

after time. At one stage, it looked as though Aspinall might be forced to scratch from the singles by a recurrence of an old back injury; but, after treatment at the local hospital, he was able to play and overcame Openshaw in two closely contested games. Aiton continued his sequence of three-game wins by beating Gunasekera in a match of fluctuating fortunes.

The Plate saw Murray looking more like his normal self, with four good wins in four games to put him in the final of the Draw and the semi-final of the Process. Foulser, who had completed a successful triple in front of the clubhouse the previous evening, had reached the semi-final of the Process in the other half; but Weitz was simply walking it, still with two lives — after one win, one win on time, two walkovers through scratching and two through retirement of opponents! Croker made up the contenders.

Saturday

The singles final, between Aspinall (who had so far not dropped a game) and Aiton, was not one of great promise, and the first game went easily to Aspinall — though he failed at least half a dozen straightforward hoops. The second game began in similar fashion until, with Aspinall for 3-back and 4-back and Aiton for 4 and first, the match suddenly came to life. Aiton hit with his forward ball, progressed through two hoops, and laid up in corner 1. Aspinall missed, and Aiton was round with his backward ball to 4-back with a controlled leave. Aspinall missed the lift, and Aiton — now looking much more confident — was round to peg from 6, laying up in corner 2. For once, Aspinall was under pressure; but, as so often, this only served to raise his game. Hitting the short lift shot with his 4-back ball, he went to peg and put Aiton's peg ball out. Though Aiton managed to get long position at 4-back from the lift, and ran it in his next turn, he failed to get position at penult; a few tense turns later, Aspinall was for peg with both, and — despite a failed peg out from eight feet — he eased safely home for his seventh championship.

In the Plate, it was definitely Croker's day. Seeing off Foulser in the Process final after beating Murray, while Murray was beating Weitz to take the Draw, he crowned his day by beating Murray again in the play-off. With only about fifteen minutes of time remaining, Croker managed to peg out Murray's forward ball to leave himself at a four point disadvantage but with Murray only for 2-back (he should perhaps not have gone to peg so early — in the fast conditions, the pegged out player certainly seemed to be at a disadvantage). Murray had his chance, but stuck in 4-back on a break, and by time Croker had levelled the scores. A missed lift left him the simple task of pegging out his forward ball to win, leaving Murray on the wrong end of a 1 o.t. for the third time. The doubles turned into a war of attrition, with what little break play there was proving decisive. Though McCullough and Cordingley lost the first, they beat Bell and Rose in the remaining games, an early break to rover — giving contact — by McCullough proving invaluable in seeing them through in the last game.

So ended the 93rd Open Championships: eight days' play at a new venue providing challenging conditions, and with some promising newcomers as well as the return of familiar faces which we have not seen so frequently of late. What will next year bring?

Event 1. Singles Championship

First Round: J.R. Hilditch bt Prof B.G. Neal +18 +21; A.B. Hope bt Dr T.J. Haste +13 +11; S.E. Lewis bt R.D.C. Prichard +1 +14; L.S. Butler bt M.J. Stevens +6 -19 +11; J.R. McCullough bt Dr W.P. Ormerod +4(OT) +8; Dr W.R.D. Wiggins bt R.A. Godby +4 +18; J.E. Guest bt D.J. Croker +12+9; M.N. Avery bt P.J. Death +20 +14; Dr E.W. Solomon bt P.L. Smith +8 +15; H.O. Hicks bt Dr B.G. Weitz +5(OT) +14; T. Griffith bt Mrs W.R.D. Wiggins +5(OT) +9(OT); A. Berry bt A.V. Camroux +12 +9.

Second Round: D.R. Foulser bt R.M. Hobbs +21 +15; G.N. Aspinall bt B.C. Sykes +24 +24; J. Rose bt P.W. Hands +13 +10; S.N. Mulliner bt Dr I.G. Vincent -4 +10 +13; D.K. Openshaw bt M.E.W. Heap -26(TP) +13 +20; Hope bt Hilditch +18 +13; Lewis bt Butler +20 +22; McCullough bt Wiggins +21+24; Avery bt Guest +3 +4; Solomon bt Hicks +22 +15; Griffith bt Berry +5 +1(OT); K.M.H. Aiton bt G.E.P. Jackson +14 -2 +18; I.D. Bond bt J. Haigh +23 +20; P. Cordingley bt E. Bell +7 (OT); D.L. Gunasekera bt P.M. Johnson +26 +16; G.W. Noble bt Dr M. Murray +2 +21.

Third Round: Aspinall bt Foulser +11 +17; Mulliner bt Rose -4 +15 +9; Openshaw bt Hope +4 +16; Lewis bt McCullough -13 +15 +8; Avery bt Solomon +9 -8 +9; Aiton bt Griffith +12 -8 +11; Bond bt Cordingley +5 +5; Gunasekera bt Noble +3 +10.

Fourth Round: Aspinall bt Mulliner +19 +13; Openshaw bt Lewis +3(OT) -2 +13(OT); Aiton bt Avery -9 +17 +7; Gunasekera bt Bond +13 -18 +12.

Semi-final: Aspinall bt Openshaw +4 +8; Aiton bt Gunasekera +17 -16 +9.

Final: Aspinall bt Aiton +24 +3.

Event 2. Doubles Championship

First Round: A.B. Hope & Dr M. Murray bt M.E.W. Heap & D.L. Gunasekera +13 -9(OT) +10; Dr W.R.D. Wiggins & Mrs Wiggins bt D.J. Croker & R.A. Godby +9(OT) -2(OT) +5(OT); M. Avery & D.K. Openshaw bt J.R. Hilditch & K.M.H. Aiton +5(OT) +6(OT); Dr W.P. Ormerod & G.N. Aspinall bt P.M. Johnson & Dr T.J. Haste -3 +17 +9.

Second Round: G. Noble & Dr I.G. Vincent bt Dr B.G. Weitz & R. Prichard +8 +12; E. Bell & J. Rose bt A. Berry & P. Smith +4 +22; D.R. Foulser & P.W. Hands bt A.V. Camroux & L.S. Butler +1(OT) +4; Hope & Murray bt Wiggins & Mrs Wiggins +25 +12; Ormerod & Aspinall bt Avery & Openshaw +1(OT) +11(OT); J.R. McCullough & P. Cordingley bt I.D. Bond & Dr B.C. Sykes +24 +18; T. Griffith & R.M. Hobbs bt S.E. Lewis & P.J. Death +1 +4; Prof B.G. Neal & Dr E.W. Solomon bt H.O. Hicks & J. Haigh -9 +2(OT) +9(OT).

Third Round: Bell & Rose bt Noble & Vincent -4(OT) +7(OT) +8(OT); Foulser & Hands bt Hope & Murray -10 +1(OT) +1(OT); McCullough & Cordingley bt Ormerod & Aspinall +26 +12; Griffith & Hobbs bt Neal & Solomon +9 -23 +4.

Semi-final: Bell & Rose bt Foulser & Hands +21 +11(OT); McCullough & Cordingley bt Griffith & Hobbs +17 +13.

Final: McCullough & Cordingley bt Bell & Rose -5(OT) +4(OT) +9(OT).

Event 3. Association Plate

DRAW

First Round: Mrs W.R.D. Wiggins bt M.E.W. Heap +4(OT); R.D.C. Prichard bt G.E.P. Jackson +3; Dr M. Murray bt D.R. Foulser +11; J.R. Hilditch bt R.M. Hobbs +12; Dr B.G. Weitz bt J. Haigh.

Second Round: D.J. Croker bt B.C. Sykes +1; P.M. Johnson bt Mrs Wiggins +5; Murray bt Prichard +13; Dr I.G. Vincent bt Hilditch +9; J. Rose bt A. Berry +24; P.L. Smith bt Dr W.R.D. Wiggins +8(OT); Weitz bt A.V. Camroux +3(OT); E. Bell bt P. Cordingley +21.

Third Round: Croker bt Johnson +9; Murray bt Vincent +16; Rose bt Smith +8(OT); Weitz bt Bell w/o scr.

Semi-final: Murray bt Croker +9; Weitz bt Rose w/o scr.

Final: Murray bt Weitz +16.

PROCESS

First Round: D.R. Foulser bt P. Cordingley +10; Dr W.R.D. Wiggins bt P.M. Johnson +3; D.J. Croker bt P.L. Smith +5(OT); J.R. Hilditch bt E. Bell w/o scr.; R.D.C. Prichard bt J. Haigh +1(OT).

Second Round: Foulser bt B.C. Sykes +21(TP); Dr I.G. Vincent bt M.E.W. Heap +19; Wiggins bt R.M. Hobbs +3(OT); Dr B.G. Weitz bt G.E.P. Jackson w/o scr.; Croker bt Hilditch w/o scr.; A. Berry bt Prichard +10; Dr M. Murray bt A.V. Camroux +23.

Third Round: Foulser bt Vincent +8; Weitz bt Wiggins w/o scr.; Croker bt Berry +22; Murray bt Mrs W.R.D. Wiggins +23.

Semi-final: Foulser bt Weitz +4; Croker bt Murray +18.

Final: Croker bt Foulser +21.

PLAY-OFF

Croker bt Murray +1(OT).

THE CROQUET GAZETTE

ISSUE No. 171

AUGUST 1983

Expedition Through the Hoops

We are all aware that players differ widely in the speeds at which they play. Who has not, on occasion, fretted as an opponent stands in apparent bewilderment in the middle of the lawn, contemplating we know not what; or heard in disbelief of games completed in under half an hour?

Managers, of course, have what might loosely be termed (*pace* Regulations 10) a professional interest in all this. They must assess the likely length of games and plan the order of matches to accommodate those slow players who always seem to end up in all the finals. After a while, they acquire a certain skill in this, and soon discover that the players who stand thinking are not necessarily the slowest — though they may frustrate opponents the most — nor are those who hurry around the lawn always the quickest. What counts, when it comes to how long a game takes, is how quickly the points are scored; and this is often better achieved by those who score steadily and consistently than by those who accumulate their points quickly but sporadically. A whole host of factors — lawn speed, weather conditions, state of equipment (hoop tightness and firmness, newness of balls), style of play and so on — may enter into the equation and exert their own particular influence. But at the bottom of it all is that basic factor: the player's natural pace of scoring.

At the Caskets this year, I recorded (amongst other things) the length of games, to the nearest five minutes. From this mass of information, comprising some 116 individual singles games, I have calculated the rate at which all the players scored their points. Ideally, of course, one would measure the time each player was in play; but this would be wholly impractical, and the short cut I have adopted is to divide the time taken in each game between the two players, in proportion to the points each of them scored. For example, in a game won +9 in 2 hours 25 minutes, 88 minutes is allocated to the winner for his 26 points and 57 minutes to the loser (who scored 17 of the 43 points made in the game). A player's speed, measured in minutes per point, is then obtained by dividing his total allocated time by the points he scored. This tends to make the faster players appear rather slower than they really are, because it "penalises" them by — in effect — assuming in each game that they score points at the same speed as their opponent; and contrariwise for slower players. This effect will be most pronounced for close games, but should not add up to too serious a distortion.

The results of this little exercise are tabulated below. I would immediately point out that I do not myself read any special significance into statistics obtained from such small numbers of games per person (particularly when some were played on lawns with hoops much more firmly set than on others) and would discourage others from doing so. But, as an illustration of the differences between players, and of the pace at which they scored points during this particular tournament, they may be of interest more widely than just to the participants, who were generous enough to tolerate my inquisitiveness. Now that they have seen some of its results, will they be so helpful again? I hope so.

I.B.

Speed	Player	Points	Wins/ Games
2.6	Aspinall	304	10/12
2.8	Hope	103	3/5
	Murray	147	3/7
2.9	Avery	210	6/10
	Bond	157	5/7
	Mulliner	220	8/11
3.0	Hilditch	110	2/6
3.2	Solomon, E.	92	2/4
	Weitz	222	5/10
3.5	Neal	71	1/4
	Rose	215	7/10
	Wiggins	189	5/9

	Wood, J.W.	60	1/5
3.6	Guest	254	8/12
	Pearson	82	1/5
3.7	Denison	82	2/6
	Godby	116	2/6
3.8	Hamilton-Miller	101	2/5
3.9	Alvey	72	1/5
	Hobbs	39	0/4
	Noble	121	2/6
	Palmer	195	6/9
	Wharrad	19	0/4
4.1	Haigh	60	0/4
4.2	Mrs Carlisle	176	4/9
4.4	Openshaw	115	3/5
4.6	Mrs Weitz	74	0/4
4.8	Mrs Wiggins	201	8/8
5.1	Miss Duthie	75	1/5
	Mrs Neal	31	0/4
5.2	Lady Bazley	101	2/6
5.3	Mrs Hague	186	7/9
	Miss Hampson	133	4/7
6.0	Mrs Yeoman	102	3/7

Also: Roy — 0/2 and 14 points, speed 2.7.

LETTERS TO EDITOR

Dear Sir,

The Croquet Machine (mooted a couple of years ago) is now half-built, and I am determined to finish it and get some results with it this summer.

Unfortunately, my wife wants to go and live in Yorkshire, and we have brought a house in Alne, near Easingwold. I am almost heart-broken at the prospect of leaving this place, and it would be good to sell it to someone who will continue to allow the lawn to be used by the Reigate Priory Club, as otherwise they will be reduced to one under-sized court, as was the case for their first 50 years.

The property, a 4 bedroomed bungalow will be for sale in early summer 1984. It has a full size level croquet lawn (0.28 ha). It has good access to station and M25. Anyone interested please contact me direct.

Babrona
Coppice Lane
Reigate, Surrey RH2 9JF

Yours sincerely,
F.F. Ross

Dear Sir,

SIX DAY TOURNAMENTS

I should like to endorse everything Bill Scarr has said in his letter (Gazette 169, p.15). Since my retirement twelve years ago my wife and I have enjoyed many of these; we both hope that they will continue for as long as there are clubs willing to run them and players giving support in sufficient numbers.

"Cranham"
18a Church Hill
Pinhoe, Exeter EX4 9JQ

Yours sincerely,
Charles Marshall

Bill Scarr in his letter in the Spring Gazette gives the impression that in my talk at the Club Conference I had predicted that week long tournaments would cease. What I really said was that many tournaments are organised on a basis which gives inadequate games to justify paying a hotel bill. It is very disappointing to go to a tournament to find that the club has accepted more entries than they should so that the number of games playable for many entrants is quite small.

I am sure that many of those who still travel to clubs for a week's tournament will agree with me that clubs should take special care to

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Tournament Results & Reports to be sent direct, within 7 days of completion of the tournament to the Secretary of the C.A.

Other Contributions other than tournament results and reports should be sent to the Editor. They will be much welcomed and acknowledged.

All correspondence about non-delivery of Gazettes, changes of address, telephone numbers, handicaps or officials should be sent to the Secretary C.A., and not to the Editors.

ensure that visitors do get better than one game a day. If clubs cannot arrange this, then in my view the weekly tournaments will die — I do not wish them to, I simply forecast that they will, except of course for the National and Regional Championship events.

Woking have tried to lead the way by arranging nine days of successive tournaments. This gives visitors the choice of playing for 3, 4, 7 or 9 continuous days as they wish. Cheltenham has been very aware of the need to provide as much croquet as possible to visitors and it is their initiative which has enabled more games to be played by shortening games depending on the sum of the handicaps of the two players thus ensuring that all players take about the same amount of time to complete a game. Using this system at Woking both in 1982 and 1981 — the average time for games in the American 3 day event was almost exactly 2 hours so that an increased number of games could be planned for each day.

Incidentally the Report of my speech under the heading "Tournaments" on page 7 of the Winter Gazette should have referred to "unsuccessful" and not "successful" player in the penultimate line.

Lionel Wharrad

Residence No Qualification

I read with interest the letter from the Secretary of the Scottish Croquet Association asking for players who are qualified to play for Scotland to get in touch with him. He quotes the qualifications for playing in the Home Internationals as:-

1. Birth in Scotland of the player.
2. Birth in Scotland of one of the player's parents.
3. Residence in Scotland.

The general feeling of the Council at the time was to the best of my recollection that for Home Internationals it was desirable that there should be much more stringent Rules than exist for the County Championships. The third qualification was therefore not accepted by the Council when these qualifications were thoroughly discussed. In addition it was not thought desirable for a player who can technically qualify for more than one country under 1 or 2 to play for more than one country. There is the special case for people who are now British Subjects and permanently resident in the British Isles but who were born elsewhere and whose parents were also born elsewhere. In such cases the player can qualify for the home country in which he is resident but once having opted he cannot subsequently change his mind if he moves.

L.W.

Dear Sir,

FURTHER THOUGHTS ON QUALIFICATION

Thank you for publishing my letter asking for players qualified to play for Scotland to contact me. Several have done so already which has usefully extended our pool of players.

Lionel Wharrad, in his letter, questions the third qualification which I gave, namely, "Residence in Scotland". The first Pimms Series was set up rather hurriedly in order to be able to fit it into that season at all, and definitions of nationality were not discussed. So the Scottish Croquet Association approached the Croquet Association in December

1980 with a view to discussing nationality qualifications. We suggested that one of the qualifications should be current residence in the country for three years. I was first told that this had been accepted, then a few days later I was told that the motion had been amended to what seemed to me to be a less strict version:-

"Qualifications for Pimms Internationals 1981"

- i. birth of the player in the country
- ii. birth of either parent in the country
- iii. British citizens who do not qualify under (i) and (ii) may elect to play for any country of which they are or have been resident for one year
- iv. no player may play for more than one country."

The SCA accepted this. It seems from Lionel Wharrad's letter that the third qualification could be interpreted differently to refer only to those born outside the UK. This interpretation would not have been accepted by the SCA, but it did not occur to us because residence as a qualification is so widespread in other sports, and a year or less is quite common. After all, three years residence was one of the conditions for the MacRobertson Shield in 1974.

The question of whether a player who has played for one country can change to another for which he was qualified to play was not discussed between the CA and the SCA.

17 Greycoran
Sauchie
Clackmannanshire
FK10 3ET

Yours sincerely,
I.H. Wright

Longman Cup**Third Round**

Edinburgh beat Bowdon 3-2
Bretby beat Edgbaston 3-2
Worcester beat Cheltenham 4-1
Wolverhampton beat Harwell 5-0
Reigate Priory beat Southwick 4-1
Woking beat Aldermaston 3-2
Colworth beat Cambridge University w/o
Ipswich beat Wrest Park 4-1

4th Round matches to be played by 3rd August

TOURNAMENT RESULTS**Colchester Open Weekend 6-8 May**

Because of a couple of last minute cancellations only 14 players participated in this Open Weekend. Nevertheless the event drew a variety of participants including a strong contingent of the chocolate biscuits and orange juice brigade from Cambridge.

The first day consisted of four American blocks with everyone playing three games — mainly through the ingenuity of the manager Gerard Healy. Getting off to a strong start, Hilditch, Avery and Allim won their three games. Joining these players on the second day were the other winners and runners-up in the blocks; now competing for a place in the semi-final play-off. Making up for their slow start on the previous day, Bond and Coward notched up three games apiece and were joined by Allim and Healy (despite managerial cares) in the semi-finals.

The remaining six players from the first day participated in an enlarged American block. Gunasekera and Girling, after beating all their opponents finally decided the block in a tantalising and well balanced game. Gunasekera however pressed home to a narrow victory.

On the third day Healy, although getting one ball round, succumbed to Coward's steady play and accurate shooting. On the otherside of the draw, Bond managed to overtake Allim at the finish thus securing a place in the final.

The other four players ousted from the main event by the end of the second day, played-off in an American block. This was eventually won on points by Hilditch although Sue Sykes in second place was playing well and persevered to beat Avery and Hobbs in two close games.

The final of the event between Bond and Coward provided some excellent croquet. However a hampered stroke from Bond conceded a critical innings to Coward who pressed on to win the game.

R.M.H.

Bowdon Weekend Tournament 10-12 June

Another successful weekend tournament was held at Bowdon from Friday to Sunday. The major feature of the three days was the sight of players blobbing hoops they expected to run. This was a tribute to Eddie Bell's excellent tight setting of the hoops, and an indictment of his victims for attempting shots which may have succeeded with wide hoops, but had little chance at Bowdon. The results of several games hinged on such incidents.

Colin Irwin, managing his first tournament, was able to get through the weekend without any mishaps, and he was generally congratulated on his hard and efficient work. Handicaps ranged from -½ to 13. The standard of play was also varied, although there was not necessarily any correlation with handicaps. The 5th Lawn at Denzell Gardens was much used, and with more usage and better care, it will improve and become a useful asset for large events. At present it is only slightly slower in pace than the main club lawns.

Ian Maughan won his Block on points from John Rose, whom he beat in an eventful game, Ian ran out of bisques before his peg out, which only resulted in one ball being removed. John Rose then took one ball round, and started with his second. Eventually John stuck in two back, another victim of Eddie Bell, on Ian's ball, and that was that. Colin Irwin 'managed' to win his block, finishing undefeated. His closest game was against Pauline Lewis. Colin eventually got going when Pauline had got to Rover and Peg. He pegged Pauline's ball out, and she never got in again, despite support from a large vociferous gallery.

Brian Storey and Bill Aldridge won their blocks for the loss of one game. Undoubtedly the hoop settings have a great advantage to players who were able to control their game tightly, or who had enough bisques to rescue balls from the jaws of hoops.

Most players will be returning next year, and the Southport contingent in its two halves of ladies and 'gentlemen?' will be especially welcome at the bar.

Results:

BLOCK 1: I. Maughan (8) 5 wins (+59); J. Rose (-½) 5 wins (+58); C. Hudson (3) 5 wins (+45); Mrs C.E. Irwin (12) 2 wins (-19); J.D. Meads (1) 2 wins (-27); Mrs M. Cotterell (5½) 2 wins (-46); Mrs L.J. Taylor (12) 0 wins (-63).

BLOCK 2: B. Storey (8) 5 wins (+64); K. Cotterell (3) 5 wins (+48); E. Bell (-½) 5 wins (+37); A. Sutcliffe (4) 2 wins (-10); R. Edwards (10) 2 wins (-22); M. Kolbuszewski (1½) 1 win (-49); Mrs L. Taylor (9) 1 win (-58).

BLOCK 3: W. Aldridge (1) 5 wins (+54); K. Aiton (0) 5 wins (+35); Mrs B. Sutcliffe (8) 4 wins (+14); N. Hyne (2½) 4 wins (+3); A. Gordon (6) 2 wins (-9); Mrs A. Dawson (13) 1 win (-57); Mrs M. Collin (4½) 0 wins (-40).

BLOCK 4: C.J. Irwin (½) 6 wins (+59); D. Kelly (5) 4 wins (+54); M. Wilkins (11) 4 wins (+11); A. Collin (2) 3 wins (+6); C.B. Sanford (4½) 2 wins (-28); M. Grainger-Brown (2½) 2 wins (-32); Mrs P. Lewis (11) 0 wins (-59).

Ryde 13-18 June**Event 1. Isle of Wight Championship. Open Singles (American)**

5 wins M.G. Tompkinson (+45)
3 wins G.N. Leech (+20)
3 wins F.H. Newman (+6)
3 wins Dr C.A. Parker (+3)
1 win T.I. Card (-17)
0 wins R.W. Newnham (-57)

Chapman Cup (American). Level Singles (22 point games). 4½ to 8 bisques

4 wins C.G. Pountney (+41)
4 wins P.W. Thompson (+23)
3 wins Mrs M.G. Tompkinson (+10)
3 wins Mrs P.H. Mann (-9)
1 win F.A. Rowlands (-17)
0 wins Mrs C. Abderhalden (-48)

Hutton Cup (American). Handicap Singles (9 bisques and over)

5 wins R.M. Moreshead (13) (+62)
3 wins Mrs S.B. Hudson (9) (+28)
3 wins P.H. Mann (10) (-7)
2 wins Mrs C.W. Marshall (10) (-8)
2 wins Mrs C.A. Parker (10) (-24)
0 wins Dr C.W. Marshall (10) (-48)

Men's and Women's Championships Hurlingham, 13-18 June

As the week progressed, I had a growing suspicion that something was wrong. Here we had six excellent lawns and another four on the Cricket Field which at surface level looked good, though they possessed a different texture of grass. An entry of 27 players was headed by the eight members of last year's President's Cup team, together with Andrew Hope. Yet, in spite of this galaxy of talent, mistakes were far too numerous and the sum total of triple peels amounted to no more than three, accomplished by Aspinall. I asked David Openshaw for his opinion on this surprisingly-disappointing standard of play. His verdict was that the new Jaques croquet balls, manufactured from a different core, were presenting difficulties, especially in forward approach shots to hoops and in take-off strokes from the side. Sometimes, he said, his playing ball, when correctly struck (to the best of his belief) would stop short of its expected target, while at other times it would go beyond. This gave rise to a gradual feeling of uneasiness and a lack of confidence, which under normal circumstances would never have occurred. Certainly this would appear to be one reasonable explanation.

In the Men's Championship, victory after a long and hard struggle against Openshaw brought John Rose into the semi-final of the top quarter of the draw. In the second quarter, Aspinall was faced with a tough assignment which he completed successfully. His first game with Martin Murray was an exhilarating contest of level cut-and-thrust play and some splendid long shooting in the latter stages by both contestants. Aspinall had reached peg and penultimate when Murray with one clip on 4-back hit in with his backward ball and appeared set to go round from hoop 4. But the careless miss of a short roquet at 3-back ended his challenge and Aspinall went on to take the second game, +16. His next opponent was Andrew Hope. Both players found difficulties in maintaining accuracy of touch in this match, played on lawn 7. After Aspinall took the first game which was well fought, Hope came back with fine determination and consistency to hold his opponent at bay in a close and exciting finish. Aspinall, so often at his very best in a third game, then made sure of victory, although he was never allowed to relax. Mark Avery now met Aspinall in the quarter-final but on this occasion posed no threat. Twice in the opening game he missed chances of a good break by failing to run the first hoop.

Meanwhile in the lower half Mulliner set out on the trail towards the semi-final by out-pointing Noble in two games. Noble might well have taken the second, after Mulliner had made a bad mistake in peeling at the rover. But a failure at 2-back settled the issue in Mulliner's favour. Two close games against Eric Solomon followed. The combination of the new balls and lawn 8 acted as a check for some time to the progress of each player when he held the innings. Mulliner finally edged home when his opponent was on peg and 2-back in the first game and at 3-back in the next, his other ball having been pegged out. I was sorry not to have been able to watch this match nor that of Andrew Hope, for both the losers deserved a more honourable mention in fuller detail. The third round meeting of Mulliner v Bond was one of the week's highlights with some fine croquet in the first and third games and a second game which was a chapter of errors and accidents by both players. Bond, playing with confidence and accuracy, won the opening game quickly with two breaks after Mulliner had failed to run hoop 2. But the next game might well have been the one summed up delightfully by a writer in the 1930s, "this was a Boat race game, in-out! in-out!". The sequence of play was as follows. Bond misses short roquet, Mulliner is hoop-bound after hoop 2.

A brief interval of cat-and-mouse tactics. Mulliner sprints to 4-back. Bond hits and progresses to 2-back where he misses a return roquet Mulliner gains the innings but stymies himself at hoop 3 while manoeuvring for a triple. Bond hits with his backward ball but misses a short roquet after hoop 3. Mulliner regains a normal temperature and wins, +16! In the deciding game Bond struck quickly, hitting with the fourth ball and setting up a fine break as the result of an admirably-judged take-off along the boundary to give himself a direct

rush to the first hoop. When Mulliner missed the lift, the position looked serious for him, as Bond was off and away with his second ball. But suddenly a missed cut-rush after 2-back ended his good run and although he had the innings again a little later he repeated this error. Mulliner now returned to the attack with all his concentration and accuracy of touch in every stroke, until he was laid up with a rush to penultimate and his other clip on rover. Bond just failed to hit his final lift shot and Mulliner took the game and a match which, with its many vicissitudes, he had once looked like losing.

The first semi-final between Aspinall and Rose was also a match to remember. Rose, on the peg and 4-back, set Aspinall the task of hitting (or missing) the final lift-shot. Aspinall hit, went round from 2-back and pegged out his opponent's ball. The two remaining clips were both on 4-back, and so it was now Rose's turn to face the final lift-shot. He missed, and Aspinall was home, +4. In the second game the players matched strides until Aspinall's clips were on peg and penultimate and those of Rose on 4-back and rover at the finish of his turn. Aspinall now hit the lift and made penultimate but then missed a roquet, enabling Rose to make rover. But in taking off to Aspinall's other ball on the yard line, he went off the boundary! Aspinall laid up behind the first hoop with a direct rush to rover and wired from the red ball in the centre of the East boundary. It was at this point that the dramatic climax occurred. The yellow ball of Rose which lay in the second corner had been out of play for some time and temporarily forgotten by Aspinall during his last turn. After careful observation, it became apparent to Rose that yellow was wired, definitely from two balls and possibly from the other behind the first hoop. When it had been agreed that Aspinall had been the last player to use yellow, Bernard Neal was called upon to give the vital decision. This proved so difficult that he requested the co-operation of two more referees. Several minutes later the answer was given, "wired". Rose promptly lifted yellow into A baulk and with no trace of nervousness went out from 4-back! Such an unexpected eleventh-hour reversal might have had an upsetting reaction upon many players. Aspinall's reaction was to allow his opponent just one lift-shot before he won the third game and the match with a triple peel in twenty-four minutes (according to a spectator)! This was a superb match from beginning to end, with a grand-stand finish by Aspinall and a splendid display of resistance by Rose who went down with his colours flying to the very last.

In the other semi-final Mulliner was not too severely tested by Adrian Palmer, who might be said to be moving at the present time both upwards and also downwards: upwards in improvement and downwards in handicap! He played a good second game, going round after Mulliner had stuck in hoop 1 and later with his forward ball pegging out his opponent's rover.

And so now we had a repeat in the Final between the same two opponents who contested the 1982 Open Championship Final. But in this match, although the result might seem by its score to indicate a decisive victory for Aspinall, Mulliner's excellent long shooting gave him every opportunity to fight back, especially in the second game where at one vital point the rub of the green deprived him of completing his break and thereby handed an unassailable advantage to Aspinall. Aspinall was playing throughout the match with such precision of accuracy and touch that, with the addition of some fine hitting in, Mulliner had to be at his very best and make no mistakes in order to hold him.

In the first game when Mulliner was laid up in the fourth corner, his long cross-court approach shot to hoop 4 having been deflected off course by touching the wire of hoop 5, Aspinall hit his partner ball with a long shot and went round to 4 back. Mulliner hit the lift but over-rolled his approach to hoop 2. Aspinall regained the innings with another long shot and finished the game with a triple peel.

Mulliner in the second game hit the long tice and, when Aspinall missed, was in with a straightforward break. Proceeding with confidence and perfect touch, he came to hoop 5 and a two-yard take-off approach from the side and back, which was made — in the opinion of his opponent and myself — with complete accuracy. But as the ball was just about to come to a halt, it appeared to give an extra roll so that he was faced with a difficult jump-shot which he missed, Aspinall then went round to 4-back and when his opponent failed to hit the lift, continued in his second break to peg with one peel, having also peeled Mulliner's ball through hoop 1. Mulliner hit in and reached hoop 4 where he over-rolled his approach. But then when he was allowed a second chance in his next turn he relaxed momentarily his full concentration and from an easy position stuck in the hoop. Game and match to Aspinall, who on his present form must be considered a firm favourite to defend his title in the Open Championships at Cheltenham. It might be appropriate to add as a postscript that during the Cheltenham meeting Mulliner, playing in

the invisible colours of "Mulliner United", (Cambridge Blue and Pink), will have an extra spur to win the Cup and thus record a momentous "home" and "away" twin victory!

In the Women's Championship, Veronica Carlisle whom we expected to see contesting the Final played below her best form and suffered the fate of Chris Lloyd at Wimbledon. After dropping one game to Bernie Duthie she went down in a Marathon struggle with Sarah Hampson, who led by 10 points at the call of time in the third game. This match was played on Lawn 10, where in 1981 the eminent partnership of Martin Murray and Roger Murfitt found themselves "bewitched, baffled and bewildered" in a first-round defeat. Sarah Hampson had previously scored a close win against Betty Weitz, as had Susan Wiggins in a time-match against Pat Hague.

The Final was a lack-lustre affair. Sarah Hampson made one good spurt at the beginning of the second game but Susan Wiggins, although in control for the two games, was unable to find the rhythm and fluency of attack which generally characterise her play. And as so often happens, frustration at herself was of no avail. The progress in this match was that of a train "stopping at all stations" before it eventually reached the desired terminus! By her play in this event, Sarah Hampson certainly emerged with credit.

In the Mixed Doubles Championship, the first semi-final resulted in a close victory for Martin Murray and Kay Yeoman over Ian Bond and Veronica Carlisle, each side making some errors in the latter stages as they strove to gain the upper hand. The second semi-final brought about a somewhat surprising, and indeed decisive, defeat for Bobby and Susan Wiggins at the hands of John Rose and Pat Hague. John Rose, having made up his mind on their tactics to be employed, dominated the play, and by giving his opponents a non-stop series of long shots he was successful in nursing his partner slowly and gradually round the course. This tactical display, carried through with remarkable accuracy to the discomfiture of his opponents, was reminiscent of similar games sometimes played with equal mastery by Humphrey Hicks in a Handicap Doubles Match.

The Final was mainly a battle of wits and skill between Martin Murray and John Rose and was obviously going to last the full span of 3½ hours. A dour struggle which ensued suddenly came to life in a most exciting and unpredictable finish. One minute before time, Rose and his partner held the innings and led by 4 points. Murray then hit a fine long shot and as time was called made a superb break of 5 hoops and also peeled his partner through 3-back, leaving the two balls widely separated on the East boundary. Rose promptly hit his partner ball from A baulk and with a long and accurate take-off gained position for 1-back, which he negotiated successfully. He was now faced with a long approach to 2-back in order to draw level, but this proved too difficult and Martin Murray and Kay Yeoman were left the winners by 1 point.

In the Du Pre Cup, corresponding to the Association Plate, with such players as Murray, Noble, Neal, Avery, Hilditch and Susan Wiggins taking part, one would have reasonably expected to find the winner among these names. Yet, not one of them reached the final! Now if you were to look through the 1982 Directory of Associates, you would come across the following name — "J.E. Guest, handicap 14!" And while, after rapid and consistent improvement during the past two years this handicap today stands at 2, J.E. Guest it was who received the Cup and prize-giving. The opponents whom he defeated in earlier rounds were Hilditch, Neal, Weitz and, in the final, Bobby Wiggins. He is to be congratulated on a remarkable triumph. Bobby Wiggins played very well in this event, scoring two notable victories against George Noble and Mark Avery. Mention too must be made of Bernard Weitz, who after defeating Murray +1 lost narrowly to Guest in the semi-final, failing twice at rover when the game was in his hands.

In the Ladies' Plate — a new event this year — Pat Hague won both the Draw and Process, the defeated finalists being Kay Yeoman and Carmen Bazley.

The tournament was managed by Ian Bond, whose quiet assurance, authority and consideration were admirably displayed and appreciated warmly by all competitors.

D.J.V. H-M

Event 1. The Mens Championship

First Round: J. Rose bt L. Wharrad +24 +23; D.K. Openshaw bt R.M. Hobbs +19 +10; M.N. Avery bt M.D.A. Strachan w/o (opp. absent); J.E. Guest bt R.A. Godby +12 -14 +7; G.N. Aspinall bt Dr M. Murray +9 +17; A.B. Hope bt G.C. Roy +22 +16; Dr E.W. Solomon bt J.W. Wood +13 +19; S.N. Mulliner bt G.W. Noble +13 +10; W.B. Denison bt B.G. Neal w/o (opp. absent); I.D. Bond bt J. Haigh +16 +16; D.J. Palmer bt Dr B.G.F. Weitz +7 +9.

Second Round: J.R. Hilditch bt Dr W.R.D. Wiggins +7 +16; Rose bt Openshaw -15 +3 +12; Avery bt Guest +6 +21; Aspinall bt Hope +11 -5 +16; Mulliner bt Solomon +7 +5; Bond bt Denison +12 +24; Palmer bt P.L. Alvey -7 +19 +7; D.J.V. Hamilton-Miller bt M.G. Pearson +7 -11 +3.

Third Round: Rose bt Hilditch +5 +24; Aspinall bt Avery +22(TP) +17; Mulliner bt Bond -25 +16 +9; Palmer bt Hamilton-Miller +15 +3.

Semi-final: Aspinall bt Rose +4 -3 +26(TP); Mulliner bt Palmer +20 +12.

Final: Aspinall bt Mulliner +22(TP) +19.

Event 2. The Womens Championship

First Round: Mrs W.R.D. Wiggins bt Mrs K.G. Yeoman +23 +15; Miss S.G. Hampson bt Mrs B.L. Sundius-Smith w/o scr.

Second Round: Mrs W. Hague bt Lady Bazley +13 +5(OT); Mrs Wiggins bt Mrs B.G. Neal +21 +23; Miss Hampson bt Mrs B.G.F. Weitz +3(OT) +9; Mrs H.B.H. Carlisle bt Miss B. Duthie -10 +23 +10(OT).

Semi-final: Mrs Wiggins bt Mrs Hague +9(OT) +6(OT); Miss Hampson bt Mrs Carlisle +17 -3(OT) +2(OT).

Final: Mrs Wiggins bt Miss Hampson +4 +16.

Event 3. The Mixed Doubles Championship

First Round: Dr M. Murray & Mrs K.G. Yeoman bt P.L. Alvey & Lady Bazley +14.

Second Round: I.D. Bond & Mrs H.B.H. Carlisle bt D.J.V. Hamilton-Miller & Mrs B.L. Sundius-Smith +22; Murray & Mrs Yeoman bt J. Haigh & Miss S.G. Hampson +18; Dr & Mrs W.R.D. Wiggins bt Prof. & Mrs B.G. Neal +26; J. Rose & Mrs W. Hague bt Dr & Mrs B.G.F. Weitz +13(OT).

Semi-final: Murray & Mrs Yeoman bt Bond & Mrs Carlisle +5; Rose & Mrs Hague bt Dr & Mrs Wiggins +10(OT).

Final: Murray & Mrs Yeoman bt Rose & Mrs Hague +1(OT).

Event 4. The 'Du Pre' Cup

DRAW

First Round: Mrs H.B.H. Carlisle bt R.A. Godby +13.

Second Round: Dr B.G.F. Weitz bt J. Haigh +1(OT); M.N. Avery bt P.L. Alvey +22; W.B. Dennison bt R.M. Hobbs +15; Dr M. Murray bt Mrs Carlisle +6; B.G. Neal bt G.W. Noble +9; Dr W.R.D. Wiggins bt M.G. Pearson +22; J.E. Guest bt J.R. Hilditch +3; J.W. Wood bt L. Wharrad +20.

Third Round: Weitz bt Avery +3; Murray bt Dennison +26; Neal bt Wiggins +1(OT); Guest bt Wood +21.

Semi-final: Weitz bt Murray +1; Guest bt Neal +17.

Final: Guest bt Weitz +3.

PROCESS

First Round: Dr G.B.F. Weitz bt L. Wharrad +18.

Second Round: Weitz bt Mrs H.B.H. Carlisle +1; W.B. Dennison bt M.G. Pearson +16; M.N. Avery bt B.G. Neal +13; Dr M. Murray bt J.R. Hilditch +14; G.W. Noble bt J. Haigh +5; J.E. Guest bt R.M. Hobbs +21; Dr W.R.D. Wiggins bt P.L. Alvey +10; R.A. Godby bt J.W. Wood +17.

Third Round: Weitz bt Dennison +12; Avery bt Murray +8; Noble bt Guest +17; Wiggins bt Godby +8.

Semi-final: Avery bt Weitz +13; Wiggins bt Noble +3.

Final: Wiggins bt Avery +8.

PLAY-OFF

Guest bt Dr Wiggins +18.

Event 5. Ladies Plate

DRAW

First Round: Mrs K.G. Yeoman bt Mrs B.G. Neal +1(OT); Lady Bazley bt Mrs B.G.F. Weitz +1(OT).

Semi-final: Mrs Yeoman bt Lady Bazley +5(OT); Mrs W. Hague bt

Miss B. Duthie +7(OT).

Final: Mrs Hague bt Mrs Yeoman +3(OT).

PROCESS

First Round: Mrs K.G. Yeoman bt Miss B. Duthie +1(OT); Mrs W. Hague bt Mrs B.G.F. Weitz +10.

Semi-final: Mrs Hague bt Mrs Yeoman +7; Lady Bazley bt Mrs B.G. Neal +19.

Final: Mrs Hague bt Lady Bazley +3(OT).

Southwick 17-19 June

Handicap Singles

BLOCK A: P.W.P. Campion (5) 4 wins (+59); D.M. Bull (4) 4 wins (+39); T.F. Owen (½) 4 wins (+14); Mrs M.T. Paddon (10) 1 win (-24); Mrs N.W.T. Cox (3½) 1 win (-32); Mrs Asa-Thomas (3) 1 win.

BLOCK B: D.L. Gaunt (4) 5 wins (+103); A.F. Coleman (1) 3 wins (+10); W.J. Sturdy (4) 3 wins (+2); T.G.S. Colls (7) 2 wins (-8); N.W.T. Cox (3) 2 wins (-23); Mrs G.A. Hutcheson (12) 0 wins.

BLOCK C: W.E. Moore (1) 4 wins (+43); Mrs L.A. Coombs (5) 3 wins (+34); G. Whillock (3½) 3 wins (+19); Mrs E. Mapletoft (12) 3 wins (+17); Dr D. Higgs (6) 2 wins (-21); Miss D. Harding (14) 0 wins.

BLOCK D: Mrs G. Harris (7) 4 wins (+30); E.E. Rees (2½) 4 wins (+19); T. Vale (5) 3 wins (+8); M.T. Paddon (3) 2 wins (+10); G.A. Hutcheson (3½) 2 wins (-23); Mrs A. Smith 0 wins.

SEMI-FINAL: Gaunt bt Campion +22; Moore bt Mrs Harris +8.

FINAL: Gaunt bt Moore +17.

Edgbaston Open Weekend 17-19 June

Blessed with a new pavilion and perfect weather, the Edgbaston Open Weekend combined some good croquet with a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.

The B block was dominated, at least until Sunday morning, by Steven Hare who played the best croquet of his career and completed his first tournament triple peel against Roger Wheeler. However on Sunday morning he lost to Ray Jones (a player he has never beaten) and it appeared that Alan Sutcliffe had a chance to steal the block since Steven was at one time in danger of losing to Dab Wheeler. But he did not, and took first place by a comfortable points margin.

In Block A things were less clear-cut. Before the last round Foulser, Jones and Davis were all in contention, John Davis having beaten both the other two despite being tripled out by Ken Jones in round 1. But he lost his last game to an improving John Meads, leaving everything on the Foulser-Jones encounter. This turned out to be a scrappy affair but David's greater experience told in the end and he emerged a worthy winner.

If you do not know Edgbaston Croquet Club it could well repay a visit. The Club has three lawns in a delightful setting surrounded by trees and greenery but close to the centre of Birmingham. Visitors are always welcome, especially at the two Weekend tournaments.

Advanced Singles (2 blocks)

BLOCK A: D.R. Foulser 5 wins; K.E. Jones 5 wins; E.J. Davis 4 wins; J.D. Meads 3 wins; A.J. Girling 2 wins; M. Kolbuszewski 2 wins; L.H. Hawkins 1 win.

BLOCK B: S.J. Hare 5 wins; A.F. Sutcliffe 5 wins; Dr R.C. Jones 4 wins; Miss J.E. Assheton 3 wins; Dr R.F. Wheeler 2 wins; Mrs R.F. Wheeler 1 win; R.A. Welch 1 win.

Southwick Weekend 17-19 June

The sun blazed, and cheered the hearts of the twenty-four competitors in the Southwick tournament.

Manager Mrs L.A. Coombs, assisted by Miss Pat Shine, ensured that each competitor played five full, untimed handicap games over the three days. The winner of each of the four American blocks then took part in a semi-final play off, with the result that the two finalists were J.E. Moore from Southwick itself and D.L. Gaunt from Ipswich.

In the seven games he played, Gaunt conceded only forty points to his opponents and was the only player in the tournament to win all five of his games in the block. His steadiness and the consistent accuracy of his long roquets, stop shots and splits were unbeatable.

The three other block winners all won four out of their five games, with Mrs Harris from Cheltenham showing great promise. W.E. Moore beat her in the semi-final play off by +8 after an exciting game. P. Campion from Roehampton was the fourth block winner and is learning at last how to take bisques to best advantage. (Perhaps time could be given during coaching to instructing higher handicapped players on how best to use bisques in play.) He was however beaten by Gaunt, by a handsome margin, in the play off.

The courts were in excellent condition and are obviously tended with care: they are a pleasure to play on. Refreshments, provided by the ladies of the Club, sustained the players during their games and contributed greatly to the enjoyment of the weekend. The thanks of all the visitors to Southwick are due to the organisers and members there for such good sport.

P. Campion

Veterans — Eastbourne June 20-25

Event 1. Rothwell Challenge Cup

DRAW

First Round: D.J.V. Hamilton-Miller bt E.C. Tyrwhitt Drake +6; S.S. Townsend bt G.F. Rothwell +9; D.A. Harris bt L.D. Adams +3(T); Cdr G. Borrett bt H.C. Green +1(T).

Semi-final: Hamilton-Miller bt Townsend +19; Borrett bt Harris +5.

Final: Hamilton-Miller bt Borrett w/o scr.

PROCESS

First Round: D.J.V. Hamilton-Miller bt D.A. Harris +19; S.S. Townsend bt Cdr G. Borrett +6(T); E.C. Tyrwhitt Drake bt L.D. Adams +15; G.F. Rothwell bt H.C. Green +5(T).

Semi-final: Townsend bt Hamilton-Miller +2; Tyrwhitt Drake bt Rothwell +9.

Final: Townsend bt Tyrwhitt Drake +1(T).

PLAY-OFF

Townsend bt Hamilton-Miller +5.

Event 2. Level Singles 3½-6½

DRAW

First Round: Mrs F.H.N. Davidson bt Mrs N.W.T. Cox w/o scr.; Mrs H.G. Wills bt A.W.D. Nicholls +1; S.G. Kent bt Lt Col D.F.T. Brown +16; G.H. Betts bt R.F. Rothwell +6; Mrs E.C. Tyrwhitt Drake bt Mrs B.L. Sundius-Smith w/o scr.; R.F.A. Crane bt Mrs I.B. Tucker +14.

Second Round: Mrs Wills bt Mrs Davidson +7; Kent bt Betts +2; Mrs Tyrwhitt Drake bt Crane +5; Dr C.L. Greenbury bt A.D. Karmel +13.

Semi-final: Kent bt Mrs Wills +9; Greenbury bt Mrs Tyrwhitt Drake +3.

Final: Greenbury bt Kent +14.

PROCESS

First Round: Mrs E.C. Tyrwhitt Drake bt Mrs N.W.T. Cox w/o scr.; Dr C.L. Greenbury bt Lt Col D.F.T. Brown +7; Mrs I.B. Tucker bt A.W.D. Nicholls w/o scr.; Mrs F.H.N. Davidson bt Mrs B.L. Sundius-Smith w/o scr.; S.G. Kent bt A.D. Karmel +15; Mrs H.G. Wills bt R.F.A. Crane +11.

Second Round: Greenbury bt Mrs Tyrwhitt Drake +8; R.F. Rothwell bt Mrs Tucker +15; Kent bt Mrs Davidson +10; G.H. Betts bt Mrs Wills +17.

Semi-final: Rothwell bt Greenbury w/o scr.; Betts bt Kent +10.

Final: Betts bt Rothwell +10.

PLAY-OFF

Betts bt Greenbury +13.

Event 3X. Handicap Singles (7 bisques and over)

First Round: W.E. Philp (10) bt R.G. Balkwill (8) +8; A. Armstrong (15) bt Mrs M.M. Grout (7) +9; Miss E.A. Taylor (16) bt J.F.S. Thomas (8) w/o scr.; Mrs A.E. Millns (7½) bt Mrs M.J. Haworth (14) +1; Mrs R.F.A. Crane (13) bt Miss B. Duthie (8) +5; J. Exell (7) bt D.C.A. Goolden (11) +3(T); Miss J. Wraith (11) bt P.H. Mann (10) +7.

Second Round: Armstrong bt Philp +12; Mrs Millns bt Miss Taylor +11; Exell bt Mrs Crane +1(T); Miss Wraith bt Mrs P.H. Mann(8) +2.

Semi-final: Armstrong bt Mrs Millns +8; Exell bt Miss Wraith +4.

Final: Armstrong bt Exell +4.

Event 3Y. Handicap Singles (7 bisques and over)

Semi-final: R.G. Balkwill (8) bt Mrs M.J. Haworth (14) +20; Miss B. Duthie (8) bt P.H. Mann +3.

Final: Miss Duthie bt Balkwill +5.

Event 4X. Open Handicap

First Round: Mrs R.F.A. Crane (13) bt Mrs H.G. Wills (6) +18; Lt Col D.F.T. Brown (5) bt J.F.S. Thomas (9) w/o scr.; Dr C.L. Greenbury (5½) bt P.H. Mann (10) +17.

Second Round: Mrs E.C. Tyrwhitt Drake (5) bt D.J.V. Hamilton-Miller (1) +15; Cdr G. Borrett (2) bt Mrs M.M. Grout (7) +7; S.S. Townsend (1½) bt Mrs A.E. Millns (7½) +16; D.A. Harris (1½) bt R.F. Rothwell (3½) +3; G.F. Rothwell (3) bt A.D. Karmel (5) +18; J. Exell (7) bt Mrs B.L. Sundius-Smith w/o scr.; D.C.A. Goolden (11) bt Mrs F.H.N. Davidson (6½) +8; Brown bt Mrs Crane +2; L.D. Adams (1) bt Greenbury +6; Mrs I.B. Tucker (6) bt G.H. Betts (4½) +7; R.F.A. Crane (4½) bt Miss B. Duthie +5; Mrs N.W.T. Cox (3½) bt Mrs P.H. Mann (8) +12; H.C. Green (1½) bt A. Armstrong (15); Miss J. Wraith (11) bt S.G. Kent (6) +9; E.C. Tyrwhitt Drake (2) bt Mrs M.J. Haworth (14) +3; A.W.D. Nicholls (5) bt R.B. Balkwill (8) +3.

Third Round: Borrett bt Mrs Tyrwhitt Drake +10; Harris bt Townsend +15; Exell bt Rothwell +11; Brown bt Goolden +10; Adams bt Mrs Tucker +17; Crane bt Mrs Cox +3(T); Green bt Miss Wraith +3; Tyrwhitt Drake bt Nicholls +3.

Fourth Round: Borrett bt Harris +10; Exell bt Brown +15; Crane bt Adams +9; Green bt Tyrwhitt Drake +15.

Semi-final: Exell bt Borrett w/o scr.; Crane bt Green +22.

Final: Crane bt Exell +14.

Event 4Y. Handicap Singles

Semi-final: Mrs F.H.N. Davidson (6½) bt Mrs M. Grout (7) +11; G.H. Betts (4½) bt S.G. Kent (6) w/o opp ret.

Final: Betts bt Mrs Davidson +7.

Event 5. Longman Trugs. Handicap Doubles

Final: D.J.V. Hamilton-Miller & A. Armstrong (16) bt R.F. & G.F. Rothwell (6½) +17.

Hunstanton 24-26 June

Handicap Singles (Swiss)

T.D. Harrison 5 wins; J.W. Wood 5 wins; G.P.N. Healy 5 wins; Mrs R.A. Gosden 4 wins; D.L. Gunasekera 4 wins; Miss S. Hampson 4 wins; J.R. Hilditch 3 wins; M.G. Tompkinson 3 wins; H.F. Barnett 2 wins; R.A. Gosden 2 wins; Prof K. Campbell 2 wins; Miss P. Hampson 2 wins; Mrs J.N. Rolfe 2 wins; Mrs M.G. Tompkinson 2 wins; J. Haigh 1 win; Mrs A. Zinn 1 win.

Nottingham 24-26 June

American (Level) in four blocks

"A", "B", "C" Advanced Play; "D" Ordinary

BLOCK A: G.W. Noble (—½) 5 wins; Dr I.G. Vincent (—½) 4 wins; J.A. Wheeler (½) 3 wins (+7); E. Bell (—½) 3 wins (—24); K.E. Jones (0) 2 wins (—6); M.J. Stevens (1) 2 wins (—17); P.J. Death (½) 2 wins (—52).

BLOCK B: E.J. Davis (2) 7 wins; J.E. Guest (2½) 5 wins (+67); J.O. Walters (3½) 5 wins (+46); N.G. Hyne (3) 4 wins; A.J. Girling (1) 3 wins (+13); J.D. Meads (1) 3 wins (—29); Mrs R.F. Wheeler (2½) 0 wins; G. Henshaw (3) 0 wins.

BLOCK C: Dr R.C. Jones (4½) 5 wins; J.C. Straw (5) 4 wins (+30); Dr R.F. Wheeler (4½) 4 wins (+11); Miss J.E. Assheton (4½) 3 wins (—6); R.A. Welch (6) 3 wins (—22); Dr T.W. Smith (4½) 2 wins; D. de Q. Lenfestey (7) 0 wins.

BLOCK D: A.J. Bucknell (7) 5 wins; L. Robinson (7) 3 wins (+11); C. Chamberlain (8) 3 wins (0); Mrs D. de Q. Lenfestey (7½) 3 wins (—5); J.F.S. Thomas (9) 3 wins (—14); Mrs A.J. Bucknell (10) 2 wins (—27); Mrs C. Chamberlain (10) 2 wins (—40).

The Bristol Weekend Handicap Singles Tournament

This tournament, now in its third year, took place on June 25th and 26th under the sponsorship of Walker Croquet Equipment. As in previous years the entry was restricted to sixteen players, nine of

them being visitors to the club. Of the seven Bristol players three — Roger Jenkins, John Massey and Ray Ransom — were competing in their first tournament. At stake were several wine prizes donated by Walker Croquet Equipment, and also a handsome cup presented by Mr and Mrs L.V. Latham as a trophy for the event.

The croquet began on Saturday morning in bright sunshine, with just enough breeze to waft the scent of elderflowers across the courts. A late start for the first round encounter between Laurence Latham (½) and Jim Potter (2½) promised the lunchtime loungers the possibility of Laurence's first point in the three year history of the event, and his running of the first hoop was duly greeted with a raucous cheer. Despite this barracking he went on to win an exciting game in which both players got well in only to break down at one or another of the admirably tight and firm hoops. Earlier David Goacher's seven bisques were enough to keep out Phil Johnson (0), who now takes over the Latham record of no points in the knock-out event. Laurence's 26 points were, however, to prove his last: against Robert Race (10) he also was faced with a pallisade of bisques that was sufficient to hold him at bay. This result meant that one semi-final would be a repeat of last year's: D. Goacher v R. Race.

The other half of the draw found all three of the lady competitors. Margaret Langley (10) beat Deborah Latham (11) and Hazel Potter (7½) went out to Ian Maugham (6), who then beat Mrs Langley in a game not infrequently interrupted to retrieve balls from the depths of the hedge at the end of lawn two. Ray Ransom had meanwhile defeated his fellow Bristolians the two Rogers — Jenkins (15) and Tribe (4).

On the Saturday evening John McCullough's imperturbable and efficient management was put to the test when Neil Griffin was unfortunately taken ill after playing two games — a double blow since he was also the intended reporter of the tournament. Within minutes John had talked me into taking over the reporting and substituted himself for Neil in the Swiz.

On Sunday morning the sun shone strongly again, and in the first semi-final a change in the margin of bisques from one to three enabled Robert Race to gain revenge for his defeat by David Goacher last year. We could hardly expect lunchtime entertainment to equal the Latham-Potter game on Saturday, but John McCullough shows his skill as a croquet impresario by providing not one, but two exciting games, doubled banked on lawn one: the result of the second semi-final was in doubt right to the end, but Ray Ransom finally clinched a hard fought game with Ian Maugham for the peg and penultimate. The double banked game, a swiz encounter between Laurence Latham and John Massey (15), really gave the deck chair pundits something to argue about. Laurence, who had earlier pegged out John's forward ball, now pegged out his own, leaving each player with one ball for 4-back, John having one remaining bisque. John finally broke the ensuing stalemate, in which each of them crept towards 4-back, by using his bisque to make the hoop and penultimate. He then, rather than taking off to rover leaving his opponent a long shot to save the game, attempted a long roll up. Bristol supporters looked on with horrors as his ball stopped not far past the peg. This rover hoop was the tightest on the lawns — measurement afterwards confirmed it to be exactly 3 11/16 — but John produced one of the shots of the weekend to run it from about five yards. He then retreated to North of the peg and went out next turn after Laurence had missed with his last shot.

After such excitement, and another good game between Roger Tribe and Jim Potter, the finalists faced a difficult task in diverting the attention of spectators from the excellent tea now being served. Unfortunately as the weather clouded over the croquet lost its shine: both Ray and Robert felt the tensions of the occasion, and some slow and very scrappy play ensued. In desperation John McCullough added to the incentive of the Latham Cup, now displayed on the terrace, by bringing out the rest of the prizes, a large basket full of bottles of wine. Soon after this Robert Race managed to scramble together a break and gain a little confidence. This proved enough to tip the game his way, although Ray Ransom kept the interest alive to the end with some deadly hitting in.

It only remained for Lady Porter to voice the thoughts of everyone in thanking John McCullough for his impeccable management of the tournament, and the many Bristol members for their part in providing the delicious lunches and teas, before Trevor Walker of Walker Croquet Equipment presented the Swiz prizes and Deborah Latham presented the Cup.

Once again the friendly hospitality and efficient organisation of Bristol Croquet Club had produced an enjoyable and memorable weekend.

Results:

Semi-finals: R. Race (10) bt D. Goacher (7) +13; R. Ransom (11) bt I. Maugham (6) +4.

Final: R. Race bt R. Ransom +17.

Swiz prizes: R. Jenkins, I. Maugham, R. Tribe.
Consolation prize: M. Suter.

Robert Race

Budleigh Salterton 27 June-2 July

Here the Clerk of the Weather certainly made amends for his bad behaviour in May. The sun shone and playing conditions were just right. Some 35 out of 179 games were recorded as finished on time, an improvement on May when there were 47 such finishes out of 163 games. The Manager, Denis Moorcraft, had hoped to get through with fewer still but the programme ended in good time without resort to 'double-banking'.

Of the entry of 51, 16 were in Class A. Four wins were by +26, but many close and exciting finishes were seen in this and the other groups, and many feats of croquet expertise. Among these were the two triple peels of Keith Aiton, who also did a 'cannon' peg-out. Dyal Gunasekera, his successor as captain of the Cambridge University team, did a notable 'jump' shot. A ball for hoop 2 where his opponent's balls were lying, was at hoop 1, completely wired from his partner ball at hoop 3. Jumping hoop 1 he hit his partner ball and found himself 'in' with a four ball break. A number of successful 'jump' shots through oblique hoops were seen; what a useful shot this is, clearly one which we should all master.

In a Doubles semi-final red, (Gunasekera) did a triple peel on blue (Danks) but failed to emerge from Rover enough for him to hit blue again and peg him out, but managed to peg out blue in his next turn. Black (Dr Wiggins), hitting in, went round from 5 and out with an impeccable three ball break, yellow having only reached two-back.

Frank Shergold just beat Keith Aiton +1, Keith having missed a peg out with his forward ball and pegged out the other. Later he was himself beaten by Susan Wiggins in spite of his having pegged her out.

Nick Hyne startled one opponent by placing his opening ball in the jaws of the second hoop and then running the first hoop from baulk! Unfortunately he did not go far enough to be able to hit in and get a break

Pat Parker (5½) did well against Dyal Gunasekera (½) in the 'X'. Using her bisques well she got round to peg and penult, with one bisque left. Hitting in, Dyal went round and pegged her out, his backward ball still being at hoop 2. Using her last bisque, Pat regained the innings, but just failed to make penult. Dyal, who ultimately won this event, then hit in and went out with a model three ball break.

We were pleased to see the new Exeter Club in the prize list, albeit with a player having dual membership: we look forward to getting entries from other Exeter players in the future.

Proceedings ended with warm thanks to Denis Moorcraft, the Manager, and Ingeborg, his wife and able assistant; to Ray Stevens, the Tournament Secretary, to Peter Danks, the Lawns Secretary and the two groundsman, who had done yeoman preparatory work throughout the winter especially, and to the ladies who had done the catering so attractively.

C.W.M.

Event 1. The Colman Cup (Advanced Singles)

DRAW

First Round: J.H.J. Soutter bt Mrs D.M.C. Prichard +1(T); Dr R.D. Bowen bt Dr W.R.D. Wiggins +23; Dr C.A. Parker bt F.L. Shergold +19; D.H. Moorcraft bt N.G. Hyne +6; Lt Col D.M.C. Prichard bt R.S. Stevens +2; K.M.H. Aiton bt Mrs W.R.D. Wiggins +12; B.G. Perry bt Mrs K.M.O. Wheeler +8; L.S. Butler bt D. Gunasekera +12.

Second Round: Soutter bt Dr Bowen +22; Moorcraft bt Dr Parker +23; Aiton bt Prichard +26(TP); Perry bt Butler +13.

Semi-final: Moorcraft bt Soutter +25; Perry bt Aiton +11.

Final: Moorcraft bt Perry +26.

PROCESS

First Round: J.H.J. Soutter bt Lt Col D.M.C. Prichard +2(T); Dr C.A. Parker bt B.G. Perry +12(T); Mrs W.R.D. Wiggins bt Dr W.R.D. Wiggins w/o scr.; D.H. Moorcraft bt D. Gunasekera +13; R.S. Stevens bt Mrs D.M.C. Prichard +22; F.L. Shergold bt Mrs K.M.O. Wheeler +11; K.M.H. Aiton bt Dr R.D. Bowen +23; N.G. Hyne bt L.S. Butler +17.

Second Round: Dr Parker bt Soutter +5; Mrs Wiggins bt Moorcraft +15; Shergold bt Stevens +6; Aiton bt Hyne +17.

Semi-final: Mrs Wiggins bt Dr Parker +7(T); Shergold bt Aiton +2.

Final: Mrs Wiggins bt Shergold +14.

PLAY OFF

Mrs Wiggins bt Moorcraft +13.

Event 2. The Longman Cup (Advanced Singles)

DRAW

First Round: K.S. Schofield bt W.A. Scarr +10(T).

Second Round: P. Stoker bt R.H.C. Carder +9(T); Dr D.R. Laney bt Mrs W.A. Scarr +6(T); M. Burgess bt P.A. Dwerryhouse +12; Schofield bt P.J. Shepard +4; Miss P.E. Parker bt Mrs P.A. Dwerryhouse +18; R. Tribe bt C. Edwards +19; Dr W.R. Bucknall bt Mrs J.H.J. Soutter +17; Mrs K. Mapstone bt Mrs C. Bagnall +3(T).

Third Round: Dr Laney bt Stoker +1(T); Burgess bt Schofield +4; Tribe bt Miss Parker +12; Mrs Mapstone bt Dr Bucknall +9(T).

Married with Process

PROCESS

First Round: P. Stoker bt Mrs C. Bagnall +16.

Second Round: Stoker bt W.A. Scarr +5(T); P.A. Dwerryhouse bt C. Edwards +12; Mrs W.A. Scarr bt Mrs P.A. Dwerryhouse +21; P.J. Shepard bt Dr W.R. Bucknall +3(T); Miss P.E. Parker bt R.H.C. Carder +2; M. Burgess bt Mrs J.H.J. Soutter +11; R. Tribe bt Dr D.R. Laney +13; K.S. Schofield bt Mrs K. Mapstone +7(T).

Third Round: Dwerryhouse bt Stoker +19; Shepard bt Mrs Scarr +5(T); Burgess bt Miss Parker +13; Tribe bt Schofield +17.

MARRIAGE Reg. 20(d)

First Round: P.J. Shepard bt Dr D.R. Laney +7(T); P.A. Dwerryhouse bt Mrs K. Mapstone +4(T).

Semi-final: Shepard bt M. Burgess +11; R. Tribe bt Dwerryhouse +18.

Final: Tribe bt Shepard +24.

Event 3X. The Stone Challenge Cup (Handicap — 8 bisques and over)

First Round: P.K.L. Danks (9) bt Mrs R.E. Flutter (13) +17; Dr C.W. Marshall (10) bt Mrs H. Cruden (8) +5(T); Mrs D.H. Moorcraft (12) bt Miss M. Hardman (13) +19; Mrs R.S. Stevens (8) bt D.G. Riches (10) w/o scr; Mrs B.G. Perry (15) bt A.P.J. Staton (12) +7(T); Mrs M.J. Goode (8) bt Mrs C.W. Marshall (10) +15; Mrs C.A. Parker (10) bt Mrs H.J. Crozier (14) w/o scr; H.J. Crozier (11) bt Mrs V. Worsley (9) +2(T).

Second Round: Danks bt Dr Marshall +3(T); Mrs Stevens bt Mrs Moorcraft +1(T); Mrs Perry bt Mrs Goode +8; Crozier bt Mrs Parker +4(T).

Semi-final: Danks bt Mrs Stevens +4(T); Mrs Perry bt Crozier +1(T).

Final: Danks bt Mrs Perry +9.

Event 3Y. The Stone Cup (8 bisques and over)

Semi-final: Miss Hardman bt Mrs Cruden +7; Mrs C.W. Marshall bt Mrs C.A. Parker +3(T).

Final: Mrs Marshall bt Miss Hardman +11.

Event 4X. The Oliver Bowl (Handicap Singles)

Bottom half of draw

First Round: Miss P.E. Parker (5½) bt Mrs K. Mapstone (5) +14; Mrs W.A. Scarr (5) bt Mrs M.J. Goode (8) +12; D. Gunasekera (½) bt R.H.C. Carder (4) +3; Dr W.R.D. Wiggins (1½) bt Mrs C.W. Marshall (10) +23; Mrs P.A. Dwerryhouse (6½) bt Col G.T. Wheeler (8) +21; M. Burgess (7) bt Dr W.R. Bucknall (4½) +1(T).

Second Round: Miss Parker bt Mrs Scarr +17; Gunasekera bt Dr Wiggins +11; Burgess bt Mrs Dwerryhouse +3(T); Dr C.A. Parker (2) bt K.S. Schofield (4) +5; K.M.H. Aiton (0) bt Mrs C. Bagnall (4) +21; P.K.L. Danks (9) bt Lt Col D.M.C. Prichard (2½) +18; D.C. Wallace (4) bt Mrs D.H. Moorcraft (12) +6; Mrs R.S. Stevens (8) bt Mrs J.H.J. Soutter (5½) +21.

Third Round: Gunasekera bt Miss Parker +3; Burgess bt Dr Parker +8; Aiton bt Danks +10; Wallace bt Mrs Stevens +24.

Semi-final: Gunasekera bt Burgess +10; Aiton bt Wallace +25(TP).

Final: Gunasekera bt Aiton +16.

Top half of the draw

First Round: F.L. Shergold (2) bt R. Tribe (4) +7; P.J. Shepard (4) bt Dr R.D. Bowen (1½) +25; L.S. Butler (½) bt Miss M. Hardman (13) +16; Mrs V. Worsley (9) bt Dr D.R. Laney (6) +1; W.A. Scarr (6) bt N.G. Hyne (3) +12; P.A. Dwerryhouse (7½) bt Mrs R.E. Flutter (13) +19.

Second Round: Mrs K.M.O. Wheeler (3) bt R.S. Stevens (2) +15; Dr C.W. Marshall (10) bt Mrs D.M.C. Prichard (3) +8; Mrs H. Cruden (8) bt Mrs C.A. Parker (10) +12; D.H. Moorcraft (1) bt Mrs W.R.D. Wiggins (0) +25; P. Stoker (4) bt J.H.J. Soutter (1) +25; Shepard bt Shergold +10; Butler bt Mrs Worsley +14; Scarr bt Dwerryhouse +1(T).

Third Round: Mrs Wheeler bt Dr Marshall +5(T); Moorcraft bt Mrs Cruden +20; Stoker bt Shepard +26; Butler bt Scarr +6.

Semi-final: Mrs Wheeler bt Moorcraft +26; Stoker bt Butler +25.

Final: Stoker bt Mrs Wheeler +12.

PLAY OFF

Gunasekera bt Stoker +19.

Event 4Y. Open Handicap Singles

Semi-final: N.G. Hyne (2) bt F.L. Shergold (2) +14; Dr D.R. Laney (6) bt Dr R.D. Bowen (1½) +13.

Final: Hyne bt Dr Laney +10.

Event 5. The Le Mesurier Cup (Handicap Doubles)

Final: Dr W.R.D. Wiggins & P.K.L. Danks (10½) bt N.G. Hyne & R. Tribe (7) +20.

Cheltenham 1–3 July

Swiss Handicap

BLOCK A: C.B. Snowdon (3) 6 wins; Dr B.G.F. Weitz (½) 4 wins; R.S. Jenkins (15) 4 wins; C. Duckworth (3½) 4 wins; P.W. Hands (–1½) 4 wins; Dr D. Cairns (2½) 3 wins; Mrs A. Warren (7½) 3 wins; J. Exell (7) 3 wins; N.J.G. Gooch (4) 3 wins; W.J. Sturdy (4) 3 wins; Miss A. Neville Rolfe (2½) 2 wins; Miss P. Lewis (11) 2 wins; Mrs W.R. Bawden (11) 1 win.

BLOCK B: R. Race (8) 6 wins; P.L. Smith (2) 5 wins; W.R. Bawden (5½) 4 wins; Mrs M. Langley (10) 3 wins; Lady Bazley (4) 3 wins; Dr G.K. Taylor (½) 3 wins; Mrs B.G.F. Weitz (3½) 3 wins; T.G.S. Colls (7) 2 wins; J. MacLaren (3) 2 wins; G. Sisum (3) 2 wins; H.G.T. Bolton (2) 2 wins; Miss A. Dawson (13) 1 win.

The Woking "Irish" Week

With very few exceptions, the familiar faces were to be seen at Woking early in July. They arrived on a dull grey, drizzly Saturday morning full of the expectation of the annual pleasures of the Woking "Irish" week. The weather soon developed into a full-scale heat-wave which lasted until the end of the tournament, except for one thundery downpour on Wednesday, which left the lawns very wet, but playable, for the Thursday doubles.

Very good food at moderate prices, a friendly atmosphere, the use of all the club's facilities together with a multiplicity of different tournaments all going on at once are provided with unflinching regularity and so little fuss that it is necessary to remind oneself that a lot of work is required to make these things appear to happen of themselves. On behalf of the visitors, I take it upon myself to offer thanks to all the members and staff of the Woking club for all their efforts.

In the handicap singles, one contestant in a game starting at the third hoop managed within one minute of the start to trip over hoop 1 and skin his shinbone. Later in the week, this same player hit his heel with his mallet during the execution of an otherwise valid stroke. Is this a fault, and if so, whose?

Monday was a hot day, and some of the 'Working Players' arrived late and in a panic, having been lost in Woking, in time to enjoy the cool of evening perfect for croquet. Unfortunately it turned out that the standard of their play was less than perfect.

John Rose, who set the hoops, ought to be congratulated (?). He was observed on the evening of the second day, after complaints from some of the players, testing the hoops on lawns one and two with a gauge. The gauge would go through only two hoops on each lawn. John tightened these hoops — later stuck in them with many others!

Some persons were heard complaining of the state of the lawns, but most people who came off smiling after having won their games seemed to be reasonably satisfied.

The Maude-Goulding marathon game which was won by John by +3, lasted for only 4 hours 57 minutes (to the managers' chagrin). This person believes that the record is held by Gunn and Calan, whose game Gunn won by +1 after 5 hours 55 minutes.

In the extreme heat, more knobbly masculine knees were exposed than ever before at Woking. May I suggest a combined "knobbly knees — cum longest-successful-roll-shot-which-scores-a-hoop" competition?

One young man, having very narrowly missed his attempt to peg out his opponents blue, was promptly pegged out by her in the next turn after a magnificent hit-in. With a winning smile she prettily said, "I wouldn't have thought of that if you hadn't tried it first!"

Even if you lost all your games, if you entered in all 4 tournaments you played twice every day for 9 days, as well as in the first two evenings! I hope that I shall be able to play and will be accepted into next year's "Irish", for I think the season would be lacking without it.

"JOMEGA"

Woking 'A' 2–6 July (weekend & evening)

Open — Woking Challenge Cup

BLOCK A: Winner L. Wharrad beat J. Haigh +25 and D. Goulding +14; 2nd J. Rose beat D. Goulding +2 and L. Wharrad +16; 3rd J. Haigh beat J. Rose +9 and D. Goulding +22.

BLOCK B: Winner J.S. Maude beat R.A. Godby +1, Miss S.G. Hampson +1 and D.C. Caporn +9; 2nd Miss S.G. Hampson beat D.C. Caporn +4 and R.A. Godby +16; 3rd R.A. Godby beat D.C. Caporn +2.

SEMI-FINALS: L. Wharrad beat Miss S.G. Hampson +5; J. Rose beat J.S. Maude +16.

FINAL: J. Rose beat L. Wharrad +5.

Level Singles 4-8 Open Play — Caporn Casket

BLOCK A: Winner C. Lamb beat A.J. Mrozinski +15, J. Wankling +1 and D. Wood +8; 2nd A.J. Mrozinski beat J. Wankling +12 and D. Wood +20; 3rd J. Wankling beat D. Wood +19.

BLOCK B: Winner R.J. Smith beat N.A. MacLean +13, P. Boddington +11 and I. McDiarmid +18; 2nd P. Boddington beat N.A. MacLean +19, I. McDiarmid +15; 3rd N.A. MacLean beat I. McDiarmid +14.

SEMI-FINALS: C. Lamb beat P. Boddington +11; R.J. Smith beat A.J. Mrozinski +7.

FINAL: C. Lamb beat R.J. Smith +9.

Open Doubles — Coleman Pots

FINAL: D. Goulding & F.H. Newman beat A.F. Coleman & W.B. Denison +2.

Woking 'B' 4–6 July (daytime)

Open

BLOCK A: Winner J. Haigh beat R.S. Eades +7, R.A. Godby +13 and W.B. Denison +11; 2nd W.B. Denison beat R.A. Godby +17; 3rd R.A. Godby beat R.S. Eades +14; 4th R.S. Eades beat W.B. Denison +2.

BLOCK B: Winner D. Goulding beat D.C. Caporn +16, L. Wharrad +2(OT) and A.F. Coleman +3; 2nd L. Wharrad beat D.C. Caporn +3 and A.F. Coleman +11; 3rd A.F. Coleman beat D.C. Caporn +19.

PLAY-OFF: D. Goulding beat J. Haigh +19.

Levels 4-8

BLOCK B: Winner B. Whitehouse beat F. Newman +1 (OT), Mrs B.V. Gosden +12 and G. Cuttle +17; 2nd F.H. Newman beat Mrs B.V. Gosden +18 and G. Cuttle +17; 3rd G. Cuttle beat Mrs B.V. Gosden +2.

BLOCK A: Winner A. Mrozinski beat R.A. Gosden +19 and Mrs M. Newman +5; 2nd Miss S.G. Hampson beat R.A. Gosden +2 and Mrs

M. Newman +8; 3rd R.A. Gosden beat Mrs M. Newman +3.

PLAY-OFF: Whitehouse beat Mrozinski +6.

Open Doubles

FINAL: D.C. Caporn & A. Mrozinski beat J. Rose & J. Haigh +3(OT).

Doubles — 3rd Hoop 3 Hours

FINAL: D.C. Caporn & A. Mrozinski beat J.S. Maude & R.J. Smith +5.

Woking 'D' 8–10 July

American Handicap Singles

RED BLOCK: Winner A. McCormack (6) 5 wins beat D.C. Caporn (3) +18; Mrs M. Newman (4½) +15; R.W. Newnham (5) +12; R.E. Vincent (9) +14; P.H. Mann (10) +11 and lost to Mrs W.J. Browne —1 (OT).

YELLOW BLOCK: Winner B. Whitehouse (4) 5 wins beat L. Wharrad (2) +17; I.P. MacDonald (3½) +6; Mrs G.M. Mann (8) +19; G. Cuttle (9) +14; Mrs G. Vincent (12) +6 and lost to R.A. Gosden (6) —13.

BLUE BLOCK: Winner Mrs R.A. Gosden (7½) 5 wins beat F.H. Newman (3) +20; R.J. Smith (4) +5; Mrs P.M. MacDonald (6½) +5; D. Wood (8) +8; A.J. Oldham (9) +4 and lost to A.J. Mrozinski (6) —13.

BLACK BLOCK: Winner D. Goulding (2½) 5 wins beat B. Sanford (4½) +19; J.L. Wankling (7½) +9; J.A. McKean (12) +20; Mrs J. McDiarmid (9) +17; Mrs M. Wharrad (9) +12 and lost to J.S. Maude (2½) —3.

Southwick 4–9 July

Having grown accustomed to long, gruelling games on parched, fast lawns, it was amazing to arrive at sunny Southwick to find beautiful lush grass on their many fine lawns. Indeed, the going was quite slow for the first half of the week. These lawns receive a lot of attention from Tristram Owen and his small band of assistants; certainly, all the hard work in continual improvement and maintenance makes for excellent playing conditions for members and visitors. Surrounding the lawns are very nicely kept beds of shrubs and flowers, thanks mainly to the hard work of Jean Chandler. In fact, this is purely a members' club and such a good environment is achieved through the efforts of the members themselves.

With the 'A' event (five players), the 'B' event (eight players), the 'C' handicap, a Swiss handicap in two blocks and the Doubles, everybody was assured of plenty of games. A young American, Alex Hittle, arrived and soon found himself in the tournament, winning often despite the different type of game. And different it certainly is, as was found later on when he showed some of us the American game.

With no particularly outstanding play in the 'A' event, it was the 'B' class which produced two very good finalists in P. Shepherd and G. Whillock. An outstanding feature was Guy Whillock's hitting in, which he seemed to be able to do most times from any distance. In fact, he did not lose a game all week, singles or doubles.

Such good conditions, excellent weather, capable management in the hands of Edgar Jackson, plus good food kindly provided by some of the lady members, all combined to make this an extremely pleasant tournament. The writer will certainly be back next year and thoroughly recommends other visitors to come to Southwick in July.

J.E.G.

Southwick 4–9 July

Event 1. Sussex Gold Cup (Open)

DRAW

First Round: W.E. Moore bt E.C. Tyrwhitt Drake +5.

Semi-final: G.E.P. Jackson bt Moore +17; J.E. Guest bt T.F. Owen +9.

Final: Guest bt Jackson +23.

PROCESS

First Round: T.F. Owen bt G.E.P. Jackson +11.

Semi-final: Owen bt E.C. Tyrwhitt Drake +12; J.E. Guest bt W.E. Moore +12.

Final: Guest bt Owen +6.

PLAY-OFF for 2nd place

Owen bt Jackson +9.

Event 2. Ron Whetstone Cup (2½-5)

DRAW

First Round: Mrs N.W.T. Cox bt Mrs L.A. Coombs +16; G.D.H. Whillock bt Mrs E.C. Tyrwhitt Drake +18; P.J. Shepard bt Mrs R.E. Tucker +10; D.M. Bull bt C.J. Chandler +2.

Semi-final: Whillock bt Cox +9; Shepard bt Bull +5.

PROCESS

First Round: P.J. Shepard bt Mrs N.W.T. Cox +1(T); Mrs E.C. Tyrwhitt Drake bt D.M. Bull +18; Mrs L.A. Coombs bt Mrs R.E. Tucker +20; G. Whillock bt C.J. Chandler +17.

Semi-final: Shepard bt Mrs Tyrwhitt Drake +15; Whillock bt Mrs Coombs +7.

PLAY-OFF

Whillock bt Shepard +17.

Event 3. The Franc Cup (Handicap — 5½-8)

DRAW

First Round: Miss B. Dennant (6½) bt G.F. Paxon (5½) +19; L.B. Barnes (6) bt Mrs I.B. Tucker (6½) +10; Mrs G. Day (8) bt E.B.T. Tanner (6) +5; Mrs E. Staddon (6) bt Mrs M. Grout (7) +4.

Second Round: T.G.S. Colls (7) bt Miss P. Shine (7) +14; Barnes bt Miss Dennant +15; Mrs Staddon bt Mrs Day +13; Dr D.G. Higgs (6½) bt Mrs E. Lewis (8) +1.

Semi-final: Colls bt Barnes +3; Dr Higgs bt Mrs Staddon +15.

Final: Colls bt Dr Higgs +3.

PROCESS

First Round: T.G.S. Colls (7) bt Mrs M. Grout (7) +13; Dr D.G. Higgs (6½) bt G.F. Paxon (5½) +9; Miss P. Shine (7) bt Mrs E. Staddon (6) +6; Miss B. Dennant (6½) bt Mrs E. Lewis (8) +14.

Second Round: Colls bt Mrs I.B. Tucker +20; Dr Higgs bt E.B.T. Tanner (6) +5; L.B. Barnes (6) bt Shine +4; Miss Dennant bt Mrs G. Day (8) +7.

Semi-final: Colls bt Dr Higgs +11; Barnes bt Miss Dennant +7(T).

Final: Colls bt Barnes +1.

PLAY-OFF for 2nd place

Barnes bt Dr Higgs +18.

Event 4. The Monteith Bowl (Handicap — 9 and over)

DRAW

First Round: Mrs Mapletoft (12) bt Mrs S. French (15) +13; Miss D. Harding (14) bt Miss J. Barnes (9) +6; Mrs A. Smith (15) bt Mrs M. Tanner (12) +13; Mrs E. Ross (10) bt Miss J. Loveys (15) +13.

Semi-final: Miss Harding bt Mrs Mapletoft +2; Mrs Ross bt Mrs Smith +4.

Final: Mrs Ross bt Miss Harding +5.

PROCESS

First Round: Mrs M. Tanner (12) bt Mrs E. Mapletoft (12) +7; Mrs E. Ross (10) bt Miss D. Harding (14) +9; Mrs A. Smith (15) bt Mrs S. French (15) +12; Mrs J. Barnes bt Miss J. Loveys +6.

Semi-final: Mrs Tanner bt Mrs Ross +4; Mrs Smith bt Mrs Barnes +12.

Final: Mrs Smith bt Mrs Tanner +11.

PLAY-OFF

Mrs Ross bt Mrs Smith +7.

Event 5. The Maurice Reckitt Bowl

This event was played as a Swiss

G. Whillock was the winner, winning 6 games
Mrs Tyrwhitt Drake was the runner-up, 5 games
N.W.T. Cox came 3rd, 5 games

The following all had 4 wins:

Dr D.G. Higgs
Andrew Hittle
P.J. Shepard
Miss P. Shine

Event 6. Handicap Doubles

Final: Mrs M.E. Mapletoft & G. Whillock (15½) bt T.F. Owen & Mrs E. Ross (10½) +12.

**C.A. (England) v C.A. (Scotland)
Hull 9-10 July**

It is becoming difficult to determine which of the two competitions which make up the fixture, catering and croquet is taken most seriously. The hospitality provided by the East Riding club was totally non-discriminatory and doubtless contributed to several close matches as the fixture was won, narrowly, by the English 5-4.

The doubles on Saturday resulted in Scotland leading 2-1, England's one win resulting from Barry Keen being able to control John Davie's almost suicidal attempt at a triple in the second game. The other two matches resulted in 2-0 wins for Scotland, Ted Scott very generously sticking in rover in the second game of his doubles with Judy Anderson against Stuart Kilpatrick and Carol Rowe to let the Scots in +1 on time. In fact, Ted really got value from the weekend because he had an epic battle with Stuart on the Sunday before losing +2 -1 and -1 on time. That's probably as close to a draw as you can get!

In the other singles Barry played well to beat Bill Spalding 2-1. John Davie was a little lucky to beat Ewan MacKenzie-Bowie 2-1. Peter Alvey lost a close contest with Bob McLean 1-2, Tom Anderson also played extremely well to beat Alastair Adam 2-0 and in the ladies game Judy Anderson beat Carol Rowe 2-0 to gain revenge for her doubles defeat on Saturday.

All in all an extremely pleasant weekend was had by all and the weather was very kind. The Yorkshire Post published an article on the game but committed the usual error of not putting it on the sports page. One day !

E.J.D.

**THE OPENS
Cheltenham, 9-16 July**

As one of the growing number of players who did not experience the playing conditions provided by the summer of 1976, I cannot tell how the lawns for this year's Open Championships compared; but the contrast with the generously paced lawns and forgiving hoops at Hurlingham last year was complete. With temperatures in the 90s for much of the week, and hoops very firmly set (though, to those of us who had been at Wrest Park the previous weekend, perhaps a fraction wide) the fiery lawns provided very testing conditions for the Championships' first visit to Cheltenham. Whether or not from the heat, there were more than usually severe problems with the balls — aptly dubbed "Ellipse" because of their propensity to deform alarmingly — and the unfortunate necessity of time limits was amply demonstrated by the frequency of uncompleted games. This year at least, there was nothing 'too easy' about croquet at the Opens.

Fast conditions pass an unforgiving judgement on croquet lawns, emphasising the slightest variation from perfect flatness, and it cannot truthfully be said that these lawns passed so close an examination without fault: even an excellent hoop approach from nearby was not always a guarantee of good position, and takeoffs of any length into the yard line area were — without detailed local knowledge — the prerogative of the brave or the insane. In short, these lawns had become too fast for them to be ideal; but, for all that, they provided the genuine test of nerve and skill which has perhaps been lacking in recent Championships. Though there was in consequence little sparkling croquet of the kind which is most readily appreciated by the casual spectator (and some which was exceedingly dull), there was good play nonetheless and, with the innings a precarious possession if progress was to be achieved, a need for a degree of flexibility in tactical approach.

Saturday

The action started with the early rounds of the doubles. With only nine lawns available (lawn 2 not having recovered completely from the levelling carried out in the winter) one of the matches could not be put on, but the rest were all in action acclimatising to the conditions. These resulted in many unfinished games, with Foulser and Hands — soon to be specialists at this form of spectator entertainment — winning their first with a point scored after time. Haigh and Hicks won their first against Neal and Solomon after Haigh had pegged out Solomon with Hicks for 4, but they drifted out of the match, going down -2 o.t. and -9 o.t. in the remaining games; and

Vincent achieved a double peel of his partner to win their match in the second game: not the sort of thing one normally reports in this event, but it is perhaps indicative of the conditions that even double peels were noteworthy this week.

Sunday

The doubles continued the following day (with those not involved being offered the chance of some singles — in two blocks, played as three-round perpetual life competitions). Griffith and Hobbs scored a good win over Neal and Solomon, with Hobbs playing particularly well in the third game, but none of the other third round matches was completed. Both top half matches were pegged down in their second games, with Bell and Rose a game down against Noble and Vincent while the defending champions Murray and Hope — who had beaten the Wiggins earlier in the day — were a game up on Foulser and Hands.

McCulloch and Cordingley, continuing their good form of the previous day, ended a game up on Aspinall and Ormerod with one of only three +26 results of the whole week. But the highlight of the day — and probably of the tournament — was provided by the ending of Aspinall and Ormerod's first game against Openshaw and Avery in the previous round. The latter had progressed to peg and penult when time was called, with Ormerod having advanced yellow to 3-back but Aspinall's red still for 4. Though red was laid with a rush on yellow to 4 from the boundary beside it, the game looked a certainty for their opponents, who played blue into the safety of corner 3, leaving black a few yards SW of 2, in their final turn. This left Aspinall needing not only to take round a break from a far from easy position but also to complete two peels of partner in the process. Making 4 and 5 off yellow, but failing to get a forward rush, he rolled it to 1-back getting a rush on black to 6. Taking off to blue in corner 3 after 6 and splitting it to 2-back, the break was established. Partner went as pioneer to 3-back, stopping two or three feet north of the hoop; from this position, Aspinall — when for 3-back himself — succeeded in rushing it back through the hoop into perfect peeling position. The rush up to 4-back after a successful peel and hoop landed on a spot stymied from 4-back by the pioneer, so he left his rover pioneer at 4-back after running the hoop*. Having made penult, he returned to complete the vital second peel successfully and got a good rush on the rover pioneer. This he hit too hard but — fortuitously — into the jaws of rover, leaving red a simple hoop and easy peg to bring off a remarkable win +1 o.t.

Monday

The singles began amidst a veritable plague of cameramen, photographers and interviewers. The by now obligatory shots of press-ups and eyeball to croquetball confrontations behind hoops were held over until Tuesday, but there was much talk in the clubhouse of "floating redheads" (none were visible to the untutored eye) as technicians trundled their equipment from one vantage point to another.

On the lawns, progress was slow. Hilditch was first to finish, against Neal, with an angled jump peel through rover which was unanimously agreed to be a physical impossibility; and Berry finished off against Camroux in their second game with a combination peg out from just south of rover. Griffith, playing the sole lady representative in the field, was 2¼ hours before scoring a single point against Mrs Wiggins; but he came to life after lunch with two good breaks, the second of which won the first game after time, and completed a straight win.

The best of the day was reserved for the evening encounter on lawn 9 between Heap, making a welcome return to the tournament scene after several years' absence, and Openshaw. Heap hit in the second turn, rolling the balls to the middle, and Openshaw put his second ball in corner 2. Heap hit again, and went to 3-back, making it in the eighth turn. In the tenth, he embarked on a triple. 4-back was peeled before 6, penult with an angled half jump, but at rover the peelee struck obstinately in front of the hoop. Jumping the hoop to the boundary, and hitting the return, he then cannon-peeled rover with an angled shot from three yards, getting a rush on it back to the peg for an awkwardly long peg out. While it must be allowed that this lawn was not as quick as the others, and that the dew had already begun to take the edge off it, this was a sparkling return to tournament play and the only triple in the main event.

Tuesday

At the end of the previous evening, Heap and Openshaw's second game had been pegged down with another triple for Heap in prospect: conceding a lift, Openshaw had broken down at penult on

Heap's backward ball with a ball two feet towards first from corner 1 and the other three yards north of 4. Sadly, it was not to be: Heap overhit his approach to 1 and could not run the hoop (should he perhaps have made the hoop the previous evening, and then pegged down? There are arguments on both sides). Openshaw eventually won the game — 110 minutes for only nine hoops between them — and went on to win the third in some comfort.

McCullough and Cordingley made it a straight games win over Aspinall and Ormerod to complete the semi-final line-up in the bottom half of the doubles, but little else of note enlivened the day, the results telling their own story; though Mulliner struggled against Vincent, losing the first and winning only ten minutes short of time in the third.

Wednesday

There were some early games in the Plate (in which only two-thirds of those eligible chose to compete), but the main interest was in the third round matches, which produced two upsets: Gunasekera, playing very steadily and shooting well, beat Noble in straight games; and Lewis, having lost the first game against McCullough, took the next but was pegged out in the third when for penult with his backward ball. Nothing daunted, he took full advantage of McCullough's less than perfect leave, hitting the short lift at McCullough's forward ball near corner 2, making penult from about three yards off the remaining ball — which had been left about five yards NE of the peg — and going out.

In the other matches, good play by both Openshaw and Hope produced no reward for the latter; and Cordingley was unlucky bot to take Bond to a third, missing a gentle two foot shot at his penult pioneer when well ahead. Rose had his chances against Mulliner, threatening to take the final game from nowhere but unfortunately sticking in 2-back on a crucial break, and Aiton very nearly completed a triple (on lawn 9 again) against Griffith, but ran into peelee after rover and missed the combination peg out by inches. His win did however complete a satisfactory day for Paul Hands, managing the event again with his customary efficiency, who now had no players engaged in both singles and doubles.

Thursday

Thursday started with the resumption of the pegged down second game games in the two top half doubles matches. Bell and Rose won theirs against Noble and Vincent, and went on to take the match. Foulser and Hands, who had lost the first -10 to Murray and Hope, also won, adding two more +1 o.t. to their collection in the process and so putting out the defending champions without pegging out against the. In the resumed second game, Murray hit as time was called, separated the opponents and, with Hope already pegged out earlier by Foulser and the scores level, took position at penult. Foulser hit the eighteen yard shot and pegged himself out to win. The third game stood eight points to four in Murray and Hope's favour with time approaching, but Foulser managed to pick up a break by approaching 5 from north of the peg with a pass roll. Running the hoop beyond the peg with less than a minute to go, Hands advised him to shoot at partner in corner 3 — if he missed, they would have another turn after time. He snicked it, and continued his break until he missed a roquet at 3-back with the scores level. Hope trickle to Murray, but though Hands hit the twenty yard shot he could manage no better than position at 1. Hope missed, and Hands ran the hoop to win.

The quarter-finals of the singles saw Aiton and Gunasekera through in three games against Avery and Bond respectively, winning them both silver medals in their first Opens. Aspinall saw off Mulliner in straight games, but Openshaw had a tough fight against Lewis who, in the second game, repeated his feat against McCullough of going out from penult with one ball. This time, his turn was even more extraordinary. With one ball out, he hit to the middle of the south boundary, took off to the other ball near corner 2 and from there rolled to penult putting it to rover. Running the four yard hoop to the south boundary, he went out without further difficulty.

Friday

Though it had cooled after tea the day before, with some distant rumbles of thunder and the odd drop of rain, the weather did not break and temperatures continued to touch the 90s. The play in the semi-finals was thus inevitably something of a disappointment, with the lawn conditions and the heat dictating slow and careful progress as the best recipe for success. Both doubles were won in straight games, with McCullough and Cordingley only avoiding a time result because of a sporting shot by Hobbs which enabled them to finish