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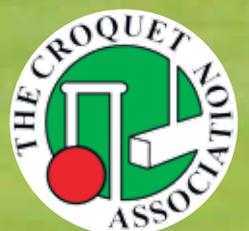
Issue 370 October 2017

CROQUET

Gazette



**New GC
Champion
Moberly
captains
England
to victory**



From our files researched by Frances Colman

10 years ago - 2007



Presidents Cup – (*Robert Fulford concludes a very long report*) . . . This was James's (Death) first win of a major event, in fact he has never previously won a championship either. I'm sure that more wins will follow soon. Hugh Carlisle, who has watched many great players, said James reminded him of Nigel Aspinall in how incredibly relaxed he is. James is great to watch, with his speed and flair – and a certain amount of unpredictability. His shooting and hoop-running were very consistent . . . He was a deserved winner.

Other Eights winners -
Chairman's Salver (2nd 8): Tony LeMoignan, Spencer Ell (3rd 8): Ben Ashwell,
Treasurer's Tankard (4th 8): Louise Bradforth.

All England AC Handicap final –
Following 41 club tournaments involving over 350 players, and five regional finals; 16 players from as far afield as Cornwall and Southport, with handicaps from 1 to 16, descended on Roehampton to contest the (*national*) final.

A number of players took time to familiarise themselves with faster-paced lawns than they were accustomed to, but all were impressed with the true playing surfaces. . .

Barry Gould (Guildford) claimed the title with a perfect 5/5 record.

Academy launch – Sussex County CC are launching what we believe is England's first 'Croquet Academy' at Southwick, which is one of the World's largest clubs based on its number of lawns. During the last eight years, the CA and the Club have invested considerable monies to upgrade the lawns, and make it a true centre of excellence for our sport.

The Club needs to increase its revenue to ensure that they can continue to improve the facilities and, with this in mind, decided to develop on of their major strengths – coaching.

The Academy is being launched for the 2008 season, and will host a comprehensive range of courses covering both AC and GC. Jonathan Isaacs (*from his Chairman's Column*).

50 years ago - 1967



The President's Cup - . . . The competition at the very top is perhaps keener than it has ever been since World War II. . .

. . . the issue now lay between Wylie and Ormerod, and they were fated to meet on a dark and drenching evening in a game which might either decide (the title), or render a tie a distinct possibility.

When Wylie triumphed over the appalling conditions even more effectively than over his adversary, it was a moral, if not yet actual, certainty that the Cup would be his. It became literally so when after a very interesting game in which the Cheltenham player was pegged out by Cotter, he hit a long shot at a late stage and, picking up a good three ball break, won by 6.

The Chairman's Salver - . . . Jackson soon had a ball for 4-back and his backward ball was set for a break when he declared that, in playing a take-off, his mallet had fouled an adversary ball.

The foul was imperceptible to adversary and onlookers alike but brought a complete change of fortune. Lloyd-Pratt, thus in possession, never again relinquished control and ran out winner of an event in which he never failed to play well.

The Surrey Cup - . . . produced some good steady croquet, quite a lot of pleasure for sadistic spectators who enjoy seeing good players miss easy shots, but no fireworks.

Godby and Prichard played well throughout and both had nine wins at the end of the series. The resulting play-off was a very dull game. Godby had 'one of those patches', leaving Prichard to trundle round, often with only his own two balls. He deserved to win by reason of his steadiness.

Ladies Invitation Event – A mixed posy of flowers from among the lady players came to Southwick for (this) event. There was much variety in the play, several ladies at times blossoming forth vigorously and at other times drooping sadly! The eventual winner was Mrs. Fotiadi. Should there not be a prize awarded to the winner of this (tournament)? We hope it will become an annual event.

100 years ago - 1917



Special Police Duty – A fine record of service by Mr D.Maynard-Taylor.

The Times of August 29th contained the following reference:- Mr.D.Maynard-Taylor, chief inspector of Banstead section, Special Constabulary, W Division, Metropolitan Police, who is in his 70th year, has just completed his third year with the Force.

With the exception of one day in January 1915 when he was away on sick leave, he has been on duty every day since he attested in August 1914.

He has thus been at work 1,095 days out of a possible 1,096 . . .

Croquet players mentioned in the London Gazette for Valuable War Services

Colonel M J C Dennis,
Colonel W W T Duhan,
Colonel C E Faunce,
Lieut.-Colonel F F Franklin,
Major W W Griffin,
Major E H Griffith,
Colonel John Harvey,
Colonel E Heath,
Lieut.-Colonel H C King,
Lieut.-Colonel P Langdale,
Brigadier-General H P Leach, CB, DSO.,
Major L E Morrice, DSO.,
Lieut.-Colonel Maurice Moore,
Colonel James St.Clair, CB, CMG.,
Colonel C E Wilson

The number Associates [members] on 1st January 1916 was 1,728 (including 95 Life and 8 Honorary Associates). During the year 30 new associates were elected and 136 resigned or ceased membership, the total number on 31st December being 1,622, showing a decrease of 106. Owing to War conditions no Association tournaments were held. Over 300 Associates and other croquet players have been serving in His Majesty's Forces, in the Special Police, or National Reserve and various capacities. Several have lost their lives on service, four have been awarded the Military Cross, two have had the Distinguished Service Order conferred on them, four have been mentioned in despatches for gallant conduct and distinguished War Service . . .

Editorial

Another main playing season is over, all our competitions and tournaments have been played and England has won inaugural GC home Internationals. Congratulations to John-Paul Moberly on captaining that England team and on becoming English National GC Singles Champion for the first time!

He gets the cover photo prestige for this Gazette which wraps up the on-court croquet for 2017 and reports from the recently held Croquet Association AGM, including presentations to the most improved players and high achieving clubs.

Congratulations to them and to those stalwart hard workers who were awarded CA Diplomas (their citations have had to be held over to the next issue because of space restrictions this time).

Also included in this issue is the five-yearly Survey of Croquet Players that you are all most earnestly encouraged to complete. This is really important as it will show us all 'the state of the (croquet) nation' and help those at the helm of our sport chart future plans and initiatives.

And it's not just the views of CA members that we want to hear from, it's the other players at your club too, so please encourage them to participate as much as you can.

The CA Hon. Secretary introduces this, the fourth edition of the survey; it's in a handy 'pull-out' in the centre of this Gazette.

Something that we can all get behind is the encouragement of new players into the competitive croquet environment.

The GC Tournaments Committee are launching another tier in the hierarchy of the CA's season-long GC competitions, specifically aimed at new competitive players.

Page 19 details the 2018 launch of the new C-Level Series of tournaments for handicaps 7+, which will culminate in an end of season National Final for qualifiers.

This will form a new base for the 'production line' of future top GC players

that is already bearing fruit thanks to the success of the now well established A- and B-Level Series.

~ Now then, winter croquet! Where are my gloves?



Chris Roberts

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The
CROQUET
Gazette



Issue 370 October 2017

Front cover: John-Paul Moberly is pictured winning the GC English National Singles Championship (Ascot Cup) at Nottingham. He later captained England to victory at the inaugural Home Internationals (by Chris Roberts).

This page: The Editor with new shoes but old hat at Hamptworth - his play was tidy and old hat too - and the Chairman double banking with Meriel Ellerby at Budleigh-Salterton (by Stephen Custance-Baker and Chris Roberts).

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Chairman's Column

I have just spent a couple of pleasurable days at Budleigh Salterton CC playing in its inaugural Short Croquet Handicap Tournament and what an excellent end of season event it was!

The lawns were immaculately presented (their new groundsman has worked wonders) and in the mid-October sun, at least on the first day, the setting was idyllic.

24 players with AC handicaps from -1.5 to 22 competed for the Rosemary Bradshaw trophy, double-banked on half lawns.

Manager Peter Moore set a 75 minutes time limit and, crucially, we played with full bisques.

I mention these details because they produced extremely competitive games: a high proportion resulted in a margin of just one or two points and most were pegged-out.

I was particularly pleased that several of the high bisquers were playing in their first tournament and some were converts from GC; and they all had fun.

~

Gazette readers will be well aware of Council's concern that many clubs are heavily GC oriented; but the CA's remit is to foster all forms of the game.

Four years ago we published a Regeneration Working Party Report "Recommended actions to help clubs and federations generate more interest in Association Croquet".

There are examples of clubs having implemented some of our recommendations but, sadly, I have to say they are few and far between.

The Report's recommendations remain valid and so I hope clubs will dust down their copy or download one from the website and read, mark, learn and inwardly digest.

My plea to clubs is to be more innovative with beginners and adopt some of the

excellent recommendations made by our coaching experts.

~

I am preparing Council's Report to the AGM and, by the time you read this, a copy will be available on the website.

It provides an account of our work over the past year.

Please make it available to your clubmates: they won't have access to it until they become Standard members, and at least some of it is relevant to them.



Brian Shorney

The 2017 Annual General Meeting of the Croquet Association

A report by Ian Vincent, Hon. Secretary

More than seventy members attended the Annual General Meeting of the Association, held at Hurlingham on Saturday, 21 October, a blustery day, though the showers held off while Liz Larsson brought the trophies in from her car and their recipients were photographed with them afterwards.

CA Council report

Council's report was presented by its Chairman, Brian Shorney, at the end of his first year in post.

He reported on a busy year, with much activity behind the scenes, preparing for membership and possible organisational changes, the latter motivated by the membership expansion and a desire to increase efficiency and meet modern standards of governance.

Safeguarding policy had been reviewed and a policy on equality and fair play had been drafted.

The quinquennial Survey of Croquet Players

This had been designed by Kevin Carter and had just been launched on the website (*it also appears in the centre-fold of this issue of the Gazette*). Clubs are asked to encourage all their members to complete it.

Volunteers

He acknowledged the work of the many volunteers who had served the CA over the year, both as committee members and in other roles, and noted the retirements of Terrey Sparks, Carol McLoughlin, Marian Hemsted, Bob Whitaker and Ian Burrige.

He also singled out the work done to raise the profile of the sport by John Dawson and his team at the BBC Countryfile show.

One of croquet's strengths is the number of talented people with a wealth of experience who play it and its future depends on identifying and encouraging them to contribute.

Time didn't allow him to cover other aspects of the report, which is published at <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?d=1862>, but he concluded with personal thanks for the support given by Liz Larsson and her staff in the Office, the Executive Committee and the President.

Questions to the Chairman

Questions focused on the issues of the level and investment of reserves, for which an ethical policy was requested, and the difficulty some clubs experienced in encouraging their members to sign up for Standard membership. It is unclear whether

the President had storm Brian on his mind by warning of possible storms ahead when winding up the discussion!

Treasurer's report

In presenting his Treasurer's report, Peter Death noted that the accounts ran to the end of 2016, so did not show the changes that had taken place this year.

Individual subscriptions had been reduced, sales to non-members had increased following the launch of the new shop website, staffing costs had increased and a National Development Officer had been appointed, all of which would reduce our reserves.

He particularly thanked Marian Hemsted for having examined the accounts and expressed regret that she had finally decided to hang up her red pen, having also marked the work of at least two of his predecessors.

David Boxell, treasurer of the Hunstanton club, was appointed to succeed her.

Amendment to the constitution

The amendment to the constitution to remove the restriction that only members of Council could chair committees was agreed nem. con.

Presentation of awards

The President came to the front of the table to present Andy Myers, Louise Bradforth and Paul Gunn with the most improved player awards, representatives of Cheam, Bath, Wrest Park and Sussex County with club awards, the diplomas and the council medal to Martin French.

A.O.B.

During AOB, Dave Kibble and Linda Shaw were congratulated on their forthcoming marriage and ideas for handicapping predominantly GC players in AC one-ball tournaments were requested.

The President's closing remarks

In closing the meeting, in less time than the record for completing a triple peel, President of the Croquet Association Quiller Barrett encouraged us to consider how to increase diversity among the participants in our sport; gave his view that his role was to provide a balance between members and the administration of the Association; and offered to assist Mr. David Beckham with his new court!

His full remarks are at <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?d=1864>.

October meeting of the CA Council

Discussion of the interim report of the Governance Working Party took up a large part of the afternoon Council meeting, *writes Ian Vincent, Hon.Sec.*

In outline its long term recommendations are that Council should be replaced by a significantly smaller Policy and Scrutiny Board, and the Management Committee by a smaller Executive Team. There would be two groups of working committees, one dealing with matters specific to croquet and the other with more general organisational issues. The committees in each group would report to a director on the Executive Team, who would co-ordinate their work.

Inevitably, the devil is in the detail, but the recommendations were approved as a basis for consultation after further refinement and discussion at a future Council meeting.

Some interim and transitional changes to Council's Standing Orders and Practice Book were agreed to take immediate effect.

New Committee Chairs

Sarah Hayes was elected to chair the Coaching Committee (the first non-member of Council to do so), John Dawson to Publishing and Stephen Mulliner to GC Rules. All committee chairmen were asked to put the issue of performance metrics on their agendas and the tournament committees were asked to consider amending the tournament regulations to cover behavioural issues and ensuring that allocation dates were set.

Administrative changes

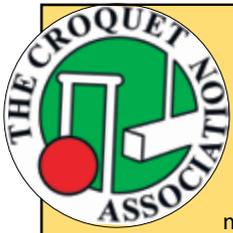
The constitutional changes agreed at the March 2015 AGM are to take effect from 1 January next year, thus enabling the introduction of Standard Membership.

Consideration of the draft equality policy was deferred but revised conditions for awarding the Council Medal were agreed.

Appreciation of work undertaken

Dave Gunn's work as National Development Officer was noted; Ian Burrige was thanked for his spell as the first AC International Performance Director; and Lionel Tibble for organising the first junior summer school.

Finally, a couple of urgent issues were raised under AOB, including the parlous state of the West Midlands Federation.



Martin French is awarded the CA Council Medal



Martin French

has been a mainstay of the Ipswich Club since 1980 and for many years has been its Secretary.

He has organised, set up and run the vast majority of club competitions and introduced a very successful winter programme. He also facilitated the twinning of the club with one in Portugal.

When, in 2011, it was necessary to move the club from the Arboretum, Martin researched possible sites and then was instrumental in negotiating terms with a local golf club.

He researched pavilions and assembled and led a team of members to construct one at the new lawns.

Four years later, he did it all again when the club had to relocate within the site.

In the 1980s, he introduced croquet to Farlingaye High School, entering the young players for the National Schools Championship and Essex/Suffolk league. In 2014 he supported and encouraged a young teacher over here from New



Martin French receiving the Council Medal from CA President Quiller Barrett

Zealand to re-introduce croquet to a new group of youngsters, who won the National School Championship and Junior singles championship the next year. He has also run many courses within the club.

On a wider front, Martin served on the CA Council for two years in the late 1980s and more recently since 2010, during which time he has chaired both the AC and GC Selection Committees, the Equipment and GC Rules Committees.

He worked with the Handicap Committee by running a trial at Ipswich when the automatic handicap system was introduced for AC and, more recently, trialling the extended range for GC handicaps.

Internationally, he has worked hard for the World Croquet Federation, first as Secretary-General and currently as Treasurer.

He has refereed both AC and GC World Championships and is no

mean player himself, having played in all the Eights bar one, in both codes.

Martin has an amazing ability to motivate and enthuse people. He uses his expertise with such good humour that it is never threatening and enables others to become involved in managing the club events, competitions and corporate events.

He is an excellent teacher and a trusted, efficient and effective communicator, a worthy recipient of the Council Medal.

The Croquet Association Club Awards

CA Club Awards are made at the CA AGM and beside a certificate, a cheque for £250 is given to the club.

The CA makes awards biennially in three categories to clubs that have made exceptional progress in providing a good playing environment over the previous two years.

The winners are:

The Apps-Heley Award

for clubs with 3 to 4 courts, was shared by **Bath CC** and **Wrest Park CC**

This was awarded jointly to Bath, which impressed the judges by its increasing strength as a Club, its work on lawn improvement, and its innovative approach to tournament hosting. Wrest Park has transformed a forced move onto rough ground with a poor and ancient hut into a high quality Club with four flat, true lawns and good facilities for players.



Representing their clubs were (from left): David Woolley (Wrest Park), Lynne Passfield (Bath), Liz Farrow (Sussex County) and Ian Cobbold (Cheam) - Photos by Chris Roberts

The Millennium Award

for clubs with 5 or more courts
Sussex County CC

Sussex has made a high investment in lawn improvement and weathered the considerable disruption of all its lawns being relaid in sequence. It makes a huge contribution to the National Croquet scene and has also significantly increased its membership.

The Townsend Award

for clubs with 1 or 2 courts
Cheam CC

Up against strong competition, Cheam was seen as a remarkable success story for a one-lawn Club, with 75 members and a significant amount of self-help on lawn and Clubhouse improvement.

Please encourage your members to sign-up for CA Standard Membership

As I hope you already know, the CA has been moving towards the introduction of the new Standard membership category, which will be happening for 2018, *writes Jeff Dawson*.

This will enable all members of full member clubs to become members of the CA, with the benefits that involves, such as getting the Gazette, entering tournaments, qualifying for CA courses and qualifications, and so on.

You will by now hopefully have been contacted by your club to give your permission (or not!) for your data to be shared with the CA.

This is necessary as the CA needs to have contact details for its members, and we can only accept as new members those who give this permission.

Getting permissions, collecting and processing the data will all take time, but we hope to have completed this in good time for the launch of the new membership category next year.

The question often asked is "why has it taken so long to get the ball rolling?"

This is because we have been re-developing the database system the office uses to cope with the increased membership, and we wanted to wait until

the new system was ready before collecting membership data.

The issue is not just the collection of the data, but the ongoing maintenance of it, and dealing with all sorts of enquiries from our expanded membership by our small team of office staff.

Because of this, we have undertaken a total re-implementation of the database so that it can be accessed securely online by club secretaries and individual members to keep their own records up to date.

This will hopefully relieve some of the pressure on the office.

We need a system which integrates with our existing tournament entry system and other website applications, and we wanted to be able to tailor the whole thing to our requirements.

However, perhaps the key aim has been to develop a system which can also be used by clubs to maintain their own membership data.

This is the main reason why we chose to implement our own membership database system rather than buying one 'off the shelf'.

The new system is designed to provide clubs with a free facility to manage their membership. It will be possible to tailor the package to suit each club, and to help

them with keeping track of their own membership renewal, enter their own membership categories, and generally to do all the things you would expect of a membership management system.

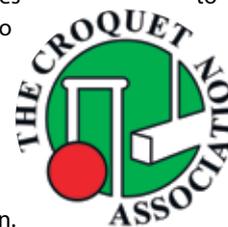
As with many software development projects, the development has unfortunately taken longer than anticipated, and is in fact still underway.

However, we have progressed far enough to be confident we can offer the first stage for next year, which will be to have the office using the new system loaded with the existing and all the new standard members.

This should soon be followed by giving individuals the ability to amend their own details (for example to update their handicap if it changes), and for club secretaries to be able to edit details for their club members, and to add or delete members.

The wider facilities

enable the system to be configured for individual club use will follow some time later – hopefully in time for the 2019 season.



VACANCY

AC International Performance Director

Following the resignation of Ian Burridge, the CA is looking to appoint a replacement AC International Performance Director (IPD), whose remit is to work with and across existing CA committees in order to drive up the CA's performance at international events.

The role will be reviewed annually but is expected to run at least until the 2021 MacRobertson Shield series.

Applications are sought from suitably experienced people who are keen to improve the England performance in major events.

Apply by email to the CA Office
- caoffice@croquet.org.uk -
by 30th November 2017

Please set out how you would intend to go about the role, what you see as the major issues and how you would plan to overcome them.

Also include any other information you think would help the selection panel, which will consist of John Bowcott, Sarah Hayes, Ian Lines and Tim King.

The AC IPD is a volunteer role and carries no remuneration. The role reports to the Chairman of the Management Committee.

Job Description

The IPD will

- be responsible for England's performance at international AC events, whether singles or team;
- formulate and implement a strategy to improve international performance in the short/medium term (i.e. the next Mac cycle) and medium/long term (i.e. future Mac cycles) including resourcing with volunteers as appropriate;
- liaise with all parts of the CA necessary to ensure support of improved international performance, influencing recruitment strategies, the tournament programme, International matches, selection policy, bursary funding, etc.;
- share relevant identified best practice with the GC International Performance Director.

The successful candidate should hold or be committed to achieving the highest CA (or other national equivalent) coaching qualification in AC.



Ian Burridge retires from his role as AC International Performance Director with much thanks from the many players who have benefited from his boundless enthusiasm and skillful coaching.

He is pictured above fairly early in his time in post with the Development Squad at Cheltenham in 2015.

(Photograph by Chris Roberts)

Rare old croquet book for sale

'Croquet' by Leonard B Williams No XII
AD Innes and Co. Ltd. 1899
£75 plus pp £3
jr.donner@homecall.co.uk (CA member)

The most improved players of 2016 collect their awards



Spiers Trophy

for the most improved GC player
Paul Gunn (Wingrave)

Paul had a 75% win percentage in 2016. He won the first B-Level Series qualifier tournament of 2016, was second and third at two others, and then won the National B-Level Final in October. Toward the end of the season, he entered the unrestricted Sussex Open (A-Level Series) and won it.

His end of season grade & rankings were:
2015: grade 1705 - World 811, UK 266
2016: grade 2091 - World 285, UK 58



Apps Memorial Bowl

for the most improved male AC player
Andy Myers (Aldermaston)

Andy had an impressive year in 2016 decreasing in handicap from -0.5 to -1.5 His index went from 2153 to 2405 - a jump of 252 points.

He won 60.8% of his games and managed five triple peels.

Andy's world ranking improved from 153 to 64, taking part in two championships and the Selectors' Third Eight - The Spencer Ell Cup - which he won.



Steel Memorial Bowl

for the most improved female AC player
Louise Bradforth (Cheltenham)

Louise made history by completing three consecutive triples to win the final of the British Women's Championship; the first time this has happened in the event's history.

Her last game on the previous day was an early Du Pre match in which she beat Dave Kibble +17tp thus making it four triples in a row. Louise completed another triple earlier in the event against Sarah Melvin.

Given the index in her handicap card at the start of the event this was an exceptional performance, plus her opponent in the final was ranked significantly above her.

Additionally she has subsequently played beyond her expected handicap ability at the Cheltenham advanced tournament in June and, notably, in The British Opens where she made the cut for the knock-out for the first time. She then went out in a blaze of glory losing 1-2 to James Death.



Chester MP tries croquet

Chester MP, Chris Matheson, accompanied by local councillor, Richard Beacham, made a visit to Chester Croquet Club during one of their club days and tried his hand at croquet.

The main purpose of the visit was to update him on the issues associated with croquet being played in a public park in his constituency. I also had the additional

benefit of briefing him about the Croquet Association's national role in the context of his membership of the House of Commons Select Committee for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

On a sunny but blustery autumnal day he was impressed by the numbers and obvious enjoyment of the members playing and gained an understanding of the strong

league structure for all levels of play across the North West.

He quickly grasped the competitive dimensions of the sport and its social and health benefits for players.

The local issues are to be followed up with council representatives and Mr Matheson offered to meet with national officials of the CA at the Houses of Parliament to discuss the future needs of croquet across the country.

John Dawson, Chester CC

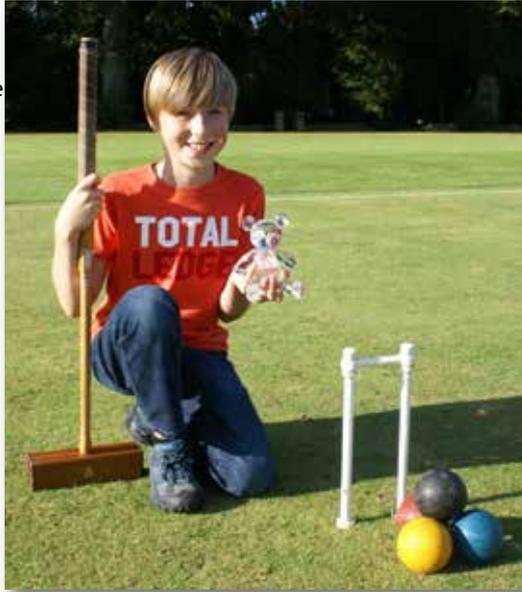
Is Harvey our youngest competitive player?

Dear Editor,
Do we have the youngest competitive croquet player or are there others?

Harvey Smith, 10, discovered croquet last year and is now an enthusiastic member of The Bears CC who play at the Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester.

He has a GC handicap of 12 (though this is likely to come down soon), and is learning AC with a provisional handicap of 26 (to be 24 when he is able to play a game of singles unaided).

At the club's competition day in



September, he stormed ahead of most of the field ending up in a penalty shoot-out tie-break against one of the club's most senior players before winning the trophy.

Everyone wants to encourage younger people to take up our sport and it would

be good to hear of other clubs who have young members and particularly, what they do to encourage them.

Robert Moss, The Bears CC

A solution for the three player problem

Dear Editor,

Club Days at East Dorset CC frequently result in an odd number of members turning up to play. Our tradition is that everyone plays, so that means one group will be playing three-handed.

Three-player games (e.g. Marlborough) can be a bit tedious, so our answer is Non-Stop Croquet.

It's not a game for the faint hearted, pedantic, or short of wind - we play two games at once on one lawn, with primaries and secondaries.

Start with red in corner 1 and black as a long tice on west boundary; brown in corner 3 with white as a long tice on the east boundary; and the other balls similarly placed in the other corners.

Two players start at the same time, one with primaries, one with secondaries (and obviously there's only one ball each can start with).

A roquet means you carry on with a standard game of AC.

A miss, however, requires the player to shout at the third (out) player "Black and blue" if red missed, or "pink and white" if brown missed. Then play continues as normal.

Scoring is simple; each player has a

unique clip and places it on their next hoop, exactly as normal.

If you run a hoop when playing primaries, you can run your next hoop in turn whether you're playing primaries or secondaries and pegging out is achieved with striker's ball and its partner.

Just remember to shout "Pink and white" or "Green and brown" as the case may be, or similar for primaries, when you break down.

Both games end, either on time or when one player reaches the peg and pegs out partner ball and striker's ball.

Club days are handicap play but this game works best with no bisques, just a limit on the number of hoops a lower handicap player can run in one turn - handicaps 10 to 5 about four hoops and those below 5 no more than three hoops.

Surprisingly this requires a complete rethink of sneaky tactics, even resulting in unholy alliances at critical points in a game, which then break down when personal advantage triumphs.

It is simple and great fun, and so much so we're tempted to run a weekend competition of Non-Stop Croquet.

Look for details in 2018.

John Crisp and David Price, East Dorset CC

Two class splits make for hit GC tournaments at Hamptworth

Dear Editor,

Hamptworth is probably one of the very few clubs in the country that has been holding successful regular monthly GC and AC tournament weekends from October through to March for the past eight and ten years respectively.

In 2016/2017 we ran six GC weekends and six AC.

One of our newest ideas for GC is something that happens in AC on a regular basis, and that is to hold two separate events on one day for level play GC on tournament weekends in October and March.

This involves sixteen players on each day, split into two groups of eight; one group for the 'lower' handicaps and the other for the 'higher' handicaps - creating two separate events on each day.

This format provides an especially good croquet day (or weekend) for, as an example, two 'high handicap' and two 'low handicap' club players who enjoy travelling to their croquet together, but have different handicaps.

With this arrangement, everyone gets to play appropriate opposition throughout the day.

So far, starting in 2016, we have held six tournament weekends of this style, all with great success.

It is ideal for all clubs who have at least four lawns, and I recommend it to everyone.

Richard Jenkins, Hamptworth CC Tournament Officer



Helena Jansson won a Hamptworth classed tournament in September.

Gold and Silver balls - introducing Eardisley's '5th colours'

Dear Editor,

Our Club has only one lawn and usually it is split in half in order to accommodate our enthusiastic membership.

Recently however, the day dawning bleak and dismal, and expecting a reduced turnout, we thought we would reward those who did come along, with the experience of playing their GC on a full-sized lawn. Come 10am the sun came out and so did twelve players!

The solution was to use two sets of first colour balls and one set of second colours – on the same lawn! As you can imagine, chaos ensued and so on a future occasion, necessity being the mother of invention, 'third colours', in the form of gold, silver, orange and purple came in to being.

I wish I could say it was a success, but although colourful and merry, if anything it was even more shambolic – and not to be recommended!

Roy Weaver, Eardisley CC



Dear Roy,

Thank you for this fun tale.

I have heard of other clubs using third colours, particularly on over crowded club days like yours. Also like your balls, these third colours are usually 'home produced'

in some way. Indeed, when managing a very rain affected tournament with decreasing court availability at my own club last season, I pressed into service a set of primary balls that are adorned with a white painted stripe as 'third colours'.

Our ball manufacturers have obviously recognised that there is more than the occasional need for an additional set of colours, and two of them at least have produced 'third colour' balls to cover such instances.

Some time ago, Barlow produced balls that were described as being 'porridge, peach, slate and aubergine', and the now preferred Dawson company still offer balls that are lilac, turquoise, orange and purple (and these are infact sold by the CA shop).

So if those two sets are regards as 'third' (and I suppose 'fourth') colours, I guess that makes your quartet 'fifth' colours – although with silver and gold balls in your set, yours are certainly the most exotic! **Ed.**

Corfu Croquet 2017

Sun, sea and croquet
 who could wish for more
 we sup and chat in the Blue Lagoon
 glide around the island's glittering bays
 with Captain Montalbano
 quip and laugh
 even occasionally hit balls through hoops
 (though this is not always easily achieved)
 Somewhere nearby - in the ether
 or the thyme scented air
 a friendly Bloky
 who made this all possible
 looks on and smiles
 and all is well on Corfu.

Jonathan Toye

'Age difference record' rises to 59 years!

Dear Editor,

On the subject of age-related records, I was 19 years old when I first played John Edwards (Luctonians and Cheltenham) in the Nottingham GC B-Level tournament in 2016.

I also played him this year in the Sidmouth Open.

I suspect that the gap between our ages will have been greater than that of the previously stated 55 year difference between Ryan Cabble and William Ormerod.

Can we claim the 'age difference record' for a CA Fixtures List tournament?

Richard Bilton, Nottingham CC.

~

Dear Richard,

I have made an inquiry with John Edwards who was happy to reveal (and for me to publish) that he will be 80 later this year, which means that the age gap between him and you is 59 years!

So until any readers claim otherwise the CA Fixtures List tournament record stands with the pair of you. **Ed.**

Calling Cambridge Alumni - a celebratory dinner invitation

The last couple of years have been rather kind to Cambridge University Croquet club. A change of fortune has seen us win the last two Varsity Matches, win the 2017 Student Championships and the current AC World Champion is an alumnus (although this pales in comparison to a varsity victory, of course).

It's time for the club to celebrate and how better to do so than with an alumni dinner?

We would like to invite Cambridge Alumni to dinner, at Selwyn College, on 13 January 2018

We hope you can join the current team for an evening of merriment and, undoubtedly, at least one or two too many croquet stories! In case this was not enough to convince you, I am proud to announce current AC World Champion Stephen Mulliner has kindly agreed to attend the dinner as a guest speaker.

We sincerely hope that you will be able to join us.

Craig Winfield, CUACC captain 2017/18

13 January 2018 - 7:30pm

Venue: Selwyn College, Cambridge

Dress code: Black tie

Meal format: 3-course meal with wine

Guest speaker: Stephen Mulliner

(The current AC World Champion)

£40 (tbc) RSVPs to: cpw42@cam.ac.uk

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ABTA
Travel with confidence

In my last article, I stated that for me to be successful in my role as National Development Officer, I will need plenty of help...from individual members, from clubs, from the CA and also, perhaps most importantly, from the Federations around the country, who can offer strong local knowledge and relationships with their member clubs.

Federation Conference

The Federation Conference that I hosted in late August was a big first step towards all the Federations coming together with me to determine **WHERE** we might best make a real difference to the fortunes of all of our clubs, and then to agree **HOW** we might do this successfully.

All nine Federations were involved, and by the end of the day they had agreed five areas on which to focus, with, in each case, a working party to be set up that would feature representatives from at least three Federations, as well as myself.

These focus areas are:

Communication – How might a Federation improve its communication to its member clubs, to fellow Federations (to share best practice and success stories) and also to the CA and its committees? And what help can a Federation offer directly to clubs regarding their own communication efforts?

Marketing and Recruitment – How might a Federation be better at offering advice, guidance and direct support to clubs in these areas?

Player Retention and Development – How can a Federation improve its offerings to clubs in these crucial areas?

Direct Support to Clubs – Over and above the areas already highlighted, what



else might a Federation offer to clubs? Perhaps support with Club Finance or with Club Management, for example?

Resources, with a particular focus on volunteers who are crucial to our sport at all levels – How might Federations be better at recruiting and retaining volunteers themselves, and also at offering advice and support to clubs in this area?

Working Parties

By the time you read this, most if not all of the working parties will have held kick-off meetings, at which they will have agreed objectives and come up with a plan that should aim to generate a small number of specific and achievable initiatives, that can start to make a real difference by the beginning of next season.

The working parties will look to make the most of what is already available, be that 'internally' (from the CA and its committees, the Federations, the Academies, individual clubs, etc.) or 'externally' (Sport England,

Club Matters, etc.) and may also devise new approaches where necessary.

They will recognise that all clubs (and individual players) will not want, or need, the same things from their Federation, and so will not be prescriptive, rather offering small selections of approaches from which clubs may then want to take up the most appropriate.

Care will need to be taken to avoid duplication of, or contention with, existing efforts around the various parts of the croquet 'eco-system'.

The primary aim of these working parties will simply be to identify a few potentially beneficial initiatives, and then see them through to successful implementation in the relatively short term.

Seeking your input

The working parties may well in time seek specific input and feedback from clubs and players but, in the meantime, can I take the opportunity here to ask if **YOU** have any thoughts about what you or your club might (or might not) want from your Federations in the focus areas highlighted.

Would you please then email the responses to me in the first instance, and I will make sure they get to the relevant group.

I am delighted with the commitment shown so far by all the Federations, and very much hope that, by the start of next season, we will be able to offer even more help as you look to grow your clubs in whatever direction you choose.

Dave Gunn,

National Development Officer
davegunn59@gmail.com 07710 981561

Helen Walker was a stalwart member of the Harwell Club, serving as its secretary until illness made that impossible in the summer.

She was also a member of Phyllis Court Club and was known in AC circles at neighbouring clubs too.

Helen knew how to use bisques but nearly always sported a 16 handicap, reasoning that she needed to play and practise more but was unable to do so on account of her work, which was the area of her life where she was known to a much wider audience.

Dr Helen Walker was an astronomer and space scientist of international repute who frequently appeared on the BBC's 'Sky at

Dr Helen Walker 1953 - 2017



Night' with Sir Patrick Moore.

She also occupied high office in the Royal Astronomical Society and was a keen

advocate for Women in Astronomy.

In recent years, she managed projects connected with the Mars Express satellite and searching for extra-solar planets, working at the National Space Academy at Rutherford Appleton Laboratory.

On one occasion she had to scratch from a croquet tournament to ensure the well-being of her Martian satellite!

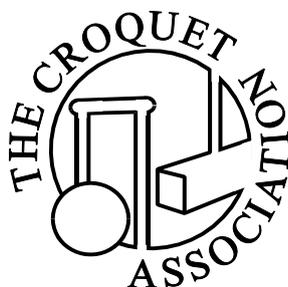
Helen had a strong Christian faith which sustained her through her illness in the last few months of her life and her funeral and requiem mass was well supported by her friends and colleagues from the worlds of church, astronomy and croquet.

Brian G Bucknall and Margaret Cotterell

Patron: Her Majesty the Queen

President: Quiller Barrett

Hon. Secretary: Ian Vincent



The Croquet Association
c/o Cheltenham Croquet Club
Old Bath Road
Cheltenham GL53 7DF

Tel 01242-242318
Email caoffice@croquet.org.uk
Website www.croquet.org.uk

October 2017

Dear Croquet Player,

SURVEY OF CROQUET PLAYERS

The CA needs your help for a further survey of croquet players - all players, not just CA members. We undertook comprehensive surveys in 2002, 2007 and 2012. These have proved to be very useful. In particular, they have helped the CA to:

1. Take into account more easily and fully the needs and desires of members.
2. Promote croquet more effectively and increase recruitment.
3. Obtain financial backing more easily; for instance, lottery grants.

The survey is now being repeated a further five years on. Some of the questions are identical to those in previous surveys (the results of which may be found on the CA website). This is because we wish to measure changes over time. Others are completely new, exploring areas of importance or interest to the CA and its members.

So, your co-operation is requested. **You can either complete the paper version here or go to the CA website homepage and click on the link (www.croquet.org.uk) for an electronic version. Please complete one only.**

Note that the professional marketing services company conducting this research for us operates under the Code of Conduct of the Market Research Society. This means that responses will be handled with the utmost integrity. The completed questionnaires will be used only to compile statistics, then destroyed.

A summary of the results will be published in the Gazette.

Within ten days, please either complete the electronic version or send the completed paper questionnaire to the address provided.

Thank you very much in anticipation of your kind co-operation.

Ian Vincent

Hon. Secretary, the Croquet Association

Completing the questionnaire

- The questionnaire looks lengthy, but in fact it is quite simple to complete and will only take a few minutes. Indeed, we hope you will enjoy completing it! If you are completing the paper-based questionnaire here, we would be most grateful if you would then send it to:

**The Croquet Association Survey
Old Bath Road
Cheltenham
GL53 7DF**

- The survey is completely anonymous. If you feel unable to complete any of the questions - just leave them blank. We would prefer a partially completed form to none at all.
- At the end of the questionnaire is a section for your comments and feedback. Feel free to add whatever remarks you wish. In the previous surveys we found your additional remarks very useful.

England win the inaugural GC Home Internationals

England won the inaugural GC Home Internationals at a sunny Carrickmines, near Dublin,

writes captain J-P Moberly.

All four teams fielded strong sides and, while England looked favourites on paper, the Welsh had firepower through Ian Burridge, Ireland had the core of the team that finished fourth in the GC World Team Championship last year, and Scotland, despite looking the weakest, had regular AC circuit players in their ranks who were never going to be pushovers.

The format was three rounds of six point matches consisting of two best-of-two doubles and four best-of-three singles of 1v1, 2v2, etc.

Round 1 **England 5 - 1 Wales**

The number one English doubles pair J-P Moberly & Tobi Savage had a scare early on as they went 4-6 down to Burridge & Sarah Melvin – whose steady hoop running and clearances had brought them back from 4-1 down – but the Englishmen came through 7-6 after close misses by Burridge at hoops 12 and 13.

A 7-5 win for England in the second game added a second point to the English scorecard after their other pair Rachel Rowe & Harry Fisher had comfortable victory over Tudor Jenkins & Arthur Rowe, in what was a first in the Home Internationals and probably in first-class croquet: father and daughter Arthur and Rachel competing on opposing sides. At least Judith, Arthur's wife and Rachel's mum, could cheer on both!

The singles saw Welsh captain Burridge continue his fine form to beat English captain Moberly, but this proved to be it in terms of points for Wales and the other singles matches were won 2-0 by England, giving them a 5-1 match win.

Ireland 6 - 0 Scotland

The Irish, led by captain Jack Clingan, only dropped one game in the singles and so set the early pace in the event.

Round 2 **Ireland 3 - 3 Wales**

The doubles ended one apiece and, while Ireland's Patsy Fitzgerald continued his good form in the singles by only dropping one hoop against Jenkins, the others'



singles were closer and finished in two wins each and an overall match draw.

England 4.5 - 1.5 Scotland

This was the most eventful match of the tournament, with the Scots able to claim the 'scalp of the event' when Murray beat Moberly in two, and England the 'shot of the event' when Savage, to save Murray and Clark going 4-1 up, jumped both Scottish balls in front of hoop 5 from the South boundary!

Despite this heroic stuff the Scots won that doubles game for half a match point, but everything else went England's way and they won 4.5 to 1.5.

Round 3 - Day 2 had a late start and a welcome extra half an hour sleep thanks to Scot Campbell Morrison's good thinking the previous evening. With only one round to play, it was up to Ireland and England to contest the top two spots and Scotland and Wales to avoid the wooden spoon.

Wales 5 - 1 Scotland

Scotland, 2-0 down after the round of doubles, had a bit of a rally where regular AC players Wilson and Morrison each won a game of their singles matches against Jenkins and Melvin respectively, but ultimately succumbed in the third to lose close contests. Clark won their only point with a good win over Arthur Rowe. While Murray at several stages looked in strong shape to take the 13th hoop (and their match to a third game) against Burridge, he unfortunately managed to clear his own ball and knock Burridge into runnable position to decide the match!

England 5.5 - 0.5 Ireland

England held a 1.5 - 0.5 lead after the Doubles before there was an excellent match between Ireland's Fitzgerald and England's Rowe for spectators to enjoy

over their lunch, when the pair decided to play directly in order to avoid any double banking.

Fitzgerald had won the first game 0-7, which was his third whitewash in the event and meant that, at that point, he had only dropped three hoops in five singles games – impressive statistics indeed!

However Rowe rallied and won the second game 7-5 and then treated the gallery to a superb display of clearing and hoop-running to win the decider 7-1.

Now leading 2.5 - 0.5, England needed only to win one of the three remaining singles rubbers for the match, and victory in the tournament, and they were looking good at 1-0 up in each at lunch.

So excited were England to get their hands on the metaphorical trophy (Burridge has kindly offered to donate a real one for next year) that Fisher, after running what he thought was the crucial winning hoop, offered a handshake to his opponent, who then rightly reminded him that he was one short at 6-5! Fisher recovered from the embarrassment to win at hoop 13, giving England the unassailable lead they needed.

Moberly and Savage then recorded good wins against Clingan and Williams respectively, for England to win the match 5.5 to 0.5 and claim the trophy.

~

Many thanks to the Croquet Association of Ireland and Carrickmines CC for hosting this superb event and to Nathaniel Healy for his management, when sheep selling didn't interfere! Thanks also to Jay Dyer who travelled with Sarah Melvin and refereed the event without any issue (even when England, and in particular Tobi Savage, gave him plenty of lawn damage calls to decide on!) and to everyone who was involved with setting up and organising the event.

We look forward to seeing everyone in England next July.

~

England – J-P Moberly, Rachel Rowe, Tobi Savage and Harry Fisher.

Ireland – Jack Clingan, Patsy Fitzgerald, Simon Williams and Mark Stephens.

Wales – Ian Burridge, Tudor Jenkins, Sarah Melvin and Arthur Rowe.

Scotland – Martin Murray, Alan Wilson, Campbell Morrison and Alan Clark.

The GC International Performance Development Group - 2017 review

With the help and enthusiastic support of those involved in the IPDG Elite and Development Squads a considerable step forward has been achieved in bringing more of our GC players into consideration for future England selection.

The marvellous way in which these participants have embraced the ethos of the scheme is a major contributory factor to its success.

Many of the Development Squad players have achieved a step change in skill and ability and some have been invited to join the Elite squad.

I'm reluctant to single out any individuals, but regular readers of the Gazette and followers of



tournament results via croquetscores.com will have a pretty good idea of the rising stars on the horizon.

Looking forward to the 2018 season, we need more players with potential to join the Development Squad.

So if you have the ambition, desire and determination to explore your full potential and perhaps play at international level, or you know someone who has but is too modest to declare themselves, then please get in touch with me.

Lionel Tibble,

GC International Performance Director

anglion@btinternet.com

The Croquet Academy (Southwick) 2018 Programme

Dates	Course	Cost	Ideal h'cap	Course Leader
(1) 11 Apr - Wed. (2) 14 May - Mon.	GC Beginners	£50	n/a	Daphne Gaitley
(1) 12 Apr - Thu. (2) 16 May - Wed.	GC High Handicappers	£50	9+	Janet Hoptroff
11-12 Apr -Wed-Thu.	AC Introduction & Development in Advanced play	£75	6-14	Nigel Polhill
14-15 Apr - Sat-Sun.	Perfecting your AC stroke & breaks	£70	5-9	Cliff Jones
18 Apr - Wed.	GC Rules	£60	n/a	Daphne Gaitley
18 Apr - Wed.	Positive Mental Approach to Croquet	£60	n/a	Cliff Jones
21-23 Apr - Sat-Mon.	AC Laws and Referees' Qualification	£60	n/a	Cliff Jones
21 Apr - Sat.	GC Improvers	£50	4-9	Daphne Gaitley
23 Apr - Mon.	GC Referees' refresher workshop	£50	n/a	Martin French
25 Apr - Wed.	AC Beginners	£50	n/a	Daphne Gaitley
25-26 Apr Wed-Thu.	AC Development in Handicap Play	£75	12-18	Clive Hayton
26-27 April - Thu-Fri.	AC Improvers	£75	18+	Cliff Jones
2 May - Wed.	GC Advanced play masterclass	£60	4-	Stephen Mulliner
9-10 May - Wed-Thu.	Coach Qualification (CQC)	£75	n/a	Daphne Gaitley
21 May - Mon.	GC Coached Games Day	£50	6+	Daphne Gaitley
6-7 June - Wed-Thu.	GC Rules and Referees' *First day only without exam - £50	£75*	n/a	Daphne Gaitley
13-14 Jun - Wed-Thu.	AC Beginners' Follow-Up AC Improvers' Follow-Up (day 2 will focus on coached games)	£75	22+ 18-22	Daphne Gaitley & Jonathan Isaacs
28 June - Thu.	GC Coached High-Bisque Tournament	£40	10+	Jonathan Isaacs
30-31 July - Mon-Tue.	AC High-Bisque Tournament (with coaching advice between games)	£50	14-20	Frances Low
NEW! Dates to include: 6,17,19,20,24,25 April.	One to One AC and GC Coaching 1 hour and 1.5 hour sessions Detailed analysis / Recommended practice. * Price on application – depending on requirement.	*	Any h'cap	Cliff Jones, Daphne Gaitley & other leading Academy Coaches

The Croquet Academy at Southwick has launched its biggest ever programme with 22 courses as well as the introduction of One-to-One AC and GC Coaching given by its leading Coaches, **writes Jonathan Isaacs.**

For 2018 the Academy has introduced some more one-day courses including an AC Beginners Course in April with an optional follow-up two-day course in June which will include a day of coached games. Many of the courses are accompanied by Cliff Jones' excellent course manuals.

We are delighted that former GC World Champion, Stephen Mulliner has agreed to run a one-day Masterclass on 2 May. Availability for this will be strictly limited so early booking is advised.

Following a successful trial in 2017, The Academy's One-to-One Coaching in 2018 is open to AC & GC players of all levels. It will be run in 1 and 1.5 hour sessions, which will include a detailed analysis, and recommended practice routines going forward.

Whilst being tailored as One-to-One Sessions, pairs can be considered providing the session is concentrating on the same subject matter.

Full course and entry details on all the Academy Courses can be found on the Croquet Academy Website:

www.thecroquetacademy.com

For further information on these courses and to make bookings, please contact

Academy Secretary Janet Hoptroff
courses@thecroquetacademy.com

01903 859417

NB. Premium Members of the Croquet Association receive a discount of £10 off all Courses & AC High-Bisque Tournament, and a discount of £5 off the GC Coached High-Bisque Tournament.



Summer School of Croquet

Following Council's approval of creating a Summer School of Croquet for young players already with some background or connection with croquet, a two day coaching course was held at West Park CC in late August, **writes Lionel Tibble.**

Unfortunately clashes with family holidays and other commitments at this busy time of year prevented some of the invited participants from attending. If the four that did manage to make the course are representative of the rest of the youth croquet talent in this country then look out for these guys in the future!

The course included a short evaluation session from which it was easily discernable that all four were very competent stroke players.

This impression was further reinforced over the two days as more tactical and demanding elements were introduced into the course.

Both AC and GC codes were covered though the tendency was to look more towards AC simply because the average GC standard already seemed pretty high.

It was an absolute joy to be with James, Adam, Eden and Albie over the two days and to get to know them better. Their youthful enjoyment and enthusiasm for the game is definitely infectious.

Many thanks to the regional coaching officers and club coaches from Bowden, Ipswich, Nailsea and Cheltenham clubs who nominated them for the School of Croquet and also for their parents for making and helping with travel arrangements.

If you are aware of any other similar, young players who would benefit, and there are definitely many more yet to be reached, please get in touch and let me know for next year's School of Croquet.

The CA bursary scheme applies to travel and accommodation costs.

Sorry if you got left out this time

The increased advertising that the Gazette has attracted in recent months and my wish to include other articles rather than have too many tournament reports, has meant holding over some stories until the December issue. This will at least give readers some croquet to read about among the usual winter articles. Look forward to reading about the all the Inter-Club Competitions, All Englands, Juniors and Grass Roots, and well as the physics of ball collisions and the first ever croquet champion. **Ed.**



A new pavilion for West Worthing

West Worthing Croquet Club was formed six years ago and is part of a multi sports club that also offers tennis, squash and petanque. The main club has over 1100 members with croquet now building to 50.

We have two main lawns but at certain times of the year some grass tennis courts can also be converted into two extra croquet courts. We have four well-attended club sessions each week, play friendly matches against local clubs and we also enter our federation handicap league. We enter the Southern Challenge and the Teams Day at Southwick, and hold our own open tournament each September.

The croquet committee, with the enthusiastic support of the members, decided to seek the funding for a new pavilion to replace some small huts that had been provided to store equipment, so that croquet could have its own space near the courts and the main club building some distance away.

The project included moving some fencing to accommodate the new larger building and provide our own gate into the courts without disturbing the tennis players.

The ground had to be levelled and a concrete base constructed for the new building and this was undertaken by club's groundsmen with a specialist firm being employed for the fencing. For the building itself we went to Skinners Sheds Ltd. who again carried out the work to very high standards.

The members themselves have been very active in painting and kitting out the new pavilion and have donated the funds for all those items required to make it a proper club house.

The project was funded in the first instance by our parent club whilst we sought financial support.

We were fortunate to obtain grants from the Croquet Association (£ 2100) and the South-East Federation (£ 500), and club members will pay a levy on their annual subscriptions to cover the shortfall.

The project was completed in April and the building was officially opened by the mayor of Worthing on Sunday 14 May to the delight of members who now have a new club house which will give us excellent facilities that will last for many years to come.

Andrew Stewart, West Worthing CC

The AC Selectors 'Eights' and other

1st Eight - President's Cup

Jose Riva was all smiles when lifting the Presidents' Cup after finishing a clear three wins ahead of a very strong line-up for this season's Selectors' First Eight, **writes Chris Roberts**



looking in from afar.

Spaniard Riva became the first overseas winner since Ireland's Ed Cunningham won the event as long ago as 2000.

Hunstanton was the venue for this season's 'Pres' and Riva got off to a corking start beating World Champion Stephen Mulliner + 23QP. It was a sign of things to come as the peeling turns abounded from Riva and pretty well everyone else as well.

Like many of you, I'm sure, it was a pleasure to follow the results as they came in on the wonderful croquet resource that is the CroquetScores website, even as one was distracted on the later days of the event because of playing in the relative depths of the Selectors weekend.

What often gets missed, however, during these big tournaments is the CroquetScores commentary pages where (not often enough) some kind soul is busy writing real-time commentary or end of day reports for the benefit of absent enthusiastic followers.

When one has the opportunity to read the inside story, as told by none other than Robert Fulford, it is all the more interesting, especially when I learnt something that I had not ever even thought about.

I was fascinated, and no little amused, to find illustrated in Rob's first day report, just how fine the margins are in the technicality of our sport at this very top level, when he commented that the "trickiest thing is that the balls are relatively new, so the milling is creating some randomness to both rushes and croquet strokes"!

It's another world at the top – and Riva finished the top of the top this year.

His impressive peeling tally speaks for itself: 2 sextuples, 4 quads, 4 triples, 2 non-peeling wins and only three losses.

Finishing order: Jose Riva 12 wins, Robert Fulford 9, Stephen Mulliner 9, Christian Carter 7, James Hopgood 7, Samir Patel 6, David Maugham 4, Gavin Carter 2.

2nd Eight - Chairman's Salver

Mark Suter capped his return to championship competition this season with a narrow win in the Chairman's at Hurlingham.

He moved two wins clear of the field at the halfway point and by the end of the four-day event was one ahead of Duncan Reeve and Jeff Dawson.

Sextuple peels were achieved by Reeve and Robin Brown but in the final analysis, Suter had scored peeling turn wins against every opponent, amounting to three quadruple peels, three triples and a TPO in his ten wins.

Finishing order: Mark Suter 10 wins, Duncan Reeve 9, Jeff Dawson 9, Andy Myers 8, David Goacher 6, Robin Brown 5, Jonathan Powe 5, Ian Lines 4.

3rd Eight - Spencer Ell Cup

Robert Wilkinson was the clearest winner of all the Eights this year, finishing a full four victories ahead of all his opponents, **writes Sam Murray.**

Ryde hosted the Spencer Ell Cup during a frequently wet and windy week and the lawns were heavy (timed at just under eight seconds on the day before play), but the hoops were tight and firm.

Players took some time to adapt to the pace with Annabel McDiarmid being the quickest to do so, producing the only triple of the opening round.

Wilkinson beat every opponent in the first set of games, with a fluent McDiarmid staying in touch with losses to only Wilkinson and Kibble.

Despite stumbling against late replacement Graham Gale, Wilkinson pulled clear and with the other contenders beginning to trade results, he confirmed his victory with two rounds to spare.

He recovered from a comical sextuple attempt to win his final game against pre-tournament favourite, Sam Murray, as none of the players fully settled, with just ten triples completed in the whole tournament.

Ryde Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club were superb hosts, making use of an excellent new clubhouse to provide fantastic catering and a very warm welcome.

Finishing order: Robert Wilkinson 12 wins, Chris Williams 8, Dave Kibble 8, Sam Murray 8, Annabel McDiarmid 7, Graham Gale 5, Mike Town 4, Phil Cordingley 4.

4th Eight - Treasurer's Tankard

This year's Tankard, held at Ramsgate Croquet Club, was **won by Omied Hallam**, who led from the front with some

memorable shooting, hoop running and peeling turns, **writes Eugene Chang.**

Hallam held his nerve in a number of close finishes, pipping Martin Murray and Eugene Chang to the TT title by one win.

There were four Eights debutants this year learning the ropes (and for anyone who has yet to enter an Eight, I would encourage you to experience the atmosphere and format) and the other half of the field were old hands ready to (mis)direct, retell stories of croquet legends and their winning turns of the past.

Some spectator highlights include Alison Jones defeating Hallam in a one-ball game from 1 and 1 with some quality croquet strokes after Hallam completed the TPO in two turns, and then Nelson Morrow edging out Hallam in near-gale force winds, having missed a short peg-out AND the subsequent single ball peg-out next turn.

Off the lawn, the Eights experience was majestically enhanced by Alison Jones's enterprise in arranging shared accommodation for most of us in close proximity to Asda, and by the late promotion of her father, Cliff Jones, retired chef, Michelin star, first class. He and several others chipped in each night to prepare some sumptuous evening meals, to add to the exceptional lunches provided by the club.

Finishing order: Omied Hallam 10 wins, Martin Murray 9, Eugene Chang 9, Nelson Morrow 8, David Marsh 7, Nigel Polhill 5, Cliff Jones 4, Alison Jones 3.

The Selectors' Weekend

Jonathan Lamb (Canterbury) beat Andy Dibben (Surbiton) +17 in the final, to win the Selectors' Weekend at Sidmouth, **writes Richard Wood.**

This was the first year of a new format for the Selectors, with 16 players divided into two blocks of 8, and the top two from each block to contest semi-finals and a final.

With darkness falling around 8 pm and an unfriendly weather forecast, this looked like a challenging schedule for play at this level, and manager Colin Hemming (Colchester) promised a proactive approach to pegging-down long games in order to keep the blocks moving.

On day 1 the worst of the weather passed over the English Channel, allowing play to proceed uninterrupted until about 5.30pm, when an intense burst of rain and hail left all lawns waterlogged for the rest of the evening. Bryan Harral (Wrest Park) was the early leader in the 'black' block, while the 'red' block had too many unfinished games

The Southern Championship

Jamie Burch topped a quality field at Compton to lift the Southern title in mid-September for the third time in five years.



No less than 32 of the 46 games in the Championship featured peeling turns including, unsurprisingly, the final when Burch beat Mark Avery +17tp, +130tp.

En route, Burch accounted for Ian Lines +9tp, -26tp, +13; Ed Duckworth +26, +140tp; and Women's World Champion Miranda Chapman +20tp, +25tp, whilst Avery saw off Phil Cordngley +17tp, -16, +16tp; Jack Wicks +21, +120tp; and Jonathan Powe +10tp, +25tp.

to identify a front-runner.

Day 2 saw more rain, but the courts remained just playable. It produced the event's only two TPs, both involving Jonathan Lamb.

Ian Vincent's (Nottingham) triple against Lamb was characteristically precise, while Lamb's own was described by victim Tim Jolliff (Taunton) as 'very entertaining', involving seven failed peel attempts, a bombard peel of rover and a peg-out from behind rover!

The intended format was scuppered by the poor weather and forecast of more ruled out time for the semi-finals.

Lamb was a clear winner of his block with 6/7 and Dibben pipped Bryan Harral (Wrest Park) of the other block on who-beat-who basis. Lamb won a well-contested final with some tidy break play to become a worthy winner of the Ranelagh-Weightman Cup which was presented by Ian Vincent on behalf of the CA.

Vincent echoed the feelings of all the players in thanking Colin Hemming for his hard work in steering us successfully through a tough schedule, and the team of volunteers at Sidmouth for ensuring that the players were provided with lawns, hoops and catering that befitted the occasion (even if the weather didn't).

Finishing order: (1) Lamb, (2) Dibben.

Red block - Lamb, Jolliff, Gunn, Roberts, Moore, Vincent, Hemming, Wood.

Black block - Dibben, Harral, Steiner, Kirby, McGlen, Thompson, Field, Wolfe



The historic Challenge and Gilbey Tournament

The 2017 edition of the CA's Challenge and Gilbey tournament (first played in 1900) returned to Budleigh Salterton CC this year after three years at Sussex County CC, **reports manager Julie Horsley.**

A week before the tournament the forecast was for four fine days, but it changed dramatically to predict all-day heavy rain for the final day of the tournament. With two block games scheduled to be played, plus two finals on that Sunday, the decision was taken to play the Sunday morning's games on Saturday evening. Given the choice between playing in the evening in fine weather or the morning in the pouring rain, there was no contest!

In the morning it was discovered that the rain overnight had reduced the available courts down to just four, yet all the crucial games were played with the exception of the Gilbey Handicap Final, and with the Manager's agreement, the two finalists agreed to play this at a club nearer both their homes, later that week.

Frances Colman (Phyllis Court) and Andre Machell (Watford CC) fought their ways through to that delayed final which was played at Roehampton, where Colman's victory saw her become the 89th winner of the Gilbey Goblet.

Class A was played for the Roehampton Cup and there was a three-way tie in this too, with Simon Hathrell (Watford), Tim Russell (Roehampton) and **Dave Mundy (Sidmouth & Budleigh)** all recording 5/7. 'Who beat whom' did not produce a winner, but quality of wins did in favour

of Mundy, with Russell as runner-up.

There was yet another tie in Class B for the Council Cup, where Roger Mills (Sidmouth & Budleigh), Nigel Amos (Budleigh), Paul Castell (Sussex Co), Adam Wimshurst (Exeter & Budleigh) and **Dave Gunn (Nottingham)** all got 4/6 wins. Quality of wins again decided the winner and Gunn got the nod over Wimshurst.

Two blocks contested Class C for the Reckitt Cup and produced two Sidmouth players, Colin Walls with 4/5 wins and Jane Babbage with 5/5 wins, for a final play-off. Both found it very challenging with the court becoming very heavy, as Walls took the victory.

Class D for The Stevenson Cup was won for the second year running by **Quiller Barrett (Watford)** with 5/5 wins, one ahead of the host Judith Moore.

Mark Ormerod (Dulwich & Hurlingham) won the prize for the most Triple Peels and Jim Field (Nailsea) won the prize for the Fastest Game (*which surprised nobody!* - Ed). Quiller Barrett, on behalf of the CA presented the trophies, with exception of the Cup he won himself, which was presented by Brian Shorney. Quiller thanked Budleigh Salterton for hosting and everyone involved in running the tournament.

~

The photo montage above shows the class winners (from left): (A) Dave Mundy, (B) Dave Gunn, (C) Colin Walls, (D) Quiller Barrett and the Gilbey Goblet Handicap winner Frances Colman. Below: Fastest winner Jim Field (right) and top peeler Mark Ormerod (all images by Chris Roberts).



The GC Championship, Selectors' Eights and

The English National Singles Championship Final *The Ascot Cup*

John-Paul Moberly finished the season with a confident victory over a much-improved Tim King in the English National Singles Championship final (Ascot Cup) at Nottingham, **writes Stephen Mulliner.**

The format was four blocks of four playing best-of-three 13-point games with the top two from each block advancing to the Championship knock-out stage.

Moberly and King qualified from Block A with the latter taking the middle game off the former in their match and both Stephen Mulliner and Ian Burridge were undefeated in qualifying from Blocks B and C with Don Beck and Richard Bilton in the second places.

Block D was the most competitive in that Tobi Savage was taken to three games twice in winning his matches and Lionel Tibble, Graham Good and Roger Goldring tied with one win each, Tibble qualifying with the best net games score.

The knock-out was full of interest.

Moberly took the first game against Beck by 7-3 but had to work hard to take the second 7-6.

Savage had not been looking to be at his best form and ran into Bilton playing very well, the latter winning 7-6, 3-7, 7-3.

Burridge was taken to the 13th in both games against Tibble, and King produced vintage form to beat Mulliner 7-6, 7-5.



In the first semi, Moberly proved too consistent and accurate for Bilton and reached the final 7-4, 7-5.

In the second, Burridge has produced plenty of excellent croquet this season in the top events, including reaching the Open semi-final and winning the Selector's first Eight (Musk's

Cup), but he could not stop the in-form King winning 7-5, 7-4.

The first game of the final provided a fascinating long-hitting duel in which Moberly and King were evenly matched in game 1 until Moberly broke the deadlock at 11 by running a long hoop and taking good position at 12, soon taking the game 7-5.

King continued to fight his corner tenaciously in game 2 but his hitting went slightly off the boil while Moberly's did not and the result was a more comfortable margin of 7-3.

King had every reason to be pleased with his return to form, aided by an improved mental approach. He reached the Open final in 2010 and has no reason not to set his sights at that level next season.

Moberly gave another highly impressive demonstration of his ability to hit centrally at short and medium range. He has now taken the mantle of the top active English player and he and Reg Bamford will again be the men to beat next season.

Selectors' 2nd Eight - *The Kate Jones Memorial Trophy*

Tim King was almost untouchable in winning the GC Second Eight which shadowed the First at Hamptworth, **writes Chris Roberts.**

He was undefeated in matches in the entire tournament with a show of his vintage form that has been so absent for the past few seasons. He dropped a few game results here and there in the all-play-all block round and was pursued by Peter Balchin, Richard Bilton and Stephen Custance-Baker who ended up one, two and three games adrift respectively whilst all qualifying for the semi-finals.

King got past the challenge of Custance-

Baker 7-5, 7-6 to reach the final, and Bilton, who had improved with every game, beat Balchin 7-5, 7-1, to also book his place.

The final was a curious affair, with Bilton in command and having a good lead in game one, only to see King claw his way back and snatch an unlikely victory at the 13th hoop.

This seemed to completely deflate the rising Nottingham player, who crashed to a quick reverse in the second, and this gave King (*pictured, right*) the Second Eight title and the Kate Jones Memorial Trophy.

Finishing order: (1) Tim King, (2) Richard Bilton, (3=) Peter Balchin & Stephen Custance-Baker, (5) Roger Goldring, (6) Tom Weston, (7) Euan Burridge, (8) Andrew Dymond.

Selectors' 1st Eight *The Musk's Cup*



Ian Burridge was in top form throughout when he won the GC First Eight at Hamptworth, **writes Chris Roberts.**

Only competition director Tobi Savage could clip his wings with a match victory in the all-play-all block stage, but there were individual game wins for Stephen Mulliner, Lionel Tibble and Nick Cheyne against the reigning English Champion, illustrating that the event was still wide open.

The GC Eights is a terrific format, offering, as it does, best-of-three untimed games throughout over a challenging three days.

The bottom four of the field were cut for the knock-out semi-finals. The first gave Burridge a revenge opportunity against Savage and he took full advantage to win 7-2, 7-6. In the other semi, Rachel Rowe faced Mulliner – whom she had beaten in straight games in the block – and although she dropped a game of this repeat face-off, she booked her final berth 7-6, 5-7, 7-4.

The final took place late on the third afternoon with an unfortunately dwindling gallery looking on, and Burridge took the match, First Eight title and Musk's Cup 7-5, 7-6.

Finishing Order: (1) Ian Burridge, (2) Rachel Rowe, (3=) Stephen Mulliner & Tobi Savage, (5) Chris Roberts, (6) Nick Archer, (7) Nick Cheyne, (8) Lionel Tibble.



The A-Level Series

Stephen Custance-Baker became the second winner of the A-Level Series when he stayed top of the leaderboard following the last tournament of the season, the **Sussex Open** at Southwick, *writes Chris Roberts.*

Going into that last tournament, only Lionel Tibble could overhaul Custance-Baker's 20 Series points and what looked like being the pivotal game, so far as the series was concerned, pitched the pair against each other in the quarter-finals.

Tibble won that and so the title was 'on' for the Northampton player, but David Dray and Colin Britt scalped Martin French and Tibble respectively in the semis.

Dray went on to beat the much improved

Britt in the final.

Tibble and French decided not to play-off for third and fourth place and so shared the Series points available at three each, leaving Tibble one point short of Custance-Baker's Series tally. This was a just reward for Custance-Baker who, as well as finishing on top of the points, was the only player to achieve two victories (at Cheltenham and Ryde) in the eight-event Series.



The B-Level Series & Final

Wingrave's Robert Chatwin won the last of the B-Level Series qualifier tournaments at Edgbaston in September; this was his second series victory of the season. Manager Richard Thompson complimented Rob's "calm smooth play, with truly excellent distance control".

This kept the number of individual winners of the 23 Series tournaments down to 17 and, with seven of those not taking up their places in the National Final, this opened up six opportunities to reward non-winners who had been accumulating points for 'placed' finishes all season.

Accordingly, Andrea Huxley (Guildford, 20 points), Andrew Carpenter (Durham & Tyneside, 18), Steve Fisher (Harwell, 12), Jane Tewson (Long Eaton, 12), Jean Ball (Leighton-Linslade, 10) and David Lloyd (Westmoreland, 8) all took up places for the 16-player season finale which took place in 'the north' for the first time at Southport & Birkdale CC.

~

Ross Bagni reports from the final -

Many of the finalists arrived at the club on the Friday afternoon and were met by Don Williamson, our manager for the weekend.

He explained that they'd had more rain in September than they could ever remember and it had only been on the Wednesday that it had been decided the event would definitely go ahead. One court still showed standing water and club members had been using squeegee rollers on two others to get them dry enough to play on.

Other than that, they were in superb condition and the club had prepared four reserve lawns (not of quite the same quality,

but better than some of us are used to!) in case of emergencies. The rain arrived in the late morning and by mid-afternoon all but one of the courts being used were abandoned and so to the reserve lawns.

At the end of day one, Paul Durkin (Long Eton) and Michael Bilton (Richmond Park) had their noses in front with six wins from their eight games – the format being the usual 15-round 'all play all'.

On Sunday the weather had cleared and three of the original lawns were again in use. Don Williamson then stated that we'd have a time limit of 50 minutes, which would allow for a sensible finish time, and he'd also worked a system that ensured that by the end we would have all played an equal number of games on the reserve courts. Ross Bagni (Leighton-Linslade) had a good morning, winning all four games, and joined Durkin and Bilton at the top of the leaderboard on nine wins, with David W Boyd (Chester) just one behind.

After lunch it was very close; Bilton and Bagni lost two of their three games, which left it between Durkin and Boyd.

Durkin went into the last round knowing



Plans are well in advance for the launch of a new national series of tournaments aimed at getting aspiring players started out on their competitive croquet careers.

The National C-Level Series for the 2018 season is timed to welcome particularly many of those players who, by dint of the Croquet Association's membership changes, will become members of the CA for the first time.

The largest group in this intake is likely to be GC players with handicaps of 7 or more. The venture effectively says "Welcome to the CA, now here is a Series of tournaments for you".

There will be a National Final at the end of the season and **applications from clubs wishing to host a tournament in the C-Level Series are now invited.**

Already lined up are Colchester, Hamptworth and Phyllis Court (who already hold well patronised 7+ events) as well as Guildford & Godalming, Camerton & Peasedown and Northampton.

So what about your club?

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that victory would give him the B-Level title, whilst Boyd had to win and hope.

It nearly worked for Boyd who won his last game and saw Durkin lose his, this tying the pair on 11 wins apiece. But Durkin got the nod on hoop difference, +16 to +13.

Bilton, Bagni and Carpenter finished just behind on 10 wins, and were placed in that order, again on hoop difference.

The players would all like to thank manager Don Williamson, Terry and the members of Southport for running a very well organised event, under difficult weather conditions.

CA Vice-President Colin Irwin presented the trophy to **Paul Durkin, the 2018 B-Level Series overall winner.**

Finishing Order: (1) Paul Durkin, (2) David W Boyd, (3) Michael Bilton, (4) Ross Bagni, (5) Andrew Carpenter, (6) Stephen Fisher, (7) Stuart M Smith, (8) Stephen Leonard, (9) David Lloyd, (10) Andrea Huxley, (11) Richard Carline, (12) Robert Chatwin, (13) Keith Pound, (14) Brian McCausland, (15) Jane Tewson, (16) Jean Ball.

~

Photographs of all the winners on these two pages were taken by Stephen Custance-Baker, Keith Pound, Lionel Tibble and Chris Roberts.

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Lawn Care ~ by Duncan Hector

Be kind to your lawns in winter

Moss is often very difficult to see, so it is a good idea to inspect the sward closely through the winter months.

Moss crops in Autumn and Spring so needs treating whenever it appears. It can be controlled by spray or a granular product which will desiccate moss, thus turning it black. Mow regularly through the winter at 8 to 10mm. By keeping the grass trimmed you will encourage side-shoots to grow and the sward will thicken. If you let the grass grow longer, the sward will thin allowing coarse grasses, moss and weeds to invade.

Play croquet through the winter

Lawns will usually benefit from continual usage and regular mowing. It is a good idea to reduce the lawn size in the winter so that hoop settings and boundaries can be rested.

Aerate regularly

Croquet players cause compaction of the surface, so it is important to aerate regularly using thin tines – a sarrel spiker is ideal for this purpose. Aeration makes pathways for oxygen and water to reach the root zone and the micro-organisms that, like us, need air and water to survive. Avoid damaging the surface by aggressive scarification or deep verticutting.

Damaging the roots of fine grasses is not good. In most cases nature will remove more thatch than scarifiers or verticutters.

The creation of bare patches and scars from scarification are an open invitation for weeds, coarse grasses and moss. The easy way to control thatch is by using nature to do the job.

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The GC English National Doubles Championship



This grand and prestigious event was hosted by the Hamptworth club early on in September, **reports Ivor Brand**.

Unfortunately the enormity of the event's title was not equalled by the quantity of entries. In fact there were only three pairs originally entered and there was talk about it being not contested again as in 2015.

Fortunately, Mr and Mrs Raby were talked into saving the day and making it a worthwhile event, so a big thank you to them, for this meant that the 'legends' of the past, Chris Sheen and Dick Stover, would have an event to remember (before their memory goes completely).

With such a small entry, it was decided to condense this championship into a one day event which pleased all, including our dedicated resident referee, Richard Jenkins.

A round-robin of two 13-point games, to be played consecutively against each pair, with no time limits was agreed and with the setting and the fantastic weather, we all went about our business enthusiastically.

It was all square after round one, with each pair recording a win and a loss, and still there was nothing between them after the second round. Surely, something had to give in the last round for the manager not to have to look at net points?

The clash of the 'legends' saw the Brand brothers, Ivor and Richard, miss out 7-6 to Sheen and Stover, while **Lionel Tibble and Jayne Stevens** squeaked a 7-6 win over the Rabys, so it was close all round.

The resulting 19-point final game was no different, with neither pair being able to breakaway until **Stevens' fine hoop running, supported by Tibble's accurate clearing, won through for victory** over Sheen and Stover 10-8.

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