



Upbeat at Broadwas

Broadwas Croquet Club is tucked away in the Teme Valley on the border of Worcestershire and Herefordshire. We're a lively and competitive Club with four full-sized lawns and 55 active members.

This year a dry Spring followed a very wet Winter which made lawn preparation difficult, though not half as difficult as the ensuing Covid 19 pandemic. We could have caved in; put up the shutters and stood back until things settled down, but like other Clubs, that's not the Broadwas way, so we persevered with getting the lawns ready using our own skills and the expertise of a local contractor. Having received excellent advice and guidance from the Croquet Association we found ourselves back in business by the third week in May with an exhaustive sanitisation regime but without the use of our pavilion and toilets and with all competitions, both internal and external, cancelled.

We also introduced a new lawn booking system under the eagle eye of our Club Captain & Secretary John Guy, so as to control lawn usage and record when each member was playing. A side benefit of this system is that our members are now spreading their use of the lawns over a greater proportion of each week.

In January we had embarked on an ambitious membership development programme mainly through local newsletters and Parish magazines. This generated plenty of interest but then the pandemic struck. Rather than disappoint prospective joiners we kept all their contact details and promised to re-connect when things improved. The moment isolation was lifted we honoured our promise, whereupon we welcomed 38 visitors from whom 28 prospective members emerged. They all attended taster sessions and in the end 18 of them actually joined as full Club members. To introduce these new members to the Club and make them feel welcome, we appointed a New Members Secretary, Mary Dryden. Our sincere thanks to Mary for carrying out this important role in such difficult circumstances.

In parallel with all the other events of this year, our President, John Steel and our Chairman, Stuart Smith had been making formal approaches to Sport England for funding to create and kit out a new fifth lawn. Sport England provided us with a generous grant and we thank them both for the grant itself and for their support throughout what turned out to be a pretty rigorous application process. The new lawn has provided very welcome extra playing space that has helped to accommodate both new and existing members within the playing limits imposed by Covid19 safety requirements.

In all, life in the Broadwas Croquet bubble has been very different, but we're more than managing. In fact, one of our Club Coaches, Jeff Faulkner, has instigated and run a very well organized and successful internal league Golf Croquet competition for the benefit of new and existing members that has brought out the best competitive instincts in everyone.

So what next for Broadwas Croquet Club? Well we intend to remain upbeat but watchful for the future. If we can, we aim to play right through the Autumn - elements and pandemic permitting. But, most important, we plan to keep in close touch with each other over the Winter by enjoying our monthly Croquet Club Breakfasts that proved so popular last year – taking all the requisite precautions, of course.

So don't be surprised to receive another upbeat report from us here at Broadwas next Spring when hopefully we'll be looking back on Covid19 and looking forward to a new season of Croquet and to playing the game that offers so much fun and fellowship to us all.