

CROQUET

Gazette

Roll of Honour.

- ABBOTT, CAPT. D. W. S. E.—York and Lancaster Regiment.—Killed in action September 26th, 1915.
- ASHMORE, LIEUT. G.—Western Army Troops' Signal Co., R.E. Drowned on active service, April, 1917.
- BARNARD-SMITH, LIEUT. W. W. B.—R.F.A. Killed in action, October 21st, 1916.
- BARRETT, MISS S. V., V.A.D.—Drowned in the "Leinster" Steamship Disaster, October 10th, 1918.
- BIDDULPH, LIEUT. R. ASSHETON.—Queen's Bays (2nd Dragoon Guards), B.E.F. Died in Hospital, Nov. 19th, 1916, from heart failure after rheumatic fever.
- BRANDON, CAPT. A. C.—Hampshire Regiment. Killed in action, Jan. 21st, 1916.
- BROWNE, LIEUT. H. MAXWELL.—Essex Regiment. Killed in action, March 26th, 1917.
- BROWNING, CAPT. F. H.—Killed in action, August, 1914.
- CHUBB, CAPT. G.—Duke of Cambridge's Own (Middlesex) Regiment. Killed in action.
- CUNDALL, CAPT. C., M.C.—Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. Killed in action, November 30th, 1917.
- FOWLER, LIEUT. D. C. M.—Killed in action, September 25th, 1915.
- HASSARD, LIEUT. E. J., M.C.—R.F.A. Died of pneumonia, November 7th, 1918.
- HUBBARD, LIEUT. W. D.—Alexandra Princess of Wales's Own Yorkshire Regiment. Killed in action, July, 1916.
- JONES, LT.-COL. F. A., C.M.G., D.S.O. (Late Welsh Regiment) Commanding the South African Infantry. Killed in action, July 11th, 1916.
- MOORE, CAPT. E. H., M.C.—York and Lancaster Regiment. Died of wounds, April 25th, 1917.
- PREESTON, SECOND LIEUT. P. S., —R.F.A. Killed in action, March 28th, 1918.
- PUCKLE, LT.-COL. JOHN, D.S.O.—Army Service Corps. Drowned on April 15th, 1917, on active service.
- WOODHOUSE, LIEUT. GORDON.—R.F.A. B.E.F. Killed in action, October, 1915.
- WOODHOUSE, J. A. H.—Killed in action, February 15th, 1915.



From our files

researched by Frances Colman

10 years ago - 2008



Rewarding Achievement –

(Letter). I read with interest the letter from Tony Blackhouse about the lack of a badge for an Association Referee.

Croquet is the only sport I know that does not always reward the successful achievement of an award. It is an achievement to have passed the Association referee's examination, and I would like to have a badge noting my success.

It does make it easier for players to see when there is a referee playing in a tournament, and for newer players to ask about some aspect of the laws that they are unsure of. – *Frances Low.*

~

Bishop Monkton CC born –

A small village in rural North Yorkshire has created a stir by forming its own croquet club. Bishop Monkton CC has already attracted 22 founder members, and rents a corner of the village playing fields where it has created two full-size lawns and a practice area. It was opened officially on May 31 by England ladies open champion Sam Curry from the nearby Ripon Sap Hotel CC, who cut a red ribbon and, with her partner hit of the fist balls.

~

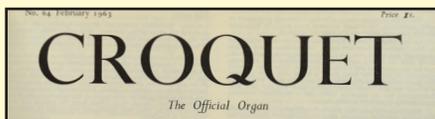
Croquet fun in Corfu –

... (after a rough landing) The pilot apologised for the fright, giving the weather and the shortness of the runway as an explanation (he didn't know about the length of the runway before he landed?), reports Michael Hague.

... blue skies with comfortable temperatures of around 22 degrees, the second Greek Open tournament had a (more) leisurely feel... Kevin Carter managed the croquet with diplomacy, flexibility and calm efficiency, allowing players to mix in a few hours of sunbathing on the beautiful beaches of the splendid Kontokali Bay Hotel.

At the two-lawn (three by 2009) croquet club, John Cosier and Rupert Webb swept the board for the main events, winner and runner-up respectively of the singles, and jointly the doubles with Graham Roberts and Diana Stevens in second place. The GC prize was won by Ivor Nunn.

50 years ago - 1968



Outstanding subscriptions –

... there are at least 100 subscriptions outstanding, due 1st January – which is a disgraceful state of affairs and I remind all Associates of Rule XXIV, "if he plays in a Calendar Fixture he shall be liable for Tribute." – V.C. Gasson, Secretary

~

The Happy Warrior –

There is something panther-like about him. Lean, swift, and with a long shot unbettered in a period of brilliant marksmanship, Nigel Aspinall has the air of a conqueror, even when croquet does not prove to be his lot.

Today he is at, or very near, the top, as he well deserves to be, and will remain there as long as he cares to play. ... (from 'Notes by Rover')

~

President's Cup –

That croquet is now a Young Man's game has ceased to be a paradox and become a truism which this year's Eight goes only to confirm.

One wonders whether there was ever an entry in the event in which there was only a single player of 60 and another in his forties, with at least three, one believes, in their twenties.

It may be a surprise to some of our readers to learn that this leaning towards youth in our Masters Tournament represents a revision to a dozen years before World War 1, when Lilia Gower won the "Champion Cup" in 1904 she was not long out of her teens.

... In the final table the (1968) competitors were grouped into three sections: Solomon (11), Aspinall (10) and Ormerod (10) at the top, ... Neal and Bray were tied in the middle with seven game each ... Perry (5), Simon (4) and Strachan (3). ...

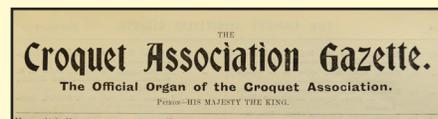
~

Surrey Cup –

Dr. Martin Murray was the outstanding player.

He not only won but also played with great enterprise and never missed a chance to go for a triple peel – sometimes successfully.

100 years ago - 1918



Death of Miss S. V. Barrett, V.A.D.

Drowned in the "Leinster" steamship disaster

It is with great regret that we have to announce the death of Miss S. V. Barrett, V.A.D., niece of Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Wilson, Carrickmines House, Co. Dublin, who lost her life on October 10th in the sinking of the R.M.S. Leinster.

Miss Barrett was returning to duty in France, where she had been working for the past two and a half years, and the last month of her life on duty was spent in nursing wounded German prisoners. She was mentioned in despatches in January, 1918.

Sir John Lumsden, K.B.E., M.D., Commissioner St. John Ambulance Brigade, in referring to Miss Barrett's work, wrote as follows: -

"Her Brigade and war record has been an exceptional one – a record of good work gallantly and efficiently performed with credit to herself, and one of which the entire Brigade may well be proud. Her final sacrifice is one in keeping with her previous service. Her name will be inscribed on our Roll of Honour".

Miss Barrett was buried with military honours.

~

2018 Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

One of the members of Camerton and Peasedown CC, Christina Sandford, had a double-take when she read the August issue (Gazette 374).

In the 100 years ago column of 'From our Files', there was the obituary for her Grandfather, Commander C.W.C. Strickland.

He was the first husband of her grandmother, who subsequently married Ben Apps, and he made the Apps Heley Award in her honour.

How things go full circle!

Brian Wilson, Camerton & Peasedown CC

CA Archivist Chris Williams added that Mrs Apps won the President's Cup in 1936, and was one of the very few women to have done so.

She was also later Secretary of the CA.

Front cover: The Croquet playing fallen of the Great War remembered. The 'Roll of Honour' cutting is from The Croquet Gazette of 1918.
This page: In Corfu; a worried looking Editor (photo by Esther Jones) and a relaxed Chairman 'letting his hair down' as his term of office nears its end (photo by Frances Colman).

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Editorial

Marking the centenary of the end of the Great War, the cover image of this Gazette issue lists those croquet players who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country.

Please take a short while to read each name in turn and honour each player with the truth that:

'We will remember them'

~

The lead article in this issue is John Harris' centre pages look back at the croquet that took place during the years of the conflict and in particular the important part our game played in the rehabilitation of the injured servicemen.

It was the croquet enthusiasts of the day who delivered the game to the VAD hospitals and elsewhere, generously donating funds, equipment and their expertise to those in need of recreation as part of their recovery. These enthusiasts are our forefathers, those who loved croquet every bit as much as we do today.

Moving forward 100 years, the rest of this Gazette is jam packed with croquet news and in particular competition and tournament reports from around the

country.

Well done to all those of you who have a new addition to your mantelpiece or trophy cabinet.

Available space to cover all events continues to be my biggest headache and I apologise to all contributors whose reports have not made it onto these pages or whose words have suffered savage edits.

In covering only players' achievements since the previous issue, those who continually win throughout the season can miss out on the acclaim that is surely due.

David Maugham has won the vast majority of top class AC events in 2018, doubtless smashing any previous record.

The next issue will have more space available to celebrate this exceptional player and his record-breaking year.



Chris Roberts

Chris Roberts Editor

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Chairman's Column

By the time you read this, my final Chairman's Column, I will already have handed over to my successor, John Bowcott (subject to his election at Council's October meeting).

Valedictory musings of past chairmen have had a number of reflections in common: surprise at how quickly their two years in office have flown by; how they have enjoyed the experience; gratitude and thanks to Council colleagues, staff and club members for their support; and so forth.

I certainly echo these sentiments and I would like to add particular appreciation and thanks to our Honorary Secretary, Dr Ian Vincent, for his steady hand on the tiller.

Our Association is most fortunate to enjoy the services of such a stalwart.

~

However, I feel bound to mention some disappointment and frustration.

It is over five years since the then chairman, Jeff Dawson, advocated the need for changes to our organisational

and membership structures; for closer integration with the federations; and the enfranchisement of all croquet playing members of clubs.

I enthusiastically supported these initiatives since they would provide an avenue to a more inclusive Association.

But now that we have enabled most of the membership changes, I am disappointed and dismayed to find that so many croquet players have yet to take advantage of Standard membership.

In my last column I reported that at the end of June around one third of clubs had not submitted their membership data to the CA office. There has been very little improvement since then.

The issue of our low level of reported membership is compounded by some club returns having records from only a small proportion of their members.

Of course, these nonparticipants are unlikely to read exhortations in this column, so I encourage you to persuade your club-mates to join up.

~

Governance change has been frustrating.

When I took the chair I had hoped that during my term of office we would reach

agreement on much-needed changes to our governance.

Although we have implemented some worthwhile constitutional change, agreement on the structure and composition of a new governing body has been contentious and I have been abashed by Council's lengthy indecisive debates on the issue.

Nevertheless, by the time this column goes to print I very much hope that the proposal for a much-reduced Council will be well received by this month's AGM and subsequently ratified at the following Council meeting. This would enable Council to produce motions for the necessary constitutional changes to be voted on by the enlarged membership at a Special General Meeting early next year.

So, there is light at the end of this long tunnel.



Brian Shorney

2019 Subscription Rates

The subscription rates for 2019, in pounds sterling, will be:

Individual members

Standard membership will be free for members of CA member clubs, provided that the club supplies details of its members.

Premium Member	Direct Debit	Other
First year	14.50	N/A
Second year	28.50	N/A
Full rate	38	43.50
Paperless discounted rate	31	36.50

Overseas Member including EU

Full rate	43	48.50
Paperless discounted rate	36	41.50

Young Person (formerly Student) Member

Full rate	15	15
Paperless discounted rate	8	8

Supporter Member

Full rate	18	23.50
Paperless discounted rate	11	16.50

(Payments by other than direct debit are possible in the Premium, Overseas, Student and Supporter categories only. Members outside the UK will need a UK bank account to take advantage of the direct debit rates.)

Member clubs

Standard (clubs with 2+ lawns) per capita	12.95
Standard (Smaller clubs) per capita	8.95
Each Junior or student member of a club per capita	5.00

(The per capita rate applies to every playing member of a club except those who have given notice that another club is their Primary Club. The minimum club subscription remains at a total of 60. For newly-registered clubs in their 1st, 2nd or 3rd year the subscription is capped at a total of 60, 100 and 150 respectively.)

Universities and schools 30

Affiliate clubs

UK 45
Overseas 45

Club subscriptions have been increased by £1.00 per capita for larger clubs, as permitted by the Special General Meeting resolution in March 2015, plus 25 pence to account for inflation.

Individual subscriptions are unchanged.

Peter Death, Hon. Treasurer

E-mail scam warning to clubs

Two of the CA's Member Clubs have reported that they were the subject of an attempted fraud, in which an e-mail, purporting to come from the club's Chairman, was sent to their Treasurer asking them to make a payment to a bank account.

The attempts, though very plausible, were spotted, but it was suggested that other clubs and individuals should be warned.

Reports of such attacks are common, affecting both commercial and voluntary organisations as well as individuals. The advice to prevent them is always to check, by phone or text message, but not e-mail, that a request to make a payment to a previously unknown account is genuine.

Recently, it was announced that online banking systems would be enhanced to report mismatches of account names, which it is hoped will reduce the opportunity for such frauds.

However, that won't happen until next year, so be on your guard.

Ian Vincent, Hon. Secretary

National Croquet Day 2019 will be Sunday 12 May

The CA Marketing Committee will be finalising ideas and themes for 2019, including how to support clubs who cannot open on Sundays, clubs that already have a 'happening' around that time, and clubs who find larger local initiatives taking place around that time.

There will be more on this and the 2019 activities in future Gazette issues.

In closing, I record my personal thanks to everyone who worked so hard to ensure NCD 2018 was a success.

All too often people think that 'things just happen', but the truth is that it takes a lot of planning and team work; thank you all.

**Brian Wilson,
outgoing chairman of the Marketing Committee**

A heartfelt thank you

I have been proud to be the Chair of the CA Marketing Committee for the past four years, during which time much has been achieved.

This reflects the dedication of the Marketing Team, the CA Office and all those clubs and members who have taken part on the many marketing opportunities.

Without their hard work and time effortlessly given, we would not have achieved so much.

Eugene Chang is taking over as Chair of the CA Marketing Committee and I'm sure things will continue to develop.

Let croquet continue to grow – here's to the future.

Brian Wilson

Introducing our new CA Office staff

Over the past six months the CA Office has seen three new faces join CA Manager Mark Suter at Cheltenham, who here introduces the new administration team.



Shop and Administration Assistant
Jack Kinane
jack.kinane@croquet.org.uk

Jack was born in South London and grew up in Cheltenham and comes from a family of teachers.

He has an avid interest in gaming and a very sweet tooth.



Shop and Administration Assistant
McKenzie Mitchell
mckenzie.mitchell@croquet.org.uk

McKenzie is the newest member of staff in the CA Office and has previously worked in various administration roles.

She lives locally with her husband and their three children.

McKenzie loves to have dinner with friends and helps run the PTA at her children's school.



Accounts and Administration Assistant
Kate White
kate.white@croquet.org.uk

Kate was born in the village of Wroughton, on the outskirts of Swindon. At 18, she left home and moved to Wales to study Fine Art at the University of Cardiff.

From there she moved to Cheltenham to train as a bookkeeper, where she now lives with her fiancé and their two children.

Kate still very much enjoys art.

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

The Townsend Award is given every two years to a **club with one or two courts** that has, in the opinion of the Development Committee, made exceptional progress in providing a good playing environment over the previous two years.

The Apps Heley Award is given every two years to the **club with three or four courts** that has made most progress at a national or local level in the last two years.

The Millennium Club Award is given every two years to the **club with five or more courts** that has made most

Club Awards ~ applications invited ~

progress at national or local level in any two of the previous three years.

The CA Club Awards are made at our AGM in October and besides a certificate, a cheque for £250 is given to winning clubs.

To apply for any of these awards, please firstly contact your Federation Development Officer and complete a submission form (**CA website: Clubs & Feds./info for clubs/CA Club Award**) together with any supporting information.

Ideally, clubs will be able to supply convincing photographs that demonstrate how their facilities have been improved, suitable for publication in the Gazette and online.

The closing date for the submissions is 1 January 2019 and the awards will be made at the 2019 AGM.

~

Elsewhere in this issue of the Gazette you will see an article that Dave Gunn, the National Development Officer, has written describing the 'Croquet Matters' workshops and the benefits that have been gleaned so far.

The Development Committee is keen to see the legacy of this work (how it will be used in future to help clubs enhance their membership and facilities) and will be developing a policy framework during the close season.

Roger Staples, Chairman of the Development Committee

~

A club session in progress at
2017 Townsend Award winners Cheam CC



The CA retained the Glasgow Quaich, with a 17-7 win over the Scottish CA in the annual match, held at Middlesbrough CC on 1-2 September, **reports the manager Charles Waterfield.**

When the Scots came to Albert Park two years ago (winning 16-8) their team, including two minus players, was nominally the stronger; but this time round the comparison was more in the CA's favour – as it turned out.

We were fortunate this year to have wonderfully warm and sunny conditions over the whole weekend.

Most competitors were able to join in a convivial supper at a local restaurant after play on the Saturday.

All games were level advanced (double-banked) with fairly tight time-limits of 2.5 hrs for each of the three singles rounds, and half an hour longer for the each of the two doubles rounds.

The CA got off to a cracking start, winning all three of the opening doubles, and by the end of day one had increased their advantage by winning nine of the twelve singles games, and went to bed with a commanding 12-3 lead.

Day two was more even, with the CA dropping a game in the doubles round and being held 3-3 in the last round of singles, but the end result was an impressive 17-7 victory.



The CA team travelled to Carrickmines, Dublin, in early September, for their annual (Association croquet) contest with the Croquet Association of Ireland (CAI) for the McWeeney Trophy (a silver cigar box).

Alison Jones assembled the CA side, (pictured), chosen to roughly match the handicaps of the host players and several of the side were making their representative debuts.

The CA established a 2-1 lead after the opening round of doubles and they built on that lead in the first day singles that followed.

Much Guinness followed in the evening and this may have contributed to the success of a spirited Irish comeback on the second morning.

This left the match result in the balance at 10-8 to the CA with six afternoon singles games left to play.

But that was as close as it got because the CA wrapped up the match with five victories to one to record a convincing 15-9 match winning scoreline.

Star player on the Irish side was Patsy Fitzgerald, who was awarded the Maugham Quaich as the best individual player, having made several complex delayed triple peels while winning four of his five games.

CA
Beatrice McGlen (Nott'm) -0.5
Andrew Killick (M'bro) 0.5
Phil Errington (Belsay Hall) 1
Derek Watts (Tyneside) 1
Charles Waterfield (M'bro) 2.5
Roger Staples (M'bro) 2.5

SCA
John Surgenor (Glasgow) 1
Derek Knight (Beverley) 2
Alan Wilson (Balgreen) 1.5
Alistair Malcolm (Meadows) 4
David Houston (Meadows) 5
Bob Darling (Balgreen) 6

CA
Nick Mounfield (Ashby) -2
Alison Jones (Surbiton) -0.5
Tom Weston (East Dorset) 1.5
Richard Pepperell (H. Wycombe) 5
Richard Stevens (Hamptworth) 6
Barry Holland (Surbiton) 11

CAI
Patsy FitzGerald (-1.5)
Nathaniel Healy (0)
Evan Newell (0)
Daniel Bennett (3)
Alan Looney (4.5)
Myles McWeeney (9)

Obituary

Cynthia Steet 1928 – 2018



Cynthia Street joined Ramsgate in the good old days (circa early 1980s) shortly after it was founded.

She developed a real 'knack' for the game (both AC, which she preferred, and GC, which she tolerated).

In her heyday in the mid-90s she was a firm fixture at Ripon, and also played in tournaments across the UK in a dynamic duo with her doubles partner, Len Hawkins.

They excelled at Poole, Ivychurch, Southwick and Tunbridge Wells to name but a few, as well as playing in the Kent Clubs' League matches.

The 'Cinque Ports Mayors Day', first held at Walmer Castle, continues to be an annual club event at Ramsgate CC, following her own brand of intervention.

Taking all the croquet equipment to the castle proved too much of a hassle, so the next year Cynthia insisted that they came to the Club for a taster session followed by a cream tea.

The Mayors managed to hit the ball in spite of wearing their chains of office.

Cynthia became Chairman of Ramsgate in 1996, and was renowned for organising the 1st International Golf Croquet Championships in 2000, which continues to this day.

Not satisfied with merely receiving international guests, she worked hard to maintain contact with many of these over

the years, arranging 'fun' visits to their clubs, and inviting them back to Ramsgate.

She was able to build great relationships with Genval CC in Belgium, and even taught university students in Gothenburg, who quickly took up the sport.

She was even fortunate enough to be invited to play in Cairo, where she took great pleasure playing alongside some of the greatest GC players of her day.

Everywhere she went she inspired new people with her infectious energy and humour.

She was my coach, my grandmother and my inspiration: she was the reason I too play croquet, and was my ever-present 'magic sponge' ready to offer advice, reviews of games and then yell 'rubbish' or "What sort of a shot do you call that" when I missed, which somehow helped to focus my game. Croquet will not be the same without her.

Owen Pugh

GC World Championships and U21s ~ Registration call



Top: Reg Bamford is the current WCF World GC Champion having won in Melbourne in 2017.

Above: Ahmed Nasr was runner-up in those last Championships. (Photographs by Bill Bromley, Lionel Tibble and Chris Roberts)

The U21 World Croquet Federation GC Championships will be held at Nottingham C C between 20 - 24 July 2019.

The GC World Championships will be held at Sussex County CC and supporting venues Compton (*Eastbourne*), Worthing and Tunbridge Wells, between 27 July and 4 August 2019.

Players eligible to represent England may register their availability for these events via the CA website.

Availability for both events closes on 1 December 2018

Players eligible to represent any of the other home countries should contact their respective national associations.

Entrants for the WCF U21s must be 21 or under on 31st Dec 2018.

For more U21 WCF Championship details visit the WCF website page <https://u21gcwc2019.org/>

Wild card nominations should be sent to the Chairman of the CA GC Selectors, Lionel Tibble, prior to the above date.

Lionel Tibble
Chairman of GC Selectors



Several U21s had registered their availability as the Gazette went to press, including the first four Summer School 2018 players as pictured above: Eden Rogers, Euan Burrige (*also in top action image*), James Galpin, Albie Willetts and Ryan Gray.

Over 50s Golf Croquet World Championship 2019 ~ Hanan Rashad's win is a female first ~

History was made in Cairo in October when Egyptian Hanan Rashad became the first female player to win a non-gender-restricted World Championship, and many congratulations to her for the inspiring victory.

Stephen Mulliner has written a full report which not only gives a detailed blow by blow account of the event but contains so much colour and flavour of the tournament that one can almost imagine being there. I recommend readers to seek out Stephen's words on the CA website (6 October news item), for what follows is a mere taster to fit the Gazette's limited available column inches – Ed.

"The Egyptian Croquet Federation knows how to put on a good show.

48 players took part, with a further 15 on the waiting list, and the first three days were sufficient to complete the block stage (eight blocks of six, playing single-banked best-of-three 13-point games, without time limits) and four play-off games.

Play started at 09:00 and continued to past midnight in a few cases with playing

conditions during the day definitely hot but not unbearably so and, from 4pm onwards, idyllic. Playing under excellent lights, with the moon in the sky, in 25 degrees with no wind, and the cry of the muezzins in the background, makes for an unforgettable croquet experience. Everyone should try it at least once and Cairo remains one of the cities that should be on every bucket list."

The full results are on Croquet Scores but very briefly the English players fared as follows: Stephen Mulliner knocked out Peter Dowd in the round of 16 and went on to lose 6-7, 6-7, 6-7 to eventual winner Hanan Rashad in the semis.

Dowd played in the 'Shield' for positions 9 - 16, and Stephen Custance-Baker, Andrew Dymond and Jonathan Powe, who all had first-round knock-out exits, played in the 'Bowl' for positions 17 - 32; Powe won (Dymond was third).

Roger Goldring, Steve Leonard, Tom Weston and Dave Widdison all missed the main knock-out; in the plate, Widdison won (Goldring was third).

Women's Golf Croquet World Championship 2019

The Women's Golf Croquet World Championship will be held at Hawkes Bay, New Zealand, between 2 - 9 February 2019.

On 27 August 2018, The World Croquet Federation announced the names of the players who had been selected.

The English players are:
Ann Brookes (Colchester)
Kathleen Burt (Kingston Maurward)
Jane Pringle (Auckland & Ripon Spa)
Jayne Stevens (Northampton & Wrest Pk)



Judith Hanekom of South Africa is the reigning Women's GC World Champion

Croquet matters: Ealing Matters

Dear Editor,

The start of the 2018 season saw Ealing Croquet Club facing a number of serious challenges that threatened its survival – principally from a cash-strapped Ealing Council, which was not only withdrawing its support for maintenance of our lawns, claiming that the club offered “too little value to too few” (direct quote), but also exploring the possibility of offering the third lawn to a commercial partner for an activity such as crazy golf.

There also were financial, recruitment and marketing issues, and we urgently needed to develop a sustainable club strategy to help us out of our situation, but we had no idea how to start.

Our Federation Development Officer, Ian Cobbold, suggested that the programme that National Development Officer Dave Gunn was developing could be helpful.

A call to Dave led to a workshop, run by him in conjunction with Ian, at which they demonstrated the various modules of Sport England’s ‘Club Improvement Tool’, on the Club Matters website.

The next step was for our subcommittee to go away and work through the process ourselves, for real.

The questions asked were not always relevant to our circumstances, and a few were strangely written and difficult to understand.

However, they got us talking about the club – where we were at that point, where we felt we could reasonably aim to be in (in our case) two years’ time.

Being presented with ready-made descriptors was very helpful and the process would have taken ages without them.

We blithely assumed that at the end Club Matters would magically assemble our answers for us into a ready-made development plan, but this, alas, was not the case; all we got was a fairly generic and not terribly useful summary.

However our answers had provided what we needed for a further meeting, at which we decided how we were going to achieve all of our two-year goals.

It took some work, but we finally have our plan. It is clear and focused, and provides a road map for the next two years, with action points and targets.

It is also something that we can show both to the Council and to potential funders.

The process was well worth going through, and I would recommend the use of Club Matters to any club in a situation similar to ours.

Many thanks to Dave Gunn and Ian Cobbold.

Jennian Geddes, Chair, Ealing CC Development sub-committee

Corner dots anyone?

Dear Editor,

This season at Middlesbrough Croquet Club we had the idea of putting white dots one yard in from the boundary at each corner.

How many times per game does a ball go off in the corner?

Multiply that number by anything between eight and twelve seconds, and you will be able to save that time by having the official corner spot already marked.

The second advantage is that you save players’ backs!

There is also the consideration of lawn damage: at one club I visited recently there were several worn corners and it may be that the white dots scheme would save on wear and tear.

Andrew Killick, Middlesbrough CC

~

Ian Vincent replies:

My concern with this would be whether it would affect the grass. The court I learned to play on as a student had the yard-line marked in lime, which burnt such a channel that you could place your tice in corner 2 and hit it from corner 1 with full confidence!

Modern lawn-marking materials seem to encourage, rather than kill the grass, but I would still be wary of the effect over time.

Corner pegs are what the laws suggest to solve this problem.

Ian Vincent, Chair. of the AC Laws Cttee.

Golf Croquet Handicap Doubles is not a game for good tossers

Dear Sir,

If one wins the toss in any game, whether it be Association Croquet, cricket, rugby or tennis you have a decision to make, which you expect to be to your advantage.

However, in Golf Croquet there is no decision to make, because if you win the toss you must start first whether you want to or not.

This can be manifestly unfair in handicap doubles when there is a significant variance in the partners’ handicaps.

I recently played a GC handicap doubles match featuring Player A (handicap 4) & Player B (12) verses Player C (0) & Player D (12).

My opponent, Player A, had the misfortune to win the toss and he had to play with either Blue or Black and in this case chose Blue.

Player C, who was giving two extra turns to player A, was able to make an advantageous decision despite losing the toss.

He naturally chose yellow to ensure that he played BEFORE player A (the opponents’ stronger player).

If player A had decided to play Black player C would have chosen Red.

Due to this rule, Player A always had to play AFTER Player C and it was left to player B to remove player C’s ball when appropriate.

How can that be fair, under any circumstances, when Player A wins the toss but is put at a disadvantage?

The result match was effectively determined before a stroke had been played.

Can someone explain the logic of this

rule, as I have spoken to numerous croquet players who are as baffled as me and can give no rational explanation.

As mentioned above, this rule does not exist in AC, so why must GC be different?

Please let us have a level playing field.

Tony Salem, Roehampton CC

Aussies’ Trugo is croquet(ish)

Dear Editor

I would strongly suggest that players ‘Google’ TRUGO, because I will be introducing it as part of my coaching sessions next year!

BTW – is this why we refer to Australia as “down under” and do they refer to the UK as “up over”?

Klim Seabright, Cheltenham CC

Tournament management and Managers

Dear Editor,

Over many years of playing I have come to appreciate more and more the unsung heroes of our sport, namely, the Tournament Manager.

A purely voluntary appointment and apart from a customary round of applause and perhaps a bottle of wine at the end of the day, the only reward is the knowledge and comfort of a job well done with lots of players going home happy.

These brave people put themselves forward into the firing line for any disgruntled Tom, Dick or Harry to have a pop at.

Uncooperative and disgruntled players can easily turn a tournament into an exercise in herding cats which the manager has to sort out.

I believe it is different in some other countries where experienced managers are sought after and offered a commission.

The tournament manager is the person who can make or break an event.

For many years I've frequented the same tournaments time after time simply because I know the management will be second to none.

I suppose I've been fortunate in this respect because I've so far not had personal experience of a poorly run tournament.

The CA makes awards for Coach of the Year, Most Improved Player, etc., etc.

Perhaps there should also be a 'Manager

of the Year' award which would help recognise the hard work and effort which goes into making an enjoyable and successful tournament.

~

While I haven't myself experienced a poorly run tournament, I know they have happened and are still happening – in spite of advice and controls imposed by the CA.

Yes, people make mistakes and poor decisions all the time and that's understandable and to some extent entirely excusable.

BUT a shortcoming of common sense is not excusable in my opinion, and can completely spoil the fun for all, leaving one asking the question 'Why did I bother travelling such a long way, spend a precious weekend or sacrifice hard earned holiday time, go to all the expense of meals, petrol and accommodation, just for this?'

Does that sound at all familiar?

If it does then you've experienced poor management.

Of course the blame cannot always be laid at the manager's doorstep; on occasion a player may also make you rue the day that you entered, but if the manager is on top of the situation it shouldn't detract too much from the occasion.

No, the instances of poor management which I really cannot excuse are the basic ones such as:

(1) With a field of 32 the manager decides to have 8 blocks of 4 players with the top of

the block going through to the playoffs.

Hence you may have travelled 300 miles or more and have only three games in the main event.

And if you lose your first game it could easily be all over and no way to qualify. Surely the sensible option would be to have 4 blocks of 8 players instead.

Please – this is not rocket science.

(2) With a field of 12 players, three blocks of four are selected – why?

(3) Even more unfathomable and truly amazing is the tournament where the manager chooses to incorporate into the consolation Egyptian all of your main event games! No prizes for guessing the obvious – how can I possibly win the plate? The only person who can is the main event winner, so why am I here at all?

~

So when you do experience a well run, happy and enjoyable tournament, go out of your way to let the manager know personally.

He/she will appreciate a kind word very much indeed.

As for the others, you can choose to return next year or not and veto the tournament until things change for the better, write a complaint to the club hosting the event with a copy to the relevant CA Tournament Committee.

Hopefully in this way tournament management will remain top class.

Lionel Tibble, Northampton CC

Roger's rollercoaster record run

Dear Editor,

I'd like to share some good news with you: that on 20th August I became a GC -2.

I feel on top of the world, I feel so pleased, the future is bright, life is good.

Roger Goldring, Phyllis Court CC

Dear Editor,

I'd like to share some bad news with you: that on 27 August I became a GC -1.

I don't feel on top of the world, I don't feel so pleased, the future isn't bright, life isn't good.

But - the glass being half full, not empty - I wonder if this is a record drop?

Around this time, I lost 138 points in four consecutive days' play - I don't suppose many players have achieved that!

I should add, I'm still enjoying my croquet hugely!

Roger Goldring, Phyllis Court CC

Pasties, cream teas, golf croquet ~ Cornwall needs you!

Dear Editor,

If you know that a Cornish pasty never has carrot in it;

If you know jam has to go on a scone before the clotted cream;

And if you know Mousehole is pronounced Mowzel;

then you, my GC playing friend, could be

eligible to wear a shirt with St. Piran's flag on it next year.

Wouldn't it be good if Cornwall could have a team in the GC Inter-Counties 2019? - We need players!

If you would like to play, and think you could be eligible through birth, parents birth, residence or Cornish Club

membership, please contact me and I will help you with the eligibility rules.

Cornwall needs you!

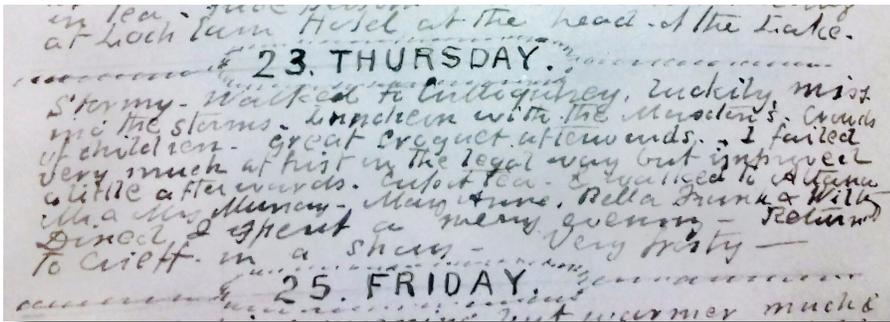
Andrea Widdison,

Cornwall County team organiser

dandawiddison@hotmail.co.uk

01765 650145, 07969 467568

First evidence of croquet in Scotland



Dear Editor,

The enclosed illustration (above) is from a diary entry for July 24 1863.

As you can see, the entry refers to when and where croquet was being played in Scotland.

This may only be of interest to croquet historians, but I believe this is the earliest reference of any sort to croquet being played in Scotland.

It is earlier by several months than the painting by William Crawford of the Middleton children with mallets in their hands.

The man who wrote this diary entry was Francis Emilius Cary Elwes. He and his wife had Scottish ancestry, being related to the Murray family of Ochtertyre, and they were staying in Scotland between late July and September 1863.

In his diary, the author who lived in London, mentions playing croquet on two earlier occasions in July. Firstly initiating a Miss Smythe into the game and then

secondly by giving the same a lesson.

Given the later painting by Crawford showing children playing croquet and the abundance of children according to this diary entry, it is tempting to think that not only may this have been the first time croquet was played in Scotland, but that it may initially have been considered as a game for children.

The relevant entry for the 23rd July 1863 reads:

"Stormy. Walked to Coltoquhey, luckily missing the storms. Luncheoned with the Maxtones. Crowds of children. Great croquet afterwards. I failed very much at first in the legal way but improved a little afterwards"

- Coltoquhey is the name of the pile where the Maxtone family lived (they were a prominent Scottish family).

- "The legal way" - David Appleton, the author of The History of the Scottish Croquet Championship 1870 – 1914, informs me that this referred to a recent rule change. **Nigel King**

The last survivor of Glenochill CC is still playing

Dear Editor,

(With reference to the From Our Files 1968 mention of Glenochill CC joining the CA):

Glenochill CC started in 1966 at the Distillers Company Limited, Research Station, Menstrie, Clackmannanshire.

A small area of ground about the size of a short lawn with a slight slope sideways was used. It was mostly a lunchtime club with time limit of 3 x 40 minutes lunch breaks for competitors.

On registering with the Croquet Association in 1968, one of the members, W.M.Spalding, proceeded to win the All England Handicap.

Two years later R.N.McLean also won the All England.

The Research Station closed about 30 years ago and I am probably the only member still playing, as most of the others are deceased.

Joe Lennon, North Lanarkshire, Scotland



Should I teach the full roll with a 'follow through' or not?

Dear Editor

(cc. Chairman of the Coaching Committee)

Coaching query – How to do a full roll shot and how to teach it?

ALL italics are to highlight the question: I quote:

1. The CA coaching manual page 31:

For this shot the **hands should move further down the shaft**, the lower hand being about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way down and the higher hand about half way down. The stroke should be played **with minimal follow** through to avoid pushing.

2. Oxford Croquet (author Ian Plummer):

Your right hand should **be very close to the mallet head** . . .

All the work in the shot is done by the right hand. You stand or crouch over the balls, hit down on the striker's ball at an

angle of around 45° and **follow through strongly**. The stroke can be played centre style or side style as is comfortable.

3. Complete Croquet -James Hawkins:

The upper hand half way down the shaft... punch, with follow through.

4. John Riches:

It is most important that the forward slope of the mallet handle (and consequently the mallet face) should be maintained throughout the swing; and for this to happen **both hands must move forward at the same rate. The follow-through should be as long as possible**, with the mallet head moving low along the ground.

To the extent that the shot involves a pushing rather than squeezing action to send the striker's ball forward, it will be necessary to concentrate on swinging

forward through the balls rather than downwards; but the mallet should still, as in any roll, contact the ball above centre.

So from these sources there is a two to one verdict in favour of follow through, with one "punch with follow through" (having and eating cake perhaps) and a different three to one in favour of lowering the top hand to some extent. Which is right?

Of course in fact they all work and different players adopt different styles.

How do these different ways of doing rolls work and which is best to teach beginners?

Adam Moliver, Cheltenham CC

(AC handicap 2.5 and a Grade1 coach)

Sarah Hayes replies on the Coaching Pages

Photo above: Jamie Burch plays a full roll at the AC Inter-Counties 2018 (by Chris Roberts)

GC Handicap play is broken

Dear Editor,

I will start with a simple, and probably controversial, statement: Golf Croquet handicap play is broken. Playing with extra turns does not work.

I find it difficult to think of sports or games whereby players of differing ability can have their play balanced by giving them extra turns.

Extra turns make no sense – GC is a game of skill, but a large part of the game is tactical.

Players will have differing levels of skill in both departments, and extra turns do not necessarily help balance either of these two aspects.

The biggest problem I see with extra turns is that they change the nature of the game. It is crucial to recognise that when considering the issue.

There is no point in playing tactically while an opponent has extra turns.

Some players deliberately play to try to force extra turns to be used so that they can then play a normal game, and this demonstrates that the extra turns have altered the game.

The player who has extra turns in their pocket and focuses on using them is not playing a natural game. You cannot even argue that extra turns will encourage them to improve their game.

Extra turns spoil the game, and I have wondered what might be done to stop the spoiler tactics.

Some things are not allowed with extra turns, in particular running hoops, and perhaps the banned list should be extended.

One suggestion I have heard is that 'knocking-out' with an extra shot should be banned. Another possibility might be to allow an extra turn to be used to 'buy' a relaxation of certain arcane rules, such as double taps or crush shots, things a high handicap player might have difficulty with.

If the purpose of extra turns is to equalise players' abilities, something that is going to be very difficult to do anyway, perhaps other approaches to handling handicap games need to be devised.

I do not like having extra turns in my pocket, I try to avoid using them, and do not like having them played against me.

The game becomes pointless. I much prefer to play level.

That way I know we are comparing our skill and tactical play.

I don't feel proud winning with extra turns.

Colin Whyles, Unity CC

Croquet baggage

Dear Editor,

Having read Sarah Hayes's excellent article on the contents of her croquet handbag (*August issue, Gazette 375*) I checked mine and found the following:

Double-headed doubloon (I've never lost a toss)

Bottle opener and corkscrew (used, win or lose)

Flat cap (forget that namby-pamby sun-screen)

Spare shoe lace (useful for changing when time is running out)

Piece of sandpaper (a present from an Australian cricketer)

Three sets of car keys (so that's where they are)

Tattered handicap card (still a 24 - must try harder)

Pencil stub, broken (had it since primary school)

AC Laws book un-opened (present from daughter five years ago)

Yesterday's Times crossword - almost complete (excellent when sitting out once all the bisques have gone)

Bent metal marker (the groundsman still gives me dirty looks)

Mobile phone (size of brick, with a flat battery)

In short, pretty typical for the keen male croquet player?

Ivor I. (Andy) Capp, Hon.Sec. Coarse Croquet Club, Corner Flag House, Cannon Court, Great Rollright, Shireshire.

CA Grant helps solve High Wycombe's flooding court problem

High Wycombe Croquet Club (*est. 1982*) is situated in Buckinghamshire, about 30 miles from the centre of London and is a member of the Southern Croquet Federation.

We have a growing membership of just over 60 members playing both AC and GC, with over a quarter of our membership playing the former.

Some of our members play internationally, many more play nationally with much success.

Our two courts were both new in 2014 when we moved location, but soon we found that even moderate rain water would pool along the west boundary in front of the clubhouse to such an extent that play was impossible.

The fundamental problem was clay, that had been excavated to make the lawns level, was now forming a barrier, preventing water from draining away. Several drainage schemes were considered, debated and then dismissed.

After a year and much head-scratching, we decided on a more elaborate scheme, but one that would work - a trench with a perforated-pipe connected to a new soak-away and finished in Grassroad, a honeycomb of plastic filled with grass.

The new scheme was expensive, with the lowest quotation being £9,000; a far cry from the original simple scheme of around £3,000.

So the challenge was to raise the funds and numerous grant applications were completed. This paid dividends as offers of funds came in, the most significant grant being from the CA at just under £4,000.

The rest came from Club funds, members' donations, and Sport England.

The work was completed as programmed within the five days and amazingly under budget! The final cost being a mere £8,000 – who says all contractors are rogues!

We have benefitted from dry lawns even during some of the August cloud-bursts, so we now know the more elaborate scheme was the right choice!

Without the CA's grant, we would still be paddling around and we are extremely grateful to the CA!

Richard Peperell, Chairman, High Wycombe CC

Before



After



Going for Growth *by NDO Dave Gunn*

Autumn is now upon us and many, if not all, clubs will be winding down their on-court activities...but I'm sure they will also be ramping up their off court endeavors, as they look to put plans in place to meet their own particular sets of goals and challenges for 2019 and beyond.

In my last article in July (*Gazette 374*), I promised to keep you updated on a number of initiatives as well as sharing some other pieces of useful news.

Free Website Template for Croquet Clubs

The pilot phase of our free of charge, centrally hosted and administered club website template has now concluded and has been a great success with a dozen clubs from seven different Federations now having their own tailored versions of it.

Many of these clubs previously had no website at all, and a couple were wanting to replace existing sites for various reasons.

If your club falls into either of these categories, please take a look at a couple of particularly good examples from the pilot phase to see what might be achieved:

<https://croquet-websites.org.uk/ashby/>

<https://croquet-websites.org.uk/colchester/>

If you would then like more information or would even like to sign up for the offering straight away, please contact me directly.

Plenty of support and guidance is available and has been proved to work well during the pilot phase.

You could be up and running well before your marketing campaigns to attract new members for next season commence!

The challenge of attracting new members

Speaking of attracting (and retaining) new members, this issue came top of a list of challenges facing croquet clubs that was generated when 69 of our clubs participated in a Sports Club Survey run by the Sport and Recreation Alliance at the end of 2017.

78% of the clubs flagged up member attraction and retention as a major challenge, with other common themes being increasing costs and difficulties with improving or even accessing the facilities they require.

The full report from the survey (of 1611 clubs of all types) makes very interesting reading and can be downloaded at: <https://www.sportandrecreation.org.uk/policy/research-publications/sports-club-survey-report-20172018>.

One major weakness identified was that many clubs lack an 'improvement plan' and one of the report's key recommendations to its ultimate sponsor Sport England was that it should continue to invest in, develop and promote its online toolkit, Club Matters...which leads me on to....

'Croquet Matters'

Several more clubs around the country have now participated in 'Croquet Matters' workshops that I ran for them, often assisted by their local Federation Development Officer.

Each club found that the Croquet Matters programme offered them two main benefits: a well-structured and thought-provoking way of performing a meaningful self-assessment....and, via Sport England's Club Matters offering, a series of comprehensive online toolkits that gave them confidence that they would be able to successfully address priority development areas they arrived at. Croquet Matters was, in a number of cases, a real catalyst for action.

It's worked for Ealing CC

One club that has gone on to grasp the possibilities particularly well is Ealing CC who went away from their workshop with a commitment to finalise their own development priorities and then agree and implement a number of key actions to address them.

Their latest development plan is very comprehensive, covering such areas as new and existing members 'wants and needs', marketing planning and execution, committee effectiveness, strategic planning and potential new sources of income.

My workshops offer to YOUR club

My role is due to finish next April and I am very keen to try to run as many workshops as possible with clubs all around the country during the close season.

YOUR club (be it large or small, new or established, competitive or social, one code or mixed) might benefit from the programme, so please a quick look at a more detailed description at

<https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=clubs/croquetmatters> and then give me a shout!

Your club could end up being 'catalysed' ready for next season and you would also be helping your local Federation build up skills and knowledge that will allow it to continue to support the programme into the future...what have you got to lose?

Dave Gunn

National Development Officer

davegunn59@gmail.com,

07710 981561

A tour of West Country Croquet Clubs (Part 2) *by Sue & Bernard Pendry*

Sue and I were thrilled to see the details of our West Country croquet tour in the **August issue (Gazette 375)** as this was one of the most enjoyable holidays, made all the more so by the warm welcomes we had at every club; our thanks to all our hosts.

~ Bath CC ~

The last club reported was Cornwall CC and from there we went on Bath CC with its five courts located on the local recreation ground shared with the famous Bath Rugby Club.

Club Secretary Norman Conner, made us welcome to join in their Thursday roll-up where they only play handicap singles.

Sue received five extra turns and beat local Paul (0) 7/4 then beat another local Sara giving six extra turns away. I lost to local Sue 7/5, 7/6, conceding five extra turns.

After the croquet we headed off to find the Old Mill Hotel, Bathampton and Norman asked if we knew where it was, as he didn't believe the postcode we gave him was in the right direction. After going round in circles for 30 minutes Sue checked the postcode on her phone, yes I had made an error, instead of BS2 it was BS1, a huge difference. In fact the hotel was just two miles from the Club! It is a well-appointed hotel on the

AC & GC player development

Are you available?

The 2018 croquet season is now coming to a close, which can only mean one thing – it's time to start planning for 2019!

Playing in tournaments is a sure way to improve your skills and strategies, especially when playing against more experienced players, where you may lose a game or two, but you will improve in the process.

There are many team events throughout the croquet calendar, which can be an excellent introduction to competing at advanced level. In my last article I mentioned the CA v CAI McWeeney Trophy (see the match report on page 4); this is only one of several selection events which players can make themselves available for.

Ladies competitive croquet

The Ladies Sixes are other events for the ladies to make themselves available for.

The events are often held in Cheltenham, where the top six available ladies play for the Barlow Bowl, and the second six play for the Longman Bowl. This all-female competition can be a gentle introduction for ladies who may be a little nervous about entering selection events.

If you would like more information about the ladies selection events or ladies coaching, please get in touch with me, Alison Jones.

Alison Jones
International Performance Director (AC)
- alison@alisonswebsites.co.uk

We need more coaching Pods!

Aspiring GC players up and down the country are, in some cases, disappointed when they find there isn't a club development Pod near them.

We still need more clubs and coaches to join this initiative, and make themselves available in helping to provide players with a ready means to access GC coaching at all levels, wherever they may be in the country.

If you're interested in either joining a Pod or forming one at a local club, please get in touch with me, Lionel Tibble.

Lionel Tibble
International Performance Director (GC)
- anglion@btinternet.com

GC IPDS Elites Weekend ~ 'A Nottinghamshire team' v 'The Rest of the UK'



In 2017 the GC Elite Squad challenged a squad of top AC players to a 'friendly' GC match at Guildford and Godalming CC.

This year, following a great idea by Ian Burrridge, top players, branded as 'The Rest of the UK', played 'A Nottinghamshire' team, at Nottingham CC in early October.

The Notts team (above): Rachel & Will Gee, James Death and Ian Burrridge took on 'The Rest' (above right): Richard Bilton, Jamie Burch, Tobi Savage and John-Paul Moberly using the World Team Championships (Openshaw Shield) format.

For those not familiar with the format, two teams of four players play a round of doubles matches followed by singles matches, and it's all 'best of threes'.

Torrential rain early on Saturday morning put a bit of a dampener on proceedings but luckily the courts remained playable.

Jamie Burch had an unenviable drive from his home in Redhill, Surrey through fog, rain and mist all the way to Nottingham and thankfully the weather improved from then on.

Ian Burrridge managed the match and made arrangements, so thank you to him, and also to Will Gee whose culinary talents almost exceed his playing skills.

With little else to do I contented myself with an occasional stir of the communal Bolognese pot.

The atmosphere was relaxed but still competitive, with the courts playing well

considering the ferocious toll the summer has taken on other 'lawns' (sorry Tom!) around the country.

'The Rest' won the doubles matches 3 – 2, the singles 6 – 4, for an overall 9 – 6 victory.

The start of the singles came from the Notts side however; Death won all three of his matches, only dropping one game to Burch, and this form saw him leapfrog ahead of Burrridge, Bilton and Burch to number 5 in the UK rankings.

All the game results are on croquetscores.com (Nottinghamshire vs Rest of the UK, 6-7 Oct, 2018).

Lionel Tibble
International Performance Director (GC)

banks of the river Avon.

The following day Norman allowed us to park at the club and we off-loaded our electric bikes for a ride into the city.

Our first port of call was a tour of the famous Roman Baths, incredible to see how advanced they were all those 2000 years ago.

Then we cycled a 13 mile route circling Bath, along the canals and through a mile-long tunnel (boy was it chilly).

The canal boats were varied, some very upmarket and some looked as though they were destined for the knackers' yard.

Back at the Club they were entertaining **Swindon CC**, the

members of which said we should visit their club too and assured us of a warm welcome.

It was tempting but we decided to call it a day and headed home.

We are now planning next year's croquet trip starting in Sussex and then on to Kent, Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk, with a possible ending in Hertfordshire.

Bernard & Sue Pendry

Ps. All this croquet must have done us good, as we have just won the handicap pairs competition at our home club Surbiton.

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The Alison Jones Column

When croquet players aren't playing croquet

In the last few years I have met many interesting characters on the croquet courts around the country, but what is really interesting is what they do when they're not playing croquet.

Our community is made up of magicians, lawyers, chefs and chartered surveyors, teachers, carpenters, tax advisors and gardeners, and many more from the weird and wonderful.

Each club has a unique set of personalities and skills which are being utilised cleverly to keep our clubs and our sport alive in each little pocket of the croquet world.

Many of our clubs are of course very much self-sufficient, so having all of these skills to hand is very important.

Looking around the clubs at the many different types of equipment holders and even bisque holders, we know many have been custom-built by a talented handicraft enthusiast, who also happens to play croquet.

A while ago it was suggested to me that these skills could actually be beneficial to more than just the clubs, but the local communities too.

Perhaps a scouting group could come and learn how to paint stop boards, or an after-school club could help and learn about flower beds.

Are there any local adult community groups who would like to learn how to fix a broken lawnmower or learn some simple bookkeeping?

We have so much to do at our clubs, why not invite the rest of the world in to help, and in return they can learn new skills.

And of course, as a bonus, more people will find out about croquet.

Whilst on the subject of croquet players not playing croquet, I couldn't resist the opportunity to ponder what a team of non-playing croquet players could be called.

It turns out that teams of croquet players are not only useful at croquet clubs.

A little research led me to 'The Hooprunners', the 2007 team of East Anglian Croquet Players who challenged the Eggheads on the BBC2 quiz programme.

Four of the 2018 Treasurer's Tankard players (Nigel Polhill, Martin Murray, Ian Vincent and John Davies) teamed up together to win a local quiz night; after spending three days duelling with each other on the lawn they became 'The Tankards'.

Martin Murray took great pleasure informing me of their win and how it came about, where Nigel correctly named 19 out of 20 in the movie star section to bring the team into a suitable lead, but it was Martin himself who earned an extra 50 points for the team by naming all 11 countries that the river Nile runs through!

The Tankards won with a convincing 111 points, where the runners-up scored just 67.

Remembering that many croquet players are also musicians, could a new band be formed... 'The Brass Bandits' perhaps?

Is this a new fact, teams of Croquet Players make the best teams?!

Alison Jones

I spotted this healthy lunch box!

I thought this e-mail that I received was such a lovely story, promoting both 'Healthy Sport' and 'Competitive Croquet', that I wanted to share it with you. Thank you Gordon for playing along:

Hello Alison,

I met you for the first time at the Nottingham tournament in August. I am a new player, it was my first tournament and I was the guy with the large salad lunch box, and you will remember that I was intrigued that you wanted to take a picture of it!

So when Patricia Duke-Cox gave me my first Gazette I was enlightened to discover who you are, and note that correct nutrition is part of your brief for the croquet team.

Well, I enjoyed being the centre of attention for a few seconds, or should I say I enjoyed my lunch box being the centre of attention? Perhaps not!

Anyway, I am on a bit of a diet and over the short six games of 1 hour 25 minutes each and the healthy salad lunch the next morning I weighed in to find that I'd lost three pounds over 24 hours. So, if this story – with my Healthy Lunch Box photo, and weight loss report – may amuse some, I would have no objection. I absolutely loved the day; I lost the first two games because I was very nervous, but after my invigorating healthy lunch I won the next four.

Everyone was very friendly and welcoming, the setting was beautiful and I had a great day out.

Kind regards, Gordon A Mills, Pinchbeck CC



A Croquet tour to South Australia anyone?

Andrew Larpent found croquet in South Australia during a work placement there in 2011 and joined Hyde Park Club in Adelaide.

He organised a tour of some English clubs for Hyde Park and earlier this year they visited: Cheltenham, Budleigh Salterton, Surbiton and Hurlingham.

For some there were also opportunities to play at the delightfully rural Dowlsh Wake Club in Somerset and also at Phyllis Court at Henley-on-Thames.

~

The tour group wish to offer their own warm Aussie hospitality to a touring party from one or all of the clubs visited, or a mixed group from UK clubs. If you are interested in participating in a two-week croquet tour of South Australia, most likely in November 2019 (the Australian spring), please send expressions of interest to Andrew at Andrew.larpent@gmail.com.

"New devotees" ~ The story of Croquet

The First World War changed the face of croquet in Britain.

Top-flight tournaments were cancelled; clubs struggled to survive.

But croquet was, during that time, making a distinctive contribution to the war.

~

Britain entered the conflict on 4 August 1914 and Yorkshire responded at once: the inaugural East Riding Open Tournament, due to start on 10 August, was immediately "abandoned ... owing to the present condition of national affairs".

An avalanche of cancellations followed.

Most gave the reason as "owing to the war crisis", but sometimes there was no choice: Portsmouth cancelled "owing to the ground being required for military purposes".

A handful went ahead: Folkestone took out a display advert to assure players their event WILL BE HELD.

But the national mood was against tournaments.

As a letter written six days after the declaration of war put it,

"How anyone calling themselves British can think or talk of playing in croquet tournaments while our kith and kin are fighting in this terrific struggle is incomprehensible".

The so-called Edwardian "golden summer afternoon" was over.

~

War-time pictures of garden croquet often include sons in services uniform on leave.

In the pre-war years, the game had attracted many committed and adventurous young players; now the Croquet Association Gazette featured regular lists of CA Associates on active service who were missing, wounded or killed.

It also included long lists of the contribution players were making to the war effort – on active service, in VAD (Voluntary Aid Detachment) hospitals, or in other war-related occupations.

~

With the national mood against indulgence, Clubs developed a range of responses to the national crisis.

Members were invited to contribute what would otherwise have been tournament fees to the war effort, and, where the occasional tournament did take place, funds were raised for war relief, typically the Red Cross.

Roehampton was quick to launch its own Emergency Voluntary Aid Committee, appealing to other croquet players

nationally for specific items of clothing and equipment.

This ambitious project took out regular full page notices up to and beyond the end of hostilities four years later.

Bowdon took a practical approach, with a dozen players setting up a four-day sewing tournament, "for ladies only".

"Scratch players" qualified for Class A by showing mastery of the sewing machine; Class B needed to be proficient at button-holing; Class C, the beginners, "played a simplified game known to the initiated as 'neatening'."

Organised with the precision of a croquet team event, with a tournament 'referee' setting strict 'hoop' targets and timings, 485 cotton bags were made for wounded soldiers in casualty clearing stations.

~

Meanwhile, while much 'official' croquet was on hold, the game was quietly making another special contribution to the war effort – as a beneficial activity for soldiers in convalescent hospitals.

Appeals for croquet equipment began to appear in the newspapers.

Again the North was to the fore, perhaps because the greater number of southern croquet clubs meant sets were easier to come by there.

One of the first hospitals to appeal was Thornes House, Wakefield,

"for the use of our wounded soldiers ... our surgeon in charge thinks that croquet would be an excellent game."

The Northumberland War Hospital made multiple appeals for sets as "comforts for the wounded".

Two Leeds convalescent hospitals within four days requested croquet equipment.

The Red Cross appealed for "croquet sets... to send to auxiliary hospitals in Scotland".

Belfast Limbless Hospital appealed for ***"croquet sets for Cripple Soldiers"*** and the Dublin Irish Counties War Hospital was ***"urgently in need" of "croquet sets... for our gallant wounded soldiers"***.

Three military hospitals approached the CA directly for equipment, so although official croquet tournaments may have been cancelled, the game was flourishing in military convalescent hospitals across all corners of Britain.

~

A letter to the Liverpool Echo from 'One Who Has Nothing To Complain About' spoke of the benefits of playing croquet as part of hospital convalescence.



The British soldier is always a sportsman. play football and other strenuous

... during World War One by John Harris



By the end of the war, the appeals had broadened to include croquet sets for military hospitals in France.

They even included sets for soldiers abroad on active service:

“The long waits between the acts in the firing line are very trying to Tommy”; croquet sets were wanted “to relieve the monotony of waiting”.

The game proved remarkably accommodating.

The Daily Mirror proudly carried a picture of wounded servicemen playing croquet, one of them in a bath chair:

“The British soldier is always a sportsman. If his wounds are too bad to play football and other strenuous games he takes to croquet.”

Other photos show convalescing servicemen playing on crutches, or with an arm in a sling.

Wild glee hails the departure of some ball to the uttermost end of the garden.

War-time croquet disdains the restriction of a boundary.

Shouts of “Kiss your wife afore you go,” “Give ‘em my love in Australia,” culminate in a chorus of good bye-ee-s in which even the cot cases at the windows join; and then, of course, the returned traveller lives only to treat his late foe in the same way; and so the game progresses...

“Go it Brown! Remember Belgium!” is the battle cry... and if he misses his mark it matters little; for on the cool green grass, under shady trees, in a corner of the England that he has helped to keep inviolate, the maimed body grows strong again, while the deeper wounds of heart and brain are slowly erased by wind and sunshine.”

John Harris, York CC

Sources: contemporary newspapers; CA Gazette 1914-1919; contemporary photographs and postcards. Thanks to Hannah Rogers, Collections Manager, York Army Museum, for additional information on the photographs. If you would like detailed references please contact the author.

Illustrations:

Top: Mallets ready at a Red Cross military hospital.

Middle left: Decorated war heroes. Convalescent croquet eased divisions of rank: the soldier on the left sports a Military Cross ribbon, awarded only to officers; the other wears a Military Medal ribbon, give only to Other Ranks soldiers.

Middle centre: Crothers VAD Hospital, Southborough, Kent, 1916: Lance Corporal Brown, Redfearn and Falkner in action, taking advantage of the more relaxed uniform rules at many military hospitals.

Middle right: A postcard from 1915; “The maimed body grows strong again”

Bottom: Croquet Player in Bath Chair: Daily Mirror, 5 May 1915

Further information:

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an. If his wounds are too bad to let him
ous games he takes to croquet.

This was croquet without sophistication.

“We are in constant need of croquet balls, mallets and hoops, but most urgently of balls, as the play of our convalescent patients is at times a little violent,”

wrote May Smith, commandant at a Lincolnshire military hospital.

The Matron at another in Norwich wrote:

“My Tommies all and each in turn have a fixed and unalterable belief that, no matter where the ball is or on which side of the wire, a hard bang will take it through the hoop. Under this treatment balls and hoops both get broken, and we have used up all our spare sets of balls.”

Seasons went unheeded:

Our croquet courts were in use all last winter.”

The rules, too, were interpreted flexibly.

Hoops could be run from either side.

“It matters little that few of the men have any idea how to play...The usual mode of procedure is for him of the loudest voice to point the way.”

A Sheffield VAD nurse, herself a croquet player, knew how much her patients benefited from the game – in rebuilding the body, in curative camaraderie, and in healing the mind:

“The croquet season is in full swing at the hospitals... Its new devotees are the men in regulation blue, limping painfully from hoop to hoop... ‘What’s th’ matter? Ah’ve tae get thro’ th’ hoops?. Oh, ah’ll tak’ you when ah’m next that way...’



First Eight President's Cup

Robert Fulford won the Presidents' Cup for the twelfth time (his first since 2012) but had to do so via a play-off with Christian Carter, when both tied on nine wins at the end of the double round-robin format of 14 games.

Looking in on the results at East Dorset from afar, **Chris Roberts writes** that David Maugham had been most people's favourite for this title – after all he'd won nearly everything else this season.

He tied with Spanish visitor Jose Riva for third place, just one win adrift.

As is to be expected at this level, peeling winning turns were to the fore across the

field, and Fulford only completed one of his victories without doing so.

He recorded the only sextuple peel (against Maugham) but backed it up with two quadruple peels and another one on Riva, while the Spaniard and Stephen Mulliner both also managed two QPs of their own.

In the play-off, Fulford beat Carter +26qp, his ninth peeling turn win of the event.

Finishing order: Robert Fulford (9 wins and play-off), Christian Carter (9), David Maugham, Jose Riva (both 8), Stephen Mulliner, Samir Patel (7), Ian Burridge, Mark Suter (4).

The Selectors' weekend

Jonathan Lamb's victory in this season's Selectors' Weekend made history when he became the first player to win the tournament twice, and in consecutive years to boot, **reports Chris Roberts.**

Manager Cliff Jones kept everyone on their toes at Colchester, where thankfully there was no repeat of last year's dreadful weather at Sidmouth and so pegged-down games were kept to a minimum.

A few co-operatively early starts, one at 8.30 am, kept everything settled on the courts, unlike two players' stomachs which suffered from the intake supplied by one of Colchester's restaurants that will be avoided in the future.

Back with the croquet, the field of 16 were split into two blocks with the top two from each to qualify for a two round knockout.

Chris Coull and Alison Jones each only dropped one game in commanding Block A with the latter's head-to-head win putting her top, and Cesar Miranda-Reyes recorded the same tally to win Block B, with Lamb one game adrift in second place.

Coull beat Miranda-Reyes +12 in one semi and eventually Jones succumbed to Lamb +3 in the very long other one.

Lamb then beat Coull +15 in the final as the field dispersed to the far-flung reaches of the country, satisfied with an excellent competitive event and to diet for a week after Alison Jones' and Georgeen Hemming's irresistible catering.

Finishing Order: Jonathan Lamb (1st), Chris Coull (2nd), Alison Jones and Cesar Miranda-Reyes (4th=).

Block A: Jones, Coull (6 wins), Duncan Hector (5), Andrew Killick (4), Dave Gunn (3), Gary Bennet (1), Sarah Melvin (0).

Block B: Miranda-Reyes (6), Lamb (5), Raouf Allim, Andy Dibbin, Adrian Kirby (all 4), Cliff Jones, Chris Roberts (both 2), Jonathan Wolfe (1).



Above: The President's cup play-off - Robert Fulford on his first break with some of the spectators looking on. One of them (furthest left) is William Ormerod, who won the event in 1966!

Above, left: Fulford running 2-back during his QP during that play-off against Christian Carter. *Photos by Samir Patel.*

Below, left: Jonathan Lamb. *Photo by Chris Roberts.*

South of England Championship

Mark Avery won the South of England Championship at Compton (Eastbourne) in mid-September, **reports Roger Wood.**

The weather was not kind – Friday was bright but very breezy, Saturday had rain that persisted all day and into the start of play on Sunday, gradually easing to give welcome sunshine after lunch.

However, a general mood of jollification anticipating David Maugham's forthcoming nuptials kept spirits high by day and by night.

Four new faces brought a welcome touch of youth to the proceedings, but they must have questioned the veracity of Eastbourne's boasts about its weather!

Of the newcomers, Daniel Gott continued his impressive season to reach a semi-final against David Maugham, while Rich Waterman took a game from Daniel, and notched up a close win over Miranda Chapman.

On his way to the final Maugham's only win without a triple



Second Eight Chairman's Cup

Sam Murray and James Hopgood finished with ten wins apiece in the Chairman's Salver at Southport, **reports Robin Brown.**

Before the final round, James declared himself unavailable in the event of a play-off being required, having a train he needed to catch to get home to Edinburgh.

As it happened a play-off was required, but with James withdrawing, the trophy was awarded to Sam.

Finishing order: Sam Murray (10 wins), James Hopgood (10), Robert Wilkinson (8), Daniel Gott (7), Robin Brown, Jonathan Powe, David Goacher (all 6), Chris Williams (3).



Brian Shorney with Sam Murray.
Photo by Robert Wilkinson

Third Eight Spencer Ell Cup

Dave Kibble won the Spencer Ell Cup at Cheltenham CC which was a hotly contested event where any one of four (or potentially more) players were all still in the running on the final morning. The spectre of play-offs loomed, **reports Sarah Hayes.**

Kibble won with ten victories, and one win adrift were runners-up Sarah Hayes and Ian Lines.

There were no pegged-down games, and everything went swimmingly well.

Finishing order: Dave Kibble (10 wins), Sarah Hayes, Ian Lines (both 9), Annabel McDiarmid (8), Omied Hallam (7), Debbie Lines (6), Nelson Morrow (4), David Marsh (3)



A happy bunch at the Spencer Ell pose up for the camera. *Photographer unknown*

Fourth Eight Treasurer's Tankard

Nigel Polhill and John Davis shared the Treasurer's Tankard top spot in a tournament that was memorable, but not for the best reasons.

A full round by round **report by Martin Murray is available on the CA website** AC news page, and your Editor apologises for this severe edit.

Essentially it is a tale of long games, pegged down games, earlier and earlier starts in efforts to complete the programme and what must have been a managerial nightmare.

Finishing order: John Davis and Nigel Pollhill (tied on 10 wins), Ian Vincent (7), James Hawkins, Chris Martin (both 6), Graham Gale (5), Martin Murray (4), David Harrison-Wood (2).

The problems started on the first morning, when one of the players arrived 45 minutes late, citing traffic problems on the motorway.

The weather was fine and sunny, but this only added to the problems, as the courts at Guildford and Godalming were very fast, and two of them were bumpy after suffering in the dry hot summer.

By lunchtime it was clear that quick games would be a rarity; the slowest game was pegged down to allow round 2 commence, but it was well after tea-time when that finished; and although a start was made on round three, no games were finished when darkness fell at 8 pm.

It was generally agreed that an earlier start, 9.30 am, was desirable on Friday morning, but round 3 was not completed by lunch-time, so again the slowest game was pegged down. This pattern continued, so that by darkness on day two, only five rounds had been completed, though by now four games were pegged down, all involving the same player.

An early leader had emerged, John Davis, playing his first Eight for 31 years, being unbeaten with four wins and one game pegged-down.

By now there was obvious concern that the event might not finish.

Davis held a two wins lead over Nigel Polhill for a number of rounds but then saw that cut to one in round 13.

The next round saw two important games start at late hours - Davis versus Ian Vincent at about 5.30 pm, and Pollhill versus Murray didn't get under way until almost 6.30 pm.

With darkness inevitable at 8 pm, . . .

continued on page 30

was against Robin Brown, where he recovered from Brown's QPO (his second quad of the day) to win by 9.

In the other half of the draw Robert Wilkinson was on form, beating Ian Lines and Gavin Carter before losing to Mark Avery in game three of their match.

Sadly Jack Wicks was obliged to withdraw after only four games because of burns to his hands sustained a week earlier.

The final began as the weather brightened and proved to be an absorbing high-quality match.

(There is a full 'ball by ball' report of the final on the CA website, but in short it went to a deciding third game which Avery won with a delayed triple peel – my apologies to the author for such savage editing - Ed.)

In the Swiss, general enthusiasm was rather dampened by the rain, although that didn't deter Lines from producing a sextuple finish against Brown, as well as a string of triples.

He was one of the top eight who won their way through to a knock-out on the Sunday, hopeful of retaining the Sussex Union Cup which he won last year.

Both he and Carter reached the final with two triples each in previous rounds, and it was the latter who came away the winner.

Hilary and Tim Smith's hot lunches were a most welcome restorative, and credit too to groundsman John Crisford whose devotion to the lawns over a difficult summer has kept them in good shape.



First Eight Musk's Cup

Tobi Savage won the GC Selector's First Eight (for the Musk's Cup) which was held at Ramsgate CC in late August, ahead of a very strong field, seven of whom had reached the knockout stage of the British Open (and the eighth didn't play that event).

This **report by manager Tobi Savage** has received an edit in concert its author's name for which the Editor apologises and points readers to the full version in the CA website news item of 29 August.

Saturday started off in glorious sunshine, and second seed Stephen Mulliner won the award for fastest match finished (which surprised nobody, with his "wind him up and watch him go" style of play).

Burrige, Bilton, Mulliner and Savage all got off to a good start and the quartet were unbeaten in matches at the end of day one, whilst the other four were without any match wins between them.

Manager Savage had been starting to fret, with a group meal booked for 20:30, and Mulliner's last game not commencing until 19:15, but Mulliner silenced the alarm bells by taking game three 7-2.

The players of both GC Eights dined together at a pub between the two venues, Ramsgate and Canterbury, and an enjoyable evening was had by all.

Day two was set to divide the top runners in the block, as they were all scheduled to play two of the three other 'winners', but the weather had deteriorated, with gusting winds and relentless rain, to the point where players were offered a 7am start in favour of abandoning play for the day, of which 50% of the chickens (soory, players) chose to accept.

Only Mulliner vs Dray and Burrige vs Gee took the hardy approach and the former in each case were rewarded with victories.

Home hero Charlie Martin cleared the courts (under a lot of waterproof clothing) and also offered to have two of the courts prepped and ready for a 7am start as well, so special thanks to him!

The early risers duly got on with it the following morning and the Manager delighted to have the event back on track,

The GC Eights

especially as he'd won his own three game match by 0845!

The final block round settled the qualifiers an match-ups for the semi-finals and, with the withdrawal of Rachel Gee and David Dray from the consolation half of the event, Peter Balchin beat Lionel Tibble in a high-spirited match for fifth place.

The semi-finals were a rather more serious affair, however, and there was not much laughter on court four, where Savage played Burrige, but there were one or two emotional outbursts!

Savage got a break when he ran hoop 9 into the jaws of 10 which was enough to earn him game one 7-5, and he kept control until 5-3 in game 2, when hoop 9 was became the crucial hoop.

Burrige got control and left Savage a long range make-or-break jump shot to take on; for those observers unsure of the outcome of the shot, Savage's reaction left little to the imagination! And he tied the match up at the next hoop.

In the other semi, Bilton and Mulliner traded clearances, shots and games, to go to a decider that initially went Bilton's way, but Mulliner did what he does best, and never let up.

He swung the score from 2-4 to 5-4, and this change in momentum saw him home at hoop 12.

Richard was automatically awarded third place.

Savage demonstrated he meant business in the final by clearing from the starting corner, but his hooping was noticeably nervy at times and Mulliner capitalised on these errors to take game one 7-5.

Savage seemed to be running on empty, and needed to improve to defeat the 'Duracell Bunny' that is Mulliner, and midway through game 2 he moved up a gear and came from behind to win 7-3.

Savage carried forward his boost in confidence, regained his hoop stroke, and soon led the decider 6-4.

With one eye on the croquet and one eye on the trophy(!), he was presented with a clearance to take control of his winning hoop.

He banishing Mulliner to a side boundary from where the return made contact, but only just, and Savage ran hoop 11 – thereby winning game, match, and the Musk's Cup for 2018, to applause from the spectators, who had amassed throughout the day.

Finishing Order: Tobi Savage, Stephen Mulliner, Richard Bilton, Ian Burrige, Peter Balchin, Lionel Tibble, Rachel Gee & David Dray (equal).

Second Eight Kate Jones Memorial Trophy

Pete Dowd won the GC Selector's Second Eight (for the Kate Jones Memorial Trophy) which was held at Canterbury CC, a lovely new venue for the tournaments scene, where the competitors, including **manager and reporter Chris Roberts**, were made most welcome.

The high-quality clearances from distance by the entire closely-matched field, coupled with the hosts' excellently set and difficult to run hoops, and the poor weather, proved to be the perfect recipe for long matches that resulted in one moon-lit ending, delayed 'deciders' and a couple of pre-breakfast starts.

Canterbury's Frank Hughes was our constant companion at both ends of the long days and many thanks to him for going beyond the call of hosting duties.

Stephen Custance-Baker won the 'all play all' block with a superior net games tally over Euan Burrige after both had amassed six match wins, and they were both one ahead of Pete Dowd and two more than Phyllis Court club mates Chris Roberts and Raouf Allim.

Roberts claimed the last semi-final spot by just one net game win. There was consolation for Allim who went on to clean up in the single-games plate block.

Roberts made Burrige work for his win in game one of their semi but was them wiped out in the next game, and Dowd was taken to hoop 13 hoop twice by Custance-Baker in a hard path to the final.

With the weather much improved and locals supporting the final well, Dowd won the first game but was well beaten in the second by Burrige.

In the decider, Dowd drew on his greater big-match experience and kept the steadier nerve to bring home the Second Eights tournament victory. This was despite a barrage of super 'never say die' clearances from his young opponent – whose day will surely come.

Finishing order: Pete Dowd, Euan Burrige, Stephen Custance-Baker & Chris Roberts, Raouf Allim, Roger Goldring, Andrew Dymond, Tom Weston.



The GC National Championships

ENS Championship Final Ascot Cup

Richard Bilton won his first GC "major"! The final of the English National Singles Championship (for the Ascot Cup) is the last major event of the domestic GC season and was hosted by Sussex County CC on 15 and 16 September. The Southwick courts were in excellent condition, complemented by sunny weather over the weekend, **reports manager Stephen Mulliner.**

The grades of the top four players were only narrowly separated in the 2,500 region which paved the way for close contests. It was anyone's guess who would eventually prevail.

The 16 competitors played best-of-three 13-point games in four blocks of four on Saturday to determine the top two in each to progress to the championship KO Stage.

In Blocks A, B and C, the top seeds Ian Burrigge, Stephen Mulliner and Jonathan Powe each dropped only one game in completing three match wins each.

Block D was more closely contested with Richard Bilton losing in three games to a resurgent Will Gee, but Gee had lost his opening match to Chris Roberts, so Bilton just won the block on net hoops.

Rachel Gee regained her European GC Champion title at Budleigh Salterton this May with a superb display of shooting and hoop running against Pierre Beaudry in the final.

She is, as they say, no mug at GC. However, she was comprehensively "mugged" by Bilton in their quarter-final encounter.

Bilton appeared to have adopted a successful strategy of "not missing" and swept into the semi-finals, 7-3, 7-1.

There he faced Mulliner (to whom he had lost three matches earlier in the season) who had beaten Peter Dowd, in their quarter-final, 7-3, 7-4.

The other half of the draw featured two close encounters; Lionel Tibble was in prime form in game 1 against Powe, who has become one of the most consistent of the top players in both AC and GC.

Tibble's speciality is the controlled centre-ball clearance from any range up to 15 yards which prods the opponent ball away by a dozen yards or more while his own ball hugs the current hoop like a long-lost cousin.

It is infuriatingly effective.

However, the magic left him during game 2 and Powe recovered to win 4-7, 7-4, 7-5.

Will Gee is one of the most entertaining players to watch. He can oscillate between brilliance, the opposite and brilliance again in as many strokes.

The opponent and the spectators often have no idea what is coming next (and neither, it is suspected, does Will), but he can grind it out and well and duly did so against Burrigge after losing a tight opening game, prevailing by 6-7, 7-3, 7-5.

In their semi, Bilton and Mulliner ended their first two games at the 13th hoop with the former hanging on in game 1 by remorseless clearing, especially in the later stages.

He made an excellent start in game 3 by roaring to a 5-1 lead with a succession of long hoops. Mulliner staged a brief rally but, after a prolonged duel at hoop 10, Bilton ran a very angled hoop to clinch his place in the final, 7-6, 6-7, 7-3.

The other semi-final started in the opposite way to the Powe / Tibble quarter-final. Powe's consistency made short work of the opening game as Will Gee struggled to hit straight. However, Gee upped his game and fought back, to finally take the match 3-7, 7-5, 7-5.

However Gee buckled in the opening game of the final, where Bilton astonished everyone except perhaps himself by taking the opening game 7-0.

When did that last happen at this level?

Once more, Gee dug deep, fought back and took game 2 with a trademark jump through hoop 12 from four yards.

This set the scene for a dramatic conclusion with Gee bidding for his third Ascot title and Bilton seeking his first GC "major".

As it turned out, Bilton maintained his impressive accuracy in both hooping and clearing and this was enough to develop and maintain an edge that translated into victory, 7-0, 5-7, 7-4.

It was a very well-deserved victory and confirms the significant improvement he has made this season and his place as one of the top young players in the game.

The Plate was played as a 19-point single-game knock-out. The final was contested by David Dray and Manuel Alvarez-Sala, the youngest of four brothers who make up half of the top eight GC players in Spain, and who was able to step in when a player had to withdraw at the last minute. Alvarez-Sala won a tight contest 7-4, 7-6.

Warm thanks are due to Sussex County for hosting the event and preparing the courts so well, including having four mown on Sunday morning.



National Doubles Championship

Jonathan Powe and David Nicholson won the GC English National Doubles Championship on Hurlingham's immaculately manicured lawns, players enjoying two glorious days of uninterrupted early September sunshine.

The event had been cancelled in 2015 and there had been a very small entry in 2017, so it was encouraging to see 14 strong pairs competing for the Ranelagh Cups this year.

A measure of the strength of the field was the number of players with their names already inscribed on the cups (11 of 28), including multiple winners Ivor Brand and Chris Sheen, **reports Jonathan Powe.**

Saturday saw two blocks of seven pairs playing single 13-point games with the top two from each to qualify for the best-of-three semi-finals and final on the Sunday.

There was an early scare for the favourites J-P Moberly and Tobi Savage when they were beaten 7-5 by Tom Weston and Steve Leonard but eventually the top two seeds in both blocks made it through.

On Sunday the Plate was won convincingly by Pierre Beaudry and Chris Sheen who were undefeated in their five games.

In the main event semi-finals, Moberly and Savage defeated Ian Burrigge and Rachel Gee 7-6, 7-5 and Powe and Nicholson beat Will Gee and Harry Fisher, also 7-6, 7-5.

In the final, Moberly and Savage won the first game 7-4, with some outstanding hoop-running and long clearances. But Powe and Nicholson finally clinched game two at hoop 13. In the decider, Powe and Nicholson raced to a 5-1 lead and then hung on, to take the title 4-7, 7-6, 7-3.

Burrigge and Rachel Gee beat Fisher and Will Gee 4-7, 7-4, 7-5, with Rachel claiming the bragging rights in the Gee household!

The full results are on www.croquetscores (date 2 Sept).

The GC National Series competitions

A-Level Series (Open) Series points winner

Lionel Tibble was the runaway winner of the A-Level Series this season and finished ten series points ahead of his nearest challenger, in contrast to last season, when he missed out on the title by a single point.

The A-level Series is different to the other Series in that there is no National Final and the Series winner is decided simply by an accumulation of points earned for first to fourth placed finishing positions in the twelve qualifying tournaments, **writes Series director Chris Roberts.**

Tibble laid down his marker early with victories at the first tournament of the

season at Cheltenham and the third, his home event, at Northampton.

While Tim King's two wins at Pendle's Lancashire Open and at Wrest Park

kept Tibble on his toes, the latter scored two valuable second places at Woking and (behind King) Wrest Park.

A late run from Stuart M Smith, with second and first place finishes at the last two Series tournaments at East Dorset and Sussex County respectively, clinched him the Series runner-up spot.

Top of the finishing order: Lionel Tibble (32 points), Stuart M Smith (22), Tim King (22), Richard Bilton, Jeff Dawson, Jonathan Powe, Roy Tillcock (all 10).

Grass Roots (+8) National Final

Jean Cording from Dowlish Wake won the Grass Roots competition Final early September, **reports manager Paul Francis.**

The Grass Roots is for players with handicaps of 8+ upon entry, and is directed for the CA by Richard Bilton. It starts with club-based rounds from which players

qualify for the national final, this year hosted by Bath CC.

Blessed with good weather and four consistent playing lawns, the players demonstrated good hoop

B-Level Series (+3) National Final

James Galpin of Nailsea won the B-Level Series National Final on a very wet and windy first weekend in October, at Camerton and Peasedown CC, near Bath, **reports manager Mo Boys.**

An usually large field of 18 qualified for this final and they were split into two blocks of nine by ranking with the top four in each to qualify for the main knockout.

Galpin won seven of his eight games, on the first day, one ahead of John Mariner, Roger Stroud and Morgan Case, and two ahead of Lorna Dewar, Mike Bilton, Nicholas Halton and Gavin Taylor, who all qualified.

The 19-point quarter-finals were won

by Taylor, Stroud, Dewar and Galpin and the latter pair then won their semis convincingly.

This led to an exciting and very close best of three 13 hoop games final between Galpin and Dewar.

The first two games were scored evenly, both ending at hoop 13 to tie the match.

The decider also went 'hoop for hoop' until Dewar was long at hoop 10 allowing Galpin the upper hand, win that hoop and then score hoop 11 – to win the game, match and the B-Level Series title.

Finishing order: 1 James Galpin (Nailsea), 2 Lorna Dewar (Meadows), 3 Stroud (Leighton-L), 4 Gavin Taylor (Surbiton), 5 Morgan Case (Sussex Co.), 6 John Mariner (Chelmsford), 7 Mike Bilton (Richmond Park), 8 Nicholas Halton (Roehampton), 9 Graham McCausland (Nailsea), 10 Jane Tewson (Long Eaton Park), 11 David Ball (Leighton-L), 12 Brian McCausland (Nailsea), 13 Mike Huxley (Gulidford), 14 David Lloyd (Crake Valley), 15 Andrea Huxley (Guildford), 16 Robert Cook (Cheam), 17 Marian Button (Camerton & P), 18 Noel Gill (Hunstanton).

running and positioning throughout the tournament. Cording survived some very tight block games and her route through the knockout was no easier, with a quarter-final win by two hoops over Mary Bertin from Bath and, in the semi-final, the closest of wins over Bath's Jennifer Pope-Saunders.

Meanwhile, patient and accurate croquet

C-Level Series (+7) National Final

Michelle Leonard of Kingston Maurward won the inaugural C-Level Series National Final at Nottingham CC in late September, **reports manager Chris Jackson.**

Given the onset of autumn, the courts were in remarkably good condition and the weather was also pretty kind, with none of the forecast rain occurring.

Using an 'all-play-all' format, the 16 finalists who came from as far afield as Bury and Ryde (with a strong Home Counties showing) played 15 untimed rounds.

Their handicaps ranged from 5 to 10 (having all been 7+ at the time of their qualification).

At the end of the first day, three players – Steve Tarrant, Stephen Hayns and the local (and recent convert to croquet) Mike Hedge, were all tied on six wins each, closely followed by three others with five wins.

Going into the final round on day two, Hedge had a one game lead over Haynes and Michelle Leonard.

However, determined and attacking play from Leonard gave her yet another win whilst Hedge lost his final game, making it 11 wins for each of them.

Leonard was declared the winner on hoops to become the inaugural C-Level Series Champion.

Finishing order: Michelle Leonard (Kingston Maurward) 11 wins, Mike Hedge (Nottingham) 11, Stephen Hayns (Ryde) 10, Peter Adams (Caversham) 9, Richard Leach (Bury) 9, Steve Tarrant (Norwich) 9, Sue Rice (Reigate Priory) 8, Brian Jamison (Caversham) 8, Tracy Martin (Letchworth) 8, Jane Powell (Ealing) 7, Rosemary Faulkner (Sussex County) 7, Gail Dowd (Northampton) 6, Bridget Goodman (Ealing) 6, Glynnis Davies (Northampton) 3, Ruth Sisley (Ealing) 2.

from Phyllis Court's Michael Christmas had seen him claim the other final berth.

In the final, Cording raced to a 5-2 lead but Christmas' resilience enabled him to pull back to 5-5 after a tenth hoop marathon.

Cording's first ball was good enough to win hoop 11 and she kept her nerve on the twelfth hoop to complete a worthy 7-5 win.



AC competitions and tournaments

AC All England Handicap

Thomas Halliday won the AC All England Handicap Final at Wrest Park in early September, *writes John Bevington*.

Thomas, a member of the Enfield club, had had his handicap summarily reduced from 20 to 18 after the area final at Surbiton.

It wasn't enough, as he won all his five games by an average of over 19 points which has brought him down to 16.

His opponents might have thought that was not before time, but it also has to be said that there were occasions where the combination of an imposing number of bisques and Thomas's mercurial and sometimes unconventional approach to break-building had them freezing like rabbits in the headlights and playing shots that made his job easier than it might otherwise have been.

The final was held at Wrest Park, with George Collin acting as manager and ROT, ably supported by club secretary Tim Brewer who looked after the catering and administrative support. The event was played as a five round Swiss, full-bisque base 10 with three-hour time-limits.

The home club had two players in the final, in David Woolley who was second

overall with four wins and Richard Keighley with one, while three players made their second consecutive appearance in the final: Phil Nuttall (Bury) who scored three wins, and Julie Sheahan (Merton) and Robert Upton (Dyffryn) each with one.

The others were Adrian Apps (Bowdon) with three wins and John Smallbone (Watford) with two; the latter was unfortunate to have his mallet shaft snap on the first day and he borrowed the manager's mallet. John Bowcott, Vice Chairman of Council, came along to present the trophy and our thanks to him and also to Hilary Smith, the event director, who had to cope with a change of venue for the final as well as everything else associated with coordinating a national competition.



AC Students Championship

Daniel Gott of Bath won the AC Student Championships, hosted on a sunny weekend in early September at Oxford University Parks, was marked by one word – dominance, *reports Kirandeep Saini*.

As the two titans of the student circuit, Gott and Mark van Loon (Oxford) swatted away challenger after challenger, the closest any came to an up-set was when Oxford's Mark Baker's triple peel attempt collapsed and he went down 26-21 to van Loon. Baker is commended for attempting his first ever competition TP against a man with a handicap almost 10 points higher than is own.

Unfortunately, for the first time in years, Cambridge did not send a representative; possibly as they were still licking the wounds of their defeat in the Varsity match.

Play the next day was delayed for an hour or two as many recovered from the night before; however, van Loon and Gott, were on time and ready to play their 'best of three' Singles final which the latter won in two games.

In the Doubles, Oxford's Saini and Baker were too strong for all the opposition and cantered to the title.



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AC Inter-Club Competitions

Most of the AC Inter-club finals take place over one weekend, the exceptions being the Secretary's Shield (for winners of Federation Leagues) and the newly reinstated Inter-Club Short Croquet competition, *writes the AC Inter-Club competitions Director and manager Brian Fisk.*

This year the finals weekend was kindly hosted by the Surbiton club who, as usual, made us most welcome, courtesy of George Noble, Christine Osmond and other "elves" who looked after us very well.

The final of the **Inter-Club Short Croquet** competition was recently played at York between Nottingham and Penrith where the latter just triumphed in a closely fought match 6-5 (*see the report below*).

This year the competition was restarted at rather short notice, after a break of several years, and I hope that the competition will attract more entrants next season.

A repeat of the 2017 **Secretary's Shield** final saw Middlesbrough again take on Sheffield at the neutral venue of York.

Middlesbrough narrowly avoided a 0-3 score-line and went to lunch with a last-gasp +1 win and although none of the afternoon games were a foregone conclusion for either side, eventually Mark Simmerson delivered the winning point for Sheffield.

Many thanks to York CC for hosting and to Colin Irwin for presenting the trophy.

Back at Surbiton, Saturday morning dawned grey and damp in warning of what might happen later.

First up were the Longman Cup semi-finals: Letchworth verses Tyneside and Hurlingham verses Ealing, and these were soon followed by the final of the **Mary Rose** competition between Watford and High Wycombe.

The 2018 Winners

Inter Club Championship - Surbiton
Mary Rose Cup - High Wycombe
Longman Cup - Tyneside
Secretary's Shield - Sheffield
Short Croquet - Penrith



CA President Quiller Barrett presents the magnificent AC Inter-Club Championship trophy to Surbiton: Chris Farthing, Samir Patel, Sam Murray and Reg Bamford. (Photo by David Walters)

By lunchtime the weather had taken a turn for the worse and it was decidedly wet.

Spirits were somewhat revived by yet another great Surbiton lunch from head chef George and players put back on their soggy outer layers to resume battle.

Wycombe took a 3-0 lead into the afternoon and as soon as they reached the winning margin of 4-0 they decided to abandon the rest of the games.

This made the management much easier as the other courts were starting to puddle ominously. Some judicious moving of games to drier courts and regular work with the excellent squeegee device meant that both the **Longman Cup semis** could reach a conclusion; both went the distance before Tyneside and Hurlingham both emerged as winners by single games.

Sunday was a complete change and was dry, warmer and sunny.

The final of the **Longman Cup** between Tyneside and Hurlingham started, along with the 3rd/4th place play-off between Letchworth and Ealing.

Hurlingham went to lunch 2-1 up having won the doubles and one of the two singles, but this success was not to be repeated in the afternoon, as Tyneside won three out of the four singles games to triumph by 4-3. Letchworth beat Ealing 4-3 for third place.

The **AC Inter-Club Championship** pitted Bowdon against Surbiton, who fielded four-time World Champion Reg Bamford, together with England test captain Samir Patel! All the morning games began in a scrappy interactive fashion, but Surbiton's

line-up proved too strong for Bowdon and they took a 3-0 lead at lunch.

In the afternoon, Surbiton's Chris Farthing had another interactive game against Martin Granger-Brown, whilst Patel secured victory over Colin Irwin with a quadruple peel and Sam Murray completed a sixth turn triple-peel against Brian Kerr.

That left David Walters fighting for some pride for Bowdon, against Bamford.

With both players having taken a ball to 4b, Walters cornered from Bamford's leave and the latter could not get his triple underway, so Walters had a 'final' lift which he hit, but stuck in hoop 1.

When Bamford missed, Walters took his 4b ball to the peg, and pegged-out Bamford's forward ball. Bamford hit but missed his return roquet after 4b, and Walters held his nerve to construct a three-ball break to finish and earn a point for Bowdon.

This was a third successive Inter-Club Championship win for Surbiton.

The considerable volunteer weekend received due thanks and CA President Quiller Barrett presented the trophies.

Short Croquet Inter-Club Final

The final of the inaugural National Inter-Club Short Croquet competition saw Penrith and Nottingham evenly matched throughout the day, as the October weather held and York's smooth, flat lawns played well, *reports John Harris.*

Nottingham took a one-point lead after the first round of the three rounds that would decide the match.

With the rest of the day scheduled entirely for singles games, the outcome of the final was now entirely down to individual play.

Honours were even in a closely-fought

round 2, as Nottingham maintained their slender one point lead, with everything to play for in the final deciding round.

Nottingham played carefully and well, but Penrith pulled off three victories for a **final score of Penrith 6, Nottingham 5.**

No silverware for this new CA competition has as yet been supplied, so Penrith will hopefully be able to look forward to the courier delivery of a dedicated trophy.

This final was an excellent demonstration

of the satisfactions to be gained from this form of the game. Both teams declared their intention to compete again in 2019, and

we hope this new National Short Croquet competition can now establish itself as a key part of the croquet calendar.



GC Inter-Club Competitions

Two first-time finalists contested this year's **GC Inter-Club Championship**. Nottingham offered to play the match at Phyllis Court who arranged an excellent day with a couple of dozen spectators braving the inclement weather, which kept empty the other hundred plus seats that had been provided for the expected record crowd, **reports winning captain Ian Burridge**.

Nottingham managed to field the same team in each round of the competition – Ian Burridge, Richard Bilton, James Death and Euan Burridge;

Phyllis Court was represented by their strongest line-up Charlie Von Schmieder, Raouf Allim, Chris Roberts and Roger Goldring.

Nottingham got off to a good start when Ian Burridge and Bilton convincingly won the doubles against von Schmieder and Allim. (All rubbers were best-of-three.)

Meanwhile Death won a long first game against Goldring and Euan Burridge and Roberts were one game each after the latter stole game one at hoop 13.

Bilton took the opportunity to get a single-banked 'afternoon' game in before lunch against Allim and after a shaky start the recent Ascot Cup winner found his form and took a 1-0 lead into lunch.

Death finally overcame Goldring after a 2hr 15min two-game marathon and whilst the others enjoyed an excellent lunch Roberts finally overcame Euan Burridge's resistance in game three to give Phyllis Court hope.

The 2018 Winners

Inter Club Championship
- Nottingham -
Inter Club (Murphy) Shield
- Hamptworh -



CA President Quiller Barrett presents the GC Inter-Club Championship trophy to Nottingham: Euan Burridge, Ian Burridge, James Death and Richard Bilton.

(Photo by Chris Roberts)

The rain continued unabated after lunch and Ian Burridge quickly won his first game against von Schmieder, sealing it with a five-yard jump shot at hoop 10.

Bilton wrapped up his match with Allim with some spectacular hoop running in game two, including hoop 6 from between hoops 3 and 4, followed by hoop 7 with its next shot.

Euan Burridge put up little resistance after Goldring ran hoops 2 and 4 from 25 yards in game one; this put the team match in the balance at 3-2 to Nottingham.

Meanwhile Death had taken the first game against Roberts and von Schmieder looked as though he would cause an upset in his second game against Ian Burridge when he took a 6-5 lead, but a careless positional shot allowed Ian to flick to hoop 13 and secure the match and the title for Nottingham a few shots later.

Quiller Barrett, President of the Croquet Association, performed the prize-giving, before the spectators left to find somewhere dry and warm, after which Death finished his match with Roberts in the worst rain of the day, winning in two, to make the final score 5-2 to Nottingham.

Full results are available on www.CroquetScores.com (date 22 Sept).

~

Two teams from the north and south of the country met at Nottingham to play the final of the **GC Inter-Club (Murphy) Shield**, in dry but autumnal conditions, **reports Ian Vincent**.

Hamptworh: Richard Smith, Steve Bennett, Bob Channon, Richard Jenkins.

Durham: Malcolm Hobbs, Nigel Martin, Anne Barnfather, Carole Brady.

Hamptworh took a slim lead 2-1 into lunch, losing the doubles but coming back from game down in both the singles.

The four afternoon singles were shared, to leave Croquet Durham suffering the disappointment of having come so far both metaphorically and by road.

Congratulations to Hamptworh, whose name will appear on the shield for the first time.

Simon Carter defended a remarkable 96 extra turns to win his second Golf Croquet All England Handicap title.

When he won this title previously in 2004, he wouldn't have been such a low handicapper, but this time he was bravely playing off -3 and was the 'top dog' in the field.

The 14 player line-up for this final included players of all ability levels up to handicap 11, showing that this competition really is one-for-all, **says Director Chris Roberts**.

The GC All England has seen participation grow year-on-year, such that an extra Area Final had to be introduced at Phyllis Court this season to cope with the numbers.

~

Manager David Boxall reports that Carter won ten times in his thirteen games at Hunstanton in mid-September, to finish two victories ahead of three players tied on

GC All England Handicap

eight wins and a further four on seven.

Roger l'Anson from Ripon Spa Hotel CC was well clear of Colin Helps (Cheam) and Geoff Johnson (Watford) on net hoops and they finished in second and third places respectively.

The thirteen game 'all play all' block format produced two days of excellent croquet which provided ample talking points for the players, referees and spectators alike. These included the running of wrong hoops and the losing of a game by failing to remove a scoring clip before attempting a difficult angled jump-shot.

The players endured some blustery and occasionally wet conditions on the second day, but all seemed to thoroughly enjoy the venue.

There were three handicap changes, each by one grade: Carter -4, l'Anson 3 & Helps 6.

The finishing order was:

Simon Carter (Dulwich, -3) 10 wins; Roger l'Anson (Ripon Spa, 4), Colin Helps (Cheam, 7), Geoff Johnson (Watford, 0) all 8 wins; Chris Joslin (Maldon, 7), Peter Howe (Maldon, 3), David Frost (Enfield, -2), David Cornes (Crake Valley, 5) all 7 wins; Marian Hardy (Enfield, 11), Mike Fensome (Phyllis Court, 0) both 6 wins; Cliff Hunter (Surbiton, 6), Chris Wood (Auckland, 3), Nigel Wolco (Camerton & Peasedown) all 5 wins; Tim Lomas (Dulwich, 6) 2 wins.



CA Secretary Ian Vincent presents the new GC All England Handicap trophy to Simon Carter who defended 96 extra turns and still won!

(Photo by David Thirtle-Watts)

Teaching the full roll to beginners ~ with a 'follow through' or not?

I recently received a query from a Grade 1 AC coach regarding roll shots which asks how to do a full roll shot and how to teach it.

Within the query (see the letters page 10) the writer quotes from the CA Coaching Manual, Oxford Croquet (Plummer) and Complete Croquet (Hawkins), and he also refers to an article by John Riches.

A general analysis of these four points of reference resulted in the following conclusion: "From these sources there is a two-to-one verdict in favour of follow-through, with one punch with follow-through", and a different three-to-one in favour of lowering the top hand to some extent."

And a final remark: "Of course they all work and different players adopt different styles, but how do these different ways of doing rolls work and what is best to teach beginners?"

~

In reply, I am only able to draw on my own experience of being coached where I was shown how moving my hands up and down the mallet resulted in the energy from the shot being distributed in various ratios through to the two balls – I was encouraged to go away and try out different hand positions so as to establish what would happen when I held the mallet in a certain way.

If, for example, I have one hand towards the top of the mallet, the other half way down the shaft, strike the croquet shot with mallet flat to the ground this will result in a half roll - a "long" half roll (ie. hoop 1 going to hoop 3 and peg) the more normal "short" half roll would need hands in similar ratio but much lower down the mallet shaft.

For a full roll I need to play with both hands quite close together towards the mallet head – hands together means balls will travel around the same distance.

The most important thing I find is to make use of the name of the shot - it is a ROLL - and therefore the balls should be rolled using follow-through and not just given a mighty whack.

I am able to hold both hands together but a bit higher up and hit the croquet stroke towards the top which puts top spin onto the striker's ball, enabling it to travel a similar distance to the other ball played.

I fully appreciate there is another roll method involving angling the mallet head for every roll shot and playing the croquet stroke down then through parallel with the ground.



I have no idea whatsoever how this works but I always highlight to beginners that the alternative exists.

My main issue with this method is the way in which the shot is played by learners where they often follow the angle down and bury their mallet in the court, so close observation and careful coaching is required to avoid the damage.

Many beginners do hurt their wrists playing the angled roll shot incorrectly and could easily be put off very quickly.

Full rolls over short distances are effective with a correctly angled mallet and a well-executed shot but I have yet to see a player standing with angled mallet who is able to



roll over considerable distance using this method; I generally see them crouch down with both hands lowered in order to achieve the desired shot.

If you are playing with mallet angled into the court above the croquet shot and play down and cause damage to lawn surface, is this a fault? Are you not playing in a manner likely to cause damage? Comments please.

Those players who approach me to ask how I play rolls (half / full / passing) by moving my hands, are usually quite surprised at how quickly they are able to realise good results; simply explaining which hand represents which ball helps tremendously.

I try to get players to coach themselves by watching the results of rolls when they are

playing a match – so if in their first half roll both balls have travelled too far but in the right ratio they know that their next half roll over similar distances should be played with both hands lowered.

Most importantly of all, however we play our roll shots, is the early coaching of the follow-through and maintaining the direction chosen.

There seems to be an ever growing proportion of players who don't bother with angles at all and simply play croquet strokes in a straight line with an enormous shovel towards their desired target throughout the follow-through – I feel it is imperative to sort this out first and foremost and allow beginners to work out their own roll method of choice over time, having, of course, been explained both methods with demonstration.

The steered or pushed croquet stroke is a bad habit and not easy to break – the skill of the croquet stroke is the execution (whichever method) of both chosen angle to play and strength of shot – anyone can shovel the ball in the general direction. I am often heard suggesting to opposition that they might simply prefer just picking the ball up and putting it where they want to – this is effectively what the push achieves.

~

I hope my thoughts go some way to helping with the original query and, as ever, I would very much appreciate comments/ advice from anyone out there – helpful ones preferably – especially if you are able to provide any more insight into why these shots work as they do. Please contact me at and I will ensure they are forwarded to the person asking the question.

Sarah Hayes,
Coaching Committee Chairman
caccommchair@googlemail.com

Recent Coaching Appointments

There have been just two coaching appointments this month:

Sarah Hayes

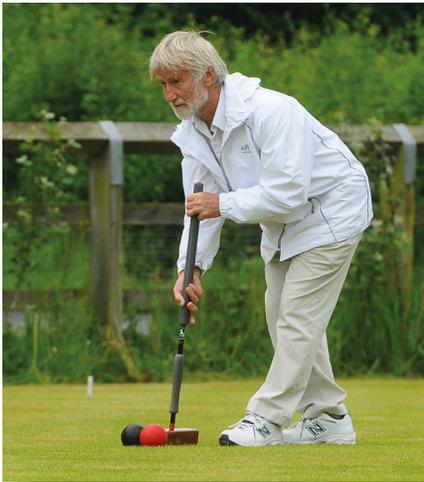
**AC Graded Coach
Grade 1**

Stewart Newman Sapcote

Club Coaches

Richard Forman Huddersfield

How to play in slow conditions with long grass (and perhaps rain too)



Please just tell me how to play when the conditions are slow with long grass and it is perhaps raining (just to make things worse!)."

I'm not sure if I am in reality the best person to respond to this query but I will give it a try.

Having learned on fast courts, I still struggle with the soggy 'wilton' (carpet), sort of surface.

I stand at hoop 1, looking glumly at hoop 3 and my hoop 2 pioneer, and just know the roll shot is not going to happen... not without a run up and a fair wind!

To try to counter this mental block, I would perhaps put a much shorter pioneer in at hoop 2, thus turning a dreaded full roll in the pampas into an acceptable half roll.

One of my heroes, Andrew Hope, imparted a great tip to me not so long ago which helps tremendously, when rolling in slow heavy conditions, and that is to play

the same shot but grip very tightly with the lowest hand on the mallet.

I have tried this and it does work a treat – the problem is I am getting too old now to remember to do it!! Pathetic eh?

So when I just know I am unable to do the roll I simply take-off and get control at the hoop and then hopefully continue by keeping control.

Take-offs are an enormous source of wonder on slow lawns. Run up and hit the blighter as hard as your brain will possibly allow. With luck you will be within seven yards of the target – with the chances of going off the court at less than 1% and hugely comical if it does happen.

I always find myself holding the mallet further down for roquets and hoop runs, and I think this is because I feel I need to hit the ball much more firmly – and holding lower down helps this to happen.

It is important to watch the mallet hit the ball and ensure that timing, rather than trying to use brute strength, is winning the day.

If you are able to only rush a ball six to seven yards normally then don't expect much more than five to six yards in the wet and long grass.

Make the most of your strengths and do not let yourself give in to the temptation of giving almighty wallops as these will invariably miss.

In Conclusion:

Adapt your tactics to make allowances for the slow pace.

Watch your mallet hit the striker's ball.

Keep control however possible.



Pick up the fourth ball for a four-ball break a.s.a.p. – and the pivot will be your saviour.

Grip the mallet with the bottom hand like a vice for roll shots.

Have a good Winter everyone!

Sarah Hayes,
Coaching Committee Chairman

Photographs:

Above left - Keswick Chairman Ian Hall coped better than most with the longer grass than usually found at Tyneside a few years ago when the club was in transition between Council and club members mowing their courts. It's much faster now!

Above - Jim Field combating some rare rain in South Africa with his usual gusto.

Opposite page - Full roll shots from (top) Sarah Hayes and (bottom) Gabrielle Higgins, both at the Women's AC World Championship at Nottingham in 2015.

Images by Chris Roberts.

So far this year I have been able to authorise the issuance of around 40 coaching badges, including almost everything from Club Coach to GG Grade 3 Elite.

The work put in by all the candidates is immense, and I warmly congratulate each and every one of them on their achievements – thank you all from the Coaching Committee for your dedication and enthusiasm.

I wanted to take this chance to share with all the readers some of the comments I receive, from both participants and Examining Coaches, which are included within the reporting paperwork:

- "outstanding candidate on the course"*
- "reported back to me in glowing terms"*

Coaching qualifications

- "will be a valuable asset"*
- "no hesitation in recommending"*
- "inspiring days attending courses"*
- "I hadn't expected to enjoy them as much as I did"*
- "more than satisfied with progress"*
- "Lovely :-)"*

Whilst I am fairly sure the last comment was directed at me (?), I hope you are all able to see exactly how well all candidates work and prepare for the qualification courses they attend.

The list of comments could easily be ten times the size, just from messages within the last few months.

Grumbles are few and are mainly down

to paperwork going missing in the post, or being sent to the wrong person; all outstanding queries have now been dealt with, and documentation is sent via email, so not everything runs smoothly and efficiently.

My thanks again to all the folk behind the scenes who are making the courses and supporting sessions work so well.

Anyone keen for next year???

Go on – speak to someone local who might have some advice for you, and enrol on a course.

Don't forget – once the fixtures are live the course places go quickly!

Dither at your peril!

Sarah Hayes,
Coaching Committee Chairman

Launching a Projectile using Propellant ~ A cannon tale by Sarah Hayes

Further to my article on Cannons in the last Gazette, I thought that readers would like this amusing tale.

Sprinting to corner 1!

Playing at Cheltenham recently, I was amused to see an old croquet chum, Laurence Latham (left), sprinting along the bank from the clubhouse to court 6 at almost 9.20am first day.

I was on a nearby court and watched with interest as he proceeded to play a perfect three-ball corner 1 cannon and thanked my lucky stars I was not playing him.

Without further consideration I continued with my game. Later on, over lunch, Laurence and his wife Deborah came to say hello and Laurence explained his 'world record' beating sprint earlier.

He wanted to get to the court before his oppo (but within his 10 mins allowance for practice) so as to have a go at a corner 1 cannon, as this needs three balls to perform, and if his oppo turned up to practice he would need to relinquish one of them.

He told me he had enjoyed my article and relished having a try, as he felt he normally hit the cannon too gently.

I congratulated him on his effort and he agreed he was pleased with the result.

Whilst reading the article Laurence was reminded of an earlier piece on Cannons and quickly located it and handed me a printed version.

This man's mind must be a labyrinth of knowledge as the article he referred to, and found very quickly, was from the September 1974 Gazette and written by Leslie Riggall.

Bloomin' cheek!

The first section highlighted to me was:-

"The next group of cannons involves a stronger stroke; ladies will have to strike with full force."

Well what a bloomin' cheek!

Of course I was still at primary school then so no matter.

The second section:

"The next group is usually for men.."

We all laughed but I did wonder why it was Men Only? Why would certain shots require lower IQ?

So, joking apart, I showed the article to a few players at the tournament and the overall consent was that perhaps the first quote should have added children and

feeble or short men (or both) to the text, and the second quote should have added some exclusions (e.g. ladies, children, etc.).

This all got me to thinking if it was just croquet (albeit in 1974) that felt so strongly about females and cannons and I found some interesting facts.

More female cannons

There are cannons named Big Bertha (large female), Dora (pleasantly female), Lazy Grete (uncaringly female) and Mons Meg (frighteningly female), whereas the only cannon I could find with a male name was Little David...

And there I rest my case, and without wanting to turn into a conical bore (see what I did then),

I will leave you with Leslie Riggall's final comments – which are still more than relevant today:-

"It is all a matter of being alert to the opportunities which arise, and the greatest argument in favour of cannons is the fact that they are fascinating to play, and add a lot of fun to a game which is often played in a manner which is too stereotyped and unenterprising."

Times have changed and I hope this has entertained you – I like to think Mr Riggall would have seen the funny side.



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continued from page 19.

... it seemed the best (or only) chance of a clear result was for Davis to win, but it was Vincent who eventually pegged out as darkness fell.

Polhill's game was still some way from finishing, but both he and Murray carried on!

By about 8.20 pm, with the balls almost invisible, Murray had got to rover and peg, but Polhill hit a 17 yard lift shot and local member Arthur Lindley brought out a powerful hand-held lamp which helped Pollhill to complete a break from 4-back and peg out just on 8.30 pm.

So Polhill's run of eight consecutive victories had been just enough to catch Davis on 10 wins, both being the only players to complete all 14 games.

In all six games were left uncompleted, indeed two games in round 14 never even started.

The remaining two players in the event, not involved in the final action, had mixed fortunes.

Chris Martin, playing his first Eight, showed obvious promise for the future, whereas David Harrison-Wood had a miserable time; frequently pegged down, and struggling for form, he lost confidence, and completed only 10 games.

Full results at: croquetscores.com/2018/ac/treasurers-tankard/

The Croquet Association Website

www.croquet.org.uk

is a fabulous resource for croquet information covering: membership, news, laws & rules, coaching, who is who, and tournament details (complete with an on-line entry system).

Croquet jargon

the CA website also has a full glossary of croquet terms, jargon and acronyms that are sometimes used in Gazette reporting.

To find the glossary go to:

[Advice & Technical/ Other Articles / Croquet Jargon](#)

or use this link:

<https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=tech/other/jargon>

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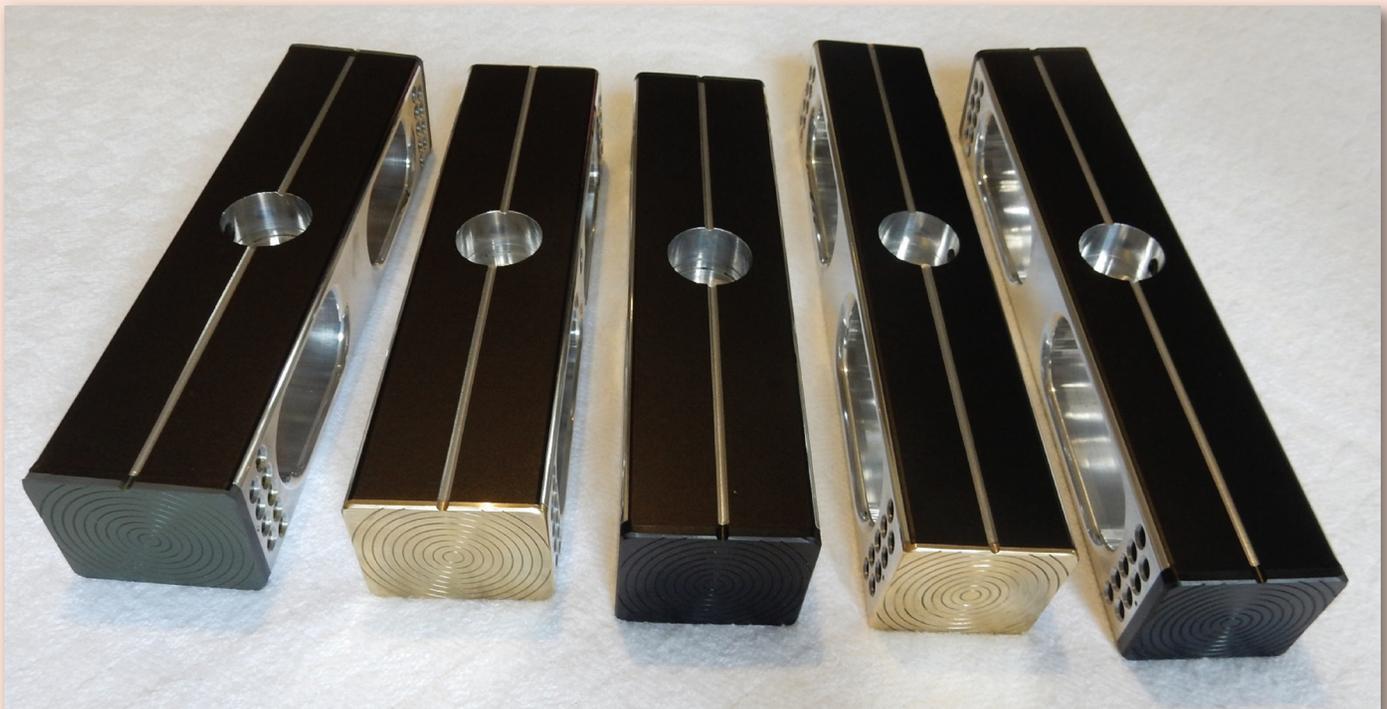
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