



newsletter

Match results

Longman Cup v Parsons Green (away)

10 June

Lost 3-4

Wrest Park	Parsons Green	WP score
Tim Brewer (7)	Gabrielle Higgins (3½)	+4T
Ray Percy (20)	Tom Tibbits (18)	
Steve Jones (10)	Gary Duke (5)	+10
Cliff Hayes (20)	Ann Robillard (20)	-6T
Tim Brewer (7)	Gary Duke (5)	-15
Steve Jones (10)	Gabrielle Higgins (3½)	+12
Ray Percy (20)	Ann Robillard (20)	-15
Cliff Hayes (20)	Tom Tibbits (18)	-18

Report by Tim Brewer

This was a new venue for all of us. Parsons Green has two well kept lawns that run true so any missed shots are due to the player rather than the lawn! In the morning, Steve played well against a temporarily out of form Gary to win comfortably. Cliff faced Anne, who has played off 14, and did very well to play to time with deficit of only 6 hoops. Ray and Tim had a tactical doubles, keeping Tom in play for most of the game, resulting in a good win on time.

In the afternoon, Steve played well again against Gabrielle to win again. Cliff and Ray both faced opponents playing well above their handicap. Tim's form deserted him against Gary. Perhaps the noisy distractions from the bowls match adjacent to the croquet lawns influenced our performance.

Thank you to Parsons Green for an excellent lunch and tea and we wish them well against Letchworth.

Beds & Herts League v Meldreth (home)

16 June

Won 4-1

Wrest Park	WP score
Bryan Harral (2)	Chris van Essen (2½) +8T
Elaine Newman (20)	Alec Osborne (20)
Peter Newman (9)	Robert Skeen (10) -8T
Bryan Harral (2)	Chris van Essen (2½) +21
Peter Newman (9)	Alec Osborne (20) +1T
Elaine Newman (20)	Robert Skeen (10) +6T

Inter Club v Cheltenham (home)

24 June

Won 6-1

Report by Howard Bottomley

On what turned out to be a glorious day lunch was delayed until 2.15 allowing Wrest Park to go ahead after some close games with a win in the doubles, the singles being split one each.

In the afternoon, a little jaded, both Ben and Dave Foulser started peeling but with no luck on slick lawns with firm hoops. Ben and Howard won to clinch the match and Rod and Bryan continued their good form to

conclude things, Rod with a particularly outrageous finish from 4-back via practically everywhere.

Wrest Park	Cheltenham	WP score
Ben Ashwell (-1)	Chris Williams (-1½)	+6
Howard Bottomley (-1)	Dave Mundy (-1)	
Rod Ashwell (½)	Don Gaunt (-1)	+12
Bryan Harral (2)	Dave Foulser (-1)	-6
Ben Ashwell (-1)	Chris Williams (-1½)	+19
Howard Bottomley (-1)	Dave Mundy (-1)	+21
Rod Ashwell (½)	Dave Foulser (-1)	+14
Bryan Harral (2)	Don Gaunt (-1)	+6

EACF golf league v Leighton/Linslade (home)

4 July

Lost 7-11

Wrest Park	Leighton/Linslade	Score (WP first)
Ronnie Richardson (5)	Sally Clay (4)	L 2-3
Don Barrett (4)	John Cundell (4)	
Judy Priestley (5)	Richard Keighley (3)	L 1-5
Eileen Harrington (6)	Tony Wells (6)	
Ronnie Richardson (5)	Sally Clay (4)	W 7-2
	John Cundell (4)	L 5-7
	Richard Keighley (3)	W 5-3
	Tony Wells (6)	L 3-5
Don Barrett (4)	Sally Clay (4)	L 3-6
	John Cundell (4)	L 3-7
	Richard Keighley (3)	W 6-4
	Tony Wells (6)	W 7-1
Judy Priestley (5)	Sally Clay (4)	W 4-2
	John Cundell (4)	L 3-5
	Richard Keighley (3)	W 5-2
	Tony Wells (6)	W 7-2
Eileen Harrington (6)	Sally Clay (4)	L 1-7
	John Cundell (4)	L 2-7
	Richard Keighley (3)	L 3-7
	Tony Wells (6)	L 4-6

Leighton-Linslade were convincing winners in this local derby, possibly helped by the fact that three of their team were as familiar with the lawns as any of the Wrest Park players. The match finished at 3pm, and the decision to forgo friendly games proved a wise one, as half an hour later the area was hit by a heavy storm.

Beds & Herts League v Enfield (home)

15 July

Lost 2-4

Wrest Park	Enfield	WP score
Tim Brewer (7)	Ken Pickett (3)	-13T
Harry Cordwell (14)	Wendy Spencer-Smith (18)	
Peter Newman (9)	Gareth Bushill (14)	-4T
Elaine Newman (20)	Alan Foott (16)	
Tim Brewer (7)	Ken Pickett (3)	-2T
Peter Newman (9)	Gareth Bushill (14)	-17T
Harry Cordwell (14)	Alan Foott (16)	+3T
Elaine Newman (20)	Wendy Spencer-Smith (18)	+10T

EACF golf league v Watford (away)

28 July

Lost 6-12

Ronnie Richardson, Don Barrett, Peggy Kenny and Judi Priestley were up against Janet Lewis, Norah Wesley, Ron Drew and Linda Spurr. Wrest Park won both the doubles matches but had a harder time of it in the singles, in which Judi had two wins and Don and Peggy one each. Janet Lewis, playing off the lowest handicap of 3, won all her singles games.

Group members golf croquet singles 25 June

The competition took place on a hot day with hazy sunshine and little wind – trying conditions which were not made any easier by the fast lawns and unforgiving hoops. It turned out that anyone playing on lawn three had been at a disadvantage as it was discovered by chance that the red, yellow and blue balls were Barlow GTs instead of the old Jaques balls that should have been in the tube.

The format had a first phase of two blocks of six and eight, with four rounds of 35 minutes each. After lunch the top three in each block all played each other over five rounds to decide the trophy. The remaining eight played as many rounds as they could manage. Positions were decided on (a) wins, (b) points scored and (d) points difference. On reflection trying to squeeze nine rounds into the day was a round too far – something to bear in mind for whoever manages the tournament next year. Lunch should be leisurely!

Preliminary block play

	P	W	D	L	+	-	Diff
Don Barrett	4	3	1	0	27	14	+13
Vera Pearson	4	3	0	1	25	18	+7
Sally Clay	4	2	1	1	21	16	+5
John Cundell	4	2	1	1	24	24	0
Judi Priestley	4	1	0	3	22	22	0
Peggy Kenny	4	1	0	3	20	22	-2
Deirdrea Ellins	4	1	0	3	13	24	-11
June Black	4	0	1	3	13	25	-12
Linda Potton	4	3	0	1	27	16	+11
Ronnie Richardson	4	3	0	1	27	17	+10
Eve Buckingham	4	3	0	1	20	21	-1
Richard Keighley	4	2	0	2	22	16	+6
Ann Lee	4	1	0	3	16	21	-5
Maureen Watts	4	0	0	4	7	28	-21

The top six had a close fight for the trophy. Don and Linda drew in their first game but each won the second, and Ronnie had started with two wins. Going into the final round Linda had edged ahead with three wins, but Don, Ronnie and Sally all had two. All was resolved in the last round: Linda beat Ronnie, Don drew with Sally and Eve beat Vera, so Linda was the clear winner.

Many thanks to all who took part, and for helping with the washing up and clearing away at the end of the day.

Final block play

	P	W	D	L	+	-	Diff
Linda Potton	5	4	1	0	32	18	+14
Don Barrett	5	2	2	1	28	27	+1
Eve Buckingham	5	2	0	3	25	25	0
Sally Clay	5	2	1	2	23	25	-2
Ronnie Richardson	5	2	0	3	25	29	-4
Vera Pearson	5	1	0	4	25	34	-9
Judi Priestley	4	4	0	0	24	12	+12
Peggy Kenny	4	3	0	1	26	16	+10
Ann Lee	4	2	0	2	18	21	-3
Maureen Watts	3	2	0	1	15	16	-1
June Black	4	1	0	3	18	25	-7
Richard Keighley	3	1	0	2	16	11	+5
John Cundell	4	0	0	4	14	25	-11
Deirdrea Ellins	2	0	0	2	6	11	-5

Advanced tournament 7-9 July

Manager Eric Audsley found himself a player short and resorted to drafting in David Tutt as a substitute on Friday to keep the three blocks from collapsing. The missing player arrived on Friday evening under the impression that it was a two-day tournament. Crisis? What crisis?

There were 99 games played, i.e. 8.25 double-banked games per lawn. This might suggest a tidy 3-3-2 split over the three days, but tight hoops and lawn speeds which varied considerably over the weekend contributed to some drawn-out games and the setting of time limits, which in some cases were quite severe.

	Block A	Block B	Block C
Number of players	10	9	10
Handicap range	-1½ to 2	2 to 4	4½ to 8
Games played	37	29	33
Games won on time*	2 (5%)	4 (14%)	8 (33%)
Average winning margin	12	11	7
Single figure margins	16 (43%)	13 (45%)	24 (73%)

Why did the games drag on? There were several comments that the hoops were too tight. They had been set to a sixteenth of an inch as stated in the Regulations and were in fresh ground. The tightness of the hoops is always likely to be a source of discussion in an Advanced tournament with a spread of handicaps, as what is appropriate for a player of handicap 1 or less may be excessively demanding for a player of (say) 5 or more, where failed hoops mean fewer breaks and more frequent changes of innings. This can lead to more defensive play which results in longer games and a headache for the manager.

Block C ended with Gina Lewis, Peter Shephard and Ian Mantle all with five wins from seven games, just ahead of Sylvia Steer and Gordon Weir with four each. The who-beat-who was inconclusive and the winner was decided on net points, which allowed Peter to squeeze past Gina to win by a single point. Block B also produced a tie with Peter McDermott and James Skelton both having six wins out of seven, but in this case Peter had beaten James and so took the prize. Ian Parkinson and George Woolhouse were next best with five and four wins respectively.

It was in playing George that John Christmas demonstrated how to recover from loss of memory. Having approached hoop 5 with balls at the peg and hoop 6 he was faced with an angled hoop which he ran

to the boundary. He then turned and hit the ball at 6 and roqueted the other balls before ending up at an angle in front of hoop 5 (!). Having had it confirmed that he had already run the hoop, he then ran hoop 6, again to the boundary, before missing the return roquet, and eventually lost -1 on time.

In block A Andrew Davies made light of the conditions and completed three triples (the only ones of the tournament) against Lionel Tibble, David Mooney and Terry Mahoney to record six wins from eight games. In normal circumstances this would have been more than enough to win the block, but these were not normal circumstances. Lionel himself had five wins from eight games and both George Collin and Rod Ashwell had five from seven, but the eventual winner was John Bevington who managed six wins from seven games. This was due to (a) managing to beat Andrew in his first game before he had warmed up, (b) missing Saturday morning due to having to pick up someone from the airport and (c) winning two time-limited games on Sunday, the first against David Mooney by hitting in when the two balls left were both for the peg and the second when Lionel failed 4-back in the last turn. Phew!

Eastern Championship

21-23 July

No effort was spared to have the lawns at their best: fresh hoop holes with the hoops set firmly to between a sixteenth and a thirtysecond of an inch, two mowings in the three days before the tournament, the last of which removed a single modest barrowload from our acre and a half. And all of this in a week when the sun beat down without respite, continuing to do so over the weekend apart from some strong winds and light rain on Saturday afternoon. This scattered debris across lawn 4, the intended venue for the final, so 3 and 4 were mown again on Saturday evening to tidy them up.



Jack Wicks with one he laid earlier. Photo by Peter Newman.

It was disappointing that there were only 11 entries, but there was quality aplenty with four of the MacRobertson Shield team (Fulford, Maugham, Aiton and Avery) and rising stars Jack Wicks and Rutger Beijderwellen. In the event it proved all too easy for Robert Fulford, who retained his title with eight triples and a TPO in his nine games.

Preliminary round (best of three)

Keith Aiton bt Jerry Guest +12TP, +13
Phil Cordingley bt Andrew Davies +11, +3
David Maugham bt Lionel Tibble +26TP, +24

Quarter finals (best of five)

Keith Aiton bt Mark Avery +16, +17, +26
Robert Fulford bt Phil Cordingley +24TP, +24TP, +24TP
David Maugham bt Jack Wicks +11, -4, +20, +12
Rutger Beijderwellen bt Jeff Dawson -1T, +25TP, +16TP, +26TP

Semi finals

Robert Fulford bt Keith Aiton +26TP, +24TP, +13TPO
David Maugham bt Rutger Beijderwellen +25TP, +12TP, +13 TPO



Rutger on his knees. Photo by Peter Newman

Final

Robert Fulford bt David Maugham +24TP, +26TP, +25TP

Plate (Swiss plus knock-out)

Cordingley bt Guest (3/9) +17
Dawson bt Tibble (4/10) +9

Dawson (6/10) bt Cordingley (5/10) +24

The final took place on Sunday morning but Robert's machine-like play, typified by the second game in which he went to 4-back on the third turn and completed the triple in the fifth, meant that it was all over shortly after 12.30 and was only witnessed by John Bevington and Ronnie Richardson and Maureen Watts, who had come down to prepare lunch. John Wheeler arrived just in time to witness the penult peel in the final game.

The other highlight from Sunday was our involvement in Wrest Park's own version of Pet Rescue. Shortly after play started John B was asked by Glenis Thorne if the club had any planks which might be used to help five ducklings escape from the pond under the fountain. Various bits of wood were found and lowered into the pond. Some of the ducklings got onto these and at one point two were lifted out but promptly dived back in. More substantial boards were fetched from behind the Orangery and left in place, and in the early afternoon

the famous five were seen walking down between the lawns and the pavilion. Later sightings revealed that they had reached the safety of the water north of the Chinese bridge and were disporting themselves on the lily pads along with some young moorhens, with their mother in close attendance.

Dunstable Council Charity Golf croquet doubles 15 July

Report and photo by Ronnie Richardson



This competition took place behind the refurnished Priory House and in front of Priory Church on a beautiful hot day. 10 teams were entered, some of whom play at Wrest Park and others from the local U3A group. Whilst the competition was taking place members of the public were encouraged to 'have a go' on two small lawns nearby. This proved very successful. The winners were Linda Potton and Vera Pearson (both Wrest Park players) who had an exciting final against Val Greiggs (WP) and Ann Bushnell.

Group members golf croquet doubles – 24 July

Report by John Bevington

Although there was no double banking and the time limit was a more generous 40 minutes nearly half the games in the block stages were not concluded before time. It may have been that greater experience and tactical awareness was leading to more defensive play, especially as the hops were firm and fairly tight.

There were five rounds of block play followed by a knock-out for the top four in each block.

Block 1

	P	W	D	L	+	-	Diff
Sally Clay & Martin Field	5	4	0	1	30	15	+15
Una Pengelly & Judith Pengelly	5	3	1	1	30	19	+11
Judi Priestley & Val Greiggs	5	3	1	1	22	17	+5
Peggy Kenny & Don Barrett	5	2	2	1	24	20	+4
Ronnie Richardson & Maureen Watts	5	1	0	4	19	23	-4
June Black & Grace Indge	5	0	0	5	4	35	-31

Block 2

	P	W	D	L	+	-	Diff
John Cundell & Diana Phelps	5	3	0	2	26	24	+2
Linda Potton & Vera Pearson	5	2	2	1	26	21	+5
Yvonne Banks & Sheila Beal	5	2	2	1	24	24	0
Eve Buckingham & Len Buckingham	5	2	1	2	22	22	0
Eileen Palmer & Keith Palmer	5	1	1	3	24	26	-2
Phyllis Luckman & Eileen Bearton	5	1	2	2	23	28	-5

Positions were decided on (a) wins, (b) points difference and (c) points scored, all of which were required to decide the order in block 2.

Knockout

Sally & Martin	}	Sally & Martin 7-3	}	Sally & Martin 6-1
Eve & Len				
Linda & Vera	}	Judi & Val 4-3		
Judi & Val				
Una & Judith	}	Una & Judith 6-5	}	Una & Judith 7-6
Yvonne & Sheila				
Peggy & Don	}	Peggy & Don 7-4		
John & Diana				

The knock-out included a managerial faux pas when he failed to remind the players that even though the whistle had sounded play would have to continue if the scores were level. Linda, Vera, Judi and Val all came off the lawn and announced their result as a draw, whereupon they had to be sent out again to contest hoop 2 on lawn 1, which, if you are starting from corner 4, is a decidedly tricky approach. Judi and Val got through first, and Vera was left regretting that she hadn't imposed her will a bit more forcefully, as apparently she was within seconds of making the deciding hoop when the whistle had gone. Elsewhere the Pengellys were edging closer to the final, one game being won with a spectacular jump shot.

After the first round of the knock-out, when the four pairs not involved had played each other, further games became optional and everyone decided to sit in the shade and watch the play – a sensible move, as, in contrast to last year, the weather was warm and sunny all day. The final was played without a time limit and Sally and Martin were worthy winners, Martin's clearances being a significant factor. Another feature of the final was the occasional bout of spontaneous applause for a well-executed shot (something I have never experienced in many years of playing and watching Association croquet).

Next year will see these events under new management and open to all members, and I would like to take the opportunity to thank all the players who have participated for their enthusiasm and support of the tournaments, their readiness to help with clearing up and their generosity. Where else does the manager walk away with a rubbish bag in one hand and six bottles of wine in the other?

Advanced tournament 6-7

August

Report by manager Rod Ashwell

Paul Salisbury won with five straight wins, albeit with a slightly shaky start. The lawns were dry and fast with tight firm hoops which may explain the lack of triple peels over the two days. Those who attempted were rewarded with their game not going to time. Aside from the croquet a fine weekend was had by all, aided and abetted with superb dining provided by Wrest Parks finest Members and the free flowing red wine making the best of the scenery. Entrants may have been slightly confused on arrival as there is now a new entrance route via Clock Tower yard - with an extra padlock but with the same code (see opposite),

Results

P Salisbury won the weekend with 5/5

Joint second: R Smith 4/5 and N Polhill 4/5

Handicap changes

G Woolhouse 4 to 4.5

R Smith 1 to 0.5

Diary

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

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

News from English Heritage

John Bevington and George Collin attended a meeting with Adrian Baker from EH on Monday 26 June, at which Adrian presented a draft Licence agreement between EH and the croquet club. We gave him a guided tour of the club's facilities and have reviewed the proposed licence and submitted our comments

We have also invited the staff at EH for a croquet evening on a date of their choosing.

The future of group membership

Before going into proposals for the future it is as well to begin by describing how the idea of group membership came about in the first place. When the club started it was only open to staff at the Institute and Association croquet was played almost exclusively. Play during the day on weekdays was not allowed, apart from a little golf croquet or practice during the lunch hour. Later the club made an arrangement with members of Silsoe WI whereby a group would come and play golf croquet on Monday evenings and pay a small subscription. The principle was that the group always came with the same group leader, who alone had a key.

Things have changed. We can now play during the day on weekdays. We have more groups and about 50 group members, as opposed to about 40 full members. It has been observed that some group members do not always come down with the nominated keyholder, and there are others who graduated to full membership and then reverted to group membership but without returning the key. One does not like to say the old system is being abused, but one could argue that it has become

unnecessarily restrictive if applied to the letter. The lawns are there to be played on, after all.

Given that all members effectively have equal opportunities to play it was felt that the group members are now being subsidised by the full members (some of whom are rarely if ever seen on the lawns). We therefore think that the time is right to abolish the distinction between full and group members and round up the subscription accordingly.

This will not happen overnight. The proposal is that we begin by only offering full membership from next season, and that existing group members have the subscription raised in stages over the next few years until it reaches the level of the full membership subscription. We would still deal with groups if they wanted to organise an event which might include members of the group who were not themselves members of the club.

There is always the risk that some people will decide that the increase in fees is too much and decide not to rejoin, but that is something we must be prepared to live with. The full membership fee is not excessive in comparison to other clubs, and we also benefit financially from all the voluntary work done by members to maintain the lawns and run the club – indeed, some of us probably spend a great deal more time on this than we do actually playing.

Please discuss this with other group members and let us know how you feel about this proposal.

Getting in and out – please read

Those of you on email will have received a map showing the new arrangements. You should park as near the house as you can, sign in as usual and present your membership card (you won't be allowed in without it) and then go in via the door to the right of the gate near the clock tower. Cross the yard and follow the colonnade to the left. Go through the gate at the end of the colonnade and turn right, and then go through the gate into the park.

During working hours (8am-5pm) both gates are often left open to allow staff to get in and out. If you arrive and leave within these hours and find the gates open there is no need to lock them. If you arrive after 5pm you must lock the gates on the way in and on the way out, regardless of whether they were open or shut when you arrived.

Failure to observe this rule will result in our only being able to enter and leave through the house between 8am and 5pm, which would make it impossible to stage tournaments and matches and therefore put the club's continued existence in jeopardy, so it's very much up to you.

The new route allows us to park and go in and out while remaining at all times on the English Heritage part of the site and avoids any problems with BBSRC, who still lease the east end. The new arrangements seem to be working satisfactorily, but if you experience any problems please let me know or tell English Heritage, and do pass this information on to anyone else who may be affected.

John Bevington

11 August 2006