



# AUTUMN/WINTER 2026 NEWSLETTER



## President's Report

It is a privilege to be able to prepare this report for the Autumn/Winter news. Once again, I would like to acknowledge my hard-working committee, Greg, Linda, Sue, Anne, Rob and Ross. As we all know, most clubs of our size rely on volunteers, who give of their time willingly, to make sure the club remains healthy and financially viable, and I am blessed to have a very supportive and capable committee, who deliver consistently and without complaint.

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge that we now have a second referee in our midst. Recently, at an event at the Takapuna Croquet Club, John Hyde, was acknowledged for his achievement and presented with his certificate and badge by Dave Butcher, organiser of the Referee programme. Congratulations John, I am sure we will be putting your newly acquired skills to good use.

Looking back, over the past 6 months, much has been achieved, but we still have plenty on the 'to do' list. I am hopeful that by the time this newsletter goes out, we will have new clubhouse chairs, either in situ, or at the very least, on order. This has been a long-standing desire of both Jenny Sonntag and me, so it is pleasing to get closer towards a conclusion. Michelle Templeman's offer to sell the existing chairs is most appreciated. Four classy outside chairs were provided to the club, two being a very generous donation from Lynley Schierling, and two from profits from fund-raising events.

The second section of fencing went in just before Christmas, and looks amazing, and has received many positive comments from neighbours and people passing by. Very recently the new signs, designed by Pete Burt and Grant Alexander, were attached. They

complement the fencing and are a welcome addition. Huge thanks go to Pete and Grant, and the generous benefactor, who donated \$8,000 towards the fence and gates. Thanks to Duncan who created a new home for a new letterbox. Ross is continuing in the role of fund-raising for the metal fence extension, and Rob is investigating means of improving the wooden fencing running along the council pathway and Wairoa Rd, to the clubhouse.

Another item on the 'to-do' list is endeavouring to get in place an up-graded path from the new pedestrian gate to the clubhouse, even more important, with the winter weather approaching. A sub-committee has been formed to progress design and options.

At the end of March, as daylight saving headed towards a conclusion, some members enjoyed the last SunDowners



evening, an event introduced and very capably run by Malcolm Ferguson, and Martin and Wendy Bailey held the last Twilight evening for the season. Both events have been very successful, with Twilight raising funds towards the running of the club. These events would not happen without club members volunteering their time and energy, so I extend genuine appreciation to Malcolm, Martin and Wendy.

I would also like to acknowledge the time and effort put in by the Private Events team. Linda has efficiently co-ordinated these events and is delighted to be able to hand the reins over to Liz Jewell and Jill Thompson. Once the events are confirmed, and in the diary, Wendy Strain and her very efficient group of volunteers take over to ensure the guest visitors enjoy the experience our club has to offer. As a club we are very lucky to have so many members willing to volunteer their time to help on these occasions. A huge thanks to all involved.

By the time this newsletter goes out, the 'Ladder' challenges should have commenced, with approximately 17 members expressing interest.

The waiting list to join the club currently sits at 17 and I have been in contact with all aspiring members to keep them up to date. After the AGM, the new committee will be tasked with deciding whether to accept some more members, and if so, how many.

Thanks to Jenny Sonntag's contacts, the club was donated another fridge. It became very much the topic of where an appropriate place was to locate it. The storage area, adjacent to the 'men's room' was finally identified, the cupboard and a door removed, and the fridge had found its new home! It has become a much-loved resource, and the holder of numerous bottles of wine, and some beer, which members are encouraged

to label with their name to retain possession! We have also purchased a new dishwasher for the kitchen.

At the request of our amazing gardeners, Sherilyn and Suzanne, a roster has been developed, to ease their load. To date it is working extremely well, so thank you to all those who have volunteered their services. A herb-garden has been planted around the 'lemon tree' and is thriving. I and others have suggested that it could be extended, but we are dependent on our Lawn-master's team' of young mowers, preparing the ground, so it is a matter of being patient! Considering its size and youth, the lemon tree is looking good and well-laden with fruit.

Planning is underway for 'Wander into Winter', a free, fun tournament, followed by a lunch of soups and a sweet, which will attract a charge of \$15 per person. Members are welcome to bring along a guest(s) to the lunch.

Last November the club celebrated 120 years of existence, with members dressing in style and playing side-saddle. Thanks to an amazing sub-committee of Liz McMaster (facilitator), Charlotte Millar, Michelle Templeman and Linda McKay, the event ran extremely efficiently. Considerable research was carried out by Charlotte and Liz, to create the 'story boards', Michelle in her usual efficient way ran the tournament, and our hard-working Linda liaised between the group and the club committee, as well as taking responsibility for the late afternoon BBQ. Huge thanks also go to Jill Thompson, who organised the morning tea, Anne Stevenson whose happy band of scone makers provided the afternoon tea, the lads who looked after the BBQ and the catering expertise of Austin and Colleen. The hard-fought tournament final was won by Murray Henshall and Duncan Trott, with the runners-up Tony McNeight and Rob Towner. Best dressed went to Wendy

Strain and Malcolm Ferguson. The day was well recorded by local cameraman Colin McRae, photographer Jonnie Crowe, the Flagstaff, and club members, all superbly displayed in the club Photobook.

Fund-raising is still very important for the club, as although we collect subscriptions, they do not always cover the capital investments that the club needs to make in the future. Top of the list for Rob is a new electric mower to replace at least one of our ageing mowers. Sadly, they do not come cheap, but good economical, environmentally sensitive mowers, are an essential part of our inventory going forward, and as you are all aware the lawns are the most important asset we possess. 'No lawns' equals 'no members'!

It is important to remember that the club is there for all members to enjoy. If you have a hidden skill that you can share, or would like to volunteer in any capacity, please let either Sue or myself know.

Thank you for your support and with the AGM fast approaching on June 13th, we are looking forward to a strong turn-out and encourage anybody who is interested in putting their name forward for a governance position, so feel free to contact me, or any committee member, to discuss the role.

Di



## Gardens & Lawns

This time, it is not others' good ideas that cause me a lot of work, but the reverse – my idea of asking for help in our gardens, has made such a difference to my workload, for which I am hugely grateful. If anyone regrets the task they have chosen, please let me know. Sometimes 'nothing is what it seems,' and it turns out to be more work than anticipated! Perhaps, like me, you will do some of your best thinking while pulling weeds and pruning.

I think the gardens have looked their best over the last few months and have complimented the fastidious, hard work the groundsman do in presenting the lawns for our enjoyment, and now are entered by way of the smart new gates, and soon a new path! Once again, THANK YOU, to the now, team of gardeners, who have put their hand up to help. I can pay better attention to my game now, rather than looking around and seeing what needs to be done

P.S. I shall have to hunt for the 95 daffodil bulbs hidden in the front circular garden! They will need a new home – compost hill?!

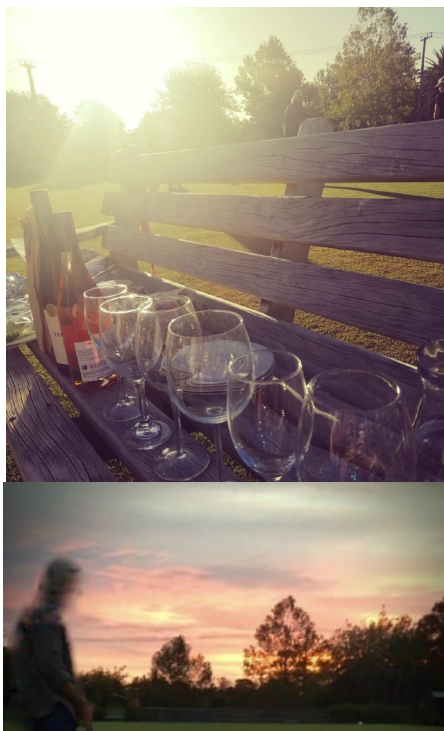
**Sherilyn**



## Twilight

Our season finished on Wednesday 1 April and we had a mixed bag of weather with slightly lower numbers than last year. A large amount of good will towards the Club was generated and has resulted in many Twilighters becoming full members. We are aware that some Twilighters have also booked the club rooms for various events. The standard menu of sausages and chicken is much appreciated and there is a high standard of salads brought along by the players. Many an enjoyable evening has been had with new friends made and great conviviality.

**Martin and Wendy**



## Sundown Croquet

During the 2025-26 summer season, we jollied along through the summer evenings even though several evenings this year didn't turn out to be very summery!! However, we still enjoyed our time socially, playing croquet and enjoying our nibbles and drinks as the sun went down. Now we are looking forward to next season when warmer evenings return and the days lengthen. So, until the sun lingers a little longer in the sky and we can enjoy our evening croquet again, stay cheerful and most importantly....Have FUN.

**Malcolm Ferguson**

## New Shed Opening

Ten months after 'The New Shed' was installed, we finally had the official opening ceremony. Lynley (who made a very generous donation for the new shed), Jenny and Di (who worked tirelessly on fund-raising events) plus Rob and Mike (the magicians who moved the old shed to its new position behind the John Sutton Shed, and were overseers of the whole operation), all held the yellow ribbon as the countdown was made, and the cheers and claps reverberated across the lawns when the ribbon was cut. In recognition of finally getting the new shed in place, their five names

have been etched into the concrete ramp leading into the shed. The old shed has become the gardener's treasured asset and in true fashion the new shed is already at capacity!! Another amazing team effort by dedicated club members was followed by a delicious Christmas lunch.

Sue



## Our 120 Year Celebrations

During 2025, the club celebrated their 120th anniversary with two events. The committee generously allocated \$1,500 to contribute to costs on Saturday 10 May, we celebrated with a Wine & Cheese evening, and on Sunday 2 November, held a vintage tournament so that members could dress up and experience what it was like playing croquet in 1905. Everyone entered into the spirit of the day and dressed up in their garb, mastering the "side-saddle" technique used back then due mainly to women wearing long skirts. Best dressed prizes went to club members Wendy Strain and Malcom.

The tournament attracted 40 players, ending with a grand finale - Murray Henshall and Duncan Trott winning the grand prize, Tony McNeight and Rob Towner the runners-up.

Planning for the day started in March with a focus on research to be able to tell our story well. For the day, 5 storyboards were mounted in the sheds



surrounding the lawns. The themes chosen were Buildings, Clothes, Grounds, Members and The Game. The project required a whole range of skills ranging from research, writing, poster design

and how to display which was achieved seamlessly with a huge commitment to make sure it was done in time.

An important aspect of the day was to include past members and make it a memorable day for them too. It was quite an exercise to track them down but a group of 10 then came along and enjoyed the morning tea, and to watch croquet sitting at tables under the umbrella beautifully set up with flower arrangements

created by club members.

The day ended with a BBQ which became a relaxed social occasion for members and invitees to enjoy and reflect on what was a very successful day. It was very fortunate that Sunday 2 November was a stunning spring day.

**Lis McMaster**



## The Auckland GC Teams Event - 21 and 22 Feb 2026

The GC Teams Event was first played in Auckland in 2025. NSCC entered a team to gain experience in playing higher graded and skilled teams from multiple clubs over 2 days. We were assisted by a St Helier's club player on loan, Steve Field, with a 3 handicap, and he coached us prior to the event. In 2025, NSCC had few wins and were placed last. There are 4 players per team, and all games are doubles and level. Two grounds were used, Takapuna and Carlton. 8 teams were entered in 2026.

This year, Sherilyn and I were joined by Trish Ward (6) from Takapuna and Graeme Woodside (6) from Warkworth. Both had previously been on better handicaps, and it showed during our games, to our advantage. They also had significant experience as players and managers. Named the 'All Comers', we were all connected via an email, and agreed to meet and practice at Takapuna, which uses only competition standard (narrow) hoops. I believe the



practices held really made a difference in our results compared with 2025. Game Day – Saturday 21st Feb, we played 4 games before a quick lunch break followed by 2 more in the heat of the afternoon.

For details of our competitors and the results go to –

<https://croquetcores.com/2026/gc/auckalnd-teams-event/competition>

And yes, auckalnd is spelt correctly - the website is based in England!

We matched and at times beat teams with a similar skill level and surprised and beat other higher-level teams. Although we ended 2nd to last, we were more competitive and won some

respect. In our last match of the day, Sherilyn lined up the hoop through two opposition balls and hit Black for a game winner! What a great way to finish. We went home happy after a most enjoyable weekend.

Prepare now for 2027, NSCC are coming! Main lessons.

- Place your ball close to the hoop before attempting a shot into narrow hoops.
- Plan and control the destination of both balls in a roquet. (e.g. use a stop shot).
- Do not attempt to clear an opposing ball from a hoop if it is halfway or more through. (Place a ball on the other side to remove it.)

- Get one of your team balls into the irons asap.

- Practice with competition level narrow hoops. Now standard in most clubs with the best players.

- Practice promoting your partners ball into better positions.

- Practice with the same partner frequently, so you know the strengths and weaknesses. Stay positive and enjoy the competition.

NB. Black balls were stuck in the hoops in Carlton over the weekend due to heat expansion. (Avoid Black??).

**John Hyde**

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## The Devonport Dirty Dozen vs Takapuna Tossers Tournament

Well! Who would have believed CHAT GBT would be the Tournament Organiser, with Trish and Claire its human drivers! Impressive.

A large sheet on the board with every partnership playing the 6 opposition pairs clearly presented. It ran like clockwork. The choice of 'Round Robin' was popular with partnerships fairly paired. The tournament has run for 7 years and the friendships – old and new, were well-cemented

by the end of a long, sunny, windy day. After group photos, play began with cheerful banter, great sports(wo)man-ship and serious competition on display. Even willingness from the opposition to share skills, post-game, when asked.

Wonderful food and 'sugar-hits' were provided all day, for which we had a dedicated kitchen crew to thank. More delights were to come to soak up the wine in worn-out bodies at 5 o'clock, when the

thoughtful, generous, and in some instances, amusing prize-giving took place. My lips are sealed!

Carol was our valiant referee for the day. I don't know how many steps she did, but one player recorded her own 4km effort. Or was it 4,000 steps?!

**Note:**

*\*If the ball in the 'area of care' around the hoop is moved by the wind after 5 secs, to touch 'the wire,' making the next shot vulnerable to a 'crush,' it is permissible. It cannot be replaced in the original position.*

*\*If the ball is followed by the wind from within one hoop, through the next hoop, it is cheer-worthy!*

P.S. CHAT GBT had nothing to do with this, although I did check afterwards, how it might have done.

Quote: "...a very serious robin had appointed itself as a referee, hopping officiously around the hoops."

**Sherilyn**



## Coaching with Mattie Clarkson

Sprinting across Lawn A gave me just a twinge of envy as I watched energetic Mattie retrieve another roqueted ball. This was on Saturday, March 7, when Mattie travelled from Pakuranga to NSCC to offer advice and friendly 30-minute coaching sessions to 10 enthusiastic club members. Any apprehension within the group was quickly dispersed by Mattie's humour, sunny disposition and sheer expertise.

Challenged to a competition of jump shots by Carl (14) who took full advantage of the handicap differences and correctly claimed at the end "she didn't beat me" as Mattie (-1) was encouraged to stand at least 7 metres away from the hoop to take her turns. It certainly

made very entertaining viewing, as did the final play of the day, when Mattie and Rod (1) played; despite a difference of 200 index points, this was level singles – no advantage! Mattie was assisted to her win when Rod graciously knocked her ball through hoop 8, giving her a hoop and first ball to hoop 9. C'est la vie!

Feedback was universally positive – everyone was treated to excellent advice and honest encouragement. "I always want to play with Mattie" – "when is she coming back" – "I learnt really helpful tips" – were amongst the comments. I can happily confirm that Mattie will be coming back to hold a repeat session in May.

To note - Mattie started to play Croquet at the age of 14

following an introduction to the sport at school and never looked back. Not intimidated by those with very low handicaps or discouraged by losses, she simply battled through the challenges, improving and learning until she joined the ranks of Premier Players (-6 to +2). As a student of Business Studies (majoring in accounting), she will graduate this year and will also celebrate her 21st birthday in June, prior to which she will be playing in the Fletcher/Sharpe Invitational Australian Open Tournament (April 22-26). This usually attracts world class players who fall within the under-35 age. Mattie is the only woman to enter. Go Mattie!!

**Michelle T**



## Private Functions

Within our past financial year we have hosted 22 private functions, welcomed 445 guests and generated revenue of \$8990, slightly down on last year as the Cruise Ship event did not take place in February but we are hoping to welcome them back some time in October for a two day tournament which will be a great revenue builder for the club. Over the past two years we have seen a trend of hosting functions in the summer months post-Christmas due

to some hirers not being able to secure a date in December - this has worked out well for us and we have one company who keep coming back with different departments hosting their clients. Looking forward, we already have 7 events booked in for November and December this year.

This will be my final update on private functions as (after nearly 5 years) I will be passing on the baton to Liz Jewell

and Jill Thompson who will be overseeing the management of events however, I will continue to be involved in a small way and always be there to assist them, I am sure they will both have a blast working alongside Wendy S and our awesome member volunteers who will be having a well-deserved rest from functions over the winter months. And now a word from our member volunteer manager.....

## Volunteer Power - Our Summer Wrap

Our amazing Volunteers came together from October to April, achieving great results.

In October we met to get event-ready and our volunteers brushed up on Health & Safety, equipment know-how, and practised deploying the main umbrella (our prized one). With laminated instructions handy, some dived into roles like Coordinator, Umbrella Assistant, and Greeting the Hirer, making sure our club ran smoothly.

Thank you to Anne Stevenson for keeping the clubhouse spotless and for always being available to lend a hand. Rob and his amazing team keeping the lawns in good condition for all the events taking place. Wendy F, Jill T, Kerry C, Charlotte M, Wendy V, and Anne S for stepping in as Coordinator Volunteers and Mike Crang & Rob F, always at the ready for Umbrella duty.

Our volunteers' enthusiasm is what makes our club thrive, attracting diverse groups like legal firms, medical pros, a Choir and 90th birthday celebration to name a few.

A massive thank you to all our volunteers. We are grateful to have you on board.

If you are keen to join the Team and be part of our enjoyable fundraising events, please do not hesitate to contact me or a committee member [w.strain@outlook.com](mailto:w.strain@outlook.com)

Welcome to Jill & Liz J. I am looking forward to working with you both.

A sincere thank you to Linda McKay for her incredible behind-the-scenes work over the past 5 years. You will be missed, Linda.

**Linda McKay and Wendy Strain**

## Interclub

The 2025/26 Interclub season was highly successful. So keen were club members to participate, we were able to enter 4 teams. One each in Div 1 (Open) and Div 3 (Hcaps 8-12) and two teams in Div 2 (Hcaps 5-9). Ten clubs from the Auckland Association participated, from as far north as Warkworth and south to St Heliers. Team captains had to be on the ball, keeping an eye on the weather, traffic and other conditions especially when playing an 'away' match. Many games were played in the rain, including the final between the two Div 2 teams... White vs Blue!!!! And our Lawn Ranger, Rob, had to be on the ball for the home games, making sure the lawns were pristine for our guests. Practice and coaching happened on Friday afternoons, often followed by a glass of wine or two

to discuss tactics, understanding GC Rules, what we had learned from playing against different clubs, which lawns and hoops were the best and how we could all improve our game!! AHS cards became a hot topic, with index scores going up and down along the way, and much consternation if we felt handicaps in opposing teams were inaccurate. At the end of the season, all club captains were invited to provide feedback on the overall experience, and on May 5, I will attend a meeting focusing on the feedback and plans for the 2026/27 season.

Congratulations go to Div One coming 3rd in their division, and a big 'thank you' to all the players, team captains, referees, for commitment and fun along the way.

**Sue**



## Visitors from Perth

Throughout the year, we get visitors from other clubs within Aotearoa/NZ as well as overseas. It's always interesting to hear about how their clubs operate and what they like about our club. Two recent visitors were Cate and Mark Johnson from Perth.

They both play at the Cambridge Croquet Club, where Mark is the President. They play Association, Golf, Ricochet and 'Rocketball', have floodlit lawns and a bar!!! Playing in the evenings is clearly popular (and necessary) due to the Aussie heat.

Checkout their website <https://www.cambridgecroquet.com.au/>

and read what they had to say about NSCC.

"We had a fabulous time and loved playing on decent grass. The history of your club is fascinating, and the grounds and clubhouse exquisitely kept. John (Sutton) is a bundle of knowledge on grass, your courts and the early days. A treasure to have a chat with."

"We both had fun playing, and although hesitant to play, I enjoyed partnering Duncan and Cate and Liz, Ann and Jenny, had many laughs, mostly at my expense which is why we love the game so much. We will definitely

be back to Auckland. If anyone from your club is ever travelling to the little island off your west coast give them our details, we would love to return the hospitality and welcome them to the Cambridge Croquet Club"



## The OVAL Tournament

Twelve club members with handicaps 11 and above competed in this year's Oval Tournament held on Sunday, March 1. For many of the players it was their first experience of tournament play. The level of competition and focus was high. Referee Carol was kept on her toes. Six 7x hoop games were played in two blocks with the winner of each block meeting in the final play off. There was much hilarity as it became apparent that the pair competing for the

Shield would be wife and husband pair, Jan and Duncan Trott. You could almost see the steam rising as they battled it out on Lawn A. At 4-3 to Duncan, he became the new holder of the Oval Shield. Rumour has it they are still best friends...and married!!!

Congratulations Duncan and Jan and well done to all the players, spectators and helpers for participation, fun and friendship on such a swelteringly hot day.

Sue



# Croquet in New Plymouth and Whanganui

In March a group of us travelled to New Plymouth and Whanganui to do a bit of biking and to enjoy the sights and cultural offerings of Taranaki and beyond. Before we left, we had contacted the NP and Whanganui croquet clubs and had been invited to come along to their twilight sessions. The East End Club in NP is extremely busy, playing both golf and association croquet. The members were welcoming and we set about testing out the lawns and organising games. Liz, Wendy F and Carolyn asked a NP player if she would join them for a pairs game. She reported that this was only her 3rd game at the club so as we progressed, we offered her helpful coaching tips and were effusive in our praise. On

about the 3rd hoop she stepped up and completed a perfectly executed jump shot with calm aplomb. It turned out that she had played in another club, went to numerous tournaments, was on a 6 handicap and knew what she was doing! She did not need our encouragement but was very gracious and we enjoyed having the tables turned and learning from her! The Whanganui club had 8 beautiful lawns, and their twilight was for club members only, with games drawn up by the club captain. Wendy and Ross were in opposition with one another, their respective partners being 2 blokes, one of whom fancied himself as a jump shot expert. Ross's partner advised them all to don crash helmets and to lie low!

He was right! It was a noisy game with lots of shouting and laughter (not a surprise!)

It's fun visiting other clubs—there's always a contact phone number on the respective websites and everyone is welcoming and keen to check our skills or lack of them.

After our forays into foreign territory, NSCC could have an onslaught of out-of-town visitors. Keep an eye out for jump shot experts, real or imagined!!

In the meantime, Sue & Grant were welcomed by the Hawera Club and were quite taken by their croquet murals. An idea for our talented club artists!!!

**Liz Jewell**



## The Grounds

Since the last newsletter lawn D has been scarified and sanded. A great improvement and a very short downtime. This year lawn C has had some work, levelled high spots and trying to get more couch grass cover. It is now back in service but lots of water and warm condition is just what carpet grass (a coarse spreading grass that forms dense mats,) likes so we have been dealing with that. We have more problems than some clubs with weeds as we are surrounded by council verges and golf greens, (paspalum and poa grasses). Our target is a dense cover of couch grass as in A and D that suppresses weeds. C is definitely getting better! Lawn A will be scarified in late spring when

everything is growing strongly. Our rule is to try and only take out one lawn at a time.

Hoops: there are three hoop positions on each lawn. We keep the middle for tournaments and alternate the side positions. It is very dispiriting to move the hoops and a day later find a big hollow where someone has hit down into the hoop and scooped out a divot. In a tournament or interclub this would be a fault. Please take care. Smooth level shots with minimum follow through near hoops. Coming into winter, grass growth effectively stops for a couple of months. This means we must be more conservative in closing lawns when they are squelchy.

Avoid walking on heavy traffic areas, perhaps hit off a bit further from the corner when starting a game, and don't short cut across A when it is wet. Commonsense stuff! Current projects coming up include updating the entrance path and turning and emptying the compost heap plus upgrading sensor lighting.

We are adding more students to the mowing team so you will see a couple of new faces. Harry has gone to study in Wellington and Mathew and William are getting busy at Uni. They have done a great job and still mow from time to time, but study is obviously the higher priority.

**Rob F**

## Dawson Balls

The project to purchase new balls for the club kicked off sometime in 2024 when a very generous donation from John Robertson of \$1,700 from the sale of his outstanding bird calendars was set aside by the committee for this purpose.

Our then President, Michelle, and her chief advisor, Rod, researched the options, quickly establishing that there were only two serious contenders, Dawson and Invictus. Rod and Michelle imported a set of Dawsons for testing and later donated them to the club.

In 2025 we secured a donation from the ever-generous, Lynley Schierling. Thanks go to Michelle for completing a successful application to and working with, the Devonport Takapuna Local Board who generously

contributed \$1,500, allowing us to replace 32 seriously old specimens of varying pedigree!

The committee was now confident to order the new balls and acting on Rod's research opted for Dawson.

The order was placed and then more or less vanished into thin air. Dawson make a fine product but seem to do so in complete silence. Over and over again our attempts at communication were met with a deafening quiet from the other side of the Tasman, Just when I was wondering how to tell the committee that I might have sent over \$4,000 of our money into a black hole, a miracle happened and we received notice just prior to Christmas 2025 that the balls were on their way.

On arrival they were tested for weight and measure and you might imagine my despair when Rod advised me with some concern that the balls seemed to be well underweight. Investment in a new set of scales remedied that problem. Clearly Rod was a gold buyer in a former life and still used his trusty old scales!

All was now well until the first competitive outing when Duncan complained bitterly in his Aussie drawl that "the new balls don't fit through the hoops". Mimicking him as best I could I replied, "mate, they're Australian. Aussies have bigger balls, everyone knows that"

Greg



# Croquet Etiquette



"Ladies, PLEASE! Come, let us have no World Cup tactics—it is the glory of the game that counts."

Golf Croquet is a wonderfully social game, but like all good things, it runs best with a little consideration and a dash of common sense. So, as a gentle guide and to ensure that everyone enjoys their game:

## BEFORE YOU START

Tossing the Coin: it's a small thing, but worth doing properly- toss it so that it spins, with a flick of the thumb against a bent index finger – rather than lobbing it skyward and hoping for the best. When playing a visiting team, the host player takes the toss

## During the Game

If you need to leave the lawn – take your mallet with you – it avoids confusion and stray hazards

## Mobile Phones:

Ideally leave them in the clubhouse. If you must keep one, put it on silent and let your fellow players know. In official tournaments, leave your phone with a non-player

Keep the Game Moving: consider or decide your next shot whilst others are playing.

In Doubles keep discussion with your partner brief and to the point – 60 seconds may be allowed but it will feel like an eternity to everyone else

## Be Mindful of Others:

- Don't cast your shadow over the striker's line
- Don't stand directly in front of or behind a player
- Stay still and quiet while a shot is taken

Safety First flat-soled shoes that stay firmly on your feet are the order of the day

## Fair Play and Courtesy

Honesty is Fundamental – if you commit a fault (divot, offside, wrong ball, double-tap etc), own up. Everyone will respect you more for doing so

## If spectating, resist the urge to:

- Offer advice
- Provide a commentary
- Become an unofficial coach

When taking a tricky shot close to the hoop, (especially a jump shot) and no Referee is present, ask an experienced player to watch if one is available.

If a ball leaves the lawn and you are nearby, as a courtesy return it to the boundary or send it home – even if it's not yours

## Starting Arrangements

**Double Banking** (how to share a lawn without losing friends)

"Double Banking" simply means two games sharing one lawn; it works perfectly well, provided everyone remains aware, patient and just a little bit organised

- Always be aware of where the other game is up to – especially which hoop they are playing
- Do not walk across another player's line of aim and take care not to interfere with the other match
- Always mark balls if they are likely to interfere with a passing opposition ball

If double banking in an official Tournament, both teams start at SE corner – second colours waiting patiently(!) until Primary colours have completed hoop 2 before starting their game. At NSCC, where Secondary Colours often start at NW corner – aim to start at precisely the same time (or slightly ahead of Primaries) if possible, to avoid potential delays. Changing routes mid-game to dodge the other players usually causes more problems than it solves

*NB If one game (often singles) is racing from hoop to hoop and constantly being held up by the match in front, have a friendly chat, suggesting that you could leapfrog them and be out of their hair.*

### Sharing Space Sensibly

Be aware that a shot might strike:

- Another ball
- A mallet
- Or even a player from the other game

(If it does, refer to the relevant rules – but ideally avoid it altogether)

### Where play converges (for example around hoops 1&8, 3&10, 5&12)

- One game should mark their balls
- Remove nearby equipment and bodies

If there is any doubt about who should go first:

### PRIMARY COLOURS GIVE WAY TO SECOND COLOURS

Keep interaction with the other game polite and minimal – just enough to keep things flowing smoothly

### Finishing Up

- At the end of a game all players shake hands – win or lose
- When leaving the lawn, don't walk across another active lawn and remain still if someone is taking a shot
- After doubles, the winning pair clears the hoops etc, unless the lawn is immediately needed
- In singles, both players should help tidy equipment away

### A Final Word

Respect the Referee – they apply the rules, they don't invent them

Above all, remember the spirit of the game:

- Loud, argumentative or aggressive behaviour has no place on the Croquet Lawn

### In Short:

- Play fairly, stay aware, keep things moving ..... and don't take yourself too seriously
- That way, everyone – including you – will enjoy the game just a little more!!

For further information go online to the World Croquet Federation [www.worldcroquet.org](http://www.worldcroquet.org)

**Michelle Templeman**

### Upcoming Dates

**May 16 - Wander Into Winter Tournament and Lunch**

**June 13 - AGM 11.30am - followed by Shared Lunch**

**Nov 13 - Homes Of Devonport**

