

# **BAKEWELL CROQUET CLUB**

## **AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2020**

I began the Autumn newsletter last year by stating that the weather had not been as kind to us, croquet players, as it was in 2018. Poor weather however is as nothing compared to 2020's pandemic.

We started our croquet year with the 2020 AGM at the Friends Hall on March 4<sup>th</sup>, followed a week later with a very pleasant well attended evening and meal at Bakewell Golf Club. We were looking forward to the start of the playing season and a summer of croquet, as soon as the weather permitted. Little did we realise that Covid 19 was lurking and spreading. A national 'lockdown' was declared in late March with those aged 70 and over (most of our Club members!) or vulnerable told to self-isolate. Luckily the weather was beautiful in early May, warm and sunny, so life was not too bad and we could catch up on all those house and garden jobs that had been neglected. However, the weather would also have been perfect for playing croquet, had we been allowed to.

Lockdown measures were eventually relaxed, the Croquet Association issued guidance based on the Government's directives, on what croquet clubs were allowed to do and Derbyshire Dales District Council gave us permission to play at the Recreation Ground. Lawn one was mown and set up, thanks to Peter Blackburn, Alan Reeves, Allen Flatman and George Wolfe. Initially singles play only was allowed and we set up a booking system for people to book an hourly playing slot. I am very grateful to Dorothy Evan's grandson, David Purser, who manages the Club website. He told me how our website could be used for a booking system, set one up, and had modified it over time, as restrictions to play have been eased and we were able to move to one doubles game per lawn. I think the system has been accessible to most members and has worked well.

By choice, about half of our members have played croquet this year and I hope that everyone has played as much croquet as they wanted to. Overall, the lawns have been under used apart from on Thursday evenings. Because

four players only could use the lawn at any one time the committee extended the Monday sessions, to match those for Thursdays to provide more playing slots. This is something we may continue in 2021. Lawn two was also subsequently set up to cater for the higher demand on Thursday evenings.

Unfortunately, the season is now drawing to an end, but we will keep the lawns open as long as the weather and lawns allow. You will receive an email when the lawns are no longer fit for play and the playing season is over.

### **Members**

We welcomed three new members this year – Glenys and David Bramley and Rosie Glass and lost Annette Dwyer-Jones, who resigned her membership. Given problems with playing because of Covid 19, I am grateful to all those members who paid their subs this year, even though some of you, by choice, have not played a single game of croquet.

### **On the lawns**

#### **Matches**

#### ***East Midlands League, Orme Shield and Coors Cup, Friendlies***

Initially there was a lack of information on how this new virus would behave and spread, how to manage it, and when and if it could be contained. Consequently, many activities including croquet, were initially not permitted, and given this 'unknown' organisers chose to play safe and cancelled the East Midlands League and the Coors Cup and the Club did not arrange any friendly matches.

#### **Tournaments**

Similarly, the two Club tournaments for the Founder's Cup and the Chairman's Cup were both cancelled because of restrictions on numbers of players and spectators permitted and the Pavillion being out of bounds.

#### **Croquet Coaching**

Two one-hour croquet coaching sessions were held for the three new members, once play was permitted on the lawns. We had arranged for

John Crossland and his wife Maggie, who are based at the Northern Croquet Academy, to come to Bakewell and run two coaching sessions for Club members. Unfortunately, it became clear that with the severity and spread of Covid 19 and lack of knowledge as to how long it would be around, the coaching sessions had to be cancelled.

## Other Croquet Events

### Visit to Ripon

The first of our two annual visits to Ripon was arranged for May and several members had booked. Lockdown meant that the hotel had to close and cancel Club members' bookings. Unfortunately, the virus not only stopped our visit, it stopped the hotel permanently. Ripon Spa Hotel has remained closed and is for sale. The loss of such a good croquet facility is very sad and the Committee have not managed to find any similar venue to replace the Ripon Spa Hotel. My thanks to Jenny Emby who suggested some places that the U3A had used. Maybe we can explore there further as and when hopefully Covid 19 is under control.



A reminder of happier times at Ripon, 2017

### Social Croquet

There have been no social events this year: Brodsworth, the Oakedge Barbecue and croquet and tea at Ann and Tim's have all been cancelled.

## Other issues

### Lawns and Mowing

Early in the season the Council ground staff did not mow the Recreation Ground as regularly as in previous years and the grass was left longer. However, once our lawns were open, mowing has gone well and we welcome Mark Marsden and Chris Shepley onto the mowing team and thank them for their help.

## Croquet Committee

The croquet committee have been busy this year trying to ensure that those members who want to, have been able to, play croquet. We have missed our usual social croquet, where members could just turn up, form a doubles group and play, with a break for a chat with other members and a cup of tea on Monday and Thursday afternoons. Given social distancing, permitted numbers of players and spectators limited, and the subsequent 'track and trace' system, the Croquet Association advised that a lawn booking system should be used, where possible.

### Walks

It is unclear at the moment because of Covid 19 whether we will be able to hold any winter walks followed by lunch this coming winter. Nearer the time the Committee will revisit any Covid 19 restrictions, arrange a date for a walk if that is possible and email all members to that effect.

### Winter Croquet

It is highly unlikely that the Club will be having croquet sessions at Fittism this winter, as it would not be possible for everyone to keep to a two meter social distance rule in that venue and play croquet.

### Club Annual General Meeting

The 2021 AGM has been arranged for Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> March, and the Friends Meeting Rooms have been booked. The format will be similar to that of previous years, with tea and coffee available from 7pm and the meeting commencing at 7.30pm. This is of course subject to the state of the country with respect to Covid 19 in the New Year.

### Croquet Dinner

We have a problem with the Croquet Dinner for March 2021 as the people who provided our meal at Bakewell Golf Club over several years, have now moved on and that venue is no longer available. The Committee will be looking into other options. However, given that the impact of the virus in the future is unknown, we may or may not be able to hold our annual dinner in 2021. If a dinner is possible, details will follow, closer to the time.

We hope that you are all staying safe and well. For those of you who are playing croquet, we hope you enjoy the last few weeks of this playing season.