CROQUET GAZETTE

Issue 413 | February 2025

CELEBRATING

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INSIDE: 100 YEARS OF THE MEN'S & WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIPS

2024 MOST IMPROVED PLAYER AWARDS

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Croquet England
Issue 413 | February 2025

Front cover:
2024 Most Improved Players
Louise Smith, Erica Malaiperuman and Jack Good

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WELCOME

Croquet is not just a sport, it's a way of life. And the life of Croquet is, in my opinion, something very special.

Having recently been interviewed by a journalist for a local paper, I was reminded what happens when a Croquet player meets someone who has not played before. Naturally, we try to convince them to become a Croquet player.

He came fully prepared with questions about the history of the sport, my plans for the new club and how I intend to encourage more people to play more croquet. What he didn't know was that I had already planned a strategy to encourage the unsuspecting reporter himself to step onto the court and 'have a go'.

I had already placed two mallets near a corner hoop, and as I picked up a ball and showed him the clearance between the ball and the hoop, he immediately cottoned on to what was about to happen. With a huge smile he took a mallet, followed my strict instructions to walk, stalk, place and play. I don't think I have ever seen a hoop run so smoothly with so little effort by a first timer. I refrained from saying "You're a natural", but the glint in his eye told me I didn't need to, he already knew.

Two hours went by before I realised, I just can't stop talking about Croquet. I did start to worry that I had talked too much and forgotten that perhaps Croquet is not for everyone, but I was rewarded with these kind words "I love your enthusiasm and passion for your sport". Having never known about Croquet before, and normally being a football reporter, he told me he now looked forward to Croquet being a new regular sport to feature. To top it all off, he then asked if he could bring his wife and grandchildren one day. I almost cried with happiness.

The moral of the story is, never stop talking about Croquet. It's a privilege to play and an honour to be able to share it with others.

Alison Maugham
Editor
editor@croquetengland.org.uk

PRESIDENT'S POETRY COLLECTION

Our Croquet England President, Patricia Duke-Cox, shares some of her favourite Croquet Poetry

AN APOLOGIA FOR CROQUET

Acknowledgement to FJF

Many ignorant people claim
Croquet is a vicious game.
To them I would give this retort
"No more than any other sport".
To spoil a lay up is not nice
But it's not done with any vice.
The aim is there to try and make
A hoop or set up for a break.
Surely it is not a sin
To do your best to try and win?
A fast and furious tennis serve
Returned at speed without reserve
Are both hit with intent to get
More points to win the game and set.
Hockey, Soccer and the rest
All strive to do their very best,
With greater energy and force
To win their game without remorse.
But, Croquet, one may well embrace
More gently and at slower pace,
With this may also be combined
A certain subtlety of mind
And, thus, a game we can engage
With pleasure and at any age.
Indeed when all is said and done
There is no doubt, "Croquet is Fun".

HIBISCUS COLUMN

MINTY CLINCH
Travelling Croquet Journalist

Telling the Croquet stories as they unfold

Though the thought will be dead in the water by the time you read this next month, it's still January so I can wish you a happy New Year. Not that mine is happy because of the cold turkey. Not the flavour-free breast or the carcass which have long gone, but the month on croquet ground zero. And it's not done yet.

Modern croquet is a year-round sport for anyone prepared to hang about outside in four layers of thermal clothing for three hours in midwinter. Provided it isn't too wet or icy for the lawns to stand the footfall. And provided fellow players haven't succumbed to the cough - also known as a preference for staying indoors watching their betters play croquet on YouTube.

Of course, there is plenty of pre planning for the nationwide summer campaign. So many clubs as yet unvisited to scope out. I mean who can claim to be an aficionado if they've never crossed the Trent to play at Nottingham or visited Bowdon and Fylde? As obsessives will, I've widened my horizons much further with a 'feed the addiction' trip to South Africa in February for the Somerset West AC tournament week. Have you been selected to play for England?', friends ask, making valiant efforts to assess an alien world.

Not exactly….Somerset West is a club in Constantia, Cape Town's wine land suburb under Table Mountain. As with all tournaments, you fill in the entry form and turn up on the right day. I see that Debbie Lines, a World GC champion as well as a monumental figure in AC, is among the entries, but I'm trusting she won't bother with handicap play.

Otherwise, all you need is an airbnb with a pool - remarkably affordable in a country with a favourable exchange rate - and half a dozen entertaining friends who like wine tasting to organise and share it with? My trusty Trimmer with divisible shaft for easy packing is ready for action. That leaves a month to dig out the whites: Reg Bamford will be looking over my shoulder as I try to iron them to his exacting standards. The elegant South African believes that impeccable turnout intimidates opposition. His global GOAT status suggests he has a point. I must also dig out my monogrammed Blewbury sun hat and persuade someone to sign a replacement handicap certificate. Practice would be valuable too, if and when available.

Plenty of time for the toughest assignment: establishing a killer mindset. Winning is never wishywashy desire, but savage certainty that you can and you will. Yesterday, I fell at the first hurdle when I opened my boot to take out bags of dog pellets. On one, a neat line of toothmarks and a lot of spillage. My neighbour rushed out with Henry and mousetrap choices. Should it be the familiar kind, with food on a spike and a neck breaker, or the snowflake variant which might trap the prey in a tube for release into someone else's territory?

Dithering - always fatal on the croquet court - we tried both. Peanut butter, now ahead of cheese as the bait of choice, was strategically placed. Three hours later, the empty trap had been neatly sprung, the bait filched from the spike, but abandoned uneaten. Was the mouse or cunning rat now in the nice warm engine space, chewing the leads? Should poison, the only realistic means of swift dispatch, now be on the menu? Was that the thunk of oppo balls pegging out reverberating in my head? My killer mindset still has plenty to work on….

THE NATIONAL SCHOOLS', CLUBS' AND JUNIORS' CHAMPIONSHIPS (21-22 JUNE 2025)

This year there will be two events. The Schools and Clubs event will, for the first time, be available to club teams as well as school teams.

1. The Tournament is open to any School, Club and/or any Junior. There are three age categories in the Junior Championship. Under 18, under 14 and Under 11, (at the time of the event) Players with any playing experience are welcome.

2. The Schools and Clubs teams consist of 2 players. Schools' and Clubs' can enter more than one team.

3. The format of the event will be decided by the Manager in consultation with the entrants.

4. The events will be organised so as to provide all entrants with as much play as possible.

5. Depending on the number of entrants, regional heats may be used prior to the final.

6. Half-size lawns and shortened games may be used.

7. Lunch will be available for the participants, parents and teachers who book it. Please indicate dietary requirements when entering.

8. To enter, please contact Ellen Gee directly (geem447@aol.com)

Croquet England encourages juniors of all abilities to come to Nottingham and experience a weekend of Croquet with juniors of a similar age.

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

by Samir Patel
Chair of the Board of Trustees

Whilst I'm writing this on 1 January, with the final mince pies in reach, it will be February by the time you read this, so I'll wish all readers of the Croquet Gazette a Happy New Croquet Season!

The 2025 tournament calendar will have been published on 1 February, offering both coaching and tournament play across the country to meet any playing level. Just visit www.croquet.org.uk/calendar for a full list of the events available. For regular players, there have been changes to how places are allocated for oversubscribed events – you can read more about these elsewhere in this issue.

If it would be your first tournament, remember that everyone is there to enjoy themselves. Most will be more than happy to help inexperienced players become accustomed. You can also consider entering a tournament with a friend from your club. It's always easier with a friendly face. If that's not possible, just let the host club know that it's your first event and I'm sure they'll find someone to show you the ropes.

The Trustees are continuing to develop more detailed plans, priorities, and targets in each of the seven areas of our Strategy:

• Play: More people playing more Croquet in more places.
• Coaching and Tournament Officials: Supporting Roles that grow and sustain our sport.
• Safety: Ensuring everyone can enjoy croquet in a safe environment
• Inclusion: Actively encouraging more people from diverse backgrounds and identities.
• Wellbeing: A sport that is accessible and enjoyable at any age.
• Funding Growth: Securing more money to grow all levels of our sport.
• Sustainability: Responding to the challenges of climate change.

Thank you to those who have already been in touch with ideas and/or offers of support. If anyone else has ideas or knowledge of these areas and want to help us drive the development of Croquet, please get in touch.

And finally, our team will be about to start their quest in the GC World Team Championship for the Openshaw Shield in Tasmania, Australia, between the top eight Golf Croquet countries. I look forward to following their progress (www.gcworldteamstasmania2025.com.au) and wish them the best of luck.

INTRODUCING DAVID CORNES, CROQUET SPORTS JOURNALIST FOR THE CROQUET GAZETTE

David Cornes started playing croquet seven years ago and soon progressed to travelling the country to compete in GC tournaments. Runner up at the A level Series National Final in 2022 and the 3rd Eight in 2023, the highlight of his Golf Croquet achievements is being selected to represent England in the 2023 World Over 50's GC Championship in Bunbury, Western Australia.

He started to play AC competitively a couple of years ago and represented Croquet England v Scottish CA in September 2024, where he managed two wins out of 3 against much lower handicap players. David enjoys all formats of the game and hopes to play more Short Lawn during 2025.

David is a member at Crake Valley, Bowdon and Budleigh Salterton Croquet Clubs playing off zero (GC), 6 (AC) and 2 (Short). He is a qualified referee and coach, sitting on the CqE Handicap Committee since November 2023.

As a regular contributor to the Gazette, David aims to enhance all readers' knowledge of the Handicap system by highlighting some of its more important (but not often widely well known) aspects. He also wants to report on YOUR croquet stories and experiences; from "rapid improvers" to mid and high-end handicappers all contributions are welcomed.

In this first article, David reports on the long awaited "GC to AC Conversion Table" to help Club Handicappers determining initial and annual review levels for Golfers moving into Association. Also, he reports on Chris Williamson, a "rapid improver" from 2024.

TUNNEL OF TIME

CHRIS WILLIAMS
Croquet England Archivist

AKA 'Statto'
Keeper of Croquet Statistics, visit croquetrecords.com

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

40 YEARS AGO
In the Spring 1985 Gazette (#179)

A Federation is born...

On 4th November delegates from 10 clubs met at Tracy Park Croquet Club, near Bristol, to form the South West Federation of Croquet Clubs.

The aim of the Federation will be to represent, promote and develop croquet within the region covering the counties of Worcestershire, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Avon, Somerset, Devon, Cornwall and Dorset.

Its most obvious initial manifestation will be the formation of senior and beginners' leagues, each split into Northern and Southern sections.

The 1985 senior league will be constituted as follows:

Northern Section: Bath, Cheltenham, Nailsea, Worcester

Southern Section: Bristol, Budleigh Salterton, Parkstone, Sidmouth

The Beginners' League is designed for players of club handicap 15 or over and will be based on half- lawn or half-game play. Bournemouth, Kington Langley and Tracy Park, in addition to the above clubs, will field teams in 1985.

United States Croquet Association Tour

The United States Croquet Association is sending a team of 6 to the British Isles in May. This will be the first time a USCA team has crossed the Atlantic, although the Westhampton Mallet Club visited Hurlingham as long ago as 1968.

Most of the games will be Association Croquet, but Scotland, who recently visited Palm Beach and played half of their games to USCA rules, will return the compliment by arranging their fixture similarly. John Solomon's team will also play their match on this basis.

100 YEARS AGO
In the January 6th, 1925 Gazette (No 490, VOL XXII No. 1)

Editorial Notes

The New Year, which incidentally is to see the five-hundredth issue of the C. A. Gazette, promises to be one of more than usual interest. With the opening of the playing season we hope to welcome our Australian visitors, whose presence in this country will be widely appreciated. The novelty of the forthcoming Test Matches should promote more outside interest in the game and it is hoped that in the matter of rational (sic) propaganda 1925 may do even better than its predecessors.

The Gentlemen's Championship, for which a challenge trophy has been jointly presented by Sir Francis Colchester-Wemyss and Colonel C. E. Wilson, is an entirely new event, to date from the present year, as also the Association Plate, with its similar prize presented by our Chairman of Council Mr W. Longman. Much thanks are due to the donors in respect of these new presentations and the added interest which they are likely to bring to the principal tournament of the year.

In the February 10th, 1925 Gazette (No 491, VOL XXII No. 2)

Editorial Notes

Quite an avalanche of correspondence has reached us on the vexed subject of wrong-ball play. While excluding no expressions of opinion from the present number, we are inclined to think that it would scarcely be profitable to devote more ink to the discussion. In any case the status quo holds good for the coming season. The individual out-player will continue to act as he pleases, and we venture to suggest that whichever attitude he adopts, he should be subjected to no adverse criticism either from opponent or spectator. This seems at present to be the only equitable compromise. In time, no doubt, a satisfactory solution will be found.

Past Gazettes can be found on the Croquet England website at https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=ca/gazette&Action=Issues. Currently there are searchable scans of the Gazette back to 1953.

IT'S ALL ABOUT CROQUET

The Croquet Gazette is a record of Croquet history. The tunnel of time shows what an amazing variety of information has been stored over the years. Most issues have featured several tournament reports alongside the official notices from those who govern our sport and an array of stories and memories.

With the introduction of modern technology, tournament reports are now readily available with a click of a button, almost instantaneously following an event itself.

This brings time for a change, with this issue of the Croquet Gazette being possibly the first of its kind, where not a single tournament report is to be found. Fear not, your Gazette will still be 'All about Croquet', even without the tournament reports.

Future Gazettes will, of course, still feature our championship events, hopefully complmenting a well-stocked library of stories from the roots of our sport.

CROQUET IN POLITICS

(not the other way around)

At the time of going to press, the December 2024 issue of the Gazette could only feature a brief mention of John Prescott in the Obituaries column. Those of you with shorter memories, and those simply too young to remember, may have wondered why he featured at all. In August 2006, the following article appeared in Croquet Gazette issue 304, written by Liz Williams (then a member of the CA Marketing Committee). Reproduced here in full, it's a succinct reminder of the time when the former deputy prime minister created more publicity for our sport than we ever could and why, years later, the CA recognised him for 'services to croquet.'

PRESCOTT: CROQUET'S GREATEST FRIEND

'Gunfight at the Croquet Corral!' screamed The Sun headline on the 7 July 2006. This is not anything to do with how members of the CA play the game but a comment on John Prescott's trip to a tycoon's ranch in Texas in the continuing saga of the Deputy Prime Minister and croquet.

The story first broke on Sunday 28 May 2006 in the Mail on Sunday, whose long lenses had spied Prezza playing croquet at Dorneywood when he was supposed to be running the country in the Prime Minister's absence. It was difficult to tell from the resulting avalanche of press coverage whether his crime was playing when he should have been working or playing what the Mail described as an 'effete toffs' game. From the furore, it appeared to be a bit of both, perhaps erring more towards the sin of a Labour man playing this toffs' sport. Whatever it was, it resulted in a massive increase in croquet coverage in the media.

The broadsheets gave space to the game in the days that followed with varying degrees of accuracy, and nearly all stating that the game was vicious and that balls ended up in the shrubbery. The honourable exception was the Independent, who produced a good, thoughtful article, with a good diagram of the layout of a lawn. At least no-one suggested the game was played with flamingos and hedgehogs.

There was also a requirement for comments from players of the game, and the resulting media coverage was huge. Richard Hilditch provided an interview for Radio 5 Live, Bill Arliss also did interviews for the radio, and Klim Seabright, CA Secretary, did at least five interviews for local BBC radio stations including Gloucestershire, Cornwall and Somerset. Patricia Duke-Cox and Liz Wilson gave interviews to Radios Lincolnshire and Lancashire respectively. Meanwhile in Scotland, Fergus McInnes, Ian Wright and Evelyn McKenzie were interviewed on Good Morning Scotland (BBC). Over in Wales, Jim Clancy was interviewed by BBC Radio Wales and the Western Mail, and Chris Williams took part in a BBC Radio Wales Sunday morning programme, "Something Else". The final coup de grace was that 'Have I got News for You' on BBC television featured The Croquet Gazette as the guest publication, with some interesting headlines about camping at Budleigh Salterton being used.

The effect didn't just end there: the CA website went from around 8,000 hits per day to 19,000 on 31" May, Asda reported a 300 per cent rise in the sale of croquet sets, but a Commons motion by the Liberal Democrats praising croquet was banned as this would mock John Prescott.

Since then, the press has used croquet a good deal: coverage of the Opens was fairly good considering the final took place on the same day as the Wimbledon Mens' Final and the football World Cup final. Two good, substantial articles in The Times and The Guardian appeared, with results being printed regularly in the Daily Telegraph. The Wales vs Canada match played in June also received good coverage with five minutes on the BBC TV Wales Friday evening sports programme.

John Prescott was not the only politician with a link to croquet this summer: David Cameron opened the Eynsham Croquet club on 1 May 2006, but presciently decided not to be photographed holding a croquet mallet. Perhaps he knew something we didn't.....

IT'S YOUR CROQUET GAZETTE

As you read this, you will be one of over 8,000 croquet players who receive the Gazette every other month. What do you want to read about in your Gazette? Do you have a favourite feature? Is there something missing that you want to hear about?

I'm the editor of your Gazette, and I want to make it great for you. Please contact me and tell me what you want to see in your sport's magazine, or better still, tell me your story.

Alison Maugham [editor@croquetengland.org.uk]

THE MOST IMPROVED PLAYER AWARDS 2024

The Croquet England Handicap Committee was pleased to announce the winners of the Most Improved Player Awards 2024.

ABOUT THE WINNERS

by Chris Roberts
Chairman, Handicap Committee

AC Male - The Apps Memorial Bowl and
GC Male - The Spiers Trophy

JACK GOOD

Jack Good's achievement, in winning the awards for both GC and AC in the same season, is unprecedented. (Other players have been awarded both before, but not both in the same season).

Of particular note, apart from Good's large ranking grade increases and handicap improvements, were his numerous tournament and competition victories, including the 'double' of GC English National Singles Championship and GC First Eight, on the way to the top of the UK Rankings for GC, and his selection for England's challenge for the GC World Team Championship (for the Openshaw Shield).

In AC, Good completed his first ranking triple peel last season, followed it with 12 more and his tournament highlight was his remarkable victory in the AC Second Eight (Chairman's Salver).

- The front page of the June 2024 Gazette was dedicated to Good's career trophy haul to that date and an article within detailed his rise in our sport, the pinnacle of which he reached by the end of the season.

- Jack Good, from Bowdon CC, will be presented with the Apps Memorial Bowl (AC) and the Spiers Trophy (GC) by Croquet England President Patricia Duke-Cox, at an Openshaw Shield warm-up match in Nottingham (taking place whilst this Gazette issue is being printed).

GC Female - The Colman Trophy

LOUISE SMITH

Louise Smith, from Budleigh Salterton CC, had had a terrific GC season and continued her year-on-year improvement, with 2024 seeing her biggest leap forward yet.

Her statistics and tournament achievements below are impressive enough but are all the more so when taking into account that she most frequently plays tournaments that are at, or above, the standard indicated for her DGrade.

In other words, in the main, Smith competes at a level that is way out of her comfort zone and she more than holds her own in the most challenging of competitive environments, including at the very top level of the sport.

Smith also competes a lot, despite being in full-time work, and her 170 ranked games in 2024 is impressive itself, in addition to these GC tournament success highlights:

Women's European Championship (Finalist), The Open Championship (Plate winner), English National Singles Championship 'Ascot Cup' (qualified for and finished 10th), A-Level 0+ Series National Final (3rd), National Third Eight (4th).

Smith also scored 'podium finishes' in the Open Series at Sidmouth (3rd), Nailsea (3rd) and in the A-Level Series at Sidmouth (3rd).

- Louise Smith was presented with the Colman Trophy by its donator Frances Colman, on behalf of Croquet England president Patricia Duke-Cox. The presentation took place at Budleigh Salterton's awards lunch in December.

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THE CROQUET ENGLAND HANDICAP COMMITTEE WAS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THE WINNERS OF THE MOST IMPROVED PLAYER AWARDS 2024.

AC Female - The Steel Memorial Bowl

ERICA MALAIPERUMAN

Erica Malaiperuman from Nailsea and District CC, began 2024 with a handicap index of 1753 (2.5) and finished the year on 1870, bringing her handicap down to 1.5.

Malaiperuman is another player who played regularly in the Croquet England calendar tournaments in the year, travelling to Colchester, Cheltenham, Bristol, Nailsea, Budleigh and Sidmouth.

By far her farthest away trip of 2024 was in January, to represent England in Women's AC World Championships in Christchurch, New Zealand, where she won the consolation prize.

Back in England Malaiperuman won two calendar tournament B Classes at Budleigh in May and Nailsea in June and in the same month held her own in the Veterans Championship in Budleigh.

- Erica Malaiperuman was presented with the Steel Bowl Trophy by Nailsea CC President Kathy Wallace behalf of Croquet England president Patricia Duke-Cox. The presentation took place at Nailsea's awards lunch in December.

ALSO NOMINATED WERE:

- AC Male - Jordan Waters (highly commended), Neil Adams, Sean Doherty, Alex Lake, Nigel Polhill, Peter Rothwell, Ged Smolskas, Chris Williamson

- AC Female - Christine Rice

- GC Male - Sam Cuthbert (highly commended), Steve Baldwin, Pat Coulter, Alex Lake, Chris Williamson, Konstantin Yudintsev

- GC Female - Diana Wilson (highly commended), Sue Barnes-Bishop, Jean Farguson, Margaret Page

By Linda Shaw, Nailsea Croquet Club

For the second year running, the South West is home to two Most Improved Players. Louise Smith (Budleigh Salterton) won the Colman Trophy for the Most Improved Female GC Player, and Erica Malaiperuman (Nailsea), the Steel Memorial Bowl for the Most Improved Female AC Player.

Nailsea President, Kathy Wallace, took the opportunity at the Club's Christmas lunch to present the award and gave a fascinating insight into its history: I had always assumed the bowl was made of steel and was disabused of this when Nailsea's Greta Stringer won the award in 2002 – it was made of glass! Sadly, Greta became ill and moved to a Nursing Home. When her house was being cleared, during the dark days of 2020, her two sons donated it back to the club. Joan Timmins looked after it for a while (giving it a good wash in the process, obviously). But we really thought it should stay with the family so later returned it to the daughters.

The original Steel Bowl was silver and was donated by the sister of Miss Dorothy Steel – the greatest woman player there has ever been. During the period between World War 1 and 2, she dominated croquet, beating all the men regularly, winning the Open Championship four times and playing in the MacRobertson Shield.

The silver bowl was stolen from the then CA office in 1993 and a new glass bowl is now presented annually. The other Nailsea lady to win it was Alison Maugham.

But today is about Erica. Erica has been improving every year since she first picked up a mallet. This year, though, she has developed her game to the next level. A natural sportswoman she has practised regularly and done a lot of thinking and reading.

She has also learned to cope with pressure. She has played at high level events and not been "scared" to take on any opponent as previously. She still says she needs to sort out her swing but she is actually a very straight hitter. But she does need to concentrate more on helping me sort out mine! She is a very supportive helpmate.

She has had a very successful 2024. She won two Nailsea tournaments – the Peter Dyke Ruby Shield and the Greta Stringer Cup. Overall in 2024 she has achieved 63% wins. That's an excellent record as it includes some high-grade opponents.

Her Dynamic Grade increased from 1547 to 1664 in 2024. So, the most improved AC lady in England this year is a really well-deserved award.

Erica responded by citing all the people and books that had helped her over the years. She mentioned the James Hawkins book and thanked her husband John for all his support and tolerance of her frequent "popping out to do some shopping" claims when she was really heading to a practice lawn.

Erica, as ever gracious and modest, was thrilled to have been awarded the Steel Bowl.

AN INTERVIEW WITH LOUISE SMITH

GILES PEPPERELL
Croquet Sports Journalist

Interviewing the who's who of Croquet

NAME
Louise Smith

HOME CLUB
Budleigh Salterton Croquet Club

OTHER CLUBS
GC Tournament Manager @ Sidmouth Croquet Club (non-member).

POTTED PLAYING HISTORY – FROM FIRST PICKING UP A MALLET TO CURRENT PLAY - INCLUDING WHAT INFLUENCED YOU TO START.

Louise & Stuart M Smith
Dorset Open Championship

Louise Smith
Playing in the GC Inter-County Championship
by Chris Roberts

My husband, (Stuart M. Smith), and I were looking for a sport we could do together. We lived in a rural hamlet on the outskirts of Northampton at the time, and joined Northampton Croquet Club after a taster session at a country craft fair. We quickly made some lifelong friends and were taken under the wing of the 'legend' himself, Lionel Tibble!

Lionel was instrumental in encouraging and coaching us both forward, with Stu soon galloping ahead. I followed in his wake but learning and improving along the way. Progression was often slow, as realistically, I started out 'punching above my weight' at GC Open and Championship tournaments because that was where Stu was competing.

However, I have since represented England on two occasions, at the Women's World Championships 2023, and Women's European Championships 2024, and achieved a -1 handicap status. I am looking forward to playing in America in October this year in the World Championships Qualifier. Even if I don't make it through the qualifier

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AN INTERVIEW WITH LOUISE SMITH CONTINUED

event, just the chance to take part and play new people will be an exciting experience.

YOUR FINEST OR PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENT AND SHOT.

Although I achieved a silver medal as runner-up in the 2024 Women's European Championships, my proudest achievement was a couple of months earlier in June, when I won the Plate at the GC Open Singles Championship.

The GC Open Singles Championship is the premier tournament within the GC fixtures calendar and attracts the best active players on the GC tournament circuit. I won all my qualifying matches throughout the plate knock-out to reach the final where I faced Mark Avery.

Mark is a renowned AC player and seasoned member of the MacRobertson Shield squad. We had an excellent match; Mark's clearance shots were persistent and powerful. I played using the tactical knowledge I have gained over the last few years from both playing and watching top level GC which just all seemed to come together on this occasion! I was delighted to win 7/5, 7/3 with the quality of the opposition throughout the event being the reason I regard this as my proudest achievement.

My best shot occurred within the English National Doubles, in 2021 when my doubles partner, Ryan Cabble, and I, won the tournament. My blue ball was in front of hoop 8 hampered by our opponent's red ball. Ryan showed me the angle to strike by heading towards the south boundary fence and saying, "Aim here!". I followed his instructions and managed to place my blue ball three feet in-front of hoop 9, wiring the red ball behind hoop 8, leaving Ryan to run 8 with the black!

MALLETS

Please tell us about your mallet and why you chose it (maker, etc., no detail too small, shaft/head materials, head weight, dimensions, one piece handle, grip material, etc.). What mallets have you had before? Do you have different mallets for AC and GC or lawn types/conditions?

I started with a second-hand Trimmer mallet and then purchased a PFC Hoopmaker mallet in 2018 and haven't look back since. I chose the brass striking face which makes a disapproving noise if you mis-hit – I rather like my mallet giving me 'feedback' on each shot! It has a 2lb 14oz head and, due to my left-handed Irish grip, I have had the handle shortened to 34". This has helped me gain more control. With a Hoopmaker, all of the power that you put into the shot transfers to the ball – so I find I can use less power (to help accuracy) and still move opponents a good distance.

There are many styles, but what is your approach to stalking and a smooth swing?

Particularly with a long shot, I walk past my ball, turn, and approach it focusing on the opposition's ball that I'm trying to hit. I don't really cast other than to check I'm lined up over the centre of my own ball having lined up the shot. I plant my mallet before striking the ball and try to remember to swing slowly and smoothly.

WHAT IS YOUR TOP TIP FOR A GOOD TOURNAMENT PERFORMANCE?

As I attend many top-flight tournaments with Stuart, I meet a lot of world class players, and this is a tip that I have received myself:

"Focus on how you are playing, rather than who you are playing."

WHAT IS THE ONE OTHER PIECE OF KIT YOU'RE NEVER WITHOUT?

Sunglasses. My eyes do not react quickly to light, so I need sunglasses to play, winter, summer, rain or shine!

What is your best suggestion for development in either code?

In order to develop your game, leave your comfort zone and compete against better players. You must become resilient to losing which helps you mentally, and of course you will learn through the experience. Personally, this has gradually helped me improve and develop into a better player.

WHO DO YOU ENJOY PLAYING AGAINST AND WHY?

I would like to name two players that I thoroughly enjoy playing for very different reasons.

Firstly, Stephen Mulliner. Stephen is, of course, a 'croquet icon' and has maintained his status as one of the best croquet players in the world for decades. I love playing Stephen just because he has everything to offer in the game – smart tactics, delicate touches, power clearances and an almost uncanny way of circling around your ball that you considered a 'perfect block'! A game with Stephen is always competitive, lively, and played to the highest standards of sportsmanship. I have yet to win, but that does not spoil the enjoyment of playing against a truly talented and unique player within the sport.

I'm sure he will be surprised when reading this, but I always enjoy playing Ivor Brand. From the moment you approach the court, and regardless of the final score, you are guaranteed to be smiling. Ivor's sense of humour, outrageous good fortune (!) and geniality permeate the game, so it is always fun. (I'm 4 / 2 up in the win ratio, so that always helps!).

ALDERSHOT TRACTION BOWLS AND CROQUET CLUB

by Andy Walker and Bob Blightman
Co-founders

After a long search for a suitable location for a croquet club in the Farnham area, we met the managing committee of the existing Aldershot Traction Bowls Club in January 2024 and very quickly agreed lawn sharing arrangements to form the Aldershot Traction Bowls and Croquet Club.

The lawn has 6 Bowls rinks and is large enough to accommodate a full size croquet lawn while still leaving 1 Bowls rink available, so at times both sports are played simultaneously. We agreed a single membership arrangement, so members can play both sports at no extra charge.

The lawn is maintained in superb condition by a team of volunteer greenkeepers, and all the visitors we have had have commented that it provides a great playing surface for croquet.

As a result of our long search, we already had a database of those potentially interested in joining and in our first year we have recruited 40 members. Some of these are experienced players, for whom our location was attractive and they joined in addition to retaining their membership at their primary club. However, the vast majority were completely new to croquet who quickly learnt the game and became very enthusiastic players. Currently we play GC, but have plans at some stage in the future to introduce AC as well.

In 2024 we had 3 regular weekly roll-up sessions, and also set up an online booking system so that members could arrange to play at any time that the lawn was available.

We arranged several friendly matches against other local clubs, all of which were played in a great spirit with our members starting to hone their skills in competitive play. We also ran an all day internal Doubles tournament in late September, played in beautiful weather, which was enjoyed by all.

We are beginning to plan for the 2025 season. We will be entering 2 competitive leagues as well as setting up several internal competitions. We will also be arranging some coaching sessions.

Our Clubhouse needs some refurbishment and, as a result of the increased membership (and revenue) that the Club now has, we have begun investigating options for this.

BARNET BOWLS & CROQUET CLUB "A SUCCESS STORY"

by Jason Carley

In 2023 Barnet Bowls Club took the decision to use one of their two lawns for croquet, and I was asked to go across to give some free coaching to the dozen or so members.

At the start of 2024 I felt I could really help move them in the right direction by joining the club, and with new members being added regularly, including through u3a, there were enough players to enter two teams in the EACF Handicap Singles Leagues.

As the season progressed with regular coaching in hand, friendlies were arranged, and I set up the club's first internal competition for Handicap Singles - "Jason's Ladder" - building a centrepiece trophy for the occasion, and then administering a Handicap Doubles competition - "The Turner Trophy".

There are now over 30 croquet members, more than there are bowlers, and their future is looking bright.

Photo: Nicola Mack, winner of Barnet's first internal competition "Jason's Ladder" handicap singles

CROQUET ENGLAND 2025 CLUB AWARDS

THE CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATION IS 30TH JUNE 2025

The new year gives an opportunity for all clubs to apply for the prestigious Croquet England biennial Club Awards.

No matter the size or age of your club, there is an award to match.

The exciting news is that the 2025 awards have been generously sponsored by three of our commercial partners and each award is now worth £750 for the winner.

Here are the details of the three awards:

Apps Heley (sponsored by Croquet & Cocktails)

For new clubs formed in the last five years with no restrictions on the number of courts.

Townsend (sponsored by DB Mallets)

For clubs with up to and including three courts.

Millennium (sponsored by Dennis UK)

For clubs with four or more courts.

All clubs will have to have been affiliated to Croquet England (or CA) for at least the two years before the year of the award.

The application process is straight forward with the emphasis on your written statement relating to why your club should be considered for the appropriate award.

Please focus on what makes you proud about your club's progress in the last few years.

Here are some ideas on what you might include in your application;

• How your club has been working towards its vision for development.

• How your club has developed its coaching programme and player pathways.

• How your club has improved its recruitment and retention of members.

• How your club is inclusive and welcoming for all members at all levels.

• How your club actively engages with its members.

• How your club engages with the wider community

• How your club has improved its playing and/or its non-playing infrastructure.

• How your club has been innovative in funding improvements.

Of course, this is far from an exhaustive list and don't feel that your application will be assessed on all of the above.

To submit an application or for further information please feel free to contact Paul Francis by email on: paulwfrancis@icloud.com

To download the application form visit the subscribers website: https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=ca/download.

BRINGING CROQUET TO THE COMMUNITY

by Alison Maugham

I am lucky enough to have the best job in the world, I get to talk about Croquet all day long, to whomever will listen. Last year I was invited to take a stand at an exhibition, hosted by an organisation called 'Sport for Confidence'. It was here that I was introduced to the George Hurd Activity Centre, a community centre for the over 50s. Intrigued by my one hoop and astroturf set up, they asked if I might be able to take a session for their members. Yoga at 10, Croquet at 11… why not!

The Croquet community then leapt into action and helped me raise over £1,000 in donations on a Go Fund Me campaign. Four rolls of astro-turf, some indoor hoops from the Harding family and some balls from Ealing Croquet Club. The indoor mini kit was born.

On Monday 20th January, Croquet was introduced to seven people for the first time, and the world gained seven new Croquet Players.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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.

SOCIAL PRESCRIBING

Madam,

As croquet players we are well aware that with the fun and fulfilment of playing the game, also come considerable benefits to physical and mental health. Many, particularly those who have retired from an active life, also find in the friendly club setting a welcome antidote to social isolation. And the game is accessible from mid-teens to early nineties (sometimes beyond) providing, at recreational level, gentle exercise to anyone who can walk without a stick on a smooth lawn: croquet's potential well fills the aims of Social Prescribing.

This is a relatively new NHS initiative seeking to reduce the need for treatment by providing free prescription of preventative measures: the cheaper and less traumatic alternative.

I have recently written to our local Social Prescribing Lead making this correlation - while conceding our game's historical baggage that has limited its widespread adoption as a go-to activity and kept it below the horizon of public bodies that might harness its health potential. But I also pointed out that the flannel and crinoline image is long outdated. Croquet is not at all exclusive nor has been elitist since invention of the lawn mower (in about 1850) obviated the need for a cohort of servants to keep the grass short.

My promotional efforts are inexpert but among members of our many clubs there must be, I feel, those who can do (or are doing) a better job to raise croquet's profile in the health arena. It seems likely that Croquet England, itself, has better tools, influence and connections to push for national recognition of our game's attractions - raising both its profile and potential for doing good.

Peter Lowe

Response to Social Prescribing

Thank you for raising this. It is definitely an area worth exploring by other clubs and CqE generally. Pendle and Craven had a very successful programme in 2024, working closely with the local NHS. You can see the details in the December 2024 issue of the Croquet Gazette. To quote from the article “According to James Smith, Lead Social Prescriber, ‘Croquet for Wellbeing’ is the most successful project that he and his team have ever been involved in.” When you look at the NHS web site on what is needed for Wellness (https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/guides-tools-and-activities/five-steps-to-mental-wellbeing/) croquet has a real potential to hit a sweet spot on the “Five steps to wellbeing” which will be important for the Social Prescribers.

Although I know it was a lot of commitment from the members of Pendle, it seems to have benefitted all involved, the Social Prescribers, the club and more importantly those referred to the programme, many of whom have gone on to join the club. Importantly, the sessions themselves were not direct recruitment efforts but primarily run to support the NHS’s goals. But they did result in new members.

Stephen Wright, Chair of Sports Development Committee

FROM MUSIC TO MALLETS

I am in receipt of my first copy of Croquet Gazette. Yes, I am a new member and very much a beginner and realise there is so much to learn. How come I have joined a croquet club?

It was totally by chance that I learned about croquet, from an enthusiastic player who ‘sold’ me the game (or is it a sport?).

I am a supporter of the National Youth Orchestra. As a supporter I, along with others, are invited to attend events. So it was, at the Royal Festival Hall, during a tea break when one meets other supporters from all over the country, perhaps discussing what instruments they play.

I sat down with a couple and asked her what she played. She didn’t play but was a singer. I asked him what he played – his answer CROQUET! There followed a lengthy conversation, music to the ears perhaps, all about croquet.

I must give this a try, I thought. On returning home I researched and discovered the club here in Norwich which I duly contacted, was invited to give it a try and I have not looked back.

I guess he who I spoke with will be a reader of this gazette and will remember our meeting but, not knowing who he is, I would like to use this opportunity say a big ‘thank you’.

Regards

David Evans-Jones
Norwich Croquet Club

NOT PEGGING OUT!

ANDREW KERSLAKE
Sports Journalist

All sports fanatic

Interview with Sylvia Speirs, GC Doubles Champion 2024 at Bradford-on-Avon Croquet Club with her playing partner Jan Korsak

Sometimes when you talk to an older person, say in their late eighties or nineties, you're privileged to get a glimpse beyond the physical manifestation of age and see what has gone before. Something that's true of one of croquet's newest recruits, Sylvia Speirs.

Sport for Sylvia when she was younger had meant playing lots of tennis and swimming, sometimes up to a mile at a time. Recently, that had been swapped for bridge played twice a week. "Yet," she says, "although I love bridge, it wasn't quite enough, too sedentary". So, when last spring a leaflet dropped through her letterbox inviting local residents to a croquet open day, despite recently sustaining a spine fracture, this Bradford-on-Avon resident said she was keen to 'give it a go'.

'Giving it a go' is something Sylvia has been doing throughout her life. An impulsive move to Canada in the 1950s, when she was only twenty years old, resulted in a three-month 'Kerouac-esque' road trip across America. "It was fun, there were three of us girls and we just took off in an old jalopy we'd bought." Travelling from Toronto and into the USA, they spent three months sleeping in the car and in a tent before slipping back into Canada to end up in Vancouver.

Living on the west coast she met and married her husband, Gordon, a Scottish civil engineer, with a similar penchant for travel. Four children and thousands of miles later Sylvia has lived not only in Canada and Malawi, but also spent year-long visits to Nigeria and the Philippines, before settling back long-term into England.

Martin Albaster presenting cup to Sylvia

Tragically her husband was killed in a car crash in the 1990s and with her grown up children now living in the West Country she decided Bradford-on-Avon may be an ideal place to live.

"I suppose I've always been quite healthy although my spinal condition limits me a bit. It's too easy as an older person just to sit at home, do nothing and drift away. One of the reasons I like croquet is it gets you out of the house and it's sociable."

But this year, her first season of croquet, "too short - I would like to play for longer", somewhat to her surprise, ended in triumph. Within months of taking up the sport, she had completed and won three competitive rounds of golf croquet with her partner, to become the club's new doubles champions.

"I didn't even realise I had won," she says, although you get the feeling at the time she probably knew she was on to something. "I still like learning new things. I've tried to master the jump shot, going over your opponent's ball and through the hoop but I can't quite manage it. Maybe next season".

When it was suggested to her that perhaps although modest about her achievements, she might be just a trifle competitive, there's a twinkle in her eye and a nod of the head as she responds with a "yes, I suppose I am". She asks if I play backgammon, to which, when I respond with a yes, she says "well perhaps you could teach me". Sylvia, I'm not sure I could handle the competition!

THANK YOU TO CHEWTON GLEN HOTEL & SPA

I am delighted to announce that Chewton Glen Hotel & Spa, a hospitality partner of Croquet England, continue their support to our sport through a hospitality partnership for the Western Championship at East Dorset, 10-11 May 2025. We look forward to welcoming players and spectators from around the UK to this prestigious tournament, which was first contested in 1980.

Jonathan Powe, Chair, East Dorset Croquet Club

Visit the website for more information about the property
www.chewtonglen.com

WHAT MAKES A GOOD CLUB GREAT?

by Beatrice McGlen, Croquet England Chief Executive Officer

All our croquet clubs are different, some are small with just an enthusiastic band of social players; some have excellent facilities and can host international tournaments; some own their own grounds and others rely on year-by-year rental agreements; some are in densely populated urban areas whilst others are located in rural communities. Each club has a unique set of circumstances and there are many ways for a croquet club to be successful. However, there are some elements that are important to members and that help attract and retain new players. Getting these right helps make good clubs great.

Analysing responses and comments in the 2022 player survey shows that there are key areas that are important to our croquet community:

· Having a welcoming, safe and sociable environment.
· Building good local community connections.
· Effective leadership and club structure.
· Appropriate facilities.
· Inspired and experienced coaches and club volunteers.
· Different opportunities to play.

Nurture volunteers who help the club

Croquet England is keen to recognise clubs that provide an enjoyable, safe and fulfilling space for all participants to enjoy playing croquet and to help them grow and develop as well-managed, successful clubs that are known in their local communities. Word of mouth is the most important way of attracting new members so building a good reputation is essential.

Club Mark was a nationally recognised, cross-sport accreditation process for community sports clubs introduced by the Sports Councils in 1985 to assure participants, and the parents of juniors, that clubs were safe and well-managed. In 2019 Sport England decided to pass responsibility over to each sport's National Governing Body. Since then, many NGBs, including England Hockey, England & Wales Cricket Board, the Football Association, British Cycling, British Triathlon, England Athletics and others, have introduced their own versions of the original Club Mark accreditation for their clubs. Croquet England has now, with the valuable feedback and assistance of three clubs, developed its Club Mark for Croquet.

Most clubs want to attract and retain members, many would like to have more young people or families, some would like sponsorship or funding to secure their future or achieve their goals. Club Mark will give the wider local community, parents, new recruits and potential sponsors or funders the confidence that they would like to be associated with your club. Accredited clubs will be able to display the Club Mark logo on all their publicity and communication channels.

There will be two levels of accreditation, silver and gold, in recognition of the varied resources that clubs have available. The requirements for silver will be more attainable for smaller clubs or to use as a stepping stone to the more demanding requirements of the gold accreditation. Each level though is constructed around the following four pillars:

1. Club Structure and Management.
Clubs that are well managed tend to be more successful and sustainable for the future as well as being better prepared in the event of unexpected events or emergencies. Good leaders have vision and the future of the whole club at heart so they will make sound long-term decisions.

2. Duty of Care and Welfare.
Members, volunteers, and visitors all want to enjoy their croquet, and other activities, at the Club in a safe environment.

3. Playing Facilities and Coaching Programme.
Most people have many competing claims on their time. They want opportunities that are fun, sociable, convenient and competitive. They want to be able to progress in the sport to whatever is their desired level of achievement. Croquet competes with other leisure and family commitments and so the playing timetable and coaching programme need to be flexible if people are to keep coming back.

4. Knowing your Club and Community.
Having a friendly, welcoming and sociable club is one of the most important aspects of being a club member. This is

Continued on page 17

CLUB MARK CONTINUED

Members value welcoming and sociable clubs

crucial in retaining members as well as making new members feel welcome. Your club also needs to be known in your area. Word of mouth and personal recommendation are the most frequent ways new members find out about croquet. This is also about recognition of all the people who make playing croquet possible, particularly all those volunteers who help the club run, and keeping your existing members happy.

A croquet club that actively engages in the Club Mark development journey will ensure a vibrant and sustainable club environment with happier, better players so please encourage and support your club's committee in going for accreditation. We will shortly be writing to all club secretaries inviting them to take part and we are considering running some on-line seminars to assist clubs with the process.

If you would like to find out more then please contact Beatrice McGlen beatrice.mcglen@croquetengland.org.uk.

THE FOUR CS: COMPLIANCE CHECKS FOR CROQUET CLUBS

by Robert Fulford, Croquet England Treasurer

Most of us can remember when the letters "cc" referred to 'carbon copy' if used at the bottom of a document. In the croquet world, everyone looks at CC as meaning 'croquet club' but for some clubs, it now has another meaning; Compliance Checks!

CASC (Community Amateur Sports Club) was introduced back in 2002 as an initiative to promote grass roots sport. Governed by HMRC it gives clubs a mandatory 80% discount on their business rates (which may be raised to a discretionary 100% by some local authorities) and offers other tax incentives, such as Gift Aid. These are very valuable concessions but there are some rules.

There are currently 54 Croquet Clubs across the country registered with HMRC as a CASC. Since April 2024, they have probably all received a letter from HMRC asking them to review their continued compliance with the eligibility requirements.

The tempting reaction is to do nothing since compliance was required when the club was first registered, so all should still be well. However, rules change (as they did in 2010 and 2015) and so can the circumstances of the club. A club committee would therefore be wise to conduct a review and put matters right if necessary. It would then be able to provide evidence of compliance if HMRC does a spot check. Non-compliance can have serious consequences for the club.

So, what are the most likely problem areas that Croquet Clubs may encounter?

PARTICIPATION

The CASC's primary purpose must be to encourage participation in croquet. It cannot be a social club with some croquet.

To meet this eligibility criterion, it has to be shown that at least 50% of members participate in the sporting activity of the club a minimum of 12 times a year (reduced if the club is open for less than 12 months per year). So, if you have social or other non-playing members then the first step is to tot these up and compare the total with the number of playing members. Then you should look at your playing members and see how often they play. This could be done through your lawn booking system, a sign-in register, lists of competitors in competitions, an annual survey of members or a combination of these. Roll-ups, social play and practising, as well as playing friendlies, tournaments, matches, club competitions or other events, all count. Finally, the definition of 'participation' includes maintaining the lawns, equipment, club hut and surrounds; serving on the committee; coaching and refereeing; helping with catering at croquet events (not purely social events); being present at sessions as the welfare officer or first aider; and attending relevant training courses, so any time spent on these, even if a member only plays occasionally or no longer plays, is classed as participation.

Continued on page 18

THE FOUR CS CONTINUED

Don't get too hung up on showing how much every member participates though. Once you can show you have the required participation from the magic 50% then you have complied with this requirement.

OPEN TO ALL

There must be no discrimination when accepting applications. If the club is full then everyone who applies should be put on a waiting list and accepted in chronological order. It is permitted to have different categories of membership e.g. juniors or those living far from the club who may get a preferential rate, but this cannot be used to move them down the waiting list or to exclude them from club activities when they do join.

Consideration should be given to those who would find the subscriptions a significant barrier to joining. Associated costs of membership, if applicable, such as green fees, equipment charges and the cost of mandatory clothing should be added to the most expensive membership subscription to establish if the total is below £520 pa. If it is not, then the club is required to make provision so that the opportunity to join is affordable to the whole community, and this should be clear on the club's website, noticeboard or application form.

GIFT AID

Gift Aid can be claimed on any donations or gifts, provided the donor pays as much or more UK tax than the tax being reclaimed by the club. Each donor must fill in a declaration, but this can be done once to include multiple donations that may be made in the future. The club's treasurer needs to keep a record of each donation linked to an identifiable donor's declaration.

CASCs can also claim Gift Aid on small donations of £20 or less. These do not have to be linked to a donor. So, for example, a thank-you box at an Open Day may collect a total of £100 from numerous unidentified people but it is permitted to claim Gift Aid on these donations.

Gift Aid cannot be claimed on subscriptions. Nor can it be claimed on payments for a service such as a coaching course or for goods such as lunch or a Laws/Rules book.

HOW CAN ALL CLUB MEMBERS HELP?

The club's committee, and particularly the Treasurer, are likely to be the people who have responsibility for compliance. However, all club members can help by playing regularly, volunteering for related tasks around the club and filling in lawn booking information, sign-in registers or player surveys when requested.

Further information

Further details on all of the above and on the definition of non-profit making; trading and property income limits; expenses; paying players; prizes; and club management, as well as what to do if your club is no longer compliant can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-amateur-sports-clubs-detailed-guidance-notes .

The Association of CASCs www.acasc.org.uk may also be a useful source of help and information.

With thanks to Sandra Cornes, Crake Valley CC, for bringing to our attention the compliance letter from HMRC to all CASC clubs.

Cook's Corner

Moist Apple Cake

Chef Cliff

Ingredients

6oz Apples (about 2 medium size apples)
4oz Sultanas
1/2oz Milk
3oz Soft Brown Sugar
8oz Self Raising Flour
1Tsp Mixed Spice
3oz Butter (melted)
2 Eggs

Method

In a large bowl add Apples, Sultanas, Milk, Soft Brown Sugar - Mix very well.
In a separate bowl mix Self Raising Flour and Mixed Spice then add this to Other mixture and mix.
Run in Butter and mix well.
Whisk Eggs and add to all.

Cooking

Grease and line a 7 or 8 inch cake tin and put mixture in evenly.
Set Oven at 170 and bake for 1 Hour & 5 Mins.

SHORT CROQUET FOCUS

by John Harris, Croquet England Coaching Committee

SC AT SC

Another club flying the flag for Short Croquet is Sussex County Croquet Club, near Brighton. Short Croquet enthusiast Frances Low has been at the forefront of developing this engaging form of the game there. Her work showcases the impact that a small group of Short Croquet enthusiasts can make. She writes:

"We pioneered a Short Croquet modular course in the 'off' season at the Croquet Academy and now run it annually. It's attracted not only newcomers but also quite a few GC players.

"This is followed up with weekly coaching sessions after the course for local members, and others are encouraged to join in. This has led to a core of players maintaining the Short Croquet spirit. Luckily there is good support from our Sussex County coaches who play their part in coaching and advising and, most importantly, encouraging.

"I have also organised follow up days, alternate stroke doubles with new players paired with experienced ones (SCCC member Gabrielle Higgins played in the doubles) and we held two SC Jamborees with six local clubs. The Jamborees were fun, as was intended, and were a mixture of doubles, singles and one-ball. It's so rewarding for beginners to see how experienced players organise breaks, and, of course, set up to do peels!"

Many nearby clubs only play GC. The Croquet Academy encourages more AC players through 14-point SC games which are speedy and help players develop their tactics. It then supports them moving onto full lawn AC.

Wrapping up warm for winter SC
(Photo: John Harris)

WINTER PLAY

Do you keep a lawn open through much of the winter? If so, the need in colder weather is for quick, interactive games, and here Short Croquet comes into its own.

To make things simple, white lines can be dispensed with: mark corners with flags and estimate amicably whether a ball is on or off. Banning jump shots, and grounded mallets in stop shots, helps reduce lawn damage.

To shorten sitting out time in cold conditions, players might agree to the striker's ball being permitted to run no more than two or three hoops, plus any peels, in a single visit to the lawn. The key thing is for there to be plenty of reciprocal action, so keep thinking time brief.

A time limit of an hour can work well – a great winter tonic on a cold but sunny day!

HAS YOUR CLUB SUFFERED RECENT STORM DAMAGE OR FLOODING?

Sport England has announced that its Movement Fund will give priority to sports and activities that need help to recover quickly from the recent impact of extreme weather, including Storms Bert, Conall, Darragh, Eowyn and Herminia.

Community organisations in England can apply now for grants of between £300 and £15,000 to support emergency costs to help restore their sports facilities and activity venues.

Examples include:

1. Skip hire to remove sediment and rubbish

2. Minor electrical works to restore power

3. Decontamination works or clearing of blocked drains

4. Cleaning work to get showers and changing rooms back up and running

5. Securing buildings.

The funding is designed to help with the initial clear-up to enable activity to resume.

Funding will be prioritised to support sports and activities that need to recover quickly, with spring and summer sports, or where activity is not scheduled to take place for several weeks, being a lower priority.

Applicants need to confirm they have any relevant permissions required to carry out the work and be able to submit evidence of damage which is directly attributable to the recent extreme weather. This should be in the form of photographs or reports of the damage that has occurred.

No deadline for applications has been given but there is a limited fund

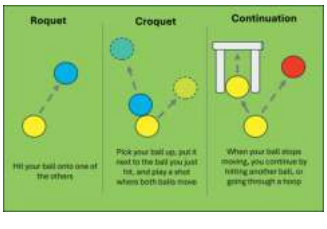
https://www.sportengland.org/funding-and-campaigns/our-funding/funding-guidance?section=what_is_the_movement_fund

CROQUET ENGLAND HAS LAUNCHED A NEW ACTION GROUP AIMED AT REVITALISING ASSOCIATION CROQUET.

by Debbie Lines, Sports Development Committee

The recent growth in Golf Croquet is not reflected in matching growth in AC, with many clubs increasingly introducing new players only to GC. Over the past 5 years, the number of AC players in the rankings has declined by 11%. This decline amongst top players is likely to be reflected in an even larger drop at grassroots level amongst beginners and high handicaps. Coaching courses held at our Academies are struggling to fill AC courses and some are ceasing to run them, whilst clubs are increasingly reporting a lack of AC coaches capable of introducing the game to new players.

Is your club open but often unused in the evenings? Do you have mornings or afternoons when the club is closed or largely empty? Do you sometimes hear new recruits express a wish for something closer to what they've played in the garden? Are your existing AC players beginning to feel isolated and unloved? Would your GC players like to 'give AC a go'? If so, then we hope this initiative will be of interest.



AC has a reputation for being complex, but the basic premise is as simple as **"Roquet, Croquet, Continuation"**. Once that basic set of shots is learnt, games can be played. There are AC variants that can take as little as an hour, and we would encourage only better players to play the full 26-point game.

We have the capacity to grow AC alongside GC to provide an offering to our members that includes both variants. This richer and fuller experience can only be a benefit in the long term, attracting a broader range of people to our clubs and our sport.

The primary aim of this initiative is to encourage everyone who loves AC to spend just a bit more time next summer encouraging its growth. This could range from as little as offering one or two hours of hands-on help at a club to active and on-going support with one of our 2025 trials (see below).

The success will depend on volunteers being active at club level to help us try different approaches, understand what works and share experiences. At the end of the season, we'll regroup, collect feedback, and plan for 2026.

The group is being run by Stephen Wright, supported by Debbie Lines.

If you wish to know more about this group, or wish to offer assistance, please contact Debbie Lines at debbie.lines@croquetengland.org.uk or visit the Action for AC page on the Croquet England website.

Click on the magnifying glass in the top right-hand corner of any page, go to the 'Subscribers Area, type in "Action for AC", and a link to the page will appear.

HOW IT WORKS

Over the winter months we will put together a database of volunteers who have extra time to spare next year. This will be matched by gathering requests from clubs, letting us know what help they would like.

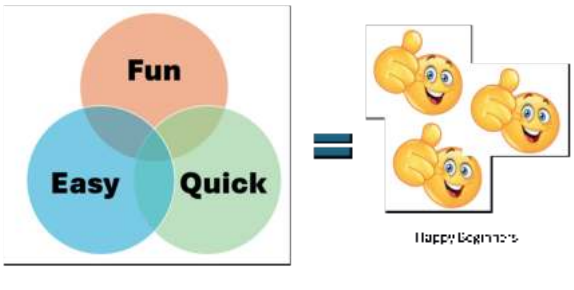
We want to build a pool of volunteers who can offer help, both during the winter and next summer.

Meanwhile, if your club would like support next season, please get in touch. We will try and source volunteers to meet the needs the clubs identify.

To volunteer, or to ask for help, please complete one of our sign-up forms. Links to these can be found on the Action for AC page of the Croquet England website, or by emailing Debbie Lines.

HOW VOLUNTEERS CAN HELP?

From January to March, you can help by encouraging others to volunteer their time and by liaising with clubs to find out what help they would like.



ACTION FOR AC CONTINUED

In early spring and throughout the summer, you can help to revitalise AC by:

o Admin support, such as leaflet design, recruitment campaigns, website support, etc.
o Helping AC Coaches in how to "Make it Fun, Make it Quick and Make it Easy"
o Introducing AC to Beginners
o Mentoring or becoming a 'player buddy'
o Run or help us with one of the 2025 AC Trials - see below for more information
o Or anything else the clubs ask for!

OUR 2025 AC TRIALS

As well as the above-mentioned exercise of allocating volunteer resource where it's needed, we'll also be running FOUR Trials. By the end of the year, we will request feedback from those involved and hope to have gathered data which we can use in future years.

TRIAL 1 - KWIK CROQUET

A new 'learners' or 'fun' game, incorporating some aspects of both AC and GC, which we hope can be used as an introduction, with players moving on to Short Croquet after a few months.

This simple game takes only one hour and although incorporating the basic 'roquet, croquet, continuation' sequence of shots, we've taken out all the terminology and made a few changes to simplify the game, make it closer to garden croquet and keep it sociable by reducing the length of turns. Ideally played on smaller lawns, we hope this variant can be used by anyone to get people started, with those who take to the game, moving on to Short Croquet when ready.

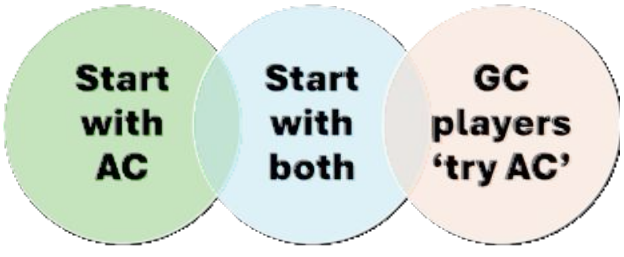
TRIAL 2 - ONE BALL

Ideally aimed at those who already play GC, but can also be introduced to beginners, the aim of the trial is to find out whether teaching 'One Ball' is an effective method of introducing the shots and concept of AC to GC players.

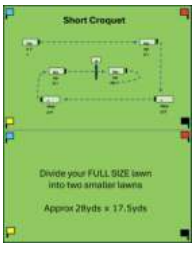
o Two players
o One ball each
o Extra shot after scoring a hoop
o Roquets, Croquet and Continuation

ACTION FOR AC..

TRIAL 3 - AC RECRUITMENT METHODS



New AC players often end up playing some GC as well, but this is less often the case the other way around. So, we want to experiment with different ways of recruiting croquet players:



1. Recruit and teach only AC
2. Recruit and teach both GC and AC from the start
3. Encourage GC players to try AC as well

Could your club pick one or more method above, and then keep a record of how well it worked? You may well be doing this anyway, but by signing up and providing us with data at the end of the season, we can learn more about what works and share it with others. We'd like to hear from your recruits, whatever the end result.

TRIAL 4 - SHORT CROQUET

We know many clubs and federations are already playing Short Croquet, some for fun and some competitively. However, parts of the country, and many clubs, are yet to try out this shorter version of the game, played on a smaller lawn.

It's a game suited to players of all levels, the addition of mandatory peels for expert players, making it a challenging variant for them too. But the main strength of this variant is that many new players struggle to play AC on full-size lawns, so smaller lawns make all the shots easier.

WE PLAN TO HELP BY:

o Providing Short Croquet experts who can help explain the game

o With any help or advice you may need setting up the lawns and managing having different-sized lawns in use at your club

And finally, we know many of you already volunteer and work hard at your clubs. We are simply asking for your focus next season to be on the encouragement and recruitment of AC, just for a little while. We believe that a concentration of effort, for one or two years, could make a real difference. We want both variants of our wonderful sport to continue and to grow, side by side, for many decades to come.

An introduction to ‘Kwik Croquet’ - Would you like to try it next season?

by David Openshaw, Croquet England Director of Performance & Competitive Play

The Action for AC (Association Croquet) group are running several trials next summer. One of them is “Kwik Croquet”: a new version of croquet.

We hope this new ‘learners’ game will be attractive to both GC (Golf Croquet) and AC players. It will suit complete beginners, or those GC players wishing to ‘give AC a go’.

A game in its own right, it is quick and easy to learn. Playable on either full size or smaller lawns, it can also be enjoyed by current members of clubs who only have an hour or two to spare.

There are action group trials for both Short Croquet and Kwik Croquet in 2025. See more on the ‘Action for AC’ webpage on the Croquet England Website.

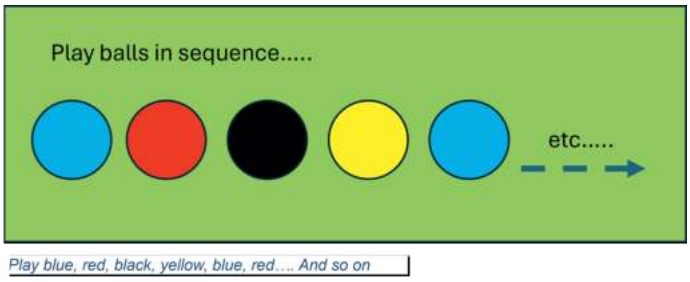
Click on the magnifying glass in the top right hand corner of any page, go to the ‘Subscribers Area, type in “Action for AC”, and a link to the page will appear.

KWIK CROQUET RULES

The aim of the game is to score 6 hoop points in order and then the peg point for both of your balls or to be ahead of your opponent after time has expired. The game finishes exactly when time (usually an hour) has expired.

The points scored are counted to determine the winner.

1. We recommend a “One hour” time limit.



Play blue, red, black, yellow, blue, red…. And so on

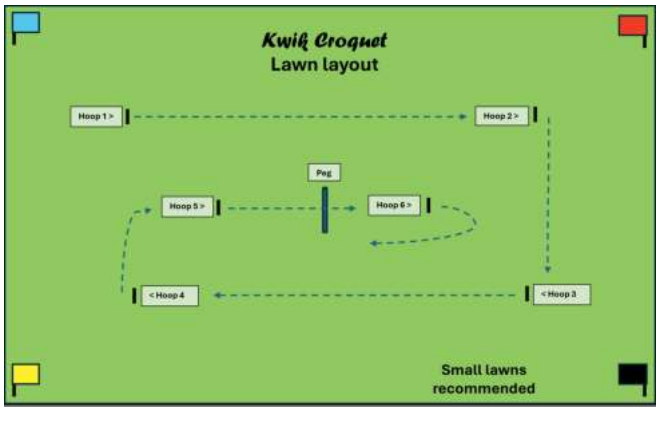
2. Singles or Doubles, Red and Yellow play against Black and Blue.

3. Unlike the full game of AC, the balls are played in sequence – Blue, Red, Black, Yellow, Blue…. etc., (See the order on the peg).

4. Each side races to score the six hoops in order (see diagram) for both balls, plus hitting the peg at the end. That’s 14 points in total. The first player(s) to do this are the winners.

5. The start: each player starts a mallet length from in front of the first hoop.

Note: if the first shot does not score the hoop the ball is removed and tries again when it’s next their turn. Second and subsequent attempts can be from approximately half a mallet length.



Continued on page 23

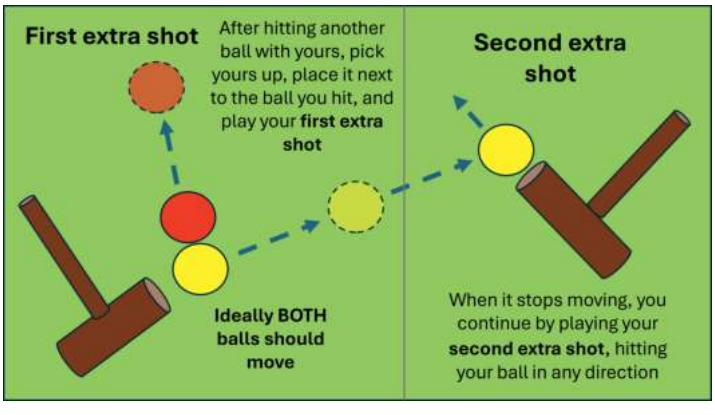
CONTINUED...

6. Each turn: When it's your turn to play you can hit your ball only once, unless you earn extra shots:

a. One extra shot is earned by scoring a hoop in order.

and

b. Two extra shots are earned if your ball hits one of the other three balls. The first of the extra shots is taken by placing your ball in contact anywhere round the ball you hit. If in the first of these extra shots your ball goes off the lawn you lose your second extra shot.



7. You may only hit each of the other three balls ONCE per turn.

8. Once a ball has made the six hoops in order it can be pegged out (thereby scoring the seventh point). But a pegged-out ball is removed from the lawn and losses its turn in the sequence.

9. We recommend using a clip to show which hoop each ball needs to go through next.

SO, WHAT ARE THE TACTICS?

Well, when it's your turn to play, you might consider hitting your ball:

- towards your next hoop; or
- towards/near your partner ball; or
- through a hoop (gains an extra shot)
- onto another ball (gains two extra shots)

WHAT ARE THE KEY DIFFERENCES FROM GC OR AC?

For those who already know the rules of Association Croquet, the following are the key differences:

- Balls are played in sequence
- You can only hit the other 3 balls once per turn, not once per hoop!
- There is no wiring relief
- No fault is made if the ball is not shaken or moved in a croquet shot (although this is still very much the intent)

And for those of you who already know how to play GC, the following are the main differences:

- There are extra shots when you run a hoop or hit another ball
- Each ball can be for a different hoop
- Balls come on a mallet length when they leave the lawn

And finally, this is a quick moving game with short turns. If all the players want to stay on the lawn (not in someone's line of sight of course), then go ahead.

THE MEN'S AND WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIPS

by Ian Bond

2025 marks the centenary of the Men's and Women's Championships meeting – known to some as the Caskets but arguably more correctly as the Gold Medals. There is an interesting and illuminating story behind these various names, which is worth recounting.

When the United All England Croquet Association was formed in 1896, it wanted its own Championships: the Open and Ladies Championships still belonged to the All England Club at Wimbledon, where they were revived in 1897. It therefore established the Gold Medals, open only to Associates, initially also with an Open and a Ladies event. The original idea was that entry would be open only to those Associates who had won a CA Silver Medal (the conditions for which were less strict in the early years) but that restriction does not ever seem to have been implemented. The first Gold Medals meeting was held at Wimbledon in 1896, where it remained until 1899 (Queens Club) and then at CA Headquarters – Sheen House from 1900 to 1902, then Roehampton.

The courts at Wimbledon became so bad that, after the 1904 Open Championship there, many of the top players refused to enter again unless the event was moved. After some negotiations, the All England Club agreed to cede control of the event to the CA provided that (a) it remained open to all comers and (b) it was restricted to amateurs. The Ladies Championship (first held in 1869 but restricted to Wimbledon club members, open to all comers from 1871) and the Mixed Doubles Championship (1899) were included in the transfer.

That being achieved, the CA now had control of two sets of Championships – the Open (with the Ladies and Mixed Doubles) and the Gold Medals (Open and Ladies). Holding one event at Headquarters (Roehampton) and sending the other on tour to Provincial centres would, it was felt, help publicise the game. But which of the two should tour was contentious: some argued that the Gold Medals, as the CA's own Championships, was the senior event and belonged at Headquarters; others that the Open Championship should stay in London. The latter view won the day and, with the exception of 1913, the Gold Medals then toured Provincial centres until the Great War. When the event resumed in 1919, Roehampton reclaimed it until 1924 when it was again held outside London – first at Cheltenham, then at other Provincial centres. The Gold Medals had been a stand-alone meeting before the War, but these later Provincial meetings simply incorporated them into existing tournaments by awarding the Gold Medals to the winners of their Open and Ladies' A Class events.

Council had decided in 1907 that the Gold Medals should no longer be Open and Ladies but should instead be for Gentlemen and Ladies – thus denying women the option of competing in the Open event. This was not well received and for the next two years a compromise was adopted, allowing women who had previously played in the Open event to continue to enter what was now nominally an event limited to Gentlemen. To underline the objectors' case, the winner of the 'Men's' Gold Medal in 1907 was Mrs Beaton (nee Lilias Gower – she had won the event under that name on three previous occasions) and in 1908 Miss Coote – the other finalists on both occasions also being women. But from 1909, all women were excluded and this anomaly ended. It may not be a coincidence that, in the same year, Lord Doneraile presented the CA with gold caskets in which the winners could keep their Gold Medal for the year – hence the alternative name for this event.

The Open Championships meeting included not only the two singles events – still Open (for the Ayres Cup and – since 1911 – also the Coronation Gold Cup, another Doneraile initiative but in this case subscribed for by Associates) and Ladies (for the Ladies Field Bowl) – but also a Mixed Doubles, for trophies presented by the All England Club. In 1924, however, Geoffrey and Maurice Reckitt presented trophies for an Open Doubles Championship. With the Opens programme already full, this created a scheduling challenge. In its first year, therefore, the Open Doubles Championship was added to the programme for the Gold Medals meeting at Cheltenham.

But this was not ideal and, the following year, Council decided to rationalise and reorganise these events. The outcome decided on was to play the various Championships in London over two weeks, with the Ladies and Mixed Doubles Championships – together with a new Gentlemen's Championship – in the first week (what we now know as the Men's and Women's) and the Open Singles alongside the recently-created Open Doubles in the second. Entry to all those first week events was, as for the Gold Medals, restricted to Associates. The All England Club's conditions for transfer meant that no such requirement was ever imposed on the Open Championship itself.

Though the need for a new Gentlemen's Championship was not obvious (it simply duplicated the Men's Gold Medal) it did at least avoid the alternative of abolishing one of the two existing Ladies' events. But it is far from clear what prompted Council to schedule the three meetings – the two sets of Championships and the Gold Medals – in consecutive weeks. It is scarcely surprising that the entry for the Gold Medals – held that year at Bedford, one of the main Provincial clubs and home to the redoubtable Miss D.D.Steel, in the third week – suffered. Indeed of the twelve Provincial Gold Medal meetings after the Great War, only five of the Men's and two of the Women's events attracted an entry of sixteen or more. This gave rise to the anomaly that a Gold Medal could be won by a player who would not thereby also qualify for a Silver Medal. Two men in fact did so – J.C.Windsor, the Captain of the Australian team, in 1925

THE MEN'S AND WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIPS CONTINUED

(who qualified for his Silver Medal at another tournament the following week) and Hubert Miller of the Exmouth Club, in 1934 (who never did).

By 1935, with an entry of only seven men and five women, it was clear that the Provincial event was neither representative nor necessary. So the following year, common sense prevailed and the Gold Medals were subsumed within the Men's and Women's. This combined event, with its two full sets of trophies, then alternated between Roehampton and a Provincial venue until the Second World War. Since then, it has been held at Hurlingham (1946 to 1953, 1956, 1957), Roehampton (1954, 1958 to 1968), Southwick (1969 to 1971) and then generally at Cheltenham (where it was also held in 1955). Of the twelve large Provincial clubs which had previously hosted the Gold Medals, only three – Budleigh, Cheltenham and Southwick – survive. Only one – Hooton Park, in the Wirral, which hosted in 1907 – was north of the line between the Bristol Channel and the Wash. It was lost to the Royal Flying Corps in the Great War and is now the site of the Vauxhall car plant at Ellesmere Port. The other eleven clubs accounted for more than half of all level play in inter-war Provincial Calendar tournaments.

The Association Plate, presented by William Longman, also dates from the 1925 reorganisation. It was initially the Plate event for first and second round losers in the Men's and Women's Championships. In the following year, when the Men's and Women's, Open and Doubles Championships were again contested at a two-week meeting, first and second round losers from the Open Doubles also qualified for the Association Plate. The weeks then became separate meetings, with the Association Plate contested in the Opens week. Until the presentation of the Du Pre Cup in 1936, when the Gold Medals were merged with the Men's and Women's, there was no formal Plate event at the Men's and Women's meeting.

Editor's note: The map of the Oxford, Worcester and Wolverhampton Railway on page 42 of the December 2024 issue was reproduced from railarchive.org.uk, whose permission to do so is gratefully acknowledged.

2025 OPENSHAW SHIELD PREVIEW

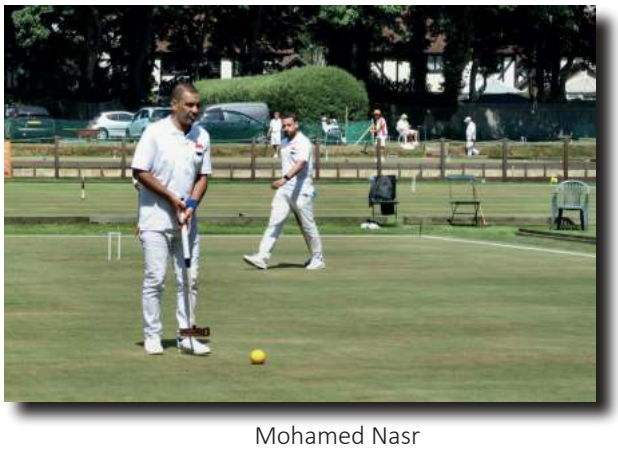
STEPHEN MULLINER
Croquet Champion

The Openshaw Shield

The Openshaw Shield is the trophy for Tier 1 of the WCF Golf Croquet World Team Championship which was inaugurated in South Africa in 2012 and has since been held in 2016 and 2020 in England and New Zealand respectively. New Zealand and Egypt have dominated the event to date, appearing in every final with Egypt winning the first and New Zealand triumphing in the last two. The event involves eight teams of four players (although squads of up to six are allowed) and is an intense experience crammed into a week of highly competitive singles and doubles matches. Attention is naturally focussed on the title contenders but relegation to Tier 2 awaits the unfortunate eighth placed team so the tension is maintained at both ends of the event until the end of the final day.

The fourth Openshaw Shield will be held from 17-23 February at the North Tasmanian Croquet Centre in St. Leonards, Tasmania. Five of the eight teams look strong with a good turnout of their best players and even forecasting the finalists is difficult. However, let's have a go, aided by the latest rankings data and the performances at the recent Golf Croquet World Championship ("GCWC") held last October in Virginia, USA. The numbers after each player are their world ranking at the time of writing in late January.

Egypt has the greatest strength in depth in the GC world but decided to field a young team in 2020 which lost to an even younger New Zealand team in the final. The squad is more age-balanced this time. Led by Mohamed Nasr, the 2006 World Champion but still 3rd in the world, its squad of five includes three young players – Yasser Sayed (10), Mohamed Taha (17) and Mohamed Walid (43) – and the experienced Khaled Kamel (23). All but Taha played in the recent GC Worlds and, with a top 4 average grade and rank of 2541 and 13, Egypt are the ante-post favourites and should be expected to reach the final for the fourth consecutive time.



Mohamed Nasr
Playing in the 2022 WCF Golf Croquet World Championship
Image Credit: Ray Hall

USA can claim the considerable bragging rights of fielding the three most recent GC World Champions – Ben Rothman (15) in 2019, Matthew Essick (7) in 2022 and 18-year old Blake Fields (20) in 2024. Add Tom Balding (19) and Stephen Morgan (54) and USA can boast a top 4 average grade and rank of 2528 and 15. All five squad members performed well in the 2024 GC Worlds and USA must have an excellent chance of reaching the final and it would hardly be a surprise if they won.

England have finished third three times but are now represented by their youngest ever team, namely 18-year old Jack Good (5), Jamie Burch (21), Euan Burridge (27) and Aston Wade (38). Jack had a stellar 2024 season with two major titles, Jamie won the British Open and Euan reached the 2024 GCWC semi-final. With plenty of recent international experience and a top 4 average grade and rank of 2499 and 23, England will be disappointed not to finish in the top four.

New Zealand Team
Openshaw Shield 2022 Winners

New Zealand are the defending champions and field another young team. Edmund Fordyce (9) and Felix Webby (18) were part of the victorious 2020 team and are joined by Logan McCorkindale (32) and Levi Franks (45). Levi has the unusual distinction of winning the NZ U21 Championship twice in March and December 2024 (once for the 23/24 season and once for the 24/25 season!). Their top 4 average grade and rank are 2483 and 26 and the players should be in mid-season form by February. There is not much to choose between NZ and England.

Australia is the host nation and able to field Robert, Malcolm and Greg Fletcher together with Ed Wilson. Robert has been the highest-graded player in the world for over two years and was in formidable form in the recent GCWC, notwithstanding his loss to Blake Fields in the final. Ed is

2025 OPENSHAW SHIELD PREVIEW CONTINUED

currently ranked 16th in the world and Malcolm (32) and Greg (63) are both excellent players. The only issue is the fairly modest amount of international play that these three players have been able to enjoy in recent years. Australia has a top 4 average grade and rank of 2526 (assisted by Robert's grade of 2783) and 28. They should have no relegation worries but will need to perform at their best to break into the top four.

Ireland have a squad of six led by Mark Stephens (146) and including Simon Williams (138), Rob O'Donoghue (188), Kieran Murphy (217), Evan Newell (429) and Alan Looney (528). Their average top 4 grade and rank are 2168 and 172. Apart from the top players in each side, Ireland and South Africa seem well-matched.

South Africa are again led by Reg Bamford (22), GC World Champion in 2013 and 2017, with Judith Hanekom (136), 2014 Women's GC World Champion, William Louw (336) and Andrew Hobbs (289). With an average top 4 grade and rank of 2223 and 177, South Africa will be focussed on retaining their Tier 1 status for the fourth time.

In 2020, Spain put heart and soul into gaining promotion to Tier 1 with their strongest team. Several of that team now have young families and this has led to the fielding of a quite different team. The captain, Nicolas Denizot (135), is joined by Juan Ojeda (194), Julian Gutierrez (218) and Begoña Elzaburu (312)- who happens to be Nicolas' mother! This is the first mother-son combination ever to represent a country in a croquet team. With an average top 4 grade and rank of 2131 and 215, Spain are not that far from Ireland and South Africa and will be fighting very hard to retain their Tier 1 status.

The top five teams all contain between two and four players under 30. The standard of top GC has continued to rise as the extraordinary hitting and long hoop-running performances of the best players show what is possible and increase expectations accordingly. This is without doubt the most open Openshaw Shield competition in its short history and it will be fascinating to see what happens.

WCF PFC MALLETS GC WORLD TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP: THE OPENSHAW SHIELD

Event information from the World Croquet Federation
www.worldcroquet.org

The WCF PFC Mallets GC World Teams Championship, competing for the Openshaw Shield is the fourth occurrence of this contest. It will be held between Monday, 17th to Sunday 23rd February 2025 at the Northern Tasmanian Croquet Centre, St Leonards, Tasmania.

SCHEDULE

Block Play: Monday 17th to Wednesday 19th February 2025.

Championship Knockout and Plate: Thursday 20th February to Sunday 23rd February.

LIVESTREAM DETAILS

Watch the event live on YouTube:
https://www.youtube.com/live/yFacoGFEW7c

All England Handicap 2025

Competitions for both AC and GC

How it works:
Individual clubs organise preliminary competitions of 4 or more players in AC or GC or Both. A player may join a preliminary competition at another club but may only play in one preliminary round in each code. Eligible players go through to an area final to compete for a place in the national finals.

Area Finals are held at different clubs:

AC	9-10 August at Surbiton & Cheltenham
GC	Phyllis Court on 23 July
	Ashby on 26 July
	Surbiton on 28 July
	Bath on 10 August

Entry fee £8 per person

Important Dates:
1 June closing date for all entries
AC:1 August qualifying names for area finals to Director.
GC:1 July qualifying names for area finals to Director.

National Finals:
AC to be held at Guildford and Godalming 20-21 September.
GC to be held at Camerton & Peasedown 13-14 September.

For further information contact:

AC	James Death: james.death1@gmail.com
GC Adv	Andrea Huxley: andreahuxley@btinternet.com

GC TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE 2025

by Richard Bilton, Chair of Golf Croquet Tournaments Committee

SERIES COMPETITIONS

There are now even more GC fixtures in the calendar, including a total of 103 Series tournaments across 6 tiers. See below for Series venues and dates. The Championship Series is having a bit of a shake-up this year, as two events are joining from the Open Series (Roehampton and East Dorset) and three others are changing dates. Many of these tournaments will continue to use the best-of-three format. Players who would like to play in the Championship Series Final, the English National Singles Championship (Ascot Cup), which is one of the three major events in English Croquet, are reminded that they should make themselves available by 8 August 2025*. From this year, the winner of the Final will be awarded free entry into the following year's Open Singles Championship.

In the hierarchy of the Series competitions, the Championship Series is followed by the Open Series (unrestricted), the A-Level Series (0+), the B-Level Series (4+) and the C-Level Series (7+), with the latter three all culminating in their own National Finals. To even out entries across the Series, and because handicaps are getting better, the B-Level Series is now restricted to handicaps of 4 and above.

This year, there is another new addition to the Series structure, the D-Level Series (10+), which is for players with a handicap of 10 or above. Unlike the A/B/C Series, there will not be a Final at the end of the season, at least not for now. Instead, the winner will be the player who has accumulated the most points throughout the season, as with the Open Series. Further details on the 'GC Series' webpage.

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

The premier Golf Croquet tournament, the GC Open Championship is getting stronger every year and it is hoped that this will continue. All good players are encouraged to enter both the Open Singles and Doubles, which will be held 24-29 June 2025 at Budleigh Salterton. Get your entries in before 13 May. The GC National Doubles Championship will also be held there on 26-27 July.

The GC Women's Open Championship, being held at Surbiton on 30-31 August, is a great opportunity for female players to compete against each other in a championship format. The GC Veterans' (Over 60) Championship will be at Sussex CCC on 22-24 July.

The GC All-England Handicap competition begins with a club round, followed by an area final stage, before culminating in a National Final. For more details on the event and how to submit entries, see the 'All-England' page via the 'Croquet England Events' page on the website.

SELECTION AND INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

The GC Home Internationals is to be hosted by Scotland, in Edinburgh, on 19-20 July 2025, availability closes on 9 April 2025*. The England v Spain Test Match will be back in Spain for 2025, held 2-4 May in Santiago de Compostela. The GC European Championship is back at Budleigh this year, being held on 15-18 May.

The GC Eights will be on the usual bank holiday weekend, 23-25 August, and once again will all be held at separate venues, as the First Eight moves to Ramsgate, the Second Eight is at Colchester, and Nottingham are hosting the Third Eight. Players of all abilities are encouraged to make themselves available for these events, availability closes on 30 June and selections will be announced by 14 July*.

You may be reading this while the GC World Team Championship is being played in Australia (17-23 February), and we wish the England team all the best. Wales and Scotland will be among the countries represented in Tier 2&3 at Sussex CCC 5-10 August.

TEAM COMPETITIONS

The GC Inter-County Championships will be held 16-17 August, and the two divisions will remain at their current venues for 2025 – Division 1 at Sussex and Division 2 at Cheltenham – before swapping back in 2026. Division 1 will comprise 12 teams and there are currently 8 teams in Division 2. Lincolnshire and Oxfordshire have been promoted, while Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire have moved down to Division 2. County Organisers are reminded that teams must be entered on the website before 10 March.

There are now three tiers of the GC Inter-Club Championship. The first is unrestricted, the second (the Inter-Club Murphy Shield) can have one player of handicap 1 and the team must be minimum 8, and the new third tier (the Inter-Club Bowl) can have one player of 4 with a team minimum of 20. The GC Federations Shield is an unrestricted Advantage GC competition for clubs qualifying from federations' leagues. Clubs are reminded to submit their entries before 3 March 2025. The draws will be published on or before 10 March.

ENJOY YOUR CROQUET

The GC programme is busier than ever, and we are confident that the variety of competitions will provide satisfying and competitive croquet for all, and provide opportunities for the growing number of GC players at all levels. There are lots of events to look forward to in 2025.

GC TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE 2025

CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES

Tournament	Date
Sidmouth	26-27 Apr
Colchester	10-11 May
Hunstanton	07-08 Jun
Roehampton	21-22 Jun
Nailsea	05-06 Jul
Nottingham	12-13 Jul
East Dorset	19-20 Jul
Ramsgate	02-03 Aug
FINAL at Hurlingham	20-21 Sep

OPEN SERIES

Tournament	Date
Bowdon	05-06 Apr
Cheltenham	12-13 Apr
Surbiton	26-27 Apr
Hunstanton	17-18 May
Wrest Park	31-01 Jun
Woking	09-10 Jun
Sidmouth	21-22 Jun
Ashby	28-29 Jun
Hamptworth	12-13 Jul
Budleigh	02-03 Aug
Watford	30-31 Aug
Sussex	06-07 Sep

A-LEVEL SERIES

Tournament	Date
Phyllis Court / High Wycombe	05-06 Apr
Wrest Park	19-20 Apr
East Dorset	26-27 Apr
Compton	16-17 May
Hamptworth	24-25 May
Sidmouth	31-01 Jun
Pendle	07-08 Jun
Woking	14-15 Jun
Watford	28-29 Jun
Crake Valley	02-03 Jul
Hunstanton	12-13 Jul
Ashby	19-20 Jul
Chester	02-03 Aug
Colchester	02-03 Aug
Guildford	08-09 Aug
FINAL at Ryde	27-28 Sep

B-LEVEL SERIES

Tournament	Date
Budleigh	13-Apr
Sussex County	26-Apr
Watford	05-May
Camerton & Peasedown	06-May
Pendle	10-May
Wrest Park	14-May
East Dorset	17-18 May
Bury	18-May
Chester	31-May
Woking	11-Jun
Ealing	12-Jun
Colchester	15-Jun
Hamptworth	21-Jun
Cheltenham	25-Jun
Hunstanton	29-Jun
Bath	03-Jul
Compton	05-Jul
Nottingham	10-Jul
Phyllis Court / Blewbury	30-31 Jul
Broadwas	31-Jul
Guildford	02-Aug
Ashby	09-Aug
Sidmouth	10-Aug
Nailsea	12-Aug
FINAL at Budleigh	20-21 Sep

C-LEVEL SERIES

Tournament	Date
Budleigh	12-Apr
Watford	25-Apr
Sussex County	27-Apr
Phyllis Court	02-May
Crake Valley	07-May
Ryde	14-May
Chester	17-May
Wrest Park	21-May
Roehampton	05-Jun
Camerton & Peasedown	10-Jun
Ealing	11-Jun
Woking	12-Jun
Colchester	21-Jun
Surbiton	22-Jun
Swindon	27-Jun
East Dorset	28-Jun
Hunstanton	28-Jun
Compton	06-Jul
Nottingham	09-Jul
Bury	16-Jul
Cheltenham	16-Jul
Bath	24-Jul
Broadwas	01-Aug
Guildford	03-Aug
Ashby	08-Aug
Hamptworth	09-Aug
Sidmouth	09-Aug
FINAL at Compton	27-28 Sep

D-LEVEL SERIES

Tournament	Date
Budleigh	11-Apr
Phyllis Court	23-Apr
Pendle	03-May
Sussex County	10-May
Guildford	14-May
Chester	18-May
Ealing	14-Jun
Hunstanton	27-Jun
Swindon	28-Jun
Camerton & Peasedown	08-Jul
Nottingham	08-Jul
Watford	10-Jul
Northampton	19-Jul
Broadwas	02-Aug
Ashby	07-Aug
Leighton-Linslade	13-Aug
Compton	23-Aug
Hamptworth	07-Sep

***PLAYERS WISHING TO MAKE THEMSELVES AVAILABLE FOR 'SELECTION' EVENTS SHOULD DO SO VIA THE 'AVAILABILITY' PAGE IN THE 'MEMBERS' AREA OF THE WEBSITE.**

WHO TO CONTACT

Richard Bilton – GC Open Championships, GC Eights

Andrea Huxley – GC Veterans' Championship, GC All-England Handicap

Steve Leonard – Federations Shield

Jonathan Powe – Championship Series, Open Series, GC Inter-County Championships, GC Inter-Club Championships

Chris Roberts – A-Level Series, B-Level Series, C-Level Series, D-Level Series

Louise Smith – GC Women's Open Championship, GC English National Doubles Championship

NEW

2025

GC D LEVEL SERIES

A NEW GC SERIES COMPETITION FOR HANDICAPS 10 AND ABOVE.
COMPETITORS EARN SERIES POINTS FOR FINISHING 1ST-4TH.

BUDLEIGH SALTERTON	11 APRIL	CAMERTON & PEASEDOWN	08 JULY
PHYLLIS COURT	23 APRIL	NOTTINGHAM	08 JULY
SUSSEX COUNTY	28 APRIL	WATFORD	10 JULY
PENDLE	03 MAY	NORTHAMPTON	19 JULY
GUILDFORD	14 MAY	BROADWAS	02 AUG
CHESTER	18 MAY	ASHBY	07 AUG
EALING	14 JUNE	LEIGHTON-LINSLADE	13 AUG
HUNSTANTON	27 JUNE	COMPTON (EASTBOURNE)	23 AUG
SWINDON	28 JUNE	HAMPTWORTH	07 SEP

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, SEE THE GC SERIES WEBPAGE FOR DETAILS:

WWW.CROQUET.ORG.UK/?PUP=Y&P=TOURNAMENT/CAEVENTS/GCDLEVEL

GC Inter-Club Championships in 2025

We are introducing a new GC Inter-Club Championship in 2025.

GC Inter-Club Championship Tier 1.
Level Play.
No handicap restrictions.

GC Inter-Club Championship Tier 2 (Murphy Shield).
Level Play.
Teams can have one player with a handicap of 1.
The remainder must be 2 or above. Team aggregate must be at least 8.

NEW - GC Inter-Club Championship Tier 3 (Bowl). Level Play. Teams can have one player with a handicap of 4. The remainder must be 5 or above. Team aggregate must be at least 20.

GC Federations Shield. Advantage GC competition for clubs qualifying from the Federations' leagues. No handicap restrictions.

Each draw will attempt to reduce travelling in the early rounds.

Teams of four. Entries on or before 2 March.

Contacts:
GC Inter-Club Tiers 1-3: Jonathan Powe – jonathanpowe56@gmail.com
GC Federations Shield: Steve Leonard – steve.leonard@croquetengland.org.uk

GOLF TO ASSOCIATION CONVERSION TABLE - 2025

by David Cornes, Croquet England Handicap Committee

THE MAPPING OF HANDICAPS FOR GC PLAYERS STARTING TO PLAY AC

WHY HAVE A GC TO AC CONVERSION TABLE?

There has been, for some time, a reliable table of handicaps for conversion from Association to Golf Croquet, however a similar table from GC to AC has not been devised until now. At the request of many, the CqE Handicap Committee has developed a GC to AC conversion table to be introduced for the 2025 season.

It is widely accepted that some GC skills are transferable to AC including the ability to run hoops and to clear (roquet) balls. Other AC skills, including the croquet stroke (take offs, roll shots and splits) are rarely used in GC so must be mastered. Further challenges for any GC player learning AC are the tactics and gaining experience of how to build an innings.

For GC to AC players, the Club Handicapper presently decides their starting level. This means players are reviewed before they play in an event outside their club. There is evidence that most players are placed in an acceptable "similar skills" bracket, but others are given handicaps of 20 plus irrespective of their GC experience. The adoption of a conversion table would reduce frustrations in Federations and other Clubs as well as improving consistency of assessments.

CONVERSION TABLE – GC TO AC

The Table is structured to recognise distinct "step changes" in playing abilities for both disciplines (Based on Class Level for GC & Standardised Index levels for AC). The aim is to show transparency of how the handicap is set and to give assurances of a "fairer" playing field. The principal structure of the table is for different levels of GC players to start AC at different (but consistent & appropriate) levels.

GC TO AC CONVERSION TABLE

GC Class Level of play	GC Handicap Range	AC Initial Handicap	AC Initial Index
Championship / Open	Minus handicaps	11	1200
A-Level	0 – 3 inclusive	14	1100
B-Level	4 – 6 inclusive	18	1000
C-Level & D-Level	7 – 12 inclusive	22	900
All other players	14 and above	24	850

NOTES –

• The table is recommended guidance for setting initial handicaps, but it would be unusual if AC handicaps were set outside these suggested limits.

• The table may also be helpful, as a guide, for a Club Handicapper during "Periodic" and "Annual Review" of all members handicap cards.

• The values in the table are set for 2025. The Handicap Committee will review the table at the end of the season. Feedback on the appropriate settings of values is, therefore, welcomed during the season.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE SUPPORTING GRASS-ROOTS CROQUET?
DO YOU HAVE A VISION FOR INSPIRATIONAL COACHES AT EVERY CLUB?
DOES ENCOURAGING COMPETITIVE PLAY AT ALL LEVELS APPEAL TO YOU?
ARE YOU A GOOD COMMUNICATOR AND DO YOU WORK WELL WITH OTHERS?
WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE PART OF A TEAM DELIVERING CHANGE?

If your answers are yes, or even maybe, then you could be the person the Executive is seeking to join its team as Director of Coaching and Grassroots Croquet.

Working with the new Player-Pathway team, the Coaching Committee, the Federation Coaching Officers and the strategic working group for coaching, as well as with the other members of the Executive team, this is an opportunity for someone with drive, who cares about good-quality coaching, to have a real impact on the standard of croquet played at all levels of the game.

If you would like to find out more, the retiring Director of Coaching, Rich Waterman (rich.waterman@croquetengland.org.uk) or the CEO, Beatrice McGlen (beatrice.mcglen@croquetengland.org.uk) would be happy to have an informal chat about the role.

REVISIONS TO ADVANTAGE SCORING TABLES FOR 2025

by Roy Tillcock
Member, GC Rules Committee

Following the WCF trial of Advantage GC in 2021 hosted by the SCF, the 2022 table of starting scores has been in use world-wide for three seasons. During 2024, with the encouragement of GCRC, a revision was undertaken for several reasons. Two seasons' worth of data from 1.2k SCF Advantage league games could now be incorporated into the computer algorithm enabling a distinction between the probabilities of scoring odd and even hoops to be allowed for. Player feedback suggested that games between widely different handicaps were not close enough to the 50/50 win criterion and that there was a preference for specific starting scores to replace the single -4:2 score in the grey area of the table.

The probability of either player winning a hoop can now be predicted, taking into account their difference in ability based on index difference. By simulating hundreds of thousands of games a suitable starting score was determined to give each player a 50% chance of winning the game, taking into account the desirability of a normal length game.

A majority of the recorded SCF games, those with small index differences, would have an unaltered starting score if using the revised table. The starting scores for the remaining games, between players with bigger index differences, would change to produce results closer to the 50/50 win criterion.

Timed Games which were previously discouraged can now be simply and fairly resolved by dividing the number of hoops actually run by the number needed to win at the start, the player with the higher ratio being the winner. The result of this calculation is given in the new Scoring Ratio tables in the current edition of How to play ADVANTAGE Golf Croquet – 2024/25 revision, available to download from the WCF Advantage page at https://worldcroquet.org/advantagegc/. How to play contains full documentation for First to 7, First to 4 and First to 10 games including Tables of Starting Scores for both the full and reduced range of handicaps.

This download, along with some additional teaching material, is also available on the Croquet England 2025 Update page at https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=games/golf/advantage.

NEW 1-DAY QUALIFICATION COURSE FOR GC REFEREES

By Ian Cobbold
Chair, GC Rules Committee

The GC Rules Committee has approved several changes to the ways in which candidates wishing to become GC referees can prepare and are examined.

Candidates have normally attended a 2-day course with classroom and on-court instruction for the first day and a half and then a closed book examination and an open-book on-court test on the second afternoon. Candidates were pointed to various sources of information but were left to do their own preparation.

Ian Shore of the Chiltern Academy, and a member of the committee, developed a 7-module online pre-course study pack which candidates could use to prepare for the standard 2-day course. The WCF then asked Ian to lead the development of a 28-module GC Rules Made Simple Study Pack with the intention that it could be used by players in countries which do not do their own referee training. An online exam was also produced which candidates can take and report their results to the WCF. There is no set pass mark and it is at the discretion of individual countries how they use the results.

The development of the WCF study pack has allowed the GCRC to produce a 1-day qualification course for candidates who have studied the WCF pack with the morning largely devoted to on-court training and the CqE written exam and on-court test in the afternoon. Candidates are advised on the best way to use the pack and have access to an Examining Referee who will answer questions while they are preparing. A course was run in Edinburgh in the autumn at the request of the Scottish Croquet Association and all the candidates passed the written exam. As with all options success in the exam depends on proper preparation.

A closed-book exam is daunting for candidates many of whom will not have sat an exam for many years and may put some people off becoming a GC referee. New open-book exam papers have now been produced with some amendments to the on-court test as well. However, candidates are advised not to rely on the Rule book for all their answers as they will run out of time but to use the book to check their answers to a few questions they are uncertain about. The pass marks for both the written exam and the on-court test remain at 70%.

The GCRC's aim is that every club should have a GC referee and hopes that the changes that have been agreed will encourage more candidates to come forward.

WHO IS CHRIS WILLIAMSON?

DAVID CORNES
Croquet Sports Journalist

Meeeting players and telling their stories

Chris was nominated for both the Most Improved Player for AC & GC in 2024. New to the game in 2022 Chris plays AC, Short Lawn and GC with 2024 membership at Penrith & North Lakes, Keswick, Crake Valley, Bury and the Algarve Club in Portugal. He also travelled to Vancouver Island, Spain and Tenerife, gaining valuable experience to improve his skills-set with some success, most notably pushing elite player, Euan Burridge to 9-10 in the quarter finals of the GC Canaries Championship.

Chris improvement is recorded as:

Format	Start of 2024 Season	February 2025
Association	22	10
Short	9	3.5
Golf	9	4

Chris's first trophy was the 2023 York Viking Short Lawn tournament. He has achieved Bronze Level Merit Award for AC and, in 2024, he had internal Club competition success at Bury CC (AC) and Penrith CC (AC & GC doubles). For 2025 he will expand his portfolio of Clubs (home and abroad) to visit but also concentrate on his duties as Level Play GC captain at Crake Valley. He is a qualified Association Croquet Referee and will take his Club Coach badge in May. Chris is also due to take on the Federation Coaching role for the North West Federation.

What does Chris put his improvement down to? "Lots of studying YouTube and other coaching videos, playing lots of venues so I have plenty of opportunity to learn from many different styles and tactics, playing with and against decent players locally but most of all practice, practice, practice."

Investing doesn't have to be stressful, it can feel like a walk in the park.

If you're eager for the kind of returns that active management generates but don't want the nightmare of stomach-churning volatility, Alliance Witan is for you. Our unique investment process is designed to quietly deliver attractive returns on shares from around the world without you needing to leave your comfort zone. We've increased our dividend every year for an impressive 57 years, making Alliance Witan an ideal centrepiece for your portfolio. Relax. Investing doesn't have to be nerve-wracking, it can feel like a bit of a stroll.

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THE (UNOFFICIAL) HISTORY OF CROQUET: PART 11

CROQVET ET ELITISMVS

by David Graham

The image portrayed by croquet amongst the non-playing public is invariably one of elitism, due to its association with country houses, university quadrangles and vicarage lawns. This is hardly surprising, given that in early societies croquet was either played by the nobility or the priesthood. It was bowls that was played by the general populous, which explains why the game was synonymous with public parks in the Edwardian period.

It was the Romans, having adopted the game from ancient Greece, who promoted its exclusivity amongst the upper classes in Roman society, or patricians, while the plebeians were excluded. The most popular venue for playing croquet amongst the aristocracy was the Herculeum Club located on the banks of the Tiber. The site is the location of several archaeological digs, revealing a wealth of information about Roman society and the importance played by croquet amongst its leisured classes.

The Herculeum Club, named after Hercules in classical mythology, was set in extensive landscaped gardens, which included an ornamental lake, protected by a walled enclosure and raised promenade separating it from the river. The main building had a portico adorned with depictions of the gods playing croquet (Fig. 1), but the facilities also included baths, a swimming pool and grass courts for playing the ancient Greek version of tennis. The digs also uncovered stabling and parking for one hundred chariots, as many of the members travelled from their country villas that surrounded Rome.

The club rules were documented by Cicero (106 BC - 43 BC), who was a member, along with most of the Senate. The rules included a strict dress code requiring all players to wear white and even Cicero was censured for wearing an off-white toga. The Toga Candida was the standard set for most members, which involved it being rubbed with chalk to achieve a dazzling whiteness, but senators were allowed to keep their purple trimmings in recognition of their rank, resulting in the rule that togas should be predominantly white. The fashion for coloured trimmings was subsequently adopted by the national team.

Cicero commented that the whiteness of the togas even extended to the wildlife, so that only swans and white doves were tolerated within the grounds, with all other birds ending up as dishes in one of several restaurants at the club.

The club did allow female members, despite women fulfilling a secondary role in Roman society. There is one particular mosaic, discovered during an archaeological dig on the site of the bathhouse, which shows a couple arguing over how to play the ball in a game of mixed doubles, possibly a humorous reference to husbands partnering their wives (Fig. 2). Cicero also tells us that the divorce rate amongst married members was so high that couples were banned from partnering each other.

There are twelve Labours of Hercules in Roman mythology, representing the number of hoops in a twenty six point game, the most common format played by the Romans. The Roman Hercules is typically depicted holding a croquet mallet (Fig. 3), whereas it is Heracles of Greek legend who wields a club. The ninth labour involved a croquet match between Hercules and Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons, in which Hippolyta's belt was the prize. The Amazons were formidable croquet players and warriors (Fig. 4). They carried a leather tube, or quiver, containing croquet balls, which they hurled at their opponents with such ferocity that few got near enough to join in close combat, whereupon they were swiftly dispatched by a single blow from a mallet. The more accomplished female players at the club were therefore nicknamed Amazons.

The Herculeum Club was also the venue for the Roman World Championships, which were held each year to coincide with the return of the Consuls from the provinces that they represented, as most Consuls were also keen croquet players. It was observed by Cicero that a Senator could not be elected as a Consul without being a member of The Herculeum Club.

The club role of honour included some of the most famous figures in Roman history, one of which was Marcus Antonius (83 BC - 30 BC), commonly known in English as Mark Antony. He was captain of the national team when he first met Cleopatra (70 BC - 30 BC), queen of Ptolemaic Egypt, herself a keen croquet player, which cemented their relationship in later years. In fact, Egypt was Rome's greatest rival in international croquet and Cleopatra was given the status of an honorary member of the club.

The influence of The Herculeum Club on the history of croquet cannot be underestimated, but modern croquet clubs have now moved away from the elitism that it symbolised.

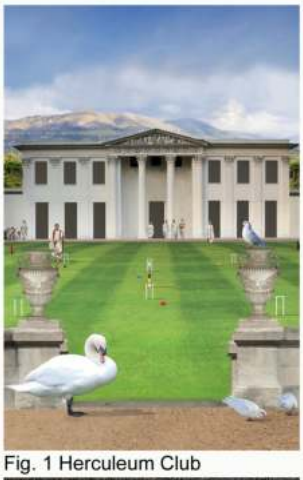

Fig. 1 Herculeum Club

Fig. 2 Mosaic

Fig. 3 Hercules

Fig. 4 Amazon

Tournament Regulations 2025

by Samir Patel, Association Croquet Tournaments Committee & Gabrielle Higgins, Chair of Tournament Regulations Review Group

Croquet England's Tournament Regulations apply to all Calendar Fixtures included in the annual calendar (www.croquet.org.uk/calendar).

The Regulations are structured into a number of sections.

I. Introduction. This section now includes a summary of terms used throughout the Regulations.

C. Clubs and Other Tournament Organisers. This includes requirements if tournaments are to be included in the fixtures calendar, together with the rules for how places in oversubscribed tournaments are allocated. There have been a significant number of changes to this section for 2025, which are described on the next page.

F. Formats for Events. This sets out in detail how tournaments should be organised. It's clearly relevant to Tournament Managers, but if you've ever wondered how a tied block should be decided, or how a draw and process works, you'll find those details here. Changes for this year have sought to bring greater consistency between regulations for different types of events.

H. Handicaps. This section invokes the guidance and procedures relating to the Association and Golf Croquet Handicapping Systems, and sets out the powers of a Tournament Handicapper.

L. Approved Laws/Rules Variations. Whilst we play the games as set out in the WCF AC Laws and GC Rules, there are times when modifications are required. The 2025 edition makes permanent the AC trial relating to Alternate Stroke Doubles, the use of video to support refereeing (for both Association and Golf Croquet) and provisions for resolving Advantage GC games which finish on time.

M. The Tournament Manager. This regulation sets out duties and powers of the Tournament Manager. The main changes for this year are to make more explicit the responsibilities relating to safeguarding and to adjust for GC the thresholds for lateness before penalties apply.

O. Officials. This is where the requirement for all tournaments to have a Tournament Director, Manager, Handicapper and Referee are set out. The Tournament Director's responsibilities are set out in detail in Regulation O4.

P. Players. This section will be of most relevance to those wishing to enter tournaments, and covers eligibility to compete, conduct (which, as well as a reference to Croquet England's Code of Conduct, includes restrictions on doping, gambling and smoking), the procedure for entries, conditions of play, player's obligations in relation to correct handicaps, and conditions for holding and returning trophies.

R. Referees. These invoke the WCF Refereeing Regulations for Croquet England events. They now define which matters an Association Croquet Assistant Referee is permitted to deal with.

T. Time Limits. This regulation defines the conditions for imposing time limits, and also the standard time limits that apply if alternatives are not defined by the manager.

The full regulations, together with a more complete summary of changes from the previous edition, can be found at: www.croquet.org.uk/?p=tournament/regulations.

Continued on page 39

TOURNAMENT REGULATIONS 2025 CONTINUED

C. Clubs and Other Tournament Organisers. Regulation C3 has been largely re-written, and separated into three regulations: General Provisions for dealing with entries in C3, and the various different methods for allocating places for over-subscribed events in C4 for Singles and C5 for Doubles.

The principal changes to practice are:

- The reductions in Dynamic Grade for allocation purposes in GC events for players with little recent play have been removed, pending further review.

- C3(a)(1). A new concept of Allocation Deadline has been introduced. It is the day before the Allocation Date, and is the last day for getting entries in before allocation. The Allocation Deadline, rather than the Allocation Date, is now shown on the Fixtures Calendar List view.

- C3(a)(2). The Allocation Date is now recommended to be between 8 and 12 weeks before the event, but may not be before 15 February.

- C3(a)(4). For seeded events, it is now recommended that the draw be no earlier than 3 days before the event. This is a requirement for GC Series events.

- C3(b)(1)(A). For events where allocation is by Dynamic Grade (DG), new players who don't yet have a DG should be given a proxy DG equal to the trigger point index for their handicap (found on all handicap cards). If they don't yet have a handicap either, the proxy DG is 900.

- C3(c)(2). There is a new recommendation for any drawing of lots to be witnessed.

- There are additional provisions clarifying how doubles pairs and single entries are treated when dealing with entries in C3(e)(1) and (4), C3(g) and C3(i)(4). In addition, two pairs, each with one Under-25 player, can now get priority entry. However, if both players in the first Under-25 pair allocated are under 25, only one pair gets priority entry. See C4(a)(3)(C), C4(b)(3)(C), C4(d)(1)(C), C5(a)(3)(C), C5(b)(3)(C) and C5(d)(1)(C).

- C4(a) and C5(a). There are new allocation arrangements for the AC and GC Open Championships in both singles and doubles. A Minimum Game Requirement of EITHER 5 (for AC) / 10 (for GC) ranked games in the last 12 months OR 15 (AC) / 30 (GC) games in the current and 3 preceding calendar years will apply. Places will be allocated by the highest DG achieved in the last 12 months or (if none) the last recorded DG. However, 1 place for Singles and 1 pair for Doubles will be allocated by the Selection Committee, and the Minimum Game Requirement need not be met for that. An updated Selection Policy and Procedures should be published by the end of March.

- C4(b). Allocation provisions for GC Series events are now included, unchanged, in the Tournament Regulations.

- C4(c) and C5(c). Open events (i.e. those played level, without any handicap or grade restrictions on entry) are allocated by DG, unless the Tournament Programme states otherwise. If they are called Championships, they must be allocated by DG (see C4(b) and C5(b)).

- C5(b)(5). Whenever places for Doubles are allocated by DG, 1 pair should be allocated by the Selection Committee (for Croquet England events) or the Entries Secretary (for club events).

- C4(d) and C5(d). It is now specified that all other events (i.e. neither Series, Championship nor Open, and therefore including handicap play events and those played level but with a maximum or minimum handicap or grade) are allocated by drawing lots, unless the Tournament Programme states otherwise.

New optional provisions for clubs to use if they wish are now included in C4(e) and C5(e). These may not be used for Championship or Series events. They include allocation by handicap, reserving places for club members, and pairing single entrants for doubles events earlier or later than the usual time (which is on the Closing Date). Clubs may of course still use bespoke provisions of their own.

Further details of the changes made, and the reasons for them, can be downloaded from www.croquet.org.uk/?p=press/news&NewsID=8642 (the news item of 3 November 2024).

UNDER 18 COACH TRAINING

1ST MARCH (YORK) AND 2ND MARCH (WOKING)

Croquet England is running training events for players who want to become licensed under 18 coaches.

If you are a player who would like to work with young people this training will equip you with skills, knowledge, behaviour management techniques and activities for working with aspiring players aged 6 to 17.

If you are a club that is hoping to establish a junior section you will need a licensed under 18 coach.

This is a joint initiative between the Coaching and Sports Development Committees.

If you would like to find out more and join one of the courses, please contact Ian Draper, ian.draper@croquetengland.org.uk or Paul Francis, paulwfrancis@icloud.com

DANCING UNTIL 3 AM AND FINDING A HUSBAND

CROQUET 150 YEARS AGO

ADRIAN COLES
Croquet sports Journalist

Secretary of Surbiton Croquet Club

January 2025 marks an important anniversary in the history of croquet in Surbiton – the first documented evidence of croquet being played in our town. One hundred and fifty years ago the local newspaper published the following, under the headline Surbiton Croquet Club –

"The annual ball in connection with this club was held on this occasion at Claremont House, Surbiton, on Thursday evening [21 January 1875]. Dancing commenced at 9pm and was carried on with much spirit till half past 3 the following morning." (The Surrey Comet, 23 January 1875)

Claremont House still looks magnificent in the centre of Surbiton, but sadly not even our longer standing members can remember the current club (formed in the early 1980s) holding a ball there, let alone seeing the members dancing through the night!

The last survey of croquet club members undertaken by the Croquet Association (now Croquet England) a couple of years ago revealed that the average age of club members was 73.

The list of those attending the Surbiton ball includes several "Misses" and few "Mrs" suggesting (as we know) that a much younger age group was attracted to the sport in the 1860s and 1870s.

This conclusion is supported by an article in The Falkirk Herald published on 3 September 1868, just a few years before the Surbiton ball. The (anonymous, and somewhat cynical) journalist is musing on the "pastimes and social manias of the present generation" and notes that various hobbies are taken up "with great zeal" and then dropped "in pursuit of some new toy". Among the manias noticed recently by the journalist is the keeping of aquariums by young ladies, "but this was too clammy an occupation for their pretty little fingers to last long", while other "thoughtful geniuses" introduced the idea of photograph albums, monograms "and that frightful bore, postage stamps".

But, the article goes on, "the superior claims of croquet bowled them over like nine pins". The author is not a fan of "this dreary game … the most concentrated form of inanity that the mind of man ever concocted" but is clear on why it became so popular.

"The secret of its vigorous development and prolonged empire over society lies in the fact that matrons who have 'daughters to marry' find it advantageous for their views, and it undoubtedly possesses great attractions for all 'flirtations' of either sex. It is undeniable that a pretty girl looks doubly enchanting as she stands on the sunny lawn, mallet in hand, displaying the neatest of ankles as she poises her stroke against a hostile ball. Many an unwary bachelor, proof against the seductions of Terpsichore*, has been cheated of his independence through the wiles of hoop and mallet."

At Surbiton we haven't noticed members dancing at 3:30 am recently, and we're unaware of any recent incidences of unwary bachelors being cheated of their independence, even though we run an active social programme! However, reading about how croquet was played in the Victorian age and what the sport then represented offers an interesting insight into the welcome change in social attitudes that have occurred in past century and a half.

*For those whose education in the classics is as poor as the current author's, Terpsichore is one of the nine Muses and the goddess of dance and chorus.

Source: The British Newspaper Archive, which is a wonderful resource offering nearly 90 million digitised local newspaper pages from the late 18th Century to the current day. Local newspapers of the 1860s and 1870s feature many articles on the social mores surrounding croquet, and the perceived impact of the new craze for croquet on the behaviour of young men and women.

THE COACHING COMMITTEE

All coaching qualifications are awarded by the Croquet England Coaching Committee. The members of the Committee are the Federation Coaching Officers from the nine regional federations, as well as representatives of the three croquet academies. There are currently two vacancies for Federation Coaching Officers, in Croquet North and North West, so if you are a coach who is keen to become further involved in coaching matters, please get in touch with your Federation and offer your services. In addition to sitting on the Coaching Committee, Federation Coaching Officers work with the clubs within their Federation on encouraging coaching and developing coaching capabilities. You can read more about what the role entails here: https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=games/coaching/fco.

The Coaching Committee meets online three times a year, in November, February and May, communicating by email and phone in between meetings on various matters.

LIFETIME COACHING AWARD AND COACH OF THE YEAR AWARD

Another of the Coaching Committee's responsibilities is to award the Coach of the Year Award and an annual Lifetime Coaching Award. These are based on nominations from clubs, so start thinking about who you might like to nominate now. The criteria can be found here: https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=games/coaching/coty.

For 2024 the Committee were pleased to give the Lifetime Coaching award to Sarah Hayes whose enthusiasm and commitment to coaching has benefited players not just in Cheltenham, but across the country. Sarah has immense attention to detail and coaches beginners, improvers and experienced players with the same attention to detail. She manages to pass on important techniques whilst allowing individuality in achieving the desired result. She also trains coaches and has seen many players through from beginners to competent coaching capability. Sarah was for several years a vigorous and committed chair of the national Coaching Committee. She has organised and led coaching for women, encouraging players across a very wide range of handicaps to develop their confidence and skills.

The 2024 Coach of the Year Award went to Richard Carline for his outstanding contribution to GC coaching. As a member of the coaching team at The Academy at Southwick he has shown his strength as an innovator, embracing new methods in coaching including slow motion video capture techniques and supporting students' learning and development through on-lawn visual aids. His popular GC Workshop targets players' individual needs. The demand for this type of coaching course continues to grow, much of it created by Richard's undoubted enthusiasm. Beyond his own club, Richard runs GC coaching pods at various locations which have been instrumental in player improvement, and he has helped on several Club-Level Coach training courses. All this is done with Richard's characteristic organisation, enthusiasm, calmness, and a positive approach which engenders a sense of 'can do' in his students.

Welcome to the Coaching Pages

BY RUTH RAUNKIAER

I am the new Chair of the Coaching Committee and will therefore be responsible for these pages for a few years. If there is any subject you would like us to write about, or any article on coaching you would like to contribute, please get in touch with me at ruth.raunkiaer@croquetengland.org.uk.

THANKS TO JOHN HARRIS

I would like to start by thanking John Harris for his sterling leadership as Chair of the Coaching Committee for the past three years. John's calm demeanour, keen intellect, wide knowledge of croquet, and warm sense of humour has steered the Committee through many complex issues. Fortunately, John is remaining on the Coaching Committee, so we can continue to benefit from his experience.

NEW MERIT AWARDS

Congratulations to Sandra Guildford, Woking CC, who secured a GC Silver Merit Award in the 2024 GC All England Handicap Tournament.

If you qualify for a Merit Award, remember to claim it! To see the standard to reach enter Croquet England Merit Award Scheme into Google to get straight to it. All CqE events have a Manager, and yours will be able to make the claim for you; otherwise, download a copy of the form from the CqE website. The form covers both AC and GC Merit Awards which should make claiming your Award straightforward.

Photo left:
Ready for coaching – a WI group takes to the lawn for the first time.
(Photo: John Harris)

NEW COACHING QUALIFICATIONS IN 2024

In 2024 we gained 1 new Examining Coach, 5 new Grade 3 coaches, 7 new Grade 2 coaches, 11 new Grade 1 coaches, and 44 new Club-Level Coaches. There are also currently 30 Provisional Club-Level Coaches, which means they have successfully completed their two-day training course and are now working towards their Club-Level Coach qualifications. That seems like a lot of coaches! However, there are still many clubs without even one coach, so if you are interested in coaching, please do sign up to a Coach Training Course at one of the Academies. Club-Level Coaches are at the heart of developing the game, inspiring enthusiasm for croquet, and raising standards of play. Croquet England offers a subsidy, and many Federations offer a further subsidy. You can read all about coaching on the Croquet England website at https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=games/coaching.

NEWLY QUALIFIED COACHES

The following five players have passed all stages of the accreditation process at the appropriate level and have been added to the register of Croquet England Coaches. Congratulations to them all.

NEW CLUB-LEVEL COACHES

John Gilmartin, Bury CC
Howard Railton, Roehampton CC
Jo Sweeney, Hebden Bridge Blue Pig CC
David Wilson, Ryedale CC
Stephen Wright, Ben Rhydding CC

Club-Level Coaches are accredited to coach beginners and high handicap players at their own clubs. Graded Coaches are authorised to coach at more advanced levels at other clubs and at Academies. For details of how to become a coach enter “Become a Coach” into the Croquet England website.

CROQUET WARM-UP AND PRACTICE ROUTINE

With thanks to Ian Burridge, Rachel Gee and Judith Rowe

CROQUET WARM-UP

The 10 min warm up at the beginning of the day or tournament should be used to warm your body up and get it ready to play and familiarise yourself with the playing conditions of the lawn; these can change significantly from one day to the next, and even from the morning to afternoon based on the weather conditions, speed of the lawn and difficulty of the hoops.

Things to focus on:
· Learning the hills on the lawns
· Finding your swing by hitting a range of different shots (this varies from player to player)
· Discovering any fast or slow patches on the lawn. Is it generally fast or slow? How should this impact what sort of shots you choose to play?
· How tight are the hoops? Are they consistent? Are they all set straight in the ground?
· Is the ground suitable for jump shots? How bouncy is it?
· Practise key approach shots, for example to hoop 13 when practicing Golf Croquet, or Croquet Shot approaches to all hoops for Association Croquet.

Try to use the majority of the practice time to take one or two balls round the entire hoop circuit; taking position with both balls at hoop 1 from corner four, running both hoops (gently) through hoop one and then taking position at hoop 2 etc.

GC 26 POINT GAME

The exact rules of this game are not important. Feel free to make up your own and deal with anything not covered as you see fit. The important point is the principle behind each game which is providing practice of different skills and a measurement of success.

This can be played solo or competitively. It encourages careful consideration when selecting hoop running position, and practises taking position and hoop running.

Each player starts with 2 balls in corner four. Approach hoop 1 with each ball. If two players are competing they take alternate approach shots. One uses the blue and black and the other red and yellow.

Once all balls are in position at hoop 1, all balls attempt to run the hoop (if they are able to do so). Those that run the hoop successfully score 1 point. Those that fail the hoop score 0.

The balls are then collected and played to position at hoop 2 from beside hoop 1, again followed by a hoop attempt at hoop 2, with success again scoring a point. Play continues in this manner for all the hoops (giving a 26 point game).

When playing from an odd numbered hoop all balls are set at right angles to it, with one ball of each opponent on either side of the hoop. When playing from an even hoop the balls are staggered into common positions, these are: 1 on the boundary behind the hoop, 1 a yard through the hoop, 2 in front of the hoop at slightly varying distances.

If playing in pairs swap who is playing first after each even hoop.

Record your score, and then try to beat it next time you play.

ADVANCED VARIANT

Once all the balls have attempted each hoop, each player has the opportunity to decide to leave any balls that have run the hoop where they lie and to attempt to run the next hoop from there, rather than playing an approach shot. Any such balls that successfully run the hoop score 2 points instead of 1.

WILL DRAKE

1923-2024

by Stuart Smith

Many croquet players play into old age. However, not too many take up the sport when they have already reached the age of 90. Will Drake was introduced to the sport when visiting his son-in-law Stuart Smith at Broadwas Croquet Club. He immediately liked it and, on returning home to Yorkshire he went to Ben Rhydding CC and picked up the rudiments of golf croquet. After visiting Pendle & Craven CC to watch the Home Internationals, a small group including Libby Dixon and Keith Terry joined the club as they played a more competitive game and had better lawns. Soon they were playing league matches and making lots of new friends. Winning ten of his first eleven matches on his green card he reduced his handicap to 6 and in 2014 was playing B level tournaments.

Unable to find a mallet that suited him, he collaborated with a friend who had access to a lathe and produced mallets made of solid aerospace aluminium! On a visit to Cheltenham he had it admired by Reg Bamford and Ian Burridge who described it as "Not half bad".

Will (left) loved his time at Pendle playing around the NW Federation and made a formidable doubles pairing with his partner Keith Terry (right) who also passed away earlier this year.

In 2017 and 2018 he played in the Cheltenham Open, setting aggregate age records when he played local Russell Barter as both were approaching their middle 90s. He completed 300 ranking games, retiring from tournaments when aged 96 and still sporting a 6 handicap.

With the arrival of Covid he relocated from Yorkshire to Herefordshire, living independently and being a playing member of Broadwas. When he could no longer play outdoors he had an indoor croquet trainer made that kept him active beyond his 101st birthday.

[Pictured right] Indoor croquet trainer – golf ball is the target, hinged wooden planks protect the skirtingboards

TERRENCE ROBERT VERNAZZA

26TH SEPTEMBER 1953 – 4TH NOVEMBER 2024

by Derek Watts, Tyneside Croquet Club

aka "Terry"

Terry joined Tyneside Croquet Club in 2015 after retiring and moving up to the north east to be closer to family. He spent his early croquet life in the north west, at Fylde CC, where in May 2004 he joined a "learn to play AC" group and, by the end of June, he played his first competitive games for Fylde at the North West Federation of Croquet Festival at Southport and helped Fylde win the trophy. In 2005, Fylde moved to new premises, which needed much work developing the buildings and land into 3 courts, and Terry was one of a gang of 4 who carried out this work. In 2007, Terry was in the Fylde team which won the Longman Cup and again when they repeated the feat a year later.

At Tyneside he quickly integrated into the "maintenance team" and was very interested in keeping close contact with our lawn treatment company to ensure we had the best treatment for our courts to keep them up to standard. He learned how to drive the mower when needed in emergencies and was instrumental in obtaining a verti-cutting and aerating cassette to complement the mower which he made sure of using on a regular basis. Terry was often first down to the lawns at the start of a new season, ready to get the layout sorted for both lawns and was ever keen to move the hoops later in the season in readiness for CE tournaments & league matches. The white lines were often applied before matches by Terry even if he wasn't playing in the match. Terry often managed club and/or CE tournaments and where lunches were required, his wife Alison would provide exceedingly good fruit cake. As an appreciation of his hard work for the club, he was awarded the CE Diploma in 2022. He enjoyed taking part in in the AC Advanced and Handicap matches of the various regional leagues and managed our Tyneside's East Pennine League, plus he would regularly travel away to play in CE tournaments. Terry was always keen to help higher handicap players and ran a Tuesday evening coaching session for the last few years. He was club AC Advanced Champion this year and it was fitting that, on the day he passed, he was at the club making arrangements for the mower to be collected for its annual service. He has left a huge, huge hole at the club and will be sorely missed by so many. A LIFE WELL LIVED.

MARTIN TOVEY

29TH OCTOBER 1946 - 20TH OCTOBER 2024

by Giles Pepperell

Martin Tovey died on 20th October 2024 after a fairly short illness, borne with dignity and his usual good humour whilst trying to beat it. He spent some time away supported by family but particularly by wife Sue as he attended treatment. However they both made regular appearances when possible to check on friends at the clubs and it was always a delight to see them; we are grateful for those visits.

Martin was a man of many interests, talents, and successes, including being a past President of the British Beekeepers Association. He started wielding a mallet during his time in the Lake District when he became a member of the Kendal Croquet Club. Martin moved to North West Wales and became an extremely popular member of both Craig y Don and Llanfairfechan & North Wales Croquet Clubs. Perhaps this popularity was at least in part because of his generosity of spirit and bonhomie as he never took himself too seriously, having the unusual ability to carry off being a model elf with style and aplomb. He became a good personal friend to several members of both clubs and beyond.

Martin gave his time freely as the GC Level Play team captain of Llanfairfechan in recent years but just as easily playing for Craig y Don when the need arose, as these clubs are quite close. This was demonstrated by playing for both

clubs as required at the wonderful annual two day event at Southport and Birkdale Croquet Club, the Festival of Croquet, where in recent years he arranged the Saturday evening meal at a great restaurant attended by players from more than two clubs.

As a competitive skipper, Martin led the Llanfairfechan GC Level Play team to victory at the first two Welsh Team Challenge competitions, through regional heats and then a final at Llanidloes, and also around the North West Federation area for matches in the hotly contested GC LP league.

Martin was always both welcoming and charming, and whilst a level play player he played with members of any handicap at any time, taking part in handicap/advantage club competitions, encouraging all players. He also organised in part, or sometimes in whole, the ever popular Captain's Day at Llanfairfechan; for me the sun always seemed to shine on that day.

For my small part, I recall my first proper time meeting Martin at the season's opening GC LP NW Fed league match in June 2021, when I had just joined the club and started my croquet journey. Martin demonstrated a friendly, organised and relaxed approach to managing the day for the teams and club, as he always did. Over the short years I knew Martin I observed traits and behaviour that have made me think about my own and often resulted in the thought 'I need to be more like Martin'. We have lost a rare individual.

NEW SEASON – NEW ME

by Chris Alvey, dbmallets@gmail.com

OK so I may have made wild promises to myself about what I would do with my diet and exercise in 2025, that went out the window on 3rd January!

However, when it comes to croquet, I made my resolutions the day after the lawns closed for winter. We have an indoor hoop at home that I shoot at from various angles in our somewhat small living room, I need to use that more. I have toyed with the idea of a swing trainer, but the large wooden ones take up too much space and we have no garden to speak of, but I have seen an electronic version so I will be saving my pocket money for that.

I have a list of questions and techniques that I want to master (or at the very least attempt) in the coming season. Things that I think may improve my game.

I play very little advanced AC, in fact only 5 games to date and all in the 2024 season; a triple-peel in my head is witchcraft and sorcery. I don't play GC but the GC to AC players that I coach, can all shoot better than me and distance hoops seem to be no issue for them, so some GC this year.

Each new season offers the opportunity to add to your game, to try something new. For me GC is something new. For those that only play GC, give AC a go. Even if your club doesn't offer it there are Grade one coaches that can come and introduce it at your club or you can potentially drop in to their club. Enter a tournament, sign up for a club team, watch the wealth of videos on YouTube.

Make your croquet resolutions and find someone that can help you achieve them.

SPONSORS OF THE TOWNSEND CLUB AWARD

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED HOW AC AND GC WERE SO NAMED?

by Ian Bond

The origins of the AC designation are relatively straightforward. The game had long been known simply as 'croquet', but persistent poor publicity – sometimes verging on ridicule – in the inter-war years prompted the Croquet Association to look for an alternative which marked out the tournament game as different from the old sequence game of their Victorian forebears. Among the suggestions at the time was lawn billiards, though that had once been the name for a quite different game (and opponents said they would accept it only if billiards agreed to change its name to table croquet …). AC was adopted as the official name for the game at the Association's AGM in June 1948, though it had been in use unofficially since 1935. With the demise of the Association, perhaps a further change is needed. English Croquet, though historically correct for the game descended from the Conference Code of the 1870s, does not feel quite right for today. Perhaps Federation Croquet would be the modern equivalent.

The GC designation comes from the early years of that game, at the start of the twentieth century, though the Americans already had a rather different game of the same name. It is superficially sensible – after all, it is played on a croquet court, with croquet equipment, and the points are contested in sequence as in matchplay golf. But GC lacks the croquet stroke, the defining feature of the AC game and the root of its name. Draughts is not a form of chess simply because it is played on the same board, nor is snooker billiards even though they are played on the same table and with the same cues and balls. Even the link to golf is tenuous: golfers do not play in sequence, and holes are not won by being the first to sink the putt. But the Holy Roman Empire was neither holy, nor Roman, nor an empire. What is in a name, after all?

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WEBSITE

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

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.

Queries regarding the delivery of the Gazette to members should be directed to Croquet England's Operations Manager (office@croquetengland.org.uk).

CROQUET ENGLAND®

2025

GW Original Mallet

GW Evolution Mallet

NEW YEAR COLLECTION

Our Aim at the Croquet England Shop is to provide equipment to Croquet Players and Croquet Clubs. We have Croquet Sets for fun games in the Garden as well as Mallets, Books and Clothing for Club Players. We also supply balls and hoops which meet CqE tournament regulations for Croquet Clubs.

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