



Wrest Park Silsoe Bedfordshire

December 2008

newsletter



Winners all – L-R Bryan Harral, Ray Percy, Tim Brewer, Geoff Strutt, Tom Anderson, Cliff Hayes and Rod Ashwell. In front of them are the Steel Cup, the Beds & Herts League shield, the Archer Cup, the Ashwell Cup, the Thomas Philip Earl de Grey Cup, the Bottomley Plate for the Steel Cup runner-up and the De Grey Plate. At the front are the Golf croquet cup and the 14 point trophy.

2008 Annual Dinner

This was held at the Bell, Woburn on 28th November. After a convivial evening and the presentation of the club trophies, members then had to find their way home in thick fog. We hope they all made it safely.

Club competition results update

Steel Cup (Advanced)	Winner: Bryan Harral Runner-up: Tom Anderson
Archer Cup (Handicap)	Winner: Ray Percy Runner-up: Eric Audsley
Ashwell Cup (All England h'cap)	Winner: Tim Brewer Runner-up: Eric Audsley
Thomas Philip Earl de Grey Cup (B level)	Winner: Geoff Strutt Runner-up: Tim Brewer
14 point advanced	Winner: Rod Ashwell Runner-up: Tom Anderson
De Grey Plate (14 pt h'cap)	Winner: Cliff Hayes Runner-up: Richard Keighley
Golf croquet	Winner: David Parsons Runner-up: Judi Priestley

The last competition was decided on 28th October when Cliff Hayes beat Richard Keighley +7 in the final of the De Grey Plate. Rarely has the word congratulations been more apposite. Earlier Rod won the 14 point competition, beating Tom Anderson in both semi-finals.

Life's a beech, and then you die



Older members will remember the beech tree that once stood near the lime avenue on the new route to the lawns. In September the stump was host to a fine crop of *Meripilus giganteus*, the giant polypore fungus.

2009 subscriptions

The proposed subscriptions for 2009 are as follows:

Full members	£45 (plus CA levy £7)
Junior members (under 16)	£10
16-18 or full time student	£20

We are proposing this increase to allow for reduced membership, a large rise in EH fees, increased costs and the new mower (see below). If you have any objections please contact the Treasurer, Eric Audsley.

Top gear for next season . . .



With a Honda engine rated at 5½ HP and a top speed best described as pedestrian this Allett Tournament 24 is unlikely to get Clarkson's pulse racing, but we are more interested in the 10 blade cylinder giving 246 cuts/metre and the 54 blade grooming reel. The existing Allett will become the backup mower, having already covered about 5000 miles in 15 years service.

. . . and an earlier version



The world's first mechanical lawn mower was built by J R and A Ransomes of Ipswich in 1832 to a design by Edwin Budding of Stroud. The lawn mower shown here is one of the earliest machines made by the company. Spur gears connect its main roller to the knife blades, rotating them at 12 times the speed of the roller. Budding patented his design in 1830, basing his grass-

cutting machine on the shears used for trimming woollen cloth in textile factories in his native Gloucestershire.

Photo and text from the Science Museum website.

Garden croquet c1865



This is a photo from an old family album, showing my great-grandfather's brother and two friends or relatives playing at his father's house in Wandsworth. Note the size of the mallets and the generous hoops. The inset is taken from another photo and shows the mower they used, which looks as though it could only be pulled (an optional extra with the Ransomes).

Christmas drinks

Those of you planning a party and looking for a change from mulled wine as a warming drink might like to try the following, which comes from Jane MacQuitty's column for the Times thirty-odd years ago. In a selection of recipes for seasonal drinks she introduced it thus:

On the other hand, if Christmas is proving all too much and the thought of spending yet another day with your relations is too horrible to contemplate, the only Boxing Day drink worth considering is:

Hot apple punch (serves 25-30)

- 6pt medium dry cider
- 1 large cooking apple
- cloves
- ¼lb soft brown sugar (or more to taste)
- 1 large stick cinnamon,
- 2 thinly sliced lemons
- 1 bottle Calvados

Stick the cloves in the apple and roast it in the oven. Meanwhile pour 2pt cider into a saucepan with the sugar and cinnamon stick. Heat gently until the sugar has dissolved, remove the roast apple from the oven and add it together with all the other ingredients to the pan. Gradually bring the mixture to the boil.

(I have made this several times and can assure you it works – Ed.)

On behalf of the committee I would like to wish all our members and the staff at English Heritage all the very best for Christmas and the New Year.

John Bevington

5 December 2008