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## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Historically the TCA is Hobart-centric. This is where most tournaments have been run, where AGM's and Presentation Dinners have been held, and where members of the TCA Executive have lived. While in the last 10 years Clive Sherry, Ian Scott and I have served as Vice-President and myself as President this year, the North has been under-represented on the Executive. Northern club members might see this as a "southern-bias", but it could be argued that southern clubs have had to bear a disproportionate share of filling Executive positions.

An attempt to address part of this problem was instigated in 2014 with the establishment of 2 extra places on the Executive, one elected and representing clubs in the South, and the other the North. In many ways this has made the situation more unrepresentative, as the Southern representative invariably attends TCA Executive meeting, while the Northern representative rarely attends. In many Executive meetings I am the only attendee from a northern club, and while my local clubs might expect me to look out for their interests; I am constrained by the obligation as State President to take a whole-of-state view.

So where does this imbalance come from. Clearly history and "doing things the way they have always been done" is part of the story but in my view this is not the major reason. The northern region has 4 (5 if the isolated St. Helens club is included) clubs, with the southern region having the same number of clubs. Each club gets a single vote in TCA AGMs and SGMs, but northern clubs rarely put forward candidates for office.

For the social and/or pennant player local regional issues are really all that matter, but for competition players there is clearly a North .vs. South issue which has arisen and grown over the last 5 years.

Until 2011 there were no venues outside Hobart capable of holding state-level events. Then with the building of the Northern Tasmanian Croquet Centre (NTasCC) at St. Leonards in Launceston the situation changed. With initially six courts and now with eight it is regularly used for national events, and is in the frame to host the 2017 AC Trans-Tasman international. The venue is capable of handling any state event at the single location but the question that needs to be asked is "should it".

Many people associated with the NTasCC subscribe to the classic quotation "Build a better mousetrap, and the world will beat a path to your door", but much depends on what different individuals mean by "better".

Were all competitions to be run on six of St. Leonards eight courts, then no club would lose access to its courts for social play. This would clearly advantage social players at southern clubs. But as currently most competition players live in the South (particularly the top players), they would be forced to travel and seek accommodation to compete. The main advantages for competition players of playing in Launceston are: all players are at the same venue; the number of tournament officials is minimised; scheduling of games is easier; and there would be less time waiting for courts to be free. A further possible advantage (largely untested) is in attracting mainland players to state Open events as Launceston is closer to the mainland and has more and better transport connections, particularly to Melbourne.

Were all events to be held in Hobart, the travel burden would shift to northern players, but there are not as many of these and in top level AC events next to none. It is easy to justify keeping all events in Hobart as first it is the state capital, and second until recently all such events were held there.

The downside for hosting all state events in Hobart is the disproportionate impact of social players at each venue. State events are increasing, and club venues are taken over by competition play more often. In 2004/05 besides inter-club pennants there were Open AC events 1-12 plus event 13 the HiLo, AC medals and a Ladies medal and a Golf Croquet Championship. In 2015/16 we have handicap events as well as level play, the Classic, plus an equivalent GC event for each AC event. The calendar is becoming crowded and social players are frequently denied access to the club courts at weekends.

We can relieve the pressure on Hobart clubs by scrapping events, or we can transfer some events to NTasCC. Scrapping events could be done based on entry numbers or obvious duplication, as for example the recent amalgamation of handicap-divisions for handicap events. Why for example do we have in AC an Open Championship, a Medal, plus a Men's and a Women's? Theoretically out of state players can enter the Open, but they rarely do, so the same players compete in both the medal and the Open. Why do we still want gender-based events? Must there be an equivalent GC event for every AC event?

Transferring events to NTasCC avoids the need to scrap events and relieves the pressure on Hobart clubs, but it does mean some players will be forced to travel or give up play in some events. It also begs the question "which events?"

An established principle is to retain a historical (mostly AC) calendar in the South and play more recently created GC events in the North. To some extent this has been the pattern in recent years. Whether making the North the notional GC centre has fostered the evident decline in AC in northern clubs is an open question. Another option is to schedule minor and/or less-popular B-level events to the NTasCC but keep major events like the Gold medal in the south. It is easy to appreciate the view of some northern members that this treats them as second-class.

An approach based on a "fair shares for all" principle is to bi-annually rotate events between the two regions. This was tried in 2014/15 but led to cancellation of some events scheduled for the North due to lack of numbers. To avoid this, the rules for some events were changed this year to allow events to be relocated where all entrants came from the "other" region. This rule was incorporated in the conditions of the AC Gold Medal and AC Gold Brooch this year.

What seemed a sensible rule has had unforeseen and unsavoury consequences. I am not certain of the precise details, as different people have given me contradictory accounts, but my understanding is that 9 players expressed interest in playing in the Gold Medal, 8 of who lived in the South. The sole northern player was phoned and asked to agree to travel to Hobart and he declined, and then he was advised that all the southern players would withdraw and the event cancelled for lack of entries. The Northern player then agreed under pressure to withdraw, and the event was re-located to Hobart. There was one northern entry in the Gold Brooch, and following a similar phone call, he agreed to accept a billet in Hobart. As told to me, there are suggestions of collusion, breach of player privacy, bribery and undue pressure in this saga which at the very best are unsporting, and quite possibly a breach of Croquet Australia's *Member Protection Policy*.

The TCA Executive believes that member clubs need the opportunity to discuss these matters, and to provide advice on how it wishes the Executive to act to promote their interests. The following questions arise:

1. Should things be left as they are?
2. Does the de-facto existence of two regions really matter?
3. Should there be more opportunity for social players by limiting competitions:

4. Should venues used for competitions be compensated through a court-hire fee (taken for entry fees) rather than a daily lawn-levy on entrants (ACA pays \$25 per day per court)?
5. Should the TCA pursue (either through the Hobart clubs or independently) the establishment of a four (or more) court venue in the Hobart area.
6. Should all competitions be held in the South? If not, should there be a rotation principle, and if so, over how many years? Should some events be quarantined from Rotation? Should clubs bid for events?
7. Should there be fewer state-level competitions, supported by regional (North and South) events and club events?
8. Are clubs concerned about the declining popularity of Association Croquet?
9. Are clubs concerned about the declining level of competition entries?
10. Should the Executive meet electronically to reduce the travel burden on members?
11. Should the TCA constitution be changed to require the President and Vice-President to be drawn from different regions? Perhaps the same for Secretary and Treasurer.

The opportunity to consider these (and other) questions is provided by the Special General Meeting to be held in Campbelltown on March 17. At this meeting each club is entitled, through its delegate, to a single vote. Any motion agreed to by these delegates is binding on the Executive. The TCA belongs to and represents its member clubs. The Executive would like clubs to discuss these issues, and prime their delegate to the SGM so they promote the best interests of their club. To use a vernacular expression, if your club cares about any of the issues I have raised, it is *put up or shut up*.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### January

23 & 24 (this weekend) Devonport SummerTournament  
 30 & 31 AC Open Men's & Women's

### February

2 – 4	AC Open Doubles (-3 to 20)	- New Town CC
5 – 8	AC Open Singles (-3 to 20)	- Sandy Bay CC
20 -22	GC Open Singles	- Nthn Tas C Centre
26 -28	AC Full Bisque Singles H'cap	- Eastern Shore CC
27 – 29	AC Classic	- New Town CC
27 – 29	AC Novice (Ted Nicholas)	- New Town CC

### March

10 -13	AC Championships (5-20), (9-20), 16-20)	- Eastern Shore CC & New Town CC
14 -20	AC National Medals & Eire Cup	- Cairnlea, Victoria
17	<b>CT Special General Meeting</b>	- <b>Campbell Town</b>
23 – 29	AC & GC Easter Gala	- Nthn Tas C Centre

## SANDY BAY CROQUET CLUB - CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

In the Mercury of 24th February 1916, an article announced the foundation of the Sandy Bay Croquet Club. We have now entered our Centenary year and are well advanced in our planning of 4 major events in order to celebrate the achievement of reaching our 100th birthday.

The first of these events will be a Gala afternoon to be held on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> February at the Club. All croquet players and supporters will be welcome and period dress is encouraged, but not essential. Novelty games will be followed by afternoon tea with a birthday cake and champagne toast to the future of the Club. Special songs

will be provided by guest Jimmy Roussos which will include a special centenary song composed for the occasion. All past members have also been personally invited. RSVP for catering purposes to the Club is essential.

In April we will be hosting two sponsored carnivals totalling \$1000 in prizemoney. The first on the 8th, 9th and 10th will be an association croquet Hi-Lo competition, while the second, on the 22nd, 23rd and 24th is a Hi-Lo golf croquet event. Notices will be sent to all Clubs in February advising details and we look forward to many participants to help make this part of our centenary an outstanding success.

The culmination of our celebrations will be a dinner on Saturday 30 April at the Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania to which Her Excellency, Professor the Honourable Kate Warner, Governor of Tasmania will launch the 100 year history of the Club.

The unveiling of a special plaque to recognize the valued relationship we have enjoyed with the Hobart City Council during our 100 years will be carried out by the Lord Mayor, Alderman Sue Hickey. John X and one other ("The Croon s") will provide entertainment at the dinner. Our Master of Ceremonies will be Peter Gee well known ABC Radio and TV personality.

Our Centenary sub-committee set out early in 2015 to make sure that this once in a lifetime opportunity to honour our past and present members would be an event to remember and we trust we will achieve our aim.

## **NORTHERN TASMANIA CROQUET CENTRE UPDATE**

The Northern Tasmania Centre lawns are being used by community groups St Leonards Club T.C.A. and local events.

As well St Leonards club is growing with several new members joining after Seniors week . This term the School for Seniors also had several new members bringing a total to 30 members. St Michaels group plays at the centre twice a week. The centre committee has organised Association Croquet on Thursdays and are pleased with the attendance . Liz and Bruce Fleming, well known mainland croquet players, are holidaying in Tasmania and their assistance to members is appreciated on this day.

The National Championships and the interstate series were a busy time and thanks go to all user groups who assisted in all areas. Painting Lines, Hoop Setting ,Mowing, Whipper snipping, Catering, Refereeing etc. A B.B.Q was organised for the volunteers in appreciation of their assistance with 30+ attending.

School Groups visited regularly during the winter months attending weekly in conjunction with the school hockey roster. These young people adapted to the game and showed promise . It is anticipated that this will continue next year. Several individual school groups have also returned for extra visits.

The N.R.C.C. Golf Croquet Competitions have been played except the Open. All the Association events are to be organised. There seems to be a lack of interest in these events as players have had T.C.A. Association events in the North to compete in the past month

Twilight Sessions are held Thursday nights from 5pm.-7pm for members of the community and Active Launceston will hold 2 sessions late November for public participation.

The Centre Committee have a huge responsibility and commitment to maintain the Centre. Interest in Croquet is seen as growing with the promotion for the Nationals and the Interstate Series bringing notice and publicity for the game into the public arena.

Lee Turner - Chair NTasCC / Promotion North

## ROYAL PARK CROQUET CLUB

Royal Park Croquet Club is enjoying a great time with all players enthusiastic and playing well .

The National Titles were great and we had fantastic comments regarding our catering at Birch Ave.



Left - Birch Avenue catering volunteers Nancy Scamp, Lois Richards, Pat Traill & Phill Bradshaw.

Above – Nunn Trophy doubles finalists Ray Bradshaw, Pat Traill, Wil Henry and Heather Finn

*Photos supplied by: Lois Richards*

A very enjoyable Graeme Nunn Trophy Tournament was held in November and I was very pleased to see so many of our newer members getting involved.

As well as great Golf Croquet the social aspect is pleasing to see as those not playing were involved in “kitchen duties” and encouragement to those playing in this annual tournament .

The winner of the singles trophy was Phill Bradshaw and the doubles trophy went to Pat Traill and Ray Bradshaw. A clean sweep by the “Bradshaw household” so well done to them.

Christmas Lunch this year was at The Riverside Golf Club. A good time had by all.

I would like to wish all clubs a very happy and successful 2016.

Lois Richards President RPCC

### TASSIE TALES PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

Remember “Tassie Tales” is your magazine. Everyone is invited to submit items of interest for publication.

**Closing date for copy**

<b>April issue</b>	<b>1 April</b>
<b>July issue</b>	<b>1 July</b>
<b>October issue</b>	<b>30 September</b>
<b>January 2017 issue</b>	<b>23 December 2016</b>

Please email contributions to [peter.tracey@bigpond.com](mailto:peter.tracey@bigpond.com)

## KINGSTON REPORT

Kingston held its Melbourne Cup Day on "the first Tuesday in November". Invitations were issued to members of other clubs and we were delighted to welcome those who accepted our invitation.

Fun and games in which all participated were organised by Elaine Roomes and enjoyed by everyone.

The Best Hat competition was won by Julie O'Brien from the New Town Club.

Our Christmas luncheon this year was held at the Kingston Golf Club with 44 members and friends in attendance. The new venue proved to be a great success with many commenting on the high standard of catering.

Our annual BBQ is to be held from 4 to 6 pm on Friday 29 Jan and invitations have been issued to all clubs (check your notice board).

**A note for the diary of all GC players – we shall be conducting our 19 hoop competition through the Queen's Birthday weekend 10 to 13 June – details will be sent to all clubs after Easter**

### Melbourne Cup Best Hat contest



Photos & Collage: Robbie Lee

## **GOVERNMENT HOUSE OPEN DAY**

Two small lawns were set up at Government House for the Annual Open Day and members of all southern clubs attended to demonstrate the art of croquet and or coach visitors who showed interest. The Promotions committee consider the day a success and will be arranging further activities at Government House in the future.

## **GC MEDALS**

The tournament to decide Gold, Silver and Bronze GC Medal winners for 2015/6 was held at NTCC over the weekend of 3 to 6 December.

Gold and Silver Medals were well contested with 13 entries in each with most clubs represented. New Town and Eastern Shore clubs provided two entries each for the Bronze Medal, a disappointing field given the number of newer players eligible for entry in this competition.

The Gold Medal field was divided into two seeded blocks with the top seeds in each, Graham Keating and Sue Beattie, winning their block and proceeding through to the finals. Hugh Denney was the runner up in Block A and Peter Tracey in Block B.

Semi-final results - Graham Keating defeated Peter Tracey 7/3, 4/7, 7/5 and Sue Beattie defeated Hugh Denny 7/6, 7/1. Graham went on to win a close fought final 7/3, 7/6.

The Silver Medal, also divided into two seeded blocks, produced very close contests. Di Hollier and June Pongratz lost only one game each in Block A with Di winning the block on net hoop difference. In Block B John Colquhoun was the winner on five wins with Dee Gibson, Roberta Campbell and Connie Allison all on four wins. Roberta was runner up on net hoop difference.

The semi-finals both went to three games with the eventual winners having lost the first game – Robert Campbell beat Di Hollier 4/7, 7/4, 7/4 and John Colquhoun beat June Pongratz 6/7, 7/6, 7/5. John Colquhoun triumphed in the final 7/6, 7/5.

Despite the low number of entries the Bronze Medal was enjoyed by all participants and all matches were hotly contested with no-one scoring less than three hoops in any game. The single block competition was won by Elaine Anderson who won all three of her games.

Congratulations to the Medal winners and thanks to June Pongratz and New Town CC for the efficient handling of the tournament.

## **TASMANIAN AC ALL GRADES HILO DOUBLES**

The annual HiLo Doubles Competition was held at sandy Bay Croquet Club over the weekend of 9/10 January with a disappointing 12 entries.

Despite the low number of entries, which resulted in four byes being included in the first round of the knockout competition and no play on the first scheduled day (Friday), participants enjoyed the competition with the majority of games being closely contested and won by less than four hoops.

The losing pairs in the first round went into a round robin Plate which was won by Connie Allison and Sally Liggins from Kingston CC (3 wins from 3 games) from Ian Smith and Barbara Carolan from Eastern Shore (2/3).

The second round saw Claire Bamford/Larry Hamilton (KCC) and Peter Tracey/Kathleen Lines (KCC) through to the first semi-final and Pam Hamilton/John Colquhoun (ESCC) and Elaine Roomes/Tim Parker (KCC) through to the second semi-final.

Second round losers contested an X Event with the final won by Sue Pearson and Carol Murphy (ESCC) from Robert Godfrey and Sylvia Wing (StLCC) 14/12.

Semi-finals commenced at 3.00 p.m. on Saturday afternoon with Tracey/Lines defeating Bamford/L Hamilton 16/12 and Roomes/Parker winning their games against P Hamilton/Colquhoun 20/6.

Sunday morning saw the final games of the Plate and X Event with the final between Tracey/Lines and Roomes/Parker commencing at 1.00 p.m.

The final was played over three hours with Roomes/Parker the winners 18 hoops to 14. Tim took his ball to the peg for the second time in the competition.

Congratulations to Elaine and Tim on a fine win and many thanks to all the Sandy Bay members who prepared the lawns, refereed and provided catering through the competition and the barbeque luncheon on Sunday.

A special thank you to Tournament Manager Sheena Sims for all her work in organising the tournament.

## **KIDS IN THE PARK**

Hobart City Council invited Croquet Tasmania to set up lawns in Parliament Gardens on the first day of the Taste of Tasmania. Volunteers from Eastern Shore, Kingston and New Town set up two small lawns and assisted children and adults to participate in games of golf croquet throughout the day.

While all who participated (the numbers were considerable) seemed to enjoy the game, the majority of adults who took part were visitors to the state and thus not potential members for any local clubs.

The lawns were reminiscent of Birch Avenue.



*Photos: June Pongratz*