

The

Issue 350 June 2014

# CROQUET

Gazette

***Is there a finer  
summer sport  
than ours?***

**Glamorgan win  
AC Counties**

**All change for  
top GC in 2015**

**Morrow's a four  
timer at Peels**



# From our files researched by Frances Colman

## 100 years ago - 1914



Dear Sir,

Mr Augustus Brigstocke complains that "It is not particularly pleasant for me to write criticisms of the kind in question" – why does he?

Have the "seven" sheep selected him as their champion?

I doubt very much that it is the goats, although he says he does so "in the best interests of the players themselves."

Self-constructed critics who give hard blows should not object when they get one back.

Mr Brigstocke has nothing whatever to complain of.

Yours truly,  
H A Collins

~

Dear Sir,

May I make a suggestion that for the benefit of tournament managers and players – that a slate should be hung near the score sheets at tournaments, on which those competitors desirous of playing early in the day may write their names?

Those very particularly anxious to play to underline their names.

This would obviate the necessity of troubling the manager with requests to have a certain game put on.

We all know that there are times when a player, say a professional man, must get away by a certain hour, yet he hesitates to worry an already harassed manager!

I am sure that if the suggestion were adopted players and managers would be relieved of the uncomfortable necessity of having to ask or refuse favours.

Yours truly,  
'All for Peace'

~

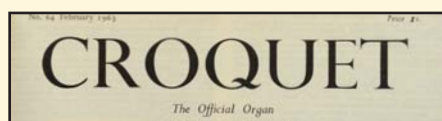
Dear Sir,

I am writing to draw attention to the way of some referees of giving decisions that balls are wired from taking a glance at them, without taking the trouble of testing them.

This has been going on for some years, and it is most unfair.

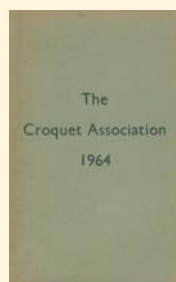
Yours truly,  
John W Thain

## 50 years ago - 1964



An internet search revealed this reference to the year – Ed.

Alongside the monthly Croquet Association Gazette, the Association has published a yearly handbook from the early 1900's. More a reference guide than the Gazette, the contents vary from year to year but generally feature the laws of croquet with updates and revisions, the committee members of the Association, medal results for the prior year and the membership roll with handicaps. Pictured is the 1964 issue.



## 10 years ago - 2004



The following was originally published by Saga Magazine and then reproduced in The Gazette:

The Mallet Master – An 81-year-old professor is the greatest Wimbledon Champion the nation has ever produced.

As Tim Henman crashed out at centre Court in July, the Octogenarian was in training to win his 38th title.

Bernard Neal's long-running success in the Club Championship at Wimbledon has prompted articles in the Times and Sunday Times...

~

*Editorial* – Since we last spoke, I've been keeping myself busy.

After 20 years of commuting to other clubs, the time is right, I've decided, to set something up here in Liverpool.

Enquiries from players are not exactly flooding in, but the trickle over the last year or so tells me that I could now make a go of it. But first there's a problem of location. Now, just how hard can that be?

Back in the old days, when the streets of Liverpool were paved with gold, our City Fathers spent their vast wealth in providing parkland for the masses.

Some of that green space is pretty run down now; some of it is hilly, or covered with trees, some of it, to the north of the city, is just too close to Southport to be inside the catchment area I'd need to cover... (*The editor in 2004 was James Hawkins, and a report on his Liverpool Club 'ten years on', appeared in the Gazette issue 348 in February this year.*)

~

Seventeen CA members were successful in obtaining their Club Coach certificate and badge at Hurlingham recently, including Eugene Chang, who at the age of 18 is the youngest to attend a coaches' qualification course.

He hopes to form a croquet club at Imperial College when he starts his university training in October.

The CA has developed a standard method of training coaches and three courses were scheduled across the country this year in April and May.

## Charity One-Ball raises over £ 3500

The annual Charity One-Ball competition was a success again under the usual directorship of Kevin Carter. The nominated charity changes every two seasons and this was the second year that **Prostate Cancer UK** were the beneficiaries.

Club rounds qualified players to go forward to one of two national finals, which was a necessary split initiative started last season to cope with the growing numbers wanting to participate.

Once again, the Winchester and Bowdon clubs donated their facilities for the two finals, which were won by Richard Thurloe (Sidmouth) and Graham Good (Bury and Bowdon) respectively.

Once Kevin Carter had done all his sums, he provided The Gazette with the competition's impressive final numbers:

- 28 heats, at clubs around the country
- 413 participants
- £2,793 was raised directly.
- The proceeds from most heats were subject to organisers' Gift Aid, totalling £790.
- So, the total by which the charity benefits is again a little over £3500.

A great effort by organisers and players alike – **Chris Roberts, editor.**

# Editorial

There really is nothing to match our sport on a corking sunny day and, as I write this, looking out across the beautifully manicured lawns of the Roehampton Club, there isn't a cloud in the sky. Even the looming probability of my AC handicap going up a notch at the end of today, can't quell my enthusiasm this morning.

This Gazette cover shows another delightful scene, with Michael Finnigan in the middle of the neat round that scuppered yours truly at the Peel Memorials at Nottingham (where I did a lot watching other play better than me).

Something else that I could have done better, was the presentation of the GC level play index points exchange matrix, printed in the last issue, which, as many of you will have noticed, had the winners and losers titles unfortunately juxtaposed.

Although Bill Arliss' name appeared as author of the text, the error with the chart was all my doing, caused by the need to manually 'correct' the chart when the formatting was lost slightly in copying it from the CA website. My apologies.

On the subject of GC handicaps, how is everyone getting on with the new 'effective' grades? I have heard quite a few negative views, mostly from those low handicappers

affected, who are now saying that they probably won't play handicap any more.

It isn't supposed to be easy fellas!

My own experience is that I, and most of the other brave lower handicapped players at my club, are now winning much closer to 50% of their games than they were, so on this limited evidence, it 'feels' right to me.

Turning back to this Gazette, it's good to be bringing you reports from English based tournaments, rather than having to have looked overseas for action during the winter. Unfortunately, I have had to have drastically cut many reports in an effort to mention as many as possible, whilst still retaining the detail of the flagship events.

In AC, we have the Western and Coles Championships, the Peels and the Counties.

While in GC, the first five of the English National Singles Championship qualifiers are reported here, and we also carry the big news of the shake-up in the arrangements for this competition in 2015. Good stuff - enjoy.



**Chris Roberts**

**Chris Roberts** Editor

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The  
**CROQUET**  
Gazette



Issue 350 June 2014

**Front cover** : Bathed in summer sunshine  
- Michael Finnigan at the Peel Memorials at Nottingham CC (by Chris Roberts)

**This page**: The Editor in action at Roehampton (by Arthur Lindley) - The Chairman, lining one up at Surbiton (by Chris Roberts)

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## Contents

- 4 Official news
- 6 Letters to the Editor
- 8 Obituaries & coaching
- 10 Club development & hoop tests
- 12 GC English National Singles Championship - changes for 2015
- 14 GC top level and round-up
- 16 AC World team Championship tiers
- 17 AC Championships
- 18 AC Tournaments and round-up
- 20 Schools, Florida & bisque calculations
- 21 Lawn care & Oxford University
- 22 AC County Championship

# Chairman's Column

As I write this I have just returned from the AC Inter-Counties Championships, which is a real festival of croquet and highly recommended to any player who can get into one of the teams.

One of the features of such an event, with over 140 players competing, is the organisation which has to go into making it a success.

As well as the preparation of the lawns, there is a vast amount of work put into the food and drink provision and general organisation.

This got me thinking about how much we all owe to the army of volunteers all around the country who help to organise our events.

Please spare a thought and perhaps a

word of thanks when next you are the beneficiary of their efforts.

Many people also spend a lot of their own time making our organisation run smoothly.

As you will know, I have recently been spending a lot of time reviewing our finances and how we charge for our subscriptions.

However, the truth is that we would all have to pay significantly more for our sport if it were not for the voluntary effort put in by so many people.

A couple of examples which spring to mind are the ranking systems and the website.

If you look at the effort put in over the years in developing these systems, the amount of work involved is incredible.

If we had to pay commercial rates for these developments, we would have paid many hundreds of thousands of pounds.

Instead, we have had it all through the goodwill and commitment of the individuals involved. Many thanks to all those involved in this work.

We could currently use some more help on both the ICT and Marketing Committees.

We are looking at further developing our website and database systems, so if this is your area of expertise and you are able to lend a hand, please let us know.

Similarly if you have some experience with marketing we know this is always an area which could benefit from more effort, and we could use some new faces to help us identify new ideas and to move things forward. If you think you could help



in either area please contact us and let us know.

If these subjects aren't your thing but you would like to help in other ways, then that is always possible too, so please don't be shy!

**Jeff Dawson**

# 132 Years service by Splendid Six

Chairman Jeff Dawson, recognises service at the heart of our sport

A little while ago, the CA Council considered whether it would be appropriate to introduce a long-service award for council members who had served on council for a significant period of time. It was decided that this was not necessary, but instead that we should recognise long service with a word of thanks in a Gazette article.

Having considered this further, we thought it worth highlighting and thanking anyone who is currently serving on council, and who has done so for more than twelve years (it being a three-year election cycle).

Accordingly, I would like to thank the following members of council for their service.

**Roger Bray** has served for a total of 38 years across two separate stints (1968-1985 and 1992 to date). Roger was chairman of council in 1979-80 and has been treasurer for many years, but has indicated that he is intending to step down from this post come the next AGM. Roger was, of course, recipient of the Council Medal at the last AGM.



**Stephen Mulliner** was chairman in 1991-92 and has been on council for some 29 years in total.

He set up the original ranking system for AC, and still runs the GC rankings.

He was also the main driver for revision of the AC laws, which he helped to totally re-write in 1984 and revise in 2000.

He is still active on council in his role as vice-president. As well as this, he is also secretary-general of the World Croquet Federation.



**Barry Keen** has served for a total of 20 years, again in two stints (1982-1991 and

2002 to date). In his early years, Barry was instrumental in pioneering the automatic handicap system, and as well as being chairman in 2011-12, he



has more recently done a lot of work on the AC Laws committee including the introduction of the examining referee handbook.



**Bill Arliss** has served for 18 years (1995 to date). He was chairman in 1998-99, was instrumental in setting up the original CA website, and has more recently been a key figure in the development of Golf Croquet. Like Roger he was also a recipient of the Council Medal at the last AGM.

**Ian Vincent** has served for 12 years, including as chairman in 2005-06, before becoming CA Secretary in 2008. As well as being secretary, Ian has been instrumental on the AC Laws and ICT committees in recent years (he is currently chairman of both).



**Alan Pidcock** has served for 15 years (1998 to date). Alan has been a key member of the equipment committee and is responsible for introducing testing on balls and hoops on behalf of the CA and more recently the WCF, among other things.



These are all exceptional periods of service, and we owe them all a debt of gratitude.

Perhaps you might consider buying them a drink the next time you see them!

Heartly congratulations to Daphne Gaitley who has been recognised with a Lifetime Coaching Award.

She will be presented with her award at the CA AGM in October.

**Jonathan Isaacs, Chairman of The Croquet Academy, writes:**

"Daphne Gaitley started playing croquet at Southwick in 1992 and quickly became an accomplished player at both Association & Golf Croquet.

She became a club coach in 1995 and from there was a valuable asset to the Summer School. In 1998 she gained her Grade 1 AC coach's award and subsequently gained her grade 2 AC award as well as her GC coach's qualification. She is both an AC & GC referee.

Daphne became a leading coach on the Summer School and a leading player in the formation of The Croquet Academy, as well as taking on the role of SECF

## Lifetime Coaching award for Daphne Gaitley



Federation Coaching Officer and

serving as a respected member of the CA Coaching Committee for a number of years.

Daphne's greatest work has been achieved 'in the field' and she still organizes numerous coaching sessions for clubs throughout the SECF and has even run courses as far north as Nottingham.

She is the senior Golf Croquet Coach in the Academy and the huge growth witnessed in attendees coming on Academy Golf Croquet courses is a true measure of her success.

I sincerely hope this will mark a milestone in her brilliant career as a well-respected coach and that she will she continue her success for many more years."

Daphne will be presented with her award at the AGM in October.

As I write this, the weather is pleasant and sunny, unlike last year. I trust it is the same with you and you have some excellent croquet this season.

# Ian Burridge gets IPD job

**CA Appoints an International Performance Director - writes Martin French**

**T**he CA has appointed Ian Burridge as its first ever International Performance Director.

The IPD role will be initially focused on AC, to work with and across existing CA committees in order to drive up the CA's performance in international events.

The role is expected to run at least until the 2017 MacRobertson Shield series.

Applications were sought from people keen to improve the England performance in major events, and the selection panel are delighted to congratulate Ian on his appointment. Like the majority of CA roles, it is a volunteer activity and carries no remuneration.

Ian will report to the chairman of the Management Committee.

*(Photo of the new IPD by Chris Roberts)*



The IPD will:

1. Be responsible for England's performance at international singles and team AC events
2. Create and manage a sustainable international pathway to take talented beginners through to elite performers, recruiting and directing a team of volunteers to assist.
3. Work with all parts of the CA necessary to ensure support of improved international performance.

The role is expected to influence recruitment strategies, the tournament programme, international matches, selection policy, and bursary funding.

It will also complement the existing activities of the Coaching and other Council Committees.

## Two Harrys and Caroline win the Most Improved Player Awards

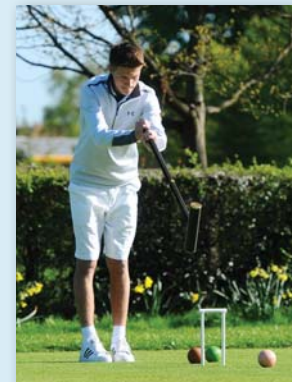


**Most improved male AC player (Apps Bowl)**  
**Harry Fisher, Oxford University**

The most Improved Player Awards for 2013 have been announced and presentations will be made at the CA AGM on 18 October:



**Most improved female AC player (Steel Bowl)**  
**Caroline Denny, Bear of Rodborough**



**Most improved GC player (Spiers Trophy)**  
**Harry Dodge, Budleigh Salterton**  
*(for second year running)*

The Handicap Committee is disappointed by the numbers of candidates coming forward and urges clubs to make more nominations. Full details of eligibility conditions and award criteria are on page 24 of the Fixtures Calendar and on the CA Website.

## CA Diplomas

**N**ominations, by clubs or federations, of people who have performed exceptional service are invited for the award of CA Diplomas.

These were first awarded in 2000 and are intended primarily to recognise the work done by the many volunteers who do so much "behind the scenes" to provide the facilities, service and organisation that we

all enjoy, but so easily take for granted. Nominations should be sent to the CA Office by 1st August, together with a short (approx 100 words) citation that will be published when the awards are made.

Diplomas are normally presented at the AGM (which this year is at Hurlingham on 18 October), but arrangements can be made to present them locally if the recipient is unable to be there.

**Ian Vincent,**  
**Honorary Secretary**

## Safeguarding

**T**he advice on the CA website about child protection, now known as safeguarding, has been updated and can be found at <http://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=ca/cpp.html>. It contains information about how to apply for Disclosure and Barring Service disclosures through the CA and has links to model policies, codes of good practice and a reporting form that clubs can adapt for their own use. **Ian Vincent, Hon. Sec.**



## GC 'effective' handicaps are now too punitive

Dear Editor,

Golf croquet is both a competitive and social game.

It has been the cause of a dramatic increase in the popularity of croquet in recent years, but I feel strongly that the new 'effective handicap' system introduced by the CA (see *Gazette issue 349*) will have a detrimental effect on both these aspects of the game.

Firstly, it is no longer a level playing field for the better player. As a 1 handicap player, I now find myself having to give six bisques (compared with three before the new system was introduced) to an opponent playing off 4. How can a doubling of bisques lead to a competitive game? This is straining credulity too far.

Secondly, many high handicappers enjoy playing with better players, as they welcome the opportunity to learn how to play shots and hopefully improve their performance. This will no longer happen, as players like me are likely to withdraw from handicap play completely.

Thirdly, golf croquet is a social game, but all this system does is to create an "us" and "them" mentality, which is a sure way to destroy the bonhomie of croquet clubs.

Is this really what the CA want?

**Tony Salem, Roehampton Club**



## Swapping handicap cards idea

Dear Editor,

Having just read the article on tournament regulations (issue 349) and the need to bring handicap cards to all tournaments, it occurred to me whilst playing in our handicap open that an addition would make sense.

At a less serious level of play, omissions and errors occur largely due to forgetfulness, and our club's annual card audit proves this beyond doubt.

Why don't we adopt the practice of 18-hole golfers and complete and exchange card information at the end of each game. A simple task that needs doing any way.

Our Club audit would become unnecessary, which would be met with joy by most members!

**Mike Glew,  
East Dorset C & L T C**

## Endowment funds are recommended

Dear Editor,

My contribution to the debate on future funding of the CA is to recommend another way of producing a regular income.

I think that the setting up of an Endowment Fund (EF) should be given serious consideration.

An EF collects money from bequests and donations, but does not spend it. Instead the money is invested into a group of safe investments;

I would strongly recommend investment trusts.

My university has an EF because it, like the CA, needs to have a regular income stream. To make it work, the CA would need to promote the idea, and encourage members to make donations and bequests through the pages of the Gazette, and regional publications like SWAN.

Income may be small at the outset, but it would gather pace and be very worthwhile for the CA in the long term.

**Richard Mills, Bath C C**

## Letters to the

## Sex Pistol not as good as Safraz

Dear Editor,

I have been lucky enough to have played croquet (or -ish) with a number of famous coves during my life, and of all of them, Pakistani cricketer Sarfraz and Stan Smith the Wimbledon tennis winner, were the most decent.

The other tennis players include Tom and Tim Gullikson, John Newcombe and Buster Mottram, and I have also played with international cricketers Allan Lamb, Roger Prideaux and Charlotte Edwards, and county player James Murray-Willis.

Then there were champion jockey Stan Mellor and rugby player Bev Dovey to complete the sports stars.

On the music front, I have played with several DJs including Mike Read and Ed Stewart, performers Paul Jones and Mike D'Abo of Manfred Mann, and perhaps most surprisingly, Sex Pistol Johnny Rotten!

Finally there was Liz Dawn who played Coronation Street's Vera Duckworth, and recently departed politician Tony Benn.

Most of these opponents were played at charity events that used to take place on London's South Bank.

Were they to have taken the game seriously, I'd have thought that Sarfraz and Murray-Willis could have made top class, but probably not quite as good as either Robert Fulford or Nigel Aspinall.

**Colin Prichard,  
CA member but unattached**



Photographs clockwise from top left:  
(1) High and low handicap pairing Jim O'Keefe and Roy Tillcock of Ryde with The Southern Federation Solstice Tournament Cup.  
(2) Kevin Carter, providing discussion points.  
(3) Richard Harris (Ryde), (4) Ian Dampney (Broadwas) and (5) Colin Britt (Camerton & Peasedown) at last season's All England GC Handicap Final (all images by Chris Roberts)

## Kevin Carter restates his position



Dear Editor,

In the February issue (348) you kindly printed my letter arguing for less of the CA's funds to be spent on developing social GC.

Thank you to the many who have sent me messages of support. These include representatives of three of our larger clubs, two CA Council members and a top competitive GC player.

Yes, of course my letter was couched provocatively in order to get noticed and talked about. For two years I have been trying, through the CA committee and two Working Groups of which I was a member, to get the funding issue recognised and

corrected. However, my calls were always put in the 'too difficult' tray.

I am hopeful that the CA will now take notice and align the work of the Development Committee more closely to the broader stated objectives of the CA - namely to focus on competitive croquet, and in particular to arrest rather than contribute to the decline in AC.

It also needs to more rigorously examine the business plans of new clubs seeking grants and loans, especially in questioning how their establishment will affect existing nearby clubs.

**Kevin Carter, Surbiton C C**

## Badgers, bunkers and slopes

Dear Editor,

It has occurred to me that croquet could be made much more exciting by varying the width of the hoops in no particular order. This could make it similar to show jumping or racing, where each fence is not necessarily the same. My lawn this year is an oval shape, fairly long (around 35 metres), but only 23 metres long at the widest point - this is because I have put in a swamp cypress and two nut trees.

We have an added disadvantage in that we are plagued by badgers, who have killed most of our bantams. Not only are they murderous, but also they dig holes in my not-so-pristine lawn - this adds to the skill aspect of my court as some of them resemble golf bunkers. Added to the problem is that my black Jaques Eclipse ball has seen better days and I have replaced my sets with ones made by Walker.

In years gone by I was a reasonable player and I can trace my decline to the demise of the Eclipse and the rise of Barlows, Walkers et al. I am quietly confident that with my new set up I might make a modest comeback.

Dartboards should also be changed. I remember SS (Jim) Townsend telling me that he bought a dartboard when he was a young lad - probably just after the Great War - with money that he earned from the paper round that he did before he went off to become an actuary and a Vice-President of the Croquet Association. Jim's father was extremely angry with this new

arrival because it was not a proper board. It consisted of a double band and a treble one, unlike the 'Kent'. It also boasted an outer bull. Jim was never allowed to put it up. The traditional Kent board, so Jim told me, also had doubles of different widths - the double twenty was much narrower than the lower numbers.

There is no reason why lawns should be flat and our other lawn on the Poldens has a distinct slope - I have yet to be beaten on it.

**Colin Prichard,  
CA member but unattached**

*The following letter is borrowed from the 'From our Files' page, because this anonymous writer shared a similar thought with the Gazette exactly 100 years ago! - Ed.*

Dear Sir,

Has not the time arrived for a little more sporting element to be introduced into croquet? The mere variation of settings does not appear to supply this want.

If lawns were constructed with suitable undulations, somewhat in the manner of putting greens, they would admit of the exercise of a high degree of skill, and yet allow of more frequent opportunities for the out-player to regain the command of the balls, thus making the game a more lively and diversified one.

The analogy of billiard tables does not seem to apply to croquet lawns.

Yours faithfully,

A life member of A.E.L.T and C.C.

## Aspinall's find ends 45 year wait for rhyme

This item isn't strictly speaking a Letter to the Editor, but it is **a very nice story told to the Editor** by none other than Nigel Aspinall (Former Champion, four time MacRobertson Shield player, and record-holder with eleven President's Cup titles) and so it finds a home here, **writes Chris Roberts.**

Nigel also has a fantastic memory for all things croquet, and because of this has been able to complete a search that started over 45 years ago.

Back in 1969, the Gazette carried one of several poems or doggerels by Maurice B Reckitt, who because of his initials, took to calling his writings 'Embers'.

Nigel remembered that Maurice was frustrated by being unable to complete a limerick because he couldn't find a town name that rhymed with 'bisque'.

The best he could do was tinker with the name of the Russian town Novosibirsk, to create the fictional Kovorosisk, which as Nigel says, doesn't rhyme properly.

However, the wait is now over, because Nigel discovered, whilst reading the tiny print in the newspaper detailing the results of a top chess tournament, that it was held in a town called Khanty-Mansisk, which scans perfectly for dear Maurice's limerick.

So here, for the first time, is Maurice B Reckitt's properly finished off 'Ember':

*A Lady from Khanty-Mansisk,  
Went off back to bed with a bisque,  
When they said "Is it moral?"  
She said "You've no quarrel";  
It's just a security risk.*

A plea from Nigel, who is a great collector of past Gazettes: He is only missing issues 298 and 314, and would dearly love to hear from anyone with copies.

**R**oger Frank Wheeler, who served on the CA Council and was Chairman of Cheltenham CC, will be most remembered for his landmark contribution to the world of croquet in the field of tournament management.

In 1995 together with Don Gaunt, he produced the definitive document of croquet management which is still in use and relevant today.

As a young man Roger enjoyed academic study and 'made it' to Trinity College, Cambridge to study mathematics. His studies were interrupted by National Service in the Royal Navy at Portsmouth as a radar mechanic.

Whilst at Cambridge, Roger took up rowing and, after graduation, he taught mathematics at Hymers College in Hull for ten years, where he also continued to row. The unexpected benefit of his years in Hull was meeting Dab, who was teaching mathematics in Beverley. He was appointed to a lectureship in pure mathematics at Leicester University where he remained until taking early retirement.

It was on a visit to Egypt during a British Council summer course for Egyptian maths teachers that Dab and Roger discovered croquet at the Gezira Club and they were soon completely hooked. On their return to Leicester, they immediately joined their nearest club – Nottingham. Retirement to Brimpsfield, a Cotswold village between Cheltenham and

## Roger Wheeler

1928 - 2014



Cirencester, suited them very well and they engaged enthusiastically with village life and joined Cheltenham CC in 1984, where they soon took very active parts.

Dab and Roger – so often the names came as a pair, were always very involved in club life and many members' first memories are of Roger's friendly welcome.

The Cheltenham July Week was a 'Wheeler Production' for many years and laid down its management structure for subsequent incumbents.

They were very active coaches and Roger wrote a very helpful pamphlet, *Bisque Taking for Beginners*, which the Club still uses. He also had a great supporting role in the club's kitchen as Dab was producing amazing food for players.

Roger, although sometimes vociferous during tournament management ('Why

was everyone so incapable of reading the simplest of instructions'), was really quite a reserved and an extremely modest gentleman.

Life in recent years was a struggle for Roger and he eventually lost both his legs through illness, but managed incredibly well with prosthetic limbs and crutches. He continued to emanate his usual mild, slightly amused persona whatever his private thoughts. Nevertheless with unstinting support from Dab and village friends he attained a good age and perhaps all croquet players know when it is time to run rover.

Roger had left instructions with the Club Secretary many years previously as to what should happen, and, just as importantly what should not happen, after his death.

He was adamant that there was to be no religious funeral, so there wasn't, but he was equally insistent that his friends should have a jolly good wake at the Club, so there was. As well as the many club members present, croquet players from around the country also attended along with folk from his village, Trinity College and, amazingly, several of his ex-rowing colleagues from Hull.

**Eileen Magee, Cheltenham CC**

**D**avid Drazin, who died on 1 May at the age of 82, is not widely known to croquet players. Nevertheless he is one of the game's great benefactors – in the shape of his magnificent 500-page book *CROQUET: a Bibliography* (2000).

Its entries are arranged chronologically from 1853 to 1997, and most of the books, pamphlets and patents had been inspected personally. He continued work on a second edition (2004), and a third (2009) which includes numerous colour illustrations. Both are unpublished, but the intention to publish the enhanced edition on CD led his publishers to remainder the first edition, so this is your chance to obtain a copy.

During research for the *Bibliography* he had amassed and recorded an extensive collection of croquet books and ephemera, which he donated to the University of British Columbia on its completion. The David and Anne Drazin

## David Drazin

1931 - 2014



Croquet Collection sits beside other sports collections.

He willingly shared the knowledge he had built up, most obviously with Croquet World Online and the Croquet Gazette, but also with enquirers seeking guidance. He assisted the CA in publishing its centenary booklet, and arranging the related exhibition at Wimbledon. The 1997 reprint,

with the CA, of Horace Crowther Smith's *The Best Ten of 1925* is another major landmark.

David learned croquet at Oxford, where he completed a DPhil in experimental psychology. His career began at the Institute of Aviation Medicine, and continued in consumer market research.

Having bought a house with a large garden toward the end of his career, he made and cared for his own croquet lawn, and resumed playing and improved his game until his wife's death in 2010, and his own decline in health.

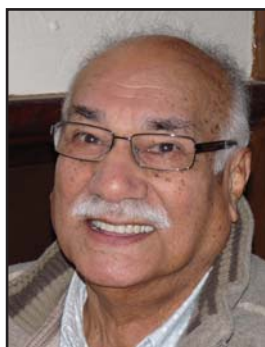
He was a member of the Harrow Oak Club in the 1980s and, from 1992, Watford (Cassiobury) where he became a popular Croquet Captain, and later an Honorary Member. The croquet community will be the poorer for the absence of a civilised companion who has enlarged our knowledge of the game.

**Ray Hall, Sussex County CC**



## Cliff Cardis

1927 - 2014



**C**liff Cardis was well known in croquet circles both in and outside his local club at Swindon.

He was born in Nilgiris in India and came to Britain after India attained self-rule.

Although he had good qualifications in India these were not accepted in the UK so he retrained at King's College London and Swindon College, where his teacher was so impressed with him that he persuaded Cliff to go into teaching and he became a lecturer at Swindon College.

Cliff joined Swindon Croquet Club when it had only been in existence for a couple of years, and became a stalwart member.

He volunteered to take on the position of secretary, which he held for twenty years and also became a coach for Association Croquet – he had no liking for Golf Croquet!

He carried the club through many turbulent times and through the move from the one-lawn site at Lydiard Park to the two-lawn facility at Moredon Playing Fields.

He made many good friends at Cheltenham CC, took part annually in their tournaments and on one occasion he wrote

a poem on a memorable win against his friend and opponent Les Kershaw. He was a great poet and he completed a book which he sold in aid of Great Ormond Street Hospital; only last year, after a stay in Prospect Hospice, he wrote for the staff.

However, Cliff's great love was music. He had a very deep bass voice, was a fine pianist and choir master. He played the organ for his local church and was always most annoyed if a league match was arranged for a Sunday.

He was proud of another croquet achievement that came about when Jeff Twentyman from BBC Points West asked to meet him at the Manor Hotel in Castle Coomb to explain croquet, when during filming, he demonstrated a jump shot which came off perfectly!

Cliff was always keen to make sure that hoops were set firmly and correctly and that they were withdrawn using a lifter to ensure that the holes were not damaged. He made both a gauge and lifter for the club.

Cliff was always willing to share his skills with new players and encouraged them with innumerable little sayings like 'A good pioneer is worth a bisque!' and 'Never put your balls together if your opponent has his together' and many others. He was not shy to winkle out a high handicap player for a game where he shared some of his experience to feed the newer player's enthusiasm for the sport.

He died after a four-year battle with cancer, and leaves a wife, Marie, son Kim and daughter Dawn, and many happy memories.

**Mary Bedells, Swindon CC**

## Dennis Capel

1917 - 2013

**D**ennis Capel was one of the founder members of Swindon Croquet Club some 28 years ago.

He was a very active member up until about seven years ago, when he moved into a care home as he was confined to a wheelchair, but he remained a life member and took a keen interest in the club's events.

He represented the club in the Intermediate League, and always took part in club tournaments, winning the social Elton Cup in 2002. But his handicap never changed! When asked what it was, he always said 14, irrespective of how many

games he had lost or won.

Dennis's career was in catering and grocery, and he was always talking of his favourite dish of lemon chicken. In the war he served with the Desert Rats in North Africa and up through Italy.

Even in his later years, when the club ran fun games of golf croquet at the local carnival, he persuaded his daughter and son-in-law to bring him along in his wheelchair so that he could relive old times.

**Mary Bedells, Swindon CC**

## Coaching Column

by Roger Staples

**M**uch has happened already this season. The role of Examining Coach has been successfully introduced and such qualified individuals are geographically well situated. Your Federation Coaching Officer can help you to find an Examining Coach in your area.

### Coaches who have been appointed to the roll of Examining Coach:

Christine Irwin, Colin Irwin, Frances Low, David G A Nicholson, Daphne Gaitley, Ailsa Lines, Ros Key-Pugh, Ian Plummer, Don Williamson, Ian Burrige, James Hawkins, Dave Kibble, Paul Rigge, Roger Staples, Jonathan Isaacs, Michael Hague, Ken Cooper and Cliff Jones.

~

The Croquet Academy, which is based at Sussex County CC at Southwick near Brighton, has run a number of very successful courses, resulting in some outstanding candidates who have achieved their coaching awards.

Congratulations to the following CA members:

### Club Coach (Yellow)

Brian Wilson (Camerton & Peasedown), David Owen (Lansdown), Elizabeth McKenzie-Gray (Woking), Jon Diamond (Tunbridge Wells) and Ian Cowie (Lansdown)

### Golf Coach (White)

Mary Moore (Norwich), David Crawford (Mid Suffolk), Jon Diamond (Tunbridge Wells), Lilian Holdsworth (Littlehampton), Paul Francis (Bath), John Bowcott (Hurlingham), Neil Cote (Reigate), Sara Anderson (Woking), Katharine Minchin (Rother Valley), Ian Shore and Don Rutherford (High Wycombe), Clive Hayton, Jonathan Isaacs and Christine Merrington (all Sussex County)

### Grade 1 Association (Blue)

Elizabeth McKenzie-Gray, (Woking), Paul Francis (Bath), John Bowcott (Hurlingham), Paul Wolff (Blewbury), Neil Cote (Reigate), Richard Waterman (Maldon), David Warhurst (High Wycombe), Sara Anderson and Annabel McDiarmid (Woking), Luc Berthouze and Clive Hayton (Sussex Co.)

### Grade 2 Association (Green)

Alex Jardine (Medway)

**Roger Staples**

**Coaching Committee Chairman**

# Swindon secure over £40k funding - for the second time!

**Swindon Croquet Club has secured yet more Olympic legacy funding from Sport England's Inspired Facilities Fund.**

The Inspired Facilities fund is part of the £135 million Places People Play legacy programme that is bringing the magic of a home Olympic and Paralympic Games into communities across the country.

Every sports facility that receives funding will carry the London 2012 Inspire mark – celebrating the link to the Games.

**The Croquet Club has secured another £49,478 of National Lottery Funding to securely fence in and re-lay their courts to tournament quality.**

Last year the club received an award which provided a new club room and better facilities for its members and the many community groups it supports. The facilities proved so popular that often all the lawns were in multiple use and it was difficult to fit in the groups wanting to come and play.

Consequently the club achieved its four year target for usage in just one year and this prompted Sport England to allow them

to make another application.

Sport England were so impressed with the quality of the application prepared by the Club and with the wealth of detail they provided, that they decided to take the most unusual step of giving a second grant.

This will enable the club to keep the lawns in good condition, protected from the dog walkers, cyclists, golfers, footballers, cricketers and even campers who occasionally misuse them!

Swindon CC has welcomed people from many different groups to its lawns, including the disabled, the blind and partially sighted, the bereaved, stroke survivors, and the young and elderly alike



The club has been held up as an example of good practice to other croquet clubs by the CA President, Quiller Barrett, who said "I am delighted that croquet has been

recognised by Sport England and I am sure that this award will enable even more people to enjoy croquet and this marvellous facility".

The club has been recognised locally as two of its members and the Club itself have been short listed for Pride of Swindon Awards.

Justin Tomlinson, MP for North Swindon, is also very supportive of the club.

He said "I am proud to support the work of the Swindon CC which through its fantastic community engagement is a real sporting gem. Working with people of all ages, they

are providing opportunities to get active, get involved and get a huge amount of enjoyment. The Club is a real credit to its sport and to our local community".

Many more communities are now set to benefit from the hugely popular fund, after Sport England announced that it was extending Inspired Facilities until 2017

There will be additional £40 million of National Lottery funding to invest.

You can find out more at [www.sportengland.org/inspiredfacilities](http://www.sportengland.org/inspiredfacilities).

**Mary Bedells  
Swindon C C**



# Lodsworth marks grand

Lodsworth can now formally claim to have added a croquet lawn to its impressive range of sports facilities and marked the occasion with an opening ceremony in early May.

The afternoon was not without its drama in West Sussex when, half an hour before the start, a violent gust of wind wiped out one of the refreshment tents!

The wind did abate and the sun broke through just as proceedings were set off by the Club Chairman, Alistair Proctor.

Alistair began by explaining the romance of first ideas for a croquet lawn being spawned, a couple of years ago, when he was walking the gardens of nearby Woolbeding House with its own beautiful croquet lawn.

From there the idea has taken form despite many challenges over the ensuing years to present us with the green sward now laid before us much tended by our professional greenkeeper.

None of this, he was keen to point out, could possibly have been realised without the substantial financial assistance of our local County and District Councils as well as from the Croquet Association itself, all of whom were represented.

Much gratitude was extended also to local committees within the village and for the most generous contributions made by individual members.

In response, Karen Brooks-Fisher recorded an appreciation for all the work carried out by members of the Croquet Club committee exhibiting, in her terms, the typical spirit of Lodsworth!

Alistair then introduced a true luminary of the sport, Stephen Mulliner, who has won countless trophies at national and international level and who only last year was elected as the Secretary General of the World Croquet Federation.



CA Archivist Chris Williams found this little gem: Jarvis Kenrick, Secretary of the CA from 1904 to 1909, was the first player to score a goal in the FA Cup and was in the winning team three times. He also played one first-class cricket match for Surrey and lived to the age of 97.

## h's prayer opening day

The Club has already been most fortunate in having had Stephen's overall guidance and advice as indeed it has from the Rother Valley CC at Duncton. After a few kind words about the Lodsworth Club's



achievement Stephen gave way to the Rev Derek Welsman who, as Club President, offered a delightfully appropriate prayer before declaring the lawn open by cutting a ribbon and striking the first drive across the grass. This then enabled Stephen to

return and entertain us with an intriguing and practical introduction to the lines and play of Association Croquet.

Thus encouraged, the members could themselves take their turn and set up a couple of games just as rain returned for the evening. So many people indicated their appreciation of the prayer prepared by Derek Welsman at the Ceremony, that it does not seem out of place to repeat it here



for the benefit of those who were not present:

In the spirit of fun,  
friendship and gentle  
competition  
We pray for God's  
blessing upon our  
lawn,  
Upon our members  
and friends,  
And especially upon  
the British weather.

May this be a place that builds friendships,  
Enhances our village life, and fosters the  
skills and practices of golf croquet!  
So let us play, swinging gently between our  
legs, with the sound of hammer upon ball,  
In one of the most beautiful spots in all  
England.  
God bless this Club!  
God bless Lodsworth!  
Amen

**Alistair P`roctor**  
**Lodsworth CC**

## Searching for an 'Elite Hoop'

**T**he CA's Equipment Committee tests and specifies the characteristics of hoops and balls and other equipment for use in tournament play in England.

We also manage the international approval of balls on behalf of the World Croquet Federation, and contribute to the development of WCF equipment specifications.

Over the past few years we have been attempting to find the factors that would produce a more challenging hoop for very top class AC play – an Elite Hoop, if you will.

When the ground is baked dry and hard by the sun, conditions are already challenging enough to make matches even between the best AC players more interactive, as errors are punished and breaks crumble. The problem has been that in too many seasons, periods of rain make conditions rather too easy, and matches can become one-sided.

Even hoops set to tiny gaps in new hoop holes can still be run with ease when the ground is wet. So the goal has been to find a more challenging hoop for top-class AC events, when set in typical damp UK soil.

Let me say very clearly at this point:  
**The Equipment Committee continues to recommend the Hopewell and Aldridge hoops, available from the CA Shop, for normal club and tournament use.**

We are not proposing that clubs re-equip with a more difficult hoop for regular club and tournament use. It is only a handful of top AC events a year for which a more challenging hoop is sought.

This year's hoop tests – continuing those started in March 2013 – sought to tease apart the different factors that affect the 'runnability' of a hoop when set in damp UK soil.

We used two kinds of test: measuring the maximum angle from which a hoop could be successfully run, and measuring how tolerant the hoops were of straight hoop strokes played off-centre (in other words, bad shots).

It was found:

(1) Square carrots ('parsnips') and long cylindrical carrots both perform better

than a traditional hoop shape. Fins were no better than normal carrots.

(2) A more massive crown makes some hoop designs more difficult to run

(3) Grippy uprights have the most significant effect on 'runnability'.

This last factor is interesting.

We have shown that painted and powder-coated uprights are much more "slippery" than bare (stainless) steel and make hoops easier to run.

Powder coating can be like Teflon™ - no wonder they seem like 'non-stick' hoops!

Moreover, we have found in some early experiments that making the uprights even grippier still – by rubber coating or knurling a pattern into the metal – make the hoop significantly more difficult to run.

However, the rubber coating soon wore through in our tests and the knurling damaged the surface of the balls.

We are now planning further experiments using polyurethane sleeving; being similar material to the balls, it is hoped this will be effective but long-lasting.

Alongside the tests looking at these individual factors, we also tested an Egyptian GC hoop, an Atkins Quadway (NZ) and an Oakley 4-fin (Canada). The Oakley performed surprisingly like a traditional UK hoop, despite its very different construction.

The Atkins was found to be more difficult to run from an angle (by about 5 degrees), as was the Egyptian hoop.

The test hoops with rubber coating or knurling were more difficult by a further 10 degrees. The Atkins and Egyptian hoops weren't noticeably better at resisting inaccurate straight hoop strokes.

In fact, most hoops were fairly similar in performance on this test – apart from the knurled and rubber-coated uprights of our experimental hoop, which proved far less accepting of poor strokes.

We now intend to pursue these experiments with grippy uprights further, to see if we can produce a genuine Elite Hoop.

I will report back later in the year on our findings.

**Martin French**  
**CA Equipment Committee**

Hoops, from left: (1) Oakley 4-fin (2) "Hopewell on Steroids" (3) Aldridge (standard championship hoop, 3 11/16", our reference hoop) (4) Aldridge prototype with square "parsnips" (5) Egyptian GC hoop (6) Dave Trimmer's test hoop for grippy uprights (7) Atkins Quadway





# Shake up for The GC English National Singles Championship (Ascot Cup) 2015

John Bowcott introduces the changes to the qualification process



The CA wants to encourage a fixture calendar that meets the needs of the membership. It also wants that membership to grow in size and in playing ability.

This means the right opportunities, in the right quantities for players of differing aspirations.

By and large this has driven the increase in GC tournaments at all levels in recent years, and the result has been more play and in particular more competitive play.

This has had a positive effect but the GC Tournament Committee is concerned that this is less true at the very highest level.

We observe that the increased opportunities to qualify for the Ascot Cup have not resulted in more truly competitive events and we plan to redress this.

We think that the CA needs to provide a structure within which a 'top player' can plan not only the current season but perhaps a career that will maximise their potential.

For every home-based aspiring international GC player, the English National Singles Championship (ENSC) - for the Ascot Cup - has an obvious attraction.

These players are competitive and want the greatest challenges, and such a challenge comes from the best players fighting to qualify and then fighting again

## For 2015

- The winner of the GC Open Championship will **not** qualify for the ENSC as a consequence of this alone
- The Musk's Cup will **not** count as a qualifying event as it has in the past.
- The concept of 'Ascot points' for 2nd, 3rd and 4th place in nominated tournaments will be discontinued.
- There will be 8 events named as qualifying tournaments and these will be reviewed on a regular basis.
- Both finalists in each of these tournaments will qualify automatically for the ENSC.
- Losing semi-finalists in each event will form a pool, from which players will be offered any available places in a sequence that reflects the GC rankings.
- If further spaces remain available these too will be offered on the basis of the rankings.
- For 2015 the tournaments nominated as qualifiers for the ENSC are hosted at:

**Bury, Surbiton, Colchester, Cheltenham, Ramsgate, Ashby, Nottingham and Ripon Spa.**

John Bowcott,  
Chairman GC Tournament Committee

for the Championship.

We believe that reducing the number of qualifying opportunities from 15 to 8 will encourage stiffer competition in those tournaments and consequently for places in the ENSC.

At every stage we anticipate that it will be harder to win and more rewarding to do so. We think that this is what the very best players want.

This has been the over-arching intention behind the changes that we are making for the 2015 season.

We want as many of the best players as possible entering the 'qualifiers', and for that to happen the tournaments must be competitive in every sense.

In choosing the tournaments nominated for 2015 we have been guided by geography and the spread of dates throughout the season.

Whether or not we have selected the most appropriate events remains to be seen, and we will be keeping the situation under attentive review.

At all levels, we need to give the players what they want. The very best national players need a structure that offers them the toughest challenge; we believe that the changes that we are introducing do offer aspiring players a meaningful preparation for international competitions.



## The 'London Masters' GC Tournament

Surbiton Croquet Club is working hard to develop this initiative and the inaugural event will take place on the 16-17 August.

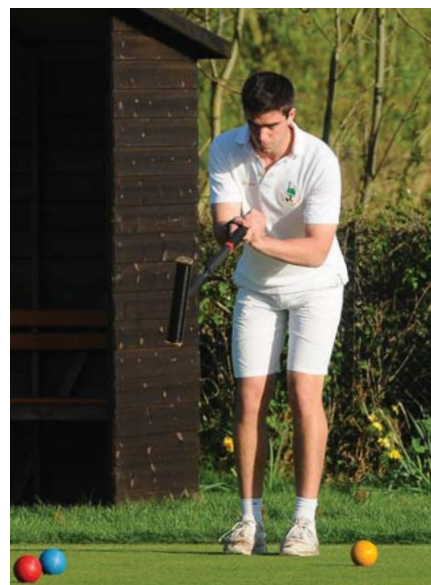
The intention is that fast lawns and firm hoops will make it a popular challenge for top players.

Single-banked play is proposed and two blocks of six will play 'best-of-three' 13-point games, with the final round played off between the block winners. International players are also expected to be drawn to this format in ideal surroundings.

This will be beneficial to our home-grown stars and we consider it an important development. We wish it the best of success.

For further details please see the CA Fixtures Calendar.

**John Bowcott, Chairman GC Tournaments Committee**



# Senior GC Tournaments

A run through of the qualifiers for the English National Singles Championship

## Hoop-God wins the Lancs

James Hopgood became 'Hoop-God up north' when he lifted the 14th Lancashire International GC Open title in April.

Only sixteen players faced Manchester's iffy weather (sun/rain/sun/rain) in this early season encounter, **reports Paul Rigge**, but what a sixteen they were!

A World Champion, couple of Kiwis plus two other internationals from Wales and Scotland, and a CA Council member to augment the field.

The players were split into two 'all play all' blocks for 19 point games, with the top four from each to qualify for the best-of-three 13 point contests on the Sunday.

This worked really well with all games finishing about an hour before twilight on Saturday, although quite a few players admitted to having tired legs the following morning.

Seven of the seeds played true to form and broke out of the blocks, and then the top four duly reached the semis with only top seed Rachel Rowe being forced into a third game on the way.

Hopgood faced New Zealander Paddy Chapman in the final and saw him off in two games with some of his shots surpassing Egypt's finest as he showcased his 'new' technique.

The victory won him a qualification berth for the end of season English National Singles Championship at Hurlingham.

The Consolation Singles title was won by Brian Storey.



## 'The Boy' is Mr Sidmouth again

The 'Boy from Nailsea' Ryan Cabble has a new moniker - 'Mr Sidmouth'!

He notched up his fourth successive victory at the south-coast tournament despite looking right out of contention until fairly late on.

Manager **Helen Prior reports** that the tournament was fully subscribed with 16 players, but only a couple lived locally and the majority had travelled some distance including from Leicester and Dulwich.

At the end of day one, only David Bell had won all his games and, when play resumed for the last round of the block games on the Sunday, with just two to qualify for the best-of-three semis, there was plenty to play for.

Bell duly made the cut, along with Guy Scurfield of Dulwich, William Ormerod of Swanage, and a hugely relieved Cabble who just sneaked in.

Cabble dispatched Ormerod in two straight games, but Bell made Scurfield work that bit harder for his final berth by taking him to a deciding game.

Cabble and Scurfield's final had to be suspended, at one game all, because of a very heavy downpour which included hailstones; however, as soon the court was considered to be fit enough for a resumption, Cabble took the decider 7 - 4.

The losing semi-finalists, Ormerod and Bell, declared themselves joint third with the permission of the manager when their tie was similarly suspended at one game all.

Cabble took the Haste Cup back to its now familiar home, but there was one change to the usual proceedings.

This year it was presented to him by Amanda Haste, a country member of the Sidmouth club, now living in France, who had donated the cup to the club eight years ago.

## Super shot Gee is King at Surbiton

Will Gee booked an place early at the English National Singles Championship (Ascot Cup) with a remarkable display of distance shots on the way to winning this early season opener at Surbiton., **reports Don Beck**.

Only Sweden's Jonatan Andersson could match Gee for style and accuracy throughout the weekend event, with no ball safe if within half a court, and it was no surprise when the pair progressed to contest the final. A full entry of 24 players was impressively strong and included a second Swede, Anders Moldin, the highly-ranked Dulwich based Belgian Pierre Beaudry, and English challengers Howard Cheyne, Lionel Tibble and Harry Dodge.

Don Beck's imaginative format saw two all-play-all blocks of twelve, with the top two from each block contesting best-of-three semis, where their block game was to count as the first game of their semis match.

Gee and Cheyne, who usually performs well in this event, progressed to the semis with little trouble, although there was a notable victory for David Bell who took a top scalp when he beat Gee 7 - 4.

Chris Sheen, having already beaten Beaudry, could not reproduce such form and lost quickly to Andersson, leaving the way open for Lionel Tibble to qualify alongside the Swede.

Gee, with a first game credit from the block, quickly disposed of Cheyne in one semi, while Andersson overcame the loss of the block game to beat Tibble.

In a single 19 point game Tibble secured third place by beating Cheyne 10-8.

The final was a long battle with more accurate play and excellent clearances time and again. Gee, in very good form for April, was made to work hard for his 7-5, 7-5 win.

Congratulations also to Patrick Knight who reduced his handicap from 8 to 7 and enjoyed the experience of his first Open event (*photograph overleaf*).

Photographs, clockwise from top right:  
 (1) Musks Cup holder Harry Dodge  
 (2) Chris Sheen, who has played in every English National Singles Championship (ENSC) to date  
 (3) Lancs. Open winner James Hopgood  
 (4) Players line-up for the Surbiton Open  
 (5) Current ENSC holder Will Gee  
 (6) Regular ENSC qualifier Nick Cheyne

All images by Chris Roberts



## Senior GC Tournaments

### Fulford victorious at East Anglian for sixth time

**R**obert Fulford won the East Anglian Open again – that’s six times in its eleven year existence – *writes Chris Sheen.*

On the first really warm weekend of the year at Colchester, this tournament proved to be another competitive event, with 16 players starting in two blocks.

A Saturday comprising of ten games was exhausting for most, but the block winners and runners-up were still not clear until the final games on the Sunday morning. The first semi-final was won by Pierre Beaudry over an out of sorts Martin French, but the other proved a revelation.



It was between an unbeaten – to that point – Robert Fulford, and Rachael Rowe.

The first game was completely one-sided and Fulford won it 7-0; indeed the second game started with Rowe scoring the first hoop and receiving a supportive round of applause! However she dug in, remembered how

to play and inflicted Fulford’s first game loss. The deciding game started in the same vein and an inspired Rowe, playing excellent croquet, took a 6 - 3 lead.

The crowd assumed it was over, but of course Fulford doesn’t give in, and playing a conservative game fought back, with some hoops being contested for fully 15 minutes, until the game was tied at 6-all.

Rowe had first shot at 13, but her approach just glanced the hoop’s left upright and didn’t quite get a running position. This let Fulford in, and after a concerted exchange he prevailed.

Could the final live up to this excitement? Well the answer was yes! Beaudry had lost two block games to Fulford earlier in the day, but he put this aside and the spectators saw another round of good clearances, and a tight game which Fulford just won 7-6.

The second game was equally close, with Beaudry running seven to ten-yard hoops and putting his opponent under pressure, to which he responded. There were excellent clearances by both players, and eventually Fulford won 7-5; thus he regained the trophy yet again.

*(Presentation by Jane Collier)*

### A happy return to GC for Barnacle at The Wiltshire

**A** two year lay-off from the GC Tournament scene did Dogmersfield’s Roger Barnacle no harm at all, and he arrived back with a vengeance, to win the Wiltshire Open in late May.

Due to the bad weather, this year’s event at Hamptworth was reduced to being a single day affair on the Sunday, *writes Richard Jenkins.*

The semi-final between Simon Carter (Dulwich) and Nick Cheyne (Surbiton) was a very close and hard fought match indeed, with Carter just managing to gain the upper hand in the third game: 7-6, 6-7, 7-4.

This despite an amazing angled ‘dam-buster’ jump shot from Cheyne from level with the centre peg to hoop 6 in the final game.

Barnacle recovered from a very close 7-6 win in his first game of the day against Keith Southern (Swanage), to progress all the way to a semis

match with Richard Brookes (Sussex), which was rather more one-sided, despite Brookes fighting back well, but to no avail.

The final between Barnacle and Carter swung one way then the other throughout the whole match, before the former pulled away in the deciding game: 7-3, 5-7, 7-3.



### All England GC Handicap

**P**articipation numbers look good again for this CA organised competition, which has grown in popularity over the last two seasons. Director Chris Roberts has again arranged a third area final satisfy demand as players vie for places in the 16 man final, to be held this year at Pendle on 20 &

21 September.

Last season’s winner, Peter Balchin (Dyffryn), has already begun playing in unrestricted level play ‘Open’ events, and past title holders Simon Carter (Dulwich), Nick Archer (Watford) and Tobi Savage (Ramsgate), have been regulars on the top stage for some time now.



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## GC B-Level Series

### Seven new events mean a truly national competition

**B**uilding on the success of last season, when some existing B-Level tournaments were grouped together to form the first series of this kind, the idea has blossomed into what now is a truly National Series. The aim was to replicate the series of tournaments that act as qualifiers for the English National Singles Championship (aka: The Ascot Cup).

For the 2015 season there are now no fewer than 18 different tournaments in 'The Series', with new events taking place at Leighton-Linslade, Colchester, Hunstanton, Bury, Middlesbrough, Ashby and Budleigh. There is provision for there to be different winner (and therefore qualifier) emerging from each of the series tournaments, to go forward to the national final at Hamptworth on 11 & 12 October.

It's early days yet in the 2014 Series and a number of strong players from last season's campaign (who still fall within the 3 - 8 designated handicap range) are expected to be prominent again.

Bury and Bowdon's Graham Good, is chief amongst these and Richard Raby from Worcester is another name to watch for.

Camerton and Peasedown CC's tournament regular Colin Britt has recently been joined on the circuit by Patrick Knight, who was brave enough to enter the strong unrestricted Open tournament at Surbiton in April. He enjoyed the experience of playing some of the best players in the country and he did 'scalp' a couple of them too! He is pictured below, in action at Surbiton.



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Michael@croquetmallets.co.uk

## GC round-up

### Vitty wins Women's Open

**F**reda Vitty won a very close Women's GC Championship on the last hoop of the deciding game from Ann Brookes.

A small field of just nine gathered for three days at Ripon Spa in mid-May, so there was plenty of time for two-game rubbers in an all-play-all block arrangement, **reports Helen Lain.**

Four semi-finalists emerged before lunch-time on the Sunday and in single 19-point games Brookes beat Margaret Cowman 10/4 and Vitty squeezed past Jane Pringle 10/9.

The final was best of three 13-point games and Vitty sneaked the title from Brookes 7-4, 5-7, 7-6.

### Littlehampton take SECF title



**L**ittlehampton had a very long wait before they could claim the South-East Federation Handicap League title.

**Michael Holdsworth reports** that 39 Croquet clubs from Kent, West and East Sussex and Surrey entered the 2013 league campaign and a split into two divisions was necessary. Merton emerged with Littlehampton as the two winners but the final play-off to be carried over to this April. The neutral lawns at Southwick saw a close and exciting match, which was tied 3-3 at lunch time, 4-4 soon after and the Littlehampton prevailed and lifted the trophy before claiming the chairs in this photograph.

From the left the victors are: Richard Didcock, Janet Hoptroff, Michael Holdsworth and Chrissie Merrington and behind them stand vanquished Merton: Declan Pritchard, Julie Sheehan, Clare Banyard and Graham Withrington



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# AC World Team Championship 2014 - Tiers 2.1 & 2.2/3

by Stephen Mulliner, Secretary-General, WCF

Photographs by Ray Hall

**T**ier 2.1 of the Association Croquet World Team Championship was played at Carrickmines, near Dublin in mid-May between holders Wales, Ireland, Scotland and South Africa.

In a genuinely thrilling final match, Evan Newell defeated Garry McElwain on time in the deciding game to give Ireland victory over Wales, and outright victory in Tier 2.1 with three Test wins out of three.

Scotland and South Africa went into their match competing to avoid the wooden spoon, and after six matches the teams

were tied at 3-3, but Scotland won the tie-break 2-1 and so were deemed to win the Test 4-3, and thus finished third overall.

The Tier 2.2/3 tournament was held at Sussex County CC, Southwick, near Brighton, more or less at the same time as the action was going on in Ireland.

Seven teams competed, namely Austria, Canada, Czech Republic, Germany, Norway, Sweden and Spain.

The latter, with the youngest team, and headed for five days of the six by Jose Riva, were installed as the starting favourites and

largely justified that status, winning five of their six Tests by 7-3 or more.

However, the Austrians also showed excellent form and took Spain to the wire on the final afternoon.

Spain finally claimed victory against the Tier 3 team by 6-4 and so completed a clean sweep of six Test victories and became the second winners of the Tier 2.2 competition.

Austria, together with Germany and Norway, were also competing for the Tier 3 trophy, and with five wins out of six finished very worthy winners.



Tier 2.2 winners - Spain



Tier 2.1 winners - Ireland



Ireland captain  
Danny Johnson



Tier 3 winners - Austria

I dropped in for a while at the World Team Championships Tier 2.2/3 at Southwick, and it was great to see my club bustling with the buzz of international competition.

The teams in contention seemed to be Spain, Sweden and Austria.

I was hoping to see some good play and meet a few people, which I did, but what will live long in the memory was a display of the finest sportsmanship, not to mention a very exciting match.

Jose Riva (Spain) had attempted a sextuple peel, but with a secondary option of a rover peel and peg-out on his opponent Miroslav Havlik (Czech Republic) if the sextuple wasn't quite happening.

After completing three peels Jose aborted to the insurance option, leaving a three-ball ending.

Miroslav was showing himself to be a dead-eye shot, with single ball shots on the day which were comfortably A-class.

However, it was clear there were a number of tactical situations he was relatively

## Inspirational Sportsmanship

*Dom Nunns reports from Southwick*



Jose Riva and Miroslav Havlik

unfamiliar with, for example forgetting his contact (but hitting the 15-yarder anyway).

As the game approached time, Miroslav was for rover and Jose was for penult and peg; so there was a two-point advantage for the outsider, provisionally ranked around world number 541 to Jose's 67.

Miroslav hit his 40-yard shot at a double target, finishing with a corner cannon in

corner two.

Time was then called. However, it became apparent that Miroslav was unsure what to do with his cannon (*as pictured above*).

Despite the nail-biting nature of the finish, Spain's position in the tournament and the large number of ranking points at stake, Jose appeared to help Miroslav by explaining not only the rules of the cannon situation, but at least two sensible tactical options Miroslav might want to consider.

Miroslav then duly approached rover. Given he was a point ahead, the tactical consensus of the crowd was that he might well have considered dodging the risk-laden five-yard angled hoop he had left himself and run away north, hoping Jose missed a 25-yard roquet.

However, in keeping with the spirit of the match he went for death or glory, ran the hoop and finished.

Congratulations to both players, and here's hoping croquet continues to provide moments like this for many years to come.





## AC Tournaments - Championships

### The Coles Championship

- Grade 2 Championship event -

**Bamford saves the day and wins before dark** - by Manager David Magee

I never cease to be amazed at how much meals influence my demeanour during the management of a croquet tournament.

Of course they are really all one has to look forward to during a day's play and thus provide bright but brief interludes in a day of otherwise unremitting boredom.

But over and above that, they provide pointers as to the progress of a tournament – will games finish before lunch, will games finish too late after tea to allow time to start the next round?

Anyway, Saturday 3 May dawned bright and cheery with no hint of the anxiety that was to come my way over the next three days.

The courts were easy paced, the weather was fair, and I was very relaxed that the 23 competitors would be done by tea time on Monday as usual.

How wrong could I be!

Christian Carter, a newcomer to the tournament, obviously thought that he and Rachel Rowe should take the full benefit of their nine hour time allowance to get to know their lawn. With veteran campaigners David Foulser and Lionel Tibble deciding that they too should enjoy the day with a leisurely lunch and tea and with other matches going to the third game, I was unable to make much progress into the second round, and thus immediately became a half day behind the schedule.

I did not really enjoy my tea and it was a very late supper by the time I got home - oh well, the joys of management.

I thought that day 2 must surely be better and I would still have time to get through the remaining four rounds – wrong!

Foulser emulated his previous day's performance, going to the third game

which he again won +4. At least Carter got a move on and my fingers were crossed that Reg Bamford would help to bring the top half of the draw back on track.

The bottom half continued to cause concern, such that I was severely distracted during lunch and tea by worries as to whether the weather would hold, would the evening stay fair and what time was night due to fall.

Bamford and Ian Lines started their semi-final after tea, followed shortly thereafter by Sarah Burrow and Dominic Nunns starting theirs. I thought neither would have time to finish and I would be in for a late supper again AND an early breakfast as I needed to prepare the courts for a 9am start.

Then of course their match went to the third game, so once again lunch time was spent

wondering about how short I could realistically make time limits for the final.

I cannot remember what I had for lunch and I do not recall having a glass of wine either! But the God of Management does shine on the worthy and, having started shortly before tea, Bamford and Burrow would have plenty of time to finish before dark if I imposed two-hour time limits on each game.

I retired to the tea-room with a relaxed air.

Burrow certainly gave Bamford a scare and hit all her long shots, including one where her ball bounced off the hoop to hit the sextuple leave. She thus arrived at the position of peg and rover versus one and four-back but unfortunately blobbed rover!

Bamford laid-up, Burrow hit again but again blobbed rover.

Bamford again laid-up, Burrow missed and Bamford won +3tp.

In the second game Burrow missed the lift and so Bamford clinically finished 26qp.

And all before 7pm, so I was home in normal time for dinner!



### Western Championship

- Grade 1 Championship event -

**Burch peels to first victory**

Jamie Burch dropped only one game in cruising to his first Western Championship title in early May.

It was a very high class field this year at East Dorset CC, with no less than four of England's recent MacRobertson Shield team locking horns. Burch beat Ailsa Lines and

Jack Wicks in the first two rounds and then scored two triple peels to win his semi-final against England captain Samir Patel, who himself had accounted for Mac team-mate Stephen Mulliner.

In the other half of the draw, Mac

stalwart David Maugham had already notched up two triples and a sextuple in beating William Ormerod and Ed Duckworth before he got pinned back by Gabrielle Higgins's tpo in the first game of his semi. He restored the flow soon after, bagged another tp and a regulation win saw him into the final.

The final its self was awash with a variety of peeling action, and Burch wrapped it up in four games. Scores: Semis - Burch beat Patel +24tp, +5tp; Maugham beat Higgins -8tpo, +17tp, +15; Final – Burch beat Maugham +5tp, +14otp, -12tpo, +18.

*Photos: Left - Reg Bamford (by Ian & Sara Anderson). Right - Jamie Burch (by Graeme & Pamela Roberts). Opposite page bottom - Fast improver Neil Bacon at the Peel Memorials (by Chris Roberts)*

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## The Peel Memorials

**Nottingham members do 'The Double' as Benson helps Morrow to fourth title**

O mied Hallam and Beatrice McGlen made it a host club double victory for Nottingham in the Peels handicap singles events this year, **reports Bob Thomson**

Nelson Morrow achieved something special too, by winning the mixed handicap doubles with fellow Hurlingham member Clare Benson, which made it a total of four wins for Morrow, each time with a different partner!

The Peel Memorials were held at Nottingham for the first time in the memory of any of those present and attracted a good entry, writes manager Bob Thompson. It was blessed with four days of unbroken sunshine, with the beauty of the rhododendrons a distinct contrast to the mess of the tram works on the other side of the road.

Both the womens and mens singles were



run as a flexible Swiss, with the top four players progressing through to a knockout.

In the men's singles event, the most successful four were Graham Good (14, Bury) on 100%, John Bee (7, Watford) 80%, and Nottingham pair Dave Gunn (3) 66% and Omied Hallam (2) 63%. In the semis, Halam ended Good's run, +5, Bee got past Gunn, +10, and then Hallam took the final +13.

After five rounds of the womens event, the qualifiers were Nottingham trio Patricia Duke-Cox (8) who was undefeated, mother and daughter, Beatrice (2) and Sophie McGlen (20) on 80% and Wendy Spencer-Smith (Watford) on 66%.

In the semis, Beatrice beat Sophie +10 and Patricia won +12 against Wendy (16). Beatrice then won the final +19.

Twelve couples of varying experience and handicaps, ranging from some in their first CA tournament and playing with their partner for the first time, to an experienced

pair who have been playing together for over 20 years, competed for the Lady Murray Silver Challenge Cups.

The final was a fitting

game of skill and guile, with Watford pair John Bee and Wendy Spencer-Smith (combined handicap 11) taking and keeping the lead for the majority of the game, before Morrow and Benson (4) clawed back the hoops to win +4.

All competitors sent their best wishes for a speedy recovery to Ashby's Derek Buxton, who was hospitalised after day 2, There was much praise for groundsman Charlie for preparing the lawns and for the members providing catering services.



## AC Tourname

### April

The **Southwick** Advanced Tournament will be remembered as the one where time ran out! Manager **Chris Constable reports** that she was lucky that the finalists Jack Wicks and Martin French were both members of Ipswich and Colchester, so that made organizing the delayed final to be played, as it turned out, at the latter venue, rather easier than it might have been. French later reported that Wicks won +4TPO, lost -13 TP and then wrapped it up with a double peel to win the decider +21 on his fifth turn, after French's TPO failed.

**Ealing's** first ever CA tournament was healthily over-subscribed and attracted a high class of entry. Of the thirteen players, six had played in last year's World Championships, which is far from 'not bad,' as **Alain Giraud reports**. The best (sic) of the weekend had to be Duncan Reeve 'completing' a triple, only to be told by his opponent that he shouldn't remove the peelee from the lawn as it had started the turn on 3-back. Ouch! By mid-afternoon on the Sunday, Nick Mounfield, Gabrielle Higgins and Alain Giraud were tied on wins, and as a 'who beat whom' was not applicable, the result was determined by a two-ball break decider which Higgins won convincingly with an 11-hoop break and claimed the Polhill Claret Jug as her prize.

Matt Holmes beat Dave Nick to win **Southport's** Advanced Tournament and manager **James Hawkins reports** that he did well to win the plate event, but found organisation of the weekend much more challenging. Both best-of-three semi-finals were scrappy and drawn-out affairs, and went against seeding. That forced the final back to a single game format.

More remarkable than the main event,

Peels photographs by Chris Roberts, from top:

- (1) Womens and Mens Singles winners, Beatrice McGlen and Omied Hallam.
- (2) Fellow Nottingham member David Gunn and his club's beautiful rhododendrons.
- (3) The runner-ups: John Bee (both the Mens Singles and the Mixed Doubles) with partner Wendy-Spencer-Smith and (right) Patrica Duke-Cox (Womens Singles).
- (4) Nelson Morrow and Clare Benson enjoy their doubles victory.



# nts - round-up



perhaps, was the achievement of Jerry Guest. His game against Ray Lowe meant that he sat on the brink of a milestone, needing just one more unique opponent to notch up 750 different oppos since the ranking system began.

He almost certainly will have achieved that by Gazette publishing time and so congratulations will (very likely) be due.

Woking scratch player Nick Harvey (*top photo*) won the **Surbiton** Easter Handicap, beating Bygrave's James Hopgood (-2) +26 in the deciding game of the Swiss. Before the final Hopgood had been in the lead on 5/6 with Harvey, the best of the field on 4/5, having earned his place in the final courtesy of a better bisque-adjusted net hoop count calculated by manager and **reporter Samir Patel**. This was in fact the sixth and last criterion on the manager's instructions and Harvey got the nod from Woking club-mate Jeff Dawson (-1.5) by 6.5 hoops.



Close though his qualification was, the final turned out to be a one-sided affair with Harvey making effective use of the first of his two bisques to set up his first break and the second to create a tea-lady leave, which James missed.

Hurlingham member Sudy Harrison (20) (*second top photo*), playing in her first tournament, finished unbeaten on four wins.

That was an insufficient number of games to win the event but she did achieve a bronze merit award and congratulations to her.

Jamie Burch was unbeaten and unbeatable in this year's Easter Open at **Surbiton**, **writes Kevin Carter**. He was the best shot by some margin and once in, never broke down - a simple formula that saw him victorious over all the usual suspects: Keith Aiton, Mark Avery, Jeff Dawson, James Hopgood, Samir Patel, etc. By Monday lunchtime he had assured himself of the trophy, even if he were to lose his last game (which he didn't).



There were 31 triple-peels (including Dawson's seven and Burch's five) and three sextuples (two by Aiton and one from Avery). Jarrod Coutts was welcomed from New Zealand and he enjoyed the number of games on offer and completed nine. Now he needs to



work on winning more of them. . .

**Pendle and Craven** CC laid on four days of fine, dry and mainly warm weather for their John Beech Memorial Easter Tournament. **Paul Rigge reports** that the main handicap event was won by local man Roger Schofield (2) ahead of Fylde's Lee Hartley (- 0.5) (*bottom two photos*) and Andy Brandwood (4.5) from Bury. In the Advanced 'all play all' block, net points finally broke the stalemate in Hartley's favour, Joe Lennon won the high handicap trophy for the 10 plus players and Hartley completed his good event with the low handicappers version.

Jeff Dawson continued his good early-season form to win the **Letchworth** 14-point Advanced event with an unblemished record. The single-day event saw nine players, in the handicap range -1.5 to 2, complete 28 games in around eight hours. Rather surprisingly, **says Nick Mounfield**, with 80 minute time limits having been applied, only four games went to time.

## May

The **East Anglian Croquet Federation** run an annual tournament for players who are champions at the Federation's member clubs' internal competitions. This year's event was hosted at **Hunstanton** in early May. **Terrey Sparks reports** that undefeated Simon Hathrell from Watford won the Advanced event, and Wrest Park's Tim Brewer turned the same trick to take the 'B' Level Advanced title. The EACF also run a handicap event along the same lines, and this was won by David Mathews of Letchworth.

This tournament was first introduced in 2002 when Terrey Sparks was chairman of the EACF, he has run it ever since then and in 2012 introduced of a mirror event for Golf Croquet. **Chris Roberts writes** that he got to learn of this EACF initiative and, wearing his **Southern Croquet Federation** chairman's hat, he blatantly pinched the idea and sold it to his SCF committee. Through the good work of Martin Brandt, Frances Colman and Richard Jenkins, copy AC and GC handicap events were given life at **Hamptworth** under the SCF banner at the end of 2013. Roger Barnacle recorded the first ever external tournament win for a player representing Dogmersfield in the AC, and Hamptworth's Jenkins himself took the GC title. They say that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, and the SCF say thank you to the EACF for a great idea!

**Elaine Marsh reports** that **Budleigh's**

week-long May tournament was very well-supported with visitors from Cheltenham, Nailsea, Bristol, Wells, Hamptworth, Bowdon, Nottingham and Ealing joining 26 locals from Sidmouth and Budleigh in the field of 42. All the events were completed without a hitch thanks to Julie Horsley's customary and unobtrusive managerial efficiency. Philip Harris (Sidmouth) and Martin Yates (Budleigh) won the doubles, Bob Burnett (Crake Valley) overcame the eight bisque advantage held by Sidmouth's Peter Hills to win the handicap.

The main interest for most players was in the class singles in which Dave Mundy (Cheltenham) (*centre photo*) successfully defend the 'A' Class and in each of the other three classes there was a clean sweep with one player winning all of their games. Nigel Amos (Lansdown) saw off all of his B Class competitors, Harry Midgley (Phyllis Court and Budleigh) won the C and Sam Watts, the D.

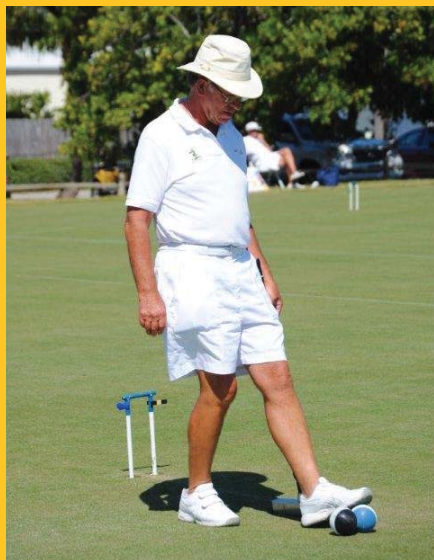
Cliff Jones won the **Isle of Wight** Championship Bowl, exactly twenty years after his last victory in the principal event in the Croquet and Walking Festival at **Ryde reports Richard Harris** who won the Mary Robinson Challenge Shield event for the third time.

Shock! Horror! - Unknown Aussie beats Fulford +26! - Bill Humphreys beat Fulford at the **Colchester** B-Level. Susan Fulford, that is, **reveals Colin Hemming**. She was filling in to replace a late withdrawal, and playing her first ever level-play singles match. Watch out, she will get much better. One star of the show was New Zealander Jarrod Coutts, currently living in England, who set the courts alight by playing A-class croquet off a B-class handicap. But his star was eclipsed, by old stager Terry Mahoney, playing only as many matches as he needed to, but making sure he won all of them.

Home player Frances Ransom (4) won the Latham Cup at the **Bristol** CA Handicap thanks to some good fortune in the final, **reports Bob Scott**. She beat last year's winner Caroline Denny (8) from the Bear of Rodborough, who hung on to her final bisque right up to the last minute of the final, only to get wired from the nearest ball.

Barry Keen played with the joint highest handicap at the **Pendle & Craven** B-Level Advanced, and earned a handicap drop from 7 to 4.5, **reports Fergus McInnes**.

Jeff Dawson was undefeated in the top class at the **Hurlingham**. The host's Alan Chance won class 2, Nottingham's David Gunn the 3, and Hurlingham's Hugh Carlisle, a strong class 4.



## Hot in Florida!

Two Sussex County C C members, **Alan Cottle** and **Avril Rangoni Machiavelli**, had a successful March and April in Venice, Florida. Cottle won the Boca Grande Six Wicket Invitational in grand style.

He played nine matches, won all nine, 26-ing no fewer than six times, a feat unheard of in 75-minute six wicket games.

Two weeks later, Cottle partnered Rangoni Machiavelli in the Florida Regional Six Wicket Doubles. In spite of being the highest handicapped pair in this level play event, they won the Championship Flight title, winning all their block games and then triumphed in the final.



There is a huge croquet tie-up with local schools planned by Nottingham CC this summer.

It will all have started by the time you read this issue of the Gazette, for as the presses were rolling, the club was due to be hosting a coaching afternoon for Oakham School Croquet Club.

Newly appointed International Performance Director and former Mac player Ian BurrIDGE, who also coaches the CA's Development Squad, was due lead the coaching day.

And that is just the tip of the iceberg, for there is a good list of other schools activity

## Nottingham's schools tie-up

by David Brydon

happening with the Nottingham club as the hub.

At Nottingham High School a group of sixth formers are running lunch-time croquet for younger boys, assisted by members, at Nottingham Club.

And there are three 15-year-old girls from Nottingham Girls' High School who, having chosen croquet for the physical activity

section of their Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award, have started a series of regular visits to the club.

There will be to 110 girls at NGHS who will experience a taste of croquet on 24 June as part of National School Sport Week.

And Nottingham Club members are also taking our sport to taster days at Bramcote School on 20 June and George Spencer Academy on 25 June.

Finally, on 4 July, Dave Gunn and a team from the club will be demonstrating croquet at the City of Nottingham School Games summer event at Highfields.

## AC Doubles Bisque Calculations - examples

Further to the announcement in the last Gazette about the change to bisque calculations for AC doubles games, a helpful article was published on the AC website.

Gazette editor Chris Roberts thought it worth reproducing here, especially as a practical example is included.

### Changes for the 2014 Season

The trial changes for doubles introduced as an optional format for 2013 have been retained for 2014 however the trial is now compulsory for all games played in events listed in the CA Fixtures Book. You are encouraged to use this format in all handicap games at both Federation and Club level as well.

Previously, doubles handicaps were calculated by adding the handicaps of the two players and dividing by two, which favours pairings where one player has a very

low handicap and the other has a high handicap. To counter this, the new format totals the trigger index of each player's handicap, divides that by two and uses it as a trigger point to look-up the combined handicap. This produces the same result as before if players have fairly similar handicaps.

To simplify the calculations, please refer to the handicap doubles calculator table (on the CA website).

The Oxford Croquet site ([www.oxfordcroquet.com/manage/d-handicap/hathrell.asp](http://www.oxfordcroquet.com/manage/d-handicap/hathrell.asp)) has a couple of useful printable look-up tables too.

An example

Bob and Lucinda have handicaps of -1 and 20 while Henry and Polly have handicaps of 10 and 14.

Under the old system their doubles handicaps would have been  $(19/2) = 9.5$  and  $(24/2) = 12$  respectively.

Under the new system for Bob and Lucinda their trigger points are 2250 and 950 giving a total of 3200, divided by two becomes 1600, giving a combined handicap of 4.

And for Henry and Polly the trigger points for their handicaps are 1250 and 1100 respectively, giving a total of 2350, divided by two this becomes 1175, giving a combined handicap of 12.

To summarise: under the old system Henry and Polly would have had 2.5 bisques, whereas under the new system they get 8.

### Your feedback please

The handicapping committee would like to hear your experiences of this trial, as it wishes to make the change permanent from 2015. Please e-mail your observations to the **Brian Shorney, Chairman of the Handicap Committee.**

## Is Mallet Sharing Hygienic? Oxford Swamped!

Recruitment is often a problem cited by croquet clubs but it's the last thing that Oxford University Croquet Club have to worry about, **writes Dr Ian Plummer.**

The Trinity (summer) term saw the club offer free coaching to all-comers twice a week at their courts in the University Parks.

Students hope to pick up tips and techniques to propel their college teams through the much hyped 'Croquet Cuppers' (inter-collegiate) competition and,



at the first coaching session, the lawns were mobbed by 120 eager students!

Coaching was orchestrated by Dr Ian Plummer, and equipment shortages led to mallet sharing and balls were scarce too.

The 'Cuppers' continues to attract many novice players to the sport and this year 484 teams of four have entered (that's 1936 players!) with one college

entering forty teams! The competition is played to Association Croquet Laws with dispensations for the size, shape and obstacles on the college croquet lawns.

For example, do you place a ball a mallet head's length in from the drain cover?

Those interested in the progress of the

various colleges can see the draw at <http://www.oxfordcroquet.com/oucc/>

The main Oxford team started their season with a delightful pre-term friendly against the

Surbiton Croquet Club which was marked by fast lawns, excellent food, great hospitality and free beer!

The teams reached a satisfactory draw.

The Oxford club benefits from its experienced players who include Harry Fisher, the current President, who played at the World Championships last year, and a kernel of experienced committee members.

## New Womens Coaching Group

Gabrielle Higgins has agreed to coordinate a Women's Coaching Group. This will be aimed at encouraging participation in and improving performance at the 2015 Women's AC World Championship to be held at Nottingham at the end of July next year.

A coaching day (details to be confirmed) will be held later this season for any interested female players with some experience of playing advanced rules.



Additional activities for those selected to play in the event will be arranged next season.

Further details will be announced shortly but anyone wishing to register their interest can do so to [gabrielle.higgins@gmail.com](mailto:gabrielle.higgins@gmail.com)

**Ian Burridge**

**International Performance Director**

## Lawn Care by Duncan Hector

### Summer maintenance matters

It is easy to scorch grass if the wrong type of **fertiliser** is applied. It is always best to use a low salt index fertiliser, and apply late in the day, leaving it overnight before playing on the lawn.

There is no point in applying granular fertiliser unless you can water it in, or if rain is expected within a couple of days.

If applying liquid fertiliser, it is best to spray at a cool time of day. It will be absorbed into the plant within an hour or so, and have an immediately beneficial effect. Nevertheless it is still beneficial to apply before rain, or water-in if possible.

**Growth Regulator** can usually be tank-mixed with a liquid fertiliser. Never apply fertilisers, growth regulator or weed killer if the grass is stressed. **Aeration** should carry on monthly through the summer, but if the ground gets very hard it may be impossible. Aeration helps to reduce compaction, and make pathways for air and moisture to reach the root zone.

Now is the time to **plan your autumn maintenance** so that it can be fitted into your playing schedule. Top dressing requires 4 to 5 tonnes per lawn. It is available in 25kg bags, dumpy bags or loose on a tipper lorry. I strongly recommend the use of sand with no loam, unless the top dressing is for levelling purposes. Loose should cost around £50 per tonne, but the price will depend on how far you are from the quarry, and how much you order. Never use builder's sharp sand. Buy from a specialist top dressing supplier.

For over-seeding I recommend **Barenbrug Extreme dwarf rye grass** which has proved to be excellent for croquet lawns

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# AC Inter-Counties Tournament

by Sue Mackay

## Division One

(WINS: matches / games)

<b>Glamorgan</b>	8	21
Surrey	7	18
Somerset	6	20
Cheshire	6	19
Nottingham.	6	16
Suffolk	5	16
Gloucester.	5	13
Hertfordshire	5	12
Channel Is.	4	13
Lancashire	3	10
Yorkshire	0	7



## Division Two

(WINS: matches / games)

<b>Middlesex</b>	10	28
Oxon / Berks	9	24
Sussex	6	16
Essex	5	17
Bedfordshire	5	16
Kent	5	13
Warwickshire	4	12
Hampshire *	4	12
Dorset	3	10
Shropshire	3	9
Wiltshire *	3	5

(\*match not played)

**T**here is a new name on the Inter Counties Cup - Glamorgan emerged as winners of the 100th Championship.

This was their first ever title, and achieved through eight match wins.

Their team (pictured above and named in the caption box) was the strongest they had ever been able to field, and four of their victories were 3-0.

Surrey ended as runners-up with seven wins, and were undefeated until they lost to Glamorgan at Compton on Day 3.

Double banked with this match was a re-enactment of the Wars of the Roses, with Lancashire emerging triumphant with their first match win.

Flushed with this success they then went on to do Glamorgan a huge favour in the next match by beating Surrey.

### Disastrous second day

This was just as well, because Glamorgan had had a disastrous second day, losing to Suffolk and Somerset, so they and Surrey started the final day at Southwick tied with two losses each.

Suffolk and Hertfordshire had fallen away after strong starts, with weakened



squads on the second two days, and the only team that could catch Glamorgan or Surrey for the Championship were holders Nottinghamshire. They had rallied from a dreadful start, but with a bye at the beginning of the final day, it seemed unlikely they would retain the trophy.

Glamorgan's first match of that final day was against Gloucestershire, and their top pair lost quickly to David Foulser and Dave Kibble, only for the Welshmen's Williams and McElwain to soon equalize.

So, the third pairing game was tense, and all the more so when Smith failed to peg out the front ball. However, after several attempts, Burridge finally hit the peg from corner 1 with a satisfying thwack.

### It all came down to the final match

Surrey had thrashed Hertfordshire, so it all came down to the final match, although the odds were on Glamorgan because they had a superior game wins tally.

In the event when Paul Smith pegged out to give Gloucestershire a 2-0 lead over Surrey, the championship was assured for Glamorgan.

They had won their first game quite easily in the final match against Hertfordshire, but seemed to be doing their best to throw away the other two games.

But with the pressure off, they salvaged both games to win 3-0, thus taking the championship outright, with one more match win than Surrey.

Gloucestershire's heroic win against

Surrey not only sealed the championship for Glamorgan but also safeguarded their own place in the top flight, at the expense of the Channel Islands. Also relegated were Lancashire and Yorkshire.

### Middlesex win division two

In the second division, Middlesex swept all before them. Their team (pictured below and named in the caption box) won all 10 matches, and their 28 game wins was the highest total ever recorded at the Counties.

Indeed until Essex took a game off them in the final match, their only loss had been to concede one game to Wiltshire, who won the wooden spoon with no match wins at all!

Parish had an easier win than he might have expected to clinch their tenth victory.

He was playing with Eugene Chang at third pairing, against Robert and Susan Fulford, and the former did a qpo on Chang and peeled Susan through a couple of hoops to boot, only then to concede a contact and a four-ball break to finish, when he hit Parish's ball onto the peg instead of Chang's - a first for Fulford that he wouldn't want in the record book!

Berks/Oxon were runners-up in the second division, their only loss being to Middlesex.

But competition for the third promotion place was a little stronger, until in the end Sussex prevailed with six wins and will also play in the first division next season.

~



## Also seen and heard

It was good to see more women than usual taking part and the future looks good too. Paddy and Miranda Chapman were always paired with each other for Nottinghamshire so that ten-month-old Oliver could look on.

He was not the youngest spectator, however, as six-week-old Alex Evans, sporting a Babygro emblazoned with the words "Future Croquet Player", slept through most of the proceedings.

Had he been awake, he might have got a bit alarmed when dad Marcus started a match on the final day with Alex strapped to his front in a baby carrier, which looked a bit dodgy when rolls were attempted!

Jose Riva and Lionel Tibble played as a Middlesex pairing for the first two days. Jose is a Spaniard and slight in stature, whilst Lionel is very tall, so it was perhaps inevitable that they should address each other as Manuel and Signor Fawltly, even though Jose had never actually seen Fawltly Towers.

Photographs: Action - Warwickshire's Joel Taylor, wrapped up warm (above), whilst two unidentified players 'reflect' and line-up a peel. Teams -

**Glamorgan** -Garry McElwain, John Evans, Richard H. Smith, Chris Williams, David Walters, Ian Burridge

**Middlesex** -Nigel Polhill, Lionel Tibble, Gabrielle Higgins, Nick Parish, Christian Carter, Eugene Chang. Not present- Jose Riva (who played instead of Eugene Chang for the first two days)

Images by Liz Farrow, Eugene Chang and Garry McElwain

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