

## PETANQUE IN THEBERTON AND EASTBRIDGE

Eastbridge Petanque Club - more commonly known as the Eels Foot Inn Petanque Club - for that is where it is based - was started in 2011 by well known Francophile Jon Swallow. A group of around 8 people expressed an interest and play began that first year on the car park at the Eels Foot Inn. This was not an ideal playing surface and somewhat hazardous at times both for players and cars coming in and out of the car park! In 2012, with landlord Julian Wallis' permission and support two shingle pistes were built in the pub garden by members of the club. 2012 also saw the first Eels Cup competition. This is now an annual event in August with teams from all over the coastal region coming to play and enjoy good company in this beautiful location.

The club, and indeed the game in general, grew in popularity and in 2014 four new pistes were added. This meant that bigger events could be contemplated and each year the club hosts several competitions involving around 100 players. Now boasting extra members the club entered 2 teams into the League and in this same year Eels Foot 2 won the both the league Grand Final and the Plate.

Since 2016 the club has fielded 5 teams in the league and now has around 30 members making it the biggest club in the Coastal Alliance. Petanque is a game which can be enjoyed by all ages and at all levels. We have members in their seventies and we are lucky enough to have some talented juniors, the youngest of whom is 9 years old (he started playing when he was 6). He and one other junior hope to be considered for the England Youth Squad later this year.

The Club is a member of the Suffolk Coastal Petanque Alliance which currently has 51 teams spread over the Suffolk Coastal area but also takes in teams from as far as Stowmarket, Bressingham and Yarmouth. The league is currently split into 10 divisions and between March and September the member clubs compete to find the winning team. Along side this are Cup and Plate matches and an independent Summer Pairs league. For hardy souls a Winter League has also been played for the last 2 seasons.

Petanque is a version of the French game of boules. It is usually played with teams of two or three people but singles can also be played. It is a game of skill but anyone who can throw a ball can play and sometimes new comers have surprising results. It is a friendly and sociable game and those who just wish to play at basic level may derive as much enjoyment and pleasure as those wishing to progress and play at county, regional and national level.

The club meets on Thursday evenings (April to October) and at the weekends. However the pistes at the Eels Foot Inn are a community facility and the pub has boules available for those who wish to give it a try. Please come along. All are welcome.