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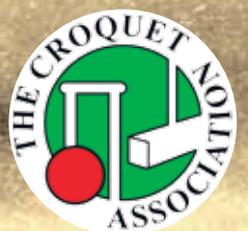
Issue 371 December 2017

CROQUET

Gazette



**Who was
the real
first
Croquet
Champion?**



From our files researched by Frances Colman

10 years ago - 2007



The 2nd WCF Women's World GC Championship (*at Carrickmines, Ireland*), report by Evan Newell

– Nine countries were represented – Australia, Egypt, England, Ireland, New Zealand, Palestine, South Africa, Scotland and the USA. Egypt led the challenge with eight accomplished players setting the standard, including of course the 2005 Champion Nahed Hassan. . . the semis were best of five, and New Zealand's Jenny Clarke took Iman El Farnsawi to the fifth in a wonderful match that stretched both players (El Farnsawi won 7-5). In the other semi Marwa Moustafa overcame Hemet Moustafa in three . . . in the final Iman lost the first game to Marwa, but recovered to become Champion.

~

Bristol beat Bowdon to win the (AC) Inter-Club Championship, and become the first club to hold the Beddow Cup, *writes Martin Murray*. This magnificent trophy, which readers will (should) know was rescued from an uncertain fate by Tom and Judy Anderson, and John and Pandora Wheeler, many years ago, has now been most generously donated to the CA. (Bristol team – David Goacher, Roger Jenkins, Dave Kibble, and Martin Murray).

~

Blewbury beat Ashby to win the (GC) Inter-Club Championship, *writes John Spiers*. They made one change to their semi-final team, bringing in Robin Brown (UK AC ranking 42) for only his second GC tournament. At lunch, Blewbury had the comfort of a 3-0 lead, and having nearly thrown away a similar advantage in the first round, the captain tried unsuccessfully to restrict the food intake of his team. The deciding match was won by Brown, who made up for an inevitable shortfall of GC tactical knowledge with some precision shooting. (Blewbury team – Robin Brown, Nick Butler, Benson Spiers and John Spiers).

~

AGM Minutes – Andrew Hope and Colin Irwin were elected as Vice Presidents of the CA. David Magee was awarded the Council Medal, for outstanding contribution to the CA, by President Prof. Bernard Neal.

50 years ago - 1967



Hurlingham – A near record entry with the prospect of up to 220 games . . . presented (Manager) Tony Roper with much potential brow-furrowing. By getting off more than 30 games on at least two days he was able however to relax by the penultimate day . . . (there was a) nail-biting finish to the semi-final game in the Mixed Open Doubles when, with less than five minutes to go, Bolton and Hope Rotherham were 5 points ahead of Bray and Molly Smartt. At this point Bray made a 25 yard shot successfully and proceeded to score 5 points before time was called. He safely made one more point and then scattered the balls. Bolton just missed with the last shot and Bray's joy at grasping victory so dramatically was good to behold.

~

Roehampton – The Ranelagh Gold Cup was won for the second year in succession by Bernard Neal, who beat Roger Hicks in the play-off +12. Neal failed to complete the peg-out after a triple-peel, but pegged out one ball. Thereupon Hicks hit in, and aroused much interest by making several excellent hoops before unfortunately wiring himself when he failed to run a difficult 1-back.

~

The 1963 Test Team v The Rest (*at Devonshire Park, Eastbourne*) – The Rest were particularly weakened by the last minute withdrawal of Nigel Aspinall. Nevertheless a close match resulted. . . In the singles, all eyes were on the match between the Champion of Champions and the winner of the President's Cup. There was no doubt that John Solomon has a special magic which none can rival. He did one pass roll from the 2nd hoop to the 4th getting behind a ball on the east boundary which elicited a burst of applause. He failed at Rover in the consequent triple peel which enabled Wylie to go from 4 to 1-back leaving the balls in perfect position for a sextuple peel. Alas, he failed at the second hoop and Solomon went out.

1963 Test Team – Solomon, Hicks, Cotter, Ormerod, Wiggins, Mrs Rotherham.

The Rest – Wylie, Neal, Hamilton-Miller, Bray, Cooper, Miss Warwick.

100 years ago - 1917



Former Chairman loses second son – Lieut. W. L. Jessopp, M.G.C., Killed in Action. - We much regret to announce that Mr. Walter B. Jessopp, Chairman of the Council of the C.A., 1901-1906, has lost in the war his youngest son and only surviving child, Walter Leverton Jessopp, a lieutenant in the Machine Gun Corps; he was killed in action in Flanders, leading the gun teams under his command, in the advance on 31st July last. His major wrote Mr. Jessopp that his son was a great favourite with all his officers and that his men loved him, and that his courage and splendid character had been brought to the attention of the General Commanding the Brigade . . .

Mr. Jessopp's elder son, Augustus John Jessopp, a Lieutenant in the R.F.C., was killed in Flanders last May, whilst on patrol duty over hostile territory.

~

Military Cross awarded to Capt. C.F. Wright, 4th Leicester Regiment

On April 22nd and 23rd, 1917, in the trenches before Cité St. Laurent, N.W. of Lens, Capt. Wright, whilst in command of a recently captured trench, was ordered to exploit success with one platoon in Narwal trench. This platoon was driven back after suffering heavy casualties. Assisted by a heavy barrage the Germans attempted to counter attack, but Capt. Wright handled his Company with great coolness and resource, and drove off the enemy. By his initiative and coolness he set a splendid example to his officers and men, which carries his Company through a most trying situation with complete success. His conduct was beyond all praise. Capt. Wright has since been seriously wounded, and is at present in No.7 General Hospital, Exeter.

~

Reduced Subscription for 1918 – At a meeting of the Council of the C.A. held on November 8th 1917, it was decided that the subscription to be collected for the 1918 should remain at five shillings as in 1916 and 1917. The Council, however, trusts that all Associates who are willing to do so will forward the full subscription as in ordinary years, in order that the reserve funds of the C.A. may not be too heavily drawn upon.

Editorial

The compliments of the season to you. As I look out of my window at the white eiderdown that is my back garden, I can't resist the easy excuse to part-quote my hero the great Roy Wood, because although (all together now):

*'When the snowman brings the snow,
Well, he just might like to know,
He has(n't) put a great big smile on my merry face,
because I can't play croquet today and so
I won't be ringing the bells anytime soon!'*

Meanwhile, those of you who are not stuck in 1973 and/or mad enough for 'hat an gloves croquet', at least you have this Gazette to enjoy by your firesides.

This issue tidies up the competition reports that had to be held-over last time and salutes the wonderful work that all the recipients of this year's CA Diplomas have

done for us and our clubs.

There are details of more course opportunities from the regional coaching academies and look out too for Alison Jones' honest look back at her season that didn't quite go to plan.

Our historians have their research to share as well and, for a change, Arthur Law, a top player from days gone by, gets on the cover some 150 years since his on court exploits; but was he the first champion?

*'Why don't
you give, your
love, for-or-or,
Christmas...!'*



Chris Roberts

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Chairman's Column

I am writing this column after having played croquet over the past couple of days. Although it was the end of November, the lawns were bathed in bright sunshine and in excellent condition.

All that was needed for a splendid time was to wrap up against a chilly breeze. Furthermore, I anticipate more of the same next week. This has caused me to reflect on one of the changes within croquet that I have observed over the past twenty-five years, and that is the marked extension of the playing season.

Many courts open earlier and remain open much longer into the autumn than used to be the case. Indeed, the number of clubs now making lawns available throughout the winter has grown considerably over the past few years. Without doubt there are various reasons for these welcome changes – I am not going to pray in aid of global warming!

I am pleased to learn that we have had an excellent response to our 2017 Quinquennial Survey.

At the closing date of the 19 November we had received 1,455 returns and this is more than 40% higher than our previous best outcome. Most of this increase can be attributed to far higher returns from players

who are currently non-members (most of whom will soon become members).

Overall the respondents split about 50:50 between members and non-members and this will enhance our analytical scope. The Survey's findings will be published early next year.

I am most grateful to all those who took part and particularly to those Club Secretaries and others who brought the Survey to the attention of non-members.

~

I am particularly concerned about one issue arising from the AGM.

Representatives from several clubs indicated that a high proportion of their members may not sign up for Standard membership of the CA, mainly because they are concerned about the security of their data.

Our Manager, Liz Larsson, has sent Club Secretaries a detailed letter which explained why we need a data sharing agreement; how it will operate; and it emphasised that CA members' data will be protected in accordance with the strict requirements of the new Data Protection Act which comes into force next May. (There is an article about how these may affect clubs overleaf on page 4).

Our understanding is that club members must give positive consent to share their details with the CA. This is not onerous, but it's clearly significant. But failure to do so will deprive them of the advantages of Standard CA membership.



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Front cover: Was Arthur Law croquet's first Champion? Find out on page 13.

This page: No editor's photo this time but still 'ringing out the bells for Christmas' is the editor's hero, the great Roy Wood.

The Chairman - planning is next shot at Budleigh in May and, according to his column, being very appreciative of the trend for longer playing seasons that are being enjoyed at many of our clubs.

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These include: a free mailing of The Croquet Gazette for the first year; access to the Members' Area of the website; use of the on-line Tournament Entry system; and eligibility for awards. Above all, it entitles members to vote on policy matters and influence the development of our sport – a benefit which will have increased significance when new, modernised governance arrangements have been introduced.

CA members and staff are working hard to implement the March 2015 Special General Meeting's decision to enfranchise all members of CA Clubs. So I hope that Club Committees will do their utmost to encourage their members to take full advantage of this fundamental change to our Association.



Brian Shorney



Data Protection - An update for clubs - by Ian Vincent

Introduction

Data protection legislation is changing next year, with the introduction of the European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) on 25 May 2018 (which will apply to us irrespective of Brexit), a new Data Protection Bill currently before Parliament, and a section in the Digital Economy Act 2017.

This is a brief introduction to the changes as they might affect a typical croquet club. It does not pretend to be definitive (indeed, some of the regulations have yet to be finalised).

The author would like to hear from anyone within the CA who has expertise in this area and is willing to offer advice to it and its member clubs and federations.

Note that the legislation applies to clubs that hold membership or tournament records in any form: spreadsheets, word documents, e-mails, or even on cards or paper, not just a database.

In the terms it uses, the club is a data controller, which either processes its own data or contracts with one or more separate persons or organisations, who are data processors, to do so on its behalf.

Overall Impact

The overall message is that this is an evolution, rather than revolution, in data protection requirements.

Similar basic principles apply, e.g. that personal data shall be processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner.

However, data controllers will be required to be able to demonstrate compliance with the principles and individuals will have a few new rights and protections.

Hopefully, the practical impact on clubs will be relatively small, as some of the more onerous ones apply only to processing on a large scale or of sensitive data, though the core provisions apply to organisations of any size.

Notification

The requirement for data controllers to notify the Information Commissioner will cease on 1 April, 2018, though most clubs are exempt from it.

It is being replaced by a system of charges. Details of any exemptions from those are still not available.

Basis of Processing and Consent

The emphasis is shifting from consent as the primary condition for processing personal data to one of the other conditions for doing so, such as that it is "necessary for the performance of a contract with the data subject", e.g. club membership or accepting an entry into a tournament.

If consent is required, e.g. to pass members' details on to a sponsor for marketing purposes, then it will have to be given on the basis of full information, positive (just offering an opt-out is no longer sufficient), optional, revocable and recorded.

Individual Rights

Individuals (your club members and tournament players) have the right to:

- be informed about what use is being made of data about them
- get a copy of it (now free of charge and within one month)
- have errors corrected
- have it erased (under certain conditions)
- withdraw any consent they have given
- object, on grounds relating to their particular situation, to it being processed

Unlike the later items in the list, which are rights that only apply if the individual exercises them, the club must be proactive in giving information when data is collected, typically on a membership application form. The information required includes the identity and contact details of the controller; purpose and lawful basis for processing; any recipients of the data; how long the data will be retained and the

existence of the above rights.

Data Protection Officers

Although it would be good practice to have someone responsible for overseeing data protection within your club, you are advised not to formally appoint them as a "Data Protection Officer", as there are specific requirements and qualifications for that role. A title such as "Information Manager" could be used instead.

Security and Data Breaches

Personal data must be protected against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage. Should that protection fail, the breach must be notified to the Information Commissioner (within three days) if it likely to result in a risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals (a possible example may be if banking or credit card details were lost), and to the individuals concerned if the risk was high.

Documentation

Data controllers will be required to document processing activities that are "likely to result in a risk to the rights and freedoms of data subjects", including information such as: the purpose(s) of processing the data; the categories of the data subjects and data held about them; to whom the data may be disclosed; and an overview of technical and organisational security measures. It is unclear (to the author, at least) how far this requirement will apply to a typical club, but it would be good practice to fulfil it anyway.

Further Information

Further information about these and other issues relevant to small organisations can be found at <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/business/>. It is possible that the Sports and Recreation Alliance will issue specific guidance for sports clubs, but has yet to do so.

I am pleased to report that there has been a most enthusiastic

response to the launching of the GC C-Level Series that was announced in the last issue (Gazette 370). The call went out for clubs to host single day tournaments that would make up a Series (for 7+ handicaps) that in turn would lead to a National Final.

I had hoped to perhaps get into a double figures but am delighted to say that the inaugural C-Level Series will feature no less than 20 tournaments that cover pretty well the whole country. On top of that, the best possible centre of the country venue has been secured for the two-day National Final, and I am very grateful to

Super start for GC C-Level Series

Having such a prestigious international venue for the culmination of the launch season is just wonderful.

My next plea is to you all - to please 'sell' the C-Level Series to potential first-time tournament players at your club.

A large number of Gazette readers know how enjoyable tournament play is, and this is your opportunity to help others to experience that. So please spread and help grow competitive croquet participation.

Chris Roberts, Director of the GC C-Level (7+) Series

Nottingham CC for agreeing to host this on 22-23 September.

National Croquet Day 2018 - Sunday 13 May

Clubs told us that 2017 was yet another excellent National Croquet Day and we want to keep building on your success.

Many clubs thought that NCD could be earlier to match their own beginners' courses and other marketing initiatives.

We looked at May – but the first and last weeks are all close to public holidays – so for 2018 we have gone for Sunday 13 May.

We also know that many clubs use NCD to get even more people involved in club activities – more on that later.

We want 2018 to be another

opportunity to celebrate croquet and this time we are looking to focus on three main topics:

- Attracting new members, especially 'younger' players -

- Increasing competitive play -

- Croquet is for all -

We will be building upon 2017 tag lines:

Think Croquet – Sport – Tactics – Team

Think Croquet – Friends – Fun – Health

There will be posters to suit the needs of all clubs and the marketing team will be offering advice on initiatives and ideas for your NCD – look out for this in upcoming issues of the Gazette and on the CA website.

If you would like to talk now about planning ahead for your National Croquet day activity, please contact Brian Wilson on 07970 922867 or

brian@europaassociates.co.uk.

Brian Wilson,
Chairman Marketing Committee

Wingrave CC reprised their successful delivery of croquet to the visitors at Waddesdon Manor, Aylesbury in 2016, with another prominent presence at the venue's second 'Summer Games Special' this year.

The decision to do it all again was not influenced by the CA's welcome success

at Blenheim Palace, **reports Richard Keighley.**

Gazette readers will recall that this six-day event was a collaboration between Waddesdon Manor, Jaques of London and Wingrave Croquet Club. Six temporary croquet courts were mar

ed out on either side of the impressive drive to the Manor along which every visitor had to pass.

Numbers were up on 2016, peaking

Wingrave return to Waddesdon



exercise on their behalf but a genuine wish to promote the game of croquet.

It is estimated that over 1000 visitors of all ages participated in playing croquet. It is worth pointing out that Wingrave is 11 miles from Waddesdon.

The next nearest clubs are Winslow at

at about 3500 on Bank Holiday Monday, thanks to perfect weather.

Wingrave provided six volunteers each day to demonstrate the rudiments of golf croquet and we were pleased to have support on three of the days from Ivo Ponting of Harwell CC.

It was non-stop for seven hours each day and visitors queued to participate.

Ben Jaques and his son, Tom, stepped in to assist but this was not a marketing

13.5 miles and High Wycombe at 20.5 miles.

There is no croquet club in the large town of Aylesbury, which has a population of over 72,000 and it would appear that this is an area ripe for croquet development.

Wingrave's members were enthusiastic to demonstrate the croquet, but they were exhausted by their efforts!

Their reward was to experience the enjoyment of visitors of all ages (as can be seen in Chris Harrison's photograph).

I was sat in front of a roaring log fire lazily thumbing through my latest Gazette when a voice from the matching high back chair with suede arm inserts and electric footrests said "you are suffering from croquet overload and need to give it a complete rest for a while...it's getting embarrassing".

I set the electric foot rest to 'fast up', nearly dislocating a knee, and said "how so?"

"Well", she said, "We visited a department store during the January Sales (in December of course) because you wanted a new sweater. It was very crowded along the whole length of the mahogany and glass counter. You went into a trance, awoke with a start, nudged me in the ribs and shouted

My Croquet Overload

that you thought a jump shot would overcome the crowd

I had to remind you that we were in Harrods not at Hurlingham!"

"Oh," I said

"You will also recall that on holiday at our favourite Ski resort, when we were coming into a crowded lift station to take the chair lift back up the mountain,

I had to explain that a 'crush' was not a fault in Zell lift station (you thought we were in Zidmouth) and that shouting out that you would execute a pass-roll was not appropriate. It took some persuading on

my part to avoid officials removing your ski-pass...most embarrassing".

"Sorry" I said, meekly.

"You got a really strange look from the Librarian the other day when you asked to be directed to Corner Four. It was the Library not Leighton Linlade"

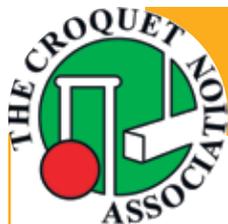
"Um"

"And no wonder the railway booking clerk was completely bemused when you requested a Two Back to Brighton!"

"Ok – I'll just pop up to the club for a last practice and then I'll hang up the mallet until....."

There was a kind of burning sensation in the back of my neck as I left the room.

Klim Seabright



2017 Croquet Association Diplo

Mo Boys Camerton & Peasedown CC

Following several years at Lansdown Croquet Club, during which the membership doubled and outgrew the facilities, Mo Boys spearheaded the creation of a new club at Camerton and Peasedown which launched in 2012.

She has been an inspirational chairman: her phenomenal hard work and commitment have resulted in the establishment of an inclusive, friendly membership.

She has dedicated time and skill to coach players in the club and, for over a decade, throughout the South-West Federation. She has pioneered the development of AC within the club and achieved significant personal success.

Beside croquet, her artistic talents and practical skills are diverse: she designs wonderful posters for our activities and created our club logo. As a skilled carpenter she has made numerous ingenious storage facilities for equipment. She organises and leads our monthly work party maintaining the club grounds, equipment and buildings.

She has played a prominent role in our outreach to the local community, inviting groups from different organisations to spend an afternoon or evening experiencing croquet with us. She has devised various croquet-based activities for use at local fetes.

CPC would not be known as it is today for its welcome and hospitality without her dedication and inspirational example.

Tess Burt Kingston Maurward CC

Tess Burt has given outstanding service to croquet for almost thirty years, both at her home club and further afield.

Her primary contributions are extensive coaching, enthusiasm and encouragement for club and AC and GC game development, and raising interest overall. Tess sets high standards vis-à-vis match discipline and fairness; she is a qualified GC referee.

Tess joined KMCC in the late 1980s, about the time the club was founded. She took up AC shortly afterwards. In the 1990s she was an active member of the KMCC committee, and has frequently represented the club at the SWF AGM.

She coached extensively both at KMCC and at East Dorset Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club, where for many years she ran an annual tournament for GC high

handicappers. She also coached the Somerset WI ladies, who now run an annual, regional tournament. Tess also regularly held coaching and training sessions at Denham College in Oxfordshire (the WI UK's educational establishment). She helped set up the Wareham croquet club.

Tess continues to be an enthusiastic and selfless ambassador. Having celebrated her 80th birthday, she is still playing in UK tournaments, is captain of the KMCC GC Level Play Team, and runs an annual Dorset WI competition.

Frances Colman Phyllis Court CC

Frances Colman has been at the heart of the Phyllis Court Croquet Club for the last nine years, during which time the club has transformed from a generally social croquet only club into one where a competitive element now runs through all levels of ability.

Frances's potential as a croquet organiser was spotted quickly and she was invited to serve on the club's committee in only her second year in the sport, willingly accepting the Golf Croquet brief.

She has organised beginners' training that has seen over half the club's current 150-strong membership pass through introductory classes.

She quickly introduced GC handicaps for all members where previously there had been none and this then allowed competitive play in ability-based classes to be brought in. By the start of her second year in the post, the number of season-long competitions had doubled, the first singles play one-day tournament had been introduced, and, thanks to Frances's encouragement and enthusiasm for competitive play, members flocked to fill everything new that was offered.

Under Frances's stewardship, competitive GC has blossomed, producing regular CA tournament circuit players and club teams that have reached Inter-Club competition semi-finals, and a final in which she captained the team.

Irmgard Finnigan, Nottingham CC

Michael and Irmgard Finnigan are stalwarts of the Nottingham Club; Michael since 2001 and Irmgard since 2007.

Irmgard is a highly valued club member who will retire from her task of catering co-ordinator at the end of the 2017 season. She has transformed the club's catering in recent

years, gaining praise on a regular basis on the quality of the club's tournament catering, with splendid and varied meals with just that extra touch. Many are in her debt for such gourmet delights.

Irmgard has served on the committee for several years and currently heads a working party putting forward plans to refurbish the pavilions. A good GC player, she has organised federation league matches for many years and is now learning to play AC.

Michael and Irmgard both starred in a short video made earlier this year, talking about how croquet helped to improve their relationship and the enjoyment of doing something together in their senior years. It can be seen on the Nottingham website.

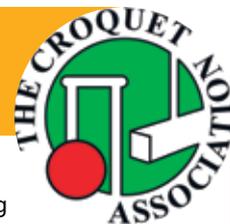


Proudly showing off their deserved diploma
Mo Boyes, Tony Mrozinski, Michael Finnigan,
Tess Burt, Frances Colman and J

Michael Finnigan, Nottingham CC

Michael is a highly accomplished woodworker who has used his skills to design, build and maintain lawn huts, hoop trolleys, stop boards, kitchen work surfaces, cupboards and trophy bases. He's also the man to call when repair work needs to be done: he's particularly renowned for overboarding hut floors and clearing blockages in the toilets! He instigated a range of club clothing, served on the committee for many years (where he still helps with never-ending rent reviews) and has been known to do a mean barbecue in August Week. He is an AC referee and a stalwart member of the many Longman Cup, Secretary's Shield

mas for Services to Croquet



and Mary Rose Teams.

Michael is always an eager volunteer who just gets on with the job in hand, and a true gentleman to the core.

Philippa Fortescue Lym Valley CC

Philippa has worked tirelessly for the Lym Valley Croquet Club for more than ten years. She has held the posts of secretary and treasurer, and at times both roles, for a number of years and has been an enthusiastic supporter of the club, helping to recruit and teach new members, publicising the club, and helping to maintain the appearance of the lawns with her gardening skills.



mas with CA President Quiller Barrett are: Michael Finnigan, Irmgard Finnigan, Jean Oades (photo by Chris Roberts)

Ron George Cornwall CC

Ron joined Cornwall Croquet Club at its first open day in July 2005. Soon becoming the only expert in golf, he had little choice but to assume the roles of its manager, organiser, publicist, handicapper, coach, referee and Lord High Everything. He took on the role of club chairman in 2008. These roles were in addition to playing a full part in practical matters such as lawn improvement, fencing and general maintenance despite living at a considerable distance from the club.

His great enthusiasm for the game and the club has him playing in various South West Federation GC and AC leagues. Ron

qualified as a GC referee in 2007 and in 2011 he was a referee at Hurlingham for the Golf World Championships.

In 2014 he was instrumental in the formation of a new club, at his home in St Agnes, where he was chairman until March 2017 and is now president.

Peter Gunn, Merton CC

For more than 20 years, Peter has worked tirelessly for Merton Croquet Club. He has been club captain, and has served two five year terms on the committee, first as secretary and later as chairman of the club. During this time he regularly hosted the club's annual barbecue at his home. During the winter he keeps us on our toes with social events, including imaginative quizzes.

He has been club coach for many years and almost half the members have learned their croquet skills from him. He is very supportive and encouraging to all members. Now he is mentoring two new club coaches. Currently he the club's handicapper, fixtures secretary and competition organiser. This means that he organises the club's internal leagues as well as many club competitions, especially in spring and autumn. For several years he has organised the heats for the Charity One Ball in spring, introducing many to one-ball and raising hundreds of pounds for charity, thereby enabling several players from our small club to progress to the finals.

Peter Kenward Colchester CC

Peter Kenward has been a member of Colchester Croquet Club for a number of years and always represents the club in the best possible manner in the many internal and external competitions in which he has played. However the reason for his nomination for a diploma is the hours of work he has put in to make the lawns and grounds some of the best in the country. He has personally tended the lawns, supervised the contracted groundsmen and ensured our neighbours are minimally inconvenienced. He has worked tirelessly to ensure the lawns are ready for play during competitions and received many expressions of thanks from external competitors for making the competitions memorable for the quality of the playing surface.

In addition he is often to be seen carrying out essential maintenance to buildings or machinery, including the dishwasher, or changing a lightbulb! In short, Peter

Kenward is essential to the smooth running of Colchester Croquet Club and the maintenance of its renowned good lawns.

Tony Mrozinski, Guildford & Godalming

Put simply, Guildford and Godalming Croquet Club would not exist without Tony Mrozinski. He founded the club in the mid 1980s, borrowing some space from the local rugby club, and served as its first chairman for about 20 years. The club has evolved over time and now features four lawns and a clubhouse, Tony being actively involved in every development.

He is a prodigious mower of lawns. A conservative estimate would put the distance he has walked behind a mower, over more than 30 years, at around 4,000 miles. It could well be much more. Added to that are the white lining, hoop setting, general grounds maintenance, etc. That speaks of commitment of the highest order. His regular tournament management activity and the fact that he maintains low-handicap performance in both Association and Golf croquet are evidence of his input to the club across the whole spectrum of its activities. The club has acknowledged this contribution locally by appointing Tony as president.

Jean Oades, Roehampton CC

Jean joined Roehampton Club in 1989 to play bridge and croquet. She immediately became an active member, not only playing croquet and encouraging other people to do so, but tirelessly volunteering to do all the small things that make a club a success.

She became a committee member in 2006 and served as club captain for three years, 2009 - 2012, responsible for everything to do with playing and equipment. She was busy, not only organising all the internal and external matches, but also promoting golf croquet. It was not uncommon to have more than 50 players enter an event.

Undaunted, Jean would always use the format that was best for all the entrants, never taking the easy option. Once she cheerfully organised an event with 11 American blocks, followed by play-offs.

Jean played a key role during the design and building of the new pavilion. Jean is one of those people that every club needs; enthusiastic, kind and cheerful. If croquet had saints, Jean would more than qualify.

The Diploma awards continue overleaf ...

Diane Kemp Winslow CC

Twenty-five years ago Diane Kemp got together a group of fellow WI members to play croquet in her back garden and this was the origin of the Winslow club. As interest and expertise grew, she badgered and cajoled Winslow Town Council into making available a plot of land at the corner of the sports field and building a small store. Twenty-five years later the club is still there and going from strength to strength.

She has coached most club members, mostly with patience, but sometimes with exasperation, encouraged us to play friendly and league matches and made sure players had the confidence to join in competitions such as Ladies' Day at Thames Valley. She has also introduced inventive club competitions. She has continued to raise funds for improvements to the lawn and store and encourages office holders to continue to develop the club.

Now in her 80s, she only gave up her role as chairman last year and still plays with as much focus and skill as ever. She now makes sure some of the original members with mobility and sight problems get to play once a week on a short lawn and continues to organise her beloved club competitions to encourage all members to learn and improve.

Janet and John Leech Rottingdean CC

Thirty-five years ago John and Janet Leech were sitting at a meeting of Rottingdean Preservation Society who, having stopped the building of houses on the picturesque large walled garden of the home formerly owned by Rudyard Kipling, were considering what use might be made of the area. The chairman put forward the suggestion of using it as a croquet lawn and asked the question "Is there anyone who would be interested in exploring the development of this area as a croquet lawn?" Janet Leech, who knew nothing about croquet at all, raised her hand.

Janet and her husband, John, promptly went on a course at Loughborough College to learn how to play Association Croquet and formed Rottingdean Croquet Club which is now thriving with 53 members and a long waiting list. Janet and John have held various positions at the club over the years and are both still honorary members, with Janet being our president. They still both attend as many events at the club as they can.

Rottingdean Croquet Club exists as a direct result of Janet's decision to raise her hand and, and both she and John have given dedicated work to the club over 35 years.

Vaun and Eunice Legerton New Maldon CC

Some years ago Vaun and Eunice Legerton, together with a small group of like-minded croquet players, recognised that there was a potential demand for people in the Maldon area to experience and develop the game. As a result of their labours, Maldon Croquet Club was founded in 2011, with Vaun elected as an inspirational chair. Vaun and Eunice were at the centre of the fledgling club's applications to play on local playing fields and for funds to procure essential equipment.

They recognised the importance of developing a club which welcomed all, regardless of ability, but which encouraged a sporting and competitive culture. To that end they presented the Legerton Trophy to the club to be played for by all members on the annual club day which they have organised every year. They continue to play very regularly on roll-up days, encouraging members of all abilities, and regularly referee and keep time at the club's matches with visiting clubs, showing a very clear understanding of CA rules.

Rita Nunn, Southern Croquet Federation

Rita has served on the federation committee for more than ten years as treasurer, a task which is far from straightforward, given the infrequency of meetings and the different ways member clubs handle their finances.

The federation is particularly indebted to Rita, who having first retired before the start of the 2016 season for more family time, answered a distress call to return, when her replacement as treasurer died within months of taking office. Rita didn't have a moment's hesitation in helping the federation by taking on the treasurer role again for the remainder of that year.

Rita has also been an equally vital part of her own club, Winchester.

Not only has she over the years served on the committee as chairman, treasurer and secretary, but has also devoted much time to coaching beginners and managing tournaments at club and federation level.

Terminology, abbreviations and 'Croquet speak'

Dear Editor,

For reasons which I won't go into I got June and September's Gazette together.

There is a splendid picture on the front cover of the June issue (*Gazette*368) with a banner proclaiming Student GC Championship. This photo should be widely used to publicise croquet and particularly potential young croquet players.

BUT WHAT IS GC?

I know and you know, but the general public whom we are aiming at won't know.

The banner should say Student Golf Croquet Championship. I know there are small logos at the side which mention croquet, but no one will see those.

The word 'Croquet' should appear prominently on all promotional material.

On the other hand, in the September issue (*Gazette* 369) the report on the 150th AC Championship is full of terminology and abbreviations that I, as an ordinary player, have to admit to not knowing, e.g. Swiss, Plummers, SXP, TPO, QP, Sextuplets, +17tp(P), +26sxp.

Ian Wills, Kington Langley CC

Dear Ian,

Thank you for these observations and smartly linking them together as you have.

You are quite right of course that the use of terminology and abbreviations only works when the reader understands them.

In the case of the Students' banner, I was impressed with this when I visited the inaugural championships in April and learnt there that it was something that the hosts, Sheffield University Croquet Society, had put together themselves for the event.

Looking again at the image of the banner now, I'm guessing that they went for GC for no other reason than 'Golf Croquet' wouldn't fit, but your point regarding the use of 'Croquet' in all publicity is well made and I am sure that we can all agree with that.

Your second point on the use of abbreviations and jargon in Gazette reports is trickier and one with which I wrestle in most issues.

Terminology of the type you list has been widely used in the Gazette for at least 50 years, ever since those at the top of our sport started peeling and other cleverness, but the snag is that the readership of

'Age difference record' is now 76 years!

Dear Editor,

In the last issue (Gazette 370) I noticed a letter titled "Age difference record rises to 59 years". Could I refer you to my letter titled "Older Adversaries" on page 5 of the December 2009 issue (Gazette 323). The record that needs to be broken is 76 years, not 59. Perhaps you could put a small correction in the next issue!

Arthur Reed, Watford Cassiobury CC

Dear Arthur,

I stand corrected with the excuse that 2009 was before my time with the Gazette and almost before my time in croquet.

Your claim sent me scurrying to my collection of dusty back Gazette issues to learn about this record game

~ Arthur Reed v Miss Lydia Elphinstone-Stone, Budleigh Salterton tournament in 1960 ~.

It is reported that by 1960 the lady had reached the grand age of 95, and goes on to record, that in being matched with tournament newcomer Arthur, the differences in their ages was indeed 76 years.

Even my shaky maths can work out that Arthur was a mere 19 at the time and probably didn't expect to have set a record that stands to this day.

The record for the largest age difference between opponents in a Fixtures Book listed tournament is now (back) in the hands of Arthur Reed v Miss Lydia Elphinstone-Stone at 76 years.

Ed.

CA archivist Chris Williams reports:

Laurence Latham wrote the following in a letter to the Gazette in October 2009:

Recently I was pleased to discover that the first 26 point game I ever played was against an opponent born in 1881. The lady in question was a renowned folklorist and author, Miss Violet Alford, and I am indebted to her great-nephew, William Ormerod, for helping me to establish the year of her birth.

Prichard's 'History of Croquet' informs us that in 1948 John Solomon played against Miss Lydia Elphinstone-Stone, an opponent who had been born in 1866, the year before that in which Walter Jones Whitmore is credited with becoming the first ever croquet champion. It would be interesting to learn whether any existing Associates can claim earlier born opposition.

Actually Lydia Elphinstone-Stone was born on 23 Aug 1865 (and died 23 May 1963), so John Solomon had claim to the record for an existing member having faced the earliest born opponent until his own death in 2014, at which point it passed to Arthur Reed.

Chris Williams

... and the record for GC is improved as well

Arthur Reed's record (left) is going to be so hard to beat that it would likely end this fun string of correspondence, so by way of keeping it going, let us park the over-all age difference record at 76, recognising that this was an AC game of course.

The recent record claims in Gazette letters have all been for GC games, and that sat with John Edwards (78 years) and Richard Bilton (19 years) at their 59 years difference until the Gazette received the following . .

Ed.

Dear Editor,

Richard Bilton's letter in the October issue (Gazette 370), concerning the difference in age between himself and John Edwards, reminded me that I am getting on in years.

In 2016, I played 19 year old Richard in the GC B-Level Series Final at Budleigh Salterton when I was 83.

So, the 'GC Age Difference Record' rises, however temporarily, to 64 years.

Incidentally, having been beaten rather easily by Richard on that occasion, I suffered at the hands of his father at the Colchester B-level Series tournament this year, when, with me leading 6-4, Michael ran hoops 11 and 12 with a single stroke, leaving both my ball offside, and I lost at the 13th. Grrrr!

What a wonderful game we do play.

John Skuse,

Chelmsford CC & Colchester CC

the Gazette has such a diverse level of understanding about such exploits and indeed croquet jargon generally.

It is impossible therefore to report in a way that can be understood by those at one end of the spectrum, yet not be too boringly obvious for those at the other.

I do try to pitch the use of abbreviations and jargon to the level of understanding that a reader who will likely be most interested in that particular story, accepting that this approach is never going to work for everyone.

It has been suggested before that a glossary of terms would be useful, but with the limited space available in each Gazette this isn't possible in every issue.

Fortunately the excellent CA website has just this at <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=tech/other/jargon>

Ed.

Striping your balls the easy way

Dear Editor,

Regarding the letters from Roy Weaver about third colour balls in the last Issue (Gazette 370), the third colour Dawson balls are a real challenge for those who are colour blind.

For general club use, to make a set of third colours, I placed two strips of tape around a spare set of secondary balls with a very thin gap between them. In the gap I marked it with black permanent marker pen, then removed the tape, creating a set of balls with a neat stripe.

It's a simple solution that might help other clubs.

Janet Lewis, Watford Cassiobury CC

Photo right: Stephen Custance-Baker found striped balls in use when he visited at Pasadena CC, USA.



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ABTA
Travel with confidence

A Bad Season - What happened to my croquet?

'Fast improving' Alison Jones looks back at a disappointing year

A quick recap, this is my croquet story so far:

Year 1 – I joined a croquet club but didn't play much croquet. My handicap started at 18, then I lost a bunch of games and ended up at handicap 20.

Year 2 – Mortified by the worsening of my handicap in year 1, I practised as much as life would allow, won a high handicap tournament and was awarded the title of Most Improved UK Female Player 2015. My end of year handicap was down to 5.

Year 3 – My challenge was to get my handicap down to zero. I fought well and did eventually managed to end the season as a 'scratch' player, but the year was really about learning to fight and learning to lose. Playing 18 games in the Open Championship and only winning three provided me with the 'off the lawn' coaching I much needed, patience, determination and drive!

Year 4 – wait for it..... So, here we are in my fourth season (third full season) of playing croquet, and what a season it has been too. In the winter I played indoor croquet and partnered my Dad (Cliff Jones). Not only was this fun, it was also a lesson in how to be a doubles partner. Indoor croquet is played on a short lawn, which is actually a carpet. It's odd to think about this now, bearing in mind the title of this blog article, but this indoor croquet experience boosted my confidence to the point where I knew in my head and my heart I could hit any ball from anywhere.

Not only could I hit everything from miles away, I was accurate, really accurate! There is a term in croquet which is 'touch'... I had 'touch'.

But then, the season began. . .

And all I can really say (or shout really) is 'Where the ***** did my croquet go?'

This year I have managed to achieve the following, in no particular order:

Handicap increase from 0 to 0.5 (that's the wrong way for those who are not familiar).

Mishit a ball so badly it went to the opposite corner of where I was aiming!

Perfectly cut rush my opponent's peg ball onto the peg.... when I really, really didn't want to!

Jump over a ball two feet away because I didn't notice the huge dent in the lawn in front of my ball (***** crows!)

Miss a lift shot by so much that I almost hit the manager in his tent!

Without going on any more, let me just say, this year has been a disaster. I have actually found myself crying in the middle of a lawn because absolutely nothing would

go right.

Last year, okay I lost lots of games against amazing players, but at least I played well, to a good standard, and better than each of the days that had passed before.

This year, I feel I have been going completely backwards.

Now here is the interesting thing... I have actually been warned about this whole scenario by other croquet players. Here are some of my favourite popular phrases which I have heard in the past, I have added my own comments below which may help someone else in the future.

"You may plateau" - An incredible understatement meaning that you are a fast improver and have probably been called 'a natural', only to find that when you have mastered the four ball break, croquet is actually really difficult, verging on the impossible!

"One day you will only want to run hoops from six inches away, straight in front"

In the beginning I could run a damn hoop from the opposite end of the lawn, so what this really means is that over time, the lawn gets bigger, the hoops get smaller and the peg becomes somewhat non-existent at the end of a game... unless you are six inches away, and straight in front!

"You will start to lose games, but don't worry, it will all come with experience"

What this really means is that croquet is hard, you will be playing against someone who has played for the last 30 years, no matter how good or bad their shots are, they are going to have the 30 years' experience to deal with it, fact!

The emotions I have felt through this year, going through this process of 'being bad at croquet' have been incredible, from tears of frustration to aches of anger.

I have however finally come to an agreement with myself and that is that I must learn to have fun again.

Croquet is competitive, but it is also a fabulous and fun sport, and I think I have forgotten to have fun in my mission to be a great croquet player.

Roll on Year 5, time to enjoy croquet for the amazingly competitive, strategic and fun sport croquet really is.

Whilst winning of course!



CA Development Grant for Auckland

Auckland Croquet Club was founded in 1998, playing on a very small lawn in the grounds of Auckland Castle in Bishop Auckland, Co Durham.

Increased rental forced a move two years later to a small disused bowling green with very poor facilities owned by Durham County Council. Two years ago the club started to look for a new home with better facilities as membership was falling away.

In April 2016 it relocated to Chilton Miners' Welfare Recreation Ground, five miles east of Bishop Auckland.

Here there is a full-sized bowling green with very good pavilion facilities in a lovely, well maintained park. Though the playing surface was level there were many bald patches causing an uneven, wayward surface and an untrue run of the ball.

Our project was to improve the playing surface which, though roughly cut during the summer, had not been maintained fully since the bowling club disbanded a number of years ago.

The aim was to upgrade the surface so as to be suitable for playing croquet at federation level.

An approach was made to Green Thumb for advice and their agent proved to be very knowledgeable in making suggestions as to the programme of work needed.

The quote was £2,438 and this cost was offset by the successful application for a **CA grant of £1,000, for which the club is most grateful.**

The project was completed in October of this year. The club has benefitted greatly and is now able to provide members and visiting clubs players with a much improved playing surface.

At the start of the 2017 season the club held open days and taster sessions in a promotional drive to increase the membership. This resulted in an increase of 50% and, thanks to our improved court, members from a neighbouring CA club have joined as associate winter members.

Within the park there is space for a second full-size croquet court which could be developed in future years when membership and finance allow.

Eugene Brady



Jaques, croquet and the missing exhibit

Roger Bray explores a croquet myth

Various myths about Jaques have been perpetuated over the years, not least that “Jaques won a place in sporting history and a gold medal at the Great Exhibition of 1851 for the introduction of Croquet to Britain”, which is in the current edition of the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.

Spratt not Jaques was first to promote croquet commercially

In fact Jaques did not even exhibit at the Great Exhibition, and my recent article on Isaac Spratt (*see the February 2017 issue, Gazette 366*) argued that Spratt, not Jaques, was the first to promote the game commercially in this country with success.

There is certainly no doubt that Jaques (or Jaques and Son from 1860 onwards) did much to popularise the game, not least through manufacturing and wholesaling thousands of croquet sets in the early 1860s.

1862 perhaps?

So perhaps the firm exhibited in the 1862 International Exhibition in London instead?

Indeed it did: two exhibits were accepted for display, and Jaques was awarded a (silver) medal for each.

One was for “billiard balls and chessmen”, the other was for “a display of toys and parlour games”.

The latter could have included a set of parlour croquet, but Jaques quite clearly did not exhibit the outdoor game.

Further investigation

Further investigation has now revealed that a Jaques lawn croquet set was shown in the 1862 Exhibition within a display which earned two medals – for two other businesses!

Jaques was an importer of hardwoods and ivory, and used these materials to make luxury goods.

In the 1850s John Jaques Junior steered the firm into making and marketing games for both adults and children.

It had started in 1850 when he secured the exclusive right to manufacture Staunton chessmen from the designer, his father-in-law Nathaniel Cooke, which was a huge commercial success.

Jaques kept a sharp eye for new games

Soon after, the firm began to create new games, or new designs of old favourites, registering, on average, over two a year throughout the 1850s.

It also accepted designs submitted by



other inventors.

This was an era when there was a voracious appetite for homely pursuits by a growing leisured elite.

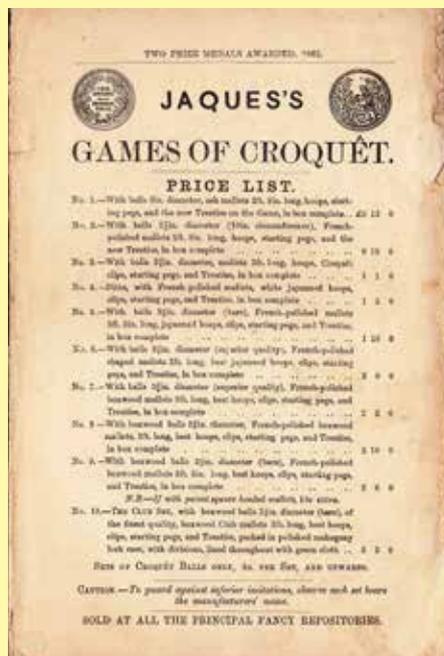
Jaques kept a sharp eye on developments elsewhere, and was quick to exploit croquet in 1857 when it began to be popular.

By that time the firm had established a network of toy and games retailers, and its sets became widely available to the public throughout the British Isles.

Cremers & Son

Two of the retailers were a father and son, both called William H Cremer.

They had split into two separate businesses: the father had a shop in Bond Street, and the son one in Regent Street (which became the Hamleys of the day).



1862 International Exhibition with Cremers & Son

Such was their reputation that they were approached by the organisers of the 1862 International Exhibition to mount a major display of games and toys in the main concourse. This proved to be controversial for two reasons.

Firstly the Cremers built a huge monstrosity – the press described it as “tawdry” and “a masterpiece of ugliness” – which the organisers quickly demanded should be reduced to half its size.

Secondly, there was some consternation that such a prominent display should be devoted to mere children’s playthings.

In the event, it proved to be one of the most popular exhibits, no doubt because William Cremer Junior was an adept magician, and kept hordes of children spellbound by his tricks – and both father and son were awarded medals.

Claims and false claims

At this time the Cremers were selling Jaques’s croquet sets, although soon afterwards the son started to manufacture his own.

He then claimed that he and his father were the only exhibitors of wooden croquet sets in the 1862 Exhibition.

This misled customers into thinking that the Cremers had exhibited their own sets, when clearly they must have been Jaques’s.

Advertisers of that time weren’t averse to bending the truth for their own purposes, and Jaques was equally misleading in displaying its two silver medals at the head of their croquet adverts for some years thereafter!

The 1862 (not 1851) Exhibition

But underlying this tangled web we can now see that a Jaques (outdoor) croquet set was exhibited at the 1862 (not 1851) Exhibition, and that the two Cremers, not Jaques, were awarded silver medals for the exhibit.

Illustrations:

Top:

An 1865 music cover advertising W H Cremer Junior’s croquet sets.

Right:

An 1864 advertisement for Jaques & Son’s croquet sets headed by their two 1862 International Exhibition medals.’

Who was the first Croquet Champion?

John Harris finds an answer



Early croquet history presents us with an intriguing puzzle.

The two first recorded croquet tournaments were held just 150 years ago, in 1867 and 1868.

But who were the winners?

Walter Whitmore is usually credited with being the first croquet champion of England, but it turns out there are two other strong contenders for the title – Arthur Law and Walter Peel.

The very earliest competitive tournament we know of was on 15-16 August 1867.

It was organised at Evesham by Walter Jones Whitmore, the energetic and often controversial early croquet enthusiast.

D.M.C. Prichard's excellent *'History of Croquet'* shows Whitmore travelling to Evesham in June to check out the ground, and then inviting a small batch of players to take part. Organised croquet was still in its infancy, and it was common practice to use any suitable area of flat grass. In this case, a bowling green was pressed into service, with the playing area divided into four small croquet lawns.

Prichard records Whitmore himself as the winner and this tallies with Arthur Lillie's 1897 book *'Croquet: its History, Rules and Secrets'*: Lillie was a committed collector of information about the origins and development of the game. Lillie in turn no doubt lifted the information from James D. Heath's 1874 *'The Complete Croquet Player'*.

And so Whitmore has come to be accepted as the first croquet champion.

But was he?

It was something Whitmore claimed repeatedly. We see him, for example, promoting himself as the English champion to publicise a tournament organised by him in 1870 at York, but Walter Peel's 1898 book *'How to Play Croquet'* tells a different story.

It records another player, Arthur Law, as the winner. Subsequent editions of Peel's book were revised in detail, but Arthur Law's



name survived the editor's pen unchanged. There seems no reason for Peel to distort the truth – Whitmore was a distant cousin of his, and all three players knew each other well.

Indeed Arthur Law wrote the preface to the first edition of *How to Play Croquet*, commenting on several sections in detail – he had obviously read it attentively. He was recorded in 1899 as being "at one time, by universal consent, the most brilliant player in England", and was still active on the tournament scene when Peel's book was published. There seems no reason for Law, an ordained priest, to claim victory if it was not deserved.

The same cannot be said of the often stubborn and manipulative Walter Whitmore, who was not averse to distorting the truth to suit his own purposes. Prichard records him asserting authorship of parlour games which had in fact been invented by his sister and brother. Whitmore was also an inveterate self-publicist; a published account of the next tournament we know of, at Moreton-in-Marsh on 31 July and 1 August 1868, focuses heavily on Whitmore's 'brilliant', 'beautiful', 'magnificent' play, as if to eclipse the fact that the actual winner was Walter Peel. Only Whitmore would have remembered the games he himself played in such detail; the prime source of this biased account must have been Whitmore himself.

~

Photographs (above, from left): Walter Peel, 1847-1897, Arthur Law, 1842-1923 and Walter Whitmore, 1831-1872.

... (and right): Richard Peperell and Buster Mottram inspect WH Peel's name on the winners board at the All England Club, Wimbledon.



So who was the first croquet champion?

Luckily we do not need to arbitrate between Whitmore and Law for the title.

Evesham may be the first organised tournament on record, but it was not, by any standards, a national event. It was not widely advertised, and had a limited local entry, by invitation only.

The 1868 Moreton-in-Marsh tournament was more widely publicised, and attracted an entry of 32. It was reported as "A Grand Open Croquet Tournament, the first attempt at anything of the sort", and so has a legitimate claim to be the first open tournament. And that would make the Moreton-in-Marsh winner, Walter Peel, the first undisputed English champion.

Arthur Law went on to play the game with some success for half a century more, often competing under the pseudonym A. Bolde.

Walter Whitmore worked hard in his short life to establish and regularise croquet, helping to organise the game nationally and writing books of rules and tactics, all now wildly out of date.

Walter Peel, for his part, founded the United All England Croquet Association, still flourishing as the Croquet Association. Peel's name is still used every time we push another ball through its hoop in order, a favourite tactic of his, and is recalled every year at the Peel Memorials, first played in 1898.

History would seem to concur that, of Peel, Law and Whitmore, Walter Peel's is the name to remember.



As the new Chairman of the CA Coaching Committee and, having recently attended my first meeting, I am delighted to announce the appointment of the first GC Grade 3 Elite Coaches (*see right*).

I am presently compiling a list of other newly appointed coaches and this will follow in the next Gazette, as I do not want to leave anyone out.

The coaching pages this month mainly cover courses available at the Northern Croquet Academy and the South West Croquet Academy. I am pleased to see there are many courses aimed at beginners and improvers.

A little word of advice – don't dither – the places go quickly and courses will be full if you wait too long!

Finally, if you want to ask anything about coaching, please send an email to the Coaching Committee's email address: cacommchair@gmail.com.

I monitor this account and will ensure all enquiries are dealt with.

Sarah Hayes, Chairman of the Coaching Committee

New Coaching Appointments

Congratulations to the following who have been appointed as the first GC Grade 3 Elite Coaches:

Lionel Tibble & Rachel Rowe (*pictured below*) **Cliff Jones, Stephen Mulliner, Tobi Savage and J-P Moberly.**



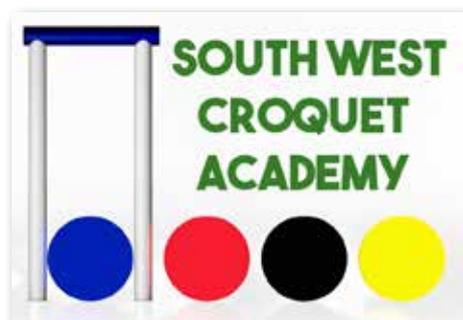
The South-West Croquet Academy (Budleigh) 2018 Programme

Date	Days	Course	H'cap range	Lead Coach	Cost *
4-5 April	2	Coaches Training Course for Club Coaches (AC & GC)	n/a	Dave Kibble	£75 / 55
5-6 April	2	Coaches Training Course for Grade 1 Coaches (AC & GC)	n/a	Dave Kibble	£75 / 55
16-18 Apr.	2-3	AC Laws & Referees Course	n/a	Dr Ian Vincent	£60 / 50
21-22 Apr.	1-2	GC Rules & Referees Course	n/a	Marcus Evans	£65 / 55
25 April & 20 May	2	AC for Improvers – 'The easy way'	18-24	Roger Mills	£75 / 55
27 April & 14 May	2	AC Mastering 4 and 3 ball breaks	9-16	Roger Mills	£75 / 55
15 May	1	GC High Handicappers Development	10+	Stephen Custance-Baker	£45 / 35
17 May	1	GC Improvers Development	6-9	Stephen Custance-Baker	£45 / 35
23 May	1	AC Short Croquet – Skills to succeed	16-	Stephen Custance-Baker	£45 / 35
10 June	1	GC Improvers Development	6-9	Stephen Custance-Baker	£45 / 35

Additional courses may be also be available later

* The costs shown are for Ordinary members / Premium members of the Croquet Association (note: Premium Members receive a discount of £10-£20 on all courses)

For 2018, the **South-West Croquet Academy (SWCA)** is continuing to offer a wide range of courses that offer something



for everyone. In addition to a range of AC and GC courses, there are a number of new courses for coaches, referees and Short Croquet players.

The Two Coaches Courses will be led by Dave Kibble, and are for players wishing to gain their first coaching badge at Club Coach level (AC or GC), and for others to gain their Grade 1 badge (AC or GC). This latter course will appeal to existing Club Coaches, as well as suitable players who have already established themselves at club coaching level but who may not have a formal qualification.

For players interested in becoming Referees, the SWCA is particularly pleased to have top Examining & Championship Referees Dr Ian Vincent and Marcus Evans to leading courses for AC and GC respectively. These courses are also suitable for players who are not yet ready to become referees, but who would like to gain a deeper knowledge of AC Laws or GC Rules.

There has been a great upsurge recently in Short Croquet so, recognising this and the fully subscribed tournaments in the South-West this season, the SWCA felt it was time to introduce a course for Short Croquet enthusiasts. This course is led by Stephen Custance-Baker, one of the leading exponents of the game. He is also one of the foremost GC players and coaches in the South West.

For AC players, the outstanding response to the two innovative courses led by Roger Mills for Improvers and Mastering the 4 ball/3 ball break in 2017, has convinced the SWCA to repeat these in 2018. Both these courses will be run over two separate days allowing participants time to practice what is learnt on Day 1 (25 April - shot skills & the 4 ball break) before further enhancing skills on Day 2 (20 May - tactics for building & maintaining breaks). Each day is fairly intensive, and there will be a comprehensive reference pack and practice guide to players after the course.

Please visit our website:

www.southwestcroquetacademy.co.uk

or contact our Secretary:

Maureen Smith

enquiries@southwestcroquetacademy.co.uk

0782 145 8447

Coaching Award nominations invited

The Coach of the Year 2017 - Nominations are invited for the 2017 Coach of the Year award. We are looking for the person who is an established coach and has made a difference. A dedicated and enthusiastic individual who has helped players improve.

The Lifetime Coaching Award - This award is for that someone really special who has made a considerable and significant contribution to coaching over a long period of time.

The Coaching Committee will be considering all nominations at their next meeting. If you know of someone you consider worthy of either of these awards, please send their name together with a suitable citation to Sarah Hayes at cacommchair@gmail.com.

Nominations for both awards close on 31 January 2018.

There is more information at <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=members/docs/committees/coaching/coty>.



The Northern Croquet Academy,

launched in 2017, is growing! After a successful first year, with some very positive feedback, the programme for 2018 is bigger and stronger.

The Northern Academy is delighted to welcome James Hawkins, author of 'Complete Croquet' to the coaching team. James is leading two new courses

'How to make 12 hoops in one go'
and

'It's not all about breaks'

– which together cover many aspects of the AC game and should be of great interest to higher and middle handicap players.

The offer for GC players is expanded for 2018, with new courses 'Classic Golf Croquet skills and tactics' and 'Golf Croquet strategy' and there are also new courses that will appeal to both GC and AC players covering basic technique, the mental approach to croquet, and a handicapping workshop.

We're also very pleased to welcome back Cliff Jones, who this year is offering new one-to-one coaching sessions over the Easter weekend for both GC and AC players who are keen to work on any aspect of their technique, mindset or strategy.

The 2018 programme includes a coach training course, for both AC and GC players

The Northern Croquet Academy (York) 2018 Programme

Dates	Course	Course Leader	Cost *
Sat 31 Mar	AC/GC Individual guidance from Cliff Jones	Cliff Jones	POA
Sun 1 April	AC/GC Individual guidance from Cliff Jones	Cliff Jones	POA
Sat-Sun 7-8 April	AC/GC Become a qualified coach	James Hawkins & Roger Staples	£60/50
Sat 14 April	AC/GC Back to Basics	Derek Knight	£35/30
Sat 21 April	AC/GC Mind Games	Derek Knight	£35/30
Sun 22 April	AC Openings and Leaves	Roger Staples	£35/30
Sat 28 April	AC How to make 12 hoops in one go	James Hawkins	£35/30
Sun 29 April	AC It's not all about breaks	James Hawkins	£35/30
Sat-Sun 5-6 May	AC Towards the triple peel	Cliff Jones	£60/50
Sat 12 May	AC/GC Handicapping workshop	Roger Staples	£15/10
Sat 26 May	GC Classic GC skills and tactics	John Crossland	£35/30
Sun 27 May	GC Golf Croquet strategy	John Crossland	£35/30

* The costs shown are for Ordinary members / Premium members of the Croquet Association

for which a subsidy of £25, funded by the CA, is available for qualifying applicants.

Most of our courses were oversubscribed in 2017, so early booking is advisable.

Please visit our website:
www.northerncroquetacademy.org.

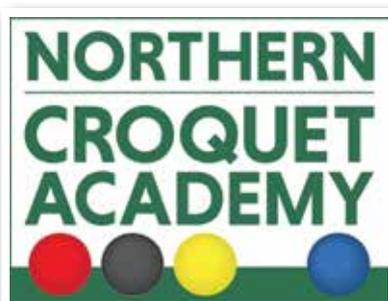
or contact our Secretary:

John Harris
northerncroquetacademy@gmail.com
01904 620211

Southwick reminder

Readers are reminded that the October issue of the Croquet Gazette (# 370) detailed all the courses in the 2018 programme at the Croquet Academy at Southwick. If you don't still have a copy of that Gazette, you can find all the information you will need on that academy's website

www.thecroquetacademy.com
or from Academy Secretary Janet Hoptroff:
courses@thecroquetacademy.com
or 01903 859417



The first season of the International Performance Development Squad for Golf Croquet got off to a resounding start in two of its three main areas of activity.

Elite Squad

At the higher level, Elite Squad, the majority of players continued to build on their already impressive skills and have managed to find the time and commitment to fully support this initiative.

For the 2018 season three additional players have signed up to the squad and we welcome Jonathan Powe, Harry Fisher and Jamie Burch.

Perhaps the highlight of the season was the GC Elite Squad making themselves available for mentoring and being on hand to provide constructive input for each of the Development Squad members during a Mentored Match weekend.

The Elites also had their first squad weekend at Nottingham - providing plenty of tactical and other discussions, some new practice routine ideas, a nice pub trip and a round of mini golf.

One of the initiatives born out of this squad weekend was to offer the Elite AC players the opportunity to test their GC skills in a 'friendly' inaugural GC match weekend.

This took place in early October at Guildford and Godalming CC, and we hope to build on this and make it an annual event.

Development Squad

Amongst the original ten Development Squad participants, we have had an average of 104 games each played during the 2017 season, one who played all eight English National Singles Championship Series (Ascot Cup) qualifying tournaments and a promotion from Development Squad to Elite Squad.

A significant number entered the Open Championships for the first time this year and were rewarded with some outstanding wins against tough competition.

Congratulations to you all, and Rachel Rowe and I look forward to your next and final season in the Development Squad.

We will also be welcoming a 2018 intake for the two-year Development Squad programme at the beginning of next year.

If you know someone you think would benefit from this opportunity please get in touch.

Coaching pods

The coaching pod initiative looked very encouraging in the beginning, with a total of 13 coaches and clubs signing up, and there has been a marvelous response from some, with coaches and clubs enthusiastically setting to the task.

I take my hat off to you guys for all your proactive efforts to date.

Pods in other regions have not been so easy to get off the ground with demand for coaching falling short of the anticipated levels to make it viable.

There still remain significantly barren areas of the country where members do not have easy access to a pod, so if you are keen to attend but there isn't one in your area please put your name down under 'Elsewhere' on the pod registration page on the CA website or follow the link below and we'll see if we can fill in the gaps:

<https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=members/CoachingPods/golf>

In order to do this, anyone with a desire to set up a pod and who has a coaching background in GC is urged to get in touch with me or contact your Federation coaching officer. Your help in meeting demand will be greatly appreciated.

Lionel Tibble,

GC International Performance Director

Ashby are Inter-Club

Ashby became the GC Inter-Club Champions for the fourth time in mid-September when they beat Letchworth in a tight final, **reports Tim King.**

The match took place at Peterborough CC which became the twelfth different venue of the GC Inter-Club final.

The score was close, but only the deciding rubber went to three games, so the number of swings in fortune was relatively limited during the course of the day.

Letchworth were appearing in their first final, having beaten previous winners Surbiton and Dulwich in earlier rounds away from home, and having had a settled team of the same four players for the whole season.

Ashby, in contrast, were competing in their tenth final and their team consisted of players with a total between them of 27 previous appearances in finals.

Ashby was at an unexpected disadvantage when David Bell picked up a bout of tendinitis a couple of days beforehand but his replacement, Mike O'Brian, had appeared in all three of Ashby's previous winning teams (2010, 2012, 2015).

The other main feature of the final was a Mounfield as captain of each side, with Ray (non-playing) for Ashby against his son Nick, who was the only Letchworth player with any experience of GC Inter-Club finals, having represented Ashby in 2004.

The latter became only the third player to represent two different clubs in finals, with the others being Nelson Morrow (Hurlingham and Surbiton) and John Spiers (Blewbury and Surbiton). Spiers is the only player to have won with two

Grass Roots win for Hill

Dave Hill from Enfield won this season's Grass Roots competition, which is for players with handicaps of eight or more.

Twelve clubs, through club-based rounds, produced 20 qualifiers for this season's expanded final at Nottingham, where Richard Bilton managed the tournament on behalf of Director Terrey Sparks.

Richard Bilton reports: The format for the single-day final was four blocks of five, with block A playing everyone in block B, and the same for block C and D; after which the top

two from each progressed to the quarter-finals. Although play started at 9.30am, only three rounds had been completed by the 1pm lunch-break (kindly prepared by one of Nottingham's volunteers), and every block had players on 2 and 3 wins, so everything was to play for.

Hill (*right*) and Julie Antrobus (Edgbaston) won all five games and topped their blocks; Colin Helps (Cheam) won block C outright with 3 wins; but there was a tie on 4 wins each between three players in block A, which meant this year's new regulation of taking net hoops as the first criterion for

ranking players was needed. This meant that Jacky Waite (Cheam) just lost out to Colin Myerscough (Cheam) and Anthony Cross (Branston U3A), on +4, +10 and +13 net hoops respectively.

By this time play was taking longer than expected, so to make sure the event finished when planned, a time limit was introduced for the knock-out games. Two of the quarters finished quickly 7-2 and 7-1, but the others went to time at 6-2 and 4-3.

The semis (Cross v Helps, and Hill v Myerscough) were very closely fought, with both going to time and finishing at the 9th

Club Champions again

different clubs.

This season's final saw Ashby make the initial breakthrough when Tim King beat John Skingsley, but in keeping with the rest of the day, balance was quickly restored by Letchworth's John Noble beating O'Brian.

Ashby's Will Gee and Rachel Rowe beat Nick Mounfield and David Tutt to take the doubles rubber and a 2-1 lunchtime lead.

Lunch appeared to give Letchworth a stimulus and, although Mounfield only won at the golden hoop against Will Gee, they were looking in good shape with winning the first game of the three of the afternoon's singles matches.

Rowe was the one immediate success for Ashby, with a 7-4, 7-6 win against David Tutt, putting Ashby one point from victory.

Then Gee gave the Ashby team further hope by clinically restoring parity in his rubber against Mounfield so that a third deciding game would be needed.

O'Brian and King, though, were not making enough headway to overcome their deficits. The former fell first and when the latter could not prevent Noble taking their second game 7-6, Letchworth had drawn level.

Fortunately for Ashby, although the crowd all rushed across to the remaining court, there was not a great deal of tension as Gee had established a 5-3 lead in the deciding game of the deciding rubber. He proceeded to keep the pressure firmly on Mounfield and the score went to 6-3 and then 7-3 without too much further drama.

As Tournament Director, John Bowcott had left home at an early hour and he was in attendance for the whole day. In handing the trophy to Ashby, he thanked Peterborough CC for the enthusiasm and success with which they'd hosted the final.

hoop; one of them had been even at 4-4 after time and six strokes, and concluded with hoop 9 being scored by the 7th stroke, but the opponent not bothering to shoot at hoop 10.

In the final between Hill and Helps, with the score was 6-5 to Hill at 'time' and being unaware that they had the 'eight shots' to play, they were going to end there, but the crowd shouted out and Hill ran hoop 12 with the first shot to seal victory.

The winner David Hill was presented with the impressive Grass Roots trophy by Terrey Sparks.

Watford win the Inter-Club Murphy Shield

Watford won this 'second tier' Inter-Club GC competition for the second time, reprising their 2013 success.

They defeated Pendle at the end of a long day for both clubs who travelled to the neutral 'half-way point' venue of Nottingham for a planned 10am start, as victor's **Jeff Johnson reports.**

Pendle arrived around 9.45 and set up two courts, put the kettle on and had a little practice, but it was 10.30 before Watford arrived to Pendle's welcoming offer of tea and a practice knock-up.

The match started at 10.40, with Watford being a little fazed by their late arrival and Pendle's Libby Dixon (handicap 2) and Keith Terry (3) won the doubles 7-4, 7-2 against Watford's Alan Clark (2) and John Smallbone (3).

In the morning singles Pendle's Will Drake (6), a croquet novice having started the game at 87 years of age, narrowly lost to Watford's Arthur Reed a veteran with a

history of two victories over Solomon and rumours of one against Methuselah - and Paul Dowdall (3) beat Watford's George Skinner (4).

Pendle held a 2-1 lead at lunch but Watford then won all four of the afternoon singles giving them a convincing 5-2 win, however, examination of the score revealed that many matches were won 7-6 and it was in fact a very close match.

~

The Inter-Club Murphy Shield is a national knock-out competition (organised with regional sensibility) with a handicap restriction that allows teams to field one player with a handicap of 2 and the combined handicaps of the team must be 12 or more.

All clubs are encouraged to enter this, and the other Inter-Club competitions for the 2018 season, the details for which are on the CA website and will be in the Fixtures Book.



Barnicoat is the All England GC Handicap Champion

David Barnicoat, who took up croquet less than a year ago, won this season's All England Handicap, beating 16 players in the National Final and in excess of 200 players overall.

For this competition players have to win through from an internal club based round and one of three Area finals for the right to play in the end of season 16-player final, hosted this year at Ramsgate CC in mid-September.

The satisfying 'all play all' 15 round single game format was again employed, and as Manager Roger Loram reports, at the end of day one, with eight rounds completed, Barnicoat (Enfield, handicap 6) was in the lead with 7 wins, with Nick Archer (Watford, -2), Richard Jones (Kington Langley, 4), Chris Joslin

(Maldon, 10) and David Vincent (Blewbury, 3) one adrift.

Barnicoat maintained his lead during the day two and by the end had stretched the gap to two wins and won the tournament with an impressive 13 wins.

Three players tied on 11 wins and Joslin claimed second place over Vincent and Brian Wilson (Camerton & Peasdown) with a higher net hoop score of +22 to +13 and +11 respectively.

The Manager (and photographer) Roger Loram who, together with Graham Wallin as the ROT, had ensured the Tournament ran smoothly and Jonathan Issacs, a Vice-President of the CA, came from Brighton to present the trophy to David Barnicoat, the 2018 GC All England Handicap winner.



Surbiton retain crown ~ Inter-Club Championship ~

Surbiton faced Bristol in the Inter-Club final, having completed a semi-final victory at Nottingham just the previous day, *writes Sam Murray.*

Three-quarters of that team; Stephen Mulliner, Samir Patel, and Sam Murray, were joined by Chris Farthing, to take on the Bristol line-up of Robert Wilkinson, David Goacher, Richard Smith and Louise Bradforth.

Surbiton's England Test players proved decisive.

Whilst Bristol's top two had occasional chances, Mulliner and Patel reeled off two triples and a quad to take all the top games.

The lower half was a different story and, with Murray spurning his chances in two interactive games, it fell to Farthing to complete a triple against Bradforth to clinch the one additional victory needed.

Surbiton therefore took the title for a second successive year, with a combination of convincing victories and very close-fought matches 4-3.

~

Final results (Surbiton names first):

Samir Patel & Stephen Mulliner beat David Goacher & Robert Wilkinson +24T (Mulliner)
Chris Farthing lost to Richard Smith -2
Sam Murray lost to Louise Bradforth -8
Samir Patel beat David Goacher +19 QP
Stephen Mulliner beat Rob.Wilkinson +15TP
Chris Farthing beat Louise Bradforth +15TP
Sam Murray lost to Richard Smith -12

CA President Quiller Barrett is a wonderful supporter of CA competition finals and he is pictured (right) with the Longman Cup winning Pendle team (photo by Brian Fisk).

Watford's first win ~ Mary Rose ~

Seventeen clubs entered this season's Mary Rose Inter-Club Trophy knock-out competition, which is played to Advanced rules and is contested between teams of players with Handicaps of 0 or greater and a gross team handicap of at least 4.

This season's final pitched Watford against Pendle and Craven and what an exciting finale they provided. Watford had reached the final by beating Blewbury 5-2, Bristol 4-1 and Roehampton 4-2, whilst Pendle and Craven's path was Colchester w/o, Pinchbeck 4-3 and Wrest Park 5-2.

Brian Fisk reports that the final match score was tied at 3-3 and Watford's Brian Havill had pegged-out Roger Schofield leaving his opponent on 4-back and himself on peg and 4-back. Schofield hit from the lift, made 4-back and penult, then took-off to rover and made it to the south boundary. Then he chose to shoot at Havill's two balls which were joined up near corner 4 but missed. Havill used Schofield's ball to set up a rush to 4-back and then two-balled it round the remaining three hoops and pegged-out to win the game +1 and the match 4-3. The result could so easily have gone the other way and all credit to Havill who held his nerve for that final break.

~

Final results (Watford names first):

Brian Havill & Gary Bennett lost to Roger Schofield & Andrew Webb -22,
Nick Archer beat Howard Bowron +11.
Arthur Reed lost to David Gillett -18,
Arthur Reed lost to Howard Bowron -4,
Nick Archer beat David Gillett +12,
Gary Bennett beat Andrew Webb +14,
Brian Havill beat Roger Schofield +1.

Three up for Pendle ~ Longman Cup ~

Thirty-four clubs took part in this season's Longman Cup, which is a handicap play knock-out for teams comprising players with handicaps between 3.5 and 20, and a gross team handicap of at least 24.

Pendle and Craven played in a required early round for the right to fill the last place in a round of 32, but later got two walkovers en route to their berth in the final, with victories over Crake Valley 4-3, Kenilworth 7-0, Tyneside w/o, Bowden w/o and Hunstanton 4-3. Woking got no such luxury, and their path to the final took them past Guildford 7-0, Reigate Priory 4-3, Merton 6-1 and Enfield 6-1.

In the final, Pendle and Craven won the morning doubles and shared the singles to lead 2-1 at lunch, and then won three of the four afternoon singles to take the title for the third time in their history 5-2.

~

Final scores (Pendle names first):

Robin Groves & Catherine Parnell beat Steve Twilley & Michael Holland +3t
Libby Dixon bt Elizabeth McKenzie-Gray +18
Paul Dondale lost to Colin Groves -1
Dondale beat Elizabeth McKenzie-Gray +26
Catherine Parnell beat Steve Twilley +2t
Robin Groves lost to Colin Groves -1t
Libby Dixon beat Michael Holland +2t



Sheffield lift the Secretary's Shield for the first time ~ reports Ian Vincent

The Secretary's Shield is a season-long knock-out competition for clubs that won their respective federation's handicap leagues in the previous season, and the holders – in this case Hunstanton – are also given an entry.

~

All but four clubs got a bye in the first round, which eliminated Oxford University and Shrewsbury, and round two saw off St.Albans, Pinchbeck, Medway and Hunstanton.

The close results that had characterised all the matches thus far contrasted sharply with the more convincing 6-1 semi-final victories celebrated by Sheffield and Middlesbrough over Chester and Broadwas respectively.

Ian Vincent reports that the final was hosted by York on a bright and breezy day, the last of their season.

Play was equally brisk, with Sheffield taking the doubles and one of the morning singles for a 2-1 lead at lunch.

They went 3-1 ahead before Middlesbrough clawed one back, only to see Maggie Crossland take Sheffield over the line.

Many thanks to York for hosting, and congratulations to both teams for having got to the end of a two-year campaign.

Trevor Billard (handicap 2.5) & Mark Simmerson (10) beat Andrew Killick (0.5) & Dennis Scarr (1.5) +11

Maggie Crossland (16) lost to Nigel Roberts (10) -15

Adrian Simmerson (10) beat Julian Sibson (14) +15

Trevor Billard beat Andrew Killick +7

Mark Simmerson lost to Dennis Scarr -8

Maggie Crossland beat Julian Sibson +8

Adrian Simmerson beat Nigel Roberts +12



The Country Masters

Congratulations to England for once again winning the European Croquet Masters title as 'Country Master'.

Spain started off well in the lead, but we didn't see many Spanish players travelling to other events in the European Masters circuit; they were there in strength at the Baltic Open and the Portuguese Open but English players were seen more across the Continent generally, *writes John Swabey*.

Association Croquet

The scores of all the players highest in the Individual Croquet Master table for AC result from an appearance in just one event each. Sadly there were only four AC events nominated this year, outside the European Championship, and it was the winner of this event who won the Individual Master title, Jose Riva from Spain. Several other players could have overtaken him if they had entered for, and finished in the top eight at the last such event of the season, the South of England Championship.



Golf Croquet

Here there was a lot more competition, with nine Opens plus the European Championship, and the players coming second and third at the end of the season, had each gained points in three Masters events including the European Championship.

The Individual Croquet Master title for GC goes to Stephen Mulliner this year, largely due to the points gleaned by his coming second in the European Championship.



Overall

The fact that the two European Championships deliver an extra five points to every participant seems to have had a big influence in the outcomes for 2017, coupled with the fact that not many players took part in multiple events.

So, if you want an Individual Master title, get yourself nominated for the Europeans, and then also travel to a few Opens staged outside your home country.

For details of 2017, go to the website for the European Croquet Federation, <http://eurocroquet.eu> and click on the tab for European Masters.

~
Photographs (clockwise):

- The flags of European nations;
- 2017 European Masters Stephen Mulliner and Jose Riva (*pictured together at the GC European Championship at Budleigh in 2016*);
- Norway's Roar Michalsen having a great time at a qualifying tournament in Spain. (*images by John Swabey and Chris Roberts*)

Undefeated Nuttall is the All England AC Handicap Champion ~ reports Liz Larsson

16 handicap Phil Nuttall from Bury, won all five of his games for victory in this National final, ahead of Libby Dixon (18, Pendle and Craven), Neal Bacon (5, Nottingham) and Jeremy Pardoe (8, Broadwas) who were second to fourth, all with three wins.

This year's competition began with 168 players playing preliminary heats at 30 clubs, from which 32 players made it to the four area finals.

The winners and runners-up from these were Bacon and Adam Huby (7, Watford) at Edgbaston, Douglas Dykes (16, Surbiton) and Julie Sheahan (11, Merton) at Surbiton, Nuttall and Dixon at Fylde and Pardoe and Robert Upton (3½, Dyffryn) at Camerton and Peasedown.

This year's final was held at Wrest Park for the first time since 1998 and games were limited to three hours and played as full bisque, base 10.

Saturday closed with Nuttall, one ahead of Sheahan, Dixon and Pardoe.



On Sunday morning Phil stretched his lead by beating Dixon, and Pardoe beat Julie +2 on time.

The last round saw Nuttall complete a clean sweep by beating Dykes +5 on time, and Upton (the lowest handicap at 3½) finally broke his duck by beating Sheahan +3 in a tight finish.

The All England Handicap is the most democratic AC event in the calendar and deserves more support.

Without more data one cannot judge its state of health, but the numbers have halved since 1998 when there were 357 entries. Would two more area finals draw in more clubs, with an American block final for the six winners?

One for the AC Tournament Committee. . .

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Lawn Care ~ by Duncan Hector

Compaction – is it a myth?

I have visited a number of croquet clubs who have been told by contractors that their lawns suffer from compaction. The symptoms were dead or dying patches of grass.

In every case the advice was wrong.

But it was valuable advice – valuable to the contractor who charged for a range of 'cures' including scarification, deep tining, verti-cutting, verti-draining, hollow tining and even deep pneumatic fracturing.

All these processes achieved, was a transfer of money from croquet into contractor's bank accounts.

The true cause in all these cases was Dry Patch which is water repellent soil. This is easily curable but not by punching holes in it.

Bear in mind that Dry Patch is not a patch, it is blocks of hydrophobic (water repellent) soil that can be a few feet across and a couple of feet deep. The repellency is caused by a waxy substance created by micro-organisms in the soil and happens in all types of soil all over the world.

The fact is that you can't make that soil wettable by making holes in it – the whole block still repels water.

I used a three-ton vibrating road roller on my new lawn in Norfolk and it is now more compacted than any number of croquet players could achieve.

Did it affect the grass?

No, the rolled areas are just as healthy as the rest of the lawn.

From an STRI test rig, it is obvious that a grass sward can prosper in only three inches of soil irrespective of how compacted the lower levels are. This is why aeration using thin tines such as a Sarrel Spiker is quite sufficient to ensure a healthy root zone.

However, if you have Dry Patch it needs to be treated as a Dry Patch issue.

Duncan Hector (contact details; see my advert, right)

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Inter-Federation AC/GC challenge match Yorkshire Federation v Croquet North

The second Inter Federation Challenge between the Yorkshire Federation and Croquet North took place at York CC's Scarcroft ground on 30 September.

The challenge is between eight players from each federation drawn from both AC and GC codes to play AC alternate stroke doubles, best of three GC doubles and One Ball during the day.

The eight Yorkshire players came from five different clubs.

Because of double banking it was decided that games should finish on the sounding of the clock on the nearby Primary School tower. By the first stroke of one o'clock the Yorkshire Federation was ahead 4-0 in the AC doubles (for eight match points) and so had good reason to enjoy the splendid buffet lunch.

The GC doubles were played from two o'clock until four by which time the sombre ringing of the bell told its tale for Croquet North – five wins for them but seven for Yorkshire.

The One Ball games finished with the score Yorkshire 6, Croquet North 2. This meant an overall match score of 21-7 to Yorkshire, meaning they levelled the series following their rival's success last year.

However, the real beneficiaries are both Federations in building teams from across the AC / GC divide that have respect for the skills and subtleties of both games.

The third round of our series will be in Middlesbrough in 2018, and I encourage other Federations to try the Challenge – the true winner will be croquet!

Ted Flexman, Ripon Spa Hotel and York CC

'For whom the bell tolls'



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