Dear Members

This will be the final Rocket for the 2010. I hope you all have happy and healthy holidays.

Glen Whitehead

Canberra members have been involved in a number of overseas competitions recently with the Canberra Gateball team (pictured) and Peter Freer achieving good results in China and Egypt respectively.

President’s Report – Elizabeth Mountain

Committee Update

The Committee has been largely focused on lawns matters in the last several weeks. The previous committee was considering two major projects:
1. splitting the lawn renovations to be able to have one lawn available for play all year; and
2. upgrading the irrigation system.
Both of these projects are big-ticket items and the current committee has wanted to be sure it understood all the possible implications. Additionally, we have been meeting with a root barrier company to arrange a quote for:

- replacing the root barriers on the eastern and western sides;
- installing a ball barrier on the western side; and,
- extending the northern boundary by about one metre.

The committee will seek input from members about these projects, as they will all be costly. For example, quotes obtained some time ago for the irrigation system were about $20,000. We await the quote for the root barrier but with there being very large heritage trees affected we don't expect that to be cheap either. The committee will circulate a paper for comment in the next few weeks that sets out the projects and the related issues. If we really believe that the drought has broken, planning for the major renovation of the lawns can start again.

### Proposal to split the lawn renovation each year and install a new irrigation system

Towards the end of the term of the previous committee, it considered splitting the annual renovation of the lawns to have one lawn always available for play and at the same time replacing the irrigation system to allow for the lawns to be watered individually. These matters were passed to the current committee to consider. We have considered them at great depth and decided not to proceed with either, as in our view, the advantages of doing them were outweighed by the costs and complications identified. The committee developed a paper that considered all the issues which is now available at the clubhouse for interested members.

### A place to play in December

Since we sadly lost OPH as a place to play in December, and we have approached Queanbeyan club about whether we could use their lawns. They have a Committee meeting on 6 November and will consider our request to use their lawns and the necessary administrative arrangements.

However, even at the moment, they would be happy for us to join their draws, at the cost of a $5 green fee, as follows:

1. Association Croquet on Wednesday evenings at 7pm; and
2. Saturday mornings at 9 am.

Their golf draws are more flexible and they were considering moving them to evening draws in the summer. Queanbeyan will let us know further details soon.

If you would like to go to their draws, please contact their President, Sarah Ferguson at asos@internode.on.net to check arrangements until we have further advice about how we will manage play in December.
**Lawn renovation**

As you know, at our *annual* renovation we do a vertidrain and scarification (generally the same effect as coring and removal of scarified product), add chemicals as indicated by soil analysis, top dress with coarse river sane (10 cubic metres over the 3 courts) and fertilise. The lawn is usually out of action for 4-6 weeks.

When we do a *major* renovation every 10-15 years where we rip the top off the court and generally redo it altogether. The lawn is usually out of action for about 12 weeks. We have been due to start the major renovation for each of the lawns during the last couple of years but deferred because of the drought. It looks as though the drought may be over and if favourable conditions continue, the committee plans to start the major renovation project with court 3 at the end of 2011. One court at a time, it will take 3 years to complete the project.

**Grant Applications**

We have been busy with grant applications in recent months. Bob Gingold, our Secretary, has been successful in getting us a computer set up with which we will be able to teach anyone over 50 in the club who wishes to learn the basics. This program was funded by the Commonwealth Government and NEC and will result in our receiving a computer, desk and two chairs. The goods revert to the club after 30 June 2011. There have been discussions that we may be able to create a lawn booking system on line.

Anyone interested in having some basic computer lessons should contact Bob or Ben. If you don’t have a computer at home you could use this one in the way that many people use those in public libraries.
Grant Applications - OPH Lawn

We considered making an application for funding to assist in restoring the OPH lawn and thus having that available for play during our ‘off’ period. However, the ACT government will not fund work on a Commonwealth property. The NCA received a rather unbelievable quote to mow the lawns for six months of the year so their interest dropped quickly too. The committee will keep looking at options.

Grant Applications - Root Barriers

However, we have made an application for 1:1 funding to install root barriers on the eastern and western barriers and to recover 1 metre of lawn on the northern boundary ($12,000). We would like to do this work when we do the annual renovation but that does not coincide with the grant approval process (January 2011). We plan to have the work done in the first quarter of next year, with or without the grant. The Club has been trying to organise this work for more than 4 years and it should result in better lawn coverage on the eastern and western boundaries and corners. The extension of the northern boundary will allow for greater flexibility in court layout.

News from around the Club

New Members – Bob Gingold

The Club is pleased to welcome back Jonathan Bowen after his time in Queensland and Robin Shenton from the Narooma Croquet Club. We also welcome Ken Goodge who has also joined after completing the Introductory Course run by Stephen Meatheringham.
**Christmas Party – 11 December**

Book the date! Our Xmas Party will be on 11 December, which allows those on the NSW team to attend. We still need a convenor, as your president, who normally manages these things, will not be able to this year. You want to do it? Please contact Elizabeth.

**Librarian**

When Anne Robinson retired from the club as a playing member, we lost our librarian. We are very grateful for the years Anne gave us as Librarian but now we need a new one to manage the collection and watch over the loans. This is not a hugely time consuming job so please volunteer to do it. Please contact Elizabeth if you are prepared to do this job for your club.

**World Croquet Online**

Club member Alex Park has had a picture article on the World Gateball Championships and associated text published on the World Gateball Online website.


**New Website – Stephen Weatheringham**

The Committee has revamped the "public" face of our website so that the homepage is better targeted at people wanting to learn about the mallet sports we offer. The new homepage is now live.

To access the usual "members" information area you will be able to click on the "For Members" link on the homepage.

The Committee would be interested in receiving any feedback regarding the revised homepage.

**ACA National Office – Elizabeth Mountain**

The new national office of the Australian Croquet Association opened recently in Sports House, Hackett. Gail Farr, the inaugural Executive Director, invited the Committee to attend the formal opening and we welcomed her to our fraternity in the ACT region. At some stage, after she becomes more settled, she will visit the club and learn croquet.
Earlier in the year, Bob and Elizabeth gave a little training session to some interested people in the new Goodwin homes in Ainslie. Quite a few of the people in these independent living units showed some talent and they have been playing three times a week on a mini lawn there. They have asked whether they could come and have a game on a real lawn with us. We have invited them to join us for a free golf session on a Tuesday afternoon (9 Nov), in the hope that a couple might care to join. We will also invite them to the finals of the current round of Golf croquet competitions.

I represented the Club at an event at Government House recently. This event was the launch by HE Michael Bryce of a book, More than a Game; Canberra’s Sporting Heritage 1854 – 1954’ by Don Selth (deceased). The invitation attracted about 100 people (and I didn't know any of them although I did recognise the bloke who runs the Brumbies and his wife). According to Don Selth’s son, we were invited because croquet is one of the sports mentioned in the book. After a nice cup of coffee and 2 elegant little sandwiches, I managed to have a look at the book and indeed there are some paras about croquet which were somewhat dwarfed by pages on cricket and football. The book is available for sale at Dymocks and the National Library for $28 should you wish to explore it for yourself.

The Club will host this year’s New South Wales Gateball Championships over the weekend of 20 and 21 November. The competition is a casual and friendly affair and we would encourage all members to consider having a go at either the team event on Saturday and/or the doubles competition on Sunday. Play is scheduled to start at 9:00am and finish around 4:00pm on both days. Canberra plans to enter teams that comprise both regular and not so regular Gateball players. Canberra has attracted players from Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales to the event and has incredibly also received an inquiry from a team in Nepal.
Competition details, and a sign-up sheet, are up in the clubhouse. Please contact Tim Goodland (0407 161 994) or Alex Park on (0450 052 226) for more information.

**Captain’s Comments – Ben Freasier**

This is just a reminder that when your GC or AC handicap changes, it should be signed off, preferably by the Club Handicapper, John Byers. In a pinch, I can sign off. We have had some instances where the handicap has changed on the card, and since nobody signed off, we were not able to change the club records on the web, since we didn't know about the change.

Also a reminder for all members to finish their matches in the Association Croquet Singles Handicap, the Golf Croquet Club Singles Championship, the Golf Croquet Club Handicap Singles and the Golf Croquet Club Handicap Doubles. These competitions are all due to wrap up by 19 November.

**Wednesday Night Golf Draw**

With the weather warming up and daylight saving giving us more sunshine into the evenings now is the time to hit the courts for the Wednesday twilight draw at 5.30pm, so drop in after work.

The twilight draw will run until 17 November.

**Come and Try**

Please remember that no lawns will be available for private play on Come and Try days, i.e. first Sunday of the month. We now offer Gateball as well as Association and Golf Croquet on Come and try days. Recruitment will be our focus for the first half of next year.

In early September, Tim the Yowie man included our Come and Try in his article in the Canberra Times Panorama Magazine which resulted in a tidy number turning up. He was unable to come himself because of illness. However he did show with a mate and his kid in October on a cold and miserable day and seemed to enjoy himself. He was writing an article about the experience so watch out for it in coming weeks.

**Veterans and Senior Competitions**

There has been some ambiguity about the age qualification to enter these competitions that arises when your 70th or 55th birthday occurs during the year of the competition. To clarify this the Committee has decided that the policy of the club is that you must turn 70 or 55 before the closing date for entries. This is in line with the age qualification used for national competitions.
Canberra at the World Gateball Championships

Below are some excerpts and pictures that were featured on the blog that tracked the progress of Australian teams throughout the tournament. http://www.worldgateball.blogspot.com/

Seven members of the Canberra Gateball team began their tour in Hong Kong playing warm-up matches against four of the World Championship sides from Hong Kong. This included Canberra’s first matches on artificial turf.

The team then met up in Shanghai on the Thursday before the tournament. Friday was the practice day, and included Gateball summit meetings, the opening ceremony and the opening of (what I believe is) the world's first Gateball Museum.

The opening ceremony comprised a number of speeches, athletes and official’s oaths and some entertainment. The highlight was a skilful dragon dance.

Several Chinese and Japanese journalists spoke to Australian teams at the opening ceremony.

The Gateball Museum included four rooms of excellent displays including the history of Gateball, the history of equipment, governance, the spread of Gateball over the World and interactive displays where you could practice your
The first thing I noticed when I arrived on Saturday morning was how many people were about. Spectator numbers was considerable with some of the round robin (of which 12 are played simultaneously) containing hundreds of spectators huddled around the court, creating a great atmosphere. All the Chinese teams and some of the teams from the other nations showed an incredible level of skill. The tactics of the top teams saw balls grouped tight to lines waiting patiently for their opportunity to attack.
In the group stage the Australian charge started well with Canberra picking up a 10-7 win (albeit playing a bit rustily) against Korea Union. Canberra’s second match was a 21-10 loss to a very strong and consistent Hong Kong side. Canberra played well and had chances to win but was unable to make the difficult shots to turn the match. Canberra’s last game was their best, a convincing 15 – 7 win over Brazil 7 including several double touches and dominance for most of the match. Other Australian teams faced tough opposition with only one win from the other sides 12 matches.

The event was covered extensively by Japanese and Chinese media including matches recorded for the Super Gateball TV program.
In the final Fujian (China) defeated Yunnan Liming (China) (9-7). Crowds were kept back by a barrier that obscured some of the court tight to the lines however allowed more of the crowd to view the final. I estimate around 1,500 people watched the final. The match was tight where Yunnan’s on-court dominance was not converted into points. Fujian was able to turn the match late with a scintillating 15m ‘maverick’ shot which swung the game and gave them the tight win despite a number of tense moments in the final two minutes.

The closing ceremony was an incredible spectacle held at the local high school in front of a massive crowd including of tournament volunteers, officials and participants.

My personal highlights were the incredible sand painting exhibition, the Chinese Mask Changing Opera and Kung Fu demonstration.