

The

Issue 360 February 2016

# CROQUET

*Gazette*

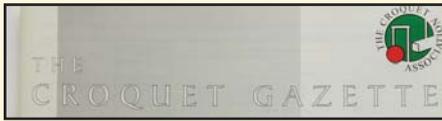
**'New System' GC  
handicaps for all**



# From our files

researched by Frances Colman

## 10 years ago - 2006



**Gazette numbers** - (*letter*) - Although the issue of the Gazette which you have just produced states at its masthead that it is issue no. 300, it is not correct to say that it is the 300th issue of the Gazette.

The Croquet Association Gazette was born in 1904 and it appeared weekly during the summer, monthly during the winter (except during World War I) until the outbreak of World War II in 1939.

The issues were numbered consecutively, and by September 1939 had reached 901.

Thereafter until 1953 the issues were not numbered consecutively but I have counted them and there were 72. In 1954 the journal was re-designed. . . (*there then followed a detailed history of the title changes and issue numbers which started again*) . . . Therefore if we ignore the various changes in title the number of issues of The Croquet Gazette has now reached a total of 1,273.

Alan Oldham (CA Archivist).

~

The WCF announces the formation of the **WCF Hall of Fame** . . .

Only those persons that have made significant contributions to the WCF aims shall be considered for induction and hence no more than five persons shall be induced in any one year.

~

**Golf Croquet review** (Bill Arliss)

GC is certainly continuing to grow within our clubs to the extent that it is becoming the major activity in many of the smaller clubs.

Admittedly a lot of play can be described as social, but there are good indications, certainly at Federation level, that local competition is also growing. . .

GC is bringing in considerable subscription income, which is stabilising the financial position of many clubs and ensuring a future for the social and the competitive players in both AC and GC.

~

**Corfu** – The Croquet Club of Corfu has recently opened with two superb lawns located by a marina close to the charming capital of Corfu. . . (*announced in a half-page advertisement*).

## 50 years ago - 1966



**Obituary – Mr W H Thorp**

It was a very great shock to the members of Cheltenham Croquet Club when Bill Thorp collapsed and died on the court. He was one of our most popular and helpful members, always willing to give lessons to beginners and useful tips to others. . .

~

Dear Sir, (*on the subject of introducing three-hour time limits, which the writer favours*)

. . . The main argument against the proposition is that it would favour the slow player. This is a matter of opinion, but surely the customs of the game could be amended to stress that an out-player must not waste time, must be ready to play as soon as opponent's turn has ended and therefore should already be on his feet on the edge of the court as his opponent plays that last shot of his turn. . .

Yours faithfully, Derek C Caporn

~

**Barnes** – The main feature of the (*past*) season was the recruitment of half-a-dozen males into what has for a long time been regarded as a female preserve.

Although they have concentrated mainly on golf croquet. . . there are hopes that the recruits will soon be participating in the wider scope of the main game.

(*At*) a highly successful end of season inaugural supper. . . more than one speaker took the opportunity to remind their audience that croquet, so far from being a tea-party type of activity, was in fact a highly skilled and rewarding pastime.

~

**Devonshire Park Exhibition** -

(October 1965). This was a great success.

Well over 300 people witnessed some excellent games in which JW Solomon just beat EPC Cotter, J Bolton beat J Laurenson, and Mrs E Rotherham beat Miss EJ Warwick.

Several requests were noted from those wishing to join clubs, and Dr Penny gave many hours to instructing on an adjoining court.

At one time he had over 20 people on it, including several boys from Eastbourne College!

## 100 years ago - 1916



Sir, (*on the matter of possibly suspending the CA for the duration of the war*).

It is a somewhat startling fact that we as a nation have been spending about 200 millions of pounds a year on various forms of sport, but now with war expenditure of over a million a day, there will have to be a very considerable curtailment in the matter of games.

Yours faithfully, A.C. Holland

~

**“Lest we forget” - Urgently wanted, a permanent holiday home for our soldiers and sailors.**

A scheme has been organised and a fund opened, the committee of which has had the generous supports of Her Majesty Queen Alexandra, for providing a Home where 1,200 of our soldiers and sailors may annually enjoy a free holiday.

More than half the necessary funds have been raised, and a promise of £1,000 has been made, on condition that the other £1,500 still required is speedily forthcoming. Cheques should be made payable to the “Holiday Home Fund”, . . .

~

**Appeal for the Manchester Regiment**

We wish to draw attention to the publication of a small book entitled “The Door in the Wall” or “The Story of My Garden,” by Mrs M Duggan (Associate), which can be obtained from all booksellers; or the publishers, . . .

The net proceeds resulting from its sale are to be devoted to founding “The Manchester Regiment Beds” in “Queen Mary’s Convalescent Auxiliary Hospital, Roehampton House, for Sailors and Soldiers who have lost limbs in the War,” and to which all men are sent, when their wounds are healed, to be supplied and fitted with artificial limbs, and taught how to use them to the best advantage.

~

**Australia** - The Gold Medal presented by the Croquet Association to the New South Wales Croquet Association, was competed for at Sydney in September last, and won by MR G H Gordon, the President of the Association.

# Editorial

**H**appy New Year everyone, if February isn't too late to say that. And quite a year we have to look forward to, with the AC World Championships taking place in Florida in April, and closer to home the World GC Teams Championship being hosted at Surbiton in May.

Both of those events will be previewed in the next issue, but the staging of both tournaments is only possible because of the work being undertaken by often 'invisible' individuals that make croquet work.

As you leaf through your CA fixtures book, that will probably have raced the Gazette through your letterbox, spare a thought for the hundreds of hours that have gone into its production for your enjoyment.

Liz Larsson and her colleagues at the CA Office should take an obvious bow for pulling it all together, and Dave Kibble too for the website version and all his technoweaney stuff that allows our online entries and other cleverness.

But behind every tournament at every club, there are individuals who have usually very quietly just done 'the stuff' that needed doing. You might not even know who these people are, and you certainly will have no idea of how many hours they've put in, just to get everything right for you. These folks

don't ask for praise, it's not in their nature, but I say 'Chapeau' to them all, and thank you.

Turning to this Gazette, the big news is the change to GC handicaps. This long-awaited shake-up is given due prominence, together with another 'rip it out and pin it up' centre spread.

There is also news of the progress being made with the changes to CA membership, National Croquet Day, club development, more Super-Advanced AC and croquet history. In addition there is a bumper crop of your letters, and I'm still coming to terms with a croquet-loving Trotsky!

By the time you read this, I'll be playing in South Africa at the Southern Cape AC Championships. Often I wish I had better luck but right now, it's good being me!



**Chris Roberts**

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Issue 360 February 2016

**Front cover:** 'New System' GC handicaps for all. World no.1 Reg Bamford becomes one of only two British based players on -5, while Phyllis Court social player Jean Pinquet is now a 14.

**This page:** The Editor at Cape Agulhas, South Africa, wondering where all his hair has gone, and the Chairman on New Years Day, presenting Ashby's Dave Davis Trophy to Lynda Allen and Rachel Rowe (*photographs by Frances Colman, Arthur Rowe and Chris Roberts*)

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# Chairman's Column

**I**n his report to the January Council meeting, Hon. Secretary Ian Vincent quoted the recent Government document "Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation".

The key parts of the quote were: "In the future, funding decisions will be made on the basis of the social good that sport and physical activity can deliver ... There are several demographic groups whose engagement in sport ... is well below the national average. ... We will distribute funding to focus on those people who tend not to take part in sport, including women and girls, disabled people, those in lower socio-economic groups and older people."

The media gave this strategy document some prominence back in December, although at that time I only noted an emphasis on starting sport young to encourage lifelong participation.

I was delighted that Ian had taken time to take a look at the document and to prompt Council to consider the potential implications of this Government strategy. My own intuition had already been that croquet offers much in terms of being able to meet the target demographic groups.

But Ian also identified another aspect of the document, which also covers the topics of governance, leadership and administration. He observed that the receipt of public funding will depend on the recipient organisation conducting regular surveys of staff, covering matters including diversity.

Diversity is an exciting word to me. I have been fortunate in experiencing the stimulation and challenge of working and living with people of different types in different situations.

The strategy document mentions the specific target of reaching 25% women on the boards of National Governing Bodies of sport. Today, the CA Council has 33 members; two of these are women. The CA website also lists 24 Federation Officers, and

only two of these are women.

I feel anything but sexist, and do not know of any evidence that suggests the CA is institutionally sexist. But I also doubt that the current controversy around the Academy Awards is because any groups of people have explicitly conspired to limit the diversity in nominations.

The only other detail I have to hand as I write is the membership list at Ashby Croquet Club, and the list includes 46% women. This suggests (unsurprisingly to me) we are a sport that serves both sexes.

What is stopping us from encouraging more of our female participants joining the ranks of our leadership?



**Tim King**

## Progressing towards the new membership structure

Following the vote at the SGM last March, we know that everyone is keen to see the new membership structure put into place. However, as previously reported, there are a number of changes to the administration systems to make before this can be done. This report is to keep you up to date with the current progress on implementation of those changes, and to give you the current timetable for the changes to come into effect.

The major change is that all members of clubs which are full members of the CA will gain membership of the CA, enabling them to enter CA tournaments. In order to do this, the CA needs to keep details for our members. We have looked at purchasing a proprietary membership system to enable us to do this, but came to the conclusion that none met our needs entirely. This is because we want to take this opportunity to implement a system which clubs can use for themselves to maintain their own membership records, and hence the system must handle both CA and club requirements.

This being the case, we have now embarked on a new implementation, which is being undertaken largely by Dave Kibble. This will build on the existing systems we have, rather than being a big-bang replacement. The plan is to have the new systems largely implemented by October of this year, so that data from clubs can be imported into the system in good time for the 2017 season. Of course, as with any software development, there are risks involved and it is possible these times may slip, but we hope to avoid that.

The new system will be accessible over the internet making it more easily available to those who need it. As you would expect, the CA's system will go further than merely complying with the Data Protection Act. Bank details will continue to be held nowhere but in our secure office, and only logged-in users will be able to access ordinary club members' names and contact details.

It is intended that the new system will:

- Allow individuals to maintain parts of their own data, such as handicap or address changes.
- Allow authorized club officials to see and maintain the membership data for their own club members.
- In time, allow club officials to do everything they need with the data to run their club efficiently. This will of course require the help of clubs in identifying what functions they will need and not everything

is likely to be available in the first release.

Use of the new system will be a free benefit to member clubs. Clubs not wishing to use the new system will still have the option of providing a snapshot of their member data to the CA for import on an annual basis. However, the advantage of using the new system from a club's viewpoint (other than the obvious features of the new system) is that their new members will enjoy CA membership rights from the moment they are entered onto it.

Club members will be given the option of 'opting out' of the system if they do not wish to be members of the CA, although neither they nor their club will gain any financial benefit in so doing. We will be writing to all club secretaries shortly on this point, providing them with a suggested format for a circular to their members. It will be possible for club to opt out of the whole process, but if they do so then they too would gain no financial benefit and their members would lose out on the CA membership benefits, so we hope this will not happen.

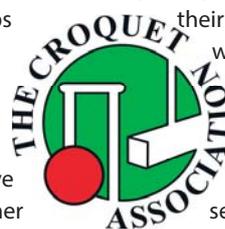
We will also be looking for help from as many club secretaries as possible in late spring this year, to provide early snapshots of their membership data for import to the new system. This will enable us to test and develop the import process with a variety of clubs' data prior to the main import process later in the year. This should ensure that everything runs as smoothly as possible for the transition at the end of the year.

A number of people have asked us if they need to continue their membership given the changes that we are implementing, so just to be clear, you will still need to be a tournament member if you wish to play in tournaments this year.

We will be writing individually to all members (both tournament and non-tournament) well before the end of the year to identify the pros and cons of remaining a member, and to let you know what to do if you wish to alter your membership for 2017. We hope most tournament members will wish to continue as 'premium' members so as to benefit from lower tournament entry fees and a higher level of priority for tournament entry, as well as to continue your valuable support of the work the CA does to promote croquet in the UK.

**Jeff Dawson,**

**The Membership Changes Implementation Group**



The CA have been trialling a modified way of calculating handicaps for AC Doubles over the last couple of years, the aim being to counter the perceived advantage that low/high handicap pairings have. Although there has been a lot of support for the new method it has not received universal acclaim.

For the 2016 season the table has been modified to remove all of the known anomalies.

**This new table is compulsory for all CA sponsored events and for all events in the CA fixtures book**, unless otherwise advertised. It is available on the CA web site

### AC doubles handicaps

under AC Handicapping. Many thanks to all those who have provided comments, in particular Mike Lambert.

I know that this will not satisfy everyone, as one of the complaints is that the advantage has now swung the other way. In conjunction with David Harrison-Wood, I have drawn up another table which produces handicaps for pairs, that lies between the old system and the new system.

You are welcome to use the new table for club and federation events should you wish, with one small caveat: The CA Handicapping Committee would like to have your feedback, if you do use it. This additional table is also available on the CA web site under AC Handicapping.

There have also been requests for some new guidance on handicapping other forms of doubles events such as alternate stroke doubles. I would be very interested to hear from anyone who has ideas about what basis should be used for handicapping other forms of AC doubles.

**Brian Fisk, CA Handicap Committee**

*Now is the time  
to prepare for*

## National Croquet Day - 5 June

**W**e know it takes time and effort to ensure a successful event – that's why a number of clubs are already well advanced in their planning.

The CA will be sending out details of National Croquet Day (NCD) in February, including posters and leaflets.

**An A4 Club poster** is designed for use in your Clubs to encourage your members to take part.

**An A4 Public poster** will encourage the public to join you on NCD, **and an A5 leaflet version** has an introduction to Croquet on the back.

There is space in the public poster/leaflet for your club to provide its contact details.

All posters and leaflets are available in hard copy from the CA office and can be downloaded from the CA web site.

I have spoken to several clubs about

their ideas for NCD, and here is a small sample of their feedback:

**An Open Day** including a 'Fun Day', when the public can test their skills by hitting a ball at a target (e.g. the centre post); for younger players the target will be closer. AC players may well want to use Garden Croquet as an introduction.

**A Competition Day** – invite other sports clubs and organisations to a 'Challenge Day'. After a brief coaching session, matches between these Clubs will be organised (with one or more club players on each team to guide play).

Invite local organisations to come and try **'The Croquet Experience'** – they invariably bring in their families, etc.

**Local/National Charities** – hold a raffle, or make a collection in aid of the Charity, especially one with a good press interest, or

one that could involve a celebrity.

This all makes good press and media copy.

**Offer refreshments** – not only does that bring in money, it will show that Croquet Clubs are welcoming places.

Whatever you have in mind, the CA's Marketing Team is here to support you with talking over your ideas, writing copy for your local press, poster, leaflets etc.

I look forward to hearing about what you have planned.

Please tell me what's happening, so that when I talk with the regional and national press, I will have a good idea of the range of excellent activities that will go to make NCD a special event.

**Contact me, Brian Wilson**

07970 922867 or 01225 708540  
brian@europaassociates.co.uk

## CA January Council meeting

**C**ouncil met on 23 January at Hurlingham.

### New website

The strains of "Happy Birthday" from the party next door seemed slightly premature, as the new website had only been launched a week ago, though celebrations were undoubtedly in order (*see page 14*).

New Council members

Frances Colman was welcomed as the new representative for the Southern Federation, as were Lionel Tibble and Brian Fisk, her predecessor, who were co-opted to fill the remaining vacancies.

### Selection

Under matters arising, the precedent that members of selection committees for world championship teams must not be on the borderline of selection was confirmed as policy. Sadly, Keith Aiton had resigned from the MacRobertson Shield selection committee as, whilst agreeing in principle with that, he disagreed with its decision to select its chairman, David Maugham, so far in advance of the event.

### Treasurer

Peter Death, the Treasurer, reported that there had been an exceptional surplus of £33K last year, mainly due to the lack of applications for development grants (*see page 16 & 17*). It was agreed to transfer £20K of it to the development fund, and £10K to a new fund to help cover the costs of

implementing the membership changes.

### Meeting procedures

A working party chaired by the President, Quiller Barrett, had made recommendations for changing the way motions brought to general meetings are handled, to enfranchise the soon to be greatly expanded membership. They were to adopt a process of *'Iterative Consultation'*, along the lines of that used by the World Croquet Federation, conducted through an electronic forum.

The proposals were generally welcomed, though the working party was asked to ensure that clubs, federations and Council had adequate opportunities to engage with the process, to prevent it being dominated by a few individuals.

It was also suggested that the process should be trialled, to iron out any problems with it before it became binding.

Although outside its remit, the working party had also recommended that another group should be set up to consider how Council and its Committees can work more effectively. This turned out to be timely in view of the government's latest strategy for sport (*see Chairman's Column, page 3*).

As an initial step, it also proposed that Council should use a separate electronic forum for dealing with urgent matters between meetings.

### Future of The Gazette

Another working party, chaired by Strat Liddiard, had considered the future of The Gazette, again in the light of the expanded membership.

It made six recommendations, which were adopted, the first being that it should no longer be a journal of record, which will free up some space for the Editor to use for articles of interest to the wider membership.

It was agreed that in the first year of the expanding membership there should continue to be six issues a year, with all of them being sent to the new members on paper.

### GC handicapping change

The proposed system for GC Handicapping (*see pages 10-13*), which had been successfully trialled last year, was adopted for general use from this season onwards.

Martin French and his team were thanked for their work in developing it, and Bill Arliss was thanked for his contribution to the field over many years.

### Trustees

Finally, it was agreed to relieve Roger Bray as a Trustee, replacing him by Peter Death.

Both them, and the continuing trustees, Colin Irwin and Stephen Mulliner, were thanked for their service.

**Ian Vincent, Honorary Secretary**

## Surprisingly, Trotsky had a remarkable passion for Croquet



exiles Trotsky took up croquet, which he played very intensely. Service quotes a fellow exile of Trotsky, one Grisha Ziv, as saying: "(Bronstein/Trotsky) had a very large amount of free time and energy which sought an outlet but had absolutely nothing to expend it on. And he took an active part in all the games and recreations which the exile used as a way of shortening the passage of time. He had a remarkable passion for croquet, perhaps partly because the character of the game – more than any other - gave special latitude to the expression of his natural cunning, imaginativeness and resourcefulness. And it was here, as in every other place and in every matter where the opportunity arose to show his individuality, that Bronstein/Trotsky was organically incapable of tolerating rivals alongside him; and winning a victory over him at croquet was the surest way of making him into your worst enemy"

Robert Service goes on to say "Alas, no



extant sources tell us who flattened the ground and laid out the lawn in Siberia for Bronstein/Trotsky to indulge his disconcerting competitiveness."

I think Ziv's description of croquet as requiring cunning, imaginativeness and resourcefulness is a brilliant definition of the game!

**Tony Mayer, Swindon CC**

Dear Editor

I was intrigued to read about Billy the Kid and croquet in the last issue (*Gazette 359*), and this reminded me of another famous historical figure who was a croquet player, namely Leon (Lev Davidovich) Trotsky (Bronstein).

Robert Service's biography of Trotsky mentions that, during one of his Siberian

### A generous equipment trolley offer from Jeff

Dear Editor,

In one of my 'something to do' moods I thought about making a suitable trolley for moving the Croquet furniture from the club house to the playing lawn.

Now that it's finished, and having remembered a request in the Croquet Gazette for spare equipment,

I thought you would know of a club who might need such an item (my club has one already).

The trolley will hold all necessary items including mallet, small shovel, golf clips, hoop lever and rule books.

The photos show my construction.

**Jeff Rushby, Caterham CC**

*I discussed this kind offer with Jeff and he won't take any remuneration for his hard work, so we came up with the idea that a donation to the CA's young player bursary fund would be appropriate.*

*Let's start at £30 and the best offer by the end of February wins (and organises collection from Kenley, Surrey).*

*Offers to [gazette@croquet.org.net](mailto:gazette@croquet.org.net) - Ed.*

### Alice anniversary prompts research into early spread of croquet

Dear Editor,

I am sure many readers of the Gazette will be aware that 2015 was the 150th anniversary of the publication of *Alice in Wonderland* and, of course, Lewis Carroll's infamous description of the game of croquet.

As part of local celebrations, I gave a talk about Carroll and croquet for Basingstoke Discovery Centre (aka Library!) in November. As well as my croquet claque and a few interested persons, the audience included Mr and Mrs Roger Scowen of Hampton-upon-Thames.

What I didn't know is that Roger has done a considerable amount of detective work to try to track down the earliest references to croquet in England; specifically how the game spread across the country via adverts in the press, how Lewis Carroll (and the rest of the Dodgson family) played croquet themselves, and the impact of the game on contemporary publications such as *The Illustrated London News* and *Punch*, to name but two.

Students of the history of croquet may be interested to know that Roger has published privately two short pamphlets detailing his findings: These are available from him directly via [atscowen@waitrose.com](mailto:atscowen@waitrose.com).

**Ian Harrison, Basingstoke CC**

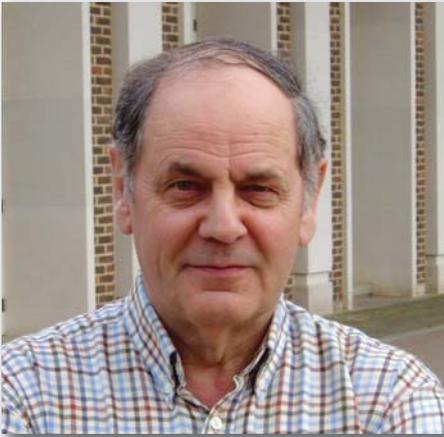
*Croquet historian Ray Hall reviews Roger Scowen's book, and fellow scholar John Harris 'Runs the rule over Alice' on pages 20 & 21.*



# the Editor

Readers are reminded that the views expressed in the Letters pages of the Gazette, are those of the authors only, and not those of their clubs, unless specifically indicated.

## Thank you Alan



Dear Editor,

As many of you know, Alan Pidcock has now all but retired from mallet-making after more than 20 years of innovation and production. As his successor, I'd like to thank him on behalf of the croquet community for all he's done for our game.

Over the years he has, besides making the mallets we've all come to know and love, served on the CA Council and the Equipment Committee for many years (and continues to do so). Here he is helping to oversee and advise on matters of product quality and suitability, etc. and has also been heavily involved in the past in much ball testing for compliance and uniformity.

Having now taken up the reigns, utilising my background in precision engineering, I have started to push the evolution of mallets ever further and I would like to thank Alan for his help and advice.

Being mindful of the fact that, to paraphrase Isaac Newton, if my innovation goes further it is because I am standing on the shoulders of a giant.

And so I'd like to wish this 'Giant' of mallet production a long, happy and well-deserved retirement.

**Dave Trimmer, Manor House Mallets**

### Colchester GC Open

Since the last Gazette went to press, a date change has been made for the Colchester GC Open (an English National Singles Championship qualifier).

It has been brought forward a week to 7-8 May, to avoid clashing with the World GC Teams Championship at Surbiton.

The Fixtures book and website show the corrected date.

## Coaching at York

Dear Editor,

One of the most powerful catalysts for personal development and club development is, of course, coaching.

So I was delighted to see coaching given such prominence in Gazette 359 with the centre spread featuring courses at the Croquet Academy and the new South West Croquet Academy.

For those living beyond easy reach of the south and south-west, many other clubs and centres across the country also offer coaching courses with local, regional or national reach.

York, for example, is hosting three CA coaching courses this spring – 'Introduction to AC'; 'Aiming for Silver' and 'Coach Training' – as well as, like so many other clubs, offering a range of internal coaching and development courses.

Let coaching thrive at all levels!

Meanwhile, all the best to the new South West Croquet Academy.

**John Harris, York Croquet Club**

~

**Dave Kibble, Chairman of the Coaching Committee, writes:**

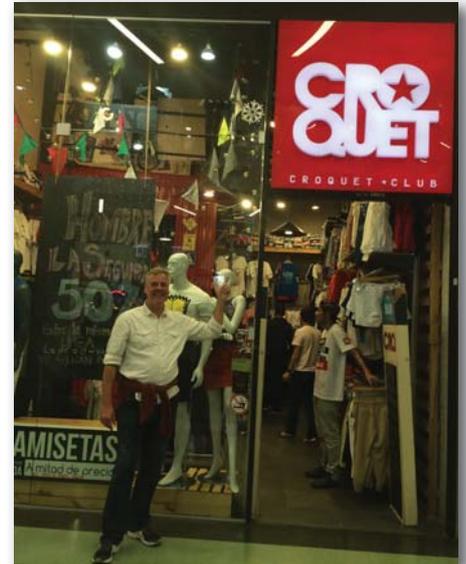
Thanks to John for mentioning the excellent courses on offer at York, details of which are in the Fixtures Book.

I thought it worthwhile reminding people how to get access to unscheduled coaching:

If your club has a Club Coach, they are your first point of call; next we have Federation Coaching Officers who will know what courses are being planned in your area and would be grateful for being made aware of any additional demand so they can do something about it.

For AC lower handicaps and aspiring A-Class players, there are Coaching Pods around the country - just register in the website members' area.

## A Colombian find



Dear Editor,

Oh no it's spread to Bogota!

I was very dismayed to see this in a shopping mall yesterday.

**Geoffrey Odds, holidaying in Colombia**

*Very well spotted Mr Odds (your Editor's oldest pal). I could only have been more delighted if this outlet was a dedicated sports equipment shop, for that would surely have settled our long running 'sport or pastime' argument! - Ed*



## Can anyone help Aussie James?

Dear Editor,

I am not a croquet player but I recently acquired an old John Jaques set and I'm interested in finding some information about it. The John Jaques company never got back to me, so I wonder if any of your readers can offer any help.

**James Whineray, Fremantle, Western Australia**





# More Letters to the Editor

## Good to see CVD players difficulties being addressed

Dear Editor,  
With reference to Martin French's article on colour blindness (*Gazette 359*),

speaking as a member of the one in twelve with CVD, I have found some people to be very understanding and accommodating of this.

It is so good to see this problem explained in a way which makes it more understandable for the eleven out of twelve males who don't have CVD. Also I believe it is very rare in females too.

At my own club at Nailsea, whenever possible (tournament managers) Peter

Dyke and Kathy Wallace, when allocating colours for tournaments, will try to give me primaries. I'm sure that most of the time other players don't notice this.

I have always felt reluctant to press the issue because on occasions you get the distinct impression that some players feel it is an excuse to try and make sure of getting primaries which most players seem to prefer. There has been many a time, when using secondaries, that I have gone to a wrong hoop because of mixing up the green and brown clips, or white and pink, and sometimes this has resulted in losing a game. Also I have felt other players getting impatient with me when I have either asked

again about which ball is which, or have walked over to double check a clip colour at distance.

I have had people say to me that I should mention my CVD to tournament managers, but when you have arrived for an event you don't feel like starting off by making problems for the event management.

Some of the suggestions in Martin's article would certainly make things much easier, and after reading his article, I will be much more inclined to mention this at matches, until things are sorted out on a more permanent basis.

**Brian McCausland, Nailsea CC**  
*(Photograph of Brian by Kathy Wallace)*

## Would purple and orange balls help CVD players ?

Dear Editor,

I read with interest Martin French's article (*Gazette 359*) on the problems people with colour blindness face, especially if double-banking.

I forget which club I was visiting where I discovered a purple ball and an orange ball, which I took to be part of a rare, antique or obsolete set of tertiary colours, presumably for super-keen players whose need for a croquet fix made them happy to triple-bank. I don't know if my assumption was correct, or, if it was, what the two other colours in a tertiary set would have been.

If ball manufacturers have made balls in these and other colours, then they should be able to do so again, and in a spectrum that gives no difficulty to colour blind players. If anyone can cast light – of whatever hue – that explains why I came across a purple and an orange ball, I would be happily illuminated.

**Peter Haydon, Dulwich CC**

### Response from Martin French, Council CVD working party

The Laws and Rules don't specify what the colours of a tertiary set should be, but purple and orange are two of the Dawson

*- Dawson third colour/tertiary balls -*



*Normal view*



*View of a player with CVD*

Third Colours – the other two being jade (dark turquoise) and grey.

While it has been suggested that from the eight Second and Third Colour balls we

ought to be able to find a set of four that everyone can distinguish, this turns out not to be the case.

As the photos below show, when seen through the eyes of one of the common types of colour vision deficiency, too many balls end up as another shade of grey.

The Equipment Committee has consulted ColourBlindAwareness.org on this very question: are there eight distinct colours that all kinds of colour vision can distinguish? They pointed us to a reference text with a set of eight colours.

However, while they may just about be distinguishable by all kinds of colour vision, they are not very distinct, and there are pairs or triplets of balls which are still very similar to some people.

It currently seems that to get eight distinct balls, we would need to use spots, stripes or checks on some of the balls – and this is technically difficult to achieve in the low volumes croquet requires.

**T**he second Dulwich President's cup took place on the third weekend of January.

The tournament is invitational with generous sponsorship organised by Andrew Dymond with his employer [littleforest.co.uk](http://littleforest.co.uk), and will accommodate a maximum of twelve players including six regular Dulwich players.

Weather permitting, GC is the order of the day with the possibility of some other form of croquet at manager's discretion.

## A January GC joust at Dulwich

The weather permitted and Guy Scurfield, our worshipped President and tournament manager, decided on a cross-block format allowing the ten players present to enjoy five single games before the top two in each block progressed to a semi-final and best-of-three final.

In the absence of Harry Dodge (studying) and JP Moberley (studying), Tobi Savage and Nick Archer emerged as finalists having lost respectively none and one game on the way.

After a tentative hoop one, Savage proceeded to a crowd-pleasing, merciless and meticulous demolition of Archer's game, running hoops from wherever his ball landed.

Not that Archer was playing badly but he

## Helping players with Colour Vision Deficiency

Martin French reports how the CA have made changes to help those with CVD

In Gazette 359 (December 2015), we highlighted the problems for those members with Colour Vision Deficiency (CVD) ('colour blindness').

It was a shock to find that the eight balls on a croquet court could be so hard to tell apart, with red, brown and green, in particular, hard to distinguish for the majority of those affected by CVD.

And with one in 12 of the male population affected, this is not something croquet should ignore. So Council approved a small working party to see what could be done in time for the 2016 season.

We've made quite good progress, with the help of a panel of eight members affected by CVD, and with great support from a number of CA committees.

### Council has now approved the following changes or improvements:

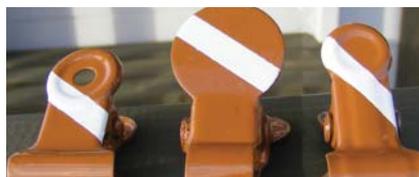
(1) **The duties of the tournament manager** – set out in tournament regulation M1 – now include the allocation of first colour balls whenever possible to a player who has told the manager they have CVD.

This will henceforth to managers of all CA events - we hope that federation and club tournament managers will also include this in the many things a manager has to juggle. *[Thanks to the AC and GC Tournament Committees]*

(2) **How should players let the tournament manager know they have a CVD difficulty?** People enter CA tournaments by using either the on-line entry system or a paper entry form.

So the paper entry form in this year's Fixtures Calendar has been updated to include a CVD tick-box, and the player profile on the CA website includes this question - any on-line entries the player makes will then carry the information through to the entry list the manager receives. *[Thanks to CA Manager and CA Webmaster]*

(3) **It is recommended that AC clips be repainted in brighter colours** –



which makes them clearer for all players - and specifically **club equipment officers** are asked to add a white dot to green clips and a diagonal white stripe to brown clips, so that red, green and brown clips may be distinguished by those with CVD.

Having now made these changes to all the clips at my own club, I can confirm it will only be a big job for the larger clubs. The detailed spec for the colours

and markings is on the CA website - Technical & Articles / Equipment.

*[Thanks to the Equipment Committee]*

(4) **A new approved laws variation has been added** to the tournament regulations (L5) which clarifies that in AC Law 47 and in GC Rule 8, the information on the state of the game which a player, if asked, must tell the opponent, includes information about any of the balls and clips in their game, and also the colour and position of clips and balls in any double- or triple-banked game. After careful consideration, it has been decided not to alter AC Law 26. *[Thanks to GC Rules Committee and AC Laws Committee]*

(5) Finally, clubs are asked to think of players with CVD when picking colours of plastic pegs used as **GC scoring clips**.

There is no specification for these clips in the rules, and their use is optional, but it would help where clips are used to **avoid red clips** for the red and yellow side – **please use YELLOW**.

**Only have one of green or brown** in use too for the Green and Brown side.

This will reduce confusion for CVD players who cannot distinguish red, green and brown. *[Thanks to the Equipment Committee]*

These actions should make it much easier for croquet players who have a colour vision deficiency to concentrate on their play and to avoid confusion.

The help of tournament managers, club equipment officers and other officials to make this happen will be greatly appreciated.

**Martin French,**  
CA Council CVD working party

soon run out of expletives to curse his luck.

Savage (photo, right) took the match and first prize, running hoop ten from six feet north-east of peg: 7-2, 7-3.

On both days, the players were treated to the lavish Dulwich hospitality that included Andrew Dymond's famous South African braai, which on Sunday was preceded by delicious canapés lovingly prepared by Cindy.

**Pierre Beaudry, Dulwich CC**



Why play in the Rain?  
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[www.corfucroquet.gr](http://www.corfucroquet.gr)



# The New Golf Croquet H

## Strat Liddiard, CA Handicap Committee Chairman, reveals the long awaited 'New System'

**C**ouncil has approved the national roll-out for 2016 onwards of the New System for GC handicaps.

This has been carefully considered and thoroughly tested across the East Anglian Croquet Federation (EACF) during 2015.

The results of almost 3,000 games have been collected and analysed, confirming the new system is fit for purpose and an improvement over the two previous systems.

### How does the New System work?

The New System is simple and straightforward. Throughout, games are played off your handicap – it does away with the Effective / Actual Handicap split.

It has a wider range than previously, but the great majority of players who are currently between 11 and 3 will find their handicap unchanged.

Because the new system is open at both ends it allows people to find their own level. In the new trigger point table (*see the centre pages spread*) we have defined trigger points from 20 through to -6, but the extremes of this range will rarely be used.

The handicap index has been re-based, so even though most players' handicaps will not change, their index will be much higher. For the best players, their handicap index and ranking grade will be similar values.

You still gain or lose 10 index points for a handicap game result.

The New System works just like the old

ones in the middle ranges, with players giving and receiving the same number of Extra Turns against 'middle range' opponents as before.

But both the extremes have been pulled further apart, so that the weakest players (11 and above) receive more ETs from their opponents, and the strongest players (1 and below) have to give their opponents more ETs than under the old (pre-2014) system.

The 'Points exchanged in level play' table (*also see the centre pages spread*) has also been re-worked to cover the wider handicap range.

It works in the same way as previously.

The same points are exchanged regardless of whether a 7, 13 or 19 point game, and the doubles handicap calculations also work as before. The East Anglian trial shows the CA's aims for the New System have all been well met; it is also popular with those who have used it. We hope you find it a positive improvement.

**Martin French will act as National Roll-out Co-ordinator.**

**If you have any problems applying the rules to convert onto the new system or have any queries, please contact him:**

**[martin.french@btinternet.com](mailto:martin.french@btinternet.com)**



## Developing the New System

The New System was devised by Robert Fulford, Jonathan Kirby and James Hopgood – three croquet-playing mathematicians with expertise in ranking and handicap systems. They started by analysing over 6,300 handicap games played under the old system and nearly 2,000 games played under the Effective Handicap trial.

The New System opens up the handicap range at both ends, to avoid the distortions of previous systems. The trigger points (and points exchanged in level play) follow the mathematical principles of the Elo rating system, long used in many sports (originally chess) for rankings, and also used in the AC handicap system.

At the end of the EACF trial, 3,000 results were collected and analysed. An ideal system would give players of any handicap a 50% chance of winning against any other handicap; this was not the case with the earlier systems.

The strongest players won far too many of their handicap games under the pre-2014 system and the weakest players won too few of their games under both previous systems.

The New System is markedly better, giving all players a much fairer chance.

From the theoretical underpinning of the New System we expect it to be more robust in the longer term, as has been the case in the AC handicapping system which has worked for 25 years without significant change.

**Strat Liddiard, Chairman, CA Handicap Committee**

# Handicap System for 2016

## What will my handicap be?

Find the rule which best fits you below, to convert your existing Actual Handicap to the New System. (If you were on the EACF trial last year, continue on your current handicap and index.)

The great majority of players will be covered by rule (a) - most rules are simple but the one for the lowest handicaps is a bit trickier!

(a) If your existing Actual Handicap is between 3 and 12 (inclusive), convert your index as follows:

- **If your existing handicap is between 12 and 6:**

**keep your handicap** and add 1100 to your existing index to get your new index.

- **If your existing handicap is 5:**

**keep your handicap** and add 1150 to your existing index.

- **If your existing handicap is 4 or 3,**

add 1200 to your existing index, then:

**If your NEW index is 1800 or above your new handicap becomes 2;**

**otherwise keep your old handicap.**

*Note for rule (a): If you were below the trigger point for your current handicap before the change, you will remain below the trigger point on the new system. Your handicap should NOT be increased during the conversion.*

**b) if your existing handicap is 12 and you have been struggling to get your index much above 0,** ask your club handicapper to reset your handicap to 14 with a new index of 1050.

**c) a new complete beginner should be started on 16, 14, 12 or lower** - we have updated the 'Three Times Round' test to work out an initial handicap for new players (see the website).

**d) if your existing Actual Handicap is 2 or below and**

- you DO have a current CGS Grade (ranking grade), take your current CGS Grade and use that for your new handicap index. Look up your new handicap from the trigger point table (*centre pages*). Take the handicap of the next trigger point at or below your Grade.

- you DON'T have a current CGS Grade, then your new handicap should be set between your Actual and Effective Handicaps. There are relatively few players to whom this applies, and it is the least 'precise' of the rules. We will send more guidance to Club Handicappers who may have to apply judgement to ensure an appropriate handicap is set where there is little recent recorded evidence to work from.

*Note for rule (d): no player's handicap should increase above their old Actual Handicap during this conversion. If someone's CGS grade is say 1798 but they were a 1, they should not be changed into a 3 with a handicap index of 1798. Instead, they should remain as a 1 and be given an initial index of 1900.*

All Club, Federation and CA Handicappers will be sent detailed guidance on the New System, how to convert players onto it, and how to set initial handicaps for beginners. This guidance will also be sent to all Club Secretaries and will be available on the CA website.



### Photographs (opposite page, from top):

- (1) **World Number One Reg Bamford** was a -3 handicap under the 2015 system, but his world ranking index of 2780 gives him a 'New System' handicap of **-5**; a mark he shares with only Robert Fulford in the UK and just six others worldwide.
- (2) Similarly, **Guy Scurfield** was a '0' but his world ranking index of 2260 takes him to a new **-2**.
- (3) **Mike Fensome** was a 2 but his good ranking index of 2037 sees him drop two rungs to **'0'**.
- (4) **Andrea Huxley** was a 3, so her re-calculation goes off her current handicap card index total. A string of good results since our last issue, took her handicap card index to the cusp of 600; add the required 1200 to that, puts her very close to the 1800 point trigger between **3 and 2**.
- (5) **Roger Price** (Bransgore) was also on handicap 3, but his old card index is only 576; add on the 1200 = 1776, so he stays a **3** on the New System.

- (6) Photo above: **Margaret Moss** (Bowdon), impressed at the All England final and she went home as a 9 handicap with a card index of 150. She keeps her **9** handicap, and adds 1100 to her 150, making her New System index now 1250.
- (7) Sharing the front cover with Reg: Phyllis Court's **Jean Pinguet** has been moved out to **14** by her club handicapper. (All photos by Chris Roberts).

## New handicap cards for AC and GC

The CA is issuing new-style cards for both AC and GC this season.

There are similar changes to both, driven by a desire for a less-cramped card where dates of games may be included.

Lionel Tibble has researched better formats of the card for the Handicap Committee, and found that Mark Hamann (East Dorset) had come up with some good alternative designs.

The Handicap Committee selected the best of these as the new card.

The first big change is a move to A5 format (in other words, A4 folded in half, rather than thirds). This reduces the number of results that fit on one card, but allows more space for entering each result.

A new column has been added for 'Date'. If you wish, take a line to write the event

title above a group of matches - it gives you a clear record of your history.

Again, you might like to take a line below to write how you did overall after an event.

We decided to stop taking up so much of the card with static information: the Trigger Points, Points Exchanged in Level Play and so on.

Instead, an A5 insert with the information for AC or GC will be available.

The CA Office will include these with new cards (AC), or send bundles to clubs to distribute (GC). The inserts will also be available to download from the CA website for both AC and GC. A4 poster versions of the inserts will also be available to download, for club noticeboards.

Apart from the additional 'Date' column, the card is filled out as before.

The how to 'Fill Out Your Handicap Card!' poster has been updated for the new format (*also see the centre pages spread*). This is also available as an A4 poster to download for club noticeboards.

Having collected results of over 11,000 games in the past year, there is one recurring error I kept seeing: if you go through a trigger point and your handicap changes, and then your next few results reverse your index through that same trigger point, your handicap doesn't change back.

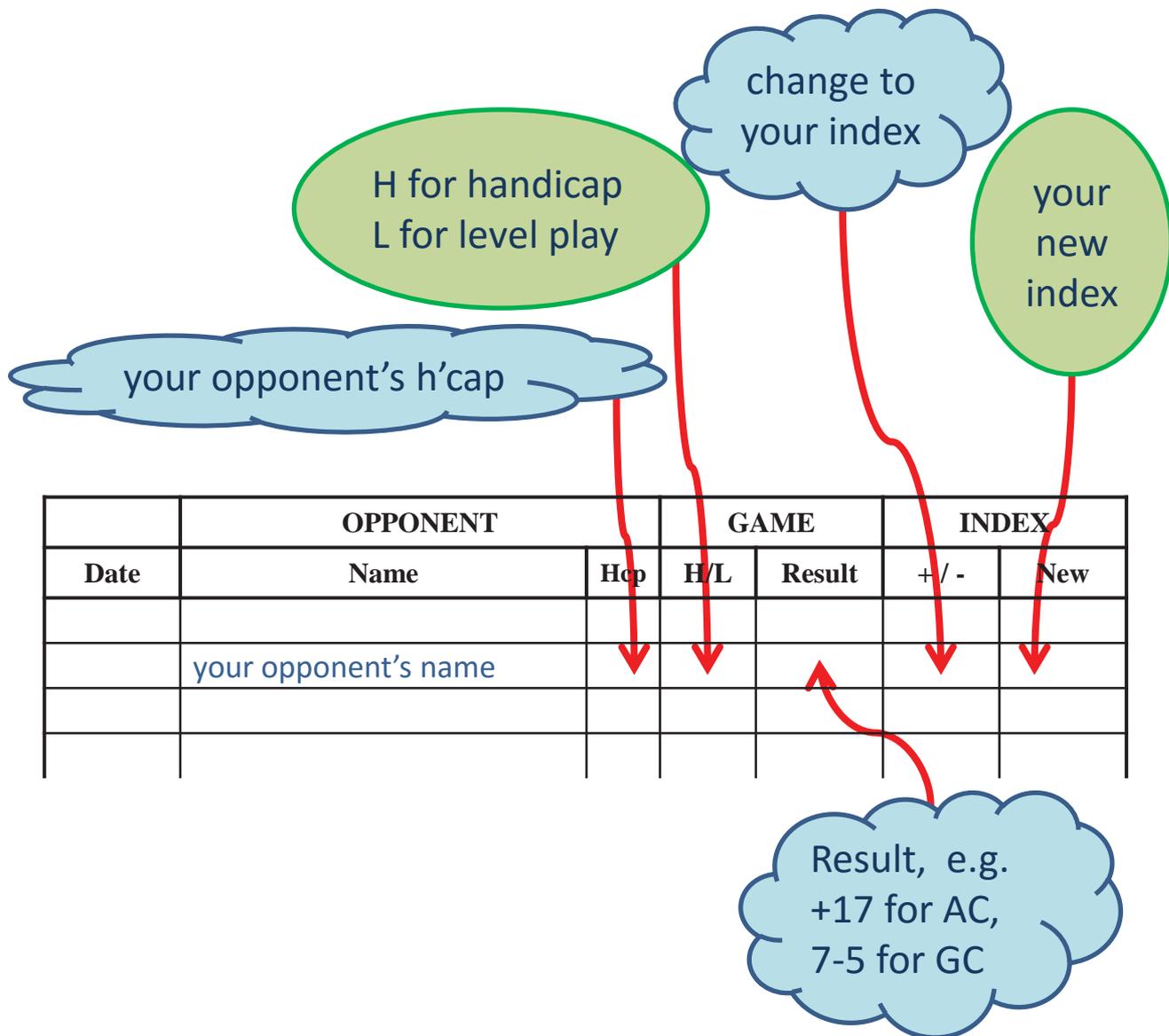
That's because it's still the trigger point for your current handicap.

Your handicap doesn't change again until you pass through the next trigger point above or below your new handicap.

**Martin French, Handicap Committee**

# Fill out your handicap card!

The following applies to the new GC and AC cards



**Avoid a common error:** when your index improves and you go through a trigger point, your handicap reduces by 1 step. If you then lose your next couple of games and go back below the same trigger point, your handicap doesn't increase again. This is because the trigger point you've gone through again is for the handicap you are already on – so you stay at the same handicap.

**Any questions?** Ask ....., Club Handicapper

# GC Handicap 'New System'

Please use the following tables with the new system and new handicap cards.

For handicap games the winner's index increases by 10, the loser's decreases by 10 (whether a 7, 13 or 19 point game).

For level play games use the table below to determine the number of points exchanged (again, for 7, 13 or 19 point games).

## Points Exchanged in Level Play

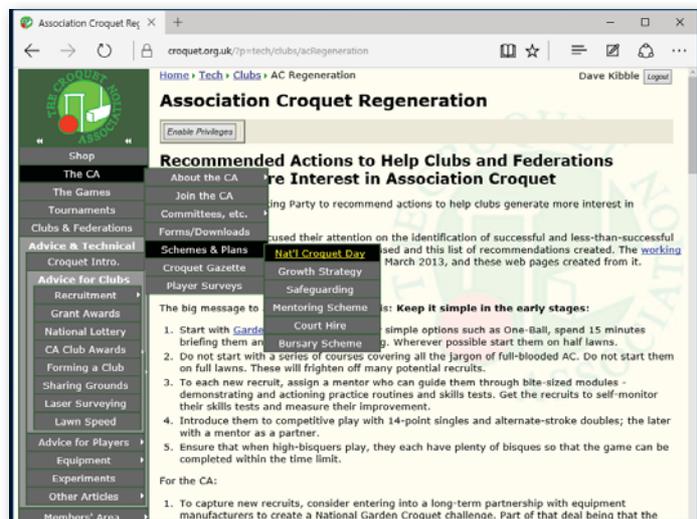
		LOSER's HANDICAP																							
		-6	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	14	16	18	20	
WINNER's HANDICAP	-6	10	7	4	2																				
	-5	13	10	7	4	2																			
	-4	16	13	10	7	4	3	2																	
	-3	18	16	13	10	7	5	3	2																
	-2		18	16	13	10	8	6	4	3	2														
	-1			17	15	12	10	8	6	4	3	2													
	0			18	17	14	12	10	8	6	4	3	2												
	1				18	16	14	12	10	8	6	4	3	2											
	2					17	16	14	12	10	8	6	4	3	2	2									
	3						18	17	16	14	12	10	8	6	4	3	3	2	2						
	4							18	17	16	14	12	10	8	6	5	4	3	3	2	2				
	5								18	17	16	14	12	10	8	7	6	5	4	3	3	2	2		
	6									18	17	16	14	12	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	3	2	2
	7										18	17	15	13	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	3	2
	8											18	17	16	14	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3
	9												18	17	15	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4
	10													18	17	16	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6
	11														18	17	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7
	12															18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9
	14																18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10
	16																	18	17	17	16	15	14	13	12
18																		18	17	17	16	15	14	13	
20																			18	18	17	17	16	15	

## Handicap Trigger Points

Handicap	Trigger Point	Handicap	Trigger Point	Handicap	Trigger Point
-6	2800	2	1800	10	1200
-5	2650	3	1700	11	1150
-4	2500	4	1600	12	1100
-3	2350	5	1500	14	1050
-2	2200	6	1400	16	1000
-1	2100	7	1350	18	950
0	2000	8	1300	20	900
1	1900	9	1250		

## Extra Turns in Handicap Games

Length of game	Handicap Difference																										
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
19 point	0	1	3	4	6	7	9	10	12	13	15	16	18	19	20	22	23	25	26	28	29	31	32	34	35	37	38
13 point	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
7 point	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	11	12	12	13	13	14



# The CA has a new website!

If you print a page, none of the navigation panels print with the page content, saving those valuable trees (and printer ink).

At the top of each page is a breadcrumb trail showing the menu selections needed to get to that page - click on the higher levels in the trail to

safe in the knowledge that it uniquely identifies the page you are looking at.

The page information link at the foot of each page reveals a lot about the page, including the comments people have made about it and access to all previous versions, with a side-by-side comparison between any two versions.

Page updates populate 'what's new' on the search page, though that will be more useful later in the site's life.

The shop section hasn't changed yet - a full-featured commercial package is coming very soon.

Keeping the information current and correct is a challenge - and you are invited to help: when logged-in, click on the feedback icon at the foot of a page to tell the owning committee specifically what is needed. Please give feedback about your new website, especially to report any problems or difficulties you encounter, or suggestions for improvement - there's a link to email the webmaster at the bottom of each page, or log page update requests on that page. The technology behind the website is all new so teething troubles are likely, and the sooner you report them the sooner they can be fixed!

**Dave Kibble - Webmaster**

**B**ill Arliss bestowed the first website on the CA in 1979, soon after the World Wide Web became worthy of the name. With very little change to the original structure, it grew steadily, but it became increasingly difficult to maintain and for Members to find what they were looking for.

The CA's new website is easy to navigate through the menu on the left-hand side of the screen. Sub-sections pop out as the mouse travels over them, or click on a heading and browse down to the detail you want. Whichever page you view, the menu remains to show you where you are.

If the menu blocks your view, hide it by clicking on the tiny left-pointing arrows near the CA logo. Hiding the menu reveals a tiny arrow pointing right to bring it back - or just refresh the page.

navigate up the tree. All the applications you've grown to love, such as the tournaments listing, online entry and CA Directory, work exactly as they did before, but now are easier to find.

Until search engines such as Google catch up with this major change, the site has its own rudimentary search facility, accessible off the home page menu.

You can explore the site through the site map - a file-system-like visualisation of all pages accessible to you. Click on the folder icons to show and hide the detail below them and click on a page title to view its contents. You can focus the view at any folder by clicking on the tree icon next to that folder - the same icon is at the foot of each page.

The browser's address bar contents can be saved as a favourite or emailed to someone,

## The evolution of the CA Golf Croquet rules

**W**e know that GC had been played in large gardens from about 1900, to rules which may have been similar to those published in *The Girls Realm*, June 1902 (as reported in *Gazette* 355 p11). By 1913, when Horace Crowther Smith published 'How to win at Golf Croquet', the game had developed and was clearly popular thereafter. For example, two games of GC featured in 'Sorrell and Son', a popular novel published in 1925. However, it was not until 1934 that the Croquet Association assumed responsibility for formalising the rules.

My first acquaintance with GC rules was the three-page appendix in the 1989 fifth edition of the AC laws which seemed insufficient for a popular game. Its unpromising opening paragraph stated: "The laws of Association Croquet relating to ordinary singles and doubles play, and handicap singles and doubles play, apply subject to the following modifications". Roger Wood has lent me his collection of Laws books dating from 1936 and this puzzle is solved - to be replaced by another.

The Laws of Golf Croquet existed in two major formats, or three if you include the

WCF versions. The first version, from 1935 to 1960, treats the game as an entity in its own right. There is a gradual introduction of relevant AC laws in amplification of the statement "to be read with reference to the Laws of Croquet as far as they apply" which first appeared in 1947.

There followed the 'Laws of Croquet which apply to Golf Croquet' and then a court diagram labelled 'Golf Croquet Standard Setting'. There are small adjustments from issue to issue but the structure in 1957 is recognisably that of 1935. I hope to publish a composite version in due course, showing the changes through that period.

The 1961 Laws booklet is labelled 'first edition' in the new series that makes the present laws the sixth edition. Early copies of the laws had been published by individuals and commercial companies, for example, the 1936 to 1948 booklets were

published variously by: Slazenger, Ayres, Jaques, The Field Press, et al. Although one 1950 edition is "confirmed and adopted by the council of the Croquet Association" and the 1957 is "Official edition published by the CA", editions were still produced by other publishers. The new series changed that.

The 1961 was the first radical revision of the CA laws of croquet since World War I. The draft was prepared by Ian C Baillieu QC.

Presumably there had been discussion at Council on the principles of the changes? I have not investigated this for AC though the order of main sections is akin to the sixth edition. Nevertheless the reduction of the GC laws is drastic and even the gradual introduction of clarifications resulted in a total of only two and a half pages by 1984.

So the second puzzle is why was this drastic change made? Perhaps it was thought that nobody played GC by then, though as I have already shown in 'History of Golf Croquet', 2014, this was not true at all. It will be much harder to research this issue so I would be most interested to hear from anyone who might have ideas on this..

**Ray Hall (Sussex County)**

## Player development activity for CA Squads and pods

A wide range of activities are planned for various groups throughout 2016. **The GB Squad** will hold a get together at Ealing in March prior to the AC World Championships in Florida the following month.

Later in the season GB will play the USA for the Solomon Trophy at Bowdon and travel to Ireland for the annual Maugham Salver match.

Following the popularity and success of events in the run up to last year's Women's World Championship, the **CA Women's Group** will hold another coaching weekend at Surbiton in July.

A Women's team will contest an

innovative match against Inter-County 2nd Division Champions Lancashire at Bury, and it is hoped that this will provide valuable match experience for those involved.

Nine players have been added to the **International Player Development Squad (IPDS)**, which will follow its usual programme of Induction day, Coaching Weekend and Mentored Match Weekend.

**Coaching Pods** will continue to provide Advanced play coaching sessions around the country.

Anyone interested should register in the Members' Area of the CA website in order to ensure that they receive information from their local co-ordinator.

**IPDS (year 1):**  
Alan Chance, Alison Girdlestone, Leo Hawkins, Tudor Jenkins, Annabel McDiarmid, Tim Russell, Peter Siddall (right), Mike Town, Dave Trimmer.

**IPDS (year 2)**  
Andy Brandwood, Sarah Burrow, Omied Hallam, James Hawkins, Tim Jolliff, Dave Kibble, Andy Myers, Nigel Polhill, Chris Roberts, Rich Waterman.

**Ian Burrige, International Performance Director**



Not so long ago, there was a happy coincidence of croquet featuring (all be it only fleetingly) on two different TV channels at the same time!

I'd decided to escape from reality one evening in mid-November and watch an old episode of Miss Marple (*only because I read that the wonderful Rik Mayall was in it*) and it happened to feature a short garden croquet scene at a stately home. This wasn't so unexpected, given the setting I suppose, but what was a surprise, was when I checked my e-mail in a commercial break.

Harry Midgely, Chairman at my club Phyllis Court, had mailed to ask if I'd seen Monty Don's 'The Secret History of the British Garden', which had just shown what used to be the croquet lawn at Levens Hall in Cumbria.

Croquet on TV! – Twice in the same night! – Simultaneously!  
I decided to investigate. . .

I quickly found out that even more coincidentally, not only was my Miss Marple a repeat (not for the first time), but so was the episode of Mr Don's gardening series, which had been first broadcast in January last year.

Digging first into the Marple scene. It was from ITV's Marple series first aired in 2011 (*starring Julia McKenzie, above*), and this adaption was of Agatha Christie's 1934 mystery "Why didn't they ask Evans?". A Google search revealed straight away that the original novel didn't feature Miss Marple at all!

This was the second television adaptation of story (the first being in 1980, that was truer to the original plot) and it is interesting that, despite there being a time



## Croquet on TV launches two investigations

shift from the original's early 1930s to the late 1950s, because it is set in a grand old house, a croquet scene is (still) typically used.

The croquet scene, where the two principals pick up a clue, was filmed in 2008 at Loseley Park near Guildford - a 16th century stately home in Surrey.

### So some questions for readers:

*Has anyone read the original book, and is croquet mentioned?*

*Does croquet feature in the 1980 TV adaptation, and if so where was it filmed? And is croquet still played at Loseley Park?*

Perhaps someone from Guildford CC can look into that last one. . .

Going back to the History of Gardens; The programme was featuring Levens Hall because of its 17th century garden and the presenter actually walked on to the croquet lawn with the owner Hal Bagot, who mentioned that it was now used for croquet rather than bowls, which was its original use. For that reason Monty Don then played some bowls.

Harry Midgley told me that back in 2000, he was able to approach Hal Bagot and with the expertise of Dave Nick, was able to lay out a croquet lawn, on what had been the former bowling green which had been not used for many years.

"The real motivator for us at the Crake Valley Club, a few miles away, was to attract

members and we staged an afternoon with commentary for the visitors" said Midgley.

"I left Cumbria shortly afterwards, but Westmorland CC now play there. In the TV programme one could just catch a glimpse of the hoops in the background".

So that led me on to investigate Westmorland CC. . .

Their recently retired secretary Ivan Wheatley, told me: "We are now based at Levens Hall, just north of the village of Milnthorpe, having relocated there from the centre of Kendal some 10 years ago.

We currently have 32 members and play golf, short lawn and association croquet in the respective leagues run by the North West Federation."

After tracking down a recording of the programme, Ivan later e-mailed me to say, "They mentioned that Levens Hall is the oldest garden still existing in the country dating back to the 17th century and that the topiary hedges are now substantially larger than when originally planted; something we know only too well when driving a ball off the lawn!

Nancy Gregory's photograph shows what a delightful setting Westmorland have in which to play their croquet.

**Has anyone else seen croquet on TV lately? If so, do let *The Gazette* know.**

**Chris Roberts, Editor**



# CA grants aid seven Southwick courts

Sussex County Croquet Club's courts at Southwick are vital to national and international croquet as they host so many of the CA's sponsored events. Chairman Clive Hayton reports on the latest phase of their huge programme of court renovations.

## Phase 1 - courts 1, 2 and 3

Following their renovation in autumn 2014, courts 1, 2 and 3 were brought into play in May 2015.

All three were used for all the major tournaments held at SCCC, and for club play throughout the summer too. However, periods of rest were also incorporated for these new courts, which were found to be very level, although understandably slightly slow in their first season of use.

The courts were given a thorough end of season 'service' that included scarification, verti-draining (deep tining) and a spreading of sand (*top two photos left*) in October, and have been rested since, save for a one-day tournament in November.

## Phase 2 - courts 4, 5, 6 and 9

Work started on the second phase of the renovation programme in September 2015.

Players at the Challenge and Gilbey Tournament were fascinated by the sight of our contractors SJK's heavy machinery, stripping the top surface off the four courts (*bottom two photos left*), followed by verti-draining and decompacting, harrowing, levelling and seeding with dwarf rye grass seed.

The four courts were then covered in a fine fleece to encourage germination, and during the process gypsum was applied to courts 4, 5 and 6 as a trial to see if drainage could be improved.

The hoped-for benefits of an early start on this phase of the renovation were realised when the seed germinated and grew quickly in wet and warm conditions. The first mower cut was required a mere three weeks after seeding.

The mild and wet weather has continued to encourage growth of the grass through to the start of January 2016 and the new lawns have been cut regularly and tined (*bottom photos below*).

## Funding of the renovation work

To date the CA have contributed over **£7,000** out of a total cost of £27,600 to complete seven lawns. The remaining money has been raised by the club with a £1,000 grant from the South East Croquet Federation.

The final phase covering the other lawns is scheduled to start this autumn.



# ... and fund a watering system for Cheam

The Cheam Croquet & Bowls Club was formed in 2012 after the London Borough of Sutton (Sutton Council) approached the CA to see if it was interested in taking over a bowls green when the existing bowls club folded, **reports Ian Cobbold**.

The local reaction was very positive and the Club started with 85 members using its one

lawn. Currently 72 primarily play croquet, ten play bowls and there are four social members. The formation of the Club was covered in Gazette 339 August 2012 and the co-existence of croquet and bowls in Gazette 348 February 2014.

The Club is fortunate in having four coaches and a GC referee among its members. A lot of coaching has been provided and the standard of play has improved rapidly, enabling the Club to enter teams in the SECF's GC Handicap

League, Tournaments and friendly matches. Members have also started to enter other club's events as individuals too, including the CA's Grassroots and All England Golf Handicap tournaments.

The Club has a small band of AC players and there is hope of entering a team in the SECF's B (beginners) League next year if the maximum aggregate handicap restriction can be met.

Club members maintain the lawn, and Sutton Council has loaned the Club a mower, scarifier and watering system, on the basis that the Council would not replace them when they come to the end of their lives. The watering system was an antiquated set of pipes which gave patchy coverage and had to be moved six times to cover the lawn, which took several hours and proved insufficient in dry spells.

The installation of an automatic watering system was researched, drawing in the experience of the Surbiton and Tunbridge Wells Clubs who'd both had good experience with the 'Rainmaker' system and it was decided to proceed with that system

if sufficient funding could be obtained.

The estimated cost was about £10,500 and **the Club, naturally, first approached the CA for a grant of £1,000** (the maximum for a single lawn club), feeling that if this funding was obtained, others funders would be encouraged.

The CA agreed the grant in March and applications were made to two other funding sources: The SITA Trust under the Landfill Local Communities Fund scheme and to Sutton Council, in each case asking for £5,000. The Club was delighted when both applications were successful, even though neither produced the full value.

The Club was aware of the need to obtain a licence from Sutton Council to carry out the work but was shocked when it turned out at a late stage that the cost of obtaining the licence would be £900.

The new watering system was installed in July and the difference it made to the lawn became apparent within a few weeks.

There is better grass cover, no dry brown patches and less disease. It's a great success.



## CA Funding Ask and ye shall get (maybe)

One of the major functions of the Croquet Association is to provide funds to enable croquet clubs to be formed and improvements made.

During the last twelve months, grants that have been awarded cover club 'start-up kits', assistance for new clubhouses and storage facilities, automatic watering systems, machinery purchase to improve standards and lawn improvement projects.

Federation Development Officers can advise clubs on the likely eligibility of a grant and give ideas as to how grant money can be sourced from outside bodies. Gaining a grant (however small) from your governing body can often help to encourage outside sources to contribute to worthwhile projects.

Looking through some of our recent grant applications, external monies have been provided by: district councils, county councils, community associations, Sport England Small Grant, refuse disposal companies, and Lottery funding. It can take time and effort to tap these sources but the money can be available providing the project qualifies and is well presented.

**Jonathan Isaacs,**  
Chairman, Development Committee

## National Croquet Day 5 June

**The CA Marketing Team  
is here to support you in  
developing your activities**  
*(see the article on page 5)*

**Contact Brian Wilson**  
07970 922867 or 01225 708540  
brian@europaassociates.co.uk



## Big clean-up after flooding at Keswick CC

**K**eswick Croquet Club moved to the much better lawn on Upper Fitz Park in 2013, and this has improved the profile of the club, the standard of the players, and the uptake of new members. However, Storm Desmond brought mayhem to Keswick once again over the first weekend of December. Fitz Park is the designated flood plain; it tried, unsuccessfully, to mitigate the flooding in houses and businesses.

Keswick, along with Carlisle, Kendal and Cockermouth, made the national news, as the mountains around our town received record amounts of rain (13.7 inches recorded at the top end of Borrowdale in 24 hours). Two rivers flow through Keswick, the Derwent and the Greta: it was the Greta which caused the most havoc. This normally placid, beautiful little gem whipped itself into a frenzy, tearing down its steep-sided wooded valley at depths of up to six metres. As it did it tore acres of valley side away, uprooting hundreds of mature trees, which careered down-river.

In 1860 enterprising engineers made a railway down the Greta valley, building seven bridges. In the recent storm the battering rams of tearaway oak trees removed two of them, each weighing approximately 150 tons. A little further downstream the trees found fresh fuel, battering eight large mobile homes from their fixings to join them on their wild journey, doing untold damage to any bridges in their path.

After the earlier floods of 2009 the Environment Agency increased the height of the flood defences in Keswick by two feet, and this held back the deluge for several hours, giving householders time

to evacuate and possibly take valuables upstairs, but at 2.00 pm this epic maelstrom overtopped even these defences, and sadly scores of houses were flooded again for the third time in a decade.

The other effect of the increased defences was to make Fitz Park, designed as we noted to be flood plain, into a major lake, where most of the trees and caravans finally came to rest. Fitz Park is home to Keswick Football Club, Cricket Club, Tennis Club, Bowling Club, and, yes, Croquet Club.

With a delicate irony, in my Chairman's report to the club at the AGM on 2 December, I had rather revelled in our ability, at a push, to muster three full-sized lawns, including two slightly idiosyncratic ones on the tennis courts. Whom the Gods wish to confound, they first make boastful.

The tennis courts were left two feet deep in mud, with several trees distributed over them and the surrounding fence completely destroyed, and our main lawn was the same in one quarter; there was about two inches of silt over the rest.

It was clear there were many greater priorities for the professional cleaners to tackle before our minor disaster, so, fearing for our precious grass, eight of us turned out to clear the three-quarters by hand, shovel and wheelbarrow.

There are an awful lot of barrow-loads at two inches deep over an eighth of an acre, but we did manage it in one back-breaking day. As I write (on New Year's Eve) the rest of our playground is still untouched, so we may be down to one strangely shaped lawn next year!

However, visitors are always welcome – and isn't that how 'real tennis' started?

**Ian Hall, Keswick CC**

### 'A great new invention!'

**C**hris Clarke wrote to the Notts List\* from his home in New Zealand, to share that he had discovered a great new invention at the excellent Wellington Croquet Club.

He wrote: "It has been invented by Doug Van Belle has magnetic yard line markers and is magnetic yard line markers. The 'base' of the marker is screwed into the ground, leaving it fractionally below the surface, so as to not affect mowing. It has a strong

magnet on top of it. The top section is a normal yard line peg with a strong magnet on its bottom. When balls, mallets or feet hit the yard line marker, the top section falls off. This means, no more tripping over them or the hole getting larger and larger so that you need to move it more inside the yard line. When you're ready to replace it, no need to bend down, just move the top

section close to the bottom section with your mallet or feet and it automatically reconnects!

Just a great invention in my opinion."

~

*\*The Notts List is a group e-mail forum for croquet news, discussion and occasional argument. Many CA members contribute and/or observe. It's good reading for all of us who can't get enough of croquet. – Ed.*

# AC Super -

# - Advanced

Following up on Ian Burridge's Super-Advanced article in December, **David Maugham** now takes a more in depth look at some of the more common tactics and scenarios. *Part one of two.*



## Two lift options

If you choose a two-lift strategy, the main decision to make is 'where to stop the first break'.

Stopping at 5, 6 and 1-b all have some benefits and some draw-backs.

If you stop at 1-b: partner fairly naturally goes to 2-b in the continuation break, which is useful for making the second leave, and on the other hand if the lift is hit and you subsequently get in with the hoop 1 ball, it's relatively easy to get rid of a lift hoop by peeling partner (even if you don't want to go all out for the sextuple); the downside is that you only have three hoops in which to make your second leave.

Stopping at hoop 6 gives you an extra hoop to dig the balls out for the leave (and probably gives you a slightly more controlled start to the second break, since 6 and 1-b are closer together than 1-b and 2-b), however you will probably be making 1-b (and therefore 3-b) off partner, and this isn't ideal for making a second diagonal spread, if oppo has missed into IV.

Stopping at 5 combines the advantages of having more hoops to make the second leave with the correct parity for getting partner to 2-b, however if the first lift is hit you may feel a bit in 'no man's land' if you subsequently get in with the hoop 1 ball. It's not ideal to forego an easy break to make a leave. On the other hand, if you go to 4-b you are probably still two turns away from finishing.

### Making the 'standard' contact leave (including 'tight' version)

If you choose to give contact after the first break, then you will need to organise your break to get the balls at the right hoops; notably you will want partner at 1-b, which typically means that it should be the pivot

after hoop 3 (so that the hoop 5 ball can go to 2-b).

If partner is the hoop 4 pioneer, and you haven't been able to get an early hoop 6 pioneer after 3, then you will need to decide whether to put out a hoop 6 pioneer going to your hoop 5 pioneer, or have partner at 6 and swap the balls before you make 1-b.

Either way, you want to be approaching 1-b with partner West and maybe a bit South of the hoop, so that when you run it you have a rush back to II, and the escape ball should be a few yards South of the corner.

Partner shouldn't be left actually in the corner, as this gives the oppo a chance of getting a cannon (and subsequently a much better chance of doing a TPO), so if you are being defensive, then 6" out on the North boundary is ideal.

If you are the weaker player, there is some merit in having partner on the West boundary 6 yards south of the corner, which potentially makes for a shorter shot to hoop 1 in your next turn. But this strategy relies on you taking an aggressive 'do-or-die' shot with the hoop 1 ball, which, if you miss, gives your opponent everything.

After placing the ball near II put a 3-b pioneer out, and make 2-b with a rush Eastwards, leave that ball somewhere near one of the boundaries 3 yards from IV. Make 3-b and rush back to near the corner. It should be relatively easy to get both balls about 3 yards from the corner on each of the boundaries, then take off to near III and put the striker's ball in that corner.

If you have sufficient control, there are a couple of advantages to actually leaving both of the opponent balls in contact in IV (the 'tight' version of the leave), depending on their line of play after the contact.

If they take off from the ball in III they are much less likely to get a rush on the ball on the South boundary, and if they play a roll out of III they have to go that bit further to have an easy roquet on partner (and have a chance of going off...).

In order to leave both balls in contact in IV after 3-b, place the escape ball close to the corner after making 2-b, ideally getting it closer to one boundary or the other (rather than just having it 45° to the corner). Make 3-b and rush into the corner (if you fail to rush into the corner, then you may be able to salvage things, but it depends on the exact position of the balls; be prepared to fall back to the 'normal' leave if you have to).

Play a thin take-off that moves the ball less than an inch (this is where having the escape ball closer to a boundary comes in handy, as you will move the croqueted ball less far from the corner spot), and rush the escape ball into the corner as well.

If for some reason the balls are not in contact at this point you pretty much have to croquet one behind the other and shoot off into III from near IV. However, assuming they are in contact, you have a cannon, and should place the roqueted ball on the East boundary, and can then move the third ball inside the yard line at right angles to the boundary so that it comes back in contact after the stroke.

Aim the take off a few yards onto the lawn (this avoids any danger of going off in the take off, and allows you to play into the stroke a bit to ensure that the croqueted ball moves). Take off towards III and then play off into it. The opponent's balls should come back in contact.

**The second and concluding part of David's article will appear in the next issue (April, Gazette 361) and will cover Taking the first break to 3-b instead of 4-b, Options after oppo has gone to 4-b first and The 'equalising' break.**

Photo: David Maugham in action for GB at Hamptworth (by Julie Kaye).



## New coaches earn their colours

Congratulations to Andrew Stewart (West Worthing) and Sue Peters (Beckford) who have gained their yellow badge and qualified as Club Coaches; I am sure they will give great and long service to their clubs.

'Hats off' also to Luc Berthouze (Sussex County, *photo left*), who has gained a green badge for his upgrade to Association Croquet Grade 2 Coach.

Luc has been a rapid improver for a while and has gained a lot of

knowledge about the game.

Details of how to become, and progress as, a coach are published in the Fixtures Book and in the coaching sections of the website.

**Dave Kibble, Chairman, Coaching Committee**

# Getting shirty again

## David Openshaw continues his review of his large collection of 42 croquet shirts.

One of the reasons for so many shirts is that sponsors like to provide shirts to promote themselves. My favourite collection is five Mitsubishi shirts which cover three major events which they sponsored – the World Championship, the British Open Championship and the European Team Championship.

The story of this sponsorship is interesting and I'm sure can be of use to many clubs who would like to find sponsors.

The World Croquet Federation (WCF) and the Croquet Association (CA) were in discussion to organise the 2005 World Championship. The Cheltenham Club was one of the clubs interested in holding this event. Phil Cordingley, representing the CA, and I (WCF President at the time) visited Cheltenham to talk with the club committee about what was involved and expected from a host club.

We had a good discussion and the club was keen to host the event. At the end we said that if they could get sponsorship for the event that would be very positive for their application. The club committee felt this would probably be difficult. We advised that the most likely source of sponsorship would be through a contact of one of their members.

Well, what a success the club committee had. Within two weeks, through a contact of Dave Foulser's, they had a promise of sponsorship from Mitsubishi, a major Japanese company in the finance and

automotive industries. Their head office was near Cheltenham and they were looking to help promote themselves locally. So that's how the first of the Mitsubishi sponsorships and the first Mitsubishi shirt came about.

The World Championship at Cheltenham



was a great success and Mitsubishi were pleased with their sponsorship.

The following year, 2006, Cheltenham were due to host the British Open Championships, so Dave Foulser again approached Mitsubishi and they were very happy to extend the sponsorship for that event, including more shirts!

The WCF was keen to develop a team event which would be open to smaller nations and for 2007 Cheltenham agreed to host a new event which would again be sponsored. At the time, the only world team event was the AC MacRobertson Shield,



played between the four strongest nations.

The new event was the European Team Championship, for teams of three players. Each match consisted of three singles (a best of three GC and two single games of

AC). All designed to be attractive to the smaller European nations.

It proved a great success, with teams from Belgium, Czech Republic, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Germany, Ireland, Austria, Jersey, Isle of Man, Switzerland and the four

home countries all competing. Wales beat Jersey in the final.

This event was staged again in 2009, won that time by Scotland, again proving the interest in international team events. This has led to today's position where there are tiered team events open to all WCF members in both AC and GC.

In the intervening year, 2008, the British Open was again at Cheltenham and again sponsored by Mitsubishi. Five great events at Cheltenham, successful local sponsorship by an international company, development for world team croquet and five more shirts! What could be better?

And as a postscript, here are some thoughts on how to increase your chances of getting sponsorship.

Personal contact is key. All your

members have a range of contacts through family, friends, business relationships, etc. The contact might be second or third hand, but it enables you to pick up the phone and talk to someone. Be positive; you lose nothing by asking, and gain nothing if you don't.

Sponsorship can take many forms; it does not necessarily apply just to high profile events. Your

club championship could be sponsored, your new lawn mower or your open day could be sponsored.

Try it. Cheltenham and Dave Foulser did. *Good luck!*

Hurlingham's Nelson Morrow is one of a handful of fortunate individuals who manages to play croquet in the sun all year round. I knew that, as a native New Zealander, he divided his time between homes here and in the Land of the Long White Cloud, but I was surprised when I happened to see his name amongst the high finishers at the USA Open!

## The Croquet globe trotter

An e-mail inquiry revealed that, on his way to his home land he had taken part in the USA Opens at both AC and American Rules, finishing fifth in the former and sixth in the doubles event of the latter.

Apparently both events were held at the Mission Hills Club which is a beautiful country club, with golf and tennis, and

where the next MacRobertson Shield will be played. There were two other familiar names on the USA Open high finishers list - American Doug Grimsley and Canadian Brian Cumming are both well-known on the international circuit and sport top 100 ranking positions. Both have played in the UK Open before, and better still, both are CA members. (*Greetings gentlemen – Ed*)



# Running the rule over Alice

John Harris looks at 1865 style Croquet



**A** hundred and fifty years have passed from the publication of *Alice in Wonderland* in 1865. So how was the game played on the Queen of Hearts' croquet ground?

**Would we recognise it today?**

The dozen or so references to croquet in Lewis Carroll's timeless classic, tell us all about flamingos as mallets and hedgehogs as balls, but nothing about the rules.

But we know from other sources from the 1860s that various hoop layouts were in use, the most widespread one being a ten-hoop setting in the shape of a fat rolling pin, with two pegs, one at each end. Balls were of boxwood, and mallets were delicate and light. Lawnmowers were in their infancy, so grass was often long and uneven.

Accordingly, hoops were wide – anything up to a foot across, large enough for croquet enthusiast Arthur Law's dog to pass through! The spaniel was trained as a popular party piece to run, when prompted by a light tap with the mallet, out and back through the full sequence of hoops in turn.

Today's centre swing had not yet been developed, so mallets were swung either across the body, golf style, or to one side.

The mallet might be held in one hand, particularly when stretching sideways to avoid the voluminous hooped skirts of the 1860s, with the other hand then becoming available for holding a parasol.

The standard croquet shot involved placing a foot on one's own ball and shooting an opponent's ball away 'up the country' or 'to Hong Kong'.

Boundaries were optional, so it was possible for a young man to croquet an attractive opponent into the bushes, before gallantly offering to help her retrieve the ball far from the eyes of her chaperone.

Croquet in the 1860s was a sequence game, like golf croquet today. Eight player games were common practice, leading to long summer afternoons and lengthy waits between turns offering plenty of opportunity for relaxation, socialising and gentle flirtation.



Doubtless there was also much discussion about the rules, for there was not yet any settled wisdom as to how the game should be played: that had to wait until the Conference Laws were drawn up five years later. Various writers claimed to offer authoritative rules, but they were all rather different.

The 1865 edition of John Jaques' popular *Croquet: the Laws and Regulations of the Game* gives 25 rules, an increase of eight on the previous year; Mayne Reid's *Croquet* weighs in with no fewer than 126. Indeed, a single publisher could issue different

codes: Routledge's *Game of Croquet* limits the number of rules to 20, whereas their *Handbook of Croquet* offers 52.

A heartfelt article published in 1865, the same year as *Alice in Wonderland*, underlines the confusion that could arise from all these different sets of rules and how difficult it was for strangers to play together. Even the terminology was different: were they hoops, bridges or arches; was croquet spelt with or without a circumflex; were they pegs, poles, sticks or stakes; were the players partners or friends, opponents or enemies? Lewis Carroll was genuinely interested in the game and developed a number of variations.

The core of the croquet chapter in *Alice in Wonderland* is all there in his early draft, *Alice's Adventure Under Ground*: Carroll wrote this out by hand in 1862-64, with ostriches, rather than flamingos, as mallets.

Luckily, an understanding of 1860's croquet rules is not essential to enjoying *Alice*. The flamingos and hedgehogs could only exist in the author's fertile imagination.

The same is true of the rush, bustle and confusion which Carroll brings to his account of a normally leisurely, sunny game – very much in keeping with his usual practice of offering an incongruous perspective on a familiar scene.

We must just accept that Carroll has forever linked croquet with *Alice* – and be grateful that it may prompt a few people to find out more about the Queen of Games.

John Harris, York CC

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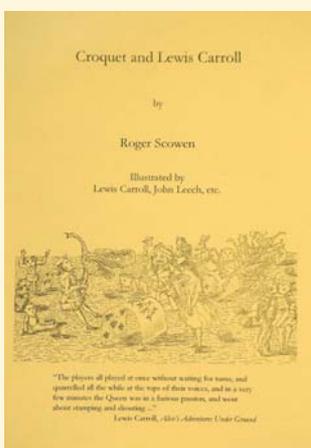
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# Booklet review

Ray Hall reviews Roger Scowen's, self-published (2014) booklet 'Croquet and Lewis Carol'



from the revival period of the 1890s; there are four pages of illustrations in the centre. Between them they are intended to describe the game as it was then and the people who played it. Of the 1864 poems the first 13 appear to be by various hands whereas

**A** note on the back cover states that Carroll's biographers had not realised croquet was a new and fashionable craze.

The booklet is therefore a "review of croquet in Lewis Carroll's Life and works".

His activities and works are described on the first six pages; there follow: a one page history of croquet; excerpts from some reference works of the period; Croquet in literature i.e. Punch, Fun and Illustrated London News in the 1860s, followed by two pages of references which reach page 11.

For the general croquet player, therefore, there is little of major interest thus far.

But there's more. The bulk of the space is taken up by an annex containing 20 croquet poems from Punch published in 1864, one from Fun in 1865 and two more from Punch

14 to 22 have a similarity of style and are probably by one author. They describe a match where Mr Robinson and Miss Brown are opposed by Mr Jones and Miss Smith. This has an antiquarian interest in covering the progress of the match under 1864 rules with starting and turning posts.

The final poem suggests that the 1890s revival was "partly owing to the abolition of tight croquetting" (*the name given to the placing of a foot on a ball*) though in fact it was abolished in the conference rules of 1870. Mr Jones, however, illustrates the practice in poem 16, putting his foot firmly on his ball (Green) and hitting it to send the Red, which was in contact, far away.

Ray Hall, Sussex County CC

# The 'secret' enjoyment of level play classed events

**A**s most of you will have received your fixtures books by now, presumably you will be deep into planning your tournament entries for the season ahead.

What isn't apparent from a good number of AC tournament titles is that they include **Level Play Classed Events**.

This is probably a hangover from the 'old days' when multi-event tournaments were the norm, and everybody knew that regardless of differing playing standards, there was sure to be an appropriate event available. Judging by the number of higher handicappers (not) attending some of the CA's historic tournaments, I'm sure that it's because they don't realise that there are handicap and level play classed events within the offering.

**The classed events are particularly good for couples and croquet travelling partners, where players are playing off different handicaps**, for they allow both players to enjoy meaningful competitive games against their peers in separate events within the same tournament.

Typically, the list of entrants will be split by handicap into three, four or even five classes, with say Class A for the minus players, Class B for 0 - 3, and so on, right up to the high handicappers' Class that will embrace players on handicap 20.

I thoroughly recommend the CA's **Challenge and Gilbey**, and the **South of England Week**, where you can be part of croquet history to boot. There are classed level play events at the CA's **National Seniors** too, and at club tournaments at Bowdon, Budleigh, Hurlingham, and Sidmouth to name but a few.

Chris Roberts, Editor

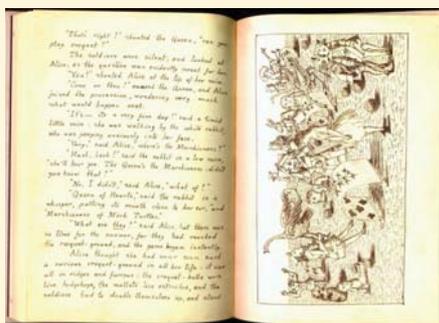
## Contemporary illustrations opposite -

**Top left:** Fashionable clothes for a fashionable game: a plate from The Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine, 1865, with original hand colouring.

**Top right:** Cartoon from Punch, 1863.

**Centre:** An eight player game from the early 1860s. Cupid is in attendance; so is the parson, to solemnise any marriages that might emerge. From Mr Punch's Pocket Book for 1862. Drawn by John Leech, the illustrator for Dickens's Pickwick Papers, with original hand colouring.

**This page right:** An illustration from Carroll's handwritten manuscript of the first version of the story, Alice's Adventures Under Ground (1862-64), BM Add MS 46700.



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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.

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

For details or discussion, contact Dave Trimmer 01747 824822  
[Davetrimmer@talktalk.net](mailto:Davetrimmer@talktalk.net) [www.davetrimmermallets.com](http://www.davetrimmermallets.com)

## NAILSEA AND DISTRICT CROQUET CLUB



Invite you to come and enjoy a day of FUN Croquet with a difference, loosely based on Association Croquet Laws

### Competing for the 10-shot level play 'OBE Trophy'

**Open to those in their 80th year and over regardless of handicap**

**Tuesday 17th May starting at 10.30**

Entrance fee £10.

Soup and Rolls (£2.50) for lunch if requested on entry form.

Entries by 5th May to:

Ian Telfer, Corner Cottage, Alhampton, Shepton Mallet,  
BA4 6PY. 01749-860414 iantelfer@btinternet.com

Dress Code: It would be great if all players could be in 1930s fashion but a token effort will do for the faint hearted

See club website for accommodation  
<http://www.nailsea-croquet.org.uk>

All entrants will be supplied with the rules of this 10-shot level play game, which ensures that there are no long periods of sitting out waiting for your triumphant return to the fray

## Duncan Hector Turf Care

*Croquet player and turf care specialist.*



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# Mallets, clothing, books and more at the CA Shop

*For all your croquet needs,  
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[www.croquet.org.uk](http://www.croquet.org.uk)  
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## Lawn Care

**M**ost clubs maintain the winter cut height at 8 to 10mm. When the growing season starts in spring, reduce the cut height gradually. This will help to thicken the sward, because it encourages the growth of tillers (side shoots).

Top dressing is best done in autumn, but if there are small areas of uneven surface early in the season you can lightly top dress at any time when there is growth.

Small amounts weekly or fortnightly can be effective, and will not kill the grass. A 25mm hollow could be filled in 10 applications of 2.5mm.

Don't use builder's sharp sand because when it compacts it can seal the surface. You must use an appropriate round-grained sand or sand/loam mix. This is available in 25kg bags for small areas.

If you need to over-seed bare patches, this can be done through the growing season, but is usually best in April. I supplied a seed slotter to Newport CC and this has been a tremendous success, and an excellent germination rate was achieved.

The seed that I recommend is a strain of dwarf rye grass developed for quick germination, fine leaf and superior wear tolerance, and can be close-mown for fast lawns.

Most clubs have active GC and AC players, and there can be concern about rabbit runs and wear around hoops. A good way round this is to have two hoop settings on each lawn. The main setting is regulation width hoops. The second setting is usually about 3 feet to one side and may have slightly wider hoop settings. Social GC is usually played in the second setting, but GC matches and AC are played in the main setting.

This seems to work very well, reducing rabbit runs and increasing the longevity of the settings.

**Duncan Hector,**  
[www.DuncanHectorTurfCare.co.uk](http://www.DuncanHectorTurfCare.co.uk)

### ~ Stop Press ~

Samir Patel has created a Club Awards page on the CA website which lists all the awards since 2000. See the 'History' and then 'Awards and Medals' tabs in the main menu or go directly to:  
[www.croquet.org.uk/?p=history/awards/clubawards](http://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=history/awards/clubawards)

All the CA's other awards, including diplomas, are also listed there.

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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.

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