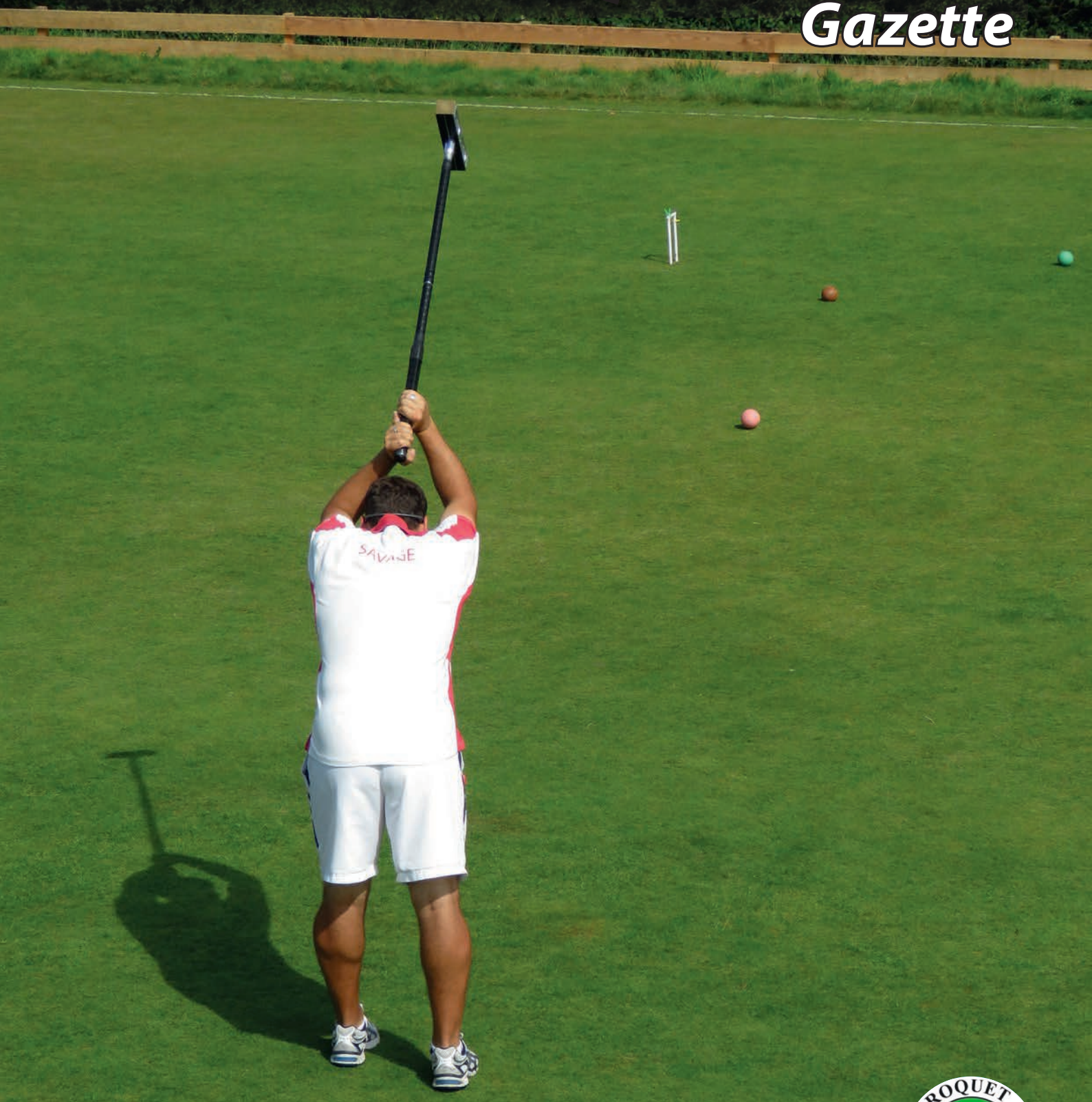


The

Issue 384 February 2020

# CROQUET

*Gazette*



**Looking ahead to 2020**



# From our files

researched by Frances Colman

## 10 years ago - 2010



**Jim's Merit Award** – Congratulations to Jim Field for achieving his Gold Award at the British Men's and Women's Championship at Cheltenham in June 2009. (*It is not known why Jim's feat was not reported until the Gazette of February 2010 – FC.*)

~

**Older adversaries** – (letter) Laurence Latham's letter jogged my memory of the first tournament I played in, which was at Budleigh Salterton in 1960. My opponent was Miss Lydia Elphinstone-Stone whom John Solomon had played in 1948, but by 1960 she had reached the grand age of 95.

The Gazette report points out that I was 76 years younger than my opponent.

Can any Associates recall being involved in a match with a bigger age difference?

Arthur Reed

~

**Casting: my thoughts too** – Messrs. Solomon are evidently not fans of 'casting' – John asks what casters are trying to achieve? My swing settles after a few casts and there is a moment when it feels just right, and that is when I strike. How many swings it takes varies – but it has made me a good shot. Apart from the virtue of tolerance extolled by Tony Blackhouse, there are three other points to consider.

1. Neither of the two slowest tournament players I can think of are casters – one is slow because they are very defensive and the other because they take an inordinate time to consider their next stroke.

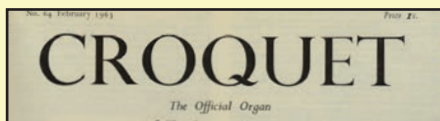
2. Casting is not new. I've been casting since 1981 and I copied it from a mentor when I first started playing.

3. The standard of shooting has improved hugely in the last 20 years, to the extent that the tactics in the top class game have had to evolve to respond to the greater accuracy. Not all top players are casters but many of the best shots are.

So in a sport continually trying to develop, it would seem very odd to ban something – just because you find it unattractive – that has been around for 30+ years, is not responsible for the slowest play on show, and has contributed to a huge improvement in shooting.

Martin French

## 50 years ago - 1970



### 1969 in Retrospect (by Maurice B Reckitt)

A is for Nigel, the Man of the Year  
B is for Roger who follows so near,  
C are the Cups they both win at our game,  
D is for Douglas of Dublin fame . . .

. . . That Nigel Aspinall was indeed the Man of the Year, he began to prove immediately on his arrival in Australia.

To win as many matches as he did in the convincing way that he did under unfamiliar conditions, and to follow this up by victories here in the Open Championship and President's Cup, marks him, at an early age, as one of the greatest masters in the history of the game.

~

**High level tactics** - The development of tactics at the highest level is always a matter of the greatest interest, but it is doubtful whether there is much scope left for new discoveries in this field.

The ingenuous and extremely delicate devices developed, and often put into practice by Messrs. Wylie and Aspinall for effectively denying any open shots from a neighbouring baulk to their opponents demand a higher degree of skill to achieve than is at the disposal of any but a few of these, and they are in essence more defensive than offensive.

The sextuple 'lay' is, of course, the major example of the latter intention, but replies are being sought for to it . . . One defence against it was exemplified at Hurlingham this year is to forgo the open shot from first hoop to the second and retire to third corner. . . It will be interesting to see how widely this self-denying ordinance may be adopted.

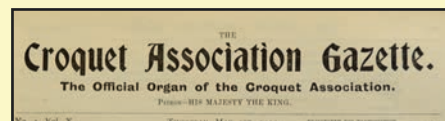
~

**Professionals** – Mr Lloyd-Pratt proposed that this Rules should be retained and reworded.

Motion defeated by 30 votes to 18. Mr Lloyd-Pratt then proposed that, as it might be vital to retain some control over professionalism, the Council's amendment should be rejected.

Motion rejected by 30 votes to 15.  
(Taken from the minutes of a SGM to approve the revised rules published in 'Croquet' in September 1969).

## 100 years ago - 1920



**Gazette frequency** – The "Gazette" will, during the winter months, appear at regular intervals, as required. (*from 'Editorial Notes'*)

~

**Editorship of "C.A. Gazette"** – The "Gazette" committee of the Croquet Association invite applications from gentlemen prepared to undertake to edit the "C.A. Gazette," who are

- (a) Regularly resident in London,
- (b) On the telephone.

Preference will be given to a demobilised officer if a suitable candidate. Application stating remuneration required to be sent to the Secretary . . . (*from 'Editorial Notes'*)

~

**Qualification of Referees** – Sir, It is apparently held by many (particularly by high-bisqued Non-Associates) that in order to dispel the charge of "shell shock," or "loss of memory," so frequently levelled at them last season, referees should have the opportunity of proving their efficiency by successfully undergoing periodic examinations in knowledge of the Laws of Croquet. It is suggested that the examination should be both "written" and "oral" – the latter taking place "on the ground." The feeling is the Board of Examiners should not be restricted as to either sex, or the number of their bisques, and that at the oral examination (as a precautionary measure) as few mallets as possible should be served out.

Yours faithfully, "SPERO."

~

**County Championship**, preliminary notice – The County Championship will be played at Hurlingham, on Monday, June 14th, 1920, and following days. The qualification for playing for a County are:

- a. Birth in the County or
- b. Present residence in the County of two years standing, or
- c. A previous residence in the County for an uninterrupted period of fifteen years.

For the purposes of this competition, the boundaries of Counties will be deemed unaffected by the Local Government Act, 1888. Care should be taken to see that team are properly qualified, otherwise their teams will be liable to disqualification.

# Editorial

This Gazette issue stays true to my initial 'Sport for All' aim, with articles featuring beginners at primary schools, through to club, county and national representation.

There is a look at how we can help people with mobility issues enjoy our sport, our wonderful Charity One Ball competition and coaching opportunities for all. And there is still room for both a review and preview of World Championship tournaments – phew!

Inclusiveness and equality starts off on this very page with the CA Shop reaching out quite literally and the introduction of a new award for female players.

I congratulate and thank our England team for the entertainment that I exchanged for sleep as I followed them online to third place in the GC World Team Championship in New Zealand; and good luck to our strong home nations contingent at the AC World Championships in Australia

this month (with more late-night online viewing in prospect!).

By the time you read this, I will be enjoying my annual croquet trip to South Africa, from where, thanks to the excellent CA tournaments booking system, I will be able to enter my choice events for the whole year. Online certainly has great functionality.

However the frequency of the paper Gazette that sits on a coffee table, likely to be read and absorbed in a piecemeal way in the weeks ahead, is under threat; and I am so far unconvinced that any on-screen alternative can offer similar.

Your views on this will be useful.



**Chris Roberts** Editor

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The  
**CROQUET**  
Gazette



Issue 384 February 2020

**Front cover:** Tobi Savage, here in full swing, introduces a new trophy this season (see pg11).  
*Photo by Stephen Custance-Baker*

**This Page:** The Editor walking purposefully at Nottingham - he must have won.  
*Photo by Charlie Martin*

**Next issue published**

**Apr 10 2020**

**Next copy deadline**

**Mar 20 2020**

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## The CA Shop goes on the Road

Would you like a new mallet?

Try before you buy?

at Phyllis Court CC (Henley, Oxon.) Tues. 21 April

**Great Britain International Mark Suter** and CA-qualified graded coaches will offer expert advice on a mallet to suit you!

**Waterproofs, croquet books and other shop wares** will be available too.

Phyllis Court CC has invited the CA Shop because they have 36 new members this

year, on top of 25 last year, and many will want to purchase equipment and more.

Visitors are very welcome, and although it's not essential, please drop me an e-mail if you are planning to attend, so you can be pre-registered as a club visitor.

**Chris Roberts ~ [info@kickphoto.co.uk](mailto:info@kickphoto.co.uk)**

## New Award for 2020 ~ The Most Improved Female GC Player

The **Handicap Committee** is pleased to announce the establishment of a new and, some might say, overdue award. Starting in the 2020 season, in order for there to be parity between GC and AC, the Croquet Association will now make an award to the Most Improved Female Golf Croquet player.

Up until now, there has only been a single award available for GC players, whereas AC players have had separate awards for male and female players.

The existing GC Trophy, that was gifted to the CA by John Spiers, will henceforth be for male recipients only. (As it happens, in the 11-year existence of the GC Award, it has only been awarded to male players).

The Chairman of the Handicap Committee, Frances Colman, who started her croquet career playing competitive GC, is currently very active in GC refereeing, GC tournament management and GC competition direction for the CA, is gifting a new trophy to the CA for the Female GC award, completing the set of Most Improved Player awards.

**Apps Memorial Bowl - AC Male**  
**Steel Memorial Bowl - AC Female**  
**Spiers Trophy - GC Male**  
**Colman Trophy - GC Female**

**Nominations for these awards should be made by Clubs or Federations and sent to the CA Office by the 8 October.**

The nomination should provide detailed information about the candidate's improvement during the season.

A reminder will appear in the Gazette and on the CA website.

Full information can be found about all these awards via this navigation: [Home page > History > Awards & Medals > Most Improved](#) (see link at top of the web page).

Online readers can click this direct link:

<https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=tournament/caCalendar&action=ViewPage&CalendarInformationID=10>

**Frances Colman,**  
**Chairman, Handicap Committee**



## Chairmen's Columns

### Chairman of Council

**A** Happy New Year to you all. One of the first tasks in 2020 was to find and appoint a new Honorary Treasurer for the Association.

I am delighted to be able to announce that Ian Burrige, President of the World Croquet Federation, has agreed to take on the role effective from 1 April 2020 and has already started a handover period with his predecessor.

Peter Death, our current Honorary Treasurer, is retiring having served as Honorary Treasurer since 2014. I would like to thank him most sincerely for all the hard work, dedication and guidance he has given during the last five years and we wish him the best of fortune in his retirement.

Members of the New Council have been busy, having agreed our overall aim of **"Getting more people playing more croquet in more places, by promoting, developing and administering the sport"**.

We have now been faced with the hard reality of finding ways to pay for an expansionist policy.

As stated in my last column we decided initially to concentrate on Marketing and Efficiency. To enable the CA to make a number of objective decisions, our Marketing Committee instigated a survey to

gather additional information. The response from our member

clubs was excellent and I would like to thank those who completed the survey for their quick responses and Eugene Chang for his professionalism in its execution.

The results of the survey commissioned by Council are now being analysed and will be fed back to the Executive Board with an action plan.

Four working groups have been instigated to develop our strategies on Marketing and Efficiency. These working groups have been selected, taking into account the knowledge and expertise the various volunteers bring to their respective groups.

The Marketing Group are now developing a draft strategy.

Efficiency is a more complex area, so we have set up a Steering Group and two working groups, one concentrating on ICT issues and the other dealing with non-technical aspects. The steering groups have been asked to report back to Council in time for the March meeting.

Funding a policy of growth will have associated costs.

The CA faces a dilemma – for the last three years we have been running at a deficit by eating into our reserves. This will also be the case in 2020, however in 2021 we need to

bring the accounts back in balance. There are a number of initiatives that we can implement this year to eliminate the deficit.

These include seeking sponsorship, gaining additional advertising income, increasing our shop sales, and encouraging more Standard members to become Premium or Supporter members of the CA.

You, as members of the CA, can help in this regard.

Please seriously consider upgrading your membership. The more Premium and Supporter members we have, the more we can re-invest in the sport.

If you know of an organisation who would be prepared to Sponsor the CA in a large or small way let us know.

Our aim is to invest any surplus monies into growing Croquet as an inclusive sport for all.

My own theme for 2020 is **"To get Croquet into action mode"**.

To do this we will need more help. Croquet is a sport built on its volunteer strength. The more help we get, the more we will achieve.

If you feel you can help, whether it be marketing, information technology, project management or any of the other skills required to run a voluntary organisation, please contact myself or the Honorary Secretary (*details on page 31*).

**Jonathan Isaacs**

### Chairman of the Executive Board

**W**e are well into the New Year, and for some croquet didn't stop at the end of October.

Our England team, captained by J-P Moberly, performed well in the GC World Team Championships in New Zealand, coming second in their Group but succumbing to Egypt in the semi-finals. They achieved a creditable Bronze position in the Openshaw Shield.

After a significant gestation period, the new book "Beyond Expert Croquet Tactics", which updates Keith Wylie's book, has been published and is available via the CA Shop.

We will soon have a new Honorary Treasurer in Ian Burrige and I record my profound thanks to Peter Death for all his efforts over the last five years stewarding our financial resources. It has been a turbulent period, and his role has not been an easy one, but he has steered our ship financially in his usual cool calm collected way, for which I extend my grateful thanks.

~ Your Board has also been busy, and at its first meeting this year, on the 4 January, a number of key decisions were made.

Amongst them was a decision to change the timetable around the appointment of committee personnel, to make it easier for new committees to achieve a more effective hand-over.

This will enable the new chairmen and committees to hit the ground running, rather than discovering that they are scheduled to attend a meeting in two weeks' time! The CA committees are always looking for help, so this initiative should help in recruiting new blood.

As always, your Board and its committees are happy to receive comments about how the sport is administered. The recent governance revolution – and the changes in responsibilities it brings – is still bedding in.

As usual the devil is in the detail, but suffice to say that the organisation is a lot more energised towards delivering a responsive, outward-looking administration.

### Online tournament entries

**B**y the time you read this, the fixtures calendar will have been published online (and on paper for those of you who ordered copies) and the website will be accepting entries.

Given that most tournaments have an allocation date, before which the order of receipt of entries is immaterial, there is no need to rush.

Even so, the website application takes a large number of entries in February and last year it failed on a few occasions, because its database was locked by another user.

To avoid a repeat of this, the system has been migrated to the one already being used for membership records, which can cope with concurrent transactions.

This has involved significant work and testing, which, if all goes well, would, but for this mention, otherwise pass unnoticed.

**Roger Staples**

## CA Council ~ January meeting



Council met at the Victory Services Club, rather than Hurlingham, as it was closer to the mainline railway stations. It welcomed Ian Burridge, who is taking over from Peter Death as Hon. Treasurer at the end of March. Ian had previously been on Council, some 25 years ago, and commented positively afterwards that the meeting was both smaller and considerably less formal than in those days.

The first part of the meeting concentrated on Council's role of scrutinising the Executive Board, hearing reports from the Officers and its Chairman, Roger Staples.

~

The provisional management accounts showed a deficit of £36.5K for the year, though about a third of that would be charged to the development fund, being the remaining cost of employing a National Development Officer for two years.

Individual subscriptions were down by 5%, but those from clubs had increased by 8%. Shop sales recovered after the poor year in 2018, but the gross profit is still well below 2017.

Staff costs were within budget, despite a considerable turnover during the year. Almost £50K of tournament income was received on behalf of clubs through the online entry system. This is a significant benefit to clubs as the CA picks up the transaction costs.

~

The budget for 2020 anticipates another deficit, of the order of £30K, but it was agreed to aim to reduce that if possible this

year, with a view to breaking even in future years. Additional income and possibly further cost reductions will be needed to achieve this. Membership subscriptions are currently our major source of income and Council requested the Executive Board to report and analyse trends in them, to provide a baseline for considering policy in this area.

Clearly one way of increasing membership income is to increase the number of players, which is part of the overall goal that the new Council agreed at its first meeting.

Communication with clubs through Federations was felt to be a key to this, to encourage take-up of initiatives such as "Croquet Matters", previous proposals to improve recruitment and new suggestions that may arise from the recent club survey.

**Some Federations had co-opted Council members onto their committees and this practice is to be encouraged to improve communication flow.**

~

Council welcomed the proposal that the process of identifying people to chair and serve on committees should be started much earlier in the year than hitherto, to give more time both to find good people and for them to prepare for office.

It was felt that the Executive Board had made a good impression in managing the CA's day to day business, but face greater challenges when faced with implementing Council's new policy initiatives. The first of these will be to consider and, if thought appropriate, implement the suggestions in

a review of refereeing, conducted in response to the concerns about the availability of championship referees raised at the AGM.

~

The results of the CA survey completed in December are being analysed and Eugene Chang has been invited to make a full presentation at the March Council meeting.

~

Since the October meeting, it had been decided that the next priority areas for more in-depth strategy review were marketing, efficiency and technology.

Working Groups have been created, consisting of Council and Executive Board members, together with other experts in their respective fields.

These Working Groups are being coordinated by a Steering Group chaired by Samir Patel.

The Steering Group has been created due to considerable areas of overlap. Their brief is to develop the work already done by Council and propose strategies covering those areas of the CA's activities. Their initial reports have been requested for the Council meeting being held at the end of March

Finally, it was agreed to follow the same pattern of face-to-face meetings next year: following the AGM on 17 October 2020 and on 30 January and 27 March 2021. There will be more contact between Council members during the year, using an e-mail group and online conferencing.

**Ian Vincent, Hon. Secretary**

### We need more Referees

Here Gabrielle Higgins marks the ball positions before refereeing Tom Coles' stroke at Hurlingham. *Photo by Chris Roberts*



## Using the CA website database



MDB Home



Help

The Croquet Association

The membership database implementation team have been continuing to develop and hopefully improve the CA database over the past year, and will continue to do so.

Inevitably this leads to various questions arising about how to do things, and a lot of calls to the CA office.

If you have any difficulties using the site, or are unsure of how to proceed, then please remember that there are various help pages provided – just click the **help button** on the database pages.

Members should remember to check that their details are correct from time to time, and we are especially keen to make

sure that everyone has the correct club memberships listed for them.

If a club to which you belong does not appear under your memberships tab, then it is now possible to update this for yourself, through a two-stage process (as it requires verification from your club secretary).

Similarly, if you know someone who is not a member but would like to take up Standard Membership (at no cost to them), then they can now initiate this process for themselves through the 'Join the CA' webpage.

**Jeff Dawson, Membership Database Implementation Team**

# “Beyond Expert Croquet Tactics” is welcomed around the world

**P**ublished by the Croquet Association in December, ‘Beyond Expert Croquet Tactics’ has received acclaim at home and right around the world, and certainly lives up to its billing as the next bible for aspiring champions and a worthy update to Keith Wylie’s seminal work of 1985.

~

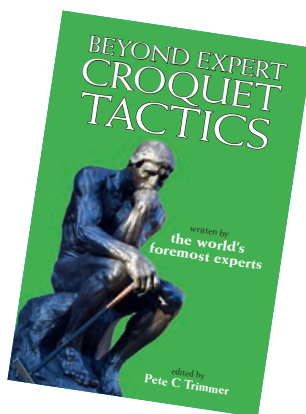
If you are new to croquet, this is not the book for you. This is written for players who are already familiar with the Advanced rules of Association Croquet and have a working knowledge of triple peels. Each chapter is written by one of croquet’s foremost experts, including five world champions.

Technically reviewed by twice world champion Chris Clarke, each chapter acts as a guide for reaching the very top of the game.

~

Taking up where Wylie’s ‘Expert Croquet Tactics’ left off, this book provides modern updates in several key areas (especially supershot openings, peeling of the opponent and developments with triple peeling) before expounding on fresh topics, including sextuples, pegged-out endgames and Super-Advanced tactics.

The book then switches gear to consider the psychological aspects of improvement, preparation and match play, before finishing with a discussion of modern equipment and a historical overview.



### This book reflects the combined knowledge of the winners of:

#### 13 AC World Championships

of the 16 that have been held

#### 13 AC World Team Championships

The MacRobertson Shield (of 22 held since 1925)

#### 69 British Open Championships

31 singles, incl. all but two since 1990, & 38 doubles

#### 30 President’s Cups (The 1st Eight Selection)

#### 26 British Men’s Championships

and countless other national titles from around the world, including the New Zealand Open, Australian Open, US Open and European Championships.

**You may never find another book by such a dominant group of players in any game or sport, let alone croquet.**

“Australia Post duly delivered my eagerly awaited copy on Monday and I can confirm that it is absolutely brilliant. It is jam-packed with incisive, beautifully written information, all conveniently organised in self-contained chapters. Each is written with a flavour of the author but each very much on-theme with the overarching narrative and perspective.

It’s thoroughly recommended.

Massive congratulations and thanks to all those involved in the project. The only problem now is how to get through it all...”

**Gareth Denyer, Sydney**

~

“It stretches my brain as it should, and how I wish I was still playing, but it will inform my spectating. It is well written, well edited and a very welcome addition to croquet literature.”

**David Appleton, Tyneside**

**“Beyond Expert Croquet Tactics” is a must for all croquet bookshelves and is available now via the CA Shop at £24.50 ~ [www.CAShop.org.uk](http://www.CAShop.org.uk) Order your copy today!**

## Putting Something back ~ a message from the President of The Croquet Association

**L**ike me, you may well derive a huge amount of pleasure from the world of croquet, both on and off the lawns. Have you ever thought of putting something back into the game to help future players enjoy our wonderful sport?

One way is a legacy to help fund future developments.

After providing for your family and friends please consider leaving a gift to Your Club and/or to the Croquet Association. If you decide to do this, however big or small, act now – we all know how easy it is to put off making or altering a Will. Thank you.

**Quiller Barrett**



### Leaving a legacy

There are two main ways to leave a legacy (or bequest) in your Will.

Here is given a brief description of each, so that you can decide which to use if you wish to leave a legacy to your Club and/or the Croquet Association in your Will.

Your solicitor will be able to check everything for you but it may be useful for you to have a look at the options now.

~

**A pecuniary legacy** is a gift of a stated amount of money which you leave to a named person, charity or other organisation. Inflation will reduce the value of these gifts over the years, so do revise them from time to time.

Suggested wording: ‘I direct my executors to pay to [name & address] ....., the sum of £\_\_\_\_\_ [in figures and words] to be used for its general purposes and I direct that the receipt of a duly authorised officer shall be a valid and appropriate form of discharge.’

~

**A residuary legacy** is the gift of all, or a share of, your estate after liabilities such as taxes & expenses have been paid (i.e. the residue)

Suggested wording: ‘I give [all]/[.....%] of the residue of my estate to [name & address] ....., to be used for its general purposes and I direct that the receipt of a duly authorised officer shall be a valid and appropriate form of discharge.’

## CA Tournament Regulations - the changes for 2020

The Croquet Association publishes Tournament Regulations to provide clubs, tournament officials and players with a consistent approach to running all tournaments published in the CA Calendar.

You can find the full text of these on the CA Website (<https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=tournament/regulations>).

If you want any advice about how these should be interpreted, or have suggestions for future improvements, please contact me or the appropriate Tournament Committee.

### The regulations have been updated for the 2020 playing season

The principal changes since the 2019 edition are as follows:

**Changes have been made throughout to reflect the new CA governance model. Some responsibilities and powers previously falling to the CA Council now fall to the Executive Board.**

**C1(c):** Removal of the requirement to include a list of **handicap changes** from the requirements for returns from tournaments. It is now the players' responsibility to update their handicap. The regulation has also been updated to

recognise the existing procedure relating to the levy for tournaments that use the online tournament entry system.

**C2(a)(9), C3(a)(1) and P3(b):** The definition of the **Allocation Date** has been made consistent. Entries received before the Allocation Date should be considered together on that date.

**C2(b)(3):** When a **Championship knockout** is preceded by a Swiss or blocks, the knockout must contain at least four players (i.e. a play-off between block winners is insufficient for a Championship knockout).

**C2(b)(6):** The word **'Charity'** within event titles will have a defined meaning from the 2021 season. This will relate to the nature of the charitable cause and the proportion of money raised to be donated to the charity. Approval will be required before its use.

**C3(a)(3):** For events where allocation is by ranking grade, **players with no ranking grade** are only to be allocated places after all players with a ranking grade have been accepted. Such players are allocated by lowest handicap.

**C3(a)(3), F1(a)(3), F2(a)(1):** For players who have played **insufficient ranking games**, their ranking grade should be reduced by 50 points per year. This provision has existed for many years for allocation but was not well known, and so

has been made clearer and extended to seeding for events. This ensures that a player who has essentially retired from the game for many years does not receive an out-of-place seeding when returning to the game until they have played sufficient games for their ranking grade to have begun to adjust to any change of form. The threshold for 'sufficient' ranking games has been retained at 10 games for AC and increased to 15 games for GC.

**R6(d):** In GC, a player **may not appeal against a refereeing decision** after that player has played a stroke. This is much shorter than the previous limitation and mirrors the WCF refereeing regulations update during 2019.

**Safeguarding and Equality Policies.** An explicit mention of compliance with these, and other CA policies, has been added to Regulations C (clubs), O (officials) and P (players).

~

Many other changes have also been made for clarity or to remove typographic errors, but without any change of intent.

You can find more details in the on-line version of the regulations:

<https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=tournament/regulations>

**Samir Patel**

## Have you considered leaving a gift in your will for your croquet club ?

Trying to find funds for unexpected problems can put real stress on a croquet club's finances.

Lawn weed and moss treatment  
Urgent repairs  
New updated equipment  
The development and improvement of club facilities

All these can put stress on the club and undermine its stability. Usually they can not simply be funded by increased membership fees. Croquet is a great game enjoyed in many ways by very different types of players and we all depend on healthy and stable clubs.

That is why leaving something in your will to your club can help members continue to enjoy playing the game we have all enjoyed so much.

It is simple to do and your club will really benefit from it.

The smallest contribution could make a massive difference.

Obituary

**Jim Penny 1922 - 2019**

James Alfred Penny was born in Glasgow on 19 July 1922 and remained a proud Scot for all of his long life despite becoming an adopted Salopian.

Early in World War II, when his age permitted, he joined the RAF; eventually becoming a pilot with the elite Pathfinders.

His active part in the war ended when his Lancaster bomber was hit in a raid over Berlin; he was the only survivor; a weight he could never quite erase from his mind.

He considered himself lucky to be taken prisoner by the Luftwaffe who treated him with respect.

After the war he remained in the RAF as a flight instructor with tours of Southern Rhodesia, Germany and various parts of the UK.

Early in his career, whilst stationed in Shropshire, he met Ursula Egerton-Hine; they married in 1948 and, when Jim eventually left the RAF, they made their home in Ursula's home town of Shrewsbury and raised a family with Jim making a new career as an English teacher until his retirement.



When he was about 80 he learned to use a computer and wrote his autobiography which he called *"The Lucky Penny"*, donating the profits to the RAF Benevolent Fund.

~

Jim had heart problems after retirement and was anticipating a very sedentary life; not a happy prospect for Jim who, in his younger

days, had been a champion oarsman. He won many trophies as a solo sculler and also as cox to his four older brothers. They were called the Four Pence Halfpenny Crew and you can see a display about them in the Glasgow Museum of Transport. Then, in his mid-seventies he discovered croquet which he enjoyed for the next 20 years, calling it his life-saver.

He soon became the most enthusiastic member of Shrewsbury CC and enjoyed all aspects of croquet especially introducing it to newcomers. He served for many years on the club committee, including as Chairman, and, at the time of his passing on 16 October 16, he was our President.

He leaves Ursula, a host of descendants and a big hole in all our lives.

**John Jennings, Shrewsbury CC**

Obituary

**John Hansen 1930 - 2019**

John Hansen was a founder member of Sapcote CC, and I am sure it will sadden those throughout the croquet world to learn of his recent death.

He started playing croquet at school in 1946, and in his younger days he was a keen tennis player, loved mountain walking and the occasional round of golf.

He played croquet intermittently in the garden before being approached by the local branch of the Women's Institute in 1988, to help start a local croquet group.

The CA at that time decided that the 'new' game of golf croquet would appeal to the gentler sex, and they sent out



croquet kits at random to WIs throughout the UK.

John played in the first Golden Mallet competition in 1991, and won a regional Golden Mallet trophy.

However, he never got to play in the National Final due to the venue being waterlogged.

He joined Leicester CC in 1992 to learn more about AC, and later Nottingham CC, where he concentrated on the game.

John was a retired Education Lecturer and is very sorely missed.

**Ann Newman,  
Secretary Sapcote CC**

**Kevin Carter likes Golf (tees)**

Dear Editor,

Stephen Parish and Andrew Killick have, in your pages (*Gazettes 381 & 382*), advocated the marking of the four corner spots.

While I endorse this suggestion, I would go a stage further.

Playing in Ireland a few years ago, I found that each corner spot had a golf tee planted just below mower height.

So, anybody wanting to hit a ball out of a corner can do so cleanly and without scuffing the grass or leaving an increasingly deeper divot.

For a reason difficult to fathom, this problem is generally worst in corner four.

Golf tees date back 130 years.

Let's see if we can do something to catch up with such new technology in croquet.

**Kevin Carter, Surbiton CC**

**An invitation to Budleigh Salterton**

Dear Editor,

I want to extend a very warm Budleigh Salterton welcome to any visiting players who would like to support Kevin Carter's National Charity One Ball Competition (*see page 13*) by playing in our heat on Saturday 4 April.

We really want you to experience our 11 fabulous championship standard courts while supporting this wonderful charity tournament and this year's good cause – Macmillan Cancer Support.

As the Budleigh Salterton tournament secretary, I can fit anyone in with 24-hours notice so long as you bring your own lunch and a generous donation!

To entice you more, the club can offer a specially brewed 150th Anniversary Budleigh Croquet Club Ale and a Devon cream tea, with profits from both going to the charity.

If you don't play AC that's no problem at Budleigh. We run this event as an alternate stroke doubles, ideal for GC players with no AC or One Ball experience because I promise to provide any visitor with a chummy partner who'll show you the ropes.

And lastly, high handicap AC players (18+) are very welcome to make a weekend of it and, for a pittance, play in our AC Hibiscus tournament on Sunday 5 April.

**Peter Moore, Tournament Secretary,  
Budleigh Salterton CC**

(*contact details on the CA website*)



## Reading the Gazette online is not for me

Dear Editor,

As an 'averagely keen' GC player, and Standard Member, I have just downloaded the on-line Gazette.

As usual it is interesting and visually very well presented.

Sadly, however, I fall into the 'Worry 2' category (*letter in the most recent issue, Gazette 383*).

The printed Gazette sat for two or three weeks with our magazines, TV guide and newspapers and was read as and when time allowed.

I fear it is extremely unlikely that I will sit in front of the PC in the study to read through the on-line Gazette and that the CA counting the downloads will give a false sense of security since I will probably download but forget to read after a 'quick-look' for vital info.

Ideally, I would print it off but as A4 lose sheets it would not then qualify for display with our magazines in the living room and may not be worth so doing.

Recognising the financial reality which drove the decision not to produce hard-copy, something needs to be done to

ensure vital croquet information continues to be seen by Standard Members while allowing those keener than average to delve into the news which, though interesting, does not need to be known about to play club croquet.

Two or possibly up to four sides of A4 is really the limit per month that I would be

willing to read on-line. It would cost little to include an 'important information' extract from the full Gazette, that then downloaded with the full document.

The last issue, for example, the Croquet Academy programmes, Short Croquet article, magnetic clips idea, Handicap Committee and Chairman's Column is really all I need to see, but buried in the full on-line Gazette I may not find the time to look for. I accept this is a

'generation problem' and that younger members may be happy to be tied to their PC or smart device, but many current CA members are not so inclined!

We could ask if there other 'dinosaur members' that support me, but don't ask for on-line feedback!

**Philip Sherwin, Littlehampton CC**



## "Opponent's Choice AC"

Dear Editor,

Looking for something different, short and fun to try over the Christmas break that would lead to a quick turnaround of innings in the cold and keep all players involved, we at Winchester CC came up with this alternative to regular AC – we call it **"Opponent's Choice"**.

Object of the game - Under normal AC rules, to be the first side to score hoops 1 to 6 plus the peg point with one of its balls, the opposing side determining the order of the hoops to be played.

Sequence of play - Bisques are awarded at 25% of the normal 26-point allocation.

Sides toss as usual to decide the order of starting and ownership of balls.

When the first ball has been played into the court, the opponents decide which hoop that side will contest first (any of hoops 1 to 6).

An appropriately coloured clip (GC set of 6 held by opponent initially) is placed on the crown of that hoop.

The opposing side's first ball is played and the opponent (i.e. the side that played the first ball) decides which hoop it will contest: a clip is placed on the crown of that hoop.

Both sides then play their second balls: if a roquet is made, that side can continue as usual with the object of scoring the allocated hoop or "laying up".

When the first allocated hoop has been scored, that ball is the "scoring ball" for the side. Its other ball can be used for positional purposes, but does not score hoops.

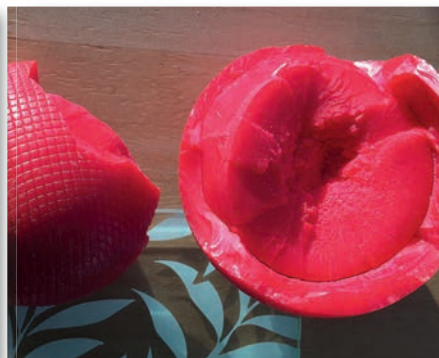
An appropriately coloured clip is placed on the leg of the hoop to denote that it has been scored, and the opponent decides which the next hoop shall be.

The balls are played from where they rest.

The game carries on thus until a side has scored all of hoops 1 - 6 and the peg point.

All AC rules apply and games typically last about 25 minutes.

**Nigel Hind, Winchester CC**



## Look what happened to our balls!

Dear Editor,

Any ideas about how long a croquet ball might be expected to last?

We have had two failures in the past four weeks. Both are red Sunshiny balls bought from the CA shop in about 2006, so about 13 years old. Both hit by low power beginners in GC club friendly matches. Both seemed to have failed in the same way, with an outer shell separating from an inner core.

Should this happen?

**George Lang, Plymouth CC**

Dear George, Rather than directly answering your question about how long a ball might be expected to last, I would like to mention the fact that twenty years ago when Jacques' Eclipse balls were the ball of choice, we would count ourselves lucky to get four or five years out of a set of balls – and it was often less before cracks appeared or they went out of shape. With

that perspective, I think the manufacturers of today's homogeneous balls, which give such long service while remaining consistent in size, shape and performance, should be congratulated on their product.

Thirteen years – that would have been thought a minor miracle in the Eclipse days!

**Dave Trimmer, Chairman, Equipment Committee**

# Registering Players and Teams for the Inter-Counties

**A**s many readers will have seen on the Inter-Counties web pages, there have been some major alterations to the functionality which will now allow County Organisers to register their team names online rather than by email to the CA Office. This will require some extra actions from both players and organisers for it to work satisfactorily – hence this article.

It may be very appropriate at this time to remind all why it is necessary to have such a complicated entry procedure with all players carefully registered.

Many established teams have questioned this need, as they know they will never have difficulty in raising a good team.

They are quite correct but we would ask all to look at the wider picture as to why we run the AC and GC Inter-Counties tournaments as we do.

The real attraction of both counties tournaments comes simply from the sheer numbers that each manages to attract.

The AC version is, we believe, the biggest croquet event in the whole croquet world and on the other hand very few other tournaments (including World Championships) are likely to be much bigger than our GC event.

Both events have well outrun the tag of 'just another big tournament' and have become festivals for each of the disciplines with a "must enter" priority for many tournament players.

If your Tournament Committees (TC's) are to maintain the status of these tournaments, they must have the ability to attract and retain the weaker teams, each of which must be able to enter a viable team, year in, year out.

Without strict control of who can play for which county, the natural competitive nature of the strong teams would rapidly Hoover up any player who showed any potential and the weaker teams would become even weaker and probably disappear.

Whilst it is pleasing to have very strong teams littered with internationals, they are the "icing on the cake" which attracts the journeyman players making up the support teams.

The TC's have a duty to modify the conditions such that it is difficult to create and run very dominant teams.

The 'Gap Year' has been extremely useful in preventing random 'poaching'.  
*(This is a rule that requires a player wishing to switch allegiance between two existing teams to miss a year in order to do so – Ed).*



## Player registration process

The new procedure relies on each and every player who wants to participate in any Inter-Counties tournament being registered for that county on the CA database, and to do this, the player concerned must have an entry on the CA database itself.

The tournaments are open to both Premium and Standard CA members, so it is most likely that almost every player will already have a database registration.

However, there may be the odd occasion where a Club Secretary has not registered one of their members. This can be easily rectified without cost, if the player concerned contacts the CA Office and explains the situation.

It must be pointed out however that to become registered, the player must be a member of a CA registered club or a CA Premium member otherwise he or she is not eligible to play in Counties.

Once a player is registered on the CA database then it is a relatively simple matter to make or check a county eligibility registration.

With modern day legislation on privacy, the login has to be made in the name of the player concerned. If you have not yet set up a login, then it is suggested you seek help from the CA Office as logging on opens up all the Inter-Counties pages for you to view.

Once logged-on 'as yourself', you can then enter the Inter-Counties pages via the 'Tournaments' link on the home page and the 'Inter-Counties Championship' link on the Tournament page.

This will bring up a page headed 'Inter-Counties Eligibility' and at the bottom of



this page it will list any county for which you are already registered.

If no registrations have been made, then follow the links and tick the necessary box to complete the registration.

Please remember that this is not an actual entry to the event.

By registering for a specific county, you allow the County Organiser to include you in a provisional or formal entry to the next tournament and he or she will not be able to select you without this registration. Most likely players are already registered as this function has been available for some years.

## County Team Organiser's duties

The Tournament Director will continue to remind all Organisers four weeks before either provisional or formal entry deadlines that action is required from each Organiser.

The provisional and formal entries have very different purposes. The provisional entry is purely to allow the Tournament Directors (at their autumn meetings) to ensure they have sufficient lawn space to meet the expected entry and to decide whether or not CA Select teams will be required (typically to provide an even number of entries).

To complete the provisional registration, the Organiser only has to view the team's page on the CA website, click on his own team and then tick the appropriate boxes to select specific players.

If a player he wants to use is not listed, the Organiser must ask that player to make their registration (as above). Provisional entries must be complete by 1 Nov.

It must be stressed that the provisional entry does not commit the Organiser to use players listed as the first choice in the formal entry nor will it stop any listed players changing their allegiance to another county if they so wish.

As such it is vital that when the formal entry is made (before 1 April for AC, and before 1 August for GC) a clean start is made and the Organiser is required to confirm the availability of each and every player.

The formal entry process will follow the same process as the provisional entry except that total numbers are limited by the tournament regulations (maximum squad sizes are AC: 9, GC: 8).

Because of the 'new start' requirement for the team list, the Organiser's choice for his provisional entry will be removed from the web site once the provisional entry has achieved its objective.

**Bill Arliss and Mike Town**  
GC & AC Tournament Directors respectively

## Marketing Committee News

### Round-up

I have been busy this Christmas with the 2019 CA Clubs Survey, commissioned by Council. I've really enjoyed corresponding with clubs and getting into the data, to understand the issues and challenges faced by clubs large and small, central and remote. I have tried to highlight the key themes, and act on urgent issues. An initial summary has gone to Council, and I will summarise the report here in the April Gazette.

I recently visited Budleigh Salterton to help them fulfil their vision of live-streaming, starting with the European GC Championships in late May. I'm very open to discuss ideas regarding live-streaming and publicity; the CA video equipment is available to borrow for croquet-related projects.

Finally, I'm working with Chris Roberts, Council and others to strategically review our marketing and communications offerings (both to members and non-players). I would like an e-newsletter to become official vehicle for communicating CA news and information, in conjunction with reduced Gazette frequency, and an improved online presence - website and social media. This may involve some restructuring of CA operations - watch this space.

### National Croquet Week 11-17 May

[www.croquet.org.uk/ncw](http://www.croquet.org.uk/ncw)

This year, we encourage clubs to celebrate National Croquet Week (which has been a single day in previous years). This allows clubs to schedule their own events, perhaps targeting companies, groups and schools, and culminating in an open taster day. Publicity materials and guides are available via the CA website, link above. Do let us know what you are planning, and share your stories on social media using #nationalcroquetweek!

### Ways of attracting youngsters

Many schools and youth organisations are involved in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme (DofE); perhaps this presents a potential recruitment opportunity? Croquet is listed in the DofE Physical Activities list, so why not write to a named contact reminding them of this and offering your help. Let Klim Seabright ([klimseabright@gmail.com](mailto:klimseabright@gmail.com)) know if you are already involved or have success with a school.

**Eugene Chang, Chair, Marketing Committee**

## New Trophy for GC 1st Eight

### The Ricki Savage Memorial Trophy

In early 2018, the GC Tournaments Committee decided to accept the offer of a new trophy for the GC First Eight (until now, the Musk's Cup).

This trophy – The Ricki Savage Memorial Trophy – has been donated by Tobi Savage (*below*) and his family in memory of Tobi's late brother, who died aged 27 in 2013.

It will be presented for the first time in 2020, and the tournament has been re-named accordingly.

Tobi started playing croquet when he was 15 years old, joining the junior section at Ramsgate CC alongside Ricki (two-and-a-half years his senior).

Ricki was a keen all-round sportsman, and so with most of his time taken up elsewhere the "bug" for croquet never quite bit as hard as it did with Tobi.

Nevertheless, he would enjoy attending the junior sessions, and followed with interest as Tobi's ability developed.

As the pair of boys grew up, they enjoyed occasional visits to the club for a game, sometimes accompanied by other members of the family (including youngest brother Harri), although by this stage in life the orange squash, that was the staple drink mid-way through the day for the juniors, had been replaced by a different type of drink entirely.

Chris Sheen, who originally donated The Musk's Cup, has been kept in the picture throughout and recently commented:

*"The Musk's Cup has an interesting history.*

*When I first donated the trophy, it was won by the Rest of Europe in a challenge match against England in 2001.*

*It was then available in 2003 to become the trophy when the GC Committee launched the GC Eight.*

*Since then we have been through eight, twelve and six players competing for the trophy, and the addition of a Second Eight.*

*I am looking forward to the trophy being used for yet another step forward in the development of the GC tournament programme."*

The Musk's Cup will be held in the CA Office until a suitable tournament can be found to meet with Chris's approval.

**Tim King,**  
**GC Tournaments Committee**



**Photos: Opposite page** - Stephen Wright and Beatrice McGlen will register for the Oxfordshire & Wiltshire County teams.

**Left** - The joy of scoring a hoop at the CA display 'court' at BBC Countryfile Live.

**Right** - Tobi Savage.

*All photos by Chris Roberts*



# An introduction to One Ball (especially for GC players)

This is the time of year when lots of people ask me:

## “What exactly is One-Ball?”

This is because the many heats of the national One-Ball Competition are being organised, so it is a frequent topic of conversation in clubs the length and breadth of the country, *writes Kevin Carter.*

If you were to turn up to a club and saw One Ball being played, you would be forgiven for thinking that it looks like something half-way between AC and GC.

This is one great attraction: it appeals to players of both codes and a typical game will last only about 30 minutes.

## So how is One Ball played?

As the title suggests, each player has just one ball and the object, taking it in turns, is to get your ball through twelve hoops and onto the peg before your opponent.

So, unlike GC, if you opponent scores hoop 1, only he/she progresses on to hoop 2. You still have to run hoop 1 yourself before moving on. However, most shots in this game comprise either taking position or shooting at the opponent's ball - which is very GC-like.

What GC players might find most different is that when they hit the opponent's ball (it is called a 'roquet'), it is rewarded by the striker getting two more strokes.

The striker picks-up their own ball, places it in contact with the opponent's ball and plays another stroke in which they are said to 'take croquet' (which is where the name of our game comes from).

In this stroke, both balls are moved, hoping that the striker's ball will come to rest in front of his next hoop.

The striker then has a 'continuation' stroke and if it successfully negotiates the hoop, it not only scores, but the striker gets yet another stroke as reward.

The opponent's ball can now be hit again ('roquet'), followed by another 'croquet' stroke and 'continuation' stroke.

Low and behold, this is the beginning of a break, like those in AC or snooker.

**And that's it - everybody who has read this far can now play One Ball!**

## How are the handicaps calculated?

Almost all One Ball is played on a handicap basis.

If you have an AC handicap, you use that (although A-class player's handicaps are reduced further for One Ball).

If you are a GC player there is a handy, and well-tryed, conversion method: to multiply your GC handicap by 2.5 to give you an instant One Ball Handicap.

The full handicap method is that your One Ball handicap is the lowest of:

- Your AC handicap;
- 2.5 times your GC handicap (if it is positive; otherwise it is left as it is).
- the number 20.

The higher handicapped player gets bisques equal to the difference in the player's One Ball handicaps, divided by three, then rounded to the nearest half. For instance, if a 10 plays a 5:  $10 - 5 = 5$ ; divide by 3 = 1.66; therefore 1.5 bisques..

## Are there any other important rules?

There are one or two other rules of which new players need to be aware. Foremost among these are:

- The winner of the toss can elect either to start first or go second (and usually chooses second).

- Balls are played onto the court from a 'baulk-line' (usually the 'south baulk-line', which is half of the boundary, from corner one to mid-way towards corner four).

- If in a 'croquet' stroke (only), either ball goes off the court, that is the end of the turn. Balls that go off the court are replaced on the 'yard line' (an unmarked line, one yard in from the boundary).

- A more complicated rule that you need to be aware of is called 'wiring'. After croqueting opponent's ball, you must not hide behind a hoop or the peg; you must leave your opponent a full ball to aim at. If you don't then he is entitled to 'a lift', that is to say he can lift (or pick-up) his ball and play his stroke from any position on either baulk (north or south).

- There are several other laws, including those dealing with errors and faults - if in any doubt ask a referee.

## How long is a typical game?

Most One Ball events last no more than one day, and often just half a day.

At my club, Surbiton, we have five 'Winter One-Balls' between December and April, starting between 9.30 and 10.00.

We typically attract a couple of dozen members, although the record, one sunny Spring day was 42!

The 'Swiss' format is employed and at least six rounds are played before a late, warming lunch.

## What are the tactics?

Most players who are new to One Ball begin to develop a good sense of the tactics after about three games. Here are a few hints to get started:

- Most turns begin with a decision whether to be attacking or to make a defensive play. The higher handicapped player's use of bisques, in attack or defence, will be key to his/her chance of winning.

- In particular, try to use your bisques to make a break and score a few hoops in one turn. If you get well ahead of your opponent, then he/she might find it very difficult to catch up.

- If you are in receipt of bisques and you find yourself not in a good hoop-running position but your opponent is in front of their hoop, then consider taking a bisque (or, better still, a half-bisque), and aim at their ball softly, so that if you miss you can take your extra turn to knock their ball away and then take croquet from it.

- If you are one hoop behind your opponent and you are next for an odd-numbered hoop (1, 3, 5, etc.), try to get tight in front of it so that you can run it hard all the way down to opponent's ball, so you can roquet it and take croquet.

- If you are well ahead; don't give your opponent an easy opportunity to hit you and begin a break themselves. Instead, go further away - even into a corner - and bide your time.

## It all sounds like a lot of fun!

Last but not least, remember that One Ball is a fun game - there are no World Championship, or even silver cups; it can be played by anybody and One Ball is invariably played on a handicap basis, so everybody has a good chance of winning.

Indeed, our own Charity One-Ball Competition is the most prestigious, so please consider playing in your local heat and, at the same time, support a very worthy charity.

**Kevin Carter,**  
organiser of the  
Charity One Ball  
Competition



# The National Charity One Ball Competition 2020

In aid of  
**MACMILLAN  
CANCER SUPPORT**

**This national competition goes from strength to strength and last year broke all previous records.**

In 2019, heats were held at 44 venues, in which 588 players participated, raising £6,870 for the Alzheimer's Society.

The 2020 charity, which was nominated by heat organisers, is Macmillan Cancer Support ([www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)), which does a tremendously good job providing advice and support to those living with cancer.

A competition heat can be organised by any club and in whatever way they see fit, be that a knock-out, blocks, a Swiss, etc.

It can last half a day, a whole day or be run like a ladder over a longer period.

All I need is to be informed is: where, when, how many players took part, how much money was raised and who are the qualifier(s) for the final.

If a club raises £50 then it is allocated one free place in the final; for £125 two places, for £200, three. This year's final will be at Surbiton CC on 10 May.

At the time of writing, 43 heats have confirmed they will run heats this year. However, we expect most of the remaining clubs that ran heats last year to do so again, but they are yet to confirm. Additionally, a dozen more clubs are considering whether to run heats for the first time.

Sometimes two clubs join forces to run a single heat and occasionally a federation runs a heat on behalf of all of its clubs.

We are delighted that this year will see that Dublin club, Carrickmines, will be running a heat for the first time.

**Kevin Carter,**  
organiser of the Charity One Ball Competition

## Clubs that have planned heats so far:

Aldermaston + Harwell	Compton - <i>visitors</i>	Middlesbrough - <i>visitors</i>	Swindon + Kington Langley
Ashby	Cornwall	Nailsea	Tunbridge Wells - <i>visitors</i>
Bath	Dulwich	Northampton - <i>visitors</i>	Tyneside
Ben Rhydding	Ealing - <i>visitors</i>	Nottingham - <i>visitors</i>	Watford - <i>visitors</i>
Blewbury	East Dorset + Kingston	Phyllis Court	Winchester
Bowdon - <i>visitors</i>	Maurward - <i>visitors</i>	Pinchbeck	Woking
Bristol	Guildford	Reigate - <i>visitors</i>	Worcester Norton
Budleigh - <i>visitors</i>	High Wycombe	Roehampton	Yorkshire (at York) - <i>visitors</i>
Camerton & Peasedown	Hurlingham - <i>visitors</i>	Sidmouth - <i>visitors</i>	<i>* While many heats are for club members only, the indicated clubs also welcome visiting players.</i>
Carrickmines (Ireland)	Littleton	Sussex County (Southwick)	
Cheam	Lym Valley	St Albans	
Cheltenham - <i>visitors</i>	Merton	Surbiton - <i>visitors</i>	

## The Charity One-Ball Competition - An impressive history of fund-raising

Year	Charity	Heats	Players	£ raised	Gift Aid	Winner of Final (and handicap)
2007	Cancer Research UK	9	170	£693		Tudor Jenkins (18)
2008	Cancer Research UK	17	216	£901		Barry Gould (6)
2009	Macmillan Cancer Support	17	287	£1280	£167	Graham Gale (2.5)
2010	Macmillan Cancer Support	19	266	£1263	£132	Roger Barnacle (18)
2011	Breast Cancer Campaign	27	363	£2198	£498	Sara Anderson (18)
2012	Breast Cancer Campaign	28	358	£2499	£586	Andrew Rutland (24)
2013	Prostate Cancer UK	29	389	£2742	£646	Libby Howard-Blood (22)
2014	Prostate Cancer UK	28	413	£2793	£682	Richard Thurloe (24)
2015	Bowel Cancer UK	29	429	£3021	£750	Andrew Killick (1.5)
2016	Myeloma UK	32	419	£3505	£662	Nigel Trotter (14)
2017	Parkinson's UK	35	489	£4148	£636	Richard Jones (15)
2018	Downs Syndrome Assoc.	37	497	£4471	£903	Margaret Murray (15)
2019	Alzheimer's Society	44	588	£5860	£1010	Cliff Hunter (12)
2020	Macmillan Cancer Support					
	<b>TOTALS</b>			<b>£35,374</b>	<b>£6,672</b>	



**Photos.** Left: 2016 Phyllis Court in orange at their heat (for Myeloma UK)  
Above right: 2017 winner Richard Jones (for Parkinson's UK)  
Above far right: 2018 runner-up Tom Weston (for Downs Syndrome Association)  
Right: 2019 Des 'Superman' Wakeley at Bristol CC's heat (for Alzheimer's Society)

# The Policing of our Handicaps

**F**or a handicapping system to work effectively, it is vital that all Handicap Officers know what is expected of them and that they carry out those duties with diligence.

**Croquet players, the length and breadth of the domain, rely heavily on appointed handicappers to act where instances of apparent inaccuracies in handicap grades are seen, or to investigate when they are reported.**

## Structure of Handicapper roles

There are three grades of handicapper in the CA's system and all three have vital roles to play in maintaining the enjoyment of our sport:

CA Handicapper  
Federation Handicapper  
Club Handicapper

The powers and responsibilities of each role are detailed fully on the CA website via this navigation:

Homepage > games > association or golf (*choose either*) > handicapping > managing  
or online readers can click this direct link:  
<https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=games/association/handicapping/managing>

## Club Handicapper

**Does your club have a Club Handicapper? And do you know who it is?**

All clubs should appoint a member as their Club Handicapper, who should act as the primary contact for all handicap matters. Clubs might choose to appoint separate Club Handicappers for AC and GC or one individual to cover both codes.

It is the Club Handicapper's responsibility to monitor players' handicaps within the club and make manual adjustments to handicap grades where necessary, to supplement those dictated by the Automatic Handicap System (AHS).

It is particularly important that a close eye is kept on players who might be described as 'rapid improvers'; for the increased skills of these players can often out-strip the ability of the AHS to keep-up with an accurate handicap.

This is especially true if they play relatively few competitive games and so have little activity showing on their handicap card - It is imperative that the Club Handicapper steps in to make necessary adjustments.

## Regular inspection of Handicap Cards

Club Handicappers should periodically check handicap cards to ensure that they are being completed correctly, that there are no mistakes, and that qualifying games are actually being recorded.

## The Club 'handicap bubble'

There is another potential snag that Club Handicappers must be aware of, and this is the accidental creation of a 'handicap bubble' when players only play games amongst themselves within a single club.

Whilst handicaps may very well be aligned within the club 'handicap bubble', it is all too easy to be out of synch with handicaps being used in the wider croquet community.

This can cause embarrassment for the players concerned and unhappiness for opponents and their clubs.

## Help is at hand

Help is available from Federation and CA Handicappers, whose job it is to see the bigger picture and police the uniformity of handicapping from Club to Club and from one Federation area to the next.

## Federation Handicapper

Federation Handicappers have the same restrictions on their ability to alter handicaps as Club Handicappers, but have the authority to act within their Federation area and at events under their Federation's auspices.

Federation Handicappers, should step in where it comes to light that the handicaps at one of their clubs are out of synch, and make necessary arrangements with that club to rectify the matter, and more instantly, to adjust the handicaps of individual players' whose handicap grades

are deemed inaccurate.

This in itself should be seen by the player's Club Handicapper as a possibility that something may be amiss with other handicaps at that club.

## CA Handicapper

CA Handicappers have much wider ranging powers to make necessary handicap changes and these individuals are the top authority on the ground when it comes to policing overall handicapping harmony.

The role can be an advisory one on occasions, especially if advice is being sought by individual players or Federation and Club Handicappers.

However, CA Handicappers, CAN, SHOULD and DO make handicap adjustments where it seen to be necessary and once made these cannot be overturned by Federation or Club Handicappers.

CA Handicappers may well follow-up the adjustment of a player's handicap, with contact with the Federation and Club Handicappers concerned so that 'knock-on' handicap adjustments happen at the player's club if appropriate.

## Review of activity of CA and Federation Handicappers

A review of all appointed CA Handicappers has taken place over the last two months and replies are only awaited from four individuals, to declare if they consider themselves still active. Several have stood down from the role and we thank them for their service to our sport.

New appointments were announced in the last Gazette and news of future appointees will be telegraphed in the same way.

**Contact is also being made with all Federation committees to ensure that they have Federation Handicapper(s) in place** because, like the CA handicapper position, this role plays a big part in achieving uniformity of handicapping through our domain.

**Frances Colman,  
Chairman, Handicap Committee**

## Support for Handicappers

Contact is being made with all Federation committees to see if they have run (or would like help in running) handicapping workshops, with the desire to see as many clubs as possible having someone in the Club Handicapper role.

Work is ongoing to establish skills-related benchmarks, with the aim to see uniformity of handicapping throughout the domain.

## Recording of Short Croquet (SC) results

There is no change to the current arrangements, and SC results should be entered on a player's current SC card **only** (*not* the full AC handicap card).

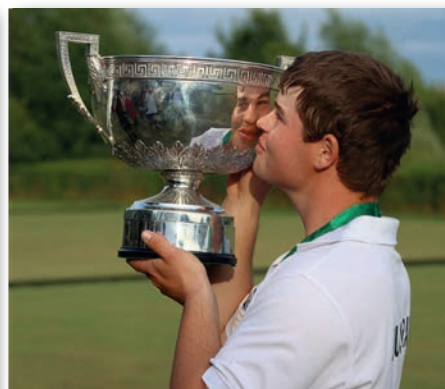
# The WCF Association World Championship ~ previewed by Eugene Chang



2016 Winner - Stephen Mulliner



Reigning World Champion - Paddy Chapman



2013 Winner - Robert Fletcher

**F**ebruary sees the second major international croquet event in 2020, following the GC World Teams Championship in New Zealand, this singles event will see 80 players battle to become AC World Champion.

The current holder is Paddy Chapman of New Zealand, who lives and plays in Nottingham.

~

The format is identical to the WCF Simon Carter GC World Championship which graced UK shores last summer: 8 blocks of 10, with the top four in each block going through to the main knockout.

The blocks will be single games, and the knockout stage will be best of 3 or 5.

There will be a range of other consolation events, which are prestigious in their own right.

Conditions are likely to be dry and very hot, with Atkins Quadway hoops (which have square carrots, unpainted uprights) providing additional challenge.

Expect long matches and lower numbers of peeling turns compared to top UK events.

The games should be untimed; if time limits are imposed, expect some low scores.

~

The players are selected based on a mixture of World Ranking and WCF Member Nations sending representatives. Australia dominates the field with 29 players, England have 15, and New Zealand 12.

## 15-23 February, Melbourne, Australia

**Website:** [2020-acworlds.croquetvic.asn.au](http://2020-acworlds.croquetvic.asn.au)

**Results:** [croquetscores.com/2020/ac/wcf-world-championship](http://croquetscores.com/2020/ac/wcf-world-championship)

**Live action:** Follow CA social media (@croquetengland) and website for live action, plus personal social media accounts

There are six places which are up for grabs via a Qualifying Tournament event (9-12 February).

### Who is favourite?

Take your pick from an elite group: Robert Fletcher (AUS), Reg Bamford (ZAF), Mark Avery (ENG), Jose Riva (ESP), Malcolm Fletcher (AUS), Paddy Chapman (NZL)

Many on this list are based in England and thus are out of season for a February southern hemisphere event; however the Fletcher brothers have not played competitive AC in over twelve months, so it's a tough one to call.

Mark Avery was runner-up in the inaugural AC World Championship of 1989; back to his best and now ranked world #2, can he go one better?

**Outside favourites:** GC World Champion Ben Rothman (USA), 2016 winner Stephen Mulliner (ENG), Open Champion James Death (ENG), NZ Open Champion Aiken Hakes (NZL).

### Ones to watch

As ever, there are plenty of new/young faces looking to upset the established order.

Ed Wilson (AUS) is a precocious home youngster looking to do well, Matthew Essick (USA) despite being only 21, has been representing the USA for five years and Logan McCorkindale (NZL) is making leaps and strides in his second full season.

James Galpin (ENG) was one of the most improved players last year, while Chris O'Byrne (ENG) had the world's largest AC ranking increase in 2019; can they pull off some big shocks?

### English representatives:

Mark Avery	Stephen Mulliner
Eugene Chang	Andy Myers
James Death	Chris O'Byrne
Harry Fisher	Dominic Nunns
James Galpin	Samir Patel
Alain Giraud	Pete Trimmer
Richard M Smith	Robert Wilkinson
David Maugham	

Scotland are represented by Bill Hadden and Duncan Reeve, and Wales by Ian Burridge and Gareth Denyer.

Additionally, Englishmen Andrew Gregory and Tom Weston hoping to progress through the Qualifying Tournament.

**Words by Eugene Chang**  
**Photos by Samir Patel and Greg Bryant**

## New style AC & GC Handicap Cards

By the time you read this, your club will be in receipt of a quantity of AC & GC cards that have gone through a close-season re-design process.

The former popular tri-fold design has made a return and, satisfying an almost universal clamour, the cards now feature integral points exchange and 'trigger point' tables.

The Handicap Committee is grateful to several members, including Chris Donovan and Stephen Custance-Baker, who shared their design ideas, and to Bransgore's Art Wardell in

particular, upon whose layout the final design is heavily based.

The inclusion of the points tables has necessitated space-saving elsewhere, chiefly in the 'name of opponent' columns, but members can rest assured that every last millimetre was utilised in the artwork completed by Chris Roberts.

Please note that cards have been sent as a bundle to Club Secretaries, rather than to members' homes, this year.

**Frances Colman,**  
**Chairman, Handicap Committee**

**The message of the 2019 GC World Championship at Southwick was that the GC baton had passed to a new generation.**

This was emphatically confirmed at the 2020 GC World Team Championship in New Zealand by the dominance of the young New Zealand and Egyptian teams and, lest third-placed England be overlooked, the statistic that 13 of the 14 players in the top three teams were aged from 18 to 31.

However, the significance of this event as a potential watershed for the sport lies in the genuinely exciting manner of the New Zealand and Egyptian play and the fact that the final two days were filmed by Sky Sports Next to a very professional standard and the excellent output is freely available on YouTube.

The opportunity exists for other countries to use this visual evidence to assist their own efforts to reproduce the success of Croquet New Zealand in promoting GC to its secondary schools' population.

~

The venue was Nelson-Hinemoa Croquet Club in Nelson at the north end of the South Island, which claims to be the sunniest place in New Zealand. The club boasts nine courts which had been prepared by the grounds staff to offer a "speed" of at least 11 seconds\* (*explained on page 28*) each morning and became significantly faster as the day wore on. Coupled with stainless steel Quadway hoops, they presented a tough challenge for the players, especially when the wind got up, which was a feature of the first day and several late afternoons.

## The Championship format

The event involves eight teams divided into two seeded blocks of four.

The first three days involve a round robin of one-day Test Matches of two double matches and four singles matches.

The top two teams in each block advance to the championship semi-finals while the bottom two compete in a Plate event, in which the main objective is to avoid coming

eight and so being relegated to Tier 2 in four years' time. The Plate consists of a further round robin, in which each team plays the two Plate teams from the other block and the Test Match already played between each team and its fellow Plate qualifier is carried forward. The top two round robin teams then play a 9-match Test Match over two days for 5th place and the bottom two play likewise for 7th place and the right to stay in Tier 1.

## The blocks

As expected, Egypt and the USA dominated Block A, and both defeated South Africa and Sweden to qualify for the semi-finals.

South Africa, led by the undefeated Reg Bamford, beat Sweden and so made a good start to their Plate campaign.

Block B was potentially less predictable because New Zealand faced the well-matched England and Australia as well as Ireland. In the event, **England beat Ireland 5-1 and Australia 4-2 before being defeated 1-5 by the home team**, while Australia, with the undefeated Robert Fletcher as first string, overcame Ireland.

## The Plate

Australia, with Edward Wilson, Pete Landrebe and Chris McWhirter, were clearly the strongest of the Plate teams and beat both Sweden and South Africa (in which Fletcher inflicted an impressive 7-3, 7-5 win against Reg Bamford).

It was no surprise when Ireland and South Africa tied 3-3 in their round two match but the expected play-off between these teams for second place failed to materialise when Sweden, who had not won a single match so far, gallantly beat Ireland 4-2.

Australia duly beat South Africa and secured fifth place but not before Bamford had gained revenge against Fletcher (and thereby inflicted the first match defeat on Robert for two decades – which is an imaginative way of referring to 2011!).

In the crucial 7/8th place play-off, Ireland



recovered from their Friday defeat by Sweden with a convincing 7-2 victory.

## Semi-finals

The championship semi-finals were 13-match Test Matches and provided something of a contrast.

**England made a good start against Egypt** when **John-Paul Moberly** and **Tobi Savage** beat Amr Alebiary and Mohamed Karem 7-6 7-6 in the top doubles and **Stephen Mulliner** and **Richard Bilton** took the first game against Hamy Erian and Mostafa Nezar 7-3.

Unfortunately, that was the English zenith and, although the remaining matches were highly competitive, they all went to Egypt who therefore notched up a confidence-boosting 12-1 victory.

In contrast to the younger New Zealand team, the USA fielded a mature team, albeit headed by recent GC World Champion Ben Rothman, but the USA defied expectations by giving New Zealand an excellent run for their money.

Indeed, had Rothman not failed a rather short hoop 13 in game 3 against Edmund Fordyce, the overnight score would have been 3-3 instead of 4-2 and the eventual match score of 7-6 to New Zealand might just possibly have been the other way around.

It is a GC truism that, particularly in top-level play, the game scores do not necessarily give a good indication of how a match went.

On the evidence of the semi-final scores, USA should have had a distinct edge over England in the 9-match 3rd/4th place play-off Test Match, now rendered even more meaningful by the WCF decision to award silver and bronze medals to the players in the second and third placed teams.

In the event, England grabbed a 4-1 lead on Saturday and converted it into a 7-2 victory on Sunday.

Mulliner (at 66, the obvious outlier in age in the top three teams) had the privilege of

The England team:  
Tobi Savage, Richard Bilton, Stephen Mulliner and J-P Moberly receiving their bronze medals.







gaining the fifth point for his team (with a 7-3, 6-7, 7-6 defeat of Sherif Abdelwahab) in what is likely to be his last match for England in this event.

However, the focus of the 70-plus spectators at the venue and a surprisingly large number of YouTube watchers was, of course, the final between New Zealand, the holders, and the mighty Egyptians.

### Multiple Champions line-up for THE FINAL

**Egypt** had fielded a squad of six:

**Amr Alebiary**

*The Egyptian no. 1, prevented from competing in the 2019 GCWC by military service*

**Mohamed Karem**

*The 2019 GCWC finalist*

**Hamy Erian**

*2015 GCWC finalist, 2019 GCWC semi-finalist*

**Mostafa Nezar**

*2013 U21 GC World Champion*

**Soha Mostafa**

*2019 Women's GC World Champion*

**Yasser Sayed**

*2019 U21 GCWC semi-finalist*

The first four were fielded for the semi-final and final and seemed to be equally formidable in their positioning, hooping and clearing skills. Four- to five-yard hoops and 20-yard clearances seemed routine and it was obvious that New Zealand would have their hands full.

**New Zealand** fielded four Under 21 GC World Champions:

**Duncan Dixon** (2009),

**Josh Freeth** (2015),

**Felix Webby** (2017),

**Edmund Fordyce** (2019).

Dixon and Freeth are multiple casters while Webby casts a little and Fordyce stalks and casts but once before lashing the ball at its target with astonishing speed, accuracy and consistency when on form.

The word was that all except Dixon had been a little off their best at the recent NZ Open Championship (won by Logan

World Team Champions New Zealand: Josh Freeth, Duncan Dixon, Felix Webby, Edmund Fordyce & Philip Drew flanking David Openshaw.

McCorkindale, apparently a Kiwi equivalent of Tobi Savage).

Despite that, Dixon, Fordyce and Freeth seemed to be firing on all cylinders with only Webby having the odd poor game.

~

The scene was therefore set for an almighty dust-up of hard hitting and long hoop-running.

The spectators were not disappointed and one result was the considerable length of some of the matches.

This is unsurprising when remorseless clearing can lead to a single hoop taking over 20 minutes to resolve.

Saturday's play ended at 9.20 pm with the match between Alebiary and Webby pegged down at game all and 4-4 and Egypt with a slender 3-2 lead.

~

Sunday began with a five-hour marathon doubles, won by Egypt, countered by singles wins for Fordyce and Freeth – which levelled the Test at 4-4.

With the afternoon wearing on, the manager wisely decided to have all four singles in action simultaneously instead of playing them in consecutive sessions on two courts.

Webby found his best form and inflicted a decisive 7-1, 7-4 defeat on Nezar while Dixon proved too good for Erian. Suddenly, New Zealand were 6-4 ahead and game up in both the other two matches.

Attention turned to the Fordyce-Karem match where Fordyce had taken the first 7-2 and was exuberantly 5-2 ahead in the second. Hoop 8 was powered through from six yards and, after a decent duel at hoop 9, Karem failed to block from short range and Fordyce hammered his black ball through from five yards. Game, match and retained title to New Zealand!

### Presentation of the Openshaw Shield

The event concluded with a courtside presentation of the Openshaw Shield to the New Zealand team by David Openshaw

himself and a more formal presentation of medals and the Shield at an excellent Championship dinner.

The event was managed very smoothly.

The tremendous contribution of the 85 volunteers from the host club and the Richmond and Riwaka clubs was very warmly recognised in the speeches, and the hard work of John Christie, Peter Freer and Manly Bowater, the Tournament Manager, Referee and Deputy Referee respectively, was given particular appreciation.

The caterers, bar staff and ground crew had worked long hours but had clearly enjoyed being involved.

In an unusual but very pleasant gesture, a message of thanks from the catering volunteers was conveyed to the players for their friendly and appreciative presence in the Nelson-Hinemoa clubhouse throughout the event!

### Re-live the action with Sky Sports Next's coverage on YouTube

Word pictures can only convey so much, and readers are recommended to enjoy the YouTube spectacle at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hu2iy7T6oRg>.

### New Zealand's young players set to dominate

GC is a game well suited to the fearless, and the example set by the young stars of the game should be an encouragement to all to play more friendly games where the object is to have as much fun as possible by trying for outrageous shots, finding your boundaries – and then trying to extend them.

New Zealand now have a sausage machine of secondary school players up and down the country who play incessant GC in the evenings with their friends. They both threaten to displace the current stars in the 2024 GC World Teams and to take a stranglehold on future U21 GCWCs and, very possibly, the GC World Championship itself.

**Stephen Mulliner, Secretary General,  
World Croquet Federation**



## Croquet on Wheels at Ealing CC

Some years ago Jonathan Toye successfully introduced wheelchair croquet to Downham Market (*described in the Gazette 301 of February 2006*), but since that time new chairs have been produced, that are better suited to croquet and more affordable.

At Ealing CC, we have been hoping to be able to provide local wheelchair users the opportunity to play croquet, and then having demonstrated that there would be a demand, to apply for funding for a couple of suitable chairs.

### Specialist wheelchairs have really moved on

As UK lawns are, more often than not, damp and soft, the risk is that the narrow tyres of conventional wheelchairs (and indeed the pneumatic tyres of powered chairs or mobility scooters) will damage grass.

The bowls community brought out the first buggy specifically designed to minimise such damage in the early 1990s and today a wheelchair bowler has the choice of four models approved by the British Wheelchair Bowls Association for use on greens.

These wheelchairs could be of any use to croquet players with impaired mobility.

The earliest chairs have a roller or wheel(s) under the seat, which leaves the sides clear for the arm swing of a bowls throw, but they are heavy to push, and a croquet stroke would need to be played to one side rather than between the legs.

### Playing between the legs is now possible

Two newer chairs, however, are lighter and can be more easily self-propelled; they have wide flat wheels at the sides which allow a conventional croquet stroke to be played.

We recently borrowed one of the latest chairs on the market, the 'Bowls Royce', to try out at an introductory GC session for a group of young adults with learning difficulties, one of whom was a wheelchair user.

We found that while the chair can be self-propelled, manipulating

it precisely into position for a shot was easier if someone was there to push.

It was perfectly possible to swing the mallet between the legs, even with the foot rests still in place, though there was more room if these could be folded up to allow the player's feet to be flat on the grass (see the photo).

Several of our members tried the chair and the consensus was that it probably would be more suitable for GC than for AC.

The problem with using it for AC, and to some extent for long shots in a GC game, was the difficulty of getting a reasonable back swing.

On the model that we used, the cross-bracing under the seat only permitted short conventionally played swings; longer shots had to

be made at the side, over the wheels.

Nevertheless we all thought that an adapted wheelchair such as the one we tried would enable its user to take full part in a game of GC.

If a club wanted to offer wheelchair croquet, it should be possible to get funding for one or two chairs and the only other major items to budget for are ramp access courts (if necessary) and some short mallets.



### Newer chairs are much cheaper

The prices of chairs are dramatically different: the two older designs, the Bradshaw Bowls Buggy and the Chairiot Bowls Wheelchair cost around £2000, while the two newer models are considerably cheaper, with the Parahandy Bowls Wheelchair at just under £1000, while the Bowls Royce costs £750.

Details of all four can be found on the Disability Bowls England website: <https://www.disabilitybowlsengland.org.uk/clubs/equipment/>.

Of course if a player is able to walk a few steps and stand to make his or her shot, a specialised chair may not be necessary: with enough space around the court a normal wheelchair or mobility scooter can be left near the ball but outside the boundary.

**Jennian Geddes, Ealing CC**

## South African GC Championships

To accommodate sixty-plus entries, the 2019 South African National GC Championships (16 – 21 November) were held jointly at Somerset West CC and Helderberg Village CC which are only 10 minutes apart by car, and situated about an hour's drive west of Cape Town, **writes Lionel Tibble.**

Players from clubs across SA meet annually to compete in this prestigious event for which the venue rotates through various locations.

Last year it was held at the Country Club in Johannesburg and in 2020 it will be at Port Alfred.

It also attracted three intrepid Brits looking for a warm welcome, some winter sunshine and competitive play, along with Australian visitor David Wise from Adelaide, paying his second visit to the Somerset West.

Whilst GC is the predominant code in SA, the GC tournament is preceded by the AC Championships making it an attractive option for British players familiar with both codes of play.

Coupled with fine weather, good food and wine and interesting places to visit, it is perhaps surprising that more British players do not have this area on their radar.

Also held at Somerset West through February each year are the Western Cape AC & GC Championships, which follow a similar format, and these have gained a devoted following of British and Irish visitors over the last 20 or more years.

Back at November's GC Nationals, in the handicap singles event Wayne Cotton shrugged off opponents on his way to the final against the veteran Paul McCreadie who had only just recovered from serious injuries to both wrists. In the 19-point final McCreadie was hard pressed to gain an advantage but eventually secured a win at the last hoop. ... *continued on page 23*

# Nottingham's Croquet for All ~ Schools project

## Croquet for All: even young people!

Nottingham Croquet Club has instigated a 'Croquet for All' campaign to take croquet to a diverse range of people and dispel some of the myths about the sport.

One of the hardest nuts to crack though is getting children involved and this is true not just for croquet but most sports.

The Sports Recreation Alliance activity map, published last summer, shows less than 14% of children in Nottingham are active for 60 minutes a day.

Could we help to improve this dire statistic?

### Learning from New Zealand's success

Last summer we hosted the Under-21 World GC Championship.

Ten of the 24 young players selected from around the World were from New Zealand.

So, what are they doing in New Zealand that has led to this success?

Following a webinar given by The Croquet National Development Officer in New Zealand on how they have encouraged school children to play croquet, we decided to see if we could put a schools programme in place in the run-up to the U21 World Championship.

### 400 children try croquet at local schools

With the expectation of disinterest, we approached three primary schools and two secondary schools near our club and offered to hold an in-school session in each of them.

Their enthusiasm surprised us!

Ten club members volunteered to coach.

The Croquet Association helped us by arranging the DBS checks and purchasing 15 children's mallets, and the Club bought light weight balls and wire hoops that were easy to transport and could be pushed into the ground without too much difficulty.

In June, with a certain amount of trepidation, we started our campaign of five schools on five consecutive days.

We played 'Pirates' (which is an easy to



teach, fun version of croquet) with nearly 400 children.

It was exhausting but the fun and excitement was exhilarating!

### Our after-school club

Every child was given a certificate saying they had completed an introduction to mallet sports, along with details of an after-school club to be held at the croquet club once a week until the end of term.

The first after-school club session was blighted by torrential rain but two children came and played for the full session.

The following week saw better weather and five children came along: And by week three the number had risen to 10, albeit from just two of the primary schools.

The aim was to keep it fun and to make sure that they all learned something new each week.

### Tying in with the U21 World Champs

After the six-week course, a 'finals day' was held during the Under 21 World GC Championship, to which the children's parents were encouraged to come along.

The President of the World Croquet Federation, Amir Ramsis, presented a trophy to the winning pair.

Although 10 children attending the after-school club does not sound many, the first year of the project in New Zealand resulted in just two children attending, but it escalated each year.

Furthermore, none of the children taking part had ever seen or played croquet before so we believe that this is actually a good start.

### What did we learn?

- Calling it '**mallet sports**' gets round the pre-conceived notion of croquet being for old, posh people!
- Years 5 and 6 were the most enthusiastic, with the secondary schools being least productive.
- Sessions must be fun and all the children must be kept active. Keep instructions brief.
- We had a good mix of girls and boys and

different ethnic backgrounds, supporting our Croquet for All ambition.

- The schools were surprisingly welcoming. Primary schools have money for sport, particularly to encourage children who do not usually join in, and croquet is attractive to children who do not like team games.

- Integration of the juniors in to the club is essential. They took part in some alternate stroke doubles sessions and they entertained our members by teaching them how to play Pirates.

### What is the plan this year?

- The ECB All Stars Cricket programme has some useful suggestions that we intend to incorporate.

- The Regional School Games Officer offered verbal encouragement but we would like him to be more involved this year.

- We shall concentrate on three primary schools.

- We will run sessions in each school two or three times before starting the after-school club.

- Parents will be encouraged to bring younger siblings to a 'tots' club and to have a coffee and a chat.

- At the end of the six-week after-school club, we will run a Junior Club over the summer with competitions, extended coaching and more integration events.

### What is going at other clubs?

We would love to hear from other clubs who have tried, successfully or otherwise, to encourage children into our sport.

What have you learned?

Do you have any junior members who would like to compete with other clubs?

We are happy to share more details of our experience with anyone thinking of doing anything similar.

We would like to acknowledge the huge amount of effort the members at Nottingham Croquet Club have put into this, the willing assistance from the PE teachers at the schools, and the support from the Croquet Association.

**Beatrice McGlen & Ian Draper**

Photo: Winners Naomi & Elizabeth with Amir Ramsis



This is part two of the Gazette's recognition of the 2019 CA Diploma award winners, continuing on from the six recipients in the last issue - Ed.

**Jennifer Fugeman  
Guildford and Godalming CC**

It is no exaggeration to say that without Jennifer Fugeman, Guildford and Godalming Croquet Club would not be where it is today.



Jennifer served as secretary from 2009 to 2017 and not only is she an extremely diligent administrator, but she also devoted considerable energy to the introduction of club leagues and the management of club competitions.

She was instrumental in the Club's participation in promotional events such as National Croquet Day and she has initiated and organised social events for club members, including "Croquet by Candlelight".

She has spearheaded the club's online presence including a court booking system which she continues to manage.

In the absence of a chairman in 2013, Jennifer effectively ran the club, and continued to play a critical role over the next four years, during a particularly challenging time.

She developed the Club's resources, such as fund raising, storage facilities and equipment, and the relocation and development of new lawns.

In 2014 Jennifer undertook her biggest project - obtaining planning permission and fundraising for, then project managing the construction of our new clubhouse.

Tapping into any organisation which might be prepared to donate to the cause, she filled in application after application, researched and resourced everything from the clubhouse shell to the fittings for the toilet, and always ensured that the club got the best possible value for every pound.

As a consequence we are now able to host major croquet events and have a thriving croquet community.

We are very grateful to Jennifer for all the time and effort she has dedicated to the club and are pleased to see her contribution recognised by the CA.

**Trevor Gill  
Charlton CC**

Trevor Gill's enjoyment of croquet began at college in the 1960's and during his time as teacher and ultimately Head Master at East Bridgwater Community School, he passed on his enthusiasm to his pupils on field study courses and continued to play Association Croquet with a small private village club in Stawell, Somerset, for 20 years.

When Trevor moved to Charlton Horethorne, his enthusiasm for croquet continued and in 2006, he founded the Charlton Croquet Club, playing both AC and GC, with an initial membership of 40, many of whom were village residents and none of whom had played before.

The club played on a neighbour's lawn, punctuated by a large tree, on which Trevor taught every member to play from scratch, which was no mean feat!

After a few years, he recognised the need to have a more permanent home for the club and also to improve its facilities, so Trevor and his wife, Ann, purchased land and subsequently leased it to the club for £1 per annum. This enabled the club to apply for grants to develop a three-quarter size level court (with no tree!) and Trevor and Ann also purchased a neighbour's large summer-house, which was moved and is now the clubhouse.

The Club has an annual finals day and Trevor initially donated an antique mallet as the main prize, but he has gone on to use his technical skills to make three other wooden trophies for presentation.

In 2010 Trevor went on a coaching course with Cliff Jones and earned a coaching badge; he is responsible for inducting new members and is currently leading a weekly AC coaching morning, and is also more than willing to help any member on an individual or collective basis. One of Trevor's inductees is Jonathan Powe, now of England fame!

His passion for coaching continues and in partnership with South Somerset District Council, he has given a series of lessons to a new club Kingsdon CC, which he continues to support on a regular basis.

Trevor has been, and is still, involved in all aspects of the Club and its upkeep and his role and his contribution is recognised by the Committee appointing him and Ann as President and Vice-President respectively.

All the above demonstrates Trevor's love for croquet and his continued involvement with the club he founded.

**Jean Hargreaves  
Bury CC**

It's very difficult to summarise in a few words just what a dynamic and wonderfully caring person Jean Hargreaves is, for she is always willing to go the extra mile in order to help other people achieve their ambitions, or complete whatever task is required. For the last 22 years, I have had the joy of knowing Jean and witnessing at first hand her dedication to helping others and sharing her time and energy with everyone she comes into contact with, both young and old.

Jean joined Bury Croquet Club in 1997, and her leadership skills and ability to communicate were immediately recognised when she was appointed as the Club's Press Officer later that same year. This quickly resulted in an immediate increase in our Membership and press coverage, with croquet becoming the 'must play' sport.

Prior to Jean's arrival our membership had been stagnant for years, but very noticeably as she became involved more and more players signed up, until we had the largest number of teams entering the North West Federation's leagues.

Jean has held many official positions in the club since those early years, and continues to play a vital part as a qualified coach, events secretary, committee member and main organiser of our tournaments.

At a national level Jean is the Croquet Association's Safeguarding Officer, which reflects her love of young people, and her desire to encourage everyone to respect others. Brownies, Guides, Schools, Church, 'Spice' groups and many more now regularly visit our club to play our wonderful game.

Four years ago it was decided we needed to expand the club, so as to accommodate all those newcomers, members and visitors who wished to play, with the result that we now have a wonderful additional facility in





Whitehead Park in Bury.

Here we have three superb full-sized courts, plus a large pavilion in which we can play indoor croquet during the winter months, and hold corporate and other events. Jean's influence and determination for us to succeed throughout this project has been a constant influence on our committee's decision-making process, ensuring that the refurbishment of the pavilion and re-building of the lawns was done to a very high standard.

It's always a joy to watch Jean when she is coaching croquet, especially when she is with young people, for her love of the game and the spirit of true human kindness pours out of her, such that no one is ever a failure; they always succeed in her eyes.

Jean's dedication and work ethic is certainly deserving of acknowledgment by the highest honour available.

### **Geoff Johnson Watford (Cassibury) CC**

Since joining the club in 2008, Geoff Johnson has been an extremely active member. As Honorary Treasurer for the past ten years, Geoff has ensured that the club has stayed on a sound financial footing.

As well as representing the club in East Anglian Croquet Federation and National events at both AC and GC, he has done much to encourage greater participation in these events from the membership.

He spends a great deal of time arranging GC fixtures, and manages our GC B and C-Level Series tournaments.

Away from these time-consuming frontline activities, Geoff has been hoop-setter-in-chief for many years, indulging members' requests for dual settings for AC and GC, and he re-sets often during the season. If there is a need to repair local damage to the courts, to remove worm casts or to organise watering during periods of drought, Geoff is there to sort it out.



### **Sue Norfolk Weston-super-Mare CC**

Sue Norfolk took on the role of Secretary at Weston-super-Mare Croquet Club in 2010.

She has been, and still is, a tower of strength, and in addition to overseeing the club's administration during the past eight years, she undertakes work far in excess of what we would expect of a club secretary.

This includes tasks such as the mowing of our lawns and outfield; her example and enthusiasm is an inspiration to us all.

### **Janet Salter Dyffryn CC**

Janet Salter has been playing croquet now since 2002, and she is the epitome of a solid club player, being available for Golf and Association teams over all the years of her membership – grandchildren permitting!

She has been the Club's treasurer since her election in 2005, and her skills in this important job have been to the fore in recent years, due to turbulent times at the club, including an enforced move from our home of 32 years.

Janet has been the person who has ensured that the club is not overstretching itself financially; she has been, and continues to be, a rock for the committee.

She has proved to be an invaluable member of our club in her capacities as Treasurer, committee member and player.

### **David Seed Blewbury CC**

When Blewbury Croquet Club's previous Lawns Manager was looking to retire ten years ago, David Seed took the role of assistant to learn the job, including mowing, aerating, weeding, and understanding the irrigation system. At the end of the year, the about-to-retire manager's verdict was: "I cannot stress just how lucky I think we are to have found someone as dependable and thorough as David Seed."

David went on a grounds maintenance course, became our Lawns Manager, and, assisted by many other volunteer club members, also attended to the machinery and grounds, directed the club's lawn care programme and put in untold hours of work himself, all to maintain the high standard of playing surface we are so proud of.

One member recently observed that our courts were of a higher standard than the lawns he had been playing on in Florida.

David soon added Facilities Manager to his lawns role, and was named our Club Member of the Year in 2014. Last year he won both our GC and AC handicap competitions; and this year he has finally stepped back from lawns and facilities management – in order to spend more time playing croquet.

David's long hours and dedication over the past decade to preserve and improve our club's fine playing surface, so often commended by visiting players, amply merit the award of a CA Diploma.

### **Mrs Marion Williams & Miss Anwen Lloyd Williams Llanfairfechan & North Wales CC**

They are daughter, Miss Anwen Lloyd Williams and her mother, Mrs Marion Williams.

Anwen has handled the Club's court bookings calendar for the last 20 years and has dealt with our visiting groups ensuring that they enjoy the experience and want to come back for more.

Her time and effort ensure a revenue of approximately £1,500 annually which in turn pays for the grass cutting throughout the year. The fact that we only charge £3 a head shows how many non-members pass through her hands.

Her mother, Marion, until recently played her part in coaching the visitors but now, at the age of 90+, she prefers to sit and watch the visitors enjoying themselves on the lawns.

Anwen is our Golf Croquet Captain and current President, whilst Marion was our President from 2002 to 2005.

They have both been club members since 1992 and being in the baking trade in the past, we have all enjoyed their cakes and puddings at our money raising events throughout that time; Marion's summer pudding and Anwen's tiramisu are to die for!



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# 2019 Croquet Association Diplomas



## **Rob Weeks Budleigh Salterton CC**

Rob Weeks has been a member of Budleigh Salterton Croquet Club since 2004 and its Estates and Grounds Manager since 2005. He is a stalwart of the club and a major contributor to its success.

Although he has a very understated approach, he has been instrumental in bringing Budleigh Salterton CC to be recognised as one of the premier croquet clubs with a sufficiently high standard of lawns and facilities to host the European GC Championships and AC Home Internationals.

The current quality of the lawns and grounds is mainly due to his stewardship and dedication.

He oversaw the development of the lawns through the installation of all the watering facilities some 14 years ago, since when he has managed two groundsmen, ensuring that their work continued to win the praise and appreciation of all players and visitors.

When the groundsman is on holiday, it is Rob who is up first thing in the morning to mow the lawns and prepare them for play and he has never been shy to roll up his sleeves to help, use and maintain the various mowers and other equipment. In every respect he has been a team player.

As if this was not enough Rob has also involved himself in coaching and over several winters he ran a very successful and well-managed GC training course and his inspiration and encouragement of others, has resulted in the club's GC League teams doing well.

In 2018 Rob was a key member of the Pavilion Development Group which designed and monitored the construction and financial arrangements of the new pavilion which replaced an old and unsafe building. With his attention to detail,

and the support of Ian Stratford, the building has won universal acclaim for its sympathetic design and layout.

Before that, Rob also project managed the refurbished clubhouse kitchen in 2011.

Rob does not seek official recognition for his efforts, though we have tried several times.

This CA Diploma is very fitting recognition of his commitment to croquet and the club.

## **Roz Wright Peterborough CC**

Roz Wright was a newcomer to our sport when she joined Peterborough Croquet Club soon after its inception in August 2006.

She volunteered to join the club committee in its first year, and was immediately recognised as having the personality to be our chairman, a role she has continued to perform ever since, beautifully.

For several years, all club members were happy to play almost exclusively Association Croquet, with alternate-stroke doubles found to be a good way of keeping the star players from monopolising on-lawn time, but Roz led the way in stemming a later decline in numbers by promoting Golf Croquet.

Under her enthusiastic leadership, the GC group has gone from strength to strength, numbering nearly thirty players by the end of the 2018 season.

Roz still plays some high-handicap AC herself and is a distinctive figure on court, with her dodgy-hip-induced rolling gait.

But more importantly, she provides great behind-the-scenes support for AC events, with her teas and lunches acquiring a stellar reputation amongst our visitors in recent years.

She also works hard in liaising with the park authorities and the bowls club

which shares our pavilion; two notable successes being the installation of a security fence and our inheritance of a disused bowling green, making us a two-court club (with a third court available on the weekends when we borrow the remaining bowling green for our tournaments).

In our wider region, Roz has often run sessions where the public can try croquet, for example at Barnsdale Gardens in Rutland.

Roz's huge contribution to our club is well recognised with this CA Diploma.

## **Gerald Wynn Cheltenham CC**

Gerald Wynn was Director of Finance at a government agency based in Cheltenham, so Cheltenham Croquet Club felt that with him as Treasurer, its affairs were in safe hands and he held that office of for ten years.

As Vice-Chair of the committee, he had to take over as Chair (while still being Treasurer) during the illness and untimely death of the then Chair, and he then held the fort until a new committee member could be co-opted to take over.

Cheltenham is a large Club so to manage two jobs was no small matter.

Much of Gerald's contribution was unrecognised by many members and perhaps by some on the committee.

Renegotiating utilities contracts and insurance policies is not stirring stuff but is vital and arranging and monitoring the work done by various contractors is also largely unremarked on by most members.

His sound counsel and steadying influence before and while a new Chair took over was greatly appreciated by the whole committee.

## **South African GC Championships**

*Continued from page 18...*

The restricted handicap singles for players with handicaps of 6+ was won by Duncan Miller overcoming Trish Greyling in the final.

Both the Open and Handicap Doubles titles were won by the Wise / Tibble combo.

They met Jim Field and Silvia Short in the Open final, where Short found terrific clearing form towards the end of the game but too late to change the outcome.

Whilst in the Handicap Doubles final, South African International pair Judith

Hanekom and William Louw put up stiffer resistance and nothing was settled until the golden hoop.

By this time all eyes were on the Open Singles final, which was a best-of-three contest between another Home International Victor Dladla and Mike Town from Woking.

On his way to the final, accurate and hard-hitting Victor had convincing wins, but he lost the first game to Town 7-1 before faring better in the second but losing narrowly

7-6.

Over the last few years a small group of lads from Johannesburg have caught up with their mentor Victor, adopting his style of play with huge success.

Of special note was Alfred Makhubo who was sparkling early on but went off the boil slightly.

I recommend this event for your 2020 diaries!

**Lionel Tibble**



## A Croquet tour to South Australia

**B**ernard and Sue Pendry have been on their croquet travels again, this time organised by Ann and Andrew Larpent. It was 'five stars' all the way, says Bernard.

We stayed at the Playford Hotel, Adelaide, in the heart of the city and from there visited six local croquet clubs, where we received a genuine warm welcome and were left feeling that the age-old bond between our countries is as strong as ever.

When preparing for this trip everyone took into account what sunny, warm weather we were to encounter, so packed shorts and t-shirts and masses of sun cream with little thought of inclement weather.

So it was rather a surprise that we encountered some cool temperatures, which in some respects was a blessing because all the clubs we visited had a rule that play had to stop if temperatures reached 34 degrees.

On non-croquet days we visited many wineries, lovely villages like Hahndorf, with its distinct German feel, Mount Lofty for its views over the city, and a tour of the Australian Oval proudly showing their wins over the English.

All our hosting clubs were similar in that they all had three or four courts, floodlights paid for by the council, spacious clubhouses and laid on excellent food all day.

Our team of 14 was made up of members from six different clubs from around England and over the two weeks we got to know each other very well.

The format for the matches, was morning pairs with team selection being decided by the hosts and friendly games mixing the two sides after lunch.

### Hyde Park CC

We started at Hyde Park CC, where those who did not bring their own mallets were able to borrow some for the whole tour.

The first things that hit us, were the CA approved metal hoops, which were so unforgiving, and the grass was very different to home. It was predominantly Australian Couch which gave a much harder surface that took a little getting used to.

Although we put up a good show we lost by two games.

At two of the other clubs their lawns were infested with Poa Annu, which is a weed

that can cause the balls not to run true.

Everything stopped to watch the Melbourne Cup (Australia's most famous annual thoroughbred horse race) and both Pamela Branley and Sue Pendry drew the winning horse, and won 60 dollars each.

### Norwood CC and Victor Harbor CC

We didn't do well at Norwood CC but won a narrow victory at Victor Harbor CC, right on the sea front with magnificent views.

A person to remember was Bernie, the referee, an ex-policewoman who took no prisoners: she was such a fun person.

From Victoria Harbor, we caught the ferry to Kangaroo Island and stayed at Mecure Island Lodge for two days which included tour bus rides to marvel at the islands many attractions, which I highly recommend.

### Brighton, Millswood & Glenunga CCs

On 11 November, Remembrance Day was observed at Brighton CC and at the 11th hour, captain Pat Lawson called us all together for a minutes silence before he raised the Australian flag to full mast.

After a visit to Millswood CC, our final match was versus Glenunga CC, where my partner, Martin Lipton, and I were thrashed by 91 year-old lady called Beryl.

She never stopped giggling when she ran many hoops, went 'in-off' and continually cleared our balls, all the time saying "I never do this, I am one of the worst players"

She was a delight with the realization that one is never too old to compete.

Despite this, our team won.

To end this wonderful tour we dined at the Windy Point Restaurant with magnificent views over the city, sipping champagne with dinner.

**The tour party:** Ann & Andrew Larpent (Dowlish Wake), Catherine and Philip Bass (Fylde), Pamela Branley (Abbey), Jane Burton (Norwich), Alan Grundy (Surbiton), Martin Lipton (Great Bedwyn), Ross Oddy & Paul Bradley (Sidmouth), Jane & Stephen Pearson (Sidmouth), Sue and Bernard Pendry (Surbiton).

~

Our leader Andrew Larpent has announced that he is thinking of The New England States for next year's trip.

## Club Level Coach

name change

**T**he name of the Club Level Coach grade was changed as the result of much discussion at the November meeting of the Coaching Committee and I want to share with you why we felt it was necessary.

In many sports, tennis and golf particularly, the Club Professional who deals with all coaching is often referred to as the Club Coach.

I received a few emails from players who had sought advice, overlooked better qualified people, and spoken directly with the Club Coach. They did receive coaching but then found out they should have actually been speaking with a graded coach and felt they had lost time by being "misled" in their use of the Club Coach.

We felt the new name better described the expected level at which a Club Level Coach should coach and this is at Club Level - mostly single ball shots for both AC and GC (at the end of the day there is a great similarity).

There is no such thing as a GC or AC Club-Level Coach - just quite simply a Club Level Coach who should be able to help both AC and GC beginners with all single ball shots at the minimum.

Players becoming more proficient should then be handed on to a Grade 1 Coach for further coaching and development of skills.

**Sarah Hayes**

## Recent Coaching Appointments

There are six new coaches to be congratulated, so well done to:

### Club Level Coaches

Ross Bagni	Leighton Linslade
Eileen Gallagher	Southport & Birkdale
Gail Moors	Southport & Birkdale
Judith Pengally	Leighton Linslade
Pauline Rooney	Southport & Birkdale
Neil Stewart	Eynsham

I hope everyone appreciates the work of the Examining Coaches and understands any delay in the awards being made - there is a lot of paperwork for them to complete and usually they are juggling running courses along with everything else. They have to review feedback and reports for each person before authorising the issuance of badges.

**Sarah Hayes,**  
Coaching Committee Chair



## Playing Merit Awards

A guild to players and others

### GC Merit Awards

In the last Gazette, I promised some exciting news but this turned out to be wildly optimistic, so I can only apologise.

As you know, the Coaching Committee have put together a new GC Merit Award Scheme, but this has not yet been finalised and agreed by the good and the great of GC.

With all new things there are obstacles to overcome and, whilst the Coaching Committee are the first to agree it isn't perfect, we all very much accept the time required for full review.

So – no news is good news, right?

I promise I will do everything possible to establish the GC Scheme, as I do feel it is important for all players to be able to aspire to something at all levels.

The Coaching Committee have their next meeting towards the end of February, so fingers crossed for an announcement then.

### AC Merit Awards

Please refer to my article in the last issue (Gazette 383, page 27) for details of the existing scheme and see what you need to be able to do in order to achieve your first (or next) award.

There are courses at the SWCA (South West Croquet Academy) at each level, so if you feel you need some coaching and advice on what is needed for each level then look at the fixtures online (or in the printed form) or go to the SWCA website for details of how to get on one of the courses.

Needless to say there were no Merit Awards made in the last two months of the year.

### Event Managers

- It would be much appreciated if a simple poster describing the awards be put up on / near the tournament details.

- Please include a mention of the Awards in your Manager's Briefing at the start of an event.

- Please make sure to have a good stock of claim forms, so these might be completed as soon as possible after an award has been achieved. It would be preferable if such forms were not left till the end of the event as the opposition involved in the match must also sign the form; people often leave a bit early, so please get the paper signed as soon as possible.

### Players

Make sure you are aware of what you need to accomplish to gain an award – there is no point at all saying "Well I did that two years ago at the XYZ tournament; this is simply not going to be good enough.

The most misunderstood award is the Silver Award, where you need to make a break of 12 hoops (including partner peels) without bisques and WIN.

Players ask me "Won't I concede contact if I make a 12-hoop break?" and I always respond with "Where does it say it has to be with the forward ball or even in an advanced match?"

If you still don't understand then the chances of you getting your Silver Award is not so good!

**Sarah Hayes,**  
Coaching Committee Chair

## Additional Courses & contacts

This is a supplement to the main lists in the last Gazette

For full details of all the courses available visit the CA website  
[www.croquet.org.uk](http://www.croquet.org.uk) > Tournaments > Fixtures Calendar

### The Croquet Academy - Southwick

Date	Course	h'cap	Leader	Cost*
Was 1 June <b>Now 8 June</b>	AC Playing the Game <i>(change of date)</i>	12 - 18	Morgan Case	£50/£40
Sec. Chrissie Merrington: <a href="mailto:courses@thecroquetacademy.com">courses@thecroquetacademy.com</a> <a href="http://www.thecroquetacademy.com">www.thecroquetacademy.com</a>				

### The South-West Croquet Academy - Budleigh

Sec. Maureen Smith: <a href="mailto:enquiries@southwestcroquetacademy.co.uk">enquiries@southwestcroquetacademy.co.uk</a> <a href="http://www.southwestcroquetacademy.co.uk">www.southwestcroquetacademy.co.uk</a>
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### The Northern Croquet Academy - York

Contact: John Harris: [northerncroquetacademy@gmail.com](mailto:northerncroquetacademy@gmail.com)

### High Wycombe Croquet Club

Date	Course	h'c	Leader	Cost *
13 Mar Fri.	HWCC Referees' update workshop for Qualified Referees	NA	Ian Shore	<i>Voluntary</i>
19 - 20 Mar Thu/ Fri	<b>CQC/CTC Coaches Qualification / Training Course</b> <i>'AC &amp; GC Players to become a coach/improve their grading'</i>	NA	Cliff Jones	£65/75
12 May Tue.	GC Practical Rules Workshop for players - Part 1 First half-day syllabus - (a.m.)	NA	Ian Shore	£20/25
12 May Tue.	GC Practical Rules Course for players - Part 1 - First half-day syllabus - (p.m.)	NA	Ian Shore	£20/25
26 May Tue.	GC Practical Rules Workshop for players - Part 2 Second half-day syllabus - (a.m.)	NA	Ian Shore	£20/25
26 May Tue.	GC Practical Rules Course for players - Part 2 Second half-day syllabus - (p.m.)	NA	Ian Shore	£20/25
Head Coach: Ian Shore: <a href="mailto:ianshore@gmail.com">ianshore@gmail.com</a> - 01494 718615				

There is a whole range of courses for people to attend, as detailed in the last issue (*Gazette 383*) and on the CA website Tournaments Calendar (*see the navigation details in red above*).

There are one day courses and some that are two or more days, with dates ranging from early March through to mid-September, so there are no excuses for not attending!

Some additional courses have been added by High Wycombe CC to those already offered and although these were arranged too late for inclusion in the printed fixtures book, the details do appear on the Website Fixtures Calendar.

**The coaching courses offered overall cater for everyone** and even if you think you know it all (you know who you are!), there are Master classes which I am sure you will enjoy. Beginners are also catered for and perhaps that new lifelong chum is waiting to be found and you won't find out unless you go along, will you?

So, before everything gets fully booked, do get involved and chose a course – what could possibly go wrong?

**Sarah Hayes**

# In-Game Performance Analysis ..

**M**any readers will have seen top players missing sitters. I thought it would be interesting to analyse how well top players play by capturing and analysing every stroke of a competitive game between two of them.

An opportunity arose when the CA's GC Inter-Club Championship Final was held not far from my home at Phyllis Court Club in September between the hosts and Nottingham CC. The game chosen was the first game in an early rubber in which the Nottingham player's handicap was -3, which was one better than the hosts' -2.

The outcome of each stroke played during the game was classified by:

1. Stroke type (Take Position, Clear Opponent, Run Hoop, Jump)
2. Distance involved (Long Range, Medium Range, Short Range)

The outcome of each stroke was assessed and recorded as either successful or not and in the cases when a stroke was not witnessed due to distraction (in fairness, on the odd occasion the author / scorer was also the referee on-call!), it was noted as unclassified. On aggregation the results are displayed in Table 1 (*below*).

		Strokes Played						% Success	Combined
		Total Played		Successful		% Success			
		PCC Player	Notts Player	PCC Player	Notts Player	PCC Player	Notts Player		
Take Position	Long Range	15	9	8	9	53%	89%	70%	
	Medium Range	9	10	7	8	78%	80%		
	Short Range	1	6	1	3	100%	50%		
	TOTAL	25	25	16	19				
Clear Opponent	Long Range	12	7	3	6	25%	86%	56%	
	Medium Range	4	4	3	3	75%	75%		
	Short Range	0	0	0	0	NA	NA		
	TOTAL	16	11	6	9				
Run Hoop	Long Range	2	1	1	0	50%	NA	54%	
	Medium Range	4	3	2	2	50%	67%		
	Short Range	3	11	2	6	67%	55%		
	TOTAL	9	15	5	8				
Unclassified		2	1	0	0	0%	NA	NA	
	TOTAL	52	52	27	36	52%	69%		

## % Success from all strokes played – Game 1

Unsurprisingly, given the above stats, the outcome of the game was a win by the Nottingham player (7-6). The statistics indicate that the Nottingham player's strength of taking long and medium range position could not be countered by the Phyllis Court player's long-range clearances.

But, this was just one game and what might be the outcome of a different game?

A second game was also scored, and this one was between a -4 handicap Nottingham player and a -2 Phyllis Court player.

The aggregate results from this second game are displayed in Table 2 (*below*).

		Strokes Played						% Success	Combined
		Total Played		Successful		% Success			
		PCC Player	Notts Player	PCC Player	Notts Player	PCC Player	Notts Player		
Take Position	Long Range	18	12	7	12	39%	100%	69%	
	Medium Range	8	7	7	5	88%	71%		
	Short Range	0	3	0	2	NA	67%		
	TOTAL	26	22	14	19				
Clear Opponent	Long Range	2	8	0	3	NA	38%	48%	
	Medium Range	8	3	4	3	50%	100%		
	Short Range	0	0	0	0	NA	NA		
	TOTAL	10	11	4	6				
Run Hoop	Long Range	0	2	0	1	NA	50%	60%	
	Medium Range	3	2	3	0	100%	NA		
	Short Range	4	4	1	4	25%	100%		
	TOTAL	7	8	4	5				
Unclassified		0	2	0	0	NA	NA	NA	
	TOTAL	43	43	22	30	51%	70%		

## % Success from all strokes played – Game 2

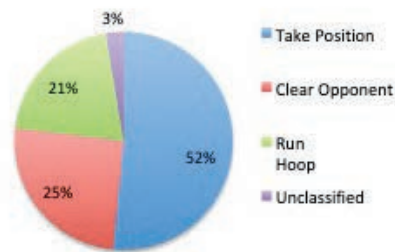
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## How well do top players play? – by Ian Shore

The answer is just about 62% (possibly)!

The question? What is the stroke success rate of by top players in competition?

### Analysis of all strokes played by purpose



As is apparent from the fewer strokes taken, the score was less close in this second scored game; however, again the different player strengths were reflected in the final score (a 7-3 win).

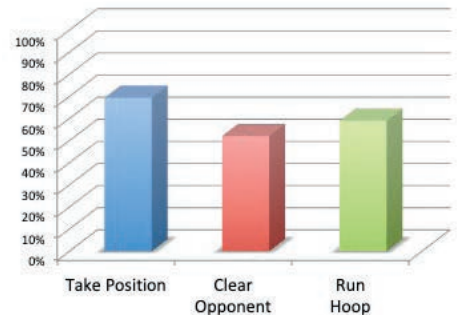
**Conclusions.** It would be most unwise to draw firm conclusions from such a small sample (hence the "possibly?" in the sub-heading above), however, to illustrate a way ahead, it is possible to aggregate the results (albeit from just two games) to give an overview, as shown by Graph 1 (*above*):

Further, the percentage of success achieved could be added and illustrated as shown in Graph 2 (*above right*), which indicates that taking position is the aspect of the game that is the most successful (easiest?) If one accepted the small size of the sample, the graphs indicate that it could be that:

1. Taking position is the most important aspect of the game.
2. Clearing an opponent may be the most challenging skill to master – influencing tactics.

There would be much to learn from identifying if there was a significant difference in the conclusions for games between those players in the top echelon (say -2 and better) and those drawn from games involving some of us lesser mortals!

### % Success by the stroke's purpose



I will be interested to hear from readers offering to score other games using this same methodology.

Once a wider scoring and analysis exercise has been conducted, conclusions then reached could influence both coaching and practice regimes. Overall, the experience demonstrates that:

1. It is possible to analyse a croquet game stroke-by-stroke post event.
2. The task needs a dedicated person, who is willing to closely focus for the entire game (arguably more than any player!).

3. Stroke's success assessment was rather subjective – more experience of the methodology might allow a more scientific approach to be taken to grading success.

4. The methodology needs some further development – for example, how to score a promotion that at the same time scores a hoop and a clearance that puts the opponent through a hoop.

Given the importance of holding position when clearing an opponent, more refinement of the scoring of clearance strokes will provide helpful insights.

Finally, and most encouragingly, surely we can all draw comfort that even at the top level, these players' levels of success are significantly less than 100%!

Ian Shore, High Wycombe CC

Photographs from left to right:

(1) The author Ian Shore takes time out from his scoring analysis to referee a hampered stroke by Phyllis Court's Chris Roberts at the GC Inter-Club Final.  
(2) Clubmate Charlie von Schmieder in action and (3) in discussion with fellow international James Death.

Photos by Russel Robinson



## Performance Analysis in Croquet Coaching

– by Andrew Cowing

The Cheltenham CA GC Coaching POD held its third meeting of 2019 in June, covering Improvements and Practice, using a Performance Analysis, which had been developed from last year's improvement course.

Starting from the position of wishing to find out the quickest way to improve, by working out what actually needs improving, we then make a plan of how to improve, and used an Elemental Approach.

We broke down the game of GC into its main elements – positioning, shooting, hooping, stop-shots, jump-shots, jawsing, un-jawsing, blocking, in-offs, promotions, nestling, croquet-shots, half-balling.

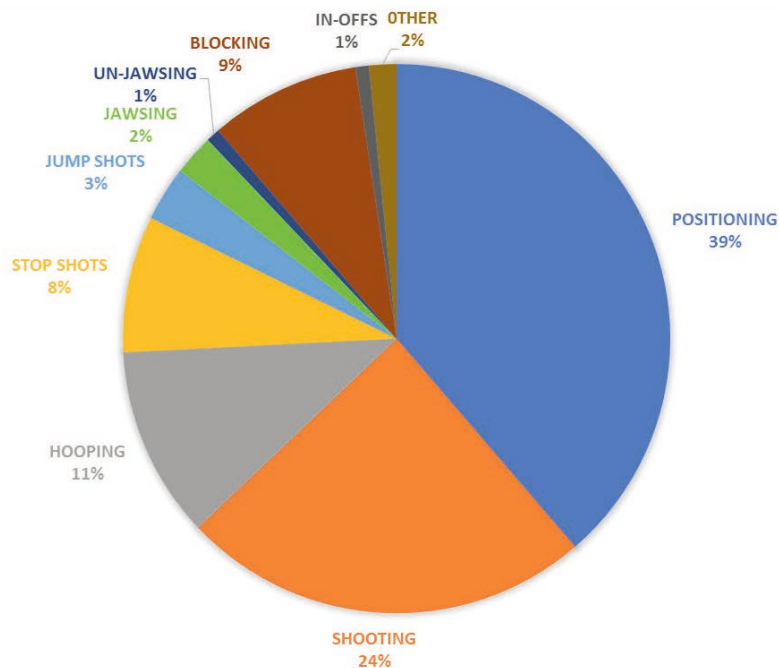
Only Skill Elements were used in our POD, as the intention was to use the analysis for skills coaching, but this could be extended to non-skill elements such as tactics, strategy, rules and regulations knowledge, psychological factors and mental training.

These were put onto a 'scoring sheet' along with columns for Success %, Failure %, Total Pie %, Score.

Most of the Cheltenham POD were scoring around 60-75% and in all cases the next level could be achieved just by improving positional play!

Other elements provided further opportunities for improvements and these can be considered by their relative ease of improving. The performance analysis is personal to the player alone and subsequent coaching can be bespoke to meet his/her coaching needs.

Following the initial analysis and diagnosis, and planned practice, the player will be able to follow up with a constant cycle of re-analysis and re-diagnosis to further seek out the next elements to



improve and re-plan the practice.

Whilst the elements used, relate to our POD playing levels (60-75%), they can be extended to allow differentiation of distances for the principal elements of:

Shooting – 7, 14, 21, 28 yards

Hooping – 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 yards

Stop-shots – 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 yards

Jump shots – 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 yards

When the failure % gets smaller it's more important to subdivide the elements for higher level players (say 80% – 90% up to 100% levels).

### Development areas

A natural extension of this would be to analyse both player and opponent in the same game (much in the way of OPTA stats used in football) and also over longer periods such as in a best-of-three match, in a whole tournament, or in a whole season.

This opens up another line of thinking: consequential improvements (i.e. improvements in one element improving another element).

For example, improving positioning would likely improve hooping; improving

length of jump-shot would improve both hooping or blocked clearances.

Another area of development is the subject of "form" where a player seems to lose form and go off the boil a bit for no apparent reason.

Perhaps there is an application to analyse whether it's, say, the positioning element that's going awry rather than the visible missing of a hoop?

One other application could be to use the performance analysis for the setting or re-setting of handicaps because the scoring within it is precise and accurate (more so than, say, the going twice round the circuit of hoops simply counting the number of shots taken).

As Coordinator for the Cheltenham GC Coaching POD, I have decided to put this out to the wider croquet domain in its current form, and I look forward to any discussions or ideas it may provoke.

**Andrew Cowing,**  
Coordinator for the  
Cheltenham GC Coaching POD



## How Fast is your Court?

### Measuring the 'speed' of a court

"11 second courts" – this is a way of describing the speed of the court, which is determined by a combination of soil firmness and the length and thickness of the grass. Generally, the least resistance to the travel of the ball as possible is seen as posing the greatest challenge and is therefore what top players crave – so that means everyone hopes for hard dry ground and very short grass.

In order to convey the ground conditions to players and followers, a simple test is carried out (and you can try this on the courts at your own club!). A ball is struck from one end of a court with enough strength to just reach the other end, and crucially no further (i.e. exactly 35 yards), and the time the ball is in motion is timed. The longer it takes for the ball to travel exactly 35 yards the 'faster' the court is said to be. This may sound counterintuitive, but it means that a 12-second court is faster than a 10-second court. - Ed

## Terrain Aeration *move into Croquet*

The two croquet courts of Church Stretton CC at Sandford Avenue had been placed on a hard surface and over time, becoming so compacted, they developed severe waterlogging problems.

Good management proving very difficult, the Council looked around for a solution and, after a number of consultations, brought in Terrain Aeration.

"We chose to go with Terrain because we needed to open up the ground for better drainage," said Michael Turner, the Council's Amenities and Services Officer, "and with the ground being so hard, it needed breaking up very much deeper than with normal aeration."

The courts (pictured above) are available to the Croquet Club and members of the public and the other reason for improving the facilities was the fact the town team won a regional competition in 2019 and needed the courts to match their prowess.

Terrain Aeration carried out the work over one and a half days, with their Terralift machine's JCB hammer slicing through the



compaction to allow the hollow probe to reach up to a metre under the lawn.

Working on a staggered grid pattern, once the probe reaches the optimum depth, compressed air is

released up to a maximum of 20Bar (280psi). The blast effect fractures the compacted soil to allow drainage and deep aeration, with the grid ensuring each shot interconnects the fissures and fractures.

As the probe withdraws, dried seaweed is injected which expands and contracts with the moisture content in the soil to keep the fissures open.

The probe holes are then back-filled with Lytag, an inert product which allows air and water to percolate through but is mower-friendly.

Michael Turner added: "The whole process was very clean and professional and Terrain Aeration were nice people to work with".

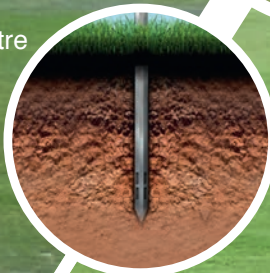
We've done a further piece of work with scarification and the combination of the two is bringing the results we wanted.

We're very happy with the work done."

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## MOSS - How it grows and how to kill it

Moss can be very difficult to spot and, in its early stages of development, can be taken for grass.

You need good light and a keen eye.

Moss crops in autumn and spring.

When ripe, the spores explode issuing an invisible cloud of spores which are carried in the breeze thus spreading spores all over the place. Moss will only develop in your lawn if there are live spores. Moss roots are not like normal plant roots, they are only a "hold fast" device, they do not provide the plant with nutrients and moss will not develop from old roots.

The only way to control moss is to stop it producing fresh spores. Even then, spores can blow in on the wind from surrounding areas so it will always be a potential enemy.

Moss doesn't have a vascular system which is why the roots can't be used to gather nutrients. **So, how does moss grow?**

The answer is that it absorbs water and nutrients through its leaves and harvests carbon dioxide and sunlight to create food by photosynthesis.

**Killing moss** is done by desiccating the plant using Ferrous Sulphate in soluble or granular form. Soluble is the best way because the product must contact the whole leaf to kill it and can be sprayed or applied using a watering can with a fine rose.

On the other hand, granules can be spread by hand or using a fertiliser spreader and are designed to dissolve in dew or rain but may not contact the whole plant. For this reason, more than one application of granules may be required.

Beware – Soluble Ferrous Sulphate comes in many grades and is well known for ruining sprayer valves and pumps.

Only use the best grade and I supply this by courier delivery if you need some.

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

## Playing standard and conditions improve at Church Stretton

**T**he market town of Church Stretton lies in the Shropshire Hills, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, 13 miles south of Shrewsbury and 15 miles north of Ludlow.

Church Stretton Croquet Club began in a small way twenty years ago and has built up to around thirty members.

In recent years the playing standard of our club has increased substantially and we won the West Midlands Federation Cup in 2019, having actually won all our matches.

We attribute this success to having taken ongoing coaching much more seriously during the course of last season.

However, it is only in the last six years that we were able to start playing in Federation matches, thanks to a Grant from the Croquet Association and help from the local council, which enabled us to lay a second court.

We are also grateful to the local council for their work on improving the surface of both courts, and the latest works have been with the firm **Terrain Aeration** (see the article opposite).

### Popular National Croquet Day

Joining in with the CA's annual National Croquet Day has proved very popular and resulted in the recruitment of a number of new members.

Moreover, simply getting people to actually try the game has meant that the popular image of croquet as being just a vicious

game has been overcome!

In the past our offering potential members five coaching sessions at the beginning of the season has usually only attracted a handful of recruits.

### Complete club activity

As well as playing competitive and friendly croquet, our club seeks to have an active social life, so we have cake and cream teas on the lawn once a month on one of our club afternoons, as well as holding a summer buffet and annual lunch. Indeed to be a friendly club is very much part of our ethos.

As to the future, we are endeavouring to encourage our members to enter CA Calendar tournaments run by other clubs.

We are basically an AC club with informal GC one evening a week, but if there is demand, this will be expanded to allow those who wish to begin competitive play against other clubs.

All in all, we are pleased to report that croquet is alive and healthy in Church Stretton.

**Fane Conant,**  
**Secretary, Church Stretton CC**





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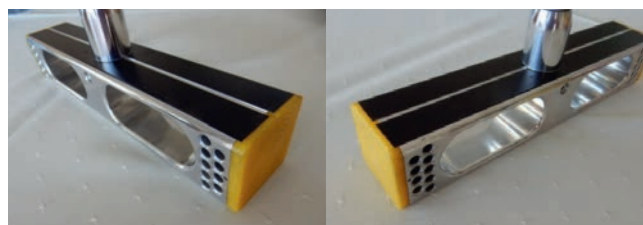
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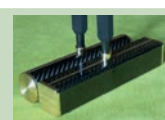
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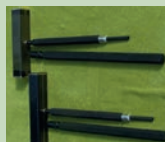
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## The Croquet Association Website

[www.croquet.org.uk](http://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

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**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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We all like a challenge but this Southwick hoop was a challenge to far! (photo by Clive Hayton)

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