



Introduction

As 2022 whizzes by we are already in April, and hurray hurray Neil has informed me that all being well our season will begin on Sunday 3rd April for a morning roll-up, weather permitting. Speaking personally I will be very glad to be back playing our lovely game out in the fresh air and enjoying good company. Our club is a friendly welcoming place which adds to our enjoyment of a good summer. We will be receiving a confirmation email regarding our starting date so we have to hope that this lovely weather continues.

As a recent addition to the committee I have already attended my first meeting, and prior to that received detailed and extensive reports from, Neil, Chris and Geoff. Of course we are all aware that a successful club depends on lots of unseen work and dedication, but I would like to take this opportunity to sing the praises of all the members of our very hard working committee, and for others who offer support, especially in keeping the lawns up to scratch. Geoff has worked throughout the winter so that the new season will see our 'shed' improved with more space, the lawns monitored and cared for etc etc.



On behalf of us all, and for the enjoyment we all share, thank you to all those who make it possible.

Our AGM was very well attended, and the lunch that followed was both enjoyable and a very good way to socialise with so many of the members who we haven't seen since the season ended.



Mary kindly took the photos, they definitely reflect the happy atmosphere enjoyed by all – I hope!

We can now look forward to a fun, more normal season, as we all learn to live with the Covid virus. Chris will be busy organising competitions, no mean task, and with our partners we can look as happy and synchronised as the couple below...

- Lynn Hamber





Chairman's Report

On a recent trip to see relatives in Cheltenham, we chatted about Croquet to them and they commented that the local Club was in walking distance. At about 4p.m. on a late winter's afternoon we strolled through the streets elbowing aside the occasional retired military officer, and found ourselves outside the grounds of the Cheltenham Croquet Club.

The gates were open and we made our way towards the lawns and pavilion. Next to the Clubhouse was a smaller building indicating it was the shop and Administrative offices of the Croquet Association. We thought we might like to examine the wares on sale but all appeared deserted. We were just wandering away a when person opened the door to see if they could help. Despite being on the administrative side he opened up the shop and was extremely helpful pulling out various mallets for me to admire and test. We chatted generally and he told us that the Club has 11 lawns and 200 members.

They played on reduced lawns during the winter. I expressed my admiration for the condition of the courts, but whether he was being modest or not, he gave his opinion that they were not as fast as they should be! I fortunately did not have any photos of our lawns to show him, so he was left in ignorance as to what more 'agricultural' courts appear like at this time of year! I thanked him for his help and indicated I would think about a possible purchase on another occasion.

As we were leaving a lady member appeared welcoming us to the Club and chatting to Mary. They welcome visitors and host U3A on a regular basis. Mary was invited to ring her to arrange a game, if we were in Cheltenham long enough.

A very friendly and welcoming visit to the H.Q. of the Croquet Association, and yes dear reader, I returned next day to purchase a mallet!

- Neil Clark



CLUB CAPTAIN'S NOTES – APRIL 22

As I write, we look forward to the start of the season on Sunday 3rd April, the earliest start I can recall. This is thanks to a lot of pre-season hard work and planning by Geoff Macro and glorious early spring weather. Let's hope that all these endeavours will not be frustrated by the return of forecast winter showers!! The creation of a temporary court while Court 4 is under renovation has been explained and illustrated in the recent circular. We ask that the normal walking route to the Club Hut is adhered to. **Please do not walk across Court 4 while it recovers from an arduous winter.**

Vice-Captain Graham and I are busy organising the programme for our club competitions. Members will be encouraged to join in the competitions which will be advertised separately – watch out for emails! The Eastern Federation (ECAF) has just released information about this year's league competitions and we now know that in the Handicap League, at Forrester Park, Pavilion will host Colchester and Chelmsford and Lakeside will host Chelmsford and Southchurch. Pavilion will travel to Sudbury and Southchurch while Lakeside will travel to Colchester and Sudbury. But first Pavilion and Lakeside have to play each other by early May.



Meanwhile, arrangements are confirmed at the Pegwell Bay Hotel for our visit to Ramsgate CC during the weekend 13th to 15th May and twenty seven members will do their best to win the "Little Cup". So another busy year awaits us which promises to be enjoyable and rewarding.

Chris Joslin - Club Captain

Lawns

You hopefully you will have received the notice of the start of the croquet season by the time you read this newsletter.

First a thank you to the team that attended Forrester's on 25th March to mark out the lawns for the 2022 season. The team consisting of Neil Clark, Chris Joslin, Pete Howe, John Hustwick Maggi & John Ferguson attended, on what was a very pleasant spring day and by mid-morning we were all in shirt sleeves. It was good to have an ideal number of helpers.



Our contractors, Skippers, have continued to carry out some pre-season work on the lawns. They have now all been scarified, which has pulled out the dead grass and should help the balls run better. Lawn four has had additional seed applied to the damaged patches.

The Forrester's green keepers have also been busy cutting the lawns, and will now be mowing regularly on Monday and Thursday afternoons. The lawns looked very good by the time we had finished setting out on Friday with the new lines and freshly painted hoops installed, let's hope they play as well as they look!



We will continue to work with Skippers in the coming season to improve the lawns, and we look forward to meeting with the new management at Forrester's when the sale is completed.

- Geoff Macro





THANK YOU

I would like to say thank you to Maldon Croquet Club committee and members for their kind words and the voucher given to me at the AGM.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my six years on the Committee undertaking the Catering Role and then more recently taking over editing the Newsletter.

My best wishes go to the new Committee and I hope to see members on the lawns in the not too distant future.

- Mary Burd

Croquet Coaching Corner

- **By Jean Healey**

As we gear up for the season it's time to consider coaching. Al Broqn who is a very experienced player will be available for coaching again this year. His time table of availability is below.

Tuesdays all day
Friday all day

He is also suggesting that if 3 players who would like to have a coaching session during roll up, they could be pegged together for the 40mins of normal play.

I am booked to coach the new members from April, as soon as the lawns are ready to play.
I will be running the 6-week programme covering:

Striking the ball – Grip - Concentration and Etiquette
Running the Hoop
Clearing and Blocking
Jump Shots and Stops Shots
Tactics

And Extra Turns, the Croquet Association definition is below:

Croquet has a handicapping system that allows players of different abilities to play competitively with an approximately even chance of winning. To achieve this, the weaker player is given extra turns by the stronger player.

The weaker player may choose to play one or more of their extra turns at the end of their regular turn. In Golf Croquet (GC) a turn is a single stroke and an extra turn is called just that, an "Extra Stroke".

The number of Extra Strokes that the weaker player gets to use for each game is calculated by the difference between the handicaps of the player and their opponent. Use the [Handicap Calculator](#).

All players should have a handicap based on their ability, a low number indicates a strong player and a high number indicates a weaker player. Zero and negative handicaps indicate very strong players.

At our club, Club Captain, Chris Joslin is also designated the Club's Handicapper who is responsible for assessing and monitoring players abilities and will issue club members with an initial handicap if requested which can be reassessed as necessary as the player progresses .



The Croquet Association is considering changing the 'Extra Turn' system we have now to " Advantage Croquet", a way of play giving everyone an even chance of winning by starting the game with the difference in experience shown from the start.

So, a player on a 12-handicap playing an opponent who plays off 4 handicaps would start the game with say a 3-hoop lead from the start. Trials at a national level are in the final stages and it is likely that this new system will come into full use in 2023. More information will be available as the 2022 season progresses and we are planning our own trials for our members this year.

Hit and Tips

Stalking

Stalking is the act of walking up to the ball to be struck along the line in which you wish to hit it. Stalking is **ESSENTIAL**. Its purpose is to get the feet correctly positioned and the body aligned with the direction of the stroke every single time. The shoulders and hips should be perpendicular to the direction of the aim. The only way to hit consistently is to always start a stroke with your body in the same position.

Stalking should commence about six foot (2 m) behind the ball giving a few paces so that you can arrange to come to position with the ball approximately 1/2"-1" (10 - 25 mm) in front of your mallet and your nose approximately above the back of the ball.

Once you have adopted the stance you can lift your head to check the line of the shot, check that the mallet head is precisely aligned along the direction of aim and then the head is lowered and you concentrate on the swing and hitting the ball right in its centre.

Somewhere in the World Croquet is played in Winter Sunshine: - A despatch from Jean Healey Croquet in Florida.

Barbara Grimason and I visited Florida in February this year, staying with Barbara's sister Jan Forbush. Before we had arrived, Jan had investigated Croquet near her home in Bonita Springs. She had found one club that would welcome visitors and had visited the club and made contact with the owner. Indeed, we could visit and play on club days for a fee of \$30. Annual membership of the club in Naples is \$500 per year, white attire and flat shoes are a requirement.

On the day of our visit the club was hosting a mallet supplier, the rep had brought along numerous mallets for the members to try and buy. Along with the rep was a friend, John played a game with Barbara and I and a Naples chap Fred. We played with two of the sample's mallets, what luck, beautiful mallets. Barbara played with Fred and I partnered John, we had a good game lasting an hour and a half that went to the 13th, John and I winning. John asked Barbara and I to his club as guests, the Bonita Bay Country club has the most marvellous facilities. Below are the Loo's! they are just next to the courts I also attach a photo of the inside; this is what we must aspire too. Drinks station between the Ladies and Gents.

The club has a professional Croquet Coach Dawn, she has played for America and was most enthusiastic and very supportive. She had only been appointed 6 weeks before our visit but was very busy coaching and organising internal competitions and league matches. We visited again and watched a match between the members, she had divided them into teams, Black and White, Red, Blue,





Yellow etc. The teams dressed in the same colours. Short games best of 4 hoops, or 25 mins, singles and doubles. I attach the score podium.

Team Blk/Wht		ROUND 1	Team Green	score
Corner 1	Estelle Green & Pam Whelan	W	Lanney Dickinson & Larry Dickinson	2 - 0
Corner 2	Joan Wright & Bob Kozicki	W	Kathy Kane & Ed Kane	0 - 2
		W		
		W		
		ROUND 2		score
Corner 1	Tim	W	Kathy	
Corner 2	Bob	W	Ed	
Corner 3	Julie	W	Larry	
Corner 4	John	W	Lanney	
		W		
		ROUND 3		score
Corner 1	Julie & Tim	W	Kathy & Larry	
Corner 2	Lynette & John	W	Lanney & Ed	
		W		
		W		

The whole club made us very welcome. Finally, I have to mention the grass, it was like a mat, perfectly flat and as short as a golf green just marvellous.



Dawn, John and the visitors.

In Closing...

Happy Birthday Martyn HK, proof that April the first is not for fools.

If anyone has any snippets of interest for the newsletter please send via email in a Word document.



This is how I felt about doing this newsletter before my dear granddaughter arrived to help me. Thank you Emily Rose what would grandma do without you!!

-Lynn