



newsletter

Linda Potton wins at Ickworth



Linda, on the left, with runner-up Linda Keable

Linda Potton achieved a memorable win at the EACF/National Trust golf croquet singles day at Ickworth House on 7 September. There were 32 players from 9 clubs taking part, and Linda and Irene Davis entered under the Waterways banner. Games were 13 point handicap with 25 minute time limits. Players were divided into four blocks of eight and played five games. Linda won her block with four wins and then won her semi-final 7-3, beating Douglas Kidd from Bury St Edmunds who had been undefeated in his block. In the final Linda played Linda Keable from the Southchurch Park club in Essex and won again by 7-3.

Advanced tournament 9-10 August

"It's too darn hot!" - Cole Porter

As previously reported, the temperature over the weekend reached 100°F as sixteen players slogged it out in the midday sun. There was a barrel of beer waiting in the small hut, for which we were all very grateful.

Manager Rod Ashwell split the 16 players into two blocks (-½ to 2 and 2½ to 7) and also acted as timekeeper, blowing the whistle on all games at 1, 4.30 and 8pm. This caused some initial confusion as players anxiously looked at their watches waiting for a final countdown, and occasionally the tempo accelerated from *lento* to *prestissimo* as players tried to snatch the

winning points before the whistle sounded. Slow players had no time to linger over lunch, but no-one had to wait more than 20 minutes for their next game. By close of play on Saturday the old campaigners John Wheeler and Tom Anderson were undefeated in their blocks.

Sunday morning saw a pair of buzzards riding the thermals high above us waiting for someone to collapse of heatstroke. On lawn 2 Duncan Hector moved into contention by beating Rod +2 and Tom beat John Bevington, also on three wins, +3. Elsewhere John Wheeler lost to Nick Evans by a large margin. In the final round Duncan and John Wheeler both won to leave them level with four wins apiece not having played each other, a situation which Rod resolved by having them shoot at the peg, which Duncan won with two hits out of four to John's one. In the other block John Bevington beat Kevin Wells and Tom lost to George Woolhouse, so Tom and John finished level with Tom taking the trophy owing to his win in the morning.

Block A		Block B	
Duncan Hector	4/5	Tom Anderson	4/5
John Wheeler	4/5	John Bevington	4/5
Ben Ashwell	3/4	George Collin	3/5
Nick Evans	2/5	Terry Mahoney	3/5
Austin Sherlaw-Johnson	2/5	Geoff Strutt	2/5
Paul Miles	1/5	Kevin Wells	2/5
Rod Ashwell	1/4	George Woolhouse	1/5
David Tutt	1/5	Mike Hopwood	0/5

Handicap tournament 13-14 September



The nursery slope in corner 2 of lawn 1. In the background Doug Taylor approaches hoop 3

You would not choose Wrest Park as the venue for a mountaineering expedition, but fourteen assembled on Saturday to try and conquer the summit of Ben Ashwell (2m). Six players were selected for the final assault, but all failed in the attempt. Playing off a handicap of ½ (now down to 0), Ben, who only entered at the last minute, won all his games by double figures and three by scores of more than 20 including a triple peel at the expense of Owen Bryce. He made light of the fast lawns

that had the rest of us struggling to hang on to any breaks we might have been able to establish.

The conditions favoured the home players; Georges Collin and Woolhouse managed four wins out of six, and then came Rod Ashwell (3/5), John Bevington (3/5) and manager Eric Audsley (3/6). Ian Mantle, also with 3/5, won the prize for the highest-placed visitor. Quiller Barrett, Robert Bateson, Ian Parkinson and Nigel Polhill had two wins each, and Owen Bryce, Doug Taylor and John Norris all won a game, so no-one failed to break their duck. A generous 3½ hour allowance resulted in only five games going to time.



Ben couchant, possibly lining up a subterranean peel

The tournament was reduced to two days this year, but we are going back to three days in 2004 to allow more time for another expedition to try and scale the heights of Ben Ashwell.

Match result

Beds & Herts League vs Letchworth (home)

20 September

Won 4-1

Wrest Park	Letchworth	WP score
John Wheeler (1½)	Robert Staddon (9)	+2T
Ben Marchant (18)	John Hall (9)	
John Bevington (3)	George Woolhouse (7)	+9T
John Wheeler (1½)	George Woolhouse (7)	-2T
John Bevington (3)	John Hall (9)	+2T
David Parsons (11)	Robert Staddon (9)	+2T

The weather was hot and sunny, the lawns quickly cranked up to turbo mode and we finished the morning two up. John Hall got off to a good start in the doubles but play then became bogged down with three clips on hoop five before John Wheeler made several hoops before time ran out. Davids' game was interrupted when the bride and groom from yet another wedding appeared with the photographer and he went off to bring them some mallets to pose with. A nice end to the season.

To sum up, here are the player stats:

	Doubles			Singles		
	P	W	L	P	W	L
John Bevington	2	2	0	4	3	1
George Collin	4	3	1	2	1	1
Peter Newman	4	2	2	2	2	0
Elaine Newman	4	1	3	2	1	1
John Wheeler	2	1	1	2	0	2
Ben Marchant	2	1	1	1	0	1
David Woolley	1	1	0	1	0	1
Rod Ashwell	1	1	0	1	0	1
Bryan Harral	1	0	1	1	1	0
David Parsons	0	0	0	1	1	0
Geoff Strutt	1	0	1	1	0	1

The final league table was as follows:

	P	W	D	L	Pts
Enfield	6	3	2	1	8
St Albans	6	3	1	2	7
Wrest Park	6	2	2	2	6
Letchworth	5	3	0	2	6
Colworth	6	1	3	2	5
Watford	6	1	3	2	5
Meldreth	5	0	3	2	3

Positions of those on equal points are decided on who beat who. In the event of a draw preference is given to the away team. *George's summary:* 8 points out of a possible 12 doesn't sound like enough to win the League but Enfield managed it. The statistics suggest that the local bandit problem has been solved. League matches must be a significant factor.

The EACF league playoff was held at Wrest Park on 27 September between Enfield (Beds & Herts) and Colchester North (Essex & Suffolk). The Northern area league winners Hunstanton were unable to raise a team. Colchester won and will represent the Federation in next year's Secretary's Shield.

They also serve....

Now that tournaments are over it's time to pay tribute to all those who kept us all fed and watered, sometimes enduring record breaking temperatures inside the hut.



Val Jeffers and Diana Phelps, our caterers on 14 September

So it's thanks to Helen Wilkinson, Irene and Peter Davis, Linda Potton, Vera Pearson, Sheila Beal, Sally Clay, Barbara Collier, Diana Phelps, Yvonne Banks, Ronnie Richardson, Eve Buckingham, Margaret Brown, Gill Bennett, Dorothy Craggs, Joan Miller, Eileen Palmer and Val.

On behalf of the club I would also like to thank Irene for organising the rota and Howard Bottomley for providing the food. Next year it would be good to see more men who aren't playing in tournaments lending a hand.

Craft Fair 23-25 August

Reasonable crowds and continued fine weather meant that we did good business over the weekend, but Saturday was quiet as usual. Takings were: Saturday £22, Sunday £82 and Monday £75, making £179 in total. Many thanks to all who helped.

Club Competitions

Steel Cup (Advanced)	Winner: Ben Ashwell Runner-up: Howard Bottomley
Archer Cup (Handicap)	Winner: Bryan Harral Runner-up: Peter Newman
Ashwell Cup (All England h'cap)	Winner: Peter Newman Runners-up: Terry Mahoney and Steve Jones
Thomas Philip Earl de Grey Cup (B level)	Winner: Terry Mahoney Runners-up: George Woolhouse and Bryan Harral
14 point advanced	Winner: Eric Audsley Runners-up: Terry Mahoney and George Woolhouse
De Grey Plate (14 pt h'cap)	<i>unfinished at time of writing</i>
Golf Croquet (Open)	Winner: Eric Audsley <i>(only three games played)</i>
Golf Croquet (Group members)	<i>unfinished at time of writing</i>



Howard and Ben at the conclusion of the Steel Cup

Ben Ashwell and Bryan Harral's wins in the finals of the main events held on 12 October sealed two consistently successful seasons, and our congratulations to them both. It was fortunate that the best summer for many years hung on until autumn, but why did it all take so long? We must apologise for the late appearance of the draw for the golf competitions, and the rule about not playing in both the Steel Cup and the B level was relaxed, perhaps unwisely. The situation then arose where the same people kept winning and the usual log jams developed, but it has to be said that there were too many occasions when players failed to organise their games in good time.

Next year we will try to publish all the draws before the last week of April, but remember that in order to do this we need your subscription and entry forms to be returned by 1 April. In the meantime we would appreciate any comments on the format of the existing competitions and any proposals for additions or alternatives. One suggestion already received would be to run the group members golf croquet competition over a single day.

High Bisquers competitions

Report by organiser Peter Newman

The season got off to a promising start, with a coaching course mainly attended by golf croquet players interested in learning more about the Association game. However, there has been little to follow this up through the rest of the summer. The De Grey Plate has almost reached its conclusion, but few games have been played outside this in the high bisquers friendly league.

What to do next year? One suggestion is a regular weekly session, similar to but separate from the Thursday club night, especially for high bisquers. This could include a brief coaching spot, short friendly games in a sociable format, such as alternate stroke doubles, and other fun activities to practice and develop skills. We could arrange another coaching course, or a pro/am doubles tournament. Other suggestions would be welcomed by your high bisquers representative, Peter Newman (01525 222446 or dpjnewman@supanet.com).



Away with cucumber sandwiches - oysters and champagne at the Steel Cup final, in honour of George Collin's birthday

Local boys make good

Ben Ashwell was picked for the CA Selectors weekend at Surbiton Sept 5-7 and acquitted himself well with three wins from seven games, the event being won by Louise Bradforth. Peter Newman won the club heat for the All England handicap, and he and Terry Mahoney travelled to Newport for the regional final on August 30-31. Peter did well enough to qualify for the national final at Colchester on Sept 13-14, where he finished in the pack with two wins from five games. The final was won by Farooq Malik from Dulwich, the runner-up being Mike Gardner from St Albans, a regular visitor to Wrest Park.

Annual Dinner

The annual dinner will be at the Leaside Hotel, Villa Road, Luton on Friday November 22nd, **Note earlier time - 6.30 for 7pm**. Please ring Rod Ashwell (01 582 504536) if you wish to attend the dinner, and let him know your preferences for starter and main course from the menu. The trophies for all the club competitions are presented at the annual dinner. If you hold one of the trophies and are not coming, please give it to someone who is.

Nigel Gray

Nigel, who sadly died on 2 August, was a member of the Letchworth club and a frequent visitor to Wrest Park. He was a regular entrant in our tournaments and would often come over to support Letchworth players and watch CA events. Around mid-afternoon he could invariably be seen making his way to the pavilion in order to see what was on offer for tea.

Nigel and Duncan Hector were among the founder members of the Letchworth club which was formed in 1987 after negotiations between the EACF and the Letchworth Leisure department. Nigel became Secretary, a post he held for over ten years. He was also a member of the EACF committee and was the EACF representative on the CA Council from 1997 until 2001, serving on the Handicapping and Coaching sub-committees. Nigel managed one of the early EACF indoor tournaments at Soham in 1992/3, and he revived the Hertfordshire Inter-Counties team which progressed from taking the wooden spoon on its reappearance in 1997 to winning the Division 2 title in 2002.



(L-R) Vic Rees, John Wheeler and Nigel Gray watching David Maugham and Keith Aiton during this year's Eastern Championship

Before taking up croquet Nigel had been an international cyclist and was a reserve for the tandem event in the 1952 Olympics. In the 1970s he was manager of the England cycling team. He was also a connoisseur of wine and regional secretary of the Sommelier's Association.

Nigel at his best was an A class player and it was typical that even after recovering from a stroke he continued to play and encourage others. He contributed much to the game and is greatly missed.

Christmas Cracker

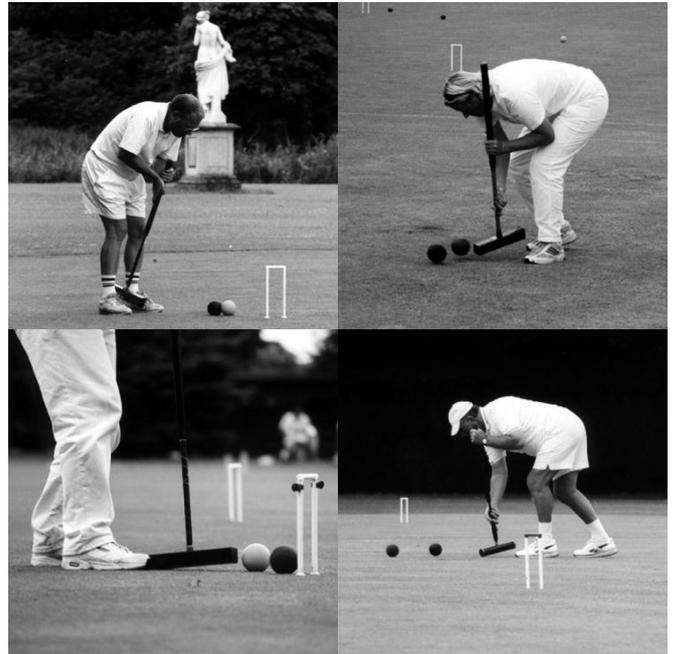
This seasonal fun tournament is scheduled for Sunday 14th December. Four one-hour games starting at 9.30 sharp, with a break for mince pies and liquid refreshment, followed by a meal in the pavilion at about 2pm. Open to **all** members, the format will cater for players at all levels, so if you are interested in playing, cooking, drinking or all three, please contact the manager, Rod Ashwell (01582 504536).

New and rediscovered members

This year we have gained a number of new members and I haven't yet got round to telling you who they are. Welcome to Anto Davies, from Welford On Avon, Geoff Strutt (Steeple Claydon), George Woolhouse (Hitchin), Bill Tapper (Watton At Stone), Michael Hopwood (Little Paxton), Anne Cook (Aston), David Morris (Hertford Heath), David Lovett (Gravenhurst), and Judith Roberts (Watton At Stone).

Anto Davies has in fact been a member all the time as he was awarded honorary membership on his retirement from the NIAE (the current Silsoe Research Institute). Geoff, George and Michael have been playing in our tournaments and have been entering events elsewhere - Michael won the handicap tournament at Northampton on 4/5 October.

Eastern approaches



Clockwise from top left: Phil Cordingly, Jenny Williams, Dave Mundy and David Maugham at the Easterns

John Bevington

21 October 2003