

The

Issue 390 February 2021

CROQUET

Gazette



From our files

researched by Frances Colman

10 years ago - 2011



'Paracroquet' – Over the years, there have been players who have learnt to play one-handed using various techniques to produce the range of croquet shots required to play the game, reaching single-figures handicaps. They trained themselves and are able to compete on equal terms.

However, it is possible for croquet in its various formats to be enjoyed by players with a wide range of disabilities. . . Special tournaments have been designed to meet their capabilities. Clubs have arrangements with Residential Homes for their residents to visit them, to enjoy an afternoon playing croquet adapted to meet their needs. One proposal, which unfortunately did not come to fruition, was to provide a croquet lawn at a home for the partially sighted [and recent Gazettes have covered] the design of mallets for wheelchair use . . . help for people suffering with dementia. . .

I would like to encourage you and your club to look sympathetically at organisations involved with people with disabilities.

Barry Keen (from his Chairman's Column)

~

Czech out GC abroad – Last year we were fortunate to visit Czechoslovakia and play in the Mill Cup, the county's major GC tournament, at Sary Mlyn (The Old Mill) at Brezcova near Karlovy Vary and managed by the owner, Miroslav Pazdora. . . The croquet courts are approximately 2/3 size and are well surfaces. Uniquely, they are intentionally crowned to facilitate drainage. The contours are regular with the centre rising to 20 cms. This brings an exciting dimension of difficulty to the game. WCF rules were observed . . . the Mill Cup is an enormous gold embossed porcelain vessel some 4 feet high . . .

Carole Jackson (letter)

~

Better than Martina – Cheltenham CC would like to congratulate members: Richard Thompson, Martin Murray, Dave Mundy, Kevin Ham, David Foulser, Klim Seabright, Alwen and Les Bowker, who are all ranked above MARTINA NAVRATILOVA (1578) in the World Rankings . . . for golf croquet! - Klim Seabright (letter)

50 years ago - 1971



Special 'extra' Gazette issue

(Following on from Bryan Lloyd-Pratt being 'relieved' of the editorship)

The publication of this special winter number of the Gazette calls for an explanation. There is an important need to clarify the situation that led to an article in the national press in December, following the editorial in the last issue.

I wish to dissociate the Council from the views expressed in that editorial which were solely those of the Editor.

They run counter to the policy of the Council who, with the object encouraging and developing croquet, have authorised the Coaching Scheme towards which the Government grant has been made. . . an important side effect of establishing clubs in public parks is that many people will, for the first time, see the game played with proper equipment on a full sized lawn and will realise that it is far removed from the garden party pastime which they believe it to be. - S.S. Townsend, Chairman (heavily edited from a full front page address)

~

Associates may have read a remark ascribed to me in the national press recently in which I appeared to imply that the degree of skill and intelligence required in croquet was beyond the abilities of lower income groups. Needless to say, this is not my opinion and was the result of the compression of two separate comments, as I was able to explain in the Radio 4 News Desk programme and in a letter to The Times. - S.S. Townsend, Chairman

~

Many Associates will have read recent articles in the Sunday Times (20 Dec.) and The Times (24 Dec.). These implied that Mr Lloyd-Pratt was dismissed from his post as editor because of an editorial which was strongly critical of the Council policy in accepting a grant for the development of croquet. The Primary reason for Mr Lloyd-Pratt's dismissal was quite different, and was due to his refusal to keep the cost of the Gazette within its budget . . . the regrettable distortions contained in these two articles make it necessary to record the facts. . .

B.G. Neal Chairman, Editorial Board

100 years ago - 1921



Ladies grievance - We should like to congratulate "Senex" upon his well-timed efforts to expound the game, a task which whoever has ventured to attempt it must have found far from easy and possibly a little thankless.

Some of our readers will be wondering if "Senex" is going to don the female attire, the better to appreciate the disabilities of the sex in which he has shown so fatherly interest.

One thing is clear. The ladies have a grievance and a very real grievance too!

If the letter from "Nonplussed" is to be taken as at all representative of the feelings of her sex, it must surely stand out quite pathetically as a sign of the times!

We have always liked to believe that a well-maintained equality of the sexes has contributed not but a little in the past to the many attractions of croquet.

Can it be that in these latter days, when apparently stance alone is to be accounted as the real hall-mark of efficiency, a certain disparity is creeping in and the gulf so made is likely to still more widen between men and lady players?

One by one we have watched the former class discard their old style, with its more hazardous side-swing, for the joys of the heavier mallet, and the absolute front-play.

Of the few exceptions, Mr. Beaton, indeed remains almost in solitary pre-eminence.

That a like change should be for ever denied to the opposite sex seems to be about as bare of justice as it is of remedy.

One remembers the days – not so far distant – when at least two ladies would be selected as a matter of course to compete for the Beddow Cup; when not only that trophy, but the Open Championship itself, was carried off by a lady player.

That the hey-day of Ladies Croquet is to be consigned irretrievably to a past decade we, however, refuse to believe, and we trust that with or without such kind assistance as that volunteered by "Senex" – for we learn with regret that his 'Reflections' are to be discontinued – the ladies will look seriously to the laurels and 'find out the way' for themselves.

(From Editorial Notes)

Editorial

I am sure that it is due to the 'lockdown effect' but I find myself more excited than ever at the prospect of a new croquet season, hopefully not too far away.

The snow that is gently falling on my 'tidier than usual' back garden (*Covid-19 has been good for that chore at least*) can't dampen my eagerness to get back to playing croquet again.

I am over my disappointment of no annual February trip to play in South Africa, but now even the distraction of pre-season administration has come to an end.

It has been rewarding to have sat on two CA Working Parties exploring avenues to increase competitive play, and another two groups set up by the WCF to research a global handicap system and, excitingly, a new style of handicap game for GC.

All these groups and others report will very shortly and details of their findings will hopefully be available for the next Gazette issue.

This magazine is understandably short on any actual croquet action but some sunny photographs of last season's play will hopefully brighten your reading of a good variety of articles generously contributed from all over the country.

And it is from all corners of the CA's domain that we launch a new regular

feature with the Federations' Columns taking centre page billing.

Here is an ideal opportunity to let a wider audience know any big news at your club!

The long awaited 7th edition of the AC Laws is heralded within these pages, along with the latest changes to the Tournament Regulations and an invitation to enter national Inter-Club team competitions.

~

I'd like to make a personal plea to Club Committees and Tournament Secretaries.

I know that times are very difficult and the months ahead are uncertain, but please will you do all you can to preserve as many of our CA Calendar Fixtures as you can.

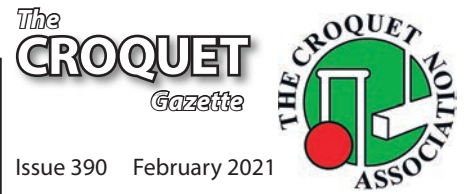
By this I mean, please explore every possibility to POSTPONE your tournaments if you can, rather than cancelling outright, because so many could have been saved last year, if only clubs had realised that it is really easy to postpone.

Dave Kibble's wizardry with the CA's Tournament Entry System sees it able to carry forward entrants to your new date with ease, and when that happened a few times last season, not many entrants withdrew and most played on the new date.

Postponing prevents disappointment, and also saves time and money transaction charges for the CA, so everybody wins!

Chris Roberts Editor

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Issue 390 February 2021

Front cover: Waiting in line for croquet to re-emerge from the darkness of lockdown.
(*Photograph by Chris Roberts*)

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Wanted - Director of Infrastructure

The Executive Board is seeking a new Director of Infrastructure to join its team in driving the CA forward.

This position is central to the smooth running of the CA at a critical time when all aspects of our organisation are being reviewed and changes being made.

If you have the leadership skills and enthusiasm to co-ordinate and steer the committees and panels in your portfolio through changes in IT, membership and safe-guarding whilst also being part of the day to day business of the CA then we would love to hear from you.

The Executive Board, as a team, is responsible for day to day running of croquet in accordance with the strategy established by Council. It is comprised of a Chairman and six Board Members, known as Directors, supported by the Hon Secretary, Hon Treasurer, CA Manager and

Chairman of Council.

The Board is accountable to Council for its compliance with CA Policies but is not obliged to seek further approval from Council for its actions.

~

The role of the Board Member is primarily:

- **To** be a member of the forum (Board) that manages the business of the CA and implements the strategies as outlined above and described in the CA Practice Book (CAPB 6).

- **To** lead a portfolio of responsibilities for particular operational functions, ensuring that the chairmen of specialist committees and other groups working in that area understand the strategies and to inform the Board of their operational decisions.

In addition, the portfolio of responsibilities for the Director of

Infrastructure will initially be focussed on re-establishing the ICT Committee to implement the recommendations of Council's technology review and to support the newly appointed National Safeguarding Officer, as the new Child Safeguarding policy is rolled out to clubs and Federations.

Board members are appointed by Council annually, and can expect to serve for a maximum of four years.

Applications, in the form of a CV with a covering letter, should be e-mailed to the Hon. Secretary, Ian Vincent <ian.vincent#cantab.net>, to whom informal enquiries can also be made.

The deadline for receipt of applications is 21 February 2021, after which the applicants will be shortlisted, for possible interview, by Council's Nominations Committee, which will make a recommendation to Council.

Ian Vincent, Hon. Secretary
ian.vincent@cantab.net



Chairmen of the CA Council and Executive Board's Column

With the news that the lockdown is to be extended until at least 8 March, it is easy to get despondent. We have to be thankful though that these last two national lockdowns have occurred out of our main playing season and that most of the older and more vulnerable croquet players will have been vaccinated by the spring.

Lockdown legacy

The start of tournament fixtures will probably see some delay and the online entry system will not open before the end of February but hopefully by then we will have the Government's roadmap showing the way out of this situation and we will be able to make firmer plans for the season ahead.

Sport England launched its 10-year strategy 'Uniting the Movement' on 26 January. The emphasis is very much on supporting and building grassroots sport so that it can help the nation recover from the long-lasting mental, physical and economic consequences of the pandemic. Croquet has an opportunity to play a part in this and the CA will be working hard to make sure that our voice is heard as detailed plans evolve.

Many club members had already paid their club subscriptions when this saga first started last March so the impact on club membership was not dramatic, although a few clubs were hit hard. It may be more difficult to persuade people to rejoin their clubs this year, particularly if they played very little in 2020. There is, however, some

momentum to the calls across the nation to support grassroots sports and get everyone back playing as soon as possible, so we hope that clubs may soon see some new faces along with all their existing croquet friends.

Much activity behind the scenes over the winter

- Council and the Executive Board have continued to conduct the business of the day using Zoom. Whilst having many benefits, meeting face to face allows for more in-depth discussion as well as the opportunity of informal conversation outside the main meetings. Once the restrictions of Covid-19 are behind us, Council envisages still using Zoom with occasional face-to-face meetings.

- The CA is developing a raft of policies and strategies, but to be successful the membership will need to engage with the vision and to actively help in their implementation. To do this our channels of communication need to be efficient. During the past year we have introduced the use of Webinars, a Monthly Newsletter for all Standard and Premium members, and we are increasing our engagement with the Federations.

- Council has been looking at our legal structure with a view to incorporation and possible charitable status.

- We have a new child-safeguarding policy and new National Safe-guarding Officer. *See page 8.*

- The old Development Committee has been split into two, with a Funding Committee now responsible for grants

and bursaries, and a Sports Development Committee that will be responsible for helping the clubs and Federations develop existing ideas and discover new ways to bring more people into the game. *See page 8.*

- A review of the CA's disciplinary policy and a new policy for on-line and digital activities have both been drafted and are currently available, via the CA website, for consultation. *See page 6.*

- The Chiltern Croquet Academy, based at High Wycombe has been approved.

See page 26.

- Daniel Gott is taking over as the AC International Performance Director.

See page 8.

- The enormous task of getting the 7th Edition of the AC Laws written and approved has been completed and the nearly as enormous task of getting it in printable form and published is underway.

See page 7.

- All the CA committees have had meetings to discuss plans, improvements and changes. Working parties on Competitive Play, Inclusivity and Diversity, and Coaching and Performance, have all been beavering away and will be reporting shortly.

~

Although more than 80 individuals are involved on an entirely voluntary basis in all these different groups and looking at different aspects of our sport, they all have the common theme of trying to make things better for our existing members and getting more people playing and enjoying croquet at all levels of the game.

Jonathan Isaacs and Beatrice McGlen

Wanted - Information and Communications Technology Committee members

The Executive Board is seeking to strengthen its ICT (Information and Communications Technology) committee by recruiting new members to it.

The committee reports to and is guided by one of the Executive Board Directors (*see the separate advertisement on page 3*) and has the following responsibilities:

- Developing and maintaining an ICT strategy.
- Technical arrangements for the processing, storage and publication of the CA's data in support of its objectives, with particular concern for conformance with data protection and other relevant legislation.

- Specification, implementation and/or approval of new software and systems and changes to existing ones.

- Specification and/or approval of computers and communication equipment for use on CA business.

- Sourcing of ICT services.
- Matters relating to the software technology of the website.
- Arrangements for support and training.

Apart from systems and networking support of the systems hosting the website and running in the CA Office, it needs to implement a number of the policies agreed in the Technology Review undertaken for the CA Council last year.

Applications, in the form of a CV with a covering letter, should be e-mailed to the Hon. Secretary, Ian Vincent <ian.vincent@cantab.net>, to whom informal enquiries can also be made. The deadline for receipt of applications is 21 February 2021.

Ian Vincent, Hon. Secretary
ian.vincent@cantab.net





The CA Council has met twice by Zoom since the October meeting. A common theme throughout the meetings was how volunteers should be identified, both to give opportunities to people who wished to contribute and to enable the organisation to harness the skills and effort available.

There was consensus that such roles should be advertised, but also that people should be personally encouraged to apply for them.

Finding and supporting volunteers

Brian Havill noted that in many other sports there was a natural progression of people serving in clubs being asked to fill roles at regional level, where they gained experience before moving up to national ones: this did not seem to happen so much in croquet.

Beatrice McGlen observed that there were already 80 or so people currently serving on committees reporting to the Executive Board and emphasised the need to support them and refrain from negative criticism.

The Chairman, Jonathan Isaacs, reflected that the CA was facing the challenge of changing from a small, largely volunteer, organisation with relatively limited objectives to the larger, more professional, one now required to meet modern expectations of governing bodies.

This was undoubtedly putting a strain on the existing volunteers.

Dennis Scarr and Ron Carter step up

On the positive side, Council welcomed Dennis Scarr to his first meeting following election to represent the Croquet North and Yorkshire Constituency and gratefully accepted his offer to lead a group to develop a policy for Adult Safeguarding.

The Child Safeguarding policy has now been published and a National Safeguarding Officer, Dr. Ron Carter, appointed, who will deal with both.

It was noted that Safeguarding was one of the priorities of Sport England's new ten-year strategy. *See pages 7 and 8.*

Budget for 2021

An ambitious, but plausible, budget for 2021 was agreed, which would break even if new sponsorship and funding activities succeeded.

Subscription income had so far been relatively encouraging, but plans may have to be revised if the season is badly affected

by Covid-19.

The draft accounts for 2020, presented by the Hon. Treasurer, Ian Burrigge, showed a loss of about £15K, which was a better outcome than might have been expected.

It was agreed to take up the offer from Brabners LLP to give advice about the CA's legal structure and execute any changes agreed, on a pro-bono basis through the Sport and Recreation Alliance's Legal Panel Framework.

Executive Board's report

The Executive Board's report to the December meeting took the form of a spreadsheet showing topics, progress made, and timescales for completing each.

In response to a question, Beatrice McGlen said that, as far as she was aware, self-editing of fixtures calendar entries by clubs was going well and confirmed that, because of Covid-19 uncertainty, a paper fixtures book would not be published this year.

In January, she reported the need to find a new Director for Infrastructure and mentioned the Communications Toolkit that had been produced for clubs.

GC Merit awards finalised

Dave Kibble had reviewed the troubled history of the proposal by the Coaching Committee to introduce GC Merit awards and concluded that it should be implemented, on the grounds that it fell within the remit of that committee and, now that it had been changed to avoid conflict with the CA Silver Medal, did not raise any strategic or cross-functional issues. This was agreed and Dave was thanked for his work. *See Coaching Pages 24 & 25.*

'Club Mark' accreditation?

Beatrice McGlen reported that Sport England had dropped its Club Mark accreditation scheme, but that it was encouraging governing bodies to run their own.

Doing so would not only help clubs to improve their governance, but achieving an award would also provide reassurance to potential members and grant awarding bodies. Unlike safeguarding arrangements, such a scheme would be voluntary.

She will get further details of whether a national governing body had to register to run such a scheme and whether any guidance was available about doing so, before a decision was taken whether or not to implement one.

Whites?

Brian Havill reported that the issue had been raised, during the annual review of tournament regulations, of whether white clothing should still be the default requirement for playing in calendar fixture tournaments.

It was agreed that there were a wide spread of strongly held opinions on this, and that a group representative of more than just the tournament committees should be assembled to review it, after requesting thoughts from the membership and trying to get evidence for some assertions frequently made.

Competitive Play Review Group

David Openshaw joined the meeting to update it on the progress of his Competitive Play Review Group.

In consulting clubs it had found that there were various teaching styles for AC, ranging from structured courses to just starting people playing garden croquet and was concluding that the most important factor in success was enthusiasm, of both teachers and students, rather than the method used.

Short Croquet (SC) was encouraged as a way to introduce people to competitive play, but other formats were needed to provide a challenge and speed up play as players progressed to the highest levels.

Membership Review Group

The broad recommendations of the Membership Review Group that the membership structure should largely remain unchanged until the future legal structure had been decided were agreed, though the nomenclature of Large and Small Clubs would be changed to better reflect the existing criteria for discounted subscriptions.

Clubs will be encouraged to increase the take-up of Standard CA membership, but the primary target was to increase the number of players and total primary club membership will be reported when measuring market penetration.

Similarly, the current tournament levy system will be reviewed as patterns of competitive play had changed and were no longer being reflected by it. Hon. Treasurer Ian Burrigge will convene a separate group to do so.

7th edition of Laws of AC approved

The 7th edition of the Laws of Association Croquet, the first new one for 20 years, was

Continued overleaf...

The CROQUET Gazette

Council meetings report continued

... continued from page 7

approved to replace the current laws for use in the CA's Domain from 1 March, following approval by the World Croquet Federation.

It was agreed that a free copy should be sent to clubs and referees, and that referees should not be charged for courses updating them. *See page 9.*

Round-up

Ian Cobbold confirmed that he was leading a review of Coaching and Performance. It was still at the information gathering stage, but hoped to produce an interim report in March.

It was reported that consultations on a general Complaints procedure, to replace the existing Disciplinary and Appeals one, and a more specific Online Communications policy and guidance were underway. The complaints procedure will add the option of mediation. *See next two columns.*

~

The next scheduled meeting of Council will be on 27 March, by which time we can hope to have a better feel as to when play will be possible again. One member had to leave the January meeting early to be vaccinated!

Ian Vincent, Hon. Secretary

A consultation version of the CA Complaints Procedure

The CA Disciplinary and Appeals Procedure has been reviewed by a small working group at the request of the Council, with the intention of producing a document which is more comprehensive than the current text but is also easy to follow.

The current procedure is set out in Clause 8 and Appendix 1 of the Constitution; the proposal is to replace those by a new Clause 8 referring to a new document, the CA Complaints Procedure, published by the Council, to make it easier to maintain.

A consultation version of the proposed CA Complaints Procedure is available on the CA website (** see below*) to allow anyone interested to comment and make suggestions.

These should be sent to Stephen Mulliner (snmulliner@gmail.com) who chairs the working group. The consultation period will end on 15 March 2021.

* Follow this CA website navigation: 'Home' or 'News' and see the news item dated 27 January.

On-line readers can use this direct link: croquet.org.uk/?d=2790

Stephen Mulliner
Chairman, working group
snmulliner@gmail.com

A consultation version of the CA 'Croquet-Online' policy

With the increasing use of social media, remote meetings and media channels it has become apparent that a policy and guidance is required to enable everyone to use the CA's technology in a way that means everyone can participate, but know where the boundaries lie.

This review has coincided with a review of the CA's Complaints Procedure, so that the policies can complement each other.

A draft Croquet-Online policy (**see below*) document with accompanying guidance (**also see below*) are now available on the CA website.

CA members, particularly those who are familiar with the CA's social media channels, are invited to have a look at this and comment, These should be sent to CA Communications Director Paul Hetherington (paulhether65@outlook.com) by 15 March, 2021.

* Follow this website navigation: 'Home' or 'News' and see the news item dated 27 January.

Online readers can use these links: croquet.org.uk/?d=2791
croquet.org.uk/?d=2792

Paul Hetherington
Communications Director
paulhether65@outlook.com



Order now
<http://CAshop.org.uk>
-> Accessories -> Jewellery



@croquetengland

Young Person Membership Categories now called U25 Premium & U25 Standard

For ease of reference, the "Young Person" category of CA membership will now be called "U25 Premium" and "Young Person Standard" will be "U25 Standard".

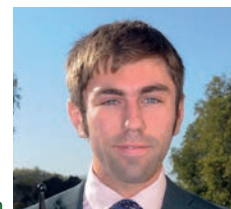
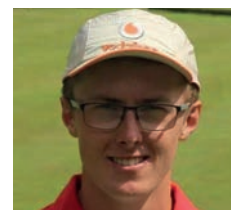
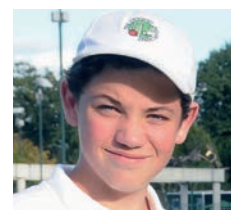
Both remain open to people under the age of 25 at the start of the membership year (1 January).

They both have equal priority for tournament entry, but U25 Premium members receive a £5 per day discount on entry fees and receive paper copies of the Croquet Gazette.

For further information, please click on the "Join the CA" button in the centre of the CA website Home page, or on-line readers can use this link: croquet.org.uk/?p=ca/JoinTheCA

Ian Vincent, Hon. Secretary

Photos: Jack Good, James Galpin & Richard Bilton



NEW - The 7th Edition of the AC Laws

The Laws of Association Croquet, and Refereeing Regulations, are maintained by a committee of the World Croquet Federation, and approved by its Council.

These Laws and Regulations have been adopted by the Croquet Association, and become effective from 1 March 2021 in its domain.

The intention of this 7th Edition of the Laws of Association Croquet, the first major revision for 20 years, is primarily to clarify them, rather than to make any significant changes to the way the sport is played.

Many of the changes incorporated were in the commentary on the previous edition.

Others have been the subject of discussion amongst players and referees, with agreement being reached that the changes are desirable.

Stylistic changes recommended in the 6th Edition commentary have also been made, including a new numbering system; a Glossary, which defines terms which are italicised when they first appear in a Law; and more modern and gender-neutral language.

Another objective has been greater commonality, in both substance and language, with the Rules of Golf Croquet: the hoops are now numbered 1-12, but with the historical naming retained as an alternative.

Super-Advanced, Alternate Stroke Doubles and time-limited games are now covered within the main body of the Laws.

The most significant change – ‘Critical Strokes’

The most significant change that players should be aware of is the introduction of the concept of Critical Strokes, for which the traditionally lenient treatment of accidental contact between mallet and ball, while casting or otherwise, no longer applies.

For these Strokes, such contact will now constitute a Stroke.

Referees are given more guidance about dealing with unauthorised advice and slow play.

The treatment of borderline cases and multiple errors and interferences has now been defined.

A commentary, examples and any rulings found to be necessary once games start to be played under them, will be published in a companion document, the Official Rulings on the Laws of Association Croquet (ORLAC).

The detail

There is a News item dated 2 January on the CA website ([link 1 below](#)) which comprehensively identifies the changes that are incorporated in these Laws.

Please read these, in particular the introductory statement ([link 2](#)) and the substantive changes from the 6th edition of the Laws ([link 3](#)).

Look out for Zoom AC Laws seminars

There will be a number of seminars around the domain starting in the middle of February, mostly via Zoom because of the pandemic, at which these changes will be promoted to players.

Please consider joining one of these seminars, the details of which are available on the CA website Fixtures Calendar (Home > Compete > Fixtures Calendar) ([link 4](#)) or contact your Federation Secretary.

7th Edition AC Laws books

Hard copies of the 7th Edition of these Laws will be available for purchase from the CA Shop; please look out for an on-line News item announcing their availability.

Direct links for online readers:

- (1) croquet.org.uk/?p=press/news&NewsID=7167&pup=y
- (2) worldcroquet.org/documents/Governance/ACLC/Introductory%20statement.pdf
- (3) worldcroquet.org/documents/Governance/ACLC/Changes%20log_final.pdf
- (4) croquet.org.uk/?p=tournament/caCalendar

Roger Staples
Chairman, AC Laws Committee

Dennis Scarr elected to CA Council for Croquet North & Yorkshire constituency

Dennis Scarr has been elected as the CA Council member to represent the Croquet North and Yorkshire Constituency, until the 2022 AGM.

He was nominated by Roger Staples (Middlesbrough) and seconded by Phil Errington (Belsay Hall) and the seat was uncontested. His personal statement was:

"I am Chairman of Middlesbrough Croquet Club and also Chairman of Croquet North.

I play AC tournaments throughout the North East, Yorkshire, North West and East Midlands. I have not as yet played tournaments in the 'deep south', but there's time!

Although my focus is on AC play and I am a Grade 2 AC Coach, I do have a GC handicap.

I was introduced to croquet, like many



before me, on annual family holidays at Cober Hill, near Scarborough and the level of enthusiasm for the game I witness every year amongst all ages, even from those who only ever play whilst on holiday, gives me confidence that our great sport has a future.

There are challenges facing croquet in the North East and Yorkshire. I believe both Federations recognise those challenges and that is more than half the battle.

I believe we need to make it easy for people to discover croquet, to understand enough to play and help them get whatever

they are looking for from the game - whichever code - preferably both.

My working career was in local government, initially committee administration, then Strategic Housing before a final decade as a Head of Service which included developing a service integration model for Social Care, Health and Supported Housing.

I hold a B.A (Hons.) in Management and a Postgraduate Certificate in Education.

My family is everything - my wife and I have two adult children and four grandchildren. My Christian faith is fundamental to who I am. Football remains dear to me as is my love for the guitar. I am a Steward at Durham Cathedral and my wife and I are heavily involved in running our local history society."

Daniel Gott joins Executive Board



Daniel Gott has been appointed to the Executive Board to hold the competitive play portfolio, which covers the activities of the AC and GC tournaments and International committees.

He has since also taken on the role of AC International Performance Director.

By way of introduction, Daniel has been playing croquet for about four years now, most of it based in Bath, and in that time he has played at tournaments all over the country. He picked up his first England cap at the 2019 AC Home Internationals.

Having graduated last summer, he is now based in Harpenden, and so will likely be joining Watford CC for the 2021 season.

He felt fortunate to have been part of the Junior Taskforce which Eugene Chang set up last year, and really enjoyed supporting and coaching the next generation of croquet players coming through.

Ian Vincent, Hon. Secretary

Dr. Ron Carter is new CA National Safeguarding Officer



Dr Ron Carter, a retired GP who is a member at Ealing Croquet Club, has been appointed as the CA's new National Safeguarding Officer.

He is taking over from Jean Hargreaves who has fulfilled this task for a number of years, but who is stepping down due to health problems.

The CA and individual clubs are very grateful to Jean for all the work she has done in this time, steering us through an increasingly important aspect of good governance.

Apart from croquet, which he took up in 2016, Ron's main interest is small bore rifle shooting. He competed regularly at national level for many years, and was the governing body's medical advisor for more than 20 years. He is still an active member of the local rifle club.

Ron not only has experience relevant to this post from his time as a GP, but he has also worked in prisons and detention centres, including a spell looking after families and children in the now rather notorious Yarl's Wood Immigration Centre.

He will be assisting with the drafting of a CA policy on safeguarding vulnerable adults.

The recently approved CA policy on Safeguarding children can now be seen on the CA website (see the navigation below*). Part of this new policy is a requirement for clubs, Academies and Federations to have a named safeguarding officer. Ron will be on hand to help clubs through this process, and to answer questions.

* Home>About Us>Governance>Policies>Safeguarding or online readers can use this direct link:
croquet.org.uk/?p=ca/gov/policies

Beatrice McGlen, Chairman, CA Executive Board

New Focus for Development Committee

The formation of the Funding Committee means that the Development Committee has the opportunity to shift its focus of attention to new priorities and working practices.

The Federations have a key role in the development of our sport and the Federation Development Officers (FDOs) will be playing a vital part via their work on the Development Committee. In addition to the FDOs we will co-opt others to assist the Committee with its priorities.

The current FDOs are:

East Anglia	Jonathan Toye
East Midlands	Mick Haytack
North	Roger Staples
North-West	Sarah Andrew
Southern	Peter Allan
South-East	Ian Cobbold (Vice-Chair)
South-West	Paul Francis (Chair)
West Midlands	Brian Shorney
Yorkshire	Derek Knight (acting)

As well as serving on the Development Committee; Sarah Andrew, Ian Cobbold and Paul Francis are also members of the Funding Committee and this will ensure a clear line of communication between the two committees.

Objectives and priorities

The FDO's knowledge of their regions and relationships with their member clubs is crucial to the achievement of the Committee's medium to long-term objectives of:

- improving the quality of our clubs' infrastructures;
- increasing the number of people playing croquet.

In order to begin to work towards these objectives, three priorities have been identified for the Committee to engage with. In no particular order these are:

- identifying additional development funding for our clubs;
- re-launching the Sport England club management model (Club Matters);
- attracting, encouraging and retaining younger people.

Collaboration between our Federations and with other sports too

In the past, there has been excellent collaboration between Federations and it is hoped that this can be built on to share expertise, ideas, resources and best practice. Likewise, we are already reaching out to Sport England to assist us on a national and regional basis via Sport England's 43 Active Partnerships.

A new era of collaboration with other sports' national bodies is also being explored. For example, it is hoped that FDOs can establish working relationships with their Bowls England regional counterparts to explore the potential for new croquet clubs sharing facilities or existing clubs sharing facilities with bowls clubs.

Whilst the current pandemic has posed major challenges for our sport, changes to how we communicate via Zoom or Microsoft Teams are likely to be long-term and an opportunity for the committee to meet more regularly (the plan is for at least four meetings per year). Similarly, Zoom might well enable us to deliver Webinars on initiatives such as Club Matters, inclusivity and diversity to our members

In summary, the role of the FDOs has never been more important and will continue to serve their federations with outstanding support.

Paul Francis, Chairman, Development Committee

CA Tournament Regulations - the changes for 2021

Another year, another season, and another set of updates to the tournament regulations!

Whilst it is likely that constraints and variations in response to Covid-19 will continue to be required, the Tournament Regulations have been written in anticipation of a conventional playing season.

Clubs, players and officials should continue to refer to the CA Task Force's guidance (linked from the CA Website's home page) for the latest instructions and any temporary variations to Tournament Regulations.

The most significant changes are as follows:

7th Edition Association Croquet Laws

Following adoption of these by both the WCF Council and the CA Council (see the separate article on this) the laws variations relating to Balls Jammed in Hoops, Impasse, Super-Advanced play, Alternate Stroke Doubles, Short Croquet Court Sizes and Expiry of Time Limits have been removed as these are now contained within the 7th Edition Laws.

Referees - The CA has adopted the WCF Refereeing Regulations and so Regulation R has been replaced with a link to the WCF regulations. Progress towards internationally aligned regulations began in 2010, and there is consequently no change in operation. Please note, however, the Approved Variations L1 and L3 (sequence umpires and use of video).

Charity Events - A new "Charity" designation for events has been created.

To use this designation, permission is required from the relevant tournament committee, and at least 75% of fees must go to the named registered charity, which must not be croquet-related. Such events are open to all and the CA levy is waived for such events.

Inclusion in the Fixtures Calendar

The inclusion of any event in the Fixtures Calendar carries a condition of adherence with all CA Policies, including (but not limited to) Safeguarding and Equality. For most events this is merely reinforcing the policies that already apply to all member clubs, but this change ensures that these policies apply to all events from non-member organisations such as charities (see above), academies and organisations outside the CA's domain.

Reporting Results - Amendments emphasise the requirement to report tournament results in the correct way, with a specific focus on the order of games and layout.

Priority Places for U25 Members - The previous priority given by Regulation C3(a)(2)(A) to "two Under 21 players (under 21 years of age on the first day of the tournament and either a Premium or Young Person Member)" has been changed to "two Under 25 Members". This aligns with the new CA membership categories and should simplify implementation.

Standard and Premium Members - Regulation C3(a)(2)(B) is modified so that all individual members of the CA now enjoy the same priority when entering

tournaments. Previously, standard members were placed in a lower priority group. Premium members continue to receive a £5 per day discount on tournament entry fees compared to Standard Members.

Ranking Adjustments - the adjustment to grades of players who have played too few games in previous years for allocation and seeding purposes has been modified to simplify implementation. The adjustment now only applies if a player has played enough games in neither the last 12 months nor the previous calendar year. The inclusion of this latter point makes the number of consecutive years easy to look up. A maximum reduction of 400 points has also been added.

Lawn Speeds - Regulation O4(b) now refers to new Lawn Speed guidance and existing hoop setting requirements.

Finally, please note that to meet Gazette publication deadlines, this article has been written before final approval of the Tournament Regulations. Readers are therefore advised to refer to the on-line regulations for the latest text; any further significant changes will also be the subject of a notice in the April Gazette.

The full Tournament Regulations are published on the CA website.

Look for "Regulations" on the "Compete" menu, or type this into your browser:

croquet.org.uk/?p=tournament/regulations

Samir Patel

The CA Archivist's labour of love

CA Archivist, Chris Williams, is gradually scanning old Gazettes and adding them to the CA website.

Chris says that he is currently back to Issue 205 - September 1989 and is aiming to go back as far as Issue number 1 (in the current numbering system) which was published in April 1954.

Prior to that, Croquet Gazettes were numbered by year with there being eight issues per year from 1946 to 1953.

Before the war, issue of the Gazette was even more frequent with publications weekly during the summer and monthly in the winter.

The scans that Chris is dealing with now,

in this labour of love, are 'images' and so are not searchable, unlike the newer ones.

This February 2021 issue is Gazette number 390 in the current numbering run and Chris reckons it is the 1362nd issue since the first in 1904.

All past issues of the Croquet Gazette up-loaded so far can be read via the CA website, using this navigation:

Home > News & Media > Croquet Gazette and on that page, click on 'view issues of the Croquet Gazette'.

There is also a search facility of indexed articles from 1989 onwards.

Online readers can use this direct link: croquet.org.uk/?p=press/gazette

Chris Williams - finding time to play as well at the AC National Seniors at Budleigh (by Chris Roberts)



I should have written earlier . . .

Dear editor,

I hope you can find room for my two anecdotes. I should have written earlier...

Also it's a great pity that there is hardly anyone still alive who witnessed the first one.

~

The Gazette of April 1969 (no.105, page 7) does not record the third game of the doubles rubber between William Ormerod and Douglas Strachan against Keith and Hazel Woollett on a very hot day in Adelaide, when it had to be played in extra time after all the other matches were over, although we (England) were 6-2 up against new Zealand in 1969.

William made a break to 4-back, then later went to rover.

After a long interval, Douglas hit in and started a break from the first hoop and diligently arranged the balls around hoop 3 to begin his triple peel.

We English looked on in horror.

After Douglas successfully finished his phantom triple we pestered William with questions.

"Oh," said William, "I rather wanted to see if he could do it."

~

First thing in the morning I played against William in the Presidents Cup at Hurlingham on lawn 3.

He had won the toss and held the innings continuously, while I played defensively.

It was only after about 20 minutes that I looked at my watch and all clips were still on the first hoop.

Sometime later something afflicted him to overcome his reluctance to make the first hoop and he ran it – after 41 minutes.

I think he was probably playing another game called "making your own arrangements."

Even so, William was an excellent doubles partner.

Nigel Aspinall, Roehampton CC

~

* Editor's note about the writer: Nigel Aspinall was one of the most successful croquet players in the 1970s and 1980s, winning the President's Cup eleven times, the Open Championship eight times, and the Men's Championship twice. He represented Great Britain in four MacRobertson Shield (AC World Team Championship) tournaments.

Nothing stopping Plymouth croquet on 31st Dec



Dear editor,

We don't usually get snow down here at Plymouth, but a threatening sky and a bit of hail didn't spoil our club secretary Linda Lang beating her husband at Short Croquet the afternoon of 31 December - in our last game of 2020.

As the white stuff came out of the cloud, Linda wasn't going to stop!

George Lang, Plymouth CC



My Croquet App is a 'work in progress'

Dear Editor,

I have been experiencing an ever increasing number of 'senior moments' and so I have been working on a possible App to aid me. My aim is a combination similar to Alexa and TomTom but something has gone wrong. Development continues! (On arrival at the club:)

Me: "Alexa I need a mallet from my locker"

Alexa: "I have made an appointment with your barber next Tuesday"

TomTom: "The nearest barber is 1.6 miles from your current position"

Me: "Alexa which court am I on?"

Alexa: "There are no civil or criminal charges outstanding against you"

TomTom: "At the end of the South Boundary of Lawn 8 turn left then, you have reached your destination"

Me: "Alexa I am walking towards the court with the secondaries"

Alexa: "I have requested that your Doctor should carry out tests"

TomTom: "turn around when possible"

Me: "Alexa I need to peel four back"

Alexa: "Warning... "You should not attempt to "peel" a croquet ball – oranges or grapes would be a better choice"

Me: "Alexa I need to take off to hoop 4"

Alexa: "Birmingham and Bristol airports are equidistant from your current location"

TomTom: "Leave Cheltenham and take the motorway"

Me: "Alexa my next shot is a roll"

Alexa: "Do you prefer ham, cheese or egg mayonnaise?"

Me: "I have run Rover and need to peg out"

Alexa: "Cooperative Funeral Services can help. You are entitled to 3000 dividend points"

TomTom: "Your requested destination is, as yet, unknown"

Klim Seabright, Cheltenham CC

Croquet is coming back to its roots at Moreton in Marsh!

Many many years ago a rather impoverished family lived in a wonderful old Jacobean mansion called Chastleton House, near to Moreton, which is now owned by the National Trust.

In the mid- nineteenth century a number of the family passed their time by inventing new games and marketing them through companies like Jacques of London – though their games like Squails, or The Chinese Imperial Game of Frogs and Toads seem to have lost their popularity!

Walter Whitmore Jones

One of the sons, Walter Whitmore Jones, was keener on outdoor sports. He was a member of the Moreton Cricket Club and was also keen on the game of croquet, which the family played on their two lawns at Chastleton.

At this time, croquet was becoming more popular and a number of groups were playing the game, but all to their own rules.

As some wished to play competitively, Walter Whitmore Jones collected the different versions of the rules and published his amalgam of them in the Field magazine in 1866 – these became the definitive rules for Croquet until they were superseded by the Conference Laws in 1870.

[Gazette readers will remember croquet historian John Harris' article on that pivotal year for our sport, in the April/May 2020 issue, Gazette 385 - Ed.]

Whitmore Jones invited a few friends to play a match in Evesham in 1867 – this was called an "Open Championship" though was, in fact, just for about six of his friends - Whitmore Jones won and declared himself World Champion!

The 'First' Open Championship

However, the next year, a true Open Championship was held on the cricket ground in Moreton - there were many competitors, and so the 1868 games are called the true first (at least by us here in Moreton!). The winner was a cousin of Whitmore Jones, a certain Walter Peel. Whitmore Jones went on to establish the croquet club in Wimbledon, which became the Wimbledon Croquet and Tennis Club, but he didn't have much time to enjoy his successes, for he died of cancer at the age of 41 in 1872.

Our new Club

So, much for the history - what about now and our new club?

Two marvellous ladies, Doreen Exton (*pictured with SWCF Development Officer Paul Francis*) and Jo Brooks, who have played croquet for a number of years, first in a garden and then with the Moreton in Marsh WI at those famous Cricket Grounds, decided it would be beneficial to our whole community to have a full Croquet Club. There is no other croquet club for many miles around and, with the history told above, it seemed appropriate to continue the name of croquet at Moreton in Marsh.

They got together with a few more like-minded locals and the Clubs' development started in 2019. Since then we have obtained a fifty-year lease from the Moreton Town Council on the old allotment land behind the present Bowls Club which had been lying idle and was badly overgrown.

Enough money was raised to clear the land, flatten most of it, fence our perimeter and keep a footpath and parking area clear.

A wonderful local contractor has done all the heavy work so far, at a cost that still might be eye-watering but was within our budget. We have space for two full courts and one smaller court, which are now a lovely green colour instead of brown but this

initial work has been hard, expensive and continuous.

We are incredibly grateful to the CA for their £5K grant, which, together with contributions from local charities, individuals, and a few businesses, have enabled us to achieve so much in such a short time.

We will begin playing in Spring 2021, maybe on smaller courts until the edges near the fencing settle down, but with the anticipated pleasure of many new members enjoying the beauty of the outdoors playing croquet in a Covid-19 safe way.

We will still keep working hard to complete our facilities, coach our new members, encourage our experienced players, get teams preparing for the 2022 season, raise money – and most of all, have fun and laughter.

Gill Hindshaw

Historical Ref.

"*The Chastleton Diaries*" published by the National Trust 2011



M C Percival Mallets



Aluminium head mallets made from high grade aluminium & fitted with long lasting Tufnol end caps which can be easily replaced if damaged.

The heads are anodised (hardened) and will be available in a variety of colours including black, blue and red.

They have been thoroughly tested and provide an accurate, reliable, peripherally weighted mallet.

These heads can be fitted with any of the carbon fibre shafts and are available in 10" and 11" head lengths and a base weight of 2 lbs 15 ozs (1332 g) adjustable from (1280 g to 1370 g).

Michael Percival

07780 677943 Michael@croquetmallets.co.uk

Marketing of our sport

Here is a round up of our winter projects, as our new-look Marketing and Publishing Team get stuck in to our long list of ideas.

CA Communications Toolkit - This new toolkit is now available for Clubs and Federations via the CA website. It explains everything communications related, from understanding and working with the media, to taking better photos. See <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?d=2789> or search 'toolkit' on the CA website search bar.

Website Consultation – See boxed item

CA website material - We are working across CA committees to refresh written material on the CA website. This includes rearranging the articles so that they are more focused on new and improving players, rather than club administrators.

Can you help?

- We are seeking web content curators and a volunteer to take on editing the CA e-newsletter that goes out to all members.

- We aspire to bring in new advertising to enable the Gazette to be cost neutral and available in printed format to all members.

This will likely see the style and content evolve to cater better for the diverse Standard and Premium membership groups.

- Upgrading our key communications outlet is the first step on the way towards our ambitious plans to bring more sponsorship into the game at all levels.

New CA shop lines and Croquet promotion

We are working with the CA Shop team to expand the marketing reach of the shop to diversify our range and ensure our products have a strong unique selling point for a croquet brand which we can be proud of .

We are also scoping out creative croquet promotion projects including documentaries, animations, videos, and podcasts. To do that we'll need extra input from those with historical knowledge of the croquet world (see the separate item).

If you would like to know more about any of the above, or get involved, please drop us a line -

Paul Hetherington & Eugene Chang
communications@croquet.org.uk
Facebook/Twitter/Instagram:
[@croquetengland](https://www.facebook.com/croquetengland)

CA Website revamp

As mentioned in the last issue of the Gazette, we are hoping to secure funding to revamp the CA website and CA Shop website. We are keen to get as much input and feedback on what the revamped website should look like, so we will be sending out a short survey in the next e-mail newsletter.

Please look out for that and send your views to -

Stephen Mills, Marketing Committee
stephen@smills.co.uk

Are you a croquet history buff?

Do you collect back copies of the Gazette or other croquet memorabilia? Have you got some great croquet anecdotes? The CA are looking to consolidate our knowledge of croquet history and to use modern story-telling techniques (e.g. podcasts, documentaries, webinars) to relive moments of our amazing sport with the new generation.

To do that, we would love to hear from you - we'd like to gather your croquet anecdotes, facts and figures, to combine with our own records.

Please drop a line to -
Eugene Chang, Marketing Committee
etychang@gmail.com

Hurlingham's Annual Tournament has changed for 2021



The Hurlingham Club's annual nine-day open tournament, starting on the first Saturday in August, has been the highlight of the Club's summer season, and its format has remained largely unchanged for generations.

In 2021, however, the Club is making several changes to bring the tournament (which is scheduled to start on 7 August) more up to date, and to widen opportunities for competitive play at all levels.

The first and most significant change is to combine all the doubles events into

one Handicap Doubles competition over the first weekend.

Croquet is one of very few sports where men and women can compete on equal terms, and so it makes sense to open the doubles competition to women, men and mixed pairs.

The second change splits the remainder of the tournament in two, with the doubles, class singles (for Super-B, B, C and D levels) and handicap singles over the first six days, before a new Hurlingham Cup event starts on Friday 13 August.

New Hurlingham Cup Weekend

The Hurlingham Cup Weekend tournament (13-15 August) will be run to a championship format, offering the country's top players a three-day weekend of action on the Club's front lawns, with championship hoops and settings, and the opportunity to win a 12-bottle case of "Grand Vin de Bordeaux" (or a runner's up magnum) as well as the magnificent cup.

The Hurlingham Cup was first awarded in



1922, and is pictured here with some wine prizes as an additional incentive to attract entries.

Commenting on the changes, Mark Ormerod (*above*), the Hurlingham Club's chair of croquet, says, "With a full weekend devoted to doubles, four days of singles at all levels and an improved Hurlingham Cup, we think our new-look August tournament has plenty to offer players of all standards. We look forward to greeting old friends, and welcoming new players to Hurlingham this summer."

Abel Hadden, Hurlingham CC

Please support our CA Inter-Club competitions

The Croquet Association runs a number of inter-club knockout competitions for both codes and all standards.

Clubs are encouraged to consider supporting one or more competitions by submitting entries.

Teams are made up of four players and the competitions take place throughout the season, with early rounds being held relatively locally. At the time of writing, **all entries are to be submitted online by 8 April** and the draw for each event will be published by 15 April.

Association Croquet	Golf Croquet
<p>The AC Inter-Club Championship The premier AC level advanced club competition, with teams of four playing seven (or nine) games. Joint entries are allowed provided clubs are not currently active in the event and are geographically close.</p>	<p>GC Inter-Club Championship The premier GC level-play inter-club competition, for which there is no handicap restriction. Each match comprises seven rubbers played in two sessions, each rubber being best-of-three 13-point level-play games.</p>
<p>The AC Mary Rose Inter-Club Trophy The AC B-level advanced club competition, with matches comprising seven games. Each of the four players must have a scratch or positive handicap and the total of the handicaps of the players must be at least 4. Joint entries are allowed provided the clubs are not currently active in the event and are geographically close.</p>	<p>The GC Murphy Inter-Club Shield The GC level-play inter-club competition for players with handicaps 2+. The total handicap of each team must be at least 12. The team may include one player with a handicap of 2; the others must have higher handicaps. Each match comprises seven rubbers played in two sessions, each rubber being best-of-three 13-point level-play games.</p>
<p>The AC Longman Inter-Club Trophies The main AC handicap club competition, with matches comprising seven games. All four players must have a handicap of 3.5 or higher and the total of the handicaps of all the players must be at least 24.</p>	
<p>The AC Secretary's Shield An AC handicap competition for which each Federation selects one club as its representative. This is generally determined by the results of Federations' handicap competitions. The holder (currently Hampstead Heath) may also enter.</p>	<p>The GC Federations Shield A GC handicap competition for which each Federation selects one club as its representative. This is usually, but not always, the Handicap League champion from the previous season. The holder (currently High Wycombe) may also enter. *The GC Federations Shield was not played in 2020, so the 2020 teams and draw have been carried forward to 2021. All relevant clubs and Federations are aware.</p>
<p>The Short Croquet Inter-Club Competition A national SC (short croquet) competition with the early rounds being run by Federations. Federation winners compete to become National Champions at a two-day weekend tournament in September. Matches comprise eleven games in three sessions. Players must have Short Croquet Handicaps of between 3 and 10.</p>	<p>Photographs: Below left - Sam Murray of the reigning AC Inter-Club Champions Surbiton CC Below right - Ian Burrige, the captain of reigning GC Inter-Club Champions Nottingham CC. <i>(images by Chris Roberts)</i></p>
<p>Brian Havill Chairman, AC Tournaments Committee</p>	<p>Jonathan Powe Chairman, GC Tournaments Committee</p>



The North West Festival of Croquet



25 years of Festival fun

An event creating a kaleidoscope of colour with up to a hundred people enjoying the summer sunshine in Victoria Park, Southport with plenty of wonderful food, fun, laughter and noise, is not quite the expected image of a formal croquet event involving white-clad players.

But this is the great **North Western Festival of Croquet** - a unique annual croquet event involving all the clubs in the North West Federation and players of all levels of abilities, from beginners to experts, competing in every croquet discipline.

A recipe for chaos? Not at all.

Each club can enter teams in AC and GC events for both level and handicap play as well as Short Croquet (SC) and because team members can also be changed between games, nobody gets left out.

Each team is allocated a club colour, resulting in many weird and wonderful effects on players, but at least we know where they come from!

Within this exciting and joyful mix, all croquet skills are on view; from the hackers and chatterers to the serious and determined, there are short roquet misses and spectacular long hit-ins, entertaining from "what do I do next" up to displays of sublime and elegant croquet.

Many clubs use the event to give their newer rising stars a first taste of competition and for those debutants, the wonderful sight of Southport Croquet Club full of colour is something they will always remember.

But the event also allows many of the established players to get together over a weekend, promoting a strong sense of unity amongst the region's clubs.

A typical Festival day sees an army of Southport members to setup about 17 courts, the management of up to 140 players, the creation of a feast of food and a well-stocked refreshment table catering for the thirsty. It all has to be put away at the end of the day and then of course repeated all over again for the second day.

This wonderful annual Festival has been the major croquet event in the north-west since 1994 and the friendships made and renewed each year last for season after season.

For the winners, five event trophies are awarded each year, plus the major prize for Champion Club, but the real winner is keeping our croquet as a competitive exciting endeavour, played with a spirit of great friendship.

Tony Thomas

(including photographs)

What a delight it was to revisit the most picturesque croquet lawns in England. With the backdrop of the castle on the crag, Bamburgh, the vista just cannot be beaten *(as pictured, right, by Klim Seabright)*.

I first visited Bamburgh, on the Northumberland coast to play cricket back in the 70's. Back then the cricket field was fringed by lawn tennis courts but the tennis players retreated to a hard court and the grass courts fell out of use.

However about a dozen years ago, Jamie Edgar and a determined band of players established a croquet section and now three croquet courts are fully utilised.

The venue has a unique atmosphere; the

A return to Bamburgh

cricket /croquet club is next to the centre of Bamburgh village and there is a constant flow of residents, walkers and tourists wandering past to watch the action of the twin sports. The croquet section is thriving with almost forty members, and both Sandy and I were made most welcome.

I (somewhat condescendingly) expected only a moderate standard of play, but the confident play of our GC opponents soon put us in our place and we enjoyed some close games in the late summer sunshine.

The croquet was great and our hosts extremely welcoming.

Additionally Northumberland is a great place for a holiday with its spectacular scenery and, by the standards of the South, the coast and countryside is empty.

For sights, take your pick of Lindisfarne, Dunstanburgh Castle, Quidditch at Alnwick Castle, St Abb's Head, and Hadrian's Wall.

We had one regret, and that was that we ran out of time to play croquet in Alnmouth and Belsay Hall; both excellent clubs in fantastic locations.

So for 2021 pack your bags and mallets, give these club secretaries a call and head for Northumberland

- You will have a great time!

John Dawson

Croquet North

Croquet North is the northern outpost of the Croquet Association.

It stretches from the Northumbrian border with Scotland in the north, to the River Tees in the south, the North Sea to the east and, if not for the Pennines, uninterrupted views of Cumbria and the Lake District to the West.

From croquet lawns against the backdrop of **Bamburgh Castle** (see opposite page and photo below) Croquet North covers almost 100 miles to the Victorian Park which houses **Middlesbrough CC** at our southern border. Between the two we have two major cities with proud football traditions, historic towns and villages as well as rivers, dales and much more.

Croquet North includes eight croquet clubs, comprising a total membership of 270, the vast majority of whom are Members of the Croquet Association.

Croquet within the Federation area has shown an increasing focus on golf croquet within the past decade, however both codes include players with minus handicaps, which helps maintain an appropriate emphasis on competitive play.

Only a small number of players venture beyond the Croquet North region to take part in tournaments elsewhere. Our clubs do, however, represent the Federation in CA national inter-club tournaments and have appeared twice in the final of the AC Secretary's Shield and have won the AC Longman Cup in recent years.

Middlesbrough and **Tyneside CC's** host AC and GC tournaments which attract entrants from beyond our region.

Croquet North runs a season-long singles and doubles championship, federation and inter-federation events as well as AC and GC Leagues. Some 40% of our members take part in our championships and leagues.

We plan to run our usual fixtures calendar for the 2021 season although a decision on whether to run leagues has been deferred.

Dennis Scarr, Chairman, Croquet North



North West

The North West Federation of Croquet Clubs has 20 club members over a geographical area ranging from the Llyn Peninsula in Wales to the western Scottish border.

During 2021 our regular programme is optimistically planned, however, contingencies are being prepared in the event that we are unable to start the season.

Our main offering is the provision of inter-club league competitions which 49 teams from ten clubs have entered this year and who will be playing a total of 183 matches.

These leagues encompass all disciplines and codes of the game with separate leagues for B-Level Advanced rules, Handicap and Short-Lawn AC along with Handicap and Level-play GC.

Each club enters a team in as many of the disciplines as they wish and the competition is played on a home and away basis in alternate years.

The League Manager is Ivan Wheatley of **Westmorland CC** and the season is due to get underway on 10 April and will run to the end of September. The winning teams are entered into the appropriate national competitions for the following year, where those exist.

The Federation also hosts individual competitions for the Millennium Trophies.

The purpose of these events is to provide a stepping stone for players to move from club into tournament play.

Each club is encouraged to enter two members to play in Advanced AC, Handicap AC, Short AC, Handicap GC and Level-play GC. Clubs around the region host the weekend events throughout the season. Tournament directors and referees are provided by the Federation.

Our great and joyous **Festival of Croquet** (see opposite page), at which every established form of the game is played, will take place over a weekend at the end of June at **Southport CC**.

The NW clubs always have a great time, with the hostilities of Southport sampled by surprisingly lively croquet players. The members of the Southport club have to lie in a darkened room for a week afterwards.

Our clubs are greatly supported by the Federation and we hope the year ahead brings a full calendar of croquet play and many new players to the sport.

Dr Sarah Andrew, Development Officer



Yorkshire

The Yorkshire Federation consists of 14 clubs stretching from **Ripon** in the north, **Sheffield** in the south and **Beverley** in the east to **Hebden Bridge** in the far west.

The Federation's four leagues for GC level play, GC handicap, AC full lawn and AC short lawn are well supported, with each attracting some half a dozen teams in 2021, which is a good total considering the small number of clubs in the area.

We use our league results as qualification for national CA competitions and the Federation's tournaments are also popular, with a Charity One-Ball event qualifying our representative for the national final.

For GC players there is an open doubles, restricted doubles with a minimum combined handicap of 11, open GC singles, and a C-level GC singles tournament.

We hope this offers everyone the chance of competitive play and an enjoyable introduction to tournaments, and with the help and support of our coaching and development officers, we hope to encourage players from our newest clubs – **Hebden Bridge CC** and **The Terrace CC** (at Boston Spa) – into tournament play.

For AC players we run a popular two-day AC full lawn tournament, and a short lawn team and individual event, with the winning team representing Yorkshire in the national Short Croquet competition.

To round off our season we will be holding our annual Inter-Federation Challenge against Croquet North at **York CC**, where rounds of GC, One-ball and alternate stroke AC doubles will all feature.

In conjunction with the Northern Academy at York we offer and subsidise courses for coaches and referees, furthering our hope that eventually all clubs will have trained officials.

One of our clubs, **Ripon Spa**, has fallen victim to the recession: the hotel which hosted them has been sold off. The club is hopeful of negotiating playing space at a local cricket ground.

Meanwhile we are investigating the possibility of starting a croquet club in **Leeds**, which has long been a croquet desert.

Leeds City Council is rationalising bowling greens, and there may well be opportunities for sharing facilities.

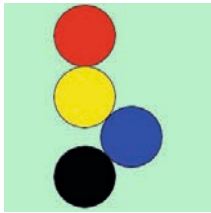
Derek Knight, Development Officer



West Midlands

The West Midlands Federation

AGM at the end of November was via Zoom, kindly enabled and hosted by Paul Francis.



The main outcome was the unanimous approval of a new constitution which, in addition to bringing it up-to-date, made each club a member of the Federation Committee. Our Zoom experience was welcomed by participants, not least by eliminating long-distance travel, and our subsequent Committee meeting agreed to take out a licence.

This will facilitate regular club meetings, the first of which was held today 24 January.

We agreed to follow our normal pattern of leagues - GC level play and AC handicap - and with two clubs new to competition, we agreed to explore more flexible arrangements to meet their particular circumstances.

We also, hope to reintroduce our 2020 proposal for fostering Short Croquet.

The meeting endorsed **Edgbaston CC's** proposal to host two events in 2021:

- a two-day AC handicap event for The Halse Trophy; probably on the first Monday and Tuesday in June (TBC); and
- a one-day GC handicap event in early September (TBC).

Ludlow Castle CC again experienced severe flooding on 19-23 January, which was their third experience in the past 12 months. Last January their lawns were under one metre of water and on two occasions the sudden flooding had preceded the flood warning arrangements.

They have suffered much loss of equipment (particularly mowers) and if any clubs have surplus equipment which they would be able to donate, it would be a godsend.

Brian Shorney, Development Officer

Photos: The sad floods at Ludlow Castle CC and memories of happier dry times last year



East Midlands

The Federation of East Midlands Coquet Clubs

plan to run all its inter-club leagues this year.

We hope to have three divisions of seven or eight clubs in the GC league and two AC leagues, one for 14-point games and one 26-point games. In 2020 the GC leagues were cancelled, but both AC leagues took place as one-day events. The 14-point league was won by **Pinchbeck** and the 26-point league by **Nottingham B**.

There was winter play at some clubs and several clubs took the opportunity to do lawn maintenance.

We have just rewritten our constitution and this will be on our website when it has been fully approved.

The photo below shows Ashby member Mike O'Brian, who instigated and manages the **Ashby** bottle challenge with most recent winner Rachel Gee.

We invite a guest player each year and in the past Reg Bamford, Stephen Mulliner, Lionel Tibble, Ryan Cabbie, Ian Burrige, James Death, JP Moberly, Martin French, and Howard Cheyne have all competed in this event and failed to win, but in 2019 Harry Fisher broke the visitors' duck at last.

Mick Haytack, Development Officer

Photo: Winner Rachel Gee congratulated by Mike O'Brian at the Ashby bottle challenge



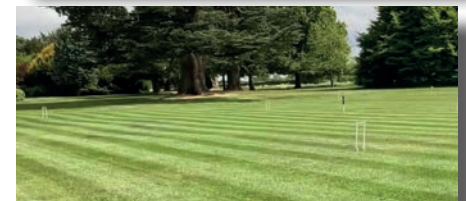
Federation of East Midlands Croquet Clubs

East Anglia

From East Anglia, there is good news and bad news in these chilly pre-season times.

Frinton CC is hoping to bring croquet back to the tennis club after a lull of fifty-odd years. Following an equipment loan from the EACF in 2020, and regular coaching sessions led by Rich Waterman, the enthusiasm of a core group has led the club to join the CA, and put together a grant bid towards the creation of a lawn on some unused, rough ground.

It will be a fine complement to the array of pristine grass courts surrounding the club's attractive Edwardian clubhouse (*see below*).



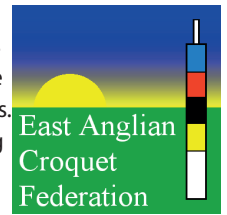
Heading north from the Essex coast into Suffolk, **Ipswich CC** have unfortunately been given notice to quit by their golf club host, and they are exploring other possible sites including the County Showground, offered by Suffolk Agricultural Association. It is a worrying time for them.

In West Norfolk, **Downham CC** spent the autumn of 2019 completely relaying their lawn, following a laser-levelling survey and the distribution by club members of 27 tons of topsoil from the local sugar beet factory.

The result in 2020 was a beautiful green sward which was eventually put into use when Covid-19 rules allowed in May.

We all look forward to another fine summer of play.

Jonathan Toye, Development Officer



“And now the News from where you live”

South-West

Despite a lack of competitive croquet, the last six months have seen the launch of several new initiatives in the **South-West**



Federation of Croquet Clubs.

Along with other Federations, the major change has been in how we communicate, and monthly Zoom meetings have helped clubs to keep in touch to share experiences and ideas. We have also introduced topics, including marketing/sponsorship and developing good media links.

The meetings have also been useful to discuss future plans for the SWF with regards to the 2021 league programme and our plans for access to coaching throughout our geographically widespread federation.

So, will these changes in communication last beyond the current crisis? The truth is we don't know, but the fact that clubs now have an opportunity to meet up so regularly must be a major positive force in supporting clubs to prosper in the future.

~

Alongside the monthly Zooms, in the late autumn **Stephen Custance-Baker hosted a series of six weekly modules called 'Playing to the Rules'**. Stephen introduced the rules of GC to a regular group of 50 plus people from a wide range of SWF clubs.

These videos are now available on YouTube (see the link below).

~

Current issues under discussion include when can we expect to start the 2021 leagues? We are offering all of our normal leagues, four for AC, three for GC and SC (short croquet) plus an inter-club SC team tournament in October.

We are confident that we will get a good selection of entries at all levels and that our new SC league will prove a great success.

However, it is thought there will be a reduction in entries for 2021 compared to 2019 as it is believed many clubs will not be willing to assume that we can restart competitive matches before July.

Therefore, most matches will be arranged for the second half of the season and a plan to reduce the number of clubs in each block will result in fewer matches per club as well as reduced travelling distances.

In the next Gazette issue, we hope to report on the development of coaching in the SWF.

Paul Francis, Development Officer

Southern

The Southern Croquet Federation includes clubs from **East Dorset** in the south-west to **Winslow** in the north and **Little Gaddesden** in the east.

Surprisingly, **Ryde** on the Isle of Wight is not the most southerly club.

The first events of the season will be the AC and GC Champion of Champions tournaments at **Hamptworth** in mid-April, which bring together our clubs' AC and GC handicap competition winners from 2020.

We have decided to take the radical step of calling the winners of these two events, the Champion of Champions of 2021 because using the previous year title was confusing.

In 2021, we will be running a full set of leagues, these being:

AC: Advanced A-Level (open), Advanced B-Level (0+), and Handicap (split into north and south divisions).

GC: A-League (open), B-Level (3+), Handicap (north and south divisions), One-court-clubs, and a Doubles league (north and south division).

Our attempt to run a Short Croquet league last year was scuppered by Covid-19 and in the end, the only SC match that took place was **Blewbury vs Caversham**.

This year we are hoping for greater participation and at the time of writing, there are already three clubs signed up for this league.

We are conscious of the fact that some clubs are finding it particularly difficult this year to field a full team for some AC leagues. Hence for the current year, entries from a team with players from two clubs are being allowed.

At the time of writing, 17 out of 23 clubs have entered at least one of the SCF's leagues.

The newly formed **Chiltern Croquet Academy (featured in a full introduction piece on page 26)** is co-located with **High Wycombe** CC and will be running 20 coaching courses during the year.

This will be a valuable resource for players who live in the centre of the country and hence are a long way from the three established academies.

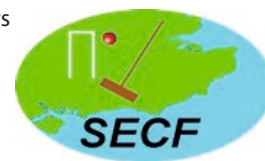
Personally, I intend to make full use of this new facility.

Peter Allan, Development Officer

Southern Croquet Federation

South-East

After 28 years on the South-East Croquet Federation



committee and eight years as Chairman, Bill Arliss retired in 2020, becoming the first person to be appointed President in recognition of his distinguished service.

A new team of officers has taken over for 2021, with Andrew Stewart as Chairman.

~

After running no tournaments in 2020 the Federation is looking to run a full programme of leagues and tournaments this year.

We invite entries for four AC and three GC leagues and hope for a repeat of 2019 when a total of 36 teams competed at AC and 53 teams contested at GC.

The most popular competition was the GC handicap league with 27 clubs entering a total of 33 teams.

The Federation also has a full programme of tournaments throughout the summer starting with an AC doubles weekend for teams of four at **Sussex County** (nine clubs entered in 2019) and then two major GC events to follow.

The first is The Southern Challenge, which because it is so popular (23 teams from 17 clubs in 2019) has to be divided into two divisions of four-player teams contesting both singles and doubles.

The other major GC tournament is a GC Teams day in August, and here again there was a large entry of 21 teams from 14 clubs in 2019.

In addition, we offer a Ladies AC day with teams of two or three (not necessarily from a single club) playing singles and doubles and a Ladies GC Day with teams of four playing singles and doubles.

The GC tournament attracted a good level of entries last time, with 16 teams from 14 clubs, but the AC event was disappointing with only six teams entered.

Full details of all the events can be found on our website at www.southeastcroquet.org.uk.

After the success of our virtual AGM at the end of last year, we are trying out some 'webinars' via Zoom, the first one being delivered by Paul Hetherington (on Marketing) with more to follow.

Andrew Stewart, Chair, South East Croquet Federation

CA Diplomas recognise those club members who have given outstanding service to croquet, and have been active in Club or Federation affairs over a long period. Diplomas have nothing to do with croquet prowess, and everything to do with help given to other members. This is only part two of the 2020 CA Diploma award winners.



Lilian Holdsworth – Littlehampton CC

Lilian first joined Littlehampton CC in 2001 and has been a stalwart member ever since.

She attends the club at least four times a week and is a willing volunteer for any task.

In 2008 she became club chairman and was elected president in 2011, a position she still holds.

Under her dynamic chairmanship the membership reached a point in 2010 when a waiting list had to be considered, but she never misses an opportunity to recruit new members and, as one of our coaches, encourages them and keeps them under her welcoming wing indefinitely.

During our centenary year in 2009, Lilian introduced the Littlehampton Centenary Cup, inviting teams from clubs in West Sussex meet for a day of friendly competition and this has continued every year since as our main event of our season. During this year she also curated a history of croquet exhibition for the town museum incorporating the club's history.

Whilst both chairman and president, in 2011 Lilian led the club through a divisive dispute which, although it caused her serious stress and required external mediation, was never allowed to interfere with routine club events.

Since 2008 Lilian has been a considerate and diligent unofficial welfare officer for the club: keeping in touch with sick and retired members.

As club president she gives quiet, sound advice to the chairman and committee whenever requested.

She combines many public duties (including assisting the Lord Lieutenant) with her club activities, sometimes on the same day, resulting in dramatic costume changes, to the surprise of new members!



Des Honey – Cornwall CC

Since joining Cornwall CC in 2006 Des has become involved in all aspects of running the club including its recruiting and fund-raising activities.

He has encouraged others to take part in croquet, always having time to give help and support through group and individual coaching for new and existing members alike. He coaxes non-members to try croquet at specially arranged group sessions and never misses an opportunity to promote the game in other areas of his life.

He is simply a very good envoy for croquet at club and in Cornwall as a whole.

When it comes to club competitions, Des's invincible IT skills have enabled him to prepare Swiss, block, knockout or handicap formats, or more or less any configuration, and then go on to act as tournament manager.

Des soon became involved in other aspects of running the club, joining in lawn working parties and generally being a reliable pair of hands whenever needed.

Becoming a GC referee added another achievement in Des's croquet career.

He has been a club committee member for nine years and served as chairman for three of those. For five years he took the lead with the ground maintenance and the care of various allied machinery.

Des is ready and willing to help in any way he can, often being the first to volunteer his services, including for notable projects, such as a successful application for a CA grant and negotiating a long term lease with our landlord.

In conclusion, Des has played a strong part in the development of Cornwall CC, is well known in many South West Federation clubs and is also a great ambassador for the sport in general.



Jane Hull – Kington Langley CC

Jane Hull is a founder member of Kington Langley CC which was set up 36 years ago in 1984. She was very much involved in getting the club off the ground and served on the committee until 2011, in various roles including being match secretary from 1996 to 2011.

Jane was part of the team maintaining the lawns which included mowing for more than 20 years.

She has been part of the successes the club has had over the years in the South West Federation Leagues including winning the Secretary's Shield, which was a remarkable achievement for such a small club.

In 2014 Jane was inaugurated as president of the club and is always ready to promote it and the game of croquet generally.

Croquet is an important part of Jane's life in the summer when she enjoys travelling to different clubs to play in CA calendar tournaments, through which she has formed many friendships in the croquet world.

In 2017 Jane took on the monumental task of managing Kington Langley CC's development when it went from one and half lawns, to two of full size.

This involved interviewing potential contractors and then liaising with the chosen one throughout the process, which was a very big commitment for her and the club.

Jane will be the first to say it was a team effort but without her leadership the development could have been far more difficult.

Jane is involved in essential fund raising by organising a successful bridge drive in the autumn of each year and supports the fund-raising done by other members throughout the year.

She is always praising others for their achievements and it is time she receives some recognition for her years of dedication to the club she helped found and for raising the enjoyment of croquet.



David Hunt – Nailsea & District CC

David started to play croquet in 2002, after being leafleted outside his local Co-op. He made rapid progress as a player, and was quick to get involved in the life of the Nailsea CC.

Even though David was still working, he volunteered to be on the mowing and hoop-setting rotas, and was always ready to help with other jobs, often providing his van for transporting bulky items.

Now retired, David is a pivotal and valued member of the Lawn Advisory Group.

He is enthusiastic about trying new ideas, and is always ready to provide effort in their implementation.

He has taken responsibility for hoop-setting at the club, and works hard to maintain Nailsea's high standards in that area. He designed and built a drill stand to ensure that the hoop holes were drilled vertically.

As well as leading on the positioning and accurate setting of the hoops, he extends his role to the painting of hoops in the winter, and also to the harvesting and sieving of molehill soil.

In addition to all his volunteer effort, David is invaluable to Nailsea tournament managers, and can be relied upon to step in or out at the last minute to ensure that tournaments or club competitions have a suitable number of players.

He is always willing to play doubles with beginners, and has recently begun to coach AC both formally and on an ad hoc basis.

Over the years, David has been a reliable member of various club AC and GC league teams, often as captain. He is a formidable opponent in both disciplines, and is particularly skilful at one-ball.

In short, David is a very good sport, a hard worker, and a much valued and popular club member.



Adrian Kirby – Peterborough CC

Adrian is and has been the lifeblood of Peterborough CC almost since its foundation. He has inspired many others to take up the game and improve, and he is also the reliable person to turn to when something needs doing or a committee post is vacant.

When the club was founded in July 2006, Adrian was one of the first new members to join, having previously played with considerable success for the works team Thomas Cook Peterborough.

He represented Peterborough Club for the first time in November 2008 at a Soham indoor croquet tournament

Earlier that year Adrian became vice-chair of the club, from which point his house became the principal meeting and social venue for the club until he moved to smaller premises in 2016.

In March of 2009 Adrian was appointed club captain, with responsibility for all internal and external competitions, and he continues in that role to this day, and around the same time he also became the lead person for setting up the lawns at the start of the season, and became the club handicapper too.

When the CA introduced coaching qualifications, Adrian dutifully went off to be trained, to ensure the club had at least one accredited coach.

In 2016, the club was again short of officers, so Adrian stepped into the role of treasurer, and sought out a new independent auditor for our books.

In 2017 Adrian became an accredited AC referee, and a year later – although he rarely plays GC – he qualified as a referee for that code too.

If it were not for Adrian Kirby it is highly unlikely that the Club would have survived to this day.



Dr Adam Moliver – Cheltenham CC

Adam Moliver joined the Cheltenham CC in 2005 and, applying his clinical approach to the full, made rapid strides in reducing his handicap to single figures. But he soon understood that there is much more to being a full member of a club than just being proficient in playing the game and representing the Club, and he looked for more ways in which he could contribute.

And this he did; significantly and across the whole gamut of the Club's activities.

One would hesitate to say that it is because of his background in old age psychiatry, but he has the ability to pass on his love of the game to new members, and rapidly forged a niche in introducing beginners with the effectiveness of his coaching.

Pinny to the fore, he also became a regular inhabitant of the kitchen, and a frequent provider of tournament lunches and teas.

He is also a stalwart member of the hoop-setting team, which is ever necessary with the Club's busy tournament schedule.

He was elected to the committee in 2013, and immediately took on the role of Chairman; an office he held until the Spring of 2020. As Chairman, he continually looked for ways to improve the image of croquet and the standing of the Club within the local community.

He oversaw the creation of the Club's website, the provision of broadband and the move to an online court booking system, as well as being to the fore in volunteering for the less thrilling maintenance of club and grounds.

It is obvious that Adam enjoys his croquet, and the Club certainly benefits from this.

Adam is pictured above receiving his CA Diploma from a socially distanced Eileen Magee at Cheltenham.





2020 Croquet Association Diploma



Mike Oulton – Rottingdean CC

Mike joined Rottingdean CC in 1989, five years after its inauguration and, following his retirement from work, began to take an increasingly active role within the club.

With only one three-quarter sized court and members who liked to play social croquet, Mike saw the need for someone to train to be a coach, took it upon himself to be that person, and qualified as a Club Coach in 2004.

Since then he has provided weekly coaching sessions for both AC and GC, which has inspired other members to qualify as Club Coaches, thus helping to raise the overall standard of play at Rottingdean.

In addition to his coaching role, over his thirty years of membership Mike has held varied posts of responsibility within the club, and has served on the committee. He was the maintenance and equipment officer for over ten years, looking after the club premises, its equipment and the court. He served as Chair of the Club from 2008 to 2011.

Mike qualified as a GC referee in 2004, and has officiated in that capacity within our club and for various tournaments at Sussex County CC.

In 2004, directly after qualifying, he was called upon to be an on-court referee for the GC World Championships held at Sussex County, and fifteen years later he was refereeing again at last year's GC Worlds.

Over a thirty-year period, Mike has made a huge contribution to Rottingdean CC, and has worn a variety of hats in his efforts to promote croquet both at home and in the surrounding area.



Ilan Stratford – Budleigh Salterton CC

Ilan has been a member of Budleigh Salterton CC for many years. His contribution to the Club is considerable having been a member for full terms on both the general and croquet committees.

As a retired engineer, Ilan was closely involved in the preparation for the design and supervision of a major building project to replace an existing pavilion that had gone beyond a safe state of repair. The new 'Middle Pavilion' is now admired for its sympathetic design, and held to be a tremendous asset to the club.

During 2019, Ilan took the role of club membership secretary where he was exposed to the various spreadsheets and paper records that had been used to manage all details of our 260 members.

Ilan's task was also to convince a rather traditional club, and its management structure, that a step change was needed and, that our rather 'mature' membership could be safely tutored to be able to quickly adapt to the technology. He and his small team achieved this and, during the winter season, a computerised system was introduced (in stages) to live operation and we are proud to say that it has saved a considerable burden of paperwork and volunteer time.

Ilan's commitment to the club is undoubted and his work has set the club securely for the next generation of members. Importantly his work will be of interest to other clubs and he has already offered to be a point of contact for those looking to upgrade their systems. The Club has been very lucky to have Ilan's skills so freely and willingly offered.



David and Nancy Temple Sidmouth CC

David and Nancy Temple retired to Sidmouth, took up croquet and proceeded to get heavily involved in all aspects of the game and the club over many years. They worked tirelessly, on and off the committee, developing the sport in Sidmouth and were instrumental in building the club's membership to a practical capacity.

They were particularly keen to support and mentor new members and always willing to coach developing players, overall helping to make Sidmouth a welcoming, recognised croquet venue at home and abroad.

David was committee Chairman for several years and represented the croquet section on the general management committee of the large multi-sport club that we are part of.

His opinion was always sought and he is recognised as a man who 'get things done' such as masterminding the fund raising for the irrigation system which is still talked about by the management committee - no wonder that David is now the overall Club President.

Nancy became a proficient player and then took-up tournament management. She managed the open B Level event for several years with an excellent balance of strictness, good humour and flexibility. She also ran internal competitions and, as social secretary, maintained a busy calendar; ensuring the club 'worked' for all.

David and Nancy were both club handicappers and reliable SWF league players. Both played in the club's intermediate team, captained by Nancy, and David turned out for the advanced league team too.

In all aspects the Temples participated; from provision of teas to shelter repair to construction of the 'coffee cart'. David and Nancy are a most effective team, always willing to assist with sound advice and practical, hands-on help, from which the Club has greatly benefited.



Photo, left: Eileen Magee on duty again at Cheltenham CC, this time making a delayed presentation of a 2019 CA Diploma to club member Gerald Wynn, who's citation was carried in Gazette 384.



Don Williamson
Southport & Birkdale CC
and
The North West Croquet Federation

Don Williamson has been a stalwart member of Southport and Birkdale CC for over forty years, serving on the committee many times including as Chairman and President.

He has also taken a leading role within the North West Croquet Federation over the years as coaching officer and federation handicapper.

Don has introduced numerous beginners to the game and within the club has organised hundreds of coaching sessions for beginners and improvers, in addition to running club sessions on laws, handicapping and etiquette.

He has also developed an expertise in lawn maintenance and the high quality surfaces at Southport are a tribute to his enthusiasm and incredible number of hours devoted to mowing and supervision.

He also enjoys repairing and renovating equipment and many beginners have started their croquet careers with a mallet reconditioned by Don.

Don has travelled extensively over the north-west to run coaching sessions at other clubs and advise on development and handicapping.

He is an Examining Level coach, and as an Championship and Examining Level referee has officiated at many tournaments and international events.

The contribution made by Don Williamson to croquet at both club and regional level is immense, and his expertise is widely recognised and respected throughout the area.



Howard Rosevear 1933 - 2021

Howard Rosevear was farming in Cornwall when he heard about croquet from his friend Trevor Bainbridge, whose brother was a keen player.

He was introduced to the Chairman of Cornwall CC who was looking for a suitable permanent site for the club and agreed to rent some of his land for the purpose.

In 2003 Howard started work on providing two lawns and the following year the club was up and running at its current location. Howard's further involvement in the club's development resulted in a comfortable clubhouse and, more recently, a third lawn.

Throughout the years since then, Howard retained a keen and active interest in all aspects of club affairs and he has honoured his position as Club President, attending AGMs and committee meetings and supported club social and fund-raising events including some of the latter in his own home.

He was an active member of the club's South West Federation GC league team for many years, and took part regularly in the club's own tournaments both as a competitor and supporter.

He promoted the game of croquet in other areas of his life too, arranging taster

Obituary



sessions for groups with which he was involved, resulting in the recruitment of new club members.

Howard's commitment to, and support for, the club remained strong throughout. During the Covid-19 lockdowns he took on the care of part of the club grounds and visited the premises every day to ensure all was well.

Howard was awarded a CA Diploma for Services to Croquet at the Association's Zoom AGM in October 2020.

In summary, without Howard's involvement, commitment, help and support, our club would not exist as it is today. He will be greatly missed and will remain in members' memories for many years to come.

Rhona Foster

Join your club to 'National Heritage Open Days'

Last year I visited several local buildings which aren't usually open to the public.

National Heritage Open Days is operated by the National Trust and in Cheltenham this is sub-contracted to Cheltenham Civic Society, which is a much respected organisation in the town.

This got me thinking... Why shouldn't Cheltenham Croquet Club be part of that....?

- The club has an interesting history.
- Becoming a regular listing would cement the club's place in the town's history.
- I have always felt that a croquet club should find ways to fully integrate within its locality.
- It would offer a potential for recruitment.

I approached Cheltenham Civic Society and their response was *"We would be delighted for Cheltenham Croquet Club to join in"*.

I recruited a team of volunteers and designed a short training course and we were all ready to greet visitors in September.... then Covid-19 hit!

I found myself writing an apologetic letter explaining the position.

They said *"We would like to include your details in the local Heritage Open Day programme and we could also include something about you on our more general website ... and we look forward to you fully joining in 2021... is that OK with you?"*

It didn't take me long to think about that!

A website entry has already been uploaded. I have looked at the National Heritage Days website and there are loads of entries for the South-West.

Why not try this for your club 2021?

Klim Seabright, Cheltenham CC

Obituary

Professor Bryan Sykes, human geneticist, author, communicator, croquet player, polymath, Emeritus Fellow of Wolfson College Oxford and Emeritus Professor of Human Genetics Oxford University, sadly passed away on 10 December 2020, aged 73.

Bryan had a brilliant mind with a mischievous streak, making him the centre of attraction in any room; lighting up the lives of all around with ingenious theories, adventures and anecdotes.

The world is a duller place without our good friend Bryan Sykes.

He attended the independent boys school Eltham College and developed passions for the natural world, experiments and inventions. He studied biochemistry at the University of Liverpool, and did a PhD at the University of Bristol on the connective tissue protein elastin. Originally a medical geneticist specialising in inherited bone disease, Bryan made his career at Oxford researching what DNA can tell us about the human past. His work encompassed the first recovery of DNA from ancient bone, the colonisation of Polynesia, the fate of the Neanderthals, the early settlement of Britain and the link between genetics and surnames. He was the founder and chairman of University spin-off, Oxford Ancestors, which helps individuals explore their genetic roots using DNA.

Bryan was a best-selling author, with seven books to his credit. His book 'The Seven Daughters of Eve' (2001) proposed that more than 95% of living Europeans could trace their ancestry to one of seven women living between 8,500 and 45,000 years ago. They, in turn, would share descent from a single Eve, who lived in Africa even earlier. He gave the seven women names, anticipating people's desire to know which "tribe" they belonged to.

As a communicator, in 1987 Bryan won a British Association for the Advancement of Science media fellowship that enabled him to spend seven weeks working with Channel 4 News. In 2015, he appeared in a three-part Channel 4 series Bigfoot Files on the search for the Yeti, which proved that all genetic samples provided to have come from known animal species.

Enjoying the finer side of life, Bryan became the proud owner of a Mercedes sports car with the appropriate registration D7 EVE and a flat in Edinburgh, where he was a member of the Meadows CC..

Prof. Bryan Sykes 1947 - 2020



~
On to croquet . . . We don't know what first brought Bryan to croquet, but Bryan was instrumental to a revival of the sport at Oxford University – he negotiated students' access to the lawns in the Parks which were previously reserved for senior members, obtained university funding for croquet and gained half Blue status for the sport.

It was Richard Rothwell's encouragement after the 1977 Oxford-Cambridge Varsity match which brought both Bryan and his doubles partner Ian Bond to the CA.

They were soon travelling down regularly to Cheltenham to practice, with only Solomon's book and watching other players as guides.

Peeling was Bryan's strength, and Ian's was more in break-building, so the latter would typically take the first break and then sit back to watch Bryan's peeling exploits – which he would often persist in and carry off, long after common sense would have brought them to a halt.

In 1978 Bryan shared the Apps Bowl (for the most improved male player) with Dave Foulser, alongside his wife Sue who won the female award. The following year 1979 Bryan went on to win the Spencer Ell Cup (AC third Eight), was promoted to the Chairman's Salver in 1980 but never rose higher. In winning the Ell again in 1981, he managed six triples but lost a play-off to Eddie Bell. Bryan represented Ireland in the Home Internationals in 1984.



Until 1991 he was a regular at the Open Championship, playing doubles with Ian Bond, but after a final appearance in the Ell in 1990 was increasingly preoccupied with his other interests and was rarely seen on the lawns competitively thereafter.

He spent several winters in New Zealand, competing in their Centenary Open Championship in 2013. In 2015 and 2016 Bryan represented Oxfordshire in the Inter Counties AC team and in 2015 partnered his son Richard. He enjoyed the social side of croquet immensely and was a regular at the Alternate at Surbiton and the Oxford-Cambridge reunion matches at Hurlingham.

Bryan reached a croquet grade of 2200 in 1980 and a handicap of -0.5 in 1981, but he was never dedicated to the game and was very much the 'gentleman amateur' taking delight in the intricacies of peeling and in the foibles of his fellow players.

~
Bryan met Sue Foden when she was a student in Oxford, and they were married in 1978. Though the marriage was dissolved in 1984, he and Sue remained close and their son Richard, was born in 1991. Bryan and Richard were close in many respects, not least their love of adventure but also their infamous track record as DIY partners and enjoyment of playing croquet doubles together. In 2007 Bryan collaborated with the Danish artist Ulla Plougmand on an exhibition featuring the Seven Daughters of Eve, and their subsequent relationship lasted until the end of his life. In later years, Bryan together with Sue, enjoyed the splendours of Scotland spending time especially on the Isle of Skye for which he had a special passion.

Bryan Sykes was a member of the Cheltenham, Oxford University, Wanaka and Meadows Croquet Clubs.

**Dayal
Gunasekera
& Martin
Murray**

Left: 1978 winning Oxford University Varsity team.
Right: 2013 in New Zealand.



Remembering Brian Sykes

As one serialisation of croquet reminisces draws to a close (see right), so another begins and will be continued in a future issue.

Dayal Gunasekera writes:

Utilising the writing skills and eye for a popular style which had made his books on genetics such a success, Bryan was a regular contributor to The Croquet Gazette and many excellent reports flowed from his pen, most memorably his characterisation of Johnny Haigh in the opening of his report on the 1981 Spencer Ell.

'A major appeal of croquet, so it is often said, lies in the rich variety of background and profession among its devotees.

This year's eight for the Spencer Ell certainly backs up the claim with, among the competitors, a World War II flying ace, ping-pong international, lawyer, confidante of Hong Kong's underworld bosses, P.T. instructor, First Division footballer, banker, county cricketer and childhood choral prodigy.

As well as Johnny Haigh the selectors had contrived to assemble the usual collection of hacks and has-beens that go to make up this annual marathon of gastronomic and hepatic endurance.'

Memories of William Ormerod

by Peter Trimmer (Part 4, conclusion)

Continued from December Gazette 389...

William had an unusual way with people, and a confidence that, with sufficient thought, all sorts of problems could be solved.

He once told me how, many years previously, he had dealt with a patient with severe depression, who William felt was at imminent risk of suicide.

"I asked him to do an experiment for me," said William. "I asked him to go to a particular restaurant that evening, which I knew to be a particularly fine establishment, and to order the best meal there that money could buy, along with a fine wine. And then, at the end of the meal, to just get up and calmly walk out – without paying.

I asked him to come and report back to me how it made him feel; whether it made him feel more 'alive'."

William waited a few seconds for me to think about this before telling me, "I then phoned the restaurant and told them that a man of that description would be

coming to dine with them, and that he would leave without paying, but that I would pay whatever was due."

William assured me that the man did not subsequently commit suicide.

"Of course, don't go telling others this story," beamed William, "or I might be struck off!"

~

To briefly sum up the way William lived, and what others may learn from him: think of novel options, make balanced decisions, be confident in (but modest about) one's own abilities; enjoy games and, more especially, the company you keep whilst playing them; share good stories and speak well of others.

In summary, it has been a great pleasure to have known William;

I will miss him very much.

Pete Trimmer

William Ormerod (1937 - 2020)
was a world renowned
GB international croquet player

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.

Your club chairman will be happy to give you more information.

Updated GC Coaching Manual

The first Coaching Committee meeting of the year was held virtually via Zoom, as you might expect, and it did have interesting outcomes, with the GC Merit Award Scheme high on the agenda plus some changes to Becoming a Coach. Details of these two important items are within these Coaching Pages.

GC Coaching Manual

Since the meeting, we have managed to update the GC Coaching Manual - well, I say we, when I should say Stephen Custance-Baker, who completed a full review and has updated all sections to incorporate the most recent changes to the GC Rules.

All members of the Coaching Committee are extremely grateful to Stephen who completed this onerous task in record time and without any arm twisting being required.

This is a manual for coaches and can be downloaded free of charge from the CA website, using this navigation:

Home > Play > Coaching (on that page, click on 'coaching resources')

Or on-line readers can use this direct link: croquet.org.uk/?p=games/coaching/resources

Recent Coaching Qualifications

An enquiry was received recently regarding names being missed from the Coaches Register, that revealed three missing qualifications, further to a course in 2008 – yes, 2008!

Thankfully, a member of the Coaching Committee was able to establish exactly what had happened all those years ago.

So, apologies to the coaches below for whatever happened to the administration back then, and thank you for continuing with your coaching in the interim.

Club Level Coach

Penny Clark	Ben Rhydding CC
Richard Field	Bishop Monkton CC
Simon Horner	Bishop Monkton CC

Sarah Hayes,
Coaching Committee Chair

New GC Merit Award Scheme

Was it really one year ago when I promised an update on the GC Merit Award Scheme? Yes, it was!

Covid-19 and event cancellations took over to a certain degree and meant we could extend our timescale to ensure the Scheme was up and running for the 2021 season. I am delighted to say that it is now ready to launch.

Both AC and GC Merit Award Schemes aim to encourage enterprising play and develop skills, and this was our starting point, from which we developed a plan to ensure:

- The class of award should proportionally reflect the achievement of the player and reflect the prestige of the event.
- There should be distinct levels of achievement to which the metrics of the awards can be applied.
- It should be immediately and easily apparent that an award has been achieved without interpretation, delay or third-party involvement.
- There should be parity with the existing AC scheme hierarchy with Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze awards indicating relative levels of merit in both systems.
- Only singles events of 13-point games or more are applicable.

We looked at a number of different approaches

The approach for the GC Merit Award Scheme has been to acknowledge a player's merit in achieving a level of performance rather than any particular

skill such as running a 7-yard hoop (where the judgements of an acceptable tolerance of angle of shot would need to be made).

Who would measure the angle and distance and with what?

On top of these difficulties is the question of in-off hoop runs, missed clearances and running a hoop unintentionally, etc., so clearly this was not an acceptable metric and similar arguments could be made for all aspects of GC, if a single stroke metric were to be used to judge a player's skill.

The only other aspect which can therefore be used as a metric is 'performance or achievement' - however, there are limitations to this as well.

We were asked to consider grade difference between opponents - however, we would then need to agree on an acceptable grade difference for award qualification and, perhaps, even various grade differences for each class of award.

Further to this, we considered if this would apply to a single game win, in which perhaps a large element of good fortune could be involved?

This would seem very unfair.

This approach would require dynamic interrogation of the grade database throughout an event and it would not be immediately apparent that an award was justified and it would also require the rankings database to be fully up to date and correct.

To overcome the 'single lucky game' aspect, perhaps we could have looked at 'best of three' match wins instead.

However, most 'best of three' events have Championship Grade 1 or 2 classifications and are covered by the CA Silver Medal Award (which sits above all the Merit Awards).

There was also the option to adopt a metric based on three or four consecutive

Becoming a Coach

The Coaching Committee has agreed the following changes to the criteria for becoming a qualified coach.

Handicap Levels - Applicants are required to have (or have held at some time) a handicap of:

AC Graded Coaches

Grade 1	12 or below (<i>previously 14</i>)
Grade 2	4 or below (<i>previously 6</i>)
Grade 3	0 or below (<i>previously 1</i>)

GC Graded Coaches

Grade 1	6 or below (<i>unchanged</i>)
Grade 2	2 or below (<i>unchanged</i>)
Grade 3	-1 or below (<i>unchanged</i>)

Grade 3

Grade 3 in both AC and GC requires a full Referee qualification. This is the highest grade of coaching award, and would normally be only approved via application to the CA Coaching Committee.

Club-Level Coaches

It was agreed there would not be any handicap restrictions applied to this entry grade coaching level. Club-Level coaches are invaluable to beginners and high handicap players alike, and should have a grounding in both AC and GC, including basic knowledge of the Rules and Laws.

The AC Merit Award requirement has been removed from the specified criteria.

game wins, but this was considered even more unwieldy especially if spread across multi-game matches or even different tournaments.

Coming to a final decision

All the above led us to the conclusion that an overall winner of an event is the most deserving factor for a merit Award.

It is immediately clear who has won, does not entail comparison between grades and ensuing calculations and the element of good fortune is outweighed by performance consistency necessary to win the event. Thus, it would seem this metric is the most suitable if it can be applied logically and consistently to qualifying events and it is the route favoured by the CA Coaching Committee.

Application to CA Calendar fixtures

The A, B and C-Level Series

The structure of the A, B and C-Level Series is a logical starting point with their clearly distinct proficiency groups and as such it seems applicable to allocate from the bottom upwards Bronze, Silver and Gold for the winners of each of these events.

Winners of the national final of each series will also be eligible for an equivalent award, providing they have not already earned one by this time. Any other event that is not part of the A, B or C-Level Series but with a handicap entry restriction specification will fall into either the Gold, Silver or Bronze category equivalent to the restriction level.

It was agreed that unrestricted Open Series events are, on the whole, difficult to include fairly within the Merit Award Scheme unless a specific handicap entry restriction is applied. The majority therefore do not appear.

Handicap tournaments - The GC All England Handicap Final for 2021 has been included in the new scheme and appears in the table.

The GC Eights

These are seen as the top of the Merit Award Scheme hierarchy and as such the winners of each eight should be duly recognised.

The 1st and 2nd Eights have been treated without distinction and both winners will earn a Platinum Award. The advent of the 3rd Eight means that, to preserve the credibility of the Platinum award as the pinnacle of achievement, a Gold award is appropriate for the winner.

~

No system gets it exactly right first time,

The Merit Award Scheme aims to encourage enterprising play and to develop skills. Awards for achievement in Golf Croquet have now been agreed upon, the criteria for which appear below.

A full list of Merit Award Winners is on the CA website.

Conditions for Merit Awards

The game must be a singles game played on a full-size court as part of any CA Fixtures Calendar event (as detailed within the qualifying events table) and under the Tournament Regulations (including hoop setting).

Players must be Individual CA Members when the claim is made.

Further Awards claimed must be of a higher category, e.g. once a Silver Merit Award has been achieved, players are no longer eligible for a Bronze or another Silver Award.

The number of players (where applicable) refers to those STARTING play on Day 1.

GC Merit Award Scheme Table of Qualifying Events for 2021

Platinum Merit Award – win	GC First Eight (<i>The Ricki Savage Memorial</i>) GC Second Eight (<i>The Kate Jones Memorial</i>)
Gold Merit Award – win	GC Third Eight (<i>The Suzanne Roberts Memorial</i>)
Gold Merit Award – win <i>Minimum 12 players at start</i>	Any CA GC A-Level (0+) Series event (13 in 2021) also: GC 'A Level' 2- tournament at Sussex County GC One-day A-Level tournament at Watford GC Restricted entry level tournament at Norwich GC Veterans Championship at Budleigh Salterton GC 'A Level' 2- part of Annual tournament at Sussex Co. GC London Masters Event at Surbiton GC Under 25 Championships at Watford
Silver Merit Award – win <i>Minimum 12 players at start</i>	Any CA GC B-Level (3+) Series event (26 in 2021) also: Newport GC B Level tournament at Newport GC 3+ part of Annual tournament at Sussex County GC All England Handicap Final at Sidmouth
Bronze Merit Award – win <i>Minimum 8 players at start</i>	Any CA GC C-Level (7+) Series event (24 in 2021) also: GC C-level tournament at Blewbury GC 7+ part of Annual tournament at Sussex County GC C2B level tournament at Hamptworth Grass Roots final at Watford

How to claim your Award

Please ensure you notify both the CA Office and Sarah Hayes as Chair of the CA Coaching Committee when you win (for the first time) any of the eligible events.

however, the above does offer a practical and relatively easy to manage Merit Award Scheme. The future success of this scheme will lie in pursuing several comprehensive reviews of its acceptance and popularity amongst the competitive GC fraternity.

I would like to personally thank everyone who has been involved in helping to finalise this scheme, particularly Lionel Tibble who has been involved since its inception in 2016.

The CA Coaching Committee looks forward to the presentation of the first GC Merit Awards in the coming season.

Sarah Hayes and Lionel Tibble
CA Coaching Committee



A first tournament win in the B-level (3+) Series will earn the victor a Silver Merit Award from 2021 onwards. Here Glynis Davies (right) receives the Phyllis Court 'Smokey's Cup' from Manager Frances Colman, for her win in 2020. (Photograph by Chris Roberts)

A New Coaching Academy

The Chiltern Croquet Academy at High Wycombe CC is celebrating its formal recognition by the CA's Executive Board, meaning that all are now able to see references to our academy on the CA website's Fixtures Calendar.

We are geared up to deliver 19 courses in 2021 (as advertised in the December issue, Gazette 389); however, the realities of the ongoing coronavirus restrictions are beginning to bite.

We remain very keen to deliver those courses that we can, while keeping within Government guidelines, however, it is already clear that our February courses cannot be held as originally planned, and the possibilities for March and April are receding.



We are exploring using Zoom for the offerings where the course material suits that medium, while for other courses (the majority), it seems very likely that we will need to reschedule them to later in the year, accepting the generous offers from some

local clubs to host some of them.

Planning is proceeding on that basis and the CA website Fixtures Calendar will reflect the latest position. Please keep a watchful eye for CA website announcements as to when the Fixtures Calendar will be open for bookings; members are encouraged to sign up for courses, as those with the highest take up will be more highly prioritised in any rescheduling. Those who do sign-up, will be personally advised, via email, what the (re) arrangements are for their course.

The Chiltern Croquet Academy is now up and running and we are doing all we can, within the Covid-19 rules, to deliver our 2021 courses.

Ian Shore, Manager, CCA

Having learned of this interesting development at the High Wycombe Croquet Club, Gazette Editor Chris Roberts interviewed the man behind the enterprise, 2019 Coach of the Year, Ian Shore.

Q. The CA website Fixtures Calendar (and Tournament Entry System) is now showing some courses at a venue called "Chiltern Academy"; what can you tell me about that please, Ian?

A. The Chiltern Croquet Academy (CCA), to give it its full title, has just been formed, based at the High Wycombe Croquet Club, which is just off the A404, in the Hazlemere Recreation Ground, north of High Wycombe in Buckinghamshire.

Q. Why has the club decided to form an Academy; is such a move necessary?

A. The club has a strategic vision to be a local Centre of Excellence for croquet. Part of that vision is to deliver a broad range of high standard croquet coaching to CA members in the local area and from further afield. To ensure the right focus and priority is given to this, having taken advice, we decided to follow the example of others and establish an Academy, which has now been approved by the Croquet Association.

Q. Who is involved; do they have sufficient experience?

A. I [Ian Shore] have been appointed as the Manager of The Chiltern Croquet Academy. I am supported by Cliff Jones as Academy Head Coach and Ed Olhausen as the Academy Secretary. Cliff Jones' vast experience, both in coaching and helping set up the other academies, has been drawn on heavily in the formation

process and he has an ongoing role as a member of The Chiltern Croquet Academy Management Board.

Q. What does a 'broad range of courses' mean, and is that possible for just one club to sustain?

A. By calling on the expertise of top coaches and experts from other clubs, while building on our experience of the past few years, in 2021 we are planning to deliver coaching covering both AC and GC at all handicap levels, as well as the non-playing aspects such as tournament management, coaching and refereeing.

Q. Is there capacity at the club, where there are only two courts and a Swiss style Tuin clubhouse, to run such a range of courses?

A. The number of courts is a recognised limitation, although the use of half-courts for some of the coaching will help to increase capacity. We are also making use of the adjacent Hazlemere Memorial Hall by hiring a room there to serve as a classroom when necessary. In due course, the High Wycombe CC plans to add a further three courts which will do much to alleviate this concern.

Q. Will not the reservation of courts for courses adversely affect the playing opportunities of club members?

A. Minimising the impact of the courses on the club members has been a major consideration in the planning for 2021. To achieve this, most courses will only occupy one of the two courts, and the use of the adjacent Memorial Hall will avoid heavy use of the clubhouse. Further, the courses have been scheduled on non-roll-up days.

Q. Will the existence of The Chiltern Academy change the way that CA

members book for courses?

A. During 2020 High Wycombe CC trialled using the Tournament Entry System on the CA website to register course bookings and take the course fees. This confirmed that the system functionality broadly met the requirement. However, newcomers, in particular, found some difficulties navigating to make a booking – and lessons are being learnt. On this basis, and with the support of the CA, all Chiltern Academy courses will be managed through the CA website, with bookings for courses becoming available at the same time as the website is open for tournament bookings.

Q. Where will the money for course fees go?

A. The course fees and the expenses of the Academy will be accounted for entirely separately from High Wycombe CC. At the end of the year, the Academy will donate the proceeds of that year to the club, to help fund the creation of the additional three courts.

Q. Won't Covid-19 restrictions prevent meaningful coaching in 2021?

A. Given the current lockdown, this is, of course, a serious challenge. The published programme of courses will almost certainly need to be amended, but it is too early to know what will be possible. The Academy's Management Board remains committed to delivering whatever coaching the Covid-19 constraints allow.

The undoubted enthusiasm and drive shown by High Wycombe Croquet Club in forming The Chiltern Croquet Academy bodes well. We wish them the best.

Chris Roberts, Editor, Croquet Gazette

Replacing the Tufnol end caps of a wooden mallet head



How often do you care for your mallet?

I tended just to pack it away in my bag at the end of play and then take it out just before playing again.

It was towards the end of September that I noticed how badly the end caps were damaged, one more than the other. This had been caused by striking a hoop on more than one occasion; the cap was chipped at a corner and had become laminated (photo 1), probably exacerbated by water getting in.

I knew that the caps could be replaced with new Tufnol ends and the **CA Shop** sold me a pair measuring 61x69x12tk which meant that as my mallet was 60mm square the Tufnol would need to be cut to size.

Preparation

I collected together all the tools I would need. With Tufnol being very hard, the tools needed to be very sharp – a junior hacksaw with a new blade, a wood chisel and a rasp. I also gathered a large clamp, wood block, rubber band, wood mallet, contact adhesive, a square, fine sandpaper and clear exterior grade polyurethane coating, with a brush.

At all times it was essential that the head was held rigidly in place, using the clamp and wood block, when I worked on it.

Removal of the existing caps

Before any removal, the existing head was used as a template to mark out on the back of the new caps to see what would need to be cut off. It was also useful to number the caps and mark 'top' for consistent orientation. Then, tapping the chisel vertically down (photo 2) into the lines of



laminations, the existing cap end was removed in layers, back to the inner cap, with care.

The inner cap is secured to the

main wooden block with screws so it is important to be aware of this before chiselling off the end caps.

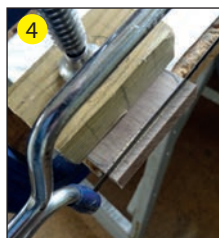
Having removed both ends I could see the countersunk screws and decided to leave the film of Araldite covering them that originally was used to bond on the end cap (photo 3).



Bonding new caps in place

The new caps had to be cut down roughly to the size needed leaving a slight overhang for finishing off (the two pre-cut faces could be lined up with the head faces).

The excess length and radiused corners were pre-cut at 45 degrees using the hacksaw (photos 4 & 5).

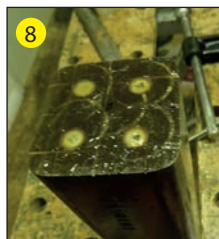


Before gluing the two faces to be in contact, they needed to be keyed and the hacksaw proved useful for this (photos 6 & 7).



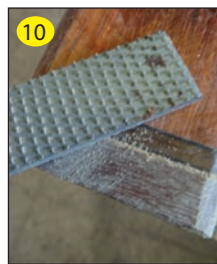
The glue I chose was a contact adhesive.

I coated both surfaces and, leaving them to dry (photo 8) before bringing them together, was careful to line them up perfectly before applying sustained pressure, and for this I used a large rubber band (photo 9).



I bonded one end and left it for several hours before shaping it using a rasp and chisel (photos 10 & 11) to align with the existing mallet head profile.

Only when one end was finished did I bond on the second for shaping. This delay



was to avoid the possibility of the two ends slipping around when being held in position.

Finishing off

Returning to the ends, I used a square to ensure alignment at the corners (photo 12) and removed any sharp edges with a final sanding off.

Taking care to remove any dust, I coated the new ends with several coats of polyurethane (photo 13).

As a personal touch, I added various transfers before coating the complete head (photo 14)



Some caveats

If you are going to try this for yourself, think safety first, because Tufnol is a very hard material to saw, chisel, rasp and sandpaper, and it is easy to become overzealous which can result in slipping and scarring the wood of the head or causing a risk to your personal safety.

A friend has alternatively used a router to shape the Tufnol ends to size.

It is best to work in ventilated areas, with goggles, mask and gloves as appropriate.

The original caps were 6mm thick so the head has now grown in length by 12mm and increased in weight by 65g but it remained equally balanced.

Good luck if you try this repair yourself.

**Stephen Webb,
Watford (Cassiobury) CC**





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Our retirement villages are home to people who really value their peace of mind... people who moved safely during lockdown, to enjoy a closer kind of community, with more reassurance for them and their family.

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Using my programmes maintenance is quick and easy. I supply everything that you need

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More info on my website
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www.DuncanHectorTurfCare.co.uk

How I used Lockdown

Irrigation - I started with a residential training course prior to lockdown. I then installed a system for my own full-size lawn which now acts as a demo for anyone who wants to see the ins and outs of the system.

It occurred to me that a DIY installation saves a lot of money and is quite easy to do. I design and supply the system and lend my trenching machine. Pipes are connected using simple push-in fittings and low voltage cable using crimp fittings. Apart from that an electrician will be needed to wire the pump and a base is needed for a holding tank.

Brilliant Mower - An opportunity came my way when I met Shane, a local mower engineer, and he proved to be a very interesting chap, who is versatile and keen on new ideas.

I explained the need for a low-cost fine turf mower for croquet lawns and he came up with the brilliant idea of using old frames from used Atco Royales. Thousands of these mowers were built and they still exist as the Allett Buckingham. When Allett bought Atco they bought manufacturing rights, not the name, so the Brilliant Mower was born, using resprayed frames and fitting a new engine and new working parts throughout.

The mower has 14 blades, cuts at over 200 cuts per metre, as low as 4mm, and can have a trailing seat. This is effectively a £6k mower for half the cost and is ideal for croquet clubs. Spare parts will be available long term and Shane offers an annual contract including collection and return of the mower via a pallet service for £304.

Interested? - for more information, please see my web site which also features the new Brilliant Sprayer.

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

When planning to start a new croquet club the first question to be solved is: Where can one find a suitable lawn?

Prospective clubs in villages and small towns have little chance of raising enough funds to start new lawns from scratch, but in many villages and towns there is a bowls club, many of which are suffering from lack of members; some have closed altogether.

When we decided to form a new croquet club at Dunston, a village of about a thousand inhabitants in Lincolnshire, we approached the local bowls club which had been founded in 1935 and discovered that it was suffering from a lack of members and funds, especially funds to replace their ageing club house.

Understandably, bowls clubs are protective of their lawns and their first concern with sharing with croquet is the holes that the centre peg and standard hoops make and, secondly, the croquet's boundary lines which may distract the bowlers.

The CA has a document entitled "Sharing Common Ground: Croquet and Bowls in Harmony?", and this mentions that one

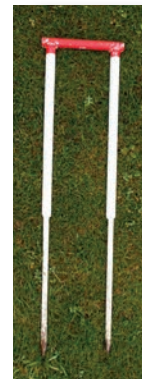
Sharing Lawns with Bowls Clubs ~ 'Foxy Hoops' trial ~

solution, adopted by the United States CA is to use Foxy Hoops (designed and credited to the past USCA president, Foxy Carter).

Foxy Hoops have above-lawn dimensions that meet CA specifications, but below ground have three-quarter inch rods (instead of 'carrots') which extend about 10" into the ground, which is a little further than standard carrot hoops. Foxy Hoops leave a small hole on the surface, which is barely visible and does not interfere with bowls.

The CA Shop already sells a centre peg with a spike (that leaves only a small hole in the lawn) and it comes from a Canadian company, Oakley Woods. Inspection of their web site showed that they also supply the Foxy Hoops and special boundary cord to replace painted white lines.

The CA Equipment Advisory Group, via its chairman Dave Trimmer, gave us a temporary permission to use these hoops in Federation league and tournament matches



in order to evaluate their use over a two year period. The Development Committee then allowed us to swap the standard hoops for Foxy Hoops as part of the **CA's start-up grant** of equipment for new clubs.

The members of Dunston Bowls Club agreed unanimously to our sharing their lawn, and with a grant

of £5,000 from Sport England and £4,000 from the Parish Council, we were ready.

With a new club house, including a toilet, small kitchen and petrol generator, we started play in April 2019 and quickly built up a keen membership of 21. Our agreement with the Bowls Club, allows each club to play two designated days each week, leaving the other three days for other activities like lawn maintenance and additional play. Play is mostly GC but a few games of AC have been played too.

The steel Foxy Hoops have performed well during the two years with no problems or complaints, and *continued overleaf...*

'Foxy Hoops' trial at Durston CC

... continued from previous page.

comments from visiting teams have been positive.

They have shown no sign of distortion or other damage during our two-year trial and they perform like any other hoops even when challenged by angled hoop shots.

A well-founded bowls (or croquet) lawn has a very firm base of aggregate and sharp sand, so the hoops go in easily but firmly, but we do find occasionally that after a few days play, especially with GC hard-hitters, that the hoops can become a bit loose.

This is not uncommon with standard carrot hoops too.

However, because Foxy hoop holes are only 3/8" diameter it is easy to move the

hoops just a little, e.g. 1", to establish a new, firmly fixed position.

Standard carrot hoops need to be moved further as otherwise the new hole collapses into the old hole. The result is that we can and do move our hoops regularly and so don't suffer with worn 'rabbit-runs' in hoop positions that one sees at other clubs.

Cooperation with the Bowls Club has been excellent and, as a result, we have arguably the best facilities for croquet in our area because we have been able to afford professional maintenance.

The club is pleased with the Foxy Hoops and we thank the CA's Equipment and Development Committees for allowing us to use them in Federation events and



the opportunity to give them a thorough evaluation under club conditions.

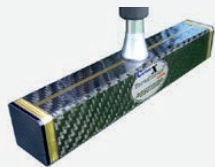
We are pleased that Dave Trimmer has now given permanent approval to our use of Foxy Hoops in our Federation and I recommended that Foxy Hoops now be sold in the CA Shop.

CA manager Mark Suter commented that he will be happy to sell them in the CA Shop if there's enough demand.

Ralph Timms, Chair, Dunston CC

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Dave Trimmer Mallets



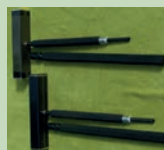
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For details or discussion, contact Dave Trimmer
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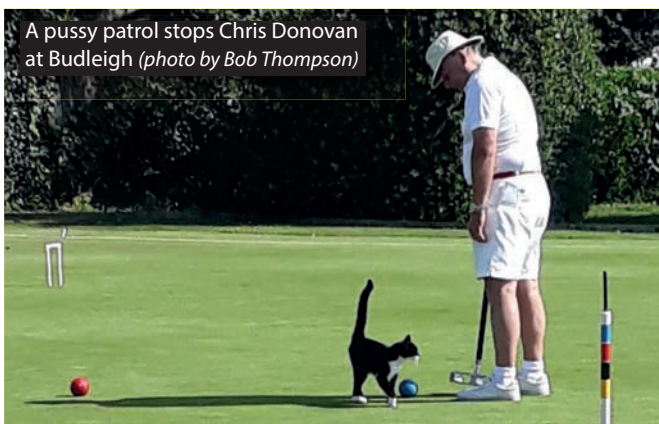
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A pussy patrol stops Chris Donovan at Budleigh (photo by Bob Thompson)



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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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The Croquet Association Website

www.croquet.org.uk

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

Croquet jargon

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

To find the glossary go to:

(AC): Home > Play > Technical > Jargon

(GC): Home > Play > Golf Croquet > Jargon

or (for on-line readers) via these direct links:

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