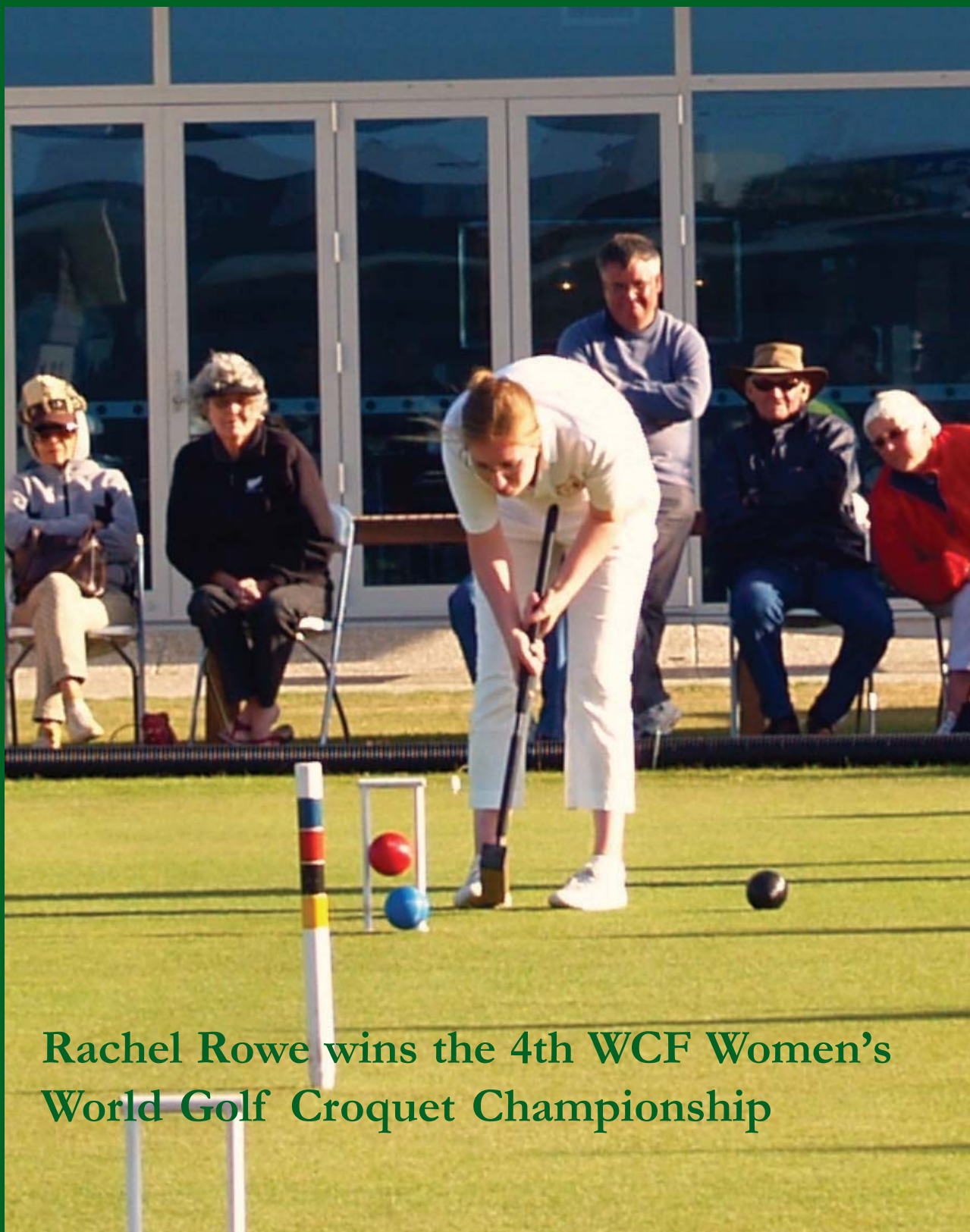


THE

December 2011

CROQUET

GAZETTE



Rachel Rowe wins the 4th WCF Women's World Golf Croquet Championship

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In the previous issue this photograph of the players and officials at the World Golf Croquet Championships was unfortunately attributed wrongly. Apologies to Clare Benson of the Hurlingham Club, who was responsible for the photograph.



THE CROQUET GAZETTE



Issue 335 December 2011

Front Cover: Rachel Rowe scores the winning point to become the WCF Women's World Golf Croquet Champion Photo by Alwen Bowker.

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Disclaimer

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Chairman's Column



I expect that you are reading this during the festive season. I hope that you are enjoying yourselves and will not spend too much time thinking about those 'if only' moments from last season!

At this time of the year it is customary to think about the coming year and some people find that a set of New Year Resolutions helps them along. So, with the new croquet season on the distant horizon, I have compiled some resolutions for croquet players. Please feel free to select those which may apply to yourself.

- Having been beaten out of site with unused extra turns, do not complain about your opponent's handicap
- Always thank the Manager when you leave a tournament even though you are convinced that you were made to play all your games on the worst lawns and at the most inconvenient times
- Do not tell your opponent he is lucky every time he hits a shot
- Always thank the Referee for his decision even though you believe he is wrong as you know more about the laws than any trained official
- Do not cross the line of shot in a double banked game when walking round the lawn
- Always praise your doubles partner
- Do not slow down as time approaches and you are winning
- Always mark double banked balls when playing your shot in their direction
- Do not disappear to the bar/fall asleep/read a book/go to the toilet every time your opponent is in play so that he has to fetch you onto the lawn to play at the end of his turn
- Do not blame the lawn/weather/worms every time you miss a shot.

Of course, *you* do not need these resolutions as you do all of these things already, which is why I would like to have the pleasure of playing you as often as I can. That way we can all enjoy our games and have fun. After all winning is not everything—is it?

Barry Keen

Golf Croquet holiday in Corfu

13th – 22nd May 2012

**Singles and doubles tournaments
Time for exploring the island and relaxing
5* hotel accommodation**

**Players of all abilities welcome
Non-playing partners and friends at reduced rate**

**Further information from Ian Cobbold 0208 6420533
ianmobbold@hotmail.com**

Editorial



Welcome to the December issue. Much of it celebrates success and endeavour, both in playing and other areas of the sport, via the recognition of competitions and awards promoted by the Association. I am sure that you would all join me in congratulating Rachel Rowe who won the WCF Women's World Golf Croquet Championship, after the copy deadline of this issue, but the presses were duly held.

As the year ends it feels as though another successful playing season has ended. Most players will perhaps find other ways of occupying their time. However, a significant number will be working and meeting during the winter months at club and Association level to ensure that when next season arrives all is prepared, arranged and planned, for all aspects of croquet.

There is also criticism in this issue, specifically in the letters pages. I find this type of criticism frustrating, as it is wholly negative, and in being so completely negates the work and contributions of others. We are all entitled to opinions, and can have strong convictions on certain issues, but please, constructive criticism and a little more respect for the efforts of others.

Gail Curry

Letters

More on Golf Croquet

I support your view of the role of the Editor of the *Croquet Gazette*: you do not feel that you “have any right to act as the censor on any part of our sport”. And I agree. My point is that ‘golf’ is not a part of our sport, even though it may be played on our lawns, using our equipment. Even though there are some croquet players who also play ‘golf’.

Rugby World does not give over a third of its pages to soccer; *Boxing Monthly* is not for fans of wrestling; *Match Magazine* is about Association Football, not the other kind; and if I was a draughts player I would not waste my money on *British Chess*. The title of *The Croquet Gazette* should be about a sport in which the croquet stroke is employed as the result of a roquet. A better description of so-called ‘golf croquet’ would be ‘hoop-ball’.

You mention elitism, implying that this is the source of my opposition to the playing of ‘golf’ on croquet lawns. I do not think you will find any suggestion of that in the letter that inspired your editorial. I have played ‘golf’ with some of the country’s best and most enthusiastic players. The other day I repeated to one of them the suggestion that ‘golf was supplanting croquet in many clubs and threatening their existence. His reply was a simple “Yes”. I am not concerned with the question of which is the better game, the more intelligent game or the more elegant game, but whether the

two pastimes can co-exist. Superficially they are close relations, one of the other. In reality there is a danger that ‘golf’ may destroy croquet.

Hitting a ball through one hoop after another is an excellent form of occasional practice. As a formal game it involves a group of people trampling an area around and on a direct line between hoops, causing excessive wear in a way that croquet does not. In the course of a few hours this can be repeated many times. While this is going on, no game of croquet can double bank with it, so that half the playing area is lost.

The ‘harmonious future’ that you desire for these two incompatible activities will not be achieved by denying that many croquet players are worried about the future of their game and open their *Gazette* with sinking hearts.

Peter Dorke

A good kicking

It’s good to see (letters, *Gazette* Issue 334) that Peter Dorke is still alive and kicking—and what needs kicking more than the CA and the *Gazette* with their floods of ‘golf’. I decline to use the word ‘croquet’ after it, because despite having elements in common, it bears about as much relation to Association croquet as solo-whist does to bridge, in both of which four people sit round a table, bid, and play with cards—though I doubt that the national bridge association would encourage the subversion of its game as the CA has done with croquet. One thinks of cuckoos in nests.

It was ironic that the most significant piece of ‘golf’ news in Issue 334 was given only a partial report in the Chairman’s column, leaving the reader to ferret around in the tangle of e-mails on the Nottingham list to find out why it was that probably the best player in the world was seriously upset by a referee’s decision, and by the general role of on-court refereeing. What is a magazine for, if not to give us the full picture? And it was disappointing, to this reader at least, to see that what are plainly defects in the attempts to make ‘golf’ a serious international sport were papered over with pious platitudes about making the game ‘impossible to play’.

I am sorry to say that while the quality of the *Gazette*’s appearance has improved recently, much of its content—and I think especially of a letter about ‘golf’ in Issue 333 that appears to have been written for the kindergarten—has declined to the extent that it hardly seems worth the bother of opening.

Peter, you are not alone.

Don Gugan

A Brighter Croquet Future—Inclusivity

The letters to the Editor in the October 2011 edition reveal some of the key difficulties that may well stifle the future development and growth of croquet within the U.K. :

Firstly the pompous and superior attitude of a significant number of association croquet players towards anything or anyone associated with golf croquet

Secondly a skills/outcome based approach to training and development, as opposed to a people-centred approach, as exemplified by the two letters concerning the referees’ qualification process.

If croquet is to grow, and not “wither on the vine”, all players, representatives and officers must accept that croquet is a “broad church”. In affluent areas there will be a higher proportion of

individuals with management/procedural skills, and confidence, to relish the tactical and strategic challenges that association croquet offers, and who would naturally choose this format from the day they first joined a croquet club. In less affluent areas individuals are more likely to see the simpler game of golf croquet as a “pleasurable bat and ball game”, with a bit of competitive edge. On developing a good skills base, and being more competitive than most, such an individual will begin to see the excitement and challenges that association croquet offers and progress accordingly. Interestingly these individuals do not stop playing golf croquet. If association croquet is to survive, the process of golf croquet in the first instance, linked to senior club members encouraging individuals to do more and also play association croquet, is absolutely essential when looking at the issue from a country wide perspective. Gail Curry’s editorial comments on this subject are laudable. Incidentally I live in an affluent area.

The two letters concerning the referees’ course demonstrate eager learning meeting rigid experience. It seems to me that the two writers are further apart in understanding than before the letters were written. The important questions that are raised within this scenario revolve around :

- Is the training/coaching and referee qualification assessment process “fit for purpose” in 2011/2012?

- Who would or should assess “fitness for purpose”? I suggest no one currently coaching/assessing within the existing referees’ course. An appropriate auditor would seek the views of all, failed and successful participants as well as the coaching/assessing individuals, before taking a position.

An experienced auditor would be asking:

- What are the objectives of the course/assessment?

- What can be done/will be done to increase the pass rate to 75% without diluting the knowledge/skills requirement?

- What formal participant feedback system is in place that might help improve the coaching/assessment process?

And at the detailed level, for example:

- When assessing (in the examination process) whether or not a “double tap” or “crush” stroke has occurred—other than the examinee, how many others should be involved in the assessment? Possibly one independent striker and two qualified referees who must both agree.

- Does the practical coaching of such things as “crush/double tap” strokes continue to “conclusion”, namely that either the examinee will always judge such strokes correctly or rarely judge correctly?

Modern trainers would empathise with the above. Even Katie Fairbairn might reconsider taking the referees’ qualification course again if such principles were adopted.

In summary any society or grouping (croquet being one) needs to be inclusive (other than rogues and vagabonds) if it is to succeed and survive. “Stuff” happens. Change happens.

Paul Robertshaw

Outdated Image?

I found Peter Dorke’s letter in the previous issue biased and would confirm to most new players of croquet the outdated image that so many clubs within the last few years have tried very hard to dispel. If it was not for Golf Croquet many clubs would be struggling to survive. In East Anglia of the 1032 members, 808 (78%) play Golf Croquet, 374(36%) Association Croquet and 150(15%) both.

The expansion of Golf Croquet must surely be of benefit to croquet as a whole and generate revenue. Mr Dorke implies that Golf Croquet should be seen as no more than a frivolous game akin to ‘pitch & putt and not elitised as Association Croquet. Yet some of the World’s top croquet players play Golf Croquet too. I cannot see why both forms of the game can not work in harmony and make full use of facilities that would probably stand idle if only for the sole use of the Association game.

Janet Lewis

Re. “Golf Croquet undermining and replacing Croquet?”

I hesitate to leap to the defence of the Editor, since she is more than capable of defending herself, but I fear that Peter’s concerns are misdirected. Any change would indeed require someone to “lead a movement”, but Peter is looking in the wrong place. The CA has a policy of supporting both Association Croquet and Golf Croquet—even the CA Constitution defines the word croquet as “Association and/or Golf Croquet as defined in the current laws...”. As the official organ of the Croquet Association, it is therefore incumbent upon the *Gazette* to report on both codes in a balanced fashion.

I suggest that Peter’s concerns would be better directed towards an elected member of the CA Council, and/or getting supporters to stand for election.

Samir Patel

Swallows enjoy croquet



I would like to reassure Colin Prichard (Letters, October 2011) that at Wrest Park swallows are regular visitors. The presence of the Long Water offers a plentiful supply of insects in May, and visitors to our tournament in the middle of the month are quite likely to see them flying across the lawns at low level chasing down food. Later in the season, if conditions are suitable, both adult and younger birds take the opportunity to fatten themselves up prior to the long flight back to Africa. Far from finding our 36 hoops a hazard, they have been known to use them as temporary perches (photo taken on 27 August). If memory serves, a French partridge was once observed in a similar pose, but whether it was a cock or a hen I could not say.

John Bevington

Stance applauded

I cannot agree more emphatically with Mr Chairman in his Column of Issue 334. And well done for the CA having the backbone to stand up to those who seem to think they are above the sporting community within which they participate. I too was horrified to read the open discussion on the croquet mailing list. I write this on a day when Wales exited the Rugby World Cup after a terrible sending off decision. The players when interviewed firmly declined to comment upon the referee's decision and quite right too. Referees are human beings and are not infallible. Players attacking them openly for their errors will not propagate a positive stage for the game's development: much better to seek serious constructive discussion within the right quarters. It of course will be clear when there are errors of judgment without the players involved needing to express their views and emotions.

Matt Holmes

Suggested repealing

According to Golf croquet Laws C 13.1 (6) & (8) it is a fault if the striker 'double taps the striker's ball' and 'causes the striker's ball, while still in contact with the mallet, to touch another ball'. This law has resulted in the situation where balls at a distance of 4 mm or less apart cannot be played along the line of the centres because if struck with force the elasticity of the striker's ball can cause the above situation (8) to occur.

Balls more than 4 mm apart can be played along the line of the centres providing there is no double tap. A double tap is considered to have occurred if the second ball travels less than eight times the distance of the striker's ball.

So we have a situation where, with balls 4 mm apart, if the balls are played gently so that there is no distortion a fault is deemed to have occurred when it hasn't, and if balls are say 1 mm apart are played with force at a wide angle to the line of the centres no fault is deemed to have occurred when it might have, depending on how hard and at what angle the ball was hit and how much it distorted.

Also if balls more than 4 mm apart are played at an angle to the line through the centres the eight-to-one rule breaks down as the relative distances travelled are governed by the striking angle, so how far off the striking line do you have to be for it not to be a fault, and how can you measure it?

Coming back to law C 13.1(8), why is it even a fault in the first place? Laws are normally created to prevent a player taking an unfair advantage of a situation, double-tapping a ball to run a wide angled hoop for instance, but I cannot see how the 'fault' described in this law can be exploited. I suggest that Law C 13.1 (8) be repealed.

Peter Stone

Cactus, carpet....and croquet

Just two full seasons into my croquet career, I had only managed to play at a couple of other clubs besides my home base of Nottingham when opportunity knocked on a recent visit to the USA.

With five rounds of golf in the Arizona desert the main reason for my trip, I found I had a free day straight after the flight



Dave Gunn enjoying play in Arizona, with Paul Bennett looking on

over the pond and decided to see if croquet was being played amidst the cactus.

A quick internet search a week before I left England threw up the Arizona Croquet Club on the outskirts of Phoenix and handily placed just a few miles from my hotel. A couple of emails soon had offers of a game from a couple of the members and I was all set.

I was very kindly picked up by US Number 5 Paul Bennett (fresh from a morning flying a light aircraft apparently, another passion of his) who drove me firstly to see their main club site (where the hardy summer grass was being over seeded with a winter version) and then on to the 'fake grass' carpet lawn that they use when the real stuff is unavailable.

After a very relaxed game of golf croquet which also featured their club secretary Rory Kelley and a pair of other visitors, we got down to the serious stuff; me versus Paul in a handicap AC match. Paul had very sneakily arranged for the temperature to rocket to an all time record for October of 103 degrees but this did not stop me racing into an early lead. I was still ahead (just) by the time we had to call it a day so I suppose I could claim victory...but I have to be honest and admit that all my bisques were gone by then and Paul was looking ominously smooth on the carpet.

So...my visit to the ACC was most enjoyable and whilst there was no exotic wildlife on display such as I was to see later in the week on the golf courses (Roadrunners, a Bobcat and even a 6 foot Rattlesnake), the welcome was very warm and the carpet croquet was certainly different.

I definitely now plan to try and find a local croquet club on future trips I make around the UK and abroad and would recommend other CA members have a go as well – do watch out for the small seams in the carpet if you happen to end up in Arizona though!!

Dave Gunn

Obituary



Nigel Graves

Nigel Graves died on 22 November 2011, aged 77, after being diagnosed with a condition of the pancreas the previous month. He has left his mark on CA affairs after being employed as Secretary for seven years until 2005 and serving on the CA Council between 2005 and 2011.

Nigel read "Greats" at Oxford, then joined Martins Bank and went on to work for an American bank based in Texas. However he wasn't enamoured with banking and, after getting an Open University maths degree, left that world to teach at Secondary and Further Education levels.

He came across croquet at a course run by Syd Jones at an OU Summer School at Lancaster after which he joined the Caterham club, becoming its Secretary before joining the CA. Nigel was a very conscientious, efficient and approachable Secretary of the CA. One of the innovations he proposed was the CA Civil Liability Insurance Scheme, which provides clubs with third party cover at a considerable saving. His tenure spanned 2001-2002 when there was an exceptional workload dealing with the move of our office from Hurlingham to Cheltenham. Council members relied on Nigel to cope with all the complexities and he did not let us down.

While a Council member, Nigel was chairman of the AC Tournament and Handicap committees and he worked behind the scenes helping to organise the 2011 GC World Championships. Nigel was a tournament manager and a referee, having a formidable knowledge of the AC laws. He enjoyed contributing to the CA's work as it provided him with an interest after his retirement from teaching.

Nigel was a member of Surbiton Club and he also often played at Hurlingham and at Pendle. He was proud to have had one of the CA's trophies in his living room each year from 2000 to 2010 when he was a regular player at the Seniors, the Veterans, the Peel Memorials and the Challenge & Gilbey.

I, and all Nigel's many croquet friends, will miss his company on the lawns and in the evenings when he used to regale us with his, and others', croquet exploits. Council intends to present a 'Nigel Graves' trophy for competition in the Seniors Championship: he will be long remembered.

Quiller Barrett

AGM Minutes

THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at 11 am at the Hurlingham Club on Saturday 15 October 2011.

Present: Quiller Barrett (President), Barry Keen (Chairman of Council), Dr Roger Bray (Hon. Treasurer), Dr Ian Vincent (Hon. Secretary), Elizabeth Larsson (CA Manager) and 47 other Associates recorded in the attendance book.

1. Apologies for Absence.

Apologies for absence were received from Clare Benson, Nigel Graves, Sanaa Hallam, Andrew Hope, Colin Irwin, Ian Lines, Stephen Mulliner and William Ormerod.

2. Minutes of the previous Meeting held on Saturday 16 October 2010.

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on the 16 October 2010 were signed as a true record of the meeting.

3. Annual Report from Council

The Chairman of Council, Barry Keen, presented the following report:

"My first year as Chairman of Council has been very interesting with several new initiatives being undertaken as well as the holding of the Bestinvest Golf Croquet World Championships in London.

Council approved a document spelling out the strategic direction the CA should take in future years. This comprehensive strategy covers all aspects of the CA's work and is available on the website at <http://www.croquet.org.uk/?d=505>. Council will be assessing how the work of the Committees contributes to fulfilling this strategy on an annual basis.

To increase openness and accountability, Council agreed that in future minutes, reports (including a summary of the management accounts) and agreed policy documents of Council and its Committees should be published to Associates on the website.

Last January Council agreed that the MacRobertson Shield competition would in future be held as part of the WCF world team championship. In order to permit the Home countries to take part in the lower tiers of this event, it was also agreed that the team playing for the MacRobertson Shield would be an English team in the future. The decision followed discussions with the other home countries.

In the spring the CA made an arrangement with a publishing house for the Gazette to be published by them at their expense in return for increasing the number of pages of advertising. It would recoup its expenses by keeping the advertising revenue. A trial was made for three issues. If successful, the CA would have saved a significant amount of their annual expenditure. Unfortunately, the publishing house was unable to attract sufficient advertising to make this arrangement viable and we

have now reverted to publishing the Gazette at our expense as in the past.

If the trial had worked then it would have given us an opportunity to make major changes to the way the CA raises its revenues. Various options were being considered including making it easier, by which I mean cheaper, for non-members to join the CA and play in tournaments. Alas this was not to be. However, Council did approve a new concession where the first year of playing membership would have a 2/3rd reduction and the second a 1/3rd reduction in the membership fee. This was introduced to hopefully persuade new members to join and get the tournament habit. This came into force on the 1st August this year.

Following an open discussion about the state of competitive play at the moment, a cross committee group of Council members led by Patricia Duke-Cox as Chair of Marketing Committee produced a report assessing the state of competitive croquet for both Golf Croquet and Association Croquet and came out with several recommendations. This report was made available on the CA website for members. Council welcomed its conclusions and Marketing Committee was tasked with implementing them. It is planned to gather ideas and information on best practice observed at clubs maintaining the competitive element amongst their membership. This will then be made available to all clubs.

The Development Committee continues to give grants to help start new clubs and to develop facilities at existing clubs. In recent years, the maximum grant normally awarded was £5,000. This year, Council agreed to raise this to £10,000 for the development of larger clubs, that is clubs with four or more lawns. The first grant of this size has been made to a new club near to Bath which is turning a field into a new four lawn club.

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 not mentioned elsewhere in my report.

- Coaching—The bursary scheme for juniors has been extended for a further two years

- Development—Awarded grants to Ben Rhydding, Camerton & Peasdown, Cheltenham, Hamptworth and Shrewsbury.

- Equipment—Manufacture of the Hopewell cast iron hoop has been taken over by the CA.

- AC Laws—The trial for super-advanced play continued this year, and was extended to the final stages of class 1 Championship events, and where agreed by both players, the earlier stages of those events. It was also used in the Chairman's salver.

- GC Laws—New Examining Referees have been appointed across the country to enable more referees to become trained and qualified.

- Tournament—On-line entry to club tournaments was trialed this year, with the CA site accepting entries for Bowdon's tournaments only. The trial will now be reviewed to look particularly at costs and the impact on the office, with a view to implementing more generally for 2013.

- International—The Croquet Association of Ireland has agreed with the CA that players with Northern Irish qualification would be eligible for Ireland and not for Great Britain or England. Further work on the definition of the Domain of the CA is planned for the coming year.

- Marketing—The contract for holding commercial events has been re-negotiated with Hurlingham, and Carole McLoughlan has been appointed as the new Events Manager. I would like to thank David Collins, the retiring Events Manager, for his support in carrying out these duties over the years and for his work in the shop before that.

I mentioned the Bestinvest Golf Croquet World Championships at the start of my address. This was a very successful event. I would like to start by thanking John Spiers for his personal commitment to the event without which it may not have happened. He also chaired the organising committee who all put in a lot of time and effort to make sure that the event was set up and run successfully. My thanks go to them and to the Hurlingham and Surbiton clubs and their members for hosting the event. The event itself ran smoothly thanks to the Manager, Tim King, the Referee of the Tournament, Bill Arliss, and the multitude of referees, scorers and other helpers at both venues. Again I wish to thank them for their commitment and dedication. The experience of running this event should put us in a good position when we next tackle such a major event again.

I wish to end this report by thanking the team of Council members and CA staff who have supported me in my role as your chairman. Our Officers Roger Bray and Ian Vincent together with our President Quiller Barrett have provided an excellent service by keeping me on the straight and narrow. The office staff have provided their usual excellent service throughout the year and coped extremely well with the extra work incurred by the additional international events that we have supported. We bid farewell to John Spiers, Cliff Jones, Pat Kennett and Arthur Reed who are not seeking re-election, and thank them for their contribution to Council. In their places we welcome Terrey Sparks, Roger Staples and Brian Shorney.

Finally, I wish to bring you up to date with changes of personnel at the CA Office. For the last two years the office has been staffed by Liz, Liz and Liz much to the confusion of those of us dealing with them on a regular basis. The Office Manager, Liz Williams (or is it Larsson?) has been supported by Liz Budworth dealing with administrative matters and Liz Parsons running the shop. Liz Parsons has asked to leave the job at the end of October and Paul Hands will be replacing her. Meanwhile, Liz Budworth has just undergone a minor operation and I am sure you will all join me in wishing her a speedy recovery and we look forward to welcoming her back soon."

He then informed the meeting that Pat Kennett was seriously ill and that Pat, and Brian Fisk her husband, were in our thoughts at this most difficult time.

Richard Hilditch (Hampstead Heath) asked whether Northern Ireland had been removed from the Domain and was told that it had not.

Simon Whiteley (Dulwich) asked what plans the GC Laws Committee had. Bill Arliss replied that the WCF GC Rules Committee were thinking in terms of a new version in early 2013 and assured the meeting that Associates would be consulted.

Ian Wilson (Cornwall) asked if the differences between the AC and GC Laws could be reduced. Both Bill Arliss and Ian Vincent replied that this was being considered, but would be a long process.

4. Accounts for the Year to December 2010 and Treasurer's Report

4.1 The Treasurer, Roger Bray, presented the Accounts for the Year to 31 December 2010 and gave a brief report.

4.2 He noted that revenue had fallen by over £4,000 due mainly to much tougher trading conditions for the CA Shop and despite increases from other sources, particularly subscriptions. Expenditure had risen by nearly £7,000 due to the cost of hosting the MacRobertson Shield. Thanks to the excellent work of its organizing committee, this event had been kept well within budget. Moreover, almost half the cost was met from the International Fund, so the impact on the CA's general reserves was relatively small. The final outcome of a £3,500 surplus after tax was insufficient to protect the CA's reserves against the effects of inflation, but it was better than had been feared during the course of the year given the weak trading.

4.3. The Shop had produced increasing surpluses year-on-year ever since Brian Macmillan started selling croquet equipment from the CA Office some 20-odd years ago. It was now a major source of revenue. In 2009 the Shop just held its own despite the economic downturn, but last year saw the first fall in income. This was in contrast to the CA's other major source of revenue, subscriptions. For many years the number of individual members remained more or less constant, but recently there had been a growth, albeit very modest. More positively, for several years now income from member clubs had risen significantly. A key factor was a steady flow of clubs joining the CA, but there also seemed to be an underlying growth in membership within clubs as well. Moreover, this trend seemed to be withstanding the current adverse economic climate. The Treasurer suggested that the growth in clubs was linked to the CA having a much clearer focus in providing a better service and enhanced benefits for its member clubs. In highlighting one of those benefits, the development grants programme, he noted that it had begun with a single £500 grant in 1990; grants totalling £18,000 were awarded in 2010; and over £21,000 was likely to be awarded in the current year. This would bring the total awarded in 22 years to nearly £200,000, benefiting 63 clubs of all sizes throughout the country.

4.4 The theme of firm underpinning from subscriptions but less firm support from commercial activities typified the current year's finances, although it was too early to predict with any definiteness the final outcome for the Shop. As for expenditure, the Gazette would remain a significant cost, following the unsuccessful venture by an independent publisher reported by the Chairman, and grants would increase. Otherwise inflation was pushing up costs, but not to an extent as to dislodge the CA from its relatively strong financial position.

4.5 In response to an invitation to members to comment on the accounts, Richard Hilditch (Hampstead Heath) noted the very small amount currently loaned to clubs, and urged more to consider using this facility if they were planning any project, a view which the Treasurer readily supported, especially as the CA offered very favourable terms to member clubs, though personal guarantees were required.

4.6 The accounts were adopted on the proposal of David Kibble, seconded by Jeff Dawson.

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. Marian Hemsted was re-elected by acclamation, on the proposal of Jonathan Kirby, who noted her attention to detail in the reports he had seen, seconded by Bill Arliss.

8. Election of Council Members

There being no other nominations, the following were declared elected to Council: Bill Arliss, David Kibble, Jonathan Kirby, Nigel Graves, David Maugham and Roger Staples.

9. Benefactors' Book.

The names in the Benefactors' Book were read as follows:

1986: Peter Alvey, Robin Ashdown Godby, Humphry Osmond Hicks, Edward M Hunt; 1988: J Bricher; 1990: Gerald Wellington Williams; 1991: Richard Francis Rothwell; 1992: Lorn C Apps, Mrs D R M Heley, David Matthew Caradoc Prichard, Katherine Elizabeth Longman, Alan John Oldham, Tremaine Arkley; 1995: Edward Patrick Duffield, Robert David Caradoc Prichard, Derek Cecil Caporn; 1998: George Lawrence Ormerod; 2006: Alan Blenkin, John Beech; 2007: Tom Anderson, Judy Anderson, John Wheeler, Pandora Wheeler; 2008: David Maugham, Jeff Dawson; 2010: Tremaine Arkley, Patricia Shine; 2011: Budleigh Salterton Croquet Club

10. Motion to elect Jonathan Isaacs as a Vice-President

Jonathan Isaacs was elected a Vice-President nem. con. with acclamation.

11. Presentations of Trophies for the Most Improved Players.

11.1 The Apps Memorial Bowl will be presented to Sanaa Hallam of the Nottingham club.



Sanaa Hallam of the Nottingham club is presented with the Apps Memorial Bowl by Peter Death.



Quiller Barrett presents Gabrielle Higgins of the Hurlingham Club with the Steel Bowl

11.2 The Steel Memorial Bowl was presented to Gabrielle Higgins of the Hurlingham club.

11.3 The Spiers Cup was presented to Nick Cheyne of the Surbiton club.



John Small of Swindon CC and Barbara Young of Bury CC accept the Townsend Award from Quiller Barrett

12. Presentation of Awards to Clubs

The Townsend Award was presented jointly to the Bury and Swindon clubs. The Apps Heley Award had been presented to the Chester club when its pavilion was opened by the Chairman of Council.

13. Presentation of Coach of the Year Award

Dr. Michael Lester of the Budleigh Salterton club was presented with the Coach of the Year Award.



Nick Cheyne of the Surbiton club receives the Spiers Cup from Quiller Barrett.

14. Presentation of Council Medal

George Noble was presented with the Council Medal for services to croquet.

15. Presentations of Croquet Association Diplomas

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

Bill Arliss* (Sussex County), John Barber (Broadwas), Eric Bevan (Kington Langley), Eugene Matthew Brady (Auckland), Cliff Cardiss (Swindon), Neil Chalmers (Norwich and East Anglian), Brian Christmas* (Shrewsbury), George Collin (East Anglian), David Collins* (Dulwich), Janet Davies (Chester), Iris Freeman (Southchurch Park), Kevin Ham (Dyffryn), Ros Key-Pugh (Lansdown), Freda Knight and Doreen Taylor (Reigate Priory), Martin Kolbuszewski (Cheltenham), Robert Laver* (Sydenham), Basil Lawrence (Enfield), Mollie McBride (Chester), John Munro (Southern), Peter Pullin* (Sussex County), Clemency Reade (Kingston Maurward), John and Edme Robinette* (Bury St Edmunds), Ron Sherwin (Purley Bury), Roy Smith* (Swanage), Freda Vitty (Auckland), Don Wright (Tyneside), Ian Wilson* (Cornwall). Those asterisked were presented in person.

16. Any Other Business

David Mooney (Roehampton) asked what the Millennium Award, which had not been presented, was for. Barry Keen replied that it was for the club with more than four lawns that had made the most progress in the last two years. Peter Death observed that there had been no nominations as it was difficult for mature clubs to make significant progress and that the money had been used to make the Townsend Award jointly.

17. President's Closing Remarks.

Quiller Barrett addressed the meeting as follows:

"We have just elected Jonathan Isaacs as a Vice President. I congratulate him and look forward to his continuing contribution to CA affairs. At the same time I want to mark the passing of Vice President Betty Prichard who died aged 96 earlier this year. I never met Betty but I know about her considerable services to croquet including helping with laws, refereeing, handicapping and editing

the Gazette.

This year the croquet world has also lost Charles Jones, a New Zealander who was President of the World Croquet Federation until his tragic murder while on holiday in Thailand. Charles was a very popular man with a great sense of humour and a personality that helped people from different countries come together, not split apart. I met Charles this summer and I congratulated him, on behalf of the CA, on the new approach that we had been seeing from the WCF: one of much more openness and transparency in the debates they have. This was something the CA had been hoping for and Charles was leading the way. He was a force for good in international croquet. He will be missed, and remembered.

Now, turning to matters closer to home, I should report on some of the things I have been doing on your behalf this year. One of the nice things about being President is visiting clubs to present CA trophies at some of the major events in our Calendar. But I am not alone in doing this and I would like to thank our Vice-Presidents, Officers, the Chairmen of Council and some of our committees who have also represented the CA at tournaments. For me of course, not being a John Solomon or a Bernard Neal, it's wonderful to watch the precision of these super-advanced players who are inch-perfect with their pioneers. However, very occasionally they do miss a 2-yarder and show they are human . . . and I always feel a bit guilty about rather enjoying those moments. Incidentally, I had hoped that I would learn something useful from seeing these guys in action, but my Association handicap has stubbornly remained around 9.

We all know that Council is concerned about competitiveness and this is where I should say that my remarks are personal and don't necessarily reflect those of Council members. I believe the CA should be all-embracing so far as clubs are concerned. If clubs can only survive by serving the needs of members who are happy to play socially, so be it. But the CA should still do all it can to convince as many as possible of these club members they will get even more enjoyment from the game if they learn the basics of the laws and compete in tournaments.

While on the subject of competitiveness, I am a firm believer that one of the CA's roles is to facilitate the way for the most talented CA players of Golf and Association croquet to become the best in the world. I have some experience of helping British competitors in other sports achieve this and become world champions. Council members know that I think the CA should do more. In particular I would urge Council to take steps to pave the way for younger players to reach the very top.

The citations that we read every year for club members who are awarded CA Diplomas show how much clubs and the CA benefit from the quite extraordinary voluntary contributions made by individuals. I should like to highlight just two categories this year.

First, referees: I admire their dedication and respect their decisions, even when to my amazement they fault me for a double tap! If you are a referee I thank you on behalf of all tournament members. And we do need more of you, so if you have the experience I would ask you to think about becoming qualified.

Second, those green-fingered members and groundsman who give our lawns so much tender loving care. Visiting clubs this year has opened my eyes to the amount of work that's required to get lawns up to the highest standard. I'm pleased to tell you that several of our member clubs are achieving just this and their lawn carers deserve our congratulations and thanks.

I also want to thank Council and its committees, led by Barry

Keen, for their work this year. I have counted and there are more than 60 members who have volunteered to help organise and administer croquet nationally in our domain. The quality of the contributions they make is, I think, quite outstanding and we should not take them for granted. It's now more than ten years since we started to encourage committee chairmen to co-opt non-Council members to help with the work and I'm told the number is gradually declining. Perhaps the chairmen should put this on their agendas again?

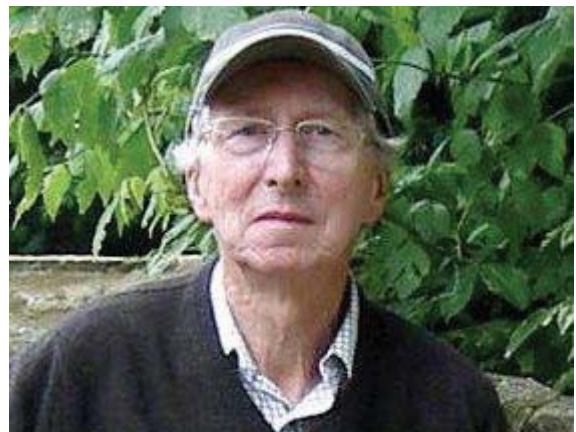
Finally I must thank those clubs that I have visited this year for their hospitality. Someone suggested I am in a good position to award stars for the quality of the catering that clubs offer their members and visitors. I must tell you that your President knows better than to even think about doing such a thing . . .

I close by wishing us all a very enjoyable—and competitive—season next year.”

There being no further business the AGM closed at 12.10 pm.

AWARDS & CITATIONS PRESENTED AT THE AGM

Photos from the AGM by Elizabeth Larsson



Dr Michael Lester, Coach of the Year 2010

Coach of the Year 2010: Dr Michael Lester

Michael Lester started to play croquet in 1995. On moving into the local area, Michael joined Budleigh Salterton CC in 1998. He spends a large amount of time organising and coaching beginners, as well as holding regular clinics for improvers throughout the season. His enthusiasm for these tasks has never dimmed throughout his time at Budleigh Salterton. His own handicap is now at a very respectable 3, and as well as being an Association Referee, Michael has also been a Grade 2 Coach since 2007. He is always most willing to offer advice and help to any player prepared to improve their game, and is a tremendous asset to the Club. Several years ago Michael and his wife, Marie, were preparing to move away to be nearer family, but realising the affection in which they were held by the club members, actually moved much nearer to the Club, to the relief of those many members who have been helped by Michael over the years.



George Noble receives his Council Medal from CA President Quiller Barrett

Council Medal – Awarded for Services to Croquet

George Noble

George Noble, Chairman of the Surbiton Croquet Club for many years, has instilled a remarkable ethos of volunteering and a relaxed atmosphere that has attracted a substantial membership, including many of the best players of both Association and Golf Croquet. Surbiton is now recognised as one of the leading clubs in the CA and its strength, under George's leadership, was evident in 2010 when it hosted the final round of the MacRobertson Shield to universal praise from the players, and this year when it hosted, not only the AC Open Championship, but a substantial part of the GC World Championship a fortnight later.

George Noble started playing croquet in the grounds of a "stately home" near Aberystwyth where he was employed as a farm adviser by the then Ministry of Agriculture. Brian Shorney was also a graduate of that croquet academy. In 1974 George secured a move to Loughborough to be near a croquet club and joined a group of young players at the Nottingham club, who were discovering the A class game. Then to London where he joined the administrative civil service and dealt with such matters as the Spanish fisheries war, where he spent much time before the Beak in the European Court of Justice, the Foot and Mouth crisis and, finally, animal welfare. George is happy to take some of the credit for the ban on dog tail docking.

In London, George joined the Roehampton club. He won the Men's Championship in 1979, played for the first time in the Opens the following year, and was subsequently invited to play in the President's Cup. He was also appointed an Examining Referee.

Feeling the need for a dedicated and more accessible croquet club in SW London he, along with a number of others including Ian Bond, Derek Caporn, Stephen Mulliner, Brian Whitehouse and Lionel Wharrad, persuaded the CA to take on a lease of a ground with space for seven lawns in Alexandra Park, Tolworth and formed

the Surbiton Croquet Club in 1986. At the start there were no facilities, just a disused public convenience that served as an equipment shed ... which led to a somewhat rustic feel to the early tournaments. However, with grants from the Sports Council, the Croquet Association and Fullers Brewery, a wooden clubhouse was erected, complete with a cellar that George has managed to this day. He has also spent many hours in the kitchen, following the standard set by Hazel Kittermaster, with the result that the club's catering is awarded stars throughout the croquet world. His real pride and joy, however, has been the lawns, which he has converted over the years from rough, sloping, former tennis courts to some of the best in the country. Rather than keep his knowledge to himself, he has been very willing to share it through the CA's Lawn Advisory Group.

Despite being heavily involved at Surbiton, George has also given considerable assistance to the Hunstanton Club. He was its President from 1996 to 2006, during the period of the fire and building of its new pavilion.

George Noble's contribution to these clubs, and through them to so many tournament players, has been immense and fully deserves the award of the Council Medal.



CA Diplomas – Awarded for Service to Clubs

Bill Arliss, Sussex County CC

William, commonly known as Bill, joined SCCC in 1989 with his wife Pamela. They quickly became prominent members with rapidly reducing handicaps. In the early 90s Bill was elected to the SCCC Management Committee where he took responsibility for club competitions and hoop setting. During his time on the Committee he recognised the potential of Golf Croquet and actively developed it at Sussex CCC. In 1998 he became Chairman of Council of the CA where he continued his active promotion of Golf Croquet. In spite of the heavy workload involved in his CA responsibilities, Bill continued as a loyal and hardworking member of SCCC developing GC coaching, managing tournaments and in 2004 heading up the organisation for the GC World Championships which were hosted at the club. It has been said that behind every

big man is a strong woman. In Bill's case this has proven to be very true. The support Pamela has given Bill throughout his croquet venture cannot be understated. Their support towards SCCC over the last 22 years has made a significant impact on the club's success as a major croquet venue.

John Barber, Broadwas Croquet Club

Since its inception in 1998 John Barber has dedicated himself to the betterment and furtherance of Broadwas CC, giving freely of his time and much else beside. When he was appointed Club Captain (and Head Groundsman!) he firstly created one lawn in the outfield of our village cricket pitch (next to his cottage) and with just 10 members things got underway. His tireless devotion fostered increased membership and by 2004 this stood at 31, and the club had three excellent lawns. But John wanted more, and by 2007 the club had four full sized lawns with 45 members. Broadwas CC now has 53 active playing members and the club has become recognised throughout the South West Federation and beyond.

Over the years John has always tried to encourage good club management practice, resulting in the club becoming ever more active in all areas of open competition.

As captain, John created a happy and harmonious membership. In 2009 he finally relegated his captaincy and ostensibly 'retired', but he is still there for everything and everybody... in 2010 the club was finally put on the CA map by winning the prestigious 'Murphy Shield'... John Barber's dreams had finally come true!

Eric Bevan, Kington Langley CC

Eric Bevan joined Kington Langley Croquet Club (KLCC) when he and his wife Irene moved to Wiltshire from Kent in 1991. In the intervening years it has been clear to KLCC members that Eric is not only a very accomplished player of both Association and Golf Croquet, but also a very patient and skilful teacher of the tactics and techniques of both disciplines, being a qualified coach. He is a long-standing and valued member of KLCC's Committee; he is a past Chairman of the Club and is now its President.

With secretarial help from his wife, Eric has organised all of the Club's internal events and competitions in meticulous detail for many years, and is often a "hard-to-beat" competitor. He usually provides the refreshments (and sometimes token prizes) for "fun" events himself.

Eric is now over 80 and in indifferent health, but he still turns out when he can to coach at, and to participate in the Club's twice-weekly sessions. He also continues to represent KLCC in some South West Federation League (Association) matches and when needed also in SWF Golf Croquet League matches—a true stalwart.

Eugene Matthew Brady, Auckland CC

Eugene has been a member of Auckland Croquet Club since its start in 1998, was club competition secretary from 2000 until 2002 when he became club treasurer, relinquishing the post in 2010 but continuing as a greatly valued committee member. He was also founder and first editor of the club's newsletter. His technical ability and skill have been instrumental, as both player and team manager, in Auckland Croquet winning the Croquet North (CN) Golf Croquet League Championship on eight occasions. With his expertise he has achieved personal success in CN Golf and Association Championships.

He has endless patience and willingly coaches and

encourages new and established members to improve their game. Eugene devotes a tremendous amount of time and commitment in keeping the club going, cutting grass, white lining if necessary and opening for play. He liaises with our landlords, Durham County Council, attending meetings and ably representing the club when required. Now treasurer for Croquet North and manager of the Golf Croquet League and Golf Croquet Championships, he is an excellent ambassador for the game of croquet in the North East.

Cliff Cardis, Swindon CC

Cliff Cardis joined soon after the birth of the Swindon Croquet Club in 1986 and volunteered for the Secretary's position, a position he held for twenty years. He carried the club through many turbulent times and the move from a one lawn to a two-lawn club from Lydiard Park to Moredon Playing Fields.

Cliff gained his Coaching Badge in the 80s and has spent many hours/weeks/months over the years coaching beginners and improvers. Hardly a week goes by without a phone call from Cliff to arrange a match and he is not shy to winkle out a high handicap player for a game where he shares some of his experience to feed the newer player's enthusiasm for the sport. He delights in passing on the finer points of the game to the club's up and coming members. Cliff is always keen to make sure the hoops are set firmly and correctly and withdrawn with the lifter made to make sure the holes are not damaged on withdrawing the hoops. Both gauge and lifters were made by Cliff.

After Marie, Cliff's first love is his music—he is a long serving choirmaster touring many local venues throughout Swindon. SCC are very lucky to have such a long-term keen player prepared to share his admin, engineering and coaching skills and his enthusiasm for the game.

Neil Chalmers, Norwich Croquet Club and the EACF

As an Executive Officer of the East Anglian Croquet Federation for eleven unbroken years Neil put immeasurable energy into supporting the Federation's activities, promoting the game and in recruitment. As Coaching Officer he arranged coaching and training courses and as Equipment Officer his organisational skills brought immeasurable benefit to both the clubs and Federation. He established a large stock of used equipment and transported it around the Eastern Region to promote the game. As Indoors Organiser he organised and managed winter croquet at Soham Sports Centre where he revised the playing formats and updated the equipment.

Concurrently Neil served on the committee of the Norwich Croquet Club, as Secretary and lately as Chairman. His balanced wisdom, patience and diplomacy has steered the Club through their recent difficult years. He helped establish the present venue at Eaton Park, relentlessly establishing improved facilities, promoting the game and expanding membership.

Neil stood down from office with the EACF and Norwich Club in 2010 but continues as a Grade 1 Coach and CA Referee, organising Club fixtures, and has been recently been enjoying great success in CA Tournaments around the country.

Brian Christmas, Shrewsbury

Brian Christmas is one of nature's natural gentlemen and a stalwart of Shrewsbury Croquet Club. He was a founder member over 25 years ago when he played in a demonstration match at Attingham Park, the local National Trust mansion, to attract



Brian Christmas of the Shrewsbury Club

members. Initially he was one of the few players who knew how to set out the lawn and paint the lines and have more than a basic knowledge of the rules; he was much sought after for tactical advice. Brian has been on the club committee for as long as anyone can remember and held the positions of Chairman, Secretary, Coach and Captain the last being his current responsibility.

He has single-mindedly fought for greater recognition of croquet in Shropshire, including writing match reports for the local newspaper, and in recent years has been instrumental in persuading other groups to try the game. More lately still he has worked with the County Council's Sports Liaison Officer to introduce croquet to schools. Above all he has always been keen to share his knowledge and enthusiasm and is never more pleased than when a player he has taught achieves a lower handicap than his own.

In addition to his untiring work for Shrewsbury Croquet club



George Collin of EACF

he is also the chairman of the West Midlands Federation a position he is clearly proud to hold.

George Collin, EACF

In November 1985, George Collin became a member of the steering group that was set up to form the EACF and after being instrumental in drawing up the Federation's constitution, was duly elected treasurer, a post which he has held to the present. Since 1985 there have been more than 80 meetings of which George has only missed one. George, through careful and diligent management has nursed the Federation's accounts and it is due to his considerable effort that they are in a healthy stated at the present time.

George has also been a long serving member of the Wrest Park Committee for many years as groundsman. Although he does not mow the grass, he organises the scarifying, fertiliser application, marking out and hoop positioning. He liaises with English Heritage ground staff to arrange spraying for weed control. George acts as ROT at most Wrest Park events and when not in play he can often be seen teasing out lesser trefoil with a cheese knife. He will be retiring as EACF treasurer at the next AGM.



David Collins receives his diploma from Quiller Barrett

David Collins, Dulwich Croquet Club

David joined the Croquet Section of Dulwich Sports Club in 1990, having previously been a member of Eden Park. In our view he has given outstanding service to the Club during the 21 years he has been a member. He served on the Committee and was President (=Chairman) from 1995 (taking over at short notice after Stephen Badger's death) to 2003. He was responsible for the introduction of coaching sessions which he led for many years, some of which were "open", and was an official handicapper. He was highly instrumental in bringing Association Croquet back to Dulwich after many years when only Golf Croquet had been played, although he was and is an enthusiast for both forms of croquet. In addition he was the "maintenance" man who helped keep the old croquet pavilion going until we moved to accommodation in the Squash Building. He has been a regular attendee at Club Afternoons and Evenings, always welcoming new members and visitors and inviting them to join him in a game, offering advice when deemed

appropriate. As a player he had a very low handicap and took part in many League and other Matches in addition to Club Tournaments. In addition he has raised much-needed funds for the Club by arranging corporate events at Dulwich. Club member Simon Carter writes: "I began playing at Dulwich over a decade ago, as a novice. I enrolled on David Collins' coaching programme. He was an inspiration to me. His patience and encouragement meant that I grew in confidence and skill and have gone on to play at every level of the game. Undoubtedly, I owe that success in a large part to David"

Janet Davies, Chester Croquet Club

When Janet Davies moved to Chester in 1994, she found a rather demoralised club of about 20 members, many of whom were not actively playing, and struggling to muster teams to play in regional league matches. She was quickly co-opted onto the committee and became membership secretary in 1995 and then treasurer from 1996 to 2000. In 1996 the club's old wooden pavilion and all its croquet equipment were destroyed by arson and she took the lead in making an insurance claim and replacing the lost equipment. In the following year, in place of the previous *ad hoc* and rather limited arrangements to introduce new members, she took the initiative in advertising, designing and running a beginners' course which has been held successfully annually ever since. She was elected secretary in 2001 and led plans to relocate the lawns in the local municipal park and increase the playing area from two to four full lawns. These were opened in 2004 by which time membership had risen to about 45. The increase in numbers and emergence of several good players enabled the club to expand participation in NW league matches. The next challenge of planning for a replacement pavilion involved over seven years of resolute discussions and campaigning with the local authority. The new pavilion was eventually approved and installed by the beginning of the current season. By this time, the beginners' courses and the growing popularity of golf croquet saw membership increase to 107 in 2010 and a widening range of successes in NW leagues and tournaments. This considerable transformation in the fortunes of the club has been due in no small measure to her determined and unflinching efforts over many years.

Iris Freeman, Southchurch Park Croquet Club

In 2001 Iris Freeman started a croquet club in the Southend area: she found an outdoor ground, local radio helped to advertise, and so the club was formed. Iris arranged a National Lottery grant for the purchase of outdoor and indoor equipment and she found a church hall with storage, so play in the winter keeps the club going all year round. Five years on a new outdoor ground was needed and Iris, with her determination, found a new area, and so the club grew. Social events and holidays were organised by Iris for what has become a really friendly club. After 10 years and some health problems Iris stood down as chairperson, but still plays a very active role in the club. Iris is held in high esteem by all members not only for her commitment to croquet, but also her concern for all its members. Iris is a true organiser and friend and the Club would like her to receive recognition of her years of service to the club, and for forming a croquet club which so many enjoy.

Kevin Ham, Dyffryn Croquet Club

2011 is Dyffryn's silver jubilee year and Kevin is one of a handful of founder members still active in the club. For the past

decade he has taken on the thankless task of organising and managing all internal club competitions and also runs a beginners' course. Unlike many clubs, Dyffryn played practically no competitive GC for the first 20 years of its existence. Kevin took up Golf with the same enthusiasm that he has for Association, however, representing Wales several World Championships, and in 2007 he persuaded three other members to form a team with him in the SWF Golf League and they ended the season as champions. Since then Kevin has run a regular Golf club evening and has succeeded in retaining many members for whom Association was proving too much of a challenge. One of croquet's real characters, Kevin has a heart of gold and works tirelessly for the Club. Every club should have a Kevin.

Ros Key-Pugh, Lansdown Croquet Club

Ros Key-Pugh has been an enthusiastic member of the Lansdown Croquet Club for nine years. During this time she has worked unstintingly for the club, serving on the committee as Treasurer, Development Officer and now Project Manager. When the club went 'Golf play' only, Ros was active in initiating the handicap system and from that progressed to qualifying as a coach, coaching our members and several other clubs in the region. This has helped all those involved to improve their standard of play, become coaches themselves and given them confidence to take part in competitive croquet. In the past five years, as Development Officer, Ros has put enormous energy and skill into looking for a new site for the club negotiating with planners, landowners and other sports clubs—no easy task as flat land is at a premium in or near Bath. She investigated 12 sites, had planning permission for one refused and another backing out at the last minute. Ros was not defeated and started again, with the result that the club has a new home at Peasedown St John.

Freda Knight and Doreen Taylor, Reigate Priory Croquet Club

Over the past twenty or so years, these two ladies, both non-playing wives of Members, have, almost alone, managed the social side of the Club. Both have made extensive and continuing contributions to many facets of the social scene, including lunches, teas and dinners, BBQs, walks, outings and the boring side of ensuring the supply of drinks, biscuits, milk, coffee, tea, sugar, clean towels and very importantly, toilet rolls!

Each lady has served for many years as Social Secretary, Doreen for much of the nineties and Freda for the noughties and beyond. In addition to "managing" most of the catering, and doing much of it too, both have introduced new ideas into the social calendar and also helped the Club in other ways.

Doreen added winter walks to keep the Members in touch over the closed season and introduced the Club's Xmas Cracker, a December event in fancy dress that has run for the past fifteen or so years. She also managed to purloin the Tennis Club's cast-off kitchen that serves the Club exceedingly well to this day. Doreen also manages to find time for a little gardening to fill in any spare moments.

Freda, along with husband John, is a mainstay of the annual BBQ, buying the meat, organising the salads, deserts and BBQ chefs. She recently introduced Club lunches that have been so successful that members turn up purely for the lunches.

Martin Kolbuszewski, Cheltenham Croquet Club

Martin started to play croquet in the mid 1970s and joined Cheltenham Croquet Club in January 1994. In 1998 Martin "volunteered" to take on the role of Minutes Secretary. He has never failed to produce immaculate minutes, accurate summaries and helpful action notes for the members of the committee. He is the "quiet man" of the club with a dry sense of humour. Martin's knowledge of the work of the committee can best be described as encyclopaedic. He always seems able to recall decisions that have been made in the past and to guide the committee through the necessary process of any action or change. This is a most useful asset for any Chairman or Secretary wishing to keep a committee "on task".

When Martin places his pencil beside his pad the committee knows that this is a sure sign that no further discussion need take place on a particular item and that the business of the meeting should move on. Martin is retiring from his position as Minutes Secretary after thirteen superb years of service to the committee. Martin's playing style is distinctive. If one is watching someone



Robert Laver receives his CA diploma from Quiller Barrett

with a flat cap, a cigarette and total lack of follow through then that can only be Martin. Martin has also proved to be a most able Tournament Manager both for the club and the Croquet Association.

Robert Laver, Sydenham Croquet Club

Robert has been a member of Sydenham Croquet Club for around eight years, and Secretary for around five. He fights tirelessly

for the croquet cause in the face of the bigger tennis section. He constantly challenges their calculations and is steadfast in his support of the section. In addition, he has assumed responsibility for supervising the groundsman, and over and above that, he frequently takes on the mowing of the lawns in the absence of the groundsman. He often volunteers to drive the older members to their matches and helps every time with tea. It is no exaggeration to say that the club simply would not exist without Robert.

Basil Lawrence, Enfield Croquet Club

Following an Enfield Council-run croquet course, those attending were offered the chance to form a Club. Subsequently Enfield Croquet Club was formed and its first Chairman in 1991 was Basil Lawrence who remained in that post until 2009 when age and the ill health of his wife Joan forced him to retire from the game. He was essentially a self-taught player who, until 1999 when his protégé Ken Pickett equalled his 14 handicap, was the leading player in the Club. Basil was a hands-on Chairman and also Club captain for a number of years. As Chairman he battled with the local council, improved our lawns, was the prime coach for all newcomers, chief enthusiast and match organiser, also recruited members and introduced golf croquet to Enfield. The sort of leader who painted the clubhouse, built the hoop remover and then spent his winter refurbishing the club mallets, hoops, trolleys and the like.

Always smiling, always there with a friendly word or timely advice. The high esteem in which Basil is held resulted in the Club committee honouring him as a life member and creating the post of Club President which he still is as he celebrates his 90th birthday this year.

Mollie McBride, Chester Croquet Club

Mollie McBride joined Chester Croquet Club in 2000 after attending the annual beginners' course for association croquet. In March 2001 she joined the committee, on which she still serves, and spent four years as publicity officer significantly widening contacts with the local press, radio and community newsletters. She became an association croquet coach in 2002 and a golf croquet coach in 2003 and initiated the popular 'rabbits' sessions for association newcomers and golf croquet sessions which are now a well-established part of the club's activities. These have resulted in a rapid increase in membership, an improvement in the club's financial position, and have strengthened our reputation with the local council (the club's landlords) as a successful and broadly based community organisation. The club now has three regular and well attended golf croquet sessions each week, one of which she still leads despite now being over 80 and suffering from deteriorating eyesight, and she organises one or two golf croquet training days each year with visiting coaches, an enjoyable and instructive croquet gymkhana, and an annual fundraising event for the Samaritans. At the same time, she retains her interest in association croquet, thus encouraging the more adventurous golf croquet players to try association croquet. Her enthusiasm, commitment and friendly encouragement are widely appreciated by all club members.

John Munro, Southern Federation of Croquet Clubs

John has been a member of Blewbury CC for many years, usually holding office in the club. In 2006 however he was elected

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to the Southern Federation committee in order to take over as Federation Development Officer. In October he took up his position and became a valuable member of the CA Development Committee. He has a great deal of patience and enthusiasm that has proved to be a perfect combination for new clubs. Better-established clubs have also appreciated his depth of knowledge, especially when negotiating their way around applications for grant aid from the Development Committee.

John has been most conscientious and it is not thought that he has missed a Development Committee meeting or a Federation Committee meeting since he was elected. The work that he has done on behalf of the CA and the Federation has been quite



Peter Pullin receiving his diploma from Quiller Barrett

exceptional. He recently moved to Gloucester and joined Cheltenham CC but continued as Development Officer. Despite the extra travelling he still continued as always. But he decided to retire from the Southern Federation this year. He well deserves his work to be recognized with a CA Diploma.

Peter Pullin, Sussex County Croquet Club

Peter has been a member at Sussex County for nearly twenty years having joined in the early nineties. He quickly developed his skills in the association game while reducing his handicap to 1, and became Captain of some of the teams. He soon joined the management committee and over several years made a great contribution in re-organising all the Club's own competitions as well as organising the teams for external matches. He made sure that all members were aware of the range of 17 separate competitions and the conditions of entry and then collected the entries before devising the draws and blocks as appropriate. This was followed up by considerable chasing and coaxing to ensure that games were completed to a timetable culminating in the now distinctive event on our calendar, namely "Finals Weekend".

The Club is well known for its Winter Working Party of which Peter has been a key figure, particularly with work on the Club's many trees, for which he provided scaffolding, ropes and sawing

equipment to complete the tree surgery. His woodworking skills have also produced a variety of bird tables, bird boxes and chopping tables for discounted sale on Open Days to raise funds for the Club. Peter has remarried during his time with the Club and he and his wife Jill regularly undertook the catering for some of the Coaching courses with Peter also serving on the catering sub-committee.

His contribution to the maintenance work around the club has been exemplary with repair and refurbishment of the 12 shelters on the lawns and the new secure store; the latter involving a full range of building work skills.

Clemency Reade, Kingston Maurward Croquet Club

Clemency Reade was Secretary of Kingston Maurward CC for 15 action-packed years until last summer. During this time she kept all 43 members in ruthless but friendly order and ensured that every aspect of the club was in good running order. This ability to keep an eye both on the club as a whole as well as on everyday detail was probably due to her previous experience as a hospital theatre sister.

Although the Club has an active committee, maintaining four leagues (South West), social events, also hosting many outside groups including wedding parties, it was Clemency who invariably took the initiative and delegated the various duties and tasks to ensure that everything ran smoothly—which invariably happened!

Newly acquired computer skills enabled Clemency to use her



John and Edme Robinette receiving their diploma from Quiller Barrett

canny communication abilities to keep all members well informed through her regular newsletters (wittily illustrated)—chatty yet very pointed! Her knowledge of events and activities outside the club also ensured that members were constantly made aware of competitions, tournaments and coaching to further their expertise. Largely thanks to Clemency, membership has now risen to over 40 from just 26. Her contribution to the club has been invaluable and a hard act to follow.

John and Edme Robinette, Bury St Edmunds Croquet Club

John and Edme Robinette have been members of the Bury St Edmunds Croquet Club since it was established 25 years ago. Throughout that time, John has served on the committee in many

capacities, including treasurer and chairman. He was the force behind the club buying a new clubhouse, monitoring its development and ensuring that every need was fulfilled. His carpentry and design skills have frequently been evident in providing ramps for hoop trolleys (which he also mends), mallet racks, shelves, lean-to sheds etc. His knowledge of lawn maintenance and the mechanics of mowers is vital to the care of the lawns where he works tirelessly marking out, clearing leaves, cutting grass, moving hoops, marking lines and performing the multitude of tasks required to keep a club viable.

Edme is the club handicapper, runs tournaments, organises



Ron Sherwin, maintaining the lawns no matter what at Purley Bury

social events including trips to international events and is supportive of all club activities. She is very helpful to members and her knowledge of both AC and GC enables her to offer advice and support to all. She is the referee-on-call whenever she is at the ground and she is a point of reference for any croquet decisions. Both have supported the EACF and frequently hold meetings in their house. They have been strong mainstays of the club.

Ron Sherwin, Purley Bury Croquet Club

Ron and his wife Audrey joined Purley Bury CC in 1996, at which time the club had two lawns, one of which had recently been an allotment. At the end of 2004, Ron took over the maintenance of the lawns which involved cutting them at least once or twice a week throughout the season, and on match days. Numerous trips to the recycling tip follow each time to dispose of the cuttings. In addition he regularly waters the lawns and oversees their

maintenance. Ron has been a member of the club committee since 2002 and as Treasurer, ensures that the club remains financially sound. Ron and Audrey prepare and edit the club's quarterly newsletter 'Crosswire'. Ron will willingly turn his hand to any task that is required by the club. His playing skills are reflected by his low handicap and he is particularly kind and helpful to less able players and makes sure that they feel at ease. Ron gives unstintingly of his time and energy to Purley Bury Croquet Club and he is liked and appreciated by the members who acknowledge his significant contribution to the development of the club.

Roy Smith, Swanage Croquet Club

In 2005 Roy Smith, while visiting Sidmouth, noted that outside the cricket outfield people were playing croquet. The thought occurred that Swanage Cricket Club outfield is not in use most weekday afternoons and golf croquet would be an activity that could be enjoyed by the senior age group. Roy then instigated an open day to assess interest and 40 people attended. With some difficulty Roy located four garden sets, the volunteer groundsman produced two lawns and the club was underway. With a little research Roy located a former international player and through him made contact with a local club. He then organised some basic coaching for the members.

The club started with 27 regular players there are now 88 members, a waiting list and four lawns. Thanks to Roy, Swanage have played other croquet clubs, two county players have emerged and the profile of Croquet has been raised by a town tournament for the benefit of the RNLI. The club has supported the founding of a club in Wareham, but most importantly 88 people, who still receive coaching from Roy, have a new and stimulating interest.

Freda Vitty, Auckland Croquet Club

Freda became a member of Auckland Croquet Club in 2000 and was secretary from 2001 until 2007, during which time the club went through two changes of venue. Sites were visited and found unsuitable for one reason or another, sorting out and acquiring grants and supporting Eugene Brady in negotiations with the local council concerning our current venue all entailed a considerable amount of expertise, time and unquenchable energy. An enthusiastic and accomplished golf croquet player, she became club competition secretary in 2007. Freda has played for Auckland Croquet in the Croquet North Golf Croquet League, thus being instrumental in their success over the years. She has captained

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teams in Golf Croquet Inter-Counties competitions and played at national and international level.

Freda gives generously of her time to Auckland Croquet and takes charge at the start of the season to set out the lawn for play. She is always willing to provide coaching to new members and direct play when 'Have a Go' sessions are provided for visiting groups. Her dedication to Auckland Croquet and the game of croquet in general make her a representative of the highest order.

Don Wright, Tyneside Croquet Club

Don Wright has been Treasurer of the Tyneside CC for 20 years, except for two years when he was the Chairman. The club has had several homes during that time, with each move having cost implications and it is largely due to Don's acumen that the club has been financially healthy throughout.

Don has represented the club on other bodies, selected and captained club sides, made racks and stands for equipment and played his part in cleaning and decorating past and present clubhouses. He helps to mark out the lawns and hammer in the hoops. Don has donated several of his fine watercolour and oil paintings to the club raffle and at the club's 25th Anniversary dinner provided the musical entertainment.



Ian Wilson receives his CA Diploma from Quiller Barrett

Ian Wilson, Cornwall Croquet Club

Ian Wilson was a founder member of the Cornwall Croquet Club. He is a qualified club coach and has been intimately involved with the coaching of AC and GC at Cornwall, Nailsea and Plymouth clubs, and gave Fowey Croquet Club invaluable advice in the setting up of that club. He was involved with grounds maintenance at Nailsea and served for several years on each of the Cornwall and Nailsea Committees. Although now he leaves general coaching to other members of the club, he still organises and runs an annual 'transition to Association' course for those who wish to try AC after sampling GC. He established a friendly match between Cornwall and Nailsea, for both codes, which still takes place annually in October.

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Report from Council

Report of October Council Meeting

By Ian Vincent

At the afternoon Council meeting, Barry Keen was re-elected as Chairman and Jeff Dawson as Vice-Chairman of Council and Chairman of the Management Committee. Roger Staples was elected Chairman of the Coaching Committee, Peter Death of Development and Investment, Ian Vincent of ICT, Lawrence Whittaker of Marketing and Stephen Mulliner of GC Selection; the other chairmen are unchanged.

The items for approval in the Report of the Management Committee were mainly financial. The details of the discount scheme for the first two years of individual membership were agreed and a new system of banking accounts and signatories was approved, to reduce the risk of fraud, given that some banks no longer accept dual signature mandates, particularly for internet banking. It was also agreed to insure against losses due to fraud for a year and review this once the system has bedded down.

A working party to review the relations between the CA and the Federations is being set up.

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 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.

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.

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

4TH WCF WOMEN'S WORLD GOLF CROQUET CHAMPIONSHIP THE BAY OF PLENTY, NEW ZEALAND

Report by Freda Vitty

Photo by Alwen Bowker

Rachel Rowe from Nottingham, who belongs to the Ashby and Nottingham clubs, won the 4th WCF Women's World Golf Croquet Championships, beating Jenny Clarke of New Zealand (7-3, 6-7, 5-7, 7-6, 7-4) at the Mount Maunganui Croquet Club in New Zealand on the 26 November 2011.

All four selected England players made it through to the knockout stage of the competition. The blocks had been played at three venues, the main one at Mount Maunganui, a fantastic bowls and croquet facility, similar to Heaton Park but with six perfectly level lawns and a palatial club house all provided by the local council! The other two venues were at Tauranga and Katikati a short distance away. Both of these have lawns and facilities similar to some of England's better clubs but falling short of the main venue, although not in hospitality.

The knockout phase was seeded and then drawn and resulted in Rachel Rowe, Kath Burt and Freda Vitty being in the same half of the draw and Samantha Thompson in the other. Kath and Rachel met in the first round of the knockout, Rachel triumphing 7-3, 7-3. Sammy met Marwa Moustafa Youssef and in a tough game lost out 2 games to 1. Freda beat Mavis Brogden to go through with Rachel to the second round of the knockout, where she lost to Phyllis Young at the thirteenth hoop in the third game, when unable to clear Phyllis's ball. Being stymied, Freda went for a roll into the jaws. She had been playing this shot consistently well, but this time the wind took it away and left a seven footer for Phyllis which she made to take the game. Rachel went into the quarter finals, only dropping one game en route to Marwa in the block. She then met Azza El Khouly, who was proving to be the most dominant of the Egyptians and had triumphed against 17 year old Laura Whittaker from Christchurch, a protégée of Chris Clarke, in a tense three setter. Rachel met Azza in an encounter badly affected by winds and rain which went to one game each. Rachel dominated in the third game to gain a place in the semis against Rosie Graham from Australia. Rachel won fairly easily in her semi, three games to nil, 7-3, 7-4, 7-6, and the stage was set for a final against Jenny Clarke, whose route to the final had been Christine Pont 7-3, 7-3, Dallas Cooke 7-6 7-3, Manal Ali Moshen Kouki 7-2, 7-5 and Marwa Youssef 5-7, 7-4, 7-3, 7-6

The final was played in bright sunshine and strong winds which affected both players and slowed down what was destined to be a long match anyway. The first game went to Rachel with a fairly comfortable 7-3 win. Jenny then came back to win the next game 7-6 having clawed her way back from 1-5 down. This left Rachel rattled and although she fought hard in the next game, she went down 5-7. In the fourth game honours were fairly even until at 6-6 Rachel played a super red to hoop 13 from a slightly hampered position and this proved decisive. Two games each and all to play for. The momentum had swung back to Rachel and her supporters were sensing that she had regained her confidence. At 6-4 Rachel missed a fairly easy yellow but a few shots later she did a great clearance on blue leaving it wired from red. Blue went into the back of the hoop, leaving Rachel an easy jump shot to win 7-4 and become GC Women's World Champion.



Rachel approaches fellow England representative Freda Vitty having won the final match against Jenny Clarke of New Zealand

In Conversation With...

A Series of interviews with some of the people who we associate with croquet.

Andrew Hope and Martin Murray

Part 2

by Eileen Magee

Martin Murray enters the tea-room still in whites from playing his last match in the Coles Championship. We start at the beginning. "I was born in Aberfeldy in Scotland. My parents were English and my father was in the Army and stationed in Dunkeld. My mother had moved up from Sunderland to escape the bombing; and we only stayed in Aberfeldy for six months but I was qualified to play for Scotland. When I was six my father got a job in Reading as a technical college lecturer. I went to Reading School and the Headmaster, Mr Kemp, played croquet in his private garden which was attached to the school grounds. In my final year I, along with

all the other prefects, was invited to tea in the Headmaster's garden and to play croquet. It poured with rain and we couldn't play. So I left school and went off to Cambridge never having had the opportunity to play. When I arrived at Cambridge, I discovered that my College, Peterhouse, had two lawns, not very flat, but there were quite enthusiastic people playing and there was a University Club. I played quite a bit in my first year and in the following year, 1962, I played my first tournament at Roehampton. Among the people playing there were Colonel Prichard and his wife. I got into the University team in 1963 in my final year and we thrashed Oxford (said with relish) and at this very moment I am still wearing the sweater in which I played." (Sweater still looks good). Andrew joins in with—"It's in better condition than its owner." Fashion detail here from Martin—"It's made of Courtelle, which was made by Courtaulds and is virtually indestructible. So a few years later they stopped producing it, otherwise the whole country would still be wearing Courtelle.

After Peterhouse I went to Leicester to do a PhD in Chemistry and whilst at Leicester I joined the Nottingham Club (only an hour or so away in my little van). There I met this lovely bunch of lads—the Sherwood Foresters as they were then known—Geoffrey Taylor, David Archer, Martin Bushnell, Gordon Hopewell, Gordon Slater, Peter Elmes. I was a bit older than they were, their 16 as against my 22, but it was great fun playing with them. In the sixties I played in the Nottingham week two or three times, where I met Paul Hands when he was just 16 in about 1966/67. I have good memories of playing at Nottingham especially the 'old dears'—Maud and Cicely Brumpton, H O Hodgson—the then grand old man who used to wear three overcoats and complain about how cold it was in the middle of July. I played the occasional tournament at Cheltenham but we are talking about the middle sixties and there weren't the events that there are now. For instance, there were no open weekends. By the time I finished my PhD at Leicester I was down to about scratch. In 1967 I played in the Men's and Women's at Roehampton eventually losing to William Ormerod, who is possibly the only tournament player still actively playing who has been playing longer than me."

Martin plans to go to Roehampton next year and play in his 50th anniversary of his first tournament and he hopes to get his doubles partner from 1962 to play with him. His name is Brian Russ from whom he lost touch for 45 years, only to rediscover him a year or two ago.

"I was at Nottingham from 1964 to 1968 but then the professor for whom I was working got a chair in Germany and I went with him. But before I went I got into the Surrey Cup played at Cheltenham. I



Martin Murray in play at Cheltenham

got in as third reserve because people had dropped out, and shortly afterwards players were being asked about availability." Martin won the Cup, beating Col Prichard who had won it the two previous years. "Two months later I went off to Germany working and had married by this time. In 1969 the Croquet Association had to invite me to play in the Surrey Cup as I was the title holder. I had no opportunity to play in Germany, but still managed to win the Cup again. I worked in Germany for three years and couldn't play croquet unless I was over here on holiday. Since I had already won the Surrey Cup twice the selectors realised it wasn't necessarily a good idea to invite me again, so in 1970 I played in the Chairman's where I came third, but at least they had got shot of me from the Surrey Cup."

I ask Martin about his style of play and whether he has always played with this skating pose. "No. Originally when I played at Peterhouse, the nicest club mallet available was a beautiful piece of boxwood with brass binding round the ends, but the handle was quite short. So I played a rather low squatting centre style. Dave Foulser plays a very similar style and we call it the rock squat style because you rock a bit backwards and forwards and when you hit you squat down with knees bent. I played with this mallet for some time before it fell apart. In 1968 I bought a Solomon mallet, again fairly short and I played with that until, in the 80s, I started getting back trouble and ended up nearly crippled during a tournament at Compton. I decided to get a longer mallet and put my right foot back a bit to get more power and from then on the rear foot seemed to take off and the lunging forward developed. But I don't fall over very often. There were very few tournaments to play in unless you took a whole week off work. In 1968 I took a week off work and played in the Opens at Hurlingham. I lost in the first match of Singles. I played a single game in the Doubles with Martin Bushnell against Solomon and Cotter (losing). In the Singles Plate event I played a single game against Hamilton Miller and lost and that was my Opens over. I had had four games for a week off work and that's how it used to be." Martin has worked out that during the whole of that Open Championships fewer games were played than in just the first day of the last Opens at Cheltenham.

"In 1971 I moved back to England, living first in Norwich, then in Bristol, and joined the Cheltenham club in 1973. In that year I again played in the Opens, everyone was trying to do well

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to get picked for the 1974 MacRobertson Test Team being played in England. I played in the Doubles in the Opens at Hurlingham with Biddy Dodd, an Australian lady on tour. During the match I played a triple peel and Maurice Reckitt who was watching was most impressed. Maurice was a selector (probably had been for the previous 100 years) and if you could get in with a selector you were home and dry. There were no rankings then and it was a matter of who knew whom. After the Opens I got into the Chairman's, won it and so was in contention for the MacRob team, because in that year the tail enders of the President's were not strong players, so the top of the Chairman's was in contention. I was invited along for a trial to select four reserves in a squad of ten. Paul Hands became first reserve and I was second or third. I played in the Men's at Cheltenham and won, so that promoted me to the Test Team. I played in four of the matches and Paul Hands played at Nottingham. In 1974 I had asked Paul Hands to play with me in the doubles at Hurlingham. He couldn't, but he knew this young chap, Andrew Hope."

Martin had already met Andrew in 1973 when he came to watch the Men's at Cheltenham and had seen this skinny lad, obviously a promising newcomer, playing in the third place play off. "It was a super 1974 Opens with all the top names playing including some of the visiting test players." Following that, Andrew and Martin played doubles for ten years through the seventies with Martin winning the Men's singles in 1974 and 1976. Martin remembers turning up for the Men's in 1977 full of himself and thinking "I'm the best player here" and noticing a little squirry chap he'd never seen before running around with a funny pink cap on. "Who's this guy?" I said. "Stephen Mulliner." "He beat me in the singles doing a TPO and this was the start of my getting nervy. Up until then, I hadn't had nerves and, as Andrew says, you had just got used to hitting everything." Andrew and Martin were then beaten in the Opens doubles by Johnny Haigh and Colin Southern. We pause here for a tale about Johnny Haigh. Martin tells us that at Cheltenham during the Men's, Johnny Haigh was standing by the door to the bar and Col Prichard was standing nearby. Col Prichard secretly wanted to know how tall Johnny Haigh was and surreptitiously lined up Johnny against the door jamb. As soon as Johnny moved away, Col Prichard took his mallet and cut a notch in the door upright where Johnny had been standing so he could measure it. This is thirty or forty years ago, but the mark is still there. Andrew remembers this act of vandalism well. If ever the clubhouse is pulled down Martin wants to buy the door frame.

At the end of the 70s Martin was having a 'bit of a low', being selected for the Chairman's instead of the President's. Edgar Jackson was in that 1977 Chairman's Eight and Martin gave him a lift to Colchester. They shared digs and during that week Edgar really cheered him up and made him feel better about himself. "By 1978 I managed to recover enough to get into the Test Team to go to New Zealand in 1979. I wouldn't have got into the team except that Paul Hands was unavailable and William Ormerod got an ear infection and lost his balance. Maybe William was never the same player after that." So a place occurred at the bottom of the Test Team. Andrew says that he would have loved to have been part of this Test Team but although he had beaten some of the Test Team players he was a lot younger and not so established. Rankings still had not appeared and selectors did tend to go for experience, not just recent form. New Zealand produced some magnificent young players for the Test, particularly Joe Hogan

and Paul Skinley both only 19 or 20 at the time. Martin considers Joe Hogan one of the most magnificent players he has ever seen, almost the equal of Bamford and Fulford today.

"The whole series hung on the first test match between Britain and New Zealand. Australia were totally out of it, they had picked a player from each state to make up their team and America weren't playing then. The first test between GB and New Zealand was incredibly tight and could have gone either way. GB lost 5-4, we lost the next one 6-3 and the last one 7-2." But having just squeezed into the team Martin had a good series winning all his singles games. Andrew, although not selected, came out to watch the final matches, but unfortunately his plane was delayed and he missed them. But he stayed on and with Martin, played in the New Zealand version of the Opens and the President's. They had such a good time that they decided two years later to go out to New Zealand on their own over Christmas using Laker Skytrain to fly via Los Angeles. They had a fabulous time, going to see Gordon Rowling—remember him—playing in tournaments including winning the North Island Doubles.

In 1980 the CA got sponsorship from Pimms for the Home Internationals—a vehicle really for the Pimms sponsorship. The final matches in the first playing of the event were played at Nottingham. The Scottish team, including Andrew (whose father was Scottish) and Martin, played England. Scotland won 3½ to ½. Martin beat Nigel Aspinall, Andrew beat David Openshaw, Keith Ross beat Bernard Neal. It remains the only time that Scotland has won the Home Internationals". Andrew and Martin continued to play in the Home Internationals throughout the 80s and, in 1982 they both got selected to go to Australia, probably on the strength of being a good doubles pair, and having been selected, they won the Opens Doubles, beating Aspinall and Ormerod in the final. (*How do they remember all this!!*).

So they go off to Australia as recounted by Andrew earlier. I ask Martin whether it was during this tour that he earned the soubriquet of 'The Mouth of the Mighty Murray'? "Apparently this came from Bernard Neal who seemed to have the idea that I talk a lot." (*Surely not!!*). But both players had a wonderful time. Before the team left they had their photograph taken at Cheltenham by the Cedar tree and got prints made and framed. They visited lots of clubs as ambassadors for GB and handed out the prints. They bet that if you go round all these clubs today these prints will still be up on club walls faded and fly spotted. Martin recalls that it was a good GB test team. They had won and he came back feeling very confident about his game.

The following year Martin arrived at Cheltenham for a freezing wet Coles tournament, lost to Eddie Bell in the first game and thus began his decline. His game gradually got worse, he was not selected in 1986 for the Test Team having come bottom of the President's. "In 1989 my daughter was born and the due date clashed with the Home Internationals (*what bad planning!*) so for the first time I missed playing in the event. Through the 90s I got busier at work, had a young family and so couldn't go away for weekend tournaments. I played less and less and in 1996 I only played six games in the season, all in the Home Internationals, winning none of them. I wouldn't say I almost gave up because I've always loved the game and I love watching." Martin has also served his time on CA Council following Andrew as Chairman in 1988.

I ask about the future and what they think it holds for their croquet.

Andrew says that now he is 65 he intends to take life a little

less strenuously and play some croquet, more social stuff—especially as Simon Pollock and Nick Norman are now back at the club. “This year Simon is my doubles partner in the Accursed Webb.” (*The Curtis Webb, an on-going Club handicap doubles event, is legendary for the length of some games, two days sometimes being required to finish a game!*). He won the winter competition at Cheltenham this year (*following on from Martin’s victory last year*). He is thinking about trying to win the Willie Green trophy again this year and, though his current handicap is 2, he has plotted a progress graph to get back to his lowest handicap of -3.

Martin feels that things changed for him about the turn of the century in 2000. “I was diagnosed with a heart problem and had a heart bypass and was put on beta blockers. I took early retirement, only working part time, and became a little more relaxed. In 2002 I went along to my fortieth anniversary of the tournament at Roehampton, enjoyed it, and played a bit better. Then about 2005/6 I bought what both Andrew and I both call a cheating mallet. One of these Pidcocks. So with beta blockers and a Pidcock mallet, I still play enough good strokes to satisfy myself. If you play total rubbish all the time it can get very depressing and I got into that cycle of

playing badly, not enjoying it—do I really want to go out into the cold weather and play? But here I am in 2011 at the Coles, playing a bit better and I have a Scottish partner, James Hopgood, for the Open Doubles.”

Finally, I ask Martin to tell me about trains. “Monday September 5th 1952 was the first day of term of my final year at primary school. And at school my best friend David Treble says to me that during the summer he had started trainspotting, and did I want to go down to the station that evening and look at trains. So I went down, got a little book and started writing the numbers down, and it started from there. In 1968 steam trains disappeared in England, but when I was working in Germany I got interested in German trains because one of my principles in life is to be a big fish in a small pond. Andrew and I decided that’s why we play croquet instead of football or tennis in those very large ponds.” Anyway Martin is the world expert on Orenstein and Koppel railway engines, especially if they are in Brazil. Andrew wakes up at this point and says he is going to Brazil in a couple of weeks. “What for?” asks Martin. “Pig farming” says Andrew. *Now would that be a large pond or a small pond do you think?*

2011 Selection Events

The Chairman’s Salver, Surbiton, 8–11 September

Report by James Hopgood (based on Samir Patel’s Commentary)

The 2011 Chairman’s consisted of a strong field of four previous winners Mark Avery (2002), Robin Brown (2000), Jeff Dawson (1999, 2005, 2006), and David Goacher (1990, 1991, 2001), along with Chairman’s regular Chris Williams, President’s Cup player Samir Patel, returnee James Hopgood, and newcomer Miranda Morgan. Miranda had been promoted at the very last moment owing to a withdrawal from the President’s Cup which promoted Ian Lines. Fortunately for Miranda, her planned journey to Ryde for the Spencer Ell required a change of trains in London, so the last minute change of plans worked out relatively painless.

With the exception of Chris Williams, all the players had played at Surbiton two months previously at the Open Championship, and five of those had also played together at Surbiton just a month earlier in the Championship of Surrey. Combined with the World GC Championships, for this correspondent at least, it felt as though the Chairman’s was a continuation of one summer long tournament at Surbiton. Which isn’t a bad thing whatsoever, as Surbiton is one of the friendliest clubs in the country, with now world renowned catering (in Croquet circles) and excellent beer—so it was a pleasure to be back so often.

The format of the event allowed any match to be played under super-advanced rules, if both players agreed. At the beginning of play on the first day, a motion was put by one of the players that the whole event be played as super-advanced, but this failed to get unanimous approval. Samir, as manager, then ruled that players have an all-or-nothing choice for super-advanced laws, on the basis that a quick decision needed to be made regarding perceived asymmetries in players coming to agreements on restricted openings, given that the toss is predetermined. For example, knowing the outcome of the toss might influence whether or not you wanted a super-shot

opening. Therefore, either standard advanced rules were played (TV0), or the super-advanced rules invoking a restricted opening and additional lift hoop (TV3). In retrospect, the consensus was that perhaps any variation should have been allowed but that whatever decision was made in the first round should also apply to the second round.

The hoops were firmly and fairly set, but recent rain meant the expectation was that there were unlikely to be many failed hoops from reasonable positions. Not that there weren’t any failed hoops in the tournament.

The first round set the scene for the rest of the event—had a straight rover peel gone slightly differently for Samir, he would have been tournament favourite on bragging rights alone. Playing James under TV3, Samir went to 1-back with a tight reverse diagonal spread, laying up for a sextuple (sxp). James, naturally, hit his partner ball near the peg and picked up a break, but after placing partner as an early 2-back pioneer, thought too much about the contact leave, got muddled trying to change polarities, and failed 2-back after misapproaching it. The conceded contact gave Samir a good opportunity for a sxp. He completed all the peels, but ran into partner after a straight rover peel. After a failed combination pegout and some additional interaction, Samir claimed his first game, but didn’t put his mark on the competition with the significant psychological advantage he would have had by completing the sextuple. Meanwhile, Mark did put his mark on the competition by encouraging his opponents to make monumental errors giving him a trivial finish each time. He became tournament favourite in the second round when he finished off the contact after being triple peeled by James. There were another six tpos to follow, an inevitability of super-advanced rules, most of them game winning tactics.

In the third round, James seemed to be faltering after two losses, with his opponent, Chris Williams, on a finishing tp turn, while Jeff Dawson quietly finished off his third tp against Robin Brown, who was also playing well but seemed to be having bad luck. With more than half the games having a triple peeling turn, it was clear the tournament would be won by the most consistent peeler, with shooting being an obvious key factor. Fortunately for

Full results below; a “*” indicates that normal advanced rules were played, otherwise the games were played as super-advanced TV3.

PLAYER	JH	MA	JD	SP	CW	RB	MM	DG	Won	Tot	Pos
James Hopgood		-13OTP	+18TP	-19	+11TP*	+3QP	+3TP*	+26TP	5	10	1
		+13TPO	-26TP	+26TP	+13TPO	-11	+10TP*	+23LTP	5		
Mark Avery	+13OTP		+14	-22TP	+25TP*	+19	+10TP*	+18TP	6	9	2=
	-13TPO		+26QP	-26TP	-17TP	+26TP*	-26TP*	+6	3		
Jeff Dawson	-18TP	-14		+26QP	+11	+16TP	+26TP*	+16TP*	5	9	2=
	+26TP	-26QP		+26TP	-26	-26TP	+26TP	+17	4		
Samir Patel	+19	+22TP	-26QP		+14*	-10TPO	-16*	+20STP	4		2=
	-26TP	+26TP	-26TP		+26TP	+26TP	+13TP*	+12OTP	5		
Chris Williams	-11TP*	-25TP*	-11	-14*		+20	-5*	+24*	2	7	5
	-13TPO	+17TP	+26	-26TP		+3TP	+5TP*	+5	5		
Robin Brown	-3QP	-19	-16TP	+10TPO	-20		+26TP*	+17	3	6	6
	+11	-26TP*	+26TP	-26TP	-3TP		-26	+26	3		
Miranda Morgan	-3TP*	-10TP*	-26TP*	+16*	+5*	-26TP*		-25*	2	4	7
	-10TP*	+26TP*	-26TP	-13TP*	-5TP*	+26		-11TPO	2		
David Goacher	-26TP	-18TP	-16TP*	-20STP	-24*	-17	+25*		1	2	8
	-23LTP	-6	-17	-12OTP	-5	-26	+11TPO		1		

James, he was offered a lifeline in the third and fourth rounds, with Chris mis-approaching hoop 6 on his tp, and Miranda failing an Irish peel at Rover on her tp, letting James finish two turns later in both games and keeping him in the running.

Mark beat Jeff in the fourth round to have straight wins, and was sufficiently delighted to head off for a healthy five mile run before dinner with some of the other players, where the banter was sufficiently restrained that they were at least still talking to each other the next morning.

After overnight rain, 13 of the 16 games on the second day involved finishing peeling turns including several sextuple attempts, and two quads, one from Jeff against Samir, and one from James after a last-chance 28 yard hit in against Robin. Lunch on the second day included roast pepper and horseradish cream blini, followed by pancetta wrapped chicken breast stuffed with gorgonzola and cranberry and minted new potatoes. Dessert included snow cheese and fruit compote or orange in caramel. Mark presumably used his run from the previous night to justify his visit to the greasy spoon. After play, Liz Williams arranged a cider tasting: Dawson, Williams and Aspalls. Dawson was “good on nose, very dry”; Williams “less nose, more buttery notes”, but two years older; Aspalls “commercial, sweeter”. For some reason, details of the rest of the evening remain hazy.

At the end of the second day, Mark was on 7 wins out of 8, James and Jeff 6, Samir 4, Robin and Chris 3, Miranda 2, David 1. Determination from some players seemed to be a key factor by the third day, and was pivotal to the final outcome of the tournament. Miranda and Chris, who had had mixed results so far, both pinched a game off tournament leader Mark with excellent tps, while James joined Samir in donating a free tp to Jeff by making errors off the contact. This made the tournament wide open, but in the 13th round the following day, James had a tpo against Mark and survived Mark’s usually excellent shooting.

This meant that with the final round to play, James needed to win against Robin to secure the tournament, while Mark and Jeff needed to win and hope that James lost, to reach a three-way play-off. Alas, Samir and Chris had quick wins over Mark and Jeff, respectively, bringing the winning line past James (10 wins), who was struggling against Robin, having put down a tpo. Mark, Jeff, and Samir shared joint second place with 9 wins.

So with an exciting finish to the tournament, 37 triples (or better), some extraordinary luck to the winner, excellent food and



Clockwise from top left: Miranda Morgan, David Goacher, Samir Patel, Robin Brown, Chris Williams, Mark Avery, James Hopgood, Jeff Dawson. Photo by Liz Larsson

hospitality from the Surbiton Club, a calm and entertaining manager (Samir), jovial banter from all the players and the indispensable and omnipresent George Noble and Liz Williams, the 2011 Chairman’s was a wonderful tournament to play in.

The Spencer Ell Cup, Ryde, 7–11 September

Report by David Kibble, Photo by Pam Sim

Somehow, Martin Murray managed to win the Spencer Ell for a second time, extending his record as the oldest winner by two years. It might be more accurate to say that four close competitors lost it, handing Martin a narrow victory at the end. Martin seemed adept at winning games after failing triples. Dave Kibble showed much greater prowess at peeling, but his failures (particularly on tpos) cost him dear. The clear pre-tournament favourite, Martin French, had an awful start, and subsequently seemed to be too defensive, concentrating on making the next hoop rather than setting up a break. The strongest challenges came from Duncan Hector, keen to reclaim the title of

oldest winner but fading in the second series, and Graham Gale, the last minute promotee, who, after four excellent wins on Friday, just missed forcing a play-off.

Ryde croquet club (on the Isle of Wight) could not have been better prepared, or its members more helpful. They had done a great job on the lawns, which were cut every other day by Philip Kennerley and managed a medium pace of 10.4 to 10.7 Plummers despite a major soaking just before the event. A bit of rain on the first two days meant lawn 4 in particular remained a bit squelchy—but surprisingly was measured slightly faster than the drier lawn 2. The club had moved the hoops to new holes and set them to sub-1/16" on the first day, and obligingly re-set them all to sub-1/32" for the remainder of the event. The players thank Roy Tillcock and Dave Willett for their excellent work on the hoops. Croquet Chairman Pam Sim organised an army of club members who produced excellent—and sometimes gargantuan—lunches, refreshments on tap, a barbecue, and a lovely tournament dinner on the Saturday night.

As we all know, croquet can be a maddening game when the lawn takes over. One player had near identical situations in consecutive games where the opponent, on a triple, was coming back to the hoop 5 pioneer after the 4-back peel. In both cases the striker's ball deviated as it slowed down, drifting into the back of hoop 5. In the one case it dribbled through and roqueted the pioneer, and in the other case it stuck in the jaws with no possible roquet. These pieces of random luck prove decisive.

There were some highly interactive games (no need for super-advanced here—only one game was played under those rules) but also some quality play with seven of the eight competitors achieving at least one triple peel. Dave Kibble claimed the peeling prize with three tps, one tpo (fifth turn) and one qp, but he also lost a highly enjoyable (at least for his opponent and the crowd) otp to Duncan (more later). Richard Smith was delighted with his first sixth turn triple, but in a story of what could have been, Martin Murray reported that in his first eight games he'd had eight failed triples AND one successful one!

Richard Smith and Duncan Hector had two very interesting games—in the first Richard felt confident when, for rover and peg against peg and box, he had technically (although not completely) wired Duncan's ball near corner II from the peg and laid a dolly rush to rover from behind rover with one ball wired. Duncan calmly took the shot at the peg and hit centre ball to win +3. The second game took three days to complete, as it was pegged down twice due to bad light.

The only game to finish +1 was the battle between the two Richards. Griffiths made all the early progress, but Smith came



L to R: Martin French, Dave Kibble, Graham Gale, Martin Murray, Richard Smith, Gabrielle Higgins, Richard Griffiths, Duncan Hector

back into it and, though failing to get a rush back to peg after rover, he pegged out partner ball with a 90 degree split shot to finish the game.

The lawn scheduler of yesteryear did an excellent job and managed to put most of the spectator-worthy games on lawn 2, just outside the clubhouse. Most memorable was the tournament-closer, Kibble's otp to Hector. Duncan had earlier received some coaching on hoop running that proved very useful as many (most?) of the hoops in the two ball ending were rather sweaty, and some impossible-looking—including a 3-yard 60-degree hoop 6! All were run routinely to keep Kibble from the possible play-off and secure Duncan's second place. Dave remarked on the Nottingham list "The impossible hoop 6 you ran against me was only made believable when I remembered you had revealed your membership of the Magic Circle the night before. I think I've worked out how you did it, but am not sure exactly where you positioned the mirror".

The Eights format was as exciting as ever with losing streaks and winning streaks abounding, silly mistakes and great performances too. Full of sportsmanship and colour, including green. Many friendships are made during Eights, and in this one several of the players had never met before. All the players heartily recommend a visit to Ryde—it's not as hard to get to as many think: a 10-minute ferry crossing and no need to take a car. A warm welcome with great croquet awaits you.

PLAYER	MM	GG	DH	MF	DK	GH	RS	RG	Won	Tot	Pos
Martin Murray		+6	-10	+4	+25	+16tp	+21(3)	-7	5	9	1
		-18	+15	-18	+21	+5	+24	-26	4		
Graham Gale	-6		-18	+23tp	+2tp	+13	+6	-21	4	8	2=
	+18		+16tp	-20	-4qp	+23	+18	-12	4		
Duncan Hector	+10	+18		+16	+18	-16	+3	+13tp	6	8	2=
	-15	-16tp		-17	+3otp	-3	-12	+25tp	2		
Martin French	-4	-23tp	-16		+2	-25tp	+26	-17	2	7	4=
	+18	+20	+17		-21tp	-26tp	+5	+26tp	5		
Dave Kibble	-25	-2tp	-18	-2		+25tp	-25	+11stp	2	7	4=
	-21	+4qp	-3otp	+21tp		+24	+9tpo	+20	5		
Gabrielle Higgins	-16tp	-13	+16	+25tp	-25tp		-26tp	+11	3	6	6=
	-5	-23	+3	+26tp	-24		-13	+3	3		
Richard M. Smith	-21(3)	-6	-3	-26	+25	+26tp		+23	3	6	6=
	-24	-18	+12	-5	-9tpo	+13		+1	3		
Richard Griffiths	+7	+21	-13tp	+17	-11stp	-11	-23		3	5	8
	+26	+12	-25tp	-26tp	-20	-3	-1		2		

MONTH-BY-MONTH CROQUET LAWN MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

The Lawn Company have a wealth of experience turning around the fortunes of croquet lawns whether they are managed professionally for a club or privately owned by keen croquet players in the garden at home. It is worth noting that the following should be used as a guide only, but in association with prevailing weather patterns, growing cycles, and ground and soil conditions.

OPERATION	JANUARY	FEBRUARY
Aerate	Solid or Slit Tine	Solid or Slit Tine
Disease Watch	Fusarium	Fusarium
Fertilising	None	Spring Starter or March if Mild
Moss Control	Spray Soluble Iron if Mild	Spray Soluble Iron if Mild
Mowing	Rotary – 10 to 12 mm	Rotary – 10 to 12 mm
Pest Watch	Worm Cast Control	Worm Cast Control if not done
Renovate	None	None
Scarify	None	Light if Mild – Wire Reel
Seed	None	None
Selective Weed Control	None	None
Top Dressing	None	None
Verti Cutting	None	None
Watering	None	Maybe
Wetting Agent	None	None
Additional Functions	Remove Dew each morning with Dew Switch or Drag Brush Paint Furniture & Hoops & Boards	Remove Dew each morning with Dew Switch or Drag Brush Paint Furniture & Hoops & Boards

OPERATION	MARCH	APRIL
Aerate	Solid or Slit Tine	Solid or Pencil Tines
Disease Watch	Fusarium	Fusarium & Red Thread
Fertilising	Slow Release MU – 28-3-8	Yes - if not done already but late
Moss Control	Spray Soluble Iron if not done	A bit late if not done
Mowing	John Deere – 10 to 8 mm, 2 times per week	John Deere – 8 to 6 mm, 2 times per week
Pest Watch	Leatherjackets & Chafers	Leatherjackets & Chafers
Renovate	Minor Areas if Mild	None
Scarify	Light if Mild – Wire Reel	Yes – Wire Reel or Verti Cutting
Seed	Localised Areas if Mild	Localised Areas
Selective Weed Control	Yes – if Mild	Ideal Month – End of
Top Dressing	With Seeding	None
Verti Cutting	None	Yes – a little grooming is good
Watering	Maybe	Yes – start this month if windy and/or dry
Wetting Agent	None	Yes – start this month – a must
Additional Functions	Remove Dew each morning with Dew Switch or Drag Brush Paint Furniture & Hoops & Boards	Remove Dew each morning Line Markings & Move Ball Stop Boards

If you require assistance call The Lawn Company on **0870 442 7475** or email Mike Seaton personally on mike@lawn.co.uk

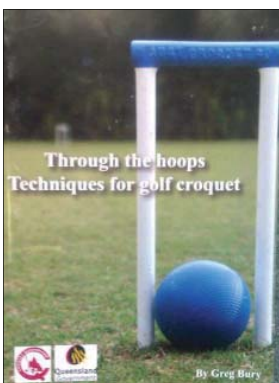
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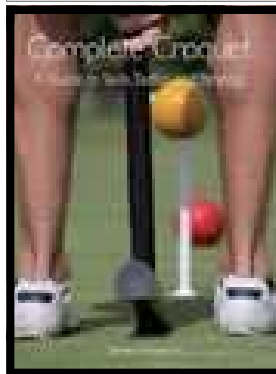
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