

BAKEWELL CROQUET CLUB

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2021

Who would have expected that we would be able to play croquet into November and as late as November 22nd. Playing that late in the season is a first for Bakewell Croquet Club. Also, who would have imagined that the following weekend winter would arrive with a vengeance with several inches of snow. Ending the final playing session of the season with tea together in the Pavilion worked well and is worth repeating next year.

2021 has been another year where normal routine worldwide has been affected by the Covid-19 virus pandemic. This year lockdown started at the beginning of January and ran to the end of March, followed by limited easing of restrictions for meeting with other people, both outside and inside buildings.

With lockdown, the winter walks, indoor winter croquet and the Club AGM did not take place. However, as croquet players we have been lucky. Croquet was judged to be one of the safer sports in terms of managing social distancing and preventing infection transfer, and as such, we were on the list of the first sports permitted to resume play once lockdown eased. Club social croquet, with restrictions, started on April 1st but with no cups of tea midsession. Restrictions slowly eased as people began to be vaccinated. Once again, a booking system for lawn use following the social croquet sessions was kindly set up by our Webmaster, David Purser.

As in 2020, by choice, about half of our members played croquet consistently this year. I hope that everyone has played as much croquet as they wanted to. Overall, the lawns were, as last year, rarely played to full capacity. One pleasing fact is that, because of reasonable weather we were able to keep the lawns open into November.

Members

We lost four members, who chose not to renew their membership, at the beginning of this year but have welcomed six new members: Tony Stephens, Ian Smith and Pauline and John Boyle, and welcomed Christine and Louis McMeecken back to Bakewell.

On the lawns

Matches

East Midlands League, Orme Shield and Coors Cup, Friendlies

Because of the uncertainty about the appearance of new variants, requirements to isolate as much as possible, and the possibility of further lockdowns, the Club did not play any matches until the second half of the season, when the East Midlands Federation Leagues were played. Unfortunately, neither our A or B teams fared well, and both will be relegated to the division below, i.e. the A team will move to Division 2 and the B team to Division 3. There is a new club starting in Derby and one or more of the current clubs may put additional teams into the leagues in 2022, so a fourth division may have to be created. In which case Bakewell Croquet Club will not have a team in the bottom division!!

We did not enter a team in the Orme Shield and Coors Cup this year and we only played one friendly match against Buxton. That match was very enjoyable and we hope to play them again next year on their two lawns. That could be an interesting playing experience as each lawn is on half of a crown green bowling lawn!

Tournaments

We were able to hold our two internal Club tournaments for the Founder's Cup and the Chairman's Cup, once again well organised by Jill Schmidt. For the second tournament, the start time was moved to midmorning, because of the adverse weather forecast. This seemed to work and we hope to repeat that arrangement in 2022. Our congratulations to Tim Spray and Alan Reeves, who won the Founders Cup and Chairman's Cup respectively.

Singles League

The singles league was well supported although not everyone managed to play all their matches. Group 1 was won by Tim Spray, Group 2 by Ruth Barnes and Group 3 by Steven Schmidt. My thanks to Ruth for organising the singles league.

Croquet Coaching

This year we were able to have the two coaching sessions we had initially arranged with John Crossland, who is based at the Northern Croquet Academy, and his wife Maggie, for 2020. From the comments I received, these sessions went down very well with everyone who attended them. They were very enjoyable and through them croquet skills were either learned or enhanced and tactical play improved.

Other Croquet Events and Activities

Ripon

Obviously, a visit to Ripon could not take place as the hotel closed in 2020 and was for sale. The hotel has now been bought and is being refurbished. We will have to wait and see, if, when it reopens, the new owners retain the croquet lawns, and if so, whether they maintain the standard of the playing surfaces.

Social Croquet

Our annual visit to Brodsworth did not take place this year. However, the Oaksedge Barbecue and Croquet on Jean and David's field and Tea and Croquet at Anne and Tim's house did. These two events were both very enjoyable, very successful, and the numbers of people attending were the highest we have ever had for either event.

Some photos of the Club barbecue, courtesy of Jenny Emby



Lawns and Mowing

We had an increased number of volunteers to mow the croquet lawns this year, which helped to spread the load. My thanks to all of them and to Peter Blackburn for organising the mowing rotas throughout the season.

Winter Walks and Winter Croquet 2022

We hope both events will go ahead. The first winter walk is on the Saturday 8th January, organised by George Wolfe and the indoor croquet starts on Saturday 15th January at Fittism, organised by Peter Blackburn.

Club Annual General Meeting

The 2022 AGM is on Wednesday 16th March in the Friends Meeting Rooms. The format will be like that of previous years, with tea and coffee available from 7pm and the meeting commencing at 7.30pm. This is of course subject to any new Covid 19 restrictions.

Croquet Committee

With the lack of an AGM at the start of this season, members of the Club Committee; Rita Read (Treasurer) Steven Schmidt (Secretary) and Jill Schmidt, Ann Riley and Ruth Barnes have kindly continued to serve the Club for a second year. Tim Spray stepped down and Committee members voted Rosie Glass onto the Committee. I am very grateful to them all for their hard work and the support they have given me, as Committee Chair, over these last two totally unanticipated, extraordinary years. Sadly, Jill and Steven have now moved away from Bakewell and resigned from the Committee and Rita and Mick have left the Club as Mick has mobility issues. Rita and Mick have kindly donated their mallets (David Barrett with red heads) to the Club, and they are available for use by members. I am grateful to John Bartolome and Jenny Emby, who have agreed to take on the Treasurer's and Secretary's roles, respectively.

I hope you all have an enjoyable Christmas and New Year.