

before contacting an opposition King-ball in that stroke, shall be played).

9. (a) A King-ball may roquet its partner ball through any hoop in order and that point is scored.
 (b) No point shall be scored when an opponent's ball is roqueted or croqueted through a hoop in order by a King-ball.
10. A King-ball may score off an opponent's King-ball or peg same out at any time.

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 82 Queens Crescent,
 Chippenham,
 Wilts. SN14 0NP

Tel: Chippenham 4319

STOP PRESS

NEW ZEALAND TEST TEAM 1982

The Editor has just heard that their team has been selected as follows (names in alphabetical order):- Joseph Hogan, Bob Jackson, Roger Murfitt, John Prince, Graeme Roberts and Paul Skinley.

PHOTOGRAPHIC CONTRIBUTIONS NEEDED

As will be seen from the front cover of this issue it is intended to publish photographs on the front page of the Spring and Winter issues of the Gazette and all contributions (black and white photographs please) will be very welcome — not only photographs of players but also clubs, trophies and unusual incidents.

BIRD COMPETITION

The winner of £5.00 is Edgar Jackson of Park House, Cheltenham, with 66 acceptable birds. The runner up is Robin Godly with 64. Congratulations.

The full list of 71 birds is:-

Bergrander	Hawk	Owl	Seamew
Blackcap	Heron	Oystercatcher	Serin
Brant	Hobby	Peewit	Skrike
Caper	Jackdaw	Pen	Siskin
Coot	Jay	Petrel	Smew
Crane	Kestrel	Pheasant	Swan
Crow	Kite (1)	Pie	Taurck
Cuckoo	Kite (2)	Pipit	Teal
Curlew	Knot	Plover	Tern
Daw	Lark	Redpole	Teuk
Dipper	Longtail	Redwing	Tit (1)
Dove	Magpie	Ree	Tit (2)
Eagle	Merlin	Reeve	Turnstone
Egret	Mew (1)	Robin	Twite
Erne	Mew (2)	Rook	Whimbrel
Felt	Nun (1)	Sanderling	Wren
Gander	Nun (2)	Scamp	Wryneck
Grebe	Osprey	Scotes	

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THE CROQUET GAZETTE

ISSUE No. 165

SPRING 1982



Edward Duffield and his wife at Hurlingham during the 1981 President's Cup

The MacRobertson Shield

A message from the President

Associates will be aware that the next triangular series of Test Matches takes place at the end of this year in Australia. This should quicken the pulse of every Croquet player, Associates and non-Associates alike. New Zealand are, of course, the present holders and will do their utmost to retain the Shield. Our best available players must be sent regardless of what proportion of their costs each player is able to meet.

I therefore urge everyone in the game to give full support to Mr Andrew Hope and his Test Four Fund Committee whose appeal is on page 2 of this issue. Let every club set out to meet, or exceed, it's allocated target.

The suggestion has reached me that cash prizes won in this season's tournaments might be handed back as donations. What a splendid idea. Painless extraction indeed!

4 Rochester Court
 Fitzwalter Road
 Colchester CO3 3SU

Edward P. Duffield

The Secretary & Editor.

The Secretary of the Croquet Association is Mr. R. F. Rothwell. The Hurlingham Club, London, SW6 3PR. Tel. 01-736 3148.

The Editor of the Croquet Gazette is Mr. D. R. Foulser. "Riverhead", 5 All Saints Villas Road, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, Cheltenham (0242) 580295 (Home).

All Contributions other than tournament results should be sent to the Editor. They are not acknowledged but are most welcome.

All Tournament results to be sent to the Secretary C.A., but **all tournament reports** to the Editor.

All Correspondence concerning non-delivery of Gazettes or incorrect addresses must be sent to the SECRETARY C.A. and **NOT** to the EDITOR.

Chairman's Report 1980/81

It is the customary duty of the Chairman to make a report at the Annual General Meeting and while it would be simple to report on the year's activities, this, at least as far as the important playing events are concerned, has already appeared in the Gazette and been done by someone far more fitted for the task than I am.

What I think is now of greater interest and importance are the developments which are taking place and the outlook for the future. I think there is no doubt that croquet is changing both by the demands of the members of the CA and by the necessity to re-arrange our finances to ensure the future of the game in modern conditions.

We need more money to maintain our organisation and we need more members and more players of the game. There is, however, undoubtedly an increasing interest in croquet and this is clearly shown by the way in which sponsors are prepared to come forward and it is in sponsorship — whether we like it or not — that the successful future of our game lies because increasing costs of every kind will, in my opinion, make it impossible to maintain our present facilities, leave alone expand them, without the funds which sponsorship can provide. This unfortunately applies to virtually every sport and I believe there are now few minority sports which do not rely on aid from sponsorship in one form or another.

I am, therefore, very pleased that we have obtained further sponsorship for the coming season. We are very fortunate in having on the Council members who are prepared to put in a great deal of time and energy, and also have the ability, to organise and deal with these matters.

In addition to the Pimms' Home Internationals, the Inter-Counties Championships is to be sponsored and I might add that we have a record number of entries this year with nine county teams competing. Modern conditions will certainly bring pressures on us to make some changes in our game and this I look upon as being a healthy condition. The recently published book, "The History of Croquet", the sales of which have gone very well, related the continuing changes made in the game over the years and I am glad to think we are as alive as ever to this necessity.

There are also other changes which take place.

We were very sorry when Edward Duffield announced that he wished to retire as President and try as we might, we could not dissuade him. His words of wisdom will be greatly missed at Council meetings which he regularly attended and I have personally always found him to be of great help when I have sought his advice. At least we are not losing him from croquet and I hope we shall continue to see a lot of him.

Virtually his last act as President is an appeal in the Gazette for funds to assist in the cost of sending our Test match team to Australia in October and, following the way he has expressed himself, all I can do is heartily endorse this appeal. When I see these players on the courts I wonder how anyone can beat them but we don't always win and this is the fascination and interest in these Test matches and why every member of the CA should take an interest.

We are fortunate in having John Solomon to fill the position of President. He has done much for the game in the past and I am sure we shall continue to benefit from the contribution he will continue to make as President.

John was a Vice-President and with the sad death of Hope Rotherham, we have lost two Vice-Presidents. Council decided we should maintain the number at four since Gerald Williams is unable to

act owing to deafness and Dr Wiggins is now living in New Zealand. We are therefore proposing that Col Prichard and Mr Townsend should be elected as Vice-Presidents, both having given devoted service to the CA for many years.

I was delighted to have the opportunity last year to visit three of the clubs in the Northern Federation and to see some of the excellent progress and contribution they are making towards the expansion of croquet, unfortunately I could not get to visit clubs of the West Midlands Federation where, they are also doing an excellent job and I only wish we had more funds to assist their efforts.

I now retire as Chairman and I cannot leave this office, in which I consider it an honour to serve, without thanking all the members of Council for their support and for all the increasing amount of work which has been carried out by Committees.

I particularly wish to thank Alan Oldham, our treasurer, for all that he does for us and our secretary Richard Rothwell, for the assistance and help he has given me in every way.

Robin Godby

1982 Test Tour Fund Appeal

This Autumn the Croquet Association are sending a team to Australia to compete against New Zealand and Australia for the MacRobertson Shield. So that we can be sure of sending the best team available we are appealing to all croquet players to help raise money for this international event.

We expect the income from raffle tickets to provide a base for the fund and all Club Secretaries have been sent enough tickets to supply each Club Member with two books to purchase or sell, so please ask your secretaries for your share. If you believe you can sell more tickets please write to Andrew Hope. David Openshaw is offering a bottle of whiskey to the individual who sells the most.

The sale of raffle tickets will not be enough to cover the Association's costs and we hope that you and your club will take part in other fund raising activities. Martin Murray is organising a 4-Ball Break Competition, conditions of which appear in this Gazette. Martin has an excellent selection of slides of croquet in New Zealand which he is willing to show to Clubs this year in return for a collection, so if this is of interest please contact him.

We are also hoping that Clubs will organise other events such as Auction Sales and Cocktail Parties during their tournaments, the proceeds of which could be split between the Club and the Test Tour Fund.

We are only too well aware that a large proportion of smaller clubs rarely see top players on their lawns so this year President Cup and test players will be available to give demonstrations, coach, or play doubles at your Club. We hope you will take advantage of this and use the opportunity in conjunction with your fund raising activities.

The next overseas tour will not be until 1988 so please do your best to raise as much money as possible and, in return, the Croquet Association will extract as much publicity as possible from the event and the players will do their best to regain the trophy for Great Britain.

Andrew Hope
for the

Test Tour Fund Raising Committee

Four-Ball Break Competition

To help raise money for the Test Tour to Australia, the Fund Raising Committee is organising a sponsored competition to attack the world record for the longest four-ball break, which is currently believed to be 180 hoops.

The object is for entrants to attract sponsorship for the hoops they make in the competition, at say 1p per hoop, from as many of their friends and acquaintances as possible. Entrants will be allowed as many attempts as time permits, but only the highest break achieved will count for the purpose of reckoning the sum due from sponsors.

The initial competition will be run at club level, and we would like each club to set aside at least one day before 30th June, 1982 for members to make their attempts. The club competition should provide good opportunities for clubs to attract local publicity.

The conditions for the competition are that each player must start the break with the striker's ball on a baulk line, the other three balls being placed by the player wherever he/she wishes. A normal four-ball break is then begun, making the hoops in the usual order, the rover

hoop to be followed by the first hoop. To give all players a realistic chance, players of handicap 2 and above may take a number of bisques equal to half their CA handicap for each round of twelve hoops. When the rover hoop is made, all bisques used are reinstated, but unused bisques are not carried over to the next round. Half bisques are allowed but must obviously be followed immediately by a full bisque for the break to continue.

To assist players in collecting sponsorship before the club competitions official CA forms will be available from Andrew Hope. These will have spaces for sponsors to enter their names and the amount pledged per hoop and should be signed by two club witnesses when the break is completed.

After all clubs have held their competitions, we would ask secretaries to send the three best scores from their club's competition to Martin Murray by July 7th. The players with the three highest scores in the country will then be invited to join the six members of the Test Team in July for the national competition, which will probably be held in London (date and venue to be arranged). These three finalists will then, of course, have an opportunity to improve their scores.

Money raised by the competition should be forwarded to the CA with other money raised for the Test Tour Fund, but as there will be small prizes for players raising the largest amount of money, we would ask secretaries to inform us of the three largest amounts raised in their club by 31st August. We hope to be able to invite the prize-winners to the Test Team versus The Rest match at Cheltenham on September 18th as guests of the Association.

Martin Murray

**International Croquet —
The MacRobertson Shield**

Reproduced from The Australian Croquet Gazette

Croquet is a completely amateur sport. There are no professional players or coaches and all administration and organisation of the sport is done voluntarily. It is a popular home recreation for people who have sufficient land for a croquet green and rivals tennis as a family sport. The landed gentry and the Royal Family have been active participants and give their patronage to the game.

Croquet has progressed from a family game to one where competitions have been organised and a high degree of skill attained by some players, including men and women of all ages. The most successful players nowadays are the young men, although there are some outstanding women players.

In 1925 Sir MacPherson Robertson presented a shield for international competition. It is the croquet equivalent of the Davis Cup. In 1925 matches were played between Australia and Great Britain but in 1930 New Zealand was included and it became a triangular competition between the three countries. It has created great interest and is the ultimate goal for a croquet player to make the team of six to represent their country. The keen competition engendered by the shield has raised the standard of the game and is attracting younger players.

A series of nine tests are played every four years in each country in turn. In 1974 it was played in Great Britain, in New Zealand during early 1979, and it is scheduled for Australia in 1982. Three doubles and six singles are played in each test with each country playing the other three times, making a total of nine tests. It is usual for the tests to be played at different venues to give more people a chance to see the play. As the world's best croquet players are assembled for the competition one can expect interesting and high standard games from which all can learn a great deal.

All countries have won the shield at some time and in 1979 New Zealand convincingly beat all teams to take the shield from Great Britain who have held it for the last four series. In 1982 the venue will be in Australia with test matches to be played in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide, with representative team games in Perth, Brisbane and possibly Hobart. New Zealand will defend the Shield which they won in 1979 against Great Britain and Australia. A very high standard of croquet is expected with many spectators.

Sussex County Croquet Club Southwick

Winter repair work has already started on the lawns and 1982 should prove to be a promising year for the club.

In order to attract more far country members a new annual subscription of £15 (£25 for couples) has been introduced and applies to people

living 30 miles and over from Southwick — 10 to 30 miles £20 (£35 for couples). Southwick Club has many internal Club events for members.

Test Tour Fund 1982

First list of individual donations received from the following:-

L D Adams, Mrs S M Adler, R A Alford, Miss E H Arkell, A C F Armstrong, Miss K Ault, H W Austin, Mr & Mrs L B Barnes, H F Barnett, Capt F Bland, Commander G Borrett, Sir Franklin Braithwaite, H C Brooks, Dr H Browning, D C Caporn, Mr & Mrs H B H Carlisle, Lt Col & Mrs G E Cave, A J Cooper, Miss C Cox, Sir Leonard Daldry, Mr & Mrs E C Tyrwhitt Drake, Mrs B Davidson, W B Denison, W J Eggleston, R L Everest, W F Giddings, R A Godby, H C Green, Mrs M Grout, Miss S G Hampson, R O Havery, N O Hicks, J R Hilditch, G E P Jackson, D J Kelly, Dr O Kerensky, Miss D Locks Latham, J R McCullough, Mr & Mrs I P Macdonald, Mr & Mrs P H Mann, Mrs M Nalder, Mr & Mrs F H Newman, Lt Col A W D Nicholls, Mrs V Ormerod, Miss H D Parker, Dr & Mrs H A Pim, Lt Comdr R Ponsonby, R F Rothwell, Dr B R Sandiford, P J Shepard, Mrs L A Showan, Professor & Mrs A W Skempton, Miss L H Smith, C B Snowdon, Dr E W Solomon, C Southern, Mr & Mrs J H J Soutter, E Strickland, A G Sykes, Mrs E N Taylor, L A Taylor, Miss B Templeton, Mr & Mrs S S Townsend, Miss V Twiss, Mrs J Vincent, Major General D Wilson-Haffenden, Mr & Mrs D C Wallace, B P Whitehouse, Gerald Williams, H C Wright, K F Wylie, G E P Young, Dr & Mrs A L Yoxall.
19.3.82

**Extracts From The Proceedings Of
The Council Meeting
On 13th March 1982**

1. Professor Neal has organised the production of a CA mallet which will be sold at £30 with a special discount price to Associates at £25. Ten prototypes have been made and will be tested in the Clubs before full production is undertaken. A F Coleman and K F W Townsend were thanked for their help and co-operation.
2. It was announced that the Hurlingham Club's Sports Shop now offer a 10% discount on goods to Associates and Registered Clubs.
3. It was agreed that the Standard rate of subscription will be raised to £10 for 1983, other rates remaining unaltered.
4. It was decided to hold a Club Conference at Hurlingham in 1982, probably in October. It will be open to Associates only.
5. The handicaps of players of — 1 and lower are being revised to try and equate the odds particularly when they play against each other under handicap. Details of the changes appear elsewhere.
6. The Apps/Heley Award for 1981 has been won by the Bowdon Club, the Apps Memorial Bowl by C J Irwin (Bowdon) and the Steel Memorial Bowl by Mrs F H Newman (Woking).

Mrs B Meachem and G B Martin have resigned from the Council. When nominations closed there were twelve candidates for the twelve vacancies on the Council, and therefore under Rule VI(b) (ii) the following are deemed to have been elected:

J H Bowman, Dr R W Bray, R A Godby, Miss S G Hampson, C Hudson, B A Keen, Dr M Murray, A J Oldham, D K Openshaw, K S Schofield, Miss P Shine and E Strickland, OBE.

Alterations to Regulation 10

The proposed alteration to the new Regulation 10 passed by the Council on 17th October 1981, and published in CROQUET December 1981 No. 164 page 2, was under Rule XIV (a) (i) reconsidered by the Council on 13th March 1982 and passed nem con, and so becomes law.

There was a typographical error in the Gazette announcement when the word "croquet" was wrongly printed as "current" in line 1. The correct text of the Revised Regulation is as follows:-

Regulation 10

Add additional paragraph as follows:-

"The selling and repair of croquet equipment, the preparation of lawns and peripheral activities such as catering and building maintenance are not regarded as services to the game for the purpose of this Regulation."

ATTENDANCES AT COUNCIL MEETINGS 1981/82

R A Godby, Chairman, *C4, T1, F3, P2, L1, Hcp1, S2, Ed1	Total	15/16
C B Sanford, Vice-Chairman, *C3, T0, F2, P2, L0, Ed1	Total	8/13
A J Oldham, Treasurer, *C4, T0, F3, P1, L1, Ed2	Total	11/13
G N Aspinall C3, T1, S2, Ed1	Total	6/9
Dr R W Bray C4, P0, L1	Total	5/7
Mrs E E Bressey C4, P2, Hcp1	Total	7/7
D C Caporn C4, T0, F3, P2	Total	9/10
Mrs H B H Carlisle C2, T0, Ed0	Total	2/7
A J Girling C4, P1	Total	5/6
D J V Hamilton Miller C3, S2	Total	5/6
A B Hope C4, F3, P1, Ed2	Total	10/11
Mrs W Longman C3	Total	3/4
G B Martin C4, T1, L1	Total	6/6
Mrs B Meacham C0, P0, L0	Total	0/7
S N Mulliner C3, T1, F2, P1	Total	7/9
Prof B G Neal C3, P2, L1	Total	6/7
T F Owen C0, T1, L0	Total	1/4
Lt Col D M C Prichard C4, T1, L1, S2	Total	8/8
K S Schofield C3, T1, L1	Total	5/6
Miss P Shine C2	Total	2/2
E Strickland C3, T0, F1, P1	Total	5/10
S S Townsend C3, F2, Hcp1, S2	Total	8/10
Mrs N Tyldesley C3	Total	3/4
L Wharrad C3, F2, P2	Total	7/9
Dr R F Wheeler C2, F2, P1, L0	Total	5/9

Attendances at ad hoc Committees are not included.

*Denotes Ex-officio all Committees except Handicap Co-ordination and Selection Committees.

Key: C denotes Council, F - Finance and General Purposes, T - Tournaments, P - Publicity and Development, Hcp - Handicap Co-ordination, S - Selection, Ed - Editorial Board, L - Laws.

A Sponsor For The Inter-County Championship

The Croquet Association are delighted to announce that this Year's inter-county championship is to be sponsored by one of the most famous names in wine, Mateus.

This is the first time any established CA event has been sponsored and we are sure that the game will benefit enormously from the publicity that will be generated. Davis Pinchard, Marketing Manager of Hedges and Butler the agents for Mateus said "We are delighted to break into this new field. We are convinced that Association Croquet has a tremendous future as a spectator sport and we hope to encourage more people to take up this most fascinating of games".

Nine counties have entered, rather more than of recent years. The championship will for the first time be held at the Sussex County Croquet Club at Southwick on the 20th to 23rd May.

This championship has been held annually since 1897 except for the war years - and since 1908 it has hitherto been held always at Hurlingham. The move to Southwick was made for various reasons, perhaps the two most important of which were that play could take place on Saturday and Sunday at Southwick which was not possible at Hurlingham (it was hoped that this would enable more working players to take part) and secondly because there was some doubt about the availability of sufficient courts at Hurlingham whereas Southwick could offer the certainty of nine lawns for each of the four days.

There was of course some fear that the move of the event to the South coast would put off many players because of the extra distance involved - but happily this does not seem to have been the case. As usual a number of well-known players will be playing including Nigel Aspinall, David Openshaw, Stephen Mulliner and many others including an all too rare appearance by John Solomon.

The nine counties which have entered are Bedfordshire, Berks and Oxon, Devon, Eastern Counties, Middlesex, Midlands, Northern, Surrey and Sussex. The present champions are Berks and Oxon, which team, as Berks, won the championship during its first four years of 1897 to 1900. Middlesex has won the event more often than any other, their 26 wins is still a good way ahead of Surrey which has

17 wins. Other previous winners include such currently inactive counties as Hants (4 times), Kent (3 times), Herts (once) and Irish Counties (once). One wonders if any of these could be resuscitated for next year and whether such areas as Cheshire, Gloucestershire and the Welsh Counties could not put strong teams together.

The Hurlingham Club
Ranelagh Gardens
London SW6 3PR

Obituary

Miss F. Joly

The sudden death occurred on February 14th of Francis Joly. A member of Carrickmines Club, she was a well known visitor to English tournaments and also played in South Africa. Among her many successes, she won the Women's Championship and also played many times in the Ladies Field Cup. A sporting player, she really enjoyed her croquet and will be sadly missed by her many friends.

N R

Obituary

Mrs. E. Ward

Players who have enjoyed lunches and teas at the Nottingham club over the years will be sorry to learn of the death of Mrs Ethel Ward, who was mainly responsible for providing them. She did so selflessly, though (as with us all) a word of praise never went amiss and those who practised the art received more than generous portions of her renowned trifles. She was also a useful player, having at one time a handicap of 6, though she maintained that she was never properly taught when she joined the club twenty years ago. She was a keen bridge player and played golf before taking up croquet.

Another familiar face will also be absent this season, that of Charles Hartshorn, who retired as groundsman in December having dedicated himself to looking after our lawns for at least twenty years. He usually appeared at lunchtime during tournaments, having started work hours before most of the competitors had breakfasted. Both these people have given invaluable service to the club and will be greatly missed.

Obituary

Mr. Frank Stanley-Smith

Frank Stanley-Smith, who died on 13th December in his 92nd year, was a Founder-Member of Bentley Croquet Club, and remained its very active Secretary until just after his 90th birthday. He was also a member of Colchester Club and of the Association, of which he was one of the oldest Associates.

He gave a great deal of his time and energy to croquet, becoming a formidable opponent on the Court whilst remaining most encouraging and helpful to new-comers. His wide knowledge of the game and his interest resulted in his being an expert on Croquet Gymkhanas - often used to herald the summer season at Bentley and Colchester Clubs.

One of his early and very able pupils was his wife, Rita - and her skill at the game pays eloquent tribute to his teaching.

Frank's passing is a great loss to his Clubs and to the game, and he will be sadly missed by his many friends.

Points of Etiquette - No. 17

Ladies may, as is well known, be unable to toss at the start of a game, either because they are without a coin or because they lack the dexterity to toss one. What should be done if two ladies, drawn to play, both find themselves in this unfortunate position?

This position actually occurred in a recent club match which has been reported to us. Apparently, the matter was - after full consideration of all the options by members of both teams - resolved amicably by allowing the lower bisqued of the two ladies to delegate her responsibilities to the captain of her team. In a tournament, the difficulty could perhaps be resolved by calling upon the services of the referee of the tournament, or other responsible person.

Next: What to do in a Mixed Doubles if the opponents peg out the lady you are partnering.

J.F.

A Journey By Train From London To Peking

The Folkestone train pulled out of Victoria Station on Tuesday morning, September 8th, and our long journey to Peking had begun.

Our party was composed of 14 Americans, five British, four Canadians and one Australian, with our first Tour guide. After a brief stay in Paris we reached West Berlin to find that our hotel had been booked for a conference and we were allotted comfortable cabins on a house-boat docked in the River Spree (hence the expression, "going on a spree"). The two million inhabitants have to make their own pleasures as it is too far to go away and many go boating on the twenty lakes. We climbed a viewing platform on the grim Berlin Wall and saw East Berlin police watching us through binoculars. Later, we drove through "check-point Charlie" into East Berlin past unsmiling women-passport-controllers with guns. Flags were out along Unter den Linden for a meeting on "Peace and Freedom"! The next morning we reached Warsaw, where my friend and I took a local bus to visit the Old City. When the conductor asked us for our book of tickets, two charming young men came to our assistance, gave us their seats and took us to a local wedding which was taking place. And when, later, they said goodbye, they kissed our hands! A bronze statue of Chopin stands in a large square surrounded by a big pond and rose gardens. After it had been destroyed, it was restored from the fragments, and some small statues melted down. In the Ghetto district there was a statue in memory of the May 1943 uprising, and the old town has been re-built exactly as it was before, from the existing rubble of the devastation which it had suffered.

The next morning we crossed the Russian border at Brest. Here, all the train carriages were run into a shed to change the wheels from one gauge to another. Each carriage was lifted up by hydraulic lifts. The old wheels were rolled out and the new ones rolled in, and we continued our journey to Moscow. On our city tour after arrival, we visited the Kremlin Armoury which contained some beautiful dresses worn by members of the Royal Family and the crown of Catherine the Great. In the Economic Achievements Exhibition there were models of Sputniks, the insides of the capsules of Space Ships and a large model of the link-up with the Americans in Space. Next day we were taken on the Metro to five different stops on the Inner Circle line. All were beautifully constructed in marble and each had a separate theme and its own architectural design. On September 17th we left Moscow for the start of our four-day trans-Siberian journey to Irkutsk. A time-table in each carriage showed 36 stops en route, varying from 6 to 25 minutes.

We were passing now through lovely little villages, like those in Switzerland, in wooded hills of blending autumn colours. At midnight I stepped out onto the platform at Omsk, a name which has always delighted me! Irkutsk is an old city of 600,000 people and a go-ahead place because of the many thousands of the "Decembrist" aristocracy who were sent to Siberia in 1825 for twenty years after their revolt at the coronation of Tsar Nicholas. They remained there and organised good schools, factories and orchestras and generally exercised a strong cultural influence. A bus tour took us to Lake Baikal, the deepest fresh-water lake in the world, which holds a quarter of the world's supply of fresh water.

And now we left for Outer Mongolia, changing from steam engine to diesel at Ulan Uda and passing through scenery of craggy hills and dry brown grass until we reached Ulan Bator, the capital. Here the people dress in bright colours, wearing the "dell" costume which buttons up to the neck and has long loose sleeves which serve as gloves. Everywhere we saw children cleaning and clearing up the city, as it was the annual week for voluntary work by children. In the main square stands a large statue of Stalin, whose memory is honoured because he freed them from the Chinese and helped to set up the Mongolian People's Republic. Marco Polo was the first visitor to write about Mongolia when he came to Karakorum, the old capital city.

We journeyed on through the Gobi Desert which was very bleak, with no sand but only stones, rock and scrub. At the Mongolian-China border the wheels were changed again. And so we came to China and were met by smiling officials at Da Tong, a town where coal is mined and where we saw large lumps being taken on carts to people's houses and stacked like a brick wall in front of each house. Here, the charming Mr Li became our new courier and escorted us throughout our stay in Peking. From him we learned many fascinating details about life in China today. In Peking, for instance, there are no private cars but three million bicycles. Education is free and also medicine. Employment is allocated according to the suitability of the individual

and is interchangeable. A young man working on the roads today would be transferred in a few months to maintenance work, perhaps, in a school. Men are not allowed to marry until the age of 27 and women until the age of 25. Married couples today are only allowed to have one child; if they have two, fifteen per cent of their total income is withdrawn for seven years! Newly-married couples are sent off with the customary greeting, "May you both be very happy and may you have twins", because twins are legally counted as "one"!

The climax of our tour came with our visit to the Great Wall of China, a coach journey of 85 kilometres. To reach the top platform of the Wall entailed a walk of some forty minutes after leaving the coach. The width of this platform is such that ten men are able to walk abreast and it is the only man made object which can be seen by astronauts from Outer Space. As one stood here and looked out on the Great Wall continuing its 3,000 miles journey through the mountainous border with Mongolia, it was an unforgettable moment; one which Edmund Hillary must have shared in 1952, when for the first time in history he set foot upon the peak of Mount Everest.

W J B

The Croquet Grading System

Listing for 12 months ended 31.12.81

1. G Aspinall	180	60	26. G Noble	118	45
2. D Openshaw	168	79	27. M Ormerod	118	48
3. K Wylie	156	27	28. M Stevens	117	55
4. M Murray	154	85	29. E Bell	116	40
5. S Mulliner	151	79	30. L Latham	114	12
6. R Murfitt	149	98	31. C Prichard	114	16
7. A Hope	147	59	32. E Jackson	113	19
8. E Solomon	143	58	33. M Coward	112	23
9. J McCullough	141	64	34. T Owen	111	25
10. W Prichard	139	32	35. P Johnson	110	42
11. B Neal	138	56	36. A Cooper	109	12
12. W Ormerod	138	18	37. P Death	109	19
13. T Read	136	20	38. R Godby	108	47
14. D Foulser	134	57	39. H Green	108	33
15. G Roberts	134	63	40. I Wright	108	16
16. D Croker	133	42	41. V Carlisle	107	28
17. I Bond	128	51	42. K Jones	107	19
18. J Rose	126	58	43. Mrs B Meacham	106	28
19. S Wright	126	25	44. A Coleman	104	18
20. P Hands	125	36	45. J Haigh	102	58
21. J Phillips	124	44	46. S Jones	102	12
22. I Vincent	122	56	47. L Butler	101	31
23. B Sykes	121	46	48. A Girling	100	14
24. J Wheeler	119	50	49. R Hilditch	100	26
25. S Hemsted	118	22	50. M Avery	99	28

S N M 5.3.82

News from the Clubs BOWDON

Last season saw the implementation of Phase I of the Club Development scheme. Grants of £10,000 and £1,080 were received respectively from the Sports Council and from Trafford Borough Council, as well as an interest free loan of £5,000 from the Sports Council. Additional funds were raised by members in the form of donations (£760), fund raising activities (£725), and loans (£4,735). The fund raising was particularly noteworthy, £550 coming from a Wine and Cheese Party organised by the ladies of the Club, and £128 from a Croquet Gymkhana and Barbecue, held during the summer. Loans from members came under three headings: a returnable levy of £25 paid by all members (new members will henceforth pay a £25 returnable entry fee); a draw, in which some 14 members contributed £100 each - the draw is held every Quarter, the person drawn receiving £115 and his/her name being taken out of future draws; and straight forward loans, on which the Club pays interest at a preferential rate, and repays the money over a 5-year period in 5 years time.

Work so far completed includes the levelling and re-laying of the turf of the Club's four lawns, together with the extension of the available playing surface to give full-size, rectangular lawns (previously, we had been playing on undersized parallelograms!). This has cost £11,650. The Clubhouse has been extended to give considerably more changing accommodation for men, and the tea room has been enlarged, with preliminary work being carried out on a viewing gallery for spectators. So far £9,500 has been spent on this work, and it is

intended to improve the changing accommodation still further, when funds permit, by providing more toilet and washing facilities, and to build a proper Bar and complete the viewing gallery. Electricity has been provided in the Clubhouse for the first time, and lighting has been installed along the access path to allow winter activities to take place, at a cost of approximately £1,150. Costs have been kept lower than they might have been as a result of a great deal of work being undertaken by the members themselves in effecting these improvements, both during the winter months last year, and throughout the summer. Fund raising has enabled the Club to buy a new mower, and a new truck for maintenance purposes, and a retired professional greenkeeper has been engaged to maintain the lawns now that the Club can afford experienced professional help. 'Capital' expenditure on the Club during the past year has thus been in excess of £23,000.

The Club held its annual recruitment drive last May, and some 20 people paid a £3 subscription to join the Club for the month, and receive coaching on Saturday and Sunday afternoons. Of these 20, 6 joined the Club at the end of the month, and during the season, a further 7 new members were enrolled, bringing the total to 13 for the year — about the same as in previous years. One of the Club members has continued to run a Croquet section at Manchester Grammar School, and it is hoped that this will provide a source of new members in the future. Attempts have been made to persuade other local schools to include croquet in their sporting activities, and croquet demonstrations and competitions were organised last year at a large Arts & Crafts Fair held in Manchester, and at Manchester Youth Club. The Club was asked to appear on Granada TV to provide a background scene of croquet being played in front of a country house, as part of Granada's 25th birthday celebrations, but failed to appear on people's screens, despite the fact that a game was in progress throughout the programme! Articles and news items appeared regularly in the Daily Telegraph and in the local press throughout the season, thanks to the efforts of the Club's Publicity Officer.

During last season, Bowdon ran separate coaching courses for beginners, middle, and lower bisquers, and these were well supported by players from the Northern Clubs. Application has been made to the C.A. to run a Referees' Course at Bowdon in the coming season, and for one of the Club's members to be examined as an 'Examining Referee', so that the North can be self-supporting in this respect, and remedy its lack of qualified referees.

The Tournaments organised by the Club last season were very well supported. The August Weekend was over-subscribed, and there was an increased entry for the Northern Championships, yet again, with an improved overall standard of entry. During the coming season, and enhanced Northern Championship will be held in August, and the Weekend Tournament will be held in June. Already there is a heavy entry for both these events.

Despite all the activities connected with the Club Development scheme, last season saw a very considerable increase in the standard of play at the Club. Triple peels, once never heard of, became relatively commonplace, and many more games were played under the rules of advanced play. At the start of the season, the Club had 5 members with a handicap of 3 or less. At the end of the season, there were 10. This general improvement in the standard of play, due to the formal coaching courses, and a Wednesday evening croquet 'clinic' run by one of the members in turn, was reflected in the number of external tournaments won by members, the most notable being the Spencer Ell Championship, won by Eddie Bell. The Club won the Longman Cup, playing more matches than most other clubs, due to the peculiarities of the draw, and fielding some 9 different players at one time or another in the various matches. Bowdon also entered two teams in the Northern Federation League, and won the League Trophy with the 'A' team. As in previous years, a team was entered in the Inter-Club Tournament, and 3 members played in the All-England Area Finals at Edgbaston, following selection in a Club tournament. Club members were nominated for both the most improved man and the most improved lady player awards.

The Club has been very fortunate throughout the past year in having a large (13 member) committee which has worked very hard to implement all the above improvements. Work in extending the Clubhouse and the provision of external lighting has enabled the Club to carry on activities throughout the winter, and plans are being prepared to form Bridge and Chess sections, (and perhaps a Ladies' Darts Team!), and to hold social functions (lunches, dinners, film shows, etc.) in the Clubhouse during the winter months. These Sections will be self-financing, and any profit arising from their activities will go towards the maintenance of the lawns for croquet. A new Constitution has been drawn up to reflect the increasing size of the Club and its much larger financial responsibilities, and to include

legal requirements for bar licences, and so on. Work has continued during the past few months to decorate the inside of the Clubhouse, and improve boundary fences before play starts next season. Fund raising has continued, with the sale of 'croquet' Xmas cards, and more recently, 'croquet' T-shirts and sweatshirts. We are having another Croquet Supper in February, and another recruiting drive next May — we look forward to the future with keen anticipation!

So you think you've got problems!

Extract from the Minutes of Bowdon Croquet Club

"A Committee Meeting was held on Saturday March 25th 1922 for the sole purpose of considering the advisability of discharging the Groundsman Goldstraw on account of his deafness, which it was found would be such a serious drawback in working a motor mower, it having been pointed out that it was costing the Club unnecessary expense in repairing the hand machines so frequently owing to his not hearing when they were out of order"

CROQUET IN THE GREAT WAR

During the Great War, the Committee at Bowdon Croquet Club carried on manfully, despite a greatly reduced membership. The Annual Tournament in 1915 was cancelled, but the ladies of the Club met in the pavilion at the time the Tournament would have been held, and spent three days using their sewing machines to make cotton bags that were urgently needed for wounded soldiers in hospitals in France. As the War progressed, other arrangements were made to help the War effort and keep the Club going

Committee Meeting on 12th February 1917

A letter was read from Mrs. Ford Smith proposing that a fowl house for the use of the Haigh Lawn Hospital Annexe should be placed on one of the lawns in the Croquet Ground. Mrs. Ford Smith offered to provide the fowl house and the hens, and wished the hens to be consigned to the care of the men in the Annexe. Mrs. Duggan proposed that if the Committee accepted Mrs. Ford Smith's offer, the putting green should be used for the hens instead of one of the lawns. This was put to the meeting and carried.

Extraordinary General Meeting on Wednesday 21st March 1917

The following resolutions were passed (amongst others)

"That the Ground be not used for Play during the coming season"

"That sheep be taken on the Ground for grazing". Arrangements with regard to taking sheep and in respect of any necessary fencing to be left in the hands of the Ground Managers.

"That wounded soldiers be allowed the use of No. 4 Court"

"That the Annual General Meeting be postponed until April 1918"

Committee Meeting on Saturday September 1st 1917

The Chairman explained that the meeting was called to consider a suggestion that the Croquet Pavilion be lent for Hospital purposes. It was resolved that

"The Croquet Pavilion be lent to the Haigh Lawn Hospital Annexe, subject to one month's notice on either side, the Hospital undertaking all responsibility and expense incurred in connection with their occupation, and to give up the premises and contents in the same condition as when taken over. The 'Premises' to include the full length of water pipe and the meter"

Committee Meeting on Wednesday February 27th 1918

The question of utilising the Ground during the coming season was discussed. It was arranged that No. 4 Court should continue to be reserved for the soldiers at the Haigh Lawn Annexe Hospital, and that the netting bought for the sheep should be used to go round the Court.

As sheep had proved a failure during the last season, Mrs. Duggan suggested offering the three remaining Courts to Miss Jo Armitage for keeping her goats in; and that two more might be bought, and that the milk of one of the goats might be sold to the Haigh Lawn Annexe Hospital for delicate soldiers.

It was resolved that Mrs. Duggan and Mrs. Miller should interview Miss Armitage, and that it should be left in their hands to make the best arrangements they could with regard to the Croquet Ground.

Committee Meeting on Friday February 7th 1919

The question of re-opening the Club in May was discussed. A letter

was read from the Quartermaster of the Haigh Lawn Annexe Hospital, in which she thanked the Committee and members of the Croquet Club for the loan of their pavilion for their Sisters. She also stated that the Sister at present occupying the Pavilion would be ready to vacate it on any date fixed by the Committee of the Croquet Club. It was resolved that the Croquet Club should take possession of the Pavilion from the Haigh Lawn Annexe Hospital on the 25th of March.

It was resolved in addition that Courts No. 1, 2 and 3 should be put in good playing order for this season, and No. 4 Court left until some future date.

The Committee decided that as the re-opening of the Club would involve a heavy expenditure, the Hon. Sec. should be authorised to send a letter to each member of the Club appealing for donations.

Sussex County Croquet and Lawn Tennis Club, Southwick

Eighty years ago this club had just come into being through the efforts of friends who had played croquet at Brighton and Hove before being given the opportunity of leasing three acres from Mr. Gorringe at Southwick. All that summer Gen. Kenyon Stow, the President, assisted by Col. Burton, worked hard to convert what was little more than a ploughed field into twelve lawns, in good order, so that by September 9th they were ready for their first tournament. The hoops were 4 inch as it had been found that 3½ inch had killed the game in the past. There were large entries. Capt. Drummond who had his own lawn at Petworth, and Capt. Jellicorse were handicapper and referee, and the prizes were given away by His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge before a very large crowd.

The annual general meetings of the club were held in the Hove Town Hall and in 1905 no more new members were accepted as the number then stood at 240. The hon. secretary received a salary which he was magnanimous enough to do without during the war years when the club was partially closed. By this time three tennis courts were in use. Gas had been laid on in the kitchen and at the opening day of the new season tea was served on the lawn to members and friends at the expense of the club.

By 1922 two ponies had been purchased to pull the lawn mower, until in 1924 an Atco mower was ordered. The list of donations of furniture and crockery and summer houses and plants for the garden is considerable as is the continuing record of voluntary service given by members with time to spare. Most of the trophies which are still competed for in the club competitions were donated between the wars. The proceeds from the bar kept the finances going together with the subscriptions. Every winter several members departed for the South of France where croquet was played at Hyeres and at Menton. A great many letters were written, boxes of which are still preserved, as is the "Bible", now full, giving all the tournaments results since 1936.

In 1962 discussions took place as to whether the tennis section should separate and run its own affairs but this was not achieved until December 31st 1977 when an agreement was entered into between the Management Committee and the Tennis Committee. Over the years various fund raising and member recruiting schemes have been tried and abandoned. Now winds of change are blowing. Fully equipped leisure centres are in demand and the emphasis is on activities such as indoor croquet and bridge which would make the croquet section viable all the year round.

(Mrs.) Gwen Day,
Hon. Gen. Secretary.

Phyllis Court Club Annual Supper

Phyllis Court held their annual Croquet Supper at the Club, on 22nd November 1981. It has become an increasingly popular event, and was attended this year by seventy-seven people, some from Clubs as far away as Cheltenham and Southwick. For those who have not had the opportunity to visit Phyllis Court, perhaps I should set the scene.

The Club is situated by the river at Henley-on-Thames. It occupies a fine position on the Royal Regatta Reach, and the Club's own Grandstand provides a spectacular view of the Finish. The present house was built in 1785 but the history of previous buildings on this site, can be traced back to the fourteenth century. In 1347 the property was granted by Edward III to John de Molyns, on the tenure of a red rose given annually. Consequently he named the Manor 'Fyllis' or 'Fyllets', the old French word for rose. This red rose still forms part of the emblem of the Club.

In the middle of the seventeenth century, part of the mansion of Fillets Court was demolished and some of the bricks were used by Oliver Cromwell to build the wall which edges the garden and fronts the river. The house then became known as 'Phyllis Court'. Again in 1785 the old house, apart from some outbuildings, was pulled down and a new one built. Phyllis Court Club was founded in June 1906 and the first patron was the late Duke of Windsor, then Prince of Wales.

Today, in addition to gracious surroundings and a sense of history, the Club offers elegant residential accommodation, as well as two dining rooms, a ballroom conference room and bar. The games facilities include a card room, billiard room, tennis courts and of course, two croquet lawns. It is therefore easy to see what an idyllic atmosphere is created for the croquet player, and why so many attend the annual supper. The visitors this year included the Chairman of the Croquet Association, Robin Godby and his wife and also the Secretary, Richard Rothwell. The Guest Speaker was Dr. B. G. F. Weitz, who with his wife Betty were members of Phyllis Court until their move to Cheltenham a year ago. It was Betty Weitz untiring work as Secretary to the Croquet Section, that laid the foundation for its present success.

'Candied Peel'

Croquet in the North

At the Autumn Meeting of the Federation of Northern Croquet Clubs, held on 7th November, some matters of general interest to croquet players were discussed as well as purely domestic questions.

A report on the past season will be sent to "The Telegraph" and to "The Guardian" at the beginning of next season in order to gain publicity for the game. "The Guardian" prints a diary of forthcoming events in all sports early in the year and croquet should be represented in it. We hope to gain further publicity by mounting a concerted drive to interest schools in playing the game, both for its educative qualities and as another sports option to be continued after leaving school; the preparation for play at universities will be emphasised. Every club in the Federation will contact schools in their areas, aiming at finding at least two each. Such schools would be given whatever assistance and guidance may be possible in getting the game set up. If there proves to be a good response the Federation will organise a handicap inter-school tournament to be played off on club lawns during school summerholidays. Teachers would be encouraged to take a playing part.

The new arrangements for publication of "The Croquet Gazette" were considered and, in spite of some adverse criticism of the shortened summer issues, the prompt reporting of tournament results was welcomed. It was only fair not to pass judgement until the winter 'bumper' issues had been sampled.

Club experience with Jaques unmilled balls had been mixed. It was agreed that in play they could not be distinguished from milled balls, but one club found that they cracked as milled balls did, and besides they were not consistent in size and shape. There was further criticism of milled balls with regard to cracking, poor replacement service and large weight discrepancies (up to 4 oz. in one instance). In spite of C.A. reluctance it was felt that an alternative manufacturer must be found. It might be necessary in the end to accept balls which differed somewhat in elasticity from Jaques' balls. This might require some slight adjustment in playing technique, but it need cause no insuperable difficulty provided the balls were officially adopted by the C.A. as the new standard.

The Chairman, Nell Tyldesley, in her report, said that the past season had been one of success for many in the North. David Openshaw's successes gave great pleasure and Eddie Bell was congratulated on winning the Spencer Ell Trophy. Bowdon C.C.'s 'A' team had won the Northern League and the Longman Cup. She said that she would be retiring from membership of the C.A. Council in April, 1982. However, there are hopes that thereafter there may be two members from the North on the Council.

Southport C.C. reported that they had successfully run two tournaments as well as the Pimm's International Match. Next year they will host another Pimm's International on June 12th as well as running an extra tournament, making three in all. Bowdon C.C. reported that the first phase of their club development programme had been completed. The clubhouse had been extended and refurbished and the lawns had been relaid at a total cost of £23,000. This fine effort, which is a matter for considerable pride in the North makes Bowdon one of the leading clubs in the country. It should be noted that the Northern Championships which are held there annually will take place next year during the week 22nd — 30th August, the dates having been exchanged with the Bowdon Weekend Tournament, which will be held on 11th—

13th June, 1982. These are both very popular tournaments and early booking is advised. The relatively new Harrogate club continues to function, though it is handicapped by the lack of a good lawn. The new officers hoped that the club would make better progress next season. Other clubs in the North reported steady progress in membership and standard of play.

A.C. Mason

Who's Who?

In the 1981 Inter-club Championship, Cheltenham 1 were drawn at home to Bath.

In the second singles game, Martin Murray (President of the Bath Club), "playing for Cheltenham" beat Laurence Latham (a Cheltenham member playing in his first Inter-Club match), playing for Bath. This win helped the visitors to their 4-3 victory.

Despite their defeat, the Bath team were pleased at having taken three games off such strong opposition.

REMINISCENT ROQUETS

reproduced from the C.A. Gazette March 23rd 1922

Some Famous Croquet Clubs

No. 2, OXFORD UNIVERSITY

A University Club, to which is attached a somewhat strange proviso — No undergraduate, however importunate, may at any time be admitted as a member!

The gleaner of these scant and faded records recalls a time (not indeed of this century) when, as an undergraduate of a sister University, he was himself occasionally privileged to play at croquet in the hallowed precincts of a Fellows' Garden. Very happy recollections, too; not perhaps of keen intellectual battles, of stern scientific encounters, which one might expect in such surroundings; rather, of afternoons of lazy wilful idleness, beautified by heaven knows what dear visions (for had not Dons their daughters!), delights, too, of the 'cool refreshment' order, cherry brandy par excellence! But we digress.

The historic club at Oxford was a club, properly and respectably so constituted from its earliest inception. Its Statutes have, down the ages, been as rigorously binding as any turned out by the Ancient House of Congregation itself. To such an institution Cambridge, so far as we are aware, can boast no rival.

The most faded of ancient records tells us of the Club's first Committee Meeting, held at Lincoln College as long ago as May 15th 1867.

Prominent among its original members are the names of Mr Mark Patison (the Rector of Lincoln), of Dr J.R. Magrath (the present Provost of Queen's), of Mr Vernon Harcourt, of Christ Church, and of Professor R.B. Chiton, of philosophical fame.

Not a little instructive, here, are the records of certain Rules under which the game is to be played.

With what happens to the player who 'misses his first hoop' we are not greatly concerned, but it is good to learn that the vexed question of admitting "two-handed play" must amicably be settled by a majority of votes of those taking part in any given game. Note, however, that no player is under any circumstances whatever to play "with his mallet in front!"

Neither groundsman nor the dead boundary rule would seem to have been in vogue, for the limits of the ground must be marked out at the beginning of each game, and a ball passing beyond them is immediately to be brought to the nearest point of the ground and there played. None of your 'tight croquet,' however! Oxford would never countenance it. No person is permitted 'to place his foot on his ball.'

If the keenness of the members is to be inferred from the length of their season, there was little lack of enthusiasm, an entry of March 3rd, 1868, showing that arrangements were made with the gardener to pay him ten shillings every month for work done on the croquet ground from March 1st to

October 31st. The 'ground' in question appears, from later references, to have been that of the Museum. It is to be hoped that 'the gardener' did something to justify his extravagant remuneration!

Match play was evidently in fashion, the Secretary being instructed on March 2nd 1870, to fix a day with the Secretary of the Four Shire Club for an inter-club contest.

On January 19th, in the same year, a General Conference of Croquet Clubs had been called to draw up the Laws of Croquet, the O.U.C.C. very properly adopting this code for its own use. Possibly as a result of this, the Club at once became over-patronised, a notice appearing on March 9th, 1870, to the effect that no more members could be admitted. Ground and accommodation were sadly inadequate. As the outcome of so prosperous a season, however, the Secretary was, on November 1st, empowered to spend as much as 30s. or £2 upon improving the ground (!!).

Sooner or later, of course, as in all such ancient records, we come across the inevitable 'rub' with lawn tennis, a specially-summoned General Meeting, on April 28th, 1876, deciding that this game should be played on the larger grounds only when not required for Croquet.

On April 29th our friend, the gardener, comes in for well-merited promotion, and is, in return for the whole management and care of the ground, to receive the "full pay" of 15s. a month (!!).

An entry on February 11th, 1878, shows that a portion of the University Park was offered by the curators to the Club upon certain conditions; while in a statement of the accounts for 1880 appear the items:—

	£	s	d
Croquet Balls	0	6	0
Lawn Tennis	4	1	3

It was not until 1884 that an arrangement was made for the use of the Oxford University Cricket Ground and Pavilion during the Long Vacation, and on June 30th of that year it was agreed to organise a Tournament in July upon the conditions that no entrance money be taken and that two prizes be given at the Club's expense. The former of these generous conditions, has, we understand, been faithfully adhered to, though the latter has been allowed to lapse.

Between this date and 1891 no reference to Croquet appears in the Club Accounts. Arrangements, however, appear to have been made for a Tournament to be held in 1882, in which year £5 1s 10d. was spent upon new mallets and balls.

By 1900 full interest in the game has revived, regulations being drawn up in June, that year, for the use of the three lawns upon which, ever since, there has been play in term-time during the summer. Three further courts are provided for use throughout the whole of the Long Vacation.

The first Association Tournament to be held at Oxford was in 1903, the fixture being repeated every season until 1914 (inclusive). The last of those meetings the writer well remembers — the hottest week he has ever known, with dear old Winch at the helm, one of the last tournaments he ever managed.

The Challenge Cup (Championship of Oxfordshire, Open Singles) was first played for in 1904.

A revival of the meeting last year found the courts, marked out on the Worcester College Cricket Ground, in anything but ideal condition owing to the drought, as those who took part may, it is feared, have reason to remember! Such phenomenal conditions, however, are hardly likely to recur, and it is hoped that this year considerable improvement will be shown. Situated in the centre of the city, and amidst such beautiful surroundings, a more suitable place than those Worcester College gardens cannot well be imagined.

Croquet In The North

The Spring Meeting of the Federation of Northern Croquet Clubs was held at the Ellesmere Club, near Manchester on 6th February, 1982. Fifteen members took part and enjoyed the excellent tea provided by our hosts. Mrs Nell Tyldesley and Mr A C Mason respectively were elected unopposed to the offices of Chairman and Secretary.

Clubs would soon be making approaches to schools in their own areas with the object of creating interest in the game and organising an inter-schools competition later in the summer. It was known that Manchester Grammar School and Chetham's School from Manchester and Queen's School from Chester were interested.

There was general agreement that the production of The Croquet Gazette and the reporting of tournaments was excellent, but it was hoped that in future the winter numbers would contain more of general interest for croquet players. This, of course, depends on getting suitable copy to the editor on a regular basis, and in order to stimulate croquet players to write for the Gazette it was suggested that an editorial panel be set up, each member with a special responsibility for gathering in contributions under headings such as 'Letters', 'Club Profile', 'Problems', 'Handiman Hints' and so forth.

The manufacture of plastic balls with suitable properties of density and elasticity, as an alternative to Eclipse balls was still under investigation.

It is recognised that with University clubs there is a recurring continuity problem, and so it is useful if a well established outside club can find a member who can take a watching interest in the University club to ensure that the equipment is preserved intact, and perhaps to stimulate interest in the game amongst freshers. It was hoped that Bowdon CC could do this for Liverpool University club.

The 1982 Brochure of the Federation will show the fixtures in the north for 1982 and entries will be made for the Longman Cup, the Secretary's Shield and the Inter-Counties competitions. Fixture lists have been drawn up for Federation League matches, and five tournaments will be held at Southport and Bowdon as shown in the CA Fixture List, including the Northern Championships (22nd–30th August inclusive). One of the Pimm's Internationals (England v Scotland) will be held at Southport on 12th June. A touring team from Scotland will be meeting players from the North at Bowdon and Southport on 22nd and 23rd May, and an inter-Federation match between West Midlands and the North will be played at Southport on 19th September.

In addition to these activities there will be a Referee's training course at Bowdon in March, and recruiting drives by individual clubs in April and May.

The Christmas cards, produced by Bowdon, featuring croquet in the snow, were a great success. The Club proposes to repeat them.

A C M

Roving Eye

Romance is in the air in the Cheltenham croquet scene for Paul Hands announced his engagement, in February to Penny Swingler (definitely not going to be a future doubles partner) and they plan to get married during 1983. Andrew Hope is getting married to Caroline Mayne (whom he met at the Cheltenham Croquet Club) on 24th April and then flying off to the Carribean for their honeymoon. On behalf of everyone in the croquet world who knows them I am sure that we wish all four every happiness in the future.

News from New Zealand is that Graeme Roberts won their Mens Championship beating Bob Jackson twice en route. It is to be hoped that this latest success almost immediately upon returning to his home country will result in him being selected to represent New Zealand in the Test Match series to be played later this year.

I am sure many readers will be interested to learn that one of our members has ventured into the autobiographical field.

Cyril Pountney, Lt Cdr RNVR Retd, has written of his wartime experiences under the title "Uncle's War in the Fleet Air Arm" and knowing him as I do, this book will be as full of fun as is Cyril himself.

Known as "Uncle" when he joined a front line Swordfish Squadron because he was somewhat older than the others, the name stuck to him throughout the war and his book tells of the sinking of "Ark Royal" which he was in at the time and of his swim among the sharks in the Indian Ocean as a result of enemy action.

The Admiral of the Fleet, The Lord Hill-Norton, GCB, considers it worthy of a foreword by him and I have no doubt that those who read this book will get as much enjoyment from it as I have always had when playing Cyril at croquet.

Robin Godby

National Rankings

South African Croquet Association

Miss Myrle Simkins, the Official Handicapper at the SA National Championships, announced the following twelve top ranked players in South Africa at the Awards Dinner held in Pietermaritzburg on 14 November 1981:

Tom Barlow	— 3
David Cunningham	— 2
Clive Coulson	— 1½
Lester Sullivan	— 1
Coroffyn Carter	scr.
Reginald Bamford	scr.
Bruce Stalker	+ 1½
Gilbert Hobbs	+ 1½
Carole Knox	+ 1½
Bryan Lloyd-Pratt	+ 2
George Jackson	+ 2
Dick le Maitre	+ 2

Spencer Buck

Reproduced from the South African Croquet Gazette

The Croquet World and especially Western Province were proud to welcome Spencer Buck, the current Australian Champion, to this country to take part in the Provincial Championships in which he won the Open Singles and Handicap event. This is the second Australian Champion to visit this country in ten years.

Older members will remember Colonel Saalfeld's short visit in 1973. Good as the Colonel was in his day, he lacked the brilliance which our later visitor displays on the courts.

Spencer, aged 25, is the son of that former famous Australian Champion, Peter Buck. He comes from Mount Gambier in South Australia, which is very close to the state boundary of Victoria and about 300 miles south of Adelaide, capital of South Australia — the croquet centre of the country.

Coached by his father, he started playing croquet at the age of twelve and won his first event in a Tournament in that year. He brought off his first triple peel at the age of fourteen, having been encouraged to get up every morning before breakfast to practise one shot only until he had perfected it. He went on from strength to strength, winning the State Championship and finally the Australian title in 1979 and 1980. He first played in England for his country in the Mac Robertson Trophy in 1974 where he made history by winning a game after seven hours play. In 1979, he won the South Island Championship in New Zealand against their star player, Paul Skinley.

He is a left hander who plays a tight standard grip with a very slow back swing and perfect rhythm in the forward strike and follow through. He is very careful and deliberate in his planning of his line of play and moves quickly on the court though his breaks are on the slow side, but the perfection of aim and distance outweigh this feature. Apart from his general play which is faultless and extremely accurate, I was most impressed by his long splits when the two balls finish within inches of the desired spot.

Withal, a most charming and modest young man who has been a most welcome visitor to our country and has given us a high opinion of Australia's croquet standard.

Cheltenham England

versus

Hawkes Bay - Ohakune

by John G. Prince

Reproduced from the NZCC Croquet Gazette

The Cheltenham Club, England represented by Martin Murray and Andrew Hope, members of Scotland's victorious 1980 team and the winners of the first Pimm's International series, together with Graeme Roberts (formerly of Dunedin) lined up against a geographically unique combination of Hawkes Bay - Ohakune, namely former doubles cham-

pions Keith Woollett and John Prince together with seasoned campaigner Charles Crosby.

The match played at Hastings club on 24th December 1980 unfortunately drew only a few spectators which was a great shame as the standard of play was high. (However, with the cancellation of this year's Easter Invitation by the Association, perhaps Hawkes Bay is no longer interested in watching really good croquet). One spectator felt the day was more enjoyable than the 1979 Great Britain versus New Zealand Test Match as everyone seemed more relaxed and the play flowed. The result was a 4 - 2 victory to the visitors, however, one highlight was all the home sides. In the doubles clash between Murray and Hope against Woollett and Prince the game was over in a short time. Martin hit with the second ball and rolled the balls to the peg, John hit with the third ball and went to 4 back. Andrew hit with the fourth ball but went boundary, so Keith finished the game with a triple on the fifth turn! Martin Murray (after more punishment) suggested we make it best of three, Keith hit with the fourth ball and went to 4 back, alas, John went boundary after the lift was missed. Martin attempted to resolve things and went for a sextuple set up but failed at six, shortly after the home side was back in and John finished with a triple.

In the singles there were two more triples, one each to Graeme Roberts and John Prince.

Results

Prince bt Murray 26 - 12, Hope bt Woollett 26 - 17, Roberts bt Crosby 26 - 8.

Prince and Woollett bt Murray and Hope 26 - 0 (26 - 5).

Murray and Roberts bt Prince and Crosby 26 - 20.

Hope and Roberts bt Woollett and Crosby 26 - 3.

New Zealand Championships Played in January 1981

	Winner	Runner-up
Open Championship	P. Skinley	R. Jackson
Heenan Plate	D. Bulloch	Mrs. E. Boyes
Women's Championship	Mrs. R.A. Johnstone	Miss S. Grigg
Men's Championship	J. Hogan	R. Jackson
Open Championship Doubles	J. Hogan and R. Jackson	J. Read and C. Jones
Mixed Championship Doubles	P. Skinley and Mrs. A.A. Johnstone	D. Bulloch and Mrs. Hadwin
Men's Handicap Singles	P. Skinley	J. Hogan
Women's Handicap Singles	Mrs. E. Boyes	K. Smith
Intermediate Championship	Mrs. J.C. Armitt	Mesdames Armitt and R. Jackson
Intermediate Doubles	C. and B.A. Johnston	Mrs. E. Boyes
Arthur Ross Trophy	P. Skinley	

Commentary

Outstanding players in the tournament were the three men P. Skinley, J. Hogan and R. Jackson. Skinley won four events, experienced some odd variations in form but fortunately for him his peaks coincided with the right moment! J. Hogan and P. Jackson were very steady with Hogan winning the Men's and with Jackson the Doubles. R. Jackson was probably the most consistent of the three with strange lapses at vital moments (lack of competitive play?). Interesting dark horses in the Doubles were J. Read and C. Jones, both of whom established themselves as players to be taken seriously. C. Jones has changed from side to centre stance . . . this is obviously developing well, some of his play being quite impressive and cannot be discounted for National Teams Honours in the coming years. Amongst the women who took the eye were Mrs. R.A. Johnstone, Mrs. E. Boyes, Miss S. Grigg and Mrs. J. Smith (better known as Judith Clark).

The last four in the Open Singles were Judith Smith, P. Skinley, J. Hogan and R. Jackson. The Women's M. Booth, R.A. Johnstone, S. Grigg and J. Armitt. In the Men's, Jackson and Hogan. Hogan won both lives. Peeling was fairly common place amongst the leading players with R.V. Jackson completing a sextuple, a quadruple and several triples.

Open - Semi-Finals

SKINLEY v. JUDITH SMITH. First game rather in and out to start with, then Paul got going but did not finish out and Judith got to the sixth hoop with one ball before Paul finished. Second game Paul played perfectly with a triple peel.

One Prejudiced Persons Opinion!

from Mrs. Mabel Jackson

There is a game called Croquet
Quite wonderful to see
Alas! Another version's played
We call "Come back to me".

The Tournament was ending
The Final day was here
We all sat by attending
But what a change was there.

A singles in the afternoon
Was played as it should be
But later in the evening
Oh dear! Come back to me.

The shadows growing longer
The four still on the green
Spectators thinned, no wonder!
And stifled yawns were seen.

So let this be a lesson
If players still there be
To play the game with pleasure
Forget "Come back to me".

Mrs. Mabel Jackson
Ellesmere Croquet Club

JACKSON v. HOGAN. First game Bob made a break but missed the shot after one-back. Joseph hit, played to four-back. Bob missed, Joseph tripled peeled. Second game Joseph made a break to four-back, Bob missed, and Joseph tried to triple peel and ended trying a straight triple. After peeling four-back he also made it but only just, had a tricky shot, missed and went to baulk. Bob got in with balls handy. He made no mistakes and triple peeled his ball two perfect rounds. Third game, Joseph went to four-back. Bob missed and Joseph started to triple peel. This started well but it ended with him trying to peel rover when making it with the second ball. He failed, made the hoop then tried to cannon it through from about a foot in front. This failed. He then tried to hit it but missed, hit the wire, leaving two balls about a foot apart near rover with Bob's balls near. Bob made no mistakes and won with a triple peel.

Final. SKINLEY v. JACKSON. Skinley played a break to four-back, Bob missed, and Paul started a triple peel but missed peeling rover. He left Bob with one ball at rover, one between peg and six and open and put his balls on the side line below four. Bob hit and made a break to four-back. Play was in and out a little then and Paul made rover and missed the peg with one ball but pegged the other out. He had one or two tries at the peg while play was in and out. He went from hoop two area and landed near corner four and at the next try went softly and stayed near the peg. Bob then got going and won the game. In the next game Bob was in but missed a shot after Paul played beautifully. In the third game Paul again played perfect rounds and triple peeled.

Can you find the following list of croquet terms hidden in this puzzle? The remaining, unused letters will then form a further croquet item. The solution will be found on a later page.

CROQUET WORD SEARCH

B C R U S H L L A B D R A W R O F
L A B O U N D A R Y L I N E O P H
E K C Y R L E E P E L P I R T I O
E A T K A D O U B L E T A P L O O
P E T I W L T E U Q O R C D L N P
E R N I L A P L P P I L C E A E E
K B P D C P R E U E E L E A B E R
O R L N E E S D D A G A U D D R A
R Y A A N L F B B I F B Q B E B U
T A Y H T L S A T A S T S O T A Q
S R I N R A T U O L L O I U E L S
E D N I E B O L H M W L B N U L R
L L G L P R P K S A I I F D Q R E
B I S L L O S L E L R P L A O E N
U N I A A L H I E L E A A R R V R
O E D B Y L O N R E D G H Y C O O
D P E G O U T E F T T E U Q O R C

Croquet Crossword

CLUES

ACROSS

- To be fine is a virtue (4, 4)
- When in dire straits - "Greetings to a can" (3, 2)
- Initial reverse of ruling body (1, 1)
- Twenty six yards separates one from another (4)
- Fifth word of thirty-five a) (4)
- "List-F" is a handicap due to confusion (5)
- If opponent does, well, you may have a point (5)
- Don't Jazz it up; make it slowly (5)
- Prerequisite of a break (2, 6)

DOWN

- That rest (Anag.) (3, 5)
- Always take it when shooting (3)
- In Autumn 1980 four players had this handicap (3)
- Collective name for one of thirteen variations on a theme (5)
- Mallet weighs 3½ pounds? You can't do one (4, 4)
- No. of main styles (Tollemache Chapter 1) (3)
- First word of Chapter 19 of "Tollemache - Croquet" (2)
- "Try to use it, not take it" (6)
- East is absent but otherwise boundaries in order.
- Arguments? - Quote this (3)
- Follow example to the letter (2)

1	2		3	4		5
6		7	8	9		
					10	
11				12		
	13	14				
	15			16		
	17					
18						

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 1981**

Year to 31.12.80			
INCOME			
4,251	Subscriptions		4,478.89
665	Affiliation Fees and Overseas Members		484.26
862	Levy		894.45
32	Tribute		4.90
829	Sale of Books, Laws, etc.		832.69
1,049	Income from Investments (Net)		1,016.40
412	Donations and Sponsorship (Net)		1,345.69
198	Surplus on Tournaments		—
<u>8,298</u>			<u>9,057.28</u>
LESS EXPENDITURE			
3,083	Magazine, less Income from Advertisements	3,791.60	
—	Deficits on Tournaments	8.09	
<u>3,083</u>			<u>3,799.69</u>
5,215			5,257.59
GENERAL OVERHEADS			
861	Office Rent, Lighting, Heating and Cleaning	839.48	
6,205	Staff Salaries	7,450.63	
218	Committee Travelling Expenses	273.75	
505	Postage and Telephone	621.98	
1,465	Printing and Stationery	1,063.46	
252	Insurance	252.41	
259	Sundry Expenses	211.26	
275	Audit and Accountancy Charges	300.00	
5	Maintenance of Office, Furniture and Equipment	23.83	
<u>10,045</u>		<u>11,036.80</u>	
731	Publicity and Development	684.00	
<u>10,776</u>		<u>11,720.80</u>	
5,993	Sports Council Grant	7,591.00	
<u>4,783</u>			<u>4,129.80</u>
432			
	EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE		<u>1,127.79</u>

INVESTMENTS HELD AT 31st DECEMBER 1981

Nominal Value		Market Value
QUOTED INVESTMENTS		
141.75	Drayton Premier Investment Trust Limited Ordinary Shares at 25p each	1,099
168.00	Midland Bank Limited Ordinary Shares of £1 each	588
550.00	Temple Bar Investment Trust Limited Ordinary Shares of 25p each	2,508
400.00	The New Throgmorton Trust Limited Income Shares of 25p each	288
218.15	3½% War Stock	58
2,500.00	9¼% Treasury Stock 1983	2,331
1,500.00	12% Treasury Stock 1983	1,443
5,000.00	12% Treasury Stock 1984	4,600
		<u>12,915</u>
UNQUOTED INVESTMENTS		
10.00	Roehampton Country Club	10.00
	Abbey National Building Society	4,000.00
	Britannia Building Society	3,607.11
		<u>19,396.27</u>

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS AS AT 31st DECEMBER

1980	FIXED ASSETS	
300	Office Furniture and Equipment at written down value	300.00
10,000	Trophies, estimated to realise	10,000.00
17,427	Investments, as per attached schedule	19,396.27
<u>27,727</u>		<u>29,696.27</u>
	CURRENT ASSETS	
4,024	Sundry Debtors and Prepayments	2,327.38
944	Cash in Hand and at Bank	1,574.32
<u>4,968</u>		<u>3,901.70</u>
<u>32,695</u>		<u>33,597.97</u>
	CURRENT LIABILITIES	
253	Subscriptions Received in Advance	631.50
3,061	Accrued Expenses	2,202.64
316	Taxation	135.66
<u>3,630</u>		<u>2,969.80</u>
<u>29,065</u>		<u>30,628.17</u>
	NET ASSETS	<u>30,628.17</u>
	REPRESENTED BY	
15,723	Accumulated General Fund, as at 1st January 1981	16,155.12
	ADD:	
432	Excess of Income over Expenditure for Year	1,127.79
<u>16,155</u>		<u>17,282.91</u>
1,920	Life Membership Fund	1,920.00
215	Apps-Heley Memorial Fund	215.50
468	Test Tour Fund	494.03
8,245	Benefactors Fund	8,453.63
2,062	Tournaments and Trophies Fund	2,262.10
<u>29,065</u>		<u>30,628.17</u>

We have examined the books, vouchers and other records maintained by The Croquet Association for the year ended 31st December 1981 and obtained such further information as considered necessary. To the best of our knowledge and belief the Accounts on pages 1 to 3 give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the business at 31st December 1981 and of the surplus for the year ended on that date.

Kipling House
43 Villiers Street
London WC2N 6NJ

8th February 1982

NICHOLASS, AMES & CO.
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

**The Treasurer's Commentary On
The 1981 Accounts**

If we had not received significant income from the net result of sponsorship the accounts this year would have shown an excess of expenditure over income and this situation exists despite the fact that we receive a substantial grant from the Sports Council towards our administrative costs. In my opinion we should not, however, rely on sponsorship to cover the day-to-day costs of running the Association but seize the opportunity presented by this additional source of income to further projects for the development of Croquet both at headquarters and at the clubs.

With this principle in mind I have made estimates of our future income and expenditure for the guidance of the F & G P Committee of the Council and although the increase in Levy rate which is already operating for this year will assist considerably in increasing our future income it is clear from these estimates that if we are to improve the magazine and other services to Associates some increase in the level

of subscriptions is now necessary. The Council has accepted the recommendations of the Committee.

The standard rate of subscription will be increased to £10 with effect from 1st January 1983 with consequential alterations in other rates. £10 is not a substantial sum in relative terms when one realizes that today it has only the purchasing power of £7.90 in January 1980 or of only £2.27 in January 1970 when the subscription rate was £4.

The invested assets of the Association have increased in value during the year by 8% to £20,532. A grant of £250 and a loan of equal amount has been made out of the Benefactors' Fund to assist the Edgbaston Club with its development. The legacy from Maurice Reckitt in that Fund has helped to make possible the publication of Colonel Prichard's History of Croquet and its availability to Associates at the special reduced price of £6. Having achieved this objective, the Council has decided that the income from that legacy will be put in future years towards financing the Test Tours for the MacRobertson Shield.

R A Godby, Chairman of the Council
A J Oldham, Hon. Treasurer

Style

by Leslie Riggall

Reproduced from the South African Croquet Gazette

The title of this article is an interesting word. I remember when building my house, I pointed out to the foreman a worker whom I was sure was completely drunk. "Oh no," was the reply, "That's his style."

Style is usually closely related to fashion, and this is dangerous because fashions change. We all have our own style, and tend to think this is the correct style, but in reality we may be merely following the current fashion.

I was quite surprised to find myself described as a "traitor" (January 1981) because I wore a white trilby hat. Surely this is more attractive than the currently trendy sloppy hats which are so in keeping with the sloppy behaviour and lack of discipline of our decadent western society? Although bowlers wear white trilby hats they were not created by or for bowlers. Lord Tollemache, the greatest student and teacher of croquet in its history, published the most important of all books on croquet in 1914, and he always wore a white trilby. The great Irish players who developed and dominated the game in the nineteenth century wore trilby hats. Although I find a cap more comfortable, when it is not too windy I need a wide-brimmed hat to ward of the sun, which causes skin-cancer.

On the question of wearing all white clothing, it is a mark of respect for the game, a sign that the wearer considers the game more important than himself. If we do not have respect for our game, we cannot expect others to do so.

"Style" in croquet usually refers to stance, grip and swing. At present we have a fashion for teaching the "Solomon grip". But few people realise that in fact John Solomon used three entirely different grips, according to the stroke he was playing, two of them being forms of the standard grip.

Many years ago he was the only player using the "Solomon grip", and I asked him for the reason. He explained that when he started as a young boy the mallet was so high that no other grip was possible. When he became big enough to stand over the mallet, he changed to the standard grip for many strokes, but retained the original grip for ordinary roquets and hoops. "Autolykus" mentions Lady Diana Spencer using the same grip at the age of nine, but of course a child of nine has to use that grip. It is interesting to consider that if Solomon had started later, he would have stood over the mallet and presumably have adopted the standard grip to which he changed, and we might have had this variation. A champion has great charisma for aspiring young players, and for years Solomon tried to discourage them from copying his grip, but the charisma prevailed and eventually he had to teach it.

New Zealanders are teaching this to youngsters together with a fashion that can only be described as ridiculous, keeping the feet so close together that there is only enough room for the mallet head. When I suggested to such a player that he must strike his ankles at times, he said that very painful injuries were common, including chipping the bone. Such is fashion.

John Solomon said that he could never understand how a player could hit anything with the Irish grip, yet Nigel Aspinall, who took over his position as British Champion, and Bob Jackson, the world champion and undoubtedly the greatest player in history, both use the Irish grip. As the latter player is I believe over fifty, he cannot maintain his position, but I doubt whether anyone will ever equal his feat of a straight sextuple in a tournament. Incidentally Bob Jackson has a very ugly style, the complete opposite of his elegant and brilliant young partner Paul Skinley.

From all this one can only conclude that style is unimportant, and therefore one should not tell any pupil that he should use this or that grip or style. On the contrary he should be encouraged to choose his own style. Left to themselves most people choose the standard grip and there must be good reasons for this. Lord Tollemache, who (no doubt influenced by the great Irish player) changed from the standard grip to the Irish grip, said that ultimately he regretted the change.

I have not discussed the swing, because here again there are so many variations. Aspinall has a magnificent flowing swing, while Jackson stabs at the ball, jerking his mallet back at the moment of contact. Mrs Rotherham, former British ladies champion, swung her mallet in a quarter circle like a scythe, but was a formidable shot. The only comment I would make is that more power should not be obtained by muscular effort. Any amount of power required can be achieved by extending and raising the backswing. With regard to stance, one should avoid extremes like the one mentioned, or the legs too wide

apart. For centre style the foot opposite to the dominant (lower) hand should be advanced slightly, so that the toes are near to level with the other heel. One has to withstand the momentum of a three pound pendulum swinging with great force, and this will prevent the tendency to over-balance forward. With the upright style, (mallet swinging outside the legs), one foot is usually ahead of the other anyway.

In conclusion, we should allow the novice to choose his own style, and then try to impress upon him the importance of concentration, standing perfectly still, and keeping his head down. If he can do all these things he will be a good player.

In Res An Acorn Cup

1. The Facts

With all the clips for the first hoop, the striker played a square split from a position near hoop six, sending the croqueted ball to hoop two and his own to an opponent's ball on the north boundary. With a sickening feeling, he realised that he had hit it too hard, and the nearer his ball got to the boundary the more certain he was that it was going off. It had been sunny that week, with something of a breeze, so that the lawn was fairly fast. Three inches from disaster, however, the ball suddenly stopped.

Arriving at the spot, the striker, much relieved, found that the cause of this apparent miracle was an acorn cup that had blown from a nearby tree . . . but was entitled to benefit from this windfall?

2. The Law

To summarise the problem: how should play continue after the striker has stated that his turn would have ended under law 19(c) had not his ball been stopped from going off the lawn by an acorn cup?

The only irregularity suggested by the facts comes under Law 34(b), "interference by an outside agency during stroke", but was the acorn cup an outside agency? The alternative is that it was a "loose impediment" which, as it had not been removed under Law 23(a), should presumably have been treated as part of the surface of the court and the striker allowed to continue. The difficulty with this is that though naturally occurring, like leaves or worm casts, the acorn cup was an isolated object invisible to the striker and thus could not, in practice, have been removed. Despite this, I would be reluctant to classify it as an outside agency, but I am very uncertain where the division between these categories lies.

If an outside agency was involved, the decision would turn on whether the interference "materially affected the outcome of the stroke". It certainly would appear to have done in this case, as the right to play the next stroke was at issue, but I find this phrase difficult to interpret. "The outcome of the stroke" must presumably mean more than just the final position of the balls, as otherwise a replay would be required after all but glancing collisions. In my view the test should be whether the outcome of the stroke, but for the interference, could be adequately reconstructed, with a replay only if the resulting position was in material doubt. This would have led to the striker's turn ending, but if, as I suspect, the law as it currently stands cannot bear this interpretation, the striker would have been allowed to escape from the consequences of his carelessness by replaying the stroke.

Ian Vincent

Rover Notes

Brian Johnson recently visited Heacham for the BBC programme 'Down Your Way' for broadcasting on 28th February on BBC Radio 4. He interviewed Jane Neville Rolfe about Princess Pocahontas, a family ancestor. She managed to get in a word about croquet in which he showed great interest. He had played Golf Croquet with Queen Juliana of the Netherlands. Princess Pocahontas married John Rolfe who introduced the cultivation of tobacco in Virginia.

According to Encyclopaedia Britannica the Princess, daughter of Powhatan a North American Indian chief, was heroine of one of the best known traditions of early American history. As a young girl she was kidnapped by one of the settlers who hoped to use her to negotiate permanent peace between her tribe and the Virginians. In 1616 the governor of the colony took her and her husband John Rolfe to England where she was received at Court and lionised by London society. On the return journey she died at the age of 22 and was buried at Gravesend. Her fame derives from a story told by Captain John Smith, one-time leader of the Jamestown settlers. In a letter to the Queen at the time of her arrival in London he related that he had been captured by Powhatan's men and was to be put to death, but just as he laid his head on the sacrificial stone Pocahontas embraced him and begged her father to spare him.

Handicapping Problems

In the April 1981 issue of the Gazette Dr Bucknall raised a number of wide-ranging questions associated with handicapping. What follows will it is hoped provide some guidance on the various points.

Two of Dr Bucknall's questions can be dealt with fairly readily.

- (1) Is there any objection, he asks, to clubs giving handicaps in excess of the CA Regulation maximum of 16 for their internal club purposes?
- (2) What can be done about the problem of a player coming to a CA Tournament who is found to be grossly over-handicapped?

Both these points were in fact dealt with in circulars sent to all Registered Clubs at about the same time as Dr Bucknall's letter appeared in print. Clubs are of course completely free to allocate whatever handicap they choose for beginners for their internal purposes. For example Cheltenham start their beginners at handicaps up to 24, and other Clubs may well consider the adoption of this practice.

On the second point, rarely a year seems to pass without cases of over-handicapping being the subject of complaint, and rarely a year without Clubs being reminded by the Handicap Co-ordination Committee that they should ensure that their members' handicaps are realistic and kept under constant review. The Longman Club Cup and the All England Handicap provide fruitful sources for complaints of over-handicapping, while, to return to Dr Bucknall's letter, the results at a Weekend Tournament can be completely distorted by a rapidly improving newcomer whose handicap should have been radically reduced by his Club before appearing in his first CA Tournament. Where a Club is aware that one of its rapidly improving members is about to take part in his first CA Tournament they should in particular be alert to the need to ensure that his handicap is realistic.

This problem invariably concerns members of small clubs where there may be little experience of handicapping. In such cases Clubs who are in need of guidance should enlist the help of an official handicapper from a neighbouring club who could visit the club, and after watching play give advice in particular on the handicaps to be assigned to rapidly improving newcomers. The CA Secretary may be able to suggest names where a club has difficulty in finding a handicapper. Having said this what else if anything can be done about the isolated case that slips through the net? A suggestion has been made that all players who have not previously competed in a CA official tournament should carry a CA starred handicap, the Tournament Handicapper at their first tournament then being free to amend the handicap during play. The barrier to this under the existing Regulations for Tournaments is that an alteration during play shall be effective only for an event in which the competitor has not already begun to play (Reg. 23: Note), so that for a Weekend Tournament, which is invariably for one event only, the suggestion could presumably not be operated. Should the Regulation therefore be amended to widen the power of alterations? One objection which no doubt led to the regulation as now worded is that competitors who had already played and lost against a player whose handicap was then reduced for the later rounds would protest that they had been treated inequitably compared with the player's subsequent opponents. The Handicap Co-ordination Committee have not at present felt strongly enough to recommend to Council that an alteration to Reg. 23 should be made, but it will be interesting to see whether there is any move at the grass roots for a change. Our present feeling is that Clubs ought to be relied upon to avoid the need for further action.

There remains Dr Bucknall's difficult question, what benchmarks or job descriptions can be laid down as a guide to determining correct handicaps. I wrote an article in the April 1975 Gazette on this subject in which I outlined the difficulties. To put it succinctly, handicapping is not an exact science. Let us examine however what can be constructively suggested. There are perhaps two benchmarks which are reasonable to apply, one at either end of the scale, although even here conflicting opinions can be anticipated. At what point should a player be reduced from the maximum handicap (16), at which he can compare in a CA Tournament? (I will use 'he' throughout for convenience). He can be presumed to have played enough games to know the Basic Laws (in particular, faults), he should have become a reasonable hitter of the ball, begin to show some ability in aspects such as long take-offs, hoop approaches and hoop running, and, very important, must show evidence that he is not using his turns just to keep the innings, but should show evidence of thinking about breaks. He should **not** be reduced automatically because he has won a game or two against high bisquers who themselves may have played badly

(or indeed have been reduced prematurely). At this stage he need not be expected to have learned much about bisque-taking, but evidence of ability in this part of the game can often of itself provide a clue to reducing a handicap.

At the other end of the scale one might in my submission define a minus player as one whose game includes the attempt (and achievement as often as not) of a triple peel as a matter of course when the situation presents itself, but even this might be held to be too rigid since, as David Prichard writes in his History of Croquet, Humphrey Hicks, in his prime, was as skilled a triple peeler as anyone but he deliberately eschewed the practice in favour of methods which he thought safer and more productive. A further bench mark might be for a scratch player who could be regarded as one able to create a break from highly unpromising situations, and having done so be rarely expected to break down.

None of the foregoing helps Dr Bucknall's quest for a job description covering the wide range of handicaps. The problem as I see it can be expressed in the following way. As players improve below the starting handicap of 16 their chances of success in aspects of the game such as the following gradually improve:

- (i) to hit 6 to 10 yard roquets,
- (ii) to get on the rush line,
- (iii) to make long take-offs to land within safe hitting distance,
- (iv) in split rolls to get both balls to within a few yards of the intended aim,
- (v) to run angled hoops successfully,
- (vi) to keep breaks going by the use of all the balls,
- (vii) to contrive safe leaves,
- (viii) to use bisques constructively by using the extra turns to improve the position of the other balls and not just making the next hoop,
- (ix) to construct breaks without the use of bisques.

These may not be comprehensive, but taken in the round, one might say for argument's sake that a scratch player is one who should in a series of games be expected to fail the standards by well under 10 per cent, a 6 bisquer by say 25 per cent and a 12 bisquer by say 50 per cent. Thus, although a 12 bisquer will show that over a series of games he can sometimes show proficiency in any of the aspects illustrated, in fact he doesn't for half the time. He may for example once during the course of a number of games make a break of up to half a dozen hoops, which will invariably evoke a remark from his opponent that he is over-handicapped, but it may be many games before he again achieves such success. Although I have used broad yardsticks of percentage of success for the nine aspects, in practice the percentage would vary considerably for each aspect; thus the 12 bisquer might rarely think of contriving safe leaves and earn a 90 per cent fail, whereas his prowess at take-offs or angled hoops may be quite praiseworthy. Perhaps the main difference as one goes down the range of handicaps is not so much the ability to play breaks when once created as the ability to build them, that is, to go on the lawn at the outset of the turn thinking beyond a one hoop at a time approach. Croquet is after all about breaks. Can one however quantify this aspect in assessing handicaps other than in broad swathes?

So far I have not mentioned one very imponderable barrier to laying down benchmarks — the mental approach. This embraces not just nerves or lack of self-confidence, but powers of concentration, will to win, getting rid of erroneous ideas such as "must make my first hoop off partner ball", and the ability not to stay worked up and brood over a mistake, which has given your opponent control of the lawn for a quarter of an hour or more. The player who has complete mental control is well on the way to being a scratch player.

I should mention the use of one criterion of a handicap indicator which the Cheltenham Club have over the years developed, the length of time it takes a player to win in games in his class, with or without bisques. Thus, the 12 bisquer's class games will average 3 to 3½ hours, the 8 bisquers 3 hours or a little less, the 4 bisquer 2½ hours and scratch 2 hours. In this as in other aspects of this Note I have benefited from the sage counsel of Edgar Jackson.

I have researched recently in the numerous books about croquet to which I have had access, in the hope that the subject of handicapping may have been dealt with in depth and so provide some ideas on job description. That my researches have proved fruitless may be because writers on croquet have been too aware of the potential pitfalls.

S S Townsend
Chairman Handicap
Co-ordination Committee

Verandah Talk

Reproduced from the South African Croquet Gazette

Should the triple peel be modified for spectator interest?

Recently, at Rondebosch, we have been treated to fine examples of top-class Croquet. Many of the spectators have pondered on the question of whether the perfection player who wins the toss has too much advantage. At that level he will probably go on to four back and cross wire his adversary on the peg. If the adversary misses the lift, the first player, if he has the skill will probably follow up with a triple peel and the game is over with the out-player having had one free shot other than the hit at the tice. One realises that, apart from marvelling at the highly commendable skill required for the 'triple', the game may lose something of interest to the spectators.

I saw this happen in two successive games at Hurlingham in 1975 when Tom Barlow, after knocking out some redoubtable English players in the British Open, met Nigel Aspinall in the final. In the first game Tom missed the tice and Nigel went to 4-back. Tom missed the lift and Nigel tripled out. In the second game, Nigel hit tice and went to 4-back. Nigel again tripled out to win the British Open without Tom having taken croquet in two games, 26 - 0; 26 - 0. I personally feel that there should be some modification of the Laws to prevent this happening. If a large audience had come to watch the final, they would be treated to a marvellous exhibition of superb croquet skill but no competitive excitement about the result except the ever present knowledge that a minute slip by the performer could alter the outcome of the game.

An almost similar scene took place at Rondebosch in the semi-finals of the Open when Spencer Buck beat our local champion 26 - 0. Winning the toss, the former went to 4-back and Tom instead of using the lift, shot across the ground at a possible double and unluckily hit the peg. Spencer Buck then did a copy book triple which never looked like breaking down lasting 35 minutes. Result, 26 - 0, Tom had one free shot. Apart from the universal admiration for Spencer's careful polished play, there was no spectator excitement which goes with the 'nip and tuck' of games in which the outcome hangs on a thread, for example, the final against David Cunningham on the Saturday morning, when for one moment at 4-back, the outcome might have gone either way.

It is not the concern of us lesser mortals to express strong views on such Olympian matters - the Gods who frequently use the triple to win their games must decide among themselves, but we can quote History for our humble opinions. The triple peel grew out of the introduction of Law 36 - the lift shot. It was, I believe, introduced about 1938 as an answer to the problem of the legendary Miss Steel who made all-round breaks and frequently won her matches in two turns. Now, since the standard of croquet has reached such heights in our efforts to overcome this penalty, with triples, quadruples, quintuples and even sextuples, has not the moment come to think again?

What are the suggestions? One, that a Law should be introduced that in advanced play, a player should not be allowed to peel his partner ball through more than two hoops in a turn. Two, that the lift shot in advanced play may be taken from any point on the north or south boundary line. This would allow cross wiring on the peg but give the out-player a better chance of a hit-in. Three, that only straight triples should be allowed, i.e. the triple may not begin until both the player's balls are on 4-back.

It would be interesting and enlivening if players would write in their views on these suggestions to be published in the next edition of the Croquet Gazette.

The Croquet Image

By C. Williams
Bay of Plenty Publicity Officer

Reproduced from the NZCC Croquet Gazette

Croquet is a classical game. The training and skill called for in present tournament and club play are now very different to the competitive rivalry, which was the social exercise on the lawn of the former aristocratic family home. It is to the good, that over the years, the game has changed in its character; yet sometimes I wonder if the people who play modern croquet are changed very much in their outlook on a formerly social game which now demands such specialised skill. Why does it not rank with golf or tennis or some of the other field games in its ability to attract a wide public interest? I think that we have largely ourselves to blame for a lack of promotion. Only once in four years, do we hold an International Contest; this is the MacRobertson Shield contested between Britain, Australia and New Zealand, of which New Zealand is

the present holder. The contest last took place here in 1978 and will not be a spectacle again in New Zealand until 1990. We cannot hope to achieve an International image of croquet, on this scale. People ask what is croquet all about and to the lay mind it is accepted as knocking a few balls through a pattern of hoops to reach an end point called the peg. Not very difficult they say? The lay mind does not comprehend the skill of the game; the long roquet; split angle shots; impacting balls to place several in highly accurate positions at the same stroke and the specialised tactics of the game.

Croquet is said to be one of the most skilful of outdoor games and we can be proud of those players who have reached perfection in its practice. Nobody else is going to promote our sport, if we do not do it ourselves. What can we do to promote the game to the public at large? It is far too good a game to be restricted to the chosen few, who by good fortune have discovered the challenge, fascination and accomplishment of this game.

The skill is in striking and impacting groups of balls to produce accurately predicted reactions. The skill rests in the ability to achieve perfection in ball movement. Many of our most skilful players have an intuitive approach to the game rather than a scientific one, but by whichever way, perfection can be achieved only by prolonged practice. It takes years to become an expert croquet player. The young appear to be best fitted to reach this perfection in the shortest time and it is significant that New Zealand's best players tend to be young people. I readily acknowledge their potential superiority and regret that I did not take the game up myself at an earlier age. Young people especially enjoy billiards, snooker and pool, because they are ball interaction games and as such, offer the challenge for high dexterity, which is achievable by long practice. Croquet comes into the same category and has the added advantage that it is a sport offering outdoor physical and social exercise. As such, it should offer tremendous appeal to our young generation and those to come after us. Because we have enjoyed the game, we have a special challenge, opportunity and responsibility to promote the game to our successors.

The future age promises to be one of increased leisure for all people. It could be a disastrous age for idle people. If we are to survive this threat of idleness, we need to occupy much of our lives with mental and physical activity to promote good health and well being. Active sport will take a paramount place in our lives and we who enjoy sport will have a social responsibility to make our sources of enjoyment and well being available to those who come after us. We need to give the game a great deal more publicity by demonstration of its skills and by offering free tuition. We could promote it as an alternative sport in the schools and offer inexpensive novice membership in our clubs to young people.

We should give croquet the contemporary image by defining its rules and dimensions in the metrical units, which are taught in our schools. Promote it as a sport with highly specialised skill and a challenge for young people. Offer tuition and the use of our lawn and equipment, to those who have the misfortune to be unemployed and need physical and social activities to occupy their time. Some clubs who are already doing these things receive my commendation. To those who have not thought about it, I advocate this article for discussion at your club meetings.

Getting Better

by Dr. W.R.D. Wiggins

extracts reproduced from "Croquet" dated July 1954

I wonder how many "B" Class players realize that the future of Croquet very largely depends on them? It is from their ranks that the great players of the future are to be drawn and it is vital that they should come forward in increasing numbers during the next few years. Croquet cannot flourish without a modicum of good players. I have heard it stated several times that the same players take part in the President's Cup year after year. As one of those who has played in that competition in recent years, I wish that that was not so and that there were more good players to choose from. It is not a good thing for the top-line players to feel that they are safe to play in what is really a very gruelling competition for yet another year.

Well, you "B" Class players, what about it? What does it take to become passably good at this difficult but intriguing game?

I would put first temperament and the will to win. Presuming these qualities to be present, the next and all-important

SUCCESS AT BOWDON DURING 1981



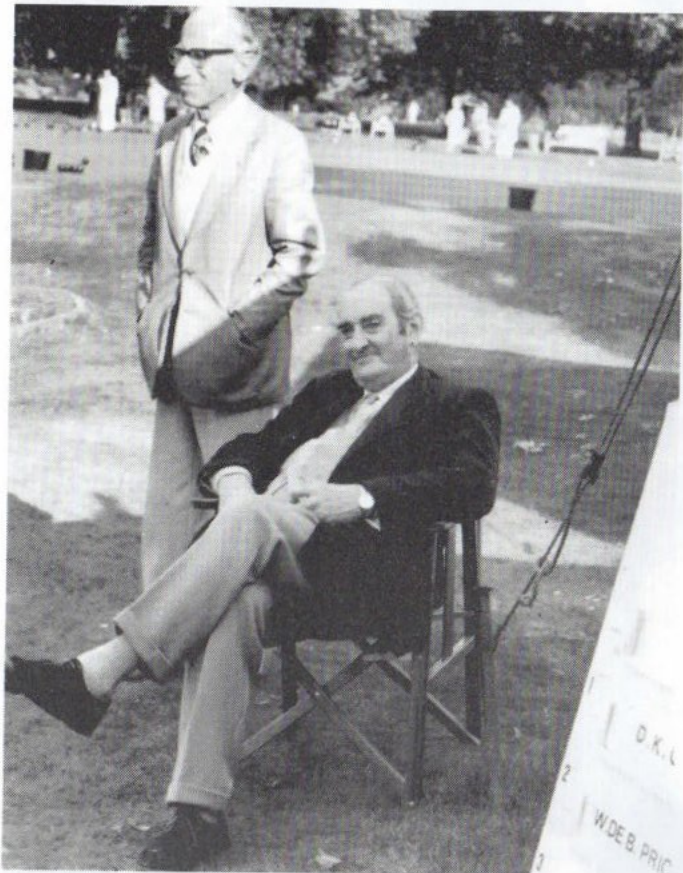
THE BOWDON LONGMAN CUP TEAM
Back standing (left to right): David Peterson, Danny Kelly, Colin Irwin, Bill Aldridge, Mike Sandler, Eddie Hopkinson.
Front (left to right): Steve Lewis, Liz Taylor, Ian Maugham.

(Photographs by Cheshire County Newspapers)



BOWDON CUP WINNERS 1981
Left to right: S E Lewis - Longman Cup, Mrs E N I Taylor - Hurlingham Longworth Cup & Doubles Goblet, C Irwin - Southport Jubilee Tankard (Handicap Weekend), W O Aldridge - Hurlingham Turner Cup & Doubles Goblet, Mrs P A Hague - Himley 'B' Class Singles (Level), E Bell - Spencer Ell Cup, I F Maugham - Northern Federation League Team Trophy

THE UNSUNG HEROES WHO MAKE TOURNAMENT CROQUET
A PLEASURE POSSIBLE FOR US ALL
— THE ADMINISTRATORS —

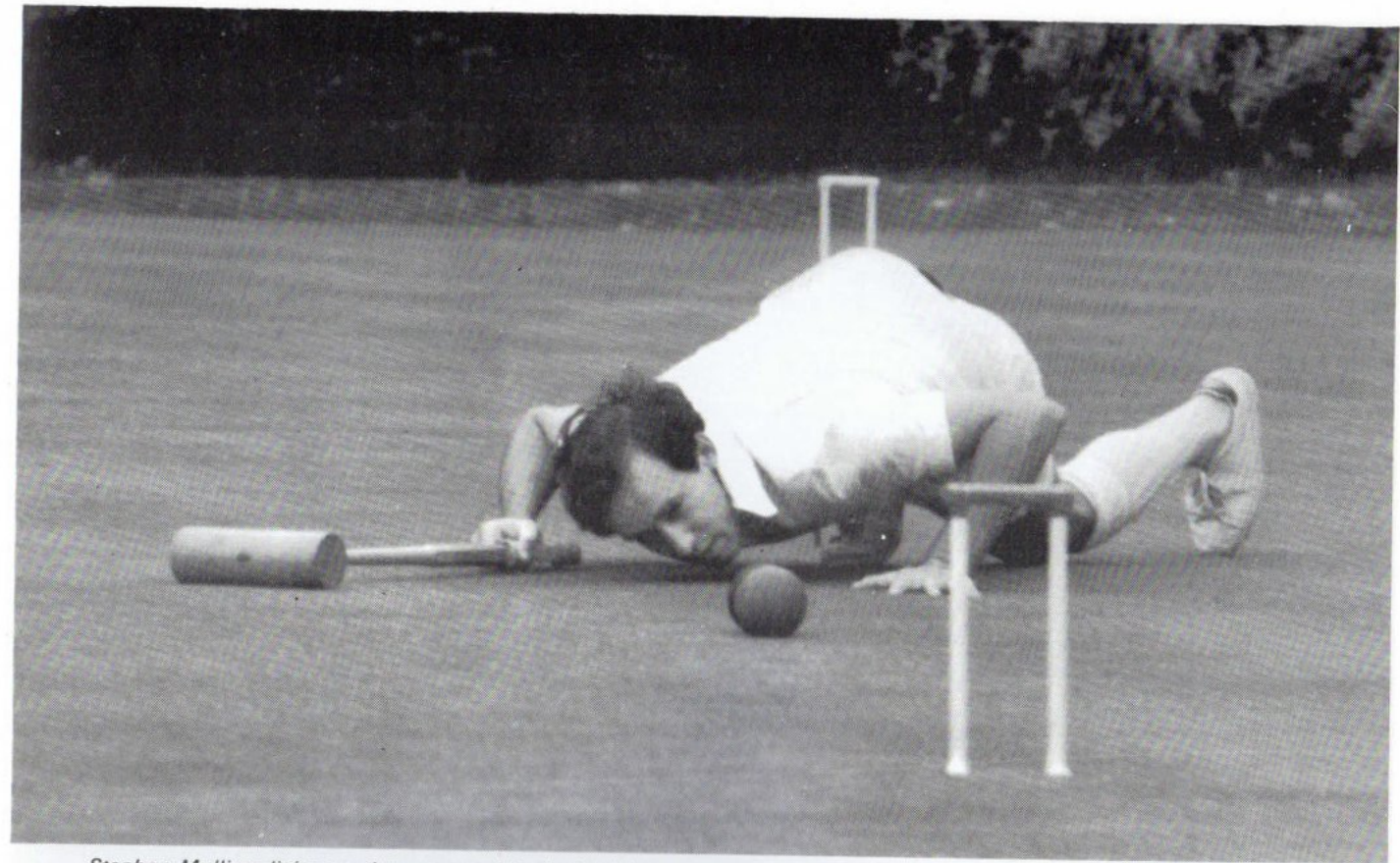


Colonel David Prichard and Jim Townsend (September 1981) — Both have been Council members for many years. The former is a past Chairman of the Council and wrote the recently published "The History of Croquet". Jim Townsend was also Chairman of the Council between 1970 and 1972



Dudley Hamilton-Miller (September 1981) — Appeared in the President's Cup on at least 10 occasions, winning it in 1946. He also won the Open Singles Championships in 1938 and 1946

(Photographs by Peter Alvey)

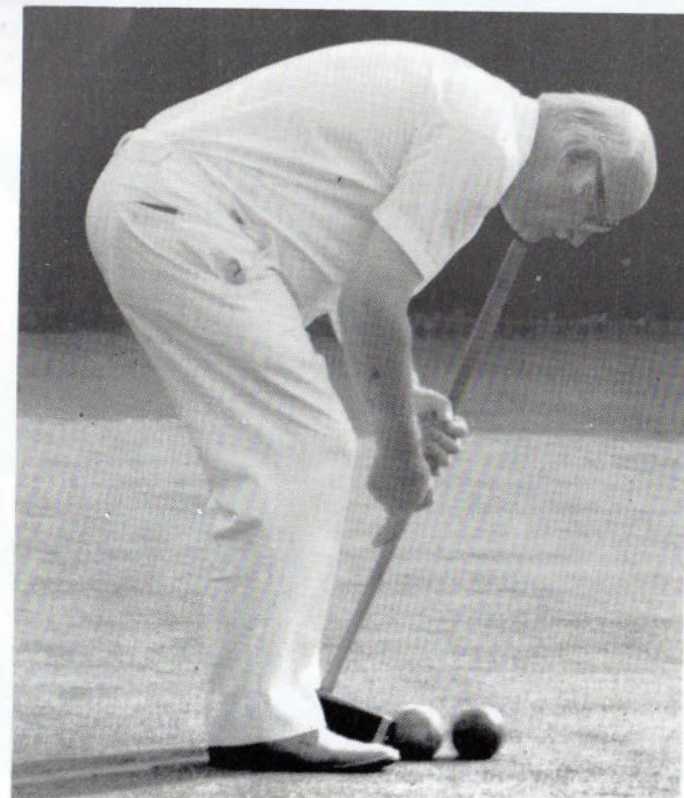


Stephen Mulliner lining up the rover peel in the decisive game of the President's Cup, which he won in September 1981

(Photographs by Peter Alvey)



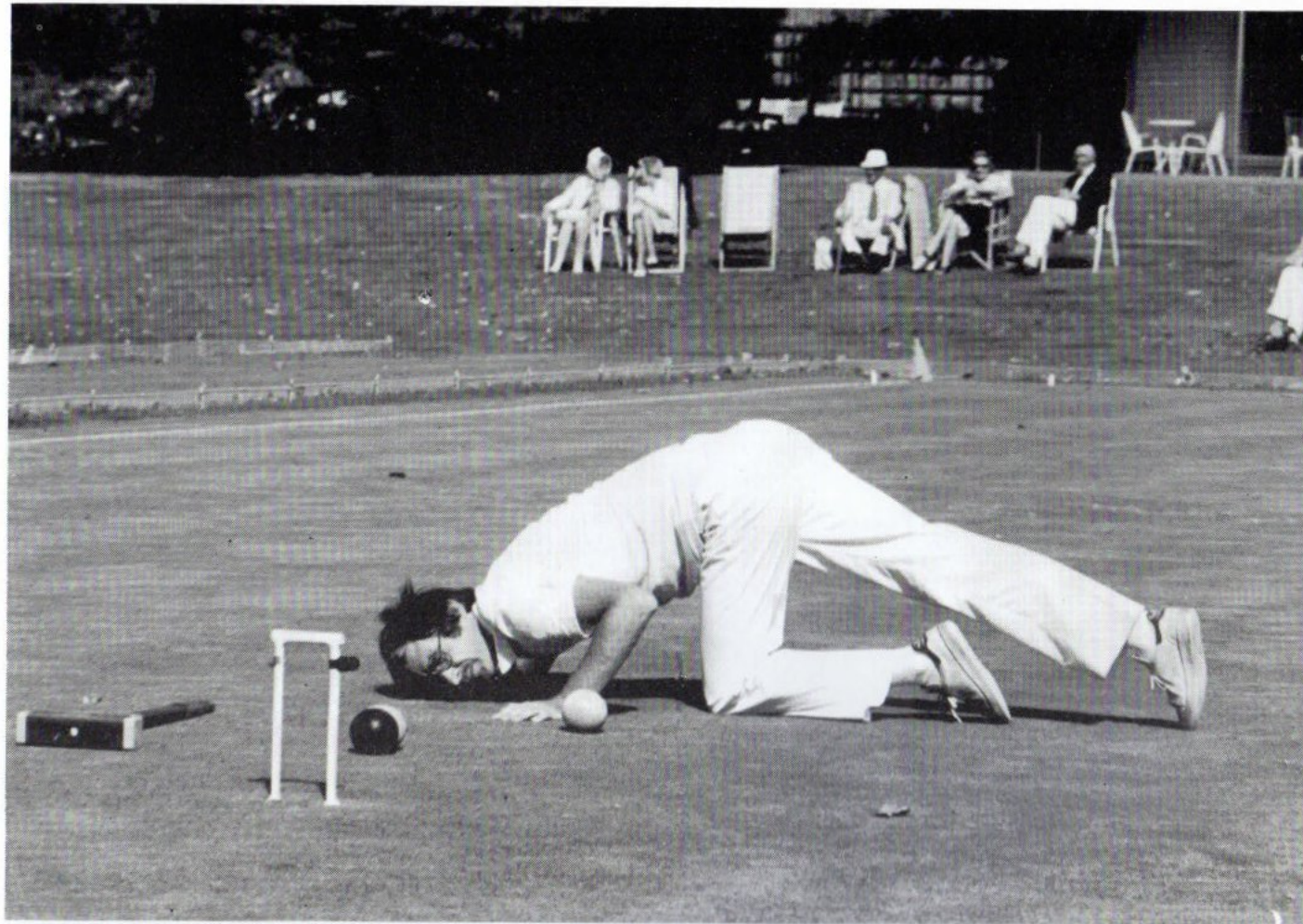
Richard Rothwell (August 1981) — the Secretary of the CA and another past Chairman of the Council. He played in the President's Cup in 1955



Lionel Wharrad at Hurlingham in August 1981. Lionel has made a dramatic contribution to the CA in terms of publicity and development as well as sponsorship

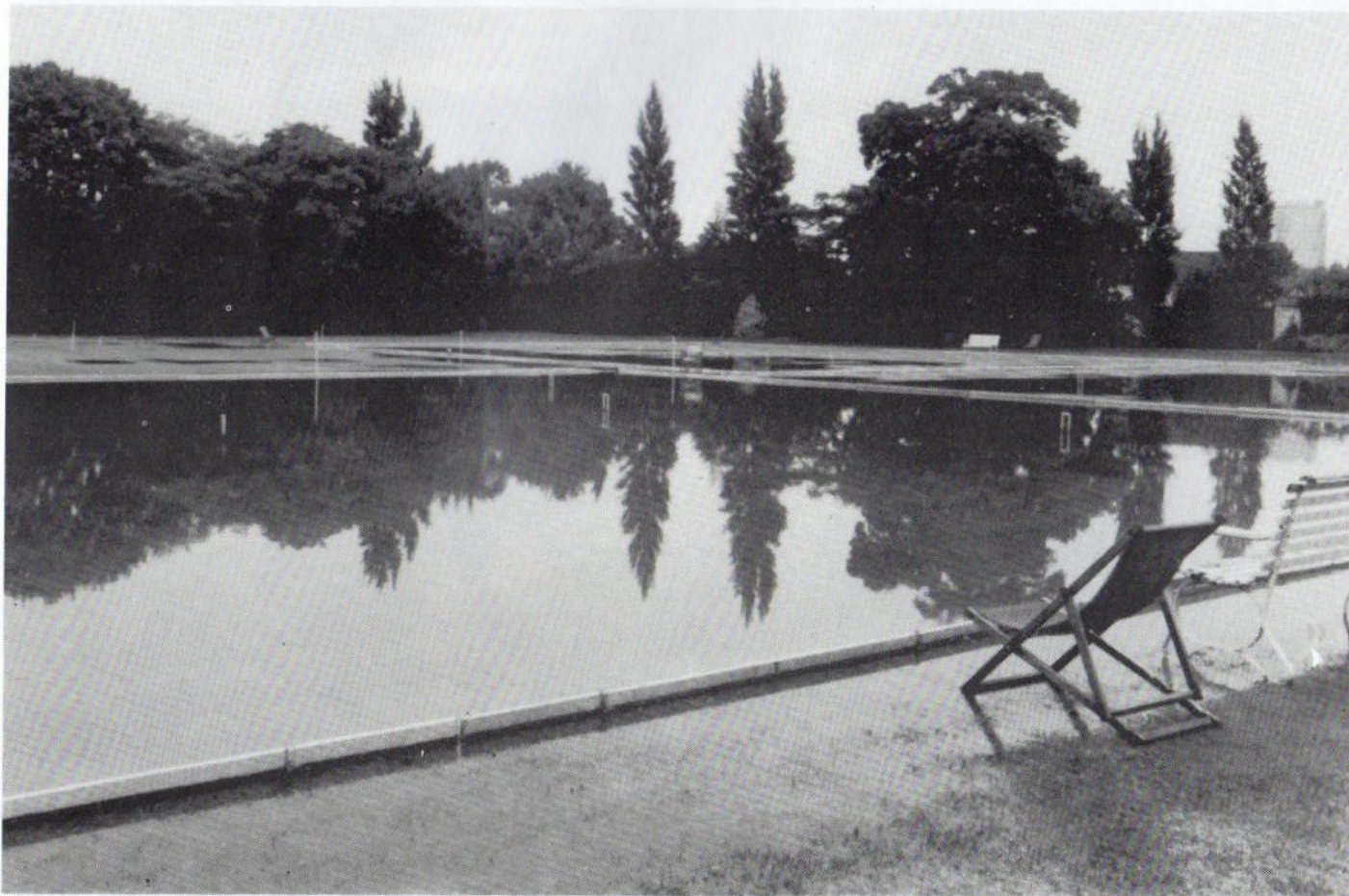


Eddie Bell, winner of the Spencer Ell Cup (Bowdon, August 1981)



David Openshaw lining up the 4-back peel in the President's Cup (1980). He won both the Open and Men's Championship during 1981 displaying amazing consistency throughout the season

(Photographs by Peter Alvey)



Rain stopped play.
The cricket pitch at Hurlingham on the day that the heavens opened (Thursday 6th August 1981)

quality is stroke play. Most of you can play a straight-forward four-ball break when it is presented to you but the difficulty lies in picking it up. Herein lies also its great attraction and you are getting better when you can do it now and again. This will rapidly become possible when you have mastered the following four points:-

1. You have studied from a book and thoroughly grasped the art of break-laying.
2. You can rush a ball with force and accuracy.
3. You can "take-off" fine to any agreed distance.
4. You are content to lay a break and not try to make an odd hoop, if circumstances suggests that progress will best be made this way.

You will note that I have not mentioned hoop running. This does not enter into the problem at all. Not all "A" Class players are good hoop runners, but they are mostly good stroke players which more than makes up the difference. You will see what I mean when I go through the items severally.

1. This takes a lot of learning and can best be done by watching only the very best players. Follow the game carefully and note how the situations arise and what steps the opponent takes to counter them. Never rely on your opponent playing with the ball you have so carefully laid at your next hoop, he may well choose the other one and cut into your game severely. C.D. Locock's book covers nearly all the theory that will be required.
2. To rush a ball accurately is probably the most difficult of all strokes, bar the pass roll. When mastered it yields rich dividends and gives great satisfaction. The stroke can best be learnt by constant practice. When you are by yourself, place the balls to give yourself dead straight "baby" rushes. Practice till you can rush the ball to the exact spot selected. Gradually lengthen the rush and continue using the cut rush. Always choose some spot to which to rush the ball; direction and length are equally important. It is just as important to be able to rush a ball accurately for 5 yards as it is to be able to do so for 25 yards. To illustrate the value of the rush, imagine the balls are lying in what to you is a most unfavourable position: Blue and Black are 2 yards apart on the side boundary, Blue being in the first corner. Red is in the second corner, Yellow is somewhere on the boundary between hoops 3 and 4. By a cut rush the first hoop is made, the forward ball being so controlled that a forward rush is done after the hoop has been made. By rushing the forward ball into the second corner, the opportunity for a corner cannon is presented and a break should result quite easily. Note the shots that gave you the break. Two rushes.
3. There seems to be a lot of nervousness amongst "B" Class players about taking-off. So many of you in your anxiety to make the object ball shake, take-off far too thick and consequently lose both direction and length. Carefully watch a good player take-off from the first corner to the third hoop. The object ball moves only about one half to one inch and has little bearing on the line of direction of the striker's ball. There should be no fear of the object ball going off the court if the balls are correctly placed. This stroke takes a lot of practice, but when learnt, anxieties about taking-off from one end of the lawn to the other will cease. You will learn more about the pace of a lawn if your ball goes off the court from a take-off than you will if it is hopelessly short and this results in your missing the roquet.
4. When you hit in and conditions are not very favourable, do not try to make a hoop at all costs. Carefully survey the situation and lay a break for next time. Trying to do a hoop on the cheap, as it were, is generally costly in innings and leads to breaks for the opposition. If it is safe to make a hoop and you are reasonably sure of doing so

then it has its advantages in that you have the use of all the balls and should have a forward rush from your hoop which will help in laying the break.

And now that question of hoop running. If, as I have urged, you have learnt to rush a ball accurately, that pilot ball will be lying plumb in front of your hoop and you should have a perfectly straight shot of about six inches. You can tell when a player is at the peak of his form by the length of the hoops he has to run. Also by having control, the nightmare of the missed return roquet does not arise.

There is a point with which you should be acquainted. There is a difficult period for you to go through when your handicap is coming down, and you are in the 0-1 class. You will find that you will be knocked out of the Opens fairly quickly and often by 26. But do not worry; so long as your stroke play is improving, conditions will soon change. Most of your victories will come in handicaps, and it is here that the attention of the handicapper is focussed. It is not usual to incur handicap reductions, in level events. Your play will improve much more quickly when you play against better players. So watch these players and practise and you will not be unrewarded.

There are many other little things, but they may have a huge bearing on the result of the game. Roqueting a ball into the middle of a hoop may, because it is impossible to take off from that ball to the only ball that has not been roqueted, mean the end of one's turn and the loss of the game. Not moving the wrong clip, may seem small things in themselves, but even they may spell disaster.

Correspondence

An Article For Our French Speaking Readers

le dix février, 1982

Cher Monsieur Foulser,

Nous avons l'honneur de vous présenter le premier courant d'air de notre nouveau Dictionnaire Bilingue des trimestres employés par les Français sur les tribunaux de croquet, qui sera d'autant plus utile pour vous lecteurs depuis notre membre-bateau du Marché Vulgaire:

l'addition verte	green fee
l'agent de liaison	contact
l'allumette d'interrogation	test match
l'ascenseur	lift
l'attaque d'apoplexie de volailles	foul stroke
avoir deux comptes de banque	double banking
le bâton lancé avec violence	the Hurlingham Club
le briseur de grève	interruption of the striker
la caresse écrasante	crush stroke
la caresse prolongée	continuation stroke
la confiture dans la gueule du vagabond	jam in the jaws of rover
le coup de fusil sauté	jump shot
le croissant fracturé	split roll
la dépêche coupée	cut rush
le double robinet	double tap
le joueur d'égratignure	scratch player
le joueur négatif	minus player
la ligne d'hésitation	bulk line
le pastiche idiot	thick take-off
la pièce d'artillerie de la ligne de cour	yard-line cannon
la pièce de théâtre horizontale	level play
le potage de homard	bisque
la rupture à quatre boules	four-ball break
le télégramme fâché	cross wire
la triple épiluchure	triple peel
les vacances au panier de pique-nique	hampered leave

94 Briggate, Knaresborough
N Yorks
et 53 Granville Road
Blackburn, Lancs

Votre sincèrement
Uzbekistan Silkworm
et Benn - A Red Newt

Croquet Must Have More Publicity

Dear Sir

The game of Association Croquet is undoubtedly beginning to attract public interest as something beyond Alice in Wonderland and worthy of serious attention, but I am convinced that croquet players, and the Croquet Association in particular, could do more to get sympathetic publicity. The big events are not well covered in the press, radio and television, and our fixtures are not publicised in advance. May I suggest that copies of the Association Fixture List should be sent as early as possible to the Sports Editors of all the national newspapers and to the BBC and ITA, with covering letters drawing special attention to the big events. Requests should be made to include these events in any sports diaries which they publish, and invitations should be given to send reporters and photographers. There should be a publicity officer in attendance at every important match to receive the media representatives and to give them background information.

Local clubs can get a little publicity for the game by getting articles and match reports into their local papers, and by getting regular weekly reports into a sports slot on the local radio stations.

If the public keep hearing croquet mentioned in the context of sports reporting, they will soon come to recognise the game as something more than a joke. Once the game is accepted seriously people will want to know more about it, and our recruiting drives will be that much more profitable.

12 Collingham Green
Little Sutton
South Wirral L66 4NX

Yours faithfully
A C Mason

CAN SLOW PLAY BE CURED?

from Humphrey Hicks

Dear Sir,

In a 1981 Championship Match, the first game took 3¾ hours. It was being said that one player — who shall be called B —, was only on the court for ten minutes, (though this was almost certainly an exaggeration). B, himself, thinks he was on the court for twenty minutes.

In the second game, A again occupied the court for a great deal of the time, and won by 3 points. B, who by any standards, is a very quick player, admitted to being 'pressed for time'.

Can anything be done to remedy such unfairness?

Yours faithfully,
H.O. Hicks

Why Not Personal Mementos

from "Smokey Eades"

Sir,

A season has just ended and at tournaments up and down the country winners received their cups and runners-up their £1 or £2 in small, impersonal brown envelopes.

Would it not be better if the Croquet Association ordered a stock of well-designed, well-printed cards which could be bought by the Clubs and locally completed with the name of the winner, the tournament, the event etc?

Not only would this give the winner and runner-up a permanent memento of their triumph, but it should also make money for the Croquet Association (if they buy and price rightly) and save money in the Clubs.

"Tall Timbers",
Horton Close, Boulsters Lock,
Maidenhead, Berks.

Yours faithfully,
R.S. Eades

The Development Scheme — Setting the Record Straight

from Prof. B.G. Neal

Dear Sir,

Col. Prichard is to be congratulated on the production of his witty and entertaining book, "The History of Croquet". However, it is unfortunate that Chapter 17, page 167, conveys a misleading impression of the purpose of the government grant which was first made to the C.A. in 1970. The grant is stated to have been made for administration and coaching, but it was actually provided for a Development Scheme.

Col. Prichard may have been misled by referring to early Council

minutes on the subject. In the minutes of the October 1970 meeting it was correctly stated that the grant was "for the purpose of running a development scheme", but this appeared under the heading "Grant for Coaching Scheme". However, the Minutes of the May 1971 A.G.M. refer to the "Development Scheme" (Gazette No. 116), and thereafter this title was used consistently, the first annual report on the scheme appearing in the December 1971 Gazette (No. 119).

The activities of the first administrators of the Development Scheme covered much more than arranging coaching courses. The objectives of the scheme had been stated by the Publicity and Development Committee (December 1970) as "to set up new Clubs and to boost new and struggling clubs", and much thought was given to the best means of achieving these aims.

Demonstrations were used to aid recruitment to existing clubs, and these were followed up by coaching sessions for the newcomers. The West Midlands and Northern Federations, initiated by the Development Scheme, did much to cement small clubs into two forceful groups.

Suitable sites for the formation of completely new clubs were sought. These were usually launched by a demonstration, again followed up by coaching at beginners' level. These new clubs would have had a hard time getting under way without being able to hire equipment from the stock built up by the Development Scheme.

Coaching was certainly part of the Development Scheme; indeed anyone who has taken part in a drive to increase membership of a croquet club will be well aware of the importance of following up the first contact by instruction. But coaching was not its prime purpose, and to decry the scheme because "it has produced few really good players" is to misrepresent its objectives. In fact, no attempt was ever made to coach A-class players.

A further criticism is implied in Col. Prichard's comment "nor has the membership of the C.A. increased significantly". Official membership statistics for the last decade are difficult to interpret. The membership totals recorded in the early 1970's were artificially inflated by the inclusion of deceased and lapsed members and a major task of the secretary at that time was to weed these out. Bearing this in mind, the apparently small increase in members becomes more significant.

32 Napier Court
Ranelagh Gardens, London SW6

Yours sincerely,
Bernard Neal

A Minor Footnote to History

Sir

A recent reading of Colonel D M C Prichard's fascinating and informative History of Croquet prompts me to send you this footnote — whether to history in general or the history of croquet. I leave it to your readers to decide for themselves.

Some time ago, in August 1975 to be exact, your predecessor published in the Croquet Gazette a letter from me under the heading "Literary Allusions to Croquet" which referred to an occasion when Kenneth Widmerpool, a character well known to connoisseurs of Anthony Powell's novel sequence, The Music of Time, for security reasons played a game of croquet with his brief-case tucked under his arm. Those interested will find the scene described in the volume entitled "Books do Furnish a Room".

This produced no reaction in the Gazette but I received later a charming letter from Mr Powell in which he said that I might be interested to know that the scene was based on a story he had been told about a game of croquet which V M Molotov, the Soviet-Russian Commissar for Foreign Affairs during and immediately after the 1939-45 War, had been induced to play when visiting this country, probably at Chequers. Mr Powell added, "I can't vouch for the truth of this, but such behaviour would obviously be an indication of character".

On the subject of literary allusions to croquet perhaps I might draw the attention of those readers who do not know it to H R F Keating's fascinating thriller "A Rush on the Ultimate", first published by Gollancz in 1961 and by Penguin Books in 1966. The suspense mounts during a croquet week and readers of the Gazette, besides spotting clues, may also note one or two croquet solecisms in spite of the author's acknowledgment of his indebtedness to Maurice B Reckitt.

7 Redcliffe Road
London SW10

Yours sincerely
B H Bliss

Accommodation Registers

Dear Sir

In view of the heavy expenses of hotel accommodation I wonder if clubs especially those staging tournaments, could form a register of people prepared to take competitors into their homes. This would be paid for, of course, and need be quite simple — firstly bed and breakfast and possibly an evening meal (could be cold). We might get more people competing if this were done and it would help younger players who, in particular, find hotels very costly.

2 Peel Grove
Worsley, Lancs

Yours sincerely
Mabel Jackson (Elsmere)

Editor's Note: I know this will echo many tournament players' thoughts and I hope that many Clubs will try to provide this service.

Correction

Dear Sir

As a result of poor communication at our end, there was an error in the last Gazette. Our Club Secretary at the Bowdon Club is Miss S E Black (not Barry Keen) of 57 Regent Road, Altrincham, Cheshire.

The Oaklands
Englesea Brook, Nr Crewe

Yours sincerely
Chris Hudson

A Question of Mallets

from Trevor Walker

Sir,

I found the letter in the April Gazette regarding mallets faced with synthetic material interesting. If the energy absorbing characteristics of a mallet are important to ball life then we should turn our attention to wood as well as synthetic materials. Simple comparisons between mahogany and lignum vitae heads will show that there is a significant difference between the two materials. If these differences are important they would have been spotted long before synthetics came on the scene.

Whatever type of head is used the same amount of energy must be transmitted to the ball to move it a given distance. If you use a mallet which absorbs half the energy then you must hit twice as hard as a mallet which absorbs none of it.

Modern materials such as polythene and nylon are not as hard as lignum vitae. Their main advantage over wood is not hardness but high resistance to splitting and cracking giving very little wear on the striking face of the head. Look at a new mallet, whatever it is made from and you should find that the ball is marking the mallet and not the other way around.

Brass bindings on worn mallets can damage balls. Look at mallets in your club and you may see loose brass bindings, nicks and dents in the brass which have given it a sharp edge. Then look at the balls and you will see cuts on the outer casing. Club officials who wish to preserve the balls should look for damaged bindings and diplomatically point out the consequences to the player.

Ball design and production problems have plagued us for too long; Richard Rothwell outlined the causes clearly in the April 1981 Gazette and showed the potential solutions. Un-milled balls and other ideas should be encouraged by members adopting a positive attitude towards them and contributing thoughts and technical expertise of their own. Once these problems are behind us we can spend more time playing the game.

82 Queens Crescent
Chippenham, Wilts. SN14 0NP

Yours faithfully,
T.T. Walker

Mechanism of the Roquet

from R.C. Case

Dear Sir,

One of our Members has substantially improved his roqueting, following upon an analysis of the mechanism of the roquet shot. What follows applies mainly to those who have adopted the "side style".

There are many "average" players who feel anxious when confronted with a 10 yard roquet, with odds against a hit of, say, 2 : 1. The odds against a complete miss with such a player when trying a hard hit rush of 1 yard and over are not dissimilar.

For those fortunates, born with a "straight eye", roqueting has few problems. Their handicaps fall like nine-pins. For the rest, the months and years roll by, "hope deferred maketh the heart sick", ambitions

fade, and they remain undistinguished exponents of the game, with handicaps in the region of 12. Our Member has (hopefully) lifted himself out of this rut.

Consider exactly what happens in a roquet shot. The mallet is propelled by muscles acting upon a series of joints in the arms and hands — "swing from the shoulder" we are told. A glance at the diagrams will show that to pivot through the humerus from the shoulder is fairly straight forward. But, lower down, we have that complex, but beautifully designed mechanism of the ulna and radius, in which the radius can rotate freely (within limits) around the ulna, and permit of a lateral rotation of the hand.

Herein lies the secret. "Arms and mallet should move as one unit during the shot" is advised by Miller and Thorp. But if the mallet is held in what is, for most, the "natural" position (Fig. 1), it is easy to demonstrate that the lower arm and, therefore, the mallet may tend to rotate slightly during the stroke; generally towards the left. This tendency is very difficult to control.

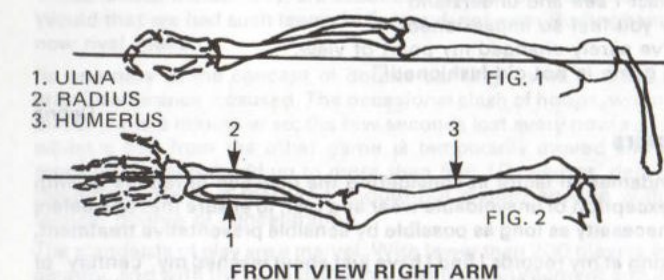
If, however, the elbow is "tucked in", as shown in Fig. 2, this tendency for the radius to rotate during the swing is largely eliminated. (The effect is more clearly seen if the Figures are viewed up-side-down). The result is a remarkable increase in accuracy.

But you may ask, "Why should such a slight adjustment have a major effect?" Between success and failure there is very little margin. The target for a 10 yard roquet is only 7¼ inches across, and the permissible error in direction of the shot must be confined to little over 1 degree. By turning in the elbow, the radius and the ulna are virtually locked together, and this goes far to achieve the maxim laid down by Miller and Thorp.

The message is, "Try it and see." You will be pleasantly surprised.

Garth
Knowle Drive, Sidmouth,
Devon EX10 8HN

Yours faithfully,
R.C. Case.
Hon. Sec. Sidmouth Croq. Club



Censorship by the Council?

from David Miller

Dear Sir,

It is much to be regretted that no associate has been moved to complain in print about the lamentable decision of the Council at its meeting on October 11, 1980 that 'the principle be re-affirmed that members of the Council should not sign petitions nor write publications on controversial matters in the Gazette either of which express dissent from decisions agreed by the Council' (Gazette, Winter 1980, 158, p.3).

I myself, when on the Council some fifteen years ago, was criticised for doing just this, and I have always regarded the criticism as unjust and ill advised. The fact is that members of the Council are not members of an appointed cabinet — for whom such a principle of collective responsibility might conceivably be appropriate (though in this case it smacks a bit of paranoia) — but elected by associates to look after their interests. One doesn't find MPs resigning their seats because they wish to object publicly to some resolution of the House; equally, members of the Council, if worthy of the trust reposed in them by associates, should feel free to campaign publicly and privately against unwise decisions of the Council itself. It is nothing short of censorship to prevent in this way public discussion of controversial issues by those most likely to know something about them.

One controversial decision that one might have hoped to see attacked in public by Council members is the very decision that I am here complaining about. But, as far as I know, no one has so attacked it. This suggests to me that the present Council is unanimous on this matter. If that is so, we obviously ought to bundle the whole lot of them out of office at the earliest opportunity.

63 Earsldon Street
Coventry CV5 6EL

Yours faithfully,
David Miller

First Visit to Cheltenham

"Pray tell me, sir, more of this game,
The one that's known as croquet.
What is it makes you so enthuse
Of cannon, rush and roquet?"

"Most people have initial thoughts,
Though with no hint of malice,
Of hedgehogs and of playing cards
And girls with names like Alice.

"But let me tell you here and now
Things of the past are changing.
The 'vicar's lawn' is quite, quite gone;
We're now much wider ranging.

"Some people think that croquet starts
A 'killer' streak emerging,
But courtesy pervades the game,
In fact on friendship verging.

"And yet opponents won't demur
To beat you without scruples,
While, envy-filled, you watch Dave F
Do highly-skilled quintuples!

"There's Geoffrey Taylor shaking hands,
Although he stands alone;
I don't mean Paul, you understand,
The hands are Geoffrey's own!

"You must, as well, watch Andrew Hope;
He's always smashing Coke tins,
Both when he plays a super game,
And when the other bloke wins."

"At last I see and understand
Why you feel so impassioned!
You've surely changed my point of view;
This game is not old-fashioned!"

Debris

Repairs

A fundamental factor in considering the question of repairs is, with the exception of unavoidable wear and tear, to ensure that one defers the necessity as long as possible by sensible preventative treatment.

Looking at my records I find I have just about reached my "century" of mallet repairs and I continue to be astonished and appalled at the lack of the most elementary care and attention. This is the more surprising today in view of both the cost and difficulty of obtaining replacement material. In the Gazette for Spring 1977 I wrote on behalf of Messrs Lignum, Box and Hickory on the care of mallets and I am using this note to renew my appeal in this direction. Regular application of varnish when the mallet is thoroughly dry will prevent many ills including loose shafts and prompt application of "making good" medium (Plastic Wood is a simple one) will help to prevent further deterioration, and, when more extensive repair is eventually necessary, will make that job both easier and more reliable. Above all look to your brasses — some I have seen are lethal.

The remainder of my observations concern Balls which must be one of the most expensive items in Club accounts today. Excluding manufacturing defects I feel again that much preventative care could be employed — not least by the unnecessarily hard hitting which is over prevalent.

Our game is played in a wide range of weather conditions but rain or shine I have never seen anyone offer any protection to the balls by putting them in shelter or shade when not in play. Are they not too valuable nowadays to omit this precaution? Left laying in scorching heat can be most damaging as can the infiltration of water into the smallest defect.

This leads me to a few suggestions for the repair of balls when they do become necessary.

Cracks and splits are probably the most common primary defects which if not dealt with quickly lead to larger fractures of the skin and holes in the core.

The material I have found quite satisfactory in ball repairs is a "putty" made of fine sawdust (preferably hardwood — excluding Lignum which is oily) mixed with one of the 2-part Epoxy Resin glues. Araldite is suitable but makes rather a stodgy mix before the addition of

sawdust and I prefer the clear type such as Bostik; Devcon or one produced by Plastic Padding.

It is essential that the ball is really dry before attempting the repair. Dealing first with a split or crack one should ensure that the adjacent coating is in fact still well adhered. Then enlarge the crack by cutting into the ball (about 3/16") with a hacksaw blade; make sure all resulting dust is brushed out, i.e. the same principle as when cutting out wall or ceiling cracks before decoration. Mix the glue and with a knife blade work a thin film into the crack. Then add the sawdust to the remaining glue until you have a workable "putty" and force this into the crack leaving it slightly proud of the ball surface. When dry file off surplus, clean out surplus glue from the milling and, if desired file in milling lines on the new surface with a triangular "needle" file.

Cracks and splits frequently create bulges along their line and in this case it is desirable to cramp the ball immediately after making good. (This is the fun part of the exercise — getting cramps to stay in position but it can be done. An alternative is to place in a vice — standing well back in case it leaps out!)

Using these quick setting glues has an advantage that after quite a short time you can start filing down and cleaning up. However do not mix too much at a time — an old glazed tile is ideal as a mixing table.

In the case of larger faults hook off all the loose covering around the edge of the hole until you have a really firm edge. With an old penknife cut/scrape away some of the core surface and under-cut slightly the firm edge of the covering. Drill a series of 1/8" holes in the exposed core 1/16" or 1/4" deep. Mix the glue as before and apply a thin film to the exposed surface. Then make your "putty" and work this into the hole forcing it into the drilled holes.

It is probably better to fill these larger cavities in 2 stages i.e., half-filling in stage one leaving the surface of the "putty" rough and when dry apply a second coat to finish proud of the surface of the ball.

When dry file off and re-mill as before.

Repaint the ball with a good quality enamel. I have found JOY PLASTIC enamel satisfactory.

To facilitate painting take a piece of scrap wood. Knock in 3 nails on the base of an equilateral triangle with sides 1 1/4"–1 1/2" long. The nails should be long enough to protrude through the wood about 1 1/2". Bend them outwards so that the ball sits firmly on the nail points. One half of the ball can be painted in the hand and then, resting the ball wet side down on the nail points paints the other half.

Happy repairs and preventative care!

Alec F Coleman

DEAR AUNT EMMA

by "High Bisquer"

Of all the opponents I have played in my apprenticeship as a high bisquer, the most difficult to win against has been Aunt Emma.

Her handicap varies. Sometimes she gives me a bisque or two, sometimes I return the compliment. Invariably she beats me, and the fault is undoubtedly mine.

Knowing Aunt Emma, my mind is made up beforehand that I am in for an unhappy game of a predictable pattern: make a hoop, separate the opponents balls, lay up for the next hoop.

On a day when my hitting is not equal to the occasion, Aunt Emma's strategy is undoubtedly a winner. By the time she finally makes a mistake to let me in with an easy hit, I am no longer in a fit state to take advantage. Aunt Emma's hoops seem not so much to have been won, but filched, and I look desperately for a way out of the impasse (something like breaking a leg, but not quite so painful).

Aunt Emma arouses the weaknesses of spirit — that retaliatory attitude, for instance, to which all but the strongest of wills can succumb, and the game then plumbs the lowest depths.

There must surely be an answer, a Churchillian master strategy, but it escapes me.

One owes it to an opponent, even to Aunt Emma, to play to the best of one's ability, and although one may well feel like it, as the game takes an unconscionable time a-dying, euthanasia is not really acceptable.

Aunt Emma is probably good for the soul. On those of us with character enough she imposes two very important disciplines, the determination to do our best come hell or high water, and to come off the lawn at the end of the game with a smile.

Oh, Lord, how I wish I could.

A Plea for Faster Courts by J.H.J. Soutter

When I first started playing in tournaments something over ten years ago, for the first few years all the major clubs at which I then played, Hurlingham and Cheltenham especially, Southwick, Parkstone, Nottingham and Compton all had beautifully fast and true playing surfaces. I did not discover Budleigh or Compton until several years later. The only exception appeared to be Roehampton whose courts seemed to be composed of a thick lush type of grass quite unsuitable for croquet.

However, with that one exception, I enjoyed my croquet and achieved some modest success. Then Hurlingham introduced an automatic watering system, and their courts changed completely to being slow and heavy like a thick pile carpet, and I even noticed a marshy type of grass invading one of their courts a few years ago.

I was delighted to be invited to play in the Chairman's Salver at Colchester in 1978, having heard so much about their fast courts, but, alas, on arriving there I found that the dreaded automatic watering system had been installed there also, their courts were thick and matted and only a small corner of one of the courts, apparently out of range of the sprinklers, showed what a beautiful surface they must have once had.

The courts at Cheltenham deteriorated gradually after Tyrwhitt Wheeler gave up tending them, but remained quite fast until suddenly between April and June 1979, their texture changed completely and they became thick and heavy, and have remained so. I must admit that not everyone shares my views; I was astonished to read in a report of this year's July tournament at Budleigh that the courts were "very fast". I played there myself and found one or two of them quite easy paced but the majority were much too heavy. I think people have forgotten what a fast court feels like, and those who have taken up croquet, in the last few years, particularly in London, have probably never played on one.

At this stage, the reader will probably say "All this may be true, but a good player should be able to play well on any type of court". That is perfectly true but my particular axe which I have to grind is that, while I can still play to a handicap of scratch or minus on a fast court, I would really need a handicap of 4 or 5 on most on which I played last summer. This is so because, although I have an accurate touch on a fast court and can put the balls more or less where I want them, I have weak wrists for a man and lose my touch completely on heavy courts. As a result I now derive more frustration than enjoyment from the game, so I can either give it up or campaign for faster courts, and I prefer to do the latter.

I am sure the quality of croquet would improve if the courts were faster. In order to build up a four ball break from nothing and then play it, certain moderately ambitious strokes are needed from time to time, and these strokes could only be achieved by a strong man on most courts on which I played last summer. Thus, present conditions encourage a negative Aunt Emma type of game, and I am quite sure that this is the reason for the present malaise in womens croquet. The courts are just too heavy for all women and less robust men to play first class croquet on. Also, heavy courts help the mediocre player in that, if he has the strength, he can roll up to a hoop from anywhere with a better chance of getting some sort of position. He does not then need to run the hoop with control, because if he runs the hoop hard, he is not, on a slow court, faced with such a long return roquet, and he can then trundle on quite happily. Whereas on a fast court a much higher standard of touch and accuracy is needed, in order to build up and play breaks, and players who wish to play more positively will be justly rewarded.

I was encouraged by reading Roger Bray's report as Chairman of the C.A. for the year 1978/79 in which he made a plea for fast courts, but since then the situation has only got worse. Roger Bray also mentioned that some of our Test players in New Zealand seemed to be having difficulty with the fast conditions, and I fear that the same thing may happen again in Australia next year.

My remedies to provide faster courts are:—

1. No artificial watering of courts, except possibly in drought conditions. If an automatic watering system has been installed much the best thing would be to dismantle it, so as to avoid temptation!
2. No fertilizer should be put on the courts during the playing season from April to October.
3. The courts should be cut closely twice a week.

4. The courts should be scarified vigorously by hand in the autumn and/or spring. No machine can do this job properly. If the courts have become really thick and matted, hollow tining should be employed.

My fellow fast court players and I are becoming an endangered species. We are rapidly losing our habitats and will soon become extinct like the Large Blue Butterfly. Please save us!

A Hurlingham Player Visits The Cape

Reproduced from the South African Croquet Gazette

My rashness in accepting an invitation to give some impressions of croquet in the Cape after less than one week's observation at Rondebosch calls to mind Sir Oswald Mosley's remark at the Oxford Union some 20 years ago: "Having only been in South Africa for one month, I cannot speak with the authority of those who have never been there at all."

The first comment must be to marvel at the superb setting; where else can there be such a fabulous backdrop as Table Mountain, seemingly only a stone's throw away? Yet, incongruously, looking over a merely shoulder-level hedge, you see just beyond the opposite boundaries a fairly busy main road.

One's impression of how flourishing the game is depends on which day one visits. Club afternoons see the lawns packed; doubles only, and double-banking to ensure that the three lawns accommodate twenty-four players. When do you see more than 15 or 16 in play, even at Hurlingham? But then why does everybody vanish at 5 o'clock, with a good three hours of daylight left? All work stops at the early hour of 5 o'clock, and nobody lives more than 20 minutes away, so why are the lawns so empty?

Those lawns, incidentally, are excellent; fast-ish but beautifully true. Would that we had such lawns in England; not even Hurlingham can now rival these.

As one new to the concept of double-banking, I was amazed how little interference it caused. The occasional clash of hoops, when one player waits a minute or so; the few seconds lost every now and then whilst a ball from the other game is temporarily moved and then replaced. It cannot add up to more than 5 or 10 minutes' delay in a three-hour game, if that, and should not disturb anyone with the faintest degree of concentration.

The standards of play are a marvel. With fewer than 200 players in the country, and with the huge distances involved, tournament and inter-club play is almost non-existent, so that all the clubs outside the Cape must of necessity become isolated and self-centres. It is thus amazing that there are nevertheless two players who can hold their own in any company. But the disadvantages are also present. Lack of competition tends to sterilise the talent, and in particular the tactics. When you can safely roll up to position for the next hoop from 10, 15 yards, why bother about the ambitious split-shot, the long rush, or the take-off to a distant ball to set up a break? And who is there to teach the middle- and long-bisquers the way to take bisques to attack and create breaks, rather than defensively, purely to rescue mistakes. Players at all levels get no introduction to "orthodox" tactics, and indeed have no apparent need to resort to tactical refinements to defend their superiority over those immediately beneath them, and, in some clubs, have no competition to spur them on to improve their game by developing more advanced tactics and refining their dexterity in play.

Peter Fidler
Hurlingham

Why Amateur Status?

from Mr. B.R. Lawrence

Sir,

I notice in the Chairman's Report that "We must, however be ever vigilant that the amateur status of the game is not affected". Why is this? Could someone please indicate what dangers there would be to Croquet if the amateur status were not maintained? I am curious.

Keepers Cottage, The Shaw,
Leckhampstead, Buckingham. MK18 5PA

Yours faithfully,
B.R. Lawrence

What Sort Of Croquet Is This !

Reproduced from the New Zealand Croquet Gazette

Why do you stand and stare,
At the ball just lying there,
Get on with your game and play,
You know we haven't got all day.
As tho you are in a daze,
Don't you realise its a 3 hour limit,
And the hour's ticking away by the minute,
Must you have a conference mid court,
Making your opposition tempers a bit short,
No need to be irritable and scoff,
When someone watches your fine take-off.
Balls around a hoop — and a hammer shot,
A referee or umpire should watch the lot,
Why do you remain sitting?
When the opposition have finished hitting.
If you are following your game of croquet,
Surely you know what ball to roquet,
Did you hear that?
Doesn't make me rapt,
That was a double tap — are you deaf?
It's you who declares it — not the ref.
Crumbs — some people just never learn,
A bisque is for an extra turn.
You didn't listen to what the coach said,
So take your silly old bisque to bed,
You know you have got plenty of time,
For that back to court, straight yard-line.
See that — looked like a crushed shot.
No Umpire that's a bit hot,
Did you ever — doesn't she know what shepherding is.
Crikey — what sort of croquet is this.
I'm ready to do a backward flip.
For now she has gone and taken my clip.
Hey! you're playing the wrong ball.
Now a dead ball! Why doesn't she call?
Don't you players realise
You should use an umpires eyes
Whatever do you think a Referee is for.
If you don't ask for one it is a bit poor,
As you play croquet you will soon see,
When in Doubt, Just Call a Referee.

R Beaufrepaire

THE CROQUET LAWN LAY

(to be sung to the tune of the Eton Boating Song)

JOLLY CROQUET WEATHER,
*With a cold north easterly breeze,
We'll grip hard on our mallets,
Frozen from waist to knees,
And we'll croquet and roquet together,
Ignoring the shiver and sneeze.*

*Some clubs may be more clever,
And whoop up the hoops in the sun,
But we'll defy blustery weather
And think it the best of fun,
Standing firm by our partners,
And never give up till its done.*

*Twenty years hence this weather,
Won't tempt us from warm firesides,
Others can don the raincoats,
And then they'll know that we tried,
For the courage of Hove Lawn players
Will and forever abide.*

Eve Sloan

(Suggested by the recent 'croakey' Croquet weather)

Measuring The Speed Of Your Lawns

The speed of croquet lawns is a subject often mentioned in the pages of the Gazette; yet precise measurement of this quantity, surely one of the chief variables affecting playing conditions, is — perhaps surprisingly — not attempted. Bowls players, so I am told, measure the speed of their greens; but croquet players limit themselves to vague qualitative remarks which provide little information of use either in comparing conditions at different clubs or in assessing changes in lawn speeds from one year to the next. Is it surprising that fast lawns are a rarity, when we scarcely know what would really constitute a fast lawn?

Measuring the speed of a croquet lawn did not seem to present insurmountable problems, so I decided to see what could be done. One possible method is to roll a ball down an inclined plane onto the playing surface and then measure the distance travelled by the ball. However, this has two main drawbacks: it requires two pieces of equipment — an inclined plane, to accelerate the ball; and a measuring tape, to see how far it travels — which may not be readily available; and its results might be affected by local irregularities in the playing surface where the test was carried out.

I therefore, decided to try a method similar to that which I assume is used by bowls players: measuring the time taken for the ball to traverse the full length of the lawn. This requires no special equipment (though a stopwatch obviously makes for more accurate results) and should not be unduly affected by local variations of pace on a lawn. The necessary technique is simply acquired, involving no more than rolling a ball from one end of the lawn with sufficient force for it just to reach the other, and measuring the time taken for the transit. The faster the lawn, the LONGER it will take: on a fast lawn, the ball slows down less rapidly than on a slow lawn; at any point it must therefore, be travelling slower on the fast lawn than at the same point on a slow lawn, so it takes longer to travel the 35 yards.

First experiments on the Roehampton lawns — which are fairly slow — gave a time of almost exactly 10 seconds, to within 0.1 second (about 1%) either way, though a quick test of Cheltenham's lawn 6 during the May Open weekend gave a much less precise reading, in the region of 12½ seconds; this was a little disappointing, and the increase in time for what were generally agreed to be relatively fast conditions was less than I had anticipated. The lawns at Harrow Oak, measured in the very wet conditions of the Golf Croquet championships, registered around 8 to 8½ seconds.

It did prove difficult to land the ball close to the line, but shots coming to rest within about ten feet of the line are far from wasted: allowing an additional ½% per foot to the time of these short shots (an approximation derived from some simple assumptions, and confirmed experimentally) provides a figure not much different from par. two or three 'counting' shots in each direction gave remarkably similar times on the Roehampton lawns: I was quite surprised, expecting to find a spread of at least half a second between shortest and longest times. It is of course important to ensure both that the ball is set in motion as consistently as possible, and — especially important, is — that it comes to rest naturally rather than as the result of an imperfection of the lawn. As the boundary line can itself constitute such a hazard (either through the presence of a slight ridge caused by the continual marking of the court or through destruction of the grass on the line) the distance to be aimed for is preferably two or three feet short of the line, the times then being corrected as above. It is quite possible to

carry out the timings without assistance, starting the clock as the ball is released and jogging slowly after it to watch it stop; don't be alarmed that you won't reach the other end in time: the ball will set off much faster than you need to. Ten seconds for 35 yards is fortunately well short of Olympic requirements!

Perhaps others might like to try this for themselves; tournament reports could then add some precision to the usual general remarks about lawn speed. Though measurements might differ slightly from one person to another, it would be interesting to see how clubs compare, both with each other and from year to year. We might then have some standard against which to measure progress towards those fast lawns which would do so much to improve playing standards.

SMALL ADS

For
CROQUET Mallet RENOVATIONS AND REPAIRS
NYLON END FACINGS
LIGNUM VITAE HEADS MADE TO ORDER
Contact: Mr. P. C. Castro,
178, St. Leonards Road,
East Sheen, London SW14
Tel: 01-878-1763

Essex & Suffolk Croquet League

1981 was the second season for the league, which again provided some enjoyable and interesting croquet for the five teams taking part. Organisation changes at the start of the season eliminated drawn matches, but it is worth noting that no less than six of the nine matches played ended in a 6 — 5 result. Congratulations to Ipswich who won all their matches and who were presented with the Harpers Shield at their AGM on 31st October. The final tabled was as follows:

Team	Played	Won	Lost	Games for/Against
Ipswich	4	4	4	24/20
Colchester Suffolk	4	2	2	26/18
Ingatstone	3	2	1	17/16
Bentley	4	1	3	13/20
Colchester Essex	3	0	3	8/14

CROQUET WORD SEARCH SOLUTION

	Ball	Ball-in Hand
Backward Ball	Ball	Ball-in Hand
Baulk-Line	Boundary-Line	Break
Centre Play	Corner Square	Clip
Croquet	Croqueted Ball	Double Tap
Dead Boundary	Double Stroke	Fault
Forward Ball	Half Bisque	Free Shot
Hoop	Mallet	Peel
Pilot Ball	Peg Out	Peg
Pioneer Ball	Playing Side	Roll
Roquet	Rover	Rush
Side Play	Split	Stop Shot
Tice	Triple Peel	Yard-Line
Wired		

The remaining unused letters form: CORNER FLAG.

Entry by:— Mr D.M. Mellor, 17, Hillbrook Road
Offerton, Stockport, Cheshire. SK1 4JW

ANSWER GRID!

1	T	2	A	K	E	3	O	4	F	F	5	S
6	H	I	7	T	8	I	N	9	A	C	T	
	E	M	W	N	E	U	10	B	O			
11	S	P	O	T	12	C	L	I	P			
	T	13	N	14	L	I	F	T	S	S		
	A	15	W	A	I	V	16	E	Q	H		
	R	17	S	W	I	N	G	U	O			
18	T	O	R	O	Q	U	E	T				

Croquet Key Fobs

from Mr. G. Birch

Sir,

This is a new innovation of mine, very well made in leather and using the same Croquet motif that I use for the Area Finals shields.

There are already quite a lot in use, and have proved very acceptable for prizes in small competitions, or as runner up prizes in bigger events.

Available at a very reasonable price of 75p from my new address shown below.

48 Alma Street
Sherwood Rise, Nottingham NG7 7LY

Yours faithfully,
Gerald Birch

	Series	Miss S Hampson	Mrs. B.L. Sundius-Smith	Mrs. B. Meacham	Mrs. A.N. Rolfe	Mrs. R.F. Wheeler	Mrs. Asa-Thomas	TOTAL NUMBER OF WINS	FINAL ORDER
Miss S. Hampson	1 2		+13 -7	-6 +17	+21 -10	+18 +2	+12 +10	7	= 1
Mrs B.L. Sundius-Smith	1 2	-13 +7		+14 +5	+13 -4	+11 -7	+3 +5	7	= 1
Mrs. B. Meacham	1 2	+6 -17	-14 -5		+15 -9	+8 +22	+16 +4	6	= 3
Mrs. A.N. Rolfe	1 2	-21 +10	-13 +4	-15 +9		-12 +13	+4 +3	6	= 3
Mrs. R.F. Wheeler	1 2	-18 -2	-11 +7	-8 -22	+12 -13		+9 -16	3	5
Mrs. E. Asa-Thomas	1 2	-12 -10	-3 -5	-16 -4	-4 -3	-9 +16		1	6

Playing off 8 handicap J. Exell did well to take a second place with four good wins and a points total of +48. In her block, Mrs. Croker's (7½) third place included a resounding +26 win over D.R. Foulser (-1½), a margin shared by Prof. A.W. Skempton (6) in his win against Edgar Jackson (-½).

A game much appreciated by spectators was that between Mrs. W.R. Bawden (13) and H.C. Green (½), in which Mrs. Bawden showed her mettle as the highest bisquer in the tournament with good control of the balls and excellent forward play to win +7.

The Andersons also had a good tournament, with a block win for Mr. and a second for Mrs. Congratulations!

*The Bray device hopefully assists games to be completed within about 2 hours by cutting the beginning rather than the end (as with a time-limit). Full games are played when the sum of two handicaps is below 13, a 22 point game when the sum is between 13 and 15½, and an 18 point game when the sum is above 16.

5 Blocks - Handicap Play

BLOCK 1: J. McLaren (2½) 5 wins +32, D.R. Foulser (-1½) 5 wins +30, Mrs. D.J. Croker (7½) 4 wins +39, H.C. Green (½) 3 wins +26, W.R. Bawden (13) 2 wins -13, L.G. Ayliffe (5) 2 wins -55, Miss E.H. Arkell (4) 0 wins -59.

BLOCK 2: P.W. Hands (1) 6 wins +85, J. Exell (8) 4 wins +48, Mrs. W.J. Sturdy (7) 3 wins +8, Mrs. E. Asa-Thomas (3) 3 wins -4, J.A. Wheeler (½) 3 wins -16, Mrs. A.W. Skempton (7½) 1 win -56, A. Warren (9) 1 win -68.

BLOCK 3: T.W. Anderson (4) 5 wins +71, R.S. Eades (2½) 4 wins +48, P.M. Johnson (½) 4 wins +12, Dr. G. Roberts (-1½) 4 wins +8, Mrs. K. Yeoman (4½) 3 wins -19, E. Asa-Thomas (6½) 1 win -63, Mrs. D.H. Moorcraft (10) 0 wins -57.

BLOCK 4: Prof. A.W. Skempton (6) 5 wins +85, G.E.P. Jackson (-½) 4 wins +18, W.J. Sturdy (4) 3 wins +7, J.D. Meads (1½) 4 wins -4, Mrs. C. Smith (4) 3 wins -14, Mrs. A. Warren (9) 1 win -30, Miss J. Wraith (11) 1 win -63.

BLOCK 5: D.J. Croker (-½) 5 wins +38, Mrs. T.W. Anderson (7½) 4 wins +42, G.F. Blumer (6½) 3 wins +4, D.H. Moorcraft (2) 3 wins -2, G.W. Sisum (3½) 3 wins -3, C.B. Sanford (4½) 3 wins -12, Mrs. J. Exell (10) 0 wins -67.

SECRETARY'S NOTES

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 S D Goulding, 167a Whitby Road, Ruislip, Middlesex, HA4 9EB.
 J C R Crowcroft, Balliol College, Oxford, OX1 3BJ.
 S Myles McWeeney, 6 Hainault Grove, Foxrock, County Dublin, Irish Republic. Tel: 10001.
 S Mrs M McWeeney, 6 Hainault Grove, Foxrock, County Dublin, Irish Republic. Tel: (0001).
 S P G Gunn, 58 Aylward Road, Merton Park, London SW20 9AF. Tel: 01 540 3576.
 O Mrs G B Corry, 12 Marsh Avenue, Milford, Auckland 9, New Zealand.
 S Mrs D Torrington Petrie, 2 Wargrave Hall, Wargrave, Berkshire, RG10 6DA. Tel: (073 522) 3691.
 S Mrs L E O'Brien, Gentssesteenweg 132, Beveren-Leie B8749, Belgium.
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 S Bernard R Webster, 45 St. Michaels Terrace, Stoke, Plymouth, Devon. Tel: (0752) 58582.
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 S A W Purvis, 33 Courtlands Drive, Watford, Herts, WD1 3HU. Tel: (0923) 22041.
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 S W L Pulley, 203 Priests Lane, Shenfield, Brentwood, Essex, CM15 8LF. Tel: (0277) 210102.
 S Miss S McCord, 4 Lanhill Road, London, W9 2BP. Tel: 01 286 9362.
 J Keith M H Aiton, 21 Nottingham Road, Ravenshead, Nottingham, NG11 8LL. Tel: (06234) 2308.
 J James R M Hewitt, 17 High Street, Great Shelford, Cambridge, CB2 5EH. Tel: (0223) 843967.
 S Miss G F Hallam, 61 Wheatacre Road, Clifton, Nottingham, NG11 8LL. Tel: (0602) 213080.
 S Miss S A Bressey, 9 Anthony Close, Colchester, Essex, CO4 4LD. Tel: (0206) 47721.
 J John S Rhodes, 55 Hammonds Lane, Brentwood, Essex, CM13 3AH. Tel: (0277) 222692.
 S Alistair McCormack, 44 Connaught Road, Brookwood, Surrey, GU24 0HE. Tel: (048 67) 5293.
 S Mrs B G Perry, 34 Greenway Lane, Budleigh Salterton, Devon, EX9 6SJ. Tel: (039 54) 3191.
 S J S Prior, 24 Charlesfield Road, Horley, Surrey, RH6 8BL.
 S Donald G Riches, The Spinney, 10a Little Knowle, Budleigh Salterton, Devon. Tel: (039 54) 3416.
 J Geoffrey W T Hammond, Galen, Oaklands Lane, Arkley Lane, Arkley, Herts, 3JN EN5. Tel: 01 449 0370.
 J Richard D Martin, 7 Ann Road, Wythall, Birmingham, B47 6EP. Tel: (0564) 822091.
 S Dr H A Thomas, 9 West Hill Court, Sherbrook Hill, Budleigh Salterton, Devon. EX9 6BN. Tel: (039 54) 3703.
 S Mrs H A Thomas, 9 West Hill Court, Sherbrook Hill, Budleigh Salterton, Devon. EX9 6BN. Tel: (039 54) 3703.
 S N A McLean, 49 Hawkesbury Drive, Calcot, Reading, Berks, RG3 5ZR. Tel: (0734) 29712.
 J Bruce Rigg, Hilcote, Kirkbride, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA5 5JB. Tel: Kirkbride (096 55) 292.
 J M F Burgess, 55 Digswell Park Road, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 7NW.
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 S F J Fowke, 38 Tower House Close, Cuckfield, Haywards Heath, Sussex, RH17 5EQ. Tel: (0444) 55975.
 S Mrs E M Wiseman, 46 Kingshill Road, Dursley, Glos, GL11 4EQ. Tel: (0453) 3179.
 S Mrs L J Taylor, 6 Fountain Court, The Serpentine North, Blundell Sands, Liverpool, L23 6TL.
 S Mrs Enid G Ross, 66 Palmeira Avenue, Hove, Sussex, BN3 3GF. Tel: (0273) 777821.
 S Julian Wilson, 2 New Cottages, Brook Road, Great Tey, Colchester, Essex, CO6 1JG. Tel: (0206) 211399.
 J A J Mrozinski, 39 Coopers Rise, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 2NM. Tel: (048.68) 29403.
 S Mrs K.M.R. Bowyer, 6 Seafields, The Close, Shoreham-by-Sea, Sussex, BN4 5AH.
 J Paul J.C. Hetherington, Harmans Hill, Nayland, Colchester, Essex, CO6 4JD. Tel: (0206) 262223 (H'Cap 10).

RESIGNATIONS (from 31.12.81)

J. Abrey, J.E. Bardo, W.E. Black, Miss J. Cooper, B.S. Coupe, C.R. Palmer, F.E. Pearson, Mrs. F.E. Pearson, Mrs. M.A. Shepherd, H.A. Simon, E.J. Tucker, Mrs. C.G. Wells, M.J. Wharrad, Mrs. W.R.D. Wiggins.

2. Deaths

J E van Berckel, CBE (Compton)
 Brigadier H E Fernyhough, CB, DSO (Budleigh Salterton)

Miss F J Joly (Carrickmines)
 F Stanley-Smith (Bentley/Ingatstone)
 R E Steen (Carrickmines)
 J G Warwick (Budleigh Salterton)

3. New Official

Handicapper — J H Bowman

4. New Registered Clubs

NAILSEA — Kenford Park, Birdlip Close (off Trendlewood Way), Nailsea, Avon. Secretary: Miss M Tarling, 12 Goss Close, Nailsea, Avon. Tel: (0272) 854477. (2 lawns).

WORCESTER — Stonehall Farm, Green Street, Kempsey, Near Worcester. Secretary: C Duckworth (at the club). Tel: (0905) 820479. (1 lawn).

5. Changes In The Clubs — New Club Secretaries:

BATH MRS. B. AMNER, 41 Old Newbridge Hill, Bath, Avon, BA1 3LU. Tel: (0225) 23950.
BOWDON F I MAUGHAM, Flat Warwick, 1 Ashlands, Sale, Cheshire, M33 5PB
BRISTOL MRS ROSEMARY GUGAN, 8 Antrim Road, Henleaze, Bristol. Tel: (0272) 620425.
COAL RESEARCH ANDREW PITTAWAY, National Coal Board, Stoke Orchard, Near Cheltenham, Glos, GL52 4RZ. Tel: Bishops Cleeve (024-267) 3361. Extn 37.
EAST RIDING A G GORDON, 34 West Ella Way, Kirk Ella, Hull, Humberside, HU10 7LW. Tel: (0482) 2289.
OXFORD UNIVERSITY P H B BODDINGTON, 239 Banbury Road, Oxford. Tel: (0865) 59988 (Day only).
ROEHAMPTON R W VARLEY, c/o Games Secretary. Tel: 01-876-5505.
SOUTHWICK J H BOWMAN, 29 Whiterock Place, Southwick, Brighton, Sussex, BN4 4AG. Tel: (0273) 593890.

6. Subscriptions

At the time of writing (22nd March) there are still a number of 1982 subscriptions still unpaid. These were due on 1st January. Will those concerned PLEASE pay without further delay.

7. Directory

The new 1982 Directory was unfortunately held up in the printing but should be available by the time this Gazette is published. Copies will be sent to all Registered Clubs.

8. Handicap Alterations

Hurlingham (Club) — Jan	from 1½	to 2½
R F Rothwell		
Reigate Priory Club — Feb		
J S H Battison	1½	1
H C Brooks	8	7
Dr H R Calvert		9
R J Ede		9
P J Franklin		6
A Grant		11
Mrs A Grant		13
Dr D G Higgs		6½
K H Hope-Jones		5
Mrs G R le P Power	9	8
J Prior		9
F F Ross		9
Parsons Green (Club) — Feb		
Mrs J Bonser	8	7
P E Callan	8	7
J D Greenwood	3½	2½
Mrs P Healy	9	8
Miss S McCord	11	11 (D10)
Handicap Co-Ordination Committee — Mar		
G N Aspinall	-3½	-2
Dr R W Bray	-1½	-1
D R Foulser	-1½	-1
P W Hands	-1	-½
M E W Heap	-2½	-1½
S R Hemsted	-1	-½

A B Hope	-2	-1½
S N Mulliner	-3	-2
R J Murfitt	-2½	-1½
Dr M Murray	-2½	-1½
Professor B G Neal	-1½	-1
D K Openshaw	-3	-2
Dr W P Ormerod	-1½	-1
C H L Prichard	-1	-½
Captain W de B Prichard	-3	-2
G J Roberts	-1½	-1
Dr E W Solomon	-2	-1½
J W Solomon	-1	-½
S J H Wright	-1	-½
K F Wylie	-2½	-1½
Ingatestone (Club) — Mar		
J S Rhodes	14	10

Adjustment of Handicaps

- The Handicap Co-Ordination Committee has given consideration to the handicaps of players in the lower range with particular reference to the inequities that can presently arise when they play each other under handicap. The Committee recommended to the Council that those handicapped at $-½$ to $+16$ should remain unaltered, but that those of all players of -1 and under be adjusted according to the following scale:-

$-3½$ and -3	to become -2
$-2½$ and -2	to become $-1½$
$-1½$	to become -1
-1	to become $-½$

No present minus player would thus lose his "minus" status.

- On 13th March The Council agreed to these proposals to become effective immediately, and that pro tem, the minimum handicap permitted shall remain at -5 (Regulation 22(d) (iii)).
- The 20 players concerned thus have their handicaps altered as follows with immediate effect:-

G N Aspinall	$-3½$ to -2	Prof B G Neal	$-1½$ to -1
Dr R W Bray	$-1½$ to -1	D K Openshaw	-3 to -2
D R Foulser	$-1½$ to -1	Dr W P Ormerod	$-1½$ to -1
P W Hands	-1 to $-½$	C H L Prichard	-1 to $-½$
M E W Heap	$-2½$ to $-1½$	Capt W de B Prichard	-3 to -2
S R Hemsted	-1 to $-½$	G J Roberts	$-1½$ to -1
A B Hope	-2 to $-1½$	Dr E W Solomon	-2 to $-1½$
S N Mulliner	-3 to -2	J W Solomon	-1 to $-½$
R J Murfitt	$-2½$ to $-1½$	S J H Wright	-1 to $-½$
Dr M Murray	$-2½$ to $-1½$	K F Wylie	$-2½$ to $-1½$

- The Committee wish to point out that these increases cast no reflection upon the play of those affected — the changes are being made simply to try and even up the odds when the top players play each other under handicap.

The Hurlingham Club
Ranelagh Gardens
16th March 1982

R F Rothwell
Secretary

INTER-CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP 1982

1st Round

To be played by 16th May

Southwick v Cambridge University, Bowdon 2 v Bath, Reckitt Club v Heley Club, Roehampton v Cheltenham 2, Edgbaston v Harwell.

2nd Round

To be played by 6th June

Colworth v Cheltenham 1, Hurlingham v Wrest Park, Nottingham v Southwick or Cambridge University, Bowdon 2 or Bath v Reckitt Club or Heley Club, Roehampton or Cheltenham 2 v Edgbaston or Harwell, Compton v Colchester, Hunstanton v Bowdon 1, Southport v Harrow Oak.

3rd Round

To be played by 11th July

Semi-Final

To be played by 22nd August

Final

To be played on Sunday 3rd October

LONGMAN CLUB TEAM CUP 1982

1st Round

To be played by 16th May

Bretby v Edgbaston, Bowdon v Wolverhampton, Nailsea v Bristol, Coal Research v Harwell, Ryde v Parkstone, Hurlingham v Woking, Wrest Park v Nottingham.

2nd Round

To be played by 6th June

Norton Hall v East Riding, Walsall v Bretby or Edgbaston, Bowdon or Wolverhampton v Southport, Chester v Ellesmere, Bath v Cheltenham, Nailsea or Bristol v Coal Research or Harwell, Ryde or Parkstone v Oxford University, Worcester v Stourbridge, Aldermaston v British Airways, Compton v Hurlingham or Woking, Maidenhead v Reigate Priory, Southwick v Parsons Green, Cambridge University v Roehampton, Bentley v Wrest Park or Nottingham, Harrow Oak v Colworth, Hunstanton v Colchester.

3rd Round

To be played by 4th July

4th Round

To be played by 3rd August

Semi-Final

To be played by 5th September

Final

To be played by 3rd October

The Secretary's Shield

The Secretary's Shield competition for 1981, played for by the 1980 winners of the various leagues, was won by Walsall (West Midlands Federation) then they beat British Airways (Thames Valley B) at Nottingham on 27th September. Walsall had previously beaten Ellesmere (Northern Federation) 3 - 2, and British Airways had received a walk-over from Oxford University (Thames Valley A). The final was a well fought contest, and although Walsall's victory was decisive on paper by 4 to 1, the outcome was in doubt almost to the last moment.

After the morning's games the scores were level, Walsall winning the double and British Airways the single. In the afternoon Steven Hare narrowly beat Dennis Goulding (the opposing captains) coming from behind after the latter looked home and dry. The other two games went to time. Arthur beat Gunn in the last turn of the game (those three bisques just turning the scales) to give Walsall victory, and shortly afterwards Trafford and Tichener beat Hughes and Matthews after time had been called just failing to peg out their second ball from three yards in the last turn of the match.

In the first three years of the competition the Shield has thus, appropriately, been won by each of the three areas. It was won by Oxford University in 1979, by Ellesmere (Northern Federation) in 1980, and now by Walsall for the West Midlands Federation.

League Winners 1981: Bowdon B (Northern Federation)

Edgbaston (West Midlands Federation)
British Airways (Thames Valley)
Aldermaston (Thames Valley)

Final: Walsall bt British Airways 4 - 1 (at Nottingham).

Scores: (Walsall names first):

S. Hare & D. Arthur (11)	beat	P. Gunn & C. Hughes (14)	by 11
P. Trafford (9)	lost to	D. Goulding (4)	by 14
S. Hare (4)	beat	D. Goulding (4)	by 2
P. Trafford & R. Trichener (17)	beat	C. Hughes & E. Matthews (22)	by 9 (OT)
D. Arthur (7)	beat	P. Gunn (4)	by 12

Picking Up A Break

by John Solomon

reprinted from "Croquet Gazette" dated April 1954

The making of a break is of course the essence of the game of croquet, and we all get a great deal of satisfaction out of going from the first hoop to 4-back or the peg, especially when the opponent has presented us with a four ball break. But we cannot always win games on our opponent's mistakes, and only too frequently must do so on our own merits. In these circumstances, the player who is not afraid to bring the balls off the boundaries is at a great advantage. Now I can hear you say, "Yes, but how are we 8 and 10 bisquers to make a break with all the balls on the boundary?" Believe me, it is not nearly so difficult to make a break, starting with one ball in each corner, as is generally imagined.

One vital condition is that you should be able to play the rush stroke with reasonable accuracy, and here, practice is a necessity. Ten minutes practice every day, by yourself, is of more value than any number of friendly games.

Let us now take a position which occurs very frequently. We will assume that you have just hit your own tice and have roqueted it off the court at about the middle of the West boundary. Your opponent's balls are 2 or 3 yards up the East boundary from the 4th corner. This is a very simple break to collect provided you are prepared to make one shot, namely, a thick take-off to the 4th corner, sending your partner's ball to the second hoop. Set your balls for an ordinary take-off to the 4th corner spot, and then hit into your partner ball rather more than usual, but with about the same strength. Your partner ball goes near the second hoop, and your own ball goes almost directly to your opponent's. This is a most useful shot and well worth practising. Now, roquet the ball nearer the corner, and if they are fairly close together, a little stop-shot will send it to the fourth hoop where it can wait till you reach that hoop, at the same time getting a rush on the other to the first hoop, and you have a perfect 4-ball break. If your opponent's balls were not very close together in the fourth corner, you may find it easier to take-off to get your rush, but do try to get the ball off the boundary by at least a yard. Then, when making the first hoop, you must try to get a rush back to the fourth corner. You can then send that ball in nearer the fourth hoop and get a rush on the other ball either to the second corner, the West boundary or the stick. From any of these positions it is a simple split shot to send that ball to the third hoop, and get on to your partner ball at the second. I would emphasise that none of these shots are beyond the power of a 10 bisquer, who is willing to practise them.

Now let us take a slightly more difficult example. Your opponent has missed the tice and has one ball on the West boundary a little beyond the first hoop, the other in the second corner, and your own balls are a yard apart on the East boundary, just outside the 4th corner. The best thing is to rush your ball down to the 3rd corner between the third hoop and the corner. If it does not come off, no harm is done, as you can easily retire and give yourself a rush. Assuming that you have done it, take-off to the second corner. If you are brave enough to try for the rush, all the better, but it is quite sufficient to be within a yard or two of it. Now you must do a thick take-off sending this ball about 3 yards along the North boundary and try for the rush on the tice ball to the first corner. You must try to get your ball on the yard-line and from here a little cut rush sends that ball about three yards in from the first hoop, a little to the West of it. Make the hoop and get a rush to the third corner, from where you can send that ball to the third hoop, getting a rush on your partner ball to the second corner. From here you can send it in to the second hoop, getting a rush on your opponents ball to the second hoop. Alternatively you can rush your partner ball from the third corner direct to the second hoop, sending the

ball to the right of the hoop on the approach, and run the hoop through to the boundary. This is where sending your opponent's ball along the North boundary when you took off to the tice is invaluable, as you can easily hit this ball and send it to the fourth hoop, and you have a perfect break again.

Building up breaks often involve variations of these methods. The only vital strokes needed are the rush — the most important in the game, and the thick take-off. Do practise them; you will find it well worth while.

Rules of KING-BALL CROQUET 1958

INTRODUCTION

The game is played between two sides — either singles or doubles.

The object is to score 26 points in order as in Croquet.

The four coloured balls shall be used — one side shall play blue and black and the other red and yellow.

The order of play shall be blue, red, black and then yellow throughout the entire game, which shall commence from the centre court end of "A" baulk.

The players shall, in order of play, hit the balls into position to the first hoop in preparation to run the first point.

No ball shall be considered to be in the play until it has made the first point, and must therefore be lifted if it interferes with a stroke or the movement of any other ball, and then be replaced when that stroke or movement of the other ball is completed.

There shall be no croquet strokes except under the provisions of Rule 7.

The game is won by the side which first scores all its 26 points in order.

Order of play to be determined by the toss of a coin.

RULES

- No player shall roquet another ball which has not scored its first point.
- Extra strokes are gained by running a hoop in order, or by a roquet on to an opponent's ball after that ball has scored as hereunder:-
 - After running a hoop in order — 1 further stroke.
 - After roqueting an opponent's ball — 1 further stroke.
 - After running a hoop in order and then roqueting an opponent's ball in the one stroke — 2 further strokes.
 - After roqueting an opponent's ball and running a hoop in order in the one stroke — 2 further strokes.
 - After running two hoops in order in the one stroke — 2 further strokes.
- Opponent's ball may be roqueted alternatively, indefinitely, between the running of each hoop in order.
- No further stroke shall be taken for roqueting a partner ball.
- All balls roqueted through their hoop in order shall, except as under Rule 9b, be deemed to have made that point.
- When a ball runs the Rover (12th) hoop in order, it becomes a King-ball.
- A King-ball may roquet the opponent's balls (Rule 3) or, having roqueted an opponent's ball, may play a croquet stroke from that ball. The croquet stroke will end the turn.
- No ordinary opposition ball can score from a King-ball. (Any hoop or roquet made after contacting an opposition King-ball is not scored in that stroke, however, any stroke gained as in Rule 2