

THE CROQUET GAZETTE

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DECEMBER 2010



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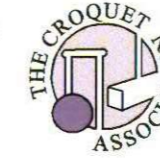
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Front Cover: The Croquet Christmas Tree by Bob Furniss, for the Bakewell 'Festival of Trees'. Photo by Tom Chapman.

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Disclaimer

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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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HOPOPOTAMUS

by Victor



Chairman's Column

I was very pleased to take over as Chairman of Council after this year's AGM. I can only hope that I can continue the excellent work that my predecessor, Patricia Duke-Cox, carried out over the last two years, particularly in her support for our young players, as well as travelling round the country meeting as many of you as possible.



I started playing croquet 41 years ago and since then I have always been interested in the administration and development of the game (as well as playing, of course). I served on Council in the 1980s, as well as for the last 6 years, during which time I have chaired most of the main committees as well as various technical committees. I believe that this experience in the workings of the CA has given me a sound base from which to help guide the CA forward in the future.

I aim to use this column to keep you informed of the work that is being planned and carried out by Council through its committee structure as I believe that there are too many club members who have been heard to say 'What does the CA do?'. I would like to think this will be clearer by the end of my period as Chairman.

I take over at a time when we are basking in the success of our MacRobertson Shield team this year. However, the nature of this success with its close matches gave us early warning that we cannot rest on our laurels. The general high standard of play, particularly from the exciting new young players, Robert Fletcher from Australia and Paddy Chapman from New Zealand, demonstrated that the other countries are fast catching us up. In the Golf Croquet world we have been playing catch-up for some years, with the Egyptians being the top players.

The key to being successful in international competitions is to have a healthy competitive croquet scene from the club 'grass roots' upwards. One of the key objectives of the CA is to ensure that this is the case, by providing clubs with the infrastructure and support they need to develop and thrive. We are fortunate to have a thriving tournament circuit, and we must work to ensure this continues and flourishes. We also need to find new, young players with the potential to reach the top in both codes and give them the help and encouragement they need to succeed. Your Council has recognised this need and is looking at ways to achieve this. I will report in future columns on progress made.

You can also help at your own club by encouraging new blood into the game. Playing croquet is probably one of the easiest ways to rise to the level of international play in sport, provided that you have the natural ability required by the game. So please go out and pass on this message and let us all aim to continue to lead the world in Association Croquet, and maybe even to overtake the Egyptians in Golf Croquet!

Barry Keen

Letters

Charity One-Ball Championship 2011 - calling all clubs

This event is now well-established in the croquet calendar, and every year we increase the amount raised for charity. In 2010 260 players competed in 19 heats all around the country and almost £1400 was raised for Macmillan Cancer Support.

It has been suggested that in 2011 we participate in the Breast Cancer Campaign's 'Sports Club Challenge'. This is a nationwide initiative involving thousands of sportspeople. If we raise £1000 then croquet is recognised as a 'Gold' contributor; if £2500 then we reach the coveted 'Pink' level!

So, we need lots of clubs to run heats - a one-ball tournament between now and the end of April. Three to four hours is all that is required for this quick-fire game and it is a fun way of keeping your eye in during the winter, or for blowing away the cobwebs in the spring.

Each player is asked to contribute £5 and the winner of every heat (with a minimum £40 donation) gets a free place in the final, at Winchester, in May, where some great trophies will be available. Also, in keeping with the spirit of the Sports Club Challenge, all heat participants are asked to wear something pink - it might be a ribbon, a sock, a hat or any item of clothing or accessory which is visible! Please let me have the date of your club heat, and afterwards who won. If you need any further information or help contact me, on 0118-971-2948 or kevin@profundus.com. If you cannot put on a heat then a donation will be welcome.

Kevin Carter

A more complicated hoop-lifter

The simple hoop-lifter, illustrated and described in Issue 328 by Martin French, has the advantage of avoiding any strain of lifting, either directly by grasping the top of the hoop or indirectly through using an alternative, simple design (as presently at Letchworth) involving levering upwards. A side-view diagram of this is illustrated in Fig.1 with the top of the hoops of various heights shown in section.

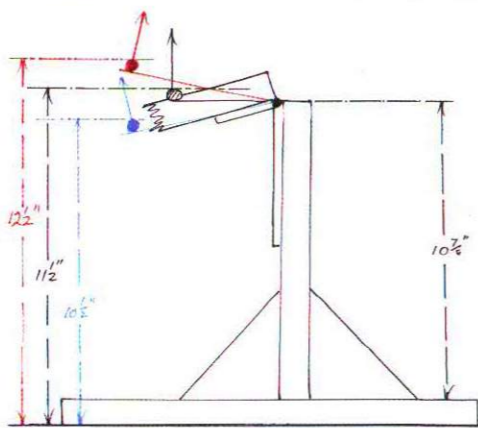


Fig.1

Use of either design is, however, likely to cause some movement of the hoop out of the vertical as it is loosened, depending on the angle of lift, so enlarging the holes, loosening the fit and requiring repair and/or deeper subsequent insertion to ensure stability. Such movement can be minimised by having the pivot point level with the point of contact under the hoop. This would be about 11 inches (10 7/8 inches) above ground level (as in Fig. 1 for a hoop 11 1/2 inches high and made of round metal 5/8 inches in diameter). In practice, hoops are legally allowed to vary between 11 and 12 inches in height and, in addition, are often inserted with their carrots somewhat above or below ground level, in which cases the displacement from the vertical on lifting is increased. The initial angle of lift for hoops 10 1/2 or 11 1/2 inches above ground is indicated by the arrows in Fig. 1.

An alternative hoop-lifter has, therefore, been designed to ensure an almost perfect vertical lift for hoops in the range 11 to 12 inches in height that are either proud or sunken by as much as 1/2 inch.

It consists of a lever, hinged directly onto a base and also hinged to a wedge having five alternative grooves available to

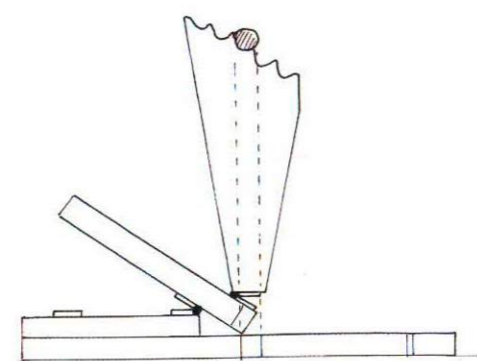


Fig.2

fit under the top of the hoop. Fig. 2 shows the device with the central groove placed under a hoop that is 11 1/2 inches above ground. The other grooves are used when the hoop is either higher or lower than that. The hinges are arranged to give a mechanical advantage of about 4:1, and the lever is arranged to restrict its downward travel to about 4 inches, resulting in a controlled upward movement of the hoop of about an inch. In use: the device is placed in the hoop in line with white locating-marks (see photo below); the wedge and lever are



lifted up; the appropriate groove located under the top of the hoop (Fig. 2); and the lever depressed.

In making the device for the conditions described, the vertical height above ground of the five grooves in the wedge (allowing for a thickness of the hoop of 5/8 inch) should be 11 7/8, 11 3/8, 10 7/8, 10 3/8, and 9 7/8 inches respectively.

John S. Alabaster

Golf Croquet – hoop running and clearance shots

I wonder how many readers have read Tim King's detailed report on the Ascot Cup Final? This was a riveting match played by two teenagers, Jacob Carr and James Goodbun at Ryde in late Sept 2010. Is there a lesson that the growing number of golf croquet players can learn from this match, just won by James, and both in the prime of their hand/eye co-ordination?

Tim is becoming a 21st century George Beardoe Grundy (1861-1948). Dr Grundy fellow at Corpus, Oxford: an ancient historian, celebrated topographer and croquet statistician played off -1.5 handicap when aged 60 – an Oxford resident like Ian Plummer. Tim sat outside in a bare shirt in a bitter north wind jotting down all

the strokes and tactics of the final game. Dr Grundy, however, once ran wearing full body armour the course run by the Athenians in their marathon charge. He disproved Heroditas' comments that they ran fast, finding that their pace was only a trot.

How do I know this? From 1948-1952 I used to cycle in the summer to see my old friend and croquet mentor. Cultured and kind, he lived and slept in the garden shed at Bristol Croquet Club (then Clifton & County) next to his Atco mower and surrounded by books and sheet music, he was Arthur Albert Munro, known at the club as the other Monroe! This wouldn't be allowed nowadays. Sometimes we would be joined for a picnic lunch by my other two croquet mentors, my father George Lawrence Ormerod, and a country gentleman, ex-Presidents Cup player, Mr F. W. Ward. We would all practice hitting tice length distances, 8-12 yards, and running hoops from the boundary, 6 yards. We would talk of music, literature, sports and stock broking and it transpired that Mr Ward had helped Dr Grundy with two books on Gloucestershire history, and also liked to know his chances of tice hitting and running long hoops, as well as the tricky 6 yarder.

At Ryde I witnessed both James and Jacob consecutively hit 30 yard clearance shots, but it is very interesting to note in Tim King's record of shots hit and missed, that figures roughly match those of Dr Grundy and Mr Ward, viz 2 out of 3 for 7-12 yarders, and approx 50% for shots over 12 yards. Interestingly, croquet players I have seen as very fine shots did not hit unduly hard like James and Jacob, e.g. Pat Cotter and William Prichard, both softly; Nigel Aspinall, Keith Wylie, Strat Liddiard, Bob Jackson Reg Bamford, David Maugham among others only moderately firm, but rhythmical.

For hoop running it was clear to me how hard James and Jacob still chose to hit, and only 16 hoops successfully run out of 26 at less than 3 yards is maybe a reflection of such hard hitting?

Certainly at our newly formed Swanage (85 members) and Wareham (42 Members) Golf Croquet Clubs, I try to advise a quiet, rhythmical steady and controlled stroke, as being one more likely to succeed when running a hoop.

Arthur Ross (NZ) knew a small band of players who ran their hoops at a "tremendous pace having uncanny powers". I don't know if he visited Egypt, but he and all other authors have advised

the Swanage and Wareham tempo for hoop running. Over to the hard hitters to prove their hoop running skills, but renewed congratulations to Jacob and James for their excellent clearances in such a spectacular final.

Oh and by the way George Grundy and his wife once floated across a bay on inflated goat skins when on a survey to prove that this method of sea travel was possible!

So, where Jacob and James are up there with the best shooters I have seen, Tim King, although braving the north wind, has some way to go before being the complete topographer and croquet statistician.

William Ormerod



Picturesque

While playing in the B level advanced weekend tournament at Sidmouth this season I took this photo of their beautifully re-thatched pavilion. I wondered if anyone can match this with a similarly outstanding example of traditional building crafts at a croquet club. At Sidmouth they also have a thatched hut providing shelter adjacent to Lawn 4.

Michael Poole



Left to right: The plywood prototype, Polypropylene mallet extended and Polypropylene mallet closed.

Listening for the solution.....

For several years the Swindon Croquet Club have introduced many local groups to the Sport of Croquet. Two of the groups have disabled members who use wheelchairs and to ensure they were not excluded set the club a challenge.

The wheel chair player finds the standard mallet very difficult to use either from the side or in front of the wheel chair.

The club chairman Arthur Ingersoll is a member of the Stratton Stroke Club which helps stroke members to lead as normal a life as possible and are invited along to the Croquet club as one of their activities.

In one of the many discussions with the club chairman on the difficulty that the wheelchair player has using the standard mallet the 'light bulb' suddenly lit up when Arthur said 'it needs something like a flat iron'. This turned into several sketches based on the flat iron idea before a final design matured. The club was successful in applying for a 'Grass Roots' grant from Swindon Borough Council to pay for the materials to manufacture the mallets which have proved successful among the social groups that have used them.

Mallets have yet to be proven for constant use at a higher level of play, to date they have only been used for social golf, kiwi and indoor puck croquet.

First thoughts on the mallet was that it should be adjustable for length to cope with the different chair heights and arm length children/adults. Adjustment is not really essential if the mallet is to be made for a single player once a height/length of mallet has been determined.

A prototype from plywood with nylon faces proved the idea and was first used by the Stratton Stroke Club. In the first batch the material was upgraded to polypropylene.

Mallet design is a grip handle that slides up and down on a spine, the lower

spine having cheeks attached to form the mallet head and the sliding grip provided with clamp to lock out in the favoured position.

John Airey

Something to recommend

I was down at my far country club Cheltenham for the first time and espied what looked to me as an Anthony Caro metalwork piece. I asked what it was and was told all about it, the fact that John Hobbs had made it for Reg Bamford to further improve his swing, but that nobody used it now. I asked if I could have a go, (having an Irish Grip I do cast) and thought it really worked as I noticed the difference in my next game. I thereupon would run down to the back of the club and have a go each time I had a chance, even as soon as I got there in the mornings. I was asked if I would like to have it (by way of paying them a donation to a charity) I jumped at the chance.



My original thinking was to give it to Bowdon Club my home club but they declined saying they did not have space, which is why it has ended up in my garden. Ian Lines brought it down for me earlier this year, as I don't have a car and between him and a fellow member Ian Bell we put it up, celebrating with Champagne.

I use it every evening I can and more at the weekends. Certainly it has improved my shooting, and I will endeavour to improve even further.

While John does no longer make the swing trainers, he is willing to send the plans via email to anyone who wants to have a go at making their own - what better way to spend a winter? You can contact John at Hobsmallets@waitrose.com

Francois Garcia

News & Information

Notes from the CA Office

Membership Renewals

Yes, it's that time of year again – by the time you read this you should have had your membership renewal letter, complete with the details we hold on your record in the office. Please do take a few minutes to check that the details are correct. Frequently missed details are changes of telephone number, email address and bank details if you are a direct debit payer. We find that although banks state that they will take care of everything when a customer changes banks, they don't always do this and we are not informed about changes of bank accounts. Changes frequently only come to light when we try to take a membership subscription through direct debit and it is rejected. So please do check.

Facebook

The CA now has a Facebook page which will be updated regularly with news and information that is relevant to croquet players. It will also give us in the office a quick and speedy way to keep you up to date with things we are doing, such as sending out membership forms and working on the Fixtures Book.

CA Shop

We will still be sending out orders up to the day before Christmas Eve, but to be realistic, the 20 December is the last day that we can be reasonably certain that orders despatched by Royal Mail will reach their destinations. Larger orders sent by courier on next day delivery are less affected. Christmas is the ideal time to give a croquet-related gift and in addition to croquet, this year we are stocking Jaques chess and bridge sets, so please look at the website for full details.

Finally, we at the office, that's Liz, Liz and Liz, wish all our members a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

AC Inter-County Championship 2011

As at the AC Tournament Committee meeting on Sat 30 Oct, only 20 provisional county entries had been received for the 2011 event as Wiltshire has decided that they cannot raise a viable team. Allowing for a CA Select team, this will mean a total of 21 teams and if we stick to our normal programme would mean two bye

rounds for each second division team.

This is not very satisfactory as the necessary nine games in division two could be completed in three days. On this basis Manager, Chris Williams, has had a look at possible formats and has suggested the following:

Div 1 will remain in its normal format, covering four days with each team having one bye. Div 2 will be reduced to three days (No byes and no play on Tuesday) with play at the two venues being arranged as follows:

On the first two days, three Div 1 and four Div 2 counties go to Compton and so six of the Div 1 counties will have their byes at Compton in those two days.

On the third day all 10 division two counties are at Southwick, which means that seven Div 1 counties will be at Compton (another 3 byes)

On the final day all 11 Div 1 counties are at Southwick (remaining two byes).

This format would appear to be ideal and has the following advantages:

- * There will still be a good mix of division one and two players at the two venues which many feel is the basis for popularity of this event.

- * The accommodation costs of division two teams may be reduced.

- * All teams in a division will be at the same venue when they complete their programme so no problems with trophy presentation.

NOTE As Div 2 teams will finish late on the Monday, a 9.00am start may be considered for that day.

As there is still a possibility that we could get an entry from a joint team, the AC Tournament Committee has decided that the programme will not be finalised until the Spring meeting of the committee. The entry of all teams who have made the provisional entry is confirmed and any further viable entries received by the Office before 30 Jan will be considered for the final place.

If no further entries are received, the event will be shortened to three days for the Div 2 and the entry fee reduced by £12/team. If a further viable team enters, the competition will revert to the normal four days for each division. The entry of a CA Select team for 2011 is therefore confirmed and any players interested in playing for that team should contact myself.

Bill Arliss, Tournament Director

AGM Minutes

THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION

(Unconfirmed, 3rd Draft) *Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at 11 am at The Hurlingham Club on Saturday 16th October 2010.*

Present: Quiller Barrett (President), Colin Irwin (Vice-President), Patricia Duke-Cox (Chairman of Council), Dr Roger Bray (Hon. Treasurer), Dr Ian Vincent (Hon. Secretary), Elizabeth Larsson (CA Manager) and 75 other Associates.

1. Apologies for Absence.

Apologies for absence were received from Geoffrey Cuttle, James Field, Gabrielle Higgins, Andrew Hope, Richard Hoskyns, David Kibble, Stephen Mulliner, David Mumford, David Openshaw, John Solomon, John Spiers, Diana and Richard Stevens and Geoff Young.

2. Minutes of the previous Meeting held on Saturday 17th October 2009.

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on the 17th October 2009 were signed as a true record of the meeting.

3. Annual Report from Council

The Chairman of Council, Patricia Duke-Cox, presented the following report:

"I present the report of Council's activities over the last year.

The most prestigious team event in the croquet calendar is the MacRobertson Shield and it is with great pleasure I am able to report that not only were the CA pleased to host the championship, but that the selected CA team won the event! It might have been by the closest margin for a long time, but success was ours for the seventh consecutive time. For the first time there was an expanded field of entry with additional tiers of national teams introduced from 17 countries unable to compete at the premier level and these were also hosted in this country under the auspices of the World Croquet Federation. Well done to all involved as many hours were spent designing logos, setting up a dedicated website, providing live commentary, preparing lawns, drumming up publicity and catering for the teams and visitors.

The work of the committees during the year asks for teamwork and co-operation from our elected and co-opted volunteers. All have performed well and I would like to highlight some of their achievements or activities:

Coaching – introduced the mentoring scheme for juniors published in April both in the Gazette and on the website. Two pairings have been agreed to date. A third edition of the Guide to Golf Croquet was also published this year.

Development – awarded grants to Bury, Dowlis Wake, Shrewsbury, Surbiton and Beverley Croquet Clubs. They are also considering ways to encourage sustainability of clubs and green issues.

Equipment – The Hopewell cast iron hoop has been examined as described in the Technical section of the website and now has full CA Approval (Standard and Championship). New Sunshiny 1st and 2nd colour sets have been received for testing and renewal of Approval. Methods for increasing the challenge provided by hoops are being examined: improvement of anchorage, less slippery surface coating, and grinding 45 deg flats on uprights.

Initial results this season are expected to be followed up by systematic comparisons early next year.

International – heavily involved with the MacRobertson Shield event mentioned at the start of this report and about which there will be more later. They continue to work with the WCF on current issues.

Laws – Association Croquet continued to trial super advanced rules. Golf Croquet has successfully liaised with the WCF about establishing a formal procedure for the issue of Official Rulings.

Marketing – Publicity surrounding the MacRobertson Shield. The clubs succeeded in getting local publicity, but despite feeding them the information the response of the national press was very disappointing. This year for the first time we advertised for an agent to help find sponsorship money, and are now working with someone on a commission only basis. So far the results have been disappointing. David Collins is stepping down as corporate events manager, running the corporate events primarily at Hurlingham, and we are currently looking for a replacement for him. The rebate scheme continued for this year.

Publishing – continued to work closely with the Gazette Editor, Webmaster and Office Manager to ensure prompt communication of news. Owing to a very busy summer (including extra reporting associated with the MacRobertson Shield) some other targets have been delayed; the main one being restructuring the website.

Tournaments – both committees provided a calendar of events with choices for all members. The Golf Croquet tournament schedule continues to grow with a new inter-club event for the Murphy Shield this year and the chairman believes the number of entries is generally holding up. A strong group of young players is also emerging, winning six of the major thirteen tournaments between them.

My own role has been to represent you whenever asked. I accepted invitations to attend Hurlingham's AGM and annual luncheon, Letchworth's annual dinner, to attend the Wimbledon lawn tennis championship and later attend a civic reception at Nottingham during the MacRobertson Shield test match. In addition I have very often been asked to present prizes at tournaments where I have entered – easy when not a winner oneself!

Last year I referred to my twin aims of supporting our juniors and ensuring our history is collected. The bursary scheme for juniors was expanded this year and a mentoring system introduced. So far 3 juniors have applied for information. I have conveyed the thanks of the CA to Tremaine Arkley who this year has sent over some early books, prints and pictures that supplement our library and archive collection and are part of the Solomon Collection he offered when John Solomon stood down as President. Chris Williams is our Archivist and assumes this role in addition to his interest in the ranking of players which he updates speedily when given results of tournaments.

My own croquet improved only temporarily this year, but I have taken great delight in visiting many clubs around the country

and I have managed to visit 6 of the 9 federations. In addition to the clubs mentioned earlier I played at Heaton Park, Southport & Birkdale, Kenilworth, Peterborough, Woodhall Spa, Nottingham, Hunstanton, Wrest Park, Soham, Colchester and Budleigh Salterton. I also visited Bury to see their newly laid lawns, Worcester Norton, Surbiton and Cheltenham. This represents about 10% of the 180 clubs currently members of the CA, but I hope shows goodwill. Last year Bernard wondered about the mileage I did – last year it was over 5000 miles and was a similar number again this year.

I started this report with the success of our MacRobertson Shield team, but to end I must thank the team of Council members and CA staff who have supported me in my role as your chairman. Quiller Barrett has been a sounding board when asked and was instrumental in ensuring that all prestigious events had a representative in the form of President, Past Presidents, Vice-Presidents, Chairman or Vice-Chairman. Roger Bray has been the voice of sound advice and considered comment, whilst Ian Vincent has been ready to guide me whenever I have sought his counsel. In the office Liz Larsson has been efficient and effective and I have enjoyed our frequent phone chats about all matters that affect the croquet fraternity. She has found a good assistant in Liz Parsons for the CA shop and I must commend the loyal contribution offered by Liz Budworth in the office. We bid farewell to David Openshaw and Ian Parkinson who are not seeking re-election, and thank them for their contribution to Council, along with Ian Vincent who is also not seeking re-election but still offers his service as Honorary Secretary. In their places we welcome Peter Death, Martin French and Ian Lines. All Council members have a part to play to achieve the smooth running of events that we have come to expect and I know this will continue. My thanks to each and every one of you and best wishes to the incoming Chairman. I know he can count on your continued support.”

The President thanked her for her report, which was received with acclamation. She had a previously unsurpassed record for visiting clubs and had progressed her specific targets of Juniors and the Archives. He summed her up as being both diligent and charming.

4. Accounts for the Year to December 2009 and Treasurer's Report

4.1 The Treasurer, Roger Bray, presented the Accounts for the Year to 31st December 2009 and gave a brief report.

4.2 He noted that the surplus after tax of £13,000 was much better than expected due to increases in income from club subscriptions, sales and CA tournaments, and to savings in expenditure. The rise in club subscriptions was largely attributable to the influx of new clubs, but this was offset by the cost of benefits that they received. Surprisingly, turnover of sales had increased in the depressed economic conditions, but profit margins had fallen. The largest factor underlying the favourable outcome for the year was the centralisation of services at the CA's headquarters in Cheltenham, leading to significant savings affecting several headings in the accounts. This restructuring had necessitated a capital outlay of £51,000 to build an extension to the CA Office: this was completed well within budget; half the cost had been met from the Benefactors Fund and the surplus of

income over expenditure for the year would cover a sizeable portion of the remainder.

4.3 This year, club subscriptions had again exceeded expectations due both to new clubs and increasing overall membership of existing clubs. So far sales had been disappointing and profits from this source were likely to fall by a considerable amount. The cost of hosting the MacRobertson Shield was much less than anticipated. Otherwise the financial performance so far was quite patchy with a mixture of gains and losses.

4.4 Next year, individual and club subscription rates would be increased by around the rate of inflation since they were last raised in 2009. This was a difficult decision for Council, but it had to take account of the increased cost this year of raising the court hire rate (paid to clubs for hosting CA events), and of the loss of income next year from lowering the levy rate. The levy system, whereby clubs pay the CA a percentage of entry fees to club tournaments advertised in the Fixtures Book, helped to pay not only for the Fixtures Book but also the cost of maintaining the infrastructure for tournament play. It has the advantage that the tournament players, the ones who benefit most from that infrastructure, pay the levy, and the more they play, the more they pay. But clubs quite understandably view it primarily as lost revenue and it has long been contentious. Council intends to review the levy system further, but the Treasurer warned that the loss of income to the CA from any further reduction in the levy rate would have to be compensated, in all probability, by increases in subscription rates.

4.5 In response to an invitation to members to comment on this issue, Janet Lewis (Watford) suggested that non-members of the CA who wanted to play in only one or two tournaments each year should be able to do so by paying a higher entry fee than members. Peter Death (Nottingham) recalled that such a system, called Tribute, had been in place when he started playing.

4.6 The Treasurer concluded by paying tribute to the many volunteers who worked selflessly for the CA with great enthusiasm and commitment. Without their input the accounts would look very different, and indeed rather bleak.

4.7 The accounts were adopted on the proposal of Bill Arliss, seconded by Pat Kennett.

5. Election of Hon. Secretary.

There being no other nominations, Dr Ian Vincent was re-elected as Hon. Secretary by acclamation.

6. Election of Hon. Treasurer.

There being no other nominations, Dr Roger Bray was re-elected as Hon. Treasurer by acclamation.

7. Election of Reporting Accountant.

The Treasurer expressed his appreciation of the work of Marian Hemsted during the previous year, in particular her attention to detail. Marian Hemsted was re-elected by acclamation, on the proposal of Jeff Dawson, seconded by David Wedmore.

8. Amendments to the Constitution.

The amendments to the Constitution of the Association published in the August Gazette were approved as follows:

Section A (Changes to the Election of Members of Council): Individuals 71 for, 0 against; Clubs 17 for, 0 against.

Section B (Changes to provide for Contested Elections of Officers): Individuals 68 for, 0 against; Clubs 15 for, 1 against.

Section C (Changes to allow non-“Currently Elected” members of Council to chair committees): Individuals 59 for, 4 against; Clubs 17 for, 0 against.

Section D (Changes to add a Borrowing Power): Individuals 64 for, 1 against; Clubs 16 for, 0 against.

9. Election of Council Members

There being no other nominations, the following were declared elected to Council: Peter Death, Martin French, Ian Lines and Alan Pidcock.

10. Benefactors' Book.

The names in the Benefactors' Book were read.

11. Presentations of Trophies for the Most Improved Players.

11.1 The Apps Memorial Bowl was awarded to James Field of the Bath Club.

11.2 The Steel Memorial Bowl was awarded to Gabrielle Higgins of the Hurlingham Club.

11.3 The Spiers Cup, a new award for the most improved Golf Croquet Player, was presented to Howard Cheyne of the Surbiton Club, who thanked the club and his mentors..

12. Presentation of Coach of the Year Award

David G. A. Nicholson of the East Dorset Croquet and Lawn Tennis Club was presented with the Coach of the Year Award.

14. Presentation of Council Medals

Dr. Ian Plummer and Professor Bernard Neal were presented with Council Medals for services to croquet.

16. Presentations of Croquet Association Diplomas

CA Diplomas, for services to clubs and federations, were awarded to:

Shirley Buckley (Weston Super Mare), Owen Bryce (Northampton), John Cotes (Durham), John Cundell (Leighton-Linslade), Arthur Davis (Ashby), Ken Dawes (Canterbury), Craig Edwards (Cheltenham), Brian and Barbara Kitching (Sussex County), Carol and Brian Lewis (Southport & Birkdale), Janet Lewis (Watford (Cassiobury)), Georgina Llewellyn (Llanfairfechan), Roger Loram (Canterbury), Ian McDiarmid (Woking), Len Nash (Crawley), Sarah Rankin (Sussex County), John Saxby (Bowdon), Alison Thursfield (Cheltenham), Brenda Vinton (Canterbury), Derek Watts (Tyneside) and Christopher Williams (Dyffryn).

17. Any Other Business

None.

18. President's Closing Remarks.

Quiller Barrett recounted some incidents during his first year as President and spoke of the effort put in by members of the clubs he had visited. He found croquet players to be special people, one aspect of this being that they trust each other to be their own referees, even at the highest level. He congratulated Wales and Scotland on winning their respective tiers of the World Team Championship and Great Britain on winning the MacRobertson Shield for the 7th successive time.

He then invited Keith Aiton, the captain of the GB team, to speak. Keith said how important the Shield was to him and that the whole team had contributed to the victory. He then thanked the host clubs and their members for having staged the event so well.

Quiller concluded by observing that we now needed to look ahead to future competitions and that he was pleased to see Edward Patel, the two year old grandson of George Noble, practising his peeling during the inter-club final!

There being no further business the AGM closed at 12.20.

Award & Citation details presented at the AGM

Coach of the Year 2009: David G A Nicholson

David Nicholson is a member of the East Dorset Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club and has devoted an enormous amount of time and effort to coaching beginners and improvers with great enthusiasm for many years. In addition to this he organises a coaching clinic for rapidly improving players. He became a Grade 1 Coach in 2005 and a Grade 2 Coach in 2009.

Any time that David is at the club, just about every day, he is always looking for the opportunity to help players improve their game and offer help and advice. David has always been a keen sportsman, representing the Royal Marines and the Royal Navy at rugby, hockey, boxing, sailing, swimming and diving. After his military career he served in the Dorset and London Fire Brigades and of course played all Brigade sports.

In 1995 David was involved in a very serious road accident which resulted in brain damage and severe injuries to his legs. The brain damage dramatically affected both his long and short term memory. Unable to work, he returned to his wife's family home in Poole. David slowly regained the use of his legs and started taking very short walks. It was during one of his walks that he came across the croquet club and returned time and again to rest and watch games being played. As David's home was in view from the club, he was able to find his way back otherwise his memory loss would have caused him to get lost.

David became fascinated by croquet and started playing in 1998 using an adapted walking stick in one hand and a croquet mallet in the other. His progress was remarkable and in 2003 he completed his first triple peel. In 2008 he won the Club Open Championship beating the holder who had been Club Champion for the previous eleven years.

Every morning David has to read and then re-read the Laws of Association Croquet to combat his memory loss, this then allows him to continue with his daily passion for coaching.

Council Medal – Awarded for Services to Croquet**Prof Bernard Neal**

Bernard Neal joined the Association in 1963. He was selected for the President's Cup in 1967 – an event in which he eventually played eleven times. He won the Open Championship twice and the Men's Championship once. He also represented Great Britain in three MacRobertson Shield series, in 1969, 1974 and 1979.

But his prowess on the croquet court is more than matched by his contributions to the game off it. He was elected to Council in 1966 and in the following year was appointed Chairman of the Publicity Committee. He led discussions with the newly-formed Sports Council which resulted in annual grants to the CA, eventually spanning twenty-eight years and making a huge contribution to the CA's finances. The first grant aid, in 1970, provided financial support for the CA to initiate a development programme and the first development officers to be appointed were Barbara Meachem and Liz Neal. The momentum they generated eventually led to the appointment of a National Development Officer and the establishment of the CA's Coaching and Development Committees.

Bernard's balanced judgement and tact made him an obvious choice to be Manager of the 1969 Test Team. He won universal praise from the Australians and New Zealanders during the tour and, since then, he has been a highly respected unofficial ambassador for the CA on the world Croquet stage. In September 2010 Bernard was inducted into the World Croquet Federation's Hall of Fame.

Following three years as Publicity Chairman, Bernard was elected Vice-Chairman of Council from 1970 to 1972 and Chairman from 1972 to 1974. He then served on numerous Council committees, many as chairman. When he was Chairman of the Laws Committee he wrote The Basic Laws – just one example of his tireless efforts to improve the CA's provision for its members. As an internationally respected civil engineer, Bernard was instrumental in making the CA see the benefits arising from standard specifications for croquet equipment. He led from the front in devising ball-testing equipment and chairing the Equipment Committee.

Bernard has so often acted in an effective way to help the Association. In 2002, when the CA's headquarters moved to his home club, Cheltenham, where he has been President since 1995, Bernard (with other club members) did their utmost to make the transition as smooth, and the welcome as warm, as possible. In 2004, Bernard was the obvious choice to succeed John Solomon as President of the Croquet Association, a position he decided to relinquish at last year's AGM.

Bernard was a highly competitive county tennis player and is a long-standing member of the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club, serving on its main committee for many years until 1996 when he was elected to a Vice-Presidency. Bernard won more Wimbledon championships than any other person – a good pub quiz question! He was one of a small group of members who effectively resurrected croquet at Wimbledon in the post-war era, and it is largely due to Bernard's influence that it now has a much closer relationship with the CA. The Croquet Exhibition at Wimbledon during the CA's centenary year, the gift of the Wimbledon Cup for the World Croquet Championship, and several notable CA functions held at Wimbledon, would never have happened but for his behind-the-scenes work.

Bernard prefers quiet diplomacy and is modest about his achievements. Thus it is impossible to chronicle how generous and supportive he, and Liz, have been to many (especially younger) players. But what has been noticed here gives ample evidence that the CA, and the whole croquet world, owe an enormous debt of gratitude to someone who has worked ceaselessly for Croquet for well over forty years and who, by setting the highest standards in all that he has done, is most certainly a worthy recipient of the Council Medal.

Dr Ian Plummer

Ian Plummer has coached students at Oxford University for over 25 years and the total number he has introduced to croquet is certainly well into four figures. A significant number have gone on to play in the higher echelons of the game - including the current highest ranked lady player in the world, the current English lady champion and several players who have represented their countries in international teams. Six of them were contenders for the last World Championships, whilst others are returning to the sport after raising families. His coaching notes have been translated into Japanese, German and Russian. Oxford's dominance in the Varsity Match during his time there shows the benefits of having an experienced player as a permanent presence. Always keen to share his knowledge, he developed the "Oxford Croquet" website about eight years ago, which is recognised, by links from sites around the world, for the authority of its articles, which now number over 500. He has also developed web-based applications, including a club locator covering many countries and a tournament management system for multi-venue events.

He has applied both his theoretical and practical scientific skills for the benefit of croquet, working with other players and the CA Equipment Committee to investigate a number of technical issues, including high speed ball and mallet interactions via video, electrical contact and carbon paper. His calculations of the time/distance relationship for balls as they slow down have been recognised by naming a measure of lawn speed after him.

Although he has never been part of the management structure of the CA, preferring the freedom of operating outside, he has nevertheless been active in stimulating its development, particularly in the areas of web and database technology and online publishing. He formatted the first edition of the laws to appear online, encouraged the publication of the directory and fixtures book, and has piloted on-line tournament vacancy information for the Surbiton club, where he plays when not at Oxford. His contribution to croquet in several fields makes him a worthy first recipient of the Council Medal under its recently adopted wider criteria.

CA Diplomas – Awarded for Service to Clubs**Shirley Buckley – Weston Super Mare Club**

Shirley took on the role of Club Secretary in 2002. In the past three years our club has developed from a group of about fifteen locals, who met regularly and played croquet in a public park, to our having acquired a neglected field, which members have licked into shape to provide three good full size lawns, with an enthusiastic membership of fifty.

This progression has involved considerable "behind the scenes" administration, Shirley lives only 150 yards from our

new venue and she is always to hand to keep an eye on things. She efficiently deals with the usual secretarial duties of correspondence, minuting, convening, issuing notices, keeping records of membership and of club equipment plus keeping the equipment store in good order.

In addition, Shirley's communication skills and personality have greatly helped the successful bonding of our original members with the influx of new members. She maintains such good communication and has been the creator, editor, producer and distributor of an internal club newsletter. Her dedication, energy and enterprise has greatly contributed to our rapid transformation into a very active, competitive, social and happy group playing both Association and Golf Croquet.

Owen Bryce - Northampton Croquet Club

In his second term as Club Chairman, Owen Bryce has been a member of Northampton Croquet Club almost from its inception 24 years ago. When he is not organizing the club, he is extremely busy doing many of the little but time consuming jobs. He repaints hoops and pegs, checks gazebos are waterproof, and unfailingly turns out to help when lawns need marking or new holes need boring.

Owen plays perhaps more often than anyone else in the club, and for some years his handicap steadily dropped, reaching about 8 two years ago at the young age of 88. He encourages others to play with his light hearted but deeply interested approach. One member said, "I always like the way Owen welcomes his opponent onto the lawn after a blobbed hoop or missed roquet with a wave of the arm!", and another said, "Owen is the only one I have seen crawling on the ground to see if the ball will go through the hoop. He is a real gentleman."

Owen is not only a friend to everyone in the club, as others have said he has "a lot of support from Kenilworth Club members who have huge respect and affection for Owen - including John Leader, who lost 1-25 to Owen in our last match." We feel he is "an extremely good ambassador for croquet generally and to new members specifically."



Group photograph (left to right) back Row: Roger Loram, John Cundell, Craig Edwards, Chris Williams, Bernard Neal, David GA Nicholson, Ian McDiarmid, Ian Plummer.

Front Row: Georgina Llewellyn, Janet Lewis, Ken Dawes, Brenda Vinton, Brian Lewis, Quiller Barrett, Carol Lewis, Len Nash, Sarah Rankin, Barbara Kitching, Brian Kitching, Howard Cheyne, John Saxby. (photo by Liz Larsson)

John Cotes, Croquet Durham

Octogenarian John Cote's energy and enthusiasm helped to launch the Croquet Durham Club. He started without a site or any enthusiast apart from himself. When the initial sites proved unsuitable, he continued undaunted and started a recruitment campaign in Durham City whilst negotiating terms with his then club, Auckland, for his recruits to learn to play on their lawn. He found disused bowling greens, with the potential for four lawns, at the Police HQ Sports facility at Aykley Heads and he negotiated a reasonable rent. He immediately redoubled the recruitment campaign with open days and an official club opening securing excellent media coverage. He has also secured sponsorship and funding from a local marine insurance company and the local Council. This allowed the Club to cut and maintain the lawns to a standard good enough to play in the Croquet North League with some success. The club is now well established with nearly 30 members and makes a valuable contribution to croquet in the North East.

John Cundell – Leighton-Linslade

As Vice Chairman of Leighton-Linslade club John Cundell is a driving force behind everything that the club does. This includes clubhouse and court maintenance and internal and external competitions organiser. He is a club coach, club handicapper and he assists with coaching at other clubs. Prior to matches or tournaments, he checks the condition of the courts and the precise measurement of the hoops. On match mornings he is invariably first there, putting up gazebos and making any other last minute preparations.

During the past four years, he has been actively involved in the development of the courts from two overlapping courts to three full size, fenced courts. As the courts are in a public park, John has developed a strong relationship with the Council ground staff to provide a high standard of maintenance, achieving a good standard for EACF league and CA Inter Club Matches.

Earlier this year, John, jointly with club member Richard Keighley, updated the CA 'Guide to Golf Croquet'. John's

commitment and enthusiasm for the game of croquet, plus his service to the Leighton-Linslade Croquet and the wider croquet community, is an inspiration to all.

Arthur Davis – Ashby Croquet Club

Arthur 'Dave' Davis turns up at the Ashby Croquet Club three times a week come rain or shine, despite being well over 80. He has been a permanent committee member for at least 12 years and a member of the club for at least 15 years. Despite his age he is always the first to volunteer to help out at taster sessions and charity events. Until recently he took upon himself the job of white lining our lawns virtually single-handedly.

Ken Dawes – Canterbury Croquet Club

A retired GP, Ken Dawes is a founder member of the Canterbury Croquet Club. He was its secretary for many years and became chairman in 2005. He retired from the committee this year.

Ken played a leading role in moving the club from its original home, in a garden in Chartham Hatch village to Polo Farm Sports Club in Canterbury. When he became the Club's secretary it had eight members and now has forty four. As chairman, Ken represented the club on the Polo Farm executive and despite the club being a very small partner at Polo Farm, he negotiated many improvements to the facilities, thanks to his tact and good humour. He also designed and provided club equipment and was once found carrying out repairs on the clubhouse roof at the age of 80.

Craig Edwards – Cheltenham Croquet Club

Craig Edwards has served the Cheltenham Croquet Club well during the last ten years, responsible for the Club's croquet equipment. The Club's 11 courts and practice area all require balls, hoops, clips, pegs etc, and it is a skilled, patient and ongoing task overcoming the problems of thieving foxes, forgetful members, wear and tear and occasional misuse. Competitors in any of the Club's many tournaments will be playing with balls tested by Craig, to precise standards and the Club's large stock of mallets for use by beginners and visitors, have all been weighed and measured. Craig also takes responsibility for the engraving of Cheltenham's many trophies. Finally, winter play at Cheltenham is highly valued and Craig organises a huge winter tournament providing over 60 members with extensive matchplay.

Brian & Barbara Kitching – Sussex County Croquet Club

Brian and Barbara Kitching originally joined Southwick as far country members and following Brian's retirement in the mid 90's they decided to move near Southwick and soon became very active members of the club. Barbara became a major contributor to the club's catering operation and Brian soon demonstrated his skills with the barbecue. Brian created the club's first website and was club secretary for two years in 2007/8.

During this period both Brian and Barbara started to develop Southwick's corporate entertaining programme whereby local clubs such as Rotary, Probus and Girl Guides come for an evening's croquet tuition with refreshments. Under their leadership this has now become a major source of funds for the club and a potential valuable source of new members.

Janet Lewis – Watford (Cassibury) Croquet Club

Janet Lewis is the heart and soul of Watford (Cassibury)

Croquet Club where she has been a member for 14 years playing both association and golf croquet. Janet instigated introductory golf croquet courses in 2003 and consequently the membership has increased from 25 in 2002 to over 90. Janet's friendly manner created a welcoming environment which encouraged people to join the Club and remain as members. As a direct result of this increase in membership Watford Borough Council have provided a third croquet lawn. Janet has worked hard to integrate the new golf croquet recruits with the established association croquet players which has created a unified Club. She is always ready to help members to improve and is a CA Coach for golf croquet. She has also organised many social activities, including a well-attended annual dinner and various fun croquet days. Janet has been an active member of the Club Committee since 2003 and Club Secretary since 2007.

Carol and Brian Lewis – Southport & Birkdale Croquet Club

Carol and Brian Lewis are long standing members of Southport and Birkdale club and very active in committee work, social events and especially coaching. They have been coaching beginners for at least 12 years and have continuously demonstrated a very high level of personal skills that have encouraged and motivated people into Croquet. Their activities during the last five years have been outstanding – they have run additional coaching courses every Tuesday morning for high handicap players. Carol and Brian have recognised the need amongst many new members to have further coaching and have patiently supported many 'new' members within a friendly coaching format on Tuesday mornings for the last five years. The result has been increased usage of our lawns every Tuesday, better retention of new members, a greater social atmosphere within the club and most importantly, more players eventually being able to participate in competitive play. Carol and Brian Lewis have given of their time freely to the enormous benefit of Southport members, Southport club and ultimately the Croquet world.

Georgina Llewellyn – Llanfairfechan Croquet Club

Co-founder of Llanfairfechan & North Wales Croquet Club, Georgina Llewellyn has given long term, dedicated service to the Club. Shortly after the formation of the Club, the secretary died and Georgina took on the job. The Club prospered as Georgina and her husband Clive coached teams to play in the North West Federation Leagues.

Sadly Clive died in 1997 but Georgina continues as Club Secretary to this day and has seen the Club grow to over 80 members. She has actively projected the Club into the Leagues and locality sports and clubs. She ensured the Club became involved with local schools and Special Services for those with disabilities and learning difficulties. Most pleasing is that the village school has croquet in its curriculum – the Club assists in training and run a summer croquet trophy competition. In the winter, Georgina ensures that the members stay together in the 'off-season' by arranging Indoor Croquet.

Roger Loram - Canterbury Croquet Club

A long standing member of the club, Roger Loram has served as external events organiser and as a club committee member. He still organises friendly matches, the most important of which is the annual tournament with Dublin club, Herbert Park. As the club's

handicapper, a position he held for many years, he strove to ensure members' handicaps reflected their ability and was not afraid to alter handicaps to ensure this.

Although he no longer holds any official position he is still one of the Club's staunchest supporters. He ensures that lawns are marked out and hoops are painted and correctly set each year. He has designed and made hoop-setting equipment and repaired mallets and other items. He keeps the committee on its toes by regularly coming forward with new ideas and proposals.

Ian McDiarmid – Woking Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club

Ian McDiarmid joined Woking Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club as a tennis member in 1977 and rapidly became an equally enthusiastic croquet player. He was chairman of croquet from 1980 to 1981 and then became well known to members of all sports when he took over responsibility as bar officer on behalf of the main committee. In this role he promoted croquet throughout the club, but undoubtedly his greatest contribution, to which every new croquet player to the club over those years attests, has been his quiet help and encouragement to new faces. Through his welcoming manner and gentle advice he has enabled struggling newcomers to break through the bewildering perplexities of their first encounter with the association game, thus becoming happy and enthusiastic croquet players, and contributing tremendously to our thriving croquet section.

Len Nash – Crawley Croquet Club

Len and his wife Jean were founder members of Crawley Croquet Club in 1983, involved in all aspects of its setting up. He has served on the on the committee since and has made friends in many other clubs in his role as match secretary. A qualified CA coach and referee, he has spent many hours coaching new members and has introduced many to the game, especially at local National Trust properties.

For years, Len has run tournaments for Crawley and other clubs, being made an honorary member of Worthing CC for his efforts. Sadly, Jean has now died, but Len, now 85, is still at the lawns nearly every club day where he can be relied on for advice and practical help.

The club owes him a great debt of gratitude.

Sarah Rankin – Sussex Croquet Club

Sarah Rankin, otherwise known as Sally or Lady Sarah, has been a staunch member of Southwick for many years. Sarah was originally introduced to the game and the club by her mother who was a highly respected, long serving member. Sarah has been a consistent supporter for many years and is well known to visitors as the club's "Trolley Dolly". Sarah regularly pedals many miles to and from the club, in all weathers, to open up and supply morning coffee to our visitors. A superb saleswoman, she has organised many raffles and other fundraising activities and well as being prepared to lend a hand whenever it has been needed.

John Saxby - Bowdon Croquet Club

John Saxby joined the Club in 1996 when the 'Mac' series came to Bowdon. He retained his clear view of matters which concern new players who find the Association game most challenging, and became a valued contributor to the Committee when still quite a new member. He invented a most popular feature

of play at Bowdon, "The Wednesday Competition", which takes place every week in the season and fills all the lawns for the day. About 30% of full playing members take part every week and form a hub around which much of the Club activity revolves. It started as an event to provide regular competition for those members who might never play in tournaments, and gives beginners the confidence to move on. Members thus enjoy the pleasures of tournament play weekly, without the cost or inconvenience of travel.

Since 2004, John has been our Honorary Secretary, during an active period of negotiation with the National Trust to renew the Club lease, which was concluded successfully. The Club is now planning the renovation of its century-old clubhouse.

Alison Thursfield – Cheltenham Croquet Club

Alison Thursfield fully involved herself in the life of the Cheltenham Croquet Club from joining. As a qualified coach she has always "been there" to coach and encourage members to improve and to play in competitions. She is always willing to pass on her knowledge and is instrumental in the encouragement of all players. She enthusiastically took over the beginners and improvers coaching and as one of the club handicappers Alison also maintained, organised and updated the club handicap records for many years.

As the Club's Federation contact she makes the arrangements for the various Federation league matches - a daunting task – and she has also managed and played in one of the league teams for over twelve years. For many years Alison co-managed the club's High Bisquers Tournaments – introducing the innovative idea of having tutoring available from more senior players. She also managed our large July Week Tournament for many years and in 2010 she took on the Advanced Over Fifties tournament.

In her quiet and undemonstrative way, Alison is always willing to support the club and regularly helps with the club's winter lunches.

Brenda Vinton - Canterbury Croquet Club

Spriteley 79 year old Brenda Vinton has never been a Canterbury Croquet Club Committee member but her innovative ideas are accepted with pleasure. Brenda introduced an annual fun day of croquet related games, started a weekly high bisque session enabling players to transfer from Golf to Association with confidence and she offers new members tuition. Brenda persuaded her husband to make bisque sticks and stands, a hoop remover, a ramp to ease trolley movement and a large notice board about water logged lawns. She found a supplier for 'Canterbury Croquet Club' hats. She undertakes these 'background' activities with minimum fuss.

Derek Watts – Tyneside Club

A member of Tyneside Croquet Club since the early 1990s, Derek Watts was initially introduced to Golf Croquet, and he rapidly developed a great enthusiasm and quickly moved on to the Association game. Within a few years he was a regular member of the league teams and won Club trophies. He then became a regular competitor in CA Calendar events and represented Northumberland in the Inter-Counties Championship.

By far the greatest contribution Derek made to his club was in the area of organisation and administration. Apart from being a regular member of the Executive Committee he has held the offices of Chairman (2000 – 2004) and Honorary Treasurer (1998 – 2000)

and has also found time to be Honorary Secretary of the Croquet North Federation.

For the last few years he has acted as the Club's Ground and Equipment Manager which involves an enormous amount of time watering and marking out lawns, setting hoops, maintaining the equipment and organising the interior maintenance and decorating of the pavilion. As a sideline he also acts as the Website Manager and for the last three years has produced both the Club and Croquet North's handbook.

Christopher Williams – Dyffryn Croquet Club

Chris Williams joined Dyffryn Croquet club as it was formed in 1987. He has been part of its development ever since. He became a member of the inaugural committee and has been an ever-present member since then. He took on numerous roles within the club, handicapper, selecting teams, coaching and very importantly, supervising the set-up of lawns at the start of the season! He has stepped into the role of chairman twice in the club's history. On a wider role, Chris has been known to eat and sleep croquet. He is a well-respected player, who has striven to improve both his own, and club members, play. Without Chris' expertise, Dyffryn CC would not have had the growth it has achieved over the years. What he doesn't know about croquet is not worth knowing. Dyffryn CC owes him a great debt of gratitude.

Report from Council

Report of October Council Meeting

by Ian Vincent

Council met in the afternoon following the AGM and elected Barry Keen as Chairman and Jeff Dawson as Vice-Chairman. In taking the chair, Barry thanked his predecessor, Patricia Duke-Cox, and said he hoped to match her charm and efficiency. He started well by quickly dispatching the formal business.

Arising from a special meeting of Council in July, which had agreed to oppose a motion before the August meeting of the WCF Council "that World Team Championships shall be open to teams representing a single WCF member only", it was reported that the motion had been passed by a narrow majority and that the Scottish CA would meet to consider its position in the light of that next month.

An Archive Policy was agreed, but a proposed policy on Conflicts of Interest arising from people holding posts in both the CA and WCF was not. Committees were asked to consider the implications of publishing their reports and minutes to CA members on the website.

David Maugham, chairman of the MacRobertson Shield selection committee, reported on the team's performance and the International Committee was asked to consider whether individual(s) should be appointed with responsibility to maximise elite performance at both Association and Golf Croquet. Colin Irwin, who chaired the MacRobertson Shield organising committee, reported on the administrative and financial aspects of the event. The main disappointment (apart from the weather!) was the lack of

national publicity, despite considerable efforts to obtain it. Given the changed economic circumstances since the tendering process and that expenses were much lower than budgeted, due to the team and officials staying with friends, it was agreed to waive the financial contribution expected from some clubs and consider whether to reimburse some expenses incurred by others.

The meeting concluded with a wide-ranging discussion about recruitment, arising from concerns about an increase in the number of social, as opposed to competitive, players in a number of clubs. A sub-group selected by the chairmen of the Coaching, Development and Marketing committees will be tasked with considering the points raised.

Obituary

Kathleen Elliott

Former city councillor Kathleen Elliott has died just weeks after celebrating her 104th birthday. The renowned local figure, affectionately known as Kay, passed away at the Queen's Medical Centre on September 3. She celebrated her last birthday with friends and family at The Firs Nursing Home, in Sherwood, on August 4.

Miss Elliott was born in the women's hospital, in Peel Street, Nottingham, on August 4, 1906. She studied at Mountford House School and was head girl at Nottingham High School for Girls, before achieving a double first class degree at Oxford University. During the Second World War, she helped to produce army clothing. She was elected as a councillor for the Abbey ward in May 1956 and was elected as an alderman in February 1975. The title is given as recognition of long service as a councillor. In 2006, she became the first city alderman to reach 100.

As part of her recent birthday celebrations, Miss Elliott had a ride in the civic car with the Lord Mayor of Nottingham, Councillor Brian Grocock. She also attended a ceremony at the Council House alongside Nottingham's 18 other honorary aldermen.

During her career, Miss Elliott held appointments at Nottingham University Court, the Library Association, Nottingham College of Art, Clarendon College of Further Education and Nottingham High School for Girls. She also managed Elliott and Brown engineering consultancy, set up by her father, in Pelham Road, and lived in Wollaton before moving to The Firs.

Among her many other achievements and activities, Alderman Elliott was a distinguished member of Nottingham Croquet Club, and latterly until her death, an honorary Vice President of the club. She made regular visits, particularly to the main 6 day Annual Tournament, well into her 90s, but has sadly not been able to visit in recent years. Her mother, Mrs Elliott, had been a founder of the club, having persuaded Jesse Boot to provide the facility as part of his endowment of Highfields Park. The club hosted the 5-day New Zealand v Great Britain Test Match as part of the Croquet World Team Championship. Great Britain, captained by Nottingham club member Keith Aiton, won the test in an exciting and close 5th day, and later won the first division of the Championship and croquet's most prestigious trophy, the MacRobertson Shield. We like to think Miss Elliott may have heard about this with an element of approval and civic pride. She will be sadly missed by members of the club.

Rob Carlton/Nottingham Post

and soon took enough control to win +4otp.

Duckworth then adopted the contact-conceding strategy that had worked for him at Bristol and Compton. This involves careful placement of balls in each of the four corners, ideally with the enemy POPed to 2 so that C1 is occupied by the only enemy ball for hoop 1. It is almost impossible to get a break immediately from the contact and the best that can be done is to send one enemy ball to the next hoop but one and lay up with a rush to a hoop. The contact-conceder will then have a long shot with his backward ball safe in the knowledge that he is likely to get at least two shots or, if TPOd, some extra chances in the pegged out game by virtue of the extra lift at hoop 4. It was interesting to see how easily the contact-taker could get into difficulties if pressing for a break.

Day 1 closed with Fulford and Maugham tied on 4/5 and three sextuples completed (Fulford and Patel both completing them against Mulliner in addition to Death's against Fulford). The key element of the sextuple leaves used was to keep all the balls on the western half of the court or very close to the peg so that the opponent had no chance to shoot into corner 4. Fulford favoured a tight almost horizontal cross-peg and his balls on the west boundary with an easterly rush. Mulliner hit a peg ball from C3 and replied identically but Fulford also hit from C3 and finished. Patel left one enemy ball just north of hoop 5 and the other in hoop 2 with his balls on the west boundary with a north-easterly rush. The chasing pack on 3/5 included Death, Duckworth and Patel while Lines, Mulliner and Aiton languished on two, one and zero wins without doing anything much wrong except either missing lifts or having opponents hit them.

Day 2 began with the two front-runners losing and Duckworth moving forward to tie, temporarily, for the lead. However, the day's activities could be summarised by simply adding three wins to the Day 1 scores for everyone except Lines, who added two wins, and Aiton who added none. Death and Fulford both completed another sextuple each with Fulford this time laying up against Maugham on the east boundary, with the forward enemy ball behind hoop 1 and the hoop 2 ball 9 yards south of C2. After deliberation, Dave took the shot from A-baulk at Rob's balls with the backward ball and missed and Rob finished, thereby taking a potentially important step clear of his closest rival. However, Maugham finished with a good win against Duckworth and Lines beat Fulford +20 so he and Maugham remained tied at 7/10.

Rounds 11 and 12 on Day 3 largely settled the outcome of the event. Maugham lost -9tpo to Mulliner in a lengthy pegged-out game (having conceded contact and been TPOd) and then by 11otp to Lines while Fulford defeated Aiton by 18tp and Duckworth,

The 2010 Eights

**The 2010 President's Cup
Hurlingham 10 - 12 September 2010**

Report by Stephen Mulliner

Fulford wins his ninth title

The premier Eight returned to Hurlingham to be competed for by five members of the successful MacRobertson Shield team (only Rutger Beijderwellen was missing) and James Death, Ed Duckworth and Samir Patel. It also formed the third trial of the Super-Advanced authorised variation. Duckworth arrived with form in this department having won both the Bristol and South of England events in 2009. Conditions were described as "super-easy" with the lawns in near perfect condition and the hoops, set in Hurlingham's silty loam, as obliging as ever. There was therefore considerable interest in discovering what difference, if any, the third lift and the opening restrictions would have on play and interactivity.

Round 1 is worth describing in a little detail because it offered a partial summary of the main effect of the new variation which is to offer the striker the choice of simply giving the extra lift while still intending to win with a triple or of laying for a sextuple and conceding only one lift. The other main option, which surfaced later, is to go to 4-b and concede contact.

Mulliner gained the minor notoriety of becoming the first person to win a game in the President's Cup under the new variation. He adopted a "5-4-TP" strategy which involved going to hoop 6, laying a diagonal spread ("DSL"), taking the forward ball to 4-b, laying another DSL and then tripling out after Aiton missed all three lifts. Lines went for the "6-3-TP" approach having hit a lift after Duckworth took the first break to 1-b. In fact, Ian turned down an angled rover peel and laid up but Ed missed and Ian finished +20 anyway. This was to be a popular margin of victory. Death, ever the adventurous showman, completed a sextuple against Fulford which featured accidentally roqueting partner (for penult) after running 4-b, croqueting it into the jaws, bombarding it through, bombarding it out of the way and then rushing it to 2 yards NNW of rover before peeling it, jumping over it to the boundary and hitting a return 8 yarder. Patel TPOd Maugham and pegged out two balls when for 1-b against I. Dave got going off the contact

Player	RF	ED	JD	IL	DM	SP	SM	KA	Won	Tot	Pos
Robert Fulford		-17 +19sxp	-20sxp +12tpo	+10tpo -20	+16sxp -23	+20 +26sxp	+20sxp +25	+11otp +18tp	5	10	1
Ed Duckworth	+17 -19sxp		+15tp -9tpo	-20 +13otp	+24tp -8tpo	-17tp +25tp	+24tp +17	+19tp +25tp	5	9	2
James Death	+20sxp -12tpo	-15tp +9tpo		+20sxp -26tp	-16tp +7tpo	-25tp +22	+15tp -10	+26tp +12tpo	4	8	3=
Ian Lines	-10tpo +20	+20 -13otp	-20sxp +26tp		-3 +11otp	-20tp -26tp	+26tp +20tp	+4 +26tp	3	8	3=
David Maugham	+23 -16sxp	+8tpo -24tp	-7tpo +16tp	-11otp +3		+11tp -9tpo	+9otp +25tp	+9otp +25tp	4	8	3=
Samir Patel	-20 -26sxp	+17tp -25tp	+25tp -22	+20tp +26tp	-4otp -11tp		+20sxp -13tpo	+25tp +11tpo	5	7	6
Stephen Mulliner	-20sxp -25	-24tp -17	-15tp +10	-26tp -20tp	+26tp +9tpo	-20sxp +13tpo	+26tp +21	+26tp +21	2	6	7
Keith Aiton	-11otp -18tp	-19tp -25tp	-26tp -12tpo	-4 -26tp	-1otp -9otp	-25tp -11tpo	-26tp -21		0	0	8

by then his other main rival, by 19sxp. This left Fulford on 9/12 and two wins clear of Duckworth and Maugham on 7/12. Fulford then wrapped things up in style in Round 13 with his fourth sextuple of the event, +26sxp against Patel. Duckworth finished with two more wins to claim second place on his own with 9/14, followed by Death, Lines and Maugham on 8/14, Patel and Mulliner on 7/14 and 6/14, and an only slightly disconsolate Aiton, winner of the decisive points against both New Zealand and Australia in the Mac and recent winner of the Northern Championship, who recorded the first ever "misere" in the history of the event (although one win has happened on eight occasions, most recently in 1997).

Was the trial of the new variations a success? There were some clear positives, in that there were only eight +26 scores compared to 16 in 2009 and 19 in 2008. Obviously, this is partially a consequence of the use of the contact strategy which is highly likely to result in the other side scoring some points. The openings offered more options although it was notable that on days 2 and 3 the supershot was being recreated by simply drifting at hoop 5 from A-baulk. The penalty for missing is not severe. There was also more opportunity for originality in setting leaves generally and especially if you had a sextuple in mind. However, it is likely that these will condense into some main lines before long.

**Chairman's Salver
Hunstanton 9 – 12 September, 2010
Report by James Hopgood**

Eyebrows were raised when David Goacher arrived at the tournament accused of "going too fast". Alas, the accusation came from the local police, not any of his opponents. He certainly made up for it later in the week when he completed a 14 hour triple, albeit with a night's sleep in the middle. On the first morning, there was further eyebrow raising from most competitors when it was announced by the real Hoop-God, Martin French, that he had set the hoops to a 1/16" according to the Manager's request. Even the Manager concurred that the decision was "interesting" a few minutes after play began and a few outrageously angled hoops were run with ease. The hoops were duly reset to a 1/32" and then contact in the subsequent days, not that this made any difference.

While weeks of rain before the event made the Hunstanton lawns easier than normal, this made the event even more amusing for the many maddening monumental errors that crept into play that could easily have been avoided. Jeff Dawson started the trend against Jamie Burch when having completed all the peels of a TPO after a 1b leave, including one peel on partner, he inexplicably missed the five-yard peg-out of Jamie's ball, pegging off his own ball, and sending Jamie's peg ball towards B-baulk. Jamie declined the contact, took the six yard rush instead, and finished. James Hopgood lost two "in-the-bag" games in one day when he failed two easy straight rover peels, giving all four balls and an easy start to lose -3tp and -2tp to Lionel Tibble and Jeff Dawson, respectively. Chris Williams did extremely well to set-up a perfect three ball break in a three-ball ending after a French TPO, only to discover he had approached and run the wrong hoop (believing he was for hoop 3 when still on hoop 2). With all the balls, Martin finished next turn. Lionel himself, having won five games in a row, then succumbed to the same trend when sticking in 2b against Hopgood having

The major caveat about extrapolating from this year's Presidents is that the conditions were very easy and greatly assisted the creation of accurate peg and hoop leaves. They also diminished the impact of the extra difficulty expected to be faced when picking up breaks so this aspect did not make a significant appearance. It is clear that the use of the variation on less perfect surfaces needs to be experienced. It might go either way, with players sticking rigidly to the two DSL strategy, in which case not very much will have been gained, or with much greater interactivity occurring, which will be positive.

The other caveat is that the new variations still clearly favour good shots and do not answer the question of how to make playing a break more challenging for the top players. The pleasure vocally expressed by good players when confronted with challenging conditions involving fast, not entirely flat lawns and rigid hoops is real. They know what Association Croquet is supposed to be about and it is not meant to be 80% about shooting. There is an excellent game called Golf Croquet which caters for that aspect of croquetical experience. Christchurch 2008, some lawns at this year's Open at Cheltenham and the 2010 Eastern Championships at Colchester took the game back to its roots and original purpose which is to provide a lengthy and demanding obstacle course.



Back row (L to R) David Walters, James Hopgood, Martin French, Jeff Dawson. Front row, Lionel Tibble, Jamie Burch, Chris Williams, David Goacher. Photo by Chris Williams.

completed two peels. He coined the acronym EPO ending, the E standing for extremely, and O for off. David Walters successfully completed a TPO against Martin French at the end of the week, making up for some frustrating previous TPO attempts. That said, Martin almost finished off the contact, but blobbed a relatively simple hoop 2. So these many maddening errors defined the tournament, but at least we can all chuckle in retrospect.

Play on lawn three was interesting providing the most interaction, mainly due to the "Death Valley" on the East boundary making the long-shot unplayable. Otherwise the lawns seemed extremely flat and a pleasure to play on.

Jamie Burch, with 11 wins from 14, was the clear winner and rightly so, having only made a couple of errors in the whole event. The CA Chairman, Patricia Duke-Cox, visited on Sunday morning

and presented Jamie with the trophy; and despite his protests at having to do so, Jamie gave an excellent winners speech. The hospitality from the club was outstanding with excellent lunches, extremely supportive club members on hand throughout the whole event, and a lovely club house. Although a small town to visit,

Hunstanton proved an excellent location for the event. Jamie even had an opportunity to show Croquet isn't his only sporting excellence, with a fairly impressive 180+ in a round of ten-pin bowling.

Player	JB	CW	JH	JD	DW	DG	LT	MF	Won	Tot	Pos
Jamie Burch		+22tp -5otp	+17tp -18	+6 +26tp	+10tpo +17tp	+14otp +25tp	+17 +16	-26tp +17tp	6 5	11	1
Chris Williams	-22tp +5otp		-24tp +23	-4tpo +24tp	+17 +10	+12 +26tp	+17 +26tp	+21tp -12tpo	4 5	9	2
James Hopgood	-17tp +18	+24tp -23		-2tp -26tp	+17 +21	+26tp -13tpo	-3tp +8tp	-4 +20	3 4	7	3=
Jeff Dawson	-6 -26tp	-17 +4tpo	+2tp +26tp		+26tp -17	-26tp -10tp	-26tp +12	+26tp +10tpo	3 4	7	3=
David Walters	-10tpo -17tp	+25tp -24tp	-17 -21	-26tp +17		+17 +11	-16 +10	+3 +12tpo	3 4	7	3=
David Goacher	-14otp -25tp	-12 +13tpo	-26tp +10tp	+26tp -11	-17		-26tp +24tp	+26tp +23	2 4	6	6
Lionel Tibble	-17 -16	-17 -26tp	+3tp -8tp	+26tp -12	+16 -10	+26tp -24tp		+3tp -12	5 0	5	7
Martin French	+26tp -17tp	-21tp +12tpo	+4 -20	-26tp -10tpo	-3 -12tpo	-26tp -23	-3tp +12		2 2	4	8

**The Spencer Ell
Sidmouth 8 - 11 September 2010
Report By Dave Kibble**

Jonathan Hills won the Spencer Ell Cup 2010 with two rounds in hand.

The lawns were quite flat with a few slopes, Lawn 1 fairly slow (10.7 Plummers) and the others medium paced (11.3 Plummers). Hoops firm but fair; easy if you are reasonably close in front, but rejecting inaccuracies if not.

At the start, everyone was asked to record openings and first break but at this level the opening seemed to have little influence on who gained control first. Good shooting perhaps being the decisive factor.

Jonathan was pretty solid throughout; far from error-free but making fewer than others, which is all that's needed to get the job done. Martin's classy play, with fantastically accurate croquet strokes and rushes to get precision pick-ups, deserved a better position in the table, perhaps lapses of concentration held him back. Campbell's

straight and powerful hitting proved very useful (particularly for big rushes), as did Jim's amazing big pass rolls - he often manages 2:1 over 15+ yards and a queue formed for coaching after the event. Ian and Paul played well enough but were perhaps being unlucky. Dave seemed to sort out how to swing the mallet most days but did not shoot quite as well as the others. Gabrielle is the one to watch for the future - a very solid swing and a style that always looks like she's going round and stopping under control. More championship-level experience will surely develop her confidence and tactics and make her a top player.

On day 3, Dave completed 4 TPs in a row, and Jim was victim to 3 in a row on day 2. On day 4, Dave managed a six peel break but bevelled the 3-yard peg-out to produce a split shot with just enough pull to miss the peg. (From the same spot he missed a TPO peg-out in the final game, losing a few turns later without taking croquet.

Sidmouth proved to be a good place for the event with Elaine Woodward taking care to make sure the players got all they needed and the many club volunteers were organised to open up, prepare the lawns, set hoops, and the myriad of things many of us don't notice get done. Most days, play didn't finish until well after 7pm

PLAYER	JH	CM	GH	DK	MM	PS	JF	IV	Won	Tot	Pos
Jonathan Hills		-17 +26	+26tp -18	+17 +15	+14 +21	+15 +23qp	+17 +26	+3 +26	6 6	12	1
Campbell Morrison	+17 -26		+12tp +10	-25tp +7	+9 -26tp	-11 -3	-24 +1	+24 +17	4 4	8	2
Gabrielle Higgins	-26tp +18	-12tp -10		+9 -11tp	+9 -15	+4 +3	-2 +11	-3 +26tp	3 4	7	3=
Dave Kibble	-17 -17	+25tp -7	-9 +1tp		+7 +25tp	-5 -20	+17tp +3	-8 +12tpo	3 4	7	3=
Martin Murray	-14 -15	-9 +26tp	-9 +15	-7 -25tp		+16tp +4	+15tp -3	+9tp +22tp	3 4	7	3=
Paul Smith	-15 -21	+11 +3	-4 -3	+5 +20	-16tp -4		-16 +19	-24 +6	2 4	6	6
James Field	-17 -23qp	+24 -1	+2 -11	-17tp +3	-15tp +3	+16 -19		-25tp +10	3 2	5	7
Ian Vincent	-3 -26	-24 -17	+3 -26tp	+8 -12tpo	-9tp -22tp	+24 -6	+25tp -10		4 0	4	8

but there wasn't any complaint.

Entertainment wise, most of us went to see an excellent production of Charley's Aunt by the Charles Vance Theatre Company. The Old Ship provided great value good food and ale,

with Brown's producing a quality tournament dinner on Saturday night.

Four debutantes, Campbell (whom no one else had played before), Gabrielle, Jim and Jonathan, helped to make it an interesting week.

**Treasurer's Tankard,
Ryde 8 -12 September 2010**
Report by Cliff Jones

Richard Griffiths won the Treasurer's Tankard

After 14 rounds there was a tie for first place between Graham Gale and Richard Griffiths so a play-off started at 3.45 pm with Richard winning a very close game +4. Richard Griffiths wins the Treasurer's Tankard.

PLAYER	GG	RG	RS	TW	SW	AJ	MP	CJ	Won	Tot	Pos
Graham Gale		-10	+24	+20	-16	+3	+4	+14	5	9	1=
		+20tp	+22tp	-17	-25tp	+8tpo	+2	-5	4		
Richard Griffiths	+10		+25	-15	-10	+8	+17	+22	5	9	1=
	-20tp		-15	+20	-8	+17	+3	+13	4		
Richard M Smith	-24	-25		+25	+24	+10	+15	+15	5	8	3=
	-22tp	+15		-26	+11	-6	+17	-8	3		
Tom Weston	-20	+15	-25		-7	+12	-7	+4	3	8	3=
	+17	-20	+26		+7	+4	-14	+17	5		
Steve Woolnough	+16	+10	-24	+7		-9	-12	-10	3	8	3=
	+25tp	+8	-11	-7		+21	+22	+17tp	5		
Alex Jardine	-3	-8	-10	-12	+9		+8	+7	3	5	6=
	-8tpo	-17	+6	-4	-21		+3	-15	2		
Mike Porter	-4	-17	-15	+7	+12	-8		+10	3	5	6=
	-2	-3	-17	+14	-22	-3		+3	2		
Cliff Jones	-14	-22	-15	-4	+10	-7	-10		1	4	8
	+5	-13	+8	-17	-17tp	+15	-3		3		

**The Selectors' Weekend
Southport 10 - 13 September 2010**
Report by David Mooney

Lee Hartley takes the title

The Selector's Southport was completed successfully despite a few of the wall factors. Firstly all the players managed to get to the venue despite the M6 being closed north of Stoke on Trent from 12.00 till after 10pm on Thursday. This resulted in all the players from South of the Watford Gap (Leicestershire not Herts) having to find creative alternative routes and ignore their SatNavs. I myself came up M1 going across the Pennines at Chesterfield/High Peak. Secondly we had torrential rain throughout Thursday night and again on Saturday night which meant we lost lawn 2 to standing water until Sunday morning. Thirdly there was also considerable on line debate as to how ties should be resolved for the knock out, should more than eight qualify for the knockout stage and lastly there was the double whammy of the Mooney/Hawkins management team.

The players stoically braved all these conditions and played on in good heart. It appeared at the end of the first day's play there were a couple of cuckoos in the nest with both David Richards and Andrew Willis playing out of the skins with a 100% record mastering the conditions and more senior players struggling.

The second day continued in the same vein with players struggling to meet the variable paced courts. In fact only two



David Mooney presents Lee Hartley with the Ranelagh-Weightman Trophy at Southport.

triples were completed in the whole weekend although it would have been three if the mangler had not been distracted mid break having completed 2 peels and then played the wrong ball. So the knock out consisted of six players: Paul Rigge, Alan Mayne, James Hawkins (masquerading as a 1/2), Andrew Willis, David Richards, and Lee Hartley.

The 2 more novice players fell in the quarters and semis with the final being contested by the two ante post favourites

Mayne and Hartley with Hartley Victorious +17

One postscript item I would like to bring to the attention of the tournament committee as the end of season selection events are to some players the culmination of their season. It is unfortunate that the Selectors' doesn't have the provision of a non-playing manager as one of its requirements for the bidding venue. Whilst on this occasion I was willing to play and manage, I would be more reluctant in the future. The eights have a fixed format and require little input from the manager. I feel a change in format to two blocks of eight with crisscross semi-finals and finals would yield a similar no of matches and could be set up easily prior to the event. The current format is fine and allows more matches and possibly slightly more players but needs a non playing manager or a very willing playing manager

Ahh!!! The Joys of management.

The View from the Bar

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

There's been a huge mailbag over the past month or two about the somewhat arcane subject of how you seed a tournament which begins with a series of blocks, with the best players going through to a knockout. Although such tournaments are pretty rare (especially those with more than two blocks), they include some of the most prestigious tournaments, such as the World Championships and until 2008 the Opens, which is possibly why it has fuelled such a fierce debate. The debate is over how to seed the draw for the knockout, with opinion divided between those who want to see the block winners being the top seeds, and those who want to use the players' rankings, calculated after the group games have been included. The former is most commonly done in other sports (such as the football World Cup) while the latter is currently used in the croquet World Championships.

The argument put forward by those wanting to use rankings (the "rankers") is that rankings are highly likely to be the most accurate reflection of overall form – since they include the block results they do take account of those games, but because they also reflect older results, somewhat discounted, they incorporate more information. This is particularly important, the rankers claim, for a

tournament such as the Worlds in which a player (who we'll call Mark) may turn up out of season and take a little while to play himself in. Mark may therefore qualify with some poor results along the way, which would mean that using just block results he only gets a low seeding in the knockout. However it may be that Mark has just played himself into form, and it would then be very unfair for the number one seed in the knockout to be rewarded with a first round match against Mark. If this occurred for more than one player, the whole knockout draw could be heavily skewed with all the top players in one half. Using rankings to seed the knockout this is much less likely to happen, since as Mark's results in previous tournaments are taken into account, he will achieve a better seeding.

Those wanting to use only block results being taken into account to decide seeding (the "blockers") accept (mostly) the contention that using rankings may be more accurate. However, they argue that it is important that players who do well in the blocks are rewarded for their performance. If a lowly ranked player (who we'll call Kevin) plays out of his skin and wins his block, the blockers say it is very unfair that because of his low ranking, dragged down by previous performances, Kevin gets a low seeding while a player who he may have beaten and who has just scraped through his block gets a higher seeding. As a result, Kevin may then get drawn against the world number one in the next round despite winning his block, scant reward for playing so well.

Effectively, as neatly summarised by Paul Billings, this is a question of whether you believe a tournament should be entirely self-contained. If so, you are a blocker and believe information prior to the tournament should not be considered where an alternative is available. That allows good play in the tournament to be fully rewarded, but at the cost of some accuracy in seeding the knockout. Those who put greater store on accuracy in seeding (i.e. using more information to make it more likely that those seeded higher really are the better players) are the rankers. Part of the problem in resolving this lies in the fact that if one player gets an easier draw in the knockout, his opponent faces the flipside. In the example above, it seems reasonable to say that notwithstanding his playing out of season, Mark has a "fair" reward for his poor block play if he is drawn against the world number one in the knockout – but it is far from fair on the world number one, and suggests that elsewhere in the draw someone else is getting an unfairly easy ride as a result.

Some ingenious other suggestions were thrown up by the debate. One which seemed might appeal to both camps (and which unusually avoided any public detraction) was to use the blocker method but then allow the top seeds to choose their opponents from the bottom seeds – so, for example, if there were four blocks and four qualifiers from each, the eight block winners and runners-up could choose their opponents from among the third and fourth placed players. Order of choosing could be determined by win percentages in the blocks. In our examples this has the advantage of giving Kevin a reward for his play by getting to choose his opponent, while also ensuring that if Mark is known as a strong player who has just taken a while to get going he should avoid getting a really strong opponent since he will not be chosen until quite late in the process.

Finally, and on a slightly different note, an ingenious and totally different structure to a tournament was suggested – rugby blocks (or for the bridge players among you, and as I prefer to think of it, duplicate croquet). This would be ideal for a weekend

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tournament with ten players. The players are split into two blocks of 5 but rather than all-play-all (which requires byes), each player plays five games against all the players in the other block. As a result, although the players in Block 1 haven't played each other they have taken on an identical set of opponents and can therefore be ranked. You could then play off the top player from each block in the grand final. If anyone is thinking of running a tournament to this format next summer, count me in!

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Club News

Club Awards 2011

By Pat Kennett, Chair of Development Committee

Your club could be awarded £250

The CA gives three awards every other year in recognition of a club's progress in two consecutive years, 2008, 2009 or 2010 this time.

The Townsend Award is open to all clubs with one or two courts, the Apps Heley Award to clubs with three or four courts and the Millennium Award is for clubs with five or more courts.

The judging criteria include

- Facilities that the club has managed to develop off court
- Development and quality of courts
- Playing achievements
- Participation in Federation activities
- Hosting of CA or Federation events
- Local and regional publicity
- Fundraising activities

The winner of each award will receive an inscribed plaque and a cheque for £250. The actual trophy will be presented at the following AGM of the CA and will be held for 2 years. Clubs must be full members of the CA.

Clubs wishing to be considered should submit a nomination to their Federation Development Officer by 15 January 2011. This will then be forwarded to the Development Committee who will consider all the applications at their first meeting in 2011.

The 2009 winners were Dulwich and Llanfairfechan.

Tournament Round-Up

Mid Week Over-Fifties' Handicap

East Dorset, 10 – 12 August

Report by David Kendrick

Seventeen players gathered at Parkstone on what some claimed to be the only wet playing day in living memory. However, it was the East Dorset Over-50s' Handicap Tournament, so perhaps their medium-term memory was somewhat deficient. Overnight rain had left the lawns very wet, but playable, and everyone started their first game, with a 2¾ hr time limit imposed. As handicaps ranged from -1 to 18, long rows of bisques were very common, and only one game finished quickly, with "Top-Turn" Tom (Weston) rapidly pegging out one of Ann Peek's balls and then speeding round with his second ball. Ann had travelled from Nailsea for this privilege – other "visitors" were Ron Atkinson from Colchester, Richard Harris from Ryde and Richard Stevens from Hamptworth. In the afternoon the wind-driven rain was relentless and everyone stopped after their second game of the day, except for Tom who managed 3.

The next 2 days were dry, with some of the expected Poole sunshine, so everyone made the most of the well-prepared lawns and the excellent, good-value catering from the Club House Café. We also enjoyed the sight, sound and smell of another 50+ visitor

during the afternoon, as the weekly summer steam train powered past the lawns on the return journey from Weymouth to Waterloo.

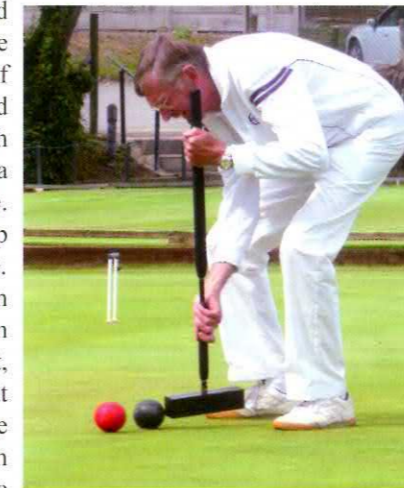
The format of the tournament was Egyptian, with the top four players after 2 days going into a knockout on day 3 for the Scott Trophy. The Egyptian would continue on day 3 for the other 13 players, competing for the Ashton Trophy.

There were 4 clear leaders after the second day, when everyone had played a further 3 games. One Scott Trophy semi-final saw Nigel Parkins win comfortably (+20) against Mike Glew. In the other semi-final, John Crisp (12) took his first ball to penultimate, having used 5 bisques. His opponent, David Nicholson (-1), took his first ball round to peg, peeling and pegging out John's forward ball. David then pegged out his own ball, leaving a one-ball contest, with John having 8 bisques standing. By the time both players were on 3-back, all the bisques had gone and the spectators were hanging on every shot. After David missed several long roquets by a whisker, John pegged out to win a place in the final by +4.

Both John and Nigel were under pressure in the final, so the mix of opportunities sought and errors made by both players contributed to a tightly-contested game. Eventually John Crisp triumphed by +5 on time.

Meanwhile, from the players remaining in the Egyptian tournament, the two clear leaders at lunch time on day 3 were Roger Hesketh and John Pollard (who would have qualified earlier in the tournament for his Silver Merit Award, having run all 12 hoops in one bisque-less turn, only to run out of steam and lose the match). Roger and John played a closely fought game for the Ashton Trophy. Both had opportunities to take a decisive lead, but it was Roger who finally succeeded in pegging out and winning the trophy.

The prizes were presented by Jill Lonsdale. An additional prize (of a bottle from the Parkstone cellars) was awarded to the best-performing visitor; it subsequently travelled to the Isle of Wight with Richard Harris. Another bottle went to the Manager,



John Crisp on his way to winning at Parkstone

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John Crowe, who was complemented on his relaxed but efficient approach to controlling the proceedings (and the players). Despite the first day's rain, a good time was had by all, and we look forward to an even larger turn-out next year.

Challenge and Gilbey

Sussex County 9 -12 September

Report by Julie Horsley

This year saw a very low entry for the Challenge and Gilbey, maybe the change of date was a contributory factor, who knows!

The Tournament started on the Thursday morning with only 10 players entered for the Gilbey Goblet. This was run as a Swiss with Philip Windred emerging as the winner – having won all his games. The runner-up was Bob Stephens, having lost to Philip.

Play for the Challenge Cups started on the Friday.

The A Block for the Roehampton Cup was won by Dave Mundy with Jack Davies as runner-up.

The B Block for the Council Cup was won by Bob Stephens with Barry Gould as runner-up.

The C Block for the Reckitt Cup was won by Philip Windred with Neil Coote as runner-up

The D Block for the Stevenson Cup was won by Nigel Graves with Anne Stephens as runner-up.

An excellent Tournament Dinner was held in the Clubhouse on the Saturday evening.



Trophy winners with the Manager - from left to right Bob Stephens, Dave Mundy, Julie Horsley, Philip Windred and Nigel Graves

Letchworth Advanced, 21 - 22 August

Richard M Smith wins 1st Letchworth Advanced Wknd

Report by Nick Mountfield

The event – the first of its kind to be played at Letchworth – was played as an Egyptian and hosted 8 [from a field of 9] players of scratch and below. Despite varied conditions (wind and rain on Saturday followed by a warm and sunny Sunday), the courts played extremely well and befitting of the predominantly A-Class field.

As expected from such a strong field the general quality of play was excellent, with Mark Avery (-1.5) racking up an impressive

five TPs on his way to winning all eight of his games and grabbing the prize for the highest number of wins. Unfortunately for Mark, the curse of the Egyptian meant that Richard M Smith pipped him at the peg to win the Letchworth Croquet Club 1st Annual Advanced Weekend Tankard. Starting from a scratch handicap and having already gained a huge number of points by beating Jonathan Hills (-1.5) and Jack Wicks (-1.5), Richard eventually sealed victory by beating Simon Hathrell (-0.5) in the final game of the weekend to lift the Tankard.



Richard shows off his trophy

Other noteworthy performances over the weekend included two successive straight TPOs from Jack Wicks and a pulsating match between Mark Avery and Duncan Hector in which Duncan completed a TPO but Mark eventually hit in from distance to win and converted the TPO into +5 OTP.

Ramsgate B Level, 4 - 5 September

Report by Nick Steiner

The B level advanced tournament at Ramsgate on 4th and 5th Sept. 2010 was won by Paul Miles. Nick Steiner was runner up.

Eight players played seven games in glorious sunshine with a light breeze in this swiss style tournament. For lunch on Saturday we had home made steak and kidney pie, and on Sunday a homemade chicken casserole with rice....Mmm, delicious. The cake at tea time was also memorable.

We managed to get some exciting croquet in too with John Ruddock finishing +1 against John Bateson with an Irish peel through rover.

No Triple Peels I'm afraid though Nick managed 4 back and penult before breaking down at 3 back.

The courts were in excellent condition and the competition was managed superbly by Trevor Longman with the aid of his lap top.

A great fun two days was had by all.

Centre Stage Golf Croquet Competition National Final, Northampton 12 September

Report by Gill Brent

The final of the 2010 Centre Stage Competition was held at the Northampton Croquet Club on Sunday 12th September.

This tournament, which is held every year, is a singles golf croquet tournament for players with a handicap of between 5 and 8. Groups play preliminary rounds at their own clubs and the winner (and runner up, depending on the number of players who have entered from the club) comes through to the final.

This year there were 10 finalists from around the country and, blessed with good weather, everyone enjoyed the day. The players were split into two groups and played each member of their group – one timed level play game of 13 points.

In the semi finals the winner of Group 1, Roger Wood from Broadwas who won all 4 of his games, played Eric Cole from Eynsham, the runner up in Group 2 who won 3 of his games. From Group 2 the winner was Nigel Haslam from Kenilworth who also won 3 games but gained the most net points and he played Chris Roberts from Phyllis Court who was second in Group 1 with 3 wins.

Both semi finals were nail bitingly close, Roger beating Eric 7 hoops to 6 and Chris beating Nigel 7 hoops to 5.

The final was an exciting game to watch and Roger Wood who had beaten Chris Roberts by 4 hoops to 3 in the first round repeated his success winning by 7 hoops to 4 to take the Egg Cup Trophy home to Broadwas Croquet Club.

The trophy and medals were presented by John Bowcott who directs the tournament on behalf of the Croquet Association. Our thanks go to him and to the Northampton Croquet Club for hosting the event once more.



Chris Roberts and Roger Wood at the end of a most enjoyable day.

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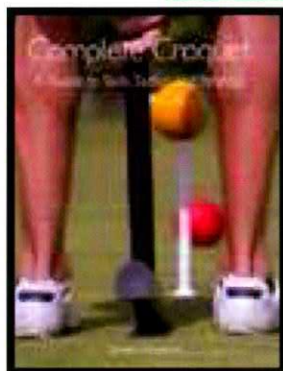
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New: Complete Croquet: A Guide to Skills, Tactics & Strategy. The latest book on croquet by James Hawkins, published May 2010. A former Coach of the Year, James trains coaches around the country and has a deep knowledge of the game. Learn about improving handicap play right up to top-class croquet tactics. £16 inc p&p

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If ordering by post, please ensure that the correct postage and packing is included. If in doubt please call on 01242 233555. Cheques should be made payable to 'The Croquet Association'. Orders and credit card payments can be taken by telephone.

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