



Wrest Park Silsoe Bedfordshire

newsletter



Alan Edwards in play against Harry Cordwell on the Sunday of the May tournament. This photograph appeared as *The Monday Image* spread across two pages of the sports section of the *Independent* on the following day. Photo © Robert Hallam

Match results

Mary Rose v Colchester (home)

6 May

Lost 2-4

Wrest Park	Colchester	WP score
John Bevington (1½)	Richard Smith (1)	unfinished
Terry Mahoney (2)	Steve Woolnough (1½)	
Bryan Harral (2)	Jonathan Hills (3)	-11
Tim Brewer (7)	Colin Hemming (3½)	+11
John Bevington (1½)	Richard Smith (1)	-17
Terry Mahoney (2)	Steve Woolnough (1½)	-7
Bryan Harral (2)	Colin Hemming (3½)	+8
Tim Brewer (7)	Jonathan Hills (3)	-17

The match started at 10.30 after Richard arrived and it soon became obvious that Jonathan and Tim were in good form (which is more than can be said for those involved in the doubles; we broke for lunch with ourselves on 4-back and 6 against penult and penult).

Terry had done well to play at all, as he was suffering from a stomach bug which meant he was restricted to water and small pieces of apple while the rest of us feasted in the pavilion, accompanied by John Wheeler and David Woolley. The rain began and continued on and off for the rest of the day. Terry recovered and put up a good fight against Steve, but when Jonathan beat

Tim and John lost to Richard it was all over. Bryan picked up a consolation win against Colin.

Vic Rees came down in the afternoon and soon found himself busy as a referee, once having to watch as John attempted a take-off from partner in the jaws of hoop 6 to the opponents laid up on the east boundary near the 4th corner. The shot was clean but rather short and the roquet missed. Why should this linger in the memory? Well, the previous shot was a lift shot taken from A baulk at partner which was close to the peg...

Beds & Herts League v Watford (home)

13 May

Lost 1-5

Wrest Park	Watford	WP score
Bryan Harral (2)	Arthur Reed (3½)	-10
Ray Pearcy (20)	Quiller Barrett (7)	
Tim Brewer (7)	Simon Hathrell (3½)	-11T
John Martin(20)	John Smallbone (7)	
Bryan Harral (2)	Simon Hathrell (3½)	-26
Tim Brewer (7)	Arthur Reed (3½)	+22
John Martin(20)	Quiller Barrett (7)	-11
Ray Pearcy (20)	John Smallbone (7)	-22

This match was Ray's introduction to serious competition and despite having narrowly avoided the embarrassment of defeat with 10 bisques still standing he declared himself keen for more. Bryan suffered a

whitewash, the first he can remember in a long playing career, and it was left to Tim to spare the team's blushes.

EACF golf croquet league v Letchworth (home) 26 May Won 10-8

Wrest Park	Letchworth	Score (WP first)
Maureen Watts (6)	David Russell (5)	L 3-4
Irene Davis (4)	Andy Kennedy (4)	
Don Barrett (4)	Anne Barrance (5)	W 5-4
Peggy Kenny (6)	John Skingsley (4)	
Maureen Watts (6)	David Russell (5)	W 4-1
	Andy Kennedy (4)	L 0-5
	Anne Barrance (5)	W 6-2
	John Skingsley (4)	W 6-5
Don Barrett (4)	David Russell (5)	L 3-5
	Andy Kennedy (4)	W 7-5
	Anne Barrance (5)	W 6-5
	John Skingsley (4)	L 3-4
Peggy Kenny (6)	David Russell (5)	W 4-3
	Andy Kennedy (4)	W 6-2
	Anne Barrance (5)	W 4-3
	John Skingsley (4)	L 5-6
Irene Davis (4)	David Russell (5)	L 2-5
	Andy Kennedy (4)	L 1-4
	Anne Barrance (5)	W 6-5
	John Skingsley (4)	L 5-6

This was the first time that a Wrest Park team had played a competitive golf croquet match in a local or national competition, and it turned out to be a winning debut. Ronnie Richardson was manager, Peter Davis kept score and Eileen Harrington was in charge of the tea. The start was delayed for an hour by rain, but thankfully there were no further interruptions. Ronnie was convinced that the lawns (mown by Eric the day before) were a significant factor in our win. As you can see from the results there were a lot of close finishes with most of the games going to time.



L-R Maureen Watts, Andy Kennedy, Irene Davis, John Skingsley, Anne Barrance, Don Barrett, David Russell and Peggy Kenny

The league format is teams of four playing 13 point games to handicap rules with time limits of 30 minutes. There are two doubles matches and each member of the team plays all the opponents in singles. The team's next home match is a local derby against Leighton/Linslade on Tuesday July 4. Supporters would be very welcome – call Ronnie for more details.

Handicap tournament 19-21 May

Independence May by Eric Audsley



Ian Parkinson tastes the bitter cup of defeat, manager Eric Audsley checks the scores and winner George Woolhouse clutches the trophy. Photo by Peter Newman.

Although the cobwebs had been removed from the outside of the pavilion prior to play they were clearly in evidence in some of the players on Friday morning. Eric Audsley and Alan Edwards only managed half a game in 3 hours – Alan winning +3. Ian Mantle and Ron Atkinson also failed to finish and went to sudden death, won by Ian. Harry Cordwell, in his first tournament game, rapidly used up all his bisques but kept David Kitson from finishing him off although he won by +11 on time. In the afternoon Eric tried to peg Ron out, missed but “did his own ball hit the peg?” After a lengthy discussion, they decided yes it did, at which point Ian, as spectator referee, intervened to remind them that in a handicap game you can't be!¹

While everyone was playing their morning game, George Woolhouse and Ken Pickett both managed two. Ian Parkinson however was losing his first game to Geoff Strutt -2, his only loss until his last game.



Ken Pickett. Photo © Robert Hallam

Harry achieved his first win (+19) on Saturday morning and thus emboldened in his second game set about pegging out Owen Bryce – well it's what everyone else does. He was then told he couldn't because his ball was not a 'rover'. Fine, so he took his ball to rover and tried again. Can anyone explain why a ball that has run the 'Rover' hoop is called a 'rover'?² Harry succeeded at the third attempt but Owen hit in and beat him with a three ball break.

Geoff Strutt won all his games on Friday but was absent on Saturday morning giving a young girl a two-hour

tutorial. The exertion was clearly too much for him as he proceeded to lose both his games.



Geoff Strutt. Photo © Robert Hallam

The weather got progressively damper, with players discovering that their waterproofs were not quite as good as they thought, but were at least windproof. Sunday was almost constant light rain all day with the occasional burst of heavy. Games got quicker as the weekend progressed, and we were almost too early for dinner at the Star on Saturday.

Sunday saw four players on 5 wins out of 6 (well 6/7 for George). Ian Parkinson saw off Ken Pickett and George saw off David Kitson, however Ian then lost to David, leaving George the clear winner with 8/9.

As George Collin's hoops were designed to be unfriendly to high bisquers it was perhaps not surprising that three of the top four were below 6. Thus the prize for the half that had high handicaps went to – you guessed – one of the 7 handicaps (David Kitson).



Eric Audsley doing his press-ups. Photo © Robert Hallam

Oh, and did I forget to mention there was a photographer from the Independent with us most of Sunday?³

Notes

1. You can't peg out your own ball unless your partner ball is also for the peg, but you can peg out an opponent using one of your balls if both those balls are for the peg.
2. After going through the last hoop the ball has no further obligations and is free to wander about, i.e. rove, until it is pegged out. Nothing to do with dogs, motor cars or Coronation Street.
3. Robert Hallam, the photographer, had rung on Friday to arrange his visit – the paper were looking for an event that wouldn't be called off for rain – and we were rewarded with a double-page spread.

Inter Counties 27-30 May

Before the tournament I made up a table based on the average handicaps of the teams, and by and large results went to form. My table had Bedfordshire bottom of Division 1 and that was where we finished, but the format of the event being what it is there is always scope for the unpredictable, for example we beat Gloucestershire who were the only team to beat the winners Nottinghamshire. We should have beaten both Sussex and Yorkshire, but even to have done so would not have been enough to avoid the drop. John Wheeler has produced a comprehensive results listing which is on the noticeboard in the pavilion.

Apart from the solitary win the highlights had to be Ben Ashwell's triple peel in the match against Lancashire (against David Openshaw, no less), possibly a county first, and Rutger Beijderwellen's sextuple peel incorporating a straight quintuple which snatched victory for Sussex in the last turn of the game against Ben and Jon Watson. The triple count was 1 for and 10 against (including the sextuple), so triple peels featured in nearly half the 23 games lost (in the match against Surrey all the games were finished with triples), which is a good indication of the standard of play in the top division.

The Bedfordshire team: Jon Watson, Howard Bottomley, Ben Ashwell, Bryan Harral, John Bevington, George Collin, John Wheeler, Tom Anderson.

Division 1			Division 2		
	Matches	Games		Matches	Games
Notts	9	21	Suffolk (P)	9	24
Surrey	7	21	Glamorgan (P)	8	20
Cheshire	7	18	Channel I (P)	7	21
Dorset	6	17	Middx	7	21
Essex	5	15	Devon	6	18
Avon	5	13	Warwicks	6	17
Gloucs	4	15	N'umberland	5	13
Yorks	4	14	Kent	3	12
Lancs (R)	4	13	Herts	2	9
Sussex (R)	3	11	Hants	2	8
Beds (R)	1	7	Norfolk	0	2

1st pair

	P	W	L
Watson/Bottomley	6	1	5
Watson/Ashwell	4	1	3

2nd pair

Ashwell/Harral	6	1	5
Bottomley/Anderson	2	0	2
Bottomley/Bevington	2	1	1

3rd pair

Collin/Bevington	6	1	5
Collin/Harral	4	2	2

The Anderson Shield 27-28 May

This tournament follows the same format as the Inter Counties (advanced play doubles with time limits), with six counties in the East Anglian Federation each represented by two pairs. Playing for Bedford were Geoff Strutt, Tim Brewer, Harry Cordwell and John Smallbone. Each county played the other five. The report is adapted from David Kitson's report on the EACF website.



The teams assembled. Bedfordshire are in the middle of the back row. L-R Geoff (in cap and blazer), Harry, John and Tim.

Bedford lost their first match against Herts -12, -1T, but beat Suffolk in the second round and drew with Norfolk in the third. On Sunday Bedford's fourth round opponents were Essex. Our second pair lost by one on time, but the match between the first pairs was level when time was called and we eventually made the winning point to earn a draw. The last match against Cambridge was decisive: the Bedford second pair lost and when the Cambridge first pair also won +9T they achieved the only win of the round which gave them one more win than Suffolk and with it the shield.

	P	W	D	L	Games
Cambridge	5	3	2	0	8
Suffolk	5	2	2	1	6
Essex	5	1	4	0	6
Bedford	5	1	2	2	4
Herts	5	1	1	3	3
Norfolk	5	0	3	2	3

Dealing with the public

We need to be conscious of the fact that English Heritage has the ultimate responsibility for the visiting public, who will be unaware of the fact that the club maintains the lawns itself and can be forgiven for thinking that they are simply part of the park. There are no notices to request visitors to keep off the lawns, and so there are times when they will walk or wheel pushchairs across them, play football on them or jump over the hoops. We like to think that visitors would walk around or between the lawns, and indeed most of them do, but there will always be exceptions.

If visitors do opt for a direct route across the lawns and you happen to be playing you may feel you ought to say something. As a general rule, don't bother. The only occasions where you might justifiably do so are (a) if they are on the lawn you are using, or (b) if they are likely to cause damage. The latter might include wheeling heavily laden pushchairs when the going is soft or heavy, or interference with hoops or pegs.

In such cases you are entitled to ask them to either go round or stop what they're doing, but keep a respectful distance, start with a friendly greeting, remain calm and polite, don't argue the toss and if your request doesn't have the desired effect report the incident to a member of the EH staff if you think it necessary.

In such situations the visitor is always right and you will always be in the wrong, so if the temperature gives even a hint of rising just back off and keep your thoughts to yourself. Always remember that the club is here by

permission and not by right, and it only takes one complaint, justified or not, to put its continued existence in jeopardy. We can't be too careful.

Diary

June 18	Golf croquet coaching course
June 25*	Group members golf croquet singles
July 4	EACF golf croquet league v Leighton/Linslade
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 29	Bedford Gardens Trust v Oxford Gardens Trust (?2 lawns)
July 30	Group members golf croquet doubles
August 6-7	Advanced tournament
August 8 or 15	Amphill 41 club evening
August 26-28	Wrest Park Craft Fair
September 1-3	Handicap tournament
September 6	Hertford U3A, 4 lawns, all day
September 10	EACF club champions tournament

*As we will not be participating in the CA Croquet Challenge, this date is now confirmed.

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

News from English Heritage

There is nothing to report. No letters, phone calls or emails have come our way since regime change. Please carry on as usual, and if you are asked to comply with rules and conditions other than those specified in the last newsletter please me know the details.

Two things we can mention are that the Institute ground staff (now employed by EH) can no longer help us dispose of the grass. The existing pile was shovelled into a 6 yd skip hired at a cost of £145. We are asking other clubs how they deal with it.

There are also plans to open five days a week. This means that there will be more occasions when visitors are present and club members are not. We have therefore suggested to EH that some equipment is made available at the mansion for visitors to use when the lawns are unoccupied.

Club competitions

Don't leave everything until after the World Cup! Note that the deadlines for the Ashwell Cup (our All England club heat) are earlier than for the other competitions.

Tournament catering rota

There are still vacancies on the list in the pavilion.

The Prescott Affair

Rarely in the field of journalism has so much prejudice, ignorance and snobbery been peddled by so few to so many. With their usual reluctance to let the facts get in the way of a good story, and a compulsion to include the word "vicious" at every opportunity, the media have merely confirmed in the public mind all the inaccurate stereotypes for which they alone are responsible. As Private Eye would say, trebles (triples?) all round.

John Bevington

8 June 2006