



Croquet Communique – 19th March 2026



Lawn maintenance

Chris and his grounds team have been busy working on the lawns. They are keen that the lawns are at their very best for an exciting summer tournament season with the highlight being the MacRobertson Shield contested by New Zealand, Australia, England and the USA which the Club is hosting in the last two weeks of July.

Part of their work has been to widen the edges of the lawns and grade areas that have become unlevel. The intention is that lawns will return to full size by Good Friday.



Friendly against Dulwich

Slightly surprisingly based on the first two floodlit friendlies, the match against Dulwich was played in very pleasant and dry conditions. Roehampton Club was represented by Diana Wilson, Harry Fischer, Dan Pearson and Tim Russell.

The match was a great demonstration of just how hard top class GC players hit the ball. Dulwich eventually won 7-3.



Lunch with the new CEO of Croquet England

Charlotte, Lynn Percy, Jenny Gaskin and I hosted a very useful lunch for the new CEO of Croquet England (CqE), Andy Dalby-Welsh and the head of communications, Alison Maugham.



Having had a meeting on the logistics of the MacRobertson Shield, Andy had the opportunity to play on the Roehampton Club lawns. For those who are unaware, Andy has serious sight issues with only very limited peripheral vision and is effectively blind.

Thinking about how a visually impaired person could play and, importantly, enjoy croquet was a very interesting discussion. Andy, helped by Alison, certainly enjoyed his time on the lawn.

Member success

Tim Russell has been selected to play in the GC Europeans. Diana Wilson has been selected for the Croquet England women's AC team and is the highest seeded England entry in the Women's European Championships. Congratulations to both of them and good luck during the summer.

Croquet booking system updates

The first phase of the overhaul of the croquet booking system has now been implemented with enhancements to the types of bookings, additional information about players and automated limits on the timings for bookings. There were some initial issues with exactly what 'two weeks ahead'. To be clear, all bookings with a two-week advanced limit now open at 7am. This is consistent with all the other Club booking systems.

Handicaps

As the competition season approaches there has been a lot of excitement both in the Club and at CqE about handicaps.

First the CqE excitement. External competitions played between members of different clubs are a good way of demonstrating whether the handicap you play off at your club is correct. To this end there is a second ranking system in GC known as Dynamic (or D) grades. These are independently compiled for anyone entering an external CqE competition. Win and your D grade goes up, lose and it goes down, although like Duckworth Lewis in cricket, exactly how this gets calculated is sometimes a mystery. Some of you with D grades may have received an email from James Death at CqE asking you to check that your club handicap and D grade are consistent and if not to drop your handicap accordingly. This has caused a lot of confusion and the initiative has now been dropped so no action required.

Your AC and GC handicap cards need to be checked by Lynn or Tim before the start of the summer competitions. In checking some of them, Tim has asked me to remind you that all competition games whether played level or handicapped must be put on your card and your opponent's card. Several people have been assuming that a 'handicap' game is one that goes on your card and level games do not. A handicap game is simply one where the weaker player gets some help from either the bisque or advantage process. Level means you get no help against a lower handicapped player. Can you check that you have been doing this and, if not, correct your cards. Tim, Lynn or I can help if you are confused.

Finally we have now added coloured tops to all the hoops which makes them much easier to see (sadly running them remains challenging). Please could I ask that, if you think a hoop is a bit loose, you do not bash the hoop with the tops still on. They are fragile and are easily broken.

Hoping for some drier weather as we begin to play more croquet.

Howard Railton, Croquet Captain