

Welcome from the new chairman

Welcome to the latest edition of the Club Newsletter. May I start by wishing all members and their families a belated Happy New Year.

My first pleasant task on being appointed Club chairman is to thank my predecessor, Richard Hawkins, for his excellent stewardship of Club affairs during his period in office. He will be a hard act to follow.

I start my chairmanship knowing that we have an excellent team in place covering the day to day running of the Club and a broad blend of new and experienced Directors whose expertise I will be able to draw on. We welcome both Stephen Britt and Rosemary Holley to the Board.

I am also very pleased to let you know that Keith Ferguson has returned from a short spell away and has agreed to continue his roles of Vice-Chairman and Finance Director. Keith's knowledge and experience have

guided the financial stability of the Ipswich and Suffolk Club for many many years, and the Board of Directors would like to take this opportunity to express their gratitude.

Pauline Young and Basil Tenwick have both kindly agreed to continue as Club President and Club Vice President respectively and I believe we are very lucky to have such dedicated people in these support roles.

Looking forward, the Club, after some 132 years, is generally in good shape with membership levels high and with a varied programme of social events which are well attended and supported by members.

In my relatively short two-year tenure, my challenge is to see that the Club can adapt to a changing world so I'll be working to ensure that we improve quality where we can, that we continue to listen to members' views and that we support those who willingly give of



their own time to organise the diverse range of activities enjoyed by the wider membership.

So, to conclude, I am very much looking forward to the next two years as Chairman of the Board of Directors and I hope to have the chance to meet many of you at the various social events. If for any reason you would wish to contact me directly, on any matter, please feel free to do so at georgemclellan31@gmail.com

George McLellan
Chairman

Two new Club directors to join the board

Having finally got over the shock of being invited to join the board, I'm now looking forward to contributing to Club affairs in whatever capacity the Chairman and other board members think most suitable.

Some of you will have seen me in action already as the latest recruit to the Wine Committee. Those of you that know me or that have crossed my path from time to time during my 15 years as a Club member will know I have more than a passing interest in food and drink, something that my waistline occasionally betrays, and I particularly look forward to having some input there.

I would describe myself as a 'Country' member on account of living thirty minutes out of town, therefore making up the 'and Suffolk' element of the Ipswich & Suffolk Club. This means that my wife Linda and I rarely do lunches, however, we make up for that by being regular attendees at evening events.

As a Director of our Club I pledge to do whatever I can to maintain and improve our little Oasis. If any of you see me around the Club, please do introduce yourselves and share your thoughts, I'll always be happy to listen.



Stephen Britt

It is a great honour to have been invited to join the board in the capacity of social events organiser. I am delighted to announce an exciting programme of events for 2018.

By popular request from our lady members, we will see the return of the Charity Fashion Show - featuring Coes women's wear and Laura Jane Boutique of Woodbridge, who will be showcasing their Spring/Summer collections. Our chosen charity for the event will be St. Elizabeth Hospice. I do hope you will come and support what is, an extremely worthy charity.

In June we have organised an interesting evening with guest speaker Sue Hayes. Sue has worked as a producer, the Director of the Edinburgh International TV festival and also the London Film Commissioner; Sue will talk about her experience in the film and television industries. Also coming up, a fascinating speakers lunch with Lina Hogg, business woman and co-founder with her daughter, of Ayria Natural.

I sincerely hope that the planned events will meet with members' approval and we very much welcome your feedback. Please do contact me with any ideas for future events.



Rosemary Holley

From the General Manager's office



2017 was one of the toughest years for the Club and myself with day to day business and ongoing projects.

UK catering is currently undergoing a radical change with huge pressure on pay rates and higher food costs which are difficult to pass onto consumers. Add to this mix continuing legislation which places an increasing burden on the Club as an example where diets and cross contamination have to be fully considered for each and every guest or face potential litigation. The Club is rare as we work with creative talent and base raw materials unlike many other establishments that purchase pre-made and stick to a known format just to keep within the law and keep labour costs low.

We continue to support local business as much as possible and will continue to do so as long as they provide us with the best ingredients as the local retail sector has also suffered in 2017.

The board have noted a shift in members' tastes and expectations and I now have director Rosemary Holley as partner in event planning which is a great help as no one person can have all the ideas.

As regards to projects and enhancements to the Club I now feel happier with the Tower Street gates now they are fully operational. Which I might add have taken away one of my most enjoyable jobs. That being car park attendant. Now the gates have an automatic sign posted, the non-member "bandits" who used to park and get issued tickets by me have nearly all gone as they must think they will get locked in. (must get my screwdriver out on that sign)

The Reading Room fire is a superb addition to the Club and has only taken me three weeks to work out how to light it without smoking the house out and setting off the fire alarm while fellow staff member Len and I run around waving arms and doors.

We've had some super weddings during the past six months, one in particular where some members enjoyed the spectacle of an open horse and carriage charging full speed up the Tower Street ramp while the occupants had glasses of Prosecco in hand going over their heads. It was hilarious as they were soaked.

Robert Coppin - Club General Manager

Financial Report

It is my pleasure to have been able to report to the AGM another solid financial performance for the year to 30 September 2017.

We must again thank Robert and his team for all of the hard work they put in throughout the year to achieve these results.

Robert has been busy as usual on property repairs and rejuvenation and we had a fairly heavy spend of over £40,000 in the year. One of the main repairs being the work on our largest "leaning" chimney and we also have the benefit of a popular "real" fire in the reading room. We have also tidied up our old stables in the courtyard area which should ensure these premises are now future proofed.

Robert and the catering team managed a near 9% increase in the catering turnover. Despite this terrific performance it wasn't quite enough to bring catering back into a break even position due to the substantial increase in wages and other costs we have incurred. We run ever harder to break even in this area and, along with all other catering businesses, I am sure this battle will continue in the coming year.

We continue to maintain strong reserves in the club, which we hope will be enough to sustain our club and in particular our fantastic building. Net current assets have increased to £177,000 within the acceptable margin set. The total cash balance at the end of September of £376,000, is a good indicator of the peak balance which we hold following the annual subscription income receipt. The low point of our cash is just over the £110,000 level in August and this is effectively our buffer against surprise costs.

Another strong year for Robert and his team and the club is in good financial health for your future enjoyment.

Keith Ferguson – Vice Chairman/Finance Director

A note from the President

2017 has proved to be yet another excellent year for the Club, and I just know that 2018 is going to be the same. I have now been a member for 17 years and president for one and cannot believe how quickly time goes by. John and I together have a total membership of 73 years.

Events at the Club continue to escalate, with more speakers lunches than ever. For me highlights were the talks given by two very young lady speakers, at a stroke lowering the average age in the room considerably!



Ali North, Suffolk Wildlife Trust's Hedgehog Officer for Ipswich in August followed in September by Claire Davies on Waste Disposal at Great Blakenham. Both were so enthusiastic and well informed on these topics of real local interest. Such a breath of fresh air, no pun intended. Robert has a real knack of getting so many diverse speakers.

A really excellent and memorable evening was the now to be annual Trafalgar Night Dinner in October. This black tie event was an immediate sell out and Captain Richard Channon, RN, our guest speaker, held our attention. I hope he will return for a speakers lunch in the future so that more members will be able to hear him. Personally I think that this dinner should become the highlight social event of the year. It is the only Black Tie evening available to members and their guests - mindful that not all members' spouses are members themselves.

The Annual Members Dinner in December was attended by over 100 members, a record for this event. The food, drink and atmosphere was great and George McLellan was a marvellous substitute for our chairman. This gathering gives us all an opportunity to publicly thank Robert and his team.

Sadly the Annual Carol Service was very poorly attended so I think there may be a rethink for 2018. However the after-service party was most enjoyable, with so few people there was a real party atmosphere with everyone mixing, sitting round tables with more chairs being added so that drinking, eating and chatting could go on. So all was not lost. You will see that events planned for 2018 are imaginative, singling out the "Royal Wedding" Formal dinner in May.

I thank all members for their support and encouragement.

Pauline Young – Club President

Bridge update

The Tuesday morning Bridge Club has continued to flourish, usually with seven or eight tables each week. We start at 9.30am and finish at 12.30pm with a coffee break halfway through.

Steph Mallett and Maurice Barnes normally direct and score the bridge sessions, with Margaret Croucher kindly doing the scoring when needed.

On 19th December 29 of us enjoyed a delicious Christmas lunch at the club after playing duplicate. On behalf of the members Alan Catchpole thanked Steph and Maurice for organising the lunch and for their efforts over the past year. In response and on behalf of Steph and himself, Maurice thanked everyone for their invariable good humour and the very generous gifts of John Lewis gift vouchers.



The atmosphere is always friendly and relaxed, with players at all levels of experience very welcome. We look forward to another year of successful finesses and slams!

Maurice Barnes

Snooker & Billiards news

The 2017/18 Snooker & Billiards competitions are in full swing and as usual I am grateful to George McLellan and Tony Harmer for their organisation. To ensure that as few problems are encountered as possible, please make sure that matches are played before the deadline date. George and Tony will be very grateful.

The winners of the Dick Berresford Mardi Bash were George McLellan and David Parkinson (it was rumoured that they went into training at lunchtime and only drank water!). This is one of the most enjoyable events of the year and many thanks go to Dick for his organisational skills especially as he managed to be some five thousand miles away on business.

The first internal competition of the season, The Bill Allin Cup, has been completed and congratulations to the victors who, for the second year running, were George Ridgway and Steve Britt. (I suspect that handicaps will be reviewed to ensure this does not happen next year.)

Following the break for Christmas the spring season of Thursday night club matches has now started. The Fixture List is on the snooker notice board outside the bar from which it is evident that we have a fairly full season ahead of us. In addition to the normal fixtures there will be a new internal competition using the snooker plus balls - watch this space!

All these matches are played on a friendly basis and from my experience they are very enjoyable. We do like to include as many Club members in these matches so please let me know should you wish to play. Ability levels are definitely not the criteria for selection rather the ability to have a very social and entertaining evening.

Club night is held on Tuesday evenings and all members are welcome - we play from 5.15 pm to around 9.00 pm. If you are interested please just turn up or give me a ring if further information is needed.

Allan Williams



Golf news

Our Annual golf day at Purdis was in September when we competed for the first time, for the Andy Booth Memorial Trophy, a new trophy in memory of a great golfer and friend.

This competition had a very justifiable winner in George McLellan who had sourced this new trophy from Scotland. In second place was Basil Tenwick and in third place David Lawrence.



Best front nine holes winner was Norman Conder and the best back nine holes was won by Roger Girling. The winners of nearest the pins were Andrew Johnson and Basil Tenwick and the longest drive winner was Andrew Johnson. We had a total of 20 taking part and were fed very well at our prize giving, a good and memorable day.



The Northgate Trophy our annual knockout golf competition was won by Peter Shepherd and the runner up was David Lawrence. A big thanks to all who took part.

We are now in contact with Colchester Garrison and the Bury Farmers Club for this year's annual fixtures and teams will be needed for these.

Yours in Golf, Allan Gosling

Scrabble

It is with great pleasure that once again I can report that we have had lots of fun and laughter this year. We haven't always played Scrabble. One evening there were five ladies and one man. Said man had, some months previously, introduced a game called "Splodge". I don't think I have ever laughed so much.

We meet at 6.30 for 7.00 meal on the second Tuesday of the month (excluding January, July & August).

Sarah Swallow

Chess

The Chess Club started in October 2017 with a small group of fairly rusty players who had not played the game for some time.

We have had some very enjoyable evenings playing chess and would like to extend an invitation to anyone who has some knowledge of the game, or no knowledge, to come and join us. You will be made very welcome.

We meet on the second Wednesday of each month at 6.30pm in the bar, look forward to seeing you there!

Liz Molander



From the Wine Committee



A warm welcome to Steve Britt who has joined the the hard working Wine Committee and no doubt will bring a new perspective and a wealth of experience.

A busy season was kick-started in September with an excellent wine-tasting evening, hosted by the two 'Jonathans' from Wines of Interest in Ipswich.

One of our more thoughtful and considered evenings, and very enjoyable. November brought a revisit of our 'wines of the vintage years' evening. We managed to source all but the dessert wine from the cellar and winelist. Some lovely wines.

Of course the cellar was also the source for the wines for Annual Members' Dinner in December. Most enjoyable, also with an alternate selection for dessert wine rather than port, for those who preferred.

Coming soon we have another favourite, our Call My Bluff evening with Charles from NethergateWines hosting. Should be a fun evening!

Stay in practice!

Bruce Murrill

The Annual Members' Dinner



The Annual Members Dinner went off very well this year as you'll see from the couple of photos (above). Everyone had a very enjoyable evening and well done to all the restaurant catering and organising staff. We've included a photo (right) of the winning team from the recent quiz held at the club.



From the fabric desk

2017 has been an interesting year on the fabric front. The former stables and stores which were redundant have now all been converted into attractive small office units which are to be known as The Hayloft, The Stables and The Coach House. Even better news is that all units are now occupied and generating income for the Club.

New automatic gates were installed to the Tower Street entrance and are working well (apart from on the first day when they would not open at all!)

Another lovely improvement is the installation of a wood burning stove in the Reading Room which makes this a much cosier and warmer place to relax. The stove was ceremonially lit for the first time by Tim Dansie and, I suspect, his lunch breaks will be even longer from now on.

However the improvements and works envisaged for 2018 will be rather less exciting on the eye. On the one hand we

are planning to make the Northgate Street gates automatic. On the other there are two quite large flat roofs not even visible from ground level that require stripping and renewing. At the same time the roofs will be insulated to comply with building regulations. Dull and expensive maybe but very necessary to maintain the fabric of our grand old building.

Trudi Nicholls and Richard Hawkins
House Mistress and House Master



Joint Membership

This is an excellent time to upgrade your membership to include your spouse or partner.
The cost is £40.00 + VAT - Interested? Contact General Manager Robert Coppin.