

# UPDATE

Now we are in March I would like to fill you in on plans for the month and the rest of the year. As usual, our season opens on 1<sup>st</sup> April and from now on all lawns are closed to enable us to prepare them for the coming season and to carry out spring cleaning in all buildings.

Last year as a result of the excellent detailed and time-consuming work put in by Nigel we were very successful in enrolling a good number of new members who proved themselves very keen to develop their croquet skills and join in all aspects of the club. This year the task of recruitment has been given to Debbie and I am sure she will be asking for help with various jobs over the next month or so. We are aiming for our first Open Weekend on 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> April, followed by a single day on 22<sup>nd</sup> April and your help on these days will be most welcome. More details later.

Looking ahead to the season the committee has agreed that we need to focus on developing Association Croquet. It is very sad that we now have only half a dozen members who play AC. In the early days of the club AC was the only code taught and played, and the skill of those early players is clear to see in the awards displayed on the clubhouse walls. As time has gone on fewer and fewer players took up AC until the club is now in the position of having to withdraw from Federation league matches altogether. The focus this year will be on coaching new players to AC through regular sessions on Wednesday and Saturday mornings as well as Wednesday evenings. Do please join in and find out for yourselves how interesting and enjoyable AC can be. Don't be swayed by comments on 3+ hour games. There is also a half-lawn form where games do not exceed 1¼ hours and that is what you will start on. You will not be expected to play on your own either - more experienced players will guide you round at all stages. Those who attended the AGM may remember Des explaining the format. So again, don't be swayed by negative comments..... try it out for yourselves and give it a fair chance. We have four AC coaches in the club. They are Bob Burnett and Des Honey, also Bob Cash who was unwell for most of last year but we hope will be fit enough to come back to play this year, and Ian Wilson. Whilst advice and help from other players is well intentioned I suggest that you concentrate only on help and instruction from the coaches.

The Wednesday evening sessions will be open to anyone who wants to play, including newcomers to croquet, whether AC or GC, but the main focus will be on AC. Sessions will start at 6pm and go on until 8pm. Initially this will be only in April, but may be extended if it proves popular

On to the lawns! You may remember an appeal last year for help with mowing. One or two members replied, but we still need more. Last year we received many favourable comments on our lawns and we want it to stay that way. Bob will be organising training for using the

mower this coming Sunday, 5<sup>th</sup> March. Just turn up any time from 10am to 1pm. The more people who volunteer the less work for everyone.

There is also other work to do during the month: the hydrangeas will need pruning and the outfield cutting back. The clubhouse will need a good spring clean, as will the cabin and toilets. The equipment shed also needs a good sweeping out, the mallets and balls cleaned, the hoops washed and any damage touched up with paint. In addition to this Bob will need help mowing the lawns, marking them out and setting the hoops up. Particularly important will be the first short cut as there will be a lot of grass cuttings. A team of three will be needed for this – one to mow, one to load the cuttings into a wheelbarrow and one to take them to one of the grass heaps. A call for such a team will be sent out when we are at that stage but if, meanwhile, you want to get going on other jobs but are not quite sure what to do, just ask.

Finally, in the next fortnight you will be sent your membership renewal forms (no increase in subs again!), a programme for the year detailing events and competition dates and forms to fill in to enter competitions. As ever, we want to see you enjoying social play as well as joining in tournaments, so look forward to lots of entries.

*Rhona*