

THE

August 2012 — Issue 339

CROQUET

GAZETTE



THE MAGAZINE FOR MEMBERS OF THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION

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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 the easiest to work with, but coloured photographic prints are also acceptable. Please send digital .jpeg or .tiff format files. Please accompany all images with a description of the subject of the picture. If you require any material to be returned please enclose an SAE.

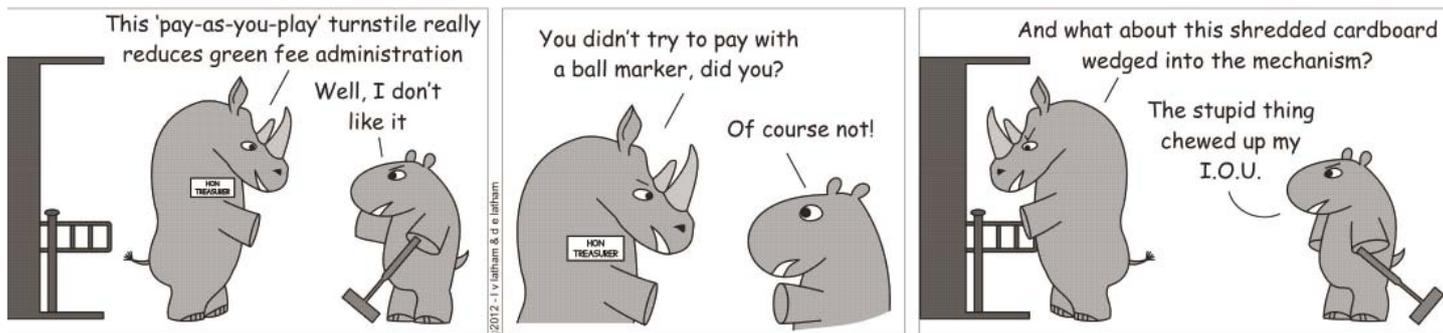
Tournament Reports & Results
Emailed reports are welcomed. Attachments may be sent in Microsoft Word format, or text format. Handwritten reports are no longer acceptable due to the illegibility of most.

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

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HOPOPOTAMUS

by Victor



THE CROQUET GAZETTE



Issue 339 August 2012

Front Cover: Marcus Evans in play at the Open Championship. Photo by Paddy Chapman

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Disclaimer

The opinions expressed in the Croquet Gazette are those of the Editor and contributors. The Croquet Association is not responsible for statements other than those clearly defined as being made on behalf of the Croquet Association.

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Chairman's Column

As the Queen has celebrated the Diamond Jubilee of her accession to the throne this year, I thought it would be an appropriate time to look back at the relationship between the CA and the Royal Family.



The first Monarch who is recorded as being interested in Croquet was Edward VII. In the May 12 1910 Gazette there is a portrait of Edward VII with the caption "By the courtesy of The Holmesdale Press we are enabled to reproduce the above portrait. King Edward was an ardent croquet player, and many of our readers must have noticed that he was playing at Biarritz only a few days before his death." He died on 6 May 1910. On 11 September 1910, the Chairman of the CA, Viscount Doneraile, persuaded the newly-crowned King George V to be Patron of the CA. (It is worth noting that the function of Patron appeared unclear.) In the following years Edward VIII, George VI and Elizabeth II each agreed to be our Patron, giving the CA an unbroken link with royalty for 102 years and still counting.

Our current Patron has had several links with croquet and the CA during her reign. Our Archivist tells me that there is a photograph apparently taken when Prince Philip first met Princess Elizabeth which showed a croquet lawn. In 1967 the CA decided to celebrate 100 years of the Open Championships by organising an enlarged All England Handicap and HM the Queen, the association's Patron, graciously accepted the association's invitation to attend the finals at the Hurlingham Club. In 2002, the then Chairman of Council, Ian Vincent, was invited to the Golden Jubilee service in London. This brings us back full circle to 2012 when our Patron extended an invitation to the Chairman of Council to attend the Diamond Jubilee service at St Paul's Cathedral. My wife and I were part of a group of over 2000 members of the public invited to join in the celebration of 60 years of the reign of HM the Queen. It was an honour to take part in such a major historical event and the memories will remain with us. In particular, the use of ceremonial groups of the Queen's bodyguard of the Yeomen of the Guard, Her Majesty's Body Guard of the Honourable Corps of Gentlemen at Arms, The Kings of Arms, Heralds and Pursuivants in the processions was an unexpected flourish. After the service, we attended a reception at the invitation of the Lord Mayor of London at the Guildhall. Perhaps the most surreal part of the day was when we walked from St Pauls to the Guildhall along streets lined with the public who were waving and taking photographs. Finally, I understand that on one of the television channels, it was remarked that the President of the Croquet Association was in the congregation – not quite correct, but in this case, very good publicity!

After I had written my last column, Reg Bamford became the Association Croquet World Champion in Australia, and has also just become Open Champion for 2012 at Cheltenham. I hope you all join me in congratulating Reg for these achievements and thank him for showing us all how well croquet can be played. While virtually none of us will ever be able to reach his level of play, it is still an excellent example for all of us to aim for. We are fortunate to have Reg playing in the UK.

Barry Keen

Editorial

Welcome to the August issue of the Gazette. Yet again, congratulations are to be offered to Reg Bamford, this time for winning his 9th Opens title. How does he do it? I imagine with a lot of dedication and, having interviewed Reg previously, I know he has a remarkable self-belief and positive mental attitude towards his play.



Of course we can't all be champions, and having spoken to other players, there can come a point when we are happy to enjoy just playing and testing ourselves in ways that have slightly less challenging goals than before. However not everything becomes less competitive as we get older and, yes, I include myself in that bracket now. I can still manage three games a day without any physical problems, but I have a feeling that 'bisques for senior moments' could be on my wish-list in the very near future! Two new Federation-led events are reported in this issue which show an innovative approach to meeting the needs of players who may not have previously played in competitive events, and also offer a good quality events where travel and costs are kept to a minimum. Both appear to have been very successful, so if you have an idea which you think can address a current deficiency make sure you pass it on to your club or Federation.

One of the older events in the calendar, the Challenge & Gilbey, first played in 1900, is to be hosted by Budleigh Salterton this year at the end of the month and still has vacancies. The event is played with handicap and class singles. The history of the event is very interesting and Quiller Barrett has kindly made a potted history of it taken from the late Alan Oldham's history of the event. 'In 1900 the Sheen House Club, which was then the headquarters of the United All England Croquet Association (as the CA was known at the time), presented to the Association a Challenge Cup for open competition. This trophy was won by Sir William Bruce who beat J E Austin +6, +26 in the final. In 1903 the Roehampton Club presented additional Cups, so there were then three Roehampton Challenge Cups. In 1920 the Chairman of the CA Council, Mr Arthur N Gilbey, who was also a prominent supporter of angling and other field sports, presented a Cup to the Association for a handicap competition. From a field of 164 entries the first Gilbey Cup was won by Mr L A Chope of Roehampton who played under the pseudonym of AN Other. In 1923 the decision was made to run the Challenge Cups and the Gilbey Cup as a joint tournament, a 'marriage' which has lasted unbroken to the present day. That year ten lawns at Roehampton were available and 265 entrants played in the tournament that was spread over a fortnight, something of a marathon for the manager.' There are plenty of lawns at Budleigh, so what are you waiting for?

Gail Curry

Letters



Photo: Members of all three clubs gather under imposing Bamburgh castle.

Is Bamburgh the most picturesque croquet setting in England?

Members of Bishop Monkton CC (Yorkshire) recently visited Bamburgh to play a combined Bamburgh/Alnwick team, in what they believe must be one of the most picturesque settings for a croquet lawn in England. Croquet is played on lovely lawns in front of the imposing Bamburgh Castle which itself overlooks golden sands stretching away into the distance. The foundations of the castle were laid in 547AD and it was rebuilt by the Normans in 1131. The weekend visit was organised by John Hague who floated the idea of the visit after seeing a picture of Bamburgh lawns and castle in the Gazette. He contacted Bamburgh's Jamie Edgar and the idea of a croquet away weekend for Bishop Monkton was quickly agreed. Twelve members of Bishop Monkton made the trip and seven took part in the match, which resulted in a 21-3 win for the visitors. Now Bamburgh are planning to come to Bishop Monkton to gain their revenge!

So, is Bamburgh England's most picturesque croquet site? Challengers should send in their rival nominations with a photo - but be warned, Bishop Monkton may be on the phone to suggest a visit!

Richard Field

2012 CA Survey Report

Having read the 2012 CA Survey Report I have come to the conclusion that I am an average female member, commenced playing in 2003 in my mid-60s, played in club competitions from 2004, and CA tournaments from 2005. I think it highly likely that I will cease competitive Association play next year when I will be in my mid-70s, the main reason being that I find two, sometimes three, games per day too tiring. My level of skill means that most games last at least 3 hours and there are very few peg-outs. However, there are two events in the South West where I live that I really enjoy, whether

winning or losing, both played on small lawns. Games last 1-2 hours, there are frequent peg-outs and it is relatively easy for an older person to get the balls to and from the diagonal corners. So what about the CA encouraging some extra events on small lawns to enable us active but physically weaker older players to continue our competitive play into our later years?

Of course it must be good to try to get more young people to join the CA and play in competitions, but realistically I feel it is highly likely that the main recruitment will continue to be amongst people in their 60s. The age of retirement is increasing, many people have their children in their late 30s or early 40s and many 50 year-olds are busy with teenage children, so perhaps a programme of family recruitment would also be a good idea. Small lawns are used by many clubs for teaching and introducing new players to the delights of the Queen of Games, in this Diamond Jubilee Year of our monarch and patron, Could the CA look to encouraging an ageing active membership to just 'keep on going', in line with Her Majesty? At present some players are pegging out faster than the balls!

Rosemary Bradshaw

Rosemary makes an excellent point here - three hour games of Association are not to everybody's taste and we seem to be slow adapting to the changing needs of an ageing population of players. Adding to her suggestion of small lawns, I would say shortened games (14-pt or 18-pt) have a lot to be commended, one-day tournaments are becoming more popular and the full-bisque variant of handicap play makes for shorter and more interesting games.

Kevin Carter

Tormented Tournaments

We learn from the recent survey that there is a fall-off in those attending tournaments. We all know about the rise in petrol prices and the cost of accommodation. However if we set off for a weekend's croquet it needs to be fun. Croquet must be the cheapest of all sports, with a decent mallet costing under £200 capitalised over five years, we face an outlay of £40 per annum. The entry to a competition stands at about £10 per day. At the regular arrangement of nine hours play we will be charged at just over £1 an hour. I have floated the idea of charging more per tournament, but unsurprisingly this has not been popular, but if we wish to play on better lawns then this matter needs to be addressed. It is a very small proportion of the overall cost of a weekend's play.

So regardless of the cost - will it be fun?

I used to play in more tournaments, but in recent years have put my energy into getting Hamptworth started. I am now in the process of returning to the circuit and I observe that little has changed. On arrival after a couple of hours driving am I given a warm welcome? Does anyone tell me where I can get a coffee? Am I introduced to other competitors, particularly my opponent? Am I shown the lavatories and changing rooms? At lunchtime do members make sure I know the ropes, when looking for a table is there a cheery 'come and sit over here'? In the evening has anyone organised a common meeting point for visitors or am I to be condemned to the tender mercy of my B & B landlady. What is the etiquette about leaving? If I have done badly am I expected to wait for an hour or so for prize giving or can I beat the traffic by leaving early? If I win why is there not a large crowd to congratulate me?

The Fixtures Book.

I have over time been able to understand the fixtures book, but it is not friendly, and new potential players (the ones we need to attract) come to me saying 'where can one look up AMD; TBA?' 'What is an allocation and closing date?' and where are Wrest Park, Pendle and Craven, Phyllis Court or for that matter Hamptworth. Yes it is all in the book, but as I say, it is not friendly. As a handicap 7 I have fallen victim of entering the 'John McCullough Challenge Trophy' described in 2010 as H:20-(this has now been changed) but I have now entered Bowdon Advanced Weekend H:20-, 'come on!' the majority are less than scratch I now discover. Hamptworth have had the pleasure of hosting 'The Peels Memorials' (first played in 1898). Last year we sent out 300 invitations explaining what the competition was about. Brian Shorney (Director) and I have done a straw poll as to what mid fleet players know about this competition.

Those who know of its existence think it is (1) a competition where peeling is involved or (2) a competition for the elite. Sad to say very few have ever heard of it.

Much more effort by way of describing the CA competitions should be made in the handbook and/or the Gazette. I considered visiting the Western Championship as a spectator and looked in the handbook to find out more, - what standard should I expect? Who can enter? Is there a charge for spectators? There were no answers given.

Richard Stevens

This is valuable feedback, thank you. We've put a great deal of effort into making the Fixtures Book (FB) concise, accessible and usable and all suggestions on making it more user-friendly are welcome. If I may break-down the points into groups, perhaps we can address them.

Newcomers to clubs and tournaments: there is an article on the CA website (Your First Tournament), which covers many of the points. We could include this, or at least a reference to it, into the F B. CA Junior Members can access the CA Mentoring Scheme to benefit from the experience of leading players, perhaps we can extend it to older members. The welcome you get is certainly important and easily overlooked, as club volunteers are very busy preparing for and supporting the tournament. Most clubs are very good at this and some are a real joy to return to, however perhaps in our regular mailings to clubs we can remind them each year of its importance, especially as we are encouraging more to take part. The Introduction in the FB should have a sentence or two urging experienced players to make others welcome and to be inclusive with newcomers.

Abbreviations should all be in the Key and we can look at whether many of them really save pages or are needless jargon.

Allocation and closing dates are defined in the Tournament Regulations (available on the website), but should also be explained in the FB.

Club information: the full address is given, together with the club website if it has one. The CA website carries full details of each club, including links to maps. What more should be included? Years ago The Editor published an excellent guide to clubs that gave useful tips and I've often thought that could be revived in a modern form by being incorporated in the CA website (B&Bs, restaurants, tips for parking nearby, etc. maintained by Member recommendation).

Suitable Tournaments: The "Your First Tournament" article has some suggestions, but tournament strength can be variable

and the clubs decide any restrictions in order to create the right entry for what they have in mind. I'd encourage you, as an improving handicap 7, to enter advanced B-Level events and I certainly would not want you to be blocked through needless handicap restrictions. However the standard of play should not be a surprise to the player, so we should encourage clubs to include in their tournament descriptions an indication for first-timers, but there is a danger of discouraging entries.

Historic (named) Tournaments. The Fixtures Book could indeed include a paragraph explaining the tournament without running to many more pages. This applies also to the standard of play to be expected at the various Championships since that is of interest to potential spectators, as well as entrants.

Charge for spectators. Most clubs welcome visitors freely, some (such as Hurlingham) admit spectators on production of their CA Membership card, others I have no idea about, but it is something the FB could cover or reference.

Variety always best

I would like to thank Laurence Latham for his clever and witty take on Alice in Wonderland. I thoroughly enjoyed the story as much as I enjoy my relatively new sport of Croquet. I am always annoyed by comments that it should be played only by those who wish to take the game to highly skilled and competitive levels. I suggest they take themselves off to special clubs where they can have their exclusive games. They may like to first reflect on who is going to cut the lawns, make teas and lunches and organise social events etc, etc. Not least of all, will they have enough subscriptions to cover all the out-goings?

I am pleased to report that at here Westmorland CC we have a good mix of players - from those who wish only to a play friendly game of Golf or Roquet-Croquet, up to NW league team standard. We have introduced a club Doubles, which is played Alternate Stroke, with a low handicapper partnered with high handicapper to give those members a bit of confidence and as-you-play coaching. Despite just having a storage hut, we manage several social events, one of which is Strawberry Sunday, when members are invited to bring their non-playing partners to have a fun game and a strawberry & cream tea. Next year I think I'll make some stuffed toy flamingos to play with!

Nancy Gregory

Can we do as other sports and find that balance?

As an ex-member of the CA, I would like to comment on why only older members are holding the fort. History around the 1980s will show that a similar problem was in force. Good fortune prevailed with the grants available from the government who were keen to promote sport with an emphasis on youth. This enabled the CA to engage a Development Officer in the person of Chris Hudson who, with others and member clubs, penetrated schools. Many of your recent top players came via that road. I was involved with Himley CC, which received tremendous help from Wolverhampton and Stourbridge Clubs. Himley is still going, after a fashion.

I fell away from the game for a while due to ill health but did return some time later. Around that period youngsters such as Sam Tudor and David Matthews were scaling the heights. Also at this time, many of the older players stopped competitive playing

and slowly other older players became content with Golf Croquet. Enjoyable, excellent for tutoring, but it lacked the combat skills and excitement of the AC for me.

I returned in recent times to Himley. The only game anyone wanted to play was GC. I feel that it was too easy to get people to play GC and that AC was too complex and too long for many. Short Croquet seemed to be an alternative, but that seemed to be much less popular than previously. What I did find was that many elderly people enjoyed GC; however they also needed time to take part in the running of a club. I am not against that game but it has caused some clubs to abandon AC. Perhaps the best example of balance is in Rugby Union, with the 15-a-side game being complemented by 7-a-side. My grandson plays and enjoys every minute of both games. I wonder how croquet can achieve that balance.

Terry Greenwood

Do you have a question or a view? Is there something you'd like to share or ask? Letters are always welcome, so don't delay, write yours today.

News & Information

Caring about croquet's future

From The President

At every CA AGM the Secretary reads names from the Benefactors' Book to remind us that members have been making legacies and bequests to the Association for many years and these have helped the CA to encourage promote and develop croquet. In recent times we have been able to accelerate the pace of making grants and loans to established and new clubs: in the last 11 years we have helped 94 member clubs, large and small, across England and Wales.

To enable us to continue this important objective of helping future generations you may feel, as I do, that you would like to put something back into the game that gives us all so much pleasure.

Manor House Mallets

A well-established range with ultra light carbon fibre/foam shafts and optimal weight distribution.

2000 model (£165 - £170) Sustainable Curufai wood, lead end weight, double composite faces, inlaid sight line and high quality, easily maintained finish.

Advanced carbon fibre heads with extreme end-weighting

2001 model (£240) Circular cross section with solid brass faces
3000 model (£275) Circular head with D-shaped brass faces

Airline shaft (£65 extra) Two-part mallet, each part fits into normal baggage

For details or discussion, contact Alan Pidcock,
Tel & Fax 01772 743859 e-mail pidcock@manorh.plus.com
The Manor House, 1 Barn Croft, Penwortham, Preston PR1 0SX



After providing for your family and friends you could consider leaving a gift to your club and/or to the Croquet Association.

The CA's policy regarding legacies is to use them for the development of croquet, not for current operating expenses. We are always pleased to consult with executors to identify any special projects the donor would have liked to support.

I hope you will give some thought to leaving a legacy to croquet, however big or small. If you decide to do this, please act now; we all know how easy it is to put off making or altering a will.

Quiller Barrett

Leaving a legacy

There are three main ways to leave a legacy (or bequest) in your will, and you can use any or all of them. We have given a brief description of each so that you can decide which to use if you wish to leave a legacy to the Croquet Association and/or your local club in your will, or change your current will. Your solicitor will be able to check everything for you but it may be useful for you to have a look at the options now.

A **pecuniary legacy** is a gift of a stated amount of money which you leave to a named person, charity or other organisation. Inflation will reduce the value of these gifts over the years, so do revise them from time to time.

Suggested wording: 'I direct my executors to pay to The Croquet Association, c/o Cheltenham Croquet Club, Old Bath Road, Cheltenham GL53 7DF, the sum of £ _____ [in figures and words] to be used for its general purposes and I direct that the receipt of the Treasurer or duly authorised officer shall be a valid and appropriate form of discharge.'

A **residuary legacy** is the gift of all, or a share of, your estate after liabilities such as taxes and expenses have been paid (i.e. the residue).

Suggested wording: 'I give [all]/[.....%] of the residue of my estate to The Croquet Association, c/o Cheltenham Croquet Club, Old Bath Road, Cheltenham GL53 7DF to be used for its general purposes and I direct that the receipt of the Treasurer or duly authorised officer shall be a valid and appropriate form of discharge.'

A **specific bequest** is a gift of a specific item (like a collection of croquet memorabilia), rather than money. Describe the item exactly and give the name and address of the organisation to which you wish to leave it.

Other ways of distributing your assets

A discretionary trust allows you to set aside money to be distributed by trustees, named by you. Trustees can take future events into account and they have significant discretion when it comes to how much beneficiaries receive. This could be a good way of making a gift, but it is a complex area of law so you should ask your solicitor for advice.

2013 SUBSCRIPTION RATES

The subscription rates for 2013, in pounds sterling, are as follows:

Individual members paying by direct debit.

	Single	Composite
First year	13.50	21
Second year	27	42.50
Full rate	40.50 (46)	63.50 (69)

Junior	15 (15)	
Non-tournament	24 (29.50)	34 (39.50)

(Payments by other than direct debit are possible in the full, junior and non-tournament categories only; the rates for these are shown in brackets.)

Member clubs

Standard (<i>per capita</i>)	7.95
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(Minimum total of 50; newly registered clubs in first, second and third years, maximum total of 60, 90 and 120.)

Universities and schools	30
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Affiliates

UK	35
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Overseas	45
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Subscriptions were last raised in 2011. Council decided to increase the member club rate by the rate of inflation over two years, as allowed by the CA Constitution. Individual rates have been increased by a comparable proportion.

Roger Bray, Hon. Treasurer

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Croquet Association will take place at the Hurlingham Club on Saturday 20th October 2012 commencing at 11.00 a.m.

AGENDA

Apologies for Absence.

Minutes of the previous meeting held on Saturday 15th October 2011.

The minutes are in the documents section of the members' area of the CA Website and will be sent to Home Members on written request to the office.

Report of Council.

The Chairman of Council, Barry Keen, will present Council's annual report. There will be an opportunity to ask questions and discuss the result of the quinquennial survey.

Accounts for the year to December 2011 and Hon. Treasurer's Report.

These accounts and brief commentary were published in the June 2012 edition of the Croquet Gazette. Copies will be available at the meeting together with a more comprehensive report, which will be sent to members on request to the office.

Election of Hon. Secretary.

Dr. I. G. Vincent offers himself for re-election and is the only nomination.

Election of Hon. Treasurer.

Dr R. W. Bray offers himself for re-election and is the only nomination.

Election of Reporting Accountant.

Marian Hempsted is proposed by Gordon Hopewell, seconded by Patricia Duke-Cox.

Election of Council Members.

The following members of Council retire by rotation and seek re-election under clause 18 (a)(i): Jeff Dawson, Richard Hoskyns, Barry Keen and Tim King. In addition, John Bowcott has been proposed by Richard Hoskyns and seconded by Tim King, so there are 5 candidates for 7 vacancies and an election is not required.

Benefactors' Book.

The names of benefactors will be read.

Presentation of Trophies for the Most Improved Players.

Sara Anderson (Woking Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club) is to be presented with the Steel Bowl for the most improved female AC player. Will Gee (Ashby and Nottingham) is to be presented with the Spiers Trophy for the most improved Golf Croquet player. The Apps Bowl for the most improved male AC player was presented to Christian Carter (Parsons Green, Imperial College and Surbiton) at the Open Championships.

Presentation of Coaching Awards.

The Coach of the Year award is to be made to Frances Low (Sussex County and Rottingdean) and a Lifetime Coaching Award to Ian Lines (Bowdon and Nottingham).

Presentation of Council Medal.

The Council Medal is to be presented to Chris Williams, in recognition of his work in maintaining the ranking system and croquet records site.

Presentation of Croquet Association Diplomas.

Any Other Business.

President's Closing Remarks.

Dr. I. G. Vincent, Hon. Secretary, 14th July, 2012

Coaching

COACHING CORNER

by Roger Staples

Congratulations to the following who recently qualified as coaches:

Club Coach

Christopher Roberts, Phyllis Court

Frances Colman, Phyllis Court

John Alabaster, Letchworth

The following will be added to the official list of coaches when they have joined the CA as Associates.

Margaret Shah, Nottingham

Robert Furniss, Bakewell

Will Gee is one of our promising young players from Nottingham. Will started playing croquet in 2004 at Nottingham, originally only Association Croquet. Improving rapidly, he won the Apps Memorial Bowl as England's most improved male player. He has been a member of the U21 CA team since its inaugural match in 2007. Having reached an Association handicap of -1 he turned his attention to Golf Croquet in 2008 and now also plays at Ashby, being a key member of their Interclub team. This coincided with him focussing on his studies much more - he is now studying Biochemistry at Oxford University and is one of only three people to have been awarded a Full Blue for Croquet. Enjoying a lack of exams, Will won several ranking competitions in 2011, including the Ascot Cup and is now ranked fifth in the UK. He also won the GC National Doubles Championship with Rachel Rowe.

Here, he shares his practice routines and shows us all how we can improve our game.....



Will Gee pegging out. Photo by Simon Hathrell

Will's Tips for Beginners

Beginners hoping to improve their Association game have one major obstacle to overcome- the four-ball break. A good command of the four-ball break reduces the number of bisques required to run all the hoops in one turn. How do you get better at a four-ball break? Practice! There are two main aspects of practice to consider: the mindset whilst playing and the choice of shot. Here I try to outline the approach I took to practice my break play.

Inevitable mistakes in ball placement during break play make it important to have some flexibility with regard to choice of shot. Therefore rules of thumb are of great use when learning how to maintain a break. Three general rules were taught to me to improve break hygiene. (1) The placement of the striker's ball should almost always be the most important concern during a shot, (2) always set up a rush out of every hoop, and (3) break a difficult shot down into several easier shots. These three points can be summed up into one overriding rule for good break hygiene: the striker's ball should move the minimum distance during shots. Therefore straight rushes and stop-shot croquet shots make for tidy breaks, whilst relying on cut rushes, rolls and long take-offs leads to an untidy and unsustainable break. Naturally rolls and cut rushes will still be required occasionally, but should be considered "rescue shots", rather than the aim.

When approaching a hoop or another ball, it is of immediate importance that the striker ball ends up in front of that hoop or near enough to the ball to roquet or rush. Where the object ball ends up is of secondary importance, unless it goes off the lawn. If the object ball ends up in a difficult position it can be dealt with later in the break, whereas if the striker's ball ends up in a difficult break it is likely the break will end immediately. How do you use this knowledge to tidy up your break? When trying to place the ball in a very specific region do not use a roll shot or a take off, but a stop-shot. This means that if you hit too hard or softly the effect on the striker's ball is minimised: in a stop-shot perhaps 10% of the excess energy stays with the striker ball, whereas a roll shot will impart 50% of the excess energy to the striker ball. Small differences can become critical when approaching a hoop.

It is useful to get into the habit of setting up a rush away from the hoop when approaching the hoop, so that after running the hoop you have the option of rushing to the pivot or to an out of place ball. This goes against the textbook hoop approach of placing the striker ball in front of the hoop and the other ball behind. This is

most important when approaching hoop 2 or hoop 4. At these hoops it is best to place the object ball level with the hoop, such that when the hoop is run you are left with an automatic rush to the centre rather than to corner. It is worth pointing out that not placing the object ball also mitigates the problem of becoming hampered after running the hoop!

Getting a rush out of hoop 2 is a useful illustration of the use of rule (3) - breaking a difficult shot down into multiple shorter shots. The half roll from hoop two to centre and hoop four is not a straightforward shot - it involves moving two balls a total of around 40 yards with relative precision, trying to avoid both the peg and pivot with both balls. On slow lawns, the distance component is enough to make this shot highly error prone. Setting up a rush away from hoop 2 to the centre overcomes the distance and precision problems simultaneously. By rushing just past hoop 6, the big half roll is converted to a shorter stop-shot.

Deciding which shot is most appropriate is only half the work, execution is the other half and improvement in technical shot play can only be achieved through practice. It is important when practising to have realistic goals and the discipline to achieve them. An approach that always proved effective for me was to aim to do three breaks round to hoop 4 without bisques or retaking shots, starting from the textbook break layout. If I missed a shot I

would start again at hoop 1, and I wouldn't leave the club until the goal had been reached. The next day the aim would be three breaks round to hoop 5, and each session the aim would be increased by an additional hoop. The shots involved in making a break round to hoop 4 are the same as those required for an all-round break, the only difference is that an all-round break requires a more prolonged period of concentration. The step approach gradually builds up this concentration, by setting goals that are ambitious and attainable. The prospect of having to redo the entire break places real pressure on the last few shots, helping mimic stressful situations during competition.

Practice has the main function of improving your chances in a competitive game and, as such, you should complement practice with match play. Matches help you to gauge the effectiveness of your practice. Although having a "training partner" is extremely valuable in motivating you to practice, continuously playing the same person carries the risk of adapting to their strengths and weaknesses and having inflexible tactics when playing against other players. Instead seek out better players on club days to play handicap games against, preferably players who can do all the hoops in one turn without bisques. Playing better players will emphasise the importance of four-ball breaks. Use bisques to set up the break and always play aggressively.

Laws

You are the Referee - II by Ian Vincent and Bill Arliss

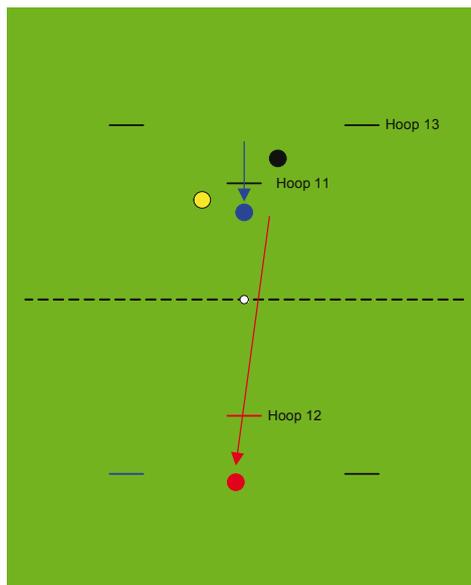
In this issue we have two completely different situations: the first only applicable only to Golf Croquet, the second to Association.

GC Situation:

This concerns the halfway law and is raised time and time again. It concerns play in a game of GC at hoops 11 and 12. Hoop 11 is being contested and eventually one player runs it, by say three feet, when the other three balls are nearby. The opponent then takes a chance and successfully runs hoop 12 from near hoop 11, leaving the three other balls close to hoop 11 and also hoop 13, the next hoop. What is the legal situation of these balls as regards the halfway law?

GC Decision:

The normal halfway law still applies in this case but what so many players forget is that play has moved on to the interchange between hoops 12 and 13. Thus any balls on the hoop 11 side of the halfway line, which for this interchange is an east/west line through the peg, are offside unless they



are exempted in accordance with the laws. The players must therefore decide whether any of the three balls concerned reached their position as a result of an opponent's stroke or made contact with an opponent's ball during their stroke. The ball that ran hoop eleven is not exempted as it was not in the last shot played before play was stopped. On many occasions all three balls in this type of situation will find themselves directed to the penalty point.

AC Situation:

Thanks to John Brooks for this one.

A player claims a wiring lift and asks you, the referee, to adjudicate. You confirm that it is the start of his turn, and that his opponent is responsible for the position of the ball he is claiming the lift with, then get some test balls and confirm that his ball is indeed wired from all the other balls. Is he then required to take a lift with that ball, or can he play his other ball to a position just out of baulk (and still wired from it), in the hope of getting a more useful lift next turn?

AC Decision:

He is not required to take the lift. Although Law 13(e)(1) says that a player can only ask whether one ball is wired from another if he is entitled to claim a lift with it before the first stroke of his turn; it doesn't say that he has to take the lift if it is granted.

Some apparently similar situations may occur in both Golf and Association Croquet, but because the laws of the two games are not the same, the decisions may differ significantly, as in the problem posed in this issue.

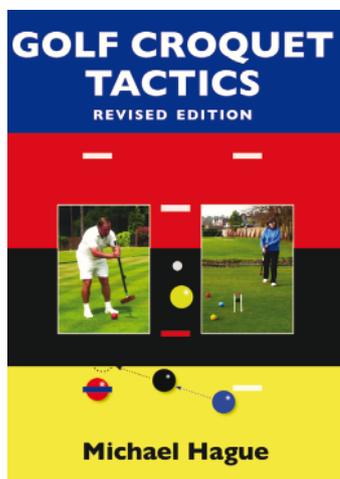
Future Issues

We are sure that there are many situations like the above which regularly cause puzzlement amongst many players and could be helped with simple clarification. Please email your ideas for future columns in this series to either of us using the addresses given on the inside front cover

Publications

INTRODUCING A SECOND EDITION OF GOLF CROQUET TACTICS

by Michael Hague



I packed the very last eight copies of my book *Golf Croquet Tactics* for despatch to Brenda Evans in New South Wales in Australia and turned my thoughts to a second edition. It would be published at the behest of the CA Publishing Committee by Kitty Carruthers who happens to be a member of Surbiton Croquet Club. My job would be to update the 2005 first edition, correcting references to the Golf Croquet laws which are out of date and two typing errors which I detected after carefully

scrutinising the original text.

My one attempt at humour in the first edition was the statement “The profile of a successful croquet player includes the aggression of a man and the vindictiveness of a woman.” This resulted in the other reaction which was an angry letter from Jennet Blake of Eynsham CC who thought it was outrageous that I should stereotype her sex with such a negative characteristic. I was too polite to point out that many men might be equally offended by being labelled aggressive. However I did canvass a number of ladies who unanimously agreed that the V work should go. As one

of them was my wife, I could not argue. I decided to replace the V word with “the delicate touch of a woman.” But even that provoked a protest from Gina Lewis of Woking CC who said that it was unfair on men as she knew from her wide experience that many of the male sex also have a delicate touch.

As the work on the second edition progressed, Jennet Blake came up with another comment. Cardinal points were used to orientate the reader for the diagrams of the court showing the tactical problems. Jennet pointed out that half of players do not understand what North, East, South and West are on a court. An arrow depicting the direction of play would be clearer. Once more I bowed to her perspective but, bearing in mind her sensitivity on the subject, I forewent asking her the gender of the half who do not understand.

The second edition remains orientated towards the rank and file club member and their coaches. An extra section has been included on “Giving away extra turns” to help those players who have reached that painful stage in their golf croquet career when they have to give away extra turns rather than have the advantage of using them decisively themselves.

There are now 60 colourfully illustrated tactical problems with suggested solutions plus a number of diagrams and photos all in colour too. The discussion on the Principles of Play, the Thought Process and How and When to use Extra Turns should give understanding to any newcomers to the game for dealing with tactical situations with which they might be faced. Remember it is generally true for most sports that the better one plays, the more the enjoyment and satisfaction one gets.

The first edition has proved its value with 1000 copies sold across the world including South Africa, New Zealand, Australia, USA, Italy, Austria, Germany and even Egypt! The second edition is for sale exclusively through the CA shop (Tel: 01242 233555 E-mail: sales@croquet.org.uk) for £14.00 (including p&p to UK addresses).

Window on the World Croquet Federation



By Martin French, Secretary-General

As the UK season gets into full swing, work continues for the intrepid band of nine on the WCF Management Committee!

What's been happening in May and June?

We started this period with the AC World Championship in Adelaide, reported in the last issue. Once an event finishes, there's still plenty to do: we send a player feedback questionnaire to all entrants – we've had 41 replies from the 80 entrants and these have to be collated, then summarised and actions agreed where there are things to fix or improve for next time. It's prompted a number of improvements and changes to include in the major new version of the WCF Sports Regulations that we're trying to finalise.

At Adelaide, James Temlett from Australia put a huge amount of time and effort into preparing for live video streaming of the final rounds – only to be thwarted by the local broadband provider not delivering enough bandwidth. Nonetheless, all the filming has

been captured and a DVD will be produced. The WCF does not want to add to the burdens on the host of an event by insisting they provide live video. However, it seems a pity to let the knowledge and expertise go to waste – so we have set up a Video Experts Group – including James and also England's Duncan Hector - to recommend what can be done to broadcast and video future events.

After a period of uncertainty, we've now committed to holding the 2nd Division of the GC World Team Championship this December in Cairo. Wales are the best-ranked team in this division, and Scotland is ranked third. England plays in the 1st Division, ranked a close second behind Egypt – this will be held in Jo'burg starting at the end of November. We're just finalising the format details and regulations for our first ever GC World Team Championship. We've also been accepting entries for the inaugural Women's AC World Championship to be held in Australia this October. Three UK women have entered. Women's events are controversial in England and the USA, but strongly supported in Australia and New Zealand – reflecting the different playing populations and views on integration in each country. The vast majority of entrants for this event are from Australia and New Zealand, but it's good to see a small number of experienced players from England contesting this event.

Our new website has gone live – hurrah! Well, almost. It's

live but we have no-one to support or develop it – so it's a bit patchy at the moment. See it at <http://www.wfcroquet.org/joomla/>. We're looking for a volunteer who could step in as Webmaster and help us develop the new site into something really useful to croquet players around the world – please contact me if you could help.

Grounds Advice

Controlling Moss By Duncan Hector

Moss thrives in swards where there is little competition. So the creation and maintenance of a strong and vigorous turf is vital if moss is to be kept at bay.

It spreads by producing spores which lie dormant in the turf waiting for the right conditions to germinate. So it is important to kill moss before the production of spores. Moss crops twice a year, spring and autumn, to be successful you need to kill it as soon as it appears.

There are many proprietary moss killers on the market varying from lawn sand to Ferrous Sulphate. These will scorch the moss but not prevent further growth and I am not sure whether it kills latent spores. The simple rule is to treat moss early and be prepared to treat on a monthly basis if necessary. This regime allied to a grass maintenance programme should eradicate the problem.

This method has proved to be very successful at Newport Croquet Club (Essex). In 2010 they had about 70% moss which was about 1" thick in places. A restorative programme was started in the winter of 2010 and by the spring of 2012 there is virtually no moss at all. Newport had several problems including worm casts, dry patch and moss all of which have been cured. The initial treatment carried out in the autumn was:

- 1/. Aerate the turf and spray wetting agent to cure the dry patch.
- 2/. Spray moss killer.
- 3/. Spray "Ringer" to dissuade casting worms.

two weeks later

- 4/. Scarify – two passes at a 20 degree angle.
- 5/. Aerate again
- 6/. Overseed.
- 7/. Top dress.
- 8/. Fertilise

In spring 2011, moss treatment was carried out again and since then there has been hardly any moss on the Newport lawns.

In early May 2012 I visited Guildford and Godalming Croquet Club with Gavin Merrison of Collier Turfcare to look at their four lawns and propose a restorative programme. Gavin masterminded the Newport restoration and has a lot of experience with croquet lawns. We found a very free draining soil apparently sitting on 100 feet of sand. The moss coverage was around 70% and at least half an inch thick so the surface was very spongy. The recommendation was that, if funds were available, treatment could start immediately. First apply moss killer. Two weeks later scarify, this will only remove 10 to 20% of the dead material so there will still be a spongy layer of dead moss. Overseed using a drill which will ensure that the seed is planted into this layer rather than just spreading the seed on top.

This will maximise germination and the grass should become established fairly quickly. A fertiliser programme will run alongside the moss control to ensure that the grass plant grows vigorously. If funds were not immediately available the programme could start in the autumn. In either case the treatment would be moss killing, scarification, overseeding and top dressing applied. This top dressing will bulk out the spongy layer which will gradually disappear as the root mass develops.

Do bear in mind that these treatments are specific to the conditions prevailing at the sites concerned and a different programme could apply elsewhere.

I do hope that this is useful and, as always, I welcome any feedback dh@duncanhector.demon.co.uk

Points Of View

Croquet and Snooker By Pete Trimmer

I enjoyed watching two World Championships whilst writing this: Snooker (on TV) and Croquet (via the internet). The games are directly comparable in terms of aesthetics and, from a more abstract perspective, our abilities to fine-tune physical skills and decision-making.

There are plenty of obvious similarities. Each is played on a large, rectangular, flat, green surface, using balls of the same 8 colours. (Incidentally, a little-known form of snooker, 'snooker-plus', also uses two of the little-known tertiary croquet colours, orange and purple). Each playing surface has six pockets/hoops, and players take it in turns to play a single shot from a static situation, with an additional shot (leading to breaks) after scoring. Whilst croquet has wirings, snooker has ... snookers. The similarities are perhaps not as coincidental as they initially appear; each game was invented in the late eighteen hundreds, with snooker lagging-up 15-20 years after croquet (though billiards already existed).

Each game is currently male-dominated but there is no obvious reason why this need be so, except for the advantage of height/reach in snooker. Although snooker has professionals (often practising for 8 hours a day) and croquet is purely amateur, each has a similar history of individual players sometimes dominating the top of the game (often for about a decade). After the great Joe Davis, snooker had Pulman, Reardon, Davis and Hendry. After Hicks, croquet has had Solomon, Aspinall, Fulford and Bamford. Each game has also had it's mavericks, such as Alex Higgins and Ronnie O'Sullivan in snooker, Keith Wylie and Bob Jackson (and a still-improving James Death) in croquet.

For nearly a year, I have practiced on a snooker table near my work for about 15 minutes per day, 4 days a week. I would expect to be reasonably 'capable' by now, but the 50 hours of focused practice has produced surprisingly little improvement. Yes, I can now occasionally pot the 6 colours from their spots, and have even managed it left-handed, but it is far more common that I pot only one or two before missing. Recently, I have begun to wonder why I am improving so little relative to what I know humans are capable (as seen on TV). Assuming that, at 39, I am

not too old to learn(!?), perhaps snooker does just take an enormous amount of practice. If this is so, then judging by how my improvement has been virtually imperceptible on a week-to-week basis, perhaps I should instead be identifying how much better we could get if we were to practice croquet with the dedication shown by snooker players. If we practiced rushes for 8 hours a day all year round, how good might we become?

There are other possible reasons for my snooker-failings, though. I have known croquet players who go to their club nearly every day to practice, but who have never threatened to become A-class. So long as they continue to enjoy playing, then all is well-and-good, but why do they not also improve? My belief has been that they are not practicing 'in the right way'. I rarely practice, but when I do, I try to concentrate really hard. William Ormerod once gave me the excellent advice that as well as (just) tonking balls around, I should sometimes walk up to a shot thinking, 'this is crucial', as though I were playing the most important match of my life. It is better to sometimes play one of those in practice than several shots without concentrating hard. Similarly, Allen Parker (sadly now deceased) encouraged me to practice rushing by playing several rushes from the same place, attempting with each one to improve on the previous effort. Again, this advice seemed to get me off to a good start. In croquet, it seems to be best to swing almost purely from the shoulders, whereas with snooker, the movement should come almost entirely from the elbow. Identifying these sorts of things early on can have knock-on effects through growing self-confidence. So it may be that in some way I am not practicing snooker in an effective manner; others with a slightly different mindset on how to become more consistent may improve a lot faster.

There are, of course, also significant differences between the two games. The most important (and interesting) is surely the croquet stroke, but who wouldn't want to be able to play a swerve shot round the peg – or a jump shot to escape a snooker?

Aside from the physical aspects, there are also subtle mental differences. My impression is that croquet has a greater strategic depth (i.e., tactical choices with longer-term consequences). A snooker player often has many more choices relating to the current shot (e.g., which of the many reds to aim at, and how much strength, side and screw to put into the shot), but rarely gains by thinking more than 3 shots ahead. In contrast, whilst having fewer choices to consider, a croquet player will typically be thinking at least 6 strokes ahead when deciding where to send a croquet stroke. So although snooker provides more options to choose from, croquet is somewhat closer to the oft stated, 'chess on grass', in needing to think several moves ahead. Arguably then, snooker requires a better appreciation of the immediate odds of success, whereas croquet requires the ability to think about longer-term outcomes.

If there were a trade-off between the ability to think about the immediate odds of success and the ability to think ahead, my guess is that it would look like figure 1 at how a few games would stand.

The further a player can move toward the top right of the figure, the better their decisions will be. How can a player improve these mental skills? The estimation of short-term success simply requires experience, but such learning can be sharpened by first estimating chances, to provide mental focus on outcomes. e.g., how likely are you to hit a 10 yarder? 50%? Now take 20 shots and see how many you can hit. If you know your odds at 5 yards, 10 yards and 20 yards, it's easy to estimate odds at the intermediate distances. It's less obvious how to improve the ability to think ahead. Perhaps beginners should start by mentally visualising

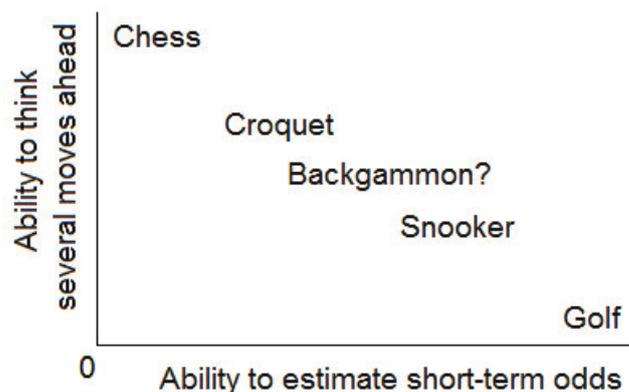


Fig. 1.

each move of a 4-ball break, moving the colours around in their minds. More expert players can think about the subtleties of more difficult breaks, or the effects of different lines of play in pegged-out games.

I believe that snooker places a greater emphasis on physical skill than croquet. To show why I believe this, I shall make use of a hypothetical situation, of an unusual doubles match in each game. Chris Clarke (recently retired from croquet) is partnered with Steve Davis to play against David Maugham and Stephen Hendry (recently retired from snooker). To respect Chris having retired from croquet, Steve Davis will play all the strokes of their team, under the direction (remote control) of Chris. Similarly, Stephen Hendry will direct David Maugham in what to play. Thus we have an expert telling a beginner what to do, versus a beginner telling an expert what to attempt. To keep things simple, let's assume that Clarke and Maugham are of similar (low) ability at snooker, and that Davis and Hendry have each tried croquet several times and, whilst being naturally (equally) good shots, are still relatively clueless when it comes to croquet tactics. When it comes to the advising, many strokes will have both a primary and a secondary goal. In snooker, the advice might be, try to pot the yellow in to that pocket (primary aim), and stop the white near here (secondary aim). In a croquet stroke, the primary aim might be where to send the croqueted ball, with the secondary aim being the position of the striker's ball (or vice-versa).

First, let's try a game of croquet. Clarke tells Davis what to attempt and, whilst it often goes wrong, there are occasional breaks for a few hoops. They rarely give much away. On the other team, Maugham (gagged, and banned from rolling his eyes or hanging his head at bad advice) is instructed by Hendry. Maugham shoots much better than Davis and can repeatedly approach hoops and run them, but the directions on where to send balls make the breaks ragged. Which side will win? Probably the beginner (Hendry) directing the expert (Maugham) because when they do manage to establish a break, Maugham's playing ability will get it round even with very basic break tactics. But it's an interesting game to imagine. How about a game of snooker? This time it is thoroughly clear: Clarke (beginner) directing Davis (expert) will *thrash* Hendry (expert) directing Maugham (beginner). Why? Because Davis will repeatedly manage the pots (or safeties) suggested by Clarke, whilst Maugham will struggle to pot anything that Hendry suggests. Thus snooker places a greater emphasis on physical ability (relative to strategy) than croquet.

If you find the argument compelling, let me put just a shade

of doubt in your mind. To compare the games fairly, let's imagine that croquet were often on TV, so Davis and Hendry had a more natural grasp of how the game is played at the top level (even without having played more themselves). And let's assume that dozens of croquet players turned professional and practised for 8 hours per day for many years. (How good might Reg Bamford be if he used his swing trainer for hours each day for many years?) Perhaps, on a flat lawn, the professionals might expect to hit almost every shot and often run 20 yard hoops. There would no longer be any comparison in the croquet doubles: the team with the expert player (directed by a beginner) would thrash the other team, just like snooker.

Generally, the difference in skill emphasis between snooker

and croquet is surely small; the games are siblings. Each game has tricky choices to be made, and can result in different styles of play having similar success rates. Despite the subtle differences in how the decisions are (or should be) reached, each game is ultimately about choosing and playing the next shot/stroke as well as possible, before seeing what actually happened and (re)assessing what to attempt next.

Meanwhile, I see that Reg Bamford and Ronnie O'Sullivan have each won their 4th World Championship titles (each undefeated in Worlds finals) – my congratulations to Reg. It's not difficult to predict that Robert Fletcher (and Judd Trump in snooker) will be following in due course, perhaps each for a decade or so at the top.

CROQUET ASSOCIATION CHAMPIONSHIPS

2012 Inter-County Championships

Report by Elizabeth Larsson

Nottinghamshire won the 2012 Diamond Jubilee Inter County Championships with nine wins out of ten. The team was: Richard White, Keith Aiton, Gary Bennett, Dean Bennison, James Death, Patrick Hort and Richard Huxley

Berkshire and Oxfordshire won Division 2 with 10 wins out of 10. The team was: Joe King (C), Robin Brown, Nick Butler, Bob Stephens, Alan Edwards, Avril Rangoni-Machiavelli, Mark Ormerod, Stephen Wright and Martin Burger (reserve). Berkshire's win, however, was not without controversy as it was unclear if the team, as a joint team, was eligible to win, as any CA Select team is not. A hastily convened Tournament Committee meeting on the final morning confirmed that they were eligible to win.

Holders Somerset got off to a good start and beat Notts on the first evening in what recently has been the title decider. However Ed Duckworth was not available for the last two days and so their challenge fell away.

Division one saw a number of third pairs with one test player partnered by a high bisquer. Glamorgan's Ian Burridge and Kevin Ham, Cheshire's David Maugham and Sylvia Steer and Essex's Robert and Susan Fulford. All three pairs won most of their games, with Burridge and Ham winning both matches against Cheshire and Essex and claiming the 'title' of best third pair. These pairings produced some interesting games: Ian Burridge top'ed Sylvia and pegged himself out leaving Kevin Ham on 2-back facing David Maugham on hoop 1. After something of a shooting match, Kevin triumphed.

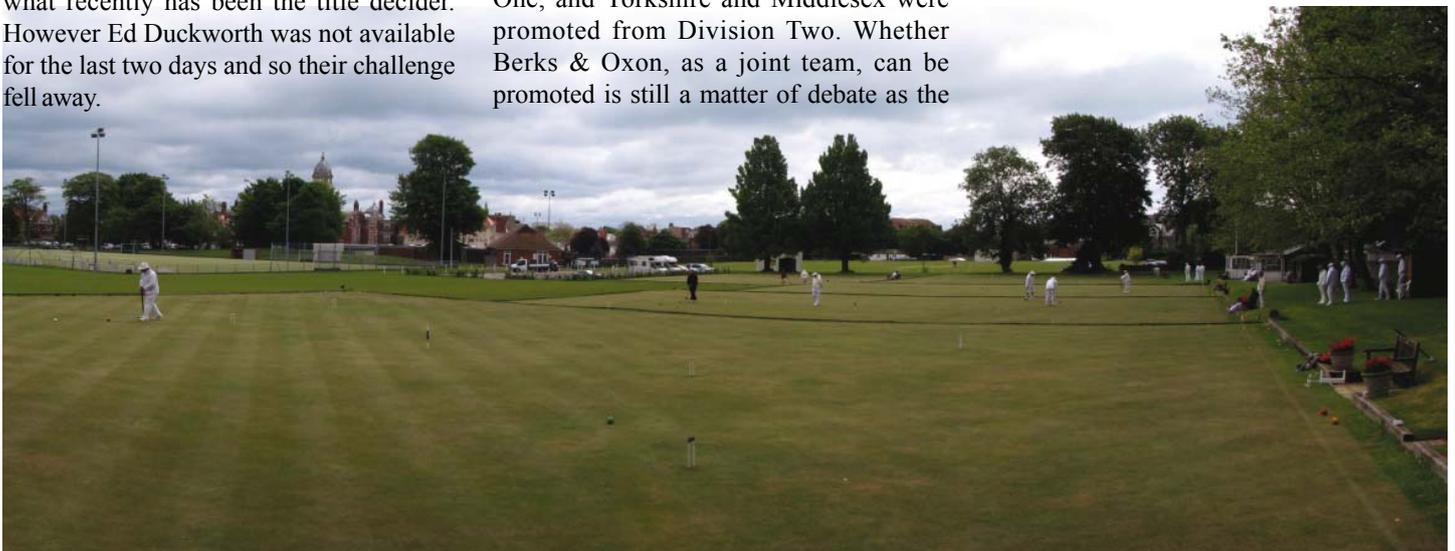
Against Essex Kevin went right round to peg and with hindsight should have pegged himself out. Rob set off on a multiple peeling turn getting Susan to 6. Ian eventually completed an all round 3 ball break to win.

The Channel Islands, Gloucestershire and Suffolk were relegated from Division One, and Yorkshire and Middlesex were promoted from Division Two. Whether Berks & Oxon, as a joint team, can be promoted is still a matter of debate as the

wording of the Inter County conditions is not entirely clear. The Tournament Committee will look at this at their next meeting, but it has sparked a lively debate on the Nottingham list with many views for consideration being put forward.

A new team entered the Counties this year following the drop out of Wiltshire. A second CA Select was proposed, but in the end Shropshire Plus made its debut. Shropshire intended to enter in 2013 with a full team but they were asked whether they could play in 2012 with five qualified players and one guest (Brian Hallam) who will be eligible in 2013.

Compared with the Diamond Jubilee weather in London and elsewhere, the tournament got off lightly: the weather was largely dry but a cool breeze predominated especially at Compton. The rain held off at Southwick until Tuesday afternoon when it was so wet that the presentation had to be held indoors. Prior the presentation of the Trophies at Sussex and Compton, a minute's silence was held for Dick Knapp of Surrey, who had died suddenly the week before.



Play in progress at Compton during the Inter-Counties. Photo by Alain Giraud

The catering and support from Sussex and Compton was of its usual high order and work involved in providing it was greatly appreciated by the players.

Results Tables

DIVISION 1

County	Played	Wins	Games
Nottinghamshire	10	9	21
Somerset	10	8	21
Glamorgan	10	6	18
Essex	10	6	16
Hertfordshire	10	6	15
Surrey	10	5	15
Lancashire	10	5	15
Cheshire	10	4	16
Channel Islands	10	3	11
Gloucestershire	10	2	10
Suffolk	10	1	7

DIVISION 2

County	Played	Wins	Games
Berks/Oxon	10	10	24
Yorkshire	10	7	20
Middlesex	10	7	20
Dorset	10	7	17
Bedfordshire	10	5	12
CA Select	10	4	16
Hampshire	10	4	13
Shropshire Plus	10	4	12
Kent	10	3	13
Sussex	10	2	11
Warwickshire	10	2	7

The Open Championships Cheltenham 7-15 July

Report by James Hopgood

The 2012 Association Croquet Open Championships might just be a key turning point in modern Association Croquet. Such a prediction is perhaps complete hyperbole, but I'll make it anyway simply because it's an interesting way to write a report, it gives a positive outlook for the next couple of years, and because you can't always take me seriously.

Due to the heavy rainfall across Britain, the 2012 Opens saw strategies for playing in easy conditions, apparently currently the norm in the UK, dealt with aplomb by increasing expertise in super-advanced tactics and the physical execution of the manoeuvres involved. The conditions generally meant that when a player obtained the innings, there would be few physical errors such as failed hoops or missed roquets, with the failure to complete peels in a potential finishing turn being the most likely cause for the out-player to have another opportunity in a game. In general then, one would expect that players who were strong in completing triples (TPs) were more likely to win their match – should they get the chance – for, with super-advanced offering an additional lift or contact, going to 4-back would likely see your opponent triple peel and peg you off (TPO) leaving one ball against two or, if you were playing Marcus Evans, one ball each. On the other-hand, if you are a particularly good shot, hitting back in immediately after yielding contact wins you the game, much to Keith Aiton's angst.

Nevertheless, the 2012 Opens hinted that simply being able to TP or TPO will not be sufficient to dominate this sport over the next few years under super-advanced rules; nor will being able to perform a standard sextuple (cross-wire at hoop 1) in normal advanced rules (rather passé now, don't you think?); nor will it be sufficient simply to sextuple starting at hoops 1 and 1b from either an arbitrary position or from a missed lift-shot in super-advanced. Rather, success in future major tournaments will be reliant on being able to finish from 3 and 1b, as the 2012 Opens Champion, Reg



Reg Bamford, a study in concentration. Paddy Chapman Takes a shot, watched by David Goacher. Photo by Dave Kibble. Photo by Prof Bernard Neal. Photo by Duncan Hector.

Bamford, demonstrated several times in stunning and devastating style.

Thirty-nine players participated in the Open Singles Championship, and thirty-two in the Opens Doubles, with a number of new faces, including rapid improver Nick Mounfield, Australian visitor Alison Sharpe, USA visitor Stephen Morgan, as well as other English players Robert Wilkinson, Alain Giraud and Richard M Smith, names probably familiar to readers, but who have recently improved their game dramatically.

The doubles consisted of a straight knock-out, although an innovation this year was to give first round losers multiple games in the Y-doubles through a Swiss on the first Sunday, with the top performing pairings going through to a knock-out later in the week. The final of the main knock-out was played under super-advanced rules, as perhaps hinted by the score line with James Death and Robert Fulford beating Mark Avery and David Maugham +12tpo(F), +12qpo(F). The Y-doubles were won by Christian Carter and Gabrielle Higgins, which included good wins over Patel and Dawson, and Foulser and Mundy in the knock-out.

The main singles event started with a qualification stage involving an eleven-round "Burrige Swiss" with twenty players qualifying to the knock-out. Compared with previous years, many more of the qualifying games were played as super-advanced, primarily because for the first time the entire main event was played

under super-advanced rules, so players wanted some practice. Unfortunately, while super-advanced usually gives another chance for the innings to change, some of the older Cheltenham lawns aren't sufficiently flat that the extra lift helped sufficiently, and there were still a fair number of +26 or +26tp results and a few upsets. Nevertheless, two non-qualifiers who had a disappointing week at least went on to win something, with Stephen Mulliner winning the Association plate, and James Hopgood winning the Z-knockout consolation event, with James earning a Platinum award along the way.

One noteworthy game in the Swiss was Death vs Evans, in which some pre-game banter involved Marcus suggesting James goes round to 4b second turn, Marcus will TPO him and have two balls off; which is what happened, although Marcus didn't get going third turn off the contact, and there with a missed shot by James fourth turn. The two ball end-game was interesting, ultimately leading to Marcus having a very stylish all round two-ball break to win. Also of particular note, were the exception performances of Richard Smith and Nick Mounfield who did very well to qualify to the knock-out, and then proceeded to win their first match beating Chris Williams and Jamie Burch, respectively. Nick will be exceptionally pleased to reach the quarter-finals of his first Opens, with an excellent win over a World-top-10 player. Thus, one "turning point" of the Opens is to see a number of new potential top players coming onto the scene, often in the younger age bracket.

The second turning point is a likely review of the format of the qualification stage of the Opens, for it became quite apparent that the sequence of early results in the Swiss can lead to discrepancies in the average strength of opponents met, giving some players an easier trajectory than others. This has led to a substantial post-Opens analysis which on the Nottingham Board email forum. While this debate might just be a blip in traffic, it looks likely there will at least some tweaks to the format for future years. The third turning point might likely be the acceptance of both easy conditions as well as super-advanced rules; the former simply because it is difficult to generate more challenging conditions in the UK, and the latter because it seems to counter the usual line of play seen in easy conditions.

There were a few notable incidences in the knock-out, but one of the most interesting days for watching play was Friday for the quarter-finals. First was seeing Marcus Evans put Reg Bamford under quite some pressure by taking the first two games in their best-of-five. Marcus generally gave contact by taking his first ball around to 4b with a couple of POPs on Reg's ball, and after Reg had done a leave from the contact, Marcus would immediately hit the 33 yard shot to get the innings back and finish. This perhaps is a perceived weakness with super-advanced in that, having given contact, your next shot is a free one in that it doesn't automatically lose you the game, but if hit, wins the game. Arguably this 33 yard shot is then a psychologically easier to take and thus more likely to be hit than if you were taking it to lose the game – if you miss, then depending on the opponents clip positions, you might be TPOed but you are still in the game.

In the meantime, while Marcus had Reg under the cosh, Martin Murray showed glimpses of his best with a quad peel against Robin Brown, while James Death was at his best fine exhibition form completing an octuplet in a super-advanced Z-game, ending in an extremely impressive straight sextuple, albeit one which might have had more pressure in a more serious game! Nevertheless, as Rob Fulford was rumoured to say, this was only the second best turn of the day, with the best turn coming from



by Christian Carter. Photos by Samir Patel. Seeing Double, Pete Christian Carter and Gabrielle Higgins receive their 'Y' doubles trophies

Reg after he got himself back into the match against Marcus: Reg demonstrated completing a sextuple starting at hoops 3 and 1b (Marcus having popped Reg's hoop 1 ball) with almost complete control ending in a straight-rover peel.

Thus, my fourth "turning point" is that while super-advanced has various advantages and disadvantages, it has undoubtedly provided new challenges to the game that players will rise to meet. This is ideal for the development of a sport, and shows some success to trying to change the rules of the game rather than hoping playing conditions will get more challenging (at least in the UK). As demonstrated in the quarter-final and final, Reg has clearly improved his game to meet these challenges, and therefore as a result I predict will dominate the sport for a good few years to come. To compete with Reg, one needs to develop their delayed-sextuple game.

Opens Results:

Doubles

JF Death & RI Fulford bt JP Dawson & SR Patel +26tp(F) +17tp(F), DJ Kibble & CN Williams bt AB Hope & M Murray +14 +26tp(K) DJ Goacher & PC Trimmer bt N Mounfield & RM Smith +4 +23tp(G) M Chapman & P Chapman bt C Carter & G Higgins -17 +7tpo(P) +17qnp(P) JA Burch & MT Evans bt DR Foulser & D Mundy +1 +20 KMH Aiton & JR Hopgood bt L Bradforth & GS Liddiard +17 +4 SN Mulliner & M Ormerod bt GW Noble & IG Vincent +26 +25tp(M) MN Avery & DB Maugham bt SN Mulliner & M Ormerod +25tp(M) +13tpo(M)

JF Death & RI Fulford bt DJ Kibble & CN Williams +15tp(D) +24sxp(F) DJ Goacher & PC Trimmer bt M Chapman & P Chapman -16qp(P) +8tp(P) +8, JA Burch & MT Evans bt KMH Aiton & JR Hopgood -23tp(A) +26tp(B) +26tp(B), MN Avery & DB Maugham bt SN Mulliner & M Ormerod +17 +15tp(A)

JF Death & RI Fulford bt DJ Goacher & PC Trimmer +26sxp(F) +267sxp(F)(3) MN Avery & DB Maugham bt JA Burch & MT Evans +25tp(M) +20tp(M)(3)

JF Death & RI Fulford bt MN Avery & DB Maugham +12tpo(F) +12qpo(F)(3)

Consolation Doubles

JP Dawson & SR Patel bt AB Hope & M Murray +25tp(D), C Carter & G Higgins bt N Mounfield & RM Smith +2, DR Foulser & D Mundy bt L Bradforth & GS Liddiard +23tp(F), GW Noble & IG Vincent bt AN Giraud & RJ Wilkinson +16tp(V), AB Hope & M Murray bt S Morgan & A Sharpe +17, JP Dawson & SR Patel bt DR Foulser & D Mundy +18, AN Giraud & RJ Wilkinson bt L Bradforth & GS Liddiard +10, JP Dawson & SR Patel bt GW Noble & IG Vincent +7tpo(P), DR Foulser & D Mundy bt N Mounfield & RM Smith +2, C Carter & G Higgins bt AB Hope & M Murray +26tp(C), L Bradforth & GS Liddiard bt S Morgan & A Sharpe +5, C Carter & G Higgins bt AN Giraud & RJ Wilkinson +15, N Mounfield & RM Smith bt GW Noble & IG Vincent +1.

Consolation Doubles KO

DR Foulser & D Mundy bt GW Noble & IG Vincent +16, C Carter & G Higgins bt JP Dawson & SR Patel +4C Carter & G Higgins bt DR Foulser & D Mundy +1(t) -23 +26

Singles KO

MN Avery bt JD Hector +20tp +24tp, RM Smith bt CN Williams +17 -12 +3tpo, MT Evans bt RJ Brown +15qp -6tp +26tp, SR Patel bt PC Trimmer +9tpo +12, RL Bamford bt M Chapman +25sxp +26sxp +25sxp, MT Evans bt SR Patel +26 -20tp +26sxp +12tpo, MR French bt JF Death -12 +18 +15 +6tp, DB Maugham bt DJ Goacher -17tp +19tp +19tp -11tpo +11tpo, P Chapman bt KMH Aiton -20tp +6tpo -16 +19 +9tp, N Mounfield bt JA Burch +17 +26 -17tp -21tp +17, MN Avery bt RM Smith +12 +5tp -19tp +2, RI Fulford bt JP Dawson +19sxp +11 +26sxp

RL Bamford bt MT Evans -18tp -18tp +17sxp +26sxp +26sxp, DB Maugham bt MR French +6tp +25tp +6, P Chapman bt N Mounfield +18sxp -24tp +25tp +26tp, RI Fulford bt MN Avery +12tpo +8tpo -26tp +13tpo.

RL Bamford bt DB Maugham +12tpo +16tp +14, RI Fulford bt P Chapman +16 +18sxp +26sxp

RL Bamford bt RI Fulford +25sxp -14tp +24sxp +24sxp

Plate Draw

SN Mulliner bt S Morgan +7, RJ Wilkinson bt G Higgins +26, M Ormerod bt CS Jones +3, DJ Kibble bt C Carter +14, IG Vincent bt D Mundy +9tp, JR Hopgood bt AN Giraud +17tp

A Sharpe bt M Murray +4, SN Mulliner bt DJ Goacher +25(3), RJ Brown bt RJ Wilkinson +22, CN Williams bt M Ormerod +26tp, M Chapman bt DJ Kibble +16, JP Dawson bt IG Vincent +25tp, GW Noble bt JR Hopgood +20tp, L Bradforth bt GS Liddiard +17.

SN Mulliner bt A Sharpe +12, CN Williams bt RJ Brown +16tp(3), M Chapman bt JP Dawson +26, GW Noble bt L Bradforth +17tp, SN Mulliner bt CN Williams +17(3), M Chapman bt GW Noble +11

SN Mulliner bt M Chapman +26tp

Plate Process

D Mundy bt S Morgan +7, M Ormerod bt GS Liddiard +23, A Sharpe bt GW Noble +16, SN Mulliner bt IG Vincent +26tp, CS Jones bt L Bradforth +18

C Carter bt M Murray +25, G Higgins bt JR Hopgood +13tp(3), D Mundy bt SR Patel +3tp, M Ormerod bt JD Hector +7, DJ Kibble bt A Sharpe +14, RJ Wilkinson bt AN Giraud +26tp, SN Mulliner bt JF Death +14tp(3), KMH Aiton bt CS Jones +12(3)

C Carter bt G Higgins +22, M Ormerod bt D Mundy +17, RJ Wilkinson bt DJ Kibble +26tp(3), SN Mulliner bt KMH Aiton +21(3)

M Ormerod bt C Carter +19, RJ Wilkinson bt SN Mulliner +23

RJ Wilkinson bt M Ormerod +20(3)

Plate Play-Off

SN Mulliner bt RJ Wilkinson +26sxp -19tp +26tp(3)

Z Knock Out

JF Death bt AN Giraud +26sxp, DJ Kibble bt PC Trimmer +14, CN Williams bt A Sharpe +5tp, JR Hopgood bt JD Hector +21tp

DJ Kibble bt JF Death +26tp, JR Hopgood bt CN Williams +17tp

JR Hopgood bt DJ Kibble +17tp

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Technical Matters

The Colours of Croquet Balls

by Lawrence Whittaker

The Laws of Association Croquet state that balls shall be coloured (blue, black, red and yellow, alternatively green, brown, pink and white, with other sets of colours being permissible) and the Laws of Golf Croquet also mention that striped balls are permitted, but no attempt is made to *specify* the colours. In other words, a ball shall be blue but there is no requirement as to *which* blue. For the most part this has not caused problems (except to those with *colour blindness*), but in some cases colours have faded with time and other balls have been confused when double banking is used. Thus a greenish blue has been confused with a bluish green, a reddish pink with a pinkish red, a dark green with black, and so on.

Some years ago now, the Chairman of the CA Equipment Committee, Alan Pidcock, wanted to deal with this problem by advising ball manufacturers which colours to use. He asked me to help, as—having worked as a scientist in the electric lamp industry—I knew something about the science of colour and had contacts who were experts in the field. This article summarises what we did. There was no attempt to add colour specifications to the Laws, as we did not wish to coerce clubs into changing balls for such a reason.

The aim was to formulate recommendations as to which ball colours are desirable. Although the colourfulness of the equipment is an attractive feature of croquet, the intention was not to recommend pretty colours so much as those which will not be confused with others. This is the approach used in specifying coloured lights used as transport signals on motor vehicles or at sea.

It was felt worthwhile to understand more about the colours of the balls which were in use. At the time, the three approved manufacturers were Barlow, Dawson and Sunshiny. New balls of each make were obtained and Dr Mike Pointer, an authority on colour science, generously offered to measure them on equipment at the National Physical Laboratory (NPL). NPL had designed apparatus which was particularly suitable, as part of their work on measuring the appearance of

manufactured objects. As with all fundamental measurements of colour, the (reflected) radiation is quantitatively measured in narrow wavelength bands of the spectrum between 380 nm and 780 nm. For those not familiar with the wavelengths of the visible spectrum, blue light is around 450 nm, green around 520 nm, yellow around 590 nm and red around 650 nm. Advantages of the NPL equipment were that it could sample small areas of the ball surface and had as the illuminating source a small xenon flashlamp which gave a good approximation to daylight.

An early outcome of the NPL measurements was that all the black and white balls were found to be satisfactory. The black balls had a broadly uniform spectral reflectance at all wavelengths. Ideally, no light at all would be reflected. With one make, the reflectance was just 0.7%, with another 1.6% and with the third 2.3%. All were satisfactory, with their computed colours (*'chromaticities'*) close to an ideal black. White balls should ideally reflect all the radiation, i.e. have a reflectance of 100%. At wavelengths longer than 500 nm, the reflectances were fairly uniform, one make being 90%, another 85% and the third 60%. At shorter wavelengths, there was more absorption but all were satisfactorily 'white' and it was considered that neither black nor white posed problems which required further specification from the CA.

Figures 1 and 2 show how the spectral reflectances vary with wavelength for the yellow and green balls, as examples. For the yellow balls (Fig. 1) there is a cut off below 550 nm and fairly uniform reflectance at longer wavelengths. As they reflect more, the balls represented by the green and blue curves appear brighter—more colourful—than the ball represented by the red curve. Dr Pointer advised that the more colourful balls would be more resistant to colour confusion if the lighting conditions changed.

Fig. 1: Spectral reflectances of Yellow croquet balls

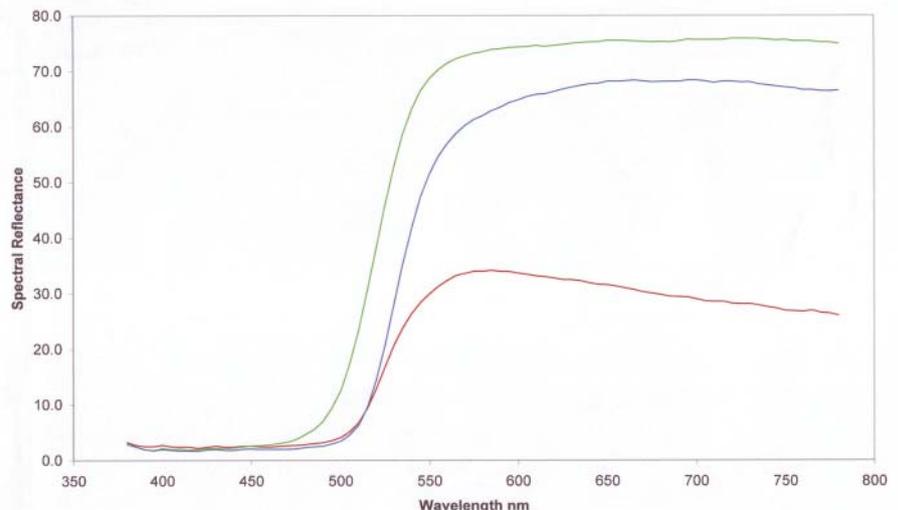
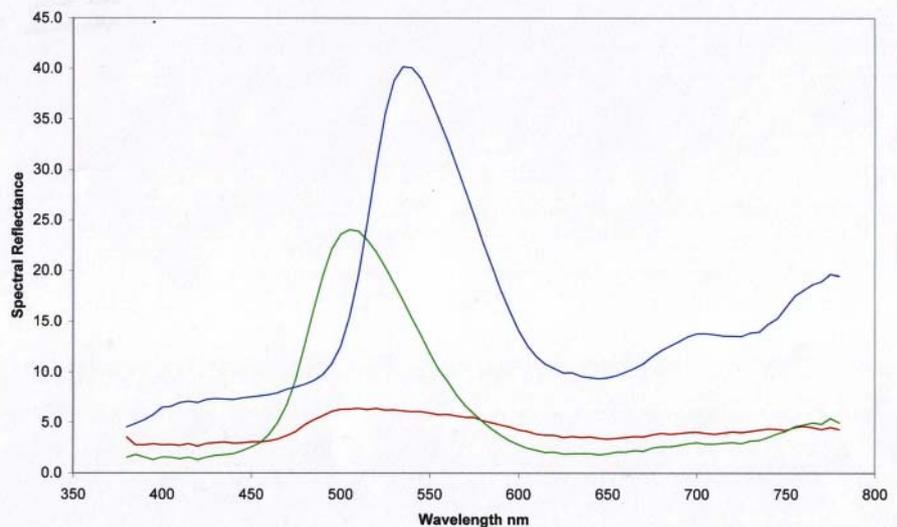


Fig. 2: Spectral reflectances of Green croquet balls



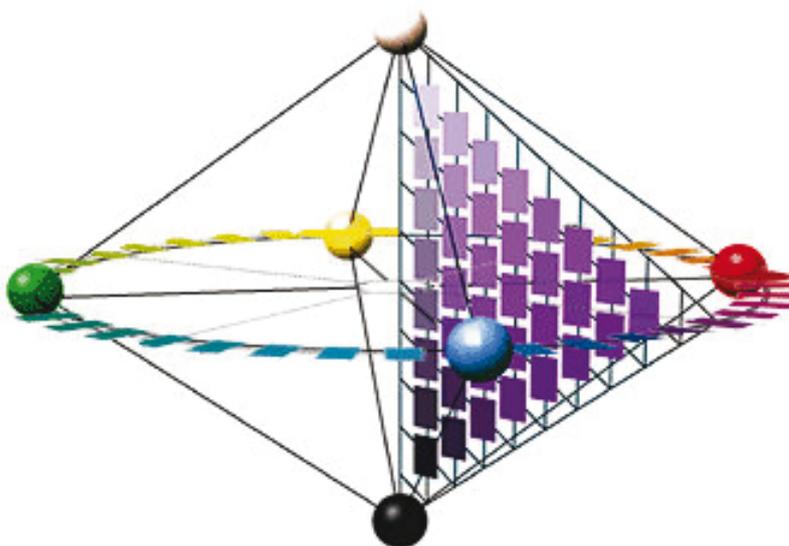
The reflectances of the green balls (Fig. 2) peak for 'green' light, as expected, but there is a surprising range of values. The blue curve is the most colourful ball, which will be resistant to confusion even though its chromaticity is that of a slightly yellowish green, because of the high reflectances at longer wavelengths. The red curve, on the other hand, has a low reflectance at all wavelengths and is such a dark green that it may well be confused with other dark balls.

A *spectroradiometer* such as that at the NPL is expensive to build and also expensive to maintain, as it needs frequent re-calibration. Such an instrument was not a practical proposition for the CA. We decided that in order to have a practical system, we need to use coloured samples which were readily available and which could be matched visually to the colours of balls. In order to specify ranges of colours, the possible colours must be arranged in a logical order in a *colour space* or *colour solid*. Several such methods of ordering colours have been developed, the best known being the Munsell system. However, the Munsell *colour atlas* is not widely available, costs about £800 to buy and individual Munsell colour samples are also relatively expensive. Moreover, the Munsell system is not easy to use in assessing ranges of acceptable colours. We chose to use the *Natural Colour System* (NCS) devised by the Scandinavian Colour Institute. This system is more intuitive to use and has the advantage that it is used by various paint manufacturers, who print acceptable colour samples which are available through their distributors. A description of the system can be found at <http://www.handprint.com/HP/WCL/color7.html#ncs>.

The NCS is a descriptive system. Each colour is described by the extent to which it resembles the "elementary" colours. There are four *chromatic* colours in which no trace of any other chromatic colour can be seen, i.e. red, yellow, green and blue. In addition, there are two *achromatic* colours, black and white, which contain no trace of the chromatic colours. Any given colour can have resemblances to two chromatic colours plus black and white. A particular purple, for example, could have 60% resemblance to red and 40% resemblance to blue. It would then have a *hue* of R40B ('between red and blue, with 40% blue'). However, there are a large number of R40B colours, being pale or dark (their resemblance to white or black) and having more or less colour. A full

description therefore includes the *blackness*, S, and the *chromaticness* (degree of resemblance to the chromatic colour), C. So the full description of a colour takes the form S 1040-R40B. This is a light purple of 10% blackness and 40% chromaticness. The framework of the colour solid representing the NCS system is shown in Fig. 3

Fig. 3: Geometrical framework of the NCS colour model



With the aid of colour samples from paint manufacturers, I constructed an NCS Atlas showing a wide range of possible colours. An example sheet for the hue Y90R ('ninety percent red with a hint of yellow') is shown in Fig. 4. The colours change from an almost pure red at high chromaticness to pink (as the amount of whiteness increases) and almost to brown (moving to high blackness with some chromaticness). The chip marked with a black border would be specified as S 2030-Y90R.

Fig. 4: NCS colour triangle for the hue Y90R

Independently, Alan Pidcock and I surveyed the atlas and estimated the boundaries where confusion might arise for the colours we normally use in croquet. We compared our results and were in close agreement. The observations were made in daylight (not sunny) in Leicester and in Preston, and Alan and I have normal colour vision. We chose what we think are the best ranges for croquet balls of the usual primary and secondary colours and advised the manufacturers, who were glad to have the guidance. The CA Equipment Committee can assess balls against the recommendations on request. Our recommendations are:

Blue

Hues between B and R80B (inclusive), with S less than 50 and C greater than or equal to 50. Aim for S 1560-R90B to S 2060-R90B.

Red

Hues between R and Y95R, with S less than 30 and C greater than or equal to 70.

Yellow

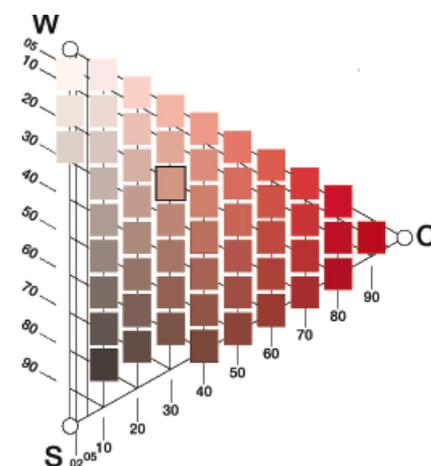
Hues between G90Y and Y10R, with S less than 10 and C approximately 80.

Green

Hues between B90G and G10Y, with S less than 40 and C greater than 50.

Pink

Hues between Y90R and R20B, with S less than 20 and C less than or equal to 50.



Brown

Hues between Y30R and Y80R, with S between 30 and 50 and C between 20 and 60.

We supplied the manufacturers with coloured chips for a sample of these colours. Unfortunately, the uncertainties of the colour printing process mean that I cannot risk having them printed in the *Gazette!* Those of you visiting Cheltenham can ask to see the samples deposited in the CA Office. Alternatively, you can obtain colour sample cards from stockists of *Leyland* or *Johnstone's*

paints. The cards are not arranged like the atlas, but the NCS descriptions are given and I can tell you which cards to get.

This article has not dealt with the problems of the colour defective—those with colour ‘blindness’. Comments made on the Nottingham List over the years suggest that their requirements may not necessarily be consistent with those of the normal population. The ranges of acceptable colours are already quite small and additional requirements will be difficult to meet. I suspect that having patterned balls (stripes, checks, etc), rather than different colours, may be the best solution for colour defectives.

New Federation Events

THE SOUTHERN CHALLENGE

Report by Bill Arliss

Dulwich and Merton take the Honours in the First Southern Challenge

It appears in some quarters there is a belief that Golf Croquet generally leads to non-competitive play. However this belief would have been hard to swallow for those around Southwick and Surbiton on the weekend of 7/8 July when the inaugural Southern Challenge was played.

The Southern Challenge is a major new GC event run under the auspices of the SE Federation following an idea from the Sussex County Croquet Club. It is a level play GC team event based on the very successful format used for the GC Inter Counties Championship and involves teams of four playing several rounds over the weekend, each round being one game of doubles and two games of singles. The three games are treated as one match with possible winning scores of 3-0 or 2-1. Tournament instructions ensure that all players have to play an approximate equal number of singles and doubles throughout the event, thus preventing two elite players from winning every round for their club. To allow development of player skills within the clubs, the event was run as two divisions with a promotion and relegation procedure each year. Substitutes were allowed and this provided the opportunity for clubs to bring in new players with little or no previous tournament experience and several clubs took advantage of this situation.

Although this event was run by the SECF, it was open to any club in the UK. However the event was specifically targeted at players who could travel daily to the venue or would need one night of accommodation.

The initial plans were made for a maximum of ten teams in division one at Southwick and a maximum of six teams at Surbiton. These numbers were based on the number of lawns available and without the use of any ‘bye’ rounds. It was strongly felt that the first division numbers should be maximised to allow top class play to be available to as wide a field as possible. It is now very pleasing to report that all places were taken and many thanks to all the clubs that supported this new event.

At Southwick with ten teams, the initial play format was an all play all, giving us a total of nine rounds, seven of which were played on the Saturday. Ramsgate, led by James Goodbun were the initial leaders with five straight wins and Dulwich with only one loss to Ramsgate were just behind them. Sussex started rather badly



The successful Dulwich team with the division one trophy.

with two losses in the first three rounds but then rallied to take out Ramsgate, 2-1 in round 6. At the completion of round nine, the teams were all ranked in position on match wins and then game wins and divided into top four, second four and bottom two. Luckily the figures produced a clean listing with no intervention necessary from the manager. The two groups of four then played each other for a second time but with the added restriction that no player was allowed to play either two singles or two doubles in the two games against each opponent.

The top four in ranked order were Dulwich Sussex Ramsgate and Tunbridge Wells, the second four Ryde Woking Compton and Phylliss Court with West Worthing and Littlehampton making up the bottom pair.

Both Dulwich and Sussex started their final campaign well with wins over Tunbridge Wells and Ramsgate but in the next round Ramsgate upset the status quo by beating Dulwich 2-1. This opened up the field for a final showdown between Sussex and Dulwich; winner takes all. Although the final score was 3-0 to Dulwich, it was still quite a struggle. Simon Carter gained his singles win over Sussex's Richard Brooks with a double bounce over both Richard's balls to run hoop 13 and the doubles match was only settled on hoop 12.

Meanwhile at Surbiton a slightly different format was used with the smaller numbers. In this case the teams were scheduled to play each other twice, which provided a total of ten initial rounds. Similar tournament instructions required the players in each team to alternate between singles and doubles as they played each team for the second time.

When all initial rounds were completed, the pairings for the



Merton celebrate their win in division two

final two rounds were Merton and Canterbury, both with eight match wins but Merton having a slight advantage of an extra two games won. The second pairing was Sydenham and Caterham, with Sydenham starting with a 2 wins advantage. The final pairing was Medway and Surbiton.

Merton were really flying and ensured theirs would be the first name on the salver with two 3-0 wins against Canterbury. Caterham had a last minute rally with two 2-1 wins which allowed them to match the Sydenham total but their net games were just too low to allow them into third position. Medway and Surbiton shared the honours in the final play off but Medway retained fifth place with two additional wins.

Because the initial support for this event was so good and the feedback afterwards extremely positive, a quick review of the main features of this event may be very beneficial in view of the declining numbers in our national events.

- Minimise costs by targeting those who can travel to the event daily (only 11 players in the first division required one nights B&B)
- Choose a proven and popular format (very good experience with the Inter Counties format)
- Team competitions are very popular at the grass roots as it allows development of the newer players. (Also team competitions mean car sharing and further reduced costs)
- With GC it is easy to make the event level play as this allows

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the more competent players to have a good fight for the title whilst at the same time still giving very enjoyable play for the lesser able players. The handicap ranges in the first division were 0 to 7 and 3 to 12 in the second division.

In our view the success of this event sends one very clear message; competitive croquet is most certainly not dying but growing at local level in the SE and GC can be just as competitive as AC players. This format may not be the total answer but it is an excellent way of making tournament play attractive to the new player.

EAST MIDLANDS 'C' CLASS GC TOURNAMENT AT NOTTINGHAM

Report by Eileen Buxton (Manager) & Jennet Blake (Referee)

In his commentary on the recent CA Survey Report, Kevin Carter suggested that a very low proportion of non-Associates play in tournaments within their own region. This is unsurprising as there are few attractive tournaments for GC players with handicaps above 8. It is these players that the CA wants to encourage to become competitive, but has not suggested how this should be achieved.

Aware of the problem, we suggested to our East Midlands Federation AGM that we should run a 'C' class tournament at Nottingham Club where GC players with a higher handicap could make a direct entry. This was run as a Federation event on May 30th with 24 entries from seven Clubs. For some players it was their first venture into tournament play, also for playing at a venue with eight full-size lawns, which are flat and play true,

The format was devised to allow the whole tournament to be played comfortably in a day with play in four blocks in the morning and two rounds in the afternoon to determine the winner and all twenty-four places. Dorothy Evans of Bakewell Club took the trophy, with Mike White, also of Bakewell, was runner-up with Nottingham member, Sandy Brown, taking third place.

The players were very enthusiastic about the tournament and have asked for another next year. We were fortunate with the weather, the courts played well and everyone expressed their thanks for the magnificent lunch laid on by two Nottingham members.

We would like to encourage all Federations to provide 'C' class GC tournaments as a way of producing more competitive players from the ranks of those with high handicaps. Perhaps the CA could give a lead in this through the working group set up to look into the activities of the Federations.

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Club News



Woking team left: Michael Hague, Malcolm Bigg, Mike Town and Gill McDiarmid. West Worthing team right: Keith Webb, Maggie Webb, Stella Russel, (Photo by Ken Dance).

West Worthing

by Maggie Webb

West Worthing C.C. is a new club that has reached its second year with a lot of help and support from Mr. Michael Hague for which we thank him. Having over fifty members we were looking for some form of shelter near the lawns. Woking Croquet Club kindly offered us their redundant equipment hut at no charge provided we could dismantle it and arrange transport. All went smoothly apart from having to make two trips as we had left the door behind!

We were delighted that we had drawn Woking in the Golf level league and could welcome them to West Worthing and show them not only how we had adapted their kind donation but also had a very enjoyable day.



West Buckland

by Andrew Watkinson-Trim

Nestling in North Devon on the edge of Exmoor, West Buckland School is the setting for R.F. Delderfield's famous Public School novel "To Serve Them All My Days" as well as producing sporting heroes like Jonathan Edwards CBE (triple jump), Victor Ubogo (rugby)

and Bertie Hill (equestrian). Now it has turned its attention to another sphere of sporting endeavour with the commencement of its own Croquet Club under the enthusiastic organisation of its new School Chaplain, Andrew Watkinson-Trim.

Help and advice from the Croquet Association via Adam Wimshurst has led to a much needed start-up kit for the club's thirty or so members, while both Exmoor Croquet Club and Barnstaple Croquet Club have visited the school and helped to generate a real buzz of interest.

The photograph bottom left shows students and members of these clubs snatched from the middle of a match to pose for a quick picture during our recent Olympics Day – when the Croquet lawns were busy all day with families keen to have a go at both Golf and Garden versions of the game.

Croquet in Malta

Earlier this season the Worcester Norton Croquet club visited Malta and played at the new Malta Club. The week was a mixture of croquet and holiday, and Worcester Norton will be hosting a return match next year. The Worcester Norton players pictured here L to R are Graeme Holland, Kathy Holland, Richard Raby, Justin Davies, Jacqui Raby, Denis Rawling, Rose Taylor and Janet Rawling.



Croquet comes to Cheam

by Ian Cobbold

Cheam was the site of Henry VIII's Nonsuch Palace. In the last century it was the fictional home of Tony Hancock. Now Cheam is the home of a brand new Croquet and Bowls Club with 85 members, over 70 of whom play croquet.

Recent issues of the Gazette have featured letters with positive and negative stories about Clubs' experiences with Local Councils. Cheam has a largely positive story to tell.

A bowls club in Cheam Park was shutting up shop because the London Borough of Sutton was no longer prepared to pay to maintain a lawn for a club with under 30 members. [Most of the members were elderly and they could not meet the Council's request either to maintain the lawn themselves or pay a much bigger rent.

Enterprisingly, the Council decided to approach the CA to see if it was interested in setting up a croquet club on the site. The CA passed the enquiry on to Michael Hague as the South East Croquet Federation's Development Officer. Michael knew of three members of the Reigate Priory Club who live in Cheam and asked them if they were interested in helping to form a club, receiving

positive responses from all three – John Timberlake and Ian and Jean Cobbold. When Michael first visited the site he happened to meet a member of the bowls club who was interested in keeping the club going and so the idea of a croquet and bowls club was born.

A steering committee was formed, chaired by Michael and including a member of the Council's Parks Department, to look at the practicalities. How many members would be needed for the club to be viable? Could the club maintain the lawn and clubhouse itself or pay for assistance? What rent would the Council charge? How would the club be promoted? There were many questions.

Michael recommended fixing a date for a public meeting and if enough people – 35 to 40 – signed up the Club would be up and running; if not there would be no club. The meeting was fixed for 27th March and a taster weekend arranged for the previous Saturday and Sunday. Jean Cobbold took charge of publicity and with the help of grants of £200 from the CA and £75 from the SECF was able to pay for the printing of posters and handbills and adverts in the local paper. All three Ward Councillors were very supportive and the Council arranged to display handbills in libraries and sports centres and to publicise the club in its magazine which was delivered to every household in the borough. The local paper sent a photographer to take some shots before the taster weekend and included an article and photograph in its printed edition and more photos on its website.



Taster weekend at Cheam with bowls and croquet on the same lawn.

The taster weekend was held on one of the those sunny March weekends and by the end of the Sunday about 100 people had visited the lawn to try their hand at croquet or bowls and 40 had signed membership forms and paid their subscriptions. The meeting on the following Tuesday was well attended and when Michael asked for a show of hands of those wanting to join about 40 people puts their hands up. It then turned out that most of those were in addition to the 40 who had already signed up! Michael decided that all those present should be allowed to join but there would immediately be a waiting list for membership for anybody else. The Club therefore started with a membership far in excess of the recommended number for a one lawn club.

The Council offered the Club a lease at £1,800 per annum but the rent is waived if the Club allows some access to members of the public to play croquet and bowls, provides a croquet coaching course and holds a day to promote the two games.

The biggest challenges will be maintenance of the lawn and clubhouse but a number of members have put their names down to

help and to undertake other activities necessary to make the club thrive. One of the local Ward Councillors has obtained a grant from the Council to help the Club install a hot water system and some security shutters. In approving the grant the Councillors were impressed by the possibility of the Club being able to apply to the CA for some matched funding. Not everything is plain sailing as the terms of the lease have still to be agreed with the Council and we need to discuss with them the recently received condition reports on the buildings which show them to be in a poorer state of repair than expected due to the low level of maintenance over the last few years.

It is very early days for the Club and the weather has kept attendance down so far. Almost all the members have played no more than garden croquet, often many years ago, so they will start with Golf Croquet, but one session of Association is being held weekly for those who have played it before or want to learn. Almost all the members are of retirement age. The club is fortunate to have qualified Golf and Association coaches amongst the handful of members who are also members of other clubs. Friendly matches beckon later in the summer and next year we hope to be able to enter a team in the SECF Golf Handicap League.



Photo: Jacob Carr, recently selected for the forthcoming World Golf Croquet Team Championships, in play at Ripon

Ripon Spa Hotel Croquet Club

by Maggie Cowan

The Club has approximately 20 regular playing members and an additional number of Associate members who give their support to Club activities. We play ten "friendly" matches each season against other clubs in the North region which are all played in doubles format and are open to any member who wishes to take part. There is also one team playing in the Yorkshire Federation Golf Croquet League and its Team Tournament. Members take part in the nationally run Top of the Tree, Centre Stage and All England Handicap Singles tournaments. The Club runs a number of in house tournaments for Golf croquet in the form of a doubles, singles and a short lawn tournament and there are also two short lawn Association tournaments during the season, but most members prefer Golf Croquet.

The RSHCC hosts a number of Open tournaments including the Women's Open Golf Croquet Championships in May which is now in its 11th year, the 3rd Women's Open Doubles in August, the

17th Yorkshire International, also in August, and the 7th Black Sheep doubles in September.

The Club is attached to the Ripon Spa Hotel so is able to accommodate visiting groups who wish to stay a few days and hire the courts for their own use as well as provide social sessions with refreshments for any group wishing to arrange a taster session of croquet. These are run by Fergus Thompson assisted as necessary by volunteer club members.

The Club also has two social events each season: a Summer Social at the beginning of the season in May and an End of Season Social to round things off in November.



Littlehampton Win West Sussex Croquet Cup

by Michael Holdsworth

On Sunday, 15 July – almost the only fine day of the summer – Littlehampton Croquet Club beat eight competitors at the Sportsfield to win the Centenary Cup for the first time. They had 13½ wins to close rivals Angmering’s 12½. Littlehampton B were third with 11½. The other teams taking part were Chichester and Fishbourne, Crawley, Rother Valley, Sussex County (Southwick), West Chilington, West Worthing and Worthing.

The trophy was instituted in 2009 to commemorate the host’s first hundred years and is restricted to clubs within the County of West Sussex. The photograph above by Geoff Greatorex shows Littlehampton Mayor, Emma Neno, with both Littlehampton teams.

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Tournament Round-Up



Ken Wheeler, Chairman of Hunstanton, presents Martin French with the Lord Fermoy Cup. Photo by Nick Harris

Robert Prichard Weekend, Hunstanton 6-8 May

Report by Nick Harris

Martin French won the Prichard Open Weekend at Hunstanton and the Lord Fermoy Cup with 7 wins from 8 games, his only loss was to the Manager/Reporter who also managed to be the runner up with 6 from 7. In addition, Martin’s +19 win over Ian Vincent mean that the WCF and Ipswich Secretary defeated the CA and Nottingham Secretary to also win the “Secretary’s’ Shield”.

Fewer games were played this year, mainly due to Mark Avery being away in Australia, the FA Cup Final and various other end of season play-offs that distracted several fans. Another game was lost when Tim Dutton phoned at 9.35 am on the Saturday to tell his opponent, Martin French who was warming up, that he had overslept and he hadn’t left home (somewhere near London) yet!

The weather was generally poor and like “the Colds” cold and wet, which made the brand new balls look very shiny. Lawns were flat and green with the usual boundaries and the hoops were well set by the Club. The Rot complimented the hoop-setters on a job well done – all he really needed to do was check there were six hoops on each lawn. As a result (of well set hoops not to the fact that there were 6 hoops on each Lawn) several games went to time – one went well over the time but then “Fingers” Eardley properly finished it. However he didn’t find everything to his liking and was often heard growling at the balls. I would ask that the CA Soubriquet Committee change “Fingers” to “Fingrrrrs!” at their next meeting.

As usual the welcome at Hunstanton was excellent and we were very well catered for. We missed Tom and Judy Anderson as Judy was unwell and unable to travel, a “get well quickly” card was sent, signed by all.

Budleigh Week 7-12 May

Report by Charles Townshend

The Budleigh Salterton Croquet Club Spring Tournament was held last week with 41 players taking part in some or all of the events. We welcomed a good number of visitors from around the

country who joined more from the West Country, many on home turf.

The Mixed Doubles started the week on Monday with 14 pairs competing for the Daldry Cups. First round winners continued in the Knockout which had strong local interest as the final pairings were Elaine Norsworthy and Jackie Hardcastle from Budleigh against Brian Pollock from Budleigh and Richard Wainman from Cheltenham. The game was played on Saturday afternoon with spectators enjoying the tussle which gave Elaine and Jackie victory by five points. First round losers reached a final which saw four Sidmouth members competing. Derek Andrew and Philip Harris overcame Peter Miller and Graham Harford and earned themselves a bottle of wine each.

On Tuesday 26 players met in singles matches in the Open Handicap Knockout. Martin Yates of Budleigh came up against Alain Giraud of Ealing in the final. Alain has a handicap of -0.5 while Martin is a 12 so had 12½ bisques available to him to assist him in his struggle against a formidable opponent. He reached the peg with one ball and hoop 6 with the other before the ammunition ran out. Alain had already gone to 4-back with one ball and soon expertly finished the game to win +8 and collect an inscribed glass goblet.

The main competition event is the Class Singles with players split up according to handicap into 6 blocks and having games against the others in that section. The A Block was a strong one with ten players on handicaps ranging from -1 to 1.5 giving them 9 games to complete. By Friday evening the winner of the Godfrey Turner Challenge Cup had to be Alain Giraud who had already completed 8 wins. He had still to play Cliff Jones on Saturday in his final game. In the event Cliff won that after Alain had made a good start with his first ball round to 4-back, and was already making progress when he failed at the 6th hoop attempting to do the second peel on his triple. Cliff was playing as deftly as ever and completed a triple himself to prevent Alain enjoying a clean sweep. Nine triple peels were completed during the week, a reflection of the good standard of competition in this block. Cliff and Dave Mundy finished on 7 wins apiece, and Bob Burnett and Martin Granger-Brown on 5.

The B Block of 6 players finished with Elaine Norsworthy and Michael Lester both of Budleigh on 4 wins each and Michael going into a final against the winner of the C block on the strength of his victory over Elaine. His opponent was Richard Williamson of Bristol who won all six of his games and defeated Michael in the final 2-0 in a best of three match to earn the Woodlands Quaich. Runners up to Richard were Adam Wimshurst and Brian Shorney of Budleigh on 4 each.

The D and E blocks both produced clear winners in Roger Hendy and Graham Harford both of Sidmouth who met in their final which gave Roger victory and the right to hold the J.K. Brown Memorial Cup for the year. The F Block for the Pat Tunmer Cup saw another clean sweep of victories and Roger Mills as the outright winner.

Jackie Hardcastle and Philip Harris both achieved their CA Silver Awards with breaks of 12 hoops in a single turn. Handicap reductions saw Alain Giraud following his recent reduction to -0.5 earning a further improvement to -1, a worthy result from his consistent performance. Cliff Jones went from scratch to -0.5, Richard Williamson from 4.5 to 4 and Ian Friedlander from 10 to 9.

The trophies were presented by Jack Smith, our new Club Chairman. Alain as the winning player in the A class event thanked the manager, Julie Horsley, for the smooth running of the Week. He congratulated the club on the condition of the lawns that had withstood the wet weather well in the middle of the week, and appreciated the hoop-setters, caterers and bar helpers, who had helped ensure a most enjoyable tournament.



Phyllis Court pretty in pink at their heat for the charity one ball. Photo by Chris Roberts

Winchester Charity One-Ball Final 12th May 2012

Report by Kevin Carter

The nineteenth Charity One-ball Championship, at Winchester on 12th May, was won by Andrew Rutland, the qualifier from the Parsons Green heat, playing off a handicap of 24, having only started playing last year.

22 players gathered at Winchester for the final, after 28 heats had been organised around the country during this very wet spring. Fittingly the sun shone on the competitors' whites – all to some extent adorned with pink, in recognition of the chosen charity, the Breast Cancer Campaign. £2500 was raised from the 358 players who contested heats and after adding in Gift Aid the charity will benefit by more than £3000.

Handicaps ranged from -1.5 to +24 and for some this was a first ever tournament. Nonetheless we had a brisk start and were able to complete the fourth round of the Swiss before lunch. At that point local player Keith Mackenzie-Ross (8) and John Knight (18) of Reigate (contesting his third final), were unbeaten, with eight others on just one loss – including two previous winners, Lionel Tibble (-1.5) and Roger Barnacle (now playing off 6, rather than the 18 of his 2010 victory).

During the afternoon the leaders played off against one another, but Keith retained his unbeaten status up to 7/7.

Andrew Rutland, the Parsons Green qualifier, emerged as his last rival, on 6/7, while John Knight and Southwick's Robin Wootton (14) – both on 5/7 – fought for 3rd place. In a thrilling final Keith played very precisely to build a lead, but Andrew's five bisques allowed him to claw back the deficit. Andrew's ball was positioned four feet in front of rover with Keith in front of penult. Andrew's ball pinged through but what now? His inexperience showed when he stopped behind rover. Now all Keith had to do was run penult hard enough to go beyond rover and pick him up. He caught a thick wire but still had a shot.... and missed. Andrew trickled up to the peg, Keith missed his last shot from the boundary and it was all over.

Prizes were presented by Michael Goodman, there to support his wife, Pat, who qualified from Dulwich. Michael recalled that the last time he was in Winchester was in the Crown Court. He hastened to add he was not in the dock; he was sitting on the bench, as judge! Engraved goblets were won by Robin Wootton,

who was third, and Keith Mackenzie-Ross for his runner-up position. The winner, Andrew Rutland, collected an engraved lead crystal decanter for his magnificent win.

Tunbridge Wells Golf Croquet Weekend 12- 13 May

Report by Jon Diamond

Following 6 weeks of what feels like continuous rain, the sun shone (mostly) on the select bunch of players who wended their way to Tunbridge Wells last weekend. Sadly, 2 of the 3 lawns were water-logged at the start of play, so it was a bit of a squeeze playing on one lawn for the first day. However, the lawns themselves were in great condition, if a little slower than the players would have liked.

Everybody won at least 6 games, which shows how evenly matched the players were, but the surprise of the event was Duncan Cox, from Tunbridge Wells, who, although having a handicap of 5, managed to win 6 of his 13 games against players with handicaps 1 and 2. When he learns how to play jump shots he'll be even more successful!

The winner was Jon Diamond from Tunbridge Wells (who also managed the tournament and ensured the fine weather, as well as the cakes for tea), with 10 wins from 15 games.

Letchworth Handicap Tournament 16-17 May

Report by Keith Rhodes

In spite of the necessary three hour time limit, with eight players playing five games over two days, only one game went to time. Brian Havill (18) was the star turn on Day One in warm and pleasant conditions, winning all three of his games quite emphatically. Unfortunately he wasn't free to play on the second day, so we'll never know what might have been.

Day Two was cooler but stayed dry, and by the final round three people were still in with a chance, having won three out of their four matches. Robin Barry (10) beat Quiller Barrett (9) +3 in a game that could have gone either way until the last turn, and Mike Bowser (3½) was beaten by Keith Rhodes (6) +3 despite having taken an early lead. That left Keith & Robin with four out of five wins but, as they hadn't played each other during the event, the decider came down to hoop difference with Keith Rhodes just making it by +29 to +19. It's a bit of an embarrassment winning in your home tournament, especially when you're also the manager, but results were checked and adjudged fair and proper!

Thanks to all those who helped before and during the tournament, and also to the grounds team for presenting the lawn in such a magnificent condition once again.

Wrest Park Handicap Tournament 18-20 May

Report by John Bevington

The tournament provided further evidence regarding the decline in tournament attendance – there were only 14 entrants and six of these were Wrest Park members. Of the rest, Nick Evans and Mike Hills travelled down from Northampton, Ken Pickett and Wendy Spencer-Smith came up from Enfield. David Gillett is almost an honorary member, having relatives living close by; Heather Bennett made the journey from St Albans, Jonathan Toye from Downham Market and Kevin Ham all the way from Cardiff. Handicaps ranged from 20 to 0, with half the players on 3½ or fewer. The lawns were in good condition, although one was still feeling the effects of all the recent rain and was left alone. The weather was grim throughout: cold and damp with the merest flicker of sun. There was a run on

soup at lunchtime, and your reporter took to lacing his coffee with a tot of rum.

Heather (20) had been encouraged to enter the tournament after playing in the East Anglian Federation Champions Day event a month earlier. She lost her first game against manager Eric Audsley, who then took her to one side for some practical advice on how to best deploy her array of bisques. Just what was said remains unrecorded, but it obviously had the desired effect as she proceeded to win six of her seven remaining games, losing only to David Gillett and recording two scores of +22 and +26 in the process. Impressive as this was, she was pipped as winner overall by club member David Marsh (3), who continued his good form of last season by winning seven of his eight games, his only loss being to Heather, and gaining yet another handicap reduction.

Time limits of ¾ hours and shortened games for large aggregate handicaps, coupled with the easy pace and not too challenging hoops, meant that only one game went to time, in which Kevin Ham (4½) beat John Bevington (1) +3 – a game which, like quite a few others, featured a pegged-out ending. Geoff Strutt took this tactic to extremes in using several bisques to peel John through the last two hoops before pegging him out, winning +7 after John missed the pioneer at 1-back when set up with a 3-ball break. John was also involved in Wendy Spencer-Smith's (16) only win after a run of narrow losses, when she got the first ball round with a few bisques and carried on to win +24.

In David and Heather's wake were Nick, Kevin and David Gillett with five wins, John, Geoff and Rod Ashwell with four, Jon, Mike, Ken and Eric with three and George Collin with two. Our thanks to Vic Rees, Sally Marsh and club chairman Tim Brewer for keeping everyone fed and watered. There is another handicap tournament in September, and the weather can only get better.

Pendle & Craven B level 19-20 May

Report by Fergus McInnes

Twelve players gathered at the Pendle & Craven Club on a dry but mostly cold and cloudy weekend for the club's 2012 B-Level tournament. The contestants came from as far afield as Gloucestershire and Edinburgh, and their handicaps

ranged from Liz Wilson's 2 to Howard Bowron's 8. Four of the five lawns were in use – the fifth having a large puddle on it after heavy rain on the Friday night – and so two of the six games in each round were able to avoid double banking.

Liz Wilson and Alan Wilson (no relation) were undefeated after Saturday's three rounds, and so in accordance with the Swiss format they met on Sunday morning. Liz won that game, and continued her winning run for the rest of the day to finish the tournament on 6/6, with Alan the runner-up on 5/6. Clive Goode took third place and earned a handicap reduction from 4.5 to 4, while Peter Wilson, Lawrence Whittaker and the manager Fergus McInnes suffered some upsets and found their handicaps going the other way. Fergus started off well by going to 4-back in turn 3 of his first game, and finished well with a +26 result against Lawrence, but what came in between was not up to the same standard; he and Peter and Alan had triple peel attempts, but none of these succeeded. With 2.5-hour time limits, 21 of the 36 games went to time, with the lowest aggregate score occurring in Ken Jones's 13-12 win over Roger Schofield.

Results aside, everyone seemed to have a good time; thanks go to all in the club who contributed to this through their work on



Liz receives the trophy from Fergus. Photo by Fergus McInnes.

lawn preparation and catering.

Liz is shown in the attached photograph receiving a trophy, though not the correct trophy for the event, which was discovered only later in the possession of her husband Peter.



Mark Avery runs the winning hoop. Photo by Chris Sheen.

East Anglian Golf Croquet 19-20 May

Report By Chris Sheen

In temperatures more akin to winter Colchester hosted the ninth East Anglian Golf Croquet tournament. 16 competitors took part in two blocks on lawns rather slower than usual with top seeds Jack Wicks and James Goodbun heading the blocks. Ten double-banked games on the first day tested stamina and by Sunday lunch time the four semifinalists were Rachael Rowe, Pierre Beaudry, Martin French and Mark Avery. Rachael fought well in the first semifinal losing the first game 7-3, winning a close second 7-6 before finally succumbing 7-4 in the third to Mark, in his first Golf tournament. In the other match Martin, who was also a semi-finalist last year, just beat Pierre 7-6, 7-5 in a close fought tussle.

In the final Martin's GC experience stood him in good stead and he took the first game 7-3 but Mark, who rarely missed clearances from a fair distance gradually fought back taking the second 7-6 and clinching the win 7-4 in the third. A more than useful recruit to this form of the game Mark was occasionally out-done on tactics but more than made up for it with accuracy. A worthy winner and a new name on the trophy!

Isle of Wight Championship 25 – 27 May

Report by Richard Harris

Kevin Carter won the Isle of Wight Championship and Mike Cockburn regained the Mary Robinson Challenge Shield.

What seemed like weeks of rain were causing a few headaches at the Ryde Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club as to whether the four croquet lawns would be ready for the Ryde "Festival of Croquet". In the event there was plenty of time to prepare, so much so that the A Class winner, Kevin Carter, commented on how well they played, and the fact that it was a pleasure to be at a club with properly set championship hoops. In fact these were nearer 1/16th than 1/8th for the B Class and nearer to 1/32nd for the A Class, which caused a few little problems with hoop running on the first day, but everyone became used to them. There was glorious weather from the outset, with a breeze to cool things a little.

The Isle of Wight Championship Trophy was first competed in 1922 and is, of course, an A Class Advanced Level Play event. The Mary Robinson Shield, named for and presented by a former Croquet Chairman of the club, is a handicap singles event. Played at various times but this year forming part of the "Festival". Entries were slightly down but, in the end, there were five visitors (with wives). Making a welcome reappearance were Graham Thompson (handicap 3) and Mike Cockburn (4.5) from Compton (Eastbourne), Derek Beard (6) from Taunton. First timers were Avril Machiavelli (6) and Kevin Carter (0) from Surbiton (and other places). Ryde was represented by Philip Kennerley (1), Pamela Sim (11) and Richard Harris (11). The event was managed by Philip in place of Cliff Jones.

The proposed early start in American blocks was delayed while there was a rearrangement of the events with Mike gallantly giving up his place in the A Class event to Avril. Although not having the opportunity to play Advanced level against Kevin on top form, all came out well in the end!

Friday, day 1. With three rounds played, Kevin was unbeaten and Avril, Philip and Graham had won one game each. A pattern was to follow. In the handicap, Mike and Richard had two wins each and Pamela and Derek one each.

Saturday, day 2. Three rounds were completed in the A class and round 7 was pegged down with Kevin again unbeaten and each of the others having added one further win to their scores. Pamela had an excellent day winning all three of her matches. Derek with two wins and Richard, responding to the presence of the CP photographer, gaining a great victory over Mike. Final scores were Pamela 4, Richard 3, Derek 2 and Mike 2.

After play everyone relaxed with champagne provided by Kevin. Players were joined by spouses and guests for a celebration dinner at the club in the evening provided and cooked by members and organised by Pam.

Sunday, day 3. The final rounds of the A class were almost all completed with Kevin continuing unbeaten. Avril rested her knee, and players relaxed over tea and watched the handicap final.

In the morning, Pam as group winner played Mike, which turned out to be the closest of matches, going to time (3 hours) with Mike just ahead by 3 hoops. Meanwhile Richard was in sparkling form against Derek, thwarting his opening gambit and setting up several breaks, finally pegging out Derek's yellow and making a perfect finish with black for a 7 hoop win.

The final was again close, but Mike had certainly regained form and was hitting in from ever increasing distances, while Richard was more off target in similar situations. On time, Richard needed to make a break with black from hoop 3, but ended up missing the rush so putting paid to any hopes. Mike came out a worthy winner by 11 hoops on time to regain the trophy for the second time to equal Richard's wins in the competition.

Left is Kevin Carter with the Isle of Wight Silver Trophy and on the right is Mike Cockburn with the Mary Robinson Shield. Photograph by Pam Sim of Ryde.



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