

The CROQUET Gazette



**Celebrating
Tournament
Winners
around the
country**



Great Britain see off Irish challenge

Great Britain soundly beat Ireland – who were without World Championship bronze medallist Andrew Johnston – at Cheltenham in late August, **writes Marcus Evans.**

Oxford postgraduate Harry Fisher had an impressive debut, winning his doubles and a singles match; his other singles was tied at 1-1 against experienced Irishman Patsy Fitzgerald.

Ireland's Ed Cunningham was another on good form in the early doubles, but he fell away a bit in the singles rubbers.

Fellow countryman Simon Williams continued his recent good results by beating Robert Wilkinson, but succumbed to GB captain David Maugham, who seems to be returning to his old self having had his mallet screwed back

together the right way.

Britain's Robin Brown also won all his matches for the home side, while teammate

despite spending much of Sunday morning digging a snapped centre peg out of a lawn.

David Walters was unfortunate not to

finish a singles match, having been in a strong position in both.

So the final score was 10-2 to GB, with three matches unfinished.

A convivial meal at Café Rouge was enjoyed by all on Saturday night, and the players were entertained all weekend by the English National Golf Croquet Doubles Championship unfolding on the adjacent lawns.



Wilkinson ground out a good win against Danny Johnston.

Your correspondent had a shaky start in the doubles, but was clinical in his singles,

GB team (kneeling, from left): Harry Fisher, Robin Brown, Marcus Evans, David Maugham, Robert Wilkinson, David Walters

(Photograph by Chris Roberts)

From our files researched by Frances Colman

100 years ago - 1913



(Discussing Walter Peel.) to him we owe – in great measure – the revival of croquet.

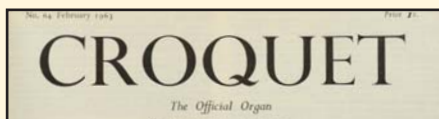
On this occasion, the ground was extremely hard - the day hot. His Opponent was laid to go out. Peel's ball number one had been 'pegged out' and this other, a rover, lay dead wired behind the distant corner hoop.

He 'hit very hard' – a *desperate* jump shot – it 'came off' – with a vengeance! His ball jumped the hoop, - cleared the length of the court with two bounds, - struck the cross bar of the winning peg, - and 'cannoned' off it, right on to the top of one of his opponent's balls lying near. . . . His opponent *looked steadily* at Walter, for a short space, - and disappeared!

What his thoughts were, his views of '*remarkable strokes*', society in general and Mr W Peel in particular – will never be known!

*Yours very truly,
E Shorthouse*

50 years ago - 1963



Club News - Bowdon,

In spite of much labour and expenditure on fertilisers and moss and weed killers, the courts have not shown the improvement which we had expected.

Undoubtedly the severe winter took its toll in no mean measure. . .

. . . Owing to the biting East wind and sunless days, only a very few hardy annuals turned out in the opening weeks of the season, before the weather at last improved.

(Unnamed Bowdon member)

Dear Sir,

May I through the Gazette express my opinions re the all bisque game.

I do not like it, and feel that the long handicap players are having to play a new game, and not *croquet* at all.

The joy of playing against a LIVE OPPOENT, is lost, and one has the feeling of being in a 'MAZE OF BISQUES'.

*Yours faithfully,
D. Locks Latham*

10 years ago - 2003



Does anyone know of any computer software available to play croquet at home on a PC? Surely in this age of computer games, when there are versions of golf, tennis, snooker, football and even cricket, available, a croquet game would enable honing up on tactical skills and allow some of us middle handicap players to play like experts. . . It might even attract newcomers to the game, wishing to swap mice for mallets. Can anyone help?

Jim Gillespie

With regard to the article on Extreme Croquet in a recent edition of the Gazette, the French have been playing this form of the game for even longer than the Yanks. . . . They now have a network of players and organisers in different parts of France, as well as outside and some membership from the States too!

Which is perhaps why 'our' croquet hasn't made much headway over here.

Alex Jardine, L'Hermenault, France

Editorial

In this Gazette, we salute our winners from all levels of croquet, be you seasoned internationals, new kids on the block or those of you who just have the crowing rights over your best pal.

Top of the tree are our A class players of course.

So, it's a big 'hats-off' to Samir Patel for his AC success at the 'first eight' President's Cup and likewise to Will Gee for his GC Ascot Cup triumph.

Gabrielle Higgins is going to need every inch of her mantelpiece for all her AC cups and young Harry Dodge has had an end of season that has really announced his arrival in top flight GC.

These achievements rightly take top billing in this issue but we have a bumper number of tournament reports shoehorned into these pages from all around the country as well.

Of course the winners get most of our attention but let us not forget the rest of us that run them close, achieve personal milestones and keep plugging away.

Having been 'placed' a few times this season, it would have been nice to have won a CA listed event, but hopefully I share with the many others of you, the knowledge that victory, when it comes, will be all the sweeter for the waiting.

I am thankful that so many managers and others take the time to report on events and thereby keep the Gazette, CA website and our croquet community so informed.

In my last editorial, I told my tale of forgetful woe about being separated from my mallet and being thankful to the Budleigh member who facilitated its safe return. I even inaccurately promoted the gentleman to the office of Club Chairman,



such was my gratitude to him, yet still muddled him with a near namesake in a later report, for which I apologise.

Things don't get any better on the absent-minded front though and I am now waiting to be reunited with my Panama that I left at Cheltenham, and to sort

a case of 'these are not my waterproofs' that has come to light after many months when thankfully they have stayed in my bag.

It was great to tick off a visit to another club when I attended Hunstanton for the first time in August, to oversee the finals of the All England GC Handicap.

What a very welcoming club they are and with terrific courts too; it was such a pleasure and I will be sure to visit there again next season.

So that's it, it's all but over – Croquet 2013 – and how was it for you?

Chris Roberts

Chris Roberts Editor

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The
CROQUET
Gazette



Issue 346 November 2013

Front cover, main picture: The Red Arrows fly over Liz Wilson and Southport CC in salute to all our croquet winners (Photograph by Kath Thomas).

Smaller images clockwise from top left:

Samir Patel with the Presidents Cup at Ryde CC (by Roy Tillcock); Eileen Buxton and Chris Mounfield at the East Midlands Vets (by Derek Buxton); Mike Steer at Budleigh May Week (by Jack Smith); Nigel Polhill at Letchworth (by Duncan Hector); Class winners at Hurlingham; (A) Gabrielle Higgins, (C) Don Beck, (B) Tim Russell and (D) Martin Pulsford (by Chris Roberts)

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Chairman's Column

By the time you get this edition of the Gazette it will be late October and most of us will be hanging up our mallets for the winter.

I hope you all had a good season.

The winter months are, of course, when most of the committee work gets done for the Croquet Association, when we all have a bit more spare time.

The CA always needs people who are willing to contribute to the administration of the sport.

If you are willing to give up some time, perhaps you would consider helping on one of the many committees as a co-opted member?

The list of committees and their responsibilities are all on the CA website, so please let me know if you are interested in helping out.



This year I would like to draw your attention in particular to the club conferences which are being held around the country – you will find more details of these on page 5.

These conferences will be discussing important issues for the future of the CA, in particular the relationship between the CA and the Federations, and the fee structure we all pay to finance croquet in this country.

These are issues most people have views on and I hope to see representatives from as

many clubs as possible there.

However, room at the conferences will be limited, so we hope to keep numbers to one or two representatives from each club.

I think this means it is important that everyone takes a little time to try to understand the issues, find out who your representatives will be and let them know your opinions on the issues.

I would also welcome feedback in any other way – letters to the Gazette, to me or to the CA Office will all be read and considered in our deliberations.

The plan will be to collect your views, review all the feedback in detail and then put together proposals which will be voted on at the October 2014 AGM.

Jeff Dawson

14 year old Joe wins All England AC Handicap

Joe Iddison from Peterborough won the All England Handicap Final in a very tight finish with two rivals, **reports**

Robert Fulford.

At the end of the Colchester-hosted event, which was played as a five-round Swiss, Iddison, David Frost (Enfield) and John Dawson (Chester) were all tied on four wins.

With 'who beat whom' unable to produce a winner, fourteen year-old Joe won on the second tie-breaker, on the sum of opponent's scores.

Iddison has been playing since he was nine, and had the benefit of the most bisques playing off 16, with the rest of the field mostly between 7 and 10.

On day one he had a relatively easy ride to 3/3 where he was joined in the lead by Frost. The day had been rich with silver medal awards with David Boyd, Tony Elliott and Susan Fulford all earning theirs.

Iddison and Frost played first thing on day two in a match that looked key to determining the tournament winner.

The eventual winner ran out of bisques on penult and peg with a big lead, but Frost came back to reach penult and peg himself and had the chance to finish; however he too failed penult.

Frost eventually took the game +1 and so then needed victory in the last round to seal the tournament.



He faced Dawson, himself having only lost to Iddison.

Despite a great comeback by Frost the game went to Dawson and, with Iddison having won his last match comfortably; he took the title on the tie-breaker.

Photograph by Robert Fulford

Gabrielle Higgins made it three in a row when she won the main event of Hurlingham Week ahead of Mark Ormerod in early August.

She did well to hoist the huge Hurlingham Cup and will look after it for another year, while Tim Russell of Roehampton, Don Beck and Martin Pulsford (both Surbiton) won the silverware for the B, C and D classes respectively.

Hurlingham Week



Higgins was on form earlier in the week too when she won the Advanced Mixed Doubles partnered by Nick Parish of Parsons Green.

Enfield's Tony Elliott secured the Silver Jubilee Cup as winner of the handicap singles, while the womens' and mens' handicap doubles events were won by Elizabeth McKenzie-Gray and Gillian Noble-Jones from Woking, and the host club's Richard Hoskyns and Peter Quinn.

The Croquet Association Honorary Treasurer

A new Honorary Treasurer will be nominated for election at the 2014 AGM following Roger Bray's retirement. The post is honorary but there is a modest honorarium.

The Honorary Treasurer is responsible to the Association through Council for providing independent leadership and guidance in financial matters, encouraging the highest standards of integrity, effectiveness and openness, and ensuring the CA's regulatory compliance.

The Duties

- Manage the CA's financial assets and systems and keep records of its financial activities.
- Monitor the financial activities of, and audit the financial reports produced by, the CA Office.
- Process a limited range of transactions such as salaries and HM Revenue & Customs returns and payments.
- Prepare and present regular management accounts and reports including budgets.
- Draft financial statements and prepare records for annual independent examination.
- Advise on a broad range of financial matters including systems, salaries, investments, insurance and subscriptions.

The Person

The following attributes are desirable:

- An innovative and proactive team worker, preferably with experience of financial management of a complex organisation.
- Good verbal, written and interpersonal skills with the ability to work to tight deadlines and to a high standard.
- Education to degree level or equivalent, with competency in computer literacy, including a working knowledge of Sage Instant Accounts or similar software, Microsoft Word and Excel.

For further information please contact Roger Bray on 01206 263405 or at brayrw@tiscali.co.uk.

Interested candidates should forward a CV and a letter detailing their suitability for the role, by 30th November 2013, to Jeff Dawson at jeff.p.dawson@gmail.com.

Have your say!

As Club Conferences head your way, Jeff Dawson explains why it's so important to learn your view

- 1 24 November at the Batch Country Hotel, Lympsham, nr Weston-super-Mare, BS24 0EX**
To be held at 2pm after the SW Federation AGM
- 2 Mid February at Surbiton Croquet Club,**
To be held in the afternoon after the SE Federation AGM
- 3 Mid to late February near the M62**
Date and venue to be announced

Fuller details of conferences 2 and 3 will be published in the next Gazette

There are a number of important issues to be discussed which arise from the Federation Working Party paper and which affect all of us, so we are hoping that all clubs will make an effort to have a representative at one of the conferences. The CA is very conscious that many of these changes cannot be implemented without the full support of the clubs and the Federations affected, so we want to collect your views before making any detailed proposals.

The principal topics for discussion are as follows:

1 A structural change, whereby Federations would be enabled to become members of the CA. At present, Federations are totally independent bodies, though they benefit significantly from the CA in the form of grants and support, and they each have a seat on the CA Council. This arrangement has worked well, and the CA has no desire to change it in practice. However, it would simplify the constitution if the Federation Representatives on Council were elected by and represented the Federations themselves, rather than CA member clubs within their area as at present.

2 Boundary changes. The existing federations vary widely both in terms of the geographical area they cover, and also in terms of their membership size. We

think it might be worthwhile re-setting the boundaries to make them more equal, while at the same time accepting that clubs can belong to whichever federation(s) they choose. In some regions, a smaller number of larger Federations could be more effective, saving time spent in administration, with leagues sub-divided on geographical lines to reduce travelling times. The South-West Federation already do this.



3 Perhaps most controversially, we think we need to change the structure of fees for the CA and for Federations.

Proposals include:

(a) That clubs should pay one membership fee to cover both Federation

and CA membership.

(b) That individual CA membership is reduced or abolished, and instead the 'per capita' rate paid by clubs is increased, thus effectively making all club members also individual members of the CA. This should be

coupled with all club members receiving the Gazette. It is believed that by increasing awareness of the wider croquet world and by reducing barriers to tournament play, this would encourage more competitive croquet.

(c) That the principle of charging a levy for tournaments should be extended as far as is practicable to cover all competitive play. This 'pay to play' element helps to reduce the per-capita charge and means that those who play most pay the most. In particular over the last few decades we have seen increasing amounts of competitive play organised through Federations, at the cost of some decline in other tournament entries. We have no desire to change this, but feel that everyone should pay on a fair basis for the infrastructure the CA provides.

The full Working Party report providing more background on these topics can be found on the CA website at <http://www.croquet.org.uk/?d=824>. I would urge everyone to take a few minutes to read it.

Photographs - Most tournament players like Mark Ormerod (left) are full CA members but are they soon to be joined by all club players like these from Phyllis Court? (by Chris Roberts)



Obituary

Ken Cotterell 1932 - 2013



Kenneth Cotterell, or Ken as he was known, will live long in the memories of members at Phyllis Court CC and those of past tournament circuit players.

He was also a past member of both the Cheltenham and Nottingham clubs.

Ken was brought up in Reading and after National Service in the RAF worked in atomic energy research at Harwell and Aldermaston.

He trained in physics and metallurgy but later was engaged in marketing, economic analysis and finally nuclear materials audit.

It was on a lunch-time walk around 1979 at Harwell when Ken and Margaret came across croquet being played in a corner of the recreation ground.

Ken had always played sports, and had been an accomplished cricketer in his day playing for both Reading and Maidenhead, but as those days were over he thought that croquet could be a game which they could play together.

They quickly immersed themselves in croquet with help from fellow Harwell members Mike Duck, Mike Moreton-Smith and Terry Wood and after their first weekend tournament at Bowdon, Ken (who had learned the art of using bisques) came back with a handicap of ten.

The couple enjoyed a number of years

playing tournaments and Ken eventually achieved a handicap of three and officiated as an examining referee.

He was also involved at the private Wallingford Club in the garden of Guy Betts.

In 1984 Ken and Margaret joined the growing Croquet Section at Phyllis Court Club in Henley and in 1991, when Ken retired, they were able to join the committee; in due course Ken became Chairman for two years.

Following the growth of golf croquet at Phyllis Court, Ken and Margaret embraced the code and, in time, they introduced a One-Ball tournament, in the hope that GC players might learn a little about AC.

Away from croquet, Ken was fond of amateur opera. He eventually performed in nearly all the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, and for some years was chairman of Reading Amateur Operatic Society.

The Cotterells also bought a cabin cruiser which was moored at Phyllis Court and went on extensive cruises of the English river and canals, although this tended, they said, to clash with the croquet season.

Ken had been a bell ringer from an early age and he and Margaret were active church members at Didcot where they lived. Ken served as treasurer, was later the churchwarden, treasurer of the Deanery and Diocesan Synods and served on the Oxford Diocesan Buildings Committee.

In recent years Ken's health sadly deteriorated and eventually made it impossible to continue playing croquet, although he still took a keen interest in games at Phyllis Court and was particularly keen to see players trying out both forms of the game.

Following a protracted illness Ken died on 29 August and his funeral was well-supported by his croquet and other friends.

Brian G Bucknall, Phyllis Court CC

Obituary for a croquet player

by Peter Lowe
Tyneside CC

Early Spring

With tyro's confidence you took the field
Old feathers ruffled, niceties defied
And hit the ball with limb-endangering speed
To scatter well-laid plans with youthful eye

Midsummer

You strode the lawns at season's height:
Your vision spanned the game.
Your breaks were legend, weight just right
And never-erring aim

Harvest time

As time impaired the perfect swing
More games were won indoors
Committees listened when you spoke
Of tactics, ploys and laws

Late Autumn

Now peals give way to toll of bell
Your clip on higher peg sits well
While failing sight and dying light
The close of play foretell

Bounty of the toss

Dear Editor,

In the lottery for choice of colours held before a golf croquet match, my record for calling correctly is abysmal and of such statistical significance that only divine intervention provides a plausible explanation. However, I believe, perhaps naively, that even those on whom the gods more frequently smile would wish to see reduced the influence of chance on who, in the absence of egregious technical or tactical error, will win.

It is, I think, accepted that first shot at a hoop considerably shortens the odds on winning it but the assumption is that this advantage will be reversed at each hoop and consequently two competent and fairly-matched players or teams will score them alternately. This is, I suggest, a factor in accepting as non-crucial the initial dollop of luck by which the toss influences playing outcomes.

This view does not, however, take into account the greater advantage which taking charge at odd numbered hoops confers on making an approach to the subsequent hoop than is the consequence of placing the first ball in front of an even numbered hoop. Run hoop 1 judiciously and you will have first shot at hoop 2 - this bonus rarely follows from running the even hoops. It can be argued from this premise that the advantage of winning the toss influences the outcome at not only hoop 1 but also at hoop 2. This likely increased consequence of fate's intervention emboldens me to put forward an adjustment of hoop order to reduce chance's bounty.

I suggest we conduct a trial in which golf croquet matches start from the blue flag corner (1) aiming first to run the hoop presently called hoop 2 and proceeding in order to what are now hoops 3,4,1,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12 and, if necessary, 3 again.

This experiment would be evaluated by comparing the percentage of toss-winners winning matches using current and trialled hoop order.

This threat to the status quo should at the least achieve some lively debate

Peter Lowe Tyneside CC



Letters to the Editor

The World Championships were not my game

Dear Editor,

Yesterday I went to Roehampton to watch the quarter finals of the Association Croquet World Championships 2013. This turned out to be a salutary experience.

Suffice to say, I am hooked on our intriguing game, and the more I struggle with it, the stronger my addiction.

So why then did I find watching the World Championship a salutary experience?

In a nutshell, it is because I realise that the top players are playing a game that I can just about recognise, can even aspire to, but which realistically is way beyond my reach – physically and mentally.

There are a number of reasons why this is so. The top players are depressingly young (or so they seem to an old codger like me). They play with breathtaking precision, putting the balls exactly where they want them. They make very few errors (I watched five games yesterday and only saw two real mistakes).

But I came away realising that the croquet I play, a topsy-turvy game with countless self-inflicted errors and perilously close results, is much more fun. Three out of the five games I watched yesterday resulted in 26-0 scoreline.

I even saw one player banished from the lawn while his opponent took his balls faultlessly round, so that he had time to walk to the clubhouse, buy a glass of red wine at the bar and wander back again.

One can hardly blame him for consoling himself with a glass of wine, but where's the fun in playing a game where one player hogs all the play and you score zilch?

Whilst marvelling at the skills of the top players, the game they play is not the game I'm hooked on. Thank goodness, since it is beyond my reach!

Peter Honey
Phyllis Court CC & Roehampton CC

Self restraint is the key at Woodside

The editor was delighted to receive this letter, as proof that competitive croquet is alive and well in the gardens of Britain as well as in our clubs and on our sport's grandest stages.

Dear Editor,

Here is news of the fourth annual croquet tournament, held at Liverpool's Woodside Cottage arena.

The prestigious trophy was won by local player Tim Perera and team-mate Christopher Wilson, who battled through a two hour semi-final, including recovering from a 'posting', on their way to victory against the odds.

They met incumbent double champion Rob Perera and his doubles partner Becky in the final. Although billed as a marathon clash of the Titans, Tim made a vital break away at the fourth hoop leading

his younger brother in to desperate 'do or die' tactics.

However, the young pretender failed to force his opponent's ball on to the post and victory was swiftly secured.

The day's play was accompanied by lashings of Pimms and vintage beer and a good time was had by all.

Speaking to reporters after the event, the victorious Tim Perera said: "It's all about percentages: we just tried to give ourselves the best possible chance every shot. Team work and

preparation were key. My partner Chris had only drunk two jugs of Pimms and five Coronas before the match".

William Robbins, Woodside Cottage CC

Toying with croquet lingo

Dear Editor,

Croquet, like most sports, has a language all its own – 'roquet', 'croquet', 'continuation shot' – but few may be aware of the subtle infiltration of these terms into many aspects of our everyday life.

Chaps who play the game, for instance, may be described as being a trifle BLOQUET, whereas those on the distaff side are positively GIRLUET.

There are differing approaches to croquet.

Those of a more adventurous, death or glory inclination may be described as favouring the RISQUET style, whereas the more cautious player goes for SAFETUET first.

One often spies a player indulging in an interesting dance move specific to the croquet lawn where, having struck a ball, in order to more accurately direct it at a given target, the right foot is raised

backwards and outwards.

This of course is the well-known HOQUET COQUET.

There are those who hail from a particular city north of the border who employ an illuminated cigarette clenched firmly between the teeth as an additional sight line when moving between hoops. These players are described as SMOQUET or more commonly as coming from GLASQUET.

All of which goes to show, as we are all well aware, that CROQUET is OQUET!

Jonathan Toye Downham CC



Centre photographs from top: Stephen Mulliner tosses up at Budleigh; World Championships precision from Kris Chambers and a rare mistake by Aiken Hakes. Right - Jonathan Toye in action as Richard Hoskins has a long wait. All by Chris Roberts except Hakes by Ian & Sara Anderson

Two out of three ain't bad for CA Teams

The Croquet Association play three matches each year against the CAs of Scotland, Switzerland and Ireland.

Here is how they got on. . .

v CA of Switzerland

The 'big away trip' was the match against the Swiss at their CERN base, which is the home of the European Organization for Nuclear Research.

Last season the CA had prevailed and, as **Richard Williamson reports** from the Geneva sunshine, the fixture got off to a great start for our team.

The Swiss team certainly had the lower handicaps but the plucky CA, in their natty Union Jack team caps (pictured below), started strongly and were 3-1 up after the morning singles with CA Captain Klim Seabright (centre), Robert Moss and Richard Williamson defeating Dave Underhill (left), Norman Eatough and Danny Davids respectively.

Only the host team's Ian Sexton (playing off -1) prevented a CA clean sweep with a skilful win over Bob Stevens, who was still recovering from his lengthy early morning drive.

The Swiss surged back in the afternoon singles to level the match at 4-4, with only Williamson able to record a CA victory.

The key moment of the first day, and the match, came in the evening doubles when Seabright managed to peg out Davids' ball, but to the CA man's despair, his own ball also touched the peg.

That left Williamson in a one-ball game against Eatough with a four hoop advantage that wasn't enough to prevent the Swiss taking the game +3 on time.

The hosts won the other doubles rubber too and ended the first day 6-4 up.

On day two, the now refreshed Bob Stephens found his form to win his single



and Seabright followed suit, but the Swiss won the other two ties to maintain their lead.

As on the first day, lunch proved to be the CA's Achilles' heel and only Williamson recorded an afternoon victory, giving the Swiss an unassailable 11-7 lead, with only the reverse doubles to play.

Probably in sympathy, nature then intervened with a violent thunderstorm, complete with huge ice spheres as big as marbles, which resulted in flooded lawns and the abandonment of the match, with victory of course going to the Swiss.

The Swiss CA's hospitality will be a hard act to follow when the CA host the return fixture next season.

v The CA of Scotland

In early autumn the CA travelled to Edinburgh to play the CA of Scotland and they made it three wins in a row to retain the Glasgow Quaich.

Scotsman Fergus McInness is thanked for the detail of the match, which beforehand looked like a tough assignment for the CA if the handicaps were anything to go by.

However, it was the CA who opened up an early 1-2 lead after the opening doubles.

The first singles round was split 3-3, with the only significant upset being Barry Keen's (h'cap 7) +22 win over Fergus McInness

(2.5).

Even a successful jump over hoop 5 to hit a ball near corner 2 – acclaimed as the shot of the day – couldn't save McInnes, who struggled with the fast pace of lawn while Keen took it in his stride.

The last round of the day was the best for the CA, who took it by five games to one, for a 5-10 overnight match lead.

However, with twelve points at stake on the second day the job was far from done. The morning round of singles was again evenly shared, although the CA's scores showed more class as they included the only triple of the match, achieved by Phill Scarr.

Graham Gale then ensured the CA's victory with a +11 win and, although three of the remaining games went to the Scots, the final score was 12-15 to the CA.

After an excellent afternoon tea, thanks to Matthew Woodward, the teams lined up for a photograph on the lawn (see below right); however the Glasgow Quaich was nowhere to be seen, as the CA players had forgotten to bring it with them!

v The CA of Ireland

The Vera McWeeney Trophy was retained by the CA in late September at the Carrickmines Club. The CA fielded an entire team of debutantes (pictured top): Peter Wilson (1.5), Liz Wilson (2.5) Paul Wolff (4), Andy Brandwood (5), Betty Bates (9),

Garry Wilson (12) who matched, so far as was possible, the B & C class skills of their hosts as requested.

The Advanced match end 7 -17 to the CA but it was two Irishmen who **reporter Paul Rigge** singled out in his account.

Nathaniel Healy produced the only triple peel of the event and young Mathew Martin, who had to get permission from his school to participate, proved to be a very promising young talent.



East Midlands - a hotbed for GC growth

The June issue of the Gazette told the success story of Hamptworth CC and in particular the rise in popularity of GC tournaments for players enjoying their sport below the top level.

This hadn't been overlooked by the CA's GC Tournaments committee, who launched the National B-Level Series (for handicaps 3-8) at the beginning of the year.

Trial events at C-Level (handicaps 7-12) events had proved just as popular too at the increasingly higher profile New Forest area club, exploding the myth that higher handicapped players lacked the desire to travel fair distances for a good event.

Another hotbed of interest in GC at this level is in the East Midlands Federation, where recently elected chairman Eileen Buxton vowed to promote competitive croquet in the area and fill the gaps where certain types of events were missing.



C-Level GC

Eileen reports that, "For years the federation has offered GC and AC league play in which most of our clubs take part, with GC being the choice of most.

Last year Jennet Blake and I introduced a C-Level GC tournament at Nottingham for players with handicaps from 8 to 12.

We were heavily oversubscribed and the event was a huge success, so we held another C-Level this season which was just as popular and won by the Nottingham's Sandy Brown".

By the time you read this, they will have staged another tournament and that too had a full complement of entrants within days of announcement.



Veterans GC

Eileen looked at what else was missing in the area and introduced a Veterans' GC tournament at Ashby in June (as these pictures show).

"We had fourteen players from seven clubs, all aged between 62 and 85 and with handicaps covering the full range from 0 to 12 taking part and enjoying themselves",

said Eileen. "Ashby's Christine Mounfield won the event, with Derek Buxton and Kath Wright finishing as the joint runners-up".

Mixed ability doubles GC and future ideas

Several other tournaments have taken place recently in the FEMCC area, including the Woodhall Spa CC hosted annual event at Lincoln Castle. Usually GC players partner beginners in a day-long tournament and

this year they introduced a singles tournament too, where Woodhall's own Roy Ware won the men's trophy while Eileen Buxton of Ashby herself won the Ladies'.

The next new thing in the area is a new B-Level GC tournament for FEMCC members at the Ashby Club in September which Martin Wroughton will be managing.

As Eileen Buxton says, "By encouraging all these new events, we feel that we are promoting the provision of competitive croquet opportunities for those of our members who have, perhaps, previously been overlooked."

GC B-Level Series - breeding next crop

As this Gazette went to press the inaugural National B-Level GC Series Final was about to be played at Hamptworth.

Phyllis Court's Ian Norris (right) will have started as the favourite after he won three of the series' qualifying tournaments, for players in the 3-8 handicap range,

He won events at Wrest Park, Hamptworth and his own club and his biggest challenge looks like coming from David Ball of Leighton-Linslade, who was a three-time runner-up (including twice to Norris) before winning the last event of the series at Edgbaston.

Twelve players will contest the final, and undoubtedly, the player making the biggest effort to attend is Janis Steins who will be flying in all the way from Latvia!

He won the very first qualifying tournament at Sussex County which came at the end of his participation in the World Croquet Federation-sponsored coaching and referees course at Southwick.

It shows a very impressive commitment to come all that way for a single day's croquet.

The National B-Level GC Series has proven to be very popular this season and competition director Chris Roberts is keen to add more events for 2014.

There has already been interest shown from two northern-based clubs which is needed to make the competition truly 'national'.

Please contact Chris if your club would like to add an event at your club to this growing competition.

Full list of qualifiers: Janis Steins (Latvia),

Keith Southern (Swanage), Richard Raby (Worcester), John Smallbone (Watford), Ian Norris (Phyllis Court), Andrea Huxley (Guildford), Mike Salisbury (Bristol), David Cooper (Hamptworth), Derek Heath (Tunbridge Wells), David Ball and Jean Ball (both Leighton-Linslade) and the 'lucky loser' Dan Ellis (Thames Valley) who won a lottery ball tie-break against Kath Wright (Long Eaton Pk).



Taking a break from GC

Nick Mounfield is one of a very select group to have risen to top class of AC having started out as a club GC player. He has just competed in his first AC World Championships. Now he looks back to his roots and enthuses to other CG players about his passion for 'the other game'.

I was introduced to croquet about 15 years ago, when my parents (Ray and Chris Mounfield) joined Ashby Croquet Club.

Despite being quite sceptical about their new pastime, I found I quite enjoyed it.

The game I had played was Golf Croquet.

Like many who let croquet into their lives, I didn't realise then how addictive and consuming it would become.

It certainly never crossed my mind that I would end up playing at a high level, or that half of my wardrobe would end up white!

After playing GC on-and-off for a few years I moved to near Letchworth, and joined the local club to play more GC.

At least this is what I expected...

I'd previously heard talk about another version of croquet, but didn't know anyone who played it.

I wasn't surprised, as from what I'd heard, it didn't sound very good:

The rules were extremely complicated, games took well in excess of three hours, and it was boring and unsociable.

At Letchworth, however, the players



who were best at GC also played this other version - Association Croquet (AC) – and they seemed quite keen that I should play it too.

After ignoring their advances for a season, I agreed to give it a go, for then at least then I'd be able to say I'd tried, that I didn't like it, and to please 'leave me alone'.

I agreed to a game and promptly lost because I didn't know how to play certain types of shot (which I later learned were called croquet strokes), and because I didn't know how to string a series of shots together in a meaningful way (building a break).

"It's a real shame that more GC players don't give AC a go, because, like me, I think a lot would really enjoy it"

To really give AC a proper go before deciding whether I liked it or not, I had to learn to do these things, and I found that neither proved particularly difficult.

It was just a case of watching competent players in action and putting in some practice.

Before long, I could play a selection of croquet strokes well enough to allow me to string a break together and, having achieved this, I realised I did like AC after all!

Quite a lot as it happened since, and four years and a fair few hours of practice later, I competed in my first AC World Croquet Championship.

I feel it's a real shame that more GC players don't give AC a go, because, like me, I think a lot would really enjoy it.

From both personal experience and from hearing the opinions of others, I know that many GC players have negative preconceptions about AC - a lot of which are simply untrue.

"AC is too complicated".

Yes, it can be made to sound

complicated, but when you step back and think about it, it really isn't. With a couple of hours of good coaching and a bit of time spent on the lawn learning how to play croquet shots and build a break, anyone can pick it up - especially those who can already play GC.

"AC is boring".

It is without doubt the most interesting game I have ever played.

Not only does it offer the same challenges as GC (the ability to hit a ball or run a hoop), but also a wealth of new and diverse mental challenges.

If you enjoy crosswords or problem solving, you'll probably enjoy AC and, unlike GC, it's also extremely rewarding to practise AC on your own.

"AC takes too long".

Having just lost a game in 36 minutes, I can assure you that this isn't always the case! Yes, some games can take over three hours, but they don't have to.

There's no reason why you can't play a shortened version of AC that suits the amount of time you have available (14-point for instance, which often takes no longer than a game of GC).

Or you could just set a time limit.

"AC isn't social like GC".

This is probably the biggest myth of all.

Just go to any club AC session or a tournament and you'll see how extraordinarily social AC is.

Whether you're in the middle of a game (but not in play), or have just finished and are waiting for another, there are numerous opportunities to have a chat and enjoy a drink with others.

While I still play and enjoy GC, my real passion is now for AC.

Having been through the process of learning to play AC (despite previously thinking it wasn't for me), my message to all GC players is to give AC a proper go.

Nick Mounfield, Letchworth & Bygrave Cs

~

Photographs by Ashton Humble



Challenge & Gilbey Tournament

The A Class Block was won by Mark Ormerod of Dulwich, who was making his debut in this event held at Budleigh Salterton.

He took home the Roehampton Cup, while Budleigh's own Chris Donovan retained the Council Cup and Peter Miller of Sidmouth won the Stevenson Cup.

Quiller Barrett had a very successful tournament in winning the Gilbey Goblet final convincingly from Roger Mills of Sidmouth by 21 points and was also second in his block.

All but one of the Class events had a winner with a 100% success rate.

The tightest event saw Elaine Norsworthy edge out Barrett on the 'who beat whom' rule for the Reckitt Cup.

Challenge and Gilbey Tournament winners: Mark Ormerod, Chris Donovan, Elaine Norsworthy, Quiller Barrett, Peter Miller (photo by Julie Horsley)



Norwich Croquet Club was facing the very real prospect that they might not be able to carry on when the rent for our council-owned lawns was set to quadruple in 2009/10...but how things have changed in just a few years.

Peter Scott tells how they overcame a crisis:

The Council's requirement to reduce costs had determined that bowls and croquet green maintenance could no longer be subsidised to the extent that it had been; however they were prepared to phase in the rent increase over three years to give us a chance to adjust.

In order to build up our reserves we used the transitional period to reduce our use to a single lawn rather than paying rent on two, but then we identified a redundant bowling green in another area of the park where we play.

This was located within a fenced compound which also included a larger bowling green and well-equipped pavilion used by a bowls club.

We developed the idea that we could restore the redundant green as our principal playing area but also use the bowls green on an occasional basis for tournaments.

The better facilities would make it easier to attract new members and even offer the prospect of being able to hold corporate hospitality events.

This was important as many of our



Saving Norwich

members are retired and on fixed incomes so subscription rates are a sensitive issue.

Our committee had to strike a balance between trying to cover the rapidly increasing costs without losing members who could no longer afford to pay.

For our plan to work we would have to persuade the Council to let us have the use of the redundant green and either

restore it for us or allow us to restore it ourselves, and we would have to persuade the bowls club, which was the principal user of the adjacent lawn, that shared use of 'their' sacred turf and treasured pavilion would be possible. We would also have to persuade our own members of the advantages of the move and, most importantly, to have to find a sustainable way of paying for it all.

The Council were very supportive of our idea and offered practical help by brokering discussions with the bowls club.

Bolstered by this, we developed a business plan which showed how we could meet future outgoings in our proposed new location, provided that we could find a way of meeting the one-off cost of £5000 for restoring the green.

We approached the CA for a grant to meet

50% of the cost and were also successful in bidding for £500 each from the Norfolk Charities Foundation and Norwich City Council, and so we began to make plans to restore the new green during 2012, ready for play in 2013.

We appointed our own contractor both to prepare the new lawn and to maintain our existing lawn for its final season, and we discovered the many advantages of controlling our own maintenance.

Instead of having to leave three mornings a week free for council workers, our contractor checked our website bookings and worked around us, often carrying out his work very early in the morning.

For our first season in 2013 the new lawn was prepared to an acceptable playing standard and the ditches which had been in place for bowls have been filled in to provide a larger playing area, so we could lay out two smaller golf lawns for busier club mornings.

During the winter we will undertake more extensive top dressing and overseeding in order to continue to improve the surface: a process which we are advised could take three years altogether.

We have a licence in place with the council and have agreed the joint occupation of the pavilion with the bowls club. We have developed an ingenious system of wooden plugs to fill the holes in the bowling green left when the hoops are removed and restore it for bowling.

Now we have two lawns to use again, this should aid our recruitment initiatives that even include a plan to try to take croquet into schools.

We hope to re-enter a range of competitions and tournaments with our improved facilities and are looking forward to the future with a great sense of optimism.

President's Cup

Samir Patel's maiden victory in the 2013 President's Cup was not only a personal milestone but it ended the five-year dominant spell of Robert Fulford.

Indeed it was Patel (below) himself who, in April's Croquet Gazette, highlighted the former ten-time Champion's consistency and tipped him for success again at this season's Cup.

Another first was the choice of venue, with the Isle of Wight's Ryde LTCC being given the honour this time.

Fulford reported that "The club has a fantastic group of volunteers on the grounds team and they had done a great job preparing the lawns. Many of the players arrived on Thursday to see the courts dry and the hoops very firm, though rain over the weekend meant conditions became easier as the event progressed".

Samir Patel was front runner after the first series of games, but by the end of round 12 of the scheduled 14, had been pegged back by David Maugham.

In the penultimate round, they faced each other, both on 8/12, with the only other player in contention being James Hopgood, one win behind, but the latter soon lost to Keith Aiton to drop out of the picture.



By then Patel and Maugham were in a 3 ball game, the latter having completed a TPO, and had control with both players being cagey.

Maugham laid up at 1-back, guarding the second corner, with Patel for hoop 2 and in corner 4. This time Samir decided to be aggressive and took on the 35 yard shot that was likely to give the game away if he missed. He hit centre ball!

This gave him an easy chance to get going and he duly finished to win +80TP.

The 14th and last round pitted clear leader Patel against Robert Fulford and Maugham against Jeff Dawson. Maugham had to win and hope Patel lost to force a play-off.

Fulford played his part in the drama well in beating Patel, but Dawson played a great game to beat Maugham +26TP, as the soon to be runner-up missed both his lift shots, one of which was a relatively short 10-yarder.

Deposed President's Cup winner Fulford congratulated

the new champion Patel and commented that "It is always a little lucky to win an eight outright with only nine wins, but Samir was a very deserving winner. He has a great relaxed style, very good single ball shots and has particularly controlled hoop running". **Finishing order:** Samir Patel (9 wins); David Maugham, Stephen Mulliner, Keith Aiton (all 8); James Hopgood (7); Mark Avery, Robert Fulford(6); Jeff Dawson (4).

THE E



President's Samir

Chairman's Salver
Peter Trimmer

Treasurer's Tankard
Matt Holmes



Spencer Ell

Gabrielle Higgins and David Goacher vied for the lead throughout this tournament for the Third Eight at Nottingham. Their last game became effectively a final, and it was all over in very few turns.

Goacher went to the East boundary, and Higgins to corner 2.

Goacher shot at the corner 2 ball and missed, only to see Higgins follow suit and hit.

There was a discussion about whether it was a cannon, and Higgins decided not to take one.

She took a ball to 4-back with a spread.

Goacher missed the long lift, and Higgins finished with a tidy delayed triple peel to take the title.

Finishing order: Gabrielle Higgins (12 wins), David Goacher (11), Martin Murray, Jack Wicks (8), Dave Kibble (7), David Harrison-Wood (6), Luc Berthouse, Paul Rigge (2).

Treasurer's Tankard

Matt Holmes (right) dropped only three games out of 14 to win the Treasurer's Tankard by three clear victories more than joint runners-up Jamie Mussi, Mike Town and Ian Vincent.

Doubtless he will be toasting his own success with pints of his fabulous 'Triple Peel' beer!

This is the fourth tier of the Selection Eights, and was played this season at Hamptworth, where there was seemingly plenty of interaction, as the results show that only three games were won 26-0, and there were only seven triple peels completed in the event's 56-game programme.

Finishing order: Matt Holmes (11 wins), Jamie Mussi, Mike Town, Ian Vincent (8), Graham Gale (6), Richard Griffiths, Cliff Jones, Nelson Morrow (5).



EIGHTS



Cup Winner Patel



**Spencer
Ell
Gabrielle
Higgins**

**Selectors'
Weekend
Paul Smith**

Chairman's Salver

His knuckles survived intact but unfortunately the peelee went off the court behind 2-back to end a courageous attempt that would have elicited even more cheers if it had succeeded.

The deciding play-off between Trimmer and Evans saw the former hit hoop 5 with his first ball, leaving it in the middle of court.

Evans went to midway along the East boundary, both players missed their next shots, and then Trimmer hit with his fifth turn and went to 4-back with a contact leave, from which Evans almost got going but failed to get in front of hoop 1.

Trimmer then hit a 20 yarder with his hoop 1 ball and established a break, did the 4-back peel before hoop 5, but the rush fell short. The take-off to 5 hilled off and he failed with the long-angled hoop shot.

Evans hit-in and went to the peg with a double peel on the ball on penultimate and pegged it off, leaving his hoop 1 ball in corner 2 and his peg ball in corner 3.

But Trimmer successfully got both his opponent's balls into the court, ran hoop 5 and completed the break to win +14 to lift the Chairman's Salver for 2013.

One of the pleasures of playing in this tournament was how my mother Ellie and I were made so welcome by the East Dorset club members, the players and particularly by our host Strat Liddiard.

Dave Nicholson deserves huge thanks for his careful and expert lawn and hoop preparation over long hours and then for his refereeing duties along with William Ormerod. **Finishing order:** Pete Trimmer, Marcus Evans (both with 10 round-robin wins), Kevin Beard, Robert Wilkinson (8), Lionel Tibble, Chris Williams (6), Robin Brown (5), Mark Ormerod (3).

See overleaf for Kevin Beard's take on Super Advanced play.
Below: The Spencer Ell Eight.



It was a close-run thing at Chairman's Salver at East Dorset when Pete Trimmer and Marcus Evans tied on ten wins apiece in the final analysis.

Trimmer then took the play-off +14 to close a tournament awash with peeling action.

This event is the second of the Selectors' Eights and it was good to see **Kevin Beard from Australia, not only adding an international flavour to the event but also writing the report that follows:**

The first day was characterised by lovely warm weather, well prepared lawns and hoops set to 1/32" in firm ground.

Lionel Tibble and Mark Ormerod had an epic battle for over four hours in the first round which included the former going to 1-back with a diagonal spread giving a rush into the lawn with his hoop 1 ball.

Ormerod didn't remember that it was 'super advanced rules' and thought this was a new sextuple leave, so took the shot from where the balls lay even though he was entitled to a lift.

Tibble finally won the game +2 with a high quality 2-ball break from 4-back with one of his opponent's balls sitting just out of B-baulk.

On day two, Marcus Evans completed three triple peels (TPs) and won all four of his games to take the lead with 6 from 8.

Although there was lying water at the start of the third day and intermittent rain, little time was lost and only two games were pegged down overnight.

Evans continued his good form to win his next two games with TPs, but then lost -21 to Ormerod and, significantly in the context of the tournament, went down -26TP to Pete Trimmer, leaving five players still in with a chance of winning overnight and into the final day.

Trimmer and Evans led on 8/12, with Robert Wilkinson one win behind, just ahead of Tibble and Beard at two down but with the Australian having completed one less game.

There were no slips from Trimmer and Evans to help the others and each won both their remaining games which included Evans playing the most interesting shot of the tournament against Robin Brown.

His hoop 4 pioneer was between hoops 1 and 5, and he wanted to peel partner through 1-back from very close and directly in front.

He wrapped his jumper around his hands and his arms in order to minimise damage to his knuckles while attempting this 20-yard equal roll through the hoop.

Super Advanced Rules

Ian Vincent explains and Kevin Beard gives us an International view

Super-Advanced rules were mandatory in the top two Eights (The President's and Chairman's), but optional, with agreement of both players, in the third and fourth tiers (The Spencer-Ell and Treasurer's), **writes Ian Vincent.**

Super-Advanced Play is an extension of Advanced Play for Association Croquet,

and is intended to reduce the number of totally one-sided games between top players.

It is defined, in Appendix 5 of the Tournament Regulations, as two modifications to the Laws.

The first introduces an extra lift hoop – which is hoop 4 – in addition to the existing 1-Back and 4-Back.

It gives a contact to the opponent of a player who runs two 'lift hoops' in the same turn,

if his other ball hadn't run the first of them when the turn started.

Or a free 'placement' if he runs all three, if his other ball hadn't run hoop 4 (unless a ball has been pegged out).

The second applies only to the first turn of the game, and gives the second player the option of moving the first ball played to baulk if it did not either leave the court or hit a hoop or the peg.

It is designed to discourage "super-shot" openings, from which the first player can get a break on the 3rd turn.

Australian Kevin Beard, had this view after playing a Summer of Super Advanced rules:

I enjoyed playing a whole tournament (The Chairman's Salver) with this variation.

A common first shot was an attempt to hit hoop 5 in order to achieve a 'super shot' opening.



This was successful most times, but not always.

Breaks were usually stopped at 1-back with a diagonal spread or at 3-back or 4-back with a contact leave.

I am sure some players were planning to stop at hoop 6 against me but when the leave wasn't perfect, they made one more hoop and tidied up the leave.

Going to 4-back with contact became the most common tactic as we progressed.

Apart from the obvious

benefit of more interaction between the players with Super Advanced rules, I also found getting the first ball to 4-back (whether it be in one break with a contact or two breaks with two lifts) much more interesting than making 9 hoops with a leave, as is done in the normal advanced rules.

The whole game becomes interesting, not just the peeling turns.

I will go back to Australia as an advocate for trialling Super Advanced tournaments in our croquet calendar.

AC TOURN

A tour of e

July

Graham Good stole the show at the **Pendle and Craven** midweek tournament in early July. His continuing run of good form allowed him to return to Bury with three of the trophies on offer for the week: the Pennine Trophy (D class), Irish Cup (Egyptian handicap) and Egyptian Cup (fastest game, in 42 minutes). He also earned himself both a bronze merit award and, not surprisingly, a handicap reduction! "He'll be back", **reports John Filsak.**

In the other Class events, Woking's Alan Edwards was unbeaten in the A/B block and duly lifted the Pendle Rose Bowl. Nottingham's Bob Thompson edged a win over Roger Staples of Middlesbrough on the 'who beat whom' tie break rule for the C Block, but Staples did however win the doubles with Terry Vernazza of Fylde.

Staples had another good win at the **Tyneside** Midweek Handicap, where he beat David Turner of Belasy in the final as Tyneside's own Colin Green beat club-mate Alice Fleck to third place. Your editor lost three games in a row until he was reunited with his mallet which he'd left as far away as Budleigh. He then won his next two games before proving it wasn't all down to the equipment when he lost a tight last game against Alice.

It was a case of third time lucky for Trevor Longman who finally got the better of Charlie Martin at the **Ramsgate** Handicap Weekend. The pair had contested the two previous finals and Martin had won both, but this time Longman's quiet, steady determination secured him victory.

Jeff Farrington won the **Colchester** 50+ Handicap, which was over-subscribed as usual and this year contained a remarkable number of very low handicapped players, **writes David Haslam.** It soon became apparent that there were some rapid improvers who were more than capable of despatching the 'stars' by educated use of their forests of bisques. The first to catch the manager's eye was Tony Elliott, who looked a certainty to take the trophy. He had a convincing +20 victory over the otherwise unbeaten Farrington, but the flexible Swiss format saw the



North of England Championship

David Maugham won a close final against Simon Williams at a tournament in which multiple peels abounded throughout, right up to the very last rubber of the event.

Both finalists had sailed through the early rounds without dropping a game.

Maugham accounted for Tom Weston, Sam Murray and Colin Irwin before being taken to a deciding fifth game by Alan Mayne in his semi, and Williams beat Richard M Smith, Debbie Cornelius and David Goacher before dropping a game in his semi to Kevin Beard.

The final swung one way and then that other before Maugham wrapped up the victory +26tp, -13otp, +17tp, -20tp, +3.



AMENT ROUND-UP

vents around the country

latter edge the overall tournament win. A welcome returner to the game, Arthur Lindley, finished third.

David Frost of Enfield was unbeaten at the John Foreman Cup for the singles event at the **Colchester** Midweek handicap ahead of the home club's Jane Collier. The brother and sister pairing of Nailsea's Erica Malaiperuman and home club **reporter Nick Steiner** won the doubles. Anne Brookes also deserves congratulations for gaining her silver merit award.

Wrest Park were pleased to see that their newly located lawns drew players from near and far for their first advanced tournament. Alain Giraud of Ealing, finished undefeated and made a small piece of history in winning the first AC event on the new grass and although the bumpiness could make it difficult to hit in, he proved that was perfectly possible to play breaks once control had been gained.

August

Heather Bennett won a later **Colchester** Midweek Handicap in early August ahead of a field of 16. Three players had pulled clear as the final round commenced and two could still win as the very last game drew to its close. John Andrews was thwarted +2 by David Ebert in the penultimate game to finish, and Bennett duly completed her win +5 over Susan Fulford to win the Rose Bowl, presented by manager Tony Haslam.

At **Nottingham's** August Week, the Robin Hood Gold Cup Handicap was won by Roger Berkeley who beat Omied Hallam +25 in the final. In the Class events, Sanaa Hallam beat John Davis to the Open event title, Richard Meacock won the B-Level and Berkeley won again, this time in the C-Level. Ian Draper was undefeated in the D-Level and the Young pair Barbara and Geoff took the handicap doubles.

The **Tunbridge** Autumn Advanced was won by Paul Miles from Medway who took home the Honeygrove Cup while Watford's Geoff Johnson celebrated a reduction in handicap when he remained undefeated to win the **Ramsgate** C-Level (4-12) Advanced.

Surbiton's George Noble won the A Class event at the 114th **Hunstanton** Annual Tournament while Su Stenhouse, Celia Pearce and Peter Whiting took the C and D classes respectively, and the latter also added a victory in the handicap event.

The COWhorn Tournament at **Compton** was won for the fourth time by Martin French, who beat off the challenge of newcomer Nick Saxton in the final, **reports Roger Wood**. French ended undefeated, ahead of a field reduced to 14 in the lead-up to the World Championships, and only he and Dave Kibble managed to complete triples, although there were several attempts from others.

For **Wrest Park's** second advanced event, home club's members were augmented by visitors from Letchworth, the West Country and Simon Carlsson (*pictured bottom left*) all the way from Sweden. Manager Rod Ashwell won the event from David Marsh.

David Maugham nearly always manages the **Tyneside** open, and he nearly always wins it, writes David Watts. After James Hopgood interrupted the usual proceedings by winning the event last season, Maugham regained his title to take his tally into double figures. The most eye-catching manoeuvre of the tournament was Maugham's lightning reactions in running a hoop, springing his clip off the top and casually catching it before it hit the ground (*England cricketers please note!*).

September

A select field of nine contested a **Nottingham** Open weekend as August gave way to September. James Death remained unbeaten throughout to win the event, and others worthy of note were Lionel Tibble who rattled through all eight of his games without playing after tea on either day and Rachel Rowe who continued to improve her handicap by getting down to scratch for the first time.

Nigel Polhill (*top left*) won the **Letchworth** A Class weekend beating Simon Hathrel in



the final, reports Andrew Gregory. He was presented with a trophy and, for completing two triple peels, he received two Mars bars! (*see front cover*). The tournament started with triples from Polhill and Christian Carter but the former then devoted himself to failing sextuples. Joel Taylor was winless on day 1, but lossless on day 2; he almost completed his first TP and is 'one to watch'.

Brian Havill won the inaugural **Blewbury & Harwell** Handicap, **reports Nick Butler**. The two small clubs are ideally situated (just four miles apart) for combining to provide a four lawn venue suitable for larger tournaments. A pair of nine handicappers, Brian Havill of Watford and John Reynolds of Ealing, contested a cagey final, mainly due to the lack of bisques, and the visitor eventually prevailed.

Oxford University's Martin Lester (*left*) won a very close and very wet **Woking** Advanced Handicap by one win over Phyllis Court's Frances Colman. He needed a victory over Chris Roberts in the final round of the Swiss format event and was using his bisques well when the threatening sky suddenly emptied its load. Both his match and Colman's, which was also a potential decider, were switched to neighbouring courts to conclude and Lester duly completed his job unfazed by the new challenge.

As seems to be traditional, Lionel Tibble beat Dave Mundy in the final of the **Medway** Midweek Advanced.

Omied Hallam of Nottingham beat Barry Keen in the final of the 24-player B-Level Advanced Weekend at **Bowdon**, with a very quick +22, +26 to record his second successive victory in the event; Hallam was presented with the Sheila Black Salver by Rupert Webb. In the consolation Egyptian, a play-off was needed for Dave Gunn of Nottingham to overcome Adrian Morris of Kenilworth.

Carole McLoughlin won the **Roehampton** ... *continued on page 23*



Gee wins Ascot Cup for second time

Will Gee won the English National GC Singles Championship for the second time but in doing so had to defeat club mate, and girlfriend, Rachel Rowe in the final, **reports Freda Vitty.**

Women's World Champion Rowe, marked her own place in history as the first female player to feature in the grand final of this competition, which sits second in the hierarchy of GC Championships, behind only The Open.

So it was quite a weekend for the Gee/Rowe couple who had had to see off one of the strongest fields ever assembled for the Ascot Cup, with all 16 players having handicaps of 0 or 1.

That said there were some notable absentees, including holder Stephen Mulliner and other regular attendee, Robert Fulford who was runner-up last season.

It was pleasing however, to see that the line-up included seven players in their teens or twenties, and representing the seniors, one who was reputedly over 80.

The manager's hope to complete six of the seven rounds of 19 point block games on the Saturday was almost achieved, due to the efforts of Richard Thompson and the senior man William Ormerod, who battled in their fifth round match until dusk.

The only game to be beaten by the light was a vital one between Rowe and Howard Cheyne which was pegged down at six all.

When the players re-assembled on day two, Gee and Rowe were each assured of places in the semis but the latter had to fight for top spot in her block in order to avoid her man until a potential final.

Gee had only lost one game and that was

to the new star Harry Dodge, who was the in-form player and the pre-tournament favourite of many.



However he lost to Thompson, Chris Sheen and Lionel Tibble so qualification eluded him.

Tibble eventually won through behind Gee and Howard Cheyne qualified as second to Rowe in the other block, so the chance of the dream final was still 'on' for the Ashby pair.

Victory for Rowe against Tibble was never in doubt and she won 7-4, 7-1, but the other semi was much closer, with Gee's second game win going to the thirteenth hoop against Cheyne.

The final was to be a potentially nervy match between two players who know each other so well but Rowe made the best start, continuing to play almost faultless placements, clearances and hoop-runs.

She reported afterwards that she felt the spectators were on her side and that this had helped as she won the first game 7-5, with Gee beginning to play better but unable to catch her lead.

Gee struck back firmly to win the second game 7-4 and then he took the decider 7-2 with a jump shot for the title.

The Egyptian style plate competition was won by Tobi Savage with an unblemished 3/3 record.

National Doubles

Harry Dodge and Pierre Beaudry won the English National Doubles in a match full of spectacular long clearances at Cheltenham.

As spectators watched out for their ankles, the experienced/young star combo edged out Will Gee and Nick Cheyne in the final.

(Both photos from that event, by Chris Roberts).

Mulliner and Dodge star in Ascot Cup Qualifiers

Qualification for the English National Golf Croquet Championship (more commonly known by its trophy name, the Ascot Cup) is achieved by winning one of several prestigious tournaments during the previous 12 months.

As well as retaining the Open Championship, Stephen Mulliner has been the stand-out domestic GC player this season with additional victories at the Ramsgate and the European Opens.

It is an odd quirk that The UK Open is the top honour, but it nevertheless is also a qualifier for the second ranked Ascot Cup at the end of the season.

Although he didn't take up his place this year's Ascot Cup, Mulliner actually qualified several times.

Young Harry Dodge of Bath turned the same trick as a three time qualifier and his promise of last season has surely been fulfilled this term.

2013 Ascot qualifying tournaments were won by:

Stephen Mulliner and Harry Dodge (three events each), Richard Dickson (two), Reg Bamford, Ryan Cabble, Jacob Carr, Nick Cheyne, David Crawford, Will Gee, Rachel Rowe, Tobi Savage, Richard Thompson, Lionel Tibble and Roy Tillcock.

The Ascot Cup line up was completed by players who had accumulated points for second to fourth place finishes.

GC

Croquet has gained a new bright young star. The modest and unassuming Harry Dodge won all five of his matches to take home the Musk's Cup (an invitation event for GC's First Six').

He lost just three individual games, but scored at least five points in each of those. He hits very straight with a relaxed swing, **reports Dr Tim King.**

The weekend started with some uncertainty because the manager had failed to identify a sixth competitor to replace a withdrawal. However, local player Robin Thornton stepped in to allow the planned all-play-all block to proceed. Robin is handicap 2 and joined the five other players who were all playing off scratch, but he competed with great determination, won one game and enjoyed the experience.

Defending champion Ryan Cabble was hoping to secure his fourth consecutive Musk's Cup title, but he began in less than top form and lost his first match to William Ormerod in two straight games.

The random draw threw up a sequence of key matches, and the last round on day one featured the Cabble versus Dodge contest, which finished well after 7pm, suggesting the recent reduction from eight to six players is indeed preferable for the GC selection events.

Dodge won that rubber to end the first day as the only undefeated player, which put a great deal of pressure on Cabble.

Tim King put paid to Cabble's chances of a come-back when he won their match on

the second morning; the victor remaining on one loss alongside Tobi Savage, with Dodge still undefeated out front.



Thus, three players entered the final round still with a chance of overall victory. Savage defeated Cabble in a deciding

third game of a tie played at such a brisk pace that it was completed before Dodge and King had even finished two games.

Dodge kept on with a calm, controlled approach, never being unduly harsh on himself when he made the occasional minor error in his last match against King.

He won the first game 7-3 and then took a 5-3 lead in the second when King was unfortunate in conceding first approach to Hoop 9 by cutting Dodge through 8 with a clearance hit from the West penalty spot!

Dodge took the 6-3 lead and had the title all but won but a marathon tussle at hoop 10 was prolonged by King declining to score, without gaining some sort of advantage for 11.

Eventually the inevitable happened and Dodge took control of the hoop. He had three relatively easy hoop chances, and for the first time all weekend he showed some jitters and failed them all.

After a 30 minute tussle, King finally won the hoop (by this stage abandoning trying to be clever) and took advantage of his one demonstrable superiority: his greater experience! - He won the second game 7-6.

Perhaps if King had started strongly in game three, things would have been different, but Dodge soon rediscovered his composure, gave his opponent few chances and cruised to a deserved 7-2 win.

Ryde club members provided wonderful hospitality and all the necessary facilities, also turning up to spectate.

The Second Six event, for the Kate Jones Memorial Trophy, was won by David Crawford at Hamptworth.

Jacob Carr won the 18th Yorkshire Open at Ripon in great style, beating previous world champion, Salah Hassan in the final, **reports Freda Vitty.**

This event always attracts good support from Egyptian players and this year, six of the 16-strong field flew in from Cairo.

Playing in his first competition since the GC Worlds, Carr lost to two Egyptians, El Mahdi and Hassan in the block round but with four to progress to the knock-out stage, third place in the block was sufficient.

Although he did then have to get past former world champion Khaled Younis.

Yorkshire Open

Many spectators from croquet clubs as far away as Alnwick and Sheffield, plus 30 guests of one of the sponsors, Batchelor's Cars, witnessed the closing stages.

Carr met El Mahdi again in the semis and won in straight games on the 13th hoop both times

In other half of the draw, Ryan Cabble had a string of unlucky 6-7 reverses against Egyptians and saw Salah Hassan carry the hopes of his fellow countrymen into the

final with the awaiting Carr.

The on-form Englishman was on fire and ran out 7-5, 7-4 winner, a score line that reflected his latter dominance.

Amongst the also-rans, the top individual triumph was scored by Ripon member and last minute stand-in Maggie Cowman, who beat El Mahdi 4-7, 7-5, 7-6.

She had accounted for herself well in minor events previously, this was a huge step-up. She was given a signed Egyptian shirt by a gallant El Mahdi.



Leicestershire win Counties at last

After several years of coming very near the top, Leicestershire finally managed to win first place in the GC County Championship, ahead of their main rivals and holders Kent, reports Bill Arliss.

And they managed this even without the assistance of Tim King who was delayed by a business trip.

Only eleven teams played this year after Oxfordshire failed to raise a team, but most agreed that it was one of the hardest fought tournaments so far.

The standard of the players taking part at Southwick was very high indeed.

The highest handicapper was a lone player on 3, and there were then fifteen 2s, twenty 1s and no less than 16 scratch players, so there were very few easy games.



With such finely balanced competition, no team raced ahead of the pack early on, as the 'all play all' format churned through its rounds.

Kent surprised everyone by recording only one win in their first four matches, but then went on to win the rest, whereas Hampshire had a reverse of fortunes in winning their first three and then only managing one more victory thereafter. Even eventual winners Leicestershire had their stumbles too and lost twice, to Suffolk and Sussex.

Following the completion of the block games just after lunch on the second day, the teams were ranked in order and, happily for manager Bill Arliss, a simple tally of victories sorted precedence.

Centre Stage & Grass Roots

The Center Stage and Grass Roots competitions start with internal events at clubs to provide qualifiers for the National Finals, this year held on the same weekend at Ashby.

The Grass Roots (for handicaps 9+) was won by **Pauline Eames** from Edgbaston, while the Centre Stage (for handicaps 5 – 8) was won by **Chris Jackson** from nearby Nottingham.

These are two competitions that are extremely easy to enter and of course they start so close to home.

Entry is by Club and your Secretary will receive the entry forms with the fixtures book mail-out, so do seek these out and get your Club involved.

All you need is a minimum of six players for the Grass Roots or four for the Centre Stage to contest a round at your Club, and a place in a national final could be yours!

Even if you can't raise that number at your club, there is still a route into the event by banding together with others from nearby Clubs and competition director Terry Sparks will be pleased to help you with this.

GC TOUR

A round-up of the event

The teams were then paired in ranking order and each pair was scheduled to play one or two more games depending upon the result of their earlier encounter.

This was the case for Leicestershire against Kent, as the former had won the block game and then wrapped up the Championship with a repeat performance in the single play-off game that resulted.

The Leicestershire team: Will Gee, Rachel Rowe, Mike O'Brian, Ray and Chris Mounfield.

The finishing order:
Leicestershire (9 wins from 11 matches), Kent 7/11, Suffolk and Somerset, 7/11, Glamorgan 7/12, Surrey 6/12, Sussex and Yorks/Durham 5/11, Hampshire 5/11, Dorset 4/11, Glos/Worcs 2/10.

GC B

Australia's **Peter Freer** (right) won **Woking's Mid-summer GC Open**, but the outcome of the event was still in the balance as the thirteenth and final round commenced. At that stage Simon Carter (Dulwich) had lost twice, whereas Freer from Canberra and the host's Jeff Dawson had lost just the once. The manager's dream finale saw Freer and Dawson meeting in the final round! Freer won and consigned Dawson to third spot after he had led for most of the competition.

In the **Montevideo Cup at Tunbridge Wells**, Richard Brooks returned to defend his trophy, but lost 4-10 in a 19-point final to



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TOURNAMENTS

Events around the country



Welshman wins All England Handicap

There is a mantelpiece in Pontypridd, South WALES on which sits an All ENGLAND cup – how bizarre, but how well deserved!

Dyffryn's immensely likeable golf croquet ambassador Peter Balchin (*right and below*) beamed a huge smile all weekend at the National Final of this CA handicap competition, but it was a face of delight when he learnt that a victory that he thought he had thrown away was finally secure.

Balchin was the best player on paper at handicap 1, and coped with having to concede extra turns in every game with seeming ease, setting quite a pace in the 16-player 'all play all' final event that few could live with.

He enjoyed an unbeaten first day and earned a two-win lead over his nearest rival at Hunstanton.

Into the second morning Balchin maintained his advantage and cemented his position with head-to-head victories over others stretching for his shirt tails.

Winning often, but needing a slip from the leader, were Rich Waterman (*pictured above left* - handicap 3 from Maldon), Nick Westmore (5, Ryde), Graham Good (6, Bury) and Ian Norris (2, Phyllis Court).

Everyone was hoping for the Welshman to falter and wondering who could possibly peg back his progress.

The answer came from Geoff Johnson (3,

Watford) whose tight 7-6 win pricked the Balchin bubble and signaled an unexpected slump for the man who had looked every bit the nailed-on champion.

Another single point loss followed – to Robin Wooton (2, Sussex) – and then a real surprise 2-7 reverse to Ian Dampney (2, Broadwas).

This let in both Waterman and Good with the former in the box seat with a single win advantage. But the Maldon player fell

at the last when he had one hand on the trophy, Good crashed too and Balchin reclaimed top spot from Waterman, courtesy of that earlier head-to-head win.

Good finished a creditable third, one win adrift, and

Westmore pipped Norris, again on count-back. Manger Frances Colman ran an enjoyable, tightly controlled and very timely event for the second year running and was kept increasingly busy as principal on-call referee to boot. Director Chris Roberts was kept amused with a crayon.

CA Chairman Jeff Dawson made the long trip from Woking to present the All England Cup to Balchin who was a very popular winner indeed.



Briefs

Hunstanton's **David Thirtle-Watts**, who earned himself a handicap reduction from 4 to 3 in the process.

Hampworth's **Janet Trueman** celebrated her first ever tournament win to lift **PJ's Pot at Guildford and Godalming**, when she sneaked in ahead of Amanda Bentley and manager Mike Huxley in a three-way tie, decided on net hoops. This was the Surrey club's first GC handicap tournament, and although only attracting a small field it did cover a huge range of abilities, from beginner Bentley's 12 handicap to Huxley's 2. Huxley conceded 23 extra turns in his last three games, so did well to record an overall net hoop score of zero.



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Coaching Corner - by Roger Staples

Well the autumn nights are closing in, and the end of the season is nigh for most of us. I trust this season has been a good one for you. There will be a few hardy souls who I am sure will put on their thermals to practise and play on those few lawns that are available over winter, but for the rest of us?

Well here are a couple of thoughts for you:

How about searching out a club with an indoor carpet near you? The East Anglian Federation organise a winter programme of competitions at Soham, as pictured here, [Visit this web site: <http://www.angliacroquet.co.uk/2013/Soham.php>] and Belsay Hall & Middlesbrough both organise weekly carpet sessions throughout the winter.

Alternatively, there are some good books to read.

Michael Hague's treatise on Golf Croquet tactics and James Hawkins' Complete Croquet are two excellent companions.

Our coaches have been busy this year and it is pleasing to see another group who have

recently qualified.

I congratulate Peter Marven (Maldon), Christine Merrington (Littlehampton) and Anthony Bingham (Old College Dulwich), who have all qualified as Club



Coaches (yellow badge), and particular congratulations to Susan Way-Vautier (Worcester Norton), who qualified both as Club Coach and Golf Coach (white badge).

Finally, think about problems around hoops.

We all know how often during a

tournament or during a club day, someone questions whether a ball has run a hoop.

Take the time to get to know your laws.

For example, when a ball starts to run a hoop; when it has completed the running; or when a 'hoop and roquet' is scored in AC.

Remember, if the stroke about to be played is dubious and perhaps you have a hampered shot, do call a referee, or at least invite your opponent to watch.

Acquaint yourself with the likely faults that you could commit during the stroke [Law 28].

If in doubt you may ask the referee about faults.

The referee is not permitted to give you advice but is required to provide reasonable information on matters of law.

Maybe this is the time of year for some bedtime reading?

Now where's that little red or gold book....

Above: Martin French at Soham
Below: Coaching at Chester
(image by Pat & Alan Clare)

Coaching Letter

Dear Editor,

I was interested in the question asked by Alison Heywood-Hill (*Gazette 345*) –)"How do you get your members hungry for a lower handicap?"

Some people take a pride in achieving this, and others couldn't care less – it's all to do with achievement and the celebration of it.

One can only achieve a lower handicap by winning singles games, and if you always lose then your handicap quickly goes to a level beyond where you started!

Losing happens to us all, because someone has to lose each game, but if you have achieved some good shots, made some good hoops, and played to the best of your ability, then the losing doesn't hurt too much.

Losing can often zap the confidence of us all, but the beginner is the most vulnerable.

Most people who take up croquet – or any game for that matter – have a competitive nature, so winning makes them feel good!

However, a beginner is always at a disadvantage against an experienced

player, so their competitive nature needs to be nurtured.

Confidence-building is the key, and this can be done in many different ways:

Always praise good shots with delight.



Encourage positive thinking by saying "You can do it". That works for you too!

Mix beginners with sympathetic experienced players in club play and remember we were all beginners once!

Discourage negative comments and unsolicited advice from experienced players and allow beginners to make decisions

for themselves. At the same time, do also encourage them to ask for help if needed. A "buddy" system is a good way of achieving this.

Allow beginners to consolidate what they have learnt before doing more coaching.

Introduce the more complicated rules by drip-feeding and explaining them sensitively off-lawn. Care in dealing with double taps and crushes should be emphasised.

Set up opportunities for coaching (individual or group) at all levels, and set up internal competitions at different levels and throughout the season.

Above all, encourage positivity and having fun!

At Camerton & Peasedown, we have introduced a 5 minute practice routine before 'club play sessions' for everyone.

This explores eight basic skills, which are rotated over eight sessions. Everyone gains, and the beginner can see that even experienced players need to practise.

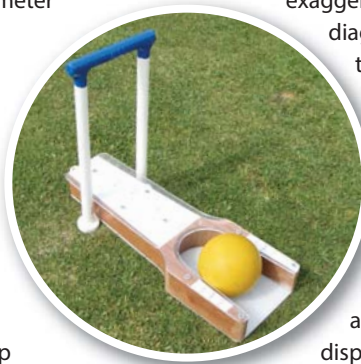
Above all, confidence is the key – 'encourage, praise, practise, and learn'.

Mo Boys - Camerton & Peasedown CC

The fine science of hoop and ball measuring

John S. Alabaster of Letchworth has tackled this problem by designing a clever device. He explains how it works:

A simple measuring device has been designed consisting, at one end, of a prong to measure the diameter of a croquet ball inserted therein and, at the other, a truncated wedge to measure the gap of a hoop into which it is inserted (see Fig.1). The height above ground at which a ball or hoop is measured is close to 1 13/16 inches (46 mm). A taper of 9 from parallel on both prong and truncated wedge provides slopes in the ratio of 1:20, so that a difference in size of 1/32 inch in ball diameter or hoop gap is magnified to a length along the prong or wedge edge of



5/8 inch.

Because of the taper, a fully inserted ball does not touch the edges of the truncated wedge at its exact diameter, but rather at a slightly smaller dimension, X, as shown exaggeratedly and not to scale in the

diagram. Simple trigonometry shows this length to be about 99% of the true diameter of 3 3/8 inches (X = true radius, R times cos 9degrees) and also shows the

displacement distance, Y, to be about 1/3 inch or 7.2 mm (Y = X times tan 9 degrees).

Almost identical values of X and Y are obtained for balls + 1/32 inch and + 1/16 inch, account of which is taken in marking the scale on the edges of the prong, ensuring that a size of a 3 5/8 inch diameter

ball, for example, is marked at the points where a ball of that size actually touches the prong.

For measuring the gap in a hoop, the diameter of the hoop wire of 5/8 inch is small enough for the resultant errors to be

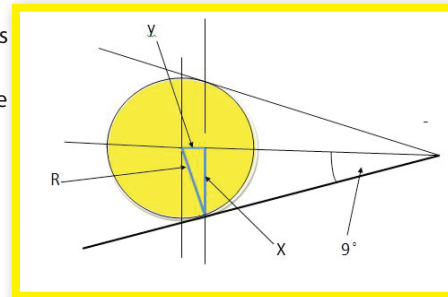
ignored, and to take the points of contact with the wedge as representative of the true width.

The design consists of

plates of acrylic, 3 mm thick, screwed to a wood core.

Since the top plate provides the measuring edges, these overlap the core and, at the wedge end, can be sufficient to allow the device to be used in hoops where the carrot is not fully buried.

John S. Alabaster, Letchworth C C



Lawn Care By Duncan Hector

In my day-to-day work with my son's lawn care business, the biggest problem is **thatch**.

This is a tightly intermingled layer of living and dead stems, leaves and roots which accumulate between the grass and the soil underneath.

You can use a core sampler or cut out a plug of soil with a knife to see how thick the layer is on your croquet lawns – you may be surprised at what you find! It is not unusual to take 10 one ton dumpy bags off a 200sq metre lawn.

Thatch prevents the penetration of air, water and nutrients into the root zone, so if the thatch is too thick, the grass roots will remain in that layer where the moisture and nutrients are.

This leads to weak growth and poor drought resistance. Nutrients have to be converted by microbial action into a form that can be used by grass roots. Micro-organisms need oxygen and water to survive. Time and again I take plug samples on thatchy lawns which, even after a week of heavy rain, show the soil as dry as dust.

The thatch acts like blotting paper and water simply stays there.

So aerate monthly and scarify at least once a year in the autumn.

Moss is another concern on croquet lawns and must be kept under control using a ferrous sulphate treatment.

The most effective way is to use soluble iron is at a rate of 500g to 10 litres of water to cover 100 sq metres.

Granular products will blacken moss at rates of around 8% but may not reach all the plant, so I therefore recommend spraying.

It may be a big job on a mossy croquet lawn but do it Spring and Autumn, because moss crops twice a year; soon there will be little or no moss left and the job will become a spot treatment only.

Duncan Hector www.DuncanHectorTurfCare.co.uk

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The Maths of Matches - Kevin Carter

It is generally considered that in top flight events it is much fairer to have best-of-three matches than single games, and even better to have best-of-five.

Actually, the effect of having matches of up to three or five games is not as great as most people think.

It is certainly correct to try to reduce the effect of luck or random events in a game, and there is nothing worse than a 'sterile' game.



At advanced level this means that

Player A gets in and goes to 4-back, Player B misses a 19-yard shot and Player A completes the game with a TP.

This is common when conditions are easy - a holding surface which is easy to judge, along with hoops which 'give'.

So, by how much is the probability of the superior player winning improved by playing longer matches?

Let us consider first a best-of-three match, where Player A has a 60% chance of winning each game. There are three ways in which he can win the match:

Winning the first two games (which we shall notate as 'AA'), losing the second (ABA) and losing the first (BAA)

The Probability of AA is $0.6 \times 0.6 = 0.36$; ABA is $0.6 \times 0.4 \times 0.6 = 0.144$; and BAA is $0.4 \times 0.6 \times 0.6 = 0.144$.

The total of these three is 0.65.

So, this means that if the chance of

winning a single game is 60%, then the chance of winning a best-of-three is 65% - hardly a transformation!

Of course, this ignores any psychological effects and also whether one player would tire more than the other.

If you repeat the calculation for when player A has a 70% chance in each game, then his probability of winning a best-of-three is improved to 78% - again, an improvement, but the substantially better player is still far from a certainty when playing a best-of-three.

Now looking at best-of-five; Player A can win in any of the following ways:

AAA.....	0.6^3
BAAA, ABAA, AABA..	$0.6^3 \times 0.4 \times 3$
BBAAA, BABAA, BAABA, ABABA,	
ABABA, AABBA...	$0.6^3 \times 0.4^2 \times 6$

The figures to the right show the calculations.

When they are worked out and totalled, we come to 68% - so, adding a further two games to a match pushes up the chance of the 60% player winning from 65% to just 68%.

For a single game 70%, we improve our 78% for best-of-3 to 84% for best-of-5.

This is a little more impressive; we have almost halved the chance of a 'rogue result'.

So, to summarise:

Probability of winning single game	Probability of winning Bo3	Probability of winning Bo5
60%	65%	68%
70%	78%	84%
n%	$n^2 + 2n^2(n-1)$	$n^3 + 3n^3(n-1) + 6n^3(n-1)^2$

The last row of the table gives the general formula, which allows anybody to calculate probabilities for 'Bo3' and 'Bo5' for other values.

The next question is whether it is worthwhile increasing the length of matches to three or five games.

A 32-player knock-out can be comfortably completed in two days, with just five single-game rounds.

However, even top players struggle to complete five best-of-3s in three days, and B-class players or seniors would take four. So, you are trading a slightly fairer result, against the length of the tournament increasing by 50-100%.

Is there another solution?

Yes - more challenging conditions.

If our player A has a 60% chance of beating Player B in easy conditions, then his chance in a more interactive game might be, say, 70%.

He can bring to bear his superior skills at making and maintaining breaks, while the chance of his slightly inferior opponent getting the first break and winning a sterile game is reduced.

If you accept this very reasonable premise, then there is a surprising conclusion:

A single game in challenging conditions (70%) is more likely to be won by the superior player, than the best-of-five in easy conditions (68%)!



Photo Extras - Left: Duncan Hector's grand-daughter Megan has got the cushion effect of the relaxed legs off to a tee for this hoop shot. Right: It's all smiles at the Roehampton handicap for home club winner Tim Russell, placed pair Veronica Carlisle of Hurlingham and Ealing's John Reynolds, overseen by manager Peter Siddle. Top of page, left: John Hall watches Aiken Hakes hampered shot closely, in a 'best of three' match at the AC World Championships. Top of page, right: Kevin Carter saving his knees at Hurlingham. All images by Chris Roberts except Magan by Grandad.



... continued from page 15

End of Season Handicap and the Hussar Challenge Cup **reports Mike Hann**. The Ealing 12 handicapper won all of her seven games including the final play-off against scratch home club player Tim Russell, who manfully won five of his games despite giving away a total of 62 bisques! McLoughlin duly reduced her handicap to ten.

Woking won the impressive Acorn Trophy for the **Rother Valley** Challenge team event ahead of Fishbourne & Worthing, Preston Park, West Chiltonington and the hosts. This was the seventh running of this short croquet tournament, designed as an excellent introduction to tournament play for those with handicaps of 9+ and was played on half lawns with almost full bisques. Forty games were played in all and, in addition to the team event, home player Wendy Bennett emerged with the best individual performance.

Forty players enjoyed the last AC action on **Cheltenham's** showpiece courts before the four directly in front of the clubhouse were renovated soon after. The three-day event was played as an 'Egyptian' banded into three Class Blocks by David Magee. Oxford's Harry Fisher won the A Class block dropping only one game in ten and including five triples. Arthur Rowe of Ashby won the B Class, again only dropping one game in his nine games. However, the overall winner (determined by % wins) was Cheltenham's own John Thirlwell who was undefeated in C Class.

The old sayings 'an old dog for a long trail' and 'experience will beat exuberance' certainly held true at the **Crake Valley** advanced weekend, when 66-year-old Brian Storey from Bowdon beat the shy retiring youngster from Bury, Paul Rigge, **reports Dave Nicholson**. Rigge had progressed to the final by beating 'The Wilsons of Fylde' and Dave Nick +24tp, while Storey beat home player Peter Wardle +26tp in his semi-final which included his second triple peel of the weekend. Storey took the final and 'The Cavendish Clock' by +15 and reduced his handicap to -1 to boot.

Tim Jolliff from Taunton Deane won the annual **Sidmouth** B-Level advanced beating the host club's Richard Wood who had an opportunity to overtake on the last turn, but his difficult approach to 1-back from corner 2, led to a failed hoop attempt which gave Jolliff the game +3t

Space has beaten your editor for this issue, so some reports have been held over until next time...

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However if you have something that you think the Editor may be willing to expand this deadline for, please contact him direct.

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

Queries regarding the delivery of the Gazette to members should be directed to the Manager of the Croquet Association and not to the Editor.

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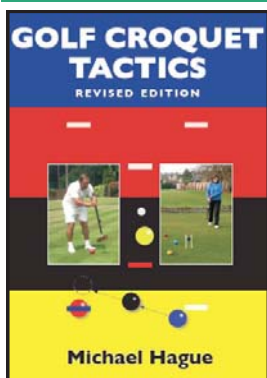
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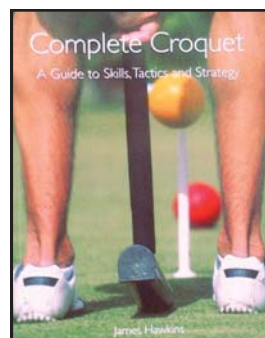


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