

The

Issue 379 May 2019

CROQUET

Gazette



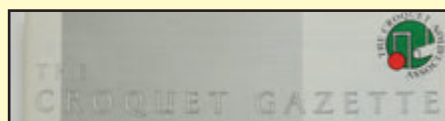
England win inaugural GC Test with Spain



From our files

researched by Frances Colman

10 years ago - 2009



CA Office extension –

The extension to hold the stock of equipment, books and associated croquet items is now complete.

Liz Larsson, the CA Office Manager, has worked with David Magee of Cheltenham CC plus architects, builders and planners to see this project through.

Grateful thanks must also be extended to our benefactors, both past and present. It has been agreed that half the cost of the extension will be met from the Benefactors' Fund.

This Fund receives donations both from goodwill gestures – those who “give whilst they live” – and from those who remember the CA in their wills.

(Extracts from the Chairman's Column, by Patricia Duke-Cox)

~

Littlehampton 100 -

Littlehampton CC are gearing up to celebrate their centenary during the forthcoming season. Together with Littlehampton museum they kicked off with an exhibition following the progress of the club over the past 100 years.

~

2008 Coaching Award to Cliff Jones –

The Coach of the Year award has not been made this year.

Instead, a Lifetime Coaching Award is to be made to Cliff Jones of Honiton. Cliff has coached in various parts of the country over many years and this award recognises the innovations he has made during that time.

~

Non-white team strips – are permitted, provided that all members of the team wear them, or white.

~

Sweden joins the WCF –

The World Croquet Federation (WCF) has much pleasure in announcing that the Svenska Kroquetförbundet (SKF) has been admitted to Associate Membership by agreement of the WCF Management Committee. The Swedish Croquet Association was formed in 1985 and at that time only the Swedish version of croquet was played . . . (it) currently consists of 16 clubs with about 100 members.

50 years ago - 1969



England win the MacRobertson Shield

(collected from three separate reports and commentaries) -

It must have given great satisfaction to members reading their daily papers, particularly those so generous with their donations, to see how well our Test team did overseas, and that England, for the second time in succession, returns with the MacRobertson Shield!

There was one young New Zealander, though, whom only Aspinall managed to beat in Singles – John Prince, aged 21, of whom we have heard so much.

Results of the Test Tour –

1st Test – England beat New Zealand 7 – 2

1st Test – England beat Australia 8 – 1

2nd Test – England beat New Zealand 7 – 2

2nd Test – England beat Australia 8 – 1

3rd Test – England beat New Zealand 9 – 0

(retaining the MacRobertson Trophy)

3rd Test – England beat Australia 8 – 1

1st Test – New Zealand beat Australia 7 – 2

2nd Test – New Zealand beat Australia 8 – 2

3rd Test – New Zealand beat Australia 8 – 2

England's triumph was complete.

All our chosen players had more than justified their selection.

We had sent out a team of young players, and there were only two players of comparable age [in] against us.

Decisive English victories will, one believes, give a valuable shake-up to Antipodean croquet. We may find their players more formidable in 1975.

But the final word must appear in praise of Nigel Aspinall.

It is impossible to exaggerate the impression this Happy Warrior made upon crowds that everywhere gathered to watch him. There is no chink in his armour, unless it is a disposition to miss slow roquets, and no heights to which he may not attain.- M.B.R.

England team –

G.N. Aspinall, J.W.Solomon, W.P. Ormerod, B.G. Neal, R.W. Bray, D.F. Stachan

~

The Ladies Field Cup has been restored to the Calendar Fixtures for 1969; a most welcome return of an event, first held in 1911, which was suspended by Council in 1966.

100 years ago - 1919



An early reference to what we now know as 'full bisque' play. . . **Speeding up Croquet** – Sir, Croquet ought not to be a “game of weariness,” a test of patience and stamina.

A game ought to be finished in an hour, and I anticipate that the Roehampton Club will soon be obliged, on crowded afternoons, to apply to the croquet players the tennis bye-law by which the occupation of a lawn is restricted to one hour.

The problem for solution is not that of compelling players to abandon their games after an hour's play, but that of enabling them to finish it in an hour. No difficulty exists in the case of the good players . . .

Players of the duller type, however, require to be assisted to speed up their rate of scoring. Suggestions for providing them with separate small lawns and big hoops are not practical. The only reasonable suggestion that appears to have been made is one which would involve no change except in the rules for taking bisques.

This suggestion is that in a “Duffers' Alternative Game” each player should be entitled to take his full number of bisques irrespectively of the handicap of his opponent. For example, if a 10-bisquer played another 10-bisquer, each of them would be entitled to take 10 bisques, and if a 10-bisquer played a 9-bisquer the former might take 10 and the latter 9.

Two bisques might be taken in succession provided that the first bisque did not result in the scoring of a point. This would enable Duffers to get valuable practice in endeavouring to lay a break with one bisque and make it with another.

The main object of the change would be the essential one of increasing the speed of scoring. Certain other objects, however, would be secured incidentally.

A long-handicap player would probably have the satisfaction of making several small breaks in the course of an hour's play. He would have the certainty of an innings, and a reasonable change of a break when his opponent's innings ended.

The tendency to play for safety – a tendency which has made croquet a “game of weariness”- would be curtailed.

J.De C. Atkins, Roehampton Club.

Editorial

Congratulations to the England GC team on their victory in the inaugural Test match against Spain in March.

Being able to follow some of the action via a livestream from Spain was a joy that surely heralds a new way to engage others with our sport. It was a revelation to listen to the Arlott-esque tones of J-P Moberly who seemed as at home behind the mic as he is on court!

'Live streaming' is a wonderful facility for croquet, allowing as it does much greater involvement in the top of our sport.

At my own club, Phyllis Court, we have been pushing croquet as a spectator activity as well as a playing one, as a way of involving the whole membership with the 'team journey'. Having the confidence to 'sell' our big matches and tournaments has seen a very welcome engagement

throughout the club and, thanks to internal publicity and a weekly presence in our local newspaper, we have seen a boon in membership as well!

Mind you, having to train 24 beginners in just under three weeks, coupled with having to wait for the fall-out after the CA SGM, has unfortunately resulted in this Gazette being delayed. For that I apologise to all and to the contributors especially.

I have found time for some croquet of my own though, and was pleased that my play was as hot as the temperature in South Africa (although Mark Avery still won of course!). Hot describes the opposition at Surbiton's GC as well, and worryingly 'hot' is how my croquet administration computer is (*should the fan be making all that noise?*).

Chris Roberts

Chris Roberts Editor
49 Ancastle Green, Henley on Thames, Oxon. RG9 ITS
07973 787710 gazette@croquet.org.uk

Chairman's Column

At the SGM, on the 30 March, the membership endorsed the proposed changes to the Constitution.

This enables us to improve governance but does not make it happen.

We still need to get the right people doing the right jobs in the right way.

Members have a big role in this.

They need to ensure that the most suitable candidates are nominated for the new Council.

They also have the opportunity to volunteer.

A guide to the skills and responsibilities exercised in various CA roles is to be found on page 7 of this Gazette.

No-one should be overawed by it but I

hope that good volunteers can be focused by it and the membership better informed.

It is the people, who can get things done, that will deliver good governance.

We need to choose them.

~

Through its governance structure, the CA aims to "encourage, promote and develop croquet in England".

The Federations too play a big part in fostering development at a local level.

This is sensible, should not change and provides a depth of croquet opportunities for enthusiasts.

The CA values this as it does National competitions.

It all fits in with developing the game in England.

This is the aim of every member of a CA committee.

~

They say that all good things come to an end and Alison Maugham has given

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Issue 379 May 2019

Front cover: Richard Bilton with a firm stroke for England in the inaugural GC Test Match versus Spain and captain J-P Moberly speaking after the presentation of the winners' cup.

(photographs by David Gilbert)

This Page: Remembering Lieut. W.G. Courthope.

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us plenty of notice that she wishes to step down from the AC International Performance Director role at the end of the summer.

Alison has been responsible for much innovation in our squad sessions and she leaves the programme in good shape.

We must use the available time wisely if we are to secure continued improvement.

I thank Alison for her distinctive enthusiasm and I wish all of our members well at the start of another croquet season.

John Bowcott



COURTHOPE, LIEUT. W. G.—4th Batt.
The Bedfordshire Regiment. Died in
France of pneumonia.

The October/November 2018 Gazette front cover paid tribute to our fallen of the Great War, with a reproduction of the Croquet Association's Roll of Honour, 100 years on.

Frances Colman's continued 'From our Files' research found this second new addition in the Croquet Association Gazette of April 1919. ~ Another croquet player for us to remember ~



The Special General Meeting of the Croquet Association

The Special General Meeting on the morning of 30 March had been called by the Council to amend the CA's Constitution, to implement changes to its governance.

These would considerably reduce the size of the Council, change the basis on which it was elected, and focus its role on strategy and scrutiny of a new Executive Board, which would be charged with implementing it.

~

After concerns as to whether the meeting would be quorate, not helped by the closure of the District Line, it was pleasing to see that 35 members were at Hurlingham on a glorious spring day: thank you for your support.

However, there was one notable absentee, Quiller Barrett, the President, who had phoned to say that he was stuck in what turned out to be a two-hour closure of the M25.

Patricia Duke-Cox, one of our Vice-Presidents, was landed with the task of chairing the meeting.

~

George Noble prevented it being purely a formality, by raising a number of concerns about the proposed amendments to the Constitution and

their implementation, which he asked the Council to consider.

He wanted, and was given, assurance that the requirements of Sport England and recommendations of the Sport and Recreation Alliance had been considered.

He felt that each Federation should have at least one representative, but was told that was incompatible with the objectives of restricting the Council to 12 voting members and ensuring equality of representation for the electorate of CA members.

He asked that the Electoral Commission should be transparent in its operation and finally raised concerns about the procedure for general meetings, which currently prevented amendments being put to the motions proposed at them.

In reply, he was told that a working party chaired by the President had made some recommendations to address those, but it had been decided to take one step at a time.

~

Hugh Carlisle commended the provisions in the Hurlingham club rules and he and John Reddish pointed out other defects with the current constitution, which were noted.

~

The motion to amend the constitution was then put.

The votes of those who had voted by post or on the website were added to those present who had not, giving a total of 489 in favour and 18 against, so **it was overwhelmingly carried**, with a turnout of about 10% of those eligible to vote.

~

John Bowcott, the Chairman of Council, has asked that alongside this report of the SGM we should record our thanks to those who have worked over nearly three years to research and develop the proposals that have now been endorsed by the membership. Such reforms had long been a gleam in the President's eye, but work to implement them began with a working party led by Strat Liddiard.

They did all of the early interviewing and established the importance of separating the roles of Council and Management.

This was followed by another working party chaired by Jonathan Isaacs. This group built on the earlier work and is responsible for the constitutional changes and the election process that will support the delivery of the new model of governance. We should be grateful to all those involved in this lengthy process.

Ian Vincent, Hon. Secretary

Council met in the afternoon of 30 March, following the Special General meeting that morning, and decided that elections for the 12 voting members of the new Council should take place over the summer, with a view to it taking over after the AGM in October.

The new Council

Success will depend critically on the quality of people elected to serve on the new Council: the attributes expected of them are listed in on pages 6 and 7 (*overleaf*) of this edition of the Croquet Gazette.

Equally important will be the ability of those appointed to the Executive Board and the working committees.

Those willing to contribute to the administration of the sport need to decide where they can most usefully do so.

The points raised at the SGM were

The March meeting of the Council of the Croquet Association

considered and it was agreed that further amendments to the Constitution should be proposed at the AGM to improve the procedures for general meetings.

Treasurer's report - accounts

Peter Death presented the accounts for 2018, which were duly adopted with thanks to him and David Boxell, the Independent Examiner. They showed that our funds had decreased by some £50,000 over the year, mainly due to the costs of employing a National Development Office and transitional costs associated with the expansion of our membership.

A similar deficit is budgeted for this year and this is clearly not sustainable going forward.

More positively, some significant savings in printing and distribution costs have been

made by Mark Suter, the CA Manager, and we received a legacy of £2846 from Alec Coleman.

Treasurer's report - 2020 subscriptions & forward planning

It was agreed that the per-capita rate for club membership subscriptions should rise to £9 for small clubs and £14 for larger ones in 2020, which will be the last of the above inflation increases authorised by the 2015 SGM.

Individual membership subscriptions will remain unchanged, but paper copies of the fixtures book will only be sent to members who pre-order one, at a cost of £5.

Clubs will continue to receive a copy. Sending paper copies of the Croquet Gazette to Standard members was agreed

Call for Nominations and Notices of Motions for the 2019 AGM

The 2019 AGM will be held at Hurlingham on the morning of Saturday, 19 October

Any nominations for the posts of Hon. Treasurer and Hon. Secretary, or notice of motions to be put to the AGM, should be e-mailed to the Hon. Secretary, Dr. I. G. Vincent, ian.vincent@cantab.net, copied to caoffice@croquet.org.uk, **by 1 June**. Nominations should give the name of the candidate together with those of the proposer and seconder, and state that the consent of the candidate has been obtained.

Please see the article on pages 6 and 7 (*overleaf*) for information about election of the new Council, under the Constitution as amended by the Special General Meeting on 30 March.

Why not upgrade your CA membership?

Did you know that Premium membership gives you priority entry into over-subscribed tournaments?

It also offers cheaper tournament entry fees (all calendar book fixtures are discounted by £5 per playing day).

I am delighted to see that we have had quite a few of our new Standard Members upgrading their membership to take advantage of these benefits.

Have you considered doing so?

If you would like to have the best possible chance of getting into the tournament you want, then Premium membership is for you!

To take advantage of these benefits, it's easy to upgrade your membership online.

Log on to the website, and then click the link with your name in the top right-hand corner. This takes you to the 'My details' page and under the 'Memberships' tab you can view and upgrade your current CA membership.

If you have any questions about this, then the CA office will be pleased to help on 01242 242318 or by email to caoffice@croquet.org.uk.

Jeff Dawson,
Chairman of the Membership
Changes Implementation Group

Please help others by sharing your Corporate Croquet experience

The CA Marketing Committee we have been considering ways in which we might be able to support clubs that are already involved in corporate fund raising/recruiting, and also assist clubs which wish to become engaged in this activity, in order to generate an income stream.

From my travels around the tournament circuit, I know that there is much knowledge and information within our sport.

I informed the Committee that we didn't actually know which clubs were currently involved, which clubs would like to become involved and which clubs have no desire to become involved (for whatever reason).

I am also sure that there are many clubs (including my own) which have been engaged in corporate events for many years and now have a finely honed system in place that they may be willing to share with others.

We are aware of the existing CA activity, which tends to be in London and based at Hurlingham.

But the CA will sometimes also contact croquet clubs away from London to see if they would be willing to respond to requests.

The Committee feel that it makes sense for the CA Office to hold a register of clubs that are willing to take part in corporate activity, such that they could then quickly pass on requests to the nearest two or three clubs.

Would your club be willing to have its name placed on a central CA list?

~

If your club is experienced in hosting corporate events, do you have a "to do" check list that you would be willing to pass on to other clubs, with the CA acting as a distribution point (probably via the CA Website)?

Maybe you have thoughts on the "Does and Don'ts"?

What kind of support could the CA offer (probably via the Federations) to these clubs?

If you have answered "yes" to any of the above questions, please drop me a line and I will contact you in order to put a profile together for your club.

Klim Seabright,
Marketing Committee
klimseabright@gmail.com

of the sport.

It was agreed that this should be a matter for the new Council, after it had set strategic objectives against which to assess any proposals.

The Council medal to Dave Kibble

It was agreed to award the Council medal to Dave Kibble, primarily for his work on the website over many years, with the online fixtures book and tournament entry system as a notable achievement of considerable benefit to members.

At the end of the meeting, the President expressed his pleasure that his long term ambition of reforming the Council had been achieved, thanked those who had served the current one so loyally and looked forward to attending the first meeting of its successor.

Ian Vincent, Hon. Secretary

Croquet Association

to be unaffordable, so will cease at the end of this year, except as an introductory offer for new Standard members.

Existing ones will be able to subscribe for paper copies at a cost of £10 a year.

~

The updated risk assessment presented by the Treasurer was generally accepted, with the rider that a business continuity plan was needed to mitigate some of the risks, particularly those associated with Information Technology.

However, the main focus of the discussion was to formulate our reserves policy.

It was generally accepted that current expenditure should be covered by current income, but it was reported that members held differing views as to whether it was appropriate to continue holding our current assets, or invest them to promote the future

Introduction

As a result of the changes agreed by the Special General Meeting held on 30 March, a new Council for the Croquet Association (CA) is to be elected this summer.

This is an opportunity for you to be involved in the governance of croquet's national governing body.

If you are a member of the CA, either directly or if you have chosen to be a Standard member through membership of your club, you will have a vote and you will also be eligible for election and to nominate others.

Rôle of the Council and its Members

The new Council is to have overall responsibility for the affairs of the Association, with a focus on high-level policy, strategic initiatives, scrutiny and transparency.

Implementation of that policy will be the responsibility of an Executive Board, which the Council will appoint. The working committees will report to the Executive Board.

~

There will be 12 voting members of the new Council, compared with the 33 on the existing one.

They will be elected by individual CA members in constituencies made up of one or more Federations.

They are to represent the players, clubs and Federations in their Constituency, balancing the interests of them and those of the CA as a whole as best they can.

Standing for Election

Membership of the Council thus offers a significant opportunity to shape the future of the CA, in the interests of its members as a whole.

We would like to encourage members with an active interest in the future of the CA to stand for election.

A list of the skills needed for this role is published on page 7 (*opposite*).

If you are interested in serving in this way, please read on to find out more about the election process and contact John Bowcott, the Chairman of Council, for further information.

~

However, whilst the Council will set the

high-level policy, it will be ineffective unless there is also a strong Executive Board to implement it.

The list also shows the skills wanted for appointment to that, or as a chairman or member of one of its working committees.

Again, please contact John Bowcott if you wish to contribute in this way or want further information about doing so.

Electoral Commission

The election process is to be managed by a (rather grandly titled) Electoral Commission, consisting of Quiller Barrett (President), Peter Death (Hon. Treasurer) and Ian Vincent (Hon. Secretary), who are responsible to the CA as a whole, which elected them, rather than to Council.

They intend to be as open and transparent as possible in their work and have started by publishing the election rules on the website

Constituencies

The composition of, and number of Council members returned by, each Constituency will be chosen to reflect the geographic distribution of CA members.

For the initial election they are as follows:

Federation(s)	Members
North West	1
Croquet North & Yorkshire	1
East & West Midlands	1
East Anglia	2
South West	3
Southern	1
South East	3

To set up the new Council, all twelve members will be elected this year and allocated initial terms of 2, 3 or 4 years.

Thereafter, a third of the members will be elected each year. Elections will be by single transferable vote.

Timetable

The timetable for the elections this year is that nominations will close on 30 July and voting will finish on 3 September, so that results are known before the new Council takes office after the AGM on 19 October.

Nominations

Nominations for election by a Constituency should be e-mailed to returning.officer@croquet.org.uk and the Secretaries of the relevant Federation(s),

identifying the Constituency, the person nominated, and their proposer and seconder, who must both be individual CA members registered to vote in the Constituency. A personal statement, of no more than 300 words, may be attached for publication and the nominee must have confirmed their willingness to stand.

Electoral Register

CA members living in the UK have been allocated to a Constituency based on the Federation membership of their primary club, failing which by the leading part of the postcode of their home address.

You can see the Constituency for which you are registered by viewing your details on the CA website, which you can do, when you are logged in, by clicking on your name, which appears next to the login/out button on the top right of most pages.

You are free to modify your registered constituency to whichever you feel you have the greatest interest in (although please note you will only be able to vote in one constituency). To set or change it, click the "Edit" button positioned above your personal details and step through the forms to change them by clicking "Next" until you reach the confirmation form.

Voting

If a ballot is necessary for your Constituency, you will be able to vote online or by post. Further details will be published on the website and in the next edition of The Croquet Gazette.

You will only be able to receive an e-mail giving a link to the voting application if you have an up to date e-mail address recorded in the CA Directory (though you can still be ex-directory if you do not want it published). Please ask your club secretary to set it for you if you can't login to the website to do it yourself.

Ian Vincent, Hon. Secretary



Council - by Ian Vincent, Hon.Secretary

The Executive Board of the Croquet Association and its sub-committees

A guide for those preferring a role in the day-to-day running of the game

The Executive Board will be charged with running croquet in accordance with the 'high level policies' established by Council. It will not be obliged to seek further approval from Council but it will be accountable to Council for its compliance with CA Policy.

The qualities of an ideal member of the Executive Board and its sub-committees will vary depending upon the assignment but many of the following will be ideal:

- For the Executive Board good experience at senior line management level.
- For functional committees, a good working knowledge of the activities related to that particular responsibility.
- A proven ability to get things done.
- An ability to establish priorities.
- An ability to prepare and manage budgets.
- Experience of working on a committee and being a team player.
- A good understanding of the role of the CA.
- A commitment to communicate with the membership and most importantly to respond to their enquiries.

Time commitment

This will vary, though typically most committees meet twice a year during the winter months. Much work is also done by email.
The Executive Board will meet up to 4 times per annum.

It should be noted that the CA regards all positions on Council and functional committees as important.
The main difference is that Council is focused on establishing the appropriate achievable goals and monitoring the outcomes whereas the functional committees must focus on getting things done.
Getting the right people into the right jobs is a very important part of the new structure.

The Council of the Croquet Association

A guide both for those seeking election and those considering the nomination of a candidate

The role of Council - to direct the CA's activity through strategy, policy and conformance.
It will not run croquet on a day to day basis.
Particular responsibilities will be:
Establishing over-arching policy goals
Initiating strategic initiatives
Scrutinising the work of the Executive Board
Ensuring that good governance practices are in place at all levels of the Association.

The qualities of a strong candidate for Council would include many of the following:

- Strategic Vision - an ability to identify key long-term goals and delivery mechanisms.
- A commitment to improving the transparency of the structure of the CA.
- An ability to establish priorities and assess the best use of monetary and human resources.
- Good leadership skills.
- Openness to new ideas.
- Good communication and listening skills.
- An ability to identify and implement good practice.
- An ability to engage effectively with the membership.
- An experience of problem analysis in a complex organisation.

Time commitment

Attendance at a minimum of two one-day meetings per year.
Willingness to engage in electronic communication, as required, to develop our objectives.

CA Grant helps sort Fylde's flooding courts

Fylde Croquet Club, once noted for its flooded lawns (surely you have seen "Synchronised Croquet" on youtube?) is now one of the least likely to flood in the North-West.

An open ditch was dug to a culvert by the main road some years ago but this has been time consuming, difficult to maintain and was threatening total collapse every season.

This winter, **helped by a small CA Grant**, the ditch has been cleared and laid with a sleeved drainage pipe and gravel.

Much work was done by Philip Bass along with paid help. The finished project went well over budget but Fylde are delighted with the finished look and are hoping for far less work and far more croquet this season.

Liz Wilson, Fylde CC



How far should we take the 'team game'?

Dear Editor,

The AC Tournaments Committee was recently asked why consultation between partners in a doubles match is allowed but consultation between team members (unless they are a doubles pairing) is not permitted in team events.

This has sparked an interesting discussion which we would like to extend to the CA membership.

The arguments for are:

If you are playing for a team, it seems perverse that you are entirely on your own once the game commences, with no input from the team (other than in doubles).

A team event could be more fun and more educational if consultation with other team members and/or coaches were permitted.

The arguments against are:

Doubles partners can frequently spend long periods of time discussing their next move – how much worse would it be if a whole team were involved?

In doubles, the pair acts as a single player on the court with the non-playing partner being allowed to do everything except strike the ball.

If a team were permitted to do everything except strike the ball, the lawn could become very crowded.

If other team members are called away from their games to give advice in another game then they are either causing delay in their own game or not acting as ever vigilant adversaries.

All the reasons given above against team co-operation are based on the current rules but different rules could be introduced for team events.

For instance you could call 'time-outs', such as they have in curling, where other team members and coaches are allowed a time-limited discussion.

Or you could allow the out-players in different games to discuss tactics with each other or their team coach.

What do you think?

Do you have other ideas how this could work in practice?

Would you love or hate the idea of someone else contributing to your game?

The original query was regarding AC matches but what about GC?

The AC and GC Tournaments Committee would like to hear your views either through the pages of the Gazette or directly by e-mail to the ACTC Chairman Beatrice McGlen or the GCTC Chairman Jonathan Powe.

**Beatrice McGlen,
Chairman, AC Tournament
Committee**

Croquet can have wider social benefits beyond competition

Dear Editor,

Peter Lowe's letter 'Prescribing Croquet' in the last issue (*Gazette 378*) raises the important issue of croquet's wider social benefits.

We too believe that croquet is suitable for, and can meet the genuine needs of, a much wider community than those who traditionally play.

Examples of groups who could benefit are those who wouldn't normally take part in sporting activities and who may be socially isolated through physical or mental illness – or even because of their own inactivity.

The combination of mental challenges and keeping people out in the open air has been demonstrably linked to improvements in mental wellbeing and, as Jonathan Toye has successfully shown at Downham Croquet Club (*Gazette 378*), croquet can also be a worthwhile sport for those with impaired mobility, using wheelchairs originally designed for bowls.

A little imagination and minor modifications can have disproportionate benefits in making the game accessible to people with special needs.

For example, at Ealing we have found that people with learning difficulties enjoy playing a modified game with cones rather than conventional hoops.

The principal aim of Sport England's small grants programme is to fund organisations that increase engagement in sport, particular those that "get inactive people more active."

All local authorities have a health and wellbeing strategy with goals of the sort that croquet would meet, and if cash-strapped clubs like ours were able to demonstrate the wider benefits of the sport, we might (perhaps) be more successful in our grant applications.

While the main focus of the Croquet Association is always going to be competitive play at all levels, it should not ignore initiatives such as social prescribing and the promotion of diversity and inclusion in the sport.

Elite engagement is important, but we believe that the CA should also aim to widen access and participation.

**Ruth Sisley and Jennian Geddes,
Ealing CC**

Memories of the hallowed vicarage lawn

Dear Editor,

I wonder to what extent our love of croquet has been affected by the demise of the vicarage lawn? I learnt croquet on my Grandfather's vicarage lawn – in the village of Lowick, Northamptonshire – and I am always grateful to him for that.

The basic skills have been ingrained in me as much as those of riding a bike – both were learnt at about the same time.

I went around the lawn using that little wooden mallet used for hitting in the hoops as my weapon. When not bashing croquet balls I was wobbling around the vicarage grounds on my first bike.

How many others of us have the same history?

And now, the vicarage lawns have all but gone.

Lowick's vicarage is now set in what was the old walled vegetable garden; the house and grounds long sold off.

No more village fetes, no more croquet there.

How do we replace the vicarage lawn?

I have no answers, but would love the game to be seen by the young for what it is, an outdoor challenge for girls and boys to develop their eye, think out winning tactics, and have the thrill of destroying an opponent with an explosive bash now and again.

Just what they do on their iPad, in fact.

Mark Higgins, High Wycombe CC

Croquet historians present a complete answer to the Mystery Bedford Medal and more besides

The CA website news editor Sam Murray collated some replies after the photos of the Bedford mystery medal (February 2019 Gazette 378, page 8) were published on-line. They are reproduced here for Gazette readers:

Chris Williams writes:

The 1940 Croquet Medal was known as the Bronze Badge.

It was introduced in 1925 and the CA Gazette for 23 May 1925 has the following: "Presentation of Bronze badges"

The Council of the Croquet Association have decided to present Bronze Badges to a selected number of registered Croquet Clubs in the United Kingdom (other than Roehampton, Ranelagh and Hurlingham), whose membership includes at least twelve Associates.

The event will be "Handicap Singles" open only to members of clubs who are also members of the C.A., and the conditions in reference to entrance fees and additional prizes will be left entirely to the Committees of the respective clubs.

In the case of an Associate being a member of more than one registered Club, such Associate would only be eligible to compete at one event for the Badge, but can choose at which club he will enter as a competitor.

The names of the winners will be published in the CA Gazette.

Applications for these badges should be sent to the Secretary of the C.A."

There were no formal tournaments played during the war so I expect that this was given for an informal club event and may have been one left over from an earlier year.

William Ormerod adds:

I suggest that these medals very likely belonged to Miss DD Steel of the Bedford Croquet Club. Another of her trophies, I think, the Beddow Cup, was found at an auction a while ago, and in 1939 she was the holder of the Mixed Doubles Championship which, like the Ladies Open used to be given a CA Medal, I think.

I remember playing some friendly matches against Miss DD Steel at the Bedford Club in the 1950's.

Roger Wood adds:

I was intrigued to see the picture of the CA bronze medal from 1940 (February 2019 Gazette 378, page 8)

I have a medal of identical design which I won in Pretoria in 1970 as runner-up in the South African Open Championship.

At that time (I don't know if the practice is continued today?) the CA gave two medals each year to the South African Croquet Association: a silver medal for the open champion and a bronze medal for the runner-up.

I have a vague memory that similar presentations were made to the national associations in Australia and New Zealand, but have never had that confirmed.

I cannot recall if the design of the 1970 silver medal followed that of the bronze one shown, or was circular like those presented by the CA today.

Sadly the Pretoria club is no longer in existence. In my time in the city (1968-71) it consisted of two courts, one of grass (which could not be used in the long, dry Transvaal winter) and the other of 'grave' (essentially coarse sand, rolled to produce a hard, very flat, lightning fast surface, which could be used year round).

The croquet club and a bowling club (whose greens were borrowed for croquet when the national championships came to Pretoria - wonderful to play on) were located immediately adjacent to Pretoria's principal rugby ground, Loftus Versfeld, venue for many international matches.

I believe that it was expansion of the stadium that led to the demise of both the croquet and bowling clubs, but I'm not sure quite when.



Roger Bray wrote directly to the Gazette with his reply to the appeal for information about the Bedford medal.

Dear Editor,

As in World War One, there were no Croquet Association events or official tournaments for the duration of the Second World War.

The CA nevertheless encouraged registered clubs to continue playing as best they could since "it is widely recognised that provision for a due amount of recreation may be a contribution to the maintenance of the physical and psychological health of the nation." (Gazette, War Emergency Number (2), 1940, page 2).

At the time, the CA allocated a Bronze Badge annually to each club which had at least 12 Associates and this practice was continued in 1940.

The Bedford Club was then one of croquet's strongholds with nine lawns and must have been a recipient.

A photograph of the badge was published in the January 1925 issue of the Gazette and looks identical to David Webb's "Mystery Medal" (February 2019 Gazette 378, page 8).

The latter is therefore likely to be Bedford's Bronze Badge for 1940, to match the inscription "Bedford June 14th 1940".

Presumably clubs typically awarded the badge to the winner of some internal event, possibly limited to Associates only – in this case won on June 14th.

Although maintenance of lawns, travel and communication were difficult during the war, several clubs organised unofficial 'open' tournaments, even if visitors were effectively by invitation only. Bedford was one such club and held a July tournament every year and sometimes an autumn event, even though it was reduced to five lawns by 1945 and there were few visitors.

Roger Bray

Dear Editor,
As a native East Anglian, I was most interested to read Jonathan Toye's article on Downham CC, particularly about its Stow Bardolph home.

One aspect of the history I was aware of was the prior existence of a maternity hospital on the site.

The reason? I was born there!

Paul Smith, Cheltenham CC

A Crushing Blow

Dear Editor,

As a GC Coach I am having some difficulty in advising players how to avoid a crush shot fault (rule 11.2.6).

The new Fifth Edition rule book (p.44) advises that playing another ball only 4mm away may be OK if played away at least 60 degrees.

The question I ask of the striker is, however, "Will you be able to remove your mallet from your ball before your ball touches the other?" Usually the answer is "No".

Then I warn them that they may be about to commit a fault (a crush shot) and therefore their only remedy would be either to play away from the other ball or simply declare their stroke played.

I have tried to contact several senior GC players and committee about this apparent anomaly in the guidance advice but have yet to receive a response.

Tony Lee, Norwich CC

~

Dear Tony,

Thank you for your letter.

You state your concern is about players being able to remove their mallets from their balls before those balls touch another.

What matters is how quickly the ball leaves the mallet face and whether an obstacle slows the ball down again.

The guidance in Appendix 4 is based on high speed filming of the relevant shots. That filming led to the stated limits.

According to 1.2.1 in Appendix 4, if the balls are separated by 4mm, the player must play at an angle of 60 degrees or more. Otherwise, the referee will declare a fault.

Yours sincerely,

Tim King, GC Championship Referee

~

The physics of the above, high speed photography and the reasoning of the Rule makers is covered in more detail in a reply to this letter by **Stephen Mulliner**, Chairman, GC Rules Committee, on page19.

Get croquet recognised on the BBC's "Get Inspired"

Dear Editor,

Informed and frequently entertained by the Gazette, I know that the croquet world is a pretty busy place.

Against a backdrop of myriad competitions and tournaments at all levels, croquet is remaining abreast of changing attitudes and circumstances by recent examination of its rules, management structure, governance and marketing.

The vibe of our favourite pastime is effervescent with action and innovation.

But is this stimulating fizz confined within our small bubble - does it register at all with people on the outside?

I pose the question after coming across a page on the BBC website that seeks to raise levels of fitness by encouraging and facilitating participation in physical activity.

Anyone responding to this commendable initiative will find at getinspired@bbc.co.uk contacts for introduction to what is described as a comprehensive list of sports and games.

Well, sorry, BBC - your selection is extensive but not all-embracing!

Indeed, it does include such arcane pursuits as petanque, korfbal and, yes, underwater hockey, alongside luge and skeleton (these surely appeal only to the already extremely fit or to the quite mad?) and (help me here), boccia - neither the structure nor the goal of which has ever intruded upon my ken.

Yet among this brain-aching selection there is still no place for - you've guessed it - croquet.

Here then is our reality check - a measure of how much efficient PR effort we still need if recognition of croquet is ever to rank with tennis, bowls (or even boccia - whatever that is).

Until our message is effectively broadcast, club secretaries are advised to postpone orders for crush barriers: queues at lawn

gates will not be forming quite yet.

Where do we go from here?

How can croquet engage with the public and tackle prevailing disinterest, lack of awareness, and misapprehension - cast off the labels of posh, effete and vicious, and association with Lewis Carroll, flamingos and hedgehogs.

Every journey starts with a single step.

Does the CA plan to promote, with relevant authorities, the wellbeing and healthcare benefits of "socially prescribing" croquet?

A Gazette correspondence in 2017 made the management team aware of 'Get Inspired' and the time is overdue for a further approach to the BBC requesting the inclusion on that site of a contact for croquet.

Would members' alerts of similar omissions and misrepresentations that impede promotion and take-up of croquet be useful to our governing body - or would the volume of information submitted overwhelm the small staff the CA can afford to employ?

What percentage increase in membership fee or inroad into capital funds would enable more effective PR and marketing - including the longer-term deployment of a Development Officer who appears to have achieved much in view of the post's limited life.

Here's a slightly mischievous suggestion that places croquet's marker on at least one public-facing map with minimum effort.

The BBC site invites queries regarding contacts for sports and games it does not list and I appeal to every Gazette reader to email getinspired@bbc.co.uk asking how they can get involved in croquet.

Mass intervention brought Boaty McBoatface to prominent public notice - can it do the same for croquet?

Peter Lowe, Tyneside CC

Cliff Hunter won the Surbiton Charity One-Ball heat

Cliff Hunter won, Cliff Hunter won,
Furnished and burnished by the Surbiton sun.
What tactical singles were played before tea,
We in the tournament - you against me.

Thirteen to eight, oh weakness of joy,
The speed of a swallow, the grace of a boy,
With carefulest carelessness, we had such fun.
I am weak from your skill, Cliff Hunter you won.

(with apologies to John Betjeman)

Kevin Carter

Richard Carline shows off his swing trainer at Ealing



Dear Editor,
A few weeks ago, Ian Shore and Richard Carline held a GC Improvers course at Ealing CC.
Richard produced the Croquet Academy Swing Trainer (which he had built to his own specifications) from the boot of his car and assembled it on site for us to use.
Seeing it alone on the lawn, passers-by had concluded it was a sculpture till Richard demonstrated it.
We thought other clubs might like to see his masterpiece, though we would caution: it isn't really portable.

Jennian Geddes, Ealing CC

The CA Fixtures list is 'all or nothing' some weekends

Dear Editor,

As someone with a youngish family and lots of other commitments, I'm sure I'm not the only croquet player who often chooses a tournament because of the weekend it's on, rather than the other way round.

This year a good weekend for me was 11-12 May, so when the Fixtures Book arrived I took a look.

For an AC player with a minus handicap, there was...nothing.

Not a single advanced AC tournament in the entire country.

B-Level players would fare little better - there is a single tournament available, up in Pendle.

However the previous weekend, which is a Bank Holiday, features no fewer than SIX

advanced tournaments - a Championship, three unrestricted weekends, and two B-Levels.

And to add to the farce - all of them are in the southern half of England, with the three competing tournaments in Southwick, Guildford and Hurlingham particularly ludicrously close.

An AC handicap 1 player living in London could feasibly play in any one of the six tournaments without even needing to stay overnight (okay, Hunstanton might be a stretch).

There is obviously an attraction to holding tournaments on Bank Holidays given the extra day available, but there has to be a balance - not everybody wants to play on a Bank Holiday, and some people actively

prefer to play on other weekends to preserve family times.

Could I suggest that next year one or two of the six clubs decides to give up fighting in the crowded market of the May early Bank Holiday, and chooses a different weekend instead.

The weekend immediately after might be a good choice...although I hear there's stiff competition in Pendle.

Nick Parish, Surbiton CC

Wanted

Croquet Mallet with 12 inch head
David Carter
davidcarter59@btinternet.com

Letters to the Editor

No more pre-game 'practice' - but you can 'warm-up'!

Dear Editor,

On page 6 of your esteemed publication, February 2019 (*Gazette* 378), Samir Patel focuses on the 2019 CA Tournament Regulations.

Initially, I was somewhat perplexed by two apparently conflicting references which I quote:

P4(e): The ability for players to practice at the start of play has been removed.

P4(e): Players will be permitted to warm up before the start of play.

From the above, it is 100% clear to me that pre-start practice is banned, but warming up is OK.

So, from 2019 onwards, will I be allowed to practice warming up but not to have some warm up practice?

This deep conundrum has been depriving me of sleep for several nights, having totally eclipsed my concerns over Brexit

I look forward to your incisive revelations into this (yawn, excuse me!) matter in a future *Gazette*.

'Concerned of East Dorset'

Samir Patel replies:

'Concerned of East Dorset' is one of several people who have enquired about the changes to Tournament Regulation P4(e) which were described in the February 2019 *Gazette* and which became effective on 1 March.

At the simplest level, the period of lawn time which players are permitted before the start of play has been renamed "warm-up".

Warm-up is the internationally used description, so it makes sense to describe it in that way in England as well.

More importantly, it better describes the purpose for which this time is provided – to warm up (you and your muscles) before the start of play.

In contrast, "practice" is a more focussed activity intended to improve one's play.

It requires access to a full range of strokes and a full complement of balls, but these are both restricted during the 10-minute warm-up period.

Finally, it will seem obvious to many that when everyone in a tournament wants to warm-up at the same time, they can't have four balls each, and that constraints on

hoop running and shooting at hoops/pegs are only sensible before the start of play.

Whereas actual practice at the end of the days' play, with the manager's permission, can often be more flexible.

However, there were players who found this distinction difficult to grasp.

It is hoped that being clearer about "warm-up" and "practice" will help such players remember the restrictions in place to protect the settings of the equipment.

~

To *Concerned of East Dorset's* specific question, he/she is indeed allowed to participate in the practice of warming up before the start of play.

But if he wishes to practice warming up, he needs to do that in his own time.

Whether he wishes to warm up before his warm up practice is not a matter for the tournament regulations.

~

The full text of tournament regulations is available on the CA website: <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=tournament/regulations#P4>

Samir Patel

Croquet to go ahead at BBC Countryfile Live North

I am pleased to announce the exciting news that croquet's presence at the new BBC Countryfile Live North event has been secured.

~

Anna Giraud and Derek Knight of the Yorkshire Federation and John Dawson of the CA visited

Castle Howard in North Yorkshire (pictured) on 4 April to meet with Georgina Wood from Countryfile Live North to check out the feasibility of showcasing croquet at the four day event (15-18 August) and to give hundreds of visitors the opportunity to give croquet a go.

The big question mark was the state of the potential playing area, but one look at the site settled that issue. We will have a level smooth lawn within the huge garden (rather than in the nearby parkland) with the castle as a majestic backdrop.



Before leaving Castle Howard, the croquet trio started on the planning and administration detail, building on the experience of the successful croquet events at Countryfile Live South at Blenheim Palace in 2017 and 2018.

~

The other key to success is having a squad of enthusiastic croquet players to supervise the public playing croquet.

It's good fun, as the Blenheim squad will testify, and our volunteers get free entrance to the show.

Anna Giraud reports that a significant number of members had already contacted her but a few places on her volunteer list remain unfilled.

If you are interested in joining the CA squad for Countryfile Live North at Castle Howard (15-18 August), please contact

Anna Giraud - eag.giraudnet@gmail.com

~

We need you at Countryfile Live SOUTH too!

If you are interested in joining the CA squad for the comparable Countryfile Live South event at Blenheim Palace, Oxon. (1-4 August), please contact

Frances Colman - frances@luxtersfarm.com

~

John Dawson, Vice Chairman of the CA
(Photo by Sandy Finchett-Maddock)

Croquet Association Club Awards 2019



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

The Winners of the 2019 Awards in the various categories are:

The Townsend Award: Tattenhall CC

The Apps Heley Award: St Agnes CC

The Millennium Award: Littlehampton CC

The Awards will be made at the AGM in October and, besides a certificate, a cheque for £250 is given to winning clubs.

Roger Staples, Chairman of the Development Committee

Tattenhall CC (Cheshire) is in the village of the same name, situated 8 miles south east of Chester.

The local population is approximately 2,000, however there are 12 villages close by, increasing the potential catchment area tenfold.

The Club has the potential to join the NWF GC leagues in the very near future and AC coaching is also being undertaken, whilst off-court much work has been done to integrate with the multi-sports that were already established at the Recreation Club that is their home.

The recreation field has seen intense work by members to make it into a more croquet-like environment with the appearance of a well-tended club.

An amazing amount of fund-raising has been undertaken, sponsorship has been obtained from local business and fund-raising social events have taken place.

I cannot recommend Tattenhall too highly for this award.

Sarah Andrew, North West Federation Development Officer

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Sarah Andrew, North West Federation Development Officer

St Agnes CC (Cornwall) burst onto the scene in 2014-15 in what was then a croquet desert.

Within no time at all, the Club had collected over 30 members and this has now risen to 57. Club members put in an enormous amount of work into the facilities, coaching and creating awareness locally as well as helping in the local community.

Increasing playing ability has given the St Agnes club the confidence to enter two teams in the SWF GC Leagues in 2018 and to plan developments in AC.

The Club is fulfilling a much needed position in their area of the South West.

Adam Wimshurst, South-West Federation Development Officer.

Littlehampton CC (West Sussex) has done extremely well to raise £50k to replace the dilapidated old clubhouse with a splendid new facility with very little help from external grants (*see the article below*).

Members also carried out a substantial part of the work involved.

The new clubhouse should enable the club to significantly increase its membership, and that is where it will now turn its attention.

New clubhouse helped by CA Grant

After several years of fundraising and saving, **Littlehampton CC** have now completed our new building, with some generous donations from several members.

The old clubhouse (above right) dated back to 1908 was a much loved but very dilapidated building with no facilities apart from a resident fox family beneath the floorboards.

We were in desperate need of a larger, purpose-built clubhouse to accommodate our growing membership, and to enable us to plan for the future.

After a few initial problems with planning and neighbours, the new clubhouse was eventually completed in August 2018.

Very grand indeed, the new building (*below*) is bright and sunny with a veranda

and windows looking out over the lawns, and a large seating area in the middle which is big enough to accommodate committee meetings, match teas and coaching sessions, etc.

There is room for a table tennis table for use during inclement weather, a fitted kitchen with fridge and cooker, and at the other end of the building is an office area adjacent to the toilet.

We are most grateful to have received a grant of £5,000 from the CA, without which we would not have been able to complete the works.

The Postcode Lottery also awarded us a grant of £2,000, which has enabled us to install six solar roof panels, giving us sufficient energy to power the fridge, a tea urn and the LED lighting.

Robyn Clark



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The Alison Maugham Column

Fresh faces

It's the beginning of the new season and everyone in the croquet world will be filling their diaries with croquet activities.

For me this means booking the tournaments and the accommodation which accompanies, planning the junior development days at various clubs and popping my name on the tea rota for my home club.

I have also taken over the responsibility of organising the (SECF) A-League team for my club at Surbiton; it's such an honour to be given this role and I will be doing my best to lead the team to success.

For others in my club and around the country, the planning will look much different.

It might be organising parts for the mowers, making the bakers list for the cakes and treats, writing minutes of

the AGM and hunting high and low for a handicap card and spare markers.

Whatever you are doing in preparation for the season remember that you are appreciated.

Whether you are a player, supporter or caterer, a chairperson, committee member or manager; a referee or coach, do know that this sport keeps going because of you!

All of you!

If you are new to croquet and this is the beginning of your croquet journey, be sure to get involved wherever you can - croquet is so much more than just hitting a ball.

~

The Alison Maugham column was to show the 'more', giving a little insight into the greater world of croquet on and off the lawns.

Alas, it's now time for me to move on and make way for more stories.

So my final words are not only to

encourage more croquet, more competitions, more cake baking and more conversation, but to also request a willing story telling successor.

If you have enjoyed reading my column over the last year and have your own croquet thoughts and tales, why not apply to take over the "readers' column".

For croquet to continue to grow and thrive we need fresh faces, and sometimes that also means stepping aside to let them through.

Good luck for your season, whatever your plans, and be sure to say hello if you see me around.

Alison xx



Croquet Marketing Projects

Hi all – Marketing have not been slacking in the off and early part of our season, and we held our second meeting of the winter at Surbiton Croquet Club, where the lovely Alison Maugham fed us with her delicious lasagne *yum*!

At the meeting, we agreed major projects for the season, and I summarise some updates here:

Social media

The CA now has a presence on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram under the username @croquetengland.

Do follow//tag us in any croquet-posts you make - we want to create plenty of interactions!

And on that topic, if you think you have what it takes to become a social-media contributor for the CA, please get in touch. We'd love to get different perspectives!

Live streaming

We are planning to bring top-class croquet to all CA members and to the general public in 2019, via live video broadcast on YouTube and Facebook Live.

The pinnacle event of the season is of course the WCF Simon Carter GC World Championships in late July/early Aug which we will cover; we will also be streaming other major events in the Fixtures Calendar in the run-up to this, to build-up experience and get feedback.

Some of us are salivating (well, maybe it's just me - *that IS me below by the way*) at the chance of handling expensive camcorders, and/or pretending that we have a potential career with BBC Test Match Special if our croquet audio commentary takes off!

To save us from potential life-changing consequences, if you have some experience of filming/production to contribute, or you would like us to come and film a tournament at your place, please let me know . . .



Recruitment and community engagement

National Croquet Day (Sunday 12 May) may have happened by the time you receive this Gazette and plans for BBC CountryFile Live (two events in August) are now well underway.

For **National Croquet Day**, the CA Office circulated soft and hard-copy publicity materials to all club secretaries and there was a suggested format for newcomers (2-ball Match-play Croquet) which was circulated.

We hope that we have provided plenty of material for clubs to stage and promote successful events to celebrate our National Croquet Day!

For **BBC CountryFile Live**, we have confirmed that the CA will be appearing at both Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire (1 - 4 Aug) and Castle Howard, Yorkshire (15 - 18 Aug) this summer.

~ see the article on page 12 ~

As always, we will be relying on our volunteers to showcase croquet to the public, so thank you in advance for your hard work!

If you have any questions or comments - please get in touch with me.

Eugene Chang,
Marketing Committee Chair
etychang@gmail.com
Twitter @etychang

Photographs by Chris Roberts

GC Series Tournaments

England

Championship Series

Surbiton in April is always likely to provide an interesting tournament and this year we saw the strongest group of players for a weekend championship, and with seven of the top eight UK players participating, it was probably a record for a GC weekend. Missing were two Surbiton members: Stephen Mulliner and South Africa's Reg Bamford, **reports Don Beck.**

Robert Fulford was in fabulous form and laid down an early marker in this World Championship year with victory here.

April brings unpredictable weather and we had a cold start with very light rain followed by temperatures that dropped to the extent that we had hail covering the courts! Most of the players retreated but noticeably Richard Bilton played on in short sleeves, protected only by his waistcoat!

Just as the weather was proving to be unpredictable so were the results.

England AC team player James Death was delayed as his personal driver had trouble getting to Surbiton and the welcome he received from his opponent, Liz Farrow, was certainly warm as she comfortably won 7-5.

Farrow followed that up in the next round by beating the England GC team captain John-Paul Moberly 7-6. We expect to see Farrow back at Surbiton for the next few years, as she really enjoyed this tournament.

The rest of the day was a series of expected results with only the odd surprise and the top four seeds in each block all in a position to make the semis: Rob Fulford and Ian BurrIDGE were on 7 wins from 8 games and just one victory ahead of Jamie Burch, Harry Fisher, John-Paul Moberly, James Death, Richard Bilton, Tobi Savage.

Day two opened with last three rounds of block games, after which Fulford and BurrIDGE qualified from Block A with 10 and 9 wins respectively, but Block B was much tighter and went to a 'net hoops' calculation between three players who all tied on 8 wins. Bilton (net points +25) and Savage (+21) qualified, unlucky Death (+14) didn't.

Semi-final

Fulford beat BurrIDGE and had to wait for the battle between Savage and Bilton to finish. Savage got ahead, winning the second game 7-3 (Bilton had won the first game previously), and was well ahead in the third, but Bilton kept pegging him back and won the decider at hoop 13.

Final

Bilton made Fulford battle for his 7-6 first game win but then Fulford ran away with the second game 7-2 for the victory.

A-Level Series

Cheltenham hosted the first A-Level Series tournament of the year and saw 'The most improved GC player of 2018', **Stuart M Smith** of Northampton, take the title in mid-April, beating Roger Goldring (Phyllis Court and High Wycombe) in a topsy-turvy final, **reports Kevin Ham.**

A full entry of 32 players was split into four blocks of eight, with the standard distribution modified to evenly spread four players from Northampton and thirteen Cheltenham members.

Only two of the top seeds qualified for the eight player knockout and particular congratulations are due to Wendy Wu, David Magee and Jeffrey Faulkner, who qualified despite being seeded in the lower half of the field. The Manager's offer to allow the quarter-finalists to play the first game of their best-of-three matches that evening was not taken up.

At the request of the Manager, play on Day 2 started at 0900 with the main event quarter-finals, and an eight-player Plate block for the next two highest finishers in each block, carrying forward one block game result from yesterday.

The remaining sixteen players were given the option of four games in a full sixteen-player knockout, or six games in two blocks of eight, with carry down, and the latter option won the vote.

I did not think it would be possible to bring Brexit into this report, but on Sunday we were joined by a cameraman and reporter from Swiss television, doing a piece on life in Britain not affected by Brexit. Lots of people were interviewed.

The last of the untimed quarter-finals finished in time for lunch at 1230, the untimed semis started at 1300 and both went to only two games, with Smith beating top-seed Nick Archer (Watford) 7-5, 7-5 and Goldring booking his place in the main event final with a 7-4, 7-5 win over Louise Bradforth.

Bradforth and Archer picked up 4 and 2 A-level Series points respectively, while Smith and Goldring battled for the 10 and 6 points awarded to first and second place.

The final was again untimed, started at 1530, and, although it went to a third deciding game, was all over by 1730, with Smith beating Goldring 7-2, 4-7, 7-3.

Phyllis Court's Ian Norris was undefeated on Day 2 in winning the plate event.

Handicap improvements recorded for Wendy Wu (3 to 2), Stephen Leonard (0 to -1) and Stuart M Smith (-1 to -2).

The inaugural GC Test Match between Spain and England was held at the fabulous Real Club Pineda in Seville over the weekend 15-17 March.

Blessed with cloudless skies and temperatures into the mid-20s, the top six GC players in Spain hosted the visiting England team for a 21-point Test (12 singles, 9 doubles), which was tightly fought on all three days.

The scores at the end of Day 1 (England 4, Spain 2) and Day 2 (9-6) meant the result of the Test Match remained in the balance at the start of the final round of six singles on the Sunday morning.

It was England who eventually came through to take the Test 13-8 and lift the splendid trophy, but the scoreline does not tell the whole story because Spain finished with only 19 hoops fewer than their English counterparts after a total of 55 games!

The croquet was highly competitive throughout and there were some impressive individual performances from both teams, but it was the generosity and kindness of our Spanish hosts that will live longest in the memory.

It is difficult to imagine how they could have done more to welcome and look after us during the weekend; they have set the bar extremely high and it will be a very hard act to follow when England host them for the return fixture in 2020 (12-14 June, venue to be confirmed).

England debut for Bilton

England boasted much the stronger side on paper, with 4 players in the world's top 30.

World no. 7 John-Paul Moberly captained the team while Spain were led by Pepe Riva, the world's 8th best AC player.

England handed a debut to their Singles Champion Richard Bilton, and he was the only first-timer as Stephen Mulliner and Tobi Savage represented England in the GC World Team Championship and Jonathan Powe and Harry Fisher earned caps in recent GC Home Internationals.

Spain pick four Alvarez-Sala brothers

This was only the second time the Spanish side had played an international GC team event; the previous time was Tier 2 of the 2016 World Team Championship, where, without star player Riva, they narrowly missed out on the title and promotion to Tier 1 by losing in the final to Australia.

Returning were the four Alvarez-Sala brothers (surely some sort of record for an

and win inaugural GC Test Match with Spain



England: (back) Harry Fisher, Tobi Savage, Jonathan Powe (front) Stephen Mulliner, J-P Moberly (captain) and Richard Bilton

international team in any sport!) – Andres, Jose, Manuel and Gonzalo – and Rafael “The Bull” Romero.

The singles rounds were split between Friday and Sunday, leaving the doubles rounds for the Saturday and a potential mammoth nine rounds of games to be played in one day!

The first round of singles was only scheduled to start late on the Friday afternoon, so in the morning the English team were treated to a guided tour of the magnificent Alcazar palace.

The oldest royal palace still in use in Europe, it was originally a Muslim residential fortress until partly destroyed and rebuilt by Castilian Christians.

The gardens were particularly beautiful and it is all a must-see for anyone visiting the city.

A full game-by-game report is on the CA website, and that which follows here gives more of a flavour of the event.

Day 1 – A good start for England

The tie of the first round was Savage vs Jose AS, where Savage, having taken game 1 and being pegged back by JAS winning game 2 and JAS going 6-4 up in game 3, took hoops 11 and 12 before running a

boundary hoop 13 (with JAS’s next ball only a yard in front) to complete the comeback.

Unfortunately for spectators worldwide, who were watching a livestream of the match courtesy of Moberly holding Savage’s phone, the phone’s battery died just as they approached hoop 13 in the deciding game!

In another extremely close contest, Mulliner unluckily peeled Riva through hoop 13 to lose their deciding game 6-7 ~ another point decided by the closest of margins.

Fisher beat Gonzalo in three and the second round games were just as tense.

Moberly registered a “grande saltaire” (the Spanish translation for “big jump”) at hoop 9 from the South boundary in game 1 v Andres AS and then carried the 5-4 lead through to win that game and the deciding third game.

Bilton hadn’t quite got into his groove yet and went down in two to Manuel AS, and in another brilliant comeback win Powe beat Romero 7-6 in game 3 after being 4-6 down.

These comeback wins would prove crucial!

The official opening ceremony followed on the Friday, where speeches were held, national anthems were sung and delicious canapes were endlessly thrust under our noses. The evening must have won the prize for latest time to leave a croquet club – after 1am!

Day 2 – Lots of comebacks!

Saturday’s doubles rounds meant that nine points were up for grabs; a day in which the Test could be won or lost.

As it was, Mulliner and Bilton were the most consistent England pairing, winning three out of three matches and, with added victories from Moberly and Savage, and Powe and Fisher, England still held the lead 9-6 at the close.

The fact that so many of the doubles

matches went to three games (including all three of Moberly and Savage’s) meant it wasn’t until after 11pm when the players, players’ families and Spanish croquet dignitaries sat down for the weekend’s formal meal.

The excellent cuisine gave the players enough energy to get back to their feet and hit the dancefloor (some more than others – Mulliner was first up there from the English, his infinite energy never ceasing to amaze).

Fisher went head-to-head (drink-to-drink) with Romero before their singles match the following morning (they were still dancing 7 hours before they were due to play) as beer quickly turned into whisky shots!

Day 3 – England in the driving seat

Sunday morning brought with it the last singles round and the final 6 points of the Test.

The Spanish needed to take five of them to stage a big comeback win, while the English only needed two to take the trophy across the Channel and bring croquet home.

To Romero’s disappointment, it seemed that the alcohol hadn’t taken its toll on Fisher as he won a high quality match 2-0 and gave England one of the two points needed.

As the other players in the first three singles matches of the morning, Mulliner or Savage looked to be in pole position to score the Test winning point, and so it proved as Mulliner won the third game against AAS to secure the trophy for Blighty!

Once all the other matches had been played out, England had recorded a 13-8 victory.

They had played with the pressure and expectation of being clear favourites on paper and having to deal with a loud and partisan home crowd (some of whom had driven five hours from Madrid just to be there!) and a fiercely competitive Spanish side.

The weekend was wrapped up with the trophy presentation and another rendition of the National Anthems.

Thanks to Real Club Pineda for hosting this magnificent event and for the amazing hospitality of our hosts.

We very much look forward to the return fixture in England next year.

Full results can be found on www.CroquetScores.com.

J-P Moberly, England Captain

GC Development Squad weekend



Libby Dixon, Raouf Allim and Lorna Dewar listen to Stephen Custance-Baker's words of wisdom (photo by John Bevington).

The 2019 Development Squad included the new intake players Chris Heath, Dr Raouf Allim, Euan Burridge, James Galpin and, all the way from Edinburgh, Scottish International Lorna Dewar.

Although both days were cloudy and overcast we were extremely lucky that rain didn't interrupt proceedings, however the decidedly chilly Saturday meant that outside sessions were liberally interspersed with indoor activities.

A first for the Development Squad is the participation of two of our up-and-coming younger players soon to compete in the U21 WCF world championships.

Good luck Euan Burridge and James Galpin and let's hope that this will inspire many more younger players to take up croquet.

Burridge will go on to also compete in the WCF Simon Carter GC World Championships following the U21s.

Sadly the energetic Rachel Gee has had to relinquish her role as Assistant and the post has been taken up, I'm very pleased to say, by the England team captain J-P Moberly.

The Squad weekend included sessions delivered by Stephen Custance-Baker about the new rules changes, a mental approach session from Tim King, and Steve Leonard described his experiences in the 2018 Over 50 World Championships in Cairo, in which there were five other current and former Development Squad players taking part.

Sunday's itinerary included development of set-piece practice

routines, jump shots and improving techniques. There was also a mentored game with Stephen Custance-Baker tasked with floating between lawns and interrupting play by directing the next player to 'play partner ball' (and other irregularities) as well as asking players to determine the correct resolution to the various infringements.

Another first for the group was the introduction of Atkins Quadway hoops; the group soon came to terms with them, although I suspect the soft ground conditions and generous one-eighth settings contributed to this a great deal. But watch out next time chaps, because they will get tighter!

The Development Squad will meet again on 7 and 8 September for the annual Mentored Match Weekend involving the Elite players.

Wrest Park CC were terrific hosts and the lawns were splendid.

A special thanks goes to George Collin and Co. for sorting the teething problem with the Atkins hoops, to J-P Moberly and Richard Bilton for their support and participation, to Tim King and Steve Leonard for their contributions and not least of all the ever enthusiastic Stephen C-B for a very professional presentation.

Note to self:

Download Coach's Eye because it's a great tool (it allows one to analyse a player's stroke in slow motion).

**Lionel Tibble,
International Performance
Director (GC)**



Calling under 25s

The Summer School of Croquet 2019 (GC & AC)

This year's Summer School will take place on Tuesday and Wednesday 20 & 21 August hosted, once again, at Wrest Park Croquet Club.

The schedule includes a full programme covering AC and GC skills development, from basic skills to advanced tactics suitable and of interest for all standards of play.

The CA has recently introduced the Sponsorship Scheme to encourage younger players to take up croquet and to help them develop their skills.

Please check the CA website for more details via this navigation:

www.croquet.org.uk -> The CA -> Schemes & Plans -> Young Persons
(<https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=ca/schemes/YpSponsorship>)

Are you a young player under 25?

If you are an aspiring younger player under the age of 25 and would like to register for a place at the 'School of Croquet', please contact me at the e-mail address below.

Regional or Federation Coaching Officers, Development Officers or club coaches may know of likely people.

Please ensure that potential candidates in your area are aware of the 'School of Croquet', encourage them to come along and send me their details.

**Lionel Tibble,
International Performance
Director (GC)**
anglion@btinternet.com

The GC Federations Shield

The draw for the inaugural GC Federations Shield competition was published on the CA website in March.

For the nine competing clubs, each representing their respective federations, there is a first round tie for Westmorland and Ashby for the right to join the others in the second round.

The full draw (*venues to be decided*):
Westmorland or Ashby v High Wycombe Croquet Durham v Ealing
Ripon Spa Hotel v Abbey
Hunstanton v Broadwas
Frances Colman, Director

GC 'Ball Crush' fault

In reply to Tony Lee's letter
(Letters page 10)

Dear Editor,

Rule 11.2.4 states that the commission of a "double tap" in a stroke, namely where the mallet hits a ball (typically the striker's ball ("SB")) more than once, is a fault.

However, high-speed video photography has shown that the SB can remain "glued" to the mallet face for a few milliseconds, especially in a firmly-played stroke.

This suggests that driving the SB into another ball ("OB") from very close range will not result in a double tap because mallet face and SB will still be in contact when SB hits OB.

~

The rule-makers felt that this should not be permitted and so introduced into the 4th Edition what is now Rule 11.2.6 in the 5th Edition to make such a stroke a fault.

The separation distance between SB and OB at which this effect occurs is given as 4mm or less in the guidance set out in Appendix 4 of the CA GC Rules booklet (see paragraph 1.1.4).

This fault is commonly referred to as a "ball crush".

~

However, if the stroke is played at an angle to straight ahead (i.e. with a "departure angle" greater than zero), the distance that the relevant point on SB (i.e. the point which will make contact with OB) has to travel before it makes contact with OB increases.

As soon as that distance exceeds 4mm, the likelihood of a ball crush is greatly reduced. But the possibility of committing a different fault, a double tap, remains.

As the departure angle increases, the extent to which OB impedes SB decreases.

A croquet ball is about half the weight of a standard mallet head and so, when unimpeded, leaves the mallet face at about twice the speed of the mallet head and therefore never gives rise to a double



Referee James Hawkins takes a look at Dave Trimmer's close together balls (by Chris Roberts)

tap. This is an application of the Law of Conservation of Momentum. Obviously, when the departure angle is small, the impedance of SB remains very considerable and a double tap remains very likely in a firm stroke.

However, as the departure angle increases, the impedance by OB is reduced and SB has more chance of escaping to the side and avoiding being hit for a second time by the mallet face.

~

High-speed video photography shows that double taps can still occur when the separation distance is small (4mm or less) and the departure angle is 45 degrees.

However, when the departure angle is 60 degrees or more (as indicated in the guidance in the new GC Rules Appendix 4 paragraph 1.2.1), OB no longer prevents SB from outdistancing the mallet face and a double tap does not occur.

~

Tony Lee's concern that a ball crush fault can only be avoided by preventing the mallet from being in contact with SB when SB hits OB is correct.

However, when the departure angle reaches 60 degrees, the effective separation distance will be more than 4mm and so SB will have detached itself from the mallet face so a ball crush will not occur.

In addition, SB will also be able to outdistance the mallet face after hitting OB so a double tap will not occur either.

Tony is incorrect to believe that the mallet head needs to be removed by the player from SB before it hits OB in these circumstances. The Law of Conservation of Momentum will cause the SB to remove itself from the mallet face of its own accord. The guidance in Appendix 3 paragraph 1.2 is correct.

Stephen Mulliner,
Chairman, GC Rules Committee

Croquet's
Charity
One Ball
2019



**"There is a Superhero
in all of us, we just need
the courage to put on
the cape"**

Superman was an unexpected visitor to Bristol Croquet Club's heat of the Croquet's Charity One Ball last month.

Des Wakeley 'had the courage' to lead his club mates in their contribution to Croquet's annual nationwide fundraising effort.

National organiser Kevin Cater reported that, as the Gazette went to press, 29 heats had taken place and 403 players had raised (together with other contributions) over £4,000 (plus £700 gift aid) for this season's good cause, the Alzheimer's Society.

A full report of the final money raised and the Charity One Ball National Final will appear in the next Gazette issue.



CA Grant just the ticket for Ryde

Ryde Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club was established in 1891 in private grounds close to the centre of the Isle of Wight town. It moved to its present location in 1906 and was opened in 1907 with the current clubhouse at its centre.

This building has been extended and modified several times over the years to adapt to the changing requirement of the membership, which in recent times has grown dramatically.

In late 2016 it was decided to carry out the most extensive alteration of the building since it was erected, which culminated in the building being extended by a third and included updated, modern facilities for the benefit of all, whether they be tennis, croquet or social members.

At this point, the kitchen was very outdated, with a range of different dilapidated kitchen units, most of which had been donated over the years. The working conditions provided were not good and it was agreed that the kitchen should be refurbished and a budget of £13,500 was agreed.

Work commenced in January 2018 and was completed in April, was not without complication with the re-routing of plumbing and general rewiring being undertaken by contractors. There was also a need to totally re-build an entire wall when it was discovered that the underlying wooden structure was rotten; it was completed with the external cladding being replaced with "Hardy Planking".

The work was undertaken by two club members, Tom Carter and Vernon Gibbs, assisted by others from time to time.

The final cost for the project, which included the unscheduled work, (electrical, end wall) came to £12,800, of which

a CA Grant provided a most welcome contribution of £1650

The kitchen was used extensively throughout last season with the members finding the layout very functional when catering for large groups.

The facilities were inspected by the local council Environmental Health Agency and we have been awarded "Five Stars".

Vernon Gibbs



Croquet in Ire

Few people realise the strength of the influence of Ireland on croquet during the early Nineteenth Century.

The Origins of Croquet

The origins of the game are obscure and it may well have had ancient beginnings, but it is clear that wherever it came from, it was developed in Ireland in the early part of that century.

The Field magazine of 1858 (as quoted by Betty Prichard in The Croquet Gazette of April 1976) mentions "meetings of the County Meath Croquet Cracks".

They were mostly young and met at each other's houses. The reporter was George Annesley Pollok of Oatlands and Newcastle, County Meath.

Later that year, he sent a copy of his rules under the pseudonym of "Corncrake" and called them "The Rules of the Oatlands Club". That is the first mention of a croquet club.

The noted croquet historian Dr Prior, in his book of 1872, makes the categorical statement "One thing only is certain: it is from Ireland that croquet came to England and it was on the lawn of the late Lord Lonsdale that it was first played in this country". This was about 1851.

Early Years

The first Irish Croquet Championship is recorded in 1871, and it was played again in 1873 and 1874 before seemingly lapsing.

Indeed croquet did not prosper in England during the next 25 years, although there is patchy evidence that it may have in America, and the new craze of Lawn Tennis stole its thunder in the sporting press.

Although croquet flourished in Ireland after its early days, most of the clubs were in the provinces and there were few in Dublin.

There were active clubs in Athlone, Athlone, Belfast, Birr, Carrickmines, Cork, Galway, Lismore, Malahide, Mallow, Mullingar, Muskerry, Newcastle (County Down), Rushbrooke, Tullamore and Youghal.

This was the heyday of croquet in Ireland, when players like Cyril Corbally, his brother Herbert, C.L.O Callaghan, Nina Coote and Peter Duff Mathews bore all before them both at home and in England.

And they introduced a totally new style, gripping the mallet in what became known as the Irish style, and for the first time swinging it between the legs instead of outside the feet or across the body.

For photos of some of the early Irish players, please visit the Croquet Association of Ireland (CAI) website.



ireland - A brief history and a warm welcome



After the First World War and in the 1920s croquet went into a decline and many of the clubs mentioned above collapsed.

Carrickmines continued to be the only club that kept in the mainstream, and the Irish Championship has continued to attract visiting players from among the strongest in the world.

As host to Ireland's international matches, Carrickmines has welcomed England, Scotland, Wales, France, Belgium, Switzerland, Australia, the USA, South Africa and Canada.

The Croquet Association of Ireland (CAI)

The CAI was formed in 1985 on a wave of enthusiasm following the victory of an Irish team against the USA in Palm Beach, Florida.

Since then it has been working hard to encourage new clubs and expand activities, with the Irish Golf Croquet Championship being introduced in 1998.

The CAI arranges annual matches against the Croquet Association (the McWeeney Trophy) and the Scottish Croquet Association (the Appleton Trophy).

Croquet at Carrickmines

Carrickmines Croquet and Lawn Tennis Club became the home of the Irish Championships in 1909 and has continued to host them ever since.

The two main (and long standing) AC Tournaments are the Championships of County Dublin, held in the first week of June, and the Championships of Ireland, played over a week in early August.

Carrickmines sits in a delightful setting in the southern outskirts of Dublin, with views

over the mountains.

The Club boasts seven outdoor and three indoor tennis courts and the old wooden clubhouse (beloved by many) has been replaced by a splendid modern building with a bar, dining facilities, changing rooms and a gym.

There are four excellent croquet courts, the quality of which was enhanced with the introduction of an irrigation system in early 2018.

The number of active croquet players has grown considerably over the last few years, and we play all year round, mainly GC in the winter months and AC in the summer.

With few croquet clubs in Ireland, it is difficult for players to get enough matches to learn and improve.

Carrickmines do play matches against Chester, Hamptworth, Hurlingham and Sidmouth and some players travel to the UK for game time.

But most of all we would like more players from other clubs to play in our open tournaments, enjoy top quality croquet in a superb location and experience the best of Irish hospitality.

To tempt more players to cross the Irish Sea we are introducing a Prize Fund for the Irish Open Championship Singles in 2019!

The entry forms for both the Dublin and Irish Championships are on the CA website. We look forward to welcoming you.

**Simon Williams and Sandy Greig,
Carrickmines C<C**

Photographs from top:

Croquet at Marino (Dublin) 1874.
Carrickmines Club c.1910 and the hive of activity at the club today.

The Croquet Gazette - Advertising Rate Card

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Strictly payment with order.

Classified advertisements must arrive not less than 30 days prior to the publication issue.

Staying Sun Safe this summer

When you consider the stereotypical weather in the UK you could be forgiven for thinking that sun protection is a relatively minor concern.

The truth is that skin cancer is the most common cancer in the UK, and there has been a particularly sharp rise in the number of cases since the 1970s.

Although we don't have figures on croquet players specifically, we do know that other sports and hobbies that see people outside in the sun a great deal tend to increase your risk of excessive sun exposure, which can cause premature skin ageing, sun damage, and skin cancer.

The good news is that skin cancer is largely preventable, and with proper practices can be detected early and successfully treated.

When spending time outside whilst playing croquet, it's important to remember to protect yourself from the sun.

In an ideal world, you should avoid being outside between 11am and 3pm on days when the UV forecast is high.

If that's not feasible, then make sure you have plenty of sun protection.

Making use of shade and protective clothing such as hats and sunglasses should

be the first line of defence during croquet games, with sunscreen used to supplement this.

When choosing a sunscreen, you should go for one with an SPF 30 or above, with a minimum of a 4-star UVA protection rating.

Sunscreen should be applied 15 to 30 minutes before sun exposure begins and



reapplied at least every two hours.

If you find that you are working up a sweat whilst playing, then sunscreen should be reapplied a bit more regularly as it can be easily wiped away.

Although prevention is better than a cure, knowing how to spot signs of skin cancer is essential for effective treatment.

The best way to check for skin cancer is to carry out regular skin examinations, ideally once a month.

Early detection can help to reduce the risk of developing a larger, more serious skin cancer that may need extensive surgery or treatment.

You should be looking for:

New skin lumps, spots, ulcers, scaly patches or moles that weren't there before

Marks (including moles) on the skin that have changed shape, colour, texture or size

Sores that do not heal

Any areas on the skin that are itchy, painful or bleed

If there are moles that you want to keep an eye on then it's a good idea to take a picture of them, preferably with something, such as a coin, for scale. This will be a good reference point so that you can easily tell if there have been any changes.

If in doubt, get it checked out by your GP.

This article has been written in collaboration with the British Association of Dermatologists, who will run their annual Sun Awareness Week from 6 to 12 May 2019.

For more information please visit www.skinhealthinfo.org.uk.



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Inter - Counties Chat by Bill Arliss

It is very pleasing to be able to tell you all that both Inter Counties events are continuing at the top of the popularity stakes and are in fact the best supported events in our national programme for both formats.

The GC version, which is really the “new kid on the block”, is following in the AC footsteps and has advanced to a two-divisional structure in the 2018 season.

It appears that we will have 18 GC county teams for 2019 and there is a distinct possibility that GC will eventually outnumber the AC version.

Whilst GC only started in 1997, first records of the AC version are dated exactly 100 years before that, in 1897.

Quite obviously, the ability to collect such large numbers of players together at common venues must give a massive boost to our promotional efforts for croquet as a whole and we therefore have to analyse exactly what features make the events so popular; and as the organising body it is our duty to ensure these features are fully maintained in the future.

I am sure everybody who has played in either or both Inter Counties has realised that both these events have progressed way beyond being just another croquet tournament.

The sheer number of players, who range from the most skilled down to the good club players, has transformed the events into croquet festivals for both disciplines.

Events not to be missed

They have become the one event each year that many players always try to attend and may be the only time each year that many may meet one another.

It has led to the development of the social side of the event; many counties now organise team dinners and we have to ensure our playing programs are tight enough not to interfere with the social side.

The composition of teams is, as we know, based on various forms of relationship with particular counties.

However we are certainly not trying to produce a pure breed of say “Kentish men”; it just happens to be a formula that has been found to work well and it is important that we all understand exactly what “working well” means.

Our aim is to be able to produce a consistent number of teams, year after year, to meet the full entry targets with the hope that overall we manage to give all CA members a reasonable chance to play, irrespective of the croquet facilities in their

location.

Thus we find birth, parents' birth, residence, past residence, club location and indeed past history are all factors that our conditions take into account.

The winning formula

However we must remember that the wording of our conditions is really just a formula and if

we feel the formula is not working quite as well as we wish, then it becomes our duty as a tournament committee to tweak that formula.

Over the years, a major consideration has always been to prevent the slightly stronger counties from hoovering up all the better players for their own use. Allowing a few teams to become totally dominant achieves no real purpose, especially as it may prevent some counties from even raising a team.

The use of a gap year between changes of allegiance has proved very useful in preventing large migrations between teams, because many players have not wanted to miss a year out of the event.

Many of the clauses in our conditions have come from the natural competitive urges of teams wanting to improve their capability by finding ways around the regulations. ‘Free long-distance membership of a particular club for -2 handicaps’ is one that regularly comes to mind, as this introduced a definition of which club memberships would count for eligibility.

Although we claim that team eligibility is only loosely based on county, the identification of a team as a specific county has in fact created a superb identity for each team. After suffering the problems created by HMG, who can create or kill off counties for political expediency, we switched our definition of county boundaries to that provided by the Association of British Counties who maintain a stable gazetteer of all addresses in the UK based on traditional county boundaries.

This identity has in fact



led to the use of traditional county flags, badges, uniforms etc.

Nowadays the dark red shirts of our friends from Glamorgan are a common sight and the green / white check trousers on the Wiltshire team are a sight once seen, never forgotten. It all adds to the general hype of the event and is fully encouraged by the tournament committees.

Although both events are organised as serious competitions, the major aim is not to find the best team on the day, as this is most likely to be determined by the eligibility criteria; it is to maintain a serious competitive approach throughout the whole competition.

The fact that we have promotion / relegation and possible play-offs in the following year to consider has ensured that serious play continues right to the end.

Indeed, there have been many cases where the result of the last game has influenced matters in the following year.

continued overleaf...

Photographs: (above) David Nicholson of Hampshire plays in front of the ‘red caps’ of Kent, and (below) Oxfordshire’s Danny Johnston double banking with Kevin Ham of Glamorgan whilst trying not to notice Richards Dickson’s fabulous ‘Wiltshire trousers’ on the next court.

Images by Chris Roberts



The CROQUET Gazette

continued from page 23...

I hope that the above description has given everyone a reasonable understanding of why our general conditions are written in the way they are.

In my personal experience of being involved with both Counties events for a number of years, maintaining the eligibility criteria has become somewhat of a contest between balancing the natural competitive instincts of our county organisers against what is best for the event itself.

The 2019 tournaments

Turning now to each event specifically:

For the AC version, we had twenty-two provisional entries last October but unfortunately Channel Islands has realised they cannot raise a team for all four days and have withdrawn, so a CA Select Team will therefore be raised to maintain the full schedule.

The GC event is still really developing.

Last year we had eleven in the first division and six in the second, one of which was a CA Select team who replaced a team that had to withdraw at the last moment due to a medical emergency.

Luckily the withdrawn team has bounced back and we have a new entry from Essex, giving us a twelve and a six which is a maximum for our two venues.

The institution of a second division has attracted several possible new counties who have registered an organiser already.

However, if we agree to expand the GC Inter Counties to more than eighteen, we are going to need a second venue larger than Compton; and venues of this size are not easy to find, and they have to be booked well in advance.

Thus, if any new county is interested in the 2020 event, their potential team list must be available for submission in the provisional entry Oct 2019. We have to ensure that any new team is based mainly around new players and has not stripped existing teams beyond redemption.

The Tournament Committee is unlikely to consider expansion of the event for a single team but should this arise it will most likely be handled as a play-off.

Please remember that if any player is interested in Inter Counties play, they can make their availability for a particular county known by registering on the CA web site.

Bill Arliss,
Tournament Director,
AC and GC Inter Counties



I had the pleasure of meeting José Antonio Milena Jimenez at Roehampton CC one decidedly chilly day in late 2018.

José had come to look at the croquet facilities and get some inspiration for his attempt to re-introduce croquet to the Canary Islands.

He and his friends then penned the following report about the history and future of our sport on the Islands, in which reference is made to a house called Buen Retiro, which is where José is hoping to locate a new Club.

All good fortune to you José – Ed.

The practice of croquet in the Canary Islands has an old tradition. Its origins go back to the beginning of the last century, linked to the important British presence in the islands, mainly in Gran Canaria and Tenerife.

Sport in general was an activity that was popularized here, thanks to the English who founded a number of sports clubs in order to practice their favorite hobbies and alleviate the boredom and monotony of life far from the metropolis.

The Canary Islands became the place where the first national golf clubs, cricket, tennis, croquet, etc. appear.

English and Canaries played these sports, intermingling regardless of nationalities, as evidenced by the local press of the time: in 1907 it seemed as if enthusiasms had been awakened for all kinds of sports.

Initially, the public life of the British community was developed in private gardens, but there was also play in public settings in the gardens of churches and hotels.

The development of tourism, saw a large number of travelers from Britain,

Reintroducing

flock to the Canaries' Croquet lawns that were then available in the luxurious hotels and it was soon customary for local and foreign guests to play sport.

Hotels like, for example, the Gran Hotel Taoro in Puerto de La Cruz, the Hotel Pino de Oro in Santa Cruz or the Casona del Buen Retiro Hotel in Güímar, all had croquet lawns.

The first Croquet Club in Spain

In 1906 the English Club was created with the name of "Orotava Bowling & Recreation Club", where croquet, bowling and tennis were the preferred sports.

The club was legalized in 1908 when registering as a national association and can therefore be said to be the first Croquet Club in Spain.

These early origins resulted in croquet being a relatively common sport or game in Tenerife.

Croquet's long history in our land has led to certain peculiarities in its game, which makes some speak of the Canary croquet as a different croquet modality.

Croquet has generally been recreational and not so sport in Tenerife and the difficult orography here means that we are always facing relatively small croquet lawns.

However are many private gardens on the island with croquet fields, or simply gardens where hoops are occasionally sited for enjoyment of the game.

Sitio Litre

A nice example is the croquet lawn of Sitio Litre which is considered to be the oldest garden in Tenerife. It is a space where nature and history merge at a wonderful eighteenth century mansion.

This space was associated with the figure of Archibald Little, who acquired the house from a Dutch wine export company established by the Pasley family.

There were many travelers who found rest among their dependencies, such as the famous botanist, explorer and German discoverer Alexander von Humboldt or the popular writer Agatha Christie.

Who knows if the latter played croquet during her stay.

In recent times, coinciding with the popularization of this croquet in our country, there is a resurgence of the same in our land.

Proof of this is the recently created Tenerife Club de Croquet which, as its



ing Croquet to the Canary Islands



Photographs:
(far left and right) Advertisements of the Gran Hotel Taoro and the Hotel Pino de Oro, offering Croquet as one of the activities.
(left) The Croquet lawns of the Gran Hotel Taoro, Puerto de La Cruz in 1920s.
(below left) The croquet field of the Casona del Buen Retiro and water mill in the background, Güímar.
(below right) Croquet Lawn, Sitio Litre, Puerto de La Cruz.
(bottom, left and right) The English Club, Puerto de La Cruz.



President, Agustín Bollo comments that it “takes its inspiration from the rich British heritage treasured by the Canaries and tries to recover the tradition of this sport practiced in our land from old times”.

**José Antonio Milena Jimenez,
 Tenerife Club de Croquet**



“... In 1902, the year that British troops put an end to the Boer War in South Africa, the idea of a sports club began to take shape.

Meanwhile, residents such as Captain Hamilton Boyle, the Reverend Humphreys, Dr Lisham, or gentlemen like Wooley or Osbert Ward, met to play some games at Casa San Antonio, of the Boreham family.

There was a cement tennis court and a lawn for croquet, a game of high society that many confuse with cricket, another game invented by the English, completely different, and very difficult to

explain on paper.

The same gentlemen met again at El Robado, the magnificent mansion of Colonel Wethered, with the vice-consul Thomas Reid and Mr Gregory. The gardens of this house, which for some reason today is an abominable ruin, were extensive.

They also played croquet and the old bowling game in a highly scientific way with civilized intermissions for tea and enjoying their picnics. . . .”

by
 John Reid and Nicolás Lemus



Recent Coaching Appointments

Despite the winter's cold and damp there have been six people who have become qualified in one way or another – including an Examining Coach!

Examining Coach
Bob Burnett - Cornwall

Many congratulations to Bob - many thanks for your ongoing commitment to coaching from everyone on the Coaching Committee.

AC Graded Coaches
Grade 3
David Mooney - Roehampton

Grade 1
Chris Coull - Sussex County
Linda Shaw - Nailsea
Julia Lowery - Cheltenham
Polly Reynolds - Nailsea

If you are interested in becoming a coach, there are a number of courses available.

See the on-line tournaments calendar and printed fixtures book for details and contacts.

Sarah Hayes,
Chairman CA Coaching Committee

The season is underway - Hoorah!

Well here we are – the 2019 season is up and running and hopefully your croquet is coming together. For those of you still uncertain about which tournaments to try, perhaps for the first time, all I might say is “Enter Now” – have a look at the Online Fixtures List or have a browse through the Fixtures Book.

You might not be lucky enough to get a place if a chosen tournament is to be held fairly soon but you should have more chance if you look a bit further ahead, but do enter as soon as you can because places go very quickly.

If there is something you fancy having a go at this or next month, please do phone the Club Tournament Secretary to see if places are available – all contact details are shown clearly within each event.

Tournaments for AC higher handicappers

Perhaps you only started playing last season and are still unsure, well thanks to Adam Moliver, I am pleased to be able to advertise an AC High-Bisquers event at Cheltenham CC and the notice detailing dates/time, etc, may be found within these Coaching Pages.

If your club is holding a similar event, please do let me know as these High

Bisquers tournaments provide the perfect way for beginners to dip their toes into competitive play without feeling overwhelmed.

Adam Moliver provided some extra information which is very useful for potential entrants and goes to emphasise the more relaxed atmosphere hoped for.

He said that whilst whites are encouraged, they are not essential, the preferred alternative would be “lights” – so light-coloured clothing – and Adam expects this might well be peoples’ first tournament so asks me to remind you all to bring Handicap Cards, Ball Markers and Timer. If you still feel it is all too much, Adam will arrange for coaching on the second day for you.

Tournaments for GC higher handicappers

Golf Croquet high handicappers have the great opportunity to enter one or more of the 21 GC C-Level Series tournaments (for players with handicaps of 7+); indeed, there are many players across the country planning road-trips including a break with their Croquet Chums to play in two or three tournaments along the way.

Perfect!

So – what are you waiting for?

Get online and start browsing the fixtures – you know you want to!

I hope to see you around.

Sarah Hayes

The Coaching Awards

The Lifetime Achievement Award

At the recent meeting of the CA Coaching Committee it was agreed there would no award made this time round.

~

I am sure there will be lots of coaching taking place across all clubs this season.

Please, please will you consider how much work these coaches are doing and if they are making a difference in your area.

If this is the case, perhaps you will consider putting together some words about them and sending it to me.

I would rather not have another year go by without a Coach of the Year at the end of it. The coaching committee are unable to make citations appear ourselves and so we rely on all of you to let us know what is going on.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sarah Hayes,
Chairman CA Coaching Committee,
cacommchair@googlemail.com

Coach of the Year 2018

To allow for more people to put forward a citation for their prospective Coach of the Year, the deadline for nominations was extended.

The new deadline has now also passed, and, after discussion, it was agreed there would be no Coach of the Year for 2018.

Coaching photos from the 'NextGen' event last year - (below) David Wise and James Galpin, (right) James Wilkinson and Duncan Catterall, (far right) Tobi Savage with a large audience.
Images by Chris Roberts



TIME TO TRY A TOURNAMENT

Go on, have a go!

High Bisquers Tournament (AC)

at Cheltenham Croquet Club

August 13-14

Two 18 point games per day for
Handicaps 14-24

Manager: Adam Moliver ~ entry £15

includes tea but please bring your own lunch

Some coaching will be available for those
still struggling on day 2

apply: croquetcheltenham@gmail.com

National C-Level Series (GC)

at 21 venues around England from

April to August ~ Handicaps 7+

For dates and locations see the panel on
page 17 of the last Gazette or visit the
CA website Fixtures Calendar / Fixtures
Book (all are marked with a '~' notation)

Spring into Action *(see what I did then?)*

Hopefully your mallet has been dusted down and your whites have been found from the back of your wardrobe; now, all you need do is remember how to play!

This time of year it is all about getting back to basics and therefore you must start at the very beginning; it is a very good place to start after all.

Roquets (AC) / Clearances (GC)

Start gently – so don't bash the living daylight out of the ball and don't practise missing by having the target miles away.

Gentle shots at short targets will do the trick.

Get the old body moving and used to wielding a mallet again.

Build the exercise up with firmer shots at lengthier targets.

Positioning Balls (GC)

This is easy to practise; play the balls to the hoops in order and hopefully the line and length will improve a little each shot.

Watch each ball as it travels and see what its journey looks like.

Is it wandering North? South? You might learn a lot about a court by simply watching

each ball, and this should help you play a better shot next time, allowing for what you have learned.

Hoop Running (AC and GC)

Hoops seem to get narrower over the Winter, don't they?

It is the cold you know – poor things have been abandoned, shivering away, unloved in some dark and dingy shed.

Again, don't go mad by merrily bashing balls from the boundary at hoop 1 – not a good plan and bound to upset any Lawn Manager who might see you.

Practise running hoops from a short distance and make sure you are standing back far enough, keeping your head down, following through and playing smoothly but firmly.

Build your confidence – don't destroy it.

Take Offs (AC)

Everyone thinks these are sooo easy! Yet never get them right!

Try not to use the ball you are taking off from as a brake – this is to say don't hit into the take-off and move the other ball yards in an effort to stop the ball you are playing going too far.

This is madness – the angle of the take-off is changed alarmingly if you do this and the result is usually your ball sitting in the middle of nowhere with your opponent sniggering in the shed.

Stand well back before playing the stroke and make sure that the take-off is going in the right direction, then practise playing almost as a single ball shot with minimal movement to the other ball.

Practise taking off around the court to the four corners – corner 1 to corner 2, etc.

For the first time round the court, allow yourself to take off from the boundary side of the ball that you are taking croquet from, and then, once you are doing well at this, change so you are taking off from the court side of the ball.

Of course the ball that you are taking croquet from may not travel off the court, but this still gives you movement of a yard! So, no problem!

Have a great season everyone – any questions or comments please send me an email.

Sarah Hayes,
Chairman CA Coaching Committee,
caccommchair@googlemail.com



The Cheltenham GC coaching POD - *an inspiration for others*

Following our start-up in 2017, Cheltenham CC held three full-day Croquet Association GC PODs last year, each split into morning and afternoon sessions to suit some of the participants with other half-day commitments.

The POD self-started from scratch by inviting all Cheltenham members; but the offer was quickly expanded to other nearby clubs and individuals.

I drafted all the written material because I

found the existing advice in the books really only covered some of the very basics – up to B-Level at a push!

The POD dates were sent out with a list of topics for each session; then, armed with an idea of attendance numbers, I was able to plan and deliver the days fully, with Russell Barter's able assistance with the on-lawn coaching.

In 2018 Cheltenham members all became CA members effectively, so the GC

POD provided all the coaching needs for members who wanted it (they just had to register on the CA website).

I took this decision as I wanted the largest base to grow from, and we are now the largest GC POD numerically.

The three PODs held covered (1) General Skills, (2) Strategy and Tactics, and (3) Rules, Regulations and Psychology, including three coached games.

continued overleaf...

The CROQUET Gazette

Continued from page 27...

Measured success

We have had some clear positive results from our POD members, with two players improving from C-Level to B-Level, three making the step-up from B to A and one player winning an A-Level tournament with two (learnt) long jump shots.

The biggest improvement was from a player who moved from C-Level right through to reaching an A-Level semi-final, and, as a club, Cheltenham had success in the 2017 South West Federation leagues.

Improvements and innovations

The discussions we have had were inclusive, lively and inquisitive, resulting in revising, improving and expanding the coaching material, and producing feedback on specific areas to help improve play.

I adopted "Nth degree thinking", taking an element and developing it all the way through.

For example, the in-off shot was examined and expanded to include open in-offs, calculating the angle of aim using the tangential rule (thought out by Robert Richardson).

We refined it by allowing for "Squeeze" for greater than 45 degrees from centre to tangent line and "Running" for less than



The Cheltenham GC POD take a break from coaching and seek shelter in the shade with coordinator Andrew Cowing (seated right)

45 degrees from centre to tangent line for more accuracy, much in the way of allowing for pull in an AC peel.

Through some trial and error we have achieved a reliable method!

Our 2019 programme

Moving on to 2019, our programme of PODs will concentrate more on need-based individual coaching using our modular drafted sessions and looking at developing Championship Level material.

Thursday 16 May – skills refresher (all day)

Thursday 23 May – POD surgery (am/pm)

Thursday 6 June – improvements / goal setting / planned practise (all day)

Thursday 20 June – POD surgery (am/pm)

Thursday 27 June – A-Level and

Championship play

Thursday 29 Aug. – POD surgery (am/pm)

Winter sessions TBA – coached games

Finally, I must thank Cheltenham CC for providing a full CA GC tournament fixture list at the club as well as revising the Club's own season-long competitions for Championship, A-Level, B-Level, C-Level and Handicap. Always having the next level to aspire to is a great help in moving POD players along with their careers.

Andrew Cowing

CA Cheltenham GC POD Coordinator

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www.DuncanHectorTurfCare.co.uk

Leather Jackets and Red Thread

- Leather Jackets -

Leather Jackets are the larvae of the Crane Fly or Daddy Long Legs. The problem is that they are delicious if you are a crow and it is the crow damage that is so annoying for croquet players.

They peck into the lawn making holes an inch or so in diameter.

Pesticides that kill leather jackets were banned a few years ago and no other method of killing them has been found – until now!

The idea is to make it easier for crows to reach their quarry so that they don't have to peck deep holes in the turf.

To do this you soak the area with water which makes the larvae come to the surface so the crows can pick them out easily thus doing much less damage to the surface.

- Red Thread -

Red Thread is a fungal attack which creates brown, dead-looking patches on grass. If you look closely at infected blades of grass you will see that they are pink. Red Thread doesn't kill the grass but it is very unsightly.

It is supposed to be a sign that there is too little Nitrogen in the root zone, but this presumption is questionable because grass that is correctly fertilised can still be infected.

You can apply more nitrogen but it simply seems to make the rest of the grass grow more, thus hiding the red thread.

The cure that does work is to spray with Soluble Iron.

This will desiccate the fungus and the grass soon recovers.

Take care when purchasing; Soluble Iron can be very damaging to sprayers.

There are many qualities of soluble iron on the market: some are gritty and don't dissolve well which can lead to blocked nozzles and broken pumps.

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

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www.burycroquet.com or via www.oxfordcroquet.com/equip



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2001 Round head carbon fibre mallet. 10" brass £255.

11" brass £260; Composite faces add £20

Airline Travel Shaft £90. Engraved Ferrules £12.
UK postage £15, rest of the world on request.

For details or discussion, contact Dave Trimmer
01747 824822 Davetrimmer@talktalk.net
www.davetrimmermallets.com



Some Coaching Answers

David Mooney wrote to the Gazette offering this poser.

"These are the answers given at a recent coaching course:

- I want to finish War and Peace.
- I want to top up my suntan.
- I want to get to know that dishy guy.

But what was the question?"

See if you can work this out before looking for the answer (which is inverted at the foot of this column).

Corrections

The Editor apologises for two errors in the February issue (Gazette 378).

Incorrect dates were published for the **Lancashire GC Open**, which will be held at **Pendle on 21 & 22 July** (not 28 & 29 July).

Also, **English National Singles Championship (ENSC)** for the 'Ascot Cup' will be held at the **Hurlingham Club** (not Hamptworth), the scene of success for Ian Burridge in 2016, below.



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: **Advice & Technical/ Other Articles / Croquet Jargon**

or use this link:

<https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=tech/other/jargon>

The question posed above is: **Why do you want to play AC?**

CA Contacts

Mark Suter

Manager

The Croquet Association
Old Bath Road, Cheltenham
GL53 7DF 01242 242318
caoffice@croquet.org.uk



Quiller Barrett

President

10 Frost House, Chesham Rd
Berkhamsted
HP4 3AY
quiller3@gmail.com



John Bowcott

Chairman of Council

7 Walham Rise
Wimbleton Hill Rd, London
SW19 7QY 020 8947 6032
bowcott@hotmail.com



John Dawson

Vice-Chairman of Council

The Cottage
2 Westminster Ave. Chester
CH4 8JB 01244 675929
johngdawson@onetel.com



Peter Death

Hon. Treasurer

252 Hockley Road, Hockley
Tamworth, Stafs. B77 5EZ
01827 251738
peter.j.death@gmail.com



Dr. Ian Vincent

Hon. Secretary

21 Cedar Avenue, Beeston
Nottingham NG9 2HA
0115 925 3664
ian.vincent@cantab.net



CA Council Committee Chairmen

Executive

John Bowcott bowcott@hotmail.com

Management

John Dawson johngdawson@onetel.com

AC Laws

Ian Vincent ian.vincent@cantab.net

AC Selection

Ian Lines ian.lines@atkingglobal.com

AC Tournament

Beatrice McGlen beatrice@mcglen.co.uk

GC Rules

Stephen Mulliner snmulliner@gmail.com

GC Selection

Lionel Tibble anglion@btinternet.com

GC Tournament

Jonathan Powe jonathanpowe56@gmail.com

Handicap

Frances Colman frances@luxtersfarm.com

Coaching

Sarah Hayes burrowsarah5@googlemail.com

Development

Roger Staples staplessteeples@live.co.uk

Equipment

Dave Trimmer davetrimmer@talktalk.net

ICT

Ian Vincent ian.vincent@cantab.net

International

Ian Lines ian.lines@atkingglobal.com

Investment

Strat Liddiard stratmale@gmail.com

Marketing

Eugene Chang etychang@gmail.com

Publishing

Brian Havill brian.havill@outlook.com

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However if you have something that you think the Editor may be willing to expand this deadline for, please contact him direct.

E-mail contributions, including tournament reports should be sent direct to the Editor, or copied to the Editor if they are being posted to the Nottingham List.

Digital images are preferred, but photographic prints may also be also acceptable.

Please send digital jpeg or tiff format files.

Please accompany all images with a description of the subject.

If you require any material to be returned please enclose an SAE. Queries regarding the delivery of the Gazette to members should be directed to the Manager of the Croquet Association and not to the Editor.

The Croquet Gazette is printed by Belmont Press, Barn Way, Northampton, NN5 7UW.

CA Federation Representatives on Council

Croquet North

01642 712551

Charles Waterfield

cwaterfield41@gmail.com

North West

01244 675929

John Dawson

johngdawson@onetel.com

Yorkshire

01484 716663

Anna Giraud

eag.giraudnet@gmail.com

East Midlands

01332 516541

Mick Haytack

mickhaytack@gmail.com

W.Midlands & Wales

- Vacancy -

East Anglia

01707 873 269

Brian Havill

brian.havill@outlook.com

Southern

07774 639 061

Frances Colman

frances@luxtersfarm.com

South West

01242 512933

Klim Seabright

klimseabright@gmail.com

London & South-East

01603 502103

John Reddish

jreddish@btinternet.com

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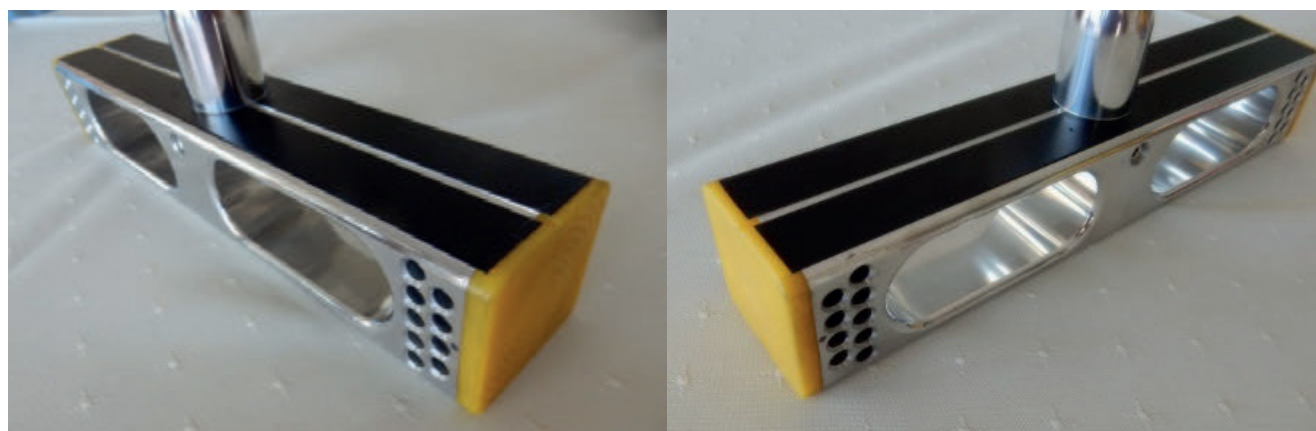
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Come and see the Best Players in the World

The WCF Simon Carter Golf Croquet World Championship



The Championship has been awarded to
Sussex County CC (at Southwick, near Brighton), together with
Compton CC (Eastbourne), **Tunbridge Wells CC** and **West Worthing CC**

Fri 26 July	Opening Ceremony and players reception (7pm)
Sat 27 – Wed 31 July	Block rounds at all four locations
Thu 1 August	1st Round of Knockout at Sussex County (<i>Southwick</i>)
Fri 2 August	Quarter Finals at Compton (<i>Eastbourne</i>)
Sat 3 August	Semi Finals at Sussex County
1 – 3 August	Plate and Bowl events at Sussex County and Compton
Sun 4 August	Finals of all events at Sussex County

Full details can be found on the Championship website www.gcworlds2019.org
Entries from at least 19 countries have been received, with an extremely strong entry from Egypt.

- Viewing top level Golf Croquet is spectacular and visitors will be most welcome at all four clubs.
- Entry will be by programme costing £5 at the gate.
- The clubs ask that you bring your own chairs due to limited seating availability.



- Sussex County has arranged for ample parking spaces adjacent to the club.
- Visitors are encouraged to travel by coach or mini bus.
- A full catering and bar service at Sussex County. For facilities at all venues, see the GC Worlds website www.gcworlds2019.org