



Scottish Croquet Association

10 April 2010

A visit to Dundonald Croquet Club

Five SCA members, Alasdair Adam, George Geis and Alan Wilson from the Edinburgh clubs and Joe Lennon and Tony Whateley from Glasgow, made the pilgrimage to Dundonald Croquet Club in Ayrshire to sample the delights of Scotland's biggest croquet club. Despite only having opened in 2007 with one lawn the club has already grown to 98 members (as of 10.04.2010) and confidently expects to break the 100 barrier before the end of the season.

With such a large membership, mainly players, the order of the day is Golf Croquet with club days drawn as mini-leagues of 3 pairs each playing playing 7-point. From these the winning (and sometimes 2nd placed) teams go on to a knockout until one pair emerges victorious.

When we went the weather was glorious, particularly for mid-April, and more than 70 people turned up ranging in ages from a few months to 60+, although it may only have been the visitors at the top end! The vast majority of the members were under 30 and already the future of the club looks secure. More than 60 players took part, although with late arrivals and early departures, the actual composition of the teams was somewhat fluid and expertly managed by Marion Imrie. When George and I finally left, at 9.30 pm, play had reached the semi-final stage and would continue until one team triumphed. The eventual winners were Dave Farrow and Ronnie Zorget who defeated the Shedden twins Douglas and Ian in the final held at 10pm. Some ingenious use of a floodlight, stanchion and extension cable made it possible for players to see what they were doing.

The lawn is slightly below full size and has an interesting mix of slopes, bumps and hollows which all add to the fun of the day - for let me emphasise, this is about social interaction and enjoyment rather than deadly fierce competition. That didn't stop some members, mainly my opponents, running hoops from vast distances. I remember hoop 2 run from the side of hoop 1 and 4 from the side of 3.

Despite their experience, the SCA members did not clean up in competition, although Alasdair will claim he would have won if he'd been able to stay long enough, and many Dundonald members showed a good grasp of the game playing with skill and intelligence.

On the social side there was food and drink aplenty. Everyone mixed in and moved around the different tables chatting, commenting on the play

and keeping an eye on the children (and dogs). The club have 4 large polystyrene containers which club member George Imrie had filled with snow collected from the hills at the nearby wind farm. Drinks, soft and otherwise, were stored there and retrieved as necessary throughout the day - there was even Pimm's. Most people had brought food and a barbecue was fired up in the early evening with the visitors' needs being catered for by an attentive club secretary, Steven Easton. Later on the fire drums were lit so we could keep warm in the late evening. Steven even insisted on a photograph of me with Dave Farrow, club captain, and promised to get it in the local paper. Fame at last.

For the future we hope to get Dundonald members up to Glasgow CC and, perhaps, introduce Association Croquet to interested members. In the future I wouldn't be at all surprised to see a Dundonald name amongst the trophy winners in the SCA.

I can't finish without mentioning the Shedden family. Brothers Ian and Douglas, sons Jamie and John. Without their land, cooperation and efforts Dundonald croquet club would still be a dream and I wouldn't have had a great day out. They said that anyone who wanted to go and visit would be made very welcome. I can guarantee that.

Alan Wilson

[Return to news page](#)