

NEWSLETTER

UNITED CROQUET CLUB INC.

Spring Edition - August 1998

President
Geoffrey Naylor

Treasurer & Editor
Bruce Newburgh

Secretary
Ursula Hill

EDITORIAL.

It is that time again - time to think about taking out the mallet for a good polish and to shake the moths out of our whites.

If the Croquet Council has its way, this could be the last year we will be doing it - taking the whites out, that is. The NZCC Executive has (in what I consider to be a seriously retrograde step) agreed to change the rules requiring players to wear white at tournaments. A reasonable standard is asked for and flat soled shoes are still required.

The Council hopes that clubs will "move to mufti and not require that 'whites' be required"

No doubt the Canterbury Association will be considering this recommendation and your committee will do the same. How about making your views known!!

THE OFF SEASON

Well - those winter elves have been at it again. All six greens have been grooved and top dressed. Fifteen cubic metres of soil was used. That is a column of soil one metre square reaching to a height of a 5 storey office building - where does it all go?

Seed has been spread, but more will be needed in the spring; three shelters have had the rotting rooves repaired and the four unpainted shelters have now had the first coat of paint and should have a second and final coat by the end of July. Seating has been repaired and painted and - listen carefully - that terribly uncomfortable seat in shelter 6 has been modified and now is as comfortable as your favourite lounge suite.

INTERCLUB

James has been in touch with all who have expressed an interest in playing for us next year and we are able to field a team in each of the grades - full details will be given at the Captain's Meeting on 15th August, after the Special General Meeting.

JOHNSON MEMORIAL

Disappointing - only four teams have entered from our club. Entries close in August - think about it.

COMING EVENTS

Committee Meeting 12 Aug. Contact a member of the committee if you have any issue you want raised or any questions.

Special General Meeting 15 August at 1.30pm - to consider Rule changes required by the formation of the Twilight Club.

Captain's Meeting 15 August following the Special General Meeting to discuss our playing activities for the coming season .

Opening Day 12 September. Ordinary play in the morning - organise your own draw. Fun play starts at 1.15pm. Afternoon tea, (bring a plate) 3.15pm.

COACHING

Geoffrey is organising two days of coaching for C Graders - Sundays 13 and 20 September at \$10 per day. UNITED MEMBERS FREE. Register with Geoffrey at 358-4764.

Coaching for B & C graders on Friday mornings commencing late September - probably 10.30am to 12.30pm. by prior arrangement only.

Tales from Long Ago

The contributions to United, and to croquet, of some of our members has been quite outstanding. We don't always remember just what a huge debt we owe to our predecessors - and it is huge - nor the special place United has in the history of croquet in New Zealand.

Long, long ago, before the Pavilion burnt down in 1979, three sports clubs were as one - they were United; the bowls club, the tennis club and the croquet club. Some four years after the initial application was made, and no less than thirty eight years after we were formed - one of the first Croquet Clubs in New Zealand and based then as now in Hagley Park - the official formation all three clubs was approved by the Domain Board in 1904. At a total cost of just under £100, two croquet, two bowls and six tennis lawns were laid out. In 1905/1906 a pavilion was built for the use of all three Clubs.

Four years further on, on 3rd August 1910 to be precise, the Secretary of the United Croquet Club, Mr S.S. Blackburn, convened a meeting to form the Canterbury Croquet Association. Can you guess where its first tournament was held, in 1911? Correct, right here in Hagley Park. Another year on, and Mr E.J. Ross of United, on behalf of the Canterbury Croquet Association, proposed, unsuccessfully, the setting up of a National Council. But the proposal was accepted in 1919, and the next year Mr Ross was elected its first President. For the next ten years or so we were the largest croquet club in the country, and our Members dominated the National tournaments.

Once the Pavilion was completed, of course there had to be a Pavilion Committee. It more or less "ruled the roost" because it controlled both the arrangements for tournaments and the social events for all three clubs, since, obviously, it was best to avoid all of them wanting to use the Pavilion at the same time. So it was a most important Committee. And now we can introduce Iris and Ernie Horwood who are just two of the people who deserve a special place in our history. Iris was the influential Secretary of the Pavilion Committee for sixteen years, from well before "the fire" until the new Clubrooms were built.

Not content with all that commitment, Iris also served on the Committee of our Club for another long stint. Vice-President for two years, from 1965 to 1967 - a time when Alice Mollison first became a Committee member - Iris was then Secretary for thirteen consecutive years - from 1967/8 to 1980/1 - and then went on to become President for a seven year spell from 1981/2 to 1987/8 except for 1983/4 when she took on the role of Secretary again! Who will ever repeat such devotion?

Although he learned his croquet at the Holmes Park Club, Ernie was also a stalwart United supporter. Not only did he prepare tea for them both when Iris was at work for the Club or playing in tournaments, but he too was a member of the Committee for a ten year spell, from 1975 to 1985, except for 1978/79. He was United's Delegate to the CCA in the early 80's,

But Ernie's efforts for the Club went far beyond his wise counselling on the Committee. He was always busy around the lawns, the Clubroom and the shelters, doing jobs a good many of which he initiated and then carried out. Of course, as he would be the first to acknowledge, others helped too.

Is that all Ernie did for us? Not by a long chalk. He worked tirelessly amid the ruins of the burnt out Pavilion, along with Jack McNab and others, clearing the site and rescuing as much memorabilia as possible. We should acknowledge too, the support received from the Bowls and Tennis Clubs in the initial stages of this salvage operation. Is *that* all Ernie did? Not by another long chalk. He helped to replace and dispose of an old water pipe under the golf course from Kilmarnock Street. The new pipe brought *mains* water which replaced the river water we had used up to then to water the lawns. [Our drinking water came from a well in our car park!]. But the pressure left a great deal to be desired, and later on the City Council brought a high pressure pipe to our back gate. Ernie, helped by the late Ray Forsythe and others, used a small digger to put in the watering system for our lawns, at a cost of \$2,000 in the late 80's.

The sprinklers were turned on and off by Bill Mallock, then as now our devoted green keeper. Of course the watering took place in the daytime - no doubt to the annoyance of some members - but at tournament times Roger Murfitt would come down in the middle of the night to do the job!

At \$1,500 a season the cost of water was a major burden on the Club's finances. But Tony Reid persuaded the Council that we were a deserving cause, and got them to reduce the charges significantly. His efforts complemented all the work Ernie had put in, enabling us to afford to make our lawns the envy of many other clubs.

So it is very fitting that both "The Horwoods" as they are affectionately known, should be Honorary Members of our Club; and that Iris be asked to "run the first hoop" each Opening Day. It is a pity that they don't feel able to come down to play much nowadays, but then if they did, and continued to play like they used to, we'd probably all get beaten.

Iris and Ernie we salute you, and want you to know all the present Members are grateful to you for your efforts over the many years you served the Club.

GET WELL WISHES for a speedy recovery to Alice and James, we hope they will be better to join us by Opening Day.

NEWSLETTER

UNITED CROQUET CLUB INC.

Christmas Addition - December 1998

President
Geoffrey Naylor

Treasurer & Editor
Bruce Newburgh

Secretary
Ursula Hill

EDITORIAL

Dress Policy

Well - it's official - we don't need to wear whites any more on club days! The NZ Croquet Council has decided that from this season whites need not be worn by those playing in its tournaments. Neatness and flat soled shoes are its only requirements. They have asked clubs to consider dropping their standards (oops, sorry) old whites only dress code.

The Canterbury Croquet Association has decided as an interim measure to require whites to be worn for all events controlled by it - this includes the Johnson Memorial and weekday interclub as well as any Association tournaments. This requirement will be reviewed at the end of the season.

At our own Special General Meeting held in August to consider the changing of our rules to permit playing associate members (Twilighters) only four of those present voted to retain whites on club days - but neatness and flat soles please.

THE TWILIGHT CLUB

During the winter we were looking at forming a new club to operate within our club to encourage more members of the public to consider croquet as a spare time activity.

Our home in Hagley Park is becoming increasingly surrounded by high rise residential flats, hopefully filled with gardenless people looking for something to do in the early evenings and Sundays. As our President has said "instead of taking a dog for a walk - take a croquet mallet". The "sub club" meet after 3.30pm any day and anytime on Sunday during the days of daylight saving. Currently there are 13 members who meet regularly (and none live in a highrise flat). They are also developing an interesting social side.

MAINTENANCE

IMPROVEMENTS

Much work has been done since last season. The shelter between greens 1 & 6 now has a full set of windows - has been painted - the roof has been partly

rebuilt - a "window box" type garden has been built and planted and even the seat facing green 6 has been made comfortable to sit in. Those ugly part tyres have been replaced with hit boards and the greens, after our full autumn top dressing, have improved magnificently.

More work is scheduled and your help is needed - the following will be done over the next month so:-

1. finish painting clochmerle and the North West shelter
 2. roof repairs and painting of the North East shelter
 3. laying paving slabs in front of equipment shed
 4. building storage bins.
- If you can spare say, half a day over the holidays please call Peter Weeks

CONGRATULATIONS

To Jane McIntyre who won the Canterbury Open championship (Bruce missed being the runner up by only 3 net points).

A special feature of this premier event was that two thirds of the contestants were United members. Jane also won the Canterbury Singles Championships, and as this goes to the press, Jane and John Prince are in the NZ trans-Tasman test trials in Wanganui.

To Peter Parkinson who was runner up in the South Island Championships. Peter also won the Senior Mens Championships.

To Geoffrey and Peggy who won their section in the Senior competitions.

MORE CONGRATULATIONS

To Malcolm Long who is to be married about the time you

will be receiving this - To Vicki for an even more magnificent garden display this season - To James on his return home after almost four months in hospital.

COMING EVENTS

The **NZCC National Championships** will be held at United starting 9th January 1999 till 16th. Peter Weeks has asked for helpers for the week. There is a roster up in the club room, if you are able to help please put down your name.

- **Interprovincial** (at Ashburton) Junior 10th Jan - with a record entry, all teams have been chosen.

Senior 17 Jan - some vacancies exist. If you are interested in entering, call Peter Weeks.

- **Silver Badge** competitions
Play off 30/31 Jan. If you are interested in representing the club in your grade contact Club Captain Peter Weeks immediately. Entries must be processed by Peter before 18 Dec.

- **South Island Teams event:**
Feb 20/21 at Timaru

- The regions premier "**C**" **Grade** tournament Jan 16/17 at Diamond Harbour - a fun weekend of short games.

- **Canterbury Junior**
-commencing Sat 6th Feb.

Christmas Party

Saturday 19th December - afternoon tea at 3.30pm, bring a plate of festive goodies. There is a raffle, \$1.00 a ticket, this will be drawn in the afternoon.

The MacRobertson Shield

This series of six test matches to be played among the four countries, America, Australia, Great Britain and New Zealand, will now be held from 24th January to 13th February 2000.

The change of date has been dictated by the lack of aircraft seats for the original starting date of 3rd January, just two days after the start of the Millennium.

United will be the main venue, and possibly the only one. An opening reception is planned at the University - where the teams will be staying and for which a limited number of tickets will be sold to anyone who wishes to come along - and a closing barbecue at United, to which everyone will be welcome for a nominal charge.

Our lawns are already in very good condition and with the further work planned for the autumn/winter months, they should be even better by the time this major international event is held.

In due course we will be asking for volunteers to help with various aspects of the event, from other Clubs as well as United. The tasks which still need to be done include painting, "mini work" on the lawns, with full top dressing to come later, extra flagpole erections, a variety of carpentry jobs on seats & chairs and a good deal of tidying up. A cheerful and willing response from you would be appreciated by your Committee, even if it is only to make coffee for the other volunteers!

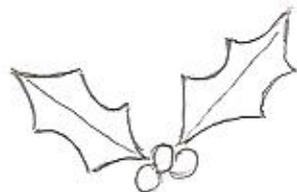
We have been fully re-imbursed by the MacRobertson Committee for the expenses we have incurred so far, and will be for all future MacRob

expenditures, so everything now looks set fair for the Shield Tests. Let's hope the weather also sets itself fair for the three weeks of the Tests.

Each Test between two teams of six players will consist of nine singles and three doubles games and will last six days. To accomplish all these matches within the three weeks allocated means the use of seven lawns. Whether or not we can find a seventh lawn nearby, or whether some matches will have to be played at another croquet club is still being explored.

The MacRobertson Committee is chaired by Roger Murfitt, a very seasoned MacRobertson Shield player, as well as an experienced team manager, and Geoffrey is the UCC representative on it - with special responsibility for the lawns.

There will be no entrance fee, so please do make a note in your diaries to come along and to "Bring a friend". It will be a marvellous opportunity to show off croquet at its very best to all the doubting Thomases you know. Drinks, food, and programmes will be available.



Have a great Christmas and may Santa bring you all you deserve.

Bruce.