

The

Issue 351 August 2014

# CROQUET

Gazette





# From our files

researched by Frances Colman

## 10 years ago - 2004



### Golf Croquet Handicapping System -

The assertion that 90% of golf croquet players have little interest in competitive play (*letters issue 293*) does not match my own experience in two clubs where I organise singles and doubles competitions. Players at both clubs are mainly high bisquers but keen to be competitive and keen to make use of the bisques they are entitled to. The letter writer says he is an "active coach of Golf Croquet". The bisque system has little chance of ever being accepted as the norm if such "active coaches" deliberately avoid using it and substitute bizarre rules of their own. Clubs affiliated to the Croquet Association should accept that it is the CA and not individuals who must set down the standards and rules of play. . . .

Richard Mills, Bath

~

**World Golf Croquet** - The World Gold Croquet Championship ends 30 minutes before the start time published in the programme sold at the event. As one of the spectators who spent time and money traveling to Southwick only to see the players walking off the lawns, I would like to know who made this decision, when and why?

Mike O'Brien, Ashwood, Derbyshire

**Anyone for croquet?** - In the course of recent correspondence with our local authority over lease renewal, we were addressed as Middlesbrough Crochet Club. One can only fear that this further reflects the old-fashioned image of our sport?

Charles Waterfield, Middlesbrough

### From John Solomon -

May I, through your columns, say how overwhelmed I was at the AGM on the occasion of my retirement as President of the Croquet Association. Our new President, Bernard Neal, in his closing address, was more than generous in his review of my playing career and also paid tribute to the I have done as President. He also presented my with the Association's gold medal, which is a great honour. . .

## 50 years ago - 1964



### The Isle of Wight Championships

At the end of the week, the writer has only one regret, namely, that, not until this year, has he played in the Ryde Tournament. Six courts, of slightly above average standard, in peaceful surroundings and a beautiful setting, a charming pavilion, and a warm and friendly welcome from the club members, are what visitors find awaiting them. . . .

~

**Marlborough** is the first public school to form a croquet club. We understand that the Master has provided a croquet lawn and that the equipment is to be given by an Old Marlburian croquet player. There is no reason why croquet should not have a lace in public schools. It is an admirable game for those boys, who, for one reason or another – perhaps medical – are unable to play either cricket or tennis. . . .

~

**The Cheltenham Club** has great hopes that their lawns will be much improved in the coming season. An expert groundsman has visited the club and given advice on the treatment required for the eradication of moss and the general improvement of the texture of the turf. . . .

~

**The Association's Handicapping System** – We have often been surprised to find how little many associates seem to know – or at any rate to grasp – about the elaborate and carefully balanced arrangements for securing justice and accuracy in the intricate matter.

~

**The Edinburgh Club** is providing an extra lawn this year. Though only a small one it will be of great value as a practice lawn. We congratulate the club on this sign of growth.

Golf Croquet . . . Tactics.

Without some recognised plan of attack and defence this pleasant game – perhaps the 'prep' school for croquet itself – is hardly worth playing. Yet the tactics are not very difficult to acquire – at least in theory, though the practice may not always follow.

## 100 years ago - 1914



### 13 August

Lincolnshire – Wars and rumours of wars: such was the prevailing atmosphere which pervaded the Grantham Tournament . . . one or two good ladies actually scratched so as to see about red-cross societies and such like . . . It only remains to add that it is to be hoped that, if events do not move too quickly, we shall all meet on hospitable Grantham soil next year. Germany vanquished and Britannia still ruling the waves!

~

Hurlingham - It hardly seems necessary to give more than a brief report of the tournament. . . . Earlier in the week, it seemed doubtful that the meeting would hang together until the end. But to play croquet was at least something to do. The weather was unkind to the meeting . . . but a far darker shadow hung over everything, which is wholly impossible to describe.

~

Tonbridge – The week was thronged with events of such dramatic interest in the outside world, that the usually rapt attention of croquet players was inclined to wander from their favourite pastime. Wednesday morning brought to many the summons to the flag, leaving a depleted company consisting of the fair sex and a few disconsolate civilians to fight out their puny battles.

~

### 10 September

*A full page of the Gazette was given to this Royal appeal:*

The National Relief Fund – The Prince to the People - Buckingham Palace –  
"At such a moment we all stand by one another, and it is to the heart of the British people that I confidently make this most earnest appeal"

*(followed by a payment slip)*

Subscriptions must be addressed to H.R.H The Prince of Wales, Buckingham Palace, London.

~

Sir, May I suggest that in addition to, or in substitution of, the usual winter list . . .

# 1914 - Croquet gives way to war

A century ago this month saw the outbreak of The Great War – 'the war to end all wars'.

The country has been remembering the bravery of those who served, and the sacrifices of those who did not return.

This page is dedicated to them all, and in particular those from the croquet community who paid the ultimate price.

During a recent foray into the Gazette archives for her regular 'From our files' page, **Frances Colman** was struck by the sudden change in tone of the (then weekly)

publication, as the announcement of war reached into the lives of everyone in the land.

Illustrating this most starkly were the pages of announcements of abandoned tournaments, the length and breadth of the country.

It appears, certainly at the outbreak of the war at least, that the idea of recreation at such a time was a distraction at best, and it later became abhorrent to some.

The letters to the Gazette editor of the day noticeably turn from croquet matters to

those of national solidarity, fundraising for the war effort, and the recognition of those CA and club members serving their country.

This Gazette reproduces some of those letters, and will continue to do so in future issues.

In time it is hoped to be able to remember in detail the likes of Dacre Stoker, Monty Spencer-Ell and some of the many others who laid down their croquet mallets and bravely went off to war... and an uncertain future.

**Chris Roberts - Editor**

ii. THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION GAZETTE. August 20th, 1914

**HORSHAM CROQUET TOURNAMENT.**  
The Committee regret to announce that owing to the war the above Tournament arranged to be held on the 24th August and following days  
**HAS BEEN ABANDONED.**  
L. FRED. A. WHITMORE,  
*Hon. Sec.*

**BUXTON**  
Owing to the National state of affairs the Committee have decided that the Tournament arranged to commence on August 31st shall be  
**ABANDONED.**  
G. CANTRELL-HUBBERSTV,  
*Hon. Sec.*

**DUBLIN (All Ireland)**  
The Committee regret to announce that it has been decided to **ABANDON** the above meeting advertised to be held on August 31st.  
R. E. ODLUM,  
*Hon. Sec.*

**EDGBASTON TOURNAMENT, AUGUST 31st, &c.**  
The Committee regret to announce that, owing to the state of Europe, the above  
**MEETING IS ABANDONED.**  
A. H. GRIFFITHS, *Hon. Sec.*

**CHELTENHAM TOURNAMENT.**  
The Committee have decided to  
**CANCEL THE FIXTURE**  
arranged to take place on the 7th September.  
H. E. WODEBOUSE, *Hon. Sec.*

**NORTHERN COUNTIES (DURHAM) TOURNAMENT.**  
The Committee regret to announce that it has been decided to abandon the Northern Counties Meeting advertised to be held at Durham on September 7th.  
W. T. JONES,  
*Hon. Sec.*

**EXETER TOURNAMENT.**  
The Committee of the above Tournament regret to announce that, owing to the War, the Meeting, notified to be held on September 7th,  
**HAS BEEN ABANDONED.**  
N. OSMOND,  
*Hon. Sec.*

**READING TOURNAMENT.**  
The Committee regret to announce that the Reading Invitation Tournament fixed for Sept. 7th will not be held this year.  
S. S. WOLLASTON,  
*Hon. Sec.*

Sussex County Croquet & Lawn Tennis Club  
**SOUTHWICK.**  
It is urgently requested that players intending to go to Southwick for the September Tournament will notify their intention to the Committee at once to enable the management to decide whether to hold the usual or a modified programme.  
Address to—  
H. KING, *Secretary*,  
24, Lower Road Gardens.

**BATH CROQUET TOURNAMENT.**  
Owing to the present state of National affairs the Committee think it better to  
**CANCEL THE TOURNAMENT**  
notified to be held on September 14th.  
WALTER EVANS,  
*Hon. Sec.*

**MALVERN CROQUET TOURNAMENT.**  
The Malvern Croquet Tournament advertised to commence on Monday, September 28th,  
**WILL NOT TAKE PLACE**  
owing to the War.  
HILDA M. FITTON, *Hon. Sec.*

August 13th, 1914 THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION GAZETTE. i.

**Onlooker Cups Meeting.**  
The Council of the C.A. regret to announce that, owing to the War Crisis, the above Meeting, notified to be held on August 17th,  
**HAS BEEN ABANDONED.**  
CHARLES CRAWLEY,  
*Secretary.*

**BEXHILL 12th ANNUAL TOURNAMENT.**  
**ALTERATION OF DATE OF ENTRY.**  
It is requested that all intending entrants send in their entry-forms to the Hon. Secretary, not later than the first post on **Saturday, Aug. 15th.**  
If the entries on that day are not sufficient, the Meeting will be abandoned, and in lieu the Club will hold a Tournament for its Members and Visitors.  
J. W. H. VIVIAN,  
*Hon. Secretary.*

**COVENTRY TOURNAMENT.**  
The Committee of the above Tournament regret to announce that, owing to the present condition of national affairs, the Meeting, notified to be held on August 17th.,  
**HAS BEEN ABANDONED.**  
F. J. VERRALL,  
*Hon. Sec.*

**MONMOUTHSHIRE TOURNAMENT.**  
The Committee of the above Tournament regret to announce that, owing to the War Crisis, the Meeting, notified to be held on August 17th,  
**HAS BEEN ABANDONED.**  
A. C. SANFORD,  
*Hon. Sec.*

**Tavistock Tournament.**  
The Committee regret to announce that, owing to the War Crisis, the above Meeting, notified to be held on Aug. 17th,  
**HAS BEEN ABANDONED.**  
F. W. PRICE,  
*Acting Hon. Secretary.*

**HORSHAM CROQUET TOURNAMENT.**  
The Committee regret to announce that owing to the war the above Tournament arranged to be held on the 24th August and following days  
**HAS BEEN ABANDONED.**  
L. FRED. A. WHITMORE,  
*Hon. Sec.*

**LEAMINGTON CROQUET TOURNAMENT.**  
The Leamington Croquet Tournament advertised to commence on Monday the 24th inst. **WILL NOT TAKE PLACE.**  
CHAS. E. LEIGH,  
*Hon. Sec.*

**TORQUAY TOURNAMENT.**  
The Committee of the above Tournament regret to announce that, owing to the War Crisis, the Meeting, notified to be held on August 24th,  
**HAS BEEN ABANDONED.**  
E. J. G. COLES,  
*Hon. Sec.*

**Hunstanton Tournament**  
Owing to the present state of affairs the Committee think it better to  
**CANCEL THE TOURNAMENT**  
which was to have been held August 31st.  
L. B. ROBINSON,  
*Hon. Secretary.*

... finalists, a list of those members who are now serving their country in the Naval and Military Forces be given.  
Yours truly, C.L.H.M.

**8 October**

Mrs V. B. Burnard asks us to state that she is collecting small sums of money in order to purchase cigarettes for our wounded soldiers at St. Nazire Hospital, France. Subscriptions should be sent to 16 Dalesford Avenue, SW.



# Editorial

Welcome to this issue of the Gazette, in which this editorial and Chairman's column have been moved back a page, to remember croquet players of a century ago. Whilst the front cover of this issue is a somber tribute to our croquet forefathers, that of the last Gazette was a summer celebration that drew a number of favourable remarks and a request from the featured Nottingham club, for a display print for their club house.

I trust that you are all enjoying your croquet and certainly from the huge number of tournament reports being submitted, it's clear players are making the most of our relatively short summer season.

Since my last piece, we have had The Open Championships for AC and GC, and both are lead articles in this issue. The CA's trophy engraver will have no difficulty setting to work on the familiar names of Rob Fulford and Reg Bamford, and the pair deserve our admiration for the consistency of their successes at the very top of our game.

Three cheers also for Rachel Rowe who won the European GC Championship back in June, but just too late to get in our last issue. Her superb achievement is given due

column inches this time round. Rachel adds this title to her Women's World Champion tag that she will soon be preparing to defending in Cairo in November.

I have been pleased to receive a good deal of correspondence recently and I have had to hold back some letters due to the number received. The GC/AC debate rumbles on and their is an in-depth reply to three letters about GC handicaps, as that subject continues to exercise those better players affected by recent changes.

Since I last wrote, I visited Wrest Park for the first time and can confirm that despite their enforced site move, they have four courts that play very fast and true.

Finally, in the millimeters left here, I give overdue thanks to my proof readers, a couple of whom took the lion's share this time. In no particular order, thank you Amanda Haste, Derek Johnson, Simon Tuke, Charles Waterfield, Janet Trueman and Roger Goldring.



## Chris Roberts

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**Front cover :** Lest we forget the croquet players who went to war a century ago.  
*(photo by Chris Roberts)*

**This page:** The Editor in need of a drink for his class event trophy goblet at the AC Seniors - The Charman with the retiring Liz Budworth at the CA Office at Cheltenham.  
*(photos by Frances Colman and Liz Larsson)*

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

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# Chairman's Column

As some of you will have picked up from the Council meeting reports, we are (slowly!) moving forward with proposals to change how the CA and federations work together, and how we fund the sport.

To this end there are two significant events coming up.

At the AGM in October, we are proposing some changes to the CA constitution which will allow federations to become members of the CA. This tidies up a number of details, such as how the federations' representatives to the CA Council are elected (representatives being selected by the federations), but heralds no big change in practice and I believe from the feedback so far this has widespread support.

I will be consulting with the federations over the next few months to see if further changes are possible or desirable, but there is no reason to hold up this particular

change.

The second event will be a Special General Meeting, provisionally to be held in March 2015, regarding proposals to amend the fee structure, and to make all club members also members of the CA.

We need the additional time before putting these measures forward so that we can consult further with the federations, and publish a paper on the proposals for further comment before entering the final debate and vote. Unfortunately any change does take time to implement if proper consultation is involved!

Naturally this timescale means that the earliest any fee changes would take effect would be for the 2016 season. I hope to publish at least an outline of the major proposals in the next Gazette.

Both events (the AGM and SGM) will require formal votes, and will require a majority vote of clubs as well as a majority from individual members in order to proceed.

I am particularly concerned to make sure the clubs are involved and vote on the process. This is after all the only way

ordinary club members get their say in the changes. I would therefore urge all club committees to carefully consider the issues and make sure you register your votes either beforehand or through a duly authorised representative at the meetings.

I firmly believe the proposed changes will help to safeguard the future of the game in all its forms, whether AC, GC, social or competitive.

I hope you will support the initiative, but in any case that you will all take time to understand the issues and make your voices heard.



**Jeff Dawson**

## England Team Selection

The team selected to represent England (v Ireland) for the Maugham Salver (AC) at Carrickmines CC on 30-31 August, is: Robin Brown, Gabrielle Higgins, James Hopgood, David Maugham (Captain), Peter Trimmer and Jack Wicks.

**David Maugham, Chair. of AC Selectors**



## England U21 Selection

Congratulations to Harry Dodge and John-Paul Moberly who have been selected to represent England in the Golf Croquet U-21 World Championships to be held in New Zealand in February 2015.

**Stephen Mulliner, Chair of GC Selectors**

*Photos of Robin Brown (left) and Jack Wicks (by Paddy Chapman)*

# Special Meeting of the CA Council ~ 12 July

A report by Honorary Secretary Ian Vincent

A special meeting of Council was held on the afternoon of Saturday 12 July in the CA Office at Cheltenham, to discuss a paper prepared by its Chairman, Jeff Dawson, proposing ways forward from the consultations held about the report of the Federation Working Party.

Once the paper has been revised in the light of the discussion, it will be published on the CA website and used as the basis for further discussions between Jeff and the Federations, reporting back to the AGM and the October Council meeting.

If it appears that proposals for changes to individual membership would have enough support, an EGM to vote on them would be held in March.

The section about relationships with Federations offered two options. - The first is the one recommended by the working party, in which Federations would remain independent organisations but become members of the Association, which would establish a formal relationship between them and simplify arrangements for electing Federation Representatives to Council.

Amendments to enable this are on the agenda for the AGM.

The second is for closer integration, which is believed to be favoured by some, but which would need further work to consider the practicalities, particularly in the area of financial arrangements and accounting. Additional constitutional changes would need to be proposed at a later date if this option is taken.

The proposal for individual membership is that the per-capita subscription for clubs with two or more lawns should increase by one pound a year above inflation in each of the next five years, from the current level of £7.95.

At some point during that period (when ICT systems have been enhanced), all club members would become members of the CA, receive at least one (and possibly more) printed copies of the Gazette each year, and be permitted to play in Fixtures Book tournaments that were not full. A second phase, which would replace the current tournament membership by a premium one, with other benefits, and give club members unrestricted access to FB tournaments, is also a possibility.

## Liz Budworth retires

Liz Budworth, the Croquet Association's administrative assistant, has retired after nine years in the post.

Liz joined the Croquet Association in 2005 from the International Badminton Federation, when it relocated from Cheltenham to Malaysia.

Her sports administration background was helpful, as she was responsible for much of the regular administration of the Croquet Association, including maintaining membership and tournament details.

Elizabeth Larsson, CA Manager, said: "Liz has been an invaluable asset to the CA: her knowledge of the members (and CA systems) was excellent. We wish her well in her retirement."

As a memento of her time with us, the Chairman of the CA, Jeff Dawson, presented Liz (*photo left*) with a wooden bowl made by local wood-turner, John Jaques, who made the CA's Spiers Trophy.

**Elizabeth Larsson ~ CA Office Manager**



**Steve Mowbray** replaces Liz Budworth and joined us during the week of the Open Championship. He started his working life in IT support, before moving on to general administration and property management. More recently, Steve managed the Chipping Sodbury Golf Club and brings with him a wealth of experience in sports management and support with regard to tournament and member administration. A keen golfer with an 8 handicap, he spent the last year as the Club Captain of Stinchcombe Hill Golf Club. Although not having played croquet before, Steve's been learning about the game and its administration very quickly.

## New Staff

The CA Office and Shop welcomed two new staff members in July



**Fiona Knee** bought a croquet set for her family and noticed our job advertisement for the CA Shop assistant post.

She replaced Jaimie Mussi and she has worked as a scientific officer in horticultural industries.

More recently she has worked in administration and retail, with her most recent customer experience as a welcome volunteer for the Cheltenham Literary and Science Festivals.

Fiona is a keen gardener and, like Steve, is fast learning about the world of croquet.

**Elizabeth Larsson ~ CA Office Manager**

# Notice of Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Croquet Association will take place at the Hurlingham Club on Saturday 18th October 2014, commencing at 11.00 am.

## Annual General Meeting ~ Agenda

**1. Apologies for Absence.**

**2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on Saturday 19th October 2013.**

The minutes are on the website at <http://www.croquet.org.uk/?d=927> and will be sent to Home Members on request to the CA Office.

**3. Report of Council** - The Chairman of Council, Jeff Dawson, will present Council's annual report. There will be an opportunity to ask questions about issues other than those covered by later items on the agenda.

**4. Accounts for the year to December 2013 and Hon. Treasurer's Report.**

The accounts are on the website at <http://www.croquet.org.uk/?d=1000>, with a commentary at [/?d=1001](http://www.croquet.org.uk/?d=1001).

They will be sent to Home Members on request to the office and copies will be available at the meeting.

**5. Possible changes to Federation and Membership Structure.** - The Chairman of Council, Jeff Dawson, will outline its current thinking on changes to the constitutional position of Federations and widening of individual membership of the Association to cover all club members, in the light of the consultation on the findings of last year's Federation Working Party report.

**6. Motions to Amend the Constitution.**

Council has proposed amendments to the Constitution, which will be voted on in two groups as follows:

A: To enable Federations to become Members of the Association.

B: Miscellaneous amendments, including one to rename Individual Associates as Individual Members. - The full text of the amendments is available on the CA website at <http://www.croquet.org.uk/?d=1002> and will be sent to Home Members on request to the CA Office. Individual Associates may vote electronically on the website, by post, or at the meeting; Clubs may vote by post or, with a letter authorising their representative, at the meeting. Votes in advance of the meeting must be received by 8th October.

A 6 to 4 majority of those voting in both constituencies is required.

**7. Election of Hon. Secretary** - Dr. I. G. Vincent offers himself for re-election and is the only nomination.

**8. Election of Hon. Treasurer.** - Following a selection process, Council proposes that Mr. P. J. Death be elected to replace the retiring Hon. Treasurer, Dr R. W. Bray. There is no other nomination.

**9. Election of Reporting Accountant.** - Marian Hemsted is willing to serve and is the only nomination.

**10. Election of Council Members** - The following members of Council retire by rotation and seek re-election under clause 18 (a)(i): Bill Arliss, David Maugham and Roger Staples. There are 3 candidates for 6 vacancies and so an election is not required.

**11. Election of Dr R. W. Bray as a Vice-President**

Council has proposed that the retiring Hon. Treasurer, Roger Bray, should be elected as a Vice-President of the Association.

Voting arrangements for this motion are as for item 6 on the agenda, except that only a simple majority is required.

**12. Benefactors' Book** - The names of benefactors will be read.

**13. Presentation of Trophies for the Most Improved Players.**

Steel Memorial Bowl: Caroline Denny (Bear of Rodborough); Apps Memorial Bowl: Harry Fisher (Oxford University);

Spiers Trophy: Harry Dodge (Budleigh Salterton).

**14. Presentation of Lifetime Coaching Award.** - A lifetime coaching award is to be presented to Daphne Gaitley (Sussex County).

**15. Presentation of Croquet Association Diplomas.**

**16. Any Other Business.**

**17. President's Closing Remarks.**

### THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION

#### BALLOT PAPER FOR MOTIONS PROPOSED AT 2014 AGM

The Council proposes the changes to the Constitution of the Croquet Association published in full on its website and summarised in item 6 of the AGM Agenda. It also proposes the election of Dr. R. W. Bray as a Vice-President in item 11. If you wish to vote by post, either as an Individual Associate or on behalf of a Member Club, please indicate your agreement or otherwise to these motions by placing an 'X' in the appropriate boxes, then sign and return this ballot paper to the CA Office to arrive no later than **8 October**.

Motion 6A: Federations to be Eligible for Membership - In favour:  Against:

Motion 6B: Miscellaneous Constitutional Changes - In favour:  Against:

Motion 11: Election of Dr. R. W. Bray as a Vice-President - In favour:  Against:

Name of Individual Associate or Member Club: .....

Name of Officer (if on behalf of a Club): .....

Signature: .....

#### Voting by clubs on AGM Motions

The Council proposes changes to the Constitution of the CA to enable Federations to become Members of the CA, as well as other miscellaneous changes. Full details are on the CA Website at <http://www.croquet.org.uk/?d=1002>.

These need to be passed by a 6 to 4 majority of Member Clubs, as well as Individual Associates. Clubs can vote on these by post, by returning the ballot paper (left), which is also downloadable from the CA website, to the CA Office by 8 October, or by sending a representative to the AGM (see above). Representatives of clubs wishing to vote at the meeting must bring a letter of authorisation, signed by a club officer, to identify themselves.



# The 2013 Accounts of The Croquet Association

A report by Honorary Treasurer Roger Bray

The 2013 Accounts will not be published in the Gazette, as allowed by the constitution changes approved at last year's AGM. They are, however on the CA website (<http://www.croquet.org.uk/?d=1000>) together with a detailed commentary ([/?d=1001](http://www.croquet.org.uk/?d=1001)), and are available, on request, by post. They will also be distributed at the 2014 AGM.

The 2013 Income & Expenditure Account shows a surplus of £11,500 (after tax), which appears to be a marked improvement on the £3,500 deficit recorded in 2012.

But if the financial year had finished just two weeks later the accounts would have included the cost of sending the England team to New Zealand for the MacRobertson Shield; there would then have been little difference between the two years.

Factors like this make comparison from year to year difficult. Council overcomes this problem by using a modified set of accounts where such major fluctuations are averaged out.

With that measure, the balance between

income and expenditure still improved – by some £9,000 – and thus the CA's financial performance in 2013 was indeed reasonably strong.

This was mainly due to two factors. Firstly, revenue from individual and club subscriptions rose by £12,100, the rates having been increased roughly in line with inflation over the two years since they were last changed. Secondly, profits from Sales rose by £5,500 with improvements in both turnover and profit margin. Trading had suffered during the recession but has now almost returned to the record profit level of 2009.

Unfortunately the better Shop performance coincided with lower returns from corporate events and advertising, but commercial activities overall still showed an improvement of £3,600.

Applications for grants remained high. Twelve clubs were awarded Development Grants to improve and develop both on- and off-court facilities. Six newly registered clubs also received grants in the form of

start-up equipment. The grants total of £30,200 almost matched the record level of expenditure set in 2012.

General administration costs, including staff salaries, remained under control. Expenditure actually fell by £1,800, attributable to the cancellation of a Council meeting due to poor weather.

The Balance Sheet shows that the value of Shop stock rose by a third to £52,000 over the year. Whilst this figure is not unreasonable, given the scale of turnover and the range of items for sale, it has been increasing year on year and now forms a significant portion of the CA's assets.

The investment of reserves remains a problem in the continuing low interest rate environment and given Council's low-risk investment policy. There were no new investments during 2013, but one of the CA's main (and relatively high-yielding) deposit accounts was withdrawn by the bank, causing a fall in already low investment returns.

**Roger Bray, Honorary Treasurer**

## 2015 SUBSCRIPTION RATES

The subscription rates for 2015, in pounds sterling, are as follows:

### Individual members paying by direct debit

Standard and Overseas, (including EU)	Single	Composite
First year	14.50	22.50
Second year	28.50	45.00
Full rate	43.00 (48.50)	67.50 (73.00)
Student (formerly Junior)	16.00 (16.00)	
Non-tournament	25.50 (31.00)	36.00 (41.50)

(Payments by other than direct debit are possible in the full, junior and non-tournament categories only; the rates for these are shown in brackets.)

### Member clubs

Standard (per capita)	8.40
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(Minimum total of 60; newly registered clubs in first, second and third years, maximum total of 60, 90 and 120.)

Universities and schools 30.00

### Affiliates

UK	35.00
Overseas	45.00

Subscriptions were last raised in 2013.

Council decided to increase the member club rate by the rate of inflation over two years, as allowed by the CA Constitution.

Individual rates have been increased by a comparable proportion.

## Duncan Hector Turf Care

*Croquet player and turf care specialist.*



### Creating great croquet lawns

I give advice and guidance on all aspects of croquet lawn maintenance and supply tailor-made fertilisers. First I carry out soil analysis of your lawns and then devise a nutrition programme to suit your soil, your club and your budget.

### Results you will love

The fertilisers I supply are blended to the exact analysis your lawns require. By tracking results the analysis is modified in harmony with the needs of your grass. This ensures on-going improvement and better croquet lawns

### What will it cost?

There are no fees to pay. My costs are covered by supplying the products for your nutrition programme which is designed to fit your club's budget.

### Everything you need

Tailor-made fertilisers, Organic, Microbial and Seaweed feeds, Moss Kill, Growth Regulators, Wetters, Zeolites & more

### One call does it all!

Tel 01462 417019

[duncan@DuncanHectorTurfCare.co.uk](mailto:duncan@DuncanHectorTurfCare.co.uk)

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## Let's all play together nicely

Dear Editor,

You might be might be forgiven for thinking this a centre peg. It is, in fact, the Ripon Spa Hotel Croquet Club tea monitor doing a passable impersonation of one!

And in that capacity (tea monitor, not centre peg), I would like to add a few words to the ongoing debate regarding Golf Croquet, in the hope that my lofty position will lend some weight.

I'm sick to death of the continual griping.

Croquet is an extremely small cog in the wheel of sport and we need to encourage more interest.

Yes, we have two very different disciplines but surely 'divided we will fall'?

Why can't we all play nicely together?

Like many others I object to Kevin Carter's description of GC as 'pervasive weed' (Gazette 348) and truly thought initially, that his vitriolic letter must have been a wind up!

But no - I can now see from his second posting (Gazette 350) that the poor fellow is

well aware that GC is a hugely popular game enjoyed by many people at different levels.

Also he sees that it is GC which is attracting (and will continue to attract) new players to the game, and that sadly for him, like the dinosaurs, AC players are a dying breed. I understand his fear and resentment.

However, it's not GC's fault that players are more attracted to that version of our sport, and repeated GC bashing is hardly likely to win AC any converts.

On a lighter note, I resent the centre peg which, as far as I can tell has no relevance to my game (GC) whatsoever, now that I can remember the sequence in which the balls are played.

It serves merely to hamper my shots from hoop five to six and eleven to twelve (if I ever get as far as the latter!).

So I am planning to organise a petition to the CA asking to have it removed from the court. Should that fail then I think there should be a referendum.

And, as a last protest, I shall withdraw my services as tea monitor.

What will we do then?

**Gill Brent, Ripon Spa Hotel C C**



## Letters to the

### Our new club is now trying AC, but we couldn't have started without CA's help

Dear Editor,

Croquet is one of the few sports which offers more than one type of game.

Whilst Association Croquet is undoubtedly more challenging and subtle than Golf Croquet, its attraction to, haven and refuge for 'the loner' make it a much more difficult game with which to start a new club.

The convivial game of GC can be quickly taught and newcomers can enjoy a game within a short time of being introduced to it, thus inspiring people to take up the sport in the first instance.

We would have found it impossible to start Great Bedwyn Croquet and Bowls Club based solely on AC.

The lawn was not in particularly good condition and AC would have been very difficult.

Although we do mainly play GC the majority of our members have played garden croquet and many of them do, and want to, play AC.

'Pat and chat' facilitates community and there is nothing wrong with it.

I am particularly proud that I have facilitated people, both at Surbiton and Great Bedwyn, to play croquet and enjoy other's company.

Many of these players are mature and are not able to play any other sport.

Without the support of the Croquet Association, the Southern Federation and my friends in Surrey, we would not have

been able to start our fledgling club.

Kevin Carter should look to trying to make the experience of playing AC as friendly as possible so that people like me don't turn to GC to the exclusion of the other code.

Where does Kevin's 'the broader stated aims of the CA - namely to focus on competitive croquet' come from?

Competitive croquet is not mentioned at all in the CA's constitution.

Rather a considerable amount is devoted to supporting croquet in all forms and to assist, promote and encourage the sport and clubs.

Competitive croquet is only mentioned in that the CA should hold and run tournaments.

Ideally the CA should be promoting croquet in the national conscience, so that it is perceived as an enjoyable, inclusive and available past time.

At the same time, it should ensure that World Championships at least make the national news, so that when the future of an unwanted bowls green is considered, the suggestion that it might become a croquet lawn is not considered a joke, which actually happened at Great Bedwyn.

No doubt the CA is finding it difficult to organise its financial affairs but not supporting new clubs would only lead to a decline in the game.

**Yvonne Cunnane,  
Great Bedwyn Croquet & Bowls Club,  
and Surbiton CC**

### No 'hitting the tea lady' but take cover Coffee Man

Spectators may wish to heed my warning and take care at boundary edge, and not take their eyes off the action in BOTH games if double banking is in progress.

I was at Roehampton Club in May for their doubles handicap tournament and had been marveling at my partner Philippa Cardale (h/c 12) who was about to complete a lovely all-round break to peg (without taking a bisque!).

It was a lovely day too, but I took my eye off the court for just a moment, lent forward in my chair, and stretched out a hand for my

beverage on the grass between my feet.

The next thing I knew, there was a huge explosion as my full china cup of coffee was smashed into smithereens by a ball hit full-blooded GC style by the Gazette Editor Chris Roberts!

I got covered in coffee and everyone just laughed (as they retired to the safety of the pavilion) and I made Roberts make me another cuppa!

You have been warned!

**Peter Quinn, Hurlingham C C**



## Making the game harder

Dear Editor,

Martin French's interesting article on the search for an 'elite hoop' prompts the thought that there might be other changes which might achieve the same result, but with less expense. Can the game perhaps be made more difficult without resorting to novel equipment?

This is not a new problem, of course – the introduction of lifts being one of the solutions adopted in the past – but it strikes me that other options, using standard equipment and settings, may not have been fully explored.

One of the factors which can make errors easier to recover from, particularly when peeling, is that the hoops are run in the direction of play. That is, in the direction of the next hoop in order. So running the hoop or peeling the ball naturally tends to take it towards the next objective. How many triples, for example, have been rescued at the last gasp, by a straight peel of penult followed by a short, straight rush to rover?

There is an obvious way to make breaks harder to achieve: Change the direction in which hoops are run.

Running every hoop against the direction of play, for example, immediately makes that late penult peel more troublesome because it then needs to be made towards the north boundary and the next peeling position is south of rover – further away and with two hoops and the peg obstructing the rush. The weakness with this solution is that rover would then be run towards the peg (unless one adopts a strict interpretation of 'direction of play' and requires it still to be run towards the south boundary, just as 5 would be).

An alternative would simply be to require that all hoops are run (in the normal sequence) towards the nearest boundary, perhaps with the addition of deleting 'or score a hoop point for itself' from Law 4(d) (1) to rule out running hoops hard to the boundary. That would of course mean that the playing and non-playing sides of the hoop are fixed – hoops 1 to 6 would be run in the same direction as 7 to 12 – and perhaps that the court would as a result become more worn on the playing (in-court) than the non-playing (boundary) sides. But it would be simpler to remember!

As someone who found the game quite hard enough as it was, I leave it to those seeking a harder challenge to comment.

**Ian Bond, Surbiton C C**

## Come on mid to high handicappers

Dear Editor,

Where are all the mid to high handicap players?

At the National Seniors' at Sussex CC last week, 82% of the entry for the Class Event were in the handicap range -1 to 5, and of the remaining 18% only one was in double figures.

The rest were in the 7 to 8 handicap range – the upper handicap limit for this event was 20.

While it was great to see such a good entry at the lower handicap level, it was disappointing to see the lack of mid to high handicap players, which resulted in a small Class D, and the handicap Class E not being contested due to lack of entries.

There does seem to be a trend that higher handicap players are not entering CA tournaments – so do please bring your mallets out of hibernation and enter a tournament!

There is probably one near you – meet new friends; and you never know, your handicap may come down.

There is a lot to be gained from the experience.

**Julie Horsley, Sidmouth C C**

*(Manager of The National Seniors Championship at Sussex County)*

## I've developed a habit

Dear Aunt Emma,

I'm looking for your advice on a habit I have developed recently after watching many games at the Wimbledon Croquet and Tennis Club.

It started when I found myself uttering a loud grunt as I faced a strenuous long rush stroke.

To my surprise it helped release the tension I had felt and soon I was grunting in every turn – even when running a hoop from about a foot in front.

I find no mention in the Laws impinging on this habit; rather, I need to ask if my opponents are at fault because they now withdraw to the far end of the park during my turn and so play proceeds rather slowly.

Should I complain to the Committee?

**Peggy Hitt (Miss) aka Brian Russ, Exeter**

## Falling between two GC stools

Dear Editor,

In the six years that I have been playing golf croquet, my competitive play has progressed from club tournaments, through federation league fixtures and the B-Level series, to the Ascot Cup qualifiers. My development throughout has been driven by access to and playing against much better players.

Whilst understanding the drivers for concentrating Ascot Cup qualification into eight tournaments next year, I am concerned. With allocation based on rankings and the elite players now having fewer qualifiers to enter, players such as myself who sit below the elite in the rankings, and are prohibited by handicap from entering National B-Level Series tournaments, will be caught between the two competitive levels.

Our competitive development and progress in the rankings will be hampered by not having the opportunity to play against, and trying to beat, the better players.

In 2015, I will have to enter all the Ascot Cup qualifiers, in the hope that I may get accepted into one or two of them, depending on where the elite players have entered. I will also have to enter a number of A-Level non-Ascot Cup qualifiers and then pull out of some, once the results of qualifier allocations are known.

The GC Tournaments Committee has addressed the Ascot Cup and the National B-Level Series. It now needs to focus its attention on the development of competitive players who fall between the two.

**David Bell, Leicester C C**

## He's good, but not that good!

Dear Editor,

I was impressed by the apparent versatility of Jamie Burch, who appears to have been playing the identical shot as a left-hander and a right-hander in the space of a few months (Gazette 348 p12, 350 p17).

**Stephen Parish, unattached (but father of Nick)**

*You weren't supposed to notice that I'd used the same photo reversed, Stephen! – Ed. :o)*

## We think the 'effective' GC handicap . . .

## Letters to

Dear Editor

We write as representatives of the Winchester and Basingstoke Clubs about the changes to GC handicaps. We have waited to see how they worked out in practice before writing. Whilst we fully appreciate the underlying objective of the changes – extending the handicap for first class players – we believe that both the way the changes were made and the outcomes have been counterproductive.

As Tony Salem pointed out (*Gazette 350*), there are now ludicrous handicap differentials between players of not dissimilar ability. As a result, there is little incentive for low handicappers to play in handicap matches. But the real losers are the higher handicap players as they will have no opportunity to learn from better players – by far the best way to improve your croquet.

For example, in a club competition two very close matches on the old system have now become 7-0 wins for the eight handicapper over the zero handicapper on the new system, simply because a high handicapper who knows how to use extra

turns has an overwhelming advantage.

A far more rational solution to the problem would also have been more radical. First, it needed a proper survey of abilities with a representative sample, not just a couple of chums of the committee. Then remake the handicap system, closely following the AC system, perhaps taking the highest handicap to (say) 18.

Handicap difference would then be calculated by the simple difference between the handicaps without reference to a separate table. Such a lengthened scale would also have the benefit of creating greater parity between AC and GC handicaps.

The current system is a dog's dinner that should be thrown out at the end of this season. We firmly believe that a simple and rational system can be constructed that would achieve the underlying objectives of the 2014 changes without creating a 'them and us' between level and handicap play.

**Nigel Hind (for Winchester CC)**

**Ian Harrison (for Basingstoke CC)**

**O**ne might gather the impression from recent correspondence that Golf Croquet handicapping is falling apart at the seams. Nothing could be further from the truth as handicap GC is positively thriving in several of our federations and the numbers entering competitions are growing year by year.

Before I answer specific points raised in the letters, I would like to put matters into context.

Handicap GC is virtually non-existent in the national programme, save for the All England Championship. However in federation programmes, handicap events form a major part. This is not surprising as almost all clubs now use GC as the introductory game for beginners and handicap GC events are likely to be the first competitive game that new players experience.

I feel one could rightly claim that handicap GC has become the gateway to all competitive play for newcomers, no matter what format they eventually transfer to.

In summary, well over 90% of the actual handicap games played involve only players in the handicap range of 3 and above, where the effective handicap has little or no bearing and the system is working extremely well.

It is only where players with handicaps less than 4 are involved and these handicaps have been generated by level play that we have any problems. It is purely the fringe areas we are trying to tackle.

On one hand we want to encourage the better players into handicap play, as this without doubt assists in the development of

## Bill Arliss replies

new players. On the other hand we do not want to see the newcomers get completely thrashed every time they take on a better player, and some action had to be taken to correct the situation.

The ideal solution would of course have been to change the main problem area: get the level play input to produce a correct handicap for handicap play.

Unfortunately when we looked at this route there was simply no time before the start of the season to make such a change, especially as we did not have a full set of data on which to base our modifications.

A temporary holding solution had to be found which allowed us to collect much more data and give us time to consider a more permanent solution.

The holding solution was of course the Effective Handicap.

It allowed us to leave the level play systems unchanged for a further season whilst we collected more accurate data, but at the same time make a correction via the effective handicap to give a fairer basis for handicap play.

Unfortunately our solution did have a rather nasty side effect. If a player had gained his handicap via handicap play input, then suddenly he would find himself giving many more additional turns which would make life rather impossible.

This was well recognised and a solution clearly offered in all the published literature: a manual increase in handicap should be made; all handicappers were authorised to do this.

Looking at the case of the 0 playing the 8 as described by Messrs Hind and Harrison:

If the 0 was mainly generated by handicap play, then the player concerned should be eligible for a handicap increase, and the suggestion was that the player should be raised to a 2.

As a 2 his effective handicap would be 0 and he would give away the same number of extra shots as he had done in the past.

Effectively no change, so it's difficult to see their problem.

One can therefore only ask whether they have really studied all the written words about the 2014 system.

Alternatively if the 0 handicap has been produced mainly by level play, all available evidence suggests that the player should be giving away more extra turns. In 2013 cards of four scratch players who play reasonable numbers of handicap games, we found success rates of 75, 83, 83 and 92%. As the target should be 50%, there are obviously some incorrect handicaps.

The same response has to be made to your correspondent in the previous issue (*letter from Tony Salem, Gazette 350*).

Martin French has suggested the problems were all caused by the fixed lowest handicap in 2013. Now that we have an open-ended lower end and Martin has descended to a -1, one must ask if he still agrees that giving away just one additional





# the Editor

## ... system has tipped the balance too far

Dear Editor,

Tony Salem is right about the trial GC 'effective handicap' system (*letter, Gazette 350*) – but there are more fundamental problems.

The old system did need fixing: very low handicap players had too much advantage in handicap play over high handicap players.

The trial system with its confusing 'effective handicap' system has tipped the balance the other way while creating new, additional problems.

The underlying principle behind the AC Automatic Handicap System (stable now for 25 years) and the AC and GC world ranking systems should also apply to the GC Automatic Handicap System.

These systems have to be open-ended at both top and bottom of the scale, so that everyone can find their own true level.

However, the GC system is not open-ended but capped at too narrow a range – and this is where the trouble lies.

If the index ran from say 500 for a 16 handicap player, through to 2400 for a -6 player, then pretty much everyone would end up in a

spread between about 14 (beginner) through to -2 (world expert).

If anyone did manage to get better (or worse) than these extremes, they could still get a lower (or higher) handicap, which would make them give away (or receive) even more Extra Turns, so correcting their likelihood of winning back to around 50% of their handicap games.

Instead, the trial system continues to constrain beginners to 12 (index of 0) – which seems nonsense when they then lose their first 6 games for example. And while moving some of the Scratch players to -1 and a few to -2 was sensible, why stop there?

If top players were winning too many games, then extend the range so that they give away more ETs and eventually 'find their own level'.

I do hope the Handicap Committee reconsiders the trial at the end of this season and goes back to the underlying principle behind these systems, rather than making piecemeal changes in the hope of papering over the cracks.

**Martin French, Ipswich C C**

extra turn would have reduced his 92% success rate in his 2013 handicap games to anywhere near the required 50%.

Martin goes on to suggest alternative index and handicap ranges, but from his figures it would appear that he is not making a change to the relationship between handicaps and trigger points.

It's no good inventing new handicap steps unless you considerably reduce the trigger point gaps at the same time.

They will never be populated by input of level play results. He has also suggested that if top players win too many games (I assume he means handicap games) then simply extend the range and allow levels to sort themselves out.

Easy to say, but please consider what happens if a player does just this and drops his handicap two steps. He then comes back to level play and finds he is playing a very equivalent player two steps higher than he himself is.

The two systems will just fight. If we are to input results from both level and handicap play, both inputs must be capable of producing the same handicaps.

**Bill Arliss, CA Handicap Cttee.**

Photograph, above - Camerton & Peasdown's Fran Ralli shows her handicap card to CA GC Handicapper Terrey Sparks.

Right - Richard Brooks with his hoop lifter.  
(All images by Chris Roberts)

## Neat hoop lifter

**W**e are very fortunate at Southwick in not having to take the hoops out on a daily basis, for which our members are very grateful. Our hoops are only removed for mowing (which is our contractor's problem) and when we need to reset or move them for tournaments. As a consequence of this luxury we have never got round to making a lifting device for use at the club.

Firm hoops have been extracted by a combination of heaving, wiggling and gently tapping with a soft mallet up underneath the crown, which is not a great idea because it can damage the holes and put a lot of stress on the crown of the hoop.

I knew from my engineering days that cast iron was a very brittle material and last summer when helping Keith Webb at West Worthing Croquet Club set hoops for their open tournament, I certainly proved the point. When trying to extract a particularly tight hoop using the aforementioned method, one leg sheared off at the point where it joined the crown! Fortunately Keith was able to get the hoop repaired by a local welder, so it could be used in their spare set.

But a result of this mishap I thought that we should have something at Southwick to help us extract our hoops, and during the winter season, I decided to spend some time constructing a hoop lifting tool.

I have seen some devices that other clubs use and quite often these have been incorporated in purpose-built storage trolleys which are mainly used where all the lawn equipment is taken in each evening.

I looked at what materials I had available and decided to keep the construction as simple as possible and chose to go for a simple lever mounted on a pivot point, giving a ratio of 5 to 1.

Okay, I know with this design the lifting force will not be applied in an exact perpendicular plane, but providing the lever is reasonably level at the start of the operation the amount of deflection will be quite small and any damage to the holes negligible.

Our unit has been in use for a few months now and it seems to work quite well, so I hope as we get new hoop-setters joining the team, we will be able to persuade them to use it.

**Richard Brooks, Sussex County CC**





# THE AC BRITISH OPEN

## Fulford wins for record equaling 10th time

Paddy Chapman reports

**R**obert Fulford won the 2014 British Open – a welcome return to form after struggling with a wrist injury for the past few years.

The event this year returned to Cheltenham after last year's Hurlingham tournament, and everyone was keen to see the newly re-laid front four 'show lawns', and eager to try them out.

However, the excitement soon turned to dismay when approximately two hours before the event started Dave Maugham, the tournament manager, tested the speed, which turned out to be a disappointing and unplayable seven seconds. It was then that the decision was made to try and run the whole tournament using just seven lawns instead of the usual eleven.

To add to the problem, this year's entry was rather large at more than 40 players from all round the world. Considering the challenges faced, Dave did an excellent job at keeping the games flowing, and the competitors happy.

Onto the tournament proper, and there were a few early surprises in the Doubles draw. The proven successful pairing of Jeff Dawson and Samir Patel only scraped past Nigel Polhill and Gabrielle Higgins in three close games, and number two seeds Paddy Chapman and Dave Maugham's match against Matt Holmes and Sam Murray was forced into a second day after light intervened at 10:10pm!

Keith Aiton and James Hopgood had an

early exit at the hands of North Americans Doug Grimsley and Brian Cumming. Conversely, top seeds Reg Bamford and Ben Rothman were sweeping all before them, with Reg completing several trademark SXPs.

The semi-finalists featured the top three seeded pairs, plus Mark Avery and David Openshaw – a pairing who won the Doubles Championship in 1987 (the year your author was born).

The final between Bamford/Rothman and Chapman/Maugham was interactive, and would have been good to watch had the crowd not become side-tracked by Pete Trimmer's nontuple attempt, and Robert Wilkinson's subsequent SXPO on the adjacent lawn.

In the Singles, most of the usual suspects qualified without too much trouble – Bamford and Fulford without dropping a game – and Aiton made a welcome return to form, and seems to be hitting the ball very well at the moment.

The match of the first two rounds was Fulford v Hopgood, with the former prevailing in the third after a very protracted and cagey 3-ball ending.

Another match of interest was Chapman v Nick Mounfield – with Chapman playing a wrong ball first turn in the first game, and Mounfield doing likewise in the second game! Meanwhile, Death progressed quickly through the draw in his characteristic flamboyant style.

Play was of a generally very high standard throughout the tournament, with extremely easy lawns and hoops for the first seven days. There were eight sextuples completed in the quarter-finals – possibly a record.

For the semi-finals, the hoops were put in new holes for the first time, and were also exchanged for 'Pres hoops' made of cast iron, which are generally agreed to be slightly more difficult. The sun also decided to make a sustained appearance for the first time for the semi-finals, and the lawns finally browned up nicely.

The combination of new hoop holes and quicker, browner lawns ensured that the semi-finals were more interactive than they otherwise would have been – all players made uncharacteristic errors, and only one SXP (by Bamford) was completed.

In the end, Bamford beat Death and Fulford beat Chapman, to set up a final between the two best players in the world, who have played each other in excess of 100 times.

Fulford, with his new, less wristy style was in dominant form in the final, favouring the super-advanced tactic of progressing to 3-back and conceding contact to Reg.

There was a bit of heavy rain an hour before the final started, and it appeared to take the bite out of the lawns somewhat, but the hoops still retained their grippiness of the day before. Bamford made a couple of uncharacteristic errors, including missing a five yarder having completed several peels on Fulford's forward ball.

In the end, it was Fulford who pegged out to win 3-0 and regain the British Open title he last won in 2008.

It is the tenth time he has won this title, which draws him level with both Bamford and John Solomon.

Who will be first to break Solomon's 1968 record?

### East Midlands Champs

- Grade 2 Championship event -

#### Jack Wicks triumphs

**J**ack Wicks won the oversubscribed East Midlands Championship at Nottingham, beating Alain Giraud +26 +15tp in the best-of-three play-off between the winners of the draw and the process format **reports Ian Vincent**

Giraud qualified for a CA Silver Medal by reaching that play-off, having beaten Ian Lines in the final of the draw, and Richard Smith was the other finalist in the process.

A rather dismal weekend for weather was brightened by Rachel Rowe's joy in gaining a Gold Award in her first game, which she followed up by achieving her second triple later in the day, and ending the event as a minus player.



Photographs: Top left - Robert Fulford (by Paddy Chapman)  
Left: - Reg: "I think we should go here." Ben: "No, how about over there?" (by Samir Patel)



## Men's & Women's Championship

- Grade 1 Championship event -

### Death and Higgins on song

#### Men's Singles

**J**ames Death 'Peeled for England' in winning this year's Men's Championship, held at Budleigh, **writes Chris Roberts**

The event was relatively well supported with 14 in the main single life knock-out.

Death's peeling prowess was referenced at the top of this report, but Peter Trimmer was no less prolific on his way to meeting Death in the final, where the latter peeled his heart out!

Follow these paths to the final if you can:

Pete Trimmer beat: Dave Kibble +24, +26tp, +25tp; David Goacher +20tp, -26tp, +19tp, +17tp, David Maugham -3otp, +15, +18tp, +17tp.

James Death beat: Christian Carter +9, +5qnp, +3tp; Jack Wicks +3, -18, +20, -6, +20sxp; Mark Ormerod -3otp, +22tp, +13tpo, -25tp, +26sxp.

Final: Death beat Trimmer +12qpo, +25sxp, +7otp.

#### Women's Singles

**G**abrielle Higgins path to the Women's singles title was straight forward enough, as she beat McGlen +17, +23tp and then Jane Morrison +16tp, +22, +16tp in the final.

The entry of just three competitors for this prestigious event was really poor and credit to Higgins who, with Ian BurrIDGE, has since set up a Women's Coaching Group to address the decline in women playing at the top level (see the pink panel on the right of this page)

#### Mixed Doubles

**I**t was a shame to see that there weren't more than four pairs entered into the mixed doubles too. Nevertheless, a draw and process format was good for Higgins and partner Keith Aiton, as they didn't have it all their own way.

They won the draw section, despite Death's peeling efforts in the final with his partner Beatrice McGlen, but came a cropper in the final of the process in straight games to Louise Bradforth and a 'tp' from Dave Kibble.

This set up a repeat of that match as a play-off for the title. An Aiton 'tpo' won the first game only for Kibble to return the favour, before Higgins and Aiton completed a straight +14 victory in the decider.

## Avery plays a record 10 games in a day

- Colchester Open -

**T**he snowy start to last season contributed to very slow lawns in April, the decision was taken to move this season's **Colchester Open** to a later time this year, **reports Robert Fulford**.

Chance plonked the Saturday of the tournament onto the Summer Solstice, providing the perfect opportunity for lots of play into the evening and, being a flexible Swiss format with fast players, it seemed plausible somebody (well, realistically maybe only the fantastically fluent Mark Avery) might set a record for most games played in a day.

Before the tournament started we knew of a few players who had played nine in a day, but no one knew of 10 having been completed. Avery (*pictured above right, by Chris Roberts*) wasn't trying particularly hard to get through games and the manager wasn't particularly trying to press him on quickly either.

At 5pm, with five games finished, we weren't expecting a record to come, but after a string of quick clinical wins and fueled by a pizza delivery (ham and cheese) Avery started his 10th game of the day against Ailsa Lines at 9.10pm. Avery had a third turn ball round. Lines hit the lift and started a break which might have taken the match into the dark, but after a mistake at hoop 4, Avery was able to finish in reasonably good light by 9:45pm.

It should be noted that six of Mark's games were super advanced which tends to make them slower!

A quote from Mark at the finish, "Ooh my back!"

Elsewhere Jose Riva completed his first ever sextuple having been going for them since the start of the season. It looks like he could become a world class player if he wants to put that much time into the game. And newly resident in East Anglia, Kiwi Jarrod Coutts is improving and had great results here.

Rob Fulford was the winner of the tournament winning all of his eleven games. He met Dave Maugham fairly early on in the game that turned out to be the decider. Fulford completed six peels of a sextuple but missed a seven yard return roquet after jumping through rover. Maugham then broke down on his own sextuple attempt to let Fulford finish. Maugham ended on 6/7 completing 3 sextuples in the tournament.



## Women's Coaching Group

The new Women's Coaching Group has been greeted enthusiastically with over 25 women registering their interest.

The first coaching day was rapidly fully subscribed and, as the Gazette went to press, twelve female players were due to attend Nottingham CC, under coaches Ian BurrIDGE and Keith Aiton. The coaching is designed to offer something for the full range of players attending, from minus players to those only just into single figures.

On-lawn sessions covering topics such as advanced four-ball breaks and making lift leaves will be mixed with theory sessions on subjects such as openings and tactics for regaining the innings. In addition, each player attending will have an individual stroke clinic focussing on improving a specific shot of her choice. The day will be repeated at Cheltenham on 13 September and more will be arranged next year.

By the start of the 2015 season, some players will already have places for the 2015 Women's Association Croquet World Championship being held at Nottingham at the end of July. But it seems likely that the event will be over-subscribed. If so, there will be a qualifying tournament with the final four places in the event up for grabs.

Next year's coaching will be focussed on those who already have places or are intending to enter the qualifying tournament. It is hoped that a revitalised CA Women's Championship will form a key part of the preparation for those participating in the World Championship and also attract more women hoping to improve.

Any female players with some experience of playing advanced rules who would like to join the group but have not yet registered their interest should contact - **[gabrielle.higgins@gmail.com](mailto:gabrielle.higgins@gmail.com)**.

There are still places available for the day at Cheltenham on 13 September.

Photograph: Top right - Mark Avery  
(by Chris Roberts)

June

The **Bowdon June Advanced Weekend** was won by Paddy Chapman but, unusually for this event, even with eight players seeded, there were some big name casualties early on, **reports Ian Lines**.

Over dinner on the Friday night, Debbie Lines raised a toast to her table, hoping that the four of them would be the semi-finalists. By tea time the next day David Maugham, James Hopgood and Ian Lines had all told her never to make such a toast again! Chapman continued to crunch up his opponents met Andrew Winn who, in reaching his first final of a 16 player CA knockout tournament, won his CA Silver Medal. Winn hit in well but Chapman's defensive leaves saw him dominate play +25tp, +17tp, +20tp to retain the title for the fourth consecutive year.

For the **Tyneside Midweek Handicap**, **David Appleton reports** that seven regulars from Tyneside, Belsay Hall, Middlesbrough, and Phyllis Court were joined by new entrant Ian Hall from Keswick, impressively playing off a handicap of eight in his first



competitive year. He won more games than he lost but Middlesbrough's Roger Staples (*photo above*) won tournament again.

In the Level Advanced section of the **Watford one-day tournament**, the two favourites Gary Bennett (Watford) and Terry Mahoney (St Albans) reached the final ahead of six others, and a close game was

won +3 by the former who retained the title in a tense 3-ball finish. In the Handicap Advanced section, Thomas Cullis, playing in his first CA tournament, showed promise for the future by convincingly beating all three of his opponents, **reports Simon Hathrell**.

In **The Cumbria Cup at Crake Valley**, **Liz Wilson writes** that, regulars were joined this year by Richard Way from The Bear of Rodborough, who was on his way "Oop North" and had no idea what he was letting himself in for. Double banking with me, he was trying to understand my opponent Dave Nick's strategy as he pealed me through hoop two. "Why is he doing that?" was the question – "Because he can" was the reply. Seemingly the extra challenge was to get all four clips on his shirt! (*see top centre photo*). Ray Lowe (who was deselected from the Lancashire Counties team this year) took out three of that team, beating Paul Rigge, Peter Wilson and Dave Nick to reach the final. But his opponent Brian Storey retained the trophy for a fourth year.

**Woking's** Jeff Dawson won the A class singles at his club's Midsummer Open by one win, ahead of Ealing's Nigel Polhill but there was a five way tie on wins in the B class. Ian Parkinson of Watford got the nod in that one and, when teamed-up with Surbiton's Sam Murray, won the doubles too. In Woking's handicap tournament Ian Anderson won the singles and the pairing of Ian McDiarmid & Liz Maltby took the doubles.

Cliff Jones retained his A Class singles title at the **Sidmouth Tournament** ahead of Nailsea's David Richards, by the who-beat-whom tie-break, **reports manager Julie Horsley**. Players came from as far afield as Colchester and Edinburgh for this popular event at which the B and C classes were won by Sidmouth pair David Temple and David Clarke respectively, and the handicap was won by Huw Rees (Kingston Maurward).

Andrew Gregory's cool computer-less

# AC Tournament

management drew praise from **reporter Roy Edwards** at **East Dorset June week**. David Harrison-Wood won the Gold Cup in the handicap singles, and he also took A class, but was somewhat fortunate when Tom Weston forgot his lift with all four clips on the peg. In the B class final David Price beat Ken Pickett and the doubles saw David Price and John Crisp victors.

**Nailsea's inaugural C Class Tournament** (for handicaps 5 to 12) attracted six visitors to challenge the same number of hosts for the new Michael Poole Cup. The cup remembers the founder member of the club who lost his life tragically this year. **Reporter Mike Tracy** made his debut in the management role and decided to use the Swiss format for the trophy with a subsidiary prize for what he called a 'Moroccan competition', in the mistaken belief that Morocco is adjacent to Egypt! Brian McCausland won the main event and Jim Gregory the Moroccan prize.

Mid-June saw good numbers attending the **Class Singles Tournament at Cheltenham**, sufficient indeed for five events to be run, **reports Michael James**. In Block 1 Jaimie Mussi (Cheltenham) and Richard M Smith (Bristol) had to peg down their 3rd round match, so that all the Round 4 matches could start but that one eventually became the decider. Once it resumed, Mussi eventually won +7 as time wound down in minimal light at 10.20pm! Les Bowker won Block 2 on the who-beat-whom rule from David Mumford; Amanda Hames-Keward turned the same trick on Keith Davis for Block 3; Caroline Denny won Block 4 with five very close results; and in Block 5 Denis King triumphed, again on the head to head tie-break, over Angela Martin.



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# ents - round-up



Andy Myers won the oversubscribed **Hamptworth Advanced** tournament (for handicaps -3 to +1) on very challenging fast lawns with firm, tight hoops. The favourite on paper was Ealing's Alain Giraud and he lived up to his billing remaining unbeaten until Sunday lunchtime. Meanwhile Stephen Marsh and Andy Myers (Aldermaston) were playing well. Going into the last round of the Swiss, Giraud only had to beat Myers for the trophy, but he was trounced! Myers won the event and dropped his handicap to just short of +0.5. It was good to see Philip Brabazon, now living locally to Hamptworth, returning to competitive croquet, **reports Kevin Carter**.

A car problem prevented Quiller Barrett defending his title at the **Phyllis Court / Blewbury Midweek Handicap**, which was won this year by co-host Paul Wolff (*bottom photo*) who was undefeated.



## July

Owen Pugh won the **Ramsgate Handicap** Singles ahead of a field of 12 that included Australian Bill Humphreys, who had entered various croquet tournaments whilst on holiday in England. **Ashton Hulme reports** that, block play provided semi-finalists for day two, when two +7 victories were earned by Trevor Longman (Ramsgate, 5) and Pugh (Colchester, 12). Pugh won the final +14 in the final in front of former Ramsgate Chairman, Cynthia Street, who came down from the Midlands to see her grandson's triumph.



The **Colchester over-50s midweek handicap** saw Charlie Mann victorious at the end of a flexible Swiss format where the almost constant blazing sunshine made it a demanding three days, **reports Colin Hemming**. Mann



ended on 8/10 (80%) just ahead of Trevor Longman 7/9 (78%).

The **Wrest Park Advanced** in early July might well come to be seen as the new site's graduation weekend, with all four lawns in use, fifteen players in action and three triple peels completed. At the finish Bryan Harral, Nick Steiner and **reporter John Bevington** all had four wins out of five and so a corner four, two-ball-break play-off was decided as a tie-break. Bevington made two hoops, Harral made three and Steiner only one, so Harral took the prize.

Steiner was in action again soon after; he and Caroline Denny won Classes 1 & 2 respectively at the **Hamptworth B-Level Advanced** Tournament (for handicaps 0-8) **writes Chris Roberts**. Firm hoops and super-fast courts challenged most and only the Bear of Rodborough's Denny was undefeated during the tournament and that decided Class 2. The top Class 1 was anything but as clear cut, with three players Tom Weston (East Dorset), Alan Chance (Hurlingham) and Nick Steiner (Colchester) all tied and having won one and lost one in the games between them. Another two-ball break from corner four, proved to be a popular choice as the decider. Weston clanged his first hoop shot, Steiner made three, and then Chance, who had earlier bagged the event's only triple peel, blobbed in his first hoop. So Steiner won.

The **Letchworth 'B' Level** used a revised format this year that increased the amount of games played and Clive Goode ran out the overall winner with a 66% record. **reports Terrey Sparks**.

There was lots of action at the **Pendle and Craven four-day midweek tournament** with Liz Wilson at the managerial helm **report Ken and Margaret Anderton**. Alan Edwards (Woking) won the advanced block for the lowest handicappers, (as he'd done last year) and Terry Vernazza (Fylde) won the other advanced block. The handicap play section was similarly divided for Ian Hall

(Keswick) to win the 'low' block and Graham Good (Bowdon and Bury) the 'high'. An Egyptian event was also won by Hall after a 'winner takes all' game against Edwards and in the doubles Margaret and Ken Anderton (Bury) won on the latter's birthday. Special congratulations go to Roger Schofield on achieving his Gold Award.

Beverley's Derek Knight and Dennis Scarr of Middlesborough won the 'Super B' and 'B' Level blocks at **Southport's Advanced Weekend** under John Haslam's management. Knight was undefeated but Scarr had to rely on his head to head result with local boy Don Williamson to break their tie, **reports Dave Gunn**.

Home club player Geoff Hughes won the **Nailsea B-Level** tournament, defeating Nottingham's Clive Goode in the final. Peter Balchin (4.5, Dyffryn) managed the biggest upset of the tournament by beating Richard Wood (1.5, Sidmouth) by 21 points to 7 early on. **Kathy Wallace reports** that another Nottigham player, Omied Hallam won in the fastest time (1h 19min) but donated his prize bottle of Southport Leave ale to Robert Moss (Bear of Rodborough) who had won a game in 1h 29min and had sportingly given way on the lawn to Omied, when he was clearly going for the speed record.

**Colin Hemming reports** that, the **Hunstanton Over-50s Handicap** was a demanding tournament, played in constant blazing sunshine throughout. But it didn't seem to affect the winner of the event, home player Charlie Martin.

Nathan Baker, playing in his first CA Tournament, won the third staging of the **Fylde Handicap Jubilee Cup**. The visitors bronzed themselves in blazing sunshine while real Bronze Awards were claimed by Catherine Bass (Fylde) and Rena Souten (Huddersfield).

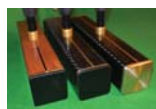
Photographs, from top: Dave Nick (*by Liz Wilson*); Charlie Mann at Hunstanton; Nick Steiner at Hamptworth; Paul Wolff at Blewbury & Phyllis Court. Far left - Roger Staples at Tyneside. (*all other images by Chris Roberts*)

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## England win the Home Internationals

England won the 35th Home International Championship, losing only eight games en-route to regaining the Frank Cooper trophy at Surbiton.

The tournament started after a slight delay while team orders were agreed.

Jack Wicks was a late substitution for England, replacing the injured Robert Wilkinson and another late withdrawal meant that Ireland found themselves unable to field a full team on the first day.

Charlie Von Schmieder was to be the late substitute, but he would be playing his first ranking game since 2007 and was only available on Sunday and to compound Ireland's woes Evan Newell suffered multiple car-hire related problems and arrived 2½ hours late.

**England v Ireland** was the first match out of the random draw, making England the beneficiaries of Ireland's predicament; two walkovers for Pete Trimmer and Samir Patel, left England firm favourites to avenge 2013's 1-4 defeat. A pair of 26tp results traded between England's Jamie Burch and Ireland's Simon Williams led to the two players agreeing to Super-Advanced laws for game three. This created the expected interaction, with Williams eventually winning +11tpo. Danny Johnston won a fairly error-free match over England's David Maugham, which left Wicks to secure the final point for England against Jane Morrison in two games ~ **England 3, Ireland 2.**

**Wales and Scotland** fought out a much closer match. Chris Williams gave Wales an initial lead by beating David Magee in two games, before Scot Jonathan Kirby, playing in his first Home International since 2008, levelled the test against Ian Burrige in three. The other matches were slower affairs with chances for both sides, and points shared when Wales' David Walters beat Duncan Reeve and Campbell Morrison pulled one back for Scotland against Garry McElwain. The final rubber decided matters for Scotland when Martin Murray beat John Evans ~ **Scotland 3, Wales 2.**

~  
**England v Scotland** - The lawns at Surbiton were in great condition, but suffered from overnight rain, supplemented by a further heavy shower during Saturday morning resulting in softer hoops and

made play more of a shooting and peeling competition. That was something that suited the **England team who ran out 5-0 winners** over Scotland with triple peels in 11 of 12 games (the twelfth was a +1 result).

**Ireland v Wales** saw Ireland, still one player down, won the first match-point quickly when Simon Williams beat Ian Burrige, but **Wales won enough of the other matches to secure a 3-1 win** in front of a large crowd who were enjoying the Surbiton barbecue and croquet in equal measure.

The most unusual moment of the event occurred during this match when Burrige claimed relief from a hoop cross-bar that was impeding his swing. This was denied and during appeal to the RoT he appeared to try to claim that a significant proportion of the hoops in use worldwide were outside specification. After this was also turned down, he then resorted to cutting a piece of his mallet grip away in order to have an unimpeded swing. This dedication to the cause secured him a break, but he went on to lose the match. It subsequently became clear that this piece of grip was the part required to protect the mallet shaft from contact with the hoop during hoop strokes, prompting some emergency repairs!

### England v Wales

The overnight scores left England very much in the driving seat, but the overnight pundits who spotted that 5-0 wins for Wales and Scotland could still leave England in third place were quickly scuppered by Trimmer dispatching Williams. Burch put the Championship beyond doubt for England with a win over Burrige. This meant that match-count would put England ahead, even if Wales won the remaining three matches, but England showed no willingness to sit back and won all three remaining, but closer, matches.

**Ireland v Scotland** was a closely fought affair, notable for Ireland's Charlie Von Schmieder beating Martin Murray +2 +17 in his first ranking games since 2007. Scotland won the 'match of the Morrisons' as the day turned to evening, and some-time later Magee drew level with Newell, to leave the **test drawn at 2-2.**

**The England team: (from left) - Samir Patel, David Maugham, Jamie Burch, Jack Wicks and Pete Trimmer.**

## CA's Interna

### The Pathway

It is a little over two months since I was appointed as the CA's International Performance Director (IPD), a role focused on improving performance in International AC singles and team events.

Much of the initial work has been based around establishing an International Pathway, so that there is a clearly identifiable route for players to take from starting out in the sport through to representing their country.

The pathway sees players initially receiving coaching via their club, Federation or the CA as at present but now with four squads sitting atop this structure to ensure that all those identified as having the potential to become an international player are given the opportunity to do so.

The Junior Squad is, as the name suggests, aimed at young players. It will be established for the start of the 2015 season.

We know from past experience that those discovering the game at a young age have the potential to progress far. All British MacRobertson Shield players in recent years began playing in their 20s or younger.

Establishing a Junior Squad will allow those juniors who are currently playing, to meet up with their peers, share experiences and receive appropriately targeted coaching.

Sadly at the present time there are relatively few young players in our sport and it will be important to the success of this venture to see improvements in the recruitment and retention of youngsters over the coming years.

The International Player Development Squad is a two year development programme for 16 players of all ages, on a rolling basis with eight places becoming available and selected in the winter of each year. Selection for the squad is based on





# International Performance Director (IPD)

## Ian Burridge shares his plan

potential rather than actual playing level at the time of selection.

During the programme, members receive coaching over a number of weekends on all topics relating to become an International player, from Openings and Triple Peels through to Match Preparation and Psychology.

The GB Squad itself is a relatively large group of around 25 players from which most representatives for International Singles and Team events can expect to be drawn.

Being an amateur sport it is rarely the case that there is 100% availability of the best players for all events, hence the need for a relatively large pool of players being included in this squad.

As well as providing an identifiable group for coaching, it also forms a discussion group for coaching related matters (particularly tactics) and issues affecting top players.

A GB Squad Coach will be appointed before the start of the 2015 season.

The Elite Squad is a planned extension of the GB Squad from the start of the 2015 season, and will be made up of those players thought most likely to form the next MacRobertson Shield team.

This squad will provide a focussed group of individuals targeting success in the premier World Team competition that will next be held in 2017.

The IPD however is not solely concerned with the management and success of these squads. The squads can only succeed if they are built on a strong foundation.

Junior recruitment has already been mentioned as important and two other initiatives are already under way:

A Women's group has been established with a specific focus on improving

performance in the 2015 AC Women's World Championship being held at Nottingham.

More than 20 women have signed up to take part in two initial coaching days at Nottingham and Cheltenham this season and it is planned to follow these up with a further event next year.

Regional coaching pods have also been established.

Learning from those with experience is critical in the development of most top players, and it can be difficult to achieve this if you are a member of a small club, or are an up and coming player. The pods will hopefully provide a friendly, relaxed, informal environment for players to develop their game and an article elsewhere in this issue gives further details.

The numbers interested and the support shown for all the various initiatives to date has been extremely encouraging, there is certainly no shortage of players looking to improve their game.

The challenge is to ensure that this enthusiasm is captured with effective and engaging development offered to all those taking part.

Raising the playing standard of all those participating, whether it be in a Pod or the Elite Squad, will all play a part in improving the overall playing standard in the country and improving international results, ultimately feeding through to World Singles and Team Champions.

There is no quick fix, although hopefully there will be short term successes.

To achieve lasting success in the medium to long term will require not only a well-integrated coaching programme but also consideration to be given to other factors, such as more challenging playing conditions and improved recruitment, particularly of younger players.

## Introducing 'Pods'

Coaching 'Pods' are a new CA initiative for members, intended to provide a focus for local A and B class players to get together and improve their game in a relaxed local environment.

It is hoped that these relatively informal groups will facilitate the sharing of knowledge, help establish informal mentoring arrangements and raise the standard of play across the country.

Learning from more experienced players is long established in croquet as a route to improvement, however for players from smaller clubs, or for those just beginning to play the advanced game, this is not always easy to achieve; pods aim to change this.

Whilst pods will generally be centred at one club, they may hold sessions from time to time at other local clubs in the area.

Eight pods are already established (see below) and it is hoped to add more for the start of next season. Full information and details of how to register can be found on the CA Website.

Pod sessions will be free to attend, and will generally be held on weekday evenings. Each session will be two to three hours long, and cover a single specific topic, for example lift leaves, openings, or pegged-out endings. Whilst each pod session will be organised by the local coordinator, the lesson plans will be prepared centrally.

**Register your interest today at [www.croquet.org.uk](http://www.croquet.org.uk)**

Pod	Host club	Coordinator
Capital	Surbiton	Christian Carter
Essex & Suffolk	Colchester	Robert Fulford
North East	Mid'sbro.	David Appleton
North West Fed.	Bury	Matt Holmes
North West Fed.	Bowdon	Christine Irwin
Robin Hood	Nott'ham.	Ian Burridge
Sussex	Sussex Co.	Luc Berthouze
Wessex	TBC	Dave Kibble



## Coaching Corner

by Roger Staples

*Congratulations to the following CA members in achieving their coaching awards.*

### Club Coach (Yellow)

Ian Cowie, (Lansdowne), Richard Harvey, (Bury), Colin Walls, (Sidmouth), Frank Collins, (Caterham), John Harris, (York), Tom Banfield, (Middlesbrough), Jean Cobbold, (Cheam), David Brydon (Nottingham), Justin Davies and Denis Rawling, (both Worcester Norton).

### Golf Coach (White)

Katharine Minchin, (Rother Valley), Jonathan Isaacs, (Sussex County), Richard Waterman (Colchester).

~

As I write this, the weather is pleasant and sunny. I trust it is the same with you and you are enjoying some excellent croquet this season. I have a new e-mail address - [staplessteeples@live.co.uk](mailto:staplessteeples@live.co.uk).



**R**eg Bamford won the British Golf Croquet Open Championship for the eighth time.

Twenty-seven players arrived at Sussex County for the first day of the new-format four-day singles event which was played with fabulous weather throughout.

The lawns at Southwick were the best I have ever seen them; we were treated to a mow every day and very firm hoops from the outset.

The standard four blocks playing single-banked untimed best-of-three matches was a popular format. There was plenty of time to fit all the matches in every day and several of Saturday's matches were moved forward to accommodate various sports fans!

There were some early block upsets... much to the crowds' enjoyment newcomer John Paul Moberly took his match off Reg Bamford, earning himself a well-deserved handicap chop from 2 to 0.

There was less drama in the other blocks – Stephen Mulliner had a clean run and didn't lose a single block game. Both the leaders in the other blocks had at least a few game losses inflicted upon them, but the normal



# THE GC BRITISH OPEN

## Bamford denies Mulliner five in a row

Rachel Rowe reports

suspects qualified for the knockout event starting Saturday afternoon.

The plate event started immediately, with the willing participants split into two blocks and then another knockout event. Ivor Brand and Andrew Hope played the plate final at the same time as the main event final so didn't get their fair share of the spectators; but took it right to the wire with Ivor winning 7-6 in the third game.

As seeds 1 and 2 and top of their respective blocks, Reg Bamford and Stephen Mulliner were drawn in separate halves of the Championship knockout draw, setting up the likely scenario of a repeat of last years' final. Only two of the first-round knockout matches went to three games, and these both eventually went the way of the favourite. Similarly, only one of the quarter-finals went to a deciding game; this was Bamford's match with Pierre Beaudry, which attracted a crowd on Saturday evening, and afterwards the stragglers enjoyed fish and chips at the club.

Meanwhile the majority of the eligible players started the Bowl and Super Bowl events, again with a best-of-three knockout format. Ultimately David Wise from Australia beat Richard Brooks 7-4, 7-2 to win the Bowl, and Pierre Beaudry won the Super Bowl final against James Goodbun 7-3, 7-4.

Back at the main Championship, on Sunday morning both semi-finals were treated to Mulliner's hoop setting on the show lawns near the clubhouse. Both

matches were wrapped up in two games to the top seeds, Mulliner exacting his revenge on Rachel Rowe for knocking him out of the Europeans several weeks earlier and Bamford beat Martin French.

After a leisurely lunch Mulliner and Bamford started the final.

Mulliner took the first game but World Champion Bamford made an excellent comeback at the beginning of the second – including a fabulous jump at hoop three, punishing his opponent for only jawing.

Bamford's good form continued and he won that game and then the decider to win British Open Championship for the first time since 2009.

Mulliner had won this event for the past four years, not quite equalling Bamford's record of five consecutive titles (2005-2009).

Despite the event running since 2000 there are still only three names on the trophy, the other being Ahmed Nasr's sole breaking of the Bamford (8 wins) and Mulliner (6 wins) duopoly in 2004.

~

Feedback from a players' surveys seems to majorly favour this new four days of singles format. The experience from Southwick suggests that, with ten lawns available, there is the time to single-bank all games, if and when we can achieve an entry of 32. There were a significant number of requests for a doubles event to be included again, so the GC Tournament Committee will investigate this for 2015.

## The GC British Open – My Experience

by John-Paul Moberly

**A** little over three years ago I went with my family for a superb Easter Sunday lunch at our good friends, the Killicks. Andrew, a Middlesbrough Croquet Club member and my godfather, had set up a croquet set in his garden.

To me this seemed a much more fun way to spend the afternoon than our customary walk, and my love of croquet was born.

That very evening I did an internet search for a place to play croquet locally, and first result: Croquet Durham, a club just ten minutes from my house! I simply thought it was a fun game which I'd like to play more

of, I did not realise just how much I would get into it and that it would take me to competing at national level.

After playing in various regional competitions within Croquet North, I felt that this summer I wanted to play in some larger competitions further afield. I had in mind some B-Level tournaments, but then after looking through the fixtures calendar, the GC British Open caught my eye.

At first when I considered it, I thought that a competition captioned with 'the premier golf croquet event' would be a bit too much too soon, but after thinking further I



# Rachel Rowe is GC Euro Champion

by Stephen Mulliner, Secretary-General, WCF

**R**achel Rowe added the European Golf Croquet Championship to her World Women's Champions title, to keep the EuroGC top prize in England.

This tournament brings together Europe's best, as the growth and enthusiasm for GC on continental Europe continues unabated.

As an example, Spain now has about 250 GC players compared to 30 AC players. This was reflected in the highest ever demand (54) for the 32 places in this the 7th Championship, an event now elevated to annual status.

The Championship returned to the Surbiton Club after a gap of four years and, then as now, the Swedish contingent led by Simon Carlsson and Jonatan Andersson was expected to provide tough competition for the dozen UK-based competitors, which included the defending champion, Stephen Mulliner, the Cheyne brothers, Martin French, Tim King and the Women's GC World Champion, Rachel Rowe.

The format was four blocks of eight, best-of-three 13 point games with the top four progressing to the knock-out.

The blocks began with a few surprises; Germany's Gerald Ehmes beat Women's World Champion Rachel Rowe, Peter Balchin (Wales) was equally undaunted and did likewise to Stephen Mulliner, and Roar Michalsen (Norway) was very pleased to displace Andersson (the 2009 finalist) from their block's top spot.

Howard Cheyne and Martin French showed excellent form to win their blocks and Mulliner recovered to win his too.

The first round of the knock-out contained a couple of tougher matches than might have been expected. Simon Carlsson was taken to the 13th in game three before getting past Richard Thompson and Nick Archer did very well to beat Howard Cheyne in the same way. Rachel Rowe and Tobi Savage had an excellent encounter with the former winning in two games and then she kept her shooting boots to dispose of Mulliner 7-6, 7-5 in the quarter-final, where she met Michalsen.

In the other half of the draw, Carlsson was stretched initially by Martin French but eventually came home, and Archer took the middle game off Andersson but again it was the latter's long shooting that told.

The semi-finals provided rather different spectacles. Michalsen, undefeated to this point, made an excellent start against Rowe in taking the first game 7-3 but the Englishwoman then demonstrated an admirable level of determination, and took the next two by 7-2 and 7-4.

A little earlier, the all Swedish semi-final was pure entertainment, which Andersson closed out after a lengthy third game.

The Swede was by now the bookie's favourite having demonstrated his ability to hit straight with astonishing consistency.

The opening game of the final saw Rowe hang in well at 6-6 and she grasp an unexpected gift when Andersson only jawed a 3-4 yard straight hoop for the game. Rowe made no mistake with a three yard slightly angled jump.

Andersson fought back as expected and



won a close second game by 7-5.

The decider swayed towards both players at times and at 5-5 the hoop 11 contest lasted almost 15 minutes before Rowe, having first jawed, ran the hoop, only to hit a ball near the peg and glue herself to it.

The time was now 1750 and but the match was on a knife-edge and a further 25 minutes was needed to resolve the 12th that included two opportunities for Andersson to score which he declined because Rowe's next ball to play was legally close to 13.

Both players shot very well but eventually someone had to miss and that happened to be Andersson, leaving Rowe a two yard hoop for the title which she ran with aplomb.

Rowe's was a really great achievement showing excellent character and determination.

Andersson deserves great commiseration for he has been second twice but probably played the best GC of anyone at various times, and a testament to his long hours of practice on an artificial soccer pitch at home.

decided: Why not? It'll be a great experience and you never know!

Through the **CA's bursary scheme**, my modest student self was able to make its way down to Sussex County CC for four days of intense competition. Just a brief glance at the names present indicated the play was going to be high level. When you see your name alongside the World and European Champions, you certainly know you're going to have to have your croquet hat on!

I arrived and found that they have ten of their eleven lawns in use; my home two-lawn club seems fairly humble by comparison. I looked at the order of play and found the World Champion and current world number one was in my group!

I'm not likely to forget my best-of-three match against Reg very quickly. He sailed into a three-love lead in the first game, but I managed to bring it back to a 7-5 defeat; I was just pleased to get some hoops off him!

In the second and third games something happened. Everything I tried came off. Even hampered shots went through when they had no right to.

To my amazement I actually won the match 5-7, 7-4, 7-5.

Of course I couldn't keep it up and quickly surrendered my new 'world number one' status to Mark 'Hammy' Hamilton, as 'the guy who beat the guy who beat the guy' (something he didn't fail to mention!).

I went out of the tournament in the

quarter-finals, having far exceeded my own expectations.

So my message to anyone who might be considering their first tournament, but are not sure: You'll get a warm welcome, and have a great experience and lots of fun! And you never know, you might even become the new 'world number one' in the process!

## Photographs, clockwise from top left:

- (1) GC Open winner Reg Bamford
- (2) GC European Champion Rachel Rowe
- (3) Watching the final with Stephen Mulliner in play
- (4) JP Moberly in action (all images by Chris Roberts)



## Cheltenham Open 'Top turn' Tom triumphs

Tom Weston won the Cheltenham Open in early June, to qualify for the English National Singles Championship.

The initial entry of 24 was reduced to 22 on the day and this did introduce a complication over the planned sequence of rounds, **reports Kevin Ham.**

Having to play three rounds of the knockout on Sunday presented its own challenges with timing, and unfortunately the final did not start till 4pm.

Local man Jaimie Mussi gave Weston a good tussle before 'top turn' Tom took the spoils 7-4, 1-7, 7-5.

## Ramsgate Open Mulliner beats tough field

Stephen Mulliner retained his Ramsgate Open title ahead of a particularly formidable field this year.

**Trevor Longman reports** that, Mulliner (-2) faced the opposition of five -1s, two scratch players, seven +1s and one +2, perhaps drawn by one of RCC's members having putting up significant sponsorship and cash prizes.

The experienced management of Cliff Jones was another attraction that saw the tournament well over-subscribed.

In the semi-finals, David Dray beat Ramsgate club-mate James Goodburn 7-5, 3-7, 7-3 and Mulliner beat Lionel Tibble 7-4, 7-2.

In the thrilling final, Dray took the first game 7-5 but Mulliner came back to win the second 7-4 and the third 7-5 to take retain his title.

At the prize giving, David Openshaw gave a brief speech in praise of the sponsor, John Ruddock, whom he had known since they were young men, and Mulliner thanked Ramsgate CC on behalf of the players.

# Senior GC Tournaments

## National Forest Open Gee makes it a hat-trick

Will Gee is unbeatable at Ashby's National Forest Open and made it three wins in three appearances.

Two blocks of seven, playing two games against each opponent, took a while to complete before the best-of-three semis.

Gee got past David Bell in his semi in two quick games, whilst his chief rival, Letchworth's Nick Mounfield, had a successful but closer encounter with Tim King, who then beat Bell for third place.

Both finalists had declared themselves lacking in GC play this season but the pair nevertheless served up an exciting and highly entertaining final.

The first of their three games went to the thirteenth hoop, where Mounfield inflicted a first game loss of the tournament on Gee but, in what continued to be a display of high quality croquet by both players, with long hoop runs and spectacular clearances, Gee went on to win the match 6-7, 7-3, 7-4.

## Ryde Open

### Small island chief wins again

Local man Roy Tillcock won the Ryde Open to retain his title and qualify for the English National Singles Championship that will take place on the 'small island' on 20th and 21st September.

**Richard Harris reports**, that this year's entry was stiffer than last. Surprisingly, favourite Carol Jackson (0) lost her opening game to Ryde's Nick Westmore (4) and Tillcock also dropped one game to Ryde's Richard Harris (3), in the block rounds only real up-sets. All the best-of-three knockout quarters were over in two games, and in the

semis, Jackson beat manager Cliff Jones 7-5, 7-6, and Tillcock was made to work harder by Ryde's Stuart Perters (3), who eventually succumbed 7-5, 6-7, 7-5. In a long hard fought final, Jackson won the first game 7-3 and but Tillcock equalised 7-5 and then won the decider by the same score.

## Nottingham Open No rain quibble for Tibble

Lionel Tibble beat Rachel Rowe to win the third Nottingham Golf Croquet Open, in a rain affected tournament, **reports Will Gee.** Play had to be abandoned on day 1, when all eight lawns were flooded and blocks were completed on a condensed schedule on day 2. The two pre-event favorites won their blocks, beat David Bell and Mike O'Brien in the semis, and then Tibble got the better of Rowe 7-4, 7-4.

## East Dorset Open Brand can't count but wins

There was a very unusual end to this season's East Dorset Open which was won by Ivor Brand, as **Don Beck reports.**

Brand was in a position to win the event with a victory over Richard Brooks in his last game (of an 'all play all block' format with no final) and then not have to 'sweat' in the last round where he had a bye. But Brooks established 5-3 lead, Brand took hoop 9 (5-4), then Brooks won 10 with a very good jump (6-4), before Brand took 11 and 12 and they walked off agreeing that Brand had won. In fact, before Brooks' hoop 10 jump, he had taken a scoring clip off the hoop and, after replacing one clip, his other had dropped onto the lawn somewhere.

As the result had been agreed it was recorded as a game (*and tournament*) win to Brand.

What a strange one!

*'My hero, my brvva'* - Richard congratulates Ivor Brand.



# 'Poaching' fails as Oxford win Varsity again

This year's Varsity match had the prospect of being a classic encounter, with Cambridge in high hopes of at last beating Oxford, who have been dominating the annual matches in recent seasons.

The new Cambridge tactics: if you can't beat them, poach them! Cambridge had managed to lure both of the previous two year's Oxford captains over for postgraduate studies, which was a fitting revenge for Oxford having poached a former Cambridge

captain last year!

One of Cambridge's newly poached, Will Gee, is ranked in the world top 100 for AC and was a real threat to the current Oxford captain, Harry Fisher, who had also risen rapidly into the world top 100 last Summer.

On the top court Will Gee (-1) and partner James Brind were up against Oxford's Harry Fisher (-1) and promising newcomer Rajiv Gogna, who had only taken up the game three weeks earlier but was already

down to a 20 handicap. After more than a couple of hours Gee embarked on a highly ambitious delayed sextuple attempt that ended before too long. Fisher was soon needing to go round and peg out for a +2 margin after time – no peels required. However, he got one anyway, to win +3. Oxford won the other two doubles too, for a 3-0 lunch time lead.

The afternoon singles clash of the two world-ranked titans, saw Fisher pick up the



## Oakham are Schools & Juniors Champs

by Marcus Evans

Oakham School from Rutland dominated the first staging for many years of the National Schools' and Juniors' Championships, held at Nailsea in early June.

As all the participants had only taken up croquet recently, all games were played to 14 points on half-size courts, but full Association Croquet rules were in force.

In the morning, two teams of two from each of Oakham School, Rutland and Queen's College, Taunton played off for the Schools' Championship.

A seeded draw saw Oakham's number one pair of Charlie Schanschieff and Liam Payne record a convincing +10 win against the Queen's number two pair of Ruairidh Morrison and Jason Ng.

In the other semi-final, Oakham's Austin Steele and Anthony Morris had a tougher time against Queen's Arthur Banks and Dominic Alcock, but the former still won fairly comfortably +6t (10-4) after the expiry of the one hour time limit.

With an Oakham win guaranteed, in the final Charlie and Liam lived up to their top seed status and beat Austin and Anthony.

In the afternoon, Arthur and Dominic had to sadly leave in order to complete their Chemistry A-Level revision, but were replaced by two more Taunton players in James McLeod and Julian Harding, who had been on a science field trip in the morning.

In the semi-finals of the Junior Championship, Julian beat Austin +6 and Liam triumphed over Jason +9, setting up

first break which he took solidly to 4b with a good diagonal spread. Gee missed his lift shot with his peg ball; Fisher picked up his second break, and had various peeling opportunities, which he eventually gave up in favour of a safe break to peg. Gee missed his second lift shot and then watched the Oxford man make his final three hoops and pegged out for a quick +26 win.

The play in the other singles games was to a different standard – and quite some time later the next game to finish saw Oxford newcomer Rajiv Gogna, who convincingly outplayed Renard Mansour,

the hoped-for Oakham v Queen's final.

Shortly after it started, the heavens opened, but play continued without much in the way of wet-weather gear (*which I*



understand the masters had suggested they bring, but the boys declined).

Julian took an early lead with some nice play, but the rain seemed to wear him down a bit and Liam fought back grittily with some

good tactical play to run out the Junior Championship winner, +4t (10-6).

The handsome Schools' Championship Shield was presented to a delighted Oakham team and Liam Payne took home the Junior Championship trophy.

No doubt Queen's will be all the more motivated to come back even stronger next time. Indeed the next event may well take place in September in order to avoid exams, with the possibility of teams from Nottingham, Oxford, Millfield, and Eton joining the fray – an excellent prospect.

Thank you to the Nailsea club for the use of its lawns, and for the support of its members. Particular thanks also to the masters in charge of croquet at Oakham and Queen's (Adam Rothwell and CA member Tim Jolliff, respectively) and to Ian Burridge, who has coached the Oakham boys, which no doubt contributed to their success.

The whole event was played in an excellent spirit, and the way all the boys conducted themselves was a credit to them and their schools.

win +19 and bring Oxford their fifth win to clinch the match.

Not long afterwards Oxford's Martin Lester beat Cambridge captain Cesar Miranda +21, while Oxford old boy Valor scraped home to a +5 timed win. The remaining two games also both went to time, with Oxford's Fred Woodcock beat Matt Hitchens +10, and Cambridge's Douglas Buisson defeating James Flannery+2 for a final match score-line of 7-2 to Oxford.

**Report by Simon Hathrell**

(Heavily abridged by Chris Roberts)

## Schools round-up

Nottingham Club put croquet mallets in the hands of over 600 young people and their sports teachers this summer.

Visits to five secondary schools plus attendance at the Sainsbury's Notts School Games have also resulted in the Club providing croquet as a low-impact evening activity to 80 schoolboys from Notts, Lincs and Derbyshire attending a residential rugby camp at Worksop College.

Club spokesman David Brydon said: *"This is all part of our plan to let young people actually experience croquet for themselves, rather than inheriting familiar tired old prejudices.*

Every child was given some fun tasks they could succeed at, and some of the sportier ones faced simple drills they found quite challenging, provoking the frequent comment that "it's all much harder than it looks."

Each child was handed a flyer advertising a special Open Day at the Club, and whilst the take-up from youngsters was predictably low, there are now 16 adults on the club's second Learn To Play course..

I am pleased to report that the three girls who chose croquet for their Duke of Edinburgh Award, that I reported on in the last Gazette, have now passed at Bronze level.

Brydon continued, *"If other clubs like ours could do something similar each season, the benefits for future recruitment to croquet could be significant"*.

Brydon's next task is to coach a team from Nottingham High School ahead of their September fixture against Oakham School.

Queens College in Taunton beat West Buckland School in a June return match, following their autumn fixture.

There was a marked improvement in the standard of play with pleasing control of the croquet shot in evidence and some break building too **reports Tim Jolliff**, master i/c croquet Queen's College.

The two teams played 14 point games using the CA published garden croquet rules. The discussion on the side lines was about the potential benefit of a regional coaching day early in the season, so the young players would develop better skills.

Queens won the match 7-0, but several games were close affairs.

Earlier in the season Queens beat Millfield School 3-1.

# Seniors and Veterans

## National AC Veterans

### Cliff Jones is top Vet

The Veterans' Championship, for the The Rothwell Cup, was won by Cliff Jones, **Reports Director Richard Hoskyns**. The Over-75s Championship (The Pidcock Trophy) was awarded to Don Gaunt (Bear of Rodborough). The Felixstowe Cup (Advanced play singles) was won by Peter Siddall (Roehampton) and the Strickland Cup (Handicap Singles) went to Rosemary Bradshaw (Budleigh).

The Doubles was played as the normal X and Y and since there were only eight pairs, a Z as well. The X (The Longman Trophies – Sussex Trugs) were won by Brian Shorney and Jane Hull (both Cheltenham). The Y (The Gilbert Spoons) was won by Quiller Barrett (Watford) and Richard Hoskyns (Hurlingham), and the Z was won by Adrian Kirby (Peterborough) and Wendy Dominguez (Budleigh). The Handicap Singles (The Meredith Cup) was won by Hull and Barrett won the Swiss.

Photo: Cliff Jones (by Paul Clayden)

in a three way tie between David Wise (Australia), Dave Mundy (Cheltenham) and Simon Hathrell (Watford), the latter getting the nod on quality of wins.

Manager Julie Horsley had a much easier time determining the winners of the other classes though, as all were clear cut affairs being won by undefeated players:

Michael Todorovich (USA) won Class B (handicaps 1 to 2.5) for the Colin Hemming Cup, Chris Roberts (Phyllis Court) won Class C (3 to 5) for the de Ansoarena Cup, and Liz Farrow (Sussex County) took home the Nigel Graves Trophy for Class D (7 plus).

Earlier in the week, the unrestricted handicap singles was played as an X and Y knockout: Todorovich got the better of Jonathan Lamb (Surbiton and Uruguay) in the final of the former and Eileen Magee (Cheltenham) beat her husband David in the final of the latter.

Lamb and Wise won the X section of the doubles, while Farrow and Cliff Jones won the Y.

All of which kept manager Julie Horsley and Peter Death, on behalf of the CA, very busy at presentation time.

## National AC Seniors

- Grade 3 Championship event -

### Hathrell bags the big prize

The National Seniors' returned to Sussex County CC this year after a three year's at Budleigh Salterton.

Entry numbers were disappointing and down by about 30% on previous years, but on the plus side, it was good to see that 82% were in the handicap range of -1 to 5, so the tournament still retains its appeal for the better 'age-qualified' players (this is a 50+ tournament), **reports Julie Horsley**.

There was a distinct lack of high to mid-handicappers though; so much so that the E Class event was not contested this time, which was a great shame.

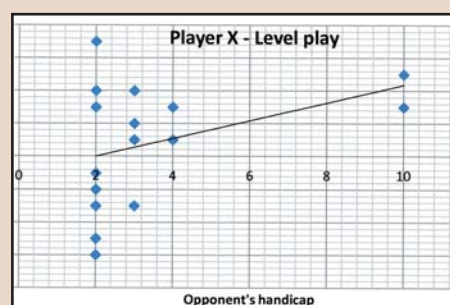
The Seniors' Championship for the Trevor Williams Cup had nine entrants with a handicap range from -1 to 0 and ended

As a GC Club Handicapper, I have tried assessing the ability of each player, not only on the basis of their trigger points, games won or lost, and my personal experience of their play, but also by examining their scores – marginal winning (positive) scores or losing (negative) ones, as a measure of the decisiveness of the win or loss.

With level play, the scores of a player, when plotted against the handicap of opponents, tend, as one would expect, to be highest against the less proficient high handicap opponents, and vice versa.

This correlation enables an estimate to be made of the handicap of the player by noting where a line fitted to the plotted points intercepts a score of zero at which the player wins exactly 50% of his games (Fig. 1, below).

It can be made either visually (neglecting all duplicates, which cannot



## It's all in the maths

Letchworth's John S Alabaster looks at GC handicapping with some maths

be distinguished) or calculated from the equation for the line (fitted by 'least squares'),  $y = a + bx$ , where  $y$  is the score,  $a$  is the intercept at zero score,  $b$  is the slope of the line and  $x$  is the handicap of the opponent; where  $y = 0$ , the estimated handicap is given by  $a/b$ .

However, such an estimate of the handicap should be treated with caution. For, while the arithmetic may be correct, we are trying to estimate the handicap of a player by using those of opponents whose handicaps we are also trying to estimate!

The wide scatter of points in Fig. 1 also adds uncertainty, being the result of the variable skill of both player and opponent. Where the estimated handicap is not the same as that assigned and recorded on the player's handicap card, the score corresponding to the latter can be read off the graph to show whether it is higher or lower than zero, and so indicate whether, and in what direction, it might need adjusting.

The same approach of plotting a player's score against the handicap of opponents can be made with handicap play. In this

case (Fig. 2, below) a line fitted to the points often depicts little or no trend, and lies close to a score of zero over the range of opponents' handicaps.

If, as happens occasionally, the line lies horizontally, but well above or below zero score (Fig. 3, below right), it can provide an added indication of the need to consider adjusting the player's handicap. This kind of graphical/statistical approach to handicapping using scores does, despite its shortcomings (no worse than any other method, including intuition), produce a good visual summary of relative performance, which can be of interest to both player and handicapper alike, within the limitations of the sampling conditions.







## National GC Seniors Morrow wins from local hero

**N**elson Morrow added the National Golf Croquet Veterans Championship trophy to his collection, after three days of competition for players of 60 years and over.

Morrow (pictured above), was joined by 27 other players from South Africa, Australia, and all over the UK who assembled to challenge for the Alan Oldham Memorial Trivet at Budleigh Salterton in mid-July.

The first two days were played as two blocks of 14 playing single 13 point games with the top four to qualify for the knock-out. The block winners were local

groundsman Rob Weeks (11/13) and the anager Morrow (12/13) from Hurlingham. All the quarter-finals went to three games with Morrow defeating club mate John Bowcott, and Chris Sheen (Colchester) beating Weeks.

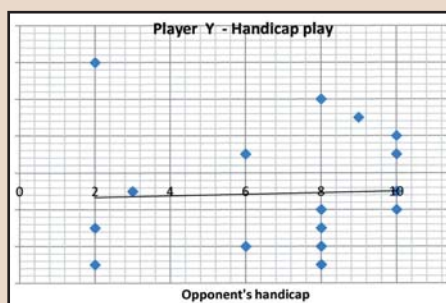
Liz Farrow (Sussex) beat Tom Weston (East Dorset), and Dick Strover taking out Australian David Wise

Farrow's good run came to an end in the semis at the hands of Morrow in straight games, but the other semi went right to the 13th hoop of the decider before Weeks got the better of Sheen.

A large group of locals were enthralled with the final and saw the first game go to Morrow 7-3 with some accurate play.

Weeks came back strongly in the second displaying the form he had produced in previous games to level the match 7-3.

The pair traded hoops in the decider with accurate clearing and long hoop running until hoop 11 when Morrow played some superb shots to win 7-5.



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