



BLEWBURY CROQUET CLUB

Newsletter

2011/2

Start of Season - at last!

Mark your diaries – croquet starts on Saturday 16th April, with a charity competition, all proceeds after expenses going to the Breast Cancer Campaign. But before the first ball is struck, we have an informal club meeting at 10am, with coffee and cakes, in the new pavilion on the Blewbury Recreation Ground.

You will be able to inspect the facilities there, especially the loos, and learn how to get in! And we will run through the plans for the season – timetable, club competitions, matches – and coaching arrangements and club days. Everyone will have a chance to ask questions and make suggestions.

Especially importantly, we would like to explain fast-track options for our own loo at the clubhouse (and the costs, and how we can raise the funds). It looks as if we can achieve this very soon, with your approval. So please be there!

As soon as the meeting is over, and the last cake consumed, we go across the road to start the season in earnest with the local heats of the Charity One-ball competition run by the Southern Croquet Federation (SCF) in support of the Breast Cancer Campaign. Nick Butler will manage the day's competition and an entry form will be circulated to everyone in a day or two. The local winner will be entitled to go to Winchester for the final stages on 7 May.

There's nothing complicated about this version of croquet. It's fast and fun, and suitable for both golf croquet and association croquet players. Two players, with one ball each, race each other through the hoops to the peg. Explanations will be given! Entrants are strongly advised to bring a packed lunch, or be very nippy with dashing off for refreshments between rounds.

What we did - Social committee report on winter events

At the last AGM, members said they would like a skittles evening and a quiz evening. So we did, and had two successful events – a skittles night in February and a quiz night in March. The Green team won the skittles but David Spear won a special prize for the most imaginative picture quiz answer. Paul's team were the quiz geniuses with a whopping score of well over 80. We provided a delicious supper on both evenings and this seemed to be much appreciated! Many members came to both events and brought along friends and family; it was good to renew friendships and make new ones with players of the "other" croquet discipline.

I wish to thank June, Rosemary, Bernadine, Prue (and the ladies who contributed their desserts) who were a great help in organising the evenings and producing the food. Hope to see you all at the Summer Socials now!

Susan Tilbrook – Social Committee

Subscriptions reminder

Subs for 2011 are due for payment on 1st April. They are the same as last year. If you have not already done so, it would help the Club's administration if you could send your cheque with the completed to June Wolff, Membership Secretary, as soon as possible to save on the chasing-up work.

Your answers to the questionnaire will help the club become what you want it to be. Please don't forget to say if you can help with the jobs that need doing around the clubhouse and, especially, the lawns.

If you have already sent your money and answers, thank you.

Playing timetable

This is much the same as last year. As always, please check with the web site if you want to be sure that nothing unusual is taking place at a time when you hope to play. From time to time, one-off events, matches or competitions will mean the usual arrangements have to be suspended. The daily courts calendar can be seen at

<http://www.blewburycroquetclub.org.uk/events.htm>

On three weekday mornings, Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, the lawns are closed to play, to allow for maintenance.

On Monday and Thursday afternoons, association croquet is given priority. Last year there was coaching every Thursday early evening during May, and we hope to include something similar this year, as well as other coaching opportunities. Details will follow nearer the time.

On Tuesday and Friday afternoons, and on Thursday mornings, golf croquet is given priority. Tuesday afternoons in particular are very popular club afternoons.

Neither code is prioritised on Tuesday mornings or Wednesday afternoons. However, Wednesday afternoons and evenings are often taken for private bookings, corporate hires, taster events, or league matches in the Southern Croquet Federation leagues (both association and golf croquet).

Most of the club's internal tournaments will take place at weekends (see the calendar), with a bias to Saturday for one-day events. Last year we gave priority to golf croquet on Saturday mornings, and this will continue when Saturdays are free. We will also make Sunday mornings an open club period, with a bias towards association croquet or beginners who need experienced players to be around when they play, to give them help and guidance.

Coaching

Coaching arrangements will develop during the season, after we have had all your membership renewal questionnaires back, and have heard what you have to say at our meeting on Saturday 16th April. Meanwhile, we know we shall be giving coaching on Thursday evenings through May, as we did last year, starting at about 6pm. Various experienced club members who are qualified coaches have offered their potential assistance, including Deirdre, Nick, Robin Brown, and Jolyon Kay, and Paul if he survives his coaches training course.

Committee news

Your Committee has met monthly this year so far, and sub-committees have been just as busy if not more so. The social committee report has already been given. News from the recruitment committee and the croquet committee follow below.

Recruitment Committee

Continued recruitment is very important for two reasons:

- a) So that the club income can rise in order to pay for the maintenance of our excellent lawns and to develop even better facilities, without raising subscriptions every year and
- b) To develop our playing strength to keep membership here attractive.

After an initial very useful 'brainstorming' session we have divided our recruitment activities this year into two main areas.

Firstly we are mounting a leaflet and poster campaign; you may see a poster on your way out of Tesco's in Didcot! They are also popping up in various other places. One has already resulted in an enquiry 😊.

Secondly we will be hosting a few 'taster' events inviting everyone to come and try out the game. These will be advertised in advance and so if you know of anyone who may be interested please bring them along.

It is a well known fact that most new members join clubs because they know someone who is already a member, so everyone is important in recruiting. Any member can bring a friend along to play for a couple of trial sessions to see if they would like to join, without charge. We already have a number of new members this year introduced by existing members.

As shown on the questionnaire accompanying the new subscription form we hope to give all new players a 'mentor' so that they have at least one face they know when they first turn up.

June Wolff – Recruitment Committee

Croquet committee - Competitions, teams and matches 2011

Club competitions, entries to be invited after season has started:

Founder's Cup	Association croquet, advanced rules, by invitation
Prebendal Manor Trophy	Association croquet, handicap play, open entry
Icknield Trophy	Golf croquet, handicap play, open entry
Ladder competition	Optional association or golf croquet, handicap play
Roger Cambray 1-ball	One-ball croquet at Hall Barn during Open Gardens w/e

Southern Croquet Federation League programmes:

<u>League</u>	<u>Manager</u>
Association croquet, advanced league	Nick Butler
Association croquet, handicap league	Bruce Gallop
Golf croquet, handicap league	Susan Tilbrook

If you would like to play in any of these, do let the manager know of your interest.

National competitions:

Longman Trophies	Association croquet, club teams, handicap play
All England Handicap	Handicap association croquet, individual entries

Other events, dates on web site calendar:

Spring Doubles	Golf croquet
Ladies Doubles	Golf croquet
Inter-Village tournament	Both Golf and Association croquet
Autumn Doubles	Both Golf and Association croquet
Friendly matches	Both Golf and Association croquet

Corporate Events

A Private Croquet Event provides an opportunity for a group of people to learn the basics of croquet and have an enjoyable session putting into practice what they have learnt.

These events take place at our club with its two excellent courts and are hosted by members of the club. In a typical case, where the group members are unfamiliar with croquet, the hosts would first describe and demonstrate the basics of the game. The group can then take to the courts and try their hand on the principle that the best way to learn is by doing. The hosts will continue to be available to guide the play and to answer any questions. We find that visitors can quickly get a sufficient grasp of the principles to have a good game.

Events normally start between 5 and 6 pm and last for about two hours. The charge for an event is £5 per person with a minimum total of £40. The courts can take up to 16 people at a time so the maximum charge is £80. More than 16 people can take part, but they would have to take turns. The club provides all the necessary equipment. Visitors need to have only a comfortable pair of flat soled shoes. The event can be arranged in a variety of ways to suit the interests of the group.

Do you belong to a club or organisation which might like to enjoy a Summer's evening like this? If you would like to find out more or make a booking, please contact David Vincent on 01491 872750.

This is also a very useful recruiting method.

New lease on the Club's grounds

The Club has signed a new formal 25-year lease on our grounds from Blewbury Parish Council. Two Trustees (Deirdre Cochrane and Paul Wolff) needed to be appointed to be the legal tenants holding the clubhouse and lawns on behalf of the members. Members will be requested at the 2011 AGM to approve new Club rules covering the appointment, removal, duties and limitations of the Trustees.

A major sticking-point with the new lease was the Parish Councils's requirement to include rent reviews after the first year, with no upward limit. We negotiated a provision that these rent review provisions wouldn't kick in so long as we remained a croquet club and a Community Amateur Sports Club or registered on any successor register.

Now we have the new lease, we need to look again at upgrading our clubhouse with a toilet and changing room – proposal to be shown at the 16th April morning meeting.

Pavilion opening day

The Blewbury Croquet Club has been invited to take part in the events taking place on the official Opening Day on Saturday 14th May.

The format is for all the clubs that use the pavilion to showcase their sports. At 2pm the building will be officially 'opened' by Ed Vaizey MP.

We have been allocated a largish plot on the sports field which we will use to host some fun games for members of the public to try in the morning. We will also have the club lawns open so that if anyone wants to try a 'real' game they can come over and have a go.

This obviously will need several club members to be on hand at the recreation ground 'plot' and at the club lawns. Volunteers will be recruited!

This does promise to be a good event, weather permitting, with food and drink available throughout the day. So do come along and help to promote the club.

Deirdre Cochrane
Chairman

Paul Wolff
Secretary