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November 1987

Issue No. 194

CROQUET



Inside:
Tournament Reports
The Opens
The Croquet Classic
1987 National Rankings
Views & News

£1.50

GROWING PAINS!

The number of events listed in the Fixture Book has increased from 83 in 1984 to 115 in 1987. During this time, the number of players at each tournament has also increased and in the last three years, 52 new clubs have registered with the CA.

This is most exciting progress, but it has become very obvious in compiling this issue of the magazine that we are bursting at the seams, and in an effort to pack everything into 32 pages, some aspects of our usual tournament coverage have had to go.

The main difference that readers will notice is that the usual long lists of results have been considerably abbreviated. Reporting of results has been the subject of discussion for many years, and it is difficult to strike a balance between those of us who delight in compiling statistics and regard the magazine as an organ of historical record, and those of us who look for something a little more readable.

My own view is that we cannot go on reporting every single result as the number of tournaments continue to grow. 'Croquet' is the Croquet Association's magazine, and we must obviously cover our own national and regional championships in some detail. But we must also not lose sight of the fact that the grass roots of the sport is in the clubs, where our members play, and all those clubs running their weekend tournaments deserve our full support.

Perhaps we could reach a situation where individual clubs would like to write an annual report (illustrated with photographs) for inclusion in the magazine during the winter months, in which they could record details of the tournaments they ran during the season, their social activities, news of their members, and outstanding performances, either on or off the field.

During the season, the magazine could then concentrate on giving up-to-date news of the major tournaments and championships, trying to be as current as possible, and leaving space to include in each issue material of more general interest to help those members new to the game.

Should it prove essential to maintain the 'historical record' of results, then perhaps these could be published as part of a year book, or as a special supplement to the magazine.

Readers comments would be welcome!
CHRIS HUDSON.

Photographs in this issue by: Owen Edwards, Tim Proctor Photography, Chris Hudson, Paul Starr, Andrew Bennet, Phyllis Court Club, Jim Sowerby (Brighton & Hove Leader), Edwards Harvey Associates, Derek Rowe (Photos) Ltd., Eric Solomon, John McCullough, John Beech, Ray Hall and Deborah Latham.

Front Cover: Dr Robert Bawden holds aloft the Lassale Rosebowl after his thrilling win in the Croquet Classic at Braxted Park.

Annual Subscription Rate	£9.00
(incl P&P). Individual copies	£1.50

'Croquet', incorporating the Croquet Gazette, is published by The Croquet Association, The Hurlingham Club, Ranelagh Gardens, London, SW6 3PR. Tel: 01-736-3148.
Printed by DDS Colour Printers, Unit 10, Worle Industrial Centre, Weston-super-Mare. Tel: 0934-516902.

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SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1988

Pay early and receive a discount!

There will be no change in the full standard rate of subscription, but the reduced rate for non-tournament players has been slightly increased. Both classes of members paying before 1st February 1988 will, however, receive a discount.

Full details of the current subscription rates are shown below. Will those members paying by Standing Order please check with their banks to see that the correct amount is being forwarded.

Any member wishing to pay by Standing Order through his or her bank (who is not at present doing so, should contact Brian Macmillan to obtain the necessary form.

For the convenience of those who wish to pay direct or through the Bank Giro system (and avoid the charge levied by banks for



The clubhouse forms a background to this shot of competitors at Loughborough's Short Croquet tournament for beginners, held in June.

Standing Orders) appropriate forms are enclosed.

As in previous years, the 1988 Fixtures Book will not be despatched until the relevant subscription is received.

Alan Oldham, Hon. Treasurer.

1988 SUBSCRIPTION RATES

1. Standard Rate: £14
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2. Junior Rate:
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5. New Members Rate
A new member joining after 1st August in any year and paying the current full (ie undiscounted) rate of subscription for the

chosen category of membership will be entitled to the benefits of that membership until the 31st December of the following year.

'CROQUET'

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Publication Details

'Croquet' is published on the first day of every second month. Copy should reach the Editor on the 20th of the month, two months before the month of issue (i.e. on 20th May for the issue being published on 1st July).

Contributions (except tournament reports and results) and photographs (preferably black and white) should be sent to the Editor. They will be much welcomed and acknowledged.

Tournament results and reports to be sent direct, within 7 days of completion of the tournament, to the Secretary of the CA.

All correspondence about non-delivery of 'Croquet', changes of address, telephone numbers, handicaps or officials should be sent to the CA Secretary and not to the Editor.

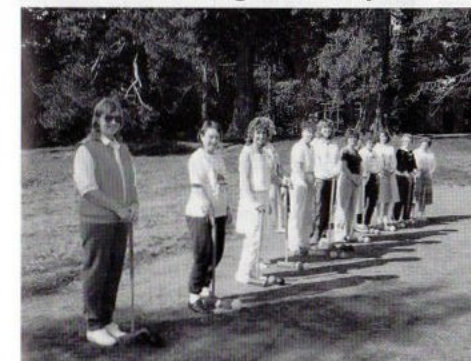
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WI 'Taster Days' at Tunbridge Wells

Report from Joan Grimley

It was a glorious September afternoon, the lawns had dried out after the morning dew and conditions were ideal for the ten ladies being initiated into the mysteries and delights of Association Croquet. They were playing in pairs, three on the upper lawn and two on the lower lawn, but all were so intent on their practice that I watched without being noticed for quite a while. Soon I joined another club member in helping them try out the various shots previously demonstrated by the Chairman of our club. There were to be seven sessions, coaching ten players at a time, so that in all, seventy WI members were able to have a 'taste' of the game of croquet.



WI ladies 'on their marks' for the start of a Taster session at Tunbridge Wells.

Our club (Tunbridge Wells) was only one of many in the country approached by local WI organisations as a result of the original contact by Association HQ with the WIHQ. If other areas were to be so oversubscribed as ours then it is quite clear that there is a great interest in the game and that croquet will increase in popularity.

It is only fair to say that for people to be able to experience new games in this way clubs have to be as fortunate as we are in having a Chairman who is keen and enthusiastic, and furthermore willing to give of his time and expertise. Incidentally, too, the club members

Journalism at large

What follows is the account of a previous school's final, which unsuspecting master Mr GN Gurney sent into the 'Times Educational Supplement'. The bounds of Fleet street treated this with a certain amount of Journalistic licence, as you can see from the version which finally bit the news-stands, reprinted here under its original title 'Just not croquet!'

Previously when referring to a certain Australian newspaper magnate, I have suggested that if the northern hemisphere must bouse the world's arsenals, the southern hemisphere should at least hold on to its first syllables; perhaps I have been unfair to single out individuals in this 'profession'!
John Walters.

Croquet - the original lawn game which preceded lawn tennis - is making a comeback. Twenty-two schools entered for the third school's championships organised by the Croquet Association, with the finalists meeting recently on the lawns of the Hurlingham Club.

are involved, since they have to be prepared to forego the use of the lawns when required.

Over tea and biscuits we were interested to hear the players' reactions. Those completely new to the game were intrigued by its possibilities, but delighted they could enjoy it while still learning. Others, who had played garden croquet, were pleasantly surprised to learn how much more there was to the game.

As to the lessons to be learned from this public relations exercise, I think we should not look for an immediate increase in our own club's membership necessarily - though some new members may result - but rather take a longer view. If we do not benefit, others may, and overall perhaps we are laying the foundations for increased knowledge and interest in a game that deserves to be more widely understood.

Progress at Rottingdean

Report from Vera Devlin

We held the first general meeting of villagers at the beginning of May and were very pleased to have present some 50 people out of about 80 who had expressed interest. Quite a number of those present enrolled as members, and we began by playing on an unused tennis court in one of the local parks as our own lawn in Kipling Gardens will not be fully operational until next summer.

During the summer, we have held training sessions and some 'Club afternoons', and despite playing on the tennis court, our members have remained undaunted and have enjoyed themselves, getting in some very good practice.

Recently, we were allowed to use Kipling Gardens for the first time and we decided to make an occasion of it. Below is a copy of the report I sent to the local papers.

At Home Awash

(and rain definitely stopped play)

When Parks & Gardens agreed the Rottingdean Croquet Club could use the croquet court in Kipling Gardens at least once towards the end of the season (it can't be used fully until next year) the committee decided to make it an occasion and have an At Home.

80 players and spectators were expected and at 7pm more than 60 were there - some on the court, some watching the demonstration, some eating, some sipping a glass of

Colchester Royal Grammar School, in only their second year of play, swept aside Dulwich College by 3-0, but needed the full three hours to overcome previous winners Manchester Grammar School, in a very close and dramatic final. The Croquet Association offers help and advice to schools wishing to establish the game and can be contacted at the Hurlingham Club, but they should take early steps to rescind their curious rule which allows one member of staff in a team.

Just not croquet!

The refined but brutal world of schools croquet is in a turmoil. Not content with bashing each other's croquet balls into the rough and other dastardly deeds, schools croquet players are

STOP PRESS

INVITATION EVENT WINNERS

The President's Cup

S.N. Mulliner

The Chairman's Salver

G.W. Noble

The Spencer Ell Cup

D.J. Goacher

The Selectors' Weekend

D.N.S. Peterson

The Ladies Field Cup

Mrs P. Hague

The Longman Bowl

Miss F.C. McCoig

Congratulations!



The Rottingdean Steering Committee (L to R): Vera Devlin, Derek Davies, Fay Carrington, John Leech, Janet Leech, Jean Coppack, Philip Newman and Margaret Green. (Photo: Brighton & Hove Leader)

wine. BUT at 7.05 it started to rain - the lightning lit the sky, the thunder rolled and it rained, and rained and rained . . .

The committee members and some gallant volunteers managed to move the food to the shelter, with only a few trays waterlogged. Not so themselves - all were wet through. Indeed one lady in a blue skirt was heard to remark she arrived wearing white briefs and would be returning home in blue ones!!!

What a night - a night to remember indeed - the 21st August, 1987.

Given with a dispute over the Queensbury rules - or rather the official rules drawn up by the Hurlingham Club. It seems that Hurlingham club rules allow one member of staff to play in each school side, apparently a travesty of true croquetdom. Mr GN Gurney, master in charge of croquet at Colchester Royal Grammar School, writes in to say that the Hurlingham should 'take early steps to rescind their curious rule' as soon as possible. But there is no cause for despair - croquet is making a comeback. No fewer than 22 schools entered the third schools championships, which was won in a close and dramatic final by - wait for it - the hoopsmanship of Colchester Royal Grammar School.

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CA COMPUTER

During 1988, we are planning to install a computer to deal with membership records, and to have the system up and running before subscriptions are received for 1989.

To help us make sure that our membership records are correct, we would be grateful if members would check their name and address on the label on the plastic envelope containing their magazine.

If there are any errors, please return the envelope to Brian Macmillan, marking the corrections necessary.

NOMINATIONS FOR COUNCIL

Anyone who wishes to stand for election to Council should note that nominations have to reach Brian Macmillan at the CA Office before 1st February 1988.

Nominations should be proposed and seconded by members of the Croquet Association. Candidates are invited to submit not more than 200 words stating brief biographical details and their objectives in standing for Council.

We are giving members early notice of the closing date for nominations because of the interest caused by the CA's current development activities. A contested election would enable candidates to test the strength of support for their views, whilst at the same time making sure that Council reflects the wishes of the CA membership.

JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIP RESULTS

(Report on Page 25)

Junior Championship (Advanced Play)

DRAW

1st Round

J. Mann bt S. Warm +22; P. Spiring bt I. Aldridge +13; Miss F. McCoig bt C. Docherty +22; M. Suter bt N. Turley +2; R. Fulford bt E. Duckworth +3; C.D. Clarke bt R. Collighan +26; D.B. Maugham bt S. Hemus +20.

2nd Round

Mann bt Spiring +19; Suter bt Miss McCoig +11; Fulford bt Clarke +26(TP); M. Saurin bt Maugham +9.

Semi-Finals

Mann bt Suter +6; Saurin bt Fulford +26.

Final

Mann bt Saurin +9.

PROCESS

1st Round

Fulford bt Mann +3; Miss McCoig bt Hemus +23; Clarke bt Spiring +17; Suter bt Saurin +12; Duckworth bt Warm +14; Maugham bt Docherty +10; Collighan bt Aldridge +15.

2nd Round

Fulford bt Miss McCoig +13(TP); Suter bt Clarke +12; Maugham bt Duckworth +9; Collighan bt Turley +15.

Semi-Finals

Fulford bt Suter +7; Collighan bt Maugham +4.

Final

Fulford bt Collighan +7.

PLAY-OFF

Fulford bt Mann +17.

(In play-off for 3rd and 4th places, Collighan bt Saurin +25.)

Progressive Swiss (Handicap Play)

Winner

S. Warm (10/5 wins)

Parkstone: 1-6 June New Lawn Settling Down

Report by Ray Ransom

I approached my first game in the Parkstone June Tournament with trepidation. Les Butler, managing the tournament, had committed me to lawn 1, adding, with noticeable pride, that the lawn had only been laid at the end of the previous season! I remembered with horror lawn 2 at Cheltenham some years back after that had been relaid.

As I advanced on the lawn I noticed the herringbone pattern showing the joins in the turves. Closing my eyes I played my first ball onto the lawn. I looked up expecting to see an aerial projectile slam into the tennis court netting, but no, the ball was rolling in a perfectly straight line. Les and the Parkstone ground staff had achieved a miracle, not only was the lawn playable, it was good. Content I could now sit back and enjoy the game, I again closed my eyes, this time to soak up the sun. Flaming June had arrived.

Tuesday signalled the end of the sunny weather. The morning was dull with prolonged drizzle in the afternoon. It also saw the start of the class events and one of the many exciting finishes to be seen during the week. Pat Parker was playing Frances Ransom and when time was called the scores were level. Pat made rover, rushed her partner ball to corner 4, took off and pegged the rover ball out (advanced play). Two ahead for Pat. Frances, a ball for 6 on the East boundary and a ball for the peg on the West boundary just South of 1-back, hits her partner ball, takes off to 6, runs a long angled hoop, hits the 13 yard roquet, takes off to 1-back, runs 1-back and joins up. Scores now level. Pat now misses the 35 yard shot by inches and Frances is able to peg out her rover ball to win by 1.

Don Williamson, in between eulogizing Southport balls, played well and won his block in the 'B' class. In the play-off against Kay Yeoman, it looked as though he would have to be content with the runners-up slot until Kay allowed frustration to get the better of her in trying an impossible penult, letting Don back in to the game.

Mike Wilkins had a good win over Susan

HONOURS BOARD

Dorset Salver D.J. Goacher
Evans Trophy J.D. Williamson
Evans Rose Bowl D.J. Goacher
Cripps Memorial Trophy
Mrs B.R. Saunders
Summer Doubles Cups
M.J. Wilkins & G.C.H. Weldon

Wiggins in the 'A' class but, alas for Mike, he lost a later game and Susan pipped him on points to win the block and take part in the play-off. David Goacher, who had the only triple of the week, won the play-off, beating both Susan and Ray Ransom.

Wednesday was doubles day and witnessed more close and exciting games. Mike Wilkins and Cecil Weldon had close games throughout in reaching the final unlike their opposing finalists, Frances and Ray Ransom. The final was played on the Saturday morning and was subjected to a new twist in the weather. The day was dry with some sunshine. The disconcerting aspect was the force 7 gale which made standing upright difficult and hitting-in more of a lottery than usual.

The final itself was a fairly dour affair with Mike and Cecil effectively keeping Frances and Ray out of the play until late in the game. But when, inevitably, time was called the game came to life. Mike and Cecil, peg and rover, were in play and scattered the balls around the boundaries leaving Ray on 2-back and Frances on penult. Ray hits and after struggling through a 6 yard 2-back, makes the rest of the hoops but can only manage the penult peel after running rover. With scores now level a game of cat and mouse ensued before Frances finally got into position to run rover but, waving in the wind, sticks in the hoop. Cecil with nerves of steel and showing no signs of cracking finishes the game to tumultuous applause.

It was around the middle of the week that the writer committed a gross error of judgement when he faulted the manager in a hampered stroke. A large scotch partially retrieved the situation, but a punishment of a 700 word tournament report was imposed in

Tournament Reports

addition. It was also noticeable when the manager subsequently required the services of a referee, he looked around carefully before raising his mallet.

And so to windy Saturday - finals day. David Goacher, man of the week, won the 'X' against Ray Ransom although in true sporting fashion Ray allowed him a 22-point start before making a hoop himself. David then rounded off a bad day for the Ransoms by again beating Ray in the 'A' play-off. In the final of the 'Y' Beryl Saunders overcame Don Williamson and the 'Z' saw William Broad-Thomas conquer his third Parker of the week. James Mays won the 'C' class block and the games I witnessed while double banking exhibited an amazing standard of hitting-in.



David Goacher: 'Man of the Week' at Parkstone.

In spite of the weather all participants enjoyed the tournament enormously, credit for which must go to the members of the Parkstone Club for their hospitality and especially to Margaret McMordie for her handling of all the admin chores.



Ian Maugham, Manager at East Riding.

RESULT

(14 entries)
Advanced Play: 7-round Swiss
Winner: C.J. Irwin (6/7 wins)

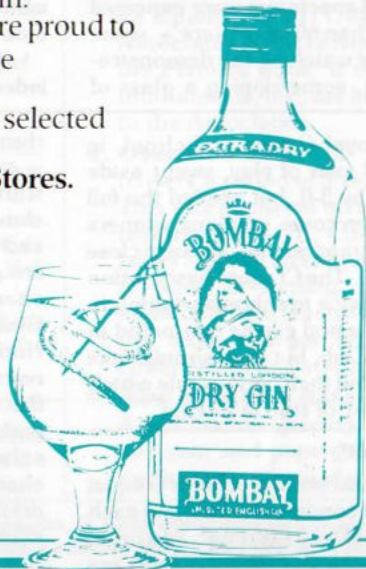
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East Riding: 1-2 August Hiawatha at Hull?

Report by David Appleton

For the open weekend down at Hull it was sunny with hardly a lull. Yes, the weather stayed fair for the fourteen folk there, and the croquet, too, seldom was dull. Among those who were on the ball were some fellows called Smith, I recall; for two out of three performed a TP - not Andrew, but Robert and Paul.

From Ellesmere they came, and from Bowdon; from Reading and Tyneside as well; and manager came up from Chelt'nham - little beggar, and bossy as hell. He sat in his tent and he pointed to where we should go out and play, but then, he had been so appointed to get four games in in a day.

Only two games went to time, and both involved Smith (Bob); the one he had against Ted Scott was a very dodgy job. When time was called he was one down, Ted spread the

balls out quick; Bob hit the shot, went round the lawn, ran rover, hit the stick.

When the matches had been finished, when the tents had been dismantled, then we knew who was the winner, winner of the open weekend; Colin Irwin was the winner (as indeed had been expected). Though (unlike my Hiawatha) Colin didn't have a TP, once he managed all the peeling, but just failed, alas, to peg out, failing by a millimetre on the combination peg out.

Our handicaps showed quite a range, and it would be a little strange were there to be no correlation with the final situation. I therefore worked out Spearman's rho to see if it was high or low: it came to 0.72; interpretation's up to you.

And finally, before I'm done, I'd like to say (from everyone) we thought the weekend was well run: the lawns were good, the whole thing was a lot of fun - with super food.

Tournament Reports

Oxford: 3-5 July

'Guilty of our disasters the sun' (King Lear).

Report by Robert Prichard

In Act III of Henry VIII, Shakespeare refers strangely to 'those twins of learning . . . Ipswich and Oxford', but this tournament was effectively an Ipswich-free zone, Danny Palmer entering as a member of Surbiton.

It had several perfect features: weather (the first totally sunny weekend of the year), setting (admirers of the view at Budleigh and the trees at Hurlingham please come to compare next year), seating (benches for 500 spectators) and number of entries (28 being what mathematicians call a perfect number as it equals the sum of its divisors).

Exactly half the players had been at last year's revival of the fixture and if half this year's newcomers also come back we could build up a nucleus of regulars at this somewhat unusual venue reminiscent of the devotees of Devonshire Park. However this wistful aim depends (as so much in croquet does) on the labour and enthusiasm of a tiny band of locals: in this case Ian Plummer and Mark Wormald. Let us hope their research proves slow and well-funded!

Goaded by valid comment that last year his 'Swish' was flexible and obscure, Robert Prichard drew up a set of rules for a Zoned Swiss to cope with factors such as slight uncertainty as to who was turning up, a third of the players needing leave on the first day, the principle of rewarding faster players with

more games and avoiding obviously uneven contests while providing level play across a handicap range of -2 to 6.

Players were grouped into three zones by handicap and each zone was run as a Swiss, but after every second game anyone who had won his previous two games was promoted a zone, while dual losers were relegated. Fortunately, there was a clear winner: John McCullough won all his games, as Jerry Guest had last year. Other repeats were George Noble coming second and Danny Palmer and Simon Williams playing most games.

The real winner though was the sun. Its presence in our hemisphere lured a visitor from New Zealand, Greg Smith, who chose Oxford as his only tournament. Its heat kept the hoops rock hard, resulting in many disasters and five fewer games than last year's 100, despite a fifth lawn on the cricket field. Beer consumption soared, causing more disasters, including rare victories for David Peterson over the manager in both a game and the beer prize. Adam Berry showed that croquet is tougher than cycling by claiming sunstroke. In their first tournament away from Cheltenham John Ross saw Chris do the son-stroke of the weekend: accidentally pegging himself out to lose against Ken Jackson. There were three triples (by Gunasekera, Williams and McCullough) and one double triple (three

pints of Pimms each in the Hobbs-Beatty match). Three cheers for Oxford!



George Noble, Ian Plummer and Dayal Gunasekera at the Oxford Weekend.

RESULT

(28 entries)

Advanced Play: Swiss

Winner: J.R. McCullough (6/6 wins)

Wrest Park: 3-5 July

A Stack of Awards at Wrest Park

Report by Jon Watson

After the downpours of recent weeks, the tournament was greeted by glorious sunshine, blistering heat and lightning fast lawns. By the end of the weekend the assembled company were almost fed up with the heat. Opinions on the lawns varied over the three days. On day 1, they were 'tricky' or 'challenging'. By the last day some of the comments were less printable, particularly as the club (obviously nettled by remarks in prior years about wide hoops) had set the hoops in fresh holes with tight clearances. They were also very firm in the ground, and remained so throughout. As a result there was little speculative hooping as the hoops would not accept any rubbish. There were no triples, though Richard Hilditch got closest with an attempt at an STP.

By day 3, the heat was getting to everybody. On lawn 1 Jon Watson removed the top fifteen inches of the peg with an errant shot that would have gone largely un-noticed but for a huge guffaw by R.H. Shortly after, Richard was less amused by an apology from his oppo Bill Lamb who had just made 1-back off a ball in the first corner. The original approach having failed, Bill shot at his partner ball and hit. He then took off back to the hoop and ran it from about three yards. Richard got his revenge by winning the game, and went on to act as a sight screen for J.W. despite the obvious dangers.

Double banking also gave some troubles.

In the course of a break, J.W. left one ball in the second hoop. Judy Anderson made first and in her play up to second managed to put a ball in the jaws of sixth, just before Jon got to five. The impasse was decided when Judy lifted the ball in sixth to allow Jon to play through. In the best style however Jon duly stuck in sixth for no apparent reason!

A number of extra awards were made to sundry people. Barry Keen who managed the tournament most ably, won the coveted 'Golden lobster' for the most impressive sunburn. During the adjudication Judy Anderson was heard to say 'I want to see Brian (Storey) again undressed'. The two over-ripe bananas were awarded to Eric Audsley in lieu of a wooden spoon and from the same block, Tom Anderson won the silver egg-timer for the most games won on time (all the timed games in block B).



Howard Bottomley: a medal for catering at Wrest Park!

Richard Hilditch was at his most persuasive in his defence of Sainsburys Whole Orange Drink (with colouring) against the most effete appearance of the Orange, Lemon and Pineapple variety. The 'expression of the tournament' award was a tie between the girl in the Fish Shop with an order for 19 different packs of Fish + Chips, and John Meads on not being the first to break some equipment.

Medals should also go to the catering crew who worked in stifling heat to keep us fed and watered. Howard Bottomley ran this with help from his mum, Enid; Jim and Pam Chappelle, Eric's parents; and the topless waiter, John Bevington. Graham Redman came along to help out with the refereeing.

In the croquet, Duncan Reeve cruised to an easy victory in the C block. Tom Anderson ground remorselessly through the B block, losing only to second placed Brian Storey.

The top block ended as a tie between John Rose, and 'Steady Eddie'. The grand final was played into the gathering gloom. Eddie made the first point after thirty five minutes. The gallery of spectators were all expecting this to be enough to win. Much to their disappointment, Eddie eventually pegged out to win by four.

With thanks to Barry for managing, and to all the visitors - I hope you enjoyed yourselves as much as we did.

RESULTS

Advanced Play: American Blocks

Block Winners

D. Reeve; T.M. Anderson; E. Bell

One Good Turn

A Short Story by Dorothy Rush

You stupid idiot! How could you? The whole damned lawn and you have to rush it onto the peg. Damn! Damn! Two strokes away from the Open Championship and you play a sloppy shot like that. You complacent fool, that'll teach you to count the points before you've pegged out. Well that's it, your chance is gone, kiddo; he's on his way. Where is he now, anyway? 4-back and 2. He'll never try the triple with only 3 balls on the lawn. I must get at least one more shot. All I've got to do is relax, watch him go round, hit the shot and finish. It's never over 'till its over. Yes, take it easy, don't get panicking now; take J.R.'s advice and keep smiling. What's he doing; where is he? 4-back and 3 - that's 3 gone and Jeez! He's doing the peel. Has he got the rush? Looks like it. Dead bloody straight too. Bound to do something daft, like jumping it. Oh! sorry I spoke; bang in front of 4. Lucky beggar. Decision time. Where next? Ah, just going to 5, nothing too heroic. Ah! Now that's an unlucky cut: that's miles off, I'm glad to say. There's a good shot needed here. Look away and he'll foul up. Or rather he won't; what

a shot, smack in front. Face it, dear, you've lost this one. All that effort for nothing. To lose by 1 point after getting to peg and peg! Why am I such a twit? Why do I play this silly game? It's for kids like wunderkind here, not fully grown adults. And now he's got the rush to first corner. All the way - you've got to give him credit; he can hit the ball straight. Is it the swing do you suppose? The pendulum boys all play a good rush. And as for hoops! Why does he never miss a hoop? Some of the ones he . . . there really is no justice. Oh! Nice shot and he's got the rush on red, by the look of it. Well, this is the match-winner. Where is it going? Must be a good foot off centre but if he can shove it in a bit and get in front the black is dead right for 1-back. Strewth, that was heavy handed; that'll be a four foot hoop. Not that he'll care - bang it through, son. Yes, as usual, all the way and nicely behind red. If he gets this peel he deserves to win. Credit where it's due, he is good. How the hell does it come so easy to these kids? When will he discover that it's a difficult game? When he does I'll have the blighter but it doesn't look as if it's going to be today. Ah! It stuck. Now what? He'll make 1-back all right but he must lay up after that, surely. Where's my mallet?

Must have dropped it in the long grass. Can't get up now; might give him ideas. I'd rather he tried to continue the break, because if he does we might win this yet, my proud beauty. Black to 3-back. Okay. Sacre bleedin' bleu! How could he rush red to there from the jaws of penult? Now what can he lose if he rolls to 2-back? Everything, that's what! So what are you going to do, sunshine? Have a good think about it, while I, being a Celebrated International Star, light up a cigarette and observe your deliberations with polite and tranquil interest - God! Wish I did have time for a cig. Mustn't forget the lift. Lift lift lift, no dammit! I don't get one. Oh hell! I didn't mean to peg out blue - surely that makes a difference. So there's nothing to stop him rolling to the hoop, unless he's also forgotten that I haven't got a lift. Heh, heh! Nice one, Sybil. Oh-oh, that look of relief means he's remembered. Ah, here goes - one speculative roll coming up. Not a great roller our wonder boy and there we have yellow hurtling past the hoop . . . It stopped! The bloody yellow stopped dead! See that everybody? The yellow has brakes. It momentarily became a

cube. Someone up there is on that little so-and-so's side. There is no way that ball could have stopped without the aid of some outside agency. I should have gone to church this morning. That's it! Vengeance is mine saith the Lord. But surely that young sinner hasn't got God on his side? Right, now, take it easy, relax and smile. This is still not an easy hoop; it's got to be a jump and he'll never get the rush even if he gets the hoop. Missmissmissmissmiss-he-made-it-but-he-hasn't-got-the-rush. One big split coming up, oh what a nice shot. Absolutely effortless. Well, that's it. In the bag now. Better get the facial muscles under control for the gallant loser's brave grin. Nicely through and the forward rush. Black to penult, yellow nicely to red. Through we go. Damn, damn, damn, why did I rush out the blue? There goes red to Rover, sweet as a nut. Stop shot approach; through penult. Tidy little rush on black. Ah, well, then, maybe next . . . Roquets red and . . . he's missed the roquet! My God! He's missed the red.

'Hard luck, Richard! Lovely turn, though. Well played! Anyone seen my mallet?'

HURLINGHAM HOSTS CHARITY CROQUET MATCH



The Hurlingham Club staged a 'Second Great Croquet Tournament' on 2nd September. Sponsored by J. Trevor & Sons, the event raised a total of £5000 for the NSPCC.

Thameside's Secretary Bill Gardner provided instruction for the tournament referees and players at the Thameside Club for some weeks prior to the event, in which 45 teams of 5 played 40-minute matches on 6 full-size lawns. The tournament ran from

12 noon to 7pm, finishing with a barbecue (steaks and a bottle of wine each) that lasted till midnight. The Red Hot Peppers Jazz Band played during the proceedings.

The winning team (Weatheralls) are seen receiving their prizes from TV-AM weather girl Trisha Williamson (2nd right). They beat a team of newsmen from the London Standard in the final.



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Short Story

Schools Croquet

Edgbaston: 14 June. Himley Hall: 27-28 June THE ROYAL BANK NATIONAL SCHOOLS CROQUET CHAMPIONSHIP The Midlands Schools Tournaments

Report by Peter Dorke

The Edgbaston tournament for the South Midlands group of schools was a series of white-washes, all matches being won 3-0. Possibly, Manager Ken Jones' decision not to bring down handicaps until the end of the tournament was part of the reason for this. Several players



Andrew Saurin, Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, Blackburn.

had enormous bites taken out of their handicap at the end of the day, with Warwick's David Neale tumbling from 16 to 11. His team had beaten Mr Jones's own King Edward's, Birmingham, in one semi-final while Stowe had demolished Tudor Grange in the other. Experience had triumphed over fresh-faced enthusiasm and a well-matched final now ensued.

Stowe had reached the National Final in 1985, while in the same year Warwick had been semi-finalists. At Edgbaston in 1987 both teams contained members of those earlier teams. In losing, Stowe struggled manfully, for though Warwick's Mike Ramsay had a comfortable win over Kyno Jones, David Neale and Germaj Drillon each won by only 8 points.

Warwick now had to wait a fortnight before meeting the winners of the West Midlands and

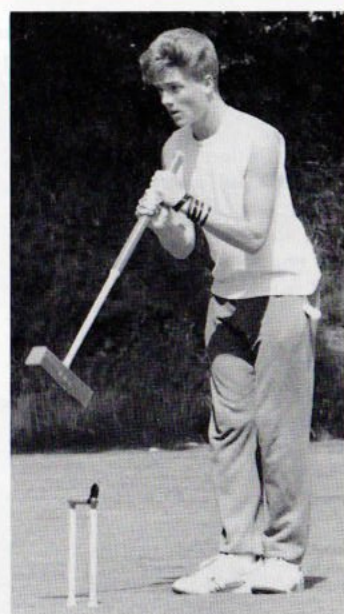
North Midlands Tournaments, both held at Himley Hall on June 27.

The line-up at Himley included 2 teams from Ludlow College, 3 from Bishop Vesey's Grammar School and one each from Wrekin College, New College, Telford and Wolverhampton Grammar School.

It was no surprise when, in an all-play-all competition, Ludlow emerged as champions of the West, while under the same conditions, Bishop Vesey's A triumphed over the North. Each of these schools plays regularly in the West Midlands League and some of their players have tournament experience, while their opponents were, by and large, raw beginners. It is fitting, therefore, to ignore the achievements of these giants and highlight the successes of the underdogs.

Amongst these was the effervescent Robert Heaton of Wolverhampton, who put paid to Sonna Pathakji, captain of Bishop Vesey's C team. It must be admitted however that Sonna had been up all night and was holding his eyelids open with a spare pair of clips. Another particularly pleasing success was Wrekin's Georgiana Woolley, whose brisk confident play and fence of bisques were almost too much for Ludlow's Tim Nock, senior player of the tournament on a handicap of 3½ and last year's runner-up in the National Junior Championship. No, Georgiana did not win but it was a crowd-pleasing performance.

Saturday, then, was a hectic



David Lendrum, Manchester Grammar School.

success. Sunday's Midlands Final - a 3-way contest between Ludlow, Bishop Vesey's and Warwick - was a much quieter affair in which, as expected, Warwick lost to each of the other teams and then left them to fight it out for the South Shropshire Trophy and the Royal Bank of Scotland's medals.

With Bishop Vesey's Neville Turley clearly in terrible form and Ludlow's Steve Warm playing like a veteran in spite of his inexperience, a win for Ludlow looked certain. Their third man, Simon Ashley had played badly throughout the tournament - certainly he did not look capable of coping with Stuart Hemus's well developed Aunt Emma.

Continued on Page 13

REGIONAL FINAL RESULTS

Wrest Park: 20 June Semi-finals

Colchester RGS 'A' bt Bedford Modern 'B' 3-0
R. Fulford (1½) bt Cox (18) +22;
J. Collis (9) bt Warner (18) +18;
C. Docherty (18) bt Parsons (18) +18
Colchester RGS 'B' bt Bedford Modern 'A' 3-0
G. Budd (12) bt Cheshire (13) +4;
N. Varndell (16) bt Bell (14) +16(T);
P. Harbord (17) bt Batey (16) +8(T)

Final

Colchester RGS 'A' bt Colchester RGS 'B' 2-1
Fulford bt Budd +10(TP); Collis lost to Varndell -8; Docherty bt Harbord +7(T)

Colchester: 30th June

Colchester RGS 'A' bt Dulwich 'A' 3-0
Fulford bt J. Pearce (14) +15; Collis bt J. Gillie (15) +18; Docherty bt D. Bottle (17) +19

Northern Region

Preliminary Round

Queen Elizabeth's GS 'B' bt Fettes 3-0
C.D. Clarke (1) bt C. Berger (18) +25;
R. Collighan (6) bt S. Hendrey (18)

+20; R. Harding (12) bt R. Finlay (18) +24

Bowdon:

Semi-finals

Manchester GS bt Queen Elizabeth's GS 'A' 2-1
D. Lendrum (9) bt R. Collighan +20;
M. Gill (12) bt R. Sinker +15;
D. Knappett (14) lost to A. Grimbaldeston (16) -13
Queen Elizabeth's GS 'B' bt Chetham's 3-0

C.D. Clarke (1) bt R. Major (18) +16(TP); M. Saurin (2) bt P. Lewis (18) +25; R. Harding (12) bt E. Rushton (18) +15

Final

Manchester GS bt Queen Elizabeth's GS 'B' 2-1
D. Lendrum bt C.D. Clarke +25;
M. Gill lost to M. Saurin -22;
D. Knappett bt A. Saurin (18) +17

Play-off for 3rd place

Queen Elizabeth's GS 'A' bt Chetham's 3-0
Collighan bt Major +21; Sinker bt Lewis +18; Grimbaldeston bt Rushton +21

Edgbaston: 8 July THE ROYAL BANK NATIONAL SCHOOLS CROQUET CHAMPIONSHIP

Bishop Vesey beat Nailsea to take title

Report by Dan Kelly

Once again the weather gods were kind to the schools as the four teams who had won the regional finals gathered together at Edgbaston in beautiful summer weather to contest the final stages of the competition.

This year two new teams won through to the finals - Nailsea (from near Bristol) and Bishop Vesey's from Sutton Coldfield. They joined the familiar faces of the finalists from last year - Manchester Grammar School and Royal Grammar School, Colchester. Colchester once again sported the best player in Robert Fulford and the most elegantly-dressed player in Jonathan Collis, so their hopes were high. Meanwhile Manchester had the same team as last year and were full of confidence. Their best player, David Lendrum, was hoping to maintain his unbeaten record in the competition.

This year teachers were no longer allowed to take part while the format of the competition was changed to a round-robin. The splendid organization of Peter Dorke ensured that everything went smoothly, while the efforts of his wife in providing excellent food were warmly welcomed.

The morning session produced some real surprises. Bishop Vesey's made full use of their bisques to despatch Colchester 3-0, while Manchester went down 2-1 to Nailsea. The highlight of this match was a dramatic last-gasp victory by Nailsea's Andrew Barradell, who stole a +1T victory from David Knappett. With the scores level after time, Andrew laid up with his blue ball directly in front of its hoop. David shot at Andrew's black with his peg ball - a six-yard shot. Unfortunately he missed, so the spectators were spared the excitement of seeing David attempt to peg out while his other ball was for 2-B. Would his opponent have known the relevant Law?

The afternoon session was very keenly contested with Colchester and Manchester both anxious to stay in the contest. Manchester played Bishop Vesey's, whose impressive Andrew Jeeves and Stewart Hemus disposed of Martin Gill and David Knappett. However David Lendrum and Neville

Turley provided an exciting finish. David was one behind as time was called, but he made an excellent roquet. He took off from the centre of the lawn to get a rush on a yard-line ball near the first corner towards 1-B. A good rush was followed by a bad approach and an excellent hoop. When Neville subsequently chose to shoot at the furthest ball on the lawn with David in front of 2-B, David snatched a lucky victory.

Meanwhile Colchester were struggling against Nailsea. Robert Fulford put pressure on his opponent by going round on the fourth turn, and recorded an impressive win. However, Alex Leggate was proving to be the most stylish player in the tournament, and he easily disposed of Jonathan Collis, while Andrew Barradell maintained his winning streak by beating Carl Docherty in impressive fashion.

So the scene was set for an exciting evening session. With Colchester and Manchester out of the running, their match ended quickly in a win for Manchester, and David Lendrum retired from school croquet with his unbeaten record intact. However the match between Nailsea and Bishop Vesey's soon became very exciting. It was no great surprise to see Alex Leggate dispose of his opponent in double-quick time, but Stewart Hemus, who also remained unbeaten, evened the score to ensure an exciting climax.

The deciding match between Paul Spiring and Neville Turley went to time with both players consistently choosing the most dangerous option. With time approaching, there were no thoughts of cornering or playing 'Aunt Emma'. Instead each player played for the break. Time was called with Neville well ahead, but he left his balls in a position to give Paul a reasonable chance to catch up. However, in the tenseness of the moment, it proved too difficult an opportunity for Paul to take, so the game went to Bishop Vesey's and with it the Championship.

Mr Keohane of the Royal Bank of Scotland, our sponsors, was on hand to present the medals, the Royal Bank Quai, and the Rothwell Shield to



Bishop Vesey's Grammar School, 1987 Champions, with Peter Dorke (2nd left) and Mike Keobane of the Royal Bank of Scotland.

Bishop Vesey's. All in all, an enjoyable and impressive day. It is a wonderful thing to see so many young people playing croquet to a high level; and especially to see the development of new and exciting talents. School croquet is a very aggressive game. Very few defensive tactics are employed. Cornering is most unusual and long joins are the result of accidental miss-hits. However it demonstrates well that the best tactic is to hit-in, as time and again we saw 'suicide' shots which were hit to turn the tables.

And now for a few regrets. I was sad to hear that Ludlow has lost its lawn and is no longer very active. I hope this does not mean that Peter Dorke will stop his missionary work on behalf of school croquet. It is also a pity that we fail to attract good girls into the game in any number. And finally, I would have liked to see tighter hoop-setting to put a greater premium on skill rather than bisques.

RESULTS

The Royal Bank National Schools Croquet Championship FINAL

1st Round

Bishop Vesey's GS v. Colchester RGS

(Bishop Vesey's names first)
N. Turley (9) bt R. Fulford (1½) +17;
A. Jeeves (14) bt J. Collis (8) +12;
S. Hemus (15) bt C. Docherty (9) +2(T).

Result: Bishop Vesey's 3, Colchester RGS 0.

Nailsea v. Manchester GS

(Nailsea names first)
P. Spiring (13) lost to D. Lendrum (7) -11;
A. Leggate (13) bt M. Gill (12) +5;
A. Barradell (16) bt D. Knappett (14) +1(T).

Result: Nailsea 2, Manchester GS 1.

2nd Round

Bishop Vesey's GS v. Manchester GS

(Bishop Vesey's name first)
N. Turley bt D. Lendrum -1;

A. Jeeves bt M. Gill +6;
S. Hemus bt D. Knappett +12.
Result: Bishop Vesey's 3, Manchester GS 0.

Nailsea v. Colchester RGS

(Nailsea names first)
P. Spiring lost to R. Fulford -10;
A. Leggate bt J. Collis +8;

A. Barradell bt C. Docherty +13.
Result: Nailsea 2, Colchester RGS 1.

3rd Round

Colchester RGS v. Manchester GS

(Colchester names first)
Fulford lost to Lendrum -23;
Collis lost to Gill -16;

Docherty bt Knappett +8.
Result: Colchester RGS 1, Manchester GS 2.

Bishop Vesey's GS v. Nailsea

(Bishop Vesey's names first)
N. Turley bt P. Spiring +7(T);
A. Jeeves lost to A. Leggate -18;
S. Hemus bt A. Barradell +16.

Result: Bishops Vesey's GS 2, Nailsea 1.

FINAL MATCH RESULT

Pos'n	School	Matches	Games
1	Bishop Vesey's GS	3	7
2	Nailsea	2	5
3	Manchester GS	1	4
4	Colchester RGS	0	2



David Isgrove, master in charge of croquet at Bishop Vesey's, watches the final drama unfold.

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Schools Croquet

Your Letters

A Signal for Umpires

Dear Sir,
At the Colchester August Handicap weekend, the shortage of available referees forced the manager to leave the relative comfort and security of the clubhouse to dash over to a distant corner, only to find that the signaller had required the services of an umpire rather than those of a referee.

It was then that the nature of the problem was realised: there is no separate signal for an umpire. One suggestion was that the mallet should be held horizontally above the head, remaining visible but different. Possibly this could be adopted with advantage as a convention – it would be interesting to know the views of more experienced tournament players.

Jonathan Collis,
Colchester.

An anomaly

Dear Sir,
Recently I was watching the double-banked game in a handicap tournament. Green (for the peg) hit in, took off to pink, obtained a rush on white (also for the peg) and pegged it out in the croquet stroke in which green also hit the peg. The player of green, clearly not conversant with Laws 15 and 39, removed white, played a continuation shot

with green and went on to win. The player of pink and white was sheltering in the clubhouse, as was her right under Law 45(a), and did not see what I saw. As pink was six or seven hoops ahead of brown, the outcome would almost certainly have been reversed if green had been correctly removed.

When I told them afterwards, I commented that it seems anomalous that I could have intervened under Regulation 8(c) in the case of a ball wrongly removed, but not in the case of a ball wrongly remaining in play. Andrew Bennet, Blackburn.

Croquet & The Arts

Dear Sir,
Not mentioned in your recent article on 'Croquet & The Arts' is 'La partie de croquet' by Pierre Bonnard (1867-1947). This charming painting, also called 'Crepuscule', is now in the Musee d'Orsay, Paris.

The figures in it are identified as being members of Bonnard's family in the garden of the property belonging to his mother's family in the province of Dauphine. It is dated 1892.

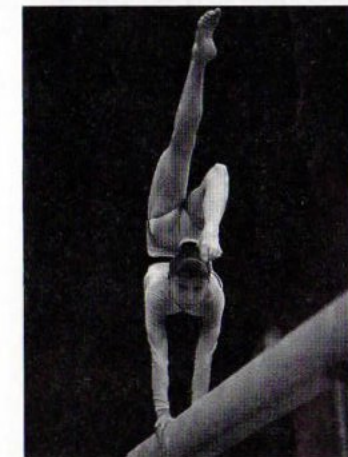
If you have not got it recorded elsewhere, perhaps you would think it worth noting.

C.E.F. Trench,
Navan, Co. Meath.

Correction!

Dear Sir,
Much as I admire your publication I am not quite so enamoured with the prefix you have given me on page 30 of September's 'Croquet'.

Far from being a 'Ms', I am a 'Mr'. The angle at which I'm sitting does indeed confirm this.



Not the Stockey Furzen member!

Far from 'Sacha' being a French tart's name, it is the Russian abbreviation of Alexander. I should be grateful if you could point this out to your readers who will possibly think me an East German gymnast should they ever meet me.

Up the Stockey Furzens!
Mr Sacha Gervasi,
London.

The Editor writes: My apologies for any confusion caused by my error!

Readers might like to know that Gidleigh Park, the home of the Stockey Furzen Cricket & Croquet Club, is described in the 1987 Ackerman Guide as 'one of the country's most beautiful country house hotels' and looks out over the magnificent Teign valley, the nearest road being over a mile away.

Seven of the Stockey Furzen members own hotels with good courts and they all intend to buy good equipment in readiness for some form of knock-out competition next year. Unfortunately they have been exceptionally busy during the summer, and have had to wait until the end of the season to formulate their plans, so details are not yet known. However, Stockey Furzen must be the first Croquet Club to be formed where members pay their subs and then think about playing croquet afterwards!

The 'Shot Clock'

Dear Sir,
As the referee in charge of the international match between the USA and Great Britain in April this year, I read with interest the report by Chris Irwin. Although she makes the point in the body of her report that there were 1½ hour time limits for US rules

games and 2 hour time limits for international rules games, she seems to lose sight of this completely in her final paragraph in which she suggests that readers draw their own conclusions as to the relative speed of the two codes from the fact that 7 of the US rules games went to time as compared to 3 of the international rules games. I submit that this is quite misleading in the circumstances (although unintentional).

After frequent visits to the United States during the past seven years and against a background of 32 years' participation in international rules croquet, I believe that my personal opinion may be of some relevance. It is simply this, that by observation I have found the average US rules game (as opposed to games involving only top-flight players) to be very definitely faster than the average international rules game. This is surely the most relevant issue, namely what is the experience of the average player.

Finally, there is no doubt in my mind as to one aspect in which US rules croquet has pioneered a better way. This is the 60-second (or 45-second in advanced play) 'shot clock'. Combined with provision for extra time on at least two occasions during a game (at the option of the player) this calls upon all players to play with reasonable despatch. It has long been a source of amazement to me that the Croquet Association (of which I am an overseas member) has not yet seriously addressed the possibility of adopting this excellent improvement, at the very least as an optional rule.

Miss J. Basten,
Ian Gillespie,
Constantia, South Africa.

Croquet Development

Dear Sir,
The July issue of 'Croquet' has spurred me into writing on 'The Debate'. As you will know now after the General Election, we in Scotland do not always have the same views as people in the rest of the UK, but on the subject of croquet development I really cannot see what all the fuss is about.

We now have a first-class magazine, 'Croquet', which I can confidently hand to any person, without embarrassment, as an advertisement for the game; we have the numbers of players and clubs growing; we have money sponsorship increasing; and we have press coverage as a sport (sometimes!). My concern is that croquet should live, not die, and

this means more players, younger players, the highest possible standards of play, and more lawns at more clubs. If we could wave a wand to produce unlimited first-class lawns then we could invite lots of people to play on them, but of course life is not like that; we need players paying subscriptions, sponsors providing finance, and a great deal of hard work to keep croquet living, in its clubs, in all parts of the country.

The game is not being metamorphosed into something different by all this development. Even as a lazy referee, I know that the Laws refer to the same game now as they did ten years ago. Club golf is not diminished either by clock golf and crazy golf at amusement parks or by professional golf played by superstars on television; instead it is enhanced by all this, but above all club golf survives on its membership, and croquet is the same.

So long as I am a CA member I shall cast my vote for the representatives on Council. The present Council are making tremendous progress and they have my full support. Alastair Hunter, Edinburgh.

Croquet in Spain

Dear Sir,
I am an A-level student of Spanish preparing a project for my A-level oral exam. In order to make it as relevant as possible to my Spanish studies I should like to know how extensive is the playing of croquet in Spain.

May I therefore appeal to any of your readers who might know anything about croquet in Spain to write to me at: Ludlow College, Ludlow, Shropshire. Ludlow.

Miss J. Basten,
Cheltenham Croquet

Dear Sir,
Going through some old papers preparatory to moving to a new house, I came across these silly lines written some years ago when there was a strong move in the Cheltenham Club to go back to 'old times' in our tournaments. I thought some others might be amused.

Spare a Tear for Cheltenham!
I sing in praise of former days
With knockouts all we knew;
The entry slight, employment light
Save for the favoured few.
Now, Jackson's claims for shortened games
And nobody knocked out;
'Petual play, past light of day
And dinner gone without.
By former ways, come Wednesdays
All visitors had gone;

Your Letters

The Chalk Yard Line

Dear Sir,
I was most interested in reading the letter from Bill Scarr in your May 1987 No 191 issue in which he made numerous logical suggestions.

One I found particularly interesting – 'the chalk yard line' concept – having wasted a great deal of time measuring 'balls in' over the years this was driven home whilst watching my prized video on UK Short Croquet



The semi-final: Maree Heenan defeated Australia's Open Champion, John Tyrrell in a real boil-over – the handicap system really worked! (possibly the only copy in captivity in Australia) – I was not

No idle folk, with drinks' bespoke
Defied the luncheon gong.

Now all is Crank and Double Bank
Spare players everywhere:
Assume dead Draw your place once more
And Process killing fare!
G.E.P. Jackson
Cheltenham.

'The World of Croquet'

Dear Sir,
For those looking for an ideal Christmas present for their croquet playing friends and relatives, may I recommend 'The World of Croquet'.

This is the latest book on the game, written by two of its foremost exponents for players at all levels. Copies can be obtained direct from myself at the CA Office, price £16.95, inclusive of p&p.

Bookshops in Australia and New Zealand will have copies available in a few months time, but overseas members who want a copy more immediately should send me a sterling cheque for £22.96 and I will air-mail them a copy.

Brian Macmillan
Hurlingham.

Why Promote Croquet?

Dear Sir,
As the Chairman of one of the most recently formed Croquet

very impressed at the time taken or some of the views exposed when players placed the ball for the 'shoot out' – a great idea but not very graceful. 'Why not have a chalk line a yard in to save all that less than elegant bending' I thought.

During mid-May I ran a Dynamite Croquet Tournament which luckily achieved 6 minutes of Nationwide TV time on ABC TV, at the prime slot of 5.45pm Sunday.

This was a short version of croquet based on the UK Short Croquet but with; Ball Boys/Girls – large directional markers – large clips – an up to date score board showing hoops run and mandatory peels achieved, an audible PA running commentary for the gallery and best of all one yard in, the chalk line

All 6 players agreed it was an excellent idea, three of those were John Tyrrell, Australia's No 1, George Latham, Australia's No 2 and Alan Cleland who, amongst other things, was in the MacRobertson Shield team with George.

Owen Edwards,
Ivanhoe, Australia.

Clubs I have read the letters and articles in the last two issues of 'Croquet' with great interest.

I do not want to get involved in the various 'nit-picking' arguments, but suffice it to say that until the creation of the Kingston Maurward Club, close to Dorchester, Dorset, the nearest other clubs were at Poole, Sidmouth, and Glastonbury. Anyone with a reasonable knowledge of local geography would know that we have filled a void in the Croquet community.

I am most grateful to the Croquet Association, the South West Federation of Croquet Clubs and the Sports Council for their untiring help and support that has enabled us to get a Club onto the lawns and to have achieved a membership of 60 in the space of 3 months. The need was, and still is there, just as I am sure it is there in other regions of the UK.

What dismays me is that so much energy seems to be expended by various writers in criticising development, instead of channelling that energy into efforts to maintain high standards. I do not believe for an instant that the 'popularisation' of bowls by the media has led to any deterioration of standards. I strongly suggest that the converse is true.

Craig W. Hitchcock,
Chairman,
Kingston Maurward C.C.



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The Open Championships

Hurlingham: 11-18 July THE CARLSBERG BRITISH OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS Probably the Best Tournament in the World

Report by Danny Palmer

With the weather fine and the lawns playing true, though a little slow, the Carlsberg Open Championships kicked off with a bang. First on in the Doubles Championship was a game that aroused much interest: Mulliner and Aspinall vs the two Keiths (Keith Aiton being a man on form – Men's Champion – but Keith Wylie still struggling to find his best). The question was: would Wylie pull something out of the bag?

He could, and he did – the two Keiths taking the first game. This obviously upset the holders and it was no surprise to hear that they had levelled in the second game – the scene was set for a 'sweaty' third game.

Aiton hit in on the 4th turn and picked up a break without too much difficulty. Wylie on his way to get a glass of water gestured to him, saying 'give me an OS!' This he did, peeling partner through hoop 1 on the way. Wylie, back from the bar, took up his mallet, the lift having been missed, and strode on to the lawn. After a few shots things started to look promising. However, he suddenly stopped – a look of pain on his face. He'd constructed a break for a ball at hoop 1, not hoop 2! Though he scrambled a few points, things soon fell apart and Mulliner & Aspinall took advantage – the two Keiths having no more croquet.

Despite a few surprise wins, notably Southern & Wiggins disposing of Hyne & Palmer, the doubles games on Saturday went largely as predicted. The new pairing of Murray and Fulford got through a couple of quick rounds. The youngster (Robert Fulford), looking very much at home on new ground, needed no advice from his more experienced partner as they dealt with their hapless opponents.

Sunday morning saw Richard Hilditch engrossed in his managerial duties. Devoted



Richard Hilditch, who managed the Championships with mathematical precision.

to getting a good way through the doubles competition, he'd given some players leave until Tuesday! This he assured us fitted in with his 'masterplan'. He kept this 'clearly defined in his head!' Everybody felt that that was probably the best place for it.

The biggest shock of the day was caused by your reporter turning up in a suit! Things were quickly back to normal, however, as he caught up on the day's play whilst taking advantage of the sponsor's bar (a popular feature of the event).

In a clash of styles early in the Singles Championship, Jerry Guest put an end to Wylie's challenge for the Opens with neither playing particularly well. Much was expected of Robert Fulford in his match against Ian Bond on Monday, but he quickly found himself in a very poor position. Game down, and with Ian looking set to finish the second, Robert had a very lucky break. Shooting at two balls near 3rd corner from hoop 1, he ran 4-back, his hoop, cleanly to the boundary!

Demoralised by this and a subsequent fluke, Ian lost the initiative, the second game, the third game, and with it the match. Robert was rocketted into the national press, where Carlsberg as sponsors gained the event a good deal of coverage.

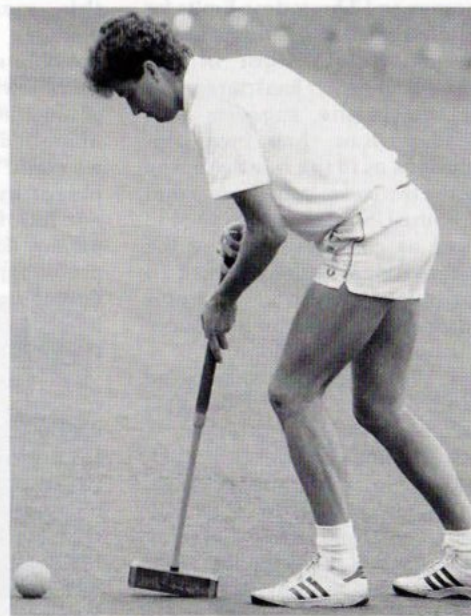
Monday also saw victory for John Walters (though no press coverage). Playing well, he beat Kiley Jones in straight games. Tuesday saw the exit of the Selectors' favourite youngster at the hands of another: Mark Suter, his usual elegant self, beat Robert Fulford in an unspectacular match, only to lose to Mark Avery in two quick games on the same day. With the first lost by 26 and facing 1 and 4-back whilst for 4-back and peg, he pegged out his forward ball. Avery won, only having to concede two further very long shots. Readers will note that an 'auto-Riggall' doesn't carry the same charm as a 'standard-Riggall', mainly because the single ball receives no lift shots.

David Peterson managed an STP on his way to victory against Ken Jones. Perhaps this was to be the start of his much talked about return to form. Unfortunately, by winning he qualified to play Steve Mulliner and also unqualified himself to enter the Plate – we shall have to wait until next year.

With the first rounds of the Singles completed, 31 players had already earned places in the restricted event, the Consolation Plate. Richard's mathematical talents were put to work and spectators looked on in awe as he frantically scribbled down the Draw and Process in quick succession. From then on the event was referred to as 'The Swiss' by the Manager, more out of habit than anything else.

By the evening, only one of the eight players staying in my flat was left in the main event – Nick Hyne. On the way to the pub that evening he walked into a bus stop. There is some justice in the world.

Keith Aiton generously donated his 'sextuple gin' (see last Gazette) to relieve our anguish. Clearly defeat had affected some



Mark Avery: 1987 Open Champion.

more than others: Tim Harrison was seen drinking from an elegantly fluted vase.

On Wednesday, Dave Foulser (who earlier in the week had played very well to beat Keith Aiton) lost to Steve Lewis in a fairly close match. Also out of the main event was Bryan Sykes, despite doing three peels of a TPO. He stuck in rover, giving Phil Cordingley the game.

The main favourites continued to plough through the field with Reg Bamford doing well. Having already beaten the seeded Heap in the first round, he did well to beat Vincent, after losing a close 1st game (by one)! The Manager was knocked out of the Plate. He'd been discussing earlier how he'd had the same shaft in his mallet for some time and had even pointed out a few weaknesses in it, so it came as no surprise when he returned to the Manager's hut with it in two pieces. 'I trod on it as I was walking down a bank!'

It rained on Thursday morning. Play was delayed, but after several pitch inspections a few games were allowed on. One of these was to have involved John Walters. John assured us that he wanted to play, despite the pouring rain, but he'd left his mallet in somebody's car and that somebody hadn't arrived. It turned out that his story was true but he was scratched nonetheless – the tournament must go on.

The Singles and Doubles were still running according to Richard's masterplan despite the rain. Once the rain had stopped, one of the first free lawns was given over to a game between three old hands and one newcomer: Michael Heap & Steve Wright vs Mike Stevens & (playing in his first Opens) Ray Ransom.

Despite the slow, easy conditions, play was slow with the first game going to time – a win for Ransom & Stevens. With the 1st under their belts, these two went on to win the match, taking the 2nd game by 18.

Michael Heap was not at all happy with the speed of the game. He commented that the opponents had dictated the pace to a large extent, at which a certain player perched nearby was heard to say 'Now you know what it is like to play against yourself, Michael!'

Meanwhile the Singles was hotting up – the event having reached the quarter-finals where seeds meet seeds.

The first two games between Phil Cordingley and David Openshaw were of a very high standard, +26, -26, justifying the use of President's Cup hoops. The 3rd contained an uncharacteristic mistake from Phil. He stuck in 4-back at Openshaw's 4-back ball – the other being for peg.

The other big match on was spectacular. Mark Avery looking very good, but having so far encountered little resistance, was up against Nigel Aspinall who'd had two TPs in his previous match against Bernard Neal.

The first game turned out to be very close, Avery winning by only 3. In the second, Nigel pulled his socks up. From a standard opening, he picked up a break in the 5th turn and went round. Avery missed and Nigel went round again, but only got one peel. Avery hit and eventually won by +3TP. Who says TPs aren't necessary?

As darkness approached, there was only time for the first game of one doubles semi-final, Aspinall & Mulliner vs Murray & Fulford. Murray had the first ball round, but it was no great surprise when Steve hit in and followed suit. More surprising perhaps was Fulford finishing in the next turn, especially as he had a handicap of 1½.



John Solomon, CA President, presents Mike Macdonald with a Carlsberg 'mallet'.

The 2nd game was put on first thing on Friday. Aspinall & Mulliner went round quickly to penult and peg before their opponents got a look in. Murray hit the last shot, went round, but missed a short roquet as he was finishing his turn. This left only a 6-yd roquet for Nigel. To the amazement of the crowd, he missed, letting Fulford in. As a result of a very poor leave after going to the peg, Mulliner was left with only an 8-yd shot. This again was missed and Murray finished off the match.

Bryan Sykes added to his list of notable achievements by missing a 3-inch peg out. He felt so sure of hitting, he just swung his mallet towards the ball one-handed. He won't do that again!

Meanwhile, George Noble was ploughing through the opposition in the Plate event. Still in both halves, he'd had 4 triples in 5 games, disposing of several very competent players.

The Open Championships



Steve Mulliner, this year's Single's runner-up, receives his trophy from Mike Macdonald, Carlsberg's Managing Director.

Carlsberg's support throughout the Championships was most appreciated.

In the afternoon, Mark Avery still hitting in with uncanny regularity disposed of David Openshaw without too much difficulty, +26TP, +11.

With the light fading however, the two found themselves playing together in the Doubles final. Thus far, they'd had very little trouble, but Openshaw fresh from defeat didn't look very comfortable in the first game. Avery stormed round, but both opponents followed suit. Openshaw got the innings, but only got round with a great deal of trouble. Once round, the innings was lost and it took an incredible shot from Avery (not having held his mallet for an hour) to regain it. But then he missed the peg out and lost the game by 1!

The rain during the latter part of the week had slowed down the lawns quite considerably, so it was no surprise that the Singles final was between two excellent shots, Steve Mulliner and Mark Avery. The innings in slow conditions is paramount and hitting in proved to be decisive in the final itself.

Mark missed his 1st shot when Steve had gone round, but failing to get a triple peel meant that Mark had one last chance. Despite a groundsman and his lawnmower walking right behind the target ball, Mark hit in and caught up. In a cat and mouse finish, Mark gained the upper hand but took off the lawn, giving Steve the 1st game.

The 2nd game was played during lunch. With few spectators, the finalists battled on, Avery taking the game by 16. The decider turned out to be a clinical +26TP by Mark. Will Steve ever win this event?

Through all this excitement, the Plate had been pottering along with most of us involved. Palmer had had good wins against Aiton and Solomon, but now he faced George (TP machine) Noble in the semi-finals of the draw. It wasn't long before George was finishing with a triple, but he made a real mess of the penult peel, letting Palmer win +11TP.

Palmer then went on to lose to Robert Fulford in a very close final. With Robert hardly started Palmer was laid up in 4th corner with a rush to the peg to win. Shooting from 3rd corner, Fulford just hit in, the target ball barely shaking. From this, he won, despite leaving a 9-yd lift. The result, +2TP.

This close result was typical of the final stages. George beat Jerry Guest by 3TP, Mike Stevens by 4, then Fulford by 3 to win the Plate.

As most people drifted away to the Hurlingham picnic, the Doubles final continued. With the rain pouring down Openshaw &

Avery dealt with Murray & Fulford. Mark, fresh from his first Opens victory, was playing very well. He almost had a 3 ball straight triple in the final game.

That wraps it up, apart from saying that the sponsorship by Carlsberg was greatly appreciated.

Results Overleaf



(L to R): Reg Bamford, John Walters, and Steve Mulliner reflect on a game in progress.

Schools Croquet

(continued from Page 8)

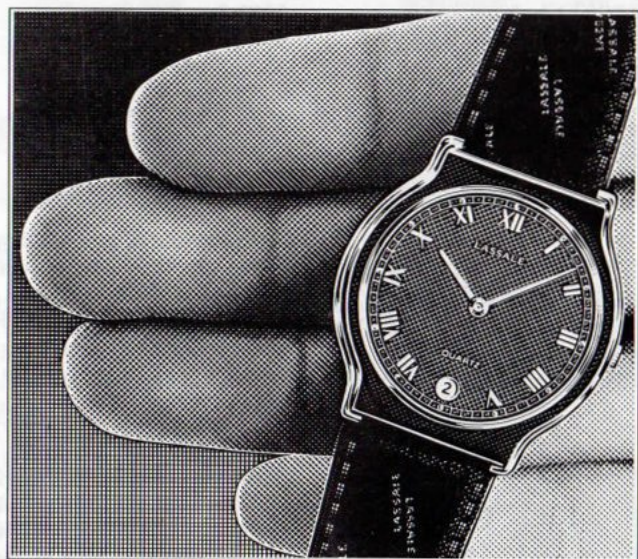
Ludlow, though, were sanguine: a 2-1 win would satisfy them.

Perhaps the presence of Eric Solomon, an old boy of Bishop Vesey's Grammar School here to present the trophies, inspired his team, for Neville Turley cast gloom aside and tore into Ludlow's Tim Nock with all the confidence of 6½ bisques in the ground. Three were soon uprooted but Neville went blithely round with black, laid up, watched Tim miss his shot and without further ado, took blue to Rover without taking another bisque. 'Is this lad really a ten?' we cried but the Bishop's men only smiled a secret smile and watched with quiet glee as Tim's red trickled through the third hoop to leave a severely hampered shot. At this point, enter Howard Stanley, a referee in the midst of an early tea, who walked on to the lawn fully encumbered with said meal and proceeded to spread it generously about the lawn with the words (or so it was said, no doubt apocryphally), 'Do you mind if I finish my tea first?' Tim played his shot fully into the hoop, making no contact either with the ball or Howard's sandwiches and the game was virtually over. A very untidy ending did not prevent Neville winning +23.

On lawn 2 Steve Warm was playing a waiting game as Andy Jeeves, refusing to take his bisques, crept steadily ahead. Andy's team mate on lawn 3, Stuart Hemus, was also in the lead, playing a close game as Simon Arnsby failed, time and again, to hit in on a very difficult lawn. Each of these games was to go to time with the outcome in doubt until the last stroke of the tournament – a take-off shot from Warm which rolled fatefully over the boundary line – for a desperately late and frenetic Arnsby charge had won Ludlow the third game by 1 point.

2-1 to Bishop Vesey's, then, the Old Enemy thrashed at last and the road open to the National Finals at Edgbaston on July 8th.

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The Croquet Classic

Braxted Park: 29 August THE CROQUET CLASSIC Title Won By Norfolk Doctor

Report by Chris Hudson

The final of the Observer/Lassale Croquet Classic took place at Braxted Park at the end of August.

Rain over the previous week had caused floods 5 feet deep in nearby Chelmsford, and it had been so wet in the last few days before the final that it had been impossible to mow the lawns at all. 24 hours before the final was due to take place, it was not possible to play a croquet shot longer than 8 yards using brute force, and it was only with the help of the greenkeeper from the local golf course that play was possible at all on the day.

However, the players took all this in their stride, playing round the furrows and tyre marks left by

competitors who had not lost a croquet game for some time.

Thomas Charles (who looked remarkably like Chris Jaques and indeed, turned out to be Chris Jaques) put out Lucius Cary, who was keenly supported by his wife and young daughter Eleanor, 14-7. The two Doctors, Bob Bawden and Jonathan Cullis, had a mighty battle, with Bob winning 14-12, and the other three games went to time, a mighty last minute surge from Peter Allnutt not quite getting him the verdict against Robert Johnson, who won 11-10. Bob Snaddon, from Alloa, beat Hamish Hall 11-3, and Albert Lawrance had a dour struggle to beat Jim Cairns 6-5.



The Final in progress. Albert Lawrance leaves the lawn with one last look at the position.

the grass-cutting machinery, and working on the principle that it was the same for everyone. Things improved as the warm weather dried out some of the worst patches, and each of the 9 lawns seemed to have its cluster of supporters taking a keen interest in the game in progress.

The Observer's man had been up early, and the area was festooned with placards advertising the event. Soon we saw their photographer on the roof of Braxted House, taking aerial shots of the play in progress, and very interesting the play turned out to be, with some of the players I had fancied to take the title disappearing in the first round.

Roger Best beat George Vincent in the first game to finish by a comfortable 14-2, and John Butcher defeated Andre Genillard 14-4. Keith Fennell had a good win over Thomas Lawrence, one of the younger

So who was going to win through to the semi-finals? Bawden was soon home and dry, with a clinical 14-1 win against Johnson. Best (14-5 against Butcher) and Jaques (14-4 against Fennell) followed soon after, but Lawrance again took the full time to beat Snaddon 9-2. There then followed a break for a ploughman's lunch, kindly provided for players and officials by our sponsors, Lassale, and served from a very impressive and colourful marquee.

The semi-finals were two contrasting games. Bawden beat Best 14-7 in a quick game where both players attempted breaks. Lawrance had a cat and mouse game against Jaques and again went the distance, winning 10-3.

The other players had been competing in a 'Losers' Plate', but after the initial three rounds they decided that they all wanted to watch the final, and so we had the marvellous spectacle of the



The 16 finalists. L to R (back): Peter Allnutt, Chris Jaques, Albert Lawrance, Hamish Hall, Keith Fennell, Roger Best, Jonathan Collis, Robert Bawden and Andre Genillard. (Front): John Butcher, Jim Cairns, Lucius Cary, Thomas Lawrence, Vincent George, Robert Snaddon and Robert Jackson.

centre court surrounded on all four sides by players with their families and other supporters and spectators.

And what a final it was! Played to a time limit of 1 hour, as were all the matches, Albert Lawrance had it all his own way for the first 45 minutes. Round to Rover with one ball and beginning to make progress with the other, whilst his opponent could not get things going at all. Bob Bawden must have found it quite unnerving to be playing with so many spectators all round the court, right up to the boundary lines, and some of the shots he would have played with ease in earlier rounds, he suddenly found he was missing.

Then came the moment when the match turned. Albert had attempted Rover and stuck in the hoop. Bob shot at it from near hoop 4, hit the rover hoop, but had he hit the ball? No, ruled the referee, and from that moment on, with the crowd right behind him, Bob tightened his resolve and found his former skill. Soon he had one ball round to the peg, with his other ball still on hoop 1, and Albert on peg and hoop 3.

Albert made hoop 3, found himself hampered on his return

croquet, and played down to his other ball at hoop 4. Bob hit in, and as time was called, he had just played a croquet shot to get himself right in front of hoop 1. So there he was, on the peg with his other ball and his opponent on hoop 4 and the peg. Could he make three hoops to draw level? He made the first hoop to a ripple of applause, but then had no ball at hoop 2, although there was a ball at hoop 3 and a ball at hoop 4. He got to hoop 2 (more applause), made it, and was soon through hoop 3 (more applause - the crowd was loving it). Now they were level. Could he actually peg out and finish the game, or would we have a sudden death finish; or would Albert have a final turn to pull the game out of the fire?

The atmosphere was quite electric. To another burst of applause, Bob was through hoop 4, with his partner ball waiting for him at hoop 5. Through hoop 5 to more applause, a series of rushes to get to hoop 6, a long roll shot back to his partner ball at the peg, and in a flash, he was finished. None of your lying down to line up, or your easy three ball breaks like they play in the President's Cup. This had been



Bob Bawden in play during his final break.

The Croquet Classic

croquet in the raw, dangerous and most exciting, and the crowd cheered him to the echo! But what a battle Albert had put up, and what a sporting loser. It was a real pleasure to watch.

And so we came to the end of the 1987 Croquet Classic, the first event of its kind to be held in this country, and we hope the first of many. Thanks to Lassale and their generous financial assistance, the event has been a great success, and already we are receiving enquiries from people wanting to enter next year. Our thanks, too, to The Observer, for all the help they gave us in promoting the event, to the National Trust for their help in staging the Regional Finals, and to Alan Pascoe Associates and

Octopus Handling Services who looked after the organisation of the competition.

RESULTS

1st Round

Albert Lawrance bt Jim Cairns +1(T); Robert Snaddon bt Hamish Hall +8(T); Keith Fennell bt Thomas Lawrence +6; Chris Jaques bt Lucius Cary +7; Roger Best bt Vincent George +12; John Butcher bt Andre Genillard +10; Robert Johnson bt Peter Allnutt +1(T); Robert Bawden bt Jonathan Cullis +2

2nd Round

Lawrance bt Snaddon +7(T); Jaques bt Fennell +10; Best bt Butcher +9; Bawden bt Johnson +13

Semi-finals

Lawrance bt Jaques +7(T); Bawden bt Best +7

Final

Bawden bt Lawrance +5

THE FINALISTS

Hamish Hall: Won the first Regional Final at Castle Drogo. A member of Bristol Croquet Club, he has the handicap of an artificial leg.

Dr Jonathan Cullis: A Doctor at Southampton General Hospital. Winner of Trinity Hall Doubles competition at Cambridge in 1981, and St Thomas's Hospital Doubles in 1984. Captain of St Thomas Croquet 1985.

Lucius Cary: Winner of the Southern Regional Final at the Royal Berkshire Hotel. Had never played croquet in a competition before.

Thomas Lawrence: Studying cabinet design at Ryecroftwood College, Cambridge. His father is the Rector of Rural Dean. Had never played croquet outside his own back garden before.

Roger Best: A professional musician who plays with the Alberni String Quartet. He is a member of the Croquet Section at Dulwich Sports Club, and won the South Eastern Regional Final at Hinton Ampner.

Chris Jaques: Marketing Director of John Jaques & Sons, who manufacture croquet equipment. Playing under the name 'Thomas Charles', he won the other Regional Final at Hinton Ampner.

Andre Genillard: Teaches Economics and Politics at Reigate Grammar School. A keen sportsman who ran in the 1983 London Marathon and likes windsurfing.

Robert Jackson: The only Regional Finalist at Speke Hall not to play with his own mallet, but despite never having played in a croquet competition before, he won through to the Final.

John Butcher: A Physics teacher and member of the Edgbaston Club, he won the closest Regional Final, winning by a score of 5-4 after time at Speke Hall.

Keith Fennell: Chosen for the Final as one of the 'best losers' after playing at Speke Hall, he is a Railway Clerk from Kingswinford and a member of Himley Hall Croquet Club.

Albert Lawrance: A retired school master who missed his chance to play in the Southern Regional Final due to illness, but later won through at Blickling Hall to gain a place in the National Final.

Dr Robert Bawden: A doctor from Diss in Norfolk, whose wife is also a doctor. Achieved the most convincing win of all the Regional winners, with a score of +14 in the Final at Blickling Hall.

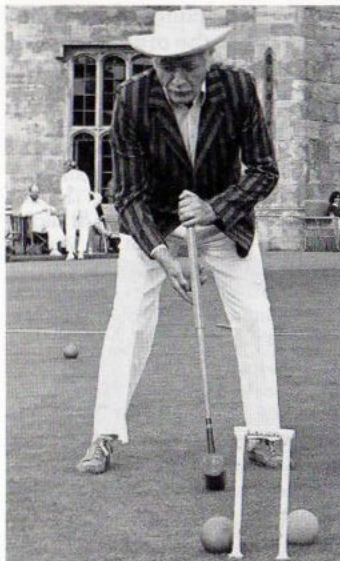
Peter Allnutt: Gained his place in the National Final as a 'best loser' at Blickling Hall. The whole Allnutt family entered the competition, including Peter's 80-year old father.

Jim Cairns: Playing in his first croquet competition at Castle Howard, Jim only allowed his Regional Final opponents a maximum of 4 points in all three games. He comes from Barnsley.

Vincent George: A dental technician from Colne in Lancashire, he won the other Regional Final at Castle Howard. His wife lost in the quarter-finals of the same Regional Final.

Robert Snaddon: The winner of the Scottish Regional Final held at the Gleneagles hotel. He is a commercial manager and a member of the Dollar Croquet Club, who play on the lawns at Gleneagles. This was his first croquet competition.

Pro-Celebrity Croquet



Nigel Davenport in play.

Showbusiness Stars Gather for Leeds Castle Croquet Tournament

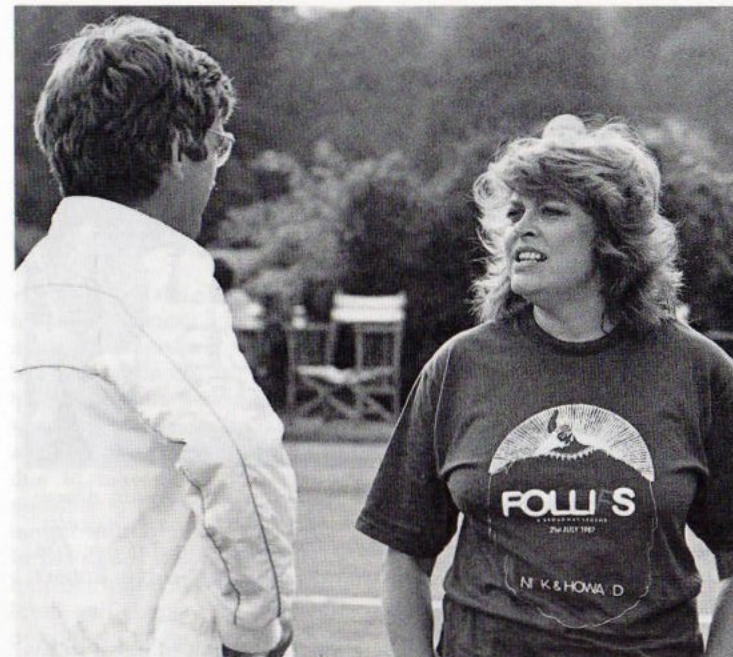
Report from Richard Harvey

Showbusiness stars and top croquet internationals met in the magnificent surroundings of Leeds Castle, Kent for a three-day tournament in aid of charity.

Donald Sinden, Auberon Waugh, Ian Ogilvy, Nigel Davenport, Isla Blair, John Wells, Linda Baron, Margaret Courtney and Julian Glover partnered members of the All-England team on the Castle's croquet lawn set in the shadow of 'the most beautiful Castle in the world'.



John Solomon and Donald Sinden in the commentary box.



Linda Baron seeking guidance from David Openshaw.

Among the croquet internationals were David Openshaw, former Open Champion John Solomon, and top woman player and former international fencer Jan MacLeod.

The tournament, which was a fund-raiser for the Mental Health Foundation, was sponsored by the National Westminster Bank, and was in accordance with the Leeds Castle Foundation's declared objectives of supporting medical research.



Ian Ogilvy poses in front of Leeds Castle before the start of play.

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Phyllis Court: 20-21 June THE GOLF CROQUET CUPS

Report by Smokey Eades

With the largest entry for some years and two days of glorious sunshine the National Golf Croquet Tournament was an undoubted success.

Golf Croquet lends itself to a more relaxed and convivial atmosphere than its more prestigious cousin - Association Croquet. In Golf Croquet there are no pensive solitaires incommunicado at the touch lines: all is bustle and activity on the crowded courts: cries of relief and dismay are voiced without fear or inhibition and opponents are regularly heard talking to each other!

Phyllis Court, on the Henley Reach of the Thames, is surely one of the most delightful settings for a sporting event and, it being the week before Regatta, the Club and grounds were 'dressed overall'.

Not only was the number of entries high but the quality of player was more than maintained - Stephen Wright, John Rose, Geoff Roy and David Croker to mention but some.

David managed the Tournament with skill, tolerance and exactitude but even he was somewhat thrown on the timings. This year, possibly due to the greater skill of the players (some of the hitting out was quite exceptional) the 13-hoop games averaged 48 minutes (last year 35).

In Golf Croquet, unlike Association, a doubles game is normally quicker than a singles.

Nevertheless one 13th hoop when Stephen Wright/Sheila Soutter were playing Peter Howell/Smokey Eades was fought over for 38 minutes (timing by courtesy of Geoff Roy). Victory on that occasion went to Soutter/Wright although Howell/Eades finally beat Croker/Maugham for the Delves Broughton Cup. Sadly the Wanklings - last year's winners - failed to find their usual form.

In the singles, Peter Howell (holder of the Ascot Challenge Cup) won his block but then went down to Derek Goulding who, after a hard fight with Ian Maugham, went on to the final only to be beaten, by the nearest of margins, by Geoff Roy.

Kay Yeoman also won her block but then lost narrowly to the Champion whilst Ian Brand (part of the much welcomed Brand contingent - father and two sons) beat David Croker but then fell at the same fence (hoop?).

Only one critical voice did I hear throughout the delightful two days and that from a past Captain of the Temple Golf Club who remarked that Golf Croquet was a simple childish game. From a Golfer, the cheek!

RESULTS

Golf Croquet Cups

The Ascot Challenge Cup
(Open Singles: Level Play)

Block 1

4 wins: I. Brand
3 wins: D. Goulding
2 wins: S. Wright



The Doubles Finalists in the Golf Croquet Cups at Phyllis Court.

1 win: Mrs P. Dirstzay
0 wins: Mrs R.F. Crane

Block 2

4 wins: Mrs K. Yeoman
3 wins: I. Maugham
2 wins: J. Rose

1 win: J. Wankling
0 wins: Mrs E. O'Dair

Block 3

3 wins: R.S. Eades (winner); D.J. Croker

2 wins: Mrs J. Wankling; R. Brand
0 wins: E. Matthews

Block 4

3 wins: P. Howell (winner); G. Roy
2 wins: R.F. Crane

1 win: Mrs J. Soutter; A. Brand

Quarter-Finals

I. Brand bt D.J. Croker +4; G. Roy bt Mrs K. Yeoman +2; D. Goulding bt P. Howell +4; I. Maugham bt R.S. Eades (wo)

Semi-Finals

Roy bt I. Brand +5; Goulding bt Maugham +2

Finals

Roy bt Goulding +1, +2

The Delves Broughton Challenge Cup

(Open Doubles: Level Play)

Block 1

3 wins: I. Maugham & D.J. Croker
2 wins: Mr & Mrs J. Wankling
1 win: Mrs Yeoman & A. Brand
0 wins: Mr & Mrs R.F. Crane

Golf Croquet

Block 2

3 wins: P. Howell & R.S. Eades (winners); G. Roy & J. Rose

2 wins: R. Brand & I. Brand; S. Wright & Mrs Soutter

0 wins: E. Matthews & D. Goulding

Final

Howell & Eades bt Maugham & Croker +2, -4, +2

Bowdon: 22-31 August Chris Clarke wins Northern's Golf Croquet

Twenty two players contested the North of England Golf Croquet event at this year's Northern Championships.

Two 'Bennet Bandits' met in the final, in which Chris Clarke beat Mark Saurin +3. John Meads and John Walters took 25 minutes to decide the 13th hoop. John Walters eventually made it and took the game.

RESULTS

Golf Croquet Championship of the North of England
(Level Play)

1st Round

R.J. Collighan bt Mrs J. Walker +5; Dr A. Bray bt Rev P.D. Hallett +1; J.O. Walters bt J.D. Meads +1; A.F. Sutcliffe bt Mrs D.C. Dennett +6; S.G. Cornelius bt Mrs C. Lewis +3; D.B. Maugham bt J.S. Dyer +1

2nd Round

C.D. Clarke bt R.R. Edwards +1; Dr A.C. Peterson bt Mrs L. Taylor-Webb +4; Collighan bt M.J. Wilkins +2; Walters bt Bray +6; S.G. Cornelius bt Sutcliffe +5; M.A. Saurin bt D.B. Maugham +2; D.S. Cornelius bt A. Bennet +2; W.E. Lamb bt Miss D.A. Cornelius +2

3rd Round

Clarke bt Peterson +4; Collighan bt Walters +1; Saurin bt S.G. Cornelius +4; Lamb bt D.S. Cornelius +5

Semi-Finals

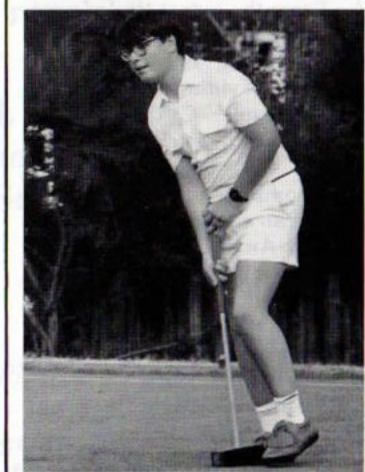
Clarke bt Collighan +3; Saurin bt Lamb +2

Final

Clarke bt Saurin +3



A WI member exults after making the hoop in a Golf Croquet competition at Denman College.



Chris Clarke, Golf Croquet winner at Bowdon.

Tournament Reports

Colchester: 6-11 July Brown Lawns and Red Noses

Report by Andrew Gregory

At Colchester the hottest week of the summer helped create what were surely the fastest lawns of the summer. Quick at the start of the week, the surface was daily baked to a glassy finish. Watching any game start in mid-afternoon one could almost guarantee to see the first unsuspecting take-off fizz into the hedge with alarming alacrity. But when treated with deserved respect the lawns proved a pleasure to play on, though the demanding accuracy did preclude many an attempted triple. Indeed there was more peeling of skin than of hoops, as Monday's predominantly white legs were later hidden, having been grilled a lobster pink.

In the early rounds of the X, Reggie Bamford made one of the week's rare triples before his progress was arrested by Carl Docherty. In all his games the latter was most cagey with his numerous bisques; he did not waste them in setting up a break, relying on his opponent to stick in first hoop. Those who doubted the wisdom of such tactics could not question their efficacy, as Carl conceded just one point in his path to the X final. Another debatable decision in the crucial game in the C class involved Docherty attempting to jump a hoop to peg out his single ball. The embarrassing failure of this shot was not fully punished as Jonathan Collis' comeback met a sad end in the jaws of rover.

The other triple peel at Colchester also involved Bamford, this time as victim as Michael Heap won the genuinely A class final of the process. Heap continued his precise play in the overall final, as he nearly brought off a second triple against Danny Palmer. Michael thus retained the trophy he seems to have made his own.

The second X semi-final was a tense tussle between Julian Eden and Fiona McCoig. Eden pegged out his opponent with both other clips on rover, and joined up near first corner. McCoig hit in from 30 yards, but after her imperfect rush to rover decided to play safe in her approach and send the croqueted ball toward fourth corner. Her own ball finished in position to run rover, but the other stuck on the wire of 4th hoop, whence she had to roquet it to win the game. She thus gained revenge for an earlier doubles game. With all clips on rover, she and her

partner Bamford had been forced to watch as Eden made a 40 yard hit-in to set up for partner Chris Sheen, who calmly finished off in the time turn.

'Time!' was heard mercifully infrequently: not because of the players' speed, rather the manager's bravery in only limiting doubles games. Pat Hetherington managed efficiently and enthusiastically, despite having to withdraw from play when the scheduled manager was unable to come. A glimpse of the chaos that might have ensued without her was provided during Wednesday evening's golf croquet, as John Walters assisted the manager in producing three semi-finals. A best-of-13 six-ball final was proposed, though this was curtailed to first-to-3 so that supper could be started before dusk.

There was an additional social event, as Debbie Cornelius took time off her consuming duties as Referee of Tournament to host a flat-warming party. Here a most extraordinary game took place between Simon Williams and Fiona McCoig, with Danny Palmer playing an unconscious part. Williams dominated from the start, adapting well to the unusual playing surface. After his innings there was a lengthy pause as everyone gathered to admire the leave. When it came to McCoig's turn, she lacked the touch of the A-class player, went too hard for first hoop, and clanged. Palmer made his first active intervention, and thus ended the game.

HONOURS BOARD

The Colchester Bowl
M.E.W. Heap

The Locke Bowl A.K. Gregory
The Cordy Salver C. Docherty
The Franklin Cup C. Docherty
The Lexden Goblet D. Reeve
The Clarke & Cork Trophies
R. Jones & Mrs C. Steward

More entertainment was to be had on the lawns, as Andrew Gregory demonstrated controlled use of his 1½ bisques. Finding himself a foot in front of first hoop with a break set up, he stuck in the middle of the jaws; cunningly used his whole bisque to hit the ground, missing the ball entirely; and then was forced to use the half-bisque to defensively retire to the boundary, conceding the innings. Earlier, Gregory had shown more competence on the

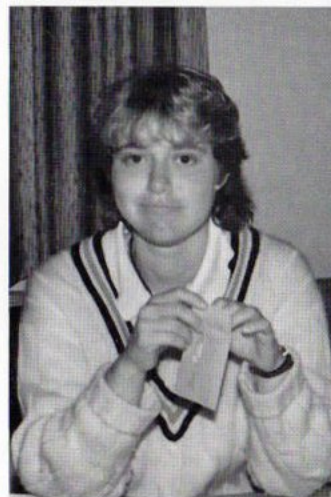
easier lawns at Boxford, recording his first TP as he and Eden won their B class blocks without conceding a game.

And so to Saturday's finals. The doubles was a surprisingly swift affair, with the Ipswichian pair of Celia Steward and Robert Jones making effective use of their bisques to win with ease. The Y and B class finals were similarly one-sided, Duncan Reeve and Andrew Gregory respectively triumphant. In the attritive final of the X, Carl Docherty held a narrow lead throughout, frustrating Fiona McCoig by taking a bisque only when she threatened to draw level. After the bisques were exhausted the fourth hour proved tense, but Docherty just held on to win by 5.

Meanwhile, on a distant lawn, two men were quietly passing their afternoon dutifully playing out their academic game in the B class. After four hours Lawrence Whittaker was seen to peg out one of David Ruscombe-King's balls, and spectators who were momentarily unabsorbed in the X final commented that with his other clip on rover, and his

opponent's on fifth, Whittaker really should have pegged out his own ball as well.

But after the excitement of the X was over, the spectators were surprised to notice the same two men still pacing the lawn, Ruscombe-King more purposefully now, and look - he has won, by one. In the last and longest game of the tournament a tactical misdemeanour has been justly punished.



Fiona McCoig, prominent at Colchester.

East Riding: 11-12 July

Report by Derek Trotman

With six lawns available, East Riding were able to organise their largest tournament to date most successfully. Players came from a wide range of clubs, but being the nearest tournament to Tyneside that club treated the event as a club outing, with seven members travelling by some extremely varied and lengthy routes to Hull.

Bill Lamb efficiently managed the weekend, even arranging for the rain to cease by mid morning on the first day. The five blocks, three with six players and two with five, contained a range of handicaps from -2 to 18 which resulted in some interesting games and a lot of sitting out by some of the lower bisquers.

Ross Gillespie in Block 'A' was in great form, winning all his games by such margins that he achieved a plus 94 score which made him outright winner of the tournament and the object of some handicap adjustment.

Blocks 'B' and 'C' were much closer affairs, with two players having four wins. Dave Appleton won the former due to his victory

over Alice Jones, while Barbara Sutcliffe's win over Andrew Smith put her top of Block 'C'.

Block 'D' was won by Alan Sutcliffe who made a speciality of three ball finishes, but in a play-off against the Block 'E' winner, he lost to Bob Sutherland.



Barbara Sutcliffe, block winner at Hull.

RESULTS

(30 entries)
Handicap Play; American Blocks

Block Winners

Dr R. Gillespie (11) (5 wins);
D. Appleton (3) (4 wins); Mrs B. Sutcliffe (7) (4 wins); A. Sutcliffe (1½) (4 wins); R. Sutherland (4½) (4 wins)

Ipswich: 31 July - 2 August 'How green (and spongy) is my valley . . .'

Report by Martin French

There was a change to the programme advertised in the Fixtures List, and this weekend developed into two events. The main event was the night-time Golf tournament played in intermittent floodlighting at Celia Steward's house. This was fitted-in between courses of the superb tournament dinner: a choice of Chilli or Beef in Red Wine.

The Gaunt Handicap Method was used in this event - all players under 5 (handicap, not age) had to play with a rough lump of wood nailed to the end of a broom handle. This is not to be confused with the similar, though more expensive, mallets made by a long-established firm. Andy Schonbeck, fresh (?) from his honeymoon, was not put off by the alarming way in which hoops kept moving in the darker regions of the sloping garden. He won the gripping shoot-out at the mobile peg.

Oh yes, there was also some play at the two Ipswich and one Felixstowe lawns. This was an unusual event as it was not attended by any beer drinkers from London. After the Ipswich

Hit Squad invaded the Isle of Wight earlier this season, we were hoping for a return influx of Ryde members, but none materialised.

The decisive game was probably that between Don Gaunt and Lewis Palmer. Lewis looked in control, having riggaled Don and being near to finishing. The crowd watched with bated breath ('poetic licence here, there wasn't any crowd!) as Don shot from near 1 to Lewis laid up near 3. A cunning rebound off the hoop resulted in a hit-in, and Don went on to finish. Don finished with 7 wins from 7 games, thus vindicating the Keen maxim on the bias in favour of the low bisquer in handicap play.

Two slightly unusual aspects of the event. There were no 'bandits' - as many players had their handicaps increased as reduced. The hoops were all set to give a clearance of up to ½th inch on the fattest ball, rather than to a gauge; this did catch out several players used to fat hoops and skinny balls.

Surbiton: 13-14 June A Notable 'First' at Surbiton

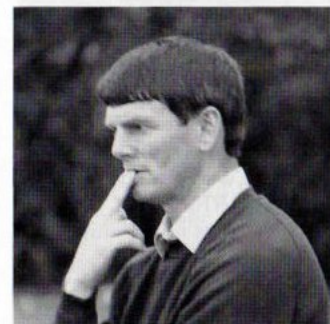
Report by David Peterson

Surbiton's first tournament was a 7-round two-day Swiss managed, as is so often the case these days, by Richard Hilditch.

The leader in the clubhouse, or at least he would have been if it had been built yet, was a resurgent David Peterson with four wins. More significant though was that Hyne who was only one win behind had already beaten Mulliner, who had yet to play David. Accordingly on Sunday Steve beat David who then fell behind for Nick to emerge victorious on six out of seven by dint of his win against Stephen. The croquet had not been brilliant but it was certainly an enjoyable weekend.

George Noble organised everything (balls, beer, barbecues, pizzas, pubs, hoops, etc.) and Jerry Guest sacrificed himself to mowing the lawns. These two are typical of a remarkably enthusiastic membership (by no means all tournament players). It is certainly a very ambitious club (five lawns already, and two more and a sumptuous club house to follow) and hopefully it will blossom at a time when other

London clubs are feeling pressure on their lawns from covetous neighbours. So far, the CA's investment in this club seems to have paid off, and we could have been privileged to see the birth of croquet's first venue capable of handling CA events for many a year.



George Noble: Sterling work at Surbiton.

RESULT

(18 entries)
Advanced Play; 7-round Swiss
Winner: N.G. Hyne (6 wins)

Surbiton: 25-26 July

RESULT

(18 entries)
Handicap Swiss
Winner: J.P. Dawson (2) (5 wins)

The catering is always mentioned in reports, this time with good reason. Apart from the excellent Tournament dinner already described, we continued our eccentric habit of offering 1st and 2nd-colour Battenbergs as part of the splendid Teas. Particularly popular was the daily Barbeque for lunch - a good change from the endless tournament salads.

Like most venues this year, the continuing wet weather has led to ridiculously easy lawns. Even the consistently good weather over the three days did little to speed up the verdant lawns. This had a noticeable



Martin French prepares the lunchtime barbecue at Ipswich.

effect in one game, where the players started on 'Bob' and 'Pat' terms. Taking full advantage of

Harrow: 25-26 July Hilditch Bounces Back

Report by Lewis Palmer

Fourteen players entered this restricted (0-6½) advanced weekend but the draw had to be re-arranged due to two local players not turning up! Although no minus players were present, most of the field consisted of improving players eager to pick up ranking points.

With medium paced lawns and easy hoops, games were played in quick time, but it wasn't until the third round that the first triple was completed, a TPO by Ray Ransom against Richard Hilditch. This obviously stung Richard into action as he beat Debbie Cornelius +17TP in 40 minutes on her 21st birthday. Tim Harrison also completed a triple against Peter Dorke in round 4 but it was Andrew Gregory who emerged as the clear leader after day 1 with 4 wins out of 4.

Alternative sport was provided by some bored spectators

the easy lawns, one player contrived a spectacularly enterprising break (worthy of Desperate Dan or Ken Jones). It was observed that a rather more icy 'Robert' and 'Patricia' tone was present by the end of the game!

This sadly might be the last Ipswich Handicap Weekend in this format, as the possible 'Easterns' next year (likely to involve Colchester and Ipswich) will cause us to divert our efforts to other events.

RESULT

(14 entries)
Handicap Play; 7-Round Swiss
Winner: D. Gaunt (1) (7 wins)

WANTED REWARD!!

Assistance in tracing the following members would be appreciated. Their magazines have been returned marked 'gone away'.

A.G. Darby (Portslade)
R.J. Evans (Littleton)
J. Hawkins (Cambridge)
P.M. Johnson (Cheltenham)
E.F.P. Melters (Wells Palace)
N. Lisle
D. Purdon (Colchester)

Reward: The satisfaction of knowing they will have the opportunity of reading an excellent magazine.

Brian Macmillan,
Admin Secretary.

in the form of a game of cricket in the park and some players tried their hand on the putting green.

Sunday began with Andrew losing his unbeaten record but he had a triple against Martin French in his next game. Both Tim and Richard completed their second triples of the tournament in round six.

In the final round Tim beat Andrew to give them both five wins along with Richard. Unfortunately Gordon Vince lost to Lewis Palmer to miss out on the play-offs.

To decide the winner, the manager (Richard) had an advanced one ball with Tim and Andrew. Much to the crowds amazement and delight, Richard won with Tim a close second.

RESULT

(14 entries)
Advanced Play; Swiss
Winner: J.R. Hilditch (5 wins)

Tournament Reports

Tournament Reports

Cheltenham: 20-25 July Chris Clarke goes from D to A

Report by Deborah Latham

A postcard-borne missive was despatched to certain relatives in Somerset on the Tuesday evening of this tournament, consisting of the following rhyme:

'Croquet is ouquet
It's raining a storm
At least it's July
And the rain's nice and warm!'

Well - mostly!

Co-manager Dennis Moorcraft (Betty Weitz being his able assistant) started the week by ensuring that he would not - as is his wont - fall to Deborah Latham in the final of the Y by the simple strategy of beating her in the first round of the X. Cunning, eh? Dab Wheeler set out the general tone of her intentions by putting John Toye in a unique position as far as he was concerned - into the Y, where he joined other such prestigious company as Robert Fulford, Laurence Latham, Fiona McCoig, Carmen Bazley, Peter Leach and Kismet Whittall.

While this huge accumulation of players in the Y was proceeding, it came to the attention of the handicappers that 18-bisquer Derek Harrison had not only won his first tournament game (hence the untimely exit of Fiona McCoig), but had gone on to win convincingly his next two as well, just to show it was no fluke. His reward for this achievement was to end the first day with two bisques less to his handicap. Chris Ross found himself in the same position: beating Robert Fulford and both generations of Maughams saw him reduced from 6 to 4 by Monday evening!

In the third round there were two cases of contestants beating their own doubles partners - to wit, Chris Clarke winning against Kay Yeoman, and Terry Greenwood beating Roy Weaver. In the semi-finals Nancy Lenfestey beat Bernard Neal with exacting thoroughness (and bisques left standing), while Duncan Reeve and Chris Clarke had a very exciting game; two balls pegged out, Duncan for rover and Chris for the third hoop. Chris then calmly performed a tremendous two-ball break (ten yard roquets/rushes, six foot hoops, all the usual stuff) with only a slight hiccup at two-back, of which Duncan took advantage by putting his ball into the jaws of rover. No problem - Chris simply hit the third of it that he could see from near the first corner, and carried on to win.



Nancy Lenfestey, a great win in the main handicap event.

The final proved to be immensely exciting. Nancy Lenfestey used two of her five bisques to set up an immaculately executed break and

went straight to the peg. Chris leapt up - probably with the words 'peg out' whizzing behind his glasses like a fruit machine - only to stick in penult. Nancy then returned to the court and, in a beautiful display of temperament, unhurriedly and thoroughly completed her second break and pegged out. A shame for Chris, but no-one could deny Nancy her evident pleasure in such a consistent performance.

In the Y John Reeve crept quietly and competently through the field to meet and triumph over Fiona McCoig in the final, and at the prize-giving Roy Weaver was enthusiastically cheered, clapped and whistled at for winning that prestigious event - the Z!

In the D class, the play-off for the Calthrop Cup paired Kathy Turtle and Don Lenfestey in the final; with Kathy on peg with both balls Don started catching up, but eventually Kathy laid a good rush to the peg and Don didn't hit, so Kathy won, albeit narrowly. In the C semi-finals, Peter Howell beat John Exell, and Fiona McCoig, in a - how shall I term it? - PRE-run(?) of the Y final, this time beat John Reeve. She and Peter then had a very close and exciting game, but since it was on court three virtually no-one was there to appreciate it. . . Never mind, Fiona - the Asa-Thomas Trophy is nonetheless yours!

Among the B's fighting it out for the Money Salver, youthful firepower showed a tendency to overwhelm mature experience as Chris Ross beat Pat Asa-Thomas and David Maugham beat Peter Leach. In a very tight game, David won the Salver by a narrow margin. Still, good going for Chris, considering his sudden handicap cut on Monday had abruptly elevated him from the C to the B class.

The qualifying blocks for the A's produced the odd moment of note; the most interesting of these was probably Paul Hands' game against Bernard Weitz, where the former completed five peels of an attempted septuple on the opponent. Despite this his form fell off so badly he had to be content with merely winning the game. . . With the holder safely out of contention, the holder's wife made herself extremely popular by drawing the play-offs so that Ian Maugham and Bernard Weitz got byes while Dennis Moorcraft had to battle it out with Bernard Neal and John Toye similarly with Chris Clarke. Dennis made a valiant attempt to come from behind against Bernard's extensive lead, but didn't quite manage it. Against John, Chris hit the lift and proceeded to execute a very neat, thorough and - for Chris - somewhat slow and ortho-

HONOURS BOARD

Cheltenham Challenge Cup

C.D. Clarke

Money Salver

D.B. Maugham

Asa-Thomas Trophy

Miss F.C. McCoig

Calthrop Cup

Mrs K. Turtle

Daniels Cup

Mrs N. Lenfestey

Secretary's Spoon

D.C. & J.E. Reeve

Barwell Salvors

D. Ruscombe-King & Miss J. Wraith

dox TPO, very beautifully done. With John on three and his backward ball on three-back Chris elected to peg out his forward ball. John thereafter played very well to catch up, but unfortunately failed rover with Chris lurking near the peg. Chris then met Ian, who had won the Battle of the Byes; both players made somewhat tentative starts (eg Chris missed four long shots in succession!), but Ian never really got into his stride and Chris took the Cheltenham Challenge Cup by a comfortable margin. And to think that this time last year he'd just won the D class. . . !

The Secretary's Spoon for family doubles was played as an event in its own right this year, and the first round saw such previous holders as the Lathams and the Moorcrafts despatched with unexpected alacrity. Roger and Dab Wheeler were responsible for the Lathams' quick exit with a most deserved win; in the turn in which time was called the latter were peg and peg, and it was necessary for Dab to ensure a victory by making the last four hoops, peeling her partner through rover, and pegging out - so she did just that! In so doing she brought to an end Laurence and Deborah's record of not having been beaten by a family pair in this doubles event since 1984. It was John and Duncan Reeve who came up against the Wheelers in the final, and despite the latter's very good form (other victims included the Neals and the Maughams) the Spoon is now in the hands of the Reeve family.

Nobody was particularly surprised that Terry Greenwood and Roy Weaver won the Y doubles; the only surprise was that they were in it in the first place!

That was the doing of Edgar Jackson and Pat Hague, who were proceeding very nicely until they ran into Chris Clarke's and Kay Yeoman's determination to be in the final of the Barwell Salvors. The same was true of the potentially very dangerous pairing of Fiona McCoig and Margaret Langley, but David Ruscombe-King and Jean Wraith were equally determined to be in the final - and, as Chris and Kay discovered, even more determined to win it! David finished in fine style by peeling his partner through rover and pegging out to the great applause of the gallery.

With X, Y and Z handicap events, at least four qualifying games in the classes and X, Y and family doubles, one certainly could not complain of a shortage of events, although played in some of the worst July weather for a good few years. At least Finals Day was bathed in sunshine, so it could be seen (as the manager remarked most appreciatively) that all the trophies had been returned in a sparkling clean condition, which made a nice change!

RESULTS

Cheltenham Challenge Cup (16 entries)

Advanced Play; American Blocks

BLOCK PLAY-OFF

Semi-Finals

C.D. Clarke bt Prof B.G. Neal +17; F.I. Maugham bt Dr B.G.F. Weitz +21.

Final

Clarke bt Maugham +21.

Money Salver (15 entries)

Advanced Play; Law 53. 22pts. American Blocks

BLOCK PLAY-OFF

Semi-Finals

D.B. Maugham bt P. Leach +10; C. Ross bt Mrs E. Asa-Thomas +5.

Final

Maugham bt Ross +5.

Asa-Thomas Trophy (10 entries)

Level Play; 22pts. American Blocks

BLOCK PLAY-OFF

Semi-Finals

Miss F.C. McCoig bt J. Reeve +11; P. Howell bt J. Exell +12.

Final

Miss McCoig bt Howell +3.

Calthrop Cup (10 entries)

Level Play; 18pt game. American Blocks

BLOCK PLAY-OFF

Semi-Finals

Edgbaston: 17-19 July Gregory Manages to Win

Report by Andrew Gregory

The seasonal July weather of three days' almost continuous rain made waterproofs de rigueur but playing a break not too rigorous on the sodden Edgbaston lawns. Indeed, the widespread reluctance to break down led to seven +26's during the weekend, often with bisques to spare.

The lower-handicapped players, denied a reasonable amount of play, amused themselves in other ways. Brian Hallam took vengeance on the long-bisquers by fouling any shot he refereed - despite not being qualified. Stuart Packer seized a rare opportunity to compile a triple peel, and Peter Dorke claimed the shot of the tournament with a cut rush rover peel from near penult. Alan Girling achieved a three-figure minus score, despite beating Hallam +1 in the final round. However, Duncan Reeve and Andrew Gregory had a quite different approach, both being unbeaten before they met in the 4th round. In the game, although Reeve scored neither a hoop nor even a roquet, Gregory unsporingly failed to 26 him.

During Saturday a curious usurpation in management occurred. In the morning Alan

Harrow: 27-28 June An Invitation Tournament

The Harrow Oak Club held an extremely strong invitation 'best of three' tournament which attracted five current Great Britain internationals.

In the first round Openshaw and Aiton both had convincing wins. Openshaw won his second game against Rose with a straight triple. In the other two matches Mulliner and Fulford both won the first game convincingly with triples, but their opponents Irwin and Avery respectively took the next two games.

In the semi-finals Aiton had a good win over Irwin. The Openshaw v Avery match went to a third game and both players missed a number of opportunities to win. Finally Avery missed a 6 yard shot to give Openshaw an easy break to finish.

The final produced excellent croquet from Openshaw who

Mrs K. Turtle bt Mrs I. Moorcraft +1(+); D. Lenfestey bt Miss S. Waterston +7.

Final

Mrs Turtle bt Lenfestey +3.

The Daniels Cup (48 entries)

Handicap Play; Knockout

4th Round

C.D. Clarke (1) bt T.P. Greenwood (3) +7; D.C. Reeve (2½) bt C.J. Ross (6) +4; B.G. Neal (-1½) bt D. Harrison (18) +7; Mrs N. Lenfestey (8) bt N. Gooch (4) +7.

Semi-Finals

Clarke bt D.C. Reeve +2; Mrs Lenfestey bt Neal +26.

Final

Mrs Lenfestey bt Clarke +1.

Girling had seemed in complete control; by the afternoon Andrew Gregory had commandeered the clipboard and with relish was wrestling with the Swiss system - Alan was wrestling with the washing-up.

One player did succeed in avoiding all the 26-ing. Fiona McCoig lost one of her games by the comparatively close score of -8; her other five games were decided by horrifyingly close margins of no more than three!

The tightest game though, and the tensest, was that which determined the tournament winner; unfortunately (inevitably?) it was the only game to go to time. After time was called, both Andrew Symons and Andrew Gregory were for peg and rover, and both were joined up. Knowing he needed one point for victory, Symons played with his peg ball, took off and 'pegged out' - in sad ignorance of Law 39. Gregory apologetically ran rover in the next turn.

HELP IN THE OFFICE!

Alan Stockwell has joined Brian Macmillan as a part-time assistant in the CA Office to help with the greatly increased workload there.

won with triples in both games, bringing Aiton's excellent winning run to an end.



David Openshaw wins at Harrow with two triples.

Tournament Reports

'Y' Handicap

Final

J. Reeve bt Miss McCoig +12.

The Secretary's Spoon (11 entries)

Handicap Doubles; Knockout

Final

D.C. & J.E. Reeve bt Dr & Mrs R.F. Wheeler +5.

Barwell Salvors (11 entries)

Handicap Doubles; Knockout

Final

D. Ruscombe-King & Miss J. Wraith bt C.D. Clarke & Mrs K. Yeoman +9.

'Y' Doubles

Final

T.P. Greenwood & R. Weaver bt Mrs N. Lenfestey & Mrs K. Turtle +17.

Some congratulations should go to the (over-) long-bisquers - after all they did spend more time out in the rain - especially to Ian McClelland and Andrew Symons, whose handicaps were deservingly dismembered.

Our thanks to our visitors; to Andy Sweeney and Ken Ruston who substituted for a late withdrawal; to Juliet Reeve and Hilda Gregory for making lunch-time the most enjoyable part of the day; and to Alan Girling for facilitating the traditional manager's birthday celebration, and for managing so vicariously.

RESULTS

(17 entries)

6-Round Swiss; Handicap Play

Winner

A. Gregory (2½) (6 wins)

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Harrow Oak: 1-2 August Home win for Cordingley

Report by Andrew Gregory

In the August Open Weekend at Harrow, the seeded players made rapid progress through the first round of the knockout. In most cases this was because they had been given fortuitous byes by manager Richard Hilditch. The second round caused them rather more difficulty, as John Walters lost narrowly to Danny Palmer, and Eric Solomon was defeated by Gordon Vince.

Vince went on to beat Nick Hyne in a closely fought best-of-three semi-final. In the first game Hyne had pegged out two balls, leaving his other clip on rover with his opponent on 1-back. But a series of medium-length hits-in by Vince gave him victory by one.

In the final Vince seemed to be heading for another notable win when he sadly stuck in rover with his second ball. This enabled Phil Cordingley to win the tournament without conceding a game; he completed three triple peels in his six wins.

The Swiz was won with consistent play by Bill Aldridge,

despite a late challenge from Nick Hyne. In their individual game Hyne had seemed to be well in control when with both his balls for the peg he experienced an apparent reluctance to finish. Before Aldridge completed his comeback to win, Hyne did manage to peg one ball out, accidentally, thus achieving his second -1 of the weekend.



Bill Aldridge, who won the Harrow Swizz.

RESULT

(13 entries)

Advanced Play; Knockout

Final

Cordingley bt Vince +3, +26(TP)

Southport: 7-9 August Bandits still lurk!

Report by Andrew Bennet

This tournament was fully subscribed, with a handicap range of 18 and a height range of nearly two feet! The long bisquers, both locals and Tynesiders, were anxious to show what they would have done three weeks earlier if the Long Bisquer's Weekend had not disappeared under water.

Gail Curry seemed to be a clear block winner, but a very late defeat by Don Williamson robbed her of that prize, which went to the shortest competitor, Andrew Saurin. Andrew lost heavily to a scratch player two days before the tournament, but when he played Tim Haste on the Saturday he finished with NINE bisques left. Many of the players could be described as 'rapid improvers', but this was extraordinary.

One of last year's bandits, Russell Collighan, started with ten and a half fewer bisques than he had a year ago and lost some more for winning Block A easily. Block B was won by Hillary Turner, playing in her first tournament. She lost only one game, and that because of the opponent's unfamiliarity with Laws 15 and 39 and her right to stay in a warm, dry clubhouse under Law 45(a)! Mike Sandler was second on points, showing how the low-bisquer ought to hit everything and go round. Syd

Jones made sure that the other block's prize went to Tyneside.

The sun eventually appeared on the last afternoon, causing confusion to the double-bankers on lawn 4 when it brought a small hedgehog out of hibernation.

Thanks are due to Peter Death for managing the 28 of us despite a mix up that I created for him at the start, and of course to those members who maintained the standard of Southport food and hoops.



Andrew Saurin, Southport block winner.

RESULTS

(28 entries)

Handicap Play; American Blocks

Block Winners

R.J. Collighan (4½) (6 wins); Ms H. Turner (16) (5 wins); S.O. Jones (9) (5 wins); A. Saurin (18) (5 wins)

Hurlingham: 1-8 August Even the dogs enjoy themselves!

Report by Eileen Shaw

It is always a great pleasure for me to visit Hurlingham, especially this year as Dennis was in his first week's tournament - our previous visits have only been for the 'Longman' heats and for a 'Friendly' against our new Ramsgate Club. It was especially nice to meet old friends who had been down to play at Compton - our other club - and to make new ones.

Nigel Aspinall who managed the tournament (ably assisted by Mike and Jean Henderson) was as always kind and considerate and of course superbly efficient. Also on hand was young Kiley Jones from the New York City Croquet Club, not only to help as one of the referees but also to keep 'Domo' who owns Bernard Neal, 'Mac' who owns Veronica and James Carlisle, 'Mitzie and

Colchester: 7-9 August 'A' Class Players Disappoint

Report by Jonathan Collis

Any hopes entertained by competitors that Colchester's traditionally fast lawns would have been made easy by the previous fortnight's heavy rain were thwarted by a chill wind which dried the courts off enough to make concentration essential. These meteorological and topographical factors combined to make for some very slow play in some quarters which on the second day forced Bill Lamb - acting as assistant manager in Pat Hetherington's absence - to assume some results simply to get people playing.

The clear leader by the end of the second day was Jonathan Collis, who showed that enough bisques could compensate for a lack of style, by 26-ing assorted lower-handicapped players. The key match was on the morning of the Sunday, against Fiona McCoig, another local junior player. Despite - or possibly because of - a number of 'insulting' leaves eg refusing to take a bisque having broken down with the opponent's ball, Collis emerged the victor +17, thus wrapping up the tournament and being rewarded by having his handicap cut by 2 to 6.

Fiona tied for second place with three others: Andrew Gregory, Paul Elliott (last year's winner) and Lewis Palmer. In a definitely unofficial shoot-out play-off Gregory hit the peg a magnificent 3 times out of 5, as befitted the lowest handicapped

Tuesday' who own Mike and Jean Henderson, well under control with frequent 'walkies' and so well behaved that not one 'bark' was heard and just a little wagging of tails when their owners won a game. Kiley is equally bemused by dogs as croquet!

The weather generally was very good except Tuesday afternoon when the heavens opened, thunder, lightning, high wind - the lot. Bowlers on adjacent lawns abandoned their games and ran for cover but the croquet still went on and the ladies still managed to emerge from their wet gear looking elegant - well done ladies. The lawns were in excellent condition and lush and green with the rain. A very nice week thoroughly enjoyed by all - Here's to next year's!

runner-up.

The average handicap of the players in the weekend was 5, but the A-class players disappointingly failed to produce a triple between them, despite the slowing of the lawns by rain on the Sunday afternoon. Far from disappointing was the food, which during the weekend was hot and appetising, much needed when the weather broke. All in all an enjoyable and (especially for the reporter!) successful weekend.



Jonathan Collis with his Trophy.

RESULT

(24 entries)

Handicap Play; 7-Round Swiss

Winner: J. Collis (7 wins)

Another Successful Course at Loughborough

Report by Chris Hudson

As in 1986, the 1987 Loughborough Summer School was over-subscribed, even though the number of places was increased from 24 to 32. So if you were disappointed this year, or are thinking about coming next time, please make an early application.

Eight short lawns were laid out on the hockey pitch at Loughborough and this proved to be an ideal site. Being close to the main road through the University campus, our activities attracted a lot of attention, and this was reflected in the number of people from other courses who joined us each evening to play forms of 'alternative' croquet or just to enquire about the game. And don't be misled by the term 'hockey pitch' - at Loughborough, even hockey pitches are up to the standard of many club lawns!

some quarters and not in others, it was a great help to the coaches to be able to recognise at a glance what stage each player had reached.

On the first evening, the 32 players took part in a gymkhana, which was marked by the coaches and provided an initial assessment of how good each player was at playing the main croquet strokes and how much each knew about 4-ball breaks. This enabled the players to be split into 5 groups according to ability, the idea being that in subsequent sessions, those in the top group could get through the benchmark tests quicker and make faster progress. If anyone in a lower group showed similar progress, then he or she could be promoted to a higher group.

On each subsequent day, each group had a session practising strokes under the super-

ROLL CALL

Those who attended in 1987:

Players

Beryl Amner	Christine Begrie	Hilary Boardman
Maurice Boardman	Frank Butler	Mary Causton
Yvonne Colbeck	Dennis Dudeney	Joyce Dudeney
John Farley	Alain Giraud	John Green
Margaret Green	Hamish Hall	Evelyn Hoar
John Hobbs	Allen Jenkin	Hazel Jenkin
Denise Johns	Cecile Leech	Janet Leech
John Leech	Margaret Macfarlane	Heather Mallinson
Lorna Mallinson	Jean Nash	Leonard Nash
Eva Ridgeon	Mary Tope	Elisabeth White
Kathleen Yonge	Susan Yonge	

Coaches

Ross Gillespie	David Higgs	Chris Hudson
John Jeffrey	Bill Lamb	

The coaches arrived two days before the course and sampled one of the sessions being run by the National Coaching Foundation before getting down to preparing for the players. In mounting a course of this nature, there is quite a lot of work to be done in laying out lawns and hoops, coordinating different coaching sessions, and defining common course objectives for all the coaches.

Croquet is mainly a matter of confidence - if you know you can do a particular shot successfully, then it will happen! So we decided to set a number of benchmark tests that each player would have to pass before going on to the next stage. In fact, players found themselves being awarded 'badges' for each test - somewhat reminiscent of the primary school 'star' system - and although this found favour in

vision of their coach and, as and when they were ready, individual players attempted the benchmark tests. The top group, coached by Bill Lamb, were soon sporting their award badges, and encouraging progress was being made lower down the field, so that at the end of the course, most players had completed the basic tests.

Following a 4-ball break demonstration on the first day, the theory of playing a break was discussed, and this led on to the second main strand running through the course. The 4-ball break was broken down into a series of 'building-blocks'. First, the hoop approach, learning how to take croquet from any position near the hoop to enable the hoop to be made, with an easy return roquet.

Having mastered the first block, the player practised block



Players and coaches at the CA's Grade II coaching weekend at Nottingham.

2, taking off from a ball near the peg to a ball near the hoop, and then making the hoop using block 1. When block 2 was mastered, the player began practising block 3, eventually joining that on to blocks 1 and 2, and so on.

Block 4 introduced the drive shot from the first hoop to put a ball at the next-but-one hoop, going to the ball in the middle, and by blocks 5 and 6, the player was practising a 4-ball break, and even beginning to consider a simple rush after making the hoop.

The third strand of the course dealt with setting up a break from scratch. The eight lawns were laid out with 'break-builder' problems, and in later sessions, players played shots in turn to set up a 4-ball break and then take the ball round to the peg.

There were also daily competitive sessions, and formal presentations on particular aspects of the game. Every evening after dinner we played alternative croquet, sometimes with 20 or 30 outsiders joining in, and on the last day we had a video show as well. All handicaps were assessed at the end of the course and several players achieved an official handicap of 18 or less for the first time.

BREAK-BUILDER No 6 - By Keith Aiton

It is the fourth turn of the game and you are to play with Yellow. How would you set up a break, using a maximum of two bisques?

You may be wondering how the balls came to be in their present positions. I leave that as an exercise, with the clue that the first two turns of the game (by Blue and Red) were the same as in Break Builder No 5.

(Solution on Page 30).

