anderson Shelter.

All England Area Final

2/3 September

Our representative was Ben Ashwell, whose previous evening's 21st birthday celebrations may have explained the ending of his first game against David Drazin, when an opportunity to put all the balls in corners when two up after time was spurned and David hit in, fortunately to no avail. Three more wins followed. Eventually three players ended with four wins: Ben, Martin McKay (11) from Chelmsford and Vi Lester (18) from Colchester, making light of her 80 years. Ben's superior points score made him the overall winner, and we wish him every success in the finals at Roehampton on 15/16 September. There was a small element of controversy in that instructions issued before the event had stated that a tie would be decided on who beat whom rather than net points, and Ben had lost to Martin, but as yet there has been no call for a steward's enquiry.

Committee Meeting 9 August

- **Forthcoming events:** 24 visitors from the Ampthill 41 club (contact Peter Sayer 01234 766271) expected on Tuesday 14 August. David Parsons to be approached for help with this.

The 'who's doing what' sheet for the August tournament will be put up in the pavilion. A new water container is needed.

There are currently 11 entrants for the All England area final. Rod has agreed to manage Saturday but may need support on Sunday because of the need to ensure three clear winners to proceed to the national final.

The question of whether or not we participate in the annual Craft Fair over the Bank Holiday weekend has been somewhat anticipated by our involvement being advertised in the leaflet.

Our final B&H league match is at home to Meldreth on Saturday 8 September. This is the same date as the Garden Show (which continues the following day).

- **National and federation competitions:** see results on these pages.
- **Internal competitions:** going well, but don't let up. We are all looking forward to the finals day.
- **40th anniversary event:** The list of potential invitees has been drawn up and will be finalised by John Wheeler and Tom and Judy Anderson, based on the fact that the venue can accommodate up to 150 people. John Bevington has agreed to produce the invitations and it is hoped that they will be posted by the weekend of August 18/19. Helpers will be invited free. Others will be charged £10 to cover the cost of a buffet lunch and complimentary drink. Eric and Rod will get estimates from caterers based on this figure.
- **Tournament management:** This came up as a result of a written complaint after the July tournament, which centred around wanting more play and earlier notification of late starts. The topic had been discussed prior to the meeting, and several suggestions were made:
 - reduce entry to 28 maximum.
 - use a conventional block for the highest handicappers and an Egyptian system for the rest (which allows players to play when they wish, within reason).
 - allow play to continue later into the evening.
 - include more information on the entry and confirmation of entry forms, e.g. requests for early departures or late starts, call for notice of first game.
 - introduce the role of assistant manager, both to provide another point of contact for players and to provide an apprenticeship for future managers from within the club.

It was also pointed out that players may want more games, but this is not always possible if A class games take longer than expected.

- **Groundsmanship:** Plans for the autumn include vertidrainage and top dressing using the material left over from last year. This will require the hire of a soil shredder and top dressing spreader. The expenditure was agreed.

It was noted that the rear wheels of the new leaf sweeper leave marks on the lawn, and solutions are to be investigated.

- **Any other business:** Rod hopes to put up an honours board above the ball locker in the pavilion.

Next meeting: Thursday 6 September.

Irene Davis's 24 hour marathon

Never one to do things by halves, Irene recently organised a sponsored 24 hour croquet marathon to raise funds for the new cancer care unit at Luton and Dunstable hospital. The event was staged on the lawn at her home and began at 3pm on Saturday 4 August. The rain later came down in quantities, but the players continued, changing over every hour.

As darkness fell the floodlights came on, and the early morning shift saw the sun rise to give a clear sky. 80 players took part, and earlier participants returned for a garden party which began at 2pm on Sunday as the players completed the final hour. Irene was hoping to raise £1000, but when all the money was counted up it amounted to over £2000. Many congratulations to all concerned.

Craft Fair 25-27 August

In contrast to last year the sun shone on Saturday and Monday, and with only a light drizzle on Sunday the crowds were out in force, Monday as usual being the busiest day. We took £41 on Saturday, £63 on Sunday and £112 on Monday, i.e. total receipts of £216 over the weekend, and thanks are due to all the club members who turned up to assist.

One of the problems that has always dogged our support of this event has been the recruiting of helpers, and it has always been assumed that a large number are needed. This year has proved that it is quite possible to "run the stall" with no more than two people, simply giving players an explanation of simplified golf croquet, handing them a sheet with the rules and letting them get on with it. Demonstration games probably don't seem to serve much purpose; an impressive array of interested spectators is more likely to be a crowd of footsore visitors who have spotted the chairs and made the most of an opportunity to sit down.

We could do with some more mallets, so if any of you have any old mallets at home let us know. Some of our own mallets could do with refurbishment or conversion to child-size - children are often the most enthusiastic participants at this event.

Diary

Sep 8-9	Wrest Park Garden Fair
Sep 8	B&H League vs Meldreth (home)
Sep 9	Mary Rose semi-final vs Bristol (away)
Sep 14-16	Handicap Tournament
Sep 22-23	All England Golf Croquet Final
Sep 22	40th anniversary Buffet Lunch

John Bevington

5 September 2001