

# CROQUET

GAZETTE

Issue 415 | June 2025





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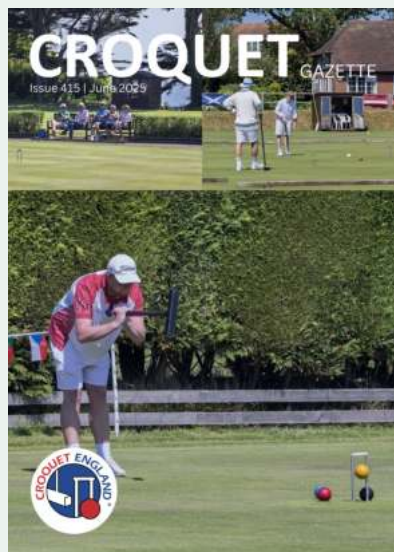


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**CROQUET  
ENGLAND**

Croquet England  
Issue 415 | June 2025



Front cover:  
Euan Burrridge at Budleigh Salterton  
Croquet Club, winning the 2025  
GC European Championship  
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# WELCOME

This month our Croquet Gazette features the 2025 Golf Croquet European Championship, which was hosted by Budleigh Salterton Croquet Club. Let me congratulate our new European Champion, Euan Burrridge, on his superb performance throughout the entire event.

For me this event symbolised a new future for Croquet, with the next generation of champions shining through, and we have all been able to spectate using the power of live streaming. It is, of course, fantastic that Croquet England has been able to purchase the equipment and continue to improve the technology of the production, but let's not forget that there are always the volunteers on the ground who make this happen.

It was clear from the livestream, the players' comments and the images shared, that the volunteer effort at this event was also something to be celebrated and congratulated. Our sport relies on our volunteers, often with the same people maintaining many tasks. The reason this event showcased the volunteers' achievements so greatly, is that many of the team have not only become managers, commentators, hoop setters, groundskeepers and tea makers, but now livestreaming technicians, camera operators and photographers too.

We are growing our sport together by supporting each other and learning together. We are the Croquet Community, and we are something special.

Alison

Alison Maugham  
Editor  
editor@croquetengland.org.uk

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# HIBISCUS COLUMN



MINTY CLINCH  
Travelling Croquet  
Journalist

Telling the Croquet  
stories as they unfold

For a game so viciously competitive, croquet is often quite cosy. Substantial is not a problem: many enjoy high level success with ill-defined waistlines. When double banked, tense sideline sit-outs while opponents go round seamlessly to peg trigger comforting gastro chats. Local pubs with decent chefs? Oh no, is he doing a triple peel? Gigondas or Chateauneuf du Pape? Best to have things to look forward to when the chopper's looming.

The dress code isn't helpful. White is too stark to flatter the average 60+ croquista, emphasising avoirdupois and scrawniness in equal measure. Victorians who ordained it for croquet, cricket and tennis couldn't imagine a world in which players might have to do their own laundry. Do you step out of the shower into the whites, tempting fate re breakfast spillage? Or do you fold the garments

you've slaved over into a bag to change into at the club, risking unsightly creases at point of use?

Reg Bamford's first rule of gamesmanship was to look smarter than his oppo. As a South African, he wasn't raised to wash and iron. The week I played at Somerset West, the club outside Cape Town that he dominated as a young man, changed my own perspective. My whites, normally on the scruffy side of Jeeves, were almost perfect, thanks to the services of Privilege, the beauty who emerged from her township on stiletto heels dressed for the Royal Enclosure to look after us in our hilltop Airbnb.

Other games have moved on from white, but croquet remains adamant. Seniors who have not gained weight like to show how well their Oxbridge cricket sweaters still fit, even if they've yellowed slightly with age. Clubs encourage shirts, jackets and hats with embroidered logos for matches so that team members walk out in the same shade, a good plan if their choice of washing powder doesn't play a part.

Of course, the young look wonderful in white, lithe and supple as they

emerge from their home-based IT consultancies to dominate the courts physically and mentally. No finessing for them. Mallet heads follow through to shoulder height, balls send shock waves as they smash into each other, or the perimeter fence; or howls of pain should it be someone's ankle. Future world champion Aston Wade, back in his junior days when he was little more than an ominous rumour in the West Country, introduced me to the youth profile, while thrashing me at Hamptworth.

I saw it again at the Cheltenham Easter tournament, when manager James Death amiably stepped in to offer a consolation game to a lad who'd been knocked out early. Less than an hour later, he was smiling broadly having used his bisques to beat the European champion 26-0. And at Blewbury where High Wycombe's Gabriel lived up to his name with an avenger's determination. Afterwards we asked two Wycombists how low they hoped their handicaps would go. The older man, an impressive seven after only three years, hoped for five. Gabriel said he'd rather learn to do a triple peel than set a handicap goal. Do you think he had a minus figure in the back of his mind...?

## 2025 ALZHEIMER'S SOCIETY CHARITY 1-BALL

By Debbie James

The 2025 Alzheimer's Society Charity 1-ball is off to a good start, with club heats continuing throughout April and May. The Yorkshire Croquet Federation heat was played at York CC on 12 April. Forget-me-not blue skies greeted 14 players from clubs across the federation. Six rounds of play, fuelled by a charity cake bake, resulted in 6 wins for Callum Johnson of York (OB-5), with runner-up spot awarded to Helen Griffiths, also of York (OB18). £233 was raised to add to this year's accumulator.

Swindon and Kington Langley's One Ball Croquet Competition raised more than £200 for charity.



Three players from Bowdon Croquet Club qualified for the regional play-offs. The club raised over £500.



# CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

by Samir Patel  
Chair of the Board of Trustees

I've just returned from the Association Croquet Intercountry Championship, which is an annual jamboree of 165 players from 22 counties competing over four days at Sussex County (Southwick) and Compton Croquet Clubs. As well as the players, there was a countless number of volunteers in all manner of roles – lawns, lines, hoops, catering, bar, gardens, maintenance, parking, finances, tournament management and refereeing. Thank you all, for this event and everyone else who volunteers at clubs across the country.

A visit to Compton also allowed me to see the Padel facility that has been built next to the courts and compare it to the facility at East Dorset LTCC (described by Dave Fuller in the previous issue). Compton's indoor courts are a much more imposing and less aesthetic structure than the open three-court arrangement at Parkstone, but at both venues it's clear that the courts have a regular stream of players across a range of demographics. Pricing for Padel ranges from £20 to £80 per hour, which is an interesting comparison to the £32.50 for four days in the intercountry championship.

The Trustees are considering the question of how we secure more money to grow all levels of our sport as we seek to collate action plans in support of the strategy. We currently rely on hundreds of hard-working volunteers. This commitment and dedication is, and will remain, essential to the smooth running of Croquet England, but it's clear that we need to attract more funding to sustain and grow our sport.



We're always looking for people with ideas to support the strategy and we are currently seeking applications for two new Trustees of Croquet England. As a charity, the role of the Trustees is essential part of our governance. Trusteeship can be rewarding for many reasons - from a sense of making a difference to our Sport, to new experiences and relationships. I encourage everyone to consider whether to stand, or whether they know someone else that they think might be appropriate. There is more information available on the subscriber's website: [www.croquet.org.uk/?p=press/news&NewsID=8708](http://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=press/news&NewsID=8708)

## KEN KNOCK WINS CHARITY ONE BALL FINAL AT NOTTINGHAM

By Debbie James

A field of 16 players, with One Ball handicaps ranging from -5 to 20, represented their clubs and federations in the final of this year's Charity One Ball at Nottingham. The Nottingham lawns were of their usual high standard, the rhododendrons were ablaze with colour, and the players' outfits referenced the blue house colour of the 2025 nominated charity, Alzheimer's Society.

6 rounds of play tested us all. Bisques were used wisely by the higher handicappers. Special mention to Mike Garratt (OB18) from Frinton who scored 5 wins, playing with precision and touch. He narrowly lost out on a place in 'the final' 7th round,

contested by Philip Thompson (OB20) from Bowdon who had scored 6 wins, against Ken Knock (OB6) from Pinchbeck, also scoring 5 wins but beating Mike in a previous round.

Finally, the sun broke through to produce a forget-me-not blue sky worthy of the charity. Philip got off to a good start, running up to position on hoop 1 and using the first of his bisques to score it. Ken attempted some long hoops, with mixed success, but had pegged Philip back by hoop 6. A tussle ensued around this hoop, Ken eventually winning this one. A wiring lift was granted as the game progressed and Philip had some solid hit-ins, applauded by the crowd and his opponent, but Ken got ahead and was positioned for rover as Philip

attempted hoop 9.

Despite a valiant effort by Philip to roquet Ken's ball near the peg, Ken prevailed to peg out and win the trophy. Congratulations to him, and to the runner-up Philip.

Other qualifiers from club heats represented Middlesbrough, Nottingham, Ashby, Wrest Park, Downham, Sheffield and the Yorkshire Federation. We were all made very welcome by Nottingham members and thanks are due to the club for the use of its lawns and for its support of this event, especially to Bob Thompson who managed a smooth Swiss format tournament.

# TUNNEL OF TIME



CHRIS WILLIAMS  
Croquet England  
Archivist

AKA 'Statto'  
Keeper of Croquet  
Statistics, visit  
[croquetrecords.com](http://croquetrecords.com)

In this section, we once again take a look through the 'Tunnel of Time' to see what was taking place in the Croquet World in the past, as seen in the Croquet Gazette.

## 65 YEARS AGO

In the July 1960 Gazette (#45)

### Notes by Rover

#### Lady Minus Players of the Future

At the end of Ladies' Field Cup week in July last year a spectator remarked that Joan Warwick was the first winner to have come from players who have taken up croquet since the war. Previous winners since 1946 were Miss Lintern, Mrs. Elvey, Mrs. Rotherham, Mrs. Reeve and Mrs. Longman, all of whom had acquired croquet prowess in pre-war days. Indeed, we are prompted to ask where are the lady minus-players of the future. The lack of improving players is hard to account for unless it be that domestic duties occupy so much of women's time nowadays compared with the past, with the result that those who do take up the game have not the necessary time or concentration to advance to the top levels. The part played in Australian and New Zealand croquet by first-class women players would seem to dispose of that particular argument as will be borne out by those who recall seeing Miss Wainwright and Mrs. Watkins, to name but two of the New Zealand Test team who played here four years ago.

## 70 YEARS AGO

In the June 1955 Gazette (#11)

### Notes by Rover

An inquiry has reached "Rover" from Australia, to which he is quite unable to give any confident reply, and he would be interested to know whether anyone else can. It concerns the supplementary colours which are still, he understands, obtainable from some sports dealers by those who, for whatever reason, desire to have more balls in play on a court than the four to which we are accustomed. These colours are Green, Pink, Brown and White, and what we are asked is in what partnership these balls should properly play. It is possible, indeed very probable, that this matter was specifically dealt with in the codes of laws published at the end of the last century, when the game revived, but if so we cannot recall what the ruling was and do not know where an inquirer could now lay his hands on the relevant document. If it be asked why anyone in Australia or anywhere else should require such information, the answer we fancy is not that it is proposed to brighten Croquet by the introduction of an eight ball break. It is that in countries where the number of enthusiasts for the game largely exceeds the courts available to accommodate them, it is often necessary to play two games on a single lawn at the same time. But perhaps it will be well for us to settle this partnership problem in case our propagandist efforts succeed so well that our own clubs find themselves faced with the situation which our Australia friends have to meet.

### THE QUESTION WAS ANSWERED IN THE NEXT EDITION (JULY 1955) BY AE SAALFELD

The second colour balls are properly paired White and Pink together leaving Brown and Green to be paired

together. A moment's consideration will show that as with the primary colours this partnership brings the two brighter coloured together leaving the two darker balls in partnership.

If I may further enlighten Rover it is both customary and usual in Sydney Clubs and in N.S.W. Country Clubs which have insufficient lawns to accommodate all members, to use 8 balls on the same lawn and so have two games in progress regularly. I have myself in Tamworth, N.S.W., played when 3 games were in progress on a Saturday afternoon on the one lawn. Twelve players on one lawn playing 3 doubles at the same time is, however, a trifle disconcerting.

## 80 YEARS AGO

In the June 30th, 1945 Gazette, War Emergency Number (6)

### Editorial Notes

### Victory!

Although this number of the C.A. Gazette still bear the title "War Emergency Number" (the sixth of the series), it may have been called the "V.E." Number. The amazing defeat of Germany, after nearly six years of the most terrible war the world has ever seen, when at one time it looked as if nothing could save us from being invaded and vanquished, had been as welcome as it has been almost miraculous. For at one time in 1941 particularly, it was, in croquet parlance, as if Hitler was for the peg with both balls before we had started and to win as we have proved, that in war, as in croquet, the contest is never won till both balls have hit the peg.

Past Gazettes can be found on the Croquet England website at <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=ca/gazette&Action=Issues>. Currently there are searchable scans of the Gazette back to 1953.

# THE JOY OF CROQUET

By Garth Aspinall, Bowdon Croquet Club  
Original published in Inside Magazines

Hidden from view, in the heart of Bowdon, there is a very special place - somewhere I visit, at least once a week, whatever the weather, all year round. This is Bowdon Croquet Club, where people of all ages, from 18 to 86, come together to engage in one of the most fascinating of sports.

I live in Poynton, but BCC is now my second home. The drive over is quickly forgotten as I park my car and gaze over the hedge at the clubhouse and its array of manicured lawns. I have a key to the gate in case I'm the first to arrive. But at 10.30am, on this lovely summer's day, the gate is already open. I make my way to the clubhouse, where I collect a set of balls before proceeding to Lawn 5, which I booked earlier on-line. (Club mallets are available, if you don't have one of your own).

Here, in this idyllic setting, I will spend the morning trying to improve my mallet handling skills and my understanding of the tactics of this complex sport. But someone is approaching. "Do you fancy a game?" she asks. I immediately accept and two people with the best laid practice plans, succumb to two hours of friendly competition, each hoping that dedication, conversation, or a light-bulb moment will bring some improvement to our respective games.

I joined the club in May 2023, aged eighty, with a history of complex surgery, and no prior knowledge of the sport. But the members are a really friendly bunch - helpful beyond all my expectations. With their advice and some formal coaching sessions, the penny has eventually dropped. Two years down the line, my initial mental confusion has virtually



disappeared, and I relish every match. In the spring of 2024, I signed up to most of the tournaments on offer and will do the same this year. Most of these are internal competitions, for which no special dress is specified, other than flat-soled footwear. I will also be participating in some inter-club matches, for which whites are required. I now have my own mallet, and I feel less of a fraud, but I also know that there is still much to be learned. If I had discovered the allure of this sport in my youth, I might have been world champion by now!

Speaking honestly, I have never belonged to a club of any sort before. I have been fairly self-sufficient by nature and not someone that particularly thrives on competition. But the reality is that BCC, for so many reasons, has become my second home, and I'm hugely grateful. As well as croquet, there is an active social side, encompassing many different activities – bridge (the more friendly kind), quiz nights, afternoon teas, fish and chip suppers, craft fairs and musical concerts, to name just a few.

Of course, none of these are obligatory, and on this more serious note I should point out that BCC, founded in 1873, is the seventh oldest continuing croquet club in the world. Even today, its lawns are regarded by top players as some of the best in the world.

If I had more time and space, I would tell you about Association Croquet and Golf Croquet, the two quite distinct forms of the game that we play. But if I have sparked your interest, why not give the game a try! I can assure you that you will be made very welcome.

## CROQUET ENGLAND TRUSTEES – THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS

I was rather taken aback to see the new Trusteeship election areas that have been promulgated especially with regard to the grouping of 'Central Counties and Wales'.

The inclusion of Wales in the trusteeship of Croquet England is anomalous as Wales has its own governing body which has the mandate as "the national governing body for Croquet in Wales, looking after all Welsh clubs and players". While Welsh clubs play in competitive leagues based on the English Federations (rather like the presence of Welsh clubs in the English Football League), this strikes one as symptomatic of the last vestiges of colonialism!

In addition, there is the strange inclusion of Wiltshire in this group. As we celebrate the 1200th anniversary of the Battle of Ellendun(e) near Swindon when Egberht of Wessex saw off the invading Mercians (described as "one of the most decisive battles of English history") so to include Wiltshire (firmly in the South West) with the counties of Mercia has no regard for its historical and geographical natural affinities. We need to revisit and revise these trusteeship groups which appear to have been established without consultation with clubs or their federations in order to correct these anomalies.

Tony Mayer

### RESPONSE:

Wales has to be included in the electoral process because Welsh clubs are entitled to be (and are) affiliated to Croquet England. Members of affiliated clubs are "associates" and, as such, they are entitled to become voting members. The constituencies were arranged by reference to the potential voting members in each area, as is more fully explained in the report of the Electoral Commission (which is available on the website).

If the only consideration was pure geography, Wiltshire would clearly be placed in the South West Counties. However, the South-West Counties constituency is already fully populated by Cornish men and women: Devonians and people living in all parts of Somerset. The constituencies have to be, as a matter of principle, broadly similar in size (by reference to the number of potential electors). If Wiltshire were added there would be an unacceptable distortion. There is therefore no plan to reconsider or revise. Any resident of Wiltshire will, of course, be able to choose to be registered in the South West Counties constituency should he or she feel such a lack of affinity to the, admittedly rather diverse, Central Counties as to render him or her incapable of identification or association with residents of Gloucestershire and other middle-Englanders.

Regards  
John Reddish

## ALLOCATION DATES

Before we begin to make changes to the allocation date procedure there was a time, within living memory, before these dates existed so you have to ask yourself why they were introduced? The reason was that no matter how early you entered some tournaments you were never certain you were going to get in because "So and so has not entered yet but always plays this tournament, so let's just wait awhile and see if they make an entry?" syndrome.

Allocation dates came about to make the entry process more open. In fact, I know of one club, of which I was never a member, where unofficially you had to be some kind of member for your name to take its proper place in the pecking order.

So, let's please proceed with caution.

Edward Dymock

## OLDEST PLAYER

I was interested to read the article, in the April Gazette, about June Jury becoming the Guinness World Record Holder as the oldest competitive croquet player (female) at 93. June still has a few years to go to beat Miss Lydia Elphinstone-Stone (August 1865 - May 1963) who played in the 1961 South of England Championship, at Devonshire Park, at the age of 96.

The oldest male player that I can find is Cyril Ratcliffe (1882-1982) who was still playing in 1977 at the age of 94.

Chris Williams  
Croquet England Archivist

## THE MYSTERY OF WHO IS "MARJ" AND WHAT CLUB "CAROL LEWIS" PLAYS AT?

My research indicates that Marj was an irreverent Aussie whose column "Marj gives simple answers to GC question!" appeared in a small number of club croquet publications in the middle of the last decade. Her raison d'être was to get GC rules better known. They were much more complicated in those days, and the rule referred to in the poem is now 2.5 but was 2.3 back then. I never met her myself, but I understand that her manner was similar to that of Dame Edna Everage.

Some say that she never existed, and nor did the letter-writers. I think they base that view on letters coming from the likes of Willy Jumpit and Norma Sears. In fact, a letter from R Descartes took this a step further when he wrote "I don't believe you exist. The names at the bottom of the letters seem to me to be made up, and so I don't think the writers exist either. Come to think of it, I'm not sure that even I exist." Pretty damning evidence, but I prefer to keep an open mind, and hope that one day our paths will cross.

Mervyn Harvey, Kenilworth

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## THE CROQUET ENGLAND DIPLOMA

Patricia Duke-Cox  
President, Croquet England

Croquet England Diplomas recognise members of Affiliated Clubs (and not just Croquet England Subscribers) who have given outstanding service to croquet, and have been active in club or federation affairs over a long period. The Diplomas have nothing to do with croquet prowess and everything to do with the help given to other members.

The President normally presents these awards at the AGM, although recipients may elect to receive their Croquet England Diploma on another occasion.

The award is made only once to any person, and is not normally made posthumously unless there are surviving family members who would appreciate it.

The full citation for those awarded a Croquet England Diploma will be published on the website, with a summary in the Gazette.

Nominations can be made by clubs or federations and should be:

- sent by email to the office by the end of July comprising:
- a short citation (300 words max.)
- a passport-style photograph, if available (as a separate attachment named as the nominee)
- a declaration that the submitter is not aware of any reason why such an award could bring the organisation into disrepute

- The office will consolidate the citations into a draft web page (including the photographs) ready for review by the Awards Panel

The Awards Panel will normally approve all nominations meeting the above criteria, but some may be declined if felt to be of insufficient merit, or deferred if too many are submitted by the same club in any year. After vetting is complete, the office will:

1. Inform the nominator that the nomination is successful, and ask them if they want to inform the Croquet England Diploma winner, or if they want the office to do it (some Clubs and Federations like to make it a surprise and award the certificate themselves).
2. Send the certificates to the President for signing, who then passes them on to the Chair of Trustees to sign and return to the office ready for distribution at the Croquet England AGM (when held at a venue) or at local events according to feedback from step 1.
3. According to feedback from step 1, inform the Croquet England Diploma winners, telling them that the Croquet England President will recognise them at the AGM and, if needed, send out the certificates either to the recipient or the nominator.
4. Publish in full the Croquet England Diploma winners' citations on the Croquet England website soon after the AGM. The content of this page is used by the President for citations read at the AGM, and publication in the Gazette.

# BUDLEIGH HOSTS THE 2025 EUROPEAN GOLF CROQUET CHAMPIONSHIPS

By Louise Smith, Tournament Manager

For four thrilling days in mid-May, the tranquil lawns of Budleigh Salterton Croquet Club (BSCC) transformed into a battleground for some of Europe's elite croquet players. From 15-18 May, the 2025 European Championships brought together talent from 12 nations in an event marked by fierce competition, dramatic upsets, and an electric new element: live streaming.

This year, BSCC made a significant leap forward in digital engagement, broadcasting the weekend's knockout rounds live across the globe. Spearheading the effort was Duncan Catterall, who travelled from London to mentor the club's team in preparation for next month's GC Open Singles Championship livestream. The initiative was a resounding success - viewers tuned in, the tech held steady, and the club gained invaluable experience in modern sports presentation.

Meanwhile, spectators and players alike were treated to mouthwatering lunches crafted by BSCC's new major event catering team, with an emphasis on locally sourced ingredients - a tasteful complement to the high-level play on the courts.

Behind the scenes, a small army of volunteers ensured everything ran smoothly. With the club's full-time groundskeeper recuperating, BSCC's members and volunteers, including some from neighbouring Sidmouth Croquet Club, stepped in with admirable dedication. Their tireless work left the courts in pristine condition, setting the stage for a tournament to remember.

## BLOCK PLAY: EARLY DOMINANCE AND UNEXPECTED TWISTS

As the block stage began, familiar names quickly made their presence felt. England's Jack Good, Euan Burriddle, and Stephen Mulliner all



asserted their authority, while tournament top seed Andres Alvarez-Sala (Spain) showed uncharacteristic vulnerability, suffering narrow defeats to England's Richard Bilton and Tim Jolliff. Ultimately, Callum Johnson (England) topped Block A, with Bilton in second, knocking Alvarez-Sala into third place within the block positions on hoop difference.

Good cruised through Block B undefeated, matched by Mulliner from Block D who dropped only one game 6-7 in a super match against Rob O'Donoghue (Ireland). Block B's Euan Burriddle and Manuel Alvarez-Sala (Spain) each secured six wins, with Euan edging top spot on net games.

Block C delivered the most complex qualification drama, with three players - Keith Aiton (England), Chris Roberts (Wales), and Anton Kamne (Sweden) - tied for two knockout places. Kamne clinched his slot with a win over Aiton, leaving Roberts to edge out Aiton in a tense two-game playoff.

In Block D, Stuart M Smith staged a late comeback, recovering from a first

game 0-7 loss, to beat Rob O'Donoghue 0-7, 7-3, 7-2 and secure qualification with 5 match wins. He joined Mulliner and Aston Wade, while Wales' Ian Burriddle clinched the final spot after a nail-biting 2-1 victory over Spain's Begoña Elzaburu.

## KNOCKOUT ROUNDS: ENGLISH SUPREMACY EMERGES

The last 16 was largely straightforward, with seven matches wrapped up in clean 2-0 victories. Highlights included a narrow loss for Lionel Tibble (England) on the thirteenth hoop in game 2 with Wade, and Ian Burriddle's gritty comeback against Johnson 5-7, 7-2, 7-6.

The Championship quarter-finals marked a turning point in the tournament, as England firmly stamped its authority on the competition. Wade sailed past Ian Burriddle in a composed 7-5, 7-3 win, while Mulliner overcame Manuel Alvarez-Sala with a steady 7-4, 7-4 performance.

Joining them in the semi-finals were fellow Englishmen Jack Good and Euan Burriddle. Jack booked his spot with a confident 7-4, 7-4 victory over

# 2025 EUROPEAN CROQUET CHAMPIONSHIPS CONTINUED



## SUNDAY SHOWDOWN: SHIELD AND CHAMPIONSHIP SEMI FINALS

The Shield knockout, reserved for players who fell at the Championship quarter-final stage, brought together some of the tournament's most strategic minds.

Richard Bilton, whilst Euan looked in commanding form as he despatched Tim Russell (England) 7-2, 7-1. The results secured an all-English semi-final line-up - highlighting the nation's depth of talent on the European stage.

The Bowl knockout, contested by those who exited in the last 16, delivered plenty of drama, with several matches going the distance in hard-fought three-game battles. The competition culminated in a gripping final between Chris Roberts (Wales) and Otakar Stankus (Czechia).

Stankus, in superb form throughout, held his nerve in two tightly contested games. Despite a determined effort from Roberts, it was the Czech who emerged victorious, claiming the Bowl with a 7-5, 7-5 win.

### THE PLATE: VICTORY FOR SPAIN

While the Championship knockout progressed, attention also turned to the Plate event - open to players who had missed out on qualification to the last 16 from the block stage.

Strong early performances were given by Tim Jolliff (England), Juan Ojeda (Spain), and Rob O'Donoghue (Ireland), each going unbeaten in their block games.

After progressing through the knockout rounds, Jolliff and Ojeda met in the final, where Ojeda delivered a dominant display. With confident, controlled play, he secured the Plate in straight games, 7-2, 7-3 - a well-earned win for the Spanish player.

Richard Bilton maintained his strong form with a straight-games victory over Ian Burrige, while Manuel Alvarez-Sala despatched Tim Russell with a commanding 7-1, 7-3 win to set up an enticing final.

In the Shield final, both players demonstrated exceptional focus and tactical finesse. The match was a spectacle of thoughtful, high-quality croquet, but it was Bilton who edged ahead with calm consistency. He secured the title in straight games, completing a 2-0 victory and capping off a strong campaign with a well-deserved trophy.

The main Championship semi-finals served up high-stakes drama under the glorious Devon sunshine. Wade narrowly overcame Good in a tense, tactical showdown—squeezing through with back-to-back 7-6 victories. On the adjacent court, Euan Burrige continued to deliver a commanding performance, defeating croquet legend Stephen Mulliner 7-3, 7-6, with a blend of precision and powerful play.

### THE FINAL: A NEW EUROPEAN CHAMPION EMERGES

The 2025 European Championship Final set the stage for a thrilling match between two of England's brightest talents - Aston Wade and a confident, in-form Euan Burrige.

From the very first hoop, Burrige signalled his intent. Playing red and yellow, he coolly took hoop 1 from around 4.5 yards. Wade answered with an equaliser at hoop 2, but it was at hoop 3 that Burrige demonstrated the confidence and skill that had defined his tournament – coolly executing a stunning 4.5-yard jump

shot to move ahead 2-1.

That moment sparked a surge of momentum. Burrige quickly raced to a 5-2 lead, highlighted by a powerful boundary hoop run at hoop 7. Wade, refusing to be outdone, struck back at hoop 8 to close the gap to 3-5. Burrige added another point at 9 but with an uncharacteristic short hoop run, before overrunning his approach to hoop 10 with his second ball - an opening Wade seized to bring the score to 4-6.

Hoop 11 saw a tighter tactical approach from both players, with precision clearances and positional play. Wade edged through from the



jaws to close in at 5-6, sending the final into a tense battle for hoop 12.

What followed was a moment where skill met fortune. Wade cleared yellow to the south boundary, leaving black with a comfortable hoop run. Red sat at an equal distance from the hoop to the left of black, whilst blue hovered 2 yards back - in an angled position, but directly aligned, behind black. Burrige, eyeing the shot from the south boundary, struck yellow hitting black dead centre. Black subsequently cannoned into blue, sending it to a wired position behind hoop 2!

## 2025 EUROPEAN CROQUET CHAMPIONSHIPS CONTINUED

Wade had no return shot back at red that sat dangerously in front of 12, so could only position blue outside wide of the centre peg, hoping for a miss, albeit unlikely. BurrIDGE stepped forward and confidently shot red through hoop 12 to seal the first game, 7-5.

Game two began on an even footing, the scoreline level at 3-3. Wade looked well-positioned to take hoop 7, but after a couple of misses BurrIDGE quickly recovered his deadly clearance form. Wade was forced into a tricky jump over yellow in the jaws - which had entered from the wrong side - but Wade's miss re-opened the door for BurrIDGE.

What followed was a display of calm dominance. After a tactical exchange and missed hoop attempts from both sides, BurrIDGE finally nailed hoop 7 from five-yards, running it down off the south boundary. He went on to take hoops 8, 9, and 10 with clinical precision, wrapping up the match 7-3.

This triumph secured Euan BurrIDGE the 2025 European Championship title - capping a superb display of top-level competitive croquet throughout the event

### CONGRATULATIONS TO EUAN ON HIS FIRST MAJOR TITLE WIN!

A sincere thank you to all the incredible BSCC volunteers who made the European Championships such a success. Special appreciation goes to Tim Spores for his leadership of the Grounds and Hoop Setting team; Jane Coward, Catherine Spores, and Lesley Hamilton for heading up the outstanding Catering team; and Adrian Coward and Jayne Ellery for expertly leading the Live Streaming crew.



Euan BurrIDGE  
Photo by Brian Carroll



Aston Wade  
Photo by Brian Carroll



Jack Good  
Photo by Brian Carroll

# SHORT CROQUET FOCUS

by John Harris, Croquet England Coaching Committee

## HAMPTWORTH TAKE 4

Coming up next in the Short Croquet calendar is the Hamptworth one-day tournament on Tuesday 1 July. The Club works hard to be friendly and make all visitors welcome, regardless of their handicap and experience. First timers are as welcome as more seasoned players: the Short Croquet handicapping system is there to give everyone a fair game and a fair chance.

This is the fourth time the team at Hamptworth, near Salisbury, has offered the tournament. Five 75 minute games are planned. The Club has level lawns, a good clubhouse and ample parking, and is in an attractive, and peaceful, rural setting.

At the time of writing there are still vacancies. Closing date is 18 June. This is a lovely opportunity to be part of a friendly day with a good gender balance in which, with the bisque system in operation, everyone has a chance to flourish.

## ELITE LEVEL SHORT CROQUET

The new table of peels for top players is a timely reminder that Short Croquet has much to offer to players of all handicaps, including those at the top of the tree. They are now required to fit in up to five peels as part of their 14 points. This not only helps level the playing field but also provides a series of absorbing situations for elite players to resolve.

Chris Williams has blogged about the creative thinking required of top players to fit in mandatory peels, not least when there are two hoop points still to score and both need to be peels. It makes for significant on-lawn problem-solving and, in his experience, forces a complete change of mindset.

In reality the new changes to the handicap table affect only a tiny minority of players, but they draw attention to other opportunities that Short Croquet offers for this elite group. The smaller lawn places a premium on thoughtful precision play, not least in croquet strokes. Setting up a good leave becomes an intriguing challenge, as does the more demanding Short Croquet wiring rule.

Many very strong players gain great pleasure from Short Croquet – Dave Kibble and Stephen Custance-Baker among their number – and it is to be hoped that others will follow their lead, take up this engaging and rewarding form of the game, and help to champion it more widely among minus players.



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Image top right:  
Short Croquet peeling practice: Maggie Crossland,  
Sheffield CC, gets down to it between games at a  
Yorkshire SC Tournament  
(Photo: John Harris)

# THE COLES CHAMPIONSHIP

By James Death

A slightly smaller field than usual contested the Coles Championship at Cheltenham this year across the May bank holiday. The anniversary of VE day may have made some players unavailable.

13 players in an untimed best of 3 knockout left one player with a late start and an unknown start time. Andrew Davies was the unlucky player having to wait and eventually started in the Main Event on Sunday, he did get a couple of early plate games on Saturday while waiting. The manager was happy to let things run untimed with 4 rounds and 3 days, hoping for efficient play on day one leading to best of 5 semi finals. That plan was gone by lunch time as only 1 match finished and only 1 game had been completed in any other match.

Early season and everyone using the Invictus balls for the first time may have lead to longer than usual matches. The balls played very nicely and it will be interesting to see how they react longer term.

Richard H Smith threatened an upset taking the first game off David Maugham but David used his vast experience and came back to win in 3 games. One first round match scored 145 out of a possible 153 points as they took all day to complete round 1.

Over the first two days James Death looked imperious and beat all opponents comfortably while managing organising the other games. David Maugham grew into the event looking stronger as the weekend went on.

By Monday morning, James and David were in the final and players were looking forward to an interesting best of 5 super advanced final between the top two seeds. James started strongly but faded with expensive errors while David was getting close to his best and ran away with the final 3-0.

The final of the Consolation was a ladies affair between Lorna Dewar and Louise Bradforth, Lorna being victorious at the end.

In the prize giving David praised the lawns as the best he can remember at the Coles.

A big thank you to all the volunteers, from the grounds team and hoop setters to the caterers and everyone else who works tirelessly in the background for the benefit of the players.



Winner: David Maugham



Plate Winner: Lorna Dewar



Plate Runner-up: Louise Bradforth

# COACHING FOR AC – BEGINNERS AT SHREWSBURY

By Dr Phil Extance – Chair, Shrewsbury Croquet Club

Do not expect the recipe for complete success here but, following the recent Webinar, I was asked to share some of the things we do that have kept AC alive and kicking, many of which will be in place in other clubs.

Shrewsbury is one of a diminishing number of clubs who focus solely on AC and we have about 30 playing members. Any beginner is introduced to AC and all internal competitions are AC. One of our members plays GC in external tournaments, and (as external bookings) we host a local U3A group who play informal GC every fortnight and a Rotary Club who play occasionally. We have had little or no interest from those players in AC.



Players in the photo, playing ASD: Alberto Porras on the left, Phil Extance (coach) on the right

All our beginners have been recruited to learn AC, through a mix of simple advertising and also via friends and contacts of existing members. Most of our new members have attended a one-evening taster course that we run in early May, and then 4 weekly sessions, led by our excellent coach (Alan Ridley), usually supported by me. Both Alan and I have completed the Club Coach course. Over half of Club's playing members have joined the Club in the last 3 years. Those who have attended the course but have not lasted beyond one season, have not played for health or injury reasons, or have had too many other commitments.

Apart from having great coaches (!), what do we do that seems to work well?

All our initial coaching is done on half-lawns which allows beginners to focus on strokes and technique without requiring the accuracy that the size of a full lawn can demand.

In the beginner's course, we introduce Ricochet (<http://www.oxfordcroquet.com/coach/ricochet/>) to illustrate the principle of roquet, croquet, continuation in a game without the need for sophisticated croquet shots. However, we very quickly move on to learning shot technique so that a proper AC game can be played.

We encourage those who complete the course to learn more of the subtleties of the game by asking two experienced members to set up Alternative Stroke Doubles games with two beginners (7th Edn. Rule 48 <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=games/association/laws/7th#law:48>). This introduces beginners to more players, but importantly allows the experienced partner to help the beginner decide what shot to take and to understand the

reasons for why the various shots are used by the experienced player. The game progresses much further than if four beginners try playing a game without support.

After a few weeks, we have a very informal 14pt Handicap Singles competition with full bisques played to base 10 (limited to about an hour's play), just for beginners. The prize is "The Rector's Teapot", a fine silver teapot donated by Revd. Simon Cawdell, an excellent player from the Club (currently working in Africa) who some will know.

Every Wednesday evening there is an informal Club Night where ad-hoc games are arranged and new members are encouraged to use these as a great way to meet other members and learn from them.

At the end of the season we have our Founder's Competition, again a 14pt Handicap Singles competition with full bisques played to base 10 (limited to about an hour's play), for which any Club member with a handicap above 18 can enter (unless they have won the Founder's in a previous year). Our better beginners start to see their index increase and the Club Handicappers are keenly watching for "bandits".

The first one-day competition we run as a Club in any season is The Short, half-lawn 14pt, which is not carded and therefore ideal for newer members who began the previous season.

So you can see that there is no magic bullet that we have found to teach AC, but we have a steady flow of new members who grow in confidence, supported by a friendly and encouraging pool of existing members, that keep AC alive and kicking in Shrewsbury.

# WCF U21 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

By Sam Cuthbert



The 2025 WCF Under 21 World Championships took place at Sarasota County Croquet Club in Venice, Florida. Ten countries were represented across a field of 28 people, with levels of experience ranging from the current GC world champion to a player who had only been playing croquet for 3 weeks. England had 3 players in the event, Jack Good (Bowdon), Sam Cuthbert (Cheltenham) and Declan Macphee (Nottingham).

The opening ceremony gave all the players a chance to catch up with friends and introduce themselves to new players. After practice in the morning for the players, which was largely made up of friendly doubles matches amongst players of all countries, the tournament was officially opened by USCA president Damon Bidencepe as well as a few local dignitaries. A welcome barbecue was then enjoyed by players, their families and many other local players who had turned up throughout the afternoon.

The block stage went as expected with the top seeds (Jack Good, Fawzy Helmy, Blake Fields and Levi Franks) winning their respective blocks, however Jack was the only player to come out of the block stage without dropping a game. Sam was placed 2nd in his block, but took the match off of Levi

Franks in 3. Whilst Declan didn't make it to the knockouts, his overall game and confidence improved dramatically as the tournament progressed having faced a tough start against Fawzy and Eduardo Nuñez.

After 2 and a half days of block play, the first round of the knockout was played late in the afternoon of day 3. Both Jack and Sam continued their impressive form into the knockouts, both winning their matches in straight games. Jack came out on top 7-3, 7-4 against the tournament's surprise package, 11-year-old Simon Dentchev from the USA. Sam progressed 7-0, 7-3 against Luke Francis of New Zealand. The quarter-finals posed a difficult challenge for Sam, coming up against current world champion Blake Fields, and he was overcome 7-4, 7-3 thanks to a fantastic display of power clearances and hoop running by the American. Jack, on the other hand, played Ethan Gumbrell and showed great composure and control to continue his unbeaten tournament record, winning 7-4, 7-4. Jack's win earned him a semi-final against New Zealander, Levi Franks. Jack faced a tough start going 2-0 down in the best of 5 match, with Levi not putting a foot wrong, winning games 1

*Continued on page 17*

## WCF U21 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP CONTINUED

and 2, 7-5 and 7-2 respectively. The comeback seemed on with Jack winning game 3, 7-5, and taking a lead in game 4. However, Levi showed great resolve to fight back and win 7-6 to take the match 3-1. In the other semi-final, Fawzy played excellently to knock out Blake, also taking his semi-final match 3-1. The final was an interesting affair, with most spectators expecting the match to go the distance. This wasn't the case, with Levi coming out of the blocks fast to take game 1, 7-2. He continued his run of impressive clearances and hoop running to win games 2 and 3, taking the match 3-0 and giving New Zealand their 5th Under-21 world champion.



In the consolation events, Declan continued to improve against tough opposition, taking a 10-8 win against plate finalist Luka Nettleton, but unfortunately it wasn't enough to see him qualify for the plate final. In the shield event, Sam showed consistent hoop control to overcome Inigo Morenes of Spain in straight games, to set up a rematch against Ethan Gumbrell who he'd played and lost to in the block stage. This



Declan MacPhee, Jack Good & Sam Cuthbert

time he reversed the outcome, to win the shield 7-3, 7-4 thanks to some excellent jumping and clever tactics, including what became a one-ball game of GC in the second half of game 1.

The experience of playing against players of a similar age was one that all the players involved appreciated, giving the event a very social atmosphere. The trading of national team shirts and other mementos brought all the players together. With this being the last under-21 event that many in the field are eligible for, all the players made the most of their time with many players sticking around after the closing ceremony to play speed croquet and more friendly doubles matches. The final evening ended with most of the field watching the sunset on Venice beach. From all the English players involved, our thanks go to the USCA for making this event one that will stay in our memories for a long time to come.



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# CROQUET ENGLAND GOLF CROQUET CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES

## SIDMOUTH GC CHAMPIONSHIP

By Louise Smith

Both international guests took home prizes from their performances, Inigo Castanon's powerful hitting overcame Louise Smith in the Shield Final, and Mateo Palazon took home the Plate Medal, running the final 13th hoop in game 3 against Dom Aarvold.

The Championship Final provided an excellent display of croquet for the gathered spectators in the warm sunshine. After a comfortable first game win 7-4 for Stuart M. Smith, Tim Russell subsequently equalised 7-5, and took the main trophy with a jump at 13 in game 3.

Photo by Ed Dolphin



## EAST ANGLIAN GC CHAMPIONSHIP

By Ian Burridge

Reg Bamford made a victorious return to Colchester, more than 30 years since his previous visit. He defeated Aston Wade in the final, having edged the first game at the golden hoop Reg then reeled off six successive hoops from 3-1 down in the second to take the title.

The surprise of the block phase had been the elimination of Robert Fulford following a 2-0 defeat to Aston Wade. Robert went on to win the Plate and the Shield was won by local member Al Brown.

The lawns were in excellent condition and played at over 13 seconds for the weekend, which combined with the Quadway hoops led to unusually challenging conditions.



Photo by Alex Lake

# ITS NOT ALL PIMM'S AND PEACOCKS AT THE HURLINGHAM CLUB

By Richard Andrews and Stephen Allen

We believe Croquet has been played in some form at Hurlingham since at least 1898; the first known reference to croquet is in the Club's 1899 annual accounts, which included items for the purchase of mallets and balls. This was probably in preparation for the first tournament at the Club, which was played in 1901.

Although Hurlingham has had a close association with Croquet over the last 130 years, it is a relatively minor sports section within the Club, with the croquet players' interests represented by a dedicated committee. This has its benefits, but also gives rise to challenges. One of the more obvious benefits is the Club's Grounds Team, which looks after the Lawns. We are very fortunate to have six world-class lawns in the Summer, and four in the Winter on the Club's cricket pitch, which means we can play all year round. The challenges tend to be related to the need to balance the Croquet section's 'wants' with those of the wider Club membership. Fortunately, the Croquet lawns are seen as an important feature of the Club's landscape.

Today the Club has an active Croquet section with a contact list of several hundred, and many more casual players who prefer to play a less formal version of the game. We have little hesitation in pulling aside any casual player spotted showing the slightest discernible understanding of the game or ability to run hoops from a distance, and offering them untold rewards for joining our community!

The Section offers a full calendar of Internal and Open Events as well as free coaching and support. It is inspiring, if a little daunting, for our high handicappers to be able to play against (or with) our small crop of members who play internationally, and who are always happy to participate in our Club competitions and offer support and coaching.

We run twice-weekly GC roll up sessions throughout the year, which are regularly attended by between 30 and 40 players. Over the Winter we organise fortnightly AC days for lower handicap players, and last year introduced fortnightly One-Ball roll-ups and coaching, in an effort to convert GC players to the pleasures of AC. We are very supportive of Croquet England's 'Action for AC' and are looking to adopt some of their initiatives in the future.

*Continued on page 20*



## AT THE HURLINGHAM CLUB CONTINUED


We are fortunate to have relatively large groups of both AC and GC players, but lack numbers in the lower handicap range and, like most Croquet Clubs, we struggle to attract younger players or players who want to play competitive rather than purely social games. This is despite the large overall Club membership. In order to tap into the wider membership, we run weekly evening sessions in the Summer, sometimes with the lure of free drinks(!) for anyone interested in trying out the game, and sessions in which we invite other sports sections to take part. This year we will also be introducing some family-friendly events in an attempt to catch younger members before they get seduced by other ball sports.



In common with all Croquet clubs there is a very strong community spirit amongst the players, and we are always pleased to welcome members from other Clubs who come to play in our Open Tournaments or annual interclub friendly matches. We even welcome players who are trying to beat us in the National Interclub Knock-out competitions. There is still time to enter our Annual Tournament in early August and tournaments in September and October.

We look forward to welcoming you!





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## BY RUTH RAUNKIAER

ruth.raunkiaer@croquetengland.org.uk  
Chair of Coaching Committee

### PROSPECTIVE CLUB-LEVEL COACHES

To date this year, 28 Prospective Club-Level Coaches have been added. These coaches have passed the first part of their accreditation which involves attendance at a Coach Training Course with formal assessments in indoor and outdoor presentations, as well as a Laws and Rules test. To earn their Club-Level Coach badge, they now have to run five coaching sessions at their own clubs, on a variety of topics, with some or all being to a group rather than one-on-one. They must then write up a description of each session, to include their own reflections on the session and what they might do differently next time. These write-ups must be countersigned by a Graded Coach or Club Official and sent to the Chair of the Coaching Committee, who ensures they are assessed and a decision made on the final award. Prospective Club-Level Coaches are listed on the CqE Register of Coaches. Congratulations to them and good luck with the further work!

# WELCOME TO THE COACHING PAGES SURVEY OF ALL COACHES

The Coaching Committee is sending a very short survey to all CqE Registered Coaches. Please do complete it as soon as you get it – it only takes a few minutes.

We would like to learn more about the coaching being offered around the country, so we can direct our resources where they are needed most. Do coaches coach only one code or are there many coaches who coach both? Is there much more GC coaching than AC coaching? Do most coaches offer structured programmes, whether for beginners, improvers or low handicap players, or is most coaching done ad-hoc? Who organises coaching – the coach or the club (or academy or other)? How many coaches coach children, and are they correctly qualified to do so?

Very importantly, we would also like to know what support coaches would like the Coaching Committee to provide. This might be things like webinars, online resources, or workshops. Do contact us either directly or through your Federation Coaching Officer if you have questions or comments which go beyond this survey. We are always happy to hear from coaches and will do our best to provide appropriate assistance and guidance.

And finally, the Coaching Committee is responsible for keeping the CqE Register of Coaches up-to-date and we therefore need to know whether coaches remain active. We have recently reviewed the Register and moved to inactive status a number of coaches who hadn't coached for some years and whose CqE membership had lapsed. If you know you are registered as a coach but you are no longer active, you can simply email me to let me know (ruth.raunkiaer@croquetengland.org.uk). Otherwise, please do fill in the survey so we can keep you on the Register.

**The survey takes only a few minutes to complete – please do it as soon as you get it!**

## COACHING THE MENTAL APPROACH TO CROQUET

(with acknowledgements to David Openshaw)

When coaching, don't forget to coach mental skills, along with shot making skills and tactical skills. The right mindset is just as important, and you can help players learn the five key mental skills.

The first of these is Confidence. Players need to understand that they are responsible for their own level of confidence, and that they can learn to be more confident – even when their game is not going well. Encourage players to:

- Remember your successes
- After each game remind yourself of what you did well
- Practise success – most practice should be things you can do
- After practice, analyse what went well and what needs more work
- Try pretending to be someone else, perhaps an international player, or just a good player at your club
- Think about things you do when you are confident and try to create the same mental state

The second main skill is Stay in the present. Concentrate on the current shot, not on your last good or bad shot, not on whether you are winning the game.

Thirdly, Visualise your successful shot. See the successful outcome of your shot in your mind just before you play the shot.

The fourth skill is to Develop the right kind of thoughts. Don't worry about something else while you are playing. Maybe just take a moment to look up at the sky, or the trees, or the clouds, and then focus on the success of your next shot.

Finally, it is important to learn to Control nerves and stay calm. Easier said than done, many will reply! Breathe well, focus on something neutral, or focus briefly on past success in a game.

# COACHING THE AC HALF ROLL

(by John Harris)

Coaching the half roll is a powerful way of helping developing players improve. Not only is it a standard go-to shot for any AC player looking to move forward in a four-ball break but not confident about setting up a rush after running a hoop, it also comes into its own when a good rush is not possible.

There is no one-size-fits-all way of executing a good half roll; much depends on grip, mallet, stance, and other variables. But a reliable starting point is as follows.

- First remind students about the stance for a drive shot. Demonstrate standing as for a normal shot, with shoe tips say a couple of inches behind the striker's ball, mallet vertical at 90 degrees to the ground.
- If they are familiar with their personal drive ratios, ask them to confirm them: normally the striker's ball will travel between a quarter and a third of the distance travelled by the croqueted ball. If they need to put it to the test, now is the time!
- Now explain that you want the striker's ball to travel further – half the distance of the croqueted ball. To do this you are walking forward, so that shoe tips are now either side of where the two balls are touching.
- The mallet handle is now at around 60 degrees from the ground, i.e. the head of the mallet is tilting forward by around 30 degrees.
- Now slide the lower hand half way down the mallet. This should make the body slightly crouched, but give a comfortable position for the shot while keeping the mallet at a good angle.
- Aim the middle of the mallet head to hit slightly down onto the face of the striker's ball.
- Sweep through both balls and consciously follow on through.

This may be a lot for some students to take in all at once, but the principles are simple. You want your own ball to go further than in a normal croquet drive, so move the feet further forward and adjust the hand position accordingly. This gives the mallet a forward slope. Follow through deliberately.

It's good to repeat the demonstration, and ask simple open questions to check understanding. Allow good time for individual practice, with students in a line on the boundary shooting into the lawn. Students may find the half roll hard at first. Give them brisk, positive guidance: be continuously encouraging.

Once students are confident in the shot, they can move on to standing alongside hoop 5, and trying to get their own ball to land near the peg, with the croqueted ball landing near hoop 6. For a more demanding exercise, start at hoop 1 or 2, and try to get the croqueted ball to the hoop diagonally opposite, with the striker's ball again landing near the peg. These ratios work for both full lawns and half lawns.

Students will work out for themselves that they can do split half rolls, so as to set up different directions as well as different relative distances.



Julia Green coaching beginners at Phyllis Court

## NEW COACH QUALIFICATIONS

### THANK YOU TO OUR EXAMINING COACHES

At this time of year, CqE Examining Coaches are busy running Coach Training and Coach Qualification Courses. Many thanks to all of them for giving their time and sharing their expertise, which is much appreciated.

For details of how to become a coach enter "Become a Coach" into the Croquet England website.

### NEW CLUB-LEVEL COACHES

The following have passed all stages of the Club-Level Coach qualification process and have been upgraded to Club-Level Coach status on the register of Croquet England Coaches. Congratulations!

Brenda Duplock, Budleigh Salterton  
Bernie Phillips, Guildford & Godalming  
Diana Wilson, Roehampton

### NEW GRADED COACHES

The following have been awarded Grade 1 Qualifications on both AC and GC. Congratulations!

Simon Fenn-Tye, Sussex County  
Simon Turner, Ealing

### NEW U18S LICENSED COACHES

Colin Groves, Woking  
Alan Clark, High Wycombe  
Neil Stewart, Eynsham

# LIFETIME COACHING AWARD

by Paul Francis

## SARAH HAYES

### CHANNEL ISLANDS TO CHELTENHAM

Over the last 10 years or so whilst playing AC at Cheltenham, I have listened with great interest to Sarah's coaching sessions on adjacent lawns. This observation alone is a great testament to Sarah's commitment to coaching as my visits rarely exceed two or three times a year but she is always there.

What first drew my attention to Sarah was her enthusiasm, energy and straightforward coaching approach. On those many occasions when I was waiting for my opponent to complete their break, Sarah's coaching was my consolation and coaching education.

So it was a great pleasure to hear about Sarah's lifetime coaching award and an opportunity to meet with her to learn more about her coaching and how she developed her underlying coaching principles.

Shared with all the coaches I have ever met, Sarah is quick to acknowledge the influence of other coaches and players on her coaching style. What they also often share is passion and ability in other sports. Indeed, Sarah represented Jersey at swimming and played netball and hockey from a young age. Sarah explains: "My coaches at this stage had a great impact on me and one in particular, Jo Crafts, was very influential. What I valued were her brief explanations, solid/straightforward approach and consistency. Really important was that we also laughed a lot!"

Sarah reflects that her passion for croquet was fuelled by the Jersey Masterclasses where she first met Cliff Jones and Stephen Mulliner. "At this time, the opportunity for development of your croquet prowess in Jersey was limited so both these top players' and coaches' contribution was a critical point for me."

Sarah went on to gain her Grade 2 AC coaching qualification in 2013 and her Grade 3 AC badge in 2020 at the same time as being made an Examining Coach.

In addition, Sarah was the Chair of the CA Coaching Committee from October 2017 through to the end of 2021.

### COACHING PRINCIPLES

Sarah is clear that the work of the coach is just the starting point in a player's quest to improve.

"It's up to them to go off and practise shots and techniques, all I can do is provide the skeleton for them to build upon. They have to make the decisions and do the thinking on why a shot has gone well or not. In addition, encourage them to be confident and believe in themselves."

Sarah also encourages players to experiment and to learn from their mistakes, "I will then intervene, and ask them 'Why did that happen?'. If necessary, I will help by giving choices."



### WE NEED MORE COACHES

Inevitably, when croquet coaches meet up they discuss the future of croquet, AC and coaching. I asked Sarah about her advice to players considering a coaching route.

"First of all, be humble and remember the players need to enjoy it.

The coaching is not about you, make the players do the demos and you become the voice in the background.

Be inventive, establish practice routines and simple games.

Get them to think, ask questions before you offer any answers.

Always work outside on the lawn, if you need to write something down or draw a diagram bring out a small whiteboard.

Ultimately it's all about 'learning by doing'".

Sarah is passionate about AC and wants to encourage GC coaches to embrace AC through considering the common shots which codes share such as the AC rush aka the GC promotion, the AC drive aka the GC clearance, the AC roll and take-off aka the GC positioning.

After nearly two hours of croquet talk it was time to wind up the discussion with one final reflection on coaching from Sarah: "Above all, keep it simple, this was advice I was given by two of the very best coaches: Ian Burrridge and David Maugham."

So once again, congratulations to Sarah on her richly deserved award and a personal thanks for her years of my indirect coaching and the chat over a coffee. The two hours with Sarah have certainly encouraged me to go away and reflect on my coaching practice.

# NATIONAL SCHOOLS CHAMPIONSHIP

By Joel Taylor



The National Schools Croquet Championships were played at Surbiton with both the doubles and singles championships being contested by a total of 36 players from 6 schools. Both events were played simultaneously, with the doubles played as a straight knockout and the singles as a swiss event for players eliminated from the knockout (or players who elected to play only singles). All games were played level 14 point on half lawns, and a total of 76 games were played in the day. Many students were playing in their first ever tournament, and were surprised by how exhausting a full day of croquet can be, and how many rules there are! There were multiple debates amongst players over the length of a yard, which reinforces the need for croquet to modernise its units of measure.

The doubles championship was dominated by Radley College, who had three of their four pairs reach the semi finals. The final was won by Patrick Hall & Jimmy Butterworth (Radley). Patrick is now undefeated in this tournament for two consecutive years, and it was great to see the improvement in his skills and knowledge of the game over that time.

With 36 players and two concurrent events, it was always going to be a challenge to complete the singles swiss, and so

it proved. Two players who played the minimum four games finished undefeated with no time for a playoff, and if there was time for a playoff then at least one more player would have also won 4 out of 4. The singles championship was won by Rufus Howard-Sneyd (Eton), who won all six of his games, including a well contested final against Teddy de Putron (Eton). Both players completed several six-hoop breaks with recognisable leaves throughout the day. Honourable mention to August Deeming (Winchester), who won 4 out of 4, but did not have time to test his skills against Rufus.

This is the third year of the tournament, with the number of entries growing from 16 to 24 to 36. A two-day tournament will probably be necessary next year if that trend continues. Special thank you to Andy Dibben who did all the work setting the hoops for day. With 10 half lawns required, Surbiton were stretched to their limits for hoops and balls, but looking at it from the perspective of the future of croquet, it's not a bad problem to have.

Thank you also to the teachers who gave up their Sunday to bring their students to the event, and without whose support this tournament would not have been possible.

# LILIAN HOLDSWORTH MBE DL

1937-2025

By Celia Fastnedge  
Secretary, Littlehampton Croquet Club

Lilian Holdsworth MBE, President of Littlehampton Croquet Club and a former West Sussex Deputy Lieutenant, passed away peacefully on March 18th 2025 after a long and courageous battle with cancer. Throughout her illness, she remained accepting and gracious.

Lilian joined the Club in 2001, became Chairman in 2008 and President in 2011, a post which she held until her passing. She was also a valued Coach and her enthusiasm knew no bounds with the encouragement that she gave to new members of the club. Her husband Michael also served on the committee for many years and sadly passed away two weeks after Lilian.

Born in Montrose in 1937, she moved to Leeds in 1943 and left school at fifteen to pursue a career as a dancer in John Tiller's troupe. For six exciting years, Lilian was a high-kicking, high-energy, high-precision Tiller Girl performing routines such as the perky poodle parade and can-canning her way through it all. She thoroughly enjoyed her years as a Tiller Girl but when she turned 21, she decided it was time to move on and went into the world of fashion.

In the late 1970s, Lilian became involved with Ford Open Prison through the BBC's Adult Literacy Scheme and later volunteered with the Probation Service and the Sussex Association for the Rehabilitation of Offenders. In May 1979, she was appointed to the Worthing Bench and was later elected to represent all West Sussex Magistrates on the National Council of the Magistrates' Association. Lilian, was a magistrate in Worthing and championed several local groups and organisations including founding a retirement club in the village where she lived. She worked at the Citizens Advice Bureau for 20 years, the last five as Chair of the Management Committee. She also worked for the Worthing Area Guild for Voluntary Service, chairing the Daycare Committee and the Executive Board.

Lilian was appointed Deputy Lieutenant of West Sussex in 1992, an honour she carried out with characteristic enthusiasm. She was an inaugural member of the Lord Lieutenant's Volunteer Liaison Group, organising many events. Having devoted her life to service in the voluntary sector, Lilian met the late Queen in person when she was made an MBE in the 1997 New Year's Honours list, and said Her Majesty 'was very easy to chat to'. In 2001, she was appointed County Chair of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, a post she held for ten years. The highlight came when she attended Buckingham Palace to witness the late Queen conferring a Royal Charter on the Award to mark its Golden Jubilee.

Members remember Lilian rushing off to the Clubhouse after a rollup and emerging five minutes later as a fully dressed Deputy Lieutenant with hat and all ready to present BEMs or attend a grand occasion.



Lilian married Michael Holdsworth who was Captain at Littlehampton Croquet Club. They both enjoyed the competitiveness of Croquet competitions. One of our fun competitions was President v Chairman where members play for either team. Lilian was always there to greet the Mayors of Littlehampton for our Centenary Cup which is a competition between Sussex Clubs, and did her best to recruit them to play and enjoy Croquet, but so far, we have been unsuccessful!

In 2018 we built a new clubhouse and in recognition of all the hard work of the members we applied for, and received, the Millenium Award in 2019. Lilian and I went to receive this at the Hurlingham Croquet Club's AGM. Unfortunately, we never got to play at Hurlingham but we enjoyed our day and this picture of her on the bridge reminds me of the lovely time that we had together.

A memorial service and Celebration of Lilian's life was held at St Andrew's Church Ferring on April 29, which would have been her 88th birthday. Recollections and special memories were read by Lilian's daughters, granddaughters and grandsons. A civic Tribute was read by Margaret Bamford OBE DL

The Club will be holding a fundraising day in her memory in aid of St Barnabas Hospice, Worthing.

# DAVID TUTT

1938-2025

**LETCHWORTH CROQUET CLUB IN NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE PAYS TRIBUTE TO ONE OF ITS HISTORIC AND VALUED MEMBERS, DAVID TUTT WHO DIED IN APRIL 2025.**

David was a central figure during the successful foundation of the Letchworth Croquet Club in the 1980's and he was passionate about the game playing regularly with family and friends until his final few months.

A founder member, Duncan Hector and friend of David, notes that back then, Golf Croquet as we know it today didn't exist and Association Croquet was the only game played. As beginners, the matches would often stretch on for hours, and on one memorable occasion, David and Duncan played so late into the evening that it became difficult to see the balls and aiming for the black ball at the far end of the lawn, they realised, thankfully after missing it, that it was actually a hedgehog!

In those early days, the Club didn't have a pavilion, so members played in all weathers. One day, David turned up with a giant fisherman's umbrella, which quickly became the standard accessory to protect players from wind and rain.

David was an expert player, and when Hertfordshire first formed a team for the Inter-Counties Championship, he was a natural choice. He went on to represent the county for many years. Beyond his own play, David spent countless hours coaching and encouraging new players, always offering his time generously. He achieved a Croquet Coaching Certificate and during many weekends David could be found playing tournaments, including at Hunstanton (outdoors) and Soham (indoors).

He was wonderful company and a great friend — someone whose enthusiasm, kindness, and good humour will be warmly remembered. The Letchworth Club will miss him.



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# CROQUET LAWN MAINTENANCE



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## TURFPEDIA

Over the years, I've received countless questions from croquet clubs about lawn care. To make life easier, I created Turfpedia—a comprehensive online resource where clubs can quickly find answers to virtually any turf-related query. Simply visit the Turfpedia section on my website and use the search function to access detailed, practical guidance on all aspects of croquet lawn maintenance.

## MOWER SETTINGS

At this time of year, most croquet lawns are cut to 5mm and mowed twice a week. Undulating lawns should be cut longer so that the balls don't wander. Check your mower to ensure that it is cutting cleanly and adjust the bottom blade accordingly. Ideally you should have a setting bar to set the height of cut correctly.

## DOLLAR SPOT

June is the time of year when Dollar Spot can become rampant. It causes dead spots about the size of a Dollar. For this and any other fungal disease, spray the affected area with Soluble Iron as soon as possible.

## LEATHER JACKETS - ROOK DAMAGE

Leather Jackets are the grub of Daddy Long Legs and taste delicious to rooks and crows. These birds can cause extensive damage to croquet lawns, making numerous holes the size of a 50 pence piece when they dig for leatherjackets. The easiest way of dealing with this problem is to scare the birds away. I have found a device available from Amazon/Ebay etc. that works well on my lawn. Even though there is a huge rookery only 200 yards away, I now get very little rook damage.



Isotronic bird scarer



Rook damage

## ASK THE EXPERT

Duncan Hector has kindly agreed to be our resident expert for lawn care.

From the results of the Croquet Gazette survey it was clear that lawncare advice was a high priority for many of our readers.

Duncan would be delighted to hear your questions which may be published and responded to in the Croquet Gazette.

Please submit your questions to [communications@croquetengland.org.uk](mailto:communications@croquetengland.org.uk).



Dollar Spot  
Photo taken at the Sports Turf Research Institute when they were researching fungal diseases.

## HOW CAMERTON AND PEASEDOWN CC NARROWLY AVOIDED 'NO-MOW' MAY IN 2025

When two of the directors/ co-owners of their contracted professional ground keeping firm decided to empty that firm's bank accounts and decant themselves abroad with the money Camerton and Peasedown Croquet Club found themselves in a difficult situation which needed to be resolved successfully and ASAP.

They found themselves, already at the height of a very busy season of League matches, Club afternoon and tournaments, with four full sized lawns that within days would be unplayable. Somehow, and quickly, they had to get the grass cut.

With literally just 24 hours' notice the CPCC committee sprang into action calling on their individual talents and their personal connections to acquire the basics needed for the Club to continue play; i.e. a lawn mower and a team of Club members to walk behind it.

Fortunately the professional contractor's workforce, who as individuals now suddenly found themselves out of work, had earlier done the spring renewal and maintenance tasks and, with the Club's irrigation system already being in use in the exceptionally dry spring of 2025, the grass was healthy and growing strongly.

Using his local contacts and his 'Just Do It' approach Andy Loakes sourced a high spec reconditioned cylinder mower and this was quickly purchased. It is an ATCO Club 20" cylinder petrol mower with 12 blades, ensuring a fine cut of 133 cuts per metre; a very nice bit of kit. The correct fuel was also sourced and purchased.

Basic maths told us that the mower, cutting at 20 inches, would need to be followed for about 4 miles and that this task, for both practical and health and safety reasons, would be best shared between 2 or 3 Club members.

Initial practice showed that the mower was indeed a good one but it would take a bit of practice to get things absolutely right. To start with the cutter bar was set at a nominal 8mm but the results were a bit odd. Maybe the cutter bar had slipped slightly during the first trial? The bar was quickly tightened and for the second run of the mower a more accurate gauge was made. It became apparent that the contractor's team may not have been cutting at 8mm because the clippings box filled up rapidly and this was time consuming to empty. At the second outing of the mower, with the cutter bar set accurately at 7mm, the task of removing clippings was much reduced.

It was decided that cutting first at 7mm and then, maybe, dropping the cut to 6mm would be the better option and mowing twice a week would reduce the onerous task of removing the cuttings box so frequently. It might be possible to do all four lawns in two and a half hours. However this still meant that many man/ woman hours had to be found from somewhere to keep on top of the mowing job alone.



Andy Loakes (left) CPCC IC (mowing) with Paul Dix 2IC

However, within a few days, the sole remaining managing director of the professional contractor firm, who had been left in the lurch by the other two, had started to re-assess his situation and to decide whether, where and when, he would attempt to take the Company once the formalities of the liquidation had been processed. In the meantime the redundant workforce still needed to work.

So, just one week on from all the drama, a second 'Andy', a long standing employee of our former contractor, arrived at 7.0am on a Thursday to chat to our now more knowledgeable Club members about a way forward for the lawn mowing. With spare keys provided and a new Mowers WhatsApp created an arrangement was made for twice weekly mowing. Whew! Continued play for the summer of 2025 was now looking possible. Crisis averted and over the worst; we hope so, at least until the next problems arise.

Looking ahead; it is possible that another company will rise from the ashes of the previous one. If this proves to be the case we shall use them for the autumn and winter lawn treatments. But we also have second, third and fourth options to look at, if necessary.

The good bits are that, in a relative short space of time, we have learnt a lot about our lawns and their routine summer management. This will put us in a stronger position when talking to professionals about the quality of our playing surface and this can only be a good thing. And we now own a top notch second hand mower.

Some timely rain has now fallen and the lawns are looking good and playing well; it may not be too early to say 'High Fives All Round'.

# CROQUET ENGLAND CONTACTS

**Mark Suter**  
Operations Manager

Croquet England  
Old Bath Road  
Cheltenham  
GL53 7DF

t: 01242 242318  
e: office@croquetengland.org.uk

**Patricia Duke-Cox**  
President  
patricia.duke-cox@croquetengland.org.uk

**Samir Patel**  
Chair of the Board of Trustees  
samir.patel@croquetengland.org.uk

**Vacancy**  
Chief Executive Officer

**Robert Fulford**  
Treasurer  
robert.fulford@croquetengland.org.uk

**Gabrielle Higgins**  
Secretary  
gabrielle.higgins@croquetengland.org.uk

**Ron Carter**  
National Safeguarding Officer  
safeguarding@croquetengland.org.uk

## TRUSTEES

**Peter Allan**  
peter.allan@croquetengland.org.uk

**Samir Patel**  
samir.patel@croquetengland.org.uk

**Brian Wilson**  
brian.wilson@croquetengland.org.uk

**George Collin**  
george.collin@croquetengland.org.uk

**Andrew Stewart**  
andrew.stewart@croquetengland.org.uk

**Tim King**  
tim.king@croquetengland.org.uk

**Carol Driver**  
carol.driver@croquetengland.org.uk

**Robin Tasker**  
robin.tasker@croquetengland.org.uk

## EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

**Chief Executive Officer - Vacancy**

**Development - Ian Draper**  
ian.draper@croquetengland.org.uk

**Marketing & Communications - Paul Hetherington**  
paul.hetherington@croquetengland.org.uk

**Infrastructure & IT - Andy Dibben**  
andy.dibben@croquetengland.org.uk

**Performance & Competitive Play - David Openshaw**  
david.openshaw@croquetengland.org.uk

**Coaching & Grass Roots - Vacancy**

**Treasurer - Robert Fulford**  
robert.fulford@croquetengland.org.uk

**Operations Manager - Mark Suter**  
office@croquetengland.org.uk

**Secretary to the Executive - Paul Brown**  
paul.brown@croquetengland.org.uk

## COMMITTEE CHAIRS

**Sport Development** **Stephen Wright**  
stephen.wright@croquetengland.org.uk

**Funding** **Sarah Andrew**  
sarah.andrew@croquetengland.org.uk

**Handicap** **Christopher Roberts**  
christopher.roberts@croquetengland.org.uk

**IT** **Andy Dibben**  
andy.dibben@croquetengland.org.uk

**International** **Vacancy**

**AC Laws** **Jeff Dawson**  
jeff.dawson@croquetengland.org.uk

**GC Rules** **Ian Cobbold**  
ian.cobbold@croquetengland.org.uk

**Marketing** **Duncan Catterall**  
duncan.catterall@croquetengland.org.uk

**AC Selection** **Ian Lines**  
ian.lines@croquetengland.org.uk

**GC Selection** **Chris Clarke**  
chris.clarke@croquetengland.org.uk

**AC Tournaments** **Joel Taylor**  
joel.taylor@croquetengland.org.uk

**GC Tournaments** **Richard Bilton**  
richard.bilton@croquetengland.org.uk

**Coaching** **Ruth Raunkiaer**  
ruth.raunkiaer@croquetengland.org.uk

## WEBSITE

[www.croquetengland.org.uk](http://www.croquetengland.org.uk) and [www.croquet.org.uk](http://www.croquet.org.uk) are fabulous resources for croquet information covering membership, news, laws & rules, coaching, who's who, and tournament details with an online entry system.

The website also has a full glossary of croquet terms, jargon and acronyms that are sometimes used in Gazette reporting.

To find the glossary online, visit:

AC <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=games/tech/jargon>

GC <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=games/golf/gcJargon>

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Email contributions, including tournament reports should be sent direct to the Editor, or copied to the Editor if they are being posted to the Nottingham List.

Digital images are preferred, but photographic prints can be acceptable. Please send digital jpeg or tiff format files and accompany all images with a description of the subject.

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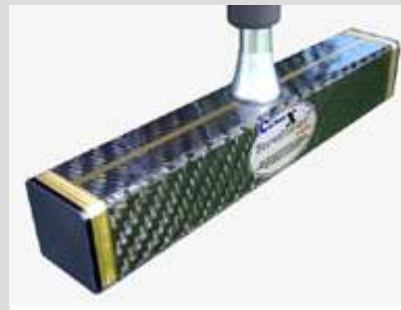
Tom Dewar (Midlands-North) on 07967 984927 email [pfc\\_malletsuknorth@gmail.com](mailto:pfc_malletsuknorth@gmail.com)

OR

Richard Carline (in the South) on 07876 227165 email [hoopnallet@gmail.com](mailto:hoopnallet@gmail.com)

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