

The

Issue 372 January 2018

CROQUET

Gazette



**AC World
Championship**
preview by
Rob Fulford



From our files researched by Frances Colman

10 years ago - 2008



2008 WCF World Championship –

... The Final: Chris Clarke beat Stephen Mulliner 3-1 at United Croquet club, Christchurch, New Zealand. The opening exchanges, in front of a crowd that eventually numbered over 250, were well-balanced and the first two games were deservedly shared. However Chris looked the more confident in break play, particularly around hoops as the pace quickened, and hoops 5 and 6 (and penult) eventually proved to be Stephen's downfall in games 3 and 4, with Chris overcoming his own problems with 3-back to win the title for the second time. James Death won the plate beating Chris Patmore in the final. *(from a report by Samir Patel)*

~

Congratulations to Mr & Mrs Clarke –

January 30 saw the outdoor wedding of Jenny Williams and Chris Clarke on the banks of the river Avon, Mona Vale, Christchurch, which not only was it a beautiful occasion, but also now holds the record for the highest ranked wedding (grade 2597) ... Chris and Jenny took advantage of the World Championship being in New Zealand so that many of their croquet friends would find it easier to attend their wedding.

~

Whites – *(the end of a quite long letter)*

... I nevertheless find it impossible to think of any logical reason why croquet players should be required to wear white. The only possible reason might be that croquet is meant to be played in warm sunshine and white is a cooler form of dress – last June made a mockery of that idea.

The real reason I suspect is sheer snobbery to deter the hoi polloi from joining croquet clubs and to instil a financial barrier to them doing so. Even if that were not the reason, such a rule makes potential croquet players see the game as one for the well heeled, expensive to play and subject to social prejudice.

This is a rule we could easily scrap ... in team matches it makes much better sense for teams to wear distinctive coloured clothing so that spectators can distinguish who is playing whom. - *David Turner*

50 years ago - 1968



About 'Croquet' *(as was the title of the Croquet Gazette at the time)* –

Chairman's report (W.R.D. Wiggins) - ... Rising costs are a great problem and cause concern to us sitting on the Council. In particular the rising cost of the magazine and the difficulties which have been experienced in producing it...

Editorial Panel report – Mr. Rivington, the Chairman, in presenting this stressed the need for economy over the magazine and continued to deal with the committee's recommendations: (1) That results should begin with semi-finals except for the Caskets and the Open Championships. This was not approved by Council who said that results should be published in full but reports curtailed where possible.

The Editor - ... The Council has now engaged new printers to produce the further issues of 'Croquet' and associates may well wonder what the future has in store for them. In the first place it will not solve the economic problem of keeping with budget and at the same time publishing full results, reports on results and sufficient other material to make some interesting reading... the proposal rejected by Council *(see above)*, means that to make it practicable, the results must be compressed into smaller space.

~

Ryde – The tournament on June 3rd-8th is a very special one for the Ryde club as it is their golden jubilee. This once flourishing club has fallen upon hard times, and I would urge all associates who possibly can to try to support this tournament which is always a most enjoyable one. *(C.A. Notice)*.

~

Roehampton - *Extracts from Council meeting, February 3rd -*

(CA Secretary) Mrs. Gasson read a letter from the Roehampton club saying that after 1968 there would be no more London tournaments held at Roehampton as the croquet lawns were to be cut to four.

Prof. Neal was asked to draft a letter to be sent to Roehampton from the Council, expressing the greatest consternation they felt at the news. Miss Lintern explained the situation in detail.

100 years ago - 1918



Capt. C. Cundall, M.C., Killed in Action –

We much regret to announce that Captain C. Cundall, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, was killed in action on November 30th, 1917.

Captain Cecil Cundall, aged 21, received his commission in May, 1915, and had been in France two years. At the beginning of the present year he received the **Military Cross** for conspicuous gallantry.

He was a most efficient officer, and had taken command of his battalion during the leave of his Lieut.-Colonel, the Second in Command being in hospital.

~

Chairman's review of the year *(1917)* –

During the War over 350 associates and other croquet players have been serving in His Majesty's forces, in the Special Police, or National Reserve and various capacities.

Sixteen have lost their lives on service, six have been awarded the Military Cross, seven have had the Distinguished Service Order conferred on them, twenty have been mentioned in dispatches for gallant conduct and distinguished War service, and the names of others have appeared in the lists of wounded.

~

C.A. Fixtures – The Council have decided to make no preparations for carrying out the usual Association Meetings as long as war conditions prevail.

~

Rapid Croquet – Dear Sir, I shall be pleased if your readers know whether this is a record or not.

I played a game on the Park Lawn at Uitenhage, Cape Colony, on November 20th. Red won the toss and played to the boundary. I played Black to the other boundary, Yellow played to Red a long shot and missed; I played blue, hit Red and went round to the last hoop.

Red played to his partner, a long shot and missed. I played Black, hit, went right up to the last hoop, peeled my partner through, and pegged out, winning in fifteen minutes.

The same parties played three games in one and three-quarter hours.

Yours faithfully,
M.M.Steytler,
Port Elizabeth, South Africa.

Editorial

Happy New Year everyone, and what a way to start our croquet year, with the AC World Championship about to start (on 3 February) in New Zealand.

I am delighted that agreeing to write a preview for this Gazette is five-times AC World Champion Rob Fulford, no less.

He runs his eye over the foremost competitors for our lead article on the centre pages. Jolly good luck to all taking part, and especially to the nearly half of the field who are members of the CA.

You can follow every result in real time, and there will be some commentary and video too. There is a panel with the preview that explains how you can follow the action.

Elsewhere in this issue, there are updates on the progress being made with the membership database, the work of our National Development Officer, National Croquet Day, and committee news aplenty. A particularly important news item is

about the changes that have been made to handicaps for One Ball (see page 11).

Sarah Hayes offers coaching advice, Tim King analyses his return to form and David Openshaw looks in his old shirt drawer again.

Our cover image this time is a soon to be lost scene; such is the sad tale at Dyffryn CC

On a happier note, I've been keeping my (cold) playing hands in at Roehampton and Phyllis Court. I'm now really looking forward to February sunshine and my annual thrashing at the Western Cape AC Championship in South Africa. I will keep a closer eye on my passport this time!



Chris Roberts

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Chairman's Column

Because Cheltenham's one-ball has been called off, I am writing this on New Year's Day. So my thoughts are on the coming croquet year and I now share some of my musings with you.

The following hopes and aspirations are personal, not those of Council, although, needless to say, I trust they are in harmony.

Starting with organisational and administrative prospects, I hope that:

- the procedures for our much-anticipated expansion of membership will be accomplished during the year and that club members will grasp this opportunity to become CA members;

- the Governance Working Party (GWP) produces recommendations for fundamental, beneficial change to our governance structures and strategies, which can be agreed by Council and the membership, in order to enable implementation later this year;

- as increased democracy will be a principle underlying the GWP proposals, that senior positions within the Association will be elected by the membership and that newly enfranchised club members exercise their rights: our elections need a good turnout;

- whatever the new structure, the CA will continue to function through volunteer effort. There is a wealth of talent within our membership and I hope that more people will be encouraged by the new arrangements to play their part in the running of the sport;

- Council agrees an equalities policy to be sent to clubs and federations, which commits us to maintaining the high standards that croquet has always enjoyed.

Turning to playing matters, I hope that:

- we will succeed in establishing more clubs and increasing player numbers;

- we will learn from the evidence which will emerge from the quinquennial survey (details in the next Gazette), particularly with regards to our recruitment policy and strategies for nurturing competitive croquet;

- that all clubs will make a much bigger effort to encourage their members to play all forms of the game. This could start with new members: all too often they are introduced to one particular code, whereas by the end of their beginners' sessions I would like to believe that they are given a better appreciation of the fun that can be gained from both codes, as well as one-ball and short croquet (SC);

- regarding SC, two national SC events lapsed in 2000 due to lack of support.

This year we will re-introduce a national

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Front cover: Sarah Melvin playing at Dyffryn House, Cardiff. This lovely scene will sadly soon be a thing of the past. (photograph by Tudor Jenkins).

This page: The Editor at High Wycombe with his choice 'nuts and berries' tournament lunch. It's the 'diet of proper athletes' (apparently).

The Chairman has been enjoying his winter croquet and is dressed for it here at Budleigh. (photos by Richard Peperell and Chris Roberts)

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team competition along the lines of the All-England event which will be aimed at providing high-bisquers from both AC and GC with an introduction to competition outside their club and I hope that clubs will support this initiative;

- this year more juniors will come forward from clubs and take part in the Youth Summer School which was launched last year. To this end, please let Lionel Tibble know of any juniors from your club who might be interested.

Finally, I wish you all a successful season, particularly those teams and individuals who represent the CA or the country during the year. But for the Home Internationals, I declare my allegiance to Wales (ever an optimist, as can be noted from the above jottings!).



Brian Shorney



Membership database - Latest news - by Ian Vincent

The title above is deliberately ambiguous, as it enables me to cover both senses of it in a single article.

The Croquet Association is both about to welcome a large number of new members, but is also developing a new database to enable it to do so. This is an update to the piece that Jeff Dawson wrote on page 6 of the October 2017 issue (*Gazette* 370).

The new Standard membership of the CA formally became available from 1st January, 2018, following the decision of Council to introduce the amendments agreed at the March, 2015 Special General Meeting from that date.

Standard membership rights

Standard membership gives the right to play in calendar tournaments, hold coaching and refereeing qualifications, access the members' area of the website and participate in the governance of the CA.

For a year from the next, April, issue, Standard members will receive a paper copy of the *Gazette*.

Standard membership is open to playing members of Full member clubs (both large and small), but they cannot apply for it themselves: instead, their club has to apply on their behalf, having obtained their consent to do so.

That consent is important, not just for data protection reasons, but because it enables the CA to claim the support of a much larger number of players when seeking advertising, grants or sponsorship, and when talking to other organisations.

The new database ~ clubs begin secure uploads ~

This is where the new database comes in. Clubs have been asked to upload, securely via the CA website, details of those of their members who wish to become Standard members of the CA, or who are already individually subscribed Premium, etc., CA members. Software has been developed to match the information from clubs against that which the CA has about its existing members and then to import details of new members or update those of existing ones.

At the time of writing, some 40 clubs have already uploaded their data and, by the time you read this, most of it should have been imported.

Mid-March up-loading deadline to get an April Gazette

Clubs will also have been reminded that they need to upload their data no later than mid-March if their new Standard members are to receive the April *Gazette* and enter calendar tournaments: note also that the temporary concession that any club

member could do so, which operated last year, will be withdrawn.

Your members data protection worries answered

With data protection an active issue this year, I have been asked whether Standard members will appear in and be able to access the online directory on the website.

Once they have logged into the website, they will have the same access to it that Premium members already do.

Clubs have been asked to contact their members, both those that wish to become Standard members and existing Premium, etc., members, to find out whether or not they wish to give their consent to be visible in the online directory, either to all CA members, or just to members of clubs to which they belong.

Ex-directory option will be the default

However, for simplicity in the initial implementation, members will be ex-directory unless they consent to both.

Irrespective of consent, details of ex-directory members will be visible to CA administrative staff and officials of any tournaments they enter.

Existing CA members who have not given explicit consent will become ex-directory when GDPR comes into force in May.

The start of the 2018 season is not too far away now! **Five working parties are already up and running**, each with representatives from several different Federations joining me in focusing on topics that they believe are crucial to helping our clubs and their players achieve whatever their ambitions are. These working parties are listed below, along with brief descriptions of the key initiatives they hope to be able to deliver for the start of (or at least during) the coming season:

Direct Support to Clubs

This group's aim is to define a 'Standard Framework' through which the Federations might offer direct and proactive support to the clubs in their region...and to then put together a programme of support that could help Federations implement it locally.

The prime candidate for the framework is Club Matters, a Sport England sponsored "one stop shop" for sports clubs that provides support, learning and guidance on all aspects of running a club whether it be large or small, formal or informal.

Club Matters offers 'free, simple and bitesize support to all clubs', is already used by a few of our clubs and can be found at <http://www.sportenglandclubmatters.com>

Marketing

Two key initiatives are underway: One sub-group will use

Going for Growth - National

an understanding of what our clubs offer to run through a Marketing Planning exercise including strategy, research and options.

It will then produce a guide that Federations could use to help their clubs follow a similar process for their own circumstances as well as signposting useful external sources of information or solutions (the CA, BBC Get Inspired, County Sports Partnerships, etc.) for the sorts of marketing options that clubs may then want to take up.

Another sub-group will address the fact that around half of our clubs currently have NO website and/or social media presence...and many that do have a presence are not seeing the full marketing benefit of it.

The group will therefore look to provide a cost effective and simple to run web template including some generic content to complement local items that clubs would produce themselves.

Player Retention and Development

Tasked with helping Federations improve their offerings to clubs in these crucial areas, this working party will aim to complement the existing efforts of the CA's Coaching

Eileen Magee BEM - awarded for services to croquet and

Many congratulations to Eileen Magee on the award of the British Empire Medal for 'services to croquet and her local community'.

I am sure that Eileen will be sat at home looking in amazement at the many congratulatory letters, email and telegrams (can you still send a telegram?)... except that... those who know her will know that she will be doing no such thing!

More likely she will be out there in the local community doing something for the greater good.

Eileen was awarded a CA Diploma by the Council of the Croquet Association in 2002.

She moved to Cheltenham in the early 1990s with a reputation as an efficient organiser at the CA Office and Cheltenham CC soon benefitted from her boundless energy, volunteering to take on the onerous post of Secretary (and later she was elected Vice-Chairman).

Now has come the much higher and deserved honour of a British Empire Medal.

Eileen's gardening skills soon became apparent and the club grounds and the CA Office were enhanced by her creation of several flower borders.



She is a very knowledgeable plants person and she is very good at suggesting exactly the correct plant for a particular space in one's garden, as I can personally attest.

And she has turned this talent into a significant fund raiser at Cheltenham; for I estimate that her effort has resulted in the equivalent of over 60 full subscriptions.

There are many other skills with which Eileen has contributed to her club, including the organisation of tournament catering, and each year some 80 members of the Women's Institute enjoy croquet at the club followed by a splendid tea provided by

Eileen.

Eileen played a significant part in attracting the MacRobertson Shield (for a return visit) and World Championships to the club, and at the other end of the skills range, she also coaches and mentors many of the new club members.

Eileen has made equally substantial contributions to the village of Hartpury, where she has served on the Village Hall committee for many years, contributing to securing funds for a new hall in 2013.

She has also been an active member of her church for around 20 years and is a churchwarden.

Eileen has managed to combine all her interests which has resulted in the annual staging of the Hartpury Village Croquet Tournament.

I am sure that we are all delighted that Eileen's abilities, talents and effort have received such high personal reward.

The Croquet Association also pass on their congratulations, particularly because it has long been their wish that our sport should receive such recognition.

Enjoy your day out at the Palace/Windsor Castle, Eileen and get David to buy you a very expensive hat!

Klim Seabright, Cheltenham CC

National Development Officer Dave Gunn has set up five working parties with representatives of all the Federation. **Pictured below:** hard at work on Communication initiatives are Tony Thomas (North-West), Simon Hathrell (East Anglia) and Jon Diamond (South-East).

Development Officer, Dave Gunn

Committee, which is already planning to extend the range of coach training courses (both for new and existing coaches) with a view to generating a wider pool of high quality and well-motivated coaches.

The group will gather, distil and distribute examples of success in areas like Open Days, Learn to Play courses, mentoring, competitive game/tournament formats, social aspects, etc.

Club secretaries may well have already received a questionnaire asking for input on this. - Please respond if you can.

Communication

Having looked at the current levels and effectiveness of communications between players, clubs, Federations and the CA itself, this group will focus initially on communications between Federations themselves.

There is limited regular and formal sharing of success stories, problems, requests for help, work, facilities, expertise, etc., so the group will source an online



'forum' for the Federations to use as a catalyst and vehicle for much more (and better quality) communication between them.

Resources

Focusing on the volunteers who are crucial to our sport at all levels, this group will look at ways to:

- Find volunteers from within club memberships and from the wider community.
- Keep volunteers by making sure they feel valued and recognised and also to develop them, which will keep them motivated and committed.

The results will be used to produce a guide to assist Federations with their own recruitment and also help them make a real difference with the clubs they support.

It will look to include recruitment success stories and case studies, from croquet and from other similarly sized sports.

You don't need, of course, to wait to be approached by your club, or your Federation; make the first move and see where your skills and enthusiasm might be of use.

Volunteering can be very rewarding....so don't hold back! Roll on spring!

Dave Gunn, National Development Officer
davegunn59@gmail.com 07710 981561



News from the CA's Committees - by Ian Vincent

The CA's committees report to its Management Committee, which last met on 6 January. Its minutes, and a collation of the committees' reports, are available in the documents area of the members' section of the website.

A lot of their work is routine, though none the less essential, such as organising tournaments and courses and making grants, but the following items from their reports were identified as being of particular interest.

Please contact the relevant committee chairman for more information about these.

Coaching

Sarah Hayes has taken over as Chairman. The subsidy of up to £25 off the fees changed for coach training and refereeing courses, that was introduced last year, has been made permanent, but only for those examined for the qualification, not those only attending out of interest.

The playing standard required for qualification as a Grade 2 GC coach has been reduced, to bring it into line with that for the equivalent AC qualification.

Development

Grants in the region of £4,000 were awarded to Cornwall CC and High Wycombe CC, but an application by Newport CC to fund its support of students was rejected as being outside the current guidelines.

Roger Staples, the chairman of the committee, is setting up a working group to

look at the issue of student support.

Executive

The committee was very sorry that the CA Manager, Liz Larsson, has resigned and is taking steps to recruit her successor.

Handicap

The system for handicapping One Ball croquet, which has been used for the Charity One Ball competition organised by Kevin Carter, is to be adopted for general use (*see the separate news item on page 11*).

The committee is minded to introduce handicap index points for handicap doubles games at +/- 5 points per player, and would welcome views from CA members.

It is also considering adopting the WCF system for handicapping players in GC doubles and introducing guidelines for handicapping new and high handicap AC players, and again would like feedback on these proposals.

Information and Communications Technology

A discussion paper has been written about the implications of the General Data Protection Regulations for the CA.

International

Arrangements for hosting the 2019 GC World Championship were discussed. Sussex County CC (at Southwick), Compton CC, Tunbridge Wells CC and West Worthing CC will be hosting the main event, and Nottingham the under-21s.

Bidding guidelines for future events are to be revised.

No-one applied to replace Ian Burrige

as AC International Performance Director, so it is proposed to split the role into more management chunks.

GC Rules

It is hoped that the WCF GC Rules Committee will publish a draft 5th edition for consultation later this year, with a view to it being adopted for the 2019 season.

Marketing

National Croquet Day will be earlier this year, on Sunday 13 May.

News hot off the press is that croquet will appear at the Countryfile Live event again this year.

A possible joint venture with a group of active retirement villages is being explored.

Publishing

Tackling the increased circulation of the Gazette is the most important priority for 2018. An enlarged Gazette is planned for the first edition in April.

The active management of a Facebook page is proposed; it is hoped that this will produce a new means of communication both within and outside the audience of existing CA members.

The new Advanced Croquet Handbook is currently being assembled for publication during 2018.



Photo: Tom Wills-Sandford

When talking to league match organisers from other clubs and federations, they often have the same difficulties and frustrations.

Dates change, sometimes at short notice; key players might not be available on particular dates; or too few people are available to make up a team at all on the chosen date.

One of our members who also plays in a bowls league told me that they have a completely different approach, so I looked into what our local bowls league does and put together 'The Very Local League' for golf croquet last season.

It proved to be a big success.

What's different?

There is a fixture every fortnight for a

The Very Local League - A different approach

three month period - always on a fixed afternoon. We found four clubs all within about 45 minutes of each other, and we each have a home and away fixture against the other three teams - so six each fixtures in all. We play just three rounds (two in our trial year) in each fixture, so it takes an afternoon rather than all day.

Benefits

Squad members can give their availability for all the fixtures in one go and captains can make up their teams well in advance. They also know who is available if a last-minute substitute is required.

The club calendar can be built around the

regular, known schedule and no last minute clashes emerge.

Travelling times are much shorter than within our Federation leagues, which can be up to two hours each way.

The half-day format seems to attract many club players who wouldn't normally put their names down for a full-day event, especially with four hours travelling on top!

Regular team members know there will be a fixture every fortnight, so can keep their diaries clear.

How does it work?

The four clubs (Ipswich, Colchester, Unity of Sudbury, and midSuffolk) agreed a

National Croquet Day 2018 - Sunday 13 May

Last year saw another highly successful National Croquet Day, so first of all, many thanks for making it happen. The feedback was so positive that we are bringing the date forward this year.

Posters and Leaflets

There will again be some of excellent A4 posters and A5 leaflets to support your club in the run up to NCD, each with a space to add in your club's contact details.

One A4 poster will highlight the 'Competitive' element of croquet, whilst the other will celebrate the 'Social' aspect of our sport. The A5 leaflet will highlight all aspects of croquet, so that it can be used as a handout to attract more people to your club.

As last year, you will be able to order your posters and leaflets from the CA Office or download them – we will contact clubs when everything is available.

The main theme for 2018 is 'Try Croquet'

We know that many clubs will be looking to attract more 'younger' players, so we will be including pictures of 'future champions'. Other pictures will show croquet as a Competitive Sport and others that it is game everyone can play. So we will be showing images of players in whites and non-whites.

Some clubs have found that previous NCD's have been an excellent opportunity to encourage more of their members to take part in club activities, evidenced by an increase in competitive play.



All smiles - these five were among no fewer than 160 people who played a simple game of croquet when York CC hosted a free drop-in 'Try Croquet' afternoon at the City's Rowntree Park. *Photograph by John Harris.*

The CA Marketing Team can advise on, and will provide, press releases to support your activities –

Some ideas to get you started

- Open Days might include a 'Fun Day' to encourage the public to test their skills - hitting a ball at a target perhaps. . .
- AC players have commented that they intend to use versions of the Short Croquet game.
- A Competition Day, to which other sports clubs and organisations can be invited. After a brief coaching session, matches between these clubs and groups can be organised, with one or more of your own club players on each team to guide on play.
- Invite local organisations like the local council or U3A groups to try Croquet for themselves - they will invariably bring in

their families and friends (and involving your local council could reap benefits for your club in the future).

- Involve your local press by inviting them to come and try croquet. Do try to have a good story to tell about your club; perhaps croquet has been played on the same site for 50 years or more?
- Involve local and national charities by holding a raffle or making a collection in aid of a charity – "ABC Croquet Club supports Help the Heroes" has an excellent positive ring to it and this is an excellent way to generate press interest in your club.
- Involve a celebrity visitor if you are lucky enough to have a contact – ditto the press interest.
- Offer refreshments, or even lunches or teas - 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

Keep up to date with NCD activities on the CA web site –

www.croquet.org.uk/ncd

Whatever you have in mind, the CA's Marketing Team is here to support you. We will be delighted to talk over ideas with you, and assist with writing copy for your local press. Please keep us up to date with your NCD plans. Tell all to Brian Wilson on

07970 922867, 01225 708540

ncd@croquet.org.uk

Here's to another successful National Croquet Day!

Brian Wilson,
Chairman, Marketing Committee

to running a croquet League - by Martin French

simple two-page document which covers the regulations, format of each fixture and the fixture schedule and the dates were agreed before club diaries were finalised.

Team captains polled club members for their availability before the season got going and were able to 'book' players for specific dates months in advance.

Captains were allowed to move a fixture date by mutual agreement but just one actually got moved in the trial year, and that was due to a lawn mower breakdown.

All the fixtures were otherwise completed on schedule with no hiccups or last minute rearrangements. A simple results sheet was provided and I acted as League Secretary,

emailing out a leader board to the four captains after each round of fixtures.

All four clubs continue to play in their Federation's handicap GC leagues too, but the Very Local League provides additional playing opportunities for our members, without adding an appreciable extra burden on the same club stalwarts who do the team organising.

Feedback from the first season was uniformly enthusiastic and the only change for next season is to extend each fixture from two to three rounds, which still fits within a half-day.

And who won the inaugural 2017 Very Local League? - The midSuffolk Club and

congratulations to them!

A copy of the Very Local League's regulations, format and score sheet is available on request from:

Martin French, Ipswich CC
martin.french@btinternet.com



Croquet needs planning and preparation. Here is Martin French, hard at work as usual
(photo: Chris Roberts)

Events, Tournaments and Competitions are not the same things

Dear Editor,

While John Harris is undoubtedly correct (*"Who was the first Croquet Champion"*, *Gazette* 371) - as Prichard himself acknowledges - that the 1867 Evesham contest's claims to be the first Open championship are weak, I think we should be more circumspect in dismissing Whitmore's claim to have won the event.

Peel was, after all, writing some thirty years later and probably from memory.

He could easily have confused a tournament in the late 1860s, which Law did indeed win, with the Evesham event (these were more frequent, certainly from about 1865, than is generally recognised).

Croquet historians are regrettably and frustratingly vague about their sources, so it is difficult to judge the truth of Peel's

account.

Prichard undoubtedly made extensive use of Lillie, and maybe did so in this case. Lillie in turn may have been relying on Heath.

But there is a still earlier source for Whitmore's claim: The Standard of 14 August 1869, in its account of the National Croquet Council's recently completed Highgate tournament, also records Whitmore as the victor of the Evesham event. It does not appear to be a partial account.

Perhaps this report is mistaken, and the mistake passed through Heath and Lillie to Prichard (perhaps Heath, indeed, was The Standard's croquet correspondent). But I think we need clear evidence, not supposition, if we are to draw that conclusion.

this usage hadn't shifted between 1869 and 1874, the Standard writer was implying that Evesham wasn't public - which seems a reasonably fair point.

To which **Ian Bond** replied:

... there was certainly a public/private dimension to it. But I suspect that a lot of early

The Standard's report is also valuable because its author makes an interesting and germane distinction between the Evesham and the Moreton in Marsh events: the former it refers to as a match, the latter as a "tournament" (the quotation marks appear in the original).

Matches had already been reported in the press for several years - including an annual Torquay event from as early as 1863 - so the Evesham event of 1867 was no novelty.

The author of the report refers to the 'meeting which was held at Evesham' as 'the first attempt to get up anything like an All England Croquet match'.

We should surely recognise the endeavour, if not the claim for it to have been a true national championship.

Ian Bond, Surbiton CC

croquet events involved groups of players, perhaps in varying combinations, rather than contests between individuals.

And of course matches produce only winners and losers, whereas tournaments - in true mediaeval style - produce champions!

In subsequent correspondence, fellow historian **Roger Bray** commented:

... Re: your interesting distinction between matches and tournaments: Heath's 1874 book (p.92) refers to '... public matches or "tournaments"... That rather begs the question what is meant by 'public', but if

Gazette Editor Chris Roberts writes:

It is interesting that previously used terminology (above) causes such doubt today and I wonder if it caused the same confusion when originally written?

We haven't come very far in the last 150 years though, for today croquet is (still) littered with the cavalier use of the words 'event', 'tournament' and 'competition' and to a lesser extent 'game' and 'match'.

To my mind these are all quite different things but many in croquet, and writers in particular, seem to see these terms as being freely interchangeable.

For the sake of us all now (and historians of the future), your editor wishes one day to feel able to stop going on about this and therefore offers the following:

A game is a term that is surely understood by us all.

A match is a contest which might consist of one or more games ('best of three' for example). 'Match' is also used for the overall contests between teams, where the result may well be determined by a number of single games or 'best of three' matches.

An event is an activity that is self-contained.

A tournament is an activity of uninterrupted duration - be that a day, a weekend, a week or perhaps a little longer - and there can be one or a number of events within a tournament.

A competition is an activity that is interrupted - spread over the whole season perhaps - and is made up of a number of events or tournaments. A federation league or the CA's inter-club knock-outs are good team examples, and for individuals, a particularly good one is the GC English National Singles Championship (ENSC):

- The Ascot Cup is a trophy which is awarded to the winner of the ENSC competition which culminates in a final tournament. Players qualify for this final by doing well in one or more of eight qualifying tournaments which consist of a number of matches which may well be single or best of three games.

I feel so much better having got that off my chest.

Now, will someone help me down from this awfully high hobby horse please. - **Ed.**

Please help fire ravaged Sheffield CC

Dear Editor,

Sheffield Croquet Club suffered an arson attack a few months ago, and we lost nearly all of our equipment in the fire.

We are grateful to the Yorkshire Croquet Federation, Sheffield U3A Croquet Club and Nether Edge Bowls Club for loaning us balls, hoops and equipment to tide us (and Sheffield University Croquet Society) through to the end of the year, and are now in a financial position to replace our equipment inventory in preparation for 2018.

In particular, we would like to rebuild our stock of club mallets, and are considering purchasing second-hand mallets.

If there are any UK-based clubs or individuals looking to clear out their old mallets, please put them in touch with me - etychang@gmail.com.

Eugene Chang,
on behalf of the
Sheffield Croquet Club committee

There is a croquet boom in Spain



The following letter was forwarded on to the Gazette by Stephen Mulliner, Secretary General of the European Croquet Federation, for publication:

Dear Stephen,

Croquet in Spain is booming and we would like the world to know about it!

In the first week of January, the Real Club de la Puerta de Hierro opened its new full-size court with a very exciting game between the two current European Champions, the GC Champion Jose Álvarez Sala and the AC Champion Jose Riva.

They played two hard-fought games where Álvarez Sala imposed his game with some incredible hits, winning 7-3, 7-5.

We would like to place Puerta de Hierro on the croquet scene because it is one of the most important clubs in Spain; we have 16,000 members and a magnificent location in the centre of Madrid.

In the last year we have experienced a great growth in number of croquet players in our club: there are 90 new federated (many more play but don't compete), and there is a very big interest in our sport.

This is a general tendency in Spain and we are very lucky to be living at a time of impressive growing interest in croquet, not only in numbers of people playing but also in the quality of our players.

As we currently have the present and previous GC European Champions, we would like to get the most out of them while it lasts!

We also wanted to remind you that you are always invited and more than welcome any time.

Best Regards,

**Real Club de la Puerta de Hierro
Comite; Begoña de Elzaburu,
Carlos Dolz Espejo, Felipe Mestanza**

Shooters target youngsters too

Dear Editor,

Recently our club stalwart, Harry Goldsworthy, died. He was typical of the generally unknown and unsung clubmen/women who form the backbone of most clubs.

There are usually no more than four or five such individuals at a club and most will be in their later years. This raises a concern for the future, both off the court and on it.

My main sport is rifle shooting and we share croquet's problem of how to increase active participation in millennials to give a base from which to find five or six international class performers.

Nearly 70% of our "Class X" (top 100) competitors are over 60, whilst most international shooters are between 20 and 50 years old. Whilst that may be a little younger than croquet's average of 70 or so, our participation levels have also fallen (to around 800-900) in the major national leagues for prone small-bore rifle, which has sadly just lost its Olympic status, and hence access to Sport England funding.

Centrally organised coaching qualifications and set regimes for newcomers to the sport for 30 years appear to have squeezed out, rather than encouraged, individually talented competitors, who respond better to having a personal coach of their choice, even if formally unqualified.

Is croquet the same? Or is there a stream of new Bamfords on the horizon?

I note that the recent UK Junior Championships at AC featured just five individuals, albeit with my home county of Suffolk heavily represented.

Dr. Ron Carter, Ealing CC

"I say there . . ." oh dear, too late!

Dear Editor,

In an effort to redirect the subject for correspondents away from 'age difference records', may I seek your readers' response to a simple problem that is experienced at Colchester CC and other clubs?

The problem is to what to call or shout when a wayward croquet ball hurtles towards other players on the court, particularly those who are involved in a double-banked game and have lost attention to what is going on around them.

Taking the 'Tea Lady' shot



Dear Editor,

In response to Alison Jones needing to have fun in her croquet (*Gazette 371*), I would like to remind her of happier times when she was sitting out whilst her partner, Dave Maugham, takes his Tea Lady shot (aka Sheila Watts) during last year's Tyneside Advanced tournament!

Derek Watts, Tyneside CC

- Derek's 'Tea Lady' reference is to a difficult challenge that is occasionally set for an AC player, where one ball is wired (hidden behind a hoop or peg) and the other two target balls are in a corner in the far distance, where the likelihood of hitting them is slim. The story goes that two ladies that were only present to provide the tournament teas were persuaded to provide the opposition for two top players in an exhibition match during the New Zealand Open Doubles in 1990. One after the other, the ladies surprised and delighted onlookers by successfully hitting their far away targets! Choosing to attempt to replicate this feat has since become known as taking the 'Tea Lady' shot. - **Ed.**

Quite often by the time one has remembered the player's name it is too late.

What is required is a distinctive short clear word(s) to call so that all players are immediately alerted to the danger and can respond quickly.

Golf players have their 'Fore', so should we adopt their warning call or find our own unique word to use?

I will be interested in your readers' suggestions because the matter could come under 'due diligence' for clubs.

Stephen Scrase, Colchester CC

Welsh Club to close - after 30 years at Dyffryn House

For over 30 years, since July 1986, the summers at Dyffryn House, just west of Cardiff, have echoed to the sounds of mallet on ball, as the two croquet lawns drawn into the original plans play host to the Dyffryn Croquet Club.

Now, following a change of policy by The National Trust, who took over the running of the house and gardens in 2013, the club has been told that the 2018 season will be its last.

In a letter to the club's chairman, the General Manger of Dyffryn House and Gardens for the National Trust, Gerry Donovan, said that the Trust was committed to make the lawn available for many different activities – both sporting and non-sporting – and that giving members access to the whole garden was a key part of their plans. As a result they could not “in future offer the exclusivity that a private sports club, like yourselves, requires.”

This came as a shock to all club members, some of whom have been members since its formation, and means that a new home has to be found, somewhere within the



Sarah Melvin at Dyffryn House. This lovely photograph is by Tudor Jenkins

Cardiff/Glamorgan area.

“I believe it is essential that we preserve our club's existence and the presence of croquet in Wales, and I fervently hope that we can find a new location, although this is proving to be difficult,” says club chairman Garry McElwain.

“Our ideal spot would probably be a bowling club with two lawns, that's seen better days.

The lawns would at least be flat, and our presence could bring some life back to a facility that's now underused.”

All is not total doom and gloom however, as two possible sites have been found.

One, on ground belonging to a sports club, is already under negotiation, and there are “positive signs” says McElwain, although he emphasised that it was far too early to get excited.

The other prospect, a waterlogged football pitch belonging to Cardiff City Council, is still awaiting proper inspection, and discussions have not started yet.

“Relocation to a more convenient accessible area could actually be a bonus, for

although we may lose some members in the process, it could mean we can get people interested who have never seen the game, or even realised it exists in such a modern form” said McElwain.

With 18 months to find a new home the Club is cautiously optimistic about the future, but if a new site needs a lot of work to bring the grass up to the required standard, then time is very short.

For further information about Dyffryn Croquet Club or croquet in general please contact the Secretary: Paul Pristavec, 01443 676239, ppriставec@yahoo.co.uk

Jay Dyer, Dyffryn CC

Another letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Vintage Pavilion - going, going, gone!

My interest in the history of Croquet

prompts me to ask, which and where is the oldest croquet (or croquet and tennis) pavilion in the British Isles, or indeed, the

whole world? In the hope that your readers will be inspired to correspond, I will start off the quest with the chronology of the games played at Budleigh and photographs of the club's earliest buildings.

1860s: Archery; 1870s: Croquet and Tennis; 1880s: Bowls; 1920s: private Bridge which became recognised as a Club game in 1930; Present: Croquet and Bridge.

**Rosemary Bradshaw,
Budleigh Salterton CC**

Photographs: top - 1870 Budleigh's first pavilion was a corrugated iron shelter.

Centre left and far left - 1890 A replacement timber pavilion with a tiled roof was larger and more substantial, with facilities for Ladies and Gentlemen at either end. Materials were provided by the Hon Mark Rolle, the landlord at that time. These two images show the building prior to the 20th century additions.

Bottom - 2018 On the left of the image are the 'Dressing Rooms' built in 1906, which were mainly for tennis players, and currently called the Lower Pavilion. The 1890s Pavilion is on the right with 20th century additions. This awaits demolition as proposed by the Club's current directors. As the song goes, 'the times they are a changin'.



New One Ball handicap calculations - by Frances Colman

for the Handicap Committee

There is a new system for One Ball handicap calculations for 2018

The Management Committee of the Croquet Association has approved the formal adoption of the system that has been successfully trialed and used for the Charity One Ball competition for the past three seasons.

The system, which was devised by the organiser of the Charity One Ball Kevin Carter, with good input from others, now takes into consideration a player's ability at GC as well as AC. This now allows a realistic and competitive One Ball handicap to be calculated for players who only play GC, or those who's GC is better than their AC.

A player's One Ball handicap will now be the lowest of:

- (1) their AC handicap*
- (2) 2.5x their GC handicap**
- (3) the number 20

~

* for AC players with handicap of 2 and below, the 'loading' placed on such players by the Laws appendix 6 still applies.

** minus GC players should not apply the 2x calc.

~

Download this helpful chart from the One Ball handicapping page of the CA website at:

www.croquet.org.uk/?p=games/association/handicapping/one-ball

Calculating your One-Ball Handicap

This method was researched and developed by Kevin Carter (the organiser of The National Charity One Ball competition), was introduced in 2016 and has since become the standard method. This has been formally adopted by the CA for use in the 2018 season onwards.

A player's One Ball handicap will be the lowest of:

- a) their AC handicap (but see below for AC handicaps that are less than 2)
- b) 2.5 x their GC handicap (but see below for GC handicaps that are less than 0)
- c) 20

Bonuses are 1/3 of the difference between the two players' One Ball handicaps, rounded to the nearest half bonus.

Name	One Ball handicap will be the lowest of:			One-ball Handicap
	AC Handicap	2.5 x GC Handicap	20	
example - Jones	4	10	20	4
example - Smith	8	5	20	5
example - Brown	22	25	20	20
			20	
			20	
			20	
			20	
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			20	
			20	
			20	

* AC players with a handicap of less than 2 use AC Laws Appendix 6 (below) and insert that adjusted value here.

** GC players with a handicap of less than 0 see the note below and simply insert your normal handicap here.

* AC players with a handicap of 2 or less
AC Laws Appendix 6 'One Ball play' should be used to complete the table above.

Point 4 states: "... handicaps below 2 are adjusted as follows:

1.5 becomes 1	1 becomes 0	0.5 becomes -1	0 becomes -2	-0.5 becomes -3
-1 becomes -4	-1.5 becomes -3	-2 becomes -6	-2.5 becomes -7	-3 becomes -8

* GC players with minus handicaps
Players should **add** multiply minus GC handicaps by 2.5 (so -2 should not become -5); instead simply enter the usual minus handicap to complete the table above.

'Sympathising with Alison Jones' by Andrew Killick

Along, long time ago on a croquet lawn far, far away... I grew up just south of London, and we played lots of Golf Croquet on a rough lawn, maybe 15 yards long and 8 yards wide, with a large chestnut tree that made the approach to hoop 9 (3-back) very bumpy.

My first 50 years

My father also taught me the rudiments of Association Croquet, and we tied lengths of coloured wool onto the hoops as we had no clips.

Then there was the annual family GC competition in a village near Birmingham, where my uncle had a vicarage with a large garden; we often travelled up there, maybe on the way to holidays in Wales or the Lakes, to contest 'The Lapworth Vase'.

Scroll forward about fifty years, during which I played only light-hearted GC with friends or family, and a fellow violinist in the local chamber orchestra said "Why don't you come and try out the Middlesbrough Croquet Club?"

This fitted in nicely with my plans for two years of part-time teaching before full retirement.



I went, I tried, I learnt a lot, and I loved it!

Like Alison, my AC handicap improved swiftly, from 8 in 2011 to 0 near the end of the 2016 season.

And then?

And then the rot started.

I lost seven of my next nine games, ending the season just one loss away from reverting to a handicap of 0.5.

Worse was to come: like Alison, 2017 was a year of very mixed fortunes.

I lost thirteen of my next seventeen matches, including seven defeats on the trot; I sank down to handicap 1.

I clanged in hoops and missed short roquets and on several occasions I managed to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory in the dying minutes. Grrrrh!

Losing hurts

No matter how often we tell ourselves it's only a game, losing hurts...

One thing that kept me going was a remark from David Magee, whose precise play always impresses me (and it might explain why I have never beaten him!): he said "When I got down to scratch, I lost my next thirteen games".

Ah, what an encouragement for the so-called rapid improvers who suddenly hit a brick wall!

My season did have some high spots, including seven wins on the trot, and (left) DISASTER – on the way to yet another defeat, at East Dorset, May 2017. (by Richard Kennedy).

(right) TRIUMPH – at a Level Advanced Tournament at Middlesbrough, June 2017. (by Phil Errington).

successes in three Doubles competitions.

"Don't panic"

So, Alison, "don't panic!" as Corporal Jones used to say.

There are times when things go brilliantly; and there are times when we keep clanging the simplest of hoop runs, miss long roquets by yards rather than millimetres and just feel in our bones that we couldn't hit an elephant at five yards.

While you have youth and enthusiasm on your side, and I have enthusiasm on mine, let's keep going, laugh, keep practising and enjoy the game.

Difficult Kipling

And remember Kipling: "If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster, and treat those two imposters just the same..." Difficult advice – I bet he hadn't just lost a string of croquet matches when he wrote that.

Andrew Killick, Middlesbrough CC



The WCF Association Croquet

3 - 11 February, Wellington

A preview by five-time
Rob F



This year's World Championship starts on 3 February in Wellington, New Zealand.

Here is a look at some of the contenders.

The Favourites

Robert Fletcher (Australia) is the current and now well-established World Number 1.

Some of you may have seen him in action winning the last but one World Championship in England in 2013, incredibly without dropping a single game and setting the record for the youngest winner at just 20 years old.

In 2016 Fletcher wasn't able to travel to Florida to defend, but with him back in the field this year's event is much stronger.

Reg Bamford (South Africa) is World Number 2 and has won this event on four previous occasions.

Bamford has just turned 50, but doesn't show any signs of slowing down, having had a stellar last twelve months winning the World GC Championship and the CA Opens at both codes.

These two players are a long way ahead of the pack and it is tempting to look straight ahead to another Fletcher/Bamford final as we had in 2012 in Adelaide.

Bamford won that match with a great come back to win 3-2 only after Fletcher missed a lift shot - essentially for his first World Championship - by a coat of paint in game four.

The two players have contrasting styles; Bamford almost machine like, Fletcher more natural, careful without being timid.

In reality there is enough strength in the field that a Fletcher/Bamford final is probably odds against.

Paddy Chapman (New Zealand) is the next most consistent player in the field. Chapman beat Bamford in 2013, before losing to Fletcher in the final.

He has a nice tempo to his play and will get plenty of support from the home crowd, but, as in 2013, to win the title he may well need to beat both of the top two, and so it goes for the rest of the field.

The hot Spaniard

In the last World Championship to be held in Wellington back in 2002,

Spain was a weak enough country that they fielded a teenager who hadn't yet been introduced to a four-ball break:

Jose Riva (Spain) is back again, but should do better this time.

Riva's shooting is a big strength and in winning the President's Cup, he showed an uncanny ability to finish his peeling breaks from unlikely positions.

His inexperience in big matches makes his chances hard to call, but he could certainly beat anyone.

The World Champion

The English contingent includes **Stephen Mulliner** (England), the holder, after his amazing 'back from the brink' time-and-again heroics in Palm Beach.

Most of the Northern hemisphere players will be out of season, but Mulliner is one of those players with enough time to play the NZ Open which precedes this World Championship.

Previous World Champions

- 2016 Stephen Mulliner (England)
- 2013 Robert Fletcher (Australia)
- 2012 Reg Bamford (South Africa)
- 2009 Reg Bamford (South Africa)
- 2008 Chris Clarke (England)
- 2005 Reg Bamford (South Africa)
- 2002 Robert Fulford (England)
- 2001 Reg Bamford (South Africa)
- 1997 Robert Fulford (England)
- 1995 Chris Clarke (England)
- 1994 Robert Fulford (England)
- 1992 Robert Fulford (England)
- 1991 John Walters (Wales)
- 1990 Robert Fulford (England)
- 1989 Joe Hogan (New Zealand)

Other CA mem

UK based players

- Ian Burridge (Wal)
- Phil Cordingley (Eng)
- Alain Giraud (Eng)
- Gabrielle Higgins (Eng)
- David Houston (Sco)
- Ian Lines (Eng)
- Annabel McDiarmid (Eng)
- John-Paul Moberly (Eng)
- Nelson Morrow (NZ)
- Sam Murray (Sco)
- Andy Myers (Eng)
- Jonathan Powe (Eng)
- Richard M Smith (Eng)
- Mike Town (Eng)
- Robert Wilkinson (Eng)

World Championship 2018

Wellington, New Zealand

Home World Champion
Rob Fulford

The Brits

David Maugham, Samir Patel, James Death, Christian Carter and Pete Trimmer are the other GB players most likely to get into the medals (both semi-finalists get a bronze).

Playing Standard Advanced rules, as opposed to Super Advanced, is always an adjustment for UK-based players these days.

The Kiwis

Apart from Chapman, the host's strongest participants are *Greg Bryant, Toby Garrison and Aiken Hakes*.

Bryant has been the most successful player domestically in New Zealand this decade with four NZ Open titles to his name.

Garrison hasn't played much since helping NZ to the MacRobertson Shield in 2014, but has some history in this event, reaching the final in 2002.

Hakes has always had talent, but in 2017 he really made his mark, winning the NZ Open and then more impressively winning all his matches playing in the top pair in the MacRobertson Shield.

The Aussies

Four more of the Australia's MacRobertson winning team last year are playing, Robert Fletcher's brothers *Malcolm and Greg Fletcher, Simon Hockey* and *Stephen Forster*. Malcolm Fletcher had an impressive Victorian Open over the New Year that included four sextuple peels.

The American

For the US, *David Maloof* was last time's runner up, with his relentlessly good hitting. If he has improved his croquet strokes he could do well again.

And watch out for the youngsters . . .

There are also some improving youngsters (so new that I've never seen them live), and they include *Edward Wilson* from Australia and New Zealanders *Josh Freeth* and *Felix Webby*. Webby already has a World Championship bronze medal for GC.

The hoops for the tournament should be firm, so I'm not expecting many sextuples in the knockout stages. Wellington is known as 'Windy Wellington' and if it blows that will cause a few extra problems.

Good luck to all the competitors.

Rob Fulford



All photographs are from previous World Championships - opposite page, from top:

- (1) Current World Champion Stephen Mulliner with his trophy in 2016
- (2) Robert Fletcher on his way to the 2013 Championship title at Surbiton
- (3) Reg Bamford, semi-finalist 2013
- (4) Paddy Chapman, runner-up in 2013

Images from the Womens World Championship at Nottingham in 2015 - right, from top:

- (5) Gabrielle Higgins
- (6) Alison Sharpe
- (7) Jenny Clarke
- (8) Annabel McDiarmid

All images by Chris Roberts except Mulliner by Samir Patel, and Fletcher & Chapman by Sara & Ian Anderson.



Players competing

Overseas based players

Sherif Abdelwahab (USA)
Jim Bast (USA)
Dennis Bulloch (NZ)
Kevin Beard (Aus)
Jenny Clarke (NZ)
Mike Crashley (NZ)
Brian Cumming (Can)
Simon Jenkins (USA)
Steve Jones (NZ)
Tim Murphy (Aus)
Stuart Lawrence (USA)
Alison Sharpe (Aus)
Jeff Soo (USA)
David Wise (Aus)

A total of 80 players will be taking part.

Follow all the action 'live' on www.croquetscores.com

Tim Murphy's CroquetScores website provides a marvelous service for all croquet enthusiasts.

It is an invaluable recourse for and I highly recommend it to you.

All the results will be up-loaded in real time and there will be ball-by-ball written commentary available throughout the tournament.

Whether you stay up half the night following the action, or check-in each morning to see how your favourite players have performed, CroquetScores allows you to feel part of the action.

Previous World Championships have also been covered with video and latterly there have been 'live feeds' too - so keep a look-out on YouTube for that this time.

The World Championship has its own website: <http://www.sporty.co.nz/2018acworldchampionships> and the CA's own website will carry updates from time to time.

~

www.croquetscores.com also hosts a results service for many of our domestic tournaments, so it's an excellent site to add to your list of 'favourites' - Ed.

Getting Shirty again

by
David
Openshaw



I'm writing this in Cape Town. It's a lovely day - 28C in the shade. I hope you are all enjoying the winter.

One cold rainy day before I left, I was looking at my croquet shirts and noticed how few featured sponsors of our Open Championship.

We have had a few sponsors over the last 25 years, notably Atco (*lawnmower manufacturers*) and Mitsubishi (*car makers*) whose shirts I have. The Lincoln Financial

Group and Carlsberg have also been sponsors in the past. Surely it's time to find another sponsor of our historic Open Championship.

Last Summer I played in the championship for the first time for a number of years. It was held at Hurlingham and it was

great to play there again.

When I first played in the Open it was always played at Hurlingham and it's a very special place to play croquet. Of course its extra-special for me as my five Open Championship wins (three singles and two doubles) were all played there.

Last summer I think all players were very pleasantly surprised by the speed of the lawns. They were much quicker than usual and it shows what can be done in this respect if there is a focus on it.

Roehampton had also shown this in for 2013 World Championship and the speed of Surbiton's lawns is a big factor in players' support for it as a venue for top events.

This was my first event in which I played all my games under Super-Advanced rules.

I can understand why top players want a more interactive and challenging game and I support this myself. It is interesting to note that this has been a constant trend in top level croquet. I recently read 'Croquet' by Leonard B Williams, written in 1899, in

which he details the changes in top level croquet over a

20-year period.

The lawn size was increased by a factor of about three; the width of the hoops was reduced from 8 inches in the first Championship in 1867 to 6.5 inches for the 1870 Championship held for the first time at Wimbledon. The following year saw further reductions in stages (maybe during the event) from 5 inches to 4.25 inches, penalties for wiring were introduced and the layout of the hoops was also changed.

Another interesting example of the trend in making the game more difficult is from Denmark where they play nine-hoop croquet with two pegs.

When I played there a few years ago they told me that to make the game more interesting / difficult they had changed the layout. Traditionally in this version the two pegs are along the centre line. They played with the second peg near corner 2.

Going back to last year's Open Championships I think the faster lawns made the Super-Advanced rules unnecessary for most rounds in the event.

Most players including myself had enough difficulty and made enough mistakes to make games very interactive.

It also seems to me that the leave when giving contact in Super-Advanced is much easier to achieve than say the diagonal spread under normal Advanced rules and this takes away something of interest from the game.

The two finalists, Reg Bamford and Rob Fulford, were notable exceptions and both played exceptionally accurate croquet.

The Super-Advanced rules were certainly beneficial for the final. They meant that after the leave for the sextuple peel, a normal length lift shot was available.

But perhaps there are other ways to achieve this change.

I'm certainly in favour of finding a way of making AC more interactive. Super-Advanced has been popular but I feel it's time to review it and look for something slightly different, perhaps by finding a way of rewarding more accurate break play.

I do hope that the experience of faster lawns can be continued in our major championships for the coming season.



Top - This image of David Openshaw winning the 1981 Open at Hurlingham made the Sunday Times front page.
Above left - A shirt from the Mitsubishi sponsorship.
Left - 1981 Open presentation time with Barbara Solomon and Secretary of the CA Brian McMillan.

The big change for 2018 is the introduction of the fourth layer of national competitions for golf croquet with the new C-Level Series for players with handicaps of 7+.

20 tournaments in all parts of the country make up the Series for this launch season, so there is bound to be one near you. Or perhaps you will join a circuit of players traveling to a number of tournaments, looking for a victory that will qualify them for the National Final at Nottingham.

In the CA's hierarchy of GC Series, there is no change at the top, with the same eight venues as last season forming the Championship Series, and the final for the Ascot Cup will be at Hamptworth.

The A-Level Series, which like the Championship is unrestricted, has been enlarged by two tournaments for 2018 with the addition of Hunstanton and Wrest Park. This Series does not have a national final; it is a straight 'points race'.

Completing the family of competitions is the strong B-Level Series (for players with handicaps of 3+) which stays at 24 tournaments but with three venue changes and the National Final going to Camerton and Peasedown.

The GC Student Championship

The GC Student Championship moves south this season to the prestigious Roehampton Club (in London), who will host the tournament on 14-15 April on their quite magnificent courts.

The 'Student GC' was adopted as a Grade 3 Championship by the CA prior to its very successful launch last season by Sheffield University. A strong presence is expected again from Sheffield and the **CALL FOR ENTRIES** goes out now to individuals from other Universities and Colleges. - *To be eligible, entrants must be an 'internal' student registered for and following a full-time degree or diploma at a University, or an Institute or College of Higher Education.*

Entries can be made via the CA website or entry forms in the usual way. Anyone who is unfamiliar with the entry process or is seeking more information about the Championship tournament is encouraged to please contact me.

Richard Bilton
Director, GC Student Championship
richard.bilton30@talktalk.net
07570 599136

GC Series Tournaments for 2018

Championship Series (unrestricted)

21-22 April	Surbiton
28-29 April	Sidmouth
12-13 May	East Anglian (Colchester)
02-03 June	Cheltenham
16-17 June	Ramsgate
30 Jun-1 Jul	National Forest (Ashby)
14-15 July	Nottingham
28-29 July	Wiltshire (Hamptworth)
15-16 Sep.	FINAL (Hamptworth)

A-Level Series (unrestricted)

14-15 April	Cheltenham
28-29 April	Lancashire (Pendle)
05-06 May	Northampton
19-20 May	Hunstanton - <i>NEW</i>
04-05 June	Woking
09-10 June	Wrest Park - <i>NEW</i>
16-17 June	Pendle
07-08 July	Ryde
14-15 July	Dorset (East Dorset)
08-09 Sep	Sussex (Sussex County)

B-Level Series (handicaps 3+)

01 May	Camerton & Peasedown - <i>NEW</i>
05 May	Sussex County
10 May	Ryde
16 May	Wrest Park
19 May	Pendle
26-27 May	East Dorset
31 May	Roehampton - <i>NEW</i>
6-7 June	Woking - <i>NEW</i>
07 June	Northampton
13 June	Ealing
16 June	Leighton-Linslade
23 June	Hamptworth
24 June	Colchester
30 June	Hunstanton
07 July	Bury
12 July	Bath
19 July	Nottingham
04 August	Guildford & Godalming
10-11 Aug.	Phyllis Court
14 August	Nailsea
18 August	Ashby
25 August	Budleigh Salterton
25-26 Aug.	Hurlingham
04 Sep.	Edgbaston
06-07 Oct.	FINAL (Camerton & P.)

C-Level Series (handicaps 7+)

12 April	Surbiton
06 May	Sussex County
11 May	Ryde
16 May	Phyllis Court
23 May	Wrest Park
06 June	Guildford & Godalming
12 June	Camerton & Peasedown
14 June	Roehampton
16 June	Ashby
01 July	Hunstanton
03 July	Hurlingham
07 July	Hamptworth
14 July	Middlesbrough
18 July	Nottingham
22 July	Colchester
25 July	Bury
09 August	Northampton
10 August	Southport
26 August	Budleigh Salterton
03 Sep.	Edgbaston
22-23 Sep.	FINAL (Nottingham)

This New Series is particularly aimed at players who have not entered a tournament before - Please join in - A very warm welcome awaits you!



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New Coaching Appointments

Hopefully the following is a complete list of the names of those who have been awarded coaching badges, but not had a mention in the Gazette, for the period from June 2017 to date.

Please let me know if I have missed you out! My apologies in advance if this is the case.

It is pleasing to see there is quite a spread geographically; many thanks to all those who have run Coaching Qualification Courses and enabled people to become coaches too.

Keep up the good work and congratulations to you all.

For many of you this is just the start so have fun and don't forget to send any questions or cries for help to me at cacommchair@googlemail.com.

Sarah Hayes, Chairman of the Coaching Committee

GC graded coaches

Grade 3 Elite:

Ian Burridge (Nottingham)

Grade 2:

John Crossland (Sheffield)

Grade 1:

Mary Bradshaw (Taunton Deane)

Dennis Crossland (Sheffield)

AC graded coach

Grade 1:

Robert Moss (The Bears)

Club Coaches

Sarah Andew (Llanfairfechan)

Phillip Batty (Old College)

Keith Bryant (Dowlish Wake)

Penelope Clark (Ben Rhydding)

Alison Murray (Leicester)

Bill Robinson (Bakewell)

Vivienne Staley (Nottingham)

Colin Turnbull (Darley Dale)

Coaching Question Time

Some players have already taken the opportunity to pose some coaching questions, and I hope the information provided below will answer the points raised:

AC and GC Coaching Pods for A and B class players

You may register for a Pod near you from within the CA website.

Go to the Home Page and then select Members Area followed by Coaching Pods. The choice is then AC or GC.

Pod locations are displayed, together with their co-ordinator's contact details.

Find the nearest Pod to you and click on the 'Plus' icon to register yourself for that Pod.

If there is nothing near to you, please contact Lionel Tibble for GC Pods or the Coaching Committee for AC Pods; we will hopefully be able to arrange something for you.

GC Rules Courses

I have reviewed all courses available, and have noted that there is not presently a GC Rules course for those living in certain areas, particularly the North.

Your Federation Coaching Officer (FCO) should be able to assist and, if there is sufficient demand, arrange for a course to be organised. Please contact them in the first instance.

The Coaching Committee does have a small budget to enable appropriate coaches to travel in order to help out in these sort of situations.

Coaches Qualification Course (CQC)

The initial step in becoming a coach is to attend a Coaches Training Course (CTC), followed by running a certain number of supervised coaching sessions, and

hopefully being approved for a Club Coach badge.

What next?

Well, gain some experience and then look for a CQC Course to become a Graded Coach!

These courses are run mostly at the Academies, so please refer to their websites for information.

All Academy courses have been detailed in the last two editions of the Gazette, so dig these out for the details; hopefully there are still places available.

Presently, I see there are Graded Coach courses advertised within the Fixtures Book.

If the dates for these are not suitable for you, I suggest registering your interest with both the relevant Academy and your FCO anyway.

Intermediate Coaching

After having completed the usual beginners/introduction course, it is not always usual for clubs to continue the coaching to help develop the new players.

I urge clubs to try to ensure such intermediate players are catered for, because I would imagine there is more chance of retaining such players if this happens.

There are formal Academy Courses this year aimed at this group of players in particular, so please again check the schedules to see if there is something for you.

I ran an intermediate coaching course last September, and have notes which I am happy to share with other coaches in order to help out with this situation.

Please use the Coaching Committee e-mail address for enquiries:

cacommchair@gmail.com

Sarah Hayes

Chairman of the Coaching Committee

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There is much to be learnt from watching our top players



With the AC World Championship about to start in New Zealand, I thought it a good idea to highlight what you can gain from watching high level events in both AC and GC.

This does not mean you need all pack your bags and fly to the other side of the world!

For although live video feeds of the Championships will be available I'm sure (*check on You Tube*), our Fixtures Book/ Online Calendar is full of Championship and A-Level events – so, find one near to you and go off for the day to make new friends and watch the play.

Here are some things you can watch for:

Single Ball Shots

Watch how the players address the ball; how near do they stand?

Try to see their feet and note the direction they are facing.

When the ball is struck try to not watch

the ball moving away – instead watch the player and particularly their shoulders and heads.

Exactly how stationary are they?

Are they walking after the ball?

How smooth is their swing?

Do they follow through?

Do they let go of their mallet?

Hoop Running

Does the player treat this in the same way as for other single ball shots?

Do they stand a similar distance away from the ball?

Perhaps they are a little further away, or are they perhaps nearer if they are doing a jump shot?

The shot should be smooth but firm – again watch the player and not the ball, and you might spot the problem when a hoop is failed.

Etiquette

Observe how the players greet each other and how the start of the game progresses.

Also watch what happens at the end.

It is usual for the loser to applaud and congratulate the winner – how is this done?

Who collects the balls and clips?

When a ball needs to be replaced onto the yard line (in AC) or boundary (in GC), watch how the players do this.

Is it the same every time? Is it how you do it? Is the ball being replaced where you expect it to be? If not, why not?

When the ball ends up in a hampered position, does the player automatically call a referee?

Sometimes the player will ask their opposition if they want the shot to be



watched – both participants will be aware if the next stroke is a "gimme" and that no referee is required – but the question will still be asked; it is polite and correct to do so.

If games are double-banked, watch how well-mannered the majority of players will be.

Where do they stand when waiting to play? Right next to the other person? Tapping their foot?

No, they will be well out of the way.

General Play

Is the 'out player' watching their opposition like a hawk, following them round (the outside of the court in AC) and questioning every stroke?

No, all players should be trustworthy and, at the top level, they will 'fault themselves'.

Keep an eye open for this and see how any problem is addressed.

AC croquet strokes are a little more complex, but keep an eye on how the players approach these.

Watch how they hold their mallet, and note the ratios they achieve, then you can try it out for yourself when you get the chance. These are just a few thoughts for new players.

'Watch and Learn'!

I have certainly picked up all sorts of things over the years just from watching, and I so I know that you will benefit too by watching the top players. There is usually a good lunch served and often bar facilities available too, so what's not to like?

Sarah Hayes,

Chairman of the Coaching Committee

Photographs: (opposite page) Sarah Hayes; (above left) A large gallery watching Mark McInerney at Hurlingham; (above right) See how carefully Miranda Chapman lines-up a crucial stroke.

GC Elite and Development Squads

After a successful first year of the GC Development and GC Elite Squads, the 2018 calendar of activities for these players follows the same format as 2017, on these dates:

24-25 Apr - GC Development Squad Coaching Weekend (Wrest Park)

19-20 May - GC Elite Squad Weekend (venue TBC)

04-05 Aug - GC Development Squad Mentored Match Weekend (venue TBC)

Lionel Tibble, International Performance Director (GC)

Young players Croquet Summer School

The 2018 Croquet Summer School will take place on the **22 and 23 August**, most likely at Wrest Park CC.

It is suitable for aspiring young players of all abilities from 11 years of age and upwards. If you know of a young player who may like to participate (or take part yourself) then please contact me, Lionel Tibble on anglion@btinternet.com

Lionel Tibble, International Performance Director

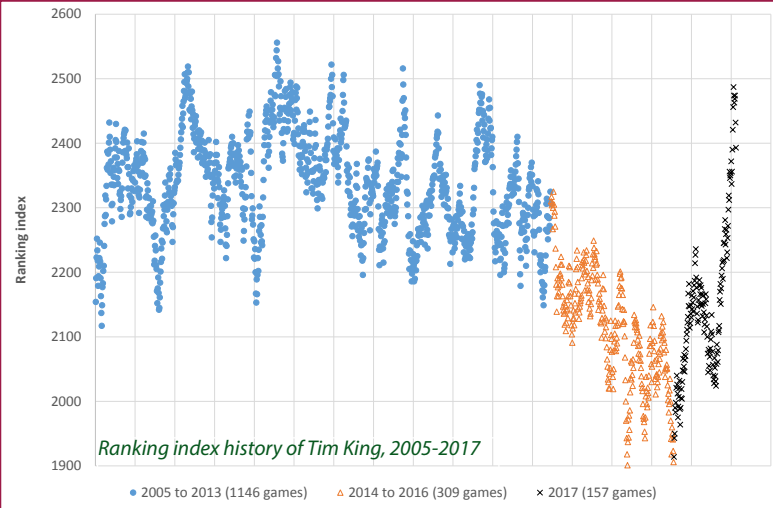
The journey to achieving

Tim King emerged on the national Golf Croquet scene in 2005. He was soon performing well in tournaments with his aggressive, hard-hitting style.

He was not, however, able to identify how to sustain his level of performance from one success to the next.

In the winter of 2013/14, he changed his technical approach to playing, but then spent the next three seasons sliding down the rankings.

He has finally enjoyed a renaissance in 2017 and here explains how he has found a more mentally resilient approach to his play.



As Sir Clive says, "Control the controllables"

When Ian Burridge ran hoop 6 from the North boundary to go 3-3 in the first game of our semi-final in the 2017 GC English National Singles Championship, he almost certainly felt that he had snatched the momentum of the match away from me.

I could do nothing about the positive surge of confidence that he would have felt. I could, however, manage my own reaction and, after the previous four years of hard work on my play, I was able to respond with calm, controlled croquet that took me to eventual victory in the match.

Falling short of peak performance

Croquet does not involve complex technique; the ball is stationary and the player takes a simple, straight swing at that ball. That swing is, however, vulnerable to one dominant enemy - anxiety.

The sources of anxiety are numerous but the effect is simple: anxiety breaks the connection between us as players and our achieving peak performance.

Anxiety prevents us reaching peak performance

(see the graphic below)

Practical psychology

I have spent much of the last four years exploring the practicalities of my mental

approach to playing croquet.

I have read some material from others and listened carefully to croquet players such as Reg Bamford sharing their own experiences.

My approach has emerged to consist of three key elements that have become the foundation for my success in 2017.

One shot at a time

The majority of the past four years has involved me working on the way in which I execute my shots.

I decided during the winter of 2013-14 to change from casting over the ball before my stroke.

I am not advocating there being only one right way of striking the ball, but I am convinced that we all can benefit from knowing how we play our shots.

This knowledge allows us to identify what we need to correct when we fail to strike the ball cleanly.

I believe this consistent execution of each shot is the aspiration that has led Johanna Konta, the British tennis player, to improve her performance by working on her "process".

By practicing and generating solid confidence in our techniques, we are able to remove a major source of our anxiety.

There is a great deal of detail in my own process for each shot, but those details are not for this particular article.

point here is that I am looking to avoid focussing on the specific result of any one shot. If we focus on results then we are likely to become anxious.

We need to ignore the result of individual shots as being the basis on which we tell ourselves we are playing well.

These results are also dependent on factors that we cannot control, for example, when the court surface causes the ball to deviate off target.

We can choose who we want to be

The third (and final) element of my changed approach is my attitude to being on the court. This attitude was never quite right and the consequence has been that I was always susceptible to the pressure of playing, with frustration mounting when my opponent played well.

Many, many different external factors give us cause for anxiety and the challenge is to counter this with a positive frame of mind.

This positivity will meet extreme provocation (for example, lucky shots by our opponents or unlucky ones of our own) but positivity is a powerful means by which we can ultimately overcome adversity.

Three layers of protection

The three elements have become the mechanism by which I protect the link between me and my peak performance.

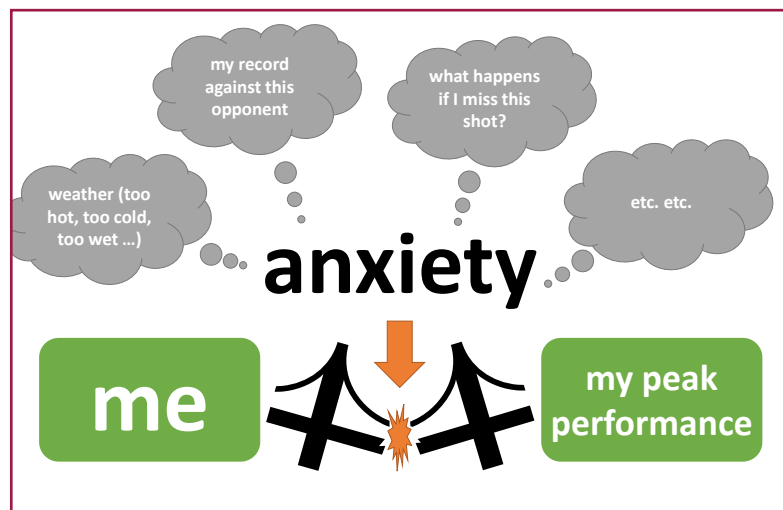
Three layers of protection against anxiety

(see the second graphic on the right)

Unsurprisingly, the description above is a summary of hard work and very personal adoption of the three elements.

This adoption needs to begin with some form of practical action.

I am sure there are many different potential actions, but I would like to finish with three examples that will perhaps help other players to begin to understand the three elements.



A one-track mind

The second element of my changed approach is to have a clear understanding of the objectives for all of my turns.

This objective is simple: I want to execute my process each and every shot.

The important

peak croquet performance - by Tim King

Exploring your process

As I wrote above, techniques can involve many different considerations (placement of feet, choice of grip, breathing pattern etc.).

We can develop many different strategies to address the various elements of our strokes, but almost certainly the most vulnerable moment in every shot is the one at which we decide to start our swing to hit the ball.

My suggested exercise for exploring your process is to try hoop running with your eyes closed. This exercise consists of placing a ball in position for a simple, short hoop run, preparing for your shot in your usual way but, at the point you are ready to swing and hit the ball, close your eyes.

My expectation is that you will run the hoop.

The first, simple lesson is that your preparation for the shot is largely what determines your ability to hit straight.

This lesson helps you to challenge anxiety about your accuracy.

By the time you swing to hit the ball, you should no longer be worrying about missing the target because you have already set the main factor controlling the direction in which the ball will travel.

The second aspect of this exercise is to explore how you feel as you swing your mallet. You will be much more conscious of your posture and body movement when you are not concentrating on feedback from your eyes about the ball and surrounding patch of grass. You give yourself the chance to learn better what you are doing when you strike the ball.

Shaping your objectives

For objectives, I recommend trying deliberately not to react negatively to failure on difficult shots.

If you strike the ball cleanly and just miss

a clearance or bounce out of the jaws of a hoop then the easy reaction is to feel cheated.

This reaction, though, is likely to eat away at your confidence

and make you tense.

I suggest telling yourself during matches "Good shot" (perhaps even out loud if that helps you to believe it) and, thus, you will re-frame your view as to how well you are actually playing.

This exercise is the first step to being much more focussed on execution and controlling the controllables of each shot, rather than being overly concerned about the results of an individual shot.

Changing your attitude

My suggested practical exercise for attitude is to try adopting the persona of your favourite croquet player when you are in the middle of a game.

If you are worried about your hoop-running ability, for example, then, as you prepare for that shot, think about how smoothly a young talent like Harry Dodge runs his hoops.

Or perhaps you suffer from nerves and should try adopting the game face of a player such as Rachel Rowe, who looks calm and impassive whatever the state of a match.

You are likely to distract yourself from your nerves and learn more appropriate feelings to support you playing your best croquet.

This exercise will help you to understand that we can choose and control our attitude to being on the croquet court.

Psychology in action

These three suggested exercises are only the beginning and you will need to explore other options to discover appropriate tools to build up your own three layers of protection against anxiety.

Enjoy the experience - as I can thoroughly recommend the satisfaction arising from a structured approach to self-diagnosis and improving your play.



Ian Burridge gets a 'positive surge of confidence'



Harry Dodge runs another smooth hoop



Rachel Rowe's 'game face' is always calm



'Happy Days are here again' for Tim King (right) and J-P Moberly seems to agree. (Photo of Rachel Rowe by Stephen Custance-Baker; others by Chris Roberts)

anxiety

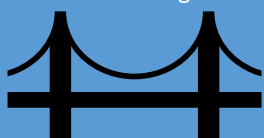


on-court attitude

objectives for each turn

process of executing each shot

me

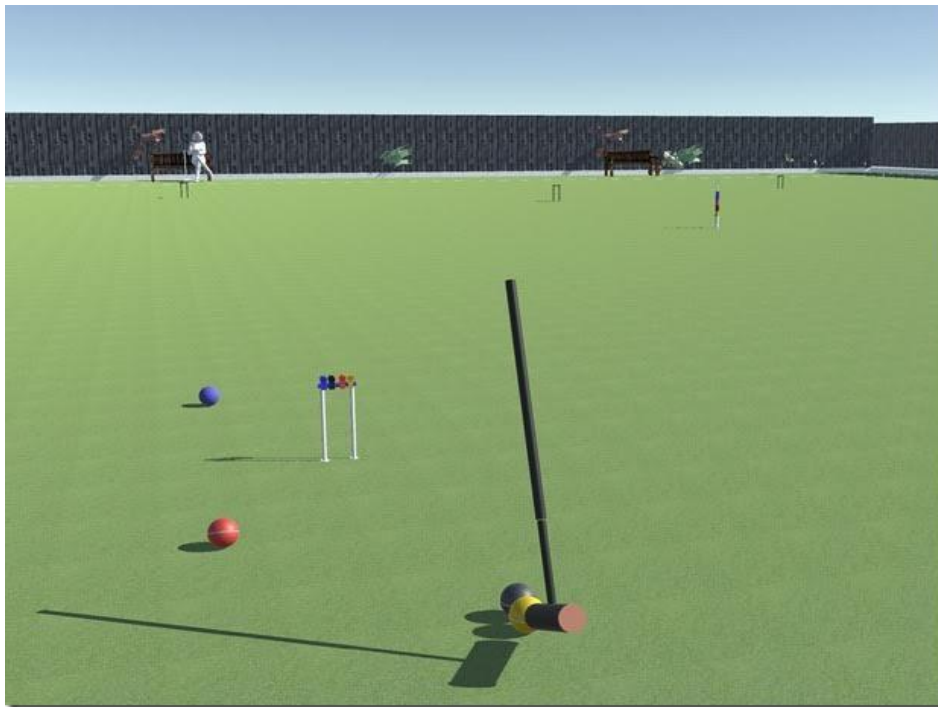


my peak performance

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Lawn Care ~ by Duncan Hector

Fusarium Patch (*Microdochium nivale*)

I have spent time at the Sports Turf Research Institute concentrating on fungal diseases such as Fusarium.

This enters the plant through damaged tissue or through stomata. It penetrates into the leaf and draws the nutrients it needs to survive from the grass plant causing the grass to starve and die.



It can be a devastating disease, killing the grass and causing an uneven playing surface.

Bruised grass is an open invitation for the fungus to enter through damaged cells. So do set your mower to cut cleanly and be gentle with your grass. Don't damage it by scarifying or verticutting.

Symptoms - Symptoms begin as a darkened water-soaked appearance to the grass. The patches enlarge and may develop salmon-pink to orange-brown rings of conidia around the outside of the patch. In conducive weather conditions, white, pink or grey mycelia may grow over the surface.

Causes - Take any handful of root zone soil and there will be a huge number of fungal spores waiting for the right conditions to attack your grass. This particular fungus likes cool damp conditions which tend to prevail in spring around April time and autumn in October and November.

Treatment - There are several factors that have to be taken into account when dealing with fusarium.

Treating with fungicide is expensive but may be necessary, there are lower cost ways of dealing with the problem but it is vital to act quickly as soon as an outbreak begins otherwise it could spread across the whole lawn.

Phone or e-mail me for guidance.

Duncan Hector (contact details; see my advert, right)

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Moberly hottest at Dulwich

The Dulwich President's Selection GC tournament brought a little light to an otherwise

dour January and was won by the English National Singles Champion John-Paul Moberly (pictured front left).

This annual winter outing was once again sponsored by Little Forest (www.littleforest.co.uk)

allowing brilliant barbeque and food both days, as well as £500 prize money.

We were lucky with the weather and ten participants enjoyed a chilly Saturday start on three courts, two of which had been brought back into service for the tournament following extensive winter work. These two courts were much slower than the third which made it a challenge when switching courts.

This year's format had five Dulwich locals (Guy Scurfield, David Whyte, Pierre Beaudry, Mark Daley and Andrew Dymond) take on five visitors (Helena Jansson, J-P Moberly, Tobi Savage, Don Beck and Lionel Tibble), in a single cross-block, 13 point games.

The visitors did very well, winning all but four of the 25 games.

We squeezed in the quarter-finals (best-of-three seven point games) as the light faded on day one, and this decided the semi-final line-up for day two – Savage v Whyte, and Moberly v Daley.

Another cold but dry day greeted players on the Sunday, for the (best-of-three 13 point) semi-finals alongside a competitive plate event, all watched by an increasing crowd of spectators.

Moberly and Savage won through to contest an all-visitor afternoon final, and alongside Whyte and Daley played off for third place, and Tibble took on Beck in the plate final.

In straight 19-point games, Daley and Tibble took third place and the plate respectively and in the (best-of-three 13 point) tournament main final, Moberly defeated Savage in two great games; this left time for prize presentations, a return to the bar for a warm-up and reflection on another fabulous weekend.

Guy Scurfield & Pierre Beaudry

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The PFC Hoop Maker Mallets

Made in Australia

Guaranteed to be perfectly balanced and perfectly made with a five-year parts and labour guarantee.

Being made of metal, PFC Mallets will never change shape, absorb moisture and distort or change their weight. This means every time you pick up your Hoop Maker Mallet it will be exactly the same every time. Because it never changes your PFC Hoop Maker mallet will soon become your old reliable friend, leading you to play reliably well in our wonderful game of Croquet for many years to come.



Mallets: left to right

- The Standard 9 5/8" mallet with Zelanite striking face – 2lbs. 14.5ozs.
- The Standard 9 5/8" mallet with Brass striking face – 2lbs. 14.8ozs.
- The Standard 9 5/8" mallet with our MMT striking face – 2lbs. 14.4ozs.
- The Competition 11" mallet with Brass striking face – 2lbs. 14 ozs.
- The Competition 11" mallet with our MMT striking Face – 2lbs. 14.6ozs.

Mallet Shafts are available in a variety of lengths.

The Croquet Association stocks standard lengths of 34", 36" and 38" with ovoid grips. If you need a different length, please contact them.

Hoop Maker Mallets have been made for and are being used by beginners right up to National Champions.

The PFC Hoop Maker Mallets

Available from the Croquet Association Shop

www.croquetmalletmetal.com

www.croquet.org.uk

The Portuguese Croquet Federation

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