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CROQUET

THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION

Number 104

December, 1968/January, 1969

The Test Fund as at the 30th November, 1968, totals £1,250.

The Editor,
"Croquet".

Dear Sir,

As members of the Test Team we would like to express our appreciation of the efforts made by so many people during recent months in order to make our forthcoming tour possible.

It is doubtful whether a team could have been sent to defend the MacRobertson Trophy without the generous support of so many Associates. The magnificent response to the appeal for funds and the very hard work done by our Vice-President, Gerald Williams, in pursuit of that object have made it possible for a team truly representative of this country to be sent to Australia.

Amongst the many who have contributed to the preparation of our team, we are particularly indebted to Bobby Wiggins, who has done so much of the detailed planning and handled all our travel arrangements so efficiently.

We hope we may justify the confidence that so many have placed in us.

Yours sincerely,

G. N. ASPINALL

W. P. ORMEROD

R. W. BRAY

J. W. SOLOMON

B. G. NEAL

D. F. STRACHAN

JAQUES EQUIPMENT, WHEREVER CROQUET IS PLAYED

Calendar Fixtures 1969

April	5 - 7	Cheltenham—Week-end
"	11 - 14	Hunstanton—Week-end
"	17 - 21	Compton—Week-end (non-official)
May	5 - 10	Budleigh Salterton (non-official)
"	12 - 17	Peel Memorials—Cheltenham
"	19 - 24	Southwick (non-official)
"	24 - 26	Hunstanton—Week-end
"	24 - 26	Cheltenham—Week-end
"	27 - 30	Inter-Counties Championship—Hurlingham
June	2 - 7	Ryde
"	7 - 14	Carrickmines
"	13 - 16	Woking
"	13 - 15	Nottingham—Week-end
"	16 - 21	Compton
"	23 - 28	Parkstone
"	30 -	
July	5	Challenge and Gilbey—Budleigh Salterton
"	7 - 12	Budleigh Salterton
"	14 - 19	Men's and Women's Championships—Southwick
"	21 - 26	Open Championships—Hurlingham
"	28 -	Cheltenham
Aug.	2	Colchester
"	5 - 14	Hurlingham
"	15 - 17	Cheltenham
"	16 - 23	Carrickmines
"	18 - 23	Nottingham
"	18 - 22	Ladies' Field Cup—Compton
"	25 - 30	Southwick
"	25 - 30	Edinburgh
"	29 - 31	Colchester—Week-end
Sept.	1 - 6	Southwick (non-official)
"	1 - 6	Hunstanton
"	8 - 12	President's Cup—Hurlingham
"	8 - 12	Chairman's Salver—Colchester
"	8 - 12	Surrey Cup—Cheltenham
"	13 - 14	All England Finals
"	13 - 14	Championship of Champions
"	15 - 20	Parkstone (non-official)
"	19 - 21	Cheltenham—Week-end
"	29 -	
Oct.	11	Devonshire Park
"	17 - 19	Cheltenham—Week-end

C.A. Notes

Associates are reminded that subscriptions are due on January 1st and it would be much appreciated if they could be sent to the Office at least during January:—

(a) Overseas Members—21/- per annum.

(b) Junior Memoers (until January 1st immediately following their 26th birthday)—£1 10s. per annum.

(c) Non-Tournament and Golf Croquet Members—£1 10s. per annum.

(d) All others—£2 10s. per annum.

The Apps Award for the most improved woman player of the year was given to Mrs. D. M. C. Pritchard—whose play, as shown at Devonshire Park, has made great strides. The Award for the most improved man player was given to D. Himmens, whose handicap has come down from 12 to 4½ in this past season! Our congratulations to both these players.

The Apps Award to a deserving Club is given to Edinburgh—as head of the three other Scottish Clubs. They are staging an Open Tournament on August 25th-30th and we have suggested the Apps money is put towards a prize. We do hope Associates will bear the date in mind and do everything possible to help make this first effort a success—by playing in the Tournament if they can. The Edinburgh Festival will be an added attraction.

The English Team travelling to Australia for the triangular Test Tour against that country and New Zealand hope to leave England on January 23rd. It may be of interest to Associates to know the names of the Australian and New Zealand players—as the English Team appeared on the cover of the November magazine it is not necessary to repeat them here.

AUSTRALIA

Mrs. Chapman (Capt.)
Mr. T. Howat
Mr. C. Rogers
Mrs. H. Gunton
Mrs. S. MacDonald
Mr. J. Magor
Mr. C. Bell
Mrs. E. Rudder
Mrs. E. Gibson
Mr. H. S. Clemons
Mrs. J. Edwards

NEW ZEALAND

John Prince (Capt.)
Mrs. B. A. Jarden
Gordon Rowling
Mrs. L. M. Hight
J. McNab
P. Rudolph
D. W. Curtis and A. G. F. Ross
were invited to play but refused.

Owing to Roehampton Club holding no more C.A. Tournaments there are changes in the Calendar fixtures of more than usual interest to Associates. One important event is that the Ladies' Field Cup is being played again this year. The Council feels there are enough good women players to make this feasible, and the Chairman of the C.A. received a petition from some of these asking him to cancel the Ladies' Invitation and play the Ladies' Field. There will be eight players and the players will play each other twice; the venue, Compton Club.

In the Men's and Women's Championships it has been decided that the women will play the best of three. All this is proof of the improvement of the standard of women's play—and very gratifying!

There will be no more advertisements of Tournaments, or conditions, published in "Croquet" as these are to be sent in pamphlet form to all Associates. They will be sent with your membership card—another incentive to send your subscription promptly.

As always, C.A. teams will endeavour to arrange to play any Club that asks for a match.

We have a number of new Clubs. All Clubs are reminded that they can enter for the All England and the Longman Cup—free of charge—and, even if their standard of play is not high, get good experience and several games, all on handicap.

While wishing everyone a happy Christmas, I would especially like to thank all Managers of Tournaments and all Secretaries of Clubs for their patient and hard work.

V. C. GASSON, Secretary.

Change of address: Miss D. A. Lintern, 95 Kenilworth Court, Lower Richmond Road, S.W.15. Tel.: Putney 1062.

HURLINGHAM CLUB CENTENARY, 1969.—There will be a Croquet Dinner held on Thursday, August 7th, 1969. Please make a note in your diary of this important date.

Referee: G. N. Aspinall. Manager and Referee: R. F. Rothwell.

HANDICAPS

HURLINGHAM
R. W. Bray -2½ to -3½
J. W. Simon -3 to -3½
Brig. A. F. G. Forbes ½ to 0
H. B. H. Carlisle 2½ to 2

CHELLENHAM
W. de B. Pritchard 2 to 1
C. H. L. Pritchard 1½ to 1
D. M. Anderson 2½ to 2

Mrs. B. L. Sundius-Smith 1 to ½
D. I. Nichols 4 to 3
Mrs. H. B. H. Carlisle 13 to D 11
G. F. Hallett 3 to 2

W/Cdr. E. Montague Smith
3 to 2½
D. H. Moorcraft 4½ to 4
L. G. Ayliffe 8 to 7

(Continued on page Four)

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1968 SEASON IN RETROSPECT

By the Editor

The Croquet Season usually reaches its climax with the President's Cup, which has for as many years as can be remembered been played in the first half of September. This was not so last season, and it is easy to discover the reason. The leading players, and all those who followed the fortunes of the leading players, had their minds focused on the forthcoming series of tests which will be played in Australia in the early part of 1969, which for this Association is between seasons. The three competing nations will each play a series of three Test Matches against each other. Two of such nations are Australia and New Zealand.

Is England the third such nation? Our Constitution as published in 1958 gives no indication. We merely describe ourself as the Croquet Association with no indication as to the scope or sphere of our jurisdiction. This assumed some practical significance when it was decided to publish the Laws in conjunction with Australia and New Zealand. On page vi particulars of the three Councils appear, and the Council is described as "The Croquet Council (United Kingdom)". In the 1964 Handbook there is an Amendment to our Constitution. Rule XVIII entitled "Local Clubs" was amended to include the words which are underlined "(a) Every Club in the United Kingdom with adequate facilities for playing Croquet may apply to be placed on the Register of Croquet Clubs kept by the Association." In our Centenary Year, 1967, the All-England Handicap was won by Lt.-Comdr. R. D. Sinclair, of the Edinburgh Croquet Club, and another Scotsman, Douglas Strachan, is a member of the present Test Team.

The interest displayed by members of the Association can best be measured by the response made to the appeal for funds to help subsidise the Tour. The total amount appears on the cover page of this issue and it signifies the enormous interest which the Associates have shown for the future of International Croquet. It is natural enough then that this season really reached its climax when the composition of the Test Team was announced. The great build-up before the climax was during the Men's Championship at Roehampton followed by the Open Championships at Hurlingham, and it was the first of these two tournaments that provided the greater excitement. Between 1967 and 1968 William Ormerod wrote two articles on new opening tactics and new leaves. These have been followed by other articles. The 1967 Season was a year of great competition which brought something fresh to Croquet. The 1968 Season carried on in the same way and will go down in history as a vintage year. Those who carried off the honours were all well known in advance. It would be too repetitious to extol the virtues of John Solomon, the Champion of Champions and our Test Captain. Possibly something to remember is that he was once criticised for attempting a sextuple peel on the grounds that this was really trying to fly too high. Spectators who invariably play so much better than the man on the court proved themselves to be behind the times. In 1968 the sextuple peel became a tactic of great significance. Solomon still perseveres with this tactic. Perhaps the most conspicuous exponent this year was Keith Wylie, who was an automatic selection for the Test Team. It is a great disappointment to Associates that he was unable to accept and that he has stated his intention of giving up croquet—or at least competition croquet—for an indefinite period. His reason for this decision is very understandable, namely, career before croquet. Another exponent of the sextuple peel was Nigel Aspinall who, fortunately, has been able to accept the invitation to join the team. Enough has been written in Rover Notes about the above three players, and so now is the time to look elsewhere. Dr. Ormerod—apart from Solomon—is the only member of the team who played for England/U.K. in New Zealand in 1963. There were only two non-accepters, Wylie and John Simon, and both these players belong to the post-1963 period. This surely is proof enough of the healthiness of the game at the present time. Ormerod's record in the President's Cup over the years has been quite remarkable, and at the beginning of the season he appeared to be another automatic selection in a team of six players. The selectors who had included Wylie in their original list had accordingly two more places to fill. It is quite probable that these two places would have been filled by H. O. Hicks and E. P. C. Cotter had these two players during 1968 shown the form which they produced in the heyday of their careers. This was not the case, but they will always be remembered as giants of the game who could make a come-back. The choice fell on Professor Neal and Dr. Bray. Neal made his debut in the President's Cup in 1967 and found the going fairly tough in this rarefied atmosphere. But he had earned his place and there is not a shadow of doubt that during the 1968 Season he had consolidated his position, and it is common knowledge that the enthusiasts who had compiled lists had him on their individual lists. Those in Australia and New Zealand know Solomon and Ormerod, and by reading the August/September issue they can read about Aspinall in Rover Notes, "The Happy Warrior". Neal plays, talks and walks with the utmost precision. You would probably guess that he was a Professor of Engineering or something, which he is. You would also probably guess that he is a Wimbledon

tennis player, which he is, and in this year qualified at the age of 45 for the Veteran's Event. The selectors did not rank the team in order and, for all one knows, Bray might have been higher on their list of rankings. I would think at the time the team were selected Bray could have been the choice of more than 50% of the amateurs' selections. At the end of the season it is probable that he would have been a universal choice. Therefore the time has come to congratulate the selectors. Those overseas will not know Bray. He is the oldest of our young players, and the youngest of our old players, the oldest of whom is Neal. He is a Doctor of Mathematics. Would you recognise him as such? If you think that mathematics is a dry subject, you would certainly not do so. You might think of him as directing or acting in a Sheridan comedy. Perhaps the only association with the exquisite is the fluency of his swing and the dexterity of his cut rushes. The first reserve was John Simon. A metamorphosis came over Simon's game during the President's Cup. In the early stages he was playing so slowly that he was losing the rhythm of his game. Then he started to play as if he were part and parcel of a gold rush. His game improved, and one can see him continuing to be in the President's Cup as long as he has the time and interest to bestow on the game. The second reserve was Douglas Strachan, and he is now a member of the team. An American reporter referred to Strachan's happy blend of "Scots canniness with Irish wit". He is a player of great determination, with possibly the heaviest mallet in the game. Nevertheless he makes it function with great delicacy, and like all the other members of the team is always on the lookout for the triple peel. These eight players were originally chosen for the President's Cup. Who are the players on the fringe of selection? The view of the selectors is disclosed in their rankings in the Chairman's Cup. At the head of the list came Bill Perry, who eventually played in the President's Cup after Wylie declined. His rise in the hierarchy of the game has been quite outstanding, and he finally finished an honourable sixth behind the five who had been originally chosen and are about to play in Australia. Then came Bolton, Cotter and Lloyd-Pratt. It must have been very hard to have put such players in order. All four of them are class players capable of heating each other. Only three of the original selections actually played in the Event. Bolton, O'Connor, who continues to climb the ladder, and Hamilton-Miller were unable to play and Lloyd-Pratt declined to play. G. E. P. Jackson, who won the game from Cotter, will undoubtedly be fighting for a place in the President's Cup next year. The only other original entry was A. J. Cooper, who had to retire through ill-health—or perhaps injury is a better term. It was good to find H. S. Clemons from Australia in the Event. He makes friends and admirers wherever he goes. The ladies are referred to hereafter.

Dr. Murray won the Surrey Cup and, of course, Lt.-Col. Pritchard was thereabouts, being second. Murray was neither an original selection nor amongst the first four named reserves. Little had been seen of him for this reason. This Event and the Ladies' Invitation Event were both played with one vacancy not filled. This is most regrettable, but it is good to know that the Council have the matter in hand, and one hopes there will be no repetition. There are many promising players who did not appear in the Surrey Cup. Michael Stride, of Edgbaston, who mightily impressed all who saw him at Southwick; Elmes, Hopewell, Price, J. N. Robinson and G. K. Taylor—all now in the minus class; and youngest of all, P. W. Hands, who swept the board at Cheltenham, was chosen for the Surrey Cup and unable to play in it. Here is so much promise that selection committees in the future are not to be envied (one must assume they never were!) when choosing their candidates for our Invitation Events—to say nothing of the members for the Test Team series here, now postulated for 1975. The Nottingham Challenge grows in strength, although their leading exponent, M. J. Bushnell, did not live up to expectations in the Surrey Cup. P. Newton, from Parkstone, bears watching. It is a pity that the Parkstone Tournament was played much too late for a selection to be made.

The leading lady of the year has proved to be Miss Kitty Sessions. In the Chairman's Cup she tied with Clemons for fourth place with five games, only one game less than Comdr. Borrett who, after Perry, is the foremost player of those who have taken up the game late in life. During the season Miss Sessions has reduced her handicap from -½ to -2, and she is to be congratulated on winning two more games than Miss Joan Warwick. For many years now the battle for supremacy amongst the ladies has been considered a dual between Miss Warwick and Mrs. Rotherham, who this year was playing in the Surrey Cup, in which she made a poor start and put in a storming finish. It would be unfair, however, not to remind Associates that Mrs. Lightfoot won the Ladies' Championship in 1967. Unfortunately she was not fit enough to accept for the Ladies' Invitation Event this year, which was won by Mrs. Sundius-Smith. Mrs. Sundius-Smith has had a remarkable season, starting with a handicap of +2 and ending with a handicap of scratch before the Ladies' Event, and this handicap was not reduced in spite of the

Three

