

The

Issue 366 February 2017

CROQUET

Gazette



GC World Championship Preview

Who will stop the Egyptians?



From our files

researched by Frances Colman

10 years ago - 2007



Chairman's column (by Jonathan Isaacs)

... Evidence suggests that Golf Croquet has grown in popularity, especially as a social sport at club level. The CA needs to consider the implications of this on the sport in general, what it needs to do to support this growth whilst at the same time developing Association Croquet in harmony with its other variants. A working party was set up last autumn to consider this project ...

On November 8th the Charities Act 2006 was enacted. This could have a significant benefit for Croquet in our domain ...

~

2nd WCF Women's World GC Championship announced ... and will be held in Dublin, Ireland, between 3 – 9 September 2007 ... There will be an expected 40 players from around the world in the main event.

~

John Solomon's reflections – I first met Humphrey Hicks at the age of 15 in 1947 (Hicks was easily the top player of his day and winner of seven British Open titles either side of World War II). I entered my first tournament and was given a handicap of 15. The Turketine Tray was a small event at Roehampton (they had seven courts in a row at that time) at the same time as the Presidents Cup. I was playing on court 7 and Humphrey finished his game and sat on a bench at the north end of my court. I came down to the 2nd hoop but couldn't make it and sat down beside him. I said "Mr Hicks, you are making me very nervous". "Don't worry" said Humphrey, "I am making your opponent much more nervous." ...

~

David Cameron at Eynsham CC – by Jennet Blake, about the Oxfordshire Club's relocation and opening day ... our local MP, David Cameron (*not yet PM for another three years*), had agreed to perform the opening ceremony. (He was a disappointment as another village activity had nobbled him first and the press besieged him for his views on John Prescott. ... With us he wanted minimum publicity and refused to be photographed with a mallet, resulting in a failure of any publicity and a lost opportunity ...

50 years ago - 1967



The 1966 season (by M.B.Reckitt)

There can be no doubt that during the last few years the most interesting feature of Croquet's development is revealed by the fact that there is now "Room at the Top".

In and around the President's Cup circles there has been a rapidly increasing levelling up. For a dozen years from 1947 our game seemed to be virtually subject to a Rule of Three: Hicks, Cotter and Solomon became successively unassailable by any but each other ...

And so to our Centenary Year, about which readers of this journal will be offered a great deal of information before the new season begins.

The auspices are favourable; our numbers are rising; new talent is flooding into the game; and the Association's financial prospects, despite the adverse conditions that confront us all, are more favourable than has often been the case. How much of this is due to the custodianship of our Treasurer (Commander Style) all those involved in the administration of our affairs well know ...

~

Champion of Champions – The players will compete for a Trophy to be donated by Mrs H.G.Stoker, in memory of her late husband, and will be known as 'The Captain Stoker Bowl (or Cup)':

The only players qualified to enter are past winners of either the President's Cup, or the Open Championship. The following therefore qualify:- EPC Cotter, DVJ Hamilton-Miller, HO Hicks, Dr WP Ormerod, A Ross, Mrs E Rotherham, JW Solomon and Dr WRD Wiggins. The winner will hold the trophy until the conclusion of the President's Cup in 1968.

On the following day, the winner of the 1968 Open and the 1968 President's Cup will play off for the right of challenging the 'Champion of Champions and the Cup will change hands (or not as the case may be) by repeating this formula from year to year.

~

The All England Club – The Club Championship was retained by the holder BG Neal who defeated in the final HF David +14, -4, +14.

100 years ago - 1917



Honours for Croquet Players

Amongst the New Year's Honours we note that His Majesty The King has been pleased to approve the following rewards for distinguished service in the field:-

- Distinguished Service Order -

LtCol (Bt.-Col.) W.W.Norman, Manchester Regiment.

Major F.A.Twiss, M.V.O, R.A.

- Military Cross -

Sec. Lieut. Cecil Cundall, R. Innis. Fus.

- The following have also been mentioned in Despatches

for distinguished and gallant service -
Maj.-Gen. Sir A. Paris, K.C.B., R.M.A.
Col. (tem. Brig.-Gen.) J.H.Twiss, C.B.
Lt.-Col (tem. Brig.-Gen.) S.F. Williams, C.M.G., R.E.
Col & Hon. Brig.-Gen. C.Penrose, C.B., C.M.G., late R.E.

The Order of St. Anne, Third Class (with Swords)

has also been conferred on Lt.- Col. and Brev.-Col. W.W.Norman by his Imperial Majesty, the Emperor of Russia.

~

Military Cross awarded to Lieut.

E.H.Moore – Lieut. (temporary Captain) E.H. Moore, of the 2nd York and Lancaster regiment, has been awarded the Military Cross for gallantry and devotion to duty in the field. Lieut Moore organised an attack very efficiently and afterwards showed great courage and determination in advancing to a new position, consolidating the new line with great ability. He went to the front in March 1915 and was wounded in the following November, returning to France in May 1916.

Lieut. Moore received the Cross from His Majesty The King on December 2nd.

~

Reduced Subscription for 1917 (due January 1st) – At a meeting of the Council in November 1916, it was decided that the subscription to be collected for the year 1917 should remain at FIVE SHILLINGS as in 1916. The Council, however, trusts that all Associates who are willing to do so will forward the full subscription as in ordinary years, in order that the reserve funds of the C.A. may not be too heavily drawn upon ...

Editorial

Here we are then - another croquet year ahead and, by the time you read this, the CA Fixtures book will have been delivered to you, the on-line booking system will have gone live and applications for all your favourite tournaments will have begun in earnest.

Are you looking forward to repeating last season over again or maybe, like me, you are keen to visit new places and try one or two new events?

This Gazette is rather the same actually, with familiar items of course but there is also a look at some new ventures too.

The big event for this next two month period is undoubtedly The World GC Championships and this issue leads with Stephen Mulliner's preview of this, the latest WFC tournament at the very top of our sport.

I'll be glued to www.croquetscores.com, throughout this event (25 Feb - 5 Mar), following all the results and some 'ball by ball' commentary, and I recommend this excellent free service to you.

Sticking with the familiar, this issue gives respect and sincere thanks to nine senior croquet figures for their longevity of service on the CA Council, and also recognises the 2016 recipients of CA Diploma Awards for special service to their clubs.

As to the new ventures we wish all success to the inaugural Student GC

Championships, and share the joy of Roehampton members at the installation of their new 'state of the art' floodlights.

I am indebted to Alison Jones for interviewing the soon-to-be England Mac debutant James Hopgood about his selection and the specific preparations he is employing for the biggest tournament of his career.

Personally, I'm starting the year in my usual way with croquet in South Africa and looking forward to the CA's National AC Seniors, the AC Challenge & Gilbey, the AC Selectors and AC Weeks at Nottingham and Budleigh Salterton, which I will try to balance with another 100-plus GC ranking games. I am also back in familiar territory as Chairman again at my local club, Phyllis Court.

New for me is a membership at the Roehampton Club to enjoy.

I also hope to play GC at Ramsgate for the first time and perhaps even get to Southport too.

Does the excitement of croquet ever wear off, do you think?



Chris Roberts

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The
CROQUET
Gazette



Issue 366 February 2017

Front cover: The big guns of GC assemble in Australia for the World Championship this month. 'Haloed' holder Ahmed El Mahdi and twice winner Ahmed Nasr lead a formidable challenge from Egypt, whilst Stephen Mulliner, Duncan Dixon, J-P Moberly and Reg Bamford will make sure they don't have it all their own way.

This page: The Editor 'working' and the Chairman in play at Southwick.

(All photographs by Chris Roberts except El Mahdi by Sara & Ian Anderson, and the Editor by Ray Hall)

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Disclaimer - The opinions expressed in the Croquet Gazette are those of the Editor and contributors. The Croquet Association is not responsible for statements other than those clearly defined as being made on behalf of the Croquet Association.

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Chairman's Column

I hope, like me, you are all turning your thoughts to the start of the new season with renewed enthusiasm. By the time you read this, Premium Members should have received the 2017 Fixtures Book. In light of the new changes to tournament eligibility, I have resolved to make this year's entries right away and not leave them until the last minute. I commend this approach to you all. Also, I shall be using the excellent Tournament Entry System on the CA website. For those of you who are not familiar with it, please go on-line and try it. I urge more clubs to use this facility: it is so much more convenient for competitors, eliminating reliance on 'snail mail' and the need for cheques.

~

Clubs will also be preparing for the start of the new season and foremost amongst their activities will be lawn preparation. I thoroughly recommend that clubs consult the excellent paper commissioned by the CA on lawn construction, maintenance and development by Jeff Perris, formerly of the Sports Turf Research Institute. It contains much detailed, practical advice and is on the CA Website linked under 'Lawns' on <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=clubs/info>.

~

There has been extensive national publicity concerning the Football Association's child sex abuse scandal, one consequence of which is that all sporting bodies are being put under the spotlight. At its meeting on 28 January your Council approved an amended Safeguarding Policy which can be found at this section of the website <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=ca/schemes/safeguarding> and I shall be writing shortly to clubs to follow up this matter.

Meanwhile, I recommend all clubs consult this document before establishing or reviewing their own policies.

~

The January Council also approved the appointment of a National Development Officer. Your Executive plans to start the recruitment process without delay and the position will be advertised shortly on both the CA website and on a national sports recruitment on-line site. Should any members wish to express an interest in this position or seek further information they can contact me brian@shorney.net or 07583 671597.



Brian Shorney

Unlike the adjacent FA cup tie, Council had a lunchtime kick-off, meeting at 1pm in the Committee Room of the Hurlingham Club.

With a shorter than usual meeting, the Chairman, Brian Shorney, kept up a brisk pace. There were a number of apologies, which avoided the need for musical chairs in the smaller than usual room.

Treasurer

Peter Death, the Treasurer, reported that the management accounts showed an adjusted surplus of about £800 for 2016, but a much larger budgeted deficit for the current year.

Applications for development grants had increased again, and exceptional items associated with the transition to the new membership scheme are now expected to fall this year rather than last. He reported the good news that, despite the changes to membership categories, subscriptions paid by direct debit had compared favourably with last year.

CA Shop, membership and new database

Liz Larsson reported the launch of the new shop website, www.croquetassociationshop.org.uk, and that the first order had come from Sweden!

She and her colleagues, along with Dave Kibble and Jeff Dawson, were thanked for the considerable extra work they had undertaken to support the membership changes and it was later noted that they would continue to be under pressure for some time to come while the new membership database was introduced. It is intended to appoint a new, full-time, member of staff to address this and succession issues.

Management committee

Rather like an awards ceremony, John Bowcott's report from the Management

Committee was taken in reverse order, saving the more contentious items till last. However, a decision by the Handicap Committee to exempt Golf Croquet players with minus handicaps from keeping handicap cards if they played fewer than 10 handicap games a year attracted a number

regulations, at the end of the season.

Selection policy

A new revision of the Selection Policy was approved, the main changes being the harmonisation of policies for AC and GC events, following the introduction of the GC World Team Championships, and nationality conditions for Elite squads.

Safeguarding

In the light of the widespread concerns about Safeguarding of children in other sports, an updated Safeguarding Policy for the CA itself was approved, with consequent changes to the model policy for clubs.

The Chairman of Council will write to club chairmen about this, making the strong recommendation that clubs and federations should review their own Safeguarding policy, or adopt one if they have not done so, and appoint an officer to provide a point of contact for it.

National Development Officer

The major debate was on a proposal to use some of the reserves that the CA has accumulated over recent years to appoint a National Development Officer, as a part-time post for up to two years, with the overall objective of growing the sport of croquet.

Chris Hudson achieved this, in a post funded by the Sports Council, some thirty years ago.

All those who spoke supported this in principle, mentioning various concerns over the details, recognising that although success was by no means guaranteed, and that, on a narrow analysis, such a venture would never be

profitable to the CA itself, the potential benefit for its member clubs was considerable. The proposal was agreed and the Executive Committee was charged with filling the post.

Ian Vincent, Hon. Secretary

THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION

The National Governing Body for the sport, is seeking to appoint a

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICER (NDO)

To promote Croquet as a competitive sport throughout England

The NDO's main role will be to increase the number of clubs and players and enhance the public profile of the sport.

As the successful candidate will need to work closely with officers of the Association, its federations and clubs he/she would probably have a professional, graduate background. Knowledge of croquet would be advantageous but not essential. Above all, the candidate must have outstanding interpersonal skills; a cheery disposition; and the demeanour to command respect.

The position will probably be part-time and working hours will need to be flexible. As the candidate will work from home a positive, can-do attitude will be essential.

A job description can be obtained from the CA website <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=ca/jobs>.

Remuneration will be negotiable based on an annual full-time equivalent of around £30,000. Applications should be by email to the CA's Chairman of Council, brian@shorney.net to be received no later than Friday 3 March 2017.

Your covering letter should set out the reasons for your application; the strengths underpinning your candidature; an attached up-to-date CV; and contact details of two referees.

of adverse comments from members fearing it would give a bad impression to other players. The Committee argued that it was just recognising current practice, but it was asked to review the matter, and its implications for AC and the tournament

CA Committees Round-up

The CA's committees report to its Management Committee, which last met on 7 January (this meeting used to be in December, but was moved to give the committees more time to meet and report).

A collation of the work of the various committees is available to CA members at <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=members/docs/committees>. A lot of their work is routine, though none the less essential, such as organising tournaments and

courses and making grants, but the following items from their reports were identified as being of particular interest. Please contact the relevant committee chairman for more information about these.

Coaching

Jonathan Isaacs has temporarily taken over as Chairman from Dave Kibble, who

has stood down to concentrate on database work. Coach training courses are to be subsidised. A Northern Academy is being launched, based at York (*see page 15*).

Development

The last Committee meeting had ten grant applications to consider, totalling £31k. It recommended that eight of these should be granted. The lawns advisory booklet is to be updated.

continued on page 6...

Tournament Regulations

– Changes for 2017 ~

The CA's Tournament Committees have updated the tournament regulations for 2017.

The main changes which will affect readers are:

(1) **The conditions for the inclusion of an event in the fixtures book, player eligibility and the process for entry have been updated.** These now encompass coaching events (as well as tournaments) and also reflect the new CA membership model (allowing the new members of the CA to enter events). Existing tournament members (now Premium Members) should still maximise their chance of getting into any event by making sure they enter before the Allocation Date.

(2) **The on-line tournament entry system is encouraged for use by players and clubs.** Contrary to some rumours, the system is no longer a trial and is being actively used by several clubs and many players. Feedback from players has been that they find it much easier than entering by post, and some clubs have reported increased tournament entries as a result. The CA would like to see this system become the default mechanism for tournament entry in the future.

(3) **As notified in the previous Gazette, the trial of the alternative AC Doubles handicap system has been concluded, and discontinued.**

(4) **The clothing policy has been updated to permit recognised international team colours in all events.** Variations to clothing policy now require agreement of both the organising body and the host club. Permission to wear coloured clothing in team events (such as inter-club or inter-county events) remains.

(5) **Practice before the start of play extended to 10 minutes from 5 minutes.** The regulation has also been clarified to make it clear that practice is permitted by default only at the start of the day, rather than before each game (with provision made for players with late starts). Players may request permission from the manager to practise at other times, such as at the end of a day's play.

As always, you can find the full text, along with a full list of changes on the CA website at <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=tournament/regulations>

Samir Patel, Tournament Committees

International Performance Squads announced



I am pleased to announce that **Dave Kibble and Andy Myers** have won calls up to the **AC GB Squad** for 2017:

Keith Aiton, Mark Avery, Jamie Burch, Ian Burridge, Christian Carter, Gavin Carter, Kristian Chambers, Miranda Chapman, Jeff Dawson, James Death, Ed Duckworth, Marcus Evans, Robert Fulford, Alain Giraud, David Goacher, James Hopgood, Jonathan Kirby, **Dave Kibble**, Ian Lines, David Maugham, Nick Mounfield, Stephen Mulliner, **Andy Myers**, Samir Patel, Duncan Reeve, Pete Trimmer, David Walters, Jack Wicks, Chris Williams.

Kibble and Myers are two of a number of players who completed the two-year AC Development Squad programme last season. They join a GB squad that now numbers 29.

The **AC International Performance Development Squad (IPDS)** enters its fifth year in 2017, with events planned at Ealing and Surbiton.

Those joining the squad in 2017 are:

Louise Bradforth	Adrian Kirby
Clive Goode	David Marsh
Brian Havill	Jonathan Powe
Andrew Killick	Nick Steiner

Ian Burridge,
International Performance Director AC



I am pleased to confirm that the following players have been selected to be part of the **GC Elite Squad** for 2017:

Ian Burridge	Stephen Mulliner
Harry Dodge	Rachel Rowe
Martin French	Tobi Savage
William Gee	Lionel Tibble
John-Paul Moberly	David Walters

I am also pleased to confirm that the players listed below have been selected to be part of the **GC International Performance Development Squad (IPDS)**, and have confirmed their availability. The first IPDS session has been arranged for 1 - 2 April. There will also be a mentoring match weekend for Elites and IPDS and this has been arranged for the 5 - 6 August. Dates for further Elites and IPDS sessions and venues will be announced in due course and available via the CA website.

Congratulations to all upon selection and a special thank you to all the Elite players who have agreed to mentor our promising players of the future.

Nick Archer	Paul Gunn
Richard Bilton	Jonathan Powe
David Crawford	Chris Roberts
Peter Dowd	Jayne Stevens
Roger Goldring	David Widdison

Lionel Tibble,
International Performance Director GC



Photographs, clockwise: Myers (above), Dowd & Widdison, Goldring & Stevens, Crawford, and Kibble.



continued from page 4 . . .

Handicap

The AC Handicap Doubles experiments are to be discontinued and handicaps will again be worked out by adding the handicaps of each side together and taking half the difference.

GC players with minus handicaps who play fewer than 10 handicap games a year need no longer keep handicap cards.

GC Club Handicappers can adjust handicaps from 3 upwards.

International

Arrangements are in hand to send a team to compete in the MacRobertson Shield at Mission Hills, USA, from 17 April to 4 May, 2017 (Alison Jones talks to James Hopgood about his selection for the Mac on page 10).

The Sussex County Club is hosting the lower tiers of the AC World Team Championship from 17 – 22 July (Ray Hall looks ahead to this on page 14).

AC Laws

The International Laws Committee has been replaced by a WCF AC Laws Committee.

GC Rules

The WCF GC Rules Committee has begun a Rules Review. The timetable is uncertain but it seems likely it will take about two years until a completed and approved new edition is issued by the WCF.

So a CA 5th Edition might be published in time for the 2019 season.

Marketing

National Croquet Day will be on Sunday 4 June and is being planned as a celebration of croquet, enabling clubs to use this opportunity to raise croquet's profile and to support recruitment as required.

Selection

The AC and GC Selection Committees have jointly proposed an update to the selection policy.

Ian Vincent, Hon. Secretary



Ian Vincent presenting the fabulous Robin Hood Cup to Anna Giraud at last season's Nottingham Week (photo by Chris Roberts).

Obituaries

John Wheeler 1933 -2016

John Wheeler, a pillar of the Wrest Park club for over forty years, died on the 31 December.

John started playing croquet soon after the club was formed in 1961 and within a few years was entering and winning CA tournaments. His heyday was during the 1970s when he was twice runner-up in the Open Doubles, he played in Wrest Park's winning Inter-Club team in 1974 and was also part of the Bedfordshire team that tied for the Inter-Counties title in 1976 and won it outright the following year.

John played in the Chairman's Salver in 1975 and the Spencer Ell in 1973, 1974 and 1976. He later played a part in winning the Inter Counties Division 2 title in 1999 and the Mary Rose in 2002 and again in 2004. His play was characterised by good shooting, accurate break play and a sound grasp of tactics, the last being particularly appreciated by his many doubles partners over the years.

John's achievements on the playing side were more than matched by what he did off court – indeed he, Vic Rees and Harry Green were primarily responsible for Wrest Park evolving from its early beginnings to



an established club with a full tournament programme attracting the best players of the day. His practical skills covered everything from making hoops, building and fitting out the old pavilion and changing room, and maintaining the mowers and other machinery. For many years he cut six lawns every week with Pandora's help, and he also organised all the other activities associated with maintaining the lawns.

The news that the club would have to move from its old site in the gardens was hard to take, but it was not long before John came to appreciate the many advantages, not the least of which was being able to park within yards of the lawns. Although no longer playing, he would still volunteer for catering duties at tournaments and watch the play with glass of wine in hand, and it must have been a source of satisfaction for him to have witnessed the first triple-peel on the new lawns (by Mark Avery during an Inter-Club match against Colchester in 2014) and see that the club he had done so much to develop was renewing itself in new surroundings.

John Bevington

Richard Stopforth 1934 -2016

Richard Stopforth, a highly valued member of Bath Croquet Club for fourteen years, died suddenly having successfully won his last competitive match, playing for Bath, a mere three days previously with a handicap of 4.

Richard was Lancashire born and bred. He trained as a radar mechanic during his National Service before rapidly rising through the ranks in the Ministry of Defence Naval Logistics department to become a senior manager.

He has been described by a work colleague as "a good guy to work for (and with), giving clear direction without fuss, always offering a welcoming smile and hand, with an easy manner.

He expected high standards and results, and got them with his unruffled manner."

Perhaps 'unruffled manner' characterises



Richard's economic no fuss approach to AC play; a characteristic wiggle of the right leg as he wondered if a roquet would be successful, was his maximum display.

He was a rapid AC improver from his early days, winning the trophy for the most improved club player multiple times, was a regular winner of club competitions and had taken to the advanced game

over the last few seasons with great success. He did not venture on to the national tournament circuit much but he did win the 2015 Advanced C-Level Tournament at Sidmouth.

He was a committee member and was always on hand to help with maintenance tasks.

He will be much missed as is his wife, Connie – also a Club member, who tragically died eighteen months ago.

Richard Jelly

Thank you for your 146 years' service

In June 2014 an article on page 4 of issue 350 of The Croquet Gazette celebrated a combined 132 years' service by six members of the CA's Council.

The criteria for being thanked in this way were having been on Council for twelve or more years, and, to prevent dredging too far back in the archives, only those still serving at the time were recognised.

Since then, according to information provided by our Archivist, Chris Williams, seven more people have reached this milestone, and it has been discovered that two very long but still serving Vice-Presidents had been omitted.

So we now thank the following for their long and dedicated service:



Quiller Barrett (13 years) was elected as our President in 2009, having served on Council from 1997 to 2003, the last two years as its Chairman.

He chaired the working party that recommended the current structure for the CA's Council and committees, which is only now being reviewed again. A former publisher, he has a keen interest in the Gazette. He plays at Watford.



Jeff Dawson (13 years) joined Council in 2003 and chaired it from 2012 to 2014. He championed the membership changes that were agreed at the 2015 SGM and is chairing the group charged with implementing

them, for which as a former software engineer he is well qualified. He also ran the CA's online Shop for seven years, keeping the stock in his garage, before it moved to Cheltenham. He plays at Woking.



Andrew Hope (29 years) has been a Vice-President since 2007, having served on Council from 1976 to 1996, as its Chairman from 1987 to 1989, soon after representing Great Britain

in the MacRobertson Shield for the second time. With Bernard Neal, he played a major part in setting up the World Croquet Federation. A fruit farmer, he plays at Cheltenham.



Richard Hoskyns (14 years) joined Council in 2002, but sadly had to retire this year due to ill-



health. He chaired the AC Tournaments Committee for four years and also served on the GC Committee, being one of the few players in this list who actively played both codes.

A member of Hurlingham, he was a valuable point of contact with the club.

Colin Irwin (24 years) was also elected a Vice-President in 2007, having served on Council from 1987 to 2002, chairing it from 1992 to 1994. He played in four MacRobertson Shields, being on the winning side three times.



He worked in the chemical industry and is a Grade 3 Coach,

Examining Referee, and long-standing member of Bowdon.

Jonathan Isaacs (12 years) served on Council from 2002 to 2009, chairing it from 2006 to 2008.



He was elected a Vice-President in 2011. He was the last chairman of the Publicity Committee and also chaired its successor, (Marketing) and last year the Development

Committee. He has made a major contribution at the Sussex County club, in particular nurturing the Croquet Academy there.



Dave Kibble (14 years) joined Council in 2002 and has chaired its Coaching, ICT, Admin and AC Selection committees. A software

developer, he has written the code behind the CA's website and the applications such as the fixtures book and tournament entry, that run on it.

He is currently developing a new membership database. He plays at Bristol, Cheltenham and Bygrave.

David Mooney (13 years) is one of two Federation



Representatives on the list, having served for the South-East and London Federation since the rôle was established in 2003.

He has been a member of the Coaching, Development, Handicap and AC Tournaments committees.

He fences (with foils, not posts!) and is a member of Roehampton and Surbiton.



Charles Waterfield

(14 years) is the other long-serving Federation Representative, for Croquet North.

A former Chairman of the

Publishing Committee, he still proof-reads and produces the index for The Croquet Gazette, and is an active coach, handicapper and referee.

A musician, he plays at Middlesbrough.

* * *

So I make that a total of 146 years (up to the end of the 2015-16) session, but it will be at least another two years before anyone else qualifies.

Many thanks to them all.

Ian Vincent, Hon. Secretary

All photographs by Chris Roberts except that of Charles Waterfield which was taken by Phil Errington.

2016 NCD was not the first

Dear Editor,

In the September issue (*Gazette* 363), there was an excellent article on NCD, but Brian Wilson stated that 'the first National Croquet Day duly arrived'.

The minutes of High Wycombe CC report an NCD on May 23 1992, but there appears no follow up, so perhaps HWCC did not take part that year.

However the minutes also show a NCD on May 15 1993 and the club displayed posters etc, and had a rota to cover the day.

A later report states that this, and a 'promotion day', were disappointing and the promised press publicity did not happen.

So it appears last year's NCD was not the first.

David Gantzel,
Archivist, High Wycombe CC

~

Your Editor asked CA Archivist Chris Williams to look into this and he replied:

It appears that there have been a number of National Croquet Days in the past.

The *Gazette* for May 1991 has a cover feature on the NCD due to take place on 1 June that year.

The November 1991 *Gazette* said that the Publicity Committee decided to stage another NCD on 23 May 1992.

The May/June 1992 *Gazette* has a full-page article from Chris Hudson on the 1992

NCD, which was sponsored by Bulmers to promote their new Giardini drink and so was entitled the 'Giardini National Croquet Day'.

Minutes from the time state that about 20 clubs in the London area were going to receive a crate or two of Giardini.

The *Gazettes* for 1993 make no mention of an NCD in 1993.

The minutes from the 1960s discuss holding National Croquet Weeks, but there is little indication of how successful they were.

Chris Williams,
CA Archivist



More inventive ideas to encourage developing AC players

Dear Editor,

The most recent issue (*Gazette* 365) asked for ideas that have been tried successfully in developing AC players.

A description of a very simple variation that usually ensures both players have an enjoyable game follows. This is such a simple concept that it has probably been tried before elsewhere, so apologies if this is not new! At its simplest, higher handicap players have the usual number of bisques, but cannot use them when they are in the lead. This means that bisques are used to 'level up' a game rather than tilting it totally the other way.

Key advantages are:

- High handicappers get practice both at bisque-assisted break building (to catch up) and the tactical risk management required when bisques are not available (when they are ahead).

- Improving players are better able to judge how much progress they are making and how many bisques they actually need to win a game.

- A greater sense of pleasure / achievement for higher handicappers in winning - I can't be alone in feeling embarrassed / bandit-like at 'hollow' huge margins of victory when achieved with several bisques.

- Lower handicap players avoid sitting out the whole game while improving players win 14-0 or 26-0.

Some possible objections, and ideas to address them, are as follows:

- Q: Is this too generous to the lower handicap player?

- A: Available bisques could be increased to compensate for the limitations on when they can be used.

- Q: Very low handicap players are likely to build a winning final break as soon as they hit in with ball 2.

- A: Limit the number of hoops the lower handicap player may run in a single turn or
- A: Remove the constraint on using bisques once either of the lower handicapper's balls have run 4 back.

I'd be interested to know if anyone has tried anything similar or thinks this is worth a try. I feel it works well for both players and gives low handicappers more incentive to play handicap games.

Brian Maddocks,
Cheam CC and Surbiton CC

Dear Editor,

My previous mail to you was on a modified GC game with an introduction to using croquet shots; this doesn't seem to have taken off, so here is another idea of mine, but this time it's another approach to the AC Game.

This is a slant on the 'ten minute / two bisque' break game with some modifications.

The object of this game is to use normal AC play to advance both of the player's clips, but doing so by using ANY ball as the striker's ball.

Hoops are run in order according to where a player's clip resides, and the game is concluded by a player pegging out both its own balls as normal.

Games can be Singles or Doubles.

A coin toss decides clip colours and the starting order and, at this point only, the players must use the ball that matches their clip.

Blue starts by shooting at hoop 1 from the south baulk, and is followed on by the red, black and yellow balls. If hoop 1 is run, that player moves the clip of that ball colour to hoop 2; there is no continuation shot at this time.

This gets all the balls onto the court; thereafter a player can choose any ball to be his striker's ball for the duration of his subsequent turns.

Breaks are limited by a stroke-count of 15 to 25 (by agreement) and the turns ends by:

- (1) A ball leaving the court in a croquet stroke,
- (2) Missing a ball or hoop with two strokes,
- (3) The stroke-count coming to an end.

After running a hoop the player must roquet another ball unless his stroke count has ended.

A fuller explanation of this AC variation is available if required.

This game has several advantages; in making you think about the choices available and the logical approach, as well as not having to sit for some time watching your opponent run hoops.

For a two-player game, breaks should last about ten minutes and a whole game will take between one and two hours, so this may give some GC players the urge to try it. Anyway, please give it a go.

Jeff Rushby,
Sussex County CC

Croquet's Help for Heroes of the Great War



Dear Editor,

I read with interest the letter from Jerry Wilde in the most recent issue (*Gazette 365*) about Help for Heroes.

I collect old pre-1940 Croquet postcards and I have found at least 50 showing First World War heroes playing croquet.

Although not to be recommended on today's immaculate lawns they actually played in their wheelchairs or bath chairs!

Liz Taylor-Webb, Bowdon CC

Trophy inquiry reveals a family link to top players of the past

Dear Frances (Colman),
(and subsequently shared with the *Gazette*),

With your 'From our Files' hat on, I hope that you will be able to help me with an enquiry.

We have just had a new member, Christina Sandford, join our club and, in conversation in the Clubhouse, she saw our Apps Healy trophy and asked if I had any knowledge of the man who is referred to in

~

Frances enlisted the help of resourceful CA Archivist Chris Williams who replied:

The CA Centenary Book has the following: 'A Silver Cup presented by Woodlands Croquet in 1996 with which is coupled a monetary award by the Association made in memory of Mrs L.C. Apps and Mrs P.E. Heley'.

Christina Sandford probably does mean Ben Apps, who was Lorn Apps's second husband.

(Christina later confirmed that Lorn Apps was her grand-mother - Ed.)

Lorn Apps (1888-1959) (nee Campbell) played for many years as Mrs C.W.C. Strickland, having been widowed during World War 1.

its name.

Her step-grandfather was, she believes a croquet player of some note with the name Apps.

Do you happen to have any further information about such a man in the archives? She would be very grateful to know anything you could tell her about him.

**Ros Key-Pugh,
Camerton and Peasedown CC**

Her husband was killed at a level crossing at Sheerness on his way to play croquet at the recreation ground in September 1918.

In 1928 Lorn Apps married Ben Apps (1871-1935) who was a top player in the 1920s and 1930s, winning the Open Championship three times (1926, 1930 and 1931) and the Men's Championship twice (1929 and 1931).

Mrs Apps was a leading player herself (and Secretary of the CA in the 1950s), winning the Women's Championship in 1923, the Ladies Field Cup three times, and is one of only four women to have won the President's Cup (1936).

There is a small section and photo of Ben



and Lorn Apps (above) in an article with Chris and Jenny Clarke on Bob Alman's Croquet World Online site:

<http://www.croquetworld.com/people/clarke-williams.asp>

The Apps Memorial Bowl for the Most Improved Male Player is also in memory of Mrs Apps.

**Chris Williams,
CA Archivist**

National Croquet Day is 4 June 2017

The CA Marketing Team is here to support you in developing your activities

Contact Brian Wilson 07970 922867 or 01225 708540 brian@europaassociates.co.uk

Hopgood eyes up his first Mac

Huge congratulations on your selection for the England Mac team James, and thank you for agreeing to be quizzed all about it for the Gazette. As this is the first time you will have played in the Mac team, I must first ask what it was like to be asked?

Thanks Alison. When the Chairman of Selectors asked, it was quite a relief, as getting into the Mac was obviously a significant goal of mine. However, perhaps more telling was how it felt after winning the Southern (Southern Championship), because the Mac selection was probably a consequence of the results in the tournaments over the previous month.

After the Opens, when the rest of the Mac team had been selected, the rest of the croquet season was always going to be difficult, with a number of players competing for the final spot. Inevitably, the talk of every tournament was who would be selected. All the 'experts' had their own front-runner, so it was important to deal with that in a detached manner. However, it became clear that, as there was still no favourite, winning the final spot was going to be down to doing something 'spectacular'.

As I did not have any experience of doing anything spectacular, it was down to playing one match at a time, staying focused, not worrying about what the other competitors were up to, and then seeing what happened.

Therefore, it all came down to the final match of the Southern. Gavin Carter was brilliant in the quarter-finals against Mark Avery, with several sextuples in super-advanced play, and nearly pulled off several more against David Maugham in the semis. It seemed to me that the winner of the Southern would get the Mac place. However, I managed to treat the final as just another best-of-five match – and, having scraped through the Northern final in a match I should have lost, I felt quite relaxed about what might happen. I was also a bit more relaxed than normal, as I had a very late flight home (from the Southern's Eastbourne venue, via Gatwick to his Edinburgh home), rather than the usual worry: will I catch my last train?

So winning the Southern final 3-0 on the back of the Northern Championship (and a streak of ten match wins) left me with a feeling of bemusement about how I had managed that, a sense of achievement, and a feeling of happiness about a milestone in my Association Croquet career. I felt like I had sacrificed a lot by being away from



The 2017 World AC Team Championship for the MacRobertson Shield will take place between England, Australia, holders New Zealand and hosts USA between 17 April and 4 May.

A full preview of the tournament will be carried in the April issue of the Gazette. *Getting ready -*

Alison Jones talks with England debutant James Hopgood

Laura for four of the five previous weekends, having only been married in July, as well as the expense of doing so. And so it was an emotional moment when I told Laura I had 'Done it!'

How long have you been aware of the MacRobertson Shield, when did you first aspire to one day be part of the team, and at what point did you realise that was a real possibility?

I learnt to play AC in Scotland, mid-season back in 2004. Scottish Croquet was of course buzzing with two Scottish players, Jonathan Kirby and Keith Aiton, in the Great Britain team for the 2006 Mac. Martin Stephenson, who was giving me coaching at the time, was an avid follower of all things croquet, and would talk to me a lot about the Mac, instilling the idea that it was a clear goal to aspire towards. The Nottingham Board got me interested in the Mac commentary and tactics, despite seeing very little top level croquet at that point – I had been limited to handicap games against the Beast (David Maugham) at Pendle, and getting crunched by Ian Lines at Crake.

Through encouragement from a couple of players in 2013, I thought I had a chance of getting onto the team then, although in retrospect, I didn't have the right mental approach to the game at that time by a long way. My name was never remotely in the hat then. I thought I was making steady progress in 2014-15, but wasn't achieving any breakthroughs.

The key moment, when I thought getting

onto the team was a distinct possibility, was at the start of last year (2016), when I realised why I wasn't getting my name into the hat. I realised that I wasn't playing enough matches to get any recognition, and that I was losing occasional single games in random tournaments, usually against solid but infrequent tournament players in benign conditions. I knew my single-game statistics were on a par with the other contenders. So I changed my strategy for getting noticed.

I decided to focus on major tournaments that had (multi-game) matches, which obviously incurred a large expense as most of these are a long way from Edinburgh. I also decided to play fewer tournaments where single-game upsets were more likely.

The Mac is now only a few months away. Although you have played in very many tournaments, I am aware that this one is like no other. The Mac is three weeks of play, where there are no rounds, so no quick elimination and very little rest time. This means the pressure of each game will be the same on every day - in other words there isn't the option to just play 'z games'. So what preparation will you be doing to help you deal physically and emotionally with such an intense environment?

As the Mac is at the very beginning of the start of UK season, and with Edinburgh being pretty cold and wet, this obviously somewhat limits the meaningful physical practice that can be done at home. Being physically fit will help, so the running shoes are out more than usual. I will also arrange a few intense coaching weekends in warmer England over the next few months, including tactical discussions and mental preparations, as well as keeping my swing in order through shooting practice. Let's hope the weather is kind.

With regards to the relentlessness of the tournament, there are several key aspects to consider.

First, I generally prefer playing matches to single games as you usually get a good opportunity to take control of the match. Moreover, I rarely take any game lightly (even plate games, as many on the tournament circuit will attest). Therefore, I hope to be prepared for having the same pressure each day; at least, I'll certainly be re-reading the relevant sections in my library of sports psychology books to ensure that this mentality prevails.

Second, while I haven't played three full test matches in a row previously, I did play

Roehampton christen their fabulous floodlights



“State of the art” floodlights have been installed on a lawn at Roehampton CC and were celebrated by two early evening GC events in December.

The first Roehampton International Floodlit GC Challenge was played between former Roehampton member, Stephen Mulliner (right) , and long-term Club stalwart, David Openshaw (above).

Despite the cold, the event attracted a good crowd who were fortified by mulled wine and a well-informed running commentary.

An enjoyable, close contest was eventually shaded by Openshaw 7-6 7-6 after holding good leads in both games.

A few days later Roehampton invited Surbiton to contest a first floodlit inter-club GC match, which was rewarded by much warmer weather and more mulled wine!

Surbiton honoured the occasion by sending a number of supporters and three of their winning GC Inter-Club team: Samir Patel, Chris Farthing and Don Beck, plus able substitute John Spiers to take on Roehampton’s David Openshaw, Peter Siddall, Tony Salem and John Pearson.

Patel chalked up two personal wins and Surbiton ran out 4-2 winners, leaving the final game unplayed in favour of repairing to the bar and supper.

We were grateful to all our visitors for two very successful evenings and are pleased to say that the new lights are highly rated by all.

**John Pearson,
Roehampton CC**

the Solomon Cup (GB v USA) followed by the World Championships a few years ago, which gave me a taster of the energy needed to play two full weeks of AC. The key is to work hard and play hard, but that has always been my approach to life, so I’m not worried about the limited rest time. In any case, last September was as good preparation as any, with four major tournaments within a month, a week-long conference in Budapest, and a busy work time in-between.

Finally, the Mac is of course a team event; the team members know each other very well, and we will strongly support each other throughout the event. It is important to remember this, and prepare to offer support to other team players, as well as receive support from the team and our supporters.

**Thank you again James, for sharing your thoughts with me for the Gazette. I wish you the very best of luck in America.
Alison Jones**

~

Photographs - Opposite page: James Hopgood by Ian and Sara Anderson.
This page: Floodlights by David Mooney.

WCF to review GC Rules and AC Laws



The WCF Council approved a revision to the WCF Statutes in December which, in addition to a comprehensive re-organisation of the document, revamped the terms of reference and operations of the Golf Croquet Rules Committee (GCRC) and established an Association Croquet Laws Committee (ACLC) as a successor to the International Laws Committee. The ACLC will follow similar administrative procedures to the GCRC.

Both committees will have plenty to do in 2017 as both the AC Laws 6th Edition (revised in 2008) and the GC Rules 4th Edition (published in 2013) have accumulated a large number of Official Rulings which should be incorporated into the body of the Laws/Rules.

The GC Rules are also in need of general polishing to bring them up to the drafting standard of the AC Laws. As it happens, the CA’s GC Rules Committee spent 2016 producing a draft 5th Edition which has recently been submitted to the GCRC for their consideration. The draft has sought to incorporate the Official Rulings, fill some

gaps and generally improve the drafting to make the Rules easier to use. It is too early to say when an official 5th Edition will be ready for public consultation but it is possible that it might be as soon as late 2017 or early 2018.

The AC Laws are likely to be a longer job because of their greater innate complexity. The AC public consultation process may also be expected to give rise to detailed comments which will necessitate further consideration by the ACLC.

The new WCF Statutes 132 and 133 govern the operation of the two committees and include a requirement for co-operation between them to seek common wording when dealing with similar subject matter which does not relate to the essential differences between the two games. The Laws and Rules relating to faults and to the court and equipment are the most obvious areas. It makes obvious sense for referees to judge faults in the same way and using the same criteria in both games.

Stephen Mulliner, Secretary-Gen.

WCF GC World Championship

25 February ~ 5 March - Cairnlea, Victoria, Australia

Preview

It has always been relatively easy to suggest who should be in the frame for the Golf Croquet World Championship but much harder to pick the winner.

In 2015, Ahmed El Mahdi had not really hit the headlines until he found about two extra gears to surge past Reg Bamford in the quarter-final, Stephen Mulliner in the semi-final and, from 0-2 down (and 1-5 down in game 5) Hamy Erian in the final, to take the title with some truly inspired hitting.

His recent form has not been as good as it can be, but it is difficult not to see him as one of the potential knock-out favourites.

The other top five names are the usual suspects of Ahmed and Mohamed Nasr, Reg Bamford, Hamy Erian and, a newish name from the younger Egyptian group, Amr El Ibieri, who has had wins against all the top Egyptians during 2016.

Much will turn on whether Ahmed Nasr can find his best form when coping with the Atkins hoops in Melbourne.

His play in the Egyptian International Open last October was at its overwhelming best in the last two games of the semi-final against Reg Bamford and in the final against Hamy Erian. In 2015, he tried unsuccessfully to batter the Atkins hoops into submission and came a cropper against Stephen Mulliner.

Will the hoops be as demanding in Australia as in New Zealand?

Will he need to adopt a different approach this time?

Stephen Mulliner introduces the front runners



Below the top half-dozen are a small and exciting raft of young players, England's John-Paul Moberly, Egyptian pair Mohamed Kareem and Mohamed Walid, and the two Kiwis, Duncan Dixon and Josh Freeth.

Not too far away is Greg Fletcher, the oldest of the Fletcher trio, who won the 2016 Australian GC Open on his debut.

However, there is another intriguing set of young talent, namely the Under 21 GCWC players.

They are assured of two U21 wild card places in the main event and could gain a further two Qualifier Places.

The field contains some players who have already gained GCWC places but there are others like Edmund Fordyce from New Zealand, who beat both Duncan Dixon and Josh Freeth to win the NZ Open in January, and the talented Mohamed Rashad from Egypt.

It would be really good for GC if this generation of young players could make it to the later stages.

Other names who might feature well include Ian Burrige of Wales, a latish convert to GC who had a great finish to the 2016 season with victory in the English National Singles Championship (Ascot Cup), New Zealand's Jenny Clarke who had an excellent GC World Teams Championship in May and your correspondent who would dearly love to be only the second player to do the 'AC/GC double'!

Stephen Mulliner

Follow the action with scores updates and some 'ball by ball' commentary on www.croquetscores.com

In addition to those mentioned in Stephen Mulliner's preview above, two other CA members are making the trip.

GC top circuit regular Richard Brooks of Sussex County CC believes he is probably the oldest player to be making a debut in the history of this Championship. Also in the starting line-up is Bowdon's David Walters who had a very impressive World Teams Championship for Wales in 2016.

Good luck to all seven CA members taking part: Bamford, Brooks, Burrige, Clarke, Moberly, Mulliner and Walters.

Ed.

Photographs: Complementing the favourites on the front cover are fancied Egyptians Hamy Erian (top) and Mohamed Kareem, and clockwise; Welsh duo Ian Burrige and David Walters, Richard Brooks and Jenny Clarke (photos by Chris Roberts).



All set for the GC Series 'get your diaries out'

The GC Tournaments committee has announced the 2017 Series roster below. CA website pages have been set up for you to follow the three competitions - look under 'Tournaments' and then 'CA Events'.

English National Singles Championship

(unrestricted)

16-17 April - Surbiton
 23-24 April - Sidmouth
 13-14 May - East Anglia (at Colchester)
 4-5 June - Cheltenham
 11-12 June - Ramsgate
 1-2 Jul - Ashby
 15-16 July - Nottingham
 30-31 Jul - Wiltshire (at Hamptworth)
 17-18 Sept. - FINAL - 'The Ascot Cup'
 (at Nottingham)

A-Level Series

(unrestricted)

22-23 April - Cheltenham
 29-30 April - Lancashire (at Pendle)
 6-7 May - Northampton
 5-6 June - Woking
 17-18 June - Pendle
 8-9 July - Ryde
 15-16 July - East Dorset
 9-10 Sept. - Sussex (at Sussex County)

There is no Final for this Series; it is a straight points race.

B-Level Series

(for handicaps 3 - 8)

6-7 May - Sussex County
 8 May - Watford
 11 May - Ryde (NEW)
 17 May - Wrest Park
 20 May - Pendle (NEW)
 20-21 May - East Dorset (NEW)
 8 June - Northampton
 14 June - Ealing
 17 June - Leighton-Linslade
 24-25 June - Hamptworth
 25 June - Colchester
 1 July - Hunstanton
 8 July - Bury
 12 July - Nottingham
 13 July - Bath
 15 July - Middlesbrough
 5 August - Guildford
 8 August - Nailsea (NEW)
 5 August - Southport & Birkdale (NEW)
 11-12 Aug - Phyllis Court
 19 August - Ashby
 19-20 Aug - Budleigh-Salterton
 27-28 Aug - Hurlingham
 5 Sept. - Edgbaston
 7-8 Oct. - NATIONAL FINAL
 (at Southport & Birkdale)

Tibble tops strongest field yet at Dulwich

The Third Dulwich President's Selection tournament attracted its strongest field yet and was again **Sponsored by Little Forest** <http://www.littleforest.co.uk/>, reports **Guy Scurfield**.

The two-day invitational event designed to blow away the January cobwebs saw six home players joined by six well-ranked visitors, topped by UK number 3 JP Moberly and England internationals Tobi Savage (the holder) and Lionel Tibble.

Tibble topped Block A comfortably and Moberly won Block B but with others all around him. Four from each block qualified for quarter-finals where everyone decided that the round would be better played under minimal floodlights and dry conditions, rather than in the following day's predicted downpour.

To add something a little different, the quarters were decided by best-of-three, 7-point games, with the opening hoop of game one started by the alternative method recently suggested by Reg Bamford.

This involves the first ball being played on to the court and then the opponent having the option to take ownership of it and its partner colour for that game - the idea being that the advantage of winning the toss is eliminated. (This and other suggestions by Bamford can be read in full on the CA website - Ed)

The quarter-final games were finished in near darkness and left the top four ranked players lined-up for the semis - Tibble v Moberly and Savage v Beaudry - with prize money available for the first three places, as well as for the winner of the plate.

On day 2 the rain arrived in full force but did not deter anyone, as Tibble and Savage reached the final 10-6 and 10-7 respectively.

The host's Simon Carter beat club mate Mark Daley 4-2 in the Plate final and in the main event 3/4 play-off Moberly won 7-4.

The main final was a tense affair with Savage's trademark distance hoop running offset by Tibble's precise play. Tibble eventually prevailed 7-6, 7-5 to win the title in rapidly fading light.

There was great support on both days and a superb BBQ provided by our sponsors.

The strong field: JP Moberly (UK no.3), Tobi Savage (6), Pierre Beaudry (14), Lionel Tibble (18), Guy Scurfield (19), Howard Cheyne (20), Nick Cheyne (25), James Goodbun (31), Mark Daley (36), Simon Carter (39), Andrew Dymond (117), Sue Lightbody (currently unranked).



The First Student GC Championship is launched

University students from all over the UK will be migrating to Sheffield over the weekend of 8-9 April for the first **Student Golf Croquet Championship**.

It is hoped that the tournament will involve as many croquet-playing students as possible and will help to promote GC amongst the younger generation.

We will be providing the students with a really enjoyable weekend and a chance to meet lots of like-minded individuals in what should be a fantastic atmosphere.

All of the known university croquet clubs have been invited to attend; **Sheffield (hosts), Cambridge, Edinburgh, Imperial, Nottingham, St. Andrew's, Royal Agricultural (RAU) and Oxford Brookes have all accepted, and Trinity (Dublin)** may also add an Irish dimension.

If you know of any university clubs that have been omitted from this list, please contact me, Jonathan Simpson (details below).

We would also like to include students from universities without their own croquet clubs, so please pass on my details to any croquet-playing students or university contacts you know of.

Sheffield University Croquet Society is flourishing in its second year of operation, with around 25 members enjoying practice sessions and progressing well.

We visited Nottingham last season (by train, as the 'Selfie plus' photo below shows) for a joint tournament with the University there and shall be organising matches with other clubs for 2017, including against Sheffield Croquet Club, with whom we share a very fruitful relationship and receive whole-hearted support.

Jonathan Simpson, Sheffield University Croquet Society

jsimpson1@sheffield.ac.uk or 07591 183359

~

Tim King, Chairman of the Golf Croquet Tournament Committee (GCTC) writes:

The GCTC is due to meet on 4 February (whilst this issue of the Gazette will be at the printers) and we will be identifying ways in which to provide appropriate support to this exciting initiative.



International teams coming to Sussex

by Ray Hall

WCF World AC Teams Championship
Tiers 2.1, 2.2 and 3
at Sussex County CC, Southwick
17 July to 22 July

In 2010 the long-standing MacRobertson Shield contest became part of the World Croquet Federation team series and the Association Croquet World Team Championship was established to extend the opportunities for team competition to other countries. Tiers 2.1, 2.2 and 3 were established to a format based on the "Mac", and Great Britain was separated into component countries.

The Mac became Tier 1 as the flagship of the new championship and England squeezed past NZ that year, although NZ won in 2013. But, other than the participants, these additional tiers may have held less interest for the typical Gazette reader. Nevertheless, take note of one of the features introduced in 2010, namely the possibility of promotion and demotion, as you may see from the following summary of results.

Wales won the inaugural Tier 2.1 Championship in 2010, beating South Africa, Jersey and Ireland and in 2014 Ireland beat Wales, Scotland and South Africa.

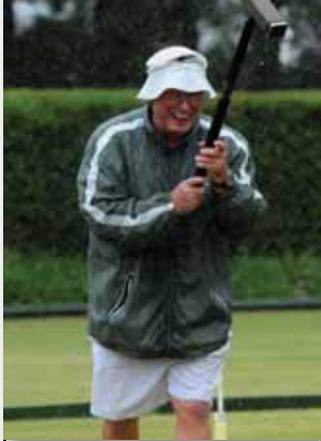
In the Tier 2.2 competition of 2010, Scotland beat Spain, Canada and Japan while the Czech- Moravian Republic took tier 3 from Sweden, Germany and Belgium.

In 2014 the lower two tiers were merged as a practical measure because there were only seven entries, and this resulting in a narrow win for Spain (*pictured right*) over Austria followed by Sweden, Germany, Canada, Czech Republic and Norway.

Scotland were promoted to Tier 2.1 for 2014 and, all things being equal, we expect Spain to replace South Africa for 2017. Nevertheless, some WCF members (Jersey, Japan and Belgium) were unable to field teams in 2014 and Austria did not compete in 2010, so places depend very much on entry declarations later this year.

All of the lower tiers will be hosted this year by Sussex County CC at Southwick.

The organising committee does not know which teams will enter, but we look forward very much to welcoming them and you too as spectators. The opening ceremony is on Sunday 16 July and the action concludes on Saturday 22 July.



Be happy in the rain

by David Openshaw

In the last issue, I had to cut short David's 'Getting Shirty' article as he was remembering bad weather at The Resort in the Mountain, Oregon, USA in 1999. He was about to share a top tip, so back to you David. . (Ed)



... My other reason for remembering this match was that during what turned out to be my winning break it started to hail, and by the time I pegged out the lawn was totally white and covered in hail stones. My focus was such that I didn't really notice the hail till the end of my break. And this leads me nicely to another coaching tip. I will describe it in a simple and easily memorable way:

Make friends with the weather!

Here is an opportunity to create a competitive advantage at whatever level you play. I was pleased to have a reputation as someone who liked to play in the rain. I saw it as a competitive advantage. But I will leave it to you to decide whether I really like playing in the rain.

There is a lot more to this than having a positive attitude. In fact by itself I do not regard having a positive attitude as particularly useful advice. There needs to be a firm basis for any positive attitude, otherwise it will evaporate away at the first sign of trouble. Any statements to yourself or to others like I will win today or I'm feeling really positive are doomed to failure unless you have some substance behind them. So what can you do to provide some good foundation for a positive outlook? There are many things; here are a number of examples:

1. Practise in different weather conditions. It's not particularly attractive to spend a wet afternoon practising. But you should do it. The same applies to, for instance, windy or cold conditions.

2. Consider how the weather might affect your general tactics. Are you going to adopt different tactics? Develop a plan for different weather conditions.

3. Make sure you have clothes and footwear suitable to the conditions. For example, if it is raining you will need towels and at least one change of clothes. I was on holiday in Murmansk in northern Russia a few years ago. It was August so not too cold! I asked our guide how he managed in the winter months when it was very cold and dark. He said very perceptively that **there is no such thing as bad weather just bad clothes.**

4. Make sure you are able to switch on a strong focus on playing the immediate shot. Stop that little voice in your head from saying things like I wish it wasn't so windy or I wish I was back in the warmth of the pavilion or I wish I hadn't missed that shot an hour ago. It is not easy to stop that little voice and in fact it is very difficult. So don't underestimate the challenge to improve in this area.

These are four examples of how you might improve your performance in poor weather conditions. There are many others. We are all different so what suits one player might not apply to another. I advise everyone to give some thought to what can help them.

David Openshaw

Photos - Happy and so not in the rain - Jim Field (left) winning in South Africa last year and Will Gee at the 2014 Selectors First Eight (Musk's Cup) - images by Chris Roberts



Coaching Courses ~ stop press ~

Chairman of the Coaching Committee Jonathan Isaacs reports that, due to demand, The Academy (Southwick) is to lay-on **an additional GC Rules course** and probably another **GC Beginners and Improvers** as well. These bolster The Academy's offering that was listed in our last issue (*Gazette 365*). This is an on-going situation, so please refer to the Academy's website: www.thecroquetacademy.com.

More Coaching and Training Courses

The Northern Croquet Academy (at York)

First came the Academy at Southwick, then the South West Academy...

Welcome now to the new Northern Academy!

Based at York CC, The Northern Academy benefits from York's bowling-green playing surfaces, and from its city centre location close to the station with direct rail links around the country.

York has been hosting CA coaching courses for several years, and has developed a reputation for a warm welcome and quality provision.

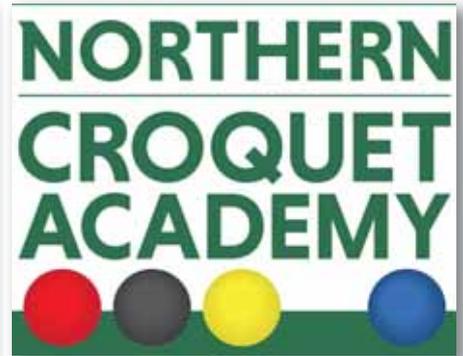
With the launch of the Northern Academy, the course offer for 2017 is much enlarged, covering both AC and GC, and with every course being led by an experienced CA-qualified coach.

"This is an exciting time of rapid development at York," **the Northern Academy co-ordinator John Harris told the Gazette**, "and York CC is delighted to have been asked to host this important contribution to the development of the game as a whole.

We're determined to ensure that every course runs to the highest standard.

We'll also want to do all we can to ensure that all participants not only benefit from Northern Academy courses, but also very much enjoy the experience."

Courses previously offered nationally at York, and this year running under the Northern Academy banner, include three AC courses – Aiming for Bronze, Aiming for Silver, and An Introduction to AC; and one



Dates	Course (at York unless stated)	Cost	Ideal H'cap	Leader
2 April	AC/GC - The psychology of winning	£35/£30	Any	Cliff Jones
22-23 April	AC - Aiming for Silver	£55/£45	AC 10 - 16	Roger Staples
29 April	AC/GC - Refresh your technique	£30/£25*	Any	Derek Knight
30 April	AC - Refine your practising	£30/£25*	AC 20 or less	Derek Knight
6-7 May	AC - Aiming for Bronze	£55/£45	AC 12 - 18	Roger Staples
17-18 May	AC/GC - Coach Training Course (CTC) at Nottingham	£45/£35	-	Roger Staples
20-21 May	AC/GC - Become a qualified coach	£55/£45	-	Roger Staples
11 June	GC - Golf Croquet tactics	£35/£30	GC 9 or less	John Crossland
17 June	AC - Tactics to win	£30/£25	AC 18 or less	To be finalised
22-23 July	AC - An introduction to AC	£55/£45	-	John Harris

* 29 & 30 April courses are offered at £55/£45 if booked together

AC/GC course – Become a Qualified Coach.

The other five courses have all been trialled and tested at York and elsewhere and are now being offered for the first time as part of the Northern Academy programme.

Two of these are AC/GC – The Psychology of Winning, and Refresh Your Technique; one is GC – Golf Croquet Tactics; and two are AC – Refine Your Practising, and Tactics to Win.

Further details of all these courses are in the CA Fixtures Book and on

the Northern Academy website www.northerncroquetacademy.org

For more, or to check course availability, contact John Harris direct at northerncroquetacademy@gmail.com or 01904 620211. Booking is open now!

~

Photograph above: Derek Knight (Beverley CC), one of the Northern Academy coaching team, in discussion with Kathleen Penrose (Durham CC) about mallet styles at the 2016 Aiming for Silver course at York. (Photo by John Harris)

All the courses offered at The Croquet Academy (Southwick) and The South-West Croquet Academy (Budleigh) were detailed in the last issue - Gazette 365. Here are some other offered elsewhere.

And there's more . . .

Photographs: Tournament Management with Chris Roberts & Frances Colman. Ian Vincent refereeing at the 2013 Mac. Richard Peperell delivering last season's 'fun coaching' afternoon at H.Wycombe.

Other CA 'Fixtures Book advertised' courses away from the three Academy bases					
Dates	Venue	Course	Cost	Ideal H'cap	Leaders
6 Mar	Phyllis Court	AC/GC - Tournament and Competition Management	£50/£45	Any	Frances Colman & Chris Roberts
15-16 Mar	Phyllis Court	GC - Rules and Referees Qualification (Day 1: Rules day only) >>	£70/£60 £40/£35	Any	Cliff Jones
21-22 Mar	H.Wycombe	AC/GC - Coach Training Course (CTC)	£70/£60	Any	Cliff Jones
26-26 Mar	Cheltenham	AC/GC - Coach Training Course (CTC)	£45/£35	Any	Dave Kibble
1-2 Apr	Nottingham	AC - Training AC Referees	£45/£35	Any	Ian Vincent
20 July	H.Wycombe	GC - "Fun Coaching" afternoon	£15/£10	3+	Ian Shore & Richard Peperell

Photographs by Don Rutherford, Paddy Chapman and Keith Pound



Croquet is run by an army of volunteers, among whom are some very special people. These are the folk that 'make it all happen' at our Clubs. These are the do-ers, the ones who just get on with it. Often unseen in their work, they do not seek praise or thanks, but here they deservedly get both. These are the 2016 recipients of CA Diplomas for outstanding contributions to their clubs and our sport.

Philip Bass, Fylde CC

Philip joined Fylde CC in 1997, and has proved invaluable to the development of the club at its new site within South Shore Tennis Club. The Club started with three neglected tennis courts, one small 12' by 10' shed, and flooding was a major problem. Philip more or less single-handedly dug a 68-yard ditch to drain water from the blocked underground clay pipes to a culvert in the road. He supervised the dismantling and erection of a new larger shed bought from eBay, and designed, supervised and, with help, built a very secure awning which has withstood the coastal winds admirably. Recently he has plumbed water into one of the sheds. Philip also maintains the machinery and has designed and built a tiner from an old mower. He mows, strims and maintains the lawns and surrounding areas. It is hard to convey the effort and graft Philip has put into the club. Being able to advertise and run a CA Tournament with no fear of cancellation due to weather, having suitable facilities to cater for visitors, and to know the lawns are the best we can offer, requires confidence in the club, and Philip has provided us with all this.

Richard Brooks, Sussex County CC

A regular on the tournament circuit, Richard is a leading GC player and SCCC's GC Captain. He has always been very encouraging to up-and-coming GC players, and has organised a Monday afternoon low handicap session at Southwick for many years, which has greatly contributed to the club's strong performance in the SECF leagues.

Putting his engineering background to good use, Richard has for many years led Southwick's lawn lay-out and hoop-setting team, and he has built a bespoke hoop-lifting device which was featured in the Gazette. Richard has also put in many days'

work in flattening the approach areas to hoops before the recent lawn renovation programme.

Penny Crowe, Cheltenham CC

Penny Crowe joined Cheltenham Croquet Club in 1992, and in 1998 she became Press Officer, a post she held for nine years, three of which overlapped with her position as Secretary of the Club. The club lacked a proper health and safety policy; Penny set about correcting this omission and the template, which she designed, is still used today. She also introduced the club's Accident Book and also a system for reporting health and safety matters. In 2002 Penny became a club coach and also a referee. Many club members owe their start in the sport to Penny's careful coaching, and she has also refereed many tournaments. In spite of all that she was already contributing to the club, Penny next volunteered to manage many of the club tournaments including the popular Croquet/Bridge event. Penny has also volunteered to help with teas, reports to the local newspaper, and has reported for the CA Gazette on many occasions.

Lorna Frost, Bowdon CC

Lorna Frost joined Bowdon Croquet Club in 1997, and quickly established herself as a very capable and able manager of many things. She joined the Club committee in 1999, and in 2007 became its Chairman, a post she still holds. On the sporting front, since 2000 she has successfully managed the weekly club summer midweek competition with a flexible format system that caters for between two and forty players. The fact that the competition has become so popular with the membership is testimony to its inclusiveness and her personal friendly approach. She has also found time to manage other Club events and numerous CA Calendar events including the 'May Handicap', 'Northern Week' and 'B Class Tournament' held at the Club over the years. If this wasn't enough to keep her busy, she has undertaken the role of Captain of various club teams, has played a prominent role in coaching at the Club, assisted with coaching within the North West Federation, and has provided and organised catering at Club events, which has met with much acclaim from visiting players, officials and spectators. Lorna continues to do all of these things in a friendly and jovial manner, with a resultant valuable contribution to the sport, especially the Club.

Richard Jenkins, Hamptworth CC

Richard Jenkins set up the GC Winter Series in 2009 and, as was highlighted in a Gazette article, he grew something from nothing. Initially the winter series was on two lawns for eight players, but increased rapidly with popularity to four lawns for 16 players on both days of a weekend each month through the winter. These tournaments are now fully booked, well in advance, as players find it so beneficial to have competition through the cold dark days of winter. Richard has managed the tournaments brilliantly, coping with extreme weather and also the vagaries of the Hamptworth Clubhouse. He is attentive to players' needs, and tries tirelessly to provide a good day.

He has now completed over a hundred such tournaments. The successful winter series led onto the C-Level Spring and Autumn tournaments from which the B-Level competition was born, and Richard then managed the first National B-Level GC tournament at Hamptworth in 2013. Richard thoroughly deserves public recognition for his dedication and committed hard work for the game of croquet by setting up and running the GC Winter Series.



Betty King, Norwich CC

Betty joined the Norwich Croquet Club in the late 1980s, and was one of a small group of players who kept the club running, serving on the committee and taking turns as secretary or treasurer. Betty was involved in the Short Croquet Country Houses initiative in the east. She then ran a GC course at the WI's Denman College, other courses for the W.I. at Norwich, and began to build a Golf Croquet section for the Club. Through her dedication, these small

beginnings grew into a thriving section that now outnumbered the AC players. As a GC referee, club coach and handicapper she enthusiastically organised the Club's GC matches, internal tournaments and managed the league teams for many years. She began the 'Spring Lunch' with its fundraising raffles. Without her efforts in building up the Club's membership and funds over the years, when problems with a sudden increase in the cost of lawn hire began, a smaller club might well have folded. However, with the help of a CA Grant and the strength of the members, mainly recruited by Betty, Norwich CC has survived, and now in its new location has a real future. Norwich CC elected Betty King an Honorary Life Member some years ago

as a mark of the respect the members have for all her work and the many efforts she has made for and on behalf of the Club over more than 25 years.

Arthur Lindley, Guildford & Godalming CC

Since 2009 Arthur Lindley has made a genuinely massive contribution

to the development of the club, concentrating on the improvement of the condition of the lawns. This went hand in hand with the need to relocate three of the four lawns, two being freshly laid and one being converted from a redundant bowling green. He researched all aspects of lawn care and maintenance and was the driving force in implementing a lawn improvement programme. The results of this have attracted much positive comment from visiting players, notably during Tier 3 of the recent GC World Team Championship. Arthur's commitment goes further: he masterminded the construction, by club members, of a robust and well-designed 80m fence to separate the croquet lawns

from the rugby pitches, and hundreds of metres of much-needed rabbit-proof boundary fence. He is in charge of the club's growing collection of equipment, servicing and maintaining usable items, sourcing replacements for redundant items, and keeping everything ticking over. Despite all of these activities, Arthur still finds time to be an active AC player in club competitions, matches and CA tournaments, and manages an AC winter club competition for which he made the trophy. He is universally liked and respected for the impetus he has given to change at the club as it had to adapt to new circumstances. His is an extraordinary level of commitment.

Eileen Prodger, Sussex County CC

Eileen works very much behind the scenes at Sussex CCC. She spends time in the Club's gardens throughout the year keeping the borders bright and cheerful, and also helping with the major gardening tasks in the winter. She is part of the catering team and cooks up excellent meals, as well as providing home-grown fruit and vegetables from her own garden. She also makes jam for sale to help the club funds. Eileen is a regular face at the Club's golf croquet roll-ups, plays in league teams and is a great supporter of Sussex CCC in all areas.

Walter Sanders, Middlesbrough CC

Walter has been a member of the Middlesbrough club since its inception in 1988. When the club moved from Ormesby

Hall to its Prissick base in 1998, Walter was instrumental in ensuring there was adequate storage for the club's equipment within the existing pavilion. When the club was on the move again to Albert Park in 2006 it acquired a burnt-out wreck of a portacabin container to use as a secure equipment cabin near the lawns. Again Walter organised a team of club members to refurbish it and produce a highly versatile storage and clubhouse which has been nicknamed 'the Tardis' because of its ability to provide so many facilities. Walter maintains all of the club equipment, repainting hoops and pegs annually, as well as the Tardis when repairs are required.

Without his stalwart efforts, the club would be much the poorer. Walter also organises an annual four-day visit in early December to Cober Hill (near Scarborough), transporting all the club's indoor carpet croquet equipment and setting it up in a hall, for members and friends to enjoy.

Mike Tracey, Nailsea and District CC

Mike started to play croquet in 2006, and quickly became involved in Club life in a wide variety of activities. He became team captain, organising the squads for the league teams, the hoop-setting team leader and club chairman for three years. He then took on the role of treasurer, producing detailed spreadsheets which gave the Committee a much deeper grasp of the accounts. He is now a qualified AC referee and he manages the annual C Class Advanced Tournament at Nailsea. A few years ago Mike ran bridge classes for beginners, forming a group who play every week, making a valuable contribution to the Club coffers. As if all the above were not enough, Mike offers his house and refreshments for Committee meetings, his garden and barbecue for fund-raising parties, and has also organised quizzes. When his wife, Liz, produces a spectacular tournament lunch, Mike is always there to act as assistant. Mike takes a full part in all Committee discussions, and constantly has the best interest of croquet and the Club at heart. He has been the driving force on many issues, and his contributions to the set-up and maintenance of the Club website are typical of his integrity and determination.

Photograph: (back) Richard Jenkins, Richard Brookes, Arthur Lindley, (front) Philip Bass, CA President Quiller Barrett and Penny Crowe after receiving their awards at the CA AGM in November. The other recipients were not present and received their awards later (image by Chris Roberts).



For the year ahead

I hope you'll think this print will suit
For Birthday Card, as substitute.
It comes with wishes most sincere
To celebrate another year.
May Breaks continue to impress
And may your Handicap grow less!
Developing your skills; unfurling 'em
At Eastbourne, Roehampton or
Hurlingham.

That I'm so ignorant a chap
On Croquet, is a handicap.
Which tends to make these verses hard
As Bisques are not allows a bard.
I'm trying all the terms to play.
I'm near the peg (a 'Rover' say).
My turn is over and I founder.
Let us hope your croquet's sounder.

Tony Fathers, Roehampton CC

Isaac Spratt: Failure or Founder?

by Roger Bray

Isaac Spratt was the proprietor of a modest shop in (Little) Brook Street, London¹ – the first on the left going from New Bond Street towards Regent Street (now a jeweller's just opposite Fenwick department store). He had leased the building in the 1820s for a toy and brush 'repository'.

The shop was strategically well-placed close to the town houses of the aristocracy and landed gentry in Grosvenor and Hanover Squares, and on a thoroughfare connecting two of London's most fashionable shopping streets. By 1850 it was one of a handful of established toyshops in Mayfair.

Spratt, aged 52, imported French and German toys, offered magic lanterns for sale or hire and even entertained evening parties with marionettes and conjuring tricks. He also created his own toys and games, but had little room to either make or assemble them on the premises, especially as his family and servant lived over the shop.

1851 was the year of the Great Exhibition. As a respected tradesman Spratt was one of its early sponsors, and as an accomplished craftsman one of his games, Cockamaroo (a Russian form of bagatelle), and a model hay cart were accepted for exhibition. In March he proudly advertised himself as

"Toy-manufacturer to Her Majesty".

Two years later he claimed the patronage not only of Queen Victoria but of the Royal Family in general.

Sometime in this period a young lady, Mary Macnaghten, whose family had a London house at the Grosvenor Square end of Brook Street, approached Spratt about a game called croquet which she had seen on the continent and in Ireland.

Spratt made, or had made, some "implements" and in August 1853 published a rudimentary set of rules for the game based on a draft compiled by Mary's teenage brother, Fergus. Although sales may have been slow initially, by June 1855 Spratt was able to place the following advertisement in the *Morning Post*:

SPRATT'S NEW OUT-DOOR GAME

(as used by the Royal Family), is to be had only at Spratt's Repository, 1, Brook-Street, Hanover Square, where may be had Jack's Alive, Lawn Billiards, Garden Bowls, Archery, Cricket, Balloons, and every new out-door amusement.

It is odd that Spratt did not name his new game, but there is little doubt that it was croquet.

The patronage of the Royal Family, even though it didn't reach the giddy heights of a royal warrant, was the key to success in persuading the upper classes to follow this latest fashion.

In the following summer Spratt continued to advertise the game in the London press and by September, when Lucy Lyttelton recorded the arrival of a croquet set at her family's country seat in Worcestershire, it had spread well beyond London, (No doubt it was then quickly adopted by Lucy's close relatives, the Gladstones.)

In November Spratt, to protect his interests, registered his Rules of the New Game of Croquet with the Stationers' Company, and in December the name "Croquet" appeared for the first time in a Spratt advertisement.



It was at this stage that an ambitious and energetic John Jaques (junior) decided to enter the fray. He ran a manufacturing and wholesale business with his father and, in May 1857, advertised:

THE NEW OUT-DOOR GAME, CROQUÉT

This Noble GAME, so much in vogue among the higher circles, is admirably adapted for the lawn or grass-plot, and affords capital exercise and amusement. Price, complete with mallets, arches, balls, &c., 25s.; superior, 45s. Sold by Spurin, Bond-street; Spratt, Brook-Street;; and most of the principal fancy repositories. – Wholesale, JAQUES, Hatton-Garden.

The game was, by then, clearly fashionable and Jaques aimed to expand the market even further to the rapidly growing middle classes who could afford to live in the newly built London suburbs

and elsewhere. To make it even more fashionable, he also suggested a French origin for the game by adding a circumflex to the "e" in "Croquét".

From the start Jaques listed Spratt as one of his retailers, but the latter also continued to advertise his own croquet sets. This may simply have been trying to sell off old stock, but the fact that Spratt also compiled a set of "Improved Rules" in 1859 suggests a more competitive stance.²

The individual maker-retailer, however, was no match for the entrepreneurial manufacturer-wholesaler, and Jaques soon proved triumphant.

Spratt's toy and games shop, with novelties and entertainments, continued for more than a decade.

He exhibited a "collection of games and toys" at the 1862 International Exhibition and his advertisements continued to boast royal patronage, even naming the Prince of Wales in 1870. But, unlike Jaques, Spratt was unable to pass the business on to his (only) son, who was in the medical appliances trade. In order to keep the shop going he probably relied increasingly on help from his two youngest (of four) daughters. His wife died in 1873 and Isaac followed in 1876, aged 78.

Notes:

¹ Dr Prior wrote in his Notes on Croquet (1872) that, in the 1850s, "Mr Spratt kept [his croquet] implements in the shop for some years, and finding no demand for them, sold the game

to Mr Jaques." Shortly afterwards Jaques stated that his croquet sets were not even modelled on Spratt's.

Consequently Spratt's attempts to popularise croquet have been deemed a failure, and he has been marginalised in the history of the game. By contrast, he can now be seen as a true pioneer in making croquet fashionable in high society, an essential first step before it spread much wider in mid-Victorian Britain.

²Max Hooper has published much interesting information about Spratt (see <http://maxhooper.info/spratt.html> for example) but the present article uses more recently available online resources to give a fuller and somewhat different picture.

When David Drazin compiled his *Croquet Bibliography* (1999) he was not aware that Spratt had produced a revised set of rules and was unable to reconcile apparently two conflicting versions of the original text (see *Gazette, January 1996, p.15*).



Women's Croquet

by Beatrice McGlen



As the fixtures book lands on your doormat and you start to browse through, eagerly planning the new season, you may spot that various events are planned which are aimed at encouraging women to play more AC advanced croquet.

This initiative followed the successful Women's World Championship held in 2015.

A Women's Group was formed, comprising all those who had an AC ranking, and a survey in late 2015 identified the areas where there was a need for development.

The following is planned for 2017

1. **The Women's Group Coaching** has been very well received and, continuing our policy of moving activity around the country, this year the coaching will be held at Bowdon on Sunday 9 April. The coaches will be the CA's International Performance Director, Ian Burrige, and the reigning Women's World Champion, Miranda Chapman. You can't get much better than

that! The tuition is aimed at women who are playing advanced AC but who would like to learn more about tactics, leaves, pick-ups, shot selection. Please e-mail me by 26 March if you would like to take part.

2. **The CA Women's Representative Team**, consisting of six players, is selected each year to challenge the previous year's winners of the Inter-Counties second division. This is a two-day event played as doubles on day one and singles on day two. For 2017 the opponents will be Yorkshire and the event will be held on 13-14 May in the beautiful city of York. This is a selection event so you need to make yourself available if you would like to be considered. The closing date is 12 March and the team will be announced on 19 March. Players, male or female, eligible and willing to play for Yorkshire should contact their captain, John Davis, directly.

3. **The Men's and Women's Championship** is to be held at Cheltenham 14-18 June and entry can be made on-line. If you haven't played in this before and would just like to get a taste, then please consider entering the mixed doubles. You can find your own partner; ask the manager to assign you one; or let me know if you would like me to help you find a partner.

The number one ranked female player in the world, New Zealander Jenny Clarke, plans to play this year but don't let that put you off!

4. **The Women's Sixes**, known as the Barlow Bowl and Longman Trophy, will also be played at Cheltenham, on 12-13 August. The competition was revived last year for the first time after a long absence and was a very enjoyable weekend with lots of laughter and some serious croquet, under the relaxed management of Sarah Hayes. This is also a selection event with the closing date on 23 June and selection announced on 30 June.

To all the women players reading this, if you did not receive an e-mail from me in January and would like to be included in the Women's Group then please contact me. Also, please don't be shy about putting your name down for these events or any other events – we have a common aim of improving women's croquet and the way to do that is to be a little braver each season!



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Lawn Care ~ by Duncan Hector

Turf Care February and March

Keep the grass trimmed to around 8mm. Mowing in winter is very important: it encourages the growth of side-shoots and thickens the sward. If the grass is allowed to grow long it will become leggy and the sward will thin. A thin sward is an invitation for moss and coarse grasses to gain a foothold. Moss can be dealt with but coarse grasses are very hard to treat.

Spike monthly if you have a spiker – thin tines are best.

In February apply moss killer/grass hardener. You should have treated the moss in October/November so this treatment will knock out any moss that has regenerated during the winter.

If your turf suffers from Dry Patch it is important to start the course of treatment in March/April to get water into the root zone early in the season. Water repellent soil stays repellent even during the winter months. The surface may absorb water and it will kid you that all is well. The problem is in the root zone lower down where repellency can linger to a depth of a foot or more.

If there are any bare patches ensure that you have a stock of grass seed (Bar Extreme is my recommendation) for application when the growing season starts (usually April). As I said in the last issue, seed must be kept moist and this is easily achieved using a special seeding compost. This holds moisture (unlike most composts) and encourages a good germination. Furthermore it disappears in the profile so doesn't spoil the flat surface.

If recommended for your turf, apply winter feed in February, spray for worms in March and wait until April for before applying your spring feed.

I have moved home to Norfolk and will be creating a croquet lawn in the garden. Watch this space.

Duncan Hector www.duncanhectorturfcare.co.uk
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National Croquet Day 4 June

**The CA Marketing Team is here to support you
in developing your activities**

Contact Brian Wilson

07970 922867 or 01225 708540
brian@europaassociates.co.uk



Although not soon enough for the last issue, the above photograph of Enfield CC celebrating their first Longman Cup victory has since come to light.

So congratulations again Enfield!

New home needed for old croquet books

Here is an opportunity go get your hands on some croquet history and reference publications.

On behalf of another club member, Wrest Park's John Bevington is looking for an appreciative new home for a collection of croquet books as follows:

1. 1974 MacRobertson Shield tour programme issue (2 copies), and results issue
2. World Championship souvenir programme 1989
3. Laws Book 1961 (first edition)
4. CA Handbook 1970
5. Abridged handbook of the CA 1970-1972
6. CA Fixtures Books 1969 – 1979 (1970 missing)
7. Croquet by Lord Tollemache 1914
8. Modern Croquet Tips and Practice by Lord Tollemache (no date)
9. Croquet by John Solomon 1983 (hardback reprint of 1964 original)
10. Croquet and How to Play It by David Miller and Rupert Thorp 1966
11. The History of Croquet by DMC Prichard 1981
12. Croquet The Complete Guide by AE Gill 1988
13. Croquet (NatWest Bank Coaching Series) 1973

"They are all 'free to good home' says John."

They are offered as a single lot or could be split into CA material and the books. I would rather do it that way rather than have people enquiring about individual items as that would cause the disposal process to drag on indefinitely.

Collection would have to be arranged as postage would be prohibitive, so please contact me, **John Bevington**, on **01908 614493** or **jbevin1251@aol.com**.

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E-mail contributions, including tournament reports should be sent direct to the Editor, or copied to the Editor if they are being posted to the Nottingham List. Digital images are preferred, but photographic prints may also be also acceptable. Please send digital jpeg or tiff format files. Please accompany all images with a description of the subject. If you require any material to be returned please enclose an SAE.

Queries regarding the delivery of the Gazette to members should be directed to the Manager of the Croquet Association and not to the Editor.

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