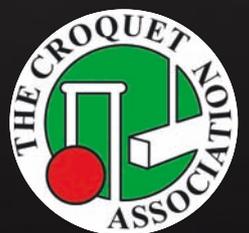


The

Issue 374 June / July 2018

CROQUET

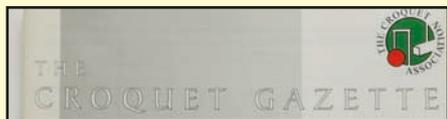
Gazette



From our files

researched by Frances Colman

10 years ago - 2008



Wisdom of the ages – Tony Fathers and Brian Rees may have ages which add up to 161 (see April issue) but Ian Burn and I, from Rother Valley, will also be at Hurlingham in September (if we live that long) and our combined ages will come to 162, so winning by one . . .

~

Upping the bar – Regarding the letter from Tony Fathers in the previous issue asking if there is an age record for doubles play. I have been playing with my doubles partner for a number of years and we are still competing in our local competitions. Our combined age is 170. Would this be a record?

~

Lionel Wharrad (*from an obituary by George Noble*) - . . . He helped revive the Woking croquet section and was its Chairman from 1976-79. Derek Caporn pushed him into membership of the CA Council. The move was inspired. Bursting with ideas, some of them good, we will for ever remember the eponymous Lionel for Wharrad turns, (Wharrad) Short Croquet (actually invented by Eric Solomon), advanced handicap croquet, full bisque croquet, and, most famously of all, the Wharrad take-off. Inevitably, Lionel became CA Chairman in 1984 and, among other triumphs, founded the Surbiton Club. . .

~

Election of Honorary Secretary – Proposed changes in the constitution of the CA have been agreed by Council, which, if passed at the AGM, will create an elected post of Honorary Secretary . . . Ian Vincent has been appointed by Council to act in the rôle until the AGM and offers himself for election, but other nominations are invited.

~

High-speed video recordings – In 2006, the CA carried out a project to investigate the dynamics of various types of shot that are applicable to AC and GC. . . the high-speed and standard video recordings have been placed on the WCF website and made available to the public. The WCF regards this video set as an important contribution to the development of referees' understanding of dynamic situations . . .

50 years ago - 1968



'Montie' Spencer Ell (obituary) -

The C.A., and Roehampton Club in particular, has lost a very dear and valued friend by the sad death of Mr. Spencer-Ell on March 8th after a very trying illness.

. . . **it was really wonderful that he could play his beloved croquet with such a terrible handicap**, and he was a very good player in his day. He won the peels in 1928 and, after a lapse of some years, returned to the game and in 1958 won the Roehampton Challenge Cup and was invited to compete for the Surrey Cup every year from 1935 to 1959, and on two occasions finished second. . .

He enlisted in the Army at the outbreak of the war and was commissioned as a 2nd lieutenant. On September 26th 1915, he took part in the Battle of Loos, when his battalion lost 26 officers and 750 men wounded and missing in one day's fighting.

Seriously wounded himself, Montie was taken prisoner by the Germans, and while in captivity it became necessary to amputate both his arms. Later he was exchanged and went to Switzerland before returning to England.

He then began to live the life which was such a shining example of how to achieve so much although so severely handicapped. He started on his own as a chartered accountant in Henley, . . . (he) lived there for over 50 years.

No person was more universally loved and admired. He was the perfect example of one who "let nothing him dismay".

D.A.L. and R.W.G.M.W.

~

The Peel Memorials - A brilliantly sunny day on Tuesday showed Roehampton at its most beautiful, and it could have been a most lovely week, but the weather changed to a surly mood. It was difficult to feel pleased that the keen wind blew away the smoke from the demolished stable blocks. . .

The Doubles final was a close fought battle until well after sunset. Professor Neal nursed his wife and partner, manoeuvred for a quadruple peel but failed at four back. . . a hit-in from the boundary near hoop two to near the 3rd corner by Mrs Neal brought a well-earned win for her side.

100 years ago - 1918



Killed in Action

Lieut. P. S. Preston, R.F.A.

We much regret to announce the death of 2nd Lieut. P. S. Preston, R.F.A., who was killed in action on March 28th, 1918.

Mr Philip Southwell Preston, of the Clock House, Braintree, aged 34, was the second son of the late Percival R.S. Preston of Marshalls, Braintree.

He was educated at Felsted, and after being articled with Messrs. Cunnington, Son, and Orfeur, of Braintree, was admitted as a solicitor in 1906, continuing with the same firm. In 1909 he was appointed Deputy-Coroner for East Essex, a post which he continued until his death.

He obtained a commission in the R.F.A. in July, 1916, and went to the front the following month.

After being wounded in September, 1917, he returned to the front last January.

~

Lord Desborough (*from the AGM report*) -

I am very much obliged to the proposer and seconder of the motion for their remarks, and the kind things they have said about me. I do not think I deserve a vote of thanks on this occasion.

There has been very little for your Chairman to do. I remember times gone by when discussions, especially when we referred to the rules, were lively, often heated, and even acrimonious. Now none of these things are troubling us, and my duties have been lighter in consequence.

I do not want to say any of the things I am forbidden to say at all because I have come to the conclusion, after reading the Report and Balance Sheet, that I make rather a good President in wartime, because no croquet is played.

I have on more than one occasion said that I should not shine nearly so well as when no croquet is played.

At the same time I feel an admiration for those things one cannot do oneself, and I am the first to admit the extraordinary skill of the croquet player, and to welcome it as a very great addition to the open-air games of skill in the country.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am very much obliged to you for these thanks.

Editorial

This issue of the Gazette leads with the quite brilliant 150th Anniversary exhibition at the All England Club, Wimbledon, which starts with... no, not tennis, but CROQUET – reflecting the origins of the club!

Elizabeth Williams previews the exhibition on the centre pages and our front cover this time shows the Ladies Locket (now a CA prize) in super close-up detail.

Frances Colman and I visited the exhibition as guests of Wimbledon CC's Mike Hann, and we highly recommend that you make it a 'must see'. I doubt that you will see a better croquet exhibition than this!

Elsewhere in this issue, we have news on a number of events that your club may well have participated in.

National Croquet Day was another success and Kevin Carter's National Charity One-Ball competition broke all records for participation and money raised this year.

Once again Sarah Hayes has ensured that there are articles on the Coaching Pages aimed at high handicappers and new players of both GC and AC.

I am delighted to announce that I have invited the engaging croquet writer Alison Jones to have a regular column in the

Gazette and she kicks off this enterprise with more on her quest to bring fun into her croquet.

Congratulations to Alison also on her appointment as the new AC International Performance Director, and 'Chapeau' (as they say on Le Tour de France) to Rachel Gee on winning back her GC European Championship crown at Budleigh Salterton.

I like to 'get out and about' for my croquet and recently I've had highs at Tyneside, Cheltenham, and Sussex Co., 'so-so' results at Sidmouth, Budleigh and Compton, and I've been beaten up at my second club, Roehampton. I've also managed to visit a new club – and Caversham CC (Reading) is my first for a while.

Closer to home, I am delighted to brag that with 146 of our members all supporting the CA with a membership, we at Phyllis Court are the largest club in the CA by that measure.

Hooray for us! :O)

Chris Roberts

Chris Roberts Editor
49 Ancastle Green, Henley on Thames, Oxon. RG9 1TS
07973 787710 gazette@croquet.org.uk



Chairman's Column

Over the past twenty-five years my life, each May and June, has been dominated by a busy tournament schedule (obviously I'm not a gardener!).

But this year croquet has taken over completely.

In addition to my normal Chairman's responsibilities, I've squeezed in two visits to open new facilities at two of our clubs and played in my first GC Tournament.

~

How often have you heard club members question the benefit of CA membership?

In my response, I have frequently listed one of the more tangible items, the grant and loan facility for capital improvements provided through our Development Committee.

On behalf of Council, I have just opened new courts at Kington Langley Croquet Club and will shortly do likewise at Canterbury CC.

Both clubs have benefitted from our

Development Grant which, in addition to its financial contribution, is an important prerequisite for support from other funding bodies.

The Kington Langley development is described on page 27 and I was particularly pleased to perform their opening as this was my own first club.

This small club (with around 30 members) has shown what can be achieved by hard work on the part of a small group of enthusiastic, dedicated members by engaging with, and enlisting the support of, the local community with a range of social fundraising events.

~

Turning to my foray with tournament GC, although I was clearly out of my depth, I much enjoyed myself, representing Wales at the GC European Championship at Budleigh.

Played at a top-level, GC not only demands great skills, but also plenty of stamina and strong powers of concentration.

On the second day I played eleven games and found this far more physically

The
CROQUET
Gazette



Issue 374 June/July 2018

Front cover: The Ladies Locket (a CA prize) which is part of the fabulous exhibition at the All England Club, Wimbledon.

This page: The Editor with Oxfordshire captain Dayal Gunasekera at the AC Inter-Counties at Southwick and the Chairman at Budleigh.

(The Cover photograph is courtesy of the All England Club, Wimbledon. Other images are by Mark van Loon and Chris Roberts)

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demanding than a full day of AC tournament play.

My experience confirmed a persistent bee that I have in my bonnet!

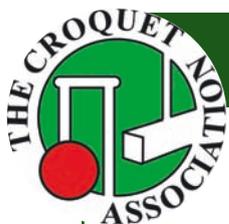
Why do we have various minor differences between GC rules and AC laws?

I have asked this question on various occasions and never had a convincing explanation.

Some of these differences seem rather arbitrary and if our law makers could achieve a degree of harmonisation between the two codes this would be desirable.



Brian Shorney



Nominations invited for CA Diplomas

Nominations, by clubs or federations, of people who have performed exceptional service are invited for the award of CA Diplomas.

Diplomas were first awarded in 2000 and are intended primarily to recognise the work done by the many volunteers who do so much "behind the scenes" to provide the facilities, service and organisation that

we all enjoy, but so easily take for granted. Nominations should be sent to the CA Office by 1 August, together with a short (approx. 100 words) citation that will be published when the awards are made.

Diplomas are normally presented at the AGM (which this year is at Hurlingham on 20 October), but arrangements can be made to present them locally if the recipient is unable to attend.

Ian Vincent, Hon. Secretary

An appeal to new Standard Members

If you are one of the new Standard Members, then we would like to make an appeal to you.

If you are getting this Gazette in paper form and you do not want it, then please take a few minutes to log on to the website and indicate that you want to 'go paperless'.

If in doubt, we would much rather you continue to get the paper Gazette, especially if it's new to you, to give you plenty of time to see if it is of interest to you. However, we recognise that some people will not want it, or perhaps you already have someone else in your household getting a paper copy, and 'going paperless' obviously saves us printing and postage costs, as well as saving a few trees!

While you are logged on to the website, please check your details as held by us. If there are any errors, you should be able to correct them on the website yourself, by following the "update my details" link, failing which please let the CA Office know so that they can be corrected.

Please also inform your club secretary if you suspect that the information held by your club is wrong.

We would also like as many people as possible to allow their details to be visible on the online directory, so that it is a useful tool for all croquet players.

If you are a Premium or Supporter member and have not allowed your club to share details with us, then we will need positive confirmation from you to continue to list your details on the directory under the new GDPR rules.

We also note that some people who hold offices for their club (secretaries, match organisers, etc) have said they do not want their details visible on the website, which will make contacting them very difficult!

Please make sure you consider the implications carefully – remember that only members of the CA who are logged on to the website can access the details.

If you wish to make a change to your directory access permissions, then you can do so when you are viewing your record on the website.

Jeff Dawson, Chairman, Membership Changes Implementation Group.

CA membership database

Uploading news and date privacy update

Development of the new CA membership database has continued and, by the time you read this, we hope to have made a new release that allows individual members to view and update their own details themselves, by logging in to the website.

You can update your handicap(s) and contact details, but (obviously!) not coaching nor refereeing qualifications.

You can also specify whether you want to go 'paperless' and give or change your consent for your contact details to appear in the website directory. This facility is also extended to club secretaries and data controllers, to allow them to amend the details of their club members.

In a related move, if a club has not yet uploaded details about you, then your club membership link will no longer appear, and the club will not be able to edit your details.

This ensures that all membership links have been confirmed before allowing this access.

As expected, the pace of uploads of membership data from member clubs has slackened. At the time of writing, 130 clubs have uploaded data, many of them multiple times (to record additional members or update details of existing ones). Most, if not all, of the larger clubs are now on-board, but a number of smaller ones have yet to register their members as Standard members of the CA and/or record people who are directly subscribed members of the CA as members of their club.

It is not too late to do so: please contact the CA office if you have any queries or need assistance with the process.

Jeff Dawson, Chairman, Membership Changes Implementation Group,

Along with many other organisations, the CA has published a data privacy notice on its website to meet the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which came into force on 25 May.

Preparing it has been a useful opportunity to review the data we hold and the reasons for doing so. It can be found at <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=ca/gov/policies/dataprotection/privacynotice>.

In brief, it says that the CA holds data about you if you are a member, or interact with it in other ways, such as buying goods from its shop.

Your details will be visible to people working on behalf of the CA, and shared with officers of clubs to which you belong, and officials of tournaments you enter.

Your name, handicap(s) and qualifications (e.g. coaching) will appear on lists of members published on the website, but your contact details will only be visible to other CA members (or, in future, fellow club members) if you consent.

Anyone who has not done so has been made ex-directory: please see the article on page for a reminder of the implications of that for club contacts.

Your details will be shared with businesses needed to provide services to you (e.g. Gazette delivery), but not for marketing purposes.

Ian Vincent, Hon. Secretary



Jeff Dawson and Ian Vincent

CA appoint Alison Jones as the new AC IPD

The Croquet Association has appointed Alison Jones as the new AC International Performance Director (IPD) - Congratulations, Alison!

Alison will be taking over from Ian Burridge who held this post from 2014 to the end of 2017.

Like the majority of CA roles, it is a volunteer activity and carries no remuneration.

Alison will report to the Chairman of the Management Committee and as the incoming AC IPD, Alison will:

- Be responsible for England's performance at international AC events, whether singles or team;
- Formulate and implement a strategy to improve international performance in the short/medium term (i.e. the next Mac cycle*) and medium/long term (i.e. future



Mac cycles) including resourcing with volunteers as appropriate;
- Liaise with all parts of the CA

necessary to ensure support of improved international performance, influencing recruitment strategies, the tournament programme, International matches, selection policy, bursary funding, etc.;

- Share relevant identified best practice with the GC International Performance Director.

The Role is expected to influence recruitment strategies, the tournament programme, international matches, selection policy, and bursary funding, and complements the existing activities of the Coaching and other Council Committees.

We wish Alison all the very best.

Mark Suter,
Croquet Association Manager

Photo: A happy Alison Jones at the most recent MacRobertson Shield tournament in New Zealand (by Samir Patel).

Golf Croquet Selectors announce players for major events

The World Croquet Federation Over 50's Golf Croquet World Championship is coming up in October in Cairo.

There are several clubs in Cairo with multiple croquet courts, including two on Zamalek Island in the Nile, which is a lovely venue for these major events.

The field is 48 competitors from around the world.

There are eight players who have received an England place: Stephen Custance-Baker, Peter Dowd, Andrew Dymond, Roger Goldring, Tim King, Stephen Mulliner, Jonathan Powe and David Widdison.

We wish them all success in this world event.



Last year saw the inaugural **GC Home Internationals**, which is a four-way tournament between teams from England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. England won the first event, which was held in Ireland last year. This season, it is to be held at Surbiton on 21 and 22 July.

The England team has been announced as:

John-Paul Moberly (captain)
Jonathan Powe
Rachel Gee
Tobi Savage

Again, best wishes to the England team.

Martin French,
Chairman GC Selectors

Photos - Powe at Sidmouth (left) and van Loon (below) at Southwick, by Chris Roberts.

Significantly improved dozen selected for AC Development Squad

Congratulations to the following selected 12 players who will form the AC Development Squad 2018.

These players have shown significant improvement and dedication to improving their game in the last twelve months; their achievements and potential have been recognised, and so they have been nominated for a place in the development squad.

The squad has been selected in agreement with Lead Coach David Maugham, the CA Selection Committee Chair and myself.



Andrew Dutton
Andrew Willis
Cesar Miranda-Reyes
Chris Coull
Chris O'Byrne
Craig Winfield
Daniel Gott
Dave Gunn
John-Paul Moberly
Mark Van Loon
Sarah Melvin
Tobi Savage

Alison Jones,
AC International Performance Director

Obituary

Derek Trotman 1929 – 2018



It was Derek's work as a Technical Author with the British Ship Research Association which brought him to Tyneside - an excellent thing for croquet in the north-east, and indeed more generally.

He was one of the founder-members of Tyneside Croquet Club in 1983 and proceeded to have three spells as chairman, clocking up eight years in charge and many more on the committee.

He used his authorial skills to publish a history of the club's first 25 years, which is

why I can be sure that on several occasions he won the club handicap singles or doubles, and was in teams which won the Longman Cup (1985) and Secretary's Shield (2003, pictured below).

He was awarded honorary life membership in 2015, when mobility problems made playing or attending meetings impossible. For even longer than his club chairmanship, for eleven years from 1991 to 2002, Derek served as chairman of Croquet North federation.

"Derek served on CA Council from 1992 to 2008 and was the 'Father of the House'.

During that time he made a major contribution by chairing at least three of the Principal Committees: Development, Publishing and Tournament, always trying to ensure that high standards of administration were maintained.

In earlier years, he had been involved in the administration of hockey and brought that experience to the Council table."

So reads the citation for the CA Council

Medal that Derek received on his retirement from Council after sixteen years.

In addition to his administrative work for the CA, Derek also represented them on court, five times against the Scottish CA and once against the Welsh CA.

After losing his wife, Margaret, Derek moved from Morpeth to a care home near his daughter in Yorkshire, near Pontefract. He died as the result of a fall.

David Appleton, Tyneside CC



Obituary

Fergus McInnes 1962 – 2014



In his website Fergus's Brain Online, Fergus McInnes defined an 'interesting' croquet player as "one who does a lot of clever things (like triple peels) relative to his or her handicap or ranking."

Well, Fergus did his first triple while playing for the SCA against the CA when his handicap was 4.5 and his index 1594 - that certainly ought to count! But then Fergus was interesting in many ways.

If you have not come across the method of marking out a lawn which he developed with Louis Nel, have a look at the SCA website.

He was interestingly bright, interestingly

amusing, especially in some of the verses he wrote, and interestingly thoughtful about the world and his place in it.

He could sometimes be too thoughtful, practically going into stasis while bent over a ball - processing, processing...

Yet he played his best when there was no time to overcomplicate things.

We all loved to watch him when it was 10 minutes before 'time' and he was racing round the lawn to get his first ball just far enough round to be able to win in the time turn.

For ten years (from 1995 to 2004) Fergus was secretary of the Edinburgh club. He was editor of the SCA Handbook from 1997 until 2000 and the following year began his stint as SCA Match Secretary which was to last until 2014.

He managed countless tournaments, including the complicated week-long six-event Edinburgh Tournament, the daily reports on which would appear in the middle of the night after he had worked out the fixtures for the following day.

No-one could help, because he recorded

the results of matches in tiny handwriting only he could read.

Fergus represented the SCA against other Associations on 32 occasions; no SCA side was complete without him.

His own personal triumphs were his wins in the 2005 SCA Chairman's Rosebowl (for the top 6 available players) and the 2006 SCA Masters.

Fergus disappeared while travelling to a meeting in Switzerland in 2014. We now know he died while walking in the Alps.

There is an opportunity to help his family to adopt a tree at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh in memory of Fergus. Go to justgiving.com and search for Fergus.

**David Appleton,
Scottish Croquet Association**



10 years ago - 2008 'extra'

AC Inter-County Championship – Somerset (code letter Z for Zummerzet) won the Inter-Counties. although their

team of David Goacher (captain), Kristian Chambers, Ed Duckworth, Marcus Evans, Roger Jenkins and Roger Tribe bore a remarkable resemblance to last year's Avon team. The tournament committee

decided that it was going to adopt the County definitions of the Association of British Counties and that, as Avon no longer existed, those who had previously played for Avon would be eligible for Somerset.

National Croquet Day 2018 - How was it for you?

Thank you for all the reports and feedback on National Croquet Day. It is always interesting to hear how you got on; the problems and successes, and all the hard work by club members.

Whatever day we choose for National Croquet Day (NCD) you can guarantee that your local community will have scheduled a major event on the same day!

Some clubs were faced with this situation and the result was a low turn-out.

But that will not hamper them in their planning for 2019 NCD because they will either celebrate NCD on a different day or become part of a larger local event

Hard work paid off

For the majority of clubs, their hard work for NCD paid off and there have been reports of ten, 20, even 60 visitors, with many being converted into new members.

Interesting initiatives included a 'Learn to play' session or 'Come and try croquet', whilst others scheduled tournaments on NCD, so they could show croquet in a positive light.

One club offered a £10 month's membership with coaching support, while another arranged a summer barbecue to coincide with NCD.

Whatever clubs arranged, it is pleasing to note that the vast majority found that more people than ever came along.

Some clubs have close links with other local sports such as bowls, so they held

combined events and attracted members from both sides, plus a few more.

Overcoming barriers

On the other hand some clubs are faced with barriers that, thankfully, few other clubs have to deal with - bylaws that mean



no banners, or even no sports on Sundays!

But that did not stop those clubs from using the CA leaflets and posters to drum up interest to deliver NCD on a Saturday which led to a good footfall.

Nearly every club that took part offered cakes and other tasty refreshments.

But all this does not simply mysteriously arrive on the day - it is the result of much hard work by a myriad of club members to whom we send our heartfelt thanks - we could not have done it without you.

Together with a welcoming atmosphere, NCD shows that croquet is not only a

competitive sport but is also where you can also find a social and healthy outdoor activity.

Press and council support

Most clubs worked closely with their local press and spent time encouraging them to come along or to print a story about NCD.

We have been advising clubs to contact their local council well before an event such as NCD because it is a good opportunity to extol the virtues of a club and croquet generally as a vehicle for people of all ages and abilities. And NCD provides an excellent opportunity drop a hint about future funding.

I know of clubs that continue to work closely with their local council and communities providing opportunities for people to take part in our sport. It could be that, for some, croquet may be the only outdoor sport they can access!

Thanks all round

Finally, yet again my thanks go to everyone who spent so much time in making NCD another overall success.

All too often we tend to overlook or not fully appreciate all the hard work that teams of volunteers do for a club.

We have honours boards for competition winners; why not an honours board for the stalwarts that keep clubs going?

Brian Wilson,
Chairman, Marketing Committee



NCD was a hit at York and Ealing

For National Croquet Day, York Croquet Club held a 'Try Croquet! drop-in' event. And the following day we hosted a work team-building afternoon. Altogether 24 people played, and some have gone on to sign up for one of the Club's introductory courses. Here (*above and left*) are some happy photos from our events.

John Harris, York CC

Who says watching croquet is boring? I took this photo (*right*) during our Open Day to coincide with National Croquet Day. We had a very good attendance with lots of young people trying out croquet.

David Graham, Ealing CC



The CA's equality policy is welcome

Dear Editor,

The formulation by the CA of an equality policy and its recommendation to croquet clubs is overdue recognition of inclusiveness as a fundamental requirement in setting socially aware participation parameters.

Implementing this expression of good intent within our game may, however, prove more difficult.

To take part in croquet requires a degree of physical strength, co-ordination, dexterity, mobility, awareness and sufficient stature to handle the equipment that is integral to play.

How the game can be made available to those whose age or mental or physical condition impairs more than minimally these faculties will, I think, cause much scratching of heads by club officials throughout the country.

Peter Lowe, Tyneside Croquet Club

Croquet is a game not a sport

Dear Editor,

An aspect of the published CA Equality Policy less important than how to implement it but equally intriguing is the document's apparent uncertainty as to how to describe croquet.

Paras 1 and 2 talk about a sport while para 4 uses "sport" and "game" as if the terms are synonymous.

As I have long understood it, the traditional definitions of these terms are as follows.

A Sport – is an activity in which one's performance can be judged without reference to the competition against which it is achieved.

For instance: speed over a distance, height or length jumped, distance thrown, weight lifted, frequency of bulls eyes or strokes per golf round.

From this comes sportsmanship - the desire to perform well by one's own estimate (you'd know if you cheated) rather than the desire to beat an opponent.

A Game – is an activity in which the quality of a performance can only be judged by taking into account the competence of the opposition.

For instance: boxing, football, cricket, croquet or match-play golf.

Acronyms and croquet lingo

Dear Editor,

Thank you for another fine issue (*Gazette 373*), especially the match reports from New Zealand.

However, given that you have a lot of new readers at Club level, please can you provide for us ordinary mortals some definitions and a key to the various acronyms – e.g. 'Supershot opening', 'New Standard Leave', TPO, POP, etc?

We don't all play tournaments.

Tom Banfield, Middlesbrough CC

Dear Tom,

Thank you for your letter which poses a tricky topic, editorially.

The difficulty that one faces with terminology is the different level of reader understanding of the laws/rules and tactical situations that are being described by an author.

For a start there will be readers who only play GC or only play AC and so the everyday terminology used in those two codes will be a foreign language to players of the other game.

For example, AC-only players may not recognise the GC use of 'off-side', and GC-only players will almost certainly not have any knowledge of 'leaves' at all.

And then when one moves on to the higher levels of play, in AC particularly, there will be club players of that code who may or may not have a limited understanding of turns that involve simple peeling – but will not have come across complex turns like when an A Class player deliberately chooses to peel his opponent through the first few hoops (POPping) so as to make said oppo's own triple peel (TP) attempt even more difficult.

So whilst agreeing that the use of acronyms is frustrating for readers who don't know what they mean, the space needed to explain the purpose of a particular manoeuvre to a reader who doesn't understand croquet at that level would be enormous.

I wrestled with this topic when I first came to the Editor's seat and concluded that the only practical way of dealing with the use of jargon was to see that it was appropriate for the level of play being described and the understanding of those readers most likely to be interested in the intricacies of croquet at that level.

Therefore, I decided to permit plenty of jargon at the top end of the sport and almost none in articles that are targeted at those playing at lower levels.

To check if this was sensible, I thought of the jargon used in other sports.

Knowing that almost everyone can potentially enjoy watching say the World Cup final of football, rugby or cricket on one level (taking an interest in who scores most – goals, points or runs), only some would understand the off-side law in football, the difference between a ruck and maul in rugby, and only a very few diehard cricket fans will have the maths interest or ability to work out for themselves the 'Duckworth-Lewis' calculation.

That said, governing bodies of most sports have available a glossary of terminology – and croquet's can be found on the CA website.

There is now a regular panel on the CA contacts page 30 about the CA website, directing readers to 'Advice & Technical' / Other Articles / Croquet Jargon or use this link: <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=tech/other/jargon> **Chris Roberts, Editor**

Thus Man City 1, Barcelona 0 deserves "Well done the blues!" whereas Man City 35, Shiremoor Occasionals 0 would be nothing for the winners to crow about.

From this comes gamesmanship - the desire to beat an opponent by any means not specifically proscribed by the rules.

Using this rubric croquet is a game.

It would be helpful if our governing body consistently so described it.

Peter Lowe, Tyneside Croquet Club

- I'm not so sure about this Peter. At best your definitions are surely out-dated in the common usage of 'sport' and 'game'.

For a start the Olympic GAMES was traditionally full of the running, jumping and throwing things long distances; which your rubric describes as 'sport'.

And more recently, but still going back over 50 years, the BBC SPORTS Personality of the Year title has been won, more often than not, by a 'games' player.

SPORT England recognise the CA. - **Ed.**

Joke mail sees quartet to Elephants Cup

Dear Editor,
Lytes Carey Croquet Club is only a small club (in Somerset) who play for pleasure amongst ourselves and with other local teams; our motto is "Fun with Decorum", and we always play in whites at the lovely National Trust property of the same name.

We do not have handicaps, although some members are thinking they may in the future.

When the information dropped into my email about the Elephants Cup I forwarded it to our chairman, Chris Essam, more as a way of a joke, since we do not play competitively.

Before I knew it she had rallied Chrissie Thomas, Celia Ellison and persuaded a fellow W.I. member Heather Price, who had never played, to all go off to Thailand in February. They were the only representatives from the U.K., much to their surprise. - Not much pressure then!

They were paired off with players from New Zealand and Australia, and played



three games of croquet each day Monday to Thursday, making nine in total.

Chrissie Thomas and her partner won the cups, and Chris Essam missed the runner-up spot by one hoop.

They enjoyed the whole experience, and are busy saving their pennies for the next time.

Chris Jessop, Secretary, Lytes Carey CC

Photo: Lytes Carey's Elephant Cup players: Chris Thomas, Heather Price, Celia Ellison and Christine Essam

Oldest doubles?

Dear Editor,

The last issue (April 2018 issue, Gazette 373) 'From our Files 2008' column carried Tony Father's tentative claim that he might have participated with the late Brian Rees in a tournament doubles game, having a record highest age combination of 161 of his side. If that was a record it has now been broken, as David Collins and I had a combination of 164 for the doubles event at the Roehampton Summer tournament last month.

Ed Dymock, Surbiton CC

- See this issue's 'From our Files 2008' for another claim in this regard. - **Ed**

Time for older Vets

Dear Editor,

I note with interest that the 'Survey of Croquet Players' in the April issue (Gazette 373) indicates that the proportion of croquet players over the age of 75 is 29%; this means that 71% are under 75.

Surely now is the time to define 'veterans' for tournament purposes, as 'over 75'; this would make the games more realistic.

Tony Lee, Norwich CC

Bad to ban 'Bandit'

Dear Editor,

I take strong exception to the letter from Robert Moss entitled "It is time to ban the 'Bandit'" (April 2018 issue, Gazette 373).

I am tired of the growing sanctimonious tendency by people trying to ban words in everyday use.

Where will it stop!

It is a serious erosion of free speech.

People should not be so sensitive and so ready to take offence.

Up to now I have never come across the word 'bandit' used in croquet, but I shall certainly be using it in the future.

Edward Colman, Sidmouth CC

"Incoming!"

Dear Editor,

I was intrigued by the letters in the April edition (Gazette 373) with regard to what to call out as a wayward stroke sends a ball hurtling towards double banked players or another court.

Being of a rather militaristic mindset, here in Swindon the call is "Incoming".

Tony Mayer, Swindon CC

Are our anniversaries worth marking?

Dear Editor,

As Samir Patel observes in his recent letter, the 150th anniversary of the first Open Championship passed unnoticed last year.

So too did the 100th contest (at least, at the time it was being played), in 1990.

The 100th contest for what is now the President's Cup almost passed unnoticed too – the host club apparently being told only a week before the event was to be played.

It is incidentally worth noting that, in the 1930s, G C Joad, the winner of the AECC's Open Championship held at Crystal Palace in 1869, was the first Open Champion inscribed on the CA's Honours Board at Roehampton.

The contemporary Year Book, however, began its list of winners with Whitmore in 1867 on the authority of Lord Doneraile.

Leonard Williams, in his Croquet of 1899, described this 1867 event as 'not Open'.

But when invited to comment on the discrepancy, his response was that "Doneraile shall have it his own way. I do not care a flapper's damn whether J C Goad [sic] or Walter Jones Whitmore was the first champion".

Leonard Williams was, as it happens, the brother of Trevor Williams, then President of the CA and donor of the trophy which replaced the Beddow Cup after Miss D D Steel won it outright in 1934.

He would doubtless have been equally indifferent to the fact that the 100th edition of that competition almost passed unnoticed.

Ian Bond, Surbiton CC

Dear Editor,

Thank you for a most readable issue.

It is full of interest to high bisquers for such as me, especially the coaching reminders which I will use at the retirement village where I live.

Audrey Porter, Surrey

~

Thank you for your kind words Audrey. I will be very pleased to hear from other high bisquers/handicapped players telling me the sort of articles that you would like to see in future issues of the Gazette. - **Ed**

Historians answer: What colour were croquet balls in 1865?

Dear Editor,

How fascinating to learn from Max Parsonage (*Letter, April Gazette 373*) that croquet balls were used by the Royal Society of Chemistry in 1865 as models of molecules. He asks what colours the balls would have been, and what they were made of.

The quick answer is that balls were almost invariably wooden (composition balls came in shortly before WW1) and were painted in whatever colours happened to be at hand. The peg was then painted to match.

Croquet balls in 1865 were almost always made of timber.

There were experiments with other materials, for example gutta percha, but these were exceptions.

The need was for a hardwood which would withstand the mallet and damp with as few distortions, cracks and chips as possible.

Among native hardwoods, beech offered an acceptable solution; premium sets using imported timber usually favoured boxwood.

Croquet was then generally an eight-player game, and any evolution towards standard colours seems to have been slow. Red and blue, however, seem to have been universal.

A popular early coloured picture of a croquet game, in Mr Punch's Pocket Book for 1862, shows red, blue and yellow among the balls.

Mayne Reid (1863) – normally a champion of detail – simply says, "Paint them of as many colours as there are balls. The more vivid the colour, the prettier will be the effect on the green sward, and the pleasanter the play. The balls are designated by their respective colours: as red, blue, green &c.; and the player of each adopts the designation of the ball."

In the same year, an account in a weekly leisure magazine of an eight-player game adds black, yellow and pink to Mayne Reid's list, with dark colours playing light colours.

On the other hand, Jaques (1864), never afraid to be different, urges patrons of his

premium sets to show off the boxwood, and paint only rings of colour: one, two, three or four rings on each ball, in blue or red.

Routledge (1864) clearly felt the need for an agreed list of colours and set out to supply one, coming up with shades which take us tangibly close to today's primary and secondary sets.

"The balls are eight in number, and are painted in the following colours: blue, pink, black, yellow, brown, orange, red, green."

But Routledge's shade card was not universally followed because Cassell's Sixpenny Handbook (1865) makes no mention of pink and brown, and instead includes purple and white.

Even Routledge later acknowledged that his colour list was not definitive and it seems that any available colour could be pressed into service.

Whatever their colour, wooden balls needed regular repainting, ideally in flat oil paint, to keep them fresh and waterproof.

As Mayne Reid airily remarked, "Nothing is easier than to renew it" – particularly, of course, if the job was left to the household's servants.

It's good to know that, when the mistresses and masters were away, those left behind were often pleased to sneak a game of their own, as a society journal sniffily reported:

"A friend in ---- Gardens, where there is a fine common garden behind the house, says that all August and September there is a perfect saturnalia of cooks and charwomen and their friends aping their mistresses – rather a loud imitation – playing croquet, giving tea and gin parties, dancing, screaming, and making summer life hideous. Very hard!"

John Harris, York CC

Sources:

Contemporary books and journals.

If anyone would like detailed references please contact the author.

during this period would be the best way to cover the subject.

They also revealed some interesting side stories that gave further colour to croquet in its earliest years.

Look out for this article in a future issue of the Gazette - **Ed.**

Dear Editor,

I was delighted to receive the April Gazette with Paddy's photo adorning the cover.

I think croquet balls in 1865 were very likely to be wooden, judging by the Jaques advertisements

in W.H. Peel's book, but it is very unlikely that they were solid colours.

I have three early mallets which are the same as the ones illustrated in the book.

Three different croquet stands for eight player-sets are shown with the balls striped with one to four bands, there are corresponded stripes on the mallets, which going by my mallets would be four with blue and four with red.

One can also make out the pattern of eight stripes on the winning and turning (starting?) pegs (2) which are also numbered 1,1,2,2, etc.

They are also advertised as available for four players (the illustrations are for eight).

One mentions (4 player) best "Boxwood balls, whole colours", while others are Beech, Hardwood and Mahogany.

Painted in "self colours" is also mentioned for a set of four first-quality selected Boxwood.

I believe it would be safe to say the colours were the same as our first colour sets of today, there is no mention of alternative or secondary colours.

Jaques also advertise Croquet Painting Compendiums sets, one for retouching the balls (Summer treatment) 6s 6d; it shows a board with four "nails" adjacent to each corner, a non-striped ball is positioned on one lot.

There are four pots, one labelled red, six paint brushes, rags and two bottles - possibly varnish and paint cleaner?

The second set is for entirely repainting croquet balls (Winter use) at 7s 6d.

**John Prince,
New Zealand**

~

Dear Editor,

I thought I might be able to throw some light on the issue raised in a recent letter by looking at the Laws of Croquet 1913 (price sixpence).

The laws have sections on the balls and there are several adverts for balls in the 41-page document. But nowhere is there any specification of colour. :(

Peter Tymms, Croquet Durham

Two other eminent croquet historians **Ian Bond** and **Roger Bray** have also been in touch about this subject.

Their research and writings were so full of interesting information, and in some places over-lap, that they decided that a joint article on the equipment used

Is this the earliest evidence of croquet in Scotland?

Dear Editor,

I was recently pleased to be contacted by someone who had noticed a reference to an early game of croquet in Scotland.

He is called Nigel King and the reference is in a diary kept by FEC Elwes (1828-1867) which he is using to research the early days of Wisden.

Anyone interested in what he has to say about that should look at www.wisdenssecret.com.

The excerpt relevant to croquet reads:

"Stormy. Walked to Cultiquhey, luckily missing the storms. Luncheon with the Maxtons. Crowds of children. Great croquet afterwards. I failed very much at first in the legal way but improved a little afterwards."

In fact the house, which is near Crieff, is called Cultoquhey, and the owners were the Maxtone-Graham family.

My interpretation of "I failed very much at first in the legal way" is that Elwes had

previously only played tight croquet, and this was the first time he had had to learn to move both balls in a croquet stroke. (There is other evidence in the diary that he had indeed played before.)

The date is 23 July 1863.

This is not quite the earliest evidence of croquet in Scotland, as the Burrell Collection contains a photograph of women playing croquet in the garden of Ibroxhill House, the home of the McCall family, then just outside Glasgow, dated to 1861 (though since they are all dressed in black perhaps 1862 is more likely, as Prince Albert died in December 1861).

However, if my interpretation is correct, it would be evidence that progressive rules were being used there well before The Field published them.

If anyone has an alternative explanation of the sentence I would be glad to hear it.

David Appleton, Tyneside CC

Handicap GC is unattractive to low handicap players

Dear Editor,

The rules for the Golf Croquet Handicap League in the South-West Federation state that players with handicaps of 10 or below may play in the Handicap League. In addition, a team may field one player whose handicap is 11 or 12.

A lower handicap player gives extra turns to a player on a higher handicap to level the playing field.

That is fine to a point.

But if the lower handicapped player continues to improve, the gap in handicaps continue to increase to a point where the playing field is no longer level but tilted in favour of the higher handicapper.

And if the improver gets down to a 2 or a 3 the gap gets so big that the good players don't play handicap croquet any more.

That is a loss for the league and to the average players who no longer have any opportunity to play a really good player.

My solution would be to limit the number of free turns any player can receive. How about 4?

Happy hoops.

Ulf Greder, Kingston Maurward CC

~

That is an interesting observation Ulf, but isn't this the very essence of the handicap system. The better player should be sufficiently handicapped by the conceding of extra turns such that both players have an even chance of winning.

In the Southern Federation it is not uncommon for lower handicapped players to be fielded in clubs' handicap teams and their successes still appear to be around 50%. Setting a maximum on the number of extra turns that could be conceded would imbalance the whole handicap system, I feel.

Whilst handicap play in GC isn't quite as satisfactory as it is in AC, due to the greater interactivity of the former, I like the different challenge of playing games (as a minus 1) against a 6 to 8 handicapped player and trying to figure how I am going to extract all the extra turns before they score seven hoops.

If I were only to conceded your suggested 4 extra turns against such opposition, I would likely win every time and that surely isn't right (or indeed any fun for either side)

- Ed.

An elegant cross-wire indeed!



Dear Editor,

You may be interested in this photograph of a situation which arose at 3-back in a recent tournament at Watford.

It would be an elegant cross-wiring under any circumstances, but on this occasion it was distinguished by the fact that both balls were placed in those positions without any help from the opponent!

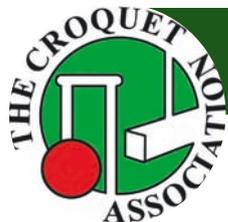
Even more so because, in spite of that the player, Robin Barry from the host club, went on to win not only the game but also the tournament with an unbeaten record!

Simon Hathrell, Watord CC

I have received two letters regarding a measurement formula for deciding where to place balls after collisions with a double banked game. The formula has seen use in Australia but recent investigations for the CA by Ian Vincent have revealed that official backing for its use was withdrawn

in Australia when doubts about its accuracy surfaced. Chairman of the CA Equipment Committee Dave Trimmer has conducted his own experiments and his initial results point to inaccuracy with the formula. For this reason the formula is not being publicised.

An article will appear in due course. **- Ed.**



(Almost) All change at the CA Office

The last few months have seen an almost complete turnover of staff at the CA Office, which is situated in the grounds of the Cheltenham Croquet Club.

As noted in the last issue, **Mark Suter** (right) has taken over as CA Manager from Liz Larsson, who left us after nearly ten years' service.

Mark is an A class AC player who has come back to the game in this country after some years abroad, so both knows the game and some of its players well, as well as bringing considerable business experience.

He has had something of a baptism of fire, having to cope with the other staff changes, a significantly increased CA membership and new computer systems, as well as getting to know the large number of club and tournament secretaries and members of CA Committees who contact the Office on a regular basis.

Daniel Atiyah left last month, having worked as an assistant to Liz and Mark for a year or so, to go to a job in his specialist field. Steve Mowbray finished this month, having been with us for four



years, but is now moving away from the area with his family. We are grateful to both of them for the work they have done and the ideas and knowledge they have shared: we will miss them and we wish them well as life moves on.

On the plus side, we welcome **Jack Kinane**, who replaced Daniel last month and is already making a useful contribution.

Although he knew nothing about the game, he has already shown an interest in it and has had some coaching to help him deal with enquiries about equipment.

Another, part-time, post has been advertised,

to replace Steve.

Last, but not least, we are grateful to **Fiona Knee**, who has provided continuity amidst all the other changes.

She primarily deals with shop sales, all the way from updating product details on the shop website, giving advice, processing orders and eventually dispatching them, and is one of the friendly voices who answers if you phone the Office.

Ian Vincent, Hon. Secretary

A review of the CA's Membership categories

As this is the second copy of the Gazette to be sent to the Croquet Association's new Standard Members, it seems a useful point at which to review the membership categories now available, and to encourage everyone to review their options.

The CA has the following membership categories:

Standard Member

Standard Membership is open to anyone who is a playing member of a croquet club which is a full member club of the Croquet Association (CA).

To become a Standard Member (if you are not already) you need to ask your club's membership secretary to upload your contact details securely to the CA's website, so that we know who you are.

If you are not yet a Standard Member and believe that you should be, then please first contact your club secretary to see if they have provided the information.

Standard Membership entitles you to receive a paper copy of the Croquet Gazette for the first year – until February 2019.

After that you will still be able to access it on-line by logging onto our website, or you will be able, if you wish, to continue to receive the paper copy for an annual fee.

In addition you can enter tournaments, attend coaching courses in the CA fixtures

book, hold coaching and refereeing qualifications, and gain CA merit awards.

You can also log on to the CA website to access the on-line directory of members and clubs and the documents area, and vote on any issues the CA brings to its membership.

More details about how to do these things are given on the website at

www.croquet.org.uk/?p=members/WelcomeNewMembers

or go to the front page at

www.croquet.org.uk

and follow the link for new Standard Members.

Supporter Member

Supporter Members get much the same rights as Standard Members.

This membership category is primarily designed for those people who have had a lot of enjoyment out of the game, and who would like to support us in our efforts to further develop it – to 'give something back' if you like.

If you fall into this category, then please consider becoming a Supporter Member!

Supporter Members pay an annual subscription to the CA, are entitled to get the Gazette, and will continue to do so until such time as they tell us they don't want it.

A reduced price is available if you do wish to 'go paperless'.

Supporter Membership is also the lowest cost membership category for most people who cannot become Standard Members through their club, either because they don't have a club, their club isn't a full member club, or because the club isn't prepared to participate in the process.

Premium Member

Premium Membership is primarily aimed at competitive players who want to enter tournaments.

As a Premium Member you get priority entry to tournaments and/or CA coaching courses, and you pay less for your entry fees.

If you enjoy more than seven tournament days over the year, it will be cheaper for you to be a Premium Member.

In addition, you will get a paper copy of the tournament fixtures book unless you have selected to 'go paperless'.

There are a number of other categories which essentially convey the same rights as Premium Membership, but for specific categories of people; these include Young Person and Overseas membership.

More details of all the membership options, together with current fees, are given on the CA website at www.croquet.org.uk – on the menu click 'The CA' > 'Join the CA'.

**Ian Vincent,
Hon. Secretary**

Building croquet in schools



We are often told that croquet needs a younger age profile. Where better to start than in schools: catch them young and they'll be hooked for life! - Well, perhaps.

Last year I learned that croquet was being played in several schools in the Southern Federation area so I have been trying to build up and encourage those involved.

The relevant schools are, without exception, fee paying. That is simply because the state sector will only support those activities that are included in the national curriculum: croquet is not so lucky!

But there are problems.

First and foremost, croquet is not regarded as a "sport" akin to cricket or tennis.

It is regarded as a casual activity to be slotted in to the timetable 'as and when'.

And, of course, there are limitations on how many students can meaningfully participate at any one time.

Indeed, in the schools I have been involved with there are splendid facilities for the recognised sports, but croquet takes

Ian Harrison discovered croquet being played at some schools in the Southern Federation area. He has been trying to build encourage their enthusiasm.

place on patches of grass here and there and often with more students than can sensibly be accommodated.

In this area we are fortunate in that we have several members of staff in schools who – although not necessarily brilliant croquet players themselves – are keen enough to set up croquet opportunities for their students, frequently at considerable personal inconvenience – it is a labour of love!

And the existence of such a person on the inside is essential. It is impossible to do anything as a casual onlooker, however well intentioned.

The other major problem is that croquet is perceived as a summer term activity.

And these days the summer term is ludicrously short, with exam leave and a

couple of Bank Holidays to boot.

In order to give students a better impression of real croquet, one of our clubs, Blewbury, has made its courts available to Abingdon School for an hour and a half after school on one day a week.

This enables us to offer a few boys concentrated coaching so that they might just get the bug.

And the schools themselves have organised matches, sometimes played on Club courts, so that we can start to develop a schools league.

I have been amazed at the level of interest shown by students in the schools in the SWF area: **Abingdon School, Portsmouth Grammar School, Radley College and Winchester College.**

It is a great pity that they are not generally well served in terms of facilities but I hope that the CA will do all it can to spread the seed on fertile soil!

Ian Harrison, SCF Coaching Officer

~

Photo: Abingdon School and Portsmouth GS at Winchester CC, 16 May 2018

This year's summer school will take place on Tuesday and Wednesday 21 and 22 August hosted, once again, by Wrest Park Croquet Club.

To date eight young players have registered and more are anticipated.

The schedule includes a full programme covering AC and GC skills development, from basic skills to advanced tactics suitable and of interest for all standards of play.

The CA has recently introduced the

School of Croquet 2018

Sponsorship Scheme to encourage younger players to take up croquet and to help younger players develop their skills.

Please check the CA website for more details - <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=ca/schemes/YpSponsorship>

If you are an aspiring younger player under the age of 25 and would like to register for a place then please contact me

at the e-mail address below.

Regional or Federation coaching officers, development officers or club coaches may know of likely people so please ensure that potential candidates in your area are aware of the 'School of Croquet' and please send their details to me at anglion@btinternet.com and encourage them to come along.

Lionel Tibble, (GC) International Performance Director

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Villages in Cheshire, Warwickshire, Hampshire, Devon and West Sussex.

Maugham wins the AC Westerns yet again

David Maugham won the Western Championship for the seventh time, reports **Jonathan Powe**.

Thirteen of us gathered for the Western Championship, played over three May days in glorious sunshine at East Dorset CC.

The courts had been much improved in recent months due to the sterling efforts of the excellent new groundsman Robin Wilcox, and so were in tip-top condition for the tournament. And the hoops were pretty tight – indeed slightly too tight as a couple of balls got jammed on the first day!

With the café now in new hands, East Dorset is once again a first-class venue for top-quality croquet.

The top four seeds, Stephen Mulliner, David Maugham, Christian Carter and Duncan Reeve, were joined by five East Dorset locals – Anthony Dix, David Harrison-Wood, David Kendrick, Jonathan

Powe and Tom Weston, plus Andy Myers, Andrew Killick, Alison Jones and Richard H Smith.

In the semi-finals Mulliner beat Powe +1, +18qp, and Maugham beat Carter +8, +16.

So it was Mulliner and Maugham who fought out the nine-and-a-half-hour, best-of-five final on the final day.

The first game saw quite a bit of interaction, but Mulliner eventually got control of all four balls and made a very tidy standard triple to win +14tp.

In the second game, Maugham pegged out one of Mulliner's balls to leave himself on peg and 2-back against Mulliner's 3-back and box. After some lengthy cat-and-mouse stuff, Mulliner finally ran Rover and pegged out from 10 yards to win +3.

Game 3 also concluded with a 3-ball finish, this time with Maugham on 4-back and box, and Mulliner 1 and peg; Maugham

won +4, so was now 1-2 down.

In game 4 Mulliner did a TPO (triple peel on his opponent's ball) leaving himself on peg and 1-back against Maugham on 3 and box for yet another 3-ball finish. Mulliner made one hoop but left Maugham a 25-yard double, which he duly hit and finished +7 OTP to take the match to the decider.

In the final game, Mulliner made a fifth-turn break to 4-back and, after some interaction following the contact, Maugham did a TPO and managed one POP (a peel of an opponent's ball) to leave himself on peg and 1 against Mulliner on 2 and box.

Maugham eventually laid-up in corner two with Mulliner in corner 4. Mulliner took the shot, missed, and Maugham played a very controlled 3-ball break to win yet again,



Charity One Ball breaks the £5k barrier with record numbers



This year we had 37 heats of the Charity One-Ball and 497 participants, reports **organiser Kevin Carter**.

Because of the awful weather we had some cancellations and postponements, and some heats had lower attendance than they might have done. So, this is excellent and yet another record.

The finals tournament

We had 40 participants in the final on Sunday 13 May and it was again kindly hosted at Surbiton, with triple-banking across all seven courts.

Because of the numbers involved, there was a lunchtime 'cut' - a bit like in a big golf

competition. The top twelve, who had lost no more than one game of the Swiss during the morning, went into a separate section to compete for the main trophies, while the remainder continued for a 'Best of the Rest' prize.

The final game

Soon after teatime, we had the two finalists: Tom Weston of East Dorset and Margaret Murray of Kington Langley and Bath (but who qualified at the Camerton & Peasedown heat).

It was a nail-biting finale, watched by over 30 spectators who witnessed Tom's superb shooting and, as Margaret's 4.5 bisques were whittled away, he looked to have it in the bag.

However, Margaret displayed great tactical acumen throughout and was the first through the last ('Rover') hoop, initially retreating to near the west boundary and then, when Tom set himself up for Rover, she moved her ball a little north of the peg.

Tom ran rover but not cleanly and he was hampered from both the peg and Margaret's ball, so he tried a difficult shot back through the hoop and missed.

Margaret finished and won the Charity one Ball to huge applause.

At the prize-giving Margaret collected this year's engraved decanter, and Tom the runner-up's goblet, while Chris Roberts (Phyllis Court) won the 'Best of the Rest' goblet, and a bottle of bubbly went to Jonathan Lamb (Punta Del Este, Uruguay) for the best break (ten hoops).

The prizes were presented by Leia, a lovely little five year old, who had prompted her grandfather to nominate the Downs Syndrome Association as this year's charity.

Unfortunately, Peter Gunn (Merton) passed away in February and could not be there to see it.

The total amount raised for the Downs Syndrome Association was £4471, which will be supplemented by £903 of Gift Aid - another record, and the first time that our nominated charity will benefit by more than £5000.

From Ted Flexman, who organised a Yorkshire Federation heat for the first time, write to organiser Kevin Carter:

"Congratulations on pursuing this excellent idea. It makes for a terrific day, bringing together players from clubs right across the federation. It encourages more GC players to give OB a try.

It is a fun game to play in its own right - making the most of GC players' great placement skills, bold hoop running, long clearances and stop shots, along with the bonus of two extra shots when you hit the opponent - Bliss!



Photographs: Winner Margaret Murray seconds after pegging out and runner-up Tom Weston with five-year old Leia who presented the prizes (photos by Chris Roberts)

A Major New Exhibition at the

~ featuring the early



A major new exhibition is taking place at the All England Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club, Wimbledon, this year, celebrating the club's 150th anniversary, reports Elizabeth Williams.

The exhibition, in the Club's museum, is beautifully presented and shows the history of the sport, as well as history of croquet at Wimbledon.

Croquet, not tennis, was the first sport to grace Wimbledon's lawns. It remained the only sport played at the club until tennis was introduced at the Club seven years after it was founded.

THROUGH THE HOOPS: CROQUET AT WIMBLEDON

explores the impact that the Club has had on the development of the modern game of croquet.

Croquet craze

The All England Croquet Club (AECC) was founded by six gentlemen at the offices of The Field newspaper on 23 July 1868, at the height of the croquet craze in this country.

Visitors can view the minute book from this first meeting highlighting the founding members and their roles - The history of the Club had begun.

In the early days of croquet, the absence of agreed rules meant that the game was played generally to local rules, much as garden croquet is today, though some players sought more competitive and formally organised games.

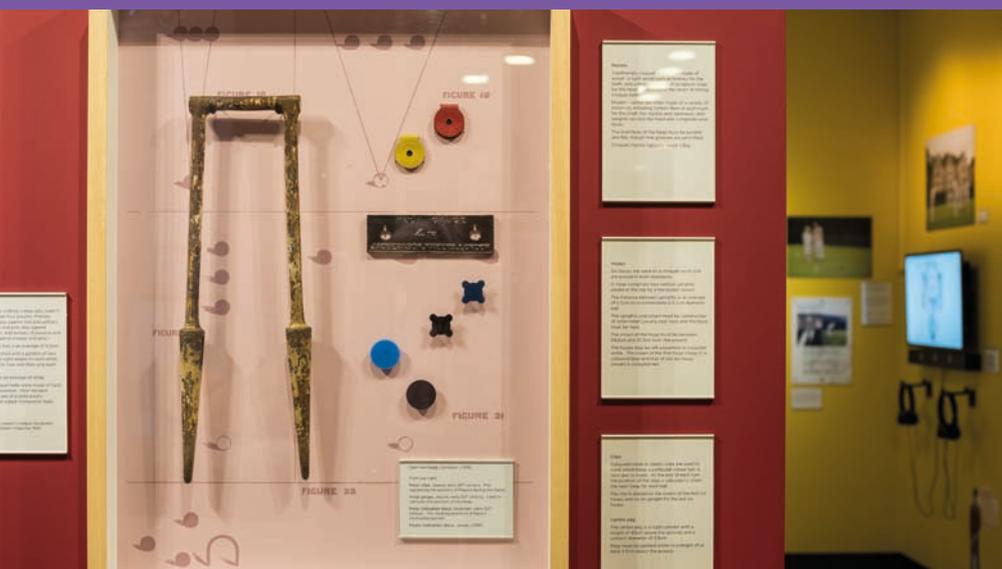
The Club's first secretary, Walter Jones Whitmore, was the first to develop consistently and widely used croquet laws, known as The Field Laws, published in 1866.

Examples of rule books from the Kenneth Ritchie Wimbledon Library collection show the growth of the codified game.

The arrival of tennis

Croquet had been governed by the AECC since 1871, but interest in the sport declined at Wimbledon with the introduction of lawn tennis.

Croquet's flat, closely trimmed lawns were perfect for the new game of lawn tennis – two tennis courts fit into one



All England Club, Wimbledon

years of croquet ~

croquet court.

Walter Peel, a member of the Club, was eager to revive tournament croquet and in 1897 created the United All England Croquet Association (renamed the Croquet Association in 1900).

It has remained the governing body for English croquet ever since.

Croquet's revival

By 1904 croquet ceased to be played at Wimbledon, and did not return to the Club until 1960.

Croquet was never a strong spectator sport and tennis drew in large crowds wanting to see their favourite tennis stars in action.

However, former tennis player and Club Vice-President, Bernard Neal (also CA President and world-class croquet player) was one of a small group of members who reintroduced croquet at Wimbledon, a strong tradition that continues at the Club today.

Large number of croquet exhibits

A variety of historic and modern equipment, decorative art, ephemera, costume and photography put the story in to context.

The Croquet Association, the World Croquet Federation and various players and manufacturers have all lent exhibits in addition to the Club's own archives and objects.

Starting at the beginning of the game, the exhibition tells the story of croquet from the establishment of the club to the present day with new equipment, such as a Trimmer mallet, and Dawson balls on show.

It's a compelling story, strong on historical accuracy as well as presentation and well worth a visit – especially to see croquet exhibits in the same halls as the club's tennis history.

Together with a Community Art Project 'Our Club', the story of the AELTC's origins is brought to life.

~

**The exhibition runs until
3 February 2019
and further information
can be found at
wimbledon.com/museum**

Elizabeth Williams



GC Students Championship

GC Students Championship

Following the great success of 2017's inaugural championship in Sheffield, the lawn quality was upgraded for this year from Parkhead Cricket Club outfield to the luscious, meticulously-trimmed grass of the **magnificent Roehampton Club** in London.

In the true spirit of the GC student tournament, the weekend brought some excellent croquet as well as two thoroughly enjoyable and entertaining nights out – and much fun was had by all! Mischief aside, 17 players represented five universities from all across the UK with a rather healthy presence from the dependable and dedicated University of Sheffield squad.

Block format and timed, double-banked games dominated the Saturday play with John-Paul Moberly, Thomas Oulton, Matthew Morgan and Jonathan Simpson topping their singles blocks.

The scorching Southern sun meant the pale, pasty Northerners burnt to a bright lobster-red crisp.

Close, tense matches were fought throughout the tournament and spectators of all ages lined the lawns on both days to watch the croquet.

The doubles championship culminated in a very close final with Sheffield gents William Chapman and Andrew Scott just losing out on the 13th hoop to the exquisite pairing of Edinburgh's finest John-Paul Moberly and Nottingham's 'military man' Steven Williams.

In the singles, Matthew Morgan beat Thomas Oulton in the Sheffield club mates play-off for a very respectable third place and a warmly-welcomed boost in his world ranking.



Support was extremely strong and entirely fair and balanced for the nail-biting grand final game and the Sunday afternoon rain did not stop play, as Simpson battled through the adverse weather conditions with a cracked, green visor. The well-rested, sober, world-class John-Paul ('Sean de Paul') Moberly and his precisely-crafted carbon-fibre mallet scraped a narrow 7-4 victory over Sheffield's sizeable commander-in-chief Simpson in an exciting finale to round off a brilliant weekend. Full results can be found on the CroquetScores website.

We were very honoured and privileged to have the legendary CA President Quiller Barrett on hand to draw the championship to a close and to hand out the weighty trophies. Many thanks must go to Chris Roberts and Frances Colman for doing a marvellous job of helping out at the event and for their superb efforts keeping the tournament on track.

As stated by many of the supporters, it was a delight to see so many young people having a great time playing croquet.

It is hoped that this fresh, youthful croquet blood will be inspired to develop their game over the next few years.

We are already incredibly excited about next year's GC Student Championship – it is sure to be another cracking weekend!

**Jonathan Simpson,
Sheffield University Croquet Society**

Photos from top: CA President Quiller Barrett presented the prizes, Isobel Corangi in play and the happy group at Roehampton (photos by Chris Roberts)



GC Coaching Pods update

Since the last Gazette publication, GC development pods (under the IPDS, International Performance Development Squad) at Canterbury, Guildford & Godalming, and Cheltenham have been active.

Canterbury CC held a development pod session, under the tutelage of facilitator Tobi Savage.

Guildford and Godalming CC followed up their inaugural session with a dozen or so participants returning for more.

Ablly assisted by facilitator Richard Carline, and a few other willing helpers, CA coach Jonathan Isaacs led the group through a two hour session, concentrating on practice routines to improve key skills.

Performance in each discipline or exercise was scored and recorded on individual record cards, giving participants a clear understanding of their relative strengths and weaknesses and their progress towards making improvements.

The Cheltenham pod is planning a series of development sessions on the following dates: 21 and 28 June, 23 and 30 August and 13 and 27 September. Andrew Cowing is the contact if you are interested in any or all of these.

The enthusiasm of development pod facilitators is beginning to show itself in very constructive ways by sharing material and ideas with each other, offering tips on session format and length, and the topics of most interest.

**Lionel Tibble, GC International
Performance Director**

GC Championship, A, B & C-Level Series

Participation numbers have been excellent so far, and in many cases 'too good', with several players experiencing the disappointment of being left out of over-subscribed tournaments.

The popularity of the GC Series tournaments shows no sign of levelling off and whilst limited available space in this issue prevents full reporting of all the Series qualifiers, readers can see all the top-placed finishers detailed in tables on the CA Website - go to: Tournaments / CA events / named pages for each Series.



GC European Championship



Rachel Gee regains her Euro crown

superb shooting and hoop-running form and lost 6-7, 7-2, 3-7.

In the quarter-finals, Andres Alvarez-Sala lost to his fellow-countryman, Rafael Romero, 3-7, 7-5, 5-7 while Beaudry found his most inspired form to beat Dodge 4-7, 7-2, 7-4.

The young Irishman, Mark Stephens, who had played so well in the 2017 European Golf Croquet Championship in Spain, beat Mulliner in a game 3 hoop 13th thriller by 7-4, 5-7, 7-6 to the dramatic accompaniment of a rapidly approaching thunderstorm.

All the while, Gee made quiet, steady progress and beat Andres De Diego in straight games to reach the semi-finals.

These were less dramatic than the quarters and Gee and Beaudry defeated Romero and Stephens in two games.

The final began with Beaudry in prime form and he soon took the opening game 7-3 and led 3-2 in the second.

Gee now rallied and squared the match 7-4 only to find that Beaudry made an even

England's Rachel Gee came from behind in the final to defeat Pierre Beaudry of Belgium by 3-7, 7-4, 7-5 to win the 2018 European GC Championship.

Gee had previously won the title in 2014.

The Championship was full of surprises.

Based on recent form, the likely semi-finalists were the block winners, Andres Alvarez-Sala (Spain), Stephen Mulliner (England), Harry Dodge (England) and Ian Burridge (Wales), all of whom had won all seven of their block matches.

In the event, not one of these four made it that far.

In the knock-out first round, Burridge met the young Spaniard, Andres De Diego, in

A quite magnificent four days of golf croquet at the Budleigh Salterton Club in Devon culminated in a win for England's Rachel Gee over Pierre Beaudry of Belgium in a knife-edge final.

There had been drama galore in the earlier rounds as well.

In the quarter-finals, for instance, Ireland's Mark Stephens needed to run hoop 13 from the boundary where he had been deposited by last year's runner-up Stephen Mulliner.

Storm clouds were gathering overhead and the first drops of rain were falling as he made the shot and took the match.

Both players and the sizeable crowd immediately ran for cover.

That apart, the weather was kind and the standard of play (at least to this six-handicapper) was phenomenal.

Hoops were run and clearances accomplished from immense distance, often with minimal preparation and just a confident swing.

I never thought to see a croquet crowd so engaged

During Rafael Romero's semi-final match against Gee, the atmosphere was like watching Rafa Nadal playing tennis.

Cries of "Vamos muchacho" echoed through the normally sedate Devonshire air.

Support for Gee was numerically superior but, as we might expect, less vociferous.

The final itself was worthy of the excellence of the tournament as a whole.

First game to Beaudry but Gee struck back in the next two to win 2-1.

She kept her nerve even when Beaudry ran a hoop from a significant angle and from almost the entire length of the court.

The section of the large crowd where I was didn't even applaud at first – they just gasped with wonder.

The organisation was so slick as to be almost invisible. Manager Stephen Mulliner was swan-like, gliding gracefully over the courts and clubhouse while working immensely hard to make it all happen.

In a witty and perceptive presentation speech, he was full of praise for the club, the welcome and the courts. Our thanks are due in rather more than equal measure to him.

As a humble, early-morning hoop-setter, I can testify that it is very rewarding to see such an eminent figure in the croquet world "mucking in" with all the unseen and unrecognised stuff.

Camaraderie across the nations

The spirit of camaraderie among the participants from the 11 countries was splendid and Beaudry said it all:-

better start in the decider and led 4-2.

However, a long hoop 7 and long clearances before 8 and before 9 combined to turn the game and match in Gee's favour.

It was an excellent performance under pressure and a very well-deserved victory.

Budleigh CC was very warmly thanked for its enthusiastic welcome and hospitality and the excellent state of the courts.

**Stephen Mulliner,
European Croquet Federation**

Photographs: Rachel Gee's winning stroke and Pierre Beaudry with a trademark hefty jump shot (by Stephen-Custance Baker)



"It was a pleasure to return to Budleigh Salterton for a second European Championship in possibly the most picturesque club on the circuit," he said.

"Catching up with old friends from the international community is an important part of the tournament and being in such a friendly and welcoming club made it all the more pleasant. Many thanks to all the members who volunteered to help in the catering, lawn maintenance and, of course, the bar. The final went the wrong way from my point of view, but it is always a pleasure to lose to the admirable Rachel."

To hear people from so many European countries sharing a drink, a joke and a very friendly rivalry was a joy.

Perhaps croquet does that. It certainly teaches humility, good manners and the ability to deal with adversity. Not bad lessons.

The last word goes to the champion herself.

"The Europeans is a fantastic event and provides a great opportunity to meet up with croquet friends from across Europe.

My thanks to Budleigh Salterton CC and all their volunteers who helped to make the event such a great success."

Stephen Andrews, Budleigh Salterton CC

Going for Growth with 'Croquet Matters' - NDO Dave Gunn

Since the official launch of the **Croquet Matters** programme in the last Gazette, I'm pleased to be able to say that there has been some good progress with all of the initiatives that I announced.

Three clubs (**Great Bedwyn** in the South, **Ealing** in the South-East and **Sapcote** in the East

Midlands) have already participated in Croquet Matters workshops that I ran for them, assisted by their local Federation Development Officer.

In each case, the feedback was positive and the club committees took away a commitment to work further on finalising their own development priorities and then agreeing and implementing a number of key actions to address them.

They all found that the Croquet Matters programme offered them two main benefits: a well-structured and thought-provoking way of performing a meaningful self-assessment and, via Sport England's Club Matters tool, a series of comprehensive online toolkits that gave them confidence that they would be able to successfully address any priority development areas they arrived at.

In effect, Croquet Matters acted as a catalyst for action. The three clubs have all agreed to update me on their progress over the coming months and I will, of course, share this with you in future articles.

Several other clubs (from other federations) have expressed interest in running a workshop in the near future and I would welcome contact from further clubs around the country.

For those clubs who feel that things are busy enough already during the season, why not consider booking a workshop (with



Photo – Committee members of Sapcote Croquet Club along with East Midlands Federation Development Officer Mick Haytack at their recently held Croquet Matters workshop'

me or directly with your FDO) for the back end of the year?

How to get on Facebook

A number of clubs have already downloaded our new 'How to get your club onto Facebook' guide, with several contacting its author for further assistance.

The main driver for this interest appears to be the desire to reach new target audiences such as 30 to 50 year-olds, a much sought-after demographic at many clubs.

Free website template

Our free-of-charge, centrally hosted and administered club website template has also generated a lot of interest and I am delighted to report that we have eleven clubs from seven different federations lined up to participate in a pilot that should be well under way by the time you read this article.

Many of these clubs currently have no website but a couple are wanting to replace existing ones for various reasons.

In the next Gazette I will let you know how the pilot is progressing and give you

the details to allow you visit some of the sites that will be live by then, to see if it might be an offering that would be good for your club.

Federations on-line forum

Last, but not least, our new online forum for use by any federation committee member wanting to share local success stories, problems, requests for help, work, facilities, expertise, etc. with federation colleagues around the country has now gone live.

We have already seen a number of new topics posted, ranging from 'how to deal with difficult local council landlords', 'levels of membership fees' to 'what types of events have been successful in attracting new members' and, in many cases, help has been forthcoming from the forum membership.

If your club has a success story or a request for help, please do contact your local federation officers and ask them to spread the word via the forum.

I am here to help you

Finally, a reminder - a more detailed description of Croquet Matters can be found (along with the Facebook Guide mentioned earlier) at a new section on the CA website, under the 'Clubs and Federations' tab.

Do have a look and then let me and/or your Federation Development Officer know if you would like some support with engaging with the programme.

Dave Gunn,
National Development Officer
davegunn59@gmail.com
07710 981561

Is it a bird? Is it Superman? No, it's a plane (and a very big one)!

Chester members were enjoying the sunshine when we had a fly past by a spectacular plane, an Airbus Beluga.

We would like to have thought that the pilot and crew were merely flying over to watch croquet in action on National Croquet Day but in reality they were on a routine flight from nearby Broughton.

Perhaps I should explain; Airbus makes large commercial planes, notably the A320 and A380 series. The wings are made in Broughton but the final plane assembly is in Toulouse or Hamburg. One can't stick the wings in the post so what does one do?

The answer is an ingenious modification of an A300 into the Airbus

Beluga which can take wings in its "belly".

If you see an unusually large plane fly over your croquet club, you'll now know what it is.

An even bigger Beluga is under development to transport a pair of A350 wings in one go. The wings of the A380 which are too large for even the Beluga XL have to go by sea. My thanks to Airbus for providing this superb image and technical data

John Dawson, Chester CC



The Alison Jones Column ~ The fun of croquet

Some of you will know that I am on a mission this year, that mission being to 'have fun'.

I am pleased to report that this is going exactly as planned.

Last weekend we played in the Bowdon Open weekend, which for me has been followed by a week of holidaying in Bowdon itself.

I have been treated to the delight of court-side conversation by the Bowdon ladies, where we giggled and gossiped for an entire 'best of five' final between David Maugham and Jose Riva.

Our chit-chat provided much entertainment for other passing spectators and players too, where the conversations spanned from 'And how do you line up a hoop run' to 'Are you a pointy person?'

Even Jose couldn't help joining in on the topic of hoop-running when he was off the lawn, where apparently the best place to aim is the middle of the hoop.

It really is amazing how many ways there are to 'run a hoop', perhaps the joke should start "How many croquet players does it take to [enter any word from the English language here]".



The club members have made me feel so welcome and part of their family; I was even invited to play in the Wednesday roll-up session.

Between becoming an honorary 'Golden Girl' for the week and watching 33 croquet players fight it out for the 'Mars Bar', I have been inspired to write this article to encourage you to have a croquet adventure of your own.

Not only will you meet new friends in the form of like-minded croquet players, but you may also be introduced to new ideas to share back home at your own club.

And, it's not always about croquet; I now have the recipe for the most amazing tuna

pasta salad I have ever tasted in my life!

My week of Bowdon holiday ended with the AC Home Internationals.

Knowing I would be spectating at the event in advance, I also offered to help the catering team.

I was presented with my own pinny in the morning, and my chopping, washing and wine-pouring skills were put to the test.

As always (even with my 'help') the catering at Bowdon was fabulous and

enjoyed enormously by the players and spectators.

And whilst on the topic of catering let me give a huge shout-out and 'thank you' to all those club members around the country who volunteer for the kitchen graft.

As you can see from the attached picture, croquet is definitely fun!

~

Definition: Pointy person = Players who like to demonstrate directing traffic before taking a croquet stroke.

~

Photo - Having fun in Bowdon's kitchen were: Sue Cooper, (Alison Jones!), Carol Steinberg, Lorna Frost and Ken Cooper.

Our new AC IPD's forward plan

I have recently been appointed AC International Performance Director (AC IPD), taking over from Ian Burridge.

Ian worked incredibly hard and made a huge difference to our sport in developing this role, the sustainable pathway for talented players, and oversaw that excellent coaching being available to all improving players. Ian is experienced enough to have delivered much of the advanced coaching himself.

David Maugham will now be lead coach for the Development Squad., while the GB Squad will gain an official coach in due course.

I will be working with clubs, federations and academies to ensure players have the opportunities to develop their skills, and will encourage players to realise the benefits of further training.

To improve the performance of croquet in our country, it is important to work with players at all levels of the sport, from beginners through to the GB Squad.

The AC World Team Championship (MacRobertson Shield) will be played in Australia in three years' time; and I will be working with the GB Squad players to prepare them for the selection process to the AC England Elite Squad.

Our senior players will be expected to achieve a high level of performance in the two seasons prior to selection, bringing exciting times ahead for those who follow the player rankings and tournament results.

In addition to ensuring that croquet coaching is available to players of all abilities, I will also be encouraging players to improve other aspects of being a sports person, including mindset preparation, nutrition, and team-manship.

External resources will be introduced to the squad programmes, such as coaches from other sports alongside new team preparation events.

Alison Jones, AC International Performance Director

Photograph by Stephen Custance-Baker



Surrey won the 104th AC Inter County Championships, winning all 10 of their matches.

This was a repeat of their clean sweep of 2015 when they needed a nine player squad.

This time they used the same six players for all ten matches, and their team Samir Patel (c), Jamie Burch, Jeff Dawson, Jean-Paul Moberly, Sam Murray

and Duncan Reeve had virtually won the tournament by the end of the third day.

They showed that they meant business at Compton on Day 1, when they beat the defending champions Nottinghamshire 2-1 in the opening match.

At the start of the final day they were still undefeated; Middlesex were on six wins but would need to have won both remaining games and have Surrey lose both theirs by 0-3 to have a chance at the title.

In the end Jamie Burch quickly won against Gloucestershire with 'an outrageous TP' that was effective if not text book, and even that mathematical possibility disappeared.

Surrey won both their remaining games 3-0 to end on 26 game wins, three more than they achieved in 2015.

Close relegation battle

Glamorgan, who won the Second Division last year, and so were promoted, were without David Walters and Ian Burrige and were always going to struggle.

They managed a game win most of the time, but only once, against Somerset, could they achieve two in the same match, and they were duly relegated. Gloucestershire and Sussex both started the final day on only two match wins, which would normally have seen them both relegated, but because the Channel Islands had had to field some ineligible players one of them could be saved, and they were due to play each other last. The games were amongst the last to finish, prolonging the suspense, before Sussex got home 2-1 winners to stay in the



Surrey regain the AC Championship with a clean sweep

top division by the skin of their teeth.

Division 2 closely fought

Oxfordshire were the only undefeated team in the Second Division after the first two days, but in the end they were pipped to the post by Dorset, whom they had beaten on the first day.

The Dorset team of Jonathan Powe (c), Anthony Dix, David Harrison-Wood, David Kendrick, Dave Trimmer, Tom Weston and David Williams lifted the trophy with eight match wins, and gained promotion back to the First Division.

Oxfordshire were also promoted (for the first time) with seven match wins along with Suffolk, another yo-yo team, who had six match wins but a superior game tally to Wiltshire, Berkshire and Essex.

Clarke v Clarke

Chris and Jenny Clarke were over from New Zealand, this time playing for Lancashire and Cheshire respectively.

When the two counties met on the first day, Cheshire's David Maugham effected a TPO on Paul Rigge's ball and then pegged himself out, leaving Chris and Jenny, both on Hoop 1, to play a game of one-ball.

Jenny started a good two ball break but eventually broke down, allowing husband Chris to finish off in record time.

Mallet goes to the beach

On the second day Sussex had a bye for the afternoon game, and Dominic Nunn's children picked up what they thought was their father's mallet and put it in the car for a quick trip to the beach.

Sadly it was Marcus Evans'

mallet, which was an almost identical Pidcock round mallet, so Marcus was forced to play with Dominic's mallet.

Perhaps this is a timely reminder to players that with so many similar mallets around they should add some identifying feature.

In another quirky mallet-related incident, Richard M. Smith of Hertfordshire broke his mallet, so borrowed Nick Mounfield's to complete his game, Nick having already finished. Thus the same mallet pegged out in two games in one match!

Airport rush forces tactical quick thinking

Also on the second day, at Compton, Jose Riva of Middlesex completed six peels of an octuple after his partner Nelson Morrow had broken down at Hoop 5.

He failed the straight double peel at the end but still finished under control against Hertfordshire.

Jose was due to catch a plane from Gatwick that day and Eugene Chang had been brought in to play the last match for him. When Christian Carter had to leave after tea, Jose agreed to stay and play for one hour, which is all he could afford if he was to catch his plane.

He did a three ball break "because it was quicker" and pegged out after 50 minutes!

Alternate Strokes alternative

An unusual feature of the second two days was the increasing use of alternate stroke doubles. The Tournament Regulations (L4) were changed this



Championship ~ Sue Mackay reports

Division One	Matches	Games
Surrey	10	26
Middlesex	7	19
Nottinghamshire	6	18*
Lancashire	6	18*
Hertfordshire	6	17
Somerset	6	16
Cheshire	5	15
Channel Islands (R)	3	11
Sussex	3	8
Gloucestershire (R)	2	8
Glamorgan (R)	1	9

*who beat whom

year to allow the use of alternate stroke doubles if all four players agreed, but it was not well publicised and hardly anyone knew about it. Lancashire and Middlesex used it for most of their games on the final two days, and as word spread quite a few pairings decided to use it for the last match, especially if nothing much else was at stake. Kristian Chambers and Ed Duckworth seemed to be having a whale of a time going for an alternate stroke TP, and despite a few mumbblings from double banked games playing conventional doubles, on the whole it seemed to be a success.

Division Two	Matches	Games
Dorset (P)	8	20
Oxfordshire (P)	7	18
Suffolk (P)	6	18
Wiltshire	6	17
Essex	6	16
Berkshire	6	15
Hampshire	5	18
Yorkshire	4	14
Kent	3	11
Shropshire	2	10
Warwickshire	2	8

James Death, Health & Safety

The last match on Lawn 10 was Glamorgan v Nottinghamshire double banked with Somerset v Middlesex, with both games using alternate stroke.

There was much hilarity and good natured ribbing, but the neighbours must have been alarmed when they saw James Death on the court.

The previous day on the adjacent Lawn 10 he had run Hoop 2 with such force that the ball hit an upturned chair and launched itself straight over the six foot wooden fence into the neighbour's garden!



Good organisation as usual

As usual thanks are due to all the club helpers who produced such splendid catering at both venues, to Chris Williams for managing the event and to Roger Wood, Nick Parish, Bill Arliss and Andrew Gregory, who Managed at the other venue to Chris.

Photographs by Rod Mackay

Opposite top - Surrey's winning team.

Opposite page bottom - Glamorgan's Sarah Melvin and Chris Williams try alternate stroke doubles.

Above - Dorset's Jonathan Powe receives the Second Division shield from Jonathan Isaacs.



Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines

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Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines are offering Croquet Association members a very tempting 10% membership discount* on your first sailing with them – and that's on top of any current offers. Existing Fred. Olsen customers can save 5%, in addition to their 5% Loyalty Club discount.



To book using your discount code **THECA10** call the booking hotline **0800 0355 108** or visit **www.fredolsencruises.com/CA**

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Travel with confidence

Top tips for newcomers to AC match play

Following on from previous articles I hope you have now been out practising shots and have had the opportunity to watch and speak with some better players.

I have detailed below some basic tips which I hope will help when you are playing a Club Match or entering a tournament event, **writes Sarah Hayes.**

Courts

Make sure you know where you are due to play and when.

If possible get some practice time on the court in question – perhaps the day before?

Be on time at all costs, and allow some extra minutes so you are not all in a tiz before you start.

Hoop 1

This usually has a blue top.

Sometimes, but not often, the court will seem the wrong way round for some reason and therefore you will be prone to going the wrong way and running hoops out of order. If this is the case grab a chair and sit as near to the South Boundary as possible until the orientation becomes clear.

Ambition

Try not to be ridiculously ambitious – this is the best way to lose imaginable.

Play simple shots well and within your ability – if you are able to comfortably rush 5 yards, then make do with this – don't go all out and miss trying to rush 10 yards.

Plan

It doesn't take long to spot opportunities – perhaps opponent has failed to get in front of a hoop or is in the right line but yards away – so start thinking about what you could do if you do get a chance. You will begin to make decisions before you step on the court and appear confident.

Leaves

People get in a bit of a state thinking about this aspect of the turn. As a start to introducing yourself to leaves try simply matching clips and balls – so if red clip is on hoop 4, then plonk the red ball nearby.

Don't worry too much if they are not a lot of use to you as it is just as important that they are no use at all to your opposition.

Try not to lay up your two balls next to a hoop with an opposition clip on it . . . that is asking for trouble.

Get your two balls as near to a boundary as possible – having the balls in the court makes it much easier for your opponent and often gives them a free shot at you (i.e. if they shoot at you their ball will be too far away if it misses for you to be able to use.

Watch

Keep an eye on what your opponent is up to – 'five-ball-breaks' are not uncommon, just as is running wrong hoops and playing wrong balls.

You might learn some new tactics to try out another time, or, perhaps see a different shot which you could practise for next time.

If you feel your opponent has done something wrong, such as: They played the wrong ball or were going for the wrong hoop - remember you are not meant to tell them until the deed is done, when you may immediately get their attention and point out the error.

Maybe they played a ball twice before running a hoop ('a five- ball-break') – stop them taking croquet.

Please do get used to interrupting an opponent – do this preferably during a practise match with a friend. Interrupting does not involve throwing something at them or screaming your lungs out.

The laws

Lots of beginners feel they have a handle on the laws – but generally they don't.

Make sure to have a law book with you and if a question comes up then both look up the issue in the index and sort out the problem. If there is still a disagreement then ask someone else to help...nobody minds

Ask ask ask

When your our brain has turned to mush and you really are quite lost – remember you are able to ask your opponent to go over the state of the game at any time – I would expect players to let you know which ball you are playing, which other balls are 'dead' or 'live' to you, and which hoop you are now on. Don't just stand there trying to work it out whilst the clock is ticking.

You should learn from every game and standing around getting more and more confused will not help.

So – come on all of you new players – get out there and have a go! We love to see croquet being taken up by fresh faces and enjoy helping you out when possible.

Sarah Hayes, Chairman, Coaching Cttee.

Becoming a Coach

Receive a few messages regarding the issue of the requirement to be a CA Member before receiving any badge or certificate. Please will everyone interested note, that any individual member of the CA may become a coach and receive the usual acknowledgement of their name in the Gazette, the award of a badge, etc., **writes Sarah Hayes.**

Individual members include the new Standard Members, so you do not need to commit to any direct debits or pay annual fees to the CA – simply being a playing member of a member club is enough.

Interested? - Please contact your Federation Coaching Officer for advice.

Also, there are courses at the three Coaching Academies (at Southwick near Brighton, Budleigh Salterton in Devon and York). If you know of someone keen to become a coach then please highlight this article to them for future reference.

Sarah Hayes, Chairman, Coaching Cttee.

Recent Coaching Appointments

Examining Coach Grade 1:

Roger Mills Sidmouth

GC Graded Coaches Grade 3:

Chris Clarke Overseas
Jenny Clarke Overseas

GC Graded Coach Grade 1:

Peter Moore Budleigh Salterton

AC Graded Coach Grade 2

Peter Moore Budleigh Salterton

AC Graded Coach Grade 1

Peter Moore Budleigh Salterton
Peter Nelson Sidmouth
Jack Smith Budleigh Salterton
Colin Walls Sidmouth
Janet Hoptroff Sussex County

Club Coaches

Peter Moore Budleigh Salterton
Peter Nelson Sidmouth
Cathy O'Brien Ben Rhydding

New Examining Coach

There are very few examining coaches and new appointments are rare – I am therefore doubly delighted to let you know that our Coach of the Year 2017, **Roger Mills**, has recently been made an Examining Coach.

Roger has worked very hard working towards this and has travelled the length and breadth of the land attending and observing coach training and qualification courses.

A few words from our new Examining Coach:

"I love the challenge of coaching; being appointed an Examining Coach is a great opportunity to help bring more coaches into the game and pass on the coaching skills I have learnt from other leading coaches and examining coaches.

Many thanks to Sarah Hayes, Cliff Jones, Dave Kibble, Roger Staples, James Hawkins and Daphne Gaitley."



New Examining coach Roger Mills (above) and Peter Moore who is recently qualified in both codes. (Photos by Chris Roberts)



Chris & Jenny Clarke's top tips for GC

I am sure you have read about our two new GC Grade 3 coaches, **Chris and Jenny Clarke**, former AC World Champion (twice) and former AC Womens World Champion respectively.

The Coaching Committee were delighted that they accepted the appointments – without any painful arm-twisting they have very kindly offered to provide some insight into their top tips for everyone just starting out, or who is less experienced in Golf Croquet, and their article follows below.

Many thanks to Chris and Jenny for taking the time to do this. It is much appreciated.

Sarah Hayes

~

We were asked to list our top tips – so here goes...

Technique...

The most important part of the game – hands together near the top of the shaft of the mallet, have a slow, smooth backswing, let gravity start the downswing and watch your mallet hit the striker's ball.

If you look up during your swing . . . you can watch your ball hit the wire of the hoop!

This is what we spend the most time coaching higher-handicap players – and a lot of low-handicap players.

Extra turns...

Don't use them to clear your opponent away – it's almost always wrong – you use an extra turn and clear us, we just play back into position – you will be one extra turn down and you're no better off!

Use your extra turns to get in front of your hoop before your opponent does – this could be with the first ball played into the game!

Don't save extra turns for a rainy day – use them as soon as there is a good opportunity to do so – e.g. taking position first at hoops when the opponent is a long way away, for

example: hoops 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9 or 10!

Practice...

Apart from practising hitting the ball cleanly, lots of practice time should be spent getting good at taking position – the best shot in the world won't win if they can't get their ball in front of the hoop.

My favourite GC practice session is using two balls, start from corner 4 and approach hoop 1 – if you get in front, run hoop 1, otherwise just take position at hoop 2 . . .

Keep doing this around the whole circuit. When you're at the 'short' hoops, e.g. going from hoop 4 to hoop 5, take position with one ball, but try to clear with the other.

Don't get carried away trying clearances, as taking position is more valuable practice, but do have a go at a few.

If you can do jump shots, throw a couple of them into your practice too.

Game day warm-up...

Use your 5 minutes well – start by taking position at hoop 1 from corner 4 with both your balls. Mostly practise taking position accurately, and do a few clearances.

The last two strokes of your warm-up should be taking position at hoop 1 from corner 4 again – it's how you will start your game.

You will win more games by taking position well than you will by hitting lots of long shots!

Game day decision-making...

If in doubt, priorities are:

1: take position, 2: run your hoop, 3: clear your opponent. In that order – usually take position!

Good luck in your play, and enjoy your golf croquet – that's why we play the game!

Jenny and Chris Clarke

Hitting the target

Further to the article in the last issue (Gazette 373), I have received a great piece of advice from Mr Colin Irwin (England and GB player), so thought I would copy it below for all to read.

It is particularly helpful as a follow on, once the very basic shot is played with confidence.

Thank you Colin!

Colin Irwin: -

When coaching I find the idea of swinging the mallet towards the target useful.

Slow backswing, smooth forward swing THROUGH the striker's ball down the line towards the target.

This helps promote a good follow through and avoidance of the cardinal sin, deceleration through the stroke.

Actually imagine you are swinging the mallet at the target.

New ideas at the Croquet Innovations Tournament

Howard Sosin is an American gentleman with a keen interest in both invention and croquet.

In early 2017, he put forward an idea for increasing both the interactivity and challenge of Association Croquet in easy playing conditions.

This is the game is now called Peel Croquet (PC).

Since then Howard has come up with other ideas aimed at rewarding peeling, including "Peel & Peg".

The purpose of the Croquet Innovations Tournament (CIT) held in March 2018 was to hold the first formal Peel Croquet tournament and to test out Peel & Peg under competitive conditions.

Stephen Mulliner, reports on the tournament and how to play Peel Croquet

Peel Croquet

Peel Croquet is AC with three modifications.

The first is the imposition of a "Peeling Requirement" which limits a strong player to two hoops in a break unless they can achieve a "Break Extending Peel" before they score a third hoop.

Peels can be either conventional forward peels or reverse peels, called "Leeps"!

It is perfectly possible to make a break of eight hoops with three peels or leeps and this offers the opportunity to win a game with a triple starting at hoop 6 or 1-back.

The second modification is designed to aid peeling in either direction.

The clips do not start on hoop 1. Instead, the Blue, Red, Black and Yellow clips are placed on hoops 2, 3, 5 and 4 respectively so the score begins at 5-5.

At the start of every turn, a ball will therefore have three peeling and three leeping opportunities.

The third modification is designed to encourage enterprise and create a focus on what can be achieved from a starting position rather than worrying about what might be given away by failure.

In order to diminish but not remove the importance of good shooting, the baulk-lines are defined as the full width of the north and south yard-lines and every turn begins with the right to lift to baulk or take contact or take a lift to position depending on what the opponent achieved in the previous turn.

If they have achieved a peel, only a lift to baulk is available. If they achieved a hoop

Seven players were invited to join Howard at the National Croquet Center (NCC) at West Palm Beach, home of the 2016 AC World Championships, namely Jeff Soo, Sherif Abdelwahab, Ian Harshman, Simon Jenkins and Mike Todorovich from the USA and Stephen Mulliner and Danny Johnson from this side of the Atlantic.

Player feedback was an essential element of the exercise and both lunchtime and start-of-day discussions were an important and enjoyable part of the week.

The NCC courts have been improved significantly in the last two years.

The CIT used courts 2, 3, 6 and 7 and these were very smooth and edging towards 12 Plummers which, together with firm superhoops, provided slightly more challenging conditions than might be ideal for peeling-focussed games.

Nonetheless, the players coped well, and some excellent peeling turns were completed, including a quintuple-peel.

The Peel Croquet and Peel & Peg events came down to finals on the Sunday.

In the Peel Croquet block stage, Jeff Soo beat Stephen Mulliner in a nail-biting game despite the latter building a big lead.

This game was recorded in high definition by Russell Dille (see at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S8BroRsCM8Q&list=PLsKaCgglltFKufuvQV-IB6ZPQQaK0cPXX>).

Mulliner beat Johnson +16. in the final.

The Peel & Peg final was between Mulliner and Sherif Abdelwahab.

The Englishman led 22-7 after his eighth and final turn but Sherif made a superb attempt to get a fifth peel in his final turn and only just missed out.



and croquet strokes.

It soon becomes obvious that rushing to positions due north or south of a peel hoop is an important part of peeling success.

The pressure is higher than in AC because jawing a peel is rarely good enough.

The structure of the game permits recoveries from far behind and knife-edge endings where one mistake is fatal.

All in all, it was enormous fun and all of us felt that we were playing much better croquet by the end of the week.

How to play Peel & Peg will be detailed in the next issue

Conclusion

Howard Sosin deserves great appreciation for his innovative approach to developing croquet and his generosity in seeking to enhance the enjoyment of AC and peeling.

The week's play convinced all the players that Peel Croquet is a truly excellent game which could have a future as "Hyper-Advanced Croquet", occupying a place in the AC spectrum which has Ordinary Advanced AC at one end for testing conditions, Super-Advanced in the middle for easier conditions and Hyper-Advanced Croquet for the easiest conditions.

Peel & Peg was greatly enjoyed and its potential for entertainment and training was fully appreciated.

It is probably less likely to be seen as a form of serious competition because it is not designed to allow the sides to affect each other's tactical chances.

The photo is by Ian & Sara Anderson.

CA Grant helps Kington Langley to nice flat courts



Kington Langley Croquet Club is situated near Chippenham in Wiltshire and is a member of the South West Federation.

Until September of this year we had a nearly full size court and a smaller than half size court.

Visiting teams would refer to our lawns as, "idiosyncratic" and made comments such as, "Playing on Kington Langley's slight slope is always a challenge..."

In 2016 following the amalgamation of the Village Hall and Playing Fields Committees into one body, a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), and the subsequent formalisation of our rental agreement we decided to go ahead with our plans for lawn development.

We are a small club and realised this was going to be a major and rather daunting undertaking.

A contractor called Talbot stood out from

the many that were contacted and their quote came in at £40,000.

We took a deep breath and agreed to proceed, feeling that we were in a now or never situation. Since then we have been involved in a hectic period of fund raising and grant applications.

We are grateful to the Croquet Association for their support; their grant of £5,000 was essential in supporting other applications.

We are also supported by our CIO, the local Area Board and our Parish Council, and we are very grateful to Wavin, a local company, who donated some drainage pipes.

We raised funds with barn dances, whist and bridge drives, barbeques, a Big Breakfast and a Pimms and Croquet event, the latter of which took place on a very wet, windy afternoon but brave souls still came out to support us.

We know that our courts were far from flat but we were surprised when surveys had indicated there was a height difference of almost a metre between opposite corners of our playing area!

We were all amazed at how much earth had to be moved before Talbots declared that the area is now flat to within one centimetre overall. Work started on 21 September, the seed was sown on 6 October and ten days later the first shoots began to sprout – we were very fortunate with the warm autumn weather.

Talbot are continuing to monitor the growth and will carry out initial maintenance. We have been very impressed with their work and attitude.

On 12 January 2018 Talbot carried out the final cut and handed the lawns over.

This coming season we should have two full size, flat and level lawns

Julia Cook

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Running Repairs

Meadow Grass produces seeds all season, looks unsightly and spreads. Use a knife to lever the clumps out complete with roots and fill the hole with some top dressing or soil and a pinch of seed. Keep the soil moist and new grass will appear within a week or so.

Seeding bare patches during the playing season is really easy. Cut a groove 10mm deep with a knife, add a pinch of seed along the groove and then close up the groove.

This captures the seed in the soil and, if kept moist, it will germinate within a week or so. Only tiny amounts of seed are required. If you want small quantities of the top rated seed, use Barenbrug Ultrafine, which I can supply.

Keep an eye out for Dry Patch

This appears as dry areas where the grass is starved of moisture and then dies. Unfortunately many people think that aeration, deep spiking or even pneumatic fracturing will cure the problem – they won't.

Dry Patch is a misleading term, Dry Block would be more descriptive because it isn't just the surface that is affected. Micro-organisms create a waxy substance that makes blocks of soil unwaterable down to a depth of up to a couple of feet. The surface is waterproof and even heavy rain won't penetrate. Furthermore, the bottom of the block can't draw moisture from the water table either. Think of it as a block of wax - if you make holes in it, fracture it or pump air into it the wax will still repel water.

The cure is very simple and not expensive.

All you need is a watering can or a sprayer and a bottle of curative. £36 will cover the cost of treating 400 sq metres.

If you want some, let me know.

Duncan Hector (contact details; see my advert, left)



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The Peel Memorials

The Peel Memorials (AC Handicap) tournament, first played in 1898, attracted twenty-six competitors to Nottingham CC this season. The handicaps for the eleven ladies ranged from 11 to 20 and for the fifteen men the range was from -1 to 11, **reports manager Bob Thompson.**

The club had an anxious time leading up to the event since the main contractors, carrying out regeneration works, had gone into administration and left the site in January. Temporary arrangements were agreed for the tournament, club members rallied round and equipment was returned from winter storage.

Eight pairs competed in the mixed doubles knockout, with combined handicaps ranging from 6 to 11. The final was between Omied Hallam (-1) & Pippa Hallam (16) [joint h/c 7.5] against Bob Thompson (2.5) & Patricia Duke-Cox (14) [8.5]. The game was evenly matched until Omied had a ten minute hooping and peeling spell which turned out to be a crucial period of play, as later he was pegged out. Pippa had an anxious twenty minutes of solo play, and hung on, and her side win +4 on time.

Both the Ladies and Mens Single events were initially played as a flexible Swiss format with the top four competitors then competing in semis and a final.

Sophie McGlen (Nottingham and Oxford Uni., 12) beat Diana Stevens (Hamptworth, 16) in one Ladies semis and the other was an all-Nottingham affair where Patricia Duke-Cox (14) beat Sue Wileman (11). In the Final, McGlen was unable to overhaul Duke-Cox who played some of her best croquet and won +9.

Richard Stevens (Hamptworth, 7) beat Bob Thompson (Nottingham, 2.5) and John Bee (Watford 7) beat Martin Beacon (Nottingham, 1) in the Mens semis and Stevens maintained his unbeaten run to win +5.

Bob Thompson managed the event in his usual relaxed style and Brian Shorney, the CA Chairman, presented the trophies.

A new CA member is trying to get the balls rolling in Grayton, South Africa



Dennis Turnbull is an American, living in South Africa, who has rediscovered the croquet he played in his youth and is now so keen that he has sourced some land and is building his own club from scratch at the village of Greyton (140 kilometres from Cape Town). Gazette Editor Chris Roberts and 'From our Files' researcher Frances Colman visited Dennis's project on a rest day during February's Southern Cape AC tournament, and Lionel Tibble had also made a visit a few days earlier. *Continued overleaf...*

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... continued from page 29

Dennis describes Greyton as a picturesque and charming English kind of village – “South Africa’s Little England with Sunshine Added” in fact.

Whilst the English likeness was perhaps looking back several decades and therefore difficult to see, one certainly couldn’t disagree about the sunshine; the day we made our unannounced visit it was a real scorcher!

A cool beer outside (but definitely in the shade) went down well as we waited for Dennis to arrive and show us to the site. By the time we arrived at the site we had learnt that there is already a Greyton Country Croquet Club in existence, but they are a club with no home court.

Dennis was pleased to say that despite this disadvantage, Greyton play in the Robinson Cup competition with the other five Western Cape clubs and that the GCCC team had just finished fourth for the second straight year (having always safely secured last place before then!).

So it is high time then for Greyton to have formal courts of their own, and Dennis is thinking big!

His site has enough room for two or three full-size croquet courts but he has much work to do to turn its current waste ground appearance into a level grassed area.

Good luck Dennis!

If enthusiasm was all that was needed Dennis would have it all.

Learn more about this ambitious project at www.gccc-greyton.co.za.

Chris Roberts, Editor

The Croquet Association Website

www.croquet.org.uk

is a fabulous resource for croquet information covering: membership, news, laws & rules, coaching, who is who, and tournament details (complete with an on-line entry system).

Croquet jargon

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

To find the glossary go to:

[Advice & Technical/ Other Articles / Croquet Jargon](http://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=tech/other/jargon)

or use this link:

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CA Contacts

Mark Suter

Manager

The Croquet Association
Old Bath Road, Cheltenham
GL53 7DF 01242 242318
caoffice@croquet.org.uk



Dave Gunn

National Development Officer

72 Musters Road, Ruddington
Nottingham, NG11 6HZ
07710 981561
davegunn59@gmail.com



Quiller Barrett

President

10 Frost House, Chesham Rd
Berkhamsted
HP4 3AY
quiller3@gmail.com



Brian Shorney

Chairman of Council

Cagebrook Mill, Clehonger
Hereford HR2 9TQ
01981 250521
brian@shorney.net



John Bowcott

Vice-Chairman of Council

7 Walham Rise
Wimbledon Hill Rd, London
SW19 7QY 020 8947 6032
bowcott@hotmail.com



Peter Death

Hon. Treasurer

252 Hockley Road, Hockley
Tamworth, Stafs. B77 5EZ
01827 251738
peter.j.death@gmail.com



Dr. Ian Vincent

Hon. Secretary

21 Cedar Avenue, Beeston
Nottingham NG9 2HA
0115 925 3664
ian.vincent@cantab.net



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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 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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CA Council Committee Chairmen

Executive

Brian Shorney brian@shorney.net

Management

John Bowcott bowcott@hotmail.com

AC Laws

Ian Vincent ian.vincent@cantab.net

AC Selection

Ian Lines ian.lines@atkinsglobal.com

AC Tournament

Brian Fisk brian.pe.fisk@gmail.com

GC Rules

Stephen Mulliner snmulliner@gmail.com

GC Selection

Martin French martin.french@btinternet.com

GC Tournament

Tim King tmk@ntlworld.com

Handicap

Strat Liddiard stratmale@gmail.com

Coaching

Sarah Hayes burrowsarah5@googlemail.com

Development

Roger Staples staplessteeples@live.co.uk

Equipment

Dave Trimmer davetrimmer@talktalk.net

ICT

Ian Vincent ian.vincent@cantab.net

International

Tim King tmk@ntlworld.com

Investment

Strat Liddiard stratmale@gmail.com

Marketing

Brian Wilson brian@europaassociates.co.uk

Publishing

John Dawson johngdawson@onetel.com

CA Federation Representatives on Council

Croquet North

01642 712551

Charles Waterfield

cwaterfield41@gmail.com

North West

01244 675929

John Dawson

johngdawson@onetel.com

Yorkshire

01484 716663

Anna Giraud

eag@giraudnet.co.uk

East Midlands

01332 516541

Mick Haytack

mickhaytack@gmail.com

W.Midlands & Wales

- Vacancy -

East Anglia

01707 873 269

Brian Havill

brian.havill@outlook.com

Southern

07774 639 061

Frances Colman

frances@luxtersfarm.com

South West

01242 512933

Klim Seabright

klimseabright@gmail.com

London & South-East

020 8789 7707

David Mooney

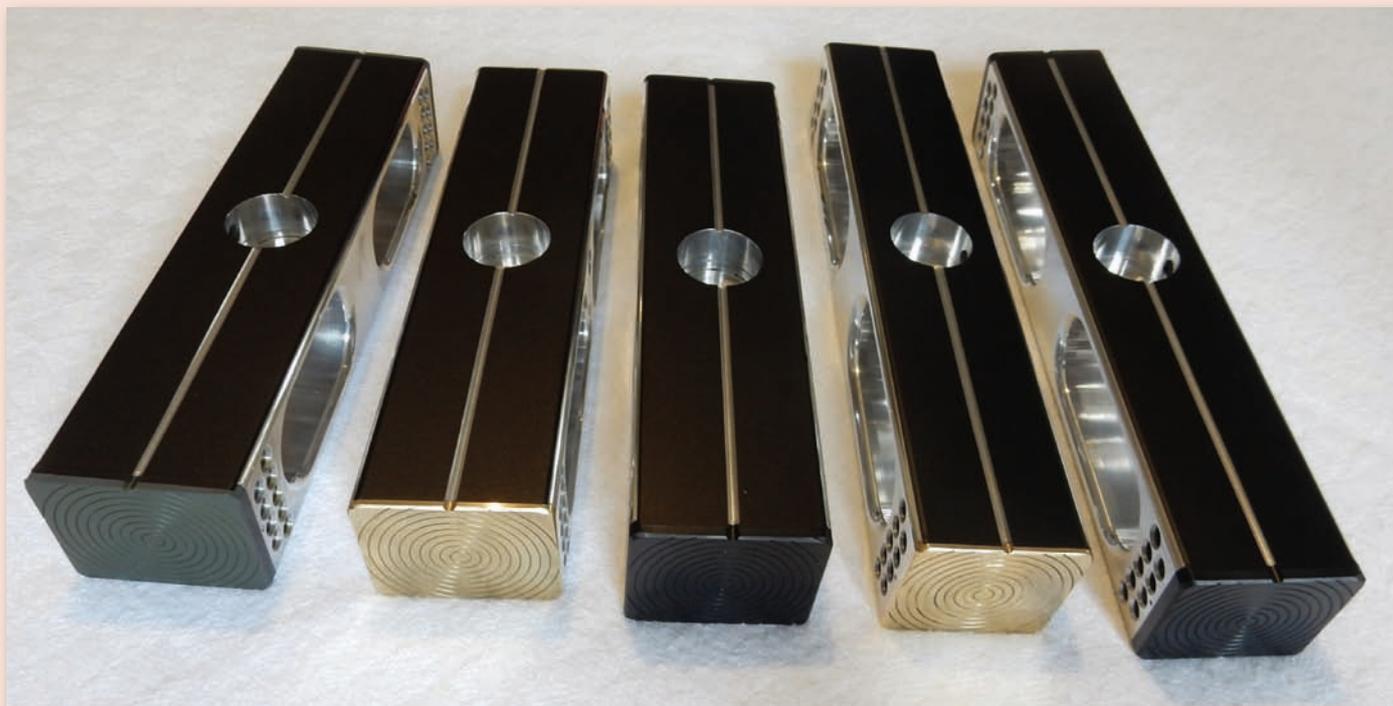
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