



Cammeray Croquet Club



NEWSLETTER

March 2016

<http://www.cammeray-croquet.org.au/>

Recent Events

The Annual General Meeting

This year's meeting, on Saturday 13th February, saw the retirement of **David Stanton** as President, after completion of his three-year term. In his place, the twenty or so members who turned out for the event elected yours truly to the top job. So future references to 'your humble scribe', 'the editor of this esteemed journal', etc., etc., must be taken to include a reference to the President of the Club, and *vice versa*.



The old ...

David himself managed both roles with aplomb for quite some time. And as was pointed out in an eloquent vote of thanks, he also managed to serve at various times as Games Captain, Club Representative to CNSW, and of course as honorary 'Club Carpenter'. (Take a look at all the improvements around the lawns in recent years!)

Among David's many achievements, can be counted the inauguration of the Dixon Advisory Classic Tournament and the Sydney Premier League. In a notable piece of hyperbole, his efforts were compared with those of the Emperor Augustus, of whom it was said, 'He found Rome made of bricks, and left it made of marble.'

So your scribe is now hunting down a suitable duster with which to polish the splendid edifice that has been bequeathed to him.

Elected to office once again were **Bev Westwood** as Vice-President, **Mike Hughes** as Treasurer, and **Warren Yates** as Secretary. And the six other members of the Committee are: **Sue Eldridge-Smith**, **Marg O'Brien**, **Sandra Colquhoun**, **Graham Maynard**, **Steve Miles**, and **Alan Walsh**. One can only thank them all for their willingness to serve, and hope that they derive an

appropriate measure of satisfaction from their efforts. We must also thank retiring Housekeeper, **Jan Thomas**, for her years of service – enjoy a well-earned rest, Jan.

Reports and minutes can be viewed on the Club website, but it is worth mentioning here that we enjoyed an operating surplus of some \$9,000, making our available reserves look quite substantial at more than \$35,000.



... and the new!

And if you care to move to the next page, you may read that **Dennis Faggotter** was elected a Life Member of the Club ...

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Editorial

The February festival of croquet is over for another year. If you missed it, think about marking next year's diary already. It does keep getting better and better, as was remarked by many of the players and spectators. Truly we are fortunate to have a club capable of hosting such events.

So there is an abundance of material to serve up to you this month – reporting both on the Club AGM and on some major activity on the lawn.

Further down this column (on the next page, in fact) you will find another little snippet of advice on 'hitting straight' – just in case you haven't quite mastered that facet of the game yet!. It really resonated with your scribe – particularly the highlighted parts.

And even further down you will find special mention of two of our sponsors/supporters. Please bear in mind their generosity, and reciprocate where you can. It would be lovely to think that the relationships we have developed might continue for many years to come.

Comment or contribution can be sent to ...
Michael Strickland
stricko@ozemail.com.au



Dennis Faggotter - new Life Member

The following citation was read to the AGM on 13th February

“Dennis took up Croquet in 1995, after a lifetime of remarkable achievement in sports, including Tennis,

Cricket, Rugby League, Soccer, Golf, Table Tennis, and Bowls. He made his mark immediately, winning the NSW Bronze Singles and Doubles in 1995, and the Gold Singles and Doubles the following year.

Over a decade of impressive wins in competitive Croquet, both AC and GC, Dennis spent as much time helping other players as improving his own game. He would come along to Bronze tournaments, and at the end of a game he would offer advice to new players. Neil Hardie, Mike Hughes and Alan Walsh were all beneficiaries of Dennis’s advice early in their Croquet careers.

Dennis first came to Cammeray to run coaching courses for Silver players in 2005, and the club took the opportunity to offer him honorary membership at that time. It was one of the best investments the club has ever made. Since then he has coached large numbers of our players, including our Bronze pennants teams. He has always been happy have a game with any player who wants to improve their game no matter what handicap they are on. Many of us have benefitted from his measured but very precisely targeted advice on both tactics and skills - advice that is always informed by a deep understanding of where the player is at, and what would work best for them. He builds up a knowledge of individual player profiles by attending the pennants matches and other tournaments to see what aspects of play need improving.

For many years, grateful members of the Cammeray Bronze Pennants teams have celebrated the end of the tournament with a long lunch with Dennis, sharing tournament anecdotes, and above all honouring Dennis’s contribution to the team’s development.

But he has not restricted his coaching to Bronze players. Alison Sharpe and Alix Verge are notable cases. Their places in the Australian team, and their splendid tournament and test match records, owe much to Dennis’s coaching.

Dennis has served on the Club Committee and in recent years has relinquished his honorary coaching position, but as a regular member he continues to be willing to apply his magic to anyone who seeks it. As the years take their toll he is now offering to help younger coaches in the club develop their own coaching skills. Never one to take the accepted wisdom as the right answer in all cases, Dennis applies his considerable intellect to any problem on a ‘first principles’ basis. For some this unconventional approach is disconcerting. For others it is pure gold.

One club member has captured what so many of us feel:

“Dennis’s advice to me has been immeasurable and so gratefully received. His words echo in my mind in every game, and he has just the right balance between praise and admonition! His ability to see a problem arising in a players game, whether in the stroke, posture, or tactic, is uncanny, and I hope he will be able to provide the inspiration and care for me for a long time to come. A tournament with Dennis on the sideline can be daunting, because he feigns sleep, but sees everything! And I wouldn’t want it any other way.”

Dennis Faggotter has made a significant contribution to the development of Croquet in NSW as a whole, and there are many in our club and beyond who would echo the above sentiments.”

More on hitting straight ...

Martin French (UK) offers the following, which can be found on that wonderful website ...
www.oxfordcroquet.com



To be a good shot, consistently, I think you need to develop a degree of self-awareness and the ability to analyse what you’re doing at the technical level during the stroke. Things I have found helped me (but of course may not work for others with different styles) include:

- Stand as square on to the line of aim as possible. I avoid having one foot ahead of the other because then sometimes I roll around the front foot. **I also try to stand as upright as I can, rather than bent-over.**
- Keep your head down even after the ball has left. Really focus your gaze on the object ball when you aim, and then at your own ball as you strike. Don’t just look in the general direction of the object, or vaguely at your feet as you strike.
- **A lot of striking inconsistency, I think, comes from the unconscious battle between your two hands.** This is why people with their hands interlocking can be such good shots. I have an overlapping Irish grip – my way of getting my hands as much in unison as I can. **I’ve eventually worked out I needed to grip the mallet tightly with my weaker top hand, with my stronger lower hand only loosely around the shaft.** If I let my stronger hand grip tightly – especially with my thumb and forefingers around the shaft, they can twist the mallet on the final swing as you instinctively grip tighter. I now use the thumb of my weaker hand to clamp down on the two smaller fingers of my stronger hand, and am careful to keep my stronger-hand thumb beside the shaft, rather than around it. All this has reduced the degree of twist I can occasionally induce during the swing. For gentler strokes (eg hoops) make sure the wrists are loose – don’t lock them out as this causes some quite gross errors of aim. Finally, think about the dynamics of the swing.
- I’ve been a ‘caster’ for 30 years, but it’s only the past 3 years (after a patch of really poor shooting) I’ve realised the need to ensure a slight pause at the top of the final backswing, then accelerate the mallet through the ball. My occasional duff shots are when I’m snatching my backswing – the more liquid I can make it the better.

<http://www.oxfordcroquet.com/coach/aiming1/index.asp>

CNSW Events

More congratulations are due to **Peter Landrebe**, who teamed up with Alison Sharpe of Killara to win the CNSW 3-and-under *Doubles* competition at Tempe on the weekend of 13th and 14th February.

And on the following weekend, Cammeray was well represented at the CNSW 3-and-under *Singles*, with Peter being joined by **Rosie Landrebe**, **Alan Walsh**, and **Mike Hughes**, making a four-person club contingent in a field of ten. The competition was won by Trevor Bassett, with six wins out of seven, but Rosie could boast the same result, and had to accept second place only on net hoops (albeit Trevor had a positive difference of 113 to Rosie's measly 80!) And Peter managed third place. Alan was the only player to beat the winner. So the Cammeray flag flew high.

The Birthday Tournament



The annual Birthday Tournament also was played from Friday 19th to Sunday 21st February, and was as popular as ever, with many very familiar faces. The winner, **Bob Green** of Epping, came fourth in his block, but fought his way back the hard way, via the 'repechage' system. This was his third time as a finalist, and he proved very

deserving of the trophy in holding off the challenge of **Greg Deakin**, from Killara, who had been on quite a winning roll until then.

Our thanks again to Cammeray member, **Maureen Cope**, for generously donating the prize-money of \$700.

The Dixon Advisory Croquet Classic

This year's event attracted the strongest field yet. The qualifying event saw Cammeray member **Mike Hughes** gain entry into the tournament proper, to join **Peter** and **Rosie**



Landrebe. Play was from Friday 26th to Sunday 28th February. And what a fabulous weekend it was! Weather good. Company very good. Croquet excellent.

The winner, playing in his third DACC, was **Robert Fletcher**, who was unbeaten in the event, and managed a neat reversal of both the result and even the score of last year's final, beating his brother Greg, 26tp – 0. Our picture shows Robert with sponsor **Daryl Dixon** and Tournament Manager **David Stanton**.

A crowd of some sixty souls, mostly from neighbouring clubs, enjoyed the afternoon's entertainment, and many stayed on for the barbecue which proved a fitting end to a highly successful event.

The NSW Bronze Division Championship

Played from Monday 29th February to Thursday 3rd March, at Strathfield Croquet Club. Cammeray's sole representative, **Sue Eldridge-Smith** (worn out after her long days catering for the Birthday Tournament and DACC!!) managed a creditable joint second in her block, missing the finals by a solitary net hoop.

Special mentions ...



Over the past three years, the company after which the event is named has contributed not only thousands of dollars in prize-money, but an enormous fund of goodwill and support. Chairman, **Daryl Dixon**, has been much in evidence throughout, and Directors, **Steve Netting** and **Tim Coates**, have rolled up their sleeves to ensure that the social side of the event never lost momentum.

This year's tournament began, as ever, with a fun afternoon for Dixon Advisory staff, but the occasion afforded just as much fun for the Cammeray members and arriving tournament competitors who were able to join them on the lawns (or over a beer in the shade!).

The closing barbecue has already been mentioned, but without adding that Dixons not only provided all the meat but also the cooks (Steve and Tim again).

So our thanks and reciprocal support are due to Dixon Advisory, who can be found on the Pacific Highway at North Sydney or <https://www.dixon.com.au/>



Hand Selected Regional Wines Delivered Direct

Julian Todd, the founder (in 2003) of BackVintage Wines, is another who has shown wonderful generosity to the Club.

This year, in addition to the regular pre-tournament wine-tasting, he was good enough to come back for the closing barbecue and very kindly provided all the wine for that event (along with some interesting chat!).

The company specialises in sourcing premium wines from around Australia, and selling them direct to the consumer at wholesale prices via the internet.

Julian can be found at the BV premises: 177 Sailors Bay Road Northbridge, or visit their website: <https://www.backvintage.com.au>

We are also grateful for the kind support of :

Northbridge Pharmacy

Shop 2, 115 Sailors Bay Road, Northbridge, and

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Shop 3, 836 Military Road, Mosman Village