



# CROQUET

## GAZETTE

Issue 391 | May 2021



## FINALLY... THE FINAL

Sophie McGlen lining up a peg-out for Nottingham in the delayed Mary Rose Final at Wrest Park

**REWORK AT  
REIGATE**  
All thanks to a CA Grant

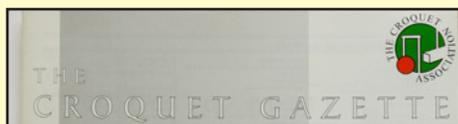
**EASTER AC ACTION**  
Featuring Surbiton and  
Cheltenham



# From our files

- RESEARCHED BY FRANCES COLMAN

## 10 years ago - 2011



**New Gazette production** – I hope that you have noticed the increased advertising in this month's Gazette. This is the first issue produced for us by an Agency that raises advertising with the aim of reducing the production costs. This is for a trial for the next three issues. I must emphasise that the CA retains full editorial control...

Barry Keen (from his Chairman's Column).

–

**Great Britain no more in Mac** – In future, the MacRobertson Shield will be contested by England rather than Great Britain. . . The principal reason for this change was to allow Scotland, Wales and Jersey to take part in the lower tiers of the World Team Championship which is now run by the WCF. Both the Scottish CA and Welsh CA have agreed to the change, with Jersey and the Isle of Man not having expressed a strong opinion on the matter...

Ian Lines, International Committee.

–

**West Worthing revival** – croquet was part of West Worthing Tennis Club when it opened in 1887 and was still being played there up to the Second World War. The last evidence we have of it is a silver cup being awarded to Major Jellicorse in 1933. The Club is now reviving its croquet section after all these years and devoting three of its tennis lawns for two full size croquet lawns... Frank Lea.

–

**Golf Croquet Origins** – The earliest writings about croquet seem to have covered all possible formats, but Prichard covers only Association Croquet ('The History of Croquet' by D.M.C.Prichard).

Following the boom in GC since it went international, various people claim responsibility/credit for re-popularising this version of croquet, most recently in my hearing Syd Jones, who said he found it in an old book.

Nevertheless, the surviving minutes of Dulwich Croquet Club show clearly that it was played in the 1920s, probably best of 9 rather than 13. I have never seen an early rule book and possibly there were none.

Also does anybody know when it was first called golf croquet? ... Ray Hall (letter).

## 50 years ago - 1971



**The 1971 Season** – the calendar broadly follows the pattern for 1970, which appeared to meet with the general approval of Associates; except the Men's and Women's Championships have been put back two weeks... One old C.A. fixture is being revived – the Inter-Club Championship – instituted in 1906 and last played at Hurlingham in 1939 as a knockout competition over three days, when nine clubs (teams of six) took part, and Hurlingham beat Compton in the final.

One new Championship is being instituted, a Veterans' Open Championship; after a long discussion the qualifying age has been put at 60.

The conditions of the All-England Handicap have been altered to allow a large number of players to participate in Area Finals. As mentioned in the special Winter number of the Gazette, the Champion of Champions contest is being discontinued.

R. F. Rothwell, Chairman Tournaments Cttee.

–

**Newsletter to clubs** – At its meeting on February 13th, Council decided to establish a new duplicated publication, a newsletter to clubs, which would be issued at irregular intervals as needs require... Every Club will receive two copies, the intention being for one copy to be put on display... In the past the C.A. has been criticised for its general lack of concern for all but the major clubs and well-established clubs. In the Newsletter the opportunity is now there for even the newest and smallest club to make its voice heard. I hope we shall see much closer contact between the C.A. and clubs in the future. Roger Bray, Chairman of Publicity and Development Committee

–

**Handicaps** – Important changes have been made for the 1971 season in handicapping procedure. Hitherto, reductions in handicaps recommended by Tournament Handicappers, although coming into operation immediately, have not become official until approved by the Handicap Co-ordination Committee. The Council have decided that reductions made by Tournament Handicappers shall be treated as confirmed with immediate effect.

## 100 years ago - 1921



Whilst I have access to a private collection of Gazettes going back more than 50 years, research from 100 year old issues requires occasional visits to the collection at CA Office at Cheltenham. With the office being closed to visitors until very recently, for this issue, I have delved into the contemporary book "**Croquet**" by Lord Tollemache (first published in 1914) - Frances Colman.

–

**From the Preface** – ... I have written a chapter on the "Either-Ball" game. I have shown how a break can be laid for each hoop, with and without the aid of making a break yourself. I have also endeavoured to indicate the various aspects of the game and how to circumvent the consequent difficulties, which generally arise owing to constant presence of two "live" balls instead of one.

As the game is only a year old, doubtless other methods will be discovered when the game comes more into universal use. . . . which I hope may be a help and guide to players who have not yet tried to play "Alternative A" or the "Either-Ball" game.

–

**From Chapter 1, Styles** – ... There are two main styles, the Upright, played with a long mallet; and what is known as the Irish or Pendulum, played with much shorter mallet . . . I am by no means sure which is the best.

For Ladies there is no question that the Upright is the best; if for no other reason than that their skirts are in the way of the Irish style.



PHOTOGRAPH: The Lady Julian Parr



**The Croquet Association  
Issue 391 | May 2021**

**Front cover:** Sophie McGlen lining up a peg-out for Nottingham in the delayed 2020 Mary Rose Final at a very cold Wrest Park in April this year. PHOTOGRAPH Chris Roberts.

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## CONTENTS

- 4 Chairman's Column
- 5 New season, new gazette
- 6 BHF National Croquet Week
- 7 CA Club Awards
- 8 Development Committee
- 9 Reigate CC
- 10 Letters to the Editor
- 12 Mary Rose AC final
- 13 Easter AC at Surbiton
- 14 Introducing Advantage GC
- 16 Federation's Columns
- 20 Short Croquet
- 21 Easter AC at Cheltenham
- 23 GC Championships & Series
- 24 Coaching Pages
- 29 Lawn Care
- 30 Mallet Makers adverts
- 31 CA contact details

### HRH The Prince Philip

The Croquet Association notes with sadness the death of His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh and joins with its Patron, Her Majesty the Queen, in mourning his loss. A letter of condolence is being sent by the President. **Ian Vincent, Hon. Secretary**



July 1939. Princess Elizabeth (second from left) and Prince Philip (far right) meet on the croquet lawn at the Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth. PHOTOGRAPH Britannia Museum, Dartmouth

# Welcome

**F**inally we have some croquet to look forward to, play and write about!  
The decision was made to hold back this issue until just that happened and as we catch up with the delayed 2020 AC Mary Rose final that gets Sophie McGlen on our cover, so the 2021 season gets underway with only minimal tournament cancellations in the first few weeks.

A new direction for the Gazette is detailed on page 5 and although it may not be too apparent with this issue, I am looking forward to producing a more 'sport' focused magazine in the future with more space devoted to the actual playing of the game. For this I need your help please with reports and photos from all levels of croquet. Let the new era for the Gazette begin!

**Chris Roberts, Editor | [gazette@croquet.org.uk](mailto:gazette@croquet.org.uk)  
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## Golf Croquet Mistakes - and how to avoid them

**F**rom the writer of the much-acclaimed "Every Shot is Tactical", Stephen Custance-Baker, comes a new GC book "Golf Croquet Mistakes (and how to avoid them)" and another masterpiece from the Coach of the Year 2020 it most certainly is. We have all been in that most annoying of situations when our own action or inaction has cost us a hoop, a game or even a tournament, and there's just no escaping the fact that we made a mistake and it was all our own doing? These are the Homer Simpson moments – "Doh!" This book is not about 'faults' and 'errors', as in transgressions of the GC rules, this book is all about YOU, and what you can do to lessen the chances that you will lose a hoop or game.

Stephen Custance-Baker nails all the unforced mistakes that players of all levels make and tells how to avoid making those mistakes in the first place.

This is an interesting angle to take for a croquet book and a most interesting and insightful work it truly is! Chapters cover everything from Preparation, Equipment and Knowledge, through to Attitude, Carelessness, Execution and Tactics.

In short, "Golf Croquet Mistakes (and how to avoid them)" highlights everything that is in a GC player's own control that will lessen their chances of losing.

I recommend this book as a 'must have' for players of all levels who want to win more often. Order your copy today from the details in the advertisement on page 29.

**Chris Roberts, GC handicap -3**

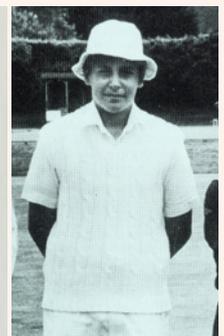
## CA Archivist's project discovers young Suter

CA Archivist Chris Williams reports good progress with his project to scan all the past issues of the Gazette back to number 1 (in the current numbering system) which was published in April 1954.

Chris has now got up to 1981 (Issue 160) which he found had a cover photo of a very young Mark Suter!

Mark had some time out of croquet but has been back a good while now, is ranked 11 in the UK and 16 in the world.

He is also the manager of the CA and often the helpful voice at the end of the telephone at the CA Office and Shop.



37 years apart: Gazette 177 (1984), the same Mark Suter at the AC Open in 2018 and as the current CA Manager





# Chairman of the CA Council's Column

## Make it happen

During the first three months of 2021, Council has considered and approved two very important strategic reviews:

- (i) **Competitive Play**
- (ii) **Inclusivity and Diversity**

### The Competitive Play Review

This review was chaired by David Openshaw, with contributions from more than 50 CA members, covers a broad range of topics for both Association Croquet (AC) and Golf Croquet (GC).

The review considers competitive play from beginner to international level as well as making some major recommendations on how we can revitalise AC.

For **Golf Croquet**, the main recommendations suggest ways to create a competitive culture for higher handicap players as well as creating more opportunities for improvers.

It recommends that AC implements an "Association Series" based on the successful concept of the GC Series competitions.

It also encourages hosting shorter events of one or two days duration.

#### Encouraging younger players

is considered in some depth, with recommendations including: increasing team activities, improving the availability of online information and relaxing the dress code.

A section of the review is devoted getting **our national teams** back on top of the international leader-board.

New Zealand has performed brilliantly in recent years and there are many learning points to be noted from their success.

The CA wants to encourage **more bonding between AC and GC players**, including the possibility of developing a game like "Quick Croquet" which will suit players of both codes.

In 2012 the CA conducted a review of **Association Croquet**. Sadly a lot of its recommendations gathered dust in an obscure part of the website.

This 2021 review has addressed the problems of AC's decline and has made several important recommendations.

It questions whether we are making the introduction of AC to new players too

difficult. We need to reflect the needs of today's lifestyle which suggests shorter, quicker games by promoting Short Croquet, One Ball and 14 point games.

It recommends getting rid of a lot of the jargon associated with AC and implementing changes to some of the laws of the game to make it more intuitive.

The way we coach Association Croquet has come under scrutiny too.

How many times do we see players being put off, having been bombarded with loads of terminology so that by the end of a coaching session their heads are spinning in a cloud of confusion?

This excellent strategic review will only be successful if we implement its recommendations and **make it happen**.

### Inclusivity and Diversity review

The second and equally important review covers Inclusivity and Diversity and was chaired by Beatrice McGlen with contributions by at least 57 CA members.

The review creates a vision for the future and its successful implementation will considerably aid our overall aim of **getting more people playing more croquet in more places**.

We need to be and be seen to be more inclusive and diverse as a sport.

This is a huge area with many considerations.

We won't be able to tackle all the areas at once but I would urge clubs to consider the report when it is published and identify what they can do to try and broaden their appeal to a wider cross-section of their local community.

### Thank you to both teams

Our thanks go to both teams for all the work and consideration that has gone into these two reviews.

They are now being passed to the Executive Board and its committees for implementation in conjunction with the federations and clubs.

### CA Webinars for everyone to enjoy

And lastly, I draw your attention to the various topics that will be covered in our

ongoing CA webinar programme.

These webinars are growing in popularity and I would urge you to attend or watch them in your own time on YouTube.

Recordings of past webinars are stored in a non-searchable area of YouTube and available via the Webinars page (member login required) on the CA web site using this navigation:

**Home .> (double click) Members > Webinars (on the drop down menu)**

Or online readers can use this direct link: [www.croquet.org.uk/?p=members/webinars](http://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=members/webinars)

Coming out of lockdown, we as a socially distanced sport, have a golden opportunity to encourage more players into our sport.

Now is the time to **make it happen**.

**Jonathan Isaacs**  
Chairman of Council

## The CA Shop

[www.croquetassociationshop.org.uk](http://www.croquetassociationshop.org.uk)

### Open for business again

At last... the CA Shop is now open for business.

We are welcoming visitors to shop in a Covid-19 safe environment.

The rules are:

- Shoppers must make an appointment before visiting, by calling 01242 233 555.
- A maximum of two shoppers at a time
- Shoppers must sanitise their hands on entry and wear a face-covering.
- Hand sanitiser and masks are available at the shop entrance.
- Your personal shopper will also be wearing a face covering.

The CA shop is located at The Croquet Association, Old Bath Road, Cheltenham, GL53 7DF

Our opening times are:

Monday	1300 - 1600
Tuesday	1000 - 1500
Wednesday	1000 - 1330
Thursday	1100 - 1330
Friday	1030 - 1500

Call 01242 233 555 to make an appointment to visit the CA Shop.

**Mark Suter, CA Manager**



Let's hope we can return to social gatherings soon. Here are members of Frinton CC pre-Covid, enjoying their fabulous thatched clubhouse.

## Call for Nominations and Notices of Motions for the 2021 AGM

The 2021 AGM is scheduled to be held virtually on the morning of **Saturday, 16 October**

Any nominations for the posts of Hon. Treasurer and Hon. Secretary, or notice of motions to be put to the AGM, should be e-mailed to the Hon. Secretary, Dr. Ian. G. Vincent, [ian.vincent@cantab.net](mailto:ian.vincent@cantab.net), copied to [caoffice@croquet.org.uk](mailto:caoffice@croquet.org.uk), by 1 June. Nominations should give the name of the candidate together with those of the proposer and seconder, and state that the consent of the candidate has been obtained. The Hon. Secretary gave notice at the last AGM that he would not be seeking re-election.

### Election of CA Council Members

Four of the members elected in 2019 to serve on the CA Council will reach the end of their term in October this year. In addition, a by-election is required for the Southern Constituency.

Name	Constituency
Frances Colman*	Southern
John Dawson*	North West
Brian Havill	East Anglia
Jonathan Isaacs*	South East & London
Klim Seabright*	South West

Elections will be held this summer to fill these vacancies, for a term of three years, except for the Southern Constituency which will be for the remaining two years.

Those currently serving are eligible for re-election, but those asterisked have indicated that they do not intend to stand. Please see news items on the website for further information.

**Ian Vincent, Hon. Secretary**

# New season, new Gazette!



## As we move into a new and hopefully post Covid-19 season, the Gazette will also be undergoing change.

Until recent years, the Gazette has doubled as the formal organ of record for the Croquet Association, providing notices and information required to run our sport.

This is a role that has now passed to the website, freeing up the Gazette to focus more on the playing side of our sport and less about the administration of it.

The Gazette is currently the Croquet Association's largest annual expenditure, though it should be able to at least break even, so we are looking to generate greater advertising revenue from the magazine.

In order to achieve this, the Gazette is going to become the sports magazine for croquet with a richer more attractive content to include:

- News items, rather than full reports (based on material supplied by the Secretary, Manager, or Standing Committees of the CA) of AGM and council meetings.
- More club news
- Tournaments news with potted results, some reports (and quality photographs)
- Rankings news
- Big event previews
- News from clubs and federations including, where possible, a profile club and federation in each future issue.
- The World Croquet Federation, European Croquet Federation and other international matters
- Letters to the Editor
- Coaching articles covering all skill levels

- Laws and/or commentary and possible future developments
- Equipment developments and lawn-care
- Book and equipment reviews, humour and gossip, viewpoints, history, profiles and Interviews
- Award winners
- Obituaries of CA members or other croquet noteworthies

To make a success of this, we need all of you to help by sending in quirky and interesting stories and travelogues from your clubs and adventures.

We have also engaged a marketing agency to sell our advertising and assist in finessing the magazine's design but all still under the direction of our Editor Chris Roberts, supported by myself and Beatrice McGlen (Chairman of the Executive Board), working together as the new editorial board (the buck stops here!).

These changes to the Gazette are not a revolution but part of our evolution, something that Chris perhaps more than any predecessor as editor has helped to champion.

We look to ensure that the Gazette is something all members look forward to receiving, reading and sharing as well as it being a tool to recruit new members, new sponsors and a real buzz about croquet.

### Website development

We are also looking to improve the appearance and functionality of the CA website starting with the more public-facing pages that will hopefully attract new members to our clubs and sponsors to our events.

A small working-party of skilled professionals who also play croquet, is currently drawing up a specification for what the current site does and what more we might want from it.

Part of this exercise is an open consultation with all current members to which we would welcome your response to a survey page that we have provided at <https://forms.gle/8LpjYkTdgPSZs3Xc7>.

**Paul Hetherington  
CA Director of Marketing**

# British Heart Foundation National Croquet Week 2021 – 24 July to 1 August

The Covid-19 restrictions have made holding National Croquet Week in its usual berth of May impractical but an exciting opportunity has come up for us to team up with the British Heart Foundation who celebrate their 60th anniversary on 28 July.

This will give us a chance to raise funds for charity by testing the 'come and play' ideas shared at recent online seminars, with guaranteed publicity through the British Heart Foundation's extensive networks.

## Fundraising whilst promoting your club

All participating clubs will receive a digital heart-care pack and local support for fundraising efforts as well as publicity presenting.

This will be a real opportunity for clubs to pull in potential members, promote an important cause and test new ways of reaching out to the public.

## Working with the British Heart Foundation

The Marketing Committee are now working hard to produce "off the shelf" materials that



Phyllis Court held two heats of the Charity One Ball competition in April in aid of the BHF

clubs can download and use for promoting their events and we are arranging how to put clubs in touch with their local British Heart Foundation representatives to ensure that events get full promotion and support.

The aim is for events to run in a nine day window from Saturday 24 July through to Sunday 1 August.

We are hoping for a strong take-up and some great fundraising activities with this exciting opportunity.

Further details will be distributed to clubs soon via email but please start thinking around the dates and what your club can do to get involved, grow croquet, grow awareness for the British Heart Foundation and test a potential model for future recruitment weeks.



Order now at:  
[cashop.org.uk](http://cashop.org.uk)



**Paul Hetherington**  
CA Director of  
Marketing

## Celebrating British Heart Foundation's 60th Anniversary

*The British Heart Foundation is delighted to have been chosen as the Croquet Association's Charity of 2021*

You are helping us beat heartbreak for club members, friends and loved ones everywhere.

One in four people die from heart and circulatory diseases in the UK and we're on a mission to beat the world's biggest killers - heart disease, stroke, vascular dementia and diabetes.

They're all connected and they're all under our microscope.

By funding research, we've helped keep millions of hearts beating and millions of families together; sparing people all over the UK the heartbreak of losing someone they love too soon.

## 2021 is our 60th birthday

2021 is our 60th birthday, marking six decades of progress.

Sixty years ago, the treatment for a heart attack was bed rest and painkillers and the majority of babies born with a heart defect didn't make it to their first birthday.

Today, thanks to research, eight out of ten babies born with a congenital defect survive to adulthood and the number of people who die from heart and circulatory diseases has halved.

BHF-funded research has given us machines that can restart hearts, the ability to fix arteries in tiny babies and the power to give someone a heart they weren't born with.

But our work is far from done and slowing down now puts even more lives at risk, at a time when hearts need help more than ever.

Covid-19 is the single biggest crisis we've faced in 60 years, reducing our funding by half - a staggering £50 million.

The shockwaves for our research will be profound, stalling progress in making the discoveries we, and the 7.4 million people living with heart and circulatory disease, urgently need.

Therefore, your support really will make a big difference and save lives.

Thank you for your hugely appreciated support.

**Victoria Carswell**  
Fundraising Manager,  
British Heart Foundation

# Croquet Association Club Awards 2021



The CA makes awards biennially in three categories to clubs that have made exceptional progress in providing a good playing environment over the previous two years. The Awards will be made at the AGM in October and, besides a certificate, the winning clubs receive £250.

## Millennium Award

for clubs with 5 courts or more

**Nottingham CC** was the only application. This is an exemplary club in terms of activity and promotion of croquet and in the community.

## Apps Heley Award

for clubs with 3 or 4 courts

**Crake Valley CC** was the only application. The club has an excellent relationship with the local community and are very active in applications for funding.

## Townsend Award

for clubs with 2 courts or less

Five applications were received and the joint winners are **Sheffield CC** and **Winterborne Valley CC** (formerly Kingston Maurward CC).

### Previous winners of the CA Club Awards

	Millennium Award 5 courts or more	Apps Heley Award 3 - 4 courts	Townsend Award 2 courts or less
2019	Littlehampton	St Agnes	Tattenhall
2017	Sussex County	Bath and Wrest Park	Cheam
2015	Budleigh Salterton	Swindon and Camerton & Peasedown	High Wycombe
2013	Nottingham	Fylde and West Worthing	Rother Valley
2011	<i>not awarded</i>	Chester	Bury and Swindon
2009	<i>not awarded</i>	Dulwich	Llanfairfechan
2007	<i>not awarded</i>	Crake Valley and Tunbridge Wells	Cornwall
2005	Cheltenham	Bowdon	Ashby
2003	Hunstanton	Ramsgate	Blewbury
2001	Cheltenham	<i>not awarded</i>	Auckland

Both clubs have faced major challenges during the last two years. The tremendous efforts of both sets of club members – during a series of setbacks in Sheffield's case, and finding a new home in Winterborne Valley's case – have ensured that croquet is 'alive and kicking' in South Yorkshire and Central Dorset.

The next round of club awards is 2023 and we would urge clubs to start planning their applications for the award which matches your club's circumstances.

**Paul Francis**  
Chairman, Development Committee



**PHOTOGRAPH** Crake Valley CC in the heart of Cumbria, Graham Jowett



Nottingham's Junior Summer School

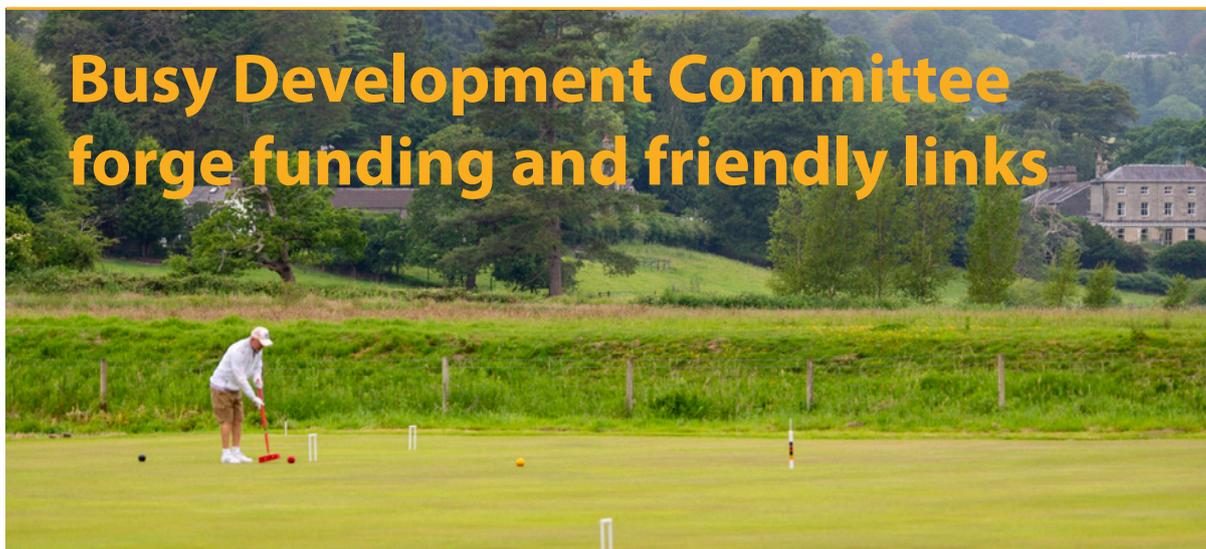


Winterborne Valley



Dean Morton & Mick Derrick at Sheffield

# Busy Development Committee forge funding and friendly links



Since the last article, it has been a busy period for the members of the Development Committee, and in particular research into, and networking with, other sporting organisations have dominated our work.

To date, there are no tangible results from our endeavours, but we are confident that positive outcomes are on the horizon.

Here is a summary of our work over the last few months:

**1 - Engagement with Sport England's Active Partnerships** (there are 43 partnerships in England) to ensure croquet is represented on the A-Z of Sports, and that croquet clubs are listed in each partnership's 'Activity Finder'.

As an exemplar, please visit 'Active Cumbria' (type that into your search engine, or online readers can use this direct link: [www.activecumbria.org](http://www.activecumbria.org) see the link to lovely Crake Valley CC (below).

**2 - Lengthy discussions with Bowls England** have taken place, and it has been agreed to continue to develop collaboration between the two sports.

There is at least one new project in the pipeline, with the prospect of one or more new croquet clubs being formed in the foreseeable future.

**3 - A survey on 'Croquet Matters'** (a Sport England toolkit for Sports Clubs that aids focused planning and decision-making) was launched and completed by 34 clubs, and thank you to the clubs that participated.

As a result we have concluded that there

is a good level of interest in the scheme, and a Webinar is being planned for the autumn, about which more information will follow in due course.

#### 4 - Engagement with the Ground Management Association (GMA).

Paul Brown and Paul Francis have met with the GMA to explore opportunities for a joint project supported by funding by Sport England.

The GMA are keen to help croquet develop:

- a benchmark for lawn quality
- specific resources on the GMA website for croquet lawn management
- online training opportunities for club lawn managers to develop their knowledge and expertise

If you are interested in learning more about GMA courses, please visit: [www.thegma.org.uk/learning](http://www.thegma.org.uk/learning)

### FUNDING: TODAY, TOMORROW AND A GLANCE BACK?

#### Today

Many clubs have shown innovation and creativity in their search for funding streams, and examples range from 'crowdfunding' to grants from local and national businesses.

If clubs are looking for short-term funding for changes to playing arrangements enforced by Covid-19, visit Sport England's 'Return to Play' funding web page, here:

[www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/coronavirus/return-play](http://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/coronavirus/return-play)

#### Tomorrow

Sport England is currently focusing on the return to play, and the impact of Covid-19

lockdowns on sports clubs.

This focus will not last forever, and the new 10-year strategy 'Uniting the Movement' will return Sport England to offering funding opportunities to clubs who:

- wish to improve facilities
- engage in inclusivity and diversity programmes
- plan to recruit and retain young people
- plan to recruit and retain over-50s

#### Glance back

There is no doubt that since 2009 Sport England has been a major provider of funding to all sports and their clubs. So how has croquet benefitted, when compared with another sport such as bowls? (In Wales, Sport Wales is the major provider of funding).

Here is a summary of the grants extracted from Sport England's public records 2009 to 2021; this table excludes Covid-19-related grants.

So does this brief 'glance back' provide us with ideas for the future?

If Sport England is to become one of the first places clubs look to in the future for funding, clubs need to engage in its 10-year strategic plan.

In addition, engagement in its excellent Club Matters (aka Croquet Matters) toolkit would provide any club with a solid foundation from where to successfully apply for funding.

**Paul Francis**  
Chairman, Development Committee

	Number of Clubs*	Small Grants	Inspired Facilities	Community Asset Fund	Get Equipped	Total Grants	Percentage of grants per total number of clubs
Bowls England	1900	314	137	138	4	593	31.2%
<b>Croquet Association</b> <i>member clubs in England</i>	200	13	5	3	0	21	10.5%

\* to the nearest 10, based on 2021 records

# Rework at Reigate thanks to a CA Grant - YOUR CLUB COULD DO THIS!

**R**eigate Priory Croquet Club nestles in a walled corner of Reigate Priory Cricket Ground.

The single 35x23 yards croquet lawn and the club, has existed since the mid-1920s and had developed a number of ridges over the years despite interim fixes.

The most significant ridge has been from hoops 3 to 4 and whilst not visible to the human eye, except in very wet conditions, croquet balls were well aware of it!

**An improvement plan** involved levelling the lawn and hopefully widening the playing area by maybe a yard, as well as reworking a wide sloping border beyond the north boundary into a worthwhile practice area of approximately 3x16 yards.

To achieve all this, the top vegetation would have to be scalped off and the next four inches depth cultivated (rotovated) and combined with 20 tonnes of new sand/loam mixture. The surface would then be Laser-graded level and flat; with consolidation, seeding and fertilizing to follow and with a germination sheet covering to finish.

It seemed simple in principle, however the reality was rather more complicated as the following paragraphs endeavour to show.

[A video diary was published on the club's website <https://reigatecroquet.co.uk>]

Work started on Monday 7 September, in parallel with similar work on the cricket square and grass-courts of our sister clubs, all carried out by JCG Sportsturf. However before the start, the lawn watering system pop-up sprinklers had to be temporarily removed and the pipework blanked off to facilitate the possible widening.

## Club members dig it!

Club members undertook that task which involved digging out a one foot cube around each of the six sprinklers [Photo A] marking the exact positions with large cardboard templates, blanking off the pipes, refilling the hole and tamping down.

Blanking off the pipes proved to be a bit tricky at times [Photo B] but a combination of milk bottle tops, plastic

bags, black electrical tape and wrap ties did the job.

Our lawn was surveyed and scalping off the grass was started, with about a third removed by the end of the first day. The remainder was removed the following day; there was machinery all over the place, tractors, trailers, a digger and a tracked excavator. Disposal of this waste vegetation proved to be a significant part of the project cost. [Photo C]

The next issue was delivery of the replacement soil, the root-zone. The club entrance drive is narrow and had to be kept clear of parked cars, by making judicious use of several empty beer barrels and a long blue rope. This enabled the trucks to deliver the 20 tonnes of "Rootzone" directly onto the outfield conveniently near the lawn. [Photo D].

## Busy Sunday

The following Sunday was a busy day at the club. It is tempting to say "on the lawn" but of course it was no longer there! Edges were cleared up and removing debris from the initial vegetation stripping by hand [Photo E] and more later on by dexterous use of a tracked excavator with a wide narrow bucket (if that makes sense).

As soon as the west boundary was tidied up, cultivation of the top few inches was started using a roller harrow, a somewhat dusty process in the summer-like weather. [Photo F]

At the north end of the lawn the gentle and careful use, by Jason the contractor, of the excavator's bucket revealed that the irrigation system blue pipework was rather close to the surface outside corner 3.

Erring on the side of caution the decision was made not to continue the roller-harrow work over the pipe run and subsequent levelling into the practice area [Photo G].

This area would be flattened out manually but not quite to the same level of precision as the lawn-to-be.

## At last, the levelling

With the cultivation completed, around mid-afternoon, the first levelling was carried out, the laser-grading in which a flat scraper is towed over the surface repeatedly,

moving the soil from high to low by raising or lower the scraper blade until level is achieved.

The scraper height is moved by hydraulics, controlled electronically and automatically from information received from a stationary device (which looks rather like a surveyor's theodolite) with a rotating laser that is set up in one corner [Photo H].

The reason for the mast on the laser grader is to pick up this information "on the level", both height and distance. After many passes and gyrations, work ceased for the day - it was Sunday after all!

## Seeing the fruits of our labour

The following Tuesday, it was all go again, with the laying down the Rootzone 60/40 topsoil to one inch deep across the levelled surface. At the end of the day, focus shifted to some further laser-levelling and flattening in of the rootzone across the practice area, and dusk fell before this was completely finished. The contractors were not on site for next few days and it rained, so seeding was delayed.

After the rain cleared on the morning of 25 September, a small working party of club members re-installed the irrigation sprinkler-heads by mid-afternoon and got the watering up and running prior to the seeding.

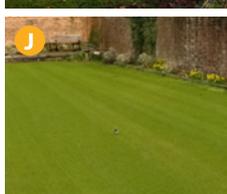
The germination sheet is a fleece-like material that seems to attract foxes to dig it up, so a temporary fence had to be put up in an attempt to deter them and the neighbouring Pilgrim Brewery cat took up guard duty, neither of which proved to be very effective.

**The club is very grateful for the grants received from the CA, the SECF and the Borough Council that enabled the work to take place.**

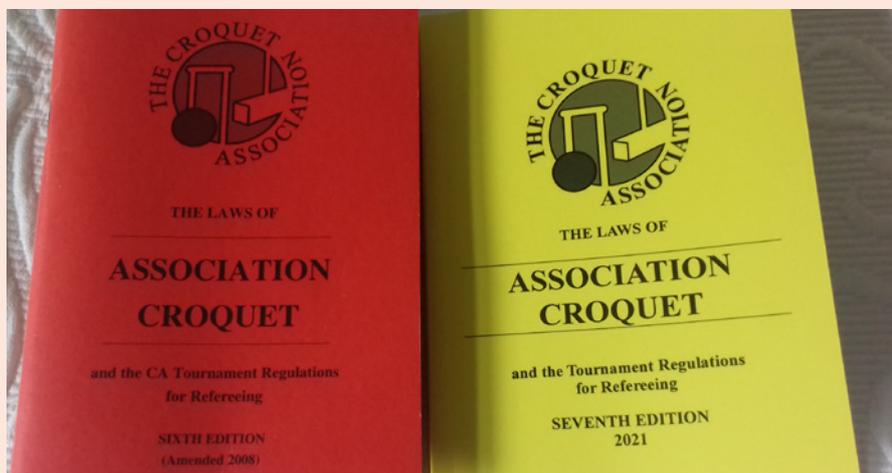
In reality the outcome of the levelling will not be known until the lawn has been played on over the next few years.

[Photo I] was taken after the first cut, five weeks after sowing, confirms that the initial signs were good, and later, despite the wet winter, progress is still on song as shown in [Photo J].

**John Bristow  
Chairman, Reigate Priory CC**



## Players can now be booked and sent off, but not yet 'spiked'!



The attention of referees is drawn to Law 64 in the seventh edition of The Laws of Association Croquet, which came into force on the first day of April.

I see that Referees are now able to "card" players who break the disciplinary codes, because the 6th and 7th editions of the Laws of Association Croquet can be \*up-cycled\* for the dual purpose of cards! The yellow card (7th edition) - when the front cover is shown to a player it indicates an initial warning.

The back cover, when shown to a player, indicates a temporary suspension and the time served only ceases when a purchase is made from the CA shop. The red card (6th edition) - when shown to a player for a serious disciplinary offence results in forfeit of that game.

**Klim Seabright, Cheltenham CC**

The new yellow 7th edition of the AC Laws book dropped on to my doormat this morning and it is bigger and better value.

It has twice as many sheets as the 6th edition but remains in A6 format but with a glued spine rather than staples. Hopefully it will hold together. The text size is a touch larger and now without serifs and amongst the additions are a glossary and enhanced index.

For the geeks:

Number of sheets: 40 (6th) => 80 (7th); 200% of 6th edition

Thickness: 4.92 mm (6th) => 8.20 mm (7th); 166% of 6th edition

Weight: 61.00 g (6th) => 108.75 g (7th); 178% of 6th edition

Whether it stains the back pocket of your whites an incontinent yellow when it rains has yet to be determined.

And here is an AC Laws question: "Is your peg legal?" How many pegs do you know which have the "extension to the peg is approximately 6 inches (152 mm) in length" (Law 5.1.4).

They are all an emasculated 2.5" from the manufacturers. I do not know of any supplier producing pegs to the specification in the Laws and this is not new - it has been the case in previous Laws editions.

Golf croquet does not define or have a peg extension. Someone should let the manufacturers know!

**Dr Ian Plummer, Oxford University Association CC**



## Swinging in bed

I had trouble sleeping this morning, so I decided to work out how accurate my croquet swing had to be to run a hoop at 7 yards. Some research confirmed that an arc's length can be calculated by the formula "distance ball travels times angle (in radians)".

This simple formula shows that for a mere 0.5 degree twist on my mallet, I will miss a target ball entirely at 6 yards, and a hoop entirely at 8 yards.

Frankly, I think it is a miracle we ever hit a ball or run a hoop!!d better go back to bed!

**Ian Shore, High Wycombe CC**

## Croquet in with Kim Kardashian and nuclear war!

I found this snippet in 10 April issue of 'The Week'. According to the magazine, it's been a 'good week' for: Kim Kardashian, who's become a billionaire for the first time; Pam Ayres who has been chosen by the BBC as one of its 'emergency voices' to calm

nerves at a time of national crisis such as a nuclear war; and "Croquet, which is booming in lockdown. Croquet Clubs have been 'inundated' with membership requests, and sales of garden croquet sets have risen sharply". **Keith Ross, Villembits, France**

## Call 'time' on Premium membership

If we are trying to promote croquet to all, and I'm told this is a long-term aim, is it not time to drop the 'Premium' membership scheme? Surely this smacks of 'upper class versus lower class' and therefore puts off many sporting types who might participate - and possibly win!

**Tony Lee, Norwich CC**

Readers are reminded that the views expressed in the Letters pages of the Gazette, are those of the authors only, and not those of their clubs, unless specifically indicated.

## Nailsea's white line assistance for Germany could help here too

Can any readers recommend a line marking system for a small club with 2 or 3 courts?

**John Swabey, Gransdorf, Germany**

The above question was asked originally on the 'Notts List' online croquet forum and I so liked the reply below from Kathy Wallace that I agreed with her and John to reproduce the correspondence here as it will be of interest to many a Gazette reading club grounds manager – Ed.

Hi John

I'm not sure which aspect of line marking you mean but one thing that we have found very useful is to sink small metal tubes into the ground at the four corners of our courts. The corner flags go in these tubes so they are the inside edge corners.

If 'white-liners' put posts, such as bisques, in these tubes and then attach string to them to mark the boundary, the lines can be painted very accurately.

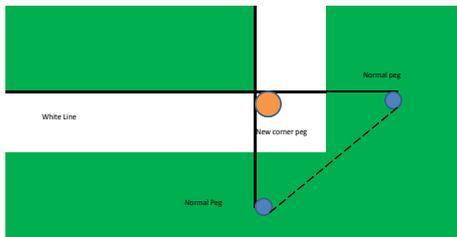
*(A refinement to this, using extra anchoring points, is shown in the accompanying diagram).*

This method prevents the lines from wandering during the season and you only have to measure them once.

We kept posts in the tubes during the winter to keep them open and visible, but do be sure to sink the tubes completely so that they won't damage lawn mowers.

The tubes also give accurate reference points when the hoops need to be moved.

**Kathy Wallace, Nailsea CC**



## How green is your club?

Have you ever wondered what it would take to make one's Croquet Club carbon neutral?

At first thought, the petrol mowers, the fertiliser and the travel, all suggest it might be an unattainable goal.

However there is a growing trend among professional sports clubs to declare sustainability or carbon neutral targets and some have already reached carbon neutral status.

For example, Forest Green Rovers FC, a League Two football club chaired by the owner of Ecotricity, was the first to be certified by the UN as carbon neutral. Other teams in Germany, Spain and the USA have similar goals.

The UN has published a "Sports for Climate Action Framework" to sit alongside the Paris Agreement and highlights the opportunity for sports to drive climate awareness and action in the wider community.

I think the time has come for us to consider what it take might make our clubs greener.

Green energy, organic lawn treatments, recycling waste and carbon offset come to mind.

Does anyone have any knowledge or experience that would help shed some light into the challenges and opportunities it may pose?

**Angharrad Walters, Bowdon CC**

## Good on HRH Prince Philip; he was worth every minute and more

Sarah Hayes and I were playing in the Cheltenham GC Open Series tournament on 17 April and we were aware of the plan for all play (across all eight courts) to pause at the appointed time, in memory of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh.

We were right at one end of the proceedings and we did our 2 minutes silence (we weren't sure if it was 1 or 2 minutes, but the Duke deserved all we had to offer); then I moved about a bit and Sarah whispered "Roger, we've started the proper one; that one we just did was the tennis people next door, I believe", and so we added another minute.

So I think that with three minutes the Duke got terrific value from us, but good on him!  
**Roger Goldring, Phyllis Court CC**

## Were we first again?

Buoyed by our starring role on the cover of the June 2020 issue (*Gazette 386*) playing at the earliest opportunity after the first lockdown easing, Duncan Reeve and I played AC at 7.05am on Monday 29 March for 3 hours, to celebrate croquet's latest re-start. Were we the first to play after lockdown again?

**Richard Peperell, Chairman, High Wycombe CC**

## Why Scarborough?

Don Gaunt's excellent collection of forty or so croquet variations and fun games "Alternative Croquet" includes a three-person game in which the fourth ball can be moved at the start of a turn to any position of the striker's choice.

It goes under the name of Scarborough and is credited to Wendy Davidson, of Canberra Croquet Club.

It is presented as a good coaching game, especially for developing strategic thinking, rushes and leaves.

Has any CA member played it? Does anyone know why it's named 'Scarborough'?

**John Harris, York CC and Northern Croquet Academy**  
\* "Alternative Croquet" is still available from the CA Shop at £7.

## A spot for 'Croquet Courting' anyone?

My toddler keeps talking about tennis courting, which seems to mean going to the tennis courts to play tennis, although it sounds to me like he wants to meet a friend from nursery!

But it got me thinking that "Croquet Courting" would be a good title for a Gazette column. Maybe a small ads column for those looking to find a partner through croquet in the allegedly traditional Victorian way! **Jonathan Kirby, Norwich CC**

## Letters continued...

### New fiction from the Latham pen (or keyboard)

Long-time readers of the Gazette may remember, back in 2012, the appearance of a short story by my husband, Laurence Latham, featuring characters from Lewis Carroll's 'Alice' stories.

'Reflections on Croquet in Wonderland' was reportedly well received among those in the croquet community who enjoy Carroll-esque whimsical humour (combined, in the follow-up 'A Singular Case of Fictional Doubles', with puzzle-solving).

Such readers may therefore be interested to know that 'A Game Changing Enigma' (finally completed during Lockdown 3) is now available alongside the original two stories on Laurence's website at <https://laurencevlatham.wordpress.com/stories-i-have-trying-to-write/>, if they'd like to see whether they can deduce the outcome of the latest croquet-related puzzle before Alice and the Narrator do. **Deborah Latham**



### In short: Mad after lockdown

This is Peter Hanley who turned up to play croquet at Pinchbeck, on a sunny afternoon in his shorts.

However, snow flurries very quickly ruled the rest of the day and club captain Mike Bowser insisted that play continued. Being released from lockdown makes you determined to get out there!

**Gordon Mills, Pinchbeck CC**



### Nottingham win the (delayed) Mary Rose

**N**ottingham defeated High Wycombe to win the delayed 2020 Inter-Club Mary Rose Trophy final at Wrest Park on a sunny but fiercely cold Sunday on Sunday 11 April 2021.

After a slow start, Nottingham's Dave Gunn (1) and Alex McIntyre (2.5) finally got going in the doubles and came from a long way behind to beat Mike Porter (0) and Chris Roberts (0) +3.

The singles rubbers were shared when the midland's Mike Hedge (2.5) beat Richard Peperell (3) +14 but team mate Sophie McGlen (3) lost a close match against Keith Pound (2) -6.

After lunch, McGlen quickly extended the Nottingham's 2-1 lead that her

teammates had established in the morning, leaving them needing just one more win to secure match victory.

McIntyre had the innings at 4-back and peg and Gunn was well up in his game when Hedge closed out a three ball ending just as snow flurries started in earnest. All agreed a quick retreat to the warmth of their cars was in order, the last two matches were duly abandoned and a presentation of the trophy was swiftly made.

Many thanks to our host George Collin at Wrest Park for preparing the courts and braving the cold to stay with us all day!

**Report by Alex McIntyre**

**PHOTOGRAPH** Chris Roberts

John Bevington took this detailed photograph of the Mary Rose trophy, whilst the players from Nottingham and High Wycombe wondered about its 'back story'.

"I'll ask CA Archivist Chris Williams" I said, "he's bound to know" and, not letting me down, Chris came straight back with: there is a letter in the Croquet Gazette number 173 (*Winter 1983*) from Richard Rothwell, who was CA Secretary at the time, that explains why the new event became known as 'The Mary Rose'.

"The CA is very well endowed with trophies, the majority being cups, and when thinking what trophy I could give, other than a cup name, it was an incident which helped me make up my mind.

In November came the dramatic raising of the wreck of The Mary Rose after nearly 450 years lying beneath the Solent, seen by millions live on television."

To celebrate this event the Mary Rose Trust commissioned Rose & Crown, the world's oldest surviving cast pewter makers (established in the XVth century) to make limited (850) replicas of a pewter flagon previously recovered from the wreck, the profits from the sale of which be devoted to the Trust's funds. I applied for one and was allocated No. 362. This seems to me to be a suitable trophy for a new competition, being a reminder of such an historic event occurring in the year when a new competition was launched.

Some thought the trophy should be known as The Rothwell Trophy, but my wish that it be known as 'The Mary Rose' prevailed."





# Easter AC action at Surbiton

## Burch squeaks Surbiton

**J**amie Burch won a very tight Surbiton Easter AC Open Advanced tournament having tied with Samir Patel on six wins from seven games, and crucially having won the game between them.

This year's tournament had a much smaller entry than usual; just 13 players, with handicaps ranging from zero to -2.5.

Many regulars were unable to participate due to Covid-19 travel and accommodation restrictions and the absence of Surbiton's excellent catering and bar probably resulted in a few more staying away.

However, those that could play were glad to be able to start the season in the normal way, after last year's Covid-19 enforced cancellation. The weather on day 1 was fine and warm in the sunshine, and although the north wind made the morning of day 2 rather cold with a brief flurry of snow, the sun returning for the afternoon.

## Dibben surprise of round 1

The first round was a random draw and, as is usual for the first event of the season, a bit of rustiness would have been expected.

However, it seemed that world ranking positions offered a good basis for start-of-season form, and the closest we got to an upset was Surbiton club chairman and hoop-setter Andy Dibben (handicap 0) beating Phil Cordingley (-1, Hampstead Heath) by 12 in a three-hour epic.

Round 2 saw a good quality match between Mark Ormerod (-2, Hurlingham) and Samir Patel (-2.5, Surbiton).

After Ormerod missed a Duffer tice, Patel took a fourth-turn break to 4-back. Ormerod hit the long lift shot and promptly embarked on a TPO. If this was considered adventurous for the start of the season, Ormerod was having none of it and played it tidily with only a jawsed straight rover peel creating any jeopardy.

He dealt with this, but at the expense of leaving a ball in court – although he did get a hoop in the way of it rushing to hoop 1.

However, from the contact, Patel managed to rush it to 'the right quarter of the court', successfully approached the hoop and finished +14otp.

## Polhill wins a marathon, eventually

Round 2 also saw a contrasting game between Nigel Polhill (-1.5, Hurlingham) and Malcolm Bigg (-0.5, Woking).

Unfortunately, this article doesn't have space

for a turn-by-turn account, but after expiry of the three-hour time limit they found themselves with scores level (24-24). Polhill eventually prevailed +1(t).

## Jenkins causes the biggest upset

If that was the longest game, the biggest upset was Tudor Jenkins (0, unattached and with a pre-tournament grade 1751) beating Jeff Dawson (-2, Woking, grade 2210) +17.

Jenkins was also part of the quickest game, although the work in that case was mainly done by Jamie Burch (-2.5, Reigate Priory) who won that +26tp.

## Burch and Patel lead the field

Burch and Patel led the field from the outset, but with Burch having won the game between them (+26tp), he was clear favourite as the pair ran clear of the field, with other players, progressing towards the top of the Swiss, finding themselves beaten by one or other, and sometimes both.

However, Nick Parish (-1.5, Surbiton) had other ideas and ran Patel close in the penultimate round until a failed hoop returned the lead to Patel, who avoided the same error as in the final round against Burch, winning +9.

That left the Burch and Patel level on wins, which meant that the game between them was decisive.

The final round also saw TPs from Dawson, +18TP against Paul Castell (0, Sussex County) and Mark van Loon (-1.5, Roehampton) +26tp against Tudor Jenkins, bringing the tally of players with peeling finishes to five.

**Final Positions:** 6/7 Jamie Burch, Samir Patel; 5/7 Mark Ormerod; 4/6 Nick Parish; 4/7 Mark van Loon; 3/6 Andy Dibben, Jeff Dawson; 3/7 Paul Castell, Tudor Jenkins; 1/5 Malcolm Bigg, Phil Cordingley; 1/6 Gary Bennett, Nigel Polhill.

**Samir Patel**

## Hewitt's a handicap hit

**T**he Friday started off chilly and got colder through the morning until the sun finally made an appearance.

This kept the 21 players active and, further encouraged by no catering being available, the pace of play was 'purposeful!'

Some managed to get through five games on the first day and by the close of play there were three players still unbeaten; Anthony Hardwick (handicap 9, Bradfield College and Blewbury) and Guy Hewitt (14, Hurlingham) both on four wins, and Dave Evans (3,

Surbiton) with three wins; they lead from Joel Taylor (-1.5, High Wycombe) on four out of five.

The second day was warmer, but only just, and the pace eased rather as the semi-finals qualifiers emerged, eventually resulting in Hewitt beating Hardwick and Evans getting past Taylor.

The final swung on a blobbed hoop 1 attempt by Evans which let Hewitt in, and by using his bisques, the Hurlingham man never gave Evans another chance, and Hewitt won 26 - 0. Hewitt had managed to compete over the two days and only concede 11 hoops. As a reward he did drop a couple of steps of his handicap card!

A total of 64 games were played over the two days and only two triple-peels were recorded; the first by Nigel Polhill (-1.5, Hurlingham) and the second, towards the end of day two, by Phil 'Fingers' Eardley (-1, Ipswich).

I am grateful to all the players for making my first experience as Manager so pain free.

## Surprising questions raised about handicap card checking

The only point of contention was my request to see players' handicap cards.

Paraphrasing the Pirates of the Caribbean referring to the Pirates Code, it seems that observance of this requirement is more guidance than a rule. When checking with experienced players and managers alike it appears that no one has a clear understanding of the purpose of such card inspection. Perhaps someone out there may be able to help fledgling managers by clarifying such purpose.

**Barry Holland,**  
Manager

*Editor  
Chris Roberts  
comments on  
page 27*



## Weaker player

Weaker player		2649	2499	2349	2199	2099	2000	1999	1899	1799	1699	1599	1499	1399	1349	1299	1249	1199	1149	1099	1049	Stronger player	
		2650	2500	2350	2200	2100	2000	1900	1800	1700	1600	1500	1400	1350	1300	1250	1200	1150	1100	1050	1000	DGRADE RANGE	
		-6	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	14	HCP	
0:0	0:1	-1:2	-1:3	-2:3	-2:3	-1:4	-2:4	-3:4	-5:4	-6:4	-3:5	-4:5	-5:5	-6:5	-7:5	0:6	-1:6	-2:6	-3:6	-4:6	-6	2650-	
0:0	0:1	-1:2	-1:3	-1:3	-2:3	-2:3	-1:4	-3:4	-6:4	-5:4	-3:5	-4:5	-5:5	-6:5	-7:5	-7:5	0:6	-1:6	-2:6	-3:6	-5	2500-2649	
0:0	0:0	0:1	-1:2	-1:2	0:3	0:3	-1:3	-3:3	-4:3	-4:3	-3:4	-4:4	-4:4	-1:5	-2:5	-3:5	-4:5	-5:5	-6:5	-7:5	-4	2350-2499	
0:0	0:0	0:1	0:1	0:1	0:2	0:3	-1:3	-2:3	-3:3	-3:3	-4:3	-5:3	-3:4	-4:4	-1:5	-2:5	-3:5	-4:5	-5:5	-6:5	-3	2200-2349	
0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	-1:0	-1:1	-1:1	0:3	-1:3	-2:3	-3:3	-4:3	-4:3	-2:4	-3:4	-3:4	-4:4	-5:4	-6:4	-2:5	-2	2100-2199	
0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	-1:0	-1:1	-1:2	0:3	-1:3	-2:3	-3:3	-3:3	-4:3	-2:4	-3:4	-3:4	-4:4	-5:4	-6:4	-1	2000-2099	
0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	-1:0	-1:1	-1:2	-1:2	0:3	-1:3	-2:3	-3:3	-4:3	-2:4	-3:4	-4:4	-5:4	-6:4	0	1900-1999	
0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	-1:1	-1:2	-1:2	0:3	-1:3	-2:3	-3:3	-4:3	-2:4	-3:4	-4:4	-5:4	1	1800-1899	
0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	-1:0	-1:1	-1:2	-1:2	0:3	-1:3	-2:3	-3:3	-2:4	-3:4	-4:4	-5:4	2	1700-1799	
0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	-1:0	-1:1	-1:2	-1:2	0:3	-1:3	-2:3	-3:3	-1:3	-2:3	-3:3	-4:3	3	1600-1699	
0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	-1:0	-1:1	-1:2	-1:2	0:3	-1:3	-2:3	-3:3	-1:2	-2:3	-3:3	-4:3	4	1500-1599	
0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	-1:0	-1:1	-1:2	-1:2	0:3	-1:3	-2:3	-3:3	-1:1	-2:3	-3:3	-4:3	5	1400-1499	
0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	-1:0	-1:1	-1:2	-1:2	0:3	-1:3	-2:3	-3:3	0:0	-1:0	-1:1	-2:1	6	1350-1399	
0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	-1:0	-1:1	-1:2	-1:2	0:3	-1:3	-2:3	-3:3	0:0	-1:0	-1:1	-2:1	7	1300-1349	
0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	-1:0	-1:1	-1:2	-1:2	0:3	-1:3	-2:3	-3:3	0:0	-1:0	-1:1	-2:1	8	1250-1299	
0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	-1:0	-1:1	-1:2	-1:2	0:3	-1:3	-2:3	-3:3	0:0	-1:0	-1:1	-2:1	9	1200-1249	
0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	-1:0	-1:1	-1:2	-1:2	0:3	-1:3	-2:3	-3:3	0:0	-1:0	-1:1	-2:1	10	1150-1199	
0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	-1:0	-1:1	-1:2	-1:2	0:3	-1:3	-2:3	-3:3	0:0	-1:0	-1:1	-2:1	11	1100-1149	
0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	-1:0	-1:1	-1:2	-1:2	0:3	-1:3	-2:3	-3:3	0:0	-1:0	-1:1	-2:1	12	1050-1099	
0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	0:0	-1:0	-1:1	-1:2	-1:2	0:3	-1:3	-2:3	-3:3	0:0	-1:0	-1:1	-2:1	14	1000-1049	

Any changes made to starting scores will INVALIDATE the game result

## ADVANTAGE Golf Croquet

### Table of Starting Scores

for first-to-7 games

Stronger : Weaker

*Roy Tillcock, January 28, 2021*

### 2021 WCF/CA Official Trial

Only results from the Official Trial (being run by the SCF) are authorised to be included on players' handicap cards

Results from any other Advantage GC games must NOT be entered on handicap cards in 2021

- CA Handicap Committee -

# Advantage GC

- THE TRIAL OF A HANDICAP GAME WITH 'NO EXTRA TURNS'

## A WCF project introduced by Stephen Mulliner

WCF Secretary General

I am pleased to send you advance notice of what the World Croquet Federation (WCF) Management Committee believes is an important development in handicap Golf Croquet and hence in the marketing of GC worldwide.

The current form of handicap GC uses extra strokes and is played mainly in Australia, England, and New Zealand and almost nowhere else.

It is not generally regarded as the optimal way of allowing players of different abilities to compete on equal terms.

In 2020, the WCF Management Committee (MC) obtained details from the Croquet Association of Ireland of a form of handicap GC that it had used successfully in recent years. This did not use extra strokes but instead gave the weaker player an advantage in the form of a certain number of hoops. Unlike the current form of handicap GC, this version did not require different tactics from the level game and it was believed that this made it easier for new and improving players to develop.

## The designing of 'Advantage GC'

The MC then established a Working Group with representatives from Australia, England, Latvia, Uruguay and USA with the task of coming up with a statistically sound and yet simple-to-use algorithm which would give both players a 50/50 chance of winning a game through an adjustment of the number of hoops that needed to be scored by one or both players to win a game.

The Working Group has developed a form of GC which has been named "Advantage GC". The WCF MC believes that Advantage GC has an excellent chance of gaining general support amongst the playing community if they have the opportunity to try it out.

## An official trial

An official trial will take place during 2021 in the Southern Federation League season.

However, players around the world are warmly encouraged to try Advantage GC in their clubs and feed back to the WCF MC their impressions and observations, and also provide game results which show the handicaps and/or DGrades of the players.

A dedicated email address has been set up for this purpose: [advantagegc@worldcroquet.org](mailto:advantagegc@worldcroquet.org)

## Chief Designer, Roy Tillcock Ryde CC, Southern Federation

The chief designer of Advantage GC is croquet-playing former maths teacher Roy Tillcock from Ryde CC on the Isle of Wight. Quite independently of the WCF Working Party and coincidentally, Roy had been working for a couple of years to devise a robust and statistically sound alternative GC handicap game and had even tested a version in a few first-to-seven game at his home club with encouraging results

## A mathematically sound and robust system

Crucially, Roy's game is based upon the tried and trusted 'Exchange of Index Points' table which was re-worked by croquet mathematical geniuses James Hopgood, Jonathan Kirby and Robert Fulford in 2016 and is familiar to GC handicap card users. Millions of computer simulated 13-point games led to a set of 'starting scores' that are statistically most likely to give both stronger and weaker players a 50/50 chance of winning in a game of "normal" duration. Roy was quickly brought on to the WCF Working Party to join existing England representative Chris Roberts because it was clear that Roy's work uniquely had a mathematical basis absent from fledgling alternatives existing elsewhere. The Working Party helped Roy hone the finer detail of this new game, "Advantage GC". The table of Starting Scores, which accompanies this article, was designed to be used by those with existing GC handicaps (in countries that have handicap systems) and Ranking DGrades (in countries without handicap systems).

**Chris Roberts, co-CA representative on the designing WCF Working Party**

## How to play Advantage GC? Simple - it's level play with an adjusted starting scoreline.

The starting score for a game is obtained by cross referencing stronger/weaker handicaps in the accompanying table.

**These scores are sacrosanct and MUST NOT be changed.**

Hoops are played in the usual order, incrementing the score as each hoop is won. Games finish when a player reaches

## IMPORTANT

Advantage GC is not an officially recognised game and is currently only at the trial stage.

Only results from the Official WCF/CA Trial (being run by the SCF) are authorised to be included on players' handicap cards.

Results from any other Advantage GC games **MUST NOT** be entered on handicap cards in 2021.

**Frances Colman, Chairman  
CA Handicap Committee**

## The Southern Federation are hosting the Official Trial

The Southern Croquet Federation (SCF) will host the Official Trial of Advantage GC in 2021, on behalf of the World Croquet Federation and with the agreement of the Croquet Association and its Handicap Committee.

The SCF are utilising their mature Handicap League as the 'test bed' because there is good confidence in the accuracy of the handicap regimes at participating clubs and the known group of players likely to play in the 16 teams.

**This is vital, because for the results from the trial to be trustworthy the players' handicaps have to be correct in the first place.**

The Official Trial will gather and analyse the 912 individual game results from the recently re-christened SCF Advantage GC League in the 2021 season.

Success will be judged on the percentage of game wins for the stronger/weaker player, occurrences of 7-6 and 7-5

scorelines and, most importantly of all, did the players enjoy the game!

**Roy Tillcock, SCF Leagues Manager**

a SCORE of 7. (Note that a winner starting from a negative score will have won more than 7 hoops, or starting from a positive score, less than 7 hoops).

There is no identifiable "golden hoop" and players will need a reliable method of keeping score. A recommended pegging method is part of the SCF trial and details will gladly be shared upon application.

**Please contact Roy Tillcock:**  
[scfgcman@gmail.com](mailto:scfgcman@gmail.com)

# The Federations Columns - AND NOW THE NEWS FROM WHERE YOU LIVE

## West Midlands



Tony Johnston and Rhona Syder at Eardisley CC

The West Midlands Federation (WMF) has, like most, been holding its committee meetings via Zoom and recently its traditional pre-season March meeting allowed arrangements for the season ahead to be discussed.

All attending clubs reported that they planned to open at the first opportunity on 29 March, with most operating a booking system, and all observing Covid-19 safety guidelines. Some clubs also outlined their own precautions and procedures with contributions from **Eardisley**, **Broadwas** and **Kenilworth**.

The usual West Midlands Federation AC and GC Leagues will go ahead this year but some clubs may want to wait until mid-season to travel.

Since the meeting, several clubs have reported great enthusiasm for resumption of play and have reported their members keenly booking-up courts and enjoying the start of the season.

Federation Chairman, Brian Shorney, hopes to introduce Short Croquet in some form this year and he has also proposed to run a training session on match tactics for new players in the leagues, which Edgbaston have offered to host, sometime after 17 May.

Our Coaching Officer, Phil Bate, reported on the slight changes in the Merit Award system and provided an update on the coaching criteria for both AC and GC.

WMF clubs are planning to host the several tournaments, including **Edgbaston** who will be running the Halse AC tournament and there are GC B-Level (3+) Series and C-Level (7+) Series tournaments at **Broadwas** on consecutive days, 28 and 29 June respectively, which might suit some travelling partners especially.

**Jen Johnston**  
West Midland Federation Secretary

## East Midlands



After prolonged consultation with our members and with much hard work by James Parker, to whom all our members are very grateful, we finally have a logo!

**Nottingham** started refurbishing both pavilions during lockdown; one has been finished, the other will be completed after Easter. Play restarted on the 29 March and the first CA Fixtures Calendar tournament will be the Peel Memorials (AC handicap) which was moved to the 20 May to fit in with Government Covid-19 guidelines.

Nottingham has also purchased CCTV to monitor unwelcome visitors holding drinking sessions in our huts.

**Dunston** has doubled the number of their club playing sessions to cope with the demand and to minimise crowding.

With the help of a grant from North Kesteven District Council, the club has bought two more sets of balls which means they can return the ones that had been on loan from the Federation.

**Ashby** had a good turnout for a working party on Sunday 28 March and record special thanks to Rupert, Colin and Maurice for the splendid work they did on laying the new path from the entrance to the pavilion and shelter.

The club opened for play on 29 March, only one day later than our normal opening at the beginning of British Summer Time, and using the same booking system and playing conditions as last year.

On 1 April, six players braved the cold weather for two very enjoyable games of Pirates by the time of our first club tournament, on the following Easter Monday, the weather had improved again.

The **Leicester** AGM was due to be held on 11 April via the Federation Zoom account, and the start of their playing season was scheduled for 18 April with a full calendar of coaching, 'Learn to Play' sessions and club competitions. Leicester City Council have continued to provide maintenance of lawns throughout the lockdown period including a recent additional application of worm suppressant. Plans to create an extra court are still ongoing and membership has held up well, as they like many other clubs, look forward to a full season of competitive and social play.

**Mick Haytack**  
Development Officer

## East Anglia



The unspoilt view at Downham

The accompanying photograph shows the completed preparations at my home club, **Downham**, for play to begin on 3 April. The courts are in the middle of the beautiful gardens of Stow Hall, Stow Bardolph, and are surrounded by great spreading Lebanon Cedar and Fern Leaved Beech trees.

Our first club tournament will be our heat of the Charity One-Ball competition on 17 April, which is part of the national charity fundraising competition, which we greatly enjoyed for the first time last year.

As a Federation, we have set out a full calendar of league matches for both GC and AC, and hope to establish a new Short Croquet (SC) league to tie in with the national competition.

Given the geographical spread of the region there is quite a lot of travelling involved, so we try to split up into smaller, paired county zones for the initial matches.

**Frinton** (which is about as far as you can get in East Anglia from Downham) have been successful in their bid for a grant from the CA, and work begins in April to establish a croquet lawn, after a brief hiatus of 50 years, amidst the array of grass tennis courts that march past their splendid Edwardian clubhouse. **Ipswich** have unfortunately been given notice to quit by their hosting golf club, and are having to search for a new home. We wish them the best of luck in this endeavour. Meanwhile, let's all seize the moment and enjoy our lovely game again. See you on the courts!

**Jonathan Toye**  
Development Officer



The new path at Ashby CC

A very difficult hoop!

## South-West



Our series of Zoom meetings have dominated the SWF's preparations for the long anticipated new season.

Numbers attending continue to grow, as do plans for future topics for our monthly and ad hoc Zoom events.

In March, we welcomed Dr. Ron Carter to introduce the SWF to safeguarding issues for croquet clubs, and in April we will be joined by Jonathan Toye to discuss how clubs can plan for and implement accessibility.

In late March, Dave Kibble ran a special Zoom event on 'Changes to the AC Laws for club and tournament players'.

The SWF's Zoom account has a limit of 100, so we opened up the meeting 15 minutes early, but all the seats were taken within the first five minutes. We're not sure if this was due to Dave's reputation or to our advance publicity, but congratulations to Dave for hosting our first sell-out evening!

Many attendees, who had understood that the only significant changes to the Laws related to critical and hampered strokes and positions, were surprised to discover this was the tip of the iceberg.

Our referees and players were sent scurrying for their Yellow Books!

Ever generous, Dave has made his presentation available at:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=2dVi1-d2xF](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2dVi1-d2xF)

This season, the SWF is testing radical changes to coaching which are being led by Roger Mills as the Federation's Coaching Officer. The aim is to extend the availability of coaching for all levels of players.

The SWF covers eight counties and 10,000 square miles, so to minimise travel times and expenses for its members, we are planning to introduce hubs / host clubs where coaching will regularly take place led by the Federation's graded coaches.

This will mean that the vast majority of members will travel no more than 40 miles / one hour to attend a Coaching South West course. Inevitably, 2021 will see a slow start to the programme, but in April we will be launching six courses for club-level coaches and one Coaching Qualification Course.

These courses will be delivered by a series of Zoom sessions, followed by a one-day practical lawn session held at a range of our hub / host clubs.

*Continued on page 27...*



Frances Colman presents a first handicap card to Frazer and Max, with Mr Hardwicke looking on.  
**PHOTOGRAPH** Chris Roberts

Spring is sprung and we are playing croquet again, which must be good for our mental health. Many SCF clubs started play as soon as it was permitted. Personally, I (Peter) was on the lawn before 10 am on Monday 29 March, writes Peter Allan, trumping co-author Chris Roberts' 4 pm effort!

The Southern Croquet Federation is running a full set of nine leagues in 2021, although the AC Short Croquet league would have benefitted from a few more entrants.

On behalf of the World Croquet Federation, the SCF is running the official trial of Advantage GC in our handicap league (now re-christened the Advantage GC League) – see the feature on page 18-19.

Some league matches have taken place already, in a Covid-19-secure manner of course, and one such was **High Wycombe CC** who like doing thing first (*remembering their 'first to play' after the initial lockdown Gazette front cover last May*). In this issue, they claim to have played the county's first League match of this season (v Winchester CC) just nine days after the lockdown eased and then they staged the coup of all coups!

Your Editor, Chris Roberts, is also Chairman of **Phyllis Court CC** at Henley, about half an hour from 'local rivals' High Wycombe, and he was waxing lyrical to all and sundry about how his Phyllis Court teams were going to stage a 'World First' inter-club match in the Official Trial of the new Advantage GC rules.

Unbeknown to Roberts, **High Wycombe** Chairman Richard Peperell (who is also a Phyllis Court member) quietly 'got in first' and played Wycombe's first Advantage GC league match two days earlier, leaving Roberts to report to his club mates that they had after all only staged a 'World Second'; and that doesn't have quite the same ring to it, does it! CA member Anthony Hardwicke is a

chemistry teacher at **Bradfield College**, and he has not only introduced croquet at the private school near Pangbourne, Berkshire, he has registered **Bradfield College Croquet Club** as a member of the CA, and he took some students to the Schools and Juniors Championship last season.

This season, Anthony has encouraged three of his boys to join the CA as U25 members and to enter the **Watford GC C-level (7+)** Series tournament!

'Mr Hardwicke' (to the boys) will be taking Frazer Creighton, Max Crome, and Cosmo Denny to the tournament in a school minibus, along with our best wishes for a successful and enjoyable time, lads!

In preparation for their tournament entries, CA Handicap Committee Chairman Frances Colman and fellow CA Handicapper Chris Roberts visited Bradfield College to assess Frazer, Max and another player Josh Angers, and were able to do this in the middle of lockdown; this was because playing croquet on the college main quad was permitted, as it is an internal school sports education activity.

While the usual early season coaching courses could not be held this year, the **Chiltern Academy at High Wycombe** did run several Zoom sessions, led by Cliff Jones, about the changes to the laws of AC that came into effect on 1 March.

These proved to be very popular and we found the sessions that we attended were entertaining, as well as informative.

Back on court, the SCF ran both its Champion of Champions day tournaments (for members club's handicap champions) in April at **Hamptworth**. Both titles were retained by the holders; **Blewbury's** Peter Allan won the AC and Tim O'Donnell of **Hamptworth** won the GC.

**Peter Allan, SCF Development Officer**  
**Chris Roberts, SCF Chairman**

# The Federations Columns - AND NOW THE NEWS FROM WHERE YOU LIVE

## Croquet North



### A canny good day!

**T**yneside CC's season opened on 3 April with our usual opening day offering of variations on a theme of croquet.

The privations of the past year sparked a higher than usual first-day crowd.

However, as we had followed CA advice by publicising in advance, requesting details of attendees and running things under the direction of an organiser who was present and responsible for ensuring that it was conducted in a COVID-19 secure manner, we could safely accommodate the numbers. We had marked out the courts earlier in the week with the added novelty of marked-out penalty areas for GC and this sparked in me the idea

for a new game to add to our repertoire.

It is played with two teams of up to four players, each starting opposite each other, on the east and west boundaries, one team with primaries and one with secondaries.

The objective for a team is to get one of their team's balls into the opposing semicircle. Teams play alternately in sequence unless they roquet another ball (any ball) for which they get an extra shot.

The balls are played from where they end up, as in Ricochet, and to score a 'goal', the ball must stop within the lines of the semicircle, as in shove ha'penny. If a ball goes out of bounds it is replaced halfway along either the north or south boundary.

When a goal is scored, teams start again back in their starting positions with the next in sequence of the team that just conceded a goal playing first. We tried games of half an hour which resulted in one 3-3 draw and a 2-1 win, so that seems about right.

We also played games of Pirates and GC triples (the fifth and sixth players take white and green so when you look at the centre peg the sequence is there to help you – blue, red, black, yellow, the white of the peg and the green of the grass).

I also like to call this Baltic Croquet as the blue, black and white of the Estonia flag plays the red, yellow and green of Lithuania, but then I like flags almost as much as Sheldon Cooper!

The day also gave us a chance to see how the lawns had recuperated from the problems of the past year.

At the end of 2019 parts of the lawns were in a very bad state (as the photo shows), so we applied for a Development Grant from the CA.

This was turned down because such grants are not available for works necessary due to lack of maintenance, but we were fortunate enough to be awarded a £5k interest-free loan repayable over five years instead.

Things looked good through that close season but then the first lockdown was visited upon us and I think we were a little naive in thinking we could not classify looking after the lawns as essential work.

When that prolonged spell of unseasonal weather came along last April, the lack of watering meant we found ourselves almost back to square one.

So at the end of 2020 we had to re-engage the local contractor again to have another go, this time with rather better results, so far at least (as can be seen in the second photo), which also shows our major incentive for anyone to enter one of our tournaments in the CA Fixtures Calendar – the Wylam Brewery and Brewery Tap are only a good rush away from our Clock Lawn.

**Derek Johnson, Tyneside CC and Belsay Hall CC**

## MC Percival Mallets



Aluminium head mallets made from high grade aluminium & fitted with long lasting Tufnol end caps which can be easily replaced if damaged.

The heads are anodised (hardened) and will be available in a variety of colours including black, blue and red.

They have been thoroughly tested and provide an accurate, reliable, peripherally weighted mallet.

These heads can be fitted with any of the carbon fibre shafts and are available in 10" and 11" head lengths and a base weight of 2 lbs 15 ozs (1332 g) adjustable from (1280 g to 1370 g).

**Michael Percival**

07780 677943

michael@croquetmallets.co.uk

## North-West

**T**he North West Federation's Spring zoom meeting was well attended, with the main talking-point being the roadmap to recovery set by the Government and how this affects croquet play. League Manager, Ivan Wheatley, explained that the proposed start date for the Federation's six leagues (three AC, two GC and one SC) had been postponed until after 17 May.

Ivan also reported that whilst level play GC, B level Advanced AC and Midweek Handicap AC leagues can still be completed in their original format the other three leagues have larger number of teams entered and it

is therefore impractical to expect all fixtures to be fulfilled.

The proposal, which was carried, was to split the handicap GC, Weekend Handicap AC and the Short Croquet leagues into North and South divisions to ease travel.

The Annual and very popular NW Fed Festival of Croquet, that was featured on page 14 of the last issue (*Gazette 390*) was also discussed, with concerns being raised about the planned date of the last weekend of June being too close to the proposed easing of Stage 4 restrictions (more than 30 people in one place). It was agreed the Festival should go ahead but be moved to the

## South-East



Lockdown easing on 29 March was eagerly anticipated by croquet players across the South East Federation area and, with the sun shining, there was nothing to stop them getting back on the courts in great numbers. Clubs reported that courts were fully booked on that first day and for most of the following week.

BBC South Today paid a visit to **Chichester and Fishbourne CC** to report on the reopening after lockdown. The programme would have been seen by thousands of viewers across the region and was a wonderful advert for the sport. Hopefully it will entice people to visit their local clubs to give croquet a try.

**Sussex County CC** has seen a very encouraging level of entries for the one-day tournaments that they run every year, with some entrants having to be put on reserve lists which indicated that players are keener than ever to get back to normality as soon as possible. The Federation itself is pleased with the entries for their leagues and tournaments, which will all be able to go ahead as long as no further restrictions are



imposed.

This year for the first time, the South East Federation has run some webinars for member clubs. The first was presented by Paul Hetherington, Marketing Director for the CA, on the subject of 'Promoting and Marketing Your Club'. The event was well attended via Zoom and a YouTube link to the recording will be put on our website.

The second webinar presented by Richard Carline and Ian Cobbold, both Championship Referees, was on the subject of GC Rules and again a link to the recording will appear on our website.

The popularity of these webinars has encouraged us to organise more later in the year and during the winter months.

The opportunity has also been taken to completely refurbish our website at [www.southeastfederation.org.uk](http://www.southeastfederation.org.uk) thanks to our webmaster Jon Diamond for that. This, together with our new Facebook page, will give us a fresh new look to start the 2021 season.

**Andrew Stewart, Chair  
South East Croquet Federation**

weekend of 14-15 August.

We have also had a change in officer personnel with Sarah Andrew (**Llanfairfechan**) moving onto the newly formed CA Funding Committee and David Cornes (**Crake Valley**) replacing her as our Federation Development Officer (FDO).

Sarah reported to the meeting that she had supported a grant to **Fylde** which was one of the last awarded by the old-style Development Committee. She also gave her congratulations to **Crake Valley** for their being awarded the Apps Heley Award for the most progressive club with 3 or 4 lawns.

Since the meeting, our FDO has been working closely with 'Active Cumbria' to raise the profile of Croquet in the area.

There are two areas within their website where croquet can be highlighted - Firstly, they have a generic text and a video /photo

for each activity which the CA has supplied and secondly individual links to the local Federation and club information in each county. The next stage is to establish links with other "Active Partnerships" in the north-west and to encourage our member clubs to make contact and champion our sport.

Active Partnerships are recognised as being a good gateway for people with mental and physical well-being needs.

Finally, 2021 will bring different challenges, but it is hoped that a new U3A group, West Pennine Villages U3A, will progress their interest of last year and re-establish play. Any assistance the Federation can give them will be offered as we try to get more people playing croquet at all levels.

**David Cornes,  
Development Officer**

Left Sue Gale at Sussex County CC  
Right Jane Rimmington (left) and Dinah Hutchins (striker) also at Sussex County CC

## Yorkshire



When we were reminded to write this column, the editor said "the 'World is your Oyster' except those that live in Yorkshire who would not want to go anywhere else!"

So here is the news from God's Own County by a Scotsman.

All fourteen of our clubs have survived the pandemic and are making preparations for the coming season. A variety of difficulties have been overcome with enthusiasm and determination.

**Ben Rhydding** (Ilkley) have been flooded twice this winter by the River Wharfe causing the pavilion floor to have to be taken up and replaced. Insurance and some grant aid have helped to secure the site but the long-term solution must be to raise the pavilion by several feet. Strangely the free and fast draining lawns have been largely unaffected.

Ripon Spa CC, who lost their former courts due to the closure of the Ripon Spa Hotel, have secured a six months tenancy at Studley Royal Cricket Club just half a mile from the hotel.

They will have an area that is sufficient for two courts, that the cricket club will prepare and maintain for them, and if it all works out well for both parties then they will look at a longer-term agreement. At that point they may be in a position to increase their membership, raise funds and seriously set about creating very good lawns on what is for the moment a rather damp site. Well done to all at Ripon.

Beverley and East Riding CC, who had lost the use of hotel facilities, have been helped by a Sport England grant to hire a portaloo, much to everyone's relief - I can now stay to the end of my games.

Lots of volunteers helped on clean-up days, setting out lawns and painting sheds in temperatures of up to 24 degrees. The following day, when a photographer from the Yorkshire Post called, temperatures had fallen to 6 degrees; however, our shivering was rewarded by a half-page spread in the paper, extolling the virtues of croquet.

Well done to Debbie James who did the journalist's interview and made all the arrangements.

Some rearranging of Federation events has had to be done but our regional heat of the Charity One Ball competition will go ahead at York on 23 April.

*Continued on page 27...*

# All you need to know about Short Croquet

## Have you had a go at Short Croquet yet?

Short Croquet is an accessible, challenging and enjoyable version of croquet, already well established in the South-West and across the north of the country. Now the parts in between are starting to discover Short Croquet (SC) for themselves.

There is nothing mysterious about it. Short Croquet is a long-established version of 14-point Association Croquet, with minimal rule changes, played on a half-size court. Some clubs call it Short Lawn, but it's exactly the same game.

## Why play Short Croquet?

A SC game normally takes little more than an hour, so it is ideal if time is short. If there is time to spare, why not play two games?

It can be sociable too. With double-banking on two adjacent half courts, there will always be a steady flow of people to chat to while play is in progress.

All SC games are handicapped, so anyone can play anyone, with a fair chance of winning. SC has much to offer across all skill levels. Those new to the game find the smaller court easier to navigate, while for players still developing their game, the court size gives confidence and security and a feeling of greater control.

For skilled players, the smaller court size encourages sharper tactical thinking and greater precision in play.

## Short Croquet for GC players

If you are a GC player looking to expand your horizons, each of the Croquet Academies will be offering Short Croquet courses this year, all designed to build directly on the skills that GC players already have.

The Northern Croquet Academy has a well-established course at York CC on 9 June, and still has a few places available this year. The Croquet



Academy at Southwick is launching a similar day on 11 June, while the Chiltern Academy at High Wycombe has one organised for 26 October.

## Short Croquet for established AC players

If you already play AC there is nothing to stop you playing Short Croquet right away.

Most players need simply to check out the slightly different wiring rule (see the Seventh Edition Laws page 116): you're then ready to go. For players with very low handicaps there is also the added challenge of mandatory peels (Laws pages 115-6) to even things up in this handicap game.

## Short Croquet regionally

If your Federation hasn't yet taken the plunge to organise SC competitions or tournaments, you could try out SC in your own club and spread the word from there?

All you need to do is run a string or white line across the middle of a full court, and lay out two half courts side by side. This means that SC has the added bonus of doubling court capacity. Even under the current Covid-19 restrictions, up to eight people can play on two adjacent half courts.

SC leagues and tournaments are very well established in three Federations.

The North-West has two thriving SC leagues, with nine teams in two blocks competing for the 2021 Short AC League title. The game is also a key part of the annual North West Festival of Croquet held at Southport, as featured in the last issue (Gazette 390), which this year is being held on 14-15 August.

The Yorkshire Federation will be holding its annual SC team event in June, while a long-standing SC league encourages players at all handicap levels to enjoy competitive croquet throughout the season. In the South-West Federation, two blocks of five SC teams,

with a mix of handicaps, will play in a new league which will culminate in the winners contesting a final in September.

Also in the south-west, Budleigh Salterton CC holds a popular two-day SC tournament in early October. This is followed a few days later by a Federation team event at Nailsea with 30 teams expected to participate.

Elsewhere, the Southern Federation's plans to run a SC League last year were scuppered by Covid-19 disruption, as was their attempt to stage all the matches as a single day tournament in August; but undeterred, a SC League is back in their programme for 2021.

## Short Croquet nationally

The National Short Croquet Inter-Club competition culminates in a Final that changes venue each year: this time it will be at Bowdon in mid-September.

SC tournaments are also appearing in the CA Fixtures Calendar, with Blewbury CC (Berkshire) hosting single-day events on 15 May and 7 August.

For those looking to make a weekend of it, there is an opportunity to round off the season at the York SC Open on 18-19 September.

This is an excellent way to see what this attractive and fast-growing version of AC is all about. Now also tagged as the Viking Challenge, this is the longest established SC tournament in the CA Calendar and offers nine games over two days in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.

Players attend from all over the country and recent winners have hailed from the North-East, North-West and, most recently, Christine Rice of East Dorset CC who took the cup down to the South coast.

**John Harris, York CC**

**PHOTOGRAPH** Left, Christine Rice (East Dorset), winner of the 2020 York Open Short Croquet weekend. Above, a group shot from the 2019 event.

# Easter AC action at Cheltenham

## Jolliff beats field and the elements

There was obviously a pent-up demand for competitive croquet, as the visitors outnumbered the locals by almost two to one, and they came from far and wide to join in Cheltenham's second tournament of the year.

Covid-19 regulations meant that this was never going to be the most sociable of tournaments, as the format dictated that players would stay in their blocks and play on the same court all day.

Three of the top seeds spurred away to finish their first game in record quick time, but although the weather helped to blow away the cobwebs for many, the three-hour time limit still did not allow enough time for a significant number of games to finish.

One aspect of the Covid-19 regulations seemed to cause certain logistical problems – the carrying of your mallet, a hamper containing the day's provisions, and your personal chair seemed to defeat many players, especially if like Robert Wilkinson your personal chair resembled a full-size hammock in a metal frame!

Mind you, on any other occasion I am sure that there would have been many volunteers prepared to carry Beatrice McGlen's stylish hamper, which was packed full of goodies including some lovely sponge cake.

One advantage of no catering, and eating by your court, was that it meant the tournament progressed swiftly, and the third games of the day were well on the way to completion long before the sun began to approach the horizon, and their outcome would determine the block winners to compete in the day 2 knockout.

Block D saw a repeat of many battles in the Women's Championship, but on this occasion Louise Bradforth (Bristol) lost out to Beatrice McGlen (Nottingham).

In Block C it became apparent that Robert

Wilkinson (Bristol) had been unable to sustain the impetus from his success in the preceding handicap tournament, and Tim Jolliff (Taunton Deane) had a relatively straightforward win.

Block B saw a very tight struggle between Sarah Hayes (Cheltenham) and Omied Hallam (Nottingham), and once again a Nottingham player was successful.

Block A saw the luckiest progression to the knockout stage. Mark Suter (Cheltenham) lost his game against Andrew Wise (Hurlingham), who then decided that he would prefer to watch Monday's weather from the comfort of his home, and as Jeremy Tyndall (Cheltenham) had decided similarly, that left a block containing Suter and Paul Watson (Cheltenham); with Suter having won their game, he thus qualified.

Bank Holiday Monday (day 2) dawned, the wind started to pick up speed, and the weather quickly became atrocious.

The arrival of sleet mid-morning sent all the players scurrying for more layers, and the courts became inhabited by a cohort of variously coloured 'Michelin men'.

Suffice to say that smooth swinging proved difficult, and even easy-paced lawns and generous hoops were not able to ensure error-free croquet. This meant that most matches became close-run affairs, with the innings changing frequently.

Suter beat McGlen, and Jolliff beat Hallam, and further down the field there were first wins for Erica Malaiperuman (Nailsea) and Sophie McGlen (Oxford University).

**The final** had a nice combination of good play and unfortunate error to keep the crowd of one (me) quite entertained, and the one-sided score line does not do justice to the game.

So, well done to Jolliff, commiserations to Suter, and congratulations to the rest of the field for battling through such truly awful conditions.

**David Magee, Manager**

win over Terry Vernazza (4, Tyneside), Knight got into his stride, beat Derek Watts (1.5, Tyneside) +19 in the semis and Dennis Scar (1.5, Middlesbrough) +15 in the final and was a worthy winner. Derek Knight added: "For the anoraks amongst us I did 19,663 steps and walked about 9.1 miles. Who says croquet is not good exercise?"

**Dennis Scarr**

## Wilko wins

Despite the biting wind and low temperatures, a field of 18 turned up for the very first tournament of the season. Due to a last-minute illness one participant had withdrawn and David Magee kindly agreed to play on Day 1 so as the blocks could be completed... thanks David!

The first day was block play with everyone spaced across all eight front courts and each block sharing the same two courts all day, for an 'all play all' or "cross block" format employed in an effort to narrow the field to just four semi-finalists.

I planned as I always do, crossed my fingers and trusted the 'Croquet Gods' (it works for me!) and with the day finished at 7.15pm, the Gods had been kind.

Four of the five blocks had been won easily by Nick Evans (Northampton, 1 handicap; 3 wins, +15), Robert Wilkinson (Bristol -1 handicap; 3 wins, +16), Wendy Wu (Cheltenham, 3 handicap; 3 wins, +5) and best of all Robin Smith (Cheltenham, 7 handicap; 3 wins +38). The 5th block winner, David Magee, Cheltenham, handicap 0) was unavailable on day 2.

**Semi-finals** were – Evans v Wilkinson and Wu v Smith. The weather wasn't a lot better on day 2, but I was fine, because I dropped out to keep the numbers even. I endeavoured to wear all the clothes in my wardrobe including very fetching long johns (which I now understand are 'Under Armour' and are quite trendy – who would have guessed it?). Wilkinson was in fine form and disposed of Evans 26-4, while both Wu and Smith struggled in the cold until the latter won 15-6 (after time).

**For the final**, Wilkinson and Smith played a real traditional handicap match – Wilkinson pegged-out one of Smith's balls and hoped it would soon be over. But no!

Robin Smith became Robin 'the destroyer' and hit just about everything whenever he had a shot to take. This all came to an extremely exciting end when Smith failed over allowing Wilkinson to finish and peg out to end impressively unbeaten in five handicap games in a row!

In closing, I'd like to give a final extra mention for young Sam Cuthbert (Cheltenham, 16 handicap) who had a terrific first tournament and finished with a well-deserved fifth place overall. In one of those later games, Sam completed 10 hoops using bisques and therefore received an AC Bronze Merit Award (see page 26).

**Sarah Hayes, Manager**

## Knight is King at Boro

The Annual Middlesbrough CC one day B-Level AC Advanced tournament was won by Derek Knight (handicap 1, Beverley) and the weather was good for the club's first Tournament of the season. The field included six players from Croquet North Federation area plus two regular visitors from Yorkshire and Cumbria. After a wobble in his first game, a +2(t)



# GC Championships and Series competitions

## European Championship

### Postponed to August

With the agreement of the Budleigh Salterton Croquet Club, the 2021 European GC Championship has been postponed to 12 - 15 August 2021 (Thursday to Sunday).

This decision was taken due to the strong likelihood that the UK's quarantine requirements for those travelling to the UK will still be in force in May.

It is hoped that an event held three months later will have a much better chance of attracting an entry from players from as many Fédération Européenne de Croquet (FEC) / European Croquet Federation Members as possible which is a primary purpose of the Championship.

Nomination of players for Membership Places and Ranking Places is now delayed to midnight BST on Sunday, 13 June 2021.

Ranking Places will be based on latest published grades on Monday, 28 June and announced on Tuesday, 29 June 2021.

Please note that, owing to competing demands for courts at Budleigh during August, we have been asked to use only seven courts. I therefore propose to limit entries to 28 for 2021 only.

This does not change the Membership Place allocations and will simply reduce the number of Ranking Places available.

**Stephen Mulliner**

European Croquet Federation

## NEW for 2021 - The Under 25 Open Championship

We are introducing a major new event in 2021 for Under-25 GC players.

Open to anyone who was under 25 on 31 December 2020, the GC U25 Open Championship will be held at

### Watford CC over the weekend

**31 July - 1 August**

There are 16 places available

As the GC Students' Championship will not be held in 2021, four places have been reserved for eligible students (under 25 and studying at a university or other place of higher education).

The format will be block play on

Saturday followed by a knock-out on Sunday for those who qualify, which will consist of at least best-of-three games in the semis and final.

There will be a plate for those who do not qualify for the main knock-out.

Overall, the motivation for this inaugural event is more about giving young players the opportunity to compete against each other, whatever their level, rather than finding a winner.

We hope to attract a large entry, so sign up as soon as you can!

The allocation date is 19 June and entries close on 17 July.

**Richard Bilton, Tournament Director**  
GC Under 25 Open Championship

## Championship Series - News of a change

There has been a slight change to the line-up of qualifying tournaments for the English National GC Singles Championship (for the Ascot Cup).

Of the original eight qualifiers, two have been cancelled: the Sidmouth GC Championship (24-25 April) and the East Anglian GC Championship at Colchester (8-9 May).

However, the **Dorset Open GC Championship at East Dorset (24-25 July)** has been moved up from the 'Open Series' to join the Championship Series, and this will ensure there is a qualifier in the South West.

**Jonathan Powe**

Director, GC Championship Series

The timing of the production of this Gazette issue was dropped back a little in order to have some actual played croquet to report on, and whilst that has worked okay, we are still going to press before an angry ball has been played in all but one of the CA five-tiered Series competitions.

The second-tier **Open Series** opener at Cheltenham was won by top seed Stephen Mulliner in mid-April. The ever-present Lionel Tibble picked up the runner-up spot and six Series points to start his campaign with a bang. The tournament was excellently managed by Ivor Brand and a short version of his online report appears elsewhere in this issue.

The new **A-Level (0+) Series** kicked off at West Park just as this Gazette issue was going to press so news of the first winner and first recipient of a GC Gold Merit Award will have

## The Open Series A-Level (0+) Series B-Level (3+) Series C-Level (7+) Series

to wait until next time. Good luck to all the clubs hosting tournaments in this inaugural season, and especially Chester who stage their first series qualifying event.

In the now very well established **B-Level (3+) Series**, it was inevitable that there would be disruption to early season tournaments as the timing of the lockdown easing was kinder to some than others.

The May tournament at Sussex County was the first to go, followed by a postponement and then full cancellation of the May Roehampton tournament.

Ryde saved their tournament by moving it back three weeks to 20 May, which is crucially

just after hotels and other accommodation will be permitted to re-open.

Pleasingly, 24 of the 26 B-Levels remain and most are showing large entries, with many over-subscribed and the allocation procedures being checked by tournament secretaries all over the country.

The B-Level (3+) Series now starts at Watford on 3 May.

It is a similar tale in the **C-Level (7+) Series**, where the first tournament at Sussex County couldn't beat the Covid-19 restrictions, unlike Ryde who postponed (to 21 May) again, and Bath moved their tournament a long way back from 15 April to 5 August.

Again, these Series tournaments have held up very well indeed, with 23 of 24 still going ahead; Watford again lead the way with a tournament scheduled for 27 April.

**Chris Roberts**

Director of the Open Series

A-Level, B-Level and C-Level Series

## Mulliner wins Cheltenham Opener

Stephen Mulliner won Cheltenham's early season GC Open Series tournament (for the Barter Cup) in mid-April, ahead of a strong, if slightly under capacity, field.

This weekend tournament is often seen as a nice friendly event for the players to ease into the season and dust off their mallets, and this was especially true this year after the Covid-19 restrictions that affected everyone and their daily lives.

The standard was exceptionally high, with all four of the day-one blocks only having one player on or above the handicap of 3!

The manager had made the mistake of putting himself in the 'toughest' block while trying to organise the tournament and subsequently got punished to the extent that he was only seen once on the lawn on the second day!

This was also due to the fact that the manager had set the challenging target of 16 players to progress through to the main knock-out with matches set as the best of three games.

Without time limits it was always going to be a big ask of the players to finish at a respectable time.

In Block A, the four seeds qualified for the knock-out as expected, with the only surprise result being achieved by David Bell (-2, Leicester) who beat Mulliner (-5, Surbiton) to be the unbeaten top dog, which pushed Mulliner into second place and an unexpected position in the knock-out draw. AC specialist Sarah Hayes (-2, Cheltenham), also qualified – could she be a GC convert?

The Block B seeds also went safely through to the knock-out, with Stephen Wright (-1, Eynsham) finishing top.

Although Block C saw the top seed Lionel Tibble (-3, Northampton) go through undefeated, he was joined by two unseeded players, Neil Humphries (1, Sussex County) and Klim Seabright (2, Cheltenham).

Block D was full of surprises, apart from top seed Chris Roberts (-3, Phyllis Court) winning the block on net points from 15-year-old Sam Cuthbert (2, Cheltenham) in his first major tournament.

The Block D fourth place qualifier was again decided on net points, with five players having three wins each, and this time a resurgent Richard Brand progressed by a single point!

In the knock-out round of 16, Mark Suter (-3, Cheltenham) took a game off top seed Mulliner, Roger Goldring (-1, Phyllis Court) did the same against club mate Roberts, and Forbes turned the same trick against Tibble, who can count himself lucky to win the deciding game 7-6. The big upsets were the two local boys Seabright and Brand (R) winning their respective matches 2-1 to join local girl Hayes in the quarter finals.

Stephen Leonard (-3, Winterborne Valley) beat Seabright to progress his semi-final where he lost out to Tibble, while in the other half of the draw saw a three-hour battle resulting in Hayes going through over Brand to face Mulliner who had overcome Roberts 2-0. Hayes put up a good fight and took Mulliner to a deciding game before the latter's experience saw him safely into yet another final.

The Mulliner v Tibble was played after most others had departed and the long sit out had done Tibble no favours. Mulliner won in straight games. Full report online.

**Ivor Brand, Manager**

## Have you considered leaving a gift in your will for your croquet club ?

Trying to find funds for unexpected problems can put real stress on a croquet club's finances.

Lawn weed and moss treatment  
Urgent repairs  
New updated equipment  
The development and improvement of club facilities

All these can put stress on the club and undermine its stability. Usually they can not simply be funded by increased membership fees. Croquet is a great game enjoyed in many ways by very different types of players and we all depend on healthy and stable clubs.

That is why leaving something in your will to your club can help members continue to enjoy playing the game we have all enjoyed so much.

**It is simple to do and your club will really benefit from it.**

**The smallest contribution could make a massive difference.**

Your club chairman will be happy to give you more information.



## The Northern Croquet Academy - York

Date	Course	Ideal H'cap	Course Leader	Cost *
19 May	AC Moves and methods for higher bisquers	16-22	John Harris	£38/33
9 June	GC/AC Learn Short Croquet in one day	N/A	John Harris	£38/33
22 June	GC/AC It's all in the head: get the right mindset	N/A	Derek Knight	£38/33
3 July	AC Twelve hoops, one turn	16-	James Hawkins	£38/33
4 July	AC Control, tactics, action!	16-	James Hawkins	£38/33
7 Aug.	GC Classic Golf Croquet skills and tactics	10+	John Crossland	£38/33
8 Aug.	GC Golf Croquet skills and tactics in practice	10+	John Crossland	£38/33
12-13 Aug.	AC Become a qualified AC Referee	N/A	Cliff Jones	£70/60 ^
12-13 Aug.	AC So you think you know the Laws of AC?	N/A	Cliff Jones	£30/25
17 Aug.	GC Strokes & strategy: take your GC to next level	3-12	Cliff Jones	£38/33
18-19 Aug.	GC/AC One-to-One coaching with Cliff Jones	N/A	Cliff Jones	POA
* The costs shown are for Ordinary Members / Premium members of the CA. ^ a £25 CA subsidy may be available and some federations also offer support.				
Full details of each course are on the CA website - <a href="http://www.croquet.org.uk">www.croquet.org.uk</a> > Compete > Fixtures Calendar (for bookings see below)				
Contact: Debbie James – <a href="mailto:northerncroquetacademy@gmail.com">northerncroquetacademy@gmail.com</a> – 07772 778232				

The Covid-19 movement restrictions of course played havoc with the programme of courses planned by the Northern Croquet Academy. The table here details our revised offering. **John Harris**

**The CA Shop**

**The CA Shop**

**Discounted prices for CA members**

Just register an account on the shop website with the same email address you use on the CA website to unlock your members' discount.

**Standard members 2%**  
**Premium members 10%**

## Coach of the Year 2020 – Stephen Custance-Baker

The CA Coaching Committee were delighted to announce earlier this year that Stephen Custance-Baker is the Coach of the Year for 2020.

Many congratulations Stephen!

There were a good number of citations received nominating Stephen for the award and some short extracts are shown below.

The CA Coaching Committee also posed some simple questions and Stephen's replies to these also follow.

"Stephen Custance-Baker has been a coach at Taunton Deane for many years, gaining his Club-Level Coach badge in 2015. In 2019 he was promoted to GC Grade 3 level and is also a Grade 1 AC coach. It's not all about qualifications though; Stephen puts tremendous effort and time into coaching

at Taunton Deane; many people have commented on the quality of the material used and of the coaching itself."

"His lessons are clear, informative and he always gives plenty of time for practice, being on hand to advise and correct."

"He finds time for anyone who asks for help, no matter what level or how complicated or basic the question."

"He coaches at all levels, both AC and GC, during roll-up sessions and at arranged courses. For the last couple of years Stephen has been guiding us in Short Croquet, including weekly lessons. He has taken us through the theory and has watched and assisted as we practiced before coached games. His attitude is always calm and encouraging."

### Academy and Pod coaching

"For the last few years Stephen's talents and ability have been recognised by the SW Coaching Academy at Budleigh, where he has been acknowledged as a popular and

successful coach for GC and Short Croquet."

"Since 2017, Stephen has been running GC coaching pods at Taunton Deane. Players from 15 different clubs attended pods in 2019 and his offering on the new GC rules was also given to the International Player Development Group. At the pod leaders' workshop, chaired by Lionel Tibble in March 2020, Stephen gave a talk on increasing pod attendance numbers and techniques for using assistant coaches.

**Dave Kibble, former Chair, CA Coaching Committee, wrote:** "He is an exemplar coach – before every pod or online session, he had dummy runs to make sure everything went to plan; his pod notes are comprehensive yet concise, and his coaching sessions well planned and run.

As an active coach, he is attentive and observant, suggesting improvements at just the right level for the student. In short, he knows only one way of doing things: properly!"

In addition to coaching at Taunton,



## The Chiltern Croquet Academy

Date	Course Title	Ideal h'cap	Course Leader	Venue	Cost*
17 Jun	GC Introduction to Competitive Play	12-16 None	Cliff Jones	HWCC	£20
2 Oct	Becoming a Coach	NA	Cliff Jones	High Wycombe	£70/£80 ^
3 Oct	2-Day Course				
5 Oct	AC Perfecting Stroke Play	NA	Cliff Jones	High Wycombe	£40/£50
7 Oct	GC Improver	3-6	Ian Shore	Basingstoke	£70/£80
8 Oct	2-Day Course - B-Level				
11 Oct	GC Beyond the Basics - C-Level	7-12	Ian Shore	Hamptworth	£40/£50
12 Oct	Swing Clinic with the Doctor!	NA	Dr Raouf Allim	High Wycombe	£20/£25
19 Oct	GC Intermediate Improver	5-8	Ian Shore	Ealing	£40/£50
	AC Working Towards a 12-Hoop Break	10-16	Dr Raouf Allim	High Wycombe	£40/£50
23 Oct	AC Refereeing Qualification Course	NA	Jeff Dawson	Winchester	£70/£80 ^
24 Oct					
26 Oct	Introduction to Short Croquet	NA	Cliff Jones	High Wycombe	£35/£40
30 Oct	Becoming a GC Referee	NA	Cliff Jones	High Wycombe	£70/£80 ^
31 Oct	2-Day Course				
06 Nov	AC Refereeing Qualification Examination	NA	Jeff Dawson	Winchester	NA

\* The costs shown are for Ordinary Members / Premium members of the CA.  
^ a £25 CA subsidy may be available and some federations also offer support.

### "You are on mute"

Who would have expected that the start of the coaching season would be marked by struggling with technology!

It is a testimony to the participants, course leaders and hosts that a series of Zoom-based courses have been run successfully during lockdown.

Now we look forward to better times as through the generous support of local clubs the Chiltern Academy has been able to reschedule its 2021 courses, all bookable via the CA website, which are now running at a range of venues, as shown in the accompanying table.

Those interested in 'raising their game' are encouraged to book early as places are limited. More details are available from the Academy Manager: Ian Shore 01494 718615, ianshore@gmail.com and on the Chiltern Academy website: [www.chilterncroquetacademy.org](http://www.chilterncroquetacademy.org)

**Ian Shore**

Full details of each course are on the CA website: [www.croquet.org.uk](http://www.croquet.org.uk) > Compete > Fixtures Calendar.

All bookings via CA website Fixtures Calendar (as left). Contact: Ian Shore - ianshore@gmail.com - 01491718615

Stephen has also spent time at Cornwall, Budleigh Salterton and Dowlish Wake CC.

### Zoom

In Autumn 2020 Stephen presented a series of six Zoom talks entitled "Playing to the Rules", to coach non-referees in the rules of GC. These presentations were watched by 50-70 people from over 20 different clubs and are now available for download.

Jean Cording of Dowlish Wake CC wrote "Stephen's (Zoom) coaching sessions (zoom) on a Wednesday evening, have been the highlight of a lot of people's week in these difficult times."

### Written material

Stephen has put together GC Coaching Manuals for Beginners, Intermediate and Advanced Level players, which have been well received by those in authority. These manuals, and another on Short Croquet are available on the Taunton Deane website for anyone to download.

His GC manuals have been referenced by other coaches and have been translated into Swedish and Spanish.

His book on GC tactics 'Every Shot is Tactical', published in July 2020, has proved to be very popular and has been well received by players and coaches. (This has also been translated into Swedish and Spanish for local use.)

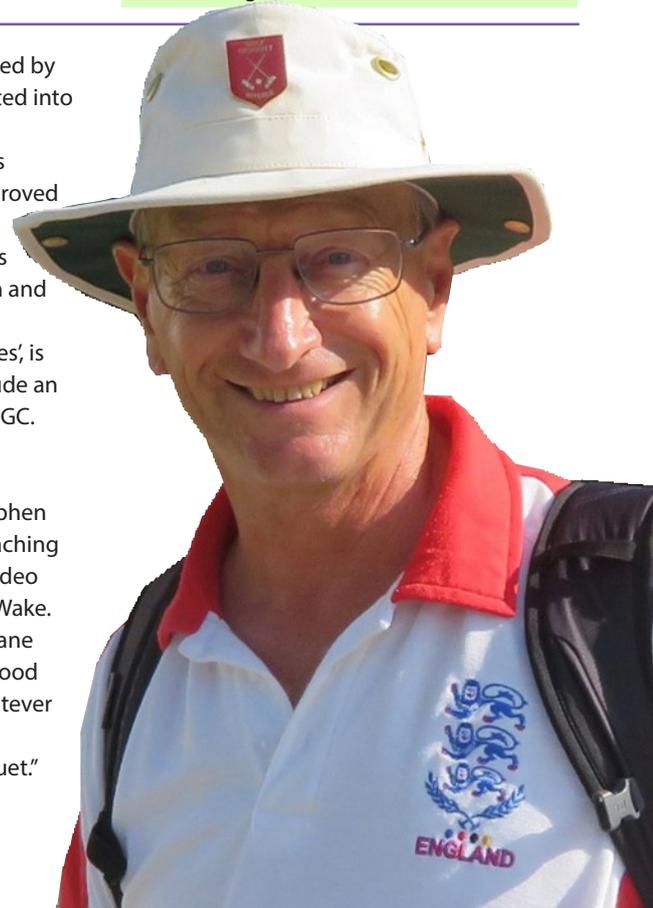
His next book, 'Golf Croquet Mistakes', is currently in preparation and will include an illustrated explanation of the rules of GC.

### Individual coaching

Despite the restrictions in 2020 Stephen managed to give some individual coaching to diagnose swing problems, using video recordings, for players from Dowlish Wake.

Sue Baker, Chairman at Taunton Deane CC wrote "He is a natural coach and good communicator, happy to work at whatever level, to solve a problem or to help a beginner take their first steps in croquet."

*Continued overleaf...*



# The Coaching Pages - AN INTERVIEW WITH THE COACH OF THE YEAR 2020



## What does it mean to you to receive this award, Stephen?

There is no doubt that it means a very great deal to me to be recognised in this way. Although I have coached several sports, including skiing and archery, I have never enjoyed it in the past as much as I do now. I love the feedback I get from players when I manage to diagnose a problem or when they see the point of an exercise. I also like to see assistant coaches, either Club Level Coaches or other unqualified people, improving their coaching skills and getting a lot of satisfaction from doing so. Writing my own material for courses and pods gives me a lot of pleasure and it was a natural extension to select from that material and put it in a book. The success of my first book, *'Every Shot is Tactical'*, has been a surprise but has greatly increased my self-confidence. This award can only add to that confidence, leading to an obvious danger I must avoid.

## What are your plans for 2021?

Completing and publishing my next book, *'Golf Croquet Mistakes'* is something I can do during lockdown, and I'd like to get that finished so that I can concentrate on the game itself as soon as we are allowed. All our plans must be uncertain in 2021 but, with luck and common sense, we should be back to something approaching normal by mid-summer. I am scheduled to give a course at the Croquet Academy (at Southwick) in late June and I'm hoping it will be allowed to take place. I will certainly try to schedule at least two GC coaching pods at my home club, Taunton Deane, and possibly one on Short Croquet as well. I am sure there will be visits

to other clubs too, but scheduling these will have to wait.

A former Coach of the Year, Roger Mills, has initiated a new venture to improve the availability of coaching across the south west and I will help where I can. In addition to these coaching-related activities, I plan to enter as many tournaments as I can. I concentrate on GC because it seems to suit me better, but I may add some AC as well and a Short Croquet tournament too.

## Zoom is now part of the new normal – how do you feel about the use of Zoom for courses?

My own experience of Zoom courses leads me to think that they work best when one person is imparting information to a large number of others. With proper preparation, a lot of knowledge can be conveyed in an hour. If the zoom session is recorded, it can be viewed again – or for the first time by those who were unable to attend on the original date – and thus increase its usefulness. Viewers could be encouraged to buy a small magnetic board so that they can set out the exercises for themselves. Different players learn in different ways and, for some, words and explanations, even with illustrations, are not enough. Playing through the moves on a board can be very instructive – for a triple peel for example. I am less sure of the value of zoom for coaching as my experience is that the interaction between coach and player is essential. However, one method of coaching that I have found to be very useful might be adapted to a Zoom setting. Players could

be encouraged to film themselves, or have a friend do so, and then send their film to a coach with a regular (perhaps monthly) zoom clinic.

The coach could view each film and show a selection during the zoom session, discussing any issues to do with stance or swing so that several people could see the problem and, perhaps, contribute to the discussion.

## Another book, eh? What can you tell us about that Stephen?

The working title of my new book is *'Golf Croquet Mistakes (and how to avoid them)'*.

The original inspiration came from seeing experienced players, right up to world championship level, making basic mistakes. As I started to put various ideas down on paper, I found I could group them under main headings. This made me realise that a large proportion of the mistakes happen before you step onto the court, and I have called these chapters Preparation, Equipment and Knowledge. Those mistakes that occur on the lawn I have called Carelessness, Execution and Tactics. I was constantly coming up against the issue of Knowing the Rules, so I have added an appendix based on my Zoom talks on 'Playing to the Rules'.

## I hope you will be able to celebrate your Award, Stephen, and congratulations again -

We are not allowed any visitors at present, so Sue and I will have to drink this Champagne all by ourselves – tragic!

**Stephen Custance-Baker was talking to Sarah Hayes**

*continued from page 25...*

Jean Cording wrote "He has a wonderfully relaxed way of coaching which puts you at your ease and he always explains why you should do something as well as how you should do it. He never rushes off after the coaching session and is happy to stay and play a few games with the members whatever their standard. His love of coaching and wanting people to improve their game is paramount but he does it with such charm and grace. Never making one feel foolish or inadequate."

## Stephen's calm approach

Paul Francis, Bath CC and SW Development Officer said "What impresses me about Stephen is his calm approach when presenting courses, I am sure this would be replicated when Stephen is coaching one to one. His attention to detail and encyclopaedic understanding of croquet laws and croquet tactics is second to none.

As a colleague there is no ego involved, all his work with croquet players is purely focussed on helping them to improve their

skills and tactics."

Dave Jones, a coach at Taunton Deane CC wrote "Stephen has helped me with advice and encouraged me to obtain my club coach qualification which I have now achieved.

He also spends unlimited time with other players of our club explaining how to improve a shot or tactic.

He is always courteous, clear in his presentations and most importantly, knows his subject inside out.

## Continuations

### Yorkshire



*Continued from page 19 (Yorkshire Federation) ...* A red-letter day so to speak! (This year's selected charity is the British Heart Foundation and everyone is encouraged to wear the charity's red 'house colour' on the day – Ed.)

**York** CC has come up with an innovative response to Covid-19. In the absence of club sessions, members are encouraged to enter for a Twenty20 competition: play friendlies during the season against 20 or more different opponents to get a share of the cup. Win or lose, all matches count. The Twenty20 has proved popular and looks set to become a regular feature of the annual club calendar.

**Huddersfield** CC and **Lepton** CC have had better treatment from Kirklees Council this year and indeed some encouragement to open; the former has started by playing alternate stroke ten-minute croquet to ensure that everyone gets involved.

Congratulations to **Sheffield** CC for a joint win of the CA's Townsend Award for the most improved small club.

And lastly, nine of our fourteen clubs have their safeguarding officer in post and many attended a zoom shared with Croquet North and hosted by Dr Ron Carter to get a flavour of the task ahead and the support available.

**Derek Knight, Development Officer**

### South-West



*Continued from page 17 (South-West Federation) ...* In March, Roger hosted a very successful introductory Zoom event for potential participants to explain what was involved in becoming a coach.

We were delighted that 46 attended this event and that over 30 members have signed up for the course this year with more deferring their involvement until 2022.

Also In 2022, alongside another round of courses for coaches, we hope the hub / host club system will be up and running, and offering a full range of coaching for our members.

Of course, this will be a large undertaking for Roger and the SWF'S team of Graded Coaches along with invited coaches from other Federations.

**Paul Francis, Development Officer**

## Merit Awards



### AC Bronze



**Sam Cuthbert** Cheltenham Easter Handicap, 2-3 April

**Sarah Hayes,**  
Coaching Committee Chair

## New Badges for GC

The CA has commissioned a new set of Merit Award badges for GC.

In descending order, from top to bottom, the GC Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze Award badges all feature a coloured band to differentiate them from their AC counterparts.



## Comment: 'The checking of handicap cards'

In Manager Barry Holland's report from the Surbiton Easter AC Handicap (on page 13), he said that there was some questioning from players about the purpose of checking handicap cards.

I discussed with Barry because I was surprised that such questions were asked because the purpose is pretty obvious (at least to me).

It's to ensure that everyone at the tournament (especially at a handicap event) is playing off the correct handicap for the benefit of all participants.

Errors when completing handicap cards, and particularly in the understanding and correct application of the trigger point system, are not uncommon and clearly the purpose in checking cards is to discover and correct discrepancies.

For the same reason, it is a duty of Club, Federation and CA Handicappers to check and sign the front of players' handicap cards (hopefully frequently) to verify that on that date, the detail on the reverse side has been checked, but unfortunately this is not always done.

It's all about administering the handicap system properly and I am always surprised when this subject comes up because it's pretty obviously the job of sports administrators (in this case the Manger or his appointed Tournament Handicapper, see below) to actually undertake that administration.

There are plenty of players who will be quick to moan about others "being on the wrong handicap" and all players should recognise the purpose of card checking is to ensure accuracy, and thereby, keep to a minimum the occasions when such unhappiness is felt.

All this is covered in the relevant section of the CA's Tournament Regulations (section H2, ) which are, of course, on the CA website; follow this navigation:

Home > Compete > Tournament Regulations.

Online readers can use this direct link: [www.croquet.org.uk/?p=tournament/regulations](http://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=tournament/regulations)

**Chris Roberts, Gazette Editor,  
CA Handicapper and member of the  
CA Handicap Committee**



*"I never feel alone"*

Our retirement villages are home to people who really value their peace of mind... people who moved safely during lockdown, to enjoy a closer kind of community, with more reassurance for them and their family.

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## Lawn Care - BY DUNCAN HECTOR

### Duncan Hector Turf Care and Irrigation

I give advice and guidance on all aspects of croquet lawn maintenance. My fertilisers contain a broad spectrum of bacteria, and mycorrhizal fungi. The bacteria break down thatch and eliminate the need to scarify. Applying fertiliser takes about two hours per lawn per year. My systems are used on around 100 lawns across the UK and produce excellent lawns for club, regional and national events.

#### Fertiliser Programmes

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##### Domestic Lawn Fertiliser for CA Members

Access products not available to the public but used in the lawn care industry to create amazing lawns.

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24" wide, 207 cuts per metre as low as 3mm  
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### Green Waste compost fights back

Last autumn I filled some low areas on my croquet lawn.

I filled the dips, then seeded and covered with top dressing which, according to the books, should be fine. - WRONG!

The germination was very patchy and I wished I had used Green Waste compost to cover the seed. That is what I advise everyone else to do, but this was an experiment and it proved a point again. - You can't beat Green Waste Compost for seeding.

It is available quite cheaply in every county. It is household waste composted to PAS100 and has an amazing ability to hold moisture, which is exactly what is required for seed germination and seedling establishment. The only downside is that most suppliers don't grade it, so it can be lumpy and have bits of wood in it. For this reason it usually has to be sieved. My supplier grades it to 4 mm and you will find it in my shop. It is not the cheapest way to buy because of transport costs but worth it because it saves a lot of time and gives great results.

### Leatherjackets meet their doom

Gone are the days of spraying Crossfire to kill leatherjackets.

That product was banned several years ago.

Ryde Croquet Club have tried a new technique they had heard about. They pegged out a sheet of black plastic over the area and left it overnight. Lo and behold, the next morning they had 20 leatherjackets under the plastic. Letchworth CC are now trying the method on chafer grubs - let's hope it works.

### New online Croquet Turf Care Shop - now open

I have had an interesting time creating an online shop for Croquet Lawn Turf Care. In this shop you buy now and pay later.

This is quite important because I don't know of a croquet club that has a credit card!

**Duncan Hector** - For contact details, see my advert, left.

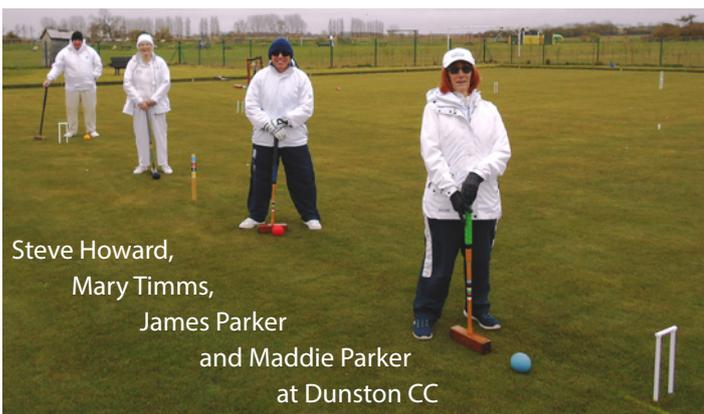
## An apology to Dunston Croquet Club

Dunston  
Croquet Club

The Editor would like to apologise for a typo error in the last February issue (*page 30, Gazette 390*) which resulted in the misnaming of the Dunston CC in a headline, which read Durston rather than DUNSTON.

Under the leadership of their Chairman Ralph Timms, Dunston CC had undertaken a valuable trial on behalf of the CA Equipment Committee, to see how the specialist 'Foxy Hoops' would perform both internally within the club and in inter-club matches. Foxy Hoops have steel rods rather than conventional carrots and so make smaller holes in the grass; the thought is that this makes for greater harmony when facilities are shared with bowls clubs.

Please see Ralph's excellent and positive report in the February Gazette and remember it is DUNSTON CC. - Ed



Steve Howard,  
Mary Timms,  
James Parker  
and Maddie Parker  
at Dunston CC

## A new book about Golf Croquet

Golf Croquet Mistakes  
(and how to avoid them)



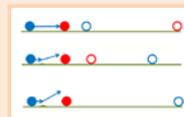
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illustrated explanations of  
the main rules of GC



The content, illustrations, scenarios and explanations are unrivalled  
and will be of huge benefit to all GC players

Richard Carline, Director of The Croquet Academy

Comments on Stephen's previous book "Every Shot Is Tactical"

By far the best coaching book I have seen. The script is easy to  
understand and the illustrations exceptionally clear.

Robert Moss, Budleigh Salterton

I am very impressed by your croquet wisdom.

Brian Giffen, Roehampton

# The UK & World Rankings

- THIS IS A SNAPSHOT OF THE UK & WORLD RANKINGS, AS OF 30 APRIL 2021.

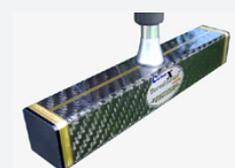
UK	World	GC	UK	World	AC
1	8	John-Paul Moberly	1	2	Robert Fulford
2	10	Tobi Savage	2	3	Paddy Chapman
3	12	Stephen Mulliner	3	5	Stephen Mulliner
4	19	Rachel Gee	4	8	Samir Patel
5	27	Pierre Beaudry	5	9	Jamie Burch
6	29	James Death	6	10	David Maugham
7	30	Jonathan Powe	7	11	Harry Fisher
8	31	Will Gee	8	12	James Death
8	33	Euan Burrridge	8	13	Christian Carter
10	42	Ian Burrridge	10	15	Mark Avery

We hope to print these Top 10s in every issue, complete with an indicator as to who has moved up or down.

It will be interesting to see just how much movement there is between these snapshots, which will be irregularly timed, just as the Gazette goes to print.

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**2001** Round head carbon fibre mallet. 10" brass £330. 11" brass £350; Composite faces add £20

Airline Travel Shaft £95. Engraved Ferrules £12. UK postage £15, rest of the world on request.

For details or discussion, contact Dave Trimmer  
01747 824822 [Davetrimmer@talktalk.net](mailto:Davetrimmer@talktalk.net)  
[www.davetrimtermallets.com](http://www.davetrimtermallets.com)



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## CA Website

[www.croquet.org.uk](http://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 online 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.

## Publication Details

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Copy should reach the Editor before the 20th of the month before publication is due.

However if you have something that you think the Editor may be willing to expand this deadline for please contact him direct.

Email contributions, including tournament reports should be sent direct to the Editor, or copied to the Editor if they are being posted to the Nottingham List.

To find the glossary go to:

(AC): Home > Play > Technical > Jargon

(GC): Home > Play > Golf Croquet > Jargon

or (for online readers) via these direct links:

(AC) [www.croquet.org.uk/?p=games/tech/jargon](http://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=games/tech/jargon)

(GC) [www.croquet.org.uk/?p=games/golf/gcJargon](http://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=games/golf/gcJargon)

Digital images are preferred, but photographic prints may also be acceptable.

Please send digital jpeg or tiff format files.

Please accompany all images with a description of the subject.

If you require any material to be returned, please enclose an SAE.

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

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