



CROQUET

GAZETTE

Issue 399 | October 2022

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**The Croquet Association
Issue 399 | October 2022**



Front cover: GCWC
Winner Matthew
Essick
PHOTOGRAPH
Ray Hall

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WELCOME

And before you know it, the season is drawing to a close. Time really does fly when we are having so much fun. What a season it has been!

Our congratulations to the new GC World Champion, Matthew Essick. Many of us were privileged to witness the event at Sussex County Croquet Club in August. For those who couldn't make it in person, the Croquet Association's Livestreaming Programme delivered all the excitement direct to the homes of over 20,000 spectators. The sheer magnitude of this event gave croquet a platform to demonstrate to the world what our sport really stands for. The standard of play from those representing 22 different countries was

exceptional. Many of them joined us in the commentary box to share our sport with the world. By doing so, they became part of the 150 plus volunteer workforce who made it all happen, once again demonstrating that community spirit on which our sport thrives. Our counterparts on the other side of the world, the Australian Croquet Association, are deep in preparations for the 2022 MacRobertson Shield Association Croquet World Team Championship. We wish all the England players the best of hitting and hooping and look forward to being able to watch the tournament unfold from afar.

CA Editorial Team

QUEEN ELIZABETH II



IN MEMORIAM
1926-2022

HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

Quiller Barrett, President: "Croquet Association members share the grief being expressed across the nation at the death of our Patron, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II." Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II served as patron of the Croquet Association since 1952. In the Gazette from December 1952, the minutes of the Council meeting held on 6th November 1952 state: "A letter was read from the Keeper of the Privy Purse announcing that the Queen (H.M. Queen Elizabeth II) has been pleased to grant her Patronage to the Croquet Association".

It is believed her first introduction to our sport dates back to July 1939 when the then Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip met on the croquet lawn at the Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth.

In 1967 the Queen visited Hurlingham to watch the All England Handicap Final as the CA celebrated its centenary year.

In 2016 sixty-two CA members attended a meal in the Mall to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday and her wonderful achievements over the decades of her reign.

The Croquet Association has enjoyed the Patronage of the reigning monarch since George V became Patron in 1910, a few months after his accession to the throne.

The Croquet Gazette from 22 September 1910 contains the short statement from Charles Crawley, the Secretary of the CA: "His Majesty the King has been pleased to honour the Croquet Association by becoming its Patron."

Following the death of George V in January 1936, the Croquet Gazette for 2 May 1936 contained notification of the Patronage of King Edward VIII. Following the abdication of Edward VII on 11 December 1936, the Gazette for 29 December 1936 contained notification of the patronage of King George VI.



HIBISCUS COLUMN

After a year as a croquet roadie, I'm becoming a repeater. At East Dorset, in downtown Poole, there are new faces. Two of them belong to Klepto and Limpy, resident seagulls, respectively named for bad habits and challenged physique. A large notice reading 'Do not feed' is no deterrent. Those who fail to guard their chips have only themselves to blame. Other faces are becoming familiar, notably Tom Weston, stand up comedian and former international. Tom is always late: the colour of his crocs, picked from 38 pairs, may reflect his mood which ranges from grumpy to lugubrious. Today's are black. He has no recollection of our game last year, my only win, but gets his revenge this time with a classically elegant break as soon as my bisques run out. '16 for Minge, 17 for me,' he announces. The next day, the crocs are white with diamanté trim. He asks about my club, Blewbury, and says he'd like to come and play there. And stay at mine. My door is always open, Tom, but if you call me Minge, it will be slammed shut. East Dorset is a three day event which is a lot of hard graft. Everyone gets at least one match on Court 1, laser levelled to perfection. The other playing surfaces are dangerously unpredictable in the

early August dust bowl. Judge John Freeman, sturdy and substantial, proves heat resistant as his juggernaut game fells successive opponents. To him, the appealing maritime trophy and applause befitting a well-loved member. Back at Blewbury on lunch duty, I have the chance to watch experts at work over an Advanced weekend. England captain Samir Patel is joined by BCC's Harry Fisher, a rookie for the upcoming tour of Australia. The England team will take on New Zealand, the United States and the host nation for the 2022 MacRobertson Shield. The trophy dates back to 1925 when Australian confectionary tycoon Sir Macpherson Robertson presented it for a series of Test matches against England. The Blewbury courts are honoured to have been chosen for an England warm up weekend before the team flies to Melbourne for the 'Mac' in November. May they bring the Shield home. And so, at last, to Cheltenham, England's croquet HQ. It held its first competition in 1870, when the All England Croquet Club ruled in Wimbledon - Lawn Tennis only checked in in 1887, supplanting Croquet in the title in 1899. CCC bought its current premises in 1920 for £800. Today there are 10 courts and distant views of Cleeve Hill, home to the blue riband National Hunt Festival every March. From outside,

the clubhouse is deceptively ordinary. Inside it has wood panelled walls, creaky floorboards and plumbing from another century, with cautionary notices to match. Close your eyes and you could be at Nuwara Eliya Golf Club, vintage Victoriana founded by tea planters in southern Sri Lanka. Cheltenham's walls have ivory-coloured boards recording champions past in gothic script. Miss G. Willis tops the leaderboard in 1899, predating T. K. Ashton, the first male champion, by six years. How appropriate therefore that the tour de force for the Challenge and Gilbey, a 4-day tournament founded in 1900 that moves around the country, was Sarah Hayes. Anyone struggling to manage a competition while smashing opponents off the courts should follow Sarah's example. To be thrashed - inevitable as no forest of bisques is large enough to repel an in-form - 2 handicapper - by someone who gives coaching and encouragement so that you leave on a high is beyond generous. In due course, I applauded Sarah, unbeaten over two days of handicap play, as she raised the Gilbey Goblet, then headed home to sign up for October's Daniels Cup. Such is the power of personality: it's croquet that takes the prize.

| Minty Clinch



SHORT CROQUET CORNER

Getting Short Croquet underway at a Club is straightforward, and this is an ideal time to put things in place for the 2023 season. All it takes is the enthusiasm and commitment of two or three key Club members, and a spare set of hoops. For the hoops, any set will do to get started. Even the oldest hoops can be spruced up for an extra tour of duty by repainting them or, better, getting them shot blasted and powder coated – not expensive, and a much smaller investment than buying new. Various initiatives are underway in the Southern Federation. At Blewbury, Paul Wolff and Joe King have been organising one-day Short Croquet tournaments, an obvious attraction being the ability to double the number of participants. Paul comments that the smaller lawn has made it easier for those in the early stages of the game to establish a break, while more experienced players are kept on their toes by practising and improving their tactics and a full range of croquet strokes.

Another plus has been the shorter games, more compatible with modern lifestyles and more immediately appealing to GC players used to quicker croquet than a full-on three-hours. They have gone for a time limit of 70 minutes single-banked, 75 minutes double-banked, and five rounds in a day, which has worked well. Meanwhile, at the other end of the Federation at Southwick, Frances Low is running one-day introduction to Short Croquet courses and winter modular classes at the Academy. The initiative is proving successful, and many of the participants have requested follow-up sessions. Another Southern Federation club, Caversham, has picked up the Short Croquet baton, so hopefully the new Federation Short Croquet league will go from strength to strength, and open up this excellent AC variant for competitive as well as social play across the region. Elsewhere, other clubs such as Nottingham are Short Croquet advocates. But Short Croquet is not just for the

'big beast' clubs. Small clubs will find it helpfully offers an enticing path to AC through shorter games – clockwise round the hoops then straight to peg – and a more easily negotiated lawn size. As this column started by saying, all it takes to get things underway is two or three committed key individuals and a spare set of hoops.

| John Harris, York CC



Tom Oulton tries the Solomon grip for a Short Croquet hoop running shot



TUNNEL OF TIME

20 YEARS AGO

From the November 2002 Gazette (#282)
"As Nigel Graves reported at the AGM our new office is now up and running. The CA Council is most grateful to the Cheltenham Club; they could not have been more helpful in working with us. The building itself was finished on time, but problems with the electricity supply delayed the move from Hurlingham by a few weeks. The CA's treasurer, Roger Bray, tells us that it looks as though the total cost of moving to the Cotswolds will be a little less than we originally estimated, but we are still talking about more than £50,000."

35 YEARS AGO

November 1987 (#194); CA COMPUTER: During 1988 we are planning to install a computer to deal with membership records and to have the system up and running before subscriptions are received for 1989.

40 YEARS AGO

From the Winter 1982 Gazette (#168) a speech made by Lionel Wharrad, Vice Chairman of the CA, had some forecasts many of which have come true and many still could. EQUIPMENT: I do not expect the coming decade to require any major change in equipment specifications or sizes but: 1 There will be a further increase in manufactures of croquet equipment. 2 Aluminium Hoops costing about half the cost of Cast Iron Hoops will become standard. 3 The present Eclipse ball with its plastic cover over a cork core will be replaced by an all-plastic ball of greater durability and less cost. TOURNAMENTS: Weekly tournaments as they now exist will largely disappear except for National or Regional

Championships - The format of a Two-life class event - a Doubles event and an X & Y handicap - giving 5 games minimum does not provide enough croquet to justify hotel bills.

If weekly tournaments do continue to attract players from other clubs and not simply become local club events - Then this will be because they are organised to give better value for money so that even the successful player can expect a minimum of 10 games in the week rather than five.

New associates listed in the Winter 1982 Gazette include current members Peter Dyke, Martin French, Jerry Guest, Roger Jenkins, Joe King, Ray Ransom, Paul Smith, Brian Storey and Peter Thompson.

70 YEARS AGO

October 1952 (#7) - EDITORIAL NOTES: Taking a Bisque -We note in the report of the recent Hunstanton Tournament that some doubt is expressed about the moral effect which a bisque has on the player who is entitled to take it. Our view is that the game is, for most players, very much a test of the nervous system. The receiver of bisques is therefore given them as an antidote to any neurotic weaknesses as well as for a lack of skill, and to fortify him against such weakness which the minus sign of the opponent by itself so often aggravates.

It therefore follows that when the striker comes to a difficult hoop or a nasty length of roquet, he tries it; this because he knows if he misses the stroke he has the bisque with which to continue the break and keep out his opponent with that dreadful minus sign.

The bisque, though a material thing in itself, actually has psychological value and uses; when - this has so often been said before - a player begins to understand

the value of those extra turns they are removed by the Handicap Coordination Committee because his morale no longer has the need to rely on them.

90 YEARS AGO

October 29th, 1932 No 715 Vol XXIX (No. 24) - The Use of Smaller Courts:

The Council understands that it is the intention of some Club Committees to give occasional trial during the season to the Settings for Smaller Courts now provided for in the Laws for 1932. There is reason to believe that the use of these settings may prove helpful in attracting beginners. Any reports of as to their value in various circumstances will be much appreciated by the Council.

EDITORIAL NOTES: Though one imagines that the setting of a Croquet Tournament has infinite dramatic possibilities, it has remained for Mrs. G.F. Muntzer ingeniously to adopt this as the background for a comedy. This new and original play is to be presented by Miss Anne Kennington (Mrs H.T. Pinckney-Simpson) at a single matinee performance at the Faculty of Arts Theatre on Tuesday November 15th. It is difficult to suppose that any croquet players will not greatly wish to be present. But do, please be brisk about bookings, as accommodation in the theatre is to be restricted. The play was called "Who Calls the Tune".

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

NOTICE OF THE AGM OF THE CA

NOTICE OF MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Croquet Association will take place by Zoom on Saturday 15 October 2022, commencing at 10.00am.

Individual Members wishing to vote may do so in advance of the meeting either electronically on the website, or by post. It will be possible to vote at the meeting by a show of electronic hands. Votes in

advance of the meeting must be received by Wednesday 5 October. To access the voting app, log in to the website and go to the Members' Area and click on "Surveys and Voting".

You are invited to vote for or against: (i) the approval of the minutes of the last AGM; (ii) the approval of minutes of the last SGM; (iii) acceptance of the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2021 and (iv) the election of Dr Ian Vincent as a

Vice-President of the Association.

Members wishing to introduce other business at the meeting should notify the President or the Honorary Secretary by 5 October, stating the subject of their contribution.

You will find the full details including the agenda on the CA website.

John Reddish, Hon. Secretary



CHAIRMAN OF THE CA COUNCIL



On 18 July, the Croquet Association held a Special General Meeting regarding conversion to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, with over 90% of votes cast in favour. This will be a major change for us as a sport, with a move to a more robust legal structure which can act in its own name. We will be more easily recognised by third parties; together with charitable status this opens more avenues for improved commercial deals, sponsorship, and fund-raising. As I write this, we have submitted our application to the Charity Commission, and await their response. The CA Council and Executive Board are working in parallel to begin the detailed planning for transition. As policies and processes are updated for the new organisation, we will take the opportunity to improve how our sport is governed by adopting the research and best practice from Sport England's Code of Governance.

On court, the Golf Croquet World Championship – which will be the subject of another article in this magazine – was won by Matthew Essick of the USA. Congratulations to him. Matthew was also the runner up in the Association Croquet World Championship in Melbourne in 2020 - a perfect example of the benefits of introducing players to both codes when they take up the game, as recommended by the Competitive Play Review. Those who weren't able to visit the Sussex County Croquet Club in person, will have been able to see more of the World Championship than ever before. As well as mainstream media coverage in The Times newspaper, we were treated to livestreaming of all nine days of play. This was down to the great work of the Marketing team, and to the team of over 20 volunteers who made the livestreaming happen.

Samir Patel
Chairman of Council

RUNNING HOOPS

With best intentions
And some invention
I went round lawns in eccentric loops,
Scared rooks and thrushes
With misplaced rushes;
Spent all day running hoops.

With much "Harumph"-ing
Practised 'jumping,'
Downward force with upward scoops:
Problem-causing
Did some 'jaws-ing';
Spent all day running hoops.

Worked on clearing,
Ever-nearing,
(Long-grass balls retrieved with swoops),
Stalked them, too
And followed-through,
Spent all day running hoops.

Swore and yipped
At ankles clipped,
After wayward balls then trooped,
Took some pot-shots
Doing stop-shots;
Spent all day running hoops.

Approaches done
'Til every one
Had four balls clustered in groups,
But later, wiring
Had me tiring;
I'd spent all day running hoops.

Mallet bagged
As shoulders sagged,
Back had gained a stiffened stoop
But gratified
Went home with pride:
I'd spent all day running hoops.

Steve Beer.
Taunton Deane CC



PHOTOGRAPH
Samir Patel

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CA DIPLOMAS 2022

CA Diplomas recognise those club members who have given outstanding service to croquet and have been active in Club or Federation affairs over a long period. The Diplomas have nothing to do with croquet prowess and everything to do with the help given to other members.

Quiller Barrett
President

The full citations can be found on the Croquet Association website.



Linda Hicks
Budleigh Salterton



Richard Carline
Sussex County CC



Nichola Davey
Palace CC



Richard Whiting
Leicester CC



Jane Collier
Colchester CC



Ralph Timms
Dunston CC



Lance Andrews
York CC



Tony Curson
Bath CC



June & Paul Wolff
Blewbury CC



Linda Shaw
Nailsea CC



Don Clay
Worcester Norton



Ian Draper
Nottingham CC



Roger Jenkins
Bristol CC



Ray & Caroline Cosham
Compton CC



Ian Theakstone
Fylde CC



Hester Henebury
Bath CC



Dawn Piggot
Himley CC



Andrew Thomas
Sidmouth CC



Sandra Rowe
Compton CC



Helena Jansson
Phyllis Court CC



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Sidmouth CC



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In 2012 we set up the online shop selling spare parts and various irrigation kits that we design.

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CLOCK-IN FOR INDOOR CROQUET



Winter is coming but there are no stark consequences to playing indoors at Soham. As the winter season approaches many clubs are closing down and even those that do not are afflicted by the winter chills, snow and other unpleasant weather conditions but in Soham (Cambridgeshire) winter marks the start of the indoor season at the Ross Peers Sports Centre. Speed croquet played on time clocks on a three quarter sized court; that runs true and fast, playing doubles one weekend every month with a maximum of 8 pairs per day. Last year trophies were won by players

with handicaps ranging from -2 to 18 so a truly level playing field.

THE FULL PROGRAMME:

- Saturday November 12th 2022 Inter Counties, normal speed doubles, without bisques.
- Sunday November 13th 2022 MLP Mallets normal speed doubles.
- Saturday 17 December 2022 Rose Bowl, normal speed doubles.
- Sunday 18 December 2022 Soham Trophy, normal speed doubles.
- Saturday 14 January 2023 Belgian Cup, alternative shot doubles.

- Sunday 15 January 2023 The Soham Trophy, normal speed doubles.
- Saturday 11 February 2023 The Martins Trophy, progressive doubles.
- Sunday 12 February 2023 Albert Lawrence Trophy, normal speed doubles.
- Saturday 11 March 2023 The Cornelius Cup, normal speed doubles.
- Sunday 12 March 2023 The Millennium Cup, normal speed doubles.

If you wish to join in, please book via Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/soham-2223-902399>

MILESTONE FOR INDOOR CROQUET

Raising temperatures and drier climates will make turfcare more expensive, in the future artificial turf could be an alternative. In many countries players would like to practice indoor croquet also during the winter. But there are only a few hoops available for playing indoor on an artificial lawn, most with poor performance. What about a hoop, which can be used on either natural turf or artificial lawn? At the 2022 Golf Croquet World Championship in Southwick, Bernhard Langhammer, from Germany, presented the prototype of a new croquet hoop, which combines many features: Rubberised stainless-steel carrots allow the hoop to be removable, and fixed in a concrete fundament as an underlying basis for artificial lawns or indoor courts. By the centric attachment of the uprights the hoop width can be adjusted, and a removable stainless-steel top of the carrots make it easy to use them on every natural lawn. For many players, this hoop could be the ideal equipment for practicing hoop runs at home, because it can be easily installed on a concrete or stone floor in the basement or in the garage. After removing the hoop, the holes can be simply closed with a plug.

“In Germany croquet is a niche sport, less than 50 people are playing it competitively, and in the whole country not more than a handful of courts exist, and only with moderate quality. To get people interested we must make the sport more visible. To present croquet on existing artificial lawns may help”, Bernhard says. The idea was to convert tennis courts to croquet by covering them with artificial turf on a

plastic panel system. But what about the hoops? That’s why he started to develop suitable equipment together with his partner Peter Kreissler. In Autumn, this patented invention will be available to purchase.

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EYNESHAM HAVE A NEW CLUBHOUSE

Having put much effort into lawn improvement in recent years, members of Eynsham CC were inspired to embark on a project to install a clubhouse. The overall cost of the build exceeded the budget slightly. The club had hoped to bring it in at £15,000 or less but with increased cost of materials, especially wood for the raised platform, the final cost was £15,743.75. However, this did include extra for vinyl flooring; the first 3 coats of preservative; wood for avoiding the loss of balls under the structure; sundry hardware; umbrellas, and an extra window for light. These small extras were not allowed for in the original budget and they were only added when members were confident that they could be afforded.

GRANT ASSISTANCE

The CA made a grant of £5,000.00. The club is very grateful. They would not have embarked on this project without the financial support of the CA. They also benefitted from the help, guidance, and support of Peter Allan, SCF Development Officer. They decided to undertake the project because they did not have their own clubhouse. They were fortunate that the cricket club, from whom they lease the land for their courts, allowed them to use their clubhouse for toilets and for teas after matches, but only when it was not being used by the cricket club. That building is some considerable distance from the courts (about a 200-yard walk, or further around the field if there is a cricket match in progress).

The club researched the facilities which other clubs have and were particularly impressed by High Wycombe's clubhouse. They confirmed that the clubhouse could be erected by club members. A Committee member had built a similar, but smaller cabin, from the same manufacturer, Dunster House. He was confident that members could do it themselves with some help from other volunteers.

Eynsham has a particular problem. The club lies on a flood-plain and 50% of winters bring a raised water table sufficient to flood the courts and any structures. Occasionally, there are flash floods if the water table is already high. The club decided that they should raise the clubhouse 30 centimetres above the highest known flood. A club member had a friend, a quantity surveyor, who had experience in designing raised cabins and he gave helpful and below-cost advice.

The Club already had a £5,000 bequest from their founder and they obtained the membership's approval to go ahead with the build if, but only if, they could get all the funding in place for the required budget. The CA Grant was applied for, and when the offer came through of £5000, the Committee could see that they were in range.

Other financial help was forthcoming. The Club obtained £200 from Sky News, who came to interview members regarding an

item about the local area. They managed to get help from the Eynsham Parish Council for a new mower, which freed up funds for the build. They recruited new members and increased the annual membership fee from £85 to £90. This all helped the Club to be able to use up to £2,000 from reserves, towards the build.

BENEFITS TO THE CLUB

There were some reasonable doubts as to the desirability of the build. Concerns were around cost, usefulness and insurance. The Committee addressed these issues as best they could. However, since completion of the build, the Committee has had 100% positive feedback. Everyone is delighted with the end result. The raised balcony height gives a great view of games in progress, because you can see the angles of shots so much more easily. Increased membership is partly due to the more welcoming experience with a clubhouse and to publicity in the local area. The clubhouse gives a focal point for the playing of games.

THE BUILD

As soon as they were informed by the clubhouse supplier of the proposed delivery date, members started building the foundations (concrete pillars) and the wooden platform. The foundations were done by volunteers to the quantity surveyor's specification and the timber work was done by a specialist local builder. The foundations took a week and the wooden platform was finished on schedule in another week. Delivery was then taken of the flat-pack clubhouse. The supplier was happy to deliver direct to site, saving half a day's work. The build started immediately, using volunteers from the club. They found that 3 people at a time was the most they could manage but, by employing early starts and late finishes, they were soon substantially waterproof. Completion of all the small bits of work took several more weeks.

FACILITIES

The clubhouse is not connected to services; it provides storage and somewhere to hold committee meetings. The club still has access to the cricket club for teas after a match, the AGM and the toilets. However, they now have a noticeboard, chairs and a small table to sit at. Members gather at the clubhouse for the start of games or matches. Even in this driest of summers it has already proved its value as a rain shelter.

INFORMATION FOR OTHER CLUBS

The build is pretty straightforward, as long as one person has spent some time understanding the comprehensive instructions. It amounts to a giant Lego structure. Dunster House has a very helpful technical support line. The majority of the costs were due to the need to raise the building out of floodwater. Without this constraint the build could be done for well under £10,000.

Tony Newport
Secretary, Eynsham CC



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PROUDLY BRITISH



CA VS SCA
27-28 AUGUST
2022

The annual match between teams representing the CA and the Scottish CA took place at York on 27-28 August. It consisted of two rounds of doubles and three rounds of singles, with the CA winning the overall contest by 16-8. Despite efforts in the selection process to match the handicaps of the players on each side, it turned out that the members of the CA team had somewhat lower handicaps than their Scottish opponents, and this was reflected in the results, although most of the games were closely fought. The SCA's Roger Binks played a long and dramatic last-ditch break (supported by expert guidance from George Plant) in his fourth-round doubles game to level the score, but their CA opponents were subsequently able to nick the golden hoop by virtue of their lift. There were several other 'Don Gaunts' (if that term retains its validity among the modern croquet set.) Andrew Killick and Dave Gunn of the CA had the distinction of winning all five of the games in which they took part. The players enjoyed admirable hospitality from the York club. The weather was dry and warm, and the city was at its beautiful best. The sustained drought conditions had turned the lawns into a challenging archipelago of green patches amidst a brown sea of scorched earth. Hoop approaches from the side were particularly fraught. There were no TPs. The match was marked by an excellent CA-hosted dinner on Saturday night in a local Italian restaurant. Thanks to the application and observance of 3-hour time-limits and the splendid cooperation and expedition of all the players, everybody got there on time! This was an extremely convivial and enjoyable sporting event played in an excellent atmosphere among friends, and would have done a great deal to dispel the myth that croquet is a vicious game. Let none create division.

Peter Thompson



LETTERS

EXCLUSIONARY AC HANDICAP POLICIES

I read in the June 2022 edition of the Croquet Gazette that the CA Handicap Committee had decided that returning AC players will be required to play from their previous handicap, even after a break of some years, unless there is a medical consideration.

I have had the experience of returning to croquet after a break of 10 years (1995 to 2005). My previous handicap was 1.5. I was evaluated to have a returning handicap of 3.5 which turned out to be a bit low as, after my first season, I then stabilised at a 4. If I had been required to play at my previous handicap of 1.5, it is unlikely I would have persevered. Who would want to be penalised for the first couple of years by losing games until their handicap card settles to a correct level?

I have also had the experience of returning to croquet after a serious leg injury that kept me out for the entirety of 2007. In this case, the break (from croquet, not my leg) was short enough and my recovery was good enough to not need my handicap of 3 to be adjusted.

I also know someone who tried to take up croquet and, after a number of coaching sessions, was not allowed to play in a club afternoon until they performed the test to be given an official handicap. This involved taking a 4-ball break to peg from a standard set-up. When I started playing on a handicap of 24, I would not have been able to play a 4-ball break on my own without help from my doubles partner. It looks to me that this is to avoid a GC player starting AC and having too high a handicap which, was not the case here. This exclusionary practice eventually resulted in them not taking up the game.

It seems we are scared of potential bandits from the following:

- A GC player switching to AC,
- Returning AC players who used to be reasonably good.

Clubs and tournament managers have the ability to slash a person's handicap dramatically if they believe someone is at the wrong handicap. I am worried that we are introducing exclusionary measures as existing players are worried that someone may briefly be at the wrong handicap and win some games easily. For me, enjoying winning games and wanting that to continue, even when your handicap is coming down dramatically, is what encouraged me to keep improving.

I think these starting AC handicap policies discourage new AC starters, GC players taking up AC and, AC players from returning. These are all things we want to encourage in a sport with diminishing numbers. As the policies stand, if I need to take a break from the game, it is unlikely that I would return to croquet after a few years if I am then required to rejoin at the same handicap.

Nick Harvey
Woking

RESPONSE:

The Handicap Committee have considered this subject in the past and see no reason to change the established position. If you return to play after some period out you should return on your previous handicap unless there are compelling medical grounds e.g. fewer limbs than before. Your handicap will change when there is evidence to suggest it should, just as with any other player. It may seem that it is unfair, however if your handicap was changed then it might well be unfair on your opponents. All this is covered on the video I created which is available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3pXni-78HKA&feature=youtu.be>

Brian Fisk
Handicap Committee Member

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.

“LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON. ROD AND BEN ASHWELL IN PLAY AT THE WREST PARK AUGUST ADVANCED TOURNAMENT”

John Bevington



Father, Rod



Son, Ben

POEM

I must go down to Nailsea again to the lonely sea and the sky
I left my waterproofs there, I wonder if they're dry?

Now stands the pavilion clock at ten to three
And is there honey still for tea?
I wouldn't know... my timer's lost
Another one! I'll count the cost.

I wandered lonely as a cloud around the Yard Line in the mist.
Standing upright in corner 2 I did espy a host of unused bisques.

So farewell “One Back” “Penult” and “Rover” as out they have been
tossed.

I'll miss your eccentric wording and briefly mourn your loss.

With apologies to Masfield, Wordsworth, Brooke and possibly Spike Milligan

Klim Seabright
Cheltenham Croquet Club

AN INDEX TO THE GAZETTE 1904 TO 1939

The CA Gazette is a valuable historical resource, but its scale in the early decades – thirty issues each year, weekly during the season – makes it a daunting prospect to look for material. Most of us rely instead on Prichard's History of Croquet (which drew heavily on earlier work by Maurice Reckitt).

Spurred by a desire to re-examine the development of the game between the Wars, however, I have recently compiled a searchable contents index of the 901 issues from April 1904 (the first issue) to September 1939.

Others may also find this index, comprising over 12,000 records, useful: even without access to the Gazette itself, information can be

gleaned from the index alone.

The dates it provides can also help target searches in other resources such as contemporary local newspapers.

I am grateful to Ian Plummer for hosting the index on the Oxford website www.oxfordcroquet.com/history/gazette, where it is now available for all, and for adding some search tools there which avoid the need to master Microsoft Access, the app in which the database was created.

Ian Bond
September 2022

CROQUET ASSOCIATION AND COMMUNITY HEARTBEAT TRUST DEFIBRILLATOR SCHEME

The Croquet Association recently signed an agreement with The Community Heartbeat Trust charity for the provision of defibrillators to clubs.

When commending this new initiative Samir Patel, Chair of Council of the Croquet Association, commented; "The Community Heartbeat Trust can help you choose the right equipment, location and maintenance, so that your club has a defibrillator available in case it's ever needed." Martin Fagan, National Secretary of the Community Heartbeat Trust charity, added; "We are proud to be working with the Croquet Association. Defibrillators are now an important part of any first aid provision, and this partnership will help clubs obtain the highest quality equipment and support. A defibrillator is one part of the story, so we are also helping clubs undertake training for their members. Defibrillators do save lives, as part of the Chain of Survival. The more we have available, the nearer these are to the patient, the more lives that will be saved."

WHY HAVE WE DONE THIS AND WHAT IS ALL THIS ABOUT?

Twenty years ago, a defibrillator was a mysterious super-duper medical device that was only used by doctors and saved lives. Now they are everywhere and even better! They are used to treat Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA), which in simple terms means, when the heart has suddenly stopped working.

SCA is more than just a heart attack, which is just one of many causes for a cardiac arrest. SCA is when the heart stops beating normally and therefore blood is no longer being pumped around the body. It is instantly recognisable by the patient collapsing quickly (within the space of a heartbeat), unresponsive, changing colour and no signs of breathing.

Saving their life is time dependent and the rescue must start fast, usually within a couple of minutes of their collapse. Their heart will degrade by up to 20% per minute, so rapid action is key. The process to save a life is known as the "Chain of Survival" and this means that to save life each step needs to be followed in sequence. The quicker each step can be completed, the better the chance of survival. Using a defibrillator is step 4 of the process, so this is as much about creating time and education in understanding what to do, when, and how, as it is about having a defibrillator. Chest compressions create time, which is why this step is so important.



The Chain of Survival is key. In 2021, Danish footballer Christian Eriksen survived because his team-mates followed this sequence.

1. **Early recognition** - this is about education; learning how to recognise an SCA and having confidence to act
2. **Call 999** – early notification to the ambulance service is vital. They will tell you to start chest compressions; stage 3. This

creates time for someone to collect the defibrillator from its nearest location.

3. **Chest compressions** – ambulance services will ask you to commence these within 60 seconds of your 999 call. Learning how to do these well is important, but not difficult.

4. **Use a defibrillator** – what to do and what you would expect to see. Modern defibrillators show you as well as talk to you.

5. **Handover** - to the ambulance crew so they know what has happened.



TAKING ON A SUSTAINABLE DEFIBRILLATOR PROJECT

There are now many defibrillators to choose from. However, few have been specifically designed for community use. A modern device is easy to use, provides maximum support to the rescuer, has features enabling good CPR to be undertaken, has a visual display to overcome noisy environments or to help hard of hearing rescuers, allows easy access to the clinical data and is cost effective over the lifetime of the unit (typically 10 to 15 years). Beware cheaper offers that may be older devices or those not complying with international standards.

All aspects of the project need to be considered, including operational checks, training in "Chain of Survival", budgeting for maintenance and consumables over 10 to 15 years and responsibility for care of the equipment.

Clubs may choose to be part of a community defibrillator scheme. Community defibrillators are covered by "activation radii" set by the local ambulance service. In the East Midlands this is five hundred metres, but in the South West it is only two hundred metres. This can have an impact on the equipment chosen, how it is activated, and whether it is supported by a localised group of trained volunteers. The ambulance service also will not activate a defibrillator if there is only a "lone rescuer" present, or if it does not meet the criteria for the rescue. Not all incidents require a defibrillator. To unlock, the ambulance service will advise the code.

Community defibrillator schemes can be a great contribution to the local community but must be done well; adhering to all legislation and insurances and using the best equipment afforded. Don't cut corners and be prepared to support the costs of the scheme for at least 10 years.

A defibrillator does not need to be placed externally, but if it is the cabinet can be locked or unlocked: the choice based upon local needs and other factors. If a locked cabinet is chosen it should have a marine grade, vandal resistant lock or similar – you cannot afford to have a cabinet jam in a rescue. Many communities now choose unlocked cabinets, particularly in coastal areas. It is unwise to use single skinned metal cabinet within five miles of a coastal location, and if in Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Cornwall and

some inner cities, dual language may be a requirement.

DEFIBRILLATORS AND CHILDREN

A child in defibrillator terms is anyone who weighs less than 25kg. Typically in the UK this means seven years and under, although a six-year-old at 26kg would be considered an adult. Cardiac arrest occurs very rarely in this age group and for publicly available community placements ambulance services recommend providing only adult devices.

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY HEARTBEAT TRUST CHARITY

CHT invented the concept of the community public access defibrillator - cPAD. As a national charity, working across the country, they began by setting standards and quality at a time when most people were cost focussed. They work to ensure communities are protected, use the correct and best equipment while also ensuring projects have long term sustainability. CHT has delivered defibrillators to over 8,000 sites across the UK, the majority governed by the WebNos Governance system. They are advisors to NHS England, the Welsh Government, PADS Scotland and work with all the UK ambulance services: www.communityheartbeat.org.uk

CA AND CHT PARTNERSHIP

Supported by the nine federations, the CA has entered a partnership with CHT to ensure those clubs without defibrillators have access to modern equipment along with training, advice and ongoing support. Training is also available to those clubs who already have access to a defibrillator. The scheme includes optional registration in the "WebNos" governance system which is the UK's most comprehensive management tool for keeping track of all aspects of governance for defibrillators. It is a national database of all community defibrillators along with the scheme coordinators and their respective ambulance service responder managers. It also tracks all information relating to the defibrillator: key information, training

records, maintenance issues, installation safety, in/out of service notifications and investigation requests and has a consumable re-supply feature. Users are notified when checks are required. There are two devices on offer. The **Lifeline AED** (£895 plus £15 delivery plus VAT); a basic but robust device without a screen, and the **Lifeline VIEW** (£999 plus £15 delivery plus VAT) which has a screen. For those clubs where portability is particularly important, the Lifeline VIEW is light and small and easily carried. It is robust, easy to use and is the only defibrillator in the UK designed to be used by the untrained rescuer and as such it has crucial features that help in the rescue. The Lifeline AED is larger and is best based in the clubhouse. Defibrillators are subject to VAT at standard rate. However, clubs may choose CHT's managed service which costs £100 extra, is not subject to VAT and includes public liability and accidental damage insurance. Additionally CHT offers an extensive annual support agreement (£126 p.a. plus VAT or £135 p.a. plus VAT) as well as theft insurance and external cabinets. CHT have produced a training video that is available free of charge to all clubs and can also provide training by Zoom for up to ninety-eight people (£100) or in person training for up to fifty people (£175).

WHAT NEXT?

Clubs wishing to order equipment can use this dedicated ordering portal: www.communityheartbeat.org.uk/Croquet-Association-Defib-Order
The training video can be accessed here: <https://youtu.be/DBnMidvx0lw>
If you have any questions, or would like to organise a specific training event, please contact Martin Fagan at CHT 0330 1243 067 or E: secretary@communityheartbeast.org.uk

Paul Brown
Director Sports Development and Executive Vice-Chair



The croquet season may be winding down, but there are certain tasks to complete this autumn/ winter to ensure it makes it through to Spring unscathed.

Late Renovation works

Earlier autumn tends to be best for mechanical works like scarifying, aerating and overseeding. However, if the season has slipped away from you, early October is still a suitable time to complete such work. This will clear out any thatch and moss and most importantly relieve compaction after a season of heavy footfall before too much heavy rain hits later in Winter. This will help reduce the risk of waterlogging, which can in turn lead to moss.

Moss control

Even if renovation works have been completed, moss can still creep in thanks to our damp UK climate. As croquet lawns are closely mown for

optimum playing conditions, this can make them even more susceptible to moss taking hold. An autumn/ winter moss treatment or tonic not only helps stop the spread of moss spores, but also can make the turf more resilient to...



Lawn disease

Disease control is also something that commonly needs tackling around this time of year. Once again, the aspects that make croquet lawns perfect for the sport can also make them more susceptible to attacks of fungal disease. A preventative fungicide treatment may be worth considering to minimise attacks of fusarium, which strikes whilst temperatures are still warm and rainfall increases.

Autumn/Winter Feed

Fine sports turf requires regular fertilising as part of a maintenance regime. As we go into Autumn, it is important to select an appropriate feed made up of lower nitrogen to avoid excessive growth, but with higher potassium levels to aid root development to help it through the autumn and winter months.

If you need further advice and assistance with an appropriate regime for your croquet lawn, head to Lawntech's website for more information about services available.



www.lawn-tech.co.uk

CHESTER CC TAKES CROQUET TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

For most people there is no charge for our community groups that we host, or for some groups there is a nominal charge of £5 to cover refreshments.

Our MENSA group have met every year since 2008 (apart from lockdown), so this is Year 13, and it is such a fixture in people's calendars that some travel as far as from Dublin and South Wales. They play a non-competitive AC in the morning and then progressive doubles GC in the afternoon, with a prize for the winner. A scrumptious cream tea is served in the afternoon, and the perfect weather this year helped the day go very well indeed. Dennis Holman has led this every year. 20 guides and rangers from St Mary's guides in Chester came for an introductory taster session. We like to encourage young people to have a go whenever we can. Some of the girls showed natural talent from the off and all were ready to play a fun game after a short practice session learning the basics. There is never a shortage of club volunteers to help on these sessions.

Other groups who came for a taster session included Chester Ramblers, Deva Rotary, Buckley Masons, CAMSOC, and Saughall Rotary. We have an established programme for the sessions, and it is

always fully enjoyed by the attendees. Gaining new members is not our primary aim, rather showing people what the great game of croquet is all about, in the hope they may take it up now or in the future, or pass on the information to others.

We have also taken a 'lawn' to our local community summer fayre this year, where we gave everyone the opportunity to see and to have a go at croquet. We held a fun competition for children and adults.

Photos of the MENSA group and one of the winning child Georgia Folks at the summer fayre.

Sally Slater
Chester Croquet Club



Georgia winning round



SURBITON'S CONTRIBUTION TO DIVERSITY AND WIDENING PARTICIPATION

On Saturday 16 July Surbiton Croquet club hosted a taster afternoon for members of our local KINGSTON LBGQTQ Forum.

Three members of the Club: Alan, Bridget and Jane acted as hosts to nine members of the Kingston group over three hours or so on a sunny afternoon. One or two of the visitors had tried croquet before but most were newcomers to the game. An enjoyable time was had by all and there were one or two brilliant long distance hoop shots and some unexpected in-off hoop runs as well.

Hopefully we will have stimulated a few people to take up the game.

Alan Grundy
Honorary Secretary
Surbiton Croquet Club



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NATIONAL SENIORS TOURNAMENT – BUDLEIGH SALTERTON 2022

TROPHY WINNERS

Doubles	CA Cups	Peter Thompson John Wells
Handicap Singles Class:	Quiller Cup	Neil Fillery
A	Trevor Williams	Tim Jolliff
B	Colin Hemming	Alex McIntyre
C	de Ansorena	Nigel Amos
D	Nigel Graves	Chris Donovan
E	Julie E Horsley	Neil Fillery



The National Seniors proved to be the usual popular event at Budleigh with the Class entry, initially, substantially over-subscribed. However, as seems to be the norm in these times, Covid struck with a vengeance. A withdrawal from the Class event, starting Thursday, was advised on Sunday following 2 requests for late confirmation due to injury/surgery recovery – both had to withdraw. Monday 8.50am Covid struck and knocked-out an entrant to all 3 events – a replacement was found by 9.10am for the doubles – phew – and the 12 pairs started in the glorious sunshine which held for the week. Fortunately, the Tournament finished before the really high temperatures of the week commencing 18 July.

The 12 pairs broke down, after the initial byes, into a neat X / Y format of 26 point games with a 2 hour 45 minute time limit. Tactical, careful play was, as usual in doubles, much in evidence. Eleven of the 12 pairs had nominated partners which left Peter Thompson [York] and John Wells [Downham] to play together. The Y final saw Gerard Osborne-Burke [Carrickmines] and Andrew Thomas [Sidmouth] win through beating Geraldine O'Rourke [Carrickmines] and Peter Nelson [Sidmouth]. Andrew was unable to attend the presentations and Gerard took both bottles of Malbec, the consolation prizes, and promised to hand on Andrews.....

The X Finals saw a very close match between Peter Thompson & John Wells and Chris Donovan [Sidmouth] & David Wise [Norwood / Adelaide]. The latter pair hoping the Damocletian bisque would not be used before time was called. Peter Thompson ran a couple of hoops to draw level and with 5 minutes to go, called for the bisque! Why is it, so often, that the better player uses the bisque to win? This on top of John Wells [8] peeling Peter [2] twice!! Do I sound bitter? Moi!? So, the CA Cups went to John Wells and Peter Thompson who won +1T!

Long-covid led to a withdrawal from the Singles handicap and the manager

twisted the arm of Neil Fillery [Taunton Deane] to stay on from the doubles and play. With reluctance, but good grace, Neil sought approval from his 'Superior Authority' who said the jobs list was merely postponed; he played. Again the 22 entries worked out into a neat X / Y format. John Wells won the Y but had to leave early on Saturday. Hence, he was unable to collect his consolation bottle of Malbec and the Manager is not absolutely certain he has forgiven him for snatching victory in the doubles – the bottle may 'get lost in transit'. The Croquet Gods played their cards with the usual panache and thus, of course, Neil Fillery won the Handicap Singles and took the Quiller Cup home.

The manager left the final block arrangements to Wednesday evening as there had been 1 withdrawal from the doubles and handicap singles and 7 from the Class event, pre-week, during the week and at the last minute. Consequently, he was uncertain until the final evening who would be playing but, it turned-out that blocks were 8 strong bar one.

Blocks B to E were scheduled, in turn to have no play sessions to accommodate the originally anticipated, extended A Class. These were kept to ensure the untimed games could be the more easily fitted in, if single banked. Chris Roberts & David Warhurst oversaw the A Block games and these were all finished bar two by close of play Friday. This caused a little unhappiness for the others having to play on Saturday, but most games went to time and 7 games unavoidably carries into Saturday play.

AND SO TO THE RESULTS:

The trophies were awarded by Jonathan Isaacs on behalf of the CA:

E Block for the Julie Horsley trophy was won by Neil Fillery – yes, his handicap has reduced to 4 from 4½!

D Block for the Nigel Graves Trophy was a clean sweep for the Tournament Manager – Chris Donovan [Sidmouth] [and back to 2.5].

C Block for the de Ansorena Cup saw a tie on 6 games each and thus on Who beat Whom Peter Thompson lost to Nigel

Amos [Budleigh Salterton] who took the Cup.

B Block for the Colin Hemming Cup saw another two players tie on 6 each, therefore, on who beat whom Peter Nelson lost to Alex McIntyre [Nottingham] who took the Cup.

A Block – The Trevor Williams Cup was won by Tim Jolliff [Taunton Deane] with 5 wins.

The Budleigh hospitality and care for the competitors continues to be first class with John O'Gorman, Club Chairman, covering every aspect with good humour and efficiency. The laws were a pleasure to play on – Oh the benefit of a greensman rather than a groundsman – can we poach Richard Quelch??? It was good to see a strong turn-out for AC and we hope to continue these good numbers next year.

Chris Donovan



NORTH OF ENGLAND CHAMPIONSHIP



David Maugham won the AC North of England Championship at Bowdon, beating James Death -25tp, +26tp, +26tp in the final. Full results are on [CroquetScores.com](https://croquetscores.com) and in the Rankings.

There was a slightly reduced field of just 12, and the hoops were all set to about 1/32" in averagely firm ground, but the lawns had some speed variations with brown and green patches due to the recent dry weather, making them trickier than usual. The weather was fine all weekend.

The first round went with seeding, but in the quarters Ian Lines beat Angharrad Walters and Debbie Lines beat Joel Taylor. However, in the semis both lost, to James Death and David Maugham respectively, although Debbie had good chances against David in their decider. In the final, both players made only one or two errors, but James missed a few shots allowing David to win his 14th Northern's title 2-1. In the plate knockout, Joel Taylor beat Annabel McDiarmid in the final.

The trophies were presented by Bowdon Club President Brian Storey, and thanks were giving to Bowdon for hosting the event, to Alan Mayne for preparing the lawns and for setting the hoops so well and to the team of volunteers who provided excellent lunches and teas for players and visitors.

I Ian Lines

AC NATIONAL SENIORS' (OVER 50)

Here I am once more at Budleigh in Bloom, having qualified for one of wrinklies events? The sky is blue; the Music Festival is in full swing (although I don't think there is much "swing" as such) and the seagulls are screeching to welcome a new day whilst starting their hunt for unsuspecting chip consumers or 99ers. Millais still refuses to allow Raleigh and his Pal to grow old enough to take part in the beginners coaching at the top of the hill. Little has changed since I was last here except maybe shrinkage of restaurant capacity, which is making the boss of the local Italian restaurant explode at his staff every time someone tries to book a table in his already full restaurant.

I am peeking over the hedge at my accommodation to see the 10 manicured lawns of Budleigh Salterton Croquet Club verdantly laid like the finest Axminster carpet, awaiting the arrival of competitors. The lawns are so good that one feels one should remove one's flat soled shoes before stepping onto them. Hang on a minute... what is that in the distance at *Cricket Field Lane? Smart new accommodation? That is surely a sound investment and I look forward to other clubs following suit. Presumably the sweeping and gyrating House Martins only play here during the



Summer Season, before heading off to play in Spain or Egypt? Let's hope these ballistic birds have never been subject to a roquet nor accidentally "Blobbed" a hoop. Play on Lawn 9 is paused to allow a Vole to cross from the west to east boundary, Fortunately not spotted by the Raptor riding the thermal high above. Of course the great joy of the "seniors" and "veterans" is that none of us can remember any of the results. But we all had a good time. Look elsewhere if you insist on the details.

Winner: Tim Jolliff
<https://croquetscores.com/2022/ac/ca-national-seniors-championship>

Locals are keen to join the club to gain access totheir allotments. That's an interesting marketing strategy!

The club has "cracked" the common lack of catering volunteers which many clubs are experiencing. On arrival order your sandwich or baguette which comes from a local caterer in a very good cardboard box. At lunch go to the fridge and there it is with your name on it.

We will all be back next year...if we remember to enter.

*I just love some of the names around here. On the drive in I noticed Ting Tong Lane... beats my local Pink Green.

Klim Seabright
Cheltenham Croquet Club

CHEL TENHAM HIGH BISQUE 2-3 AUG

A small field played in blocks on day one – 18 point games, full bisque off a base of 6. Winners and runners up played on day 2 in 22 point games in semi-final and final and third/fourth play-off. After a morning game on the second afternoon those not in the Final or Third/Fourth play-off had a coaching session from Adam Moliver. They requested particular help with "The Start" and roll shots. We then watched and learnt from the mistakes being made in the Final! Sarah Butler of Nottingham won, winning all five games and gaining the Bronze merit award along the way – a serious handicap reduction awaits....

Sarah beat Richard Coward in the final. He joined High Wycombe this year having only played garden croquet. Watch out for him, especially if he gets a better mallet and a couple of lessons. Phil Stapleton beat Liz Eyre (both Cheltenham) for third place.

An event like this is a great way to get into Tournament play - look out for it next year!

Adam Moliver, Manager
Cheltenham

OXFORD AC STUDENT CHAMPS 2022

On 23 & 24 July 2022, Oxford University Association Croquet Club was thrilled to host the Student AC Championships again this year. It was a busy weekend of croquet, with both a doubles and a singles tournament running simultaneously, and most players entering both. We were also impressed by the spread of player skill levels, although all were eager to play Level Advanced, with handicaps ranging from a -1 (Aston Wade, Exeter University) to a 22 (Julius Gasson, Cambridge University)! Some unevenness to the lawns managed to level the competition a little bit, as all found them challenging at times.

In the doubles, all played all, though the brothers Jerome and Julius lost both of their first matches, leaving the other two to battle it out in the final. After a tight game, one of the two Cambridge teams came out on top (Finn Gavin and Felix O’Rahilly), beating the Exeter team (Aston Wade and Kieran Moore) in the final on Saturday evening. Once the singles games in the evening finished early, those of us not in the doubles final had been doing a mixture of quick and casual one-ball games, tips, and friendly coaching. However, we soon set aside our practice games as we became enthralled by the neck and neck competition between the doubles finalists. Finn (10) and Felix (10) had already let Aston (-1) slip round to leave his clip on rover, and were instead focusing on holding Kieran (a complete novice) back. They finished with +2 as Time was called, but Aston drew even with a long hit in, running rover and pegging out, but not before lining Kieran up for his next hoop (hoop 2). It was to no avail, however, as Finn hit Kieran on the next shot, eventually snatching the golden point from an outnumbered Kieran to grasp the victory. Kieran’s work was impressive, for someone with enthusiasm but next to no experience, but it was testament to Aston’s skill that he carried the team so far, even jumping over a hoop to regroup with his partner ball at one stage. Congratulations to Finn and Felix on their victory.

The Saturday evening matches were followed by an excellent dinner at the Royal Oak pub, courtesy of the OUACC, where all the players were able to relax and socialise after a long day in the sun (with another exciting day ahead). The dinner was followed by further drinks, a late night ice cream, and even some last minute accommodation arrangements.

The singles (handicaps: -1, 3, 5, 8, 10, 10, 22, and 22*) was

played over both Saturday and Sunday, kicked off by Albie Willett (5, University of Wales Trinity St David) impressing the onlookers with the power with which he hit the balls. While the OUACC had to protect the shins of onlookers, reset hoops after every stroke, and replace a broken timer and a mangled clip, we have decline to forward the charges to Mr Willett. With an impressive opening gambit, Albie, predominantly a GC player, ran hoops 1 and 2 in a 1-ball break. This feat clearly inspired confidence in Julius (22, Cambridge University) who pulled off the same trick in his first match.

The top end of the singles also saw a good few attempts (some particularly ambitious) at triple peels of all flavours, but they were generally abandoned due to challenging conditions. Nevertheless, Albie, Sophie, and Aston each made admirable attempts (I also made an attempt, but it was so far from admirable that I hesitate to mention it) which showed the higher handicappers just how good players can get.

The final, however, ended up being between (Teddy, 8, Oxford University) and Aston (-1, Exeter University) both of whom were undefeated in the singles. The final thus managed to usurp the expected handicap order, as I had managed lucky wins against Albie (5) and Sophie (3). Aston Wade managed to maintain his title as winner of the Dudley Hamilton-Miller Trophy, however, beating me decisively as I failed to pull together any confident breaks. Quiller Barrett, CA President, paid us the honour of saying a few words and awarding the trophies to Finn and Felix, and Aston. We are immensely grateful for everything that Mr Barrett has done for student croquet during his time as CA President.

▮ Teddy Wilmot-Sitwell

PLAYERS

Albie Willett	5	Wales Trinity St David
Aston Wade	-1	Exeter
Felix O’Rahilly	10	Cambridge
Finn Sutcliffe	10	Cambridge
Jerome Gasson	22	Cambridge
Julius Gasson	22*	Cambridge
Kieran Moore	N/A	Exeter
Sophie McGlen	3	Reading
Teddy Wilmot-Sitwell	8	Oxford



Photographs Clockwise from left: Players at the AC Student Championships at the Oxford lawns, Aston Wade and Kieran Moore face challenging conditions during the doubles, Spectators **PHOTOGRAPHS** **Teddy Wilmot-Sitwell**, Finn and Felix receive the Edmund Reeve trophy from Quiller, Aston receives the Dudley Hamilton-Miller trophy from Quiller Barrett, CA President **PHOTOGRAPHS** **Ian Plummer**



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OPENING DOORS COMPETITION SYDENHAM CROQUET CLUB

On behalf of Sydenham Croquet Club, I would like to thank the Croquet Association for our award in the 'Opening Doors on Croquet' competition. We submitted our designs for banners and flyers in connection with our move to a new venue in Mayow Park, Sydenham over the May Day Bank Holiday weekend this year, hoping to attract new members. I am pleased to report that we have been successful in this respect, (an increase of 50% thus far) so we feel we have opened doors (or gate in our case), to new players of our fascinating game.

Until December 2019 we were part of a tennis and squash club in the Sydenham area in South London. At the AGM a proposal was presented which sought to replace the croquet lawn with an eighth tennis court, and this was agreed by a majority. We therefore had to find a new venue as lockdown came into effect in 2020. My husband and I started visiting local parks briefly, as this was a permissible activity, and found that the former bowls green in Mayow Park, in the London Borough of Lewisham, was available for hire. We contacted the management company immediately, met representatives when possible, attended virtual meetings with a relevant Council Officer and Councillors and over time, our move looked increasingly likely.

In the interim, we were able to continue to play on our old lawn when games were possible, including over the winter. The Tennis Club Board provided a one-off



grant for appropriate renovations to the lawn to bring it up to a playable standard, and the Mayow Park groundsmen undertook a great job to achieve this.

Prior to our move, we set up a club bank account, established our own website and email address, and joined local societies and social media groups so we could let the local community know what was happening. We have learned that advertising in these different ways is working, resulting in much interest from the local community, to the extent that we are about to set up additional regular sessions, so members get a better experience when playing... We have also attracted younger people. Two of our Committee members belong to the Friends' group of the park where we play, and our involvement in this is not only appreciated by the group, but provides

another networking tool, alongside writing occasional articles for local electronic newsletters. We will continue to promote our sport as widely as possible.

So, in late April we marked the boundaries of a full-size court (having had a smaller one previously), positioned the hoops, and members helped moved everything to our new venue, where we enjoy greatly improved facilities. We placed banners around the lawn and at the park gates, distributed flyers, and settled in quickly. We have been told that park visitors are pleased to see the space being used purposefully.

We held a 'formal' open afternoon later in May, inviting people who had supported our move in a variety of ways. Our President welcomed everyone, then one Councillor cut a ribbon across a hoop, and another hit a ball through it. Sydenham Croquet Club had officially arrived! I would also like to thank Council members of the SECF and CA for their advice at different stages, which has been most useful. Other clubs have given us additional equipment, and want to arrange friendlies. We are playing in the SECF league, and are also holding our own internal competition.

I Jane Sheridan



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OPENING DOORS COMPETITION WOODHALL SPA CROQUET CLUB

Woodhall Spa is a village centrally located in Lincolnshire. Whilst it is less than 200 years old, the village has a formidable history: launch place for the 97 Sqn raid on Augsburg, the Tirpitz sinking by 617 Sqn (The Dambusters) and the Arnhem Landings of the Second World War. It is now more peaceful and home to not only England Golf, but also Woodhall Spa Croquet Club.

There is a tradition of playing croquet in Woodhall Spa, dating from the village's early beginnings when it was a Victorian Resort, through the Edwardian period to the present day. Hotels, schools and private gardens would have their own croquet court, but unfortunately no records exist of an early club in the village. The present Club is probably the oldest croquet club in Lincolnshire and celebrates its 30th birthday this year. It has had several homes during that time and doesn't profess to have the best lawns, as they slope from one side to the other and have gentle undulations, but we are located in the beautiful gardens of Jubilee Park, surrounded by rose beds, walkways with wisteria laden pergolas and, of course, a bandstand.

This year our Club had a change of management and lost 12 members – 33% of the membership. Some had moved out of the area or, because of the pandemic, had found new interests. Others had changed their club or were too ill or infirm to continue and, sadly, one member passed away.

Luckily for us, one of our members spotted the Opening Doors on Croquet Competition and we decided to enter. We were awarded £500 for our submission. Unexpected funding to attract new members, pinch ourselves, are we dreaming?



Woodhall Spa Croquet Club plays mainly GC and for the past few years our membership has stayed stubbornly below 40. However, we have some very committed members and coaches, a new committee and most of us new to the game, but our plan was simple... attract new and younger members! Traditionally, club subscriptions had been paid early in the year at the AGM. But this year, just three weeks before the start of the season, we had Subs Saturday. In addition to members, it was also advertised around the village for anyone interested to attend. Complimentary refreshments helped the event along and we attracted four new members! Not only was that a great start, it was also more new members than we had attracted in the previous two years! Soon after the season started we followed the example of the bowls club and had an Open Day. With adverts around the village again and complimentary refreshments, we got another four new members, including an AC player and some visitors who were members from another club who

had only come out of interest. Our pavilion is not the largest and there are no utilities on our side of the Park, however, at the suggestion of one of our coaches, we started a weekly Social Sunday with the Club Pavilion open for everyone – along with complimentary refreshments. Members come to play a game, have a chat, enter their name for competitions, and improve their skills with some coaching. Of course, we are also open to anyone passing who wants information about the game, to play, or just a cuppa. In the first four weeks we gained another four new members!



In addition we have had a concerted 'push' in the local monthly magazine with an article and photos every month. This has attracted a few more prospective members and both the WI and the Scouts groups want us to give them some tuition and organise tournaments. Also, the U3A, who celebrate their 40th anniversary this year, want some tuition and have organised a local inter-U3A tournament. As we are in a park with two caravan sites and a camp site we do get a fair number of visitors to the area. On Club afternoons

we regularly have visitors coming up to our fence to watch the game and take a photo or two. We now engage them in conversation and get them to join in for a game if possible. To date we have had visitors to the area from all over the country as well as from Europe and New Zealand. Whilst they may not join our club, we do feel we are raising the profile of the game and they may seek out their own local club.

This went a step further during the Queen's Jubilee celebrations when our lawns were open, and we held tutorials followed by a little competition with a £20 Amazon voucher prize, all for the princely sum of £2! The tutorial was to get them to hold the mallet correctly and to hit the ball without damaging our lawn. The competition was playing through five hoops, Hoops 9, 10, 11, 7 and then closest to the peg, in Hoop 1 position, as a tie-break.

Our target was to increase our membership this season to around 50, including some of working age, without a huge financial outlay. Therefore, we are delighted to have had a very successful start with 14 new members already. Having boosted our club AC players to four, we have also attracted an AC player from another local club, who was feeling lonely on his own courts and now regularly plays on our lawns. For the first time in many years we also have a local AC tournament planned, and will be hosting the Jim Kirby Cup for Short Croquet. The club has always held rigid Club Sessions for GC on Tuesday, Friday and Sunday afternoons, 2-4pm. With an AC session held on a Thursday afternoon, again 2-4pm. However, during the pandemic we introduced a booking system and this worked very well. In the second year of the pandemic a further Club Session, 4-6pm, was added to Tuesday, Friday and Sunday. This eased the usage of the lawns and most people were happy that they didn't have to use secondary balls. With the new management in place we came up with a timetable for use of the lawns. The system we picked is <https://www.supersaas.com/> as it has more features and flexibility in the free version. Club members can now book and use the



lawns when they wish, in two hour slots. The AC session on Thursday afternoon has also been increased, noon-6pm, and the GC players therefore avoid the AC players who always want to use all three lawns!

With summer on the way we got in touch with our local sign-makers and they produced a banner to advertise the Club. They were really helpful and it was with us just in time for the Annual Parish Meeting. As a new Committee we, luckily, had done some research and noted that the Parish Council had, some years previously, given us a grant for a lawn mower and a set of balls. Photographs were taken of our less portable equipment and all laid out with balls, mallets etc on our banner draped table. Within minutes the Parish Clerk appeared and asked about their grant purchases and she was pleased to see that we had noted on our information sheets what had been provided by the Parish Council.

We hosted two Scout evenings in July, both were successful with around 30 scouts attending each session. Unfortunately, neither session attracted new members, but they will be back next year!

The WI tournament was a very enjoyable day for the ladies and their partners. Whilst we may not see any new members at our Club there definitely was interest shown in finding their own local club. The U3A tournament, also very successful, with at least one new member on our horizon plus others looking to join their local clubs.

The next promotion was planned to be the local school, therefore smaller mallets were needed. These are priced at approximately £75-£120 each. However, we ran out of time this season and have

put this promotion on hold until next year. In the meantime, one of our members has produced shorter handled lighter mallets for the younger ones to use. Our Social Sunday has also been very popular and many people have come to have a go during the summer. Again, many will not join our club but we have got them interested and shown them that croquet is not an elitist sport or the preserve of the privileged few. One person in particular had had a very nasty road accident some years ago and they have only just managed to enable him to move his hip. He has borrowed some hoops, a ball and an extra long, locally made mallet to help with his rehabilitation. With the very hot weather that we experienced this year we found that extra refreshments were required. Two of our members spotted the



need and produced a drinks station for use during games. Unfortunately, it was found to hinder play a little and did not conform with the rules. It is now just used as our trophy presentation table, and the envy of a couple of local clubs.

The end of the season is fast approaching and we were very thankful to the Croquet Association and the "Opening Doors On Croquet" Competition for the award of £500 to assist our club funding the promotion of croquet. This has enabled us to promote the club and the game with a new banner, to fund our Social Sundays, and to purchase short handled lighter weight and longer handled mallets. We have attracted new members, not only to our club but the wider croquet community. For our club we have had an increase in membership of 62%!

Our conclusions are: promote your club at every opportunity, be friendly and welcoming, invite people in to 'have a go' and a free cuppa really does work magic! Hopefully other clubs and the CA have also benefited from our award.

NATIONAL INTER-CLUB SHORT CROQUET FINAL

Good weather and warm conditions greeted both teams at York Croquet Club. The opening session saw Richard Harvey and Vi Richards team up in doubles to play Clive Goode and Sarah Butler. In the singles Tony Philips played David Brydon while Richard Leach faced Debbie Watson.

In the match between Richard and Debbie, at first things seemed to be going the way of Debbie, even though she had to use 2 bisques to take her lead ball round to peg, while Richard initially found the slowness of the lawns in places to be tricky to deal with. Things looked especially dire when Debbie took her second ball round to hoop 3, while Richard had yet to get started with either ball. After Debbie broke down on hoop 3 Richard finally found some form and took his first ball round to hoop 4 before breaking down, though he left both of Debbie's balls some distance apart in the process.

After Debbie failed to make anything of her hit in, Richard took his second ball round to hoop 4, but ended up jamming his ball on the hoop post while retaining a single bisque at this stage. Debbie made a crucial error at this point by playing her blue ball instead of her black. She used her final bisque and got the lawn nicely set to finish, including running hoop 3 with her blue ball from a very tight and narrow angle, only to realise that it was the black ball that needed the hoop. Richard used his final bisque to separate Debbie's balls and took his red round to peg and pegging out Debbie's blue, leaving the black a long distance away from the red and yellow balls. From this point on Richard took control and finished the match 14-9.

The doubles match was a very tight affair for the first hour, with both sides getting balls to hoop 5 and hoop 2 to leave the match tied 5-5, before Richard H managed to run hoop 2, only to break down at hoop 3 to take the score to Bury 6 Nottingham 5. With time running out Clive stepped up and took his ball from hoop 5 to peg leaving the match to end with Nottingham winning 7 - 6.

The other singles match between Tony and David looked for most of the match like it would easily go in Bury's favour, especially after Tony pegged out David's yellow while David had yet to make hoop 1 with his red. However, after reaching hoop 6 with his black ball the situation turned on its head and Tony was left to wonder how he lost the match on the golden hoop. David's play was far from error-free, including playing the wrong ball twice (a personal worst) and using his half-bisque to successfully separate the oppo's balls but only into a wired position. Somehow, he managed to prevail 12-11 on time with that golden hoop. A game to forget.

Nottingham (back, left to right): Debbie Watson, Clive Goode, David Brydon, Sarah Butler.

Bury (front): Tony Philips, Vi Richards, Richard Leach, Richard Harvey



LUNCHTIME BURY 1 NOTTINGHAM 2

The first session of the afternoon saw Tony facing Clive, Richard L facing David, Richard H facing Debbie and Vi playing Sarah. Richard H and Debbie seemed to be a fairly quick affair with Debbie taking the match 14-5. Tony's match with Clive lasted almost the full 75mins, even though the score line didn't suggest that that was the case with Clive winning 14-7. The captains' match, Richard vs David, almost lasted the full 75 mins but again the score line didn't reflect the way that the match went with Richard taking the match 14-8. The last match to finish was the battle of the high handicaps with Vi just managing to squeeze out the win 13-11 after time was called.

TEA BURY 3 NOTTINGHAM 4

The final session saw Tony facing Debbie, Richard L facing Sarah, Richard H facing David and Vi playing Clive. Tony's match with Debbie was the first to finish with Debbie taking the win 14-9. The second match to finish was between Vi and Clive, Vi rushing into a very strong position with good use of her bisques getting her balls to peg, while Clive took his lead ball round to hoop 4. However, with his intention of doing his peels for his lead ball on hoops 5 and 6, Clive failed to make any headway with his second ball only managing to run hoop 1. The match finished Vi 14 Clive 5. The match between Richard H and David was the third to finish though the score line didn't reflect the match play as Richard H took the match 14-6.

The overall match score at this stage Bury 5 Nottingham 5 with one still in play. The match between Richard L and Sarah was a very tight affair especially in contrast to most of Richard's other games. Sarah started off well and used 3 of her 8 bisques to do a very good 4-ball break to take her yellow ball round to peg. This however proved to be a mistake, as Richard took his black round to peg using just 1 bisque. Then he separated the red ball from the blue by using the boundary

behind hoop 2 and the boundary near hoop 4 before pegging out the yellow, and then put his black ball into corner 4. Sarah very nearly managed to get out of the situation but after using her final bisque at hoop 4 she left her red ball jammed in hoop 6.

Richard used 2 bisques to get started with his blue, though he really should have called a referee to check due to how tight Sarah had left the line between blue and black with the peg in between. Richard gradually pulled his way back into the match limping his blue ball round from hoop 1 while avoiding the use of Sarah's ball apart from to run hoop 1 initially. On several occasions Sarah could have applied pressure by putting her ball in front of hoop 6 but instead she chose to hide her ball on the boundaries or in the corners until Richard got his blue to hoop 5. At this point Sarah put her red about three mallet lengths in from the boundary directly behind hoop 6. Richard ran hoop 5 and then deliberately left Sarah cross-wired from his balls using both hoop 6 and the peg.

With less than 5 minutes on the timer Sarah was left puzzled by what options she had remaining. She opted to shoot her red down towards corner 1 in order to keep it as far away from Richard's balls as possible. Richard used his last bisque to run hoop 6 and then managed to peg out both of his balls to win the match 14-12.

FINAL SCORE BURY 6 NOTTINGHAM 5

Thanks to York Croquet Club for a great day and to the spectators from York and also from Bury (Malcolm Daines) who watched the proceedings including the presentation of the Ranelagh Club Competition Trophy to Bury by John Harris, and a traditional consolation prize of a Terry's Chocolate Orange to Nottingham.

Richard Leach, Bury Captain
David Brydon, Nottingham Captain



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GC WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP 30 JULY TO 7 AUGUST 2022

Sussex Country Croquet Club, usually referred to as 'Southwick', had deservedly received much praise for its hosting of the 13th GCWC in 2019, some 15 years after its debut as a GCWC venue. That event had ended with the formal handover of the WCF flag to New Zealand to signify the identity of the next Event Host. However, the pandemic intervened to delay and disrupt the planned schedule of world championships. The hope that the next GCWC could still be held in New Zealand, albeit in 2022, could not eventually be realised and the WCF was fortunate that England and Southwick were willing and able to step into the breach and provide a superb venue and well-practiced expertise. The long hot summer had provided courts that were distinctly quick, especially from midday to 16.00, which put a great premium on touch.



(A) Bamford vs Eissa by Ray Hall

It also made good sense to simplify matters by reducing the field from its normal 80 to 64 so that the entire event could be held at Southwick without the need to rely on satellite venues to assist with holding the Block Stage or consolation events. Covid still cast a shadow over Australian and New Zealand representation which was sharply reduced. However, appetite for places from England and Spain was high and a strong field of 30 assembled for the Qualifying Tournament held at the Compton Club from 25 to 28 July. This included five Spaniards, two Australians, a New Zealander and a rather distinguished American in the shape of the defending champion, Ben Rothman. A combination of Covid and a new child meant that he had not played competitively since January 2020 and there was much interest in seeing how he would fare. In the end, Ben qualified reasonably comfortably along with Mostafa Eissa (EGY) and six strong English players.

The opening ceremony was modelled on the successful 2019 format which culminated with a flag-bearer from each of the 22 nations represented carrying their flag to the display mounting at the south end of court 1, where they remained for the duration of the event.

The 2019 GCWC had been notable for 'Black Thursday' when four great stars of the game had made unceremonious and unexpected exits from the first round of the Knock-Out Stage. One had been Reg Bamford (ZAF) who was now favoured by many to take his third GCWC. He appeared to be in prime form and did not drop a game to top Block A with an ominous 64 net hoops. Richard Bilton seems to like Southwick and showed clear signs of regaining his impressive 2019 form by taking second place with 6/7. Omar Fahmi (EGY), the 2018 Over-50 GCWC finalist, and Jenny Clarke (NZL), twice a Women's GCWC finalist, were the other qualifiers.

Mohamed Kareem (EGY), the 2019 GCWC finalist, and 23-year old Matthew Essick (USA), the 2020 ACWC finalist, headed

Block B with 6/7. Naguib Hossam (EGY) scored 5/7 and a play-off was required for the last spot in which Dominic Nunns, a Southwick member and top AC player who had recently taken up GC, edged out Aston Wade, the 2021 British Open champion.



Amr and friends
PHOTOGRAPH
Ray Hall

Block C was dominated by Mohamed Nasr (EGY), the 2006 champion, who did not drop a game and accumulated 49 net hoops. Jonathan Powe and 15-year old Blake Fields (USA), already a highly impressive performer, both scored 5/7 and qualified alongside Rachel Gee with 4/7. Robert Fulford has always played GC to a very high standard and had won his first British GC Open title just over a month earlier by defeating Reg Bamford in a fascinating duel in which Robert's precise positional play was able to prevail against a much harder-hitting opponent. How would he do in the GCWC? He made a strong start by winning all seven matches, ahead of Yasser Sayed (EGY), 16-year old Jack Good, England's latest young GC star, and Brian Lozano (MEX) who is a croquet professional at Mission Hills in California.



(A) Bamford vs Eissa PHOTOGRAPH Ray Hall

Ahmed Nasr (EGY) won the GCWC in 2004 and 2008 and was runner-up to Reg Bamford in 2013 and 2017. He dropped no matches and only two games in winning Block E, followed by Mostafa Nezar (EGY), the 2013 Under 21 champion, and two English players, Euan Burrige and Tim Jolliff.

Block F was dominated by John-Paul Moberly, who dropped only one game, and saw a good performance by Stuart M. Smith with 5/7. Robert Fletcher (AUS), Karim Ghamry, a young Egyptian and Pierre Beaudry (BEL) all ended on 4/7 but Robert and Karim won the play-off games.

Amr Alebiary is another of the younger top Egyptians and headed Block G with 6/7, followed by Stephen Mulliner and Joi Elebo (SWE) on 5/7. Ben Rothman (USA) could only manage

3/7 and qualified to prolong his title defence only via a play-off with Ian Burridge.

Ahmed El Mahdi (EGY), the 2015 champion, dominated Block H with only one dropped game and 49 net hoops. Manuel Alvarez-Sala (ESP) is the youngest (and currently strongest) of the four brothers who form the core of the Spanish national team and lost only to Ahmed. Tobi Savage and Simon Carter also qualified for the Knock-Out Stage with Simon repeating his 2019 feat of doing so as a Qualifying Tournament entrant.



Commentators



(KO) Jack Good vs M Nezar
PHOTOGRAPH Ray Hall

THE KNOCK-OUT STAGE – ROUND 1

There was no repeat of the 2019 carnage among the top seeds. Reg Bamford swiftly ended Ben Rothman's hopes of a successful title defence and other expected leading contenders such as Robert Fulford, Mohamed Karem, John-Paul Moberly, Ahmed Nasr and Mostafa Nezar also won in straight games. However, not everything was plain sailing. Amr Alebiary had a tough battle against Jenny Clarke and Mohamed Nasr dropped the first game to Karim Ghamry. Robert Fletcher was initially swept aside 7-1 by Blake Fields. Robert has been the AC World number one as well as the Australian AC and GC champion and had been expected by many to do well here. He had made a slowish start to the GCWC but now responded strongly to take the next two games. Dom Nunns has a less than totally classical style but can hit the ball very straight indeed. His 7-3, 7-4 defeat of Ahmed El Mahdi was the one definite upset of the round.



Lorna Dewar
PHOTOGRAPH Sarah Patton

THE KNOCK-OUT STAGE – ROUND 2

Bamford dropped only two hoops against Omar Fahmi to reach the quarter-finals and a revenge match against a reborn Bilton who had prevailed by 6-7, 7-3, 7-5 against Alebiary. Fulford lost the first game to Nezar but recovered to win 4-7, 7-5, 7-5 and so qualified to meet Ahmed Nasr, who had beaten Yasser Sayed 7-4, 7-5.

In the lower half of the draw, Stuart M. Smith's gallant campaign ended despite taking the first game from Mohamed Nasr, losing 6-7, 7-4, 7-1. Moberly started strongly against Fletcher with a 7-3 win but the Australian raised his shooting game to an

extraordinary level of consistency and emerged the winner by 3-7, 7-4, 7-3. Matthew Essick defeated Manuel Alvarez-Sala 7-6, 7-2 to meet Mohamed Karem who had ended Nunn's run with 7-4, 7-1 victory.



Hanan Rashad - Jenny Clarke - Alison Sharpe
PHOTOGRAPH Tony Elkin

QUARTER-FINALS

The quarter-finals were best-of-five games and only one, between Fulford and Ahmed Nasr, went beyond the third game. However, only Bamford and Bilton could be said to have had a straightforward encounter which featured a close opening game before Bamford's all-round skills prevailed by 7-5, 7-2, 7-3. Robert Fletcher made a strong start against Mohamed Nasr and took the opening game 7-3. He did not play quite so well in game 2 but managed to recover from 4-6 to 6-6 and, after Nasr had missed a 6 yard attempt at hoop 13, ran it from 7 yards angled to establish a 2-0 lead. Game 3 featured an unlucky peel on Fletcher's ball by Nasr at hoop 3 and a superb long-distance jawsing by Fletcher at hoop 7. Nasr could be forgiven for feeling that luck was not on his side and the final match score was 7-3, 7-6, 7-2. Matthew Essick was beginning to attract attention but was not really expected to prevail against Mohamed Karem, the 2019 finalist. However, Essick started well with a 7-3 win and showed no signs of weakness in two lengthy and closely-fought games that both went to hoop 13. In game 3, Karem recovered from 3-5 to 5-5 and ran a 9 yard angled hoop 12 to make the score 6-6. However, he could not clear Essick's first ball to hoop 13 and Matthew made no mistake from 4 yards to take the match 7-3, 7-6, 7-6. It was an impressive performance from the youngest player still in contention.

Fulford took the first two games against Ahmed Nasr 7-4, 7-5 but then lost the next two by the slightly more decisive scores of 7-4, 7-3. What would the final game hold? In the event, Fulford stuck to his strategy of consistent and accurate position taking and let his much harder-hitting opponent take the risks with the result that Fulford won 7-4 and progressed to the quarter-final to set up a repeat of the British Open final against Bamford. The end of the quarter-finals marked the end of an era. In the previous 13 holdings of the GCWC, there had always been at least one Egyptian in the final. Now there would be none, which would instead feature players representing Australia, England, South Africa and the United States.

SEMI-FINALS

The semi-finals offered a contrast in age, experience and approach. Matthew Essick and Robert Fletcher were both under 30 while Reg Bamford and Robert Fulford were both over 50. Essick was the least experienced and least well known. He regards himself primarily as an AC player who took up GC only three years earlier but, nonetheless, had won the 2021 USA GC Championship. He has an interesting approach to hitting the ball in that he uses Irish Style predominantly for hooping and gentle strokes while switching to Solomon Grip for longer clearances and jump strokes.

...continued on Page 32



(D) Jack Good & Yasser Sayes
PHOTOGRAPH Ray Hall

Essick and Fletcher had met in the 2020 ACWC semi-final in Australia and the American had won 3-1. So each knew the quality of the other. Essick was the lesser-known quantity at GC and Fletcher's form had been steadily improving throughout the week. Essick had the better of the first three games, leading 7-4, 2-7, 7-4 but there was little to choose between the players in terms of execution. At 1-1 in game 4, Fletcher cleared Essick's Yellow to the south boundary leaving Blue in good position for hoop 3. Essick hit Blue with Yellow from 29 yards almost in the middle and Fletcher replied by running the hoop smoothly with Blue from 7 yards angled! Tremendous play by both players.

The game, and with it the match, seemed to hinge on a fortunate in-off by Essick at hoop 6 to lead 4-2 and then a lengthy tactical battle at hoop 7 in which both players had moments of ascendancy before Essick finally prevailed. Fletcher then produced an excellent 4 yard jump at hoop 8 to make the score 5-3 but, after two rotations of clearances, Essick ran hoop 9 cleanly with Red from 9 yards west of corner 4 and watched with delight as it rolled smoothly through hoop 10 as well!

Reg Bamford and Robert Fulford have played each other many times at AC but not so often at GC and each has the highest respect for the other's skills and thinking abilities on court. Bamford had displayed a wonderfully consistent standard in all parts of his game in reaching the semi-final and his motivation to put matters right after his defeat by Fulford in the British GC Open final could not have been greater.



Crowds PHOTOGRAPH Sarah Patton

The match seemed to be heading Bamford's way despite losing game 2, the first game he had lost in the event to date. Fulford had continued to exhibit an extraordinary level of precision in positioning on a slippery court without ever hitting anything very hard but had not been able to prevent Bamford from building a solid lead of 2-1 in games and reaching 6-4 in game 4 after some extraordinary and lengthy hoop battles. Redress for

Bamford and a place in the final seemed only a short time away. However, Bamford then suffered the mishap of half-peeling Fulford's Red at 11 while leaving his Blue almost in contact with it. This allowed Fulford to win hoop 11 and, soon after, hoop 12 as well. Bamford played Blue to good position at hoop 13 but Fulford nicked it with Red to an angled position while Red ended on the north boundary above hoop 13. Bamford's attempt to jaws Blue fell off to the west and Fulford seized the chance to run with Red and square the match. This was a huge momentum shift and, while there was no let up in the intensity of the battle, it was not completely a surprise when Fulford ran away with game 5 and won 7-2.



Winners PHOTOGRAPH Ray Hall

THE FINAL

Rarely has there been such a marked contrast between player styles in a GCWC final. Robert Fulford had qualified on a palette of patience and superbly accurate positioning and blocking. Matthew Essick had displayed excellent hoop-running and medium-distance centre-ball clearing. The pre-match opinion was that, if Matthew could continue to perform as before, he should win. But, given the circumstances, that was a big "if".

Game 1 started evenly with both players in good form. The first decisive move came at 3-3 when Essick scored hoop 7 with a confident 4 yard jump. He followed that with two good clearances in front of hoop 8 to reach 5-3 and benefitted from a failed Fulford snuggle to make the score 6-3. Another 4 yard jump ended the game and all looked very good from the American's perspective.

Game 2 was reasonably balanced until Essick led 6-4. However, his unsuccessful 4 yard angled hoop attempt at hoop 11 gave Fulford an edge which was converted into a 6-6 score. Hoop 13 was a little messy on both sides, including two unexpected Essick jump failures which allowed Fulford to win 7-6 and square the match.

Essick won the first two hoops of Game 3 but was pulled back to 2-1 and there was a distinct sense that he was beginning to miss things while Fulford was beginning to hit well. A turning point? Had Fulford run a reasonably short hoop 4, it might have been but, unfortunately for him, he missed to give Essick a 3-1 lead which became 4-1 when a long Fulford clearance attempt jaws Essick's Yellow in hoop 5. Fulford did well not to lose hoop 6 as well but lost the hoop 7 battle to trail 5-2. Essick missed two jumps at hoop 8 with Fulford's Blue in the hoop but Fulford unluckily put Black into the hoop from the south and could only run the hoop with Blue into a position hampered badly by Black. This gave Essick an easy hoop 9 and a 6-3 lead which soon became 7-3 and a 2-1 lead in the match.

Game 4 began with an extended hoop 1 duel. Essick eventually took the hoop and soon reached 3-1. A rare positional error from Fulford blocked his Blue from clearing Red at hoop 5 and forced a long hoop attempt instead. When this failed, Essick was able to score and take command at hoop 6 and the score was soon 5-1. Fulford won hoop 7 but a missed 5 yard clearance gave Essick a 6-2 lead. Fulford ran hoop 9

with Blue to just past hoop 10 and was followed by Essick's Red played to 3 yards short of the hoop. Black now came in but blocked both Blue at Red and Red at the hoop. Yellow was played up and Fulford settled for clearing that with Blue and leaving Essick with a 3 yard jump to score the hoop. Matthew showed no signs of nerves at this crucial moment and played a smooth jump which won the game, match and title. With only a handful of errors throughout the final, this was a very impressive and confident display by the 23-year old American. Robert Fulford also deserves hearty congratulations for such a successful GCWC campaign. His left wrist does not permit him to play powerful shots anymore but he used his extensive experience and positional skills to keep his opponents under pressure to play difficult and risky strokes. It was a strategy that worked extremely well in the fast court conditions and showed that there can be more than one way to win a game. The losing quarter-finalists event was won by Mohamed Nasr who defeated Richard Bilton 7-5, 7-5 in the final. Stuart M. Smith finished the week strongly by taking the WCF Shield trophy for those who lost in the second round of the Knock-Out Stage, defeating Dom Nunns and, in the final, John-Paul Moberly by 2-7, 7-3, 7-6. The WCF Bowl trophy for those who lost in the first round was won by Karim Ghamry who beat Stephen Mulliner 7-4, 6-7, 7-5 in the final. Lastly, Aston Wade made up for his disappointment in just failing to qualify for the Knock-Out Stage by winning the WCF Plate, defeating Ian Burridge in the final 7-3, 7-1. The speeches at the Closing Ceremony quite rightly thanked

not only the tournament officials for their hard work but also Southwick for providing a superb venue with excellent courts and also a wonderful atmosphere with legions of enthusiastic volunteers and first-class catering for players and spectators.

Stephen Mulliner



Matthew Essick PHOTOGRAPH Ray Hall



THE BEAR" WINS AGAIN. Tobi "The Bear" Savage won the Ramsgate Open Championship title for the third year in succession, fatherhood is obviously keeping him in good shape. In glorious weather over the weekend of 11-12 June, he beat a very high standard field that included three England internationals, Stephen Mulliner, Lionel Tibble and Euan Burridge, plus the legendary Reg Bamford, with all player handicaps being scratch & below. Savage won all his block games, all games in the quarter and semi-finals & beat Bamford 2 games to 1 in arguably the best GC final ever seen at Ramsgate. The lawns were green, the hoops very firm & the first day saw the block games going mainly to seed, although not in the metaphorical term. Block A saw Bamford and Mulliner progressing, each with 6 wins out of 7, with Pierre Beaudry and Tony Butcher also moving into the knockout. In Block B Savage was top with Burridge, Helen Reeves (New Zealand) and Guy Scurfield also qualifying.

RAMSGATE GC OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP 2022

On the Sunday morning, the quarter finals went mainly the way of the top seeds; Bamford beat Scurfield 7-2, 7-4, Mulliner also beat Reeves 7-2, 7-4, Savage ended Butcher's run 7-5, 7-3 but Beaudry put in a great performance in beating 3rd seed Burridge 7-5, 7-3. The semi-finals also saw really top class games; Bamford lost his first game against Beaudry 7-5, but came back strongly to win the next 2 games 7-3. Savage was ruthless in beating Mulliner 7-3, 7-2, although the score line does an injustice to the quality of the games.

"THE BEAR" IS SAVAGE IN THE FINAL

The final was therefore set up between Savage and Bamford and had brought spectators from as far away as Canterbury to witness style against power. The first game saw Savage shooting long hoops and clearances to win 7-3, although Bamford came back unmercifully in the second game which he won 7-1. The third game was a real blockbuster and even had ardent AC spectators arguing the merits of GC. The positioning and clearances from both players was precision in action, and the game progressed evenly for the first 10 hoops. Savage won hoop 11 but was cleared from No 12; then, in a very good position close in front of the hoop, Bamford tried one of his specials to use

his second ball to jump & clip one of Savage's balls to be up at hoop 13 in an inside position, unfortunately for him this tactic did not go to plan. He then tried to "jaws" his ball in hoop 12 but instead managed to run the hoop by just a few inches, leaving the ball blocked behind the hoop. Savage then put an excellent first ball 2-3 yards in front of hoop 13 which Bamford was unable to clear from the east penalty point. With Bamford's other ball blocked, the rest as we say is history, as Savage does not miss 2 yarders very often.

ROUND-UP

Mulliner was placed third, on a walk-over, as Beaudry was nursing a leg injury and preferred to watch the final. The plate was won by Neil Humphreys (Sussex County) and Tony Butcher won the losing quarter finalist RR. Thanks to the other competitors not named above who helped to make the weekend such a great tournament, Andrew Hobbs (Medway), Jonathan Claxton & Sue Lightbody (Dulwich), Jane Humphreys (Sussex County), Albie Willett (Ipswich) and Charlie Martin (Ramsgate)

Hopefully this class of competition will inspire all players to enter challenging events and more senior players to never give up.

Trevor Longman

GC ALL ENGLAND HANDICAP FINAL, WREST PARK CC, 10-11 SEPTEMBER

The day started with a minute's silence to pay our respects to the Queen, our long-standing patron.

Play (all play all) started under a cloudy sky and the morning's play seemed to go in favour of the higher handicapped players. They seemed to continue with few exceptions, the day ending with Jason Carly -3, being the only player to win all his games.

He was closely followed by Roger Goldring, the defending champion, Terry Collis, Gill Brewer and Charles Briggs just behind, all on 6 wins each. With seven rounds played on Saturday, Sunday would leave 6 rounds to play. In the morning session Marion Button, Carol Wadsworth and John Horne all had perfect mornings. Terry Collis carried on winning with just one loss. Jason Carly found that the number of extra shots for his opponents were

just too much and lost 3 from 4. Roger Goldring was having a bit of an up and down time.

Come the last 3 rounds it was very even and by the last round we had Gill Brewer on 8 wins with a better hoops difference than Terry Collis who had 9 wins. Gill Brewer won her last game, whilst Terry Collis lost his. Leaving Gill Brewer in provisional first place, an excellent performance, having started GC only last October. It all came down to Roger Goldring who needed to beat Ron Gould, who had 8 extras shots, to beat Gill.

It inevitably went to the 13th hoop. With Roger finally winning and so retained the title he won last year.

Quiller Barrett kindly presented the trophy to Roger Goldring.

I Ross Bagni, Joint Manager



GC REFEREES COURSE AT GUILDFORD

The GC Tier 3 World Team Championship was held at Guildford and Godalming Croquet Club at the beginning of August. Two members of the Iranian team asked the WCF if they could attend a referees' course while they were in England. The WCF took up the idea, offered the course to the other teams taking part in the tournament and agreed to fund their course fees. Ian Cobbold, Ian Shore (Examining Referees) and Richard Carline were asked to run the course. Places were also offered to local players. In the event, the Iranians' visas did not come through in time for them to play in the tournament and so they did not attend the course. The four members of the Mexican team joined the

course together with one of the players from Portugal and two supporters. Two UK players also took part.

Two of the Mexicans passed the written and on-court tests, Brian Lozano and Rick Zazueta. Both are accredited GC referees in the USA but still valued obtaining the CA qualification. Dusan Turcer from Portugal also passed as did the two local candidates, Simon Turner (Ealing) and Peter Adams (Guildford and Godalming). Separately, Ian Shore has passed the on-court test to be appointed a GC Championship Referee.

I Ian Cobbold, Chair of GC Rules Committee

MOST IMPROVED PLAYER AWARDS

Joint Most Improved Male GC Player Award Winners together at last. The GC Home Internationals at Nottingham on the weekend of 16-17 July provided the first opportunity for a joint presentation to be made to Aston Wade and Jack Good, as the winners of the Spiers Trophy for the Most Improved Male GC player of 2021.

Wade had already been presented with the trophy signally back in November by CA Handicap Committee Chairman Frances Colman, standing in for President Quiller Barrett.

On this occasion however, CA Treasurer Ian Burridge did the honours on Quiller's behalf and made the double presentation, before Jack Good took possession of the Spiers Trophy for his

six months share.

Call for Nominations for the Most Improved Player Awards of 2022

This is a good opportunity to remind everyone to please send in your nominations for the Most Improved Player Awards of 2022. Nominations should be sent to the CA Office by 31 October please.

The CA makes four annual Most Improved Player Awards:

Most Improved Male AC Player will receive the Apps Memorial Bowl
Most Improved Female AC Player will receive the Steel Memorial Bowl
Most Improved Male GC Player will receive the Spiers Trophy
Most Improved Female GC Player will receive the Colman Trophy.



Eligibility is restricted to players who are members of a CA-member club, and who are playing predominantly within the CA's domain for the period under consideration.

The nomination should provide detailed information about the candidate's improvement during the season (or, in respect of players who join the CA part-way through the season, the portion of the season after becoming a CA Member).

Full details of supporting documentation can be viewed on the CA website: Home > Compete > Honours Board >. Most Improved or online readers click [here](#).

**I Frances Colman, Chairman
CA Handicap Committee**

WOMENS EUROPEAN GC CHAMPIONSHIPS - LATVIA 30 JUNE - 3 JULY

The women's Golf Croquet Championships were held at Ikskile and Sigulda, Latvia.

There were three lawns at Ikskile and one at Sigulda. Nearby was the Spa Drops Hotel which provided nearly all the accommodation for the players.

Competitors came from Spain, Ireland, Switzerland, Germany, Sweden, England and Latvia, consisting of a total of 28 players.

Glynis Davies and I were the only entries from England, therefore received a membership place in the competition. It was at the Women's open at Surbiton, that I persuaded Glynis to come with me and like the good sport she is, she agreed!

It was self-funded by ourselves, unlike the Spanish players who were given 600 Euros each towards their travel and hotel expenses!

The Latvian hospitality was second to none, transport was provided from and to the airport and every day from the hotel to the two croquet clubs.

Entertainment was provided with a boat trip on the Friday night and a dinner on the Saturday night.

The opening ceremony started with a parade of the players holding their national flags, with several Latvian dignitaries and even the Irish Ambassador, followed by a band and a buffet with drinks. All the players were then presented with a welcome bag containing an embroidered European 2022 Women's T shirt with our names and country on the back, a cap, drinks bottle, a fan, a stress ball, a name badge and a booklet detailing the players and playing schedule.

It was all live-streamed and recorded and uploaded on to social media. The following day the games commenced and Latvia was in the worst heatwave that they had ever experienced, with temperatures reaching 34 degrees. It was hot! The tournament consisted of four blocks with the top four qualifying for the knock out stage. Both myself and Glynis made it through into the Championship knockout.

I progressed winning through the last 16 and also won my quarter final, whilst Glynis lost in the last 16 knockout. Glynis went on to lose in the Bowl final to Ireland's Jane Morrison.

I reached the semi-finals, but

unfortunately was affected by the heat and got heat stroke and could not attend the evening dinner which by all accounts was a very good night.

I did play in the semi-final but lost to my Spanish opponent who I had previously beaten in the blocks. I was eventually placed in fourth place after losing in the playoff for third and fourth place.

The Championship final was won by another Spanish player Begona Elizaburu.

The closing ceremony was as good as the opening ceremony and enjoyed by everyone. The friendliness of the games was outstanding. For example, one of the Spanish players, (there were 10 of them) gave me a Spanish club badge for being the only player to have beaten her. I have made new contacts with Ireland and Germany and look forward to seeing them in the future.

It was a wonderful experience and I would recommend anyone, male or female, to enter a tournament abroad like this, as both Glynis and I made some new friendships from the different countries for a long time to come.

I Michelle Leonard



GC CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES - NOTTINGHAM



Rachel Gee wins the Nottingham Golf Croquet Championship.

12 players contested this year's Nottingham Golf Croquet Championship. Of those twelve, three have played for Great Britain in the Mac Robertson Shield, a further two have played for England in the GC World Team Championships, and a yet further three were playing for England in the Golf Croquet Home Internationals the next weekend.

Coupled with the strong entry, the conditions were particularly challenging this year. The tournament was hosted on one of the hottest weekends of the year,

with Nottingham's recently renovated lawns and Atkins hoops. The competition to be one of the four people to survive the round-robin block was therefore grueling. Aston Wade edged Callum Johnson out of fourth place by only two net hoops to secure a semi-final against Rachel Gee, whilst ninth seed Debbie Lines played Ian Burrige.

Both semi-final matches went to three, but eventually Debbie and Rachel won out. The final was won 7-5, 7-4 by Rachel to secure her sixth Nottingham GC Championship and her third in a row. Full results are at [CroquetScores.com](https://www.croquet.org.uk)

I Will Gee

TWO YEARS LATE - WORTH THE WAIT

The World Croquet Federation's Golf Croquet World Team Championship Tier 3 2020 was due to be played at Guildford and Godalming (GGCC) in, you've guessed it, 2020. That was Plan A. Covid interfered with that, so Plan B was to reschedule to 2021. Covid again – move to Plan C. The tournament was scheduled for 21-23 July 2022, involving teams from Czech Republic, Iran, Mexico and Portugal. Things were looking good until shortly before the appointed time it became apparent that the visa and travel plans of the Iran team were not going to work and that only one person qualified to play for Iran was able to come. So, I agreed a Plan D with the WCF, which was that Omied Hallam (Nottingham) would captain an unofficial Iranian team, which we dubbed 'Iran Plus'. Apart from Omied, the remainder of the team would be drawn from the ranks of GGCC. The team would play the fixtures of the Iran team 'hors concours'. That way, the other teams would at least play their three scheduled international test matches in three days, and would be guaranteed to win at least a bronze medal.

The teams had a day's acclimatisation and practice on 20 July. GGCC's lawns were at their most taxing – very fast (about 14 Plummers) and with unforgiving hoops. About this time Plan E

was conceived, as a member of 'Iran Plus' succumbed to Covid and was replaced.

TO THE COMPETITION.

Each one-day test match consisted of two best-of-three game doubles matches and four best-of-three singles. Day 1 saw Portugal beat Czech Republic and Iran Plus draw with Mexico. On the next day, 'Iran Plus' beat Czech Republic and Mexico beat Portugal. By this time, Mexico seemed sure to take the title, but 'Iran Plus' were not finished. In a nail-biting finish they beat Portugal by a slender margin and claimed their second win and an unofficial draw with Mexico.



SIDMOUTH GC 'B' LEVEL SERIES TOURNAMENT, 14 AUGUST

Sidmouth Croquet Club was delighted to hold their first GC 'B' Level tournament as part of the National Series. The tournament was fully subscribed with 16 players from no less than 11 different clubs located around the country – Bristol, Swanage, Winterborne Valley, Nailsea, and Colchester to name but a few.

The format followed the one day 16 player format of 4 blocks of 4 players, with the top two players from each block going forward to the main event Knockout. The remaining players went into the Plate knockout which mirrored the same format, and all players are to be commended for finishing the tournament playing right through to contest even 15/16th position in the blistering heat.

Block A ended much as expected with top seed Tim Spores (Budleigh) taking top spot, followed by Keith Bryant (Dowlish Wake) in 2nd place, and an upset to the seeding for third spot with Victoria Stocks (Bristol) ending above Sue Nicholas (Cheam) who failed to get a game win. This was a positive start for Victoria in her first CA ranked tournament.

Block B caused the biggest upset with Anthony Nicholas (Cheam) failing to win any block games despite his pole position, and another newcomer, Trevor J Smith (Budleigh) gained a full house with three wins in his first CA ranked tournament. Michael Manning (Colchester) as third seed also managed 2nd place above Martin Strange (Winterborne Valley) with 2 block game wins.

Block C saw Marc Colson (Budleigh) and Steve Pearson (Sidmouth) take the top two places to progress to the main tournament Knockout, with Marian Manning (Colchester) and Michael Powell (Nailsea) going into the consolation Plate event.

Block D was interesting with local Sidmouth player Paul Bradley gaining an impressive full set of three wins, whilst all remaining competitors, Gill Hindshaw (Moreton), Tony Green (Swanage) and Gordon MacRae (Moreton) all only managed one win each. Tony Green took the 2nd place having the best net hoop difference.

The main Knockout saw the so far unbeaten new arrival Trevor J Smith lose in a tight quarter-final game against Steve

Pearson 4/7. Steve Pearson went through to the semi-final against the thus far unbeaten Paul Bradley, and snatched victory at the 13th hoop, 7/6.

The other quarter-finals resulted in wins for Tim Spores and Marc Colson, the latter taking the semi-final win to face Steve Pearson in the main tournament Final.

Meanwhile, the Plate Knockout saw a great showing from the women competitors with Gill Hindshaw, Marian Manning and Sue Nicholas all progressing to the Plate Semi-Finals alongside Martin Strange. Both games featured close results with Marian prevailing over Gill, 7/5 and Sue taking the win at the 13th hoop from Martin 7/6, leading to an all-female Plate Final. The Plate Final was another close fought game, and saw Sue Nicholas triumphant over Marian Manning, with a 7/5 win, taking home the specially commissioned tournament Plate medal.

The main Final was contested under soaring temperatures, but did not disappoint the spectators. Marc Colson played strongly throughout but was countered by Steve Pearson's tight tactical play. However, once Marc gained the lead Steve was unable to reverse the tide with the eventual score ending at 7/4 to Marc. Added to his previous B Level win at Budleigh, Marc claimed the new Sidmouth B Level winner's title and silver bud vase trophy, confirming his place in the National Finals later in the season.

| Louise Smith

From left: Sidmouth B Level Winner Marc Colson; Plate Winner Sue Nicholas; Runner Up Steve Pearson



THIS IS THE UNOFFICIAL TABLE.

	W	D	L	Points
Mexico	2	1	0	5
'Iran Plus'	2	1	0	5
Portugal	1	0	2	2
Czech Republic	0	0	3	0

Removal of 'Iran Plus' from the fray and awarding a win to each of the other teams results in the following:

THE OFFICIAL TABLE:

	W	D	L	Points
Mexico	3	0	0	6
Portugal	2	0	1	4
Czech Republic	1	0	2	2

SO, IT WAS MEXICO FOR THE GOLD, PORTUGAL SILVER AND CZECH REPUBLIC BRONZE!

Those are the bare facts, but it's not just about that. GGCC members put a huge effort into making our overseas guests feel welcome and at home. We made a lot of new friends as a result. At the opening of the tournament, I urged the teams to play hard, play fair, and have fun. I believe that was exactly what happened. We at GGCC enjoyed it hugely and were delighted to wind down with the teams on the final evening at dinner in a local pub.

And I've learnt a couple of things: managers are likely to need a Plan E and visiting teams from abroad need a Plan E.

Mike Huxley, Manager

PHOTOGRAPHS Sarah Patton



NOTTS WINS GC INTER-COUNTIES DIV 1

Nottinghamshire were worthy winners of Division 1 of the GC Inter-County Championship at Cheltenham on 20-21 August, winning 10/11 matches and dropping only 7 of their 33 games over the course of the weekend.

The only match they lost was against Yorkshire & Durham in the final round, but the title was in their hands by that stage, so perhaps they dropped their guard somewhat (although I'm sure Y&D will tell you otherwise).

Notts - the 2021 winners - were the strong ante-post favourites with two -4 and two -3 players (Rachel Gee, Will Gee, James Death, Ian Burrigge), but the Yorkshire & Durham team (Richard Bilton, Richard M Smith, Robert Wilkinson, Callum Johnson, Stuart Smith) kept pace with them throughout the first day; both teams won all six of their matches and we looked set fair for an intriguing second day. However, things changed early on Sunday when Y&D suffered two defeats in fairly quick succession, first to Essex in Round 7 and then to Dorset in Round 9. This left Notts, who had maintained their 100% record, in an unassailable lead before the final two rounds. In the end, Y&D were comfortably 2nd overall with 9/11 match wins (and some bragging rights following their final round win against Notts), followed by Dorset (7/11), Northamptonshire (6/11) and Hertfordshire (6/11). Herts were placed below Northants on net games.

At the foot of the table, four teams (Essex, Glamorgan, Oxfordshire and Surrey) were battling to stay out of the relegation zone in their final few matches on Sunday. Following some tense games, it was Essex (4/11) and Surrey (3/11) who managed to stay up, leaving Oxfordshire (3/11, with the same

net games as Surrey, but placed 11th due to their match loss to Surrey) and Glamorgan (2/11) in the bottom two slots. They will join Division 2 in 2023.

The GC Inter-County Cup was presented to Nottinghamshire by Andrew Hope. Cheltenham CC and their team of helpers were warmly thanked by Ian Burrigge for all their efforts before and during the event, and for their excellent hospitality.

The Divisions are back in Cheltenham (Div 1) and Sussex CCC (Div 2) for a second year in 2023 before switching in 2024.

Jonathan Powe

The detailed results can be found on CroquetScores.com and linked here:

[Div 1 Block](#); [Div 2 Block](#)

[Div 1 Matches](#); [Div 2 Matches](#)



SOMERSET WINS GC INTER-COUNTIES DIV 2

Somerset worthy champions, being undefeated at the Div 2 championships at Southwick.

Team (L to R) Dom Aarvold, Andy Loakes, Stephen Custance-Baker (capt) and David Goacher; missing Jim Field and Jonathan Isaacs.

So, congratulations to Somerset who bounce straight back to Div 1 next year. Joining them, in a well deserved 2nd place, will be Devon led by Stuart M. Smith. The format for this tournament is 8 counties playing a round robin in

a best of 7 games and, I confess, it is full on. So, it was with regret that I have to mention that a county (who has no name) had to withdraw late on the Wednesday evening leaving the aforementioned format in peril. The easy option was to scratch them and give every county a 2-hour bye, which would be disappointing and frustrating for all concerned. It was decided this would be unacceptable and hence a hectic two days of phone calls and emails to plug a gaping hole!!! The solution

came in the way of a 'Misfits' team of whom I am indebted to every one who answered the call to take a turn as a 'Misfit', even if it meant playing against their own county, as I did. Special thanks to Andrew Stewert and David King who were the mainstays for the 'Misfits' and Roger Sutton who helped me initially find players from Southwick at short notice. By the way, the 4 in the photo also took a turn at being a 'misfit'.

My gratitude also goes to David Bell (RoT) who only had to make 2 decisions and the catering team who provided us with sustenance over the weekend. Finally to Louise Smith who kindly took on Croquet Scores for me and allow me time to think. In the end I believe it was a successful saved weekend that at times was hanging by a thread. Last minute heroes that stepped in as a 'Misfit' include:

- Deborah Albertsen who was minding her own business watching her son play Saturday morning, in flip flops;
 - Neil Humphries who was also minding his own business playing a game with his wife Jayne, Sunday morning;
 - Naomi Whitehead, who thought she was going to watch her husband Darryl play Sunday afternoon.
- Hope to see you all next year at a more relaxed event.

Ivor Brand (Frustrated Manager)



TOURNAMENTS & CELEBRATIONS AT CRAKE VALLEY

June 2022 was a special month for Crake Valley. Thirty players from all over England (including Surbiton, Hunstanton and Gainsborough) played CA GC National Qualifiers.

In the C level Giles Pepperell (Llanfairfechan) beat Crake's Chairperson, Simon Robins 7-5 in the final. In the B level Neil Adams (Westmorland) overcame Marcia Henderson (Auckland) 7-3.

Over the weekend, Crake Valley's David Cornes was consistent throughout winning all 11 games against top A level players to take a place at Wrest Park in September. David beat Glynis Davies (Northampton) 7-6, 7-1 in the final.

The following Tuesday (21st) represented the climax in the Clubs 125th Anniversary Year celebrations. The special club day was transformed after lunch into a series of fun games testing croquet techniques, with the highlight being the unveiling of the Commemorative Garden (pictured) by our special guest, Liz Vaughan. Liz is the widow of Bob Vaughan who in the late 1980's and early 1990's had done a tremendous amount to save the Club from near collapse. The full history of the Club is collated into a 108 page publication, visit: www.crakevalleycroquet.org.uk

The Garden has been created to

commemorate those loved ones no longer with the Club and to celebrate the new clubhouse. The main feature of the Garden is a stunning full sized glasswork mallet and balls, created by one of our own members. The day continued with drinks and buffet for members past and present in the marquee.

There was a final surprise when Liz presented the Club with her own painting of the clubhouse and surrounds.



QUIZ SECTION

ANSWERS ARE PUBLISHED ON THE CA WEBSITE



AC LAWS QUIZ

QUESTION: Ray shoots at Black and Blue with Red which hits both balls. He notices that Red hit Black first but because it would be to his advantage he elects the roquet to have been made on Blue and continues by taking croquet from Blue. Is this correct?

GC RULES QUIZ

QUESTION: During the game, a player complains that a hoop appears to be an unlawful width. No ball is currently a jammed ball. What happens next?

- Option 1: Only check the width of the hoop once the game ends.
- Option 2: Only check the width of the hoop if the opposing side agrees.
- Option 3: Immediately check the width of the hoop.
- Option 4: Only check the width of the hoop once a ball becomes a jammed ball.

WHO AM I?

Can you work out who the players are from their own unique anagrams?

1. PIRATE SLAM
2. HEEL GRACE
3. RISK BIG HAMLET
4. A GOAT VIBES
5. STAND A WOE
6. WARREN LOAD
7. WAS HER DOLL
8. MUST A THURST
9. AM DOME A HILL
10. A NOTED CRUNCH

Hint: All players are mentioned in this issue of the Gazette.



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STEVE LEONARD WINS THE ALAN OLDHAM TROPHY

The players gathered at Sussex County ground at Southwick for the GC Veterans Championship on 19 July, with the weather forecasters predicting the highest temperatures in the UK ever. The entry had reduced to 20 from the maximum of 24, mainly due to the forecast high temperatures. However, the rest of the competitors arrived not knowing what the following three days would hold.

In the event the first day was the worst as far as temperatures were concerned; being on the south coast they did not get up to the 40c seen in some parts of the country, but they did reach a steamy 32c. The players had heeded all the warnings and were prepared with sunglasses, water bottles and sun cream to do battle against the elements and their opponents.

The lawns at Southwick were in excellent condition as always, having been well watered during the recent dry weather, and with plenty of iced drinks available throughout the days. The programme also allowed them to take some fairly leisurely lunches.

Day 1 consisted of two blocks playing 6 rounds each with the remaining 3 rounds completed the following morning. The top 4 from each block would go forward to the quarter finals. In the Red Block Don Beck was top with 8 wins, followed by Richard Brooks and Helena Jansson on 6 wins each. The final place from this block was decided on net hoops and was taken by Andrew Fall. In the Blue Block Steve Leonard won all his nine games followed by Liz Farrow on 8 and Tony Butcher on 6. The last place was again decided on net hoops, and went to David Wise.

The quarter finals were played in the afternoon of Day 2 with matches consisting of best of three games. Temperatures had lowered a little, making the conditions slightly more comfortable. There were some very close matches but the eventual semi-finalists were Don Beck to play Liz Farrow, and Tony Butcher to play Steve Leonard. Day 2 also saw the start of the Plate for the remaining 12 players, who took part in a cross-block with 6 rounds.

On Day 3 the semi-finals were played first thing in the morning and after three

very close games all going to the 13th hoop, Liz Farrow beat Don Beck and with three games not quite as close Steve Leonard beat Tony Butcher. The losing quarter finalists played a knockout for the Shield with David Wise beating Helena Jansson and Richard Brooks beating Andrew Fall. The Plate competitors had also completed their cross-block.

So, after lunch we were ready for the finals. Liz Farrow took the first game 7/6 but then lost the next two 2/7, 3/7, so Steve Leonard was our winner receiving the Alan Oldham Trophy from Croquet Association Vice President, Jonathan Isaacs. Richard Brooks beat David Wise to win the Shield and after a playoff, Steiner Olsen from Norway beat Chris Sheen to take the Plate.

This year, for the first time, players over 75 could compete for the Brooks Vase, to be presented to the player who gave the best performance in that age group. This year it went to Richard Brooks himself, having reached the quarter finals.

Andrew Stewart



Richard Brooks winner of the Shield and the Brooks Vase



Steiner Olsen winner of the Plate



Steve Leonard winner of the Alan Oldham Trophy

THE COACHING PAGES **JOHN HARRIS**

COACHING QUALIFICATIONS

The following players have all been added to the official list of CA Coaches:

ACCREDITED CLUB-LEVEL

COACHES (Trained to coach beginners and high handicap players at their own Clubs):

Bruce Bennet Edinburgh Meadows
Tony Elkin Chichester & Fishbourne
Trevor Hopper Rottingdean

QUALIFIED COACHES (Qualified to coach skills and tactics at an appropriate level throughout the country)

Golf Croquet – Grade 2
Ivan Segal Rottingdean

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL FOUR!

NOMINATIONS ARE INVITED FOR COACH OF THE YEAR 2022 & THE LIFETIME COACHING AWARD

Coach of the Year 2022

We are looking for an established coach who has made a significant contribution to coaching our sport.

Someone who is dedicated, enthusiastic and has helped players improve.

A coach who always seems to go that 'extra mile'

The Lifetime Coaching Award

This award is for that someone really special who has made a significant contribution to coaching our sport over a long period of time.

For further details please go to the following link: <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=games/coaching/coty>

The Coaching Committee will be considering all nominations at their next meeting. If you know of a coach you consider worthy of either of these awards, please send their name together with a suitable citation to Paul Francis. Nominations close on 31 October 2022

Paul Francis
CA Coaching Committee
paulwfrancis@icloud.com

The Coach of the Year and the Lifetime Coaching Award are prestigious awards that are made to CA Graded Coaches who have shown a significant and above normal contribution to coaching.

GUIDANCE CRITERIA INCLUDE:

- Has shown dedication, innovation and enthusiasm in expanding knowledge and skills of the game.
- Carries an endorsement from Federation Officials, National/International players, or club committees.
- Has a significant length of service as a coach.
- Has made a particular contribution within the relevant playing season.
- Is recognised as helping individual players, a group of players or a team achieve significant success.
- Has led a successful reorganisation or development of coaching that has reached a number of players.
- Has dedicated significant time and expertise to producing a widely-used CA coaching asset, such as a manual or technique.
- The Lifetime Coaching Award is awarded only once to anyone, whereas Coach of the Year may be awarded again after at least five years have passed.
- The Lifetime Coaching Award encompasses additionally:
- A sustained contribution over a number of years.
- The candidate is widely recognised as having made a significant contribution to coaching in the domain throughout that time.

These criteria are for guidance and the candidate would not necessarily have to fulfil all of them.

MERIT AWARDS

Congratulations to the following:

ASSOCIATION CROQUET - BRONZE MERIT AWARD

Sarah Butler Cheltenham High Bisquers
Russell Dalgleish Challenge & Gilbey
Tony Mason Challenge & Gilbey
Michael Owens Nottingham Annual
 Tournament

ASSOCIATION CROQUET - SILVER MERIT AWARD

John Callander Longman Cup
Stephen Mills All England Area Final
Robin Morrison High Wycombe/Phyllis
 Court C-Level
Albie Willett Wrest Park August
 Tournament
Nick Yates Longman Cup

ASSOCIATION CROQUET - GOLD MERIT AWARD

Ed Olhausen Mary Rose

GOLF CROQUET - BRONZE MERIT AWARD

Andy Jones Wrest Park C-Level
Giles Pepperell Crake Valley C-Level
Bernie Phillips Woking C-Level
Colin Spencer Hunstanton C-Level

GOLF CROQUET - SILVER MERIT AWARD

Diana Wilson Hamptworth B-Level

If you qualify for a Merit Award, do remember to claim it! To see the standard to reach pop Croquet Association Merit Award Scheme into Google to get straight to it. Any CA event you are playing in will have a Manager who will be able to make the claim for you; otherwise, download a copy of the form from the CA website. The form has been revised to cover both AC and GC Merit Awards so claiming your Award should be straightforward.



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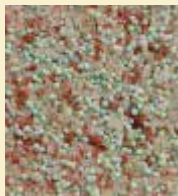
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Croquet Player
Turf Specialist



2022 - A FANTASTIC LAWN

It is three years since I levelled the croquet lawn in my garden. It has played superbly well throughout the season and attracted players from far and wide. The quality of the surface is due to three things. The mower, irrigation and maintenance programme. My Atco mower was upgraded to a 14-bladed Brilliant mower with a rate of 207 cuts per metre. I have a trailing seat on mine and it is a dream to use. I mowed at 5mm through the season, usually twice a week. The lawn speed has been consistently 11 to 11.9 Plummers. Shane usually builds these mowers during the winter months. The current price is £3119 and the cut quality is equivalent to a £7,000 mower. Interested? See my website.

Irrigation has been vital. Through the long dry spell, I applied 5 cu metres every other day - equivalent to 5mm of rain each time. The total cost of water at £1.68 per cu metre was around £400 which equates to about £17 per member. I think this is a good deal for members who have benefitted from an exceptional lawn throughout the year. I am still supplying DIY irrigation schemes with everything provided including guidance and the loan of a trencher. If you are interested please get in touch.

I used my standard Granular and Liquid maintenance programme (see my website) and added 1.5kg of soluble iron to the monthly sprays during the summer months to keep Red Thread at bay. The Brilliant sprayer makes this an easy job. As worms appeared in autumn, I spot-treated with soil conditioner which quickly solved the casting problem.

New fairy rings have appeared and I have been testing my new treatment method which seems to work but I am still working on the application rate.

Duncan Hector

TAKING THE 'COUNTRY ROUTE' IN AC

In Gazette 398 we started looking at what to do when you have yet to run any hoops, with bisques still standing. Red has used the other three balls but a speculative full roll to hoop 1 has fallen short. It's time to stamp your authority on the game.

The story so far...

A high bisquer might be tempted to use the continuation shot to place Red in front of the hoop, then take a bisque to run hoop 1. That's a one-star bisque: it improves the position of one ball, Red.

But why not improve the position of two balls? Use the continuation shot to send Red a little north-east of Yellow, then take the bisque. Roquet Yellow into position for a good hoop approach shot. This should also yield a well placed reception ball. Two balls benefit – a two-star bisque.

Or why not improve the position of three balls? Play Red off the north boundary to miss Blue and finish up behind it on the yard line. Then take the bisque. Push Blue nearer the hoop as your pioneer, and take off back down to Yellow, setting up to run hoop 1 as before. You have turned a bisque to correct a poor shot into a three-star bisque – three balls are now better

positioned.

TO CONTINUE THE STORY...

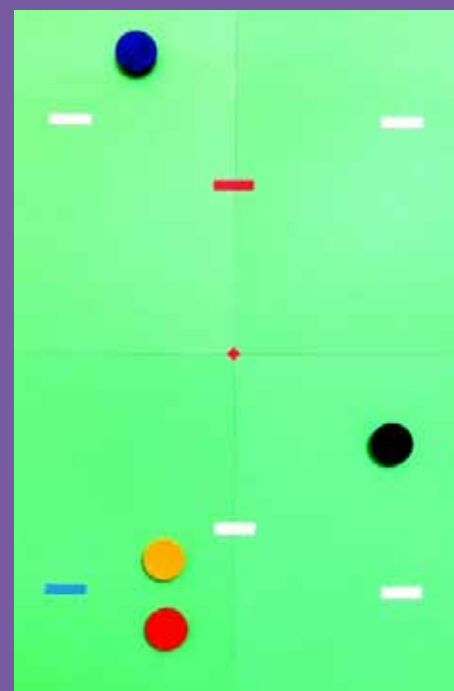
But why not think bigger still? With the continuation shot, aim to miss Blue as before. Take the bisque, send Blue as before into the lawn to become the pioneer at hoop 2, but now take off over to behind Black. Send it into the lawn to become a pivot: even if Red does not finish up just where you planned, you may well be able to nudge Black into a more useful pivot position. Then take off to a little north-east of Yellow as before. This is now a four-star bisque, improving the position of all four balls.

In fact you have done more than simply rearrange the balls. You have not only improved the position of every ball on the lawn, but also turned a poor shot needing a corrective bisque into a chance to set up workable four-ball break – a five-star bisque.

By taking the 'country route', as one of my Club colleagues rather attractively calls it, you have converted a reactive bisque – a bisque you were going to take anyway – into a pro-active one. You have converted a problem into an opportunity. The key thing is to stop and think before

taking the continuation shot. Look at the position of all the balls; see how you might improve the position of each; then use your continuation shot creatively.

GOOD LUCK!



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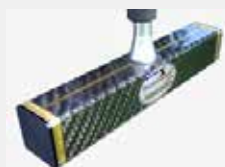
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OBITUARIES

MAGGIE COWMAN 1955 – 2022



Maggie was a very good croquet player and a remarkable human being. She played cricket locally, at county level, and also for Young England Women's Team against the West Indies, and on a tour to India in 1981.

She was sporty and active but this was curtailed when a severe lung disease meant she needed a double lung transplant. Thanks to the brilliance of The Freeman Hospital Newcastle and her own determination, Maggie was back on the road and was introduced to croquet by the physio who had traveled with the cricketers to India.

She became a vital member of the Ripon Spa Hotel Croquet Club and quickly moved up the rankings. Just a year after her transplant she organized a 48hour game of continuous croquet played between 8 members, which entered the record books and raised thousands of pounds for the Freeman Heart and Lung Transplant Association, which supports transplant patients.

Following her transplant it had always been Maggie's ambition to regain sufficient health and strength to compete in sport at a high level once more. Her motivation and dedication allowed her to achieve selection to play golf croquet for England in the Women's World Championships in Egypt in 2014, after only three years' experience in the game. Maggie competed against the world's best and brought home the Plate.

Once the Hotel closed and we had to find a new venue, Maggie was a key member of the committee, helping to secure our current venue at Studley Cricket Club. During lockdown isolation she renovated and painted our hoops and cleaned then revarnished our club mallets, as well as funding the purchase of eight new mallets for our new members to play with before buying their own.

Jane Pringle remembered "She

organized a lockdown competition which kept spirits and competition levels up. It involved hoop running, hitting a peg and positioning, all in our back gardens. We then reported the scores back to her. She would send little prizes – knitted hats and scarves in croquet colours, she was very generous. The croquet gang of girls became known as the Ramsgate Belles and had croquet holidays in Portugal and in Whitstable for the Ramsgate Ladies."

After her operation Maggie travelled extensively in this area giving talks about her experience policing the streets of Chapeltown in Leeds, as a sportswoman and as a transplant recipient, encouraging people to be donors and always raising money and awareness of The Freeman Hospital and those who support its philosophy of aftercare – live your life to the full. This she did in abundance.

Penny Clark of Ben Rhydding thought about Maggie in this way – "She quietly accepted with patience and joyfulness her health and her condition, her life, her croquet and her engagement with everyone who knew her. She accepted the clumsiness and mistakes of beginners to the game, always willing to support and mentor newcomers with kindness and expertise. Similarly, she accepted the foibles and, dare I say it, the occasional tantrums on the lawns of fellow players, with grace. Maggie's personality was reflected in her game, never flustered, or so it appeared, simply clearing obstacles and returning to run the hoop without fuss or self congratulation. In short, she just got on with it, enjoying the game and all its challenges, as she did in life. A wonderful role model indeed."

Incredibly, following her transplant as well as playing so much sport and competing in several transplant Games, Maggie managed to fit in a happy home life with her husband John, visiting over 25 countries on holiday and still be a friend who will be missed by us all.

She will be remembered here at Studley on the 1st and 2nd of September, when we will be holding a tournament for the Maggie Cowman Cup in aid of the Freeman Heart and Lung Transplant Association.

**| Ted Flexman
Ripon Spa Croquet Club**

RAY BARTLETT

1939 – 2022



Ray sadly passed away in July after a long battle with cancer. He was a member of the Dowlis Wake Croquet Club for many years which is a small village club near Ilminster in Somerset. It is well known to many league players from the South West federation for its suburb location and excellent pavilion, even though the lawns have a little bit of a slope!

Ray was mostly around 5 or 6 handicap and a regular winner of in-house competitions, and an important member of one of the club league teams. Ray came from a farming background, later becoming an agricultural sales representative visiting farms all over the south west. When traveling to league matches, he could be relied upon to give a near continuous commentary about the farming families for many of the farms we passed on the way, much to the amusement of his traveling companions!

Ray was also a committee member for many years and a real stalwart when it came to doing things. He could be relied upon to clean, overhaul and paint our equipment during the winter months, as well as constantly seeking to improve our lawns, often doing a lot of the work himself, as well as organising our small white lining squad.

We submit this tribute to Ray to mark the huge contribution he made to our croquet club, but also as a celebration of the many people all over the country who, like him, are the backbone of our wonderful croquet clubs.

| Tony Carter

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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.

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