



CROQUET

GAZETTE

Issue 396 | April 2022

STRIVING FOR DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

NOTTINGHAM
WOOS ASIAN
COMMUNITIES

THE 2022
MACROBERTSON
SHIELD

GC RULES
6TH EDITION

“OPENING DOORS
ON CROQUET”
COMPETITION





HIBISCUS COLUMN

Hip replacement? They say it's an easy operation and they're right. They may fail to add that a determined croquista can be back within two weeks of the hammer blow that rams a ceramic prosthesis into the heart of the femur. Simple as bashing hoops into holes in wet turf. True because croquet is a game with no damaging hip twist and it's as easy to lean on a mallet as a crutch. Proven by Hibiscus following an ill-judged Swiss roll in late January.

So court time was possible in February, though curtailed by Dudley and Eunice and Franklin and a certain amount of pain. As with all leg injuries, discomfort equals insomnia. What better cure than the little yellow book, aka *The Laws of Association Croquet* (£5, croquet.org.uk). Like all the best historic games - golf, bridge - croquet has shedloads of laws written by men for men. Sub clauses, sub plots, arcane inferences, shades of meaning that can be interpreted every which way. When 23, 1.1, is no help, turn to 36.6.2. Sorry, was that you snoring....?

Better not because interpretation is essential for success. In theory, AC is an honesty box. With opponents compulsorily off court, there's often

no way for them to be sure that a thin take off has moved a touching ball; or whether a distant roquet shivered or missed. The player will always know, but may not say: realistically there's not much you can do about that. What you can control is an opponent citing wiring to pick up his ball and put it on a baulk line near yours. When you try the same - often legitimate - manoeuvre, he may reveal a subtle difference in the set up that prevents it. You need to be able to argue your case. Or at least find the bit in the book that supports it.

A less solvable hazard is the involved sideliner. 'That was a double hit'. The call rings out with certitude from a seat in front of the pavilion 25m away. He who was allegedly sinned against hasn't noticed from 2m away, but duly claims foul shot, end of turn. You turn. The spectator is not cheating - a life partner's glass is apt to be half full - but such assessments are not allowed. Call on a qualified referee to monitor potentially illegal shots - hooping at close quarters - or declare whether a ball has hooped or not, but don't expect him to post-judge random incidents. Meek acceptance of injustice or childish confrontation - did, didn't, did, didn't? Ouch....

On February's gloriously sunny final

Sunday, I entered a non handicap AC tournament - and got right royally mugged. Remember the one about the injured opponent? How sharing their pain affects your game? In an informal match, a player slightly less experienced than you may reasonably ask for help during play. Kindly organisers may back him up. Delighted of course to reveal which hoop comes next, which direction to run it, which ball to hit, where to put the clips. When you surge ahead as your opponent rips through the many bisques he seems to need, you may succumb to more technical requests. Then his inner Reg Bamford stalks onto the court. A long painful time later, you're watching him peg out. Stand and applaud the chutzpah.

Part of croquet's allure is that seven hours slip by with no sense of passing time. One court, four balls, three successive opponents, no lunch, no toilet breaks. Frustration reigns.. 'Only D words', a player muttered sternly to himself. Drat, darn, a daring damn? Now it's April, the time to plot a summer of tournament entries. Like every addict, I can hardly wait.

I Minty Clinch

NEW TUNNEL OF TIME

In this new section we take a look back through the 'Tunnel of Time' to see what was taking place in the Croquet World in the past as seen by the Croquet Gazette.

Whilst looking at Gazettes from 10, 20, 30 and 40 years ago a common theme seems to have been croquet clubs having to find new venues or making changes to the number of courts they had use of.

10 YEARS AGO

The April 2012 Gazette (#337) reported that 2012 was going to be the final year of play at Wrest Park. English Heritage decided to turn the grounds of the house back to their original state. Fortunately the croquet club were able to move to another site near the entrance to the estate. Also on the move in 2012 were Ipswich Croquet Club who decided to move from the public park in the centre of Ipswich

where they had been for 81 years, to the Fynn Valley Golf Club 2 miles away. Unfortunately after 9 years the croquet club had to leave Fynn Valley, because of redevelopment, and the club is in the process of creating four new courts at a nearby farm.

20 YEARS AGO

The March 2002 Gazette (#278) reported that Pendle Croquet Club had been given notice to quit by the end of 2002 from Nelson and Colne College, where they had been playing since 1986. Fortunately they managed to find an area of land with room for five courts in the nearby village of Earby and the new ground was formally opened in 2005.

30 YEARS AGO

The January 1992 Gazette (#219) had

much better news from Sidmouth in that they had recently had work done to their poor quality old tennis lawns which turned the club from a three court venue into a four court one.

40 YEARS AGO

On a happier note the Spring 1982 Gazette (#165) reported that two new clubs had been registered; namely Nailsea with 2 lawns and Worcester with 1. Past Gazettes can be found on the CA website at <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=ca/gazette&Action=Issues>. Currently there are scans of the Gazette back to Issue 154 from December 1979. The intention is to place all the Gazettes from 1953, when the current numbering system started, on the CA website.

Chris Williams
CA Archivist



The Croquet Association
Issue 396 | April 2022



Front cover:
Nottingham
Woos Asian
Communities

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WELCOME



The 2022 croquet season has finally started. Some of us will be aiming for the top of the club roll-up tables, with others setting their sights on the Championship silverware. Whatever your plans are for this season, may the force be with you. Alongside planning tournaments, courses and practice sessions, many clubs will be hosting events to celebrate National Croquet Week 14-22 May. You can help support your clubs by introducing friends and family to the action and help get the word out in your local community clubs and societies. Once again the CA is partnering with the British Heart Foundation. Poster downloads and BHF contacts are available from the CA website to help

make the time a great success for your club. We will also be aiming to create a bit of national PR around the week to raise awareness of croquet. This issue will be taking a look at what the Croquet Association and Clubs have been doing to encourage change for the good amongst the population of players. We are also featuring a look into the history of the MacRobertson Shield alongside the latest news and information from our committees. Next time we will be well into the beginning of the season with hopefully some reports of the action from around the country. If you would like to join the tournament reporting team please do get in touch at: editor@croquet.org.uk
CA Editorial Team

REPORTERS WANTED

The Croquet Gazette is looking for Tournament Reporters so we can make sure the whole community experiences our top events being hosted around the country. Of course we want to know the scores, the big shots and the screams that follow the good and the bad, but what about the atmosphere, the tension and the drama.

Do you love to watch croquet? Can you tell a story and then some? Come and join our team, come and tell all!

Contact: editor@croquet.org.uk for more information.



PHOTOGRAPH Edward Patel

I'm sure everyone is looking forward to their first croquet event of the 2022 playing season, whether that is a tournament or meeting up with friends again. Government pandemic regulations have now relaxed to the stage where the CA's Coronavirus Taskforce has been able to remove all the emergency restrictions and guidance on clubs and players. I'm sure we all hope that things stay that way, but please remember that everyone's tolerance to risk and their medical condition is different. If you are nice, kind, and considerate to others, it will be easier – and safer – for everyone. Croquet has prided itself on such inclusion. We've used 'played by men and women on equal terms' in our marketing for many years. However, recent correspondence in this magazine has challenged how well we achieve that in practice, and inclusion goes much further than gender. I challenge everyone to look around your club, its teams, committees and so on, and ask "do the people I see here reflect society in our area of the country?" If not, then it is incumbent upon

us all to consider why that might be the case. The benefits of increasing the diversity in our sport will be multiple. If we can remove barriers, real or perceived, how many more members might we recruit? If existing members feel more included, how many more volunteers will come forwards when there's a job that needs doing? And it's simply the right thing to do. The CA has recently written to all clubs under the banner 'Opening Doors of Croquet' to ask them to ask the tricky questions on this topic, across all characteristics, visible and hidden. In parallel, we have launched a competition for member croquet clubs to win a share of £3,000 for initiatives that reach out to communities and individuals that are not currently well represented among a club's membership. You will find further details on these in this issue, along with some inspiration from clubs around the country who are already working hard to bring croquet to a wider audience.

Samir Patel
Chairman of Council

CORRECTION from February 395 Edition:

The listing for the podium spots for the photo competition was correct at:

1. Liz Farrow
2. Chris Martin
3. Richard Sanville

However, the medals accompanying the pictures have 2nd and 3rd the other way around.

WINCHESTER GC MIX-IN UNDER 'LESS-THAN-IDEAL' CONDITIONS

At a GC mix-in at Winchester on 24th February we were visited by a sudden burst of hailstones. Nothing daunted, one game continued for some time until defeated by the state of the lawn!





CROQUET IS FOR EVERYONE!

Croquet is a special sport – it is adaptable and affordable, competitive and companionable and it can be played by everyone at every level – but we all know this, which is why we are croquet players. Some clubs have realised there are very many people in their community who have little or no idea of what croquet is about. They have started tapping into this huge potential to gain more members while becoming more representative of their local area. Recently there has been increased interest in our sport across the country and there has never been as better time to spread the message that CROQUET IS FOR EVERYONE!

Inspirational stories from clubs in Swindon, Sheffield, Nottingham and Hampstead Heath are shared here, and there are many other clubs doing splendid

work. Swindon has produced fantastic solutions to make the game accessible to everyone; Sheffield has inspired local primary schools to have croquet on their PE curriculum; Hampstead Heath has attracted younger people with its ‘Pay and Play’; and Nottingham has built relationships with its Asian community. Sharing ideas and tales of what went well, and what didn’t work well, gives other clubs encouragement and useful tips. One of the keys to success for clubs is not to try to do too much too quickly. Taking one idea and working on it so it becomes successful is much more satisfying for everyone involved than trying to do several things and becoming disheartened if the results are not as good as hoped. If you have an idea that will make croquet more welcoming or would like some advice, then a group has been set up which will be happy to help you (contact

Paul Brown). Better still, enter the ‘Opening Doors on Croquet’ competition. The group has also produced a set of questions that clubs may find useful to help guide a discussion about inclusivity and diversity within the club’s committee or membership. In addition, a report produced in March 2021 helps identify the barriers and obstacles that diverse groups may face and suggests ways to overcome them. This report can be found on the CA website: <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=ca/gov/policies/ide> Finally, please tell everyone what you are doing. Let other clubs read about your experience in the Gazette or on the CA website. Let your local community know via social media, your website and the local press. Most importantly, make sure your own members know what you are doing and spread the word – ‘Croquet is for Everyone’.

NOTTINGHAM WOOS ASIAN COMMUNITIES IF CRICKET CAN DO IT, THEN SO CAN CROQUET!

Approximately 14% of Nottingham’s population is from a minority ethnic background but this has not been reflected in the past in either the membership or the users of the Nottingham Croquet Club. Efforts to address this began in 2019 as part of our community engagement programme ‘Croquet for All’. Links were established with the Pakistani Community via the Pakistan Forum and a visit was made to their Independence Day celebration to demonstrate croquet and promote the club.

Last summer, club member Ferzana Shan went on two local radio stations, serving the Muslim and the wider Asian population in Nottingham, to talk about our sport and to promote an evening of croquet hosted by the competitors in the GC Women’s Championship. This date coincided with the Sport England campaign known as This Girl Can which encourages women and girls of all ages and from all backgrounds to take part in physical activity.

Thanks largely to the top female GC players and a group of enthusiastic club members being willing to spend a warm summer evening showing all the visitors the rudiments of the game, the event was a great success. Over 50 people (not



all women) attended, with nearly all of them from ethnic minorities. There was a lot of fun and laughter and many really positive comments about how enjoyable it had been. Some came back in following weeks, either with groups or via our Pay and Play.

The biggest hurdle to engaging with under-represented groups is getting them to come in through the gate. Promoting the game on dedicated Asian and Muslim radio stations helped to make them feel they would be welcome and so they came. Once that initial trepidation is overcome,

word starts to spread via word-of-mouth or social media. Our aim this year is to build upon this small success, starting by inviting the attendees back to another evening event and to our Pay and Play sessions, and then promoting the game further using social media and maybe another radio feature.

Hopefully, this is just the start. Watch out cricket - here we come!

Beatrice McGlen and Ferzana Shan



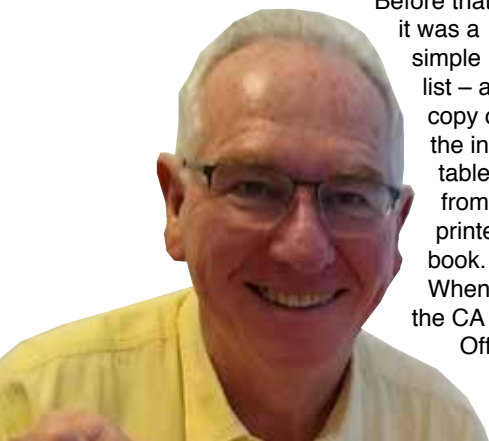
CA'S TOURNAMENT AND COACHING ENTRY SYSTEM

The CA's online Tournament and Coaching Entry System (TES) opened for business on schedule on February 1st 2022 and began satisfying the country's croquet players' cravings. By the time lunch was eaten, but not digested, over 450 events had been entered online with £10k paid out for the privilege.

Littlehampton's Chrissie Merrington took the honour of making the system's 25,000th payment since its inception and steady growth since. She said, "I find the entry system very easy and user friendly, with all the instructions clear and straightforward even if you're not that au fait with computers."

The 2004 Fixtures Calendar, listing some 200 events, was the first online to allow viewers to filter events by type and then be added into an electronic calendar, but the printed Fixtures Book had to be used to post entries off to the relevant clubs.

Before that, it was a simple list – a copy of the index tables from the printed book. When the CA Office



took over the job of producing the Fixtures Book, Dave Kibble saw the opportunity to use his unusual set of skills to automate and make the information more accessible. The first step went online in 2009, with which the office maintained a database of events and published a draft programme on the website to get clubs' feedback on any errors or omissions.

The office then used a Microsoft Word document whose macros automatically downloaded the programme from the website to create the printable Fixtures Book. This steadily developed through 2010, which saw online registration of availability for selection events and direct entry with online payment into CA-organised events, such as the championships.

In 2011, Bowdon's Ian Lines helped realise the potential by trialling online entry to three of the club's events. System enhancements allowed the Tournament Secretary to manage local entrants paying to the club and a simple report showing the levy and net payments due - all with no forms being posted around! Hurlingham and Nottingham joined the trial in 2012. More and more clubs each year saw the benefits of going fully online to manage their entries. Now all member clubs that list tournaments in the CA Fixtures Calendar use TES, which allows players to plan their entire season and then select and pay with one transaction. None of this could have happened without the diligent support of the then CA Manager, Liz Larsson, who shared the vision of the online future, as well as writing a comprehensive guide for clubs,

which lives on within the system's help pages.

From 2019, club Tournament Secretaries were able to directly prepare their fixture details online, guided from the CA Office by the ever-patient Sarah Hayes (a saint, for sure). This has resulted in a massive saving of time in the office, particularly in subsequent years.

In early 2020, COVID-19 struck and a mechanism was very rapidly developed to allow organisers to cancel an event but allow players to donate their entry fees. Players were very generous in giving £7,200 of their entry fees to help support the host clubs through those very difficult times - The CA, of course, charged no levy on those donations.

2022 enhancements include a separation of the host venue from the organising body to better support the academies that run courses around the country, though most are not (yet?) allowing online entry through TES, despite it being free.

Just over 26,000 fixture entries have been recorded with 25,000 payments, suggesting that most players pay for only one fixture at a time rather than entering several events and making one payment – maybe no one reads the help pages! Since its inception, 6,000 events have been listed in over 4,500 fixtures, with more than 350 fixtures scheduled to take place this year. 2021 had 5,214 event entries recorded in the online system, and 2022 looks set to be another record-breaking year.

Dave Kibble
CA Website Systems



SRA AWARDS

Nottingham Croquet Club has been honoured to be selected as a finalist for the Sport and Recreation Alliance's Diversity and Inclusion Award.

The club's nomination for introducing croquet as an inclusive, attractive sport to a wide range of people, is the first time that croquet has been considered in the 25 year history of the awards. The prestigious ceremony, hosted by HRH

The Earl of Wessex, was held at Coventry on March 24th in front of 120 guests from across the sporting world. Katherine Merry, the Olympic bronze medal winning sprinter, and Charles Runcie the former head of BBC Sport joined the CEOs of London Sport and the Sport and Recreation Alliance, sponsors, and representatives from 14 widely differing sports. The other finalists in the Diversity and Inclusion category were British

Cycling and Para Dance UK, both national organisations, so there was some very stiff competition for one croquet club! The winner was announced as Nottingham Croquet Club. The club is extremely proud that it has brought croquet to many community groups within Nottingham. This award ceremony has also brought our sport to the minds of many influential people in the sports sector.

Beatrice McGlen

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SWINDON'S PIONEERING COMMUNITY CROQUET



PUCK CROQUET

Swindon Croquet Club originally offered croquet as an activity to a local council leisure department and thereby became a member of the Swindon Sports Forum (SSF). With its introduction of community group visits, through the leisure department, the club achieved a local accreditation which then meant it was eligible for grants from the SSF.

From this small beginning, Swindon Town Football Club Community Foundation (STFCCF) approached the club in 2008 to see if it could include croquet as an activity for its brand new 'Extra Timers' Project. This is aimed at football fans who are over-65. The first session took place indoors at the Link Leisure Centre. The floor at the centre is not ideal for croquet balls and hoops so 'Puck Croquet' was used where the balls are replaced with a nylon puck and the hoops are temporarily stuck to the floor with tape. The sessions are split into male and female, with 25 attendees at each. STFCCF has professional instructors and one of them attends each session. In the summer the sessions move to the S.C.C. croquet lawns. These year-round sessions have remained one of the Extra Timers most popular activities. 18 of Swindon's current members have joined the club from this group, including the current Chair Clive Smith.

Other activities, including croquet, at the leisure venues in the town involve disabled children. A light-weight flat-iron mallet was produced and from this proto-type a set of such mallets of different lengths were made to accommodate different types of wheelchair and different height users.

During the season the club runs Community activities on its own three lawn club on Moredon Playing Fields and it has taken croquet to groups around the town. The local Bereavement Group has come for an annual social event for several years and the Parkinsons Group have found that croquet is an ideal pastime that both the people with Parkinsons and their carers can do together. New members have been recruited from both of these groups. Numerous other groups from across Swindon have been entertained and coached at the club. Croquet has also been played in local care homes, although the problem of carpets being too fast for croquet balls has yet to be overcome (does anyone have any ideas of what sort of ball would be more suitable on a normal domestic carpet?). Perhaps we need to transfer the 'grass' to the ball for indoor surfaces.

In 2019 (pre-covid) 32 two-hour sessions were run for Community Groups. All this takes a lot of commitment, volunteer effort and dedication from the members. However, the club's membership has increased from 20, when all this started, to 60 now. Working with the community has also enabled the club to successfully apply for Lottery Grants, thanks to the vision of Neil Morrison, which has enabled it to build a clubroom with toilet and kitchen facilities and to buy a new mower and accessories.

| John Airey, Swindon Croquet Club



WHEELCHAIR CROQUET

GETTING OUT INTO THE COMMUNITY AND RECRUITING NEW MEMBERS

In order to promote croquet and find new members for your Club you need to have access to the Local Community. In the Brighton area we were able to access the Local Community in several ways.

Firstly at the beginning of the season four clubs in the area got together and set up the South East Federation's indoor croquet mat in the atrium at the Shoreham shopping centre on a Saturday. An excellent flat concrete surface allowed us a full day of activity, with a rota of coaches and shoppers queueing up for a chance to try out a new and interesting activity (free!). A stand manned by volunteers provided information about local clubs, and people were encouraged to attend open days at the clubs shortly afterwards.

Later in the summer Brighton Council had a "try sports" weekend for local clubs. We were able to set up a croquet lawn and stand on the sea front. This attracted greater interest since it was part of a larger event. Many people including youngsters were keen to have a go and find out what the sport had to offer and were motivated to follow up with open days and tasters.

One year Shoreham council included SCCC in their evening classes programme and our first course was very successful in bringing in new members.

A member produced a cheerful leaflet (4 to an A4 sheet) which members put through local letter boxes.

Today we would have included references to material on the web and had a lap top on our stand. How things have changed!

| Pat Jackson



FYLDE DRAINAGE PROJECT

When Fylde first took on the disused tennis courts at South Shore Tennis Club in Blackpool we soon discovered that any substantial amount of rain rendered the lawns unplayable. Many rainy days resulted in the lawns being underwater and we would visit to be greeted by the indignity of seagulls perching on the floating ball stops. If you don't believe it then search YouTube for "Synchronised Croquet"! Many years of ditch digging to redesign the drainage helped and a grant a few years back helped us to lay pipe and infill with gravel down the south boundary towards a public drain. We had another open ditch along the west boundary which needed constant maintenance and shoring up. The proposal to improve this ditch was accepted by the CA Development Committee and work commenced at the beginning of the 2021 season. We were lucky enough to have a retired British Aerospace design engineer as a member and his drawings, research and ideas were invaluable. The original costings were helped by a donation (for cost of transport) of a length of pipe from Southport and Birkdale Croquet Club who had used it as a ball stop for a major CA Golf Tournament. We were also lucky enough to secure the help of two local extremely fit young men who barrowed 6 bags of gravel from the delivery point to the ditch (200 meters!). The ditch is now secure and maintenance free.

Lawn Levelling

The work to improve the lawns at Fylde has been started with major work to level lawn one. Turf was lifted and soil removed from the major "hills" around hoop 1 (on the full lawn). With the help of a volunteer squad of members, and under the supervision of Philip Bass, 1,500 kgs of top dressing and seed were manhandled and spread. This should be a welcome start to the improvement to the playing conditions at the club.





“OPENING DOORS ON CROQUET” COMPETITION

The Croquet Association has launched a competition for member croquet clubs to win a share of £3,000; with a maximum prize of £500 per club.

We want to support new initiatives to welcome new members, especially those that will attract people from diverse groups within your community to join your club.

For example, perhaps you plan regular sessions for university students or school pupils, to engage with local faith or community groups to arrange a taster day for their members, to make access easier for people with disabilities, to change your website or to buy a new promotional banner for your club. Maybe you plan a scheme to make all new members, from wherever they arrive, feel more included and welcome. But whatever you plan, the prize money must be spent on an initiative to make your club more welcoming.

Winners must provide an article with photographs for The Croquet Gazette or E-newsletter on completion of their project, setting out what they have achieved and learned.

The deadline for applications is 31 May

2022 and since the purpose of this scheme is to encourage new initiatives, prizes will not be awarded for any expenditure or commitments made before 2022 (even though we know some clubs have already done great things).

Applications will be judged on merit and in competition with other applications. It is probable that not all applicants will be successful.

Payments will be made soon after the winners are selected and will be made only into the bank account of a member croquet club

Judging Criteria

The judging panel will look for initiatives that are intended to reach out to communities and individuals that are not currently well represented among a club's membership. We hope to see innovation and novel approaches, but these are not essential factors.

How to apply

Send an email to: p_h_brown@icloud.com that includes the following:

1. The name of your croquet club
2. A contact person, along with their

3. email address and phone number.
3. The name of the club Chair and confirmation that they support the entry.
4. The name of the person who will provide the article for publication.

And, in no more than 500 words: A description of the initiative, how you expect it to make your club more welcoming, what you hope to achieve and how you will measure success. This must include a timetable and brief details of the proposed expenditure. There is no requirement to supplement the grant with club funds, but you should mention this if this is the case. You can apply for up to £500 in prize money to support your initiative.

Entries will be accepted where expenditure or commitments have been made prior to submission of the initiative, provided these were made in 2022. Applicants should not assume their application will be successful.

Paul Brown
Director for Development
Executive Vice-Chair

“OPENING DOORS ON CROQUET” ASKING THE TRICKY QUESTIONS

Could your club do with help to engage your members in a dialogue on the tricky topic of “How welcoming is our club?”

Here is a set of questions that a club can ask of its committee and wider membership to start that conversation. There are no right or wrong answers, and no requirement to share the answers outside of your club. You may find it easier to have the discussion led by a facilitator – check to see if you have a club member with that experience.

1. How would you describe the mix of members in your club? Would a change in this mix improve you club to everyone's benefit? What would that change look like? (e.g. more younger members to share the club tasks such as lawn maintenance and administration).
2. Following on from the last question; to what extent does your membership reflect your local community. (e.g. younger people, people with disabilities, people from ethnic backgrounds, people who are LGBTQ).

3. List the advantages you see of having a more diverse membership but also any disadvantages of the make-up of your current membership.
4. Describe your current recruitment process (aims, goals, and methods) and how (or indeed if) it considers the answers to the previous questions.
5. Discuss the extent to which your club website and publicity material promote a welcoming and inclusive approach to croquet? (e.g. could your photos do with updating to show that croquet is open to all?).
6. When new members join who may have diverse needs to the current membership how do you ensure that they feel welcome? (e.g. people with visual impairment or learning disabilities).
7. How are new members introduced into your club from both the playing and social perspectives?
8. How are inexperienced players coached and how is the success of coaching assessed and how is coaching developed?
9. What value do you see in exploring these ideas further by linking up with

- other clubs?
10. Describe any practical support with any of the issues raised by these questions from which your club will benefit (e.g. further training in social media, access to photos)? If so, what do you see these needs to be?

Further Information: The CA runs a scheme called “Croquet Matters” which allows clubs to analyse their current position in a number of areas and then create development plans. Participants discuss stern questions and categorise their answer to each e.g.

1. Does your club have a plan for identifying, engaging and working with local organisations?
2. Would you describe your club as inclusive?
3. Does your club understand all the different marketing options available to promote your club? Do you adapt your communication method for your target audience?

Clubs wanting to use Croquet Matters to further discuss these, or other topics, should contact their Federation Development Officer.

Plan your next big adventure



These days, retirement is less about slowing down and more about regaining time – to enjoy the leisure pursuits and adventures you’ve been dreaming about for so long. But with the shift to financial self-reliance in retirement, making the right decisions requires advice that is personal to you.

That’s where we come in. We offer a local, friendly service backed by the strength and security of FTSE 100 company, St. James’s Place Wealth Management. Our advice can help you manage your income and lump-sum needs, whilst guiding you through the tax landscape.

So, if you’re looking for security without compromising on your bucket list, let’s talk about how we can make that happen.

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CROQUET WELCOMES CANINES!

We enjoy playing competitive (GC) croquet up and down the land. 15 months ago we added a Border Terrier (Crunchie) to our croquet family. His first visit post vaccination was to our home clubs, Ealing and Surbiton. Crunchie loves the game. He watches intently whilst happily tethered to wherever we can put his spike - he gets constant cuddles and strokes from passing folk, the odd treat and lots of walks alongside clubs in the UK. So far he has been made very welcome to Ealing (Mascot of the club) Surbiton (where there are quite a few canines with their croquet playing humans) Guildford and Godalming which has excellent walks around as well as a

very welcoming atmosphere, Bath and Blewbury both with amazing views and walks, Woking, Ryde, Hurlingham, Wrest Park, Sussex County, High Wycombe all give him a fine welcome and attention. He did go to Hunstanton but sadly not in the actual croquet premises but did watch me play through the gate. For Christmas he was given his own mallet (photo attached). Are there any other croquet dogs out there? He's ready for a game if anyone else is! There are loads more clubs to visit - how about a Club crawl?

**Bridget, Jane and Crunchie
Goodman Powell
Ealing and Surbiton**



ACTION AFTER A FAULT IN GC VS AC

This has puzzled me for some time!

When a fault is committed the non-offending player has the option of moving the balls back to their original position. In AC this option may give an advantage to the non-offending side with a short roquet etc. However, in GC this can almost let the faulting player 'get away' with it. For instance; when the faulting player commits a double tap and the striker's ball hardly moves, it could still be blocking the other balls from running the hoop regardless of whether it stays where it is or moves back. Surely in GC, 11.4 – action after a fault, it should give the option of removing the faulting striker's ball to the penalty spot. This would make players more focused at forestalling / getting the shot watched, knowing they have a chance of eliminating the opponent's ball from the immediate area should it be a fault.

What do others think?

**Brian Wainman
Plymouth**

'CAMPBELL' ON 10, 50 AND 100 YEARS AGO

I do agree with reader, Campbell, those archive columns were usually the first thing I read in the Gazette, do hope they will be resumed.

Rosemary Bradshaw

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.



RESPONSE:

Although AC and GC have the same choice of remedies for a fault, the games are different and the consequences of the choice can be much more significant in AC than GC. As Brian Wainman points out, a fault in AC may lead to a change of innings which can be a highly significant event. In GC, a turn contains only one stroke and so the implications of a single mistake, whether it consists of missing a clearance or failing a hoop or committing a fault, are much more limited for both sides. For that reason, it does not seem necessary to increase the penalty for committing a fault. It is also relevant that, in the example given, when two balls are close together and the striker's ball hardly moves despite double tapping, the striker had the option of deeming his stroke and preserving the block or hamper.

Ian Cobbold
Chairman of the CA GC Rules Committee

LATERAL THINKING COLUMN?

I offer the following for possible inclusion in the Gazette's Lateral Thinking Column.

Why CAN'T we use more than one mallet in a turn? Pool players use a heavy cue to break off and then continue with a lighter cue. Tennis players enter the court with a whole sponsorship of rackets. When did you last see a serious angler with only one rod in the water? Golfers are allowed masses of mallets; so many that they have to hire someone to carry them.

Speaking of "mallets"...don't you think that is rather a dull word? What about "Blobber" or "Peeler"? In the course of time such words would come into general use a bit like using the "Hoover" rather than "vacuum cleaner".
Let's introduce a Shot Clock

to aid CastersCasters.
...Casters.Casters. ...who go into a yip like trance and cannot finish their shot.....shot..... shot.....shot.

Let's give us Mere Mortals (MM) a better chance against the Top Players (TP). How? TPs must play the hoops in the sequence laid down in the current Laws/ Rules but MMs can run a sequence of hoops in whatever order they choose

The Lateral Thoughts Committee would love to hear from you but if you miss the 1st April deadline you will be too late.

Klim Seabright
Cheltenham Croquet Club

CROQUET COURT FANTASY

While idly flicking through the latest Gazette I came across the article by Howard Bowron. Imagine my dismay when I came across the reference to "nubile tennis players.."

I checked the date and confirmed that we are still in 2022 and not back in the 70's. May I respectfully

suggest that such sentiments have no place in the modern inclusive game of croquet and it is time for Howard to put away his collection of Benny Hill videos and move on.

Alex Kidd
Stony Stratford CC

RESPONSE:

Thank you so much for taking the time to let us know your thoughts, although we haven't received many requests for the return of the '10, 50 and 100 Years Ago', we thought we might try something similar but with a twist. Our fabulous CA Archivist Chris Williams will be offering an insight into past gazette issues which he is calling the 'Tunnel of time'. We hope you will enjoy this new feature and as always welcome your feedback.



SHORT CROQUET CORNER

Short Croquet handicapping in doubles.

Have you noticed that bisque allocations in SC doubles games have changed? Instead of simply taking the average of the two handicaps – difficult when one player has peels to do – the CA Handicapping Committee has put in place a new method of calculation. This takes account for the first time of situations where one player has mandatory peels. However the new approach now applies to all SC doubles games.

Take the handicap of each player and convert it to the trigger index point, rounding down if needs be. Add the two index numbers together and divide by two, to get the average. Now read this number off against the trigger index table, again rounding down if needs be. This gives the number of bisques to be shared between the two players.

The effect is to preserve the generous bisque allocation when two higher bisquers are playing together, but slightly reduce the number of bisques when a higher bisquer is paired with a low bisquer. For the full rubric and tables key Short

Croquet Handicapping into Google or visit: <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=games/association/handicapping/short>

National SC Competition

The National SC Competition is back for 2022 with a revised format: Federations nominate one Club to represent them in a knockout. The old handicap restrictions are removed. In two other innovations, Federations can put up combined teams if they choose, and there is the choice in each match whether to play three rounds or four, which will be helpful where travelling distances are larger and time is limited.

Entries need to be in now. If your Federation hasn't yet organised a representative team, why not put your Club in as a placeholder? Who will be playing can then be sorted out afterwards.

Lawn equipment for Short Croquet

Newcomers to Short Croquet often ask if special equipment is needed. No, it is not: everything is exactly what can be found in any croquet club store.

What will be helpful is an extra set of hoops to divide a full lawn into two. Any



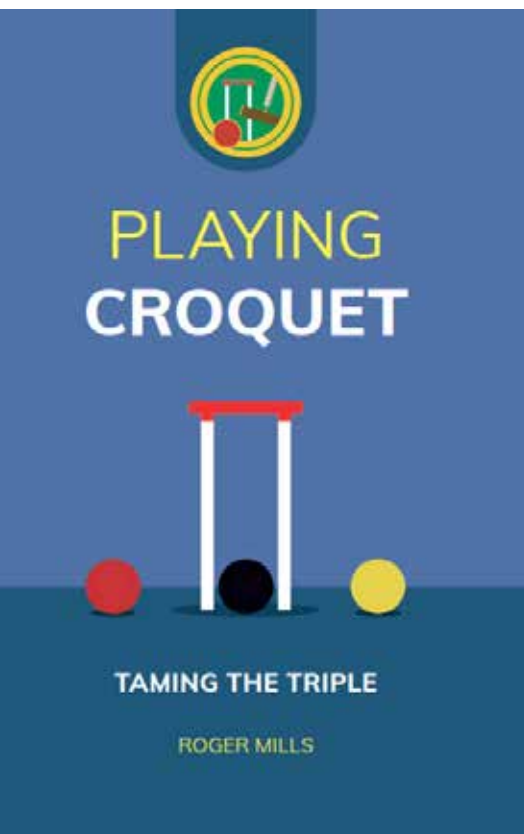
standard set will do. Old discarded hoops lying in a corner can be brought back to life by getting them shot blasted and powder coated. This is a lot cheaper than buying a new set; it gives time-expired hoops a smart, nearly-new look and should allow them to serve well into the future.

PHOTOGRAPH Pete Thompson proudly displays a set of hoops he has had shot blasted and powder coated.

John Harris

BOOK REVIEW

TAMING THE TRIPLE, ROGER MILLS



Following on from his highly-successful book giving new insight into winning with bisques, Roger has turned his attention to Taming the Triple and has devised a method that makes the triple peel accessible to any single-bisquer wanting to take their game to the next level of enjoyment.

He contends that facing the challenge of the triple peel early in your croquet career makes you a better player in the long term, plus you'll have much more fun getting there. And I agree!

Roger's "Magic Peeling Shot" eliminates the judgement required in other methods, he tells us to use it and never miss another peel! He has thought carefully about the kind of shots a single-bisquer can rely on and those that are a bit more variable and builds a set of tactics that work for any lawn on which you can play a reasonably well-controlled 4-ball break. His plan focuses on the "Super Six" peeling opportunities, eliminating what he calls the clutter of "the other 11" encountered on a regular triple peeling course. His aide-memoire is to think of

two planned journeys, the Standard and Delayed triples, and to stay on course, switching tracks if necessary.

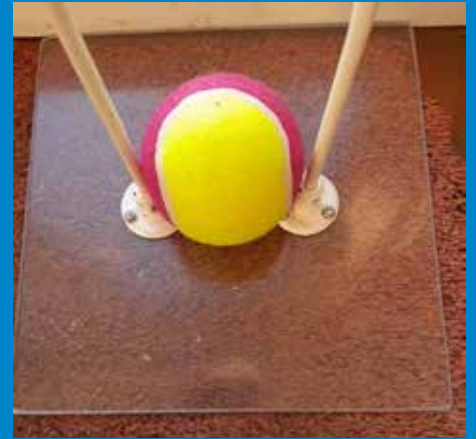
The appendix is amusingly titled "Bring back that peelin' feelin' when it's jawssed, jawssed", and covers how to get back on track in the journey if a peel sticks. It's pretty comprehensive, putting you back on the Super Six trail, though of course there's a lot more to remember if you go there. This can be left until you've mastered the Super Six, and by then you'll also be ready to absorb the elite methods described in the mainstream literature. The book describes recommended leaves from which the triple is easier to get started, with detailed instructions on how to make them without expert-level skill. There's even a section on how best to set up if you lose the innings and need a quick leave from which you have a good chance to get a triple going next turn.

The practice pack (freely available to book owners) can be printed off to take onto the lawn without worrying about the book getting wet or dogeared, or you can use it on a phone or tablet. It's got all the key diagrams as well as the coaching notes.

INDOOR CROQUET AT ROTHER VALLEY CC

Our club is fortunate in being located adjacent to the village hall. Having recruited 30 new members last year, we were looking for suitable winter activities to keep their interests up and, if feasible, conduct some training. I approached one of our members, an innovative engineer to design a suitable hoop stand which could be fixed to the floor. At first he thought that could be achieved by adding suction pads to an acrylic base stand, but the floor was insufficiently smooth for the pads to stick for long. After further experimentation,

hand they needed a certain mass so as not to drift in odd directions as the hall floor wasn't entirely level. Hard balls on the solid floor were hopeless. We then tested solid rubber balls (too fast), balloon type rubber balls (not good at clearing opponent's balls) and finally giant tennis balls. I discovered the latter at my local dog food shop! These balls were easier to control, but far from perfect. As there was no good solution, we had no option but to cover the playing surface with carpet. This would be tedious because of the time it would take to lay out the carpet, either in rolls or in tiles.



A "eureka moment" came when talking to Richard Carline, Coaching Director at the Academy. My call to him was about training courses for our new members. On hearing about our indoor croquet plans, Richard mentioned, by an extraordinary co-incidence, that the dust

heavy duty and awkward to set up. They needed to be bolted up from the underside of metal plates placed beneath the carpet. We thought the hoop stands we manufactured would be much better if they could easily be affixed to the carpet surface. Duck Tape proved to be the perfect solution! Each hoop could be fitted in a jiffy. With much fanfare, our inaugural event took place on 15 January with 20 participants. Groups of four were booked in for an hour's play with refreshments available throughout the day. The "lawn" size and the "grass" quality are of course limiting factors, but as a social activity, it was a great success. A second event was held on 6 February to satisfy growing member curiosity! With much excitement, a final "whacky" competition was held on 6 March. After awarding a novel prize to the winner, the club chairman could not resist himself in awarding a wooden spoon to the slowest player! Our indoor croquet facility is undeniably a bit of a novelty but great fun nevertheless. It certainly comes into its own on a wet and windy day.

clear duck tape proved to be the most effective solution! The next issue was to find suitable balls. On the one hand, they needed to be soft so as not to damage the walls and especially not the full length windows on either side of the hall! On the other

had just been blown off an indoor croquet set stored for many years at Southwick. He offered to lend it to me. The rubber backed green carpet rolls (covering 50 sq yds – approx. 75% of a half lawn) can be clearly seen in the photograph. The hoops that came with the set were

Douglas Shand

Armed with the Magic Peeling Shot, and following the two trails with concentration, you will tame the triple and win a coveted CA Gold Merit Award (a scheme devised to encourage enterprising play). When my handicap was in single figures, I set about trying to master the triple, win or lose, and my clubmates soon realised that they had the game in the bag if a clip was on 4-back! I eventually completed a triple peel in a handicap game on lawn 8 at Cheltenham at tea time - no one ever forgets their first triple peel! I'm sure I'd have done it sooner had I read this book first. Now, with over 500 triples completed, I've checked out Roger's plans and they

do work and are easy to understand and follow. He doesn't tell you how the elite players do it, he tells you how you can do it with your current skills. When you occasionally play an elite player, you might not realise that they use their view of whether you will complete a triple peel in their shot selection - so getting some triples on the database will encourage them to take a longer shot against you, improving your chance of keeping the innings after a leave. This is a very well-written, structured and accessible book, breaking the two journeys down into easy steps, with recaps, coaching notes, and over

100 clear diagrams. The style, as in his previous book, has the feel of a personal coaching session, with Roger's enthusiasm and warm encouragement shining through. The layout is carefully designed to make self-study easy, with no flipping-over pages to reference the diagrams the text refers to. I heartily recommend Taming the Triple to the ambitious and fun-seeking single-figure-handicap player. Once again, Roger has bestowed all profits on the CA, so your purchase from the CA's online shop will help to support the game too!

Dave Kibble

THOMAS MAYNE REID (1818-1883)

RETURN HOME AND A CHILD BRIDE

Reid returned to New York in early 1849 and sailed for Liverpool in June, in the company of a band of volunteers bound for service in the Bavarian revolution. However, rather than accompany these adventurers to the continent, Reid visited his home in Ireland and then settled in London, where he began the production of numerous novels of adventure. "The Scalp Hunters," his next story, appeared in 1851. There is a suggestion that he may have travelled to the continent to take part in an uprising in Hungary and that, when he reached Paris, he found that the plan had already failed. However, the evidence for this is found in his memoirs, the reliability of which is highly questionable.

In 1853, aged 35, Reid married Elizabeth Hyde, a girl of 15. They moved from London to Gerrard's Cross, where a child bride was presumably not so obvious.. The publisher Davis Bogue suggested to Reid that he should write books specifically for boys, catering for the Christmas market each year. He wrote a string of successful novels including "The Boy Hunters" (1855). The book was written after Reid accepted that "writing books in which not too many people died, and there was not too much violence, was better business than writing as he did at first". Reid revealed himself as a keen naturalist and wrote about "the creations of nature", without all of the moralising and piety in which other, contemporary Victorian authors might well have indulged. He added several other volumes, to his oeuvre during this period.

CROQUET

In 1863, "Captain" Mayne Reid wrote his book on croquet. It was published by Charles James Skeet of Charing Cross, London. Copies of the first edition of the work are very scarce. In February 2021, a first edition, with "a few light spots, hinges split but firm, otherwise internally very good," could be acquired from Shapero Rare Books of New Bond Street for £575. So far as Shaperos were aware, there was no other copy available on the market for sale.

When the book entered the public domain in the USA, it was reprinted, as "culturally important", by Kessinger Publishing as part of their Legacy Reprint Series. It is widely available, via the internet. In his six chapters, Reid described the words used in the game ("The Slang"); the court ("The Ground"); the equipment ("The Croqueterie"); the positions of the hoops and the pegs ("The Arrangement"); the progress of the play ("The Programme")

and the laws of the game ("The Rules"). He appears to have been delighted by the some of the words used by players. All of the technical words have been carefully and lovingly transcribed by Dr Ian Plummer on his website: www.oxfordcroquet.com.

LITERARY (AND LEGAL) SUCCESS

It is not immediately obvious why a writer of many "boys adventure stories" should turn his pen to a manual for those interested in playing croquet. The work that he published immediately before his enthusiastic commendation of the contemporary mallet sport, was entitled "The Maroon: A Tale of Voodoo and Obeah" (a form of sorcery practised in the Caribbean). Reid's interests ranged far and wide.

At this stage of his career, Reid was making a good living from his writing but he was spending inordinate amounts of money on his new home in Gerrard's Cross, an elaborate reproduction of a Mexican hacienda that he called The Ranche. He wrote "Croquet" there and he undertook some farming on the property. It may reasonably be assumed that he badly needed funds and that he reckoned that a book about the game that had, within a very short time, become extraordinarily popular, particularly amongst the wealthy, might be worthwhile. It is a slim volume and it may not have taken him very long to complete. Furthermore, Reid wrote about almost anything that he experienced in his adventurous life, and about quite a few other things that he probably did not encounter first hand, save in his vivid imagination.

Reid came into some money, as the result of "Croquet", fairly quickly. Plagiarism was rife at this time. In 1864, the Earl of Essex published "Croquet" by "An Old Hand". It was a blatant copy of Reid's book. The Captain resorted to law, with significant success. All copies of Essex's book were ordered to be destroyed and Reid was awarded damages of £125 (about £12,000 in today's terms).

BANKRUPTCY AND RETURN TO THE USA

Reid had a further six books published in the next two years (including "The Cliff Climbers" (1864) and "The Boy Slaves" (1865). Next came "The Headless Horseman" (published in monthly serialised form during 1865 and 1866 and subsequently published as a book in 1866). This was a story "based on a South Texas folk tale", featuring, unsurprisingly, an Irish adventurer and hero of the war with Mexico.

Despite his output, in November 1866, Reid was declared bankrupt.

In 1867 he began to publish a daily evening paper, The Little Times. It was a failure. Hoping to recoup his fortune, in October 1867, he and Mrs Reid went to the United States, arriving at Newport, Rhode Island, in November 1867.

In Newport, Reid he wrote "The Child Wife," which was published by Sheldon & Co. of New York. In their advertisement, the company announced that "Captain Mayne Reid" had "now become an American citizen, and this is the first of his books in the sale of which he has any direct pecuniary interest". That announcement presumably had something to do with this bankruptcy in England.

Reid wrote many works about American life. In these, he described the colonial policy in the United States, the horrors of slave labour and the lives of American Indians. His many "adventure novels" were, it is said, akin to those written by Robert Louis Stevenson. His books contain action that takes place primarily in places including, but not limited to, the American West, Mexico, South Africa, the Himalayas and Jamaica. He was very prolific. In all, he wrote about 75 books and numerous articles and sketches.

Surprisingly, it appears that Reid was a fervent admirer of Jean-Jaques Rousseau and also a devotee and follower of Lord Byron. He espoused his "liberal, radical and humanitarian ideals". A renowned orator himself, Reid regularly lectured upon these political subjects. He was a champion of the underdog and many of his novels not only reflect his zeal for the abolition of slavery but also his distaste for authority - especially that exercised by the monarchies and the Roman Catholic Church of his time.

During his second sojourn in the USA, Reid lectured at Steinway Hall in New York (the building housing concert halls and showrooms for Steinway pianos) and his novel "The Helpless Hand" was published in 1868. But in this period in America, things began to go badly wrong. The wound that he had received at Chapultepec started to bother him. A magazine which he started in 1869, called "Onward", lasted only fourteen months. In 1870 he was confined to St. Luke's Hospital in New York City for some time, because of an infection of his war wound. On 10 September 1870, he was able to leave the hospital. His wife hated America and, following Reid's discharge from St. Luke's, they returned to England, arriving on 22 October 1870.

'PAY & PLAY' SUCCESS AT HAMPSTEAD HEATH



Following the really helpful CA webinar last March on introducing Pay and Play sessions (which can still be viewed at <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=members/webinars> we, at Hampstead Heath Croquet Club, were very keen to try out the suggested approach to offering "Pay & Play" sessions in the 2021 season. Despite being in a prominent position on popular Hampstead Heath, the Croquet Club is small. We only have a single lawn that we share with the Bowls Club, but there is plenty of capacity to accommodate more members. We are eager both to increase the overall membership, and to encourage more young people to play.

How we ran the sessions:

We offered two sessions lasting an hour and a quarter on alternate Friday evenings. Our lawn was divided into two halves, with four players on each, so that we could have up to 16 players on each Friday. We promoted the sessions with details on the website, and with an A1 sized advertising board on the footpath by the lawn. Booking and payment was arranged through the Eventbrite website, as suggested by the CA's excellent Webinar. Apart from the first Friday all the sessions were fully booked, so altogether we introduced croquet to, or rekindled an interest in, more than 50 players. Most were young i.e. teen-age to mid-30s, and everybody thoroughly enjoyed themselves. We focused on the "five hoop" croquet suggested in the webinar, which meant that we could complete three or more games in the 75 minutes available. This made for a friendly, competitive atmosphere, which seemed to go down well with everyone.

Conclusions:

The overall conclusion is that it was a successful trial, and that we'll do it again in 2022. On the positive side first. Everyone felt it was a great success. We had a good response and we recruited half a dozen new permanent members to the club, so it achieved one of our main goals. It made a few pounds profit. On the negative side, it was quite demanding in terms of organisation. We played a very basic version of Golf Croquet and didn't attempt to cover the Association form. We could have been more effective with our marketing. Of course, we couldn't control the weather, so had to reorganise one of the sessions and abandon another.

Plans for 2022:

We'll aim to start marketing sooner, and hopefully make better use of social media. We'll promote the new sessions with those who came last year, and we'll put in place a follow-up system to give those who are interested a structured introduction to either Golf or Association Croquet. We hope that the summer of 2022 proves to be sunnier than 2021.... and Covid-free!

Tom Hankinson
Hampstead Heath Croquet Club

HILLSBOROUGH PRIMARY SCHOOL TRIES CROQUET

Sheffield Croquet Club hosted 83 Year 5 and Year 6 pupils from Hillsborough Primary School in June 2021, following an initial email approach in April to introduce croquet to local community groups.

The school's PE teacher arranged for pupils to attend across 4 x 45 minute sessions throughout a single day - as part of their scheduled school PE sessions. We divided our full court into 4 mini courts with string boundaries, and used wire hoops, hockey practice balls and junior croquet mallets instead of full size equipment.

All equipment was generously lent to us by Nottingham Croquet Club, who were running their own schools outreach programme that week.

Within each session, pupils were divided in 4 groups of 4-6, and put through their paces by club members who kindly volunteered their time. After a short intro, pupils tried to knock their ball through the 6 hoops using the fewest strokes, followed by a shortened game of pirates (first to 7 points, everyone starting with 1 point, and points banked for each multiple of 3). A quick tidy-up and sanitisation (remember Covid-rules) later, and we were ready for the next. And the next.

Everyone enjoyed themselves immensely, and the pupils were pleasantly surprised when prizes were awarded after each session - many shared their prize chocolates and sweets with their class which was wonderful to see.

We were delighted to receive observational feedback from the teachers and helpers present - one or two pupils with known attention deficit disorders or other behavioural issues particularly took to the activities, and in fact showed the most improvement over their short session!

This has led to the school booking Sheffield Croquet Club to deliver croquet as part of their PE curriculum in summer 2022 - which we are very excited for.

Our big thanks must go to the club members who volunteered their time, and to Nottingham Croquet Club, for the equipment loan and willingly sharing their experience and expertise.

Myth-busting/lessons learnt:

- Schools have budgets to pay for external activities - promoting outreach costs resources (volunteer goodwill/court time etc) and the income was a welcome addition for our treasurer. The school expected to pay and we think this helped create 'value' from the school's perspective.
- Safeguarding is covered by teachers/staff - as a one-off daytime outdoor activity - there was no need for our volunteer members to be DBS checked.
- Keep it simple. The primary aim was for pupils to enjoy themselves; it was not important to have qualified coaches present, or to teach specific codes of croquet.

Eugene Chang
Sheffield Croquet Club

enquiries@sheffieldcroquetclub.uk



EXERCISES

When learning AC, and the use of bisques, your coach will often say “with 2 bisques you can set up a 4 ball break from any starting position”.

They will then demonstrate this, usually by showing how to set-up for hoop 1 after a standard opening. In real life, there is an almost infinite number of ball positions that can be left when your opponent’s turn finishes and you only have a short time to work out what your next move should be.

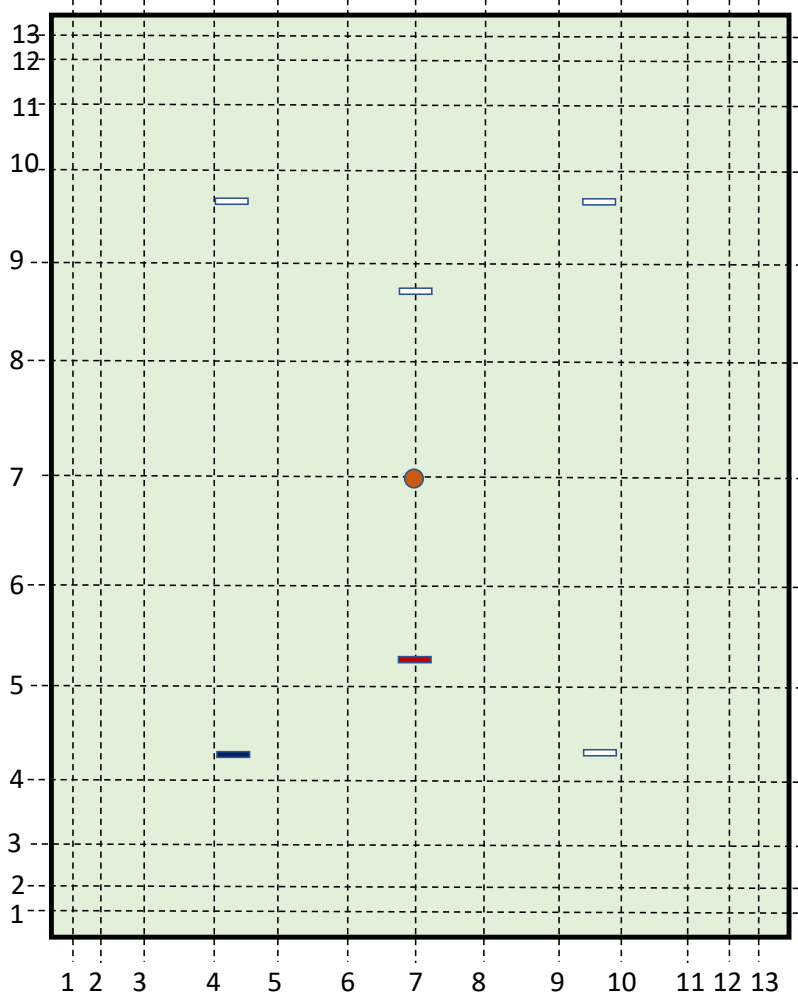
The following is a simple exercise you can do at home to set up random starting scenarios and to formulate what your break building strategy should be for each starting position. Working through a number of scenarios will help you make better use of your bisques during real games.

I find that the 2-3 minutes during a TV commercial break is a good timeframe to work through 1 scenario!

You will need a pack of cards, 4 small coloured counters to represent the balls and a copy of the attached lawn layout with a 13 * 13 grid pattern marked out on it.

1. Shuffle the cards
2. The position of each ball is determined by drawing 3 cards. The first card determines the West-East position (Jack = 11, Queen = 12, King = 13) the second the North-South position and the third which is its next hoop (7 = 1 back to King = peg).
3. Assuming you are R & Y, what ball would you would play, is it worthwhile taking 2 bisques to set up a good 4 ball break and how you would you do it.

For each shot be realistic about your chances of the shot working based on your current ability. (ie, having made a roquet in corner 3. If you are for hoop 3 it may be valid to assume that you can do a straight drive putting a ball at hoop 4 going to a ball near hoop 3 but, If you were for hoop 1 doing a big split roll putting the roquet ball as a good hoop 2 pioneer whilst getting your ball behind a ball near hoop 4 for a perfect rush to hoop 1 is not a high probability shot!) Rather than have all 4 balls in Random positions, an alternative exercise is to say Blue and Black are together having broken down approaching a hoop. Use the cards to put Red & Yellow in random positions and then working out whether:



- Blue and Black should take bisques to continue to the break
- Red and Yellow have an easy option of using bisques to get a break going

Andy Dibben, Chairman
Surbiton Croquet Club

ACTC NEWS - NEW FOR 2022

As previously reported, one of several recommendations of the competitive play working party was that AC level play series should be introduced at both B level and C level. Such series have proved very successful in GC in recent years.

The AC tournament committee have picked up the baton to implement this recommendation and several B and C series events are scheduled to take place throughout the summer. This is in addition to various other AC championship, class and handicap events.

B SERIES (0+)		C SERIES (7+)	
22/23 April	Woking	7/8 May	Pendle
30 Apr/1 May	Budleigh	21/22 June	Phyllis Court/ Blewbury
7/8 May	Pendle	9/10 July	Cheltenham
14/15 May	Surbiton	20/21 July	Phyllis Court/ H Wycombe
28/29 May	Nottingham	30/31 July	Nottingham
11/12 June	Newport		
25/26 June	Middlesbrough		
2/3 July	Bowden		
6/7 July	Letchworth		
9/10 July	Cheltenham		
16/17 July	Southport		
3/4 August	Watford		
20/21 August	Bristol		

Brian Havill
Chair of ACTC
brian.havill@outlook.com

A NONAGENARIAN BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION



I know it is normally rude to divulge a lady's age, however on this occasion I think it is highly acceptable. Our heartfelt congratulations go to Doreen Grubb on celebrating her 90th birthday at the end of February.

Doreen has been a member of the Stony Stratford Croquet Club for over 20 years and has seen many changes. Indeed, when she first joined there were only a handful of members and the club was in danger of closing. Through necessity she became a committee member, a position she held until April 2014. Luckily now the club is in the enviable position of full membership and also has a fairly long waiting list.

Still an active member, Doreen plays most Tuesday mornings and is famous for never wearing trousers and even in the coldest weather never wears tights or stockings. Her club friends surprised her on the last Tuesday in February with cakes and flowers (cake being staple part of activities in the club). You can always rely on Doreen to give you a story about her time with the club and her life. May we enjoy many more hours of storytelling from her.

**Jackie Hikal, Secretary
Stony Stratford Croquet Club**

WINNER STAYS ON

Early in 2021 BBC Radio Shropshire breakfast programme started running a weekly sports quiz named "Winner Stays On". Three multiple choice questions, 2 on sport and 1 on general knowledge, usually obscure, and some with bizarre or extremely unlikely answers. Representatives from Shropshire based clubs have been on air from a whole range of the usual sports e.g. cricket, rugby, football, tennis, bowls, plus baseball, American football, archery, pickleball, croquet and a team of 4 mature/senior male rowers, The Wrekin Rowers, who have just rowed across the Atlantic in the Talisker challenge.

Representing Shrewsbury Croquet Club I went on the quiz during last March and was the first contestant to win three weeks running and on the fourth week, as champion, I was given "walk on" music. This was the Hokey Cokey music to which I sang/croaked (croquet),

"Oh Okey Roquet Croquet, Oh Okey Roquet Croquet, Oh Shrews-bury Croquet and that's what it's all about." My opponent however beat me but he also went on to three wins.

Throughout the year, Jan from a local Ladies cricket team had 4 wins and also an archer from the Bowbrook Archers, who are also based adjacent to Shrewsbury CC on the Monkmoor recreation ground had an amazing 8 wins on the trot.

During Xmas week the 4 champions played in a knockout, with two semi-finals and the final on Xmas Eve morning. I played in the second semi-final beating the archer, but eventually lost in the final, on a tie breaker, to Jan from the local Ladies cricket club.

My participation on "Winner Stays On" was all good publicity for the club and croquet and I was also on Radio Shropshire on a separate occasion talking about the Shrewsbury Croquet Club and colour blindness in male players in croquet and snooker.

I also recorded a five minute slot about croquet for the local Talking Newspaper. Hopefully the easing of covid restrictions will now enable a full programme of events and competitions to be completed this year, while carrying out an active publicity and recruitment campaign in order to replace members lost over the last few years.

**Alan W. Smith, Chairman
Shrewsbury Croquet Club**

FOOTNOTE: The Talisker challenge is to row across the Atlantic from the Canaries to English harbour in Antigua. The Wrekin rowers completed the 3000 miles in just over 40 days despite two setbacks and raising over £100K for 2 charities in the process. When 2/3 of the way across the Atlantic their boat was attacked by a 4 metre marlin/ swordfish which punctured the fibreglass hull below the water line in two adjacent places, which flooded two food lockers and caused the boat to list to port. Fortunately the marlin's sword came up between the two rowing positions and not into the small cabins where two rowers were resting, otherwise a rower could have been seriously injured. Shropshire, despite being a landlocked county, has had a number of successful Atlantic rowers in the last few years, including a lady solo disabled rower in an adapted boat and also a team of three ladies.



All England Handicap 2022

Competitions for both AC and GC



- What are the All England Handicap competitions?
- How do players enter either competition?
- Who can I ask for more information?

For answers to all your questions see below.

How it works.

Individual clubs organise preliminary competitions for 4 or more players in AC or GC or both.

Players may only play in one preliminary round in each code.

Eligible players go through to an area final to compete for a place in the national finals.

Area Finals are held at different clubs:

AC Camerton & Peasedown and Bury and Surbiton on 20-21st August

GC Surbiton on 25th July
Ashby on 30th July
Phyllis Court on 10th August
Bath on 14th August

For further information contact:



Hilary Smith, Director,
AC All England Handicap -
hilarysmith8@gmail.com



Andrea Huxley, Director,
GC All England Handicap -
andreauxley@btinternet.com

Important Dates.

Closing date for club entries 1st June

Club rounds to be played and area finalists' names to the Directors by:
1st August for AC
1st July for GC

Entry fee £8 per player

National Finals for 2022

AC to be held at Watford
17-18th September

GC to be held at
Wrest Park
10-11th September

Grass Roots Competition 2022

A fun and sociable introduction to competitive Golf Croquet for people with a handicap of 8 or above.

Players will compete in a preliminary round within their group. Players may compete in one group only.

A group may include players from one or more clubs.
A club can form one group only.

Entry is £6 per player

Director: Richard Bilton.
richard.bilton30@talktalk.net

The group rounds can be played at any time up to 31 July 2022, and do not require full size lawns.

They will consist of 13-point level-play games.

The top performing player(s) from the club/group rounds will qualify for the National Final at Ryde Croquet Club on Sunday 25 September 2022.

Timetable

31 May 2022:
Closing Date for entries

31 July 2022:
Last date for completion
of club rounds

25 September 2022:
National Final at
Ryde Croquet Club

Winners

2004	Peter Mallen	Kenilworth
2005	John Walker	Watford
2006	John Norman	Woodhall Spa
2007	Nick Archer	Watford
2008	Trevor Wood	Ilrley U3A
2009	Francis Skinner	Watford
2010	Chris Jackson	Long Eaton
2011	Richard Field	Bishop Monkton
2012	Tony Newport	Eynsham
2013	Pauline Eames	Edgbaston
2014	Pat Edgington	Eynsham
2015	David Milford	Camerton & Peasedown
2016	Christine Searle	Phyllis Court
2017	David Hill	Enfield
2018	Jean Cording	Dowlish Wake
2019	David Brame	Hunstanton
2021	Nicola Hyde	Enfield

See the online fixture for more details and to enter a group.

THE 2022 MACROBERTSON SHIELD

Despite the gap of forty years, I still remember with great clarity the visceral excitement of my first MacRobertson Shield tour in Australia in 1982. Part was the knowledge that, at last, I was representing my country. Part was the opportunity to meet in person the players from the other teams who had hitherto only been names and reputations, only some of whom I had even been able to see in photographs. It was an era that preceded regular international competition (Sonoma-Cutrer did not hold its first championship until 1986) and the modern, internet-based communications that we now take for granted were unknown. But, above all, it was the first time I had ever played abroad in different conditions, at times in scorchingly hot weather and in front of sizeable crowds – and in a team event that had iconic status in the minds of all croquet players.

Of course, in those days Association Croquet was the only form of croquet that we knew. It was also an era of wooden mallets, courts that were generally quick and often characterised by interesting slopes, especially near the boundaries. Every match was an intense and interactive experience that could last for many hours (in 1979, Bernard Neal and Ron Sloane had taken 12 hours to complete two games over two days). It was a far cry from modern AC played with peripherally-weighted mallets on courts cossetted by automatic watering and, in consequence, slower and flatter than was the norm decades ago. It was a far cry from the modern era of sextuples and fifth turn triples.

Does this mean that the newcomers in the 2022 MacRobertson Shield contest will have a very different and less intense experience than I enjoyed forty years ago? Happily, I am sure that it does not. Despite the onrush of Golf Croquet over the last 30 years, so essential to the financial and social health of many clubs all over the world, the individualistic appeal and challenge of AC has not changed one iota. When you or your partner has made the first break and the foreign opponent has missed the lift, you are put firmly on the spot to do your stuff for your team and country and complete the peels and close out the win. The pressure to perform at international level by completing a break of up to 91 strokes without serious error, when it really matters to people other than yourself, is quite unlike anything else most of us will otherwise experience.

Before contemplating England's prospects in Australia in November, it is worth conducting a brief MacRob historical

tour. The competition was established in 1925 for competition between Australia and England by the generosity of Sir Macpherson Robertson, an Australian rags-to-riches confectionary tycoon and philanthropist. He presented the handsome shield which has now been competed for on 22 occasions. Although New Zealand joined in 1930, the costs and duration of sea travel and the length of the tours themselves had a significant effect on how often the MacRob could be held and which teams and players could take part. Indeed, the 1935 event was the only one of the first seven holdings to involve all three countries. 1963 can be regarded as the start of the modern era since when all three countries always competed and, since the admission of the United States in 1993, all four.

Up to and including the 20th holding in 2010, England, sometimes appearing as Great Britain, were by far the most successful MacRob team with 14 victories, including seven consecutive wins from 1990 to 2010. Australia and New Zealand had three wins apiece although Australia's last success was in 1935.

All the MacRobs since 1982 had special moments or features which are worth recording.

1963, New Zealand: This was the last time a visiting team (England) travelled by boat and were away for six months. David Curtis liked NZ so much that he never returned! England won comfortably but significant debuts were made by two young Kiwis, John Prince and Tony Stephens.

1969, Australia: The visitors arrived by air and Australia teams were selected to ensure that all states were represented rather than on strict merit! Nigel Aspinall made his debut and England won comfortably again but it was to be the last time that the team would compete as England until 2014.

1974, England: New Zealand fielded Bob Jackson for the first time. Great Britain won for the first time.

1979, New Zealand: Ultra-aggressive Jacksonian tactics and two impressive young players, Joe Hogan and Paul Skinley, helped New Zealand to its first win since 1951.

1982, Australia: The hosts seemed likely to achieve their first win in 47 years but victory was snatched away by the brilliance of Keith Wylie in the final Test in Melbourne. The temperature reached 104°F (40°C) in the Adelaide Test.

1986, England: In the last of the long tours, New Zealand were the first side to appear in matching team kit and achieved a notable victory away from home.



1990, New Zealand: The format was shortened to accommodate working players and Great Britain defeated the home side on the challenging Christchurch courts.

1993, Australia: Held at Rich River on the border between New South Wales and Victoria, Great Britain were convincing winners, defeating New Zealand 17-3 in the final. USA became the fourth competing nation.

1996, England: A comfortable home win and Debbie Cornelius became the first woman to represent England/Great Britain since 1963.

2000, New Zealand: Great Britain and New Zealand both recorded decisive wins against Australia and USA and the deciding Test went down to the last match. Great Britain won 11-10. USA fielded two half-brothers, Jacques and Don Jr. Fournier, who were the first close family members to play in the same MacRob. Full brothers Geoffrey (1925) and Maurice Reckitt (1937 and 1956) had represented England but in different years.

2003, USA: USA were hosts for the first time. Great Britain won all three Tests but, once again, only scraped past New Zealand 11-10.

2006, Australia: Rich River provided the fastest courts in MacRob history (18 seconds was recorded) and Great Britain were in a class of their own.

2010, England: The home side began its final outing as Great Britain with a close win over USA, another nail-biting 11-10 defeat of New Zealand and then a more comfortable victory over an Australia team that included a new star, Robert Fletcher.

2014, New Zealand: New Zealand fielded their strongest possible team and beat England 13-7 in the deciding Test. Australia fielded Robert and Malcolm Fletcher, the first full brothers to appear in the same MacRob side.

2017, USA: Australia now created a new record by fielding three Fletcher brothers with Greg joining Robert and Malcolm.



PHOTOGRAPHS Clockwise: The Shield itself, The way it was in 1963, Australia victorious at last in 2017, A game for the young in 1996, The first Americans in the Mac – 1993

They defeated England 12-9 and then New Zealand and USA 14-7 to give Australia its first victory in 82 years. The temperature reached 44oC in the final week.

In 2022, Australia will start as favourites to defend the Shield at home, especially if they field the Fletcher brothers and a side otherwise as strong the 2017 team.

New Zealand have announced a squad containing three of their young GC stars who have rapidly become extremely good AC players, namely Edmund Fordyce, Josh Freeth and Felix Webby. If they join the likes of Greg Bryant, Paddy Chapman

and Jenny Clarke, a Kiwi win cannot be ruled out.

The USA team also has new young talent on display with Thomas Balding and Zack Watson joining Matthew Essick, Stephen Morgan, Ben Rothman and Jeff Soo. USA has not yet finished higher than third place and will probably be pleased to avoid the wooden spoon this time.

So, how do England compare? Despite the event taking place well into our late autumn, we should have an excellent chance with four battle-hardened warriors in Mark Avery, Jamie Burch, James Death and Samir Patel. Our newcomers are

Christian Carter and Harry Fisher who are comparative youngsters but have been playing at the top level for several years and have recent AC World Championship experience.

Playing in your first MacRob in 2022 may not be exactly the same experience as it was in 1982 but the raw excitement of representing your country in croquet's oldest team event will be just as intense as it ever was.

| Stephen Mulliner



Stephen Mulliner

GC RULES 6TH EDITION

INTERVIEW WITH STEPHEN MULLINER

The 6th Edition of the GC Rules has been approved by the Councils of the WCF and CA for use from the start of the 2022 season. Stephen Mulliner, who is a member of both the CA and WCF GC Rules Committees, was interviewed by Ian Shore about the new Edition. Reassuringly, his message was that little has changed in the way that the game is played.

A video of the interview is available on the CA website. The text of the 6th Edition is also available on the CA website and the GC Rules Book can be purchased from the CA shop. A set of slides identifying the changes between the 5th and 6th Editions is also available.

IAN

Stephen, what was your role in producing the 6th Edition?

STEPHEN

I joined the WCF's Golf Croquet Rules Committee as the CA's representative in January 2017 and acted as the committee's editor for the 5th Edition. I was reappointed for another four year term in January 2021 and continued as editor for the 6th Edition. The editor is the wordsmith who expresses the committee's decisions about the substantive meaning of the rules. One of the editor's tasks is to review the text of all the rules to ensure that language is used both clearly and consistently. Players and referees should not have to puzzle over the meaning or purpose of a rule or wonder why the same idea is expressed differently in different places.

IAN

It seems like only yesterday that the GC Rules 5th Edition was introduced, though I see it was March 2019. Why do we need another edition now?

STEPHEN

There were three reasons. First, although the 5th Edition made desirable changes and greatly reduced the number of rules queries from players, practical experience of the 5th Edition showed that there were still some gaps that needed addressing by issuing Official Rulings. These have been incorporated in the 6th Edition. Second, we recognised that Rule 10, which deals with playing a wrong ball and gives rise

to more debate than any other rule, could be made clearer and easier to use. Third, the WCF wanted similar wording to be used in the AC Laws and the GC Rules when dealing with common subjects. This applies mainly to the refereeing of faults. It is important that referees, who will often officiate in both codes, should look for the same things and apply the same standards no matter which code is involved. The 7th Edition of the AC Laws was published in January 2021 and it was appropriate to publish a new edition of the GC Rules reasonably soon after that.

IAN

Do you expect that as a player you, or indeed any GC player of whatever handicap, will need to adopt different tactics as a result of the new Edition?

STEPHEN

No. The basic rules and tactics of both level play GC and traditional handicap GC have not changed in any way. The only actual Rule changes in the 6th Edition involve swapping the order of Rules 17 and 18 and adding two new rules to cover time-limited games and a new form of handicap play called Advantage GC. The Glossary has been expanded to use more defined terms which are intended to make the rules shorter and easier to use. Also, as I mentioned earlier, the text of the Rules has been reviewed. It has been refreshed in certain places to say the same things more clearly and a few rare situations are now covered for the first time or treated in a slightly different way.

IAN

You mentioned Advantage GC earlier. This is a new form of handicap play which does not use extra strokes. Where does this come from and how does it work?

STEPHEN

The idea behind Advantage GC is to equalise the winning chances of sides of different strength by changing the starting score of each side instead of using extra strokes. This approach was invented by Irish GC players about 8 years ago, came to the WCF's attention in 2019 and was made the focus of a specialist working group. The refined version was trialled successfully by the CA's Southern Federation in 2021 and this led the WCF to decide to give it the status of an authorised GC variation

alongside traditional handicap GC. Rule 21 describes the game and, in a first for croquet, provides tables of starting scores not by a table in an appendix to the Rules but by a link to the WCF website. The tables have to be quite large if they are to be legible but can be printed out by players for personal use or in a large format for display in clubhouses. Tables are available for First-to-4, First-to-7 and First-to-10 games, the Advantage GC way of referring to 7, 13 and 19 point games, to reflect the fact that the stronger player may have to score more than 7 hoops and the weaker player fewer, depending on their starting scores.

IAN

Advantage GC is an encouraging variation to the game. Are there any issues in practice?

STEPHEN

The only one is keeping track of the score in a clear manner. Rule 7.8 already says the when a hoop is scored, the side that causes a point to be scored should announce the score but this is not always done. In Advantage GC, because the starting scores are different, it is very important that the score is announced clearly after each hoop is run.

IAN

What are the new Rules 17 to 21 in the 6th Edition?

STEPHEN

Rule 17 now deals with penalty areas and penalty area continuations while Rule 18 covers the use of alternative colours and double-banking. Rule 19 deals with time-limited games but UK players will see no change because this rule has exactly the same approach as set out in the CA Tournament Regulations. There are some slight variations in the wording of Rule 19 but the meaning is exactly the same. Handicap Play is now covered in Rule 20 and Rule 21 describes Advantage GC. What this means is that the standard game of single-banked, untimed level GC is covered by Rules 1 to 17 and the variants are dealt with by Rules 18 to 21.

IAN

What adjustment has been made to the ruling on interferences?

...CONTINUED...

STEPHEN

Rules 9.1.1 and 9.1.2 have been clarified, but it was realised that there was a difference between the AC Laws and the GC Rules with respect to incorrect information. The AC Laws have always said that acting on incorrect information given by an opponent is a form of interference and it was felt that there should be a similar provision in the GC Rules. This is now Rule 9.6 and it has the benefit that time can be restored if the interference occurs shortly before time expires.

IAN

A new rule 15.3 deals with impasses. What are impasses?

STEPHEN

An impasse is an unusual event in GC and occurs when all four balls are in contact, or almost in contact, with an opponent ball and neither side wants to be the first to play away for fear of giving the other side an advantage. Rule 15.3 sets out for the first time in the Rules how impasses are to be dealt with. If an impasse arises, a player can call a referee and the referee will warn the players that if nothing changes in the next eight turns they will direct a penalty area continuation to break the deadlock.

IAN

Are there any other wording changes to be aware of?

STEPHEN

Rule 6.3 defines a stroke and has been re-organised and also contains new material dealing with some rare situations, including annulment. Rule 6.4 provides a more comprehensive treatment of when a ball becomes and ceases to be an outside agency. Rule 7 has adopted most of the AC Laws approach to scoring a hoop. It is worth mentioning Rule 7.9 which deals with a hoop run out of order. If a player realises that both sides are contesting the wrong hoop, they can wait for the opposing side to play a stroke and then forestall play and play first to the correct hoop, having corrected the score if necessary. However, if an Inactive Referee notices the same thing, they

should forestall but, to be fair to both sides, play then continues by a Penalty Area Continuation.

Rule 8 deals with offside balls and has been clarified. It also include a new provision in Rule 8.2.3 which deals with the unusual situation in which a ball which is very close to the halfway line for the next hoop but one suffers interference. It should be replaced as normal but its exact position in relation to the halfway line could be a cause of contention and Rule 8.2.3 says that the ball will not be considered to be offside if the next hoop is run before that ball is next played.

IAN

What are the changes to the rule on refereeing?

STEPHEN

Rule 15 has been reorganised and shortened. It includes the rules on impasses and contesting hoops out of order which have already been covered. It also contains the important Rule 15.5, the overriding rule, which allows the most unlikely cases not covered elsewhere in the Rules to be dealt with as best meets the justice of the case. We have also clarified the powers of referees to deal with the very rare cases where a player has breached Rule 16.1, which deals with behaviour, more than once. There are a series of escalating penalties culminating in applying to the Tournament Referee to have the player disqualified.

IAN

What revisions have been made to Rule 10, the wrong ball rule?

STEPHEN

Rule 10 has been re-ordered to provide a more logical flow and thereby make it simpler and easier to use. Rule 10.1 defines a wrong ball and 10.2 deals with forestalling play both before a player is about to play a wrong ball and after they have done so. Rules 10.3 to 10.5 describe all the possible wrong ball types and are arranged as a checklist, starting with the least common and ending with the most common. Rule 10 then ends with 10.6 and 10.7 which are two

housekeeping sub-rules.

10.3 is entitled “playing when not entitled” and replaces the 5th Edition “same side plays successive strokes” which it includes as well as dealing with some rare cases not covered in the 5th Edition. One example is where the player who should play second at the start of the game actually plays first. Another is where a player should replay a stroke but the opposing side actually plays next. Such cases are now dealt with by annulling the unentitled stroke and taking the game back to its state before that stroke was played. Any irregularity in the previous stroke can now be remedied.

10.4 is “previous stroke played with opponent ball” and simply replaces the same rule in the 5th Edition without any change.

10.5 is “wrong ball played by striker’s side” and is by far the most common class of wrong ball error. It includes playing the partner ball, playing an opponent ball and, in doubles, the striker’s partner playing the striker’s ball. The remedies remain exactly the same as before.

10.6 provides a comprehensive treatment of the status of previous strokes and points when each of the three classes of wrong ball occurs and 10.7 sets out what happens when a fault occurs in the same stroke as a wrong ball.

IAN

What if there is a wrong ball in the first four turns of the game?

STEPHEN

Playing a wrong ball in the first four turns of the game no longer leads to a restart. It is dealt with in the same way as if it occurred later in the game. The only exception is the very rare case where the players swap colours in the second or later game of a match and do not realise their error until after the fifth turn of the game. Then they continue with the swapped colours. This is the same as in the 5th Edition.

IAN

You have said that Rule 10.2 deals with forestalling play. Can you clarify who the Rules permit to forestall play when a wrong ball is about to be played or has been played? In particular, are spectators allowed to do so?

STEPHEN

The Rules only permit the players in the game, or a referee (if present) to forestall play. The reference to a referee includes a Referee in Charge (almost never used in England) or an Active Referee, which is a referee who has been called to watch a stroke, and an Inactive Referee who is a referee who has been authorised by the Tournament Referee to act in the match or tournament. So, a spectator, even one with a referee's qualification, unless they are an Inactive Referee, should not forestall play either before or after a wrong ball has been played. However, in England, the CA permits and encourages the authorisation of all players in the event as "Sequence Umpires" who are thereby able to forestall play before or after a wrong ball has been played.

IAN

When the WCF launched the public consultation in November 2021, it included two formal questions and sought the opinion of the playing community. What was the response to these questions and what was the outcome in terms of the 6th Edition?

STEPHEN

The first question was whether the winner of the toss should have the right to play first or second and the second question asked if the wrong ball remedies should be extended in two cases, namely playing an opponent ball or, in doubles, the striker's partner playing the striker's ball. Neither question attracted a very large number of replies and opinion was fairly evenly divided.

In relation to the first question, the Rules Committee could see no harm arising from allowing the toss winner to choose whether to play first or second. This is the same as in the AC Laws and also reinstates the position in the 1st and 2nd

Editions of the GC Rules. It allows a doubles pair to choose to play second so that they can choose which of their players will play Red in the knowledge of which of their opponents will play Blue.

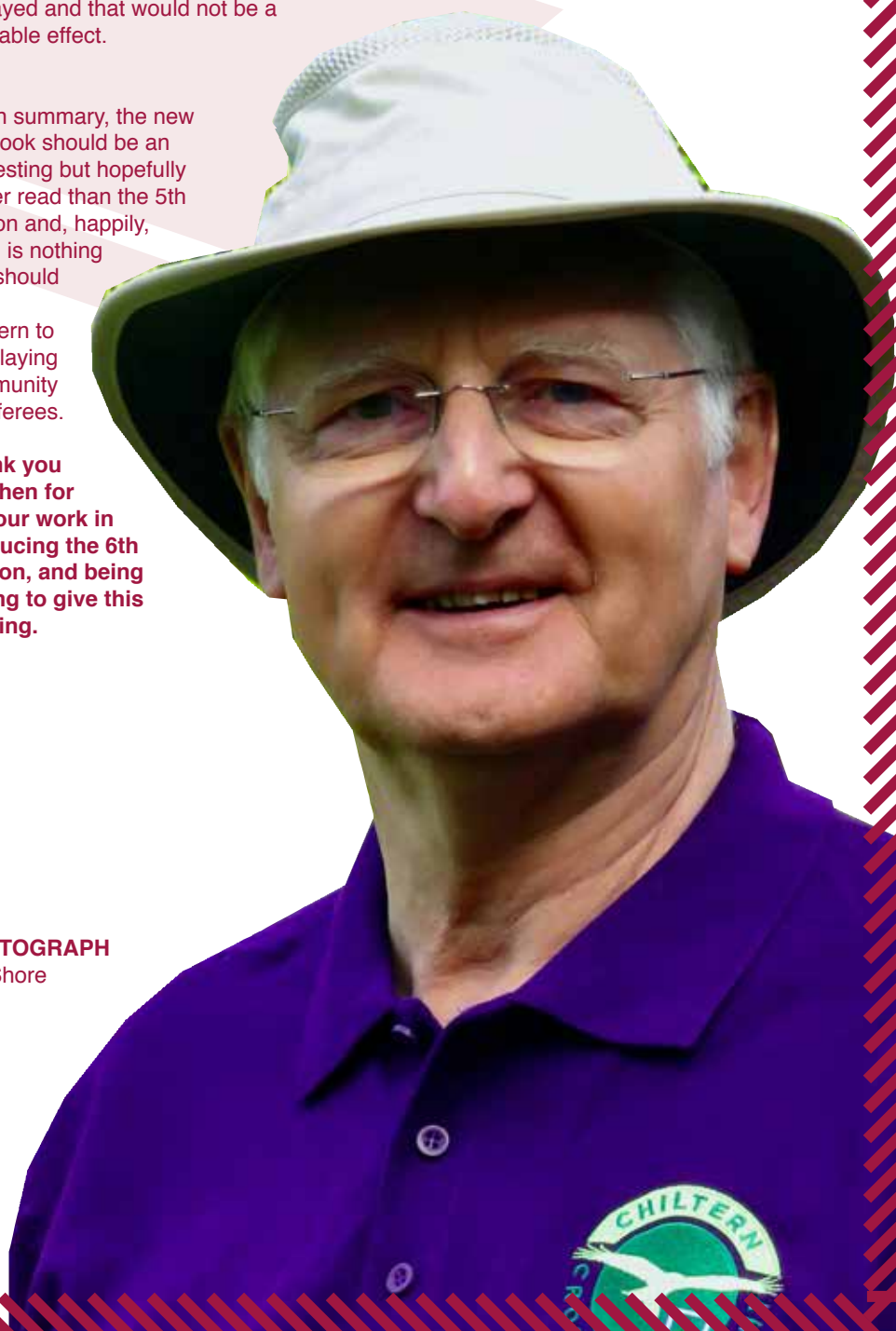
With the second question, it was decided to make no change. Offering alternative remedies could be an incentive to some not to forestall play before a wrong ball is played and that would not be a desirable effect.

IAN

So, in summary, the new rulebook should be an interesting but hopefully easier read than the 5th Edition and, happily, there is nothing that should be of concern to the playing community or referees.

Thank you Stephen for all your work in producing the 6th Edition, and being willing to give this briefing.

PHOTOGRAPH
Ian Shore



A LITTLE OASIS OF SUN, SEA,

Hove Beach Croquet Club was only formed in 2010. The softly spoken Irishman Graeme Kerr is the inspiration behind the club. He recognised the benefits of croquet to those with depression, anxiety and social isolation, so right from the start he and a small group of enthusiasts have been engaging with local support organisations.

Graeme takes up the story...

The aim of the club is to create a relaxed and friendly place where anyone can come along, take a deckchair, chat to members, watch or have a go. As the name of the club suggests, we are blessed with an idyllic setting on the sea-front at Hove. We try to make it a perfect environment to relax and chat and develop friendships, and to focus on something that is a million miles away from the daily

grind of living with often severe health issues.

The last couple of years have been difficult, of course, because of Covid, but the year before we were running regular sessions for Mind, The Corner House (local mental health charity), Brighton Housing Trust (Learning Difficulties) and the East Sussex Association for the Blind, which was a bit of a surprise, but has turned out to be very interesting.

For these groups a typical introductory session would start about 10.30am, we set out deckchairs and tables, provide tea and coffee on arrival. Then when they are relaxed and ready, we show them how to hit the ball, and only the basic rules of the game, get them in teams and get them started. They usually have a group leader and a volunteer, which is very helpful. I

tend to go round with them and in a very light touch way, encourage, advise and explain rules as they come up.

We play with larger hoops for these groups as their enjoyment is so closely linked to the joy of getting a ball through a hoop.

The feedback has been fantastic. Every group and every individual has a story.

Michael, who comes along with a group from The Corner House, has learning difficulties and the Support Worker said he couldn't concentrate for more than a few minutes. On Michael's last visit though, he stayed focused throughout, and won a 'competitive' game. I watched him walk up the path after the session and he looked truly happy. The Support Worker said he hadn't seen him smile before.



SAND... AND CROQUET

I could write 20 similar stories, from what I have observed and the feedback I have received. From the group leaders, who always accompany, we most often hear that many people like to have something to look forward to and the very act of getting out in the open air and the gentle exercise of croquet seems to work well.

In a short time, we try to help them achieve a level they didn't think they could and, since the hoops are bigger, they all can experience success.

Most of the people who come are isolated but when they are at the croquet, they feel comfortable in the safe environment we create, though they are required to interact, talk and generally work with others. The facilitation for creating a gentle, stress-free environment is really important here.

As time goes by, the groups need less supervision and tuition. The Centre Manager at Brighton Housing Trust now has a key to our hut and they play every week, mainly in the mornings when the club is quiet.

We don't only focus on mental health groups and we are generally open to anyone who can make a case. We now have regular users from the East Sussex Association for the Blind, Families of Children with Downs Syndrome, the Priory, Sussex Rehab and an LGBT Older Person's group.

Our aim is to make the Croquet Club available to people in our community who will benefit and enjoy it most. We can promise that cost will not be an issue. One local charity plays on Wednesday mornings and, since they

want to contribute, they pay £5 each for the morning. Another local charity also plays regularly, but since their funding is precarious and their clients are on benefits, they pay nothing.

This is an ideal spot to show that the game is good fun and to dispel the myth that it is only for the privileged few. As a local reporter wrote:

I discovered a little oasis of lazy days, easy laughs, curious people and interesting conversation. Oh and croquet!



2022 SURVEY OF CROQUET PLAYERS



2022 Survey of Croquet Players

DON'T FORGET...

The survey closes on 22nd April.

Go to:
<https://www.croquet.org.uk/>
and click 'Complete the Survey'.

Your answers are important to us.

THE COACHING PAGES JOHN HARRIS

WELCOME TO THE NEW SEASON!

The new season is upon us – so this is the perfect time not only to dust off the mallet, but also to make a firm resolution to improve your play. There are lots of ways to do it, including coaching courses, croquet books, tournaments, even making productive use of Club sessions. Why not try all four in 2022?

Coaching – many Clubs offer in-house coaching, particularly to players in the earlier stages of their croquet journey, and it's often free of charge. Don't be shy: sign up! There are also one-day and two-day coaching courses at the Academies at Southwick, High Wycombe and York: places on these are filling fast so now is the time to check out what is on offer and get booked in.

Croquet books – the CA shop has an excellent selection appealing to different skill levels. All of them are valuable and offer ideas you can think through in the comfort of your armchair before trying them out on the lawn. Three new titles have recently been added, two by Stephen Custance-Baker on GC and one by Roger Mills for AC players – all worth checking out!

Tournaments – these offer a good opportunity to meet people from other clubs and experience what may be different styles of play. Your Federation may well be running one or more

tournaments ideally suited to your skill level. Beyond that, the CA website has details of a host of tournaments at different levels: scroll through the Fixtures Calendar and see what will work for you. Like the Academy courses, some of these are already filling, so it's helpful to see now what you fancy. If it's your first tournament, tell the tournament secretary or manager, who will make sure you are warmly welcomed.

Club sessions – ordinary club days also offer great opportunities to develop your game. Much less hangs on whether you win or lose, so why not use club sessions to try out different shots and different tactics? You can then see what happens as a result, how they work out for you, and what you may need to work on further.

In between games is also an ideal time to get in some very simple practice routines to put you back into the groove. Try standing astride the boundary line and casting over it to check you aim line and swing line. Next try adding two pairs of bisque sticks, two either side of the lawn a foot or so apart, to check that at the key moment of impact the mallet is in just the right place to strike squarely. Now gradually bring in the bisque sticks, narrowing the gap to check that the mallet is indeed moving just where you need it to.

When you feel confident, now pop a ball on the boundary line and hit it straight,

along the white line. Start small and build up: how far can you hit it so that (ignoring irregularities in the lawn) it stays on line? As a more exacting test, put a second ball on the line a yard in front of the first, and use your own ball to propel the second ball forward. The further the second ball travels forward still covering the boundary line, the more accurate your shooting.

Don't worry if the second ball sprays off course: reduce the distance to the point where you are once again consistently accurate. Rather than becoming frustrated with something you can't do, it's better to reinforce what you can do, and build slowly and gradually from there, one step at a time. For more practice routines check out the CA website.

The start of the season is also an ideal time to bone up on the Laws and Rules. For most situations in day-to-day club play, the Basic Laws and Basic Rules will see you through, so that's the place to start: both can be downloaded free from the CA website. The full versions are much more detailed but you can graduate to them when you feel ready.

Have a great season! And do talk to other people about technique and tactics. This crazy, wonderful game of ours is endlessly fascinating, and is full of people who will be happy to share their enthusiasm and understanding.

NEW COACHING MANUAL

A new Coaching Manual has just been launched which should be of great interest to Club-Level Coaches in both codes. It's freely available from the CA website.

Called Introducing Association Croquet: Manual for Coaches, the early pages apply directly to both AC and GC, before going on to look in detail at skills specific to AC. It echoes the standard introductory course structure of six sessions but it can of course be delivered in fewer, longer sessions if that works better for the coach and the club.

There is a special section on introducing AC to GC players in an accelerated course to build on their GC skills. There is also guidance on refresher mornings, coaching children, coaching students, organising taster afternoons, and meeting the needs of those with early onset dementia. At the end are ten fun games, competitions and coaching games which serve not only to engage those learning the game but will also bring a smile to the faces of Club members at croquet social events.

The emphasis throughout is on practical activity on the lawn, with plenty of tips for coaches on how to introduce different topics. Many of the tips use simple visual aids such as bisque sticks to help make the learning memorable; all of them are tried and tested. They can be used as they stand within an introductory course, or brought out to deal with a query from a Club member.

The new Manual replaces the first section of the previous 2006 version. This older version is however still useful for coaches working at higher levels, so both are available free of charge on the CA website: key "Croquet Association Coaching Resources" into Google and look for the links towards the bottom of the page.

More work is now in progress to develop a common approach to coach training courses, and to define the roles and scope of coaches at the different levels within the CA coaching structure.

Watch this space for developments!

TOURNAMENT REGULATIONS

The Tournament Regulations have been updated for the 2022 season and apply to all Calendar Fixtures. The full regulations can be found on the CA Website: <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=tournament/regulations>

Some of the significant changes made since the 2021 edition include:

- References to GC Rules updated throughout to reflect the new **6th Edition GC Rules**
- Mandate for **Super-Advanced Play** removed for **AC Grade 1 Championships**. Super-Advanced may still be played with the agreement of all players in a game or match.

- **Allocation Date** and **Closing Date** definitions and procedures reviewed for consistency and rearranged into chronological order. The Allocation Date is the date on which places are first allocated. The Closing Date is the date on which entries close. The Draw Date is the date on which the draw is conducted.
- The procedure for **incomplete blocks** is now the same for AC and GC events.
- **Advantage GC** now available to any event or tournament, at the discretion of the Tournament Manager.
- Clarification that players entering **doubles events** as single players will be paired by the manager at the Closing Date. Players are strongly

encouraged to find and indicate their partner prior to the Allocation Date.

- Regulation added to confirm prior practice that the '**official list of referees**' referred to in the Refereeing Regulations are those recorded in the CA database has having the relevant qualification. The regulation also provides a default position (which may be modified by a Tournament Referee) about the scope of activity of qualified referees. For AC, this includes **assistant referees**.

The published regulations contain a complete changes log.

| Samir Patel



PHOTOGRAPH Callum Johnson (York) and Alan Lockett (Beverley & East Riding) compare the old printed AC coaching manual with the new electronic one, and try out one of the coaching tips.



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NEW Turfpedia - on my website

Each year I am asked a host of questions, my answers are added to the Turfpedia on my website, a useful resource for croquet clubs.

Seasonal Maintenance

- **Mowing** the height of cut can be gradually reduced to 5 or 6mm. Ideally, you should have a setting bar with your mower so that the height of cut can be set accurately across the whole width of the mower. If you don't have one, I can make one for you, just get in touch.
- **Spring fertiliser** should be applied in early April. Last year April was cold and growth was sluggish. This is because bacteria in the root zone are less active in cold weather and don't convert the fertiliser into usable nutrition until the temperature has increased. The fertiliser isn't wasted, just delayed.
- **Moss**, spray soluble Iron. I use a cordless drill and paint paddle which makes quick work of mixing (there is a video on my website showing how this works). It takes about 2 minutes to mix 5kg of product in water and that is enough to cover one full-size croquet lawn. Spraying is quick and easy with a Broadcast Sprayer as described above.
- **Weeds** should be treated with a systemic weed killer when the weeds are actively growing, Weedol Verdone is available in Garden Centres, professional products require Pesticide Certification.

I Duncan Hector

OBITUARIES

JULIE HORSLEY - SIDMOUTH CC DIED WEDNESDAY 2 MARCH 2022



Many Gazette readers across the UK, and probably further afield, will be saddened to hear that Julie succumbed to a debilitating illness after two years of struggle.

Her background was hotel management and she was a more than competent 'cook'. One can see where the precise, no nonsense, tournament management skills originated. She loved gardening, having a very large, productive one at Woodpeckers, which sustained her interest in cuisine.

Julie was a member of Budleigh Salterton Croquet Club for 14 years, serving on the committee from 1999 until 2005, including a 4 year stint as secretary.

She also lent her secretarial skills to the SWF in 2006 and was still going strong in the role, if looking to step down, in 2014 when she was awarded a much-merited CA Diploma.

To Sidmouth Club's great fortune Julie joined us in 2007. Although she was not formally an elected committee member until October 2017, a quick scan of our minutes demonstrates, over and over, how involved she was; internal tournament organiser, external tournament manager, developing referees, coaching and the 'go to' for advice and guidance. Her grasp of the whys and wherefores of managing CA liaison on external tournaments is a skill few appreciate until they have to do it.

As so many will know, her name as Manager of a tournament was, in itself, a draw to the event. You were guaranteed efficiently planned, maximum play that was not perturbed by rain, hail or snow. Above all, she gave freely of her time to many clubs and players and I am very grateful for her mentorship in developing my managerial skills; she is a very hard act to follow. I like to think the photo, as she awards a prize, sums up her good humour at all times with a hint of 'don't mess with me!' It is far from just me or Sidmouth and Budleigh that will miss Julie's personable manner, humour and efficiency. What a lady!

I CGD

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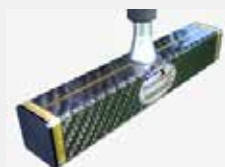
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CA WEBSITE

www.croquet.org.uk is a fabulous resource for croquet information covering membership, news, laws & rules, coaching, who's who, and tournament details with an online entry system.

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

To find the glossary online, visit:

AC <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=games/tech/jargon>
GC <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=games/golf/gcJargon>

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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.

Digital images are preferred, but photographic prints can be acceptable.

Please send digital jpeg or tiff format files and accompany all images with a description of the subject. If you require any material to be returned, please enclose a SAE.

Queries regarding the delivery of the Gazette to members should be directed to the CA's Operations Manager.

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