

CROQUET

GAZETTE

Issue 417 | October 2025



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our people*





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Croquet Gazette
Issue 417 | October 2025



Front cover:
Croquet England Diploma Winners

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WELCOME

In just a few days' time, from 18th to 26th October, I will be back to late night viewing as the livestreaming of the 2025 Association Croquet World Championship will get underway. The event is being held at the National Croquet Centre, Florida USA, so please join me as I cheer on our fellow Croquet England players. (I make no apologies for being completely Croquet obsessed and, of course, this is probably why they let me continue being your Croquet Gazette editor.)

Back to England, I have had the pleasure of starting work with our new CEO, Andy Dalby-Welsh, who has already brought a fresh perspective to our organisation. I look forward to supporting him and our new independent trustees, as they learn about the croquet community and work with our existing management to shape the future of Croquet England.

As you will see from the front cover and the names below, once again we are proud to show our thanks to the volunteers who support the development of croquet. The work they do for their Clubs and Federations is paramount to achieving a successful sport, from grassroots level through to International Development. From all of us, thank you to our Diploma winners.

Alison

Alison Maugham
Editor
editor@croquetengland.org.uk

THANK YOU TO OUR PEOPLE

Croquet England Diplomas are awarded each year to those special people who have been nominated by their clubs for their outstanding service to croquet. Congratulations to you all and thank you from all of us in your Croquet community.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Philip de Glanville - Bath | Alistair Proctor - Lodsworth |
| Marion Cofield - Ben Rhydding | Chris Joslin - Maldon |
| Penny Clark - Ben Rhydding | Ellen Gee - Nottingham |
| Brian Wilson - Camerton & Peasedown | Cathy Turski - Nottingham |
| Rhona Foster - Cornwall | Mike Bowser - Pinchbeck |
| Jean Cording - Dowlish Wake | David Smith - Rother Valley |
| Simon Tuke - Ealing | Katharine Minchin - Rother Valley |
| Nigel Parkins - East Dorset | Roy Tillcock - Ryde |
| Roger Booth - Eynsham | Angela Avis - Sussex County |
| Alison Murray - Leicester | Kathleen Burt - Winterborne Valley |
| Sarah Andrew - Llanfairfechan | |

HIBISCUS COLUMN



MINTY CLINCH
Travelling Croquet
Journalist

Telling the Croquet
stories as they unfold

Look up into the sky at this time of year and you'll see large flocks of birds no bigger than match boxes heading south with intent. Swan Vesta, Bryant & May? Although the blue plumage may be too small to spot, the forked swallow tails and the joyful aerobatics are unmistakable signs of a year on the wane.

At ground level, croquistas look around dolefully. Long months of courts closed for maintenance or saturation lie ahead. The elite may be competing to be AC World Champ in West Palm Beach, but what about the rest of us? Some have already taken advantage of the September BA 2025 sale to secure personal swallow status. The destination is the same but while the birds cover the 6000-mile journey to South Africa at 20 miles a day, desperately snapping up any available insects over the Sahara, we do it in one 12-hour hop, no jet lag involved.

And we do, do it. In mid-February,

Somerset West Croquet Club, Reg Bamford's hatchery, is as English as Hurlingham, but a good deal more relaxed. The Western Province Association Championships last for a full week (February 15-22, 2026) with 20 players competing in six categories. Not enough really: repeat confrontations are the order of many days so frustration builds as defeats by the same oppo mount up.

There is a maximum handicap of 16, but multiple bisques don't defeat UK familiars like Mike Town (-1.5), Jim Field (-1) and Lionel Tibble (-1). Doubles are played as you wish, own ball or alternate strokes: Phyllis Court duo Chris Roberts and Frances Colman demonstrate impressive harmony as they set each other up for the next shot. And then it's time for tea with cake or drinks with snacks. The club provides sweet and savoury food throughout the day, plus hot drinks and refrigeration for BYO wine and beer: sitting out is not a hardship.

Big Jim leads the most prestigious swallows, those who flit between their own nests in the northern and southern hemisphere by seasonal command. Roberts and Colman spend a month moving between tournaments at Rondebosch, South Africa's oldest, and other venues. Kitty Carruthers and Jonathan Edwards are travelling out on the

Queen Mary to link up with family before addressing a croquet ball.

Better still, they're harnessing their outstanding hosting instincts to my advantage. Johnny takes his duties as silver service butler and harem manager very seriously. He finds the perfect Airbnb for his wife and four ladies - mountain and ocean view, terrace, swimming pool, en suites.... He stocks two fridges with things we love on a daily basis, fruit and veg, vodka and tomato juice. He books waterfront restaurants and Ubers to take us to them. He splits the bills, leaving Kitty free to share jigsaws and cocktails and knowledgeable relatives.

Despite abysmal croquet scores, my addiction is total. How could I, as frequent winner of "Owner most like the scruffiest dog" at summer shows in the UK, miss slipping into immaculate whites ironed by Privilege, our stand-out cleaner? Or Kitty's birthday bash at the Thirsty Oyster where every vodka shot contains a succulent bivalve? Or the local market where birds fashioned out of recycled cans and painted by their vendors cost £3.00?

Former GC world champion, Judith Hanekom, represents South Africa at the highest level and rules at Somerset West. Entry enquiries: judithhanekom@hotmail.com.

HOVE BEACH CROQUET CLUB

Hove Beach Croquet Club has built a new Clubhouse. This was needed following a significant redevelopment of the Hove Beach seafront area which was paid for by the Government Levelling up Fund. The Project resulted in our existing storage shed, which was provided by Brighton & Hove Council, being repurposed.

That Project allowed for our existing lawn to continue to be available for croquet but included no funding for any premises. We have one lawn which was previously a bowling green.



Relaxing outside our old hut

This is configured to provide two overlapping croquet playing areas.

The Club had no option but to find a way to build a new clubhouse. This was paid for by donations and loans from members and some grant finance including £5,000 from Croquet England. We were awarded a similar grant by the Co-op Local Community Fund and together these grants covered approximately 12% of our Project Costs.

Hove Beach Croquet Club is in a conservation area. Planning permission was needed for our new building and compliance with several

Continued on page 5

WELCOMING OUR NEW CEO

by Samir Patel
Chair of the Board of Trustees

I am delighted to announce the appointment of Andy Dalby-Welsh as CEO from 1 October. Andy has led organisations across the sport, disability, and youth development sectors for over twenty years, and I'm excited that he will be bringing this experience and enthusiasm to Croquet England.

Most recently, as CEO of London Youth Games, Andy created and drove a new five-year strategy that brought together local authorities, funders, volunteers, and national partners, evolving governance and driving diversification in both participation and income generation.

Previously, as Deputy CEO of Activity Alliance, (the national lead organisation for getting disabled people active) he worked nationally to influence disability inclusion and oversaw governance reform to a federated structure, whilst achieving over £2m in sustained Sport England funding.

Andy said "I am very excited to be joining Croquet England. Having played Croquet in the garden with my family when growing up I have seen the inter-generational benefit the sport can bring. The best players will draw on great technical and tactical skills to succeed at club, regional and international level, whilst all players especially those playing for fun benefit from developing friendships and improving physical and mental wellbeing. I look forward to demonstrating how Croquet can improve the lives of many people of many ages and from many backgrounds."

Andy is visually impaired and represented the England Blind Cricket team over several years. He impressed at interview with his enthusiasm and ideas for growing the sport of croquet. Andy lives with his wife and two daughters in Brighton, not too far away from the Sussex County Croquet Club, where he looks forward to dusting off his Croquet skills!



Andy Dalby-Welsh
Croquet England CEO

COMPLETED CLUBHOUSE

conservation, heritage and ecological requirements was essential. There was a considerable amount of planning and preparation including: finding a contractor, designing the new building, obtaining planning permission and negotiating a 20-year lease for the site which includes the croquet lawn.

Our existing hut was removed during the Hove Beach Park Redevelopment. At this time the site for our new building was still part of the overall construction project and not yet available for us to start the build. This meant finding storage space for all our equipment. Storage space was provided by members (garages) and the council (an empty seafront building). During most winters, members will play in good weather, but we were not able to do this between October 2024 and the beginning of April 2025.

We now have a new Clubhouse with storage and kitchen/social areas and dedicated outside space. While the old hut was some distance away from our lawn, the new Clubhouse is right next to it, giving us easy access to all equipment and a relaxing and sociable place to watch croquet being played.

The build of the new Clubhouse took three months from January to April 2025. A local company assisted with the design and then constructed the new building. Additional work to fit out our storage area and lay decking was completed by other local companies.

The club has 125 members with a waiting list of more wanting to join. With our new facilities we hope to increase the number we can accommodate. Club members compete internally in leagues, in friendly local games and in the South



Opening day- the new Clubhouse – 5th
April 2025

East Croquet Federation. Hove Beach Croquet Club members play mostly Golf Croquet but there are a growing number who also play Association Croquet.

The new Clubhouse enhances the hospitality we can offer to other clubs and will allow us to extend our competitive involvement in the region and possibly nationally.

TUNNEL OF TIME

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.



CHRIS WILLIAMS
Croquet England
Archivist

AKA 'Statto'
Keeper of Croquet
Statistics, visit
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.

45 YEARS AGO

In the Winter 1980 Gazette (#158)

Retrospect 1980

"How busy we are on Tom Tiddler's Ground looking for Gold and Silver". Croquet players, Clubs and by no means least the Croquet Association are looking for ways to make the money go round. There are two distinct brands of sponsorship; one is small and local and the other nationwide, and this year we had our first taste of both. The former at Cheltenham where Coles, who are Estate Agents, gave money to the Club and a trophy to the players, and attracted an even more distinguished field than the Open Championships; it was acclaimed an unqualified success. The second, the Pimm's Internationals, was arranged at short notice and the sponsors hoped for nationwide publicity, and gave a sum of money to the CA, from which the expenses of mounting the events and the expenses of the players — and even of the administrators — had to be deducted. The paying of expenses is a sensitive area and one which needs careful monitoring to keep the balance between money to Clubs, which benefits everyone, and money to individuals. Happily, both sponsorships are to be repeated in 1981.

55 YEARS AGO

In the Autumn 1970 Gazette (#112)

NEWS FROM NEW ZEALAND

PRINCE "PIPS" WYLIE ON THE "POST"

On March 30th of this year, in the Final of the Hawkes Bay Open Tournament at Napier against F. Bennett of Hastings, John Prince, the New Zealand Men's Champion, completed a standard sextuple peel.

This was achieved from the usual leave—Bennett cross-wired at hoop 1, the forward ball wedged in 1-back, and the opponent required to miss the back ball so that he can be picked up from the north boundary.

Warmest congratulations to John Prince from all devotees of expert croquet in England. Unless news comes through to contradict us, this really is the first match-play sextuple to have been completed.

90 YEARS AGO

In the September 28th, 1935 Gazette (No. 795 Vol. XXXII (No. 24))

Letters

Dear Sir,

Is it too much to expect players in important tournament finals and competitions to wear suitable attire? Why not white flannels instead of the drab garb so many men appear in.

It is said that Croquet players may play in anything. They do! What a pity and how dull for the spectators.

Yours faithfully,

E. L Ward Petley

In the October 26th, 1935 Gazette (No. 796 Vol. XXXII (No. 25))

A reply

Attire

Dear Sir,

I quite agree with Mr. Ward Petley's criticism of men's attire on Croquet lawns, and I am sure improvement in this respect would be a very useful form of propaganda. In almost any weather white, or light grey, flannels

are the most comfortable garments to play in; even if they get wet they are more easily restored to their pristine freshness than are other materials. Further to play in tweed trousers (or plus fours) and waistcoat, minus a coat, is far from complimentary to lady players.

Yours faithfully,

WALTER WEBBER

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NEW INDEPENDENT TRUSTEES FOR THE BOARD OF CROQUET ENGLAND

By Samir Patel, Chair of the Board of Trustees

I am delighted to welcome three new Independent Trustees to the Board of Croquet England. Independent trustees offer a fresh perspective from outside our sport, and bring additional expertise and experience. I look forward to working with Glenda, Kishan and Matt.

Samir Patel, Chair of the Board of Trustees

GLENDA VENCATACHELLUM

I am a practising barrister, Accredited Mediator (CMC registered), MCI Arb International commercial arbitration.

During my time at the Bar, my practice has spanned many areas including Crime, Civil, Family, Divorce, Children (public and private law), International Family Law, Human Rights and Commercial Law. I also spent some years working for the Incorporated Council of Law Reporting, writing the Law reports, and the Times Law Reports.

Increasingly I have focused on dispute resolution, and I have been seeking to transfer my skills and experience to the area of sports. I recently completed a Sports Disputes Resolution Training certification course. I hope that I am able to bring my experience from the Bar, particularly in safeguarding, to this appointment.

When browsing through a list of potential appointments, on seeing Croquet, something simply resonated.

I was delighted to observe that the International Croquet Cup is held at the Sugar Beach Hotel in Mauritius. Both my parents were born in Mauritius, but came to England in the late 50's and late 60's.

I enjoyed visiting Purley Bury Croquet Club, meeting fellow trustees Carol Driver and Andrew Stewart, and getting to know Penny Hinton (Chair of Purley Bury), and members Val, Vivienne, Donna and Trish, amongst others.

I hope to visit many more clubs around the country, and hear from, and speak with, as many of you as I can, in order to better serve your needs.

I look forward to being involved in shaping the future of Croquet England, and being part of its ongoing and future success, so that together we may bequeath the game to others for centuries to come.



[Left to right] Andrew Stuart, Kishan Devani, Glenda Vencatachellum and Carol Driver at Purley Bury Croquet Club

PROFESSOR KISHAN DEVANI BEM, FRSA

I am delighted to be appointed as a Trustee and bring my business background and love of sport to help grow the sport of croquet.

I am an Entrepreneur, Political Strategist, World-Renowned Educationalist and Global Education Expert/Academic/Strategist/Trainer, Speaker, and International PR, Communications, Media, Campaigns & Fundraising Consultant/Advisor. I have had a distinguished career highlighted by numerous prestigious recognitions and roles that

underscore my significant contributions to various sectors. I was honoured with the British Empire Medal (BEM) by Her Majesty the Queen in the 2020 New Year's Honours List, and I became a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts in 2015. Additionally, I was awarded the Freedom of the City of London, making me one of the youngest BaME Freemen of London.

I have held several advisory roles, and am currently Senior International Advisor to Westminster Group PLC (UK Listed Global Security Group). My political career includes serving as the youngest Deputy Chairman (Membership and Finance) of the London Conservative Party, Treasurer's Envoy and Vice-President of the Liberal Democrats Campaign for Race Equality (LDCRE), and I currently serve as Fundraising Officer for the Uxbridge and South Ruislip Labour Party.

My consultancy work spans various sectors, including governance, finance, and education. I have been a vocal advocate for community cohesion and diversity within the British Asian community, volunteering extensively to motivate young Asians to engage in British civic life. My contributions to education and social integration have earned numerous accolades, including the Asian Achievers Award.

I am passionate about the power of sport, and I am a shareholder of Sixes Social Cricket – the world's first cricket focused social entertainment venues. I am also shareholder of Global Airlines, Senior International Advisor & Shareholder of Westminster Group PLC. In addition to this, I run my own successful consultancy firm and property company.

I really enjoyed my visit to Purley Bury Croquet Club and I am looking forward to learning more about this amazing game.

NEW INDEPENDENT TRUSTEES CONTINUED

MATTHEW MACDONALD

I am an academic at the University Campus of Football Business (UCFB), the first higher education institution in the world dedicated to university degrees in the football and sports industries. I teach across a number of specialist areas and I am Course Leader for the BA (Hons) Football Business degree.

I also support executive students on specialist postgraduate programmes, including the MSc Sports Directorship and the CEO of a Sports Organisation course, and I serve as an External Examiner at the University of Salford.

Alongside my academic career, I bring global consultancy experience supporting clubs, leagues, and executives across the sporting pyramid. I have delivered projects

throughout Europe, Africa, and North America, covering strategy, sports operations, and commercial growth.

My industry highlights include consulting on a successful Premier League governance appeal by Everton FC, supporting a strategic review of UNAFUT and Liga Promerica in Costa Rica, and advising Mazatlán FC in Mexico on sporting operations. I have directly reported on multimillion-pound player transfers and managerial appointments while providing strategic recommendations to senior executives.

I am delighted to join Croquet England as a Trustee. I look forward to learning more about the game and contributing my knowledge and experience to support the continued growth and development of croquet.



Matthew Macdonald with his wife Alison enjoyed croquet at Bowdon hosted by Angharrad Walters, the club secretary

THE NEW LAWNS AT DOWNHAM CROQUET CLUB

By Jonathan Toye

It all began in February 2025 at the AGM when we collectively decided to take the plunge and find out what would be involved in making our lawns flat. Several members had visited other clubs near and far and commented on how wonderful it was to play on a surface that didn't send your shot skittering off to one side or jumping over its target ball. We knew it wasn't going to be cheap. We had spent £1000 some years before on 28 tons of topsoil from the sugar beet factory and 3 tons of council compost. Four of us laboriously raked it out and levelled by eye with a ladder. It turned out that we hadn't actually achieved a level surface. This time we would. The magic words laser levelling kept coming up.

We had four contractors visit and give quotes, and chose the one who turned out to be the most reasonable, but also because they look after the neighbouring cricket ground and do a pretty good job there.

I should explain that we play in Stow Hall Gardens, Stow Bardolph, a mile from Downham Market. This is part of the Hare estate which farms the local area. We have been there since 1989. It's a beautiful setting with great old trees dotted around, a walled kitchen garden and a general air of peace and calm.



Before the contractors visited I took some soil samples from just beyond the four corners of the main lawn, digging down about a foot and carefully replacing soil and turf afterwards. As expected it was very good light loam with stones encountered around nine inches down. This gave us an indication that it wouldn't be necessary to add further topsoil to the levelling work.

Having learned how much it was going to cost, the next part of the process was applying for grants. After a spot of

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DOWNHAM CROQUET CLUB CONTINUED

due diligence on their part, the Funding Committee of Croquet England agreed to cover 50% of the costs. The East Anglian Croquet Federation followed suit with their maximum grant. A local farming family promised a good sized grant and the remainder we would make up from funds.

We had the final day of the season on 31 August and the contractors arrived a few days later in the first week of September to begin work. Jonny, our recently appointed groundsman (whose main job is looking after the cricket ground) had sprayed the lawns with weedkiller beforehand.

Will and Stuart set to work with the Koro machine, towed behind their smart blue tractor. This scalped the top layer off the lawns and projected the 'arising' into the accompanying trailer. These were dumped on a large compost heap beyond the walled garden to be spread later on the farmland. Will estimated that about 20 tons was removed from our 1 3/4 lawns.



Next Will drove the stone burying machine over the lawns. This was like a large rotavator with a pair of cylinders with long spikes sticking out which created a fine tilth to a depth of around 6 inches and pushed any stones further down in the ground. Because heavy rain was expected over the following two days, Will then drove the tractor over the soil, compacting the surface, so that he didn't face sludge on his return three days later.

He returned on the final day with the laser leveller and seeding machine. He began by setting up a large theodolite tripod beside the lawns emitting a laser beam. He then walked over the lawns with a staff which received the laser beams and took a series of readings at various points. He entered these readings into the main unit which would show high and low points and control the laser leveller towed behind the tractor. He then drove around and around the lawns for several hours moving soil from one point to another until no more earth was being gathered. This was an incredibly painstaking job.

After a well-deserved lunch break, Will set out with the seeding machine towed behind the tractor. This consisted of a seed box above two cylinder harrows which provided the furrow for the seed then buried it. He did the seeding lengthways then widthways to ensure thorough coverage. To make sure that the seed was covered and further flatten the surface he towed a drag mat over the ground. Finally he walked around with a fertiliser spreader to give the land a good feed. Now we wait for the effect of the rain that has come in the following week and hope for a lovely flat sward. We should see something green in the next few days I trust.

Needless to say, none of this would have been possible without financial support and we are extremely grateful to Croquet England, Ouse Bridge Farms and the East Anglian Croquet Federation for their funding of this exciting project.



MORE THAN JUST A GAME: WHY CATERING DESERVES A SEAT AT THE TABLE

I've been playing croquet and entering tournaments for nearly 20 years. When someone recently asked how long I'd been involved, I instinctively said "about 10 years"—a reminder of how quickly time passes when you're immersed in something you love.

One thing I've noticed over the years is how catering at tournaments has quietly slipped down the priority list. And I think that's a shame.

One of my earliest events was at Pendle and Craven. I can't recall how I played, but I vividly remember the proper Sunday dinner and pudding. It wasn't just a meal—it was part of the experience. Croquet tournaments aren't just about competition; they're social occasions, a chance to break bread and build camaraderie. That shared time over lunch or tea fosters connection, warmth, and a sense of belonging.

After a break from tournaments, I've returned over the past couple of years

and found catering to be increasingly "hit and miss." Some events feel flat without it, dare I say, even unfriendly. That's not always the fault of the club. I have attended two tournaments at the same venue. The first, an AC C2 event, offered excellent lunch and tea, and the atmosphere was lively and welcoming. The second, a Golf Championship Series event, was well-run but lacked catering. No lunch was offered during registration and, on arrival, the tea and coffee facilities felt off-limits. Tables and chairs remained stacked all weekend, and the social element was noticeably absent.

This isn't a Golf vs. AC issue either. I played in an A Series Golf tournament in Chester that had the best-value catering I've come across. Everyone took part, and it made for a friendly, competitive and thoroughly enjoyable event.

I understand the challenges. Clubs rely on volunteers, and preparing food takes time and effort. Some tournaments offer catering but

withdraw it due to low uptake. That's disappointing—but understandable. Still, when I see lots of those little red Xs next to "catering" during online registration, I find myself asking, "Do I really want to go to this?"

So, what's the solution? I don't have all the answers, but I believe it's time for a conversation—between Croquet England, clubs, and players. Why are fewer people opting in? Is it cost? Convenience? Dietary needs? Could a simple survey help us understand what would encourage more participation?

We can't force people to buy lunch, but we can explore ways to make it more appealing, accessible and valued. Because, at its heart, croquet is a social game. And if we want players to keep investing their time, money, and passion into it, we need to nurture not just the competition—but the community around it.

Robbie Dodds

CROQUET ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The recent correspondence regarding the contenders for oldest active croquet player reminded me (by some peculiar form of inverted reasoning) of a letter dated 28 January 1981 from Richard Rothwell, the then Secretary of the Croquet Association, responding to an enquiry from my husband Laurence.

In it Richard confirmed that whilst there were then 24 male Junior members (of whom Mark Avery, at the age of 15, was the youngest), at 20 years of age I was at that time the only female Junior member of the CA.

This leads me to suggest that there must be other records held by 'the youngest player to...' achieve various croquet accomplishments. Nominations for that category, anyone?

Deborah Latham

EYESIGHT BEATS LASER

Philip Taylor makes interesting suggestions for the use of laser pointers on croquet courts (Issue 416), including for determining if a ball has run a hoop.

He says "If the laser beam can touch both legs of the hoop (and is not touching the ball) then the ball has run the hoop. If the ball obscures the beam and the two legs cannot be illuminated at the same time then the hoop has not been run."

There's a problem with this, in that the Law now recognizes a ball that is touching but not protruding back through the plane of the playing side as having completed running its hoop (Law 20.3.1). In this case, a laser beam that touched the near leg (and not the ball) could not illuminate the far leg.

Adjudicators should rely on eyesight – one eye only being best – and in borderline cases decide that the hoop has been run (Law 20.6.1).

This "protruding" approach was introduced in the Seventh Edition of the Laws. I should know – it was I who drafted it for the International Laws Committee.

Adrian Kirby

SHORT CROQUET FOCUS

By John Harris

All four Short Croquet tournaments in this year's Fixtures Calendar were fully subscribed; each attracted a good gender balance; and each welcomed players from three or more different Federations and six or more different clubs.

Some 'big beasts' of croquet signed up, including an England player, a top coach and a well-published croquet writer, all playing on equal terms alongside mid and high handicappers thanks to the SC handicapping system. In 2025 Short Croquet Fixtures Calendar tournaments have truly announced themselves as mainstream.

Blewbury's Spring tournament was deemed a real success. All games were strongly competitive. Andy Robertson proved victorious, ahead of runners-up Caroline Tarran (Kington Langley) and Blewbury's Carol Jamieson and Andrew Petit. The day followed the pattern adopted by all this year's Fixtures Calendar SC events: 16 players; double banking on four half lawns; all games 75 minutes. These conditions seem to have established themselves as optimum for Short Croquet tournaments.

At Hamptworth in July, former England captain David Openshaw (Roehampton) made the most of his first ever Short Croquet tournament. When time was called in the deciding game against Robert Corbin (Kington Langley), David was 4-10 down with two of his three peels still to fit in. What followed was a cliff-hanger finale, a masterclass in how it should be done. David steered his second ball right round, meanwhile peeling his forward ball through both its remaining hoops, and pegged out, to win the game 14-10 and the tournament.

He was not to repeat the feat at Blewbury's one-day August tournament. Blewbury's lovely lawns and warm welcome attracted a rich mix of players from a wide spectrum of experience and handicaps from 10 bisques to 3 peels. Most games pegged out. Four players won four out of their five games, with Debbie James (York) being narrowly beaten to the cup 14-10 by Charles Briggs (Caversham).



Cup holders: Viking Challenge winner Chris Williamson is flanked by three former winners: L-R Richard Sanville (Ashby) and York players Sue Longcroft and Debbie James.
Photo: John Harris

At York's two-day Viking Challenge in September, the 70% bisque allocation system came into its own, with several players from across the handicap range vying for the Leader Board top spot right to the last round. In the end Chris Williamson (Crake Valley) just edged to victory, with Roger Schofield (Bury) a strong runner-up. Denise Foster (York) earned a special mention for scoring the most hoop and peg points over the weekend.

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SHORT CROQUET IN WILTSHIRE

By John Grimshaw

With the recent addition of two new clubs in Wiltshire, both playing AC, bringing the number to five, it was thought a good opportunity to arrange an inter-club competition between them.

Five is an ideal number for a one-day Short Croquet competition. The SWF have been holding competitions at Nailsea in the spring for 25 years, and at Budleigh in the autumn for 10, so the format is tried and tested. Thirty teams attend each of these competitions split into six divisions of five clubs each, and played over three days, ten playing each day.

Each club names four players and they are ranked in handicap order within the teams. Each player then plays his/her opposite number in the other team. All teams play each other, four matches each with one team sitting out each round. All games are double-banked, 80 minutes, with secondaries playing the other way around i.e. treating hoop three as hoop one.

So the inaugural Wiltshire Short Croquet Team Championship took place on September 3rd at Kington Langley. The participants were Bradford on Avon, Hamptworth, Kington Langley, Swindon and Tisbury. Handicaps ranged from 4 peels to 10, but, as each player plays the similarly ranked player in the opposing team, the handicap differences in the games are not so great.

Play was very competitive and four of the first six matches (three rounds) were 2-2 draws, with Bradford on Avon taking an early lead with two 3-1 wins. Going into the last round, four teams could still win. Tisbury were leading on 9, but had to sit out the last round. Kington Langley and Bradford on Avon were on 7, and Swindon could tie with a 4-0 win, if the other match score was favourable for them. In the event, Hamptworth, the only team that could not win at this stage, beat contenders Bradford on Avon 4-0, and, after beating Swindon 3-1, Kington Langley were crowned champions.



An advertisement for 'dbmallets.com'. At the top left is the logo 'db Mallets' with a QR code to the right. Below the logo is the text 'HIGH TECH, AEROSPACE TECHNOLOGY INSPIRED CROQUET MALLETS, EACH FITTED WITH THE EXCLUSIVE POWERFLEX SHAFT'. The central image shows two croquet mallets, one blue and one green, with a large glowing blue number '3' and the text 'DAYS FROM PAYMENT TO DISPATCH'. At the bottom, it says 'MALLETS FROM £248' with several slanted lines to the right. At the very bottom, there is contact information: '(07714) 765 181 or (07775) 680 828', 'dbmallets@gmail.com', and 'www.dbmallets.co.uk'.

Final scores were

Kington Langley 10, Tisbury 9, Hamptworth 8, Bradford on Avon 7, Swindon 6

Everyone enjoyed the event and promised to repeat it in 2026.

A special mention should go to Caroline Tarran of the Kington Langley club, who spent the whole day ensuring that the players were furnished with tea, coffee, biscuits and cake, badly needed when the heavy storms came along.

ASSOCIATION CROQUET EIGHTS

FIRST EIGHT: THE PRESIDENT'S CUP



Andrew Johnston celebrating with the President's Cup
Photo Credit: Ed Dolphin

By David Fuller

The Eights Selections were missing a few of the usual names this year due to, I assume, the forthcoming AC Worlds and dwindling holiday allowances for those still keeping the wheels of industry turning. But to my eyes, the President's group looked very strong, especially with Jack involved and still improving so quickly.

Participants: David Fuller, Jack Good, Gabrielle Higgins, Andrew Johnston, Debbie Lines, Stephen Mulliner, Duncan Reeve, Samir Patel.

Sidmouth is a lovely place to visit, even more so with a croquet mallet in hand, but the weather forecast was just a little suspicious on the first morning with sun, wind and showers all on the way. Nevertheless, the courts looked in fine condition and, as we found, of consistent speed.

I won't even bother mentioning how organised everything was throughout the event, as Samir was in charge.

My first game against Gabrielle pretty much summed up our tournaments: some reasonable play followed by some, well, 'less reasonable' play. Both of us should have won a couple of times before Gabrielle put us out of our misery. I put it down to nerves. Elsewhere, everyone seemed to be easing themselves nicely into some competent play and getting ahead of my 0/3.

I will be honest with you now... I wrote the introduction and denouement parts of this report and only then thought about what to put in the middle. It's a little like the middle bit of those 10k races where you go and make a cup of tea because nothing much is happening and it's the same when you get back to hear the bell. My assumption is that you only want to know of: a) someone losing by missing the peg from a foot, b) an outrageous straight octuple, or c) a freak mallet injury. Well, none of those happened, more's the pity.

THE PRESIDENT'S CUP CONTINUED

Oh wait! Perhaps it was me. I was just completing this 'well-controlled' TP against Gabrielle, with a simple rush on peelee, past rover, back to the peg for glory. I must have been distracted somehow. My rush 'went a bit right', straight through Rover barely touching the wire, and up to a couple of yards short of the Peg. Cue much hilarity and insistence that 'this must go in the report' by all present. Tick.

Ooh, and someone had a grievous. Shh.

Two days of wind and sun followed with Jack and Andrew leading the way, just, and the rest of us 'tucking in behind'. Debbie, Stephen and Samir were all playing excellent croquet but were taking points off each other. Duncan seemed to be struggling a bit with unexpected errors. I saw a note from Nick Parish saying that the first two Eights had never been so close at this stage. Anyone could still win, at least theoretically, with a day to go.

And so to the final day. Jack and Andrew could not be separated, both having 7/11 with a pegged-down game, and both having Gabrielle and myself to play. I didn't (have a chance to?) bother the scoreboard in either game, with Gabrielle only slightly less, so leaving the deadlock on to 9/13. Both pegged-down games were then settled with TPs, prompting a play-off.

Jack and Andrew had clearly played the best croquet of the four days, with Andrew perhaps slightly shading it with 7/10 wins by TP. Jack had been slightly critical of his own play, often needing his excellent single ball and hoop-running shots to keep his breaks going. He will have to keep playing less-than-perfect croquet shots or we are all in trouble!

The play-off was a tense affair in front of the club house on Court 3. Three of the pegged down games were abandoned, two between Duncan and myself, due to a combination of

play-off excitement and threatened drizzle.

Andrew won the opening and went round, continuing after Jack missed the long lift to his Diagonal Spread. An over-approach to H3 (it was a bit bare around there) caused Andrew to stick in it, leaving Jack a six-yarder perhaps. Directly on our eye-line we saw Jack flick the target ball to move it at least an inch and a half, probably his poorest contact of the tournament followed by his wryest grin. He completed this pressure break round to an NSL with the H4 ball in the hoop.

Andrew seemed to have the H4 ball and the boundary ball as a sort of double... and he coolly hit the boundary ball, the H4 ball acting as an excellent pioneer for the subsequent break starting at H3. There were 'many adventures', as they say, for Andrew in this break, it being one of the most critical in his croquet career. The stop-shot Rover peel and successful Rover hoop run to the necessary 'less than 15 inches' through required much thought, followed by a relatively trivial peg-out.

So congratulations to Andrew on his first President's Cup at his first attempt (off went the statos to check... I didn't hear the outcome). Very bad luck to Jack who played fantastic croquet and could well have succeeded if that last short lift had not been hit. It will be of no consolation, but surely it is just a matter of time.

Stephen Mulliner conducted the presentations; the usual speeches were made and thanks extended. Well done everyone at Sidmouth for a great long weekend.

We then had to take a number of photos of Andrew with the ENORMOUS Silver Trophy, mainly because he couldn't take it home to Ireland. I think that the win will be enough and he won't need to get a bigger trophy cabinet!

SECOND EIGHT: THE CHAIRMAN'S SALVER

By Marcus Evans

Chairman's Salver past experience among the eight players gathered at Parkstone ranged from zero events (debutant Jordan Waters) to 14 (Robin Brown). One or two may have felt that a very strong run of results could sneak them into the frame for England MacRobertson Shield team consideration, but in the event nobody was able to maintain a consistently high level of play, with the number of errors being greater than it should given the easy playing conditions. Club volunteers and ground staff had prepared the lawns and the loaned Atkins hoops to a great standard, but a deluge the night before the tournament made the pace on the slow side, and indeed two courts were unplayable to begin with, so we started by double banking. The soft ground made the hoops less scary than they might have been, but there were definitely more hoops and peels failed throughout the tournament than if standard club hoops had been used.



THE CHAIRMAN'S SALVER CONTINUED

Robin raced into an early lead with four wins from four on day one, including two triple peels. However he was pegged back first thing on day two after doing three peels of a TPO but then failing 4-back, a gift that Marcus Evans gratefully accepted to join him on 4/5.

Marcus looked to capitalise with a TPO of his own against Andy Myers, but despite facing a six-hoop deficit with only two balls left on the lawn, Andy then played almost flawlessly to win by two points, in the only Super Advanced match up of the event. Having not been sure whether to accept, Andy said afterwards it was the most enjoyable game of Super Advanced he'd ever played.

Meanwhile Ian Lines also reached 4/6 with a tidy triple peel against Robin, and Mark Suter recorded his first win of the event, over dark horse Rick Harding. He then followed this up by beating Marcus and the always dangerous Omied Hallam to end day two on 3/8, down but by no means out as the leaders could only manage 5/8.

So day three was 'moving day', as they say in golf majors, with everyone having a good opportunity to move up (or down) the leader board. However, nobody took full advantage, with errors still abundant, and at the start of round 12 the eight-way tie on seven wins each was still possible. From there, each contender slipped up in one way

or another except the ever-reliable Ian Lines, who with 4 wins from his last 4 games snuck through the field to claim the title, without the need for the playoffs that at one stage looked so likely.

Croquet England Vice President (and past Chairman) Jeff Dawson was on hand to present the trophy, and in doing so he pointed out that Ian now holds the outright record for most times winning the event, with five (one shared) - just ahead of Jeff himself, and David Goacher, on four each. Ian echoed Jeff's thanks to the club and manager Robin Brown (who was delighted that this was the first of the many Eights he's managed in which no games needed pegging down).

Rick won his final game, shortly after the presentation, to finish joint runner up with Marcus on 8 wins apiece, with Jordan scoring a creditable 7 wins, alongside Robin.

Most importantly, there were a lot of laughs both on and off the courts, with visits from old friends, a board games night, and excellent catering from both the club cafe and the nearby Britannia pub. Indeed the latter boasts such an extensive and delicious menu that we went nearly every night, wanting to sample as much of it as possible. Highly recommended to any future Parkstone visitors, as is the club itself - do go if you can.

THIRD EIGHT: THE SPENCER ELL

By Andrew Killick

This year the Spencer Ell was held at Cheltenham, the headquarters of Croquet England. What a venue! You could stand for hours reading the honours boards: one board listed winners of a club competition starting from 1901, while another had the name of C. H. O'D. Alexander, a former British Chess Champion who had worked at Bletchley Park during WW2. Many thanks to the club for looking after us so well throughout the tournament. But enough of history: what happened in this year's competition? First, here is a list of the participants in current ranking order (which is not necessarily reflected in handicaps):

David Goacher (-2) The lowest-handicapped player, and therefore hot favourite for the title.

Nigel Polhill (-1.5) Coach, strong player and Referee of the Tournament.

Richard Huxley (-1) Quietly efficient: should surely have been -1.5 already.

James Hopgood (-1.5) Strong player but started with several uncharacteristic losses.

Neil Adams (-1.5) Almost invincible at the Treasurer's Tankard two years ago.



The eight contestants

Joe King (-1.5) The Manager, and a good player, but had the occasional bad day here.

Lorna Dewar (-1) Should surely be -1.5 already after all her practice on the Nottingham lawns!

Andrew Killick (-1.5) Your reporter: -1 would have been a much more realistic handicap.

THE SPENCER ELL CONTINUED

DAY 1 THURSDAY 4TH SEPTEMBER

"The Day's grown old; the fainting sun
Has but a little way to run..." (Charles Cotton)

The Manager's nightmare - we needed to play 3 games a day, which meant some pretty late finishes as the sunlight faded and the moon grew brighter. In the first round I was playing against Lorna, and we both made nervous starts, with easy roquets missed and short breaks of only about 3 hoops. Eventually I got to peg and peg (and should have pegged a ball out to make life harder for her), but she caught up and very nearly achieved a TP, winning a nail-biting finish 26-24. Meanwhile Neil lost to Richard's TP: afterwards he blamed just one missed shot for his defeat. Late in the evening, when all the games had finished, David had scored 3 wins, Nigel and I were languishing on 3 losses, and the rest were somewhere in the middle.

DAY 2 FRIDAY

"If you can meet with triumph and disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same..." (Kipling, If)

David and Nigel had excellent days with 3 wins, while James was off form and suffered 3 losses. (Perhaps he was affected by his train journey from Edinburgh, which took ten hours instead of five!) In the morning, I had a 4-hour game: my opponent Richard missed a shortish peg-out, which led to a nervy 3-ball finish. At last I ran Rover, but only by about two inches; so he had one more chance to hit the peg before I won 26-25. (By contrast, in my two games of the afternoon I only hit the ball ten times and made no hoops. Where's the icon for a gloomy face?) One curious feature of the day was the pegging out of red on two adjacent lawns, which also led to tense 3-ball finishes; but in one the two balls triumphed, while in the other the lone yellow hit in and won. All that left David with 6 wins out of 6, Lorna with 4, and Nigel, Neil, Richard and Joe with 3 each.

DAY 3 SATURDAY

"Close behind sped Dioces, always with a foot grazing the
heel of Helymus..." (Virgil, Aeneid 5)

The third day of the Open Golf Championship is sometimes described as moving day; and we certainly saw some interesting moves here. The seemingly invincible David lost two games! Lorna and Nigel both won all their games; but Joe and I suffered 3 losses. And we had yet another 3-ball finish: it seems to have been a popular tactic thus far. By the end of the day the leader board showed Lorna and David tied on 7 wins out of 9, but Nigel on 6 was breathing down their necks, closely followed by Neil on 5, so there were several players with realistic chances on lifting the trophy.

DAY 4 SUNDAY

"What though mortal joys be hollow? Pleasures come, if
sorrows follow." (Gilbert and Sullivan, The Mikado)

This was a day when we failed to complete the statutory three games each. Joe beat me 26-0 with a TP. But I do feel slightly cheated by the lawn: would you feel robbed if your second shot of the game was heading dead straight for

partner ball in corner 2 only to veer off at the last moment? It was rather galling when Joe said later that he had played his two best games of the tournament against me! However we were treated to an entertaining spectacle when David lined up a slightly angular rover peel and lay on the ground TEN TIMES to check the minute corrections he had made. It was worth it: he got the peel and the subsequent peg-out. So how did things stand as darkness fell? We had a new sole leader: Lorna had 9 wins with one game unfinished. David had 8 plus one unfinished. Then came Neil and Nigel with 7, but Nigel had better chances with 2 unfinished games. So, there was much discussion about how the unfinished games would affect things, and the poor manager was haunted by visions of multiple play-offs.

DAY 5 MONDAY

"Samson hath quit himself like Samson and heroically hath
finish'd..." (Milton)

Another beautiful day had dawned as we reached the climax of the tournament. Lorna wobbled against James and lost 5-26: she said afterwards that she felt she was running on empty! I started badly against David, was forced to be on the defensive whenever I came to the lawn, and lost 1-26TP. But Nigel also had a bad result, though it sounds close: Neil beat him 26-23. Joe beat Richard 26-14. Around the lunch hour some of the outstanding games from the previous day were also completed, and the stage was set for a real battle of giants – though in this case it was a duel between a giant and a giantess, David versus Lorna. Whoever won would almost certainly lift the trophy.

And then the weather intervened. We had driving rain, lightning, thunder and hailstones for at least 20 minutes. The lawns were carpeted with white and were temporarily unplayable – unless you were James, determined to finish his TP against me AND catch his 5 o'clock train (he managed both!). But when the weather settled down and the lawns had drained sufficiently, David was able to win his game against Lorna 26-1. Samson may have had a mid-tournament wobble, but he finished impressively.

So, the final standings were: David 11, Lorna 10, Nigel 9, Neil 8, James 6, Joe and Richard 5, Andrew 1. There were some handicap changes: Lorna moved to -1.5, and Nigel to -2, both very significant achievements, while I moved back to -1. James Death came out to present the cup to David, a deserving victor. Very possibly he is the oldest winner of an Eight, and the one with the longest interval between his first and his latest victory!



James presents the trophy to David Goacher

FOURTH EIGHT: THE TREASURER'S TANKARD

By Paul Rigge

The 25th Silver Anniversary Treasurer's Tankard was hosted by Southport & Birkdale Croquet Club between 4th - 8th September.

Before the final competition schedule was calculated, those wishing to compete became quite volatile with one withdrawal, one refusal and two promotions from the reserves list – a record in recent memory. However those that did 'make the cut' were really glad they did (more about that later).

Day One (Thurs); Heavy overnight rain had blown through (almost) by 8:30, when your correspondent arrived to set up the courts; but he chose to put the kettle on instead – standing lakes greeted him where grass should have been. What club members did next is worth recording – out came the 'brand new' John Deere mower which was driven back and fro through these lakes, pushing bow-waves of water away to the nearest boundary. T'was a first for me to witness – never seen water mowed, but it worked and we soon had a surface that could support play.

Three rounds with only two games pegged down, so only ten games completed.

Day Two (Fri); Early fresh cut on a hot clear day, so the day's scheduled workload was completed, including the outstanding from the first day. but at expense of a new pegging down.

Three (Sat); All three rounds completed by 19:00 including pegged-down game, so back on schedule. Club again broke out the Deere, this time to mow (in two directions opposite yesterday's).

Four (Sun); Rain arrived mid-morning so early lunch was taken to (mainly) avoid, three rounds completed by 19:00, only if we ignore the 3 new pegging-down sheets, all involving the same player.....

Last (Mon); Looking at posted game results could drive a manager insane this morning, six players could possibly win *if* this condition *or* that happened – better to demand an early start to clear backlog and take a position at lunchtime.

Multiple triple and quad peeling turns were attempted but only four TPs were completed, 2 by Hawkins – peeling prize bragging rights awarded to him.

As R14 started the naysayers were predicting a three-way Playoff, train bookings were cancelled, options on overnight accommodation were pencilled in.

However after R14, with one game still pegged down we had an outright winner: Mike Hedge is the 2025 Tankard winner with 10 wins.

The Glass Tankard was presented by (the ever present Club Chair) Esther Jubb.

In his speech Mike thanked the club for their brilliant job of hosting, from lunches and teas, extraordinary ground working and hoop setting, and finally stating that this had been the best tournament he had ever played in, to echoes of 'hear hear' from the others.

Social Side?

Thursday evening, local pub – pub grub

Friday evening, Southport's oldest pub – pub grub followed by karaoke in a totally rammed boozier. All players did at least one turn with the mike [various videos exist for future use (ed)].

Saturday, busy Italian.

Sunday, by 'brethren' request the final Tournament Dinner was at a local Indian restaurant – superb!



Back Row (L-R): Hawkins, Wilkinson, Warhurst, Rigge & Ross.
Seated: Martin (9 wins), Hedge (10 wins) & Cuthbert (9 wins)

TOBI SAVAGE WINS THE AC SELECTORS' WEEKEND - GC REIGNS IN RAMSGATE

By Stephen Allen



AC Selectors' Group
Photo by Louise Smith

The AC form book was turned on its head this past weekend, as indeed was the AC coaching manual, as Tobi Savage and Stuart M Smith blew away the field on their way to the final of the Selectors'. A terrific display of hoop-running and straight-hitting to overcome a high-quality entry.

As the competition completed the first round of the knockout stage, Stephen Allen led with 6 wins out of 6 by the end of day two. Other notable contenders were Rich Waterman (coming back to form from injury) finishing with 5 wins out of 6 in the Swiss, and Mike Porter rallying in day two.

However, the conclusion to the knockout was a testimony to the quality hitting and hoop-running of the elite GC players which had been a feature throughout. Tobi adopted the novel and impressive habit of running hoop 1 with both balls at the start of each game and frequently running hoop 2 in the same turn from peg high. Earlier, a double-banked game witnessed Tobi running rover from the North boundary while Alex McIntyre joined in by simultaneously running hoop 6 from the South boundary.

In the final, Tobi was victorious over Stuart, watched closely by Rich who reported on Tobi's final turn which involved precision take-offs from 4-back onwards. At penult, the intention was to crash through penult back down to his opponent's red ball south of rover, but, catching some wire on the hoop run, the ball headed close to hoop 4 near south boundary. There followed a superb centre ball strike rushing red way back up to yellow on west boundary; although the rush back on yellow was not ideal, accurate positioning and a hoop run at rover under pressure was followed by a perfect take-off to land behind partner near 4-back resulting in the peg-out.

Although no triples were made during the tournament, attempts were made by several players, with Mike and Rich achieving 'New Zealand triples', peeling partner ball in separate turns. And Mike went on to complete his weekend with victory over Stephen in the 3rd place play-off. Bowdon club mates, Charles Harding and Brian Medley, made the Cheshire to Ramsgate trip worthwhile by making it through to the knockout stage.

Blessed with glorious weather, and playing on Ramsgate's fast and challenging lawns, Alex managed the event with his characteristic calm and good humour! There was universal appreciation for the warm welcome from the local Ramsgate team of Trevor Longman and Charlie Martin and in their preparation of the lawns, made especially difficult since the line-marking machine had broken down, meaning lines had to be painted by hand! A final thanks to the catering & baking team of Chris Orpwood, Jacqui Young and Marie Perkins who treated us to delicious lunches and teas.

Whilst there's no doubting the importance of GC skills in the AC game, it was impressive to see their benefit so manifestly displayed at this level. A handicapper somewhere will be reviewing Tobi's 2.5, and intriguing to reflect on the fact that only one person had picked Tobi in the AC Eights Fantasy League!



Finalists Tobi Savage & Stuart M Smith
Photo by Stephen Allen

CROQUET ENGLAND TEAM RESULTS

CROQUET ENGLAND V CROQUET ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND: THE MCWEENEY TROPHY

By Paul Hetherington

Croquet England took on Croquet Ireland for the 34th occasion in the McWeeney down at Ramsgate Croquet Club on 5/6 July. The Club did a fabulous job preparing some excellent fast and true lawns with team members Trevor Longman and Charlie Martin both hard at work setting the hoops on the Saturday morning. Sadly, Ireland were a player short, so the match format was changed, with each round having a two versus one round that would not count to the final team scores. The morning started in brilliant sunshine, with a round of two doubles finishing one apiece, and both going to time and just 19 hoops run in the England win. The second round saw four singles, which were again shared two apiece, with a first win inside time as the winds began to roll in across the

coast. The gusty nature of the wind made north-south activities a lottery and croquet strokes east to west needed careful judgement of pace. The second round of four singles continued in these windy conditions and saw Ireland forge ahead winning three to one with one game decided by one on time.

As always the evening was a convivial meal at an excellent Ramsgate Italian restaurant. By now, the wind had dropped and the air was hot and humid, making for restless nights all round. Sunday started with a further round of doubles which saw Ireland triumph two-nil and thus win the McWeeney trophy back, ending a run of two losses. Following lunch and with imminent thunder storms expected, players were given the option to play singles or doubles and it was decided to pit the two top

players, Charlie Martin and Alan Looney, against one another to decide who should be player of the match. Beyond this one singles and a further doubles were played and these were shared one a side. The battle for player of the match looked to be a one-sided affair, as Alan swiftly took his second ball to the peg, with Charlie's for three and four-back. Alan missed with the front ball leaving it in the middle of the lawn and pegged one ball out. It was now that Charlie got going, and with two great breaks salvaged some English pride with a 26-25 win. Ireland won the match nine games to six, meaning the trophy has now been won 17 times each. The Croquet England team were: Neil Coote, Tobi Savage, Charlie Martin, Paul Hetherington (captain), Trevor Longman and Deborah Marcus.

PINCHBECK CROQUET CLUB HELD AN INTERNAL DOUBLES EVENT

With twelve participants, they were able to play a round robin of 5 games each. Pairs were drawn on arrival by simply putting participants names in one bag, numbers 1-6 in a second bag, and players pulling out a name and a number. With one exception this created reasonably equal teams in ability, with three of the teams having a aggregated handicap of 6-7.

After 4 rounds one team remained unbeaten, with two teams on three wins each and yet to play each other, meaning at least one more team would have four wins.

Consequently, with the team with 4 wins (Ken Knock and John Wright) losing their fifth game, it left the field open for a second team to win the competition. The winners of the second game were Terrey Sparks and Sally Farrow. However, a score of 31 hoops for and 25 against was not



enough to beat Ken and John, who had an overall score of 34-21

Nibbles were provided by the participants, and a good day was had by all.

Participants were Tim Barzycki, David Boxall, Mike Bowser, Anthony Cronin, Ann Gillett, Sally Farrow, Sam Hales, Ken Knock, Terrey Sparks, John Wright and newcomers Alan and Barbara Ulyett.

At the same meeting, Club coach Tim Barzycki was able to present Mike Bowser with a Croquet England Diploma award for Services to Croquet.



CROQUET ENGLAND V SCOTTISH CROQUET ASSOCIATION

By Peter Rothwell

The annual AC fixture between teams representing the English and Scottish governing bodies of croquet took place this year at the Meadows Croquet Club in Edinburgh over the weekend of 30-31 August. Whilst not a full international, the teams of six are selected with broadly matching sets of handicaps to ensure a competitive match played to level advanced rules and each proudly wear their respective national coloured shirts in a contest for the Glasgow Quaich.

Six Englishmen made the journey north by train, plane and automobile with the aim of capturing back the Glasgow Quaich that had been won by the SCA for the last two years. The format is a round of doubles and two rounds of singles on day 1, followed by another round of doubles and singles on day 2, giving a 24 game match. For the singles games, each team is split into two blocks of three, based on dynamic grade with all-play-all in each block.

This year's teams were:

CqE – Stephen Allen (0), Dom Aarvold (0), Peter Rothwell (1, captain), Stuart M Smith (1.5), Steve Leonard (3.5), Tony Butcher (8)

SCA – Andrew Symons (-1, captain), John Owen (-0.5), Stefan Colling (1), Mark Shanks (2.5), David Houston (3), Roger Binks (9)

The lawns at Meadows C.C. were in good condition and covered in green grass, something not seen for several weeks at many clubs south of the border without the benefit of watering systems due to the recent drought conditions, and the CqE team took a while to adapt to the much slower conditions. The initial round of doubles went the way of the SCA team, winning 2 out of 3, albeit with both wins being very close affairs decided by a single point. After lunch, the points were shared in the first round of singles, with Peter, Tony and Dom winning for CqE and Andrew, Stefan and Mark prevailing for SCA. By mid-afternoon, persistent rain showers had set in and only 3 of the 6



– Front row L to R: Peter Rothwell (CqE capt.), David Houston, Steve Leonard, Andrew Symons (SCA capt.), Tony Butcher. Back row: Roger Binks, Stephen Allen, John Owen, Dom Aarvold, Stefan Colling, Stuart M Smith, Mark Shanks

games in the second round of singles were completed before play was suspended just after 7pm so that the teams could relocate to a local Italian restaurant, for some delicious food and a chance to discuss the day's events.

Sunday morning dawned with fine but cloudy weather and the SCA team leading by 7 games to 5. The three unfinished games were held over until later in the day, to be played if needed. For the morning doubles, the team captains agreed to shuffle their pairings to avoid a repeat of the first day's games. Peter took the opportunity to pair Stuart with Steve (former winners of the English National GC Doubles Championship) who promptly rewarded his decision with a win for CqE, but the other two games went to the SCA increasing their lead to 9-6. The afternoon singles round saw each player take on their counterpart in ranking order. Andrew and John for the SCA and Dom for CqE each won their games as their respective handicap differentials might have suggested. This made it 11-7 to the SCA with 12 wins needed to retain the

trophy. Peter and Stefan's game was a hard-fought, even contest with relatively few errors and an exciting 3-ball ending which Peter won. This point for CqE kept the overall result alive with the match score on 11-8 and two of the three unfinished games from day 1 were restarted including the game between the two captains. From an overnight 9-17 deficit, Andrew played some perfect croquet and allowed Peter only one 30-yard lift shot, which somehow found the gap (don't they always?!) and ran out a 26-17 winner. The SCA team also prevailed in the other three games, making the final match score 15 games to 8 with one game unfinished, and the SCA retained the trophy for the third year in a row.



The Glasgow Quaich

THE GC OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS

24-29TH JUNE 2025

By Louise Smith

The much-anticipated GC Open Championships were held at Budleigh Salterton Croquet Club over 6 days during late June. Nobody could recall when the premier event of the GC tournament calendar was last staged in the South-West, so this was an occasion to savour.

BSCC began preparations months in advance to ensure that everything was perfect for the UK's top competing players and visiting internationals. The grounds team worked tirelessly to present the courts and surrounding areas in pristine condition, with countless volunteer hours contributing to the excellent playing conditions.



Budleigh Scorekeeping Volunteers John Duplock and Lynn Wood

Our major events catering team, building on the success of May's European Championship, produced a delicious and varied menu throughout the week to keep all players, officials, and spectators well fed and watered.

Meanwhile, the livestreaming crew - also having refined their skills from the European Championship experience - assembled a team of camera operators and a rotation of commentators to broadcast the Doubles Final and the full Singles Championship to a global audience.

As early as October 2024, international players were encouraged to enter to further enhance the field of competitors. Promotional leaflets distributed at the GC World Championships in Chesapeake Bay, Virginia tempted Gary Phipps from Australia and Mohammed Kamal from the USA to join us, with Gary and his wife, Caroline, planning an entire UK summer trip around the tournament schedule.

THE GC OPEN DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP

Often viewed as a 'warm-up' to the main Singles Championship event, the 2025 Doubles featured two previous winning pairs – the 2024 champions, Reg Bamford and Tobi Savage, and the 2022 champions, Euan Burrridge and Callum Johnson – as well as some exceptionally strong partnerships including Jack Good and Richard Bilton, Stephen Mulliner and Jenny Clarke, and Sam

Cuthbert with visiting Aussie Gary Phipps. All in all, the Doubles Championship line-up was one of the strongest in recent years.

BLOCK STAGES

The top four seeds from Block A all gained qualification to the knock-out stage, with Euan Burrridge and Johnson edging out Good and Bilton from the top spot by 4 net hoops, (6 games wins each). Top seeds Bamford and Savage were dropped to 3rd place with 5 block game wins, whilst Stuart M. Smith and Steve Leonard were the 4th placed qualifiers with 4 wins.

Block B was altogether different. The new U25 pairing of Sam Cuthbert and Gary Phipps proved highly successful, topping the block with 6 wins and just one defeat - a major upset delivered by the 8th seeds, Mike Bilton and Michelle Leonard. Mulliner and Jenny Clarke were edged into second place with 5 wins. Partners Tim Russell and Tim Jolliff alongside Dom Aarvold and Louise Smith achieved 4 block game wins and qualification to the knockout stage, separated by just 2 net hoops. Second block seeds Chris Clarke and Ian Burrridge failed to qualify, finishing with 3 game wins after a narrow 6-7 loss to Rick Lilley and Roger Goldring, who also ended on 3 wins.

THE QUARTER FINALS

The Quarter Finals saw several close calls - Euan Burrridge and Johnson narrowly took the first game from Aarvold and Louise Smith 7-6 but were dominant in game two, qualifying for the Semi Finals in two straight games. Bamford and Savage took game one from Mulliner and Jenny Clarke 7-4, again with a tight 7-6 win in the second game assuring qualification. Russell and Jolliff also came close but were the wrong side of another 6-7 result in favour of Good and Bilton who also took the second game 4-7 moving forward to the Semis.

By contrast, the only Quarter-Final to stretch to three games saw S. M. Smith and Leonard snatch a tense opener 7-6 from Cuthbert and Phipps. But the new pairing quickly found their rhythm, storming back to take the next two games and seal the match 2-1.

SHIELD AND PLATE EVENTS

The Shield was contested between players that fell during the Quarter Final round and again saw Aarvold and Louise Smith play above their paired ranking to beat Mulliner and Jenny Clarke 10-8 in the first round. A potential Smith husband-and-wife showdown in the Shield Final was denied when Russell and Jolliff overcame S. M. Smith and Leonard 10-5. Aarvold and Louise Smith, however, maintained their strong form, sweeping past Russell and Jolliff 2-0 to claim the Shield title.

The Plate consolation event once again proved fiercely competitive, with overseas visitors Mohammad Kamal (USA)

THE GC OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS CONTINUED

and David Wise (Australia) edging through both the Quarter and Semi-Finals with narrow 10–9 victories. In the Final they faced Lionel Tibble and Guy Scurfield. Returning to a best-of-three 13-point format, Tibble and Scurfield blended calm tactical play with bursts of power to edge out Kamal and Wise in an entertaining contest, 7–4, 5–7, 7–6.

SEMI-FINALS AND FINAL

The Doubles Championship Semi-Finals showcased all of the tournament's most powerful players. E. Burridge and Johnson swept past Bamford and Savage in the opening game, before the next two became tense hoop-13 battles. Ultimately, Burridge and Johnson prevailed by the narrowest of margins, 7–2, 6–7, 7–6, to secure their place in the Final.

In the other Championship Semi-Final, Good and Bilton lost momentum and fell in straight games to the well-balanced partnership of Cuthbert and Phipps.

This momentum carried forward into the Championship Final, producing a dynamic performance by the new pairing. E. Burridge and Johnson struggled to make any breakthrough, as the young English talent Sam Cuthbert, alongside his Australian partner Gary Phipps, powered to a commanding 7–2, 7–3 victory. Their triumph not only thrilled the crowd but also underscored a partnership whose success was richly deserved.



Gary Phipps & Sam Cuthbert

THE GC OPEN SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIP

The 25th Anniversary GC Open Singles Championship brought together a truly international field, with players representing seven nations—England, Wales, Spain, New Zealand, South Africa, the USA, and Australia. Adding extra excitement, a consortium of players and supporters raised funds to introduce cash prizes for the top four finishers, bringing the event in line with the prize structures seen at other major tournaments worldwide.

BLOCK STAGES

As the Block stages unfolded, it quickly became clear that the tournament would be fiercely contested, with several notable upsets along the way. In Block A, previous doubles partners Reg Bamford and Tobi Savage finished level on 6 match wins and 8 net games apiece, with Bamford edging

into first place on net hoops. Third seed Callum Johnson also advanced to the last 16 with a well-earned tally of 5 wins, joined by the surprise qualifier Inigo Castañon, a rising U25 player from Spain, who secured 4 victories.

With one player forced to withdraw through ill health, Block B was left incomplete, yet Euan Burridge, once again in commanding form, finished unbeaten with 6 wins. As expected, Aston Wade and Richard Bilton also progressed comfortably to the knockout stage with 5 and 4 wins respectively. The final qualifying spot, however, was far less straightforward - Simon Carter and Stephen Custance-Baker found themselves in a surprise play-off after managing only 2 wins each. On this occasion Custance-Baker could not produce his best performance, and Carter claimed a last 16 place with a decisive 7–1 win.

Top New Zealand international Jenny Clarke dominated Block C, finishing with an impressive 6 match wins. As the only other female competitor in the tournament, L. Smith was pleased with her own performance, securing some game and match wins, and even pushing Jenny close in a tight 6–7, 5–7 contest – though she also let pure excitement result in a blobbed golden hoop against Jamie Burch, 6–7! Burch joined J. Clarke in advancing to the Last 16, along with Lionel Tibble, who claimed third place with 5 match wins, just behind Burch on net games. The fourth qualifying spot was decided in a play-off between Sam Cuthbert and Ian Burridge; in a tightly contested game, Cuthbert prevailed 7–4.

In Block D, Jack Good was super impressive with 7 match wins - only dropping a single game to Australian Gary Phipps, with all other results decisive 2-0 victories. Phipps advanced to the knockout stage in third place, behind the legendary Stephen Mulliner, who dropped only one match - to Good - while comfortably taking the other six, 2–0. Another play-off, somewhat more complicated, was required to resolve this block - with 4th block seed Chris Roberts tied on three match wins with 6th block seed Steve Leonard and 7th block seed Mateo Palazón from Spain. In a tense contest, it was Palazón who emerged victorious, clinching the last qualifying place.

FIRST KNOCK-OUT ROUND - THE LAST 16

Palazón's elation was short-lived, as 12-time GC Open Champion Reg Bamford dispatched him 2–0 in the first round of the knock-out. Wade battled Johnson in a closely contested 2–1 win, and Mulliner beat Bilton by the same score. J. Clarke continued to impress with a straight 2–0 victory against Carter, while Burch and Good also advanced with decisive 2–0 wins over Phipps and Cuthbert, respectively.

Despite taking the first game 7–6, Tibble couldn't hold off Savage, who claimed the next two games 7–3, 7–5. The biggest upset came when two U25 power hitters came head-to-head, E. Burridge and I. Castañon. Burridge won a tight opener 7–5, but Castañon fought back to take the second game 7–6. The decider was equally fiery with an outrageous angled boundary shot at 13 clinching progression to the quarter final for the Spanish player.

THE GC OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS CONTINUED

CONSOLATION EVENTS

Meanwhile in the consolation events, Dom Aarvold and Tim Jolliff emerged as the main contenders in the Plate, both reaching the Final with a string of compelling and competitive matches in the previous rounds. Their fortunes both ebbed and flowed as the Plate Final progressed, Jolliff winning game one 7-2, only to lose to Aarvold 5-7 in the second. The deciding third game could have gone either way with a nail-biting 13th hoop decider giving Jolliff the Plate title.

After a narrow 10-9 loss to Chris Roberts in the Plate knockout, Louise Smith suffered a similar fate in the Saucer Final, with Guy Scurfield also claiming victory on the 'golden hoop'.

In the Bowl, contested by players who fell at the Last 16 stage, Palazón reached the final after defeating Bilton 7-5, 7-6, while Phipps maintained his strong form with a decisive 7-2, 7-5 win over Tibble. The Bowl Final became an international showdown between Spain and Australia, with supporters from both countries cheering on their players via the live stream chat. Ultimately, it was the in-form Aussie, Gary Phipps, who triumphed, claiming the Bowl title to add to his earlier Doubles Championship victory and capping off a personally very successful tournament.

THE QUARTER FINALS

The Singles Championship Quarter-Finals kicked off with a three-game thriller between Bamford and Wade. Wade fought back to level the match by taking the second game, but Bamford proved too strong in the decider, sealing his Semi-Final place 7-5, 3-7, 7-5. Doubles partners Mulliner and J. Clarke clashed in another tense battle for a Semi-Final spot, with Mulliner emerging victorious 7-5, 7-4. Castañon faced the ever-consistent Burch and was quickly eliminated, losing 2-7, 5-7. The remaining Quarter-Final was another showcase match between Savage and Good, with little to separate the two; however, Good's steady play under pressure ultimately secured a 7-4, 7-5 victory.

THE SEMI-FINALS

The four Semi-Finalists, all guaranteed a cash prize, lined up as Bamford versus Mulliner—both multiple-time GC Open Champions - and 2024 winner Burch against Good. With such renowned names at this stage, it was inevitable that every match would be fiercely contested and push through to a deciding third game. After a relatively swift first-game loss to Bamford, Mulliner, in typical fashion, swung the momentum in game 2, winning 7-6. However, Bamford regrouped and played with his trademark determination, taking the third game 7-3 to secure his place in the Championship Final.

In the other Semi-Final, Jack Good surged to an early advantage, taking the first game 7-5 with a display of precise, disciplined play. But Burch, always cool under pressure, battled back in a tense second game, 7-6. The decider was equally gripping, with both players trading blows, before Burch ultimately prevailed 7-4, securing his spot in the Final against Bamford.

A crowd of over 50 spectators basked in the sunshine to witness the GC Open Singles Final, featuring two of the sport's most accomplished players. Jamie Burch seized immediate control in the first game, running long-range hoops and consistently clearing any threat from Reg Bamford, comfortably taking the opener 7-4.



From that point onward, Bamford began to draw on his World Champion pedigree. While Burch had initially been the favourite, Bamford steadily piled on the pressure, levelling the match with a 7-6 win in the second game. That proved the turning point: a few missed shots saw Burch lose his grip on the game, and though the decider remained tight, Bamford's immense experience shone through as he clinched the final game at the 13th hoop.



With this victory, Reg Bamford extended his remarkable tally to 13 GC Open Singles titles over 25 years - a feat impressive by any standard. Congratulations to Reg; no doubt he'll be back in 2026 aiming for an incredible 14th title!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Sincere thanks to Frances Colman, Referee-on-Call for the entire week, and the incredible Budleigh team of volunteers whose hard work and dedication ensured the 25th Anniversary GC Open Championships were a resounding and memorable success. This was underpinned by livestreaming views topping over 10,000 from people around the World - viewing figures that even surpassed the last GC World Championships in 2024.

GOLF CROQUET EIGHTS

FIRST EIGHT: THE RICKI SAVAGE MEMORIAL

By Tobi Savage

The 2025 GC First Eight event was played at Ramsgate Croquet Club. The conditions were challenging, with Quadway hoops being set into ground that had seen little to no rain for a prolonged period - conditions that UK clubs can seldom produce. The courts were fast, and got faster as the weekend drew out. Slight inconsistencies in the surface (generally uncharacteristic of Ramsgate's smooth and consistent lawns) provided a challenge, and demanded precision and accuracy for both positional play and clearances.

DAY 1

The event comprised an all-play-all 8-player block, followed by a KO round for the top 4 finishers and a bowl event for the remaining entrants. The first round of the block provided little upset, with Jack Good, Euan Burridge & Stephen Mulliner conforming to seeding, taking out Tobi Savage, Aston Wade and Albie Willett respectively. Ian Burridge had other ideas when it came to conforming to seeding, and took the match in three games against Dom Aarvold. Albie had put up a bit more of a fight than Aston and Tobi did, who both took a little more time to get going, with Tobi failing multiple opportunities to close out game 2 at hoop 13. Round two was a little more straightforward for the manager, with all four matches going as expected - the most crucial of which being Euan taking the win against Stephen, maintaining Euan's impressive overall win rate against Stephen at 66.6%! The big match of round 3 was 1v3, Jack versus Stephen. The other 3 matches concluded in relatively quick time, but the epic battle at the top end of the block was the match that kept on giving. Stephen prevailed at the 13th in the third, which ultimately proved vital in determining the block standings on day 3.

DAY 2

Round 4 started a rollercoaster of a day with Stephen and Dom doing their bit to maintain order, but Tobi and Aston (who were vying for qualification as 4th and 5th seeds) were keen to turn the event on its head by defeating Euan and Jack respectively in hotly contested matches. With the tournament blown wide open, Dom proceeded to chuck an even bigger spanner in the works by not only beating Aston, but closing the match out in two games, whilst Tobi had taken a game off Stephen in their match, which proved to be very valuable indeed. Jack recovered well from the preceding round by winning the match against Euan, which effectively sealed both of their block standings (notwithstanding any further tumultuous results!). Aston attempted to deliver one such result in round 6, but was not able to convert the first game win, and Stephen closed out the match in the third game. Euan and Jack at the top end of the block had their last two rounds against the bottom end of the block, in an effort to keep the middle of the block contesting for qualification until the very end, and this proved to be the case when Tobi closed out a well-contested match against Dom in 2 games.



The Ricki Savage Memorial

DAY 3

This meant that the maths had fallen in his favour, and for the final round of the block, Tobi needed just one game against Aston to guarantee qualification provided the rest of the block matches conformed to seeding. Jack, Euan and Stephen all delivered, and did so in 2 games, which meant that Aston had to win in two straight games or face inferior net games against Tobi. Playing some extraordinary croquet under significant pressure, Tobi achieved victory in the first game, and thus did all he had to do to qualify. Aston nobly suggested that in the interest of the event schedule, the dead game(s) need not be played, and Tobi as manager breathed a massive sigh of relief and accepted the proposition.

All 8 players continued to play, for which the manager is grateful. Albie did well to take a game off the England GC Captain, but Aston prevailed in both the second and third. Dom versus Ian was a perhaps slightly more one-sided affair, which set up a Bowl final between Aston and Dom. Yet another match went the distance, with Aston winning to take home the Bowl.

KNOCKOUT

The semi-final of the main event saw Stephen (through the block in first place) take on Tobi, who had finished 4th. Jack and Euan battled it out at 2nd and 3rd respectively. Jack maintained his form and decided that he wanted to have a massive lunch break, so won his semi-final match in 2 games. Stephen v Tobi was a more drawn-out battle. Tobi started playing croquet at a young age after volunteering as a ball-boy, and he himself was ably assisted by his son Monti during this match, who had come along to cheer on "Dadda". This motivation seemed to do the trick, as Stephen and Tobi went into lunch 1 game all. Lunch must have done the trick for Tobi, because he wrapped the match up at the tenth hoop in game three to set up a Good v Savage final.

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FIRST EIGHT: THE RICKI SAVAGE MEMORIAL CONTINUED

FINAL

Jack and Tobi had played each other twice, and have shared the honours directly down the middle (at one match win in straight games each) up until this event. Jack took the advantage earlier on in the event by winning their third match against one another, yet again in straight wins. The final was played to an extraordinarily high standard. Both players were positioning well, given the challenging conditions, which was made totally irrelevant by the fact that they were also both clearing well. Hoop 5 was contested over the course of 20 minutes, with few hoop attempts actually being taken because of the high calibre of long-distance, cross-court clearing. Savage opted to break the deadlock by shooting for the hoop from the south boundary, and having missed the hoop entirely, conceded control of the hoop and ultimately game 1 to Good.

After a short break, play resumed and the players maintained their accurate shooting and extremely low error rate. Tobi gained the momentum, and never looked back until he cleared the balls into corner 4 after hoop 10, with a terrific display of grit and resolve. Another pause for water punctuated the match, and then the spectacle resumed! After yet another bout of relentless clearances and controlled play, Savage took on an opportunity to take a 6-3 lead, only to see his boundary hoop attempt denied by the absolute narrowest of margins. Jack played very well to take 9, and then wrestle back control of 10, capitalising on an unforced error from Tobi. Jack was later forced into taking a shot at 11 from the north boundary in line with hoop 10, which entered the middle of the hoop but was rejected. This was enough to allow Tobi to run 11 off the south boundary, and later generate a somewhat lengthy in lawn clearance for control of 12. Tobi's positional shot at 12 applied some real

pressure, and despite him missing the clearance from south boundary, Jack saw his angled hoop attempt reject to a few feet straight in front. Tobi made no mistake, and wrapped up the game, the match and the tournament.



Stephen Mulliner was on hand to carry out the prize giving, and after having thanked the club for their hosting skills, lawn preparation, and spectator support, he presented the Ricki Savage Memorial trophy to Tobi. There was some poignancy to the presentation for Tobi - Ricki is his late brother, and they used to play croquet together here at Ramsgate Croquet Club, so for Tobi to win this particular trophy at this Croquet Club was a very special moment indeed. Congratulations to all involved for a triumphant weekend of croquet!

SECOND EIGHT: THE KATE JONES MEMORIAL

By Richard Bilton

Colchester were this year's hosts for the GC Second Eight (a swap with Ramsgate from 2 years ago). Their contractors decided to take a holiday at just the wrong time, but the club nevertheless did a very good job preparing the courts for the event. The caterers also served up some lovely lunches for the 3 days.

DAY 1

Rick played well to take a game 7-6 off Richard, and David had a chance to do the same but didn't take it. Konstantin, having yet to win a game, caused an upset when he beat Richard at the end of the day, coming out on top at hoop 13 in game 2 and 3. The first was with the aid of a tricky 5-yard 40-degree jump with a bounce. The second was down to a fortunate final approach from hoop 12 which ran through the back of 13 by nothing, and Richard subsequently peeled it with his 4-yard hoop attempt.

Paul had a good start to the event, beating Konstantin and Rick, only being beaten by Stephen, which turned out to be

his only win in the event. Sam had a good first day, beating Stephen, Konstantin and David without dropping a game.

DAY 2

Richard and Stephen both played their best of the weekend in their block match. Both were positioning, clearing, hooping and jumping well. Stephen pulled out a very good 5-yard jump to steal hoop 6. Richard found himself behind in both games, but took the lead in game 1 by running 11 from the boundary, and came out as winner after 2 games.

The first round of the day issued another big upset as Sam lost to Rick in 2 games. He must have been off form, as he then lost what would have been expected to be a closer match with Richard in 2 games. Happily, he had no problem finishing the day against the bottom seed.

Richard also won his next match 2-0 to repeat what Sam did the previous day. Meanwhile, Konstantin played 9 games on day 2, but still came out on top in all three matches. David played well to beat Rick 2-0, which ended up being a deciding match.

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SECOND EIGHT: THE KATE JONES MEMORIAL CONTINUED

DAY 3

On the final morning, Richard and Sam had already secured their places in the knockout, but not their finishing order. Richard beat Patrick to claim top position. The usual cusp match between seeds 4 and 5 (Rick and Stephen) had no bearing on who would progress to the knockout as neither player was able to qualify. Konstantin and David were both on 4 wins and competing to guarantee a semi-final place – Konstantin won in 2 games. Although Sam was already through, if Paul was able to win their match, he would progress instead of David. It would also have swapped Sam and Konstantin in positions 2 and 3, but they would meet in the semi-final either way. Although Paul played well to take a game off Sam, he wasn't consistent enough throughout the match, so it was David to play Richard in the other semi-final.

KNOCKOUT

David was generally clearing well, while Richard had a slight dip in form. He had some help in game 2 as David accidentally cleared his own ball from in front of hoop 3. Richard came out comfortable winner in the end 7-4, 7-4. The other side of the knockout was a much closer battle. Sam and Konstantin were seeds 2 and 3 respectively, and also finished in those places in the block. It was therefore little surprise that Sam took the first game. However, the momentum then shifted and, despite some lengthy hoop battles, Konstantin was always in control from there onwards. He took the next two games to win 4-7, 7-3, 7-4.

FINAL

It looked like the three days' play were starting to show in Konstantin's game, and he hadn't recovered from his semi-final battle, as Richard established an early lead and pressed on to take game 1 rather convincingly. Game 2 was also looking ominous as Richard again took a 3-1 lead, but the middle hoops were a crucial turning point. Richard allowed Konstantin to take on an angled hoop 5, which he ran. Richard then positioned at hoop 6 hiding from that ball behind the peg, but Konstantin only went and ran the hoop from 13 yards to level at 3-3. Richard regained the lead with a double at hoop 7, which ran and left Konstantin with no approach to hoop 8.

At this point, the game became something of a comedy of errors, as there were several unlucky outcomes and bad shots. After both players missed attempts at hoop 8, Konstantin eventually scored it with a nice jump. Hoop 9 saw the most misses, bad run of the ball and strange situations. One shot from Richard saw him clear the opponent ball straight onto his partner ball. Later, Konstantin cleared Richard to the boundary but didn't get off himself, Richard played in tight and Konstantin went to clear, but unfortunately peeled it half way.

Hoop 10 was much quicker as Richard took a 6-4 lead. He then played possibly his best shot of the day in clearing the ball in front of 11. Konstantin replied in kind and sent Richard to the north boundary. With his other ball out of the picture, he went for the win with a good effort, but hit the upright. Konstantin won the hoop when Richard had a ball

onside for 12 and again chose to play in and leave him an angled shot. It ran about 3 yards, and after the other balls played to 12, Richard attempted a block which hilled and hit the peg. Then followed a series of clearances which led to Richard being 15 yards from the next ball, and accidentally clipping his own ball instead of the opponent's. Konstantin levelled at 6-6.

Fearful of a repeat of their block match (on the same court), Richard made sure he was the right side of 13, about 5 yards and 25 degrees back. Konstantin went off the boundary, but both the next two balls again managed to be short of pace. Richard went for the hoop but missed and Konstantin played in. Then followed several rotations of bad choices and poor shots that it looked like neither player wanted to win. Richard had two goes from the boundary but missed the hoop entirely (one on each side), and Konstantin blobbed a hoop from 2 yards. Richard pulled out some good clearances to keep the hoop going, but couldn't get another good chance. In the end, he was left with a 4-yard jump which he unfortunately peeled.

With the frustration of his third 7-6 loss to Konstantin, and in the way they had all gone, Richard started game 3 casting less and hitting harder. However, it didn't help him win the first hoop. While Richard was having a drink, Konstantin played the wrong ball, caused by the confusion of having peeled his partner through hoop 1. Richard was able to settle down after he ran hoop 2 from 7 yards. From here, the misses crept back into Konstantin's game. At 3-1 up, Richard again left an angled hoop shot, but it wasn't successful this time around. Konstantin was twice short to hoop 7, and then failed the block, and by this time, Richard had found a gear and ran 7 straight down into the upright of 8 for another 6-1 lead (narrowly missing out on finishing with 2 hoops in one shot). Richard played two good balls to hoop 9, which Konstantin had no attempt at moving, and Richard ran the first to win 7-1, 6-7, 7-2.



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THIRD EIGHT: THE SUZANNE ROBERTS MEMORIAL

By Andy Jones

The GC Third Eight was contested at Nottingham Croquet Club by just six players. In the early matches of block play on Day 1, the top seeds Colin Britt, Robbie Dodds and Josh Wise established an early lead over Andy Jones, John Picken and Richard Platt. The top three then pulled further clear as the block was completed, with Colin winning all 5 of his matches to take the top spot and Josh taking 2nd place from Robbie on Net Games. With three of the semi-finalists decided, the remaining place came down to the final game of the final match on Day 2, where John Picken edged home 7-5 against Andy Jones to claim fourth place in the block and enter the main knockout for The Suzanne Roberts Memorial Trophy.

The Knockout play on Bank Holiday Monday saw Colin edge past John 7-6, 7-6 to move on to contest the final against Josh, who had defeated Robbie 6-7, 7-5, 7-5 in the other semi-final. In the meantime, Andy secured 5th place in the event by winning over Richard in the Bowl Final, 7-4, 7-6.



Josh & Colin starting the final game

In a close match reflecting contrasting styles, the final went to a third game before Josh Wise emerged triumphant over Colin Britt 7-3, 5-7, 7-5

Our thanks go to Nottingham Croquet Club for providing us with excellent lawns and to Ian Vincent for hosting us throughout and presenting the trophies.



Winner Josh Wise

NEW REFEREES

WE HAVE ONE NEW GC REFEREE SO -

Congratulations to David Larkin (Sussex County) who has qualified as a GC referee.

Ian Cobbold
Chair, GC Rules Committee

GOLF CROQUET INTER-COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIPS

LINCOLNSHIRE AND NORTHAMPTONSHIRE LIFT THE TITLES

By Jonathan Powe

The GC Inter-Counties was held over the weekend 16-17 August. Twenty-one county teams took part (one more than 2024), plus a CqE Select team. Division 1 (twelve counties) was at Sussex CCC, while Division 2 (nine county teams plus CqE Select) was at Cheltenham. The divisions swap locations next year.

DIVISION 1

The format for Division 1 hasn't changed for a while: an all-play-all round-robin over 12 rounds (includes a preliminary round); each match comprises two singles and one doubles (all single 13-point games); and the number of singles and doubles games played by each player may not differ by more than one game.

It was difficult to pick the outright favourite at the start. The newly formed Lincolnshire team (Richard Bilton, Euan Burrridge, Callum Johnson and Aston Wade) had burst onto the scene in 2024, winning all their matches in Div 2 and gaining promotion to Div 1, so they were certainly a team to watch. Nottinghamshire had taken the title three years in a row (2021-23) and had a strong line-up once again (Keith Aiton, Ian Burrridge, James Death and Will Gee), so were likely to be fighting it out at the end. Other contenders included Somerset (last year's winners), Dorset (winners in 2020) and Devon.

Notts and Lincs looked very strong from the start on Saturday, both winning their first five matches on Saturday without too much fuss. But Nottingham had a surprising stumble against Gloucestershire in the final round on Saturday to end the day on 5/6 wins. Although Gee & Death won their doubles against Sam Cuthbert & Dave Kibble, Ian Burrridge and Aiton lost their singles games to the Brand brothers (Ivor and Richard) who were in great form.

Meanwhile, Lincolnshire had a tough battle against Somerset in their final game on Saturday. Two of their games went to the 13th hoop but they eventually prevailed to head the table at the close of play with 6/6 wins. Dorset and Devon both ended on 5/6 having lost to Notts and Lincs respectively. Somerset though looked to be fading from contention having dropped their first match to Yorkshire, closing on 4/6.

Despite their good run on Saturday, Devon's hopes were swiftly dashed early on Sunday morning by defeats to Gloucestershire and Middlesex. Dorset fell heavily to Lincs just before lunch, which meant that all hinged on the key match between Notts and Lincs in the penultimate round. Despite the air of expectancy, it was a fairly straightforward 3-0 win for Lincs (Bilton beat Gee 7-4, Euan Burrridge beat Death 7-5, Wade & Johnson beat Ian Burrridge & Aiton 7-4) which meant that, with 10/10 wins, Lincs were guaranteed to take the title whatever happened in their final match

against Sussex. In the end, they beat Sussex to finish on 11/11 wins, losing only four of their 33 games during the weekend – an extremely impressive performance. Euan Burrridge deserves a special mention for winning all six of his singles games to top the individual table.

Notts and Dorset both finished on 8/11 wins, but Notts took second place due to their higher net games total.

Yorkshire (3/11) and Sussex (2/11) were left at the foot of the table and will join Division 2 next year. It was a very close call for Yorkshire, who had the same number of match wins and net games as Hertfordshire, but lost the match between them.

Huge thanks to the team at Sussex CCC for providing great lawns and wonderful food throughout the weekend.



Division 1	Wins	Losses	Net Games
Lincolnshire	11	0	25
Nottinghamshire	8	3	7
Dorset	8	3	5
Devon	7	4	7
Somerset	6	5	9
Gloucestershire	6	5	-1
Oxfordshire	5	6	-5
Essex	4	7	-5
Middlesex	4	7	-11
Hertfordshire	3	8	-7
Yorkshire	3	8	-7
Sussex	1	10	-17

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GOLF CROQUET INTER-COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIPS CONTINUED

DIVISION 2

Division 2 had a change of format this year as the number of teams had swelled from eight to ten. Last year, each match comprised two rounds, so 14 rounds overall, which meant a packed weekend (perhaps too busy for some). This year, with ten teams, the format reverted to the Division 1 format, so a traditional all-play-all round-robin over nine rounds (five on Saturday, four on Sunday), with each match comprising two singles and one doubles. New to the line-up was the combined team of Herefordshire, Shropshire & Staffordshire, and the CqE Select team ensured there was an even number.

The two teams that had been relegated from Div 1 last year (Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire) were expected to do well, as was Leicestershire, who had come down from Div 1 in 2023.

In the end though, it was the CqE Select team (Jill Bateman, Neil Fillery, Mark Godfrey-James, Gill Hindshaw, Peter Kirby, Tony Mayer and Brent Watkins) that performed the strongest overall, losing only one of their nine matches throughout the weekend. Close behind were Northants (Glynis Davies, Mike Hills, Rick Lilley, Lionel Tibble and Peter Toffield) and Leicestershire (David Bell, Mark Buckley, Jon Carrington, Alison Murray and Keith Pound), both with 6/9 wins. As the CqE Select team were not officially entitled to win the Division, it was Northants who lifted the trophy, as they had a greater net games total than Leicestershire.

Both Northants and Leicestershire are promoted and will join Division 1 at Cheltenham in 2026.

At the prize-giving, Cheltenham were warmly thanked for hosting the event.

Division 2	Wins	Losses	Net Games
CqE Select	8	1	7
Northamptonshire	6	3	9
Leicestershire	6	3	5
Bedfordshire & Cambridgeshire	5	4	3
Buckinghamshire	4	5	5
Hampshire	4	5	3
Herefordshire, Shropshire & Staffordshire	4	5	-3
Glamorgan	4	5	-5
Surrey	3	6	-11
Berkshire	1	7	-13



“DOWN TO THE SEA AGAIN” AKA THE GC INTER COUNTY DIVISION 1 AT SOUTHWICK

By Klim Seabright

The terrific backstage crew are making last minute preparations. The “tip tap clunk” can be heard from those making final adjustments to the hoops. The white line artists are standing back to view their work and consider if it merits an entry into Fake or Fortune. The Salad Days Team is ensuring that all will be well fed.

The diesel electric trains running between the club and the sea are regularly gliding along from “here” to “there”; and the first light aircraft of the day from the Isle of Wight is overflying the club.

Ah, here come the county contestants

from all points of the compass. The experienced among them make a dash for the best parking slot, which will enable them to make a quick exit at the end of the day. It’s just like one giant sliding tile puzzle game. Off they go to collect their food tokens before warming up.

The more serious players are keen to win, the remainder are out to enjoy the festival atmosphere. There appears to be a beer drinking contest going on between Gloucestershire and Notts – is there a handicapping system?

Now for the important part of this report. My beer tasting expert reports the beer to be “full of fragrance, very

pleasant on the throat with slight overtones of alcohol”.

At some point Bill Arliss (Mr GC) will appear on his latest supercharged mobility scooter; did he actually invent GC?

Rumour has it that Eugene Chang will be representing croquet at Master Chef.

“What”, I hear you say “about the croquet?”. I can report that the Lincolnshire Poachers (aged sixteen and three quarters) conducted a clean sweep of us “wrinklies” to lift the title.

Must go – the tide is coming in.

BUDLEIGH SALTERTON GC OPEN SERIES

2-3 AUGUST 2025

By Louise Smith

As the race for Open Series points intensifies ahead of the end-of-season finale, Budleigh Salterton Croquet Club hosted another full 16 player tournament over the weekend of 2–3 August. A strong field assembled, with all top eight seeds playing off minus handicaps and all bar one of the remaining competitors within the 0 to +1 handicap range.

Block A went to form, with the top four seeds qualifying for the knockout. Top seed Stuart M. Smith (Budleigh), No.2 seed Tim Jolliff (Budleigh), Diana Wilson (Roehampton) and David Goacher (Bristol) all progressed, Wilson pipping Goacher to third spot on net hoops.

Block B proved much tighter. Three players finished on five wins apiece; Steve Leonard (East Dorset) headed the group on net hoops, while Richard Gardiner (Dowlish Wake) claimed second over Tim Russell (Roehampton) on the “who beat who” rule, after the pair were tied on wins and hoops. Mark Huttley (Budleigh) took the remaining qualifying spot with four wins, Martin French (Bude) and Louise Smith (Budleigh) both narrowly missing out.

Sunday’s knockout began with swift 2–0 victories for Stuart M. Smith over Mark Huttley and Tim Russell over Tim Jolliff. Diana Wilson struck first against Richard Gardiner before Gardiner battled back to take it 7-5, 5-7, 2-7. In the longest quarter-final, David Goacher out-last-ed Steve Leonard 7-6, 1-7, 7-4.

Withdrawals led to the Plate being run as a six-player all-play-all. The title came down to the final round where

Stephen Custance-Baker beat Martin French 7-5, and Lynn Percy produced a sterling performance overturning a 1–5 deficit to beat David Thirtle-Watts 7-5. That left French, Thirtle-Watts and Louise Smith tied on three wins, the former pair tied also on net hoops, leading to Martin French emerging as the winner, once again on the ‘who-beat-who’ rule.



The Shield, contested by the losing quarter-finalists, saw just two players compete with Diana Wilson defeating Steve Leonard 7-5, 3-7, 7-5 in a well-contested final.

The main event semi-finals offered a contrast: in a rapid but competitive match Stuart M. Smith swept past Richard Gardiner 7-6, 7-4, while Tim Russell edged a lengthy encounter against David Goacher 7-5, 4-7, 7-4.

The Open Series Final began very late, around 5.00pm in the afternoon. Stuart M. Smith never fully settled after a long wait, missing several early chances, while Tim Russell seized the initiative and kept momentum with some nice clean hoop running. A late rally from Smith in game two wasn’t quite enough with Russell taking a 2/0 victory and the BSCC GC Open Series title.

Congratulations to Tim Russell (Roehampton), and my thanks to all the players, BSCC volunteers, and Martin French for his role as Referee-of-Tournament.

GOLF CROQUET ALL ENGLAND HANDICAP

The GC All England Handicap competition has been working its way through the preliminary stages during the summer. In all, 24 clubs held preliminary rounds before area finals were held at Ashby, Bath, Guildford and Godalming, Phyllis Court, and Surbiton. 55 players competed in the area finals before 14 players qualified for the finals held at Camerton and Peasedown in September.

Many thanks to all of the clubs who supported the competition and to the players who competed.

Andrea Huxley, Director GC All England Handicap competition

Despite the wet forecast, the first day of the All England GC Handicap Final stayed fine. With 13 finalists, there were 13 rounds or 12 games each to complete. 8 rounds were completed on Saturday with many games ending in a 7-6 result. Play started early on Sunday to try and beat the weather and it was only the last game that was played in the rain.

The competition was close right to the end, but it was Fiona Walker who won 10 games and was awarded the cup by Brian Wilson on behalf of Croquet England. Congratulations to all who participated.

By Jill Shaw, Manager



WELCOME TO THE COACHING PAGES

SURVEY OF ALL COACHES

The survey has now ended and the results are in the process of being analysed. A total of 406 coaches have completed the survey, while a further eight coaches have confirmed by email that they are still active as coaches. A full analysis will be included in the next Gazette. An initial review shows that – not surprisingly – most coaches coach only at their primary club, and they organise their own coaching, often following requests. Perhaps more surprisingly, as many as 27% of coaches coach both AC and GC, while 31% coach only AC and 41% only GC.

A large number of coaches responded to say they were no longer active as coaches, and they were therefore removed from the CqE register of coaches. Furthermore, any coach who did not respond before the final deadline, after several reminders, has also been removed from the register of active coaches. If you believe you have been wrongly removed, please get in touch with the coaching committee immediately at coaching@croquetengland.org.uk.

COACHING V TEACHING

By Ian Shore

Is there anything we can learn from the subtle distinctions between ‘teaching’, ‘instructing’, ‘training’ and ‘coaching’ that can inform the way we help players learn in our sport?

We all have benefitted, to a greater or lesser extent, from ‘teaching’ at school. Those with a military background (and some others) will have received a great deal of ‘instructing’ and ‘training’. Those with a sporting background will have benefited from ‘coaching’. The overlap is that the subject learns; however, the process differs.

Let us look at those differences:

‘Teaching’, a broad term, is centred on imparting knowledge, concepts, and critical thinking. It is often delivered to students in a formal setting following a structured curriculum focused on long-term intellectual growth. Included in the concept is testing of whether the knowledge has been learned by the student.

‘Instructing’ is more specific and directive than teaching. Instructors provide clear steps, procedures, or rules to follow in order to complete a task or learn a process. Unlike teaching, which encourages exploration and discussion, instructing is about precision and clarity. For example, flight instructors or driving instructors guide learners through exact methods that must be mastered for safety and competence.

‘Training’ emphasizes skill development and practical application. It tends to be hands-on, repetitive, and goal-oriented, focusing on building competence and efficiency, sometimes as a team member. For instance, workplace safety training equips employees with the ability to respond correctly in emergencies through practice and reinforcement.

‘Coaching’ is distinguished by the coach learning from the person they are coaching so that they can then help them improve their performance. Thus, a tennis coach will observe a player’s attempt at a serve and provide guidance on how the service could be improved. A coach helps individuals unlock their potential, set goals, and reflect on their performance. Instead of providing direct answers, coaches ask powerful questions and encourage self-discovery.



BY RUTH RAUNKIAER

ruth.raunkiaer@croquetengland.org.uk
Coaching Committee

NEW MERIT AWARD WINNERS

Congratulations to the following:

ASSOCIATION CROQUET – GOLD AWARD
Clive Goode – Blewbury Advanced Weekend

ASSOCIATION CROQUET – SILVER AWARDS
Matt Cook – Surbiton SB & Super B Advanced
Philip Snowden – Heart of Yorkshire

ASSOCIATION CROQUET – BRONZE AWARDS

Bruce Scriver – Nottingham Annual Tournament
Peggy Deller - Nottingham Annual Tournament

GOLF CROQUET – PLATINUM AWARD
Richard Bilton – GC Second Eight

GOLF CROQUET – DIAMOND AWARDS
Dom Aarvold – Nailsea & District GC Championship
Joshua Wise – GC Third Eight

GOLF CROQUET – SILVER AWARDS
Adrian Coward – Hamptworth B-Level
Rob Eagle – Phyllis Court & Blewbury B-Level
Sue Nicholas – Compton B-Level
Bobbo Peers – Broadwas B-Level
Andrew Grant – Ashby B-Level

GOLF CROQUET – BRONZE AWARDS
Brian Owens – Bath C-Level
Helen Lucas – Compton C-Level
Colin P Carr – Nottingham C-Level
Carol Huntington – Guildford & Godalming C-Level
Graham Brooksbank – Sidmouth C-Level

NEW COACH QUALIFICATIONS

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!

Martin Alabaster, Bath
Jacqueline Bryant, Thames Valley
Simon Bryant, Thames Valley
Peter Cartman, Tyneside
Nigel Cocks, Bradford on Avon
Matt Cook, Caterham
Jill Hanson, Charlton
Nigel Knee, Cheltenham
Peter Mathews, Driffield
Duncan Meek, Hartley Wintney

NEW U18S LICENSED COACHES

The following coaches have passed the requirements to become U18s Licensed Coaches. Congratulations!
Raouf Allim, High Wycombe
Sarah Butler, Nottingham
Alan Clark, High Wycombe
Andrew Lockwood, Guildford and Godalming
Christine Morris, York
Bernie Phillips, Guildford and Godalming

CONTRIBUTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS SOUGHT

Is there something you would like us to write about on the Coaching Pages? Is there something you would like to write about? We are always happy to receive suggestions and contributions on any coaching subject. Please contact the Coaching Committee at coaching@croquetengland.org.uk.

COACHING V TEACHING CONTINUED

Coaching is highly individualized, often used in leadership development, sports, and personal growth. For this to work well the coach must have a wide knowledge of their subject, be experienced, be a good observer, have tools at their disposal to assist the learning process, and be an encourager.

All the above terms are relevant to croquet. We teach the AC Laws / GC Rules; we 'instruct' newbies in the basics of the game; we 'train' our muscle memory with swing trainers etc and we coach players in how to improve their game.

Each process requires subtly different skills in the person delivering it. Some will be better coaches than teachers for example. Thus, we can ask ourselves "what are our strengths and how can they be best used?" and "how can I improve as a teacher / instructor / trainer / coach??"

COACHING THE AC HALF BISQUE

By John Harris

Half bisques lend themselves perfectly to a short indoor coaching session in wet weather. Even if players have no half bisques themselves, they may encounter an able player with one. More particularly, players of any ability may well find themselves with half a bisque to spend if playing bisque difference, if playing 18 point AC, or if playing Short Croquet with a 70% bisque allocation to even out the odds.

The basic message is simple. Half bisques work like full bisques, giving an extra turn with the same striker's ball, but with one important restriction: no point may be scored for any ball.

A half bisque comes into its own in three situations. Most powerfully, when setting up a break, if you know you will need invest two bisques, use the half bisque first. You'll run no hoops while setting up, giving it the power of a full bisque. When you then call for your full bisque, it's a new turn, and any hoops scored will count. Roger Mills's book 'Bisques, Breaks and Beyond' is the go-to guide on how to identify a two-bisque break opportunity (a 2BBO) and what to do next, and can be confidently recommended to developing players.

A half bisque can also tidy up a leave. You'll run no more hoops in that turn; investing half a bisque may mean the difference between an easy hit-in for your opponent and a challenging situation costing him or her a bisque to retrieve.

And a half bisque can be a useful 'get out of jail' card if your opponent sets up a perfect leave, or if you break down in a situation favourable to your opponent and have no full bisques left to rescue things.

In timed games, half bisques – like full bisques – are cancelled once time is called, so coaches need to guide students to use them while the clock is still ticking. They are reactivated if completing the last two turns brings about a golden hoop finish.

Oddly, the Laws of Association Croquet are silent on how half bisques are represented (usually with a shorter bisque stick, or a full sized one set into the ground at an angle). They are also silent on how a player indicates for one (normally, as in the picture, by putting the arms in a T shape).

The Laws do not allow you to swap a full bisque for two half bisques. But they do hint at a rare but valuable tactic: "No point may be scored for any ball during a half-bisque" (42.1). This means that if, for example, an opponent ball has stuck in the jaws, you can, with a half-bisque, peel the opponent ball through, leaving it on the wrong side of the hoop, with no point being scored – a very satisfying move.



Jenny Dunkley signals for a half bisque

DAVID GA NICHOLSON

By Jonathan Powe

David Nicholson died in early September following a long battle with cancer.

David was an active and committed member of East Dorset Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club (EDLTCC) for about twenty years, having joined the club in the late 90s.

In 1995 David was involved in a very serious road accident which resulted in brain damage and severe injuries to his legs. The brain damage dramatically affected both his long and short-term memory. Unable to work, he returned to his wife's family home in Poole and slowly regained the use of his legs, taking very short walks in the local area. It was during one of his walks that he came across EDLTCC and he returned time and again to rest and watch games being played. As David's home was a stone's throw from the club, he was able to find his way back despite the significant difficulties he had with his memory.

David had always been a talented sportsman, representing the Royal Marines and the Royal Navy at rugby, hockey, boxing, sailing, swimming and diving. After his military career, he served in the Dorset and London Fire Brigades and of course played all Brigade sports.

Having discovered EDLTCC, he became fascinated by croquet and started playing AC in 1998 using an adapted walking stick in one hand and a croquet mallet in the other. His knowledge of the game improved steadily, as did his skills with the mallet. Although his competitive play had to be limited to matches for East Dorset or tournaments at the Club, his progress was impressive. In 2003 he completed his first triple peel and in 2008 he won the Club AC Open Championship, beating the holder (David Harrison-Wood) who had been Club Champion for the previous eleven years. In 2010, he won the East Dorset A-Class (Bournemouth Bowl) winning all eight of his games.

David was also a superb coach. Patient, understanding and a great communicator, his love of the game and natural enthusiasm rubbed off on those around him. He devoted an enormous amount of time and effort to coaching beginners and improvers for many years. In addition, he organised an excellent coaching clinic for rapidly improving players, which is still fondly remembered by those who attended it. Whenever he was at the club (which was just about every day!), he was constantly looking for an opportunity to help players improve their game and was unfailingly generous with his help and advice. He became a Grade 1 Coach in 2005 and a Grade 2 Coach in 2009. In 2009 he was named by the Croquet Association as their 'Coach of the Year', an award he was extremely proud to receive.

David was a wonderful member of the club and a true servant of the game. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him.





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CROQUET ENGLAND CONTACTS

James Death
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Croquet England
Old Bath Road
Cheltenham
GL53 7DF

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

Jonathan Isaacs
President
jonathan.isaacs@croquetengland.org.uk

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

Andy Dalby-Welsh
Chief Executive Officer
andy.dalbywelsh@croquetengland.org.uk

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

George Collin
george.collin@croquetengland.org.uk

Matthew Macdonald
matthew.macdonald@croquetengland.org.uk

Robin Tasker
robin.tasker@croquetengland.org.uk

Kishan Devani
kishan.devani@croquetengland.org.uk

Samir Patel
samir.patel@croquetengland.org.uk

Glenda Vencatachellum
glenda.vencatachellum@croquetengland.org.uk

Carol Driver
carol.driver@croquetengland.org.uk

Andrew Stewart
andrew.stewart@croquetengland.org.uk

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

Chief Executive Officer - Andy Dalby-Welsh
andy.dalbywelsh@croquetengland.org.uk

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
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Treasurer - Robert Fulford
robert.fulford@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 **Stephen Mulliner**
stephen.mulliner@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 **Vacancy**

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www.croquetengland.org.uk and 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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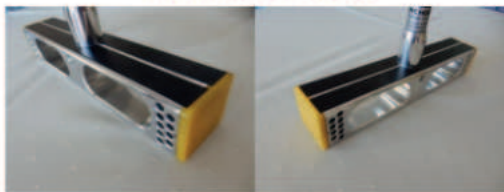
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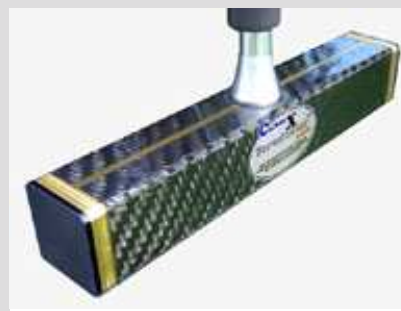
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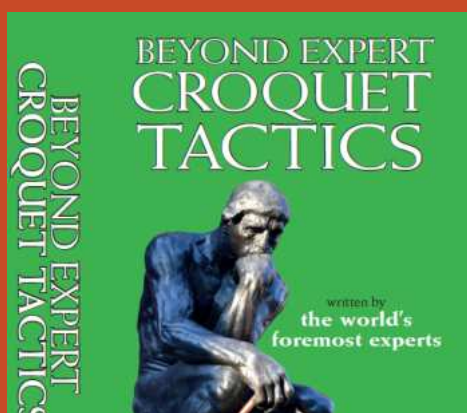


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