

THE CROQUET GAZETTE

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Chairman's Column



For the majority of CA members the season has just begun in this country. I hope you have all dusted off your mallet, perhaps even wiped it down or polished it, and are raring to enjoy a happy and successful season.

Some clubs allow winter play, so some members have not stopped playing, unless the winter snowfall prevented play. Members of East Anglia Federation used the indoor mat at Soham and it was pleasing to see a report and picture on the website. A handful of enthusiastic members in the East Midlands Federation played on Astroturf at Burton-on-Trent in an annual event there and were delighted to have a sunny day for a change. I hope other federations will let us know what happened in their region.

Now is a good time to thank our webmaster Dave Kibble and CA Manager Liz Larsson for the extraordinary amount of time they have put in to changing the design of how the Fixtures Book is produced so that it can be easily updated. Creating a database entry system now allows on-line updating. Entries to a CA event need only to be input once and are available on-line to the tournament manager. I learn that Dave wrote some macros (a computer term) to ensure that downloading the information was simple to use. Please ensure you look at the events listed there and arranged by the CA, the Academy or member clubs for your pleasure. All tournaments need the support of players from near and far. I look forward to meeting some of you very soon.

Patricia Duke-Cox

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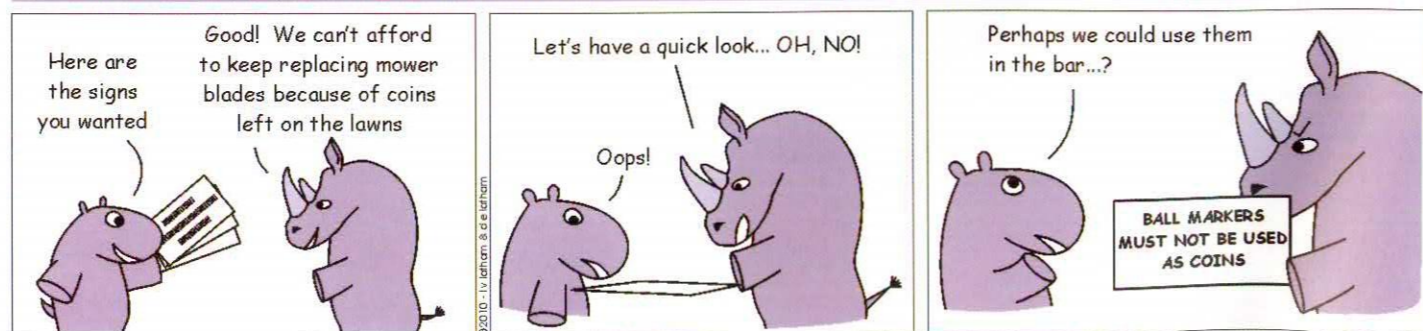
Email contributions, including tournament reports should be sent direct to the Editor, or copied to the Editor if they are being posted to the Nottingham List. Digital images are the easiest to work with, but coloured photographic prints are also acceptable. Please send digital .jpeg or tiff format files.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

Tournament Reports & Results
Emailed reports are welcomed. Attachments may be sent in Microsoft Word format, or text format. Handwritten reports are no longer acceptable due to the illegibility of most. Queries regarding the delivery of the Gazette to members should be directed to the Manager of the Croquet Association and not to the Editor.

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HOOPOTAMUS

by Victor



Letters

Royal correspondence

I wrote to the Queen, our Patron, asking if she could attend the MacRob this year, or failing that come to the GC Worlds at Hurlingham next year as well as sending loyal greetings. The response is set out below.

Patricia Duke-Cox

Thank you for your letter of 18th January in which you invite The Queen to open the first Test Match of the MacRobertson Shield on the 5th August in Manchester. Her Majesty was most grateful to receive this kind invitation but I am afraid she is unable to accept it as she will be in residence at Balmoral Castle and rarely undertakes public engagements at that time.

Your invitation to The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh to open the Golf Croquet World Championships on the 18th July 2011 at the Hurlingham Club will be considered when her Majesty takes decisions on her programme for the first half of 2011 this September. I would hope to come back to you with a definite response by the end of October.

Finally, your Patron received your message of loyal greetings with much pleasure and has asked me to send her warm good wishes to all members of the Croquet Association with this letter.

Yours sincerely
Mrs Helen Cross
The Queen's Diary Secretary

Not so black and white

About two years ago letters appeared in the Gazette arguing for a relaxation in the rules relating to players wearing whites. Inevitably, letters from those wishing to defend the all-white rule were soon published. Since then I am not aware of a rule change and from what I have seen at tournaments and from pictures in the Gazette it would seem that the "white or mostly white" supporters have won the

day. That is fine by me.

However, on page 19 of the February Gazette, issue 324, Alix Verge is seen sporting a bright red jacket (not a waterproof) in the Women's World Golf Croquet Championships. She is quite likely wearing a white outfit underneath but she is seen to be wearing predominantly bright red. If this is permitted why are the rest of us bothering with whites?

Nick Evans

Handicap comments

I would like to add a number of points to the current handicap discussion.

I am a member at two clubs. Aldermaston courts are usually on the slow side of moderate (around 9 seconds) and Surbiton ones usually significantly faster (10 to 13 seconds). On the latter I would usually need a significantly greater number of bisques to feel I had an even game against a zero handicap player than on the former. As a 7 handicap, I meet a roughly equal number of lower and higher handicaps so on average play have a similar percentage of wins at both locations.

Analyses carried out by some of your correspondents need to take this into account. These usually seem to have been done at clubs where conditions are generally favourable. The quality of the summer could also be expected to contribute to variability of results. Another factor is what happens at the bottom end of the handicap scale.

There are two distinct types of high-bisquer. One is the newcomer who shows rapid improvement and soon has a significant cut, either automatic or manual. The other is the player who, either through physical weakness, lack of muscle control, or unproductive tactics remains on or below 20. Usually these seem to mix and the latter can form a sort of anchor to the bottom of the range in the same way as the A-class do at the top. Points can find their way into the system if these handicaps are stabilised.

There is a problem with the concept of doubles handicaps in that two 20s who are tactically weak would remain so when playing together, but when playing with a sympathetic minus player and obeying instructions can frequently make 8 hoops remarkably quickly (followed by the QP), to the distress of their B-class opponents.

One situation that can throw the system out is when a new club with a good coaching regime comes along and many in the club are improving rapidly. This can

result in no player standing out as a rapid improver on the criteria given in the handicapping guidelines. Some provision could be made for a general CA handicapper review when this occurs, as it can result in some hostility to the club when it is not really a problem of its making.

Note too that if the formula for advanced play points is applied in reverse, it implies that to win an average of two out of three games, you would be between three and four steps too low (3 steps is 13-7, 4 is 14-6), so minor inaccuracies are not a great problem.

Martin Burger

CA Diplomas

I was very interested to see in the December edition of the Gazette the various CA Diplomas that had been awarded, particularly as a number of clubs we had played last season were featured. I think we have one member at our club whose contribution at least equals some of those listed. Could you therefore give me some idea of the criteria and procedure for his name to go forward for next years awards.

Alan Foott Secretary Enfield Croquet Club

The information for nominations for the Diplomas, as well as many other awards and useful information generally, can be found in 'The Club Handbook', which is sent out annually to Club Secretaries by the CA. The 2010 issue is due out sometime this month, which gives clubs plenty of time to nominate for the Diplomas.

Ed.

Memories are made of this

The two photographs headed 'Spot the Difference' on page 15 of Issue 324 brought back to me two memorable incidents in my croquet-playing career.

After I had asserted in 1957 that "I would not be seen dead playing that game" I was persuaded to approach the local club-Dulwich Croquet Club- to learn to play croquet. There I was told that they 'only played golf croquet' but that I could probably learn from a man who came there to practice once a week. The man turned out to be Vincent Camroux, quite a well known player at the time, who was most generous in passing on his knowledge.

The second photograph reminds me that after I had become addicted to croquet I gained permission to practice during the winter on the hard snow at Felixstowe Croquet Club close to where I was teaching at Woodbridge School. Two pupils in my House were intrigued to hear that I was doing such an unheard-of thing and came out to watch me. Inevitably they hit some balls around, took up the game and one of them, David Miller, later co-authored the book 'Croquet and How to Play it'

The two incidents underline what I was told many years ago that croquet is not a game but a 'Way of Life'. This was further borne out for me by the fact that it was croquet that brought me out to New Zealand where I have since lived happily with my family.

Now I find that I have come full circle and play mostly golf croquet - with great enjoyment.

David Curtis

Full bisque handicap play

I cannot trace an advertisement in the calendar for a doubles event played under the Full Bisque Handicap Play, as set out in Appendix 3 of the Laws, so I wonder how many B class players write at the injustice of the modified law 3(b), which denies a player taking a bisque when his handicap is lower than the base.

The unfairness of the law can apply when the base handicap is directed to be greater than scratch. Here at Bristol, the organiser of our Club tournament has set the base at 6, with the object of speeding up the game, and also to encourage shy beginners to test out tournament play. All very laudable, on the face of it, until a former MacRobertson player entered the event partnering a long bisquer. My opponents' handicaps are -1 and 18, whereas I am 4 1/2 and my partner is also 18. The maths arrive at my opponents receiving 2 1/2 bisques, and my side 6. Playing an 18 point game, the bisques are reduced appropriately, but we receive extra bisques solely on account of my International opponent being so superior in play to myself. Our partners playing off 18 are deemed to be equal.

But modified law 3(b) only permits me to play the half bisque!! How can that be fair? Clearly it is not, and the proof is in the records. In 2008, the same pair won, and last year, they were only beaten by rapid improvers in the final! Clearly an International playing against a markedly

weaker player will always dominate the game, unless the weaker is permitted to play a bisque that has been awarded to his side. What is the justification of this law? There is no such restriction in Handicap Doubles play.

This unfairness only applies when both senior opposing players have handicaps of less than the base. The greater the difference, the more galling the injustice. Would sympathisers please lobby the Chairman of the Laws Committee for a change.

Hamish Hall

Carrots and sticks

I would like to revert to the correspondence commenced with Mark Miller's letter commenting on his inability to finish B class games in time, and John Solomon's observations that all games, other than championship events should be played to 14 points. (December 2008 and February 2009 issues) It is a disappointment to me that B Class players allowed the subject to wither on the vine, as I cannot trace any advertised 14-point B event in this year's calendar. So, may I resurrect the debate, in the belief that Mark's problem is largely attributable to the Tournament Committee changing the goal posts!

In John's book, Croquet, he writes 'Advanced play is that form of croquet played by players of championship or near championship class'. In his concluding chapter he comments on the strain and concentration of playing in the President's Cup, stating that '...in this tournament the hoops are only 1/16 inch larger than the balls, it can be regarded as the most supreme test of skill open to the croquet player.'

I recognise that John's book was first published in 1966, when, I deduce, the hoops for championship play were set with a clearance of 1/8 inch (otherwise there is no point in his concluding comment). And therein is the basis of my argument. In the course of time, the Tournament Committee have raised the bar, as they now decree that the clearance for advanced play is 1/16 inch. Simply because the standard of A class players has increased, is no reason to question the skill required to complete a triple. Comparatively few players within the rankings above 100 have achieved a triple. In an attempt to make hoops more challenging for the A class player, the regulations have been framed to the

detriment of the B class player.

I fall within John's category of the not so young player unwilling to play 3 games in a day, but his suggestion of a 14 point game does not entirely meet the aspirations of the player wishing to attempt a triple. An 18 point game, with the partner ball being advanced to 4 back once hoop 1 has been made, allows the player more time to get the balls into position for the peels, something extremely difficult in the 14 point game. And if the clearance remained as it was in 1966, we might find more enjoyable B class games finishing in time with some tps or tpos to boot.

The range of handicaps for B play is 2 to 7 or thereabouts. Why not frame regulations that enable that class of player to normally finish games in time? Would the Tournament committee please address the matter, recognising that the skill required to complete a triple in 1966 is no less in 2010. Let us play with hoops set for standard play, as apparently was the case 40 years ago. I would then expect a marked increase in games being finished in time. Would B class players please lobby Samir Patel. (responsible for Tournament Regs.)

Hamish Hall

Hamish makes some interesting points.

It's worth commenting first on the current requirements for hoop clearances. Handicap events have a standard clearance of 1/8", with 1/16" for championship events. Whilst I have no direct knowledge of play in John Solomon's era, I understand that outside a few major championships (e.g. the Open Championships or President's Cup), most level play took place during what we'd now call a mixed event - something like the Cheltenham or Hurlingham Week tournaments. These should still be using hoops with 1/8" clearance - exactly as was the case 40+ years ago.

Where I do have sympathy with Hamish is arriving at a tournament where the hoops have been set "as small as possible" out of some macho crusade. The AC Tournament Committee (ACTC) is attempting to bring greater consistency to this, and some changes in the 2010 regulations are intended as a first step.

I've looked at some past tournaments for which I have data. Only including players in Hamish's 2-7 range, these show 20% of games complete on time - not supportive of this argument. It would be interesting to hear from others who have

data on this matter.

In terms of 14 or 18 point variations, the ACTC endorses these formats, and both are permitted by the Regulations. If you want to encourage triples you really need a 17 point game, although I could imagine much disappointment following on 4th turn loss. I'm not sure that changing hoop clearances would significantly affect the number of triples - we don't see a glut of triples from B class players in mixed events with 1/8" hoops.

However, debate about the merits of different formats is peripheral. The vast majority of events are organised by clubs, not the CA. Consequently, arranging such events is something which the ACTC cannot directly address. I am aware that a number of clubs attempted to host 14 point tournaments a number of years ago, but demand turned out to be too low and these have fallen from the calendar.

I and other members of the ACTC, are always happy to receive comment and feedback on the Tournament Regulations and will, as we have in the past few years, continue to make a number of improvements based on that feedback. However, I suggest that tinkering with the regulations is unlikely to address Hamish's concern and that he would have more success lobbying his local clubs.

Regards,
Samir

Problem solved.....

You will be familiar with the problem of finding a referee during a tournament. You raise your mallet in the approved fashion only to be ignored because the profile of the mallet is lost in the background of the fencing or hedgerow which surrounds the club. It is just impossible to see the dark mallet from the clubhouse or from some distant lawn. I can now inform you that good old Professor Wunbach has come up with a rather clever way of solving the problem. He has combined several pieces of technology to solve the problem. By the way, I'm pleased to announce that the good professor has recently been appointed to the Chair of Blobotology at Oxford.

In order to understand the first part of the solution I must take you back to your childhood when you were the proud possessor of your first doll. This was not just any old doll however. No, you had the

good fortune to be given a luxury model complete with a "growl box" inserted into the doll's stomach. On tilting the baby backwards or forwards this cunning little mechanism emitted a sound which was supposed to sound like "ma, ma". With time, of course, the sound box became damaged and either the sound was reduced to one "ma" or gave out a sound which suggested that the doll should quickly be taken to the nearest A & E.

Wunbach has now come up with an adapted version of the Growl Box which has been inserted into a prototype mallet. It is not yet quite perfect but on lifting the mallet skywards the call of "ruffreee" can be heard coming from a small speaker in the middle of the mallet.

Now fast forward to more recent times when 'ealth and safety' had rightly concluded that the reversing of a large vehicle was potentially very dangerous and insisted that a loud "beep, beep, beep" should be activated as soon as the driver selected reverse gear.

This sound system too has been inserted into the mallet and so, on raising the mallet one can first hear "ruffree, ruffree, ruffree" followed by a high pitched "beep,beep,beep" until the call is answered and the mallet lowered below the horizontal.

The final piece in the jig-saw is indicative of the professor's brilliance. He has isolated the micro organisms which contribute to the green phosphorescence effect which can be seen in the wake of a boat sailing through the tropics. He has incorporated this via a specially designed valve in the mallet. So, when the mallet is lifted above the horizontal the process is complete.

"Ruffree, ruffree, ruffree" growls the mallet, "beep, beep, beep" issues forth through the speaker. The valve opens via the natural movement of the mallet which releases microbes into the mallet head turning it a bright green (when the mallet is lowered the liquid returns to the small holding sump and the head reverts to its normal colour).

Professor Wunbach stated that he had conducted several "dry" tests at recent tournaments, prior to the item going into production. He did so by imitating the technical solutions which he knew would work. "I raised the mallet above my head whilst at the same time shouting - she's going, she's going, she's gone! I then shouted beep beep beep". This certainly had the desired effect and I had the attention of

all 28 competitors in the tournament! It was a little disconcerting however when one medically qualified player mentioned something about a "section".

I tell you that Wunbach, who incidentally turns out to be dual German/Welsh national, is a genius! My sister, April recently tried the first model to come off the production line.

Klim Seabright

Russian Croquet

Perhaps a different news story for the Gazette. I'd like to point you toward a Russian maverick, Yuri Ilyuhin, who is an excellent website designer and a complete croquet enthusiast. I am amazed at the amount of information he has ferreted away on his website.

We have been corresponding for over five years now (with difficulty! Neither speaks the other's language but online translation works!) Apart from the web site he is trying to translate the rules into Russian as well as get croquet sets made and sold.

I can heartily recommend a look at the website, which can be found at <http://www.croquet-club.com/>

Ian Plummer

The sad demise of Cheltenham's Cedar Tree



The sad start of the end for Cheltenham's beautiful landmark Cedar. Full details on page 19. Photo by Gordon Weir.

News & Information

GB MacRobertson Team announced

The Great Britain Team for the 2010 MacRobertson Shield is:

Keith Aiton (C)
Rutger Beijderwellen
Chris Clarke
Robert Fulford
David Maugham
Stephen Mulliner

One or more reserves will be decided upon after the Open Championships.

All items and news related to the MacRobertson Shield can be found at the following dedicated website:
<http://macrobertsonshield2010.org>

CA Team to play the Swiss CA

The CA Team to play at Cheltenham on August 14th and 15th will be:
Dave Mundy (-1)
Klim Seabright (2.5)
Neil Kellett (5)
Barry Keen (8)

Skipper Klim Seabright is pleased to also announce that Dave Foulser will be the non-travelling reserve for Dave Mundy and John Hyde will act as cover for the other three members of the team. We look forward once again to welcoming the Swiss Team to the UK.

CA v The Scottish CA

The annual match is due to take place at Middlesbrough over the weekend of 4th-5th September. The club has good facilities and excellent lawns, so anyone wishing to be considered for selection in this match is encouraged to take a look at page 24 of the fixtures book to find the details.

Nominations for Election or Notices of Motions for the 2010 AGM

Any nominations for the posts of Hon. Treasurer, Hon. Secretary or membership of the Council, or motions to be put to the AGM, should be sent to the Hon. Secretary, Dr. I. G. Vincent, 29, Thoresby Road, Bramcote, Nottingham NG9 3EN, or

e-mailed to ian.vincent@cantab.net, by 1st June. Nominations should give the name of the candidate together with those of the proposer and seconder, and the consent of the candidate should have been obtained.

New edition of 'A Guide to Golf Croquet'

As a result of many requests, a new edition of A Guide to Golf Croquet is now available in the CA Shop. Richard Keighley and John Cundell have up-dated all the sections relating to the Laws and a number of other modifications and clarifications have been included. We hope that new players of Golf Croquet will find it valuable as other available books are for more advanced players. Much of the information is also be useful for Improvers who want to develop a more skilful game.

Although the new Guide comes in a new colour and some of the contents have changed, the price remains the same. It is a real bargain for all who want to learn to play an enjoyable and tactical game.

Updated Tournament Regulations 2010

The annual update of Tournament Regulations has taken place in advance of the 2010 season. As well as a number of clarifications and simplifications, a few regulations have been modified in the light on incidents during the 2009 playing season. The full regulations can be found in the Tournament section of the CA Website.

The Tournament Regulations are arranged in a number of sections:

- I. Introduction
- C. Clubs and other Tournament Organisers
- F. Formats for Events
- H. Handicaps
- M. the Manager
- O. Officials
- P. Players
- R. Referees
- T. Time Limits

It is recommended that club organisers, tournament managers, referees and players familiarise themselves with the relevant sections which are intended to provide a consistent approach to all UK fixture book events.

The principal changes made since the 2009 edition are:

C2b - Permitted forms of play - Regulation simplified whilst ensuring that all approved variations of association and golf croquet are permitted.

M2e - Withdrawals - New regulation to clarify the actions open to a manager in the event of a withdrawal or disqualification.

M2f - Late Entries - New regulation to clarify the actions open to a manager in the event of a late entry.

Appendix 3 and Appendix 4 - Modifications to clarify definitions of event titles such as "Open" and "Championship" in advance of more rigorous application from 2011.

P1 - Eligibility to compete in calendar fixtures - Men's and Women's Championships removed (previously included in error).

II - Introduction - References to separate CA and WCF laws for Golf Croquet removed

F1 - Knockout Events - Clarification made that in the event

of an incorrect (or withdrawn) entry in the draw, the manager may, if time permits, re-do the draw. If time does not permit, the incorrect (or withdrawn) entry is struck out.

R8 Golf Croquet Referees - Content removed and replaced with a reference to Golf Croquet Law 15 in the preamble to regulation R.

T2 Expiry of Time Limit - Modified to deal with the circumstance of a player faulting or declaring his last stroke before (or while) time is called.

Russian Photographic Invitation

Yuri Ilyuhin invites you to take part in competition and exhibition of photos on the theme of Croquet. The Photo Competition is devoted to the 135th Anniversary of Russian Croquet (1875-2010). With your support we would like to make our competition international in order to make croquet in Russia more popular.

Please send the photos via e-mail to CroquetRussian@gmail.com, and give your name (or nickname), country, region and the photo description. Pictures should be not less than 800x600 pixels but be less than 2 Mb.

Currently croquet is not well known in Russia but with your support we would like to make our competition international to raise the profile of Russian croquet. The competition closes on November 30, 2010. Results will be announced here after December 7th 2010

Surbiton complete their irrigation system

Surbiton have just completed the installation of our long-planned irrigation system. It's taken about a month to install and has entailed the burying of about half a mile of pipes, and the submersion of a vast tank beneath the car park.

It's now in working order, in good time to prepare the lawns for the MacRobertson in August.

Fundraising for a new Compton Clubhouse - B&B in Eastbourne

Although there have been repairs, replacements and additions over the years, rumour has it that some parts of the present wooden structure date back to the "mallet shed" of Edwardian times! A quick inspection today reveals serious shortcomings in the state of the building and the club has decided that it is time to bite the bullet and construct a new clubhouse to a design that will meet modern requirements and stand the test of time.

The membership is being formally consulted as a first step in the preparation of a design brief. Three architects have been short-listed to take part in a mini-design competition to meet Compton's aspirations for a world-class clubhouse giving function, form and delight. It is expected that the winning design will be selected during the summer with a view to making a Planning Application later in the year. Then, subject to the grant of an extended lease, statutory consents and raising the necessary funds, it is hoped that construction can start in October 2011 for

the new facility to be ready for the 2012 season.

Over the course of the summer the club intends to organise various fundraising events and a number of members have offered to host visiting tournament players for bed and breakfast at £30 per night and donate their earnings to the fund (see the Compton website at <http://www.croquet.org.uk/clubs/compton/> for details and contacts, or contact Ann Fenwick, the Compton secretary).

First Of 100 Exhibitions To Celebrate The Nation's Sporting Life Kicks Off In Henley

Johnny Wilkinson's World Cup winning ball, the murderous thoughts of Atlantic rowers, the ball from the first ever Olympic football final, WW1 amputee croquet hero, 1930s football etiquette highlights in first exhibition.

The 16th March 2010 was the starting pistol to the build up to the UK's greatest ever sporting exhibition. Our Sporting Life, a series of 100 exhibitions across the UK exploring our addiction to sport and our sporting heritage, opened its first exhibition at the River & Rowing Museum, Henley on Thames today.

Our Sporting Life will reveal hidden sporting histories, forgotten heroes, objects and stories in communities across the UK. Local people and sports organisations are being asked to put forward objects and memorabilia that can help tell the story of their sporting life and work with museums to create their Our Sporting Life exhibition. Highlights from each exhibition will become part of the largest ever exhibition of British sporting life and heritage and will be held in London for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Objects and stories from the nations and regions will be joined by icons and treasures from our national sports, such as the Ashes Urn, Calcutta Cup, and the football from the 1966 World Cup Final to name a few will provide a unique insight into how sport has shaped the country, its communities and people. People can also get involved and submit ideas on line via the Our Sporting Life website: www.oursportinglife.co.uk

Our Sporting Life Henley was opened by Roy Clare, Chief Executive, Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) and Cllr Malcolm Leonard, Chairman, South Oxfordshire District Council with double Paralympic Gold Medal Winner, Graham Edmunds and former World and British Mountain Bike Champion Rob Warner, both from the area. International trial bikers Jack Meek and Nick Goddard, from Henley, performed tricks and stunts in the museum's galleries.

Our Sporting Life Henley has been created with the support of the British Olympic Association and British Paralympics Association, both of which have donated objects to the exhibition from their own prestigious collections. Highlights from Our Sporting Life Henley include:

Adventures of Henley Town Football team. Highlights include photographs from 1912, when the team travelled to Rouen to play the Club Rouenaise at the home side's expense - a major undertaking at the time. Over 6,000 spectators watched the game - still the highest crowd Henley Town has ever recorded. Henley lost 5-3. Back in Henley upset was caused by a rumour they had lost 20-0 and all been put in prison. The Club's minute book from 1931 outlines the etiquette of hosting visiting teams - hot baths

for the competition and cold baths for the Henley Town team.

Atlantic rowers describe 60 days at sea with one other person, including murderous thoughts about their rowing partners, daring each other to swim as far away as possible from the boat during breaks and the power of a perfect partnership.

The foundations of the Paralympic movement at Stoke Mandeville, with photographs showing how sports such as wheelchair basketball developed.



Montague Spencer Ell in play

Photographs of local hero Montague Spencer Ell, a champion croquet player who lost his arms in the First World War but continued to win national championships. He is credited with significantly advancing sport for disabled people and developing sports at Stoke Mandeville and was awarded a gold badge and certificate of Life Membership from the British Legion

Memories of swimming in the Thames, swimmers were chased from the river by zealous boatmen and finally forced out due to pollution. With the river cleaner, the swimmers returned. One example is the 'Henley Swim' daring to face the wrath of officials and swim the Henley Royal Regatta course during the competition. It now attracts almost 200 people to complete the course before the first rowing race begins.

Modern day superstars including Sarah Duff, part of the first female team to row across the Indian ocean in 2009; Olympic skier Graham Bell, gold medal winning Paralympian Graham Edmunds, and champions from new sports such as Rob Warner's Mountain Biking triumphs.

Objects from national sports and British Olympic Association and British Paralympics Association include:

Objects from the London 1908 Olympic Games, include a stopwatch and starting pistol from the track and field competitions and the football used in the Olympic final - Great Britain beat Denmark 2-0 to win Gold. 1908 was the first time Football was included in the Olympic Games. All the matches were played at White City Stadium, Shepherds Bush. The surprise of the tournament was Denmark beating France with a record score of 17 - 1 in the semi-final. After the defeat, the French withdrew from the tournament declining to compete for the Bronze Medal.

The inclusion of sports memorabilia such as Sandy Irvine's kettle found in his tent on Everest at 23,500ft in 1924 after he and George Mallory disappeared, illustrate how sport is not just a competition against others, but often the elements and ourselves.

The ball dropped kicked by Johnny Wilkinson to win the 2003 Rugby Union World Cup final, on loan from the Rugby Museum, Twickenham and The Grand Challenge Cup from the Henley Royal Regatta.

Our Sporting Life is funded by Museums, Libraries, Archives Council (MLA) through The People's Record and Renaissance and created by the Sports Heritage Network, which comprises all the UK's major sports museums and archives. The People's Record is a once in a lifetime opportunity for museums, libraries and archives to connect with eye witness stories for London 2012.

Roy Clare, Chief Executive, MLA says: "Our Sporting Life is an exciting example of the bond between sport, culture and people, an innovative and stimulating evocation of the Olympian ideal. Linking creative organisations across the country, Our Sporting Life presents a wide range of opportunities for engaging the public and inviting the participation of individuals and communities. The various activities will make a substantial contribution to the festivities that will infuse the Cultural Festival being planned in conjunction with the London Organising Committee for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The MLA sees Our Sporting Life as an enlightened initiative that we are very pleased to support through our Renaissance programme that invests in England's regional museums."

Graham Edmunds, double Paralympic Gold Medal Winner, said: "Sporting objects and memorabilia have the power to educate, inform and inspire. People are often astonished that a bit of kit or sporting device is far different than they assumed, and this brings them closer to sport, sparking new questions and inquiry. Our Sporting Life will help people get closer to sport and share the memories and passion sport creates - from past glories to the new hopefuls. It's fantastic to see sports taster days being linked to Our Sporting Life, having seen the exhibition I hope as many people as possible will be encouraged to give a new sport a go.

Sport Taster-days

South Oxfordshire District Council has supported the Our Sporting Life Henley exhibition and arranged 'taster days' at the River & Rowing Museum to enable people to try a new sport. Sports on offer include Hockey, Rugby, Tennis, Cricket, Croquet and Golf. Details at www.rrrm.co.uk.

Future "Our Sporting Life" Exhibitions

Our Sporting Life exhibitions are currently being developed in the South West, North East and West Midlands. Details of these exhibitions will be announced soon. People can get involved in Our Sporting Life is at www.oursportinglife.co.uk

Our Sporting Life Henley, 16 March – 11 July 2010.

The River & Rowing Museum (www.rrm.co.uk), Mill Meadows, Henley on Thames, Oxfordshire, RG9 1BF
Tel: 01491 415600.

Tickets give FREE admission to the Museum a whole year. Admission is just £7.50 for adults, £5.50 for children aged four and over, FREE for children aged three and under and £5.50 for senior citizens and concessions. Free parking for visitors.

Opening times: The Museum, terrace café and shop are open every day from 10am - 5.30pm in summer.



The Lake District, aptly named unfortunately.

rain in November and the Sports ground at Langwathby was flooded.

Fortunately, we were able to 'rescue' our lawnmower just before the water got into the Pavilion and our other croquet equipment was stored well above water level. So we sighed with relief and can report that the excellent Toro Greensmaster machine we purchased early in the season is ready for work. Regular mowing has made a huge difference to our playing surface. It is hard to imagine how we could improve our playing standard without the means to keep the grass short. We play on the cricket club outfield and due to an increase in membership during the season were able to mow and prepare another lawn which was needed to accommodate more players.

The club at Penrith is very grateful to all our friends who have supported our development with grants and to Southport Croquet Club who loaned us the hoops and balls we needed to bring our new lawn into service at short notice. We are still a small club with more enthusiasm than talent, but the purchase of our own mower has eliminated a major obstacle to our future progress.

How we built our third lawn at Ashby Croquet Club by Mick Haystack (Chairman)

Ashby Croquet Club used to play on council land at Hood Park in Ashby. We had in effect three half-size lawns, two of which could be combined to make an almost full-size lawn. Whilst these lawns were perfectly adequate for club play, they were not really suitable for serious competitions, certainly nothing approaching the standard of lawns which are required for CA events.

In the late 1990s the council approached us and informed us that they wanted to build a swimming pool on the site of our lawns. The good news was that they were prepared to offer us compensation to go. We found a new home at Moira Miners Welfare, some three or four miles away. Our then chairman, Barrie March worked very hard to obtain grants and we constructed two good quality full-size lawns, which were ready for the 2002 season. In the meantime we played on temporary lawns, which were in effect part of an old football field.

Over the next few years our members provided countless hours of voluntary labour to improve our two new lawns. Anyone who has visited our club in the previous three of four years will attest to the fact that these lawns are now as good as any in the country. However, we run a lot of taster sessions for local interest groups and we also run an East Midland Federation event.

The club enters teams in the East Midland Federation association and golf croquet leagues and we also enter the Longman Cup, the Secretary's shield (if we qualify) and the Inter Club golf croquet knock out. We have also on occasion used our lawns for the CA All-England golf croquet regional final.

So, you can imagine the logistical problems we had in making our lawns available for all these events as well as accommodating our club members for our regular club sessions. The obvious answer was a third lawn. The land was not a problem: there was an area just the right size available to us.

Our first step was to make the club a Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC). If your club has not yet gone down this road I would urge you to do so. Being a CASC gives several tax advantages, the primary one being a 28% Gift Aid rebate from the Inland Revenue on donations by club members. Before we could apply for CASC status we needed to update our constitution. I won't go into this but advice as to an acceptable constitution is available online.

We then opened a 'development fund' where we ring-fenced our development money away from our day-to-day funds. We then asked our members for donations and with the tax rebate this raised well over £2000. By this time we had received quotations for the necessary work and realised that we would need around £14,000 to do all the work. The next stage was to apply for grants. With the London Olympics approaching this was not an ideal time to seek funding but we sent in applications to any organisation, which we thought could help. We were turned down on several occasions but we were fortunate enough to receive grants from Ashby Woulds Town Council, Leicestershire Grassroots, Awards for All, East Midlands Croquet Federation, the National Forest and the Croquet Association who provided our largest grant of all. We also held several fund raising activities including a quiz and a promises auction. The latter was held at the height of the recession but still raised well over £1000. By April 2009 we had reached our target so we placed the order with the contractor.

At the time of writing (November 2009) the land has been professionally levelled and drained, the seed-bed prepared, seeded and fertilised and fencing has been erected to encompass all three lawns together. All that remains to be done is the hedging which should take place some time this month. We hope to be playing on our new lawn by early summer next year and a grand opening ceremony is planned.

Applying for grants and raising funds is not an easy process. I was indebted to Barrie March for the hours of work he spent filling in forms for me to sign and submit and particularly for attending a council meeting at Ashby Woulds, where he presented our case very successfully. So, if your club wants to improve or expand its facilities, I hope this article is of help to you.

THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION

ACCOUNTANT'S REPORT

In accordance with Council's instructions I have examined the attached accounts for the Croquet Association for the year ended 31st December 2009, together with the accounting records maintained for that year. I obtained such further information as I considered necessary to assist me in my review.

Although I have not conducted an audit of the accounting records, in my opinion the attached accounts summarise and are in agreement with the accounting records and information obtained relating to that year.

Reed House
The Street
Plaxtol, Sevenoaks
Kent TN15 0QL

Marian Hempsted
Accountant

28th March 2010

COMMENTS ON THE 2009 ACCOUNTS

Despite fears at the beginning of the year that the difficult economic conditions would hit the CA hard, a £13,000 surplus of income over expenditure after taxation was achieved in 2009. This will go some way towards paying for the cost of building the CA Office extension which was completed early in the year at a total cost of £51,000, well within budget.

A key role in this strong performance was played by members who continued to support the CA despite an increase in subscription rates: we are very grateful indeed for their loyalty. Subscriptions produced an extra £8,800, with income from member clubs in particular growing strongly. Net income from CA tournaments also increased significantly.

Several other headings in the Income & Expenditure Account show quite dramatic changes from 2008 to 2009. In general they are due to a redistribution of costs consequent upon moving the CA Shop to Cheltenham, rather than substantive changes. Thus, most of the £18,700 increase in surplus from commercial activities is accounted by the Commercial Agent's commission being included in 2008, whereas the staff (and other) costs of running the Shop in 2009 appear as part of central administration expenditure. If commission is stripped out of the 2008 figure, the surplus from commercial activities grew by just £1,000 in 2009.

Continued on page 15



Sydenham Equipment Storage Shed by David Tuner

A small grant to Sydenham CC enabled them to solve their storage problems. The new shed was first installed in May 2009 although a size smaller than requested, an error of Premier Sheds, which was put right in the following month. They are now proud owners of a sound and waterproof 9'x6' Pent Roof Shed thanks to the grant awarded by the Croquet Association.

The shed is used to store spare mallets, hoops and chairs in addition to some of the lawn maintenance equipment.

As can be seen from the picture the magnificent new shed seemed to remind secretary, Robert Laver and his wife Anne of former courting days, snapped coming out of the new shed by our undercover Croquet Gazette photographer!

The rest of the club were busily employing the stored equipment in a match against Temple CC at the time!

Penrith Mower by Howard Bowron

The Development Committee's grant to Penrith CC nearly got washed away. Like much of Cumbria we had a lot of

THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2009

	2009		2008	
	£	£	£	£
Income from:				
Subscriptions:				
Individuals		52,822		48,132
Clubs		37,667		33,528
Levies		15,195		14,764
Surplus (deficit) of income from -				
Commercial activities		42,696		23,967
Sponsorship		-		-
Tournaments		4,476		1,857
Investments		3,900		9,566
Donations and royalties		435		550
Total Income		157,191		132,364
Expenditure on:				
Publications	19,521		19,263	
Marketing & Development	4,116		5,007	
International activities	1,688		2,436	
Direct expenditure on Clubs & Federations				
Grants to Clubs & Federations	19,906		19,497	
Legal liability insurance scheme	6,194		5,968	
Central administration costs:				
Staff costs	60,437		51,884	
Office building & equipment depreciation	7,175		4,317	
Office overheads	4,543		2,805	
Office services	5,680		5,777	
Meetings expenses	10,662		9,293	
Professional fees and expenses	1,515		815	
Sundry expenses	874		336	
Direct debit and related charges	778		744	
Total Expenditure		143,089		128,142
Surplus for the year before taxation		14,102		4,222
Provision for Corporation Tax				
year ended 31st December 2009	1,505		3,389	
adjustment for prior year	(435)		57	
		1,070		3,446
Surplus for the year after taxation		13,032		776
Net transfer from/(to) special funds		22,798		(5,829)
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year transferred to General Fund		35,830		(5,053)

THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION
BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2009

	Note	2009		2008	
		£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets	1				
Office Building - net book value	2,3		84,265		62,002
Office & Croquet equipment - net book value	3		2,690		3,534
Trophies at valuation			10,000		10,000
Investments at cost	4		78,597		78,580
			175,552		154,116
Current Assets					
Loans to Clubs			1,510		4,213
Stock held for resale	1		42,877		23,663
Debtors & prepayments			4,763		2,718
VAT recoverable			-		3,348
Cash at bank and in hand			94,894		133,482
			144,044		167,424
Current Liabilities					
Receipts in advance			3,971		6,114
Creditors & accrued expenses			6,697		17,678
VAT liability			35		-
Provision for taxation			1,405		3,292
			12,108		27,084
Net current assets			131,936		140,340
Net Assets			307,488		294,456
<i>Financed by:</i>					
General Fund					
Balance at 1 January 2009			102,254		107,307
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year from Income & Expenditure Account retained in General Fund			35,830		(5,053)
			138,084		102,254
Special Funds	5		169,404		192,202
			307,488		294,456
P Duke-Cox	Chairman		Dr R W Bray	Treasurer	

THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS - 31 DECEMBER 2009

1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Accounting convention

The accounts are prepared under the historical cost convention.

Fixed Assets

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life:

Office Building	5%
Croquet & Office Equipment & Fittings	33%

Trophies are included in the Balance Sheet at valuation.

Stock is valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

2 OFFICE LEASE

The Croquet Association is the leaseholder for the CA Office and the land on which it stands for a term of a million years.

3 BUILDING and CROQUET & OFFICE EQUIPMENT

	Building (from 2002)	Equipment (from 2005)
	£	£
Cost at 1 January 2009	78,452	11,996
Additions in year	27,593	1,688
Cost at 31 December 2009	106,045	13,684
Accumulated depreciation	(21,780)	(10,994)
Net book value at 31 December 2009	84,265	2,690
Net book value at 31 December 2008	62,002	3,534

4 LISTED INVESTMENTS AT COST

	2009	2008
	£	£
15,409 4.125% Index Linked Treasury Stock 2030	18,810	18,810
4,228 2.5% Index Linked Treasury Stock 2024	10,053	10,053
3,898 2.5% Index Linked Treasury Stock 2016	10,059	10,059
19,019 4.75% Treasury Stock 2020 (9,733 in 2008)	19,850	9,918
9,344 4.75% Treasury Stock 2015	9,898	9,898
10,157 4.25% Treasury Gilt 2011	9,927	9,927
0 4.00% Treasury Stock 2009 (9,920 in 2008)	9,915	9,915
Investments at cost	78,597	78,580
Market value of investments at 31 December 2009	102,021	101,541

5 SPECIAL FUNDS

Fund Name	Balance	Transfers from/(to) General Fund in year:			Balance
		Investment	Donations	General Allocation (net)	
	1 January 2009	Income			31 December 2009
	£	£	£	£	£
Benefactors Fund	38,576	978	122	(25,500)	14,176
Development Fund	102,000				102,000
Duffield Bequest	20,449	811			21,260
International Fund	31,177	791			31,968
Total Special Funds	192,202	2,580	122	(25,500)	169,404

The View from the Bar

A Summary of discussion topics from the Nottingham List by Nick Parish

An enormous amount of heat and light has been spent on the list in the past few months discussing the World Teams Championship. This is an Association Croquet event running in parallel with the MacRobertson Shield ("the Mac"), taking place at several venues in England this summer. The Mac is effectively the top division (call it "Division One"), being contested by the usual Mac countries of Great Britain, New Zealand, Australia and the USA. There are three further divisions below – the four countries with the next strongest teams (measured by the average grade of the team's players) make up Division Two, the next four Division Three while the remaining five countries will contest Division Four. (NB – my nomenclature of Divisions is not the official one, but it's simpler than the mix of Tiers and Divisions that is in use officially.) At the time of typing the full entry was not available, but it looks probable that Division Two will be Ireland, Jersey plus any two from Scotland, South Africa and Wales.

Much of the debate has centred round the distinction between GB and its constituent parts. Until now the team from the UK has always been composed of players from any part of the UK, even though it was sometimes called England. (Sometimes it also had players from Ireland and Jersey included, but let's not go there.) That was never a problem with only one division. However, with the addition of lower divisions, we now have the difficult position of Scotland, Wales and Jersey having the opportunity to enter lower divisions while at the same time GB is playing in the top division. A number of people on the list from outside the UK feel that this gives the GB players an unfair advantage of having two opportunities for selection.

The solution to the problem this year, which was a hastily-arranged compromise and does not set a precedent for any future years, is that if Scotland, Wales etc have any players selected for the GB Mac team then they cannot compete in the lower divisions, but if they don't, then they can. Since as it happens the GB team is composed entirely of Englishmen this year, all the other countries can compete in the lower divisions. This has generated a lot of discussion on the list.

A separate but linked issue is that following a recent rule change, players can change nationality with only 13 months between appearances – so a player who represented one country at an event in July 2009 can represent another in August 2010 (provided, of course, he fulfils the necessary criteria to represent the new country – e.g. by living there). Some players have already taken advantage of this, and considerable debate was engendered in particular by Rutger Beijderwellen, who has changed his allegiance from the Netherlands to England and as a result can now play in the Mac. There has been outrage expressed on the list – not so much because of Rutger's specific case (there are no other Dutch croquet players and Rutger has lived in England for many years) but because it is felt to be a further advantage that GB has

Continued from page 11

Investment income, depreciation of the office building, staff, overhead and service costs, and tax liability have all been affected by moving the Shop in-house. The net extra cost of all these items in 2009 is virtually the same as the amount spent on commission in 2008. As lower interest rates also affected the investment income, and inflation must also have affected the central administration costs, one could then conclude that savings have been achieved from the Shop move – but it is not possible to quantify this with any accuracy.

In addition to this immediate financial gain, the Shop has been able to increase stock levels (see Current Assets) and thus benefit from bulk orders to suppliers and provide a more effective service to customers. Moreover, and very importantly, the move has enabled the CA to build a strong central staff team which should auger well for running the CA in future years.

As announced last year, half the cost of building the extension, i.e. £25,500, has been met from the Benefactors Fund. This is shown as a transfer from that fund to the General Fund (see Note 5) and is the major factor in the abnormally large surplus transferred to the General Fund at the end of the year, as shown in the bottom line of the I&E Account.

During the year development grants totalling £18,000 were awarded to 6 clubs (compared to £15,600 in 2008 to 8 clubs). In the 20 years the development grant scheme has been in operation, 91 grants totalling just under £150,000 have been awarded to clubs of all types and sizes throughout the country. For the first 11 years the grant was fixed at £500, but since then awards have averaged over £2,000 each.

A more comprehensive commentary on the 2009 Accounts will be distributed at the AGM in October.

Roger Bray
Honorary Treasurer

Manor House Mallets

The originators of carbon fibre shafted mallets now offer a truly comprehensive range, from the 'Basic' at £87.50, the well established T-series (£137.50) to the 2000 mallet at £160 (inc. head wrap). All have heads of fine hardwood with screwed and glued double faces, inlaid sight lines and a high quality finish. Sustainably managed timbers.

Hollow head with brass plate extreme end-weighting (£20 extra)
Revolutionary 2001 model £230
3000 model with D-shaped ends £265

Mallet bags (£27) Head wraps (£7.50)

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

because of its constituent countries. Others point out that the thirteen month rule was not proposed by GB, and that it is applicable to all croquet-playing countries – there's no reason to suppose GB has a particular advantage. One thing that all seem agreed on, GB and non-GB, is that while a thirteen month period for changing allegiance may be reasonable, e.g. to support a player who has moved countries and wants to represent his new homeland, a much longer period should be required (between two and five years has been suggested) before allegiance could be transferred back, to prevent players using flags of convenience. It remains to be seen if the WCF will act on this feeling.

If you find all this a little confusing, some light relief can be found in Australian Croquet Regulations. They note that a player should be warned (and if he repeats the behaviour, disqualified) for heinous crimes such as performing a wiring test or a test to see if a point has been scored in the presence of a referee, or consuming alcohol during a match (at any time – not just in the presence of a referee). In addition, because receiving advice during a game is not permitted, players and spectators should not position themselves near each other if they could be thought to be exchanging advice. It was noted that if enforced this might make it impossible for friends or partners to sit near each other in case they could be thought to be offering advice, while double-bankers watching their respective opponents in play would need to stay out of earshot from each other.

Finally, my apologies for the lack of a column in the last two Gazettes – this was because of pressure of work. Normal service has now been resumed.

To subscribe to the list, go to <http://nottingham-lists.org.uk/mailman/listinfo/croquet>. You can receive emails individually or as a daily digest.

Report from Council

Report of the Council Meeting held on 27th March, 2010.

by Ian Vincent.

In opening the meeting, the Chairman thanked the retiring individually elected members of Council: David Openshaw, Ian Parkinson, Alan Pidcock and Ian Vincent. The last two are seeking re-election, the latter only as Hon. Secretary.

The 2009 accounts, which now show an overall surplus of £13K after accounting adjustments, were approved for submission to the AGM. A revised budget for 2010 was approved. It was noted that both the Benefactors and General Funds were depleted, following the extension to the office, but that an appeal for legacies had recently been made. It was agreed to start a Building

Maintenance Fund, to provide for work when it became necessary.

It was agreed by a small majority to reduce the rate of tournament levy from 30% to 25% in 2011. The main argument in favour was the concern expressed by clubs who perceived the levy as a tax on clubs holding CA events; that against that clubs were merely collecting money from individual players, and that it was right that active tournament players should contribute more. The Management Committee are considering the wider picture with the intention of making longer-term proposals.

Subscription increases of £2 to the standard individual rate, and 30p (subject to the April RPI not being significantly lower than expected) to the per-capita club subscription, were agreed for 2011 (the last change was for 2009).

John Handy was thanked for donating the Murphy Shield for the Golf Croquet 2nd division club teams event, which had attracted 15 entries. It was noted that the fixtures calendar has become a lot more congested, but that the CA sees its role more as a scheduler than a gatekeeper of events.

Drafts for constitutional changes to implement the changes to voting procedures discussed at the last meeting were agreed to go before the AGM, but an additional proposal to remove the requirement for Council to specifically sanction membership of committees by non-currently elected members (the President and Vice-Presidents) was rejected, though it will be proposed that they should now be permitted to chair committees.

The main business was to discuss the issue of international representation. The team selected by the CA for the MacRobertson Shield has traditionally represented the whole of Great Britain (and at one time Ireland), but the Scottish and Welsh CAs are independent members of the WCF. This discrepancy has been highlighted by introduction of lower tiers of the World Team Championship, in which they wish to compete, and other countries understandably regard this as having our cake and eating it. The problem is how to resolve this, given that the CA, the other Home Associations and Overseas Associations all have an interest, and decisions made by one are likely to constrain the others. The meeting was told that the WCF Management Committee intended to propose a motion to the August WCF Council meeting that only individual, not composite, teams should be allowed to compete. As a consequence, the proposal to take a decision, after consultation with the interested parties, in January 2011 was amended to bring this forward to a special meeting in July. Straw polls to show the current opinion of Council members revealed a large majority in favour of retaining the MacRobertson Shield as the World Team Championship (or its top tier, if the lower tiers continue), but only a small majority, with a large number of abstentions, in favour of the CA team being restricted to English players.

A proposal to introduce a new top level award for exceptional service to Croquet was amended to instead extend the conditions for the award of the existing Council Medal, and those for CA Diplomas were extended to include service to Federations as well as Clubs.

Finally, the equipment committee were asked to investigate ordering, or commissioning, a set of "super-hoops" to test their

effectiveness for top level play in various types of ground and it was announced that the dimensions of the prototype "Hopewell" hoop (the development of which had been funded by Gordon Hopewell) had met the requirements for both championship and standard approval.

Information from CA Committees reported at the March Management Meeting

By Barry Keen

Chairman of Management Committee

The following items were reported to the March meeting of the Management Committee:

Executive

The Chairman has received a response from our Patron who cannot attend the MacRobertson Shield event, but may consider the 2011 GC Worlds with Prince Philip. Her Majesty sends her warm good wishes to all members of the CA.

CA Manager

The Fixtures Book was compiled fully on-line and downloaded as a finished document for printing; all the information in the Fixtures Book is now on-line and all contact details come from the single source of the CA database.

Coaching

David G A Nicholson of East Dorset who has been named Coach of the Year for 2009. The award certificate is due to be presented at the 2010 Annual General Meeting.

An Assessment Form for Grade 3 Coaches is to be added to the CA website.

Development

The Development Committee awarded grants to the value of £12,000 between 1990 and 1999, and £138,000 between 2000 and 2009.

Four grant applications have been discussed. Two were granted and one was refused. The fourth application was held pending the provision of further information.

A review of the Development Committee advice notes is under way and will be loaded onto the web site.

An article for the Gazette on new advice for applying for Grants is in preparation.

A dummy risk assessment for clubs is to be produced.

Golf Croquet Tournament Committee

Liaison with the Fédération Européenne de Croquet (FEC) has ensured that the 2010 European GC Championship no longer clashes with the previously allocated dates for the East Anglian Golf Croquet Championship (which is one of the qualifying events for the English National Singles Championship)

A ballot has been conducted to select the twelfth team for the Inter-County Championship. As a result of the value of the National Lottery Bonus Ball, Suffolk was the winner (having also been willing to have participate in a play-off match as an alternative to the ballot); commiserations to the Cornwall & Devon team.

Publishing

A 'special' issue of the Gazette, featuring much about the MacRobertson Shield competition, is planned for June.

Editorial



Earlier last month I was asked as a player to take part in CA consultation, to give my views on a proposal by the WCF for a Women's World Association Croquet Championship, along with nine other female players. My views echoed the voice of the majority view, which was in essence it's a bad move. I believe that if we are to be true to the spirit of the game then 'women and men should play on equal terms', that is after all one of the major phrases that 'we' use to promote the sport, and that should be at every level of the game, including World Championships. 'Playing' a sport however and 'competing' are two entirely different things in my way of thinking.

Over time the number of top females players, i.e. those prepared to play advanced level croquet at open events has decreased, to such a point that the women's eights have been discontinued, and the entry for the Women's Championship has dwindled to the point that the future will no doubt be questioned. On looking at the UK Rankings I can see that there are only three women currently in the top 100, with a further five in the next 100. So with a sample of two hundred regular players, and only eight of them being women, what has happened to the equality? Better still, what has happened to the standard of women's croquet, why aren't we 'competing' and what are we going to do to address it? As one of the over-riding comments from the consultation document we contributed to was to find a way to improve the level of women's play.

We segregate as a sport in many different ways and have done for some time. We have junior events, under 21 events, over 50's, seniors and veterans. In this issue there is news of a mentoring scheme for young players, and yet to my knowledge the only effort made to towards women as a 'sub-group' was to offer golf croquet to the Women's Institute a number of years ago.

As the top croquet playing country (with twelve out of the world top 20 players being UK based) we may be able to sit back

on our laurels and bask in glory, but I can't help but think what or where we would be if the likes of David Maugham, Chris Clarke, Robert Fulford, Ian Burrige, to name a few, had not been brought into the game by encouraging forces, where would the standard of play be now? For all anyone knows a future World Champion may be one of the fairer sex, but in order to find that out I believe we have to offer some encouragement, and not, as was in the case when I began to play regularly at tournaments, disparaging remarks. There was a time when the male of the species was the underdog in croquet, which I believe is why the 'Men's and Women's Championship was originally brought into being. I feel as though we've come full circle, but rather than repeat the remedy of all those years ago, how about we tackle the issue in a modern way, with a new approach and be creative. Maybe if we do that and ask women why they don't compete, as well as what they need to 'compete' on an equal basis.

I'm not prepared to just ask the questions, I'm willing to volunteer to take an active role in addressing this issue, but I really want to hear views from other players, and administrators, and not just from the UK. Let's have a global discussion on the issue, as then we might just get some input and action to raise the standard and standing of women's croquet. So speak up, if you have a view, this topic is open for discussion and it's not going to be done hurriedly, unlike some I could mention.

Gail Curry
Editor

NB: Details of the proposal for the Women's World Championship can be found at http://www.wcfcroquet.org/Files/Womens_Association_Croquet_proposal_and_responses.pdf

Also please note the change of address for the Editor on page 2.

Please send all tournament reports and photos to news@croquet.org.uk

This ensures that your contributions go to the website and the Gazette.

If you upload your own news or tournament reports please remember to forward to the Gazette.

Golf Croquet

Drafting Laws of the Game

By Bill Arliss

Chairman of the Golf Croquet Laws Committee

I started to write this article as a simple letter to readers to try to recruit some new members to our Golf Croquet Laws committee but I thought it was only fair that if I was asking someone who had not been involved before in this type of activity, I should give some idea of what would be involved and what qualities they would need to make a worthwhile contribution. As I started writing and defining what went into the laws of the game, I realised that to many players our laws books are the evil machinations of some warped minds setting out to confuse the club player. If someone comes along to our clubs and has never before played croquet before, a typical description of Golf Croquet would be:

"We split you into two teams of either one or two players and the two sides own pairs of balls, either red and yellow or blue and black. Starting from corner 4 each side takes alternate turns in a defined sequence to cleanly hit their own ball with a mallet, the aim being to be the first to pass through a specific hoop. Each side whose ball passes first through the hoop scores a point for his side and then all play goes on to the next hoop in a defined order. The first side to collect seven point wins"

The above summarises Golf Croquet and with a little help most people can start playing the game immediately. So inevitably the questions gets asked "Why then do we need a 30 page booklet to achieve the same results?. I changed my approach and decided to describe the essential parts of any laws books and how do we in practice put them together and hope this will be of interest to all players but at the same time meet the need of describing what is expected of a member of the laws committee.

Let's start the process by defining exactly what are the necessary parts of any laws and we find that there are actually two

very distinct parts.

- ◆ How to play the game correctly
- ◆ What to do if the game is not played correctly.

The first part is really only a more detailed explanation of the simple description above, covering the sequence of play, the definition of a clean strike and how far through a hoop a ball has to travel to score a point.. This is certainly the easiest part to deal with and, whilst we may change the words slightly from edition to edition, there has be very little change in the intent of this section of the laws since the game of Golf Croquet was first invented in the early 1900s.

The second part comes entirely from and is dictated by the first part. It has to include solutions to all the incorrect play situations that the laws drafters can imagine and please believe me that these are many, even though the basic games is extremely simple. There are probably at least 30 totally different ways to play a wrong ball One may ask why bother with all the complex situations and there is one simple answer; **competition**. Once we start serious competition, everyone will demand that our laws book provides a definitive solution to all possible errors in play. It simply cannot be left to the local referee to decide what might appear to be the fairest solution to the particular case.

It is very pleasing to say that nowadays we are not starting from scratch but simply developing specific parts of the laws which in practice are not seen to be working quite as well as we feel they should. Every now and again there is a move to change the penalties that are awarded for specific errors and this can cause major headaches. We are still recovering from the imposition of the stiff penalties for wrong ball which were first imposed in 2005 and than withdrawn in 2008. I believe we are now approaching the right solution but feel there is somewhere yet to go. It is probably one of the few weak points in the present laws.

So now let us have a look at how the GC Laws Committee tries to achieve the above aims. Since its formation in 2000 we have only met once. All our discussions are by email which is probably the best approach. Seeing all the possible meanings of one set of words is for most of us quite a

lengthy process and sitting round a table is not the ideal approach. Normally debates on a particular issue will be kicked off by the Chairman who will circulate the description of a problem and may attach his own suggested solution. Hopefully this results in various replies from the committee members either supporting the suggestions or offering alternatives. The Chairman may then re-summarise and the whole process starts again. It is an extremely repetitive process and on slightly complicated laws can be repeated many times before a fully agreed version is accepted. It is usually the simplest answer that turns out to be the best. A very typical example of this is the halfway law exceptions. If we go back to the 'yellow' book (2003), one finds the words of an exception "Scoring the previous hoop, either by being struck through the hoop, being peeled through the hoop or peeling another ball". In the latest version this becomes "a stroke just played", much simpler but an identical meaning. One other difficulty that the law makers encounter is the question of fairness or what would appear to most to be a fair solution. If things go wrong then basic fairness would suggest that the player who first went wrong should bear any penalty that is imposed and if we follow this train of thought we effectively have to 'unwind the string' i.e. we have to trace back what happened. This was our initial approach in 2000 to out of sequence play. The laws suggested that we should go back effectively up to four turns and start again from there. Great in theory but I am sure all players will recognise that it is very often difficult to remember what was played two turns ago, let alone four and most certainly a referee who was not watching the game is unlikely to be able to find out. Above all a law has to be workable, even if in some cases apparent fairness has to be sacrificed.

The above briefly outlines how our laws committee works, but this is not the end of the story as far as the CA is concerned. International play is an integral part of out activities and to have international play it is essential all of the participants play to the same laws of the game. To meet this aim, the CA have joined with other large governing bodies under the auspices of the WCF to generate an internationally acceptable set of words. Initially the efforts of this body produced text that in some parts reflected practices

only used in a minority of user countries and the CA were only able to use part of the text, but this has improved considerably in recent issues and 100% acceptance was given to the last issue. Whilst the result means we have a consistent set of laws for international play, it does mean that law changes cannot be rushed through which is possibly a very good idea.

The question arises as to how often a new version of the laws should be issued. Certainly in the UK new issues are far from popular with our members and, because of the procedures which are inherent in our constitution for the acceptance of new laws, it becomes quite an expensive process. However it should be remembered that the laws of Golf Croquet as a standalone issue only arrived in 2000 and quite naturally there were considerable weaknesses in the first attempts. Since the formation of the consortium there have been issues in 2000, 2004, 2005 and 2008 in an attempt to overcome apparent weaknesses. This is far too many, but can be justified on the basis that we were all learning our trade. However I feel we are now in the situation where the laws can be regarded as fairly stable and we should be looking at an absolute minimum of five years life span . Once one accepts this premise, one has to accept that no matter how good the new issue is, someone will always find situations which cannot be resolved by the existing wording. A method has to be found to cover such a situation. Our AC colleagues already use their ORLC (Official Rulings of the Laws of Croquet) system Very simply it allows them to issue well considered rulings which fully resolve the situation but are small add-ons to the laws which themselves remain unchanged. The WCF committee have not as yet adopted such a system but the CA is working with them for one to be established.

With the maintenance of the laws between editions, there is always a need for a laws committee to be in existence. Admittedly their workload will peak when a new issue comes around but as long as interim problems are well considered at the time, much of the work for a new edition is completed well in advance. Whether the laws committee is working on a new edition or the formulation of rulings their working procedures remain very similar..

We are not looking to replace our laws committee but simply strengthen it with additional members. If after reading this article any players are interested in joining the

committee, please get in touch. Our present member's experience varies between legal training, scientists and engineers working with international standard and contracts and virtually any profession where text output defines precisely what they are trying to achieve.

Tel: 01272 728204 or
bill.arliss@ntlworld.com

Obituary



Cedrus Atlantica Glauca

? – 2010.

The Cheltenham Croquet Club has lost one of its greatest friends. The Cedar tree in the centre of the Club's grounds that has offered shade and shelter to several generations of croquet players was finally lowered to the ground on 26th February. It is not known precisely when Cedrus was planted, only that a photograph in 1930 showed a young tree – age indeterminate. We think that Cedrus lived nearly as long as Maise Peebles, who died a few years ago in her nineties.

Last Summer having discarded two more branches, we were told that weaknesses were appearing in Cedrus's limbs (many of you will know the feeling) and after much debate, it was decided to end Cedrus's life in a dignified way. This decision was not taken lightly nor did it go unchallenged. 79 members attended a general meeting to hear the reasons why and why not, but in the end it was agreed to lose our friend. A remnant of the Cedar's main stem has been left and plans are being made to consider a suitable memorial to the former centrepiece of Cheltenham Croquet Club.

Eileen Magee – Secretary.

Mentoring and Bursary Schemes

High level coaching for Juniors – launch of the CA Mentoring Scheme

By Lawrence Whittaker
Chairman, CA Coaching Committee

Are you a Junior member of the CA (under 21 or in continuing full time education up to first degree level on 1st January 2010)? If so, you could be in luck!

The CA has just launched its Mentoring Scheme, an idea that arose from the Juniors Working Party (Patricia Duke-Cox, Marcus Evans, Dave Kibble and Stephen Mulliner) which reported to Council last year. In the Mentoring Scheme, a participating Junior member (the *student*) is linked with a leading player (the *mentor*) who agrees to give one-to-one advice and coaching to enable the student to make rapid progress. The student benefits by having access to skills and experience which might otherwise take years to acquire and the CA hopes to benefit by fostering a new generation of top class players.

How can a mentor help?

We expect the likely areas of help to be

Physical skills

Correct stroke production and demonstration of unusual strokes.

Tactics

Picking up breaks, development of peeling, repairing breaks, risks and rewards (AC). Tactics in relation to the opponent's situation (AC and GC).

Psychology

Dealing with the pressure of competition.

Choice of tournaments

Matching the tournaments entered to the student's aims, potential and budget.

Gaining representative croquet experience

Ensuring that the student is aware of junior representative fixtures and that selectors are aware of the student.

Travel and accommodation

Advice, especially for international events.

Funding

Making the student aware of sources of support.

How will the scheme work?

The scheme is co-ordinated by the CA Mentoring Officer ("CAMO") and initially the CAMO is

Stephen Mulliner (smulliner@googlemail.com Tel. 01428 643504).

Fuller details are provided on the CA website and in due course the website will include a list of mentors. To join the scheme, you should contact the CAMO, stating

Your name and contact details

Your date of birth

Whether you are interested in Association Croquet, Golf Croquet or both.

Although there will not at first be a list of mentors, you may have someone in mind. If so, tell the CAMO who will investigate whether this is feasible. If this is not feasible – or if you haven't suggested anyone – the CAMO will suggest a mentor and set up a pairing. In some cases a CRB check will be necessary and the CAMO will arrange this.

Once a mentor/student pairing has been established, it will last for an initial period of 12 months although it can be extended for two further periods of 12 months if both mentor and student agree and notify the CAMO. It will be primarily the student's responsibility to make the most of the relationship although it is expected that most mentors will take an active interest in the progress of their students. A mentor may have more than one student but each student should have only one mentor. Either party is free to terminate the mentoring at any time. The party terminating the arrangement should inform the CAMO: in appropriate cases the CAMO may appoint a different mentor.

The progress of the scheme will be monitored on Council's behalf by the Coaching Committee. Council encourages eligible players to make the most of this opportunity!

The CA Bursary Scheme

Tim King, Convenor of the Bursary Panel

In 2009, the CA launched the Bursary Scheme as a means by which to channel funds into the development of individual players who aspire to or have achieved international standard at Association or Golf Croquet. The general expectation is that such players will be Junior Members of the CA. However, other members may also apply.

Players must fill in a form (available on the CA website) to apply for a Bursary and a panel of three (Cliff Jones, Tim King and Stephen Mulliner) will consider all applications. A key part of the application is a personal statement that should provide much of the evidence concerning the player's achievements and potential and why they deserve to benefit from the awarded funds.

Domestic and international events are eligible for funding; the applicant must indicate the expenditure that the Bursary will contribute towards (at a maximum rate of £500 or 50%, whichever is smaller). The Scheme is now in place to run alongside the recently endorsed CA Mentoring Scheme that will provide young

players with access to a personal mentor who is a leading player and can guide them towards improvement.

In the 2009 season, the CA awarded bursaries to the three applicants, each of whom went to the Under-21 World Golf Croquet Championship in Cairo. Will Gee, James Goodbun and Rachel Rowe each performed with great credit. The CA has decided to continue the Bursary Scheme after this success in 2009 and encourages all CA members to consider who they know who would benefit from financial support in their journey towards International achievement.

Development News

Development Grants of £150,000 Awarded

Barry Keen

Vice-Chairman of Development Committee

Are you thinking of making changes to your club facilities – say another lawn, or improvements to your clubhouse but have been put off by the costs? Do you know that the CA has funds available to help? Provided that your proposed improvements meet our conditions the CA can give up to £5,000 towards the costs of your project.

To give you some idea of the amounts of money available, in the last 9 years, 67 grants have been awarded totalling £138,000. The development grants scheme has now been in operation for 20 years and £150,000 has been distributed to clubs of all types and sizes throughout the country.

The CA also gives start-up grants to new clubs in the form of a set of equipment including balls and mallets for one lawn. These grants have been available since 2005 and have helped 28 new clubs to be formed.

If you are thinking of improving your club or are aware of the possibility of a new club, please contact the CA office or myself for further information or advice. I look forward to the Development Committee being able to help you in the near future.

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Contributions Sought

Don't be shy

Charles Waterfield (Chairman- Publishing Committee)

In order that your Gazette continues to provide good value information and entertainment we rely on the membership, and not just CA committees, to provide interesting copy for the Editor to select from. Articles do not just write themselves and the internet is not a satisfactory substitute. Let us know what's going on at the grass-roots, as well as at high-profile events. Simply email contributions to gazette@ or news@croquet.org.uk so that others can enjoy them. Copy deadlines are printed in each issue, along with guidelines on suitable formats. For those unable to use electronic forms please forward by post to the Editor, noting that there is a change of address on page 2.

Club News



Croquet Five Years On

By Roy Smith

Chairman Swanage Croquet Club

It is now five years that Croquet has been played at Swanage Cricket Club. From a tentative start with little knowledge of croquet, we borrowed 3 sets of garden equipment, and set up two lawns on the cricket outfield. The Cricket Club had said that we were to be self-funded for this venture and having asked the local U3A organisation to see if this could be a way forward, we found that with only six replies we needed to find other avenues to get our project underway. The various local organisations that had retired folk on their books were written to and 40 people were interested in finding out more.

We were told that in Corfe Castle village there was a gentleman who played croquet at International level. With some help from friends

William Ormerod was tracked down and immediately he got us help from the East Dorset Croquet Club. Tom Weston brought along some coaches and started to unveil the finer points of the game, which was very helpful indeed.

As we were only going to play on Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons we decided that with 40 people we could only entertain playing Golf Croquet. From all those that came along to our 'open days' in the first year 27 became members. This was all we needed to indicate that the playing of Croquet was viable and something that Swanage could take up as a pastime.

In 2006 we held various 'open days' and 'afternoons of croquet' with other clubs and societies locally and the popularity increased with membership increasing to 55. The Swanage Carnival Committee were able to make us a grant of £800 to purchase Championship hoops and balls to allow us to set up a third lawn for the next season. Our support from the volunteer grounds-man Tom Yate was marvellous and one or two other members were able to help in various ways.

With all our new kit we entered the 2007 season with much relish and were even able to play East Dorset in a match and then entertain them to our 'interesting surfaces' at Swanage. We gave good accounts of ourselves and in subsequent years we have continued to play them.

We decided to increase the awareness of croquet in the town and hold a tournament for novice players. The RNLI took this up on Wednesday evenings from May to August, 24 players from various organisations turn up to play for the RNLI Trophy. In doing so it also raised money for their funds and to date well over £2000 has been made available.

We have had 3 very enjoyable 'tours' to Sidmouth, Budleigh Salterton and Somerset, with approximately 18 members taking part.

Croquet is now part of the Cricket Club scene and has enabled many people to 'find' the delightful setting of the club and also enjoy the cricket that is played there at weekends. The increased membership through croquet has helped to swell the takings at the club bar and also make financial contributions

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towards the purchase of a 24" mower, as well as sponsoring the young cricketers for the cost of their cricket balls.

To improve our playing surfaces is going to be difficult, but the turf has had an application of weed-killer courtesy of a local farmer and over the years the surfaces will get better. To play at Swanage does require a definite understanding of the various twists and turns of our lawns, but it all adds to the enjoyment.

Recently the Mayor of Wareham approached us to help with the setting up of croquet in their town and a group of councillors came to Swanage to see how we have set up our club. When they have an area ready for play we will go along and set up a lawn for all who are interested to try out the game.

At the end of the 2009 season we had 85 members and a waiting list for people to join the club. Our aim is to have members regularly coming along as often as they wish and enjoy what is a very friendly and welcoming club.

Swanage as a seaside resort has many people who visit and if you or any groups would like to come and play please do get in touch with me on 01929 421086

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