

The

Issue 364 October 2016

CROQUET

Gazette



From our files researched by Frances Colman

10 years ago - 2006



Chairman's column (by Ian Vincent; extracts from) – There was a good turnout of croquet players for the service of celebration for the life of John Beech, a founder and prime mover of the Pendle and Craven club. . .

This is my last column, as by the time you read it, I will have completed the maximum term of three years as Chairman of Council. At least I didn't have Tony Blair's problem of deciding when to go! . . . Behind the scenes there has been significant progress with improving IT systems and integrating them with the website. . . There has been a significant turnover in personnel: Klim Seabright and Liz Budworth have joined us in the Office, Bernard Neal was elected President, Gail Curry resumed as Editor and Chris Williams has agreed to take over as Archivist. . .

Support for women's events has declined to the extent that some are in abeyance, but golf croquet has continued to grow and the implications of this for both clubs and the Association need to be considered. . .

FEC – At the AGM of the Fédération Européenne de Croquet, held in Jersaye during the European Croquet Championships, Stephen Mulliner was elected as President. This follows the resignation of the former president Peter Payne, due to personal circumstances. The FEC owes a great deal of debt to Peter for his work in forming the FEC, and his continual assistance to European Croquet in the years since.

Chelmsford and Bentley – Chelmsford CC, established in 1990, relocated from (the town's) Central Park to Writtle College Sports Ground in 1997 . . . in 1999 came a merger with Bentley CC who had lost their ground. . . with about 40 members, what the club has lacked until this year has been a clubhouse – though on wet days the two existing small huts have provided some interesting moments!

Thanks to grants from the Croquet Association and Awards for All, all that has changed and a splendid new clubhouse was opened recently.

50 years ago - 1966



The Presidents' Cup - Congratulations to Dr W P Ormerod on his splendid triumph on his seventh attempt. . . .

He made his first appearance in 1958, finishing a clear fourth behind the great Triumvirs, John Solomon, who that year was first, H.O.Hicks, and E.P.C.Cotter.

An Article by Octavian in the Gazette of October 1958 divided the President's Cup into two equal groups of the governing class and the proletariat. Here is a quotation "A. I see you include William Ormerod in the governing class. B. Certainly: he fully deserved his fourth. He has all the enterprise, but something of the impetuosity proper to youth."

*To set the Cause above renown,
To love the game beyond the prize,
To honour, while you strike him down,
The foe that comes with fearless eyes.*

Sir Henry Newbold might well have been talking about croquet; certainly we all love the game; many were struck down this week, and it was usually the foe who appeared fearless!

The Challenge and Gilbey was played as an American Tournament for the first time, at Roehampton. Players in the five blocks were thus ensured a number of games. The Manager, Miss Lintern, had spent the previous week preparing a magnificent chart. All the competitors knew exactly when they would be needed, and this contributed to their enjoyment

Dear Sir,

In the published list of names of those invited to play in "Eights Week", the Selection Committee has, apparently, granted a most unusual privilege – i.e. the choice by a player to opt out of the First Eight in favour of playing in the Second Eight.

This seems to me to be a dangerous precedent to establish, since if it should be more widely practiced in the future, it would make nonsense of the time-honoured order of merit, as determined by the Selection Committee.

Yours faithfully,
D J V Hamilton-Miller

100 years ago - 1916



Sir Henry St.John Mildmay – It is with regret we have to announce the death of Major Sir H P St.John Mildmay, Bart., which took place, after a long illness, at Dogmersfield Park, Winchfield, Hants (now a hotel and the home of Dogmersfield CC - Ed). Sir Henry served many years in the Grenadier Guards, and saw active service in the Egyptian War of 1882 and the Suakin Expedition in 1885. He was also for a long period a most valued member of the Croquet Association and served on the Council from 1904 to 1915, occupying for some years the position of Chairman of the Gazette Committee.

East Dorset – The feature of the (August) Tournament was the consistent form shown by the Rev. L.E.W.Thoroton, who took part in no less than four finals, including an extra event of American Singles which generally finds a place in the programme down here, and for which there were 18 competitors.

Dear Sir, I should be obliged if any of your readers could tell me **how to get rid of worms** in a croquet lawn, fairly cheaply.

Yours faithfully, J.L.Peach, Malton

Dear Sir, Having seen the generous response that Mrs Lawrence's appeal to the readers of "The Croquet Gazette" met with, may I venture to appeal to them on behalf of the **V.A.D. Hospital**, of which I am Commandant. We are in constant need of croquet balls, mallets and hoops, but most urgently balls, as the play of our convalescent patients is at times a little violent. . . . May Smith, Commandant Horbling V.A.D. Hospital, Folkingham, Lincs.

The Committee of the **Sussex County C< Club**, Southwick, regrets that, owing to the war, many of the club's 13 courts are not being used. Members of the CA living beyond the 10-mile radius are therefore invited to become temporary members at the following special terms: Day, 2/- ; Week, 7/- ; Two Months 21/- ; or for the season 2 guineas. The lawns and courts are in first-class condition. Apply:- H. King, Secretary, 24 Lower Rock Gardens, Brighton.

Editorial

Taking a leaf out our Chairman's book, I name drop that I'm writing this amid the excitement of heading off to the Croquet Club of Corfu once again for the Greek Open Championship.

By the time you read this, I and 23 other players, plus nine non-playing partners, will be taking our last chance to enjoy some croquet under the summer sun.

The annual trip is always to be looked forward to, and comes as a nice finale to a sometimes over hectic, but nonetheless thoroughly enjoyable season.

This Gazette is unashamedly all about competitive croquet, covering as it does, the culmination of many of the CA administered season-long competitions.

Missing out this time, because of the printing deadline, are the CA's inter-club competitions, and whilst one could have attempted to squeeze them into this issue, that would hardly have done them justice, and the same would have applied to the severe editing needed elsewhere to accommodate them. All will be reported next time, which will give you some actual croquet reports to enjoy amongst the news of meetings and other off-court goings on.

I was about to congratulate the winners of our top National events when it struck me that it was surely just coincidental that the victorious all have nicknames and perhaps

this is a crucial element of my own croquet that is missing. So hearty congratulations indeed to 'The Beast', 'Hoopgod', 'Digger' and 'Pope' for their achievements (and well done Messrs Maugham, Hopgood, Burridge and Moberly too).

The Gazette letters pages often provide the spark for some lively debate and this issue is likely to be no exception, with two topics being kicked-off.

There is a proposal for opponents to sign handicap cards to minimise errors (ooh, I can hear the blood boiling in some quarters already). And then 'traditionalists' will be horrified at the thought of coloured clothing being allowed in tournament play. I look forward to your responses.

By way of demonstrating neutrality on this second idea at least, below you see an 'all white' Editor, following on from the floodlit 'red and blue' me last time. :O)



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The
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Gazette



Issue 364 October 2016

Front cover: The new Golf Croquet English National Singles Champion Ian Burridge is a picture of concentration at Hurlingham.

This page: The Editor at Nottingham, sporting new headgear in the shape of a white crocheted hat, made for him by Roger Goldring's granddaughter Katie. How kind Katie, thank you! And the Chairman looking back on his two years in office (Photographs by Chris Roberts and Frances Colman).

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Chairman's Column

I will not be the first (or last) Chairman of Council to observe the speed with which two years of office have passed. I have decided to follow general precedence and not take on a third year, which is the maximum allowed by our constitution. In these circumstances, this column is a last chance to share my views and then I hand you over to the next in line.

Looking back at my previous columns, I seem to have avoided repeating myself too blatantly. I have referred a couple of times to the history and cultural significance of the sport of croquet. This significance struck me again when, earlier this year, I made one of my occasional forays into the literary world and listened to the 60th anniversary performance of "Look Back In Anger" on BBC Radio 4.

In railing against the older generations, the character Jimmy makes reference to the Edwardian era being characterized by "all home-made cakes and croquet" (cue opportunity for Channel 4 to make use of the grass beside the Bake-Off tent!).

Whether controversy over John Prescott and his team playing croquet on an away day, or the prevalence of croquet sets on the shop shelves of summer toys for children, croquet appears as a meme that persists despite the multitude of changes that sweep through society.

We are two years away from a significant anniversary for The Championships, Wimbledon (tennis): 150 years since the founding of the host club, the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club. This club, though, began as the All England Croquet Club, so we are a part of the history of that great sporting institution and I very much hope that we will be able to support the AELTCC in their celebrations.

In trying to nurture this precious gem

that is our sport, I have enjoyed my two years, not least because Ian Vincent is such a reliable and efficient Hon. Secretary.

I have learnt much about the breadth of issues that matter to you, the membership of the CA. Thank you for approaching me with your varied passions and concerns.

I very much hope that all will go to plan at the AGM and you vote Brian Shorney as my successor.

He has been a diligent Chairman of Management Committee and will be a safe pair of hands to oversee the early life of our implemented membership changes.



Tim King

British Citizen Award for Richard Field



Richard Field, chairman and founder of Bishop Monkton CC, has been awarded a British Citizen Award for services to the community, which in his case included the formation of the croquet club in the North Yorkshire village.

Richard received his award at a ceremony at the House of Lords in July and was among 34 winners from around the UK.

British Citizen Awards are made to 'exceptional individuals who have made a real difference to the lives of others'.

The presentation of medals and scrolls of honour to the winners was followed by an open top lap of honour around central London and an evening ceremony at Church House, Westminster, where winners were praised by the group's Patron Sarah, Duchess of York, and interviewed by TV presenter Fiona Phillips.

Richard started the Bishop Monkton club in 2007 using a patch of rough agricultural land with borrowed hoops, mallets and balls, and orange boxes for seats.

Today the club has around 70 members and has obtained funds through fund-raising and grants, including two from The Croquet Association, to erect its own

clubhouse and, two years ago, to undertake a £17,500 ground restoration programme after repeated flooding threatened the future of the club.

Bishop Monkton CC currently has two teams in the Yorkshire League, and also plays a large number of friendlies during each season.

Richard also started a table tennis club in the village, which now has over a hundred members.

He also founded, and now edits, an award-winning village website, which since its formation in 2005 has attracted over 320,000 visitors to its 35 sections and 100 pages of reading (including a section on croquet, of course!).

Richard also started and still co-ordinates the Bishop Monkton Life Savers, which comprises a team of first responder volunteers who provide round-the-clock cover in case anyone in the village suffers a heart attack or other life-threatening crisis.

Richard commented: 'I was, of course, very



honoured and thrilled to receive the award, but really this is an award which should be shared by all the people who have supported me over the last ten years'.

Photographs: Richard Field receiving his British Citizen Award medal from Adrian Russell, Group Deputy Chairman of the awards sponsors Pall-Ex, at a presentation in London (image by Beattie Communications). Richard, who is a past winner of the CA's Grass roots competition, here in action at Bishop Monkton CC.

Cobbold becomes GC Champ Ref



Ian Cobbold has passed the on-court test to become the 21st GC Championship Referee, since the scheme was launched 18 months ago. Congratulations to Ian!

Martin French, Examining Referee



Escape to the Country to find croquet of TV twice!

A little while ago, the Gazette carried some reports of 'Croquet on TV' sightings, and it's always nice to hear from Members about this.

Your Editor has been trying to find room for news of a 'spot' by **Martin French**, who earlier in the year reported another 'Croquet on TV' coincidence. As daytime TV shows tend to get repeated regularly, here are a couple to look out for.

Martin says, 'On 14 and 15 April, both of the episodes of "Escape to the Country" – a lightweight property show in prime daytime TV scheduling – featured side articles on croquet'.

The first was at Wells Palace CC, in front of Wells cathedral. It started about 16 minutes in, and ran for about three minutes.

The late Ian Telfer of the club (*who sadly passed away shortly after this broadcast*) gave a clear explanation of the differences between AC and GC, then the property-hunters taking part in the show, tried some GC. A brief synopsis of the history of the game was also covered. (The episode was first shown two years ago).

The following day it was at Kingston Maurward CC in Dorset, and was a new episode. This one was slightly shorter at two minutes and aired at 19 minutes in to the program. Bob Field give an introduction to GC.

What's good is that both pieces were quite positive and serious "here's something you might like to try" pieces.

Good work!



Tibble steps up to become GC International Performance Director

The CA is delighted to have appointed **Lionel Tibble** as its Golf Croquet International Performance Director (GC IPD).

This is a companion role to that performed for AC by Ian Burrige and from which the development squads and regional pods have been created.

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

Lionel will report to the Chairman of the Management Committee and is by right a member of the Coaching Committee.

The GC IPD will:

- **be responsible** for England's performance at International Singles and Team GC events.



- **create and manage** a sustainable International Pathway to take talented beginners through to elite performers.

- **work with** all parts of the CA necessary to ensure support of improved international performance.

The role is expected to influence recruitment strategies, the tournament programme, international

matches, selection policy, and bursary funding; and it complements the existing activities of the AC IPD, and Coaching and other Council Committees.

Congratulations and thanks to Lionel for stepping up and we wish him all speed and great luck in this valuable new role.

Scots beat the CA in annual match

The Scottish Croquet Association retained the Glasgow Quach with a 16-8 win over the CA in the annual match held, this season, at Middlesbrough,



coming back from almost certain defeat (Morrison v Killick and Chang v Surgenor come to mind).

David Magee was the only

player to win all three singles.

One singles game used 14-point format (Advanced - as were all games), to give a player time to catch his train home.

The Scots had won the match before the last round of singles started, but everyone was happy to continue playing - with the CA at last producing better results, but too late!

CA: Eugene Chang (0, Sheffield), Andrew Killick (0, Middlesbrough), Robert Essler (1, Pendle), Peter Wilson (1.5, Fylde), Liz Wilson (1.5, Fylde), Roger Staples (3.5, Middlesbrough).

SCA: Campbell Morrison (-1, Balgreen), David Magee (-0.5, Cheltenham), John Surgenor (0, Glasgow), Alan Wilson (1.5, Balgreen), Brian Durward (6, Glasgow), David Houston (7, Meadows).

reports manager Charles Waterfield.

With two minus players in their ranks, the Scots were always likely to present a bit of a challenge to their North of England hosts, although there was some hope in the B class area.

In a departure from custom, we occupied the first day, which was miserably wet, with the two rounds of doubles, leaving three singles rounds for the Sunday (with an earlier start). This arrangement seemed popular, as players had time together for a relaxing evening meal, before heading off to their hosts or hotels.

Thankfully Day 2 was better weather-wise and we actually ended in sunshine for the group photo. Quite a few games were close-run affairs (indeed two 'golden hoops' featured), or were the result of one player

England Mac Team Announcement

Debut for Hopgood



The MacRobertson Shield Selection Committee has selected the following team to play for England at Mission Hills, Palm Springs, California, USA, from 17 April to 4 May 2017:

- Jamie Burch**
- James Death**
- James Hopgood**
- David Maugham**
- Stephen Mulliner**
- Samir Patel (Captain)**

The team sees one change from the last line-up for the Mac in New Zealand in 2014, with James Hopgood making his debut in this event, in place of the unavailable Robert Fulford.

Hopgood has represented England and Great Britain before but selection for the Mac is the top AC team honour. Congratulations to him as well as the others selected.

The opposition will again be Australia, USA and New Zealand (and England



is likely to play them in that order). A full preview of The MacRobertson Shield Series will appear in the February or April Gazette.

Photographs by Phil Girdlestone

Ideas needed to teach the joys of AC before it's too late

Dear Editor,

For those of us who play Association Croquet, it is a really satisfying game, demanding mastery of strategic options, skills and tactics. We love it.

However, in our club, we find that the perception of our GC players is that AC has laws that are 'impossible' to understand and is socially unfriendly (players sit out by themselves for ages). 'Why', they say, 'bother

with it, given that we so enjoy GC?' I would guess that our experience is not unique and unless, nationally, we find ways to make the teaching of AC fun and able to be quickly grasped, the number of players will gradually, but inexorably, dwindle.

I am sure that many clubs have successfully solved this problem; we need to share ideas. My suggestion is that those with the experience of successful teaching

ideas and methods, write in to the Gazette, explaining what it is that they do.

This would then provide the basis for the Gazette to publish a series of articles which could be used as templates for clubs' teaching methods. We would all benefit.

Can your readers spare the time to share their thoughts please?

**Clive Tompsett,
Chairman, Littleton (Winchester) CC**



Sarah Hayes coaching at SWCA, Budleigh (photo by Rob Weeks)

Dave Kibble, Chairman of the Coaching Committee replies:

I am grateful for Clive for raising this issue and giving me a brief opportunity to stand on my favourite soap box.

First though, I fully endorse what is written and agree it's a problem and Clive's suggestion is one aspect of the solution, but there's more to say. Both main forms of the game, when played competitively, need some thinking as well as physical skills and our recruitment activities should emphasise this aspect to attract people who want to play and think – a key feature of the sport we all love that makes it distinctive.

Competitive croquet rewards effort put into analysing tactical situations and improving physical skills.

One could refute the claim that AC is "socially unfriendly" by saying that in a double-banked AC game, two players are sitting out with nothing to do but socialise, or that competitive GC players often find it tiring to be on their feet all day, but it is a fundamental difference between the two games that, as in snooker, AC has one player concentrating on playing a long break, while the other is not involved.

If someone knows about AC but finds GC more stimulating, that's fine; however, if they are truly unable to grasp AC, then they are probably unable to grasp competitive GC either and are really a social member.

Whilst there's nothing wrong with that if they contribute to the running of the club and support competitive play, very many don't, and some of those begin to question

the high fees to maintain facilities they don't need for social play.

The real problem though, goes back to the initial introduction and self-selection of new club members: a sports club must emphasise competitive play from the start but, while recruiting anyone who can hold a mallet pays the bills in the short-term, this leads to a decline of AC and of competitive GC (which is less obvious).

The decline in AC is a real phenomenon that the CA has analysed and has made a number of recommendations that its committees (including mine) have yet to fully implement.

Some fear 'telling clubs what to do' but as governing body, the CA really should take a lead and publicise and share good practices for the clubs to adopt (or not) as they wish.

Some of this comes down to a club's ethos: once a club has allowed clearly separate AC and GC groups to develop, they have a problem.

Make every effort to nip in the bud any running down of one game or the other.

That's not to say that all players must play both codes – each to his own.

Emphasise competitive play – maybe bring in events so that all members see fully-competitive play in action.

We published a Growth and Recruitment Strategy paper www.croquet.org.uk?p=ca/schemes/RecStrategy and a Working Party subsequently recommended actions to help clubs generate more interest in

Association Croquet. This delivered a good set of recommendations www.croquet.org.uk?p=clubs/info/acRegeneration, the main one being to introduce outsiders with a simplified AC (Garden Croquet).

We do need to push these messages out to clubs. As far as I know, no clubs have been successful in 'converting' social GC players to AC, but I'd love to be wrong.

The committee I chair (Coaching) bears a significant responsibility to promote these recommendations and we've defined actions but have insufficient resources to action them – please see my coaching column (*on page 10*) article for what you can do to help keep the sport we love alive.

Note also that the AC coaching manual sets out a series of lessons – it's available from the AC coaching section of the website.

BC then AD (Oh no!)

Dear Editor,

In your September editorial (*Gazette 363*) you were fretting about the meaning of life (before, during and after croquet).

You should put aside such ontological issues and follow the advice of the sports psychologists i.e. "focus on the here and now" or "stay in the moment".

Every schoolboy knows that BC (Before Croquet) is rapidly followed by AD (Actually Dominoes). Not much of a choice!

So enjoy it while you can.

John Dawson, Chester CC



Best practice: Arthur Lindly completes his card straight after his game at Hurlingham (photo by Chris Roberts)

Strat Liddiard, Chairman of the Handicap Committee replies:

Dear Editor,

Thank you for asking me to respond to the letter from Andrew Wise of Bristol CC.

The reason for asking Managers to check Handicap Cards was that we suspected that there were a number of incorrect cards, and wished to know the extent of the problem. There were errors in about 25% of cards. Most of the errors we have found are minor mathematical ones, and

Handicap cards: Let us learn from Golf

Dear Editor,

Though not a tournament manager or handicapper myself, I question whether the requirement to check the handicap cards of all tournament entrants is the best solution to ensuring accuracy of records.

Why not have score cards signed off by opponents, as in that other great sport of golf?

If the croquet score card contained an extra column for opponent initials, then that would encourage each player to:

- (1) bring their card to every club match as well as every tournament;
- (2) calculate and record the score line directly at the end of each game;

very seldom has there been a resultant change in playing handicap.

Nonetheless it is unfair on the opponent if a player is playing off the wrong handicap and avoiding these silly mistakes is a good idea. As you point out, the checking adds work to the busy life of a tournament manager, but I still think it right that he should ask for the cards at the start of play because people often forget to bring their cards with them, and that is, I suspect, where errors are made.

(3) agree with the opponent on the index adjustment;

(4) note and record any handicap adjustment.

Tournament handicappers (who may also be the busy managers) would simply confirm any handicap changes - although any previous games not initialled for any reason, should be verified by club or tournament handicappers as appropriate.

A bit less work for busy people, a bit more trust in the players: what is the disadvantage apart from a small extra column on the score card?

Andrew Wise, Bristol CC

As to signing-off cards at the end of a game as in golf; I personally agree with you that this is the way forward, but not all croquet players agree. David Magee wrote very powerfully against. I think it is the duty of the CA and its committees, both to follow and lead the thinking of all croquet players; I will put your suggestion on the agenda for the next Handicap Committee.

If others read this reply and have strong feelings either way, can they let me know: stratmale@gmail.com



What do we want, Whites or Colours? Let the debate begin . . .

Dear Editor,

I have heard some debate about the wearing of whites at tournaments whilst visiting other clubs, and several ideas have been raised:

- each club could have a particular coloured T-shirt or fleece which they could wear at tournaments
- the clubs which hold tournaments could give the players freedom to wear whites or not
- although spectators enjoy seeing players wearing white, when it comes to photos in the Gazette, it makes a welcome change to see players wearing brighter colours.
- Many players hold whites dear and would hate to see change, but we must listen to what the members want.

Erica Malaiperuman, Nailsea CC



Photographs (clockwise from top left): Mike Town, Andy Dibben, Raghu Iyer and Richard Peperell (all by Chris Roberts)

Ian Parkinson 1943 - 2016

Parkey' won his final game of croquet on the morning of 3 August and died of a cardiac arrest watching his other favourite game, cricket, that afternoon.



Ian was a sportsman and a competitor. After soccer, hockey, running and cricket, he took up croquet around 2001 when he became less nimble.

Soon one club (Watford) was not enough and he joined Surbiton, playing in competitions at both clubs and winning Surbiton's advanced handicap competition three times from 2003-5.

He played for Surbiton in the Mary Rose, Watford in other competitions and Hertfordshire in the Inter-Counties.

He played 1,000 games in tournaments, winning eight class 2 events. At his best he was a scratch player around 270 in the world rankings.

Croquet was a huge part of Ian's life. He was a regular winter player, always in shorts and shirtsleeves – he didn't feel the cold (one lady remarked that she had

Obituary

never seen him with his trousers on) and was always back on court within days of his latest operation (four artificial limb joints amongst others).

In school chess he played board 1 with Keith Wylie on board 2. His croquet combined the skills of a batsman with the analytical approach of a county schools' chess champion, consistent and accurate if a little slow (all the opposite of his bowling), choosing shots to maximise the percentages.

Ian began training as a barrister before switching to become a Chartered Secretary and Company Registrar at ICI. He never lost his advocacy skills. Perhaps he should have continued his legal training – he would have been formidable at the bar.

If you wanted to argue tactics, which he loved, you had better have your thoughts marshalled.

Ian's croquet was competitive, but always fair and played for enjoyment of the competition, companionship and a beer or two. Watford's tour involves visiting hostelrys assessed for the Parkinson real ale seal of approval. And frequently re-assessed. Did I say 'formidable at the bar'?

He also put a lot back into the game,



serving on the Council of the CA for six years and on the Tournament and Handicap committees, chairing the latter.

Pint in hand or not, there was something about Ian that endeared him to people.

He was warmly regarded on the circuit and larger than life.

During one match the opposition ladies amused themselves by preparing character assessments of the Watford team: 'Simon's a very good player, but quirky. There's Bill. He's good, but a bit mean with it. John's quite nice. Mark's nice most of the time and there's Ian.....he's luuvly'. RIP Parkey.

Mark Homan, Watford Cassiobury CC

The CA Shop All you need for croquet

New this year:

PFC Hoopmaker Mallets

The CA Shop is now the agent for
PFC Hoopmaker Mallets

Made in Australia, these precision-made mallets from aluminium and alloy. They are designed to require less effort to hit the ball and therefore improve accuracy.

The makers have patented their design and aim to provide the highest precision manufactured croquet mallet. As each mallet is perfectly balanced and accurately manufactured to within 90% of one thousandth of an inch, they are completely consistent. They will not absorb moisture or change shape.

www.croquet.org.uk/shop
01242 233555



More Letters to the Editor

Husband stays schtum

Dear Editor

So there I was on the Isle of Wight, double-banked on lawn 2. The start of the game was quite bitty but my opponent picked up her mallet and suddenly sparked into life and got a good break going.

I became aware of a certain amount of "kerfuffle" off the lawn.

Out came the rules book – no answer thereout came a wedge of commentary papers....no answer there either.

Meanwhile my opponent was in the middle of a good run and was heading for four-back and beyond (handicap game dear reader).

So what's the problem I hear you ask? Well my opponent had in fact not "picked up her mallet" but that of a player in the other game. There is an important piece of information missing however. The other mallet belonged to her husband (and the head was two inches longer!).

I have two questions. Would you really interfere if your wife was undertaking possibly the best break of her season (Peter Moore [below] wisely took positive inaction)? Would the CA have been willing to pick up the costs of divorce proceedings, had he pointed it out? Funny, but suddenly we couldn't find a Ref anywhere!

Another good "ticket to Ryde"

Klim Seabright, Cheltenham CC



Kibble's GC extra turns article useful

Dear Editor,

As a Club Coach, I shall find David Kibble's coaching article, on using GC Extra Turns (Gazette 363), a very useful aide memoire. Especially worth reinforcing are his reminders that using a free shot only to delay losing a hoop is to throw it away, and that careful assessment of the opponent's ability is an indicator of whether taking

Swindon's help for Parkinson's Group is much appreciated

Dear Editor,

Swindon CC has always been a community based club and, over our 30 year life, many local organisations and non-croquet clubs have been introduced to our sport. Many of these clubs come to us via the local authority or health groups within the borough, such as 'Healthy Lives' and both senior and junior diabetes groups.

We also attend two Access Sports Days that are run by the borough for people in the education system with physical disabilities and those with learning difficulties. There are no less than 16 other groups that also enjoy a day on our croquet courts throughout the season.

We have many members who have Parkinson's Disease and in conversation with them, I have been struck by the pleasure that they get from croquet.

They tell me that their medical staff have also noticed the benefit croquet brings to their patients, so I asked our member, Colin Freegard, to report his experience first-hand and am pleased to enclose his letter (*see an edited copy right*).

I am sure that there are many croquet clubs around the country that would welcome such groups, and hopefully, as in our case, this will lead to an increased membership (30 to 70 in the last two years).

John Small, Chairman, Swindon CC

'A study in apprehension'

Sidmouth's Peter Miller thought to share this. It is by his grand-daughter Katie who presented it to him on Father's Day.

Katie's father is Anthony Miller, who some years ago, presented Surbiton with the ARK Trophy that they use for their popular end of season open Advanced Handicap tournament.



an extra turn is likely to yield a crucial advantage.

David does not include the need to plan the use of a free shot into stroke selection: perhaps because it is a truism not worthy of reiteration. But too often I find that the less experienced player will decide to use an extra turn only after, and as an attempt to compensate for, a poorly executed shot.

This can result in what has been called the 'windscreenwiper' scenario (or "I'll hit the beggar this time"), when a bit of forethought would have enabled a hard to miss clearance of the opponent's ball.

I look forward to a further piece on the gameplan necessary to counter an opponent with free shots in his locker.

Peter Lowe, Tyneside CC

The Coaching Column by Dave Kibble

As the season comes to an end, thoughts turn to CA committee work.

In last December's issue (*Gazette 359*) I wrote of the vision of the Coaching Committee and the actions we wanted to take to improve access to coaching and to broaden the coaching available.

We've set about analysing where our coaches are, and in the coming season we will look to fill the regional gaps.

We are working on a syllabus and have defined the aspects of the games and broken those down into lessons.

We are thinking about how the very successful Croquet Academies can be expanded to better serve players in the north of the country.

There is much work in progress but still more work needing people to get involved and help.

Our committee programme is set out on our committee actions web page www.croquet.org.uk?p=members/docs/committees/coaching/focus - all good ideas that will help to transform coaching and, in turn, improve the quality of play and increase the competitive membership of clubs.

However, the key theme (*see the letters page 6 for why*) of Getting People Started remains languishing for want of someone to lead it - specifically to ask around the clubs, find the common themes in their replies and disseminate good practices back to the club coaches, commissioning any support materials identified.

I am confident that the remainder of the committee's initiatives are in good hands and moving forward, though, with more people helping, they all could move much faster.

Whilst it's run by committees, **'The CA' is us - every reader of this magazine.**

We share a passion for our sport and I know that many people want to get stuck in and help but don't have much time, and certainly they don't want to spend it sitting on committees talking about stuff for hours on end.

Newly qualified Coaches

I am pleased to congratulate the following two members who have earned coaching qualifications recently:

Graham Tucker (Sussex Co.):- GC Coach
Ann Beard (Hamptworth):- Club Coach

Well here is my challenge to you: take a look at the list of things that have to be done and volunteer to help or lead at least one of those activities. You won't have to do any more than you want, and I won't ask you to sit in boring meetings for hours.

Our sport needs you to step up and help make it better.

You'll find my contact details on the inside back cover - I truly look forward to hearing from you, no matter how little time you have available to help our sport improve, I promise that I will do my best to spend it wisely.

Solo practice routines

As winter approaches, some of you have access to a club that keeps a lawn or two open for use but you probably don't want to be out in the cold and not playing, so here are some solo practice routines you might like to adopt:

Shooting/Clearing

Get two sets of balls, place four in a row and the other four in a row two yards away. Then hit the balls, one after the other in the middle, then set-up again and repeat.

Each time you hit all four, increase the distance by one yard. If you miss more than one, decrease the distance by a yard. In this way, you will determine and improve the distance that you are confident of hitting.

Make sure that you stalk every shot, and play a consistent stroke.

AC key skill

With two balls a yard apart on the boundary next to a hoop, take-off, rush to the hoop, run the hoop, rush back to the boundary, repeat. Count the number of hoops you run and improve it by analysing what lets you down.

For those of you playing AC and approaching or beyond B-Class, challenge yourself to play a 2-ball break starting by taking croquet in front of hoop 1 - record and improve how many hoops you run in three consecutive attempts.

Make sure you understand why you broke down and practice that shot several times in succession until you get it right twice.

And another exercise is to play with three balls, play a break keeping one ball near the peg, rushing to it after each hoop.

Dave Kibble
Chairman of the Coaching Committee

Ask the Ref

Roy from Ryde asks the Ref . . .

Who'd have thought the off-side rule held any secrets?

At the All-England GC Handicap Final at Ryde (*see page 14*), it took four referees to agree a decision on the following:

The players were contesting hoop 10 with secondary colours.

The correct striker (Green/Brown) played White in error and incidentally promoted Green past the halfway line towards hoop 11.

The players agreed that a 'wrong ball' had been played and that the 'full penalty' should result.

The opponent (White/Pink) elected not to replace balls and scored hoop 10 with Pink.

A referee was then called to decide if Green was offside.

The spirit of the rules might suggest it should be, but Rule 10b3 rules an exemption by virtue of contact with an opponent's ball. There is no qualification either as to who played the opponent's ball or which ball 'caused' the contact.

Did we get it right?

~

'The Ref' (*in this case Martin French, Chairman of the GC Rules Committee*)

replies:

As described, then yes, Green is on-side because of 10b3. The time for WP to wonder whether Green would be offside is before they either decide to have the balls replaced, or before they run the hoop with Pink.

Those two options give WP the opportunity to benefit from GB's error.

Unless Green's original position was blocking Pink's shot at hoop 11, then it seems to me it would have been best for WP to have the balls replaced, then decide whether to restart with Pink or White.

We all have to consider whether our opponents' balls are near the next hoop lawfully or not, before we decide whether to attempt a hoop.

Thanks Ref!



“Off-side!” ~ Are you sure about that?

When is a GC ball over the halfway line **NOT** an offside ball? ~ Martin French explains

A recent incident highlighted that the four exceptions to when a ball is offside in GC, despite being beyond the relevant halfway line, are not always remembered.

These are all set out in **Rule 10(b)**.

Rather than just re-state the rule here, it may help to think about any ball which is now over the halfway line when a hoop has just been run by working through this “**check list**” in order.

If the answer to any of these questions is “yes”, then the ball is lawfully onside:

Question 1: Did the ball arrive there in the same stroke as the hoop was run?

If so, it is ONSIDE [this is 10(b)1].

For example, Black cannons another ball through the current hoop and ends up beyond the halfway line. Black is NOT offside, even if the ball which scored the hoop was Black’s partner ball, Blue. This can be a deliberate tactic in high-level play, especially at hoops 2 and 8.

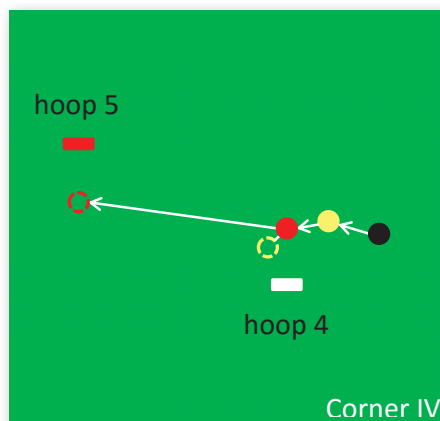
Question 2: Did the ball arrive beyond the halfway line in a stroke played by the opponent?

If so, it is ONSIDE [10(b)2].

Take this real case: Hoop 4 was being contested; Red and Yellow were both close to the playing side of hoop 4, with Black a little towards the near boundary. Black hit

Yellow, which in turn cannoned into Red sending it close to hoop 5. As a result of the cannon on Red, Yellow stopped dead in position to run hoop 4. In the next stroke, Yellow then ran hoop 4, with Red already in a lawful position at the next hoop, as it had arrived at hoop 5 as a result of a stroke played by the opponent (in this case, the player of Black).

The full wording of Rule 10(b)(2) also includes a wrong ball or fault committed by the opponent. So, if BaBs (the player of Black and Blue) mistakenly uses Red to clear Yellow up to hoop 2 and Red stops in position to run hoop 1, RaY (player of Red and Yellow) can forestall, elect to play with Red and score hoop 1; Yellow is not offside for hoop 2 because it is lawfully beyond the halfway line.



Question 3: Did the ball arrive beyond the halfway line following any contact with an opponent’s ball?

If so, it’s ONSIDE [10(b)3].

So if Black hits Yellow which then cannons Blue beyond the halfway line, Blue is not offside because it was in contact with the opponent’s ball which moved it beyond the halfway line.

Question 4: Has the ball already been directed to a penalty spot and not yet been played back into the game?

If so, it is an OUTSIDE AGENCY [9(d)] and must be played back in from the penalty spot it was originally directed to [10(b)4].

An example: When you run hoop 5 with Blue, you direct the opponent’s offside Yellow ball to the West penalty spot. You might then regret this choice if hoop 6 is run in the next two turns by Red or Black, as now Yellow will be rather closer to hoop 7 than you would like. However, you cannot now change your mind and re-direct Yellow to be played from the East penalty spot instead. It is always worth thinking of this possibility, especially after hoops 5 or 11.

So ask yourself these four questions in sequence, and stop when you get a “yes” – it will make it easier to remember all four exceptions.

Martin French.

Chairman, GC Rules committee

The steady growth of GC C-Level events ~ the case for more . . .

Interest in C-Level tournaments has seen a steady growth amongst higher handicapped players over the past few years and Hamptworth’s prolific tournament manager, **Richard Jenkins** (pictured right), has been championing the thought of an organised Series of such events for some time.

Jenkins said “*The demand for this level of competition is, in my opinion, very high indeed and should be encouraged nationally*”

His latest C-Level (handicaps 7-12) was over-subscribed yet again, and this time round, Hilary Bird (8, Guildford) and Peter Phillips (8, Hamptworth) were victorious in a split two-day event.

Jenkins continued with further encouraging news: “*For October and next March, I have introduced 16 player GC level*

play tournaments where the entries will be split into two class groups, and when I advertised these events in August, I had 21 entries in the first 24 hours. Both weekends have been full with reserve lists for some time”.

~

Confirming Jenkins’ view, **Dick Stover reports** that Colchester held their first C-Level tournament, (handicaps 6-10), and that too was oversubscribed. 16 played in groups of four, with everyone then progressing to a knockout which was seeded by group position. The semis saw Stuart Mosley, in his first tournament, beat Patricia Drinkwater 7-3 and Paul Home (Mid Suffolk) beat Duncan Brinkley (Sudbury) 7-6. The final was an exciting best-of-three won by Home 7-3, 6-7, 7-4.

“*This was such a successful tournament*

with players on a waiting list, that we will definitely run it again next season. It would be good if we could turn tournaments like this into a National Series”, said Stover.



Golf Croquet Championships

The English National Singles Championship (Ascot Cup)

Super accurate Burridge is surprise winner

Ian Burridge won the English National Singles Championship (Ascot Cup) for the first time, *writes Rachel Rowe.*

The 16 strong field that assembled at Hurlingham, comprised - winners, finalists and losing semi-finalists from qualifying tournaments across the country.

Saturday's block play comprised three best-of-three matches, and despite a chilly 10am start all play was in fine weather, and finished well before sunset.

Some excellent play from the lower seeds caused a few upsets. Nick Cheyne beat Rachel Rowe to take the second qualifying place in Block B and Block D had a three way tie for its second place!

Ian Burridge, the second seed in the block, had won all of his matches, and the remaining three players had all won one match against each other. Chris Roberts pipped Pierre Beaudry and Mark Daley for the remaining qualifying spot.

All matches in the first round of Sunday's knock-out went to the full three games. In the bottom half of the draw, recently crowned Doubles Champions Tobi Savage and John Paul Moberly were pitted against each other, with the latter prevailing for the privilege of playing Burridge in the semis.

Cheyne continued his good form to beat Lionel Tibble, for a semis match-up with Stephen Mulliner.



Most players took the opportunity to enjoy the tasty Hurlingham Sunday BBQ lunch on the terrace and there must have been something in the food, as both semis were pretty snappy, both finishing in two games, leaving Burridge v Mulliner to

contest this year's final.

Meanwhile, the growing crowd were enjoying the remaining plate and consolation games. Savage's hard hitting drew the most attention wherever he was in action, with his successful 5/6th play-off v Tibble having more spectators than the first game of the final!

Moberly won the 3rd/4th place game with a tight 10-9 victory over Cheyne and Beaudry beat David Bell 10-8 in the final of the Plate.

Moberly set up live video streaming for the final for the enjoyment of those elsewhere, as Burridge and Mulliner's hoop trading in the first game of the final, was only broken when Burridge ran hoop 11 down to 12.

The second game was rather different; Burridge took a very early lead, actually going 4-0 up, before Mulliner dug his heels in to get back to 4-3. But Burridge quickly widened the gap again, and won 7-5 and with that became English National Singles Champion for 2017.

Congratulations Ian!

The English National Doubles Championship (Ranelagh Cup)

Youngsters see off veteran pair

The new names John-Paul Moberly and Tobi Savage will be engraved on the National Doubles 'Ranelagh Cup' following their victory at Hurlingham *reports Tony Bingham.*

Nine pairs entered this season's event and after an all-play-all block the following emerged to contest best-of-three semi-finals: Moberly and Savage (with 7 block wins) versus Sue Lightbody and Lionel Tibble (4); and veterans Chris Sheen & Dick Strover (7) versus Dulwich duo Pierre Beaudry and Guy Scurfield (6).

Moberly and Savage were taken to a third game before winning a long and tight contest 7-1, 6-7, 7-4, while Sheen and Strover continued their impressive form, winning 7-6, 7-6.

The final looked to be going comfortably Moberly and Savage's way when they won the first game 7-3, but in game two Sheen and Strover came back strongly, taking a 3-1 lead. There followed a titanic struggle for hoop 5 with many long clearances from all players.

Eventually the dynamic younger pair evened at 3-3 and the game continued closely fought all the way to hoop 13, with Moberly's reliable clearances and effective hoop-running balancing Savage's brilliance but occasional misses.

Savage had the last laugh with an easy hoop 13 run after their opponents' desperate final clearance attempts.

The Ranelagh Cup was presented to Moberly and Savage by GC Tournament Committee Chairman John Bowcott.

Photographs: Ian Burridge with the Ascot Cup and different jumps shots from Stephen Mulliner (right) and Tobi Savage. (images by Chris Roberts)



and Series tournaments

The Selectors' Eights (Musk's Cup & Kate Jones Memorial Trophy)

Moberly's come back caps his terrific season

The GC Eights this season were both superbly competitive events, attended by 16 high-quality players, **writes Tobi Savage.**

We saw an exciting blend of seasoned tournament players, and faces relatively new to the competitive GC scene, across both tournaments. The standard of play was generally very good, which gives high hopes for the future of competitive GC.



1st Eight

The 1st Eight event (for the Musk's Cup) saw three of the four top seeds proceed to the knockout, with fifth seed Pierre Beaudry joining the top three, thanks to his victory over an on-form Ian Burridge.

Credit has to go to Nick Archer for his performance throughout the weekend; according to feedback from multiple competitors, he shot spectacularly well.

It wasn't quite enough to make the results go his way, but he was able to take a match off the second seed very comfortably, as well as giving the fourth seed an upset!

This was testament to the standard of play throughout the weekend.

An interesting mix of results at the top end saw top seed Stephen Mulliner finish third, second seed Tobi Savage conform to his rank, and third seed John-Paul Moberly soar to the top spot, having dropped only one match against Savage.

Mulliner had beaten Savage 7-6, 7-5 in the last match of the block phase, and when the pair were drawn together again in the semis Mulliner replicated the exact same score-line. Savage played well, and managed some terrific jump shots through the course of the two matches, but he was unable to overcome his foe, who was as precise and reliable as ever.

The other semi also was also settled in two games, with Moberly emerging victorious 7-4, 7-6 over Beaudry.

The Final went to a deciding third game, after Mulliner's first game advantage was pegged back by Moberly, who continued his fine form to win at the eleventh and secure his second National title to add to his Doubles Championship title (*see left*).

He has had a terrific season, and it is very exciting to see him burst onto the national GC circuit with such flair.

1st Eight (finishing order): 1, John-Paul Moberly; 2, Stephen Mulliner; 3= Pierre Beaudry and Tobi Savage; 5, Ian Burridge; 6, Nick Archer; 7, Martin French; 8, Chris Roberts

2nd Eight

The 1st Eight event (for the The Kate Jones Memorial trophy) was certainly well contested, and the block results provided the manager with a problematic situation, with one player on five wins and a quartet on four!

This resulted in an unfortunate outcome for William Ormerod, who finished fifth by virtue of the 'who beat whom' rule, whilst David Widdison, Peter Balchin, Andrew Dymond and Leslie Heard all progressed through to the knockout (in that order).

The semi-finals both concluded in two games, resulting in a close-run final between Widdison and Balchin.

The latter played the stroke that won the match in the third game at the thirteenth hoop, but unfortunately wasn't playing the colour balls for which the point was scored, so Widdison got the tournament win and commiserations to Balchin.

2nd Eight (finishing order): 1, David Widdison; 2, Peter Balchin; 3= Andrew Dymond and Les Heard; 5 William Ormerod; 6, Graham Good; 7, Roger Goldring; 8, Don Beck.

In conclusion, the weekend was a definite success, with some superb croquet, and an exciting atmosphere.

The A-Level Series

Widdison wins

David Widdison won the inaugural A-Level Series having been in pole position with one tournament to go (as reported in the last Gazette), **writes Chris Roberts.**

That last Series event was the Sussex Open in early September, which was won by relative outsider Paul Gunn of Wingrave, who beat some very established GC names on his way to victory. Gunn has done well in the restricted B-Level Series this season, with one tournament win, and a second and third place, under his belt, but this win in the open A-Level Series certainly announces his arrival in this class.

Widdison, from the Bishop Monkton Club, has had a great season, having graduated from the B-Level production line last term to record two A-Level tournament wins, take the Selectors Second Eight crown (*see left*) and climb to 33 in the UK rankings (at the time of writing). His will be the first name on the new A-Level Series trophy.



Photographs: Eights winners John-Paul Moberly (top) and Dave Widdison (above) together with Nick Archer (below) who shot spectacularly well in the 1st Eight and upset the seedings. (*images by Chris Roberts*)



The All England Handicap

'Lucky loser' Noble is Handicap Champion

This event's inaugural visit to Ryde was dedicated to the memory of Richard Harris, a twice past winner from the Ryde CC who sadly passed away earlier in the year, **writes manager Roy Tillcock.**

Richard's widow Diana presented the winner's trophy to the inappropriately tagged 'lucky loser' **John Noble from Letchworth** (below with RT looking on).

Playing off scratch and conceding 55 extra turns across the block, Noble took the place of a withdrawal and won 11 of his 13 all-play-all games, two wins ahead of Ryde's Pam Sim in second place.

The players were shocked to discover that fleeces and gloves were preferred wear on Day 1 as a cold northerly wind and overcast skies replaced the balmy September heatwave.

The addition of hot soup to the lunch menu was welcomed by all and the added incentive 'to play with reasonable dispatch' was

a manager's dream; all seven rounds completed by 6.15pm.

The ensuing evening meal at a local restaurant was a far more comfortable environment in which to mull over the day's play; including a bizarre wrong ball / offside situation (see 'Ask the Ref' on page 20)

Noble took an overnight lead on six wins, one ahead of Watford's Geoff Johnson and a chasing pack one more behind.

There was much to play for as summer returned on Day 2 and the gloves were off.

Despite a second defeat (this time to Pam Sim), Noble edged further ahead whilst Johnson slipped back allowing a strong

finish from Sim that lifted her into the runner-up spot.

An enthusiastic local contingent of spectators enjoyed the more leisurely play in warm sunshine and were much amused by a display of apparent colour vision deficiency from two female players. A scoring peg of the opponent's colour (pocketed from a previous game) was used to claim a hoop score and shortly afterwards they reverted to the familiar 'out of sequence play', before unknowingly correcting the error to score the tie-break hoop!

The 'joker in the pack' award almost

certainly goes to Ron Piper of Guildford (another lucky loser) who was playing off

11 and with a total of 99 extra turns! He took on all-comers with impunity; show any sign of weakness and another jawed ball was awaiting you.

Several

players with limited tournament experience were attracted to this competition and we hope that they will take on similar challenges in the near future as a result.

Finishing order (after 13 games):

John Noble (handicap 0, Letchworth, 11 wins), Pam Sim (3, Ryde, 9), Geoff Johnson (2, Watford, 8), Robert Cook (6, Cheam, 8), Marian Manning (4, Colchester, 8), Pauline Harvey (4, Kenilworth, 7), Carolyn Doswell (2, Merton, 7), Al Brown (4, Maldon, 7), Steve Dennis (1, Watford, 6), Ron Piper (11, Guildford, 6), John Sim (2, Ryde, 4), Hazel Clark (7, Cheam, 4), Des Taylor (4, Enfield, 3), Mary Neale (5, Ramsgate, 2).



The Grass Roots (8+)

Surprise for Searle

The first winner of the CA's re-vamped GC Grass Roots competition is **Christine Searle of Phyllis Court.**

Sixteen competitors visited Nottingham CC for the single day finals tournament for players with handicaps of 8 or more, **reports finals manager Patricia Duke-Cox.**

Four blocks of four were played out in the morning sunshine, with the winner of each block progressing to the event semi-finals, and the same procedure being used for minor places for those coming second to fourth in the blocks.

Searle met Eynsham's Ann Wotherspoon in the final, the pair having beaten John Horne and Mike Nightingale respectively 7-4 and 7-2 in the semis.

The final was rightly a close one, decided at the 12th hoop 7-5 in Searle's favour.

The finishing order: Christine Searle (Phyllis Court, pictured right, receiving her cup from CA Treasurer Peter Death), Ann Wotherspoon (Eynsham), John Horne (Cheam), Mike Nightingale (Eynsham), John Suckling and Linda Williams (both Watford), Chris Lyons (Cheam), Carol Reding, David Goff and Willie Robb (all North Hykeham), Jill Glenn (Watford), Roger Booth (Eynsham), Pam Tillett (Reigate), Margaret Shah (Nottingham), Pauline Wood (Phyllis Court) and Jean Oldfield (Bury).

Competition Director Terrey Sparks

was pleased with the new formula for this completion; "By going to Nottingham, with multiple courts available, I was pleased to be able to increase the places for each club in the finals tournament.

My intention was to encourage travel by car sharing, as individual travel seems to put off the novice player" he said.

"By encouraging clubs to put forward multiple entries, we have attracted more support than previous years and we even had quite a good crowd watching the finals, which made it more special for the players.

I definitely think that it is worth sticking with this formula next season and see if we can grow the interest from this year's nine participating clubs and total of 55 players."



All clubs are encouraged to support these CA National Competitions, which are suitable for all playing standards. The Grass Roots caters for players with handicaps of 8+ and the All England Handicap, is open to all obviously - all you need is four players! :O)

Look out for the Grass Roots and All England Handicap entry forms that are sent, with all the others, to your Club Secretary in the fixtures book mailing (usually in February).

The Inter-Counties Championship

Just no holding Middlesex this year

Middlesex won this season's Championship and were three match wins clear by its close, *reports Bill Arliss.*

A full complement of twelve teams contested the event and utilised all eleven lawns at Southwick.

The standard at GC Counties gets stronger each year and this time there was a very good turnout from our younger top players such as John-Paul Moberly, Rachael Rowe, Will Gee and Tobi Savage. Handicaps ranged from -4 to 3 with an average of just over 0.

Most competitors arrived with full waterproof kit due to a rather horrific weather forecast, but fortunately the worst of it, almost gale force winds and driving rain, occurred conveniently between rounds and was countered with an extended afternoon tea.

The wind, however, was quite strong all weekend and gave many of the big swingers some problems.

At close of play on Day 1, Middlesex had retained a 100% record but were closely followed by Leicestershire, Glamorgan and Durham/Yorkshire, each with only one loss. At the other end of the scale Surrey and Oxfordshire were still looking for a first win.

Day 2 started clear and bright, and so did



Middlesex: Harry Fisher, Nick Archer, Nelson Morrow and Tom Coles (photo, Helena Jansson)

Middlesex, who continued in their winning ways all through the competition as their rivals fell away.

There was extra pressure this year to keep away from the two bottom places as there is a likelihood of two new Counties applying for 2017, which will mean the basement pair will have to play-off for places next year.

	Wins	Games	Position
Middlesex	11	26	1
Yorks/Durham	8	21	2
Dorset	8	19	3
Leicestershire	7	22	4
Kent	7	19	5
Hampshire	6	19	6
Glamorgan	5	17	7
Somerset	4	16	8
Sussex	4	12	9
Glos/Worcs	3	11	10
Surrey	3	19	11
Oxfordshire	0	5	12



Harry Fisher was a winner with Middlesex



J-P Moberly did not win this car at Ripon!

Mulliner wins strong Yorkshire Open

Stephen Mulliner marked his first appearance at this Ripon Spa Hotel CC hosted tournament with victory over a good field with an international flavour, *reports Maggie Cowman.*

Mohammed Kamal and Stephen Jackson from the USA and President of the WCF Amir Ramsis of Egypt, provided the event's international tag, as did former England International Jacob Carr, who made a welcome return to a ranking tournament (his first since 2013).

Soon to be GC 'Eights' winner John Paul Moberly was another pick from the starting line-up of the the three-day tournament that started with two blocks of eight, playing best- of-three matches, before moving on to a knock-out phase.

Local man Carr showed that he had lost none of his touch and beat all in his block, including a 2-0 victory over event favourite Mulliner, and Moberly topped the other block with Kamal runner-up.

Carr and Mulliner got past Kamal and Moberly respectively the semis and in the final, Mulliner reversed his fortunes against Carr, winning 7 -3, 7-3.

This year the tournament was supported by Lloyd Land Rover, Ripon, who enhanced the periphery of the lawns with a number of top-of-the-range Range Rovers (as pictured below left).

Ripon Spa club members and friends from other local clubs gave up their time to act as scorers for all three days and the event was a good social occasion.

The hotel provide an accommodation and food package, which even those of us who are club members and live nearby choose to take, and some concessionary places are available (see the fixtures book).

The standard of the food and the attention of the staff make one feel special and many of our newcomers remarked on the enhanced croquet experienced.

For those of us who live and play in the North of England, opportunities to play on a big stage are limited and I try to take every opportunity to play against and learn from the elite players who attend this event.

I always come away from the Yorkshire Open feeling that I have learnt skills that will benefit my croquet and that I have made some new friends, who I hope I will see year on year.

This year the Pres went to the Ramsgate club which is situated very close to the coast near the top of a cliff; players know to always watch the forecast here for wind. With the courts paying fairly fast and unevenly paced and a significant wind gradient, conditions were unusually challenging. Long croquet strokes were frequently followed by five yarders and a couple of the hoop approaches were treacherous if one was overly ambitious trying to get close. This might sound like complaining but for this event the conditions were perfect, and many thanks to all the volunteers who helped prepare the lawns.

The selection for the last England "Mac" place was looming large, with Mark Avery, James Hopgood, Jeff Dawson and Jack Wicks in with a shout, although Wicks maybe needed to win the event to make it happen.

Dave Maugham set the early pace winning all his four games on **Day 1**. Most people's favourites Robert Fulford and Paddy Chapman were on three, Stephen Mulliner on two and the rest on one.

Day 2 started with Maugham against Fulford. Fulford got to peg alone having failed to finish a triple peel with Maugham still on 6 and penult. Maugham then played a great turn, hitting his lift shot and then approaching both 6 and then 1-back in turn from 10 yards away to get a three ball break going. Fulford missed a 20 yarder at the peg and Maugham finished +1.

Maugham continued his good form reaching the end of the first series unbeaten, making far fewer errors than everyone else and completing a useful TP against Chapman.

This was the day when conditions were hardest with the wind blowing and the hoops still fairly firm. Not all the games were finished in the last round and the leaders Maugham and Fulford both ended with pegged down games where they were in trouble against Dawson and Mulliner respectively. Chapman versus Avery did finish with Avery having the unluckiest shot of the event, shooting his ball (the other having been pegged out) from corner 2 at Chapman's balls near corner 4 hit close to centre peg and bounced beautifully over

The First Eight (*The President's Cup*) by Rob Fulford

Maugham wins The Pres for fifth time



David Maugham with CA President Quiller Barrett and in action, by John Bowsher



to perfectly pioneer hoop 1.

Scores at the end of day 2 were; Maugham 7/7, Fulford 5/7, Chapman 5/8 with the rest back on 2 or 3.

Day 3 started as normal with round 9, rather than with the pegged down games (which were to be finished at the end of the day if possible). Fulford beat Maugham to peg back the latter's lead to just one win.

Round 10 saw lucky escapes for Maugham and Chapman. Maugham played Wicks who had made the unusual choice of taking his first ball to rover. Maugham failed to capitalise from his lift to position and Wicks established a second break, get his rover peel but then failed 4-back. From there Maugham won, with the aid of a peg out.

Chapman TPOed Hopgood, but having played well to almost establish his winning break, failed a slightly long 2-back giving a straight forward chance for his own three-ball break. Hopgood managed to get in a position after 3-back, so he could only take off to 4-back and ended up failing penult. Chapman got control again a won with a two-ball break from 3-back.

Maugham beat Mulliner early in round 11, while Chapman who was playing Fulford, took on a TPO which needed a longish death roll peel going to 3-back, but once completed allowed him to peg two balls out leaving himself for 1-back versus 1. Chapman won the two ball comfortably with another two-ball break out from 3-back.

Saturday finished with an easy win for Fulford over Dawson, but Chapman lost -5 to Wicks after missing a hampered stroke at 4-back with two peels done.

Darkness brought Maugham and Hopgood's game to a stop, with Maugham in a strong position on 4-back and peg.

Day 4 started with wins for Fulford

and Maugham, with Chapman still in play against Dawson. There was time for Maugham's game with Hopgood to resume and the former soon finished which eliminated Chapman from contention.

As it was Chapman lost to Dawson who was aided by hitting a do-or-die 30 yard shot.

This now left Maugham needing just one more win, or a loss for Fulford, either in round 14 or in each of

their pegged down games, which you may remember they were both losing.

Fulford beat Hopgood while Maugham was taking on Chapman and pegging him out, but after going out on a long take-off to partner in corner 1, he was unlucky to give Chapman the lift, after which Chapman finished.

With Maugham waiting for Dawson's game to finish, so they could resume their pegged down game, Fulford resumed against Mulliner, who immediately hit a 'sweaty' 11-yarder, which allowed him to get to peg alone. Fulford missed his 18 yarder, Mulliner won the game and **Maugham won the President's Cup**.

Hopgood finished on 6, Avery and Dawson on 5 so not much for Mac Selectors to work on. Roll on the Southern's!

Results (14 games): Maugham (11 wins), Fulford (10), Chapman (9), Hopgood (6), Mulliner (6), Avery (5), Dawson (5), Wicks (4).

The 4th Eight (*The Treasurer's Tankard*)

Powe wow at TT

Rising star Jonathan Powe won the Treasurer's Tankard at Ryde, at the first time of asking, *reports Martin Murray*.

Ian Vincent went into an early lead with three wins on the first day, but fell back on the second.

Powe then established himself as the man to beat, with a consistent display of controlled croquet. No-one else managed to match his consistency, although a challenge was maintained by Campbell Morrison, who was only one game behind going into the final round.

The 2nd Eight (*The Chairman's Cup*)

Lines and Carter share the spoils

The elements conspired to prevent the completion of the Chairman's Salver Eight this year at Hamptworth, **reports manager Mark Ormerod.**

Fast lawns and rock solid hoops ensured extended games and a dearth of triples in the first series, whilst the loss of six hours playing time on the Saturday (due to prolonged rain making the courts unplayable) further compressed the schedule. However, by 8 pm on the final day, the 54th of the 56 scheduled games was completed in the semi-darkness, the hoots of an owl echoing down Hamptworth valley as David Goacher triumphantly pegged out to win+1.

Ian Lines, Christian Carter, and Robert Wilkinson led the field at the end of the first series with seven wins apiece, followed by Duncan Reeve, Chris Williams and David Goacher, with Gabrielle Higgins and Mark Ormerod holding the wooden spoon.

The second series followed a similar

Cleaver Roy Tillcock had some Photoshop fun (below) creating a 'split decision' for referee Nigel Polhill at the TT, where Jonathan Powe (below left) was victorious. Andy Myers won the Spencer Ell (right) and the joint winners Ian Lines and Christian Carter are seated center front at the Chairman's (above). Photos by Roy Tillcock, Ian Harrison-Wood & Liz Larsson.



pattern, though the number of pegged-down and unplayed games muddied the waters.

By late afternoon on the final day, Lines was looking favourite, needing to win his

outstanding round 12 game to claim the Salver. However, his opponent, Higgins, had other ideas. Under the scrutiny of a small but appreciative audience (including our Chairman Tim King and William Ormerod, both enjoying the early evening sun, having sampled the excellent local ales) Higgins won the game +23tp.

This meant that **Lines and Carter were declared joint winners**, there being no time for a playoff. Our warm thanks to Jerry Wilde and Hamptworth Club for hosting.

Results (14 games): Ian Lines and Christian Carter (10 wins), Duncan Reeve and Robert Wilkinson (8), David Goacher (7, 1 unplayed), Chris Williams (6), Mark Ormerod (3, 1 pegged down, 1 unplayed), Gabrielle Higgins (2, 1 pegged down).



However, another steady win for Powe secured his title, and Campbell lost his last game to make the final margin as convincing as the former deserved.

Powe's rapid improvement over just two years is a tribute to a calm, studied approach to the game, coupled with a basically sound technique. Nerves appear not to trouble him, and he is learning so rapidly that minor tactical weaknesses will soon be overcome.

The two other newcomers to the TT, Leo Hawkins and Andrew Willis, fought valiantly to avoid the wooden spoon, Willis just succeeding in his final game, but lack of experience

let both down repeatedly, particularly in end games. Both showed promise, however, and should have bright futures.

A total of six triple peels (including one TPO), three from James Hawkins, was probably a fair indication of the general standard of play.

Too many random errors, often in easy positions, showed why the contestants weren't selected for higher events.

Finally, the hospitality of the Ryde club was excellent, as previous visitors have experienced.

Results (14 games): Jonathan Powe (12 wins), Campbell Morrison (10), James Hawkins (8), Martin Murray and Nigel Polhill (7), Ian Vincent (5), Andrew Willis (4), Leo Hawkins (3).

The 3rd Eight (*The Spencer Ell Cup*)

Ell of a win for Myers

Andy Myers won the 'Third Eight' at his first attempt, **writes Nick Parish.** Hunstanton provided nice lawns, good food and, for four days, delightful weather. On Saturday it poured all day, but even this failed to disturb play as good drainage, double-banking and judicious use of the fifth lawn prevented delay. This meant there was nothing to blame except the players' incompetence for the tournament getting further and further behind, which meant an increasingly harassed manager Dave Kibble, and earlier starts each day, culminating in a final day 8am start for David Harrison-Wood, which got the tournament back on track. It also enabled Harrison-Wood to finish three games before lunch, which is surely unprecedented.

Sam Murray won his first five games to take an early lead, but then lost his next three, with Kibble and Andy Myers the other early challengers. Harrison-Wood was always in the race if he won his ever-increasing number of pegged-down games, while Annabel McDiarmid's slow start prevented her fantastic finish (seven wins from her last nine) from propelling her into contention. Sarah Hayes was just off the pace, while Luc Berthouze and Nick Parish were the whipping boys, whose sole target after day one was avoiding last place.

There was an exciting finish entering the last round, with Myers and Kibble on nine wins, and Murray and Harrison-Wood on eight, and none of them playing each other. Kibble and Murray both lost quickly, but with Berthouze and Parish both starting winning turns against Myers and Harrison-Wood respectively, the manager was left wondering if he would prefer to come second, or to be part of a two or three-way play-off starting at 5pm.

As it turned out, Berthouze and Parish reverted to type and broke down on their winning turns, meaning that Myers's win was enough to give him the trophy.

Thank you to the Hunstanton members, for their mowing and setting up earlier every day. Results (14 games): Myers (10 wins), Harrison-Wood and Kibble (9), McDiarmid and Murray (8), Hayes (7), Berthouze (3), Parish (2).



The North of England Championship

The South of England Championship

On from Hopgood impresses Mac selectors

The deciding game of five for the North of England Championship was tantalisingly kept on ice, **reports Ian Lines.**

The pre-tournament agreement to allow James Hopgood leave to catch a plane was honoured by opponent David Maugham and the manager, with the agreement that the North title would be played, during the South of England Championship a few weeks later.

A full field of 22 contested this season's 'North', including several first timers at Bowdon, including Jose Riva who flew in especially from Madrid to play, adding an international flavour. The overall entry was pretty strong with 16 players on handicap -1 or better.

There were few surprises in the main knock-out event, though Joel Taylor had a good win against Chris Williams and Debbie Lines got through against David Walters, who had to withdraw following a wrist sprain. The most entertaining game was Riva's +1 otp against Debbie Lines, where the Spaniard's excellent shooting proved decisive.

In the semis Maugham was clearly too good for Ian Lines who was lucky to take a game in the best-of-five, and in the other match Riva didn't play as well as he had done earlier, and Hopgood also won 3-1.

The final started at 9.30am on the Monday, and it looked at 6pm as though Maugham would wrap it up with another 3-1, but when he got slightly hampered after 3-back and missed a five yarder, it left Hopgood a 16 yard shot at a double, which he duly hit and finished from hoop 2 to level the match and hot-foot it to the airport!

In the plate, the most remarkable performance was from Alison Girdlestone (handicap 2.5) who had a string of five consecutive wins, including her first tournament triple peel (earning her a CA gold award), and wins against James Hawkins (-1) and Dave Kibble (-1.5). She later went on to record her best ever win in defeating Ina Lines (-2) by +6, and reduced her handicap to 1. Kibble recovered to eventually win the plate event final +16 over David Goacher after a good attempt at a sextuple peel.

~ The fifth and deciding game of the Northerns Final, between Maugham and Hopgood was duly played at the start of the Southerns (*see next column, right*).

A full house of twenty players entered this year's Championship no doubt encouraged by the earlier announcement by Chairman of Selectors Ian Lines, that the player to fill the sixth and final team place for the forthcoming MacRobertson Shield series would only be decided after this South of England Championship.

Roger Wood reports that Lines entered the tournament for the first time to monitor the performance of hopefuls and James Hopgood set out his stall early on Friday morning with a +25(TP) win over David Maugham as the decider for the North of England Championship, his first regional title (*see report on the Northerns, left*).

Back to the Southerns - most of the games in the first two rounds were completed on Day 1 with just two matches pegged down in their third games.

Even with the hoops newly set to 1/32" and very firm in fresh ground there was plenty of peeling.

In his first game against Maugham, Christian Carter peeled and pegged his opponent's 3-back ball, but a very weak leave allowed Maugham to finish from the contact in the next turn.

More spectacularly Gavin Carter, having sealed his win against Debbie Lines with a triple peel, impressed in the next round with a delayed sextuple in his first game against Mark Avery (+26sxp), and then promptly repeated the exploit in the second - the peeling prize was assured!

In fact he was unlucky not to add another sextuple to his haul: against Maugham he completed all six peels but at rover, the peelee didn't touch the sides of the hoop and went off the boundary.

His steady play earned him a deserved place in the final.

Meanwhile James Hopgood was making equally steady progress to the same goal beating Ian Lines, Ed Duckworth and Jack Wicks with only one game lost.

In the final some of Gavin Carter's flair deserted him. Despite an exemplary break to 3-back from a contact leave in the first, begun by approaching hoop 1 from corner 4 and characterised by exceptionally accurate rushing, he was unable to regain the innings and Hopgood finished with a triple.

In the second Hopgood was again first to 4-back. Carter made hoop 1 but missed a



James Hopgood won the North and South Champs. (Photos by Alison Girdlestone)



Omiel Hallam won the Selectors' despite late drama. (Photo by Chris Roberts)



Phil Dunk won Division 3 of the Challenge, and the Gilbey Handicap. (Photo by Chris Roberts)

long return roquet and Hopgood's winning triple had all three peels before 3-back.

In the third and longest game, errors from both crept in (*see full report on the CA website*) but Hopgood eventually prevailed to take his second regional championship in three days, and earning a handicap reduction to -2.5.

The Selectors' Weekend

Hallam survives to win

The Selectors' Weekend has had the same format for a number of years - Flexible Swiss on the Friday and Saturday, top four plus ties progress to a knock-out on Sunday - and in every year I can remember, the qualifying mark has been 4 wins from 6 games, **writes Andrew Gregory.**

However, the conditions at Nottingham were easy, so quite a few players squeezed four games into a day. With that, plus three players more than the prescribed 16, some speculated that 5 out of 7 would be needed.

At the end of Friday, two players were unbeaten, Phil Cordingley and Omied Hallam. The former won their Saturday morning game 26tp, a result which was to prove irrelevant. So by Saturday tea-time, the aforementioned pair had safely qualified, but four players reached 4/6 around this time. Should they twist or stick?

Commendably, all wanted an extra game.

It wasn't a Burridge Swiss (and I'm not sure that would work), so Cordingley and Hallam were involved, playing Dave Gunn and David Mooney respectively.

Nick Steiner seemed to have the easiest draw, playing Kevin Carter, who had played most games but not won too many of them.

Alan Chance was unlucky (perhaps his game finished a few minutes later than others) but the Manager couldn't find him a suitable opponent, and had he not been the late starter on Friday, he might have played one game more.

Gunn inflicted the only defeat on the Cordingley/Hallam "diarchy" to reach 5/7, but Hallam beat Mooney and Carter beat Steiner. So after all the qualifying mark was 4/6 and the only player on that score was the no longer unlucky Chance!

Sunday morning saw Cordingley and Hallam win their semis and in the final the latter survived some drama near the end to lift the trophy that was won by his father in 1988.

Nick Steiner won the non-existent consolation trophy, Jeff Race the similarly imaginary peeling prize with three triples.

Hallam and Cordingley should prove too good for this event next year, along with the fast-improving Alison Girdlestone.

Sorry to bang on about the format, but I do feel something more transparent should be employed for a serious tournament. 16 players for three days - it's crying out for a Draw and Process!

The Challenge and Gilbey

(including class and handicap events)



This is another of the CA's historical tournaments that appears to sit under the radar for many players.

Nevertheless, because of the continued lawn renovations at Southwick reducing capacity by four courts, a pleasing and effective full complement took part in the Challenge's four level play class events.

But before that, the tournament started with the handicap event for the Gilbey Goblet, as **manager Julie Horsley reports.**

Two minus players Phil Cordingley (-0.5, Hampstead Heath) and Nigel Polhill (-0.5, Ealing and Surbiton) contested the semi-finals along with Philip Windred (2, Letchworth) and Phil Dunk (5, Sussex County) and the latter two won respectively. Dunk then won the final convincingly +22, while Chris Coull (7, Sussex County) took the consolation event.

The class events started after lunch on the Friday and there was a good low handicap entry, with nine playing off scratch or below.

In Division A for the Roehampton Cup, two blocks produced winners for a best-of-three final which Sam Murray (-1, Surbiton) won in straight games +16, +25 against Tim Russell (-1, Roehampton).

Luc Berthouze (-1, Sussex) and Dave Mundy (-0.5, Budleigh) shared the consolation flexible Swiss with five wins from their seven games.

Division B for the Council Cup was won by Liz Farrow (3, Sussex) 5/6, from Windred 3/6.

Division C for the Reckitt Cup was won by Dunk 4/5, from Coull 3/5 and Division D for the Stevenson Cup by Quiller Barrett (9, Watford) 4/5 in his last block game which was an effective final against Frances Colman (10, Phyllis Court and Roehampton) 3/5.

AC round-up



August

The **Nottingham Week** was oversubscribed this year, with 36 players in the singles events, and two more who were only in the doubles, **reports Peter Death.** The first four days were hot and sunny, so that the lawns became quite fast and interesting, which was reflected in the big handicap, the Robin Hood Cup, where five of the eight quarter-finalists came from the A class.

Friday, however, was wet all day, the lawns became easier, and the bisques of the C class players came into their own,

so that Saturday's final was between Anna Giraud (11, Huddersfield) and Sue Wileman (12, Nottingham). In a tight contest, Anna came from behind to win +1t.

Joel Taylor (-1.5, High Wycombe) won the A class, beating Omied Hallam (-1, Nottingham) +26tp, +26tp in the final. Taylor completed a total of five triple-peels during the week, and was the only one to be record a triple of any kind all week, although though David Brydon (Nottingham) failed rover having done all the peels of a tpo (triple-peel on opponent).

... (continued overleaf)

... The B class final was an all-Ramsgate affair, with Charlie Martin beating Trevor Longman +11, +11, and in the C class (one of the few events in the tournament calendar where Ordinary Level Singles are played), Neal Bacon (Nottingham), beat Frances Colman (Phyllis Court and Roehampton) +25 in the final. The D class was won by Rena Souten (Huddersfield) who beat Andrew Beaumont (Nottingham) +10 in the play-off. Twelve pairs entered the Handicap Doubles, and the home pairing of Omied Hallam and Neal Bacon beat Charles Ostler (Hunstanton and Pinchbeck) and the host's Sue Wileman +1t in the final.

Jonathan Powe continued his rapid rise in the rankings at the Bank Holiday **class events at East Dorset CC** in Poole, **reports Roy Edwards**. He started his A class campaign by beating Mark Ormerod (the winner for the last four years) in his first match, and continued in the same vein, to finish undefeated and lift the Bournemouth Bowl.

The B class winner was in doubt until the final round when Alan Edwards beat David Williams to catch him on four wins, and so pip him to the Deshon Cup.

Susan Fulford sneaked in to win the **Colchester Mid-week handicap**, **reports Colin Hemming**. The tournament was played as a Flexible Swiss, and veteran John Andrews, sticking to two games a day, but winning all of them, led right up until his final game against Fulford. She scraped home +3 on time, achieving a narrow victory of 86% against 83%.

The **Sidmouth B-Level Advanced** attracted sixteen players from far and wide, **reports David Temple**, but there was a celebration when Sidmouth's own Derek Andrew became the first home player to win the event since its inception in 2003.

The **Hurlingham Annual Tournament** took place in perfect croquet conditions: not a drop of rain and magnificent lawns. We are all very grateful to the ground staff for their work and to mark this Peter Craig, the Grounds Manager, was invited to present the prizes, **reports Hugh Carlisle**.

The mixed doubles Centenary Salvagers handicap event was hotly contested over five rounds, but Woking pair Mike Holland and Gill McDiarmid were undefeated and were the winners.

There were 32 entrants for the unrestricted handicap singles event with handicaps ranging from -2 to 18. In an all-Hurlingham final of the main event for the Silver Jubilee Cup, Tony Bingham beat Sudy Harrison by 1 hoop after time was called.

The Class Singles came next with the 36 entrants divided into three classes. Mark Ormerod (Hurlingham) beat Joel Taylor to receive the A class Hurlingham Cup, Chris Roberts (Phyllis Court) beat Peter Siddall (Roehampton) – the match lasting till 8pm! – to collect the B class Turner Cup, and Daniel Bennett (Dublin) won the C-class Younger Cup by beating John Reddish (Dulwich).

There was no holding Bingham (Hurlingham) in handicap play and he added the restricted event's Longworth Cup to his earlier success, with victory over club mate Henry Bagwell; this brought his handicap down from 11 to 9 during the week and we congratulate him.

Still the events kept coming, and the advanced mixed doubles title was retained by Brian Havill (Enfield) and Gabrielle Higgins (Southwick) and there were two undefeated pairs in the handicap doubles; the Ladies' Field Candlesticks were won by Gillian Noble-Jones (Woking) and Sudy Harrison (Hurlingham), and Roehampton pair Douglas Gurney and John Pearson won the Gentlemen's Wine Coolers.

The 117th Annual Hunstanton Tournament caught a very severe storm on the Saturday (27th August) evening, **reports Martin Kolbuszewski**.

'We were in the eye of it for a while, so the rain held off and play could continue. But then it got very dark indeed, with torrential rain and hail. Amazingly, the lawns drained very quickly and everything seemed to be back to normal in the morning.

Duncan Hector triumphed in Block A ahead of David Tutt, and after Nick Harris assisted with the calculations caused by an incomplete block, Hugh Carlisle turned out to be the winner of Block B.

Sue Stenhouse and Martin Kolbuszewski won the C and D blocks ahead of Peter Whiting and Sarah Bailey respectively.

It was nice to see the low handicappers doing so well in the Egyptian – Terry Sparks won from Kevin Carter – and also to meet some new long bisquers as well.

September

The Roehampton End of Season Handicap Tournament for the 101-year-old Hussars Challenge Cup (with many famous past winners), attracted five former winners for this year's edition, **reports John Pearson**.

Going into the fifth and final round there were four possible winners, and at its conclusion three of them tied with four wins each. Collin Southern (Woking), plus the host's Peter Honey and Adrienne Sackin, all had one win each in the games against each other, but Southern was the clear winner on 'quality of wins'. He was one of the previous winners, having done so as long ago as 1994!

Undaunted at entering his first CA listed tournament, Sidmouth's Jon Ball, who has only been playing for just over two years, ended undefeated at the **Sidmouth C-Level**. He topped a field of twelve from as far afield as Cambridgeshire, Herefordshire, Cornwall, Somerset and Wiltshire to lift the Connaught Cup, two wins ahead of the host's David Clarke, **reports Julie Horsley**.

The B-Level at Surbiton was well supported and won by **reporter Neil Coote** from Reigate. A four round Swiss, managed by David Mooney, qualified the top four for semis and a final but not before a shoot-out between three players to determine one of the semi-final places. Coote won that and then his semi against Andrew Dutton (Woking), before beating Kevin Carter (Surbiton) +21 in the final. David Warhurst (High Wycombe) won the plate. *The photo (below) shows from left: Mooney, Warhurst, Coote, Gina Pellegrini (who has changed her name from Lewis) – she presented the trophy she donated – and Carter.*

Hurlingham's Midweek Veterans tournament enjoyed three days of perfect weather, magnificent lawns and sparkling play from the Over-Sixties, who travelled from far and wide, including Australia, **reports Hugh Carlisle**.

The field split into two groups, the Ancients and the Seniors, with two advanced handicap games a day, and this format seemed to work well. Frances Colman won the Ancients, and is now down to handicap 9; Tony Bingham was the unbeaten Senior and he reduced his mark to 8, having started the season at 14.

Many of the players said that they would be there next year and we look forward to seeing them.



Wingrave showcase croquet to a 1000 !

Okay, so you are expecting visitors in the thousands, and a good number will want to try croquet.

Where to start?

- **Call Wingrave CC!**

Club Chairman Richard Keighley takes up a story with some amazing numbers:

August Bank Holiday weekend visitors to Waddesdon Manor (near Aylesbury, Bucks) stepped down from their shuttle bus to admire the house in the distance and the lawns on both sides of the entrance drive, attractively laid out with a total of six taped half-size croquet courts, complete with equipment.

This was a 'Summer Games Special', arising from collaboration between the National Trust and Jaques of London, the renowned manufacturer of games, especially croquet sets and accessories. The aim was to entertain visitors and to promote awareness of the game of croquet, rather than to conduct a sales and marketing exercise.

The event was a 'first' at Waddesdon, but others have been staged at Ham House (see *Gazette 358, page 18*), Chastleton House,



Stowe and elsewhere.

For Ben Jaques, the daunting task was to provide basic croquet tuition to the anticipated visitor numbers over the period of a seven hour day.

He turned to Wingrave CC for help, on the grounds of proximity rather than youth and playing ability. The club (with 21 members) agreed to provide between four and six volunteers on each of the six days of the event in return for being fed and watered - *That was quite an undertaking Richard! - Ed*

Ben's fears about large numbers were well justified. On the first fine day, about 2,000 visitors turned up and numbers only dropped slightly each day before an estimated 3,000 came to the Manor on Bank Holiday Monday. Wingrave's volunteers were kept very busy throughout and it is estimated that they demonstrated the rudiments of golf croquet to a surprising

1,000 visitors overall!

Family members enjoyed competing against each other. An Australian father insisted on a golden hoop being played although timed tickets for his

family for the Manor were about to expire. Other visitors came from all over Europe and the UK.

From Wingrave's perspective, this was 'come and try' on an enormous scale. It was a pleasure to discover the universal appeal of croquet and to be able to disabuse visitors of any preconceived notion of how the game is played. To cap the occasion, Ben Jaques has kindly agreed to take up an honorary position with the club and it is suspected that its members will be invited to take part in similar events in the future.



Lawn Care by Duncan Hector

Winter lawn maintenance

Croquet Lawns should be maintained right through the winter and this will ensure the best possible playing surface when the new season starts. Raise the cut height to 8 to 10mm.

It is vital to keep the grass trimmed because it encourages the growth of side shoots (tillers) and therefore thickens the sward. In normal winters a cut every few weeks is fine.

Aerate monthly using a thin tined aerator. A Sarel Spiker is ideal and can be towed by a lawn tractor. This will encourage bacterial activity in the root zone and help the breakdown of thatch.

Casting worms can be controlled by spraying a pesticide called Ringer but the spray operator will need Pesticide Certification.

It is very important to use soft water or a pH buffer. The product creates an unpleasant environment which worms avoid. At most clubs one application will deter worms for about 10 months.

Moss must be treated in October/November and then again in February/March. A granular moss killer/hardener can be applied or a liquid moss killer/hardener can be sprayed. These will desiccate the moss which will rapidly turn black. The dead moss can be raked out but this may be quite damaging.

It is probably better to ensure that the moss stays black so that the grass can start to dominate again. The best way to deal with moss is to keep it dead at all times.

Fusarium Patch can occur during the winter. I am not in favour of using Fungicides because these kill a lot of micro-organisms and to apply them you need Pesticide Certification. I am now supplying a special Phosphorous based nutrient that helps to protect the grass against Fusarium. Some clubs are testing it this winter and I will let you know the results next year.

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Last September **Pendle CC** initiated a development programme to improve their lawn drainage and provide more security for the continuation of the club.

The Club is located at Earby in Lancashire, and suffers significant rainfall from time to time, which has impacted on previous tournaments and league matches.

They moved from Nelson in 2003, constructing five lawns and a new clubhouse on some land leased from the local council. The ground conditions were not favourable for drainage, being boulder clay overlying Limestone rock at a few metres, and as club finances were stretched at the time, the drainage was not the best that could have been installed.



In 2015, after some investigation into the club archives and advice from contractors, it was concluded that sand slitting, to

allow rainwater to drain down to the lateral drains, was needed.

Accordingly in September last year, following a competitive tendering process, a specialist arrived with his equipment (as pictured) and, over a two-day period, installed sand slits at a spacing of around 200mm, to a depth of 100-150mm.

In association with the sand slitting, some 80 tonnes of special fine to coarse sand was spread on completion, causing the lawns to resemble a beach at first, but within a week the grass was growing through!

The lawns were remarkable, undisturbed and were playable within a few weeks; and

CA Grant for Pendle's development programme

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by the start of this season, the effects of the work could not be seen.

Further investigations have been carried out recently, to check the main drain, and this showed clearly the successful results of the sand slitting and the sand spreading.

It is intended to continue spreading sand annually to build up the depth of sand below the turf, although this will take some time at the rate of 1cm a year!

This season, with the help of a further CA grant, a second-hand ride-on mower was purchased.

The club had previously used a walk-behind mower which took three to four hours to mow the five lawns and, as it was being used by a contractor, was costing the club some £1,200 to £1,600 per season, which was a large chunk of their income.

Therefore, the purchase of the ride-on mower, while costly, allows members to cut the grass two or three times a week at only the cost of the diesel and maintenance, which we were paying before.

In order to securely store the mower, the club purchased a second-hand 20ft container.

Pendle CC is now looking forward to hosting CA events with five good lawns available, and is pressing on with further drainage investigations and improvements.

GC extra

Kathleen Wright won the inaugural **Chester 'cross-over' tournament** (for handicap 1-8), so called as it bridged the gap between the B-level Series and fully open events. It attracted a full field of 16 countrywide players, and with such a high level of interest, will be repeated on an annual basis, *writes David Crawford.*

Following the same idea was **Guildford's CARA Cup** (handicaps 1 to 6) where **Mike Huxley reports** that his wife Andrea (4) (*pictured left*) sprang a surprise in defeating Roger Goldring (1, Phyllis Court) for her a first tournament for several years.

Cheltenham's reporter Russell Barter, is keen to get high handicap

GC players to play competitively and he managed a two day tournament for players in two groups: 5- and 6+. Day 1 was handicap play and Peter Balchin (Dyffryn) and Lorraine Shepherd (Cheltenham), won the respective groups. Day 2 was level play where Tony Forbes (Cheltenham) and Gordon Weir and topped groups of 17 and 12 respectively.

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

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