

The

Issue 345 Sept 2013

CROQUET

Gazette



**Aussie
Fletcher
wins
AC
World
Crown**



Great Britian retain the Solomon Trophy

Great Britain retained the Solomon Trophy by beating the USA at Hunstanton in August.

The Solomon Trophy used to be a one-sided affair and since the regular GB v USA test match started in 1985, GB had won every time. However, in 2009, the trend towards a reduced winning margin finally produced USA's first win in California and in 2011, they proved that it was no fluke by retaining the trophy on GB soil, and by a larger margin to boot.

By 2012, the GB squad had decided that enough was enough, and set off to America with a simple mission: "To get our trophy back".

This they achieved and the 2013 team, set out to ensure that it stayed that way

There were two debutants on the GB team in James Hopgood and Robert Wilkinson, and this, combined with the test

match starting with two rounds of doubles, considered by some to have been GB's Achilles' heel in recent years, led to much anticipation of a close contest by the sizable



crowd that came to watch play. However, a strong performance on day 1 delivered a 5-1 overnight lead, with Doug Grimsley and David Maloof scoring the only US point.

Day 2 saw the start of the singles games,

with the same US players winning their team two more rubbers, but all the other matches went the way of GB by 2-0 scorelines, save the David Maugham v Chris

Patmore tie that was halted overnight at one game all.

The 7-3 lead helped GB into full swing and they scored a resounding 7-0 result on day 3.

The final score of 17-4 is the largest winning margin for 9 years.

There was an excellent report on ITV's Anglia Television that showed some of the play and a neat interview with GB captain Samir Patel (see the link on the CA web site news item).

Back Row (USA): David Maloof, Robert Hurst, Doug Grimsley (c), Chris Patmore,

Mike Taylor, Paul Bennett. **Front Row (GB):** Stephen Mulliner, Marcus Evans, Samir Patel (c), Robert Wilkinson, David Maugham, James Hopgood

Photograph by Quiller Barrett

From our files researched by Frances Colman

100 years ago - 1913



Astonished in Norwich

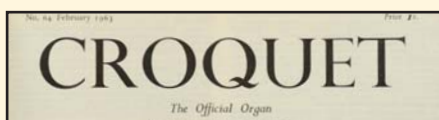
Who has not heard of the Norwich flood of August last?

Therefore as I came on Monday into the quaint city of gardens, curiosity shops and narrow streets, great was my astonishment after a tram ride up a mile of a broad elm avenue-street, to find there a charming ground with seven well laid out lawns, fresh and green, although they had been subject to drought for some weeks, and as were as hard as the road.

Verily Norwich is a ground to play on in wet or dry. . . .

2013 News - In the last Gazette, we listed several players who had recently qualified as AC Full Referees. They have since been joined by Peter Moore of Nottingham CC.

50 years ago - 1963



The Open Championship

Congratulations to John Solomon in wrestling the Open Championship from Patrick Cotter, thus resuming his pattern of winning the title in alternate years.

What a pity that the final was played in such inclement conditions as to attract only a small gallery.

The more so, as the first game can aptly be described as the perfect game.

While missing the youthful presence of three of last year's Eight; Curtis, Lloyd-Pratt and Ormerod, all of whom are some thousands of miles away, it is gratifying to see the form of another of our younger men, Arthur Reed.

He made his mark in the Surrey Cup last year, and has fully earned the honour of being selected for the President's Cup.

10 years ago - 2003



W.M.D. at Tyneside

Vandals broke into our clubhouse at Tyneside Croquet Club recently. The mallets were neatly settled in their final resting places (smashed into in cupboards and other furniture) after wreaking devastation throughout the building,

We have been hearing so much about 'weapons of mass destruction' recently – we thought that we were in the wrong place!

We lost all our crockery, toilet pedestals, cisterns, hand basins, electrics and so it goes on.

The real loss felt by members was the feeling of intrusion into our haven but determination of members to rebuild is equally real – we will overcome, in our club's twentieth year.

Derek Watts Tyneside C C

Editorial

The main focus of attention in this Gazette is, of course, the AC World Championships, so magnificently hosted by Surbiton, Hurlingham, Roehampton and Woking.

I join everyone in congratulating Robert Fletcher on his wonderful victory and thank Pete Trimmer for his centre page article telling us the full story.

The decision of the Publishing Committee to delay this issue in order to bring you news of Britain's major croquet event was, I believe, the correct one.

I also thank photographers, Samir Patel, Sara and Ian Anderson, for their images that illustrate the play so well.

I was disappointed not to have been able to attend more days of the Championships than I did, but this summer has seen a case of 'too much croquet and not enough time'.

There have been competitions and tournaments to organise both at my home club and nationally for the CA.

I am particularly pleased with the way that the GC B-Level National Series has

taken off and the All England GC Handicap has seen an increase of 50% participation.

So much for the previously perceived notion that mid to high handicapped players lack the desire to travel for competitive croquet. There will be full reports of these two competitions in the next issue of the Gazette as space is so limited this time.



I have found time to play a bit too, although only rarely at my home Club, Phyllis Court, Henley-on-Thames. Since my last editorial, I have played at

three of The Worlds' venues and visited Cheltenham and Budleigh for the first time.

I will long remember my first visit to the latter, not only for the wonderful hospitality but because I left my mallet behind and couldn't have been further away when I realised.

I had to ask Budleigh Chairman, Charles Townshend, to courier it to me at tournament Tyneside CC!

As my summer season draws towards its close, my thoughts now turn to another October

visit to the Greek AC Championships in Corfu, and after that, a bit of a rest I think.

Chris Roberts

STOP PRESS Mac selection

On the final day of the AC World Championships, the England Team for the MacRobertson Shield was announced as follows:

Jamie Burch
James Death
Robert Fulford
David Maugham
Stephen Mulliner
Samir Patel (Captain)

Congratulaions to each of them. A preview of this event will appear in a future issue.



Issue 345 September 2013

Front cover: (1) A wave from the new World AC Champion, 20 year old Robert Fletcher.

Smaller images clockwise from top:

(2) Christian Carter (England); (3) Kevin Wells (Isle of Man); (4) Paddy Chapman (New Zealand); (5) Reg Bamford (South Africa); (6) Andrew Johnson (Ireland); (7) Mark Ormerod (England); (8) The man in charge, Mike Town.

This page: (9) The Editor at Tyneside.

(10) The Chaiman at the AC Worlds.

Photographs by (1) Samir Patel; (2,3,5) by Chris Roberts; (4,6,7,8,10) by Sara and Ian Anderson. (9) Derek Watts

Next issue published 15th Sept. 2013

Next copy deadline 10th Oct. 2013

(Please note that these dates are subject to change, so check with the CA web site)

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Chairman's Column

Many congratulations to Robert Fletcher, the new AC World Champion. His performance was very impressive – both the youngest ever World Champion, and the first to win without dropping a single game. Many congratulations too to the four host clubs, for putting on such an excellent event. I think we often forget how much effort goes in behind the scenes to run an event like this. We are very fortunate in this country to have clubs with willing unpaid volunteers who are prepared to go the extra mile to make an event such as this both truly welcoming and challenging for the players.

It was perhaps a bit disappointing for

the CA to have no English players getting any further than the quarter finals, and raises again the inevitable question of whether standards are slipping in the UK. It is right that we should question this, especially when looking at the rankings we see that we will not be going to the next



MacRobertson shield as favourites to win, for the first time in 20 years or so. This is the premier team event, to be held in New Zealand starting at the end of December this year. I hope our newly selected team will prove this wrong, and I congratulate Robert Fulford, David Maugham, Stephen Mulliner, Jamie Burch, James Death and

Samir Patel on their selection. I wish them all good luck in the competition.

As I visit clubs around the country, I still see an active tournament scene, and a good depth of high-quality play. However, I also hear from many competitors the now familiar story that there is an increasing number of social croquet players at their clubs, who have no real interest in competition. I think this represents a danger we must all be aware of if we are to maintain our competitive edge. It is important that we have clubs who continue to support competition at the highest level, together with new players coming through with that desire to win. While there is nothing wrong with social play, we cannot let it squeeze out competitive play in our clubs.

Jeff Dawson



How the CA spends

Jeff Dawson explains

There are some initiatives within the CA which concluded that we need to review the way the CA charges its subscription income. This has come about for a number of reasons, but chief among them are the following:

1 - We would like all club players to be directly connected with their governing body, and be aware of what goes on in the croquet world, by including them on the distribution list of the Croquet Gazette.

2 - There are an increasing number of federation-led competitions, which has in turn led to a decline in the numbers playing in CA tournaments, threatening that income stream. We calculate there are now actually more player-days undertaken in Federation organised events, than there are in Fixtures Book tournaments.

3 - There is a desire to make tournament play available to all, with minimal financial barriers to playing.

If we are to re-structure club and member subscriptions, it is important to understand why the CA needs the money, and what it uses it for. There seems to be held a view that the CA is for tournament players, and this is understandable given that most people only join the CA when they wish to play in tournaments. However, although most of our money comes from this source, we do a great deal both directly for clubs, and indirectly by providing the infrastructure which clubs enjoy. The purpose of this article is to look at where the money goes, so that we can build a fee structure which is

fair to all.

The figures used in this article are taken from the draft 2012 accounts, although for international expenditure, which varies considerably depending on what events are scheduled in any one year, an averaged expenditure amount has been used. I have also ignored the income and costs of the CA shop. This is because the shop income is overall fairly cash neutral – in good years it generates a profit for the CA, but in the last couple of years when times have been harder, a small loss has been made.

On this basis the following table shows the income and expenditure figures for 2012, simplified from the full accounts. Rather than show a single 'staff costs' figure, which would be quite substantial, I have divided these costs across the various activities depending on how the time is spent.



INCOME: Individual subscriptions 56,076, Club subscriptions 46,814, Levies & Tournaments 13,452, Sponsorship/Advertising 7,957, Investments 5,914
= Total Income 130,213

EXPENDITURE: Membership benefits – Public liability scheme 5,365, Grants 31,205, Office support - Assistance to clubs 3,712, Assistance to members 3,799, Tournament administration 9,165. Standing committees - Publishing 23,715, Marketing 3,039, International 8,076

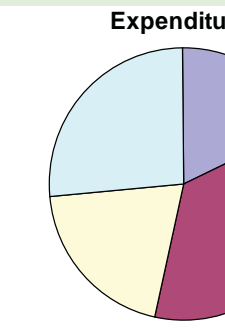
General costs - Meetings 13,511, Other 29,558
= Total Expenditure 131,145

Meeting costs look high, but you should remember that a large amount of what the CA does is actually

implemented by volunteers, and this figure covers all their associated expenses. Thus the CA spends a lot of time on ensuring the laws are suitable and agreed internationally, and that we have a suitable handicap and ranking system. Time is also spent making appropriate coaching materials available, and supplying qualified coaches and referees. None of these appear as significant cost items, and in this sense the accounts are a misleading snapshot of what the CA is really all about, because most of the work is done for free by enthusiastic members.

'Other' costs cover the running of the office, including the building depreciation costs, office equipment, etc.

So how much money do we spend on tournaments and tournament related activities, compared to the money we get from that source? In order to assess this, I have summarised the figures in the diagrams below. I have assumed most people only join the CA because they want to play in tournaments, so have taken individual subscriptions and tournament levies together, as being income that we get for tournaments. I have compared that to the income from clubs, ignoring the other minor income sources. Note that tournament players also pay their club subscriptions like everyone else, but as they make use of club facilities it seems fair not to take this as part of tournament income.



Top left: The CA office and shop provide a service and income respectively, as these club players discovered on a shopping trip.

Middle left: Action at a CA fixtures book event; Gabrielle Higgins and Sam Murray double bank (both photographs by Chris Roberts)

Bottom left: Top Honours - The Opens' silverware (Samir Patel)

Right: Possible membership rule changes would see all players, like these NW Federation Festival of Croquet participants, all become CA members (Tony Thomas)



ends your money

ins and looks to the future

On the expenditure side, I have put the cost of marketing as being a benefit primarily to clubs, since any publicity we receive, leads to more general interest in the game, and hence helps club recruitment. I have put international costs down as a benefit to tournament players, since it is they who benefit directly by having access to these events. However, like a lot of tournament-related activities, one could argue that all club players benefit from the expertise and experience that players gain in these events and then bring back to their clubs.

I have divided the meeting costs roughly in proportion to the committees concerned; assuming that tournament and international are of benefit to tournament players, while development and marketing committees, benefit clubs, etc.

All this is displayed in the two pie charts. A large part of the costs that remain are what I have identified as 'overheads', including office costs, meetings on infrastructure (coaching, laws, etc.). I would argue that this portion is necessary for the existence of the CA, and if clubs are to benefit from the infrastructure that the CA provides, then they should

pay a significant proportion of this.

I have kept publishing separate, since at the moment the Gazette is primarily a tournament player benefit, going directly to them and only being available to other club players indirectly via their clubs. Nevertheless, I think the Gazette has a lot of material in it which benefits all club members, and as mentioned earlier, we would like to expand circulation to them. This of course would increase the cost

of the publishing element unless we review how the Gazette is circulated (possibly in electronic form) or how often (perhaps fewer paper editions?). However, that is the subject of a whole other debate. For now, if we consider the Gazette to be a benefit purely to members; tournament players still get the short straw. They pay 57% of the CA's income, while 38% is spent directly on tournament activities. If we extended the Gazette to all players however, then this would become 57% and 18% respectively.

Further information can be found in the federation working party report, which is available on the CA website at <http://www.croquet.org.uk/?d=824>.

In the meantime, what I would like to see is a debate about these issues. To this end, we are planning a series of club conferences over the forthcoming winter; perhaps in association with some of the federation AGMs. We need the feedback both from CA members and non-members (who are equally affected), so please try to make as many of your club members as possible aware of the issues – perhaps by cutting out this article and posting it on a notice board.

Please write to the Gazette and let us have your views.

Jeff Dawson - CA Chairman

Happy Birthday Fowey

Fowey Croquet Club celebrated their Tenth Anniversary in May, writes Marlene Bowden.

We chose to make it light-hearted with a game of 'Pirate' Croquet which requires a degree of skill but also deviousness since the aim is to steal opponents' points.

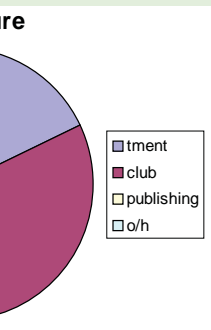
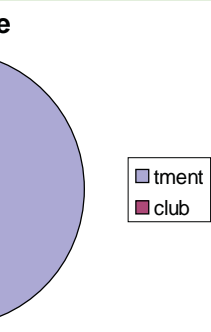
The winners were Margaret and Stephen Read who also play for Cornwall CC.

Founder member and now President, Rosemary Bradshaw, returned from Budleigh Salterton for this special day and the game was followed by a toast to the Club's future with Champagne and cake, before an evening celebration dinner at the Fowey Hotel which was the Club's first home.

Wonderful views across the estuary were enjoyed by all the members in those early years and we are indebted to the Hotel for allowing us to use their lawn.

The Club is now at Fowey Community College where two half-size lawns have kindly been provided.

We only have 21 playing members but successfully retained our position in the First Division of the Short Golf Croquet Tournament held at Nailsea, and Fowey's coach Reg Wapling has won an 'Egyptian' event at Budleigh Salterton.



Woodhall Spa come of age

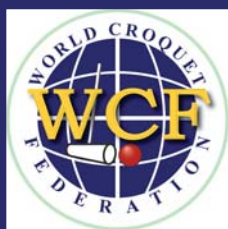
Woodall Spa Croquet Club celebrated their twenty-first anniversary in August with a special tournament at their Jubilee Park home, reports Eileen Herrod.

On a beautiful sunny day, Chairman Bob Potter launched the GC event that eventually saw Pauline Donner and Barry Darling emerge winners of the ladies' and men's events.

After the presentation of the trophies, Cassandra Hewson, a member of the croquet club for many years, proposed a toast to the club and explained it was founded by a few ladies from the local WI.

Bob Potter then cut a celebration cake that Chris Johnson had made, and all looked forward to the next twenty-one years for the now flourishing club that boasts forty-three members.





Window on the WCF

by Martin French,
Secretary-General



The World Croquet Federation has 30 national associations spread around the world as its Members. Together, these have more than 30,000 affiliated players of club and tournament croquet.

What's been happening?

Since the GC World Championship in Cairo in April, our attention turned to the AC World Championship that has just been staged in England from 10 to 18 August. The event was centred on Surbiton and Roehampton, with Woking and Hurlingham providing additional lawns for the first part of the event. Entries came in from Members at the end of March, and since then a number of wild cards and replacements for the smaller than normal number of withdrawals were invited. Twenty-two further players competed in a Qualifier Tournament at Nottingham from 6 to 8 August for the final four places. The AC World Championship went very well indeed and a full report can be found elsewhere in this issue.

Instability in Egypt

Back in early June we signed-off an agreement with the Egyptian Croquet Federation to host the Women's GC World Championship in Cairo in March 2014 – but until there is more evident stability in Egypt it seems foolhardy to make any further preparations. For now, we have postponed

the event until November 2014, and will make a call in February as to what to do. I wish our croquet playing friends in Egypt a speedy return to a safe and normal life.

WCF Council Meeting

During the AC World Championship in August we also held a Council Meeting of our Member associations at Surbiton. These no longer have the formality of old, as most Council business is now done by email, but the annual face to face meetings are very useful to cementing relationships and getting feedback. These meetings probably provide much of the social 'glue' that holds the WCF together.

I resigned in May, and will be giving up the role of Secretary-General at the end of August, now the AC Worlds are over. The continual arguments within the Management Committee eventually became too much for me. I am very glad that Stephen Mulliner has stepped forward to take over the role of S-G at the end of August – I wish him a successful term of office. More recently, Ian Burridge the WCF Treasurer (*pictured in the story on the right*) has resigned too. Apart from his role with the finances, Ian provided much of the innovation and ideas for the formats, scheduling and technical details for our championships - his contribution will be greatly missed I think.

Ireland win Home Internationals

Ireland won the Home Internationals for the fourth time, beating England 4-1, at Carrickmines.

CA archivist Chris Williams reports that this was only England's fifth defeat in 94 Home International matches, and their heaviest in all competitions since the 5-2 defeat by New Zealand in the MacRobertson Shield in December 1950.

Ireland (3 wins); Andrew Johnson (below), Simon Williams, Ed Cunningham, Danny Johnston, Patsy Fitzgerald.

England (2 wins); David Maugham, Marcus Evans, Robin Brown, Robert Wilkinson, Richard M Smith.

Wales (1 win); Ian Burridge, Chris Williams, David Walters, John Evans, Roger Hayes.

Scotland (0 wins); Duncan Reeve, Campbell Morrison, David Magee, Martin Murray, Sam Murray.



Photograph:
Andrew Johnson, by Sara & Ian Anderson

Mulliner is European GC Champion for third time



Stephen Mulliner won the sixth FEC European Golf Croquet Championship ahead of a record field of 32 at Budleigh Salterton in June.

He saw off a spirited challenge from Surbiton clubmate John Spears in the final of the four day event that saw ten nations represented.

There were thirteen English, six Swedes, four Germans, three Spanish and individual representatives from Belgium, Finland, Latvia, Norway Switzerland and Wales.

The semi-finals had seen the young front raise a challenge to the old guard but Mulliner and Spears got the better of James Goodbun and Nick Cheyen respectively.

A delighted Mulliner received the European trophy from Budleigh Chairman Charles Watershend, and in his report later complimented the club - "Budleigh has always offered excellent hospitality and the club has worked very hard in recent years to bring their lawns up to the same level. They are now simply excellent". *Photo by Chris Roberts*

Publicity: Quiller Barrett looks at what we can do

When I visit clubs there is one topic I can almost guarantee members will raise: Why isn't there more publicity for croquet in our national newspapers and on TV? How come, and what's the CA doing about it?

It's certainly the case that papers such as the Telegraph, which used to print results of minority sports, now rarely do so.

During 2010 and 2011 the MacRobertson Shield and the GC World Championships were held in London, yet despite regular press releases and phone calls from the CA, no national newspapers showed interest.

This was new and the publicity we got for these events was mostly through the local London press and radio outlets.

At the same time that newspapers' circulations have declined dramatically, there has been the rapid growth of the web and social media.

Reporters on national papers increasingly use twitter feeds and other social media to discover people's interests.

This signals a change in direction for the CA: We need to put even more emphasis on our website which already helps the CA keep near the top of search engine rankings and is something many commercial companies would envy.

As well as serving our members, www.croquet.org.uk is also the first port of call for anyone interested in croquet and is a valuable resource for potential members and journalists alike.

We have a good story to tell with growth in club and in player numbers but we need to raise the awareness amongst younger people to help clubs recruit more of them.

The CA already has a Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Croquet-Association/129551197103348>) We aim to increase its profile and activity.

This will give us the opportunity to publish our own stories and publicity and reach a much wider audience.

In future Liz Larsson, who is in charge of the CA's publicity, will still be helping clubs write press releases and routinely keep national media informed about major events. But a lot more of her time will be spent on creating our own publicity via the website and social media outlets.

Ian and Euan's Charity Croquet Tour raises over £6000



Readers will remember the ambitious plan, detailed by Ian and Euan Burridge, of visiting all twenty-one Clubs that have staged a 'CA Selection Eight' event, in just five days! Here is how they got on. . .

The tour started at Hunstanton on Wednesday 29 May, before culminating at Ian and Euan's home club Nottingham the following Sunday evening.

Remarkably after visiting all the clubs and playing a game of golf croquet at each, the final score was a draw, with the Burridges and their opponents each winning 21 games.

The first day was a long slog, starting at 8.30am and accommodation in Ramsgate was not reached until 11pm. Once the flight to Jersey had been boarded the following day everything became much more relaxed.

The only significant stress arose in trying to find the foot ferry terminal for the Isle of Wight (tip – don't arrive by car!).

We were well looked after throughout, with plenty of food provided and lots of supporters offering encouragement.

Above: Burridge Senior and Junior in action at Roehampton. *Photographs by Chris Roberts*

Right: Eleven year old Euan played against all ages on the tour including Bury's 14 year-old Harry Anderton at Heaton Park. *Photograph by Derek Deadman*



Given the fantastic support received throughout the country, it would be wrong to single out a favourite club, but the highlight of the tour was undoubtedly the Saturday afternoon.

This started at Nailsea where Ian played 80 year-old club President Jim Gregory, for whom the club were putting on a surprise birthday party, progressed to Cheltenham where the games took place on lawn eight (Ian's favourite lawn in the World) and a gymkhana fun day had been set up which Euan loved. And the day ended with a fish supper at Bowdon.

Ian and Euan would like to thank the dozens of people at all the clubs that made the event possible and to the many people who donated towards the cause – Leukaemia and Lymphoma Research – which led to a sum raised well in excess of their expectations.

Donations can still be made at www.justgiving.com/croquettour until the end of September.



Obituary

Sheila Black 1926 - 2013



Sheila was a member of the Bowbon Croquet Club from 1969 until her death on 19th February 2013.

In that time she saw the Club develop from being an Edwardian survivor, with gas mantle lighting and a huge tree encroaching on Lawn 1, to becoming a contender for national supremacy with regard to lawn quality and playing strength. She was Club President from 1998 to 2006.

Sheila was born in Chesterfield, and after a prize-winning school career went to Homerton College in Cambridge to train as a teacher. An early student of the Open University, her career in teaching culminated as headmistress of Hope Park County secondary School in Prestwich, Manchester. In her hobby as a lace maker she achieved great skill.

Croquet came into Sheila's life on a holiday in Sidmouth in 1968, when she chanced upon the Club at the

neighbouring town of Budleigh Salterton and witnessed the renowned Guy Warwick play a disastrous 'three ball' ending in that club's handicap doubles final, due to the ineptitude of his youthful partner.

The event was never forgotten, for she and her brother Eric joined the Bowdon Club on their return North, and she never ceased to take pleasure in reminding the said partner of his part in the catastrophe! The Blacks became an integral part of the Club and Sheila put her formidable administrative skills to work for almost 10 years as Club Secretary until 1990.

She played competitively to a handicap of 7, and in 1994 she joined her brother as a non-playing member, and regular spectator, noted for her flowery hats, at all events.

But her significance to the Club was to continue. In 1998 she was elected President in place of the distinguished Chris Hudson, who had been the first General Secretary of the WCF. In office she could always be relied upon for a wise word when there were problems to resolve and she remained in post until the 2006 AGM.

Sheila was made an Honorary Life Member of Bowdon for her past services, which included 18 years as a Club Officer.

She continued as a well-informed, expert spectator, regularly walking up with Eric to see the fun on all significant occasions, until her final illness made this impossible.

John Saxby Bowdon Croquet Club

Coal Industry dig it at Nottingham

Dear Editor,

A sport which needs impeccable lawns, and an industry intent on digging them up or tunnelling under them, would seem unlikely bedfellows. However, when the coal industry flourished, so did works croquet clubs.

National Coal Board's mining research establishment was moved from Middlesex to Bretby in Derbyshire in the late 1960s, and a small group of croquet enthusiasts moved as well.

They persuaded the NCB to provide a couple of lawns, scaled at 4/7 and 3/7, with the larger having the unusual feature of a manhole cover near hoop 3!

Engineering apprentices made a unique trophy (below) which was competed for annually, and the club was an active member of the CA, winning the Longman Cup in 1984.

At Stoke Orchard in Gloucestershire, where the Coal Research Establishment (CRE) sported a lump of coal outside the front door, an enclosed grassy quadrangle provided a three-quarter size court, and a multi-sports competition – including croquet – was held annually between the two establishments.

In 1994 the Bretby facility closed, and the croquet club members,, decided to hand over their modest assets to Nottingham CC, in exchange for the use of two lawns once a year to hold their Annual Tournament.

I worked at the CRE for four years from 1996; that establishment also eventually closed, but the Bretby Croquet Club is still very much alive, and its Annual Tournament continues still.

Anyone who worked for the NCB, British Coal or spin-off companies, and can wield a croquet mallet, is very welcome to join us.

Contact Michael.Gibson@care4free.net

Liz Potter Bretby CC



Remembering Miss Allardyce

Dear Editor,

I like this story and I am assured it is true. In the "good old days" the Secretary of Cheltenham Croquet Club was a Miss Allardyce. She had the reputation of being very efficient but also extremely strict.

A group of players from Worcester Norton felt that it would be nice to go and play at 'the Wimbledon of Croquet' and phoned the Secretary to ask if that would be possible. Apparently the response was "I'm not sure if we allow Worcester people to play here, but

I will check with the committee".

The group awaited a return telephone call from Miss Allardyce. and were subsequently informed that "Much to my surprise the committee say that you can come. Mind you we will only accept cash for the Green Fee!".

If you visit Worcester Norton, do ask to see the Allardyce Cup, which I believe they still play for each year.

Klim Seabright Cheltenham CC

Hoopopotamus Pegging Out

Further to the recent decision that 'Hoopopotamus' is no longer to be published in the Gazette; we would like to take the opportunity of thanking all those people who have expressed to us their enjoyment of the cartoons since his first appearance in November 2002.

Laurence and Deborah Latham

Letters to the Editor

The Owl has landed (again)



Dear Editor,

I seem to recall the CA producing a recruitment document called "Get Them and Keep Them". Well, how about the following tale:

At the Cheltenham Club we hoisted an owl (no, not a real one!) to the top of our flag pole in an effort to scare off the messier, more lawn damaging type of bird. It came time to re-paint the flag pole and we forgot to replace our feathered friend.

I received a letter from the father of 7-year-old Freddie who explained that his son was very "down" because he walked past the club most days and looked forward to seeing the owl. Apparently Freddie kept asking his dad what had happened to his favourite bird.

About a week later I was able to write to said Dad advising him that Freddie would be "wise" to keep his eyes peeled next time he passed.

I also invited him to name the owl and visit the club. Freddie is very shy but came to our Taster Day and whispered the name he had chosen. He was delighted to receive a croquet shirt containing the name of a

well known car manufacturer.

So the problem is sorted; "Luna" has been restored to its rightful place, Freddie is happy and I reckon we'll 'get him and

keep him', but not for a few years yet.

Someone was heard muttering that the club Publicity Officer never misses a trick!

Klim Seabright Cheltenham CC

'Be Prepared' to give change a chance says Scouting Ian

Dear Editor,

As someone relatively new to croquet I have been somewhat bemused by the continual soul-searching about the viability of the CA and the AC/GC debate.

At base seems to be the reliance of the CA on full membership income as a result of tournament entries and the reluctance of many people to become full members of the CA in addition to their associate membership (by virtue of being members of a club).

Wearing another hat, I am involved with the Scout Association – which in organisational terms is not entirely dissimilar.

Every member of the Scouts, whether a six-year old Beaver or a knobby-kneed Commissioner, has to pay an annual membership subscription of about £33; two thirds of which goes to headquarters to run the organisation and the rest to the relevant County/District.

In addition, members pay a significant weekly/termly subscription to their own Scout Group – more or less equivalent to a Club subscription.

It strikes me that croquet club members are rarely on their uppers and could easily afford to pay a sensible subscription to the CA in return for full membership and the usual benefits such as receiving the CA Gazette, etc.

Wider circulation might be of benefit to the Gazette in terms of proselytising the

game and improving it through the articles about coaching etc.

It would also help to show to the average member of the average club that there is a world of croquet out there that is currently unrecognised.

These days people (or at least this person) are not hugely interested in playing in tournaments because there is more than enough croquet at club/regional level to fill their diaries. The CA simply needs to recognise the facts of life and amend its modus operandi to suit.

I gather that Council has discussed this issue on occasion and has stepped back from change.

In the face of the current problems, perhaps it's time to give change a chance.

Ian Harrison

Vice Chairman, Basingstoke C C

Jeff Dawson, CA Chairman replies:

Dear Ian, Thank you for your comments, which are quite timely - you will see on pages 4 and 5 in this issue that I have written an article on our costs and who benefits. For the most part I agree entirely with what you say, but you are wrong in your conclusion. Far from having stepped back from change, we would like to push this forward and to this end are intending to hold club conferences this winter to discuss the issues, prior to formulating further plans. If we get support for action, we will be proposing a change in fee structures at the 2014 AGM.

Solomon Grip for Mark Kenny at under 6 months

Sara Anderson wasted no time in introducing her grandson Mark Kenny to croquet.

The bare chested look will probably not catch on at Woking Croquet Club, but it looks as though the little man has mastered the 'Solomon Grip' already as you can see.

It appears to have worked well for him, as he seems to have made a peel through, what looks like, a pretty tight hoop!

Now can he score the hoop and roquet?

Thanks for sharing the photo Sara. :o)

Ed.





Plymouth play croquet on water!

The location of Plymouth Croquet Club is believed to be unique in the world.

George Lang tells of the challenges faced when playing on top of a working reservoir!

Plymouth Croquet Club has existed for about 30 years, and is situated two miles north of the city.

The site is laid out over a 1.5 acre site that is South West Water's (SWW) "Hartley Reservoir", which holds some seven million gallons of potable water that has already been treated for public consumption; water which flows directly into the dwellings of the city of Plymouth.

In 1982 the reservoir was fitted with a concrete roof, supported by 165 concrete pillars and protected with layers of gravel, soil and grass; thus providing a reasonably level playing surface, sufficient for four full-size courts.

The sensitive nature of the contents create some positive and some negative issues. On the positive side, SWW are highly security-conscious, and the reservoir is subject to national security levels.. The club is seen as an ideal user because we keep the site in good condition, provide a regular presence and act as a camouflage to the true purpose of the site.

On the down side, the site licence contains several restrictive clauses; we cannot use petrol mowers, weedkillers, pesticides or fertilisers, and nor can we carry out work below the surface vegetation layer. Even white lining can be fraught!

All was fine until January this year, when the Council, who for years had managed the mowing for a charge, notified us that they were going to increase that charge by about sevenfold. Other local sports clubs were notified of similar increases, and some have since closed down.

The club researched the market and decided that, with some help, they could manage their own mowing, and so the new charges were refused and the Club looked at other options.

Electrical corded mowers were dismissed due to the lack of a suitable "greens" mower on the market, power loss due to the cable length required, and safety issues.

But luckily found out about the Allett "Elmow" battery-operated mower for fine turf. This is a recent product that has been bought by some local authorities for use where noise and/or green credentials are an issue. We made an application for funding to the CA Development Committee, and were grateful for their support and help in quickly awarding a maximum 50% grant of £3,195. We found the additional matching sum within the clubs resources – just!

The Elmow is a heavy machine and there are only a few members able to work with it, so we have a contractor who comes in several times a week.

It is still early days, but we now have four playable lawns, being regularly cut to a reasonable standard. We will learn how to manage the grass over time, but the next big issue is the local rabbit population...

CA Development grants are helping

A new pavilion

A CA development grant of £3,000 helped Kenilworth Croquet Club erect new buildings to cater for an increasing membership, *as Mervyn Harvey explains.*

We have come a long way since humble beginnings in 1989, when a few members started croquet with the help of the CA on two grass courts no longer needed by the Kenilworth Lawn Tennis and Squash Club. By 1995 it was clear that a second lawn would be needed, and with significant earthworks undertaken by volunteer labour one was added in just under a year.

The Croquet Club is a section of the main club and benefits from the extensive facilities, but these are 100 yards away. The only buildings we had at the 'croquet end' were a small pavilion, constructed by members in 2000, and a second-hand shed to store equipment. However, with our membership having more than tripled these had been outlived.

We decided that we needed a pavilion large enough to include a kitchen area and furniture, plus a second 'garage' as an equipment hut, with an area for improved toilet facilities.

Festival of Croquet at Southport

"This is arguably the largest concentrated croquet event on the planet!" says North West Federation Chairman Liz Wilson.

Now in its 19th year and expanding all the time, the 'Festival of Croquet' goes from strength to strength and 12 ½ courts at

Southport & Birkdale Club were all put to good use for the whole weekend.

Ten of the NW Federation's established clubs were represented along with the court-less Isle of Man and the newly re-formed Ellesmere. All disciplines of croquet were played; Advanced and Handicap AC, Short and Golf Croquet.

Clubs were invited to send a doubles pairing to the Advanced and a team of three to the other competitions. The whole event

is very flexible and it is not unusual for the larger clubs to donate a player to one of the smaller clubs. It is also run in a carnival atmosphere with players ranging from complete beginners to experienced county and even international



James Hawkins of Pendle & Craven CC



ment Grants ng Clubs for Kenilworth

The main club agreed to help finance replacements to meet our current and expected future needs, if we could get some funding from the CA.

With that funding as duly granted, for which we are very grateful, we approached a company who supply log cabins which are built with solid 45mm logs in kit form, and these seemed to have the right blend of quality and affordability.

Fortunately we were contacted by someone experienced at erecting this type of building, and at half the price that the company would have charged. It was too good an offer to refuse, and with a lot of the work being done by our members, the buildings were soon erected.

On the whole, we bought well and we kept to our budget of £12,000.

We are very happy indeed with our new buildings and have had many admiring comments.

We can now offer much improved facilities to our own members, those of the West Midlands Federation and others who come to play on our lawns, including many who experience the game for the first time through our hospitality events.

Quiller opens Swindon's HQ

When Swindon Croquet Club was formed in 1985 at Lydiard Park our first 'Club Room' was not in the big house (we were not allowed in there), we had to shelter under a fir tree, *writes Mary Bedells*

In 1996 we moved to Moredon Playing Fields and our second 'Club Room' was a summerhouse without windows or door, which had to be dismantled at the end of each season; that was until it was destroyed in 2002 by vandals who drove a dumper truck across the lawns.

April 2003 saw the arrival of Club Room number 3, a container affectionately known as 'The Green Room' and a lot of hard work went into converting it into a usable space.

In 2011 the Swindon Borough Council Management Review meant that in order for the club to survive it had to undertake all its own lawn maintenance. We needed equipment, which would have to be stored in the Green Room and that meant we had nowhere to shelter.

Member Neil Morrison came up with a plan; a pre-fabricated building with a toilet, a changing room, a kitchen and a seating area. It looked wonderful, but we would need money for it and all the equipment.

The search was on for grants and (mainly due to our involvement with Community and Social events) we obtained sums from three sources: £5000 came from the CA for equipment, and a Sport England small grant of £10,000 for more equipment.

And then we secured major award

of nearly £43,000 from Sport England 'Places People Play' programme, for a new clubroom and all the services needed. We used some of our reserve funds to buy a boiler, furniture and kitchen items needed for match teas and other social events.

By the start of the season nearly everything was completed. A Grand Opening Ceremony was arranged and Quiller Barrett, President of the CA, did the honours with the Mayor of Swindon and the local MP in attendance. As the ribbon was cut, Quiller revealed that club members had decided to name the clubroom 'The John Airey Clubroom' after our secretary and Senior Coach who has been the guiding light for the club in all its community work and competitive play for many years.

Now we want to expand our provision to three Lawns and put a secure fence.

Sport England Inspired Grants are still available and worth checking to see if your club qualifies. See www.sportengland.org

Key to photographs (from top left):
(1) Kenilworth's pavilion. (2) Ground work at Norwich - full story in next issue.
(3) Running for cover at Nottingham's grand sprinkler switch-on, as trailed in the April's Gazette. (4) Plymouth's battery mower.
(5) Quiller Barrett, Swindon Mayor Mick Bray and club secretary John Airey tackle a balloon hazard!
Photographs by: Mervyn Harvey, Nick Harris, Linda Death, George Lang and The Swindon Advertiser



Photograph by Tony Thomas

players.

Many years ago it was decided to allocate the team colours to clubs with a request that the players sport a coloured top with their white trousers. Colours were allocated from the

colours of the croquet balls (leaving out white) and it soon became necessary that tertiary colours would have to be included. Bowdon were the lucky recipients of orange with Chester being allocated aubergine!

Six teams competed in the Advanced, with eight in the Handicap, six in the Short and nine in the GC. This meant that 78 players were in action at any one time and over 100 attended each day. The Advanced event was won by Crake Valley (resplendent

in pink), the handicap by Southport and both the Short and the Golf events were won by Bury.

Southport were marvellous hosts providing the Championship Manager, two individual event Managers and all the well prepared courts. Then there was the catering, and what a spread was provided, by Margaret Flemington and her gang of helpers.

Liz Wilson - NW Fed. Chairman



The AC World C

20 year-old Australian Robert

Pete Trimmer

The World Championship was won in dramatic fashion by Robert Fletcher of Australia.

On day one, Aiken Hakes fainted, Doug Grimsley fell down some stairs and knocked himself out, Reg Bamford inexplicably lost a game to Ian Burridge, and the Australian top seed Stephen Forster lost all his games without taking croquet.



Brilliantly masterminded by Phil Cordingley, the event was held at a combination of four croquet clubs. Several players were delighted to finally visit the famous Hurlingham club, and many were surprised on the first morning to find the groundsmen out with hoses, flooding the lawns. Several players reported that Woking was one of the most friendly clubs to visit - again excellently prepared. The main battle grounds would be Surbiton and Roehampton, with faster, more challenging lawns.



The event began with eight blocks, each of ten players, with just the top four going through to a knock-out.

Pre-event qualifier Christian Carter won his first five games before running out of steam.

In the last round of blocks, playing against peg alone, Brian Cumming ran rover, then ran it backwards and put his thumb up to the crowd with a big Canadian grin as the ball continued to roll on to hit the peg, +1.

In a nervous finish, Ian Lines beat Danny Johnston +1 to take the two of them into a play-off, winning again to prevent Johnston - one of the most promising young Irish talents - progressing any further.

Surprise early casualty

The biggest surprise of the blocks came with the elimination of Mac favourite Stephen Mulliner.

First, he needed one of the other block games to go the right way to even be in a play-off . . . it did.

But Nick Parish then stepped up to the mark to beat Stephen in that play-off.

The draw for the knock-out was carried out with great humour . . . and in the raffle, Mulliner duly won an hour of croquet coaching from Reg Bamford.

Match of the whole day in the first round of the knock-out was a clash of the Wild Cards: Pete Trimmer and Kristian Chambers.

In a freak accident, Trimmer's arm had been trapped in an elevator door the previous day, and it subsequently transpired that he was playing with a slightly fractured wrist.

Game down, facing a do-or-die shot, Pete hit the peg from 10 yards to win the second +1 and take it to a decider.



Slow play led to the match being pegged down after eleven hours, with Kris having pegged out one of Pete's balls.

With an 8am restart, Pete fluked running 2-back from corner 2 (whilst shooting at a ball nearby) and finished, to Kris' despair

Monstrous clash

The second round (now best-of-five) produced a monstrous clash between five-time World Champion Rob Fulford and the top Irish player, Andrew Johnston.

Fulford went 2-0 up but Johnston, hitting everything, battled back.

In the fourth game, playing against 2 and 4-back, Fulford made six hoops and laid for a sextuple, with the leave (*as shown on page 22*); Johnston's ball for 2 having a huge 38-yard shot.

Although any straight-swinging player would have no problem, Andrew Johnston has a very skew swing and on intending to play his 4-back ball (red at black), his mallet hit hoop 1 on each

attempted backswing.

This meant that Andrew could have a lift - but he didn't realise, commenting afterwards that "Rob wouldn't have left if there if it meant I had a lift!"

So he shot with his hoop 2 ball instead ... and hit the 38-yard shot centre ball! He carried on to win,



Championships

Robert Fletcher wins World Crown

...er reports



creating the biggest upset thus far.

Highest Quality Match

The highest-quality second round match was surely between James 'Jimbo' Death and Marcus Evans.

Jimbo went 2-0 up with a sextuple and a triple peel but Marcus, who had regularly practised at 7am for this event, was made of work-hardened steel.

He came back in with a quad and a triple of his own, before TPO'ing Jimbo in the decider.

The much favoured Jimbo was in trouble . . . but in succession, he hit a 10-yard shot, then one at a 33 yards, and finally a 35-yarder with his one remaining ball to crush Marcus' World and Mac chances.

Contrasting style

In contrast, Jenny Clarke reached quarter finals despite not completing any peeling turns in her nineteen games to that point, demonstrating the power of good shooting, rugged breaks and old standard leaves.

The key is, so often, to make fewer errors than the opponent, and this was to be the real test for the rest of the tournament.

The quarters were played at Roehampton, where the lawns had been



brilliantly prepared by one of the country's leading grass experts, running at 13.5 seconds when dry and nearly 13s even in light rain.

In the blocks, players had struggled with the lush green surface being so fast, and Bamford had accidentally sent three croquet strokes off in one game.

The much-awaited quarter was Death v Bamford.

In the first, Jimbo did all six peels of a sextuple before accidentally rushing the peelee back through the rover hoop and missing the peg out with a croquet stroke through the hoop.

Bamford battled back to win +2sxp.

Jimbo took the second, but the Bamford express was not to be derailed, and he won with two further sxps; a champion performance.

The quarters were indicative of what was to come though, with Paddy Chapman and Robert Fletcher making zero errors to ease their way through to the semis.

'Killer hoop setter' George Noble

Congratulations to Surbiton groundsman George Noble, whose aim was to have hoops which dissuaded sxp's in the semis or final.

The killer hoops seemed to unsettle Bamford, who became uncharacteristically 'human' on the Saturday, blobbing hoop 3 and 6 in the first game.

Referees were called, and it soon became clear that the red was fractionally larger than the black (which had been used to set the hoops), but there was still 1/64" clearance, so Reg didn't get any replays.

His opponent, Paddy Chapman, who had become a father just ten days before the event, played the whole event with good tactics and accurate croquet strokes, and made fewer errors against Bamford.

At 2-1 up, Bamford hit his 'last' lift shot and proceeded to triple peel his opponent - but having done all three peels,

Reg failed to run 3-back from nine inches straight in front, leaving Paddy to play his 4-ball break round to win 3-1. No one had expected that

Meanwhile, the second seed and. . .

Continues overleaf



Photographs - clockwise from top left, and then overleaf:

(1) The croquet world united under the WCF flag. (2) Reflecting on a job well done; Robert Fletcher. (3) Runner-up Paddy Chapman. (4) George Noble; hard at work as usual. (5, 6) Agony for beaten semi-finalists Andrew Johnston & Reg Bamford. (7) The men in control: Phil Cordingley and Mike Town. (8, 9) The new World Champion: Robert Fletcher. (10) James Hopgood. (11) Jose Riva. (12) Family Chapman including three week old Oliver. Photographs (1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9) Sara & Ian Anderson, (2, 5, 6) Samir Patel and (10) Chris Roberts.





...previous losing finalist, Robert Fletcher, had overcome Andrew Johnston in another match where George Noble felt like the winner.



the day and, to much relief and huge applause, he also won the third game to become the youngest ever World Champion at the age of twenty.



He had won the event with twenty-three straight game wins – never before done at a World Championship.

There would be a new name on the Wimbledon Cup ...

But would it be the Aussie favourite, Fletcher, or the sleep-deprived Chapman? On the final day, the consolation events were decided before the main event had finished.

The plate was won by the recently discovered Spanish star, Jose Riva. James Hopgood stamped through the final of the Bowl (losing in the first round of the knock-out) with two triple peels,

and the Shield (termed 'the Chamber Pot' by finalist Tibble) was won by the up-and-coming Richard Smith.

Chris Osmond's team of catering volunteers excelled themselves yet again and the scene was set. The final of the main event was again won by the groundsman, with some of the toughest hoops of all time making the two young finalists look twitchy.

Chapman had good chances in each of the first games, and could have been 2-0, but it was Fletcher who led by two games after a +3tp in the second. Despite making slightly more errors, Fletcher's better shooting continued to win

Congratulations to Robert Fletcher for a truly outstanding performance

It has been twenty-one years since any name other than Bamford, Fulford or Clarke has been inscribed on the cup.

With the inclusion of Fletcher, it seems that it will be some years before another new name appears.

Pete Trimmer

'Goodie Goodie Yum Yum' TBT enjoys a charity game at Nailsea

When a local charity, Wellspring Counselling, approached Nailsea Croquet Club with a view to running a fund-raising social occasion, we were keen to help, **writes Kathy Wallace.**

But we wanted to make some profit for ourselves too and get good publicity for croquet at the same time.

The one time 'That's Life' presenter Chris Serle was the charity organiser and he invited ex-Goodie and Radio 4 regular Tim Brooke-Taylor along, it wasn't long before Pimm's was mentioned and, of course, the

word 'quintessential' soon followed. We decided to use small lawns so that we could accommodate 32 players in each of two sessions.

Each player paid £12 for a glass of Pimm's and an hour's tuition from 'the experts', The club received £4 per person plus tea/coffee profits.

Forty-four tickets were sold and with Pimm's as well as mallets in hand, groups of four were taught how to play Golf Croquet. A raffle, with donated prizes including items autographed by Nick Parks, beer with a croquet label from Matt Holmes, champagne and a croquet session with Marcus Evans, raised a further £250.

The evening was a huge success and raised about £600 for the charity and nearly £200 for the club. In addition a few of the guests may well pursue croquet as a new interest.

Tim Brooke-Taylor celebrates a successful hoop run, watched by Chris Serle, Nailsea CC founder Peter Dyke and Chairman Mike Tracy.
Photo by Harry Wallace



School report Eton's Myers bows out at PCC

Oli Myers (pictured, right) bowed out of the Eton College croquet scene with a perfect record of four consecutive singles titles, **writes Chris Roberts.**

His latest success was again on the Phyllis Court lawns at Henley, where he dispatched Frances Ireland by +18 to retain the Eton Champion tag.

Myers had just marked his farewell to the College by presenting his own new Myers Cup to the winners of the doubles competition.

It was to be a consolation for the hard-worked Ireland, who had partnered Hugo Braham to a +8 on time victory over Ollie Sale and Jack Parham.

All four of the doubles players will still be at Eton next season, and so will no doubt lock horns again, while local boy Myers has since delighted Phyllis Court by announcing his intention to join the Club. At 18 years old he will be their youngest member by some way.



It's a Dark Blue Varsity 'White Wash'

Oxford scored a resounding 9 – 0 victory in the Varsity match at Hurlingham in June.

Cambridge were always going to find it tough as Oxford were led by Will Gee (-1 handicap), backed up by scratch player Harry Fisher. Further reinforcing their team, they also included the former Cambridge

captain from the 2009 Varsity Match, Joel Taylor, himself now down to a 3 handicap.

And so it turned out, with only the junior doubles providing a close encounter and ending +1 on time, as elsewhere the closest result was +18.

Taylor scored the only triple peel of the contest which is recorded in greater detail

on the East Anglian Federation website, with thanks to Simon Hathrel.

Perhaps the most interesting revelation of the day was the news that Gee will be starting a new postgraduate course later this year... at Cambridge.

So things could get quite interesting in next year!

Now and Then...

Charles Townshend remembers 50 years ago
(in collaboration with Martin Murray)

The Summer of 2013 saw well over 2000 students involved in the Oxford College cuppers and a formidable team, led by Will Gee, notching up a massive Varsity match victory over Cambridge at Hurlingham.

The Summer of 1963 was a little different: Oxford produced a mere handful of players who responded to Chris Miller's invitation to learn about croquet and as I had played coarse garden croquet before, I was promptly selected!

We had help from Cheltenham and Hurlingham clubs (I recall hitching a lift back from Cheltenham to Oxford, complete with mallet, on the back of a Vespa) but we were no match for a strong Cambridge side.

They are recorded in the 'Croquet' (Gazette) of the day as playing proper

matches against teams at Hunstanton and Roehampton, and in August, as gaining an overwhelming victory over Oxford by 7 games to 2. I met a certain Martin Murray and lost -23!

Martin told me that when we played he was already a (comparative) veteran having played in the Roehampton Tournament the previous year. The whole Cambridge team had received great support from Mrs Pat Heley and Martin actually played with her late husband's mallet.

Martin came down to Budleigh three years ago for the Men's and Women's Championships; I reminded him of our meeting and suggested that when/if we reached the 50th anniversary, we might

meet at the Varsity fixture and see about a rematch.

We did manage to organise ourselves to watch this year's contest and indulge in a brief GC skirmish that was interrupted by lunch with Martin enjoying a slim lead.

To mark the occasion, we had obtained a couple of glass goblets engraved 'Most Promising Newcomer', which we duly presented to Renard Mansour (Cambridge) and James Morrison (Oxford) at the end of the day. The winners are expected to return in 50 years-time to ensure that the tradition might continue!

Both Martin and I remain grateful that we succumbed to the croquet virus in our youth and have never been able (or wanted) to shake it off.

So many recruits nowadays take up the game on retirement and most lament the fact that they did not discover croquet till so late in life.

We still remain happy to continue, as long as we can wield a mallet, to enjoy the challenge of this wonderful game.



School report Nottingham Boys & Girls HS

Nottingham Club took croquet out to 110 girls of Nottingham Girls' High School during National Schools Sports Week in June, *writes David Brydon*.

Four short lawns were set up at the adjacent Nottingham High School, where about 40 boys (aged 10 to 17) and several staff also rose to the croquet challenge.

"It's harder than it looks" was a common observation but everyone involved seemed to have fun.

Will Gee, Rachel Rowe and Keith Aiton handed out 200 flyers inviting pupils and their families to a Schools Open Afternoon on 14 July.

Our timing was not good being a full three weeks since our visits, after start of their school holidays, and there was the distraction of another sports event at Trent Bridge apparently.

However, the two best prospects Will Stevens and Kam Khalil (*pictured by Judy Brown*) duly appeared and they were treated to some alternate stroke AC tuition from Paddy Chapman.



'Mr 100%' Mulliner wins GC Open for fourth year in row

Stephen Mulliner won the Golf Croquet Open Championship for the fourth consecutive year, beating World Champion Reg Bamford 7-3, 7-5 in the final, *writes Dr Time King.*

One impressive aspect of his achievement was not dropping a single game in the Championship, winning all 18 he played.

Having also won the European Championship and Ramsgate Open in the same month, Mulliner only lost two



games (to James Goodbun and to Richard Thompson) in a total of 54 games.

Mulliner hardly missed a thing in the final. His worst shot almost certainly was when he had a relatively short (for the standard of the match) shot at Hoop 11 in the second game to win the match.

The sweet thought of victory seemed to enter his mind just as he played the ball and he failed the hoop, allowing Bamford to skilfully clear that ball and put his own into the hoop jaws.

But Mulliner kept his nerve, lagging both of his balls to onside positions either side of the peg.

Bamford took a long time considering his options but in the end ran Hoop 11, knowing that, however good his shot, he was almost inevitably going to be a sitting target for Mulliner.

The latter was left with a 7.5-yard shot at Hoop 12, which he duly ran to win the

match. Bamford had looked imperious in the block phase of the Championship; his opponents scoring an average of less than 2 hoops per game against him.

Meanwhile, various other players made a good impression. Jeff Dawson put his calm approach to good use and was a worthy semi-finalist alongside Ryan Cabbie who played the whole tournament with his usual vigour, but looking as though his minor hiccoughs along the way

would be the price of getting into top form.

Without doubt, the main "find" of the tournament was Harry Dodge (still only 17), who was looking very promising last season and has made huge strides ever since.

He made no more dent on Bamford and Mulliner than anyone else but otherwise had some excellent wins, beating Lionel Tibble for 5th place, the so called 'Super Bowl'.

Harry hits the ball very cleanly and with great accuracy.

In terms of victories in the GC Open Championship, Mulliner's six wins still sits one behind Bamford's total and the latter had a winning streak of five consecutive titles from 2005 to 2009.



GC TOUR

A tour of the Open eve

Dickson puts local knowledge to good effect

Richard Dickson used his local knowledge – and no mean touch skills – to retain the Wiltshire GC Open Cup on the lightning-fast Hamptworth courts, *writes Chris Roberts.*

A disappointing entry of just ten did however attract some keen souls from far-off parts, and none more so than runner-up David Crawford – all the way from Bury St Edmunds – and Plate winner Tudor Jenkins from Sussex.

Manager Richard Jenkins kept everyone busy with an all-play-all block, and then commendably ensured that a full plate programme was also in place for the six not making the semi-finals 'cut' early on the second day.

Dickson was taken to a deciding third game by East Dorset's Tom Weston in one semi, and after a 90-minute first game, Phyllis Court's Chris Roberts fell quickly to Crawford in the other.

Under a scorching sun and temperatures of 30°+ that July weekend, the whole tournament was played in a very friendly atmosphere, and everyone kept their 'cool'!

Frances Colman received special thanks at the close of play for her refereeing on the Sunday, when she was kept very busy indeed.



Mulliner wins at Ramsgate too

The Ramsgate trio of David Dray, James Goodbun and Tobi Savage had to play second, third and fourth fiddles to Stephen Mulliner in their own GC Open event.. Mulliner beat Dray in a two straight games final, but was taken to a decider in his semi by Goodbun.

In GC, Mulliner really is the man on form this season.

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Images, clockwise from top left:
 (1) Stephen Mulliner
 (2) Richard Dickson
 (3) Roy Tillcock
 (4) Rachel Rowe and Will Gee
 (5) Lionel Tibble
 (6) Harry Dodge
 Photographs by:
 (1-3) Chris Roberts
 (4) Notts CC
 (5) Sara & Ian Anderson
 (6) Roy Tillcock.

TOURNAMENTS

Events around the country

Tibble wins quick fire GC at Cheltenham

The Inaugural Cheltenham GC Open, in the Ascot Cup qualifier series, was won by Lionel Tibble ahead of Tony Forbes.

Australian visitor Peter Freer won the third place play-off against Ivor Brand. The event attracted a good field of 18, and manager Kevin Ham had organised a tough schedule to get all the games played.

Two blocks of nine meant a lot of games, and it was always going to be a long first day, despite the strict 45-minute time limits.

Fourteen of the 72 block games went to time, and it was half past seven when the last pair, Hm and Brand, finished their game. The regulation 'best of three' format was employed for the three knock-out rounds, and pleasingly Ham had also made good provision for those missing 'the cut', ensuring a full weekend's croquet for all, and especially Chris Roberts, who won the plate.

Two blocks of nine meant a lot of games, and it was always going to be a long first day, despite the strict 45-minute time limits.



Jackson flies in for Veterans success

Carol Jackson's long journey from South Africa was rewarded with victory at the National Veterans' Championship.

A truly international field met at Southwick for the 2014 Alan Oldham Memorial Trophy event, with players from Australia and South Africa in the field for what is becoming an increasingly popular tournament.

Buoyed by having knocked out tournament favourite David Wise of Australia, the hosts' Jonathan Isaacs proceeded on to a closely contested and lengthy final, thanks to newly tightened hoops.

Jackson won 5-7, 7-5, 7-5..

Rowe & Gee win at Ashby & Nottingham

Rachel Rowe won the Nottingham Golf Croquet Open final and took home the Diamond Jubilee Bowl for the first time.

The format consisted of a single game, 'all play all' block from which eight of the nine players qualified for the knockout stage.

Although the top three qualifiers were readily identifiable, a further four players all finished with four wins each!

The block was won by Rachel Rowe, having lost to her father Arthur who came



second in that phase of the tournament.

Lionel Tibble played better on the second day and disposed firstly of Ray Mounfield, who went on to win a consolation event, and then in the semis he beat Arthur Rowe, who finished third overall.

Women's World Champion Rachel beat Andrew Carpenter and then Richard Thompson in the other half of the draw, to face Tibble in the final, which she won in two straight games.

And at Ashby...

Will Gee (above) won the Ashby

'National Forest' GC Tournament for the second time in its three-year history, beating Tim King 7-6, 7-6 in a tightly-fought final.

He happily received the Glassware from Rachel Rowe.

In the third/fourth place play-off Lionel Tibble beat David Bell 7-6.

Home hero Tillcock reigns on small island

Home hero Roy Tillcock saw off a spirited challenge from club-

mate Dave Willett and visitors Cliff Jones and Chris Roberts to win The Ryde GC Open on the sun-baked Isle of Wight.

Ryde is a super venue with four excellent lawns, raised 100 year-old clubhouse of character which overlooks the action, and the friendliest of welcomes for visiting players.

It is a constant wonder why so relatively few venture across to the island when this gem of a club is so accommodating, writes Chris Roberts – they even come to meet you off the hovercraft!

Tillcock won his block clearly enough, but manager Alan Truckle's maths skills had to be employed for the other half of the competition, as one loss apiece meant a net hoops calculation to separate Roberts, Willett and the unlucky Stuart Peters.

Willett pulled the best out of Tillcock in their semi, pleasingly showing that the former is really back to his old form at last.

In the other semi, Jones and Roberts battled through a very lengthy three games in scorching heat but wonderfully gentlemanly spirit, right up to 13th hoop of the deciding game, where an uncharacteristic short first ball from Jones handed Roberts the result.

In the final, Tillcock had to work for the first game, but Roberts fell away in the second, handing the local man victory.



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Sextuples abound at Bamford's 10th Open Success

Reg Bamford won the 2013 British Open for a record equalling tenth time in July.

He defeated Samir Patel in three straight games in the final at Hurlingham Club and a feature of his successful tournament was the high number of sextuple and other multiple peeling turns.

He beat Nigel Polhill (+23sxp +17tp +15sxp) and David Maugham (+16tp

+16sxp +25sxp) before dropping his only game of the event in defeating Jeff Dawson in the semi-final (-20tp +25sxp +9tpo +26sxp).

In the other half of the draw, Samir Patel had a rather more work to do as he got past George Noble (+19 +14otp +23), Robert Fulford (-12sxp +19tp +3otp +2otp) and Surbiton rival Stephen Mulliner (+14otp +14otp -13tpo -25sxp +26tp).

The high number of super peeling turns continued into the final which Bamford took from Patel impressively +26sxp +25sxp +15qnp.

Cumbria Cup goes 'on holiday'

Brian Storey won the Cumbria Cup and took it for what reporter **Liz Wilson says** is a 'holiday' to Cheshire!

Of the 16 players who enjoyed the usual well managed and hosted weekend at Crake Valley, Nottingham's Peter Moore caused the only first round upset by beating Dave Nick.

Peter Moore continued his winning streak against Peter Wardle with a +1 on time victory to join Storey, Lee Hartley and Tom Griffith in the semis.

Both Storey and Griffith were on cracking form and won easily, setting up a best of three final which went the way of Storey with a quick +20 before an entertaining +3 that went on for hours.

A plate event ended tied between Ray Lowe and Alan Pidcock, and was settled by a shoot-out at the peg which was won (eventually) by the latter.

Silver goes with East Saxons

The East Saxons made off with South Saxons silver in mid-July, **writes Ray Hall.**

Georgeen and Colin Hemming from Colchester won the Castell Soda Siphons at the Sussex County Alternate Strokes event ahead of fourteen others with handicaps ranging from -1 to 16.

Five pairs had a Southwick affiliation of some sort, there was a second Colchester pair and a Purley Bury/Surbiton combination.

The CA's modified tournament regulation for calculating doubles handicaps was employed and resulted in five joint handicaps in the range 1.5 to 6 and three from 9 to 14.

Interestingly, the closeness of most games, and distribution of handicaps in the final results, suggest that the modification is along the right lines but will, no doubt, be fine-tuned as further experience is gained,

AC TOUR

A tour of the events

Cottle & Sussex scoop all at the Vets

The 2013 National Veterans' Championship was won by Alan Cottle of Sussex, who beat Cheltenham's Dave Mundy 2 - 1 in a last round decider to lift the Rothwell Cup.

And it really was 'the Sussex County CC show' as members of the club took all the honours in the other classes too.

Manager Richard Hoskyns reports that regrettably entries were again poor, with only four entries to the actual Championship, and two of those were in fact qualified for the Over-75s; an event won by Bill Arliss who took home the Pidcock Trophy.

The Advance Play Singles for The Felixstowe Cup saw Sussex' Jonathan Isaacs beat Watford's John Bee in the final.

There was a double success for Cottle, who also won the Sussex Trugs Doubles event with partner Avril Rangoni-Machiavelli (Blewbury, Surbiton, and Sussex). And in the Unrestricted Handicap Singles for the Meredith Cup, Jonathan Isaacs triumphed unbeaten.

AC Briefs

Derek Knight of Beverley won the **Middlesborough Advanced B-Level** Tournament in late June, beating reporter Charles Waterfield in the final. Knight celebrated with the trophy and a handicap reduction from 3 to 2½, while David Millener won a bottle of Four-Ball Break ale as the 'quickest game' prize.

The **Isle of Wight Festival of Croquet** at Ryde ran alongside the island's Walking Festival and proved a great success with 26 entries during the full week of competition. In the Advanced Singles Championship, first contested in 1932, it soon became clear that defending champion, Kevin Carter (0) from Surbiton, was on good form and he again remained unbeaten. The Mary Robinson Shield for the handicap event was won by Derek Beard (7) from Devon.

Richard Sanville won a tight **National**



TOURNAMENTS

around the country

Fulford's personal best at East Mids

Even after having won Five World Championships, Robert Fulford still managed to achieve a personal best at Nottingham in early June.

He scored a remarkable seven sextuple peels in two days to win the East Midlands Championships for the second time ahead of the host club's leading player James Death.

The two-life knockout format had seen Death reach both finals in brilliantly sunny conditions, and he dispatched fellow GB-teammate and former world number one Dave Maugham by +25tp in the first, but lost to an in-form Fulford in the other, so setting up the best of three play-off final for the to Hopewell Cup.

With the score at one game all and Fulford a break ahead in the decider, Death made an all-round break, boldly peeling Fulford's forward ball through its last four hoops and then pegged it out, conceding a contact.

But Fulford's renowned steady play saw him home to win back the trophy with a score of +26sxp -18tp +14oqp.

Forest AC Handicap tournament at Ashby in mid-June, ahead of four home club-mates and five visitors, including Steve Thornton from Australia.

The multi-event **East Dorset June Tournament** saw different winners in each discipline. Julie Horsley and Nigel Betts were victorious in the Handicap Singles X & Y format that opened the proceedings. Three Class Singles events followed; Block



Higgins and Burch win Women's and Men's Championships

Gabrielle Higgins and Jamie Burch won the Women's and Men's Championships respectively at Cheltenham in June.

Burch beat James Hopgood in a close final that went to a fifth and deciding game, of a match abundant with peeling action.

Burch came good in the end by +9otp -20tp +26tp -17 +3tpo in that final, having dispatched Richard M Smith, Robert Wilkinson and Keith Aiton on route during which time he dropped only one other

game (to Aiton).

Higgins came back from two games down, to win three in a row in beating Sarah Burrow in the final of the Women's event.

She seemingly took some time to get into her stride as she dropped a game in the first round against Louise Bradforth, before winning through 2-1. She then by-passed Beatrice McGlen in straight games.

She then really turned on the style with the final come back, recording a -5 -19 +11 +25tp +26tp score line to secure the title.

A was won by Richard Griffiths, B by the aforementioned Betts and C narrowly by Duncan Reeves. A small doubles event was won by Ken Pickett and Peggy Nutland.

Hamptworth opened their new fifth lawn for competition for the first time in mid-June, and saw Surbiton's Christian Carter win a 20-player Advanced event for -1 to +3 handicaps. It was good to see that this tournament was oversubscribed, which is

good news for croquet generally, if not for those that missed out.

The Swiss format at the **Southport and Birkdale Handicap weekend** eventually saw Barbara Haslam (3.5) prevail over Di Williamson (11).

The host's own Keith Rhodes won the **Letchworth B Level**. Is a total of six games out of twenty-two finishing +1 on-time, some sort of record at this level?

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Notts are AC County Champions

Pre-tournament favorites Nottinghamshire won the 99th Inter Counties Championship at Southwick but their team of Richard White (captain), Keith Aiton, Gary Bennett, Paddy Chapman, James Death, James Hopgood, Patrick Hort and Peter Moore had to work hard for their victory this year.

The sun shone for the first three days of the tournament and the teams arrived at Southwick for the final day's play with Notts., Surrey and Somerset all on 7 match wins out of 8 (and a three way head tie) but Notts. had their noses in front with 20 game wins to their rivals' 17 apiece.

At this point the heavens opened and although the morning games were completed, just, with all three of the top sides winning, flooded lawns resulted in the

final round of matches at Southwick being abandoned, although nearby Compton remained dry!

Analysis of completed matches and the unfinished block resolution section in the CA's Regulation for Tournaments showed that Nottinghamshire had won Division 1, and they were duly awarded the trophy by John Solomon.

Division 2 had a clear cut winner as Suffolk were uncatchable.

At the start of the final day Suffolk had seven victories, Gloucestershire were on six, just one win ahead of Hampshire, the Channel Islands and the CA Select.

In the rain, the Channel Islands beat Gloucestershire, but Suffolk beat Hampshire, allowing their team of Steve Comish (c), Mark Avery, Mick Belcham, Phil Eardley, Chris Farthing, Martin Leach and

Simon Riley, to lift the Shield as undisputed champions and gain promotion to Division 1 next season.

The torrential rain on the final day did spoil the party and this roving reporter decided the best place to hear about any noteworthy turns was to stay in the tea room and wait for players to come in for shelter.

At one point a shout was heard from Lawn 1; "I'm wired by a puddle!"

Despite the best efforts of Chris Williams and Samir Patel with the Bowdry water remover, large puddles were formed on the bottom six lawns, and there was some controversy over whether in fact lawns were playable. Marcus Evans did manage to complete a triple on Lawn 6, which was quite a feat, but mostly balls were just sticking in the water and no-one complained when the afternoon matches were abandoned.

Sue Mackay



It really is the President's Cup



CA President Quiller Barrett won the inaugural Phyllis Court and Blewbury Handicap Cup in mid-summer.

The two clubs, which are only 18 miles apart, have a high demand for court time from their members, making it difficult to stage more than single day tournaments for outsiders.

By arranging a single day's play at each of the two venues the clubs hit on a formula that was an easy fix.

Barrett, from Watford CC beat Sussex County's Ray Hall in the final.

Coaching for all

I once attended a rallying speech by a senior manager at work, who said that every lecture we delivered should be like a gourmet meal, offering the finest foods in a variety of textures and flavours superbly presented to tempt every taste. A voice at the back said: "But what if they're not hungry?"

This is my first year on the CA Coaching Committee and I'm keen to establish the North as a coaching centre par excellence.

My master plan is to establish an academy in the north and I have spent time looking at the profile of our croquet players.

I'm mindful of the CA's plan to get university students and under-60s interested in the game and also aware that we must expand or else lurk in the shadows of other sports.

But what about members who aren't that hungry for competitive play?

There is no doubt that matches improve your play - but not without the agony of missed hoops and other difficulties

It takes all sorts to make up a club and I believe that croquet is for all.

Personal improvement is what matters and the rate is measured by player's own achievements.

In our Federation most of the coaching takes place at club level; with coaches offering advice as we go round.

It is the most efficient method, but tracking improvement is not an exact science unless players have a handicap card and play in matches.

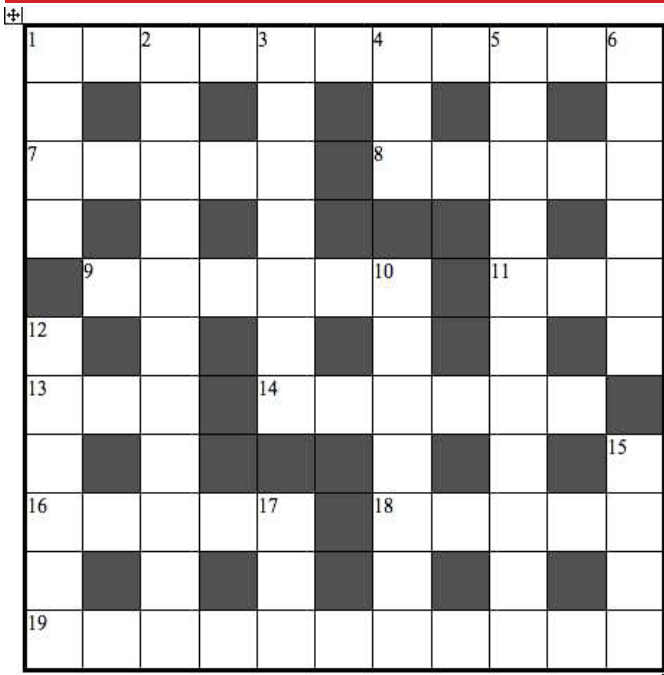
And that brings me right back to the beginning. How do we motivate our players to improve?

I welcome readers' comments on how you get your members hungry for a lower handicap.

Alison Heywood-Hill



Crossword 'Completing the triple' by Dis



The Chambers Dictionary (2008) is recommended but does not give all of the croquet-related terms. The solution to this puzzle is on page 22.

- Across**
- 1.** It can be red or blue, confusing star pupil – me too. (6,5)
7. Girl with Aunt Emma is good-natured about end of game. (5)
8. Obscure mark on balls used by Wylie. (5)
9. Blast! Finally lost plus one on time. His handicap's too high. (6)
11. In Italy more play in university, for starters. (3)
13. It's hard to cut. Make a leave and it will be fine. (3)
14. Indicate by a sign need to adjust positions. (6)
16. Go back in slightly mad – duffer. (5)
18. Begin with short super shot – about time. (3,2)
19. More than one opposition may be encountered in series. (11)
- Down**
- 1.** Mark out short lawn. (4)
2. Start of golf and Kate has red. That's not right; a long time has passed since those days. (3,4,4)
3. Had a turn and finished ahead, on top. (7)
4. Hoop two problem finishes Chris Clarke for one. (3)
5. For each stroke moving tice I must be in there, walking about(11)
6. Spooner's colourful form of training – it's fantastic and makes you a deadly shot. (6)
10. This country can provide sun at 2 for Augustus (but it's not in the WCF). (7)
12. Against referee turning up to have a discussion. (6)
15. Chooses stop shot. (4)
17. That's right: Dis's last is beneath you. (3)

You are the Ref Bill Arliss and ian Vincent

In this issue we again deal with a situation that can arise in either Golf or Association Croquet, but where the way the laws treat it is different:

Situation: In a doubles match, due to some miscommunication within a partnership, the players of both Red and Yellow shot with their balls at Black almost simultaneously. Their balls collided just before Red, which its owner thought was on target for Black, reached it. It was agreed that Red in fact played first.

GC Decision:

This kind of situation was raised by our Australian colleagues some time ago and an official ruling was raised, as it was not covered in any way by the then laws. Originally the ruling, 9.1, was aimed at two opposite sides playing almost simultaneously and took the view that if two balls from two strokes were traveling at the same time, that belonging to the player whose turn it was to play should be regarded as the legal shot and the opponent would be considered to have made a non-striking fault. This ruling was irrespective of who actually played their shot first

The ruling describes how to deal with any interference from the opponent's ball.

The ruling was then expanded (9.2) to cover the situation where both players of one side in a doubles game played almost simultaneously. A similar approach was taken with the exception that no replay would be allowed if the partner's ball



interfered in any way with the striker's play. It should be remembered that normally a player whose turn is interfered with by an opponent's non-striking fault, may elect for a replay if the outcome from his stroke is in doubt.

In this case, let's assume that it was actually Red's turn. Yellow has committed

a non-striking fault, so the opponents have the option of having Yellow replaced or left where it ended up. As Red was also interfered with as a result of the non-striking fault, they also have the choice of whether it is placed where it would have ended up if Yellow had not hit it (ignoring the possibility that it might have hit Black), or left where it ended up. Yellow loses its next turn.

GC Decision:

Assuming it was the start of their turn, either Red or Yellow was entitled to play, but once one of the balls has been struck, the other is playing when not entitled to (Law 25), as his partner's turn is in progress.

It could also be argued that the side has played the wrong ball (Law 26), but even if that were... **continues overleaf**

Above: (1) Southport's Don Williamson referees Greg Fletcher's hampered shot.

Opposite page, top: (2) James Death. (3) Quiller Barrett hoists the silverware. (4) Peter Lowe runs through a coaching drill at Tyneside, where (5) Alison Heywood-Hill is the Chairman. Photographs by (1) Tony Thomas (2) David Brydon (3) Chris Roberts (4,5) Alison Heywood-Hill

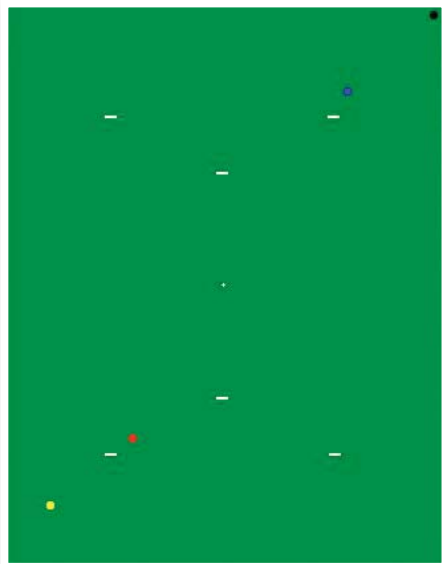
...the case, the wrong ball error would be ignored under Law 24, as it happened in the same stroke and Law 25 comes before Law 26.

Law 25(a) says that any balls moved by a stroke played when not entitled, should be replaced and that the side entitled to play then does so. So it is clear that Yellow should be put back to where it was played from and, if Yellow had not hit Red (and Red had in fact roqueted Black), Red would continue by taking croquet.

However, Law 25 was clearly not written to cover this case and, strictly, Law 33 (Interference with a Ball) does not apply as it only covers interference by a player or an outside agency. I would therefore apply the Overriding Law 55(a) and, failing to find anything relevant in the Official Rulings or Commentary, treat the impact by Yellow on Red as interference under Law 33, as though Yellow were an outside agency. If the player of Red was convinced that it might have hit Black, I would direct him to replay his stroke, otherwise I would direct him to place Red where it would have come to rest and his turn would end. I would certainly not allow a roquet claim on yellow!

'Fulford's Leave'

This is the leave referenced in the World Championships report on page 12



Crossword Solution

Across. 1 litmus paper (anag); 7 ni(e)ce; 8 murky (m + blue U, black K, R, Y); 9 b(last) and i t; più (initial letters); 13 o(a)k; 14 denote (anag); 16 f(og)ey; 18 set up (anag-r+t); 19 resistances. **Down.** 1 line(n); 2 The Dark Ages (anag+g-r); 3 up,ended; 4 pom (final letters); 5 per,i,pat,etic; 6 ray gun (gay run); 10 Tunisia (anag inc ii); 12 con,fer; 15 opts (anag); 17 ye,s.

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Publication Details

The Croquet Gazette is published six times per year, in February, April, June, August, October and December. **Copy should reach the Editor before the 15th of the month before publication is due.** However if you have something that you think the Editor may be willing to expand this deadline for, please contact him direct.

Email contributions, including tournament reports should be sent direct to the Editor, or copied to the Editor if they are being posted to the Nottingham List. Digital images are preferred, but photographic prints are also acceptable. Please send digital jpeg or tiff format files. Please accompany all images with a description of the subject of the picture. 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.

The Croquet Gazette is printed by Billingham Press, Central Avenue, Billingham, Stockton on Tees.

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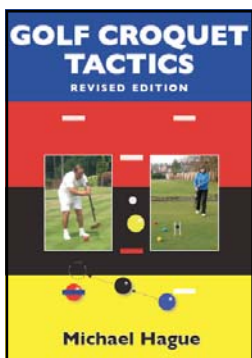
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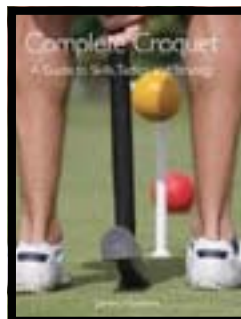
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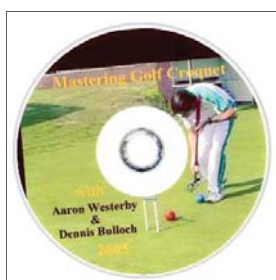
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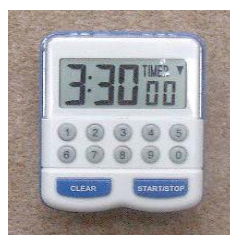


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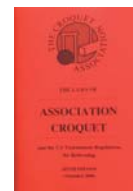


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