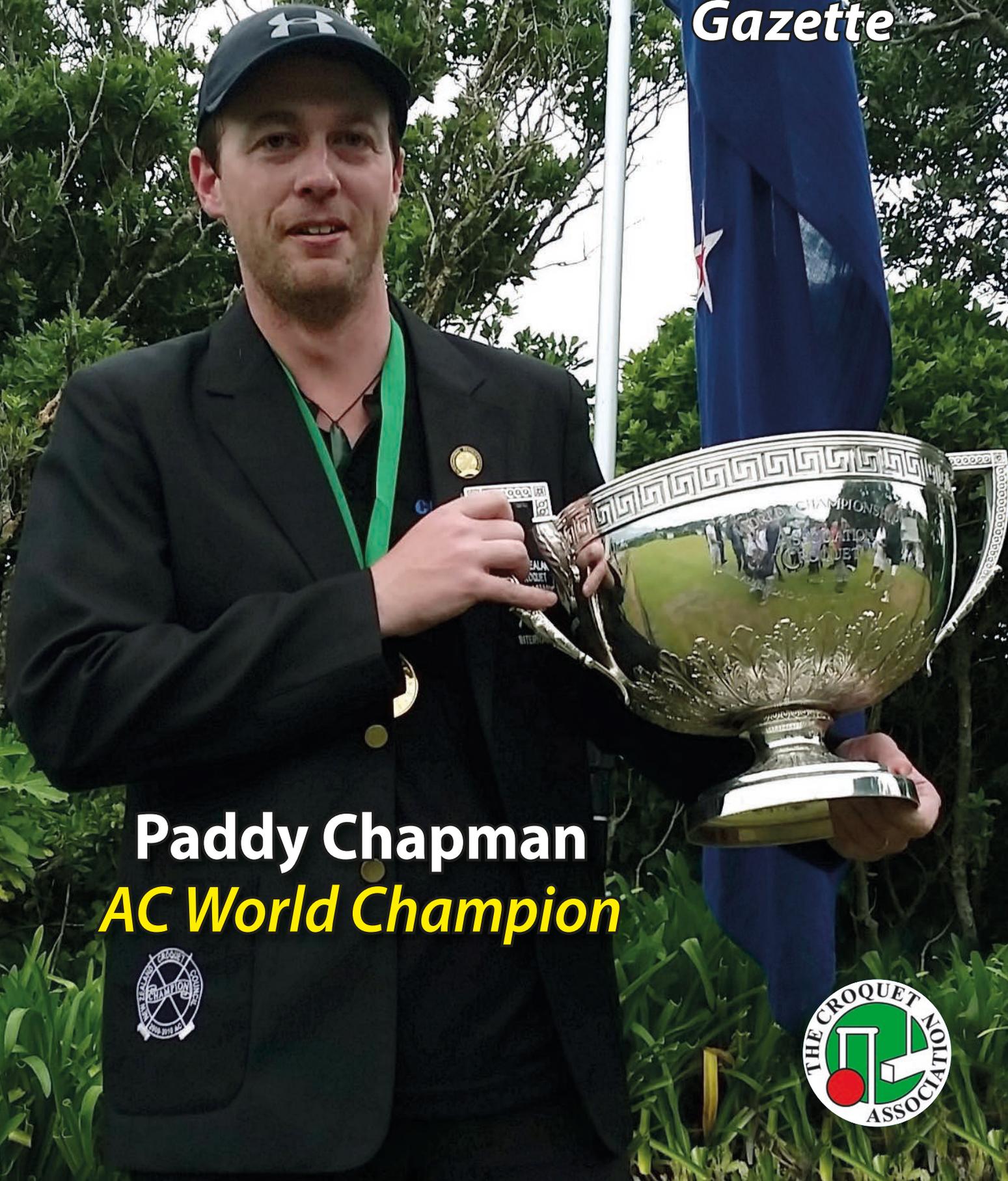


The

Issue 373 April 2018

CROQUET

Gazette



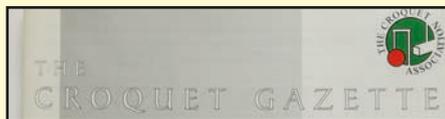
Paddy Chapman
AC World Champion



From our files

researched by Frances Colman

10 years ago - 2008



England's First Croquet Academy has been launched at the Sussex County CC at Southwick for the 2008 season. Whilst it started at the Club it has been adopted by the CA and the WCF. The main aim is to develop a centre of excellence for croquet training. Once established, the Academy plans to give assistance to courses in other parts of the country and even abroad.

~

Liz Larsson – By the time you read this, Liz Larsson will have taken up her post as CA Manager based at Cheltenham. I am sure you will join with me in wishing her best of fortune. I would also like to put on record my thanks to Klim Seabright for the service he has given the CA during his three years as CA Secretary. . .

- Jonathan Isaacs (Chairman's Column)

~

Editorial – . . . Starting with the next issue, Chris Clarke, the current World Champion, will be starting his regular column on ways to improve your play. . .

- Gail Curry, Editor

~

Age record? – Brian Rees and I will be going in for the Hurlingham men's doubles with a combined age of 161. I'm not claiming this to be a record but please does anyone know what the record is?

- Tony Fathers (letter)

~

Hampstead Heath – The city of London has agreed to promote a public croquet lawn at Hampstead Heath. It will have modest beginnings, with a small lawn (20 by 16) in Golders Hill Park but we do hope it will develop an oasis in the croquet desert of North London. . .

- Gabrielle Higgins (letter)

~

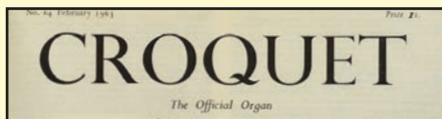
Charitable status – It was reported that the Enfield had become the first club to be registered as a charity. . . This could be a useful precedent for other clubs. . .

~

Derek Trotman – It was agreed with acclamation that Derek Trotman should be awarded the Council Medal, to be presented at the AGM. . .

- Ian Vincent (Council meeting report)

50 years ago - 1968



Mrs H. De La Mothe (nee Miss Noel Gilchrist) -

The name of this lady will be known to scarcely any associates today, but she was a player of such quality over a period of 20 years until her death on December 29th last year that it cannot go unnoticed in these pages. Her first win was in the Women's Gold Medal (virtually a championship in those days) in 1911, and she went on to win it on four future occasions between 1921 and 1926, the last two of these under her married name. . . It was as Miss Gilchrist, however, that in 1921 she won the Women's Championship, and it was in the following year that she made three consecutive appearances in the 'Best Ten' . . . in 1924 she won the trophy.

Perhaps no more admired figure of her sex has ever appeared on our courts. M.B.R.

~

Official announcement on the Test Tour

Associates will be aware that arrangements are in preparation for the despatch of a team from this country to take part in a Test series in Australia for the McRobertson Trophy, of which England is the present holder. Our players will arrive in West Australia on January 27th next year and take part in a State match in Perth . . .

They will then proceed to Adelaide where Test matches will be played against both Dominion teams and a second match against New Zealand. After this they will travel to Melbourne where the remaining three Tests will be played . . . (followed by) State matches at Sydney and Brisbane. . . While it expected that some of those invited to join the team will be able and willing to bear a substantial proportion of the expenses involved, others may not be.

(2018 Editor's note: Travel to Australia and six weeks between first and last games means the expense would have been considerable).

An application has been made for a grant from the Sports Council, but the success of this appeal can by no means be guaranteed . . . it may well be that an appeal for what can only be described as 'A Freewill Offering' will shortly have to be made to clubs and individuals who are in a position, and would desire, to respond.

100 years ago - 1918



The Gazette – During the continuation of the war no further issues of the "Gazette" will be published, except such as required for official communication to Associates.

~

CA Year Book and badges – Associates are informed that the issue of the Year book has been suspended and the usual badges will not be provided.

~

Rapid Croquet

Dear Sir, In reply to your correspondent, M. M. Steytler, I do not think the game alluded to, although played quite well, is by any means a record.

I can recall, in the happy days of long ago, two instances where games, although not officially checked, were said to have only taken thirteen minutes to play; the first at the Brighton Spring tournament, where, Mr. G. H. Woolston beat the late General Kenyon-Stowe in that time; the second at the ladies' Irish Championship, when Miss Coote beat Miss Gatehouse in thirteen minutes.

I particularly remember this last instance as the ladies took to the court I had vacated, and on coming out of the pavilion, after changing my shoes, I was told that Miss Coote had just finished the game in marvellously quick time even for her.

Hundreds of games have been played in the same way as M. M. Steytler's (6 turns all), and I think a good many in five . . .

The best performances that I know of are Miss Gower's going to 4-back with only two balls in play at the Open Championship, and Mr.M.Barry going round and out from the first hoop, after being pegged out, playing against yours very truly R.C.J.Beaton

~

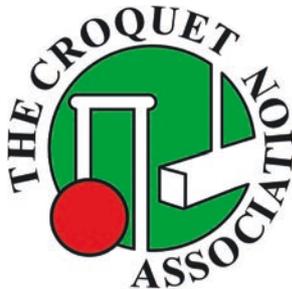
Suggestion for shortened game

Sir, . . . Last summer I had under observation sundry games between cautious players of the high-bisque class (*where little progress was made*) . . . I venture to submit the idea that a game could be devised under authority that should be finished in one and a half hours. . . instead on the 7 x 5 and 7 x 4 court, let it be 6 x 4 and 5 x 4 yards and set in 4 inch hoops a little nearer together in proportion. L.A.C.

Patron:
Her Majesty the Queen

President:
Quiller Barrett

From:
Quiller Barrett, President



Manager: Mark Suter
The Croquet Association
c/o Cheltenham Croquet Club
Old Bath Road
Cheltenham, GL 53 7DF

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Dear New Member,

On behalf of the Croquet Association – the CA – I would like to offer you a very warm welcome if you are one of the many who have now joined our existing members.

Our recent policy change brings the CA into line with most national sports and the expansion of membership will give us more “clout” when seeking grants and sponsorship.

I know that many players don't always realise the help they and their clubs get from the work done by our small number of staff and more than 60 members from clubs all over the country who volunteer to serve on CA committees.

Here's a reminder of just a few of the benefits:

You have probably previously glanced at your club copy of the Croquet Gazette. Now you have access to your own copy of the magazine which is changing the emphasis of its content, recognising its new broader readership.

Since 2015 the CA has awarded grants and loans totalling £150,000 to member clubs. You have probably played at a club that has benefited from such help.

You may have already bought goods from our Online Shop where you can get expert advice as well as good value. I hope it will continue to be your first choice for future purchases.

Most clubs benefit from the free CA's Public Liability Insurance scheme.

Perhaps you have already improved your croquet by attending a CA-organised coaching course at one of the Academies or benefited from Federation outreach coaching sessions?

Your club is part of a Federation.

As well as running many local leagues and competitions, each Federation is represented on the national Council of the CA.

This is important because Council members want to hear from Federations about members' views.

And here's something you can do to publicise our great sport: please display the enclosed sticker in your car or some other prominent place.

May you continue to enjoy your croquet: always challenging and fascinating at all levels.
Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Quiller Barrett'.

Quiller Barrett, President

Editorial

Welcome to all our newly-registered Standard Members, not only to the Croquet Association but also to this, your first Croquet Gazette. This is **YOUR** magazine, so please tell me what sort of articles you would like to see included in future issues.

This is an especially enlarged issue because I wanted to be sure to have room for some articles that are particularly tailored to the new Standard Members who, for the main, are less likely to be regular tournament players.

Kevin Carter's summary of the five-yearly Survey of Croquet Players features in this issue (on pages 12-14); it confirms that Golf Croquet is on the rise across the country and in most clubs. So, with the majority of new Standard Members being GC players and probably having mid to high handicaps, the first article to highlight to you is Sarah Hayes' Early Season Coaching Reminders (page 25) which goes back to the basics of

hitting the ball correctly every time.

I also encourage you all to take a look at the Golf Croquet National C-Level Series for handicaps 7+, which was launched this season specifically with the majority of new Standard Members in mind (see page 23).

At the other end of the playing scale, this issue leads with Stephen Mulliner's full report on the Association World Championships (see centre pages) and of course it is hearty congratulations to the new AC World Champion Paddy Chapman.

He rightly gets the top billing on the front cover of this issue, just as his wife Miranda did when she won, and still holds, the AC Women's World title three years ago.

And while on husbands and wives, it's congratulations as well to England GC internationals Will and Rachel Gee (née Rowe) who tied the knot in February.

How lovely :O)

Chris Roberts

Chris Roberts Editor

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Chairman's Column

The Croquet Association Office is experiencing a major turnover of staff. Following Liz Larsson's departure we were fortunate to be able to appoint Mark Suter as her successor.

Mark has a very strong croquet background and, on his return to this country two years ago, he re-joined our corps of elite players.

I am sure you will join me in conveying our best wishes to our new CA Manager.

You will note from Ian Vincent's Council Report (page 6) that Council members made a presentation to Liz in appreciation of her excellent service over the past decade (page 5).

I am sorry to report that both Steve Mowbray and Daniel Atiyah will be leaving us shortly, so we are currently recruiting successors.

Each has given us notable service over four years and one year respectively.

We need to prepare for impending changes to the membership of Council.

Jeff Dawson, Dave Kibble and Martin French, three of our long-standing members, will be standing down in October.

Consequently, there will be more vacancies than usual and I hope that members will come forward and stand for election to Council - please see the formal call for nominations which sets out the procedure and timetable (page 6).

Each of these three devotees has made a substantial contribution to the work of Council and the CA's organisation of our sport and we are much indebted to them.

Personally, I have greatly appreciated their input and I am confident they will continue to contribute to the development of croquet. I thank each of them.

In my February column I expressed the hope that we could resurrect National Short Croquet (SC) events after a long absence from our calendar.

I am pleased that we have agreed to introduce a SC team event this season.

It will be for teams of four and is aimed at providing experience for AC and GC novices.

Because this new event is not in the Fixture Book and it is being launched at very short notice, I have written to all clubs with the details and competition rules, which are also now on the website.

Go to 'Tournaments', 'CA Events', 'Inter-Club' - or copy this direct link:
<https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=tournament/caCalendar&TwOpen=y&CalendarEntryID=2850&pup=y>



Issue 373 April 2018

Front cover: The new AC World Champion Paddy Chapman with the Wimbledon Cup.

(Photograph by Greg Bryant)

This page: The Chairman Brian Shorney presiding at a Council meeting, with Hon. Secretary Ian Vincent looking on.

(Photograph by Chris Roberts)

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I commend this competition to clubs and hope they will enter straight away because the deadline is tight.

The SC competition will be run under normal Inter-Club rules, and it aims to give high bisquers and GC players an easy and fun entry into AC tournament play.

Kevin Carter's Quinquennial Survey summary (page 12) reveals that 30% of non-AC players would like more opportunity to play AC. Participation in this short Croquet competition will be an initial step towards addressing this finding.



Brian Shorney

Good bye and thank you for your long and loyal service

Liz Larsson

The Council meeting on 24 March interrupted its business before lunch, for a presentation to Liz Larsson. As a result of generous contributions from Council members, Liz was given a Zaha Hadid Serenity bowl in highly polished stainless steel and a Lalique glass Heggie cat, together with a voucher for her and her husband Chris Williams to have afternoon tea together at The Angel, Abergavenny.

Liz had been the friendly voice of the Croquet Association's office at Cheltenham for almost ten years, having retired at the end of February from her role as CA Manager.

Many of its members, particularly those she had regular contact with, expressed their appreciation of her when they heard that she was leaving.

As her successor, Mark Suter, will soon find out, the job encompassed a wide variety of tasks, from membership enquiries that would have been routine for her, but important for the member concerned, to unique events like organising the tickets for the picnic lunch in the Mall to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of our patron, Her Majesty the Queen. She was also handy with a toolkit when bookshelves were needed in the office!

She took a leading role in creating the new online shop, which attracted a significant increase in sales to non-members in its first year of operation.

A major contribution has been her work in editing the fixtures book, and championing the use of the online tournament entry system developed by Dave Kibble. Her period at the helm of the tight ship she ran (though that is a slightly false analogy, as her military background was the Royal Air Force rather than the Royal Navy) was one of considerable change for CA.

A significant number of new clubs were formed – there are now over 200; the tournament programme has vastly increased; and her last couple of years have been dominated by the introduction of Standard Membership and the new database to support it.

She will be much missed, and we are grateful both for her dedication and exemplary service and for the support given by Chris.

Ian Vincent, Hon. Secretary



Croquet Association Chairman Brian Shorney made presentations to Liz Larsson (above) and Marian Hemsted. (Photographs by Tim King and Chris Roberts)



Marian Hemsted

At the Council meeting on 27 January, the CA Chairman Brian Shorney made a presentation to Marian Hemsted.

This was to mark her retirement after many years as the Independent Examiner of the CA accounts – a job which enables the members of the CA to be sure that their funds are being looked after properly.

Peter Death, CA Treasurer, expressed appreciation for the help that she had given him when he took up the post and, speaking for himself and for his predecessor, Roger Bray, paid tribute to the thoroughness of Marian's examination of the accounts each year. Marian often worked late into the night, with the result that there were e-mails with queries waiting when he awoke.

In reply, Marian spoke of her long association with CA matters, going back to the days when her husband Stephen had set up the first database of CA members (using a BBC B computer and lots of floppy disks).

A heavily-pregnant Marian had typed names into this, and she said it was pleasant now to meet some of the people whose names she recalled from that time. She had greatly enjoyed her time with the CA, and wished us well for the future.

Peter Death, Hon. Treasurer

Tournament Regulations changes for 2018 - Samir Patel

Some of the most important changes are:

- Breach of any CA Policy (in addition to a breach of CA Tournament Regulations) can lead to in-tournament sanction, and should be reported to the CA for investigation and possible disciplinary action. This includes the new Equality Policy.

- A number of laws variations have been introduced, including the option for Alternate Stroke Doubles Play, and regularisation of the use of half-size courts for Short Croquet. A new One-Ball Handicap System has been introduced, but the trial AC Doubles handicap system has been discontinued.

- A trial to permit the use of video evidence that may exist to assist referees has been introduced for the 2018 season.

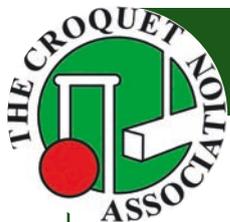
- Clarification that the Organising Body, and Tournament Director when appointed,

is responsible for post-tournament activity, such as submitting a tournament report. There should be no assumption that this can all be left to the manager.

- Standard time limits for AC games now includes additional variations, such as for 18 point games. The distinction between midweek and weekend events has been removed, but there are different standard limits for handicap and level play.

The full regulations and a complete list of changes can be found on the CA website at <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=tournament/regulations>.

The CA Tournament Committees welcome ideas for further regulation improvements at any time. The new appendix that provides an example of the block tie break criteria is an example of an addition directly arising from queries from players.



Call for Nominations and Notices of Motions for the 2018 AGM

The 2018 AGM of the CA will be held at Hurlingham Club on the morning of Saturday 20 October.

Any nominations for the posts of Hon. Treasurer, Hon. Secretary, membership of Council or notice of motions to be put to the AGM, should be sent to the Hon. Secretary, Dr. I. G. Vincent, 21, Cedar Avenue, Beeston, Nottingham NG9 2HA, or e-mailed to ian.vincent@cantab.net, by 1 June.

Nominations should give the name of the candidate together with those of the proposer and seconder, and state that the consent of the candidate has been obtained.

There are expected to be at least six

vacancies on Council, caused by the completion of three-year terms by John Bowcott, Jeff Dawson, Dave Kibble, Tim King and Brian Wilson and the resignation of Martin French.

Of those completing their terms, John Bowcott, Tim King and Brian Wilson have stated that they are willing to serve again and so do not need to be nominated.

A ballot will be held if there are more candidates than vacancies.

Candidates should be aware that Council is currently considering the governance of the CA and has accepted in principle that it should be replaced by a smaller body, so those elected as members of Council may not serve the normal three-year term.

Under clause 12 of the Constitution, Council is responsible for managing the

affairs of the Croquet Association and for the fulfillment of its objectives. Its standing orders and practice book (see under <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=ca/gov>) state that it is responsible for deciding matters of policy, delegating day to day management to its standing committees.

It normally meets three times a year: immediately after the AGM in October, late January and late March, at Hurlingham.

Ideally its members should have experience of managing organisations, have a strong interest in croquet and be willing to serve on at least one of its committees.

Please contact its Chairman, Brian Shorney (e-mail: brian@shorney.net) or Secretary, Ian Vincent (contact details as above), if you would like further information.

Ian Vincent, Hon. Secretary

March meeting of the CA Council ~ a report by Hon. Secretary, Dr. Ian Vincent

Council met at Hurlingham, on the day of the boat race.

The oarsmen were no doubt grateful that it was a calm, dull, day: the meeting was brighter, but whilst smoothly conducted it led to a stormier outcome.

Personel - arrivals, departures and awards

Proceedings started with a welcome to the new CA Manager, Mark Suter, and business was adjourned before lunch for a presentation to his predecessor, Liz Larsson, in grateful appreciation of her decade of service.

The late John Handy's faultless administration of the coaching committee was also recognised.

Jeff Dawson and Michael Hague are to be awarded the Council Medal at the AGM in October and it was agreed to nominate Patricia Duke-Cox for election as a Vice-President of the Association.

West Midlands Federation and Commonwealth Games

The most significant matters arising were two items that were related by geography: the news that the West Midlands Federation seemed to be well on the way to reviving itself and that efforts were being made to get croquet on the schedule for the Commonwealth Games, when they are held in Birmingham in 2022.

Accounts

The accounts were approved for

submission to the AGM after the Treasurer, Peter Death, had explained that the approx £6,000 surplus on the current account was mainly because applications for development grants had been lower than anticipated.

£18,000 had been transferred from the development fund to meet the salary and expenses of the National Development Officer, which it had been agreed to fund from reserves.

Looking ahead, the main uncertainty was about subscription income following the membership changes.

It was agreed to increase the per-capita subscription for larger clubs by £1 + RPI, in line with the mandate given by the 2015 SGM that approved them, but defer a decision about individual subscriptions until July, when the picture may become clearer.

Membership clarification and The Gazette

It was clarified that Standard Membership was an entitlement, rather than requirement, and the Management Committee was asked to review this.

A policy for advertising in The Croquet Gazette was quickly approved and a way forward for reporting the results of the quinquennial survey agreed.

Assisting Younger Players

The idea of a "passporting" scheme for students and other young players, to help enable them to play at local clubs,

was enthusiastically received and will be introduced once the details have been agreed, with a budget of £2-3,000 for the first year.

Another measure agreed to assist younger players, specifically those who might play in the U21 GC World Championship to be held in Nottingham next year, is to reserve places to enable them to get experience in domestic tournaments for which their rapidly increasing grade might not qualify them (see page 15).

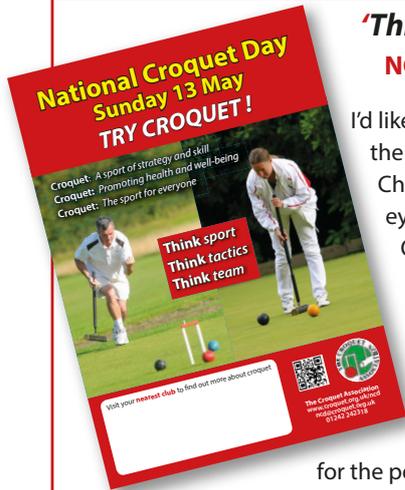
Governance Working Party proposal

The main business of the day came after lunch, when it was hoped that Strat Liddiard, Chairman of the Governance Working Party, would be able to present its proposals over an internet connection from Australia. Unfortunately the bandwidth was insufficient, so Council had only the executive summary that had been circulated to go on.

There was general agreement that Council should be replaced by a smaller Policy & Scrutiny Board, but there was insufficient support for the proposed composition and method of election of this successor body, so subsequent motions to bring the changes into effect were not taken.

Instead, the Management Committee was asked to establish a working party with the specific remit of addressing this issue, in the hope that the other proposals would be implemented once that log-jam was cleared.

National Croquet Day 2018 - Sunday 13 May



'Things are hotting up' ~ Brian Wilson looks forward to NCD 2018

NCD posters and leaflets

I'd like to thank the Marketing Team for the preliminary design and words, Chris Roberts for creating such eye-catching designs and CA Office for seeing them printed and the 'envious task' of stuffing them into envelopes to be sent to clubs.

Most important of all; my heartfelt thanks to all those clubs who placed their orders

for the poster and leaflets and who are already working on making National Croquet Day 2018 another success.

The Marketing Team appreciate that so much of croquet's success is down to the many stalwart club members who work tirelessly over the year.

NCD - what's happening?

Many clubs are well advanced in their planning for National Croquet Day and thank you for keeping us updated.

Some clubs are integrating NCD into their recruitment drive with open days planned where visitors are encouraged to 'give croquet a go'.

Others are using NCD as a launch pad to celebrate their club's history, and others still have tied in local charity collections. I know of one club that is working with a local children's hospice and I am sure that there are many other clubs supporting similar causes.

Using the local media

Everyone thinks of local newspapers but don't forget local radio or TV too.

You will need a good story to interest the media and supporting a local charity or other worthy cause is not a bad start.

Now is the time to get to know your local and regional reporters and editors.

Why not invite a local reporter to come along to your club, hit a few balls and experience your friendly welcome?

- An interested reporter can make all the difference.

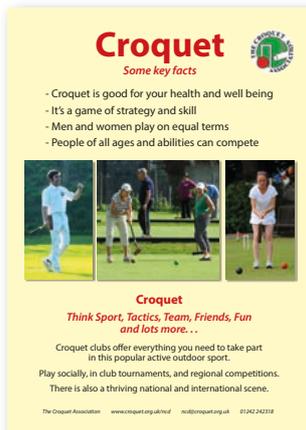
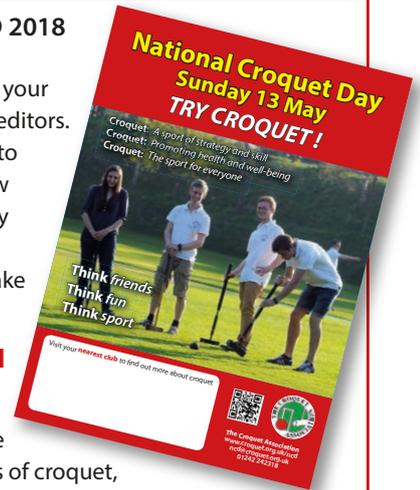
Other advertising material

We have had a lot of positive feedback on the A4 posters - one extolling the competitive aspects of croquet, the other focusing on the social side of our sport.

We have also produced A5 leaflets that introduce croquet and these can be used throughout the year (they are not dated.)

There are just a few posters and leaflets left - so contact the CA Office if you'd like some (more).

The CA also has plenty of tri-fold leaflets that introduce croquet or focus on either AC or GC. All the posters and leaflets are free, so make sure you are well stocked up!



Can we celebrate NCD on another day?

If NCD (13 May) does not suit your club's activities please do still run an event on another day for your own celebration of croquet - as for the posters, just give Brian Wilson a call and we will see what can be arranged.

Marketing is here to help you

The Marketing Team is here to help you to make your NCD yet another success.

We can help you with press releases, or contacts with the media.

If you want to talk over some ideas or have any queries please contact me.

Brian Wilson, Chairman, Marketing Committee - 07970 922867, 01225 708540 or ncd@croquet.org.uk

John Handy was a long-time member of Kenilworth and Nottingham Croquet Clubs; he was Secretary of Kenilworth and Treasurer of Nottingham for many years.



He had also been a member at Leicester and served on the Croquet Association Council from 2007 to 2013.

During this time he was the Director of the National AC and GC Inter-Club Championship competitions and he started the Inter-Club Murphy Shield GC competition, donating the trophy which

Obituary

John Handy 1925 - 2018

was named after his mother.

John also donated the Longman Shield and Tankards for the runner-up and the winner of the third/fourth placed play-off in the AC competition; he also managed the CA awards scheme and was a qualified AC and GC referee.

At Kenilworth he was no mean player and was always willing to help newcomers to the club with guidance and coaching.

He presented the Pindi Cup and the Secunderabad Cup to Kenilworth (both were tennis trophies won by his mother in



India in the 1930s) and the Treasurer's Bowl to Nottingham as a B-Level GC trophy.

John spent 25 years in the military, working on the development of radar and electronics in

general.

His hobbies included motorsport and bee-keeping.

Due to ill health, John gave up croquet a few years ago, but will be remembered as a good friend to the sport and to Kenilworth and Nottingham clubs in particular.

Adrian Morris

It is time to ban the 'Bandit'

Dear Editor,

Throughout my croquet career, I have heard and used the word "Bandit" to describe players who play better than their handicap suggests.

Usually, this only applies to players who are new to the game and who are learning and improving quickly.

However, there is another meaning.

Although I have only heard the word used in jest and never as a term of abuse, it has the potential to be used critically, even offensively, and I now wonder whether it should be cast into the abyss to join other words that have passed their use-by-date.

In every sport, new talent is sought, encouraged and celebrated so why would anyone wish to accuse anyone of being a

"Bandit" when they are doing well?

New players are not responsible for the handicaps they have been given and will not reach the magical world of the Automatic Handicapping System until they play regularly in games, matches and tournaments outside their own club for this system to work.

In my case this was quite a few years and so my club handicapper was responsible for ensuring I always played off the correct handicap.

It is the club that is responsible for ensuring its members are correctly handicapped, which is fine for larger clubs with experienced people who see enough competitive play on the circuit to be able to

make these assessments confidently.

But what of the majority of smaller clubs where few members play in league matches, or in new clubs where a small number of people are learning everything as they go along?

Fair play, of course, can only be achieved if every club has a nominated and diligent club handicapper and the South West Federation held handicapping workshops for its members in March with the aim of achieving this.

As for the individual player though, it is now time to abandon the "B" word - however jocular - and only refer to such players by the more appropriate and accurate "IMPROVER"?

Robert Moss, The Bears CC

"Balls!"

Dear Editor,

Stephen Scrase's letter "I say there oh dear, too late" (February Gazette 372) compares the long-established protocol for preserving the health and safety of golfers threatened by wayward shots with the lack of a corresponding universally agreed cry to protect in such circumstances those who play croquet.

Because in many situations litigation is becoming an option increasingly favoured sooner rather than later, it is clearly important that threats not only to life and limb but also to harmony on our lawns are effectively diminished.

But how do we expedite the evasive action of vulnerable bodies in the path of violently propelled missiles?

What is the most efficient warning to players potentially in harm's way that their nemesis approaches at speed across the grass?

The cry needs to be short (time is of the essence); easily distinguished (from the call of "time!" or for a referee); relevant (to the threat) and, above all, it must be attention grabbing (for obvious reasons).

After lengthy psychological and practical research I have identified the word that fills these criteria and, moreover, pricks up ears and promptly turns heads.

The CA must urgently promote, as croquet's version of 'fore', the universal cry of "balls!"

Peter Lowe, Tyneside CC

"Snark!"

Dear Editor,

Stephen Scrase asked what we should we cry out in warning when a ball is whizzing towards another game, "Fore!" having already been bagged for golf.

Croquet players will know there's always good sense to be had from Lewis Carroll.

In *The Hunting of the Snark*, the Baker had wholly forgotten his name, but:-

*He would answer to "Hi!" or to any loud cry,
Such as "Fry me!" or "Fritter my wig!"*

To "What-you-may-call-um!" or "What-was-his-name!"

But especially "Thing-um-a-jig!"

But I suggest "Snark!" itself would be even more effective, short, sharp and distinctive, and if the loose ball turned out to be a Boojum, it would deservedly crash into the inattentive game.

Paul Wolff, Blewbury CC

~

A related story from **Tony Whateley**:

In his editorial of the previous issue of the Gazette, the Editor said that he was looking forward to his annual thrashing in the Cape.

During the Handicap final, which he lost to Manager Judith Hanekon, he played a hard hit roquet shot across the court which, on the bumpy surface, contacted the roqueted ball high up with the result that his striker's ball flew high over the protective stop board at 45 degrees and hit his doubles partner Frances Colman hard on her leg.

He received, perhaps not quite a thrashing, but more like a spanking!

Game, Rubber and Match for the man from Ashby

Dear Editor,

With reference to page 8 of the February issue (Gazette 372), I have heard you share your views on "tournament", "event" and "competition" before, but you did not address another layer to the potential confusion.

What should we call a "match" between two teams in a team competition?

At international level, this seems to be handled by using the term "test match", which consists of "matches" between players (each of which could have multiple "games"), but I cannot feel that "test match" applies below international level.

I prefer the term "match" between the teams and "rubber", which mirrors, for example, the Davis Cup in tennis (but for some reason Americans then snigger!).

Does it help for me to grow the dilemma for you?

Tim King, Ashby CC

Dear Tim,

I too like the term 'rubber' for part of a team match and so will be more than happy if that were to become the accepted descriptive term.

However, will 'Johnny' foreigner from across the pond be able to keep a straight face?

Perhaps we can look forward to a letter from France on this subject! - Ed!

Paperless Spouse speaks out

Dear Editor,

I am writing to highlight something which may not have crossed the minds of other Premium Members – particularly married couples - where only one Gazette now arrives on their doormat and the other is 'paperless'.

Now, I do appreciate there is a discount on membership fees offered to couples, but we do still pay an annual membership to the CA.

Whilst I very much applaud the new Standard Membership drive - and I hope they all enjoy reading this, their first, Gazette – might I be so bold as to ask if they too will be identified, as I have been, as being a spouse and therefore also have a 'paperless' flag on their record?

Does the new membership category identify couples?

Or, as I suspect, will every owner of a standard membership record be sent a Gazette?

The cost-saving initiative of a Paperless Spouse was a stroke of genius but, with many more thousands of Gazettes now being printed and posted, is now all rather immaterial.

Perhaps replies could be sent via the Editor – I hope I am wrong.

Cost-Effective Paperless Spouse
(Name supplied)

Jeff Dawson replies:

This is an issue which we have, of course, considered carefully.

The promise to club members was that everyone who becomes a Standard Member of the CA is entitled to get a (free) paper copy of The Gazette for the first year (April to February editions inclusive).

We could have ensured that only one copy goes to any one address, but this leads to issues as to whom it gets sent to, and of course not everyone under the same roof is husband and wife and some may want their own copy.

We therefore took the decision that for this, the first edition to go to Standard Members, we would send a separate copy to all.

However, at the same time we would like to appeal to all those in a household already getting a copy, and who do not need or want a second, to go paperless.

This involves logging on to the website, reviewing your own details (and let us know if anything is wrong) and selecting the 'paperless' option there.

If you follow the link from the home page www.croquet.org.uk for new standard members there are more detailed instructions as to how to do these things.

Jeff Dawson, Membership Changes Implementation Group

Computer Croquet helped my game

Dear Editor,

I've been playing the computer game Brookwood Croquet (AC version) on a Mac since the start of this current winter season, when it's been too cold or wet to get out on the lawns.

There were quite a few bugs initially, but the concept really interested me because of its potential as a training aid, and so I have persevered - working my way through a series of iterations which Andrew Dutton, at Brookwood Croquet, has kindly sent me to try out. Obviously a computer simulation can never match the enjoyment of playing live croquet against an opponent, but the 3D game is now remarkably realistic and has enabled me to teach myself advanced tactics which were completely beyond me last summer.

My handicap is 9, but over the past couple of months I've been able to practice playing increasingly sophisticated virtual croquet and as a result was thrilled to have successfully completed my first 'live' triple-peel on a half-lawn the other day!

I don't think there can be any doubt that this is an extremely valuable aid for relative novices like myself, and I whole-heartedly recommend giving it a try. (see page 27)

Philip de Glanville, Bath CC

The winter Olympics ~ viewed in two ways

Dear Editor,

Like many viewers, I have been keenly watching the broadcasts from South Korea of the Winter Olympics.

In common, surely, with a lot of croquet players, I paid special attention to the curling competition where the tactical nous to decide on placement or clearance and the skill to impart weight and direction to the stone resonate with the aptitudes we regularly deploy in our own game.

Yet my admiration of the curlers was tinged with regret: even perhaps a feeling approaching resentment.

How has this game, played on ice by a tiny minority, achieved Olympic status and a worldwide television audience, while croquet, comprising in my unbiased opinion far greater variety of shots, situations and competitor interaction and an equal potential for spectacular change of fortune, has languished for 100 years in the backwoods - neglected through ignorance and misunderstanding by all but

its aficionados.

I guess the rules of curling are pretty simple, making the action easily interpreted - and it all takes place, unlike croquet, on a strip within the scope of a single camera.

Perhaps crucially, there are fewer winter games competing for recognition.

Croquet on ice is not a viable option (unless played for banana-skin laughs) but those other comparisons with curling are not convincing arguments. Golf croquet is not hard to follow and, on a half lawn, could be covered from a single elevated viewpoint.

Is it not time to throw a little more money and effort into showing how our game can be made accessible to a much wider audience?

Peter Lowe, Tyneside CC

- A good comparison and point well made Peter, but top class GC on a half-court is just 'Micky Mouse'. TV coverage of a full-sized court is just as easily achievable. - Ed.

Dear Editor,

In the bad snow spell, with about 1 cm of snow on my front lawn, I got my secondary croquet balls out and had a practice.

I was bedevilled by only two things - all the balls turned white, so that I couldn't see them, and I kept falling over the wretched things.

So that wasn't such a good session.

The next day, taking a cue from the Winter Olympics, and the curling competition, I had the bright idea of asking my wife if she would rush along clearing the snow in front of an advancing ball.

She didn't take me seriously; I can't think why.

The weather didn't win, though, because I still got my practice in – air strokes in front of an indoor mirror.

Roger Goldring, Phyllis Court CC

- I know full well that it takes a lot to keep you from your practice, Roger, and I'll bet you were out in your shorts, weren't you?

You are dedicated, yes, but also mad. - Ed.



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More Letters to the Editor

'Flip-Flop-Fly' Curb on damaging and flimsy footwear

Dear Editor,

I would like to hear from other Clubs with regard to their rules or bye-laws concerning what is considered to be appropriate footwear for playing on their lawns.

I have been Lawn Manager at Cheltenham for just a few months and it was highlighted to me during last season that some players were wearing flip-flops (or similar) to play.

Through the Winter I have needed to speak to players about wearing walking or hiking-style boots which have a heavy tread.

Whilst these were mostly worn to keep feet warm and dry, these sort of treads scuff the lawns considerably, especially when turning.

My main concern is that people playing in flip-flops (or similar) are putting themselves in an unsafe situation and are an accident waiting to happen.

I am also aware that when double-banking is in use, players in the other game also find it very off-putting as they fear injuring the poorly shod other players.

I am therefore very interested to hear if other clubs have specific written rules or guidelines covering footwear.

Please email me - hayes4708@gmail.com.

**Robin Hayes, Lawn Manager,
Cheltenham CC**

Invite the Monarch to mark 150th AC Open

Dear Editor,

In relation to the status of Walter Jones Whitmore's event in 1867 at Evesham, your readers may be forgiven for not noticing the 150th Anniversary Open Championships held last year.

However, the CA's Council declared Whitmore's 1867 event to have been the first Open Championship.

Alan Oldham, writing on Oxford Croquet, described it as follows:

"Whitmore is credited with the organisation at Evesham in 1867 of what has been regarded as the first Open Championship, although many might question whether it should merit such a distinction, since there was no advance notice of the event: he merely invited four friends to play, the courts were small, the hoops eight inches wide, and he won the event himself!

However that may be, this was the tournament whose centenary we celebrated in style in 1967 in the presence of our patron, Her Majesty The Queen."

It may be too late for the 150th anniversary, but by my calculations the 150th Open Championship will be in 2030.

Perhaps the CA can mark that milestone in similar style!

**Samir Patel,
Surbiton CC**

Croquet's link to 1865 Chemistry; help requested

Dear Editor,

I am writing a book about the story of chemistry.

I was delighted to read that, in the Royal Society of Chemistry in 1865, models of molecules were demonstrated using croquet balls.

The pictures of the models show that black balls were used for carbon, and white for hydrogen.

Also, the text mentions that red was used for oxygen, blue for nitrogen, green for chlorine, yellow for sulphur.

The same colours are still used by chemists today.

The text appears to suggest that, rather than choosing a colour and making the balls, instead, the elements were matched to the croquet ball colours.

The photographs of the models appear to show the white 'hydrogen atoms' as larger than the carbon atoms, so I wonder if some other ball was used to represent hydrogen.

Please, what were colours of the available croquet balls in 1865?

Were they wooden?

I look forward to your historian's views.

**Max Parsonage
(Chemistry writer)**

Please reply to the Editor
– gazette@croquet.org.uk –

The New Membership Implementation Programme ~ a report by Jeff Dawson

These last few months we have been focusing on getting the information we need from clubs and importing the data into our database system.

This has progressed well and, at the time of writing, **over 50% of clubs have supplied their data, including almost all of the larger clubs, which has so far resulted in 2,000 people becoming Standard members.**

We have been in contact with the remainder of the clubs, and are expecting most to be able to supply us with their information during April.

About 5% of clubs have said that they do not wish to participate in the scheme – mostly very small clubs with little competitive croquet, or educational establishments.

Of course, we understand that one of

the difficulties for everyone is the Data Protection requirements, which require members to give explicit consent for their contact details to be published in the online directory.

The CA has also been reluctant to require club members to join it; Standard membership is just an entitlement.

A lot of individual club members have been slow to respond to requests from their club, which has delayed clubs being able to send us their information.

Please make sure you are not one of the people holding up the process!

We would also like to extend a warm 'thank you' to the club volunteers who have been processing the information for us - we expect it will be much easier next time around!

A lot of the clubs who have provided

information expect to add to it once they get all their consents back, so we know that the lists are far from complete at this point.

For this reason, it has been agreed that there will be two mailings of this, this April Gazette. New Membership Implementation Programme. Those missing out on the initial mailing will still be able to get their copy provided that their club can get their details to us by the end of April.

Some of you might be confused by the on-line directory options, especially as one of them was to allow your details to be visible to fellow club members only.

This is an option which is not yet implemented on the website, so unless you have opted to make your details visible to all CA members, your fellow club members will not be able to see them at this point but we hope . . . *continued on page 29*

The report mainly states facts - the objective results of the survey.

However, certain interpretations are placed on these.

Any subjective interpretations and opinions expressed in the report, and indeed this article, are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the CA.

Kevin Carter

This was the fourth five-year survey of croquet players. The main objectives of the 2017 survey were:

- continuing the time series provided by similar surveys in 2002, 2007 and 2012, to inform the CA management and committees of important trends, serving as a foundation for strategy and plans
- to measure what has changed in the last five years, particularly any unexpected differences, along with charting progress in correcting unwelcome trends identified in the last survey
- to explore AC/GC issues, with an intention to provide the CA a view of how both codes might flourish side by side.

We had a fantastic response: 1450 - half from CA members and half from club players who had not (then) joined the CA.

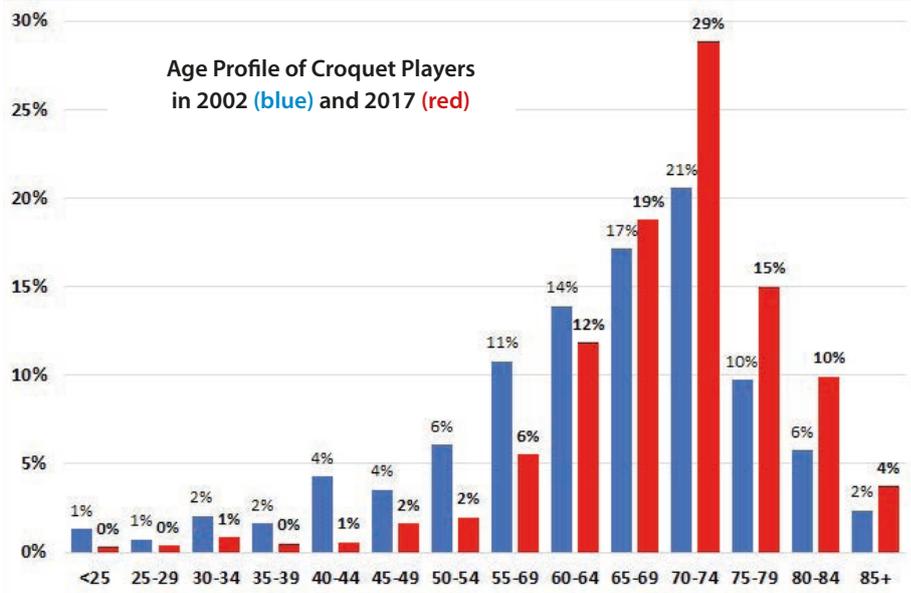
In fact, over the years the difference in responses between members and non-members has reduced to very little.

Thank you everybody who responded.

This high number of responses provided a very robust sample to analyse and great confidence in the resulting statistics.

The Age Issue

The 2012 Survey revealed that croquet



players were ageing: the median age had increased to 68 - up from 65 just five years before.

It identified that 81% of all new recruits were over 60 and that the proportion of under-50s had dropped by a quarter and that for under-30s by a half.

The CA urged clubs to concentrate their recruitment on more younger players.

In 2017, five years on, the CA was keen to see if the trend had continued or whether it had been reversed.

If it was continuing we needed to understand what the implications were of this trend. Our findings show conclusively that the trend has continued - the median age is now 70 - and in some other respects it has intensified.

- See the illustration above -

A major demographic shift

It is now clear that we are seeing a major demographic shift - the age distribution is shifting substantially.

One could almost say, if croquet were to be likened to a business, that we are moving

from one 'business model' to another, as the chart shows, by comparing results for 2002 (our first survey) and 2017.

We used to have a good mix of players between university age and middle-age, and most of these stayed in the sport for decades (most leave between 75 and 85).

- 31% of players below 60, rather than today's 11%;
- 14% were below 50, rather than today's 6%;
- 6% were below 40, rather than today's 1%.

Currently the average new recruit is 66 and will realistically remain a committed, active player for about ten to twelve years.

As younger/middle-aged players age, without replacement, the age profile of all croquet players will eventually become more of a spike, with its peak at about 72 and little outside 60-80.

A section of the report is devoted to studying the impact of this strong shift.

It includes a mathematical model of age distribution, the profile of new recruits and of leavers.

Recruitment level is healthy for now, but . . .

The current level of recruitment is a healthy 600 each year, this is comfortably ahead of leavers (2000 over the past five years) and the total number of members in our 211 clubs has risen to 7500.

However, we shall still see the remainder of today's 50-65 year-olds, representing 20% of all players, working through the system over the next 15-25 years; and these are largely not being replaced.

A meeting of the generations in a Southern Federation AC Handicap League Final - Winchester v Oxford University (by Martin Brandt)



So, with today's 'stock' of players under 60 set to leave the game in due course and mainly older ones being recruited, the trend is set to accelerate. Our mathematical model shows that if we continue to recruit at the rate of 600 each year, in just ten years the number of leavers will have increased by 50%, to equal the rate of recruitment and so growth will cease.

Or to put it another way, if the average new recruit stays in croquet for ten years, in due course we shall have to replace 10% of the croquet population - currently 7500 - every year.

Administration volunteers are getting older

Besides having to run recruitment harder just to keep pace with an increasing number of leavers, there is another major impact of an ageing population.

Croquet is run largely by people who have been in the game for decades and are now mostly in their 70s/80s.

Half or more of all coaches, referees, tournament managers and administrators fall into this category.

We are moving towards a scenario in which very soon - probably within a decade - over half of the people who currently fill these roles will no longer be in the sport and very few replacements with the same level of experience will be available to take their place.

The Future of AC

The CA asked that we examine the current position of AC.

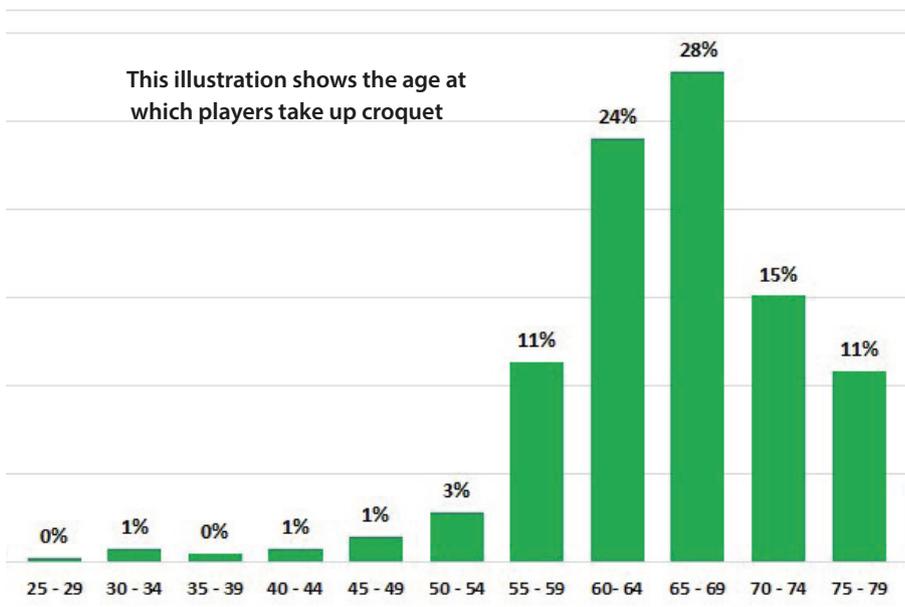
It is clearly beginning to decline and it was thought useful to measure this and to extrapolate the present trend to see what its effect would be, and perhaps to see what steps could be taken to halt it.

The number of AC players can be arrived at by taking the number of respondents who call themselves 'Predominately AC' and adding half of those who say they play AC and GC equally.

After appropriately weighting the differing proportions for CA members and non-members, we find that 34% of all players are AC players, so they are now outnumbered 2:1 by GC players.

In the last survey we had a less reliable means of deducing whether players were predominately AC or GC but the figures were roughly 50-50 in 2012.

Conservatively, 30-40% of all currently competitive AC players will need to be replaced over the next ten years to



maintain the player base.

However, the current rate of recruitment of 'ready-made' AC players is only about half of this.

Ways of recruiting for AC

Our responses to the survey show that some new players learn AC at the outset and others begin with GC as an easy entry and then switch to AC, typically in their second or third year.

Based on our analyses and also taking into account respondents' verbatim comments, there would appear to be three obvious ways in which the number of AC players could be boosted:

- a) Recruit more players directly into AC.
- b) Possibly provide a simpler, shorter entry point into AC - perhaps Short Croquet.
- c) Recruit from the pool of GC players.

Expanding on the third, there are 4500 non-AC players - representing a huge opportunity to introduce some to AC.

Further, survey responses revealed that 30% of these would like to play AC.

However, two-thirds of these face barriers to this ambition: primarily insufficient opportunity at their clubs and/or availability of coaching.

A lowering of these barriers might seem to be a good idea.

Other Important Findings

The following are findings not already discussed, either in isolation or in conjunction with other findings to arrive at the key findings in the previous section.

The gender statistics show there is room for improvement in the numbers of Women playing competitively like Alison Jones, here with Dave Kibble at the Mens & Women's Championship.

Club Statistics

The CA office reports that at the end of the 2017 season the total number of players in UK clubs was 7500, up 23% from five years ago.

Gender

61% of all croquet players are male (down slightly from 62% in 2012).

The figure for CA members is higher (77%), largely because men tend to be more competitive and playing in CA tournaments was the main reason for joining the CA.

The figure for predominately AC players is also higher than the average.

However, with the ratio for new (mainly GC) recruits being near to 50% and a large proportion of these still being uncompetitive, the overall figure is set to come down further.

Education and employment

49% of croquet players have a degree and 35% have a professional qualification (with a 12% overlap having both).

Continued overleaf...



...continued -

The figures for AC players is significantly higher than those for GC players.

82% of survey respondents were retired (up from 75% in 2012). 'Qualified Professionals' dominate occupations, at 42%, with 'Senior Managers' at 19%.

The Croquet Gazette

Only 14% of CA Members never read the Gazette and, perhaps surprisingly, the 'frequent' or 'occasional' figure for non-member readership is up at 43%.

Years playing croquet

56% of all croquet players who belong to clubs have also played 'informally' - typically in their own or somebody else's garden, and 28% do so before leaving their teens.

An increasing number of older players play informally after first joining a club.

AC/GC

Looking at years since first playing AC/GC, reveals two interesting facts:

Firstly, thirty years ago less than 5% had ever played GC.

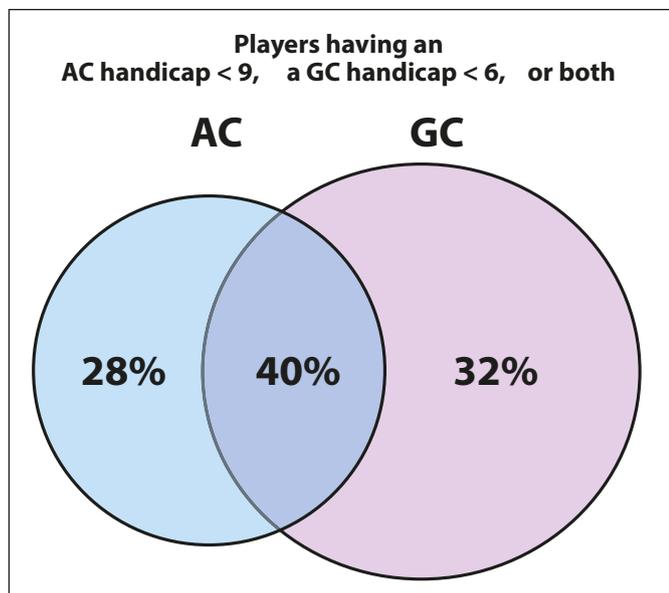
Secondly, AC players show remarkable longevity - 26% have been playing in excess of forty years.

Handicaps

Further measures of how much AC and GC is played is obtained by looking at players' handicaps in various bands.

The Venn diagram (below) shows what is probably the most relevant for players who have achieved a reasonable level of competence in one or both.

The diagram shows that 28% have reached that level in AC only, 32% in GC only and 40% in both.



- Years belonging to a club -

The median age of new recruits has risen to 66 and we are seeing a dearth of younger players being recruited.

~ The full profile can be seen in the (green bars) chart on the previous page ~

72% of players who recently (less than five years ago) took up croquet now predominately play GC (with AC 18% and equally 10%).

Personal introduction is by far the most powerful source of new players.

Types of croquet

The responses to this question also strongly confirm that GC is on the rise - the proportion of CA Members who never play GC has almost halved since 2012 to 11% and among non-members it is 10%.

One-ball is displaying significant growth, with 21% of CA Members now playing it 'frequently' (vs 7% in 2012). Short croquet is also increasing in popularity.

Playing in Matches against other clubs is on the increase; and, while playing in CA Tournaments outside of respondents' home region remains steady, there is an increase in playing in Tournaments nearer to home.

Competitive and non-competitive players

Based upon a measure of competitive/ non-competitive behaviour, the proportion of all players who are now wholly social/ uncompetitive has reduced sharply, from 49% to 39%.

Factors for taking up and continuing croquet

Two factors dominate: having a local club and having a friend who plays.

Recent attitudes

Half of all GC players have increased their playing time, compared to five years ago.

This is consistent with other findings which show greater competitiveness, playing in more matches, etc.

The 2017 Survey was undertaken for the CA by Kevin Carter

CA Young Persons Sponsorship Scheme

The CA has created a sponsorship scheme to encourage clubs to attract young people into the sport.

Clubs which take part in the scheme will allow young people to use their facilities, either as members at a discounted rate or on a temporary basis, will be eligible for a subsidy. By joining the scheme, Young Persons can take advantage of high quality coaching in the sport by qualified CA coaches within member clubs, and those clubs can receive financial support.

Additionally, as members of the CA, Young Persons can enter tournaments and enjoy the benefits of competitive play.

The scheme will run as a pilot for the 2018 season and will be reviewed in the Autumn.

Key elements

The age limit is under the age of 25 on 1st January in the year of application.

The Student membership category of the CA has been redefined as a Young Person membership with the same age qualification.

Participating clubs and Young Persons must be members (either Young Person or Standard) of the CA and applicants must have the endorsement of their Federation Development Officer.

It is recognized that some potential candidates could spend a significant part of the playing season at a different location away from their 'home' club (e.g. because they are at University), so it is possible for the Young Person to have a 'passport' to nominate a second club, allowing both clubs to participate in the scheme and benefit from the sponsorship.

If a second club is nominated within the scheme the Sponsorship monies for that person will be divided equally.

All applications are considered on their merits, and payment may be granted if funds are available for the current year.

The application process

- Young Person joins CA and
- Young Person nominates up to two clubs for passport - those clubs must agree.
- Young Person / Club(s) lodge application to join the scheme with the CA Office.
- The FDO endorses the application.
- CA Development Cttee approves.
- Clubs claim sponsorship assistance at the end of season (Oct.) from CA Office.
- Application forms are available in the download area of the website.

Roger Staples, Chair, Developm't.Cttee.

Good news for Young Players

Priority places for U21 players at GC tournaments

At their meeting on 24 March, the CA Council approved increasing the opportunities for under-21 (U21) players to gain places at GC tournaments.

This initiative follows on from the CA agreeing to host the 2019 U21 GC World Championship, taking place at Nottingham Croquet Club from 20 to 24 July.

The 2019 U21 GC World Championship offers an ideal target to inspire young England players to apply themselves to practice and to enter appropriate tournaments to prepare themselves.

Such players have the potential to make rapid progress during the next 16 months and to achieve good results in the event.

Until now, when young players entered a tournament, they could be at a disadvantage because they were likely to be improving rapidly but their ranking would be lagging behind and not reflecting this improvement when tournament managers were allocating places under the existing

regulations. To remove this disadvantage, Council agreed that priority places will be available in the 2018 season for U21 players at: the GC Open Championship; the GC National Doubles Championship; and all tournaments in the GC Championship, A-Level, B-Level and C-Level Series.

In each of these tournaments, two U21 players can receive a place even if their rankings are not high enough under the existing tournament regulations.

These players will need to meet the applicable handicap restrictions of the event or (in the case of unrestricted events) have a handicap of 2 or better. When entering a tournament, players will need to inform the tournament manager that they are under 21 and eligible for a priority place.

The full details of this scheme have been sent to tournament managers by the CA tournament directors of the respective tournaments.

The CA is also engaged in various other initiatives that support the development of young GC players. These initiatives include:

- the International Performance Development programmes to nurture

emerging talent through to elite levels (contact International Performance Development Director, Lionel Tibble anglion@btinternet.com);

- The Summer School weekend to foster emerging young talent. This will be held on 21-22 August, probably at Wrest Park (contact Lionel Tibble, as above);

- the CA Bursary Scheme offering financial support to those who would struggle to cover their playing costs otherwise (contact Bursary Scheme panel chairman, Stephen Mulliner snmulliner@gmail.com);

- a "Next Generation" tournament that will trial creating a tournament experience suited to the expectations of young players (contact Eugene Chang etychang@gmail.com) – see below

The Council very much hopes that all clubs and individual members of the CA will introduce these initiatives to young players entering the sport.

These players have an exciting opportunity to compete in the 2019 U21 GC World Championship.

Tim King,
Chairman, GC Tournaments Committee

The inaugural 'Next Gen' tournament

This is a call for entries for the inaugural 'Next Gen' (next generation) croquet tournament.

A team event targeted at younger players with limited experience of competitive croquet, featuring Assoc. and Golf Croquet.

Free entry and logistical support (e.g. help with accommodation) is available.

14-15 July at Cheltenham CC
Contact: Eugene at
etychang@gmail.com or 07816158105

*Have started croquet in the last few years?
Do you feel A LOT younger than most other croquet players?*

Do you wonder if there are more people like you out there? Look no further...

What's going on?

We have received the go-ahead to trial a new croquet event on 14-15 July, overlapping with the end of the AC Open Championships at Cheltenham Croquet Club, specifically targeted at younger players with little or no tournament experience. The aims of the event are:

- To expose young and improving players to competitive play of a high standard,
- To build a community of young and improving players who may feel isolated

in their region,

- To expose these players to current top players,
- To trial a cross-code tournament format, uncommon on the UK circuit.

How will it work?

The plan is to run the two-day event as a team competition (like the Davis Cup in tennis), where each team competes against other teams in a mixture of AC and GC rubbers, both singles and doubles.

Teams will be captained by leading young players active in both AC and GC, and ideally will be mentored by a top 'pro' who will be at Cheltenham competing in the AC Opens. It will have some similarity to the 'Mentored Match Weekend' format used successfully in the AC/GC International Player Development Squads.

There will be a coaching element but we hope the event will promote a high standard of play and lead to knowledge transfer from experienced players, which might inspire them to seek further coaching or competitive opportunities.

The exact format and team sizes will be dependent upon the entrants and alternate stroke doubles in AC could be an option.

Why overlap with the AC Opens?

So younger players see some top-class play, especially during the final weekend. Because it is out of the exam period and

term time for school and university-age players and it will raise the profile of the event amongst casual spectators.

I am keen but worried about costs/logistics...

Please get in touch – we can help with arranging accommodation with local Cheltenham members, and there are CA Bursaries to support developing players (contact the Bursary Scheme panel chairman Stephen Mulliner snmulliner@gmail.com).

I'm under-18 and want to take part.

Please ask your parent or guardian to get in touch.

What counts as young or limited experience of competitive croquet?

The definitions are loose, but if you could be classed as a millennial (or younger), then you probably count. If you've rapidly improved in the last 2-3 seasons, please join us and share what you've learnt!

I'm no spring chicken in croquet but I know this lad/lass who has potential...

That's why this piece has been written. Spread the word!

We want to hear from anybody interested in taking part, as participants, team captains, mentors or if you are Cheltenham-based and can offer accommodation.

Eugene Chang,
etychang@gmail.com, 07816158105



*Editor Chris has convinced me to put pen to paper about my first World Championships, despite my thinking that the views of more experienced players would be more interesting. I hope that I may encourage others to strive to a similar level.
~ Andy
(Photo by Judith Kier)*

Paddy Chapman wins the

Defending Champion St

Huge congratulations to Nottingham's adopted son, New Zealander Paddy Chapman, who secured his first AC World Championship in February, and on his own home soil to boot.

He and wife Miranda now have the unique distinction of holding two current World titles in the same household, following Miranda's victory in the Womens' AC World Championship in 2015.

Stephen Mulliner, the defending Champion, looks back in detail at how this latest World Championship unfolded.

The 2018 AC World Championship was held in the Wellington area in the south of New Zealand's North Island, from 3 to 11 February.

Kelburn Municipal CC served as the event headquarters, with support from the Wellington Municipal CC and three clubs on the Kapiti coast at Plimmerton, Paraparaumu and Waikane, whose courts were used for the Block Stage and for the Bowl and Plate events.

Block Stage

The five Block Stage venues offered a variety of surfaces. The Plimmerton courts provided a combination of slope and speed that most players had only rarely encountered, and this led to several close, low-scoring games.

Three young GC stars, namely Josh Freeth (NZL) and Felix Webby (NZL), the 2015 and 2017 U21 GC world champions, and John-Paul Moberly (ENG), had added AC to their repertoires in the last two to three years and there was great interest in seeing how they would prosper at ACWC level.

In fact, all three looked thoroughly at home and qualified comfortably for the knock-out stage.

Jonathan Powe (ENG) was another

newcomer who excelled.

He took up AC and GC on retiring as a senior Army officer, and has made tremendous strides at both codes in the last three years. His seven wins from nine block



My First World Championships

~ Musings by Andy Myers ~

New Zealand is obviously a long way to go, but I took the opportunity to have a holiday at the same time, as did a number of other Brits, which made the flights and accommodation costs seem more bearable.

Sharing accommodation also kept costs lower (six of us shared a house) and was like having a little croquet family.

Being far away from the UK means fewer England players make themselves available, which is something you may want to consider in 2020 when the next AC Worlds are likely to be in Australia.

Locations

The croquet was split over five venues, from Wellington itself to about an hour's drive away - a drive that was stunning, with some classic NZ scenery to admire.

Some of you may have already heard about Plimmerton CC, where it was like playing on concrete... on a hill... in a wind tunnel! Needless to say it was very challenging; hence there were some very low-scoring games.

The other venues were generally very good and similar to UK conditions, although hoops were tighter and they were reset between games.

How did I play?

On the first two days I was pleased with

AC World Championship

Stephen Mulliner reports

games was a fine performance.

Top seeds qualify but not all easily

The top seeds, Reg Bamford (ZAF) and Paddy Chapman (NZL), and four other block top seeds, Greg Bryant (NZL), Toby Garrison (NZL), Simon Hockey (AUS) and Samir Patel (ENG), all qualified without undue difficulty.

However, this was not so for Stephen Mulliner (ENG), the defending champion, and José Riva (ESP), the 2017 President's Cup winner.

Both had to survive play-offs to qualify, and Jose had a desperately close +2



pegged-out win against 18-year old Edmund Fordyce (NZL), who had made his ACWC debut in Florida in 2016.

19-year old Ed Wilson (AUS) sees himself as primarily an AC player, although he reached the semi-final of the 2017 U21 GCWC, and had played superbly to win the NZ 2018 AC Open Championship at Christchurch in the run-up to the ACWC. But he, too, had to work for his place, and needed to get past the experienced Steve Jones (NZL) in a play-off.

Knock-out - First round

The first round of the knock-out looked for a time as if it might produce a few surprises, but ultimately all the results were as might normally have been expected.

However, there were some close encounters, and the two young Kiwi qualifiers were both involved. Freeth took the first game off Chapman +23, and had a ball round in game three, while Webby caused Riva some anxiety in another last-game cliff-hanger, losing +2, -26tp, -2.

Second round

The second-round matches were also best-of-three to meet management concerns about the possible length of matches.

Bamford beat David Maugham (ENG) +26tp, +5 to meet Hockey, a member of Australia's victorious 2017 Mac team, after Hockey defeated Pete Trimmer (ENG) +14tp, +26tp. Wilson swept into the quarter-finals at the expense of Brian Cumming (CAN), having dropped only three points in four knock-out stage games, aided by very good



shooting, and this set up an exciting contest with Riva, who had accounted convincingly for James Death (ENG) +10tpo, +26tp.

Christian Carter (ENG) was one good rush away from beating Bryant in straight games. Alas, he failed a difficult rover and Bryant went on to win -3, +3, +25 and gain the opportunity to avenge his NZ Open semi-final defeat by Mulliner, who had recovered to beat Aiken Hakes (NZL) -25, +17, +12tp.

At the bottom of the draw, Patel had a close battle with Greg Fletcher before winning +5tp, +11, and Chapman reversed the outcome of his 2016 ACWC quarter-final against David Maloof (USA), the eventual losing finalist, by winning -25, +26tp, +5.

Quarter-Finals

Friday was the hottest day of the event, and produced the most testing conditions

All photographs by Jeff Soo

Centre - Paddy Chapman takes care with a peel.
Opposite page - Reg Bamford, Felix Webby and birds-eye view of the Final at Kelburn.
Above - Paddy Chapman with his mentor John Prince.
Below - J-P Moberly pegging-out.

my performance, considering the standard of play, and I won five out of six.

But on the third day the wind was around 50 mph, with even more powerful gusts, as Windy Wellington lived up to its nickname.

It was actually difficult to stand up, let alone hit croquet balls, which were shaking in the wind as if they were alive.

I lost all three games that day and so just missed out on a play-off for the knock-out. It didn't help that I ran four hoops with a wrong ball in a critical match!

Did I enjoy it?

Absolutely; I learned so much!

Holes in my game that I had previously got away with were exposed, and there were certainly no easy games. I've come

away with a long list of things to practice

Being with the best players from around the world is an education in itself and I learned a lot from seeing the better players play (and not just the very best ones).

The highlight of the tournament for me was meeting so many people from all over the world. The tournament scene in the UK is very good and arguably the best in the world, but to play new people is always a fresh challenge and making new croquet friends is also fun.

Assuming resources permit I will certainly be making myself available for the next AC Worlds and would encourage you to do the same, even if you feel you're on the cusp of this this level of play.

Andy Myers, Aldermaston CC



The CROQUET Gazette

encountered at Kelburn.

At the top of the draw, Hockey was keen to make amends for his 1-3 loss to Bamford in the 2012 ACWC semi-final in Adelaide. He made a good start by taking the opening game, but Bamford moved relatively comfortably into the semi-final by -17, +26tp, +3tp, +12.

Riva looked destined to join Wilson's list of straight games victims after going 0-2 down, but he demonstrated his huge competitive spirit by remaining focussed and completing a solid triple peel in a close final game to triumph -11, -17, +9, +15, +5tp.

Mulliner showed his liking for fast conditions, and produced three triples on his way past Bryant by +24tp, -23, +9tpo, +23tp, and Chapman took the first two games without reply against Patel, and ran out the winner +26tp, +26, -13, +17.

Semi-Final 1 – Bamford v Riva

The semi-finals of Bamford v Riva and Mulliner v Chapman were played at Wellington Municipal CC, where the quality and speed of the courts suggested that sextuples would be a plausible tactic.

Riva had brought a Spanish fan club with him and, having survived several close encounters on the way, was noticeably motivated for his first ACWC semi-final.

Bamford had enjoyed a relatively smooth run through the block stage and the first three knock-out rounds, and was regarded by almost everyone as the firm favourite to take his fifth AC World Championship title, and thereby draw level with his great rival, Robert Fulford.

This had, of course, also been the case in the 2016 ACWC at West Palm Beach, where events demonstrated that nothing is certain in croquet.

Bamford won the toss and chose a standard east boundary opening for **game 1**. However, Riva hit on turn 4 and completed a confident sixth-turn triple peel.

In **game 2**, Riva played a supershot opening, to which Bamford replied by playing to the east boundary just south of

the peg; the next three shots were missed, which left Bamford with the innings. He laid for a sextuple and completed it smoothly after peeling 1-back before hoop 1.

In **game 3**, Riva again hit on turn 4 and seemed set to lead 2-1 with another sixth-turn delayed triple; however, a failed straight rover peel left him on rover and rover. Bamford again laid for a sextuple, survived the 33-yarder, and completed the sextuple only slightly less easily than his previous attempt.

Nothing daunted, Riva again played the supershot opening in **game 4**, and this time hit on turn three and went to 4-back, before Bamford hit a 19-yarder down the east yard-line and laid once again for a sextuple.

There were huge Spanish and other cheers when Riva hit the 35-yard roquet and gave himself the chance of a triple to square the match.

The triple started well, but required a death-roll when peeling penultimate, and Riva missed a 10-yard roquet on the 2-back pioneer. Bamford now had the chance to complete his third sextuple of the match, but failed 1-back unexpectedly with three peels completed.

Riva played with his forward ball, ran rover, and made a leave which offered Bamford a 24-yard shot. Bamford hit, took his 1-back ball to the peg with no peels, and pegged out Riva's forward ball.

Unfortunately for Spanish hopes, Riva missed both his lift shots and Bamford made no mistake in completing a short 3-ball break from 4-back to take the game +6 and the match 3-1.

Semi-Final 2 – Chapman v Mulliner

Chapman had reached the other semi-final looking calm and collected after dropping only one game in his block (by 4-7 to Annabel McDiarmid on Plimmerton's most interesting court) and defeating three dangerous opponents in the knock-out.

He was the runner-up to Robert Fletcher in the 2013 ACWC "youth" final at Surbiton (the combined age of the finalists was 44) but had lost in the quarter-finals of the 2016 ACWC "senior" final (where the equivalent statistic was 124).

Mulliner had had to battle through the block stage, but had then played with increasing confidence, and was clearly determined to hang on to his title.

Game 1 started with a supershot opening that was to be both players' preference throughout the match.

The game did not have the clinical efficiency of the first game of the other

semi-final, and resolved itself into a difficult TPO by Mulliner and an entertaining pegged-out phase that he eventually won +4tpo with nothing left on the clock.

Chapman rapidly squared the match with a seventh-turn triple in **game 2**.

Game 3 was enlivened by a Mulliner sextuple attempt that began well but foundered at hoop 3 with one peel done. Chapman went to 4-back with a natural POP on the hoop 3 ball and, after the lift was missed, completed a delayed triple +16tp to lead 2-1.

Game 4 began with a Chapman supershot opening, but Mulliner hit on turn 4 and laid for another sextuple, and this went well until he failed 3-back with three peels done. However, Chapman was compelled to rush-peel the 4-back ball, and failed hoop 2.

After a miss apiece, Mulliner took what was now his penult ball to the peg with a cross-wire at 3-back. Chapman missed the 32-yard shot into Corner 2, and Mulliner finished +25 to level the match.

Game 5 should have been a routine eighth-turn +26tp to Chapman, but he unexpectedly failed penultimate with two peels done, only to see Mulliner spurn this unexpected lifeline by mis-approaching and failing hoop 1. Chapman took his rover ball to the peg, survived a 20-yard roquet attempt by Mulliner, and finished +26 to reach his second ACWC final.

~ The Final ~ Bamford v Chapman

The players and spectators were greeted by a rather gloomy and rain-threatened scene for the final day at Kelburn.

Drizzle appeared intermittently, which slowed the courts and, at times, threatened to cause the suspension of play or, worse still, compel the transfer of the final to the better-draining courts at Wellington Municipal. Fortunately, the rain held off sufficiently to allow the final to be completed by 17:00, when the forecast weather front brought heavy rain.

Bamford attempted a sextuple in **game 1** which came to grief when an unkind slope



Photographs: Semi-finalists, Jose Riva (Left) and Stephen Mulliner (photo by Jeff Soo).



caused a gentle roquet to miss in front of hoop 4 with one peel done, and Chapman eventually took the opening game +7tp.

Bamford's excellent shooting and routine triple-peels gave him the **next two games**.

When he again took an early innings in **game 4** and reached 4-back with another good leave, the most likely outcome seemed yet another 3-1 win for Reg after dropping the first game, the pattern of both his quarter-final and semi-final victories.

Chapman had missed lift shots from A-baulk to the east boundary in games 2 and 3, but now switched to shooting at the ball by the peg from the end of A-baulk. He hit and went to 4-back with two POPs and a New Standard Leave, which placed Bamford's backward ball near hoop 2.

Bamford just missed the 20-yard lift shot with his backward ball from B-baulk into corner 4, and this gave Chapman a good starting position for a standard triple peel, which he completed confidently to square the match.

Game 5 'The Decider' followed similar lines to game 4, with Bamford reaching 4-back and Chapman again choosing to shoot at the ball by the peg from the end of A-baulk.

Again, he hit and went to 4-back with another New Standard Leave, with Bamford's hoop 1 ball again near hoop 2.

Bamford did not shirk the challenge and

again lifted his backward ball to B-baulk to take the 20-yard shot that, if he hit, would give him an excellent chance for his own triple peel to win the game, match and title – and the achievement of once again holding both the GC and AC World Championships simultaneously, the feat he had achieved in April 2013.

Bamford took great care in preparing for the shot but, once again, it missed by a tiny margin on the right and Chapman, a previous finalist in 2013 and semi-finalist in 2016, was presented with the chance to complete his third triple peel of the final and become World Champion.

The break was not without a couple of moments of concern, but Paddy coped calmly with the challenges, completed a straight rover peel and pegged out to great acclaim from the watching crowd, winning +7tp, -26tp, -26tp, +15tp, +17tp.

Shield, Bowl and Plate

The Shield was won by Greg Fletcher (Australia), the Bowl by Jonathan Powe (England) and the Plate by Stephen Morgan (USA).

Appreciation was warmly

expressed to Croquet New Zealand for hosting the event, and to the tournament officials and the army of volunteers at the clubs who set the courts and welcomed and catered for the players and spectators.

The epitome of good sportsmanship - Reg Bamford will have been disappointed to lose but you would never know from this photo as he offers warm and sincere congratulations to the new Champion. (Photo by Jeff Soo).



CA Bursary takes young England GC captain to the AC Worlds

~ J-P Moberly ~

It was with great excitement that I stepped aboard my flight from Edinburgh to Heathrow, the first leg in what turned out to be a 47-hour door-to-door journey to Wellington, New Zealand; I was going to my third World Championships in three years!

I had a great experience and was delighted to reach the knock-out stage by qualifying as joint top of my block. It was most unexpected, being the eighth seed in my block and a relative unknown, at least in the top-class AC world.

It was a source of amusement for many that throughout the tournament that I had to introduce myself to all the British-based players. A couple of days before the end I think I managed to say hello to the last English player whom I hadn't met before, and it was a recurring theme of conversation that I need to play more A-class AC tournaments from now on!

I have been very fortunate since I started playing tournament croquet in 2014.

Being a (poor) student and Junior CA member, I have been the recipient of five bursaries from the fantastic CA Bursary Scheme, including one worth £500 towards my flights, accommodation and entry fee costs at this recent World Championship.

I graduate from my Civil Engineering Master's degree this summer and so look forward to being able to earn a salary of my own and not have to rely on the generosity of the CA Bursary Scheme to help me compete on the world croquet stage.

Studying at university has been great for having the time necessary to practice and compete in our national and regional tournaments.

For the past few years, long summer holidays have been spent working during the week, either with part-time jobs or work experience, to save up money which I can then splash on playing croquet at the weekend!

I have also been afforded very generous hospitality from various croquet friends I

have made over the last few years - I would not have been able to play anywhere near as much without them. You know who you are, and I thank you all!

Another way to reduce costs has been taking the overnight Caledonian sleeper train from Edinburgh to London and trying to blag a cabin whenever possible (has only worked once so far), although I have found overnight sleeper trains don't make for particularly great croquet the next day.

Thank you for all the messages of support received while I was out in Wellington and thank you to the CA for their generous Bursary Scheme! **J-P Moberly, Durham CC**



Going for Growth - NDO Dave Gunn

The new season is here and so, I'm pleased to be able to report, is the first batch of development initiatives coming out of the various Federation Working Parties that were set up late last year. More will follow, but the ones that are now 'ready to go' are as follows:

The Marketing Group is launching two offerings: a guide to getting your club onto Facebook and a hosted club website template.

The Facebook guide is aimed at 'social media novices' and features clear instructions supported by screen shots along with ideas on how best to reach new target audiences such as 30 to 50 year olds, a much sought after demographic at many clubs.

The Website Offering should be of interest to the many clubs with no website currently and also to some whose website is proving hard to support or is due for a refresh.

The template will offer options for many features that a club would expect, including Welcome, The Game, Learn to Play, Finding Us, Contacts, News, Calendar, Members Area, etc.

The websites will be centrally hosted and administered at no charge to clubs and guidance will be offered on how to tailor them with individual club content, providing an excellent focal point for wider marketing activities.

We are looking for perhaps one club per Federation to participate in an initial pilot before a wider rollout during the season - **please do let me know asap if you would like to be considered for this.**

The Communication Group is launching an **online forum for use by any Federation committee member** wanting to share local success stories, problems, requests for help, work, facilities, expertise, etc. with Federation colleagues around the country.

The resultant increase in the volume and quality of communications between Federations should benefit all clubs as the season progresses.

The Direct Support to Clubs Group is delighted to announce a new framework of assistance for clubs called '**Croquet Matters**'.

It will build on all the existing support offered by the CA, the Federations and the Academies by adding details of other sources of help, such as County Sports

Partnerships, the Sport and Recreation Alliance, Join In, etc.

It will also look to make extensive use of **Sport England's 'Club Matters'** offering, which comprises a self-assessment tool (the Club Improvement Tool), a range of online toolkits for key areas such as Club People (members, coaches and volunteers), Club Marketing, Club Finances and Club Management and, finally, a programme of complementary workshops around the country.

A more detailed description of **Croquet Matters** is to be found (along with the Facebook Guide mentioned earlier) at a new section on the CA website, under the 'Clubs and Federations' tab. Whilst 'self-service' by clubs is perfectly possible, our preferred approach is via a guided engagement, with Federation Development Officers currently gearing up to deliver this, with central support from me.

Clubs can make ad hoc use of **Croquet Matters** content if they know specifically where they want to improve... or alternatively they might choose to be helped along a journey of self-assessment and prioritisation of focus areas that can make the biggest contributions to whatever development goals they set for themselves.

Any club wishing to engage with the new **Croquet Matters** framework should initially register their interest with me please. I will then liaise with their local FDO and look to set up an appropriate workshop for the club committee as soon as possible, dependent on the level of interest generated by this launch.

Croquet Matters is by no means the finished article at this point.

We are confident, though, that it will deliver benefits to each and every early participant and we are also committed to sharing the learning from engagements across all Federations.

We will also look to continue to add 'croquet specific' offerings to enhance the generic content available within Club Matters and other external tools.

So... if your club is facing development or even sustainability challenges as we enter a new season, please do consider giving Croquet Matters a chance to make a difference.

All the FDOs around the country and I are keen to help, so please drop me a line and we can get started!

Dave Gunn,
National Development Officer (NDO)
davegunn59@gmail.com, 07710 981561

For the Love of Croquet

Alison Jones champions the All England Handicap competition

One of my favourite competitions in the croquet calendar is the All-England AC Handicap Competition.

As a member of Nailsea CC in 2015, I played in the club qualifying event for the AC All-England.

Being a complete bandit at the time, I managed to utilise those wonderful little bisques and secure myself a place in the area final at Camerton & Peasedown CC. A fellow club member and most importantly a great friend of mine Brian McCausland also played in the Area Final with me.

I was reminded of my 2015 All-England experience last year when I had the privilege to manage the All-England Area Final at Surbiton CC, three years after my first knowledge of this prestigious event.

I also played, and I am pleased to report it was undoubtedly one of my most fun croquet experiences, just like in 2015. It is this experience that inspires me to promote the event to all croquet players out there who are looking for a competition which really is for players who, well, just love croquet.

When I say 'croquet', I'm not talking about perfect break play, three-inch precision hoop approaches or peeling turns – I am talking about the wonderful croquet that we have all played at some point in our time. This competition is for making new friends, learning to be competitive, but with allowances to be beautifully 'scrappy'.

Brian and I will both admit that the All-England brought out some of the most scrappy and possibly nail-biting (for all the wrong reasons) play we had ever shown, but equally, even playing against each other, we didn't half fight to the finish and enjoy every minute.

The final game of that 2015 Area Final was in fact between Brian and me. If I were to win I would secure a place in the All England National Final, if he were to win... nothing, for either of us.

We scrapped, we battled and we almost cried. He won! But I draw your attention to our selfie taken at the end of this day.

For the love of croquet, please find your nearest club competition and strive for a place in an All-England HC Area Final.

It's worth it, I promise!

Alison Jones

Glossary:

Bandit = fast improver.

Peeling turns = something fancy top players do to score more points with both balls.



International Performance Development Squad (GC) weekend

report by Lionel Tibble



IPDS (GC) Squad 2018

Standing from left: Paul Gunn, Rich Waterman, Michael Bilton, Roger Goldring, Keith Pound, Dave Widdison, Nick Archer, Pete Dowd and Paul Durkin.

Seated: Colin Britt, Jayne Stevens, Libby Dixon, Richard Bilton, Rachel Gee, Lionel Tibble, Liz Farrow, Steve Leonard, Stephen Custance-Baker.

This year's International Performance Development Squad weekend was again held at Wrest Park over the weekend of the 24 and 25 March, and was deliberately set earlier in the season in order to avoid clashes with the tournaments calendar.

A 99% full complement squad enjoyed the presentations of Sports Psychologist (and croquet player) Rich Waterman, exploring the importance of the mental approach to the game.

He offered insightful guidance on the best approaches to overcome the dilemmas which we all come to face over time, including recognising that we all have a 'chimp brain' which can either be caged, fed or conversed with - so that's the origin of that little voice in my head saying 'where's my banana then?'

Complementing this were sessions on tactical situations with analysis, personal key skills development and practice routines, all rounded-off with a social meal in the Star and Garter pub where the conversation continued along similar lines.

Hat's off to Rachel Gee for putting together all of the course material and making the weekend not just a success but a very enjoyable one too.

Thank you Rachel, and of course Rich as well for sharing his expertise with us.

Lionel Tibble, International Performance Development (GC) Director



Survey Findings ~ What now? by Brian Wilson

Brian Wilson, on behalf of the CA, highlights some Key Points arising from the Five-Year Survey (pages 12-14).

~

First of all, a heartfelt thank you from the CA to Kevin Carter (Profundus Consulting Ltd), who not only designed the Survey, but also collated all the information into a report that highlighted a number of Key Points, and to everyone who took part in the Survey.

Looking ahead

By combining this survey, plus other information, we have identified 5 Key points.

1. The Age Profile of Croquet Players

Bearing in mind the age demographic of many clubs, if a club wishes to grow by 5% this year, then it may well need to set a recruitment target of above 8% to grow membership and to 'replace those members who have left the fold'. Some clubs are creating more opportunities for younger players to take up and enjoy croquet, but more clubs need to get involved - after all, these players are our future.

2. More people are playing Croquet

Croquet is becoming more popular. CA club Membership has increased by 250 p.a. (2012 to 2017). Today there are 211 clubs encompassing 7,500 players (up circa 20% from five years ago).

3. More Coaches, Referees,



Handicappers and Tournament Managers

The survey noted that many of these people could be 'retiring' in the near future.

Thanks to CA/Federation-led Coaching Courses, Croquet Academies, etc; today there are more coaches, referees, handicappers and tournament managers than ever before. But we need to attract more 'younger players' and encourage more players to train as coaches, referees, etc.

These people are critical, not only to the efficient operating of croquet as a sport, but also to stimulate interest in AC and competitive play across both codes.

Photographs: (left) Mike Bilton in action at Surbiton, (centre) Sheffield University players, (right) Competitive play can lead to silverware, or in this case 'goldware' at Roehampton.

4. The Future of AC

The survey indicated a slight upward trend in the numbers of people playing AC. But we all still need to introduce and support continuing initiatives that attract more AC players.

The Survey highlighted the following routes forward:-

- Recruit more new members to play AC.
- Provide simpler/shorter AC entry points.
- Recruit from the pool of GC players.
- As there are circa 4,500 non-AC players, this represents a huge opportunity to introduce GC players to AC.
- One-ball has grown in popularity, as has Short Croquet.

But there are perceived barriers including:

- Lack of opportunity to play AC and lack of coaches, especially those for beginners and improvers, at my club.
- Time constraints (not wanting to play croquet for three hours).

To address this Clubs, Federations and the CA all need to work together to create opportunities for more people to try and to take part in AC in all its forms.

5. Competitive Play

Looking at information from this Survey, the Federations and the CA there are more people playing in inter-club tournaments and matches.

Successful clubs tend to look at starting more internal competitions, encouraging beginners and improvers to take part - not forgetting the vital role of club coaches to 'fine tune' current skills and encourage players to participate in club-based competitive play. There are many examples of players who, once they have 'dipped their toe' into club-based competitions and are supported by coaching, feel more secure to move into regional competitions.

So what is being done now?

Led by the CA Marketing team, we are taking these 5 Key Points further - setting clear objectives and targets, plus identifying who will take the lead and ensuring that each initiative is fully resourced, including finance. So watch out for more details in a future Croquet Gazette.

Brian Wilson, Chairman, Marketing Committee



Farlingaye Juniors progressing fast at Ipswich

Just over three seasons ago, a young Kiwi teacher and croquet international Jarrod Coutts started croquet at Farlingaye High School in Woodbridge, with a group of Year 7 students (aged around 12), **reports Martin French**

After a year or so he returned to New Zealand to take up a permanent teaching post but by then we had started regular sessions at Ipswich CC for these juniors.

Since then, juniors from Farlingaye have won the National Schools Championship and/or the National Juniors Championship every year.

We have continued to coach the juniors in both AC and GC, and have a core of four promising players who now compete



regularly in our club tournaments and have also played for the club in local league matches.

From the beginning, you could see these four had some flare – but all took a couple of seasons to begin to make serious progress down the handicap scales. **All four are now CA Standard Members: Albie Willett, Eden Rogers (both pictured), Henry Gosnell and Ryan Gray.**

Competition between them is fierce, which has driven them all to rapid improvement in the last season, as they all began to find success in our frequent club one-day handicap tournaments.

During the winter, Ipswich runs a programme of about 15 one-day events in both AC and GC – and these four juniors have won a good proportion of them this year and their handicaps have begun to tumble. There is a prize – the Dog Day Trophy – for the best performance across the winter.

After years when three experienced club members dominated the Dog Day Trophy, this year the top four in the leaderboard were these four juniors! Easter Sunday rounded off our winter

programme, with another chilly and gloomy day. We got in nine rounds of GC level play – where the event winner is the person who makes the greatest improvement to their handicap index.

We like this format and use it for maybe a third of our GC days: it gives players the experience of level play, but doesn't mean our two minus players are bound to win (in fact, they find it very difficult to win, as any slip-up costs them 19 points!).

The day finished with Albie the winner on +68pts, with Eden third.

Albie had an impressive day, beating our best player (a -4) on the golden hoop and only losing 5-7 to our other top player (a -3). As a result, Albie's GC handicap is now down to 5.

We have encouraged the juniors to represent the club in EACF Club Champion Days, and also to enter their first CA B-Level and C-Level Series tournaments this season.

In 2019 they will take their GCSEs and, soon after these finish, the 2019 Under 21 GC World Championship is being staged at Nottingham – we hope they will be able to make an impression there too.

Martin French, Ipswich CC

Data Protection ~ a report by Hon. Secretary, Dr. Ian Vincent

Introduction

This is an update to the article in the December issue (Gazette 371), which outlined the impact that the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) might have on clubs, when it comes into force on 25 May this year.

Registration & Data Protection Fee

One of the changes that GDPR makes is that Data Controllers no longer need to register with the Information Commissioner (though, in practice, typical croquet clubs were exempt from doing so).

However draft legislation is before Parliament to introduce a 'data protection fee', to support the Commissioner in the style to which she has become accustomed.

The good news is that it appears that most croquet clubs will also be exempt from this.

Things you should be doing

Even if you are exempt from paying the fee, you are still required to abide by the regulations.

I think the most important things for clubs

to do, if they have not already done them, are to:

- Document what data the club holds, where it is held (many clubs will have data held on their officers' personal computer), where it comes from, who you share it with and the lawful basis for processing it.

- Ensure that it is held securely and backed up, to protect against loss or unauthorised disclosure.

- Provide privacy notices. There is a template on the CA website under <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=clubs/info/gdpr>, which you can tailor to produce a formal notice for publication on your website (or elsewhere) and refer to on membership application forms and club handbooks.

- Obtain freely given, informed and positive consent if you use or publish members' data for purposes that are not necessary for running the club.

Further Information

The Information Commissioner's website has a wealth of information at <https://ico.org.uk>.

The Sport and Recreation Alliance has

been commissioned to provide advice to the sector, but I suspect that this is still being developed.

The Sport England 'Club Matters' website (see the separate article by Dave Gunn on page 22) is also advertising a podcast on this topic.

Further information, and a copy of the article mentioned in the introduction, can be found on the CA website under the link given above.

Conclusion

Like Y2K, there has been a lot of talk and publicity about this, and not a little FUD (Fear, Uncertainty and Doubt).

Unlike Y2K, GDPR will have a more lasting impact, but the message I've been getting is that small organisations have little to fear, providing they take sensible, proportionate steps to comply and keep their members sweet.

The Information Commissioner's Office is only likely to come down heavily on large organisations, or those who wilfully continue to breach the regulations after a complaint.



John Maguire & Diana Zatouroff (above) and some of the group below played in Phyllis Court's trial C-Level last year. In the lower photo Margaret Turner and Keith Bishop played in similar event at Edgbaston (photos by Chris Roberts, Frances Colman and Richard Thompson)



New Standard Members

A new Series of tournaments to suit many of you

Do you play Golf Croquet with a handicap of 7 or more? Well, here is a Series of Tournaments just for you! Launched this season, precisely with you in mind, there are 20 tournaments all around the country and there is bound to be one near you.

The C-Levels are all tournaments in their own rights - so you can enter just one or many, it's up to you - but they also contribute to a National Series for which there is a final and brand new trophy.

Tournament winners qualify for the National final 'as of right' (although participation is of course entirely optional) and those who finish in positions 2, 3 & 4 all accumulate points, which may also be enough to qualify for the final.

Someone is going to be the first ever National C-Level Champion in September and IT COULD BE YOU!

If you are unfamiliar with the entry process (which is easy when you know how), please contact the C-Level Series Director who will happily help you along.

Please, please - do join in - it's all for you!
Chris Roberts, C-Level Series Director
07973 787710, info@kickphoto.co.uk

C-Level Series (handicaps 7+)	
12 April	Surbiton
06 May	Sussex County
11 May	Ryde
16 May	Phyllis Court
23 May	Wrest Park
06 June	Guildford & Godalming
12 June	Camerton & Peasedown
14 June	Roehampton
16 June	Ashby
01 July	Hunstanton
03 July	Hurlingham
07 July	Hamptworth
14 July	Middlesbrough
18 July	Nottingham
22 July	Colchester
25 July	Bury
09 August	Northampton
10 August	Southport
26 August	Budleigh Salterton
03 Sep.	Edgbaston
22-23 Sep.	FINAL (Nottingham)

This New Series is particularly aimed at players who have not entered a tournament before - Please join in - A very warm welcome awaits you!



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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.



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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 September 2018. E&OE. **ABTA** Travel with confidence

Coach of the Year Roger Mills

The Coaching Committee are delighted to announce that the Coach of the Year 2017 goes to Roger Mills. The Citation received from the General Committee of Budleigh Salterton CC tells of an awful lot of work by a very dedicated and helpful coach.



Roger Mills is nominated for his coaching at all levels in the Club and his innovative courses with the South-West Croquet Academy (SWCA).

His humorous, practical approach with temporary members gained the club 25 new members this year.

His 'conversion course' for GC players – with initial one-to-one sessions, then relaxed group sessions using catch phrases, images, and the 'Budleigh Dance' to help demystify the game - persuaded 12 members to try AC. Roger is always willing to help players, even at a roll-up when he has come to play and ends up coaching!

In 2016, Roger was one of a small group who worked many hours to set up the SWCA, and he was assistant coach on many courses. In 2017, he delivered with great success an innovative course – 'Mastering the four-ball-break'.

It is a course of elegant simplicity; avoiding a myriad of rules, the methodology of the 'five mindset points' (Place, Plan, Pioneers, Play Easy, and Prevention) is easily remembered and takes players a long way before a more advanced course is needed.

His instruction is laced with humour, frequently self-deprecating and, using aids such as a washing line, coloured 'ball position mats' and hula hoops, is inspirational. The course, with clear, concise notes, illustrated with simple diagrams to support the 'simple' idea of the 5Ps, took hundreds of hours to develop.

Roger's nature is always to satisfy his personal, demanding mantra of 'how can I do that better?'

After coaching, at whatever level, his mind is working on developing coaching skills to improve delivery, to increase attendees' understanding and continue to make croquet fun!

Roger coaches at all levels to enthuse others in the game he so clearly enjoys.

Lifetime Coaching Award - Dr. Ian Plummer

The Coaching Committee are delighted to announce the Lifetime Coaching award for 2017 goes to Dr Ian Plummer.

The citation received from Mark van Loon of Oxford University ACC, details Ian's huge contribution to croquet over many years:



~
 Ian Plummer has never tired from coaching Oxford players since the 80s, when he did his D.Phil at Oxford.

Many of his students, myself included, had never played croquet before and their later successes in croquet were facilitated for a large part by the training they received from Ian as students.

Students he has coached have gone on to great heights within croquet, with at least a dozen of his 'alumni' playing in the AC World Championships at some point.

Former protégées of his in the AC Worlds this year include Jenny Clarke, Samir Patel, Gabrielle Higgins and Rob Wilkinson.

His contributions stretch beyond Oxford: besides being a highly regarded Championship and Examining Referee, who has officiated matches in the World Championships, he has also disseminated a very comprehensive collection of coaching material to a wider audience through his website, www.oxfordcroquet.com.

Another major service he has performed is in getting 'Wylie' publicly available online

He has developed a truly innovative and enthusiastic approach to coaching, which we believe should be applauded and recognised.

Alison Maddaford,
Chairman, Budleigh Salterton CC

~
 The Coaching Committee warmly congratulates Roger on all the work he has carried out throughout 2017 and feel he has really made a difference – thanks very much Roger.

~
 Upon learning of his award, Roger writes: *"I am absolutely delighted to receive this award from the CA. I have to acknowledge the help and encouragement I have had along the way from my club members, many coaches, and top player/coaches such as Cliff Jones, Dave Kibble, Sarah Hayes and Peter Moore."*

Roger

for a wider audience to use.

The material on his website stretches beyond coaching guides, covering technical croquet questions as well.

A particular effort he is spearheading within our club is trying to understand the effects of 'pull' properly (e.g. do balls go off at different angles immediately or do they curve inwards?), where we have

even tried to answer this using drone footage to track balls after a croquet stroke.

In summary: Ian has coached generations of Oxford students to very high standards, and has made many of his personal coaching materials publicly and freely available on his website.

Mark van Loon, Oxford University ACC

~
 The Coaching Committee warmly congratulates Ian on his many achievements and thanks him for his enormous contribution over the years.

This award goes some way to recognise his continuing hard work.

~
 And finally, a few words from Ian Plummer himself:-

"Coaching is easy when you are given the best material to work with. I have had the luxury of coaching fit young people with well-tuned minds and seemingly huge amounts of free time. This recognition by my peers is most touching."

Ian

Recent Coaching Appointments

AC Graded Coaches Grade 1:

Ivan Segal	Rottingdean
Ian Anderson	Woking

GC Graded Coach Grade 1:

Art Wardle	Bransgore
------------	-----------

Club Coaches

Stewart Newman	Sapcote
Fiona Crompton	York
Deborah James	Beverley
Richard Butle	Ben Rhydding
Ian Anderson	Woking
David Hudson	York
David Arrowsmith	Torksey

Early Season Coaching Reminders ~ for beginners (and the rest of us!)

You might have started playing in the last year or two, or be a complete beginner, and with the new season upon us, be full of enthusiasm and ambition. I have detailed below two areas where you are able to help yourself or, better still, work with a friend for an hour or so now and then.

Getting into the swing

This is exactly what you need to do and gaining a little confidence over the next few weeks will reap benefits.

Try not to wait until after your first match has been played as this could well be too late; strike while the mallet is hot and simply get out there and enjoy some Spring Sunshine Practice. In the words of The Bamford – "Practice Makes Permanent".

Hitting a Target Ball

Firstly – don't practice missing – we are all quite capable of doing that thank-you!

When working on your routines don't have the balls too far apart – start at one yard and progress over time.

It really helps if you are actually facing the intended direction, so please make sure your feet are parallel with your mallet; this is where a friend looking-on is handy because they are able to see what you chose to ignore.

It does not matter if your feet are quite far apart or close together but they do need to be equidistant to your mallet and in the same line.

How might you make sure of this?

Stalk the ball

Walk into the desired shot position from at least five yards away using your mallet in front of you so that when you reach the object ball your feet should be in a pretty good place already. Remember your feet are your aiming device, so make any small adjustments once in position.

Nearly everyone has a lazy foot –

especially when starting off – so make sure to look at your feet before taking the shot and correct the lazy side so both feet are parallel.

Do not hunch over the ball

Try to stand with your toes level with the back of your mallet at worst.

Do you find that when attempting a shot at a target ball that your striker's ball jumps into the air?

This is because you are standing too near and hitting the ball towards the top and this is causing it to jump. Watch out for this and make sure to stand further back next time...if there is a next time!

Keep your head down

Next important thing is to watch your mallet hit the ball in front of you and stay looking down....you are unable to change the direction you have chosen so don't raise your head to see what is going on.

Lifting the top of your frame changes the direction of your mallet and will generally result in a marvellous miss!

Keep looking at the place where the ball was and follow through with your mallet.

Follow through

The follow-through with head down will make a tremendous difference.....and I don't mean just frightening kneecaps in the height of your follow through.....imagine your opponent in front of you and really make sure to reach at least chest height.

Exaggerate in practice so when a bit nervy or self-conscious in a real match you will still achieve some sort of decent shot.

Hoop Running

So, if you are able to hit a target ball at a yard then you should be able to run a hoop...right? Well not necessarily.

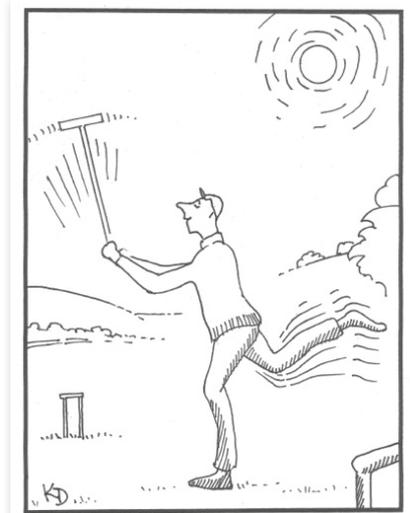
You might miss the centre of your target ball by quite a distance yet still make a contact; but miss the centre of the hoop by even a smallish amount and you will not run it.

The best advice ever given to me was by Dave Kibble who once suggested I 'try aiming at the gap'!

Once I had resisted the urge to shoot my ball at him I did understand his friendly comment.

Basically if you are near or far from a hoop you must always follow your set routine and definitely aim at the gap....don't think hoops from very near are easier.

Do everything as for a shot at a target ball (perhaps even picture a ball sitting in the centre of the hoop), stalk the ball and check



Freddie felt - 'At last' he had mastered his follow through

your feet are in a good line and parallel.

Again ensure you are standing with toes behind the mallet; head down and follow through....

Top spin

Being even a little further away than you normally are, so toes at least one inch further back from the mallet than usual will ensure you impart top spin to your ball when you follow through and this spin will help the hoop run and often save your bacon!

Standing over the ball and angling your mallet downwards does not impart top spin but actually causes ball to jump, even slightly, this will remove a lot of energy and probably result in your ball plonking itself into the hoop when landing and not running through – so a scoring opportunity is missed.

Imagine every stroke is a hoop scoring attempt

In conclusion, there are huge similarities here, which apply to both AC and GC.

Players will spend considerably more time over a hoop run than they ever do when attempting to hit another ball.....why not try treating every stroke as if it were a hoop running attempt?

Once you start hitting those targets more or less centre ball.... who knows what will follow!!

More next time –

If you have any questions, please contact me at cacommchair@googlemail.com.

Sarah Hayes,
Chairman, Coaching Committee

Thank you to all our coaches

Congratulations to all of the people named left – some are new coaches and some are more long standing where a breakdown in procedure has resulted in late delivery of awards.

My apologies to those concerned and thanks to all for the valuable work they do.

Sarah Hayes,
Chairman, Coaching Committee

Peter Gunn 1942 – 2018

Peter Gunn joined Merton Croquet Club in the early nineties, having played previously for various teams. He was welcomed for his knowledge and skills, was soon made club captain, and became well-known throughout the South-East for his play in both AC and GC leagues.

Over the next few years he took on the roles of club secretary, coach and later chairman. He shared his skills and love of the game with all new members, and was valued by all for his kindness, his warmth and his sense of humour and fun.

Peter was an outstanding organiser and administered all club tournaments, leagues and match fixtures. He enthusiastically encouraged participation in the All-England Handicap competitions, and ensured that Merton was well represented in regional and national finals.

Last year he was nominated for a CA Diploma, which he was very pleased to receive, but he was almost more pleased to win the club AC Championship in September, whilst also winning the trophy for the highest break.

Peter was a strong supporter of the National Charity One-Ball competition, raising significant sums for the charities that are supported each year, and this always meant that Merton sent several representatives to the final.

This year, at Peter's suggestion, the competition is being run in aid of the Down's Syndrome Association, a charity very close to his heart, and it will be an occasion to remember an outstanding champion for the game of croquet.

Merton Croquet Club

Bill Sidebottom joined Kenilworth Croquet Club not long after it was founded in 1989 and was one of the dedicated few who excavated a large bank to form the club's second lawn.

As the club developed he became its first chairman and held the post until 2008.

Bill also held positions in the West Midlands Federation and served on the Croquet Association Council from 1995 to 2001.

He chaired the Development Committee from 1998 to 2001 and was chairman of the Equipment Committee 1997-98.

At his peak, Bill was a 'scratch' handicap player, a regular in the Warwickshire team at the Inter-Counties and in the Eastern

Don Martin 1935 – 2017

Don Martin, who passed away just before Christmas, was a regular player at Nottingham CC until ill health curtailed his playing commitments.

He served on the club's committee for three years and was for many years the Equipment Officer for the East Midlands Federation.

A farmer and jack of all trades, Don learnt his croquet at the Southwell club before establishing himself at Nottingham where he was an ever able volunteer woodworker and builder.

He often helped with general maintenance, with special interest in replacing and erecting the wooden huts adjacent to the lawns.

He played his croquet with the most casual-looking style but this hid an underlying steely talent, as many of his opponents found to their cost, including when he played in federation leagues and for Nottingham in the national Secretary Shield and Longman Cup competitions.

In his early years at Nottingham, he won the Robin Hood Handicap and his class event during the club's August Week.

Don was a family man, a past Scout Leader and had a passion for history and especially battles and wars. He also had a love of steam trains and once fulfilled a dream by getting on the footplate of the locomotive Clun Castle.

He was a true gentleman and a lovely man; as well as being a big loss to his family, he will be sadly missed on the Nottingham scene.

Bob Thompson

Bill Sidebottom 1929 – 2018

Championships.

He had also been a member at Edgbaston and Bowdon.

Bill favoured Association Croquet and was a generous coach to all. He was also a referee and officiated at the GC World Championships at Leamington in 1998 and at the AC Worlds in Cheltenham 2005.

He enjoyed a career as an innovative engineer but had many passions including cooking, gardening but particularly running of any sort, from fell running to ultra-marathons.

Carol Lewis 1943 – 2018

Carol Lewis was a very patient lady and it showed in the way she played croquet and coached. On the lawns she was a competitive player with a quiet determination to win and playing against her was enjoyable as she always brought a fair and honest attitude to the game.

No matter what the result was she was gracious both in victory and defeat.

Her experience and knowledge of the game's tactics meant that to watch a match with her was enlightening and it helped many players to improve.

Carol joined Southport & Birkdale CC in 1981 and became a member of its committee in 1986. In the following years she helped the club to prosper serving as Treasurer, Trustee, CA Coach and Club Handicapper, all whilst becoming one of the leading female players in the country.

Her husband Brian joined the club in 1985 and together they coached the beginners and improvers for many years and were each awarded a CA Diploma for their services to croquet in 2010.

Carol was an All-England finalist at Colchester, a finalist in the Men's and Women's Mixed Doubles at Cheltenham and she twice played on the CA team against the Irish CA. Well known at the croquet weeks at Budleigh Salterton, Cheltenham, Southwick and Parkstone, Carol captained the SBCC team that won the Longman Cup, its teams in the Federation leagues and was also successful in the club's internal competitions. She was a true stalwart of SBCC and will be missed by all members and many others in the croquet world.

John Haslam

Bill is at peace now but will be long remembered by his grateful friends at Kenilworth CC.

Adrian Morris

Derek Trotman

Late News - As the Gazette went to press the sad news was learnt that Derek Trotman had died on 4 April.

Derek served on the CA Council from 1992 to 2008 and in the last year of his service he was presented with a CA Council Medal, its most prestigious award.

A full obituary will be published in next issue of the Croquet Gazette.

The Croquet Academies

If you are thinking of signing up for a coaching course this season, the time to act is now. Many of the courses at the three Croquet Academies (Budleigh, Southwick and York) are already full, but there are some spaces. For the latest position see the Academy websites:

www.southwestcroquetacademy.co.uk
(Budleigh Salterton)

www.thecroquetacademy.com
(Southwick, near Brighton)

www.northerncroquetacademy.org
(York)

The Northern Academy is offering an extra course, not in the Fixtures Book, aimed at GC players interested in trying AC. The course is called 'GC to AC in One Day' and it will run on Friday 27 April at York. It builds on players' GC skills and covers croquet shots, building a break and other distinctive aspects of the AC game, including a supported game and plenty of opportunity for individual help and guidance.

Sarah Hayes, Chairman Coaching Cttee.



Probably the world's first Virtual One-Ball Croquet Tournament took place at Woking LRCC on 29 March to celebrate the end of their winter season of virtual croquet, that had been during winter.

The games were played on two computers each linked to a large screen allowing two games to be played simultaneously. The two players sit in front of a screen each with a mouse and play in the same way as the real game, attempting to hit in and get breaks going or just playing for position in front of the next hoop.

This is a good format for experiencing Virtual Croquet because it is very interactive without long sit-outs while the other player makes a long break, and it allows players the chance to practice croquet strokes.

The programme's variable shooting accuracy was set to 'low' to improve the interaction. The maximum break achieved (remembering that this was one-ball

Virtual Croquet

croquet) was three hoops and the standard seemed to be equivalent to that of B

class players.

Five players competed in a block each playing four games giving a total of 16 games. Their 'real world' handicaps varied from 12 to -1 but, due to the level playing field offered by Virtual Croquet, the games were played level and there was no advantage to the lower handicap players as proved by the winner and runner-up being middle-ranking. Great fun was had by all and it was felt that it was a fitting finale to the end of the season.

The virtual game offers the opportunity to higher handicap players to practise methods of play which they would not normally use out on court and that can only be good experience.

Incidentally, who said you couldn't play croquet on a table tennis table?!

Andrew Dutton

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The Ravages of Nature

On 17 January my wife woke me and said "I don't know whether I should tell you what has happened".

I looked out of the bedroom window and saw that the roof of the club house that I and others had built and nurtured was smashed up in next door's garden. This catastrophe was the result of freak winds overnight that one of my neighbours measured at around 100 mph. Fortunately the insurers paid out within 10 days and a replacement has been installed, complete with storm braces.

This spring has been very unkind to us and croquet lawns around the country know it. But as croquet players we can be very demanding and if the season starts at the beginning of April we expect nature to fall in line.

As groundsmen we have to satisfy a demanding membership whilst allowing nature to provide the superb surface that we all want. We do this by feeding, mowing and (if possible) aerating the lawn.

But nature can work against us and produce diseases such as **Fusarium**, that kill patches of grass, or red thread which is less harmful but spoils the look of our well-tended lawns.

Fusarium is a fungal disease that enters the plant through weaknesses in the leaf and then uses the plant as nutrition thus killing it. The highest risk times are the cold, damp mornings in November and April. There are ways of reducing the risk and methods of treatment but it is important to act quickly before it spreads across your lawn. So it is worth keeping a close eye on your grass especially at these high risk times.

Another problem is **Dry Patch**.

This is thoroughly described on my website and easy to cure but take action early before it ruins your lawn.

Duncan Hector (contact details; see my advert, left)



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Membership (continued)

continued from page 11 ... to have this facility available in the next few months

Also coming soon, but not available as yet, is the ability for your club secretary or yourself to be able to modify your details online.

There are some options you can select (such as to 'go paperless'), but the majority of your details can only be modified at this point either through the CA office, or through a new data upload from your club.

Again, we expect self-maintenance of your details to be available soon.

Please also note that the temporary concession that operated last year, which allowed club members who were not CA members to enter CA tournaments, is being withdrawn. This means you must either become a Standard member or hold another membership category of the CA if you want to enter CA listed tournaments in the future. Those who signed up to do so last year will have their access to the website removed if they have not become Standard members since.

This may have already happened by the time this article is published, but if not it will be very soon. Existing tournament entries will not be affected.

Jeff Dawson,
Chairman of the Membership Changes implementation Group

Cambridge University ACC alumni dinner



On 13 January, Cambridge University Association Croquet Club hosted its inaugural alumni dinner, held at St Catharine's college, Cambridge.

The event brought together players at various points in their croquet careers and it was lovely to hear the stories of some excellent players.

Special thanks go to Stephen Mulliner, our guest speaker for the evening, for a wonderful speech about his experiences in croquet.

I would also like to thank those in the CUACC committee that helped organize the evening and also everyone who attended the dinner

and helped make it such a successful event. If you missed out on the dinner but would like to be invited to future events held by CUACC, please get in touch with CUACC captain, Craig Winfield, at cpw42@cam.ac.uk.

Craig Winfield, CUACC Captain 2018

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Sapcote CC

~ back from the brink ~

This is a lovely tale of coaching a club that was looking at closing down but has recently seen a revival of fortunes.

The Chairman of Sapcote Croquet Club, Leicestershire, is Stewart Newman (pictured below), and he tells how his club was turned around.

~

Approximately four years ago I became interested in forming a croquet group within the local U3A and contacted clubs within the local area.

Although the Sapcote Club was founded in 1988, at the time of my enquiry their membership had dwindled to four players and they had decided that they would only be able to play one more season. I quickly contacted U3A members whom I thought might be interested and we got 18 people playing that first season. Most of the players became members of the Sapcote CC and this year we are hoping to increase our membership to 20.

Three of the original four players are still playing and we have formed a really friendly and social club.

Although initially I learnt how to play GC, I soon became fascinated by AC and have read whatever books are still available on the subject. Pat Wright is our GC Coach but I wanted to take the Club Coach course on AC, which I did last May in Nottingham.

The course was run by Roger Staples, who I thought was excellent as he made it easy to participate and feel fully relaxed. I am now working to become a Grade 1 AC Coach and have enrolled on three courses at later this year.

I also joined the Leicester CC last year and have received some excellent coaching from two of their AC coaches.

It is an uphill battle to get our members interested in AC, as there is a misconception that it's boring!

However, I started short croquet sessions indoors during the winter

months and we currently have ten members who are thoroughly enjoying the experience.

I am hoping that at least some of this group will play AC as well as GC this season.

**Stewart Newman,
Chairman of Sapcote CC
(Leicestershire)**



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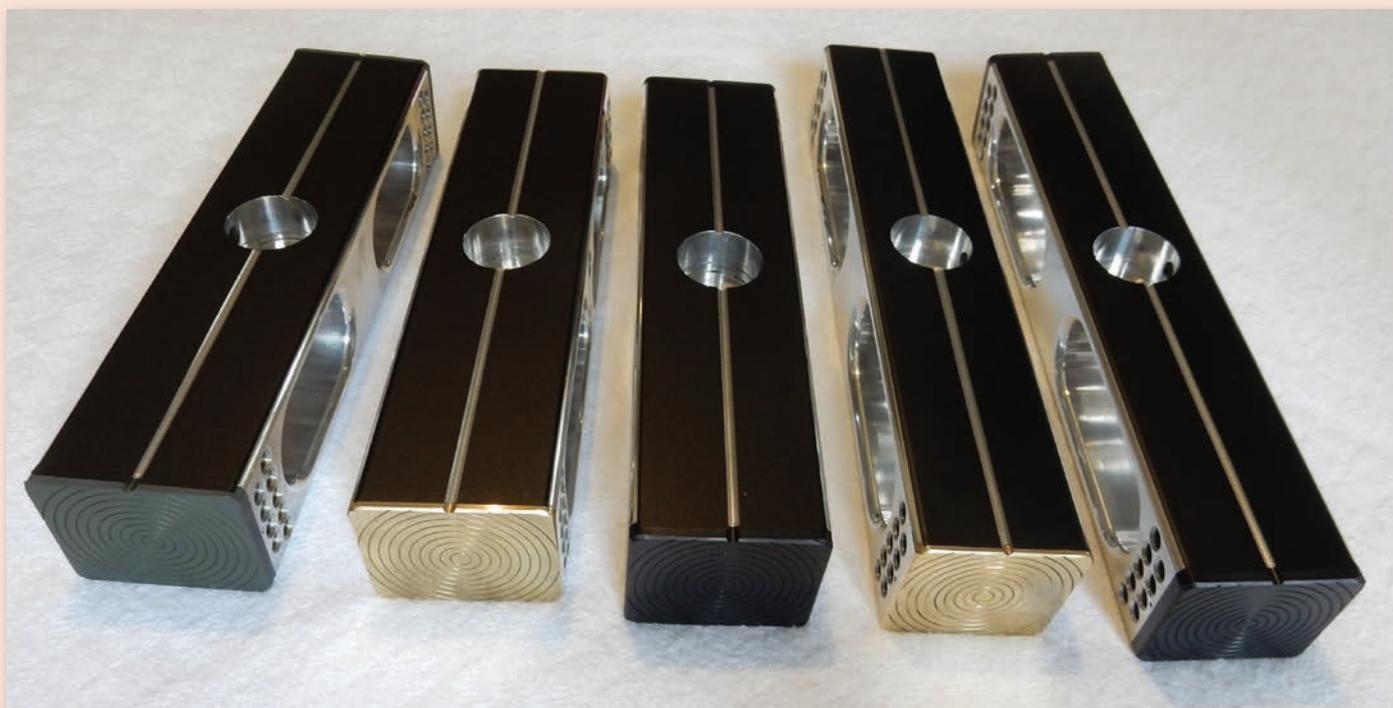
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