



# NEWSLETTER

Issue 31

November 2024

## *A big thank you to Brian Hunt*

At the 2024 AGM Brian announced that he would be stepping down from the Chair and the Committee on Finals Day – 6<sup>th</sup> October this year.

We wish to thank Brian for his many years of service to the club. In 2017 he was the Membership Secretary and Safeguarding Officer. In June 2020, after a short break, he re-joined the committee as Acting Chairman, and was elected Chair at the 2021 AGM.



On his return to the committee Brian found himself at the forefront of an extremely challenging time. The restrictions and closures of the pandemic were bad enough, but then our landlords gave us notice to vacate Fynn Valley, putting unprecedented pressure on the club and its committee.

Finding a new home proved to be far from simple. On more than one occasion we thought we had found a solution only to be let down at the eleventh hour by unforeseen conditions and technicalities.

During this time of great activity visiting many potential sites Brian, through his Nacton Parish Council Chairmanship and local contacts, was able to negotiate a space for two croquet courts on the outfield at Nacton Cricket Club. This allowed the club to remain active before moving to its present location. In addition he arranged for us to hold our AGMs at Nacton Village Hall.

We then set about turning a meadow on Bucklesham Road into our new croquet club, and again Brian's position on the Parish Council gave access to both County and District Councillors that proved most beneficial in obtaining grants towards our new facility. From finding a new site to constructing the courts required a period of sustained application with many setbacks on the way. In April 2023 we finally opened.

Over the past year in addition to his role as chair Brian has been part of the team maintaining the lawns and property, plus arranging inter club matches. He will continue as a member of the club and hopes to play more often, maybe winning club tournaments!

Again we wish to thank Brian, and extend our thanks to his wife Ria whose constant support has not gone unnoticed. We wish them both the very best for the future.

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## New Acting Chair

After the 2024 AGM your committee elected Martin Brown to fill the role of Vice Chair (a position required by our constitution). He will now stand in as Acting Chair until the 2025 AGM when the membership will elect the new Chair (a 3 year appointment). Prior to this forthcoming AGM members will be invited to submit their nominations, with seconders, for this office.



## Finals Day

The weather was kind and the traditional Speed Doubles Tournament produced a thrilling day of fierce but friendly competition; however the combination of senior wisdom and youthful enthusiasm proved too much for the rest of the field. Colin Hawes and Henry Gosnell romped home to victory.



**Victory Cup.** The final of the Victory Cup, which had been played earlier, was between Ria Hunt and Henry Gosnell. Congratulations go to Ria for a sterling performance, and well done to Henry the runner-up.

## Committee update on Finals Day

While enjoying pizzas provided by Azure Woodfired Pizzas, Bernard Button (*Treasurer*) updated members on the club's current financial situation. To survive beyond next year the club needs to increase its income.

Bernard described several ways in which the club aims to achieve this, however the main ones are 1) to increase the membership, 2) to increase green fees from regular facility hire to organisations such as U3A, and one off corporate events for team building and networking, and 3) by signing up sponsors.

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Martin Brown (*Club Secretary*) then gave more detail of the club's plans and the strategy for their implementation. He explained that help from members would be essential to reach the club's targets and asked for volunteers to assist either with individual tasks or by taking on specific roles.

The meeting was then opened to the members for comment, and some concerns were raised. Of particular note were 1) a growing divide between committee and members – an apparent feeling of 'them and us', 2) a lack of communication, 3) a lack of committee members' visibility.

The committee was listening and a subsequent meeting of the committee was convened. Much was discussed. The members' concerns mentioned above were taken on board and will be addressed wherever possible.

The following was also agreed. 1) To regularly invite individual members to committee meetings to contribute to and participate in discussions on a selection of topics. 2) Members of the committee will in future attend more club sessions. 3) Better planning of events will be communicated via the newsletter, posted in the pavilion and on the website – so please read the noticeboards, visit the website and feel free to talk to your committee members.

During the course of the afternoon several members came with offers of help. Our thanks to those members and we will be in touch to develop a way forward. Further support is still welcome.

## ***Recent events***

**East Ipswich and Ipswich Massachusetts Rotary Clubs.** After their successful corporate event in August, East Ipswich Rotary returned with their American counterparts for another most enjoyable evening of croquet. We are confident that the seeds have been sown for future events.

### **Home Start Sports Day**



Once again Ipswich Croquet Club was pleased to support the Home Start Sports Day at Trinity Park by showcasing croquet and providing one of the sporting challenges of the day.

It was also great fun to see how far employees of some

of the most respectable organisations in Suffolk will go to raise money for a worthy cause.

**Ladies Friendly v. Unity.** Unfortunately this event was cancelled due to bad weather. However Unity ladies are keen to arrange a fixture next summer.

**Landguard Rotary.** Many thanks to Chris Minett for arranging this event and to our members who helped on the day. Fun was had by all and it is hoped that some Rotarians will now consider joining ICC.



### **Norfolk Suffolk Foundation Trust (NHS).**

This was probably the last of this year's group events. The weather turned out to be beautiful and all 7 participants had a great time.

We also had a positive conversation about how croquet might in future have a role in both staff team building and with building patient confidence.

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## ***Forthcoming Events***

**Christmas Lunch** This year the Christmas lunch will be held at the Newbourne Fox on Saturday, 30<sup>th</sup> November. The table has been booked for 3.45 PM, and we hope as many of you as possible will attend – your partners are most welcome to join us.

Jane Miller and Ria Hunt have kindly volunteered to organise this event. Please confirm your menu choice and number attending by Saturday, 16<sup>th</sup> November latest to the club (Jane or Ria) and **not** the Fox as suggested on the menu (*see menu attached to separate email dated 29/10/2024*).

**The 2025 AGM** The 2025 AGM will be held on Sunday, 23<sup>rd</sup> February – we will confirm the time and venue nearer the date.

**2025 Calendar** The committee is currently preparing the 2025 club calendar which will be presented at the AGM and posted in the pavilion and on the website

## ***In-house tournaments***

Congratulations to the following:

**Wednesday GC Singles.** September winner: Bernard Button

October winner: Martin Brown

**Sunday GC Singles.** September winner: Martin Brown

October winner: Bernard Button

**Wednesday GC Doubles.** The winners of the September tournament:

Valerie Harding & Chris Minett

October tournament:

(Pool 1) Christine Bingley & Mick Miller,

(Pool 2) Lucy Ratcliffe & Ria Hunt

**November Tournaments.**

**Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> Singles;**

**Sunday all day, 24<sup>th</sup> Singles;**

**Wednesday, 27<sup>th</sup> Doubles;**

## ***New Member***

We would like to welcome our latest member Liz Thompson. Liz has joined the club as a Full Member. If you spot her at the club please extend the usual ICC welcome and include her in a game or three.

## ***Taster Sessions***

The Saturday morning taster sessions (10 AM – 12 PM) continue to attract potential new members. We urge all current members to take invitation cards (kept in the top drawer of the pavilion filing cabinet) and hand them to as many people as possible. You can also post these cards on noticeboards in your locality (libraries, village halls, retail outlets, doctors' and dentists' surgeries, sports/youth/bowls clubs etc.). In addition we will be preparing posters periodically for such displays.

## ***New Thursday and Saturday sessions***

The club is keen to encourage as many members as possible to participate in in-house tournaments, and eventually for some to move on to represent ICC in interclub events.

**Thursday mornings.** To assist in this endeavour Valerie Harding (*Club Coach*) has offered to start Thursday morning ladies only sessions to build confidence in playing skills and tactics. If you are interested please contact Valerie (*Tel: 01394 246 876 or Email: [hardingvalerie233@gmail.com](mailto:hardingvalerie233@gmail.com)*)

**Saturday tournaments.** In order to build for its future the club needs to not only increase the membership but encourage younger members. Such members will almost certainly be working or studying on weekdays and thus miss out on many of the club's activities. We are therefore planning to introduce monthly half day tournaments on Saturdays for everyone. If you would like to join in these events please enter your name on the list in the pavilion so that we can gauge interest.

**If you have other suggestions** please use the 'suggestion box' in the pavilion or on the website, or talk to a committee member.

## ***New email address***

For a variety of reasons including security, identity and technical issues we have been advised to set up a new Gmail account making a minor change to the club's official email address. We have added "uk" after "...ipswich" so that the new address is now [croquetclub.ipswichuk@gmail.com](mailto:croquetclub.ipswichuk@gmail.com). We apologise for any inconvenience however in future when sending emails to the club or committee please use the new address. The old address will remain active for a transitional period before being phased out.

## ***Independent Accounts Examiner***

We are still looking for an Independent Examiner to replace John Jones who is retiring. If you know someone who is willing and able to take on this role please contact Bernard Button (Treasurer) Tel/text: 07737 972 144 or email: [croquetclub.ipswichuk@gmail.com](mailto:croquetclub.ipswichuk@gmail.com) No specific qualification is required, but clearly a good understanding of accounts is necessary.

## ***Beverages***

A friendly reminder - £1 per cup! On top of the kitchen unit in the pavilion is the tea, coffee, chocolate register. There should be one page per member filed by surname in alphabetical order (if you don't have a page please create one). Please don't forget to enter each cup you make so that the treasurer can collect your dues periodically.

## ***Suggestion Box***

Your committee has always welcomed your comments and suggestions. Please don't forget the "Suggestion Box" in the pavilion. This gives you a great opportunity to get your views heard.

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*We would like your feedback. If you have any comments about this or other newsletters or would like to contribute to the newsletter please contact the Club Secretary—contact details at the bottom of this page. Copy and photographs should be submitted by Friday, 22<sup>th</sup> November for inclusion in the Christmas issue. If you no longer wish to receive ICC's newsletter please notify the Club Secretary*