



Reigate Priory CC Newsletter Summer 2011

Secretary's report – Geoff Gunton

The season seems to be racing past this year and I hope you are enjoying your croquet. The deadline for club games has now past and Neil is sorting out arrangements for Finals Weekend on August 19-21. I hope you will support this enthusiastically; it will culminate on the Sunday afternoon with the final of the Vulliamy Salver, followed by presentations of all the trophies. If you do not have time to watch more than one final, I suggest you watch the final of one of the events you entered.

This revives a tradition that lapsed a few years ago; the trophies will then be sent for engraving and will be re-presented at the AGM in November.

If you did not enter a competition this year, you should consider doing so for next year. Neil will be inviting entries in the not too distant future and it gives a focus for your play to have a competition to keep up with. And you will meet club members who you may not otherwise encounter.

Thank you to those who have supported our attendance at the Priory Park so far this year. The weather has not always been favourable, but those who have come along have had a good time. There are two more sessions planned: the morning of August 13 and the morning of Saturday September 24.

Thanks, too, to those who supported the afternoon at Gatton Park, when the Mayor opened the restored parterre. It rained all afternoon and there were few visitors, although the mayor came and had a go.





I expect there is a note elsewhere about our autumn outing to Standen on September 10th. This is while our lawn is closed for its autumn maintenance. Standen is a lovely National Trust property near East Grinstead; it is a gem of the Arts & Crafts movement and we were made most welcome last year so do please support that expedition.

Secretary's Choice Club Day: New date – Geoff Gunton

The Secretary's Choice Club Day was due to be held on Saturday October 1st. Unfortunately, I will be on holiday that day so it has been rescheduled to Saturday September 17th. This is the first day after the autumn maintenance, so the lawn should be in first class condition.

I will put a sign-up sheet in the clubhouse shortly; it may be there by the time you read this. I have not decided what variety of croquet we will play that day, but you can be assured that it will not be Association. Or Golf. But there will be a prize.

Clubhouse Phone – Geoff Gunton

The clubhouse phone is now an incoming-calls-only phone. When I checked the airtime balance a few weeks ago, there was none left, yet the cash in the jar represented only 20% of the airtime that had been used since my previous check, in autumn 2010. I have not topped it up again.

My main purpose in providing a phone was to make it possible to contact the clubhouse, and that is still possible, so it will continue to serve its main function.

However, I often find that it has been turned off, although it will only work if it is kept turned on. This may be because the on/off button is the same as the end-call button; if you keep it pressed for too long, the phone will turn off. So if you answer the phone, when you end the call, just press the button briefly, to end the call without accidentally turning the phone off.

I will be amending the notice in due course to indicate this change in its use.

Competitions Secretary's report – Neil Coote

Well done to everyone for finishing all their games on time. This was more of a challenge than normal this year as the end date has been brought forward to accommodate the earlier final weekend.

I have confirmed the competition results, which Geoff has emailed to the club members, so that the semi-finals can now start.

I will now start to arrange the order of play with those involved and post this out to the members when finalised. As Geoff has mentioned earlier, all the trophies will be presented on Sunday afternoon, so all you winners remember to come along and be presented! Will the present trophy holders please make arrangements to return their trophies beforehand. Martin will be there with his camera and notepad to record the event and Freda will be providing afternoon tea.

In addition, on the finals weekend Martin and I are always appreciative of match reports for the newsletter, as you can see examples of that in this issue, so feel free to send something in for a match you watched. Also required are referees. This is not an onerous task, sometimes the competitors need an independent view of a difficult shot so any low handicapper in the audience should be able to assist in this task.

I will also try and get the forms out soon for next years comps, so it gives you a chance to play a few games this year before the weather breaks, and ease the burden next year!

BBQ Day Finals

All England Golf Final - Laurence Hughes

With Jean Brading (handicap 12) taking on John Bristow (5) there was a positive fence of bisque sticks for this best of three match. The first game was very close with neither player pulling ahead by more than one hoop till they were 4-all. Jean was using her extra shots to good effect and keeping John very much on his toes. However at that point John really found his game and ran in to win 7-4. John's form remained top notch in the next game and he moved quickly to a 5-1 lead at which point Jean played her last extra shot, and as sometimes happens, without the "should I shouldn't I" question, played more freely and pulled back to 5-4. However, it was not enough and John ran out again 7-4.

An interesting match played in the very best of spirits and enjoyed by the, sadly pretty meagre, audience.

All England Association Final – Geoff Gunton

This was played before the barbecue between John Knight and Mike Bottomley, with Mike facing a forest of bisesques – 13; unlucky for some – and with some uncertain weather in the offing. John immediately hit in with the third ball and may have made progress if his roll to Hoop 1 had not wired at hoop 5. Mike's start was not much more successful; having hit in with the fourth ball, he conspired to concede a lift before reaching Hoop 1.

And so it continued, with John making progress to Hoop 5 using his bisques until Mike hit in and got round to 4-Back, with some impressive splits, cut rushes and an Irish peel. He would have got further but missed a simple roquet.

John advanced with further bisques until Mike got his second ball going and took it to 1-Back, by which time the scores were level and the rain was falling hard.

After a couple more turns each, John's bisques were nearly gone and both players blobbed hoop attempts but Mike eventually got one ball to peg, with the other at 2-Back. But John soon also got a ball to peg and, while Mike shot and missed a couple of times, John used his last bisque to take his other ball through rover. All he has to do now is peg out, but his front ball missed and he pegged out his other ball.

This left Mike with an easy roquet to the remaining ball and, with a three ball break, he looked well set to clear up from 2-Back. Astonishingly, Mike missed the roquet and, with a simple tap of the mallet, John secured the trophy.

Golf Doubles – Ian Cobbold

8 pairs contested this popular tournament in 2 blocks of 4. The morning session was won by John Bristow and Joyce Hampton who were victorious in all 3 of their matches, with John Timberlake and Lorna Jenkins the runners up with 2 wins. In the afternoon Jon Criddle and Martin Holland won all 3 of their matches and the other 3 pairs ended up equal with a win each. The final was played on BBQ day..

The final was between Jon Criddle/Martin Holland and John Bristow/Joyce Hampton and was very closely contested. After hoop 10 the score was 5 all. Jon and Martin won hoop 11 after Jon's ball was put through by his opponents. A long battle ensued for hoop 12 where John and Joyce levelled the score at 6 all. There was another long battle for the golden hoop before Jon and Martin finally prevailed.



Team News

The Secretary's Shield – Mike Bottomley

Reigate Priory qualified last year to represent the SECF in the Secretary's Shield in 2011. Eight regions were represented plus last year's winners, Ashby. Our first round draw was against Huddersfield CC representing the Yorkshire Federation.

Rather than have a massive journey for either team, we agreed to play the tie at Nottingham CC. This club has five lawns in an attractive parkland site close to the University.



Unfortunately, in contrast to the above picture, we never saw a shadow all day. Two and a half hours of driving, six hours playing in the rain on lawns getting slower and slower, and a three and a half hour drive back did not make for a stunning day out! However Nottingham provided a fine lunch and the good news was that we won through to the semi-finals 6 games to 1. The team was Neil, Geoff, Andy and Mike.

The semi-final draw coincidentally was against Nottingham CC, and again to reduce travelling we chose to play this at Wrest Park at Silsoe, Bedfordshire close to Milton Keynes.

As can be seen above, Wrest Park provides a stunning setting in which to play croquet. We did get some sun, but inevitably quite a bit of rain too. Nottingham was too good for us on the day and we went down 2 games to 5. The team was Neil, Andy, Bob the Builder and Mike. OK, we lost but what a setting we played in!. Nottingham now plays Fylde or Letchworth in the final. (Ed note: This park was featured recently in the BBC news as it has just been open to the public for the first time after the first phase of its restoration. This is still ongoing and is now managed by English Heritage who have a long term plan to restore it to its former glory. In addition the Croquet Club has until 2013 to move it's lawns to

another part of the estate, so croquet players in the future will not get to play in this setting)

Secretary's Shield (*joint managers John Timberlake/Jon Criddle*)

As you recall, we qualified for this Competition by winning the 2010 U League in the SE Region. We beat Huddersfield 6-1 at Nottingham to reach the semi-final, but lost to Nottingham 2-5 at Wrest Park (Beds). We were represented by Mike Bottomley (Capt.), John Bristow, Neil Coote, Andy Gray, Geoff Gunton. (see Mike's article above)

U League B side (*managed by John Timberlake*)

So far, we beat Caterham 6-1, lost to Ramsgate 1-6, Southwick 3-4 and Guildford 3-4. We were represented by John Bristow, Neil Coote, Andy Gray, Geoff Gunton, and Roger Tedstone.

U League A side (*managed by Jon Criddle*)

We have only played Purley Bury so far and won 4-3. Our next match is against Ealing this weekend. We play Rother Valley on 30th August and Tunbridge Wells on either 1st or 22nd September.

B League (*managed by Tim Hazell*)

We are having a slightly eventful, and rather unsuccessful, campaign! Our first game against Purley Bury was lost, rather unexpectedly, as we were ahead in at least two of our matches until the last moment. What a very nice club it is though. Our second game was played in the middle of a howling gale and driving rain at Worthing. No sensible person would have ventured out of doors normally but croquet players being the people they are John Timberlake relished the conditions and said he played his best croquet of the year, I won my match entirely because my lady opponent had a huge white poncho on which kept blowing across her face and she couldn't see anyway as her glasses kept misting up! Our doubles pair of Ron Farr and John Knight eased home fairly comfortably in the end. Eating our lunch in soaking wet clothes in the small hut they have as a clubhouse was a chastening experience but at least we were out of the wind!

Our next encounter was at Medway where David Connah and Alan Slade performed nobly, but unsuccessfully, in the two singles matches and your captain distinguished himself by aggravating a torn muscle to the extent that he had to abandon the game and be helped off the court by his 93 year old doubles partner! Oh dear.

We have one other match to arrange, or rather re-arrange, against Southwick. I had to cancel the original date as we could not raise a team.

Rather more seriously it has been a bit disappointing that so few members have been available to play. Apart from those mentioned above, no one else has been able to play – some have 'gone up' into one or other of our U league teams, some just have very full diaries anyway, but there has been no rush of volunteers from people starting to play association which is the group at which this competition is principally aimed. Maybe they are too busy also playing in our various golf teams? Something to think about for next year.

Golf Teams

SECF Leagues

Level play B League

The SECF has introduced a new league this year. It is the equivalent of the Association B League. In the case of the golf league, teams' handicaps have to add up to at least 16. 7 teams have entered and each will play 4 matches.

We started our season against Littlehampton in June and ran out the winners by 5 – 2, winning 5 singles and losing a singles and the only doubles. Most of the individual matches were closely fought. A week later, we entertained Sydenham at home on a rather wet day. They had brought a very weak team (handicaps of 6, 8, 9 and 10 against our 3, 3, 6 and 7). They put up a good fight but we won 6 -1.

Our other 2 matches are against Sussex and Dulwich in September.

Handicap Leagues

We again entered 2 teams in the handicap league in which 24 teams take part. Only 2 other clubs have 2 teams. Again each team plays 4 matches.

Our teams are called A and B but they draw on pools of players with a similar range of abilities so they are not a first and second team. If anyone can think of names with a Reigate connection to distinguish the teams for the future please let Jean and I know and we will put the names to the AGM.

A team

This team's first match was against Roehampton who have entered the league for the first time and we lost 3 -6, taking a while to adapt to their particularly fast lawns. However 4 of our losses occurred at the golden hoop so the match was tighter than the score suggests. We understand that Roehampton have now won all 4 of their matches.

Our second match was against Medway and we narrowly went down 4 -5. This was Colin Swain's first match and he won both his singles and his doubles. Well done Colin!

The team will now play Surbiton on 25th August and Compton in September.

B team

We started by entertaining Merton at home in June but lost 3-6, winning 3 singles but losing the other 3 and the 3 doubles. On 8th August the team went to Tunbridge Wells and recorded our first handicap win of the season 7 -2. We won 5 of the 6 singles and 2 of the 3 doubles.

The B team's remaining matches are against Woking on 16th August and Sydenham in September.

SECF Golf Teams tournament at Southwick

This very popular event at which we have won the singles 3 times in the last 5 years took place last Sunday. We were again able to field 2 teams, with a total of 19 teams from 15 clubs taking part. Doubles are played in the morning and singles in the afternoon.

Unfortunately this year we did not trouble the judges. In the morning, both our teams won 2 of their doubles matches and lost the other 2. In the afternoon our first team won 5 of their 12 matches and drew 2, the second team only won 3 matches and drew 1.

As we having been winning the singles in alternate years we can hopefully continue the pattern next year and perhaps win the doubles for the first time.

Grassroots – Ian Cobbold

The Club round of this national competition for high handicap golf players was held on 12 June. It was a miserable morning but the organiser remained optimistic and his optimism was rewarded when the rain relented about the time play was due to start at 1.45pm and it remained dry for the 2 hours it took to play the preliminary rounds of doubles. At this stage the top 4 were John Robertson with 19 points, Martin Holland with 16 and Sally Mackinlay and Colin Swain both with 15.

During tea the rain returned with a vengeance. John and Sally bravely played their semi-final. Sally played very well in this her first croquet competition but John won in the end at the golden hoop. Martin and Colin prudently decided to play their semi-final at a later date and this again went to the golden hoop with Martin being the winner. The club final was played on BBQ day.

Grass Roots Final – Ian Cobbold

The final was between John Robertson and Martin Holland. It was another closely contested game with the 2 players swapping hoops to 3 all. John then won the next 2 before Martin replied with hoops 9 and 10. John won hoop 11 after Martin had missed with a jump shot. One of Martin's ball s was wired and John was able to obtain the advantage at hoop 12 to run out the winner and so retain the trophy.



The 4 semi-finalists were invited to the regional round held at Watford on 30 July.

Grassroots Area Final Watford - *Martin Holland*

Geoff Johnson, the Team Manager had arranged a good area final competition in Watford. John Bowscott, the tournament director, was the referee.

After a stress free drive around the M25, although the road works at the top of Reigate hill didn't help, we arrived with bright sunshine at the lawns in Watford. There were competitors from Bury-St-Edmunds, Letchworth, Watford and Reigate. The lawns were in fairly good nick although some areas were quite dry and therefore very fast.

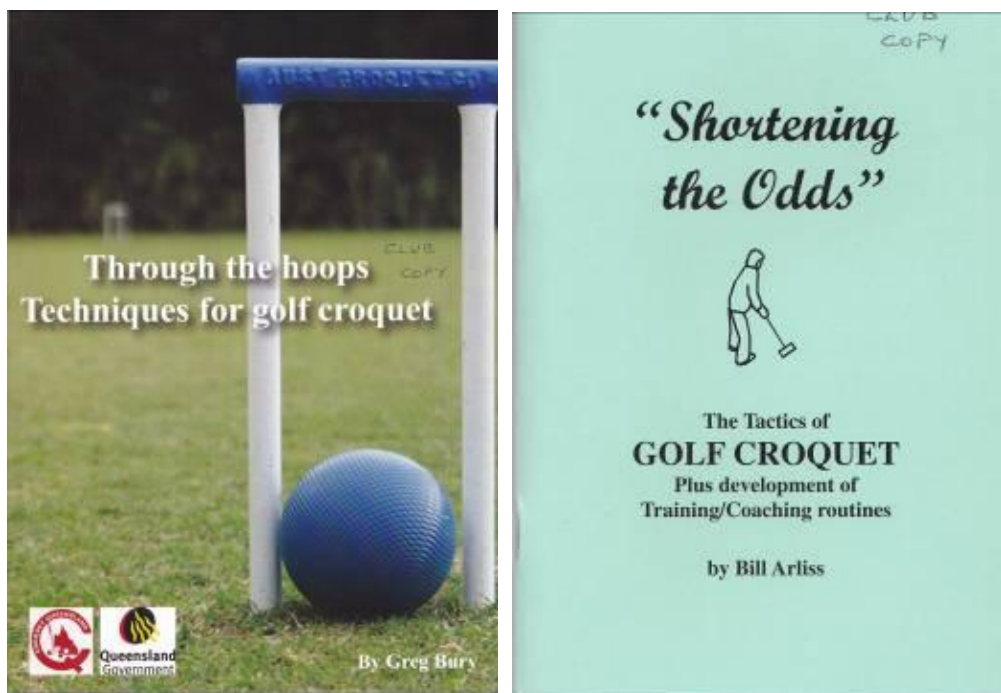
John Robertson won the final against stiff competition. The rankings were on total points gained. In this John Robertson came 2nd. Colin Swain came 6th and yours truly, Martin Holland, came 7th. We all go forward to the National Final on 17th September at Northampton CC. Let's hope the weather and welcome are as good as Watford.

Golf referees

Ian Cobbold recently qualified as a golf referee bringing our qualified golf referees up to 3, the others being Mike Bottomley and Laurence Hughes. All 3 officiated at Surbiton at the recent Golf World Championships.

New books – Ian Cobbold

The Club has recently purchased two books on Golf Croquet (two copies of each).



The first 'Through the Hoops: techniques for golf croquet' was on sale at the recent World Championships and is by an Australian Greg Bury who was one of the competitors. Its publication was aided by a grant from the Queensland Government!

Greg's book provides an introduction to the game and then discusses various tactical situations. It also covers in some detail practice drills and techniques for improving players' mental attitude to help them improve their game. A slight disadvantage with this book is that it uses some unfamiliar Australian terms but their meaning is clear.

The second book is 'Shortening the odds: The Tactics of Golf Croquet' by Bill Arliss – Mr Golf Croquet in the UK. It is a more advanced discussion of tactics and is very valuable reading for anyone wanting to up their game and play at a higher level.

The Club already has a copy of 'Golf Croquet Tactics' by Michael Hague which was published in 2005 and had the field to itself – apart from introductions to the game – until Bill's book was published in 2009. All three books are worth reading as they take different approaches and so complement one another.

Finally, we have also acquired an undated version of the Laws of Golf Croquet (still a gold cover but with a note on the outside) which includes several new international rulings. Some of the rulings are fairly esoteric but those dealing with balls hitting scoring clips and other outside agencies need to be remembered by those who play in matches and other competitions. All the books are available in the Club house. Please sign them out if you borrow them.

Edited by Neil Coote and Martin Holland