SUMMER NEWS

President's Report

It is hard to believe that 6 months have passed since the last newsletter was sent out and a lot has happened at the club during that time.

After much discussion - a path leading from the pedestrian gate to the clubhouse was designed and the installation took place in July. An extra cost, agreed by the committee, meant the path to the side door was included.The committee also agreed to install a grille and tidy-up the council side of the gate which has greatly improved the entrance. Rob and his team have installed new pavers leading to the side deck and in the near future, they plan to rebuild and realign the ramp leading from the side deck to the pavers.









At the end of August, after months of waiting, the new clubhouse chairs finally arrived. Their simplicity and style blends well with our heritage clubhouse and they have made the room look much less cluttered. A huge thanks to Michelle Templeman who volunteered to sell the old chairs though TradeMe, with any funds raised being added to the club funds.

On behalf of the committee Jenny Sonntag and I have ordered new light fittings (fully funded from donations) and we hope that they will arrive next month.

Eight new members will join the club soon having completed the initial coaching run by Greg Hall and John Robertson and supervised coaching led by Liz McMaster. The waiting list has reduced, however there is still approximately 17 on the list including some who have yet to confirm their interest.



A huge thanks to all who participated in the 'Spring-clean' held on Saturday 5th September. They say that 'many hands make light work' and that proved to be true. The following week was our 'Swing Into Spring' tournament. Our grateful thanks to James Varcoe, of New World, who was very generous in his discount on the goods purchased. Thanks also to those who baked, and helped throughout the day, whether in the kitchen or on the BBQs, and I would like to particularly acknowledge Wendy Fergusson, for her very competent organising, and running of the tournament.



Our club continues to enjoy annual competitions against Takapuna and Mt Albert, the most recent against Mt Albert competing for the Friendship Cup. In November, approximately 15 members will be travelling to Whangarei to compete in a two-day friendly tournament at the Whangarei Croquet Club, facilitated by Liz and Ross Jewell.





Liz McMaster, Linda McKay, Sue Alexander and I are currently working on a total revamp of our current website. With the expert help of Dave from Clearview Design, our website will have a whole new look and feel, and will include more functionality, ability for us to amend details ourselves and offer clear navigation to information. We are so excited - Watch this space!!!



Liz McMaster has taken on the role of facilitating Interclub and is doing a great job. It proved particularly challenging when she was advised on the day the teams had to be registered, that the club could only have one team in Division 2, and not two as in the previous year. Members of the committee have undertaken to work with Michelle T, who is our representative at Croquet Auckland, to prepare a paper to share with other clubs regarding our thoughts on how the Interclub divisions could be organised.

Ross Jewell has been working hard raising funds towards extending the metal fencing and has recently been very successful in achieving a grant from Shaw and Partners for $7,500. At the very least it should enable the section adjacent to Wairoa Rd to be completed. A letter of thanks has been sent acknowledging their donation. Recently Rymans confirmed their sponsorship of their sign for another year, which was gratefully received and acknowledged.

Jenny and I organised a 'Soup Lunch' on May 14, which raised $520 and on August 8th and we held the 'Annual Mid-Winter Dinner' which raised $2,550. It is intended that the proceeds of the dinner will go towards Rob Fergusson's long held desire to buy an electric mower.

To date Michelle T has organised three sessions of 'Coaching with Mattie'. Both days proved extremely popular, with all the coaching slots filled very quickly.

The ladder is slowly ticking along. Due to unforeseen circumstances and in some cases medical demands, the challenges have been slower than expected, but now that we are in 'Spring' with the promise of warmer weather, hopefully the challenges will increase!

Croquet NZ has sought comment on a proposal to restructure, and Michelle T, has prepared a submission for their consideration.
The 'Club Championships' have been postponed until March 2027 and the Committee are in the process of finalising the format for this tournament.

Once again, I would like to acknowledge our hard-working committee, their enthusiasm and support makes my job so much easier. We are also so well supported by other members undertaking important roles – Wendy F, Health and Safety, Jill T and Liz J, who look after event bookings, Wendy S, who co-ordinates the volunteers for the events, Robs lawn maintenance team, garden team, John R who has helped Greg with the coaching of new members, and the members who willingly help Liz with the supervised coaching of new members. Thank you also to the members who fulfil the roles demanded by the kitchen roster.

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.

Di



A Few Words from your Club Captain

I'm now into my second year as Club Captain and still learning on the go!!
It is a fun, busy, at times challenging, but mostly very rewarding position. I am constantly grateful to be one of the almost 100 members that make up the North Shore Croquet Club. There's never a dull moment, and I'm sure Mike and Rob feel like hiding when they see me coming with yet another maintenance request!!
Sometimes when I'm prepping (with Di's help) the weekly email, I wonder if everyone will 'groan' when they see another email from the CC!!
A huge bonus for me has been the addition of Liz McMaster to our already hardworking committee. I wasted no time in naming her 'Captain's Assistant'. Liz has great 'management 'expertise, and I have already been able to pass on some of my responsibilities to her e.g. Interclub. The individual 'help' that club members offer and give doesn't go unnoticed. We have several 'sub' groups working away, whether it be related to the grounds, clubhouse or management.
I also love seeing Club Members entering tournaments outside of our club. Alongside Interclub, it's a great way of improving your game, meeting others in the relatively small Golf Croquet Community and observing differences between clubs. A Big Thankyou To All For Making My Job So Enjoyable.

Sue

Capt Sue

Club House Co-Ordinator

It has been a busy time in the Club House over the last few months with events and competitions. I want to extend a massive thank you to everyone who has given their time, energy and hard work in the kitchen and prepping food to managing the rush of tea and coffees and the endless washing of mugs and glasses!!

The Spring Clean of the Club House was a huge success due to the energy and hive of activity with silver cleaning, window cleaning, kitchen makeover and bathroom clean. The gardens also got a boost as well. Thank you again everyone - we couldn't function without your support. On that note I will be sending out another kitchen roster for 2027 in November!

Anne



Coaching with Mattie

It's hard not to feel uplifted when Mattie Clarkson comes to our club. Her beaming smile and love of croquet is infectious, as well as her keenness to share her skills. At only 21 years of age, and already with a handicap of '0', it's hard to imagine where the game of croquet is taking her. But for now, we can make the most of 'Coaching with Mattie' days as ten club members did recently during Mattie's third visit this year.

Here's what they had to say.....

'She's so good' 'Its practice, practice, practice'

'Mattie encouraged me to change my grip and stance'

'She's wonderful…talks such commonsense'

'She is marvelous' 'Showed me how to cast before I roquet'

'I've got a lot of things to practice'

'Mattie noticed that I move my feet when I take a shot'

'She gave me a tip that helped me with running hoops straight away'

'I managed a jump shot which I have never done before'

The day finished with a nail-biting demo match between Mattie and Murray Henshall, with Mattie winning narrowly 7-6!

Huge Congratulations to Mattie on her award from CNZ for being the 'Most Improved Player' of the Year 2025/26.

Sue





Native Gardens

It seems like last year went by in a flash. The native gardens have benefitted from another whole year's growth and have filled in to form a complete area of bush on D Lawn and a varied planting on C Lawn. Even the plants I had worries about have come right and are now as healthy as their neighbours.

I am planning on establishing a path from C Lawn planting over the slight rise behind the compost pit, around the large Pohutukawa tree, to D Lawn planting with the help of Rob F. Hopefully, this path, which will be laid with bark, will link the two planting areas and provide people with the opportunity to walk that way instead of around the front of the John Sutton Shed. On either side of this path other native plants will be established and all mowing in this area will no longer be an issue.

Finally, I would like to mention John Sutton's help, without which my job maintaining the native gardens would be a lot more difficult. John sprays the margins of the gardens whenever weeds start to encroach from the lawns or from the council verge. I've learnt to trust his skill and experience and no plant has ever been lost! So indebted to you, John.

And thank you everyone for the wonderful comments you make about our garden landscape.

Suzanne







Wander into Winter

With the veranda decorated in white balloons and paper snowflakes, and club members arriving in a vast array of colourful 'winter' fashion, our 'Wander into Winter' fun tournament got underway. 35 players - randomly paired by our Tournament Manager extraordinaire, Wendy Fergusson - battled it out on the lawns, on what turned out to be a relatively mild and sunny May day. Play was then followed by a choice of five delicious soups made by our top chefs, Di, Lynley, Jenny..... and rounded off with beautiful crisp and crunchy brandy snaps.

Mike Crang and Peter King were winners of the final match against Josa Ness and Rod Templeman. Here's what they had to say

"It was a beautiful day and, thanks to Wendy who allocated the teams, I was lucky to have a partner, Peter, who played well below his handicap on the day so that together we made an excellent team. We just seemed to gel at critical moments in the various matches to keep the hoops run ticking over. And of course the prize, a bottle of Prosecco, went down very well indeed". Cheers, Mike

"For a first timer it was quite a blast to be part of a winning pair also against the odds. I watched with a sense of disbelief our 3 wins clocking up on the board along with checking out others in the race. Then, as Mike says a steady bag of hoops scored but the final still left open for the opposition at the penultimate 7th hoop when an election by the opposition striker to run the hoop from 3-4 metres (missed) rather than roquet a rookie ball in hoop running position turned the game/match!!" Cheers, Peter

Approximately $700 was raised towards the 'new clubhouse chairs' fund.

Sue

Mid-Winter Dinner



It is great to report that the 'Mid-Winter Dinner' with a difference, was very successful, with the event raising just over $2,500, the majority of which is planned to go towards a new electric mower. We were able to seat 40 people very comfortably and still had room to enjoy mixing and mingling at the beginning, while enjoying, Mojito Cocktails and nibbles. The dinner 'difference' was that the meats, potatoes, kumara and pumpkin were cooked Hangi style in a gas operated 'Multi Kai Cooker', with side dishes of Pea Puree, Braised Red Cabbage, followed by dessert. Some members unable to attend made generous donations, which was most appreciated.





A huge thanks to those who helped with the cooking or other essential roles: Jill Thomson and Wendy Fergusson for cooking, Wendy Strain for her table-cloth ironing and photography, Di's husband Dennis, who set up the Kai Cooker, and Carol O'Toole who filled the role, normally held by Kay Troup, by creating the table designs. We also appreciated others who helped with the room set-up before, and clean-up after.

Finally, we want to acknowledge our loyal kitchen and bar staff. Colleen Rasmussen who ran the kitchen so efficiently on the night and loves working with, and alongside, Wendy Volkov and Sherilyn Hurman, while our capable Linda McKay, prepared the cocktails and set up the bar, and was ably assisted by Austin Rasmussen. Without these five amazing people our job would have been so much more challenging.

Jenny and Di

Mt Albert Friendship Cup

"Competitive on the lawn, friendly off it"

Our four North Shore pairs played four rounds against the Mt Albert teams in what was alose contest all day. It finished with 8 wins apiece.

With wins tied, it came down to hoops – and North Shore took the honours 90 hoops to 86 to retain the Cup. This tournament has been running for over four decades promoting inter-club friendship and sportsmanship.

Thank you to our visitors for their kind notes saying, "this is one of the most enjoyable and friendly tournaments on the calendar". Visitors also commented on how much they love our clubhouse, and our club excelled in hospitality and tasty food on the day.



A huge thank you to our Tournament Managers, Kitchen Volunteers and Grounds Team. Mt Albert will host us next year – I would urge you to enter.

Wendy Strain



Pukekohe – Fun, Sun and Soup

This tournament was held in Pukekohe on Sat 1 Aug. Four NSCC members attended, joining approximately 50 others from BoP, Coromandel, Waikato and Auckland Clubs. Our team included Laura, Liz, Suzanne and John.

The Sponsor was an Irish Real Estate agent, and we were encouraged to wear something green. With a 5 court double competition all players were divided into 2 parallel groups and courts double banked, playing 30 minutes in each game. Our aim was to win the most hoops over the 5 games. Clocks were carried in each game. After our first 3 games, we stopped for a soup and buttered bun lunch then the afternoon started with each group competing in a one shot each closest to the centre pole, hitting from the starting corner. This was followed by the last 2 games.



Their grounds were perfect, and we were able to quickly adapt to the narrow hoops, relying on accuracy and ball control to win. Our NSCC team won both our group 5 games competition and the closest to the centre pole. We all thoroughly enjoyed the day, and I plan to enter again next year. (No AHS cards needed)

John Hyde

Auckland Clubs GC Teams Event

Hosted by NSCC on Day 1, and Takapuna on Day 2, our awesome team of Murray, Jenny, Rob and Liz came 3rd out of the 5 clubs that participated. Mixed teams with handicaps ranging from 0 – 9 overall, with classic Spring weather thrown into the mix, made it a truly testing tournament. Congratulations to our NSCC team and Tournament Manager, Wendy Fergusson.



Swing Into Spring

There's nothing like a 'themed' fun tournament to get everyone out of their comfort zone and a little bit of zing into their step, which is how it played out at 'Swing Into Spring' this year. A typical 'Spring' day, it was windy and cold – blowing the colorfully decorated hats about the lawns, and needing that extra layer on, but not deterring players from competing and playing three x7 hoop games, doubles pairs randomly picked from name's in the hat.







Four pairs won all their games, which led to a play off....with the centre peg being the target!! Linda McKay struck gold, making Linda and partner Sue Lane the winners, Liz McMaster and Sylvia McQuilkan the runners-up.

In the background, Wendy Fergusson was managing the score sheets with pizazz, Anne Stevenson was ensuring the refreshments and generously provided home-baking was there for everyone to enjoy, John O'Toole and Rob Fergusson were cooking the sausages to perfection, and Di was overseeing the proceedings!! Malcom and Anne S took out the Best Dressed award. A great team effort to make another fun club day.

Extra special thanks go to our local New World Manager James Varcoe who kindly donated $100 to our costs for the day.

Sue





Golf Umpires Course

When the offer came from two of Auckland's top referees, Sharon Browne and Sally Coles, to run GC Umpire courses both for players interested in becoming umpires, as well as players just keen to understand the rules more clearly and hence in improve their game play, I knew it was a must for



NSCC. Thirty club members took up the opportunity including two players from Orewa. The course was held over two consecutive Wednesdays and covered everything from the basics of what defines a turn, striking period and



stroke, to Scoring, Offside balls, Faults and Refereeing a game. Using a whiteboard inside the clubhouse to demonstrate different scenarios and moving outside onto the lawns to observe 'double taps' and 'crushes', Sharon, with her exuberant encouraging and wonderfully demonstrative approach, broke down the often-confusing wording in the little WCF Rule Book. Sharon made learning accessible and thoroughly enjoyable.

Sherilyn Hurman and Liz McMaster then decided to take up the challenge and do the Umpire test and both passed with flying colours and there may be another one or two in training!

Having qualified umpires as well as our referees, John , Carol, and Rod T is a huge asset to our club. Thank you to everyone who participated, and special congratulations to Sherilyn and Liz.

Sue



Pt Chevalier Tournament Soup & Savouries

Four North Shore Club players, Laura Sutherland, Dianne Hale, Wendy Strain and Wendy Volkov made up our Devonport Damsels team and headed over to the Pt Chevalier Club for their Soup & Savouries Tournament.

This event is ideal if you don't yet play Interclub or Tournaments. It gives you that same team competition experience, but in a relaxed social environment.

- Pt Chevalier holds three Soup & Savouries Tournaments per year over the colder months.
- Just $25.00 per player including a delicious lunch between games.
- You play four doubles games in a day.

A team is 4 players, but you can have 5 and substitute someone in the morning or afternoon. We had a bit of weather debating beforehand, but it went ahead and it was well worth it. It was a great day with a fun lineup of teams: Saint Almighty, The Tradies, The Coalition, Taka Tossers, Devonport Damsels and the Wicked Weasels.

Thanks go to Dave Butcher, Tournament Manager at Pt Chevalier, for hosting us, and to Charlotte for her communication between Clubs.

North Shore can always rely on a few club members popping over to support – we do appreciate you.

Think about signing up when you see this tournament advertised in June next year. It is a great way to meet croquet players from other Clubs and develop your croquet skills.

Wendy Strain





Our Experience Becoming a Qualified Umpire

Sherilyn and I sat and passed the Golf Croquet Umpire exam on Monday 24 August. We travelled to Carlton Croquet Club for a 10am start where we sat both a practical and oral exam. There were two assessors, including Sharon Browne who had run our Umpire training sessions. We sat the exam separately, Sherilyn going first doing the practical exam under the watchful eye of the two assessors while I had a cuppa. After about 40 minutes, Sherilyn came inside to do the oral section, and I went outside with Sharon to do the practical part of the exam. At this stage, Sherilyn knew she had passed the practical.

The assessors follow a set of questions issued by Croquet NZ. Sherilyn and I took quite a different approach to answering the questions which was not an issue. I tended to be very decisive, calling a shot either "clean" or a "fault". Whereas Sherilyn tended to talk through her approach before giving her answer.

Both of us were very careful about preparing for the exam and used the 3 - 4 weeks before the exam to challenge each other, and practise marking the ball around the hoop. Throughout this time, Sharon provided test questions to help us prepare and always came back to us quickly if we wanted to clarify different scenarios. Although we studied all the rules covered in the training sessions, the exam itself tests only a part of the material.

Sherilyn and I now have an Umpire badge each and a certificate showing we passed the exam. The experience has helped us both to better understand and apply the rules which inevitably will improve our confidence playing croquet. Hopefully also a resource for club members.

Big thank you to our Club Captain for proactively setting up the training and encouraging us to sit the exam.

Liz McMaster



Golf umpire's quiz

(how well do you know your GC Rules)

1. Do all games start by playing the Blue ball?

2. Like in Golf, can a player change mallets during the game?

3. A game, in Golf Croquet, is the best of how many points?

4. What is the width and height of a hoop?

5. The game of Golf Croquet may be played as _____ or _____?

6. How many hoops on a court?

7. Where does a game of Golf Croquet start?

8. Is it a fault if you mishit a ball in the open court? Eg. Bevel the ball.

9. What terminology should you use when 'shot watching" and giving your decision? _____ or _____

10. When might a scoring clip become an Outside Agency?

11. Before a game starts, a coin is tossed. Does the winner of the toss have to play first?

12. When does a turn start and when does it end?

13. The striker's mallet hits the hoop but does not touch the ball but the ball quivers. Is it a fault?

14. What is the colour sequence of the secondary balls?

15. After a fault has been declared, what happens?

This Quiz was given to us to complete during the Umpire Course.

Answers to quiz will feature in the next Sunday email.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Club Tournament –Sunday Nov 8
NSCC vs Whangarei 21/22 Nov
Club Xmas CelebrationThursday 10 Dec

Ode to Old Croakies
by Gripstalk Swing with sincere apologies to
William Wordsworth

I wandered forlornly o'er all four lawns
that float serenely after rain,
when at once I thought I saw a
ghostly apparition from the drains
or coming from the compost heap,
and lo, a never-ending line,
a host of ancients of a long-gone time.
As I came closer to the decomposed
I shouted, "Oi, you lot, the lawns are closed."
They paid me no mind and, in their fours,
floated on high o'er hoops and pegs
and danced and wobbled on ancient legs.
Out they came from beneath the trees
with worn-out hips and dodgy knees
bickering, challenging every shot,
'that was a fault' and 'that was not.'
They gathered around the little hoops
as vultures might around their prey.
"Come on you lot" I heard them say
"We haven't got all bloody day!"
And oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
I see those ancients in my eye
and think of all the hoops they've played
and all the games and yang and yin
and having no idea how this will end,
I think I'll have another gin.




Roll on Summer