

Welcome from your new chairman

My first task on being appointed Club Chairman is to thank my predecessor, George McLellan for his excellent stewardship of Club affairs during his period in office. His practical “can do” attitude helped enormously in pushing forward a number of projects which are about to come to fruition including work on conversion of our Pine Room to a Bistro style area and extension of the bar. He also brought a good dose of wit and charm to the role of Chairman.

I would also like to mention that Richard Hawkins has decided to retire as a Director and to thank him for the huge shift that he has put in for the club. Richard has been an incredible asset to the board and club over the period since his appointment in 2003. He has overseen, with Robert, a vast number of projects in our demanding buildings.

The obvious ones being the creation of the Hayloft, storeroom, stable, coach house and not least our moving dining space. He has also overseen the installation of electric gates and refurbishment of the Tower Street entrance, twice redecorating the outside of the building and refurbishment of all the kitchen areas just to mention a few. We wish him all the best and look forward to see him in the club in his retirement.

I start my second Chairmanship knowing that we have an excellent manager and team in place covering the day to day running of the Club and that I will also be able to draw on the expertise and support of experienced Board members around me.

I am also delighted to confirm that Stephen Britt has accepted my invitation to become Vice Chairman

- and I am sure he will continue to bring the benefit of his business acumen to the Club. Pauline Young has also kindly agreed to continue as Club President, which is excellent news.

It seems remarkable to me that the last time I was chairman was in 1999 when the world was a very different place. Not quite a flat world back then but the explosion of new technology and changes in business behaviour have had a lasting impact on how we operate as a club. In those days, the bar would have been full of an evening and many professionals would have had lunch together most days in the club. Compare that to the modern working life.

Looking forward, the Club is generally in good shape as it approaches its 135th anniversary in my term. Membership levels remain robust, and the varied programme of social events are well attended and supported by members.

We have been able to proceed with important refurbishment projects to improve Club facilities – and these will be a major feature of the next 2 years - notwithstanding the challenging economic conditions.

However, for the Club to continue to succeed, we need to ensure the club and its events remain attractive to current as well as new and younger members.

Also, that Robert and his team are able to provide an effective offering for private and business functions - without sacrificing the high standards of quality for which the Club is known and respected.

To this end, I intend to work closely with Robert to see that we continue to listen to members' views and support those who give so much of their time voluntarily to organising a



wide range of activities in which the wider membership can participate. We will also do all we can to increase awareness (both within and outside the membership) of the excellent facilities the Club is able to offer for functions.

Ultimately, the success or otherwise of the Club depends upon members using its facilities and attending events.

Please do therefore get in touch with myself, Robert or any other members of the Board, if you have any ideas either for events or new ways of doing things – please use the comment slip provided in the reception or see Robert. This will do much to ensure that we can continue to provide a social programme and facilities which are enjoyable and relevant to the membership.

I am very much looking forward to the next two years as Chairman, and to meeting many of you at the various forthcoming social events.

Keith Ferguson
Chairman

From the General Manager's office



Christmas has come and gone and January continued my work on our major project for this season. To transform the old Pine Room and Snug into your new Bistro.

After six months of planning with building regulations and multiple contractors I have been working hard to ensuring minimal impact on our business during a busy period while still taking bookings and looking after events. My feet have hardly touched the ground.

Now the big work starts in April, ripping out the old and replacing with new plaster, ceiling, lights, glass

walls, colours, tables, chairs, carpets, artwork, fire and the icing on the cake is a new menu to be launched in May. I will send you an invitation to come and take a look at the finished rooms and enjoy the new menu.

I am also now working on a bar extension that will provide additional floor area in the bar and works behind the bar counter to make service more efficient.

Both the New Bistro, Restaurant, and Bar will also have a new Electronic Point of Sale (EPOS) system that will communicate directly with the chefs in the kitchen to speed orders especially during a busy lunchtime.

All the above works are scheduled while still being open for business which is a major undertaking.

However, this is an exciting time for the club that will deliver you a stylish area, fresh menu ideas, and smooth professional service for you to bring friends.

Thank you for your support over the years you can reap the rewards for your loyalty.

Robert Coppin
Club General Manager

A note from the President



I find it hard to believe that the newsletter is now being read by 549 members. The Club is really thriving. I would urge members to avail themselves of the catering facilities offered by Denis and his team at lunchtime.

Although speakers lunches are very well attended, it is now usual for some 66 members and guests to attend, we still need members to lunch on other days. There is a wide choice of menu, which changes on a regular basis, although old favourites like scampi and treacle tart are always to be found.

The topics recently covered by speakers have ranged from Trinity House and The Ipswich Mint to the Arctic with its polar bears, Tax, Care and Toy Boys!

Sadly the annual Carol Service in December was not well attended, but those who did really enjoyed an excellent finger buffet and much merriment back at The Club afterwards.

The Annual Members Dinner was again a sell out and Jane and her team did a marvellous job getting the food to tables.

Robert had worked extremely hard to put up the decorations and the Christmas tree in the reading room seems to get bigger every year. It did look really splendid and was appreciated by one and all.

I now look forward to seeing the Spring programme and cannot wait to see what Robert has lined up for us. He always comes up trumps.

Pauline Young
President

Financial report

As I reported to the AGM, we had another strong financial performance for the year ended 30 September 2019. Robert and his team are to be thanked for all their hard work.

In particular this year it is worth noting the incredible efforts that have gone in to turn around the bar and catering result. We again combine the bar and catering results but to break these down, the catering sales were up £27,000 and bar sales up £6,000 on the back of very active functions and club/speaker lunches.

Bar margins are constant at a target of 55% and catering margin were brought back to target at 65%.

Wage cost were up another £7,000, mainly extra resources. In summary, all leading to an amazing turnaround to a surplus £14,000 from £11,000 loss in prior year.

Unfortunately we still continue to suffer from the vagaries of the hospitality world and we are back to break even in the current year and we are still seeking to utilise our staff as flexibly as we can.

We continue to maintain our strong reserves in the club, which we hope will be enough to sustain our club and in particular our fantastic building.



We now have net current asset of £205,000 which is on the target set. However we have a series of projects over the coming month which include refurbishing the whole outside of the club including timbers and work in the Pine Room and bar.

These are all major works being overseen and planned by Robert currently.

The total cash balance at the end of September of £417,000 is a good indicator of the peak balance which we hold following the annual subscription income receipt in advance of the 1st October subscription renewal.

All our cash is spread over 5 FCA approved institutions. The low point of our cash occurs in August and this is effectively our buffer against surprise costs.

Another strong year for Robert and his team and the Club is still in good financial health for your continued enjoyment.

Keith Ferguson
Chairman

Snooker & Billiards news



The 2019/20 Snooker & Billiards Competitions are in full swing and as usual I am grateful to 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. Tony will be very grateful.

The first internal competition of the season, The Bill Allin Cup, has been completed and congratulations to the victors who were George Ridgway and Robbie Adams.

The Taylor Tankards Finals night has been held and the winners were Des Cunningham and Russell Leeburn. Congratulations to them and thanks to Tony Harmer and Andy Johnson who undertook the refereeing duties on the night.

The two Snooker Plus competitions have proved to be very popular and are now permanent features in the Fixture list so much so that two trophies have now been provided. In recognition of their contributions and the work they have both put in to build up the snooker section to its present

Golf news

Our annual golf day at Purdis last September was the third time we competed for the Andy Booth Memorial Trophy in memory of a great golfer and friend.

The winner was Richard Parry, second George McLellan and third Phil Thorndyke, the best front nine winner was Andy Johnson best back nine Peter Shepherd, and the two nearest the pins winners were Richard Dewar and Steve Britt. There were 18 golfers competing.

strength, I am very pleased to advise everyone that the trophies will be known as The John Marjason Snooker trophy and the David Green Snooker Plus Volunteer Trophy.

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 still have a fairly full season ahead of us.

All the 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 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
Captain of Snooker

The Northgate Trophy our annual knockout golf competition was won by George McLellan and the runner up was Barrie Henderson, a big thanks to all who took part. In October a team of twelve had a match against The Cronies (a Purdis based group of golfers) after the match we all had an excellent meal. This was the second annual match of what we hope of many, it was a win for the Ipswich & Suffolk Club.

Allan Gosling
Captain of Golf

Bridge matters

Steph Mallett has been Director of our Duplicate sessions since the sad loss of Tim Hedley, who took over from Steve, and was a popular winner of the Steve Croucher Trophy.

None of us knows when Steve started up the Tuesday morning bridge club (around 2003?) so if anyone reading this can tell me, I'd be very grateful.

It is a pleasure to have Steve's widow, Margaret, still playing with us every week and doing the scoring when the need arises.



2019 champion Steph Mallett is pictured receiving the Steve Croucher Trophy from Captain of Bridge, Maurice Barnes.

We remain an enthusiastic but very friendly group who enjoy one another's company as much as the playing of this wonderful game. This was evident from the excellent turnout for our Christmas lunch on 17 December, expertly and cheerfully organised (again) by Val Hindes and Dottie Kennerley.

Maurice Barnes
Bridge Captain

Pine Room and Snug refurbishment

As you may know the Pine Room and the Snug will shortly be going through a refurbishment the idea is to make the rooms more comfortable and more suited to the current use of the Club.

The large tables and wooden chairs will be replaced with smaller tables and more comfortable chairs

In an attempt to reduce noise levels there will be a new wall constructed to screen the kitchen area along with extensive redecoration and soft furnishings

Trudi Nicholls

Ladies Lunch Club

A new regular event at the club is a Ladies Lunch Club. This is on the 3rd Monday of the month.

Chef is provided with the menus and the recipes and the ladies do what they do best - eat, drink and natter. We do not have a speaker just a good time. We do raise money for charity by donation and in 2018 we raised £400 which was given to SELIG in Ipswich and in 2019 we raised £610.80 which is going to EACH.

Hopefully you have had your appetite whetted for one of these events and I look forward to welcoming you.

Sarah Swallow



Sarah Swallow presenting the cheque for SELIG to Andrea Davies together with Liz Harsant and Jilly Harrison-Pinder.

Mahjong

The Mahjong Group meets twice a month on Monday mornings from 10am to 12 noon, a wake-up session to start the week. John and I are delighted to welcome new players who would like to learn how to play.

If you feel intrigued and would like to know more, please come along to a session and give this fascinating game a try.

We have numerous competitions throughout the year and needless to say these involve a winner and a Mahjong-themed prize.

If you have been wondering what this game is all about, why not come along and then meet up with friends for lunch?

Mo Stiles

Leader of Mahjong

Book Clubs

The Book Clubs are flourishing and a wide variety of novels, biographies and books on different themes are enjoyed.

Our reading lists are regularly updated on the Club noticeboard and you are welcome to come along to whichever meeting suits you best, or to both of course!

We occasionally have a talk from a visiting author and we always ask for suggestions from the members of the groups to help decide what we read.

Our meetings take place on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday mornings each month from 10.15am finishing in time for a drink in the bar followed by lunch at about 12.30pm for those who have the time.



From the Wine Committee

Our autumn/winter program this year started with a Nethergate wines hosted dinner in November.

Well attended and much enjoyed, with Charles on good form, on this midweek evening event.

To brighten up the post Xmas/New Year blues, we hosted our second Wine Committee Challenge. This event pitted current champion Melvyn Eke against Wine Committee Chairman Bruce Murrill to select wines that best complemented the meal, crafted by our chefs Denis and Richard. In a very close contest, yours truly just managed to prevail, in an event which contrasted the difference between wine for everyday drinking, as against a wine matched to a specific dish.

Upcoming events include our popular Call My Bluff tasting in March; a chance to influence our ongoing club wine list, with a buffet and tasting, at the end of May; and the 'welcome to' Summer wine tasting event, with complementary menu, in early July. Book early - drink well!

Bruce Murrill

Wine Chairperson

Scrabble



Having now being officially voted in as the new Social Director of the club, as well as running the Scrabble and the Ladies Lunch Club, I have been asked to write a few words (well, as many as I want really!) for the Newsletter.

That was the advice given to me by our editor George.

Being a scrabble player I have a lots to say and lots of words up my sleeve but they are not necessarily in the right order!

Our scrabble year started in February as we don't play in January. For a club of this size our numbers are quite low and we would love to welcome more players. So on the next social calendar you will see we are introducing a day time scrabble club. These will be on the 1st Monday of the month (except for August). Please see further details on the calendar.

The evening sessions will continue to run on the second Tuesday of each month meeting at 6.00 pm and sitting down for supper at 6.30 pm which is then followed by the scrabble. It is a fun evening and as I have said previously all abilities are welcome. We even have a dictionary corner!

Sarah Swallow

Captain of Scrabble

New members

The Ipswich & Suffolk Club warmly welcome the following new members:-

Christopher & Eileen Keavey
Michael Smith
Nicky Tayler
David Weaver
Linda Neville-Thomas
Susan & John Hutton
Paul Tarrant & Jennifer Haxell
Zena Steward
Sandra Eley
Marion Harvey
Wendy Markt
Tony Kirby