

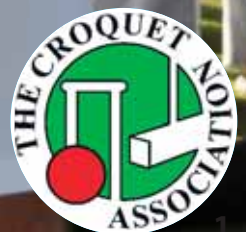
The

Issue 367 April 2017

CROQUET

Gazette

**Bamford
regains
GC World
title**



From our files researched by Frances Colman

10 years ago - 2007



Croquet goes to the Races

(by Klim Seabright, reporting on the initiative of a croquet demonstration at the Cheltenham Festival)

... this led me into the office of the Cheltenham Racecourse Managing Director, Edward Gillespie).

The response was remarkable.

A list of journalists was handed over; an advertisement in the Racing Programme was offered; a croquet demonstration was arranged in the winner's enclosure; an information desk was set up next to the statue of Arkle; and the GB team were invited as VIP guests.

Edward even had the area re-turfed and also managed to lay on perfect croquet weather! ...

The day started with a briefing at Cheltenham CC complemented by some practical experience on the lawns, expertly supervised by David and Eileen MaGee.

The journalists and broadcasters included Rolf Johnson of the Daily Mail, John Inverdale from Radio Five Live and a film crew from ITN ...

By the time they arrived at the racecourse the croquet match between 'Ireland' and 'England' was in progress.

Sue Edwards and Graham Taylor led the sides and 'punters' from around the parade ring were recruited to the teams.

Meanwhile Keith Aiton and Phil Cordingley were live on air with John Inverdale and there was a steady flow of people at the information desk ...

A very worthwhile day was the conclusion of most.

~

The 2nd Women's World Golf Croquet Championship ... will be held at Carrickmines in Ireland from 3rd-9th September 2007.

The GB Selectors have met and the following players have been chosen from the list of those available to fill the three places at present offered:

Freda Vitty, Kath Burt and Julie Hudson.

~

Pam Mason has been appointed Child Protection Officer for the CA having now taken over from Bob Whittaker ...

50 years ago - 1967



A Royal Visit – All associates will be glad to know that our patron, Her Majesty the Queen, has graciously consented to present the prizes to the winners of the Centenary All England handicap Competition at Hurlingham on the morning of 28th July. ...

~

The lack of lady players – The 3 Eights which were first played last year look like establishing themselves as regular encounters to be fought out by the 24 most formidable players who are available.

In the foreseeable future there are two facts which emerge with a degree of clarity.

Firstly the two leading lady players, Mrs. Rotherham and Miss Warwick, will be sure of a place, and secondly there are no other ladies likely to gain a place ...

For the second year in succession the Ladies' Field Cup has been suspended. The wisdom of this decision is not questioned, but surely the moment is now ripe to establish a new and less exalted event at which the ladies can aim their sights. ...

~

Dear Sir,

Once more may I ask your permission to let me inform any of your readers who may be interested in the progress of what has – perhaps unwisely – been described as my **History of Croquet** since its revival in the nineties ... this chronicle has now been extended as far as to cover the 1964 season, and it is proposed to continue it beyond our, which is also the 70th anniversary of the foundation of the Croquet Association Centenary Year. If I had realised to what lengths these annals would carry me I doubt whether I should have embarked upon the compilation of them ...

Maurice B. Reckitt

~

We are very glad to welcome Mrs. B.L. Sundius-Smith as Honorary Assistant Editor.

~

Mr Bagnal Wilde – The Editor has been told that this Gentleman was a croquet player, but has been unable to verify this. Can any associate throw any light on this elusive character who revolutionised the principal on which knock-out tournaments for all sporting events are drawn.

100 years ago - 1917



Lieut. W.H.Fordham, R.F.A. - This photograph was taken on Christmas Day on the Croquet Ground, of the Sporting Club, Alexandra. Mrs.H.Grierson, to whom we are indebted for the photo, writes: " Lieut. Fordham, who is here on sick leave, having just recovered

from malaria contracted in Salonica, played an Exhibition Game for our benefit and gave us all many hints of how to improve our game which had the effect of putting fresh interest into our contests."



~

(Following the announcement, in the previous Gazette issue, of a continuation of the **reduced [War Time] subscription fee**)

An Associate, in remitting his subscription, writes as follows:-

"I beg to enclose my full subscription for 2017 as I feel sure that the Croquet Association will require all the assistance financially from its members; although anything but a rich man, I feel in a small way I may be helping the C.A. to retain the services of the efficient staff, to whom I think all members of the C.A. owe a great debt. A help to others can be no extravagance even in War time. Hoping all members will be of the same mind."

~

The news of **the death of Mr Henry Winch** will come as a shock to the Members of the Association. ... He will be remembered perhaps more generally as a referee in Tournaments than as a player, though in the latter capacity he was by no means undistinguished – more particularly in Doubles – his first conspicuous success was in the Association Doubles in 1903, when he won the event with Mrs.F.Wood as a partner, and he was second in the same event in 1910 playing with Miss K.Webb. In 1905 he played for the Champion Cup ...

Editorial

Once again it's hats off to Reg Bamford, who in February became the GC World Champion for the second time; a feat only equalled by three others, all Egyptians. In securing this latest crown he moved to the top of the tree in terms of all-time world title wins, with six under his belt (two GC and four AC), one ahead of Robert Fulford's five, all AC, titles.

Bamford is rightly given front cover billing in this Gazette, which splits its lead articles between a report on those GC Worlds and a preview of the AC World Teams Championship (for the MacRobertson Shield) which will have just started in the USA by the time you read this.

I recommend www.croquetcores.com to you for following the Mac results and some commentary. It was via this service that we learnt that 'live streaming' video had been set up courtside via You Tube at the GC Worlds. How fabulous to be able to watch the dramas unfold in the middle of our night, all the way from Australia!

Also 'Following the Mac' will be Alison Jones, who will be writing a daily blog

for you all to enjoy. See this and Stephen Mulliner's Mac preview on page 10.

Good luck England!

And it's the same message to the CA's newly appointed National Development Officer Dave Gunn, who is taking on the not inconsiderable task of growing our sport in all manner of ways. It's a hugely important job for the future of croquet, and one which will require much support from us all.

My trip to South Africa closed in an 'exciting' way with a last-day realisation that our passports were missing! A combination of Frances Colman's cool head and Carole Jackson's Cape Town local knowledge saved the day, as emergency documentation was secured in the nick of time for our flight!



Chris Roberts

Chris Roberts Editor

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The
CROQUET
Gazette



Issue 367 April 2017

Front cover: Reg Bamford winning the GC World Championship title in Australia.

(Photos by Bill Bromley).

This page: The Editor with Carole Jackson, Frances Colman and emergency passports! The Chairman at the March Council meeting (Photos by David Hopkins and Chris Roberts)

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Disclaimer - The opinions expressed in the Croquet Gazette are those of the Editor and contributors. The Croquet Association is not responsible for statements other than those clearly defined as being made on behalf of the Croquet Association.

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Chairman's Column

Because of concern that we are falling behind other countries in the development of young talent, the March Council approved the establishment this summer of a Youth School of Croquet.

This new initiative will be separate from our schools and university activities and is aimed at juniors who are already playing in clubs, often having been introduced to croquet by family members.

We envisage one or more summer schools (the number and locations will depend on the responses) and the aim is to encourage and develop skills in both AC and GC.

It will also fast-track particularly talented youngsters through to our International Performance Directors' programmes.

As a matter of urgency we need to identify all those youngsters under the age of around 21 who might be interested in taking part.

I urge clubs to put names forward as soon as possible to their federation representative or coaching officer or direct to Jonathan Isaacs jonathanisaacs@

btinternet.com or Lionel Tibble anglion@btinternet.com.

Gazette readers will have seen our advertisement in last month's issue for a CA National Development Officer.

Following external and in-house advertising for this post, we received 24 applications and six very strong candidates were interviewed.

Following this keenly competitive process, I am pleased to report that Dave Gunn, who has just completed a term as chairman of Nottingham CC, has been appointed with immediate effect.

It is a two-year, part-time appointment and he will work closely with CA officers, particularly federation development officers, to grow our sport: more clubs and more players, especially those playing competitively.

This is an extremely important self-funded CA initiative, so please give Dave your full support.

Congratulations Dave – we wish you well.

I know that some club members who are not currently members of the CA are taking advantage of the new interim arrangement allowing them to enter Fixture Book tournaments and I hope many more will do so.

This prompts me to ask clubs please to spend a little time with members who enter our tournaments for the first time, to familiarise them with the etiquette and conventions involved.

I have noticed that on occasions some new tournament players are simply thrown in at the deep end.

I think it most important that we maintain the traditional standards and ethos of our sport, especially integrity (we are our own referee) and respect for our adversary.

With televised professional sport we are exposed to so much disgraceful, unsporting behaviour (even with my former love, Rugby Union) and, sad to say, society stomachs it.

We must not get dragged down to such levels.



Brian Shorney

The Croquet Association most improved player awards ~ 2016

The Croquet Association is pleased to announce the winners of the Most Improved Player Awards for 2016. The recipients will receive their awards at the CA AGM on 21 October. **Strat Liddiard, Chairman of the Handicap Committee**



Most Improved Male AC Player (Apps Bowl):
Andy Myers



Most Improved Female AC Player (Steel Bowl):
Louise Bradforth



Most Improved GC Player (Spiers Trophy):
Paul Gunn

CA Council March meeting

by Ian Vincent,
Hon. Secretary

This Council Meeting was back in its usual room, with an expansive view of the Hurlingham lawns.

Peter Death reported that the accounts showed a surplus despite £45,700 of grants being given to clubs last year and the continued decline in investment income.

He particularly thanked the reporting accountant, Marian Hemsted, for completing her review so thoroughly at a difficult time, and the accounts were approved for submission to the AGM.

This year is likely to be a lot tougher, with expenditure on the MacRobertson Shield, membership database and increased staffing.

Looking further ahead, it was agreed, for 2018, to increase the per capita subscription for larger clubs by £1.20 and that for smaller ones by £0.20, with a £2 reduction in the individual subscription for Premium membership, but only if the change to make all club members eligible for Standard membership had been introduced by then.

The Secretary reported that Bill Arliss and Roger Staples would be seeking re-election at the AGM in October. Charles Waterfield had been re-elected to represent Croquet North, but Terrey Sparkes was returning to his former role as Secretary of the East Anglian Federation and will be replaced by Brian Havill as its representative on Council. Terrey was warmly thanked for his service.

With the formation of the WCF Association Croquet Laws Committee, it was agreed that the time was right to offer copyright of the

Laws to the WCF; the Croquet Association had previously been holding it on behalf of the other major governing bodies.

We were the preferred bidder for the GC World Championships in 2019 and clubs would be asked to express interest in hosting it.

It was agreed to support the idea of a WCF U21 AC Championship, even though we may not initially have any players able to enter it.

Jeff Dawson had led a review of the membership database replacement project which, although significantly behind the originally projected timescale, had now delivered an initial version for the office staff to try, containing data about existing CA members.

It was about to enter an Agile phase of development and it was agreed to review the position again in August.

The Chairman reported that only a few clubs had replied to his letter about Safeguarding and the possibility of an Anti-Bullying policy.

The Executive Committee will develop an equalities policy which would be more appropriate for a voluntary organisation.

Twenty-four applications had been received for the post of National Development Officer, of which six were short-listed for interview.

Information from the Federations had indicated that the decline of competitive Association Croquet was only relative to the

substantial increase in Golf Croquet over the last few years, but there was concern that new players were not being introduced to AC.

A report with recommendations to address this has been circulated to clubs.

Mindful of the success of young players in other countries, a summer school is to be tried, to encourage and develop ones that are already playing either code, possibly having started because of family interest.

The offer of a year's free paperless CA membership, to be made to participants in the GC Student Championships at Sheffield, is to be extended to other student events.

New grades of Senior and Elite Golf Croquet Coaches are to be introduced and it was suggested the clubs hosting coaching 'Pods' could charge £5 per head to non-members attending if they wished.

An inaugural GC Home Internationals tournament will be held in Ireland at the end of September.

It was agreed that neither the AC nor GC Opens should clash with other CA or international events.

Posters for National Croquet Day should soon be available, with two designs, one targeted at a sporty and the other a more social audience.

Finally, it was announced to applause that Martin French would be awarded the Council Medal at the AGM for his outstanding service to Croquet.

The Croquet Association Club Awards ~ 2017

The CA is delighted to announce the winners of this year's Club Awards, which are made biennially in three categories, to clubs that have made exceptional progress in providing a good playing environment over the previous two years:

All the nominations were of a very high quality and are to be congratulated on their strong development and the club members who have worked so hard to achieve it. The winners will receive their trophies at the CA AGM in October.

Roger Staples, Chairman, CA Development Committee



Townsend Award

(for one and two court clubs)

For this category, a shortlist of three clubs was made from the many excellent nominations received.

The Bears CC impressed because of its sheer determination to continue in existence after losing its ground over two years including fielding league teams during this period.

Bishop Monkton CC impressed because of its vigorous, far-sighted and energetic leadership and its commitment to continuous development.

Cheam CC was seen as a remarkable success story for a one-lawn club, with 75 members and a significant amount of self-help on lawn and clubhouse improvement.

- The Townsend Award, and £250, is awarded to Cheam CC.



Apps-Heley Award

(for three and four court clubs)

Four clubs caught the eye in this category:

Bath CC impressed by its increasing strength as a club with its work on lawn improvement and its innovative approach to tournament hosting.

Guildford and Godalming CC impressed by its transformation from a club without facilities and three lawns of modest quality, to a one with a pavilion, toilets, fencing and four lawns of good quality; all achieved with an extraordinary amount of self-help.

Plymouth CC, which is situated on the grassed roof of a reservoir, has successfully pulled itself back from the brink and is recruiting vigorously.

Wrest Park CC has transformed a forced move onto rough ground with a poor and ancient hut into a high quality club with four flat, true lawns and good facilities for players.

- The Apps-Heley Award is to be shared between Bath CC and Wrest Park CC, each holding the trophy for one year, and each receiving £250.

Photographs - (above) Sussex County CC; (left) Cheam CC; (top right) Wrest Park CC; (bottom right) Bath CC. *Images by Ray Hall, Ian Cobbold, John Bevington & Chris Roberts*

Millennium Award

(for clubs with five or more courts)

Sussex County CC has made a high investment in lawn improvement and weathered the considerable disruption of all its lawns being re-laid in sequence.

Sussex makes an huge contribution to the National Croquet scene and has also significantly increased its membership.

- The Millennium Award, and £250, goes to Sussex CC.



Call for Nominations and Notices of Motions for the 2017 AGM

The 2017 AGM will be held at Hurlingham on the morning of Saturday, 21 October.

Any nominations for the posts of Hon. Treasurer, Hon. Secretary, membership of Council, or motions to be put to the AGM, should be sent to the Hon. Secretary, Dr. I. G. Vincent, 21, Cedar Avenue, Beeston, Nottingham NG9 2HA, or e-mailed to ian.vincent@cantab.net, by 1 June.

Nominations should give the name of the candidate together with those of the proposer and seconder, and state that the consent of the candidate has been obtained.

There are expected to be two vacancies on Council, caused by the completion of three year terms by Bill Arliss and Roger Staples. Both have stated that they are willing to serve again and so do not need to

be nominated. A ballot will be held if there are more candidates than vacancies.

Ian Vincent, Hon. Secretary



Obituaries

Des George 1945 - 2017

As President of CERN Croquet Club, I have just attended a memorial service for Des George, along with other club members and an impressive number of his friends from many walks of life: business, Geneva Amateur Operatic Society, Geneva English Dramatic Society, his croquet world.

It was a very touching experience: several tributes were made, most quite emotionally and they moistened many an eye.

It made us croqueteers realise how little we knew about this remarkable man.

Des obtained a chemistry degree at Manchester University: the tribute from a friend from those days described him as extremely clever though sometimes somewhat chaotic.

Des later moved to Zürich with Dow Chemicals and then to Japan to head up a firm's new branch.

Many years later, he realised his ambition of setting-up his own business, taking on board a partner who has remained in England.

Des was keen on flying and joined the RAF as a pilot, but soon rebelled against the, for him, unacceptable orders and discipline of those 'idiots', and resigned.

He later realised a long-held ambition and flew a Tiger Moth biplane near Geneva.

In the realm of croquet, Des travelled an hour from Yverdon to Geneva



regularly by train for several years, then hired a Mobility car for the last leg to CERN, often returning home in the early hours.

A few years ago he moved near to Geneva, the better to be able to pursue his ruling passion.

Des was a rebel, there is no doubt about it.

On the croquet court, he would do his own thing, often taking on spectacular shots, such as outrageous bouncing jump-shots from six metres or more, or attempting clearances when taking position would have been more advisable, which sadly succeeded less often than he would have hoped.

It was a considerable challenge to have him as a doubles partner.

That said, it was impossible to doubt his extreme enthusiasm for the sport: he practised alone and became a redoubtable

shot.

He would cajole club members by colourful e-mail to join him, including all winter-long on fine days, and on our Monday social evenings, he would badger us to play yet 'one more game', despite no longer being able to see the balls adequately in the gathering gloom.

He hated AC, 'that silly game where someone sits out most of the time', preferring GC where he could be on the court all the time.

He was always ready to help newcomers, notably by travelling to Zürich and Rheinfelden, coaching beginners and helping to found our two most recent Swiss clubs there, for which he was much appreciated.

He loved to invite family and friends to his chalet at Rosswald in the Valais and teach them to ski. He was particularly good with children, as we saw in a colourful slide-show, inventing all sorts of games.

His passing was a huge shock and tragedy for his family, club members and his many friends.

Des and his winning smile, generosity, camaraderie and eccentricities, will truly be sadly missed. May you rest in peace, dear Des.

**Norman Eatough, President,
CERN Croquet & Lawn Bowls Club.**

On behalf of all club and Swiss Croquet Association members.

Rodney's love of croquet began in our front garden, when he was about nine or ten.

The lawn was oval in shape encircled by a gravel drive.

We had no idea how to play - all I remember is that we started either one or two mallet lengths before hoop 1.

Nevertheless we enjoyed ourselves, despite the rhododendron bush alongside hoops one and two.

Many years later, in 1991, Rodney noticed an article in the local paper about two ladies who had been playing croquet on the Isle of Wight.

He contacted them to suggest forming a club - or at least find a place where they could play.

Due to his powers of persuasion, Medway Croquet Club was born with Rodney as its first chairman.

The local Council donated a piece of land

Rodney Parkins 1940 - 2017



- although one end was three feet higher than the other!

Rodney started entering tournaments as a handicap 16, got down to 3.5 and was awarded his County cap.

He enrolled on a course where he learned to do a triple peel and the following week he showed me how to do it - I think that

was the only one he ever did.

But he did once beat Jamie Burch in an advanced game; in croquet history that was the seventh biggest upset win of all time.

Rodney had wide and eclectic interests and had groups of friends all over the UK.

Although a widower for forty years, he had been a loving husband, a doting father and a caring brother.

Always loyal, honest and polite, his quirky sense of humour will be well remembered and very much missed!

DAP

~

A service to celebrate the life of Rodney Parkins will be held on Friday 9 June at 2.00pm in St Martin's Church, Ryarsh, ME19 5LB; followed by a tea in the Church Hall, where there is parking, about 300 metres from the church. Ryarsh is about six miles west of Maidstone.

England set to host GC Worlds in 2019

The CA seeks suitable venues and Tournament Director for this prestigious event.

The CA and the WCF have agreed that England is the preferred venue for the next GC World Championship.

This agreement gives English clubs the chance to submit proposals to host the event.

The last time that England was the host country for the GC World Championship was 2011, when Hurlingham and Surbiton provided the courts.

These clubs saw plenty of tough, competitive croquet, which culminated with a victory for Mark McInerney from Ireland (pictured right). He became the first non-Egyptian GC World Champion.

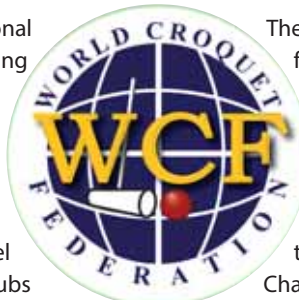
In response to the offer from the CA, WCF Secretary General, Stephen Mulliner commented "The WCF is delighted that England continues its support to high-class international GC."

The CA has accepted the Championship as part of the process of ensuring England only takes on a fair share of WCF events.

The CA, however, is reliant on individual clubs to offer up their facilities for each event.



The CA International Committee is seeking a volunteer individual who would like to take on the challenge of bringing top-level GC to a group of clubs somewhere in England.



The Committee will be able to facilitate any interested person to talk with those who have been involved in successfully delivering a range of different events in recent years.

Recent events have included the 2015 Women's AC World Championship (Nottingham) and the 2016 GC World Team Championship (Surbiton, Camerton & Peasedown, Bath and Guildford & Godalming). This year sees the AC Tier 2 and Tier 3 World Team Championships (Sussex County).

Tim King, Chairman of the International Committee, observes, "A successful World Championship needs to be led by a Tournament Director who has plenty of energy and initiative but who also knows how to delegate tasks to members of a supporting team."

The Tournament Director's job will start with seeking the cooperation of a group of host clubs that can provide a combined total of as close as possible to 20 courts.

Anyone with an interest to learn more about this opportunity should, in the first instance, contact Tim King tmk@ntlworld.com.



Seeding trial for GC Open Championship

- Director Rachel Rowe explains -

The 2017 Golf Croquet Open Championship will be trialling the use of Modified Grade-Based Seeding for the knock-out draw of the Singles event. The purpose is to see if this method will generate a more balanced knock-out draw than the current Block-Based Seeding method.

A player survey will be circulated at the end of the event, with specific questions relating to the draw and format of the knock-out, to ascertain how all the players in the event have viewed the change.

The full procedure to be implemented is below: Rankings will be updated with all block matches, and all grade references further down the methodology will use this updated grade. The draw will be done fully in public, with the following methodology:

Rank:
 block winners (#1's) according to grade as 1-4
 block runner ups (#2's) according to grade as 5-8
 #3's randomly as 9-12
 #4's randomly as 13-16



Place 1-4 in the draw in their respective positions.

Place 5-8 in the draw in their respective positions.

Place 9-12 randomly, but avoiding any first round block clashes. This is achieved by placing all available positions (9-12) in a bag. Draw a position for

player #9; if it isn't a clash insert the player in that position. If it is a clash, redraw (without replacement) and insert in that position. Replace remaining positions and draw for player #10 as for player #9. Before drawing for player #11 check whether there is more than one solution; if there is, draw, if not, place.

Place 13-16 randomly, but avoiding any first round block clashes. This is achieved by placing all available positions (13-16) in a bag. Draw a position for player #13; if it isn't a clash insert the player in that position. If it is a clash, redraw (without replacement) and insert in that position. Replace remaining positions and draw for player #14 as for player #13. Before drawing for player #15 check whether there is more than one solution; if there is, draw, if not, place.



Photographs: 2016 runner-up Tobi Savage (above left), Champion Stephen Mulliner (above) and GC Opens Director Rachel Rowe (left) - images by Chris Roberts.

Coaches Training Courses vary in description and cost

Dear Editor,

To a small organisation relying heavily on volunteer input, the annual production of the CA Fixture Book must be a mammoth task and it is an extremely useful source of reference.

Gratitude from all members is surely due.

However, players seeking to become coaches will find the content confusing.

Readers using the index to find Coach Training Courses (CTCs) may well start at page 165 (BECOMING A COACH) and thus overlook the training available this year at High Wycombe (on page 148) and at the York Northern Academy (page 150).

Nor is it clear why the cost of attending (what one assumes are) very similar sessions over two days varies from £70 (at High Wycombe and the Croquet Academy at Southwick), through £55 (at York) to £45 (at Cheltenham and Nottingham).

Most confusing, however is the variety of ways courses are described.

Having attended a CTC at York and subsequently qualified as a Club Coach, I am aware that the instruction provided there (and, one assumes, at the other venues) imparts programming, presentation and interpersonal, rather than, croquet skills, and so a one-size-fits-all approach is suitable in whatever game format or at whatever level a candidate seeks to qualify.

But this is not explained in the Fixture Book and from the descriptions of what is on offer at each venue it would be easy to infer that the syllabuses vary and thus the qualifications available.

Individual courses do not, I have discovered, accommodate the coach seeking to move from Club to CA status, and the question remains how this can be achieved.

The Fixture Book under 'Becoming a Coach' (pages 167-168) is not helpful.

This section states that such progression

requires "further steps" but expansion of the term at the foot of page 168 implies that to become a Golf Coach requires a Club Coach only to adequately perform in a test on the Rules.

Having spoken to coaching tutors, it appears this is not the case and further elucidation on how progression might be achieved would be most welcome.

Peter Lowe, Club Coach, Tyneside CC

Jonathan Isaacs, Chairman of the Coaching Committee replies:

Dear Editor,

Peter makes a very good point concerning the location of Coaches Training Courses (CTC) in the CA Fixtures Book. When it comes to the production of the 2018 edition we will take this point into consideration.

The cost of hosting courses can vary greatly and the costs charged reflect this fact. However since the Fixtures Book was published, the CA and Federations have already agreed to subsidise the cost of the approved CTC and Referees Examination courses published in the CA Fixtures Book for 2017. This means that the prices actually paid will be considerably less.

The description for each course will be discussed by the CA Coaching Committee. However it must be borne in mind that the initiator of the course is the local Academy, federation or club, not the CA, and as such they submit their own course descriptions.

This year our domain is hosting an increasing number of Coaches Training Courses (CTC), not only to help create Club Coaches but also to help existing coaches progress to higher levels. There is still work to be done in this area and further improvements are being discussed by the Coaching Committee.

As Chairman of the Coaching Committee I would like to thank Peter Lowe for his comments and observations.

Playing too much croquet?

Much is written about recruitment – but has anyone ever considered the antithesis? How do you wean an erstwhile fanatic off croquet?

My friend David, who has just turned 80, is so enamoured of the game that he plays at his club three times virtually every week. On a Tuesday, he plays GC with members of the U3A. On a Wednesday he plays AC with highish bisquers (from 5 to 18), and on Saturday he plays Advanced with his friends (-0.5 to 5).

David has arthritis and thirteen months ago he underwent a serious back operation, which sadly does not seem to have helped. He becomes quite tired and almost always has to play doubles. On a Saturday morning, normally only three members - including David - turn up to play. There is a weekly ritual before play, solved by the toss of a coin. "Let's see who will play with David". The coin is tossed and the shout is always "Great - I've got David". Poor David is never sure if the pleasure is genuine or not.

He is always hoping to help others and tries to demonstrate how things should be done, although it doesn't always work. Incidentally he used to be a scratch player - he got down to scratch twice – and likes to boast that not everybody at the top can say that! David says that as he cannot stand properly and therefore cannot address the ball correctly, that when playing a croquet stroke his ball does not always do what it should.

He got terribly excited in the middle of the winter running all 12 hoops in one turn, and now if he has a break of four or more, he experiences all the excitement he had 20 years ago when he was just learning.

The problem is how to wean him away from croquet and extinguish his fanatical, all-consuming (just ask his wife) love of the game. Can you help?

Anon, Medway CC

Correction

Dear Editor,

Please may I correct an error in the long service article on page 7 of the issue 366.

Jonathan Isaacs was co-opted to fill a vacancy on Council in the 2000-2001 seasons, so has completed 14, not 12, years of service. My apologies to him and your readers.

Ian Vincent, CA Hon. Secretary

Adventurous play in Australia

Dear Editor,

I just missed a good photo in Sale, Victoria, Australia, even though I was leaning out of a car window at a junction.

I did get most of this direction post, where the croquet club appears to be signed as an adventure playground!

John Dawson, Chester CC



Jumps and hammers at 45°

Dear Editor,

I was attempting a jump shot over a ball in a hoop, to which my ball was rather close (within a mallet-head). Close, but doable.

I asked for a referee to watch the shot, to keep an eye out for my mallet follow through touching the ball in the jaws. The balls were marked, and I took my stance.

I executed the shot well, and the jump generated enough height to clear the ball and potentially score the point.

Sadly, my mallet proceeded to go a little further than hoped, and just poked the oppo ball through. Damn!

As the ref gathered up his markers, I was told that the shot would've been faulted anyway, because of the guidance released by the CA about hammer shots being automatically faulted at anything steeper than 45°.

I was shocked as had I really hit the ball at 45 degrees or more, I would have had to be standing beyond the hoop to hold the mallet! And my mallet would have hit the ground long before it made contact with the oppo ball. If my shot had been clean and a total success, only to be declared a fault on the grounds of misapplied guidance, I'd have been furious!

I have since found the document released by the CA, which stated: "To foster consistent playing and refereeing standards, it will be normal practice to fault any firmly-played stroke where the mallet strikes the ball more steeply than at 45 degrees to the horizontal and which is not seen to rise from the surface as a result".

My jump shot most definitely rose from the surface. Further to this, I had a discussion with a relevant contributor to the CA guidance, who clarified that the guidance was primarily aimed at duff hammer strokes, as jump strokes were very rarely played at a steep angle, unlike hammer strokes.

I figured this well worth presenting to the Gazette in an effort to prevent the same mistake being made in the future, and to highlight that the guidance given by the CA is aimed at obviously duff hammer strokes, not jump shots that leave the ground cleanly and clear a ball.

Tobi Savage, Canterbury CC

A copy of the hammer stroke guidance I'm referring to can be found here:

<https://www.croquet.org.uk/?d=1473>

Powe and new mallet make history with masterly sextuple peel

Dear Editor,

Jonathan Powe today completed a brilliant and very difficult delayed sextuple in our game at Parkstone on a sunny February day.

Historic, because this was the first day and game he had ever played using his brand new Dave Trimmer mallet. It was also Jonathan's first ever completed sextuple peel.

Brilliant because he chose to peel straight at several longish hoops, deliberately leaving himself 2-3 yard long rushes to distant hoops – all successful. This tactic avoided the variable pull which we experience with our Dawson balls.

Absolutely masterly, Jonathan; and could this be a worldwide first ever with a new mallet?

Congratulations, too, to Dave Trimmer for his superb precision craftsmanship.

William Ormerod, East Dorset (Parkstone) L.T.C.C.

Long shot challenge

Dear Editor,

I was wondering if you might be able to help with this question:

What is the distance of the longest ever recorded single croquet ball shot?

(A record) has reportedly stood since 1958, and happened in the U.K.

Sandra Boon, Western Australia

Sandra then wrote again saying that she was quite disappointed when she found out the answer to her own question. - Ed

Dear Editor,

Apparently some drunken soldiers put a croquet ball into a cannon and fired it – the ball went 460 yards!

Perhaps this poor example of a world record can be turned into a more positive and talented exercise if competitions were held around the world?

The choice of surface would have to be determined Australia / New Zealand have some fine beaches – a ball could go for miles! If it ever eventuates – I will look for your name on the list of competitors!

Wish you lots of croquet successes.

Sandra Boon, Western Australia

Does any member know the 'when and where' of this cannon tale I wonder.

As to a 'more talented record setting exercise' – presumably using a mallet for propulsion – does anyone fancy setting up such a challenge? It could be fun :O) - Ed

CDV thanks

Dear Editor,

Have been meaning to write this ever since the end of last season which, for me, was my most enjoyable so far.

It culminated with me getting to the GC B-Level National Final at Budleigh and, I think, putting up a good showing with a final round hoop 13 losing game with Paul Gunn; a result that would have affected the winner if it had gone my way.

I also did well enough to have a couple of other mighty tussles with both Richard Bilton and Paul Gunn over the season.

This I put down absolutely to having a completely 'clear head' and being able to focus on the game itself and the tactics I should be employing.

All of this was made possible by the hard work put in by Martin French and others in relation to Colour Vision Deficiency (CVD).

I would like to extend enormous thanks to Martin and all involved in the hard work they put in over winter of 2015-16 in respect of CVD. I did find that most Tournament Managers had made note of the new instructions in respect of CVD, and even those that had not noted the provision, obliged when it was pointed out.

They made it clear to other competitors that, where possible, players with CVD should be allowed to use the 'Primaries'.

Brian McCausland, Nailsea CC

Dear Editor,

I found this wooden plaque in a pile of pub memorabilia. So far I haven't been able to find out anything about its origin. It would appear that the plaque is about 100 years old by the appearance of the players. Diss Croquet Club does not exist or does it? Does anyone have any ideas?

Richard Lewin, Chelmsford C C



AC World Championship 'Tiers 2.1, 2.2 and 3 by Ray Hall

Getting Shirty at The Mac by David Openshaw

AC World Team Championships Tiers 2.1, 2.2 and 3 ~ 17-22 July 2017 at Sussex County CC, Southwick

The entry is similar to that in May 2014 save for the regrettable absence of Austria and Norway.

This is particularly unfortunate since one of the intentions of this competition is to expand the experience of players in countries who do not compete at the top level, and here we have a reduced entry.

Tier 2.1

The tier 2.1 entrants are Ireland, Scotland, Wales and Spain; the latter was promoted from tier 2.2 at the expense of relegated South Africa.

Each team will play a full two-day test match against each of the other countries, as in the MacRobertson Shield (Tier 1 of the World Teams Championship), finishing on Saturday 22 July. Scotland finished only marginally above South Africa A in 2014, so much hinges on whether Spain can maintain their 2014 form.

Tier 2.2 and 3

Tiers 2.2 and 3 will be run as a combined event involving Canada, Czech Republic,



Germany, South Africa and Sweden. In 2014, when this event was played as a single block, the finishing order of the current entrants was Sweden (4 wins) Germany (3) Canada

(2), Czech Rep (0), so it will be interesting to see how these entrants cope with the introduction of South Africa.

Initially each team will play against the other four in 'Jamboree' format; this entails one doubles and two singles each day, which enables all five teams to complete a full test match format.

Tier 2.2 will be decided by the two top placed countries playing a full test match.

Tier 3 will be decided by the remaining three countries playing a further modified Jamboree, minimising repeat encounters.

The Championships start with an opening ceremony on Sunday evening, 16 July and other evening events include 'international' skittles on Tuesday (18 July), a tournament dinner on Friday (21 July) and trophy presentation on Saturday (22 July).

Spectators will be most welcome throughout the week, although we cannot guarantee a repeat of the 2014 sunny weather.

Ray Hall, Sussex County CC

The MacRobertson Shield is the name and trophy associated with the World AC Team Championship, which has been played since 1925 and the latest event will begin shortly in Mission Hills, California.

The original tournament was between England and Australia (though it was really a team from Victoria) and it is now played about every four years between England, Australia, New Zealand and USA..

I played for the Great Britain team in 'The Mac' on six occasions between 1979 and 2000. For each Mac we have special shirts produced and so these have contributed to my shirt collection, as has a New Zealand team shirt from the 1990 series.

During my time in the Mac, the strongest team and best performance was in 1993.

Our top three players were the young trio of Robert Fulford, David Maugham and Chris Clarke, all of whom had developed during the late 1980s when we had a very good Junior and Schools development programme. By 1993, these three had already become our three strongest players and they remained so until quite recently.

Numbers 4 and 5 in the team were John Walters and me, who both had performed very well in the World Individual Championships of 1991 and 1992. John had won in 1991 and was runner-up in 1992, and I was runner-up and bronze medallist respectively. Our sixth player was the experienced and very reliable Colin Irwin.

This team won its three preliminary matches; 9-0 v USA, 6-2 v New Zealand and 6-3 v Australia. Then we beat New Zealand 17-3 in the final.

I'm pictured (*below*) at the 1993 Mac with Eddie Hunt who had played for Australia in the 1935 event. Can you spot the mistake on my shirt?



A century up for Exeter's Major Geoff Bird

Major Geoff Bird MBE

On 26 March the members of Exeter Croquet Club wished a very happy 100th birthday to Geoff Bird, their redoubtable President.

A career Civil Servant, only interrupted by service in the Hampshire Regiment during WW2, ending the war with the 8th Army in Italy, Geoff made Exeter his home for much of his life and continues to live there with his daughter Janet.

He first joined the Exeter club in 1978 after a period as a country member with Cheltenham CC and has been a playing member continuously ever since.

After long service on the committee Geoff became our President in 2007 and continues to be an active and diligent contributor to



the club's wellbeing. Some years ago the reward of an MBE recognised the support and tireless hard work given by Geoff and his late wife Molly to Mencap and this remains a cause dear to his heart.

Committed to AC, Geoff can often be seen patrolling the court boundaries giving support and helpful advice. He is a great follower of home fixtures in the various SW Federation Leagues, his ready wit and talent for making friends easily is a wonderful asset to the club and can be a memorable feature of any visit.

The members of Exeter CC wish Geoff a very happy centenary and welcome him to another year as their President.

Marilyn Craven, Secretary Exeter CC

THE MAC - The WCF AC World Championship

17 April ~ 5 May- Mission Hills, California, USA.

Preview



The forthcoming Mac will be the twenty-second holding since its inception in 1925, and the eighth from 1993 when the USA was welcomed into the competition.

The venue is the Mission Hills Country Club in Rancho Mirage, California, which is in the desert about 120 miles east of Los Angeles.

Mission Hills was the venue for the Solomon Trophy in 2005 and 2009, and is expected to offer excellent lawn surfaces which will place importance on good shooting and offer the more adventurous ample scope for peeling breaks more challenging than triple peels. The teams all have interesting features.

New Zealand

The holders are New Zealand, who have lost the services of three of their 2014 team.

They will be captained by Jenny Clarke, who thereby becomes the second alumnus (leaving gender issues aside) of Wadham College, Oxford to captain a Mac team. The other was a well-known chess-playing car salesman.

She is supported by Paddy Chapman and Greg Bryant from the previous team, and by newcomers Aiken Hakes (winner of the 2017 NZ AC Open) and Chris Shilling and returnee Joe Hogan (1979, 82, 86 and 90) who has thereby set a record for the longest gap between appearances (27 years).

Their average grade is 2,410.

Stephen Mulliner looks ahead to the Championship

Australia

Australia will set a new Mac record of another sort by being the first to field three brothers in the same team, namely Greg, Robert and Malcolm Fletcher.

Robert was the 2013 AC World Champion and, with his two talented siblings and the experienced Ian Dumergue, Stephen Forster and Simon Hockey in the side, this is a team that has genuine hopes of reclaiming the Mac for Australia for the first time since 1935, a gap of 82 years.

Their average grade is 2,472.

U.S.A.

The USA team features two current world-class players, namely Ben Rothman (2016 British Open Champion) and David Maloof (2016 AC World Championship finalist), two highly experienced players in Danny Huneycutt and Jeff Soo, and two Mac newcomers, 18-year old Matthew Essick and Stuart Lawrence, who have both played in the Solomon Trophy.

The USA will be keen to convert their familiarity with the playing conditions into a higher finishing position than indicated by their average grade of 2,384, the lowest of the four teams.

England

England have the least changed and, in one respect, the most experienced team.

James Hopgood replaces Robert Fulford, but otherwise they field the same line-up as in 2014.

David Maugham and Stephen Mulliner, the current AC World Champion, each have seven previous Mac appearances behind them, and are joined by Jamie Burch, James Death and Samir Patel.

The England line-up is the most concentrated in world ranking terms, ranging over only nine places from 6th to 14th, and their average grade is the highest of the four teams at 2,507.

Who will win?

A betting man would probably put a modest fiver on England to regain the Mac for the first time (to be pedantic) since 1969 because, from 1974 to 2010, we competed as Great Britain.

However, determined performances can be expected from all four teams and, as usual, nothing can be taken for granted.

Photos from left:

Jenny Clarke (New Zealand), Robert Fletcher (Australia), David Maloof (USA) and AC World Champion Stephen Mulliner (England).

Images respectively by Paddy Chapman, Ian & Sara Anderson and Samir Patel (twice).

Follow the Mac with Alison

America here we come!

Team England will soon be off to compete in the MacRobertson Shield (The AC World Team Championship) and I am lucky enough to be able to travel with them and support the team.

I will be hoping to catch up with top players from around the world and tell you

all about it in the next issue of *The Gazette*.

In the meantime, I thought that we could take advantage of the opportunity for some joint journalism, and I would invite any specific questions that you would like me to ask. You might even have questions about how the sport is progressing in America

and what they do to help grow their club membership.

I welcome you to contact me at alison@alisonswebsites.co.uk to join me in my journalistic journey. I will be updating my blog with pictures and stories at www.alisonjonesdiary.co.uk during the event.

Alison Jones



In some ways, the main story of the recent GC Worlds at the Victorian Croquet Centre at Cairnlea outside Melbourne was not so much the happenings in the main event but the dramatic rise in the participation of the Under-21 players.

The U21 GCWC was held at the same venue from 18-22 February and displayed a hugely impressive standard of play.

The best of the Australian, Egyptian and New Zealand competitors displayed levels of pace and accuracy in clearing and running hoops that were simply breathtaking.

What is more, this standard was maintained consistently, none more so than by the 17-year-old Felix Webby (NZL) who took the U21 title with an emphatic 3-0 win against fellow-countryman George Coulter.

The U21 contribution at the 2015 GCWC in New Zealand had been rather muted with only two reaching the knock-out stage and neither advancing to the second round.

Would 2017 be different?

The Block Stage

The GCWC block stage was held at the VCC and at four other clubs.

Some interesting results emerged, notably the performance of the 18-year-old Australian, Edward Wilson, whose preference is for AC but who decided to enter the U21 GCWC; he reached the semi-final, and then won all nine games in his block in the GCWC!

The new U21 champion, Felix Webby, was no less impressive in his block with another clean sweep.

The other undefeated block winners were Reg Bamford (ZAF), Mohamed Karem, one of Egypt's young rising stars, and Duncan Dixon (NZL), the first U21 champion back in 2009.

When the dust had settled, six U21s and another seven players under 30 had made it to the knock-out stage and, of those 13, nine won through to the second round.

Quarter Finals

The quarter-final line-up could be classified into three groups.

The traditional heavyweights were represented by Reg Bamford and Ahmed Nasr (EGY) in opposite halves of the draw.

The young guns were Hamy Erian (EGY), the 2015 runner-up, Mohamed Karem, and Felix Webby.

And the experienced middleweights were Jenny Clarke (NZL), John Christie (NZL) and Peter Landrebe (AUS).

In best-of-five games, Erian had a 3-0 win of the closest kind (7-6, 7-6, 7-6) against Karem to set up a semi-final against Bamford who had proved too strong for Clarke by 7-3, 7-5, 7-3.

Nasr had a comfortable 7-4, 7-3, 7-3 win against Christie, while Webby ended his match against Landrebe somewhat emphatically by 7-5, 7-6, 7-0!

Semi Finals

There was now serious talk of Webby pulling off an extraordinary double of the U21 GCWC and the GCWC itself, and the two semi-finals, which were played one after the other, attracted a large and enthusiastic crowd.

They did not disappoint in excitement or quality.

Webby took the first game against Nasr, lost the next two and then rallied with a superb 7-6 win in the fourth via a jump shot from the boundary at hoop 13.

Sadly, for the U21 champion, Nasr, twice a former GCWC champion, took and kept the

upper hand in the decider and ran out a 7-4 winner.

Nonetheless, Webby had given a superb performance and became the first player ever to win medals at both the U21 GCWC and the GCWC – and in the same year to boot. The latter aspect of his feat might remain unmatched for many years.

In the other semi-final, Bamford took the first game against Erian 7-4 but dropped the second 7-5 and then played two excellent hoop 13s, to take the third and fourth games 7-6 each and the match 3-1.

In game 3, Bamford had needed to win hoop 12 to stay alive and had engineered a rush to 13 after Erian had played a good approach.

The rush went badly wrong but, nonetheless, two excellent long clearances kept Bamford in the hunt and he eventually clinched the game with a magnificent six-yard angled hoop 13.

The Final

And so to the final which was swiftly recognised as the third encounter of a 'best-of-three' between former champions stretching back to 2008 in Cape Town, when Nasr beat Bamford 3-1, and encompassing Cairo in 2013 when Bamford achieved the extraordinary feat of recovering from 2-6 down against Nasr in game 5 to take the game, match and title; and, in so doing, became the first ever holder (and simultaneous holder at that) of both the ACWC and the GCWC.

The match itself was an absorbing encounter with many extraordinary moments from both players but, on the whole, was perhaps more a testament to the players' determination than to their brilliance.

Bamford maintained a superb level of concentration throughout, even when his clearances and hoops were not behaving quite as planned, and emerged a very worthy winner by 7-6, 5-7, 7-4, 3-7, 7-4 to take the title for the second time and, for the moment, to take a lead over his great rival.

The consolation events

In the consolation events, Duncan Dixon (NZL) beat John-Paul Moberly (ENG) in the Shield final while Greg Fletcher defeated Kevin Beard 7-4, 7-1 in an all-Australian Bowl final. George Coulter (NZL), the U21 finalist, was a convincing Plate winner, defeating Geoff Jamieson (AUS) 7-3, 7-3 in the final.

All in all, it was another great GC World Championship.

New Zealand are to be congratulated on the extraordinary success of their youth programme which has developed so many excellent young players who promise to be major factors in the GCWC for the foreseeable future.

There are welcome signs of a revival of youth croquet in Australia and, with the steady emergence of good young players in Egypt, the future of GC looks brighter today than ever before.

Let us hope that the northern hemisphere can achieve similar progress in the next few years.

Stephen Mulliner



All photographs courtesy of Bill Bromley (USA)

Left from top: New GCA World Champion, Reg Bamford (RSA); Teenage sensation Felix Webby (NZL) at the end of a tough semi-final for Ahmed Nasr; Spectacular stuff from Amr El Ibieri (EGY); and Ahmed Nasr again, with a trademark long hoop smash!

Above: The English entrants, Stephen Mulliner, John-Paul Moberly and Richard Brooks.

CA Bursary Scheme aids Moberly to scale new heights

In February I jetted off to Australia to play in my second Golf Croquet World Championships.

I had had a great experience playing the previous one in New Zealand in 2015, and hoped to improve on my near miss of knockout qualification.

Competing both for that tournament and this one wouldn't have been possible without the CA and their Bursary Scheme which generously contributed towards the costs of travel and accommodation.

The trip was made all the more enjoyable by staying in a house with Chris and Jenny Clarke, Ian BurrIDGE and young Kiwi sensation Felix Webby – plenty of good croquet discussion was had!

I was thrilled to be England's highest ranked player there and when the draw was made I was the top seed in my block and so 6th seed overall. My initial aim was to qualify for the knockout and then match my seeding by making the quarter finals. I had a good last couple of months at the end of the 2016 season so knew I could challenge some of the big names.

After an enjoyable doubles match with Ian BurrIDGE, competing for the North team in the Ramsis Cup (which we and the North won!), for the Singles it was five days of block play to decide the last 32.

The five days felt a little drawn out, and the two matches a day schedule made for some long waits between matches, but I wasn't complaining as it was a chance to get out of the sun!

I won seven out of nine matches, meaning I had made the knockout; my losses were to an impressive Mohamed Karem and to Angus Coulter, who made long hoops and roquets look easy – another young Kiwi to look out for in the future!

A win over Aussie Kevin Beard in the last 32 pitted me against 2015 finalist and top Egyptian Hamy Erian. These are the kind of matches you want to play in, and I loved every minute of it!

He won it 7-6 7-6 after I missed the one shot I had at hoop 13 in the second game. I was disappointed to lose after missing but pleased to have pushed him almost all the way. The rest of the tournament saw me finish in tenth place overall after losing in the Shield final to a superior Duncan Dixon; and we saw Reg Bamford being crowned World Golf Croquet Champion for the second time – congratulations to Reg.

I'll be doing my best to wrest his and Stephen's grasp off the British GC Open title in the coming years!

John-Paul Moberly

CA introduced two new grades for GC Coaches

Two new coaching categories will be introduced from the 2017 season onwards:

Club Coach and GC Grade 1 Coach

The criteria for these are the same as the existing criteria for a Club Coach and a GC Coach respectively.

Grade 2 GC Senior Coach

The new category of Grade 2 GC Senior Coach will be created.

"Anyone deemed to have sufficient and relevant coaching experience may be appointed as a Senior coach at the discretion of the Coaching Committee. Applications are made to the Chairman of the CC and supported by:

- A written appraisal of the applicant's coaching involvement and record, either as a qualified CA coach at whatever level, or relevant coaching experience gained informally.

- Playing experience at A Level or better for a period of not less than two years prior to the application being made.

- Must demonstrate a good working knowledge of GC rules to Referee standard. The Examining Coach at his/her discretion may require the applicant to sit the GC Referees Exam.

Any applicant who may have limited or negligible coaching experience may be approved as a probationary SC for a limited period of 12 months, after which, and pending the production of a suitable coaching and playing record, the appointment may be confirmed."

Grade 3 Elite Coach

A new category of Grade 3 GC Elite Coach will be created:

"Anyone deemed to have sufficient and relevant coaching experience may be appointed as an Elite coach at the discretion of the Coaching Committee, providing they have previously served as a Senior Coach. Applications are made to the Chairman of the CC and supported by;

- A written appraisal of the applicant's coaching involvement at Senior Coach level and record.

- Playing experience at A Level or better for a period of not less than three years prior to the application being made.

Jonathan Isaacs, Chairman of the Coaching Committee

Newly Coaches Appointments

The following new appointments have been made.

Grade 3 AC Coach: Lionel Tibble.

Grade 2 AC Coach: Adrian Kirby, Annabel McDiarmid, Chris Roberts, David Warhurst.

Grade 1 AC Coach: Frances Colman, Stephen Custance-Baker, Ian Harrison, Sarah Melvin, Jayne Stevens.

Examining Coach: Bob Whitaker.

Club Coach: Heather Bennett, Andru Blewett, Julia Lowry, Richard Peperell, Gerald Wynn.

Grade 1 GC Coach: Sarah Melvin, Richard Peperell, Jayne Stevens.

New - Grade 2 GC Senior Coach:

Below is an initial list of people who have been appointed Grade 2 GC Senior Coaches. The Coaching Committee is currently processing applications and recommendations and the following list should only be regarded as a work in progress:

Pierre Beaudry, Ian Cobbold, Andrew Cowing, Alan Cottle, David Crawford, Stephen Custance-Baker, Daphne Gaitley, Kevin Ham, Janet Hoptroff, Jonathan Isaacs, Derek Johnson, Cliff Jones, Richard Keighley, Dave Kibble, J-P Moberly, John Noble, John Noble, Chris Roberts, Tobi Savage, Lionel Tibble, Don Williamson.

Jonathan Isaacs, Chairman CA Coaching Committee

Newly qualified GC Championship Referees and GC Referees

Congratulations to following for their appointment as GC Championship Referees, arising from their successfully officiating at the GC World Team Championship last year.

**Frances Colman
Chris Roberts**

This brings the number of GC Championship Referees to 22.

Congratulations also to the following who have qualified as GC Referees over the past couple of months:

**Richard Bilton, Ian Burrigge, Peter Haydon
Raghu Iyer, Keith Pound**

The total number of GC referees now stands at 128.

Martin French, Chairman GC Rules committee



(Left) - New Championship referee Frances Colman tells Martin French a comical tale at the GC World Teams.

(Right) New referees Raghu Iyer, Keith Pound and Peter Haydon with others at Cliff Jones' qualification course at Phyllis Court.

(Far right) Rachel Rowe & Lionel Tibble with the GC IPD Squad.

(photos by Chris Roberts)



North London added to AC Pod Coaching centers

AC Pods enter their fourth season in 2017. They are aimed at delivering Advanced play coaching material to A and B Class players in bite-size two-hour chunks.

There are now 13 pods established around the country, including North London which is a new addition for this year.

Most meet regularly on weekday evenings throughout the season, although there are local variations.

Topics covered include areas such as break play, openings, 3-ball endings and peeling.

A list of pods, their primary location and co-ordinator is given below.

If you would like to attend visit <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=members/CoachingPods>, register your interest and your local co-ordinator will be in touch.

Ian Burridge - International Performance Director AC

Pod	Primary host club	Co-ordinator
Capital	Surbiton	Harry Fisher
Devon	Budleigh	Elaine Norsworthy
Essex and Suffolk	Colchester	Robert Fulford
Gloucestershire	Cheltenham	Sarah Hayes
Hampshire	Winchester & Aldermaston	Ian Harrison
Kent	Medway	Robert Alexander
North East	York	Roger Staples
North London	Hampstead Heath	Phil Cordingley
North West Fed.	Bowdon	Colin Irwin
North West Fed.	Bury	Paul Rigge
Robin Hood	Nottingham	ian Burridge
Sussex	Sussex County	Luc Berthouze
Wessex	Bristol	Dave Kibble

Tibble sets up new GC Coaching Pods

As a key part of the International Performance Development Group for Golf Croquet, Pod clubs have been established around the country offering players currently involved in the A and B Level Series of tournaments and other ambitious players the opportunity to further develop their skills.

A list of Pod clubs and associated coaches and coordinators presently participating is shown below. The list is changing as additional clubs become Pods, and an up-to-date master list of Pod clubs and other relevant information will soon be available via the CA website. If your club is interested in becoming a GC coaching Pod then please contact me.

If you would like take advantage of the coaching, register your interest via the soon to be set up Registration page on the CA website and a local coach or coordinator will be in touch.

Lionel Tibble – International Performance Director GC

Pod Club	Coach/Coordinator
Phyllis Court	Chris Roberts
Hamptworth	Chris Roberts
Sussex County (Southwick)	Daphne Gaitley & Richard Brookes
Dulwich	Pierre Beaudry
Canterbury	Tobi Savage
Taunton Deane	Stephen Custance-Baker
East Dorset	David Nicolson & Ian Harrison
Tyneside	Derek Johnson
Letchworth	John Noble
Northampton	Lionel Tibble
Watford	Janet Lewis

Rachel Rowe delivers for the GC IPD Squad

Rachel Rowe delivered a very useful and enjoyable first coaching weekend for the new GC International Performance Development Squad at Wrest Park in March.

Assisted by GC IP Director Lionel Tibble (suffering terribly with a cold, but struggling on manfully), Rowe took the 10 strong squad, who came from all over the country, through a number of sessions that broke down the barriers to improvement.

A brainstorming section highlighted the areas where practice would be most



productive and a couple tactics sessions using a magnetic board brought up the need to identify one's own and one's

for a mentored matches weekend. The IPDS is a splendid enterprise.

Chris Roberts

opponents strengths and weaknesses.

Visits to the now splendid Wrest Park courts saw the squad share ideas and learn new practice routines and a classroom rules section delivered by GC Rules Committee Chairman Martin French was particularly well received.

Rowe will be bringing the GC IDP Squad together again in August

A busy year for Ludlow Castle

Looking back at 2016, reveals that so much has happened at Ludlow Castle CC

Our new lawn was levelled and seeded by Dave Davies in the late autumn of 2015 and as a result of an exceptionally mild period, the grass developed well.

A number of sessions took place to pick stones and other debris from this new surface and the resulting pile was testament to the work done! The grass responded well and was playable in a short time, with the mower settings gradually being reduced to give a closer and closer cut.

A heavy roller was hired to even out some of the bumps and by the end of the season the lawn was playing very well.

2016 saw a significant increase in the amount of equipment available. This was as a result of successful grant awards, in particular from the Mid Counties Co-op, which funded additional sets of good quality balls.

The Croquet Association provided a start-up set of equipment, including four mallets, hoops, and balls.

Grass cutting was becoming ever more difficult with the ancient mower scavenged from the Bowls Club scrap heap, and it was decided to buy a good quality second hand mower which we hoped would be more reliable.

This was purchased using the balance of the grant monies from the Mid - Counties Co-op.

Later in the year a large rotary mower was donated by Dave Davies, and is helpful in dealing with the perimeter of the playing area, which needs regular cutting.

We soon found difficulty in fitting our ever growing number of mowers into the equipment shed, and decided to apply for a further grant from the Croquet Association towards a larger, more easily accessed shed, to be used just for mowing equipment.

Members of our committee and others provided matched funding and in December the Club was notified of the award of a CA grant of £625 representing 50% of the cost of the new shed and associated works.

We are most grateful to Brian Christmas, the West Midlands and Wales Federation representative to the CA, who supported us in this application, and who has provided coaching and general support during the year.

The new shed was erected after the preparatory work on its base standing took four weeks owing to bad weather.

We had a setback in September when, during a Bowls competition, a visitor deliberately drove his car across lawns two of

Bude CC Croquet's newest club

Croquet's newest club Bude CC was officially opened on 2 April by the Lady Mayor of Bude and Stratton Council, Mrs Lea Deely, who cut a ribbon at the Bude Haven Recreation Ground.

The Club Chairman, Brian Donahue welcomed the Lady Mayor and all others attending and explained that Mrs Deely would play a few hoops with the Club's founder and joint secretary Tony Trump, South-West Croquet Federation Development Officer Adam Wimshurst and Michael Solomons, a supporting visitor from Sussex.

The new club was favoured by sunny weather and after that short game, all withdrew to The Barge, on the canal for celebratory light refreshments.

The occasion was also attended by representatives of the bowls, tennis and squash clubs, who will be the croquet players' neighbours at 'The Rec', and from the closest by croquet clubs: Barnstaple, Exeter, Plymouth, Cornwall/St Austell and St Agnes, as well as from Sussex County and Worthing CCs.

Bude Croquet Club will be pleased to hear from existing croquet players or others interested in the game, who are invited to contact Tony Trump on 01840 230 091 (below right) or Brian Donahue (below left) on 01566 774 892.

Tony Trump, Bude CC



our lawns and caused deep ruts. Urgent remedial action was taken and grass maintenance company 'Greensleeves' were employed to repair the remaining damage. We welcome new members and hope to swell our current membership of 30.

David Jones, Chairman, Ludlow Castle CC



Guildford & Godalming Croquet Club was founded 30 years ago and since its inception members have longed for a clubhouse and facilities.

Unfortunately a restrictive clause in our lease prevented any structure being built and in spite of approaches to the landlord it remained in force.

In late 2013 the club was given one month's notice to quit by the multi-sports club of which we were part.

This was a tremendous blow, but once we had got over the initial shock we were able to use this to our advantage.

The local council landlord was re-negotiating a new lease with the multi-sports club, knew nothing of our proposed eviction and did not like the way we were being treated, especially as it had a duty to promote provision for sport. Some tricky three-way negotiations ensued and finally in 2014 our tenure was secured, albeit we had to re-create some lawns, and the restrictive clause was removed.

For the first time we were able to fence off our lawns and most importantly we had agreement that, subject to planning consent, we could build a modest clubhouse on the footprint of a rickety old bowls shelter and derelict portalo.

Much needed to be done and funds secured. The lawns were laid in 2014, then brought into use and fenced off in 2015.

We set about finding a suitable and affordable clubhouse that would fit the allowed footprint and after months of research, and a few false starts, we chose a customised Norfolk Cabin.

How we funded the project

Our aim was to raise the money through grants and donations and to be debt-free on project completion.

We had £4K set aside for development in the kitty and needed to raise another £20K. This would provide us with a wooden clubhouse of 32m², incorporating a small kitchen area and a fully equipped disabled toilet with external access.

It also included bringing in mains water and a septic tank or connection to a mains sewer, but mains electricity was beyond our means at this stage.

We applied for grants and appealed

A new clubhouse for Guildford and Godalming



to our members for donations.

Our Federation Development Officer supported our application to the CA for a grant and we were extremely grateful to receive £5k from the CA and £500 from SECF.

Surrey County Playing Fields awarded us £800, advised on providing disabled access and also wrote to the planning authority in support of our planning submission.

An application to Godalming Town Council resulted in a further £1K.

We had raised a total of £7.3K grant aid and by some happy chance in June, Waitrose selected us as one of the community groups for their monthly 'green token' scheme which raised a further £340.

Members responded most generously to our appeal for donations and it was decided to make a one-off offer of four life memberships to close the funding gap. These were all taken up and so, finally, we had the funds.

Our clubhouse took shape

We had done much of the work on the lawns and all the work on the fencing ourselves, but had had to recognise that we had insufficient members with the fitness and skills capable of erecting a clubhouse of this size, so we made a contract for supply and erection. The cabin was delivered on time, the erection crew put down a base and the cabin took shape over a five day period, which provided an interesting diversion for members and visiting teams.

A remarkable achievement

This has been a major project for the club. It is a remarkable achievement for a club of our size, whose members are primarily well over retirement age and exclusively amateurs when it comes to construction. With the exception of painting which involved a large number of members, the work has been carried out by a very small team who have willingly foregone croquet to work on the clubhouse.

We look forward to welcoming visiting teams and players to our new facilities - your membership of the CA has made our grant possible.

Secretary.

Guildford & Godalming CC

Avery is the class act in South Africa

Another very successful Western Cape Croquet Association (WCCA) AC Tournament was held at the Somerset West Croquet Club, 40km from Cape Town in February.

There has been a cohort of UK players attending this tournament for about twenty years and the 2017 edition saw a record entry of 33 players, including five from South Africa and two from Dublin.

Mark Avery (-2) won all three major events, the Open Singles, the Handicap Singles and the Handicap Doubles (with Geraldine O'Rourke from Carrickmines).

He won all his games except for a 19 index points 'ground-breaking' loss to Chris Roberts (0.5) in the Open.

It was literally 'ground-breaking' in that Avery, having gone to 4b on a super-shot opening and Roberts having missed into corner 2, had a certain TP available (having won his previous games +26tp), but blobbed hoop 1.

To stay in the game, Roberts needed to hit a ball at hoop 2 from corner 2 and after careful aim, proceeded to bury his mallet into the ground with severe lawn damage and only just contacted with his striker's ball, which rolled gently to



only just make the roquet.

Roberts failed to see this because his head was buried in his hands!

But he went on to record a most unlikely win, although it must be said that Avery was suffering from a severe cold on that day, and later went on to win the Open Final.

The full list of winners is:

Open Singles – Mark Avery (Ipswich);
B Class - Barry Huxley (Woking); C
Class - Chris Osmond (Surbiton);
Handicap Singles X – Mark Avery
(Ipswich); Handicap Singes Y - Peter
Dreyer (S.Africa); Restricted Handicap –
Jonathan Edwards (Surbiton); Veterans
Handicap – George Noble (Surbiton);
Open Handicap Doubles – Mark Avery
(Ipswich) and Geraldine O'Rourke
(Carrickmines); Most game victories
without winning an event – Chris
Evans (Bowdon).

~

The WCCA Golf Croquet Tournament was held later in February at the Kelvingrove Club in Cape Town, and Lionel Tibble won the Open Singles.

~

Tony Whateley, Edgbaston CC



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ABTA
Travel with confidence

National Croquet Day - Sunday 4 June

There's so much to report about National Croquet Day.

First of all, thank you to all those clubs that took part in 2016; the vast majority found it to be a success and asked for another one in 2017.

I appreciate that whilst the CA puts a lot of work and effort into NCD, it is you, the club memberships, that make it a success - so many thanks to everyone.

Help from the CA

The CA has produced posters and leaflets support your club.

All the A4 posters and A5 leaflets are designed to attract the general public into your club.

There is an A4 poster that extols the virtues of competitive play:

'Think Sport - Think Tactics - Think Team'

Another A4 poster highlights the social aspects of croquet:

'Think Friends - Think Fun - Think Sport'

The A5 leaflet is printed in landscape, uses the same tag lines and includes a few introductory words about croquet on the reverse.

All posters and leaflets have a space for clubs to enter in their own contact details.

If you have not yet sent in your order, don't worry, we'll be sending out a NCD poster package to all clubs, very soon.

And you can get more posters from



the CA office or download them from the website at www.croquet.org.uk/ncd.

Learnig from last year

Last year many clubs told us of their experience - here are some of their ideas:

An open day including a fun day: Encourage the public to test their skills by hitting a ball at a target (e.g. the peg).

AC players commented that they will use versions of the short game.

A competition day - invite other sports clubs and organisations to a challenge day.

After a brief coaching session, matches between these clubs will be organised (with one or more of the host club's croquet players on each team to guide play and even up the odds).

Invite local organisations e.g. local council, University of the Third Age, to try croquet for themselves - they invariably bring in their families and friends.

Involve your local press - why not invite them to come and try croquet? But have a good story for them: maybe you have been at the same site for 25 or 50 years, or your

club supports and provides for Help for Heroes.

Local and national charities - why not hold a raffle, or make a collection in aid of a charity, especially one with a good press interest or one that could involve

a celebrity? This all makes good press and media copy. Don't forget to offer refreshments - not only does it bring in money, it will show that croquet clubs are welcoming places.

More help from the CA and the Marketing Team

Whatever you have in mind, the CA's marketing team is here to support you by talking over your ideas, writing copy for your local press, and supplying your posters and leaflets.

Please keep us up to date with your NCD plans. Contact Brian Wilson on 07970 922867, 01225 708540 or brian@europaassociates.co.uk.

You can keep up to date with NCD at www.croquet.org.uk/ncd or email us at ncd@croquet.org.uk.

You can also contact the CA office at caoffice@croquet.org.uk or 01242 242318.

Here's to another successful National Croquet Day!

Brian Wilson, Chairman, Marketing Cttee.

Whetting our appetites for National Croquet Day on 4 June, it was timely to receive Martin French's remembrance of last year's activity at Ipswich Croquet Club.

The 2016 National Croquet Day was a very successful recruiting device for Ipswich CC, when we decided to move our regular club Open Day to combine with the NCD.

Among the people who responded to our local publicity, which was mainly in free magazines, were some members of a local Women's Institute group, from three local villages. In August they came along again as a group of more than a dozen players for an afternoon session, and enjoyed it so much that 13 then joined us in October as Winter

2016 NCD Case Study ~ Ipswich CC



Members - a category we created to help players from nearby clubs play in our winter programme of club tournaments, which have proved very popular.

These WI members played bowls every Monday afternoon, and this ceased for the winter, so instead they have been coming along to croquet almost every Monday since October, right through the winter.

With a few other club members bolstering

their number, we have often had 16 to 20 playing on a winter's afternoon.

Never before have we had to run coaching sessions in December!

Several have 'got the bug', so we have arranged for Mike Percival (MCP Mallets) to come along in early April so they can try and buy their own mallets, and we hope a

good number of them will then join us as year-round full members.

We're already planning our Open Day to be on National Croquet Day this year, and intend to contact more local WI groups.

The photo of our WI group was taken on a lovely March spring day.

Martin French, Ipswich CC

NCD at (top) Roehampton CC and (above) Ipswich CC by Elaine Philimore and Martin French.

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Lawn Care ~ by Duncan Hector

Turf Care April and May

Nutrition programmes differ widely depending on soil analysis, grass type, playing requirements, maintenance equipment and budget. There are plenty of balls to juggle and each club is different. Most want good quality, fast lawns. This is possible by getting nature on your side.

That is the basis of good nutrition programmes and results show that lawn speed can be improved without aggressive mechanical work and at no greater cost than doing it the wrong way. Nature costs nothing but you do have to help it along by using fertilisers that encourage bacterial activity.

Croquet lawns get compacted so it is important to aerate to allow oxygen and moisture reach the micro-organisms in the rootzone. Having done all that, a good quality mower with a groomer will add the final touch.

Creating a croquet lawn in a paddock

I have just moved to Great Dunham in Norfolk and am creating a croquet lawn in an old paddock.

I will do most of the work myself, but for £40 a local JCB owner took out a hedge and some trees to make way for the lawn.

He also made a concrete slab for a club house, but that cost more. I bought a Tuin log cabin online and three of us 60 and 70 year olds built it in a few days. However, there was a lot of damage done by the JCB and a dump truck. I hired a vibrating road roller and managed to iron out most of the ruts. There are still lots of bumps and undulations so I have locally sourced graded top soil at £18.50 a tonne.

I am looking at it next week to see whether it is suitable for luting in using my lawn tractor and ladder method.

More next time.....

Duncan Hector www.duncanhectorturfcare.co.uk

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National Croquet Day 4 June

**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

Last four courts at Southwick have been renovated

The remaining lawns at Sussex County CC, Southwick, numbers 7, 8, 10 and 11 (the latter two beside the car park and tennis courts) were renovated in the autumn and again we were lucky with the weather, **reports Clive Hayton.**

The wet and warm conditions allowed the seed to get a good start and mowing was required before three weeks were up.

Good growth is now established and we look forward to bringing the lawns into use in the spring in good time for the Inter-Counties at the end of May.

The lawn renovation project was initiated by Jonathan Isaacs in 2013 and the work has been done in three phases, the final phase being completed in August 2016.

The lawns completed in phase 1 are playing very well and we expect them to be even faster this coming year.

The lawns completed in phase 2 are coming along well and we expect the most recently renovated lawns to play well this year.

The total cost of the project has been about £37,000. External funding has come from a **CA grant of £10,000** and a **SECF grant of £1,000**, for which we are most grateful, with the remainder raised and provided by the club.



Stop Press

Paper tournament entry form

Please note the tickbox to register any Colour Vision Deficiency was accidentally omitted from the forms in the back of this year's Fixtures Book.

Please annotate your entry forms accordingly if you wish to record a CVD problem.

On-line entries will automatically pick up if you have registered as having CVD.

Martin French

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

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

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