



## SURBITON CROQUET CLUB

[www.surbitoncroquet.org.uk](http://www.surbitoncroquet.org.uk)

### MEMBERS' Handbook 2024

This information pack has been written to provide all members with the essential information on the club and how it operates. Do visit the website for more information and up-to-date details on tournaments and events.

We try to be accessible, which means that we keep our subscriptions at an affordable level. We keep the number of rules to a minimum and rely on our members to use common sense when using the club's facilities. We are passionate about the game and trying to play it well and proud of our excellent facilities and what we achieve.

The club relies on its volunteers and encourages all members to contribute in some way towards the running of the club. All of us have some skills that can be applied to club activities – practical or organizational. Let us know what they are and how you think they can be used help maintain the high standards and friendly atmosphere of the club.

We hope that you will enjoy your croquet with us and please do not hesitate to approach any club member if you have questions on the game or the club.

Nick Parish  
Chairman

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## **An Introduction to Surbiton Croquet Club (SCC)**

The present croquet club in Surbiton, based on land leased from the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames in Alexandra Drive, is not the first croquet club in Surbiton. The first record of a croquet club in Surbiton appeared in 1897 - the Surrey Comet of Saturday 23 January 1875 contained a report of Surbiton Croquet Club's annual ball "which was held at Claremont House, Surbiton, on Thursday evening. Dancing commenced at 9 pm and was carried on with much spirit until half past three the following morning." The croquet club did not survive the war and was compulsorily purchased to become the site of Christ Church C of E Primary School. Until recently, it was possible to make out the outline of the old lawns on the school playing field. Further information about croquet in Surbiton up until 1945 is available on the archive page within the club's web site.

In 1985, the late Derek Caporn worked with the late Lionel Wharrad, then Chairman of the Croquet Association and later president of Surbiton Croquet Club, to establish SCC in its present form and location. The club was developed on the former site of public grass tennis courts, and the small brick building next to the hard tennis courts that is now a café (yes, it once was a public toilet) became our first "clubhouse" and storeroom, largely through the efforts of Stephen Mulliner.

Facilities improved quickly when Derek Caporn sponsored the purchase of our first on-site clubhouse which is now the equipment hut. Loans from the Croquet Association and from Fuller, Smith & Turner plc, together with a grant from the Sports Council, helped finance the present clubhouse which was formally opened in 1988 by the then Chairman of the Sports Council, the late Sir Peter Yarranton. The kitchen was later extended with the help of a grant from the Croquet Association (topped up by the South East Croquet Federation).

Converting tennis courts into croquet lawns involved a great deal of work and money. Each lawn has been laser-levelled; some have been levelled twice. We were fortunate to receive a Lottery grant to help meet the cost of those works. In 2010, we installed an irrigation system, a huge undertaking which was paid for from club funds and with the help of club members and the Croquet Association.

The club's membership has grown steadily since the handful of experts who founded the club and we have more than 175 members including many who are new to the game as well as World Champions in both Association and Golf Croquet. The club's facilities and standing as a center of croquet excellence means that we are regularly asked to host major events. Recent highlights are:

2010 The MacRobertson Shield, the premier Association Croquet world team championship

2011, 2015, 2019 The Association Croquet British Open Championship

2013 The Association Croquet World Championship

2016 The Golf Croquet World Team Championship

2017 The Golf Croquet British Open Championship

2021 The Association Croquet British Open Championship

2023 Joint staging of the Association Croquet World Championship



... and upcoming

2024 The Men's & Women's Championship

2026 The MacRobertson Shield

## **The Club's Aims**

Surbiton Croquet Club aims to be a centre of excellence for British croquet by:

- providing first class, accessible facilities in south west London for the playing of croquet on an equal basis for everyone, irrespective of ability, age, gender or ethnic background
- keeping fees as low by utilizing volunteers as much as possible whilst at the same time ensuring adherence to best practices and regulatory standards
- creating a welcoming and inclusive environment where members can play at the level that best suits them – whether social or highly competitive.
- maintaining a balance between social and competitive play and providing encouragement and coaching for members wanting to improve their skills
- collaboration with local clubs to promote croquet in South West London particularly newly formed or smaller clubs
- providing thought leadership and support to Croquet England in the development and promotion of the game, nationally and internationally.

## **Club Welfare**

The club acknowledges that it has a legal duty of care for the welfare and well-being of all those participating in its' activities.

We do this by requiring those participating in our activities to adhere to the standards of acceptable behaviour. In all situations, Club Members are expected to act in a reasonable and courteous manner towards others. Acts of abuse, neglect, bullying, harassment, discrimination, victimisation causing harm or offence to others are never acceptable.

Any member who witnesses or, who feels they are the recipient of such acts, should report it to the Club Chairman

The full Club Welfare policy is available on the club website

## **Finances**

The club is able to offer membership at attractive rates because of the efforts of the members. We are a “self-help” club in that, if at all possible, we do the work ourselves and only contract others when absolutely necessary. All members are asked to volunteer their talents to help keep our costs to a minimum.

Membership fees would need to be around 3 times their current level if the club had to pay commercial rates for all the activities undertaken by our volunteers.

## **Club Access**

Each new member will receive instructions (arranged by the Membership Secretary) about how to access the club's grounds and facilities. New members will be shown how to open the clubhouse and to secure it at the end of play. With the exception of a very limited number of days when the club is booked for tournaments or corporate events, members may use the club whenever they wish. The last person to leave the club should ensure that all lights and taps are off and that the club and grounds are secured properly. It is essential that all windows are closed before lowering the shutters (which lock in position when fully lowered). There is a checklist for closing up the clubhouse next to the alarm panel.

Remember: You may not have used the clubhouse yourself but, if you are the last to leave then it is your responsibility to ensure that it is left secure.

At busy times, the carpark may become full. There is plenty of parking on Alexandra drive but, be careful not to park with your wheels over the white lines painted on the pavement for the 'on kerb' parking areas. If you do you are likely to get a ticket from Kingston's rather officious parking wardens.

## **Club Security**

From time to time we do get 'unwanted' visitors on our premises. Please observe the following guidelines whilst at the club:

- Cars are parked in the car-park at your own risk. Ensure that they are locked and that valuables are not left in them. At less busy times, consider shutting and padlocking the gate.
- Be vigilant whilst playing. If you notice people who you do not recognize entering the premises then politely enquire if you can assist them.
- If there are only a few people at the club and, especially if only lawns 3-7 are being used, put one padlock on the clubhouse door to prevent casual theft from the clubhouse.
- Similarly, do not leave bags or other personal belongings on the clubhouse veranda (or in the marquee when it is up) when playing on lawns 4-7.

The club has a comprehensive CCTV system which monitors the club 24/7. If you do notice anything suspicious then please contact a committee member who can then arrange for the CCTV to be checked.

## **Club Membership**

The membership year runs from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March. Membership fees for the coming year are confirmed at the club's AGM and members are expected to pay the relevant amount without further individual reminders as this reduces administration. Membership fees are reduced for new members joining later in the year. See the website for details. There are also reduced fees for those living a significant distance from the club.

A list of all members, their contact information and the current club password for accessing the members' area of the website is maintained and sent by email to all members. A paper copy is kept in the clubhouse by the bar and updated copies are issued at appropriate times with the club newsletter to all members.

## **Communications**

Club members are kept informed by the following communication channels. If you are not receiving information from any of the channels then please contact a committee member:

1. The club website. The home page has a 'latest news' banner which is used to provide urgent information for members
2. Club newsletter. This is emailed to all members. Normally monthly but sometimes more frequently if there are a lot of items to cover
3. Club WhatsApp group. Please ask a committee member if you want to be added to the group.
4. Croquet England (CqE) website. <https://www.croquetengland.org.uk/> This provides extensive information on the sport and events that club members can enter
5. Croquet England newsletter. As a member of Surbiton CC you will be enrolled as an Associate of CqE and will receive their newsletter by email unless you have specifically asked to be removed from the mailing list
6. Croquet England Gazette. This is issued 6 times a year and is available on the CqE website. The latest 3 issues are not available to Standard Associates of the CqE but older issues provide useful

information on CqE activities.

## Visitors & Guests

Our bar license requires that all visitors sign the guest book along with the name of the member who invited them. A number of members enroll their partners as social members as a simple and inexpensive way to obtain continual access to the club for social events.

There is a visitor's fee for croquet-playing guests; For 2024 the fees are unchanged from 2023:

- £6 for a half day per guest – to a maximum of £30 per lawn
- £10 for a full day per guest – to a maximum of £50 per lawn

payment should be placed in the plastic pocket at the front of the guest book. The club also has a card payment machine that can be used for Guest fees as well as purchasing drinks from the bar. The machine is kept on the bar along with instructions for use. If paying guest fees by card then please enter a description of "Guest"

Please be aware that children under 18 must be accompanied by an adult at all times while within the club's boundaries.

The club has a more detailed guide for guests and visitor usage of the club facilities that is also available on the website. Please read this guide or contact a committee member if you would like to bring more than 3 or 4 guests to the club at any one time or are involved with an organization that would like to hold a croquet event at the club.

## Club Committees

Your club has five elected officials: President, Vice President, Club Secretary, Treasurer and Accounts Reviewer. The Club Secretary and Treasurer are joined on the Committee by a further eight elected members.

The Committee elects from its members the Chair and Membership Secretary and allocates responsibilities across the key club areas of: Catering & Bar; Grounds, Premises & Equipment; Coaching & Recruitment; Publicity; Clothing; Strategy & Finance. The Committee sets up sub-committees to focus on specific aspects of the club. The sub-committees are always looking for additional help for specific activities. Please contact them if you can assist in any aspect of supporting the club especially in the key areas of:

- Catering
- Grounds and Clubhouse Maintenance
- Opening up and Closing up on tournament days
- Publicity and Recruitment

Current Committee members and responsibilities are listed on the website under the 'Administration>The Committee' section of the website.

## Club Tournaments

There is a full programme of club tournaments beginning at the start of each season. An entry form is emailed to all members at the start of the season. This year's tournament details are displayed in the clubhouse and on the website. Sometimes it is possible for members to join the block tournaments mid-way

through the year; contact the Club Internal Tournament Organiser to discuss the possibility of late entry to any tournament. The current Organiser is identified in the 'Administration>Internal Competitions and Organisation' section of the website

## **Croquet Handicaps**

Croquet handicaps are maintained by players using handicap cards to record points gained or lost during official singles matches, i.e. club and Croquet England tournaments, inter-club competitions and matches versus other clubs. Members are encouraged to keep a handicap card for Association and Golf Croquet. The cards are provided by Croquet England and are also available in the clubhouse.

Initial handicaps and subsequent changes should be initiated by an official handicapper; Current Club Handicappers are listed on under the 'Administration>Authorised Handicappers' section of the website. If you are worried about your handicap then ask one of the authorised handicappers to review it. No other club member can alter your handicap.

## **Booking Lawns**

Members may book lawns using the booking system on the website under 'Lawns > Lawn Booking'. New members will be set up on the system and can log-in using the e-mail address that they provided on their application form. The first time you use the system, select 'forgot password' and a reset e-mail will be sent to you. Some email providers tend to route system generated emails into the 'Spam' folder and so check your 'Spam' folder if the reset email does not seem to arrive.

At busy times be prepared to double bank with another game. When booking a lawn please ensure that you select whether it is for Golf Croquet or Association Croquet so that another member can only double bank the lawn with a game of the same type.

Please remember to cancel a booking if, for any reason, you are no longer able to utilise it.

In rare cases it may be necessary for a committee member to move your booking to another lawn or to cancel a booking to accommodate an interclub match or other rescheduled event

## **The Year's Calendar**

The year's calendar is maintained and displayed on the website Diary.

Please note that the lawns are closed for annual maintenance from the middle of October to the end of November.

## **Coaching**

The club has a number of Croquet England accredited coaches who are listed on the website under the 'Administration>Qualified Coaches' section of the website.

Please ask any of these for any help you require outside of formal coaching courses.

Association and Golf Croquet courses are held regularly to help members improve their play. A full programme of coaching courses is available at the Croquet England Croquet Academy which operates at Sussex County Croquet Club, Southwick. The current programme is on the club's notice board.

## Summer Croquet

The summer season starts on the day of the club's AGM in March or early April. Club days (Roll-ups) are:

- Monday (AC from 10:00 am),
- Tuesday (GC doubles from 10.00 am),
- Wednesday (AC from 10:00 am),
- Thursday (GC singles from 10:00 am),
- Friday (GC Doubles from 10:00 am)

Roll-up days provide an ideal opportunity to meet and play other members. Just turn up – there is no need to book for Roll-up days.

Roll-up sessions will also be arranged for some weekends and evenings. Please see the club diary for details.

On club days we organise coaching sessions for members and specific events to help with the tactical side of the game, e.g. an informal doubles tournament to pair high and low handicap players.

## Winter Croquet

Up to four lawns are available for winter croquet from the time of their re-opening in December.

AC and GC roll-up sessions are also held during winter. The intention is to generally follow the same format as for the summer roll-ups.

Members must not use the lawns when they are frozen or have standing water on them. The webcams accessible from the website are a good way of checking the ground state before leaving for the club. The website and WhatsApp group are also used to inform members if the lawns are unplayable due to bad weather

## How to Lay out a Lawn

Lawns are numbered 1 to 7, starting from the car park. In the equipment hut you will find a trolley numbered to identify the associated lawn. Each holds a peg, hoops, balls, flags and corner markers for the designated lawn. All hoops should always be placed in the ground according to the instructions in Attachment 1.

Wire grids are used to cover the hoop holes to deter birds from pecking them and damaging this critical area. If you find wire grids on other parts of the lawn when you set it up or there any grids left over when you have covered all the hoop and peg holes, look for holes in other parts of the lawn and that is where the spare grids belong.

## Lawn Cutting Schedule

Lawns are cut twice a week in the summer - usually on Tuesday and Friday mornings. On these days members should not use a lawn until it has been cut. Normally 3-4 lawns are available by 10:00 and the rest by 11:00.

In the winter lawns need cutting less frequently and the schedule is very much determined by the weather.



## How the Bar Works

The bar is only for members and registered playing guests. It works on the principles of honesty and self-service. Tournament players are considered as temporary members. A special license is required and applied for on the occasions when the club is hosting a major event and expect to attract non-playing visitors. There is a glass washer for use whenever the club is busy; at other times, glasses should be left in one of the washer's baskets on the draining board so they can be washed properly when the machine is next operated.

Payments can be made by cash or card (there is a card reader and instructions for use on the bar). Alternatively, members can maintain a tab using an index card in the box on the bar. Please do not let the tab get too high before settling up! All tabs must be cleared at the end of the season.

## How Catering Works

Our catering is the envy of most clubs and consequently is hugely appreciated both by those enjoying the end-products, and by the Treasurer who values the contribution to the club's finances. The Catering Committee organises food for all official club catering (e.g. tournaments and social events) and are always grateful for any assistance in the form of extra hands or contributions to a menu. Should you wish to volunteer please contact Chris Osmond.

Tea and coffee are available at all times to members for a small charge (Currently £1 for unlimited tea/coffee for the day and £1.50 including biscuits). Again, an honesty and self-service arrangement. Members are free to use the kitchen facilities to prepare their own food but must ensure that all items used are properly cleaned and put away.

Please ensure that the kitchen is immaculate at all times. We protect our Health & Safety certificate ferociously and have to be prepared for unannounced visits from the inspectors

## SCC Clothing & Dress Code

We supply to order a range of clothing bearing the club's badge. A catalogue and order forms are available in the clubhouse. The website contains images of the most common items ordered. Orders are normally placed every month during the season. Please see the diary for the 'ordering dates'.

A few items such as books, laws books, caps and visors are kept in stock held in the cupboard nearest the changing rooms and operates on the principles of honesty and self-service. Please remove the tiny white price ticket which is attached to each item and put it in the wooden box with your payment.

At all times, flat-soled shoes (eg trainers) must be worn on the lawns. White clothing is worn for tournaments and inter club matches. Otherwise being comfortable, waterproof and warm are the most important things.

## Croquet England (CqE)

The following description is extracted from the Croquet England website [www.croquetengland.org.uk](http://www.croquetengland.org.uk).  
*Croquet England is the National Governing Body for the sport of Croquet (all versions) in England. It is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (Registered Charity number 1202444) with an approved Constitution. It was formed in 2023, replacing The Croquet Association (formed 1896).*

Surbiton CC maintains full club membership of Croquet England and has benefited from that membership in a number of ways, including direct financial support during the club's start-up, access to beneficial insurance arrangements and entry into national inter-club tournaments. All club members are automatically enrolled as Standard Associates of CqE and may participate fully in CqE's activities; these include those Surbiton tournaments that are listed in the CqE Fixtures calendar, and further details are available on the CqE website <https://www.croquetengland.org.uk/>. Note: that for charities, "Membership" is a term reserved for those people having voting rights in the organization. CqE therefore uses the term Associates for people who do not have voting rights. As a Standard Associate, if you want to become more involved in CqE then you can become a voting member of CqE by updating your profile on the CqE website.

We are fortunate that there are a significant number of Croquet Clubs within commuting distance that offer a wide variety of tournaments (both AC & GC and from beginner to advanced) that you can enter as a Standard Associate of Croquet England. There is some useful information on the CqE website on entering your first tournament: <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=tournament/first>

Unless they have specifically opted out, Club Members details are held on the CqE database and are accessible to all other Associates of CqE. Club Members are encouraged to check that their details are correct on the CqE database – accessible in the Subscribers section of the CqE website <https://www.croquet.org.uk/> - and to update their handicap status whenever it changes.

SCC is also a member of the Croquet South East (CSE), formally the South East Croquet Federation), <https://southeastcroquetfederation.org.uk/> which is an association of croquet clubs, in the geographical area covered by the Federation: London and the counties of Kent, Surrey and Sussex. The Federation's primary activities are to assist clubs by providing coaching support to and to organise leagues and tournaments in the South East of England.

## Inter-Club Tournaments

The club enters teams in the following club tournaments. Most tournaments consist of a team of 4 players, with each match played in a single day with morning and afternoon games. Participating in these team events is a good way of starting to play at other clubs as you have the support of your team members and can share travel if playing at the other club.

### Association Croquet

- CqE Inter-Club Championship (holders 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021: Surbiton CC), open play.
- CqE Mary Rose Inter-Club Trophy (last won by Surbiton CC 2015), open play for handicaps 0 and above. Teams must have a combined handicap of at least 4.
- CqE Longman Club Team Cup, handicap play for handicaps between 3 ½ and 20. Teams must have a combined handicap of at least 24.
- CSE "B" League, four handicap play matches against other CSE clubs; Players must have a minimum handicap of 11
- CSE "U" League, four handicap play matches against other CSE clubs; unrestricted.
- CSEAC team events

### Golf Croquet

- CqE Inter-Club (last won by Surbiton CC 2016), open play
- CSE Handicap League.
- CSE GC team events

Members interested in these tournaments should contact the organiser listed on the website under the 'Administration> Inter Club Competitions and Organisers.

## Health & Safety

The casual observer may be surprised to find this section, but we are pleased to share a few warnings to help avoid painful lessons.

The club's first aid box is located by the cupboard next to the coffee table. The nearest A&E department is at Kingston Hospital, opposite Norbiton railway station.

The club has a defibrillator. This is also located in the clubhouse by the cupboard next to the coffee table.

### **Mallet Injuries – mallets weigh approximately 3 pounds (or 1.4 kg.)**

1. Hitting an ankle with your mallet is painful and an instant reminder that force = mass x acceleration!
2. Less immediate but just as painful are injuries to wrists, elbows and shoulders resulting from errors of technique.

### **Hoops do not move**

1. Tripping over hoops may look funny from a distance but can be very dangerous; remember that all that furniture on the lawn that is forever getting in the way of your shots is equally unforgiving to legs. Never walk backwards without being absolutely sure there isn't a hoop waiting to trip you up.
2. Lifting hoops takes real strength and that's why each equipment trolley includes a levered device to save our backs!

### **Equipment trolleys are very useful but very heavy**

Be very careful when wheeling a trolley and take extra care to ensure it is evenly balanced and the handles are fully extended in their lowest position. If the trolley is about to fall, let it fall and get out of the way quickly!

There is a small lip at the door on the ramp to the hoop hut. You may find it easier to pull rather than push the trolley over this lip.

### **Flat sole shoes can be slippery in wet weather**

Flat sole shoes often have less grip than other types of shoe. Take extra care when walking on the lawns when the grass is wet.

## Etiquette & Customs

A few points are listed here to help avoid embarrassment for those new to croquet.

- Dress: always wear flat soled shoes on the lawn; whites are not required at Surbiton except for official tournaments. Other clubs may have other rules so best check if visiting.
- Respect for games in progress: be aware of games in progress and avoid interfering in any way.
- Before games: the player with the lower handicap tosses the coin and sets up any bisques.
- During games: play as quickly as possible; do not distract your opponent's play; always call for a referee or for your opponent to watch whenever you are about to play a shot that may result in a fault.
- Games Status: at any time during the game you can ask your opponent about the state of the game (e.g.: which ball you are playing or which is the next hoop). Even very experienced players sometimes need to do this!
- Double-banking: ask the other game before lifting and marking their balls, and inform the player when the balls have been replaced; agree with the other player on the lawn who should go first when you are both playing in or towards the same parts of the lawn.

- After games: convention is that the winner retrieves clips and buys the drinks!
- Clearing the lawn: If no one else is at the club and ready to play on the lawn when you have finished then you should put the hoops, flags and pegs away.

## **Recruitment**

We are very keen to recruit new members and believe we have plenty of space to accept many more. Experience shows that members are our best channel to potential recruits and we encourage all members to introduce friends and acquaintances.

Note that new members joining partway through the season qualify for a reduced subscription and full details are available via the membership page of the website. The club has a number of mallets that can be borrowed initially for those new to the game. A membership application form can also be found on the website.

# Attachment 1: Setting and Storing Hoops and Pegs

Random placement of hoops causes their different shapes and sizes to enlarge the holes in the lawn. These instructions are designed so that each hoop and peg is always set in the same position on the same lawn.

## Instructions:

1. Ensure the trolley handles are positioned downwards before moving the trolley.
2. To avoid scraping the hoops against the metal flags, **remove all flags first.**
3. Place each hoop in the correct location on the lawn.
4. After removing the peg and each hoop, tread down the holes and store each item in its correct position in the trolley.

