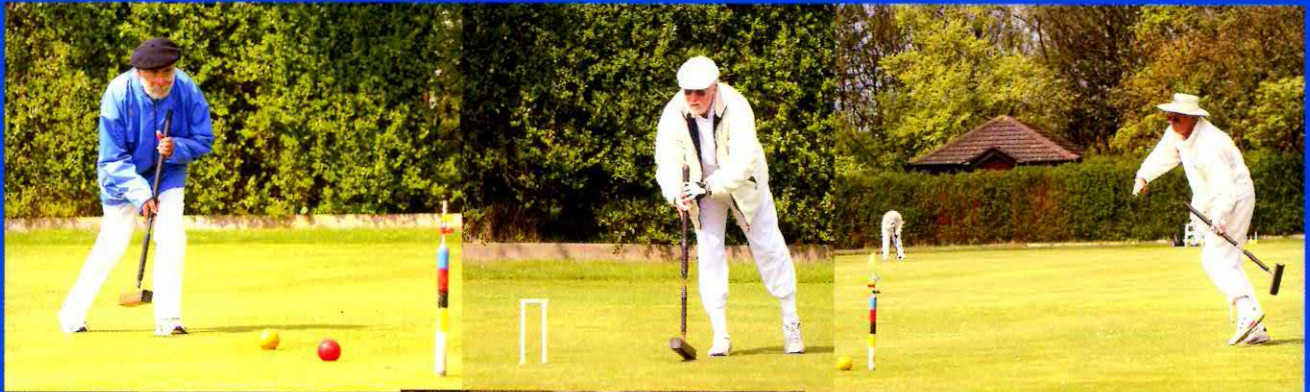


# THE CROQUET GAZETTE

ISSUE 326

JUNE 2010



Peels Southport May 2010

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**THE CROQUET GAZETTE**



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Front Cover: *The Peels*, by Tony Thomas

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**Disclaimer**

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

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**Chairman's Column**



Keen croquet players will be anticipating the MacRobertson Shield and the associated World Team Association Croquet Championship events this August. Indeed, this issue of the Gazette is to whet the appetite and inform you of more details in readiness for these Test Matches. I hope that many of you will be able to visit the hosting clubs and admire the standard of play that will be exhibited. If you do decide to visit as a group please be kind and inform the clubs that you will attend. Some clubs will be able to cater for an influx of visitors, others may ask you to bring your own sustenance. The President, Vice-Presidents, Chairman and Vice-Chairman will endeavour to make an appearance at all the Test Matches along with other prestigious events in the CA calendar.

The CA puts on several events and has some lovely silverware. Perhaps many club members think these go only to experienced players in advanced games. I'd like to share with you the fact that there is an event known as the Peel Memorials which is for handicap play. I should add that I entered it for the first time this year and succeeded, with my doubles partner Nigel Graves, in winning the mixed doubles and coming back with the Lady Murray Silver Vases which are beautiful. This event deserves to have a bigger field of entry and I ask that more members consider entering. With only 11 players this year (see us on the front cover), and an odd number in the womens' event, more entries would offer more games.

I now wish to make an appeal to all our members. The CA is an organisation that likes to recognise the voluntary contributions made by its members. Clubs and Federations can nominate members for a CA Diploma that it feels have given or made extraordinary efforts. Please see the official notice in this magazine (page 13) from our Honorary Secretary.

Patrica Duke-Cox

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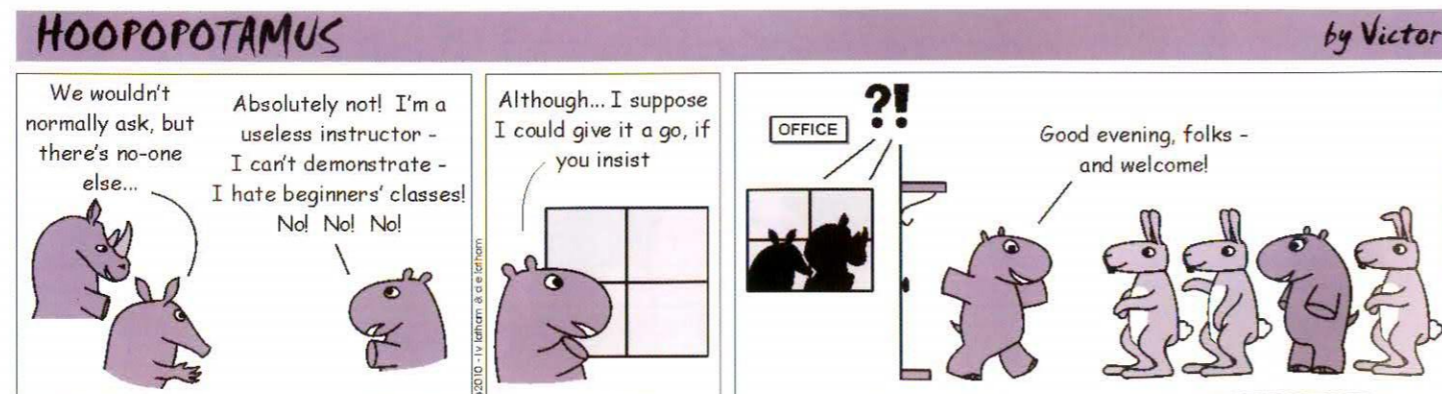
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Email contributions, including tournament reports should be sent direct to the Editor, or copied to the Editor if they are being posted to the Nottingham List. Digital images are the easiest to work with, but coloured photographic prints are also acceptable. 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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## Letters

### Recommending the CA Laws Course at Hamptworth

If you are the sort of person that is interested in questions like "What is the force of the second 'and' in law \*20(b)?" then I can recommend the CA's laws course. It is an excellent preparation for the referees' examination – which must be arranged separately as there isn't time for a course and an examination in one weekend.

For 2010 the only one planned was given at Hamptworth on 13 and 14 March by Dr Ian Vincent, chairman of the CA laws committee, and assisted by Brian Fisk and Strat Liddiard. The six on the course were privileged – with one instructor for two pupils this is a pupil-teacher ratio that few of us are lucky enough to experience. The "aha!" moments were many as the subtleties in the laws were revealed and there are some surprises. Who, for example would have known that if you rush a ball into a corner where there is already another ball (one that you may still roquet) and you make the mistake of 'purporting to take croquet from a live ball' (in other words you play the cannon with the wrong ball) and you or your opponent realises the error before two further strokes of your turn, there is no penalty! The law requires you to replace the balls as they were after the rush and then

take croquet with the correct ball.

It takes an effort to concentrate on such things for two days even though the desk sessions were leavened, morning and afternoon, with exercises on court where we watched our instructors trying to execute difficult strokes with every kind of fault and error, challenging us with "What was wrong with that?"

The course was organised by Richard Stevens who hopes it can become an annual event. Hamptworth Golf and Country Club is an excellent venue in the New Forest and its croquet section has been going for ten years. This year they have added two new lawns, making four in all and have a delightful mostly glass pavilion with a commanding view over all the lawns. The club is comfortable, the food is good (the English breakfast was excellent) and the service unobtrusive. If you, like me, have ambitions to alleviate the great shortage of qualified referees by becoming one, make a note to book yourself in next year or better, put yourself down with Richard Stevens now.

*Anthony Camacho*

\*The striker plays a stroke with the balls placed in accordance with law 19 and in so doing must play into the croqueted ball and move or shake it (see Law 28(a)(14)).

### Sexism in Croquet

What do you think of the idea of having a Women's World Championship?

Perhaps your first thoughts are that

it would be a good idea; an opportunity for women to excel in the sport and to encourage more women to play. A new platform, first to strive toward and then (perhaps with increased confidence) from which to reach even higher toward the real World Championship.

Having thought about it for a while, I am not of this view; I would vote against introducing a Women's World Championship.

'Are you not in favour of encouraging women - are you sexist?' I imagine a few voices cry. It is all-too easy to accuse someone of sexism. Several years ago, I was the sole selector for a team players. On breaking the news to an unsuccessful candidate, I was accused of sexism: 'you've not picked me because I'm female!' I thought it an off-the-cuff remark, wanting an excuse for having not quite made the team, but over the coming weeks, I heard that she told other players that I was sexually discriminating against her. I was appalled. On confronting her about her views, it became apparent that my having not selected her for the team was reason enough to her mind; it was her only 'evidence' that I was sexist, despite having known me for several years.

Since then, I've listened with great interest when the subject of gender has arisen in relation to croquet. I am not sure why there are few women at the top of the game. Most people seem to believe (as do I) that the game can be played on level terms by men and women; strength has little bearing on the game unless a lawn is incredibly heavy and, unlike snooker, height does not seem to matter. Perhaps, as I've heard joked, 'men are simply willing to spend longer playing with their balls!' Whatever the reason, I'm pretty sure the current discrepancy is not the result of a sexist bias.

Why then, need I write this letter? Returning to the opening question, relating to a possible Women's World Championship, some of you may be surprised to learn that several of our top female players were recently canvassed for such an opinion by the CA on behalf of the WCF. I happen to know because my partner plays at a similar level to me and was canvassed for her views.

It seems that a small number (a minority) have replied that they would like such an event. It is primarily to them, and to others who might be inclined to agree with them, that I write this letter. My point does not relate only to World

Championships, but to play at every level. For instance, I have heard the possibility mentioned of positive discrimination toward women (in the name of 'developing women's croquet'), such as having at least one or two women on every inter-club or inter-county team. To my mind, an inevitable long-term affect of any such 'positive' discrimination would risk turning female croquet players into rather a joke. Rather than encouraging women to compete at a lower level amongst themselves in a separate Women's World Championship, wouldn't it be better to encourage *all* players to strive for the top?

It can often be worthwhile to segregate players in terms of ability, with events for novices, handicap brackets and so-on. To my mind, events for Juniors also come under this bracket, as they have may have the ability to learn more quickly than older players.

For players who lack the ability (or confidence) to play in the World Championships, there are plenty of less prestigious events in which to compete; I see no need for separate events specifically for women. In many respects, I would be happy to see the current Men's and Women's events scrapped - but existing events also have separate concerns (such as tradition) which are not relevant when it comes to the setting up of new events.

Finally, in relation to the opening question, to anyone who thinks that there should be a Women's World Championship, I set a challenge: Give me one reason why we should have a Women's World Championship but not a Black World Championship.

To my mind, each is unnecessary, despite each having a minority of players. Race should not matter in any sport. Let us celebrate having a sport where gender also matters not.

*Pete Trimmer*

### Conceding defeat

When describing croquet to a newcomer, it is often said that it has similarities to snooker and chess. This makes sense, in that a common feature in all of these games is that each person plays in turn, and when it is the opponent's turn to play there is nothing you can do to influence the outcome. You just have to let them get on with it and try to respond when they have finished, assuming of course that the game isn't over. Which to my way of thinking is where the games differ.

Snooker isn't officially finished until there is only the black left on the table (only 7 points can ever be scored with only the black left, since a foul ends the game). Yet at most levels of play, games are often conceded long before this point.

Chess isn't officially finished until one player delivers checkmate. But at any reasonable level this virtually never happens. Long before the end it often becomes clear which player is heading for victory, at which point the opponent does the decent thing and resigns. This could be a lead of two or three pieces at club level, to perhaps only a small positional advantage at the highest level. Again, an advantage doesn't mean the game is irretrievable. The player behind could continue to play out the game, hoping their opponent makes a mistake, or series of mistakes, to let them back in. But given the small probability of this happening the game is generally conceded.

Croquet isn't officially finished until one player pegs out. Which in my experience always happens. Yet long before the end of most games it is clear which player is going to win. So why do we persist in forcing our opponent to go through the motions of finishing the game?

We have all been involved in games which have a certain inevitability about them. At handicap level this could be either against the croquet bandit, or just against someone who plays much better than their handicap in a particular game. For instance your opponent takes 2 bisques to take the first ball round to peg and does a reasonable leave, with 8 bisques left standing. Your only real chance is to make a roquet and peg your opponent out, but you miss the roquet. An even more disheartening scenario is where the bisques have run out and your opponent is many hoops in front but is not close to pegging out. You know they are going to play Aunt Emma for the last 45 minutes, which is arguably the right thing to do, but it is very tedious. At the very top level, this could be missing the lift shot leaving your opponent a standard triple peel (in the recent Coles Cup, every game in the semi-finals and final finished with a TP or better, with the comment on the report that "peeling turns were rarely in doubt").

At this point you know the opponent is almost certain to win. Further your opponent knows it too. So why don't we adopt the snooker/chess approach and just shake hands at this point? This would reduce game times, which has been the subject of some debate recently, and hence

allow more games to be played in a day, particularly at tournaments with a flexible format. For most players I don't believe there is any pleasure to be gained in watching your opponent playing, less still if you have to pull bisques out at the same time. Even for the person in play there I think there is often little joy in going through the routine, knowing that you can only snatch defeat from the jaws of victory.

I am not suggesting that people should be forced to concede games, just that it should be an acceptable option. I am not aware that the laws expressly forbid it, but I have rarely seen it happen which suggests it would currently be frowned upon at the very least. Finally I would like to make it clear that this should not be seen as being disrespectful to your opponent. If anything it is completely the opposite. Conceding defeat before the end would show respect for your opponent's ability to successfully conclude the game, without forcing them to do it.

*Lee Hartley*

### Jerry Stark, USA 1955 - 2010

Jerry Stark was diagnosed with cancer of the stomach in January. He immediately undertook a course of chemotherapy in preparation for surgery. Unfortunately, the cancer turned out to be very aggressive and he died on 20 May.

Jerry made quite an impact when he appeared at the first WCF World Championship in London in 1989. His handlebar moustache, red braces and Falstaffian physique, allied to an exuberant and gregarious personality, made him a superb ambassador for the sport and even propelled him onto the front page of the London Times. Those fortunate enough to get to know Jerry, and they were legion, found that they had made a wonderful friend who was a determined competitor on the court and the very best of company off it. He was the backbone and icon of every USA MacRobertson Shield team and the 2010 team have decided to honour him by wearing his initials on their shirts. It is fitting that he should have had the enormous and deserved satisfaction of playing in the USA team that finally wrested the Solomon Trophy from Great Britain at Mission Hills last December. A fuller obituary of this great character will appear in the next issue.

*Stephen Mulliner*



The Laws in action. From the left: Richard Stevens, John Smith, Gabrielle Higgins, David Williams, Strat Liddiard, Dr Ian Vincent, the new pavilion and Brian Fisk.



## MacRobertson Shield 2010

### Welcome from the President of The Croquet Association

Congratulations from The Croquet Association to all the players selected for their teams and a very warm welcome to them and their supporters.

This is only the seventh time since its inception in 1925 that the MacRobertson Shield has been held in England. Our members have been hugely looking forward to hosting this supreme challenge for teams from Australia, New Zealand and USA as well as Great Britain.

The MacRobertson Shield is the Association Croquet World Team Championship and this year, for the first time, the event becomes the pinnacle of two additional tiers in the World Team Championships. We, and the World Croquet Federation, are delighted that players from many other countries have travelled to England to take part and we wish them well.

Such a major sporting enterprise has involved a lot of hard work by volunteers and on behalf of The Croquet Association I would like to thank the members of the organizing committees, chaired by Colin Irwin and Stephen Mulliner, and all the enthusiasts at the venue clubs who have been tirelessly trying to ensure that when the croquet world looks back at these championships it will be with some pleasure, whether their team won or not.

*Quiller Barrett*

### Dates and Venues

#### The shape of the competition in 2010

For the first time, the MacRobertson Shield is being played as the top tier of a wider World Team Championship, under the auspices of the World Croquet Federation and hosted by the Croquet Association.

Tier 1 – The Association Croquet World Team Championship for the MacRobertson Shield

The format of the MacRobertson Shield has changed over the years. This year's event will follow the format of the last few and it will be played as a four-team round-robin of 5-day test matches. Each five-day test consists of 21 matches - 12 singles and 9 doubles – and each match is the best of 3 games. Dates and venues are:

#### Thursday 5th August 2010

Opening Ceremony at Heaton Park Orangery

#### Friday 6th - Tuesday 10th August 2010

Great Britain v USA at Bowdon Croquet Club, St Mary's Road, Bowdon, Cheshire WA14 2PL

Australia v New Zealand at Bury Croquet Club, Heaton Park, Manchester

#### Thursday 12th - Monday 16th August 2010

Great Britain v New Zealand at Nottingham Croquet Club, University Boulevard, Nottingham, NG7 2PS

Australia v USA at Roehampton Club, Roehampton Lane, SW15 5LR

#### Wednesday 18th - Sunday 22nd August 2010

Great Britain v Australia at Surbiton Croquet Club, Alexandra Drive, Surbiton KT5 9AA

USA v New Zealand at Surbiton Croquet Club, Alexandra Drive, Surbiton KT5 9AA

#### Sunday 22nd August 2010

Closing Ceremony at the All-England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club, Wimbledon SW19 5AE

#### Tier 2

This section of the competition has two divisions. Each division will be comprised of four teams of four players, determined by the strength of the nominated players. It will be played from Monday 16th August to Saturday 21st August. Division 1 will be played at the Hurlingham Club, Ranelagh Gardens, London SW6 3PR and Division 2 will be played at Compton CC, The Saffrons, Compton Place Road, Eastbourne BN21 1EA.

#### Tier 3

Tier 3 will be comprised of 1 division. Each team will be comprised of four players. It will be played at the Sussex County Croquet Club, Victoria Road, Southwick BN42 4DJ from Wednesday 18th August to Saturday 21st August 2010.

### Opening & Closing Ceremonies

There will be an opening ceremony at the Orangery in Heaton Park on the 5<sup>th</sup> August and a closing ceremony at the AELTCC on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Details have not yet been finalised, but some tickets will be available for sale to associates, the cost is likely to be between £30 and 40 per person which will include a meal. Details will be posted on the CA website as soon as they are available. If you think you would be interested in attending either event please mail [colin.irwin@irwin-ce.freemove.co.uk](mailto:colin.irwin@irwin-ce.freemove.co.uk) or contact the CA office, saying which event so that we can get some idea of numbers in advance.

### Venue Details:

**Bowdon** - Contact Christine Irwin 01565 722556. Food, refreshments and a licensed bar will be available to spectators. There is a free parking in the car park adjacent to the club. Please let the contact know if you are going to bring a group.

**Heaton Park** - Contact Paul Rigge 07947 333236. Food,

refreshments and a licensed bar will be available to spectators. there is plenty of car parking in the park, although there may be a charge at weekends. Please let the contact know if you are going to bring a group.

**Nottingham** - Contact Ellen Gee 0115 970 2988. Drinks and refreshments will be available at the club, but if a light lunch is required it needs to be booked in advance. It is OK for spectators to provide their own. Car parking will be arranged at one of the other sports clubs on the other (south east side) of University Boulevard. Details will be made available on the MacRobertson Shield website as soon as they have been confirmed <http://www.macrobotsonshield2010.org/nottingham>

**Roehampton** - contact Tristan McIlroy 020 8480 4200. Food, refreshments and a licenced bar will be available for spectators,

but visitors are not permitted to bring their own food or drink. Please let the contact below know if you plan to bring a party. There is limited parking for visitors to the club. Spectators are asked to use public transport (the nearest rail station is Barnes, 5 minutes walk away, and buses 72 and 265 pass the entrance to the club in Roehampton Lane). Spectators will be admitted free of charge, but are asked to sign in at the Security Lodge, where they will be given a pass and information leaflet. Chairs will be provided.

**Surbiton** - Contact Kitty Carruthers 0208 399 7736. Food, refreshments and beer will be available for spectators. Please let the contact below know if you plan to bring a party. There will be no parking at the club for spectators. Please use the local side streets, which are unrestricted, or preferably use public transport. Admission will be free of charge, but although some seating will be available, specators are invited to bring their own folding chairs.

Australia in the 2008 world championship. Being selected to play the MacRobertson Shield event in 2010 is an enormous honour. Pete is a member of Cammeray and Blue Mountains croquet club, both in NSW, and plays with a 37inch 2lb 12oz Pidcock mallet with an Irish / golf grip. The highlight for Pete regarding croquet in the last few years has been the emergence of new and highly skilled talent to arrive on the tournament circuit, young and old, and with three debutants in the Australian starting team this year it is going to be an exciting time.

**Kevin Beard** was born into a dairy farming family but left the farm for University to avoid having to milk cows twice a day for the rest of his life. He went on to complete a PhD in Animal Breeding and worked as a geneticist in the Victorian Department of Primary Industries for 30-odd years. Kevin took up croquet in 1999 and plays Association, Golf and Gateball at the Brunswick Mallet Sports Club in Melbourne. Kevin now lives in Moonee Ponds (of Dame Edna fame). As well as representing Victoria six times, Kevin has won a number of State titles and was semi-finalist in the Australian Open Singles in 2004 and 2007, and won the Australian Open Doubles in 2008 with Stephen Mulliner.

**Martin Clarke** lives in Rockingham, Western Australia, and works as a despatch clerk for a brushware company. He learned to play croquet through a social club in 1992 when living in Geraldton. Since then, Marty has won every major Western Australian event at least twice.

On the National scene, he won the Australian Open Singles in 2003, two Australian Doubles titles, and the Australian Gold Medal. Marty has also played one Trans Tasman Test Series and this will be his fourth MacRobertson Shield campaign.

**Ian Dumergue** is an underground miner with Barrick Gold Australia, at Darlot Gold Mine in Western Australia. He is married with a young daughter and lives in the Perth hills. Born in Christchurch New Zealand, Ian was introduced to croquet by his great-uncle Jack McNab in 1986 at the Sumner Croquet Club. He won the Australian Doubles title in 2000 and has won the Australian Gold Medal twice. He represented NZ in the Trans-Tasman Test Series of 1991 (ironically, in Perth). He moved to Australia in 1997. Ian debuted in the Australian MacRobertson Shield Team in 2006 and is looking forward to participating again in this series.

## MEET THE TEAMS

### AUSTRALIA



*Peter Landrebe (Capt)*



*Kevin Beard*



*Martin Clarke*



*Ian Dumergue*



*Robert Fletcher*



*Stephen Forster*



*Trevor Bassett (Reserve)*



*Greg Fletcher (Reserve)*



*Steve Jones (Coach/Manager)*

**Peter Landrebe (Captain)** Some of Pete's favourite croquet accomplishments and memories have been representing New South Wales in the Eire cup for ten consecutive years, representing Australia in the 2009 Trans Tasman Test Series, and representing

**Robert Fletcher** started playing croquet in 2004 and played in his first major tournament, the Australian Open, in 2007. He was a close runner-up to Pete Landrebe in the 2008 Australian Open, and won the Australian Gold Medal in 2009. Robert represented Victoria in the Eire Cup for the first time in 2009 and was also on the team in 2010. He represented Australia for the first time at the World Championships in Florida 2009, where he lost in the semi-final to the winner Reg Bamford. Other interests include history, chess, current affairs, photography, cricket, table tennis, snooker, and showing rabbits.

**Stephen Forster** is married with two children, Stephen works as a Theatre Technician at the Geelong Hospital in Victoria. He won the Australian Gold Medal in 2007, and the Australian Men's Singles title in 2009 as well as numerous Victoria State titles. Stephen reached the final 16 at the 2009 World Championships in Florida and has also represented Australia in the last 3 MacRobertson Shields, in the 2009 Trans Tasman Test Series, as well as 15 times for Victoria. Stephen is an ardent AFL (Aussie Rules Footy) fan.

**Trevor Bassett** works as a Financial Adviser in Kyabram, Victoria, and started playing croquet in 1990 at the age of 10. He has played in six Australian teams, including 3 previous MacRobertson Shields and ten Victoria State teams. During his career, Trevor has won 6 National titles including the Australian Open in 2000 and 2004, and Australian Gold Medal in 2000, as well as an amazing 26 State titles. For those that haven't heard, Trevor and his wife Claire have welcomed the safe arrival of their little daughter Evie on 28 August 2009, and she is "the highlight of our lives".

**Greg Fletcher** started playing croquet in 2004 and won the Australian Open plate 2007 in his first major tournament. He has also won the selectors' Invitation twice, the Major Tingey Tray 2 in the Presidents 3rd 8 in 2009, and represented Australia at the World Championships in Florida in 2009. Greg has recently started to enjoy playing doubles after having a wonderful time playing with Robert in the New Zealand Open Doubles in 2010. His other interests include music, history, reading, chess, jokes, funny stories, table tennis, snooker, and convincing people that Robert and Greg don't look alike....and shooting rabbits.

**Steve Jones** began his croquet career in Cheltenham, England, before shifting to New Zealand in 1982. There he won the NZ Open in 1996 and 4 Open Doubles titles as well as playing in 4 Trans Tasman Tests and 4 MacRobertson Shields. Steve was also World Champion at Sonoma in 1989, and in 1997 wrote a book on croquet "Peel Appeal". After jumping the ditch in 1999 he was reserve for the 2006 Australian Mac team, before becoming Australian Team Coach in 2007. In real life he is Business Development Manager for a marketing company in Brisbane and, more importantly, spends as much time as possible travelling the world, drinking Italian coffee and wine, as well as (and sometimes at the same time as) boating and fishing!

## GREAT BRITAIN



Keith Aiton  
(Captain)



Rutger Beijderwellen



Chris Clark



Robert Fulford



David Maugham



Stephen Mulliner

**Keith Aiton** took up croquet seriously while a student at Cambridge University where he was captain of the team against Oxford in 1982. The next year he reached the final of the Open Championship and won the Chairman's Salver. For the next six years he was near the top of the game in Britain while also developing an interest in coaching. From 1988 to 1992 he ran the National Junior Squad that produced world champions Robert Fulford and Chris Clarke and several other Great Britain internationals including the mighty David Maugham. Keith was coach of the winning Great Britain team in the MacRobertson Shields of 1990, 1993 and 1996. Keith's playing career became revitalised in 2005 due to the purchase of a new (modern) mallet, and he won the President's Cup that year. In 2006 he played in the Great Britain team that retained the MacRobertson Shield in emphatic fashion. Keith was the only player to win all six of his singles matches. He is a member of Nottingham and Bowdon croquet clubs.

Outside of croquet Keith works as a business coach and commercial mediator and is a doting father to his two children. He plays chess for his local club and golf when time permits.

**Rutger Beijderwellen** moved from the Netherlands to England to follow a croquet dream. With two major opens recently under his belt (New Zealand and the British) and being a member of the British Test Team he now has his sights firmly set on becoming the World Champion.

**Chris Clark** started playing croquet at the age of 13. He has won every major championship in the sport, but is particularly proud of his 15 National Doubles Titles. Chris moved to live in NZ in 2005 and lives in Christchurch with his wife Jenny (see NZ team) and their golden Labrador, Amy. He is President of the



Ian Lines  
(Reserve)

Canterbury Croquet Association and Coach of the NZ Youth Squad. Health permitting, this will be Chris' sixth MacRobertson Shield. He has been the world number 1 for the past two and a half years.

**Robert Fulford** made his debut in MacRobertson 1990 helping Great Britain to win a tight series in New Zealand. Since then GB has been unbeaten in the MacRobertson with Robert ever-present in the team. Outside of the MacRobertson Shield Robert has won the World Championship 5 times, is current holder of the President's Cup and is chasing after John Solomon's record for who has won the British Opens the most times. Robert is a member of Colchester Croquet Club where he first started playing back in 1985. He lives in Lower Raydon, Suffolk with his wife Susan and works for the NHS diabetic eye screening service.

**David Maugham**, born in 1969 is the IT manager for a natural stone company, he was introduced to croquet by his father in 1981 and started playing competitively in 1985. He has won various singles honours including the British Open Championship, British President's Cup on 4 occasions, the Sonoma-Cutrer World Championship 3 times, the Australian Open, the US Open and 17 British Regional Championships. His doubles successes include three British Open Doubles titles (with Steve Comish, Chris Clarke and Mark Avery) and two British Mixed Doubles (with Jenny Williams and Ailsa Lines).

David has also been on five MacRobertson Shield winning Great Britain sides, and considers his best match to be the one in which he completed a TP to win the deciding game of the final match of the test against New Zealand when the scores were level.

Outside of croquet, David has a black belt in ju-jitsu; recently gained a degree in IT with the Open University; enjoys computer games; and practices modern jive dancing.

**Stephen Mulliner**, 56, first played in the Mac in 1982 and this will be his 6th appearance for Great Britain (1982, 86, 90, 2000, 03, 10). He has won the British Open Championship on 3 occasions (1988, 1990, 2000), the President's Cup 5 times, the Sonoma-Cutrer version of the World Championship event 4 times, the European Championship 11 times and finished runner-up in the WCF World Championship twice (1997 and 2008). He does not mind who he plays doubles with and has won the British Open Doubles on 8 occasions with 4 different partners and reached the final on 9 other occasions with 3 others. He awarded himself three years off work in 2007 to travel and play more croquet and, in 2009, added the New Zealand, Australian, Irish, German and Austrian Opens. In his spare time, he is a business angel, a member of the WCF Management Committee, a former mayor and active local politician and a keen golfer and runner. He and Sarah have clocked up 30 years of marriage, four children aged from 27 to 21 and, so far, no grandchildren that they know of.

**Ian Lines** started playing croquet in 1993 at the age of 27 and made steady progress, winning the All England Handicap Championship in 1995, and has now been ranked in the world top ten for the last two years. However, it wasn't until after he won the Chairman's Salver in 2004 that he began to play at an international level, representing GB in the successful Solomon Trophy teams in 2005 and 2008. He has also represented England in several Home Internationals, and in 2008 he won the both the

Coles Championship and the Chairman's Salver for a second time. His most recent successes were winning the 2009 New Zealand Open Doubles Championship with Michael Wright, and winning the 2009 North of England Championship. Ian works as Risk Management Consultant, specializing in health and safety issues for major hazard installations such as chemical plants and refineries. When away from the lawn he is one of those that the sport needs by giving up his time to coach, organize tournaments and acting as Tournament Secretary for Bowdon Croquet Club and as Secretary of the North West Croquet Federation. He also enjoys travel, walking and climbing volcanoes.

## NEW ZEALAND



Aaron Westerby  
(Captain)



Greg Bryant



Paddy Chapman



Jenny Clarke



Paul Skinley



Michael Wright

Not pictured: Reserve, Phillip Drew. Team Manager Charles Jones.

**Aaron Westerby** taking the honoured position of Captain, he sees it as his responsibility to help the New Zealand team reach a good placing at the Event. Aaron started playing croquet in 1986 and his career highlights have included winning the 1994 and 1995 NZ mixed doubles title with his grandmother as well as being named "player of the series" at the 2010 Trans Tasman. Not one to take his position lightly he regards the MacRobertson shield event to be the pinnacle of competitive croquet and is proud to have a group of people that are very committed to the sport who will fight on even in adversity. "This quality will help us win matches on the margin", he says.

He believes we have a strong team this year and is looking forward to taking them to Great Britain. "All the players have earned their place". He is well aware of the pressures that such a competition can have on the players both physically and mentally. "It's a tough event and it does have a reputation for breaking the odd player completely so as captain of the side I will be looking out for signs of stress among the team and making sure it doesn't get on top of anyone. "I would like to thank all the interest and support from the clubs, players and Croquet NZ. This means that as a team we can focus on training and our performance at the event

without having to worry too much about finances".

**Greg Bryant**, a veteran of the MacRobertson shield event, this will be Greg's fourth tour having played in the 1993, 2003 and 2006 events. Greg has played croquet for about thirty years after he took his grandmother to an open day and discovered the sport to be more to his liking. "It was like snooker on grass, I liked it immediately and have played ever since," he says.

He realises that the MacRobertson event is always gruelling competition. "It will be a hard fought event. Great Britain is a great team and always plays hard. I'm looking forward to better results than we have had in previous years. Our goal is to win, or at least place second".

Greg has played with all his teammates previously which will increase the team dynamic over there. Greg had been practicing with a new mallet which he hopes will give him an edge in the competition. "I have always played with a basic mallet. Perhaps the most basic," he laughs. "I have always resisted change but now realise that I needed to upgrade after playing around with a weighted mallet and seeing the benefits".

Greg is hungry for the win and when asked of his personal goal at the tournament he replies, "It's been a long time since we have been prominent in the MacRobertson competition and where we sit. I am bloody determined to improve our standing".

**Paddy Chapman** is the youngest member of the team, but is no stranger to the event having participated in the 2006 competition in Australia. Paddy began playing croquet 11 years ago and with the aid of weekly coaching sessions by seven time NZ Open winner John Prince he has great success within the New Zealand Croquet scene. As well as competing in the MacRobertson Shield Paddy has been a part of the last two winning Trans Tasman events and recently won the NZ Open Championship. Paddy speaks highly of his team mates and enjoys participating in team Croquet events.

"My favourite events are team events. I've known all of my MacRobertson team mates for years and get along well with all of them. One of the strengths the New Zealand team has over other countries is that our team always gets along well. I believe it is the key factor in much of our previous Trans Tasman success. I think New Zealand is in with a great chance this time around. We have only two newcomers to the event and they are both extremely good players. We will take each match as it comes and focus on beating Australia who we will face first".

**Jenny Clarke** is representing New Zealand Croquet playing women, as it has been many years since a women was chosen for the competition and they couldn't have picked a stronger player. She started her career 11 years ago after some free lessons at Oxford University. Jenny has had many highlights including; "winning the NZ Open doubles with Chris Clarke (her husband) and winning the 2007 Swiss Open to name a few", she says. Jenny is in an unusual situation as she will be playing against her husband and coach Chris Clarke who will be playing for Great Britain. "I am very happy with this", she says. "Chris is supportive and genuine in his praise. It is always pleasing to be able to perform at one's best against your coach. It shows gratitude for their teaching".

She believes that team unity will be an asset in the competition and this is shown with the high praise she gives them, "My team mates are an awesome bunch. I have enjoyed spending time with them in tournaments or on tour with the Trans Tasman. Our compatibility will be a strength for us overseas".

**Paul Skinley** was born into a Croquet playing family and started playing as soon as he was old enough to join a club. "My mother played while carrying me and a week afterwards she was back on the courts again". With such an early start, and backing it was of no surprise to see him rise through the Croquet ranks. Paul adds a level of experience to the team being a veteran of the MacRobertson shield events, and having played and won in the 1979 and 1986 events. Paul's best local success came at the North Island National Championships where he won the singles, doubles and open divisions.

When asked about his previous MacRobertson experiences Paul says, "When playing at the MacRobertson Shield event it is 18 days of solid competition, it is difficult to stay focused for the event. You have to try and be in your best form and if you're not on form you have to find a way to get it back quickly".

It has been a tough few years with Paul having to recover from an accident which required him to learn to walk again. He is now back on his feet and ready to represent New Zealand to the best of his abilities. "It means a lot to be selected and to be at a level to compete. It is a good feeling to get back into form and achieve consistent results.

**Michael Wright** is looking to make a splash at his first MacRobertson Shield title is. Originally from South Africa, Michael immigrated to New Zealand 12 years ago and started playing croquet a year later after attended an open day at the local club and enjoying the game immediately. Michael has enjoyed success during his career, but his highlight was during the Top 8 Invitational where he placed second to team mate and Captain Aaron Westerby. As well as this achievement his name appears consistently throughout the leader boards of tournaments.

He is aware that he will be fighting an uphill battle as the odds are against him but he is eager to prove he is worthy of the competition. "Currently I am ranked 50th in the world which makes me the lowest ranked player in the competition. On paper I should lose everything," he laughs. "My goal is to be well prepared and play my best from game to game and give it my all".

"I am proud to be representing my adopted country at the highest level", he states proudly. Currently Michael is practicing as normal in preparation for the competition and looking forward to the team's training session to be held in Christchurch before the event.

## THE USA



Jeff Soo  
(Captain)



Jim Bast



Doug Grimsley



Danny Huneycutt



Richard Lamm



Ben Rothman



Paul Bennett  
(Reserve)



Paul Billings  
(Reserve)



Jerry Stark  
1955 - 2010

**Jerry Stark** sadly lost his battle with cancer in May of 2010. He had played in all five of the previous MacRobertson USA teams and had been selected to play in the sixth. The team will be wearing Jerry's initials on the sleeves of their team shirts, as a mark of respect to their friend and team member.

**Jeff Soo** started playing croquet when Ben Rothman was ten years old. He had the good fortune to learn the game from some of America's best players, and soon made it his goal to play for Team USA, thanks to the encouragement of his principal mentor in croquet, Mack Penwell. Jeff made his Team debut at the 1999 Solomon Trophy, and his MacRob debut in 2000 at Christchurch. The 2010 MacRob is his ninth appearance on the team, and his third as Team Captain. He has won US national titles in USCA Croquet, Association Croquet, and Golf Croquet. And he is the current club champion of the Stoneridge Croquet Club, his home club located in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

**Jim Bast** began playing competitive croquet in 1981 at the Arizona Croquet Club. Less than two months later he played in his first USCA National Championship. Named USCA Rookie of the Year in 1982, he then competed in the USCA International Challenge Cup in 1982 and 1983 against Scotland and South Africa. Jim became the USCA national singles and doubles champion in 1984, in American Rules. He then turned his sights on a new goal, helping the United States gain entry to the MacRobertson Shield.

In 1985, Jim was a member of the first USCA test team to tour Great Britain, competing against Great Britain, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. Jim competed in the first six Sonoma-Cutrer world championships. In 1991, he became the first American to reach the finals at Sonoma-Cutrer, narrowly losing to Dave Maugham. Also, in 1991, he played for the USCA Solomon Trophy team and played in his first WCF World Championship at Hurlingham. In 1993, Jim was named in the first United States MacRobertson Shield team, the most meaningful moment in his croquet career to date. He does, however, remain quite fond of his two Arizona Open titles.

Jim largely "retired" from croquet for nearly ten years to start a family with his wife, Cynthia, an affordable housing attorney in Austin, Texas. Since his return to the game in 2005, he has reached the finals of the US Association Croquet National Championship and won the Canadian Open in 2009. He was humbled to once again represent the United States in the 2009 Solomon Trophy and to be a part of that historic first triumph over Great Britain.

Jim and Cynthia reside in Austin, Texas where, sadly, there is no croquet club or lawn. He practices on a sport court and travels to Houston to play on a regulation lawn. Jim retired from a career in professional sports to be the stay-at-home parent; the "toughest job I ever had, and I've had some doozies." Their two daughters, Olivia (10) and Amelia (7) use the Solomon grip.

**Doug Grimsley** continues to win National Doubles Championships in both Association and American Rules with the dual strategy of playing reasonably competent croquet and picking really good partners. This, combined with occasional singles success enabled him to qualify for spots on the U.S Solomon and Carter teams. The retired tuna boat captain now works in real estate, leaving ample time and just enough money to pursue his "croquet career". Doug recently celebrated his 20th year in croquet by purchasing a new hat.

**Danny Huneycutt** began playing croquet in 2002 and immediately became involved in the North Carolina District administration, club building, teaching and tournament directing.

His most cherished croquet moments are, in chronological order, winning the 2005 National Championship, partnering Jeff Soo to win two of three doubles matches in the 2005 Solomon Trophy, winning the deciding match to win a test for the USA during the 2006 MacRobertson Shield, winning three of three singles matches during the 2008 Solomon, partnering with the Goat to come within one turn of winning the 2008 British Open doubles championship, and contributing to the 2009 USA victory over Great Britain in the 2009 Solomon Trophy.

Born in 1958, with thirty-one years of service, Danny retired March 31, 2009 from R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, where he spent the last fifteen years as a GIS and IT professional. He has been focusing his efforts on "being the best croquet player I can, developing others and promoting croquet". Being married to Danna, the love of his life, for 32 years and raising two children, Brook age 28 and Zachary age 25 has made for a most wonderful life.

**Rich Lamm** made his US team debut during the 2004 Solomon Trophy in Bowdon, UK. He also contributed to the US team victory over Ireland in 2009. This is his second MacRobertson Shield appearance. He enjoys both American and Association rules croquet, winning the 2007 National Championship, 2002 and 2003 US Open, 2008 Rocky Mountain Invitational and the American Rules 2006 Osborn Cup. He looks forward to all that great English cuisine this summer and boldly forecasts there will be no rain the entire month of August.

**Ben Rothman** is a 26 year old alumnus of the University of California, San Diego where he received a B.S. in Psychology in 2006. Ben has been all over the North American croquet circuit since 2008 and has racked up several tournament wins including the 2009 National Championship singles and doubles with partner Doug Grimsley. This will be Ben's first MacRobertson shield appearance, though he was a member of two Solomon Trophy teams and one Carter Challenge squad. Ben is attempting to eat, drink and breathe croquet because he loves it.

**Paul Bennett** began playing croquet as a member of the Arizona Croquet Club, then joined the Kentucky clay court association, the American Croquet Association, the United States Croquet Association, the Mission Hills Croquet Club and the Croquet Association. Each step has helped advance his play through progressively stiffer competitions and greater variety of techniques; he has enjoyed travel within the United States, New Zealand, Jersey, Ireland and Great Britain. Paul is an analogue integrated circuit design engineer within National Semiconductor's Power Management Division. Away from croquet, Paul stays active with aviation, amateur radio, billiards, bicycling, hiking and rock climbing. Paul has played in two Solomon Trophy matches and as Team USA captain at the 2006 Carter Challenge. Paul won the 2004 North American Open, the 2004 and the 2006 US Opens.

**Paul Billings**, born 1969, is an electrical engineer specializing in image and signal processing. He was introduced to Association Croquet in 2000 while living in Maui (Hawaii) but began a more focused pursuit of the game in 2008. Indeed, it figured largely in his recent relocation to Denver, Colorado. Memorable croquet moments include back-to-back victories of the Meadowood Classic, a 5th turn quad to win the 2009 US Nationals Plate, and sharing first place in block play after reaching the 2009 World Championships through the Qualifying Tournament.

When not on the lawn, one is likely to find him playing beach volleyball (doubles), making custom furniture in his workshop, or simply enjoying the family life with his wife Tracy and son Jackson (5 yrs old).

### MacRobertson Shield Facts by Chris Williams, CA Archivist

Heaton Park and Surbiton will become the 13th and 14th venues in the UK to stage a MacRobertson Shield test match. The previous ones, together with when they were first used are below. The figures in brackets indicate the number of tests held at that venue.

- 1 1925 Roehampton (5)
- 2 1925 Cheltenham (6)
- 3 1925 Southwick (4)
- 4 1937 Hurlingham (5)
- 5 1937 Buxton (1)
- 6 1956 Nottingham (5)
- 7 1956 Budleigh (3)
- 8 1974 Colchester (2)
- 9 1974 Compton (2)
- 10 1986 Bowdon (3)
- 11 1986 Parkstone (2)
- 12 1986 Hunstanton (1)
- 13 2010 Heaton Park (1)
- 14 2010 Surbiton (2)

The Warleigh Club in Melbourne, Australia has held the most test matches (23) between 1927 and 1982.

Rutger Beijderwellen will become the 58th player to represent GB/England. Australia field 3 debutants, Robert Fletcher, Peter Landrebe and Kevin Beard, who will become the 62nd, 63rd and 64th players to play for Australia.

New Zealand field two newcomers Jenny Clarke (number 51) and South African born Michael Wright (52), whilst the USA will

For all other details of the MacRobertson Shield and the World Team Championship please visit the CA Website of the MacRobertson Shield.  
<http://www.macrobotsonshield2010.org/>

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## News & Information

### CA Diplomas

Nominations, by clubs or federations, of people who have performed exceptional service are invited for the award of a CA Diplomas. Diplomas were first awarded in 2000 and are intended primarily to recognise the work done by the many volunteers who do so much "behind the scenes" to provide the facilities, service and organisation that we all enjoy, but so easily take for granted. Council decided to extend them to cover service through federations at its March meeting.

Nominations should be sent to the CA Office by 1st August, together with a short (approx 100 words) citation that will be published when the awards are made. Diplomas are normally presented at the AGM (which this year is at Hurlingham on 16th October), but arrangements can be made to present them locally if the recipient is unable to be there.

Ian Vincent  
Hon. Secretary

### New lawns and Pavilion for Hamptworth

CA President, Quiller Barrett, officially opened two new lawns and a spectacular new pavilion at Hamptworth Croquet Club, midway between Salisbury and Southampton, on Saturday 17 April.

The Croquet Association has helped to finance these improvements and he warmly congratulated the club's Life President, Richard Stevens, and the members on their enterprise in promoting Hamptworth to 4-lawn status. The club is already committed to holding additional courses and open tournaments this year.

About 100 members and friends then enjoyed watching exhibition matches of Golf and Association croquet played between Rutger Beijderwellen and Dave Maugham who will be doubles partners in the GB team in the MacRobertson Shield in August.



Quiller Barrett cuts the ribbon at Hamptworth with Richard Stevens assisting.

### Refurbished clubhouse at Sussex County Croquet Club

On the Opening Day of the 2010 Season, CA President Quiller Barrett officially opened the newly refurbished clubhouse canteen and bar at Southwick.



Before formally cutting the tape, Quiller remembered his first visit to Southwick more than twenty years before, when the club was not in such good state as it is now. He rehearsed some of the developments since then, both in lawn care and innovations like the Croquet Academy, and the support which had been received from the Croquet Association development funds. He praised the club management for the change in culture which had taken place. He thanked all those involved in the re-design and refurbishment which would make the clubhouse a much more sociable place in which to meet. Following the ceremony, Quiller was invited to pull the first pint!

The driving force behind the work has been David Gaitley (responsible for the club bar) who did the planning and design, drawings and much of the building work. The other main participants were Paul Castell, Jack Davies, John Gosney and Peter Pullin, supported by members of the Winter Working Party including Martin Rogers, Alan Scott and Peter Yates.

The Club owes a very large debt of gratitude to all these and others who took part.

The purpose of the work on the bar was to create an area where visitors can chat without being in the way at busy times for meals and to make their visit to Southwick more attractive and enjoyable. Space was created by moving the servery back and this has allowed new events to take place, like Paul Castell's Skittles Evening (to be repeated, hopefully, later in the year).

It will improve serving during meals as the food and drinks queues will be separated and will allow bar staff more room to work effectively - shorter queues during the InterCounties!

One of the major improvements David made to the club bar when he took over was dramatically to improve the range and quality of beer available on a regular basis. A contract with Dark Star, a local Sussex mini-brewery, provides their excellent Hophead and one other beer on tap. In addition, David has introduced a wide range of bottled speciality beers from around the country.

The changes to the bar area include, as well as the two beer taps, a built-in sink and glass washer, so that the bar is entirely self-

sufficient and does not interfere with the operation of the kitchen area.

The re-furbished kitchen area was designed with help from Jonathan and Chrissy Isaacs and now has a dedicated vegetable preparation sink, new double oven and microwave and a commercial dishwasher. It will be used in earnest during the 2010 season.

John Low

## Points Of View

### Golf Croquet Referees - Shouldn't we be building on success?

by Michael Hague

I enjoyed reading in the February Gazette the article by Bill Arliss on GC Referee Training but it leaves me with the impression that there is something not quite right with the present system if there is a failure rate of 75% for the written examination. Something is wrong; it is not in the interests of the sport to have a shortage of qualified officials. We should look again at how the GC referees are trained and tested and what we are training them for; bearing in mind that while there are GC International Level Tournaments and other top GC events, much more GC is played at the Club and Inter-club level where the knowledge of the laws is often abysmal and GC referees do not abound.

Most sports have a structured progression for referees eg junior club and schools, league, county, international and world finals, whereby referees gain experience and can have further training and testing/selection for the different grades. Association Croquet has the Assistant Referee qualification, fully qualified referee, Championship and Examining referees. GC has only Referees and a very few Examining Referees. Bill has the commendable aim to "demand much higher standards from our new referees on fault recognition and future tests will reflect these new standards". This is all very well for the top end of competitive GC but it is not helping to broaden the base of referees at the club level where they are needed and through whom knowledge of the laws can be improved for the average player.

What I would advocate is a club referee or assistant referee (call it what you will) with a lower pass mark, allowing the lower grade official to improve with experience and perform a useful function in the meantime. We all, of whatever level of qualification, improve with experience (and I do not accept the myth that only A-class players should be referees or can be good referees!) and meet new and unique situations that have us delving in the laws books and discussing the outcome.

If someone is willing to give up his or her time to study the laws, attend a course and later take an exam, we should be doing everything we can to help them to get a qualification which they can use and build on. One step in the preparation we miss out on at present, which one has in schools and many professional institutions, is the mock exam. It is an excellent means of revision, identifying areas for the student to polish up (or where the teaching has failed and should be done again!) and helps to build self-confidence from experiencing exam conditions. Mock exam papers

could be given out at the end of the one day referee course, to be done in the student's own time and marked and commented on either by experienced referees in a local club or by correspondence with examining referees.

Another important area which is neglected at present, is Exam Technique. In the written exams for both AC and GC there are time limits which throw many candidates (the AC exam can be taken orally which makes time a less critical factor but it is for the written it is). I believe the exam should test knowledge, not the ability to work fast under unrealistic conditions where the problem is described in written form in the classroom rather than visually on court. Exam Technique includes:

- Making out a quick time plan according to the time allowed, the number of questions and the marks allocated to them.
- Allow a few minutes to review the finished paper. A few corrections might be spotted to pick up a few extra marks.
- Read questions twice. Too many misread what is written down on the exam paper and answer the wrong question.
- Only answer the question asked. Don't go off on a tangent or elaborate unnecessarily.
- Stick to your time appreciation. Move on if stuck. Spending valuable time on chasing a couple of extra points can mean not answering all the later questions, a most common cause of failing exams.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, skip it and come back to it at the end if you have remembered something about it. Too many run out of time and fail to complete other questions where they could have more easily gained marks.

Over the very recent years GC has made great strides in being properly organised and recognised in the croquet world as a game in its own right. Qualified officials are an important factor in the growth and sustainability of a sport. Right now we are just not producing enough GC referees and perhaps it is time to have another think about what we are doing and how we are doing it. I hope that I have made a few suggestions worthy of consideration.

## Publications

### "Complete Croquet – A Guide to Skills, Tactics and Strategy" my process of writing a croquet book

by James Hawkins

Three years ago I received a phone call from Jeff Dawson at the CA Shop. He'd just been contacted by a small publishing company, Crowood Press, who wanted someone to write a book on croquet. I'd just written a series of coaching articles for the Gazette, and – slightly against my better judgement – I ended up volunteering to serve as author.

Crowood have some form in publishing books on croquet. They've previously given us *The World of Croquet* by John

McCullough and Stephen Mulliner, and *Croquet – The Skills of the Game* by Bill Lamb. Crowood, a relative minnow in the publishing world, are unafraid of allowing their titles to remain in print for a long time, and are prepared to cater for a niche readership. (Their catalogue of other titles, for those who are interested, can be viewed at [www.crowood.com](http://www.crowood.com). This treasure trove of obscurity includes such titles as "Cattle Footcare and Claw Trimming", "Corkscrews" and "Wehrmacht Camouflage Uniforms and Post-War Derivatives".)

My brief was to release a title pitched at – in the words of my editor – a "more advanced" level. Aware that "Advanced Croquet Strategy" could lead me down a path more obscure than anything else in the Crowood range, my challenge was to interpret my instructions in a way which might make sense, both to them as publishers and to me as author.

Eventually, Crowood's Commissioning Editor and I settled on a synopsis which satisfied both of us. The title, after some to-ing and fro-ing, became "Complete Croquet – A Guide to Skills, Tactics and Strategy". There's a brief coverage of how to hit a ball, but the bulk of the book is concerned with tactics, from the basics of how to play a break, right up to the more obscure realms of A-class play, via how to deal with both giving and receiving bisques. The target audience is the keen improver – someone who's maybe already come to terms with a beginners' coaching course, and is looking for something to dip into over the course of several months or years, in the long climb from novice to expert.

I'd been set an 18-month deadline to deliver the manuscript, but most of that period turned out to be "thinking time". I paced around the house, frowning and pointing at imaginary croquet balls, trying to strip apart everything I'd ever learned about the game, examining every component, and then trying to reassemble all the parts to see if it fitted back together.

So, with six months to go before my deadline, I had everything worked out – not only how to play the perfect game, but also why. The problem was that all that information was floating round in my head in one big knotted ball of detail. That left me with the difficult task of trying to unravel it, and transcribe it to paper before it was all forgotten.

This process, for those who've never attempted to write a

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The Manor House, 1 Barn Croft, Penwortham,  
Preston PR1 0SX

60,000 word book, isn't something I'd recommend. Nevertheless, everything was bundled up and despatched to the publishers by August 2009. There then starts the long process of producing the book.

Collating, editing, indexing, typesetting and proofing take a surprisingly long time. It took until February this year to sign off the final draft. Then the whole thing gets sent electronically to a printing press in China, where the book is finally produced.

At the time of writing (the end of March), I'm expecting the first copy any day now. The first batch (review copies, and my one and only complimentary copy) will be flown into the country, with the rest of the print run following by boat. Assuming the cargo doesn't get impounded by customs officers, you should be able to buy it in the shops round about the end of May. (With much satisfaction, I've just looked online to view the pre-ordering screen at Amazon. Today I'm ranked at #8 in the Ball Games chart, ahead of Ryan Giggs' autobiography.)

I leave the task of reviewing to someone with less of a vested interest in the book's success. As yet, I haven't seen a completed draft, so have no idea how it will turn out. I've tried to convey some of the feel of croquet as it's played today, as well as making the book as instructive as possible. I'll soon see how well I've achieved that.

*Complete Croquet – A Guide to Skills, Tactics and Techniques* by James Hawkins will be reviewed in the August issue, and is now available from the CA shop, priced at £16 inc free P&P.

### SPONSORSHIP AND FUNDRAISING

To host major events it is becoming important that the CA can either find sponsorship or other means of raising funds to support these events.

Being a voluntary organisation we cannot afford to pay an agency in the hope that they may come up with the results. We are however prepared to pay people based on a percentage of the result achieved.

If anybody has the expertise required or knows of someone who would be prepared to work on a voluntary or percentage fee basis could they contact the Chairman of the Marketing Committee, Jeff Dawson, [jeff.p.dawson@gmail.com](mailto:jeff.p.dawson@gmail.com)



# COACHING

## Tips for Coaches No 2

by David Mooney

### Striking and Stalking

This lesson is essentially a teaching lesson and is for both Golf Croquet (GC) and Association Croquet (AC). It should be noted that along with rushing/clearing, striking or hitting a ball is the key skill for a croquet player. The ability to hit will aid the development of novice croquet players far more than any other skill. On this basis it is surprising that more time is not spent actually teaching the correct way of striking, whether it be with a casting style or with a standing style. I believe that striking balls and running hoops should be the only things taught in the first lesson, together with a free play session of GC afterwards or Pirates.

Golf (the Royal and Ancient kind) and croquet are two of the few games where you are required to strike a stationary object with an implement. In most ball games the skill is to hit a moving ball and the brain is able to track the trajectory and speed of the ball to bring a racquet or hand or foot to the ball and this gives a bigger margin for error. In rugby and association football it has been identified that goal/place kicking and free kicks are specialised skills. You only have to look at the effect that Jonny Wilkinson had on the England Rugby Union team to understand the significance of the skill.

Hitting a stationary object requires the ability to take the correct position or stance to hit the ball correctly. Taking the correct stance consistently is amazingly difficult for beginners. To teach this skill and then to coach it to the required level requires time and problems that develop here can be very difficult to correct later.

### Lesson Plan

As this is usually the first lesson that is undertaken it is important to introduce the equipment and the basic concept of the games of croquet (both AC and GC) but GC is the game we are going to use for the later play session, so concentrate on that. The grips should also be mentioned at the start and the coach should check each player's grip before a ball is struck.

### Practice 1 Striking and Stance

Demonstrate the striking of a ball, identifying the correct position of the feet (parallel to the line of striking) and the correct position of the mallet, not between the feet but just in front of the feet. Having the back of the mallet head level with the toes is a good indicator, but some people may find slightly further forward is more comfortable. Emphasise that comfort and freedom to swing easily are the two best guides to show that you have a good stance. After the demonstration, get your players into pairs facing each other at about 6-8 yds apart and get them to hit a ball to each other. Get the player who is not hitting the ball to give marks out of 5 on how clean the hit is. The coach should be walking round correcting errors and praising good technique throughout this period. This

practice should take no more than 5 minutes.

### Practice 2 Stalking and hitting a ball

Now that we have taught the stance and striking, we need to talk about hitting an object ball. If you know about the techniques of golf, it is good to emphasise the similarities between the golf address and stalking in croquet. At the moment the players haven't had to aim at anything. The coach should again emphasise that aiming can be seen as a very personal thing, with many people having quite idiosyncratic methods. *These methods are not wrong* and they probably work for the players concerned. What the coach is demonstrating is the accepted way of aiming and stalking. Other methods could be tried outside the lesson should the player find this method is not working for them, but they should consult the coach at the next session for one-to-one tuition to sort out faults. The acronym I use for this practice is

### The six S's.

**Stand** Stand on the line of aiming between the player's ball and the target ball (red), at least 6 feet behind the player's ball.

**Swing** Swing over the object ball and the target ball and adjust stance until the aiming line on the mallet passes through the centre of both balls.

**Stalk** Walk down the aiming line to the player's ball, swinging the mallet as you walk to check the correct aiming position.

**Stand** Stand in the correct position to hit the ball.

**Swing** Swing over the top of the player's ball to check the correct aiming position.

**Strike** Take the mallet back and swing through smoothly, following through to the target ball and keeping the head still until the mallet has reached the end of its travel.

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I have developed this hitting and stalking layout primarily for teaching good aiming technique and introducing stalking in a way that the coach can measure progress easily. You need at least eight balls for this practice and I have also made myself a 'coaching' ball.

A coaching ball is one with a hole drilled in it and with a half bisque glued into the hole. The coaching ball acts as a target and saves the coach from continually having to replace the ball. Put the coaching ball on a boundary line (don't put the ball in the court or your groundsman will be chasing you, as when the ball is hit continually it can make a rather large hole in the court!) Then set up the layout as in figure 1. The first distance of 6 feet may seem short but it is important to offer a measure of early success and then to make the test harder.

The pupils should stand at the end opposite to the coaching ball, the coach should stand adjacent to one of the bisques aligned with the first ball marker. The first pupil should then walk down the line and stand in correct position and hit the ball at the target ball, Stalking should begin from a marker 2 yards behind the ball e.g. position 3 for position 1.

The coach should then either praise the shot if it hit or explain any faults. The pupil should then walk up, retrieve the striker's ball

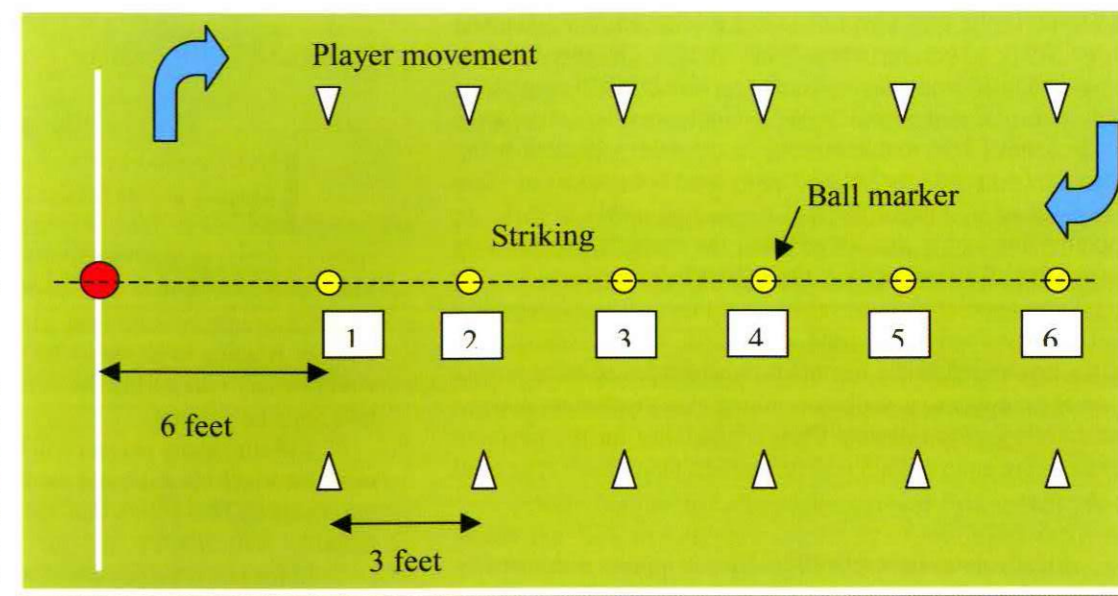


Figure 1 Striking and Stalking Layout

and return it to the coach. The coach in the meantime should replace a striking ball on the first marker and the second player should repeat the process. If a player succeeds in hitting 5 times in a row, the player starts from first marker further back and continues to progress in this manner, increasing the distance with success. This is the *overloading* part of the exercise referred to in Tips for Coaches 1.

The players must walk back to the far end outside the line of the bisques. It should be noted that if this exercise is running well there should be a conveyor belt effect with players playing a shot about every 20 seconds. The coach must correct and praise throughout the exercise and keep the balls placed on the markers quickly.

## The View from the Bar

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

International intrigue has continued to be the topic of most discussion on the List over the past couple of months. A topic of considerable conversation has been the announcement by the World Croquet Federation (WCF) of an Association Women's World Championship – a Golf Women's World Championship has been running for a few years now, with a championship held in Australia last year.

All the contributors spoke (with varying degrees of conviction) of the need to improve the women's game, both in terms of the number of players and the quality at the top level – currently only three of the top 100 Association players are women. However there was considerable disagreement whether a Women's World Championship was the way to achieve this. Those who spoke against

this ranged from those who felt it was patronising towards women and that playing in events without men would not help women reach the highest level, to those who were opposed for the more practical reason that they felt it was highly unlikely that such an event could attract entrants from across the globe, as opposed to merely the country it was located in. It was noted that one factor behind the success of the Golf World Championship was the enthusiasm and skill of the Egyptian women, who do not play Association. However, others were supportive of the initiative, believing that it was worth trying and that women might find their confidence improved by the opportunity to compete at a world championship level with a realistic chance of winning. Interestingly, while the men who spoke in the debate were fairly equally divided between supporters and opponents, there were women in favour of the initiative as well as some vocal dissenters. The key test will be if the concept transfers into practical support for the event.

A spill-over from that debate was Chris Clarke's fairly mild support for the initiative, provided there was sufficient women's support. Coincidentally – or perhaps not if you believe some of

the contributors – the announcement was then made of Chris’s ascension to the very grand-sounding role of Secretary-General of the WCF, taking over from Brian Storey. The role involves more than just being a secretary, since it also brings a vote on the Management Committee of the WCF. Some contributors deplored the fact that Chris was appointed to the role without it being advertised more widely – indeed many were not even aware there was a vacancy. Others felt that it was reasonable to make an appointment, rather than advertising the vacancy, to speed up the process of filling the post. One possible compromise was for an interim appointment to ensure continuity, while allowing the post to be properly advertised. That said, nobody was able to fault Chris’s credentials for this role, which led to the amusing sight of a number of contributors falling over themselves to point out that they didn’t dispute Chris’s suitability for the position, before going on to explain why he shouldn’t have been appointed to the post.

Finally, some light relief from croquet politics was posed by the question of how wide a target a single ball is. Many contributors, including me, thought that it was three balls wide. Visualising the target you are shooting at, you can just nick it on the left-hand edge, or hit it full on, or just nick it on the right-hand edge – so surely three balls wide. Not so. The reason this is incorrect is that to get a target three balls wide you are measuring from the left-hand edge of the first ball to the right-hand edge of the second ball – which is comparing apples with pairs. If you visualise the target and then think of a fixed point, you can see that it is in fact two balls wide – if you just look at the centre of each ball, then from the centre of the ball that would just clip the target on the left-hand to the centre of the ball that would just clip the target of the right-hand edge is actually two balls wide. Never say that the Notts List doesn’t teach you anything useful.

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.

## ALL ENGLAND GOLF CROQUET AREA FINALS

Please note that there will be area finals for this competition on Saturday 31st July at Letchworth CC and on Sunday 8th August at Kenilworth CC. Depending on location of all entered clubs at closing date, there may be a further venue, to be arranged.

Please send all tournament reports and photos to [news@croquet.org.uk](mailto: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.

## Editorial

It’s been good weather for croquet, well in the north anyway. One of the American team soon to visit for the MacRobertson Shield has been brave enough to say that the weather is going to be sunny for the whole of August, and there won’t be any rain during the event – now that is optimistic, but let’s hope he’s right.

I’m sure many players will be looking forward to watching some the MacRobertson and the World Team event, which brings me nicely to two points that have come to mind since the last issue.

Some players enjoy watching croquet, I’m one of them, as I find it interesting to watch how others play the game, their technique, choice of shot, if they use different grips for different shots, how they build breaks etc etc. I believe that I’ve learned a lot from watching players over the years, but in watching I am also observing, whether as a pure spectator or as the out-player. Each of the three events I have played in recently have resulted in the observant out-player becoming aware that all was not as it should have been, with regards to wrong balls being played, balls played twice, and bisques not being signalled. I don’t for one minute think that any of the errors were made deliberately, but by observing and being able to recall the various courses of actions, redress was made quickly and efficiently and the games were relatively uninterrupted. So maybe in this fine sunny spell of weather we should all observe our games to see what we can learn and possibly prevent.

My second observation is regarding tournament entries and travelling, and I wonder if the patterns of player’s choices of which events to play in are being influenced by the economic climate in the last couple of years. Are we more likely to stay and play the events at our own clubs and those in the local vicinity, as opposed to travelling further in favour of finding new opponents? Or have we just reached the point where we have so much choice now in the fixtures list that we don’t have to travel as far as we used to? Let me know if you’re making active decisions on the matter.



Huddersfield Croquet Club welcomes all comers. Mr and Mrs Mallard found the lawn to their liking especially later that afternoon when the heavens opened and it became waterlogged!  
Photo by Maggie Crossland



## The Croquet Association and Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups

### An Introduction

by Jean Hargreaves

Firstly let me introduce myself. I am the current C.A. Child Protection Officer (CPO). My professional background is in Nursing, initially in a Children’s Hospital. I have almost 40 years of experience working voluntarily with young girls and women in Girlguiding UK.

I do not profess to be an expert in the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults but will try my hardest to advise people as best I can. What I don’t know I will try to find out.

The safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults has long been a consideration of Government Legislation. Two current acts are the Childcare Act 2006 and the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. The latter has led to the introduction of the Vetting and Barring Scheme that came into force last autumn and is slowly being implemented. All establishments that deal with these vulnerable groups are required to have policies/procedures in place relating to these issues.

The Croquet Association, Federations and croquet clubs are not exempt from this. Coaching of young people and vulnerable adults is provided at all levels whether they are club members or visitors attending clubs for e.g. a coaching course covering 6 weeks.

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act defines children as persons of less than 18 years of age. Vulnerable adults are those aged 18+ who come under certain categories. (Please ask if you want more information on these categories).

The Croquet Association has a model policy, model Code of Good Practice – Safeguarding Children and a model reporting form, which are available on its website. The World Croquet Federation also has papers relating to these matters. There are many other organisations that have sample documents similar to the above that could be adapted to comply with Croquet.

Federations and clubs should be aware that most, if not all, funding bodies require clubs to have these documents in place, as well as a designated Child Protection Officer, when considering grant applications.

To reiterate a comment from the former CA paper by Bob Whittaker, a former CA CPO “I am sure that the CA, federations and clubs would wish to have the interest and well being of children and vulnerable adults taking part in the game as an achievable objective and not to see it as yet another difficulty or bureaucratic measure to be imposed on the game”.

Federations and clubs should have their policies etc. formally adopted at their Committee meeting or AGM whichever is appropriate. They should include details of the Child Protection Officer. It is advisable for some members of each club to receive some training in Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups. If possible this

should include the CPO, Chairman and any coaches of the club or Federation. It may be possible to arrange this, or get advice on available training, through the Local Authority or police. Some churches or local youth organisations also have people who can carry out this training for club/Federation members.

At present the ideal requirement is for clubs to have at least 1 person, preferably 2 (or more), with CRB clearance. It may be possible for this to be obtained through the local Sports Development Council; it cannot be done through the CA.

Following the introduction of the Vetting and Barring Scheme changes are taking place in how people obtain clearance. The Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA), through the Vetting and Barring Scheme, will be responsible for checking individuals. The information at the moment is that this will commence in the summer. There are certain criteria regarding who will need checking, and when. There is some information on the ISA website but this has altered since it was first set up. I have asked the ISA to keep me informed of any updates in the information being provided. When I have more concrete information regarding this I will endeavour to disseminate it to all clubs and Federations.

We would hope that all clubs feel that they could welcome children and vulnerable adults to their clubs as it is to our advantage to nurture and develop these people for the benefit of Croquet. I understand some clubs still have grave reservations about having junior members. A vast amount of Safeguarding is based on commonsense. Please do not be put off by what you might have heard previously.

Meanwhile, any Federation, club or individual requiring information or assistance please contact me either by letter to 9 St. Paul’s Rd. Salford M7 3NY, email to [jwjh#care4free.net](mailto:jwjh#care4free.net) or by phone 0161 792 4694. I will try my best to help.

## Tournament News

### Surbiton Easter Handicap 2-3 April

Report by Samir Patel

The first tournament played since the installation of Surbiton’s new irrigation system was met by the inevitable heavy rain, flooded laws, cold wind and disrupted play. However, a number of players from across the handicap range mastered the conditions, leaving players ranging from -2 to +18 on the overnight leader-board.

Day 2 opened without any play, but by noon we had four lawns open (one only temporarily, and running at only 7 seconds). A number of players paddled hard, but Sam Murray (18) emerged from the puddles at the end of the day to win the event with 5 wins from 6 games and was presented with the Llewellyn-Williams Urn. Andrew Johnson (-1) pipped Ian Plummer (0) to second place.

The event hosted three tournament newcomers, and all did well. Other than Sam Murray, a new member at Surbiton, Lucy Beach (14) from Reigate finished on 3 wins from 5, and Carole McLoughlin (18) from Surbiton from on 2 wins from 4. Sam and Carole both earned their Bronze merit award, and Sam also had his handicap cut from 18 to 14.

## Cheltenham Easter Tournament 2-5 April

Report by Penny Crowe

Forty players were expected on Good Friday morning, 16 to play in the advanced play section and 24 in the handicap play section and 41 turned up – an extra player expecting advanced rules games! A manager's nightmare! Fortunately our new club secretary, Klim Seabright, did the gentlemanly thing and dropped out in favour of the visiting player, only to drop into the handicap section as one of those players decided he didn't want to play after all!

This year both sections played knockouts and Egyptians. The advanced play games were untimed although those who actually read the notice (which croquet players are notorious for not doing) found that best-of-three games had to finish on the day they started! Fortunately, all games finished! Handicap play was organised as 26 point knockout games with the Bray system used for the Egyptian.

The advanced play knockout was won by David Foulser. David Mundy was runner-up. In the Egyptian Lee Hartley came first with Tony Forbes and Jim Field coming second and third respectively. David Mundy also won the peeling prize, but as he only executed a small number of peels he only received a small bottle of wine!

Fast improver, Richard Way, won the knockout in the handicap section with gentlemanly Klim coming runner-up. The placings for the Egyptian were 1. Eileen Gallagher, 2. Adam Moliver, and 3. Richard Thompson. Adam Moliver won the prize for the fastest 26 point game which he completed in 59 minutes while Klim Seabright pulled out the bisques!

Thanks must be expressed to Eileen and David Magee for, yet again, producing such excellent lunches, the lawns team for getting the courts up-to-scratch so early in the season and everyone else who provided teas and helped in the bar. No club would survive without willing helpers and in this we, at Cheltenham, are much blessed.



Winners & losers assemble for a photo call at Pendle & Craven. Photo by Barbara Dutton

## Matt Holmes wins the John Beech Memorial Easter Tournament at Pendle

Report by Barbara Dutton

Twelve contenders took part over the 4 days to win one of the five trophies on offer. Local man Roger Schofield battled hard to beat Roger Staples from Middlesbrough to take the

Low Handicap trophy, only to find he was in a shoot out for trophy with level score with David Turner from Tyneside (who also holds Pendle & Craven membership). They tossed a coin for which side to shoot from and unfortunately Roger lost out to David.

Joe Lennon from Glasgow took the High Handicap trophy. A young player from Bury Matt Holmes who arrived with a handicap of 14, took the Overall Winner trophy and was also awarded a silver medal for running 12 consecutive hoops in a game which he won. This, his first tournament came with a mixed blessing as his handicap has now been reduced to 9.

Liz Wilson of Fylde and Pendle took the Fastest Game trophy in just 48 minutes. Playing time is up to 3 hours 30 mins for each game.

James Hopgood (Edinburgh) and Peter Wilson (Fylde & Pendle) shared the Most Games Played trophy, getting in 12 each over the 4 days.

The weather was mixed but mostly kind and players contended well with the odd puddle, unlike the member who drove onto the green car park and became bogged down and remained so in spite of several efforts to free him. Croquet whites do not go well with mud splatter, rendering those players, who offered to push, in a semblance of monochrome Jackson Pollocks.

## Southwick Salver 10-11 April

Report By Stephen Mulliner

Jamie Burch retained the Southwick Salver

In a re-run of last year's final, Jamie Burch defeated Stephen Mulliner +26tp, -24tp, +26 at a sunny but windy Southwick on a distinctly interesting Lawn 5.

An entry of 26 contained mostly familiar faces but Andrew Hobbs from South Africa, but now living and working as a science teacher in Medway, was a most welcome addition. In the top half, Stephen Mulliner and Mark Avery made it to the semi-final with Mark reeling off four triples (plus two more in the Plate in idle moments between main event games). In the other half, Jamie Burch dropped the first game of his quarter-final to Nick Parish before recovering and then played Alex Jardine, the victor of the seeds' graveyard quarter (Martin French lost to Alex Jardine and Paul Castell to David Parkins who then got Mary Knapped who then lost to Alex).

The finalists Stephen and Jamie coped pretty well with the Lawn 5 conditions which were by far the most interesting of the weekend. Southwick had a very wet winter which did not help the lawns but visitors will be impressed by how much has been achieved. Lawn 4 has had most of its eastern half relayed so goodbye to the infamous ridge between hoops 3 and 4.

Eugene Chang won the Plate and, along with Alex Jardine, a handicap reduction. The players expressed their great appreciation to the hoop-setters, the excellent catering team and, of course, to Chris Constable, the manager. Another most enjoyable season-opener at Southwick.

## Lancashire Golf Croquet Open

10-11 April, Heaton Park

Report by Geoff Young

The 10th Lancashire Golf Croquet Open was held at Heaton Park on 10 and 11 April in about the first decent weather of the year, with 19 contenders divided into two nearly equal blocks.

In block A Ian Lines was the apparent main contender until an unexpected defeat by James Hopgood, who made a clean sweep of the block, and another to Robbie Dodds who narrowly missed being one of the four qualifiers for the knockout phase, the others being Freda Vitty and Paul Rigge. In block B holder David Walters was narrowly edged into second place by a defeat by Tim King; Alan Mayne and Ray Mounfield also qualifying.

Rigge then produced a turnup by beating King in the quarter-final before losing to Walters in the semi. In the other half Lines defeated Mayne and Hopgood to produce a three-game final, winning it in a match tighter than the scores appear.

In the consolation doubles David Barrett and Derek Buxton defeated all five opponents in a convincing series.

## Jubilee Tankard Advanced, Southport 17-18 April

Report by Ian Lines

Ian Lines beat Keith Aiton +15, +26, -5tp, -24tp, +26 in a closely contested final to win the Jubilee Tankard at the Southport April Advanced Weekend.

All the preceding rounds of the 16 player main event also went exactly according to seeding, with no great surprises.

The consolation plate (a flexible Swiss) was won by James Hopgood with 5/6, only losing to Lionel Tibble who was also playing well.

The final was a fairly interactive match, with both players making uncharacteristic errors, generally caused by the slight hills around some hoops (all set at ~1/32") leading to some difficult hoop approaches. The early season top dressing and sand was also sticking to the balls a little in the morning, which also made things slightly tricky. However, both players shot quite well throughout the match. Keith's tps in the afternoon, when conditions got drier and easier, were very neat, but he just failed to hit a few shots in the final deciding game.

Many thanks to Southport for laying on an excellent tournament, and particularly to Terry Foster for all his work setting out the lawns, and for stepping in at the last minute to replace Lee Hartley, who was stranded abroad (is this the first time a croquet tournament has been affected by a volcanic eruption?).

Congratulations also to Paul Rigge for getting his handicap down to -0.5.

## Woking B-level, 22 - 23 April

Report by Malcolm Bigg

Alan Edwards of Woking and David Williams of East Dorset both finished with 5 out of 6 wins in this event. However, Alan had beaten David when they met, so he won the Lewis Cup for the second year in succession.

Sixteen players with handicaps ranging from 1 to 7 took part in this event which was run for the first time in 2009. The weather was perfect and the hoops were moderate, but most players found it difficult to find their form so early in the season and there were many unforced errors and several long games!

The final round was a nail biting affair for the manager as 4 players, the above two together with Ian Parkinson and Lawrence Whittaker, went into the last round on 4 wins out of 5 games. However, Alan finally prevailed over Lawrence, and David came back from the dead to defeat Ian, so the outcome was clear cut.

Congratulations also to Alan and Gina Lewis for their handicap reductions, Alan from 1½ to 1 and Gina from 5 to 4½.



Mark Butler, the Mayor of Littlehampton, presents Daphne Gaitley, captain of the Southwick team with the West Sussex Cup. Photo by June Caffyn.

## West Sussex Golf Croquet Cup at Littlehampton

Report by Michael Holdsworth

The Littlehampton Centenary Cup was played at the Sportsfield on Sunday 9 May. Eight West Sussex clubs contested this annual competition, organised by Colin Thornton, the Littlehampton coach. In a tight finish, Sussex County (Southwick) just prevailed over the host club, scoring

14 wins/108 hoops to Littlehampton's 13 wins/103 hoops. Crawley took third place with 8 wins/89 hoops. The other clubs taking part were Angmering, Chichester and Fishbourne, Rother Valley, West Chiltington and Worthing.

## Winchester Charity One-Ball Finals 8-9 May

Report by Kevin Carter

This year there were 19 club heats, some in far-flung corners - from Sidmouth to Colchester to Southport. Over 260 players participated, over £1300 was raised for Macmillan Cancer Support and the quality of the final was as high as one would expect in any event seeking the cream of the cream.

Early on, the leader board saw Brian McCausland (Nailsea qualifier for the second year running), Roger Barnacle (local Winchester player), Ann Brooks (Colchester qualifier and a confident 20 handicapper) and Rutger Beijderwellen, who is so good at one-ball he has his own private handicap of -10.

After lunch, and in the second half of this eight-round swiss, Roger saw off each of his challengers, and indeed finished with a magnificent eight out of eight.

So, Roger was awarded the engraved crystal decanter. There was discussion in the bar afterwards confirming how much players value a trophy, which is both attractive and useful to keep permanently. Engraved glasses went to Rutger for second and strong finishing third, Andrew Wise (Bristol qualifier).

Sunday saw the more relaxed advanced level event. For the past three years the final has been fought between Rutger and Stephen Mulliner. This time Stephen had to unfortunately pull out on the very morning of the event. Foregoing her planned sightseeing trip, Rutger's partner, Karolina, courageously stepped into the vacancy. The blocks

were revised and the semi-finalists were the top four players, based on ranking: Rutger, Marcus Evans, David Nicholson and Dave Trimmer.

Rutger saw off Dave in two straight games and looked very good for another win overall, especially as Marcus struggled to complete a close 2-1 win over David and seemed not to be firing on all cylinders. However, Marcus lifted his game in the final, barely missing any shot and making game-winning breaks while it was Rutger who struggled to make his trademark long hoops.

Marcus won the final 2-0. Meanwhile, Rita Nunn, claimed some notable scalps and was the deserving winner of the consolation event. David Nicholson collected the traditional bottle of bubbly for the first all-round break of the day.

### The Peel Memorials, Southport 6 – 9 May

Report by Gail Curry

A relatively small entry for the event gathered for what must be one of, if not the oldest, event in the CA calendar. Handicaps ranged from 0 to 18, and in other terms the entry was well represented with CA officials with the Chairman and Vice-Chair of Council, Chairman of Tournaments, as well as the Editor of the Gazette, all throwing their hats in the ring. Politics was not high on the agenda though, as bisques, sunshine and fun took pride of place.

The mixed doubles was played as an American block with only five pairs. Gail Curry and Ken Harper had played and won 3, but then met their match with an on form Patricia Duke-Cox and Nigel Graves who moved into an unbeatable position, as their possible nemesis of Eileen Gallagher and Abdul Ahmed, lost to Barbara and Geoff Young. The resulting final game, which could not affect the result was won by Abdul and Eileen to give their event a positive ending.

Abdul won four of his five games in the men's singles, and was a deserved winner, also earning a handicap reduction to 4 in the process. Gail Curry won the women's singles with three out of four wins.

It was a shame the event did not have a higher entry, as it's a good tournament to play, with the possibility of playing doubles as well as singles over a pleasant four days, or of course you can just enter one of the events, but the doubles does offer a good opportunity to learn from partners, and a wide range of handicaps in the singles offers the opportunity to test yourself against a range of playing styles and standards. So give it a thought when

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planning your calendar next year, as the trophies really are something else.

Oh yes and speaking of trophies, guess who forgot their trophies? The Chairman of Council and Tournament Committees. Patricia Duke-Cox realised once on her way home, so had to return and collect her and Nigel's doubles trophies. I might have been back in Newcastle by then, but I have eyes and ears everywhere.



Parsons Green members David Fairman and Eithne O'Leary in play at the tournament

### Parsons Green One-Ball Tournament 25<sup>th</sup> April

Report by Rob Minshall

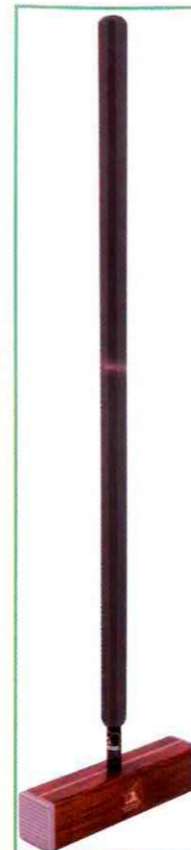
Competitors from clubs as far away as Cheltenham and Watford arrived to the always friendly welcome from Parsons Green Club members and with tournament manager Gary Duke at the helm all started smoothly under the grey, spitting skies.

One-Ball is a quick and fun form of croquet, so the games passed quickly and the contenders for the title started to show themselves as the early rounds progressed. Roehampton player Tony Fathers was looking good with some early wins, but with last year's winner Brian Rees failing to produce his usual form it was Klim Seabright from Cheltenham who was the one to watch with some deadly accurate play before lunch.

The lunch at Parsons Green Club was as usual a very sociable feast and with the catering now under new management provided a variation on the usual ploughmans. Regular visitors to the Club will be either sad or relieved to know that Pete (gruff exterior, heart of gold) is no longer present behind the bar to snap at his customers. The new bar boasts increased variety of drinks and a better quality of wine, but without the touch of eccentricity that has always been a feature at Parsons Green.

With a couple of drinks from the bar to smooth the swing, everyone came back to the lawns happy to see the warm spring sunshine. The afternoon session saw three local newcomers all lose any early tournament nerves to enjoy some deserved wins but the winner was never in doubt, and after Rosemary Callan's super cakes and tea were eagerly scoffed in the warm afternoon sun and to warm applause, Gary Duke presented the deserved winner's prize to a delighted Klim Seabright, with Tony Fathers and Martin Strong both very happy runners-up.

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