

CORNWALL CROQUET CLUB

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A Personal View

While the croquet scene in Cornwall has been quiet (I have only played once at Bareppa and about four or five times at An Gwel), I have been active elsewhere. I have managed to play in tournaments at Plymouth (where I am a Country Member for only £30 p.a.), Woking, Bristol, Budleigh Salterton (twice) and Sidmouth and in league matches for the Plymouth CC at Exeter, Nailsea, Taunton and Budleigh. The great thing about these games is that one does not have to be an expert, the handicap system taking care of a wide spread of abilities. However one does need a reasonable idea of the rules and etiquette of the game and also to be a member of the Croquet Association.

Malcolm Hooper and I won the doubles in Budleigh and achieved some publicity in Cornwall on the lines of "we had to go to Devon to play as there is nowhere here" and I also won in Bristol, very nearly playing the final against Malcolm. We have both tried hard to publicise the state of affairs in Cornwall with some success. As a result of Budleigh, we had some TV time – at about 1.45 p.m. on the local ITV channel. This was a disappointing programme, about one or two minutes from more than two hours filming, the main points including contact names and addresses being omitted. Malcolm advertised his lawn in the Croquet Gazette and, as a result, had visits from about half a dozen different croquet players taking the opportunity for a game on a beautiful lawn, though small, in a gorgeous position.

Otherwise I have had no calls, queries, requests or invitations from members - disappointing in that respect.

The Croquet Association

The CA is, of course, the ruling body in England for the game. It lays down the rules (in association

with other national bodies), oversees the activities of registered clubs and publicises their tournaments, produces relevant booklets on rules, how to conduct tournaments, coaching guides, issues free to members the quarterly Croquet Gazette and sells equipment and literature at varying discounts – all this and more at a cost for a Tournament Member under 65 paying by direct debit of £25 p.a. For anyone interested in the game and in widening his/her horizons, membership really is necessary.

Roserrow and Lakeview

I have heard no more from either. If anyone happens to be in the vicinity and manages to take a look to see how their lawns might (or might not) be progressing, I would be very interested to hear the results.

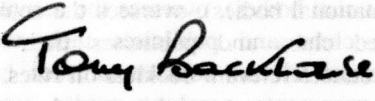
Killiw Park

I called in at Killiw in August and was lucky enough to meet the owner who was talking to his estate manager as I arrived. The results of an amiable, constructive but fairly brief discussion were:

- They are expanding their existing facilities by constructing a second 18-hole golf course and extending the clubhouse.
- They have earmarked a site for two croquet lawns, are discussing with the planners and their immediate neighbours. Objections from either are unlikely.
- Appropriate machinery is on site and its use will minimise construction costs.
- The property is privately owned and the golf club, though it has a committee, is financed and run by the owner who meets all costs and collects the subscriptions. A croquet club would be run in a similar manner.
- Assuming that all goes well, it is unlikely that we would be able to run the first hoop before the spring of 2001.

Possible disadvantages are that space is limited to two lawns so expansion might be difficult and the lawns are about 300 yards from the clubhouse. I hope that one loo can be included in the equipment shed together with shelter for players when it rains. Nevertheless, these points are trivial compared with the chance of actually achieving an operational club, and I firmly believe that this is by far our best opportunity to achieve that since I first started looking in March, 1995. The site is ideally

situated in the county with populations from St Austell and Newquay through Truro to Falmouth all being within reasonable reach. I also believe that, once one club with positive publicity and a constructive recruiting, coaching and playing programme gets underway, others will follow as the advantages of the game in terms of accessibility, cost (one tenth of golf!) and enjoyment become known. My fingers are firmly crossed.



Tony Backhouse.