

CORNWALL CROQUET CLUB

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Apology

This is something of an apology and an announcement of bad news. The bad news first: Ian Wilson has been diagnosed as suffering from angina. He goes into Derriford Hospital on 21 May for an inspection, probably followed by an angioplasty. We all (I am sure) hope the operation will be successful and return him to full fitness in a very short time. Meanwhile he is being looked after at home and probably does not need to be disturbed too much.

The result of this is that you get a rather hurried and second class Newsletter to let you know what is going on.

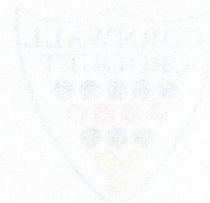
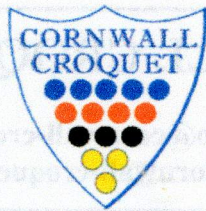
Porthpean

The lawns at Porthpean are undoubtedly suffering from a lack of rain, having, at the end of last year, suffered from too much. The result of "too much" was that some drainage has had to be put in, mainly in Lawn 2, resulting in some large bare patches. The soil itself is now bone dry and cracked, requiring some days of persistent, gentle rain. I am hoping that Lawn 1 will be playable some time in July, perhaps only on a reduced size court for the time being. I doubt if Lawn 2 will be ready before early next summer.

The hut has been delivered to the site at Porthpean, paid for as a result of donations and will be constructed by my neighbour and me in the next few days. If anyone is prepared to help with the work, which will include painting the exterior with a suitable preservative, please let me know. As a result of Ian's indisposition, practical and useful assistance is in distinctly short supply. My neighbour works for his living and therefore has to be paid and we can only afford to pay for essential work, i.e. the erection of the hut itself as we cannot leave it lying around in the long grass in pieces. HELP IS NEEDED. There will also be further work inside to be done shelves, hooks, etc.

We now need to start thinking about the peripheral equipment that we are going to need. I am thinking of chairs (green plastic ones from B&Q are about £5 each, less 10% to an oldie shopping on a Wednesday) as well as ball stops (we will need nearly 100 yards!), bisques, mallet racks, notice boards and so on. I have made six ball carriers, yard-line markers I am making from 20mm white pipe. Any volunteers to make bits at home and bring them up in due course will be more than welcome. (Nailsea use netting 6" high stretched along between the lawns, wound up on a board when dismantled. Any budding Heath Robinsons?

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Disappointment

I am afraid that my invitation to the Duke of Cornwall to open the club next year has been declined. They claim (and I'm sure they are right) that he gets an awful lot of requests and cannot accept them all. I may now try the Lord Lieutenant who is, I believe, Lady Mary Holborow. We will see what happens.

Club Finance

Once we start to play on our lawn(s), we have to institute the full subscription. This has been set at £75 for a full year, with reductions for country members, youngsters and so on. Of that sum, it has been agreed with Howard Rosevear that we keep £5, the rest going to him to recompense him for the costs of establishing the lawns and to cover also their maintenance. Unfortunately, we totally overlooked the question of our affiliation to the Croquet Association (which will, we trust, be providing the main part of the cost of equipment) and its associated cost. The CA requires a sum of between £6 and £7 per member per annum. This puts us in a loss-making situation which may require a further £5 to be added to the above subscriptions.

Personal

Rosemary Bradshaw and I (and Pam, but not as a player) both went on the Florida trip in February and some of you may have read the report in the Gazette. It was a really enjoyable trip, the US Croquet Centre being beyond possible expectation. The mixture of people was interesting and Florida an agreeable contrast weather-wise to that in an English February. The travel

agents really tried to ensure that everyone enjoyed themselves and I unhesitatingly recommend the trip to anyone with a handicap of 18 or better. I see they are next year also organising a trip to New Zealand incorporating croquet as well as tours. Worth a thought!

And last weekend I enjoyed a two-day tournament at Nailsea. The club was started in 1981 on Council land with two lawns and a hut. They now have four reasonable lawns and a splendid pavilion with an attached garage containing at least £25,000's worth of equipment. I wonder what can be achieved at Porthpean.

Fowey Croquet Club

This club, operating in difficult circumstances, using part of the local school's playing field, has achieved amazing things in recruiting and in setting up an interesting programme of events. It provides me with quite a lesson in what can be achieved with a centrally organised membership of which a number of members have volunteered for the boring tasks of making the club work. My immediate reaction on receiving their latest programme is "Thank you, Tim and Ian. We really wouldn't be much without you".

Anyone who feels like organising a coffee morning, a small croquet tournament, a barbecue or any other form of entertainment, please let me know.

12 May, 2004.

Please use the web site for croquet information at