



18 October 1999

newsletter

MARY ROSE REGAINED

George Collin wins tense decider to clinch 4-3 victory over Sussex County in final at Cheltenham

Match report by team captain Howard Bottomley



The men in the white suits: Rod, John and George look on as Eric accepts the trophy from David Magee

Regency Cheltenham, bright and windy, welcomed the final of the Mary Rose between last year's finalists Wrest Park, and Sussex County aka Southwick. The teams were evenly matched and were greeted by David Magee, our manager for the day, to be joined later by Quiller Barrett, our tournament manager. Eric and George faced Freddie and Peter in the doubles, with trousers tucked in socks and Eric's hat spending more time on the lawn than its owner.

Rod and John appeared in control of the singles against David and Christine as the visiting supporters arrived. Rod was concentrating so much, it didn't matter to him whose coffee flask he used. John cursed the odd roll, but finished well to give Wrest Park an early lead. An excellent lunch was quickly followed with a victory for Rod making it 2-0. The doubles was closer. Freddie and Peter seemed to have it wrapped up, but a failed peg-out and a good hit in by George kept it alive until indecision left an opening for Freddie to strike convincingly and finish. The manager was relieved to have the first round over before 3:00pm!



Doubles trouble for George and Eric

At a quarter to 4 (the Mary Rose sank in 1545), the top games saw Peter and Eric handing each other breaks and Freddy (a QC) taking a surprisingly early lead against George in the battle of the briefs. Meanwhile, Rod was looking unstoppable and John whilst shooting well, was not having much luck. Rod, although last to start in the afternoon, was first to finish, 3-1 to Wrest Park. One more needed but where would the match-winning game come from? Eric was back on a break, George had made some ground, John was cold, time for tea.

David completed his game against John, so it was now 3-2 and Sussex County were looking good in both the remaining games. Peter got in against Eric and finished - 3-3, with the light starting to fade and Freddy on rover and 3 against George on 1-back and 5. So many twists and turns in the next hour, so many chances, errors and lucky escapes. Freddy got cramp (warm water to the rescue), sundown at 6:35, the Longman teams are long gone and then George started enjoying himself. 7:00. Freddy advanced to rover and 3-back, George on rover and in play, David Magee insisted on a finish. George went ahead, the teams were on the lawn to observe if roquets were being made, George made rover and set up for rover and stick. 7:10. Freddy hit made 3 and 4 back but failed penult with George then outside corner 3. George made rover and pegged out one ball. Freddy missed. George won, Wrest Park won. 7:20.

A floodlit presentation, relief all round, off for dinner. Champagne at 8:00, wine at 9:00, a captain's speech, coffee and port. Hmmm, quite a day. Well done chaps - well done supporters - Good Old George!



Enid, Jon (with beer) and Howard keep track of the singles.

Mary Rose final vs Sussex County 2 October at Cheltenham Won 4-3

Wrest Park	H'cap	Sussex County	H'cap	WP score
Eric Audsley	1	Peter Pullin	1	-6
George Collin	2	Freddy Reynold	2	
Rod Ashwell	2	David Parkins	2½	+22
John Wheeler	2½	Christine Constable	3½	+22
Eric Audsley	1	Peter Pullin	1	-13
George Collin	2	Freddy Reynold	2	+5
Rod Ashwell	2	Christine Constable	3½	+24
John Wheeler	2½	David Parkins	2½	-25

CA club competitions - a description for new members

The Croquet Association organise three national club competitions, all played as a straightforward knockout with teams of four. The Inter Club Championship is played to advanced rules and there are no handicap restrictions. The entry is fairly small, and Wrest Park are usually lucky to survive the first round, although we did reach the final in 1995. The Longman Cup is played to handicap rules and players must be **3½** or above, with the combined team handicap 24 or more. There are three doubles and two singles matches. This competition attracts a large entry, and we have reached the final three times in the last nine years.

The Mary Rose was inaugurated by the CA's then Secretary, Richard Rothwell, in 1982, the year the eponymous pride of Henry VIII's fleet was raised after having sunk in the Solent. The trophy is a pewter tankard copied from one recovered from the ship. The competition is played to advanced rules and to the same format as the Inter Club (one doubles, six singles) with the restriction that players must be handicap 1 or above. This makes it a more realistic proposition for the average club, and it attracts a reasonable entry. Wrest Park won the trophy in 1995 and were runners-up last year. The finals for all three competitions are held at Cheltenham over a single weekend, the Longman Cup semi-finals and the Mary Rose final on the Saturday, followed by the Longman Cup and Inter Club finals on Sunday.

This year the Inter Club was won by Surbiton, who beat Cheltenham 4-3, and the winners of the Longman Cup were Medway, who beat Bowdon 3-2.

B&H League - the only way is up

Our loss to Letchworth condemned us to the wooden spoon, as although we were equal with Meldreth the match between us had resulted in a win for Meldreth. Never mind, it's the taking part that counts and thanks to everyone who did. St. Albans won the league for the second year running without, as last year, losing a single match. Time for some attention from the handicapper?

Beds & Herts League vs Enfield

11 September

Drew 3-3

Wrest Park	H'cap	Enfield	H'cap	WP score
Peter Berry	9	Keith Davies	10	+5T
Peter Newman	18	Ken Pickett	18	
Tim Brewer	10	Paul Wilson	10	+1T
David Parsons	11	Basil Lawrence	12	
Peter Berry	9	Keith Davies	10	-7
Peter Newman	18	Ken Pickett	18	-8T
Tim Brewer	10	Paul Wilson	10	+3T
David Parsons	11	Basil Lawrence	12	-5T

Beds & Herts League vs Letchworth

2 October

Lost 2-4

Wrest Park	H'cap	Letchworth	H'cap	WP score
Tim Brewer	10	David Harley	4	-11
Peter Smith	11	Robert Staddon	12	
Peter Berry	9	John Hall	8	+4T
Peter Newman	18	George Woolhouse	10	
Peter Berry	9	David Harley	4	-10T
Tim Brewer	10	John Hall	8	+10T
Peter Smith	11	George Woolhouse	10	-2T
Peter Newman	18	Robert Staddon	12	-5T

	P	W	D	L	Pts
St Albans	6	5	1	0	11
Enfield	6	4	2	0	10
Colworth	6	3	0	3	6
Letchworth	6	2	1	3	5
Watford	6	2	0	4	4
Meldreth	6	1	1	4	3
Wrest Park	6	1	1	4	3

Handicap tournament

17-19 September

The weekend starts on Tuesday

by the Lawn Ranger

The weekend actually started on Monday evening when Eric rang to say that he would be managing as Cliff Jones had withdrawn owing to a catering obligation (*He now runs a restaurant - Ed.*) We touch on the horrendous weather forecast and the prospect of a grim weekend, apart from the social evenings in the pub. On Tuesday 1 create a sheet of Egyptian scorecards (*ie. scorecards for an event run on the Egyptian format*) for Eric to print and make a card holder, resembling a crude musical instrument, from scrap material. Weather prospects still grim. Wednesday. Rain.

Thursday. Sun shining brightly so Pandora and 1 go mowing. 1 need just a few more minutes to complete the job when it starts to rain. 1 look to the sky and mouth: 'Couldn't you ----- wait?' It doesn't last, and Eric marks out the lawns and sets the hoops in the afternoon. Watch George Collin and Peter Berry play the club's handicap final.

Friday. My day starts with a bye so 1 go on coffee duty. 1 eventually manage to win two games on lawn 5, which is playing beautifully. John Bevington manages five games in the day and others play four. The weather is surprisingly fair, everyone seems in a good mood, and 1 overhear kind comments about the lawns. No-one is complaining about lack of play, and (good news!) two people claim lost property.

Saturday is a bad day as 1 play three and lose three, the second by 26. My opponent in this game then went on to do the same to Eric but this time with four bisques left standing. Weather still quite passable. Home for a bath before an evening in the pub where 1 sit next to my + 26 opponent, but we never mention croquet once. Tom, Judy and 1 have an after-hours nightcap at home.

The forecast for Sunday had been really bad, but we were lucky to escape with intermittent rain and a light wind. 1 win one of my two games under the watchful eye of the chief selector for the Mary Rose team. The tournament management passes to George when Eric leaves to go to a party, and the tournament ends under control with everyone still in a happy mood. George presents the handicap group prizes to Keith Davies, Graham Dodd and David Harley and thanks all those who have contributed to what 1 feel has been one of our better tournaments.

Club competitions

Congratulations to all the winners but spare a thought for new manager Rod Ashwell, whose efforts to stage a finals day were on course until the last minute when individual circumstances led to the claiming of temporal lifts.

The final of the Steel, played on Saturday 25 September, may we '11 have turned on the outcome of an unusual leave by Jon (henceforth to be known as a 'Watson' or 'Elementary') in which he managed to hide his balls from Howard so effectively that Howard was able to go to 4-back off the ensuing wiring lift. Jon does have the consolation of receiving the Bottomley Plate as runner-up.

**Steel Bowl
(Advanced)**

Winner: Howard Bottomley
Runner-up: Jon Watson

**Archer Cup
(Handicap)**

Winner: George Collin
Runner-up: Peter Berry

**Ashwell Cup
(All England h'cap)**

Winner: John Bevington
Runner-up: George Collin

**De Grey Plate
(14 pt h'cap)**

Winner: Peter Newman
Runner-up: Gordon Sampson

A message from Ground Control

The scarification has been completed, although the contractor was perhaps a little over-zealous:



The Sods 'R Us prototype thatch control attachment. In striving for the perfect lawn no stone is left unturned.

The next operation will be the application of top dressing, to take place on the weekend of 30-31 October. This is a long job and we need as many helpers as possible. What we have to do is:

- Put the heap of soil cores (left from the hollow tining last year) through a soil shredder.
- Mix the shredded cores 50:50 with sand.
- Barrow the mixture to a filling station and load the hopper of the top dresser.
- Spread the top dressing.
- Last, but by no means least, brush in the dressing with the drag mat.

Please ring George if you are likely to be able to help. Bring spades, shovels and wheelbarrows if you have them, and pray for dry weather.

Scheduled Monument Consent update

English Heritage have asked us to apply for SMC for our hoops, as they penetrate the ground to a depth of more than four inches (see the August newsletter for details). We have provided a detailed document giving the lawn layout, the standard hoop positions, and alternative positions for small lawns. We have also included pictures from the NIAE archive taken about forty years ago when the area now occupied by the lawns was ploughed up for potato harvester trials

We have since received a reply from Sian Brown with various forms that need to be completed if we wish to pursue a formal application. The local inspector has a copy of our plans and apparently *"is quite happy just to have a copy of your plan on file and to have it updated as and when you change the layout/location of the croquet lawns"* so whether we go ahead is something for the committee to decide.

San is leaving Wrest Park after four years as Head Custodian and takes with her our best wishes. We look forward to meeting her successor.

1999 Annual Dinner

The annual dinner will be at the Leaside Hotel, Villa Road, Luton on Friday November 19th, 7.30 for 8pm. To get to the hotel, drive down Villa Road (see map) and continue down the private road which leads to the hotel car park. Please ring Rod Ashwell (01 582 504536) if you wish to attend the dinner, and it would be appreciated if you could let him know your preferences for starter and main course from the attached menu. Don't leave it too late.

Christmas Cracker

This seasonal fun tournament is scheduled for Sunday 12 December. Four one-hour games starting at 9.30 sharp, with a break for mince pies and liquid refreshment, followed by a meal in the Star & Garter at about 2pm. The final format will depend on the number of entries, so if you are interested please contact the manager, Rod Ashwell (01582 504536) before the middle of November.

News of members

- Judy Anderson is recovering at home after a recent operation. Our best wishes to her and Tom.
- John, Sue and Stephen Watson have moved to 28 Oak Drive, Henlow, Bedfordshire SG16 6BX. Telephone 01462 817231.

Gold Course notes

Earlier this season George Collin, among others, attended the CA Gold coaching course, run by the GB Test player Steve Comish. The course dealt with advanced play: openings, leaves and the triple peel. George has been putting theory into practice; the double peel is becoming quite familiar, as is the super-shot opening. He has also written some useful notes, of which there is a copy in the pavilion. They are recommended reading for anyone wanting to learn more about the advanced game, and I daresay he would forward copies to anyone who asks.

Who wants to be a referee?

Eric has passed on an e-mail from Ian Plummer of Oxford to the Croquet newsgroup, bemoaning the lack of information on becoming a referee available from the CA and encouraging more people to become referees. He writes:

'This is a case where our Laws and Publicity Committees should be asked to get together and produce information for our members ... the following information needs to be made available. There is no reason why people cannot treat the theory side as a home study course.'

What is involved in becoming a referee - Sample questions and procedures - Sources of precedent Dates, location and costs of main courses - Names of examining referees (who could be contacted if a club or individual wants to arrange a teach-in.)

I can only add 'Hear, hear!' Having attended an Assistant Referee's course this summer I was then unable to be examined by one of the club's examining referees because the questions weren't available.

Even if you are not intending to become a referee just yet, it is worth remembering that players act as joint referees of the game so it behoves them to have a knowledge of the laws. Not only does this make it easier for existing referees by allowing more questions to be resolved without their intervention, it can also make a big difference in play. How many members have lost a game just because they didn't know the laws? So, if a friend asks what you want for Christmas, why not ask for a copy of the Laws and the Commentary on the Laws, both of which can be ordered from the CA at modest cost.

Golf croquet at Waterways

Waterways is the home of member Irene Davis, who runs a prodigious golf croquet operation with 80 players on her list. She kindly sent a report on the club, together with a newspaper cutting from the Leighton Buzzard Observer which described how the finals day of her annual knockout tournament raised £200 for Macmillan Cancer Relief. The article was accompanied by a colour photo.

It is not a club as such, but there are ten groups who play regularly - four from the Leighton Buzzard U3A and six from local WIs. There are two undersize lawns, and six two-hour sessions a week. With eight players per session most people play once a fortnight. During the year matches are played within groups, then two from each group enter the knockout, which is attended by friends and supporters.

Three players have joined the golf croquet section at Wrest Park, and there are likely to be more next year *'if you will have them, of course'* concludes Irene. But of course, Irene, of course, and thank you for the report.

Now, ladies, who's going to be the first to dip her toe in the Association Croquet waters?

Publicity seminar

The Editor, in his role of publicity officer, will be attending the one-day publicity seminar organised by the CA at Leamington Spa on Sunday October 24. The seminar is designed to help clubs improve their press, radio and TV coverage.

John Bevington

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