

The

Issue 356 June 2015

CROQUET

Gazette



Women's AC Worlds
A preview of the Championships
Nottingham 25 July - 1 August



From our files researched by Frances Colman

10 years ago - 2005



Previewing the AC World Championships in August. 'Who will win?' –

Reg Bamford: "Given that the event is being held in England, I think it very unlikely that the winner will not come from the Big 4 – Rob, Dave, Chris and myself" (Fulford, Maugham, Clarke and Bamford). . . . "My personal views on each individual's belief about who can beat whom makes me think that Rob and myself will battle out the final."

Robert Fulford: "Anyone could win . . .

(I am) mainly hoping that the conditions will be similar to 2003 when they were deadly fast. In those conditions it is difficult to see anyone else being able to compete with me and Reg on break play. David Maugham might have a good stab at it, but would likely have to beat us both" . . .

~

Croquet wedding - St Francis Church in Sidmouth was packed to the rafters with friends and family from seven countries for the wedding of Amanda Prowse and Dr Tim Haste. Amanda is well known as a musician, and Tim is a nuclear physicist . . . They met on a refereeing course run by Tim, although Amanda would like to point out that she made sure she passed all her exams BEFORE she and Tim became an item.

Croquet friends from Sidmouth, Budleigh, Bowdon, Cheltenham, Winchester and Littleton played their part: Liz Taylor-Well (Bowdon) kindly designed the artwork for the invitations, Don and Dianna Williamson (Southport) provided one of their vintage Lancias as a wedding car, and Chris Ford (East Dorset) was best man. The happy couple emerged to a traditional guard of honour of crossed mallets.

~

The article by James Hawkins, 'The Renaissance of Pendle', which appeared in the April Gazette, was truly inspiring. It showed what can be achieved by sheer determination, enthusiasm and hard work, . . . The Club has sensibly registered as a Community Amateur Sports Club, so that donations can be treated as Gift aid. I have sent a contribution to help . . . the Inland Revenue will add a useful 28%!

Bernard Neal, CA President

50 years ago - 1965



Middlesex as usual won the Counties,

as, barring accidents, they will continue to do with a team that starts with Solomon and Cotter, and ends with Hollweg and Godby, with Stoker and Prichard sandwiched in the middle and the late dominion to call on for their reserves.

For the record, they did lose one game, but this was covered by the Laws of Croquet: it comes under "inadvertence".

~

AGM – Lt.-Col. A.E. Saalfeld said he would like to bring the C.A. the best wishes of the Australian Croquet Council and he was specially instructed to speak for them on any matter at issue; he was specially glad to be here this year as 50 years ago it was Mr Reckitt who put forward the idea of a federal body to speak for Australia to which all the States were affiliated – this was the beginning of the Australian Croquet Council.

Mr Reckitt welcomed and thanked Col. Saalfeld.

~

AGM – Mr J.G. Warwick pressed for the Handicapping Committee to review all handicaps annually and put people up or down at their discretion.

Miss Lintern protested and Mrs Rotherham said she thought this was something which could be done far better by Club's Handicappers.

The general opinion was against the idea of the C.A. dealing with it, but thought Mrs Rotherham's idea was good, if all Clubs really co-operated. It was decided to add this to the Conference Agenda.

~

AGM – Lt.Col. D.M.C. Prichard said that the best advertisement for croquet was the results in the daily papers and unless these were received by the Agency by 5 pm they could not be in the paper in far distant places.

Mr J.W. Solomon said that last year he had managed to get an account of the Championships in the Times and hoped to do so again. Associates could greatly help if they would write to the papers asking for news of croquet.

100 years ago - 1915



Dear Sir, A good many people are trying to save money "owing to the war." Apparently there are croquet players among the number.

If they wish to subscribe to Red Cross Funds or other charities surely they should do so after meeting their ordinary obligations. How many of them are suspending club subscriptions (with the prospect of fresh entrance fees on re-joining)? Let us have benefit of any surplus funds by all means, but the proposal of suspending subscriptions or diminishing them is "pure bosh."

Yours sincerely, L.C.Strickland

~

Dear Sir, From the words of the Chairman at the General Meeting of the CA, it seems that the Either Ball game is to be continued.

Would this not be a good time to ascertain the wishes of the whole of the members? I believe that the alteration is going to prove the knell of croquet, and that it will cause a large number to give up the game. . . To have two games is enough to spoil any game. It would be much better to have one and let the Croquet Association as a whole decide which they prefer. I should advise a postcard election.

Yours faithfully, J.B. Richardson

~

For Our Wounded Soldiers

Miss A. Vyvyan will be very grateful for small donations to buy tobacco, cigarettes and chocolate for the men in No.1 Temporary Hospital, Exeter. 9, The Close, Exeter.

~

Red Cross Day at Ranelagh

The prospect of seeing so many first-class lady players engaged in their favourite form of sport, and at the same time doing a good turn for the Red Cross Fund, attracted a large and fashionable crowd to the picturesque grounds of Ranelagh Club . . .

~

Small Advertisement: Lady would like two ladies as paying guests. Excellent Club Croquet, good bridge. Moderate terms "Associate", c/o Victoria Works, Upper Tower Street, Birmingham.

Editorial

There is nothing like a tight deadline to make one realise that forward planning is everything.

Oh how we always think that we have everything so well planned in advance, only to realise when crunch time comes, we weren't so clever after all.

I have learnt that there are endless ways to organise one's croquet diary, but that all of them will inevitably lead to a disappointment somewhere along the line, simply because no-one has yet invented a time machine.

Having to miss out on tournaments that one has enjoyed in the past, because new opportunities clash is always unfortunate, and playing both AC and GC complicates the situation even more so.

I was therefore frustrated not to be able to take up a late offer of inclusion in the GC European Championships, which arose due to a withdrawal. I had arranged to produce this Gazette right on those very tournament days, in a tight window between the AC Counties and my annual jaunt to the hospitable Tyneside club.

This issue previews the 2nd Women's World AC Championships at Nottingham, and good luck to players and organisers alike. The latter's planning has been good

and all the elements for an enjoyable tournament are nicely in place.

Congratulations to the GB team for retaining the Solomon Trophy in the USA, and to the teams of Surrey and Lancashire for winning their respective AC County Championship divisions. The Counties were a real joy to be part of for the first time as our fledgling Oxfordshire team did ourselves proud. I even ticked off a first visit to another club, at lovely Eastbourne.

A few weeks earlier I had returned to the Sidmouth GC Open for the first time in a while, and an added bonus was at last getting to meet (France-residing) Gazette proof reader Amanda Haste, when she presented me with the Haste Cup!

Regular readers of this column will be sad to learn that my good friend Amber the cat didn't make it to her 21st birthday and now rests in peace in her favourite garden spot. Sleep well Old Girl.



Chris Roberts

Chris Roberts Editor
49 Ancastle Green, Henley on Thames, Oxon. RG9 1TS
07973 787710 gazette@croquet.org.uk

The
CROQUET
Gazette



Issue 356 June 2015

Front cover: Looking forward to the Women's World Championships at Nottingham, are the top four ranked female players. Clockwise from top: Jenny Clarke, Miranda Chapman, Alison Sharpe and Gabrielle Higgins. (Photos by Chris Roberts, Chris Clarke and Paddy Chapman).

Next issue published 10 August 2015
Next copy deadline 20 July 2015

(Please note that these dates are subject to change, so check with the CA web site)

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.

Contents

- 4 CA Membership News
- 5 Tournament Regs., England Selection
- 6 Obituaries
- 7 Letters to the Editor
- 8 Understanding the Rankings Systems
- 9 USA v GB ~ The Solomon Trophy
- 10 GC Tournament reports
- 12 Women's AC World Championships
- 14 AC Tournament reports
- 18 Club Development and Lawn Care
- 20 AC County Championship
- 20 Coaching Corner & M.H.Mallets
- 23 Croquet Association contacts

Chairman's Column

Last season, I was involved in a match with an opponent who left the court mid-game saying "I am not playing in this rain."

The situation was complicated by various factors but, when I investigated later, the response was "Croquet is an amateur sport. If I am not enjoying myself then I am not going to play."

I was very disappointed to hear an answer that failed to give any consideration to the efforts made by me to be the other player on the court and wanting to play.

Furthermore, all the other players were still carrying on with their games and expecting to be able to compete against a winner from our match.

This story makes me see parallels with many different aspects of croquet.

Examples would include any players being unhappy with the introduction of the super-advanced format as a variation

for Association Croquet or some members feeling that Golf Croquet is changing the nature of their croquet club. (Although, I am not intending to imply the degree to which either of these matters is actually controversial!).

To me, these situations share a common thread: we are in this together and croquet is too small a sport for us to allow division of what we have.

We will each have passionate enthusiasm about particular elements of this sport.

But our fellow competitors, members of our club or members of the Croquet Association will potentially see matters from a different perspective.

In each and every case, we need to respect the natural variation between the views of different people.

At times, the most important thing is to remain committed and true to the rules or circumstances that were in place when we signed up to participate.

At other times, challenging the rules is necessary to move us forward but we must remember that some other people will feel differently until we can communicate our

vision for changing the way things are.

Under these conditions, it is a great honour to serve as the Chairman of the Council of your Croquet Association.

Now that the season is well under way, the administrative side of the sport is not my sole focus. But playing together is an opportunity for me to hear the views of the wider membership.

Let me know how we can work together to nurture our sport.

When we face conflicting objectives then we must find a way of constructively moving forward to achieve enjoyment for all.



Tim King

Implementing the Membership Changes

~ Jeff Dawson explains the process and likely time-line ~

Firstly, I'd like to thank the many of you who contributed to the discussions on changing the fee rate and membership structure for the CA.

Your views (both positive and negative) are very valuable to us in determining the best way forward.

As you will probably know, the Special General Meeting in March voted convincingly in favour of the proposed changes.

Following that vote, Council has set up the Membership Changes Implementation Group, chaired by me, to look at the detail required for implementation of the policy.

We would welcome any further comments you may have on the practical details.

I think it important to be realistic about when you can expect to see the membership changes come into effect.

The vote in March has set us on the road of significantly widening the CA's membership, but that is not something we can achieve overnight.

We now need to do a significant amount of work to put the systems in place to cope with the change. We will be implementing these systems as quickly as we can, but I would expect this to take at least two years.

Therefore you should not expect the widened membership to take effect next year, and probably not even in 2017.

I know that having made the important decision, we are all looking forward to seeing it put into practice, but I must ask you to bear with us while the work is done. We have been asked if some parts of the change could be moved forward more quickly. For example, could we allow the promised entry for club members into tournaments?

The difficulty with this is again having the correct processes in place. We currently do not know who the qualifying club members would be, and this would make it very difficult to control.

This too, then, will be implemented as

soon as we can, but must wait for the time being.

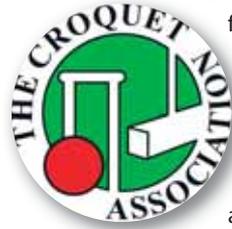
As I have indicated, there is much work to be done, and we are seeking help from willing volunteers, particularly in the implementation of the on-line database system to track the membership.

We need input from a few club secretaries (not necessarily IT experts) to guide us as to what would be most useful and manageable for you to use.

Remember, we are aiming to establish an on-line facility that you can use to manage your own club membership, and of course we want to make sure this is as helpful as possible for you.

We also need anyone with the appropriate technical expertise to help us with the implementation. If you are able to assist in any way, then please consider giving up some of your time to help, and contact me or the CA office so that we can discuss the details further.

Jeff Dawson - Chairman, Membership Changes Implementation Group



Allergen Awareness

Is your club compliant with food allergen legislation?

Legislation came in last December, for all premises selling food, concerning food allergens. There are 14 allergens that clubs need to be aware of, and whether they are present or not in their food.



How is your club's catering affected by this?

There is no restriction brought about by this legislation in what you may provide for lunch/tea.

Your caterers just need to know whether the allergens are present or not, in case you are asked.

If asked, the answer shouldn't be a yes/no as to whether they can eat it, it should be a yes/no as to whether it contains the allergen. Leave the person to decide themselves as to whether to eat it.

What are the 14 allergens?

As you can see, some are more obvious than others.

Lupin is in some types of flour. Sulphur dioxide can also be listed as 'sulphites'.

If you look at the ingredient list on packaged products you will see some items in bold print – these are the ingredients that have the allergens in.

The biggest issue clubs may have, I think, is if members prepare food and put it in the fridge/freezer at the club and then someone else is the one serving the food.

That person will need to know what if any allergens are present.

For any further information go to www.food.gov.uk.

James Death, Nottingham CC

Tyneside award for Derek Trotman



In recognition of long and effective service to Tyneside CC, Derek Trotman has been appointed an Honorary Club Member by the Executive Committee.

Derek, who helped found TCC and wrote a brief club history to celebrate its 25th anniversary, has served the Club as Chair and AC Handicapper and represented it at the Croquet North Federation which he also chaired. His contribution to the wider croquet community, chairing and serving on various committees of the Croquet Association, has been recognised by the award of the prestigious CA Medal.

His wisdom and wide knowledge of structure, administration, rules and political strategy have been invaluable to North-East and National croquet; and his experience of the game's technique has helped the development of many association players.

Peter Lowe, Tyneside CC

Tournament Regulations

In-season changes announced

A further in-season change to the CA Tournament Regulations has been approved by the CA Council.

This is a trial variation, for the remainder of the 2015 season only, to the Refereeing regulations.

It creates, **for GC only**, the concept of a **'Sequence Umpire'** to police in-sequence play (see right).

The Regulations affected are **L6 and R1(a)(3)**.

The full regulations can be found at: <http://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=tournament/regulations.html>

Players' attention is drawn to the fact that this new regulation takes immediate effect.

~

There has been some confusion about the applicability of the **Super-Advanced Variation (Regulation L3)** to AC tournaments.

If all players in a game agree, the variation can be adopted in any event, provided that event's conditions do not explicitly exclude it.

There is no need for the option to be explicitly made available since Regulation L3 does this for all fixtures book events.

In addition, the variation is now mandatory in all Class 1 singles events (see Appendix 4).

~

Samir Patel,
CA Tournaments Committees



Sequence Umpires for GC

The GC Rules Committee asked Council to approve a trial of 'Sequence Umpires' for 2015 (see the announcement, left). There were two main reasons for this request: to see whether this simple change can significantly reduce the number of times the Wrong Ball rule causes unsatisfactory outcomes in matches; and to get a better understanding (some statistics) of the relative frequency of the various transgressions of the Wrong Ball rule.

Sequence Umpires are empowered to do two things:

(A) forestall under the existing Rule 11(h) whenever they see a player strike – or about to strike – their partner ball (rules 11(b)1 and 11(c)1). In these cases the balls are replaced without penalty and the turn re-starts, and

(B) interrupt play after they witness any other wrong ball incident occur, so that the players can rectify the error before any complicated or lengthy multiple "out of sequence" play occurs.

The second of these is more of a departure from our normal habits than the first, as players are normally left to referee their own games unless they call for assistance. But it was felt to be the "lesser of two evils" to allow Sequence Umpires to intervene, if it helped avoid some of the more difficult consequences of wrong ball play.

The Sequence Umpire trial can be run at any event, and any feedback on it should be sent to me – though it is most likely it will be trialled in the final stages of major GC events.

Why only the final stages?

It seems likely that some Tournament Referees or Managers will choose to appoint all players (or at least all referees) as Sequence Umpires in a major event – but it is usually only in the final stages of a major event that some players and referees are no longer involved in the play, so might be available to act as Sequence Umpires."

Martin French,
Chairman CA GC Rules Committee

CA Diploma nominations are invited

Nominations, by Clubs or Federations, of people who have performed exceptional service, are invited for the award of a CA Diploma.

Diplomas were first awarded in 2000 and are intended primarily to recognise the work done by the many volunteers who do so much behind the scenes to provide the facilities, service and organisation that we all enjoy, but so easily take for granted.

Nominations should be sent to the CA Office by 1 August, together with a short (approx. 100 words) citation that will be published when the awards are made.

Diplomas are normally presented at the AGM (which this year is at Hurlingham on 17 October), but arrangements can be made to present them locally if the recipient is unable to be there.

Ian Vincent, Hon. Secretary

England Team Selection

As this Gazette hits your door mats, the AC Home International Tournament is taking place in Glasgow (13 and 14 June).

Congratulations on their selection (and if it's not too late, 'good luck') to the England team:

Robin Brown (left)
James Hopgood
David Maugham
Samir Patel
Jack Wicks (right)



Christine Elizabeth Pike was born in Crook, Co Durham on the 4 January 1955.

She showed early academic promise, becoming the first female pupil from her local School (St. John's) to go on to any University, reading Operational Research at Leeds.

She met her future husband Colin Irwin there in 1974, and upon graduating in 1976 she started work for British Steel in Rotherham. From there she joined TSB's head office in Manchester in 1978 and subsequently moved on to Barclays Bank at Radbrooke Hall.

Her developing career took her into the special world of management consultancy where by sheer determination, which involved using all her accumulated leave for three years in weekly day-release as a mature student, Chris earned an MBA with Distinction at the Manchester Business School.

Later she wrote, as co-author, a leading book on the subject 'Organization Design, a guide to building effective organizations' of which she was justly proud. It is now in its second edition and is a standard text book in Business Schools around the world. This career later proved to be a great background for her future impact on the world of croquet.

Chris married Colin in 1979 and they set up home in Altrincham. There by chance they saw the advertisement for an 'Introductory Course at the Bowdon Croquet Club'. By lucky co-incidence, Bowdon had enrolled at this time a number of younger recruits and Club Secretary Chris Hudson (who was later to become the CA Development Officer and then the founding General Secretary of the WCF) was on track to resurrect the Northern Championships, hitherto dormant for 23 years.

Chris and Colin immediately took to the Club and to the game. Within their first full

Obituary

Christine Irwin 1955 – 2015



year they were on the committee, which already had a distinctly youthful aspect, then unusual in the croquet world.

As a result Chris became part of the blossoming scene at Bowdon which included the removal of the encroaching beech tree on lawn 1, the relaying of the lawns, the electrification and modernisation of the clubhouse, and – her own special interest – the redesign and equipping of the kitchen and bar area.

Chris' quick absorption of the laws of croquet made her a qualified referee at handicap 12, when 16 was the maximum possible!

She soon became a top class (championship and examining) Referee, who served on many occasions at the US Sonoma Cutrer world event, the MacRobertson Shield and WCF World Championships.

Her life skills and easy manner made her a natural tournament manager, and, after a rapid graduation to the Class One Northern Championships, Chris went on to manage four of the early AC World Championships for the developing WCF. Only recently, she had been asked by the USCA to referee at Palm Beach Florida 2016 in the forthcoming WCF AC World Championships.

Chris enjoyed the game enormously and played in many tournaments around the UK and across the world. Although her handicap never surpassed five, she was a mighty competitor and a champion of fair play. Her apogee as a player was to represent Cheshire in the Inter-Counties recently, but her secret personal triumph was always that she had once beaten Colin for the 1983 Reed Cup in the handicap singles at the 'Northerns'!

Although playing the game with such enthusiasm, Chris never limited her contribution behind the scenes.

She was an excellent cook and a ready volunteer for catering duties, both at social gatherings and at tournaments (when not managing). She worked tirelessly on and off the committee for the benefit of Bowdon CC and also for the North West Federation.

Her management consultancy skills were freely given when matters of long-term planning for the future of the Club, the renewal of its lease, and the major refurbishment at its centenary, were all on the agenda.

In recent years she took the presentation of the club handbook to new heights of clarity and excellence, and on holiday in Florida had just completed, through the internet, the arrangements for its printing and distribution ready for the new Season 2015.

With Colin, she had realised on retirement a 'croquet-lifetime' ambition, to own a condominium in a sunny winter climate, with excellent croquet on hand.

Her sudden death came without warning on the 14 March 2015, during play and only a month before their planned return home.

Many lives have been the better for her presence. Christine is mourned by all who have accompanied her on her way. Her untimely death will leave a substantial gap in the World croquet scene.

Pam Overton was a founder member of the Woodhall Spa Croquet Club, which was formed from a WI group activity after a visit from the National Development Officer, Chris Hudson.

She was enthusiastic about promoting the game within the WI at local schools and at youth events, when there was an

Obituary

Pam Overton 1928 – 2015

In 2003 she was a recipient of a CA Diploma in recognition of her great contribution to the club.

**Patricia Duke-Cox,
Woodall Spa CC**

opportunity. Pam joined the East Midland Federation in 2000 and later became the Development Officer until 2007.

Bob Stephens

It is with great sorrow that the Hurlingham Club reports the death of Robert (Bob) Stephens who died after a short illness on 23 April.

We extend our deepest sympathy to his wife Anne and their family.

An obituary will appear in the next issue of the Gazette.

Richard Hoskyns, Hurlingham CC

Letters to the Editor

The April Gazette stirred many memories for Keith

Dear Editor,

There was so much in the April issue (*Gazette 355*) that brought back memories of my 65

years of playing croquet and made me think of a few suggestions for the future too.

I started playing at the age of six on my father's back lawn, using wooden mallets and balls and square hoops that he eventually donated to York Croquet Club.

Ray Hall's *Golf Croquet History* (*page 11*) states "3: The order of playing shall be as in croquet: blue red black yellow", which is how my father taught us.

But I bought that thin volume "Know the game; Croquet", updated our rules, learnt how to make a break and consequently always won against other family members (who subsequently refused to play with me any more!).

When I started at St Catherine's College, Oxford, I happened to sit next to the captain of the university team, Rodney Shewan, and when I said I could do a 4-ball break he immediately made me a member of the team.

We made frequent trips to Cheltenham and played in their new-fangled 'week-end' Easter tournament.

The picture on *page 16* reminded me of one Easter tournament (1963?) when snow stopped play – the balls became too big as they picked up a band of snow.

I got to handicap 0.5 when Nigel Aspinall was -5 and I played for Scotland in 1980 (thanks to my father being half Scottish).

I remember playing in the Open Championships against Pat Cotter and almost won the match but got too nervous – but I did get my picture in the Times; unfortunately it was in the court circular page not the sports page!

After that, though I was living in Cheltenham, I stopped playing to give time to my growing family, and restarted in 2006.

I now live in SW France so get no practice and only get to two or three tournaments a year, one of which is the Veterans' Championship, as referred to in Brian

Bucknall's letter (*page 8*).

Yes 70 would be a good age – I'd just squeeze in!

My best coaching tip (*page 18*) is for practising breaks: after each croquet shot you place the balls where you hoped they would reach. In this way each continuation shot is as easy as possible, so you keep the break going, and you learn where the balls should reach to make the break as easy as possible.

So often it is the inaccurate croquet shot that ruins a break, and beginners never get the feel of playing a break like the experts.

Playing on AstroTurf (*page 23*) with those hoop extensions sounds like a good idea (also for indoor carpet croquet?) but it precludes jumping over a hoop if you find yourself wired (something I have only done successfully once) – but maybe it is not easy to do jump shots on AstroTurf? Yes, I enjoyed reading the printed Gazette sitting in the spring sunshine (*Editorial, page 3*) – the print version is so much more convenient.

However some possible solutions: (a) make the print version on cheaper paper in black and white, like of old, (b) give a subscription reduction for those who receive their Gazette in e-format only, (c) to save postage send the Gazette to club secretaries for them to distribute.

And a final question (*page 4*): since I am not a club member, can I continue to be a non-club, CA member?

Keith Ross, Villembits, SW France

Thank you for this lovely letter Keith which ties in the past and future so colourfully.

I know that you have already been provided with the answer to your final question about membership by CA Office manager Liz Larsson, but for other readers she clarified the position that "There are many players who are not members of clubs, but they can still be members of the CA on an individual basis. This will continue to be the case in the future."

- Ed



Unity remember VE Day

Dear Editor,

I write as Secretary of Unity Croquet Club from Sudbury in Suffolk. We are a small Club with a nucleus of enthusiastic players with dedicated Officers and Trustees.

For the commemoration of the seventieth anniversary of Victory in Europe we held a special day of play including lunch.

Our photographs show a few members dressed for the occasion with the pavilion decorated to match. Lunch tried to re-enact a meal of the time including jelly for pudding! However, as usual cake dominated the afternoon play.

Margaret Maybury, Secretary, Unity CC



Stumped for a hoop-lifter?

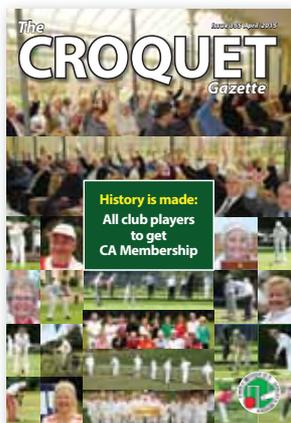
Dear Editor,

Many croquet players have their own lawn and possibly some of these have difficulty lifting firm hoops. Here is a picture of a hoop lifter used on my lawn. It's unlikely to damage the paintwork and it's rustproof.

Make two, one for each short boundary.

Ten minutes' work with the chainsaw.

Paul Schofield, Cornwall CC



Understanding the Rankings Systems

Chris Williams tells how you can find your place in the UK (and even The World!)

Editor Chris Roberts thought it was high time that he understood the croquet performance rankings fully, and so asked Chris Williams – who administers the AC system – to explain. The GC system is run by Stephen Mulliner, but Chris explains that here too.

You can check your UK and World position on line at:
<http://butedock.demon.co.uk/cgs/rank.php> (for AC)
<http://rank.wcfcroquet.org/gcrank/rank.php> (for GC)

Chris, I enjoy keeping tabs on the rankings list that you administer, it's a fantastic resource and thank you for making all this information available to players.

I only understand the system up to a point, however, and wonder if you would be good enough to explain, please, the subtle differences between all the columns, because I do get them rather confused!

Sure, here is how it all works:

DGrade is **Dynamic Grade** and is the number which is now used to rank players in AC.

If you win you get points, and if you lose you lose points in a similar way to the Automatic Handicap System (AHS).

The difference in DG between the players before the game, and whether the 'better' player wins or loses, determines how many points the winner gains and the loser loses.

One difference between DG and the AHS is that the AHS is zero sum (ie. the winner gets the same number of points as the loser loses), whilst DG is not.

The winner will gain a different number of points to that which the loser loses.

This is where the **pdt (Performance Deviation Trend)** comes in. The bigger (+ or -) the pdt the more points a player will win/lose. A big positive pdt means you are playing better than your form, whereas a big negative one means you are on a bad run.

Grade and **Index** are the old system in AC, but are still the current system in GC.

After each game the Index is recalculated, with the winner gaining points and the loser losing the same number – the same as the handicap system. However, the number of points at stake in each game (40, 50 or 60) depends on the class/standard of the event, which means that a ranking list based on Index alone is a very volatile one. For a normal class 2 event (worth 50 points), if two players have the same index (before the game) then the winner will gain 25 points, and the loser will lose 25 points. (In DG they would probably swap about 15 points.)

The Index/Grade system still applies in GC. In this system the Index is smoothed

Num	World	Name	Country	DGrade	pdt	Games	Wins	%wins	Tps	Tpos	Otps	Sxps	Last
1	2	Reg Bamford	South Africa	2735	68	28	25	89	18	0	0	11	May2015
2	3	Robert Fulford	England	2646	-157	67	54	81	41	8	0	9	May2015
3	4	Paddy Chapman	New Zealand	2596	34	39	29	74	27	4	2	1	Sep2014
4	6	Jamie Burch	England	2570	-138	52	37	71	24	4	2	1	May2015
5	9	David Maugham	England	2491	0	138	100	72	65	10	0	6	May2015
6	10	Samir Patel	England	2479	200	63	41	65	31	4	4	1	May2015
7	11	Jonathan Kirby	Scotland	2470	52	13	9	69	6	0	0	0	Apr2015
8	16	Stephen Mulliner	England	2425	32	67	40	60	23	3	5	2	May2015
9	18	Jeff Dawson	England	2413	41	65	48	74	32	4	0	0	May2015
10	21	Mark Avery	England	2385	32	114	80	70	59	4	0	1	May2015
11	22	Pete Trimmer	England	2378	-86	89	52	58	38	5	7	3	May2015

The top of the UK rankings (as 29 May) - AC above, GC below.

Num	World	Name	Country	Grade	Games	Wins	Index	%wins	Last
1	4	Reg Bamford	South Africa	2765	57	46	2815	81	
2	7	Robert Fulford	England	2687	42	35	2680	83	
3	9	Stephen Mulliner	England	2666	176	135	2736	77	
4	20	William Gee	England	2516	98	72	2514	73	
5	32	James Hopgood	England	2447	45	32	2373	71	
6	33	Harry Dodge	England	2446	51	35	2399	69	
7	35	Jeff Dawson	England	2444	27	19	2426	70	
8	36	Lionel Tibble	England	2443	118	91	2323	77	
9	40	David Walters	Wales	2437	16	14	2502	88	
10	49	Rachel Rowe	England	2415	96	63	2451	66	

hands rather than the 40/50/60 in the Index/Grade system). It produces a much less volatile system, and produces



figures fairly similar to the DG system (see the red line on this example of Stephen Mulliner's 2014 chart).

Wow! It's even more involved than I thought! I'll have hours of fun now :O) Which of the columns is the one used for

ordering the rankings? using a moving average technique to produce a Grade, since the Index is so volatile. The grade can be thought of as an average of about the last 30 indices.

The problem with this is that the grade can go down if a player wins the game, because it is an average. The DG system was introduced to remove this anomaly, and to handle rapid improvers better.

A good illustration of the difference in the different numbers, and the smoothing of the index to produce the grade, can be seen by looking at the graphs on an individual player's ranking page.

Another button which appears in the AC list is **Idx20**, which means **Index 20** (ie. all games are based on 20 points changing

ordering the rankings?

DG in AC - Grade in GC

Is this the same for deciding precedence of entry to tournaments, and the seeding?

Yes, but it has been changed recently by the WCF for ranking into World Championships. The WCF has decided that it will be done on the maximum DG achieved in the previous 12 months, which is why there is now a 'Max DG (12m)' button.

And what figure should be put into the 'minimum games in the past year' box – the default 10 or some other?

The default is 10, which is what is used for official lists. I hope this helps.

It most certainly does Chris!

Thank you for explaining it all so fully.

Great Britain retain the Solomon Trophy

Samir Patel reports from the USA

The 2015 Solomon Trophy was contested for the first time at Pinehurst Country Club, which owes a special debt to John Solomon. In 1980, John Solomon and Jack Osborn came to Pinehurst and played a demonstration match on a lawn beside

the Carolina Hotel. John then told the owners of the resort that they MUST build croquet courts at Pinehurst Resort.

He must have been convincing – they created the courts that are still in use today!

U.S.A.

6

1. Ben Rothman
2. David Maloof
3. Jeff Soo
4. Danny Huneycutt*
5. Doug Grimsley
6. Matthew Essick

* Replaced by Damon Bidencepe after Day 2



Great Britain

15

1. James Death
2. Jamie Burch
3. David Maugham
4. Samir Patel
5. Stephen Mulliner
6. Pete Trimmer

A view from the USA camp . . .

Pinehurst Mayor Nancy Fiorilla and Pinehurst Senior VP Jay Biggs opened festivities. Jay reminded us that Croquet was actually Pinehurst's oldest sport. It was listed in the amenities offered by the Resort in 1895, long before the construction of the golf courses.

Day 1 began with doubles and a plethora of resetting hoops. After a salty first game, Burch & Death beat Soo & Grimsley 2-1. Patel & Mulliner beat Huneycutt & Essick 2-0, Rothman & Maloof beat Maugham & Trimmer 2-0, Burch & Death beat Huneycutt & Essick 2-0, Rothman & Maloof beat Patel & Mulliner 2-0, Maugham & Trimmer beat Soo & Grimsley 2-0

USA 2, GB 4

Day 2 was a long, disappointing day for the USA; Danny Huneycutt had to drop out and was replaced by Damon Bidencepe, who rode his motorcycle over from Charlotte. All USA Team members lost their matches.

One high point; Matthew Essick (16 years old) won his first international game beating Pete Trimmer 26-1, but after losing 26tp-10 in the second, lost the match by losing the third 26-23tp in a game that ended one-on-one.

USA 2, GB 10 (is the fat lady warming up?)

Days 3 and 4 had some high points.

Matthew bounced back by beating Steven Mulliner 2-0.

Jeff Soo beat Samir Patel 2-0.

Ben Rothman beat James Death 2-0, and Rothman & Maloof beat Burch & Death 2-0.

But, when Pete Trimmer beat Doug Grimsley to give the Brits 11 match wins, it was all over.

USA 6, GB 15

We should have known the fix was in from the first. When Captain Samir Patel was bringing the Sterling Silver Solomon Trophy through Customs, he was asked if he was planning to leave anything of value in the USA.

His response: **"Of course not!"** (Photo by Cami Banbini)

. . . and how GB saw it

Pinehurst is an interesting place. Branded a golf and country club, it has the feel of a sports club first, perhaps as you might expect from the home of one of the top 10 golf courses in the world.

So whilst walking from the hotel to breakfast and then to the lawns, we were regularly stopped by people who, despite a varying knowledge of croquet, had a great attitude to international sport.

Hopefully, some will have come to watch, and been inspired by the live radio commentary (via miniature earpieces).

The US started well on Day 1 and took the first two games.

However this was only a temporary setback, and by the conclusion of the first round of doubles GB were 2-1 up.

This was repeated for the second round for a satisfying 4-2 overnight lead. Danny Huneycutt was clearly suffering with a back injury, and was substituted by Damon Bidencepe.

The revelation of Day 2 was Matthew Essick, the local teenager (with special dispensation to skip school) who recovered from a tentative start on Day 1 with an impressive +25tp win over Pete Trimmer at the start of the first day of singles. Pete levelled the match with a tidy +16tp win of his own in the second game.

There followed an epic third game, much of which was played as one-ball, which Trimmer won to claim a +30tp win.

Whilst this excitement was in play, GB were quietly getting on with the job in hand, to win all but one of the other games and secure a 6-0 day result, and an almost unassailable 10-2 lead.

Day 3 started more scrappily as a result of the overnight rain; or perhaps it was the tournament dinner?

Matthew Essick capitalised on errors from Stephen Mulliner to take a 2-0 win, and his first international match victory.

This set the tone for a strong US morning performance, but the damage had been done on the previous day.

Trimmer scored the necessary eleventh point for GB during the early afternoon, and a drawn day brought the score to 13-5.

A final day of doubles saw another 2-1 GB win, for an overall 15-6 result. A was a great result for the team. **by Samir Patel**



Senior GC Tournaments

~ English National GC Singles Championship (Ascot Cup) Qualifiers ~

Lancashire Open Welsh Walters wins well

David Walters won the season's first qualifier for the English National Singles Championship (Ascot Cup) which was held again in Manchester's Heaton Park, **reports manager Paul Rigge.**

The indigenous bowling club had 'double booked' the Facility Club House, allowing another organisation's usage of it on 'our' weekend, but after the 'tool shed' spring clean by Bury CC members during preceding days, the normal breakfast service was available from within, although it was quite cosy for the Manager's briefing.

A single 'all play all' block format was employed, with the top four qualifying for the 'best of three' semis with a ranked consolation knock-out was also available.

Everyone had played nine games by home-time on the first day and some did report tired legs. One pedometer reported 10.5 miles covered, but I don't believe it!

The four highest ranked players were true to form and duly qualified for the semis: James Hopgood v Paul Rigge and David Walters v Ray Mounfield.

Again the matches went with ranking, which set up an interesting Scotland v Wales final of sorts. In the event, Wales International Walters reprised his 2009 success to deny Edinburgh-based Hopgood's bid to retain his Lancashire title.

The consolation event was won by Jane Pringle after a cracking match with Kath Wright.

Surbiton Open Mulliner beats quality field

Stephen Mulliner beat Will Gee in a close and skilful final in mid-April, which was a fitting end to a very strong tournament that had attracted the stiffest field yet.

But before all that, history was made when John Spiers became the World's First 'Sequence Umpire' to act, barely thirty minutes into the event, **reports Don Beck.**

The CA tournament committee had announced the trial introduction of Sequence Umpires (SU) just prior to this event and it was decided that the players and others who were qualified referees would act as SUs when able to do so.

The first round of a two-block format saw the usual mix of predictable and surprise results. Chief among the upsets were Ed Dymock's victory over Jeff Dawson and Helena Fensome's win against James Goodbun, who gave full credit in defeat, saying "She just hit everything..."

As the day wore on, the chilly air turned decidedly colder, but Mulliner (in shorts as usual) cared not, and he took control of Block A. He was playing very well indeed and better than in previous seasons at this time of year. John Spiers seemed very focused and looked like being Mulliner's main rival until the latter won their head game late on.

In the B Block, Will Gee got to five wins from six, with only the one slip to 7-6 to Chris Roberts. Gee jumped 12 leaving Roberts having to play through the hoop to hit his ball, which he did with a great shot which put him four feet in front of 13, from where he took the game.

Goodbun recovered from his early

setback to also end on five wins.

Thankfully the cold wind of day one did not make a re-appearance on the second day, but Mulliner's play was just the same and he progressed without much difficulty to book his semi-final berth where he met with Spiers again, and started with the advantage of carrying forward his block win to their best of three.

The other block ended in a real nail-biter at hoop 13 of the deciding game where Gee got the vital score against Martin French and was paired with Goodbun in the semis.

Spiers ran hoop 9 from the boundary to take a 5-4 lead in his semi and he held on until hoop 12 where there was much interplay with Mulliner once declining to score from the jaws, before eventually doing so.

Poor Spiers missed his shot at 13, Mulliner didn't and that was that. Gee and Goodbun had a more interesting semi which went to a third game, which the former won despite looking like he was losing at 12.

The first game of the final game went to 13 in Mulliner's

favour. The feature of the second game was the number of near and actual in-offs, and there was even a double in-off when Mulliner's ball hit two others en route to scoring. Mulliner did prove he was human though by peeling Gee through hoop 12 to give the Ashby man a 7-5 win.

In the decider, Mulliner was steady but Gee's clearances were the more effective initially. However, as the game wore on Mulliner's all-round game held true, Gee's first ball approaches faltered and the Surbiton man wrapped up victory 7-5.

Photographs, clockwise from top left - Walters, Fulford and Mulliner, all at the AC Counties (by Chris Roberts). Below - Roberts and Amanda Haste at Sidmouth (by Helena Fensome)



The loss of qualifying status for the ENSC(Ascot Cup) didn't deter 16 tidy players from entering the Sidmouth open in April, and finally Ryan Cabble's four year title reign came to an end

Chris Roberts took the spoils at the end of an entertaining tournament for the Haste Cup, **reports manager Helen Prior.**

Pre-tournament, top ranked Lionel Tibble (-1) probably started as co-favourite or

Sidmouth Open Roberts wins a non-qualifier

better along with Cabble, but surprisingly neither made the semi-final line-up: Richard Brooks (Sussex) v Tony Forbes (Cheltenham) and Roberts (Phyllis Court) v William Ormerod (Swanage).

The latter match was particularly interesting to watch because of the different styles of the players. Roberts lined

up, hit hard and was very accurate, while Ormerod (employing his unique side style) was nonetheless dead-eyed but took his time. Forbes needed the a third games to see off Brooks while Roberts won in two and was undefeated going into the final, where he maintained form with his long-shot accuracy to the fore.

He beat Forbes in straight games to win the Sidmouth Open for the first time.





East Anglian Open Familiar ~ Fulford to the fore

It was the familiar tale of victory for Robert Fulford at the East Anglian GC Championship in May, reports Chris Sheen.

A weekend blessed with warm bright weather saw the field split into two blocks from which four semi-finalists emerged.

The Saturday was, as ever, a tough day on players' stamina and concentration as the inevitable hold-ups due to double-banking on the four lawns saw play continue until around 7.30, a full 10 hours after the start!

Fulford, the top seed, did not have it all his own way and dropped a couple of games as did Jack Wicks, but both qualified nonetheless.

The other block was more open and was won by the doughty Richard Thompson from the elegant Pierre Beaudry.

Fulford and Beaudry had a close tussle in their semi, which enthralled the spectating club, as the former got home 7-6, 7-6. Thompson won the first game in his semi against Wicks but the local man won in three.

However, it was a long arduous game, and in the process Wicks sustained an injury to his right hand which regrettably, both from his perspective and that of the expectant gallery, forced him to concede a walk-over in the final.

This gave Fulford seventh victory in the event in its twelve year history!



Amanda Haste, who had donated the Cup which bears her name a few years ago, is still a country member of Sidmouth despite living in France, but was nevertheless on hand to make the presentation in person to Roberts.

The pair were delighted to meet each other at last, after two years of e-mail communication only in their roles of Gazette editor and proofreader!

GC round-up

National B-Level Series

The 18 Tournament National B-Level Series kicked off at Sussex CC on the first weekend in May.

Now with events all around the country, competition Director Chris Roberts is pleased to report that news of full and oversubscribed entry lists came his way within days of the fixtures book being published. The Series has really caught the imagination of players in the 3 – 8 handicap range and several players have signed up for up to ten events each.

The hoped for B-level 'circuit' is now well established with players saying "I'm looking forward to seeing you at the next one", and advising each other of known tournament vacancies.

All Series winners qualify for the National Final to be held at Hunstanton on 10 and 11 October, and players finishing second to fourth accumulate competition points, which may lead to a final spot for some.

That first **Sussex tournament** was a two-day affair, and attracted a good field, with five players on the handicap limit.

One of these, Keith Southern (Swanage), came out on top after a tough schedule of eleven rounds of 19-hoop games in an all-play-all format. Southern was thus the first to qualify for the National Final.

In the second Series **tournament at Watford**, home player Jeff Johnson won five of his six flexible Swiss format games, to win the event. Enfield's David Frost had the same record but his loss was crucially to Johnson, and his net hoop count was two adrift of the Watford man.

Next up was the **Wrest Park tournament**, which was another popular one and was oversubscribed within days, aided no doubt by the club's inclusion in the CA's on-line entry system. Unfortunately manager Richard Keighley's knee played up to such an extent that he was forced to leave the field during the afternoon. The winner was Graham Good (Bury) who beat Roger Goldring (Phyllis Court) in the final and earned himself a handicap reduction from 3 to 2.

All England Handicap

The deadline for Clubs to enter the All England GC Handicap competition was looming as the Gazette went to press, reports Director Chris Roberts.

Once again, this has proven to be popular with 26 Clubs committed to playing a home-based first stage to establish qualifiers for one of three Area

Finals to be held at Surbiton (4 August), Hamptworth (9 August) and Nottingham (16 August).

From these tournaments, 16 players will emerge as qualifiers for the National Final at Colchester (19 and 20 September).

Inter-Club Championship

The Inter-Club Championship has made a steady start, with three of the four first-round ties completed at the time of writing.

Ashby beat Belsay Hall 5 – 1 to earn a quarter-final tie with Bowdon, who had a bye.

Watford mirrored that result to dispose of Hunstanton, and now face Letchworth.

Woking were given a walk-over by Hurlingham and have a tough match with Surbiton to look forward to, while Phyllis Court await the winners of Cheltenham's match with holders Dulwich.

Inter-Club Shield

The Inter Club (Murphy) Shield is a restricted competition in which teams can field one player who is a 2 handicap, and the sum of all four team players' handicaps must be 12 or more.

Six clubs were required to play a preliminary round, in which Hunstanton beat Watford 4-2, Phyllis Court beat Hurlingham 4-3 and the result of the Belsay Hall v Tyneside had yet to be reported at the time of writing.

In contrast, some other Clubs have not hung about and have played their next round matches already, with Croquet Durham defeating Bury 5-2, Nottingham beating Northampton 4-3, and Camerton getting past High Wycombe by the same score.

The round will be completed by the following ties: Ashby v Belsay Hall or Tyneside, Hunstanton v Enfield, Hamptworth v Reigate, Leighton-Linslade v Phyllis Court and Guildford v Sussex County.

Hamptworth C-level

Hamptworth's prolific tournament organiser **Richard Jenkins reports** that Peter Dowd of Northampton CC is really someone to watch. Richard said: "Peter, who only started to play last September, came down to play in our two C-level one-day level play tournaments in April as a handicap 8. He won on both events, didn't lose any of his twelve games and left us as a handicap 6! He has now entered the Hamptworth-hosted Wiltshire GC Open at the end of June and is definitely someone to watch out for in the near future!"



The WCF World Cham ~ Nottingham 25

Ian Burrige and Chris Clarke take a good look at the front runners, in this preview of the Championships.

Reigning Champion Jenny Clarke of New Zealand will be looking to retain her title at the second Women's AC World Championship at Nottingham between 25 July and 1 August.

The thirty-two players invited will be joined by four more from the Qualifying Tournament to be held at Nailsea the week before, making thirty-six players in total for the main event.

Higgins heads home challenge

The home countries will be well represented and make up around half the participants, with Gabrielle Higgins, Miranda Chapman, Ailsa Lines and Rachel Rowe expected to lead the challenge for England, along with Jersey representative Sarah Hayes (formally Burrow) also among the top ranked players.

Of these, only Ailsa Lines (CA Women's Champion in 2012) participated in the inaugural event in Australia in 2012, eventually being eliminated at the quarter-final stage. While Lines is not available, all the others play in the Men's and Women's at Cheltenham in June, making the Women's a much larger and stronger event than it has been in recent years, and giving a good early indication of the form of the top British players.

Higgins is the defending UK Women's Champion and is currently the second-ranked woman in the world behind Clarke.

Chapman in first England outing

It will be Chapman's first appearance for England, having previously represented Australia.

The leading contender from the host club,



Chapman is just returning to the sport after the birth of her first child.

Prior to this she had enjoyed her most successful seasons in 2011, when she beat Clarke in the Trans-Tasman match and won the CA Women's Championship, and in 2012

when she knocked Rutger Beijderwellen out of the World Championship to reach the last 16.

Rowe is also a member at Nottingham, and better known for her GC play, where she is a

former Women's World Champion and (at the time of writing) the European Champion.

Watch out for Rowe and Hayes

Since the event was announced Rowe has been putting considerable effort into improving her AC skills, continues to make good progress up the Women's AC World rankings, and is now inside the top 10.

Hayes enjoyed her most successful season to date in 2014, finishing runner-up to Reg Bamford in the Coles Championship and qualifying for the knock-out stage of the Open Championship.

Her excellent shooting and controlled break play make her a serious contender for the title.

If Nottingham lives up to its reputation as one of the easiest venues in the country, shooting could well be very much to the fore in the final stages of the event.

In the block stages however, completing a high percentage of breaks should be sufficient to make progress into the knock-out.

Aussies send strong seven

Australia has had the best strength in depth in women's croquet for many decades and this year they are sending over seven players to try to take the title.

Leading the challenge will be 2012 runner-up Alison Sharpe, who plays a controlled and tidy game, and is capable of tripling.

Rosie Landrebe has been playing for well over twenty years and continues to improve.

She has over 30 career triples to her name and is an excellent shot.

Jannine Hawker is less experienced, with just 10 years' open play under her belt, but continues to improve steadily.

Elaine Coverdale and Wendy Dickson are also both improvers and recently posted



Women's Championships July to 1 August ~



strong results in the Interstate Cup.

The Aussie contingent is completed by Kathleen Colclough, Sue Beattie and Anna Miller. Colclough is a deliberate player and was one of the players highlighted as "one to watch for the future" by Chris when he saw her play in the 2013 GC Worlds.

Champion Clarke heads Kiwi quartet

New Zealand sends four players.

Alison Robinson from Wellington is a defensive player who seems to play her best croquet when she has to.

Nina Mayard-Husson, also from Wellington, won the NZ Women's Invitation this season.

Kathie Grant from Auckland, is less experienced than the other players, but staked her claim for a place earlier in the season when she beat Jenny Clarke from Christchurch, who completes the Kiwi line-up.

Despite spending most of her time on the golf course nowadays and not having picked up a mallet for months, Clarke will still be favourite to retain her title.

Eight other nations fly their flags

In addition to the four countries mentioned, players from eight other nations will also participate: Belgium, Czech Republic, Ireland, Scotland, South Africa, Spain, USA and Wales, with Jane Morrison (Ireland) being the most likely to progress to the KO phase.

Further details of the event can be found at www.wacwc2015.org where there is also a link to the Facebook page.

Centre photographs - Gabrielle Higgins (left) and Jenny Clarke (right), then clockwise from top left - Ailsa Lines, Rachel Rowe, Mary Knapp, Miranda Chapman, Beatrice McGlen, Annabel McDiarmid, Sarah Hayes, Louis Bradforth (all by Chris Roberts, except Sarah by Ray Hall and Jenny by Chris Clarke).

An invitation to all by Beatrice McGlen

Family, friends, croquet aficionados and spectators of all descriptions will be very welcome at Nottingham Croquet Club during the Women's AC World Championship (25 July to 1 August).

Come and see the top female players

best-of-three knockout, starting on the Wednesday.

The first round losers from this elimination stage will compete for the Bowl in another best-of-three knockout.

Players who do not qualify for the knockout stage of the Championship, will participate in a best-of-three knockout for the Plate.

And finally, The Shield event will be a single game, run as a flexible swiss, for those eliminated from everything else.

The semi-finals and finals of all the events will be held on Friday 31 July and Saturday 1 August.

The opening ceremony will be conducted by the Lord Lieutenant of Nottinghamshire on behalf of the CA's patron Her Majesty the Queen at 7pm on Friday 24 July.

A barbecue will take place at the club on the evening of Tuesday 28 July and a tournament dinner will be held on Friday 31 July in the Senate Chamber of the Trent Building overlooking the lake. If you would like to attend any of these events, please contact me, Beatrice McGlen (at beatrice@mcglen.co.uk) before Friday 10 July.

Further details, such as directions, parking and accommodation, can be found on the competition website www.wacwc2015.org

We very much look forward to welcoming you to Nottingham.

Beatrice McGlen, Chairman of the Organising Committee



from 12 nations compete for the Charles Jones Memorial Trophy.

The club is situated in Highfields Park, so a picnic, leisurely row on the lake or a stroll to the Lakeside Pavilion for lunch can be interspersed with croquet viewing.

The World Championship will commence with four seeded blocks of nine players, held over the first three days of competition. The top four from each block will proceed to a



AC Championships

The Western Championship

- Grade 1 Championship event -

It's Fulford after fallow four

Fourteen players contested the Western Championships at East Dorset, under the new regulations for Grade 1 tournaments where super advanced had to be played in all matches, **reports Roy Edwards.**

The May Bank Holiday weather was very cold, but all the rain fell overnight, and the lawns were reasonably fast and the hoops set at one thirty-second in firm ground. The matches were very interesting to watch because of the extra variety and different tactics the super-advanced game gives.

The seeds Robert Fulford, David Maugham, Stephen Mulliner and Samir Patel were given some stiff opposition in high quality matches, and only Fulford progressed relatively easily to the final.

In the second round Chris Williams suffered a costly 'grievous' (accidental peg-out) against Mulliner, whilst attempting his peg-out from distance on a sloping lawn. He lost 2-1.

In the quarter-finals Mulliner lost to Pete Trimmer, in spite of some impressive play and pegging his opponent out twice.

A very popular Jose Riva, whose shooting

was most impressive, lost a hard-fought three games to Maugham, who was managing the event for the sixteenth consecutive time. Riva did go on to win the plate event by beating Williams in the final.

The tactics were very different from normal advanced play and many more contacts were given, but I did not see any placements conceded. There were many TPOs and QPOs, but not all were successful. Not many sextuples were attempted, and only Samir Patel completed one in the main event.

The semi-finals pitted Patel against Maugham, and Fulford versus Trimmer.

The former prevailed in each case, and the final looked as if it was going to 2-2 after Patel had completed his TPO in the fourth game. But he missed a shortish shot at the start of his three-ball-break, and soon after Fulford was once again champion after a break of four years.



Robert Fulford receives the Western silverware from William Ormerod

The Coles Championship

- Grade 2 Championship event -

An Eleventh victory for reliable Bamford

There are some things that one can always rely on it seems and Reg Bamford winning the Coles Championship is one of them!

This season he beat another good quality field, without dropping a game, to lift the trophy for the fourth time in succession and eleventh time overall.

En route to this season's final, Bamford

beat Andrew Hope (+24qp, +18), Will Gee (+26sxp, +26qp), and Marcus Evans (+22sxp, +25).

There he met James Death who similarly, got to the final unscathed, via Richard H Smith (+12, +10tpo), Omied Hallam (+22, +13), Matt Holmes (+4tp, +7) and Rachel Rowe (+15qnp, +17).

The final was a best-of-five, but Bamford only needed three of them to retain his title (+14, +15tp, +3).

CA Archivist Chris Williams adds "The Coles Championship started in 1980 when the Cheltenham Club hosted this Advanced tournament which became a magnet for the top players. The name was resurrected after the Westerns moved to Parkstone (East Dorset) in 1986. Coles were one of the first sponsors of croquet".

Hurlingham May Weekend



There was a strong entry this year, and one of the scratch players, Andy Myers (pictured above at Surbiton earlier in the year), found himself in the second block.

Here he did gloriously, winning the block with six wins against a range of 0.5 to 2 handicaps and completing his first triple peel, **reports manager Dennis Cross.**

In the first block Jeff Dawson won all nine of his games all with triple peels, although achieving 'only' +3 tp against Sam Murray.

The tournament was an early test of the new handicap card auditing for the Handicapper, Frances Colman.

By the last day most players had found their handicap cards, although one player's was a blank, representing his first competitive game this year.

Last year there were just a few, but this year more players than not, that entered online on the CA site – which is very convenient once you get used to it.

There might have been more, except that Hurlingham Members get a discount if they pay the Club on their club card!



The winners and runners-up were:

Block 1 - Jeff Dawson (Woking) and Mark Ormerod (Dulwich);
Block 2 - Andy Myers (Aldermaston) and Jerry Guest (Hurlingham);
Block 3 - Andrew Dutton (Woking) and Ian Parkinson (Watford);
Block 4 - Brian Havill (Enfield) and Richard Williamson (Bristol).

The victors are pictured above being congratulated by Manager Dennis Cross, in block order from the left (photographs by Chris Roberts)



The Peel Memorials

(first played in 1898)

The Peel Memorials were again keenly contested at Nottingham, where home players Philippa and Omied Hallam won the Men's and Women's titles and David Brydon partnered Sidmouth's Julie Horsley to success in the Mixed Doubles.

Starting with those doubles, manager Bob Thompson reports that twelve pairs entered the knockout event, in which Horsley and Brydon (combined handicap 8) were +17 and +13 winners in the early rounds. Husband and wife team David and Eileen Magee (playing off 3.5), were also strong contenders with +21 and +13 victories and the final pitted these two pairs together. With a +9 score-line, Horsley and Brydon claimed The Lady Murray Silver Vases.

Both singles events were run as flexible Swiss, with the top four players in each to qualify for the semi-finals. Michael Finnigan (Nottingham, handicap 5) beat Derek Buxton (Ashby, 12) +8. and Neal Bacon (Nottingham, 14) came up against clubmate and defending Champion Omied Hallam (0.5). Bacon took his first ball to peg and wired Hallam at hoop one only for Hallam to hit the long shot straight and hard to hit the nearby ironwork and glance onto his intended target! Hallam made no mistake in completing a +13 win.

In the Women's semi-finals, Philippa Hallam (Nottingham, 20) found it easy



to take her first ball to 4-back, but then struggled with her second ball. Opponent Julie Horsley (Sidmouth, 12) saw the bisques fall and made her hoops in the last hour of play, but Hallam made it through to the final +12. Another Nottingham high handicapper, Viv Staley (20), had plenty of bisques against fellow club member, and defending Champion Beatrice McGlen (1), but the latter still won +6.

The Men's final, completed in under 90 minutes, saw Finnigan on his best form to get to 4-back and rover, when a rover peel went astray. Hallam had an easy hit in to complete a faultless round with his second ball, which included a rover peel, to win +6. The early finish allowed Omied to watch sister-in-law Philippa play her final game.

Before the Women's final, McGlen announced that she had now gone over the

ton, having conceded a total of 102 bisques to her opponents!

Hallam took her first ball to penult and then went on to win +25 with bisques standing. Horsley beat Staley +6T for the Women's third place and Bacon beat Buxton +16 for third in the Men's.

The tournament handicapper reduced Staley to 18, Philippa Hallam to 16 and Bacon to 9, as the latter two were congratulated on having gained their Bronze Awards. It was very pleasing to see Derek Buxton returning to the Peels and playing some of his best croquet, as last year he had had to retire from the event and spent a day or two in hospital. Well played Derek.

Photograph - The winners: David Brydon, Julie Horsley, Philippa Hallam and Omied Hallam (by Bob Thompson)

The top prize in this 41 player,

classed tournament, The Godfrey Turner Challenge Cup, was won by Cliff Jones (pictured right) with seven wins out of eight games. He beat last year's winner Dave Mundy (Cheltenham) into second place.

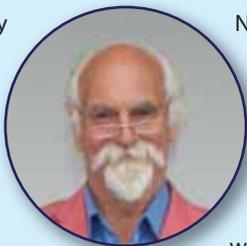
Alan Pidcock (Southport and Bowdon) won The Woodlands Quaich with 6/7, and again it was last season's winner, this time Nigel Amos, who had to be content with second place.

There were two blocks for the J K Brown Memorial Cup. Sylvia Steer won block C with 6/7 but that same score wasn't enough to provide a clear winner in block D where Ray Meads, Peter Nelson and David Clarke all tied.

Neither the 'who beat whom rule' nor 'quality of wins' could separate the trio, so the manager (and **reporter**) Julie Horsley, had to resort to net points, which decided

Budleigh May Week

the matter in Nelson's favour.



In the play-off final Steer beat Nelson +16.

The Pat Turner Cup was won by Horsley who was undefeated after her seven games.

The Ray Stevens Cup for the Open Handicap Singles event was won by Jane Hull who beat Brian Shorney +8T in the final and Jim Field beat Mike Taylor +6 in the final of the 'Y' event.

Hull teamed up with Shorney to win the The Daldry Cups for the Handicap Doubles, ahead of Field and Jack Smith, and in the 'Y' section of that one, Alan Rush and Philip Shaw got the better of Chris Donovan and Ian Friedlander.

Richard Wood was delighted to gain his Gold Award and all the trophies were presented by the Club Chairman Peter Hardcastle.

Drawing the line!

The Hassocks Croquet Club had a problem when we moved to a new home and so looked for help to our national governing body the Croquet Association.

Following a less than satisfactory relationship with the local council in charge of the ground where we used to play, the last straw was when fees increased by some 36%. We found a friendly new home at a local cricket club, but although the cricketers had much equipment, they had no white line marking machine.

Our small club had few reserves and the cost of even a basic machine would have had a major impact on our financial position. **Therefore, we very much appreciate the grant of £185 that we were awarded from the Croquet Association** as it was 50% of the new cost of our nice new machine, which is now in regular use.

Charles Corker, Hassocks CC



April

The John Beech Memorial Tournament at Pendle was a happy hunting-ground for Bury's Matt Holmes this year, as he ended undefeated after seven games in the Advanced event, **reports Paul Rigge**.

And Holmes was still on fire at the **Southport Advanced** just a week later when he retained the Jubilee Tankard that he won last year (*presentation photo above with Prof. Alan Pidcock*). Peter Taylor from Bowdon won the consolation Swiss.

~

Whilst all this Northern action was taking place and being sewn up by 'locals', quite the reverse was happening at the other end of the country where Spaniard Jose Riva was top dog at the **Southwick Advanced** where multiple peeling was the order of the day.

After getting past Graham Pegley and Mark Fawcett +17 and +25 respectively, Riva did for Gabrielle Higgins +26tp to qualify for the semi-finals where he accounted for Jamie Burch +7otp,-23tp,+26tp.

Jack Wicks won the other semi against Mark Avery +13tpo,-5tp,+23 but was second best to Riva in the final +7otp,-23tp,+26tp.

~

Andrew Cowing got his season off to a fine start by winning on home turf at the **Cheltenham Advanced** Easter Tournament. (*pictured below with Club President Paul Smith and Manager Penny Crowe*).

Adam Moliver reports that his was the first time the club's front lawns had seen tournament action since being renovated (*as detailed in the April Gazette 355*).

Fellow home players Chris Williams and Tony Forbes were runner-up and fastest



AC round-up

game winner respectively, with the latter's winning time over Andrew Wise being an impressive 55 minutes.

Equally impressive, and encouraging too, was the large entry of 40 players (with maximum handicaps of 6), a quarter of whom were visitors, and all were kept busy with four games each day by Penny Crowe's managed Egyptian format.

Following on from a sometimes wet and sometimes cold Easter Friday and Saturday, was a two-day handicap event that was enjoyed in glorious sunshine.

The knock-out main event attracted 26 entries and was won by John Wells, who had his handicap reduced to 3.5, ahead of runner-up Peter Mores. Robin Smith won the Egyptian consolation in a shoot-out at hoop five against Gordon Weir and the prizes were awarded by Cheltenham's newly installed President Paul Smith.

~

Samir Patel was another home winner the **Surbiton Advanced** Easter Open, which featured a field reduced to 22 due to on-going lawn renovations. Nevertheless, half of that number were minus players, including a rare outing for Jonathan Kirby who was runner-up with only one defeat.

Manager **Kevin Carter reports** that third placed Malcolm Bigg reduced his handicap to -1 and there was also a reduction to 2 for Howard Cheyne.

~

The third **Cheltenham** tournament weekend in a row was a **B-level Advanced**, which was won by Surbiton's Kevin Carter who defeated Peter Moore of Nottingham +16 in the final.

~

The final of **Woking's B-Level** was an altogether much tighter affair as Andy Dibben beat Surbiton clubmate Mary Knapp by the classic +1 on time!

This was followed by the club's Spring Handicap Weekend where Susan Fulford beat her man Robert +26, which one suspects he might be reminded about occasionally!

(MAIN PICTURE, by Mike Town who reports that) Susan went on to account for Collin Southern +19 in the final while Robert had to contend himself with a third place win over Ian McDiarmid. Robert did wow everyone, however, in his block game against Ian Anderson, when on the fourth turn he performed straight peels at 4, 5, 6, 1b and 2b. The 3b peel was made after 3b and the 4b peel (attempted going to penult) bounced off the wire. *Shucks, it just wasn't his day – Ed.*



Several last-minute injuries left a diminished entry for this year's **NW Federation Millennium Advanced weekend at Pendle** towards the end of April. Bury's Andy Brandwood was the clear winner of the B-class, but the A-class looked perilously close to an 'every-one-a-winner' five-way tie between the whole bunch. Manager **James Hawkins reports** that he broke the deadlock by failing an easy finish against David Walters, leaving Walters the block victor.

~

As the month drew to a close, **Budleigh Salterton's B-Level Advanced** had five in contention on the morning of the second day. But with some very fast play (including 47 minutes for one game), Southport's Brian Kerr managed to get in an extra game and win the tournament. He went home with an engraved goblet to go with the one he won last year, **reports Julie Horsley**.



May

George Noble won the Lord Fermoy Cup at **Hunstanton's Prichard Weekend**, when he beat Duncan Reeve +19 on Monday afternoon in what could be described as 'the final'. Noble and Reeve only suffered one defeat each in the first two and a half days of the tournament.

Reeve only lost to Jon Watson in reaching



Killick wins 2015 Charity One Ball, which raises over £3,400 for Bowel Cancer UK

This year's Charity One-Ball Competition was won by Andrew Killick - the furthest traveller to the Surbiton final - representing Middlesbrough and playing off 1.5, reports organiser Kevin Carter. He won an engraved crystal decanter.

430 players participated in 29 heats around the country and the provisional figure raised for Bowel Cancer UK was £3,400, plus £800 in Gift Aid.

This is a truly magnificent total and thank you to all players, heat organisers and Surbiton CC for hosting the final.

In nine editions of the Charity Competition, we have beaten the previous year's total every time and cancer charities have now benefited by over £20,000.

This year we saw a dazzling display by David Nicholson (playing off -4 and from Winchester) as he won his first six games, including an all-round break against a bemused Steve Stuart-Mathews (3.5,

Guildford & Godalming), to win a bottle of fizz.

However, his next two opponents, Andrew Killick and Elizabeth McKenzie-Gray (11, Woking) had the measure of him.

By winning the ninth and last round of the Swiss, against Liz Farrow (2.5, Southwick), Nicholson secured second place, with McKenzie-Gray third. Both received engraved crystal glasses.

Just failing to make the prize list, but playing admirably, were Connie Anderson (20, Roehampton), Rosanne Creighton (20, Hurlingham), Ian Morrison (12.5, Kington Langley) and Tom Wills-Sandford (20, Hurlingham).

Meanwhile, Killick was working his way through the field - dropping two games but securing a place in the play-off round, by which time his shooting and long hoops were superlative.

With 7/9 he drew on games with David Nicholson, but won the who-beat-whom tie-break.

9/10 and Noble's only defeat was to Ailsa Lines in reaching 6/7, as both players recorded good wins against Mark Avery and Keith Aiton. **Nick Harris reports** that the weather was mainly good with rain only on Sunday morning, whilst the food and the lawns were excellently prepared by the caterers and Jeff Race respectively.

The 14 players that entered the **Southwick B-level** tournament were the first to use the club's newly laid lawns. David Boyd (Rother Valley) won the event with five straight wins, one more than the host club's Daphne Gaitley, **reports Jonathan Isaacs.**

Letchworth's Philip Windred (handicap 3) topped the eleven entrants at the **Wrest Park Handicap Tournament**, which pulled in players with handicaps from 0.5 to 20.

Windred was pushed close for his victory but his record of 5/6 was just good enough to beat the host club's manager George Collin's 4/5, but Collin did earn a handicap reduction from 0.5 to 0 for his effort.

The (not so) new lawns at Wrest Park, now in their third year are getting better all the time.

Last to leave was Wrest Park's new Chairman (and **reporter**), **David Woolley**, whose vintage Morgan refused to start and

had to be resuscitated by the AA (a sticking relay was suspected).

Oxford University's Martin Lester won the inaugural **Wessex Shield**, which is a new tournament held jointly at the **Winchester and Littleton** clubs as a successor to the previous Six Lawns tournament.

Ian Harrison reports that the sixteen participants were drawn mainly from the two host clubs, but that the event did attract some from further afield too. An 18-point Swiss format over two days was employed.

On Day 1, Ian Harrison (Basingstoke and Winchester CCs) got off to a storming start at Winchester, as did Watford's Wendy Spencer-Smith at Littleton.

Fortunes changed for Harrison on Day 2 as he let things slip at Littleton, but Spencer-Smith and Lester continued their progress, each ending with five wins out of six. A shortage of time demanded a quick finish and, in a peg shoot at Winchester, Lester came out on top.

(Circle photo right, with Winchester Chairman Rita Nunn)

Kevin Carter (Surbiton) found his long journey north to Lancashire very worthwhile indeed, when he won all three of his qualifying games to earn a semi-final berth at the **Pendle B-Level** tournament.

With victories over Andrew Webb (Pendle), Peter Wilson (Fylde and Pendle) and Howard Bowron (Penrith) under his belt, he beat Clive Goode (Nottingham) and then the hitherto undefeated Barry Keen (Bowdon) in the final.

The non-finalists contested an Egyptian event that culminated in victory for Terri Vernazza (Fylde) over Malcolm Daines (Huddersfield and Bury) in that final.



Cleverer and Leveler at Nailsea by Mike Tracy

Regular readers may remember my report about a year ago in which I described how, **with the assistance of a grant from the CA**, we had started a program to improve our lawns.

In particular we were trying to address the slight but noticeable undulations, and the method was to spread kiln-dried sand with a wide lute.

The plan was to carry out this operation on one lawn each year, and my report indicated that it was too early to be certain, but that we felt optimistic of the outcome.

Over the course of the season, club players and visitors that were familiar with our lawns expressed the view that improvements had been made, but that some slopes were still evident. Feeling encouraged, we continued in autumn 2014 with the second lawn.

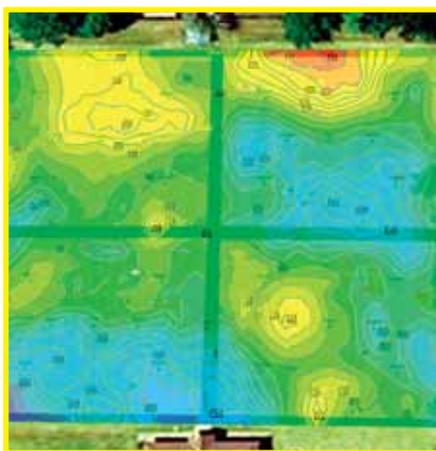
Around this time there were significant changes to the way we managed our lawns. We had decided not to renew the contract with our consultant groundsman whose work had been satisfactory but whose services we could not afford.

Equally significantly another member of the club volunteered (a word that you do not hear often enough) to take on the role of lawn work coordinator. He is not a groundsman, but had done a great deal of research and helped us to decide to go with Duncan Hector as our source of materials and professional expertise.

After the second lawn had had its levelling treatment, our new main man, John Wallace, decided that it would be sensible to do a proper survey of the lawns.

We knew that the CA has laser-assisted surveying equipment available for clubs to borrow, but an attempt to use it a few years ago had shown that taking readings was time consuming. John hired some laser-

assisted surveying equipment from M & P Survey Equipment Ltd, who delivered to our door and collected a few days later, for just £60. The self-levelling Leica Rugby 280 came with a 5m levelling staff and Rod Eye receiver that provided a precise audible and digital display.



Strings were put across all of the lawns at 2m spacing; a tape measure was laid along each of these lines in turn and readings were taken.



The main part of the measuring equipment, essentially a theodolite which projects a laser beam, was then placed in

the centre of the area and powered up. Each measurement took only seconds to collect!

John noted all and then entered all the values into an Excel workbook of his own design, which made possible the generation of a 3D map of the area, from which the volume of material that would have to be added or removed was calculated.

As the philosopher and poet, the late lamented Ian Dury, said in one of his songs, "There ain't half been some clever b*****s".

Another member, spookily sharing the same surname as John but unrelated, pumped the numbers into another piece of software and produced an aerial picture of the site with the contours overlaid in colour (and the Ian Dury reference again).

A review of this data revealed that whilst some of the surface irregularities could be filled with sand, there were areas where the variation from the datum level was up to 10cm. which was beyond the scale that the lute method could be used.

We concluded that it did not make sense to spend of the order of £1,500 per annum per lawn to improve minor variations in levels whilst making no impact on the more severe problems.

We (principally John) are now researching the use of a laser-guided grader.

The moral of this story is that before you try to improve the levelness of your lawns, it really does make sense to do an accurate survey to see how serious the problem is.

The equipment we hired enabled two people to complete the survey of our four lawns in one late autumn day and cost just £60.

We are confident that we got excellent value from the time and money expended. We would wholeheartedly recommend any club considering such a project to perform a survey as a first step.

David Barrett.
The maker of the Powerflex croquet mallets.

High Tech' croquet mallets, each fitted with the exclusive 'Powerflex' shaft which can assist players in achieving increased shot distance. Jump shots and Stop shots are also said to be much easier with 'Powerflex'

NEW !	SP 6 -- 11" Aerotech - The No. 1 Best Seller in the Range.	NEW !
		
SP 6 -- 10" -- 'AEROTECH' croquet mallet. <small>Weight approx 2lbs 11oz</small>		SP 6 -- Lightweight 10" -- 'AEROTECH' croquet mallet. <small>Weight approx 2lbs 8oz</small>

Inspired by Aerospace Technology the SP6 'Aerotech' mallet head is sculptured from a solid composite, the 'wing-holes' lead to end-weighting which helps reduce mallet twist and improve accuracy. The head design also helps avoid deviation from crosswinds and maintains a smooth pendulum swing.

ALL ENQUIRIES to:- David Barrett. 61 Heywood Hall Road. Heywood. Lancashire. OL10 4UZ.
Tel:- 01706 - 368214 Mobile - 07957 103417 e-mail:- davidbarrett.db@tiscali.co.uk

The John Hobbs Mallet

The mallet that adjusts to your grip.

You set the handle to whatever angle best suits your style of grip and any tendency you have to deviate

Now with option of carbon fibre or aluminium shaft
Nylon shock absorber or rigid aluminium
Easily dismantled for airline travel

Web site: john-hobbs-croquet-mallets.mfbiz.com

John Hobbs, Lewins, Mayfield Road, Rotherfield TN6 3LS
Tel: 01892 852072 Email: hobbsmallets@waitrose.com

You get the lawns that you deserve!

by Duncan Hector

Croquet lawns differ in quality. The comparisons are stark at times and it can be very difficult for lay people to understand why.

The answer is usually very simple; a poor maintenance programme will result in poor lawns.

There is no point in re-seeding a poor lawn and then using exactly the same maintenance methods on the new lawn.

It will simply revert to a poor lawn again.

Is this actually happening at croquet clubs in 2015 – surprisingly, yes!

If you really are driven to do this I would strongly recommend that proper guidance is sought in the choice of cultivar to be used, the actual method of seeding, and after care especially during the germination period.

In my view, the only valid advice will come from people who have 'hands on' experience in maintaining croquet lawns to a high standard.

You will not find it in books or from people who only know the theoretical side of the business.

The problem with books is that they are generally out of date.

For example, where will you find recommendations about how and why to use growth regulator?

Why do they recommend bents and fescues?

Is it because the authors had no experience of maintaining croquet lawns and no experience of modern dwarf rye grass!

This is far better for croquet lawns – even those with a low pH.

It has better drought resistance; it is

harder wearing and can be cut to 4mm to produce really fast lawns.

You must sow the right seed at the outset and I beg you not to let the contractor decide.

The seed must be of good quality and preferably already proven at other croquet clubs.

It is quite easy to restore a poorly maintained lawn by treating it properly, and in most cases this will be the best solution and far more cost-effective than digging it up and starting again.

Two general rules of croquet lawn maintenance are: firstly that it costs no more to do the job properly, and secondly that few contractors know how to maintain croquet lawns.

Croquet players don't usually have enough knowledge to counter what contractors and 'experts' say, so can pay through the nose for second-rate results.

In my experience there can be substantial savings for clubs, and better results, if they get an understanding of the maintenance side themselves, even if they employ contractors to do the manual work.

That way, the club can control the programme and ensure that they get better quality lawns for their money.

Duncan Hector Turf Care

Croquet player and turf care specialist.



Creating great croquet lawns

I give advice and guidance on all aspects of croquet lawn maintenance and supply tailor-made fertilisers. First I carry out soil analysis of your lawns and then devise a nutrition programme to suit your soil, your club and your budget.

Results you will love

The fertilisers I supply are blended to the exact analysis your lawns require. By tracking results the analysis is modified in harmony with the needs of your grass. This ensures on-going improvement and better croquet lawns

What will it cost?

There are no fees to pay. My costs are covered by supplying the products for your nutrition programme which is designed to fit your club's budget.

Everything you need

Tailor-made fertilisers, Organic, Microbial and Seaweed feeds, Moss Kill, Growth Regulators, Wetters, Zeolites & more

One call does it all!

Tel 01462 417019

duncan@DuncanHectorTurfCare.co.uk

www.DuncanHectorTurfCare.co.uk

Tyneside croquet club has lent a set of garden croquet mallets to a local private school, to be used as props in a production of Alice's Adventures in Wonderland staged by the Junior House.

The school initially asked for full-size mallets, but were dissuaded from so equipping pupils of relatively small stature. The programme distributed to the audience for the production will acknowledge the loan, and provide club contacts for those interested in trying the game without flamingos and hedgehogs.

Peter Lowe, Tyneside Croquet Club

Percival Mallets

Hand crafted wooden mallets with Carbon or Ash shafts, any weight, length or size made to your own specifications.

Adjustable weight range +/- 2 ozs, variety of grips and peripheral weighting available. Mallets altered, repaired and upgraded.

Contact Michael Percival on
07780 677943
Michael@croquetmallets.co.uk



Manor House Mallets



Ultra lightweight carbon-fibre shafts with firm, tactile foam grips:
Jarring minimised, pendulum action maximised

2000 Mallet: Head from well-seasoned, sustainably managed Curuñai wood with maximum end weighting from lead behind the double composite faces. Easily maintained finish; 10 (£170), 11 or 12 inch (£175) heads. *A popular & long lasting first mallet.*

4000 Mallet: The latest technology - with lightweight square section carbon tube and ultimate twist resistance from solid brass end pieces; 10, 11, or 12" (£290); composite faces £15 extra.

Airline shaft (£65 extra) Two-part mallet shaft

For details or discussion, contact Alan Pidcock
Tel: 01772 743859 Email: pidcock@manor.plus.com

Surrey win the A

by Sue



accepted the trophy and paid tribute to all the teams who make the Counties such a wonderful festival of croquet.

Surrey effectively won the tournament on Sunday evening at Compton, when they beat Nottinghamshire 2-1.

Notts finished second on the same number of games won as Surrey, but with only nine match wins.

On the final day, Surrey only had one match, followed by their bye, and Stephen Mulliner pegged out to win the first game against Gloucestershire +26TP at 10.40.

The second pairing took a little longer, but Samir Patel pegged out to secure the championship at 11.15.

Gloucestershire's third pairing of Louise Bradforth and Craig Edwards held out the longest, but in the end Surrey won 3-0.

It was decided to present the trophy after lunch to allow the Surrey players to go home – Colin Irwin made the presentation and paid tribute to ex WCF Secretary-General Chris Hudson, whose funeral was that day. Poor Nottinghamshire, who had a bye in the morning, arrived to find the silverware disappearing to the car park, and all they could do was secure second place.

There was no presentation of the Second Division trophy, firstly because the winners, Lancashire, were at Compton on the last day, but also because Nick Parish had been attempting to get his hands on both trophies at once for Middlesex, and had left the trophy they won last year sitting on his mantelpiece!

Lancashire finished on eight match wins, and their team of David Openshaw (Captain), James Hawkins, Matt Holmes, Ailsa Lines, Annabel McDiarmid, Paul Rigge and Liz Wilson will have been delighted with their win, in particular their 3-0 victory

Division One

(WINS: matches / games)

Surrey	10	23
Nottingham.	9	23
Somerset	6	18
Cheshire	5	16
Sussex	5	15
Glamorgan	5	15
Middlesex	5	13
Hertfordshire	5	13
Suffolk	3	12
Gloucester.	2	10
Berkshire	1	8



in the War of the Roses against Yorkshire.

The Channel Islands, Essex and Oxfordshire all finished on seven match wins, but Oxfordshire lost out on the third



promotion place on games won.

This was Oxfordshire's first appearance as an independent county since 1911. They started strongly and were undefeated at the start of Day 2, as were Dorset.

Sadly for Dorset, William Ormerod developed a debilitating leg pain, and realised after the first three balls had been played on to the lawn and it was his turn to play that he was unable to continue. The ROT was consulted, and David Williams was

The Coaching Corner by Roger Staples, Coaching Committee Chairman

The season is now well underway and mid-summer's day is just around the corner.

The Croquet Academy, along with some of the Federations, is running all manner of coaching courses. Now is the time to hone those skills and to acquire some expert advice to improve your game.

Ian Burridge has produced some very useful coaching aids which are being used around the various coaching 'pods' and I encourage you to consider joining one in your area.

We have some newly qualified coaches to

help you. Congratulations to the following for gaining coaching awards.

Club Coach (Yellow)

Garry Douel (Swindon), Mary Bradshaw (Taunton-Deane), Neal Bacon (Nottingham), Russell Barter (Cheltenham), Celia Greder (Kingston Maurward), Patrick Knight (Camerton & Peasedown).

Golf Coach (White)

Paul Rigge (Bury), Tony Green (Swanage), Brian Wilson (Camerton & Peasedown), Stephen Custance-Baker (Taunton-Deane), Ulf Greder (Kingston Maurward), Chris

Jackson (Nailsea), Richard Broad (Nailsea), Martin Peacock (Reigate Priory), Frank Collins (Caterham), James Tree (Lodsworth), Brenda Theobald (Watford), Mervyn Harvey (Kenilworth).

Grade 1 Association (Blue)

Dave Gunn, David Brydon, Bob Thompson, Patricia Duke-Cox, Derek Blow (all Nottingham).

Grade 2 Association (Green)

Beatrice McGlen (Nottingham).

Grade 3 Association (Red)

Paddy Chapman (Nottingham).

C Inter-Counties

Mackay



Division Two

(WINS: matches / games)

Lancashire	8	25
Channel Is.	7	18
Essex	7	18
Oxfordshire	7	15
Hampshire	5	16
Dorset	4	14
Yorkshire	4	13
Kent	4	13
Wiltshire	4	12
Warwickshire	3	10
Bedfordshire	3	11

allowed to take his place.

Bedfordshire ended up with the wooden spoon with only two match wins and Berkshire found it tough in the First Division



having separated from Oxfordshire for this season's event. They did not have the best of starts, as Nick Butler got stuck in traffic and Alan Edwards misread the schedule and went to Compton instead of Southwick.

Furious reading of the rules ensued, instead of practice on the lawns. They did eventually get a team of six, although as they were up against a strong Notts side they didn't get much lawn time anyway!

They did have a win against Suffolk, but were clearly going to be relegated, as were Gloucestershire, who had two wins under their belt at the start of the final day but would have had to beat Surrey and Notts to stay up.

As so often happens at the Counties, there was fierce competition on the last day to decide the third relegation place.

In the morning Hertfordshire pulled off a really tight 2-1 victory over Suffolk and that effectively ensured their survival on four wins, with a superior game tally.

They had had a disastrous start to the tournament with five straight losses, in complete contrast to 2014, where they started with five wins followed by five losses. They must be the only county in history to have a run of ten straight defeats in the First Division and not be relegated!

Their win over Suffolk meant that the final match of the day between Suffolk and the holders (Glamorgan) was a straight battle for survival, with the loser being relegated.

Glamorgan's Kevin Ham had managed to leave his mallet at Compton and so he had borrowed the report writer's weapon for the morning match against Cheshire.

But a David Maugham triple (not quite as spectacular as the TPO he apparently did against Gloucestershire, where he made the rover peel after hoop 5) at least ensured Kevin was able to rush over to Compton to retrieve his own mallet in time for the crunch match. It didn't appear to improve his hoop running, however, and his pair lost to Mark Avery and Mick Belcham.

Chris Williams and Garry McElwain had earlier had a good win, so it was down to David Walters and John Evans to prevent Glamorgan going from champions to relegation in one season.



Eventually Walters pegged out to seal Suffolk's fate.

Suffolk had been without their long standing captain Steve Comish, who is sadly battling cancer, and a card was circulated to wish him well.

Thanks are due once again to Chris Williams for managing the event and to all who contributed to its success.

Photos clockwise from to left: David Nicholson (Hants) in new disguise, Surrey, Lancashire, Oxon skipper Dayal Gunasekera, the best outfits by Wiltshire, Jose Riva, Nick Parish (both Middlesex), and Joel Taylor (Warwickshire) - all by Chris Roberts, except Surrey by Liz Larsson



Manor House Mallets Alan Pidcock writes:

After more than 25 years of making mallets (about 4,800 to date), I have decided that my remaining energies can justifiably be spent on hobbies instead of business.

I am delighted to announce that, as I retire, Dave Trimmer will be continuing the mallet supply from October 2015 under the Manor House banner.

Dave plays Association Croquet at a high level and is a qualified precision engineer, so his expertise can confidently be expected to lead to further development

of the brand. Over the coming months we will be working towards ensuring that the transition is seamless and uninterrupted and, of course, I will be on hand to help for as long as it is useful.

Reference seems appropriate to one aspect of a business of this kind: its great dependence on the advice and goodwill of component makers and many people in the game itself.

Customers have generally been very willing to join the informal, unpaid sales force and throughout, have operated

the only form of quality control and testing accessible to a single worker, with processes that are confined (with some domestic spillage) to a double garage.

I am also deeply grateful to have been allowed to follow an enjoyable academic career with a completely different and fruitful practical activity - to the extent that I have to acknowledge some truth in a jibe that occasionally comes my way - that I have never ever had to do a day's uncongenial work.

Heartfelt thanks to all concerned!

The Notts list is an on-line croquet forum that only some CA members will be aware of.

It provides a good platform for discussion, amusement and (sometimes heated) debate on all manner of croquet related topics. As Gazette Editor, I find it a great resource for stories and quite often, articles that appear in these pages started life as items on the Notts list.

Two recent postings caught my eye, both as individual items, but all the more so as they were posted within days of each other and contrast rather beautifully, I think.

~

Firstly, **CA Archivist Chris Williams** posted that he had found an interesting article on of the growth of tennis which contained some great quotes about croquet in the 1870s. In particular, he was amused by this one:

"The popularity of croquet was on the wane. An excellent game in itself, croquet afforded amusement to only two persons. It was voted intolerable to the spectators, and tedious even to the players. It took an inordinate time; and, even of the two playing, one was always out in the cold, while the other was producing by his skill a peculiar feeling of irritation and disgust,

1870 ~ 'Croquet is tedious' 2015 ~ Bring on the Dancing Girls!

Contrasting stories from the Notts List

not to be found in other games, and foreign to a wholesome spirit of rivalry."

The whole article is on line at: <http://www.thesportinghistoryboys.com/2015/03/the-growth-and-evolution-of-lawn-tennis.html>

~

Then under the title 'Progress at last!' – regular contributor, **John Riches from Australia**, reported the following:

Long-time readers of this list (*The Notts List forum*) will know that for years I have been advocating a more progressive approach to the marketing of the game.

Some will have read about the introduction of 'Hammer Time' in South Australia, which is a type of 'Come and Try' invitation to the general public, spread over several weeks and accompanied by other entertainment as well as croquet instruction.

It is sponsored by local business houses and a grant from the State Government, and last year won an award for the best marketing presentation by a sports club. This year it is bigger and better, and has

been expanded to include at least one rural croquet club.

So far only a few new members have joined our clubs through it, but many hundreds have come to see

the game in a new light.

A further step has been taken by the North Adelaide Croquet Club.

We are running a series of Hammer Time sessions on Friday nights, and it so happened that the cheer squad of the North Adelaide Football Club have been practising on the oval next to our croquet lawns on Friday evenings.

They are now coming over and entertaining the croquet players with their music and dancing girls practising in their brief cheer squad uniforms.

It is great for the image of croquet, and the dancing girls are pleased to have an appreciative audience as they practise their energetic dances.

We have had about thirty people attending each Friday to enjoy the entertainment and learn to play croquet.

My only regret is that this sort of thing was not done long ago, and that croquet administrators in other places have not had the foresight to undertake similar marketing adventures.



Mallets, clothing, books and more at the CA Shop

*For all your 2015 croquet needs,
look online or
give us a call*

www.croquet.org.uk
01242 233555



Pink Flamingos spotted at Notts

Nottingham Croquet Club is staging a Pink Flamingo Fun Day on 14 June to raise public awareness for next month's Women's AC World Championship. The event has been inspired by the 150 year anniversary of the Alice in Wonderland stories of Lewis Carroll and is being organised by the indefatigable Patricia Duke-Cox.

Club spokesman David Brydon explained: "Pink-clad teams of four have paid £10 a head (all for Cancer Research UK) to have fun trying out a range of gymkhana croquet, with some GC thrown in, all whilst trying to spill none of their Raspberry Lemonade from local sponsors Belvoir Fruit Farms.

We decided to support research into cancer because three competitors at Melbourne in 2012 had cancer, and we particularly wanted to remember Alison Wall (NZ) who sadly died a few weeks later."

Photo above: Sir Jesse Boot welcomes people to Nottingham's fundraiser for Cancer Research UK (by Andy Jennings)



Classified Advertisement

WANTED

Pidcock 3000 mallet, in good condition.
Tel: 01507 622741 (Lincolnshire)

CA Officers

Elizabeth Larsson

Manager

The Croquet Association
c/o Cheltenham Croquet Club
Old Bath Road, Cheltenham
GL53 7DF 01242 242318
caoffice@croquet.org.uk



Dr. Ian Vincent

Hon. Secretary

21 Cedar Avenue, Beeston
Nottingham NG9 2HA
0115 925 3664
ian.vincent@cantab.net



Quiller Barrett

President

10 Frost House, Chesham Rd
Berkhamsted
HP4 3AY
quiller3@gmail.com



Dr Tim King

Chairman of Council

17 Hospital Street
Tamworth B79 7EE
01827 703620
tmk@ntlworld.com



Brian Shorney

Vice-Chairman of Council

Cagebrook Mill, Clehonger
Hereford HR2 9TQ
01981 250521
brian@shorney.net



Peter Death

Hon. Treasurer

252 Hockley Road, Hockley
Tamworth, Stafs. B77 5EZ
01827 251738
peter.j.death@gmail.com



Publication Details

The Croquet Gazette is published six times per year, usually in February, April, June, August, October and December. Copy should reach the Editor before the 20th of the month before publication is due. However if you have something that you think the Editor may be willing to expand this deadline for, please contact him direct.

E-mail contributions, including tournament reports should be sent direct to the Editor, or copied to the Editor if they are being posted to the Nottingham List. Digital images are preferred, but photographic prints may also be acceptable. Please send digital jpeg or tiff format files. Please accompany all images with a description of the subject. If you require any material to be returned please enclose an SAE.

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

The Croquet Gazette is printed by Billingham Press, Central Avenue, Billingham, Stockton on Tees.

CA Council Committee Chairmen

Executive

Tim King tmk@ntlworld.com

Management

Brian Shorney brian@shorney.net

AC Laws

Jeff Dawson jeff.p.dawson@gmail.com

AC Selection

David Maugham dmaugham@gmail.com

AC Tournament

Brian Fisk master@brianfisk.net

GC Rules

Martin French martin.french@btinternet.com

GC Selection

Stephen Mulliner snmulliner@googlemail.com

GC Tournament

John Bowcott bowcott@hotmail.com

Handicap

Strat Liddiard stratmale@gmail.com

Coaching

Roger Staples staplessteeples@live.co.uk

Development

Jonathan Isaacs jonathanisaacs@btinternet.com

Equipment

Martin French martin.french@btinternet.com

ICT

Ian Vincent ian.vincent@cantab.net

International

Ian Lines ian.lines@atkingglobal.com

Investment

Roger Bray brayrw@tiscali.co.uk

Marketing

Brian Wilson brian@europaassociates.co.uk

Publishing

Strat Liddiard stratmale@gmail.com

CA Federation Representatives on Council

Croquet North

01642 712551

Charles Waterfield

cwaterfield@btinternet.com

North West

01253 735266

Peter Wilson

peter@palnet.co.uk

Yorkshire

01484 716663

Anna Giraud

eag@giraudnet.co.uk

East Midlands

01623 558650

Bob Thompson

robert_thompson9@sky.com

W.Midlands & Wales

01743 243532

Brian Christmas

bchristmas60@gmail.com

East Anglia

01553 770390

Terrey Sparks

tds3elm@aol.com

Southern

01794 322209

Brian Fisk

master@brianfisk.net

South West

01249-783012

Brian Shorney

brian@shorney.net

London & South-East

020 8789 7707

David Mooney

adavidmooney@sky.com

CROQUET IN THE SUN ...

BELA ROMAÓ INTERNATIONAL CROQUET CLUB **First and Only Croquet Club in Portugal**



Portugal's first Open International Tournament **11th - 13th September 2015**

Overlooking exotic islands & white powder beaches of Eastern Algarve, tucked away into 14 acres of coastline property dedicated to Croquet & Relaxation. Meticulously maintained full size grass lawn surrounded by tranquil tropical gardens & orchards. Private on-site 3 bedroom villa w/ pool and exclusivity to lawn. Club House w/ full bar, Mediterranean Bistro, Pool. 20 minutes Faro Airport, 2.5 hrs UK & Ireland. Book your extended croquet season today! ~ www.airbnb.com/rooms/1996464



www.belaromaacroquet.com tel. (00351) 289 798 254 belaromaacroquet@yahoo.com

Sponsored by Lita Gale International Solicitors

QUINTA MARIALVA, BIAS DO NORTE, 586H, 8700-066 MONCARAPACHO ALGARVE PORTUGAL