



SEPTEMBER 2023 NEWSLETTER



Presidents Message

Humpy Doo!

Is it a form of greeting, a Childs Toy, something connected with Humpty Dumpty? 'Fraid not, nothing to do with any of those. Humpy Doo is in fact a town in Northern Australia, situated some 40kms south of Darwin, on a 'main' road junction. It boasts 4,300 inhabitants (most of working age commute to Darwin) and the largest collection of Water Buffalo Horns in the Humpy Doo Pub! At the time of the influx of Chinese as a result of the gold rush, it successfully supported that population by growing rice and now has a thriving market gardening industry supplying both Darwin and Cairns. Why, you wonder, am I regaling you with something so far distant from a Croquet Newsletter? Well, actually not so far as it happens, as Humpy Doo has a very strong connection to Croquet. It is in this small distant town that Dawson Balls are made (these are the balls with which you play Croquet). Brian Dawson was the name of the original manufacturer who developed a composite material made solely from a particular type of plastic using a secret formula! Dawson Balls are recommended and used by the World Croquet Federation and they are always used for major (and not so major) Tournaments the world over. Version Mark IV was superseded by the 2000 – imprinted on the ball. If there is no distinguishing mark, you can be sure they are pretty old. Have a look when you next play Croquet, particularly at the Second colours!

So to continue - the original owner/manufacturer, Brian decided to retire some years ago and the factory (his garage) passed into new ownership – one Paul Manwaring. He turned out to be the gardener who mowed the grass for Brian; plastering being his other skill - and who knew next to nothing about Croquet, but a lot about gardening and landscaping. He nonetheless continued the tradition of Croquet Ball making handed down to him in confidence. The production of Balls mysteriously drew to a halt about a year ago, creating a worldwide shortage.

What shall we do when we need to replace our balls? Ask the Chinese of course. They produce Croquet Balls that the WCF find acceptable; so in future we (NZ Croquet Assn) may be able to offer the alternative, 'Sunshiny Balls' instead. But wait!! Rumours emerging on the horizon are telling us that Paul Manwaring will be able to start production again very soon in Humpy Doo. The problem was all to do with the secret recipe now successfully adjusted to include an alternative ingredient which continues to remain a closely guarded secret

Go to YouTube and look for "Paul's Balls" to see a clip on Croquet Ball production – a short documentary about this fascinating Cottage Industry that is known the Croquet World over.



Stop Press – Notice Just Received "While I am not in a position to give quotes out at the moment, the good news is that I am much closer to having a ball available and recommence production. Sorry for any inconvenience and thank you for your patience and understanding." Paul Manwaring
The WCF have also announced that Dawson Balls will be available during September/October.

Getting back to terra firma (or not so firma) – a few dry days have improved the lawns and although slightly soft, they are now far from squelchy. Only a couple of weeks to go until we celebrate our 'Swing into Spring' on the 16 September, lots of Competition Flyers on the board from other clubs, then our own Golden Grades at the end of October, organised by Croquet Auckland. Thinking way ahead, we will have our neighbourly head to head with Takapuna on 14 March when it will be their turn to host and we will defend the title.

House Convenor

Talking about hosting reminds me of several points on a lengthy agenda, the first of which is our need for a House Convenor to take over the role from Suzanne. This position comes with membership of the NSCC Committee that meets once a month. Please give it some thought and speak to me if you'd like to know more. With a new kitchen, new carpet and new tables (soon) it is mainly an organising and Hospitality role as the bulk of the physical work is now behind us – even dealing with the pesky borer.

House Convenor

Just One Small Club House to manage!
Could this be you?

If you're only vaguely thinking about it, just
send an email to

Michelle president@northshorecroquet.co.nz

Event Volunteers

Corporate and Private hiring continues to be an important source of revenue for which we need willing volunteers. Not only does this provide a resource for the local Community, it also acts as a person to person advertisement for the game. Thanks to the tireless work of Linda and Carol (and now Sue Alexander) our reputation has grown alongside enquiries for Christmas celebrations and other Corporate and private parties. We even have an enquiry for a Wedding in the New Year. If you can swing a mallet, know the order of colours and the direction around the lawn then you are perfectly qualified to help! We realise the importance of balancing Private and Corporate demands, whilst continuing to provide plenty of playing time for members – always weather permitting!

June AGM

I must mention our AGM held in June, attended by many members who contributed to the occasion and enjoyed a delicious lunch followed by a game or two. We celebrated the long service of two members (Charlotte, Captain and Christopher, Treasurer). Charlotte was the longest serving having steered the Club through some tricky times over the past 20 years or so and Christopher looking after the finances for 16 years. John Sutton has been at the club for many, many years and although officially retired still

manages energy-sapping ground work and he was officially thanked not only for grounds work, but for bravely squeezing in the minute-taking role at Committee Meetings for the past year. Finally, we congratulated Murray Henshall on his retirement after 4 years as President. His shoes have been a challenging fit as I inherited this mantle at the 2022 AGM. Thankfully all those who now enjoy well-deserved retirement continue their membership and Christopher has also joined the ranks of Life Members alongside Ruth Castle, Charlotte, John Sutton and Llew Owen. The retirement of Christopher, inevitably caused the role of Treasurer to become vacant – quickly filled by Chartered Accountant, Greg Hall. This caused the domino effect meaning that the Grounds Superintendent Position was also vacant. An appeal at the AGM for someone to take on that considerable responsibility resulted in an almost immediate offer from Rob Fergusson, who has scooped up the work with alacrity. Linda McKay is our new secretary and as you all know, Carol is now our Captain – taking over the role from Charlotte. We are so grateful to you – Carol, Rob, Greg and Linda Suzanne retired from her role as House Convenor more recently and we are indebted to her for her tireless energy and commitment to ensuring that everything was cleaned, polished, and well presented; she inducted Amalia our part-time cleaning lady and also reviewed systems. Thank you Suzanne – we miss you.



The Photo Book

Keeping our memories and archives safe for future generations is an important aspect of our enduring history and two things spring to mind. You will have seen the amazing photo book on the centre table – it's a treat to be able to dip into it and all credit to Linda who managed the production and Wendy Strain for providing most of the photography – they have plans for further editions.

Time Capsule

Linda actually produced two copies of the book, one of which we included in our carefully sealed Time Capsule. During the main refurb, a section of rotten flooring was removed just inside the back door. It was at Linda's suggestion that we hastily gathered together all manner of things to be included in the Capsule as we had just over one day before the gap was closed for good! Whilst the cavity was exposed however, we found a large plastic box and clearly labeled it for future generations to find. The lid was glued on and sealed with tape (ever wary of our ratty friends!!) and the box lowered beneath the floorboards by Rod and builder Russell. Amongst the contents were:

Photo Book, Membership List, Weekend Herald, Croquet Ball, Flag, Croquet Rules Booklet, Tea bag, Minutes of a Meeting and a host of other interesting items – the box was full!



....and finally

As usual, my deep appreciation goes to my fellow Committee Members, plus all those who work tirelessly to keep our lawns mown and lined, the gardeners, those on kitchen duty, those who volunteer for events, poster and flyer makers, handymen/women, admin staff, coaches, organisers, fundraisers and of course, you the membership without whom we would not have the thriving club that we all enjoy.

Thank you one and all.

Michelle

PS Just a reminder to the last one out please: turn out lights!, pull the curtain, leave kitchen tidy, turn the lock to 'red' inside the club, make sure no one is left inside (! – yes that has happened) - before closing the door and finally, please make sure the padlock on the gate is securely fixed.

John's Corner

For those who enjoy exploring topics in depth... The internet is a great resource for all aspects of Croquet. Croquet NZ is a source of information about nationwide croquet and resources such as coaching and tournaments. It is a great resource for playing when on holiday as it lists all the clubs throughout NZ, they also publish a yearly hand book with similar information plus all the rules for AC and GC and everyone's handicaps. Croquet Auckland offers information about Auckland Clubs and any local events and tournaments. Croquet Scores lists all the AC and GC tournaments throughout the world. Clicking on a tournament will lead to a website detailing the scores for that tournament. (The recent Smyth Tournament we hosted is there) You Tube has a wonderful resource of past world championships and coaching videos clarkecroquet.com. Chris Clarke moved to NZ in 2005 and married his wife Jenny. They have been national and world champions many times. They made this excellent series of coaching videos to help raise the standard of croquet in NZ Oxford Croquet. This is one of the most, if not the most, comprehensive resource for all aspects croquet. It ranges from how to start a club and create a lawn, to the intimate physics of a mallet playing a jump shot. There is even an aerial map showing detailed contours of the surface of a lawn. Exploring this website is a great way to spend the time when it is too wet to play.

Enjoy, John.

PS NSCC maintains copies of the CNZ Yearbook stretching back 15 years.

Planting at the NSCC

On Friday 8 September, the north-eastern ends of Lawns C and D will be planted with native plants. This will be thanks to the club's collaboration with the local group Restoring Takarunga Hauraki (RTH) - Restoring Devonport Peninsula. The aim is to reduce the need for lawn mowing and weeding in these areas, to enhance the local environment and to establish habitat for native birds and insects through an extension of the eco-corridor of the Devonport Peninsula. Our planting will also serve to demonstrate to the local community our concern for the environment. This collaborative native planting also offers the club the opportunity for mass planting at a very reasonable cost - three dollars per plant. (A few plants were also sourced from Pourewa Wholesale Nursery in Orakei.) RTH

will also provide volunteer help with the planting and a mulch delivery from the golf course next door. The variety of native plants purchased for planting include some of the following: phormium cookianum, carex secta, astelia banksii, hebe speciosa, kawakawa, houpara and wharangi. These should provide evergreen interest with contrasting leaf colour and form, as well as providing nectar and berries from flowers. Huge thanks goes to the following members who also took part in this initiative: Janet Paul, John Sutton, Jacqueline Beetham, and Michelle Templeman.

Suzanne Caron

Swing Into Spring

Saturday 16 September 9 - 2pm

Just what we've all been waiting for, sunshine and the annual casual fun day. Bring along \$5 and a beverage of your choice. 7 hoop games, blind draw for teams. Play 2 games, morning tea about 11am, then 2 more games followed by a sausage sizzle and refreshments around 1pm, followed by PRIZES!



Organiser - Club Captain, Carol Buckingham
captain@northshorecroquet.co.nz

Twilight and Sundowner restarting

Our first twilight evening will be 5.30pm on Wed 4th October, then the first and third Wednesday of each month. Fee remains at \$10 for non-members and suggested revised donation of \$5 for members. I have upgraded from 1 sausage to add also chicken nibbles as the clubs contribution. Cancellations will be advised by 4pm on the day if weather inclement. A reminder to bring a salad and drink of choice on the evening, club provides the meat as above. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Cheers, Martin

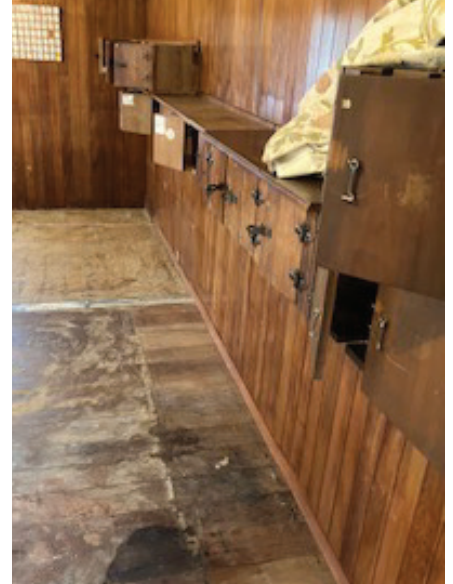
SUNDOWNER will recommence later in the year, as you will be aware the idea of sundowner is to enjoy croquet in the balmy summer evenings when the days are hot and not so pleasant playing croquet in the middle of the hot days. So when the weather it is more conducive for sundowner croquet we will send out a notice advising the starting date of sundowner evenings.

Cheers, Malcolm

Refurbished Club House

Thanks to Lynley's suggestion at the 2022 AGM to replace the carpet, this has now been achieved and as Lynley said "It really speaks for itself and it looks great." In addition, Michelle organised the borer treatment, had flooring timbers checked and bought

a new heater. A joint effort by everyone involved with the Club which resulted in this fantastic new carpet.



Smyth Tray Team Tournament

This tournament was first played in the early 1980's. At the time, Association Croquet was the only form of the game played in NZ and this Tournament was devised by a Mr. Smyth for two competing Associations – Auckland and Counties Manukau. For many years Golf Croquet has been the predominant code played, being adopted for the Smyth Tray in the early 2000's. With the exception of the Covid years, it has been an (almost) annual event. North Shore agreed to host the Tournament of 24 players on 27 August, defending the title that Auckland won on 28 August last year. Teams of 12 on each side were divided into 3 grades: Premier -6 to 2, Senior 3 to 6 and Intermediate 7 and above. The play was competitive and the final score of Counties Manukau 13, Auckland 29 belies the energy and skill invested by the CM team. Well done to the victorious Auckland Team with players from Warkworth, Takapuna, Point Chev, Mount Albert, St Heliers, Carlton and Epsom Remuera. Perhaps next time, North Shore might be represented too! It's at events like this that we have the opportunity to meet with other players from all around the Auckland and CM area. One topic of conversation that was constantly repeated was the state of our winter lawns - as compliments came from far and wide! The investment of energy, determination and time from the Lawns Team at our Club really paid off. Players and spectators alike were full of admiration - we can justifiably allow ourselves to be proud and thank you to all those involved!



Red jacketed lady Carol Sandford Team Manager, Counties Manukau.



Michelle has just presented the winning Team with the Smyth Tray (Auckland, represented by Melba Scott, President Croquet Auckland) plus teams



Past Members Come Visiting

Recently the Club welcomed a group of past members, invited to come along for morning tea and to see the improvements to the clubhouse and to share memories of their time spent at Wairoa Rd both on and off the lawns. All had contributed a great deal to the Club in their time as members, some having served on the committee, others making their contribution with lawn and grounds maintenance, the annual fundraising garage sales, membership drives, twilight hosting, corporate and local hire events, working bees etc. And some were pretty good players - Association as well as Golf Croquet - representing the Club on the competitions circuit. Having hit a ball through a hoop with their original mallets, Dawn Avery (L) and Jean Sullivan (R).



Newbie Coaching

A further eight folk have been undergoing coaching as the first step in their journey to becoming fully integrated members of the club. Under trying weather conditions Ruth Hyde, Ruth Chapman, Rose Vincent, Mary Crooks, Cathy Miller, Andrew Wilkinson, Kit Brown, Sally Burge and Bill Aldridge have been practising their roquets, their hoop running, their placement shots, the ball playing



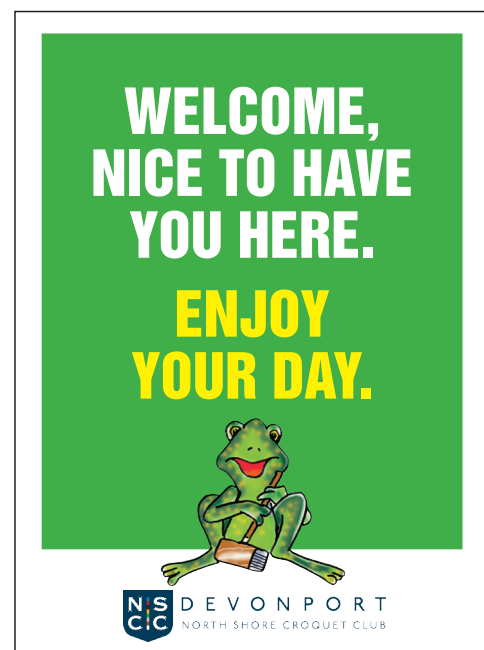
order, etc. etc., in fact learning all the manoeuvres as we did at a similar stage in our croquet playing journey. In the next wee while you will begin to see them on club days and they can be assured of a warm welcome and a helping hand.



Events' Volunteers

A big thank you to everyone who responded to my request for volunteers for private events at the club. If you thought about offering your help but didn't quite get around to it, it's not too late. I am also looking for a 2IC (aka assistant). Together we would manage the volunteering for events and cover for each other if one or other is unable to be there on the day. Just email me at

sue@studioalexander.co.nz
or call me on 021 283 9742





Pt Chev Soup and Savoury Fundraiser

When the opportunity arose for the Club to enter a team in the popular Pt Chev Soup and Savoury annual competitions a couple of months ago, four Devonport Damsels eagerly put their names forward to form our team, comprising Charlotte, Carol, Jenny and Liz. Unfortunately at the 11th hour Liz was forced to withdraw and after a quick flurry of phone calls elicited no NS replacement Pt Chev offered us their first reserve and Gillian became a 'Devonport Damsel for the Day'. Whilst all teams played to win, the emphasis was on fun with teams entered under quirky names, Devonport Damsels, Takapuna Terriers (or was it Tornadoes?), Pakuranga Panthers (or some such), you get the picture. A few teams even sported appropriately labelled T-shirts and one all-female team went so far as to dress in green net tutus and tiaras. At afternoon tea prizes were handed out for 'best behaviour', 'best dressed', 'most polite' etc. as well of course for 'winners'; the writer having quite forgotten who won but definitely remembering that the Devonport Damsels came a creditable second, no trophy but chocolates to share.

So where are the chocolates – Charlotte, Carol and Jenny?

Addition from Rod Templeman.....Dave Butcher started this friendly competition (no AHS cards) about 5 winters ago at Pt Chev Croquet Club, he now runs one in July and another in August. The concept is to allow players to enjoy a half or a full day of either Golf or Association Croquet, and, as the name suggests, guzzle as much of 5 different delicious soups as time permits. These are pretty short half days ... my freezing cold AC afternoon was over in 90 minutes, largely due to my brilliant doubles partner who swears he's only been playing AC for a year. These S&S's are so popular that they are fully subscribed within hours of the flyer being issued. The price is far too low, Dave could easily double the entry fee and I'm sure it'd still be full. Maximum entry numbers are 50 per event, and Michelle (who only went for the soup), and I thoroughly recommend it.

Advantage Croquet

The World Croquet Federation have, for the past two years, been developing a simple algorithm to enable players of differing handicaps to compete with one another on level terms without the use of extra strokes. In total some 2,000 trials have taken place to perfect the calculations. All croquet playing countries have adopted the format, and it seems that most players prefer it to the 'free turn' arrangement, because no change of tactics is required. The game is included in the 6th Edition of the WCF Golf Croquet Rules. Paste this link in your browser to obtain "How to play Advantage Croquet", published by the WCF.

https://worldcroquet.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/2023perCA_AdvantageGC2023HowToPlay-Complete.pdf

PS. CNZ Croquet Development Officer, Greg Bryant will be running a half day (morning) course on Advantage Play at NSCC on Thursday morning 28 September using 4 x half lawns. He will be coaching RUSH in the afternoon – see flyer on the Board.





Kevin Ireland, poet and former member of North Shore Croquet Club.

North Shore Croquet Club joins with the communities of Devonport and Aotearoa New Zealand in mourning the passing of this great man. He leaves behind volumes of poetry and prose, laughter, and memories. NSCC hosted Kevin and his charming wife, Janet Wilson, during the summer twilight series and in his many appearances with the Devonport Wine Club at our clubrooms.

We have reproduced below an excerpt from Kevin's last memoir, 'A Month at the back of my Brain', in which he writes about the complexity and paradoxes inherent in our wonderful game of golf croquet.

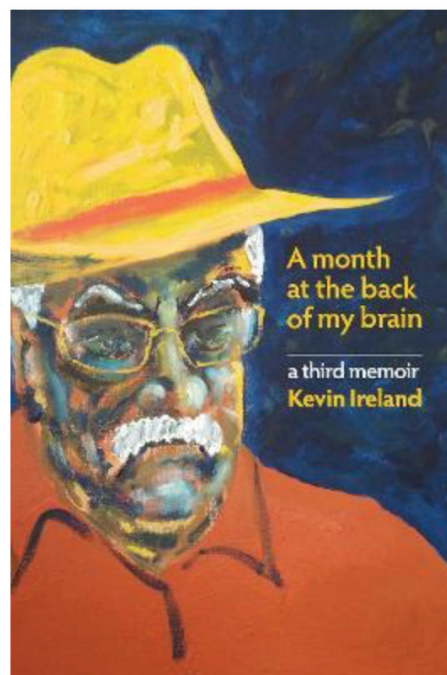
Go well from this place, Kevin. You are sadly missed.

...There is nothing nice or genteel about croquet. It's gratuitously offensive, though luckily its mostly played only by calm and fairly stable people. Some games force you into situations and choices that border on a legalised but appalling disturbance of the peace, and some sanction metaphorical acts of violence against opponents that would in normal circumstances justify prosecution and prison sentences.

Think of 'games' such as rugby league and ice-hockey and hurling, which often descend close to life-and-death struggles – well, croquet may appear to be far gentler, and many would pass it off as too soft to be taken seriously, but this is a grave underestimation. Croquet – or at least the most popular 'golf croquet' version of the game – is the nastiest sport on Earth. It is so repulsive, so vicious, that you have to laugh to cope with its naked malevolence.

Without a developed sense of humour to protect yourself and others, games of croquet would often end in murder. I feel utterly wretched about some of the things I have to do – and others tell me they suffer from similar guilt. Its ugly and unfriendly and great good fun – for you're always left with the hope that you may soon get your own back for a run of what amounts to gross and deliberate acts of treachery. No wonder Lewis Carroll was able to use croquet as such a convincing setting for arbitrary and absurd death-dealing. 'Off with their heads' would serve beautifully as any croquet club's motto.

Extract from 'A Month at the back of my Brain', A Third Memoir. PP 132 - 133



Curry Night Fund-Raiser

A huge thanks to all involved in making the Curry Night such a success, from the many that helped with the setting up, the cooking, the photography (Wendy Strain) and the breakdown on Sunday. A special thanks to Colleen, Sherilyn and Wendy (Volkov), in the kitchen, and Austin on the bar. Special thanks also to those involved in the preparation of the food, in particular Linda, Mary, Carol, Lynley, and Veda, we could never have coped without their support. We also want to acknowledge the members who were quick enough to buy tickets, they were literally sold within hours, before we had to compile a waiting list. Our apologies to those who missed out, as (in our opinion) it was a fabulous night. We would

also like to acknowledge the many 'cooks' who generously donated ingredients, their generosity will improve the profit, along with the subsequent Sunday 'sales' of yummy left-overs. The final figures have yet to be calculated, but we hope will match the \$2,000 raised at the last dinner fund-raising event. As you're aware the profit is to go towards a large umbrella that will be a permanent fixture in front of the club-House. Lastly, we would like to acknowledge Tony for his generous donation of a beautiful painting of the Croquet Clubhouse, which Michelle had the pleasure of unveiling at the dinner, and will soon be hung within the clubhouse for all to enjoy.

Thank you all again for your amazing support
Di and Jenny
" Actually we Thank You!"



Making Applications to Major Trusts

Michelle, Di and Ross are a group that is listing the projects that the club wishes to undertake over the next year or so. Many club members have been involved in the composition of the list which includes a number of items from fencing, club house painting, drainage, club house items, lawn maintenance etc. These projects will need to be funded which will require monies from various charitable trusts as well as funding sourced from our own club resources and possibly local Devonport people or businesses. As a group we have also spent time understanding the Charitable Trusts and the likelihood of them providing funding to the club. At the time of the next newsletter we will provide the latest update in our endeavours.

Ross

Preparation and investment in the Future – a Taster

As Ross has mentioned, we are planning for our future as a well-managed, financially secure and well maintained Community Facility. Preparation is the key to ensuring that our Future Strategy is cohesive and financially acceptable - and that we can present our funding applications to Grant Making Trusts with a sound plan, including quotes and timescales, having worked through all the assumptions and risks.

To date we have secured positive financial support and established cohesive Sponsorships and Partnerships with Ryman Healthcare, the Local Devonport-Takapuna Board, Devonport Rotary and RTH (native planting). We are also extremely grateful to our members for their generosity.

To ensure that we try to mitigate against future problems outside our control, we have

- increased the value of our insurance
- changed the type of insurance from Indemnity to Replacement Value
- obtained a revised valuation of all buildings (including sheds, shelters and fencing in addition to the Club House)
- Recently, we have obtained two quotes for

repainting the Club House – external elevations - next autumn, including the roof and installing roof insulation. (Timing will be dependent on securing external funding)

- Replacement Fencing is on the list of course, but we are taking a steady approach to this major project, meanwhile we are seeking to resolve long standing drainage issues

On a smaller and more immediate scale we still have

- Tables to replace (already funded)
- Roller Blinds to install
- Equipment to buy to help our Lawns and Gardening Teams

In essence, we are following a process for each item or project Identify the Need, the item or the project

- Define the impact
- Obtain costs
- Agree optimum timing
- Assess impact on Club and Membership
- Obtain minuted Committee Approval for funding applications
- Identify a plan B if funding not forthcoming
- Draw up draft submissions and adjust (many times!) for final approval
- Research likely funders, their terms and timings for submissions
- Marry up the project with the appropriate funder
- Review the application once more
- Submit the application well before 'due by' date if applicable

Then Wait - and Hope

Michelle

Future dates for your diary..

- Swing Into Spring Saturday 16 September
- Golden Grades weekend 28 and 29 October
- Club Xmas Party Sunday 3 December
- 6 Monthly InterClub Competitions Hcap 8+