



newsletter

Tom Anderson cracks Easter Egg

This pre-season pipe-opener took place on April 20, managed as ever by Rod Ashwell. Seven one-hour games, starting at 1-back and played to advanced rules, with hot chili and rice (and liberal amounts of red wine) for lunch. 10 players took part, the winner being Tom Anderson. George Collin and Howard Bottomley tied for second place. Great fun all round.

Longman Cup successes

The Longman Cup is a national club knock-out competition played to handicap rules with a recommended time limit of 3½ hours. It is designed to give higher handicapped players an opportunity for competitive play - hence the doubles matches and the combined handicap rule (see the Leicester report).

Preliminary round: **Wrest Park 4 Edgbaston 1**

Played at home on May 11 in foul weather, this year's campaign got off to a good start, the only defeat being Terry and John's loss by 1 in the afternoon doubles.

Terry Mahoney (4) and David Woolley (11) beat Noel Davis (10) and Joan Smith (14) +2 (T)

John Bevington (4½) and Peter Smith (11) beat Tom Sampson (12) and Rosemary Gregory (12) +9(T)

John and Terry lost to Noel and Tom -1

David beat Joan +13

Peter beat Rosemary +2(T)

First round: **Wrest Park 5 Leicester 0**

In 1990 we lost to Leicester in the final, so this win was sweet revenge. Terry and Peter's absence saw George Collin return to the team along with Paul Sharrock. Mathematicians will note that we bordered on the edge of ineligibility - the team's combined handicap has to be 24 or above. The game was at home, on June 8.

George Collin (3½) and Paul Sharrock (8) beat Gary Yates (5) and John Riddington (16) +6

John Bevington (3½) and David Woolley (9) beat Richard Whiting (10) and John Hansen (14) +11

George and John beat Gary and Richard +10

Paul beat John H +2 (T)

David beat John R +12

Inter Counties tournament - Bedfordshire miss out on promotion

The centenary edition of the Inter Counties was held on May 23-27. The format is advanced rules doubles with time limits of 3 hours. Each county has three pairs, the order of the pairs being determined by combined handicap. The lawns at Southwick and Compton were smooth and fast and took a bit of getting used to, but too many opportunities were missed and we didn't really do ourselves justice. Our most reliable players were the new pairing of John Wheeler and Terry Mahoney. Had Jon Watson and John Bevington's two -1 defeats been turned into wins we would have been promoted, but as it is we shall be staying in the second division, where we shall be joined next season by Essex(!), Northumberland and Nottingham. Northampton won the second division and were promoted with Berkshire and Sussex. The champions and winners of the first division were Avon with nine wins, followed by Surrey and Lancashire with seven wins each. The full results are available from John Wheeler.

Wins: Sussex (3-0), Herts (3-0), CA Centenary (3-0), Dublin (2-1), Suffolk (2-1)

Losses: Kent (1-2), Yorks (1-2), Northants (0-3), Berks (1-2), Warwicks (1-2)

Team: John Wheeler (7 wins from 10 games), Terry Mahoney (7/10), Tom Anderson (6/10), Jon Watson (4/10), Howard Bottomley (4/10), John Bevington (3/5), George Collin (2/5)

The team and supporters, suitably kitted out in borrowed blazers and Silsoe ties, attended a highly enjoyable dinner on the Sunday night to celebrate the centenary of the tournament. Many thanks to Jon Watson for providing the wine.



L-R: Tom Anderson, Terry Mahoney, John Wheeler, Jon Watson, Howard Bottomley, George Collin, John Bevington

Mary Rose - Colchester go under

The Mary Rose is a national club knock-out played to advanced rules. Players must have a handicap of 1 or more, and there are no time limits.

First round: **Wrest Park 7 Colchester 0**

This match was played at Colchester on June 14, where rain threatened but never actually arrived. Although the scoreline looks impressive the handicaps reveal that we were up against a relatively weak team.

John Wheeler (1) and Eric Audsley (1) beat Paul7

Stephenson (2½) and Chris Sheen (3½) +13

Howard Bottomley (2) beat Ron Harris (7) +9

John Bevington (3½) beat John Williams (10) +7

John W beat Paul +20

Eric beat Chris +16

Howard beat John +14

John B beat Ron +9

Open Days

After a concerted publicity campaign, with £200 worth of newspaper advertising, posters everywhere and a mention on 3 Counties radio, the Open Days took place on May 31 and June 1. The weather was reasonably kind, although strong winds on Sunday took their toll of the display board (now repaired by John Wheeler). Many thanks to all those who came down to help, and even more thanks to those who attended. 20 forms were completed, with 14 individuals or couples expressing an interest in attending a coaching course and six considering becoming members. Judy Kitchiner wasted no time and signed a cheque on the spot - welcome to the club.

We will be needing volunteers to help with the coaching course running until the end of June, both on Sunday afternoons from 2.30-5 and on Thursday evenings from 6-8.30. Please make every effort to help with this and let Tom know when you will be available. There is a CA Coaching Manual and some sheets giving a suggested programme for four lessons in the pavilion, and there are also copies of Know The Game, the CA Short Croquet Handbook and the Basic Laws for sale at £3.99, 75p and £1 respectively.

Beds and Herts League kicks off

This is a regional competition played to handicap rules between teams in the Beds and Herts area of the East Anglian Federation. Our first match took place at home against Cassiobury (Watford) on June 15 and resulted in a 5-1 win. Details will follow in the next newsletter.

English Heritage news

- EH have kindly lent us a substantial A-frame display board which has already seen service at the May tournament and the Open Days.
- It has been suggested that there is a tripartite meeting early next year so that EH, Silsoe Institute and ourselves can exchange information on any events we have planned.

All England Handicap - hurry up!

Please note that we shall be staging the area final again this year, the dates being September 6/7. It is therefore essential that our own internal competition to decide our entrant for the area final is completed by the end of August.

Free copies of the Croquet Gazette

Every year the Croquet Association give away one copy of the Gazette to each member of the club who is not also a member of the CA. I assume that this is by way of a come-on to encourage you to join the CA. There are copies of the May 1997 issue for Peter Cox, Vic Rees, Judy Kitchiner, Dorothy Craggs (for Silsoe WI) and A. N. Other. Please collect them from the pavilion.

Diary

- Saturday June 21 - Beds and Herts League vs Meldreth (home)
- Saturday June 21/Sunday June 22 - Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee Centenary celebration at Wrest Park - details from English Heritage.
- Thursday 26 June - Committee meeting
- Sunday June 28 - CA Centenary tournament

May I conclude by welcoming all our new and potential members and point out that this newsletter isn't just for match reports. If you have something you wish to contribute, let me have it and it will appear. We could, for example, have a questions and answers feature, coaching tips, interpretation of the laws, what to look for when buying a mallet and so on.

On the subject of mallets, I have re-gripped two old club mallets using black cycle handlebar tape, which comes in lengths long enough to do a complete handle. Available from all good cycle shops from about £4, it comes in a variety of colours and patterns. Something to try if you are losing your grip.

John Bevington

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