



January 2014

This month in Croquet Matters

This month we review the success of the New Zealand team in the MacRobertson Shield International Test Series and - with the tournament season in full swing - provide coverage of many of the tournaments happening around the country.

From the Exec

First, a huge congratulations to the New Zealand team who won the MacRobertson Shield. An awesome achievement team, well done!

Executive members Sue Roberts, Dallas Cooke and Lester O'Brien were heavily involved in the organisation of the MacRobertson Shield at Mt Maunganui and Marewa respectively. The tournament committee meets in April to review the season and confirm venues for events next season and beyond. (An organising committee has been formed to work on the Golf Croquet World Championships to be held in NZ in February 2015 and preparations are underway. It should be a large tournament as the WCF have asked us to put on an 80 player event)

Phillip Drew and the Executive Director have started work on campaign plans for future international teams... the blueprint from the successful MacRob team providing guidance!

Annie Henry was made convenor of the Organisation Development committee at the last Executive meeting. She has formed a committee of Dallas Cooke, Marion Prentice, the Sport Development Officer and the Executive Director. The Committee are focusing on three areas for immediate attention: update green prescription, develop a publicity plan, and continue improve and evolve this Croquet Matters newsletter.

The Green prescription pamphlet will be getting an overhaul thanks to Greg's excellent design skills in addition to new stories which we hope will "sell" croquet to what could be an excellent source of new croquet participants.

We plan to produce additional pamphlets targeting different demographics.

The first publicity plan will be drafted for the next Executive meeting. Major tournament coverage and improving local publicity will be the two areas of the plan.

As most of you will be aware, Pamela George recently took over the editing of Croquet Matters. We are very appreciative of her volunteering time for this important communication link. Pamela will develop a schedule of topics that will be covered each year. Topics such as tournaments, coaching, rules, local news, and Q & A will be added. Feedback on the new format is greatly welcomed. Please send Croquet Matters comments directly to Pamela George pmgeo@ihug.co.nz

Other tasks that are being discussed are:

- 1) Changing to or adding an electronic format for the Yearbook;
- 2) Developing a grievance procedure for non-player issues;
- 3) Examining the structure of CNZ (Do we have a structure that meets our current and future needs?); and,
- 4) Reviewing the Constitution for revisions.

Your comments are necessary to help us make better decisions. Please send them to Annie Henry at annie58@ihug.co.nz, call at 03 539 0620, or text at 022 39 79 303. We want to hear from you.

CNZ Awards & Qualifications:

Frank Robinson achieved a Gold Merit Award for completing his first competition triple peel at the Northern Vets this season.

Rose Tecofsky achieved a bronze merit award for completing a ten hoop break at Hawera

Newsletter Stats (Dec)

Total Subscribers 273 including Association secretaries, club secretaries and those who have subscribed personally.

Successful deliveries 265 (8 email addresses bounced)

Number of subscribers who opened the email 202 (76% of successful deliveries)

2 people unsubscribed

122 people opened the Croquet Matters newsletter...

- 63 opened the GC Rules pdf that was attached

- 53 opened the poster Greg provided for clubs.
- 55 opened the flyer for the 0-3 & 4+ tournaments.

We don't know why over 50 of the newsletter recipients didn't open the email... did they go into spam/junk mail folders?

Furthermore it is perplexing that 80 recipients opened the email but did not go on to click on the link to the newsletter itself.

Are we wasting time trying to produce material for clubs to promote themselves and gain new members if only 53 opened the poster Greg spent time producing (and less than 10 asked Greg to add their club details to the poster in readiness for publication)?

We hope that all club secretaries would open the email, download the newsletter and put it on the club noticeboard

MacRobertson Shield Report

Congratulations to the New Zealand team on bringing the Shield back to New Zealand after 27 years.





Back row L to R
 Toby Garrison, Michael Wright (Res) Paddy Chapman, Paul Skinley (Res), Aaron Westerby (Capt), Greg Bryant
 Front row, Jenny Clarke, Chris Clarke, Jarrod Coutts (Mgr)

Stephen Mulliner from the England team made the following succinct report on the finals day:

“New Zealand came out with clear intent on the final day and thoroughly deserved their victory. The hoops were not quite as formidable as at the earlier venues but, set to 1/64 inch (0.4mm) in drying and quickening ground, they still punished even slightly poor hoop strokes. Fundamentally, that is where the main difference between New Zealand and England lay, especially at the start of the Test when New Zealand built up a 8-1 lead. We took 5 of the next 6 points to bring the match back to 9-6 down and keep hopes alive but, come Wednesday, both Aaron and Toby shot well and played solid breaks to take New Zealand over the line.

There were echoes of 1986, the last time that New Zealand won. They were the first team then to have a uniform and the other countries

followed. This time, there is no doubt that their preparation for the Mac was well organised and this, together with a strong team spirit, clearly helped them to perform at or near their best. England was much stronger than Australia and the USA but, despite some very competitive matches in the final Test against New Zealand, did not display the consistency necessary to provide a challenge of the intensity required.

Final result: New Zealand win 13-7 (one unplayed)”



The Team at the Opening Ceremony in Christchurch

Former NZ Players for the MacRobertson Shield



L to R Graeme Roberts, Roger Murfitt, Tony Stephens, Michael Wright, John Prince, Paul Skinley, Joe Hogan, Steve Jones

The beautiful aside to the Test Series was an impromptu wedding between Ben Rothman of the USA team and his fiancée Codie. On the morning between the test in Hawkes Bay and the one in Mt Maunganui the couple were married by the rose garden of the orchard in Havelock North owned by Tony & Colleen Stephens



the WCF's World AC Teams Championship. In its present form, this top tier is played a quadrangular contest between England, Australia, USA & New Zealand by teams of 6 players who play both singles and doubles.

There are too many individual people to individually recognise and thank for their dedication, commitment and effort that they put into NZ's hosting of this series, we certainly appreciate that an enormous amount of volunteer effort was put in behind scenes generally and at the venues that underwrote the smooth running and success of this event.

However the team would again like to especially thank those who took on senior officiating roles, Kevin Fellows (Test Series Manager), Graeme Roberts (Referee of the Series) and the venue managers (Lester O'Brien, Terry MacBeth & Geoff Young). Also to all the referees, some of whom almost certainly committed more hours than they may have originally envisaged to oversee matches.

We also wish to acknowledge CNZ support and in particular the Executive Director's long commitment and passion for our campaign.

Also to all our supporters from the NZ croquet community, it was great to see many of you at the event (including many past MacRob players) and to receive lots messages of support from those who were not able to make it. Once again, to all those who did play a part and supported us, we thank you immensely. The team couldn't have performed so well without you.

With 15 playing days, many of which were 11+ hours in duration, it is impossible to do justice to the many battles and moments of drama that make up a MacRobertson Series. In my review

The MacRobertson Shield:

I (Jarrod) wasn't born last time NZ won the Shield and in my ten years of being involved with croquet I had heard countless stories about this event - all of which didn't even come close to being involved and seeing it live. It's scary to think what it would have been like to be a player!!!

With it's rich history and the intensity and commitment with which it is pursued, it is easy to argue that the MacRobertson Shield is still the premier event in international croquet. First contested in 1925 it is currently played for approximately every 3.5/4 years and it is also now recognised as the top tier in

here I only provide a very brief summary of the NZ team's journey through the event. However, for those that are not aware, the excellent croquetscores.com website and the archives of the email based Nottingham list will contain many full match commentaries and summaries from other contributors, that in aggregate, provide an in-depth record of the series.

So onto the competition, would a well prepared NZ team bring an end to 23 years of English/GB dominance in the event and become the fourth NZ team to win the Shield (alongside teams from 1950, 1979 & 1986)?

The team had a very good start with a 20-1 test match win over the United States. This was a fantastic start to the event and in the process NZ set a record for the most convincing test match win in MacRobertson shield history (within the current best of 21 test match format). Although this was a good achievement for the team, the test match was a lot closer than the score suggested and credit must be given to the United States who provided us with some extremely tough matches. During this test some of our players had an excess of 50 hours of croquet so it was a draining 5 days. The United club was a fantastic place to start the event and we had a lot of support from the local players and the dedicated support crew from South Canterbury.

It was then our 'day off' which involved travelling from Christchurch to Napier to prepare for the second test against Australia. As usual, our Trans-Tasman rivalry was going to be fierce. Again NZ would be the favourites for this test but we weren't taking anything for granted. There were some more long days for

the team with some matches literally going from dawn till dusk and play having to stop due to no daylight! It was again a very strong performance by the Kiwi team and we sealed the test on the 4th day finishing with a 15-4 win (2 matches incomplete).

We had another travel day in which the team drove to Mt Manganui and I was entertained by Toby Garrison's singing along the way. With England having beaten both the United States and Australia the final test was now the equivalent of the final. It was going to be an epic 5 days.

NZ got off to a good start with a 3-0 lead after day 1, this turned into a 5-1 lead after day two and at one point on the 3rd day NZ had an 8-1 lead and things were looking very comfortable. However, these things are never over until someone reaches 11 and the England fightback begun taking 5 of the next 6 matches to give NZ a 9-6 lead at the end of day 4. It was a gruelling campaign and everything came down to the final day with NZ desperate to get 2 match wins to seal the Victory. NZ Captain Aaron Westerby took the first to take us to 10 before Toby Garrison sealed the victory for the Kiwi team.

It was a very important moment in Croquet NZ's history, an extremely emotional day for everyone involved and something I (Jarrod) was privileged to be a part of and hope to one day follow in their footsteps of getting 'your name on the shield'.

Jarrod Coutts, NZ Team Manager
Aaron Westerby, NZ Captain

Sport Development Officer

CELEBRATIONS!!!! After 27 years and 7 attempts, New Zealand has won the World Teams AC competition for the MacRobertson Shield!

The Everest of the croquet world was not conquered by accident. A generation of players have dedicated many years to the goal and as a member of this team, I have not previously experienced such a will and determination to win as was shown by everyone involved in this campaign. It is an outstanding achievement, and everyone involved can take great pride in their efforts.

Winning the Mac shows us all that a worthwhile and appropriate goal can be achieved with a persistent effort and good preparation. The will to achieve, and in the Captain's own words a "whatever it takes" attitude took precedence over adversity.

So it is with any endeavour. Growing a club membership is an exercise in goal setting and carrying out a plan. Advertising is a repetitive continuous exercise, and 'one off' attempts will rarely bare the results we want. Community newspapers, in which public notices incur little or no charge are a great vehicle for regular advertising – even more so if an occasional sports news item passes the editor's desk. The 'Play Croquet' posters are an easy and inexpensive advertising option for continuous exposure. Where costs are unavoidable, they should be a budgeted item and an advertising plan will identify the value and means of costs.

You may have set yourself a goal to achieve a CNZ Merit Award earlier this season which may, or may not have been achieved already. If not, is your plan to achieve the award working

for you? Should your plan be reviewed? Do you need additional advice or assistance and if so from who or where? You may blindly hope, and on some lucky occasion reach a target, but a measured plan and some persistent effort is a far more reliable recipe for success.

For those that do have their eye on a Merit Award, the CNZ Coaching session at the NZ Men's and Women's Championship in Wellington on Wednesday 12 March 2014 may be beneficial.

8.30am – 12.30pm: Silver Award coaching (12 hoop break or more without bisques)

1.00pm – 5.00pm: Gold Award coaching (triple peel in competition)

Venue: Kelburn Croquet Club, Salamanca Road, Wellington.

Numbers may be limited. Preference will be given to those that are entered in the NZ Men's and Women's Championship 13th-16th March. (Same venue) It is envisaged that a participant will not attend both sessions. Please select the appropriate session and register at admin@croquet.org.nz

Light refreshments (morning or afternoon tea) will be provided for a nominal charge.

I would appreciate hearing of any news, feedback on this article, or developments taking place, and if any assistance is required, please ask. I can be contacted at the CNZ office by email, admin@croquet.org.nz or by phone (04) 916 0258.

Up-coming Tournaments

GC Grade Champs, Nelson, 8 & 9 February 2014

(Page 310 of the Yearbook)

Entries must be received by Wednesday, 5 February 2014

Entry Fee: \$20 per event, tea and coffee included, light lunches available to purchase.

Events:

Championship Doubles Senior
Championship Doubles Intermediate
Championship Doubles Junior

Championship Singles Prem: Bisques 0-3
Championship Singles Int: Bisques 4-7
Championship Singles Prim: Bisques 8-12

Method of play according to entries, time limit may be imposed.

Trophies and prizes for all events.

Email all entries to the Manager, Marion Prentice: an.apprentice@gmail.com

The English Silver and Bronze Medals Ashburton 15 & 16 February 2014

(Page 258 of the Yearbook)

Entries must be received by Croquet New Zealand by **Wednesday, 5 February 2014**

Entry Fee: \$30 per competitor.

Morning tea and coffee available lunches to order

Manager: Mrs Raylene Phillips
raycol@xtra.co.nz

Arthur Ross Memorial Event Handicap Singles Final Paraparaumu 28 February, 1 & 2 March 2014

(Page 263 of the Yearbook)

Entries must be received by Croquet New Zealand by **Friday 14 February 2014**.

Details of the play are in the advertisement

Hot & cold drinks and lunches will be available

Players should also be aware of the Specific Conditions of this event as set out in Appendix 3 to the tournament Regulations on page 180 of the Year Book.

Players are also reminded that handicaps may change during the tournament.

Email all entries to Croquet New Zealand croquet@croquet.org.nz with a copy to the Manager Pamela George pmgeo@ihug.co.nz

International Tournaments

Over-50 Golf Croquet World Championship: Sunday 5 to Saturday 11 October 2014 (Qualifying Tournament: Wednesday 1 to Friday 3 October)

Women's Golf Croquet World Championship: Sunday 16 November to Friday 21 November 2014 (Qualifying Tournament: Wednesday 12 November to Friday 14 November)

Both in Cairo, Egypt

Any players wishing to be considered for selection should register their interest with the Executive Director

Coaching Corner

Stop Shots

Watching the MacRobertson Shield players created quite a new dimension in balls control and encouraged some golf Croquet players to think again about the parent form of the game.

What made it so different from what we often see played? It was the sheer level of skill needed to play on fast lawns with tight unforgiving hoops.

It was obviously not routinely possible to run long hoops, especially from a side angle to the face of the hoop. This meant that something else was taking place. Over the next three issues, I will try to give a bit of coaching as to how to go about playing the game as the "greats" do. Bearing in mind of course the countless hours of practice all players do which go into their preparation for major events.

The first most practical bit of knowledge specific to you the player, is to know the ratio of your basic stop shot. This shot has a huge number of variations from a straight shot with a straight shaft to $\frac{1}{4}$. $\frac{1}{2}$. $\frac{3}{4}$ roll and a few variations in between.

To find out your basic ratio, take some practice balls to the yard line and play a number of stop shots - not too hard as you have to chase the balls later, and then pace out the distances each ball travels. A hard stop shot can be paced in yards while a short one can be done by heel to toe. Some of the top players can get a ratio of 10:1 depending

on the way they play the shot, how tall they are and the way their mallet performs.

I have heard players say they cannot do stop shots with a Puckett mallet. Perhaps this is a technique problem although the mallet properties do come into effect.

I play my stop shots with my feet in the same position as for a roquet. I tilt the face of the mallet a bit backwards and rely on my swing to achieve the desired effect.

We are often told to stand a little back, to tilt the mallet face back quite a lot. This is a personal thing.

The essence of the shot is to "stop the mallet" as it hits the striker's ball. To do so successfully requires a bit of work so that the heel of the mallet stops when it reaches the ground - and there is no follow through whatsoever.

The shop shot is critical to all forms of the game and in Golf Croquet is called a "stun" shot. The technique is the same as for a croquet shot involving 2 balls. Unless you know with comfort how far the balls will travel, it is not easy to decide how hard to play a shot and the consequences can become a lottery.

Stop shots in Association croquet are great for getting in front of hoops as well as moving balls long distances. But always remember the wider the angle of your shot, the further the striker's ball will travel in relation to the croquet ball.

Pamela George
Kelburn Municipal Croquet Club

CROQUET Laws

Reminder to Players

On occasion during tournaments players have been seen bashing in hoops that they feel are too loose?

AC ORLC 3.2.4, page 54 of Yearbook covers this situation - "Players must not adjust, stamp or knock in loose hoops themselves, but should at least consult their opponent and preferably (particularly if there is another game on the lawn that might be affected) a referee".

Please ask a referee on duty to help with the hoop(s) rather than trying to tighten them yourself.

Regional News

Watch out behind you!

We have some truly talented young people becoming proficient in both forms of the game

Felix Webby (age 14) from Inglewood won the Taranaki Primary Grade Golf Croquet Silver Badge followed by playing his first ever Association singles games in which he pegged out in less than 3 hours.

Hemi McLaren won the C Grade in the Upper North Island Teams event. He won his games 24-2, 26-3, 26-0, 26-6 and 26-3. He now has to deal with a possible handicap change from 18 to 8 although the huge handicap reduction is being reviewed. Nevertheless a substantial reduction is likely.

Jasmine Rule won the South Canterbury 10-16 Grade Championships without losing a game. She is now a 10 handicap.

Logan McCorkindale (Waireka) was reduced from a 22 to a 16 before playing in the 4+ handicap singles. He won the event and is now looking a move to a 14 soon. Runner-up in the 4+ handicap singles was another youngster out of Waireka - Edmund Fordyce. Edmund is already down to a 9 and is close to becoming an 8.

Congratulations to our up and coming players. We look forward to seeing more of you at major events.



The Kaikoura club told us in the last issue of their 90th birthday. We now have a photo of the three longest serving Members cutting the anniversary cake.

Manawatu

Feilding Croquet Club
Golf Croquet Handicap Doubles Tournament

Winners: Max Charlton & Rex Oliver (Rose Gardens), **Runners-up:** Haig & Pam Thomson (Rose Gardens)

The Rose Gardens Croquet Club

Golf Croquet Handicap Singles Competition for The MacEwan/Nikoloff Plate

There was a good entry of 24 Club members for this event that took place over the first half of the season. Four sections were played off with the section winners going on to semi-finals. John Wall was the eventual winner,

beating Neil Stantial in the final for the MacEwan/Nikoloff Plate.

Winner: John Wall, **Runner up:** Neil Stantiall.

Triton Hearing Tournament, Palmerston North, 11-16, January

This year saw the Silver Jubilee of this annual tournament, hosted jointly by The Rose Gardens and Takaro Croquet Clubs in Palmerston North. This is a big tournament of seven two-day events spread over six days and nine lawns at two venues and, this year, attracted 95 entries from 68 individuals with handicaps ranging from -3.5 to 22, from around the North Island. It was also nice to see Paul Castell from UK playing in the Open Doubles and Open Singles. Despite its clashing with the MacRobertson Shield Tests at Mt Maunganui, numbers were not noticeably affected, although we did miss our two Senior Referees on duty up there. There was a welcome lack of rain but the wind for much of the tournament was strong, even by Palmerston North standards. It was so strong on Monday that Paul Castell, our English visitor, was prompted to comment in a Manawatu Standard article that they, "were the worst conditions he'd ever played in." Despite this, a number of TPs and TPOs and one OQNP were performed, some on the Monday.

The purchase of naming rights of the tournament by Triton Hearing meant that generous prizes could be given. The following were the prize winners.

Open Doubles for the 1990 Trophies - Winners: David Wickham & Terry Price (Masterton), **Runners-up:** Aiken Hakes (Wellington) & James Abernethy (Marton).

Handicap Doubles for the Takaro Trophies - Final: Murray McNae (Marton) & Lachlan Hughes (Wanganui) bt Allan Sanson & Daryl Flood (Takaro) 26-13, **3rd:** Rex Oliver & Margaret Snelling (Rose Gardens). **Open Singles for the Sesquicentennial Salver - Final:** David Wickham bt Aiken Hakes 26tp-7, **3rd:** Dick Smith (Well). **Scratch & Over Singles for the Triton Hearing Cup - Final:** André Murray (RG) bt Terry Price 26-13, **3rd:** Doug van Belle (Well). **Four and Over Singles for the Neall Trophy - Winner:** Doug van Belle, **Runner-up:** Pam Green (RG), **1st Consolation:** Bryan Williams (Hawera), **2nd Consolation:** Margaret Muir (West End T), **3rd Consolation:** Susan Williams (Hawera). **Ten and Over Singles for the Junior Trophy - Final:** Haig Thomson (RG) bt Stewart Pye (Masterton) 11-7. **Handicap Singles for the Rose Gardens Trophy - Final:** Maree Burt (Whangamata) bt Jo Schneebell (Whangamata) 18-13, **3rd:** Monica Huisman (RG).

Next Edition of Croquet Matters

1. A review of the NZ Open Championships Wellington on 25 January to 2 February 2014

We welcome your news!

Please send in your match reports, letters and other information which may be published in Croquet Matters newsletter.

Croquet Matters was prepared by the Executive Director and Sport Development Officer and Pamela George