



newsletter

Special General Meeting 16 June

The SGM went ahead as planned and the decision was taken to start negotiations with EH for the development of site 2 (next to the pavilion). All the issues were discussed at length and the minutes of the meeting will be published in due course.

Handicap tournament 21-22 May

With no rain to speak of since the slitter was used the lawns were slightly bumpy in places, and this, coupled with rock-solid hoops, led to frequent changes of innings and many games going to time. The 21 players (of which seven were club members) were split into two blocks, each played as a flexible Swiss. Handicaps ranged from Nigel Polhill at -1 to Peter Aspinall, playing in his first tournament off 20.

In the first block, Geoff Johnson led the pack after three rounds with three wins, with Nigel, George Collin, Ian Mantle, David Marsh and Alan Clark snapping at his heels. Nigel, David and Alan then caught him up and in the final round Alan beat Geoff while Nigel got the better of David after pegging him out. Alan won the block by virtue of having beaten Nigel +26 in the third round.



In the battle of the bulges, Ian Mantle beat Eric Audsley +16.

The second block was more clear-cut as Alain Giraud, playing off 1, won all his five games. The closest he came to defeat was his victory over John Bevington +1 on time, which could have gone the other way had John remembered his half-bisque. Alain's nearest challengers were Terry Mahoney, Ray Percy and George Woolhouse with three wins.

Our thanks to Geoff Strutt, Sally Marsh and Tim Brewer for keeping everyone fed and watered, and also to English Heritage for their loan of a prop for the presentation photo.



A barrier holds back the crowd before the prizegiving.

Inter County Championship 28-31 May

Another year, another Inter Counties. Bedfordshire's performance could be described as average, finishing in mid-table thus avoiding both promotion and the wooden spoon. The weather was cold and windy for the most part, with some rain at Compton on Monday but finishing with welcome sunshine and blue skies at Southwick on the final day. We began with wins against Warwickshire and Wiltshire, the latter by 3-0, although Jon Watson and Ben Ashwell at first pair found it hard going, winning +1 and +2, both on time.



A young jay near lawn 3 at Southwick on Saturday evening.

They recovered some form against Jonathan Hills and Michael Heap of Essex in the third match, winning +16, but it wasn't enough as Howard and George lost by 1. John and Bryan also lost against Robert Fulford and his wife Susan, playing off a handicap of 22. This game is worth recording for the fact that after John went to 4-back, Robert completed a TPO while peeling Susan to hoop 4. Bryan was left with a succession of long shots and we lost on time.

Sunday was an unmitigated disaster as Howard and Tom recorded the only win in the matches against Gloucester, Berks & Oxon and Kent. Jon and Ben only managed three points in the first two games.

Ben's departure meant George moving up to first pair with Jon, with Bryan and John taking over as second pair and Howard and Tom at third. The match against CA Select was close-run with two games lost by a single point, but the team recovered to beat Yorkshire 3-0 in the evening session, and celebrated with fish and chips.

And so to the final day, which began with a good win against the Channel Islands. John and Bryan were up against Jersey Boys James LeMoignan and Matthew Burrow, both -1.5 but suffering from a late night. In the last turn John managed to scramble three hoops to win +1 on time and give us the match 2-1. In the last match against Hampshire Jon and George stormed home +25 but the other games were both lost.



Bryan Harral in play against the Channel Islands – James LeMoignan (seated) and Matthew Burrow (with mallet, in conversation with Graham Gale).

Division 1

	P	W	Games
Somerset	10	10	24
Notts	10	9	23
Cheshire	10	6	19
Suffolk	10	6	17
Glamorgan	10	6	15
Herts	10	5	16
Lancashire	10	5	14
Surrey	10	4	14
Middlesex (R)	10	3	13
Dorset (R)	10	1	5
Sussex (R)	10	0	5

Division 2

	P	W	Games
Essex (P)	10	10	24
Channel I (P)	10	8	21
Gloucs (P)	10	7	21
Yorkshire	10	6	14
Berks & Oxon	10	5	16
Kent	10	5	15
Hampshire	10	4	15
Beds	10	4	14
CA Select	10	3	10
Wiltshire	10	2	6
Warwicks	10	1	9

1st pair

Jon Watson (-1) & Ben Ashwell (-1)

P	W	L
6	3	3

Jon Watson (-1) & George Collin (1)

4	3	1
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2nd pair

Howard Bottomley (½) & George Collin (1)

P	W	L
5	2	3

Bryan Harral (1½) & John Bevington (1½)

4	2	2
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George Collin (1) & John Bevington (1½)

1	0	1
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3rd pair

Bryan Harral (1½) & John Bevington (1½)

P	W	L
5	1	4

Howard Bottomley (½) & Tom Anderson (2½)

5	3	2
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Somerset captain David Goacher receives the trophy from Colin Irwin.

Match results

Beds & Herts League v Northampton (home) 30 April Drawn 3-3

Wrest Park	Northampton	WP score
Bryan Harral (1.5)	Les Carrick (9)	-15
David Marsh (7)	Rex Hale (14)	
Tim Brewer (4.5)	Owen Bryce (11)	-10T
Ray Pearcy (12)	Mel Christie (18)	
Bryan Harral (1.5)	Les Carrick (9)	+7
Tim Brewer (4.5)	Owen Bryce (11)	+15
David Marsh (7)	Rex Hale (14)	+10
Ray Pearcy (12)	Mel Christie (18)	-4T

Report by Bryan Harral

I would like to report that this draw was part of a carefully conceived plan to pace ourselves over the season and end with a flourish. Although Northampton had more than a few bisques I have to be honest and say we were outplayed in the morning doubles. David and I could not match Rex Hale's accurate shooting. Tim and Ray couldn't shoot straight either, so we were 2-0 down going to lunch. It was then our opponents confessed to practicing over the winter – definitely not cricket! Luckily most of us found our form in the afternoon singles and we managed to salvage a draw. The entertainment of the day had nothing to do with croquet. A swarm of bees took refuge in the pine tree nearest lawn one and players and public were kept away while Gill Brewer captured them.

Inter Club v Cheltenham (away) 5 June Lost 1-6

Wrest Park	Cheltenham	WP score
Ben Ashwell (-1)	Chris Williams (-1½)	-20TP (W)
Rod Ashwell (-½)	Dave Foulser (-1½)	
George Collin (1)	Dave Kibble (-½)	-16
John Bevington (1½)	Dave Mundy (-1½)	-16
Ben Ashwell (-1)	Chris Williams (-1½)	-26TP
Rod Ashwell (-½)	Dave Foulser (-1½)	-9
George Collin (1)	Dave Mundy (-1½)	-20
John Bevington (1½)	Dave Kibble (-½)	+26

Report by John Bevington

Getting there earlier than expected and finding the gate locked there was time to drive to the station for coffee and a bun before returning to the club, where the next to arrive were Rod and George. Two club members then turned up to play and let us in, and shortly afterwards the home team appeared and the match began some time after 10 under threatening skies. Rain fell on and off all day, but thankfully not too heavily.

The doubles was fairly clinical. In the singles both George and John got one ball round, but lift shots missed by us and/or hit by the opposition left us 3-0 down at lunch – a splendid green Thai chicken curry with cheesecake to follow, all prepared by Dave Kibble.

Chris Williams's second TP of the day sealed the win, but John got one back in a game where Dave K failed to take croquet after missing a 3 yard shot. Dave M then beat George and we watched while Dave F finally overcame Rod to complete the 6-1 scoreline – the exact reverse of the score the last time we met in the Inter Club in 2006.

Beds & Herts League v Watford (away) **11 June** **Lost 1-5**

Wrest Park	Watford	WP score
Bryan Harral (1)	Arthur Reed (2)	-1T
Cliff Hayes (20)	Alan Clark (12)	
John Bevington (1)	Simon Hathrell (-½)	-22
Tim Brewer (4½)	John Bee (5)	
Bryan Harral (1)	Simon Hathrell (-½)	-9
John Bevington (1)	Arthur Reed (2)	-8
Tim Brewer (4½)	John Bee (5)	-14
Cliff Hayes (20)	Alan Clark (12)	+13

Report by John Bevington

A crashing defeat, with few excuses. True, there were rabbit runs in many hoops (Hopewell hoops on one lawn and Omega on the other), the lawns were distinctly two-paced and we were playing with unfamiliar Barlow balls, but the fact remains that we were outplayed on the day. Bryan and Cliff should have won after Bryan used the last bisque to establish a three point lead close to time, but he left a rush rather than scatter the balls and Alan duly hit and went from 5 to 3-back to win +1. After Simon went to 3-back early on John Bee followed with an all-round break and that was that.



The lawns in Cassiobury Park. Note the gazebo in front of the clubhouse and the fencing round the courts.

In the top three singles Simon, Arthur and John all got to the peg but only managed to peg one ball out, which led to a lot of tactical play to try and recover ground, but to no avail. Cliff kept his nose in front for our only win.

Longman Cup v Ashby (home) **12 June** **Won 4-3**

Wrest Park	Ashby	WP score
Tim Brewer (4½)	Arthur Rowe (3½)	+7T
David Marsh (6)	Tim King (4)	
Ray Pearcy (14)	Richard Sanville (9)	-1T
David Morris (18)	Mick Haytack (7)	+12
Tim Brewer (4½)	Arthur Rowe (3½)	+1T
David Marsh (6)	Tim King (4)	-7
Ray Pearcy (14)	Mick Haytack (7)	-3
David Morris (18)	Richard Sanville (9)	+9

No report to hand but congratulations to the team on a successful first step in our effort to retain the cup. The scores suggest that it was a tight match even though, as we all know, closer inspection of a +1 or -1 can sometimes reveal events that the players might wish to forget. The next match will be against either East Dorset (Parkstone) or Aldermaston.

CA Golf Croquet tournament **25 June**

This tournament was the club's first CA golf croquet tournament and was the brainchild of Richard Keighley, who was unfortunately unable to be present due to a rescheduled knee operation. Geoff Strutt and Judi Priestley stepped in to manage and organise, and by all accounts it was a great success. The tournament was won by John Cundell from Leighton-Linslade, and there is a full report on the EACF website.

Dates for 2011

July

- 2-3 CA Advanced tournament (6)
- 9 Mary Rose v Aldermaston (4) from 10
- 12 Kensworth Lower School (4) eve
- 17 Reigate Priory v Nottingham (Secretary's Shield) 4 lawns from 10am
- 24 Golf croquet doubles tournament

August

- 6-7 CA Advanced tournament (6)
- 9 Ampthill 41 Club from 6pm (6)
- 10 Dunstable U3A 10-4 (6)
- 16 Bedford Castle Rotary (Paul Heerey) 6pm (6)
- 17 Harpenden Probus from 6pm (6)
- 23 ATC group from 10am (2)
- 24 Dunstable CC 10-4 (6)
- 27-29 Wrest Park Craft Fair

September

- 3-4 CA National golf croquet doubles tournament
- 10-11 CA Handicap tournament

- Anyone organising home matches, group visits or any other events must let me know the proposed dates so they can be cleared with EH. Please state start/finish times and number of lawns required.