

PHYLLIS COURT CROQUET

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25 February - Season-Long Competition entry formed dispatched

Entry forms for our GC Season-Long competitions were sent to all members yesterday. The AC forms were sent to just the relevant players last week.

25 February - Pavilion roof 'shingles' replaced

Just in from Property Services Manager Barry Foster is this photo showing that the missing pavilion roof tiles have now been replaced



16 February - Colman & Roberts pipped at the last in South Africa

Phyllis Court pair Frances Colman and Chris Roberts both lost their respective finals in South Africa today.

Frances (AC handicap 8) was runner-up in her class block and also runner-up in the handicap plate final, only just losing out to Jim Field (-0.5) in the last turn of their game when he made good an ambitious three-ball ending with a series of monster rolls to overhaul Frances who'd been in front for three hours and was peg and rover at the end.

Chris (AC handicap 0) got to the Open Class final for the first time, beating Mike Town (-1) in the block and Lionel Tibble (-1.5) in the semis (both big scalps for him) but then lost somewhat inevitably to England international Mark Avery (-2) by 10 points in that final but at least made him think about it for two minutes shy of two hours.

We were both very happy with the accounts we had given of ourselves and it was our best result yet in this annual tournament and was rewarded by a collective three bottles of runners-up red wine.

15 February - Roberts joins Colman in South African finals for first time

Chris Roberts scored an unexpected and first time win over Lionel Tibble today to reach the final of the Western Cape AC Championship tomorrow.

Frances Colman also won another game in her class event, which was sufficient to secure her the runner-up spot in that event, in addition to previously having qualified for the Handicap plate final. The Phyllis Court pair are represented in two events on Saturday's finals day for the first time.

14 February - Roberts into Open Singes semis in South Africa

Chris Roberts achieved his best result yet in the five years he's been coming to South Africa, when a third win in four games saw him win his block to qualify for the Open event semi-finals at the Western Cape AC Championship.

Roberts' victory in today's game v Mike Town represented a 'big scalp' for our man, who will take on the vastly experienced Lionel Tibble on Friday morning for a place in the final.

Roberts and doubles partner Frances Colman narrowly missed out on a place in the doubles handicap semis when the top seeds Tibble and Australian David Wise snatched a win with the last turn of the game having trailed the Phyllis Court pair for over three hours.

13 February - Our Pavilion receives a face-lift

Much needed renovation work is currently being undertaken on our pavilion.

The original suppliers of the building have been contracted to amongst other TLC work, replace missing and/or broken balustrades and paint the whole structure. Property Services Manager Barry Foster sent us this photo of the work in progress.



09 February - Colman reaches Handicap Plate final in South Africa

Frances Colman qualified for the Plate Final of the Handicap event at Somerset West CC (near Cape Town), South Africa. She and Chris Roberts who had a miserable day, are competing in the annual Western Cape Provincial AC Championship. Frances' final will be on Saturday when she will face the strong and accurate hitting of the experienced Jim Field from Nailsea.

29 January - Charlie von Schmieder secures place in GC World Championship

Charlie von Schmieder (right) was confirmed today as having secured an Ireland Membership Place for the 2019 WCF Simon Carter GC World Championship. It is wonderful that Phyllis Court will again have a presence at croquet's top competitive table. The event is to be played principally at Sussex County CC (Southwick, near Brighton) and at other Sussex and Kent venues from 27 July to 4 August. ***Congratulations Charlie.***



28 January - Season preparation details distributed

The first four e-mails detailing our season ahead were sent out to members today. These covered, (1) Membership subs reminder (2) Social events (3) Internal day tournaments (4) National Series tournaments. More will follow shortly.

27 January - Dianne Browne earns an automatic handicap reduction to 4

Congratulations are in order for Dianne Browne (right) who is celebrating an automatic Handicap Reduction to a new low of 4. She entered a one-day handicap tournament at Hamptworth just before Christmas, won 4 out of her 6 games and so edged up over the handicap trigger mark.

She subsequently played in two High Wycombe tournaments, went down a bit on the first one, then back up again to yesterday.

- Well done Dianne!

- and others get manual handicap adjustments

In the annual close-season review of handicaps, Club and CA Handicappers Frances Colman and Chris Roberts agreed the following adjustments so as to more accurately reflect current abilities (particularly when compared to the 'outside croquet world'). Here is the list of recent handicap changes:

Dianne Browne	5 to 4	congratulations Dianne
Bill Pitkeathley	9 to 8	congratulations Bill
Angus McKibben	10 to 9	congratulations Angus
Dee McKibben	10 to 9	congratulations Dee
Steve Morton	10 to 9	congratulations Steve
Rosemary Noel-Clarke	12 to 11	congratulations Rosemary
Diana Zatouff	12 to 11	congratulations Steve



27 January - former playing member John Hutchinson has died

Sad news - It is with regret that I have to tell you that our former playing member John Hutchinson has died.

John was an Association Croquet player for many years and was a member of the Croquet Club until 2013.

I only really knew John as a former player but one who was always interested in the current goings on of the Croquet Club.

Brian Bucknall says that John was a frequent support of the weekly AC mix-in sessions up to about 10 years ago and will be fondly remembered by co-attendeess of the time.

The funeral for John Hutchinson is on 5 February at Reading Crematorium at 11.30 am.

24 January - Snow on court but fabulous 50+ members attend our pre-season meeting

There was super support for our pre-season meeting this morning when getting on for a third of our membership attend our pre-season meeting. Kept inside by the frost and snow maybe, attracted by the prospect of Jammy Dodgers possibly, but this was the biggest turnout by our membership for this event for years.

It was especially good to be able to welcome three new members to the gathering (one of who joined the Croquet Club as recently as 30 minutes before we started) and another couple joined as new members straight after the meeting.

Chairman Chris Roberts updated everyone on court renovations, pavilion improvement plans and the playing season ahead, with enthusiasm for coaching courses and graded tournaments that are available around the country and here at Phyllis Court.

Richard Peperell invited members to coaching courses at our neighbours High Wycombe CC. Raghu Iyer championed the joys of Association Croquet, and Pauline Wood detailed the Grand National, river trip, and croquet quiz social events.

Chris will e-mail members with all the information given at the meeting and will do this in a series of separate themed postings over then next week to 10 days.

Elizabeth O'Dair, certainly the longest standing member in the room, was the lucky winner of our new innovation, a year's free membership - *and jolly good for her!*

20 January - Please come to our Pre-Season Meeting - THIS THURSDAY (24th) 1030 for 1100

REMINDER - I do hope that you all have this in your diaries, as this will be our first get together of the year and it will be lovely to see you all. This is just a meeting and so you may wish to consider your own lunch arrangements for afterwards.

- **FREE** tea, coffee and biscuits on arrival – *important up-date: the Jammy Dodgers have been bought!*

- **FREE** raffle – One attendee will get free membership for 2019 - but you will have to be in the room to be in the draw!

- Are there any new tournaments?

- Are there courses and other opportunities to up your game? (hint – yes there are)

- Who are the international visitors coming to play you this spring?

- What about the World Championships in Sussex?

Membership renewals - Please help our committee volunteer Membership Secretary and Treasurer by renewing your membership promptly. Delays just cause our lovely people more work having to chase those that dilly-dally.

A really easy option will be to renew in person at the pre-season meeting – simply bring £15 cash! Smile

20 January - Helena and Mike Fensome compete in the Florida Regional Chamionships

Here are three photos from the USA National Croquet Centre NCC in Florida that have been supplied by Helena Fensome, who together with husband Mike, played in the Florida Regional Championship there last week.

Helena reports: "*The NCC is just amazing with twelve courts and a 'pro-shop'!*

The building you see in the (top) photo is the clubhouse which is just for croquet. They do have corporate events and weddings here as well but no other sport - just croquet!

The 36 player tournament was split into two classes (or flights as they say here in the US) and we were both in the 'first flight'.

There was some very good players present and they came from all over the US abd included three US resident Egyptians.

I qualified from the blocks stage to play in the knock-out but lost in the first round 5-7.

Mike and I got to the quarter-finals in doubles.

We are going to Arizona for a week then back home."



15 January - We host 'Croquet Matters' workshop for SCF clubs

As Phyllis Court winter play got off to a good start with members playing on this first morning (and afternoon), representatives of six Southern Croquet Federation gathered in our Thames Room for a clubs improvement workshop called 'Croquet Matters'.

Central to the workshop was the Sport England computer based self-assessment too 'Croquet Matters' which encourages clubs to look closely at what they do well and less well.

The SCF's Development Officer Barry Dench led the workshop which was attended by Raghu Iyer and Roger Goldring (for Phyllis Court); Frances Colman and Chris Roberts (today representing the Federation) and Richard Peperell, Raouf Allim (representing High Wycombe) amongst others.

Impressed by the process, our club committee will make time to apply it to Phyllis Court Croquet in the coming months, and I will report in the findings in due course.

15 January - Court 1 is open for play

I sited the hoops yeasterday, and all are off-set away from the pavilion by approx. two feet in an effort to preserve the summer positions from ware.

Whites are not necessary – dress for warmth – please do not venture onto the grass until any frost has thawed – and have fun!

For the time being, court usage rules are as detailed in last week's news post below please (no private bookings yet).

09 January - Court 1 to open for play next Tuesday (15 January)

Croquet will resume at Phyllis Court a week today - on Tuesday 15 January - when Court 1 will be open for play.

Obviously this is dependent on the weather between now and then, along with my ability to get the hoops in place the day before, but that is the plan!

I am struggling to get the new computer booking system set-up for our purpose (needing staff assistance) but I hope to achieve that this week, after which I will write again – hopefully with some instructions as to how to use it!

For the time being, please do not attempt to book a court because your efforts will probably get over-written in the season setting-up process.

For the next few days, the arrangement will have to be: NO BOOKINGS but just turn-up and mix-in with who ever else you find present, taking a turn sitting out if need be.



04 January - Allim is selected for the International Performance Development Squad 2019-20

Raouf Allim received notification today that he has been selected for a converted place in the GC International Performance Development Squad (IPDS) for 2019-20.

This is a worthy recognition of Raouf's rapid improvement at GC over the past year in which he was an integral part of our club team that achieved our 'best ever result' in finishing runners-up in the National Inter-Club Championship last season.

The IPDS meets physically for two coaching weekends each season when tuition and mentoring will on-hand from members of the England Elite Squad. Raouf is the third Phyllis Court member to win IPDS recognitions after Chris Roberts (2016-17) and Roger Goldring (2017-18).

Congratulations Raouf!

02 January - Monty Taylor has died

Sad news - Former Phyllis Court Croquet member Monty Taylor passed away before Christmas but the news has only just reached me.

In his latter years, Monty served on the on the Main Club Council, and for a few years was the officer with liaison duties for the Croquet Club (or Section as we were then known).

Monty is survived by his wife Sue, herself also a former Croquet member - Our condolences to her and their family.

Update (5 Jan) - A Memorial Service will take place in Maidenhead on 15 January.

Looking back at 2018

*Phyllis Court has a
'GC & AC Double Champion'
~ Raouf Allim ~*

*Phyllis Court were
National GC Inter-Club
Championship runners-up*

*Phyllis Court has the
National Veterans Champion
~ Roger Goldring ~*

