

newsletter

2005 Annual Dinner



Tim, in messianic pose, delivers his sermon prior to announcing the club competition winners.

The dinner (probably the last meal to be served in the Institute's restaurant) was attended by about 30 members. The call to bring your own drinks did not go unheeded, and chef David Lucas and his team did us proud. Chairman Tim Brewer presented the cups for the internal competitions, and the evening finished in true tournament style with our washing up the glasses and taking out the bin bags. Photos by John Wheeler.



John, David & Penny



Martin, Sally, Yvonne and Diana



David, Eric and Bryan



Peter and Elaine



Rod and Rae



Tom and Judy



Tucking into the tarte.

2006 Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be on **Thursday 16 March at 7.30pm** in the upstairs room at the Star & Garter in Silsoe.

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of 2005 AGM and matters arising
3. Reports: **Chairman**
Secretary
Treasurer
CA Tournament Secretary
Club Tournament Secretary
Club Captain
Groundsman
4. Election of officers
5. Diary of events
6. Facilities and equipment
7. Coaching
8. Catering
9. CA and EACF news
10. SRI and EH news
11. Any other business

■ If you can't attend the meeting but want a topic discussed, let me know and I can raise it under AOB.

■ Please check the details on your membership form, make any corrections and return it with your subscription before 1 April. **Please return the form even if you don't want to renew your membership, or if you joined as a full member last year and therefore don't have to pay.** In the former case it helps us keep the membership list up to date, in the latter we need to receive the form before you can be sent your membership card.

■ The distinction between the membership categories is that all full members have keys to the equipment shed, whereas group members come as a group with a nominated keyholder. As a general rule Monday evenings are for golf croquet and Thursdays for Association. Other than that you can all play what you like whenever you like, but check the events diary in case the lawns have been booked.

Subscriptions for 2006

Full membership £46.85 (£40.50 + £6.35 CA levy if applicable)

Junior membership £20

Group membership £14.50

The green fee for visitors has been raised to £3.60 per person per session, and is payable by guests of members and by visiting groups. Please record these payments in the Visitor's Book in the pavilion. Full members can bring three guests free of charge during the season.

Payment of subscriptions using Internet banking

If you want to pay your subscription using this method please pay to sort code 20-05-74, account 80983861 (Wrest Park Croquet Club). Please make sure your name is referenced in the payment, and ask Eric Audsley if you have any questions.

Groups and their representatives

With the demise of the SRI it may well be that we have to provide English Heritage with details of the groups who use the club. As far as I know these are:

Dunstable U3A	represented by Ronnie Richardson
Hertford U3A	Jennifer Thomas
Leighton-Linslade CC	Richard Keighley
Silsoe WI	Dorothy Craggs
Waterways	Irene Davis

Please let me know (a) if there are any other groups I have failed to mention or (b) if any of the representatives I have listed are incorrect. It is also an opportune moment to establish which group members have keys, so if you are a group member with a key please indicate this on your membership form.

Diary of events

April XX	Easter Egg
May 19-21	Handicap tournament
May 27-29	Wrest Park Garden Show
May 30	Dunstable U3A, 6 lawns 4-8pm
June 7	Waterways group, 6 lawns 6-9pm
June 18	Golf croquet coaching course
June 26*	Group members golf croquet singles
July 7-9	Advanced tournament
July 21-23	Eastern Championship
July 25	Dunstable U3A, 6 lawns 4-8pm
July 26	Waterways group, 6 lawns 6-9pm
July 30	Group members golf croquet doubles
August 6-7	Advanced tournament
August 8 or 15	Ampthill 41 club evening
August 26-28	Wrest Park Craft Fair
September 1-3	Handicap tournament
September 10	EACF club champions tournament

*This may change – see the piece on the CA Garden Croquet Competition.

Anyone wishing to enter the Easter Egg competition should contact Rod Ashwell - the format depends on the number and standard of the entries.

For details of English Heritage events at Wrest Park ring 01525 860152, or visit www.english-heritage.org.uk.

CA Garden Croquet Competition

The CA are planning to revive this event (aimed at all those who play the Association game at home, unconnected with any club) and have asked clubs if they would be prepared to make their facilities available. The CA's research established that what players wanted most was to play on good lawns to a consistent set of rules. The plan is to have local heats in late June or July with a regional final in August and a national final in September.

We have expressed an interest. The CA is in discussion with a sponsor and a national newspaper, so there may be useful publicity and an opportunity to attract new members. We will confirm the details when we have them, but it does mean that the date of the golf croquet singles may have to change.

Open golf croquet competition

It has been suggested that we run a golf croquet competition open to all members, so you will see this advertised on your membership form. It will be a two-life knockout, otherwise known as Draw and Process. The draw will go up on the golf croquet section of the noticeboard.

Players will be expected to act as joint referees and are therefore advised to become familiar with the laws as they currently stand. Handicaps will not be used as most players do not have them, but if two players have handicaps and wish to play the game on that basis there is no reason why they should not do so. We will try and organise a suitable trophy.

EACF golf croquet league

Wrest Park will be entering a team in the league this year. There are 16 clubs entered, and the proposal is to split them into four sections, with Wrest Park playing matches against Letchworth, Leighton-Linslade and Watford. Ronnie Richardson will be the organiser for Wrest Park.

This is the club's first venture into competitive golf croquet. We wish the team well and look forward to reading about their successes in the newsletter.

EACF/NT tournaments 2006

There will be no Short Croquet event this year. There was a plan to run it as an individual entry tournament, with preliminary heats at various NT properties and a final at Ickworth House, but it has not been possible to arrange the heats at NT properties and so the tournament will not take place.

The golf croquet events will be held on the following dates:

July 8	Ickworth (Doubles)
Sept 3	Ickworth (Singles)

The organisers want as many clubs/groups as possible to be represented, and I have an entry form (to be returned by April 30th) if any Wrest Park members want to enter.

Golf croquet representation on the committee

For the last few years Irene Davis has acted as a representative for Wrest Park's golf croquet players and we remain grateful for her help. The number of golf croquet players has increased, and we hope it will continue to do so. Golf croquet is becoming more popular across the country, and there are more tournaments and other events being held.

Wrest Park has already hosted CA golf croquet events such as the Inter Counties and the Selectors' Weekend, and it may not be long before we stage a golf croquet tournament in a similar fashion to our Association tournaments. This year the club has taken its first step into the world of competitive golf croquet by entering a team in the EACF golf croquet league.

This is significant as it represents the club as a whole rather than any one of the individual groups. As the profile of golf croquet within the club increases there will be more golf croquet matters to be addressed, dates to arrange and letters to answer (the EACF is now asking clubs for a specific golf croquet contact name for inclusion in their next leaflet).

Most of this business can be conducted remotely, but the discussions and decisions that guide the business happen at committee meetings and we ought now to have a golf croquet representative joining in.

We are therefore looking for someone who is prepared to take on responsibility for all golf croquet matters within the club and can attend committee meetings (about five a year, on Thursday evenings in the Star & Garter.)

Catering dates for 2006

We need volunteers for May 19/20/21, July 7/8/9 and 21/22/23 (Eastern Championship), August 5/6 and September 1/2/3. Please indicate which dates you can help on your membership form.

We will put all the dates and names received on the noticeboard and members can then volunteer themselves for any dates not covered. If anyone would like to offer to organise the rota we shall of course be delighted – it is a job that needs doing.

Coaching – the Saturday club

Association croquet - This year we are proposing to have Saturday mornings as a time when members are encouraged to turn up and participate in friendly doubles games with an element of coaching thrown in – doubles play is a great way to learn the game. Please contact Howard Bottomley if you are interested. Details will appear on the noticeboard in due course.

Golf croquet - The golf croquet coaching course on June 18 is already fully booked (mostly by our own group members).

Lawn bookings

If anyone wants to book the lawns for an event please let me know so I can book it into the calendar and inform English Heritage. Details required are the date, hours of play and number of lawns needed. If you bring a group

who will be paying green fees then please enter the details in the visitor's book.

2005 club competitions update

Archer Cup (Handicap) **Winner: Rod Ashwell (w/o)**
Runner-up: Peter Newman

14 point advanced **Winner: Bryan Harral**
Runner-up: David Woolley

De Grey Plate (14 pt h'cap) **Winner: David Morris**
Runners-up: Peter Coles and Elaine Newman

Unfortunately the final of the Archer Cup could not be played as Peter Newman was unwell. The De Grey Plate was completed on 6 November 2005 when David Morris beat Peter Coles in the second semi-final, having already beaten Elaine Newman in the first.

Golf doubles at Watford – 12 May

Watford croquet club are running a friendly golf croquet doubles tournament on Friday 12 May. Entry restricted to three pairs per club, handicaps 5 or above (play will be level). Applications close on 21 April.

If anyone is interested in entering please let me know and I can hand over the entry form.

Sic transit gloria SRI – or, where does the club go from here?

As you know, the Silsoe Research Institute closes on 31st March and the following day English Heritage takes over the ownership of the grounds. You are probably wondering how this will affect the croquet club.

All we can say at the moment is that we are in communication with representatives from English Heritage, SRI and consultants acting for the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (who hold the main lease on the site from the Department of Trade and Industry), and we have been given a verbal assurance that croquet can continue.

We would therefore suggest that for the time being you carry on as normal, but please remember to:

1. **Carry your membership card at all times**
2. **Sign in at the house when playing during working hours on weekdays**
3. **If you arrive after 10am at weekends when Wrest Park is open to the public, go in through the house and show your membership card**
4. **Lock the gate after using it**

As soon as we hear of anything new we will let you know via email and a notice on the board.

John Bevington

22 February 2006