



# Reigate Priory CC Newsletter Summer 2010

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## Chairman's Thoughts – *Mike Bottomley*

The first Saturday morning use of the Priory Park croquet lawn was very successful. The lawn is by no means perfect but by using it we will encourage the ground staff to put in additional effort to improve the surface. Further, our use of the lawn attracted interest from passers-by and the Priory Park advanced publicity has proved very effective. We have, as a result, gained two new members with possible others to follow. Please supports these sessions, further ones are on 14<sup>th</sup> August and 25<sup>th</sup> September.

The Club is very happy to loan chairs, tables, mallets, catering items etc. to members for their own private events provided they are not required by the Club. However you must ask first; Geoff Gunton is the first contact point, if Geoff is not available then call the Chairman for his approval. If necessary, we will then check with other Committee members as appropriate. When you remove the items, will you please record this in the Club diary, on the pages at the back with the tab. Also record their return.

We are particularly concerned to discover where the second set of wire hoops is hiding, and if you have borrowed them this year, would you please contact Laurence.

The Club survives on the vast amount of effort which comes from the Members, particularly the Committee but many others are willing helpers in running teams, catering, replenishing supplies etc. etc.. Much work is done by Laurence and John B. (aka Bob the Builder) but we must not assume that because they do a lot, then they will do everything. We do need support at the Monthly Maintenance mornings, and that is not forthcoming at the moment. Please try to come to a couple of these sessions each year, they are short (2 hours typically) and many of the tasks are not arduous so everyone can help.

Finally, if you do not already have in your diary the Club outing to Standen on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> September, please add it now! **Our lawn will be closed for autumn maintenance.**

## Secretary's notes – *Geoff Gunton*

First of all, please join me in welcoming three new members since the last newsletter: Ian Coulson, Jenny Cauchard and Sally Mackinlay. I am in touch with a couple of other potential new members.

I am especially grateful to Ian who almost immediately became involved in dealing with the police about our break-in. He has written a report elsewhere in this newsletter. Thank you to all others who responded in the immediate aftermath of that incident and to those involved in the clear-up, especially John Bristow for repairing the damage.

We have had two successful visits to the lawn in Priory Park and I am sure that all who attended enjoyed those sessions. While the lawn is far from perfect, it is a lot better than in the past and our use of it raises our profile in the community and encourages the Council to continue investing in its improvement. We also had one unsuccessful visit – for the Sports Festival in May, when the heavens opened. At least we turned up, which many clubs didn't, but it soon became clear that no visitors would be venturing out and we packed up after a couple of hours. We have two more visits planned – on 14<sup>th</sup> August and 25<sup>th</sup> September.

I know some members are thinking of buying mallets and, if you are one of them, look at the Mallet File in the clubhouse cupboard. It has got lots of useful information and contacts but ask any member about their own mallet to help you choose. And if you are buying a replacement mallet, please consider donating your old one to the club. Some of our club mallets are past their best and, when we have large groups of guests, some of the less glamorous equipment has to be pressed into service.

At a recent committee meeting it was decided to apply to the Reigate & Banstead Sports Council for funding for two more sets of Dawson balls. These cost about £160 a set and if we are successful, the Sports Council would contribute half the cost.

The Dawson balls, by the way, are available for everyone to use – they are the type used at most competitions, so it is useful to become familiar with their characteristics. When you put them away, however, please make sure you don't mix them with the non-Dawson balls!

As most of you know, we are affiliated to the Croquet Association. As a result, we benefit from liability insurance arranged by the CA – There is a copy of the certificate in the clubhouse. They have switched to a different insurer this year and the policy requires us to have an Accident Book on the premises. I have acquired such a book and will shortly place it in the cupboard and post some notes about what to do in the event of an accident.

On that point, it would be helpful to know if any members are qualified first-aiders and, if so, whether you would be willing to have your name included in that notice. Or, if you are willing to undertake training in first aid, please let me know that, too. The Sports Council sometimes subsidises such training for member clubs and I will try to arrange training for any that are willing to take it.

Finally, I hope you have got the Gymkhana in your diaries for August 7<sup>th</sup>, starting at 2pm. This is always an enjoyable afternoon and is suitable for all members of whatever ability and tests skills from both Golf and Association.

### **Our Library – *Mike Bottomley***

Some of you may not be aware that the Club has a range of croquet books at all levels which are available for loan. There are a number of books for Association players at various levels and I have just purchased two copies for the library of a very recent paperback "Complete Croquet: A Guide to Skills, Tactics and Strategy" by James Hawkins which covers beginner to triple peels!

There is Michael Hague's (Woking CC) excellent book on Golf Croquet which is well worth a read. If you are interested in the history of the game then look at "Queen of Games" by Nicky Smith which gives an excellent account of the clubs, past champions and much other historical information.

In addition, I personally have two small books giving the history of the Hurlingham Club and the Roehampton Club (these cover all sports played at these clubs as well as croquet). I would be happy to lend these to anyone who is interested.

P.S. The Club would appreciate the return of two books which someone has had on loan for some time: "The Skills of the Game" Bill Lamb and "Croquet" John Solomon. Please search your shelves for these two books.

### **Foul Deeds at Priory Park – *Ian Coulson***

Most members are probably aware that several of the buildings around The Cricket Ground have recently suffered damage by vandals. The Football Club were first, followed a few weeks later by a forced entry to our toilet and a subsequent attempt to break through the wall into the main club area.

The following Friday night a window near the main door was broken to release the digital lock. The storeroom was searched but nothing was stolen even though a virtually new strimmer was visible on the shelf. Some tools were removed and these were used to break a kitchen window and then force open the centre casement to gain entry.

On Saturday morning Laurie and Ron were greeted with a liberal sprinkling of glass from the broken windows, tools left lying around and items on the worktop that were not there when The Club was last used. A selection of drinks were missing, the tea money was gone together with the biscuits and the recycling box.

The police were contacted and we were advised to retain anything that may have been handled during the robbery so that a Scene of Crimes Officer could visit sometime later on the Saturday. Laurie and Ron then cleared up the mess leaving the evidence ready for the Police. I made an initial statement on that Saturday and learned that the Tennis Club had also been vandalised around the same time. Later that day a forensic officer came as promised, after visiting the Tennis Club, but was not too hopeful of obtaining evidence from our scene.

Last week I was telephoned again and asked to give a formal statement as an empty drink can left in our kitchen had yielded a DNA sample that was traced to an eighteen-year-old male known to the Police. Results from the Tennis Club were not yet available at the time. The final outcome is not certain and will probable depend on result from that part of the investigation.

### **Croquet in Sri Lanka - *Alan Slade***

On my recent holiday to Sri Lanka I was intrigued to see that my hotel offered croquet as one of their activities, however on investigation it (unsurprisingly) didn't quite turn out to be croquet as we know it. The balls were light and wooden, the mallets had rounded heads and the hoops were large and semi-circular. In addition the 'lawn' was comprised of what looked like small dandelions and as for the rules, they seemed to change with every game. I thought I had won a game and ended up tying for third place!

It was however very popular, a good way of meeting people, and a pleasant way of spending an hour before venturing to the bar for an early evening pick me up. On speaking to the other players they were all quite impressed with the game, such as it was, and some expressed an interest in looking at croquet back in England, unfortunately none of them were from Surrey so I couldn't find us any new members.



### *Annual BBQ – Martin Holland*

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> July was a wonderful day to hold our annual barbeque. The sun was out and there was a good turnout of members. We also had a few potential new members invited to participate. It took the combined power of three chefs and four grills to do all the cooking. It did give our loyal culinary ladies time to put their feet up for once (only joking!).



### *All England Golf Club Final - Laurence Hughes*

Mike Bottomley and Lucy Beach contested this best of three golf croquet match before a small but perceptive following. Mike won the toss and ran the first hoop with a perfectly placed blue. However, Lucy came back immediately and went into a 2-1 lead but Mike retaliated and forged ahead to 5-2, with Lucy using 2 of her 3 bisques. Now as sometimes happens, freed from the "shall I or shan't I" bisque concerns Lucy fought back to 6-5 only for Mike to square to 6 all. At this point, as the BBC commentator sitting near me observed tension seemed to grip the players with both fluffing game winning chances. Finally, Lucy crept through to win.

The second game was unexpectedly one-sided as Mike's early immaculate striking, both in terms of hitting away and hoop running, deserting him somewhat and Lucy, now having

shed the "golden hoop tension" of the previous game came in a 7-1 winner.

A very convivial match with some really excellent play. Congratulations to both players.

## **Grass Roots final**

The final was played on BBQ Day and proved to be a very tight match with John Robertson prevailing over John Knight at the 13th hoop.

## **The Gordon Goodchild final.**

This was contested by J.Knight/J.Timberlake v J.Bristow/J.Hampton. Knight and Timberlake were victorious.

## **National competitions**

### **All England Association – *Lucy Beach***

This year saw 15 entrants from RPCC. Lucy took over the task of organiser. There were 3 blocks of 5 and therefore 30 matches to play in total over the first fortnight in May. The blocks proved competitive, but 3 players won all 4 of their block matches - Andrew Gray, Tim Hazell and John Staddon. They went on to play runners up John Knight, John Bristow and Roger Tedstone respectively. The results of the play-offs couldn't have been closer with all 3 matches resulting in the same classic score +1 on time. However as Andrew and John Staddon won all 5 of their matches they will play off in our local final on BBQ day and will both go forward to the Regional Final on 4/5th September, we wish them the best of luck!

### **All England Play-Off – *Lucy Beach***

#### **Andrew Gray (7) vs. John Staddon (9)**

John had 1.5 bisques. Andrew won the toss and put John in, he chose Blue & Black (BAB) and therefore Andrew had Red & Yellow (RAY).

It was a slow start, but JS got the first opportunity but after running hoop 1 missed a dolly rush. AG had the next chance but blobbed in hoop 1 with his opponent just behind.

The middle part of the game was reasonable with JS making a few hoops at a time, with one on 1 back and the other on hoop 5. AG then had a 4 ball break with yellow from 3 to Rover.

The end game, the best bit! JS made has both balls on Rover, Y was on Rover and R on 3 back, JS left Y to right of 3 back and R to left of hoop 1. AG tries to hit R to Y but just misses. JS separates RAY and sets up BAB for a rush next turn. AG shoots R at BAB and just



misses. JS rushes blue to middle of lawn, takes off to Y and rushes it to Rover (but not that well), so stops shots Y to 3 back, but not a in good hoop running position, so sets up another rush for next turn. AG shoots Y at R as he's wired from BAB and he hits in, then did a long split roll, leaving Y by BAB and R by 3 back, he then left black beyond penult and blue by corner 1. JS shoots black to blue and misses. AG then made 3 back & penult, John Hyde commented 'all 4 clips on penult, always a nice ending. After a few more turns each, AG managed to win +4.

Tim Hazell reported 'it was a very good match, very thoughtful'. John Staddon said 'he enjoyed the match, it was very up and down, started badly, but was very challenging & equally opposed'.



## ***Grassroots – Ian Cobbold***

Eight members contested the Club round of this national competition for players with handicaps of 9 and above. After the initial rounds of doubles, each round played with a different partner, the top four players who would contest the semi-finals were Roger Mackinnon, Lorna Jenkins, John Robertson and John Knight. The semi-finals are played as singles and the order was reversed with John Robertson beating Roger and John Knight beating Lorna.

We have been asked to put forward four names for the regional round so all the semi-finalists may have a chance to play but this will depend on the number of clubs who have entered the tournament.

## **League matches**

### ***B League Matches – Tim Hazell***

Two of our four B league matches have been played so far this year resulting in two wins for the Club! The first game against Ember was played at home – the first time an association match has been played at Reigate for some years. Ember is also a one-court club and so is used to the formula of playing half the match in the morning and the remainder in the afternoon. Our team of Jean Cobbold, Ron Farr, John Knight and myself won by three matches to nil. We managed to achieve the same result on the lightening-fast lawns at Tunbridge Wells later in July with John Bristow and John Knight winning their singles games and John Copper and Tim Hazell winning the doubles.

We play Purley Bury on August 5<sup>th</sup> and complete the year with a match at Caterham on August 14<sup>th</sup>. I have told the teams for those matches that we expect to finish the year unbeaten! We will see.

P.S. Does anyone know why the two main leagues operate under such boring names? U league and B league. Ugh!

### **Friendly Match v Rother Valley on 24 June 2010 – *John Timberlake***

Played at Reigate, this was a very friendly affair. Rother were represented by David Smith (Capt.) on 11, John Parker and Hunter Rogers both on 16, and Katherine Minchin on 18. We were Alan Slade, Charles Harvey and Margaret Murphy, led by John Timberlake. Before lunch we had two double-banked 26 point doubles, with John/Charles scraping home +1 on time, and Alan and Margaret being shaded –2 on time. Following an excellent “Cuisine Freda” lunch, we played two double-banked 14 point doubles, with Alan/Charles sneaking a +2 on time win, and John/Margaret agreeing an honourable draw. Finally, there were 2 double-banked golf doubles, with John/Alan triumphing 7/4 and Charles/Margaret squeezing home 7/6. Weather was beautiful, lawn tremendous, and convivial and varied croquet with Reigate Priory victorious by 5 and a half to a half.

### **Golf Doubles Tournament – *Ian Cobbold***

This handicap tournament was staged for the second year on 3 July. The only major difference was that this year the pairs remained the same throughout the day while last year there was a change of partners for each round. The sixteen players contested five rounds after which there were clear winners with Mike Bottomley and Peter Goldsmith winning four of their matches. Indeed, no other pair managed more than two wins – there were a number of drawn games – and Ian Cobbold and Jean Brading came second by virtue of the number of hoops run. It was a good day weather-wise and Freda added to the success of the day as usual with her delicious lunch and tea.



## **Boules evening – *Martin Holland***

Katherine and Peter Goldsmith had their Boules evening on 14<sup>th</sup> July. Katherine had put on a fantastic spread in their garden at Court Lodge Farm. My bathroom scales showed that I had too many cream scones. We had a wonderful evening chucking (is that the correct technical term?) boules around the garden. As I hadn't played before, I was completely surprised to be on the winning team. A wonderful evening was had by all and even the threatened rain stayed away.



## **Summer Flood Lighting – *John Bristow***



A short illuminating note that has nothing to do with the summer weather, floods or lightning.

This time of the year [July/August] the rush to complete competition matches results in many evening matches taking place. As August advances the evenings shorten and games can end up being played beyond dusk. This can make seeing the position of distant balls tricky and the discernment of colour difficult. For a long time there has been a floodlight mounted high in the football pavilion wall which covers the Clubhouse end of the lawn adequately, but leaves the Brewery end in gloom. A new non-permanent floodlight has been devised for that far end. It can be mounted on a pole attached to the seat at corner 3. See photo. It has a fixed orientation so as not to impinge on neighbouring gardens. Electrical power is supplied from the socket by the toilet entrance via the lawnmower leads; so it has to be set out



each time it is needed and removed after use. The light and leads along with a note about installation are kept on the upper left hand shelves in the equipment store.

### ***And finally.... a recipe - Lucy Beach***

#### **Chocolate Mousse in minutes (serves 8)**

200g plain chocolate (60%+ cocoa solids)

2 x 250g cartons mascarpone cheese

4 tablespoons or so of icing sugar

Cognac to taste

Melt the chocolate, quickly beat in the mascarpone add enough icing sugar and cognac to taste. Spoon into a serving dish and chill for about half an hour until set