

The

Issue 365 December 2016

CROQUET

Gazette



**Surbiton do
'The Double'**



From our files

researched by Frances Colman

10 years ago - 2006



GB win the MacRob – Great Britain have successfully defended their title to win the MacRobertson Shield for the thirteenth time.

The event was contested by GB, Australia, New Zealand and the USA, in a series of back-to-back test matches in Australia between 18 November and 13 December . . . This was GB's sixth successive victory and is the longest winning streak in the event's history.

They now have an unbroken chain of 18 test match wins – last losing to Australia in 1986, reports James Hawkins.

GB won 15-6, 19-2 and 19-2 against NZ, USA and Australia respectively.

The GB team comprised Keith Aiton, Mark Avery, Chris Clarke, Robert Fulford (captain), Jonathan Kirby and David Maugham. The GB team manager was Phil Cordingley . . .

~

Chairman's Column (by Jonathan Issacs) - . . . Ian Vincent handed over the chair in mid-October and I am sure that you would all want to join me in thanking him most warmly for the sterling work he has done during his three years in office.

During his tenure the CA has continued to flourish. A measure of this is the fact that we have been able to increase our grants as well as funding the Public Liability Insurance for member Clubs. . .

~

South Africa awarded the GC Worlds -

The WCF has much pleasure in announcing that the South African CA has been awarded the hosting of the 8th World GC Championships.

The tournament will be played from 8th to 16th March 2008, in Cape Town, centred at the Kelvin Grove Club, with additional matches at Rondebosch CC and Somerset West CC.

This is the first time a World Championship event has been held in South Africa and President of the South African CA, Mrs Carole Jackson, said, "Croquet in South Africa has always been strong, with fourteen clubs and enthusiasts around the country.

This award will provide us with the impetus to spread the sport even wider. . ."

50 years ago - 1966



Mr Hugh Denny – The CA has lost yet another keen and valued member. . . He had been very active for the past five years in trying to promote interest in the Reigate Club, and in 1965 he was elected to the Council. . . As a young man he served in the First World War and won the M.C.; he had two years in the trenches with no leave – which the doctor thinks may well have been the basic cause of the heart trouble from which he died. . .

~

'Eights Week' Selection (in reply to a letter reproduced last time, in which a player was allowed to opt out of the first eight to play in the second) – Mr Lloyd-Pratt comments: I can see Mr Hamilton-Miller's point; but in this case I happen to know that Mr Strachan found it more convenient as well as preferable to play at Hurlingham, and . . . the results have more than justified my standing down in Mr Strachan's favour.

~

Miss E.D.B. Simeon – There will not be many associates left now who can recall seeing this lady play, but her recent death at the end of April ought not to go unrecorded. For about two decades from 1912, when she won the Women's Championship at a time when rivalry for this title was very keen. . . Ella Simeon began her croquet at the Bedford Club at about the same time as Dorothy Steel, and they were notable rivals. . . She first appears in the Ladies Field cup in 1912 when she was runner-up and she tied for first place the following year, as in 1928 . . . A curious feature of her play was that the backswing of her mallet went out at an angle of 45 degrees to the right. A back swing to the left is by no means unusual, but to her sister's recollection, Miss Simeon's 'deviation' was unique. M.B.R.

(Maurice Reckitt, CA President 1962-67).

~

Editorial panel – At the last meeting of the Editorial panel, it was decided that, owing to a shortage of space, and the fact that tournament reports were becoming quiet unreasonably long, the Editor be instructed to "use his pencil" – drastically, if necessary.

100 years ago - 1916



Major-General Sir A. Paris – The "Sunday Pictorial" of Nov 5th contained the following reference: "That fine soldier Major-General Sir Archibald Paris, who, I am informed, has had to have his left leg amputated as a result of his recent wounds, will be a great loss to Sir Douglas Haig's armies. He proved himself a first-class divisional leader during his two years command of the Naval Division, first at Antwerp, then in Gallipoli, and later elsewhere. I believe he was 'on the list' for a corps command"

(He) has taken a great deal of interest in the tournaments at Portsmouth, for which largely owing to his good offices, in conjunction with those of Sir Collingwood Hughes, the use of the United Services Ground has been permitted.

~

Military Cross for Lieut. Walter Boyd – Amongst those on who Decorations were conferred by the King at Buckingham Palace on October 21st, Lieut. Walter Boyd, Scots Guards, received the Military Cross. Lieut. Boyd is a son of Major Walter Boyd.

~

Hunstanton – Judging by the number of entries there must be still many croquet players who are somewhat nervous as to the general opinion whether it is "correct form" to play in tournaments during the War, yet surely they do not realise how harmless and even pleasant it is to indulge in a sport of bracing capabilities to the health such as a week's croquet at Hunstanton can give. If croquet were judged in a broader spirit then surely the 27 entries would have been doubled.

~

Worms (replying to a previous letter) - Dear Sir, Worms are such valuable soil cultivators that it is a mistake, especially in heavy ground, to destroy them unless their number really is excessive. It is far better to spread the casts – which form an excellent top dressing – by birch broom and then roll the lawn. If their destruction be decided upon it can be effected by means of lime water (10lbs of newly slaked lime in about 30 gallons of water). . . Yours faithfully, E.H.Cartwright

Editorial

There is much about the season just past for croquet to be pleased about, and in rounding up a successful season for the CA as a whole and individual members alike, this has been a nice issue to put together. There is much silverware on show in this issue and, in salute to Surbiton's rare Inter-Club 'Double', they rightly feature on the cover.

Hats off too to Robert Fulford who has received the Council Medal, and his citation is carried here in tribute to one of the most successful players in the history of our sport.

Looking forward, this Gazette includes details of next year's coaching courses at The Academy at Southwick, and the South-West Academy at Budleigh Salterton – and there is excellent news of the formation of a new University Club.

The Letters pages are full to bursting, which is a sure sign of an active readership, and they include the welcome news that two Federations are to fund courses that benefit croquet as a whole (rather than those aimed at individuals). Congratulations to them for giving a lead in this area.

One letter tells of Hamptworth CC's thoughtful tie-in with a Help the Heroes centre, which harks back 100 years to the role that croquet played in the rehabilitation of some of the Great War injured (*as frequently covered in Frances*

Colman's 'From our Files' column).

As ever with the Gazette, the limitations of space mean that I have had to hold over some material until the next issue again.

This is of course disappointing for those who have taken the trouble to write articles and reports, only to find their efforts have been 'sliced' by this heartless Editor, or worse still not made the magazine at all.

This time round my apologies go to David Openshaw, whose always interesting 'Getting Shirty' column had to be halted just as he was about to share an excellent coaching tip – I will leave you on tenterhooks about that until next time when David will tell all.

Missing out also in this issue are the citations for the CA's Diploma recipients, and these too will be carried next time when, with competitive croquet seasonally playing thin on the ground, space will allow due recognition for these most valued of club members.

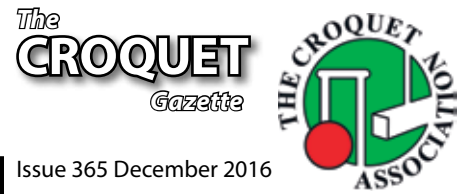
I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and good health in the New Year.



Chris Roberts

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Issue 365 December 2016

Front cover: Surbiton were jubilant at completing the Inter-Club 'Double' when they added the AC title to the GC crown secured a few weeks before. Captain Samir Patel hugs the beautiful Beddow Cup as Sam Murray and obscured GC Captain Don Beck share a laugh. (*impressively this photo was taken by Edward Patel, Samir's eight year old son!*)

This page: The Editor with Hurlingham silverware in September, and the new Chairman in charge of his first Council meeting in October (*photos by Rosanne Creighton and Chris Roberts*).

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Chairman's Column

I am humbled, but pleased, to become Chairman of Council. We are facing significant changes and I will do my best to lead us through them. As this is my first Chairman's column, I will focus on a few of the issues that will need to be dealt with in the next year or so.

Avid Gazette readers will be well aware that the Croquet Association is in the midst of significant organisational change.

The Special General Meeting decision to extend full CA membership to all club members by 2020 has major implications for our administrative systems, tournament eligibility and communication with members.

Jeff Dawson, who heads the implementation team, gave a progress report in the September Gazette and I

hope we will be able to launch the on-line membership database during 2017.

Several members have expressed disappointment that our new arrangements can't be fully operational for next year.

But this is a detailed and complex change process involving considerable time and effort by volunteer members of Council and others. I appreciate the commitment that they are giving to this and thank them all for their work.

Croquet is run primarily by volunteers in clubs, federations, Council and its committees. At each level it is clear to me that we depend on relatively few stalwarts who carry a heavy workload.

I would like our members to recognise that the functioning of Council relies heavily on the work of its committee chairmen. They are the linchpins when it comes to executing our policies. A number of these: John Bowcott (GC Tournaments), Jeff Dawson (ICT and AC Laws), Martin French (Equipment), Richard Hoskyns (Investment),

Jonathan Isaacs (Development), Tim King (Executive), Ian Lines (International), David Maugham (AC Selection and ICT) and Strat Liddiard (Publishing), retired from chairing those committees last session.

I salute each of them and am grateful to those who have taken on other roles.

Amongst our membership we have no shortage of skilled, experienced people and I urge more of you to come forward and support the sport we love, whether it be in your club - with its upkeep, catering or aspects of administration; standing for election to your federation; or election to Council.

Continues overleaf.



Brian Shorney

The CROQUET Gazette

Continued...

Another article in the September Gazette by Strat Liddiard, Chairman of the Governance Working Party (GWP), set out our need to examine the CA's governance arrangements.

The GWP will, of course, aim to make recommendations on how we can best perform as an efficient, effective national governing body for croquet, but it must also ensure that we have processes which meet the needs of our expanded membership.

Strat invited views from members and I am disappointed that, so far, very few have responded. I know from exchanges with friends on the tournament circuit that many of them have strong views about "the CA", by which they mean its Council and committees.

A common theme has been a perceived distance between "the CA" and the grass roots: Council is seen as an A-class elite. But now we are all to be CA members, the expression "the CA" must refer to all of us.

Members' views matter, so please take this opportunity to express them: revisit Strat's article and write to him with your suggestions on how we can best meet your needs.

At last month's AGM our President, Quiller Barrett, expressed his concern about the amount of AC being played in clubs.

The following Council meeting discussed this topic and federation representatives have been asked to assess the current position in clubs. In particular, we wish to establish whether the suggestions in the AC Regeneration document issued by Council three years ago have been taken up by clubs and, if so, were they effective.

Before we debate this issue at the next Council we need to know how much development of new AC players is taking place and the form that this usually takes.

I am pleased to note that at the top level many players successfully compete in both AC and GC championships. This clearly demonstrates that these codes are not mutually exclusive. Consequently, I believe we should aim to have more club players playing competitively in both forms of the sport. I've thrown down the gauntlet!

Brian Shorney,
Chairman of Croquet Association

Nominations sought for CA Club Awards

The Croquet Association Club Awards are made at the AGM in October and beside a certificate, a cheque for £250 is given to winning clubs.

The CA makes awards biennially in three categories to clubs that have made exceptional progress in providing a good playing environment over the previous two years:

The Townsend Award is given every two years to a club with one or two lawns that has, in the opinion of the Development Committee, made exceptional progress in providing a good playing environment over the previous two years.

The Apps Heley Award is given every two years to the club with three or four lawns that has made most progress at a national or local level in the last two years.

The Millennium Club Award is given every two years to the club with five or more courts that has made most progress at national or local level in any of two of the previous three years.

To apply for any of these Awards, please firstly contact your Federation Development Officer and complete an application form.

The closing date for the awards is 15 January 2017

Roger Staples, Chairman of the Development Committee



National Croquet Day was a hit in 2016 at Roehampton (Photo by Elaine Phillimore)

CA Personal Membership Clarification for 2017

There have been some enquires from members about not renewing their membership from January 2017, with a view to becoming Standard members through their clubs.

Please note Standard membership of the CA is not yet available.

This means that if you resign as a member now, you will cease to be a member until the CA brings in this category.

Therefore you would not get the Croquet Gazette, nor be able to access member-only areas on-line, nor be able to vote until after this happens.

When Standard membership is brought in, you would automatically become a Standard member at that time as long as you are a member of a full Member Club and your club supplies your membership details to the CA.

As an interim measure, you will be able to enter CA tournaments throughout 2017 if you will qualify for Standard membership through your club when it does come in.

We will also keep your record of qualifications as coach, handicapper or referee and recognise these qualifications through the transition period, so if you resign now but become a member again when the Standard membership category comes in, then your qualifications will not be affected.

I hope, like me, that you will feel that supporting croquet is important, and will want to continue as an individual Premium or Supporter member.

However, I hope this helps clarify the situation should you decide to discontinue your membership.

Jeff Dawson,
Chairman of the Membership Changes Implementation Group

National Croquet Day is 4 June 2017

The CA Marketing Team is here to support you in developing your activities

Contact Brian Wilson 07970 922867 or 01225 708540 brian@europaassociates.co.uk

The Annual General Meeting of the CA

A report by the Honourary Secretary Ian Vincent



The Annual General Meeting of the Association was again held in the Terrace Room at Hurlingham.

The Chairman delivered his last Council Report

Council's report was delivered by its retiring Chairman, Tim King.

Starting with highlights of the playing season, he congratulated Vice-President Stephen Mulliner on his stamina while winning the AC World Championship in Florida; the England team and the clubs that hosted the GC World Team Championship; and those selected to play in the MacRobertson Shield, the AC World Team Championship, in California next April.

Domestically, the main change was the introduction of a new handicapping system for Golf Croquet, with an expanded range to accommodate the top players without distorting the system for the majority.

Off the court, the focus of planned activity has been implementation of the membership changes agreed at the SGM held in March last year, both at a practical level and in terms of how the organisation must change to accommodate a larger membership.

We have been unable to deliver a new membership database in time to make the change in January 2017 but, next season, members of clubs will already be allowed to play in all tournaments that appear in the CA Fixtures Calendar without having to join as Tournament Members.

Council also had to consider two matters about which members of the Association felt strongly, which related to disciplinary action and team selection. Both raised issues fundamental to good sports governance, such as natural justice and avoidance of conflicts of interest, and were resolved by reference to existing policies or development of new ones.

Liz Larsson and her Office colleagues had a busy year, making arrangements for members to attend the Patron's Lunch and for National Croquet Day.

Turning to personal matters, Tim noted that the death of past president Bernard Neal was a very sad loss for croquet during the past year and mentioned the passing of Ian Parkinson and illness of Richard Hoskyns.

He thanked Alan Pidcock, who was retiring from Council after 18 years, and Jonathan Isaacs, Ian Lines and Strat Liddiard, as they move on from chairing principal committees.

Tim concluded his report by encouraging more women to join Council.

Hon. Treasurer

After reporting on his first full year as Hon. Treasurer, Peter Death noted that the development budget had been significantly underspent and encouraged clubs to approach their Federation's Development Officer to discuss possible projects.

Shop profits were impacted by fluctuations in currency values. He was asked about a capital loss recorded on the redemption of government stock; the amount we had in cash or on deposit; and the availability of grants for playing equipment.

Constitution amendments

The two amendments to the constitution proved to be uncontroversial and were adopted nem con. Proposals to change voting arrangements to reflect an enlarged membership were likely to be brought forward.

Council members for 2017

Those nominated to serve on Council were elected unopposed. The new members, Beatrice McGlen and Dave Trimmer, stood to be recognised, along with three new Federation Representatives: John Dawson (North West), Mick Haytack (East Midlands), and Klim Seabright (South West).

Awards and Diplomas

Jonathan Powe, Alison Jones and Peter Dowd were presented with the most improved player awards, but neither Keith Aiton nor Ian Burrige were able to collect their coaching awards.

Diplomas were awarded to Philip Bass (Fylde), Richard Brooks (Sussex County), Penny Crowe (Cheltenham), Lorna Frost (Bowdon), Richard Jenkins (Hamptworth), Betty King (Norwich), Arthur Lindley (Guildford & Godalming), Eileen Prodger (Sussex County), Walter Sanders (Middlesbrough) and Mike Tracey (Nailsea).

The Council Medal

Unfortunately, Rob Fulford was prevented at short notice from attending to receive the Council Medal, but the President read the citation which paid tribute to his contribution in transforming the tactics of the game.

Closing remarks by the President

In closing the meeting, Quiller Barrett asked Council to obtain some reliable data about the amount of Association Croquet being played at clubs and reconsider, in the light of it, the initiatives proposed a few years ago.

The October Council meeting

The subsequent Council meeting opened with a period of silence in memory of Bernard Neal.

Brian Shorney was elected Chairman of Council
and

John Bowcott Vice-Chairman
(and to chair the Management Committee)

New Committee Chairmen and Governance

Several new committee chairmen were elected: Roger Staples (Development), Tim King (International and GC Tournaments) and Jeff Dawson (Publishing), with others resuming former roles.

The issue raised by the President in his closing remarks to the AGM was considered, in a discussion that extended to a wider debate about governance, focusing on how Council could ensure that its policies were acted upon given the limited voluntary effort available.

The Regeneration of AC

Returning to the specific topic of AC regeneration, Anna Giraud offered to look at the recommendations of the working parties that reported a few years ago and ask appropriate committees to follow them up.

Federation Representatives were asked to report on what was happening in their regions and committee chairmen were also asked to review the strategy document produced during Barry Keen's Chairmanship.

Governance Working Party

Strat Liddiard reported on the first meeting of the Governance Working Party, appealing to members of Council to let him have their views.

Brian Shorney re-iterated the request to clubs and individual members to respond to the recent Gazette article.

In closing

The only questions to the new Chairman came from his predecessor, who took the opportunity to inform him, and the meeting, about a possible development opportunity and encouraging news about some university societies.

Despite a short break caused by a fire alarm, the meeting finished at 15:40.

Handicap committee announcements

GC changes and decisions

Handicap Doubles

At present, the CA's system for calculating Extra Turns for Handicap Doubles is different from the rest of the world.

Analysis showed that these two approaches made little or no difference to the net number of ETs exchanged between the two sides.

For now, the CA system will not be changed, but when the next edition of the WCF GC Rules is published (maybe two years' time?), we will then fall in line with other countries.

As the other large croquet countries have already adopted the CA's new GC handicap system, it means the same system for singles and doubles will pertain wherever you visit.

Minus Players

A handicap card will become optional for minus players who play no more than 10 handicap singles games per year - a player's ranking grade, rather than handicap cards will be used for determining handicap. Martin French has written to all players affected.

Adjustments by Club Handicappers

Budleigh Salterton had proposed that Club Handicappers should be allowed to adjust GC handicaps for players of handicap 3 and above - rather than 5 and above - given the wider range now in place with the new handicap system.

The CA website has been updated to allow GC Club Handicappers to alter handicaps from 3 upwards.

All GC Club Handicappers have been informed.

AC changes and decisions

Doubles - back to the drawing board

The current system is too complicated for very little gain.

It has been pointed out that many short bisquers are losing interest and that developing longer bisquers are losing out.

All of the Handicap Committee (HC) were in favour of reverting to the original system of determining the number of bisques for each pair.

This brings us into line with the rest of the world.

However if any club wishes to try alternative methods in their own clubs and report to the HC, we would be interested to hear their experiences.

10 points for all games remains

We discussed again whether shortened games should be played for 5 or 10 points and the opinion of the Handicap Committee is that 'a game is a game'. So 10 points remains.

Other decisions

Checking cards / Opponents signature

All agreed that the inclusion of a column for the opponent's signature on the handicap card is a desirable long-term aim of the HC committee, but that now is not the appropriate time to implement.

New Handicappers

Hugh Carlisle for Hurlingham and Adam Wimshurst for Budleigh Salterton are appointed as CA AC Handicappers.

Strat Liddiard,
Chairman of the Handicap Committee

GC International Performance Development Group

2017 will see the inauguration of the Golf Croquet International Performance Development Group (GC IPDG). This will help to realise the potential of CA Members who aspire to represent England or play in the GC World Team Championship, through a programme of coaching and mentoring.

Regional coaching Pods throughout the country will attract local players, and provide a focus for A and B class players to get together locally and improve their game in a relaxed environment.

There will be more detail on the locations of these in the Gazette and on the CA website in the upcoming months.

Improving players with the potential to reach an international standard will be selected annually for the two year International Performance Squad course, giving them access to a higher level of coaching material and benefit from regular mentoring and advice from players of international standard and great experience.

An Elite Squad will be created to concentrate on important aspects of the game at the international level.

If you have the ambition, desire and determination to explore your full potential and perhaps play at International level, or you know someone who has, but is too modest to declare themselves, then please get in touch.

Lionel Tibble, GC IPDG Director

On Thursday 13 October local villagers were shocked to witness the result of an arson attack on the Pavilion on the Playing Field. It was built by villagers in 2005 after fundraising for several years and has been home to the croquet club ever since. In fact we are by far the biggest user.

All visitors who come to play league and friendly matches comment on the lovely surroundings and the super facilities offered by the Pavilion. It is a sad loss to the community, but the village will not be defeated by this cowardly act of vandalism.

The burned out remains of the building will be demolished this winter and plans are already afoot to rebuild in 2017 if possible.

Although a small club of just 40 members, we do have three full sized lawns.

Arson attack at Dowlish Wake



The lawns are horizontally challenging, but we have plans to work on that aspect.

In fact just 48 hours before the fire Duncan Hector had praised our facilities and was setting us on the road to making improvements next year.

The Club still plans to participate fully in

the league with the expectation of having some temporary facilities on site. If anyone can help in this regard we would really appreciate a call (01460 57220).

We beg understanding for the change in circumstances and wish to reassure all visiting teams that the welcome will be as warm as ever. We are already looking forward to the 2018 season when we expect to be welcoming visitors to a new and even better facility!

Anthea Carter, Chair, Dowlish Wake GCC

If you think you can help in a small way, the Playing Field Trust has established a fund-raising page <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/dowlish-wake-pavilion-phoenix-appeal>

Robert Fulford is awarded the CA Council Medal

Robert Fulford has been awarded The Croquet Association's Council Medal because he has enhanced his country's reputation throughout the croquet world, not only as an outstandingly successful player.

Robert has also made an immense contribution to the sport, recognised throughout the world, as a tactical innovator.

He started playing at the Colchester club aged 15 in 1985 and developed fast: in 1989 he won the President's Cup for the first of 11 times. By the 1990s Robert's play had advanced into a class of its own and he was coaching semi-professionally in Australia and in USA.

By the end of 2015 Robert's AC achievements made him one of the most successful players in the history of the sport. It might be said that he is the first person to conquer the game: he appears to be able to complete almost any manoeuvre he decides to try.

He has won the World Championships a record five times and has been a member of a winning British MacRobertson



He expanded 'Peel On Opponent' tactics with a variety of new lift leaves and in 1993 pioneered the sextuple peel into a routine winning tactic – though many of his peers couldn't match his ball control well enough to adopt it. The introduction of super-advanced rules has given Robert a new environment to experiment tactically and, unsurprisingly, he is regarded as a leading thinker in this area.

Since Robert married Susan and she began to play doubles he has gone beyond mere sextuple peels

to making 10 or 11 peels in a turn. He has turned peeling from being a formula and pattern to being more a 'state of mind'. Championship croquet in 2016 is a different sport to what was being played in 1990 and this is largely due to Robert Fulford. He has been a great ambassador for croquet and his services to our sport have indeed been outstanding.

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Championship croquet in 2016 is a different sport to what was being played in 1990 and this is largely due to Robert Fulford. He has been a great ambassador for croquet and his services to our sport have indeed been outstanding.

**Quiller Barrett,
President of the Croquet Association**

Robert Fulford is pictured here with the President's Cup (photo by Samir Patel)

Most improved female AC player Steel Memorial Bowl

~ Alison Jones ~

Alison Jones started 2015 with a handicap of 20, entered the High-Bisquers Tournament at Budleigh Salterton and won it with five wins out of five and, following success at her home club of Nailsea, had her handicap further reduced to 14 and then to 10 after she won the Bristol High-Handicapper's tournament. She played in the qualifier for the Women's World Championship and although this was her first tournament playing advanced, she managed to win three of her eight games. She continued to reduce her handicap playing in tournaments at Nailsea and Hamptworth and in the Area Final of All England Handicap, where she gained her bronze merit award. She was invited to be part of the CA team versus the CAI, winning both doubles, two of her singles and gaining her silver merit award.

Alison also played in all four SWF leagues over the year and by the end of the season her handicap had reduced to 5.



The most improved player awards

Most improved male AC player Apps Memorial Bowl

~ Jonathan Powe ~

Jonathan Powe started playing AC at Charlton Horethorne Club in 2013 and played his first tournament on full-size quality lawns at East Dorset's June Week in 2015.

In that tournament he won the C Class, the Handicap singles knockout, was joint winner of the HiLo doubles and achieved his silver merit award.

He won the Kingston Maurward club championship and the internal competitions at Charlton CC.

Of his eleven world-ranking games he won nine and only lost two, changing his grade from 1603 to 1669 in the process.

He started 2015 with a handicap of 8 which came down to 3 by the end and he was selected for the Dorset Inter-County team for 2016.

Most improved GC player Spiers Trophy

~ Peter Dowd ~

Peter Dowd joined Northampton CC in 2014 and started 2015 with a GC handicap of 9, which was reduced to 1 by the end of the year.

His year was marked by success in tournaments, winning two C-level tournaments at Hamptworth, the B-Level at Hunstanton and the B-Level at Guildford & Godalming.

He capped a fine season by finishing as the runner up in the GC B-Level National Final at Hunstanton.



Call for top GC events to be three dayers

Dear Editor,

The structure of top-class GC events has been improved greatly over the past few years. However, I suggest the GC Tournament Committee, managers and venues of our top events consider how recent developments have affected the format of some of these events – can we improve them further?

Excluding the British Opens and the Selector's First Eight (*Musk's Cup*), all the other top GC singles events are two days long: the English National Singles Championship (ENSC) (*Ascot Cup*) itself, its eight qualifiers around the country, and Surbiton's London Masters.

Adding a third day would be of considerable benefit to these events, even if a major step to take.

There are three reasons to consider:

The formats of many of these require three 'best of three' matches to be played on the first day – not too bad if you complete 1 or 2 matches in straight games, but if all 3 go to the third game, that is 9 games in a day. And generally, if they've gone to the third game, it's because they are tight matches – so quite long and demanding.

One of the ENSC qualifiers even schedules 10 games for everyone on the Saturday.

In my experience, by games 9 and 10 in such events, it is more a question of who's still standing than of ultimate skill levels.

Is it really meant to be primarily a test of endurance?

When questions about the format were asked at the 2016 event with 10 games on Saturday, the answer was "we've done it this way for 16 years". An obvious response is "true, but most of the entrants are 16 years older now!" But that isn't the compelling reason for change.

More importantly, it is evident in the past five years that the strength of the field in these events has risen significantly – whereas five years ago, the uneven strength of the field meant there were some easier, quicker matches which were quite one-sided. That is now rarely the case.

The changes to the tournament schedule in recent years have been successful in drawing much stronger fields, where all the players are very competitive. So there are no easy rounds now – every match is a serious struggle.

And finally, this strengthened field contains many more first-rate shots. This

means more matches involving prolonged shooting battles at hoops, where neither player can maintain a decent hoop running position for long enough to get off a shot at the hoop. This has noticeably lengthened many games.

Add into the mix that several events – and even the ENSC final itself – use time-limits and double-banking, it can become really hard work just surviving the Day 1 schedule.

I felt the ENSC final was spoiled this year by the huge impact time limits and especially double-banking had on many matches – it was difficult to maintain any rhythm at times. Long hoop battles in one game would repeatedly stall the double-banked game.

Taking these factors together, it seems worth asking the question whether extending to a three day format wouldn't be better?

It would allow revised formats with a small reduction in peak games per day, could obviate the need for time limits, and make it more possible to reduce double-banking. It would recognise the stronger competition many of these events now provide. All in all, it would aid the standard of play and improve the events considerably for the players.

Martin French, Ipswich CC

Tim King, Chairman of the Golf Croquet Tournament Committee (GC TC) replies:

Dear Martin,

Thank you for your thoughts on an important matter.

There are two versions of my answer: the long one, which would leave our readers few other articles to read in the rest of this issue; and the short one, which is that I have huge sympathy for your position and that the GC Tournament Committee has already begun to consider many of your points.

I expect managers to act in the first instance to nurture competition in our sport.

I cannot remember, by way of example, the last time (if ever) that I applied time limits in a tournament that I managed.

I was extremely disappointed to hear of a World Championship in 2015 where the manager decided it was appropriate to apply a limit to at least one match.

I look for us to do better at knowing what creates tournaments that deliver the right experience for players.

Keith's best AC coaching tip

Dear Editor,

I love the coaching column in the Gazette. Hidden in my letter published in 2015 was my best coaching tip. It was neither praised nor criticised, so maybe it was too hidden.

It is for practising breaks to encourage those who aren't yet able to sustain a four-ball break (or a three-ball or a triple).

Start the break with the four balls where you would ideally like them to be, then:

After each croquet shot, place the balls where you hoped that they would reach.

In this way each continuation shot is as easy as possible, so you keep the break going, and you learn where the balls should reach to make the break as easy as possible.

So often it is the inaccurate croquet shot that ruins a break, and beginners (or those learning to do their first triple) never get the feel of playing the break like the experts.

For those GC players who would like to try the AC game, it is the croquet shot that will be new to them, along with the tactics.

This method of playing a break helps with both.

Once you have got the hang of what you should be doing to keep the break going, you can then begin practising the croquet shots themselves [the rule is to aim at the mid-point of the line connecting the end positions of the two balls, so you need to know where you want them to end up].

If they end up near where you want them to – just move them to the ideal positions, but if they are widely out, play the shot again till you get it right(er).

Dr Keith Ross, Villembits, France

Dave Kibble, Chairman of the Coaching Committee replies:

I like Keith's idea and commend it to those improving their break play.

It also helps in that you need to think about where those ideal positions are, which in turn helps you play the right stroke.

One addition I'd make is that when you get to the final stage of Keith's suggestion, instead of just moving the balls, you replay the shot from the exact spot you first played it from – observe what should be improved and improve it with several replays until you get close.

Yorkshire and Southern Federations to fund courses that aid wider benefit

Dear Editor,

I was very pleased to see Don Beck's letter in *Gazette 362*, suggesting that coaching courses should be subsidised.

Coaching at all levels is at the very heart of the development of our game, and coach training has to be an essential first step. Yet, in 2016, nationally advertised coach training courses at York and at the South West Academy had to be cancelled because of lack of support. I am sure a key factor is the cost. Those willing to coach give freely of their time and enthusiasm, and it is asking a lot to also require them to pay to qualify.

The Yorkshire Federation has taken up the proposal. Our aim is for every club to have in-house trained coaches, so in 2017 we will subsidise Federation members attending coach training courses. Will other Federations do likewise? Don suggested that Federations might contribute 25% of the cost and the CA 75%. Will the CA rise to the challenge? I can think of no better way of securing the future of croquet.

**John Harris, Development Officer
Yorkshire Croquet Federation**

Dear Editor,

Having (very) recently taken over as Coaching Officer for **The Southern Federation**, I was delighted that our committee has decided to reimburse in full the course fees for people willing to undertake training to become coaches, referees or tournament managers.

Although there is a limitation of 'one grant per course per Club' I feel that this sends a signal that the Federation is happy to use Clubs' subscriptions in aid of wider benefit.

People give generously of their time to become coaches, etc., so I feel this is the least we can do: one hopes that other Federations will follow suit.

I know that some feel that people don't value what they don't pay for: all I can say to that is that I am of the lucky generation that did not have to pay for GCE exams, degree exams and the like.....it doesn't mean that I don't value the outcome.

**Ian Harrison,
Coaching Officer,
Southern Croquet Federation**

Charity one-ball to support Parkinson's UK

The annual Charity One-Ball goes from strength to strength.

This is a brilliant opportunity for clubs to kick-off the new season next spring and at the same time to raise funds for a worthwhile charity.

Additionally, it appeals to both AC and GC players and so bridges the gap between the two codes. Indeed, many GC players get to the final and do well!

In 2016 over 400 players participated in 35 heats, and 37 qualifiers went to the National Final.

Over £4000 was raised for charity.

The 2017 event has just been launched, in aid of **Parkinson's UK**, and all participants are encouraged to wear something blue, which is the charity's house colour.

If your club has not run a heat before you should consider it.

Heats are normally half a day or a full day and run as you please (perhaps a swiss, blocks or knock-out – you choose). If you need help organising your heat it will be provided.

For every £50 raised in your heat, your club gets one free place in the final, at Surbiton on 7th May.

**For more information contact
Kevin Carter (kevin@profundus.com).**

Hamptworth's Help for Heroes tie-in echos the croquet of the Great War

Dear Editor,

For many years Croquet has been used as a rehabilitation activity. This was especially true for First World War soldiers with shell shock.

A hundred years on, we are still seeing injured military personnel with post-traumatic stress disorder and many physical injuries.

At Hamptworth Croquet Club we have Help for Heroes as a near neighbour.

Via H4H we approached the Tedworth House Rehabilitation Unit and offered croquet sessions for the delegates, who come from all over the UK to attend weekly residential programmes.

The initial responses from those who have played croquet with us have been very positive and we have all had great fun.

There have been a mix of soldiers with physical and psychological needs, but all

were able to wear trainers, which was the only requirement from the club.

The lawn surface stayed intact!!

We have not yet considered wheelchairs on grass, but see no reason why we shouldn't play on an indoor mat or Astroturf and research is ongoing into that.

As the delegates come from all over the UK, I hope that other croquet clubs will offer a supportive personal response to any keen new young

prospective croquet player who has had an introductory session at Hamptworth. We will be very happy to put them in touch.

**Jerry Wilde,
Chairman,
Hamptworth CC**



Photo below: The tranquil setting at Hamptworth CC has been just the ticket for using croquet to aid the rehabilitation of our injured military heroes.
(Photo by John Bevington)



More Letters to the Editor

Encouraging more GC players to try AC - ideas to try

Dear Editor,

I write with reference to the 'Encouraging more GC players to try AC' article in the most recent issue (Gazette 365).

It's the case with most ball games that growth in participation is dependent upon several factors – Cost to the individual, Feasibility for the provider, Potential reward for the ambitious player and Enjoyment for all those involved.

Where growth in croquet is concerned, there is no distinction between AC and GC with regard to the first two factors.

So let's look at ways of increasing enjoyment for beginners at club level, by altering on a temporary basis some of the features of the AC game that stand accused of being responsible for inhibiting enjoyment.

(1) The long wait for an innings – Reduce the number of hoops that can be run in an innings, and so teach the merits of a 'good leave'.

(2) The long game – Play 'Short Croquet', which only involves running the first six hoops.

(3) The failure to hit the target in the first stroke of an innings, when cold, bored, or because of lack of continuity

Once all four balls are on the court, start each turn by lifting one of your balls, placing it a mallet's head length from another ball, and rush that ball to a spot from which one can take croquet and get a break going.

The technique of hitting-in over a long distance can be learned separately.

(4) The complexity of AC Laws – Simplify these for beginners. For example, there will now be no need for a 'wiring lift'.



GC B-Level players could be a target group

Incorporate specific challenges, such as a requirement to take croquet from at least two balls before being able to run a hoop. Then clarify these unambiguously and publicise them widely.

Let us now look at ways of motivating those who want to win, and like to be seen winning. This is not the definitive game of AC, so set it apart for members of an 'All-age beginners group', by giving it a separate name, such as 'Lift and Rush AC'.

This game will need court time, tuition, publicity and most importantly its own competition structure, with significant trophies to be won, presented and reported upon by the local press. Moreover, because it has been identified as a 'separate' game, it must have continuity from one season to the next. Finally, this can only become a successful venture if it has absolute support from the club's senior management.

Note (1) A reference to 'Lift and Rush Croquet' can be found in 'Alternative Croquet', a book compiled and edited by Don Gaunt, and published by the CA. Note (2) The 'Lift and Rush' variation of AC can be suitable for children, the elderly and those with a weakness in their wrists or shoulders.

John Hansen, Sapcote CC

Dear Editor,

Two or three years ago, a letter in the Gazette described a way of playing Association Croquet that was named as "two and ten", if my memory serves me right.

In it each player had two strokes at the start of their turn and a maximum of ten strokes per turn. This was suggested as a way avoiding players sitting on the side for long periods during club practice sessions. I am afraid that I am unable to find the original letter.

We took this idea up but have developed it into a way of playing that we call "fifteen with bisques". We have used this way of playing during our club sessions over the course of this season with some success.

At the start of each player's turn they have a maximum of fifteen strokes available with a number of bisques available to them according to their handicap or the level of their experience. Bisques are agreed between players at the start on a flexible basis, depending on how hard or easy we want to play on the day. Broadly every player gets one bisque, middling players get two bisques and beginners three. Absolute beginners being coached may be given four.

We find that having fifteen strokes available, compared to ten, allows players to develop their game more and adding bisques keeps the turns going, which is especially useful to those of us who still have a lot to learn.

Bisques are used as in the standard game but not until all four balls are on the lawn. The out player keeps the record of strokes played and bisques used, using clothes pegs in our case, as it is quite hard to do that when one is playing.

Normal croquet rules apply but sometimes have to be interpreted flexibly because it is a different way of playing.

Although there is a competitive element, the purpose of this arrangement is to allow players to develop their shots in a setting that does not punish mistakes with prolonged periods on the bench. To this end excessively defensive play is also discouraged.

We would be interested to hear if any other clubs have developed similar ways of organising club practice sessions.

**Graham Heap,
Cheyney CC**

CA Governance review wins praise

Dear Editor,

The CA is to be commended for undertaking a review of its governance.

All organisations lose rigour over time in monitoring what they do, why they do it and how they go about it and consequently tend to lose focus on their paramount objectives: the efficient use of members' money and promotion of their legitimate interests.

Tyneside CC recently overhauled its constitution, agreed a disputes and disciplinary procedure and, for the first time, produced a codified list for members of the many rules and understandings put into place by successive administrations.

In these initiatives TCC no doubt lags behind many other clubs but I am sure we would not be alone in welcoming guidance on good governance from our parent organisation.

Is it possible the CA might, once its GWP has published conclusions, provide headline advice - perhaps in the form of a FAQ or a list of dos and don'ts - to those charged with the management and administration of member clubs?

Peter Lowe, Tyneside CC



A big welcome to the RAU

A new fertile centre of croquet interest has been found at the Royal Agricultural University (RAU), Cirencester, where Students were introduced to the sport through a series of activities organised by The Bears CC, who have been playing there this season.

A demonstration cum 'have-a-go' day attracted the interest of over sixty students and six members of staff earlier in the year.

It was the university's estate manager who suggested setting up a small court in the main quad as there would be maximum exposure when students moved between lectures and the dining room.

A core of enthusiastic students formed a croquet committee and under the guidance of the local Federation Development Officer they formed a club (the RAUCC), joined the CA and requested a start-up set of equipment to be delivered in time for the start of autumn term.

All then went quiet while the students entered their examination period and then left for the summer holiday.

However, the student committee did have a morning of croquet with The Bears

in order to appreciate the differences and attractions of the two main games.

During the holidays, emails flowed between the students and The Bears and plans were made for the start of term.

The CA office provided publicity materials and the croquet table at Freshers' Fair was described as one of the best in the hall. It attracted much interest, no doubt helped by the fact that the adjacent table was run by the Beagle Society who had brought along beagle puppies!

The Bears were secretly hoping that 16-20 students would take up the game, but by the end of Freshers' Fair, over 80 had signed up, which suggested an interesting management problem might ensue as there was just one court and four mallets.

Prior to Freshers' Week, international students arrived at the university from China, India, several African countries and Germany, for an orientation programme to help them explore and settle in.

The Bears were invited to run a one hour croquet experience to introduce the students to 'something peculiarly British'.

Two, double-banked, half-lawns allowed sixteen students to play simultaneously



and the hour passed so quickly that they asked if they could continue playing at the expense of the next organised session and lunch time.

Four members of The Bears coached the students, several of whom have since turned up at Bears' club days to play. The enthusiasm, intelligence and competitive spirit of these young people made the experience a sheer delight.

It is hoped that they will all continue to play either with The Bears or with the RAU CC or both. The Bears will be coaching students in both codes of the game depending on demand and encouraging links with croquet clubs in other universities, whether this be for competitive AC, GC or just social play.

Robert Moss, South-West Development Officer and The Bears CC

Photos: (above left) The RAUCC committee; Harriet Mainds, Iona Campbell and Joe Nebbett, and (above right) the overseas students group with members of the Bears



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The AC Inter-Club Competitions

~ An introduction and reports by Brian Fisk ~

The Inter -

The AC Inter-Club Championship

Surbiton supreme for fifth time

The CA organises four AC inter-club competitions each year. Each is for teams of four players who usually contest a seven-game format, starting with a doubles and two singles in the morning, followed by four singles in the afternoon.

The Inter-Club Championship is an unrestricted event consisting of advanced level play (or super-advanced by mutual consent); because of the higher calibre of players there is an optional third round of four more singles.

The Mary Rose is for players of handicap 0 or higher and the team must have a combined minimum handicap of 4; all games are level advanced.

The Longman Cup is for players whose handicaps are between 3.5 and 20 and the minimum team handicap is 24.

The Secretary's Shield is rather different as it is played to handicap rules and its participants are the winners of the federations' handicap leagues from the previous season.

In all the competitions, matches are played at one of the two participating clubs, or sometimes at a neutral venue. The finals (and for Longman semi-finals as well) are all played at one venue (Surbiton this year) over the first weekend in October, with the exception of the Secretary's Shield final, which is played convenient venue elsewhere.

All inter-club competitions are run as single-life knock-outs. For the Longman and Mary Rose the draw is done on a regional basis. This minimises travelling in the first three rounds but does have the down side that repeat matches from year to year are more common than might be desirable.

As a CA handicapper, I think these competitions provide an opportunity to test the handicaps of players who don't often play outside of their own federation area and this is important as there can be regional variations in the playing standards.

Fixing a date for matches can be a challenge but this is left to the clubs who are given a period in which to play. Problems raising teams can lead to walk-over, this is always disappointing.

This year, two clubs couldn't agree a date and neither wished to concede a walk-over, so it was decided that blame was shared between both clubs and therefore neither club would go forward; a walk-over was awarded to their next opponent.

In future this sanction will become the norm unless one club is clearly to blame.

Surbiton won the Inter-Club Championship final on home soil with a 5-2 victory over Woking.

The hosts had beaten Colchester 6-3 and Cheltenham 8-0 on their way to their showdown with last season's winners Woking who had accounted for Hurlingham 6-1 and Bowdon 6-0.

In the morning the results were as follows (Surbiton names first): Samir Patel and Christian Carter lost to Jeff Dawson and



Mike Town +4, Sam Murray beat Malcolm Bigg +5, Chris Farthing beat Annabel McDiarmid +11.

This gave Surbiton a 2-1 lead going into the afternoon where Patel beat Dawson

+26TP, Carter beat Town +5, Murray lost to McDiarmid +16, and Farthing beat Bigg +24TP. CA President Quiller Barrett awarded Surbiton the Beddow Cup, the history of which, was reported in an earlier edition of the Gazette.



The Mary Rose Trophy

There were contrasting paths to the Mary Rose Trophy final at Surbiton this year for eventual winners **Wrest Park** and runners-up East Dorset.

The former had a string of close matches, defeating Northampton 4-2, Pinchbeck 4-3, and Nottingham 5-2, while the latter beat Dyffryn 6-1. Woking 5-2, and then received a walk-over in the semi-finals.

In the final, **Wrest Park** held a lead at lunch time (Wrest Park names first): Bryan Harral and George Collin beat David Kendrick and Tom Weston +16, John Bevington beat David Williams +16, and Tim Brewer lost to Anthony Dix -20.

They capitalised on this 2-1 advantage by winning three of four in the afternoon to triumph 5-2: Harral beat Kendrick +16, Collin beat Weston +17, Bevington lost to Dix -15, and Brewer beat Williams +19.



Full details of all the results and reports may be found on the CA web site. I look forward to receiving the entries for 2017 in the Spring. I hope more clubs will be interested in entering and if you have any questions about any of the competitions please contact me, details on the CA web site.

Brian Fisk, AC Inter-Club Director and AC Tournaments Committee Chairman

The Longman Cup

This season's Longman Cup was **won by Enfield** from a game High Wycombe at the end of a finals weekend of action at Surbiton. The semi-finals were played on the Saturday with the final and third place match following on the Sunday.

Enfield beat Bowdon 5-2 in their semi and High Wycombe beat Roehampton 6-1 in theirs, leaving Bowdon to inflict another 6-1 score-line on Roehampton for the third place. In the Final it was very close in the morning (Enfield names first): Michael Broadway and Tony Elliott beat David Warhurst & Richard Pepperell +1T, David Frost beat Keith Pound +1T, and John Street lost to Raouf Allim -22.

Those two 'plus one on time' results gave Enfield a slim 2-1 lead going into the afternoon games where Frost beat Warhurst +13, Elliott lost to Allim -21, Street beat Pound +3, and Broadway lost to Pepperell +9T. So Enfield just ran out the winners of the Longman Cup 4-3 and received the Longman Cup CA President Quiller Barrett, who also presented the Longman Shield to High Wycombe, and the Longman Tankard to Bowdon.



Photographs on this page: (top) Surbiton receive the AC Inter-Club Cup from CA President Quiller Barrett; (above left) **Wrest Park** with the Mary Rose Trophy and (above right) David Frost of Longman winners Enfield. (photos by Edward Patel, Chris Roberts and an other).

Club Competitions

The GC Inter-Club Championship

Revenge is sweet for Surbiton

Surbiton the 'double'!

Surbiton regained the GC Inter-Club Championship title with victory over holders Ashby in a table-turning repeat of last year's final at Cheltenham, in mid-October, **report Nick Cheyne and Don Beck.**



the decisive result against Tim King.

Rachel Rowe and Gee went on to win the deciding games against Patel and Farthing respectively, to bring the scoreline back

to 4-3, but by then the championship was in the bag for Surbiton.

The victory was number six for Surbiton but was their first since 2011 and they have now won twice as many titles than Ashby who remain their nearest rival on three wins.

Results (Surbiton names first): Patel and Farthing lost to Gee and Rachel Rowe 7-2, 5-7, 6-7; Beck beat Arthur Rowe 7-5, 7-3; Cheyne beat King 3-7, 7-4, 7-4; Cheyne beat A. Rowe 7-4, 7-5; Beck beat King 7-6, 7-1; Patel lost to R. Rowe 4-7, 7-6, 4-7 and Farthing lost to Gee 7-5, 4-7, 5-7.

At the halfway stage, Surbiton had a 2-1 lead, thanks to singles wins by Cheyne and Beck, which offset a loss in a very close doubles match which was decided at the 13th hoop, when Samir Patel failed an angled hoop attempt from the boundary, giving victory to Ashby's Rachel Rowe and Will Gee.

After the break Cheyne quickly wrapped up his match with Arthur Rowe to stretch Surbiton's lead, so they needed just one more win from either Beck, Patel or Chris Farthing, and it was captain Beck who got



The GC Murphy Shield

There is a new name to be engraved on the GC Inter-Club Murphy Shield following **winner Leighton-Linslade's** closely fought final with Guildford and Godalming at Surbiton in mid-September, **reports John Cundell.**

The season-long competition (which is restricted by handicap) once again attracted a healthy entry with nineteen clubs from all corners of the country taking part.

The final itself pitted two closely matched teams in terms of handicaps, and the day's play was similarly close.

In the morning doubles, Guildford's Mike Huxley (3) and Alan Miles (3) won the opening game with some excellent positioning, but David Ball (2), John Cundell (3) fought back well for Leighton, to level and then win the decider. Mark Godfrey-James (3) and Ross Bagni (3) won their morning singles for Guildford and Leighton respectively, at the expense of Jean Ball (3) and Andrea Huxley (3), so giving Leighton a 2-1 lead at lunch.

Godfrey-James and A. Huxley both won their afternoon singles in two games, pushing Guildford in front 2-3; Leighton's D. Ball then beat M. Huxley, also in two games after some excellent battles, leaving the title hanging on the last match to finish

Cundell established a 6-4 lead, but as in their first game, Miles took hoops 11 and 12, to play out that drama to the 13th again. However, this time Cundell was able to clear his opponent far enough away that the return shot was missed and he was able to secure the win. Leighton were jubilant at this their first team win in a CA National Competition, and they were of course all smiles upon receiving the Murphy Shield, from competition director John Bowcott.

The Secretary's Shield

Hunstanton won the Secretary's Shield for 2016 when they beat Middlesbrough 4-2 in the Final at Nottingham. Ian Vincent penned a detailed report (see the CA website) of the closing few shots of the deciding game of the final to compliment the scores that follow at the foot of this article which details the rest of the competition.

The Secretary's Shield is rather different to the other inter-club competitions in that it is played between the winners of the previous season's nine Federation handicap leagues, plus the holders.

With Oxford University having retained their Southern Federation crown last

season as well as being the holders, the SCF were represented by their runners-up, Ryde, who together with Bath, Caterham, Fylde, Hunstanton, Kenilworth, Leicester, Middlesbrough and York, gave this season's Secretary's Shield a fullhouse of ten entrants.

Middlesbrough reached the semi-finals by default after walkovers and played Kenilworth who had beaten Oxford University. The Teessiders reached the final with a comfortable 6-1 win.

In the other semi Bath, who had beaten Ryde by the same score, met Hunstanton who had beaten York and Caterham. The

Norfolk club squeezed into the final 4-3.

If you are puzzled that not all match results add up to seven, this is because sometimes they are abandoned once the match winner becomes known (as was the case in the final, where a pegged-down morning game, was not resumed).

Scores from the final (Hunstanton names first):

Mike Bowser (3) and Bryan Saddington (4) beat Andrew Killick (0) & Dennis Scarr (2) +12, David Haslam (14) beat Nigel Roberts (11) +8, then Bowser beat Killick +1(t), Saddington lost to Scarr -12, Charles Ostler (6) beat Roberts +10(t), Haslam lost to Julian Gibson (16) -5.

The Croquet Academy Launches its Tenth Year Programme

In 2007 The Croquet Association, The South East Croquet Federation and Sussex County Croquet Club agreed to launch a Croquet Academy based at Southwick.

The Academy started in a modest way in the following year, running a total of six courses. Since then it has grown rapidly and now runs a comprehensive programme for UK players as well as courses for those from overseas through the World Croquet Federation, **writes Jonathan Isaacs.**

2017 marks the start of the Academy's tenth series of courses and workshops, with no fewer than 17 courses planned. In addition the Academy will be offering one-to-one and small group training as well as bespoke courses for individual clubs.

The new courses planned for 2017 include:

GC Referees' refresher workshop – Course leader Martin French (Chairman of the GC Rules Committee) will be running a one day course updating existing GC Referees on the latest Rule changes as well as advising on how to improve refereeing techniques.

Perfecting your AC stroke and break play – An eminent croquet player once said "near enough is not good enough". Cliff Jones has planned this special course to assist single-digit handicap AC players in seeking perfection in their stroke and break play. This course is ideal for players planning to progress towards the Triple Peel Course and should give them the foundation to move towards 'A Level' play.

GC Coached games day – The Academy has increasingly used coached games as a way of improving player performance and to give players the confidence to enter tournaments and club competitions. The day is run in a very relaxed atmosphere and players will be able to play under the

The Croquet Academy (at Southwick)

supervision of Academy Coaches, who will offer help and advice on ways of improving their game. This will be offered during and between games.

Later in the season the Academy is offering a GC Supervised High Bisque Tournament where High Bisque players can enter a relaxed fun tournament where help and advice will be available between games with the games themselves being run under tournament conditions.

With Golf Croquet continuing to grow the Academy is offering a GC Referees Training & Qualification Course & Coach Training Course (CTC).

NB: Premium Members of The Croquet Association receive a discount of £10 off all courses with the exception of the GC & AC High Bisque Tournaments where a £5 discount is given.

All course and entry details are available on The Croquet Academy website:

www.thecroquetacademy.com

And questions can be answered by Academy Secretary Janet Hoptroff on **courses@thecroquetacademy.com** or 01903 859417.

Dates	Course	Cost	Ideal Hcp	Leader
18 Mar	GC Referees Refresher Workshop	£45	n/a	Martin French
7 Apr	Croquet Psychology – Get the mindset edge	£60	n/a	Rich Waterman
11-12 Apr	AC Introduction & Development in Advanced play	£70	6-14	Nigel Polhill
18-19 Apr	Perfecting your AC stroke & break play	£70	5-9	Cliff Jones
21-23 Apr	AC Triple Peel course	£100	4 & under	Cliff Jones
25-26 Apr	GC Rules & Referees course * First day only without exam - £45 FULL	£70*	n/a	Daphne Gaitley
25-26 Apr	AC Beginners' & Improvers course	£70	18+	Clive Hayton
28 Apr	GC Beginners & High Handicappers	£45	10+	Janet Hoptroff
28 Apr	A simple Guide to Tournament & Competition Management	£45	n/a	John Low
29-30 Apr	GC Rules & Referees course EXTRA COURSE *First day only without exam - £45	£70	n/a	Daphne Gaitley
2 May	GC Improvers course	£45	4-9	Daphne Gaitley
2-3 May	AC Development course in Handicap Play	£70	12-18	Clive Hayton
10-11 May	Coach Training Course (CTC)	£70	n/a	Daphne Gaitley
13 May	GC Advanced Play course	£50	4 & under	Lionel Tibble
22 May	GC Coached Games Day	£45	6+	Daphne Gaitley
14-15 June	AC Beginners' & Improvers follow up course	£70	18+	Clive Hayton & Frances Low
30 June	GC Coached High Bisque Tournament	£35	10+	Jonathan Isaacs
31 July – 1 Aug	AC High Bisque Tournament (with coaching advice between games)	£45	14-20	Frances Low

Newly qualified Coaches

Congratulations to the following two players who have earned coaching qualifications recently:

September 2016

Ann Beard (Hamptworth): Club Coach
October 2016

Roger Mills (Budleigh): Grade 2 AC

Dave Kibble,
Chairman of the Coaching Committee



Training Courses

The South-West Croquet Academy (SWCA)

'building on a successful first year'

We enjoyed a very successful first year, both in terms of feedback from coaches and participants, and in terms of numbers attending, **writes Jack Smith.**

The start-up team that launched the venture in 2016 - Rob Weeks, Chris Donovan, James Homer - are taking a well-earned rest from the administrative side of things.

They should be proud of setting a high standard and their efforts in getting SWCA going are very much appreciated.

A fresh team of six keen players will be

The South-West Croquet Academy (at Budleigh)

taking their place for 2017.

They will be working behind the scenes to ensure all runs smoothly for this year's delegates, and see that that we continue to trackdown and collaborate with some of croquet's finest coaches from all over the UK.

Delegates returning in 2017 will find many familiar faces on the support crew who will be helping our lead coaches deliver further enjoyable courses at Budleigh Salterton.

A new programme of courses has been arranged for 2017

As a result of feedback from delegates, there is now more emphasis on helping croquet players of all abilities and across both codes of the game.

Courses will be banded according to delegates' handicaps, so that inexperienced players do not find themselves 'out of their depth', nor will experienced players be 'going over old ground'.

Adding in more courses aimed at those coming to the game with limited experience should help the smaller clubs that may have limited or no in-house coaching available.

Improvements are being made to the SWCA website to make course booking and payments even simpler and it now uses a 'basket' style checkout to avoid the need to register and pay for each course individually.

It is highly likely that additional courses will be added later in the year, such as addressing the need for training additional referees, tournament managers and club coaches.

These will be published in future issues of the Gazette and on the SWCA website.

Full details of the content of courses offered and profiles of the lead coaches can be found at the SWCA website:

www.southwestcroquetacademy.co.uk

And questions can be answered by Maureen Smith on:

enquiries@southwestcroquetacademy.co.uk

or 07821 458447.

Photographs: (opposite page) Cliff Jones at The Academy, Southwick; (this page, clockwise from left) Welcome to SWCA; Dr Stewart Cotterill with Paul Wolff; Sarah Hayes takes a class. (photos by Ray Hall, Chris Donovan and Rob Weeks).

Dates	Course	Cost	Ideal Hcp	Leader
30 Mar	Out-thinking the opposition	£55/£45	all	Dr Stewart Cotterill
4-5 Apr	Getting into Advanced play	£85/£70	6-12	Dave Kibble
6-7 Apr	Nailing the Triple	£85/£70	5-less	Dave Kibble
19-20 Apr	AC The Easy Way - for beginners & improvers	£65/£55	GC any AC 18+	Roger Mills
25-26 Apr	Mastering 4 and 3 ball breaks	£65/£55	6-16	Roger Mills
27-28 Apr	Don't leave me this way!	£85/£70	5-less	Sarah Hayes
9 May	GC - a Sound Foundation	£45/£35	10+	Ros Key-Pugh & Mo Boys
10 May	GC - Moving on	£45/£35	6-10	
11 May	Reach for the stars in GC!	£45/£35	8+	Lionel Tibble
12 May	Advanced GC	£45/£35	4-less	Lionel Tibble
17 May	Winning intermediate GC	£45/£35	4-9	Dave Kibble
18 May	Winning intermediate GC	£45/£35	4-9	Dave Kibble
6-7 Jun	AC the Easy Way – next steps	£65/£55	18+	Roger Mills
Additional courses may be available later				



Coaching Awards

Coach of the Year

*Ian
Burridge*

In 2012, Ian identified the lack of activity aimed at developing the next generation of international players and made a proposal to the CA.

The proposal was accepted and Ian was subsequently appointed International Performance Director, an honorary role.

Since then, Ian has used his network to identify squad members, facilitated the squad sessions and harnessed a range of experts from the croquet community to pitch in and share their insights into top level play. Ian's appointment was an inspired action.

Addressing the next tier in 2014/15, Ian set up coaching pods around the country, which concentrated upon improving Advanced Level AC play.

He produced the material and supported and encouraged the coaches, as well as running the Robin Hood pod himself.

Pod Coordinators have been impressed with the quality and volume of the material Ian provided, and with the set-up that has triggered a lot of quality coaching that otherwise would not have happened.

When the Northern pod faltered, Ian went to York to provide a couple of sessions in a day, which was acclaimed as "truly inspirational stuff and a real benefit to those who attended".

Ian constantly seeks and acts on feedback on the programme, engaging the participants in a continuous improvement process - his energy, enthusiasm and rigour are an example to all.

In the run up to the Women's World AC Championship he ran several intensive weekend coaching sessions aimed not only at encouraging our female players to consider putting their names down for selection, but also to give them the confidence to participate in more advanced tournaments.

The results of these sessions were clear to see last season with three of the four trophies at the Women's Worlds being won by competitors who had attended his coaching sessions, and the number of women entering advanced tournaments up and down the country showing an increase, not to mention a new-found camaraderie amongst women players.

Ian has also found time to write coaching articles for the Gazette, which are well thought out, clear, and concise. It is



*Ian Burridge and Keith Aiton
(photo by Ian Vincent)*

obvious that Ian not only knows his subject very thoroughly indeed, but that he also possesses the ability to transmit his croquet knowledge to others extremely well - the sure mark of a quality teacher.

Good coaches are found at all levels of the game and are important in introducing and encouraging people to take up our sport.

They are also important at every stage of a player's development and Ian has demonstrated a particular skill in developing Advanced Level players.

To all he has helped he remains available for individual support as they grow.

Ian Burridge has exhibited an infectious enthusiasm for competitive croquet and instilled a desire to improve into all those he has coached.

In this year, he has transformed upper-level AC coaching in England.

Most players will not make it to the very top, but the important thing is that, thanks to Ian, there is now a clear and sustainable 'pathway to the top' that is open to every aspiring player and that encourages many to strive for a higher standard of play.

Lifetime Coaching Award

Keith Aiton

Having proactively offered coaching to players aspiring to top-level Association Croquet for many years, Keith has demonstrated that he is good at identifying and resolving problems, both mental and physical, as opposed to just reciting text book material.

He has been an active Grade 3 AC Coach since the qualification was introduced and is a highly competent coach, with many years' experience of playing and coaching at international level.

In the 1980's Keith coached beginners at Nottingham and Southwell, wrote the original Grade 3 course, and led the under-21 GB squad, bringing on promising young players such as Robert Fulford, Chris Clarke and David Maugham.

Keith was coach to the 1990, 1993 and 1996 winning MacRobertson Shield GB teams.

As the century turned, Keith included mentoring and the application of his knowledge as a Neuro-Linguistic Programming practitioner to sports psychology on the croquet field.

He wrote a manual for aspiring A-Class players in 2003.

It is particularly appropriate to make the award this year because he coached both of the finalists for the Women's World Championship who have acknowledged Keith's very significant part in their achievement, as have other women who enjoyed success in the event.

Town coaching award for Littlehampton's Christine Merrington



Olympic Swimmer Sharon Davies presented Christine Merrington Trice with the Coach of the Year Trophy at Littlehampton Sports Awards Event held at the Millennium Chamber, Manor House, Littlehampton.

Club captain Merrington holds both yellow and white badges and coaches at Littlehampton CC where she has introduced group coaching courses alongside individual tuition.

She also coaches at The Croquet Academy at Southwick and is a qualified GC referee and is club handicapper.

National Competition Finals

Gunn wins close GC B-Level Series National Final

Paul Gunn of Wingrave won the National Final at Budleigh Salterton in October by the narrowest of margins, typifying what was another highly competitive B-Level Series this season, **reports Series Director Chris Roberts.**

He became the Series' fourth winner when, just like last season, the title was decided on the 'who beat whom' rule after he tied with Richard Bilton from Nottingham, at the end of a satisfying all-play-all schedule of 15 games in two days.

Although the B-Level Series is for players with handicaps in the 3 to 8 range, it was no surprise that half the field for the final had reduced their grades to 3 or below by the end of the season, illustrating once again that this Series is a very effective production line for future top players.

Gunn himself proved this with aplomb when he entered and won the unrestricted Sussex Open (part of the A-Level Series) in September, which bodes well for his future adventures when he fully steps up to that level and more next season.

Returning to the National Final, **manager Brian Shorney reports** that the combination of untimed games, double banking, short day length and very close, competitive games, resulted in the last games of each day being concluded in fading light.

Ashby's Steve Marsh (4) was in fine form on the first day.

Playing above his handicap, he led the leaderboard at the halfway stage with 7 wins from 8 games, but he lost his opening games on Day 2 and was overtaken by the top seed Gunn (1) and Bilton (3).

Not to be confused with his father Mike who was also in the final field (in his case, for the second year running), Richard Bilton, a 19 year-old student at Nottingham University, displayed impressive stroke play and a positive approach which indicates a promising future. Gunn and Bilton tied on 12 wins apiece, but with the former having the head to head win in the bag, he took the title and the B-Level Trophy (donated by Jennet Blake) from Budleigh Chairman Adam Wimshurst.

Budleigh's club members were most hospitable and the lawns were immaculately presented, providing excellent late-season playing conditions.

Final placings: Paul Gunn (Wingrave, 12 wins); Richard Bilton (Nottingham, 12); Steve Marsh (Ashby, 10); Richard Keighley (Wingrave, 10); John Skuse (Colchester, 9); Brian McCausland (Nailsea, 9); Ross Bagni (Leighton-Linslade, 7); Roger Stroud (Leighton-Linslade, 7); Peter Moore (Budleigh, 7); Richard Carline (Sussex County, 7); Marrian Manning (Colchester, 7); Andrew Carpenter (Durham, 6); Chris Heath (Guildford, 6); Klim Seabright (Cheltenham, 4); Mike Bilton (Richmond Park, 4); Michael Manning (Colchester, 3)

The photos show the winners with (left) Adam Wimshurst, Chairman of Budleigh Salterton CC and (right) Quiller Barrett, CA President.



Elliott is AC All England Champ



Tony Elliott, representing Enfield, won the 2016 All England AC Final at Hamptworth, **reports director Peter Wilson.**

At the end of round four, the Swiss format had declared a winner, therefore, by agreement, lunch was extended and the final round was shortened to 18-point games, allowing extra time for return trips across the country.

Many if not most of the games were very exciting and close, and with handicaps ranging from 1 to 20 all sorts of challenges were created.

Elliott played exceptionally well throughout the tournament and ended his five games undefeated. His fourth round game versus Will Mellor (Bowdon) was decisive and decided on the time turn. Had that gone the other way, the tournament would have been wide open in the final round.

The trophy and tray were presented by CA president Quiller Barrett who thanked Hamptworth for the provision of single banking and ideal hoops, lawns and the weather!

Looking back at this competition, one is reminded that to get to the final, each player had to qualify not only from their club preliminary competition but, after that, from one of the four Area Finals that took place at Bury, Camerton & Peasedown, Edgbaston and Surbiton.

Not only is that an achievement in itself, but there was also a considerable amount of travelling to be done. I know this is the main reason that some clubs do not enter this competition, but it is also the reason that some clubs do. This year the entry was conveniently distributed around the Area Final venues and I understand the majority of players were able to commute each day and did not require overnight accommodation.

Of course there was always going to be travelling involved for the National Final and that did mean some planning for many of the finalists. However they were rewarded by visits to the New Forest and Portsmouth Harbour.

In 2017 the final will be on the new lawns at Wrest Park, which although now missing the breathtaking views of the Long Water, Archer Pavilion and the House, provides easy-access car parking and yes toilettes sans vélo!

I ask clubs at their AGMs to consider entering the All England AC Championship. If it turns out there is no interest, then please not to remove it from the agenda for the following year. Membership does slowly change over the years and new players do surface. For them this could be an ideal and exciting challenge.

Organising the Inter-County Championships ~ By Bill Arliss

As most readers will know, the AC and GC Inter-County Championship events are two of the most popular in our calendar; both are still growing and almost bursting at the seams.

Their popularity appears to stem from the large numbers they attract, that effectively turn them from mere championships into a festival of croquet. In view of the popularity, I would like to explain a few points of the organisation behind these events, as they are so often misunderstood.

Inter-County general conditions

There are nearly three full pages in the fixtures book about the general conditions and they read almost like a book of laws, which in fact they are. Why do we need them?

In reality, I don't think anyone could claim that there is anything special about being born or having a parent born in a specific county, or living in a specific county; it is just a formula that has been developed over the years and it works well.

It produces about the right number of teams to make a good competition but, of more importance, it has not allowed any county to dominate for a long time in either AC or GC.

A county does provide a sense of identity or belonging and it's great to see teams turning up with flags and uniforms based on county colours (even if the green and white-checked trousers of one team does remind one of the Little Chef!).

Entries are carefully monitored and if things are not working quite as well as they might, the tournament committee reserves the right to modify entry conditions accordingly.

About three years ago we added parents' birth and previous residence in a county as a qualification to slightly boost entries. Our aim is to make one team from one county always a possibility.

So why the complexity?

When one has been associated with The Counties for a few years, one starts to see the 'fiddles' that some try in order to get players eligible for their team.

We have seen: free 'far country' membership for players with handicaps -2 and below; holiday home addresses being used for residential qualification; and many more of the like.

What we need to have is a document that can give us a clear answer without having to resort to personal preferences, which can always be challenged.



Unfortunately one of our main problems was HM Government, who regularly changed county boundaries and even invented new counties; but we got round that one by agreeing to use the Association of British Counties which maintains a definition of traditional counties and their boundaries, and these never change.

The rule now is that each time we come across a situation where there is no clear-cut answer, we modify the conditions accordingly. As a short term measure we do have a special committee that can rule on any matters that are not covered by the conditions.

So how do we implement all these various conditions?

Several years ago we decided to invent what we termed the County Organiser, for each county, for each of the two croquet disciplines. His or her main task was to coordinate all activities for a county within the specific discipline and be the only spokesperson for that county.

Any player that is qualified for a county can register as the organiser, provided there is not another player already registered. Registered names will be published on the CA web site.

Choosing the organiser is purely the prerogative of players qualified for that county and the CA will only accept entry requests from the nominated organiser. We just cannot allow more than one team to be organised in any county.

I tell everyone to "Please read the entry conditions in the Fixtures Book and ensure that if you do enter a team list, everyone meets the latest regulations for eligibility."

The regulations for eligibility

The full details are covered in the Fixtures Book and give the precise details required and all limitations on change of allegiance, however a brief summary is as follows:

(1) Birth or parents' birth in a county is the prime qualification

(2) Permanent residence in the county on 1 January in the year of the tournament is the secondary qualification

(3) Non-restrictive membership of a club in the county on 1 January but with the added proviso that the permanent address on 1 January is in an adjacent county. (This gets over all the variations in types of membership chosen by our clubs.)

(4) Previous residence in the county for more than three years for purposes other than education. (This is a recent addition.)

(5) A history of representing the county in the previous three years. This was introduced to cover outstanding irregularities from previous years, and careful consideration of all the requirements should be considered before this is used.

Preparations and entries from new county teams

Preparations for each year's tournaments have to start early in the previous year and in time for the annual November meetings of the two Tournament Committees.

With the possibility of play-offs or the need to organise a CA Select team to fill any gap, the committees need to have a good idea of the likely field for the next season.

We therefore require every team to make provisional entry, with a team list of their potential players and their eligibility.

Of course it cannot be definitive at this date but all we ask is that to the best of the organiser's knowledge, his listed players will be available for the following year.

I believe this has had the effect of making Organisers far more conscious of availability with the result that we have never had absolutely last minute withdrawals, which are nigh-on impossible to fill.

Of course the tournament committees are keen to support entries from new counties; it is the basis of all future development of the competition. However they must also be mindful that the exuberance of any new entrant does not lead to a team that may be non-competitive or make up its numbers by denuding existing teams.

Entries from new teams are therefore very carefully screened and may be rejected if considered not viable.

Bill Arliss,
Director, both Inter-County Tournaments

Croquet in Portugal

The now familiar back page advertisement for 'Croquet in the Sun' has drawn a number of enquiries asking 'What's it like?'

Martin French reports on the lovely Bela Romao Croquet Country Club and a well-supported second Portugal GC Open.



The second staging of the Portugal GC Open saw it expanded with the addition of a two-day doubles event to complement the three-day singles event that followed.

The venue was the Bela Romao Croquet Country Club on the eastern Algarve which is about 20km East of Faro airport. The owners, Lita and Sarah, have put a huge effort into establishing the club as well as founding the Portuguese Croquet Federation.

Bela Romao currently has one lawn, a club house where Sarah cooks the most amazing food, and an adjoining villa that sleeps up to 10 people. Both the club house and the villa have pools which are vital because it was 39°C on the day we arrived, and remained above 30°C every day!

Land has been purchased and there are plans build one or two more lawns nearer the road which should make the Club more visible and therefore easier to attract interest from passing locals.

Planned additional accommodation should also attract more players from northern Europe looking for some winter croquet in the sun.

Despite the prolonged hot spell, the lawn was in good shape and it has been better every time I have visited. It has to be watered copiously every night, so it is not particularly fast, but is pretty flat.

Clearly with one lawn, the tournament format and schedule is oriented around keeping the lawn busy. Sarah arranged a lovely buffet lunch over two hours, so one could eat before or after games without holding up the tournament.

Inaugural Doubles Championship

After a last minute withdrawal due to imminent grandparenthood, ten pairs entered the Draw and Process Doubles with participants from England, Germany, Norway, Portugal, Scotland, Spain and Sweden.

Draw and Process is no longer a common format; it is essentially a knock-out draw, then a re-arranged knock-out where you cannot meet the same player who knocked you out again, unless you get all the way to the final. So it's sometimes called a "two life" knock-out. This took some explaining to the Norwegians and Spanish, who had not come across it before.

The Draw was won by Guy Scurfield

(Dulwich) and Lionel Tibble (Northampton) who then sportingly withdrew from the Process, to ensure we avoided the manager's nightmare of having the same pair win both lives.

Norwegians Roar Michalsen and Steinar Olsen duly won the Process but Scurfield and Tibble won the final at the end of a high quality tough best-of-three match in blistering heat. At the end of one game, Scurfield jumped in the pool for two minutes to cool down, before returning to the fray for the next game!

Second Singles Championship

A full field of 16 players (four each from England, Norway and Spain and lone players from New Zealand, Portugal, Scotland and Sweden) played in blocks of four with the best two from each to qualify for the knock-out.

We managed to get a little ahead of the tight schedule, so could play best-of-three semis, and both went to deciding games.

Martin French defeated Nelson Morrow by the narrowest margin, and Michalsen beat Olsen more comfortably.

That evening, the club had a large celebration around The Last Night of the Proms, with a streamed broadcast from London, and yet more fantastic food from Sarah which was enjoyed by 50 or so members and guests.

The Plate final preceded the main event in the morning of the last day and, in an all-Spanish affair, Fernando Soto beat his wife Carmen Perez, so will presumably be doing the washing-up for the next month!

The final of the main event was a very tight and focussed match with some fantastic shooting from both players.

French eventually beat Michalsen 7-4 7-5 and then hostess Lita presented everyone with prizes and medals - there were more awards than entrants! Some trophies were huge and would count as "excess baggage" for many of the players' return flights.

Next year

For 2017, the thought is to move the tournament to a little later in the year to reduce the risk of such extreme heat, and we will find a better format for the Doubles to give everyone more guaranteed games and less explanation!

... and on Coufu

Tom Wills-Sandford confessed to being the 'most surprised man in Greece' when he won the tenth annual **Greek Open (handicap) Championship** at the Croquet Club of Corfu in October, **writes Chris Roberts.**

The Hurlingham member was one of the highest handicappers in the tournament, yet managed his bisques well to see off all challengers, including the Corfu Club Chairman Rich Quilter who he beat in a close final.

Twenty-two Brits and two locally based players contested this season's championships and the travelling group was swelled by the presence of nine non-playing spouses for this holiday with croquet under the Greek sun.

The sun was frequently quite hot enough but some torrential rain early in proceedings did curtail the doubles event that opened the tournament and caused a scheduling re-think for joint managers Frances Colman and Chris Roberts.

The pair and six others used one of the two rain affected days to make an unexpected visit to Albania and found that it rained just as heavily there too!

But the sun was back soon enough and the Singles event got underway using a knock-out format that included a repêchage round for early losers, and a consolation 14 point event that ran alongside allowed everyone to play as many or as few games as they wished.

The Doubles Handicap was concluded with a final that was decided in dramatic fashion after time with Hamptworth's Richard Stevens partnering local Jan Harbers to victory over Phyllis Court pair Frances Colman (also Roehampton) and Richard Peperell (also High Wycombe).

The 14 point event was won by Carol Steinberg (Bowdon) and in the **'GC with the locals' event** well managed by Quilter, Peter Siddall (Roehampton) and local man Dick took the best Brit and best Corfiot prizes respectively.

Kevin Carter will be managing the 2017 Greek Championships.

CA grant for new clubhouse for **Craig Y Don CC**

The Croquet Gazette April 2013 (Issue 343) carried a centrefold article on a new club formed the previous year in Craig Y Don, a village suburb of Llandudno in North Wales.

The club had joined the Association and was granted a start-up kit and a £900 grant towards a secure precast 10 by 8 feet concrete store.

Llandudno claims 'Alice in Wonderland' as its heroine and is said to be the third most popular seaside destination in the UK so it was fitting to have its own croquet club!

The original group of enthusiastic members has swelled to a membership of over 60 with the launch in 2016 of a non-playing social membership who play croquet on a green fee basis.

Our lawns have an interesting challenge, being on a crown green bowling lawn which was unused in summer, allowing us a playing season which runs from April to September. However, it is important for the membership to have winter activities to maintain and extend the local friendship base of the club and to encourage new members.

In late 2014, plans were drawn up to extend the original concrete store, by trebling its size, into a modest clubhouse



with electricity and water, so we could have shelter and entertain ourselves and visitors in the playing season and continue social activities during the winter.

Grants were obtained principally from the Peoples Health Trust for £8,500, and members undertook some fundraising and gave donations.

Gift Aid was obtained which boosts all our donations by 25%, and building the Clubhouse shell commenced early 2016, so as to be ready for the start of the season.

The Health Trust Objectives were for the club to offer a social membership and take a more active part in Community affairs.

This was satisfied this year by our facilities being used by groups visiting from a local primary school, a Welsh learners group, a Round Table branch, and

the pièce de résistance was entertaining Llandudno's twin town of Wormhout from northern France. For the visit of our French guests, our members dressed up as 'Alice' characters, we had young Majorettes twirling (children's) mallets; the Mayors of Llandudno and Wormhout both attended, along with our Town Crier, who is a blind Army veteran, in medieval costume.

Within half a mile of the club, we have the premises of a major charitable organisation, the Blind Veterans, with who we share a groundsman, and they have decided that they wanted to convert an old tennis court into a croquet lawn.

We presented our Blind Veterans neighbours with a start-up kit including mallets, just at the CA had done for us three years previously.

Their lawn is now ready for use, so we have offered to help them start it off which is likely now to be next year. In return they have offered us the use of their court for occasions when we have visitors or tournaments that we can't accommodate.

Throughout the season, the new clubhouse proved a real boon, and we realised that it was a facility that could be used all year round . . .

continued on page 23

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.

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01242 233555**



GC A-Level Series Cup at last for Widdison



As reported in the last issue (*Gazette 364*), Bishop Monkton's David Widdison won the inaugural GC A-Level Series, which is a points accumulation competition with no end of season final. This created the problem of when and where to present David with the brand new trophy.

Fortunately, the occasion of the Yorkshire Federation AGM came to the rescue in November and CA Council member Anna Giraud was able to present the silverware to the first A-Level Series Champ. (Photo by Andrea Widdison)

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Lawn Care ~ by Duncan Hector *Five Keys to Seeding Success*

1) The right seed

For croquet lawns I recommend dwarf rye grass - but there is dwarf rye grass and dwarf rye grass.

The wrong seed can contain inappropriate cultivars which are not suitable for close mowing and fast lawns.

I supply Barenbrug Bar Extreme and you should find that my price beats anything you find elsewhere.

Seed normally comes in 20 kg bags costing £90 to £120 but I can supply in 1kg, 2kg or 4 kg bags.

The usual seeding rate is 35 grams per square metre, overseeding is 20gsm and can be broadcast using a standard fertiliser spreader.

2) Use a Pre-Seeding fertiliser

It is very important to give the seed the right fertiliser; this will aid germination and the establishment of young seedlings.

If you are one of my customers, the Spring and Autumn feeds that I supply are perfect.

3) Cover the seed

When overseeding you can simply broadcast the seed and hope it germinates. Just like weed seeds that blow in, some of the grass seed will germinate. If you are using this method try to incorporate the seed into the sward by brushing or running over it with the mower or playing croquet on it. You will get a better germination rate if you top dress afterwards.

Alternatively you could hire a dimple seeder or similar which will get the seed into contact with the soil. The STRI recommends the "Plant Pot" method which has been tried successfully at some clubs.

You need blunt tines that make holes about 10-12mm deep, spread the seed and brush it into the holes using a drag mat or similar. If you want details of this method, I can send you a PDF.

For smaller patches the best method is to cover with a special Seeding Compost. 120 litres costs around £48 + VAT. This type of compost has been tested by the STRI and is widely used. It is an excellent way of achieving a high germination rate.

The unique feature of this compost is that it holds moisture - others don't.

Successful germination requires a moist environment (not wet) and that is what this compost provides.

But the most important feature of it is that it will disappear into the sward in a few weeks and not create bumps on your croquet lawn. If you want some, let me know.

4) Temperature

Bar Extreme seed germinates at six degrees or more, in spring or autumn it usually germinates in eight to ten days.

5) WARNING

DON'T apply iron in liquid or granular form to a freshly seeded area. Iron is a desiccant and will dry out the seed and it will not germinate.

Duncan Hector

www.duncanhectorturfcare.co.uk

duncan@duncanhectorturfcare.co.uk

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Getting Shirty Abroad by David Openshaw



Of my collection of 43 croquet shirts, a number of them are related to a particular event.

For example, the World Championships of 2012 in London and Cape Town in 2008, the Inter-Counties 2004, and the Jeløy Grand Tournament in Norway 2005 (*above left*).

But for this article I focus on an invitation event at the Resort at the Mountain, Oregon, USA (*above right*) where I have been lucky enough to play on five occasions, and have a shirt from each occasion.

The history of this event is interesting. The Resort at the Mountain is a hotel with three very good nine-hole golf courses, and is about an hour's drive from Portland in the mountains around Mt Hood.

The owner of the hotel was an aficionado of Scottish golf and had many golfing effects around the hotel. Whilst on holiday in New Zealand he came across croquet and thought it would be a good addition to his hotel. So he built two croquet lawns and started an invitation event in 1997.

Tremaine Arkley was asked to advise and organise these annual events which were played each year from 1997 to 2007, with past winners including Robert Fulford (twice), Reg Bamford (twice), and Jerry Stark (USA) who won the first event.

I remember particularly playing in the final in 1999 against John Taves, the American no.1 at the time.

Why do I remember it? Well firstly I won, and it's always good to remember your

wins, and on my coaching courses I always emphasise how important it is to help your ongoing confidence by keeping a memory bank of good or winning experiences.

These can be individual shots or particular breaks or a full game. I recommend making a written record of these which you aim to continually add to.

My other reason for remembering this match was that during what turned out to be my winning break it started to hail, and by the time I pegged out the lawn was totally white and covered in hail stones. My focus was such that I didn't really notice the hail till the end of my break.

More on this next time . . .

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... but that the internal bare concrete panelled walls and corrugated steel roof would need thermally lining. Unfortunately this was not in the original plan and was unfunded.

We decided that we could afford to go ahead with the ceiling lining during the summer from club funds and it could be done over a weekend at a cost of £700 without disrupting play, but the walls were a bigger job and would have to be after the season had ended and when we could afford the £1400 estimate.

We had by then applied for a CA Grant towards the thermal lining costs and had gained the support of the **North West Federation's Development Officer James Hawkins.**

We were delighted to be awarded a CA grant of £600 in late August toward the cost which was enough for us to schedule the wall lining for late October.

Thanks to the Croquet Association's final grant input, we now have a modest-sized but fully functioning clubhouse which can be used all year round.

We had already started a winter card and board game afternoon which stopped for a week whilst the walls were lined, but that recommenced at the start of November.

Our plans for next year include trying to recruit more members and try to lower our age profile.

We want to offer a summer sports option to a local senior school and to support the Blind Veterans' croquet initiative.

We also hope to see more visiting croquet players now that we have the facilities to host properly.

If you choose to holiday in the beautiful Victorian seaside resort of Llandudno, please do come by and play croquet just 100 metres from the sea.

**John Hannah,
Chairman, Craig Y Don CC,
(Llandudno)**



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