



Wrest Park Silsoe Bedfordshire

newsletter

Inter Counties 28-31 May – Bedfordshire gain promotion

Bedfordshire finished fourth in Division 2 and will be playing in the top flight next year. The CA Select team was ineligible for promotion as it is not a true county.



L-R: Tom Anderson, Bryan Harral, George Collin, Jon Watson, Howard Bottomley (captain), John Bevington, John Wheeler, Ben Ashwell. Photo by Jon Watson

Division 1			Division 2		
	Matches	Games		Matches	Games
Notts	8	22	Dorset (P)	9	26
Surrey	7	21	Sussex (P)	8	20
Avon	7	20	CA Select	8	18
Essex	7	17	Beds (P)	6	18
Cheshire	5	17	Hants	6	16
Lancs	5	15	Kent	4	14
Gloucs	5	15	Warwicks	4	13
Yorks	5	14	Middx	3	13
Herts (R)	3	9	Devon	3	12
Suffolk (R)	2	8	Berks	3	10
Glamorgan (R)	1	7	Norfolk	1	5

1 st pair	P	W	L
Watson/Bottomley	9	5	4
Watson/Ashwell	1	0	1
2 nd pair			
Ashwell/Bevington	8	6	2
Ashwell/Collin	1	1	0
Bottomley/Anderson	1	0	1
3 rd pair			
Collin/Harral	3	3	0
Wheeler/Harral	3	2	1
Wheeler/Collin	3	1	2
Bevington/Collin	1	0	1

A brief explanation of the format for new readers; each match consists of three games of doubles (advanced play), and the combined handicap of the first pair has to be greater than or equal to that of the second pair, and so on. The captains exchange their teams just before the match, so you don't know who you are playing until the

last minute. The reasons for our success? One was the reappearance of Bryan Harral after a twenty year absence. Bryan could only play for the first two days and won five games out of six. Another was Ben Ashwell's presence on all four days; his shooting and break play inspired his partners and demoralised the opposition. Things will be more difficult in the first division, but there is that match against Yorkshire to look forward to....

Handicap tournament 17-19 May



Eric Audsley, George Collin and George Woolhouse stem the flood. Photo by Gordon Weir

The tournament was won by John Hall from Letchworth, but will be best remembered for the rain which caused Saturday's play to be abandoned in the early afternoon.

There were only 14 players, including Susan Griffiths from Letchworth who was making her tournament debut playing off 18 and managed two wins from her six games. It would have been three but for manager Eric Audsley sneaking in by one point.

John Hall's victory with a clean sweep of 7/7 might have been predicted given past form, but he was pushed by Ken Pickett with 6/7. Eric, playing off the lowest handicap of 1½, came third with 5/7. At the other end Owen Bryce claimed the bananas after failing to trouble the scorer.

England World Championship qualifier 4-5 June

This event was held to decide the last four England places, the other 11 already having been allocated. It was contested by a high-class field of 16, among them club member Ben Ashwell. Manager Phil Cordingly organised it as a six-round Swiss, and at teatime on Sunday was anxiously awaiting the result of a pegged-out game between Tim Wilkins and Don Gaunt to find out if a play-off would be needed. It wasn't, and the qualifiers were Marcus Evans, Tim Wilkins, Jerry Guest and Ben. From the All England handicap to a place in the World Championship in four years is remarkable progress and we wish him well in the tournament.

Match results

B&H League v Watford (away)

12 June

Lost 1-4

Wrest Park	Watford	WP score
John Bevington (1½)	Adam Huby (11)	-1
Bryan Harral (3)	Bill Gillott (12)	
George Collin (2½)	Arthur Reed (4½)	-1T
John Bevington (1½)	Arthur Reed (4½)	-25
George Collin (2½)	Adam Huby (11)	-6
Bryan Harral (3)	Bill Gillott (12)	+14

Strictly speaking it's Cassiobury rather than Watford. Cassiobury is mentioned in the Domesday book as belonging to the Abbey of St Albans, and may have been named after the Cassii, Celtic inhabitants of Hertfordshire. Their female descendants were out in force on the day of our match (the proximity of the summer solstice may have had something to do with it). At 11 o'clock a horn sounded and 3,000 women (or so we were told) set off on a 2½ mile run round the park. The course took them past the lawns, but they were too far away for us to notice their finer points....

In the doubles Bryan was left near the peg when we had both balls round and we elected to peg it out when the opponents still had some way to go, but a combination of the remaining bisques and John's failure to hit anything led to the narrowest of defeats, the result being repeated shortly afterwards when George hit in after time but failed to run 4-back to level the score.

After lunch Arthur took one ball straight to the peg, and when John missed a hoop 2 pioneer he raced round with the other ball in one turn to finish in less than 45 minutes with two of his bisques still standing. Bryan beat Bill, who was not having a good day, and Adam held on against George, saving his last bisque for the peg-out.

All good fun, but it would be nice to see some fresh faces volunteering for the next match. We don't really want to be giving away an average of nearly six and a half bisques per game for the rest of the season!

Longman Cup v Enfield not played

We were offered three dates but club captain Howard Bottomley couldn't raise a full team for any of them and had to concede the match. This is the second year in succession that we have failed to contest the first round and inevitably raises the question of whether there is sufficient interest to justify our entering next year.

Mary Rose v Southport (home)

25 June

Won 6-1

Wrest Park	Southport	WP score
Eric Audsley (1½)	Alan Pidcock (½)	+24
John Bevington (1½)	Don Williamson (1½)	
George Collin (2½)	Barbara Haslam (2)	+22
Bryan Harral (3)	Carol Lewis (5)	+24
Eric Audsley (1½)	Alan Pidcock (½)	+21
John Bevington (1½)	Don Williamson (1½)	-4
George Collin (2½)	Carol Lewis (5)	+17
Bryan Harral (3)	Barbara Haslam (2)	+19

After an enjoyable visit to Southport for last year's semi-final it was nice to have the opportunity for a return match. The heatwave that had gone on for the whole of the previous week finally expired on Friday and some welcome rain slowed things down appreciably in spite of George's efforts with the scarifier the weekend before.

We got off to a flying start, only dropping eight points in the three morning games. After a splendid lunch Wrest Park continued their dominance in the afternoon singles, the only blot being John's loss to Don. John, having been elected captain for the day, set a good example by passing up a perfect 4-ball break and then missing a short lift at a perfect double by a yard at least, which let Don go round. Finally, with both players on peg and penult, Don hit the last lift and finished.

Flyboys at Wrest Park



This picture is taken from www.flyboysthemovie.com, and it's good to see Wrest Park in a starring role standing in for a run-down French chateau, which explains why much of the grass in the park was left to grow so long.

The film follows the exploits of some US pilots who joined the French before the USA's entry into WW1 and formed what was known as the Lafayette Escadrille. The film is an independent production with a \$60 million budget and is scheduled for release in late 2006. Filming took place on 14/15 June. The high (or low) point was supposed to be when some Nieuport 17 replicas flew over the Long Water, but this did not take place, apparently because of the wind/trees/statues. But, given what can be done with special effects...

The four aircraft were built in America and sent over in pieces. They use VW engines instead of the original rotaries and weigh in at 530lb instead of the original 900lb, giving a similar top speed of about 100mph but with a superior rate of climb. Two of them are destined to be destroyed during the filming.



The Nieuport 17 replicas prior to shipment.

Group members golf croquet singles – 26 June

This competition marked the tournament debut of the younger members of the Ashwell family, who were allocated places as Ashwell *major* and *minor*, a system which allowed for various permutations depending on availability. In the event Rod, Bryony, Rory and Edward all played, and Edward had several wins.

The format had a first phase of five blocks of four, with three rounds of 35 minutes each. After lunch the top two in each block then went into a new block of ten, as did the bottom two, and there were then five rounds with which to determine the winners, the winner of the top block to take the trophy. Positions were decided on (a) wins, (b) points scored and (d) points difference.

There were the usual managerial faux pas, including failing to blow the whistle to start the double-banked game while lost in thought transferring the scores from the previous round, and getting into a tangle with the last round for the second block, which resulted in two players playing each other a second time (when, on reflection, a simple rearrangement of the top three pairings would have been sufficient to keep them apart).

The competition all hinged on the final round, where Helen's unbeaten run came to an end at the hands of winner Peggy Kenny, whose 7-3 win brought her level with four wins and a better points total. In the second block Vera won by the narrowest of margins from Judith and Ronnie, the three of them all having four wins. Looking at what the last round pairings should have been, I think Vera would probably have got her fifth win and a clearer lead.

It was a pleasant and enjoyable day, and my thanks to all the players who assisted with the preparation of tea and the washing up afterwards. We were visited several times by a swan which interrupted play, came over at lunchtime to inspect what people were eating and later hoovered up any crumbs.

Preliminary block play

	P	W	D	L	+	-	Diff
John Cundell	3	3	0	0	21	12	+9
Peggy Kenny	3	2	0	1	19	12	+7
Vera Pearson	3	1	0	2	16	18	-2
Deidrea Ellins	3	0	0	3	7	21	-14
Diana Phelps	3	3	0	0	21	11	+10
Una Pengelly	3	2	0	1	17	15	+2
Judi Prestley	3	1	0	2	17	16	+1
Ronnie Richardson	3	0	0	3	8	21	-13
Helen Wilkinson	3	3	0	0	21	6	+15
Margaret Marshall	3	1	1	1	14	15	-1
Judith Pengelly	3	1	1	1	14	17	-3
Barbara Collier	3	0	0	3	10	21	-11
Linda Potton	3	3	0	0	21	8	+13
Don Barrett	3	2	0	1	17	12	+5
Ashwell <i>major</i>	3	1	0	2	10	21	-10
Yvonne Harpin	3	0	0	3	13	21	-8
Margaret Brown	3	3	0	0	21	11	+10
Irene Davis	3	2	0	2	18	13	+5
Ashwell <i>minor</i>	3	1	0	2	15	18	-3
June Black	3	0	0	3	9	21	-12

Final block play

	P	W	D	L	+	-	Diff
Peggy Kenny	5	4	0	1	33	14	+19
Helen Wilkinson	5	4	0	1	31	24	+7
Linda Potton	5	3	1	1	31	23	+8
Una Pengelly	5	3	0	2	29	25	+4
Irene Davis	5	2	1	2	28	26	+2
John Cundell	5	2	0	3	23	30	-7
Margaret Brown	5	2	0	3	22	26	-4
Margaret Marshall	5	1	2	2	25	28	-3
Diana Phelps	5	1	1	3	23	32	-9
Don Barrett	5	0	1	4	18	33	-15
Vera Pearson	5	4	0	1	34	17	+17
Judith Pengelly	5	4	0	1	33	20	+13
Ronnie Richardson	5	4	0	1	32	17	+15
Judi Priestley	5	3	1	1	28	27	+1
Deirdrea Ellins	5	3	0	2	27	28	-1
Ashwell <i>minor</i>	5	2	0	3	27	26	+1
June Black	5	2	0	3	24	25	-1
Barbara Collier	5	2	0	3	18	32	-14
Yvonne Harpin	5	0	0	5	21	34	-13
Ashwell <i>major</i>	5	0	1	4	15	33	-18

The new shed, and other home improvements

For many years we had the use of a shed in the woodyard previously used by the Institute ground staff. It had deteriorated to the point where the floor had virtually rotted through, and earlier in the season we demolished it and erected a new 7'x9' shed. John Wheeler and Tom Anderson fitted internal shelving during the weekend of the May tournament and our thanks to them for their hard work – it looks extremely professional.



*The old roof goes up, and Tom takes a well-earned rest.
Photos by master builder John Wheeler.*

We have also revarnished the floor of the pavilion, given the cupboards a new coat of paint and put up a rack for the various keys. The next item will be the replacement or repair of the tables.

Open Golf Croquet competition

This has attracted five entries and the draw is on the Golf croquet section of the board. Play when you like, but make sure you have agreed which rules to use before you start.

Wrest Park Garden Show

28-30 May

At the organiser's request we agreed to support this event in the same way as for the Craft Fair later in the year. Irene Davis, Nick Richardson and Margaret Brown organised the teams for the three days, and our thanks to them for volunteering. Takings were low (Sat £5, Sun £?, Mon £19). There appeared to be more children interested than adults. The long grass around the lawns may have been a deterrent.

Events diary

July 8-10 Advanced tournament
July 12 Rod Ashwell staff group (eve)
June 29 Howard Bottomley (5-8pm, 4 lawns)
July 17 Woodhall Spa v Purley Bury (2 lawns)
July 8-10 Advanced tournament
July 19 Dunstable U3A group booking (pm)
July 20 Waterways group booking (pm)
July 22 Kempston Rotary (eve)
July 24 Group members golf croquet doubles
July 27 Brickhill Wives (5-8pm, 6 lawns)
Aug 6-7 Advanced tournament
Aug 9 Group members one-ball croquet (eve)
Aug 27-29 Wrest Park Craft Fair
Aug 31 Hertford U3A 2-5pm 4 lawns
Sept 7 Hertford U3A 10am-6pm 4 lawns
Sept 11 EACF club champions tournament
Sept 16-18 Handicap tournament

John Bevington

30 June 2005