



newsletter

Annual General Meeting

The 2012 AGM will be on **Thursday 8th March at 7.30pm** at the Star & Garter in Silsoe.

1. Apologies for absence
 2. Minutes of 2011 AGM and matters arising
 3. Reports: **Chairman**
Secretary
Treasurer
CA Tournament Secretary
Club Tournament Secretary
Groundsman
 4. Election of officers
 5. EH news
 6. Dates for 2012
 7. Groundsmanship
 8. Facilities and equipment
 9. Coaching
 10. Catering
 11. CA and EACF news
 12. Any other business
- If you can't get to the AGM but have a subject you would like us to discuss, please let me know.
 - 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 the padlocks on the gates and the groundsman's hut. Cards must be carried at all times and shown to EH on request.
 - We are going to need a lot of help with tournament catering this year as we are hosting the Eastern Championship and the All England area final as well as our own tournaments. Please indicate your availability by circling dates on the membership form. If you've never done it before and what to know what's involved please call Tim Brewer.
 - **Please return your 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 for 2012

The subscription rates for 2012 are as follows:

Full membership	£50
CA levy	£7.30
Junior membership (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 **member** club and have nominated that club as their main club. Any member who is also a member of a CA **affiliated** club has 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.

Dates for 2012

March

31 Spring cleaning

April

14 Social day from 11am
22 EACF Champions Day
21-22 St George's Day Festival

May

18-20 CA Handicap tournament

June

17 Golf croquet singles tournament
23 CA B level golf croquet tournament

July

2 Stotfold Salvation Army (Roy Scott)
6-8 CA Advanced tournament
15 Golf croquet doubles tournament
27-29 CA Eastern Championship

August

11-12 CA Advanced tournament
22 Dunstable U3A 10-4 (6 lawns)

September

1-2 CA All England area final
14-16 CA Handicap tournament
22 EACF AC Leagues playoff

- Anyone organising home matches, group visits or any other events must let me know the proposed dates as soon as possible so they can be notified to EH. Please provide approximate start/finish times and the number of lawns required.
- Note that all six lawns are likely to be busy when a CA/EACF tournament is scheduled. There may be a lawn free depending on the number of entries but this cannot be guaranteed, so if you turn up hoping to play you will have to take pot luck.

Playing arrangements for 2012

You can play seven days a week from 10am until dusk, which is a significant improvement on last season. EH reserve the right to close the lawns in exceptional circumstances (e.g. filming). Signing in and out will only be required when the park is closed to the public, and there will be no need to go in via the new visitor centre or use the new car park. Full details will be sent out separately – please ask if you have any questions.

Spring cleaning on 31 March

We will be sweeping out the huts, washing the windows and generally getting things ready for the new season. Volunteers welcome from 11am. As we will be vacating the site at the end of the season it will also be an opportunity to update the inventory of all our equipment.

Social on 14 April from 11am

This will be an open day with food and drink provided. If you know anyone who is interested in joining the club, this would be an ideal opportunity to introduce them.

Golf croquet club days

I have set aside dates for the singles and doubles days as usual, and repeat the usual entreaty to members to invite friends from local groups or clubs. These are primarily social events so the more the merrier, especially as this year is the last chance to play on the old lawns.

I will also repeat the usual request for someone to manage each day. If you are prepared to do this, then please put an M next to the tick indicating your entry. Having a manager appointed in advance is a considerable help in organising the event.

EACF GC tournaments

There is a GC tournament for handicaps 8-12 at Bury St Edmunds on 24 June, entrance £6.50. I can provide an entry form for anyone who is interested.

The Apps Memorial Bowl

This was donated by Captain Reid-Walker in 1959 in memory of Lorna Apps. From 1960 until 1964 it was for the most improved player of the year; it is now for the most improved male player. David Marsh was nominated for the award for 2011, but he lost out to Christian Carter of Parsons Green, who, in the words of the citation, “prevailed at the ultimate stage by a narrow margin over David Marsh, Wrest Park, whose progress was also highly impressive”.

Our congratulations for having come so close. Brian Shorney, in his letter from the Handicap Committee announcing the result, added “We hope that David continues his impressive improvement and that we see him amongst the candidates next year.”

Lorna Apps and her husband Ben were prominent players in the late 1920s and 30s, and Lorna won the President's Cup (one of only three women ever to do so) in 1936, the year after her husband's death. She was the CA Secretary from 1948-1959.

51 not out . . .

... and this year is also the fortieth anniversary of the first tournament to be held at Wrest Park in 1972.



One of the trophies for the first tournament, made by the late Harry Green.

The results of the first tournaments were:

23-25 June - Handicap - 18 entries

(A) R. Bateson (1½) (B) B. Keen (6½) (C) H. Bolton (6)

22-24 September - Handicap (Invitation) - 16 entries

(A) H. Bolton (2½) (B) B. Keen (2½)

Barry Keen was a regular tournament entrant and is now the CA Chairman of Council.

In the same year the club won the Apps-Heley award for having made exceptional progress in providing a good playing environment over the previous two years. Records for 1972 show the club's concern with the cost of equipment:

Three more sets of mild steel hoops are made - the cost of materials is now £7.95, a doubling in price compared to the previous sets. Jaques Eclipse balls are now £10.95 per set, and a set of clips cost £2.60

It is worth noting that the current price for a set of Dawson balls is £320.

It runs in the family



Lieut. Col. Robert John Knox

This photo of Robert Knox appeared in a Brighton and/or Hove newspaper just after the turn of the last century, together with a short profile which begins somewhat inauspiciously: "Although not figuring as largely in the public eye as the three gentlemen who have preceded him in this series..." We then discover that he is the Ruling Councillor of the Hove Habitation of the Primrose League, before being told about his military service and positions in other local organisations. The profile finishes as follows: "He is a prominent member of the Union Club, rarely misses the Sunday morning church parade, and is an enthusiastic croquet player, being on the committee of the Sussex County Culb". The printer had obviously had a long day.

Robert Knox's name appears in a summary of the first records of the club, a fascinating document in beautiful handwriting which can be seen at <http://www.sussexcountycroquetclub.org.uk/articles.php?lng=en&pg=767>

The newspaper cutting was found in an old family scrapbook which led to the suspicion that he and I might be related, and so it proved. My great-great grandfather married a Mary Knox, whose family lived at Rushbrook, near Coleraine. One of her brothers was the father of Robert Knox, making him my first cousin thrice removed.

Perhaps this accounts for my adoption of the Irish grip.

The CA 2012 survey

The CA is conducting a survey of players similar to those carried out in 2002 and 2007. The survey is open to all croquet players, whether they are individual members of the CA or not.

Some of the questions are identical to those in previous surveys. This is to measure changes over time. Others are completely new, exploring areas of importance or interest to the CA and its members. A summary of the results will be published in the Gazette. Previous surveys have proved to be very useful. In particular they have helped the CA to:

- Take into account more easily and fully the needs and desires of members.
- Promote croquet more effectively and increase recruitment.
- Obtain financial backing more easily; for instance, lottery grants.
- Obtain an increased level of sponsorship.

If you are not a member of the CA but would like to take part in the survey you can do it online by going to the link on the CA website at

<http://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=members/survey.asp&SurveyID=8>

John Bevington

16 February 2012