

Auckland Croquet Club - Report 2022

Though few in membership numbers, this season has been enjoyable for those that play regularly. Playing at the Chilton Miners Recreation Ground continued from 23rd March with toilet facilities available. However, to get full use of the kitchen and hall we need to request and collect the keys from the Chilton Town Council offices to open up. From May to the end of September the park is open from 8.00am to 9.00pm. From then on the park closes at 4.00pm. The condition of the lawn remains adequate though little maintenance is carried out with no watering done even in the very dry spells. Thus the surface is bumpy with a mixture of grass, moss and bare patches. The one big improvement has been the replacement of the stop boards by park volunteers, partly because of health and safety but mainly because the trustees are endeavouring to re-establish a bowls club. If this is successful we are not sure how it will impact upon the playing of croquet. Though there is a proposed second lawn at the back of the pavilion, as yet, it is not fit for croquet and we are loathe to give up use of the main lawn.

Throughout the season we have continued at regular intervals to place entries in the local free papers to include match reports. The success of this has been minimal. We entertained a group of ladies (ex-Girl Guide leaders) who enjoyed an afternoon out on a beautiful summer's day with no interest in taking up the sport. Two of our new members from last year were unable to return because of health problems. Our current membership is 12 including one affiliated member, one pay-as-you-play and one non-playing member.

The club entered CN GC league with moderate success; three wins and two defeats. Unfortunately, we were unable to send a team to play in the Bamburgh Club tournament since we couldn't raise a team to comply with the minimum 20 handicap rule. Three members played in the CN GC Singles Turner Goblet without success, two played at Belsay in the progressive doubles and the club played friendlies at Bishop Norton and Bedale winning both.

The club has been represented at CA GC tournaments throughout the country by Jane Pringle and Marcia Henderson. Marcia entered B-Level tournaments at Pendle, Crake, Bury and Ashby. She qualified for the National B-Level final at Hunstanton. In the Women's Open at Crake she reached the semi-final only to be beaten by Jane who finished runner-up. At the same venue, on another occasion, Jane was the winner of the A level plate and also won the Maggie Cowman Memorial Cup at Ripon. Travelling further afield she was runner-up in the Greek Open in Corfu. Nearer to home she also played in the Women's Open Championship at Surbiton.