

The

Issue 358 October/November 2015

CROQUET

Gazette



Champions & Achievers



From our files

researched by Frances Colman

10 years ago - 2005



Chairman's Column (by Ian Vincent) – During the AGM at Hurlingham I had the pleasure of presenting Nigel Graves with a camcorder, bought from your contributions, to thank him for his services as Secretary, and James Hawkins with a crystal bowl for his stint as Editor.

~
AGM – (Admin.) The office computers were replaced over the summer and dial-up was replaced by broadband . . . (Equipment) An investigation into possible damage to balls by metal-faced mallets concluded that they were unlikely to be responsible . . . (Golf Croquet) Reports from around the country indicate that GC is proving a very positive stimulus to recruitment to croquet generally and the additional subscription income that it is providing is stabilising the financial position of many clubs . . . (Most improved player awards) The Apps-Memorial Bowl was awarded to Jack Wicks and the Steel Bowl to Gina Lewis.

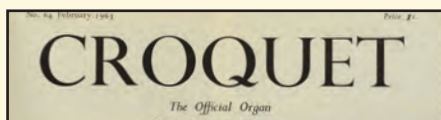
~
2006 MacRobertson Shield Team announced – Robert Fulford (Captain), Keith Aiton, Mark Avery, Chris Clarke, Jonathan Kirby and David Maugham. The Event will be in Australia from 18 November to 4 December.

~
CA Student Championships – The individual championship was won by Marcus Evans from Nottingham University, with a perfect 5-0 record against a field of tough opponents (reports Mark Gooding). In second place was Eugene Chang from Imperial College . . . In the team championships, Oxford A defended the title against Trinity College Dublin after defeating Imperial in the semi-finals.

~
The WCF is pleased to announce that the Czech-Moravian Croquet Association has been admitted to membership of the WCF with Observer status . . .

~
Editorial (by Gail Curry) - . . . bon voyage to Chris Clarke and Jenny Williams . . . I am sure they will be sadly missed here, but will be welcomed warmly in New Zealand.

50 years ago - 1965



A.G.M. - Mr.Rivington proposing a vote of thanks to Mr.Reckitt for taking the chair, said that although Mr.Reckitt during his long and distinguished croquet career had done everything else that could be done both on and off the court, he had never before occupied the Chair at an AGM. Today he had rectified that omission with characteristic distinction.

~
Croquet Gymkhana at Southwick - This year's event was ably managed by Major R.Driscoll. . . It proved a tremendous success – well over a hundred visitors and a most satisfactory financial result . . . we were glad to see the two little Solomon boys taking these events very seriously.

A Chequered Contest -

Said Harold, "Now I rule the land
And am installed at Chequers
I mean to take up croquet, and
Defeat the Tory wreckers
"But here I'll vindicate my fame,
For it would be beneath
My dignity to play the game
On any blasted Heath
"Tis well," said Ted, "I'll join the sport
Without a moment's dawdling,
I'll gladly bring to Churchill's court
MacLeod and Hogg and Maudling."

But Wilson – "Callaghan shall play,
No croquet name is greater,
And Brother Brown and Douglas Jay
Shall mop the rest up later
"I've won the toss and I'll go in,"
said Heath, "I've no objection,
But you will not get in to win
A General Election

"True Blue is Tory colour, so
That leaves you Red and Yellow,
They're the most appropriate I know
To a Labour fellow
Enough of this, did all go well
And were the matches pleasant?
Ah, that I really cannot tell
Because I wasn't present

Harold, I know, was heard to say
When all the hoops were run,
"I've hit the peg, so I've got a
Majority of one."

100 years ago - 1915



Dear Sir,
I shall be so grateful if you will allow me to use your paper to make known a need I have for our small convalescent Red Cross hospital, which has been running in our house for eleven months.

The Tommies have full use of the gardens and lawns, and those who are well enough play golf-croquet and tennis all day – our croquet courts were in use all last winter.

Flat soled shoes are a big item in our expenditure, and I am sure there are several kind croquet players who could spare me some old croquet shoes.

So long as the uppers are in good condition, worn out soles can be renewed by the village shoemaker at a small cost.

Any size from men's 6's upwards are useful; some of the outsizes are needed for those recovering from wounded or frozen feet.

Thanking you. I am, Yours Truly,
C. E. Esbell Laurence (Mrs.R Laurence)

~
Golf Croquet – Croquet players may be interested to learn of the publication by Messrs.Jakeman & Carver, Hereford, of a pamphlet entitled "Rules of Golf Croquet with hints how to play it," drawn up by an Associate under the pseudonym of "Manu Forti". These rules must not, however, be taken as official.

Reduced Subscription for 1916.

The attention of the Associates is called to the decision of a Special Meeting of the C.A. Council announcing the reduction of the Subscription for 1916 to 5/-.

~
Sir, (raising concern from the **AGM report published previously**) . . . out of 2,244 members only 36 thought it worthwhile to attend . . . out of the same number only 832 members had paid their subscriptions to date . . . Yours truly, Charles Bere

~
Advertisement – Miss Ella Simeon wants post as Chauffeuse. Holds Royal Automobile Club 2nd Class certificate; would take entire charge of car. – Reply, stating salary, to New House, The Embankment, Bedford.

Editorial

This editorial column is always the last thing that I write, just before I wave off the finished Gazette to the printers.

Just before this, I deal with the cover, hoping by that stage to have decided which story deserves top billing.

Of course that is dead easy when we have a new World Champion in our midst, or a big croquet tournament is being previewed on the pages of a particular issue.

This time though, things were less clear cut - how could one separate the winners of the two AC and GC events that rank second only behind the two codes' Open Championships. And then there is the celebration of a resurgence of the Juniors and Schools Championships, and an individual with an outstanding 40 year contribution to our wonderful sport.

The cover this time features them all: Paddy Chapman (AC First Eight ~ President's Cup), Tobi Savage (GC ENSC ~ Ascot Cup), Eden Rogers (Junior Champion) & Ian Vincent (recipient of a rare Council Medal).

I was pleased to receive so many letters from members this time round, so many in fact that a long one has had to be held over to the next issue. It is good to have your views and please do keep them coming - this is after all YOUR magazine.

With so much of note happening on the courts, once again several submitted pieces relating to non-playing croquet activities have also had to be shelved until next time, when traditionally the Gazette's winter issues have space for such matters. There will also be a full round-up of Inter-Club Team competitions, as well as details of other CA awards and diplomas.

But that's all for next time . . .
 . . . In this issue, look out for action aplenty, a report on the Annual General Meeting of the CA, and the announcement of a new awareness and recruiting initiative - National Croquet Day.

My own club's courts closed much earlier than most, meaning I'll have to travel for my winter croquet in the coming weeks.

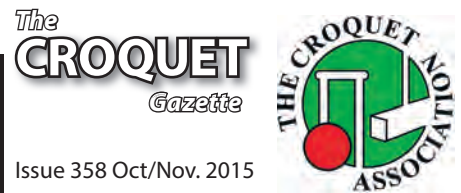
And like many others, I'll be traveling to meetings as well, as we have the 2016 season to prepare.

It never stops. . .



Chris Roberts

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Front cover: Winners and Achievers: Clockwise from top left: Paddy Chapman (AC Presidents Cup), Tobi Savage (GC Ascot Cup), Eden Rogers (Junior Champion) & Ian Vincent (Council Medal)

This page: The Editor with no follow through at Tyneside and The Chairman showing how it should be done at Cheltenham.
(photos by P & G Roberts [NZ], Quiller Barrett, Derek Watts and Chris Roberts).

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Chairman's Column

One of my favourite aphorisms is "The despair I can handle; it is the hope that kills me."

I must immediately apologise to opponents who have seen me disintegrate on the court. They will not believe that I have any ability to cope with despair!

My meaning, however, relates to being in a phase of my playing career where I strive to repeat feats that I have previously achieved. Too often recently, this striving has been in vain. But, every once in a while, the better me comes out of retirement and that is what I mean by the 'hope'.

What I love about croquet is that it is the first sport in which I have ever got anywhere near being physically competent. This competence has enabled me to experience the mystery of how powerful the mind is in affecting sporting performance.

When everything goes right then there is no better feeling. But demons are never far away and can catch the unwary mind with devastating effect.

I very much appreciate the great players of our sport being generous in their willingness to share the stories of their success. I especially enjoy the occasions on which they talk about the role of the mind in what they have achieved. If you have never had the chance to listen to Reg Bamford speaking about his experiences, then I highly recommend that you search for 'Reg Bamford mental game' on YouTube.

The Croquet Academy also offers a course on Croquet Psychology for those who want to learn more about the topic.

The winter period allows us to move away from concentrating on our play on the court. Administrators can review aspects of structuring and supporting the sport, grounds-teams can tackle suitable maintenance, and players have the chance to sit back and think about their goals and ambitions.

Perhaps this year is the chance for you to read up on sports psychology and identify improvements to take back onto the court in the spring. I, for one, will be seeking to uncover further secrets on a long and endlessly fascinating journey.

Meanwhile, Council will spend the winter working through meetings of the individual committee and three Council meetings.

These meetings will enable us to move forward on the basis of the recent constitutional changes,

and address any matters that concern you each as individual members.

Please do not hesitate to drop me a line with your thoughts.



Tim King

The Annual General Meeting of the Association was held in the dining room at Hurlingham, which, although darker than the usual terrace room, also had a large mirror as a trap for unwary photographers! As usual, it was ably chaired by the President, Quiller Barrett.

Council's report had been published on the website and was presented by its Vice-Chairman, Brian Shorney (*right*) as Tim King (*left*) was away on business in the USA.



Jeff Dawson, the Chairman of the Implementation Group for the Membership Changes agreed at the SGM earlier in the year, was asked by the President to give a progress report, as a number of members had asked him about it while visiting clubs during the year. Jeff said that three working groups, one for the Gazette, one for ICT issues and one for constitutional and communication ones, had been established and had started work. However, the changes would not come into effect until 2017 at the earliest, due to the need to upgrade or replace our membership database system before they could do so.

The CA AGM by Ian Vincent, Honorary Secretary

The other topic of interest was the Golf Croquet handicapping trial that had taken place in East Anglia this year. Strat Liddiard, the Chairman of the Handicap Committee, reported that it seemed to have been well received, but the data had yet to be analysed. Bill Arliss commented that the current system of effective handicaps had improved on the previous situation and was working well in other federations.

The report had ended with a list of inspiring individuals who have made significant contributions to croquet but had died during the year, including John Solomon, Donald Cornelius, Paul Macdonald, Christine Irwin and Chris Hudson. Chris Williams asked that Dab Wheeler should be added to the list.

In giving his first report as Hon. Treasurer, Peter Death thanked his predecessor, Roger Bray, for giving him a flying start; Marian Hemsted, the Reporting Accountant; and Liz Larsson and her team in the office for all their help. There were no significant unexpected variations from the norm,

though meeting expenses, which had risen by £3.6K rather than the £2.6K stated in the report, had been partly inflated by an exceptional meeting of Council.

Neither Ian Anderson (Woking) nor John-Paul Moberly (Croquet Durham) were able to come to receive the Apps Memorial Bowl and Spiers Trophy, for the most improved AC and GC players respectively, but Janet Hoptroff (Sussex County) was presented with the Coach of the Year award.

A lifetime coaching award is to be presented to Peter Dyke (Nailsea). Representatives of High Wycombe, Camerton and Peasdown and Budleigh Salterton received their club awards and Swindon will receive theirs in due course. Diplomas were awarded to Russell Barter (Cheltenham), David Haslam (Colchester), Bernard Jones (Woking), Paul Pristavec (Dyffryn) Stephen Read (Fowey) Richard Sanville (Ashby), Chris Sheen (Colchester) and Fred Smith (Church Stretton) - *the citations will be carried in the next Gazette* - and I was presented with the Council Medal.



The President's closing remarks

After the excitements of the Special General Meeting I think things have settled down for most Council members. My remarks this year are, as always, personal.

Looking back at all the clubs I've visited this year, a lot of them had one thing in common: the amount of effort put into caring for lawns. This was most obvious at Southwick where we were playing in the Challenge & Gilbey at the same time as vast earthmovers were stripping down four lawns that were being relayed.

But I should also mention all the other clubs where CA tournaments are frequently hosted, including Nottingham, where the club produced some superb playing surfaces for the Women's Worlds. Thank you, on behalf of visiting players, to all those groundsmen and members who work so long and hard to improve our lawns.

As usual, representing the CA at the finals of major events has been great fun. It gives me an opportunity to chat to lots of our members so I can keep my feet firmly in the grassroots. These finals remind me that our thanks are due to the managers of all CA tournaments who often have to deal with fast-moving challenges – if not problems.

I should also like to thank our Vice

Presidents and the other Council members who have kindly helped me by presenting CA trophies.

Looking forward, I admit to having a couple of bees in my bonnet.

I was pleased to see that, in addition to Federation Coaching and Development Officers, we have nearly 30 members serving on our committees who are not on Council. I think this is one of the strengths of the CA's committee structure and I would just like to remind the chairmen of our committees that they have this power to co-opt. Sometimes I meet members who have special interests and knowledge that are relevant to the CA and it would be good if they were able to contribute directly, particularly if they are young (in croquet terms that's under 40). New blood and new ideas are vital.

My second bee is to remind everyone that in my remarks last year I urged Council to appoint an International Performance Director for Golf Croquet. Ian Burrige, in his role as Director for AC, has shown what can be achieved and we promised to do the same for GC. Some action has been taken but we still have not made an appointment. I mention this again, hoping we can very

soon find someone to take on the job, so we can signal to our members who play GC that the CA is just as concerned about top level performance as we are for AC.

I add my thanks, on behalf of all croquet players, to Liz Larsson and our staff at Cheltenham, and to Tim King, Brian Shorney and everyone on CA committees who help to keep our show on the road.

I want to close by sharing a recent experience. I attended the final of the National Schools Championship played at Oxford just a few weeks ago. This is an Association Croquet doubles event and I happened to be standing close-by a partnership of two young boys, who had been coached at their school by Jarrod Coutts, a New Zealand croquet player. They were getting the hang of tactics and I overheard their fierce debate about the right line to take in their game. They were obviously totally focussed on winning and that's what they did: they became National Schools Champions. It made their day, and it was good to know the younger generation is learning fast, that croquet can be such a great competitive sport – for all ages. May your results in 2016 exceed your expectations. **Quiller Barrett**

Council meeting

Although many useful conversations took place over lunch, in hindsight the afternoon Council meeting should have started earlier, given that there were some controversial items on the agenda that had arisen after the last meeting of the Management Committee.

Chris Jackson was welcomed as the representative of the East Midlands Federation and it, along with the other eight federations, were accepted into membership, following the changes agreed at the 2014 AGM. Dave Kibble was elected to chair the Coaching Committee, Martin French GC Selection, David Maugham ICT, and Richard Hoskyns Investment; the other chairmen remain unchanged. Keith Aiton, Ian Burridge, Dave Kibble, Ian Lines and David Maugham were appointed to select the team for the 2017 MacRobertson Shield, with the latter as chairman.

A proposal to put forward an amendment to the constitution to give voting rights to up to 30 members of a school or university club aged 16 or over when the new membership arrangements come into effect was quickly agreed.

But the question of whether the CA should provide a dispute resolution mechanism for clubs took more consideration. It was agreed that federations should be asked to assist in the first instance, with the CA as a backstop.

It was a proposed policy for the inclusion of coaching courses in the fixtures book that was most contentious, given the apparently conflicting aims of providing coaching in locations convenient for the players wanting it whilst maintaining quality standards. An amended version of the proposed policy was eventually agreed as an interim measure, with the coaching committee given authority to review.

A proposal for a National Croquet Day was up next. There was a general view that the proposed was too early in the year, and Sunday 5 June 2016 was chosen instead. As time was getting short, the details were referred back to the Marketing Committee to re-consider in the light of comments made, in particular about focussing on attracting people interested in competitive play.

A discussion of a paper about assisting players with colour vision deficiencies had to be deferred, but it was hastily agreed to delegate authority to contract for an upgraded or replacement membership database system to the Management Committee. - **Ian Vincent, Hon. Secretary**

Council Medal for Ian Vincent

Ian Vincent was awarded a Council Medal because of his outstanding services to croquet at club, national and international level for over 40 years.

Ian has been Hon. Secretary of the Nottingham club since 1978, guiding club Chairmen and Presidents through countless agendas and developing very useful contacts with local authority officials. He has managed the East Midlands Championship since its inception and the Club's August Week from 1982 to 2002. But Ian has always had his feet on the ground at Nottingham, bringing on beginners and doing his stint in the kitchen when tournament catering is needed. His contribution to the life and growth of the club has been truly remarkable.

Ian has been a long-standing member of the Croquet Association Council and was its Chairman from 2003-2006. Over many years Ian has been an examining referee and chaired the International and CA AC Laws committees, steering them along true and rational paths. He became the Secretary of the Association in 2008 and in that capacity continues to make many contributions above and beyond the call of duty. He has found time to play to a standard where he is a regular among the invitation Eights and he has played in 36 consecutive Open Championships.

Ian is the father of the Nottingham Board, a mailing list by which croquet

players exchange knowledge and abuse, sometimes to the wider benefit of the game. He has maintained it for twenty years and has also contributed greatly to the smooth running and effectiveness of the CA's Information and Communications Technology.

Ian Vincent's first degree was taken at Cambridge in Natural Sciences, but he was based at Sussex for his doctorate in theoretical chemistry. 'The Good Doctor' moved on to provide a working computer system for the students

at Nottingham. He is a music enthusiast and The Opens at Cheltenham are a particular delight for him when that tournament coincides with the music festival.

He is a regular in the tower at Beeston Church, ringing bells, and in the adjacent pub afterwards. It is speculated that Ian has done more peals of triples than triple peels.

Ian is a keen hill walker. On a recent trip to New Zealand he showed a croquet player's characteristic disregard for written notices and decided that the instruction "Do not walk past this point" did not apply to him. He was rescued the following day by a Kiwi State helicopter.

Over and above all the specific details of his rôles and activities, Ian consistently demonstrates an understanding of people and their views, nurturing their contributions without any upset.

Beyond all doubt he is a worthy recipient of a Council Medal.



Neither of the Most Improved Player Awards winners for 2014 were able to be present at the AGM to collect their trophies, but their citations were noted as follows:

Male Association Croquet Player – Ian Anderson

Ian Anderson, spurred on by the success of his wife Sara, started to improve his game in 2014. His handicap went from 16 at the beginning of the season to 5, as he chalked up many wins. This included the Oliver Memorial Bowl at the Budleigh Salterton August Tournament, winning the most improved player for that tournament (having gained the most index points) and gaining his Silver Merit award.

Golf Croquet Player – John-Paul Moberly

John-Paul Moberly started to play in 2011, and in 2014 he improved his game, starting the season with a handicap of 3 and ending on scratch. He defeated Reg Bamford in the block stages of the GC Open and reached the quarter-finals and this was his first entry into this tournament. He was selected to represent England for the GC Under 21 World Championship in 2015 and also received a wild card to the GC World Championship.

The rise of the 'Prowler'

Dear Editor,

In each of my last three tournaments, I have had occasion to have to ask one or two of my opponents to move away from their ball after replacing on the lawn close to my ball, as their close presence was a distraction when I went on to play.

On too many occasions there was no attempt to clear my line of sight and I found their close presence somewhat threatening.

Perhaps worse, was actually having to stop and ask the player to move which was distracting in itself.

Sadly this issue seems to be getting worse and is not just confined to inexperienced players.

Some experienced players appear to have adopted this 'style' as a part of their normal game.

Could I ask that certain players remind themselves of their responsibilities under Rule 51 (a) - Interrupting the Striker: *The adversary must not interrupt, distract, interfere with ... the striker ...*

I am sure that no player would seek to gain an advantage by unreasonable behaviour but it is worth revisiting this rule to be fair to all.

David Williams,
East Dorset and Hamptworth CCs

~

Thank you for being bold enough to raise this David. 'The Prowler' does seem to be becoming more prevalent, and whilst most of us like to pride ourselves in observing croquet's etiquette, some players are indeed found wanting in this area. I am as keen as anyone to have my opponent be ready to play and 'get on with it', but only when it is their turn. Having 'oppo' retire to a reasonable distance and leaving the striker alone to play their turn without being crowded, is surely every player's right - Ed.

William Ormerod has the right idea. Keeping out of the way but close to a beer! (Photo Julie Kaye)



Organized post-tournament socials have enhanced my croquet enjoyment

Dear Editor,

As a player new to Association Croquet, I decided to enter CA tournaments and I have played at Phyllis Court (Henley), Woking, Hamptworth, Southwick, Cheltenham, Budleigh Salterton, Sidmouth, Hurlingham, Roehampton and Surbiton.

It was a daunting but enjoyable experience, playing low handicappers who would sit watching patiently, pulling out numerous bisques with bemused expression - 'What on earth are you doing now?'

I mainly stayed at B&Bs and often these had been suggested by the secretary of the tournament. This was fine, but after play, only Phyllis Court, Woking and Hamptworth had organized players to get together for an evening meal.

This made a huge difference to the enjoyment of the tournament for me, because entering as a lone player, it was important to be able to socialise with other players in the evening.

To encourage players to enter CA tournaments, particularly those that require a stay away from home, I suggest clubs indicate in the CA handbook that players will be invited to join in for a meal together on the first evening of the event. And on subsequent evenings that there will be a sign-up list for players wishing to go out and eat together.

It is a great experience playing at these tournaments and it becomes more and more fun getting to know the mix of croquet characters!

Sally Hunt,
Hurlingham and Roehampton CCs

The Stranger on a Train and the unknowing Samaritan

Dear Editor,

Readers of the Weekend FT (Financial Times) will be pleased to see today's letter from Alison Sharpe explaining a situation described two weeks ago.

The Magazine section of August 15 carried an interview with the actor Tom Courtenay by the journalist Peter Aspden. It began: "Tom Courtenay walks into the central London hotel lobby that is our rendezvous looking sprightly but also a little bit discomfited. He is carrying a plastic bag under his arm. We shake hands, and he tells me that he has a good beginning for my story. "I came here on the train," he says undramatically. "But then someone was sick over me." I express my sympathies. "It's all right, a woman was very kind and helped me out. She was on her way to the world croquet championship." The northern vowels, deadpan delivery and slight surrealism are pure Alan Bennett. "Of course she was", I reply.

Telling, that last remark, I think.

Now Alison writes from Sydney, NSW:

"Sir, I was startled when I read the first few lines of Peter Aspden's interview with Tom Courtenay in the FT Magazine (August 15). I suddenly saw the photo of the familiar face

and realised that it was me who had helped clean up Sir Tom Courtenay on the train that Friday morning, but at the time I had no idea it was him.

While I was cleaning him up he talked about going for an interview, which I wrongly interpreted as a 'job' interview, so I told him I would make him look as 'decent as possible'. After much wiping down of his clothing with my plethora of tissues, I then felt happy enough to release him from the train at Waterloo. He thanked me profusely for helping him feel semi-normal again and I felt chuffed that I could help this lovely gentleman when no one else in the carriage was prepared to take charge.

Since that day I had been wondering whether he ever got the job he was going for, and I also wanted to let him know how I did in the Women's World Croquet Championships in Nottingham. I did in fact come home with a bronze medal."

So, another bit of publicity for Croquet combined with actions in keeping with the best traditions of the game and of our nation. Well done, Alison.

Honorary Englishwoman, anyone?

Lawrence Whittaker,
Nottingham and Leicester CCs

Two croquet variants ~ A three sided game & GC with slice of AC

Dear Editor,

At one of our mix-ins at Littleton earlier in the season, with three players left at the end of the afternoon, we had exhausted the possibilities of double-v-single games, and our John Ambrose suggested playing one-ball with 3 players and 3 balls.

This was so much enjoyed that we have made it a regular feature of our mix-ins, and in the absence of a better name, we are suggesting it be called 'Littleton Triple'.

Rules are as for normal one-ball, with play in rotation of colours (e.g. Blue-Red-Black-Blue-etc.), players drawing lots for colours at the start.

Normal one-ball suffers from the fact that 2-ball breaks are difficult to maintain, and there are limited opportunities to hit-in, so players often tend to just run the hoops in order with little interaction. The leading player can maintain the lead by keeping well out of the way of the opponent.

The situation in Littleton Triple is different. The non-existence of partner balls, makes long hit-ins very much the order of the day. This reduces the incidence of extended sitting out, as there is no possibility of a 'return to mother' and any attempt at 'Aunt

Emma' play is impossible.

On the other hand a successful hit-in gives a much greater advantage, as it is then possible to set up a 3-ball break. With two other balls to aim at, hitting-in possibilities are also increased.

So far we have always played without bisques, and are still discussing how we could incorporate them fairly.

The wiring lift has also come in for some discussion, since each player now has two opponents. The simple solution is to rule that if either opponent has placed your ball in a fully-wired position you have a lift; but there has been a further suggestion that, having lifted your ball, you can only shoot at the opponent who placed you in the wired position.

An interesting strategic point can arise when the two losing players gang up against the one in the lead, typically by one of the losing players rolling their ball up to the other's, with the intention of instigating a fight-back by the other losing player.

We recommend this game as being good fun and, at the same time, giving good practice at hitting-in and 3-ball breaks.

Peter Fry, Littleton CC

Dear Editor,

Golf Croquet has often been regarded by many Association players as just a social knockabout and probably rather boring. However I have added a slight twist to the golf game by the addition of one extra rule.

On playing his/her turn, if the ball in play strikes another ball then the player must take croquet; any type of croquet shot is allowed and, as there is no continuation, and after that the turn ends.

This has been warmly accepted at Caterham, so what about pushing it out to other clubs? You never know – it could become the standard game.

The immediate implication on playing this way is that the approach to running hoops is vastly changed and requires more thought. In several games, we found it necessary to only play 4 points instead of 7 as a full game can last 90 minutes.

Apart from that, this is an excellent way to encourage GC players to try AC, as once the various types of croquet shots are mastered, then you are more than half way there.

Jeff Rushby, Caterham CC

Exit strategy advice required for loyal club servant

Dear Editor,

You may know the situation. A loyal club servant, you are familiar with lawn mowing, painting white lines and having to arrive early and/or stay late at tournaments.

The former can be a pleasure, the latter is invariably a pain, always with one last plate to be washed as the survivors look at, but rarely touch, the sole remaining sandwich.

You therefore wish, at this tournament, to try and get away at a reasonable time.

Is it therefore better to start the day (on the assumption that your index is

reasonably secure) in an attacking or defensive frame of mind?

A long drawn-out struggle first thing might last you well into the afternoon, and so the prospect of the third game and the likelihood of being part of the clear-up gang might diminish.

The timing, of course, is critical.

The alternative is to throw caution to the winds, resulting in quick wins and/or defeats (with the same caveat regarding the timing).

However this tactic may have the

manager thinking that you are game for anything, with the inevitable result that at 5pm or thereabouts you find yourself (loyal servant, remember) offering to play against X "who's only had two games and would like another".

Is there a strategy which maximises one's chances of an early exit?

Discount fake phone calls concerning an imminent birth, or indeed anything else, as I am hopeless at pretence.

**Yours, etc.,
"Deliberator"**

Cindi's chest!

Dear Editor,

I recently purchased this beautiful chest in Florida, USA with Windsor Park Croquet Club painted on.

Can your readers tell me anything about this piece please?

It appears to be hand painted and in very good shape.

Cindi Conte, Lakeland, Florida



Owen Bryce 1920 - 2015

Owen Bryce died in Northampton General Hospital on 8 October at the grand age of 95.

He was a remarkably active and fit man and was still playing croquet until early 2014, when he was first taken ill.

He joined Northampton Croquet Club in 1988 shortly after its founding. Owen was a great organiser and soon took on many tasks - arranging the Club programme, scheduling the yearly maintenance tasks and taking on the onerous job of organising matches against other clubs, first in the East Midlands and later in the East Anglian Leagues. He was Club Chairman for many years and was given life membership of the club.

Until last season, Owen was still playing three or four times a week off a 3 and 12 handicap in GC and AC respectively. He prided himself on ringing up and playing every club member during the season, one of the reasons why he won the Club Ladder eleven times in 20 years. Although well known in the region, Owen only played occasionally in CA events outside Northampton. The one exception was Nailsea, where he could stay with his daughter. He was given a splendid send-off the last time he played there.



Obituaries

But croquet was only one of Owen's many interests. He and his wife, Iris, have led a remarkable life.

Having learnt to play both the piano and trumpet before he was eleven, he was one of the pioneers of traditional jazz in the UK in the 1940s, with the George Webb Dixielanders, a band

which at various times included Chris Barber and Humphrey Littleton. He later formed his own band and continued playing and teaching trumpet and piano into his 90's.

He met Iris in 1945 at the VJ celebrations in London when the band was playing in Trafalgar Square and they married a few months later. She had worked at Bletchley Park and later wrote a series of books about her early life in Greenwich and their various travels.

After bringing up a family, the couple spent ten years living on a canal boat, travelling the length of the canal system before settling in Blisworth, Northampton in a house backing onto the canal.

Both Owen and Iris are great raconteurs and those who knew him will remember his colourful recollections, often told at lunch times between games.

He will be sorely missed.

Mike Hills, Northampton CC

Vic Rees 1926 - 2015

Vic Rees, the last surviving founder member of Wrest Park Croquet Club, died on 17 July.

Shortly after the club was formed in 1961 Vic's practical side showed itself when, together with John Wheeler and Harry Green, he constructed four sets of mild steel hoops, as well as centre and corner pegs, which are still in use.

He was a member of the teams which won the Longman Cup in 1964 and again in 1966 and was arguably the club's most successful player.

In 1973 he and John Wheeler reached the final of the Open doubles, losing to Humphrey Hicks and John Soutter, and Vic qualified as a referee in the same year.

The following year he was a member of



the Wrest Park team which won the Inter-Club Championship.

In 1977 he was a member of the Bedfordshire (aka Wrest Park) team that won the Inter-County Championship, and later that year the club built a pavilion, for which Vic was the chief architect.

Vic made five appearances in the Chairman's Salver from 1973, finally winning it in 1980. He also won the club's own Advanced Championship in 1989, and received a cup that been donated to the club by D. D. Steel.

Vic continued to take an active interest in the club after he stopped playing, was a keen spectator and pleased to referee if required.

His contribution to the formation and continued success of the Wrest Park Club was immense, and he is much missed.

John Bevington, Wrest Park CC

David Edwards 1940 - 2015



David Edwards was a key member of Cornwall Croquet Club for many years.

He joined the club about nine years ago, having learnt to play at Fowey CC and soon became, with Barry his wife, a central figure in the life and work of the club. He was always there when something was happening, be it a game to play or work to be done. As a player he rapidly became very proficient, with an improving handicap and a long list of successes in club competitions and in away tournaments.

He competed throughout the South West, in London and Corfu and was a coach, team captain and handicapper.

Off the court David made an immeasurable contribution to the running of the club as a committee member for many years and as an effective and popular Chairman. As a member of a working party, and often on his own account, David undertook general maintenance and lawn-care duties. It was very apparent that David loved croquet and his Club.

He was a gentleman, on and off the court,
Des Honey, Cornwall CC

Lynda Everett 1945-2015

Lynda Everett joined the Cornwall CC in 2002 and became club secretary two years later. During the six years that she held the post, her time, work and effort helped to create a sound base for the Club's development. She was an enthusiastic and committed member and enjoyed playing in South-West Federation Leagues.

Lynda's positive and forward looking attitude, and her loyalty to anything she was involved with, stood her in good stead for her final challenge with cancer. When Lynda found club days too difficult to cope with, she became secretary of the local Breast Cancer Support Group and refused to allow her declining health to disrupt everyday routines. She will be much missed.

Dorianne Forsdick, Cornwall CC

NATIONAL CROQUET DAY

5 June 2016

National Croquet Day is a day on which the public will be encouraged and able to try croquet anywhere in the country. It is a project coordinated by the CA Marketing Team, led by its Chairman Brian Wilson. The key objectives include:

- Showing that croquet is a game for everyone.
- Showing that croquet is a sport with a competitive edge.
- Providing an opportunity to motivate people to visit their local club to try 'The Croquet Experience'.
- Grasping an opportunity to dispel negative and inaccurate images of croquet.



In the run-up to National Croquet Day, the CA will send out a series of national press releases to arouse public interest, and your Club could both support and capitalise on this by aligning your Club Open Day and publicity to this media interest.

If your Club has already arranged activities on that day you can still take part in National Croquet Day – just arrange your own NCD event to be close to the 5 June date, as the media interest will still be active.



Over the 'winter season', clubs and federations may well be considering how to take part in National Croquet Day. You may want to share and discuss ideas with the CA Marketing Team to shape the day.

In the meantime the CA will create and push national press releases and will be on hand to help and support clubs to fine tune their own press links. The CA has a national network of volunteers who can advise and support clubs.

Under tag lines including 'The Croquet



Experience', the CA will create a series of template stories that will arouse interest in croquet and invite members of the public to give it a try. Clubs can customise these stories for local use.

The CA also has access to a compendium of good ideas and publicity materials for clubs. So please look to the December issue of the Croquet Gazette for more details.

In the meantime, if you wish to talk over ideas, please contact Brian Wilson on 07970 922867 brian@europaassociates.co.uk.

Tremaine Arkley Croquet Collection Prize



Applications are now being accepted for the Tremaine Arkley Croquet Collection Prize. The purpose of the prize is to promote scholarship using the Tremaine Arkley Croquet Collection. The winning paper will be published and held in cIRcle, UBC's digital repository. The prize will be awarded annually to the best research paper on a subject featured in the Tremaine Arkley Croquet Collection held at UBC Library.

Deadline: February 1, 2016

Annual Value: \$1,000 CDN

Eligibility - The prize is open to all interested individuals and candidates must submit a maximum 12-page paper that incorporates primary sources from the Tremaine Arkley Croquet Collection. Papers may focus on a range of subjects, including and not limited to: gender studies, athletics, history, art, and photography, but must use the Collection in some capacity (fuller details of other important requirements and how to submit entries, are available from The Gazette Editor).

About the Tremaine Arkley Croquet Collection

Tremaine Arkley is a former member of the US National Croquet team. The Tremaine Arkley Croquet Collection, donated to UBC in 2011 by Tremaine and Gail Arkley, is a unique fine art collection spanning from the 1850s to the present. The collection includes oil paintings, watercolours, etchings, illustrations and other pieces of original fine art, as well as photographs, prints, books, advertisements, comics and other materials related to croquet. The collection can be viewed in person at UBC Library's Rare Books and Special Collections, or online at digitalcollections.library.ubc.ca.



August

Giving the lie to low handicappers being too penalised at Handicap GC these days, Phyllis Court's Ian Norris (*pictured above*), playing off 1 (and -2 effective), won **PJ's Pot at Guildford and Godalming**, albeit after a first round setback.

Manager, Mike Huxley, reports a full house of 16 competitors covered a wide handicap spectrum from 1 to 10 and the first significant result of the day came in the first round, when the host's Joan West (handicap 6 and a couple of months short of her 90th birthday) beat Norris 7-2 with an impressive display of accurate hoop-running.

Nevertheless, Norris still qualified from his block as did another low handicapper Brian McCausland (2 effective 0, Nailsea) amongst others. These included impressive newcomer Peter Dowd (Northampton) who only took up the sport less than a year ago and was already down to a 5 handicap.

He met Norris in the final and had seven extra turns in his pocket, which made the game an utterly absorbing one for onlookers. Norris crept out to a 6-2 lead, but Dowd had conserved more than half of his extra turns, and got the score back to 6-6 before exhausting his last 'extra' at hoop 12. Norris clinched it at the last to win the title and drew much praise having conceded 44 extra turns in six games!

Holder Lionel Tibble met Ian Burridge in an excellent final at

Surbiton's London Masters.

Manager, Don Beck, reports in their only previous meeting in the Worlds GC 2011 Qualifier, Tibble won and took the last place available in the main event, so the match-up gave Burridge (*pictured left*) the chance to get even. Tibble took the first game at the 13th and then Burridge turned the same trick in the second, before the decider featured more accurate play from both.

When Burridge scored hoop 10 to make it 5-5, there was still an expectation that



Lionel's greater experience would see him retain his title, but it was Burridge's clearance at 11, which ran down to 12, that turned the game and match in his favour.

He took 11 with a good hoop shot and his positional advantage thereafter secured the win 7-5. And to think he only entered because his son Euan wanted to play!

September

Lionel Tibble won the **Sussex Open** which, although no longer a qualifier for the English National Singles Championship, was the designated **English leg of the European Masters GC Series**. The field of 16 played in blocks, leading to a best-of-three knockout for the top eight. Tibble of Northampton beat David Bell (Ashby and Leicester) in the final 7-5, 7-3 and the other knock-out finishers in order were: Colin Britt (Camerton & Peasdown), Michael O'Brian and Ray Mounfield (both Ashby), Bill Arliss, Roger Sutton and Robin Wootton (all Sussex)

~

Having been at the vanguard of GC B-Level events a decade ago, **Edgbaston** was keen to pioneer **C-Level** competitive play too, reports Richard Thompson.

Their 2015 effort was their second such event, but the first as a formal CA Tournament. The atmosphere was supportive and encouraging; senior players offered well-received tips; and the many good shots and 'against the form-book' wins were greeted with sincere congratulations.

Worcester's Matt Raby, son of 2014 B-Level champ Richard, like many of our younger players, has progressed quickly and arrived as the clear favourite with the best handicap. He beat Ged Antrobus in the block phase and then did the same again in the final, playing beautifully throughout.

~

Another who is keen to promote competitive play is **Cheltenham's** Russell Barter, and he ran a two-day two-classed event (making the split at handicap 6) and attracted good participation numbers all round. The first day was handicap play and saw 22 players in high handicaps class and eight in the low whittled down to winners Mark Buckley and Janet Bedford.

On the second day it was level play with 14 players in the high group, won by Lloyd Jones, and 11 in the low class won by Peter Balchin.

Last four B-Level Series Qualifiers

Just too late for inclusion last time were the last four tournaments in the National B-Level Series.

Phyllis Court's two-dayer was first up and was won at the second time of asking by the popular Andrew Carpenter (*below right*) all the way from Durham. He won all but two of his 15 games in the 'all play all' giant block format that was employed.

The **Ashby** and new **Hurlingham** tournaments followed soon after and brought a second Series win for David Widdison (Bishop Monkton, *below left*) and a first success for Ross Bagni (Leighton-Linslade) respectively.

The last qualifier for the National Final was played in mid-September and was the ninth running of the **Edgbaston** B-Level, where the star turn was Nottingham's Jayne Stevens. In his report, experienced manager Richard Thompson said: "B-Level Tournament play is now indistinguishable from all but the very top A Class players."

The 18 B-Level Series tournaments were won by 13 different players this season (Stevens won three times, while her Northampton clubmate Peter Dowd, Widdison and Phyllis Court's Roger Goldring all won twice each).

Of the winners, only Bagni couldn't make the 16 player final, which allowed four players who had accumulated points for 2nd to 4th placed finishes to make up the numbers. Ian Shore (High Wycombe) topped the list with 20 points, followed by Guildford pair Chris Heath (18) and Andrea Huxley (12) and following a 'lottery ball' draw, Mike Bilton (Richmond Park) claimed the last Final place.



Leicestershire win GC Counties

	matches/games
Leicestershire	10 26
Surrey	8 25
Middlesex	8 20
Kent	8 18
Dorset	6 17
Durham/Yorks.	6 14
Oxfordshire	5 18
Hampshire	5 17
Glamorgan	3 13
Somerset	3 10
Glos/Worcs.	3 9
Sussex	1 11

Leicestershire repeated their 2013 victory and finished clear winners in this year's GC Inter-counties Championship, **reports Bill Arliss.**

Non-playing Captain, Ray Mounfield, used his top ranked four players: Rachel Rowe, Will Gee, Nick Mounfield and Mike O'Brian for both days and this looked as if it would produce a 100% winning record.

However, this was spoilt in the last round of this all-play-all tournament, when they lost to holders Middlesex.

Leicestershire's nearest contenders were Surrey, Middlesex and Kent, who all finished one match win in arrears and were ranked in that order by virtue of individual games won.

Sussex had a bad year and took the wooden spoon.



There was no room this time to do justice to all the Inter-Club team competitions that reached their finals as the season closed. All will be covered in the December issue.

Watford's Alan Clark won the 17th All England Golf Croquet competition final by two clear game wins.

Clark emerged as a front runner at the halfway mark of this two day event at Colchester, which will be remembered for its length and its players' willingness and ability to see in the dark!

The 16 strong field, with a handicap range from 1 to 11, enjoyed the 'no time limits' regime employed by manager and **reporter Chris Roberts**, who only had to step in to impose a restriction on a handful of games that were delaying the tournament.

The result was some very competitive games indeed, with the low handicappers having to employ all manner of tactical cleverness to deal with the large number of extra turns facing them during the 'all play all' 15 game format.

First to show on the leader board was the highest handicapper at the event, Margaret Moss (Bowdon), Philip Batty (Dulwich) who had dropped his handicap two grades to 7 since the Area Final qualifying round, and Ryde's Pam Sim.

Together with eventual winner Clark, this quartet were tied by the end of day 1, which finished in such sudden darkness that three games had to be pegged down overnight.

The illness retirement of local John Skuse,

All England GC Victory for Watford's Clark



also robbed us of the catering services of his wife but club stalwart Jane Collier rolled up her sleeves to assist Ann Brooks to lay on another lovely lunch.

Back at the croquet, things were hotting up, and even the lowest handicappers Stuart Smith (Broadwas) and David Frost (Enfield) had chalked up a few wins despite playing off the effective handicap -2 that their 1 status decreed.

By lunchtime though, Clark had pulled one game ahead and all eyes turned to his upcoming game with Moss who, could draw level (and be ahead of him on the 'who beat whom' rule) if she could win their 'head to head' game.

It was a close one, but Clark bided his time well, and with that victory the All England title was in his grasp.

He sewed it up in the penultimate round and, despite losing his last game, he was a decisive winner from four others by two clear victories.

CA President Quiller Barrett, who'd been unwittingly misled by the optimism of the Manager about the likely finishing time, had been in attendance since the mid-morning and used his time to chat with each of the players between their games.

His wait until nearly 7pm was very worthwhile though, as with the gloom of evening setting in again, he was able to present the trophy to his Watford Club mate Alan Clark – the All England Golf Croquet competition winner for 2015.

Finishing order: Alan Clark (Watford, handicap 6) 11 wins, Margaret Moss (Bowdon, hc11) 9, Vernon Gibbs (Ryde, hc9) 9, Pam Sim (Ryde, hc4) 9, Margaret Eccles (Bury, hc4) 9, Richard Peperell (Phyllis Court, hc4) 8, Louise Taylor (Merton, hc4) 8, Philip Batty (Dulwich, hc9) 9, Des Taylor (Enfield, hc8) 7, John Knight (Reigate, hc5) 6, Stuart Smith (Broadwas, hc1) 5, Pam Hendry (Nailsea, hc9) 5, David Frost (Enfield, hc1) 5, John Smallbone (Watford, hc2) 4, Robin Hendry (Nailsea, hc7) 2, John Skuse (Colchester, hc3, did not play on day two).

This Spring we created the new category of GC Championship Referee. Experience from AC has shown that a new person joins the ranks of AC Championship Referee only every year or two – so if we left it to 'organic growth' it could be 20+ years until we had enough GC Championship Refs. So we decided to kick-start the scheme. We asked the GC Rules Committee and the group of GC Examining Referees to suggest candidates. There were three criteria to get onto the list: a) well-regarded AC Championship Refs

GC Championship Refs Brooks joins top dogs

who were either GC Examining Refs or on the GC Rules Committee; b) experienced GC Examining Refs who also ran courses and examined many candidates; c) experienced GC refs who have already officiated at top class events and are well-regarded as referees by those players. We then asked five of our most experienced refs to form an Appointment Panel, to consider the list against a single criterion: 'If I were the

Tournament Referee, would I be happy to have this person refereeing the final stages of a top-class event?' From this one-off process we appointed: Barry Keen, Bill Arliss, Chris Sheen, Cliff Jones, Dick Strover, Ian Vincent, John Crossland, Kevin Ham, Marcus Evans, Martin French, Michael Hague, Mike Town, Nelson Morrow, Pierre Beaudry, Roger Barnacle, Stephen Mulliner, Tim King, and Tony Hall. Congratulations to Richard Brooks who has now joined this august group (read the story Richard's journey on page 20).

Martin French, Chair GC Rules Committee

Golf Croquet

Savage is National Singles Champion



Tobi Savage defeated Harry Dodge 7-6, 7-6 to win the 2015 English National Singles Championship final and lift the Ascot Cup for the first time.

This Championship is second only to The Open in GC prestige and comes with the tough requirement of qualification by performance at one of only eight linked tournaments throughout the season.

Nottingham hosted this end-of-term gathering of the season's big achievers, with only Rob Fulford and Rachel Rowe absent from an otherwise impressive line-up of winners, bolstered by runners-up and

placed personnel.

Befitting an event of this stature, a best-of-three regime was in place throughout and all the fancied players made it through from a quad of four-man blocks to contest the quarter-finals.

Dodge had a hiccup in his block when he lost 1-2 to James Goodbun, who is no mean player of course, but he did crucially get one over on Savage when he scored a 2-0 victory to feel good about for when the pair met again in the final. Elsewhere, Stephen Mulliner, Will Gee and Lionel Tibble came through with three match wins apiece, ahead of Martin French, John-Paul Moberly and David Walters as respective runners-up.

Dodge beat Moberly 2-0 in the 'young lads' quarter, Savage needed a third game to see off Gee in the 'bit older lads' match-up, and both Tibble and Walters also took three games to get past French and Mulliner in their rather 'more senior' affairs.

The semis were both very tight. Dodge squeaked past Tibble 7-6, 3-7, 7-6 and Savage did well to come back from a first game reverse to beat Walters 5-7, 7-6, 7-3.

The final is preserved on You Tube thanks to Nick Cheyne's efforts and was a great match, which Savage won 7-6, 7-6 to become English National Singles Champion.

~

It was good to see that a thoughtful tournament format had been provided for the non-qualifiers from the blocks and those making a quarter-final exit from the main event.

Championship finishing order: 1 Tobi Savage, 2 Harry Dodge, 3= Lionel Tibble and David Walters, 5 Will Gee, 6 Martin French, 7= John-Paul Moberly and Stephen Mulliner.

Plate - 9 Graham Good, 10 Ivor Brand, 11= Ray Mounfield and Mike O'Brian, 13 Nick Cheyne, 14 James Goodbun, 15 Tim King, 16 Richard Thompson.

High Wycombe's Ian Shore won The Golf Croquet B-Level Series National Final by the slimmest of margins when he beat the unlucky Peter Dowd of Northampton on the 'who beat whom' rule and effectively just a single hoop! **Chris Roberts reports.**

The sixteen-strong field was just that – strong – comprising, as it did, of twelve winners of B-Level Series qualifying tournaments and four players who had amassed points for good placed finishes.

Shore himself had qualified via this latter route, which rewarded his constancy through the season that had earned him two runner-up and two third places at Series tournaments.

The B-Level Series is for players with handicaps in the 3 to 8 range (on a qualifying event's allocation day) and has been a huge success this season, with most of the 18 Series events being either full or over-subscribed. The final was superbly hosted by Hunstanton CC on their fine

National B-Level Final Shore sneaks it from Dowd

courts, that were wonderfully turned out for the occasion.

Things got off to an unexpected start, when the top-ranked player Graham Good lost his first three games and second-ranked Keith Southern won only one of his first five, but there was plenty of time for 'comebacks' with the format being one 'all play all' block of 15 (13-point) games over two days.

Shore lost to Enfield's David Frost in the second round and so he was 'off the radar' so far as the leader board was concerned, but with a postponed game still to play, his true position was hidden as darkness fell at the end of a long first day.

Play resumed with the aforementioned trio being pursued by Bishop Monkton's David Widdison, and with Frost having beaten Shore (by a single point), Shore having beaten Dowd (also 7-6), and Dowd scheduled to play Frost in the last round, it was too close to call.

Enter Roger Stroud of Leighton-Linslade – he only won four games in total but had a huge influence on the final outcome of the tournament, when he effectively ended Frost's challenge and then, in the penultimate round beat Shore too.

Shore must have thought that he was 'done for', but there was more drama

on the adjoining court where Dowd's attempted jump grievously peeled Frost through hoop five in the pair's final game, and that proved to be the pivotal score that earned Frost the win (and yet another 7-6).

So it boiled down to Shore needing to win his own last-round game against Richmond Park's Michael Bilton to get level again on wins with Dowd, in the knowledge that his 'head to head' win over Dowd earlier would be the clincher.

Poor Dowd could only watch, as indeed did the rest of the field, as, rather nicely, the crucial game was the last to finish.

Bilton made Shore work, but the High Wycombe man had shown good control throughout the tournament, with centre ball clearances and jump shots being his main weapons. And it was with a latter-style stroke that he took the National B-Level title at the tenth.

CA Council member Terrey Sparks made the presentation and complimented all the competitors on a terrific, closely-contested tournament, played almost always in the best of spirits.

Finishing order: 1 Ian Shore (13 wins, from 15 games); 2 Peter Dowd (13); 3 David Frost (12); 4 Roger Sutton (9); 5 David Widdison (9); 6 Keith Southern (8); 7 Graham Good (8); 8 Andrea Huxley (6); 9 Michael Bilton (6); 10 Garry Greenwood (6); 11 Jayne Stevens (6), 12 Roger Goldring (6); 13 Chris Heath (5); 14 Geoff Johnson (5); 15 Andrew Carpenter (4); 16 Roger Stroud (4).



Championships

Mulliner tops the Selectors' First Eight

Stephen Mulliner won the CA Selector's First Eight GC tournament for the Musk's Cup which was contested by what was probably the strongest field ever assembled for the event, **reports Tobi Savage**. This was most fitting as it is the third ranked GC Championship behind only The Open and The English National Singles Championship (Ascot Cup) in prestige, and was staged at the suitably prestigious Roehampton Club.

This year saw a change of format which introduced two more competitors to the field, so now the AC code was mirrored as an 'eight'. Another change was that instead of the 'all play all' block deciding the title, a knock-out phase was introduced.

As far as performances go, the Roehampton members were certainly treated to some top quality GC as, in particular, Harry Dodge played with his usual brilliance and Stephen Mulliner demonstrated his strengths well.

The field had an interesting mix of power players and steady performers and

there was an abundance of distance hoop running, long roquets and immaculate positional play executed. Dodge emerged from the block having dropped only one game, Mulliner took a comfortable second, and both Lionel Tibble and Martin French also qualified in third and fourth places.

In the semi-final round, Dodge put in a clinical performance against French to take the match in two, while Tibble made Mulliner work exceptionally hard for the win, taking the third game to the thirteenth hoop, which warranted a Mulliner fist pump upon scoring.

The final was a bit of a soggy ordeal, as we had faced pretty consistent rain throughout the third day. CA Chairman Tim King (very kindly) set to work with a sponge roller to dispatch the puddles that had emerged on the North Boundary – this worked like a charm removing the standing water!

Mulliner and Dodge are both incredibly strong players and, as both were on song, the clearances just kept on coming. Mulliner played well to take the first game



7-5. Dodge took a comfortable lead in the second but Mulliner came back from 4-1 down to 4-3, before the former played very well to take control of hoop 8, which was the pivotal hoop in the game. Mulliner played a great blocking shot to take control of 9, but Dodge scored 10 and 11 to win 7-4.

The third game was a little less nail-biting, as Mulliner produced a commanding 5-1 lead and closed the match at 7-2.

John Bowcott donned his CA hat to present Mulliner with Musk's Cup and thank Roehampton for being terrific hosts.

The 2015 'First Eight' – 1 Stephen Mulliner, 2 Harry Dodge, 3= Martin French and Lionel Tibble, (k-o non-qualifiers) Nick Archer, Tobi Savage, William Gee and Tim King.

Joel Taylor played the most consistent croquet of the weekend to end up a clear winner of the CA's Second Tier GC Selection event for The Kate Jones Memorial Trophy.

The manager and **reporter Tim King**, had decided to apply yet another new format, that this time mirrored that of the AC Eights, with the Hamptworth-hosted tournament to be decided by a double round robin of games.

GC often adopts a best-of-two format for block play but that involves playing the two games back to back. A double round robin works well for either an eight or a six in GC over the two days of a weekend. On this occasion, only six players were available, so each game became a 19 pointer.

Saturday saw six games completed, which left four games for the Sunday, and enough time for play-off games in the eventuality that there was a tie to break. Not all games were close but the final results indicated overall competitiveness.

William Ormerod was the defending champion but finished last this time round but his results included two 9-10 losses, which would otherwise have put him close up with the rest of the players. He did, however, maintain his usual exemplary standards of gentlemanly conduct in terms of own mental composure and effusive

Selectors' Second Six Tidy Taylor is tops

compliments to opponents who played skilful shots in even in his tightest of games.

Tom Weston was the only player who joined Taylor at the end of Day 1 on four wins, but with Tim King and Andrew Dymond just one victory adrift, much was still in the balance.

Sunday became interesting when the slowest game in the penultimate round involved Ormerod keeping in close touch with Taylor, who prolonged the drama by failing to get his first approach to the running side of hoop 19. When he did finally engineer the chance he needed and ran the hoop from the boundary, it was fitting way to achieve certainty of his tournament win, with one round still to play.

Taylor achieved this success in only his fourth ranking GC tournament, having honed his skills in AC and he plays his clearances with calm, controlled precision.

He will, without doubt, continue to learn from more exposure to the different positions of GC, and will progress further up the rankings.

The 2015 'Second Six' – (1) Joel Taylor, (2) Tim King, (3) Andrew Dymond & Chris Roberts, (4) Tom Weston, (6) William Ormerod.

Yorkshire Open - ESCN qualification event - Egyptians rule the roost

Egypt's Amr El Ibieri beat countryman Salah Hassan 7-2, 6-7, 7-6 in an exciting climax to the Yorkshire Open at the Ripon Spa Hotel Club, which was the final qualifier for this season's English National Singles Championship. The Egyptians dominated this Yorkshire tournament with their third player Mohamed Kareem also making it to the semis, after brushing aside host Samantha Thompson, to leave Colchester's Chris Sheen as the only English player to feature in penultimate round of the knock-out. Phyllis Court's Carole Jackson, playing under the South African flag, had taken Hassan to 6-7 in the decider of their quarter-final encounter but, that aside, the Egyptians had it all their own way.



Association Croquet



Chapman champions All the President's Men

The President's Cup ~ The Selectors' First Eight ~

Paddy Chapman led all the way but had to survive a late scare to win a close President's Cup this year.

He got off to a terrific start with a first game QPO (quadruple peel on opponent) to beat Samir Patel and then followed that with a QP (quadruple peel on his own ball) to record what proved to be a crucial victory

over David Maugham.

A further QP and TPO (triple peel on opponent) did for Stephen Mulliner and President's debutante Alain Giraud respectively, as Chapman cruised to end the first day undefeated.

The in-form Jack Wicks halted Chapman's progress in the fifth round, but he only lost twice thereafter, to James Death and then in the penultimate round to Maugham, who had emerged as his closest challenger.

This meant Chapman had to win his last round game against Jeff Dawson, which he did with a flourish and another QP, to end one victory ahead of Maugham.

New Zealander Chapman to become the first President's Cup winner to have competed under a foreign flag since 2008.

Finishing order: Paddy Chapman 11 wins, David Maugham 10, Jack Wicks 8, Stephen Mulliner 7, Samir Patel 7, James Death 5, Jeff Dawson 4, Alain Giraud 4.

Hopgood delivers the goods at Chairman's Salver

~ The Selectors' Second Eight ~

James Hopgood won a tense final round game against Ian Lines to win the Chairman's Salver for the second time.

Mirroring the Presidents Cup scenario, Hopgood, who had led throughout, suffered a penultimate round reverse from his nearest rival, Duncan Reeve, meaning that his final game was a 'must win' to be sure of his title.

The foundations of his success in this

campaign were laid right at the beginning, when he recorded six straight victories and he was two games to the good over Reeve and Lines for a day and a half before the late scare.

Finishing order: James Hopgood 11, Duncan Reeve 10, Ian Lines 9, Ian Burridge 6, Marcus Evans 6, Chris Williams 6, David Goacher 4, Matt Holmes 4.



Panther kills them at the Spencer Ell

~ The Selectors' Third Eight ~

The Panther, David Harrison-Wood (below), won the Spencer Ell with a round in hand, **reports Dave Kibble.**

The games worthy of note were Panther v Rachel Rowe in round 3, which saw a very lengthy pegged-out game after Rowe had pegged one off at the end of a triple peel, expecting to hit-in easily afterwards.

Panther played very conservatively and accurately, never allowing Rowe an easy or unguarded shot; but eventually he blobbed rover giving Rowe an easy finish.

In round 8, again Panther hit peelee after rover on a triple peel and pegged two off leaving his peg ball verses vs. Richard M Smith on 6.

Smith hit and rolled off 6 from the east boundary giving himself a rush to 1-back.

He ran it hampered and rolled up to a six yard 2-back, which he also ran but failed to approach 3-back, sending Panther almost to the east boundary.

Panther centre-balled the peg!

In the final round, Dave Kibble made good progress with a sextuple but had exhausted his luck by the time he came to an 18-inch slightly angled rover peel. The peel went cleanly through but his striker's ball hit the wire and bounced to the side.

Budleigh Salterton CC had made the players very welcome, prepared the lawns to a high standard, and cut them and set the hoops before play each day.

Despite there being only eight players, a volunteer was found each day to cook up an excellent lunch and tea with a choice of four splendid fresh cakes each afternoon.

What more could any player expect?

Finishing order: David Harrison-Wood 11 wins, Dave Kibble 9, Sarah Hayes 8, Rachel Rowe 7, Mark Ormerod 6, Richard M Smith 6, Luc Berthouse 5, Jamie Mussi 4.

Murray slips but Murray sips from Treasurer's Tankard

~ The Selectors' Fourth Eight ~

Surbiton's Sam Murray (below) was undefeated after nine rounds of this season's Treasurer's Tankard, but then lost four of the next five, threatening a Sam Murray / Martin Murray play-off on the Monday evening, **reports James Hawkins.**

Martin played Eights debutants James Hawkins and Andy Myers on the final day and saw both of them hit their last shots to steal wins from behind, allowing Sam an outright win by one game.

Finishing order: Sam Murray 10 wins, James Hawkins and Martin Murray 9, Andy Myers 8, Annabel McDiarmid and Nelson Morrow 6, Dave Trimmer and Ian Vincent 4.



Photographs this page by Samir Patel, Dave Kibble and Chris Roberts.

et Championships

Maugham's 31st win extends his remarkable Regionals record

The Southern and Northern Championships

David Maugham won the South of England Championship at Compton (Eastbourne) and lifted the O'Callaghan Gold Cup for the fourth time, **reports Roger Wood.**

Maugham's appearances in the finals of 55 Regional Championships since 1989, 31 of which he won (including a clean sweep of all four in 1998), is a truly remarkable record.

Only Robert Fulford (34 finals, 26 wins) comes anywhere near that record, with the formidable Miss DD Steel (10 wins, the last in 1952, admittedly in the days when there were only two regional championships) coming, what seems, a poor third.

From the semi-finals onwards it was best-of-five games. The four seeds duly found their way to those semis where Jamie Burch beat Ed Duckworth +18tp -12otp +13tp +17, and Maugham beat Jack Wicks +26tp +26tp -26tp +13tpo.

In the final Maugham was on top form making controlled breaks and strong leaves whenever he was with the balls. Burch's shooting was not quite as consistent as it

was when he was champion in 2013 and 2014 and this gave Maugham the edge for victory +22tp +16tp -6otp +12tpo.

Meanwhile the Swiss was won in fine style by Mark Ormerod. He beat both Jack Wicks (fresh from a Compton speed record win: +26tp in 28 minutes flat - over Nigel Polhill) and Ed Duckworth to win the Sussex Union Cup for the first time.

No sextuple attempts succeeded but there were triples aplenty with 11 of the 14 players achieving at least one, and more than half the games were won with peeling turns. David Maugham took the peeling prize with nine triples from ten games.

~

Details are a bit thin about the **Northern Championship** which preceded the Southern, except that Maugham won again, beating Chris Williams +6tp, +17, -18tp, -17tp, +15tp in the final.

~

Maugham also won the Grade 2, 47th **Championship of Surrey** beating Mark Avery in the final +5tp +17tp +15tp.



Reeve is Euro King

Duncan Reeve of High Wycombe, representing Scotland, won the European Championship at Southwick in mid-September, **reports Ray Hall.**

The Championship is run by The European Croquet Federation and has been played since 1992.

A total of 16 players had been nominated from the Federation's 20 members - Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, England, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Isle of Man, Italy, Jersey, Latvia, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal, Scotland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Wales. One of the Spanish nominees was unable to attend and so manager Cliff Jones called in local member Alan Cottle who was fresh from winning the Challenge (and Gilbey) A-Class the previous week.

Four all-play all blocks qualified eight players for a knockout phase and all eight places were claimed by English players.

The rest, including those from Germany, France, Spain and Austria dropped out into the Plate contest which was won by Germany's Bruno Hess.

In the Championship semis saw Annabel McDiarmid beat Jim Field and Reeve got past Sam Murray to set up an England v Scotland climax.

McDiarmid took the first game in that best-of-three final, but Reeve rallied to win with the second game and an interactive decider too, so left the court as European Champion. (Photo by Ray Hall)



Hawkins returns to steal Fifth Tier event at death

~ The Selectors' Weekend ~

Leo Hawkins showed nerves of steel to win the final of this year's Selectors' Weekend, **reports Rich Waterman.**

Faced with both of his clips on hoop 1 and his opponent, Omied Hallam, on peg and rover, Hawkins refused to be defeated and eventually triumphed 26-24.

Hallam was a worthy runner-up, having been in fine form over the three days, including a TPO on Colin Hemming in a 26-13 win in his semi-final.

The other defeated semi-finalist was Nick Steiner who lost in a close match to Hawkins 26-21. Steiner had the consolation of the highest win ratio (5/7) amongst the remaining active players in the Swiss that continued as a consolation.

The first two days of flexible Swiss had been a tightly contested affair on excellent courts at Colchester. The lawn pace slowed

after rain on the second day and brought several players back into contention.

At the end of day two Hawkins, Hallam, Steiner and Alan Chance had qualified for the semi-finals with Chance topping the table on 5/6.

Unfortunately he had to withdraw overnight due to illness, so a six-way 'corner 4, two-ball-break' play-off was instigated by manager Colin Hemming, which he proceeded to win himself and so claim the vacant semi-final berth.

The tournament saw two TPs from Tim Jolliff and the TPO from Hallam, who also narrowly missed out on an STP.

Competitors: Leo Hawkins, Omied Hallam, Nick Steiner, Colin Hemming, Alan Chance, Tim Jolliff, Steve Woolnough, Chris Roberts, Peter Thompson, Andrew Willis, Keith Ross, Derek Watts, Rich Waterman and Owen Pugh.



August

There was just no stopping David Maugham at the **Tyneside Advanced** weekend where he won all seven of his games and completed five sextuple peels in the process.

~

The knockout for the **Compton's COWhorn** was dominated by Roger Tribe playing beautifully tidy controlled breaks which, once established, never looked like going awry, *Roger Wood*. Only Robin Brown succeeded in taking a game from him and the final against Luc Berthouze, played as super-advanced, was won by two orderly triple-peels.

Meanwhile Robert Wilkinson, having narrowly lost his first round knockout game to Dave Kibble, spotted the Ace Peeler's helmet, announced himself determined to win it and proceeded to do so in impressive style by beating all seven of his Swiss opponents (six with peeling finishes, including three consecutive +26tp wins).

~

A wildcat railway strike by model engineers in **Norwich** robbed finalist Jonathan Toye (handicap 7), of his ride on the Eaton Park model railway, and a missed peg-out robbed him of victory at the **Chalkhill Mallet** tournament. The ensuing three-ball ending allowed Owen Pugh (8) to demonstrate his unique take on Monte Carlo croquet to win +1, and end the weekend undefeated on five wins, *reports Nick Harris*.

~

Budleigh Salterton's August week saw all classes well patronised as usual, *reports Elaine Marsh*.

In the 14-player A class singles Ian BurrIDGE and Peter Moore reached the final via semi-final wins over Lionel Tibble +26tp and Mike Town +14 respectively. BurrIDGE then won the final +13, +26.

All the other classes attracted a dozen entries. The B class was won by Adam Wimshurst who beat Richard Williamson +9(T), and it was as close as can be in the C and D classes, where respectively Roger Mills beat Jane Babbage and Sam Watts



beat Sally Hunt, +1(T) in both cases.

There were 31 entries for the handicap singles and it all boiled down to a final where Huw Rees beat Adam Wimshurst +22.

Father and son Ian and Euan BurrIDGE won the handicap Doubles from Silvia Dreyer and John Andrews, Tibble beat Ian BurrIDGE 7-4, 7-5 in the GC, and also achieved an tournament double when he took the one-ball event as well.

~



Hurlingham's Annual Tournament was held amid somewhat variable weather, but all events were completed on schedule, *reports Richard Hoskyns*.

First up were the handicap events and in the Centenary Salvagers (Handicap Mixed Doubles), the knock-out final was won by Maggie Holland and Geoffrey Cuttle (Woking) from Elizabeth McKenzie-Gray and Ian McDiarmid (Woking) in a close finish against time. In the unrestricted handicap singles, the main event – the Jubilee Cup – was won by Joel Taylor (High Wycombe) who beat Tony Elliott (Enfield) 26-24.

In the final of the Baillieu plate, Alain Giraud (Ealing) pegged-out both his and the host's Tom Coles' balls leaving the other two balls for hoop 1. Giraud went on to win the ensuing one-ball struggle that had the audience enthralled.

The class events, had attracted a very strong entry, with three minus players having to play in the second tier Turner Cup.

In the final of the first tier (Hurlingham Cup) Gabrielle Higgins (Sussex), the winner for the last four years finally met her match and was beaten by a very steady Sam Murray (Surbiton) +16.

In the 2nd tier play-off, Nigel Polhill (Ealing) beat Alan Chance (Hurlingham) +13 and in the 3rd tier Don Beck (Surbiton) overcame Mark Strachan (Hurlingham) +23.

Hurlingham's Rosanne Creighton won the Longworth Cup (Handicap singles for handicaps 10-20 off base 10) and the Hurlingham Doubles Cup (Advanced play mixed doubles) was won by Higgins and Brian Havill (Enfield).

And finally, Wine Coolers and the Ladies' Field Candlesticks (Men's and Women's Handicap Doubles), were won by Mark Ormerod (Hurlingham) and Ray Hall (Dulwich), and Adrienne Sakin (Roehampton) partnering Sudy Harrison (Hurlingham) respectively.

~

Rain seemed to have put paid to any outdoor action at **Pendle** on day one of their handicap tournament, *reports manager Garry Wilson*. However, after everyone had enjoyed an alternative doubles event on the croquet carpet in the local community centre, organised by the club's resourceful chairman Roger Schofield, play finally became possible back on grass at about 4pm. Now with less time, a reorganisation split the players into low and high handicap groups which were eventually won by Ken Jones (Edgbaston) and David Lloyd (Crake) respectively, and Lloyd took the Egyptian event that had run alongside too.

~

The home club's Rich Waterman (*pictured left at the Selectors Weekend*) won the **Colchester Summer Midweek Handicap**, *reports David Haslam*. Waterman came to the fore on day two to lead the pack with five wins from six. The final day went to the final shot when Andrews lost by -1 against Nigel Parkins, and Waterman beat Hemming to secure his overall victory.

~

Once again the Nancy Temple-managed **Sidmouth B-level Advanced** proved very popular and was oversubscribed, but the players arrived to find the courts flooded. The start was delayed until 1pm but things were soon back on track for Howard Bowron (Penrith, *pictured below left in South Africa*), who has been supporting this event for years, to finally emerge victorious.

~

This year's **Letchworth Advanced** field was perhaps the strongest yet, with seven of the nine players having handicaps of scratch or below. Jack Wicks was the star of the show and maintained a 100% record from his six games. His first win was a sub-40 minute sixth turn triple peel against *reporter Nick Mounfield*, who won his next seven games to finish second.

~

Bury's Andy Brandwood returned to the **Edgbaston B-Class** event to defend the Sally Nichols Trophy after



The unusual sight of mechanical diggers and much manpower greeted the arriving players for this season's historic Challenge and Gilbey tournament, *report Julie Horsley and Chris Roberts.*

The Sussex County Club had begun work on the renovation of four more courts and these cut a swathe through the uninterrupted green paradise that one is used to seeing at Southwick. The activity, which included precise laser leveling, provided an alternative interest for players between turns and a veritable larder opportunity for the flocks of seagulls that noisily squawked their heads off as they scavenged for turned out worms and newly sown seeds.

The croquet was exciting too!

Thursday saw the start of the Gilbey handicap event which was played as a straight knock-out with a consolation flexible Swiss. Chris Coull (Sussex County) and manager Julie Horsley won through

winning narrowly on a split tie last year, *reports Ian Slater.* This time he won all five games in fine style including a triple-peel against highest-ranked entrant Clive Goode (Nottingham).

~

Mark Ormerod (Dulwich and Hurlingham) and the host club's Anthony Dix won the A and B classes respectively at the **East Dorset Class Weekend**. Jonathan Powe (Kingston Maurwood), who so impressed at the GC Counties, continued his AC progress with four wins from five, and another handicap reduction to 3.5.

~

Sophie McGlen became the first female winner since 1959 of the Robin Hood Cup for the Handicap Singles event at **Nottingham Week** when she beat Sue Wileman in possibly the first ever final between two women (and both from the host club to boot), *reports Peter Death.*

Next up was the Open Singles with 13 entries, and this was won by the rapidly improving Joel Taylor (High



The Challenge & Gilbey 2015

to the final which Coull won when it was squeezed in later in the tournament.

The Challenge class event was divided into four blocks by handicap and ranking – which is the delight of this and similar events, because players are pitted against their closely matched peers, ensuring the likelihood of close contests throughout.

Block A for the Roehampton Cup was won by Alan Cottle (Sussex County) with five wins out of six, one ahead of runner-up Tim Russell (Roehampton) who had the head-to-head win over Jim Field (Nailsea).

Wycombe) from Jonathan Hills (Colchester) +13tpo, +26. in the final. The B and C Level Singles (for handicaps 3+ and 8+) were won by Michael Finnigan (Nottingham) and Ann Brookes (Colchester). In the D-Level Singles (handicap 14+, full bisque base 10), Viv Staley (Nottingham) was undefeated, and in the Handicap Doubles, Omid Hallam & Ian Draper beat Martin Beacon & Sophie McGlen +12 in an all Nottingham final.

~

John Bowsher says that his wife Sylvia, who is Secretary of Canterbury CC, has been drawing his birthday cards for many years; but he felt the one received this year (pictured left) for his 82nd return had to be shared with other croquet players "... so that they too are able to look back on this year's remarkable August with a smile."

September

The 111th **Annual Tournament at Hunstanton** straddled the month change and saw good competition in four classes, *reports Martin Kolbuszewski.* The top two events could not be decided by 'who beat whom' and so resorted to the 'Hemming

Block B for the Council Cup was won by a previous winner, Mary Knapp (Surbiton) on 5/6. Chris Roberts (Phyllis Court) and David Mooney (Roehampton) both had 4/6, but Roberts got second place, again on who beat whom.

Block C for the Reckitt Cup was won

by Joe Prinold (Surbiton) who had had his handicap cut on the first day from 9 to 6 by the tournament handicapper, which moved him up into this block. Prinold proved the handicapper's judgement by incurring only one loss in this tougher block, a feat also achieved by Neil Cote (Reigate Priory). so the who beat whom rule decided the issue.

Block D for the Stevenson Cup was won convincingly by Brian Shorney (Eardisley) who was undefeated in his five games, including the decider against runner-up, Quiller Barrett, who then had to award all the prizes and thank Sussex County on behalf of everyone.

shoot-out' tie-break, in which each player has ten shots at hoop 1 from A baulk and points are awarded for scoring, jawing or hitting the ironwork.

Nick Harris (Norwich and Hunstanton) won the A class in this fashion, from five others involved in the tie, and the host's Bryan Saddington turned the same trick when a trio tied in the B class. Meanwhile Hunstanton pair Malcolm O'Connell and Charles Ostler won the C and D classes in more regular fashion, Peter Whiting (Letchworth) won the Egyptian event and Neil Chalmers (Norwich) took the Handicap.

~

Ian Lines' new secret weapons are a late start and jetlag, *reports David Brydon.*

Having flown in from a business trip to Singapore just three (continued over-leaf...)



play now?



... hours before the others started play at the **Nottingham Open Weekend**, Lines and his steady, measured play seemed quite undisturbed by 36 hours' lack of sleep.

At the end of day one he was undefeated on four wins but hard-pressed by Miranda Chapman and manager Debbie Lines.

The manager had sidelined the Lines v Lines meeting until Day 2 and the game was then adjourned after wife uncharacteristically missed an easy two-yarder after 3-back, and husband abandoned his place in the lunch queue to start propelling brown towards B-baulk to take the lift. Then he recalled that he was playing pink and white! The ROT (referee of tournament) eventually decided that lifting - but not playing - oppo's ball would be ignored and Mr Lines went on to win that game. His subsequent TP against Nick Parish meant that he retained his title.

~

The **Woking Autumn Advanced** was won by Oxford University's Martin Lester from Woking's own Bill Wood-Roe. The pair reduced their handicaps one notch each to 3.5 and 3 respectively.

~

Richard Stopforth from Bath won the **Sidmouth C-Level** with five wins from his six games having beaten local player Philip Harris, also on five wins, in an earlier game. This was the second year running that Harris was runner-up, *reports Julie Horsley.*

~

Jonathan Toye of Downham Market won five of his six games to win the **Wrest Park Handicap** closely followed by Geoff Johnson (Watford). The highlight of the second day was when the host's David Marsh completed a triple peel against scratch club mate Bryan Harral, which was the first triple peel executed at a handicap event on the new Wrest Park courts.

~

Tudor Jenkins won the **Solomon Cup at Southwick** in brilliant sunshine defeating Sussex clubmate Alan Cottle in the final, +12, + 8. Having lost the first game Cottle sought to take advantage of Jenkins' tactic of going to peg, whilst his other ball was still for hoop 3, by making an all-round break and pegging off his opponent's forward ball. Unfortunately, Cottle over hit his stroke and pegged himself out too. From the contact Jenkins made a seven hoop two-ball break to take a commanding lead which he maintained to the finish.

The B Class 'Sussex Tumbler' was won by Daphne Gaitley (Sussex) on the who beat whom rule after a three-way tie.

Croquet makes a comes back at two Country House estates

The Federation of East Midlands Croquet Clubs were called in to advise on the setting-up of a new court at **Kedleston estate** (north of Derby) and their representatives were then invited along to the official opening of the new boutique hotel at the country house.

The Derby Brewing Company, a family concern founded in 2004, had taken a bold step in converting a 1761 property that had been owned since the twelfth century by the Curzon family.

The official opening was performed by Helen, Viscountess Scarsdale, in the presence of local dignitaries and other

invited guests. It had been hoped that croquet could be demonstrated, but construction delays meant that the small lawn had only just been laid and no play was possible.

However, the presence of 'croquet whites' aroused considerable interest, and suitable leaflets were left for subsequent distribution to hotel guests.

The Kedleston Country House offers fine dining and



is worth considering for croquet players visiting Derby. **Lawrence Whittaker reports.** Pictured ready to play are: Chris Jackson, Lawrence Whittaker, Patricia Duke-Cox, Eileen Buxton and Derek Buxton (photo by Bob Thompson)

Croquet came to Ham House in SouthWest London on a sunny summer weekend, as Jaques of London held two of their Family Fun days there, in conjunction with the National Trust, *reports David Cook.*

Along with other outdoor games, five short lawns were laid out for croquet and lots of people, with lots of children, came to have a go. Members of Ember CC, in Esher, joined Ben Jaques and his son Tom, in providing instruction and assistance, which were eagerly welcomed.

Faint hopes of finding new club members were dashed as so few of the visitors were local, but helpers found sufficient

reward from the enthusiasm of the mostly novice players, and the congenial surroundings, marred only by the house being



shrouded in scaffolding. At a time when there has been press talk of croquet 'croaking' by 2037, it was an opportunity to help maintain public awareness of the game, and perhaps even spark a germ of interest here and there in the next generation of potential players.

Double BEMs celebration at Harwell

Oxfordshire club Harwell were delighted to report the coincidence that two of their members were awarded the British Empire Medal at the same time, *reports Norman Goodall.* Prince Richard, Duke of Gloucester KG GCVO presented the awards in June, to Mary-Elizabeth Shewry (pictured on the left) for services to Science, and to Judy Goodall for services to the community in Chilton, Oxfordshire. Congratulations to them both.





20 year high numbers for Schools and Junior Championships

The 2015 edition of the Schools and Juniors Championships was a roaring success, with numbers so much increased that there was even a scheduling headache for **Manager Marcus Evans**, as he explains . . .

After the successful revival of this event in June 2014, consultation with the current and prospective participants suggested September was a more convenient time in the school year to hold it, with no immediate exams to worry about - provided those who had officially left school that summer were still eligible to participate.

This was duly arranged and resulted in a total of 17 players, by far the highest entry in the 20 or so years I have been associated with the event, and possibly the most ever.

Sadly, last year's winners from Oakham School were unable to defend their titles as the master in charge of croquet at the time has since moved on. Their challengers from last year, **Queen's College Taunton**, returned but with largely different personnel in their two pairings, and were joined by two pairs from the **Royal Grammar School Worcester**, one pair from **Wycombe Abbey School**, and no fewer than three pairs from **Farlingaye High School** (near Ipswich). The original venue of Nailsea was abandoned in favour of the more central Oxford University CC where, Jordan Waters was immensely helpful in securing parking permits and preparing four half-size courts for us when we arrived.

Most of the teams had benefited from coaching by an A-class player/teacher in Tim Jolliff (Taunton), Joel Taylor (Wycombe) and visiting Kiwi Jarrod Coutts (Farlingaye), though with varying amounts of lawn time, so as ever it was anybody's guess who might prove to be the strongest.

The plan was to run the Schools and Junior Championships concurrently and to ensure both events concluded by 5pm: this necessitated one-hour time limits.

While several games had predictably low scores as a result, there were quite a few peg outs - which were impressive achievements with no bisques in play.

In the doubles the three Farlingaye pairs all triumphed, with the senior Worcester team taking the fourth semi-final place with a convincing win.



Attention then turned to the Juniors singles, which saw the addition of James Galpin from **Nailsea CC**, the latest product of the Peter Dyke stable.

After two rounds of singles that straddled lunch, Galpin (Nailsea), Alistair Pryke (Worcester) and Matthew Pugh (Taunton) were still in it and they were joined by Eden Rogers (Farlingaye) who won a delayed game. But by now it was 2pm and the manager was starting to feel a little anxious.

Galpin's attacking play was top good for Pryke in the first semi and the manager was desperately hoping for Pugh to be his saviour and defeat Rogers in the other.

But it wasn't to be when Rogers won a game reduced to 45 minutes and this left the manager with potentially three games to play and only about an hour until 5pm.

The Schools doubles semis were next up, and Pryke and Jack Gibson (Worcester) scored a classic +1t victory over Albi Willett and Liam Flyn (Farlingaye), before all hopes of managerial respectability were dashed when the Farlingaye juniors (Eden Rogers and Ryan Gray) pulled off a shock +1t win against their senior colleagues Chay Hathaway and Sam Parkinson.

With the witching hour virtually upon us, the pragmatic decision was taken to reduce the time limits for the finals to just half an hour each. The singles was played first, and this time Galpin didn't quite get a break together in time to overhaul the lead taken by Rogers (centre photo), who won +2t.

The doubles final was then won in the most dramatic fashion, when in the final turn after time, Gray hit in and then scored a long hoop two to break the deadlock and ensure both trophies went to Ipswich.

I can only apologise to the players for having such short time limits at the end; with hindsight (or perhaps a little foresight - a much better weapon for a manager to deploy) it was too ambitious to fit that many games into the time available.

If next year's event attracts similar (or, hopefully, greater) numbers, we will have to look at alternative solutions such as school or regional qualifiers, or playing the singles and doubles on different days.

All the games were played in the best of spirits, with each participant being a credit to their school and upbringing.

Many thanks to all those who made this event possible: the teachers/coaches, parents/drivers, Ian Plummer and (in particular) Jordan Waters of OUCC, Ian Burrige for collecting and delivering the trophies, and Quiller Barrett for presenting them, and taking the photos too.

The Schools Champions 2015
Farlingaye High School
The Junior Champion 2015
Eden Rogers (Farlingaye HS)

Ask the REF

Dear Ref,

I heard you were seeking tricky refereeing questions.

I offer the following anonymously.

Time is due in an Association Croquet tournament game. Time is called during the stroke period of an air-stroke. In whose turn was time called?

Anon.

Dear Anon,

Tournament Regulation T2(b)

(2) states: "For the

sole purpose of

determining whether

the striker's turn ends

before or after time

is called, it is deemed

that his turn ends and the

adversary's turn begins as soon

as the striker, in the last stroke of his turn:

A. strikes a ball,

B. plays an air-shot..."

So the question boils down to when an

air-shot is played.

The term "air-shot" does not

appear in the Laws, but is

convenient shorthand for

the situation covered by

sub-clause (C) of Law

5(e)(2), which states

that "Otherwise, the

stroke is played when

A - the mallet hits

the ball; or

B - fault is committed;

or

C - mallet misses or does not

reach the ball."

So the referee has to judge whether the

mallet missed, or stopped having failed

to reach, the ball before or after time was

called.



Chris from Henley (not too difficult to work that one out), asks:

Dear Ref,

A few weeks ago I wasn't thinking straight in an AC Advanced game. I was about to take a lift shot from the yard line of the north boundary but well west of the centre line, so not from B baulk. My rather more

alert opponent pointed out my

careless positioning before

I played my shot, and so

I was able to move my

location and perform

the stroke correctly.

Only later did we start

thinking about what

had happened and

several questions came to

our minds.

Should my opponent have

forestalled me in the first place?

Yes, as required by Law 23(c)(2).

Did his intervention amount to advice,

and if so should I have ignored it and

continued with my own plan (even though

I then knew an error was bound to occur)?

No, it was not advice: he was fulfilling

his duty as a joint referee of the

game.

And if, in either scenario,

the stroke had been

played before my

opponent forestalled,

what would be the

remedy?

The error is specifically

covered by Law 27(g).

Provided that it was noticed

before the third stroke of your

turn, you should place your ball in

baulk and replace any balls moved in the

stroke(s) you played. You can then restart

your turn with that ball, unless it had

already ended (e.g. by missing your lift

shot).

Photos: James Death and Ian Lines refereeing hampered shots (Chris Roberts)

High Wycombe get on song

High Wycombe broke new ground in the summer when they hosted their first event for an outside group since moving to their new location north of the town a couple of years ago.

A new angle that others might like to follow-up on is explained by Club member David Bourne who said "The choir is a small one and not long formed, so I didn't expect

as many takers, but the prospect of croquet with bring your own Pimms took off.

We were a bit daunted at having to cater for 22 adults and a dozen children aged from 3 to 16, but thanks to good weather and the help of club members the event was a great success. It provided useful income for the new clubhouse fund and good publicity for our Club."

My journey to becoming a GC Championship Referee by Richard Brooks

When I read in April about the new scheme to appoint Championship Referees for Golf Croquet, I was interested and investigated what the requirements were.

With a little research on the CA website I found that I was soon going to meet the criteria needed to be able to apply.

I had a grade above 1800 on the ranking list and had regularly taken part in suitable tournaments during the last five years. The third requirement was that I needed to have been a qualified referee for a minimum of two years, a milestone which I was going to achieve during the following month.

So the scene was set and I decided it would be my ambition to be one of the first to take the championship referee exam. I met Martin French at the Surbiton GC Open and was encouraged to apply when I reached the two-year qualification period.

The following weekend I played in the Sidmouth Open tournament where Kevin Ham (an examining referee) was acting as the ROT (Referee of Tournament). He suggested that he appoint me as the 'Referee In Charge' of the final. This would not count towards becoming a Championship Referee but would be a useful experience. Referees in Charge are rarely used in GC games, but the finalists Chris Roberts and Tony Forbes, were both quite happy for me to officiate.

Fast forward two weeks - I had now reached the required two-year qualification mark so sent in my request to take Championship Referee exam.

A date was set during the Open Championships and Examining Referees were to be Martin French and Tim King.

I don't think I should give too many details of the actual test but can reveal that it was an entirely a practical test with quite a high pass mark of 80%. There was also a 'must pass' element of general refereeing skills, including being able to give authoritative and speedy decisions.

The examining referees approach was professional, but with a friendly manner which helped to put the my nerves at ease. I would certainly encourage any qualifying GC referees to take the test, especially if they are regular tournament players.

After a few minutes get-together by the two examiners, I was told that I had achieved 88% and was welcomed as a Championship Referee, the first to qualify under the new scheme.

Winter lawn maintenance

During the winter months it is important to keep croquet lawns trimmed to around 8 to 10mm. If you allow it to grow unchecked the grass will become leggy and the sward will thin out. Regular mowing encourages the growth of tillers (new grass shoots) which help to thicken up the sward.

Check to see if moss has invaded your lawns. It must be treated now if you haven't dealt with it already. When ripe the spores explode in a smoke-like haze that carries in the wind, and readily inhabits bare areas of turf. So be sure to apply moss control in the autumn and spring to keep it at bay.

With the right maintenance programme it is not necessary to scarify. In fact it usually does more damage than good. It is an excellent way to generate bare turf, which is a perfect home for moss, weeds and meadow grass. When the first scarifiers were introduced the market was flooded with propaganda to encourage scarification so that they could sell the machines – this still goes on today. There are plenty of old books, websites and groundsmen that still recommend it as a good practice, but it isn't. It is possible to improve croquet lawns without beating the hell out of the grass plants. How? By composting the thatch in situ. Is this 'cutting edge', 'up-to-the minute' and high tech? No – it is just old-fashioned greenkeeping. The STRI have an interesting series of articles about Disturbance Theory. It is only available to contributors, but if you want to know more, drop me an e-mail.

I keep banging on about aeration. Bacteria need oxygen and water and food. Aeration provides the first two, and the food is the thatch that is sitting in the root zone. Thin tines that penetrate a couple of inches are all you need – a Sarel Spiker is perfect. Avoid the big heavy tines that go in 10 inches; they will do more damage than good. - **Duncan Hector**

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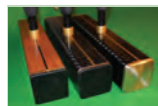
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The Coaching Corner by Roger Staples, *Coaching Committee Chairman*

This is my last contribution as Chairman of Coaching Committee.

I wish my successor well and trust you will find his endeavours helpful to all of you. I take the opportunity through this column to thank all the committee for their support over the last few years. Many have contributed to this column and I hope you have found their offerings interesting. Another article from Bob Thompson follows below.

And finally, I offer my congratulations to the following CA members for achieving Coaching Awards:

Club Coach (Yellow)

Graham Tucker (Sussex Co.), Peter Lowe (Tyneside) and Peter Petrie (Cheltenham)

Golf Coach (White)

Klim Seabright (Cheltenham)

Building a four-ball-break

1 Take your time, plan to succeed

Take your time in making a decision. Stop, think and decide on your planned course of action before you start.

2 Pioneer at your next hoop

If there is no ball at your next hoop, your priority should be to play one of the balls to that hoop, with the intention of continuing

to play the other balls to improve your chances of making a break.

3 Movable pivot ball

Initially, beginners are generally coached to place their pivot ball somewhere in the middle of the court. However, as you progress your four-ball-break, a pivot ball can be more useful to you if it is closer to the hoops that you are attempting to run.

4 Taking a bisque

Do not wait for a better opportunity to arise. Use one bisque NOW to improve a bad situation.

5 Start with the most difficult ball

When considering the use of a bisque, your first thoughts should be send your striker's ball to the furthest ball on the lawn first. Whatever course of action you take will bring that ball towards the other balls.

6 Hitting in, using only one bisque

Once you have decided which ball you intend to hit with your striker's ball, consider all options open to you. Is it wise to go all-out to roquet the object ball (risking sailing past it), or is it better for your striker's ball to finish close to the object ball and to use a bisque to be certain of hitting the roquet, and then to commence your break?

By not hitting in (with the first shot) you

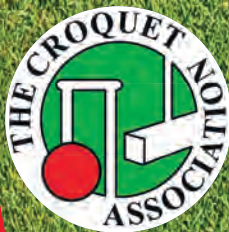
will be using a bisque to start the break. However, if you are successful in hitting in, then you may be required to perform a long roll croquet shot, and depending on your ability, may finish up taking an extra bisque anyway, if your croquet shot goes astray.

How many times have we seen players 'windscreen wiping' and using up their bisques by missing a roquet, not once but several times?

7 Play balls on the boundary

In the course of building a break, you will no doubt have occasion to shoot at a ball that is either on, or just in from, the boundary. Always consider where your ball will be placed on the yard line if and when your ball goes off the court. Go over to the boundary and imagine where the balls will be placed. You can make the best use of the situation to set up a useful rush for your next break.

8 Cut Rush - For beginners, a cut rush can be an extravagant shot. It looks brilliant if it comes off, but at what cost if you miss the object ball? Until you master straight rushes, it may well be advisable to aim centre of striker's ball to centre of object ball. As your handicap reduces, cut rushes may well become part of your repertoire.



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Evidence found of Croquet in 1866

At least four years before the first rules of croquet were codified in 1866, our sport was a seemingly commonplace pastime, as evidence discovered by Middlesbrough CC's Tom Banfield reveals:

Kiplin Hall is a fine 1620s Jacobean mansion situated between Richmond and Northallerton in North Yorkshire. It was owned by four related families until the final private owner, a feisty spinster called Bridget Talbot, died in 1971 aged 85.

She was passionately interested in her own family history, and assembled some 70 scrapbooks relating to the Hall and the family in late Victorian and Edwardian times.

She also accumulated about 140 original family letters dating from the 1830s onwards. Since her grandfather was Henry, 18th Earl of Shrewsbury and premier earl of England, the picture they paint is mostly of a leisured aristocratic life.

The letters are steadily being transcribed by volunteers and one in particular may interest students of croquet history (see illustration). The author is Constance, Marchioness of Lothian and Bridget's aunt, writing to her mother Sarah, Countess of Shrewsbury and the sister of the Marquis of Waterford.

It was written from Blickling Hall, Norfolk, and is dated 20 July 1862. It reads: *"... I have heard all about the party from D. Dunglass who is here. There were only a lot of married people and a host of men and croquet all day long."* I suspect that in July the Talbot family were probably at their town residence, Ingestre House, 36 Belgrave Square, rather than their country seat at Ingestre near Lichfield, so the location would probably be in or close to London. Clearly Constance thinks nothing of it - croquet is just a commonplace pastime for the aristocracy. She spells the game 'croquet' rather than any earlier version such as 'crokey' and is confident that her mother will know exactly what she means. Yet this is four years before the first rules of our modern game were codified at Chastleton House in 1866.

Fortunately before she died, Bridget set up a Trust to own and run Kiplin Hall, and it is now a most delightful tourist attraction, well worth a visit. Do not expect to see the letters, however, as they are held at the County Record Office in Northallerton.

Tom Banfield, Middlesbrough CC

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