

The

Issue 375 August 2018

CROQUET

Gazette



From our files

researched by Frances Colman

10 years ago - 2008



The Mitsubishi (AC) British Open Championship – Robert Fulford successfully defended his Open title to record his eighth win in the Singles Championship, beating Samir Patel 3 – 0 in the best of five final.

~

The (GC) British Open Championship – Reg Bamford beat Stephen Mulliner 7 – 2, 7 – 6, to retain the Golf Croquet British Open Championship title.

~

GB beat USA 21 – 6 to retain the Solomon Trophy – . . . the Solomon Trophy is a series of international test matches between the US and Great Britain which were begun in 1988, alternating venue each time, and generally played annually except in the year of the MacRobertson Shield test (which is among croquet's big four and is played approximately every three years).

Since the Solomon began the American team has never prevailed and the relative strength of the teams, as measured by the world rankings, has always strongly favoured the Brits.

(GB team: Keith Aiton (c), Ian Burrigge, Jonathan Kirby, Tony LeMoignan, Ian Lines, David Maugham).

~

CA v Swiss CA – The CA team retained the Eatough/Darby trophy at Cheltenham by 14 points to 6.

The fixture included, for the first time, Association and Golf Croquet . . . the combination seemed to work well and all enjoyed a full weekend of croquet as well as a most enjoyable social programme.

(CA Team: Klim Seabright (c), Bryan Judson, Dave Mundy, Carol Smith, John Timberlake)

~

The (AC) Veterans Championship – . . . was won by Martin Granger Brown at Budleigh Salterton.

~

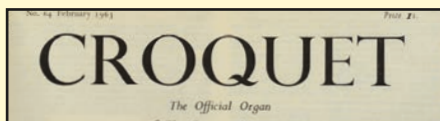
Election addresses of Council candidates (David Maugham) –

I'm David Maugham.

You all know me, or know of me, and there is nothing I can say in 300 words that will change your minds about me.

Vote for me or not. It's up to you.

50 years ago - 1968



Test Tour:

A "package deal" for followers –

Associates who attended the A.G.M. may recall that it was stated on the occasion that the projected "package deal" for members of the Test Team could be extended to cover a limited number of Associates who may wish to follow the fortunes of the Team in person during its journey from (approximately) January 24th at Heathrow to its departure from Brisbane on March 10th.

The "deal" will reduce the cost of the whole trip, including hotel accommodation in the five capital cities of Australia and aeroplane to, within and back from Australia, to the remarkably modest sum of £610.

~

Champion of Champions –

The winners of the President's Cup and of the Open Championship will play a match of three games for the right to challenge the present holder of the title – Mr John Solomon.

This will take place at Hurlingham on Saturday, September 14th, 1968 and the challenge will be held there on the following day.

~

Three new clubs have registered with the Croquet Association – **Glenochil CC**, Clackmannanshire; **Langside CC**, Davos, Glasgow; **Phyllis Court CC**, Henley-on-Thames.

~

Brigadier Stokes-Roberts, O.B.E., M.C (former Chairman of Council) –

The death on 19th July of Brigadier Stokes-Roberts has deprived the Croquet world of one of its most popular and colourful characters. . . . He led a distinguished life but was the most unassuming of men.

Keenly interested in all sports, in his youth he had been regarded as one of the finest horsemen in the British Army. On the courts he was a delightful companion, whether as generous opponent or sympathetic partner.

But it is for his work for the association off the courts for which we should be most grateful.

100 years ago - 1918



Military cross awarded to

Capt. G. L. Reckitt

The Military Cross has been awarded to Capt. G. L. Reckitt, Royal Sussex Regiment, for gallantry in the field in March last. "The Times" of May 15th contains the following reference:-

"Capt. G. L. Reckitt, Royal Sussex Regiment, carried out a raid on the enemy's trenches at very short notice at a time when identifications were urgently required. He handled his party with great skill, and set them a splendid example of contempt of danger. By his keenness and initiative he contributed very largely to the success of the operation."

~

Tragic Death of

Commander C.W.C. Strickland, R.N.

We much regret to announce the death of Commander C.W.C. Strickland, R.N., Sheerness Dockyard, who lost his life under most distressing circumstances on September 14th.

He was on his way to the Naval Recreation round to play croquet, and in entering a level crossing was knocked down by a passing train. He was rendered unconscious, having sustained a bad fracture of the skull, and though immediately removed to the Naval Hospital, he died an hour later without regaining consciousness.

The Funeral took place at Charlton, with naval honours.

~

Death of Miss S.V. Barrett, V.A.D.

It is with great regret that we have to announce the death of Miss S.V. Barrett, V.A.D. (Voluntary Aid Detachment), niece of Mr. and Mrs. W.H. Wilson, Carrickmines House, Co. Dublin, who lost her life on October 10th in the sinking of the R.M.S. "Leinster".

Miss Barrett was returning to duty in France, where she had been working for the past two and a half years, and the last month of her life on duty was spent in nursing wounded German prisoners.

She was mentioned in despatches in January 1918. . .

Miss Barrett was buried with military honours.

Editorial

What a summer we have had! The scorched turf has meant lightning fast and challenging courts up and down the country and doubtless, like me, you will have been caught out by balls that have rolled forever and hoops apparently 'set in concrete' that reject all but absolutely centred shots.

And with summer, whatever the weather, there's plenty to report about here.

This Gazette is a magazine in the truest sense, and we have in this issue a variety of articles which I hope will interest our now very diverse croquet playing membership.

I have attempted to steer away from many tournament reports one after the other and so offer my apologies for those whose success has not made it into print.

However, alongside the regular articles, this issue does feature the Open Championships for both GC and AC, and it's congratulations to Reg Bamford and David Maugham respectively.

The GC Home Internationals are also featured as is Eugene Chang's innovative 'Next Generation' dual code event that took place at the AC Opens at Cheltenham.

Away from tournaments, we are taken on holiday by a tour of West Country clubs visited by Sue and Bernard Pendry from

Surbiton and bask in the enjoyment that was 'delivering croquet' to over 900 show-goers at the BBC Countryfile live event at Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire.

This event provides us with the Gazette's front cover image this time, in which Frances Colman shares in the fun of BBC weather presenter Carol Kirkwood's first introduction to croquet.

My own croquet has been a mixed bag this season and included, in the same week, seeing my GC handicap go the wrong way from -2 to -1 and my AC handicap getting to scratch for the first time.

Frances discovered, during her 'From our Files' research, that our home Club, Phyllis Court (Henley on Thames), joined the Croquet Association fifty years ago, which came as a surprise and calls for a celebration.

That got me thinking, that no matter how long your clubs have been in existence, and many are considerably older than mine, it is worth remembering that without the CA we would not have the well-maintained game that we all continue to enjoy.

Chris Roberts

Chris Roberts Editor

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Issue 375 August 2018

Front cover: BBC weather presenter Carol Kirkwood had a great time being introduced to croquet at the Countryfile Live show with Frances Colman.

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Chairman's Column

As I write this, there are signs of the prolonged heatwave abating. But the drought has had a marked effect on most lawns, and playing conditions have generally been too tricky for my competence.

I noticed that even our elite players in the Opens at Cheltenham were challenged, with about one in eight games going to time.

~

The Management Committee is the only CA Committee to meet during the playing season, and its meeting in July focussed on future governance proposals.

An article from its Chairman, John Bowcott, on page 4 outlines a proposal which will go to the next Council in October.

Readers will note that, if the proposal is accepted by Council, the new smaller Council will be elected by the whole CA

membership.

As a precursor to these governance changes, the CA Constitution was changed to entitle full playing members of Member Clubs to become individual members of the CA from 1 January 2018.

So, in addition to all the other benefits of CA membership, our expanded membership has been enfranchised and, in particular, will be able to elect its new CA Governing Body, hopefully over the next twelve months.

However, I am dismayed to report that the number of club members who have taken up their entitlement to CA membership is far lower than I had hoped.

At the end of July, the database held details of only 4,618 members.

There are two main factors for this disappointing response: firstly, around one third of our clubs have not responded to the request to submit membership details to the CA Office; secondly, of those clubs that have responded, there is a wide variation in the proportion of their members that have agreed to participate.

So, I plead with Club Committees, especially Club Secretaries, to reassess their situation and either (a) submit a return or (b) enhance their initial return by encouraging their members to join.

In the interest of making our Association more inclusive and democratic, please make an extra effort to enlist as many players as possible.

At the time of writing, it is only possible for clubs to register additional CA Standard Members by re-uploading details of their entire membership, which may be why some clubs have been reluctant to do so.

However, I am assured that an enhancement is under test to allow clubs to download details of their members as currently registered, in the format required to re-upload them, so that new ones can be added without triggering e-mails about data discrepancies for existing members.

Furthermore, another one, to allow new members to be registered individually, interactively, is coming down the track.

Brian Shorney



The Annual General Meeting

NOTICE OF MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Croquet Association will take place at the Hurlingham Club on Saturday 20th October 2018 commencing at 11 a.m.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence.

2. Minutes of the AGM held on Saturday 21 October 2017.

The minutes are on the website at <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?d=1881> and will be sent to Home Members on request to the CA Office.

3. Report of Council.

The Chairman of Council, Brian Shorney, will present Council's annual report. There will be an opportunity to ask questions.

4. Governance Proposals.

A proposal to change the role and reduce the size of Council, as outlined in the August 2018 edition of the Croquet Gazette, will be open to discussion prior to the Council meeting which is expected to consider it.

5. Accounts for the year to December 2017 and Hon. Treasurer's Report.

The accounts are on the website at <http://www.croquet.org.uk/?d=2022> and will be sent to Home Members on request to the CA Office. There is a commentary on them at <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?d=2091>.

6. Election of Hon. Secretary.

Dr. I. G. Vincent offers himself for re-election and is the only nomination.

7. Election of Hon. Treasurer.

Mr. P. J. Death offers himself for re-election and is the only nomination.

8. Election of Independent Examiner.

David Boxell is willing to continue as the Independent Examiner.

9. Election of Council Members.

The following members of Council retire by rotation and seek re-election under clause 18 (a)(i): John Bowcott, Tim King and Brian Wilson, who were elected in 2015. In addition, Sam Murray, Chris Roberts and Elizabeth Williams have been duly proposed and seconded and are willing to stand, so there are 6 candidates for 6 vacancies and there will not be a contested election.

10. Proposal to elect Patricia Duke-Cox as a Vice President.

Council has proposed that Patricia Duke-Cox, a past Chairman of Council and currently Chairman of the Federation of East Midlands Croquet Clubs, be elected a Vice-President of the Association under clause 17(b) of the constitution. The proposal is subject to a postal or electronic vote under clause 19. Individual Members may vote electronically on the CA Website at <https://www.croquet.org.uk/members/survey.asp?Action=ViewSurvey&SurveyID=17>, by post or at the meeting. The postal ballot paper may be downloaded from <https://www.croquet.org.uk/news/docs/AGMBallotPaper2018.pdf>. Votes before the meeting must be received by the CA Office no later than 10 October.

11. Benefactors' Book.

The names of benefactors will be read.

12. Presentation of Trophies for the Most Improved Players.

Apps Memorial Bowl: Chris Coull (Sussex County);
Steel Memorial Bowl: Sarah Melvin (Dyffryn);
Spiers Trophy: Richard Bilton (Nottingham).

13. Presentation of Coach of the Year and Lifetime Coaching Award.

The 2017 Coach of the Year award is to be presented to Roger Mills (Sidmouth). A lifetime coaching award is to be presented to Ian Plummer (Oxford Uni. & Surbiton).

14. Presentation of Croquet Association Diplomas.

15. Presentation of Council Medals.

Council Medals are to be awarded to Jeff Dawson and Michael Hague.

16. Any Other Business.

17. President's Closing Remarks.

Improving the Governance of the Croquet Association

The CA recognises the need to build on the benefits of the newly expanded membership.

We need to be responsive to its needs and in particular implement an operating structure that people understand and find easy to use. We are told that the current Council is too big and that its interaction with the committee structure is cumbersome and inefficient.

The Management Committee was charged with proposing a solution and they are ready to do this at the October meeting of Council. They will suggest that the size of the governing body should be halved and that its remit should be to embed good governance and transparency into everything that the CA does.

In particular it should focus solely on policy, strategic initiatives and scrutiny of the way in which the Management Committee fulfils its responsibility for running croquet.

This separation of duties beneath a structure of established policies should make two-way communication with the membership more straightforward.

The benefits of the proposed new structure include:

- A streamlined Council with a more focused role
- A proper accountability of the Management Committee
- A greater transparency that makes the CA more accessible by members
- A big reduction in bureaucracy and a consequent increase in responsiveness
- A clarity of purpose likely to encourage greater participation by members
- A whole governing body elected on a constituency basis by the membership for three-year terms

If Council accepts this in October a process will begin to prepare the constitutional changes that are needed and the membership will be asked to approve them next year.

If in the meantime you have any questions or would like to comment on these ideas please email me at bowcott@hotmail.com.

I believe that this represents an important step forward for everyone who enjoys croquet, wonders what the CA does for them and wishes to interact more easily with those who can help them.

John Bowcott, Chairman of the Management Committee

News from the Croquet Association's Committees

The CA's committees report to its Management Committee, which last met on 14 July.

Its minutes, and a collation of the committees' reports, are available to CA members in the documents area of the members' section of the website.

CA Hon. Secretary Ian Vincent chooses some highlights from some of the committees reports.

~

A lot of our committees' 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

Alison Jones has taken over from Ian Burridge as AC International Performance Director.

After consultation with her squads, she has proposed that the CA should purchase Atkins hoops to use in elite events, to give our potential international players experience of them.

A proposal to merge the handicapping systems for AC (on any size of lawn) and Short Croquet has been developed.

Players would have a single index covering both games, which would be used to derive their handicaps for each.

(It is not thought feasible to go further and unify that with GC handicapping, due to the fundamentally different nature of the games.)

Development

The Committee has approved ten Grant awards totalling £17,729.

Equipment

Experiments with hoop uprights sleeved with polyurethane (for elite players, to make them more difficult to run) are taking place at Surbiton.

Information and Communications Technology

A model GDPR data privacy notice was drafted for clubs to adapt for their own use.

A notice for the CA itself has also been published.

The (somewhat elderly) PC's in the CA

Office are being replaced (with considerably smaller kit).

A recommendation that the CA take out Cyber Insurance, primarily to provide assistance in the event of its systems being hacked, was approved.

The committee also recommended that the concept of a Primary Club for the purpose of calculating club per-capita subscriptions and giving entitlement to Standard Membership of the CA should be abolished, in the interests of simplify membership administrations for both clubs and the CA itself.

International

The possibility of croquet being included in some way in the Commonwealth Games to be held in Birmingham in 2022 is being canvassed. The future of the Maugham Salver (GB v Ireland) fixture is under discussion as Ireland are currently unable to raise a competitive team.

AC Laws

A re-print of the AC laws book is now available from the CA Shop, which includes official rulings and the latest relevant tournament regulations

GC Rules

The WCF Council has approved a 5th Edition of the GC Rules, which the committee recommends should come into effect in England for the 2019 season.

Work is needed before then to prepare a new booklet and update referee training and examination materials.

Marketing

National Croquet Day had again been successful at many clubs, though some were less fortunate due to clashing events in the locality.

Croquet was to be demonstrated at the BBC's Countryfile Live event (*see the report of the event on page 11*)

Five key action points have been identified in response to the findings of the quinquennial survey.

At least some of them are being addressed in the work being done by the National Development Officer.

Publishing

A request to use the CA's Logo on

a handicapping spreadsheet being developed by a member was declined, as it might be taken to imply that the CA was responsible for it.

Developers, and potential purchasers, of such software should be aware that the algorithms underlying handicap and ranking calculations might change.

GC Selection

A committee to select our team for the 2020 GC World Team Championship (for the Openshaw Shield) has been appointed.

The unwritten assumption that all events are Association Croquet unless otherwise designated was challenged.

The Management Committee agreed that the code under which all events were played should be stated in the fixtures book and tournament/match reports.

AC Tournaments

The standard daily rate for lawn and ball hire will increase to £34 next season.

In addition, higher rates, of £40 and £50, have been proposed for certain CA or International Events where additional work in lawn preparation and hoop setting is undertaken.

Stop Press

Most of the enhancements to the membership database that were mentioned in the last paragraph of the Chairman's Column on page 3 are now available.

A link to download a CSV file giving full details of a club's members is available to its Secretary (and any Data Administrators) in the Members/ Subscribers tab of the club details page.

That tab also contains an 'Add Member' button, which adds a person, who is already in the database, as a member of the club without having to upload their details in a CSV file.

If you uploaded details of your members earlier in the year than please use these facilities to add any members that have joined your club since then; if not, please consider now doing so, to enable those of your members who are not directly subscribed members of the CA to receive this magazine.

Obituary

Rupert Webb 1928 – 2018



Bowdon Croquet Club treasures the memory of Rupert Webb who was an active member for the past 33 years.

He was introduced to the game and to the Club on his marriage in 1985 (to the former Liz Taylor, already a Club member for seven years and a 'Cover Girl' for the CA development drive.

Rupert was a keen golfer and took to Croquet with the wholehearted enthusiasm which we all came to associate with his approach to everything worthwhile.

He had recently become Chairman of the Galt Toys subsidiary responsible for their wooden toys, having produced their

famous large wooden beech blocks in the 1960s, and receiving the Royal Society of Arts Award for excellence in Design in 1976.

He shared his wood manufacturing skills for 15 years through a British development agency to help worldwide developing communities, and found time to devote to charities nearer home.

He brought all his life skills and experience to his membership of the Bowdon Club, serving on the committee for some years and being a notable house manager (with Golf Club experience).

As a former Captain and President of his golf club, his wise advice was often invaluable, and he was a generous benefactor to Bowdon on many occasions.

His splendid weathervane stands as a visible and lasting memorial to his time with us and the access ramp to the clubhouse was his last such donation – though confiding it was not as he would have designed it!

His retirement from Galt Toys in 1993 gave him time to improve his croquet and until 2008 he became a regular winner of handicap and class events, off a handicap as low as 6 (like Liz!).

He and Liz catered for many a tournament

lunch or tea and their Saturday club teas were always very popular.

Hurlingham and Budleigh were his favourite external tournament venues in the UK and both he and Liz also travelled widely to play croquet and make friends in the USA, South Africa and Corfu.

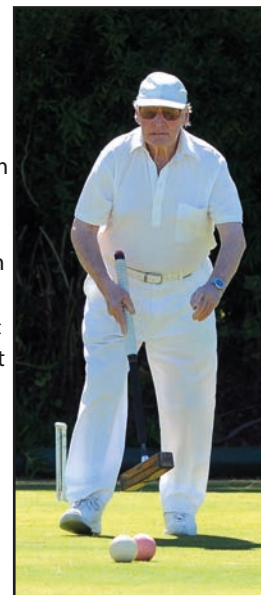
Their plans for 2017 were cancelled at short notice when he became ill.

His life was celebrated at St Bartholomew's Church in Wilmslow where more than 300

attended to remember him as a man who could always be relied upon for a word of encouragement to 'do the right thing' in play and in life.

He is sorely missed.

**Martin
Granger
Brown**



Obituary

Roy Edwards 1927 – 2018



I met Roy at Bowdon Croquet Club in 1985 when we both enrolled on a six week introduction course to Association Croquet.

This was the beginning of many years of friendship, challenge, enjoyment, competition and admiration for his commitment to the game.

He was still playing in competitions and tournaments until 2017 and was anxiously waiting for the lawns to open this year but this was delayed by the weather until April, when he still hit a few balls and made some hoops just four weeks before his death.

Over the last few years he battled

successfully against knee and hip problems and failing sight but still won matches and cups, with legendary concentration and competitive spirit but impeccable honesty and integrity in play.

Roy played for many club teams at both AC and GC at Bowdon and then at East Dorset LTCC after he and his wife moved south from Cheshire to Dorset.

He played in the Inter-Counties tournament for Cheshire, Dorset and Hampshire.

He got his handicap down to zero and made his first competitive triple peel when in his eighties!

But his croquet success was merely a reflection of his whole life with amazing adventures during service as a pilot in the Fleet Air Arm, British Airways and airport management at Manchester.

This included supporting the British Antarctic expeditions, in the Falkland Islands and flying the Queen Mother round the UK.

One well recorded incident showed him in a plane hanging over the edge of the deck of an aircraft carrier after a retaining wire had failed.

All sport captured his interest and enjoyment and he came to croquet after many years of playing golf.

Bridge was another activity in which he participated with enjoyment and competitive spirit and, in later years, he was also a founding member of the O-Hell group that played cards on Tuesday and Friday mornings in winter at Parkstone. He last played just three weeks before his death.

We shall miss his company, sense of humour, honesty and integrity and will all remember a 'life lived to the full' for 91 years.

Alan Linton



AC player development - Calling out for AC improvers

This is the time of year that our rapid improvers usually begin to shine.

I am asking for some help from federation and club coaches, handicappers and senior club members to be on the lookout for those rapid improvers.

They will probably be the ones storming through the ranks of the club competitions and winning with bisques still standing, or may have started to give away the bisques and are learning level play.

It is vital that we recognise these improving players and provide the support and encouragement they need to continue their successes.

Those improving players, who may have achieved handicaps below 5 within just a

couple of years of starting to play, often display great single ball stroke ability, and with some advanced coaching we can significantly develop their croquet strokes, strategy and knowledge of advanced play.

The development squad for next year will be selected in January 2019.

However, as we are already halfway through the season, this is the time to be looking out for appropriate candidates.

For those who are not quite ready for high-level coaching, I have recently been organising a wonderful team event called the McWeeny Trophy.

This is a friendly match played between the CA and CAI, where members can represent the CA and, although there is no

handicap limit for players, the play is Level Advanced.

This is an event that is perfect to which to introduce our improving players to Advanced play.

Not only does it help continue the fabulous relationship we have with our Irish companions, but can also introduce newer players to level play and team events.

Please look out for your local rapid improvers and either contact me or let them introduce themselves, I would be delighted to begin working with individuals to help them find their journey to croquet success.

Alison Jones,

AC International Performance Director

GC player development - CG Mentored Match weekend

The GC International Performance Development Squad (IPDS) is a mid-range mechanism for improving GC players, the levels being Elite squad (top level players), IPDS (next level), Pods (regionally-based improvement centres).

The IPDS is a two-year course involving – each year – a training weekend, run by the IPDS organisers Rachel Gee and Lionel Tibble and involving guest speakers, and a mentored match weekend, where the squad meets up with the Elite squad for matches, advice, coaching.

The outcome is an improvement in one's game, and occasionally a promotion into the Elite Squad. I've just finished my two-year course, and it's been a most enjoyable experience.

Some of things covered in the training that made an impression on me included:

- What makes for a good game of croquet (Rachel). The importance of practice.
- Going through a set of routines.
- Appreciation of Rules (Martin French)
- Control of corner hoops
- Watching one's opponent's ball to see how the court behaves
- Positive thinking when taking shots
- The top players don't always think the same way
- Richness of tactics in GC
- The Mental game (Lionel) - For example: Observe and respect oppo; have a positive attitude; accept 'off days' but try

Ivor Nunn

It is with sadness that we report the death of Ivor Nunn, CA Member and a long time member of Winchester CC



to turn fortunes round

- Taking your chances against a strong player
- Mind Training (Rich Waterman) – all about being positive

One of the great things about the Mentored Weekend was to be with Elite Squad top players, who were prepared to give up a weekend to advise, coach, play games with the IPDS players.

Particular thanks go to Ian Burrige, Will Gee, Tobi Savage, Harry Dodge, John-Paul Moberly, Jonathan Powe and of course Rachel Gee (above) and Lionel Tibble.

What worked most for me in my two years involvement with the IPDS was top players – giving up their time – going round the court with me (as partner, or opposition, or advisor) discussing, coaching, and continually giving tips.

Finally, where would we be without organisers Rachel and Lionel?

We owe them so much for organising and running the weekends, for being on hand, for being great on coaching, advising, mentoring, for their sense of humour, and for generally allowing us all to have a brilliant time.

Roger Goldring



Another call to limit GC extra turns

Dear Editor,

Further to Ulf Greder's letter and your reply in the June/July issue (*Gazette* 374).

Apart from the difficulties in both league and friendly matches against other clubs, there is also now more handicap (GC) played within clubs.

For example, just two years ago a club may have had players with the lowest handicap of 4 and highest 11 or perhaps 12 (because handicaps stopped at 12).

The 4 would give eight extra turns to the 12.

Now the handicaps extend to 16 or 20 and the handicaps are spreading out, and so too are the extra turns.

Perhaps the handicaps could stop at 12, and players stay at 12 until their index is sufficient to go down to 11?

This would work better I think, for clubs numbering 40 or 50 members.

Happy hooping.

Sylvia Wheatley, Worthing CC

A record for late starting Goldring?

Dear Editor,

I started playing croquet at age 70 and was lucky enough this year to win a

Championship event - the GC Veterans (Over 60s) Championship.

I wondered if "starting at 70" with such an outcome is a record?

Roger Goldring,

Phyllis Court CC & High Wycombe CC

Personal Gazettes copies are a hit

Dear Editor,

I thought it worth highlighting the positive feedback in our club amongst the "new" members concerning the Gazette.

Despite having a fairly comprehensive club library of back numbers and always placing the latest edition in a conspicuous place and referring to it, it seems that the penny didn't drop until they received a personal copy through their letterbox.

Also the car stickers that were enclosed with the April issue (*Gazette* 373) proved very popular indeed.

George Lang, Plymouth CC

Analysis of the GC handicap system indicates overall fairness

Dear Editor,

Ulf Greder is concerned that the new GC handicap system isn't fair on low handicap players playing against high handicap players (*letter, June / July Gazette* 374).

When the new system was trialled in East Anglia in 2014, we collected and analysed the results of 2,000 handicap games played under the new system, and compared them with 6,000 games recorded under the old system and the Effective Handicap Trial.

The evidence shows that the new system is in fact pretty well balanced across all handicaps, and a clear improvement on the previous systems.

A perfect handicap system would allow a player of any ability to win 50% of their games against any other ability level.

For almost all handicap ranges, the new system gives a success rate of between 40 and 60% against other handicap ranges – which is a reasonably good outcome for the new system.

To simplify the rather detailed analysis: *- minus players through to handicaps 0 and 1 typically attained a 45% success*

rate against most other ranges.

- players between 2 and 10 did a little better, at around 55%

- high handicaps of 11 or more did least well, with success rates against other handicap ranges of around 35 to 40%.

The maths behind the system (which isn't unique to croquet but is used in the rating or ranking systems for several sports) works best when it is open-ended at each end and when there is no artificial interference – 'let each player find their own level'.

Setting an arbitrary limit of four Extra Turns that a weaker player could receive would be just such an interference and would skew the system unfairly.

Just as in AC, it is true that many minus GC players don't participate in much handicap play.

But speaking as someone who has played around 80 handicap games a year as a minus player, and won more than half of them, it would be rather unfair to limit how many ETs my opponents should receive.

Martin French, Ipswich CC

In praise of the GC C-Level Series

Dear Editor,

At Ealing Croquet Club in West London, we have run a very successful early season annual AC Advanced Tournament for five years, and for nearly as long we have been part of the National GC Series structure with our B-Level Series tournament. We started this at the suggestion of Series director Chris Roberts, who was looking for a hosting venue in and around London; he approached and encouraged us in the early days and along with Frances Colman ran through all that was needed to organise and manage a tournament circuit event.

Latterly it was identified by fixture organisers, including Chris, that GC players in clubs like ours would benefit enormously from C-Level category GC tournaments (for handicaps 7+).

This led to five members of Ealing feeling sufficiently confident to spread their wings and 'play away from home' in other clubs' C-Level Series tournaments.

So successful were they that certainly two, and possibly three, of the players (Bridgett,

Ruth and Jane) have qualified for the C-Level Series National Final.

The experience has not only improved their personal game and given them a new horizon and challenge, but also allowed club players to feel there is something to aim for other than a game for the game's sake. This has, and will have, a trickle-down effect on other club members who want a new challenge from previous sports, games and activities.

The C-Level Series tournaments have raised the standard and opportunities available, whilst also filling a gap between those who wish to play at intervals and just for a day out, to those who play and practice regularly to improve their skills and sense of achievement.

Added to this, for the first time since Ealing have entered GC Federation league games, this year we have won every match.

So, thanks Chris, the GC Tournaments Committee, and all those who are helping clubs like ours to survive.

Carole McLoughlin, Ealing CC

What you don't want is a broken chopper!

Dear Editor,

The photo of the airbus fly past at Chester June/July issue (*Gazette 374*) brought to mind a recent visitor to the Ripon Spa Hotel Croquet Club which, although it is renowned for its hospitality, is taking things a bit far!

The North Yorkshire Air Ambulance landed on court 3, it being the nearest to the adjacent park where someone was in need of assistance.

It gave a whole new meaning to the term "outside agency"!

Unfortunately the rescue mission



failed as subsequently the helicopter would not start and our club was graced with its presence and that of the attending repair vehicle for over 24 hours before it flew away leaving behind two 6" deep ruts some 6' long as a memento of its stay.

We were really grateful to Fergus and Keith who keep our lawns in a beautiful condition and managed to repair the damage in time for a tournament being held the following week.

Gill Brent, Ripon Spa Hotel CC

The building of 'The Biltonator' and me

~ An inspiring success story with thanks to those who have helped the Biltons ~

Dear Editor,

A piece of history for my son Richard and me that explains why I would like to say a big public thank-you to three croquet people.

We started playing croquet at our local club Richmond Park, Gainsborough in 2008, which is a small club that had only eight members at the time.

We met Roy Ware when we entered some tournaments organised by Woodhall Spa CC.

Richard and I won our first tournament at Lincoln Castle in 2010 playing doubles; it was managed by Roy Ware and Mary Currie from Woodhall Spa for the East Midlands Area (a picture and report of the day are in the Gazette Issue 327, August 2010).

We went on to win again in 2011 but then missed out in the final and semis of the next two years.

It was around that time when Roy asked us if we were happy just doing local tournaments because he thought we should try some on the national scene.

So in October 2013, we entered the Ripon Spa Black Sheep Doubles, where we met Tim King, who, after being surprised by how well Richard was playing, got us to join the CA.

We entered the English National Singles Championship Series (ENSC) qualifiers at Ashby and Nottingham in 2014 and have since played further afield and enjoyed some B-Level Series tournaments, which culminated in Richard winning a qualifier at Hurlingham and finishing a close runner-up in the B-Level Series national final of 2016.

Last season was our best so far (up to that point); I managed some B-Level

Series second and third places and then a tournament win at Leighton-Linslade to qualify for the national final, where I



Richard 'The Blitonator' Bilton at the GC Open (above) and Mike Bilton, the with the Phyllis Court B-Level Series Cup. (C. Roberts)



finished third.

By this time Richard, now not eligible for the B-Levels, played in all eight of the top flight Championship Series tournaments and did well enough to qualify for the ENSC (Ascot Cup) final where he also finished third, taking his handicap from 2 to -2 during the year.

Richard has been awarded the Spiers Trophy for the most improved GC Player 2017 and will receive the trophy at the CA AGM in October.

Remarkably, 2018 has been even better for us; I've won the B-Levels at Sussex County, Bury and Phyllis Court; and Richard got great start in winning the A-Level tournament at Hunstanton and was delighted play against World Champion Reg Bamford in the block stage of the British Open in June.

I asked Richard what it was like playing Reg and he said "Fantastic!"

Reg kindly gave Richard some comments about his game and those must have stuck because soon after that he won the Championship Series tournament at Nottingham without losing a game.

So in just three years, Richard has gone from a B-Level contender to a minus 4 handicap player, 14th in the UK rankings and is hopeful of a place in next season's GC World Championship.

So it's a big thank-you to everyone who has given us any advice along the way and especially to Roy Ware, Tim King and Reg Bamford for guiding us, and Richard in particular, along our wonderful croquet journey . . . and it's not over yet!

Michael Bilton, Richmond Park CC

The Alison Jones Column ~ I've got a beautiful feelin'...

Many of you will remember a previous article I wrote about my last year, my awful last year, of croquet.

It was so bad in fact, I'm not sure I can even call it 'croquet'.

Well, you might also remember that I said I was going to do something about it, and that something was 'have fun'.

I am pleased to report that my handicap has gone from 0.5 down to -0.5, and I am on my way to -1 (only 100 points to go).

Although this is a clear indication of success, the biggest tell-tale is the smile on my face.

I can play croquet again, and I'm loving it!

This of course is not going to work for everyone, but I'm going to tell you how my croquet world was changed, and all I can hope is that it helps someone else, somewhere out there.

Here goes...

The first step in my success in getting back on track was to ask for help.

I talked to people, players, family and friends including a very special friend called Rich Waterman (*in action below*)

If you don't know Rich by now, believe me, he's a chap you're going to want to know soon.

It is, of course, rather handy to have a friend who is not only a croquet player, but also somewhat of a specialist in 'sport mind-set'.

After a two-hour chat, many strategies to help with the background noises on the lawn, words of wisdom and ways to remind myself of achievements and good times, Rich said one thing which changed my world... I had said to him "Who stole my croquet?", he said "No Alison, you forgot to have fun".

In that instant I realised, somewhere along the way I had totally forgotten to have fun.

I was so busy trying to make the handicap numbers come down and the ranking numbers go up, I forgot why I played.

I play croquet because I love the game, I love out-thinking my opponent, I love out-thinking myself.

I love the sound of the mallet when you get that amazingly clean contact and watch the ball go exactly where you imagined it would go.

Once I had started to remember the fun things about croquet, I made sure that any croquet I played would be fun.

So here are some of the things I did to make sure I was having fun:

I took on a 4-yard hoop, and smashed it. Miles away from any other ball on the lawn and I missed that long return shot. It felt good and I laughed.... I ran a hoop and I loved it!

The last break I played was with four balls, it was accurate and I didn't even try a single peel.

I was on the lawn and my opponent wasn't. It felt good, and I loved it!

I took a change of clothes for the end of the day, I relaxed after play, whether I played well or poorly.

I chatted with friends and laughed at the great shots, and the amazingly unsuccessful ones.

I wrote a list of all the great things that have happened in the last couple of years (here are just a few):

Meeting friends from far and wide at the AC Opens, partnering Dave Kibble and spending time with Brian Cumming and Doug Gimsley.

Playing indoor croquet with my friends, my Dad and my David – who would've thought there would be 'hills' on a carpet?!

Singing and dancing with Sheila in the lovely little Tyneside club house, and cooking with Lorna in Bowdon CC.

Being allowed on the Golf Croquet team for my fabulous Surbiton Club, even though I am hopeless. I think I provide the entertainment.

I have spoken to many of you who have contacted me about your similar situations; my advice is to have fun, relax and remember why you love this sport so much. Play a handicap game with a friend, spend time with nice people and visit new clubs.

Go wild, smile when you miss.

To everyone who has helped me these last six months, you know who you are, thank you!

"Everything's goin' my way."



2019 GC World Championship awarded to Sussex County (Southwick)

Sussex County Croquet Club at Southwick (near Brighton) has been announced as the major venue for the 2019 Golf Croquet World Championships.

They will be supported by three other venues in **Eastbourne, Worthing** and **Tunbridge Wells**.

The Championships will be held between **27 July and 4 August 2019**, with competitors from up to 30 countries eligible to compete.

Sussex County CC, which is one of the world's oldest and largest croquet clubs, has completely refurbished their eleven courts to international standard within the last five years.

This improvement was a major factor in the World Croquet Federation's decision to award the Championships to Sussex.

The current World Champion is London-based South African Reg Bamford, who won the last Championship in 2017 in Melbourne, Australia.

More details of the planning for the Championships will be featured in future issues of the Gazette.

In the meantime inquiries and offers of assistance are invited by Linda Gavigan, 07890 027385, lindagav23@gmail.com or Jonathan Isaacs, 07767 226477, jonathanisaacs47@icloud.com.



Croquet at BBC Countryfile Live

After last year's successful debut, the CA team returned to the BBC Countryfile Live show at Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire. The four days (2 to 5 August) were baking hot, but that did not deter the visitors; most of the 120,000-plus visitors wandered past the croquet court in the very centre of the show.

Our counts show that over 900 people picked up a mallet and tried croquet (up from 800 last year); over 85 people (up from 65 last year) left their contact details for Dave Gunn our National Development Officer, to steer them towards clubs near their homes, and others made direct contact with a CA volunteer who came from their local club.

We don't think that we were on television this year, but the BBC's Weather presenter Carol Kirkwood tried croquet and both Carol and Countryfile presenter Anita Rani gave a plug for croquet during the Q & A sessions



in the Big Barn. Our croquet volunteers also did a great job passing out leaflets and chatting to passers-by: updating knowledge of croquet and dispelling a few myths.

It is always difficult to assess impact, but undoubtedly the public profile of croquet was raised and interest stimulated, which we hope will convert into people taking up our sport. This year we trialled sail flags with the CA logo emblazoned on them.

We think they were very useful.

The flags will soon be back at the CA Office at Cheltenham, and if any club would like to borrow them they are most welcome.

Interestingly, Countryfile Live has decided to have two shows next year – one at Blenheim as usual, and a second show at Castle Howard in Yorkshire; so I'll be talking to our Northern colleagues about any potential interest in the latter.

Finally a big "thank you" to all the volunteers who stuck to their tasks in such roasting conditions, to Tony and Pat from Eynsham who did a great job making the court out of parkland and managed the setting up and dismantling of the site; to the Eynsham Club and Klim Seabright for the loan of equipment, and to Frances Colman who recruited the 50 or so volunteers, and managed the admin processes.

John Dawson, CA Council member

Photographs (Top): Richard Peperell was excellent with the children. (Left) Volunteers organiser Frances Colman shows Carol Kirkwood the side style swing to cope with her tight dress. (Below) John Dawson demonstrates AC. (Images by Chris Roberts)



CA Advertising flags make debut ~ please borrow these for your event

The CA have invested in four 'tear drop' advertising flags and these had their first outing at Countryfile Live in early August, **reports Brian Wilson.**

These double-sided flags featuring the CA logo can be read from either side, and they certainly helped to draw in more visitors to the Countryfile Live croquet court (see left).

The flags are approximately three metres tall and they really do stand out!

They are available for any club to borrow and this can be arranged with the CA Office at Cheltenham.

Clubs have often asked how they can create more interest in croquet from passers-by and eye-catching flags and banners, similar to these, could well be the way forward as a cost effective way to attract attention (photo left).

These particular flags are made from a lightweight material and there are various

design types available. The difference between feather, sail and teardrop flags is simply the shape. Feathers tend to be rectangular or banner shaped, whilst sails are to be curved at the top. The teardrop shape that we chose is a little more distinctive. They are held up by a telescopic pole secured at ground level by either a spike or a water-filled base unit.

There are many suppliers to choose from and I recommend that you search a few websites for the choices available.

The CA worked with Sailflags Ltd. - 01736 719111 - www.sailflags.co.uk.

It is worth giving some consideration to the content of an advertising flag or banner.

Whilst there is no right or wrong shape of logo or badge, some designs are much better for this purpose than others and the advice is to keep the design as simple as possible, because over wordy flags have less

impact.

Draft your design and discuss it with your supplier, but be aware that logos or pictures may not be in a high enough resolution for good quality reproduction.

We found Sailflags Ltd very useful here, as they offered to produce the CA logo in a higher resolution for us. That incurred a small additional charge but the result is worth it – and we now have the enhanced logo available for future use.

Flag costs vary from £90 to £150 depending on the design and the number purchased.

However, seeing that the CA flags gained the Countryfile Live visitors' attention, I advise clubs wanting to get noticed to give serious thought to buying flags/banners for their own use.

Brian Wilson,
Chairman of the Marketing Committee

The story of croquet balls being used in historic models

Max Parsonage's question (*letter, Gazette 373*) about the possible connection between the colours of croquet balls and those used in chemists' molecular models has led to the (re) discovery of some interesting croquet artefacts in an unexpected location, the existence of which may be of wider interest.

It turns out that the models which prompted the question are probably those of August Wilhelm Hofmann and are generally recognised as among the earliest attempted physical representations of molecular structures.

Hofmann was a prominent chemist, and Head of the Royal College of Chemistry from its foundation in 1845 until he took up a post at the University of Berlin in 1865.

The College continues to this day as part of Imperial College (of which, as part of the Royal College of Science, it was the first constituent college).

Hofmann's 'ball and stick' models

Hofmann's models were of the so-called 'ball and stick' type, with individual atoms represented by balls and the bonds between them by rods.

The colours chosen by Hofmann for his atoms are still in common use.

We know that Hofmann used croquet balls to represent the atoms in at least one manifestation of his models because he himself stated this in a well-attended public lecture he gave at the Royal Institution on 7 April 1865.

The components of his model for methane – a name he himself was to coin the following year – survive in the care of the Royal Institution.

It comprises five balls – four white, one black – and their connecting rods and stand.

The balls have been repainted

The balls are small, at just under three

inches diameter, and have clearly been repainted: the black shows evidence of red paint underneath; and the off-white on the other balls has strayed in one or two places onto the black connecting rods.

The direction of the brushstrokes is consistent with them having been painted after attachment to the rods, though of course their current paint may post-date their original construction.

It seems unlikely that Hofmann's choice of colours was dictated by those then in general use for croquet balls.

Red, blue, green and yellow are obvious colours to use.

White – for hydrogen – was not among the standard croquet ball colours at that time (*see Roger Bray's article, right*), and the black – as already noted – has an under-layer of red.

It is understandable that he did not use orange, pink or brown which could have been easily confused.

Hofmann's colour choice probably just a coincidence

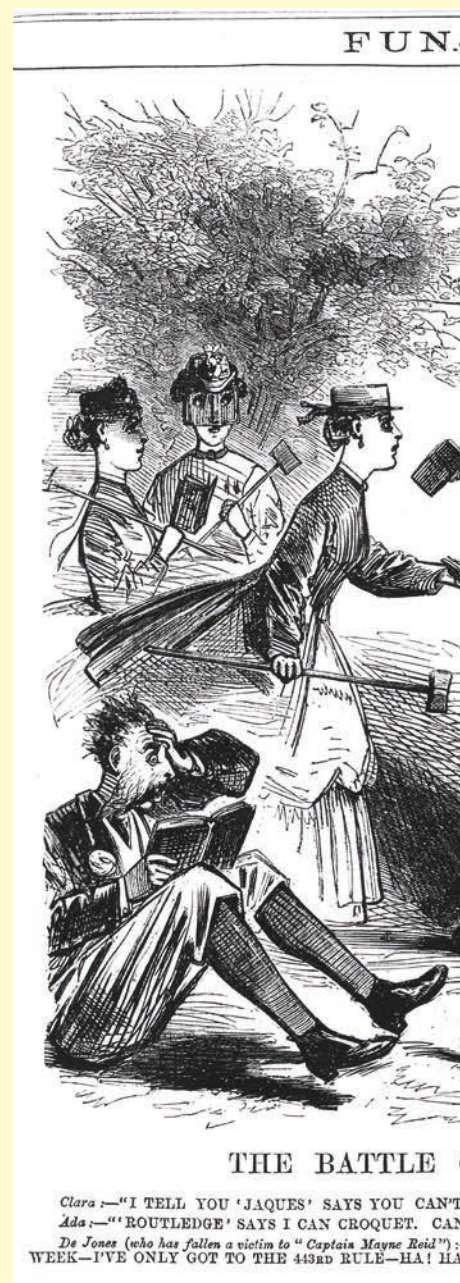
The correspondence between the rest of Hofmann's colours and those of croquet balls, however, is probably no more than a happy coincidence.

As to the croquet balls themselves, their small size and seemingly low weight (they are firmly attached to the rods, so cannot be directly weighed) casts an interesting light on the croquet of the time.

Balls of modern size and made of boxwood were already available, and would have been of much the same weight as today's balls, but playing with those used in Hofmann's model would have been a completely different proposition.

One can all too readily envisage them featuring in the 'pat ball' game derided by many contemporary commentators.

Ian Bond



Coaching – Question Time

Just one question has been presented to me which I had never thought of before; the answer to which might help out anyone just starting to play Level Advanced.

Question: Do you still concede or receive optional lifts after time has been called?

Answer: Yes you do.

Lifts are not like bisques (which may not be used during a time turn) but they are an intrinsic part of Advanced play.

If you are ahead and time very near, why would you want to concede a lift?

Unless you are on a controlled break and a potentially winning turn of course.

Without running a lift hoop, you might leave the four balls in the most difficult places imaginable to hopefully protect your lead – so balls may be left in A and B baulk.

If you do concede a lift your opponent may lift either ball and take the shortest shot possible, and thereby create an opportunity to win. **Sarah Hayes, Chair.Coaching Cttee.**

In search of historical evidence of our ball colours



In the early years of Croquet it was common for mallets, balls and hoops to be made by local craftsmen.

In the absence of any generally accepted guidance for playing the game, the equipment must have varied enormously in composition, size and finish.

Jaques dominated the market in the 1850s

A degree of uniformity was established when Jaques & Son started making croquet sets in the late 1850s and dominating the market.

We have no direct evidence about any of the firm's early equipment, but it seems highly likely that J H Walsh (*in 'Stonehenge's Manual of British Rural Sport, 1859 edition*) was describing it when he stated "Each ball should be painted a different colour, and have a mallet corresponding."

8 different coloured balls in Jaques' standard croquet set

The 1862 Punch cartoon mentioned by John Harris (*Letter Gazette 374*) – see illustration – is also likely to portray a Jaques set; and Lewis Carroll, who had family connections with Jaques, lists (*in Croquet Castles, 1863*) the balls in the "ordinary game" as being painted blue, pink, black, yellow, brown, orange, red and green in the then standard 8-player set.

Incidentally, in 1857, the year before starting to make and sell croquet sets, Jaques began to market a parlour game called 'Squails', which also became highly popular.

It was invented by Wolryche Jones, the younger brother of the croquet pioneer Walter Jones Whitmore and was a form of shove-ha'penny.

The pieces, or squails, were differentiated using the colours blue, red, black and yellow.

Confusion reigned

Other croquet manufacturers began to compete with Jaques from 1862 onwards, and were quickly followed by several authors of books on croquet (again, see John Harris's Letter) all of whom claimed authority for their own pet ideas.

Confusion reigned – wittily encapsulated in an 1864 cartoon in the satirical magazine Fun, a rival to Punch (*reproduced here*).

Jaques added to the confusion by promoting a new "improved" set of balls in 1864 which were plain with 1, 2, 3 or 4 rings painted on them, four in red and four blue.

Standardization was badly needed

The weekly newspaper The Field, edited by Walsh and urged on by Walter Jones Whitmore, led the way in trying to establish a widely accepted set of laws governing the game.

The initial 1864 draft, however, meekly suggested "The stakes, balls, and bridges may very safely be left in the hands of players and manufacturers."

The 1866 version was slightly more prescriptive: balls were to be painted either all over, or with just a ring of colour, or in Jaques' improved manner.

The colours to be used were not specified.

1866 and yet more different ball marking methods

As time passed, yet other methods of differentiating the balls (and mallets) were introduced, including stamping the numbers 1 to 8 on them (Cordeaux & Ernest of York, 1867).

How, then, did the standard (primary) set of four balls coloured blue, red, black and yellow evolve?

By the early 1870s the 4-ball game was emerging as the most popular form for competitive play, but the four balls were selected from any 8-ball set, fully coloured or ringed, at the players' choosing.

So there was still little uniformity.

1890s call ball standardization

With the 1890s revival of the game, the development of open tournaments led to increasing pressure to standardize the appearance of balls.

In 1898 Walter Peel advocated using "whole coloured [balls] although striped ones are in many respects equally good".

A new century and uniformity at last

But in 1900 Colonel Needham, the Honorary Secretary of the Croquet Association, was able to declare that balls "are painted in plain colours, blue, red, black and yellow" and that "the method of ringing balls was obsolete."

Interestingly, he added "Efforts have been made to introduce composition balls, with little success so far."

Roger Bray

Illustrations:

1862 Punch cartoon

1864 Fun magazine cartoon

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CA Grant gives Bowdon more room and new path

Bowdon Croquet Club are grateful to the Croquet Association for helping to fund the second phase of the improvements to the access to and surrounds of the clubhouse.

We would also like to acknowledge the support of James Hawkins, the NW Federation's Development Officer.

In 2017, a project was completed to realign and widen the pathway from the entrance gate to the clubhouse, in order to increase the area available for courts 1 & 2.

This will give more flexibility in laying out the courts to avoid excessive wear, and will

occasionally support a five-court layout.

This phase was supported by Manchester Airport Community Trust Fund.

This year, with £2,000 assistance from the CA, the paved area in front of the clubhouse has been relaid, including a ramp access from the pathway, to reduce the risk of tripping on the uneven paving, and to make the clubhouse wheelchair accessible.

The balance of the project costs have been funded primarily by anonymous donations from club members. The projects were conceived and managed by Alan Mayne and John Greatbanks, and both projects were completed, using contractors, just before the start of the summer season to minimise the impact on members' use of the courts. weekend.

David Walters, Bowdon CC

Chairman of the Development Committee Roger Staples forwarded this photo supplied by Bude CC's Tony Trump showing not only his club's well located courts with Atlantic backdrop, but their rather splendid advertising banner.



Plymouth Croquet Club has had a long-term problem with the local rabbit population. We are fortunate in having four lovely flat courts on the top of a reservoir belonging to South West Water, but our Club adjoins a busy park used by families and dog walkers.

The rabbits enjoy the tranquillity of our lawns, and we have had up to 30 sighted, especially in the early morning and evening.

Over the last few years they have been increasing in numbers, and causing a nuisance by digging holes and leaving droppings everywhere.

It was time to deal with the problem.

After contacting several fencing contractors, who were reluctant to quote for our small scale requirements, I was fortunate to discover Evergreen Rabbit Control, who provided a quotation which I could submit to the CA Development Committee for a grant for half the cost.

Thank you to South-West Development Officer Adam Wimshurst who helped me to complete the paperwork for our application for a grant, which was approved.

Our club was able to raise the remainder of the money needed by hosting a variety of local groups and organisations for croquet days, utilising our clubhouse that can seat two dozen guests for lunch.

Prior to commencing the work, Evergreen Rabbit Control visited our site and made recommendations that reduced the amount of fencing required, and so reduced the cost to £1,834.80.

The work commenced in mid-January, and took only two days to complete by

CA Grant ends rabbit problem at Plymouth

two men with a digger, which we only just managed to get through our gate!

The majority of the rabbit fence was in place and had been attached to an existing security fence by the end of day one.

On day two, the rabbit fence was completed and a drop box rabbit trap was installed.

This is a very simple idea with operation such that when open it provides a run into our site that the rabbits get used to using, but when set, the floor falls and several rabbits can be caught..

Next we had to remove any rabbits that were now stuck on our side of the fence – so we went ferreting! This was a whole new and fascinating experience for me.

Two dogs and a ferret were brought on site. The dogs pointed to where the rabbit burrows were and nets were put over the holes before the ferret was put in. It had a transmitter on its collar so that we knew where it was underground!

We had a network of burrows under our clubhouse, some of which extended about six feet outside the line of the building and were at a depth of three feet. The ferret did his job and four rabbits were removed.

I was offered one for supper which I declined, but was told that none of them are wasted, and the ferret gets to keep one as a reward.

I was very impressed with the professionalism of Evergreen Rabbit Control, and would recommend them to any other clubs with a similar problem.

They are based in Hampshire but travel to all areas of the country, including Scotland and Cornwall.

They also control rabbits by shooting, and also fly a Harris Hawk in addition to having about 20 ferrets.

They regularly work at the Eden Project in Cornwall, and they are happy to call in at Plymouth in a few weeks time on their way home to make sure we are rabbit-free.

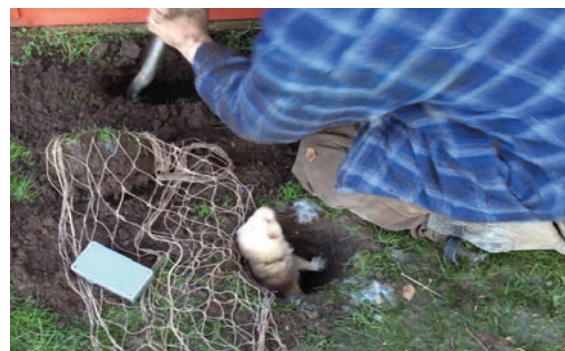
Our members and guests will now be able to have smoother courts to play on.

We will still struggle to improve our lawns further, as we are unable to use petrol or diesel mowers, chemicals or weedkillers due to our location atop the reservoir.

A few years ago we were able to purchase a battery-driven greens mower with the help of a grant from the Croquet Association as detailed in a previous Gazette issue.

We would like to thank the Croquet Association for providing funds of £917.40 to enable Plymouth Croquet Club to become rabbit-free.

**Linda Lang,
Honorary Secretary, Plymouth CC**





After a month or so of hot sun, no rain, and admirable restraint in use of watering from Lawn Manager Robin Hayes, the Cheltenham lawns were brown and quick with firm hoops that made four-ball breaks challenging and sextuple peels unthinkable, *reports Andrew Gregory.*

The Doubles Championship

Fifteen pairs entered the Doubles Championship and the four seeds reached the semi-finals without dropping a game.

By the end of the first Sunday, Stephen Mulliner and Mark Suter had won their semi, while the other was pegged-down at one game all. Suter is the ninth partner with whom Stephen Mulliner has reached an Open Doubles final.

The doubles was resumed after the singles semi-final; see later in this report

The Singles Championship

- Challenging conditions for the Qualifying Swiss -

The Singles Championship attracted 34 entries, but alas Reg Bamford was unable to defend his title.

The qualifying Swiss took place on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, starting with the usual plan to have eleven rounds, but with the tricky conditions this was reduced to nine, with players needing five wins to qualify for the knock-out stage.



There were no notable casualties, though Mark Avery needed all nine rounds to register his five wins. Daniel Gott did well to qualify in his first full season of advanced AC and he was also the only player under 30 years of age in the event.

Of the 125 games in the Qualifying Swiss, there was one quadruple peel achieved, four triples, and 18 games had to be decided on time.

Did I mention the difficult conditions? They were not to everyone's taste.

One player grumbled about taking over three hours to lose by twenty-[something] to [a top player]. - Some details here have been redacted to protect player's anonymity!

Another told of a hoop set in concrete on a sheet of glass. "I failed to approach from two inches!" was said.

Chris Clarke gave this high praise verdict: "There was a really good test for all players this [Thursday] morning. I think that the eight courts used for the knockout are probably the best eight I've ever seen for an event. They were all challenging and all seemed to have substantially different speeds in North and South directions. Court number 8 was one of the slower ones, with the northwards direction running at only about 11 seconds. However, the southwards directions on some courts (numbers 4, 5 and 6 are the fastest) may be close to 15 seconds."

The knock-out

- rounds 'zero' and one -

Seventeen players qualified for the Singles Championship knock-out.

This necessitated one match before the round of 16, which fortunately involved the quickest player in the event in James Death, who beat Robin Brown in three games, then started against Alain Giraud at 5.30 pm.

Giraud's 'hanging bye' is an unfortunate position, and Death won inside three hours.

Apart from Death v Brown, there was one other three-game match in the 'zeroth' and first rounds, and that was between the two eighth seeds, Avery and Suter. (The Seeding Committee in its wisdom was unable to decide between them.)

Suter won through on court number 5 which was perhaps the most difficult.

Elsewhere the World Champion Paddy Chapman won his first game v Doug Grimsley plus one on time, and eight seeds proceeded to the quarter-finals.

Quarter-finals

- The game of the tournament -

The Manager was able to start all quarter-finals on the Friday morning and the first game between Robert Fulford and Mark Suter was probably the most exciting of the tournament.

I urge you to read Jenny Clarke's commentary on CroquetScores, but here's a brief synopsis:

Fulford gained a break in the fourth turn and had obviously decided that triples would be too difficult (on court 6).

So he made ten hoops, conceding a 'lift to position' under Super Advanced rules.

From that Suter picked up a break, and decided to double-peel Fulford's ball out of the game, and at the end he confounded the crowd by pegging out his own ball as well as Fulford's.

This was a deliberate tactic, because he preferring his chances in a 2-ball ending rather than a 3-ball.

There was no significant break in the nervous endgame.

At one point Fulford attempted hoop 4 and missed it altogether.

Eventually the players broke for lunch with both clips on penult and this gave the referees a chance to brush up on the regulations for an impasse.

On resumption the players nudged the balls cagily, until Fulford gained the advantage by hitting an 11-yarder, and was able to dribble into the middle of penult with Suter on a side-boundary.

Suter took on the shot at the half of the ball that he could see - he hit, fortunately stayed near the hoop and was able to finish.

Shortly after this, there was a significant development when the heavens opened, and half an hour or so of heavy rain rendered the lawns much more conducive to breaks.

Fulford completed a Triple Peel in his second game with Suter, but the latter replied with a TP of his own to win the match.

This was the second time Suter had knocked Fulford out of the Open - the first was in 1987!

- The other Quarters -

Elsewhere, Jamie Burch beat former World



Championship

Category reports ~

Champion Mulliner 2-0 on court 5, while the current World Champion Paddy Chapman went out 1-2 to James Death on court 4.

On court 7, David Maugham and Samir Patel shared two scrappy games before a Maugham TP settled their match in the third.

Three of the four semi-finalists had not reached this stage of the AC Open before, and the other was Maugham who lost in the final in 1993 before winning the title in 2005.

~

On Saturday the easier conditions meant a return to the usual Super Advanced tactic of attempting a Triple Peel on the Opponent (TPO) given the opportunity.



Semi-final 1, Death v Burch

Two expensive errors from Death in his first game gave Burch two breaks and he finished with a TP.

Game two saw a TPO from Burch, who later picked up a 3-ball break, but disastrously failed the hoop with Death's clip on, off Death's ball.

Death gratefully accepted the chance to equalise.

In the deciding game, Burch got the first break but failed hoop 5, only to see Death then fail hoop 1.

Burch picked up a break with his backward ball, and surprised the crowd by making all 12 hoops and so conceding contact.

Death got a leave but Burch hit in, then Death missed, and Burch should have finished, but failed hoop 5.

Death then also made all 12 hoops and peg out Burch, who didn't get going off the contact, but did hit in with a 15-yarder on his next turn.

He approached hoop 5 from the first corner, ran a three-yard hoop and again should have finished, but failed 2-back.

A couple of turns later Death failed hoop 1, Burch hit another 15-yarder and did finish this time.

Semi-final 2, Maugham v Suter

The other semi-final also had a deciding third game.

Maugham TPO'ed Suter, then controlled the three-ball endgame well.

Suter took one lift shot, after Maugham made hoop 4 with a defensive leave.

Suter took only one other shot, when Maugham was for hoop 6, and joined up in the 3rd corner.

Perhaps Suter was unlucky that Maugham was able to play a rush promoting the third ball into the court and from that Maugham finished.

~

On the Saturday evening the outstanding Doubles semi-final was resumed and went like this: Sam Murray (partnering Avery) made nine hoops; Chapman made also made hoops and his partner Maugham made 12, before Chapman finished.

~

The Final, Burch v Maugham

The singles final was between World no.4 Jamie Burch and World no.9 David Maugham.

Maugham is vastly more experienced, though surprisingly for someone at or near the top of the rankings for the last 25 years, this was only his third Opens final.

A day and a half's sun had made the lawns quick again, not like Friday morning but maybe running at 12 Plummers.

One expert thought it the toughest conditions for a final for ten years.

In Game 1 Maugham had the first break and a chance for the second until a two-yard rush was missed entirely.

Burch then made his own break to 4-back - the balls weren't there for a standard TPO.

After some interplay Burch started a standard TP but failed hoop 6 with one peel done. Maugham tried a standard TP, but was fatally hampered after 3-back with two peels done and from there Burch finished.

Game 2 of the final saw Burch gain the first break, but in the last shot of the turn he failed to find third corner, yielding Maugham a useful rush.

Maugham picked up the break but again was not in shape for a standard TPO.

Instead, for the first time this week, POP tactics were deployed. (The early demanding conditions rendered them superfluous.) (POP = Peeling OPponent, other than with a view to pegging out).

Thus at the end of this turn Maugham's clips were on 1 and 4-back, and Burch's on 3 and 4-back.

Later Burch got in with his backward ball



but was hampered after 1-back, allowing Maugham back in however, but he failed hoop 1.

Burch then took his forward ball and made three hoops to reach peg and 2-back.

Maugham hit the 13-yard "last shot" and embarked on TP which boiled down to a straight rover peel, which only just went through.

Maugham was unable to avoid a hoop-and-roquet and could not see the peg for a long attempt at the peg-out.

At this point Maugham made an interesting tactical decision.

Instead of croqueting his partner ball away somewhere, and pegging out two balls to leave 'peg alone' v '2-back alone', surely a 90+% winning position, Maugham decides to go for the finish.

His first croquet stroke was very good, sending his partner ball to within 12 inches of the peg. The other ball is rushed three feet away, and the combination peg-out was ... missed!

After some thought a scatter-shot was played, but Burch still had chance to finish.

(continued overleaf on page 18) ...

~

Photographs:

(Middle) AC Open Champion 2018 David Maugham. (Corners, clockwise from top left) James Death, Jamie Burch, Mark Suter and Daniel Gott.

Images by Chris Roberts



.... (continued from page 17)

Some indifferent shots meant Burch was soon attempting to approach 2-back from about nine yards. His roll-up yielded a three-foot hoop shot and he ran it to the boundary now requiring four hoops on a 4-ball break to become Open Champion...

But he failed 4-back and Maugham had trivial finish to take game 2 and tied the match.

I fear Burch was a disconsolate figure in the third and deciding game.

He had chances, but two short shots were uncharacteristically missed.

Maugham was efficient enough and became Open Champion for the second time.

The presentations:

The Solomon peeling prize was won by James Death with four TPs and a QP.

The Z was won by Joel Taylor and the Y Doubles by Brian Cumming and Doug Grimsley. The Plate play-off was still ongoing on and eventually Alain Giraud beat Sam Murray on time.

Burch tried to muster a smile as he collected the runner-up trophy and Maugham was presented with the main cup, so it fell to him to make a speech.

He was most effusive in his praise of Cheltenham Croquet Club, and rightly so.

The conditions were absolutely amazing, thanks to Robin Hayes the Lawn Manager and hoop-setter. The catering was to its usual high standard with thanks to Eileen Magee et al.

"I cannot praise the Club enough." he said. Hear, hear!

Thanks also to Sarah Hayes for organising two evening socials at the Club, an Italian evening on Thursday and a barbecue on Saturday. It saves having to eat out and get drunk, etc! . And most importantly, thanks to the Manager, David Maugham - I'm sure he would have won more titles if he didn't have the strain of managing this event every other year.

~

At about half past four the Doubles Final started, but by 8pm it stood one game all and by 9.45pm it was dark, but Maugham had a finishing turn!

Sadly he failed hoop 4, so the game was pegged down with the clips situation: Chapman for peg & Maugham on 4 versus Mulliner on 2-back and Suter for hoop 1.

The match may be resumed at the Championship of Surrey (which was being played as the Gazette went to press).

Andrew Gregory



Photograph (above) Oliver Rice with a full follow through, watched by Tobi Savage.



Photographs: (above) Robert Wilkinson with Duncan Catterall and (below) David Wise points the way to James Galpin. Images by Chris Roberts.



NextGen event introduces youngsters to competitive tournament croquet. The inaugural 'Next Generation' croquet tournament was held at Cheltenham Croquet Club over 14/15 July, coinciding with the final weekend of the AC Open Championships.

The team event attracted 14 participants of mostly school and university age, from locations spanning Ramsgate to York, to compete in a mixture of AC and GC matches, partnered and mentored by leading croquet players.

The idea

The idea of the event was first conceived in a WhatsApp group of croquet players discussing how to get young people into competitive croquet.

A number of barriers to entry were identified, including geography, cost, lack of access to other young players, and an absence of top players at local clubs to inspire / mentor junior players with potential.

This event was proposed as an experimental solution, with the following aims:

- to bring together young croquet players across the UK and build a community / network,
- to expose them to A-class AC/GC players, who are normally scattered few and far between and might not appear at their local clubs regularly,
- for them to experience top class croquet first-hand, by being at the climax of the AC Opens and by playing alongside A-class players in a relaxed but competitive atmosphere.

A-Class players captain four teams

Participants were divided into four teams, each captained by an experienced player.

A number of A-class players (Robert Wilkinson, Tobi Savage, Gabrielle Higgins) gave their time to mentor and play exclusively at the event, whilst many other players dipped in and out to take part around their existing Opens commitments (Andrew Hope, Mike Town, Gareth Denyer, David Wise, Alison Jones, Andy Myers, Jamie Burch, Stephen Mulliner, James Death, Sam Murray, Brian Cumming, Paul Bennett, George Noble).

A special mention should go to Daniel Gott – identified originally as a potential participant only, his storming run in the Opens rendered him unavailable for much of the NextGen activities, but he duly joined



The NextGen group photo - Rob Wilkinson, Ellen Thompson, Callum Johnson, Eugene Chang, Nick Fraser, James Booth, Duncan Catterall, Andrew Scott, Matt Morgan, Jonny Simpson, Alison Jones, Greg Peters, Oliver Rice, Aston Wade, Tobi Savage, James Galpin. Squatting: Daniel Gott. Not pictured: Tom Oulton who was passed out on a bench.

as a team captain in the final rounds, and represented the NextGen participants in a GC match laid down by James Death and Jamie Burch.

His Opens success will undoubtedly inspire more young players to follow his lead.

The tournament

The event was run as an all-play-all team event, with each match consisting of two rounds: three GC games followed by three 14-point AC games. Hi-lo doubles partnerships were used where possible, using whichever experienced Opens participants we could press-gang to play at short notice (for full list, see above!), and AC doubles matches were played alternate stroke.

The lawn conditions at the Opens this year were the most testing in recent memory, and many of the youngsters were surprised at both the firmness of the hoops and the speed / variability of the lawns.

Fast track AC coaching

Many of the NextGen participants had little experience of AC, having only participated in the GC Student Championships previously.

For these players, they got a fast-track taste of AC break play through partnering an A-class player, and many of these duly played a part in completing their first ever all-round breaks under patient tutelage.

The NextGen players with some AC already in their repertoire were treated to more advanced tactics such as pegged-out endings, peeling turns and forcing leaves.

In particular, Aston Wade (Winchester School) playing off handicap 14 had some fantastic single ball strokes and will improve rapidly.

Callum Johnson (York) was another player who stood out, earning praise from his doubles partner, 2016 AC World Champion Stephen Mulliner, whilst Ellen Thompson had the delight of partnering James Death to complete a superb peeling turn with a cross-wired leave.

Eye opening GC from Savage

The GC games were where most participants felt at home and these were contested fiercely.

England international Tobi Savage opened some eyes with his unique swing, and his singles game against Daniel Gott featured some exhilarating long clearances and jump shots from the boundary.

Oliver Rice (Ramsgate) was returning to the game after a few years out and showed glimpses of a Tobi-like swing, having been introduced to croquet by the latter.

Meanwhile, the university-age participants were resuming their rivalries after many of them graduated over the summer – **the CA's new Young Persons Sponsorship Scheme and Bursary Schemes** will hopefully make it easy for them to find clubs nearby as they relocate around the country to join the world of work.

Yellow team victorious

The block rounds were finished by lunch on Sunday, culminating in a 1 v 2, 3 v 4 final match-up on Sunday afternoon, with the

Yellow team of Daniel Gott, Alison Jones, Aston Wade, Tom Oulton and Greg Peters emerging as champions.

Other NextGen activities included some practice drills, including sequentially ricocheting a ball on to the peg over the fewest strokes and also a peg-shootout exercise.

These were won by James Galpin (Nailsea), who also collected the Most Valuable Player award for winning the most games over the weekend.

Overall, the event was played in a relaxed but competitive manner, with NextGen players mingling with local players and Opens participants off the courts, and getting plenty of chances to watch the Opens Singles semi-finals and finals when not in play.

Fast track AC coaching

There were some good-humoured remarks put to some of the NextGen youngsters over their liver-damaging exploits of Friday night, which led to late (very late!) starts for a select few.

The Saturday evening BBQ provided a chance for further mingling, with NextGen participants taking full advantage of **extremely generous offers from the CA Coaching Committee and Alison's Websites** to fully subsidise their supper.

With the dust now settled, post-event feedback has been sought from participants, local members and mentors, with the potential of running another such event next year, perhaps following the AC Opens or another similar major top-class croquet event.

There were multiple CA juniors and potential mentors who were unable to enter this year, and thus it would be good to get a future event into the diary as soon as possible.

As ever with experimental formats and a rookie tournament manager (yours truly), there were things that could be improved on all fronts, from timekeeping to eligibility to format.



England win the GC Home Internationals

England won the second Golf Croquet Home Internationals in convincing fashion; winning fourteen out of a possible eighteen matches and only dropping one match that was completed.

After the inaugural tournament at Carrickmines in 2017, Ian Burrirdge offered to buy a trophy for the event, so the weekend started with Ian presenting the trophy to John-Paul Moberly for England's win last year!

All 16 players then headed straight out to test themselves against Surbiton's challenging conditions.

England v Scotland

England got off to the perfect start by winning all six of their matches against Scotland without dropping a game.

First up was the doubles; and British Open Doubles Champions Moberly and Tobi Savage were able to put the 2017 draw against Martin "it's all luck" Murray and Alan Clark behind them, with a convincing 2-0 win.

This score was matched by England's Jonathan Powe and Rachel Gee against the new Scottish pairing Robert Darling and Rosemary Saunders-Robertson.

England continued their good start into the first round of singles, where each player conceded less than six hoops in their matches.

Ireland v Wales

In the other first round test, between Ireland and Wales, the score was much closer.

Ireland, fielding a much-changed line-up compared to 2017 (with only Simon Williams playing again), prevailed 3.5 - 2.5 after Evan Newell beat Garry McElwain in the crucial last singles match with the score tied at 2.5 all.

The only singles match to go the distance and reach a third game was Ireland's Jane Morrison against Wales' Sarah Melvin, with Morrison dominating 7-0 in the third. In the other singles matches, Wales' no. 1 Ian Burrirdge beat Ireland's no. 1 Simon Williams, however Ireland won the other as Charlie von Schmieder beat Peter Balchin.

Wales' points came from the doubles in which they won three out of four games.

~

The second round followed the usual excellent Surbiton lunch and, in order to stay in the competition, Wales now had to beat England, and Scotland had to beat Ireland.

~

England v Wales

The singles round was played first to reduce the number of games needing to be played on the second day.

Welsh captain Burrirdge continued his good form by beating England captain Moberly in straight games, playing particularly well at hoop 12 in game 1.

Burrirdge played numerous consecutive centre-ball clearances from the boundaries which he described as "some of the best shots I've played".

Unfortunately for Wales, that was as good as it got and the other three singles matches went England's way, leaving Wales needing to win all four games of the doubles matches to salvage an unlikely draw.

Scotland v Ireland

Scotland were also on the receiving end of some good play from their test against Ireland, where all the singles went in Ireland's favour, apart from Newell v Darling which was left tied at one game all and would be resumed later, if it mattered.

That was it for Saturday's play, and
continued on page 25...



The Singles Championship 'The Blocks'

The singles started on Thursday 22 June and it soon became clear that Reg Bamford, current GC World Champion and defending British Open Champion, and John-Paul Moberly, the top active English player, were the favourites.

The first impression on arrival was how good everything was looking at Southwick.

In recent years, the club has devoted considerable resources in order to improve the courts and surrounds and it was clear that the effort has and will continue to pay off.

The prolonged hot and sunny weather since the start of June had also speeded up the courts to provide challenging conditions worthy of the event.

The Doubles Championship

The Doubles Championship was held on Tuesday and Wednesday 20 & 21 June, and featured several interesting pairings among the entry of 20 pairs.

John-Paul Moberly and Tobi Savage were the ante-post favourites but challenge was expected from Ian ('old') Burrirdge & Rachel Gee, Howard Cheyne & Will Gee and Euan ('young') Burrirdge & Chris Clarke.

Last year's winners, Reg Bamford and Stephen Mulliner, were partnering Charles Barlow, a fellow South African, and Richard Bilton respectively.

The Moberly & Savage favourites duly reached the semi-finals but, with only a 7/9 win record, came second to the unbeaten Burrirdge (young) & Clarke.

They were possibly slightly surprised to meet the all-Kiwi pair of Jenny Clarke and Nelson Morrow who had played very effectively and won block B with 8/9 wins, ahead of Burrirdge (old) and Rachel Gee.

The semi-finals duly pitted Burrirdge father against son and Moberly & Savage against Clarke & Morrow.

Burrirdge (young) & Clarke took a close first game but lost an equally close final game to Burrirdge (old) and Gee, 6-7, 7-3, 7-6.

Moberly & Savage had a rather more convincing 7-2, 7-3 victory in the other semi-final against Jennie Clarke & Morrow and then played – at close to their best form – to defeat Ian Burrirdge and Rachel Gee 7-4, 7-5 to take the title.

GC Open Championship

~ Stephen Muliner reports ~

Both sailed through their blocks unbeaten with +52 and +58 net points respectively.

In **Block A**, Jose Riva (Spain), the current AC President's Cup holder, European AC Champion and a past European GC Champion, was a clear second to Bamford, followed by Richard Bilton and Harry Fisher.

By way of contrast, **Block B** produced a four-way tie on 4/7 for the three qualifying places (for the knock-out) behind Moberly!

This was resolved in favour of Peter Balchin, Pierre Beaudry and Ian Burridge.

In **Block C**, there was another four-way tie, but on 5/7 for the top four places, so no play-offs were required.

This involved Jamie Burch, Will Gee, Tobi Savage and Jose Alvarez-Sala (Spain); the latter another past European GC Champion.

Lionel Tibble was back to his best with an unbeaten display in **Block D**, followed by Stephen Mulliner, Rachel Gee and Tim King.

The Knock-out - Round 1

Round 1 of the knock-out produced two tight battles.

The first featured Tobi Savage and Rachel Gee.

Gee took the first game 7-4 but Savage recovered to win the next two 7-6, 7-4 and so qualified to meet Bamford, who was looking in excellent form.

The other tight battle saw Jamie Burch overcome Harry Fisher by 7-5, 5-7, 7-4.

Burch can be fairly described as an occasional GC player but, when he does appear, his exceptional shooting makes him a very dangerous opponent.

Quarter-Finals

In the quarter-finals, Bamford beat Savage 7-3, 7-5, with Savage in full contention in game 2 until the very end, while Mulliner gained revenge for his block defeat by Tibble by a 7-4, 7-4 margin.

In the other half of the draw, Moberly overcame Burridge 7-5, 7-6 in another close battle and Riva won a high quality shooting contest with Burch by 6-7, 7-2, 7-5.

Semi-Final 1: Bamford v Mulliner

Bamford and Mulliner have had many battles in this event over the years and Mulliner started out brightly with a 3-1 lead in game 1.

However, Bamford's metronomic centre-ball hitting at almost all ranges brought him back into contention and, after a prolonged

battle at 5-5, a long attempt by Mulliner went into the jaws of 11 and out again.

This gave Bamford a vital edge and he took the first game 7-5.

Mulliner's shooting fell away a little in game 2 and Bamford cruised to a more comfortable 7-3 win to reach his 13th final since 2002, out of 17 appearances.

Semi-Final 2: Riva v Moberly

The other semi-final pitched Riva, not known for his lack of self-confidence, against Moberly.

Riva's shooting can be formidably accurate and it was no surprise when he responded to losing the opening game 7-6 by winning the second 7-4.

It was a fitting end to a superb contest that it should be decided by the 13th hoop being run from the boundary, this time by Moberly.

The Final: Bamford v Moberly

The final therefore provided a repeat of the 2017 encounter when Moberly lost in three to Bamford.

In the 18 years since 2000 (since the British Open Championship has been contested in its modern form), only three names have appeared on the trophy (and one was Ahmed Nasr in 2004 when the Open Championship was subsumed into the GC World Championship).

The dethroning of the old guard of Bamford and Mulliner by the new generation of GC players has been long anticipated. Was 2018 to be the year when it finally happened?

Game 1 - The first game of the final began evenly with the players trading hoops.

However, when leading 4-3, Moberly uncharacteristically missed two fairly routine chances to run hoop 8 and lead 5-3 and, at 4-4, he had two boundary shots to lead 5-4 but neither worked.

Bamford took full advantage to reach 6-4.

Moberly ran a six-yard hoop 11 with Blue to make it 6-5 but missed his first opportunity to clear Bamford's Red which gave his opponent the upper hand at hoop 12 and, thirteen turns later, Bamford ran it from close range to win the first game 7-5.

Game 2 - Nothing daunted, Moberly leapt into leads of 4-1 and 5-2 in the second game.

Bamford won hoop 8 (5-3) but, after missing his 14 yard clearance, appeared to have given away a 6-3 lead.

However, Moberly unexpectedly failed hoop 9 from a yard and, worse still, ended up in contact with an upright.



Bamford jumped to cut the lead to 5-4 and gain a dominant position at hoop 10.

His prospects improved still further when the luckless Moberly accidentally rush-peeled Bamford's ball, to level the scores at 5-5 and give Bamford first shot to hoop 11.

Moberly only snicked the immediate clearance and Bamford was able to block and then jaws with Yellow.

Moberly then produced an extraordinary jump from the north boundary (*see next page, 22*) which somehow cleared Yellow from the hoop but left Red in runnable position, and now Bamford led 6-5.

After one more long clearances from each side, Bamford was in position with Yellow almost wired from Moberly's Black on the south boundary. The clearance hit the hoop rather than the ball and Bamford ran hoop 12 to win 7-5, 7-5 and claim his eleventh Open Championship.

~

The Sussex Country Club received very well-deserved appreciation for the state of the courts, the excellence of the catering and the warmth of its welcome. The prospects for the 2019 Golf Croquet World Championship here look very good indeed.

~

Photographs - (Above) Reg Bamford on his way to his eleventh GC Open Championship. (Below) A jump from Spaniard Jose Riva (Left) Peter Balchin who had a great Open and then represented Wales in the Home Internationals won by England (top left): Rachel Gee, J-P Moberly, Tobi Savage and Jonathan Powe.



Croquet Innovations Tournament ~ part 2

Continuing on from his introduction to the 'Peel Croquet' game described in the last June/July issue (Gazette 374), **Stephen Mulliner** now looks at 'Peel & Peg' which is another variant of our sport that was tried at the Croquet Innovations Tournament that he attended in March in Florida.

'Peel & Peg'

Peel & Peg takes the idea of making peeling the aim of the game to an even greater level than Peel Croquet.

The two sides play a set number of turns each (eight turned out to take about 2.5 hours) in each of which a maximum of four hoops may be scored. During the break the striker tries to complete as many peels as possible.

The game is won by either being the first side to reach 17 peeling points in the same number of turns as the opponent or by simply accumulating more peeling points from your eight turns than your opponent can from their eight turns.

One peel in a turn earns one point, two earn two points, three peels earn four points, four earn eight points, five earn 16 points and six earn 32 points and an automatic win!

Simply running hoops scores nothing and, unless you finish under enough control to peg out two balls, none of your peeling points for that turn will count either.

In practice, achieving two peels is normal, three is good, four is very good and five peels needs considerable skill with or some luck! Six peels in a turn has not yet been achieved.

The start

- balls paced in set positions -

To aid successful peeling, the game begins with the four balls placed in set positions.

Two are placed one yard east and west of the peg, one is placed midway between hoops 1 and 4 and the other midway between hoops 2 and 3.

The striker is entitled to choose any ball as the striker's ball for their turn and to start by taking a lift to position on any other ball.

These choices will depend on which hoops are chosen for the peels and which hoop has the striker's clip.

This is drawn randomly at the start of

the game and then simply keeps on going around and round the hoops as the game proceeds with hoop 1 following hoop 12.

A key item of equipment is a bag which contains 12 small blocks numbered 1 to 12.

One block is drawn blindly from the bag to determine which is the first hoop for the striker's ball. That block is then returned to the bag.

The striker's clip should be coloured something other than one of the colours of the game (e.g. green when the primary colours are being used) and will be placed on the chosen hoop.

Four more blocks are then drawn blindly to determine on which hoops the four peeling clips will be placed. These blocks are then left out of the bag. Four identical clips (e.g. pink) are placed on these hoops.

If the situation is "target-rich" go first

The players toss to decide who will have choice of start and the toss winner will inspect how the four hoops that the striker's ball will run in the course of its break relate to the positions of the four peeling clips.

If the situation is "target-rich" with two or three peel clips on the hoops that are on the route of the striker's clip, the toss winner will choose to be the first striker.

If the situation looks more challenging, they might choose to go second.

The striker can choose any ball on court to be the striker's ball for his turn and can begin with a lift to position on any of the other three balls.

The regular clips should be placed in the peg so that the striker can start by placing the clip of the chosen striker's ball on his clothing as a memory aid.

The striker then starts his break and goes peel hunting.

Each time a peel is made, the clip is pocketed.

Three, four, five peels . . .

If three peels are made, the striker calls for a new block to be drawn from the bag (and not returned) so that one of the pocketed clips can be placed on a new hoop.

The same will apply if they score a fourth or fifth peel before the end of the turn.

When the turn ends, as many blocks are drawn from the bag as necessary to ensure that there are four peeling clips on hoops when the other player starts their turn.

The new stiker starts

The new striker starts with a lift to position and takes over the position of the striker's clip and the positions of the balls as they lie at the end of the last turn.

However, if any ball lies within one yard of the peg, it may be moved one yard away.

If three (or four) balls are outside the box defined by the four corner hoops, one (or two) can be moved to any of the vacant starting spots.

The idea is that every turn starts from an easy position and so provides both sides with similar chances to score multiple peels.

'Peel & Peg' sharpens up your game

Peel & Peg sharpens up all aspects of your game - except shooting which should almost never be needed.

There are no leeps and peels can be completed in more than one turn. The need to finish with two balls pegged out, which can be done in stages several strokes apart if necessary, ensures that the hunt for peels is conducted with a certain discipline.

Inward peels (meaning those where the striker's ball can be croqueted towards the peg rather than towards the boundary) are especially useful at the end of break.

Peel & Peg can be strongly recommended as a training routine with the goal of becoming a "six-peeler" as the target.



Jolliff wins the top class at the National Seniors

Players found the courts and hoops at Budleigh Salterton quite a challenge this year, such that some games went to four hours duration. Maybe the sun and heat had something to do with it?

Consequently, and unusually, the Manager had to impose time limits on the more senior Blocks A and B on the last day in order to finish the tournament at a reasonable time for players to travel home.

On Saturday morning no clear winner was emerging in most blocks and there were some very close finishes this year.

At the top, Block A for the Trevor Williams Cup, Simon Hathrell (Watford), Tim Jolliff (Taunton) and Jonathan Lamb (Canterbury & Uruguay) were all on five wins but with the games between then still to be played.

Hathrell beat Lamb, but then lost to Jolliff, giving him six wins; Jolliff won both his two games giving him seven wins; and Lamb lost twice so dropped out of the running.

In the meantime Jim Field (Nailsea) who was on four wins at the start of the day, soon made that five and then beat Hathrell to end as runner-up on six wins, behind Jolliff who beat Lamb to win the event and cup for a clear victory.

In the second tier Block B, it was closer still on Saturday morning with four players;



Stephen Custance-Baker (Taunton Dene), Bob Thomson (Nottingham), Peter Nelson and Roger Mills (both Sidmouth), all on four wins each. The first pair then won both their remaining games, Nelson won once and Mills didn't add to his tally.

The tie between Custance-Baker and Thomson, each on six wins from their seven games was broken on the 'who beat whom' rule in Thompson's favour and he collected the Colin Hemming Cup.

The third tier Block C was a clear cut affair for John Dawson (Chester), who had a clean sweep winning all seven games to win the de-Ansorena Cup, two wins ahead of Mike Taylor.

But there was a nail-biting end in **Block D**, where the last game would determine who won the Nigel Graves Trophy as both Brian

Shorney (Eardisley) and Richard Peperell (High Wycombe and Phyllis Court) were tied on four wins, with the latter having to sit out on his bye round and watch whilst Shorney completed his game schedule, which he did with a deciding victory to win the class. And another one win advantage in **Block E** saw Judith Moore (Budleigh) win the small silver goblet with four, ahead of Sam Watts, Pat Jackson and Rosemary Bradshaw all on three.

The Handicap Singles, for the Quiller Cup, was won for the second year running by Shorney, who was lucky to win it again as he only entered on the Monday saying he had thought he had entry as last year's winner.

Philip Harris & Susan Rogers beat David Wise & Gerald Osborne-Burke to the Doubles title and there was a tie in the consolation event between Dave Mundy & Tony Bower and Tim Jolliff & Jonathan Wolfe.

The fastest game prize was, as usual, won by Jim Field and was just one of the awards presented on behalf of the CA by its Hon. Treasurer, Peter Death, who thanked everyone involved in the organisation of the event.

Julie Horsley (Manager)



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A tour of Croquet Clubs in the West Country



Sue and Bernard Pendry of Surbiton CC decided to go on a different holiday this summer, as Bernard reports.

Sue and I were contemplating where we would like to go for a holiday. Perhaps we could go to an exotic place abroad, with sun, sea and whatever?

Not a bad idea but we would miss our regular games of croquet, so we hit on the idea of a croquet tour and decided to go westwards.

With a bit of planning we contacted several croquet clubs and booked into nearby accommodation with this plan:

- **Monday 23 July - Hamptworth CC**, staying at the Bell Inn for two nights.

- **Wed'sday 25 July - East Dorset CC**, staying at the Countryman Inn for two nights.

- **Friday 27 July - Budleigh Salterton CC**, staying at the Devon Hotel for three nights.

- **Monday 30 July - Cornwall CC**, staying the Waterwheel Inn for three nights.

This is as far as we got but, if all goes well, we hope to play at **Weston-super-Mare CC** and maybe another on the way back to our home (we later decided that we would also like to visit **Bath CC**).

Hamptworth CC

In the north of the New Forest, Hamptworth is situated at the Golf Club of the same name which has a fully staffed clubhouse with bar and restaurant area.

They have five courts on two levels which are which are overlooked by a spectator pavilion. The courts are nowhere near as brown as our club at Surbiton or as fast but there is some grass and they play well once you master the slight slope.

Sheena Griffiths, the social secretary, made us most welcome and joined us in their afternoon roll-up where we put up a reasonably good show before joined them for a drink in the bar.

Next door is The Cuckoo Inn, a rare old traditional pub with ancient customers to match, especially one old lady, (reputedly Romy), who was drinking a pint while puffing her pipe.

After hop/on, hop/off buses in the New Forest we turned-up again for the club's Tuesday evening roll-up but there were only four members there.

Sue and I lost heavily to Richard Dickson playing off handicap 1 and his partner Bob but we did get a little of our own back beating Dudley and Rita, who was comparatively new to the game.

We stayed at the Bell Inn in the heart of The New Forest and we recommend it for those wishing to explore this wonderful part of the country.

East Dorset CC

What a real surprise where we found five magnificent lawns all beautifully green, reputedly something to do with an underground river.

The clubhouse is all you would want (it is nearly as good as Surbiton) with a café open all hours. Luckily on Wednesdays they have morning and afternoon GC roll-ups and we joined in with both.

We were a little late for the morning session but did get in one game each and both won.

I partnered a lovely lady, Carole (handicap 12) v Paul (10) and we had a most enjoyable game.

The afternoon was different though and, partnering each other, we lost 4-7, 5-7 to Brian (3) and Martin (9) in a most convivial atmosphere. This is a club



we hope to revisit one day. We stayed at the Countryman Inn, which is rustic but every room is well appointed.

When booking there was only one room available and that was their classic suite, room 9. If ever you decide to visit make sure you book room 9!

Thursday was a day off from croquet so we drove to Bowleaze Cove, unloaded our electric bikes and rode right through Weymouth and back again, stopping for a dip in the sea.

Sidmouth CC

On the way to Budleigh Salterton CC we were recommended to pop into Sidmouth CC and how pleased we were that we did.

We were met by Peter Nelson, the club Chairman, who explained there was an internal match in progress on the lower courts but that we could use court 1 nearest to the clubhouse, which was pity because Sue beat me 7-4!

Sidmouth has five courts in magnificent condition, verdant as though there had been no drought and overlooking the sea, all very charming.

It was a 30 minute drive to our next accommodation, The Devon Inn on the outskirts of Exeter, which is very basic and really a motel but it was okay for three nights. The restaurant was first class and the fillet steak was perfect.

Photographs, clockwise from top left:
(1) With the members at Hamptworth.
(2) With Brian, Martin & Tom at E. Dorset.
(3) Sue at Cornwall CC (*obviously*) and likewise (4) Bernard with Felicity.
(5) What is that in the hoop hole?
(6) The answer!
(7) Sue at beautiful Budleigh Salterton.



Budleigh Salterton CC.

We found "perfection" at Budleigh Salterton with eleven very green lawns in a beautiful setting over-looking the sea.

Even some inclement weather could not spoil our enjoyment and it seemingly had no effect on the locals either because the club was crowded when we visited due to the hosting two internal GC matches and an inter-club AC match.

However, this still left two courts for the club roll-up where we had good fun playing with Doreen, Faith and Pierre whilst dashing in and out to dodge the downpours.

We cannot believe there are better courts anywhere.

Before returning to the hotel we cycled around Exmouth, which is a beautiful holiday resort but the wind was so fierce it whipped up sand from the beach and hit us like a blast furnace.

The sun that had been with us from the start had departed and the clouds with rain set in so we spent the next day cruising down the coast as far as Brixham and back.

Cornwall CC

Our sat nav had difficulty locating Cornwall CC with its three courts tucked away in the countryside outside of St. Austell with lovely views.

Felicity Owen, the secretary, was playing a match but took time to show us around and said we could set-up the hoops on their court 3, then suddenly Sue called a halt as she found something down a hoop hole – and it was something ALIVE!

I couldn't make out what it was and soon Felicity and her opponent joined us in turn looking into the hole – whatever it was, it was indeed alive!

They tried to coax it out with teaspoons and a clothes peg to no avail and then topped the hole up with water hoping to bring whatever it was to the surface.

Nothing worked, so we decided to play round the problem, using only five hoops but then another court became free for us.

Later we discovered our hoop hole lodger was a small frog, when it decided to come to the top of its temporary dwelling and was looking at us - A real toad in the hole moment!

Meanwhile, Felicity won her match and Sue and I finished at one game all.

Okay, so the courts do not compare to Budleigh's but we enjoyed ourselves and looked forward to the following day's Wednesday's roll-up.



At the time of writing, we are due to play a second day at Cornwall CC and then head back east to Surbiton calling into Weston-Super-Mare CC and Bath CC on the way.

To be continued . . .



GC Home Internationals

... continued from page 20.

most of us headed to The Royal Oak for some well-deserved liquid (and solid) refreshment. Simon Williams was very generous with his spare red wine, particularly to the English players (and we wondered if this had anything to do with our upcoming test the next day!).

On day two, the doubles matches from the round two tests were left to play later if they were to turn out to be relevant, and the round three tests got under way. England faced Ireland in the title decider and Wales faced Scotland for the wooden spoon (in a repeat of the final round from 2017).

Wales v Scotland

Both tests were surprisingly one-sided with Wales winning 4-1 with a tie in both of the best of two doubles matches and Burr ridge, Balchin and McElwain all winning their singles matches 2-0.

The match between Saunders-Robertson and Melvin was left at 1-1 as the test result was already beyond doubt.

England v Ireland

Meanwhile, England beat Ireland with a decisive 4.5 - 0.5 score line.

Savage came back to take the second game against an in-form Morrison and again that match was left at 1-1 once the overall result had been decided.

Williams and von Schmieder claimed a game off Moberly and Savage, and Powe dropped a game to von Schmieder in their singles but, apart from that, it was plain sailing for England as they wrapped up the Championship and retained the title of Golf Croquet Home International Champions.

All the unfinished games were left that way, apart from the doubles between Wales and England as Wales could still snatch a draw if they won all four games. Moberly and Savage won the first game (of the scheduled two) against Burr ridge and Melvin 7-4 meaning an England win was confirmed.

The other doubles match was abandoned, and the second game went 7-1 to England, with Savage running hoop 8 with the final shot of the event backwards!

Many thanks to the Director and Manager of the tournament, Rachel Gee, and Surbiton CC for hosting, Thanks also to George Noble and his team of cooks and hoop setters, and to Tournament Referee Jay Dyer who refereed for us all weekend, and was even kept interested by a couple of Bray slice attempts from Savage.

J-P Moberly, England GC captain

Never Ask a Lady.....what she has in her bag!

Coaching any form of croquet is very much about making people comfortable.

This usually means when people are out on the lawn playing a game but, to me, also includes having everything with you that you need.

I normally cart around a small/medium sized holdall – bright in colour so I might notice if someone wanders off with it by mistake but more usually I am able to see it from a great distance when I have abandoned it!

Here is what it contains (and why!):-

Handicap cards – in a plastic sleeve with a pen so they might be presented as required and completed every time I play a qualifying game.

Markers – a number of plastic markers to not only mark balls in double banked games but also for refereeing purposes. You will find markers have magical properties and disappear all the time so a fairly more than adequate supply lives in various compartments.

Timer – a countdown timer is a must. It drives me mad when players use the nearest visible clock to time games, so get a timer please if nothing else – it would be perfect birthday or Christmas present in my view and a good stock is held at the CA Office Shop. **Tip** – when not in use reverse the battery and thus extend the battery life by years and save the whole thing leaking

and corroding over the Winter.

Sunscreen – a good quality high factor sunscreen is a must these days. Opt for a spray variety as you might spray and rub in with your arms and not get it all over your hands. Lip Screen may also be used on your nose and ears to save the greasy hands.

Insect repellent – when the sun is high and you are sitting in the shade of a tree or hedge, so are all the creepy crawlies, so spray yourself generously with repellent – at the very worst they might just find someone else nearby to graze on.

Sun glasses – at least three pairs in my bag – can't see a thing without them when the sun is out as I find it far too bright. Squinting into the sunshine is not a good look and makes you very tired and headachy. If you can't play wearing them at least put them on whilst out of play.

Allergy tablets – a well-known brand of these loiters at the bottom of my bag. There is nothing worse than being grabbed by hay fever or having an adverse reaction to an insect bite.

Glove(s) – a couple of pairs of my preferred gloves are always to hand (see what I did then?) so when it gets very humid or rainy I am able to whip out a glove and continue without my mallet spinning wildly in my hands.

Mallet grip – I always keep a spare grip in my bag (and the grip applicator in my car) so if anything happens to the existing

grip I am able to replace it immediately.

Law/Rule book – a very important part of my kit – has lots of uses including checking if a ball is on or off the lawn. AC book has just been reprinted to include Rulings and Regulations, so make sure to get yours at the CA Office Shop.

Smaller bag – inside of which I keep valuables such as bank card or cash, mobile, car keys and so on. Whenever you have to leave the area you are in, perhaps to nip to the facilities or afternoon tea is served, it is easy to simply grab the smaller bag and take it with you.

Waterproofs – if the forecast is suggesting rain the only way to make sure the sun continues to shine is to pop your waterproofs into your bag! Again the CA Shop have these for sale.

Spare pair of socks – easiest way to make yourself feel better on a hot day (or a very wet one) is to change into a fresh pair of socks – oh joy!

Other less permanent residents – **Hat, banana, water bottle, corkscrew, knife and screwdriver** – the last two being for hoop setting purposes.

So – now you know what I have in my bag and I hope my list helps you to be prepared for every eventuality and therefore feel more comfortable and enable you to concentrate on your game.

Sarah Hayes,
Coaching Committee Chairman

Since the last Gazette, I have been merrily bashing around the Cheltenham courts, including a nine day stint at The AC Open Championships.

The courts I learned to play on were not hugely dissimilar to the dry, grassless skating rinks which we played on for the Opens – the hot dry weather certainly presented a challenge – so this set me thinking about the difficulties inexperienced people must be facing adapting from playing croquet on long, often wet grass.

My first tip is to go for it! – don't be afraid of take-offs (AC) or taking position from distance (GC) as until you actually play the shot properly you will never know anything whatsoever about the pace of the court. Your poor old brain will just see a pathetically dainty shot meandering along miles from anywhere useful and still be wondering how to play the next similar shot. Croquet strokes are marvellous – rolls

Feeling Hot! Hot! Hot!

just keep on rolling – they can even go in a circle! – So, try to do away with these altogether particularly as hoop approaches.

How many times have I heard the old **“my ball just kept on rolling!”** wail of despair? When I ask about the shot selection and get the reply that it was a full roll, I am quick to comment something along the lines of “What did you expect?”

Approaching hoops with a stop shot is also risky as the reception ball is easily liable to whizz-off over the boundary even from a seemingly close position.

So how might you stop this happening?

Drop your hands down the mallet – the hand at the top represents the ball being placed into reception position – so lower the top hand and control the distance of the object ball.

You need to sort of coach yourself when starting a break (AC) or progressing into the game (GC) and this might only be achieved by watching every shot carefully – gone too far? Wandered left or right? Disappeared out of sight into the road?

Watch and learn, and don't make the same mistakes again.

I do appreciate how tricky it is to play under such conditions, but, spare a thought for those of us who played for years on dry, fast lawns as we struggle 90% of the time playing on the wet Wilton style courts which are more the norm most of the year!

Feeling sorry for me yet? No? Well, didn't think you would.

Make the most of the speedy surfaces – sun cream encrusted, jaunty hat, sunglasses and a cold drink – I know I will be.

Have a great time!

Sarah Hayes
Coaching Committee Chairman

Brief Encounter – or – the key to groups (cannons)

I was clearing a lawn the other day and carrying some equipment back when I passed a religious gentleman...

"What do you have there my dear?" he asked, to which I replied "3 balls, Canon".

That gave me an idea for an insight into a much avoided line of play (mainly due to lack of knowledge) and that is the business of Cannons.

Remember that the most difficult part of playing a cannon is getting one in the first place.

Please don't just mysteriously create a cannon when it is apparent to all watching that the ball you have roqueted did not cross the boundary line anywhere near the other ball.

Corner 1 Cannon

Often games start with a tice being put onto the West Boundary.

Your opponent shoots and misses usually towards corner 2, and you now shoot (from middle of South boundary) and miss but keep your two balls quite close together on the yard line (usually a couple of yards north of hoop 1).

Opponent thinks – what could possibly go wrong? So takes on the shot at your 2 balls and misses into corner 1.

If you can now rush your partner ball into the corner also you will have a corner 1 cannon.

Practise this rush because it is not as easy as it sounds.

So – you have rushed a ball off the lawn



James Death playing a corner 2 cannon

into the corner and this needs to be placed in a legal position of which there are just two – in contact with corner ball East or North.

I prefer to place it East as this is marginally nearer the hoop – every little helps!!



Replace red into a legal position.

Next - REMOVE THE CORNER BALL!!

We will replace it later.

Prepare your croquet stroke by putting your ball in contact with the ball you have roqueted and line these up to hoop 2 – in reality line them to the left of hoop 2 (how far? well depends on the conditions – if wet/slow a couple of yards and if dry not far).

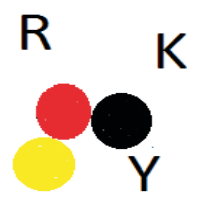


Remove corner ball and prepare croquet stroke.

Next reintroduce the corner ball as this is the one which you will be rushing to hoop 1.

This ball must be placed in contact with the ball being sent to hoop 2 (not the ball you are playing) – the two balls which were in contact originally (when you rushed into the corner) must be in contact when the shot is played.

Put it into contact so as the angle of the three balls is a right angle – you have a right angle on the head of your mallet so check carefully and adjust as needed.



Replace corner ball so as the sides make a right angle

Now you are ready to play the shot but where do you aim?

The line to use is always directly at the inside hoop (5 or 6) which is furthest away so for corner 1 cannon you need to aim at hoop 6. Don't forget how hard to hit it – you not only need one ball to toddle all the way to hoop 2 but you also need to rush the third ball around five yards to hoop 1.

I always suggest a mighty wallop and usually it does the trick, but take care if lawn is fast because the hoop 2 pioneer will probably go off the court and your turn will end.

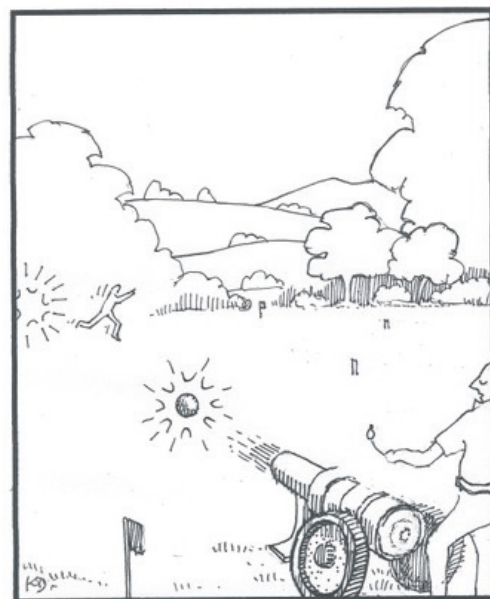
When playing the cannon you have not only played a croquet stroke but also rushed the third ball – in this case to hoop 1 - and you now have a great chance for a break.

The ball you are playing has become a ball in hand so may be picked up and taken to the ball you have rushed near to hoop 1.

Points to remember (the cannon mantra)

- Replace ball rushed in a legal position of which there are 2.
- Remove the corner ball.
- Line up croquet stroke slightly left of next hoop.
- Replace the third ball so as to create a right angle.
- Aim at the inside hoop (5 or 6) furthest away.
- Mighty wallop.

Continued on page 28...



A 'CANNON' CAN BE A USEFUL SHOT – IVOR OFTEN GOT TO USE IT WHEN IN A TIGHT CORNER

Cartoon by Keith Davis

The key to groups (cannons) ~ cont.

... continued from page 27.

Make sure to identify other chances to use this:-

- Corner 2 for hoop 1 back
- Corner 3 for hoop 3
- Corner 4 for hoop 3 back.

This is the most complicated cannon (*not really once you have had a try*) and having got the hang of it you will find out what a great opportunity is presented if you might just be able to persuade your opponent to take a shot into a corner....providing they miss of course.

The wafer cannon is much easier and you simply put the ball you have rushed in a legal position in contact with third ball – move the third ball around the fixed (corner or yardline) ball keeping it in contact of course – place the ball you are playing into contact with the fixed ball also and arrange the third ball and your ball so as to create a dolly rush to where ever you want to go – this will mean leaving a small gap between them – as small as possible without being in contact.

This often needs a bit a fiddling with so make sure to stand back and have a look at where the rush is pointing.

When you are satisfied then simply ignore the fixed ball (which is bound to move in the croquet stroke) and rush the other to destination. Most common errors are hitting

into the shot too much or over hitting the rush, so please practise these too.



Example of a wafer cannon.
Red and yellow are in contact.
Small gap between yellow and black.
Rush line through centres of yellow and black.

The dreaded banana/worm/ whatever you call it cannon?

Don't ask – never used this rubbishy cannon as a ball is always left behind so the whole exercise is pointless!

It's not really a cannon at all, just a silly croquet stroke which could be better played as such without the worm exercise.

If you have never heard of this then please don't bother finding out.

Please find some time with a local coach to run through the exercises and then go and practise.

Please send any questions or comments to caccommchair@googlemail.com

Sarah Hayes
Coaching Committee Chairman

Recent Coaching Appointments

Within just a few days of the deadline for the last Gazette issue, I had already received a further 15 coaching appointments. I think this is fantastic and highlights for me that the coaching framework is working. **Sarah Hayes**

AC Graded Coach Grade 1

Morgan Case	Sussex County
Deborah Marcus	Sussex County
Andy Dibben	Surbiton
Chris Alvey	Bury

GC Graded Coach Grade 1:

Anne Smith	Rother Valley
Morgan Case	Sussex County
R.T.F Clark	Littlehampton
Rosanne Creighton	Hurlingham
Henry Bagwell	Hurlingham
Jacky Waite	Cheam

Club Coaches

Jane Babbage	Sidmouth
Andrew Thomas	Sidmouth
Anne Smith	Rother Valley
Robyn Clark	Littlehampton
David Wicks	Ipswich
Chris Alvey	Bury
Ted Flexman	Ripon Spa
David White	Budleigh Salterton

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Autumn Lawn Care

Autumn is the time to top dress croquet lawns if necessary.

To maintain a flat surface it is important to use a lute, not a drag mat which is fine for undulating surfaces like golf greens.

I use a twelve foot aluminium ladder as a lute. This can be pulled across the surface easily by one person and will produce a fine flat surface. Two to four tonnes of top dressing per lawn is the usual amount required, but before top dressing you can over-seed at the rate of 20kg per lawn.

For croquet lawns, the seed I use includes the stand-out cultivar of ryegrass for summer sports use. It is ranked No. 1 with a score of 8.6 in table G4 of BSPB Turfgrass Seed 2018. It had the highest mean score in the entire publication and more than a full point clear of its nearest rival.

Moss

Moss is easy to control if you keep it dead at all times.

The problem with moss is that you can't kill the roots because moss doesn't have a vascular system so normal translocation products don't work. This is why it regenerates, but if you keep on top of it you can more or less eliminate it as a problem. I don't usually rake dead moss out because that can disrupt the surface.

WARNING - Moss control will desiccate grass seed and stop germination. So it is best to treat moss after germination or two weeks before over-seeding.

Worm Casts

Worm casts can be a real problem in alkaline soils. In the past lawns could be treated with Carbendazim but that was banned and is no longer available. For this reason we now have to resort to cultural methods. My customers are aware of this - if you want to know more, please let me know.

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

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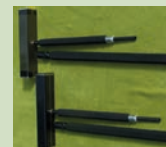
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... continued from page
Any further comments / thoughts are welcome – contact me at etychang@gmail.com.

Thank you for making it happen

My thanks must go to the many people who helped make this event such a success:

- Alison Jones (AC International Performance Director) and members of the 'Promoting Croquet' WhatsApp group for helping to conceive / plan / publicise the event and bounce ideas off,
- Dave Maugham (Manager of the Opens) who kindly let us have three lawns pre-allocated for the Opens,
- Mark Suter (CA Manager) for help in securing the location for the event and for marketing the event to club secretaries,
- Rob Fulford, Chris Clarke and others for discussions on the event format,
- Adam Moliver and Sarah Hayes (Cheltenham) for the local logistics including transport, lawns, and accommodation,
- The volunteers at Cheltenham CC for their work behind the scenes, suggesting and providing cheap lunch alternatives for the youngsters, and hosting / transporting participants,
- The experienced mentors who took time out to partner / mentor at the event, sacrificing the chance to get more games in the Opens.

Eugene Chang

The Croquet Association Website

www.croquet.org.uk

is a fabulous resource for croquet information covering: membership, news, laws & rules, coaching, who is who, and tournament details (complete with an on-line entry system).

Croquet jargon

The CA website also has a full glossary of croquet terms, jargon and acronyms that are sometimes used in Gazette reporting.

To find the glossary go to:

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