



newsletter

Peter Newman



Peter after winning the Archer Cup in 2000

Peter died peacefully on the ninth of January. He will be greatly missed by us all.

Peter and Elaine joined Wrest Park croquet club in 1997 after attending an open day. Peter wasted no time, winning a pro-am golf croquet competition a few months later. The following year he and Elaine began their long association with the Beds & Herts League team, and Peter also played in the Longman Cup, winning the deciding singles in the match against Ipswich. In 1999 he won the high bisquer's De Grey plate, and in 2000 had an *annus mirabilis* when he won the club handicap, retained the De Grey plate and was runner-up in the All England qualifier.

It didn't stop there. In 2001 he won a block in the May handicap tournament and in 2002 started a club league for high bisquers. In 2003 he qualified as a CA coach, ran the first of several club coaching courses, and still found time to win the All England qualifier and get through to the national final.

2004 saw him playing advanced doubles at the first staging of the Anderson trophy, doing more coaching and managing the Beds & Herts League team to such good effect that they won the League and the playoff to gain entry to the Secretary's Shield. Peter also won the club handicap for the second time.

In 2005 he played in four of the five Beds & Herts League matches, all of which were won, and he again won the All England qualifier. Last season he continued to play in the B&H League and also played two games in the September tournament, in the last of which he comfortably defeated the manager by a large margin. During the season he and Elaine made regular visits to

the Crake Valley club in Cumbria and played games in their Centenary Shield competition, which Peter won.

Peter took an active role at Wrest Park almost from the start. He joined the committee as the high bisquer's representative in 1999 and stayed for six years. Peter had a real love for the game; he and Elaine were often to be found playing and practising together, and they were regular spectators whenever the club staged a major event.

2006 Annual Dinner

*The rich arrived in pairs
And also in Rolls-Royces;
They talked of their affairs
In loud and strident voices.*

*(The Husbands and the Wives
Of this select society
Lead independent lives
Of infinite variety.)*

Hilaire Belloc

from Ladies and Gentlemen in Cautionary Verses



*Gentlemen eating
Tim, Rod, Cliff, Ray and David*



*Ladies drinking
Helen, Diana and Yvonne*



*We three kings
John, Geoff and Tom*



*Only here for the beards
Tim, Cliff and the De Grey Plate*

It is true that some guests arrived in a Rolls-Royce, but as to the rest, well, I couldn't possibly comment.

This year's dinner was held at the Bell in Woburn on December 15th and 27 members attended, Peter and Elaine among them. The proceedings were enlivened with a visit by part of the Danesborough Chorus, who trooped into the restaurant to regale us with a selection of carols. Having sung with them years ago I found myself quietly joining in with the tenors and basses ("*Bring me flesh and bring me wine...*").

Chairman Tim Brewer presented the trophies for the club competitions, handing over the duty to Rod Ashwell for the two he won himself.

Photos by John Wheeler and Tim and Gill Brewer.

Annual General Meeting

The 2007 AGM will be on **Thursday 15 March at 7.45pm** in the **public bar** at the Star & Garter in Silsoe.

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of 2006 AGM and matters arising
3. Reports: **Chairman**
Secretary
Treasurer
CA Tournament Secretary
Club Tournament Secretary
Club Captain
Groundsman
4. Election of officers
5. Diary of events
6. Groundsmanship
7. Facilities and equipment
8. Coaching
9. Catering
10. CA and EACF news
11. EH news
12. Any other business

- Please check the details on your membership form, make any corrections and return it with your subscription before 1 April. **Please return the form even if you don't want to renew your membership, or if you joined as a full member last year and therefore don't have to pay.** In the former case it helps us keep an accurate current membership list, in the latter we need to receive the form before you can be sent your membership card.
- Now that group membership is no more all members will have access to the pavilion via the key above the door in the small hut, which itself will have a new padlock using a combination. The number (along with the number for the other padlocks) will be printed on your membership card, and the new padlock will be installed shortly after 1st April.
- Please indicate if your availability to help with tournament catering by circling dates on the form. We may need more than the usual complement in October when we hope to offer hot meals to 24 players.

Subscriptions

The subscription rates for 2007 are as follows:

Full members	£41
Existing group members	£25
CA levy	£6.70
Under 16	£10
16-18 or full time student	£20

- The CA levy is payable by all full and existing group members unless they are also members of another CA **registered** club and have nominated this club as their main club. All those who are already members of Leighton-Linslade (an affiliated club) will have to pay the levy.
- The green fee for visitors remains at £3.60 per person per session, and is payable by guests of members and those in visiting groups. Please record these payments in the Visitor's Book in the pavilion. Members can bring three guests free of charge during the season.
- If you want to pay your subscription using internet banking please confirm your intention to do so with

Eric beforehand, and use sort code 20-05-74, account 80983861 (Wrest Park Croquet Club). Please make sure your name is referenced in the payment..

Club tournaments

- The golf croquet singles and doubles one-day tournaments are open to everyone
- The open golf croquet event will be played to handicap rules, so anyone entering will need to establish a handicap. You can do this yourself by following the instructions in the Golf Croquet section on the CA website
- The Pro Am alternate stroke doubles tournament (Association croquet) will follow as far as possible the format described in the Tournament Management section of the Oxford Croquet website (see link on the CA site). Players of handicap 10 or above are paired with players of lower handicap in a series of 1½ hour games in which the strokes of each turn are played alternately by the two players. The pairings change for each round.

You can enter for these events on your subscription form. Entries for the golf croquet singles and doubles and the Pro Am will be posted on the noticeboard and can be added to until a week before the event.

Diary of events

April 15	Easter Egg
May 18-20	Handicap tournament
May 26-28	Wrest Park Garden Show
June 16-17	Home Internationals
June 20	Irene Davis group (6 lawns from 6pm)
June 24	Golf croquet singles
July 1	Pro-Am alternate stroke doubles
July 6-8	Advanced tournament
July 18	Irene Davis group (6 lawns from 6pm)
July 22	Golf croquet doubles
August 4-5	Advanced tournament
August 25-27	Wrest Park Craft Fair
September 5	Hertford U3A group (4 lawns all day)
September 7-9	Handicap tournament
September 22	EACF leagues playoff
September 23	EACF Champions Day
October 6-7	CA Club Finals weekend

- **Anyone organising home matches (B&H league, golf croquet league, Longman Cup etc.) or any other events must let me know the dates as soon as they are confirmed.** We have to tell EH who is using the lawns and when, so please let me know before writing anything on the calendar in the pavilion. It may be that EH will be holding more events in the park (e.g. corporate hospitality) and as our landlords they can refuse us access if our presence compromises their own event.
- Note that this season we are hosting the Home Internationals and the CA Club Finals weekend. Tell your friends and drag them down to watch.
- Anyone wishing to enter the Easter Egg competition should contact Rod Ashwell - the format depends on the number and standard of the entries.

Steel Cup final

Report by John Bevington

Steel Cup (Advanced)

Winner: Howard Bottomley
Runner-up: John Bevington

This competition was eventually concluded in bright sunshine on 18th November, which may be some sort of record. The end came when John, with yellow on the peg, failed penult with red going for a two-ball finish. Howard, for peg and rover, joined east of hoop 2. John managed to tiptoe through the hoop but was hampered on the partner ball. He shot at Howard and missed. Howard promptly finished it off +3 to win for the third year in a row, and only needs one more to equal Jon Watson's four consecutive wins from 1991-1994.

On the carpet – the EACF Indoor Golf croquet doubles

Report by Ronnie Richardson

Wrest Park entered two teams for this event, held on 25th November at Soham. None of the players had ever played indoors before. There were eight other teams: three from Leighton-Linslade, two from Newport and Downham Market and one from Bury St Edmunds. The teams were split into two groups; each team played all the others in the group and the two group winners met in the final. There were four points for a win and two for a draw, with a bonus of three points if seven hoops were made before time was called.

Margaret Marshall and Ronnie Richardson, playing as Wrest Park II, beat Leighton-Linslade III 5-2 and Downham Market II 3-2 but lost to Leighton II and Newport II to finish third in the group, which was won by Newport II. Wrest Park I, represented by Peggy Kenny and Don Barrett, beat Bury St Edmunds 5-4 and Downham Market I 7-1, losing to Leighton I and Newport I. The three-point bonus (the only one of the day) put them top of the group and into the final, which they sadly lost 2-4.



The Wrest Park teams. L-R Margaret Marshall, Peggy Kenny, Don Barrett and Ronnie Richardson

Everyone thoroughly enjoyed it, although the superfast surface took a little getting used to. It's not as smooth and level as it might look – one player managed to run hoop 2 from a position behind hoop 1. Many thanks to Tony Marks for organising the event so well.

Open with flare



L-R: Tony Dumont, David Openshaw, Harry Green, Eddie Bell

John Wheeler recently unearthed this photo from the 1976 July tournament, which was the first ever open weekend tournament to appear in the CA fixtures calendar. The records show that the winners were Eddie Bell (handicap 2 or below, runner-up David Openshaw) and Harry Green (2½ or above, runner-up Tony Dumont). Harry made all the trophies.

David Openshaw won the most improved player award in 1977 and went on to become the England and GB captain in several successful MacRobertson Shield campaigns. He is currently President of the World Croquet Federation.

EACF/NT tournaments

Golf croquet

July 7 Ickworth House, Horringer (Doubles)
Sept 9 Ickworth House, Horringer (Singles)

I have an entry form (to be returned by April 30th) if any Wrest Park members want to enter.

There is also a one-day level play golf croquet tournament at Newport on July 22. Entry limited to 18. Apply to Terrey Sparkes (tdsexpress@amserve.com 01362 692601) by April 30th.

Short croquet

This will also be held at Ickworth and is being organised by Jonathan Toye. The first round will be on July 8 and will comprise eight doubles teams drawn from the entries received. The top four clubs will play singles in the second round on September 9. If anyone wants to enter please contact Jonathan direct (jonathantoye@hotmail.com 01366 382280)

Coaching

Geoff Strutt has offered to run a Association croquet course for six weeks on Thursdays from 4-6pm, aimed at beginners and/or high bisquers. There will be a charge of £24 for non-members which will be deducted from their subscription if they then join the club. Please pass this on to anyone you know who might be interested and contact Geoff for further details.

I had already planned to offer coaching (Association) on Thursday evenings through the season from 5.30-7.30, starting in mid-April. This will be more like a regular clinic - what happens will largely depend on who turns up and what they want to do. We might, for example, just watch and critically appraise another game.

Having discussed it we both intend to go ahead and see how things turn out. Note that the club now has a copy of the new CA coaching manual, which contains useful advice on technique and practice routines. Worth dipping into if your game gets rained off.

S'wonderful!



Black swan (*Cygnus atratus*)

Photo from Wikipedia

After an initial short visit in November, a black swan has returned and is currently keeping company with a pair of mute swans. Quite how this situation might develop is really anyone's guess (the sex of the swan is unknown). I therefore contacted the RSPB, who replied as follows:

I suspect the mute swans are relatively young and have not yet bred and the black swan is only tolerated because the mute swans have yet to develop a strong sense of territory. Mute swans rarely breed before four to five years of age and although the pair bonds form before this age, the birds are unlikely to be strongly territorial until they breed.

Curiouser and curiouser. I thought our swans were already a breeding pair. After all, we are quite used to seeing cygnets on the lake. Perhaps this pair is a different pair. If so, what has happened to the breeding pair? Keen birdwatchers are encouraged to observe and make notes, although establishing the age of the swans may prove beyond the scope of the amateur (apparently you have to measure an organ called the bursa of Fabricius, an operation which would be intrusive and, given its location, indelicate).

Newsletter distribution

There are about 25 existing group members without an email address who are now, as full members, entitled to a regular copy of the newsletter by post.

If you are one of these but do **not** want a copy sent, please add a note to this effect on your subscription form. I make this request in the interests of economy – it may be that some of you are happy to share a copy or read one of the copies left in the pavilion.

News from English Heritage

We are still negotiating the terms of the Licence and are trying to sort out two main points. The first is the Licence Fee itself, which covers the amount the club pays EH and how it is calculated, and also what entitlements payment of the fee confers on members of the club. The second is dates and times of access, which covers when we can use the lawns and notification of dates of tournaments and matches to EH. We have made various suggestions and are awaiting a reply.

In the absence of any further information I would suggest that members carry on as normal, signing in if arriving between 8 and 5 on weekdays and 10 and 5 on weekends when the park is open to the public. Carry your membership card at all times as you may be refused entry without it, and remember to lock all gates after use.

Croquet Management

I have ordered a copy of the CA book on tournament management for the club as part of our reference library. It should prove useful background reading for any members who want to become more involved with the management of our existing tournaments, and it may act as a stimulus to anyone who is interested in organising a new event.

John Bevington

21 February 2007