



newsletter

Advanced Tournament - 3-5 July

On Friday morning a host of spectators appeared. They turned out to be a touring party of Dutch farmers from Friesland and stood close to the boundary, oblivious to the risk to their ankles of long shots at any balls just over a yard in front of them. When they realised what was going on they got into the spirit of the thing and cried "Missed!" if the ball failed to hit. On the other hand they may be been speaking in Dutch and the word could have been "Mest!". This has a more rustic meaning and might have been more appropriate if the miss was a bad one.

Manager Eric Audsley's random draw had matched him with David Openshaw for his first game. David had a TP going but couldn't get pink through the jaws of rover, so he left it and pegged out white. Eric hit pink out of the jaws and went to peg on a 3 ball break, then crept round with the second ball. David had plenty of shots which all missed, and the game ended when Eric was for rover and laid up on the side boundary. David shot from the other side and hit - rover. David made up for this by beating Mike Percival +24 TP in the next round, and in his last game of the day started a triple after going to 4b on the third turn. Howard Bottomley got in and pegged out David's forward ball, and was well set when he stuck in penult. David hit and finished.

Graham Fowler made up for lost time when he arrived with a quick +26 win, but on Saturday morning he was down to play David Openshaw. There were some visitors from Yorkshire watching the game, and Graham had the painful duty of describing David's creation of a perfect cross peg leave, which, unless Graham hit, would very probably result in his losing the game. And so it proved. But Graham had the last laugh as he won Block A (-1½ - 2) with eight wins out of nine. Next were David and Howard with 7/9 and the Northampton pair of Lionel Tibble and Nick Evans each with 6/9. Block B (2½ - 6) was a walk-over for Mark Roberts, who nearly had a triple of his own against John Bevington which failed at 3b with two peels done. He won all seven of his games playing with confidence and style and is clearly a player to watch. Struggling in his wake were John, George Collin, Peter Stansfield and Alan Edwards with four wins each.

I've saved the best till last. No need to dwell on the weather (dull) or the number of triples (at least five). On Sunday morning we had some real drama as a result of the three hour time limits, and the hero was Rodney Parkins (4½), who was making his first appearance at Wrest Park and playing in Block B against Peter Stansfield. When time was called Peter was on 2b and rover and Rodney on 4 and 6 - a deficit of 10 points. With his last shot Rodney played the ball for hoop 4 and hit in from 12 yards. He then rolled up to the hoop from yards away and made it, and in the next 40 minutes carefully went round, peeling the hoop 6 ball as if it was

for penult (!) when for penult himself, made rover, went back and did the hoop 6 peel the right way and finally pegged his ball out to win +1 on time amid loud and richly deserved applause. Truly a star turn.

Match results

Beds/Herts League vs Watford (away)

21 June

Lost 2-3

Wrest Park	H'cap	St Albans	H'cap	WP score
George Collin		Arthur Reed		-3(T)
Peter Smith		David Drazin		
David Parsons		Robert Bateson		-4(T)
George Collin		Arthur Reed		+15
Peter Smith		Robert Bateson		+20
David Parsons		David Drazin		-12(T)

Mary Rose vs Letchworth (home)

11 July

Won 6-1

Wrest Park	H'cap	Letchworth	H'cap	WP score
Eric Audsley	1	Ian Mantle	2½	+22
Howard Bottomley	1	Tony Parry	3½	
George Collin	2½	David Harley	4	-15
Rod Ashwell	2½	David Tutt	5	+13
Eric Audsley	1	Ian Mantle	2½	+5
Howard Bottomley	1	Tony Parry	3½	+24TP
Rod Ashwell	2½	David Harley	4	+24
George Collin	2½	David Tutt	5	+13

A convincing win in the doubles is especially valuable as it gives both partners extra confidence for the singles in the afternoon, and this was borne out as Howard continued his excellent form with his first triple for three years and the team cruised to the next round against either Dyffryn or Parkstone. It would be nice to have a chance of revenge against Parkstone, who narrowly beat us in last year's semi-final - the only worry is that Howard's form is such that by the time it occurs his handicap may be down to ½ which would make him ineligible (competitors in the Mary Rose must have a handicap of 1 or more).

Inter Club vs Northampton (home)

12 July

Lost 3-4

Wrest Park	H'cap	Northampton	H'cap	WP score
Howard Bottomley	1	Brian Hallam	-1	-11
George Collin	2½	John Anstey	½	
Terry Mahoney	3½	Philip Shaw	4	-11
John Bevington	3½	Nick Evans	1	+11
Howard Bottomley	1	Brian Hallam	-1	-5
George Collin	2½	John Anstey	½	+7
Terry Mahoney	3½	Nick Evans	1	-22
John Bevington	3½	Philip Shaw	4	+12

When you consider that our scratch side was giving away six bisques the match turned out to be a damn close-run thing, and it only slipped away when Brian hit the last lift when for peg and rover against Howard's rover and penult. There had been a concert the previous evening which meant that the lawns had to be cleared of fragments of cardboard shell cases before play began, and conditions in the morning were appalling - the rain and accumulated water made it impossible to hit a ball more than 20 yards. The afternoon brightened a little, but a final downpour as the match finished drove the players and the new members back to the pavilion for reviving cups of tea.

Longman Cup vs Norwich (home)

26 July

Lost 2-3

Wrest Park	H'cap	Norwich	H'cap	WP score
John Bevington	3½	Terry Sparks	5	-1(T)
Peter Newman	18D17	Feargal Smith	14	
Terry Mahoney	3½	Neil Chalmers	8	+9
Peter Berry	11	William Windham	12	
John Bevington	3½	Terry Sparks	5	-12
Terry Mahoney	3½	Neil Chalmers	8	
Peter Berry	11	William Windham	12	+10
Peter Newman	18	Feargal Smith	14	-20

We started off on the wrong foot when John entered Peter Newman's handicap as 16 instead of 18 - this would have given us a whole bisque in the morning doubles instead of just a half, and Peter would have had two more for his game in the afternoon. The error was not spotted until the match was over, but whether it would have made a significant difference is questionable. Peter and John had their noses in front for much of their game, but a late rally by Terry and Feargal left John needing to make rover to tie, and the take-off to get the rush was both off line and off the lawn. In the (late) afternoon games Peter Berry had a good win against William in a game which included a number of spectacular shots, but Peter Newman struggled against Feargal. In the doubles Neil raced round to 3-back with the aid of two bisques, John then handed Terry a break after sticking in hoop 5. After some less than scintillating play Terry and Neil had got to peg and rover when our Terry, planning to get close to partner near corner 2, wedged himself in hoop 2 leaving a fraction of the ball to aim at. John's two attempts to prise him out failed, and so it ended.

Forthcoming events

- Mon Aug 10 - visit from Ampthill Tangent. 15-20 expected at 6.30, £2.50/head confirmed. Contact is Margaret Hatcher (01582 882282).
- Tue Aug 11 - visit from Ampthill 41 Club. 15-20 expected, time not fixed. £2.50/head confirmed. Contact is Mr. Hastings (01462 813759).
- Fri Aug 14 - Golf croquet evening, which is being arranged by Irene Davis (01525 210260)

Weekday play - an answer from EH

English Heritage have stated that they are keen to open the park during the week as well as at weekends but there are presently no plans to do so. A chance meeting with Siân Brown during the July tournament revealed that the ownership of Wrest Park is currently the subject of a dispute between two Government Departments, namely the Department of Trade and Industry and the Department of Culture, Media and Sport. Can we look forward to seeing Margaret Beckett and Chris Smith (or whoever is in charge following the impending reshuffle) fighting it out on lawn 1 for the ultimate prize?

Sunday coaching sessions

The weather has not always been ideal and occasionally there seem to have been more trainers than trainees, but we hope that the sessions have been helpful and thanks to everyone who has participated in whatever capacity. As a result there is now a cake and biscuit surplus, so investigate the cupboards if your opponent is engaged on a long break and you start to feel peckish.

And don't forget - if you are a relative beginner and want to get some practical help with half-rolls, working out the angles in croquet strokes or bisque management, then do please feel free to ring up any member to arrange a coaching session or a friendly game.

Small but imperfectly formed

Having ordered four sets of metal clips from the CA (the price was comparable with plastic, and at least they wouldn't break quite so easily) and eased the springs with a judicious application of WD40, we came to baptise them at the last Longman Cup match only to find that they won't expand enough to actually clip on to the hoops. Merchantable quality? I don't think so. Plastic replacements are on their way, and so is a letter to the CA equipment committee.

John Bevington

27 July 1998