

The

Issue 381 September 2019

CROQUET

Gazette

SIMON CARTER
LONDON



**Ben
Rothman**
*'On top of
the World'*



From our files researched by Frances Colman

10 years ago - 2009



The President of the CA –

There is to be an election for this ceremonial role. Last month I asked members for their thoughts on who might succeed Bernard Neal and I was heartened to get some suggestions . . .

The Executive committee considered them with a view to presenting members with a nomination from Council, but just before the deadline one of our vice-Presidents lodged a nomination. It will therefore be up to you, the members of the CA to elect the president you want from the two personal nominations before you. . .

I hope it will be possible for the first time in the CA's history to register an electronic vote. All I can do is to ask that you do vote! *(Patricia Duke-Cox, from her Chairman's Column. The August 2009 Gazette also carried a ballot paper and personal statements from the candidates Quiller Barrett and David Openshaw.)*

~

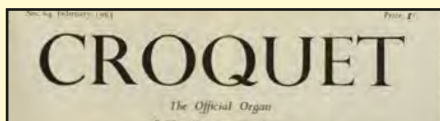
Editor's mallet travel woe – Travelling to the USA with my mallet proved to be quite eventful. I used to be able to remove the head by removing the Hobbs Screw, but as I hadn't done that for some time (no longer being a motorcyclist) whilst the screw still removed, the head would not budge. Thankfully, having a very short mallet, a 30 inch suitcase solved the problem- or so I thought. On arrival in the USA, I had to explain my luggage - chalked marked for being suspicious! The offending item being my mallet of course. . . *(the customs officers)* made their own crude attempts to remove the head . . . *(They)* eventually scanned it again before finally returning it to me and moved on to their next suspect.

~

Leighton-Linslade CC 10th Anniversary

. . . Chairman of the CA, Patricia Duke-Cox, gave a short talk of congratulations for the club's achievements and in particular thanked Margaret Browne, who was the main inspiration for the foundation of the club, and who led the process through the decade. . . . 14 boys and girls arrived from Leighton Middle School to play their school tournament. LLCC has been fostering croquet at the school for a number of years..

50 years ago - 1969



The Test Tour of Australia –

Mr Reckitt: "Before asking our victorious captain (John Solomon) to report upon our team's Tour of Australia I feel it to be my pleasant duty to stress . . . That the conspicuous success of the Team, following upon its official recognition by the Sports Council, should – and surely will – vastly increase the prestige of croquet in Britain and show it to stand at the head of the world at this uniquely subtle, skilful – and completely amateur – game. . . *(From the Chairman's AGM address)*

~

Prize Money –

Mr Carlisle proposed abolishing prize money at tournaments, but this was not agreed. It was pointed out that in some cases the prize money barely covered the cost of engraving the name of the winner on the trophy. *(From 'Any other business' of the AGM report)*

~

New Open Champion –

It must be rare for a player to win the open championship when his first appearance in this event took place only three years previously.

This is the achievement of Nigel Aspinall. Yet so obvious was his potential in 1966 when he narrowly lost to that Grand Master of the game, Humphrey Hicks, that it is remarkable the individual success in one of the classic events has eluded him up to now. In the same year he and John Solomon did, of course, win the Open doubles, a success that was repeated two years later. *(From Notes by Rover)*

The Inter-Counties Championship has just finished at Hurlingham; Middlesex were the winners. We only had five counties competing, which was a great pity and limits everybody's interest and enjoyment.

~

U.A.R. – Associates may be interested to hear that I had a letter recently from a lady member of the Alexandra Club asking me to order her a new mallet as she wished to play in the Championship of the United Arab Republic! I hope to hear further particulars. – V.C. Gasson, Secretary

100 years ago - 1919



Lord Desborough –

The Chairman (at the AGM): . . . I have received the following letter from Lord Desborough: "My dear Longman, Alas! I have a committee at the House of Lords on Thursday afternoon, and I am afraid that I cannot come to the Annual Meeting of the Croquet Club after all, which I much regret, and for which I apologise. Now that croquet will soon recuperate after the war I think that you should have an active and working President and a fit exponent of the game, so the time has come for me to retire gracefully, which I accordingly do, so that you may elect a more fit and more proper President. With all good wishes to the Association Yours sincerely, Desborough."

Now, ladies and gentlemen, you will all agree with me that it is a proposition to which we cannot give our assent ("Here, here"). It is quite true that Lord Desborough is not a very active croquet player, but in the world of sport his name is a name to conjure with, and he makes a most admirable Chairman at any meeting over which he presides. . . . I think his name and position as an all-round sportsman adds lustre to our proceedings here as members of the Croquet Association, and I hope you will unanimously refuse to accept his resignation, and empower me to write to Lord Desborough and tell him so.

~

Publication of the C.A. Gazette –

Dear Sir, Every Associate appreciates the work done by the Association Executive, and in consequence I feel a little shy in criticising its action in any way. . . . I believe I am voicing the opinion of a great number of members in expressing the wish that you should now revert to the weekly publication and distribution of the Gazette. You have told us that it is a question chiefly of expense, but I, with others, doubt the wisdom of only giving us Croquet news once a month. We appeal, therefore, for the paper weekly as in pre-war days. If it costs a hundred pounds or so more per annum then make the associates pay by raising the annual subscription to £1 all round, and it will be cheap at the price. Yours faithfully, George C. Branthwaite, Manchester.

Editorial

What a summer we've had!
A home-hosted GC World Championship that was quite simply excellent all round.

An Under-21s accompanying event that gave us great heart for the immediate future of our sport.

A long-awaited maiden AC Open Singles title for the most natural of talents, James Death (and do enjoy the pictorial evidence of just how long he's waited for that!).

Then we have the changes to the governance of croquet, finally nearing the end of the process with the imminent election of the newly slimmed down CA Council.

So I think I can be justified in being able to tick off a journalistic 'must do at some point' action and this is to write:

"Phew! – WHAT A SCORCHER!"

~

I've had just the best time in croquet since my last editorial.

I was delighted to win through the "Worlds" qualifying tournament (an excellent event in its own right at the very welcoming Guildford and Godalming Club) and then play to above my seeding in the main event itself, the WFC Simon Carter GC World Championship.

It was most pleasing that Simon himself won a place in the main event via the same route and, like everyone else, I thank him most sincerely for his generous title

sponsorship of the Championship, which takes centre stage in this Gazette issue.

Congratulations to the new GC World Champion Ben Rothman, who gets the decision for the cover this time, pipping James Death.

It's been a while since I visited a new club and, since my last editorial, I have ticked off two! It was lovely to visit West Worthing CC twice during the Worlds and to play at the Guildford Club for the first time since I played junior rugby there 40 years ago.

I have also had occasion to re-visit East Dorset, Eynsham and Watford where I'd not played since early in my croquet career.

And as Director of the All-England GC Handicap competition, I must take this opportunity to record my very grateful thanks to Simon Hathrell at Watford for coming to my rescue in mid-August to host



an Area Final when my own club courts became unavailable with two days' notice!

As the end of the summer looms, I wish good luck to all those reaching finals that will hopefully crown your seasons.

Chris Roberts

Chris Roberts Editor

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Front cover: The new GC World Champion poses with his trophy.

This Page: The Editor in the red of Wales, playing in the WFC Simon Carter GC World Championship at Compton (Eastbourne), and the Chairman John Bowcott at Southwick to present the Plate event winner's salver to rising star Euan Burrridge.

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Chairman's Column

Elections are underway in three Constituencies and all of the 12 elected members of the new Council will be known well ahead of the first meeting on 19 October.

The Executive Board, which is to run croquet on a day to day basis, will be appointed by Council at that meeting.

Naturally there will be more from each remodelled body in the Winter Gazette.

~

I have spent time at Nottingham for the U21 GC World Championship and at Southwick for the main event.

Both were outstanding successes.

Much will be written, elsewhere, about the play, the quality of the lawns and the

fantastic media coverage so I will give my pride of place to the Organising Bodies and the army of volunteers that made it all a delight.

The events across five venues could not have gone better and could not have happened at all without a magnificent effort. I hope that they all know that they were a part of something special and that we are grateful.

~

Surbiton too is a splendid croquet venue. Visitors to the AC Open Championship enjoyed the famously warm welcome and the spectacle of lawns that were lightning-fast until the Saturday night downpour.

On the Sunday there was a popular and overdue first win in the singles event for James Death.

I am told that the winning turn began with a 'regulation' 27 yard hit-in.

It also seems that I am the only one

impressed by this formality!

I was not there to see it but I have been able to watch some of it on [youtube.com/CroquetEngland](https://www.youtube.com/CroquetEngland).

This is an important capability that we are creating. There will be more live streaming in the future and a growing archive to enjoy as I have just done.

Clubs and members should take note.



John Bowcott



The Annual General Meeting

NOTICE OF MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Croquet Association will take place at the Hurlingham Club on Saturday 19 October 2019 commencing at 11.00 a.m.

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence.**
2. **Minutes of the AGM held on Saturday 20 October 2018 and SGM held on Saturday 30 March 2019.**
The minutes are on the website at <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?d=2126> and <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?d=2324> and will be sent to Home Members on request to the CA Office.
3. **Report of Council.**
The Chairman of Council, John Bowcott, will present Council's annual report. There will be an opportunity to ask questions.
4. **Accounts for the year to December 2018 and Hon. Treasurer's Report.**
The accounts are on the website at <http://www.croquet.org.uk/?d=2317> and will be sent to Home Members on request to the CA Office. There is a commentary on them at <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?d=2352>.
5. **Election of Hon. Secretary.**
Ian Vincent offers himself for re-election and is the only nomination.
6. **Election of Hon. Treasurer.**
Peter Death offers himself for re-election and is the only nomination.
7. **Election of Independent Examiner.**
David Boxell is willing to continue as the Independent Examiner.
8. **Election of Council Members.**
A new Council is being elected under the provisions agreed at the SGM held in March 2019. The names of those elected will be reported.
9. **Benefactors' Book.**
The names of the benefactors will be recited.
10. **Presentation of Trophies for the Most Improved Players.**
Apps Memorial Bowl: Daniel Gott (Bath).
Spiers Trophy: Stuart M Smith (Sidmouth).
11. **Presentation of Club Awards.**
The 2019 awards are to be presented as follows:
Townsend Award: Tattenhall Croquet Club.
Apps Heley Award: St Agnes Croquet Club.
Millennium Award: Littlehampton Croquet Club.
12. **Presentation of Croquet Association Diplomas.**
13. **Presentation of Council Medals.**
The Council Medal is to be awarded to Dave Kibble.
14. **Any Other Business.**
15. **President's Closing Remarks.**

The Election of a New CA Council

Nominations for the 12 voting members of the new CA Council closed on 30 July, and 17 members were put forward.

Four of the constituencies were uncontested, with ballots necessary for the other three.

CA members can vote online or by post; the polls close on 3 September.

Please see the news item on the CA website for further information, if you are reading this before then.

The personal statements submitted by the nominees are also published there.

Constituency	Vacancies / Nominations	
North West	1	John Dawson
Croquet North & Yorkshire	1	Derek Knight
East & West Midlands	1	Patricia Duke-Cox, Peter Hanley
East Anglia	2	Brian Havill, Rich Waterman
South West	3	Dave Kibble, Peter Nelson, Klim Seabright, Linda Shaw, Brian Wilson
Southern	1	Frances Colman
South East	3	Bill Arliss, Ian Cobbold, Jon Diamond, Jonathan Isaacs, Samir Patel

A preparatory meeting of those elected is scheduled for 19 September, to prepare the agenda for the first formal meeting of the new Council, which will take place on the afternoon of the AGM, which is to be held at Hurlingham on Saturday 19 October.

Ian Vincent, Hon. Secretary



Obituary

~ A correction and apology ~

**Bevis Sanford
1918 - 2019**

The Editor wishes to apologise for the date error at the head of the obituary for Mr Bevis Sanford in the last Gazette issue.

As the text of the obituary revealed at the outset, Mr Sanford was a centenarian. He was born in 1918 not 2018 as printed in error.

Chris Roberts, Editor.

Call for 'Most Improved Player' Awards nominations

Nominations are invited for the CA's three annual Most Improved Player Awards.

The **Apps Memorial Bowl** is for the most improved male AC player, the **Steel Memorial Bowl** for the most improved female AC player and the **Spiers Trophy** is awarded to the most improved male or female GC player.

These awards are open only to Individual Members of the CA. Eligibility will be restricted to players who have membership of a CA member club, and who are playing predominantly within the CA's domain for

the period under consideration.

Nominations should be made by Clubs or Federations and sent to the CA Office by the 8th October. The nomination should provide detailed information about the candidate's improvement during the season. For the full details, see the CA Awards webpage (search for 'Most Improved Player') or navigate to: <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=tournament/caCalendar&CalendarInformationID=10>.

**Frances Colman,
Chairman of the Handicap Committee**



England team for GC Home Internationals announced

The GC Selection Committee is pleased to announce that the following players have been selected to represent England in the 2019 GC Home Internationals on 21st and 22nd September:

J-P Moberly (Captain)
Stephen Mulliner
Richard Bilton
Dr Harry Fisher (pictured left)

England are the current holders after last year's win at Surbiton CC when the team included J-P Moberly, Tobi Savage, Rachel Gee and Jonathan Powe.

This year's event will be held at Balgreen CC, Edinburgh.

Good luck England and stay away from the Haggis!

**Lionel Tibble,
Chairman of the GC Selectors**

CA Shop visit by 'Mr Dawson Balls'

Here at the Croquet Association shop, we were lucky enough to have a flying visit from Paul Manwaring, owner of Australian Croquet Company and maker of legendary Dawson Ball. The laid back Aussie is one of only three people in the world qualified to make croquet balls and operates from a shed in Humpty Doo after buying the business from highly regarded croquet player, Bryan Dawson.

We have plenty of first and second colours available here at the CA Shop and they can be ordered via our website cashop.org.uk or over the phone.

Single balls are priced at £105 and set of 4 are £380 postage is free of charge and our friendly courier will deliver the next day.

The balls receive great reviews and are well known for their great quality and longevity. They are approved by The CA and WCF for match play. If you would like to find out more please call me on 01242 233555 and I will be happy to help.

**McKenzie Mitchell,
The Croquet Association Office**

Photo above: Paul Manwaring, Australian Croquet Company, flanked by McKenzie Mitchell and Sue Thomas at the CA Shop.

CA team lose The McWeeney Trophy to The CA of Ireland

The McWeeney Trophy is competed for annually between members of the Croquet Association of England and members of Croquet Ireland.

Six players-a-side compete over two days, playing six doubles matches and 18 singles.

This year's match was held at Surbiton in mid-July and as always it was a great host venue - the Irish have already requested the same venue in 2021!

The match was played on the weekend after the first 12-all tie-break in the final set at Wimbledon and the first Super Over in a Cricket World Cup Final and, although Ireland were stronger on paper, for a while, we were wondering what to do if there was a tie.

However, no tie-break was needed and Ireland were worthy winners 14-10.

Special mention should go to Sandy Greig who won all five of his games

Brian Havill



Hundreds 'Give Croquet a Go' at BBC Countryfile 'South & North'



The summer of 2019 saw not just one but two BBC CountryfileLive shows, because the organisers decided to add Castle Howard as a second venue to complement the existing Blenheim Palace event.

Teams drawn mostly from local croquet clubs, attended both venues and gave large numbers of show visitors the opportunity to "Give Croquet a Go".

Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire

The Blenheim Palace show came first and, as in the previous three years was blessed with warm (and occasionally very hot) weather.

We had a central pitch on which Tony Newport, Pat Edington and Roger Booth from the Eynsham Club had performed the annual miracle of turning parkland into a playable surface.

According to Tony the biggest problem is where to put the grass cuttings - I did not ask further questions.

Frances Colman from Phyllis Court did a great job in recruiting and briefing the teams of volunteers from clubs across the region.

The teams were enthusiastic and adept at luring passers-by onto the lawns.

On the Saturday, Richard Peperell from High Wycombe employed a novel approach by providing the team with colourful and striking shirts to catch the eye.

Once on the lawn, visitors got skilled instruction in wielding a mallet and running hoops and judging from the constant

low of visitors, they seemed to enjoy the experience and the teams captured



the names of the seriously interested for later follow-up.

Each year there is a surprise; this year I waylaid a fit looking man with a couple of dogs: "Fancy giving croquet a go" I said. "I already play" he replied. It was Paul Hetherington from the Peterborough CC and the real surprise was that he had recently returned to the sport after a 30 year break.

Overall, it was a very successful show; the teams worked very hard under the hot sun, but took time out for them and their spouses/ guests to visit the rest of the show.

Castle Howard, Yorkshire



I was a bit worried about the new venue at Castle Howard.

I suspected that the Yorkshire weather would be less kind and indeed the Friday afternoon was rained off.

However we had the bonus of being able to set up two smallish courts on the established lawns (no cutting down parkland here) so that play took place against the backdrop of the magnificent fountain and frontage of the House (both Blenheim and Castle Howard were designed by the same architect, Sir John Vanbrugh).

Anna Giraud, from the Yorkshire Federation, had recruited her teams of volunteers mostly from the local Yorkshire clubs but with a few additions from Kent and Cheshire. Derek Knight from Beverley and Anna set up and dismantled the lawns.

The show area was smaller than that at Blenheim but the enthusiasm of visitors to 'Give Croquet a Go' was quickly apparent and over 1500

Photographs, clockwise from top left - (1) Beautiful Castle Howard. (2) Pudsey Bear, & Matt Baker (BBC) with helper Rachel Leadbetter (3). Ebor Morris with Anna Giraud (4). Phyllis Court's Colin Morgan, Tony Peperell and Russell Robinson show off their fancy shirts. (M) Annie Holmes & Ellie Harrision (BBC) - Photos by Tony Kirby and Richard Peperell -

tried their hand over the four days which was a remarkable achievement.

We did get one big carry over from Blenheim.

During the three years at Blenheim, we had made considerable efforts to get the Countryfile stars on to the lawns to play.

At 8.15 on the first day at Castle Howard, Derek was somewhat surprised when the whole of the Countryfile celebrity team turned up en masse for a photo shoot playing croquet and he found himself coaching them.

Similarly, the compère for the Village Green had also been at Blenheim and was quickly able to give us effective publicity and it was good to realise that the hard work we had put into building relationships was paying off.

Many of the stars made return trips to the croquet lawns during the four days and this had two bonuses - the crowds gathered to watch them and Eugene Chang was able to utilise his growing skills in filming the stars as they played.

It is always difficult to assess the long-term effect of these events.

It is pretty clear that we have raised the public profile of croquet but we'll have to wait to see how many end up playing croquet and joining clubs.

A final thanks to the organisers, the teams and to the Eynsham, York and Beverley clubs for the loan of their equipment.

John Dawson



The WCF Simon Carter Golf Croquet World Championship

Successfully hosting and organising

a World Croquet Championship can present many opportunities to promote croquet, providing it is done well.

It also requires considerable attention to detail.

In 2012 Southwick took the decision to upgrade its lawns because, whilst it's always been a venue for large events, the lawns had been somewhat uneven and suffered from poor drainage.

The work was carried out over three phases and by the time we had completed the second phase, we felt confident enough to consider bidding for the WCF World Golf Croquet Championship.

The entry fees offered by the WCF fell far short of the cost involved in hosting the event, so before completing the bid we had to consider what other revenue streams we could tap, to make it a successful event without the hosts losing money.

Sponsorship

The answer lay in gaining sufficient sponsorship, advertising revenue and making up the shortfall through entry fees, catering and bar sales.

The detailed planning started 15 months before the event with the formation of an Organising Committee and the search for sponsorship.

It is vital that the search is done at an early stage, as companies with sufficient budgets will be finalising their own plans and budgets more than a year ahead of the event.

Gaining sponsorship is not easy and using personal contacts can be of major benefit.

Supplying potential sponsors with a schedule of sponsorship opportunities is important and the schedule needs to spell out the benefits the sponsor will receive.

We took the view in preparing the

Hosting the event - Jonathan Isaacs looks back

schedule that streaming the event was essential, not only to reach out to potential croquet viewers by embracing up to date communication avenues, but to also enable sponsors to get increased exposure for their brands.

We were very grateful in gaining the commitment from Simon Carter as the major sponsor with significant additional contributions from Irwin Mitchell (Solicitors) and Inspired Villages.

Additional income was gained by obtaining individual lawn sponsorship from local business and individuals.

Gaining media attention

Gaining serious media attention for croquet has always been difficult.

On this occasion, we agreed to work on a two-pronged attack through Simon Carter's PR team and through our own efforts within the Organising Committee.

Another early consideration was to seek a VVIP to open the championship.

Apart from attracting attention from the croquet community, it could greatly assist media interest.

Securing the presence of HRH the Duke of Gloucester greatly helped to raise the profile of the event and attracted added media interest.

Developing a detailed plan

The main organising committee first met in September 2018 and developed a detailed plan covering all the host locations.

Regular meetings were held and progress reviewed every eight weeks.

A dedicated website was established www.gcworlds2019.org, not only as a tool to communicate with the public and the media but also with the players.

The volunteering ethos within the croquet

occasion.

We ended up with more volunteers than players and they all gave their time and effort to make the Championship a successful event.

Many volunteers including my Organising Committee gave a huge amount in the run-up and during the championship to make it successful.

I can't thank them all enough; they all stepped up to and beyond the mark.

Looking back at the event, what have we achieved?

- Raised the profile of croquet by increased media coverage including the attendance of a VVIP at the Opening Ceremony.

- Developed the use of live streaming and "professional" commentary.

- By raising the profile, created an opportunity to recruit further members by portraying Golf Croquet as an exciting sport for young and old.

- Developed a format to gain sponsorship and established annual lawn sponsorship as an additional revenue stream.

- Used an event specific website as a means of communication with players and spectators.

- Made increased use of social media.

What can we do better?

- In conjunction with the WCF, consider more satisfactory ways of transporting players between venues.

- Recognise the dietary requirements of top players and meet their particular needs.

- Make even more use of social media as a communication tool (i.e. What's App).

Jonathan Isaacs,

Chairman WCF Simon Carter GC World Championship Organising Committee

Graham Fowler

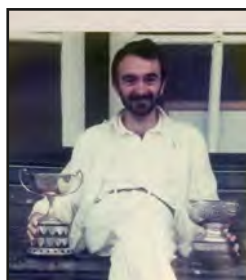
Graham Fowler died on 12 August, after a long illness bravely borne.

He was an active player in the 1990s, playing 83 games in each of his last two full seasons, being then comfortably within the top 50 domestic players.

A member of the Nottingham Club, he was also active in the East Midlands Federation, being its Chairman and Coaching Officer.

He captained the Nottinghamshire Inter-Counties

Obituary



team for several years, often partnering Keith Aiton.

Despite retiring from competitive play, he retained his membership of the CA and interest in the game, being an avid reader of the Croquet Gazette. Graham is pictured here in 1992, when he won both one of the handicap blocks and the doubles (partnering Richard White) in the club competitions.

Ian Vincent

It's not like we play!

Dear Editor,

I had the pleasure of attending the recent WCF Simon Carter GC World Championships at Southwick.

We watched on Thursday and again on Finals Day on Sunday.

I confess that I am a rank amateur (6 handicap) and may not be qualified to make comments about these matches.

The standard of play was exceptional and the power and accuracy of all the shots was to be applauded; we, of course, enjoyed being spectators at these events.

However, on reflection, some questions arise in my mind.

At Academy coaching sessions we were taught to play a tactical game using such strokes as stop shots, cut rushes, block shots and so on.

From my perspective the only tactics that seemed to be employed at the Championships were to hit your and your opponent's ball as hard as you can and it doesn't matter where the balls end up.

In fact, in both matches that we saw there were only two, what I would call, nuanced shots and not a single stop shot.

Am I alone in thinking that there may be two Golf Croquet games.

The "gentler game" played at Club level and the "Bash Crash" game at International level?

Frank Davies, Littlehampton CC

Colin's dedication to croquet

Dear Editor,

I'm one of the team captains at Exeter Croquet Club and thought you may have an interest in the attached photographs.

One of our members, Colin Lovell, recently had an operation on his foot making walking a major issue for six months.

His solution was to provide a wheeled frame for support.

This enables him to travel to our club and continue regular practice sessions.

His enthusiasm and dedication to our sport is most certainly not in doubt.

One interesting point is that his ability to run hoops has much improved; the frame is used as guide for the mallet.

I think this story has some merit for inclusion in your magazine.

Ian Lavender, Exeter CC

Save CA money

Dear Editor,

As much as my wife, Margaret, and I would like to be the first to read the Croquet Gazette, I question whether it is really necessary to send us a copy each (together in the same pack).

Presumably this generosity extends to other couples living together.

Surely you could save costs, and cut down on paper, if only one copy was sent.

You may wish to pursue the opinions of other dual recipients, perhaps through the letters pages.

Edward Colman, Sidmouth CC

~

Dear Edward,

Thank you for your letter which provides a happy opportunity to further highlight this cost saving opportunity for the CA.

The relevant passage of the Hon. Treasurer's article on 'going paperless' on page 13 of the February issue (*Gazette 378*) is worthy of repeat here:

- If you don't wish to continue to receive a paper copy of this magazine (perhaps you get two to your household), then please let us know.

This can easily be done by logging on to the website and editing your details to set the "paperless" flag.

You can ask your club secretary or the CA office to do this for you if you cannot do it yourself. - Ed.

We had success in promoting croquet at our village Fete

Dear Editor,

Raising awareness of croquet and getting new members is a problem at many clubs, especially if the courts are not exposed or available to the public.

Rottingdean CC recently had a successful venture which may be of interest to others.

Fortunately our court in Kipling Gardens adjoins the area where our annual village fete is held.

We offered each person wanting to play croquet, usually in two doubles, a try for £1, assisted by a member and using club mallets. All proceeds went to charity.

We had over 100 players, could have had more with greater capacity, and we ran out of leaflets about membership by midday.

If you have a fete or festival in your area with recently cut and reasonably flat grass surfaces, then you can make several mini courts for potential players and do a similar exercise.

We found it was a great success with participants, our members who helped, and the fete organisers were delighted to have a novel attraction.

It raised awareness of the club and croquet, and we shall definitely repeat it.

Trevor Hopper, Rottingdean CC

Football has the right idea ~ Can we not be spot on too?

Dear Editor,

In Association Football, when the referee awards a penalty he does not pace out 12 yards from the midpoint of the goalposts.

He places the ball on a pre-marked point known as the penalty spot.

Can anyone explain why in AC we have to go through the tiresome and time consuming ritual of two measured mallet lengths from the corner flag to establish the corner spot (law 2(a)(3)) when a blob of whitewash would be sufficient?

I can't see anything in the laws which forbid it.

Stephen Parish, Surbiton CC



Dealing with on-court heart attacks ~ Is your club prepared?

Dear Editor,

Thursday 11 April was a normal Thursday morning club gathering at Hamptworth Croquet Club, but it didn't stay that way for long.

Before we had reached the fourth hoop in the first game **my heart had stopped beating and I was flat out on court 1.**

I would like to be able to say that this was when the Hamptworth emergency routine kicked in and everyone knew what to do.

Unfortunately, that wasn't the case. We didn't have anything like that in place.

I count myself as amazingly lucky as another member, unbeknown to anyone, had worked for the Red Cross and had been trained in CPR and she got to work on me straight away.

Another member remembered that there was the defibrillator in the

clubhouse, so that was sent for as well.

The golf pro and green-keeping staff came running and kept working on me, continuing the CPR and using the defibrillator until two first-responders, an ambulance and the air ambulance arrived.

All the time the 999 operative had stayed on the line and was talking them through the procedures.

Once again, I count myself amazingly lucky because, I have since learned, that the chance of surviving an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest is 1 in 11.

Why share this message?

Croquet players are important people and they need to be looked after by their clubs.

~

Ask yourselves a few questions:

- Does my club have an emergency procedure in place?
- Do we know who are our trained first

aiders are?

- Does my club have a defibrillator?
- Do we know where the nearest one is?
- Are there signs to this effect at our club?

Even something as simple as: can we get a phone signal everywhere at our club?

A little knowledge might make all the difference to someone, for they might not be as lucky as I feel.

~

When writing this I feel sure that similar letters would have been written in the past but reminders like this will always be welcomed by someone.

Finally, I would like to record a huge thank you to the club members and staff who acted calmly and with determination to save my life.

**Steve Bennett,
Hamptworth CC**

An Algarve welcome awaits

Dear Editor,

I am pleased to inform readers of croquet developments in Portugal's Algarve region.

As many people will know, the Bela Romao Croquet Club closed down after Lita Gale's death earlier this year.

The Bela Romao premises have now been sold and consequently the future of croquet in the Algarve had to take a new direction.

The Algarve Croquet Club (ACC) has now been officially formed and is inviting applications for membership from everyone who may care to apply. It is perhaps worth saying that we are nothing to do with the erstwhile Bela Romao Club.

At the moment we have two lawns at a very charming Algarve hotel called Quinta dos Poetas near the pretty town of Estoi, which is convenient for the trendy town of Olhao and Faro Airport.

The croquet lawns are currently being flattened and re-seeded; a new lawnmower is being acquired and we hope play will begin at the beginning of September.

Quinta dos Poetas has an agreeable dining room, bar and terrace and about 25 bedrooms, some of which are chalets overlooking the lawns.

Discounts for dining and bedrooms are offered to members, and the facilities can be viewed on the website www.quintadospoetas.com.

The Algarve Croquet Club is also investigating several other venues with the aim of creating a bigger, second, croquet establishment in the Algarve.

It is also hoped that we may have access to a reduced-size lawn in Quinta do Lago very soon.

All enquiries are most welcome (to the e-mail address below).

Please come and see us if you're in the Algarve.

William Weber, Chairman, Algarve CC Committee,
algarvecroquetclub@gmail.com

Racing Croquet anyone? Yes actually!

Dear Editor,

In the July 2019 issue (*Gazette 380*) you published a letter entitled 'Racing Croquet Anyone?'

Bernard Pendry (*pictured below in the braces*) may be interested to know that at Chelmsford Croquet Club we have been playing this exact game and format for the past 10 years. Even down to the start again rule!

We play it as an alternate-stroke doubles game and have a knockout competition at our annual social event.

We call it the 'Marmalade Challenge', as I happen to make marmalade and both of the winning couple receives a jar!

It only takes about 90 minutes for the whole competition with 16 couples. Yes, it is keenly contested and great fun. Whether for the croquet or the marmalade I'm not sure?

Perhaps Bernard would like to contact me (my details are on the CA database). We might draw up a rule book!

Richard Lewin, Chelmsford CC



Wrong Ball (M. Harvey)

Dear Editor,

My wife and I recently attended the excellent GC World Championship at Southwick, and were probably the only two to observe a wrong ball situation which, in my view, substantiates a point made by Louise Smith in the last issue (*Gazette 380*).

It is relevant to say that one referee was allocated to cover two games on adjacent lawns, and at the critical time, this referee's attention was on the other game.

It happened at 5-5; Black had just won the last hoop, having been promoted through by Blue. If this wasn't a recipe for things to go wrong, there followed uncertainty about whether or not Yellow was offside, and because of a language barrier, it took a little longer to work it out using sign language.

But they correctly concluded that Yellow was offside, and it was sent to the penalty area, from which it was immediately played (out of sequence), followed by Black, Red, Blue and four more balls in that wrong ball sequence.

The referee first noticed the problem when Blue had just played and Yellow was about to play, at which time the game was stopped and the new rule applied.

At this point, Blue was the de facto wrong ball, and R/Y opted for Ball Swapping.

B/B did not seem to be happy about this, and it was apparent from the gesticulation that he could now see where it went wrong – ostensibly bemoaning the fact that Yellow was the first wrong ball but ended up with a potentially useful option.

Had the referee spotted this a shot earlier or later, B/B would have had the option.

In cases like the above, BOTH players are equally at fault, although it could be argued that R/Y started it, so was slightly more so.

If, as Stephen Mulliner suggests, there are situations where Replace and Replay would confer a disproportionate benefit to one side, all I can suggest is that the options conferred by rule 10.3.1 should only apply when just ONE wrong ball has been played, and after that, all four balls restart from the penalty area, with a coin toss to decide who goes first.

A better solution would be to extend the use of Sequence Umpires to all important competitions, a role which I understand could be done by other competitors.

In this instance, the apparently random award of the 10.3.1 option helped R/Y to a 6-5 lead, but B/B won the next two hoops.

Mervyn Harvey, Kenilworth CC

Wrong Ball (John Guy)

Dear Editor,

I write in reply to the letter entitled 'GC rule 10 – It's all about staying alert and prevention' from Louise Smith in the July issue (*Gazette 380*) and particularly the response from Stephen Mulliner.

Although I agree with both Louise and Stephen that the forestall approach is an improvement, I do feel that the 'wrong ball played' laws are now far too complex for the majority of club players to follow.

I strongly agree with Louise that a wrong ball is a wrong ball (WB) and the consequences should always be the same.

Additionally, although there are many errors that can occur in a game of GC, most players would deem playing an opponent's ball one of the more serious errors.

However, this incurs no penalty at all, when other more minor errors incur harsh penalties. For example, blue plays from hoop 1 to hoop 2; red, in an attempt to play speedily, plays to hoop 2 before blue has stopped moving – the penalty is that red is replaced and loses a turn. A similar penalty applies if one team plays consecutive strokes in doubles.

A player accidentally touching another ball in the striking period loses a turn.

Both Stephen, in his reply, and other members of the GC Rules Committee I have spoken to, make strong reference to the new wrong ball laws preventing a 'gift hoop' situation. However, there are many other examples where the rules either create 'gift hoops' or take away 'certain hoops'.

As an example of the former, Ray plays Red in front of hoop 5 but Blue is in a good position to knock away, so Bab plays Black to a hoop-running position. Ray drives Yellow at Blue but misses, and Yellow sails up the lawn. Bab enthusiastically strikes Blue to knock Red away but does so before Yellow has come to rest. The result – Overlapping Strokes (Rule 12) – is that Blue and Red are replaced, Blue loses a turn and Red is given a 'gift hoop'.

At the other end of the spectrum, Bab plays Blue directly in front of hoop 4 to a certain hoop-running position. Ray drives Yellow (WB) at Blue but misses. After some consideration Bab plays Red (WB) then Ray drives Black (WB) at Blue but misses. Play is then stopped. Both players have made errors but under rule 10:5:4 (Previous stroke played with the opponent's ball) play restarts with a penalty area continuation and Blue loses a 'certain hoop'.

In summary, there are many occasions when players get 'gifts' – I am sure we have all had opponents who have played to the wrong hoop! – and the rules cannot cover all of these.

So please don't take just one example and over-complicate the rules to cover it.

Any wrong ball is a serious error but, in my opinion, playing an opponent's ball is more serious than playing a partner ball, so the consequences should be at least as severe if not more so.

Indeed, it could be argued that all wrong ball errors should incur penalties as severe as the minor errors described above.

John Guy, Broadwas CC

Wrong Ball (Peter Lowe)

Dear Editor,

The considerable effort which has produced an edition of the GC Rules that is easier to interpret, covers areas previously omitted and, in general, improves the playing experience is to be commended.

I am, however, disappointed that in the re-writing of Para 10 (Playing a wrong ball (WB)) opportunities to address over-complication, to promote continuation of play rather than legislative interruption, and to encourage co-operation in place of gamesmanship have not been fully realised.

Applying 'Replace and Replay' offers, in my view, no advantage to the striking side unless an incorrect sequence has continued for several shots and should, therefore, be the only remedy available (no matter who has played what*) if the fault is immediately spotted. By thus making prevention the aim of everyone on the lawn the incidence of WB is likely to be much reduced.

No advantage will be gained from keeping mum and waiting for the opponent to make a mistake, a practice that can sour the spirit in which a game is played. If the fault nevertheless occurs, disruptive consultation of the list of WB variations in the Rules* will in most cases be unnecessary.

'Ball Swap', I suggest, is best reserved for circumstances in which the positions of the balls mean that reverting after several shots to the correct playing sequence produces a fortuitous hoop-running opportunity for one side or the other.

* i.e. The striker played partner's ball; striker's partner played own ball; striker or striker's partner played opponent ball, and striker's partner played striker's ball.

Peter Lowe, Tyneside CC

Wrong Ball (Nick Harris)

Dear Editor,

I believe that Stephen Mulliner does the Rules a disservice when he says Rule 10 was not designed to deal with this rare occurrence and it is necessary to invoke 15.3. (*Reply to the letter 'It's all gone wrong', in Gazette 380.*)

The solution can be found within Rule 10.

As Stephen says, upon discovery, 10.1.5 is quite explicit. This is a Special Situation ((d) Previous stroke played with opponent ball (see Rule 10.5.4)...)) and 10.2 does not apply.

So all strokes before the last stroke cannot be treated as valid – in this case those strokes played for hoops 3 to 6 with the opponent's balls are invalid – and any points scored in those strokes are not counted for the owners of the balls that scored the points. Quite simply then NO

points have actually been scored for anyone whilst playing with their opponent's balls so the next hoop in order is still hoop 3 and the game continues with a score of B/K 2 – R/Y 0 and a Penalty Area Continuation (PAC).

In Stephen's second solution I can see no justification for contradicting 10.1.5 and suggesting that 10.2 should be applied in these circumstances and I am surprised he has done so. However, if it were to become policy that the hoops counted for the owners of the balls in this type of error it could give rise to the possibility that players might well wonder about their opponent's veracity when they discover they have inadvertently scored several points for their opponent and, as such, could give rise to considerable bad feelings.

I would strongly suggest that this second solution is discounted in favour of going

Derek Johnson 'Asks the Ref'

Dear Ref,

Given the emphasis on forestalling in the latest edition of the GC Rules, should spectators forestall if they see an incorrect ball being played, or just leave the players to sort the ensuing mess out themselves?

**Derek Johnson,
Belsay Hall & Tyneside CCs**

back to the last agreed lawful state and continuing with a PAC.

In the event of a disagreement as to which is the next hoop in order then the referee may use 15.3 to make a best case decision as to which hoop it is.

Nick Harris

Stephen Mulliner replies to all the Wrong Ball and 'Ask the Ref' letters

Let me begin by thanking the authors of the letters printed above for taking the time to write. Rule 10, the wrong ball rule, is a predictable subject of interest and it is helpful for the rule-makers to know what issues or concerns have come to the fore. Some preliminary points should be explained before I comment on each of the letters.

Simple rules for a simple game

The WCF GC Rules Committee, when drafting the 5th Edition, decided to continue to respect the approach of the first GC rule-makers summarised by the phrase "simple rules for a simple game". Accordingly, the new Rules have been made as simple as possible while covering all reasonably foreseeable situations. Rare situations, typically involving a combination of two or more different irregularities, are intended to be dealt with by a referee using Rule 15.3 (the overriding rule) to achieve a fair outcome based on the facts of each particular case. This avoids cluttering the Rules with text designed to deal with highly unlikely occurrences.

Overlapping play

Simplicity is also the reason why Rule 12 penalises overlapping play. At first sight, it may seem to matter little if Ray plays Red slightly before Bab's Blue has stopped moving. However, permitting such premature strokes would create a legal minefield. The Rules would have to accommodate the concept of two strikers existing at the same time and the possibility that Ray's turn could end before Bab's turn (if Ray played a firm stroke which left the court before Bab's gentle stroke

had stopped moving on a fast court). Coping with these possibilities and would considerably complicate the drafting of the affected Rules for little or no benefit. This is why the Rules simply forbid overlapping play and penalise it by loss of turn.

Wrong ball rule

The wrong ball rule is also intended to be as simple as possible while dealing correctly with particular situations. Replace and Replay remedy is the sole remedy for two categories of wrong ball situations (striker or striker's partner plays opponent ball and striker's partner plays striker's ball). However, there are three situations which cannot be dealt with by that remedy alone, namely out-of-sequence play (where Ball Swap is a necessary optional remedy), the playing of opponent balls in successive strokes by both sides (Rule 10.5.4) and the same side playing two successive strokes (Rule 10.6).

A simple common remedy exists in the form of "Universal Full Penalty" ("UFP"). This applies the 4th Edition penalty for playing an opponent ball to all cases of wrong ball. This meant that the non-offending side chose whether the balls were replaced or left where they stopped and then restarted play with either ball of their side. This was a severe penalty because it gave the non-offending side a significant advantage. It was also the remedy provided in the 2nd Edition of the GC Rules that governed play from 2005 to 2007. UFP became deeply unpopular because of the opportunity it gave the unscrupulous to play deliberately out of sequence in the hope that their opponent would not notice and continue to alternate their own colours. Then the

first player would stop play and point out that the second player had not played in sequence. Not only did a few cases of clearly deliberate wrong ball play cause bad feeling but, worse still, players who had played out of sequence accidentally and then realised that their opponent had played out of sequence with them could be tarred with the same brush. UFP was dropped in 2007 and, although it was discussed by the WCF GC Rules Committee in the 5th Edition drafting process, it was firmly rejected. Assisting the maintenance of a good sporting atmosphere between players is another of the 5th Edition goals and also led to accidental contacts with balls being treated as interferences rather than non-striking faults.

Why do even good players go out of sequence?

To a GC spectator, it may seem extraordinary that players ever go out of sequence, let alone top players and sometimes for many strokes in succession. The reason lies in the difference between the psychology of a spectator and that of a player. To a spectator, the game presents a tableau in which the two sides are akin to actors. Even if the spectator is passionately rooting for one of the players, they see the game as a whole and from outside the court. To a spectator, the colours of the balls are their only significant identifying characteristic and, to a knowledgeable spectator, the sequence in which they are played allows them to predict what might happen next as the contest evolves. In sharp contrast, a player is immersed in a battle and the balls are tactical objects.

Continued on page 24...

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Marketing Committee projects

Keep your feedback coming in! The last six weeks have been a whirlwind for the team and me. I have been up and down the country supporting various Marketing projects, whilst trying to stay on top of my inbox; as a poor multitasker, I apologise if I haven't responded to some of your messages!

You will see other articles in this issue covering the various strands we have worked on, so I won't go on about them here; instead I will briefly highlight all the feedback I've had since the last issue.

Your feedback

I would like to thank everyone who has reached out to me after my last column: those who have written to BBC Get Inspired on our behalf, those who have corresponded with me with comments/suggestions, and those who have passed on feedback through other channels.

It is through all these messages that my team and I can gauge whether we are succeeding in our roles, adapt if necessary and feel empowered to continue otherwise.

So please do continue to let me know your thoughts by email to etychang@gmail.com or via our various social media channels.

Social Media

On a social media note, I have recently been flooded by communications and friend requests from croquet (and indeed Gateball!) players around the world on the back of the U21GCWC and GCWC; it is heart-warming to see that croquet is SO international and that we are reaching Egypt, New Zealand, Georgia, Taiwan, Tenerife, and more places besides.

I do encourage all of us to think about croquet as a global sport, and to perhaps look up some croquet/gateball clubs next time you travel abroad.

I think they would be only too glad to host a croquet player from the UK!

Let's talk more

I am coming up to one year in post as the Marketing Chair and have learnt a lot during this period.

In particular, I believe that communication

is something the CA needs to be better at.

With all our new Standard Members, the change in governance structure and our extended foray into social media with its additional interactivity, there is a real need to listen to our members and also for the inner workings and decisions of the CA to be communicated.

There are associated risks with more regular communications and increased resource, but I think in the long run it will lead to a more cohesive sport, where ideas get passed both upwards and downward, and barriers get broken down between grassroots and the CA 'elite'.

Gazette, newsletter, website

Perhaps I risk alienating some of our members who don't like being bombarded with information, but I think that we as the CA do not communicate frequently enough with Individual Members and Clubs.

The Gazette, whilst lovely to flick through, costs to produce hard-copy and is published six times a year. Articles on the CA website require members to... erm... actively visit the CA website regularly (embarrassingly, I do this daily but not everyone is as sad).

Would you be in favour of say a monthly or six-weekly e-newsletter, with a round-up of croquet news and some blogs/communications from the CA?

Let me know what you think.

Working with Dev. Officers

Dave Gunn (the CA's recent National Development Officer) sought to provide a forum for Club/Federation/CA Officers for regularly communicate, share ideas and have a searchable knowledge base.

Marketing have inherited this project and experimented with using Slack - a comms/messaging platform similar to WhatsApp, popular amongst large tech companies e.g. Microsoft. This has had limited success to date and the jury is still out.

I will continue to drive this project forward alongside some of the Federation Development Officers and look forward to updating on this.

That's it for now. but remember - keep sending feedback, and get communicating!

Eugene Chang - etychang@gmail.com

Oxford claim Cuppers Varsity win

O 9:30 on Saturday 20 July at Cassiobury Park, Watford saw a stream of smartly-dressed young men with croquet mallets appear at the gates of Watford Croquet Club, conspicuous amongst the crowd who were finishing their local parkrun.

These were students from King's College Cambridge and Jesus College Oxford, who had just won their respective Croquet Cuppers competitions.

'Cuppers' are AC team knock-out competitions held within Oxford and Cambridge Universities, this year attracting 2048 and 176 students respectively, in teams of four.

This one-day event was a combined coaching and Cuppers Varsity match, the brainchild of CA President and Watford member Quiller Barrett, and rapidly improving croquet star Daniel Gott of Bath CC. Players on both teams were taken through their paces in the morning by expert AC players Simon Hathrell and Gary Bennett (Watford), Daniel Gott and Craig Winfield (Cantab), playing team four-ball breaks in small groups and receiving tuition on ball placement and stroke play.

At an entertaining pub lunch, we discussed the respective Cuppers events, how to get students into competitive croquet and comparisons between top-level rugby and top-level croquet. The afternoon was spent playing a mini best-of-three Cuppers Winners Varsity match.

Oxford won despite the best efforts of Winfield who pulled out an impressive victory over Gott (playing for Oxford).

Everyone who participated enjoyed themselves, wanted to take croquet more seriously, and were given further details of the 'CA Passport Scheme' for students, plus details of clubs nearby home and term-time addresses.

This event has the potential to become a regular fixture, and we would welcome other universities taking part as well.

I give my thanks to the expert mentors for giving up their time, to Watford CC for hosting and to the CA's Coaching, Marketing and Tournament Committees for funding the event.

Eugene Chang

Photo: (L to R) - C Winfield, S Trueman, C Enoch, M Tigchelaar, E Whittaker, Z Case, M Noka, D Gott, G Bennett, S Hathrell. Not pictured: D Larby.



The WCF Simon Carter Golf C

~ by Stephen



Photographs: (above) Josh Freeth of New Zealand and (below) Mohamed Karem of Egypt in semi-final action at Southwick.

(Photos by Chris Roberts)



The Golf Croquet World Championship (GCWC) returned to Sussex County Croquet Club after 15 years and to England after an eight-year gap.

80 players assembled from 19 different countries and took part in an excellent Opening Ceremony in the presence of the Duke of Gloucester and Susan Pyper, the Lord-Lieutenant of West Sussex.

The guests began proceedings by playing four hoops of doubles partnered by John-Paul Moberly (England) and Ben Rothman (USA) respectively and the Lord-Lieutenant impressed everyone by running a 4-yard angled hoop 1!

The players processed around Court 1 behind their countries' flags accompanied by a Mardi Gras band, and the flags were then brought forward to be mounted along the south boundary for the duration of the event.

Amir Ramsis, the World Croquet Federation (WCF) President, Quiller Barrett, the CA President, and the Duke then gave short speeches of welcome and appreciation to officially open the World Championship.

The Duke asked to meet the helpers, officials and players and shook well over 100 hands in the process.

The event attracted unprecedented levels of media coverage, including regional television and national newspaper interest.

Eugene Chang had organised live streaming of the Under 21 GCWC in Nottingham during the previous week and brought his equipment to Southwick to cover the GCWC itself.

The Block Stage

The players were divided into eight blocks of 10 and played 'best-of-three' matches against their nine opponents from Saturday to Wednesday at the Sussex County, Compton, Royal Tunbridge Wells and West Worthing Clubs.

The weather took a hand and flooded the Tunbridge Wells courts on the Saturday morning but the management team of Mike Town and Phil Cordingley coped efficiently.

Four past GC World Champions took part, namely Ahmed El Mahdi (2015), Ahmed Nasr (2004 and 2008), Mohamed Nasr (2006) and Reg Bamford, the defending champion (2013 and 2017).

It soon became apparent that something was afoot.

Three of these giants of the game lost two

The Changing

block matches, including Bamford, the 2019 British Open champion, and failed to win their blocks.

Only El Mahdi kept his losses to one match and he won Block B.

Just two players emerged undefeated, namely Duncan Dixon (New Zealand) and Stephen Mulliner (England).

More generally, the blocks produced plenty of unexpected results which suggested that the 2019 GCWC might be one of the less predictable championships.

Unsurprisingly, Wednesday afternoon was enlivened by several play-offs. It was followed by the Knockout Stage draw and an excellent barbeque.

The Knockout Stage – Round 1

If the Block Stage had raised a few eyebrows, it was as nothing compared to the general astonishment on Thursday morning when all four former champions made their exits in the first round of the Knockout.

23-year-old Josh Freeth (New Zealand) dropped the opening game to former champion Mohamed Nasr 3-7, but came storming back 7-3 and then held on to take the decider 7-6.

Improbably, none of the other three former champions even took a game.

Jonathan Powe (England) added to his reputation by disposing of the formidable Ahmed Nasr 7-4, 7-5 and Fathy Farouk (Egypt) no doubt upset domestic expectations by overturning Ahmed El Mahdi 7-6, 7-3.

However, pride of place went to Watford's Nick Archer who claimed perhaps the best win of his career by defeating Reg Bamford 7-4, 7-4.

There was a distinct sense that Golf Croquet was witnessing a changing of the guard as the former generation of champions was giving way to a younger cohort!

The Knockout Stage – Round 2

The young, or fairly young, were definitely on the march in Round 2.

Egypt was well represented by Mostafa Nezar, 26, Mohamed Karem and Hamy Erian, both 30.

Croquet World Championship

Mulliner ~

of the Guard?

All three progressed to the quarter-finals at the expense of three similarly-aged players from other parts of the world, namely Jose Riva (Spain), Tobi Savage (England) and Hamish McIntosh (New Zealand).

In another battle of the youthful, Richard Bilton (England), 22, won the decider convincingly to eliminate an on-form Duncan Dixon, 31.

Three of the other matches featured more of an age contrast and, in each case, age was not a help.

Ben Rothman, 31, defeated Jonathan Powe, Josh Freeth beat Khaled Tharwat (Egypt) and Jose Alvarez-Sala (Spain), 35, beat Fathy Farouk.

Only Stephen Mulliner, 65, now flew the flag for the elder generation by defeating 45-year old Nick Archer.

Quarter-Finals

The quarter-finals were best-of-five matches and staged at Compton on Friday.

From a spectator's point of view, they were over rather quickly.

Three were won in straight games.

Josh Freeth took the first 7-3 against Stephen Mulliner. In both of the next two Freeth was trailing 4-5, but each time he produced some spectacular clearing and hooping to convert them into 7-5 victories.

The Times delighted in pointing out the 42 year age difference between the players!

Hamy Erian was the losing finalist in 2015 and a semi-finalist in 2017, but the rapidity and accuracy of his play against Jose Alvarez-Sala gave him scores of 7-6, 7-2, 7-3, and it was no surprise to hear his name mentioned as the favourite for the title.

Ben Rothman (USA) has a modest style based on accurate middle-strength clearances and he was expected to have his hands full against Richard Bilton if the latter repeated his form against Duncan Dixon.

As it happened, Rothman took the first game 7-4 and then he capitalised on some bad luck for Bilton in game 2 to convert a 4-6 deficit to a 7-6 win, and a 2-0 lead.

He then built up a 5-0 lead in game 3 and converted it to an ultimately comfortable 7-2 victory.

In the last match to finish, young

Mohamed Karem beat even younger Mostafa Nezar in a close match, 7-2, 5-7, 7-5, 7-6.

Mostafa was very good but Mohamed was just a little more accurate and a worthy winner.

Semi-Finals

The speed of play on Friday persuaded the manager to delay the start of the semi-finals at Southwick until 1100 to ensure some afternoon play.

He need not have worried.

The all-Egyptian semi-final produced the highest quality of play to date and something of a surprise when Mohamed Karem built a thoroughly-deserved 2-0 lead over Hamy Erian by 7-4, 7-5.

Game 3 was desperately close and, at hoop 13, Mohamed seemed to have sealed his place in the final when he produced a cut clearance with Blue which sent Erian's Red ball off the boundary due north of 13 with Black one foot north of the hoop and Yellow a yard north of Black, completely covering it from Red.

Erian then produced a low bouncing-bomb jump with Red which just cleared Black and scored the hoop.

This was a dramatic change of fortune and it would not have been astonishing if Mohamed had allowed it to affect him and let Erian back into the match. But, to Karem's great credit, he began Game 4 strongly and closed out the match with a 7-3 victory.

The other semi-final did not quite match the all-Egyptian encounter for quality of play but outdid it in terms of dramatic content and took a full six hours of play to decide.

Josh Freeth started strongly against Ben Rothman and wrapped up the first two games 7-2, 7-3, albeit requiring over 2.5 hours to do so given the frequency and the length of some of the hoop duels.

Rothman needed a fast start to Game 3, got it and took the game 7-3.

Freeth began Game 4 à la Karem by taking a 4-1 lead but Rothman dug in and recovered to 4-4.

There then followed a fascinating succession of high-quality strokes.

Freeth had approached hoop 9 from hoop 8 with Blue to 4 yards south and west of the hoop, Red was near the south boundary below 9 and Black and Yellow were almost in contact 3 yards south of 9.

Continued on page 16



Photographs: (above) 'Giant Killer' Nick Archer of England who knocked-out holder Reg Bamford and (below) Hamy Erian of Egypt who enjoyed the 'favourite' tag for a while. (Photos by Chris Roberts)



The WCF Simon Carter Golf

~ by Stephen

... Continued from page 15

Freeth now appeared to jaws Blue successfully and Rothman played a precision cut-clearance with Red to send Black up the court by 18 yards.

Undaunted, Freeth then nailed the return clearance with Black to send Yellow to the south boundary, three yards off straight, and Black also to the south boundary.

Equally undaunted, Rothman produced a classic one-bounce jump shot to run 9 with Yellow and send it to 7 yards south of 10.

It then turned out that Blue had no good shot through 9 so, instead, Freeth intelligently played Blue to 2 feet north of Black on the South boundary.

Red was lagged up a little too strongly and ended on the outside edge of the western wire of 10, making a much larger target for a long-range hoop stroke.

Freeth then played an excellent rush on Blue to place it a yard south and a little east of 10.

However, Rothman had no hesitation in taking on the 7-yard hoop with Yellow to reach 6-4 and then he squared the match with a 7-5 win.

The fifth game was extremely close.

The duel at 5-5 in front of 11 was finally resolved in Rothman's favour when, perhaps rather fortunately, he cleared both of Freeth's balls in one stroke.

The boundary clearance was missed and Rothman ran 11 with Red almost to the south boundary.

Freeth played Black to a 3-yard position at 12 but, crucially, left it just open to Red to the east of 12.

Yellow and Blue were both played in, and then sure enough Red cleared Black by 14 yards.

Now, sadly, Black missed Yellow and cleared Blue instead.

Relieved of any pressure from the presence of Blue, Rothman made no mistake from two yards, almost straight, to take the game 7-5 and his place in the final.

The Final:

Mohamed Karem (Egypt)

v

Ben Rothman (USA)

It is no surprise when players in a World Championship final for the first time show early signs of nerves.

Mohamed Karem carried the weight of Egyptian expectations and was probably regarded as the favourite by those watching. Ben Rothman is not known for lacking self-confidence but he, too, was in new territory.

In **Game 1**, Rothman took an early lead and reached 6-3 before succumbing to a phase of hoopitis which delayed victory until 7-5.

Perhaps encouraged by this, Karem started well in **Game 2** and developed a 3-0 lead; this he converted into a confidence-boosting 7-2 win.

Mohamed Karem has an interesting style which, when he wants power, involves casting over the ball in a conventional manner and then placing the mallet on the ground immediately behind the ball.

He then slides his hands down the shaft of the stationary mallet so that his eyes are over the rear edge of the mallet and then gives the ball a wristy lash which is usually very accurate.

His swing was now looking very smooth and he soon reached 4-1 up in **Game 3**.

That he turned into a 7-3 win.

So he'd turned the match to his advantage so far, 2-1.

The first four hoops of **Game 4** were shared, with Karem running an acutely angled hoop 2.

Four of the next five went to the Egyptian, culminating in an extraordinary 40 degree hoop 9 with Yellow to create a 6-3 lead and, seemingly, one hand placed on the trophy.

However, all was not quite over.

Yellow had not run 9 by much and, after the three other balls had been played up



The new World GC Champion Ben Rothman (USA) flanked by Burridge (England), George Coulter (New Zealand), and Aron Freeth (NZ) and Mohamed Karem (all photographs by C...)

to 10, Karem missed the 15 yard clearance with Yellow on Blue.

Rothman was then able to split Red to the south boundary while Blue took commanding position north of 11 and this led to him winning 10 followed by both 11 and 12 and sending the game to hoop 13.

Karem kept his cool and played Yellow to 3 yards north of 13 with both of Rothman's balls over 20 yards south.

Rothman missed with Blue to the north boundary and Karem elected to play Red firmly to the north boundary alongside Blue to avoid any chance of interfering with Yellow's passage to 13.

There then occurred one of those moments in which the player who comes off worse is fully entitled to feel unlucky.

Rothman was in the last chance saloon.

His style also is interesting: it depends on three big swings with a heavy mallet held with a Solomon grip; he then lowers the mallet head to the ball, looks down, starts the backswing very slowly indeed and then focusses entirely on watching the mallet hit the ball in the middle. Then he looks up to see what has happened.

Now, he shot from over 20 yards and was able to look up and see Black hit Yellow bang in the middle and clear it to the north boundary and, crucially, stop a yard south of Red.

Often, this is bad news, allowing the cleared ball to counter-clear with a stop-shot.



Croquet World Championship

Mulliner (continued) ~



anked by (from the right) - Hamy Eiran (Egypt), Euan
mir Ramsis (WCF President), Dubcan Dixon (NZ), Josh
Chris Roberts).

This time, extraordinarily, Black also blocked Red from 13.

Karem decided to finish game and match in style by running 13 from 7 yards with Yellow.

His Red was on the boundary as well, so clearing Black with Yellow offered no obvious advantage unless he could bring off a tricky split-stop clearance.

Unfortunately, his hoop shot erred on the left and Yellow bounced off to near the east penalty spot.

Rothman now played Blue to a one yard position and Karem was forced into a jump with Red which also missed on the left and finished south of 4.

Rothman now played Black a little closer to Blue than he really wanted and left Karem a chance of a double clearance.

However, only Blue was cleared and, with Red predictably missing Black from south of hoop 4, Rothman ran 13 from a yard with Black to square the match.

Score: 2 - 2 - The deciding game -

The decider was close all the way to hoop 10 which then gave rise to another decisive moment when Rothman cleared Red with Blue in such a way that Blue ended three yards south-east of 11.

Red played back and, from the east boundary, Black missed Yellow which was a yard south and fractionally west of 10.

Jawing Yellow seemed the obvious counter in the light of Blue's position so near 11 but Karem chose to run 10 to the boundary and, in effect, risk the title on Rothman failing to block Yellow at Blue in front of 11 and Yellow successfully clearing Blue from 12 yards.

Rothman duly played Blue to 2 feet north of 11 and Red played one yard behind Blue.

Black failed to reach the blocking point and Karem prepared with his usual care for the crucial, title-affecting clearance.

Unfortunately for him, he missed and Rothman ran 11 with Blue down to 12 – and two yards beyond! Karem now played Red a fraction too hard and wide so that it was north of 12 but visible to Blue.

Black and Yellow were both played into position and Blue then cut Red to the north boundary.

Red missed Black by nothing from 22 yards and Rothman made no mistake with Black from a yard to take the match 7-5, 2-7, 3-7, 7-6, 7-5.

It is impossible not to feel sorry for Mohamed Karem who was tantalisingly close to winning the title in great style.

Ben Rothman displayed enormous resilience in both the semi-final and final to recover from significant deficits against very strong opposition and deserves full credit for maintaining a high level of play for most of the match and especially when it mattered most.

5th-8th place, the Shield and Bowl

The Shield for the second round Knockout losers was won by Duncan Dixon (NZL) who beat Tobi Savage (ENG) 7-7, 6-7, 7-4, 7-4 in the final.

The Bowl for first round Knockout losers went to George Coulter (NZL) who defeated Harry Fisher (ENG) 7-5, 5-7, 7-6, and the Plate was won by Euan Burrige (ENG), a Wild Card Place holder, who beat Lionel Tibble (ENG) 7-5, 7-6.

Richard Bilton won an abbreviated 5-8th place play-off by defeating Stephen Mulliner 10-5 and Mostafa Nezar 10-6.

Prize-giving

The prize-giving was conducted by Phil Cordingley as Tournament Director with Simon Carter, the Main Sponsor, asked to present the principal trophies.

In his closing remarks, Quiller Barrett, as CA President, expressed deep appreciation to Simon and the other sponsors for their generous support.

He also paid a warm tribute to Amir Ramsis who will step down from his post as WCF President in December.

It was notable that the average age of all seven prize winners was well under 30.

It really does seem likely that the audience for the final day was witnessing a changing of the guard.

The proceedings concluded with the first occurrence of what deserves to become the traditional end to all WCF events, namely the handing over of the WCF flag by a representative of the Event Host to a representative of the next Event Host for the same event. On this occasion, Richard Bilton presented the flag to Josh Freeth, and we all look forward to the 2021 Golf Croquet World Championship in New Zealand.

Stephen Mulliner



The World Championships were sponsored by Simon Carter, London

Simon Carter Ltd. is a British fashion design company specialising in men's accessories and menswear, founded in London in 1985 by its eponymous director.

Simon is pictured here presenting the WCF GC World Championship trophy to Ben Rothman.



The Under 21 GC World Championship

~ by Ian Burridge ~

The WCF Under-21 Golf Croquet World Championship was hosted by the Nottingham Croquet Club and featured 24 players from eight countries.

The event was opened by the High Sheriff of Nottinghamshire and the Lord Mayor of Nottingham, with national anthems and musical accompaniment provided by the Nottingham Concert Band, a forty-piece orchestra.

The rain didn't quite hold off but nobody got too wet!

The Block Stage

The players were drawn into four blocks of six players, contesting 'best of three' matches, with the top four progressing in each block to a 16 player knockout.

When play began Euan Burridge (England) took advantage of a first round draw against the second-ranked Egyptian Mohammed Rashad, who was playing his first match with Quadway hoops.

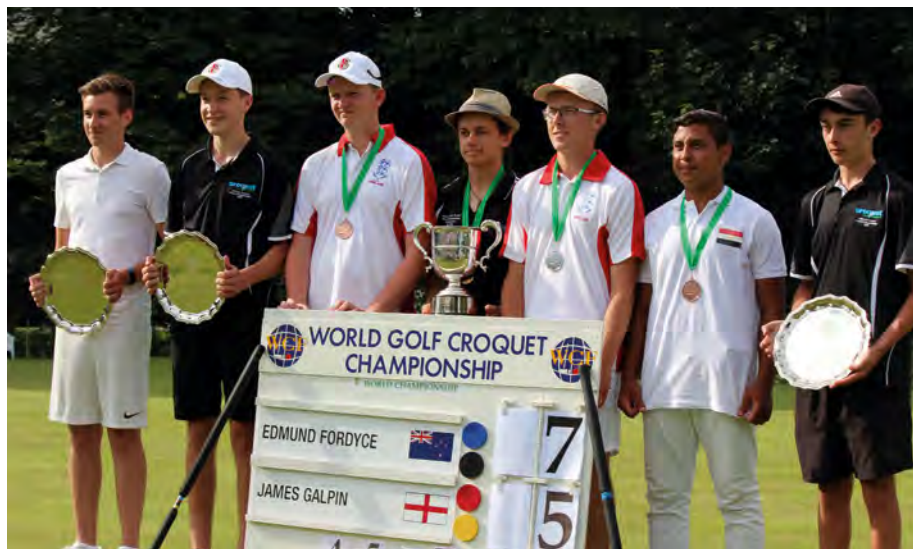
Burridge ran out a comfortable 2-0 winner and went on to win Block C.

The Nottingham-hosted GC Championship Series (Ascot Cup qualifier tournament) the previous weekend had used the CA's newly acquired Quadway hoops and Jamie Gumbrell (Australia) and Eleanor Ross (New Zealand), as well as Euan Burridge, had taken the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the hoops and conditions.

Gumbrell finished second in a very competitive Block B which was won by one net hoop by Jeffrey Gatchell (New Zealand) with Yasser Amaar, the top-ranked Egyptian, in third place.

The youngest player, 12-year-old Blake Fields (USA), also qualified via a play-off from Block A which was won by top seed Edmund Fordyce (New Zealand), who coasted to victory without losing a game.

This feat was replicated perhaps slightly more surprisingly by James Galpin



(England) in Block D.

With few GC games under his belt Galpin was only just ranked in the top 16 players coming into the event. Albie Willett made it three Englishmen in the last 16 with a play-off victory over fellow countryman Callum Johnson.

The Knockout – Round 1, quarter and semi-finals

The knockout draw was performed by the WCF President, Amir Ramsis, at a social evening supported by the local McDonald's franchise, who provided a meal for all the players, supporters and volunteers.

Kaleb Small (New Zealand) gave Edmund Fordyce a small scare by winning the second game of their first round knockout match but Fordyce won the third comfortably and reached the final without further ado, including a comfortable semi-final win over Euan Burridge.

In the other half James Galpin managed to reach the final without losing a game, putting in a particularly impressive performance against Yasser Amaar in the semi-final in which he was always in control (having been taken to the 13th hoop in both games by Eleanor Ross in the previous round).

The Final: Edmund Fordyce (New Zealand) v James Galpin (England)

It looked as if James Galpin might run away with the best-of-five final having taken a 2-0 lead against an out-of-sorts Edmund Fordyce, however failure of a relatively straight forward hoop 11 at 5-5 in the third game proved to be the turning point.

This allowed Fordyce to take the game 7-5, his confidence returned and, along with more experience and tactical awareness than his opponent, he was able to win the next two games by the same score to become World Champion.

Consolation events

Various consolation events ensured that all the players had games every day of the event.

The Bowl was won by Chris Spittall (New Zealand), the Shield by Nathan Bullen (New Zealand) and the Plate by Callum Johnson (England). Full results are available at www.croquetscores.com/2019/gc/wcf-u21-golf-croquet-world-championship

Video streaming and sponsors

The CA's new video camera was put to good use throughout, live-streaming the event to a global audience of around 300 people, thanks to Eugene Chang and his team of budding cinematographers, commentators and expert summarisers.

The event was made possible due to the support of the Nottingham Club, its sponsors and numerous individual volunteers.

The next staging will be in two years' time in New Zealand.

Ian Burridge

Photographs (top, left to right): Callum Johnson (ENG), Nathan Bullen (NZ), Euan Burridge (ENG), Edmund Fordyce (NZ), James Galpin (ENG), Karim Yasser Amaar (EGY), Christopher Spittall (NZ).

And (left): James Galpin (ENG) in action. by Bob Thompson and Rob Edlin-White.



Live-streaming croquet is a huge success!

~ by Eugene Chang ~

Live-streaming the WCF Under-21 and Simon Carter Golf Croquet World Championships was both a learning and successful experience.

Eugene Chang won praise all round for leading the team and enterprise. Here he takes us behind the scenes and reveals unprecedented viewing statistics - *Ed*.

Background

The Marketing Committee undertook an ambitious project to produce in-house high quality live internet broadcasts of both the U21 Golf Croquet World Championship at Nottingham and the Simon Carter Golf Croquet World Championship at Southwick and Compton, using the CA's new video equipment and entirely staffed by croquet players.

This was a first in the croquet community worldwide; other previous croquet livestreams in Australia and Spain were carried out by professional video production companies.

The Fellowship of the Livestream

Our livestream journey started back in April when the equipment arrived and we streamed some of the Surbiton GC Open two days later.

Subsequent test broadcasts included the AC Opens, the AC Inter-Counties and the AC East Midlands Championship.

Through gradual iteration (and many frustrating journeys to buy extra accessories), we refined our filming technique (camera placement and operation) and production details (screen layout, scoreboards, internet connectivity, audio, broadcast platform).

Kudos to Southwick for building a wonderful viewing platform for us and digging a 70m trench for our power/ethernet cables!

The production was boosted by further purchase of a second-hand camcorder, permitting an alternative camera angle and switching between two views for panoramic/close-up images.

Commentary

Commentary was somewhat ad hoc and was dependent on who was on mic duty; we tried to supply fun and tidbits whilst keeping the serious side moving along, and we sought to strike a balance between providing radio-type commentary (describing ball positions and play-by-play) vs tactical insights, whilst seeking not to



alienate non-players and players of different abilities.

We made plenty of mistakes along the way and are grateful to viewers for their continual support and detailed feedback.

Results and statistics

All our broadcasts are available to watch back on www.youtube.com/CroquetEngland.

We are still in the process of editing these and making events highlight videos, so do subscribe to the channel and keep a lookout.

We received fantastic feedback from viewers in live chat and through private messages, and we tried to respond to all.

In particular we've unearthed some gems - including that Stephen Mulliner has an alternative career as a commentator 'with a lovely voice' if and when he hangs up his mallet!

Unprecedented viewing numbers

The U21 final between Edmund Fordyce (New Zealand) and James Galpin (England) peaked at **147** live viewers, and has subsequently watched by **950** unique viewers from seven countries - the top two were unsurprisingly England and New Zealand.

For the latter stages of the GC World Championship, we additionally broadcast to Facebook Live.

The semi-final between Josh Freeth (New Zealand) and Ben Rothman (USA) peaked at **258** viewers on YouTube with **1,500** unique viewers from **13** countries.

The final between Rothman and Mohamed Karem (Egypt) peaked on YouTube at **546** live viewers (plus 50 from Facebook), and has since been viewed by **2,700** unique viewers from **17** countries (including Ghana and Indonesia) evenly

spread across age groups.

Across both Facebook and YouTube, we have had Impressions (people seeing auto-plays in their news feeds) of around **29,000** to date.

Overall, the CA's YouTube channel has attracted more than 53,000 views in the last 28 days, with 7,800 unique viewers from 28 countries and Impressions of 262,000 across all our videos.

Legacies

It's been an amazing experience and has been a team effort throughout.

Our (not so) little group has built a wealth of technical experience on livestreaming croquet for the future. I think we have created a demand from the worldwide croquet community for livestreaming of future top events, and we have set a precedent and standard for what can be achieved.

I continue to receive positive feedback from croquet players nationally and worldwide for our efforts with the livestream; many have said how it has inspired them to improve their game, and permitted them to watch top-class players for the first time, all from their own homes and countries!

The World Croquet Federation is interested in learning from our experience to make livestreaming more elite events a reality and I hope that this will support the marketing of our sport to non-players and players worldwide.

We will draw up a schedule to broadcast future CA events; this will require some careful knowledge management to transfer expertise to new people.

In addition, the purchase of video equipment allows the CA to potentially film and produce its own videos on all sorts of topics, including coaching, marketing and laws. Video analysis of past matches can become a reality for elite events.

If clubs are interested in making their own videos, the CA video equipment may be available for loan - Please contact me.

Acknowledgements

Team Livestream: R Bilton, E Burridge, E Chang, C Clarke, H Fisher, R Gee, W Gee, G Higgins, A Maugham, N Morrow, S Mulliner, D Nunns, T Savage, J Taylor.

Supported by the CA (budget for broadcast equipment), and technical support from A Dibben (Surbiton), M Hunter (personal), C Hayton and J Isaacs (both Southwick).

James Death wins The Open for first time

The Qualifying Phase

The Croquet Championship saw 36 players competing in the qualification phase.

This is now the standard format for the AC Open Singles and requires players to win five games from a maximum of 10 rounds to qualify for the knockout.

Six losses and you're out.

The first rounds are computed prior to the event to give each player an equally hard set of opponents; the remainder are paired by the manager in a manner similar to a Swiss. There were few surprises amongst the top players, with the two former World Champions, Reg Bamford and Stephen Mulliner, first to secure their places in the knockout by winning their first five games.

Playing conditions were mysteriously described by Chris Clarke as "easy and become easier as the day progresses".

In reality, however, they were proving a good challenge. There were only 39 completed peeling turns (and just one sextuple) from 142 games played during the Qualification Swiss (compared to 61 from 139 games two years previously).

The final day of the Swiss, where the last few players compete for places in the knockout, always sees keenly contested games, exemplified by Nick Parish and Mark Ormerod as they fought their way to qualification, winning +3(t) and +4(t) respectively.

Both of their opponents, Joel Taylor and Eugene Chang, had a final life which was enough for them to get through as well.

Nigel Polhill, Doug Grimsley and Alison Maugham were the three who just missed the cut, finishing one short of the target on four wins from ten games.

The Knock-Out

The knockout draw was conducted during lunch on 'Doubles Wednesday'.

By the time the singles resumed, the continued sunshine had dried out the courts further, with the top lawns in particular becoming very fast.

It was clear by the quarter-final stage, that four players were playing much better in those conditions than the others: Reg Bamford, Mark Suter, James Death and Mark Avery who all won their quarter-finals in straight games, and by large margins in each game (the collective score was 208-45, with one TP each).

Semi-Finals

The semi-finals were played on the fastest courts, which were timed at 14-16 seconds.

(For elite play, faster courts are preferred. For comparison, 10 seconds would be normal for regular club play, and over 12 seconds is rare in UK conditions).

Peeling turns were abandoned in favour of tight break control and the Surbiton team who look after the lawns and hoops declared success in their aim to produce challenging courts, when they saw three-time World Champion, Bamford, decline to set-up for a delayed TP in favour of concentrating on a four-ball-break to the peg en-route to the final.

He was joined by James Death (generally accepted to be one of the most fluent players of the game).



The Final

Reg Bamford v James Death

The morning saw a light drizzle - less than 3mm of rain - but enough to douse the fiery lawn and reduce the speed to 9.5 seconds and put peeling turns back on the cards.

Bamford was still the pre-match favourite having not only won 11 Open titles, but also 36 of the 47 games the two players had ever played against each other.

But Death was having none of it.

In the first game Bamford had the first break to 1-back with a diagonal spread.

Death hit the ball at the peg from A-baulk and took a break to 4-back with two POPs - putting Bamford to 3 and 1-back.

Bamford failed to regain control from the contact and Death completed his TP to take the first game +18tp.

The second game followed almost the same pattern for another +18tp win, crowning James Death as Open Champion for the first time.

~
Photographs supplied by Samir Patel.

As is now traditional, the Open Championships began with Doubles after lunch on Saturday.

Chris and Jenny Clarke (New Zealand) got out of the traps fastest, with a quick and comprehensive +26tp +26tp win over Kevin Beard (Australia) and Dennis Bulloch (NZ).

However, in the first game of their quarter-final, they both failed to complete turns attempting to peg-out their opponent, giving that game to Brian Cumming (Canada) and Doug Grimsley (USA).

Cumming and Grimsley were then more

clinical in the second game; +12 and +26, and the top seeds were out!

Most of the other matches were much more interactive, and a significant number were played as Alternate Stroke Doubles.

This variation was made available for all doubles games in England a couple of seasons ago, and has become increasingly popular amongst top players.

Harry Fisher and Alain Giraud gave a masterclass in Alternate Stroke Doubles when playing Simon Jenkins and Nelson Morrow (NZ) +13 -19tp +17tp.

However, they went on to lose a closely

fought quarter-final -17 +22 -3 to James Death and Samir Patel.

Christian Carter and Mark Suter looked like the pair to beat, and a +17tp +16 win over Eugene Chang and Miranda Chapman got them off to a good start, and a +26tp opening game against fourth seed Mark Avery & Sam Murray looked to be continuing that trend.

But the fourth seeds were having none of that and fought back to take the second two games of the match +11tp +25tp, and then continued in the same vein to

Death & Patel w

What does an English Croquet Club look like? ~ Macey White writes home to the USA

This year the British Open is in Surbiton, a suburb southwest of London (one train-stop past Wimbledon).

The club has been around since 1984 and has 7 courts and a nearby lawn bowls that it can borrow for an eighth.

It has a single clubhouse (25' x 60') with bathrooms, a small kitchen, a small bar and open area.

Two tents are also set up for the championship – a large white one 25'x40' with tables and chairs for meals and gathering, also a small 12'x12' one for scoring and scheduling.

This club is great!

- It is all about croquet -

There are no weddings, bar mitzvahs or dinner parties to contend with.

At Surbiton, croquet is King.

The courts are faster than almost all US courts and the hoops are tight.

A team of three or four volunteers set the hoops every morning with a feeler gauge with 0.3 to 0.8 mm of clearance. The courts are not perfectly flat, but play very nicely and are not watered during the tournament, giving dry courts that play faster and the hoops set firmer. The ground here is not sand based and when the soil is dry, hoop carrots set as if potted in concrete.

The lines are painted with a very impressive laser-guided machine.

Getting there ...

Barbara and I are staying in Hounslow,



just 10 miles away (as the crow flies).

That's 35 minutes on the weekend and 1.75 hours during the week. It looked so close on the map when we booked it online!

We've taken several different routes and they all send us up one-lane roads used for two-way traffic, swarming with pedestrians, bicycles,

motorbikes, embedded with lots of zebra crossings, and roundabouts every quarter mile or so. I don't think I could make the trip without the nice little lady on the GPS telling me what to do.

My British Open

The players at the British Open are some of the best in the world.

Reg Bamford has been the odds-on favourite, but he was beaten two straight in the finals by James Death, who also won the doubles with partner Samir Patel.

I'm not winning a lot of games but I'm learning a lot and had a good game against Patel who is a 2400 something grade.

I had the first hit in and scored one hoop; then I got the first break with the other ball and scored 8 before going belly-up with all the balls Christmas gifted to Patel.

He went to rover and QPO'd my first ball (quadruple peel of opponent).

This is usually a death sentence; he left his brown in corner 4 and his green in corner 3.

I had a lift to contact with my pink ball which was for hoop 2.

I played a big split out of the 4th corner leaving brown next to 3 and getting close

enough to green to roquet it.

I did a full roll out of 3 and got set-up 12 ft in front of 2 which I scored.

Now I had an "easy" three-ball break to win the game, but about hoop 8 or so, nerves got the better of me and a not so good set-up, followed by a less than perfect hoop shot, gave Patel all three balls.

He scored 1 and then put my pink on the boundary near corner 4 and put his balls behind hoop 2.

I hit in and ran a few more hoops and got to penult where nerves got me again.

Patel hit-in, ran a break and won 26-23.

it's is different from the US

The British Open experience is quite different from most American tournaments, even American AC tournaments.

Play is to Super-Advanced rules and games are paired by Swiss format in the 'play-in' and then best of three in the knock-out. If you don't make the knock-out or get bumped out of the knock-out in the early rounds, you go to the Plate and play a double elimination (draw and process) and then for losers there are Z games right into the last day. This Open lasted nine days so there was plenty of chances to play.

What does this cost? Entry to the British Open is £95 which is about \$125 (most shorter tournaments here cost £25 or less).

Most clubs here have a bar and Surbiton's is stocked with beer, wine and soft drinks.

One of the great traditions here is that when you win a game you offer to buy your opponent a drink.

One of the lessons I learned is that British players generally can drink better than me - so if I win a drink, I make it a lemonade!

win The Doubles

win their semi-final against Cumming and Grimsley +26tp +26tp.

The fourth semi-finalists were the third seeds James Hopgood and David Maugham, who had a slow start, losing their first game -18 to Alison Maugham and Nigel Polhill. They recovered to win that match however, and then also beat Stephen Mulliner and Mark Ormerod.

Their semi-final was a close contest, with Death and Patel edging both games for a +5 +4 win.

The final marked the first Alternate Stroke

Doubles Championship Final.

This variation is proving more popular to players and spectators alike, because it requires a doubles pair to work together, rather than playing turns in sequence.

Played over two days, Death and Patel completed what proved to be a game-winning TPO in the first game against Avery and Murray. On a 15+ second lawn on the following day, the two pairs fought a more defensive game, with Death and Patel winning the game and the final +14tpo, +9, to become the Open Doubles Champions for the second time.



James has waited a long time for his Open Singles win - since he was 20 months old in fact!
(Photos by Samir Patel and Linda Death)



The AC National Seniors Championship ~ Julie Horsley reports

The National Seniors held at Budleigh Salterton CC in early July, originally attracted a big field of 45 players for the Class event but, after a number of late withdrawals mainly due to injury, only 39 players contested the five trophies.

Block A for the Trevor Williams Cup, saw Simon Hathrell and Tim Russell tied on five wins each on the Saturday morning.

Hathrell won his first game against Chris Roberts, which put him one ahead of the field when Russell lost his first game to Chris Williams. In the meantime, Tim Jolliff came into the frame with a fifth victory at the expense of Australian visitor David Wise.

In the afternoon, Russell lost to David Warhurst, so remained on 5/8, and Hathrell playing Williams lost as well, so he remained on 6/8 wins, only to be joined on that score

by Jolliff who beat Roberts. With a tie for first place, **Simon Hathrell** had the crucial 'who beat whom' advantage over Jolliff and was declared the winner.

In **Block B**, Nigel Amos and **Peter Thompson** both had 4/6 wins, and again the 'who beat whom' tie-break decided matters, this time allowing Thompson to get his hands on the Colin Hemming Cup.

In **Block C** for the de Ansorena Cup, **Ian Draper** was aiming to finish his game early to catch a train, but in his last turn, he hit-in and produced a long break to beat Charles Ostler +1 on time - cue a very quick dash for the train and, once aboard, the opportunity to reflect on his 6/6 clean sweep.

In **Block D** for the Nigel Graves Trophy, there was again a tie for first place, with **Wendy Dominguez** and Charlie Martin

both on 5/6 wins and the former having won their head-to-head game.

In **Block E** for a small Goblet, **Frances Colman** scored a clean sweep with 5 wins.

The week started with the **Handicap Doubles** and eventually produced a final between **Tim Jolliff and Roger Mills**, and the Magee duo, David and Eileen.

The former pair won +3 on time to win the Croquet Association Cups and the consolation event was won by Brian Shorney and Jane Hull. Tim Jolliff and David Magee also had to play each other in the semi-finals of the **Handicap Singles** knockout which Magee won and in the other semi-final Ostler beat Jim Field. **David Magee** won the final +16.

All the winners bar Draper and Magee lined-up in the above order (Photo by Chris Roberts)



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ABTA
Travel with confidence

GC Inter-Counties Championship ~ Bill Arliss reports



Somerset spring Division 1 surprise

Somerset were the surprise winners of the Inter-Counties Championship 2019 in mid-August, *reports long-time Director, Bill Arliss.*

I am sure most players at the start of this event had Nottinghamshire down as firm favourites. With a team of four -4s, they were on paper by far the strongest.

There were only three more -4s amongst all the other players and they were all spread between different teams.

All appeared to be going to Nottinghamshire's plan until round nine, as they had achieved eight wins from eight matches including a 2-1 win over their nearest rivals, Somerset, in Round 8.

Round 9 pitted them against Lionel Tibble's Northamptonshire; the latter started with a doubles win over Rachel Gee and Ian Burridge and then followed it up with a splendid win by Jayne Stevens (-1) over James Death (-4) by 7-3.

This put a very different focus on the Championship Division 1 table because Somerset's early collection of 3-0 wins put them very much in the driving seat.

Round 9 also brought a further 2-1 win for Somerset against Durham / Yorkshire, who were the only other contender for the title by this stage.

Somerset sealed their victory with a final 2-1 win over Dorset whilst Durham / Yorkshire, not to be outdone by Northamptonshire, finished with a 2-1 victory over Nottinghamshire and pushed themselves into the runner-up spot.

There was also considerable activity at

Division 1	Match wins	Game wins
Somerset	10	26
Durham/Yorks.	9	26
Nottinghamshire	9	23
Kent	7	16
Dorset	6	19
Northamptonshire	6	18
Hampshire	6	15
Middlesex	4	13
Surrey	3	13
Glamorgan	3	13
Leicestershire	2	10
Hertfordshire	1	6

the bottom of the Division 1 table which is now much more important because of the prospects of relegation to Division 2.

Hertfordshire had a very poor tournament and, with only one win to their credit, there was little they could do in the last three rounds to improve their position.

However directly above them were four teams, Middlesex, Glamorgan, Surrey and Leicestershire, for whom the last three rounds mattered considerably and by the close it was Leicestershire who would join Hertfordshire in Division 2 next year.

Despite some atrocious weather just before the event, we managed to get away with just one sharp shower on the Sunday morning, with mostly sunny weather for the rest of the weekend.

As someone who has been much involved in the development of Golf Croquet for the last two decades, it is extremely pleasing to note the number of very young players that were involved in the top teams for this event. It bodes very well for the future of this sport.

Sussex win Division 2

In Division 2, Sussex were the clear winners with seven match wins from the ten played whilst Essex just managed to beat Buckinghamshire into second place by the narrowest of margins. Both Essex and Bucks had six match wins, were +2 on net games and shared the honours in the matches between themselves. Essex however had the best net points and will join Sussex in Division One next season.



Division 2 finishing order: 1 Sussex; 2 Essex; 3 Buckinghamshire; 4 Gloucestershire / Worcestershire; 5 Oxfordshire; 6 Berkshire.

Photographs (left) - 2019 Champions Somerset: Ryan Cabble, Colin Britt, Jim Gregory (non-playing Captain & Manager), James Galpin, David Goacher, Stephen Custance-Baker (*photo by Louise Smith*)

(above) - Smart in blue, runners-up Durham / Yorkshire: Dave Widdison, Callum Johnson, Stuart Smith, Richard Bilton, J-P Moberly (*photo by Rachel Gee*)

(below) - A doubles discussion between Somerset's David Goacher and James Galpin (*photo by Chris Roberts*)

AC World Team Championships (MacRobertson Shield) Selection committee

The CA Council has appointed the following committee to select the England team for the MacRobertson Shield (AC World Championship):

Keith Aiton
James Death
Robert Fulford
Ian Lines (Chairman)
David Maugham
Stephen Mulliner
Samir Patel

The current intention is that they will:

- establish player availability over the next few months;
- select an Elite Squad of 10-12 around October 2019;
- define some Elite Squad activities for 2020/21; and,
- make the team selection around October 2020, in good time for the event, which is scheduled to take place from 13-30 November 2021 at Cairnlea, Australia.

Ian Vincent, Hon. Secretary



'Wrong ball' letters reply

... Continued from page 11

- What Bab is seeking to do when she plays a stroke is of intense interest to Ray because the outcome of Bab's stroke may require Ray to change his plan for his next stroke. So, when a hoop is scored by Ray, Bab will invariably try to send her ball to good position at the next hoop. The excellence or otherwise of Bab's stroke is Ray's primary interest, not the colour of the ball which Bab played. If Ray is totally focussed on where Bab's ball has stopped, especially when it is in a place which dictates that he makes a different tactical decision, it is not surprising that, sometimes, Ray will fail to notice that Bab has played her partner ball, especially when both of her balls were close together. Ray will quite naturally continue to alternate his balls and, if Bab also alternates her balls after the first wrong ball, it is easy to see how a wrong sequence can continue for some time.

Some commentators believe that any player who goes out of sequence is obviously not concentrating hard enough and deserves to suffer a significant penalty for their presumed inattention. I beg to differ for the reasons given above and believe that the introduction of the Ball Swap remedy as an option for the non-offending side is the best development in the GC Rules since the first edition was published in 2000. It allows the tactical balance of the game to be preserved by permitting the non-offending side to choose whether or not to play the next stroke (with the offending side's balls swapped so that the game is able to proceed on the fictional basis that the offending side actually played the right ball - the ball swap gives that fiction a greater semblance of reality).

There are two obvious situations where Ball Swap solves a problem with transparent fairness. Bab runs hoop 1 with Blue by 3 feet. Red and Yellow are very close together on the west boundary. Ray now plays Yellow to 2 yards past hoop 2 which, tactically, is a mistake. The players now realise that Red should have been played instead. If Replace and Replay was the only remedy, Ray would retrieve Yellow and then play Red, in the knowledge that he needs to hit a slightly gentler stroke. Using Ball Swap, Bab plays Black after Red has been placed where Yellow stopped so that Ray does not get "free practice".

The other is the classic "gift hoop" situation. If Bab plays Blue to good position at hoop 2, a normal sequence of strokes is for Ray to play Red into similar position and for Bab to play Black in an attempt to block a clearance by Yellow. Then Ray will have a chance to clear Blue with Yellow (if he can see it) or perhaps go for the hoop. If, however, Ray for some reason plays Yellow after Bab played Blue and Bab then plays Black, stoppage of play at this point would mean that Black would be a wrong ball (because Yellow is deemed to be correct

and Black does not follow in sequence after Yellow). If Replace and Replay were the only remedy, Black would be replaced and Blue would then be played, giving Bab the chance to score the hoop without ever giving Ray a chance to clear Blue. Ball Swap allows Ray to choose to have Blue and Black swapped and then he can play Red to try to clear Black, which is the clearance opportunity that he would expect to have if the game had proceeded in sequence.

It might be wondered that, as Ray was the original sinner by playing Yellow after Blue, he would have little to complain about if Replace and Replay was the only remedy. But that overlooks the possibility that Blue was the first ball out of sequence as Red had been played in the stroke before and when Ray played Yellow after Blue, he was merely alternating his colours as normal. There is also one obvious situation where Ball Swap would not be a good choice. Consider a case where Bab has just scored hoop 1 with Blue which stops a few yards south of hoop 2. Red and Yellow are both near hoop 1. Ray now plays Yellow from near hoop 1 into the jaws of hoop 2 and play is then stopped. In this case, Bab will prefer that Yellow is replaced and Ray plays Red as he is unlikely to be able to achieve such a good or lucky outcome on his second attempt.

Playing an opponent ball

Some have queried why playing an opponent ball now attracts no penalty, perhaps suggesting that it is a serious error deserving of a significant penalty. The other way of looking at it is to recognise that there is a difference between failure to notice that the opponent is about to play their partner ball and failure to notice that the opponent is about to play one of your balls. As explained above, the former can arise through excessive focus on the tactical consequences of the opponent's stroke when they are playing one of their own balls. There is no such excuse for a player to fail to notice that their opponent is about to play one of the player's own balls.

The Letters (in alphabetical order of the authors' surnames)

John Guy advocates UFP which, as explained above, would be a retrograde step. He also criticises Ball Swap on the basis that it tackles one type of "gift hoop" when other types exist of which he gives two examples. However, his examples are based on combinations of irregularities which are far less likely to occur in play than the classic "gift hoop" that arises from out-of-sequence play. These are therefore not valid comparisons.

Nick Harris refers to the situation described in Gazette 380 at page 10 (where play was stopped after the players played the opponent's ball in successive strokes and then realised that the previous three points had been scored for a ball

when played by its owner's opponent). He expresses his scepticism that Rule 10 was not designed to deal with this rare occurrence and argues that the combination of Rules 10.1.5 and 10.5.4 makes it mandatory to treat as invalid points scored for a ball when played by its owner's opponent unless Rule 10.2.1 applies - which Rule 10.1.5 expressly disapplies. As someone who was involved in the drafting of Rule 10, I can assure him that it was not designed to cope with this situation or other rare possibilities. Rule 10.5.4 is there to cope solely with the fact that, after both sides have played an opponent ball, it is impossible to continue play fairly by "replacing and replaying" anything because the second offender becomes the striker. A Penalty Area Continuation ("PAC") is a practical and fair way to restart play. Having said that, I have considerable sympathy with his argument and would probably have ruled that way had I been the referee unless the facts of the matter indicated that fairness required a different solution. One example would be if the owner of the balls for whom the points were scored by the opponent had expressed their doubts about what was happening but was overridden by the opponent's opinion. Rare combinations of irregularities often arise from strange circumstances and the flexibility afforded to a referee by Rule 15.3 is a desirable feature.

Mervyn Harvey described a situation at the recent GC World Championship where play went out of sequence and was stopped only by the intervention of a referee. He wonders if the tactical balance would have been affected if the referee had intervened one stroke earlier or later. He was kind enough to provide some extra details but could not recall how play had proceeded after the initial wrong ball so it is hard to say whether the timing of the discovery had any impact.

He also suggested that the options of Replace and Replay and Ball Swap should only apply if play is stopped after only one wrong ball has been played and that a PAC should be imposed in all other cases. In fact, the WCF GC Rules Committee Consultation Draft published in March 2018 proposed a PAC as the general remedy for wrong balls but this attracted criticism mainly on the ground that it would take too much time. This was accepted as a valid point which is why PAC was dropped and the Ball Swap option was added. Finally, Mervyn suggested that the use of Sequence Umpires should be extended to all important competitions. This already happens in England with all the players in an event permitted and encouraged to forestall both when they see that a player is about to play a wrong ball and after it has happened. The WCF Refereeing Regulations do not currently permit anyone other than a Supervising Referee or Inactive Referee to intervene in this way. Consideration will be

GC Series Tournaments

Championship Series

The English National Singles Championship tournament (for the Ascot Cup) will have been played by the time this Gazette issue drops through members' letterboxes, and a high quality field is expected following a successful season of qualifying tournaments.

Since the last issue, the remaining three events in the Championship Series have been played and there was a big surprise at the first of these at Ashby's National Forest Open where 20-year-old **Callum Johnson** announced his arrival in top-class GC convincingly with a win.

The more natural order was restored at the Nottingham Open when England captain **J-P Moberly** won the final versus Will Gee, with fellow internationals Rachel Gee and Richard Bilton beaten in the semis.

It was good to see the return of the Lancashire Open to the Championship Series after a few seasons in the A-Level Series, and so pleased about this was local man **Paul Rigge** that he duly won it!

A-Level Series

This season, the A-Level Series has been dominated by **Stuart M Smith** (*below*), who followed up his victories in the first two tournaments by turning the same trick at the Wiltshire Open (at Hamptworth).

That was the ninth Series tournament of ten, with the last being the Sussex Open, which was still to be played as this Gazette went to press, but Smith is the holder of that one and will be all out to retain his title, for sure. Regardless of what happens at The Sussex he has an insurmountable lead in the A-Level Series points race and so will get his hands on the cup that he missed out on so narrowly last season.

In other Series tournaments since the last issue, victories have been recorded by **Steve Leonard** at Ryde who beat Roger Goldring in the final at the end of an exceptionally long day that culminated in a scramble to catch the last hovercraft back to the 'North Island' at 2045! And **Jonathan Powe** won at East Dorset, where the consistent Smith was again to be found – in the runner-up spot.

B-Level Series (3+)

The mammoth 24-tournament schedule of the B-Level Series has seen good attendances at nearly all events, and many have been over-subscribed as players' appetites for competitive play at this standard seem to know no bounds.

Ron Carter and **Andrea Huxley** head for the National Final at Guildford with three tournament victories apiece, pursued by double winners **Keith Bryant** and **Jane Tewson**. Since the last issue there have been wins for:

Ron Carter (at Colchester)

Henry Hobbs (at Northampton)

Andrea Huxley (at Hamptworth and at Guildford)

David Cornes (at Bury)

Mark Buckley (at Nottingham)

Keith Bryant (at Bath)

Mike Bilton (at Phyllis Court)

Brian McCausland (at Nailsea)

Jane Tewson (at Ashby)

Niall Litton (at Budleigh Salterton)

Andrew Fall (at Hurlingham)

C-Level Series (7+)

It is good to see that young players **Henry Gosnell** (*below*) and **Jack Good** (16- and 13-years old respectively) have won qualifying tournaments since the last issue, and thereby earned places in the Series National Final.

Second half of the season winners are:

Henry Gosnell (at Colchester)

David Brame (at Hunstanton)

Charles Sale (at Hurlingham)

Ray Bassett (at Cheltenham)

Jack Good (at Nottingham)

Susan I'Anson (at Middlesbrough)

Izzy Poyntz (at Bury)

Russell Robinson (at Broadwas)

Diana Dunkley (at Northampton)

Alan Grundy (at Hamptworth)

Jean Cording (at Budleigh)

Hilary Bird (at Woking)



Photo by Louise Smith

given to whether this should be modified to allow competitors in WCF events to act as Sequence Umpires.

Derek Johnston asks whether spectators should forestall if they see that a wrong ball being played. This would take the use of Sequence Umpires a step further than their current use in England. However, in principle, there is much to commend it as has been the experience in Egypt for many years.

Peter Lowe suggests that Replace and Replay should be the only remedy available if play is stopped immediately after a wrong ball of any type listed in Rule 10.3 is noticed. He believes that this will make prevention the aim of both sides and so reduce the incidence of wrong balls. He also suggests that Ball Swap should be available but only if "reverting after several shots to the correct playing sequence produces a fortuitous hoop-running opportunity for one side or the other". This is the opposite of Mervyn Harvey's suggestion.

Two points arise. First, if a player plays their

partner ball and Replace and Replay is the only remedy if play is stopped immediately, it becomes possible for a player to play a practice stroke to a distant hoop with the partner ball, then declare their error and then play a second, better informed stroke with the striker's ball. Even if this happens genuinely accidentally, it puts both sides in a difficult position. The availability of Ball Swap after only one wrong ball prevents any ill feeling. Second, the drafting of the Rule to restrict the availability of Ball Swap as Peter suggests would be more complicated than the current Rule 10.3.

Conclusion

The letters express an interesting range of views about Rule 10 and all the authors will hopefully be re-assured that their views were either considered in the drafting process or will be borne in mind by the rule-makers in their ongoing task of monitoring how the 5th Edition is working in practice.

Stephen Mulliner
Chairman, CA GC Rules Committee



Recent Coaching Appointments

Once again people have been busy, busy, busy!!!

Have a thought for the new Club Coaches, who have not only attended a CTC course but also completed five or six full coaching sessions (often supervised) in order to complete their assessment. There is a lot of work involved by the candidates, examining coaches and the clubs involved, so thanks to all for your dedication.

GC Graded Coach

Ted Flexman - Ripon Spa

Club Coaches

Philip Bate - Stourbridge
John Bateson - Medway
Jean Cording - Dowlish Wake
David Cornes - Crake Valley
Sandra Cornes - Crake Valley
Carol Driver - Purley Bury
Pege Gustafsson - Sweden
Callum Johnson - York
Terry Johnson - Purley Bury
Jane Powell - Ealing
Izzy Poyntz - Bishop Monkton
Alan Ridley - Shrewsbury
Bob Whiffren - Bristol

Thanks to all the course organisers, extra session supervisors and examining coaches.

Sarah Hayes,
Chairman of the Coaching Committee

The Women's Coaching day ~ an update

Further to the coaching day, Dave Kibble and I were inundated with happy e-mails. We do very much appreciate a simple line or two saying what people did or didn't enjoy, and here are some of the comments received:

"I will never be a brilliant player even with Dave's mind control, although I will use it. However, I love the game and you both help me play it to the best of my ability."

"Thanks for a very enjoyable and constructive day."

"I have taken away a few gems from you both and thoroughly enjoyed the coaching."

"There were so many useful ideas that I now need to make use of."

My favourite was from one of the women who had played a serious club match against a player with a much lower handicap, shortly after the day's coaching.

She related how, after a missed shot, she readily identified a corner one cannon opportunity and played it to perfection!

She wore a perfect poker face (an 'I do this all the time sort of thing') and you could almost hear oppo's chin hit the floor – fantastic!

And from Dave Kibble himself:

"I thought you all might like to know that, as a result of my talk, I've been playing much more confidently today :)"

So you see – coaches learn too whilst presenting – it's a win/win really, eh?

The most repeated question throughout the kind thoughts from everyone was "When is the next coaching day?"

I hope something similar might be arranged for next season (perhaps through the Federations?) and looking at a good geographical spread of venues would certainly be popular.

Sarah Hayes



You said you'd practice ~ What happened?

So – you promised yourself months ago you would do some practice routines at least a couple of times a week...you were all fired up and raring to go.

So – what happened?

Too wet, too dry, too windy, too hot, or, was it always wine o'clock?

When you did practice regularly, I'll bet you gained confidence and improved...but by then of course you either became a bit bored or thought you knew it all, so didn't need to practice any more.

Whatever the reason, please do find some time each week to perfect your skills – playing is not practice no matter how much you try to convince yourself!

You don't need to be out there for long, so don't be a martyr and practise for hours one day a week – this is a sure-fire way of becoming fed up.

Twenty minutes here and there is perfect.

Don't just run through your favourite routines, but try to introduce new exercises and concentrate on these until you understand the reasoning behind the routine and when to use it.

Then ask a coach for another couple of practices, and firstly run through them with him/her.

Remember to keep on returning to all routines, no matter how basic, on a regular basis – croquet is repetitive, so your practice session should be too, and never fall into the "I know that" trap – you will regret it at some point.

Even simple roquets or clearance shots must be repeated again and again – grab a croquet chum to practise with and get them to tell you what is going awry – perhaps you are moving on the shot, lifting your head, not following through, or perhaps your feet are all wonky-donkey.

Ask your local coach for some simple conditional games which you might play between a few of you, and quite quickly you'll always learn something.

So, before the winter arrives (when you will have the best excuse possible) get out there and rekindle your love of practice... you know you want to!

Have fun and don't get too wet!

Sarah Hayes

New CA Handicapper appointed

The CA Handicap Committee is pleased to announce the following appointment:

CA Handicapper (AC)

Jane Babbage Sidmouth CC
(pictured, right)

Frances Colman,
Chairman of the CA Handicap Committee

High Bisquers return to Cheltenham

I was lucky enough to be able to watch quite a few of the games played during the two-day High Bisquers event at Cheltenham.

This had been cancelled due to lack of interest in the previous two years, so I was delighted to see a dozen entrants this time and well done to Adam Moliver for pursuing advertising through different media.

I was also thrilled to see the age range from 12 (yes 12) to considerably more than 12...I think the young lad was the only player who had been born this century, as opposed to when the Beatles were all the rage.

Throwing yourself in the deep end is by far the best way to learn the game, especially when you know the majority of the other attendees are all in the same boat.

All the usual things happened – running the wrong hoop, playing the wrong ball, failing to move the croquet stroke, etc, but nobody seemed to mind.

There was a good competitive atmosphere but off the lawns everyone was friendly and chatty, and mainly laughing about their foolishness.

I really hope there will be more of these mini-tournaments for high bisquers – it is a nice easy way into tournament play and a great way to learn some laws.

Through the last Gazette article I received several emails, all on the same thread, asking for consideration of the handicap range.

It seems that people think 14 too low or even 16 possibly; do please let me know what you think.

Are you a high bisquer?

Look out for these events on the CA Fixtures Calendar (and fixture book if you order one) next year or check with your Federation.

You will have the best time, if the Cheltenham event was anything to go by!! Go on – you know you want to!

Sarah Hayes



Crake Valley CC - a funding story

Crake Valley CC has enjoyed great success in funding their development project and other clubs could learn from their experiences.

David Cornes tells the Gazette how they went about it . . .

Based in South Cumbria, Crake Valley Croquet Club has 30 members, with 17 group visits this year. The clubhouse is 100 years old, but no longer fit for purpose.

Knowing that to attract more people to try both AC and GC we need to offer modern and practical facilities, the club committee is clear in its aims.

We will be introducing a programme "Croquet for All" from 2020, but this is not possible with our current structure.

Funding is essential

In October 2018 we met with the Cumbria Community Voluntary Services (CVS) support officer for third party organisations.

That organisation then produced a list of 50 potential funders, and our next step was to do internet research, review guidance criteria and assess our prospects for each one. We researched thoroughly, and determined only to go for funding with a realistic chance of success.

In November we identified 20 grants to apply for, but it was clear that we could not apply to them all at once.

We had also met with potential suppliers to obtain quotes for the key main elements – electricity to site (something we need come what may), demolition and removal, concrete base-laying new clubhouse with separate equipment store.

During December ten capital bids were submitted. Each took on average a day to do, as we made each one specific to the respective application form. We answered the question asked, to make it easy for the reader to follow our goals.

Assuming the reader would not know our circumstances, we included relevant supporting background information and photographs. Follow-up information was often needed, and we replied promptly to demonstrate good administration.

We kept funders informed of any awards received, so that they gained confidence as others deemed our project worthwhile to support.

In 2019 we have had to gather finishing costs to determine the total expenditure.

In practice this proved difficult to do, because tradesmen are not, generally, interested in giving ballpark quotes for an unbuilt structure. We tried local tradesman first, and those who have been most helpful have now got a gentleman's agreement to undertake the work.

Awards, pledges and grants

By August we had received £46k in awards and pledges (**including £8,000 from the Croquet Association**) which is enough to build the shell.

Our website also lists our other backers and/or pledgers: Walney Extension Community Fund, Sport England, Hadfield Trust, Frieda Scott Charitable Trust, Eric Wright Charitable Trust, ENMO Parish Council, ASDA and Aviva Community Funds.

We need up to £10k more to complete our project (furnishings, landscaping, car park etc) and are awaiting decisions on some second fit' bids, submitted over the last six months. If we proceed, work will commence some twelve months after our initial meeting with CVS.

Key to our applications is that we are not simply asking for a new clubhouse.

We demonstrate how we intend implementing our "Croquet for All" plans to the local community, schools and businesses.

Four of our members are working towards being club coaches, and we have shown a structured plan of marketing from 2020. Want to help?

Please visit

www.crakevalleycroquet.org.uk

Will we succeed? Watch this space, we will report back in a future edition.

David Cornes – Crake Valley CC

Photos: Crake Valley's existing clubhouse and the club team winning the 2018 NW Fed Festival GC; (from left) Frank Sharps, Sandra Cornes and David Cornes receiving trophy from Paul Rigge



The AC Peel Memorial Tournament ~ Bob Thompson reports

The Nottingham club were proud to host the historic Peel Memorial tournament (first played in 1898) for the sixth consecutive year in mid-May.

The 2019 Peels, a four-day handicap tournament, featuring Mens and Womens Singles, and a Mixed Doubles event, started in rather cold and damp weather.

Players wore waterproofs, woolly hats, scarves and gloves initially and heavy thunder and rain at Friday teatime actually curtailed play when the lawns became unplayable.

Fortunately, the weather gradually improved with Sunday's play in glorious sunny conditions.

The tournament attracted seven women players and 19 men, from seven clubs, with handicaps ranging from -1 to 22, and it was fortunate that plenty of new bisques had been made during the winter for such an event.

Several players were playing in their first CA tournament and the games were played in a friendly but competitive spirit.

There were numerous mini coaching sessions after the completion of some games where an experienced player thought that an inexperienced opponent might have fared better taking a different line of play, indeed this proved invaluable for one player in one of his next games, who

later thanked his 'coach' for his instruction in getting a corner ball back into play and went onto peg out.

Handicap Mixed Doubles Final - The Lady Murray Silver Challenge Cups -

Ian Vincent & Diana Plant (h/c 10, Nottingham) beat Mark Lansdale & Ferzana Shan (17, Nottm.) +3T.



Sue Wileman in action (photo by Chris Roberts)

Experience told in this game, though it was a very closerun thing.

Both pairs were new to the event, but Vincent had been playing handicap doubles for many years, and longer than the other three combined.

With 7.5 bisques, Lansdale and Shan

made early progress and the former was most of the way round when the bisques finally ran out.

Vincent had yet to start, but was comforted that Plant was a hoop ahead of Shan. It should have been plain sailing from there, but Vincent repeatedly broke down in what should have been decisive breaks, being unable to resist the temptation of peeling.

With a minute to go, the score was level with Shan laid-up by her hoop, when a hit-in led to a three hoop lead and a leave which proved sufficiently defensive for Vincent and Plant, despite Shan hitting the last shot.

Womens Singles Final - The Peel Memorial Silver Challenge Bowl -

Wendy Spencer-Smith (22, Watford) beat Sue Wileman (11, Nottm.) +13.

The final began with Spencer-Smith confidently running hoops and using her bisques to good effect.

Wileman countered with some progress but allowed Spencer-Smith to forge further ahead when a missed roquet ended her turn. Wileman managed to get a break together when her opponent broke down at 2-back, but Spencer-Smith was able to keep ahead and finally pegged-out just within time. *Continued on page 30*

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Fairy Rings and Levelling

I have written before about my croquet lawn which was a paddock a couple of years ago.

Unfortunately, it has a hill which makes normal (AC) breaks a nightmare and there are eight large and hyper-active fairy rings.

I have tried every method available on the market to kill the fairy rings, all have failed.

The mycelium draws moisture from the soil and kills the grass and produces toadstools in abundance.

The toadstools appear after rain and I knock the tops off with a hoe but there can be literally hundreds appearing overnight.

So I have decided to have the fairy rings dug out.

I am not sure how deep the mycelium goes but I have been told that it can go down two metres. My local digger driver will dig them out and dispose of the infected soil.

I am taking delivery of a 65/35 Sand/loam sport dressing from British Sugar to fill the holes left. The product is washed off sugar beet so comes weed-free from farmland. The cost is around £20 per tonne which is half the price of other local suppliers.

I have laser surveyed the lawn and worked out that I can skim 8" from the highest parts of the lawn and this will produce enough topsoil to fill the low parts. The total amount of soil being moved from the high spots to the low spots is about 70 tonnes.

It will be compacted by the digger which has tracks and I will top dress afterwards using the British Sugar sport dressing.

Then spread seed, apply seeding fertiliser and finally spread seeding compost to cover.

Germination should happen within 10 days and the seedlings will establish during the winter months – fingers crossed!

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

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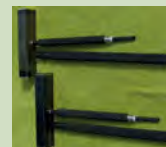
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For details or discussion, contact Dave Trimmer
01747 824822 Davetrimmer@talktalk.net
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Continued from page 28...

The Peel Memorial Tournament

Mens Singles final

- The Peel Memorial Silver Challenge Bowl -

Mike Hedge (14, Nottm.) beat Alex McIntyre (8, Nottm.) +10.

Early play saw both players enjoy good spells on court and Hedge eventually took his first ball to peg, but then stalled with problems running hoop 2 on more than one occasion with his second ball.

McIntyre also went to peg and pegged-out Hedge's first ball.

Starting from a couple of hoops behind, McIntyre then played a 3-ball break for a slender lead, but Hedge had been hitting in across court throughout the tournament, kept that up and ultimately won +10.

McIntyre had at least made Hedge use all his bisques, which was quite an achievement in itself, as Hedge had won all of his eleven games, several by +26 with bisques standing, and most well within the three hour time limit!

In fact on the Friday he celebrated his birthday by scalping McIntyre +20, Omiad Hallam +26 and the manager +26 in double-quick time!

For his endeavours, Mike Hedge's handicap has been cut to 8.

Hedge and Gordon Mills (14, Pinchbeck), both CA tournament debutants, achieved their Bronze Merit Awards.

Bob Thompson

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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>

Publication Details

The Croquet Gazette is published six times per year, usually in February, April, June, August, October and December.

Copy should reach the Editor before the 20th of the month before publication is due.

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 acceptable.

Please send digital jpeg or tiff format files.

Please accompany all images with a description of the subject.

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

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PFC HOOP MAKER MALLETS

THE PFC HOOP MAKER ZELATRON STRIKING FACE Mallet

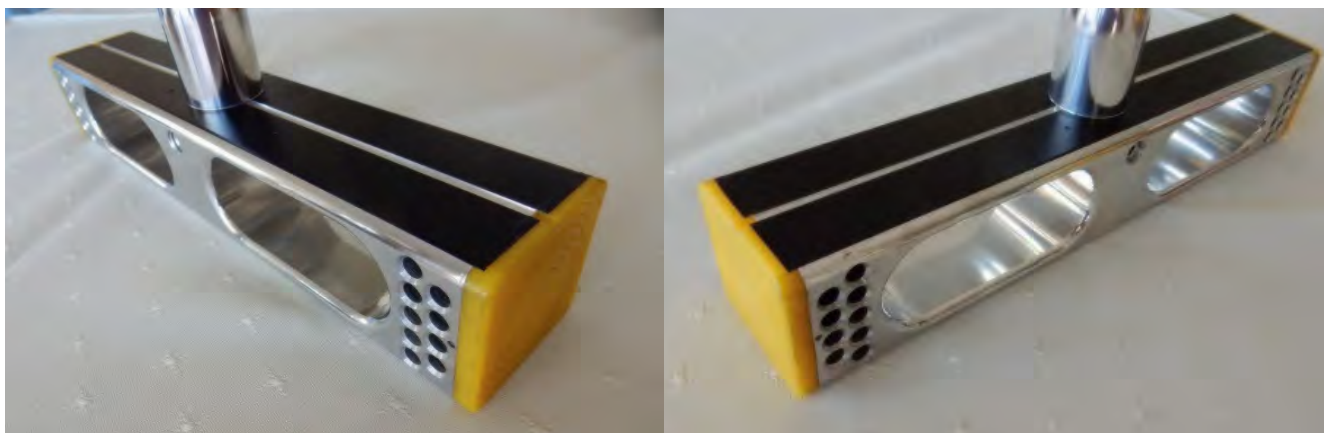
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