



Wrest Park Silsoe Bedfordshire

February 2008

newsletter



Three secondary colours to the fore on a spring-like early February afternoon.

Annual General Meeting

The 2008 AGM will be on **Thursday 13 March** at **7.30pm** at the Star & Garter in Silsoe.

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of 2007 AGM and matters arising
3. Reports: **Chairman**
Secretary
Treasurer
CA Tournament Secretary
Club Tournament Secretary
Club Captain
Groundsman
4. Election of officers
5. EH news
6. Diary of events
7. Groundsmanship
8. Facilities and equipment
9. Coaching
10. Catering
11. CA and EACF news
12. Any other business

- Please check the details on your membership form, make any corrections and return it with your subscription before 1 April. You will then be sent your membership card which shows the relevant numbers

for padlocks on the gates and the pavilion. Cards must be carried at all times and shown to EH reception when you sign in between 8am and 5pm on weekdays or after 10am at weekends

- Please indicate your availability to help with tournament catering by circling dates on the form.
- **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 maintain an accurate membership list, in the latter we need to receive the form before you can be sent your membership card.

Subscriptions

The subscription rates for 2008 are as follows:

Full members	£35
CA levy	£6.70
Under 16	£10
16-18 or full time student	£20

- The CA levy is payable by all full members unless they are also members of another CA **registered** club and have nominated this club as their main club. Members of CA **affiliated** clubs have to pay the levy.

- There is a family membership option. If two adults in a family both take out full membership then any children under 16 from that family get free junior membership.
- If you want to pay your subscription using internet banking please confirm your intention to do so with Eric beforehand, and use sort code 20-05-74, account 80983861 (Wrest Park Croquet Club). Please make sure your name is referenced in the payment.
- The green fee for members' individual guests and any groups for which individual members are responsible remains at £3.60 per person per session. Please record these payments in the Visitor's Book in the pavilion. Members can bring three guests free of charge during the season.
- The green fee for independent visiting groups requiring a member to supervise them is now £5 per person and the member who is looking after the group can claim £20 expenses, as explained in the last newsletter.

Bark in the Park



This tree is one of a group of four in the rough grass to the south-east of the clubhouse. But what is it? Answer at the end of the newsletter.

Diary of events

April 12	Golf croquet coaching course
May 16-18	Handicap tournament
May 24-26	Wrest Park Garden Show
June 4	Irene Davis's group (from 6pm)
June 20	Kempston Rotary (John Martin) pm
June 22	Golf croquet singles
July 4-6	Advanced tournament
July 20	Golf croquet doubles
July 23	Irene Davis's group (from 6pm)
Aug 2-3	Advanced tournament
Aug 23-25	Wrest Park Craft Fair
Sept 3	Hertford U3A (David Morris) 4 lawns 10-5
Sept 13-14	Handicap tournament
Sept 21	EACF Champions Day
Oct 4-5	CA Club Finals weekend

- **Anyone organising home matches (B&H league, golf croquet league, Longman Cup etc.), group visits or any other events must let me know the dates as soon as they are confirmed.**
- **For group visits it would be helpful to know approximate start/finish times and the number of lawns required.**

Social on 26 April from 11am

We thought it might be a good idea to have a sort of "open house" near the start of the season as an opportunity for old and new members to meet. There is no plan – short games (say two hoops and the peg) and coaching will be on offer, two or more of you could arrange a game amongst yourselves, or you can just eat and drink (we will provide the loaves of bread and jugs of wine). We look forward to seeing you, and if it's a success we'll do it again during the summer.

Early season coaching

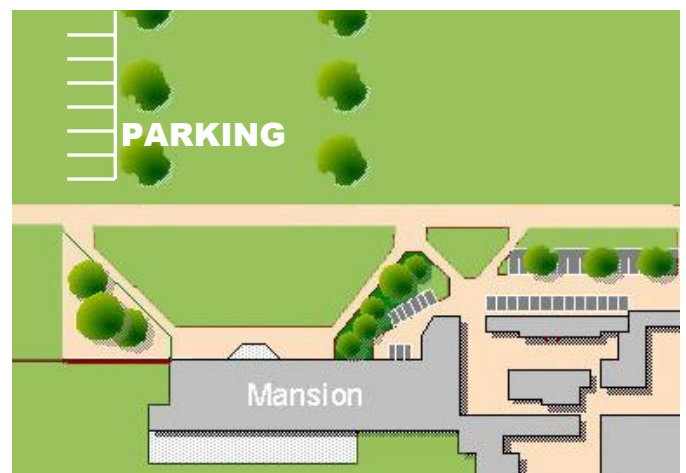
We will be running an Association croquet coaching course for beginners and higher handicappers starting on Thursday 1 May at 5pm and running for six weeks. This will be organised by Geoff Strutt, who would be happy to hear from any members either wanting to participate or assist him with the coaching.

EH news and car parking

Those of you who have visited the park recently will have noticed the conservation work in progress. The drive in front of the house has been relaid and the cobbles in front of the steps exposed, the railings are being repainted dark green with gold highlights and many of the statues have been cleaned.

The next step is the preparation of a Conservation Management Plan which will underpin an application for a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The plan will include work to be done in the house and other buildings as well as the park itself, one of the main aims being the creation of a visitor centre which would probably be in the area now occupied by the walled garden to the west of the mansion. The time scale for submission and approval means that work is unlikely to start before 2010. We are being kept informed and will ensure the club's interests are represented.

No newsletter these days is complete without a note on car parking. It was agreed that in order to save wear and tear on the grass weekday winter parking should be in the south-eastern corner of the internal car park next to the hedge (a map is available for anyone planning on pre-season practice). I suggested to EH that the distinction between summer and winter parking be determined by the hours of British Summer Time, i.e. during BST we go back to parking on the grass, as shown below. As I have heard nothing from EH to contradict this I can only assume they are in agreement, but do check at reception just in case.



Baby, it's cold outside



Warm enough to melt a heart of stone, this cloak by Hessian is the latest in refugee chic. The waterproof bubble-wrap lining makes it an ideal garment for anyone who has to be out in all weathers.

The schools initiative and the visiting group volunteer pool

There was no rush to go on the various courses required for the accreditation process, so we won't be pursuing it just yet. However a new opportunity has arisen. Having been put in touch with the Mid-Beds School Sports partnership at Redborne School (next to the Flitwick/Amphill roundabout) I found out that they are putting on a "Get Back into Sport" event at the end of April/early May, aimed at people aged 16+. I have said that we will support it – it could be a good recruitment opportunity. More details to follow.

The volunteer pool is not exactly overstocked, but there will be a further appeal once the date of the first group visit is known.

Laws course at Newport

Ian Vincent will be running an Association Croquet Laws course for budding referees at Newport Croquet Club on 5-6 April. If you are interested in attending please contact Terrey Sparks for details on 01362 692601, or via email at Tds3elm@aol.com.

EACF/NT tournaments in 2008

Golf croquet

July 5 Ickworth House, Horringer (Doubles)
Sept 7 Ickworth House, Horringer (Singles)

I have an entry form (to be returned by April 30).

There is a level play golf croquet tournament at Ipswich on July 20. Entry limited to 14. Apply to Terrey Sparkes (tds3elm@aol.com 01362 853872) by May 31.

Short croquet

This will be held at Ickworth on Sept 7 and is being organised by Jonathan Toye. To enter please contact him (jonathantoye@hotmail.com 01366 382280)

Annual Dinner – second sitting



The photo in the last issue rather neglected those on the far table, so here they are. Photo by John Wheeler.

Lawn maintenance update

Saturday 23rd February saw the lawns being prepared for the vertidrainage and spring fertiliser application which is due to take place the following Thursday. All the lawns were gone over with the flat-bottomed rakes (to dislodge the wormcasts) and the leaf sweeper (to pick up leaves, wormcasts, pine needles and other debris) before being mown. We also raked up the leaves and mowed the grass around the huts, loaded the grass heap into the trailer and applied wood preservative to both our own and the Fishing Club hut in the woodyard. A good day's work and thanks to all participants.

The fertiliser contains a percentage of ferrous sulphate which will kill the moss in the lawns (and leave them looking rather dark). The dead moss will be removed by scarifying later on.

John Bevington

25 February 2008

The tree is a London Plane (*Platanus hybrida*)