



newsletter

2012 Annual Dinner

This took place on Friday 30th November at the Mount Pleasant Golf Club in Lower Stondon. We had three tables for the 23 attendees and the staff couldn't have been more helpful. The food was good too.



Clockwise from extreme left: Tom Anderson, Anto Davies, Vic Rees, George Collin, Geoff Strutt and Hilary Strutt.



Eric Audsley, Wendy Audsley, Bryan Harral, (Sharman Harral), David Marsh, Sally Marsh, Tim Brewer, Gill Brewer



Gill Pearcy, Cliff Hayes, Jan Hayes, Richard Keighley, Peter Aspinall, Denise Aspinall, Ray Pearcy

Chairman Tim Brewer then presented the trophies for the various club competitions, followed by a special presentation to John and Pandora Wheeler as thanks for all the time and effort they have put in mowing the lawns over many, many years.



Eric Audsley – Steel Cup



Bryan Harral – Bottomley Plate (Steel runner-up)



Geoff Strutt – Ashwell Cup



Tim Brewer – Earl De Grey Cup



Cliff Hayes – De Grey Plate



Tim with John Wheeler

Club competition winners

Steel Cup (Advanced)	Eric Audsley Runner-up: Bryan Harral
Archer Cup (Handicap)	John Bevington Runner-up: Cliff Hayes
Ashwell Cup (All England h'cap)	Geoff Strutt Runner-up: David Marsh
Thomas Philip Earl de Grey Cup (B level)	Tim Brewer Runner-up: David Marsh
14 point advanced	Rod Ashwell
De Grey Plate (14 pt h'cap)	Cliff Hayes Runner-up: Peter Aspinall
Golf croquet	Rod Ashwell

The Last-Minute Tournament 20-21st October

Report by manager George Collin

Eight players responded to the call at short notice to make the most of the lawns in the park before the clocks changed. Saturday involved Bryan Harral, Ken Pickett, Nigel Polhill and David Marsh, all play all, level advanced, 2½ hour time limit, no double banking.

No games went to time and we finished 1½ hours ahead of schedule. After two rounds all four players had one win and one loss. So all had a chance to win in the final round but all depended on the outcome of the other game as well. Nigel was the overall winner with 2 wins and having beaten David (also on 2 wins), Ken and Bryan still on 1 win each.

Sunday was a mixture of level and handicap games, three faces from Saturday and four new ones. Again 3

rounds of 2½ hours, to avoid the dark. To encourage positive play, and to allow the bisque givers time to catch up, bisque takers were only allowed to carry one bisque into the final hour.

Brian Havill won the Handicap event with 3 out of 3 (the other new faces being myself, Nick Evans and Peter Aspinall), with David Marsh deemed a close second on 1 out of 1. David won the Level Advanced on 75% success (including games carried forward from Saturday). Only one game went to time and we still finished 1½ hours ahead of schedule. Managing is fairly simple, if you're allowed to bend the rules.

Going for Gold

"The trademark of the expert and the ambition of most up-and-coming players is the triple peel." J.W. Solomon

But what is a triple peel? In Association croquet played to Advanced rules (i.e. without bisques) a player who runs 1-back or 4-back concedes a lift shot to his opponent at the end of that turn, meaning that the opponent can lift either ball and play it from any point on either of the baulk lines. If the player runs 1-back and 4-back in the same turn before the partner ball has run 4-back he concedes a contact, i.e. the opponent can lift either ball, place it in contact with any other ball and take croquet immediately.

Conceding a contact is usually regarded as giving the opponent too much of an opportunity, so a player who makes a break with his first ball will make 3-back and then arrange a leave. If the opponent misses the lift shot he will then try and play an all-round break with his second ball, and while doing this may try to send the first ball through the last three hoops with croquet strokes and then peg both balls out to win the game in that turn. Putting another ball through its hoop by means of a croquet stroke is known as peeling* it, hence the term triple peel, or simply triple.

Completing a triple peel in a tournament entitles the player to a CA Gold Award. David Marsh completed his first tournament triple in June and here, *pour encourager les autres*, is how he did it:

"After getting my handicap down to lowish single figures, the next logical target seemed to be the Triple Peel. I have practised from time to time starting with a ball at hoop 4 and the other 3 balls near hoop 3 (4-back) but had never succeeded, although I had come fairly close a couple of times. I had been on the CA triple peel course run by Cliff Jones in April, and while I had thoroughly enjoyed the course I didn't think I would be able to put the main points into practice quite so soon. The main learning points from the course were not so much the actual mechanics of the triple peel but the need to play short, smooth accurate shots.

I entered the B level Advanced tournament (handicaps 2-8) at Roehampton in June, playing off a handicap of 2.5. The lawns were in excellent condition, very evenly paced and the hoops were not, it must be said, a massive challenge.

The game had gone back and forth a bit and had reached the stage where my opponent had taken blue to 4-back with black for hoop 2, and set up a rush to hoop 2 for black, south of hoop 2 near the west boundary with red (for hoop 1) near the east boundary north of hoop 4

and yellow (for 4-back) by the peg, a sort of reverse diagonal spread.

After much thought I lifted red and shot from B baulk at the opponents balls and hit. I then put black to hoop 2 while trying to get a rush on blue to hoop 1. This failed dismally but left me with a rush on blue to yellow by the peg, which I then rushed to hoop 1. After running hoop 1, I put yellow to about half way between hoops 3 and 4 and then blue towards hoop 3 while making hoop 2 off black. I think it was at this stage that I thought that I could try a peel at 4-back.

I didn't manage to get a rush on yellow and in the croquet stroke only managed to get yellow on to the wire of 4-back while planning to make hoop 3 off blue. Yellow, being stuck on the wire, was obviously not in peeling position, but I then played probably my favourite shot of the break. In approaching hoop 3 off blue I managed to get blue to just knock yellow off the wire and into peeling position.

I peeled yellow and put blue, the escape ball, to hoop 5, but then after running hoop 4 I only managed to rush black halfway back up the lawn. I decided to take a risk and split black to 6 while going to yellow, just ensuring that I didn't let 4-back get in the way of roqueting yellow. Yellow was rushed north of hoop 6, followed by a take-off to Blue at hoop 5.

After making the hoop Blue was rushed east of hoop 6 and sent to 1-back while going to Black. A split shot allowed me to rush Yellow nearer to hoop 6 and peel it after running the hoop, after which Black was rushed north of hoop 6 and sent to 2-back while going to Blue at 1-back.

Blue was roqueted after running 1-back and sent short of 3-back while getting behind Yellow. I then rushed Yellow between rover and 2-back and split it to behind rover in going to Black at 2-back. The positions of Blue and Yellow made it impossible to try and peel Yellow en route to 3-back, but I was able to put Yellow in a good position for the peel before getting to rover myself.

The rover peel was successful and I had an escape ball allowing me to rush back to the peg and peg out by which time I could hardly hold the mallet. Final score +16TP. I have since had quite a few goes at another TP without success, but the quest for more will continue next season."

* Peel, after Walter H. Peel, one of the earliest Open Championship winners (1868, 1870 and 1871) and founder of the United All England Croquet Association in 1896. The Peel Memorials, annual handicap tournaments for men and women, were instituted in 1898 in his honour.

The next few months – an update

Members can continue to play on the existing lawns over the next few months, but you must take the lawns as you find them. As the park is now closed to the public during the week you should sign in and out at Reception if playing Monday to Friday. Our Licence covering the use of the old site expires on March 31st 2013, by which time we have to "leave the Premises clean and tidy and remove all property". We hope to have cleared up some time before the deadline.

Equipment will be moved up to the pavilion and container as and when we can. This will include tables, chairs, crockery etc., together with some of the spare balls and mallets. The mowers and other machinery will be moved later when the container has been moved to its intended position.



The container in its temporary position, with racking and ramp.

The disposal of our old buildings will be discussed with EH over the next weeks. The building behind the old pavilion can be taken apart and we may have a use for it on the new site, swapping it for the existing garage. We are not planning to retain the old pavilion itself, so if any member knows of an individual or organisation which could make use of it please let us know. It should be pointed out that it was constructed from scratch on-site and is not pre-fabricated. The small shed will be retained for as long as possible for storage before being demolished.

We will be making use of some of the paving slabs on the new site, and there is a tentative arrangement with EH whereby if we can stack the remaining slabs on pallets they will be able to find a space where they can be stored.

The pavilion at the new site needs some work done on it and we will be discussing this with the other clubs who share its use over the coming months. There are numerous opportunities for any member with DIY skills and we will advertise these as and when they arise. As the time to quit the old site approaches we shall need to take down the old buildings. This is bound to be labour-intensive and we would be grateful if you can respond when the call comes.

One, two or maybe three of the new lawns should be available for play by April 1st 2013 (Easter Monday). At the moment it's difficult to be specific as to playing arrangements for next season as they depend on a number of things over and above the state of the new lawns. The intention is that members should be able to collect equipment needed for play from the pavilion without needing to fetch anything from the container. We are hoping that by the start of the season the pavilion will have had its existing front doors replaced by new ones fitted with a keypad lock. We have salvaged a metal cupboard which is now inside the pavilion and fitted with a combination padlock. This will be used to store whatever we can cram into it and will also contain a key to the lean-to storage area at the back of the pavilion. This space is currently waiting to have a door and lock fitted to it, and what it ultimately contains will

depend on an assessment of its security once the job is done. Ultimately it should be possible for you to get access to any playing equipment without the need for individual keys, in much the same way as you have done in the past.

As regards tournaments and matches next season we are taking an optimistic view and have already put forward our tournament dates for inclusion in next year's CA Fixtures Book. Note that there will be a half a dozen days during the season when play will not be possible because of access restrictions associated with EH events – these are Sat 20/Sun 21 April, Sun 26/Mon 27 May and Sun 25/Mon 26 August.

Further updates will be provided in due course, and if anyone has any questions let me know and we will do our best to answer them. There are bound to be some problems along the way – moving house is acknowledged to be one of life's more traumatic experiences – but we could do worse than adopt Napoleon's maxim "On s'engage et puis on voit", i.e. get in and see what happens.



With best wishes for Christmas and the New Year

John Bevington

13 December 2012