

The

Issue 347 December 2013

CROQUET

Gazette

The Mac

**WILL ENGLAND
DELIVER?**





10 THINGS....

you might not know about The Croquet Association

- 1 In the last 10 years the CA has awarded grants totalling nearly £200,000 to 80 member clubs and interest-free loans of more than £28,000 to 15 clubs. This support is often crucial for clubs to obtain funding from other sources.
- 2 In the last eight years, 48 *new* clubs have benefited from the CA's financial and practical help.
- 3 In the last 10 years the income from well over £1million of CA Shop sales to the public and £40,000 from sponsors has been used by the CA to expand its development programme.
- 4 198 clubs are members of the CA and most benefit from its free Public Liability Insurance scheme as well as help from 10 Federation Development Officers.
- 5 The CA organises national coaching, handicapping and awards to encourage enterprising play and to raise overall skills.
- 6 The CA co-ordinates championships, tournaments and inter-club events nationally.
- 7 The CA represents the interests of players internationally and selects and supports teams and individuals who play for their country.
- 8 The CA promotes research into, and development of, playing equipment and court surfaces.
- 9 The CA publishes *The Croquet Gazette* and a website, which are full of news, coaching tips and information so that players can keep in touch.
- 10 More than 60 volunteer members help run the CA which only employs three part-time staff in the CA Office and pays modest retainers to three others.



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Editorial

This Gazette leads with a full preview of the forthcoming MacRobertson Shield series of Test Matches that see our England team take on New Zealand, Australia and the USA from 30 December to 15 January.

I am indebted to Ian Burrige for his in depth analysis of England's challenge ahead and both John Prince and Keith Aiton for their Mac reflections.

Whilst remembering those CA members who hail from opposing nations, I am sure that I speak for most CA members in wishing Samir Patel and his team the very best of luck in New Zealand.

There will be regular 'as it happens' Mac reports on the CA website of course and for those of you that subscribe, there is the Notts list too, but rest assured there will be full coverage of, what is effectively, croquet's 'World Cup' in the February Gazette.

The off-season is the time for meetings and preparation, as croquet's administrative machinery builds a full head of steam.

Perhaps like the CA, your club has held its AGM and presented your leading lights with

awards and honours?

We cover the CA AGM in some detail in these pages and salute the individuals from all levels of our game who have achieved so much, on and off court.

In mid-November, I attended the first CA Club Conference and heard our Chairman canvas club representatives' views on croquet's future. Be sure to have your say at one of the other two planned conferences.

Regular readers of this column will be relieved to know, that a waterproofs swap has been affected and my Panama is being cared for in Dulwich.

And I'm delighted to have had an early Christmas present, with my club's decision to allow winter play at last!

Season's Greetings to you all.



Chris Roberts

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such conferences. There is of course some flexibility with the numbers and it is very hard to predict just how many will actually turn up. If you would particularly like to attend (without representing a club) I would hope that we will be able to accommodate you. Please inform Anna Giraud or the SECF Secretary know in advance for the Northern and Surbiton conferences respectively. Their contact details appear later in this Gazette.

We would also like to hear from all club or federation representatives, whether or not they will be attending, so that we can make an assessment on numbers.

For those who can't come, rest assured that I see this as just the first stage of the process. We are simply trying to bounce a few ideas around and collect views from as many people as we can. After the conferences, I hope to report on the discussions held and the conclusions reached (if any!). Hopefully those who attend will be able to feed back to their clubs, the thinking and views expressed. There will be plenty of time through next season to discuss the issues with friends and council members, and to let us have your views either by direct communication or by writing to the Gazette.

Based on the response we get at the

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Front cover: The MacRobertson Shield

This page: The Editor at the Croquet Club of Corfu and the Chairman congratulating inaugural GC National B-Level Series winner Ian Norris (Photographs by Annelies Vogels and Chris Roberts).

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

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Chairman's Column

As I write this I've just come back from holding the first of the club conferences looking at the proposals in the Federation Working Party report. I thought it a very useful meeting, with about 50 people attending, and providing a lot of interesting feedback. I'm looking forward to the next two meetings in February, to hear what other people have to say and will report on the outcome once the process is complete.

I've had a number of people saying to me that they would have liked to attend a conference, but are unable to do so either because of the distance to travel, or because we are trying to limit numbers to two representatives from each club. I'm sorry that this is the case, but I'm sure you will appreciate that club conferences are difficult and time-consuming to arrange. We have limited resources and trying to go to each individual federation would not be practical. We therefore decided to hold 3 conferences across different regions, which is along the same lines as previous

meetings, we will then be formulating a more concrete set of proposals for the way forward. Again, we will need to publish these to all CA members (and ideally to all club members if we can), together with explanations for why we believe the changes are to be preferred. It is not clear at the moment; if all this can be achieved in time for a formal vote at the next AGM, and it may well be that we will need to take a bit longer before we are ready. We very much want to ensure that everyone has a chance to fully understand the issues before any formal voting takes place.

I hope you all have a good Christmas and I look forward to seeing as many of you as I can next season!



Jeff Dawson

CA Club Awards

Clubs which had made most progress during the preceding two years. Citations which appeared in Gazette 343 April, were read by CA President Quiller Barrett at the presentation part of the AGM.



The Millennium Award

(for clubs with five lawns or more)

Received by Peter Death on behalf of

Nottingham CC



The Apps Heley Award

(for clubs with three or four lawns)

Received by Liz Wilson and Maggie Webb

Fylde CC & West Worthing CC



The Townsend Award

(for clubs with three lawns or fewer)

Received by David Boyd on behalf of

Rother Valley CC



Indoor Croquet at Soham

The indoor croquet facility at Soham in Cambridgeshire was referenced in the Coaching section of the last Gazette. Now **Duncan Hector** tells us all about the competitive croquet that is played there.

The winter season is well under way at Soham under mastermind Terrey who organises all the events on behalf of the East Anglian Croquet Federation.

The carpet on which we play measures 24 x 16 yards (about two thirds the size of a full court) and although it is at least 20 years old, it still plays really well

It is stored at the Ross Peers Sports Centre at Soham, where the staff roll out the five sections of carpet for us beforehand, so all

we have to do is to set out the hoops, peg and corner flags and then run the vacuum cleaner across it before play.

The plates and carpet don't always meet perfectly so it can be very challenging around hoops.

The hoops are mounted on steel plates and are particularly difficult to run because, with a hard shot, the whole assembly moves and absorbs energy.

This means that the normal rebound off a wire usually results in a 'rattle and a blob'.

AC games are timed using giant chess clocks and we usually get 25 minutes per side, so as soon as one's opponent leaves the carpet, his clock stops and one's own clock starts.

At 'time' one only gets single-shot turns, so it is vital not to run out of time.

AC games are 14-point handicap doubles and the handicap system is quite ingenious.

Minus players can be faced with having to do three peels and have 2.5 minutes deducted from their time and added to that of their opponent.

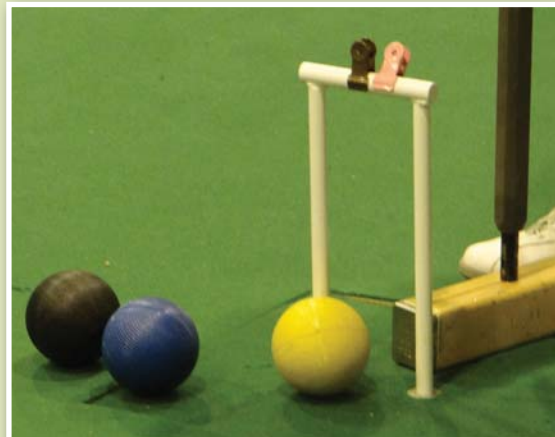
What makes this game so good is that normal croquet tactics don't work and indoor speed doubles is a very different and addictive game.

GC fans will be pleased to learn that the code has also been played at Soham but only once or twice each season.

Last month, David Crawford of the new Mid Suffolk club organised the GC event that was over-subscribed.

Double banking proved to be tricky and the timing of games was clunky; however, he has new ideas for the future and GC will hopefully be on the menu again next year.

Indoor croquet is also played by the Belsay Hall and Middlesbrough Clubs at a separate facility in the north-east.



CA Office and Shop News

By the time you read this, the annual membership renewal notices will have been sent out, which show the information we have recorded for each member.

Please take the time to read it and let us know of any changes.

We also hope that you will renew your membership!

The on-line Fixtures Calendar for 2014 is available in draft form on the website.

This will be confirmed when the printed version is finalised and sent to print at the end of the year.

The Season's Greetings from all of us here Liz, Liz and Jaimie

As some of you will know, Paul Hands has retired from the shop.

Paul was with us for just under two years and we wish him well.

He has been replaced by another Cheltenham member, Jaimie Mussi.

Jaimie took up croquet three years ago and has rapidly progressed to a high standard, playing in the Treasurer's Tankard for the first time this year.

A former software engineer, Jaimie brings IT knowledge to the role as well as croquet.

Dennis is still playing at 91

Many readers will recognise Ramsgate's Dennis Shaw in this photograph, *writes Trevor Longman*

Dennis continues to play GC into his 90's as he is not able to play his preferred AC any more.

He does sometimes have to ask for confirmation of a ball colour, but he still wins many more games than he loses!

Dennis, with his wife Eileen, founded Ramsgate

Croquet Club in 1983 at Montefiore Park in the town, which was a council site with just enough room for two full size courts and a couple of beach huts used as club house and store.

After four years membership had grown to about 20 members and Dennis had the insight to accept the council's offer of a larger site that had been previously used for tennis

and crazy golf, situated on the Westcliffe, on top of the 'White Cliffs of Ramsgate'.

Four lawns were set up, and initially some were better

than others, but by 1999 all lawns had been re-laid and laser levelled, and an irrigation system had been installed. Although Dennis was never Chairman of the club, he served on the committee

continuously until about three years ago.

He also captained the Kent AC team for many years and played competitive croquet on the circuit until recent years.

Many will remember his skills and hospitality to visiting players, as well as his short shorts, worn for most of the playing year, come rain or shine; he has not handed them to the charity shop just yet!



Have your say too!

Club Conferences 2 & 3 are your opportunities to make sure that your club's voice is heard

The CA has organised two more club conferences in February, to give club representatives an opportunity to discuss a number of important issues arising from the Federation Working Party paper that affect all of us, including changes to the CA's fee structure. We hope that all clubs will have a representative at one of the conferences (one has already been held in the South West). The CA is very conscious that many of these changes cannot be implemented without the full support of the clubs and the Federations affected, so we want to collect your views before making any detailed proposals.

Club Conference 2 Saturday 15th February

11:30 - 14:30

The Canalside Sports Complex, Huddersfield

509, Leeds Road, (A62) Huddersfield HD2 1YJ

Leave the M62 at junction 25 and follow A644 / A62 towards Huddersfield. After the turning onto A62, look out for the drive for Canalside on the right hand side after four sets of traffic lights (not pedestrian crossings). It is after the Shell petrol station but before the McDonald's Drive-thru. Please contact Anna Giraud, eag@giraudnet.co.uk or 01484 716663, if you plan to come and want a buffet lunch (£6 a head).

Club Conference 3 Sunday 16th February

14:30 - 17:00

Surbiton Croquet Club Alexandria Drive, Surbiton KT5 9AA

The AGM of the SE Federation will be held on that morning, but the conference is open to representatives of clubs from any area. It would be appreciated if representatives of clubs from neighbouring Federations could let the SECF Secretary know the number of those proposing to attend, to ensure we can accommodate everybody.

Please use info@southeastcroquet.org.uk for correspondence. If numbers are too large we will find alternative accommodation within a short distance of Surbiton. To be sure, please check the CA web site before you travel.

Ian Vincent (CA Hon. Secretary)

Brian Hallam was born in Clifton, a suburb of Nottingham.

As a young man he studied mental health nursing in Shrewsbury and, in a discussion about how to spend some funds to benefit the residents in a local nursing home, he whimsically suggested getting a croquet set.

To his surprise, the suggestion was taken up, and he started teaching himself to play there.

He then went to read psychology at Aston University, where he played at the Edgbaston club, and joined Nottingham, where he introduced his sister Gillian to the game.

He rapidly improved, winning a number of trophies along the way, though he felt that the handicappers (in the days before the automatic system) were slow to recognise his talent, as he relied on accurate stroke play rather than precision breaks.

However, he eventually attracted the attention of the selectors, winning the Spencer-Ell in 1995, and his ranking peaked in 1997, when he was 43rd in the world and played in the Chairman's Salver.

Obituary

Brian Hallam

1953 - 2013



Professionally he worked as a management consultant, particularly in the field of training and development, for a number of companies and, latterly, charities.

This interest and expertise was reflected in his willingness to teach beginners and partner them in doubles.

His family circumstances took him away from croquet for a while, during which he turned his attention to carriage driving, at which he won several national events, and which gave him good subject matter for his photographic skills.

His other interests included poetry and he was an active member of the Bahá'í faith.

He came back to croquet a few years ago when his sons, Omied and Sanaa, expressed interest in playing and he took huge pleasure from their rapid improvement under his expert tuition.

He played with them for Shropshire in the inter-counties this year, but sadly fell ill over the summer and died on 25 October, having moved back to Nottingham to be with his family.

Ian Vincent Nottingham CC

Brian is pictured here with sons Omied and Sanaa, and the Nottingham Week trophies they won in 2010.

From our files

Researched by
Frances Colman

100 years ago - 1913

50 years ago - 1963

Croquet Association Gazette.
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No. 44 February 1963
CROQUET
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Dear Sir,

May I express cordial agreement with "A.B.'s" sensible and well-reasoned communication in your issue of 18th December? I strongly urge the abolition of distinctions and alternatives of any sort. Let there be one setting, one size of hoops, one order of play. Then we shall be getting near a rational and scientific set of rules.

One day we shall not be permitted to move the "other" ball in taking croquet, comfortably to the rule at billiards; then we shall be all correct scientifically. The present audible test of a foul is so unsatisfactory that it is never or hardly ever applied – perhaps because many of us know that the rough surfaces of the mallet and ball cannot actually make only one contact when the blow is given: but this is a revolutionary idea.

Yours faithfully, SCIENCE

Sir,

The exhortation to enter the Devonshire Park Tournament which appeared in the September issue was surely late in the day, since in the nature of things, most intending competitors would have already made their plans.

However, it inspired my wife and myself to consider entering, until my wife fortunately drew my attention to the fact that, as we had not taken part this year in any C.A. tournament other than that at our own club, we would be rendering ourselves liable to an additional subscription of no less than £3 6s., far exceeding the entry fee.

I believe this negative form of encouragement is in fact disappearing this year, and so perhaps 1964 will see the welcome resurgence of entries hoped for in the Notices last month.

Yours truly, MEDIUM BISQUER



"I wish it could be a Croquet Christmas Everyday" (the Editor's homage to the great Roy Wood) - This fabulous tree was made by Bob Furniss of Bakewell CC (photograph by Tom Chapman)

Ripon Spa Hotel Celebrate their 20th Anniversary



Past and present members of the Ripon Spa Hotel C C came together in September to mark its 20th anniversary, **writes Maggie Cowman.**

The club was originally started by the hotel Managing Director Mrs Curry, her daughter Samantha and the club's current President Keith Smith.

There were many doubters in the early days who thought that a croquet club linked to a hotel would not survive, but here we are 20 years later to prove otherwise.

The club can boast several international players both past and present in its membership, not least Samantha, who is a former England Women's GC number 1, and her husband Fergus Thompson, who has represented Scotland.

But the club's success can also be measured by the number of regular members who play for the enjoyment of the game and are always happy to encourage new players to 'have a go'.

Uniquely the hotel's guests are welcome to try their hand free of charge and over the years many have done just that.

Ripon Spa also hosts a number of open tournaments including the prestigious Yorkshire International GC Open which attracts many overseas players.

Returning to the celebration day, there was a morning of fun croquet related skills games, followed after lunch by a progressive doubles tournament and then champagne and cake for club members and hotel staff alike.

One of the morning events was a game of 'Traditional English' golf croquet played by members in a variety of costumes and with a suitably old set of wooden mallets and balls. It was great fun but a completely different game!

Letters to the Editor

Bounty of the toss re-visited

Dear Editor,
Peter Lowe's tongue-in-cheek (?) suggestion on equalising the odds (*Gazette 346 letters: 'Bounty of the Toss'*) is reasonable, but does not go far enough, as the same difficulty arises at hoops 3 and 4, 7 and 8, and at 9 and 10.

This iniquity is especially noticeable when one's opponent is in possession of extra turns.

A better sequence, using current hoop numbering, would be 1,3,2,4,5,6,7,9,8,10,11,12 and back to 3 if necessary.

This sequence would eliminate the odd-numbered hoop advantage, and would not, I think, increase the number of traffic-jams when double-banked. It would increase

one's hatred of the centre-peg however.
Further discussion needed?

Vic Stilwell, Hamptworth CC

Dear Editor,

One simple solution to combat the perceived advantage of commencing the golf game at an odd-numbered hoop, is to apply the half-way rule to hoop shots, with the proviso that the striker, rather than the opponent, choose his/her own penalty spot of the two available.

A by-product would be slightly fewer jawsings and slightly fewer jump shots, which would be to the advantage of lawns used by the less skilled player.

Edward Dymock, Dulwich CC

Parlez vous Croquet?

Dear Editor,

In November's issue (*Gazette 346 letters*) I was amused by Jonathan Toye's 'Toying with croquet lingo' which relied on our not pronouncing the final 't' of our game.

However, some years ago, while on holiday in France I played a game with a man in Fontenay-le-Comte who said he was the French champion and pronounced the game as 'croquette', and the stroke as 'roquette'.

At the same time I found out that my mother's maiden name of Noquet is common in that area (although when children, my brother, sister and I pronounced it 'knock-it').

I wish I could tell you that my erstwhile opponent called a short roll a 'petit pain' but not so! **Brian Russ, CA member but currently unattached.**

AC players - 'See GC as challenging!'

Dear Editor,

Nick Mounfield makes many valid points about the pleasures of playing AC (*Gazette 346, November*).

I would like to encourage the reverse with more AC players seeing GC as a challenging, tactical game and then making an effort to play it seriously.

The two games require very different mind-sets: some of us can adjust to both games, but many of us find greater satisfaction in one or the other.

I started playing AC as my only option and I progressed to a reasonable beginner's handicap. I could set up a four-ball break with bisques which was quite satisfying but once my bisques were used, my lack of accuracy led to the inevitable breakdown.

Each time I got in, a breakdown soon followed and frustration dogged me every time.

When I moved locality, I found that GC

was the only option. Now I was always getting a fresh start and even 50% accuracy of shot led to many enjoyable games.

It even allowed entering competitions at top level in the long-ago past (competition is much tougher now!).

In AC you have your own long-term pattern of shots which you can maintain if you are an accurate player, so that your opponent fails to get in. You build your own success.

In GC, you need think no further ahead than the next three or four shots; then a quick adjustment for your next shot is needed after your opponent has ruined your plans. This pattern gives constant tension to the game with the expenditure of both physical and mental energy, but can also give much satisfaction whether you win or lose.

**Jennet Blake,
Nottingham CC & Eynsham CC**

Annual General Meeting o

Report by Ian Vincent, CA Hon. Secretary

The 2013 AGM started promptly at 11am on Saturday 19 October at The Hurlingham Club, with 61 people in attendance. The Chairman of Council, Jeff Dawson, gave its annual report in two parts with an opportunity for questions and discussion after each.

The first part covered the general work of Council and its committees, emphasising the report of the AC Regeneration Working Party, which, reports from the floor indicated, that some clubs had taken on board and found useful. He also mentioned involvement with the WCF GC Rules Committee's revision process and trial of an alternative wrong-ball law. It seemed clear that the current revision of the GC laws was likely to be a tidying up exercise, whereas in discussion, it seemed that a more

fundamental review was wanted.

The Chairman also recognised the successful AC World Championship and praised the efforts and generosity of the hosting clubs.

He then went on to outline concerns raised by the Federation Working Party and announce that three club conferences were being arranged to consider them. The extensive discussion and straw polls taken at the conclusion, suggested that the majority of those present were happy with the outlined constitutional changes and felt that there was a case for looking at boundary changes. But less were convinced about the idea of restructuring the CA's income by (a) increasing the subscription paid by individual members of clubs, (b) decreasing the amount paid by Individual Tournament members, and (c) extending the principle of pay-to-play to Federation events.

Roger Bray briefly commented on the 2012 accounts, explaining that Council had decided to simplify the balance sheet by closing the Benefactors' Fund and reduce the amount held in the Development and International funds. He anticipated a modest surplus this year, but 2014 was not looking good.

There was a brief discussion of how the accounts should be published.



Roger Bray

Steel Bowl - Francois Garcia (Bowdon)

The most improved female AC player 2012

Francois started off the 2012 season on a handicap of 4 after having had a successful season in 2011 culminating in winning the Bowdon B-Level event. In 2012 she decided to concentrate on advanced play. While not winning any competitions she reduced her handicap to 2.5 and her Dynamic Grading has increased from 1512 to 1685. She reached the final of the Bowdon B-Level event again but had to withdraw because of injury. For the same reason she had to withdraw from the Bowdon B-Level weekend tournament. This cut her playing season by 20% which makes her improvement in 2012 even more of an achievement.

Apps Bowl - Nick Mounfield (Bygrave)

The most improved male AC player 2012

Nick Mounfield performed amazingly in 2012 beating Jamie Burch 3-1 in the Open and taking two games off David Maugham in the Eastern Championships. He started the year as a -0.5 and this was reduced to -1.5. He ended his season by winning the Chairman's Salver at his first attempt.

Spiers Trophy - Harry Dodge (Nailsea)

The most improved GC Player 2012

Harry Dodge started 2012 with a GC handicap of 4 (index 409), and ended it with 2 (index 786). In a year packed with achievements, his successes included winning the Hamptworth Winter Handicap event; the plate event in the Dorset Open GC Tournament; the Bath Club's handicap competition; he was also semi-finalist in the Bath Level-play competition and made a significant contribution to Bath's victory over Camerton & Peasedown in the SWF GC League. He was ranked 160 in the world at the start of 2012 and ended the year at 89.

Lifetime Coaching Award - Ken Cooper (Bowdon) *(not in attendance)*

Ken's sterling work and achievements were documented in Gazette 343 April at the time of the award announcements.

CA A



Francois Garcia



Harry Dodge

Council Medal - Bill Arliss

Bill Arliss has been the main driving force behind the development of Golf Croquet in the Croquet Association's domain, from being a relaxing diversion at the end of a day's play to a competitive sport in its own right. Whilst always eager for GC to be given parity with AC, which he also played

f The Croquet Association

The constitutional changes were overwhelmingly agreed, after it was stated that the intention was that the CA should still be able to select Great Britain teams



Bill Arliss

Those standing for re-election to Council were unopposed and the vacancy was filled by co-opting Robin Brown at the start of the Council meeting which followed the AGM.

Peter Wilson

and Brian Christmas were welcomed as new Federation Representatives, for the North West and West Midlands respectively.

Several awards were made by the President, who read citations which are covered elsewhere in this Gazette.

The only item of AOB was to congratulate Chris Roberts, the new editor of the Gazette, on his first few issues.

In his closing address, CA President, Quiller Barrett thanked Liz Larsson and her colleagues in the CA Office.

He also mentioned the excellent community involvement of the Swindon Club, and expressed his pleasure at the creation of an AC International Development Squad.

He ended by wishing the England MacRobertson Shield team every success in the forthcoming test matches. and then he then closed the meeting at 13:15, which made it the longest for many years.

CA Council Meeting

The Council meeting in the afternoon was shorter, consisting mainly of formal business, though there was a useful discussion of how to review committees' policies and objectives. The Chairmen of Council and its committees were re-elected, with the exception that Martin French has taken on the Equipment and GC Laws Committees, and David Maugham has resumed chairmanship of the AC Selection Committee.

There was, however, one significant item of other business.

In response to a request from several clubs which host CA events, the lawn and ball hire fee will increase from £25 to £30 for 2014, and will then be reviewed annually. This is to reflect increased maintenance costs being encountered and it will be funded by an increase in entry fees for CA events.

wards



Nick Mounfield

for Sussex, he fought to ensure that it was played in the same spirit and to avoid the formation of a rival governing body.

Bill was elected a member of Council in 1995 and became Chairman in 1997, following the sudden death of his predecessor, Stephen Badger. He oversaw the introduction of the Management Committee and the devolution of powers

to standing committees. He then chaired the GC Committee and its successors GC Tournaments and Laws Committees.

An engineer by training, his high speed video of several strokes did much to improve understanding of the dynamics of mallets, hoops and balls. Other innovations were the website and GC ranking system, both of which he ran for a number of years.

Internationally, he has represented the CA on the WCF's Golf Croquet Rules Committee, organised the 2004 GC World Championship and played in a further three. Bill has published a book covering the more advanced tactics of Golf Croquet; he has been on the committee of the South-East & London Federation since 1994 and its Chairman since 2002.

Bill has always been a forceful debater on croquet matters and he has ruffled some feathers along the way. However croquet players generally, not just those of the form he came to champion, have much to thank Bill for. His contribution to our sport has indeed been outstanding.

Council Medal - Roger Bray

Roger Bray played for the winning Great Britain team in the 1969 MacRobertson

Shield tour to Australia and was reportedly a master of the three-ball break.

However, it was after he retired from top-level play that Roger made his most substantial contribution to the sport, as an administrator.

As a mathematician, he worked at Essex University and the Royal Institution and was Chairman of the Colchester Club from 1973 to 1982.

Elected to the CA Council in 1968, he became its Chairman from 1978-80 and retired from it in 1984. However, he returned to become Hon. Treasurer in 1992 when Alan Oldham retired after 25 years in the post, and has himself served over 20 years in that role.

During that time he has guided the CA to a position of relative financial security, weathering the storm that resulted from the withdrawal of Sports Council support. It is a measure of his success that the CA is now able to give development grants to clubs amounting to some £30,000 each year.

Both club and individual members of the CA have good reason to thank Roger for his careful husbandry of our resources. The Council's award of this Medal recognizes his immense service to croquet over many years.

Les and Alwen Bowker (Cheltenham)

Soon after joining Cheltenham CC as full members in 2006, Les and Alwen agreed to take over the management of the bar, sourcing new and interesting beers, with the result that visitors to the club soon commented on the good range. They also arranged training and support for members manning the bar and spearheaded an innovative plan to move its location to create a lounge area for members, undertaking many of the construction tasks themselves.

Alwen and Les have introduced speed croquet at the club which is now a popular winter activity. When Alwen is not on a ladder re-proofing the five wooden pavilions or painting clips and other lawn furniture, she can often be found mentoring new members of the club, assisting at open days, plant sales and any other task which requires a willing volunteer. Les has managed the intermediate and other Federation teams for the club. He is a calm and knowledgeable coach for players new to the game and often acts as mentor until new members have settled into the club.

Susan Edwards (Cheltenham)

*This posthumous award was presented to
Craig Edwards*

Aware of setting the precedent of a posthumous award, Cheltenham CC would nevertheless wish to formally recognise Susan Edwards' significant contribution to the Club with a nomination for this CA Diploma. Susan's introduction to croquet was watching the final stages of the MacRobertson Shield at Cheltenham in 1996 and she immediately set about trying to attain the same standard. Her commitment to excel did not blind her to the progress of others and she could often be seen offering quiet and discreet coaching to those who struggled with the finer points of break play. She also made a point of recognising and encouraging the efforts of other members away from the spotlight of mainstream club activity. But it was in the role of Club Chairman that Susan made her presence felt in a highly significant and lasting fashion. She ensured that the Committee dealt not only with day-to-day issues but also addressed any longer term problems of the Club without losing sight of the needs and best interests of all club members.

Her determination to continue acting

effectively and decisively through the later stages of her final illness was inspirational.

John Handy (Kenilworth & Nottingham)

John has been a member of Nottingham for over 20 years and Kenilworth for 15 years. At both clubs he has taken an active part club management and sharing his enthusiasm for the sport with members and visitors. At Nottingham he was an efficient treasurer from 2005 to 2011, and organised the movement of club funds and activity to the Charity Aid Foundation bank where they remain to this day. His time

in this role is remembered for his obliging and helpful nature – 'nothing was too much trouble'. At Kenilworth, John was a key committee member and launched the club on its growth to its current strong position. As secretary, he organised the club's systems on a more efficient and user-friendly basis while he handled all the admin, including member communications and renewals. He also represented Kenilworth on the West-Midlands Federation, before moving on to represent the Federation at the CA. John is a referee in both codes of the sport and an active coach. He encouraged the growth of Golf Croquet and managed tournaments at both clubs, particularly B-Level to encourage more competitive play. He also donated trophies to both clubs, and at Kenilworth members still compete for the Pindi Cup and the Secunderabad Cup, trophies won by his mother as a tennis player in India

Zoe Hawkins (Ramsgate)

Zoe has been a stalwart member of Ramsgate since its earliest days. She became an essential part of the smooth running of the catering department and her Coronation chicken, lemon meringue ice cream and lasagne were renowned! She certainly helped to build up the club's reputation for staging open tournaments. Zoe also served on the club committee for many years and provided a marvellous archive of photographs of the club's history. Advancing years and failing health have forced her to retire from active service in the

CA Diplom

club and she certainly deserves recognition for her past work.

Jonathan and Chrissy Isaacs (Sussex County)

A well-known figure in croquet circles, Jonathan Isaacs was introduced to croquet in 1984 and joined Sussex County CC the following year. He became Chairman of the



CA Marketing Committee in 1999, Chairman of the CA Management Committee circa 2002, and then Chairman of Council in 2005 for two years. He helped organise the Golf Croquet World Championships at Southwick in 2004 and had been involved in marketing at the club for some time before he became its Chairman in 2008. The Croquet Academy at Southwick, which goes from strength to strength, was entirely his idea: he set up and launched it. More recently he helped introduce the concept of the Southern Challenge to the SECF. Jonathan stepped down from the Chairmanship of Sussex in 2012 but was obliged to reassume the position in 2013. He is still a driving force

a Awards

at club, regional and national level, and is currently head of Marketing for the CA.

He was made a Vice-President of the CA in 2011.

Chrissy Isaacs does not play croquet but has supported Jonathan wholeheartedly and immersed herself in the social life of the Club. She has masterminded the catering at Southwick for the last five years, was a driving force behind the redesign and



equipping of the kitchen, and is a very able cook. It is thanks to her that themed dinners have become so successful, and the club's reputation for good food is her legacy.

Paul Miles (Medway)

Paul Miles has been a stalwart of the Medway club for at least eighteen years. His closeness to the club ensured that he learned rapidly (starting at 16, he has been down to 1). Once he was experienced, he undertook weekly coaching for members and newcomers. He also helped on the club's committee and would often be the first at the club to set out the equipment for visiting teams.

Neil Morrison (Swindon)

Neil is ever present at the lawns on Swindon club afternoons, runs improver sessions for members and is a lead coach on beginners' courses. From the day he joined, Neil has been involved with the club's 'Taking Croquet to the Community' project. In 2012 the club introduced 16 plus groups to the sport in over 50 events and Neil turned out for 90% of these, introducing over 900 adults and children to the sport. When the club was asked by Swindon Borough Council how the cost of the lawn maintenance could be reduced, Neil

grasped this as an opportunity to improve the Club's facilities.

He played a major part in putting a development plan together: this involved taking over maintenance and increasing the number of lawns from two to three.

Neil played a major role in submitting successful Lottery funding applications to raise money for machinery and a club room. He also negotiated with a contractor and the council to ensure that everything was in place by 1 April 2013.

Neil had the vision and assembled all the component parts for Swindon CC to have its first clubroom in its 27-year history and has made an outstanding contribution to the club and residents of Swindon.

Hilary and Tim Smith (Compton)

Hilary and Tim came to Eastbourne from Nottingham with the new millennium and brought with them their wide-ranging croquet experience. This has proved invaluable to the running and well-being of the Compton club. Members and visitors alike have benefitted from their devotion in a range of contributions that makes daunting reading. Tim has just relinquished the post of treasurer after more than a decade of meticulous record keeping, ably assisted by Hilary as membership secretary. Hilary took on the task of organising tournament catering and the rotas for club teas, while Tim had charge of stocking and running the bar, so that, between them, they supplied lunches for most of the major

calendar events. One might think that this was enough for anyone, but not for Hilary! For many years she has been lead coach for both beginners and improvers, and club representative and GC league contact for the SE Federation. She studied to become the club's only referee and has recently begun to manage both internal and CA tournaments. To fill her 'spare time', she helps keep the flower beds weeded and makes dozens of jars of marmalade and jam to swell club funds. Their joint efforts are hugely appreciated by club members and richly deserve this recognition.

John & Jo Munt (Preston CC, Brighton)

Preston CC report that they are fortunate to have John and Jo Munt as members as they have dedicated themselves to ensuring that the club that is welcoming, friendly and a joy to belong to. John is Chairman and Jo is a committee member, but the greater benefit is seen by their willingness to help others. John arranges monthly social events, club games and matches, and Jo shows her catering expertise in preparing the food for many events, especially excellent teas for visiting teams. Preston owe both of them a debt of gratitude.

David Parkins (Medway)

David Parkins joined Medway in 1992, shortly after its formation. As a land surveyor, his services were, and are, invaluable in finding suitable sites, measuring accurately, identifying slopes, etc. Moreover, David has looked after club newcomers and other members seeking tuition, as well as organising the Kent team in the Inter-County Championship. He is the most experienced member of the Club committee, yet still found time to once reduce his handicap to scratch.

Croquet Association Diplomas are awarded for services to Croquet

Lining up in our photograph are -
Back row: John Munt, Les Bowker, CA President Quiller Barrett, Craig Edwards (for Susan), Jonathan Isaacs
Front row: Tim Smith, Alwen Bowker, Jo Munt, Chrissy Isaacs and Hilary Smith
Not present: Zoe Hawkins, Paul Miles, Neil Morrison and David Parkins
(photograph by Chris Roberts)



A veteran of the 1996 MacRobertson Shield encounter, Ian Burridge previews the next instalment of croquet's World Championship.

It was twenty-three years ago that Great Britain and Ireland began over two decades of domination of the World game with their victory in New Zealand in 1990.

Robert Fulford and Stephen Mulliner survive from that team to play under the England badge on this occasion, and seek to bring the MacRobertson Shield home with them for an eighth consecutive time.

Following the restructuring of international team events, and the introduction of the World Team Championship by the WCF, the MacRobertson Shield forms Tier 1 and is effectively croquet's 'World Cup'.

It is currently contested every four years by six-player teams from Australia, England, New Zealand and the United States, who will all play each other in best-of-21 test matches



THE MACROBERTSON

(twelve singles and nine doubles), each of five days' duration.

On paper, this renewal is the most competitive since that 1990 victory, and the general feeling is that New Zealand start the event as slight favourites over England, with the other two teams being distinct outsiders but with the potential to cause an upset.

It is off-field matters that have given New Zealand the edge, with the decision of Chris Clarke to switch his international allegiance from England to New Zealand following his non-selection for the English golf croquet World Team Championship team in 2012.

With Clarke in their ranks, England would be the clear favourites, but his loss to the strongest opposition tips the balance.

Despite clearly being the stronger team on paper in 2000, 2003 and 2010 GB only beat NZ 11-10, which suggests that with two well-matched teams anything is possible.

It is said of the New Zealand team that it contains five number ones, all having won their national championship and performed well in previous MacRobertson Shields and various other top class events.

They include Paddy Chapman, fresh from taking the runner-up spot in the recent World Championship.

Their team is completed by Jenny Clarke, a quarter-finalist in the Worlds and a solid and consistent performer who, at the time of writing, was ranked ahead of half the English team, thus illustrating New Zealand's strength.

With Robert Fletcher having improved to the extent that he is now World Champion, Australia should be stronger than in 2010 and, if he can provide five match wins (two singles + three doubles), they have the chance of pulling off an upset against England or New Zealand.

However, whilst Stephen Forster is a second world class player he will be up against it at the top of the order and the remainder of the team you would expect to be outclassed in the company of two favourite teams.

Whilst not quite having a player of Fletcher's standard, the make-up of the US team is very similar to that of Australia, with two World Class players in Ben Rothman and Danny Huneycutt.

But the rest of the team is at a significantly lower level and likely to fall short of what is required to compete with England and NZ.

On paper they will be competing with Australia for third place in their final match.

I would expect Fletcher to give Australia the edge in this battle, but much will depend on their respective morale levels after what will have been a difficult previous two weeks.

Since selection the potential of the England team has grown on me.

The experience of Fulford, Maugham and Mulliner is complemented by the three debutants, Burch, Death and Patel, who are amongst the most dangerous players in the world on their day.

The timing of the event is far from ideal, virtually obliging team members to be away from home for Christmas.

It is small aspects like this that touring teams can use to help them gel and it has often been noticeable in past events, that it is the home team that finds it difficult to create a good team spirit and sense of unity.

With things likely to be so finely balanced, turning the touring experience to their advantage will be vital if England are to be successful.

The Mac starts with all four teams



30 Dec - New Zealand v Australia

5 Jan - New Zealand v USA

11 Jan - Australia v NZ

"Good Engl"



MacRobertson Past W

- 1930 Australia
- 1935 Australia
- 1937 England
- 1950/1 New Zealand
- 1956 England
- 1963 England
- 1969 Great Britain
- 1974 Great Britain
- 1979 New Zealand
- 1982 Great Britain
- 1986 New Zealand
- 1990 Great Britain
- 1993 Great Britain
- 1996 Great Britain
- 2000 Great Britain
- 2003 Great Britain
- 2006 Great Britain
- 2010 Great Britain
- 2014

MACROBERTSON SHIELD 2014

3 Jan
USA
ENGLAND

9 Jan
Australia
ENGLAND

15 Jan
USA
ENGLAND

Luck
and''



MacRobertson Shield
winners

Ma
a
New Zealand

Britain
Britain
New Zealand
Britain
Britain & Ireland
Britain & Ireland
Britain & Ireland
Britain
Britain
Britain
.....

at the United club in Christchurch, a venue renowned for offering testing conditions.

England kick off their campaign against Australia and should prove too strong for their opponents, whom I would not expect to be suited to the playing conditions, although they will have the advantage of taking on an England team fresh off the plane in their winter off-season.

The Americans will take heart from their Solomon Trophy victory in testing conditions over Great Britain at Hamptworth in 2011, but I would again expect the conditions to accentuate the difference in strength between the teams and for New Zealand to run out comfortable winners.

Atkins Quadway hoops will be used throughout the event.

These are harder to run than conventional hoops and the NZ players can expect to gain a general advantage by virtue of being more familiar with them.

However, one would expect this factor to diminish as the event goes on and probably be largely eliminated by the third week when they come to play

England.

The teams split up for the second week and I would expect two more balanced matches than in the first week.

New Zealand will take on Australia at the Marewa Club in Napier and their strength in depth should ensure a fairly comfortable second round victory.



The Te Mata club in Havelock North hosts the England v USA match and, whilst the Americans have enjoyed some success against GB in the Solomon Trophy, it would be a major upset if they secured a MacRobertson Shield victory.

So if there have been no slip-ups on the way, the deciding test will be held when all the teams meet up again at the Mount Maunganui club in Tauranga, where conditions are expected to be relatively benign.

It is perhaps surprising that NZ have chosen to taken on England in such conditions, rather than at United where one would have thought they might have gained more from home advantage.

Doubles is usually the key in any close match with each pair playing the three opposing pairs.

The matches tend to be that bit scrappier than singles and with the first day being a 'doubles day' can set the tone for what follows.

Ensuring that England get off to a good start, is probably the biggest challenge facing rookie captain Samir Patel.

It is hard to predict what the singles order of either team will be.

Each player plays two singles matches with the top two players in each team playing each other and the middle two and the bottom two doing likewise.

Whatever the potential match-ups, I come to the same general conclusion, that if the English player plays well then they will win, and if they don't, they will not.

The New Zealanders are far more consistent performers in my view and there will be no hiding place for any Englishman playing badly, even if dropped down the order.

New Zealand will be particularly strong at number five and together with Jenny Clarke can be expected to make easy work of anyone off form.

I think the conditions at the Mount are going to suit the English though with their aggressive style of play likely to reap dividends when it may



well have led to their undoing had the match been played at United.

They will, however, need to guard against carelessness that I believe has tended to creep into all their games with the increased use of super-advanced play in England (it is not used elsewhere).

Mistakes in easy conditions are fatal and the New Zealand players can be expected to capitalise on them to the full.

It would be easy to predict a close 11-10 match but I think it far more likely that one team or the other will get some momentum and run out fairly comfortable winners 13-8 or 14-7, as their opponent's confidence wanes.

Home advantage and the weight of expectation may well mean that New Zealand are more likely to succumb to the pressure.

My prediction is for England to bring the MacRobertson Shield home once again.

Photographs clockwise from top left: Captain Samir Patel, Stephen Mulliner, David Maugham, Jamie Burch, Robert Fulford and James Death. (images by: Tim King, Julie Kaye, Samir Patel, Liz Larsson, Samir Patel and David Brydon)





THE MAC ~ the rich history ~ John Prince looks back



The MacRobertson Shield Test Series is the oldest and greatest international croquet contest and the jewel in the croquet's world crown. No other croquet competition produces the tension, the drama, the elation that comes when a series is won, or the devastation of a defeat.

Some years ago a young player, now an established member of the New Zealand team, was asked during the NZ Open about his ambitions in croquet. His reply was not a self-centred 'win the Open' response but 'to play for NZ in the MacRobertson'. Such is the mana that goes with the Mac.

Since the first contest between England and Australia way back in 1925 the MacRobertson has enjoyed a rich history with many wonderful encounters, triumphs and bitter disappointments, but above all the Mac has made croquet the international game it is today and for those of us fortunate to take part life-long friendships were formed. Apart from an isolated anti-Mac rumbling from within the WCF in its early days, the event has been seen as the 'Everest' for croquet players worldwide.

As I reflect back on past series from, of course, a Kiwi perspective, I recall reading about, hearing about, or witnessing the following: Australian Billy McCleery, in 1930 completing all three peels of a triple before running hoop five; NZ's Arthur Ross 'hurdling' the first hoop to hit the cross-wired ball and Ashley Heenan playing a sensational jump shot through rover

against Dudley Hamilton-Miller when NZ first won the Shield in 1950; my own debut, aged 17, midway through the 1963 series, and the huge thrill in playing against the legendary John Solomon.

In 1969 there was the arrival of two new young outstanding players in Nigel Aspinall

for England and John Magor for Australia. NZ mounted a challenge to the top order of British croquet in 1974 and this led on to a victory at home for the Kiwis in 1979.

I'll never forget Bob Jackson's match-saving straight triple at



Westport against Aspinall and Paul Skinley becoming the first player to compete a sextuple peel in the Mac at Rotorua.

At Adelaide in 1982 we experienced for the first time hoops becoming too narrow when set in rock hard ground; Kiwi Richard Clarke in desperation letting fly at hoop six with a massive jump only to see his ball finish wedged in the hoop, six inches above the ground! There was huge excitement as that series was decided on the last match of the final test between Great Britain and Australia. Britain's Keith Wylie, at game down, turned his match against the 'player of the series' Neil Spooner before a large crowd at Warleigh in Melbourne.

1986 saw history made when Great

Britain, for the first time, lost the series on home ground; there was the 'tension in the twilight' doubles and the sensational hit-in and finish from Paul Skinley against William Prichard. And so the rich tapestry grows.

In 1993, against Bob Jackson with just two balls left on the court, Dave Maugham played a sensational break from hoop one to the peg to win the Shield for GB.

At United in 2000 the final game, of the final match, in the final test, again involved Maugham - this time, with an immaculate triple-peel on a rock hard court with unforgiving hoops, he secured the shield for GB over NZ by the narrowest margin 10-11.

2003 saw an out-of-sorts Kiwi team, having already lost to Australia and the USA

at the National Croquet Centre in Florida, face an undefeated GB team.

On the back of a fantastic 'captain's knock' from Toby Garrison, who won five matches out of five from five, the Kiwis again went down 10-11.

2010 saw an amazing comeback by the Kiwis in the series decider against the old foe. Needing to win all six singles on the last day, they again came up just one short - but gave the holders a huge shock.

I firmly believe the New Zealand go in as favourites this time.

John Prince is former MacRobertson Shield Kiwi Captain and player. Although living in New Zealand, John is a life member of the CA.

The MacRobertson Shield 2014 line-up

England

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

New Zealand

Aaron Westerby (c)
Greg Bryant
Paddy Chapman
Chris Clarke
Jenny Clarke
Toby Garrison

Australia

Ian Dumergue (c)
Ken Bald
Malcolm Fletcher
Robert Fletcher
Stephen Forster
Tim O'Leary

USA

Danny Huneycutt
Jim Bast
Rich Lamm
David Maloof
Ben Rothman
Jeff Soo

I've played tournament croquet since 1981, but I have never experienced anything like the tension, drama or sheer intensity of my match against Jenny Clarke of New Zealand at Nottingham on Monday 16th August 2010.

By way of context, GB narrowly beat USA in the first round of matches 12-9, which given that we had beaten them 19-2 in 2006 in Australia wasn't the best of starts.

However, on that Monday morning things were looking very promising. The score against New Zealand was 10-5 in favour of Great Britain, so we only needed to win one of the six singles matches left to be played.

The format dictated that four matches would start in the morning and then the remaining two matches would begin as and when lawns became available.

Rutger Beijderwellen and I drew the 'byes' and I think I said something to my team mates along the lines of "Well, your motivation is to make sure it doesn't come down to my match!" Oops!

By the time Jenny and I started the score was 10-7 and within minutes had become 10-8. With the remaining match from the morning into its final game, the potential significance of our match was now plain for all to see.

Indeed the score became 10-9 shortly

THE MAC ~ the pressure ~

Keith Aiton remembers it well

...nothing prepared me for the sort of inner turmoil that ensued...

after our first game finished and all knew that losing to New Zealand would probably mean losing the Shield.

'Did I fancy being the first losing GB Captain since 1986? Not really, no!'



We were put on lawn 1, which I expect Jenny thought favoured me as it is the 'show' lawn at my home club. Rutger played on lawn 5, the furthest from the clubhouse.



In truth, it was

only because Jenny seemed even less keen to be on lawn 1 than I did, that made me glad to be there.

Being known as a practitioner and advocate of 'sports psychology', I thought I would be able to find a way of handling the situation.

In fact nothing prepared me for the sort of

inner turmoil that ensued and simply holding the mallet steady enough to hit the ball became a challenge.

You can read the bare bones of the match in the archives on the CA website, but what isn't set out there is what the players went through. I can't speak for Jenny, but from what I observed she seemed as nervous as I was.

The thing that I felt at the time that pulled me through was, that I started an internal conversation that went something like this:

"It doesn't matter what happens, because you are going to win in the end. You are going to win. You're going to win."

That last phrase became my mantra and I said it to myself at least a hundred times that afternoon.

It just made enough difference!

Keith Aiton played for Great Britain in the MacRobertson Shield teams of 2006 and 2010 and was Captain on the second occasion.

Jamie Burch wins the South of England Championship

Jamie Burch won this Grade 1 Championship which had more peeling action than a weekend in a marmalade factory!

Every single match in the main event featured at least one triple peel, most had two and the later rounds had multiples.

Roger Wood reports that the only new faces this year were Richard H Smith from Bowdon and Simon Hayward-Tapp, who was returning to croquet this season after a gap of just over 30 years!

However, something of a shock awaited Simon in his first match, because Keith Aiton's immaculate 7th turn and 6th turn consecutive sextuples consigned poor Hayward-Tapp to the Swiss in 87 minutes without taking croquet!

Aiton went on to make five peels of a

sextuple against Gabrielle Higgins and complete another against David Maugham, to secure the peeling prize for the second year running. Maugham himself impressed with eight triples in his nine wins.

Most impressive of all though, was Jamie Burch's superb shooting throughout the weekend and he progressed to the final without conceding a game, although Ed Duckworth did run him close in his semi.

Maugham, who had taken five games to see off Aiton, awaited Burch in the final.

The match swung one way and then the other all the way to a deciding fifth game, which Burch won somewhat typically with yet another triple. The final score-line read -26tp +26tp -18tp +14otp +26tp.

Having been eliminated from the main event in the quarter-finals by two Ed

Duckworth triples, Jack Wicks proceeded to win all six of his plate games, five of them with triples of his own.

He beat his then closest rival, defending champion Gavin Carter, in his final game ensuring an unassailable two game margin in that event.

At the same time Gabrielle Higgins beat Sam Murray to draw level with Carter for joint second place, while the plate was highlighted by two more completed sextuples by Dave Kibble and Duckworth (allowed a few non-scoring plate games in lieu of a third place play-off) against the manager!

Photos, clockwise from top left: Ben Rothman, Robert Fletcher, Jenny Clarke, Keith Aiton, Chris Clarke and Paddy Chapman. By Julie Kaye Photography, Sara & Ian Anderson (x3), Nick Cheyne and Samir Patel.

School report: West Buckland



West Buckland School's fledgling but flourishing Croquet Club ended its season late this year, with the final match played at the school against Queen's Taunton at the end of September.

Teacher Andrew Watkinson-Trim reports that the match was carried over from the summer term, when wet weather resulted in a series of fixture cancellations.

Queen's brought a team of experienced sixth-form players across to meet our mainly Year 7 novices, and so they started and finished hot favourites.

Even so, West Buckland's players put up a good fight, and even managed one win and a draw in the eight-game contest, which saw lots of good humour.

The home side measurably improved their game during the course of the afternoon, and ended keen to play more: they look forward to the return fixture at Queen's next season.

Mr Watkinson-Trim, who runs the West Buckland Club, said: "Anyone running a Croquet Club with North Devon weather must have great faith! We had to cancel fixtures at the end of the school term because the weather was so bad, only to then enjoy a perfect summer of ideal croquet weather...when everyone was on holiday!

Nevertheless, it's been a most enjoyable season, and our players have gained some valuable experience, and are already looking forward to our matches next year."

In addition to their outing against Queens, West Buckland also played with the Barnstaple and Exmoor Clubs, and enjoyed their coaching and encouragement.



Bishops lead croquet at Wells Palace



Can any club trump having a Bishop as their President?

Wells Palace CC, in the lovely Cathedral City of the same name, claim that particular distinction – as well as enjoying their croquet on the well-maintained flat lawns in the peaceful surroundings of the Bishop's Palace.

For many years the game had been played by various Bishops – and some clubs too – on the main lawn during the summer months, and one such noteworthy was Bishop Kennion (1894-1921) who was a very keen player indeed.

His successors have also maintained a good interest in the game, and in 1976, with the approval of Bishop Bickerseith, the Palace Croquet Club was revived by Horace Southwell.

Bishop Bickerseith considered that 'the game would fit in well with the character of Wells', and since then the Club has thrived and further expanded.

A second lawn was created in 1990, when the Club was joined by members of the defunct Wells Priory Croquet Club.

Two years before that, newly incumbent Bishop George Carey played a game on the green for the Wells Journal cameras, and the scene was replicated in May 2012 when

Bishop Peter Price opened the season, in the hope of encouraging more people to take up the sport at the Palace.

The recent developments have provided a fresh audience for the players, with a new restaurant looking directly out onto the lawns. The Palace attracts well over 100,000 visitors a year, and the Club now has around 30 members, whilst the lawns are also home to a U3A group on Tuesday mornings.

In recent years the Wells Palace Club's oldest players were two sisters, Cecile Leach and Denise Johns, both in their 90s, and the latter was still seen playing this season.

New members are most welcome, so if you fancy playing somewhere just a bit different, contact Wells Palace CC secretary Guy Arnoux.



Photographs:

Bishop George Carey opened the Wells Palace CC season in 1988. Bishop Peter Prince followed suit in the 2012 season, pictured here with Denise Johns (in red), Club Chairman Ian Telfer (behind the Bishop), Guy Arnoux (far left) and other club members (Images courtesy of The Wells Journal). Denise's 19-month old great-granddaughter Ruby (Image by Mark Holman).

Chelmsford & Bentley celebrate 720+ years at croquet!

A surprise greeted nine octogenarians at Chelmsford & Bentley CC when they turned up for the club's usual end-of-season fish-and-chip lunch, **reports Judith Hand.**

In celebration of five of their number turning 80 this season and another four already having reached that milestone, the club laid on a fun day party which included some rather odd croquet games.

The honoured seniors were each required to captain a team of four players to try

croquet using normal croquet balls and those of both tennis and golf!

In between games, the teams took part in a domino challenge to build towers against the clock and a mini-marathon food quiz.

The scores were very close and so there was heightened pressure in the final deciding round when each captain shot for their team, in a 'nearest the peg' contest.

A special cake was cut at close of play and was washed down with some bubbly

No more floods at Bishop Monkton



Bishop Monkton Croquet Club, located on the edge of the Yorkshire Dales, faced a big dilemma last season – regularly flooded lawns, causing them to sink in parts.

Club Chairman Richard Field explains how, and at what cost, the club resolved the problem.

Last season things looked as gloomy as the ever present storm clouds for Bishop Monkton Croquet Club. The exceptional rainfall caused the lawns to flood repeatedly, and the standing water had seen the ground sink in parts and become virtually unplayable.

We repeatedly had to cancel club days, and call off league and friendly matches. Radical steps were called for and somehow the money to tackle the lawns would have to be found.

We contacted a number of contractors who specialise in remedying drainage problems and restoring dilapidated playing fields. The lowest quote was for £16,750, from a firm with a reputation for reliability and excellent results.

Next was the daunting task of raising the money. We trawled the Directory of Grant Making Trusts, which is an invaluable manual which lists organisations which

have money to support worthwhile causes.

We chose the 50 best prospects and sent begging letters explaining our dilemma and over the next few months we were thrilled to receive the following offers of help:

We gratefully received a **£3,000 grant from The Croquet Association**

£300 from the Shepherd Charitable Trust, £1,000 from The Two Ridings Community Foundation, £2,000 from Bishop Monkton Village Hall & Playing Fields, and £2,000 from The Garfield Weston Foundation.

Our 65 members answered requests for one-off donations, 'subs in advance' and even Life Memberships for £1,000 – and we got two of these!

In all our members chipped in over £5,000.

We are immensely grateful, both to the grant providers and to our own members for their generosity.

After discussions with various experts, including The Croquet Association's Yorkshire

Development Officer Derek Knight, we settled the technical requirements of the project.

The work, which took just two weeks to complete during August, involved digging up the old lawns, installing land drains, importing 320 tons of new top soil, levelling the new area and then seeding it.

We were nearly home and dry!

That night there was a horrendous thunder storm and a downpour went on for hours. We all had visions of all our carefully laid seed whooshing down the nearest drain. But, remarkably, most of the seed stayed in place and within ten days had germinated and was beginning to sprout.

The new grass is now getting thicker every day but play will have to wait until next June, when we are told the new lawns should be ready to use.

Then we shall no longer have to 'aim off' to take into account known slopes and hollows.

Home advantage in matches will be lost – but we're very happy to live with that!

Photographs by Richard Field (clockwise from center top); The reason why the club had to act; Clearing old turf; Drainage pipes being laid into one of the five 60 yard trenches; Laser levelling for super flat lawns!

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as medals were presented, before all went home tired but very happy.

Chelmsford & Bentley's Octogenarians:

Lillian McNaught, Sheila Sowter, Cynthia Knox, Ian McNaught, Nora Smith, Lionel Rose, Les Renew, John Marchant and Alan Toogood.

Photo by Betty Craig

National AC Inter-Club Championships

Colchester, Nottingham, and Woking took the spoils at the CA's weekend of National Inter-Club Championship finals at Surbiton in early October.

In regaining the **Inter-Club Championship** title from Cheltenham, victorious **Colchester** drew level on all time wins with their opponents on six title wins each. The doubles was over fairly quickly: Cheltenham's Sarah Burrow went to 4-Back; Colchester's Robert Fulford failed a TPO and ended on Rover having done one peel. Chris Williams stuck in hoop 1 off the contact; Colchester missed; Burrow hit hoop 1 but not the Williams' ball and Ian Burrigge finished. 1-0 to Colchester. The morning singles took rather longer however, when Colchester's Colin Hemming (*pictured, left*) beat David Foulser, but Cheltenham's Dave Kibble beat Nick Steiner, to limit the Essex club's lead to 2-1 at lunch. In the afternoon, Fulford completed a TPO and then finished against Williams to give Colchester a 3-1 lead, before Burrigge wrapped up the match with the crucial fourth win. The other two games were shared.



In the **Mary Rose Inter-Club Trophy**, holders Hurlingham couldn't match the early pace of **Nottingham**, who won all three of their morning matches before midday. A generous lunch break then followed, that seemed to inspire Tom Coles, who quickly defeated Ian Vincent to keep

Hurlingham in the match, to the delight of their supporters. However, their joy was short lived, as Omied Hallam (*pictured right*) pegged out a minute or so later to take Nottingham over the line for the title. The remaining two matches were shared to give a 5-2 result.



Meanwhile in the **Longman Club Team Cup**, **Woking** edged out Enfield 4-3 and Southport beat another Nottingham team 5-2 in the semi-finals to qualify for the following day's final. The Sunday was gloriously sunny at Surbiton and Woking were delighted to lift the Longman Cup for the first time since 1955, thanks to a 6-1 victory over Southport. Woking's victorious team was Sara and Ian Anderson, Michael Holland and Michael Hague were backed

up, manager Gina Lewis, Graham Service, Paul Shannon, Geoffrey Cuttle and Gill McDiarmid who played in earlier rounds. In the third place match, Enfield got on the right end, this time, of another 4-3 result to defeat Nottingham.

In the last of the CA's club team competitions is the handicap event **The Secretary's Shield**, **Nottingham** were in action again - and they won.

The new lawns at Wrest Park was the venue for this final and Omied Hallam's team were ahead by two games to one at lunch against Enfield, who had kept themselves in it by pegging out the Nottingham captain with his partner on rover.

They did have a bit of work to do however and did well to win by that two point margin from being at 1 and peg.

Hallam narrowly but quickly won his afternoon singles and so was able to see Dan Greenaway, Philippine Hallam and Ian Draper also win their matches to wrap up a convincing 6-1 victory. This gave Nottingham their third successive Shield, equalling the record set by Bowdon some years ago.

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Cabble jumps for glory in GC Inter-Club nail-biter!

Nail-biting was the best adjective to describe this titanic struggle!
Simon Carter reports from Parsons Green on the Inter-Club Final between Surbiton and Dulwich which all came down to one 'do or die' shot at the last hoop, of the last game, of the last match.

Under captain Don Beck, Surbiton fielded Samir Patel, Nick Cheyne and Nelson Morrow, while Dulwich skipper Simon Carter wheeled out his own big guns in the form of Ryan Cabble, Sue Lightbody and the legendary Belgian, Pierre Beaudry.

In the first round Lightbody and Beaudry took on Patel and Cheyne in the doubles, and claimed the first blood 7-5, 7-5.

Meanwhile, in the singles, Cabble had a wobbly start against Morrow before bouncing back from a 5-7 reverse to win the remaining games 7-1, 7-5.

In the other singles, Carter never quite found his best form against a very much on-form Beck, and the Surbiton man took the tie 6-7, 6-7, leaving the match poised at 2-1 to Dulwich.

Duly fortified by an excellent lunch spread from the host club, play resumed with Beaudry now showing his top form, with strong bold shots that dominated his two games against Cheyne.

The latter played some excellent croquet

himself, but wasn't a match for the Belgian, who ended his day's work with two impressive 7-3 victories.

Patel's calm, straight and accurate play kept Surbiton in the hunt against Lightbody, who he had struggling as she pulled out all the stops and played very strongly to finish 5-7, 6-7.

This was a very creditable performance against such a strong player, but the score-line now read 3-2 to Dulwich.

Surbiton levelled the match with Morrow's 7-6, 5-7, 3-7 victory over Carter, and suddenly all eyes were on the Cabble v Beck match that would decide the title.

And what a decider it was!

Cabble won the first game convincingly 7-3, really finding his powerful and accurate form, but The Beck is written off at one's peril. He never flapped, and continued to play his own steady and accurate game in the second to win 5-7.

Cabble set off as he meant to go on in the last game of all: great accurate play with his trade-mark jumping from seemingly impossible distances, and clearing from all corners.

At 5-2 up he looked like a certain winner, but then, faced with a ball a yard in front of hoop 8 to go 6-2 up, he 'clanged it' off the wire at high velocity and Beck began his

come-back.

5-3....5-4....5-5.... Cabble clearly was feeling the pressure. Soon Beck went 5-6 up, and had a spring in his step – in marked contrast to Cabble's drooped shoulders.

Cabble ran hoop 12 to level the score and it was a 'last hoop showdown'!

Beck's approach to 13 was short (how often we see that in these tense situations) but Cabble failed to capitalise.

A battle ensued with thoughtful play until Beck cleared and in the process lodged his own pink ball in the hoop.

With another ball blocking, Cabble was forced to jump, from only a metre in from the boundary.

Acknowledging Cabble as one of the most feared jumpers today, Beck later commented that 'the last player that you want to face in such circumstances is Ryan'.

Everyone held their breath...waited...he shot – the ball hit the underside of the cross bar, fell onto pink, and skipped through.

What a dramatic end to a great final!



Norris wins GC B-Level Series Final at last hoop

Ian Norris of Phyllis Court is the first-ever National Golf Croquet B-Level Champion.

He backed up a hat-trick of qualifying tournament victories with a cliff-hanger victory in the National Finals event at Hamptworth in October.

Twelve players from eleven different clubs contested this inaugural tournament which even attracted one overseas qualifier in Janis Steins, all the way from Latvia!

He had won the very first qualifying event of the season at Southwick, which happened to coincide with the end of a WCF-sponsored coaching and referees qualifying course there.

Steins started well and looked to be the early favourite, despite Norris' consistent achievements throughout the season, but the Latvian eventually disappeared from the block winners' standings.

The two blocks of six provided two semi-finalists each, whilst other players went

on to play repêchage games for the minor places.

Norris had one reverse in block games and qualified with ease for the semi-finals where he defeated John Smallbone of Watford for a place in the final against the host Club's David Cooper.

Cooper was the one who had scalped Norris in the block round and so the final presented Norris with a pay-back opportunity.

If Cooper had any kind of psychological advantage from the earlier win, it didn't show in the early stages of the final, as both players made steady starts and traded hoops in turn.

The local man cleared exceptionally well, time and again from distance, to counter Norris' often inch-perfect ball placement

- perhaps owing much to the latter's formidable skills in the 'small ball' golf game.

A perfect jump shot from Norris drew applause from CA Chairman Jeff Dawson and visiting croquet doyen William Ormerod, along with Frances Colman and Chris Roberts who were managing the event.

It looked however that Norris had 'blown it' when he lost the 11th after an uncharacteristic poor approach and a hoop later he was facing defeat going second to the last hoop.

But some jitters from both men ultimately proved more costly for Cooper who for once missed a clearance to give Norris a tap-in for the Championship.

He was all smiles when Jeff Dawson presented him with the unique pewter bowl trophy donated by Jennet Blake.



GC Rules

How GC Rules are made

The rules for both Association and Golf Croquet are made by international committees.

The International Laws Committee (ILC) administer AC rules, and the WCF GC Rules Committee (GCRC) do the same for GC.

The CA is one of four members of the ILC, and one of six on the GCRC – so we have an influential voice on both committees.

It has taken many decades for the AC rules to settle into their current stable form, and so it is no surprise that the GC rules, which only first appeared in their current form 13 years ago, are still subject to greater debate and change.

If you play GC you will know that, while the game is based on a fairly simple concept, some rules quickly become very complex in certain situations – like the Wrong Ball rule.

So there has been a strong desire to “fix” the Wrong Ball rule, although not much agreement on how best to do that.

Since the current Third Edition of the GC rules was published in 2008, it has accumulated a large number of Official Rulings and Commentary, including some CA-specific clarifications, to help deal with the known defects.

So the WCF GCRC has been working for the past few years on a new edition with a number of aims:

- (1) Clarifying the rules so most of the Rulings are no longer needed.
- (2) Fixing the known problems, such as the Wrong Ball rule.
- (3) Simplifying the rules and using standard text for aspects common to AC and GC (e.g. the specification of courts, mallets and balls).

Driven by the deadline of the impending



retirement of the GCRC chairman, good progress has been made on the first of these, and some on the third.

But only limited progress has been made on tackling the really difficult problems, as no agreement could be reached between the various countries.

Nonetheless, a proposed Fourth Edition of the GC rules is currently being voted on by the WCF Member Associations, which includes the CA.

A new edition of the GC Rules?

The World Croquet Federation has just approved a new edition of the GC Rules.

We are hoping to have a CA version of the new edition finalised in time for Council approval on 25th January, and available in printed booklets and on-line before the season starts in 2014. But there are many potential snags that may delay progress.

The good news is that the new Fourth Edition, if approved, will mean very few actual changes for the players.

It is primarily a tidied-up version of the current rules, with many of the Rulings integrated into the rules, which shortens and simplifies many.

The Wrong Ball rule is simplified too, but needs further work.

The CA's GC Rules Committee will be working hard through the winter to produce a version suitable for use in the CA Domain.

This means considering all the existing CA Rulings and CA Commentary, and working

By Martin French

out what needs to be carried over – as well as looking for any new areas where CA-specific guidance is required.

Look out for the proposed text of the new edition on the CA website over the Christmas and New Year period – a copy will be emailed to all GC Referees.

Any comments must be sent to martin.french@btinternet.com as soon as possible, and no later than 12 January.

There has already been a period of consultation via the CA website during the summer on the final draft international text – we will now have a final cycle of consultation on the CA-specific additions. By the next issue of the Gazette, we will know whether CA Council approved the new edition and if so, another article will explain the changes in full.

You might ask: if the changes are really only tidying-up, why we should go to the bother of changing at all?

Firstly, the changes do make the rules easier to find and follow, without the ever-burgeoning number of Rulings to get in the way.

Secondly, the international community will be using these – which includes our top players in international matches. Thirdly, the more difficult work to tackle the major problems in the rules, like the Wrong Ball Rule, will probably take at least three years to agree, and will work from this new edition as the starting point.

The CA is more likely to achieve its eventual goals for improving the difficult areas of the GC rules by embracing the new edition and working constructively with the WCF GC Rules Committee.

The 4th Edition is imperfect but better than the previous rules.

Martin French
Chairman, CA GC Laws Committee

Sussex win SECF GC Day

A recent survey suggested that competitive croquet was gradually dying and that the cause could be the growth of social Golf Croquet, **reports Bill Arliss.**

However this theory was put to a severe test at Southwick in August with the 21st staging of the SECF Golf Croquet Day, an event which grows in popularity every

year.

This season again attracted the maximum entry of 22 teams and even a last minute withdrawal by Surbiton was filled by a second Guildford and Godalming team at only four days' notice.

A total of 99 players registered for the event, with handicaps fairly evenly spread from 0 to 12 and for many, this was their tournament.

The handicap tournament combined both singles and doubles events for teams

of four, with the interchange of substitutes allowed each round if desired.

With ten rounds to complete, timing was all important and the whole operation was controlled with military precision by the Manager's wife, Pam and her now infamous air horn!

Competition was very fierce and no clear winner was obvious in either the doubles or singles until the final round.

In the morning doubles, four teams finished within half a win of one another

International Development Squad - *The Inaugural Year*

by Ian Burridge



There was snow all around and a maximum air temperature of -1°C when the squad met for the first time at Cheltenham in March.

The season seemed a long way off, but in the blink of an eye it was over.

The AC International Player Development Squad was created with the aim of assisting improving players make the progression to

international competition.

The 16 players selected ranged at one end of the spectrum from Tobi Savage, a

primarily GC player with an AC handicap of 7, to David Walters and Gavin Carter, who were on the fringe of the full GB Squad and had each previously represented GB in the Maugham Salver against Ireland.

Under the guidance of squad co-ordinator Ian Burridge, over three separate days at Cheltenham, Nottingham and Ealing (where Ian was assisted by David Openshaw), the squad covered various

topics, including three-ball endings, lift leaves, triple peels, match tactics, mental approach and preparation.



with only Tunbridge Wells 2 managing to retain a 100% record of four wins from four.

One victory behind were Guildford & Goldalming 2, Dulwich and Sydenham.

In the afternoon singles, the position was even closer with six teams as potential winners after five rounds.

In the end it was Sussex 1 who managed to climb from fifth place to the top position by being the only team with two wins in the last round.

They finished with equal wins with G&G 2

Two further days are planned for next year with the help of Keith Aiton, Robert Fulford and Pete Trimmer, and will cover additional topics, such as peeling the opponent, super-advanced play, openings and reprising three-ball endings and mental approach.

The two-year programme will end with a match-play weekend, where there will be a chance to put everything learnt into practice with mentor guidance.

There were achievements during this first year that included an average grade increase per squad member of nearly 100 points, first tournament triple peels for three of the five squad members. Alain Giraud earned a place in the KO phase of the World Championship, there were victories in the Spencer Ell and Treasurer's Tankard for Gabrielle Higgins and Matt Holmes respectively, and Harry Fisher debuted for GB against Ireland.

It has been decided that following the success of the first year and the clear demand for coaching at this level, that the squad will form a permanent part of the CA coaching structure and will be the responsibility of the Coaching Committee, with new members being invited to join by the Selection Committee each winter.

Squad Members

Luc Berthouze **Christian Carter**
Gavin Carter **Harry Fisher**
Alain Giraud **Sanaa Hallam**
Matt Holmes **Sam Murray**
Jaimie Mussi, **Rachel Rowe**
Tobi Savage **Phill Scarr**
Richard Smith **David Walters**
Gabrielle Higgins

Photographs: Sam Murray (top) by Teodora Baeva and Gavin Carter by Ian & Sara Anderson

but had a much better points average.

The event was bathed in sunshine all day and with all 11 lawns pressed into service, it made Southwick a picture postcard croquet scene.

Mike Oulton from Rottingdean deserves much thanks for giving up the chance to play in order to act as wandering referee so that delays were minimised, and Chrissy and Jon Isaacs provided a superb buffet lunch, which turned the tree lined area into a massive picnic at lunch time.

Coaching Column

by Roger Staples

I congratulate Clare Benson of Hurlingham and Sussex County's Clive Hayton, who have both gained Club Coaching awards recently.

A full list of this year's Merit Awards will be appearing on the CA Website shortly.

Each year the CA recognises a coach who has, in the opinion of the CA Coaching Committee, provided outstanding service to croquet.

This prestigious award is called 'Coach of the Year' and nominations are invited from clubs and Federations for the 2013 award.

The closing date is 31 Dec 2013 so please send nominations, including a citation as to why the nominee should receive this award, to the Chairman of the CA Coaching Committee without delay.

Christmas is just around the corner, so perhaps you are looking for some stocking fillers?

I draw your attention to two excellent publications that are available from the CA shop.

Michael Hague's treatise on Golf Croquet tactics and James Hawkins' Complete Croquet; both are full of illustrations showing you how you can improve your game.

The Fixtures Book is about to be issued and it is full of tournaments and courses.

Notably the Croquet Academy will be running courses that will benefit GC players who want to learn about the niceties of AC, as well as the very popular supervised Tournament for Beginners.

Amongst the many tournaments, watch out for the one-ball events. These are always exciting because the games are quick and mix the skills and tactics of both codes of our sport. I recommend them to you.

I wish you all the compliments of the season. May your festivities be happy ones and you return to the croquet lawn next year full of determination to improve your game.

I am sure you will find many opportunities and remember, your Federation Coaching Officers are available to help you too.

Peeling Rover - it can all go horribly wrong!



You are closing in on victory, the fat lady is warming up in the wings and there is just that rover peel to complete. But now is not the time to relax. **William Ormerod** cautions that calamity is waiting to strike. . .

In 1954, Arthur Ross (NZ) stayed with us in Bristol, bringing his chatty wife Lena, and the Gold Coronation Cup, as Open Champion. A local parish magazine reported "there was a large golden cup that New Zealander Mr. Ross had won for croquet on Dr. Ormerod's sofa table!"

Earlier, Arthur played an exhibition match, but his triple peel sadly failed with rover problems.

Pat Cotter had also played on another day, remarking that it was the only time he had completed a triple on a ploughed field.

The next day Arthur asked me to itemize all the problems that can beset a player peeling at the rover.

Arthur's excellent 'Croquet Handbook' was published in 1957, and I finally wrote a piece for the Parkstone Club in 1968 – 'Warnings when peeling at rover'.

Maybe it's still topical?

In all the situations listed below, the balls are thus:

BLUE is the mallet ball and makes penult off **RED**; **BLACK** is the peelee at rover; **YELLOW** is in the vicinity of rover.



but not at all costs, as no escape ball is present here. If in doubt, dispense with the forward rush and make sure of the hoop and roquet.

(2) Inaccurate croquet stroke on **RED**, after a successful hoop and roquet; sending **RED** too deep off the South boundary or too short risking a missed return roquet when later jumping through rover (see error 6). **RED** or **BLUE** may also cannon into **BLACK**, **YELLOW** or the rover hoop, due to an inadequate margin of error in aim. So take great care with aim and pace.

(3) Failing to have an accurate rush on **BLACK** into a peeling position, after roqueting and leaving **YELLOW** two feet to the side of the non-playing side of rover. Note, some players in the 50s and 60s preferred to roquet **BLACK**

first, peel **BLACK** while getting a rush on **YELLOW**, and cannon yellow into the peeled **BLACK** on the rover hoop approach.

Cotter and Ross were both advocates of this, which should avoid the error (4e that follows) of **BLUE** hitting **BLACK** on the hoop stroke. In traditional play, it is very easy to under hit the rush on **BLACK**, especially if **YELLOW** also needs to be croqueted to the side of rover.

(4) In the traditional method, where **BLACK** is peeled as an Irish Peel Drive stroke or in two strokes, be aware of more errors:

- (a) **BLACK** hits upright to lodge on a wire.
- (b) **BLUE** lodges on a wire.
- (c) **BLACK** sticks in rover with **BLUE** too

Errors PRIOR to the peeling stroke at rover:

(1) **BLUE** gets hoop-bound at penult or stuck in penult. Remember a forward rush is preferred

close to jump or run the hoop without a double tap.

(d) **BLUE** and **BLACK** finish in contact.

(e) **BLUE** hits **BLACK** on the hoop stroke.

(f) **BLUE** fails a jump hitting the crossbar, especially if **BLACK** is only just peeled through. Note that it is probably safer to play the peeling stroke as an Irish Peel only when **BLACK** is two feet or less from rover and relatively straight. Otherwise, it is better to play to peel on the croquet shot and be prepared to jump or half-jump. Please practice jump shots off the lawn!

Errors AFTER peeling at rover and running rover:

(5) Getting hoop-bound at rover. Avoid this by placing **YELLOW** to the side of rover during a traditional peel; or play a jumping hoop shot to a deeply placed **RED**.

(6) Missing the return roquet on **RED** or **YELLOW** (see error 2).

(7) Rushing **BLACK** into the rover hoop. Try and line the rush to peg at least one foot from rover, unless very close behind rover. In that case, it may be cannoned to the side by **RED** or **YELLOW**, but beware of a stymie on **BLUE** from **BLACK** or **YELLOW**, or a failed rush line to the peg on **BLACK**.

(8) Rushing **BLACK** onto the peg – it is often tempting to aim to rush to the peg, but aim the rush to one or two yards to the side of the peg instead.

(9) If **BLACK** is rushed three or more yards from the peg, the peg out may be missed and **BLACK** could be sent from the lawn. Try to play a straight croquet shot at the peg to reduce the pull but beware of the pace on **BLACK** and **BLUE**.

(10) **BLACK** or **BLUE** or both miss the peg in a peg-out stroke. A straight stop shot with a slight follow through is safest from three yards or more. Be very careful with the final peg-out by **BLUE**. In the heat of the moment I've seen 6 inch peg-outs missed! Hale Irwin missed a six inch putt once that cost him 60,000 dollars!

(11) Playing the wrong ball in the excitement of a finish – playing **BLACK** instead of **BLUE**. This is easy to do and especially with the peg-out stroke, so concentrate right to the end, and you can then celebrate your victory!

William Ormerod 1968 (Parkstone), slightly amended 2013 (Corfe Castle)

The day I went to Pendle

try to visit at least one new club each season, and this was my first visit to Pendle, **writes Jonathan Toye.**

The club is actually over the border in Earby, Yorkshire, having moved lock, stock and clubhouse several years ago under the careful guidance of the indefatigable John Beech, in whose memory the clubhouse is named.

All croquet clubs are in interesting settings, and Pendle certainly follows the pattern.

On either side is a row of pristine Northern terraces, with the land beyond to the East rising steeply to the Pennines, whilst to the West there is a factory.

This provided a fascinating hour or two's entertainment for players on one of the afternoons, as a curved sectional metal chimney was dismantled by men swinging in cradles suspended from an enormous cherry picker, after which it was replaced with a tall straight version.

There was a definite 'will they/won't they' air to the proceedings as each bit was gingerly lowered into place.

Anyway....enough of this gay banter... the tournament was an Egyptian which followed the Barrett system for bisques.

This involves adding your handicaps together, dividing by four, rounding up to a whole number and subtracting this from your handicap.

It sounds complex but works well once you've grasped the process.

The main outcome is that both players have bisques (unless one is pretty low) so games proceed apace.

At the end of day two there appeared to be a pretty sure-fire leader in Garry Wilson, but the vagaries of the Egyptian system meant that Janet Davies, who had been quietly stacking up victories, was the eventual winner.

The tournament was ably managed by Roger Schofield on days one and two, and in his absence at a christening the final day was cobbled together by Jonathan Toye, who tried to ensure that the result wasn't a foregone conclusion.

Wonderful catering provided by members, great scenery, industrial gymnastics...what more could you want?

Photographs opposite: William Ormerod with Jeff Dawson (by Chris Roberts) and Lionel Tibble (by Sara and Ian Anderson)

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David Mooney

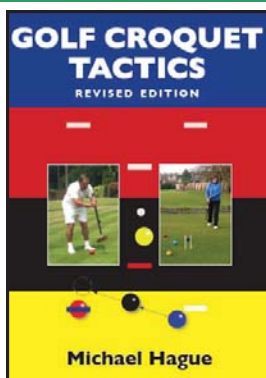
adavidmooney@sky.com

Winter Warmers at the CA Shop

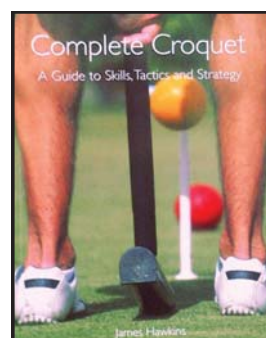


Christmas Cards: Two popular designs: Robin on a Hoop or a Snowman or mixture of the two.
Price: £8 for 10 A5 cards inc p&p

Croquet cards by Elizabeth Castell. Blank inside. Pack of 4 A6 cards—see right illustration. Subjects are from left to right: Tournament Croquet, Croquet at the Rectory, L'Invitation a Bayeaux and Croquet at Preston Manor.
Price: £4.00 inc p&p



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Published in October 2012
A4 size, 42 pages.
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