



June 2002

newsletter

What's happening and when

Date	Event	Courts in use
June 29	Concert: The Pretenders	
June 30	Concert: BBC Radio Big Band	
July 3	SRI Harpenden group	All (afternoon)
July 5-7	Advanced tournament	All
July 6	Jazz Piano in the Orangery	
July 12	SRI Sports Day	Some (pm)
July 20	Inter Club v Nottingham	1-4
July 21	EACF Club Champion Tournament	All
July 30	Irene Davis' group	All (pm)
Aug 4	Pro-Am day *see STOP PRESS	All
Aug 13	Amphill 41 Club	All (evening)
Aug 17-18	Advanced tournament	All
Aug 24-26	Wrest Park Craft Fair	All
Aug 31-Sep 1	CA All England area final	All
Sept 6-8	CA Selector's Weekend	All
Sept 13-15	Handicap tournament	All

This includes tournaments, group visits and all other events going on in the park. If you want to book the lawns for a visit please let me know and I will add it to the list. If the visit is likely to have taken place before the newsletter comes out please let me know anyway and book the lawns by writing something on the planner in the pavilion.

Handicap Tournament 17-19 May



Two swans (and seven cygnets) a'swimming on the Sunday morning of the May tournament

The 22 entrants were divided into two blocks of 10 and 12, with the home club providing five sacrificial lambs of handicap 2½ or below on whom the visitors could feast. Block A ended with David Hills (Bottisham) and Nigel Polhill (Ealing), handicaps 10 and 9 respectively, level on six wins each. Circumstances required a playoff, so they had a 14 point decider in the Sunday afternoon sunshine with David emerging the winner. Manager Eric

Audsley upheld the honour of the home club with five wins, a total equalled by Gordon Weir (Cheltenham) and John Bee (Watford).

Block B was a walkover for Ian Parkinson (Watford), who won all his games and had his handicap reduced from 14 to 11 as a result. Trailing in his wake were Ben Ashwell (Wrest Park), Colin McKenzie (Ealing) and Mike Gardner (St Albans) with six wins each. Ben and Mike both had handicap reductions (8 to 7 and 10 to 9), and Mike also gained his silver award.

The lower bisquers frequently had their backs to the wall, none more so than George Collin who was for 1 and 1 with opponent Mark Homan (Watford) for peg and peg, with a bisque in hand. This situation is not covered in Advanced Croquet Tactics, or indeed anywhere else. George's answer was to go round with one ball, leaving Mark in the jaws of 2 and rover, leaving partner in the jaws of 1 with the ball for 1 just beyond it. Unfortunately he was unable to test the theory as Mark hit the lift shot and finished.



David Hills walks off leaving Nigel Polhill to work out his next move during the A block play-off

Going good to firm, weather warm and sunny for the most part, with a cold wind and showers on Saturday. And many thanks to Mr and Mrs Audsley, Mary Russell, Sheila Beal, Dorothy Craggs and Joan Miller for keeping us fed, especially as most of them were asked at the last minute.

STOP PRESS.... STOP PRESS.....

The Pro Am day on 4 August will **not** be alternate stroke, and the emphasis will be on conviviality as much as croquet. John Wheeler is organising it, call him on 01525 860134 if you would like to take part. Beginners and experts are equally welcome.

Match results

Beds & Herts League vs Meldreth (home)

12 May

Lost 1-5

Wrest Park	Meldreth	WP score
Eric Audsley (2)	Robert Skeen (10)	-4T
Ben Marchant (18)	Angus Bell (11)	
David Woolley (7)	Chris van Essen (3½)	-15
John Martin (20)	Alec Osborne (12)	
George Collin (1½)	Chris van Essen (3½)	-6
Eric Audsley (2)	Robert Skeen (10)	+8
John Bevington (2)	Angus Bell (11)	-19
John Martin (24)	Alec Osborne (12)	-10

The team fell back to earth with a resounding bump as Meldreth eased to a comfortable win. After being roundly beaten by Angus in the afternoon he was good enough to tell me that his game had improved as a result of reading an article about taking bisques that I wrote for the Gazette some time ago!

Beds & Herts League vs Enfield (away)

9 June

Drew 3-3

Wrest Park	Enfield	WP score
John Wheeler (1½)	Basil Lawrence (11)	-25
George Collin (1½)	Joan Lawrence (20)	
Bryan Harral (6)	Ken Pickett (7)	-3T
Ben Ashwell (6)	Wendy Spencer-Smith (18)	
John Wheeler (1½)	Wendy Spencer-Smith (18)	+15
George Collin (1½)	Ken Pickett (7)	-16
John Bevington (2½)	Joan Lawrence (20)	+3
Bryan Harral (6)	Basil Lawrence (11)	+9

The Enfield courts in Bush Hill Park are graced by a pair of cats who appear at lunchtime in the expectation that the sandwiches might contain tuna or chicken, and it is not unknown for one or other of them to stroll onto the lawn for a closer view of the play. Bryan and Ben might have done better but for a difference of opinion on what happens when time is called (for anyone who's not sure, your turn ends, and your opponent's begins, as soon as you have struck the ball). Things improved after lunch, and we won three of the singles to earn an honourable draw.

CA Gold Coaching Course

25-26 May

The course, run by Steve Comish, a Great Britain international and President's Cup winner, is aimed at players who are on the verge of experimenting with the triple peel in advanced play. I took part after being unable to do so last year. Saturday was devoted to break play, leaves and openings, and Sunday to the various types of rover, penultimate and 4-back peels, with a combination of explanations using a magnetic board, demonstrations and practice exercises. Steve finished with a demonstration of a complete triple. A very good course, even though it may be a while before I try putting theory into practice - there was a lot to take in.

Unfortunately I missed a golden photo opportunity (everyone lying flat out on lawn 1 lining up peels), as the weather was less than perfect: heavy showers interspersed with brief periods of sunshine. Thankfully

the heaviest (with added hail) only came on after everyone else had left.

Copies of Steve's course notes are available in the pavilion.

Inter Counties 2002 1-4 June

A solid performance which saw the team finish in a respectable position in the second division. Keeping up our tradition for causing an upset we saved the best till last: beating Hertfordshire in the last match and thus inflicting their only defeat. The full results are on the notice board.

Division 1		Division 2			
	Matches	Games	Matches	Games	
Essex	8	21	Herts	9	24
N'umberlnd	7	17	Suffolk	8	24
Surrey	6	19	Glamorgan	7	21
Gloucs	6	18	Yorks	7	17
Cheshire	6	15	Beds	7	16
Notts	5	15	Warwicks	4	15
Avon	5	14	Northants	4	14
Middx	5	14	Devon	3	10
Dorset	4	14	CA Select	3	7
Sussex	2	10	Kent	2	10
Lancs	1	8	Berks	1	7

The pairings had a new look this year as we finally persuaded Arthur Weightman from Colworth to take part, and he played with John Wheeler on days 1 and 3. John played with Tom Anderson on day 2 and on the last day there was a switch which had Jon Watson and John Wheeler at first pair and Howard Bottomley and Tom Anderson at second. This latter pairing was inspirational and won both games, including a fifth turn break to 4-back by Tom!!!

John Bevington and George Collin had a fairly quiet time of it at third pair for three of the four days, but had the crowd on their feet for the dying moments of the game against Suffolk at Compton. The match was already lost, time had been called and we were both for 3-back, with a contact, and needing a hoop to draw level. John took the contact, made the hoop and left a short rush for George. Celia Steward then hit in across the lawn and tried to make hoop 5 off John's ball but stuck in it, the leading edge of the ball just within the jaws. John then roqueted partner near 3-back and took off to dislodge Celia's ball. The ball was perfectly on line and a dead weight until at the very last minute it rolled sideways into an almost totally wired position, offering the narrowest of targets which, needless to say, was not hit.

Silsoe School Fair 15 June

The three Johns (Wheeler, Bevington and Martin) ran the stall, which gave people the chance to try their hand at hoop running, roquets, short rushes and croquet strokes and raised £22. We will be looking for volunteers to take over next year; if none come forward we may offer to loan some equipment to the school so they can run the stall themselves.

John Bevington

25 June 2002