

Croquet Communique – 20th August 2026



MacRobertson Shield

Our July has been dominated by hosting the Centenary MacRobertson Shield in the Club's 125th year. England, New Zealand, USA and Australia competed for this prestigious international AC event being hosted by Roehampton Club, Hurlingham, Southwick and Surbiton.

As a result of the patience of our Members in giving up their lawns for such a long time, and for the hard work and skill of Chris Hughes and his excellent team, the Roehampton Club lawns were in fantastic condition running with great speed. All of the international players voted them the best they had played on anywhere.



Opening Ceremony at Roehampton Club



Samir Patel, England Captain, on the lawn

Roehampton Club hosted the opening ceremony, the doubles and some of the singles in the first tests between England and Australia and New Zealand against the USA. It was particularly nice to watch the live coverage on the big screen at the Club.



The teams played six tests including doubles and singles with the eventual play off being between England and New Zealand at Surbiton. England won overall with three test wins, New Zealand second with two, the USA third with one and Australia finishing without a win.



My thanks to Lynn Percy who led the Roehampton Club effort with smooth organisation of everything from television coverage to tea. Another person who received high praise for his tireless commentary on the live screening was Joel Taylor – thank you Joel for bringing Test Match Special to the croquet lawns. Lynn and Marc Newey worked very hard for the right to host not only the opening ceremony but also the very successful MacRobertson Centenary Dinner. It was very special that a number of previous MacRobertson winners and team members were present at Roehampton Club where the original matches were played.

The other significant competition hosted at Roehampton Club was the Ranelagh Gold Cup managed by Joel Taylor. This was won by England player, James Death.

External competitions

Tim Russell played for England in the Home Internationals which England won. Tim was undefeated in both doubles and singles.

Tim also got to the final of the English National Doubles at Cheltenham with his partner Dom Aarvold, trying to retain their title but eventually losing to the number one seeds. Diana Wilson and her partner, Louise Smith (from Budleigh) were the only all-female partnership in the same competition. They were ranked eighth and made it to the semifinals against Tim and Dom. Although they had a good chance in the first game, they eventually lost 2-0. This meant they came third overall which was well past their ranking expectations.

Tim won the GC Vets (over 60s) at Southwick for the third time in four years and got to the final of Budleigh AC Summer tournament (the Colman Cup) but lost 26-14 to the top seed, Duncan Reeve.

Lynn Percy played in the East Dorset GC Open where she reached the final of the plate losing to Helen Reeves two games to one.

Lynn Percy and Mark Green also competed in the Swiss GC Open held at CERN Croquet Club, Geneva 10th–12th July. An international field of 20 players from around Europe competed, with handicaps ranging from -3 to 7. The event was great fun and very well organised by the eventual winner and CERN member, Peter Payne, who overcame Northampton's finest, Lionel Tibble in a best of three games final. Lynn and Mark saw just how enormous the CERN site is and enjoyed fine Swiss hospitality as well as some scorching hot weather.

The two lawns were in excellent condition, and some of the ball hitting seemed to mirror the speeds of the particle accelerator deep under their feet. Lynn made it through the pool stages and came a creditable seventh overall and was the highest placed woman. Mark was runner up in the Plate, bringing home some Swiss glassware.



Tim and I played in the Hurlingham AC summer tournament in the first week of August. I entered and surprisingly won the Longworth Cup on the Monday and Tuesday. We both played in the Handicap event on Wednesday and Thursday, with me playing off for second place and losing to finish fourth.



Inter Club Competitions

The Tier 1 Inter Club GC competition semifinal between Hurlingham and Roehampton Club was played at the Club in the late afternoon and well into the evening on Tuesday 12th August. A good crowd of supporters turned up to watch a very competitive match which eventually saw Roehampton Club losing four to three.

The Tier 3 Inter Club GC Bowl semifinal was played at Roehampton Club on Saturday 15th August against Guildford. Roehampton Club won the Bowl last year in its first outing. The team of Emile Fernades, Chris Bray and Kevin O'Connor led by Mark Green played extremely well to beat the visitors five games to one with one match level but not needing to be finished to decide the result. The games were closely contested but positive play and some clever tactical choices saw a very convincing win. Well done.



Hurlingham Croquet and Bridge Match

A regular feature of the calendar is the bridge and croquet match with Hurlingham. This year, Roehampton Club had a most enjoyable day at Hurlingham. The croquet in the morning was very tight as each pair played four 30-minute games, with Hurlingham ending just one game ahead.

After a delicious lunch, Roehampton Club Members played bridge as a team match of 20 boards. Roehampton Club performed strongly and won by 26imps. So, with honours even, the players parted in good spirits at the end of a strongly competitive but friendly day.



The Roehampton Club Team was captained by Ron Wood, with Diana Wilson, Carmel Brancen, Allen Lever, Sue Norgate, Libby Dand, Jacqui Pattison and Emile Fernandes.

Upcoming competitions to watch

AC inter club semi final vs Surbiton at Surbiton Sunday 13th September. We await news of who and where we are playing in the Inter Club Bowl final in September.

General news

Can I remind everyone that Charlotte and I will be presenting the Strategic Plan for 2026 – 2030 at 5pm Tuesday 8th September in the Garden Room. We look forward to getting your input and to answering any of your questions.

The GC summer rainbow has now been launched by Jenny Gaskin. This will be played on full sized lawns and will, therefore, allow players to enter the results on their handicap cards. Please sign up at Reception and pay the £5 entry fee, pick a number from the sign-up sheet on the board and then play anyone who is either the same colour as you or the colour either side of you. These are single GC handicap games.

The all-weather training area is now fully working and provides the opportunity to practice jump shots, some AC croquet shots and close and long range hoop running. The surface is less forgiving than the lawns and the hoops are very stiff so it is an excellent way of practicing hitting the ball straight and hard. Remember that when the lawns are closed for maintenance or because of weather / frost, the training area will be available.

We have very smart new pegs to score in GC competitions. If people are watching a match, it is very helpful to peg for them to know what is happening. There are two colours: blue for the side playing blue and black primaries (red and yellow do not need to peg) and pink for the secondary side playing pink and white (green and brown do not need to peg). Remember that primaries are pegged on the top of the hoop and secondaries on the side. There are also some not so smart pegs in a basket to score the games. The winning side of the first game puts the correct coloured clip on the peg in the centre of the lawn. Red for red and yellow, blue for blue and black, green for green and brown and white for pink and white. If the second game is won by the other side, they need to add a second peg of the correct colour. This is also very helpful for spectators.

Finally there are new timers for those playing timed games. To get them working you need to turn the batteries round the right way. When you have finished, please turn one of the batteries the wrong way round or they will go flat.

Enjoy the summer. There is lots of sun cream in the pavilions and drink plenty of water.

Howard Railton, Croquet Captain