



newsletter

1999 Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be held at 8pm on Thursday 11 March in the upstairs room at the Star&Garter in Silsoe. Please come along if you possibly can as it is your best opportunity to have a say about the running of the club. The provisional agenda is as follows:

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of 1998 AGM and matters arising
3. Reports: **Chairman**
Secretary
Treasurer
Tournament Secretary
Team Captain
Groundsman
Publicity Officer
Development Officer
Equipment Officer
4. Election of officers
5. Club activities for 1999
6. Catering
7. Any other business

The minutes of the 1998 AGM were included with the April 1998 edition of the newsletter. I am not intending to reprint them here but will have a copy available at the AGM if anyone wants one. Such reports as I have available are enclosed with or are part of this newsletter. If you cannot attend but want a topic discussed please let me know and I can raise it under AOB.

Committee Meeting - 28 Jan

A meeting whose main purpose was to discuss arrangements for the AGM would not normally be expected to go on for over three hours, but so it proved. It was suggested that, among other things:

- players in matches might pay a small match fee
- teams should include a wider range of players
- we purchase a more robust leaf sweeper
- the club create its own web site
- links with schools should be developed
- players learn the Laws
- we consider a code of conduct
- we need more referees
- we make a contribution to Silsoe's Millennium time capsule (contact John Wheeler for details)
- recruitment should not be neglected
- we obtain advance notice of English Heritage events for the following year
- fees for visiting groups be increased

More on some of these later.

Secretary and Publicity Officer's Report for the AGM

The most significant event of 1998 has to be the long-awaited decision of the Institute to allow daytime weekday play. This could be a great benefit in that it allows us to advertise the club as being "open all hours" and may attract people who were put off by only being able to play in the evenings and at weekends. We will be planning a weekday course for the Bedford branch of the University of the Third Age (U3A) this year, and it is likely that we will gain some members as a result.

There is an obvious problem. As it is unlikely that those new members wishing to play during the day are already competent players we will need existing members who are not working during the day to volunteer as coaches, and we do not have very many who fall into this category. If you think you might be able to act as a daytime coach please let us know.

During 1998 we had a number of visits from groups such as Round Table, Tangent and other clubs. These groups organise weekly or monthly activities for their members, and croquet evenings seem to be becoming more popular. They don't require a great deal of effort on our part: some basic coaching in how to hold a mallet, practice in hitting a ball, a bit of golf croquet and a brief description of Association croquet with a demonstration of a four-ball break usually does it. We are unlikely to get any new members as a result, but it does bring in some useful income. This year we will be charging £3 a head for such events.

Publicity has been restricted to poster campaigns arranged through local authority library services. We supply a quantity of posters and they put one up in each of their libraries. This will be repeated in 1999. Any other ideas for publicity would be welcome.

More leaflets were produced courtesy of the Institute's reprographics department, and these are displayed in the house and at tournaments and matches when we remember to get them out. The display board has appeared occasionally - what we really need for this is a large poster which can be laminated so it can withstand the weather. This can be done for about £20 - all we need is agreement on the content of the poster. Samples will be available at the AGM. There has also been a succession of newsletters, and I would welcome member's comments on their form and content. What I would really like are more contributions from members themselves, which could be handwritten, sent on disk (Word or .txt files preferably) or sent as e-mail to jbevin1251@aol.com.

Diary

- The Easter Egg tournament will be on Sunday 11 April. Details from Rod Ashwell (01582 504536).
- There is to be a St. George's Day Festival at Wrest Park on 24/25 April. Outplayer's theory (that this is for the canonisation of our groundsman followed by his chasing the dragon) is fanciful but wrong.
- The dates for our 1999 tournaments are listed on Eric's attached subscription and entry form.
- There is to be a CA Gold Coaching Course at Wrest Park on 8/9 May. This is described in more detail in the January issue of the Gazette. It costs £40, and if you want to know more you are advised to contact Nigel Gray (01462 436430).
- Irene Davis has made a booking for a group visit for Tuesday 8 June.
- The All England Area Final is on 4/5 September. I have told the CA we are willing to stage it if requested but would not like to deprive another club of the opportunity to do so . . . better keep the weekend clear.

Code of conduct

The croquet club is affiliated to the Institute's Sports and Social Club. It is not an independent organisation and has no security of tenure - we do not own the lawns - and its survival depends to a large extent on maintaining good relations with the Institute and English Heritage. We should remember that playing at Wrest Park is a privilege, not a right.

This year the privilege has been extended to allow daytime play on weekdays, so it is perhaps a good time to remind members that we should at all times:

- observe the speed limits when going up and down the drive
- ensure that visiting children and pets are properly supervised and are not a nuisance to others
- be scrupulous about keeping the area around the huts tidy and free of litter
- exercise politeness and diplomacy in any dealings with Institute or EH staff, e.g. security guards

Any comments? Tell us at the AGM.

Know the Laws

One of the points raised at the committee meeting concerned the wish for more members to become referees and ease the burden on those referees we already have (to whom, as ever, much thanks). You may have seen the article on the new refereeing examinations in the January issue of the Gazette, which made the point that *"when a call is made for a referee, it is usually to deal with comparatively simple cases rather than those which require a detailed knowledge of error laws"*, and introduced the idea of a one-day course leading to the qualification of Assistant Referee. Those who baulk at the full referee's course might consider this as an alternative, so if you are interested please tick the box on your subscription form. The minimum requirement for a course is eight players (who could be drawn from a number of clubs.)

Returning to the quote, we could all make life easier for the referees and for ourselves by making an effort to read and understand the Laws, and thus be able to resolve the *"comparatively simple cases"* without recourse to a referee. The section on Customs of the Game in the Laws states that: *"The players act as referees of the game in the absence of a referee in charge"*. Players therefore have a responsibility to become sufficiently familiar with the Laws so that they have the knowledge to resolve the simple cases for themselves. So, if you haven't got a copy of the Laws, why not buy one and read it before the season starts. Those who find the language of the Laws on a par with Finnegans Wake will be glad to know that the CA offer the Laws together with the Commentary on the Laws for £6.50 including p&p.

Serious students may wish to consider this piece by John Riches, which Eric passed on to me via e-mail:

LAWS - QUESTIONS ON RESPONSIBILITY

Those who are not interested in discussing the Laws should read no further.

I have decided to try again to initiate some sensible discussion for the few who I believe are interested in the laws. I appeal to others to refrain from poking fun or ridiculing the comments of those who take the following seriously.

Having used all four balls in his break, Roy has failed in an attempt to run the rover hoop, and his red ball is resting against the east hoop leg wired from blue which is behind the hoop. Yellow is on the yard line near hoop 2 and black is in the 1st corner. In each of the following cases can you say how the game is to be continued, and which balls, if any, Bob has become responsible for?

1. Bob, in trying to hit blue at black, hits the hoop on his final backswing and moves the red ball, but then stops his swing before hitting the blue ball.
2. Suppose instead that Bob, while checking whether red can run the rover hoop, forgets which colours he is playing and plays the red ball, shooting at, and roqueting, the yellow ball.
3. As in (2), Bob attempts to play the wrong ball, but misses the ball and hits the hoop instead, and:
 - (a) in so doing he moves the red ball.
 - (b) in so doing the red ball does not move or shake.
4. Now suppose that Bob is entitled to contact, so he picks up his blue ball and takes croquet from red, going to black. In so doing,
 - (a) he leaves a still red ball, then roquets black before the fault is discovered.
 - (b) he leaves a still red ball, but goes out near black, and Roy, assuming that he will be entitled to a wiring lift with red, waives the fault.
 - (c) he swings at blue but misses both balls completely.
 - (d) he hits the blue ball but touches the red ball with his mallet, causing it to shake.
 - (e) as in (d), but the red ball does not move or shake.
 - (f) he swings at the blue ball, but hits the red ball with his mallet instead, moving both balls.

Here are my answers, which of course do not represent the final authority (responsibility only; you can work out how to continue the game for yourself):

1. Red (but not blue).
2. None.
3. (a) Possibly red (indeterminate - laws are contradictory.)
(b) Red (definitely.)
4. (a) Blue and black (but not red.)
(b) Blue (Roy's assumption was incorrect.)
(c) Blue (but not red.)
(d) Blue and red.
(e) Blue (but not red.)
(f) Blue and red.

Easy, wasn't it, but how many would you have got right as referee in a game? Who still says the law is not an ass?

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Enfield 5085 (*Australia, not Middlesex. Ed.*)
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Wrangler's Christmas Quiz

Wrangler knows of at least two people who were slaving over a hot calculator over Christmas, and offers the following answers:

Total number of hollow-tined holes: 1,172,961
Volume of material removed: 19.3 cubic yards
Weight of material removed: 29.2 tons

Anyone who obtained answers within a gnat's appendage of the above should give themselves a pat on the back. The figure for the weight estimate would be on the high side as the density assumption didn't allow for the fact that part of each core is grass and thatch, which is a lot lighter than soil.

Croquet on your computer

If you have a computer with all the necessary bits you can download a free trial version of a croquet game written by Ian Lines (a previous All England winner and one of last year's visiting finalists). The full version is available from him for £25. Apart from its potential as a game, it might also be useful for demonstration and coaching. You can find it in the Miscellany section of the Oxford University Croquet Club website, whose address is:

<http://users.ox.ac.uk/~croquet>

where you will also find the 1999 CA fixtures list and much more besides.

The CA are also building up a database of club details to publish on their own site (they currently share the Oxford site) and I have passed on the relevant information. It has been suggested that we create our own site, so if you are an HTML expert (or have a copy of PageMill and a scanner) please let us know.

EACF/National Trust events 1999

The East Anglian Croquet Federation, in conjunction with the National Trust, are staging their annual short croquet and golf croquet competitions at various NT properties over the summer. Wrest Park haven't been enthusiastic supporters of these events in the past, usually because our relatively small membership was committed to other events.

As we now have a few more members can I suggest that two people might like to form a team to represent the club for, say, the short croquet event? You do not have to be an expert, it is quite informal, the properties are all worth a look and you get to meet players from other clubs. The dates are as follows (note that the Wrest Park team would play on **one** of the first four dates):

Short Croquet - 2 small lawns at each venue. 4 teams of 2 players at each venue. Entry fee £5 per team.

27 June	Long Melford
11 July	Anglesey Abbey
25 July	Anglesey Abbey
1 August	Oxburgh
5 Sept	Ickworth (Final)

Golf croquet - 2 small lawns at each venue. Up to 16 teams (doubles). Entry fee £2 per team (doubles).

10 July	Anglesey Abbey	Doubles
5 Sept	Ickworth	Singles

Tom and Judy Anderson, the unflagging organisers, can answer all your questions (01234 781783) and I will bring the entry forms to the AGM.

News from the CA

The latest envelope contained the following:

- a copy of the February 1999 issue of the CA Noticeboard, in which we are invited to respond to the recommendations of the CA's Constitution Working Party which were circulated with the December issue. Responses are due to the CA Office by 6 March. Forgive me for not having circulated them (they were sent on 15 December, not a very convenient time), but they are in the January issue of the Gazette. The club is not planning a formal response but feel free to respond as an individual if you so wish.
- a copy of the booklet *Croquet Lawns: Their establishment, improvement and maintenance* by John Beech, which will be left in the file in the pavilion. I do not intend to elaborate on the contents owing to the controversial nature of the subject, but there is a useful Appendix on surveying court levels in which we might be interested.
- a request for information concerning any CA property that may be in the club's possession. Does anyone know of any articles we have that fall into this category? There is (as usual) a form to complete which I will bring to the AGM.

English Heritage events 1999

2 April	Wrest Park opens
24/25 April	St. George's Day Festival (contact Jane Dobre 0171 973 3458)
15/16 May	1750s battle
29-31 May	Gardens Show
5/6 June	Falcons and Gundogs
12/13 June	Art Exhibition (in aid of NSPCC)
26 June	Silsoe Drama Club production
27 June	Redbornstoke Morris Dancers
10 July	Jazz on a Summer Evening
11 July	Last Night of the Wrst park Proms
28-30 August	Craft Show
31 October	Wrest Park closes

And finally

I have enclosed Eric's current copy of the membership list, which is as accurate as he can make it but not as accurate as it could be. Could you please check your entry and let him know the following details if they are not already present and correct:

- whether or not you are a member of the CA
- your current handicap
- your address **and postcode**
- your car (make, model, colour and registration)
- phone numbers
- e-mail address (if applicable)

As a starter for ten, my own entry should have a car registration of H557 RWU and an e-mail address of jbevin1251@aol.com

John Bevington

22 February 1999