

The

Issue 368 June 2017

# CROQUET

Gazette





# From our files

researched by Frances Colman

## 10 years ago - 2007



**Col. Albert Saalfeld** – I was interested to read John Solomon's reference to Col. Albert Saalfeld, whom I met at the Leamington tournament of 1985 or thereabouts . . . He was a short stocky man with thick glasses and a squeaky voice. He was related to the English royal family and arrived at the club every day with an escort of motorcycle outriders. Charming without any side, he gave me a mouldy banana to sit on the head of my mallet to prevent shrinkage of the shaft, apparently a normal practice where he lived. . . . J.B Meacham

~

**AC Counties** - Nottinghamshire made it a hat-trick of wins when they retained the (AC) Inter-County Championship over one of the coolest Whitsun weekends on record. Cheshire were leading at the end of day 3, but with a bye in the last round they could only wait to see whether Notts. could equal their nine match wins, as the holders had a superior game tally. . . . Robert Fulford stopped at hoop 3, but then tried to run hoop 1 again when he next got the innings. He later attempted a quadruple peel but failed at 2-back leaving James Death a straight forward triple to clinch the title for Notts.

~

**CA Juniors v CAI Juniors** at Newcastle, County Wicklow . . . It was the result of a conversation between Syd Jones, a past CA Council member, and Harry Johnston, the current President of the CAI (Ireland), that I was approached in September 2006 with a view to getting young players from each Association to compete against each other (writes Patricia Duke-Cox). . . . I approached all 13 junior members of the CA and 11 responded. Some were unavailable on the choice of dates, and one rejected the notions of playing golf croquet. Thus six members were willing and able to make the team. . .

The teams (*some now familiar names here*)

**CA (England):** Eugene Chang, William Gee, Rachel Rowe, Jack Wicks (c), Marcus Evans, Tom Brant.

**CAI (Ireland):** Kieran Murphy, Louise Ireson, Ben Harris, Daniel Johnston, Fiachra Carrol, Andrew Murphy (c).

## 50 years ago - 1967



**The Rev. G.F.H Elvey** – The death of Handel Elvey on March 20th robs our Association of its most senior member and one of the most widely known and well-loved of all.

Handel joined the CA as long ago as 1902 and soon rose to be a very good player . . . (in) the dozen years that became the Golden Age of Croquet. . . He played three times in the Best Ten – 1919, 1933 and 1935 – and twenty years after this, in 1955, he won the Men's Championship of the South of England at Devonshire Park when well into his seventies.

To more recent generations he is likely to be remembered as a councillor and most notably as Chairman from 1939 to 1948.

His addresses at our Annual Meetings during the dark years of the late War were a source of unfailing confidence and hope for the future, and nobody did more to help us bring the Association through the critical days of the post-War period . . . M.B.R.

~

**Cheltenham Easter weekend tournament** . . . Two end of game dramas are worth recording.

In one, a Longish bisquer with both balls for the peg, and his minus opponent mostly sat out in the cold, politely runs up to the peg with yellow to be sure of using his last bisque – he takes it and plays with red! Happily minus misses.

In the other, a long bisquer, still with seven bisques standing, is for rover with both: minus opponent is for 2 and penultimate. The former approaches rover off own ball, makes it, looks at bisques, decides against trying a peel, and lays up alongside. Minus hits with backward ball, completes the double peel but alas sticks in 4-back!

~

**The 6th Annual Varsity March** will be played at the Hurlingham Club on 21st June 1967.

For the first time, minus players will be in the match, which should provide croquet of a higher standard than in any of the previous battles.

K.F. Wylie, Cambridge University CC  
K.A. Ross, Oxford University CC

## 100 years ago - 1917



**Lieut. H. Maxwell Browne, Killed in Action** - It is with much regret that we have to announce the death of Lieut. H. Maxwell Browne, Essex Regiment, who was killed in action on March 20th, 1917. . . (he) was in the foremost rank of croquet players, and was selected to play in the Champion Cup in 1909, 1910 and 1911, winning the Trophy in the latter year after a tie with Capt. C.L. O'Callaghan.

~

**Lieut.-Col. John Puckle, D.S.O., Drowned on Active Service** – We much regret to have to record the death of Lieut.-Col. John Puckle, D.S.O., who was drowned on active service on April 15th. . . . (he) was one of the first three officers to land in France at the outbreak of the war in August 1914, prior to the arrival of the British Expeditionary Force and was mentioned in despatches in May, 1915. . .

~

**Capt. E.H. Moore, M.C.** – It is with much regret that we have to announce the death of Capt. E.H. Moore, M.C., York and Lancaster Regiment, which occurred on April 25th in France from wounds received in action. He joined the Army at the beginning of the war, and went to France in 1915. He was wounded and mentioned in despatches in 1916, and was promoted to Captain and awarded the Military Cross for gallantry and initiative in leading his men at a critical moment during the Battle of the Somme. He had been fighting ever since the commencement of the Battle of Arras. . .

~

**Capt. G.R.B. Drummond, M.V.O.**  
- We regret to announce the death of Capt. G.R.B. Drummond, M.V.O. which took place at Hove on April 27th. Those whose recollection can take them back to the earlier years of the Association will realise with gratitude the services rendered by Capt. Drummond to the game of croquet. Before the public revival of the game, which took place in the middle nineties, a good deal of scientific play took place in the grounds of his house at Petworth, and he was one of the chief pioneers who helped Mr. Peel to lay the foundations of the Association. . .

# Editorial

**W**hen Croquet history is made, it is only right to set aside one's usual sporting prejudices and say hearty congratulations to Australia for winning back the Mac for the first time since 1935. This Gazette issue leads with two reports from the AC's 'World Cup' from the perspective of one who was at the centre of the action and another who tells of her enjoyment from the other side of the white line.

Denied a picture of a winning England team for the front cover, I've instead gone to the other end of our sport, with images from the inaugural Students GC Championship held back in April, whilst the previous Gazette was at the printers.

What a fabulous event that was and I hope the players' enthusiasm comes across in my report on page 17.

On a more sombre note, when preparing this issue, I was struck by Frances Colman's 1917 'From our Files' column this time round, which records more of our fallen croquet playing forbears.

Media focus has strayed from reminding us that the Great War was still taking its huge toll of lives exactly 100 years ago and presumably commemorations will mark the

anniversary of the return to peace next year.

However, marking just the beginning and end of hostilities, tempts us to overlook the anniversary of every other horrible day that was endured a century ago.

By way of addressing this, I devote the rest of this editorial to the 'Roll of Honour' that was carried in every Gazette issue of the time, sadly with frequent new additions.

## Roll of Honour

(as of June 1917)

Abbot, Capt. D.W.S.E.  
 Ashmore, Lieut. G.  
 Barnard-Smith, Lieut. W.W.B.  
 Biddulph, Lieut. R. Assheton.  
 Brandon, Capt. A.C.  
 Browne, Lieut. H. Maxwell.  
 Browning, Capt. H.F.  
 Chubb, Capt. G.  
 Fowler, Lieut. D.C.M.  
 Hubbard, Lieut. W.D.  
 Jones, Lt.-Col. F.A, CMG., DSO.  
 Moore, Capt. E.H., MC.  
 Puckle, Lt.-Col. John, DSO.  
 Woodhouse, Lieut. Gordon.  
 Woodhouse, J.A.H.

## Chris Roberts

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The  
**CROQUET**  
 Gazette



Issue 368 June 2017

**Front cover:** It was all smiles at the inaugural Students GC Championship at Sheffield which is reported on page 17.

**This page:** The Chairman in action at Budleigh Salterton. (Photographs by Chris Roberts).

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# Chairman's Column

**T**he playing season is now in full swing and my active tournament schedule has provided a pleasant respite from CA administration.

My games have been all the more enjoyable as the exceptionally dry April and May made my wet weather gear redundant.

Unfortunately the rains came over the first weekend in June coinciding with National Croquet Day (NCD).

I am writing this the following evening and first reports indicate that despite some rain, there was a good public response around the country.

I congratulate Brian Wilson and his Marketing Team for their thorough preparatory work, the production of posters, and the associated publicity.

My club, Eardisley, in rural west Herefordshire, gained new members on NCD. Some visitors joined on the day and others plan to do so.

Now in its third season, we have a growing membership and, in common with most clubs, beginners are introduced to GC.

But we do try and follow the recommendations of the CA Coaching Committee and ensure early on that newcomers try AC (on half lawns); alternate stroke AC doubles (with a more experienced partner); and one-ball.

Away from the lawns, much of the CA's activity has centred on promoting our sport.

Our National Development Officer (NDO), Dave Gunn, commissioned a promotional video aimed, not at players, but at the general public and this can be found on our website Home page [www.croquet.org.uk](http://www.croquet.org.uk).

This short montage has excellent publicity value and discussions are ongoing concerning other ways of extending its use.

TV viewers can't fail to have noticed the BBC's promotion of its 'Get Inspired' initiative. This was launched last autumn with the aim of encouraging the public to take up a more active lifestyle through participation in sport and their website showed a long list of sports but croquet was not amongst them. I contacted the

responsible department and sought to get croquet included; but I failed.

I am pleased to report that we have now not only be added to the BBC's site but we have been featured on its front page which provides a link to our new video [www.bbc.co.uk/sport/get-inspired/40105873](http://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/get-inspired/40105873).

Another promotional initiative is that Her Mojo, a leading activity finding organisation, which aims to encourage women and girls to adopt active lifestyles, has agreed to promote croquet specifically throughout the first half of June [www.her mojo.co.uk/about](http://www.her mojo.co.uk/about).



**Brian Shorney**

# England win the Home Internationals

England won the 2017 Home Internationals in early June when the weather was a real challenge, **as Samir Patel reports.**

Following heavy overnight rain, the start of this year's Irish-hosted tournament at Southport was delayed due to significant puddles on all five courts.

Ongoing drizzle with intervals of heavy showers kept them topped up, so the usual all-play-all format was amended to a knockout, with the randomly drawn semi-finals; England v Wales and Ireland v Scotland.

Play finally got underway at 11am on court 5, with court 4 becoming available later in the day.

The wet conditions made some play heavy going, with one of the first matches being an eight-hour epic, which Jane Morrison won for Ireland (-5 +13 +23). A quick 13-minute TP in the fading light by Simon Williams over Campbell Morrison (+26 +23tp) gave Ireland their test win 3-1, with Martin Murray having won the single point for Scotland.

The England v Wales test was further

behind, with England having an overnight 1-0 lead thanks to Christian Carter beating Garry McElwain (+18 +18tp), and only one other game was completed giving James Hopgood a lead over Chris Williams.



There was no further rain overnight, and with Sunday morning revealing three playable courts, this was enough to start all the remaining first round matches.

England won all games played against Wales to win that test 3-0.

At this point (11am), all games in play were abandoned in favour of starting the second (and deciding) round, and with all five courts now playable, all 20 players were

in action.

The final was Ireland v England, while the Wales v Scotland encounter would decide third place.

Both matches were one-sided affairs, with Scotland and Ireland winning only three games between them, leaving England and Wales winning their matches to take first and third places respectively.

Play finished at around 5pm, as initially planned, allowing everyone to stick to their travel plans and the manager to claim that everything had been under control all along!

Danny Johnston, on behalf of the hosts, Ireland, presented the Frank Cooper trophy to England Captain, David Maugham

**England:** David Maugham (C, pictured left), Mark Avery, Christian Carter, James Hopgood, Samir Patel.

**Ireland:** Andrew Johnston, Danny Johnston, Jane Morrison, Evan Newell, Simon Williams

**Scotland:** David Magee, Campbell Morrison, Martin Murray, Sam Murray, Alan Wilson.

**Wales:** Ian Burridge (C), John Evans, Garry McElwain, David Walters, Chris Williams

## Forthcoming AC International Events

Players are encouraged to make themselves available for the following forthcoming events.

Please do not make your own assumptions as to whether you are likely to be selected or not, that is a decision for the Selectors. If you want to play, please make yourself available.

### 2018 WCF AC World Championship, Wellington, New Zealand

**Saturday 3 to Sunday 11 February 2018**

English players interested in playing in this event should make their availability known via the Members section of the CA Website before the closing date of 23 July 2017.

Selection is a two stage process; initially all the available players from around the world are aggregated together and those with the highest rankings are selected (Ranking Places). Once these places have been announced, the CA will have two places to allocate to English players who have not gained a Ranking Place (Membership Places).

There is a third route to playing in the event and that is via a Wild Card Place. Wild Cards are selected by the WCF according to the various criteria; the most relevant likely

to be, "the encouragement of young players or players showing exceptional promise of future development". If you believe that you might meet this criteria and wish to be nominated for a Wild Card by the CA (a citation is required), please add the text "Please nominate for Wild Card" in the comment section of the availability form.

For those failing to gain a place via any of the above routes there is a Qualifying Tournament being held in Wellington, 30 January to 1 February 2018 and anyone interested in playing in this should contact the WCF directly for details (closing date 14 January 2018).

### 2018 Solomon Trophy - GB v USA

It has recently been agreed that this event will be played at Surbiton, Tuesday 7 to Friday 10 August 2018. Register your availability on CA Website before the closing date of 8 May 2018.

### 2017 Maugham Salver - GB v Ireland

Availability registration for this match closes on 28 July for this match at Ramsgate on 2 and 3 September 2017.

**Ian Burridge,**  
**International Performance Director (AC)**

## Introducing new man Dan



**Dan Atiyah** joined the CA team at the start of April and is jointly working on the CA Shop and the administration side of the CA in a full time post.

He has worked in a variety of roles since university, including educational administration, procurement, pension services, and market analysis for an online plumbing business.

Dan is new to the world of croquet but, as a keen sports observer, is trying to learn as much as possible about our sport.





## 'Going for Growth' with NDO Dave Gunn

**A**s you may well have already seen, I recently started work in the newly created position of National Development Officer for the CA.

The announcement on the CA website read as follows:

*"The Croquet Association has appointed Dave Gunn (pictured right) to the part-time role of National Development Officer, for a period of two years starting on 6 April. Formerly employed by IBM, Dave will continue to work for a local charity, and is currently Chairman of the Nottingham Croquet Club.*

*He will work from home and report to the Chairman of the Management Committee, liaising with Club, Federation and the Marketing, Development and Coaching Committees, and in particular the Federation Development Officers, to understand and help address their needs.*

*His main focus will be on sharing best practices, along with developing and supporting new initiatives, for the recruitment and retention of competitive club members.*

*If you have initiatives that you think might benefit from his involvement, please contact him on 07710 981561 or email [davegunn59@gmail.com](mailto:davegunn59@gmail.com)."*

### It's a big job!

I am already starting to realise what a big job it is, and that I am going to have to be very focused in deciding where I spend my limited time to make the maximum impact...but I am genuinely looking forward to working with you all where appropriate, and I'm sure we will have broadly similar objectives in helping the sport, the federations and individual clubs grow in a sustainable way.

Having played cricket from boyhood to the age of 50, I was delighted to discover the excellent sport of croquet when injury forced a change, and I now have every confidence that my new sport will 'see me through!' Though mainly an AC player, I enjoy all forms of the game at both social and competitive levels, and have worked hard at my club, Nottingham, as both a coach and during my recently ended spell as Chairman to help recruit and retain new members, and to develop them in whatever direction they wish to go.

### My wide-ranging remit

My remit is quite wide-ranging, and I will certainly be looking at, for example, opportunities to open new clubs and to encourage more competitive play at club, Federation and CA Tournament level.

Initially, though, my focus has been on attracting more people to try (and become hooked on) croquet, and then go on to at least explore competitive, as well as social, play in both codes.

### A croquet journey

The easiest way to explain my current thinking here would be for me to describe what I see as an ideal 'journey of a typical new croquet player'. I set it out below and would welcome any thoughts on how it might be improved:

Firstly the individual needs to hear about croquet somehow, and be inspired to

If, and only if, the individual joins for a third year (or buys their own mallet!) can they be truly viewed as being 'hooked'.

It is then that the wide range of development coaching and courses offered by clubs, federations, the CA and the Academies

can kick in to help all players to reach their potential in either or both codes, and to hopefully go on to play competitively at higher levels as their capabilities improve.

From what I already knew, and also what I have picked up from my various meetings in the role so far, it is clear to me that I need to add value in all of the above phases of that

new croquet player's journey. It is also clear that there are many examples of best practice around the country, and that I need to try to capture as many of these as possible, and then look at ways of sharing that best practice nationally. This will take time so please bear with me. It may not be until next season that I am able to fully address some areas.

### Our new promotional film

One thing I have already been able to deliver, and that I hope will be a useful tool to help drive potential new players through the gates of our clubs, is a short promotional film that aims to capture all the reasons why it is worth giving croquet a go.

It is featured on the CA homepage, and I would urge all clubs to add it to their own websites.

### 'Get inspired' and help me please

I am also in the process of trialing the use of external websites such as the BBC Get Inspired programme.

Enjoy the rest of season...and do not hesitate to let me have any thoughts or ideas that might help me in my role, please!



attend a taster session, an Open Day or even a National Croquet Day event. Although introductions can be made through friends and family, many people hear about croquet through external vehicles.

Next, the individual needs to have enjoyed that taster sufficiently to want to sign up for some form of 'Learn To Play' course. That needs to be well run, combining fun with a serious attempt to show participants the possibilities that both AC and GC can offer, socially and competitively.

After that, the individual needs to have been convinced to sign up for the remainder of that first year. Ongoing coaching, mentoring, and an introduction to competitive play all need to be delivered in quality ways.

### Getting players 'hooked'

If all has gone well, the individual will sign up for a second year, when ongoing support will be vital because the game can be quite hard to pick up during these early stages.



**Dave Gunn**  
**National Development Officer**

07710 981561  
[davegunn59@gmail.com](mailto:davegunn59@gmail.com)

# Obituaries

## Bill Lamb 1936 - 2017

**B**ill (William Edward) Lamb died in Hull Royal Infirmary on 15 April 2017 at the age of 80. He had suffered increasing ill-health for some years.

Bill retired from the Physics Department of Hull University in 1987, and proceeded to dedicate his waking energies to what had become his primary interest, croquet. He practised hard and played a lot, achieving a handicap of -1, completing seven triples during the next thirteen years and was a very active member of the Yorkshire county team. He also wrote a book, "Croquet – Skills of the Game", and an authoritative booklet on the "Principles of Handicapping".

Bill made a substantial contribution to the organisation and administration of croquet.

He was a member of the CA Council from 1988 to 2000 and Chairman from 1995 to 1997. He was a selector for six years, Chairman of the Laws Committee for four years and the Handicap Committee for seven.

It is in this last role that his legacy on our game is most evident today, through the devising and implementation of the modern handicapping system.

It is a testament to the far-sighted work of that committee that the version in force today differs so little from that introduced twenty years ago.



Bill's valedictory Chairman's Column in the Croquet Gazette of November 1996 asserts that "Chairmen of Council are transient beings", but 'transient' is not an adjective that one would apply to Bill.

In the mid-1980's, Bill was the driving force behind the Hull and East Riding CC, based on disused bowling greens in the Costello public park in the city.

Several successful 'open' weekend tournaments were held there, but the appetite of local youth for riding its bikes and motorcycles on any patch of nice flat grass overcame even Bill's resilience, and the club subsequently folded.

Thereafter, Hunstanton became Bill's spiritual home, where he managed, and won, tournaments.

Bill was troubled with arthritis, and trips

to the Inter-counties were challenging but never dull. It was usually necessary to lift him from the car at the end of the long drive to the south coast, and his early morning callisthenics had to be seen and heard to be believed.

He would regale fellow breakfasters at Cornerways with his account of how he remained awake and alert throughout the replacement of both his hips, giving vivid accounts of the noise made by the saw and the faint smell of bony combustion and causing some to send to the kitchen to cancel their Full English. One year, he displayed very proudly his little fingers, which had been surgically straightened; we never found out why. There was some debate about how much of Bill could be replaced before he ceased to qualify for Yorkshire.

Bill was a very intelligent, articulate and hard-working man who focused his considerable abilities on what he thought was right and made a major contribution to the game of croquet.

He could be tenacious and direct in debate; one can imagine him even now at the pearly gates with St Peter, arguing coherently and forcefully that his previous handicap should have no bearing on his eligibility for the celestial Longman Cup team. Rest peacefully, Bill.

**Peter Thompson**

## John Munroe 1929 - 2017

**J**ohn Munroe died in early May.

He started playing croquet at Thames Valley CC and was also a member of Blewbury CC, where he held office, Cheltenham CC and more recently at The Bears CC where he was one of the most conscientious and supportive of members.

John played until just a few years ago when his health began to fail, but had been a most loyal club member and made a significant contribution both to his clubs and to the sport in general - always in his usual quiet and unassuming manner.

He was the Southern Croquet Federation Development Officer from 2006 – 2014 and was named Coach of the Year in 2007. He was also a GC Coach and referee and an AC Coach and Assistant Referee.

In 2011, Blewbury CC nominated him for a CA Diploma in recognition of the work



he had done there and the citation for that award sums up John's attitude and dedication

to croquet. Part of it reads:

"He has a great deal of patience and enthusiasm that has proved to be a perfect combination for new clubs. Better-established clubs have also appreciated his depth of knowledge, especially when negotiating their way around applications for grant aid from

the Development Committee.

John has been most conscientious and it is not thought that he missed a Development Committee meeting or a Federation Committee meeting since he was elected. The work that he has done on behalf of the CA and the Federation has been quite exceptional".

All of us who knew him would also add that he was a perfect gentleman, a kind and most loyal club member and a dear friend.

**Robert Moss**

## Mary Goodhart 1926 - 2017



**B**udleigh visitors of the 1990s and 2000s will be saddened to hear of the death of Mary Goodhart.

Jane Hull speaks for them all with this affectionate tribute.

*'I have happy memories of the many years when Mary was part and parcel of my visits to Budleigh. Both she and her sister Joyce were stalwarts of the Club for many years; the very essence of what the game of croquet was all about. When I first took the plunge to play away from home it was Mary who greeted me with warmth and enthusiasm.'*



This article is dedicated to all those who do so much for the development of croquet by coaching.

In particular to Teddy Prentis, a world renowned coach from USA, who was recently tragically killed in a motoring accident whilst in Bermuda for a croquet tournament.

Teddy was an eight time USCA (United States Croquet Association) champion and a member of the US team. He played in the first Test Match between GB and USA at Nottingham in 1985 and in the Solomon Trophy in 1989 and 1990.

He also played a vital role in the early development of the USCA but it was as a coach that he was most widely recognised.

He was Director of the USCA's National Croquet School and the world's first croquet teaching professional.

Initially based at the Palm Beach Polo and Country Club he extended his teaching to other clubs in Florida including the Breakers and Indian Creek Golf Club.

During the summer he would coach in the North East at Westhampton and more latterly Ocean House Rhode Island.

He has almost certainly taught more players than any other person, but it was his ability to enthuse his students, whatever their standard, that was truly exceptional.

It is this aspect of coaching which I think is his legacy.

## 'Getting Shirty' and remembering Teddy Prentis



For all those engaged in coaching, passing on enthusiasm for the game should be your number one priority.

Of course technical aspects of croquet coaching are important but increasing the level of enthusiasm for the game is absolutely vital.

No one could do this better than Teddy.

During the 1980s the USCA played a number of challenge matches against teams from South Africa, Ireland, Scotland and England, and these were an interesting

mixture of Association Croquet and American Rules Croquet.

Those of us playing in these matches had to learn quickly of the substantial tactical subtleties of American Rules Croquet, and it was Teddy Prentis who taught us.

I benefited greatly from this as did a certain 14 year old from South Africa - Reg Bamford.

~

Now you will know that this series of articles is all about shirts. So I hear you asking what's all this got to do with shirts?

Well one of my happiest croquet memories which I shared with Teddy, was when we were playing as doubles partners in an American Rules competition at Meadowood in California around 1990.

It was a great experience for me, as he knew just about all there was to know about the tactics of this game.

We spent many happy hours playing and discussing the finer points of the game. And we played in shirts with the logo of Teddy's club The Palm Beach Polo and Country club.

Many players from around the world last saw Teddy just over a year ago when he was a Manager of the World Championship held in West Palm Beach.

We were again touched by his infectious enthusiasm for the game.

RIP Teddy Prentis.

**David Openshaw**

*She and Joyce were to be seen from first thing in the morning until last thing at night doing everything to ensure the well-being of all the visitors. They organised the tournament dinners and often gathered up the waifs and strays on to their table so that no one felt left out. Mary was an inveterate talker and I so much enjoyed her tales, including her experiences as a Wren after the war. One of the joys of playing in croquet tournaments is the pleasure of meeting other players; Mary was for me rather special.'*

On retiring to Budleigh in 1986, Mary and Joyce joined the Club, threw themselves into the game and the life of the Club. Budleigh CC owes an enormous amount to Mary who served as Croquet Chairman twice (from 1995-96 and 1997-2000), and as Club Chairman (1998-2000). She was also Tournament Secretary from 1997 -2008 and organised all Budleigh's fixtures in the SWF leagues until as recently as 2015. It is believed she may have performed this last function for as long as 20 years.

**Elaine Marsh**

## The updated version of 'Lawns Advice' is now available

The latest updated version of the official publication by the Croquet Association - 'Croquet Lawns, their construction, maintenance and development' by Jeff Perris, retired Director of Consultancy Services at The Sports Turf Research Institute, Bingley - is now available in a down-loadable form from the CA website.

This advice, recommendations and legal requirements, should be the accepted standards for grant applications for the construction, improvement and maintenance of lawns, to the Development Committee of the CA.

This document is a valuable source of information and is intended for those involved in lawn management at clubs, as well as federation development officers and contractors providing lawn services. In particular, attention is drawn to sections 61 & 62 - Pesticides, application and legislation. To view this valuable resource, please visit the 'Information for Clubs page' on the CA website using this link:

<http://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=clubs/info> - then scroll down to the 'Lawns' section.

**Bob Whitaker, MBE, MA,  
Development Committee Lawns Advisor**

*Christian Carter gets a closer look at Roehampton's near perfect green stuff.  
(photo by Chris Roberts)*



## CA Archivist recalls the details of Woking's 1930 triumph

Dear Editor,

I write with regard to the letter in the February issue (*Gazette 366*) about a family link to top players of the past.

Both Ben and Lorn Apps were members of the Woking Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club before the war.

I have been unable to trace where they lived at the time, as the records of the 1931 census were destroyed in 1942 and the 1939 register for Surrey does not record Ben Apps in the county.

Woking won the 1930 Inter-Club Championship with a strong team which also included Maurice Reckitt, another top player of the time.

Perhaps Chris Williams (CA Archivist) could fill out the details of that tournament and also give some information about the Apps Trophy which was lost many years ago and has never turned up.

I enclose a photograph of the team.

**Collin Southern,  
Woking LT&CC**

**Chris Williams writes:**

The 1934 CA Directory lists the Apps address as 'Craycombe', Mount Hermon Road, Woking (Tel: Woking 1319).

The draw for the 1930 Inter-Club Championship shows that 11 clubs entered



and the draw was as follows.

Round 1 - Compton v Sussex County; Roehampton v Hurlingham; Bedford v Warwickshire (Leamington).

Round 2 - Woking v North Hants (Fleet); Bexhill v Compton or Sussex County; Ranelagh v Roehampton or Sussex County; Carlisle v Bedford or Warwickshire (Leamington).

Results reported during the season were - Sussex County beat Compton 5-2; Roehampton beat Hurlingham 7-2; Sussex County beat Bexhill 5-4; Bedford beat Ranelagh 5-3.

The other matches don't appear to have been reported and the CA Gazette for September 27, 1930 just has the results of

the final.

The 1930 Inter-Club Championship Final Round was played at Hurlingham on 23 September between Woking and Bedford.

Here are the game results of that final (Woking pairs named first):

Ben C Apps and Mrs BC Apps - beat WS Brocklehurst and Miss DD Steel by 6; beat Col CL Young and Miss C Attenborough by 26; lost to Rev GC Graham and Mrs Atkinson by 16.

MB Reckitt and Godfrey

Turner - beat WS Brocklehurst and Miss DD Steel by 7; beat Col CL Young and Miss C Attenborough by 4; beat Rev GC Graham and Mrs Atkinson by 6.

PA Houghton and Miss DE Oliver - lost to WS Brocklehurst and Miss DD Steel by 24; lost to Col CL Young and Miss C Attenborough by 1; lost to Rev GC Graham and Mrs Atkinson by 8.

The result was a 5 - 4 win for Woking.

As can be seen from the above results the teams consisted of six players who played three rounds of doubles.

I don't appear to have any information on the Apps Trophy.

**Chris Williams  
CA Archivist**

## Is there any proof for this Chastleton House claim?

Dear Editor,

On a recent day out with my wife, where I promised not to play croquet or even mention the word, we went to, and I quote, 'A rare gem of a Jacobean country house, Chastleton House was built between 1607 and 1612 by a prosperous wool merchant as an impressive statement of wealth and power'.

Owned by the same increasingly impoverished family until 1991, the house remained essentially unchanged for nearly 400 years as the interiors and contents gradually succumbed to the ravages of time.

However, upon arrival I found that they indeed had two croquet lawns and claimed to have invented the game of croquet, or its rules at least.

I enclose a photo of a plaque claiming this in the house grounds.

My question is, could you please clear up this scandalous accusation of who and where the rules were created and by whom?

... Not Jaques I assume!

**Richard Brand, Worcester Norton CC**



*One for the croquet historians I thought, and who better ask than Ray Hall - Ed.*

~

Dear Richard and Editor, As explained by David Prichard in his magnificent *'The History of Croquet'* (1981 and probably now unavailable), Walter Jones Whitmore was born at Chastleton House in 1831.

Subsequently he lived largely in London but always spent time at Chastleton which was the parental home and later that of his elder brother (and descendants until 1991). Walter took up croquet around 1860 and two lawns were laid at Chastleton.

Correspondence in *'The Field'* bemoaned the lack of standard rules and Walter did indeed take a major hand in producing such a set of rules which became known as the Field Rules in 1866. They were widely accepted until superseded by the Conference Laws in 1870 and 1872 which, for example, removed the "tight croquet" so copiously illustrated in Punch. Walter died in 1872

**Ray Hall, Sussex County CC**



## String boundaries no more, as S.A. clubs see the danger

Dear Editor,

Having just got back from a trip to South Africa, I am delighted to report that both Somerset West CC and Helderberg Village CC have replaced the string that they had been using to mark out their croquet courts with white painted lines instead.

Two years ago I tripped over the string at Somerset West, during their February AC Tournament, and ended up going to hospital for x-rays and being told I had broken ribs.

I spent a very painful remainder of the tournament unable to play and a most uncomfortable flight home.

Thankfully, there was no lasting damage.

I do know of other players who have been injured because of string boundary trip-falls, including one from my own club who broke her wrist playing in an away match.

I will never play croquet where string is involved again. It's not worth the risk.

**Frances Colman,**

**Phyllis Court CC and Roehampton CC**

## Thank you all for helping after my fall

Dear Editor,

While representing Suffolk in the inter-counties this year I slipped on the bank by the north boundary at Compton about 15 minutes before the end of the last game of the tournament. A loud crack from my ankle was heard 3 lawns away and I was left, clutching my leg, on the edge of the playing fields.

This seemed to be the signal for many of those present to leap into action doing things to help me over the next 90 minutes while we waited for an ambulance. In the end Hilary Smith drove me to the hospital where Philip Eardley accompanied me and it was confirmed I had broken my fibula.

I had travelled to the counties from Bristol on my motorcycle which I am now unable to ride, however Graham Pegley has arranged to collect and store my bike until I am able to ride again. I would like to thank all those involved in looking after me, particularly Hilary, Graham and Philip, who made what could have been dreadful experience much easier to deal with.

**Martin Leach, Bristol CC**

## Her Majesty and Hugh, 50 years ago



Dear Editor,

It is 50 years ago this year that Her Majesty the Queen came to Hurlingham and presented, amongst others, the runners-up prize for the Centenary All England Handicap to Hugh Carlisle.

Also in the photograph are (from the left): CA President Maurice Reckitt, Mrs Showan, Dudley Hamilton-Miller, William Ormerod, Derek Caporn, Hugh's proud wife (with hat!) and Joan Warwick. It is possibly John Bolton hiding behind HM's hat, but can't place the 'sneezer' over Hugh's shoulder.

**Veronica Carlisle, The Hurlingham Club**

## Centenary celebrations for Roehampton's Jimmy James

There was a large and cheerful gathering when Roehampton CC member 'Jimmy' James celebrated his hundredth birthday at the Club on 3 May.

Having actively played tennis deep into his nineties (he was for twenty years Secretary to the 45 Club for tennis veterans), Jimmy then took up croquet.

He is a regular player of golf croquet at Roehampton, setting a wonderful example to all in enjoying the game into older age. He still has ambitions for improving his handicap.

At a recent roll-up he chanced to play doubles with fellow member Stephen Reves.

Their aggregate age was over 190.

Roehampton invite other Clubs to trump this if they can!

In recent weeks Luton Town have recognised his long-standing loyalty to them, and he has been awarded Honorary Life Membership of both the Institute of Directors and the Roehampton Club.

**Ann Wilkinson**

**Roehampton Club**



## A new pavilion for Lodsworth



Lodsworth CC celebrated the opening of their new pavilion in April.

Club Chairman Alistair Proctor reports that its construction had taken three years from conception to the final build.

**It was paid for with a grant and loan from the Croquet Association, grants from West Sussex CC, Chichester CC, and private donations.**

Built on a 45 degree bank, the foundations included a complex foundation of sunken steel RSJs, which took more planning than the pavilion itself, which has a direct water and electricity supply. Club Chairman Alistair Proctor said: "The new pavilion is a great achievement for the Club, and will enhance the croquet experience for all our club members. It's only our fourth year, and again we have over 60 members for the 2017 season".

## Croquet to go on show at BBC CountryFile Live ~ please come along ~'

In 2016 BBC Countryfile Live ran a very successful show in the beautiful parkland of Blenheim Palace (near Oxford) attracting 125,000 visitors.

For this year's show - 3 to 6 August 2017 - the Countryfile Live team is providing the CA with a small lawn area for croquet in the centre of the event.

Over the four days, teams of CA volunteers, led by John Dawson, will be helping visitors "to pick up a mallet and try their hand at croquet" and there will also be demonstrations of croquet skills, showing croquet in its true light.

We know visitors will enjoy the experience, and we hope that many will be inspired to follow up that interest with clubs across the country.

The show is a great day out for all the family; so why not come along to support croquet, and at the same time enjoy all the facilities of the show.

Watch an exclusive Countryfile theatre show featuring the presenters; meet rare breeds at Adam's Farm; climb aboard mighty farm machinery; watch live animal arena shows; discover British wildlife; get

stuck into outdoor activities; learn from cooking and craft demonstrations; join live debates and interviews; and shop from hundreds of quality exhibitors – **and this year, experience croquet!**

### Special deals for croquet players

As club members will soon hold CA membership, this offer is open to all members of CA clubs.

Countryfile Live is offering a discount of £3 off advance tickets to the 2017 event, so £24 for an adult.

To take advantage of this special offer, visit [www.countryfilelive.com](http://www.countryfilelive.com), select the promotion 'Croquet' and enter the code CA2017 when booking.

The show is very popular, and booking online in advance is essential both for entrance and parking.

**We look forward to seeing you at Blenheim**

**Brian Wilson,**  
Chairman of the Marketing Committee



Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines

# Cruise with Fred. Olsen

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



To book using your discount code **THECA10** call the booking hotline **0800 0355 108** or visit [www.fredolsencruises.com/CA](http://www.fredolsencruises.com/CA)

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\*All bookings are subject to Fred. Olsen's (FOCL) standard terms & conditions, available on our website & on request. All prices quoted under the Croquet Association members discount offer are exclusive to qualifying members & their travelling companions only, members must quote their discount code at time of booking. Membership discounts cannot be applied retrospectively. Bookings must be made via the booking hotline number 0800 0355 108. Proof of membership will be required at the time of booking. Offers cannot be extended to any unrelated third party, are subject to availability & may be withdrawn or amended at any time without prior notice. From time to time FOCL may run special offers which cannot be combined with this discount, including selected group travel deals. All guests booked under this scheme are requested to refrain from disclosing the fare paid whilst on board. Offer is for first-time cruisers with Fred. Olsen only. Fred. Olsen Oceans members are entitled to a 5% Croquet Association discount subject to the same terms & conditions, to be applied after the standard Oceans discount, where applicable. In this instance, Oceans Terms & Conditions apply. This offer expires on the 30th June 2017. E&OE.





# National Croquet Day - How was it for you?

## The weather was variable, but not the welcome

I am writing this just a few days after National Croquet Day and the reports from clubs are still coming in.

The weather may have been variable but the welcome was as warm as you could imagine, and one thing is certain – the hard work of so many people in all clubs certainly paid off – so congratulations to one and all.

The weather was fine in the Lake District as **Keswick CC** celebrated the long-awaited restoration of their lawns, with a joint taster day and re-opening ceremony (*see their report in the next column*).

The weather was also fine in **Royal Tunbridge Wells**, and some 30 visitors attended their event – some hearing about it via the BBC 'Get inspired' web site.

All five of their courts were needed and competition was fierce, with hoop-running won with a shot from over 13 feet. A reporter and cameraman from their local TV came along and undertook some interviews with the club members and visitors.

Club coaches were on hand to introduce the visitors, three of whom will soon become full members, and a number of visiting families were really keen, so perhaps there will be a youth section soon?

**Church Stretton CC** tells us that National Croquet Day has been an excellent opportunity to recruit new members.

They placed a banner on the Council railings by a busy road junction at the entrance to their lawns, thanks to forward planning that enabled them to grasp this key advertising space.

Finally my own club, **Camerton and Peasedown**, which is situated just south of Bath, found that the rain kept off whilst we were setting up, but then decided to come down in torrents and added in strong winds for good measure!

But that did not stop our stalwarts from playing croquet, and we greeted many old friends from other clubs, and local families with their children, who tried hoop-running and a short game, until everyone agreed that the rain had won – so tea and cakes beckoned.

Was it a success for us? Well yes, for we met old friends and some new ones, and we all had a good day.

Look out for further NCD coverage in the next Gazette issue.

**Please report your National Croquet Day experiences to me Brian Wilson, at [ncd@croquet.org.uk](mailto:ncd@croquet.org.uk)**

**Brian Wilson,  
Chairman of the Marketing Committee**

## NCD featured Club ~ Keswick CC

### Flood victims bounce back with a re-opening celebration!



**K**eswick Croquet Club, struggling rather with fewer than a dozen members, took the opportunity of the happy coincidence of National Croquet Day and the long-awaited restoration of our lawn on Fitz Park, Keswick, to hold a joint taster day and re-opening ceremony, *writes Ian Hall*.

Fitz Park is the natural flood plain for Keswick, and Storm Desmond of 5 December 2015, took full advantage of it to deposit many thousands of tons of silt, many hundreds of uprooted trees, and even the remains of eight mobile homes over the thirty acres of park – much of it on our croquet lawn (*as reported on page 17 of Gazette 360, February 2016 – Ed.*)

We found that even after the mechanical removal of the detritus and the sterling efforts of the Park's staff to restore order, nets, park benches, flower beds and shrubs, the croquet lawn was unwilling to resemble anything more than a pond.

All those tons of silt had thoroughly blocked the drains, and even seemed to have formed an impermeable layer a foot down. Restoring the drains, breaking up that layer, and establishing a decent sward, has taken for ever since the deluge, and so National Croquet Day, falling eighteen months to the day later, was too good an opportunity to miss.

We publicised the joint opening and taster day in the local 'Keswick Reminder'

and with the posters provided by the CA.

We invited the Mayor, Councillor Susan Leighton, to perform the ceremony and join in the golf croquet afternoon.

Fortunately the sun smiled on us and the small crowd who'd come along to see what it was all about were able to enjoy both the game itself and the social aspect provided by sparkling wine and canapés laid on by our social secretary Tom Ryan and his wife Gail. We double banked on two short lawns, each with a member explaining and keeping score; and those who played seemed thoroughly to enjoy themselves.

Was it a success? Well, it depends how you define such things. The attendance was small and liberally laced with friends and well-wishers, so the permanent uptake is likely to be tiny – say two or three at most. However, it may establish these two short lawns as a venue for GC and this may generate its own following.

Existing members are passionate AC players, and we have found an alternative excellent full lawn at nearby Braithwaite village, but we have found that it is difficult to introduce new players to AC; so maybe GC at Fitz Park will slowly generate some AC players. Only time will tell.

*Above: Keswick CC chair, Ian Hall (far right) with town Mayor, Susan Leighton; And below: Hall again (far left) in clean-up mode 18 months ago.*





# Australia win *The Mac*

Stephen Mul

**F**our teams, twenty-seven players and forty degrees Celsius – the latter applying for part of the three weeks over which the 2017 MacRobertson Shield was played in the Californian desert about 120 miles east of Los Angeles.

The venue was Mission Hills Country Club, a wealthy residential community spaced around four championship golf courses in Rancho Mirage and famous for a major tournament on the LPGA Tour. Mission Hills has four croquet lawns,

with a further three available when needed, which otherwise double as lawn-tennis grass courts, and hosted the Solomon Trophy in 2005 and 2010.

The grounds staff had put in a huge amount of work and taken the request for fast lawns to heart.

The grass surface was very smooth and the main lawns reached 12 Plummers most of the time with the back lawns perhaps one Plummer slower.

The Rodoni hoops used were very stable

## Round 1 England v Australia

The opening round pitched Australia against England and for the first time in MacRobertson Shield history, three brothers formed half of their national croquet team.

Robert, Malcolm and Greg Fletcher have become well-known names in AC since Robert burst on the scene in 2008 and added a youthful component to supplement the experience of captain Ian Dumergue, Stephen Forster and Simon Hockey.

Ian and Stephen had four and five previous Mac appearances and Simon played in the 2003 Mac.

They played as a team and it is no exaggeration to say that they formed the strongest Australian team since 1982 and very probably for much longer than that.

~

England fielded the most experienced and least changed side of the four countries.

Swap James Hopgood for Robert Fulford and the England team would be the same as in 2014, with David Maugham and Stephen Mulliner both notching up their eighth Mac appearances, whilst Samir Patel, Jamie Burch and James Death all made their second.

~

Playing format 1, Australia made a solid start, winning the day 1 doubles 2-1, sharing the day 2 singles 3-3 and repeating their day 1 success on day 3 to lead 7-5.

English hopes of a singles whitewash to take the Test on day 4 were quickly dashed and it was the Australians who sealed matters with four wins to reach 11-7.

England took the last doubles day 2-1 to make the final score line 12-9, but the truth was that Australia had shot better than England and had played with admirable steadiness to turn that advantage into a well-deserved Test victory.

## Round 1 USA v New Zealand

This match featured teams who both fielded a squad rather than a fixed team of six.

Jenny Clarke captained New Zealand and was supported by the experienced Paddy Chapman and, for the first Test, Toby Garrison who was then replaced by Harps Tahurangi. Aiken Hakes (the NZ Open Champion) and Chris Shilling made their Mac debuts in the company of veteran Joe Hogan who had first played in 1979, a mere 38 years earlier!

USA fielded previous Mac players Danny Huneycutt, Jeff Soo, Ben Rothman and David Maloof, plus Stuart Lawrence and newcomers Stephen Morgan and Matthew Essick, with Rich Lamm also named. Matthew played in the second Test and Stephen in the first and third.

The NZ-USA match was a desperately close 11-10 affair, in which the home team led 7-5 after three days but suffered a 3-0 drubbing in the day 4 doubles to trail 8-7.

Well into the afternoon of the final day it looked as if USA might yet get the vital 11th point to record their second ever Mac win against New Zealand but, in the end, it was not to be and New Zealand, as holders, kept their hopes of a successful defence alive.

## Round 2 England v USA

In the second week, Australia faced New Zealand and England met USA.

England, playing format 1 again, were still showing signs of early-season rustiness and trailed USA by 1-2 and 4-5 after two days before squaring matters at 6-6 after the second doubles day.

They also dropped the first singles on day 4 to trail 6-7, but then they found a higher gear and won all five remaining singles and the three day-5 doubles to sweep to a 14-7 victory.

## Round 2 Australia v New Zealand

Having beaten England in what was regarded by many as the crucial encounter, Australia might have suffered from the "it's yours to lose" syndrome.

In fact, they showed few signs of pressure and moved smoothly to victory in four days for the second time, winning both early doubles days 2-1 and the first singles day 4-2.

From this 8-4 platform, they took all three doubles to clinch the Test 11-4 and then shared the final six singles to end as comfortable 14-7 winners.





# to end an 82 year wait

## liner reports

and showed little sign of loosening.

All-in-all, given the special pressures of competing in the Mac, the venue offered an excellent test of playing skill and mental fortitude.

For the first fortnight, temperatures were generally a pleasant 25 to 33 degrees in dry heat and players followed the advice from the excellent organising team to keep in the shade, put on plenty of sunscreen and drink copious amounts of water.

However, the ball surfaces were slightly

softened by the heat, which significantly increased the pull effect on croquet strokes.

This made angled peels noticeably harder to judge with the result that most triples became delayed.

The standard format of a 21-point Test Match is three doubles on days 1, 3 and 5 and six singles on days 2 and 4. Using seven courts requires one pair of teams to play "format 2" which is doubles on days 1 and 2 and 4, and singles on days 3 and 5.

### Round 3 England v New Zealand

The final round was played under truly sweltering conditions as a ridge of high pressure parked itself over the Coachella Valley and showed no inclination to move on.

England played NZ using format 2 and made their best start of the contest, winning four of the doubles on days 1 and 2 and five of the six singles on day 3.

This gave them an all but unassailable 9-3 lead and they duly clinched victory on day 4 with a doubles whitewash.

Day 5 was limited to only four singles to spare the late starters from the extreme afternoon heat and England finished comfortable 15-4 victors, embellished by the only sextuple of the 2017 Mac.

### Round 3 Australia v USA

All attention was naturally focussed on the Australia v USA match to see if Australia, the home of Sir MacPherson Robertson, the founder of this most historic international croquet contest, could actually win for the first time since 1935 and break an 82-year hoodoo.

On day 1 a 2-1 USA lead seemed possible at one stage, but the day ended with Australia just ahead.

The Australian machine then imposed itself with a 4-2 margin in day 2 singles and another 2-1 win in the day 3 doubles to give a comfortable 8-4 lead.

Although play was by no means one-sided, it was no real surprise when Australia took the three wins they needed, and it was their youngest player, Malcolm Fletcher, who had the honour of scoring the winning point.

Australia went on to win a fourth singles and the day 5 doubles 2-1 to record another convincing 14-7 victory.

### World Champions Australia

The Shield was presented to Ian Dumergue immediately after Malcolm's victory and the pleasure and satisfaction of the Australian team was both evident and very well deserved.

All the opposing teams appreciated what this long-awaited victory means to Australian croquet and it makes the prospect of the 2021 Mac in Australia all the more exciting.

The 2017 MacRobertson Shield contest finished with an excellent dinner in the Mission Hills main clubhouse at which the Shield and the WCF individual medals were formally presented to the Australian team.

All four captains were invited to speak and present their teams and took the opportunity to express the deep appreciation that everyone felt at the huge amount of work done by so many to make this event possible.

Jim Butts, as a key figure in Mission Hills croquet, and Leo Nikora, the very efficient Tournament Director, deserve particular mention for their contributions which began many months before the event.

Rhys Thomas managed the event with his customary affability and the Mission Hills Country Club itself both provided superb green-keeping support and treated the players with great generosity.

Finally, mention must be made of the excellence of the refereeing team organised by Liz Fleming. This included among others Bruce Fleming from Australia, Ian Vincent from England and Graeme Roberts and Brian Boutel from New Zealand. They all came at their own expense and, by doing so, paid a fine tribute to the oldest and most respected international croquet contest.

**Stephen Mulliner,  
Secretary General,  
The World Croquet Federation**



**Photographs** (clockwise from top left): Mission Hills was a fabulous venue, Jamie Burch, James Hopgood, Captain Samir Patel, the croquet family' re-unite (see Alison Jones' atrice overleaf) and the England Team (from left) Burch, Hopgood, Death, Maugham, Patel & Mulliner (images by Samir Patel).

# The Big Mac: Croquet's Family Feast

## How Alison Jones saw the AC World Team Championship

**T**he MacRobertson Shield is the top tier World Team Championship event for Association Croquet, the most prestigious event in the croquet calendar. The event is held in the four countries of the competing teams in rotation - this time the host was America.

The event itself is played as tests: five days play between each of the countries, 15 days of play in total. Stephen Mulliner has reported about the play, hoop settings, lawn speeds and breaks on the previous pages, so let me tell you the rest of the story.

~

We were welcomed by the Mission Hills Croquet Club, where it is not just the lawns that are beautiful. In the distance from every angle the mountains can be seen, sometimes with snow framing the tops of this most incredible backdrop. In the country club itself the relaxed and friendly atmosphere, which combines sport and leisure seamlessly, was a pleasure to experience.

### Chatterbox me

For those of you reading this who have not already met me, I am a bit of a chatterbox. Often during tournaments around the UK I will be found chatting to spectators, players, passers-by and well, anyone who will listen.

I just love the game of croquet and am always excited to introduce new people to our sport.

So naturally, I couldn't resist talking to the local tennis and golf players, who had often walked past the perfectly manicured lawns but had never really noticed what happened on them. The posters around the club advertising the Mac encouraged the members of the country club to find out a little more, but I'm not sure they were quite expecting the invasion of white (and black thanks to the Kiwis) which descended upon them.

### I have to have tea!

As I made friends with the local country club members I also experienced the tea, and this is not something I would recommend. Fortunately one of my new friends, a tennis player, recognised my distress and returned with a box of English tea from her own home. A true example of kindness and community spirit within a multi-sport club.

The first couple of days were practice days for the teams, a chance to experience the speed of the lawns and the heat of the sunshine. Sitting under the canopy with my

freshly brewed tea, was the moment, just then, when I saw what croquet was really about.

### Croquet's 'family' reunions

The players practised together as teams, playing alternate shots, laughing at the hoop clangs and the missed roquets, cheering the hits and the peels, all whilst finding the perfect spot to place their well-travelled mascots.

But this still wasn't what brought a little happy tear to my eye, it was the croquet family that stood before me. There was of course the blood family, with the three Fletcher brothers from Australia, but this really was an amazing display of an extended family reunion.

As the teams crossed paths there were handshakes and hugs all round. Realising that some of these people have known each other for over 40 years, this is a coming together of not just great croquet players, but of great friends too.

During my three weeks of spectating I heard many stories about players past and present, each with its own special meaning and usually an hilarious ending.

Many of these stories also came from previous Mac players who were fellow spectators supporting their countries, and I was privileged to be in the company of Keith Aiton, David Openshaw, Chris Clarke and Kenster Rosenberry, who not only provided live commentary and tactical tuition, but even played croquet with little old me on the practice lawn.

### My very own little croquet story

As the tournament began and I forged my daily routine; arrive with the team, collect my tea (own bag provided of course), say my good mornings along the courtside and settle to watch some world class croquet.

A friendly tennis player, who booked the court next to lawn 5 every morning, also began to wave and say good morning.

Soon this had become more routine, so he started to joke about where his 'cwafee' was (apologies for the terrible Italian/American accent). Eventually I decided to venture onto his court for a proper chat, hoping the croquet players would be less distracted by our voices. The tennis guy then proceeds to put a hand on my shoulder, and, almost hopping with excitement, begins to ask me about the players in the croquet event.

He says "Now tell me, I have heard that you have the best players here". I agree and tell him we have the best players from four

countries and begin my usual croquet spiel.

He stops me and says "But, isn't there 'The Best' player (small pause)... isn't he the short man?". . . Well, I did try very hard not to laugh, but I just couldn't help it. I then had to explain that yes, 'The Short Man' is in fact the current world champion, and is genuinely Stephen Mulliner's actual nickname, and how wonderful it was that he and his nickname were so famous. For anyone who worries about political correctness, Stephen was actually the first person I told about this, and has approved my sharing of the story.

### Recommended viewing

Being a spectator at the Mac is something that I would recommend to any croquet player, whether you have an ambition to one day be a Mac player yourself or you just appreciate precision croquet at its finest. However I must say this does come with a health warning, it's stressful!

I have never really understood or appreciated the supporting of a football team, now I think I do! Watching the team win a couple of games, the spirits are high, smiles everywhere, yet two days later when things just will not 'go right', it's heart breaking.

As much as you can cheer on your team, tell them it'll be 'alright on the night', you can't change what happens on the day. And on day 4, when the well deserving Australian team were ahead with no return, it was hard not to feel and show disappointment.

So, I honestly can't imagine what the England team players themselves were feeling inside. As a team they supported each other through the final day of this test, they fought for their games, even knowing that the test, and possibly the entire Mac, had already been lost.

I can give the same credit to the New Zealand team who we played in the last test, the final day of play being a 'dead day', but they still played their best for their team, the spectators and their country.

To say that I enjoyed my first Mac/American experience would be an understatement and I so look forward to improving my spectating and supporting skills in Australia in 2021. Having said that, I am definitely a Dorothy... 'There's no place like home'.

Well done England, I am proud to support my team, my friends, and I am proud to be part of our world-wide croquet family.

**Alison Jones**



# Charity One Ball fund-raising tops £30,000



## Total funds raised by the annual Charity One Ball competitions passed through the £30,000 mark this year, reports Kevin Carter.

This was the eleventh year of the Charity One-Ball and 35 heats were held across the country, from Middlesbrough to Devon - and one was even held in Uruguay!

A record 489 players took part and another record £4,148 (excluding Gift Aid) was raised for our charity this year, **Parkinsons UK.**

39 players made it to the final, at Surbiton and a dozen made the 'cut' after four rounds of the swiss to continue in a 'premier league', but Cheltenham's Wendy Wu who missed the cut, does earn a mention in dispatches, for her subsequent six straight wins as she finished as a clear 'best of the rest'.

It took nine rounds to sort out the main result, soon after tea-time.

The winner was **Richard Jones (Kington Langley)** from runner-up for the second year in a row, **Steve Stuart-Matthews (Guildford and Godalming)** and third was **Doug Dykes (Reigate).**

Additionally, **Jonathan Lamb (Uruguay and Canterbury)** won a bottle of fizz for the best break, of nine hoops.

Qualifiers for the final travelled long distances to participate and most added to the enjoyment of the day by wearing 'something blue', the house colour of the Parkinsons UK charity.

It was a fun day, supplemented by a superb three-course lunch and a mountainous tea, provided by Surbiton CC.

The photograph shows winner **Richard Jones**, receiving his engraved crystal decanter trophy from Parkinsons UK regional fund manager, **Kevin Perkins.**

**Kevin Carter**

# The Coaching Column



## An alternative way of coaching - by Roger Mills

This has given me food for thought" an A-class player and experienced coach commented after helping me deliver a 4-ball break course at the South West Croquet Academy.

What was different about this course?

Well, it was based on my belief that there are two ways of playing croquet and two ways of learning to play croquet - the easy way and the difficult way.

There are excellent texts available detailing the many things players need to know to play perfect croquet. And coaches do an excellent job coaching what the text books tell us. But therein lies the rub - people find it difficult to learn, let alone retain, a lengthy list of rules and must-do's.

When a visitor leaves our home we say "drive safely", rather than "follow the Highway Code". Why? Because the Highway Code has 300 rules and a myriad of sub-rules, whereas "drive safely" is a way of thinking - a mindset - and has very few rules to it.

Relating this to coaching the 4-ball break, we can find the numerous rules and sub-rules in the texts and coach every single one of them - but will players absorb them and remember them in their game next week, next month?

An alternative approach is to give players the croquet equivalent of the "drive safely" mindset - which I call the '4-ball break Master Mindset'. What are the elements of this mindset? For me, there are five elements, each simple and memorable:

**Place, Plan, Pioneers, Play easy, and Prevention**

Place is knowing exactly where you want each ball at each hoop ('Know your place').

Plan is always having a plan for your next five or six strokes ('Plan before you play').

Pioneers is always having a good pioneer and not leaving a ball behind getting it there ('Play unpioneering croquet').

Play Easy is playing each shot in a way that makes your next shot easy ('Play your shot to the Easy Spot').

Prevention is playing in a way that prevents breakdowns ('Prevent a mistake and keep the break').

Yes, players still need to be coached in the various techniques required to support this mindset, but the five elements of this framework will guide players in every situation and every shot they play.

High handicap players also need a framework to guide their play.

I studied high handicappers' games, recording every mistake made, and found that 50% of the mistakes were shot execution errors (not stalking, lifting the head, etc) and 50% were tactical errors (90% of which related to 4-ball breaks).

So, for high handicappers to play croquet the easy way, the learn-lots-of-rules approach can be replaced with a simple framework of three rules:

Rule #1 'always use an effective shot routine with every shot you play';

Rule #2 'always try for a 4-ball break';

Rule #3 'there are no other rules!'

Croquet is a challenging game, which is why we enjoy it.

Using simple, easily remembered frameworks, it can be played the Easy Way.

## New Coaching Appointments

The following new appointments have been made.

**AC Grade 1 Coach:** Andy Starkey (York)

**GC Grade 2 Coach:** Rachel Rowe (Nottingham)  
Klim Seabright (Cheltenham)

**GC Grade 1 Coach:** Richard Carline (Sussex County)  
Hilary Smith (Compton)  
Louise Taylor (Merton)

**Jonathan Isaacs, Chairman CA Coaching Committee (right)**



# The European GC Championship

**T**his is a special year for the European Croquet Federation because, for the first time, both its GC and AC championships are hosted in continental Europe, *writes Stephen Mulliner.*

Spain is the most rapidly growing croquet centre in Europe, mostly, but by no means entirely, based on GC, and the idea of holding a European GC championship had been a gleam in the eye of the Federation Espanola de Croquet since the first ever Spanish Open GC in July 2015.

Vista Hermosa in Puerto de Santa Maria, near Cadiz, and Pineda in Seville are both golf clubs which now boast three full-size lawns.

The hot climate makes for rapid growth but it remains a source of amazement that Pineda's two newest courts were laid as turf less than a month before the event began. They had bedded down so well that no joins were visible and they were fully playable.

## Eleven countries represented

The ECF had adopted a new approach to entry management which limited any country to five players. In consequence, eleven countries were represented (Belgium, Czech Republic, England, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Norway, Scotland, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland).

The 32 players were entertained to a lavish cocktail party on the Tuesday evening and then they embarked on two days of block play using a best-of-two format to determine which 16 would progress to the knock-out and which to the Plate.

The weather was warm and the "Pineda sixteen" had a very long day on the opening day, starting and ending with a 90-minute journey, fortunately in a very comfortable bus.

## The Block stage

After the block stage was completed, happily with only two play-offs for fourth place, Spain and Ireland were the clear leaders with all five and four, respectively, of their players successful.

Jose Riva (Spain), the defending champion, had looked uncharacteristically



out of sorts at Pineda and only qualified third in his block, while his compatriot Jose Alvarez-Sala had won his block, including a win against 2015 champion Stephen Mulliner.

Pierre Beaudry (Belgium) had been in impressive form and had the best block record, and Mark Stephens, a 23-year old Irishman, had shown impressive patches of form when he seemed unable to miss. He reached the quarter-final with an excellent victory over Andres Alvarez-Sala (Spain), the winner of the German GC Open the previous weekend.

## Quarter and Semi-Finals

The quarter-finals on Saturday morning pitched Beaudry against Riva who had begun to show better form and edged a very tight 7-6, 7-6 win, which set up a semi-final revenge opportunity for Mulliner who was too steady for Patsy Fitzgerald (Ireland) and won by 7-4, 7-6.

In the bottom of the draw, Jose Alvarez-Sala prevailed 7-5, 7-6 over fellow-Spaniard Rafael Romero while Basilio Iglesias, another block winner, made a great recovery against Stephens. The Irishman had looked to be cruising to a relatively comfortable victory by 7-5, 7-6 but an unfortunate first approach to 13 cost him game 2 and Iglesias played with increasing confidence to take the third 7-3.

The Mulliner-Riva semi-final clash never really took off because Mulliner was now hitting top form and Riva missed a few crucial hoops and roquets, and subsided 7-4, 7-4.

There was plenty of drama between

Alvarez-Sala and Iglesias where a large and appreciative Spanish crowd provided an exuberant background. In the end, the coolness of the "Ice Man" proved just more successful than the passion and excitement of Iglesias and gave Jose a 7-4, 4-7, 7-5 victory by 9 p.m. under lights.

The evening was still young by Spanish standards and the entire field now retired to Vista Hermosa's Beach Club where another superb cocktail party was held, attended by club members and friends.

## The Shield, Bowl and Plate

Sunday began with the finals of the Shield, Bowl and Plate competitions and brought victories respectively for Pierre Beaudry against Mark Stephens, Andres Alvarez-Sala against Guy Scurfield and Lionel Tibble against Roar Michalsen (Norway).

## The Championship Final

The final began at 11 a.m. and Mulliner began both games strongly, reaching 3-1.

In game 1, Jose Alvarez-Sala produced a long-range cuddle to change fortunes at hoop 5 and then produced a series of long clearances and three superb long hoops to reel off the next six hoops to take the opening game 7-3.

Game 2 was evenly contested until hoop 11 when Mulliner appeared to be in control with Alvarez-Sala dead-wired to the south from a ball in good position. Alvarez-Sala now produced a 12-yard trickle into the jaws which halted Mulliner's plans and he later ran the hoop from six yards to lead 6-5.

Mulliner managed an exotic angled hoop 12 but could not clear a good ball at 13 and his opponent made no mistake with a two-yard hoop, and Alvarez-Sala became the second successive Spanish European GC Champion. Jose Alvarez-Sala had played extremely well with consistently good clearing and long hooping and he was a very worthy winner.

Then it was off to the Beach Club again for the presentations and a lavish Championship Lunch. The Spanish flair for generous and stylish hospitality is second to none and, unsurprisingly, there was not a single visiting player who would not want to return.

Next year, the Championship will be at Budleigh Salterton and then, hopefully, back to Spain in 2019. The two host clubs and the Spanish federation, especially Luis de Gortazar, did a wonderful job and made this a truly memorable event.

**Stephen Mulliner**



## New Referee Appointments

The following new appointments have been made.

**GC Championship Referee:** Don Beck (Surbiton, left)

**GC Referee:** Andru Blewett (St Agnes),

Vernon Gibbs (Ryde)

Sally Green (Bristol),

Paul Pristavec (Dyffryn)

Pamela Sim (Ryde)

**Martin French, Chairman GC Rules Committee**



# The First Students GC Championship

**H**aving just returned from The GC World Championships, John-Paul Moberly started as the hottest of red hot favourites for the inaugural Students GC Championship, and he duly wrapped-up both the Singles and Doubles titles back in April whilst your last Gazette issue was at the printers, **writes Chris Roberts.**

Richard Bilton partnered Moberly to the doubles win and, along with the Cambridge University pair Cesar Miranda and Francis Wragg, whom they beat in the final, they were the class acts at this fabulous first gathering of younger GC players, whose enthusiasm for croquet was so evident throughout.

## ***This was a Championship with a difference!***

Music rang out from huge speakers, beer flowed, the manager was very entertaining on the P.A., and whites were far from de rigueur.

A party celebration atmosphere over-rode the two day event which was hosted by Sheffield University Croquet Society at four courts laid out on a cricket outfield at their neighbouring Sheffield U3A CC ground

And at the centre of it all, young players had gathered for competitive croquet and were having a great time!

The University's Jonny Simpson and his pals are to be roundly congratulated for launching this event, which was picked up by the CA in the Spring, given the Association's 'Grade 3 Championship' status, provided with attendant support and a brand new trophy.

Simpson was a natural on the mic, and as manager, kept a busy schedule of games ticking over with comedic chivvies to the more laid back of competitors which



numbered 20 at their height.

"Has anyone got a posh looking mallet who shouldn't have one?" he announced at one point when Cesar Miranda had mislaid his Pidcock for the umpteenth time.

Simpson wasn't in the least perturbed when 'student time' was in evidence



with a few latecomers and he managed, with seemingly little difficulty, to bring proceedings to a timely close despite scheduling a relaxed 11am start time for the second day so that the effects of the 2am end to a previous 'night on the town' might be lessened.

The best game in the Singles event was the semi-final between Bilton and Miranda, which came to an exciting conclusion at the 13th hoop when Bilton conceded 'first stroke' having inadvertently put his opponent through hoop 12. A twenty shot tussle ensued before Miranda performed a super 15 yard clearance and then ran the hoop from the boundary.

The Singles final was closer than most would have expected as Miranda matched Moberly to 5-5, before a crucial accidental 'pre-stroke ball touch' cost him dear and Moberly wrapped up the first Students GC Championship with a crowd pleasing 12th hoop run from peg high.

CA Council member and Yorkshire Federation Chairman Anna Giraud came along to present the prizes and ROT John Crossland was in attendance throughout, as was GC Tournaments Committee representative Chris Roberts, who had little to do in support of such a well-managed event.

All competitors will be put in touch with clubs close to their homes, or summer accommodation, as end of term time is nigh.

Congratulations to organiser Jonathan Simpson and his team, Moberly and Bilton for winning, and to all who took part, making this a most enjoyable event that will surely be repeated next season and beyond.

**Chris Roberts**

## **Record Breakers?**

A record was surely set at Cheltenham in early June when players with a combined age of 185 years locked competitive horns in a plate event game of a GC Grade 2 Championship tournament. The pair were even enthusiastic enough to recreate their game in the lashing rain for the benefit of your Editor's camera.

Will Drake of Pendle and Cheltenham, who is still improving his GC handicap at one month short of 94, won a coin toss for the right to pose as striker, whilst Russell Barter also of Cheltenham, who actually won their real game 7-5, awaits his turn at a mere 92 years. Congratulations on your longevity, gentlemen – you are 'Record Breakers' until someone tells me different! - Ed.

The Tournament Manager at Cheltenham, Kevin Ham, reminded me of another probable record that was set at the final (no less) of the Sidmouth GC Open three or four years ago, when young Ryan Cabble (was he yet 20?) played William Ormerod, who is somewhat his senior. Their exact ages at the time are not known but it's highly likely that they set the record for the greatest 'age difference' for a Championship – unless readers know differently?



# The GC Series of Tournaments

## The English National Singles Championship Qualifier Series

The top-flight series of qualifier tournaments for the English National Singles Championship (ENSC) produced some strong fields in the first half of the season and highly competitive events throughout.

As the Gazette went to press, five of the eight qualifying tournaments had been played, all have been won by different players, and the runners-up positions were filled by four different players with only reigning National Champion Ian Burrige appearing in two finals so far.

Reaching the final guarantees the achiever direct qualification into the end of season finals tournament for the National Title and the Ascot Cup.

The series began as usual at the **Surbiton Open**, where a traditionally strong line-up assembled, albeit with the notable absence of Stephen Mulliner who was away on Mac duty.

Peter Dowd surprised the pack with some extremely accurate play and he certainly looked to be the 'form player' as he dropped only one game to top his block and qualify for the semi-finals along with Dulwich trio Guy Scurfield, Pierre Beaudry and Andrew Dymond.

Dowd's luck ran out at the hands of Scurfield, who himself then lost out in a three-game final to Beaudry despite achieving the shot of the tournament, a monster of a jump shot to win the second game (and on the show court too!).

Burrige looked a cut above the field in winning at a rain-soaked **Sidmouth Open** a week later, where timed games became something of an issue thanks to the very well set hoops and the general high quality of the players' clearances.

Jonathan Powe kept Burrige on his toes in the final and there were good performances too from Stephen Custance-Baker and Colin Britt.

Next up was the **East Anglian Open** at Colchester, where Robert Fulford lost only two games in 17 on his way to victory over Tobi Savage in the final, with Rachel Rowe and Martin French knocked out a round earlier.

The surprise of the series so far came at the **Cheltenham Open** when Chris Roberts was fortunate to find Burrige low on his usual clearance hit rate in the final, and he picked up the best tournament win

of his career ahead of an impressive field of 32 (with big thank to Sarah Hayes who was recruited to fill a late vacancy on the opening morning).

A very windy **Ramsgate Open** in early June rounds up this report where John-Paul Moberly beat Stephen Mulliner in the block round and dropped only one game before meeting him again in the final.

Mulliner on the other hand had a tough route, with deciding games being required to get past Lionel Tibble and Tobi Savage, before Moberly did for him in two.

The ENSC qualifier series concludes with open tournaments at Ashby, Nottingham and the Wiltshire Open at Hamptworth. A 20 player line-up at the latter is known to be especially strong, which is hardly surprising, as it will be the last chance for many to qualify for the national final at Nottingham in September.

## The A-Level Series

Running alongside the ENSC qualifier series is the National A-Level Series of tournaments, which are also all open events.

Four, or perhaps more accurately 'three and a half', tournaments have taken place so far, because the last one at Woking was abandoned without a ball being hit on its second day.

This Series doesn't have a final tournament and it's all about accumulation points for high-placed finishes.

GC International Performance Director Lionel Tibble leads the way with 16 points, thanks to one win and one second place.

The Series started at **Cheltenham**, where Stephen Custance-Baker announced his arrival on the scene with a victory that might have owed much to his having played croquet in sunny USA instead of shivering here during the winter.

Tim King was rewarded for his long journey from Ashby to **Pendle** when he won the Lancashire Open title, beating last season's inaugural winner of the A-Level Series Dave Widdison in the final

Tibble picked up his win at his home **Northampton** Open when local knowledge of the famous slope seems to have been a big advantage as club members filled three of the top four places; Peter Dowd was runner-up and Letchworth's John Noble stopped the hosts 1, 2, 3 by beating Michael Hills.

And finally, although some may say that the rain was the winner at **Woking**, nobody had any argument that the true

victor was once again Jeff Dawson, who was the only one undefeated when play was abandoned due to flooded lawns.

Mike Town's clever 'quality of wins' calculations helped manager Bernard Jones declare the result that gave Tibble second place and late replacement James Death (resplendent in Mac shirt) third.

Your reporter Chris Roberts picked up fourth and some Series points and he was (nearly) just as happy when, as the rain poured down outside, he and Roger Goldring proved more adept than Death and Sara Anderson at crawling under the sofa to play their indoor mini-croquet strokes!

## The B-Level Series

The popularity of the B-Level Series seems to know no bounds and the 2017 edition has been expanded to 24 tournaments that straddle the country from Budleigh Salterton to Hunstanton, Pendle to Sussex, and its national final going north for the first time to Southport.

**Sussex County** CC hosted the first event of the Series in early May and Gavin Taylor's victory there saw him be the first to qualify for the end of season final.

By the end of the month, his good lady Louise had joined him in qualification with her win at Wrest Park.

Between times Arthur Reed won his home event at **Watford**, Robin Thornton rolled back the years to turn the same trick at **Ryde** and there was another home player win in the last Series tournament before the Gazette went to press when Stuart M Smith earned a handicap cut after winning at **Northampton**.

Host players didn't have it all their own way however and Long Eaton Park's Paul Durkin went all the way from Nottinghamshire to **Pendle** for his victory and Richard Carline travelled a good way along the south coast from Southwick for success at **East Dorset**.

So that's seven different winners in the Series so far and hot on their heels are the 'points gatherers' who will be hoping for a tournament win themselves in the remaining linked events, rather than having to qualify for the final as a 'best non-winner'.

The 'smart money' would be on Harwell's Steve Fisher and Andrew Carpenter of Durham to pick up a victory before the end of the season, but for the moment they head the points table with two second places and two thirds respectively.

**Chris Roberts**



# The AC Inter-Counties Championship



**Left:** Oxfordshire's Mark van Loon won all eight of his first ever 'Counties' games (with three different partners). Is this a record for a debut or do you know different?

**Right:** Division One winners Nottinghamshire.

**Far right:** Division Two winners Glamorgan.

*Photos by Chris Roberts and Ray Hall.*



**N**ottinghamshire won the 103rd AC Inter-County Championship, retaining the trophy they won last year, *writes Sue Mackay.*

Their team, captain Richard White, Keith Aiton, Martin Beacon, Miranda Chapman, Paddy Chapman, James Death, James Hopgood, Patrick Hort and Richard Huxley, looked to have the title secured by the end of the third day, when they were unbeaten on eight match wins.

However, on the final morning their first match was against Somerset, one of three teams on six wins.

Death and Hort had a fairly swift TP win against Marcus Evans and Roger Tribe, but Aiton and White had a lengthy end game tussle against Kristian Chambers and Jim Field, which Somerset eventually won, thanks to some superb hitting in by Chambers. Somerset won the decider, giving them seven wins.

Surrey lost, to remain on six wins, and although Middlesex won to put them on seven, they had a bye in the last round.

Somerset needed to win their last match against Gloucestershire, which they did. However they also needed Nottinghamshire to lose, but a convincing 3-0 win against Lancashire saw Notts. home with Somerset as runners-up.

Essex and Yorkshire both struggled in Division 1 and were relegated with only two wins each.

There was a bit of a battle for the final relegation place, with Berkshire, Gloucestershire, Cheshire and Hertfordshire all finishing on four wins, but Berkshire lost out on game difference.

## Second Division

The Second Division title was won by Glamorgan.

Their team, captain Chris Williams, Kevin Ham, Tudor Jenkins, Garry McElwain, Sarah Melvin, Richard H Smith and David Walters, owed a debt of gratitude to Wiltshire, who beat the front runners, the Channel

Islands, at the end of the third day and then obligingly allowed Glamorgan to beat them 3-0 on the final morning.

Richard H Smith has become something of a talisman for Glamorgan, as the only other time he played for them was in 2014, when they won Division 1!

The Welsh county had some very tight matches, losing to the Islanders and Sussex when they had chances to win.

They looked to be losing in the deciding game against Oxfordshire, when Kevin Ham, who in his own words had been "in wombat mode" throughout the game until the last turn before time, suddenly put together a superb 3-ball break from Hoop 4 to peg out and win.

The Channel Islands and Glamorgan both finished on eight match wins, but Glamorgan took the title with more game wins.

The third promotion place was between Sussex and Suffolk, who were both playing at Compton on the final day.

Both finished on seven wins, but Sussex finished with a better game record to clinch promotion.

## An unfortunate accident

Any disappointment Suffolk may have felt, however, was totally overshadowed by a most unfortunate incident that occurred right at the end of Suffolk's final game against Oxfordshire, when Martin Leach slipped and fell down the steep bank by Lawn 5 at Compton and broke his fibula.

After waiting in vain for an ambulance he was eventually driven to hospital by Hilary Smith, where he was kept overnight for observation.

No croquet for six weeks!

Croquet can obviously be a dangerous game, as Ailsa Lines broke her ankle after the end of play last year when she stepped awkwardly on a watering outlet at Southwick.

This year they were all clearly marked with white painted circles!

The wooden spoon was won by Shropshire, who did at least have one match win against Dorset.

## Two unusual equipment issues

For once there was virtually no rain at the Counties, and the lawns were looking superb, so thanks are due to the groundsmen at both venues as well, of course, to the army of club members setting hoops and laying out equipment.

Two unusual equipment issues happened at Southwick on the first morning.

First Sarah Hayes (Channel Islands), on Lawn 10, hit the ball so hard that it landed up in the adjacent tennis court, which was locked.

Fortunately this game was not double banked and so they swapped to secondary colours until the ball could be retrieved.

Then Brian Havill (Hertfordshire) hit hard across the lawn and shattered the peg!

## New looks for Southwick and Compton

Both Southwick and Compton looked a little different this year.

At Southwick a lot of work was done over the winter to level the ground surrounding the lawns, and a retaining wall built between the lower six lawns and the upper five.

A rope fence had been erected above this to force people to take a safer walking route, which confused quite a few Counties regulars on Saturday morning.

At Compton the clubhouse has been transformed by replacing the wood with white PVC, designed to look as much like the old wooden clubhouse as possible, but with vastly improved views of the courts.

The catering at both venues was, as usual, superb.

Thanks once again to Chris Williams for managing the tournament, and to all those who help to make the Counties such a wonderful festival of croquet.

**Sue Mackay**



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# Lawn Care ~ by Duncan Hector

## Life after pesticides

Many pesticides are becoming unavailable, and new methods of control are being developed.

**Worms** - There are 28 species of worm found in the UK, of which four are of the casting variety. They are surface feeders and spoil the playing surface. Until now pesticides have been the only method of control, but these have been withdrawn from the market. However, new methods have evolved which do not require pesticides.

In essence the maintenance programme must address the root zone condition and convert it into an environment that is not favoured by casting worms. The objective isn't to kill but to persuade them to go elsewhere. The solution is to incorporate a special root zone conditioner in the annual maintenance programme. Contact me for more details and supply.

**Leather Jackets** - Leather Jackets are the larvae of the Crane Fly, commonly known as Daddy Long Legs. They attack grass plants at or below ground level, which then die off rapidly. Over-winter damage becomes visible in the spring. They make an attractive meal for crows, which peck quite large holes in their daily search for food.

Pesticides for controlling Leather Jackets are no longer available, but I can now supply a soil nutrient/conditioner which is applied in liquid form, and has proved to be very effective.

**Chafer Grubs** - Chafer Grubs are the larvae of the Chafer Beetle, and they feed on the roots of grasses and other plants. Infestations can be devastating, and usually occur between autumn and spring. Areas of lawn might become yellowish, and considerable damage can be done by crows, foxes and badgers feeding on the grubs. There is evidence that the approach used for Leather Jackets will also control Chafer Grubs.

**Duncan Hector** (contact details my advert, right)

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## First time winners and 'old boy' find success at The Peels

There was a mixture of first-time winners and one 'old hand' at trophy hoisting among the victors at the 2017 edition of the Peel Memorials (first played in 1898), held at Nottingham 11-14 May, **as Bob Thompson reports.**

Twenty-nine players competed for three titles and the event would have seen two past CA chairpersons, Dr Ian Vincent and Patricia Duke-Cox play alongside the present CA Chair, Brian Shorney, but for Ian having to withdraw due to illness the day before the start of play. I am pleased to report that although Brian came to the event complaining that he was playing 'dire croquet' before the event, he managed to complete a 12-hoop break without bisques on the last morning, which was something that he had not achieved for some time.

The mixed doubles, with nine entries, was played as a knockout and previous singles winner (in 2014 & 2015) Omid Hallam (h/c -1) partnered Viv Staley (14) to victory by +6 against Bob Thompson (2) and Patricia Duke-Cox (12) in the final.

The Men's and Ladies Singles events were both played as flexible Swiss, with the top four players then progressing to a knockout for the semis and final.

Sophie McGlen (Oxford University, 12, *pictured above*) overcame Viv Staley (Nottingham, 14) +18 in the semis and then beat Sue Wileman (Nottingham, 12) +21 in the final, to win the Ladies Silver Challenge Bowl, emulating her mother Beatrice, the 2014 winner.

Andrew Beaumont (Nottingham, 18) won all his nine games to win the Men's Silver Challenge Bowl, including beating Neal Bacon (Nottingham, 8) +11 in the final. Both Singles winners earned handicap reductions.

Filming by a local professional video maker of some of the tournament play was undertaken on two days, the results of which can be seen included in the CA's short film that was organised by Dave Gunn, CA National Development Officer, for promotional use to help stimulate growth of our sport.



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