



newsletter

Advanced Tournament - 22/23

August

by the Manager (with minimal editing)

Well, it started dry! On Saturday the lawns were fast and rolly, and the freshly set hoops gave lots of trouble to the unwary. Interestingly the wider (comparatively speaking) hoops were not significantly easier than the rest (Eric please note). John Wheeler reckons it ain't the size but the firmness which matters. The pissoir gets half built in the morning.

It warms up in the afternoon and some of the top lawns became very tricky, so it was no surprise that most of the games went to time (Three hour limits had been imposed). The rehearsals for the evening concert were in full swing, the audience began drifting in and later on Mike Hammelev almost assaulted two members of the public for pinching chairs, but fortunately was prevented from attacking Pandora Wheeler. Later there is a panic phone call to Eric as I realise there are no prizes to present (and this in spite of the committee meeting). Eric is out. Oh, s#-t!

Overnight rain slows the lawns down to an easy pace, in fact so easy it is hard to adjust. Still no sign of any trophies - Judy suggests alcohol. I assume she means to give away, not to get drunk and ignore situation. Panic phone call home to summon suitable prizes. The morning games again mostly go to time apart from Mike Hammelev's, who is beaten in an hour and a half. Plenty of lawns free, but no opponent. Lunchtime is spent working on the last round. Commit managerial hara-kiri and draw self against Tom Anderson who wants a quick finish as he and Judy are due at a wedding anniversary party in Southend later in the day. The rain commences, and we agree not to bother about the game after all.

The rain is getting worse. Dejected Louise Bradforth beats Terry Mahoney +21TP and wins her gold award. Her timing is excellent, finishing just before it starts to rain really hard and also just before her already wet trousers become completely transparent. Still, nothing like a first tournament TP to cheer you up. The final, between Jeremy Dyer and David Kibble, ends up as a one ball game and is concluded in Jeremy's favour just after half past two. The rain is now heavier than ever and large pools are expanding and merging into one another. Call players in for early tea and make further panic call home begging for bottles asap. Rain pouring down outside, atmosphere inside hut reminiscent of crowded Turkish bath. The soprano (whose girth was not observed) joins the orchestral rehearsal. We get the hint, but when the strains of the Blue Danube waft across the lawns we decide the concert organiser is taking the piss.

It is now three o'clock, and I decide to hold the prize giving anyway before everyone drifts away. Am just

about to give Jeremy a virtual bottle when Sue and son arrive with the real thing. Rabbit pulled from hat just in time - I just hope the prizewinners aren't teetotal. (Young Stephen must be getting some funny ideas about Sunday afternoon picnics, being wrapped up at a moment's notice and heading off into the pouring rain with nothing but two bottles of wine - Ed).

Wind down and clear up - the lawns are strewn with balls from abandoned games. Woodwork is collected and the hoops lifted out. The holes fill up with water in seconds. The pissoir (still only half built) is dismantled. Discuss triple peel failures, e.g. completing all peels in two turns (peelus interruptus) and completing all the peels but failing to peg out (Catholic triple - pulling out at the last moment).

Another year, another tournament. Somehow between us we slipped up on this one!

Match results

Beds/Herts League vs Enfield (away)

15 August

Won 5-1

Wrest Park	H'cap	Enfield	H'cap	WP score
John Bevington	3½	Basil Lawrence	14	+4(T)
Peter Newman	18D17	Joan Lawrence	20D17	
Peter Berry	10	Freida January	20D17	+12(T)
Tim Brewer	16	Wendy Spencer Smythe	20D17	
John Bevington	3½	Basil Lawrence	14	-15
Peter Berry	10	Wendy Spencer Smythe	20	+7(T)
Tim Brewer	16	Joan Lawrence	20	+7(T)
Peter Newman	18	Freida January	20	+4(T)

A first visit to Enfield for all of us. John and Peter B arrived early enough to head into Enfield in search of breakfast and found a small cafe with excellent egg and bacon sandwiches. The two lawns are in a secluded corner of Bush Hill Park and have been converted from what used to be a putting green, so there are a few dips and slopes but nothing to worry about unduly. The lawns are surrounded by some fine shrubs which have been infested with a number of barbarous blackberry canes. A clean sweep was prevented by Basil, using his bisques intelligently against John, who had managed to get one ball round but then failed to hit in when it mattered.

Mary Rose vs Parkstone (home)

15 August

Won 6-1

Wrest Park	H'cap	Parkstone	H'cap	WP score
Eric Audsley	1	R Edwards	1	+15
Howard Bottomley	½	J Simmonds	1½	
George Collin	2½	I Scott	3	+11
Rod Ashwell	2½	K Priestley	4½	+20
Eric Audsley	1	J Simmonds	1½	+16
Howard Bottomley	½	R Edwards	1	+5
Rod Ashwell	2½	I Scott	3	+11
George Collin	2½	K Priestley	4½	-4

Those who read the last newsletter will realise that Howard has become a victim of his own success and by lowering his handicap has eliminated himself from the team from the final. To those who might wonder why he was playing in this match off ½ I do know that there is a rule that says that you can still play if your handicap has only changed within a certain time before the due date of the match. Anyway, it was a great win and recompense for last year's defeat. Next stop is the final at Cheltenham on Saturday 3 October, and supporters will be very welcome.

Other events

- Many congratulations to Irene Davis, who single-handedly organised a golf croquet evening on Tuesday 18 August. The weather was fine, the event was well attended, everyone enjoyed themselves and there was a write-up in the local paper, as well as a welcome boost to club funds.
- On Monday 24 August we had a visit from eight members of the Dunstable Ladies Circle for a croquet evening followed by supper in the Star & Garter. This is the sixth group we have entertained this year, the others being Hitchin Tangent, Ampthill Ladies Circle, Ampthill Tangent, Ampthill 41 Club and Luton Chiltern Rotary. Many thanks to all the club members who have helped out on these occasions, which have raised at least £120. As these requests from outside groups appear to be proliferating, can I suggest that at the next committee meeting we consider the following:
 - increasing charges, e.g. £3 per head.
 - devising a format which could be written down and used as a guideline for members to use when looking after the visitors.
 - using a short lawn which can be set up quickly using wire hoops. Beginners are interested in Association croquet but find a full size lawn too intimidating.
- A number of local NHS directors and other executives came for a demonstration and some hands-on practice on Friday 11 Sept as part of a client event organised by Janine Smith of Harvest Ltd., a human resources consultancy based at Wrest Park. John Bevington, Peter Smith and Peter Berry gave them all a chance to have a go and demonstrated 4-ball breaks, which was followed by an invitation to the house for a glass of wine.

Craft Fair

The annual craft fair took place over the August Bank Holiday weekend, and a large number of club members helped out in manning the desk, giving tuition to members of the public and playing demonstration games. I can't vouch for what happened on Saturday and Sunday, but Monday saw good weather and a good crowd, and I gather we took about £150 together with a number of names who may be interested in taking up membership. Many thanks to everyone who assisted, and especially to Tom and Judy for the loan of extra mallets and to Eric for the loan of the Institute megaphone which was used for commentating on the demonstration games.

Internal competitions

The Ashwell Cup (our All England Handicap qualifier) was won by Terry Mahoney, and the Archer Cup by Tim Brewer, who eliminated the need for a final by winning both halves of the draw and won all his games by substantial margins. Congratulations to them both. The Steel Cup provided an upset when Rod Ashwell lost to Steve Jones, who then lost to Jon Watson in one semi-final. The other semi-final was won by Howard Bottomley after he had pegged Rod out, but not before Rod did an outstanding hit-in by playing from B baulk and running penultimate cleanly to hit Howard's ball behind the peg.

All England Area Final - 5/6 Sept

The usual Thursday night gathering in the Star & Garter was enlivened when Eric appeared with his laptop. Was the card school about to be revolutionised by a new scoring system? It turned out that he had come to instruct George Collin in the program for running the area final as a Swiss. There was some confusion on Saturday when it became apparent that the names on the printed sheets were in a different order to those in the computer, but this was satisfactorily resolved by manually cross-checking with pencil and paper. The 10 contestants struggled through a wet Saturday and dull Sunday and the two winners who go through to the national final were Richard Smith from St. Albans (who won all his games and has plunged from 18 to 14) and John Gibbon from Watford whose only loss was to Richard.

Forthcoming events

- 26/27 September - All England Handicap National Final
- 3 October (Cheltenham) - Mary Rose Final

John Bevington

17 September 1998