



# newsletter

## WREST PARK WIN MARY ROSE



After the final at Surbiton: (L-R) Bryan Harral, John Wheeler, John Bevington, George Collin. Photo by Tom Anderson.

The autumn campaign resembled that of King Harold nearly a thousand years ago. On Friday 25 September the Wrest Park divisions moved north and encamped overnight, moving out in early morning mist to cross the Pennines and the Mersey and converge on Southport. After defeating the northern challengers they then had to move south a week later, cross the Thames and prepare for battle with Surbiton on their turf. It turned out to be one in the eye for the home club as Wrest Park overturned a 2-1 deficit to make a clean sweep of the afternoon singles and win 5-2.

### Mary Rose vs Southport (away)

25 September

Won 4-1

| Wrest Park          | Southport          | WP score  |
|---------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| John Wheeler (1½)   | Alan Pidcock (1)   | -7        |
| John Bevington (1½) | Barbara Haslam (2) |           |
| George Collin (2½)  | Carol Lewis (5)    | +11       |
| Bryan Harral (3)    | Keith Roberts (5)  | +25       |
| John Wheeler (1½)   | Alan Pidcock (1)   | +12       |
| John Bevington (1½) | Barbara Haslam (2) | +16       |
| George Collin (2½)  | Keith Roberts (5)  | abandoned |
| Bryan Harral (3)    | Carol Lewis (5)    | abandoned |

There was a stiff breeze on the lawn and a warm welcome from our hosts. John Wheeler was quickly round to 4-back, but both partner and Alan Pidcock were stuttering. Barbara then showed them the way by hitting a lift shot and going round from hoop 2 to the peg and the game was won shortly afterwards. Bryan had a quick win and George overcame Carol but not before crashing into several hoops.

After a good lunch in the charming old clubhouse (shortly to be extended and made more vandal-proof)

the afternoon singles began at about 3 o'clock. John B was the first to finish after Barbara uncharacteristically missed a short roquet after 2-back and left him, also for 2-back, with two balls in baulk and a lift. Later John W then made rover with his second ball and picked up partner via the East and North boundaries. He pegged one out and when Alan missed the other the match was won, so we abandoned the other games in order to get home in reasonable time. All we have to do now is win the final against Surbiton, who will be playing on their home ground.

### Mary Rose final at Surbiton

2 October

Wrest Park v Surbiton

Won 5-2

| Wrest Park          | Surbiton              | WP score |
|---------------------|-----------------------|----------|
| John Wheeler (1½)   | Samantha Symonds (1)  | -4       |
| John Bevington (1½) | John Cosier (2½)      |          |
| George Collin (2½)  | Graham Brightwell (3) | -13      |
| Bryan Harral (3)    | Andy Dibben (4)       | +18      |
| John Wheeler (1½)   | Samantha Symonds (1)  | +12      |
| John Bevington (1½) | John Cosier (2½)      | +16      |
| George Collin (2½)  | Andy Dibben (4)       | +19      |
| Bryan Harral (3)    | Graham Brightwell (3) | +22      |

The match started at 9.30, which at this time of the year means a heavy dew that seems to cling to blades of grass, balls and mallet heads alike. This can make shots tricky to judge (perhaps a form of aquaplaning occurs?) and you took on big split rolls at your own risk. In the doubles John Bevington made rover to leave peg and penult against the opponent's peg and rover. He then missed the short return roquet to leave his ball in baulk giving away a lift. Don't worry, there's worse to come.

George lost to Graham Brightwell, who played slowly but surely. The gloom was lightened, as ever, by Bryan Harral (Player of the Year, no question) who beat Andy Dibben comfortably. As lunch wasn't going to be ready for some time the doubles players were urged to start their singles there and then, as the manager was concerned about the rain forecast for later in the day.

John B's singles against John C began with both players missing the tice and JC shooting back from corner 2 and missing in or near corner 1. JB then rushed partner close to it and looked at the three balls in a row for an age wondering how to manufacture a rush to hoop 1 (no cannons possible). He then either left undone the thing he ought to have done or did the thing he ought not to have done and, with turn ended, stood idly by as JC went round to 4-back as if on speed. With his last shot before breaking for lunch JB played a long take-off back to partner, leaving a juicy double which JC was sure to hit. Appetite and morale are not improved by such situations.

Lunch was enlivened by one of those moments when you have to hold your emotions in check for just a second – one of the plastic chairs split asunder dumping its mature male occupant on the floor. He rose quickly and we could all laugh. Maybe it was that, maybe it was the glass (one, mind) of wine. Anyway, JB dug in on the lawn if not at the table (the double was hit, by the way) and was first to finish. John Wheeler did the same against Sam, who was dangerous but, when she stuck in 4-back, fatally fallible.

George was given the best incentive when his opponent stuck in hoop 1 off partner when George was laid up, and he took full advantage, going to 4-back and peg in two turns. After a brief hiatus he pegged out to clinch the match, and Bryan iced the cake with a +22 win against Andy.

You may be wondering why the trophy does not appear in the photo. Poor Nigel Graves, the CA Secretary, thought the final was the following day and turned up on Saturday without it. Profuse apologies followed.

## WREST PARK WIN EACF LEAGUE PLAYOFF

*Report by Peter Newman*

Having won the B&H league, we were invited to send a team to the East Anglian playoff at Hunstanton on 25th September. As this coincided with a Mary Rose match at Southport our choice was somewhat limited, but we managed to find four team players who were available, namely Tim Brewer, Geoff Strutt, Elaine Newman and myself. The format was a three-cornered match, with doubles in the morning and singles in the afternoon.

Tim and Geoff played Jeff Race and Cathy Storey from Hunstanton, Geoff quickly going round, but Tim struggling to find consistency. Eventually he played himself into form, and apart from an accidental peg-out of one ball at the end, they went on to win comfortably +19. Elaine and I played David Haslam and Margaret Selmes from Colchester. David got an opportunity and went round to penult, leaving Margaret on hoop 1. We managed to keep her there almost to the end as we went round in short breaks, with Elaine playing very steadily (including her characteristic long roll approaches, and peeling her partner's ball through 2-back), and me providing tactical guidance and intermittent errors. The other games had finished to get out of the rain, but we continued with spectators crowding the windows of the (splendid) pavilion, pegging out in just under three hours to win +14.

The rain stopped after lunch, but it was still cold. Tim was now in his usual form, and 26ed Colin Hemming of Colchester in short order. Geoff fought out a close game with Peter Bishop (also Colchester), but finally lost -3. Elaine and I were against the Hunstanton tactical substitutes (they changed their team to allow as many people as possible a game). Elaine used a lot of bisques early on against Bryan Siddington, but settled down and got to rover and rover with Bryan several hoops behind, but his experience got him home +4.

This left me in the last game still playing (again - I must enjoy having spectators) against John Christmas. When he was a few hoops ahead, and all my bisques had gone I thought I had little chance, but he started to miss his roquets, and I got home +3 on time. So we had

beaten each of the other clubs by two games to one, and emerged the winners. And the sun came out.

So congratulations to all concerned, not only on the day but throughout the season. We now have not only the opportunity to play other regional winners next season in the Secretary's Shield, but also the pleasure of organising next year's play-off.

## EACF League playoff (Hunstanton) 25 September

### Wrest Park v Colchester Wrest Park won 2-1

| Wrest Park         | Colchester           | WP score |
|--------------------|----------------------|----------|
| Peter Newman (10)  | David Haslam (4)     | +14      |
| Elaine Newman (20) | Margaret Selmes (12) |          |
| Tim Brewer (7)     | Colin Hemming (2½)   | +26      |
| Geoff Strutt (10)  | Peter Bishop (12)    | -3       |

### Wrest Park v Hunstanton Wrest Park won 2-1

| Wrest Park         | Hunstanton           | WP score |
|--------------------|----------------------|----------|
| Tim Brewer (7)     | Jeff Race (4)        | +19      |
| Geoff Strutt (10)  | Cathy Storey (6)     |          |
| Peter Newman (10)  | John Christmas (4½)  | +3T      |
| Elaine Newman (20) | Brian Siddington (6) | -4       |

### Colchester v Hunstanton Colchester won 2-1

| Colchester           | Hunstanton          | C score |
|----------------------|---------------------|---------|
| Colin Hemming (2½)   | John Christmas (4½) | +24     |
| Peter Bishop (12)    | Don Cornelius (6)   |         |
| David Haslam (4)     | Jeff Race (4)       | -10     |
| Margaret Selmes (12) | Ken Wheeler (4)     | +15     |

The final Beds & Herts league table:

|                   | P        | W        | D        | L        | Pts      |
|-------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>Wrest Park</b> | <b>5</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>1</b> | <b>0</b> | <b>9</b> |
| Letchworth        | 5        | 4        | 0        | 1        | 8        |
| Watford           | 5        | 1        | 2        | 2        | 4        |
| St Albans         | 5        | 0        | 3        | 2        | 3        |
| Colworth          | 5        | 1        | 1        | 3        | 3        |
| Enfield           | 5        | 0        | 2        | 3        | 2        |

## Advanced tournament: Aug 14/15

Manager Rod Ashwell split the 24 entrants into two blocks of 12 based on handicap. There were no time limits. Block A was won by Jack Wicks after a shoot-out at the peg as he had tied with Roger Tribe and Duncan Hector on five wins, with each of them having beaten one of the others. Block B was won by Terry Mahoney, who with George Collin had five wins, one of which had been against George.

Jack began with a win against Austin Sherlaw-Johnson and then steamrolled Philip Brabazon +24, before losing -4 to Roger, who earlier had +23 and +26 wins against Mike Percival and Paul Salisbury. Duncan won a tight game against the manager +2 before beating David Tutt +15 and John Bevington +17 after John had helpfully missed a short roquet after 3-back.

On Sunday Jack got off to a good start with a +25 straight triple against Paul Salisbury and Duncan beat Roger +14. All three won their next games, and then Roger beat Philip Brabazon +3 and Jack overcame Duncan +5 to leave the three-way split.

In the other block George Collin got through Saturday undefeated, having disposed of Ian Mantle +10, Nigel Polhill +1 and Geoff Strutt +11. Terry beat Ian Parkinson +6 and then scored a maximum against Geoff Strutt before losing to John Daniels, who, with Jonathan Hills and Colin Hemming finished the tournament just behind the leaders with four wins each. The following day George beat Jim Potter and John Daniels but lost to Terry, while Terry beat Dick Knapp and topped off his day with a +2 win against the manager.

## EACF Champions Day: Sep 12



Bryan Herral receives the B level trophy from EACF chairman Terrey Sparks. Photo by George Woolhouse.

This event is for the winners of the previous year's internal club competitions from clubs in the East Anglian Federation. There are three classes: Advanced, B level advanced (handicap 2 or above) and handicap. Wrest Park's representatives were Howard Bottomley, Bryan Herral and Peter Newman. Bryan won the B level event, the advanced competition was won by Jack Wicks (Colchester) and the handicap event by Ian Thompson (Downham Market).

## Handicap tournament: Sep 17/19

*"We're busy making plans for Nigel  
He has a future in a triple peel."*

*With apologies to XTC*

The tournament only managed 15 entries and manager Eric Audsley ran it as an Egyptian, which meant that players had the flexibility to take whole days off and play as much or as little as they wished. It turned into a benefit for Nigel Polhill (3½), who played nine games and won the lot in fine style. Runner-up was John Hall (9) with six wins from eight games, and he was followed by Martin Stephensen (12) who won six out of nine off a

handicap of 12. Three of his wins were +26, all against Wrest Park members. Never let it be said that we don't look after our visitors.



*"This one's on me" – Eric presents Nigel with his trophy.  
Photo by George Woolhouse.*

Mark Homan was next with five wins, and George Collin, John Bevington, Ken Pickett and Ian Mantle had four. At the other end, Wendy Spencer-Smith was left without a win and claimed the golden banana award. The weather was mixed, with some serious rain on Saturday afternoon which left several lawns unplayable.

## Hertford U3A Handicap day

Eight players from the Hertford U3A group met on 8 September for a day of 14 point handicap mixed doubles, managed by Jennifer Thomas. There were four rounds with a one hour time limit, and players swapped partners for each round. David Morris, Alan Cracknell, Dennis Elliston, Jonathan Roberts, Judith Roberts, Jo Cracknell, Cleone Gardner and Anne Cook took part, and the winners were Alan Cracknell and Judith Roberts. A grand day was had by all.



*L-R: Jo Cracknell, Alan Cracknell, Judith Roberts, Jean Luscher*

## Groundwork

On 9/10 October, in absolutely perfect conditions, all the lawns were scarified diagonally and lawns 2, 4 and 6 were also scarified vertically, which produced a prodigious heap of dead material. The scarifying of lawns 1, 3 and 5 was completed a week later, and the autumn fertiliser has been applied. We now have to either hollow or solid tine and top dress the lawns. We also plan to do some refurbishment of the pavilion (as a minimum, clear out the furniture and then sand and revarnish the floor).

All these operations require a certain amount of manual labour, and we will be calling for volunteers when the time comes. Please come along if you can.

## Club Competitions

**Steel Cup (Advanced)**      **Winner: Howard Bottomley**  
Runners-up: Rod Ashwell and John Bevington

**Archer Cup (Handicap)**      **Winner: Peter Newman**  
Runner-up: Tim Brewer

**Ashwell Cup (All England h'cap)**      **Winner: Tim Brewer**  
Runner-up: John Bevington

**Thomas Philip Earl de Grey Cup (B level)**      **Winner: George Woolhouse**  
Runner-up: Steve Jones

**14 point advanced**      **Winner: Tom Anderson**  
Runner-up: Terry Mahoney

**De Grey Plate (14 pt h'cap)**      **Winner: John Martin**  
Runner-up: Nick Richardson

Last year's winners are requested to make sure that the trophies are polished up and available for presentation at the Annual Dinner.

## Christmas Cracker 2004

This will be on Sunday 12 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 please contact manager Rod Ashwell (01582 504536).

## Golf croquet Selector's Weekend Aug 21/22

I put this headline in as a reminder to include some kind of report on the event, given that it was something that took place at Wrest Park and might be of interest to our members, especially those who play golf croquet.

The CA website is usually the place to look for such things, but to date no results or report have been posted so I remain in the dark as to who played and who won, but will try and include something in the next issue if and when the results are forthcoming.

## Annual Dinner

The dinner will be on Friday 26 November, 7.30 for 8pm, and will be held at Wrest Park in the Institute dining room. Car parking is beyond the mansion on the right. Walk across the yard and go in through the door under the colonnade.



All members and their partners are invited, and I would be grateful if group members in receipt of the newsletter could tell the others. The cost is £22. Our chef is David Lucas, who has worked at the Savoy and elsewhere. The bar serves beer and spirits, but if you want wine you should bring your own (and a corkscrew).

There are only 25-30 places, so book yours by calling Rod Ashwell (01582 504536) before 14 November, quoting your preferences from the selection below:

### Menu

— — — — —  
*Prawn cocktail*

*Melon flowers with Parma ham on a raspberry coulis*

— — — — —  
*Suprême of chicken filled with wild mushrooms served with a red wine sauce*

*Pork fillet with white wine and Dijon mustard sauce served on a parsnip rösti*

*Puff pastry parcel with roast red pepper, tomato and mozzarella on a red onion chutney*

— — — — —  
*Sticky toffee pudding with caramel sauce*

*Tarte Tatin*

*Cheeseboard*

— — — — —  
*Coffee and petits fours*

The individual club trophies will be presented at the dinner, so if you are currently in possession of one of these please bring it with you or, if you are not able to come yourself, make arrangements to give it to someone who is. The Mary Rose and other trophies won by the club will also be on show.

## Editor's postscript

This is the last newsletter of the year, so I would like to take the opportunity to thank all those who have mown and maintained the lawns and provided catering support during the season.

The club has grown apace in recent years and there are now nearly 100 members. With such a large number it is all too easy to become out of touch, so if you have any thoughts or suggestions on our club events, facilities, administration or anything else please let me know and I will pass them on to the committee. I would be grateful if group member reps could pass this message on.

John Bevington

22 October 2004