

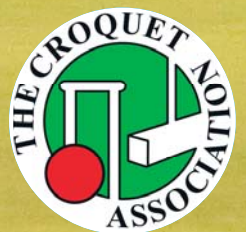
*The*

*Issue 362 July 2016*

# CROQUET

*Gazette*

**Stephen Mulliner  
wins the AC  
World Championship**



# From our files researched by Frances Colman

## 10 years ago - 2006



### Alan Oldham

(from the Chairman's Column) –

It is with a mixture of sadness at his loss and thanksgiving for his life that I received the news that Alan Oldham had died, a month after travelling to view a total eclipse. His outstanding contribution to the Association is in an obituary in this issue compiled by Stephen Mulliner...

~

### Media afternoon at Cornwall CC –

The media braved a wet and windy day at Cornwall CC at Porthpean. They enjoyed a light-hearted game of Golf Croquet, and watched some demonstrations of techniques and tactics in the more sophisticated version of this fascinating sport, Association Croquet. The visitors included (reporters from the) Cornwall Guardian, Cornwall Today, BB Radio Cornwall and St Austell Tourist Information.

~

### Surbiton Speed Doubles & a croquet wedding –

The manager was absent from this year's tournament, writes Kevin Carter. Getting married was a reasonable excuse so we forgave Samir (Patel) and his new wife, Anna Noble (George's daughter), for depriving us of his services. They more than made up for it by providing a superb curry – a sort of up-market take-away for 150 people at the club on Saturday evening. It was great to see bus-loads of sari-clad ladies from India, Tanzania, Fiji and elsewhere trying side-style croquet shots.

Team colours are encouraged for the speed doubles, and some took this a stage further – for instance we had a pair of Mexican bandits.

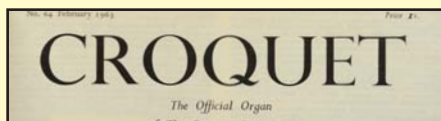
But the plaudits for dressing up went to Chris 'Elvis' Patmore and Chris 'Elvis' Farthing, complete with wigs and a guitar! ...

In the final Gina Lewis and Philip Eardley beat Avril Machiavelli and yours truly in a final that had everything: brilliant shooting, fluky peels, referee calls for contested wiring lifts and hoop faults, a peg-out, and time called...

~

**Mitsubishi** are proud sponsors of the 2006 British Open Croquet Championships.

## 50 years ago - 1966



Dear Sir,

In a handicap doubles, red pegs out Black and itself hits the peg. Blue roquets Yellow and lays up for its hoop. Having no shot at Blue, I am told that Yellow may claim a lift.

Since the Red and yellow partnership has removed two balls from the court, it seems grossly unjust that it should be able to demand an open shot to be supplied by the opposition's single ball, and I feel strongly that if this is the Law, it should be amended.

Had Blue left yellow on the wire, in a hoop, or on the peg, a lift would be fair enough; but I cannot see why Blue should be compelled to leave itself open since it is not responsible for the fact that Yellow cannot hit Red or Black

Yours faithfully,  
W.H.Austin.

~

Dear Sir,

I would like to comment on two decisions in the April number of 'Croquet'.

Firstly I consider the imposition of a time limit of 9 hours on all matches consisting of the best of three games deplorable.

Although this would only be applicable to those matches in the Mens & Womens and Open Championships that go to a third game, yet it is quite conceivable that at the end of the second game with the score at 1-1, the bulk of the 9 hours would have elapsed and the first player to get a break or perhaps even run the first hoop in the final game would be the winner on time.

This would be quite farcical for a Championship event. . .

Secondly, it has been decided that travelling and overnight expenses be paid to the area finalists in a glorified All-England Handicap to celebrate the Croquet centenary year 1967.

This is in blatant contravention of Regulation 10 and may foreshadow further financial help to players, thus leading croquet into the realms of 'Shamateurism' and eventually to professional players.

... Would not energy and money be better spent on attempting to publicise and build up the Open Championship in 1967?

Yours faithfully, A.A.Reed.

## 100 years ago - 1916



### ROLL of HONOUR

#### Abbot, Capt. D.W.S.E.

York and Lancashire Regiment – Killed in action September 26th, 1915.

#### Brandon, Capt. A.C.

Hampshire Regiment, Killed in action on Jan. 21st 1916.

#### Browning, Capt. F.H.

Killed in action in August 1914.

#### Chubb, Capt. G.

Duke of Cambridge's Own (Middlesex) regiment. Killed at the front.

#### Fowler, Lieut. D.C.M.

Killed in action, September 25th 1915.

#### Jones, Lt-Col. F.A., CMG, DSO

(late Welsh Regiment) Commanding the South African Infantry. Killed in action July 11th, 1916.

#### Woodhouse, Lieut. Gordon, RFA, BEF

Killed in action October last.

#### Woodhouse, J.A.H.

Killed in action, February 13th 1915.

Dear Sir,

Among the changes which are taking place during the interval caused by the war, I think we may note that the *Either Ball Game* has entirely superseded the older form, and it is most probable that when croquet is resumed it will be officially recognised as *THE* game, and the older game abandoned. It may, therefore, not be out of place to consider Alternative A as applied to doubles. (*Alternative A is 'alternate turns' with the incoming player allowed to play either ball of their side*). The main advantage is that each player gets an equal number of turns. It becomes impossible for a selfish player to monopolise the game. . . . But it also has considerable advantages in an unequal partnership. The stronger player has two alternatives. He may either go round or partly round and then coach his partner hoop by hoop, or he may adopt the ancient form of keeping with his partner, and making the hoops together, in which case he can do a lot of peeling. The latter is generally the most successful, but either plan makes a very dull game. . . . The Alternative A game is much more lively.

Yours, etc., R.G.Scriven

# Editorial

It has been quite a couple of months for British croquet, with a new AC World Champion in our land, and the hosting of the GC World Team Championships.

Both events are given due prominence in this issue of your magazine which leads with Stephen Mulliner's magnificent victory in Florida.

I was one of a couple of hundred either watching the live streaming (a first for a World Championships I believe) or following the later matches intently into the small hours, as lines of text commentary flowed into my mobile phone - if you were sleeping you missed out!

Massive congratulations to Stephen his magnificent achievement.

England's hosting of the GC World Teams Championship went like a dream, thanks to the planning and execution of various CA officers and committees, together with the volunteer help at host clubs Surbiton, Camerton & Peasedown, Bath and Guildford.

It was super fun for Frances Colman and me to be part of a great week, visiting three of these venues as appointed referees.

My own play saw an upturn too, with an AC win at Woking and a GC success at Sidmouth - all very pleasing.

But I wasn't quite as 'chuffed' as Jose Riva

(if Spaniards get chuffed) when he won the GC Euros and all but threw his hat in the air.

His and his countrymen's absolute delight was wonderful to see and join in with at Budleigh.

On a more sombre note, my previous trip to Budleigh witnessed the sad death of Wells Palace player Ian Telfer on court, and it was a stark reminder of how quickly our enjoyment can be cut short by events far greater than this game we love.

On the opposite page, is a poignant reminder of just that, with a roll call of the fallen croquet players of the Great War, 100 years ago this month.

That we can play our sport and enjoy our lives in relative peace, is thanks to the sacrifice of these heroes and those to come.



## Chris Roberts

**Chris Roberts** Editor

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The  
**CROQUET**  
Gazette



Issue 362 July 2016

**Front cover:** Stephen Mulliner, moments before winning the AC World Championship. Quite a scene and quite result - *Congratulations Stephen!* (great photograph by Samir Patel)

**This page:** The Editor (back row, far right) with fellow referees at the GC World Team Championships at Surbiton - *do you like our day-glow hats?* And the Chairman, looking to the future for both GC and AC.

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# Chairman's Column

During the week of the World GC Team Championship, the Nottingham List (*an e-mail based croquet discussion forum*) was buzzing with differing opinions on the implications of the popularity of GC on the current and future health of AC.

The most negative views could certainly be taken as disrespectful to the significant volunteer effort at Surbiton, Camerton & Peasedown, Bath and Guildford to deliver an excellent event to our international visitors.

Fortunately, the constitution of the CA makes it absolutely clear that croquet encompasses the two major codes of our sport.

Council has a duty to nurture both codes.

The debate, however, did call into question the potential consequences of a report commissioned by Council and

approved in March 2013. This report identified a set of specific recommendations as to how to provide appropriate support for AC.

Turning back to GC, I also learnt in the same week that, for their programme to develop young players, the Egyptians have adopted the mantra: the future - train, believe, behave, enjoy.

I suggest this mantra is equally applicable if we think about AC.

**TRAIN:** we are not going to sustain the population of AC players unless those who love the game pass on their passion to a new generation.

**BELIEVE:** we should not lose faith in the intrinsic viability of AC as a sport that will continue to attract a certain type of player.

**BEHAVE:** respect is the foundation of all fair sporting competition. This respect also demands that the advocates of each code recognise the shared heritage and mutual dependency of both codes. We are too few to risk tearing ourselves apart over our differences.

**ENJOY:** in all our volunteer contributions

to the health of our sport, we are only ever bringing true meaning to our activities when fun is our final objective.

I will lead Council to review the progress of the CA, Federations and Clubs in acting upon the report, "Recommended actions to help Clubs and Federations generate more interest in Association Croquet". Council will want to hear all the positive action that individuals have been taking and any barriers that are preventing success.

Our future is only secure if we can achieve the sustainability of both AC and GC.

*P.S. I am not sure that many of these columns have been written on a journey to the northern tip of Japan. I hope you find my travels have enhanced rather than clouded my perspective!*



**Tim King**

## News from the Croquet Association Office

### Insurance

There has been a significant difference to the insurance provided by the CA this year: Employer's Liability Insurance has been included in the cover provided to clubs as part of the membership benefits of being a full member.

The Association of British Insurers recommended last year that clubs, even if manned and managed purely by volunteers, should have Employer's Liability Insurance. This is because if a volunteer works on a regular basis and an employee/ employer relationship is deemed to exist, then Employer's Liability would apply. Some of our clubs were told last year by their own insurers (for buildings etc) that they needed Employer's Liability Insurance. We investigated this with Endsleigh who confirmed the advice and we negotiated with Endsleigh to provide Employer's Liability Insurance for all our full member clubs at no cost to them.

### CA Diplomas – Deadline for Nominations

There are many people who carry out basic tasks in clubs (and Federations) that keep the sport going: hoop painting, providing teas, sitting on committees, coaching, arranging fixtures – the list goes on.

And this is what the CA Diploma was designed for: recognising club members (who need not be members of the CA) for continued service to their clubs over the years so that the club and the sport benefits. Clubs can nominate members for this award, and should do so by 31st July 2016.

Nominations, which should be no more than 200 words, can be sent to the CA office by email or by post.

Clubs are informed of the outcome of the nominations by the end of August and successful nominees are invited to the AGM at Hurlingham Club to receive their Diplomas.

### Email Addresses

When you are giving your email address to the office, can you please make sure it's clearly written. We've had a few problems this year with scribbled email addresses, that are ultimately revealed (usually after a few bounce backs) to be rather different from the interpretation we put on the handwriting.

### The CA Shop

#### New Line - PFC Mallets

The shop is now the agent for PFC Mallets from Australia. These are new to the market and made from precision-machined

alloy with carbonfibre shafts. They were developed to reduce the effort necessary to send a ball to its destination.

See online for details.

Elizabeth Larsson  
CA Manager



## Patricia D-C on TV



Former CA Chairman Patricia Duke-Cox was collared by the BBC's Mel Giedroyc for a **LIVE** TV interview on The Mall.

Photos by Elizabeth Larsson and Getty Images.

# The CA Shop All you need for croquet.

New this year:

## PFC Hoopmaker Mallets

The CA Shop is now the agent for PFC Hoopmaker Mallets

Made in Australia, these precision-made mallets from aluminium and alloy. They are designed to require less effort to hit the ball and therefore improve accuracy.

The makers have patented their design and aim to provide the highest precision manufactured croquet mallet. As each mallet is perfectly balanced and accurately manufactured to within 90% of one thousandth of an inch, they are completely consistent. They will not absorb moisture or change shape.

[www.croquet.org.uk/shop](http://www.croquet.org.uk/shop)  
01242 233555

**C**A members left behind their mallets when they went to the Queen's Patrons' Lunch in the Mall. But - it seems - they did appear in whites. Well, that might have been the impression, when on arrival in very inclement weather, all were forced to don white ponchos.

Sixty-two members attended, occupying three rows of tables, and the initial poor weather didn't dampen their spirits. It was a unique occasion, which took two years of planning, and the purpose was quite simply to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday and her wonderful achievements over the decades of her reign.

The Mall was filled with 10,000 guests occupying over a thousand tables; each person had a hamper of outstanding quality and free tea was on offer all day.

When one was offered ice cream, it didn't seem to go with the coolish weather, but when one found out it was free, suddenly an ice cream felt like a good idea.

With typical Britishness, the weather then improved dramatically, people got into their hampers and enjoyed the excellent food within (such delicacies as salmon mousse, chicken salad with asparagus, and with some Pimms to provide a most pleasant accompaniment),



## The Patron's Lunch

The Royals then provided the highlight with a walkabout by Prince William, Catherine and Prince Harry.

Prince William and Kate came nearer and nearer to the croquet group, but then they decided they should cross over to the other side. Never mind, Prince Harry came along and entered into brief discussions with one or two croquet members.

Joyce Goldring from Phyllis Court shook his hand, and said "Croquet, Sir" once more to him. Who knows, maybe Prince Harry will add it to his 'To Do list', now or sometime?

Then it was time for the Head of the Family, the person at the very centre of today's celebration.

The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh were seen in the distance, standing up in their car, fully visible to the public, and we craned our necks to get a view. They slowly approached, and then passed unhurriedly by, waving to all

The Queen, dressed in a magnificent pink outfit, touched our hearts, while The Duke (just turned 95!) grinned and looked in great form. We were all so pleased to be at this most special occasion and to wish Her Majesty a heartfelt Happy Birthday.

**Roger & Joyce Goldring, Phyllis Court CC**

croquet was discussed, and then - with the sun bursting through at times - the parades got under way.

Groups of marchers with dancers in attendance came cheerfully processing down the Mall.

They represented six hundred charities and organisations (we didn't miss the Croquet Association placard held aloft!). It was a most colourful and enjoyable spectacle.

## The CA's long Royal patronage

The Croquet Association has enjoyed the Patronage of the reigning monarch since **George V** became Patron in 1910, a few months after his accession to the throne.

The Croquet Gazette from 22 September 1910 contains the short statement from Charles Crawley, the Secretary of the CA:

*"His Majesty the King has been pleased to honour the Croquet Association by becoming its Patron."*

~

Following the death of George V in January 1936, the Croquet Gazette for 2 May 1936 contained the following notification of the Patronage of **King Edward VIII**.

The President of the Association has

received the following letter:

*Privy Purse Office, Buckingham Palace.  
8th April, 1936. - Dear Sir, I am commanded by the King to inform you that His Majesty has been graciously pleased to grant his Patronage to The Croquet Association. Yours truly, (Signed) WIGRAM, Keeper of the Privy Purse'*

~

Following the **abdication of Edward VII** on 11 December 1936, the Gazette for 29 December 1936 contained the following:

'The President of the Association has received the following Memorandum:-  
*The Keeper of the Privy Purse is commanded by The King to state that His*

*Majesty is pleased to intimate to those Societies and Institutions which were recently granted Patronage by King Edward VIII, that they may continue to show the Sovereign as their Patron during the present Reign, unless otherwise notified. - 14th December 1936'*

~

**H.R.H. Queen Elizabeth II**

In the Gazette from December 1952, the minutes of the Council meeting held on 6th November 1952 state:

"A letter was read from the Keeper of the Privy Purse announcing that the Queen has been pleased to grant her Patronage to the Croquet Association".

**Chris Williams, CA Archivist**

## Smokey's GC leaflet found, as old friends look back in time

Dear Editor,

I have just read the letter from Smokey Eades about golf croquet (*Gazette 361*).

He says he and Chris Hudson prepared a leaflet for the CA on golf croquet many years ago which he cannot track down any longer.

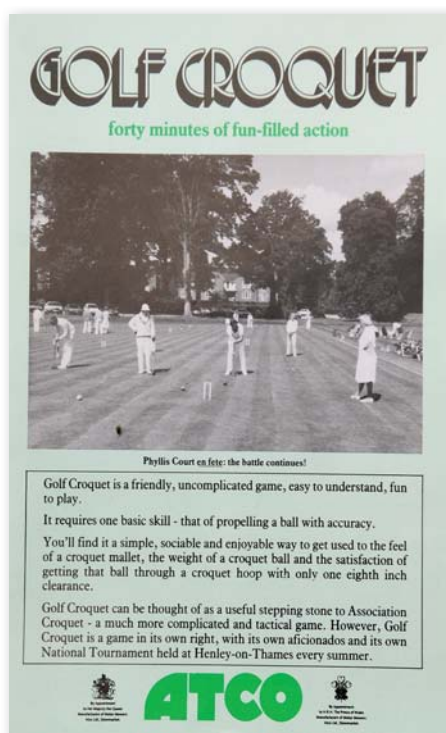
I have a few copies of that leaflet, as well as number of other CA leaflets on both golf croquet and association croquet.

They form part of a collection of material I have from the time my late wife, Judy, was on Council and CA Development Officer for East Anglia.

I will happily send you one of Smokey's, which I would be pleased if you could forward on and remember me to him.

Judy and I first met Smokey many years ago, and played against him and his club, Phyllis Court, for Colworth CC in the Thames Valley Association Croquet Tournaments for a number of years (again many years ago!).

**Tom Anderson,**  
Colworth CC and formerly Wrest Park CC



Dear Editor,

With reference to Smokey Eades' letter in the last issue (*Gazette 361*), his version of GC sounds much more fun than anything regulated by the CA at the time. The 1984 & 1989 laws were of the style "AC laws apply subject to the following modifications" and took only two pages plus a section on handicapping, as I noted in January.

I had met Smokey some time in the 1980s, probably at Hurlingham though I was a member at Southwick in the 80s (of the far country persuasion; my main Club was Harrow Oak), and I recall Smokey practising on the public court at Hove (alas! no longer maintained). Lionel Wharrad had moved to Sussex and became Chairman, amongst other things introducing short croquet.

Partnered by Mrs Bobby Wiggins, I played doubles against him and Moira, and I remember them well. Unfortunately Moira died suddenly and soon after that Lionel moved back to Woking.

**Ray Hall, Sussex County CC**

## Colman was as hot as mustard

Dear Frances Colman (*via the Editor*),

Thank you for including in the April issue (*Gazette 361*, 'From our Files'), my letter from 50 years ago, about the bowl used to serve soup in Market Deeping, Lincs.

Has the CA any record of the Sleaford croquet tournament in existence post 1906?

Being a Colman, have you any connection with the great player Maurice Reckitt who I used to know?

**Yours sincerely, Toby Jessel,**  
Hurlingham CC

**Frances Colman replies:** How lovely that you should have spotted the reprise of your letter all of 50 years on, Toby. I don't believe that I have any connection with Reckitt and Colman (the Mustard producers) or either of the two famous croquet players of yesteryear of the same names. My croquet is strictly in the present era, so I've asked **CA Archivist Chris Williams** to research the answer to your questions.

**Chris Williams writes:**

Tournaments appear to have been played at Sleaford until 1936. The Championship of Lincolnshire was held there from 1929 to 1936. The report on the 1936 Championship states that the four club courts were used and that "the club there is in danger of an all-round break and peg out", because of the low number of entries.

Charles Colman (c1876-c1944) was one of the leading players in the 30s. He won the Opens in 1937; the Men's and the President's Cup in 1938. He played for England in the 1937 MacRobertson Shield. Prichard's History of Croquet says: "He was a stormy and emotional character, seeming to have a chip on his shoulder; ever ready to take umbrage at some imagined slight, he was easily thrown off balance by trifles. Despite this his execution was brilliant and enterprising, and he was one of the most consistent shots."

## Insane croquet

Dear Editor,

I wonder if anyone else spotted the croquet reference in The Sunday Times News Review article this week (*mid-April*) entitled "Broadmoor – a Murderer's Paradise".

It tells how most patients had committed horrifying crimes, but because they had been judged insane, were treated sensitively and encouraged to pursue their hobbies.

An article written in 1897 told how the patients were allowed out each day:

*"In spring fruit trees blossomed against the weathered red brick of the asylum walls. In summer the beds brimmed with flowers, while sycamore and chestnut trees afforded shelter from the sun. A few attendants kept watch as the men played croquet, smoked and chatted..."*

**Esther Jones,**  
Edgbaston CC

## Bernard Neal photo answer

Dear Editor, My answer to the identity of the players in the photo on page 10 of the April issue (*Gazette 361*) is: John Rose (seated), Michael Stevens, and Stephen Mulliner (identified by his socks), but I'm not totally certain. **Nigel Aspinall, Roehampton CC**

Dear Editor,  
Belsay Hall are playing Durham today in a first-round Murphy Shield match. It will be very nice to meet the Durham team again; after all it is 24 days since we met them in a Croquet North league match.

I appreciate the rationale behind zoning the early round or rounds of national competitions but, call us old-fashioned, we enter national competitions to play clubs that we do not meet every year within our Federation, and are therefore not taken aback if we are drawn against clubs from more than 50 miles away.

I have inferred from our experiences over the years in various national competitions that this is a fairly rare outlook on life. The opponents' horror when they discover that Belsay is north of Newcastle-upon-Tyne usually means that a neutral venue is suggested, rather than running the risk of travelling should they lose the toss. 'Neutral' usually means Nottingham (and many thanks to the Nottingham club and Ian Vincent in particular for accommodating us

## World Champion Mulliner is the new Cindy Crawford

Dear Editor,

As I followed the Mulliner v Maloof World AC final on the internet, I was reminded of the recent newspaper articles when the supermodel Cindy Crawford reached the age of fifty, one headline read "Fifty is the new Thirty".

Without pushing the analogy between Messrs Mulliner/Maloof and Mesdames Crawford/MacPherson too far (I am clear who are the prettier) perhaps the Gazette headline should be "Sixty is the New Forty!"

AC players of a more serious bent, should of course note the ending of the final Mulliner/Maloof game. It was a model "straight double (peel)".

The coaching Pods for advanced players, put together by Ian Burridge are a really good initiative.

My thought is that "If you want to be World Champion, and there are plenty of years left, make sure you attend a coaching Pod".

**John Dawson, Chester CC**

## Belsay Hall not shy about travelling far and wide

and opening up for us) which is 170 miles or so away.

170 miles south of Nottingham is around Southampton, so we usually end up travelling significantly further than our opponents. I acknowledge it takes time and money to travel long distances, but if you don't want to travel far, why enter a national competition? Perhaps we should do a Berwick Rangers and compete in Scottish competitions?

I should give honourable mentions to Nottingham, Leighton-Linslade, Broadwas and Bowdon who have schlepped up to Northumberland for matches in the past few years, and we were pleased to play at Bowdon in return recently in the first round of the GC Inter-Club Championship - at least they were from a different federation!

I look forward to being drawn at Budleigh Salterton next year, as they say up here "That'll larn ya"!

**Derek Johnson, Belsay Hall CC**

**Reply from John Bowcott,  
Director of the GC Inter-Club  
'Murphy' Shield.**

Dear Derek,

I see from the updated draw on the CA website that you had an exciting match at Durham.

You are right to notice that the early round of the competition is likely to be a fairly local affair and that the national bit comes later.

Most participants do indeed count their blessings at this stage and centrally based hospitable clubs are spared early requests to use their lawns.

If your letter does encourage other clubs to seek early season travel they should contact me rather than the Gazette as I like to know about these things.

It is even possible that Budleigh Salterton might enter next year and you never know what the 'luck of the draw' may bring.

Bad luck against Durham by the way and very best wishes for the rest of the season.

**John Bowcott,  
Director GC Inter-Club 'Murphy' Shield**

## Call for support for croquet's enablers

Dear Editor,

The building bricks of croquet need support.

As someone who has played in many tournaments around the country over the years, I have arrived at the following conclusions.

The tournament scene relies on the goodwill and support of hundreds of volunteers, players and club members. It is a great success because they give of their time and money to make it happen.

We are all guilty of taking this for granted assuming it will continue year after year.

How could we better support the structure to ensure its future?

My suggestion would be for the CA and federations to jointly sponsor the courses for coaches, referees and tournament managers (CA 75% Federation 25%).

These roles are the "enablers" of the game, from club through to the top level, and there is a shortage of people for all three.

Individuals give of their time and commitment, the least we could do to support and encourage them is to remove the course fees.

**Don Beck, Surbiton CC**

## An extra turns/bisques app anyone?

Dear Editor,

I was wondering whether anyone of our members is able to come up with an app that calculates the bisques/ extra turns for a game, as there are so many options (association/ golf, doubles/singles, game length, lawn size, . . .)

The users could select various options on such an app, enter their handicaps and discover who has the bisques/extra turns and how many.

The people who need to use the bisques, are the least likely to understand or to be able work it out!

**Brian Wainman, Plymouth CC**

# More letters to the Editor



## Routine time limits? 'Count me out'

or extreme weather could exceptionally require time limits, even when events have committed to untimed matches.

The avoidance of 'blanket' timed matches should not prevent Tournament Managers imposing individual time limits on games that would otherwise be holding up the smooth progress of the event. Occasionally and individually, imposing '15 minutes plus 8 shots' is fine. I have a great deal to say about the distinction between slow play and long matches. But not now.

The failure to recognise the difference can be very irritating. It is reasonable to recognise that the best sporting contest is a 7-6 outcome with all 13 hoops keenly contested - a long game. Conversely, players regularly taking too long over all their shots is wrong, and deserves penalty -slow play.

I also think that tournament 'adverts' should attempt to indicate the expected level of playing intensity. Some players are



happier with 5 or 6 GC matches in a full day. Others want to squeeze maximum playing time – maybe 10 GC matches.

It would help entrant calendar planning, to be able to select those tournaments that best suited a player's preference.

I do not have any crusade. I just want to know which tournaments intend to operate time limits. I will choose not to enter. Simple. No problem. No grief.

**Richard Thompson, Edgbaston CC**

Dear Editor

The purpose in writing this letter is to encourage all GC Tournament Managers, from 2017 onwards, to be required to advise prospective entrants whether matches will be time limited, or not. This is most relevant to one-day GC Tournaments or to the Saturday in weekend GC Tournaments.

I recognise, without question, that unavoidable surprises such as lawn damage

## Easy record keeping keeps Budleigh in HMRC good books

Dear Editor,

The new Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC) regulations came into force from 5 April 2016 and Budleigh Salterton considered whether it should stay registered or give HMRC notice to withdraw without tax implication / penalty. There are two potential problems: membership participation compliance and the £50K trading income limit.

We are a big club with many social, bridge-playing members and the new regulations advise that third party auditors may/will check CASC Clubs for compliance; so records need to be robust. Sports subs are neither included in the trading income, nor subject to VAT, so the £50K trading ceiling is okay. If the South West Croquet Academy and bridge player income really takes off, we will set up a separate company

that Gift Aids its profits to the CASC.

Fifty per cent of members must play twelve times a year (ten times for the Bowlers who can only play for six months). We wrestled with how to record this activity in the least administratively burdensome way. As many members complete a handicap card, we devised a simple card system, printing three cards to an A4 sheet. A member ticks a type of participation on the card and, on completion, signs and dates the card. The cards will now be stored for the mandatory seven years - simples! See our example. Others might like to consider the same approach? Word & pdf versions that you are welcome to copy are at: <http://www.budleighcroquet.org/members-section/attendance-records/>

**Chris Donovan, Hon. Treasurer,  
Budleigh Salterton CC Ltd.**

## Top words

Dear Editor,

Can I congratulate the authors for the quality of their contributions for the 2015 Coaching Awards (*Gazette 361*). One of the problems historically has been obtaining high quality citations to support the nominees. This year's contributions are to my mind exemplary, and indicate the value that these awards should extol to the wider CA community. They also set a very high standard to which others should look when submitting future citations.

**Roger Staples, (past Chairman of the Coaching Committee)**

Season 2016-17 Player's Attendance Card				
Name _____				
No	Date	Play Practice	Organise Coach	Committee Maintain
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
New Member wef			Attendances Needed	

Please insert date & tick the appropriate column for each day you perform any 1 or more 'participating' activity (see reverse for details).

**DO NOT COUNT**

- spectating
- playing bridge or scrabble
- attending a social function
- hospitality – catering teas / lunches, bar duty
- fund raising

These do not qualify as 'participation'

**10 (Bowls) / 12 (Croquet) days done? Please sign & return the card to the Secretary's office**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



# Coaching news ~ and dealing with a tricky shots

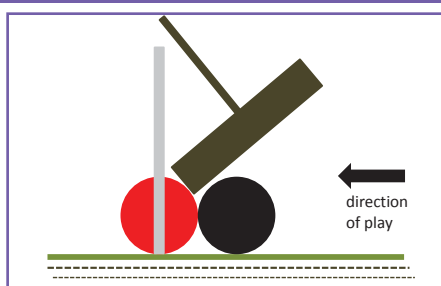
**The International Development Squad** entered its fourth season with a coaching weekend at Wrest Park in early April.

The pavilion next to the relocated lawns at Wrest Park comfortably accommodated the 15 players attending and the new courts were in good condition for the time of year. A variety of topics were included in the session including openings, POPs, super-advanced play and three-ball endings, along with a brief talk on nutrition by Rich Waterman.

*[POP ~ Peel on Opponent. In recent years, some experts have developed tactics that involve peeling an opponent's ball through hoop 1 and possibly 2 and 3 as well. It is a tactic that makes it more difficult for the opponent to have a peeling turn (eg. a triple peel) later in the game]*

**The CA Women's Development Squad** played members of the Lancashire Inter-Counties squad at Bury's Whitehead Park in early May. The new lawns needed particular care from the players, resulting in several long matches and the outcome could have tipped in favour of either team, but the women were triumphant 6-3. The CA Women's DS team: Miranda Chapman, Annabel McDiarmid, Ailsa Lines, Beatrice McGlen, Liz Wilson and Sylvia Steer.

**Ian Burridge,**  
International Performance Director



**P**otential faults in a common GC situation explained by Martin French, Chairman, of the GC Rules Committee.

The striker may need to play their ball when it is in the jaws of a hoop, and when it is in contact with – or very close to – another ball. What can and can't they do?

There are legal strokes that can be played, but there are things to avoid. There are also some common misapprehensions.

In the situation shown, the striker wants to play Red (R) through the hoop to score the point, but Black (K) is in their way. A legal stroke may be played by striking down on R from an angle – but this stroke should be watched by the opponent, a third party or – best – by a referee, as there are several potential faults:

1) **if you strike down on R at more than 45 degrees**, it is likely to be a fault under Rule 13(a)6 or 11 – you will be squeezing the ball between the ground and mallet.

Most referees will routinely fault any kind of "hammer stroke" if the angle is over 45 degrees – and experienced players know to avoid playing them at so great an angle.

2) **if you strike R with the edge of the**

**face** (the bottom edge is most likely, but a corner is also possible), this will be a fault under 13(a)5(ii).

3) **if your mallet touches the top of K during the stroke**, it will be a fault under 13(a)12 – or if you touch K when preparing for the stroke, it will be a non-striking fault under 12(a).

In any of these faults, the opponent chooses whether the balls are left where they now lie or whether any moved balls are replaced; no point is scored for any ball, and the opponent is now due to play.

To watch the stroke properly, the stroke must be viewed from the side and from a kneeling position so you can see which part of the mallet strikes R and whether there is any contact with K – you won't be able to see these faults from a standing position!

**To play in the opposite direction – so playing R back through the hoop and towards K – there is the added issue of whether R and K are already in contact.**

If they are not, but are just a few millimetres apart, it will be difficult to play any straight stroke without faulting under 13(a)6 or 8 – and any oblique stroke is liable to crush R onto a hoop upright (13(a)7).

So it is possible to get out of these kinds of tricky situations – but you need to know what you can and can't do, and

**you should always get someone to watch the stroke.**

**Martin French,**  
Chairman of the GC Rules Committee



## Newly qualified Coaches

I am delighted to welcome the following newly qualified coaches and thank them in advance for the work they will do improving the playing standard in our sport.

### GC Coach

John Munt (Preston), Mike Solomons (Worthing), Bill Humphreys (Golden Square, Australia), Clive Grimley (Sussex County), Charles Corker (Hassocks).

### Grade 1 AC Coach

John Munt (Preston), Bill Humphreys (Golden Square, Aus)

### Club Coach

Isobel George (Rottingdean), Paul Newton (Dulwich), Nicholas Beard (Hamptworth), Duncan Brinkley (Unity, Sudbury), Fiona Phillips and Richard Carline (both Sussex County).

**Dave Kibble, Chairman of the Coaching Committee**

Howard Wright (Ian) found croquet early, as his grandparents' house in Birmingham had a lawn, and he learnt back-garden croquet, which he replicated at his own family home in Wigan in 1965, and in Alloa, to where he moved in 1967 to work with NCB.

He saw croquet advertised at the nearby Glenochil Research Centre at Menstrie, and there he met Robert Milne and Bob Mclean, who introduced him to the competitive side of the sport, then being played at Glenochil. One of his first opponents was Magnus Pyke the scientist and TV presenter.

He started first a small club at his NCB workplace at the Whins in Alloa, and later a small open club in the town.

Ian was keen to understand the game, and created his own small croquet board with red, blue, black and yellow pins, to work out tactics and to learn how to set up breaks etc. His son Stephen remembers him using the board at all times in the early days to get a good understanding of the game.

As croquet in Scotland expanded after the CA Centenary in 1967, Ian was one of the prime movers in the setting-up of the Scottish Croquet Committee, as part of the Croquet Association. This organised competitive croquet in Scotland, from whose numbers the next three "All-England" winners came.

Ian was closely involved in setting up the Edinburgh Week Tournament in 1969, which has been run annually during the Edinburgh Festival since 1972, and in which he played every year till 2014. His name is perpetuated in the Norton-Wright doubles trophy, which he co-presented, and the Ian Wright B-Level trophy which was presented to honour him. He managed the event for many years.

When it became apparent that the Scottish Sports Council (now SportScotland) would only support sports with autonomous National Governing

## I Howard Wright 1924 - 2016



Bodies, Ian used his contacts and influence in the CA to initiate the amicable secession of the Scottish Croquet Committee, and its rebirth as the independent Scottish Croquet Association.

By chance while attending the annual dinner of Edgbaston Croquet Club, Ian had been sitting beside the president of CA, and asked if either the Australian or NZ teams could play warm-up games for the MacRobertson Shield in Scotland. Thus the 1974 New Zealand Mac team played a Test format at Gleneagles Hotel against Scotland, for whom he and Stephen played, after the first ever Open weekend in Britain. Scotland lost 6-3, but that was seen as a fantastic result against some of the top world players, as every Scot won at least one game. The whole series further stimulated Scottish competitive croquet.

As a player, Ian reached scratch and the finals of both draw and process in the Scottish Championship in 1980. He regularly played in the Scottish team as captain in the 1970-80s, in the Home Internationals, and took touring teams for the SCA to other parts of the British Isles.

Ian was very involved in setting up links and matches with other Tier 2 countries at home and abroad, including a long-remembered match under CA and US rules against USA in Glasgow. He forged strong links with South African croquet, and he toured there and played in a Test match

## Obituaries

with Stephen.

He was proud of being the first home-grown player to be invited to play in the Invitation Eights, being runner up in the Spencer Ell (the third Eight) in 1975. His son Stephen won it the following year.

He was the secretary of the SCA for many years, continued to be involved with croquet north of the border for a full 49 years, and to some he was known as the 'Daddy' of Scottish Croquet.

He was assiduous in the promotion of croquet itself, and particularly with press publicity.

I well remember days out to country house Open Days, where we would demonstrate croquet, and weekends away with golf croquet players of rural Aberdeenshire, as well as Ian providing coaching for Gleneagles Hotel guests.

In his later years Ian continued to practice, not only outside but also in his living room. Only in this April he demonstrated to Joan that he could still hit a straight ball at a self-designed wooden hoop placed at various places in the room with cushions behind it.

Ian understood the desire of the best players to find ways to make the game more challenging for themselves, and spent much time in the last two years designing a new hoop which he thought might meet those specifications. He then had prototypes made, which were tried out at the Meadows club, and then sent to England to be reviewed. They were not accepted, but acted as a good example of how Ian remained very active and interested in the croquet world right up to the end of his life.

Ian was awarded SCA Life Membership in November 2011 in recognition of his lifetime contribution to Scottish Croquet, and in 2012 he was the first Scot to be inducted into the WCF Hall of Fame.

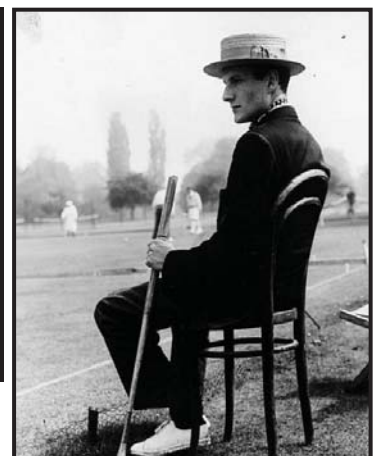
**Alasdair Adam**

**High Wycombe CC** will be installing a piece of croquet history in their new club building alongside their relatively new (nicely surfaced) two court facility. They have come by a mallet used by one of croquet's true characters, Bryan Lloyd-Pratt, and will be displaying it in pride of place.

There are many stories about Lloyd-Pratt, who was for a very short time (just four issues), an Editor of the Croquet Gazette, before being dismissed due to over-expenditure and a series of rather inflammatory editorials!

A subsequent Gazette editor, James Hawkins, has posted his research of this and other Lloyd-Pratt stories on the croquetworld website and, whilst not all are suitable for reproduction here, can be read at <http://www.croquetworld.com/people/lloyd-pratt.asp>.

As Wycombe's Duncan Reeve advised me – "Lloyd-Pratt was clearly a 'colourful character', but best stick to the facts. He was a member at Hunstanton and we have his mallet!" – Ed



## John Barber 1936 - 2016



**M**ichael John Barber, always known as John, was the driving force at Broadwas Croquet Club for many years.

He moved next door to the cricket club in Broadwas so that he could play cricket regularly, and one day a great friend of his, Hugh Popplewell, suggested that a croquet lawn could be cut in the cricket outfield. Always one to take the initiative John measured it out, mowed and rolled it until it was ready.

In no time he was hooked and the Broadwas Croquet Club came into being as villagers were persuaded to join and play. Soon John was coaching and encouraging a team to enter the South-West Federation league.

Visitors coming to the club were warmly welcomed but were often horrified to find that the lawn was very far from flat and dry ground and short grass produced prodigious sideways movement as balls exercised parabolic shapes when played along the slope. Broadwas built a reputation on rarely losing at home. As the club's success grew John cut more and more lawns (now four and a half), each with their own particular quirks, and Janet, his wife, served the most marvellous teas. John won many of the club competitions but always preferred to let others play in the league matches.

In 2010 Broadwas entered the inaugural GC Inter-Club (Murphy) Shield and John was persuaded to play. Remarkably, Broadwas won the shield and, the following year, retained it. In all John played 12 games winning all of them and appeared in the national GC rankings at position 29.

In recent years John's health deteriorated but he always maintained great interest in how the club was doing and if we were recruiting new members. He is greatly missed in the club and across the South-West and West Midland Federations.

**Stuart Smith**

## Ian Telfer 1934 - 2016



**I**an Telfer joined the Wells Palace Croquet Club about 2001, served on its committee from May 2003, and became Chairman in March 2006 until March 2014.

As Chairman, he gave freely of his time to support all the club's playing and social activities. He was a diplomatic representative of the club in its dealing with the Palace authorities at a difficult time.

Ian was a patient croquet teacher, always ready to play with beginners and encourage them with their AC. As his own game improved, Ian joined Nailsea and District CC and made the hour-long journey regularly throughout the season, missing very few Club afternoons. Ian was an enthusiastic and positive player, with a majestic swing and wonderful accuracy. He was pleased to win but happy to lose, provided that a good game had been played. Over the years Ian won many Nailsea Club trophies for both Handicap and Advanced Play competitions. He played in tournaments around the south-west, often in a successful doubles pairing with Jim Field.

At Nailsea, Ian leaves a legacy of his 10-shot game. He devised this format to avoid long periods of sitting out while the opponent plays a break. Although based on the Laws of AC, each turn has at least two shots but no more than ten. Some of the other Nailsea members have embraced this format and used it in the Club's OBE tournament for octogenarians, which Ian managed and won on both occasions that he took part.

Ian was seen recently on BBC television playing croquet at the Bishop's Palace and chatting to the presenter with his usual energy.

Ian died at the age of 81 on 4 May, having collapsed on a lawn at Budleigh Salterton whilst playing on a beautiful sunny evening. He is sadly missed at both the Palace and Nailsea Clubs and leaves a wife, Anna, and a son and daughter.

**Kathy Wallace**

## GC round-up 1

### English National Singles Championship Qualifiers

**T**he Golf Croquet competitive season got off to a cracker with the traditionally very strong **Surbiton Open**, setting that standard for the other seven top flight ENSC qualifying tournaments to follow. Jamie Burch was a new name in GC for most and the AC Mac team player certainly was a handful (as we should have expected), sweeping all aside as he did in his block games. And there were some top scalps in there too - Lionel Tibble and Pierre Beaudry to name but two. Burch made the semis, where he met Chris Roberts on a good day and let a first game 'carried forward' lead slip to a 1-2 reverse. James Goodbun squeezed past Nick Cheyne in the other semi and then did the same to Roberts in the final.

Next up was the **Sidmouth Open**, re-installed as an ENSC qualifier this year, where Roberts beat Tom Weston in the final at the end of a long day, to retain his title. At this event, Phyllis Court's Roger Goldring (hot off the B-Level production line), stepped up in class to surprise everyone, including himself, with some excellent wins to claim third place.

The **East Anglian Open** at Colchester followed in mid-May, and with all five of the England team squad asked to play by the Selectors, as a warm-up for the World Teams Championship the following week (see page 16), the field was particularly strong. Robert Fulford doubtless drew on home advantage to beat Stephen Mulliner in a final that went to a decider, as had the semis where Lionel Tibble and Rachel Rowe had met their matches

Tibble maintained his good England form after the World Teams and cruised through the knock-out of the **Cheltenham Open** with big wins in every game, including the final where he dispatched Mark Daley.

It was back to another very strong field at the **Ramsgate Open** where another England team member Tobi Savage and Belgian captain Pierre Beaudry showed good form before being edged out in the semis respectively by Tibble and eventual winner John-Paul Moberly.

The Opens at Ashby, Nottingham and Lancashire (Bury) complete the ENSC qualifying programme and are sure to be keenly contested. These tournaments will be reported in the next issue of the Gazette.

**Chris Roberts**

*(more GC reports on page 23)*

# Stephen Mulliner wins the

## The new Champion shares his own thoughts



Stephen Mullier is the new AC World Champion, crowning a wonderful career that has spanned 40 years of consistent highs. He was asked by the Publishing Committee, to write an account of this, his greatest (but only latest) achievement, for wider circulation.

By writing in the third person, Stephen tells his story with the typical modesty that one has grown used to over the years. He omits to add congratulations of course, which I am pleased to be able to do on behalf of croquet players everywhere.

*Take a well deserved bow Champ! (Ed)*

Stephen Mulliner (ENG) and David Maloof (USA) contested an 11.5 hour five game final in the Association Croquet World Championship at the National Croquet Center, West Palm Beach.

For the first time, live video streaming was available as well as a court-side commentary on [www.CroquetScores.com](http://www.CroquetScores.com).

Mulliner and Maloof ensured that there would be a new name on the Wimbledon Cup and, as both are 62, that the new World Champion would be the oldest ever winner, let alone for the first time.

Malooof is a professional tennis coach who has made rapid progress in US and world croquet in the last few years. He has



one of the best swings in the game and is renowned for his calmness and infrequency of error.

### The routes to the Final

Malooof had accounted for Paddy Chapman [NZE], the 2013 runner-up, and David Maugham [ENG] a stalwart of the England team, in the quarter and semi-final rounds, two major scalps.

Mulliner had survived close encounters with Stephen Forster [AUS] and Danny Huneycutt [USA] in the last 16 and quarter-final rounds and could easily have lost to either player. Both matches went to a fifth game and he made it through to meet Reg Bamford [SAF], the four-time AC World Champion, and the firm favourite to make it a fifth in 2016.

### The Semi-Final ~ comeback no.1

Bamford soon established a 2-0 lead, including an extraordinary sextuple peel in game 1 in which he overcame several problems and brought the break to a thrilling and successful conclusion.

He offered Mulliner a glimpse of hope in game two, when a second sextuple was apparently heading for a smooth and more routine conclusion, when he failed to run a short penultimate hoop. However, Mulliner had his own problem at the same hoop and Bamford soon made the score 2-0.

Mulliner responded by hitting a long roquet in turn three of game three and reaching 4-back with a good leave. However, Bamford had been in remorseless hitting form and made no mistake with the 19 yard shot down the east boundary and shortly afterwards, he had laid up for a third sextuple and given Mulliner a 35 yard shot to stay in the match. Lady Luck now intervened and Mulliner's shot clipped the ball he could barely see behind a hoop. He seized his chance and completed a triple peel to win +20tp and extend the match.

In game four, Mulliner hit in with turn four and decided to lay for his own sextuple so that Bamford would face a 30 yard shot. Bamford missed and Mulliner brought home a sextuple with almost as many adventures as Bamford's effort in game 1.

The fifth game was short and simple. Mulliner hit in on turn three and went to 4-back. Bamford this time just missed the 19 yard shot down the East boundary and Mulliner made no mistake with a delayed triple peel to take the match and claim his place in the final for the third time in his 40-year playing career.

### Third time lucky for Mulliner?

Mulliner's two previous finals had been in 1997 (when he lost 3-1 to Robert Fulford [ENG] in Bunbury, Australia) and in 2008 (when he also lost 3-1 to Chris Clarke [ENG] in Christchurch, New Zealand).

### The Final was a marathon, and a Hollywood script that nobody would believe! ~ comeback no.2

Malooof was a deserved winner of the first two games of the final and was tantalisingly close to winning 3-0 after more than seven hours' play in the bright Florida sunshine on a tricky court.

In game three, Mulliner was pegged out when for 4-back with his remaining ball. He had to hit a 26 yard shot across court to get a chance of finishing and made two hoops before failing to approach rover. Malooof missed a 13 yard roquet and Mulliner took this unexpected second chance by running rover and hitting a 13 yard roquet to gain an easy peg-out and stay alive in the match.

Malooof gained an early advantage in game four but missed a return roquet after 1-back and Mulliner was able to reach peg and penultimate against 2-back and 4-back before Malooof regained the innings with an 18 yard roquet. Both players then hit long shots alternately but Mulliner had the last and was able to finish and level the match.

### Final game drama by floodlight

By now it was after 7pm and the light was going to become an issue. The players agreed to move to a floodlit court and have an extended warm-up on the new surface.

After two early errors on which Malooof was unable to capitalise, Mulliner reached 4-back with a good leave. Malooof missed his 18 yard roquet attempt and Mulliner calmly conducted a delayed triple peel to take the game, the match and the title.

Mulliner had been obliged to play twenty games of high-intensity croquet in four consecutive days to achieve victory and his reputation for determination, focus and the will to win could not have been more searchingly tested.



Photographs (this page) - A celebratory 'fist' from the soon to be Champion and runner-up Malooof.



# AC World Championship



## Manager Chris Clarke saw the tournament this way

Former World Champion Chris Clarke offers his personal take on the Championships. His is the view of the Tournament Manager and experienced commentator.

The 15th WCF AC World Singles was held at the National Croquet Center in West Palm Beach between 16-24 April. Eighty players took part, but there was only one past Champion in Reg Bamford [SAF]. Defending Champion Robert Fletcher [Aus] had withdrawn the week before the event and there was no Robert Fulford (Colchester) or Chris Clarke (New Zealand) and despite



hoping to attend, Joe Hogan [AUS] was also absent. Other notable absentees were Greg Bryant, Aaron Westerby, Toby Garrison, Paul Skinley [all NZ], Simon Hockey [AUS], Jamie Burch (Surbiton) and Jonathan Kirby (Norwich).

As usual, the event started with eight blocks of ten players, at the conclusion of which only Mark

Avery (Ipswich) and James Death (Nottingham) were unbeaten and there had been several strong performances by less fancied players.

### The Block stage

Behind Avery in Block A came Matthew Essick [USA] and Ian BurrIDGE [WAL], with NZ Mac winner Jenny Clarke needing to finish-off a contact in her final block game to deny Debbie Lines (Nottingham) a knock-out spot.

David Walters [WAL] won Block B with 8/9, including beating Bamford. Simon Jenkins [USA] qualified from eighth place and John Christie just missed out from ninth.

Block C was topped by Jeff Soo [USA], again with 8/9, closely followed by veteran International, David Openshaw (Roehampton) on 7/9.

Paddy Chapman [NZ] and David Maloof [USA] tied with 8/9 in block D with Sam Murray (Surbiton) producing some excellent results to record 7/9 from 8th place.

Gavin Carter (Jersey) won block E from

Stephen Mulliner (Surbiton) and Danny Huneycutt [USA]. Kevin Beard [Aus] took the final place in a play-off from Jim Bast [USA].

Behind Death in block F came Samir Patel (Surbiton) and Dwayne McCormick [AUS]. Qualifier Ted Salter [AUS] had a marvellous event and beat Ian Lines (Bowdon and Nottingham) in the play-off to take the fourth qualifying place.

Block G was a rare block to go to form, with the top four all qualifying – Jeff Dawson (Woking), James Hopgood (Bygrave), Stephen Forster [AUS] and Chris Williams [WAL].

More giant killing was seen in block H, where Stephen Morgan [USA] and Christian Carter (Surbiton) joined the top two seeds, Ian Dumergue [AUS] and Ben Rothman [USA], in making the knock-out.

### Bamford was in great form

After the block stage, it became clear that Bamford was the best player in the event, just in case anyone didn't know that beforehand. He completed two sextuples and was generally excellent whenever he took croquet. However, his first stroke of the turn had looked somewhat suspect.

Chapman was fancied by many, but never seemed to be in form, whilst David Maugham (Bowdon and Cheltenham) again lacked fluency. Other players who looked good during the block stage were Gavin Carter, Maloof, Avery and Death.

### The Plate

The Plate event started a day earlier than normal and this seemed popular with the players. It was run as a flexible Swiss leading to a knock-out and this allowed some players to rack up 13 games, most of which were against players of similar ability – this format has a big advantage over blocks.

One aspect of the entire event that surprised me was the speed of play. It was funereal at times – I remember one player coming back after 2 hours 35 minutes and recording the score +26tp! Despite the slowness of some players, and being severely lawn limited with only 16 courts available, we still managed to record the highest number of games in an AC Worlds.

Playing conditions throughout the event were extremely easy. Many players commented that the hoops were easier and the lawns slower than when the 2009 Worlds were held at the same venue.

### Overall standards and choice of openings surprised Clarke

Despite that, the standard of play was



worse than I would have expected and there were many games with multiple errors and no peeling finishes.

Perhaps the most surprising aspect was the choice of openings. The most important skill in easy conditions is having third-turn balls to 4-back. There were comparatively few, almost certainly due to the lack of super-shot openings played. I had expected over half of games would feature this choice of opening, but in the end, it was closer to 20%, with corner 2 openings being the most common choice. I thought this was an error from many players. Perhaps the use of Super-Advanced in the UK has made some players less comfortable with the super-shot as an opening.

### Upsets and Giant-Killings!

With easy conditions, there were always likely to be upsets in the last 32 of the knockout. The best performance came from a favourite though, as Forster beat Soo in under two hours. The giant-killing came from José Riva (Spain) beating Rothman, Huneycutt beating Death and, perhaps most surprisingly, Murray beating Carter (+1 in the third).

### Two interesting matches

With 'best-of-five' being played for the rest of the event, the favourites had a greater chance to settle in and there were two . . .

*(continues overleaf)*



particularly interesting last-sixteen matches.

Chapman played Pete Trimmer in a battle between the two players who used a greater variety of tactics than most in the event. 'Popping' (*Peel On Opponent*) wasn't seen much, but both these players were always on the look-out for such opportunities to maximise their chances.

Chapman eventually won in four games after winning a 1 v 1-b pegged-out game after a Trimmer otp. I have tried to highlight over the past decade that pegging-out your opponent in easy conditions is a highly dubious manoeuvre.

In the knock-out, there were six otps and one tpo. With a remarkable lack of ingenuity on display with regard to 'popping' and hoop leaves, this left the event somewhat bereft of interesting play, apart from the odd sextuple.

### Disagreement over shot-choice

The second interesting match was between two Stephens, Forster and Mulliner. Forster squeaked home +1 in the first game, but Mulliner took the next two comfortably before Forster levelled at 2-2.

In the fifth game, Forster broke down on a triple-peel, allowing Mulliner his own triple.

What happened next is a perfect example of how Mulliner plays. He had reached a straight double-peel to finish his triple and, as he has done for the last 30 years, opted to have his escape ball at penult about four feet South-East of the hoop (all other players tend to have it just South and wide to avoid getting hampered).

Mulliner has claimed that he has never broken down due to this placement. Unsurprisingly, after the Irish-peel at penult, the striker's ball was only just through and was unable to hit the escape ball.

### Getting out of jail and a 'fist'

Mulliner now needed to hit a nine-yarder at peelee and after much lining up and self-marking of the balls, he did so accompanied by a 'fist'. He was now faced with a tough three-yard rover peel from a slight angle.

He played the stroke perfectly, with peelee sailing through the hoop and the striker's ball finishing straight in front – a great shot.

### Oh no!

Forster walked onto the lawn – "wrong ball Stephen!" So, now Forster was back in and took a ball from penult to the peg, cross-wiring Mulliner at hoop 1 and laying-up in corner 3. Mulliner faced a last shot after his dreadful error, but as always, he didn't let past issues concern him and 'hit the tea-lady' (*a maximum length shot after a lift*). He made rover and pegged-out Forster,

but now managed to wire the in-lawn ball rather than the boundary ball. Forster missed and Mulliner reached the quarters.

### The quarter and semi-finals

In the last 8, Bamford beat Jenny Clarke in straight games with a quad and two sextuples. He was joined in the semis by Mulliner who came back from 2-1 down to beat Huneycutt, who missed a four-yarder on a match-winning turn. Maugham came back from 0-2 down to beat Patel whilst Maloof provided the upset beating Chapman in four.

Prior to the semis starting, it was rumoured that a bet had been placed on Bamford to win the event at the somewhat unappealing odds of 1-4.

In the semis, Maloof beat Maugham in 4 games, all of which contained at least one error, but the other semi-final was of much higher quality.

Bamford took the first +26sxp with a sextuple that needed many good shots to recover. The second game looked like the same result, but with just a straight forward rover peel to do, Bamford failed penult from a few inches. Mulliner now had the opportunity to take a ball to 4-b and force Bamford to hit (his only weakness), but chose to go to 1-b and attempt to complete his first sextuple of the event (bonkers!).

His attempt was already in serious trouble when he failed hoop 6 with two peels done. From here, Bamford made no attempt to finish, despite a fairly easy position. Mulliner hit his bonus shot, but miss-approached hoop 6. Bamford missed a 20-yarder and Mulliner immediately clanged hoop 6, giving Bamford a 2-0 lead. At this stage, the 1-4 odds were looking like a fair bet.

### 0-2 down but never say die

Mulliner now had a good third turn ball to 4-b, despite rolling his opponent south of hoop 1 with his first croquet stroke. Bamford hit the lift shot and unsurprisingly went to 1-b. Mulliner now took his 30-yarder and hit a part-wired ball when shooting at the other ball a couple of yards away and finished.

He had the first break in the fourth game and again opted for another bonkers ball to 1-b. Bamford missed the 'tea-lady' and once again a 'hairy' break started. Various tough positions were overcome before Mulliner needed a straight triple-peel to finish and his was completed with a series of very good strokes.

### Excellent stuff for final reward

So, we now had a decider and once again Mulliner had a third turn ball to 4-b – excellent stuff. Bamford missed the lift shot

and the Mulliner made no mistake with his triple-peel to reach his third world final.

### The Final

With both players aged 62, this was the oldest final by about 33 years and would produce the oldest winner by over 20 years, but the final was both slow and of poor quality.

After about 6.5 hours, Maloof had a standard triple-peel ahead of him to win 3-0, but failed to get a rush out of hoop 2 and his subsequently roll to peelee at hoop 3 left him hampered. He faulted the stroke and allowed Mulliner back in. Despite this, he once again got in, but failed to make a good 4-b and peg leave. Mulliner hit a 15 yard last lift shot and made it 1-2.

The fourth game saw Maloof peg Mulliner out, but as with most 'Riggalls' this was not a winning tactic. So, at about 7pm, we reached two games all.

### Floodlit deciding game

The players were offered the opportunity to stop and resume in the morning or to move lawn and play under lights after practice. They both opted for the latter. The lawns were now a completely different speed to the rest of the event, running around nine seconds.

Despite failing two fairly easy chances, Mulliner won the deciding game +26tp – the only peeling finish in the final, which finished after 11.5 hours. It is now 11 years since there was a sextuple in the final.

### Massive credit to the new Champion

Stephen Mulliner's shooting throughout the knock-out had been excellent. It is a massive credit to him that his swing was as flat as I had ever seen it. To make technical improvements at any stage in your career is tough, but to do so after 40 years is particularly impressive. His energy and perseverance, even when taking sub-optimal lines, is probably the key feature to his croquet. ~

### ... and rounding up the Championships

The Bowl was won by James Death, the Shield by Stephen Forster and the Plate by Ian Lines. Regrettably, the WCF had failed to provide trophies for any of these events, one of multiple areas that they will need to improve.

Thank you to the USCA for hosting this event. My understanding is that it cost about \$50k to host. I am keen to ensure that World Championships can be hosted at under \$15k and that any spare monies go into the promotion of the game at grass-roots level.

**Chris Clarke,**  
**AC World Championships Manager**



# Notts win the AC County Championship

~ and Yorkshire win Division 2 ~

*Sue Mackay reports*



Division 1	Played	Match wins	Game wins
Nott'hamshire	10	7	21
Surrey	10	7	19
Lancashire	10	7	19
Essex	10	7	17
Cheshire	10	6	19
Hertfordshire	10	6	16
Somerset	10	5	15
Middlesex	10	5	13
Sussex	10	3	12
Glamorgan	10	2	7
Channel Islands	10	0	7

**N**ottinghamshire won the 102nd AC Inter-County Championship, their seventh title in twelve years, so regaining the trophy they last held in 2013. Their team of Richard White (c), Keith Aiton, Paddy Chapman, James Hopgood, Patrick Hort and Richard Huxley had to work hard for their victory however, and the result was not decided until the last turn of virtually the last game on court.

Yorkshire won the Second Division, thereby ensuring that there will once again be a War of the Roses match in the First Division next season. Their team was John Davis (c), Rod Ashwell, Robert Essler, Peter Thompson, Paul Watson and Robert Wilkinson, with Davis's son Alastair standing in for Thompson on Saturday afternoon, so that he could go and support Hull City in their play-off final. Sadly, Yorkshire played their final matches at Compton and so could not collect their trophy along with Nottinghamshire, but a Lancashire player was heard to observe that the Yorkshire team were more upset by the fact that they had won nine out of their ten matches and so were always having to pay for drinks!

Also promoted were Gloucestershire and Berkshire. Dorset had had a great start to the tournament and almost gained promotion, but were unable to maintain their early momentum, and were without David Trimmer on the last two days. They won the same number of matches as Berkshire but lost the third promotion place on games won. Kent won the wooden spoon, and may have to enter a play-off next season should another county wish to enter.

The Channel Islands failed to win a match in the First Division and were relegated. Glamorgan also had a disastrous first three days, their only win coming against the Islanders, which they only won by the skin of their teeth, so that their fate had been sealed by the final day. On the last day, however, the rain came down in torrents for the morning matches, and Glamorgan were obviously more used to the conditions as they beat a strong Essex side. Indeed they spoiled the party for Chris Clarke, over from New Zealand this year to boost the Essex team, whose only loss was to Glamorgan – in his other nine games he achieved seven triples, a quintuple, and a quadruple peel on the opponent. Sussex were the third team to be relegated.

The title race this year was one of the closest in recent times. At the start of the final day, six teams were still in the hunt; Cheshire, Essex, Lancashire and Nottinghamshire on six wins, with Hertfordshire and Surrey on five also having a mathematical chance. Cheshire had a bye on Tuesday morning, however, and realistically the race seemed to be between Essex, Lancashire and Nottinghamshire, the only teams capable of achieving 8 match wins. Essex, without Jack Wicks on the last day, still rather unexpectedly lost to Glamorgan. Lancashire and Nottinghamshire won their morning matches, putting both on 7 wins, but Nottinghamshire had more 3-0 victories, and so Lancashire needed to win their final game against Essex and see Nottinghamshire lose to Somerset in order to lift the trophy.

Somerset had been having a much worse tournament than usual, even getting perilously close to the relegation zone at one point. All three games against Nottinghamshire were in the balance right up to the end, but then Marcus Evans completed a triple and Kristian Chambers shortly afterwards ensured the win for Somerset. David Goacher made it 3-0 after time, and suddenly all eyes were on the Lancashire–Essex match. James Hawkins had broken down at 3-back and allowed Chris Clarke to do a QPO, giving first blood to Essex. David Openshaw and Paul Rigge then equalised for Lancashire, and the title race boiled down to whether Ailsa Lines and

Division 2	Played	Match wins	Game wins
Yorkshire	10	9	20
Gloucestershire	10	8	22
Berkshire	10	6	20
Dorset	10	6	18
Suffolk	10	6	13
Bedfordshire	10	5	14
Hampshire	10	4	15
Oxfordshire	10	4	11
Warwickshire	10	3	12
Wiltshire	10	2	11
Kent	10	2	9

Annabel McDiarmid could prevail against Debbie Lines and Nick Steiner. As time approached the game was evenly poised, but eventually Debbie pegged out just as the bell went for time. This meant that four teams, Essex, Lancashire, Nottinghamshire and Surrey, finished the tournament on 7 match wins, with Nottinghamshire ahead on game wins.

It was most unfortunate that the European GC Championships had been scheduled to clash with the first two days of the Counties, as some teams found themselves short of key players. Middlesex's fortunes certainly improved on Monday with the return of Jose Riva, the newly crowned European GC Champion, and Stephen Mulliner played the last two days for Surrey. These counties did at least have replacements, but Oxfordshire were unable to field more than five players for the first two days, as Chris Roberts was playing in the GC Euros and Stephen Wright had a family bereavement. This did not seem to deter them on the first day, as Dayal Gunasekera played on his own for the first two games, narrowly losing the first -1 and winning the second +8 on time. Teammate Harry Fisher then played on his own and completed 12 peels to peg out and win +14.

Kevin Garrad also had to play a solo game on for the Channel Islands because Gavin Carter's flight from Jersey had been delayed. As usual the tournament was played in great spirit, and a good time was had despite the "Counties Weather". Thanks to the army of volunteers at both Southwick and Compton, for their hard work with the lawns, catering and bar duties.

# 'Y Viva Espana'

Report by Chris Roberts

**A** 'Spanish Armada' raced on to the court as Jose Riva posed chest-out and proud as the first-time continental winner of the GC Euros.

This was a landmark event, in this, the ninth return of the GC Euros, which has latterly become an annual affair.

Hitherto, the winners have largely been confined to well established croquet countries, with only Swede Simon Carlsson bucking the trend in 2010.

At the centre of all things Euro has been the current Secretary-General Stephen Mulliner (a four-time winner and once runner-up previously) and sure enough 'Mr Consistency' was there at the final reckoning this time too.

Thirty-two players, representing ten countries contested this four-day event at Budleigh Salterton, whose club

members are to be congratulated for the thoroughness of their preparations, the warmth of their welcome and good support, particularly court-side on the final day.

The tournament attracted no less than five players from each of Germany and Spain, two from the Czech Republic, Latvia and Wales and singletons from Belgium, Finland, Sweden and Switzerland.

Four blocks of eight, playing best-of-threes throughout, reduced the field by half after two days, with only a couple of seeded players failing to make the cut, thanks to unexpectedly strong performances by Luis de Gortazar (Spain), Thomas Freimanis (Latvia) and local player David Hicks.

In the knock-out round-of-16, Mulliner dropped a game to the best of the Germans, Joerm Vinnen and a surprisingly out-of-form James Goodbun also dropped one to de Gortazar.

By the time the semis came round, all the top four seeds bar Goodbun, who lost out to fifth seed Chris Roberts, were safely in place.

Mulliner pulled out a second game length-of-the-court clearance at hoop 13 to save going to a decider with Roberts, which

allowed the pair to watch the latter half of the 'match of the tournament' between Riva and Martin French.

Riva had come back from a first game 6-7 reverse to comfortably take the second, and the third game was a cracker which went to the last hoop, with half those present

lining the court. Riva took the game and match at the 13th to set up a final of contrasting styles, with Mulliner starting favourite.

Riva's GC came of age in these last two matches and his prowess at this code now matches his formidable ability at AC. He took the first game of the final 7-5, then positioned well at the 13th hoop in the second.

After much lining-up, and Mullineresque lying on the ground, he appeared to be going for a safe clearance, but stunned onlookers by

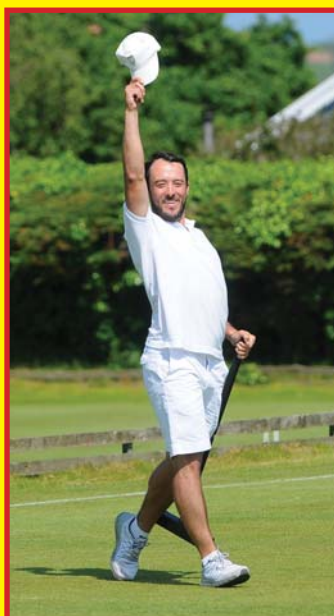
squeezing past his oppo's ball to score the winner.

Amid much cheering, an impromptu rendition of 'Y Viva Espana' rang out loud, as, cloaked in his national flag, the new European Champion Riva's achievement sunk in. The result was popular one, not least for the growth of croquet in Spain.

Mulliner was roundly congratulated by all for his performance, not only on court, but as manager-supreme as well (*just how does he do all that?*).

Roberts and French shared the Championship third place, Goodbun won the Shield (for quarter-final losers), Hicks did really well to defeat Peter Dowd in the final of the Bowl (for round of 16 losers), and Thomas Magin beat fellow German Michael Boeer in the Plate event (for those missing the knock-out cut).

A sun-burnt Peter Balchin (Wales) made the cut from the block stage, and was eliminated soon after. But he just couldn't get enough croquet, so played on and on, and won the Z event despite playing with someone else's mallet for the entire tournament!



**N**ew Zealand are now the World Team Champions at GC as well as AC after a commanding performance saw off holders and hot favourites Egypt.

Firmly now establishing a 'new world order' the men and woman in black, not only looked the smartest throughout, but their play was a notch above all others too.

That is not to say that they had it all their own way, and indeed the world title hung in the balance well into the last session of play in the final of the Tier 1 event hosted by Surbiton CC.

The Kiwis were very strong, with Chris Clarke and Philip Drew beating all before them in the final, and being well supported Duncan Dixon and Jenny Clarke.

They won the final by seven matches to five, with one left unfinished (and Chris Clarke was leading in that one) to leave the Egyptians rueing an overall performance that was, by their own high standards, just below par.

Star of their team was Mohamed Karem, an assured and very accurate striker, to be sure, but not seemingly from the archetypal 'very hard-hitting' mould of his fellow countrymen.





# New Zealand win WCF GC World Team Championship

Report by Chris Roberts



Former double World Champion Ahmed Nasr was perhaps the most notably off form and he was found to repeatedly 'clang' hoops that ordinarily he would have thundered through with ease.

In several quite amusing incidents his eyes blamed the firmness of the hoops, but it was a tad comical for him to ask for the target to be firmed up by a referee, then proceed to smash the living daylight out of it with an errant shot, before wiggling the now loose hoop, and with a look at least, blame the ref's hammering in!

England performed to seeding and came a comfortable third, having been eliminated at the semi-final stage by Egypt.

Home credit in this encounter must go to Lionel Tibble (*right*), whose repeated 'centre-ball and hold position' clearances, undid Ahmed Nasr in exactly the same way that he had dispatched New Zealand's Chris Clarke (*above left with Ahmed Nasr*) in the counties' block stage encounter.

The Northampton man is so annoyingly persistent with his accuracy, it gave rise to the introduction of a new verb - and as one who has been on the receiving end from Lionel more than once this season myself, I know what it's like - to be TIBBLED!

The other England players, Stephen Mulliner, Rachel Rowe and Will Gee all had

their moments to look back on with pride in the block games and Tobi Savage looked good when called off the reserves bench for the semi and third place game, and he won a singles a match in the latter.

Below the top three teams, Ireland sprang a surprise defeat on the USA in their block, so qualified for the semis at their expense, and in the Plate event placing games Sweden's win over South Africa and draw with Wales consigned the latter two to fight it out against the threat of relegation to Tier 2 for the losers.

South Africa, with World no.1 Reg Bamford in their side, eventually won a real nail-biter, but not until William Louw, tied after two 13th hoop games with Ian Burridge, finally sank Wales's hopes with another 7-6er.

Congratulations to New Zealand then, who took the Openshaw Shield back to the Land of the Long White Cloud, where I'm sure it will look just fine alongside its AC counterpart 'The Mac'.

~

Just space here to report briefly on Tiers 2 and 3 of this World GC Teams Championship, that were hosted elsewhere in southern England and concurrently with the senior event.

Camerton & Peasedown CC and Bath

CC co-hosted Tier 2 and both made a wonderful job of it. At the former, flags bedecked the courts that were surrounded by homemade white-painted picket fencing that created a quite delightful scene.

At Bath, clever organisers had involved local city firms as sponsors, and they included a brewery that had badged up special bottles of 'Jump Shot' ale and 'Golden Hoop' cider.

Australia were the class act in this division and duly won back their place at the top table, but Spain showed enough, even without their star Jose Riva in their ranks, to suggest that Wales will have to perform well next time, if they are to get back into the top flight.

Behind those two, the finishing order was Latvia, Germany, Belgium, Czech Republic, Scotland and finally, Switzerland, who were relegated.

Tier 3 was hosted by Guildford and Godalming CC, and was won by an undefeated Norway team with Roar Michaelson at the helm. They won promotion to Tier 2 ahead of Russia and Portugal (and a CA Select team who provided extra opposition).



## Hallam and Ostler win The Peels

Philippine Hallam (*photo below*) and Charles Ostler won the 2016 Peel Memorials Ladies' and Mens' titles at Nottingham, **reports Bob Thompson**.

It turned out to be an emotional day for Hallam (Nottingham, h/c 16) who won the **Ladies Silver Challenge Bowl** for the second successive year, beating Julie Horsley (Sidmouth, 12) +3T, after a delayed start which led to the final finishing at 6:45 in the evening.

This was because earlier in the morning her semi-final game against Beatrice McGlen (Nottm, 1), had to be suspended after an hour's play to enable Hallam to take her toddler son to A&E, where doctors did their magic to repair a dislocated elbow (in the afternoon he was happily toddling around the club, showing no ill effects).

Upon her return Hallam then went on to beat McGlen +6T. Julie Horsley had to get past Jeanne Ackermann (Nottm, 11) in her semi-final, winning +7. Ackermann, a nonagenarian, had played at her best in the preliminary rounds winning 4/5 and it was noted that her hitting-in was of a remarkably high percentage.

Sixteen players contested **the Men's event**. Bob Thompson, (Nottm & Pinchbeck, 4), Omied Hallam, (Nottm, 0) and Charles Ostler (Pinchbeck & Hunstanton, 9) were joined in the semi-finals by Ian Draper (Nottm, 6), who had earlier on Sunday morning won a two ball play-off between himself, David Brydon (Nottm, 4) and Richard Stevens (Hamptworth, 6).

Convincing wins for Draper over Thompson, +19, and for Ostler +15 over Hallam set up the Men's final. Little by little Ostler managed to gain the advantage and he won by +4T, with a bisque standing.

**The Mixed Doubles** event attracted eleven entries and was played as a knockout. In the final, Sue Wileman (Nottm), partnering Ostler (joint handicap 10.5), established a good break to penult. Omied Hallam, playing with Philippine (5), had a chance with a long hit-in but hit the peg, and Ostler continued to make progress to victory +26.



## April

Waterlogged lawns forced **Southport** to cancel their April Advanced weekend, so several of the entrants – plus local player Lee Hartley – decamped to **Fylde** and played there instead. Matt Holmes and Paul Rigge tied on five wins, but Matt won on the who-beat-whom rule, reports James Hawkins. Rigge was undefeated in the A-Class event of the **NW Fed Millennium Advanced Weekend** a few days later, where Roger Schofield took the B Class.

'Today Ealing, tomorrow the Worlds', **writes Nigel Polhill**. Now in its third year, the **Ealing Advanced** tournament in early April attracted its strongest line-up yet, with eleven of the thirteen-player field due to participate in the World Championships a few weeks later. The favourite on paper, Alain Giraud, flew back from Holland to defend the trophy, but failed to win his first two games, and others suffered equally mixed fortunes. Of the 45 games played, fifteen involved tripling turns (well up on last year) and Jose Riva rounded off the event with an 'entertaining' SXP which drew much applause from the spectators. Harry Fisher was the eventual winner on 7/8, losing only to Martin Beacon along the way.

Stephen Mulliner's choice of the **Southwick Advanced** to 'warm up' for his eventually successful World Championship bid was good in one way, because he won, but 'warm up' certainly nobody did **reports Chris Roberts**. Many layers, hats and gloves were de rigeur, but this didn't hamper Mulliner, who beat Mark Fawcett +12tpo, +24sxp in his semi, and then Jack Wicks (who himself score a TP in his semi) +26tp, +26tp in the final.

**Letchworth's** early-season event is the only **14-point tournament** in the CA fixture calendar and, serving up a full 28 games, proved again that it's a great format for a one-day event. Definitely something other clubs should consider doing. Nick Mounfield was the eventual winner on 4/5, ahead of last year's winner Bryan Harral, on 4/6. After managing three peels on two prior occasions (without successfully pegging out), Nick finally completed the day's only triple peel (straight) in his final game. Anyone who thinks the 14-point format doesn't lend itself to peeling turns should think again, **writes Nick Mounfield**.

**Julie Horsley reports** that Jonathan Powe (Kingston Maurward/East Dorset) was undefeated in his eight games in winning the **April B-Level at Budleigh**. Powe was the CA's Most Improved Male Player last year, and seems to have started this year

well. He attained his Gold Medal for his first Triple Peel in a CA Tournament, and a handicap reduction from 3 to 2.

On probably the soggiest set of lawns **Royal Tunbridge Wells** have ever provided for a tournament, twelve of the County's finest squelched their way through five advanced games for the **Kent Cup**, **reports Jon Diamond**. Regular London visitor, Kent-born Brian Havill (*photo above*), brought to an end several years of Medway domination. He beat Jolyon Creasey in the semis to reach the best-of-three final against Mike Greagsby. Greagsby had staged an exciting late run in his semi to pip Trevor Longman by just three points. The final was more clear-cut however, with Havill winning +13, +19.

Susan Fulford won the **Woking Spring Handicap**, and Chris Roberts at the **Woking Spring B-Level**.

~  
**As the month closed came the news that Nelson Morrow (right) had won the prestigious North American AC Open in Sonoma - hearty congratulations to him (Ed).**

"It was a thrill to win an American Title", said Morrow via e-mail, "They have a slightly strange format here. After the blocks there are two semis, winners play-off and winner goes into final (that was me). Then the three others play-through to play me. I started the final one up, so if I had won the first game it was all over. I lost it but had another chance, and I managed to win narrowly!"

## June

Day one of the **Budleigh Salterton May Week** was blackened by the death of Ian Telfer (*right*), **reports manager Julie Horsley**. [Also see also, Ian's obituary on page 11]. Ian from



## AC round-up

Palace Wells CC collapsed whilst walking to the lower lawns and despite the valiant attempts for resuscitation made by players under telephone guidance, the paramedics and the air ambulance, it is very sad to report that he did not recover.

Play was understandably halted for the day but the decision to continue with the tournament the following morning was agreed as appropriate by all as players had gathered from across the country for the annual return. For some this was their first CA Tournament, taking the plunge by entering the doubles with more experienced players and for others, the classed events were the main draw.

A presentation was made at the tournament dinner to Martin Granger-Brown for his fifty continuous years at playing in Budleigh tournaments. He first played in the May Tournament in 1966 and has returned every year since to play a tournament at the Club.

Back on the courts, Brian Fisk won the A Block for the Godfrey Turner Challenge Cup with six wins from his eight games, ahead of Alan Mayne (Bowden), Peter Moore and Chris Donovan (both Budleigh) all one win adrift. In Block B for the Woodlands Quai, the 'who beat whom' rule favoured Bob Burnett (Crathes) over Alan Pidcock (Southport) who tied on 5/7. The third class was divided into two blocks C and D with the winners of each to play off, and Stephen Custance-Baker (Taunton Deane) beat Charles Townshend (Budleigh). In Block E for the Pat Tunmer Cup, the Manager managed to retain the cup for a second year, and was happily undefeated in her six games.

Fisk beat Horsley in the final of the handicap singles, Peter and Judith Moore (Budleigh) won the Handicap Doubles X and Sidmouth pair Susan Roger, and Horsley won the Y.

**Nick Parish wrote** an amusing account of the **Guildford and Godalming Advanced** weekend (sadly cut to these few lines by a space-restricted editor), that modestly hid away his own first tournament success since 2004. Instead he heralded Chris O'Byrne's achievement in providing the highlight of the weekend: playing off a six handicap and by far the lowest ranked player in the field, O'Byrne inflicted the only defeat on top-ranked Parish in what turned out to be the 29th biggest upset of all time, out of more than 300,000 games! He achieved this with his first tournament triple peel to boot and all on the day before his birthday. The other big winner was Luc Berthouze's dog, who earned a rich reward for some

innovative foraging and fortunately suffered no ill effects from devouring a whole walnut cake!

Manager **Denis Cross reports** that there was a rare 'win for the home team' in the top block of **Hurlingham's May Week** that kicked off the month for many. Mark Ormerod (Dulwich) tied on wins with Coles but the local man won on the 'who beat whom' rule. There was a full-house entry of 40, split into four classed blocks, and the same tie-break rule was used a further two times. Peter Siddall (Roehampton) beat off the challenge of Chris Roberts (Phyllis Court) both on the court and the subsequent tie-break decision for the block B, and Martin Burger (Surbiton, *photo top right*) turned the same trick against John Culhane (Hurlingham) block D. The only winner on game victories alone was Jonathan Powe (Kingston Maurward) in the C Block, where Ian Parkinson (Watford) at one victory behind, was runner-up.

At the other end of the country, David Millener (Belsay Hall) won the **Middlesbrough May Handicap**. Manager **Charles Waterfield reports** another full entry, this time 16 players including visitors from Ashby, Nottingham, Beverley, Keswick, Tyneside, Durham and of course Belsay. There was a very brief diversion on the Sunday morning when the entire Tour de Yorkshire cycle race caravan passed through the Park and so close to the courts that a commentator was heard to mention that *'there is also croquet here!'*

At **Hunstanton, the Prichard Tournament** saw George Noble (Surbiton, *photo right*) win the Lord Fermoy Cup for a second consecutive year, **reports Nick Harris**. A depleted field (sick cat -2, sick players -2) meant that the remaining twenty contestants had the pick of the lawns and the weather which was quite warm for the time of year. Mark Avery 8/8, and Noble 7/7, contested a 'final' and the latter finished +25TP.

Faced with the slightly awkward number of nine-and-a-half-and-a-half in terms of entries, the manager/tournament **reporter Marcus Evans** decided to try a cross-block format for the first time. Undaunted by mishaps in previous years involving (variously) an 'Eight' with seven players, a 'flexible' Swiss with eight players (pro-tip: it isn't very flexible), and unfinished blocks, no timers were set, which looked like a serious error when lunch on day one was reached with plenty of play left in at least two of the five first-round matches. The standard of play was perhaps best illustrated by the fact

that David Goacher was the last to start but (comfortably) the first to finish. Rather conveniently, round six involved the two favourites for the event, so this was declared the final, with the semi-finals to follow. Because why wouldn't you?

Evans beat Goacher, the pair having reached the 'final' as clear winner of block A in Evans' case, and Goacher – sneaking in ahead of the combined Kriss Chambers (Saturday) and Robert Wilkinson (Sunday) entry – not being eligible to contest the trophy despite having one win more. Alison Girdlestone was a surprise semi-finalist, as she was easily the highest-handicap player in the event off 4 (3.5 by the finish). The semis fortunately both went to seeding so there was no need to start a second final or share the trophy.

For the first time in three years the **Colchester B-Level** was full and was in fact over-subscribed, **reports Colin Hemming**. The undoubted stars of day one were the redoubtable Ian Parkinson, returning for the umpteenth time to play in this tournament, and newcomer (and local lad) Rich Waterman (*photo below*). Both won all three of their games, and Waterman won his Silver award in his second game (I believe Ian won his sometime around 1947). Parky's fine form evaporated in the sun of the second day but Waterman continued to shine, and in the game between the two he completed his first tournament Triple Peel to win his Gold award. He went on to win his fifth round game as well to finish unbeaten and to take the Roy Alford trophy. So triple congratulations due to him.

This year's **Wessex Shield** (a two-site handicap tournament at neighbouring **Winchester and Littleton**) ended with a nail-biting win (*continued over-leaf . . .*)





... for the latter's Peter Wingent (3½), who won a 'peg shoot' tie break with Jonathan Powe (Charlton, 1½) and Steve Fisher (Harwell, 14), **reports Ian Harrison.**

The middle weekend of May saw the first open tournament to be hosted by **High Wycombe** at their new lawns in Hazlemere, **reports Keith Pound.** The courts were in beautiful shape, the weather kind and the brand new clubhouse a welcome addition. Pound himself won the event, with a 5/5 record that bettered the field by two.

It was surprising that the winner of the **Tyneside Midweek Handicap** was the person least adapted to the biting cold that plagued the event. Visiting Australian Bill Humphreys (*photo above*) managed to play several very tidy breaks, and indeed he would have won by a greater margin but for being unfamiliar with the pegging-out law in handicap games (which are hardly ever played in Australia), Jim Wilson from Keswick, playing in his first tournament, was the only other newcomer to the tournament; he did well to win 3/7, **reports David Appleton.**

Liz Wilson won the **Pendle & Craven B-Level Advanced**, and the **Southport Jubilee Tankard Handicap** was won +1 on time by the hosts' Eileen Rossiter against Rena Souten (Huddersfield).

At the **Colchester Handicap**, home duo Georgeen Hemming and Al Brown won the doubles event after a 'Hemming tie-break' (shoot-out) settled the affair, but there was no such drama in the singles where David Frost (Enfield) was a clear winner.

## Victory for Burch at Westerns ~ A Grade 1 Tournament ~

Jamie Burch beat Samir Patel in the final of The Western Championship which had much reduced numbers this year because most of its usual supporters played in the World Championships the previous week, **reports Roy Edwards.**

Only eight took part but this did include both Patel and David Maugham who had performed well in the Worlds; the latter reaching the semi-finals. The lawns looked fine, in spite of the coldest April on record, and were already showing signs of improvement under new groundsman Daniel.

The quarter-finals went as expected but Patel had a very tight match against Chris Williams winning +2TP in the fifth game before going on to defeat Maugham in three straight games in his semi. In the other semi, Burch beat Ed Duckworth 3-1, and was too strong for Patel in the final, winning +12TPO, +25TP, -11TPO, +23TP.

... and he re-discovers Golf Croquet with aplomb!

When Jamie Burch entered the Surbiton GC Open there were many eyes looking to see how the AC ace would fair after a five year gap from his last GC ranking game.

There is no question that GC standards have moved on considerably in those five years. However, there was no holding Burch, who swept nearly all aside at Surbiton to finish third in a very strong field, and then just to prove it was no fluke, he did just the same at the GC British Open! (*report on that next time*)

## Lawn Care by Duncan Hector

### In pursuit of speed

Most players want fast lawns. The faster they are, the flatter they need to be. Lawn speed is dependent on the nature of the surface, the length of grass, the amount of dead organic matter on the surface, the thickness of the thatch layer, grass type and wetness.

A mower fitted with a groomer will remove dead material from the surface and immediately improve the speed by 0.5 to 1 Plummer.

This is significant because it means that you can keep your grass longer and still achieve a desirable speed. Where lawns are flat enough it is normal to mow to 4 or 5mm during the season but ease this up during dry periods if you don't have irrigation.

Meadow grass is slower than modern dwarf rye grass cultivars.

The Colchester lawns were nearly 100% meadow grass when I started advising the club in early 2014. Since then annual over-seeding with dwarf rye grass has noticeably improved the playing speed and quality of the sward.

Many people think that thatch is dead material lying on the surface. It isn't, that material will eventually contribute to the thatch layer unless removed or broken down by microorganisms. A groomer incorporated into the mower is therefore a really useful gadget and one that will make a real difference to the playing quality of the lawn.

Alternatively a light scarify (set 2mm above the surface) or mechanical rake can help to remove this surface debris.

Proper thatch is a layer of dead material below the surface and this can seriously affect lawn speeds. My method of reducing thatch is to work with nature and compost it where it lies in the root zone. The work is done by bacteria and results at croquet clubs show that thatch can be reduced by 20 to 25% in a year in this way with no invasive scarification.

**Duncan Hector, Duncan@DuncanHectorTurfCare.co.uk**

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## CA Grants help clubs improve facilities

**B**ransgore Croquet Club, situated on the southern edge of the New Forest, started life ten years ago with half a lawn and a handful of members. We have slowly increased in size and now have two nearly full-sized lawns plus a half-size practice area and just over 40 members.

Over the years we have had advice from a number of professionals but I am afraid that it always turned out to be bad or inappropriate advice. We also had our fair share of bad luck – heavy rain caused flooding and in dry summers everything turned brown.

We had a drainage system put in on court two but the contractor left early due to heavy rain and left deep tractor tyre marks on our other lawn!

We were embarrassed about the state of our lawns and following a committee meeting we decided to get some more professional advice. Two professionals were consulted – one was a local who specialized in golf courses. The other was the well-known **Duncan Hector** (see ad. opposite left).

We went for Duncan and after a visit, he stated that there was nothing basically wrong and that there was no reason why we should not have two first class lawns within a couple of years. His core sample showed that the grass roots only went down about a half inch. No wonder the grass became brown during dry summers!

'Aeration' was the thing he said.

**With the help of a grant from the CA**, we bought a Sarel Roller and started spiking a couple of times a month. The grant also allowed the purchase a towed sprayer for the application of fertilizers and other treatments. In total, the CA granted half the total cost of the equipment that was needed amounting to £777.

Here we are twelve months later. We have had another visit from Duncan, who's core sample this time revealed that the roots went down more than two inches.

We are doing something right at last and the lawns are the best they have ever been. Even during the summer, having had no rain for nearly three months, the grass has stayed reasonably green.

We know that we are doing the right things at last and that the lawns will continue to improve.

On our wish-list now is the purchase our own modern mower with some attachments instead of the old ATCO currently used by our grass cutting contractor. We are hoping to purchase and introduce this some time next spring.

Roger Price & Barry Dench, Bransgore CC

**L**ym Valley Croquet Club started in 1988 with four players, using a corner of the King George V playing fields at Uplyme, near Lyme Regis. By 1995 the club had grown to about ten members, and acquired some dedicated ground just big enough for a 25x20-yard lawn.

Unfortunately this area suffered from poor drainage, and a noticeable slope in two directions, making hoop approaches perilous and peels virtually impossible. Long-lasting pools of water were apt to develop along the entire east boundary after rain, but at least we had sole use.

Thanks to a generous legacy from the late Bill Simpson, Founding President of the Club, members were able to plan a major improvement – namely a new and enlarged lawn. Bill's legacy covered half the estimated total £10,000 and the club made a successful application for a **Croquet Association Grant**, which resulted in a £1000 gift and the offer an interest-free loan of another £1000. The remaining shortfall was covered by generous donations from many members of the club.

Work started in October 2014, when the entire area was cleared and enlarged significantly by removal of a bramble hedge and the incorporation of a small patch of wasteland. The area was then laser-leveled, a herringbone pattern of drains was installed, covered by layers of gravel, and finally good topsoil replaced the clay which previously dominated and made the grass quality poor.

Seeding took place in August 2015, but had to be repeated because of a torrential downpour. Now all is well and members are watching with increasing anticipation as the lawn matures towards its inauguration next spring. It will be perhaps the only piece of truly flat ground in this remarkably hilly area!

The new lawn will measure something over 30x25 yards, which we hope will allow us to host A-level and Intermediate League matches.

Already our membership has increased significantly this year, and we plan a major recruitment drive in 2016, including the possible introduction of a junior division for sixth- formers at local schools.

We are most grateful to the CA for their support, which gives the club at least one lawn on which to play proper croquet!

**Richard Godfrey, Chairman, Lym Valley CC**

*Photographs from top:  
(1) Bransgore's improved courts.  
(2 & 3) Lym Valley's new courts and facilities.  
(4) Worthing's new Clubhouse.*



**W**orthing Croquet Club are now sporting a brand new clubhouse thanks to **Grant from the CA** towards the cost of our new Pavilion.

In mid-June, the Mayor and Mayoress of Worthing were due to cut a ribbon to officially open the new facility, and this will earn our Club some welcome publicity to the Club.

The new structure itself has sparked interest from the passers-by and two new members have joined recently.

The new pavilion will enable the club to entertain visiting teams without having to hire rooms from the local council.

'We now look forward to a very bright future for our club and we are very grateful to the CA for their support.

**Mike Solomons, Chairman, Worthing CC**



## Getting even

**M**y first article asked the question: "how many shirts does a croquet player need?"

Well – good news – I have acquired another one! And a particularly nice one.

It's a club shirt from Somerset West Croquet Club. I wore it for the first time at the Counties playing for Lancashire v Somerset!

I pointed out my shirt to our opponents who will probably wish to remain anonymous, but for the purposes of this article let's call them Ed and Kriss. There followed a discussion about where exactly

in Somerset this club was. Both were surprised they had never heard of it. But after some discussion they thought it must be somewhere west of Taunton.

In fact its 25 miles east of Cape Town! I joined as a temporary member this winter. It's a very successful and progressive golf croquet only club and has four lawns and about 70 members. I must say that

## more Shirty by David Openshaw

when I saw them playing inter-club matches in their shirts I thought that this was something many more clubs should adopt. It adds some welcome colour and looks great.

My only other club shirt is an all yellow one from Wellington New Zealand. Croquet New Zealand allowed coloured clothing some time ago. Has this helped them attract new members?

Personally I would like to see the Somerset West type shirt become the norm for Inter-Club Matches.

Let's have a bit more colour in croquet!

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## The A-Level Series

This new Series introduced for 2016, has received a warm welcome from tournament managers who are, for the most part, reporting increased entry numbers.

However, the decision to move the East Anglian Open (see page 11) forward a week, so as to avoid the World Teams Championship, did rob the A-Series' first tournament, the inaugural **Northampton Open**, of many a likely entrant. However, here three players; David Bell, Les Heard and Dave Widdison, all stepped up from the last (or recent) season's B-Level Series to qualify for the semi-finals along with the experienced Tim King. Buoyed by victory over -2 player Bell, Widdison (hc 1) capped his weekend by beating King in the final.

The **Woking Open** was all about Jeff Dawson, who was unbeaten in his thirteen game programme that pitted all v all. Dawson finished two wins ahead of fellow home player Mike Town and the reliable Lionel Tibble. Jayne Stevens proved that she is going to be one to watch with some good scalps and some additional 'nearlies'. Ian Norris, Colin Britt and Ian Cobbold also won more than their seeding suggested likely and, along with Stevens, will be potential banana-skins for established Open circuit players to watch for this season.

In this competition, points are cumulated for top four finishes throughout the season, to decide the A-Level Series winner.

## The B-Level Series

The popularity of the B-Level Series (restricted to handicaps 3-8) continues to grow, with over-subscribed tournaments now being reported as the norm.

Wingrave's Paul Gunn beat Chris Heath of Guildford in the last game of no less than 104, to win the **Sussex County** event, which included Tomass Freimans and Zigurds Plavins all the way from Latvia.

Heath went one better and won the **Wrest Park B-Level**, ahead of Kath Wright (Long Eaton Park), Richard Keighley (Wingrave) and Roger Stroud (Sussex).

Durham's Andrew Carpenter is no stranger to long distance travel for his croquet and his journey to **Ealing's B-Level** was rewarded with first place ahead of Tony Elliot (Enfield), Andrea Huxley (Guildford) and that man Heath again.

In this competition, qualifying event winners progress 'as of right' to the National Final at Budleigh on 8/9 October, and any remaining places not taken by winners, are offered to the best gatherers of points for position two to four finishes.

**Chris Roberts**

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

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