

A master stroke.



Sponsors to the Croquet Association

Probably the best lager in the world.

July 1988

Issue No. 198

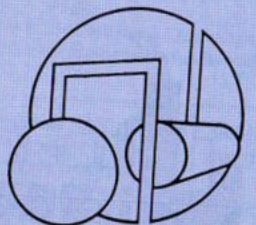
CROQUET



Inside:

**Weekend Round-Up
Championship Reports
Appointing Club Handicappers
Club News
Comment & Features**

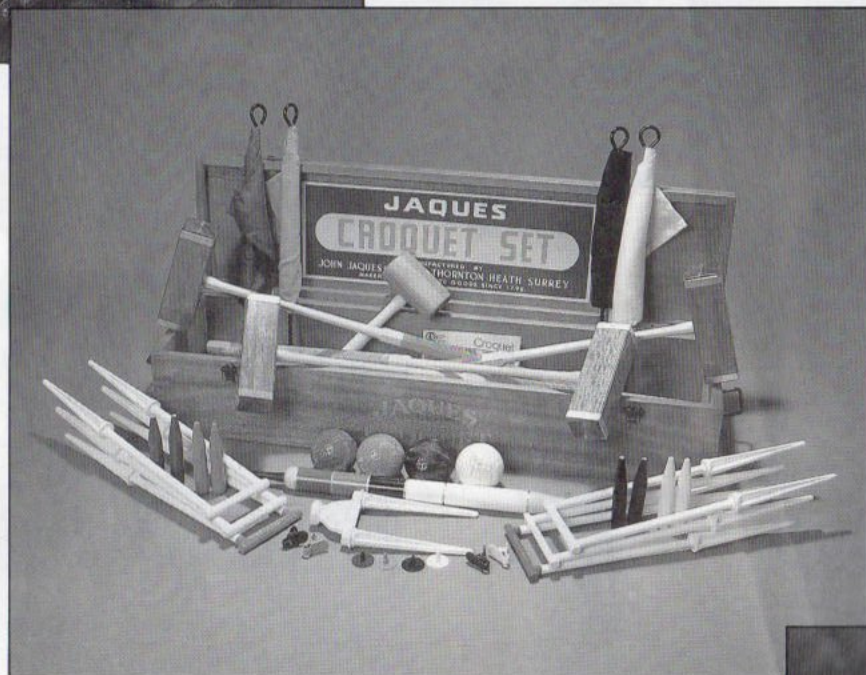
Published by



The Croquet Association



JAUQUES
 craftsmanship and
 style has provided
 the finest equipment
 for over 100 years



Still
 leading
 the way



Selected for 1988
 Solomon Cup



SETS from £75 to £700
 Custom Made MALLETS, HOOPS,
 BALLS etc from £25 to £110

Send for Coloured Brochure and
 Price List from: -

Jaques

361 WHITEHORSE ROAD,
 THORNTON HEATH,
 SURREY, CR4 8XP

LEADERS IN SPORT PHONE: 01-684 4242

INDEX

	Page
AGM Minutes	29
Club News	6, 7
Coaches Corner	28
Comment	14
Course Notes	16,17
Croquet Book of Records	26
Croquet Classic	17
Feature: Mallets of Old	10,11
Grading Systems	8, 9
Handicapping Appointments	27
Indoor Croquet	18,19
Letters	26,27
Obituaries	9,16
Official Business	29,30
Overseas News	15
Personal Column	15
Short Story	20,21,22
Straight Rush	26
Tournament Reports:	
Coles Western Championship	12
Home Internationals	13
Inter-Counties	4, 5
Club Tournaments	19,23
Weekend Round-Up	24,25

'CROQUET'

Contact Addresses

CA Secretary: Brian Macmillan, The Croquet Association, The Hurlingham Club, Ranelagh Gardens, London SW6 3PR. Tel: 01-736-3148.

Editor: Chris Hudson, The Oaklands, Englesea Brook, Near Crewe, Cheshire CW2 5QW. Tel: 0270-820296.

Advertising: Brian Bucknall, Moonrakers, Goring Road, Woodcote, Reading, Berks. RG8 0QE. Tel: 0491-681746.

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 welcome 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.

Editorial Team

Editor Chris Hudson
 Tournaments Andrew Bennet
 Coaching Richard Brand
 Features Allen Parker
 Pictures John Walters
 Advertising Chris Hudson
 Advertising Brian Bucknall

Annual Subscription Rate **£12.00**

Editorial

TELEVISION & CROQUET

As you will have seen recently in the papers, Granada TV have decided that the proposed Croquet International Indoor match will not take place in October as planned, but will be deferred indefinitely. The problem seems to be that many changes are taking place in television at present, with companies contracting, new regulations coming into force that affect output schedules and the use of independent producers, the impending advent of satellite TV, and the intense competition for advertising.

It seems that advertisers are no longer interested in the 50+ market - they are looking for programmes that achieve high viewing figures and attract a young, high-spending audience. Their researches show that TV Soaps, Quiz Shows, and 'Ladies magazine' type programmes attract the audience they want. Sports programmes, on the other hand, attract an older audience and fail to gain many places in the top 100 viewing figures. Bowls, darts, gymnastics, wrestling, snooker, football, and many other

sports will all suffer reduced coverage as a result of the current climate.

So for this year, at least with the Independent TV companies, we are going to have to tread water whilst we look for opportunities to arise from the new situation.

: : : :

Perhaps we should offer a prize to anyone who can guess which mallet Dorothy Rush uses (see page 14) - with an additional prize if they can guess which balls her club plays with! The fact is that if you were to ask 100 players which equipment they preferred, you would probably get 100 different answers.

Nevertheless, her article gives one player's views, and puts over the message 'try before you buy'. Beginners are usually told to try a few club mallets before they take the plunge and buy their own, and this is sound advice. Account should also be taken of the type of use to which the equipment is to be put, and the CA's new Classification Scheme for equipment will help in this respect.

CHRIS HUDSON



The players who took part in the Home Internationals at Budleigh Salterton, photographed with Ray Stevens (manager) and Peter Danks.

The Daily Telegraph

The Daily Telegraph is including a regular report on Croquet on its Sports Pages every Friday, written by Charles Randall, their assistant Sports Editor.

Peter Danks is acting as the CA's link with the Telegraph, and it would be helpful if selection committees, team captains, and event managers could keep him fully informed, both before and after the events with which they are concerned.

The Telegraph only 'gets it wrong' if we give them the wrong information. But please bear in mind that Peter needs advance information (about teams, etc) at least 10 days before the event if it is to be included in the Telegraph's report. And results and a brief report are needed immediately after the event to catch the 'Croquet Column' in the following week's Telegraph.

Charles Randall and his team have been to Hurlingham to play Croquet and learn about the game at first hand. Please help Peter to help them give Croquet the coverage it deserves.

Photographs in this issue by: Standard Photo Co, Russell & Sons, Chris Hudson, Mark Wood, Andrew Bennet, Diana Williams, Capt Tucker, Folke Engstrom, S. Rackley, John Parkinson-Jones, Barry Keen, GSB Associates, Ivor Brand and Jeff Bowden.

THE SOLOMON TROPHY

Great Britain has announced its team to play the United States at Cheltenham for the inaugural match in the Solomon Trophy series.

The order of play will be as follows:

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| 1. G.N. Aspinall | 4. C.J. Irwin |
| 2. D.K. Openshaw (Capt) | 5. K.M.H. Aiton |
| 3. WdeB. Prichard | 6. P. Cordingley |

The doubles pairings are:
 1. Aspinall and Cordingley
 2. Openshaw and Aiton
 3. Prichard and Irwin

The match will take place from 9th to 13th July, and will consist of three rounds of doubles and two rounds of singles. All matches will be the best of three games, under advanced play rules.

In the three rounds of doubles, each pair in one team will play against each of the three pairs in the opposing team.

In the singles, one round will consist of matches between opposite numbers: GBI v. USA1, GB2 v. USA2, etc, and the second round will consist of reverse matches: GBI v. USA2, GB2 v. USA 1, etc.

The schedule of play is as follows:

- | | |
|---------------------|---------|
| Saturday 9th July | Doubles |
| Sunday 19th July | Doubles |
| Monday 20th July | Singles |
| Tuesday 21st July | Doubles |
| Wednesday 22nd July | Singles |

The Cheltenham Club is in Old Bath Road, Cheltenham (Tel: 0242-512650). Play will start at 10am each day, and spectators will be most welcome.

Front Cover: Mark Avery, British Open Champion, in play for the Eastern Counties during the Lister Inter-Counties Championship at Southwick.

'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 9/10 Worle Industrial Centre, Weston-super-Mare. Tel: 0934-516902.

Lister[®]
OUTDOOR FURNITURE



WARWICK

SPONSORS OF THE
INTER-COUNTY
CROQUET
CHAMPIONSHIP

Lister solid teak outdoor furniture. The perfect complement for a traditional English setting. Elegant and gracious yet sturdy and robust. Distinctly civilised you might say. But quite clearly—in a league of its own.

Lister[®]
OUTDOOR FURNITURE

ANYTHING ELSE JUST ISN'T CROQUET

GREEN BROTHERS (GEEBRO) LTD.,
HAILSHAM, EAST SUSSEX, BN27 3DT
TEL: 0323-840771

Southwick: 27-30 May
LISTER INTER-COUNTIES
CHAMPIONSHIP
Eastern Counties do it again!

Report by Martin Murray

The Inter-Counties Championship is in one way the premier event in the CA calendar, in that it attracts the largest number of players to one venue. This year there were again twelve entries, probably the maximum that Southwick can accommodate, making a total of 72 players, but the fact that most teams drew on larger squads meant that even more players actually took part over the four days.

With four days allowing for eleven sessions, it would have been possible for each team to have played all the other eleven teams, but Nigel Aspinall decided to omit two of the matches for each team, so that each team would have two rounds rest during the tournament. This arrangement found little favour with most of the players, who would have preferred to play the extra two games, three games of doubles in a day not being much of a strain for most players.

Two changes from last year were the timing over the Bank Holiday weekend, which meant that working players only needed one day's leave, and a welcome new sponsor in Listers, makers of teak garden furniture, a most appropriate field of business for sponsors of a croquet event.

From the start, it seemed likely that Avon, last year's winners, Eastern, Lancashire & Cheshire, and Surrey would be the teams from which the winner would come. The first round saw Eastern gain an important win over Lancs & Cheshire, with Mark Avery looking very impressive in the first pair. Avon had a much tighter and slower win over Berks & Oxon, while Surrey, without the assistance of Steve Mulliner (how come the Daily Telegraph was misinformed again?), struggled to beat Yorkshire. The newcomers, Kent, had a good win in their first match over Sussex. As the day went on, Avon and Eastern continued to impress, both ending the day unbeaten.

On Saturday, the usual appearance of new team members occurred, Middlesex and Surrey in particular undergoing wholesale changes in team composition. The arrival of Phil Cordingley and Jerry Guest was expected, but the appearance of Debby Prentis, freshly arrived from America, was a surprise for most of those present. She

intends to play quite a lot of croquet over here, though the lack of an American or Canadian team in the event prevented her making her debut on the British tournament scene. Interest on the court centred around the two leading teams, Avon achieving three more wins, including an important one over Lancs & Cheshire despite the absence of Martin Murray at a wedding (not his own!), and Eastern kept up the pressure with three wins as well.

Sunday morning saw an abrupt change in the weather after the sunny conditions of Friday and Saturday, and Avon were pleased not to be playing, except that this gave Eastern the chance to close the gap, which they duly did, both teams having 6 out of 6 at lunchtime. The afternoon session saw Eastern get another win, but Avon had to struggle against Surrey.

Avon started with a very quick win for their second pair of Martin Murray and John Mann, Surrey won a somewhat longer game at first pair thanks to Tony Mrozinski's excellent shooting, but Avon looked like winning the third pair until David Wiggins pegged out John McCullough with Bob Race on 4-back. Bob played well to get to peg, but could not connect with the final shot. Bernard Neal crept round to penultimate but stuck there, leaving Bob a treble target from B baulk of white in the hoop, pink nearby, and the peg. Avon were sure he must hit something, and indeed he did, but it was the wire of penultimate he hit, not ball or peg, so Bernard was left with an easy finish to record Avon's first defeat.

Now the mathematicians started to calculate the possible outcomes, each of the leaders having two more matches, Avon versus Kent and Eastern versus Gloucestershire that evening, followed by a possibly deciding match between Avon and Eastern which some foresighted management had decreed would be played on Monday afternoon. It transpired that Avon could just win if Eastern dropped a game to Gloucestershire, Avon beat Kent 3-0, and then Avon beat Eastern 3-0 on Monday.

Now the nerves started to appear, Avon struggling first against Kent, particularly in the first pair where Gordon Drake for Kent appeared to be hitting everything. Gradually

the experience of the Avon team showed through and they picked up the necessary 3-0 win, and attention turned to Eastern's match where all three games were close.

The closest was the second game, where Ian Maugham and Carmen Bazley were in the lead against John Walters and Tim Harrison. As time was called Tim made a break to the peg to take a one point lead but he left a ball in baulk to give Gloucestershire the innings. Ian was able to leave his partner's ball in front of Rover and peg out to level the score, John just missed a long shot, and Carmen, to huge cheers from the Avon team, ran a difficult Rover hoop to record a +1(T) win which kept Avon's chances alive. Eastern just scraped home in the other two games to retain their unbeaten record, but they still needed to take one game from Avon to lift the title.

With neither team due to play on Monday morning, and Eastern only needing one game to take the title, both captains had plenty of time to decide on the best strategy of team order to give them the best chance. Should Eastern, who had fielded an unchanged team order through eight matches, put their best two players in the first pair to guarantee victory? John McCullough felt he had to strengthen his first pair to counter the possibility of Eastern doing just that, and therefore changed Avon's order, but kept the new pairings so secret, in order to prevent leaks, that most of his own team had to find out who they were playing with from Martin French, the opposition's captain!

In the event Martin adopted the wise tactic of not changing a winning team. What promised to be an exciting contest ended in a slight anti-climax as John Walters and Tim Harrison, playing some very positive croquet, gave Martin Murray and Bob Race no more than two or three half chances, none of which were taken, before John achieved the necessary win with an excellent three-ball straight double peel finish.

With the title now safe in Eastern's hands, interest centred round the third pair game, where Martin French and Duncan Reeve were vying with John Mann, partnering Ray Ransom in this game, to be the only unbeaten players in the competition. In the event, it was John Mann who achieved that distinction, and his excellent play throughout the weekend (in five games partnering him I only saw him make two or three errors) was rewarded with a handicap reduction to 1/2.

Eastern took the top game thanks to some excellent hit-ins from Mark Avery and a fine finish from Debbie Cornelius, full of

powerful accurate rushes on a heavy lawn that belied the claim that slow lawns put the 'weaker' sex at a disadvantage. The secret of rushing lies in timing and technique, as Kitty Sessions demonstrated years ago.

There is little doubt that Eastern Counties thoroughly deserved their win. They found three good partnerships and kept to them throughout the tournament. Mark Avery provided the sparkle at the top, but triple and quadruple peels require a partner able to get round consistently, which Debbie Cornelius regularly did. The third pair, Martin French and Duncan Reeve, were far too strong for most of the opposition, and while the second pair, John Walters and Tim Harrison, were occasionally erratic, they produced the good performances when they were needed, particularly in the final match against Avon.

After tea, the trophy was presented to the victorious Eastern Counties team by Mr Peter Bennett, Managing Director of Listers, who expressed his company's satisfaction at being involved with the event. All the players received a



The Eastern Counties team receive their prize of a Lister seat. Standing (L to R): Mark Avery, Martin French (Captain), John Walters and Tim Harrison. Seated: Debbie Cornelius and Duncan Reeve.

Lister badge with an excellent lunch that Lister's generosity had made available on Monday, and after the prize-giving there was wine and cake for all. The Southwick Club had put a lot of hard work into the preparations for the event, and the difficulties of catering for so many players were overcome with a smooth efficiency which was much appreciated by all who took part.

Away from the excitement of the battle between Eastern and Avon for the title, there was much enjoyable croquet and many fine performances. It was good for instance to see William Ormerod back to something like his old form, picking up several good wins for 'Butlershire', as one humorist labelled the Devon and Dorset combination. Barry Keen and Dave Foulser confirmed one of the unwritten laws of doubles play, that says that the most certain way to make your young, self-confident partner break down is to tell him 'don't try a triple, just make sure you get round to the peg'. Chris Clarke and Mark Suter were the two victims of the law, but no doubt they will be saying much the same

things to their partners in twenty years time! Pegging out an opponent was a common feature of the play (Riggall's Law remains unconfirmed), but many pairs decided not to peg out an opponent when time was nearly up because they didn't want to give points to the opposition. They failed to appreciate that the two ball player can often make points much faster if he doesn't need to spend time separating the opponents' wide joins.

The continual presence at croquet tournaments of players sitting out provides fertile ground for 'discussion', perhaps more accurately described most of the time as 'gossip'. With 72 or more players present, and no more than 15 or so of them actively involved in play at any one time, the Counties is perhaps the most fertile ground of all. Certainly I seemed to hear more 'unconfirmed rumours', 'brilliant suggestions', and 'scandalous outrages' at this event than at most tournaments.

The success of the Counties in recent years suggests that it might soon grow beyond the capacity of even Southwick, and solutions proposed to that problem include a pre-qualifying tournament for the weaker or newer Counties, or splitting the event into two blocks, played at two different venues. The success of the Eastern Counties team in recent years (1st, 2nd, 1st) led some to suggest that only single county teams should be admitted or that qualifications should be tightened to exclude, for example, players who are only members of a club in the county.

These are, of course, only the problems of success, and we can all be satisfied that the Counties is such a successful tournament. It was my first appearance in the event for 16 years, but I hope to make it a regular feature of my croquet calendar in future.

RESULTS		Round 1		Round 7						
Eastern Counties	9	22	1	0	Surrey	3	Lancs & Cheshire	1	Avon	2
Avon	7	18	2	2	Lancs & Cheshire	1	Eastern Counties	3	Berks & Oxon	0
Lancs & Cheshire	6	18	3=	2	Sussex	1	Surrey	2	Gloucestershire	1
Berks & Oxon	6	17	3=	1	Middlesex	2	Round 8			
Surrey	6	15	3=	2	Berks & Oxon	1	0	Middlesex	3	
Middlesex	4	14	6=	3	Avon	0	3	Bedfordshire	0	
Devon & Dorset	4	13	6=	1	Devon & Dorset	2	0	Yorkshire	0	
Yorkshire	4	13	6=	1	Bedfordshire	2	2	Eastern Counties	2	
Gloucester	3	13	9=	1	Gloucestershire	2	2	Lancs & Cheshire	2	
Kent	3	7	9=	1	Surrey	2	0	Devon & Dorset	1	
Sussex	2	6	11	3	Eastern Counties	3	3	Gloucestershire	0	
Bedford	0	6	12	0	Yorkshire	0	0	Devon & Dorset	1	
								Round 9		
								Eastern Counties		3
								Bedfordshire		0
								Yorkshire		2
								Eastern Counties		2
								Kent		0
								Avon		3
								Lancs & Cheshire		1
								Sussex		0
								Middlesex		2
								Berks & Oxon		3
								Yorkshire		0
								Round 10		
								Yorkshire		1
								Devon & Dorset		2
								Surrey		2
								Middlesex		1
								Lancs & Cheshire		2
								Berks & Oxon		1
								Kent		2
								Bedfordshire		1
								Sussex		0
								Gloucestershire		3
								Round 11		
								Surrey		1
								Berks & Oxon		2
								Eastern Counties		2
								Avon		1
								Kent		0
								Gloucestershire		3
								Devon & Dorset		2

OXFORD UNIVERSITY CROQUET CLUB The Cuppers Final

From Ian Plummer

Cuppers is the name given to the University's inter-college competitions - they range from tiddlywinks to karate. With more than 32 colleges and associated halls there are plenty of competitors wanting to represent their college and gain plus points for their CV.

Oxford's Croquet Cuppers must be one of the largest organised croquet events in the world involving over 250 competitors in a single competition. It serves also to popularise the sport amongst students. The Oxford University Croquet Club organises the competition and was fortunate last year in obtaining sponsorship for the competition from one of the major champagne houses, Laurent Perrier. With plenty of champagne prizes the interest in the game was highly promoted!

Most colleges have a small ill-defined patch of grass on which the college croquet set is scattered. Typical equipment consists of a standard garden croquet set with its flimsy wire hoops. Few of the lawns are of standard size, many having unusual obstacles such as trees, drains and sculptures. Consequently, although standard CA rules apply, dispensation is made for the size of the lawn and the character of the equipment. Canny colleges with 'CA pro's' use this to their advantage by ensuring that their college has proper cast hoops with which to daunt the opposition.

One of the main problems, and the major achievement of the competition, is to banish all the hybridised rules that exist in croquet backwaters of the country. Countless times the between-the-wars rules; playing in colour order, putting your foot on the ball to croquet, pegging out a ball back to the beginning etc. raise their ugly heads. It is mainly the distribution of the University players throughout the colleges which help enforce the rules and teach new players the intricacies of the game.

This does however mean that those colleges blessed with University players are favourites in the competition. It is however the case that the winners are not the team who can play the best CA approved croquet but the team who can adapt best to the various terrains and configurations of the college lawns. Some lawns have the character of meadows and others of the insides of egg boxes.

Cuppers is organised as an eight round knock-out with 64 teams of four in the first round. Each round

consists of a home and away doubles game, thereby eliminating any home advantage. The rules have been formulated over many years but still the bright young things work out how they can be used to their advantage. A college may enter a number of teams and, once the draw is made, much head scratching and advanced psychology is used to map what is presumed to be the easiest route through to the final. There is no rule stating that the college's '1' team has to be their best team, although once someone has played for one team they cannot then change to another, so Linacre 1 could be +26'd by Worcester 4, with Worcester 4 then beating Worcester 3, 2 and 1! This leads to initial confusion whilst colleges work out in which teams the University players are hidden.

Knowledge of the rules is obviously a great advantage, playing a ball onto the lawn from B baulk cannot be believed, but once caught twice shy. One of the interesting observations is that practised two-batters (Aunt Em's) can be exceedingly successful on the indifferent lawns. On such lawns there can be little difference between an extended rush and an approximation to the Barnes-Wallace bouncing bomb. It is said that this tactic succeeds as it dampens adventurous development of break building. Local knowledge is an advantage to the home pair - since most lawns were never destined to be croquet lawns they are far from level and the side from which you approach some hoops may mean the difference between success and failure. (Some of the lawns in CA clubs have this feature - perhaps clubs should publish contour maps of their lawns in 'Croquet').

With champagne prize sponsorship last year, cuppers was exceedingly popular. Teams knocked out in the first three rounds went into a draw for bottles of champagne, those players reaching the quarter finals won half bottles each and those in the semi-finals won a bottle each. The final involved two of the favourite teams - Balliol and Keble, the former being the senior croquet club secretary's team and the latter being the undergraduate croquet club secretary's team. In each team there were three University players of various standards and one unknown. The prize for the winners was a magnum of champagne and an engraved champagne cooler each and for



The Balliol 'third' team enjoying the fruits of sponsorship at the 1987 Cuppers Final: (L to R) John Griffiths, Ian Plummer (Capt), David Wheeler and John Watts.

CHELTENHAM'S GONE AUTOMATIC!

From Dennis Moorcraft

Many croquet players will know from personal experience the steady improvement in Cheltenham's lawns over the past three years.

This is largely due to the dedication and hard work of Wilf Handley, the Lawn manager, to Peter James, the groundsman, and to the Cheltenham Committee's determination to spend much more money on greenkeeping.

They have now decided to spend some £10,000 on the installation of an automatic irrigation system, which will be in operation this season.

The club are not looking for slow lawns, but they expect that the new system will be an aid to better greenkeeping so that the improvements of the past three years can be maintained.

the runners up a bottle of Rose champagne each - high stakes.

The Cuppers Final took place on Trinity lawns in front of the historic buildings of the quiet Oxford college. A single lawn was set out with CA standard equipment and the two doubles games took place simultaneously - much to the confusion of some of the on-lookers. The final was well attended by the gentlemen of the press and other invited representatives and a lively game ensued. Both teams used attacking tactics and despite the slow drizzle the audience were cultivated until the last ball was played. Nick Luff (Keble) had the chance of a triple peel during his game but went for college glory rather than personal triumph and let the occasion pass. The standard of play was high with good break play. The games were timed to three hours and the first pairs finished their game with a two point hoop lead for Balliol. This then put the pressure on the second pairs running neck and neck to decide the victors before time was called. A piece of superb

play by Michael Ainley-Walker brought Keble one hoop ahead overall just before time. With time called John Griffiths of Balliol was left to attempt to make a single hoop to keep the game going. It was not to be and Keble became the 1987 Croquet Cuppers Champions - by one point! Nick Luff (Keble) also gained an award for being the only person to achieve a triple peel during Cuppers.

Whilst the players were fighting to the finish the spectators had the additional attraction of tea and cucumber sandwiches followed by champagne provided by Laurent Perrier. We thank Laurent Perrier for their support and are pleased to announce that they have agreed to sponsor Oxford University Croquet Cuppers again this year.

Teams:
Balliol: John Griffiths, Ian Plummer (Capt) (3), John Watts (6), David Wheeler with Stephen Heyes (reserve) (8).

Keble: Jonathan Calver (6), Richard Colthurst (Capt) (8), Nick Luff (4) and Michael Ainley-Walker.

CROQUET ON TEESSIDE

From John Davis

In 1955 a group of ICI employees got together to form a croquet club. Restricted membership meant one had to work for ICI to be allowed to use the facilities but Norton Hall became the first venue for Association Croquet on Teesside. I say the first for Association Croquet because, down the road, at Stockton Cricket Club, a group of cricket widows were (and still are!) playing a game not unlike the American version. Occasional contact between the two groups over the years has led to the odd match but nothing more.

The early development of Norton Hall Croquet Club was led by Sam Salisbury, ably assisted by Ralph Bucknall and soon a group of enthusiasts had built up. Matches with Edinburgh, Nottingham and Durham University enabled the players to broaden their experience and soon some of them began venturing out to tournaments.

The facilities at Norton Hall have remained largely unchanged for over 30 years, a single two-thirds size lawn in a very sheltered position as part of the delightful gardens of the Hall. However in 1960 a full size lawn was acquired in the grounds of a neighbouring house also owned by ICI. This was a great boon to the club and was used extensively by the players until the property was sold off in 1975. The acquisition of this lawn improved the general standard of play and players such as Ralph Bucknall, Eric Knowles and Graham Foster (Secretary from 1967 to 1976) began to have success in tournaments at Parkstone, Cheltenham and Hunstanton.

Ralph retired to Budleigh Salterton in 1968, where he is still very active within the club, and he was succeeded as club chairman by Reg Forth, who had taken up the game in 1967 at the age of 60. Reg is still the Norton Hall Club chairman and he has been the guiding light for nearly 20 years now. Those early players were responsible for establishing a very sound croquet presence at Norton Hall which has sustained the game in the area during the last thirty years.

By the 70s regular fixtures with Nottingham and Edinburgh had been established. Irregular Fixtures with Durham University also took place. Graham Foster had become a successful tournament player before leaving the area. John Chesworth took over as secretary in 1976 and one of the best players the club has ever had,

Colin Snowdon, appeared on the scene. Colin had developed his talent for the game at Cheltenham and by finishing runner up in the All-England Handicap in 1977 he not only gave Norton Hall Croquet Club its first major national success but he showed the rest of the players what was possible and this served as an incentive for them to go out and show what they could do.

Into the 80s and by now, thanks in part to John Rose and John Meads, the croquet world was beginning to open up for the Norton Hall players. Jeff Evans and Bill Masterton, who'd both been playing for fifteen years, began to venture out to other clubs and three comparative newcomers, Peter Thompson, Charles Waterfield and John Davis discovered that tournaments were fun. Success at various venues around the country, the inevitable handicap reductions, and discussions with other croquet players made us acutely aware of the lack of facilities on Teesside. So the search was on for a site for a croquet club open to all.

In 1985 the Topspin Racket & Leisure Centre, located in an old Aircraft Hangar at Teesside Airport, approached the CA with a view to starting a croquet club. We started with a field! There is enough space for six full size lawns but at the moment we are concentrating on getting two into reasonable condition. We struggled for 18 months, but then, with generous support from the CA and the Sports Council, we were able to spend some money on improving the surface. Gradually through 1987 the lawns improved and we are confident that 1988 is going to be our best year yet.

But what of the club itself. With the support of experienced Norton Hall players we have been able to run coaching courses for beginners and also 'come and try it' sessions for local organisations. We have built up a membership of about twenty players, one of whom, Walter Sanders, reached the National Short Croquet Final. We also entered a team in the Northern Federation League. Captained by Charles Waterfield, the team featured twelve different players during the season and managed to finish up top. The fact that we won all our home games probably helped, but even Chester will admit the lawns have improved.

Meanwhile Norton Hall were winning the East Pennines League, a competition specifically for single

lawn clubs. In one notable match, against Newcastle University, Reg Firth was older than the combined age of the three-man opposition (not all students!).

Back to Topspin where the facilities are excellent. Bar, Restaurant, Changing Rooms, Showers are all available and the spirit amongst club members is building up well. We recently staged an Indoor



Referees in triplicate! L to R: Andrew Bennet, Bill Lamb and Bernard Neal sort out a tricky point at Bowdon whilst the players wait their verdict in keen anticipation!

SOUTHWICK VISITS RAMSGATE.

From R.J. Smith

We were rather delighted when we learned that we were to visit Ramsgate in the second round of the Longman Cup. We had been hearing interesting things about the club and its new premises, and looked forward with pleasurable expectations to our visit.

We were not disappointed - except with the outcome of the real purpose of our visit! The journey was pleasant, even the notorious M25 being reasonably well-behaved that fine early Sunday morning, and illustrated directions specially prepared by the club for its visitors piloted us successfully through the town to a prompt arrival at the ground.

Our first pleasure was trouble-free parking right outside the ground. The position and setting of the ground, just below the esplanade on the west cliff of the town, are very attractive, with a grandstand view from the esplanade of the four well set-out lawns, and panoramic views from the lawns (through the hedge) of the sea and

Weekend, reported elsewhere, which confirmed our feelings about the potential for croquet in the North East. With an equally enthusiastic group of players on Tyneside we are hopeful that the next couple of years will see the establishment of two multi-lawn tournament-staging clubs in the North East of England.

coastline to the west.

A great deal has already been achieved in developing the clubhouse and pavilion facilities, and an energetic management - with an obviously supportive town council in the background - has plans for further early extension. The hospitality lavished on us was quite superb: our thanks to Eileen and Dennis Shaw and all the other friendly folk who looked after us so well.

The match? Well, we came up against a strong team and were well beaten, 1-4; but each game was keenly fought, and was good fun. We enjoyed our day out at Ramsgate very much - in spite of the journey home taking 3½ hours, with a 1 hour hold-up on the M2.

A final thought: how many clubs can arrange for the local Mayor and Mayoress to form part of the welcoming party for a visiting team? And what a charming and genuinely interested couple they are. Well done, Ramsgate.

LOOKING FOR MR RIGHT - II A Continuous Grading System

By Tim Harrison

The croquet grading system has been the source of much comment recently. Unfortunately some of this has been rather uninformed criticism, based largely on what the critics think the ranking order should be, rather than on possible drawbacks in the system. Steve Mulliner described the mechanics of his system in the November 1986 'Croquet' leaving aside the questions of why. In this article I will explain the theory underlying this system and then I will propose an enhancement that is both elegant and original.

Introduction

The objective of any grading system is to provide a figure, the grade, for every player in a pool of players. This figure says something about the ability of a player. In the system to be described, it is a measure of the player's current ability. To be more specific, the difference between two player's grades is related to the expected outcome of any game between them.

As well as defining what the grade means, it is necessary to find an objective method for estimating the grade. If this is to be a general method, the only information that can be used from a single game is the result (win/loss/draw) - the significance of the score is too game dependent. The problem then is that there is very little information arising from any single game. Moreover we are also often working with a small sample of games, which further compounds our difficulties. Two desirable properties of any grading system are that grades can be continuously updated and secondly that there is a sound theoretical basis.

Definition of grade

The first step in designing a grading system is to decide upon a mathematical model which accurately explains past results and can be used to predict future results. We will use a relatively simple model, in which one figure, the grade, is assigned to each player in the pool. The meaning of this figure is seen by examining how the model predicts the result of a game between two of the players.

Consider two players A and B with grades and X_a and X_b . The model gives the expected probability of A beating B as:

$$P_{ab} = \frac{1}{1 + 10^{-(X_a - X_b)/50}}$$

This probability function is called the logistic function. For those

whose mathematics may be slightly rusty this looks like a sigmoid. If A is much worse than B, then P_{ab} is near but always greater than zero, whereas if A is far superior the probability approaches one. For the gamblers a probability can be converted to odds according to the formula:

$$\text{Odds of A beating B} = \frac{1 - P_{ab}}{P_{ab}}$$

The table shows the probabilities and corresponding odds for a series of grade differences.

$X_a - X_b$	P_{ab}	Odds
-50	0.09	10/1
-40	0.14	6/1
-30	0.20	4/1
-20	0.29	5/2
-10	0.39	6/4
0	0.50	Evens
10	0.61	6/4 on
20	0.71	5/2 on
30	0.80	4/1 on
40	0.86	6/1 on
50	0.91	10/1 on

This formula does rather appear 'out of thin air'. However its validity can be evaluated by considering the situation of three players, A, B and C. What is the relationship between P_{ab} , P_{bc} and P_{ac} . From the above equation it can be shown that:

$$P_{ac} = \frac{P_{ab} P_{bc}}{P_{ab} P_{bc} + (1 - P_{ab})(1 - P_{bc})}$$

By inspecting what happens when some numbers are put in, it can be seen that the model is reasonable for most games, croquet included. However if this is not the case, then the grading system derived from it is likely to be inaccurate. This probability function does seem a sensible choice but it is not essential to use it. There are some major constraints on the function though. Firstly it must always be increasing from 0 to 1 in a continuous fashion and secondly it must be true that $P_{ab} + P_{ba} = 1$.

A player's grade is in theory only relative in that it is only the difference between two grades that has real meaning - it gives the odds of each player winning. However in practice, with a large enough pool of players, the overall ability of the pool can be considered stationary and then a player's grade does say something about his ability. Note though that the absolute value of a grade is arbitrary.

There is an analogy between a grading scale and a temperature scale. In the Celsius scale, 0 is chosen as the freezing point of



Tim Harrison

water and there are 100 degrees between the freezing and boiling points of water. Both these numbers are arbitrary and in fact for the Fahrenheit scale the numbers are chosen are 32 and 180. However the freezing point of water is the same temperature on both scales. What is important though is to pick a scale and then to stick to it.

In choosing a suitable model, some consideration has to be given to the estimation of the parameters, which in our model are the grades. The more complicated the model, the more results are required to estimate the parameters. Thus a more complicated model will not necessarily give a better grading system.

Estimation of Grade

1. Big Change Method

The broad principle behind the estimation formula is that given the result of a game the winner's grade is increased by a small amount, and at the same time the loser's grade is decreased by the same amount. Thus the total number of grade points in the system is unchanged. The amount that the grades are changed by depends on how unlikely the result was - the more unlikely, the greater the change.

Consider a game between A and B. If A wins increase his grade by I_w and if he loses decrease his grade by I_l . Let ΔX_a be the change in A's grade. The expected change in A's grade $E(\Delta X_a)$ is zero as we assume both X_a and X_b are correct grades. Now,

$$E(\Delta X_a) = P_{ab} I_w - (1 - P_{ab}) I_l$$

Thus we let

$$I_w = \frac{C}{1 + 10^{-(X_a - X_b)/50}}$$

$$I_l = \frac{-C}{1 + 10^{-(X_a - X_b)/50}}$$

i.e. I_w is proportional to $(1 - P_{ab})$, the probability of B winning, and I_l is proportional to $-P_{ab}$, the probability of A winning. In other words, I is proportional to the difference between the actual result (1 or 0, corresponding to win

or loss) and the expected result, P_{ab} . Thus the change is greater the more unlikely the actual result. An intuitive reason for this is that the result is only unlikely because our estimates of the two grades are inaccurate and so we wish to alter our estimates. The more inaccurate the estimates, the greater the change. C is a constant which affects the total amount the grades are changed as a result of one game. The setting of C is quite crucial to the performance of the system and in the present system is one of 4, 5 or 6, depending on the game's importance.

2. Smoothed Method

If C is set to a reasonable value it is found that the formula above gives a grade figure which is too volatile. To circumvent this it is necessary to provide some smoothing, whereby the change in the grade depends not only on the last game, but on the most recent previous ones. Mulliner does this by taking an average of the grade over several games to produce a ranking - the figure that is published. This is normally a 20 game average but since this will be too sluggish for a rapidly improving or deteriorating player, this can be lowered to 10 or even 5 games depending on how rapid the change is. The major problem with this is the sharp discontinuities introduced when converting from a five game average to a ten game average and similarly from ten to twenty. Also the figures of 5, 10 and 20 seem rather arbitrary.

I propose a different method that is relatively simple but highly effective. Define a figure f which will be called a player's current form (relative to his grade). It will be positive if his recent results are better than his grade would indicate and negative if they are worse. After every game f is recalculated according to

$$f_{new} = \alpha \text{fold} + 1, \quad 0 < \alpha < 1$$

where I is the increment as calculated above (but with C much smaller, typically 0.7) and can be positive or negative, and α is the momentum constant and is typically 0.9. Then the grade is recalculated simply by adding the form figure to the old value i.e.

$$X_{new} = X_{old} + f_{new}$$

Note that changing grades using this method satisfies the condition that the total number of grade points in the system is constant.

These formulae effectively take an exponentially weighted average of the grades produced by the Big Change method but without having to store all the most recent grades individually. The increment produced by the Big Change

method is applied to the grade over the course of several games and so for a given size increment (i.e. a given value of the constant C), a much smoother grade is produced.

I have performed several computer simulations of such a grading system and made comparisons with the present system. I will gladly send details to any interested readers but for now the conclusions will suffice. At the very least the smoothed method is *definitely* no worse than the big change method and I would claim it behaves considerably better. For a rapidly changing player the sharp discontinuities no longer occur. The present system cannot cope with a rise in grade of 0.5 per game, which is equivalent to a rise in grade from 100 to 150 in 100 games, but lags behind by an average of 11 points. This compares with a figure of 7 points for the smoothed method.

As an estimation of accuracy, the probable error (a 50% confidence limit) for the current system is 2.6 points, so it is only differences of three or more points which are significant. With the smoothed method the probable error is 3.7 points. However this figure does not take into account the slow response to rapid changes and so is biased towards the current system.

The true test of any grading system is to see how it works in practice. It has been shown though that the Continuous Grading System does have a very pure mathematical basis to it. The system is also relatively easy to implement with only two figures needing to be stored at any stage, one of which is the grade.

Obituary

DAVID ANDERSON

It is with the deepest regret that we have to inform members and colleagues of the death of Reverend David Anderson M.A. (Cantab.).

David was a founder member of the East Riding Croquet Club (formed in 1976) and served as its first Secretary and later held the post of Chairman for 2 years.

David was instrumental in bringing Association Croquet to the attention of residents in the East Riding of Yorkshire and he was responsible for building the sound foundation on which the East Riding Croquet Club was formed.

As a croquet player David in his latter years was always easily recognised due to the fact that he had a gadget fitted to the top of his mallet shaft as a sitting device for his target ball. He swore that it helped him to line up his target ball - his opponents swore that it was a time wasting tactic!

David leaves a daughter, Elspeth.

THE JERSEY CROQUET CLUB

From Richard Sowerby

Few people seem to know that a club exists in Jersey - or that there is one in Guernsey also - as croquet playing visitors to our Island who have seen us playing and come to join us for a game have frequently expressed surprise at the discovery. So, with a new season about to commence, we thought it was time we introduced ourselves to the croquet world with a brief history of the club.

In June 1982 an advertisement appeared in the local press inviting anyone interested in forming a club to get in touch with the writer. Four people responded and the Jersey Croquet Club was founded. A further article shortly after encouraged others and there were soon fourteen members.

The club had nowhere to play and no equipment but fortunately one of the members offered the use of his lawn (mostly mole hills and apple trees) and provided some equipment to begin with. It was also fortunate that Pat Shine, on holiday in the Island, kindly gave some of her time to coach one of the members who was then able to pass on what he had learnt to the others - most of whom had little or no idea of the 'real game'.

In 1983 the club purchased two sets of equipment and some mallets with the kind help of Brian MacMillan, and became affiliated to the CA. We also negotiated a site for two courts with the Education Committee at no charge. The courts provided were the practice area of a football pitch and, though far from perfect, they gave the club its first 'home'. There were minor problems, transporting equipment to and from a member's home, having nowhere to shelter in inclement weather, and having youths playing football on the courts when not in use for croquet. Nevertheless club members all pulled together and by the end of the year we had some twenty members.

The following year a member purchased a hut which was leased to the club for a small annual rental which was to go towards the club's purchase of it. This was a great improvement. However, due to the problems with youths playing football and interfering with play we were obliged to negotiate the use of a bowling green with a private company. This was most opportune as during 1985 the club welcomed John Solomon and Professor Bernard Neal, who kindly came over to give us some coaching.

Unfortunately the cost of hiring the bowling green proved prohibitive and for the 1986 season the

club had to return to the football pitch for which a hiring fee was now made. After further negotiations the club moved to a new site in 1987 and it now has two almost full size courts and better facilities. However, the cost of hiring the site means we can only afford to play on Thursday and Sunday afternoons.

A club was formed in Guernsey shortly after the formation of the Jersey club, and in 1983 the first inter-island team match was played for a trophy presented by the President of the Jersey club. In 1987, two businesses presented trophies to the Jersey club and it was decided to use these trophies for a Mens and Ladies CI Championships to help promote the

game in the Channel Islands. A member also presented the club with a trophy for a club handicap competition. Last year also saw the first signs of interest in the game in at least one school.

The club is now well established and every year more members are competing in tournaments in England. However opportunities in this area are limited, due to the obvious difficulties of distance, time, and expense. Nevertheless one day we hope to see a Jersey team compete on equal terms with those from elsewhere. In the meantime if any croquet players are visiting Jersey for a holiday they can be sure of a warm welcome, and I know the same can be said for Guernsey.

NIVINGSTON HOUSE CROQUET CLUB

From Libby Weir-Breen



In preparation for the launch of the Nivingston House Croquet Club, Allan Deeson (left), proprietor of Nivingston House, and student trainee Neil Reynolds, unpack the Carlsberg Croquet Sets acquired this year.

The Club was launched at an Open Day on Saturday 21st May at Nivingston House, Cleish, Kinross-shire.

Membership is open to anyone who would like to join.

MALLETS OF OLD

By Allen Parker (Parkstone)

The earliest mallets had very short, narrow 'pepper-pot' heads, little heavier than the balls. Jaques' catalogue of 1868 quotes prices for fourteen different croquet sets, the cheapest with ash mallets and 3-inch balls at \$0-15-0d, the most expensive with 3 5/8-inch balls and large size solid IVORY mallets at £20-0-0d. During subsequent years some players made, or had made, mallets to their own specification. One gentleman even had a mallet with the shaft leaning backwards. The heavy lignum vitae mallet was introduced by J.H.Hale and much later, J.A.McMordie played with very heavy mallets; his wet weather mallet was said to have weighed over 11 lbs! The following abstract from Cassell's 'Book of Sports and Pastimes' (1896) gives some idea of how the design of mallets developed.

....The first advance in the shape of mallets is to be attributed to private enterprise. Most of the manufacturers were, and still are, very loath to fall in with the new conception of a mallet, as the increase of wood needed to make eight mallets is considerable; and the mallets which are often sent out in the ordinary croquet-box are still inadequate, compared with the average match-mallet, and putting aside the more ponderous weapons. In 1869, a great advance was supposed to have been made on the toy mallets, and those used in most of the public tournaments were six inches long and two inches and three-quarters in diameter, weighing about 1lb 12 oz. There were mallets heavier than this in existence, some being used at the Crystal Palace tournament in 1868; but the figures given represent the average. In 1872 the mallets used in public tournaments varied in weight from 2 1/4 lbs to 3 1/2 lbs, their length being from seven inches to nine inches, and their diameter fully three inches. The increase in weight is to be partly attributed to the use of plates, which will be now explained....

....Some players, notably Mr Peel, the then champion, finding that the stroke which has been described as the 'rush' was difficult to achieve without striking your own ball too high,



Mr John Austin and the scythe-handled mallet.

and thus making it hop over the other, conceived the idea of cutting away the bottom of the mallet, which was thus able to be swung nearer to the ground, so that the striking centre struck the ball very low, and made it go forward steadily. In many other strokes, too, it diminished the chances of the mallet catching the ground. This kind of mallet was adopted by the majority of croquet players, and many supplemented the change by 'plating' their mallets, i.e. by having a brass plate screwed upon the flat bottom. Of course this made the mallet considerably heavier, and, in the opinion of its advocates, rendered many strokes easy of execution which were very difficult with light implements. There can be no doubt that less exertion is needed with a heavy mallet, and so a lady who aspires to excellence in match play will probably do well to use one; but given strong wrist-power and fairly muscular arms, it becomes a question whether the additional weight does not make the mallet too unwieldy, and incapable of very delicate play. No one, however, can be dogmatic on this point, for it is a matter of private taste, and each player had better choose the weight which suits him best, and make himself master of its peculiarities....

....We have had mallets with looking-glasses fitted in them, in which the ball aimed at was to be reflected; mallets with black lines drawn along them, which were to guide the eye unerringly; mallets with long handles; mallets with short handles, sometimes heavily weighted with lead; mallets, also, with one end of the head more heavily weighted than the other; and innumerable shapes and sizes of heads; but all former peculiarities had to bow before the combined oddities of a mallet which once graced the Wimbledon lawn. The head of the mallet was a large square slab of wood, octagon-shaped at the top and sliced at the bottom; but the handle which was inserted in it was the great curiosity. It was shaped at the top like a spade-handle, and the shaft was bound tightly round with leather and whipcord, in order to insure a firm hold and deaden vibration. But there was additional provision made against vibration being felt at the moment of striking by the manner in which the handle was inserted into the mallet-head. The wood shaft came to an end, and then two pieces of thin iron, quite separate, were the connecting link between the handle and the mallet-head. The owner of this machine, when about to strike, grasped the spade with his left hand, with his knuckles turned towards the striking end, and steadied the handle by laying hold of the whipcord. It required a most inelegant attitude to perform properly with it, as the player had to stoop completely over the balls and turn his head askew to take aim....

In discussing the advances that croquet was making, Arthur Lillie, in the book 'Croquet up to Date', published in 1902 (ie several years after the start of the croquet revival), makes the following comments

....Two other evidences of the firm hold that croquet is taking might be adduced - the quite enormous sale of plant and the quite enormous sale of croquet law books. Mr. Ayres tells me that in 1898 he sold three thousand specimens of one special mallet alone, namely, that which has india-rubber at one end of the head. This mallet has had a great role in the present revival of croquet, because it has proved to the ladies that croquet is a game for which they are not incapacitated physically. By some mystery of mechanics not yet solved, the india-rubber mallet

effects a very important croquet stroke - the roll up of two balls together for twenty or thirty yards without the player requiring the muscles of Mr.J.H.Hale or Mr.W.W.Bruce....

....Three thousand india-rubber mallets in one year, and in the next year, I learn further, three thousand more! Six thousand mallets in two years by one dealer! How many were sold by Mr.Jaques? How many by Messrs. Slazenger, Wisden and Buchanan in these two last years also? And how many india-rubber tipped mallets have been disposed of since 1894? To answer fifty thousand is of course to understate the case enormously. Fifty thousand players, of whom forty thousand are probably ladies, playing with india-rubber mallets! And for this large body of probably very worthy people a quaint surprise was in store. They were suddenly arraigned as a parcel of cheats! For a small clique of theorists



Mr 'Bonham Carter' - otherwise Mr B.C. Eveleigh. Champion of England in 1877 and 1899.

had started the idea that when an india-rubber mallet smacks away two balls, even when the operation takes only a quarter of a second to perform, the hinder ball gets embedded in the india-rubber for a portion of that quarter of a second, and the spring of the india-rubber throwing it out constitutes a second stroke, an infringement of the law. But I am happy to announce that science has come to the rescue of these fifty thousand probably very worthy people. Their consciences may be completely at rest. For it has been discovered that the rolling stroke with two balls can be better done when a hard surface like three quarters of an inch of box wood is attached to the mallet head beyond the india-rubber. Now it would be quite impossible to embed a boxwood ball of three inches and a half diameter in three quarters of an inch of boxwood, and if you did it would be still more difficult for the boxwood to throw it out again to a distance of, say, twenty-five yards. To speak more seriously, I think this discovery is important. The silence of the india-rubber was the real point objected to. If ladies can now roll up balls with a mallet that makes a noise, they ought to be let alone....

In the same book, 'Croquet up to Date', W.W.Bruce has the following to say about mallets

....Now I think a word as to choosing a mallet would be, advisable. This is a very difficult subject to advise upon, as I think croquet players are particularly faddy about their mallets. Let me give a few instances and you will understand what I mean about being 'faddy'. Let us first take Mr 'Bonham Carter', the champion at Wimbledon last year. He plays with a clumsy black mallet, which must weigh about 6 lbs with no spring, and as unlikely-looking an instrument as one can imagine; yet we all know what he can do with it. Then Mr Trevor Williams, the runner-up in the same event, he plays with a little yellow mallet weighing about 2 1/2 lbs, which he swears by, and certainly his play justifies it; but nobody would give the implement any credit from its appearance. Take Mr C. Heneage, as fine a player as any; his mallet he acknowledges to be sprung in one place and the handle warped. I think it is sprung in about three places, and besides, the head is always turning round; but again look at the result! Then take Mr. Austin, the runner-up for the gold medal last year, another fine player. He plays with a mallet about two feet high with two little handles like those on a scythe. This keeps his nose about twenty inches from the ground when he hits, but he does hit. Mr Willis, who perhaps has won more tournaments than any other man, plays, I think, best with a mallet that is all broken at the head. The Hon A. Capell used to carry a little mallet in his pocket for some strokes, but the latest rules have stopped this. Lord Doneraile's mallet is hard to describe, but if you were to cut about ten inches off a common cart-wheel, and then use the spoke as a handle, you would get something like it; and yet he is by no means to be despised as a player. Last, but not least, take Mr Lillie's. Their name is legion. He has them about twenty inches long in the head; very short, about four inches; some with bits of lead that you can take out and put in according to the stroke you have to play; some with india-rubber ends; some with cork; but with all of them he is equally dangerous....

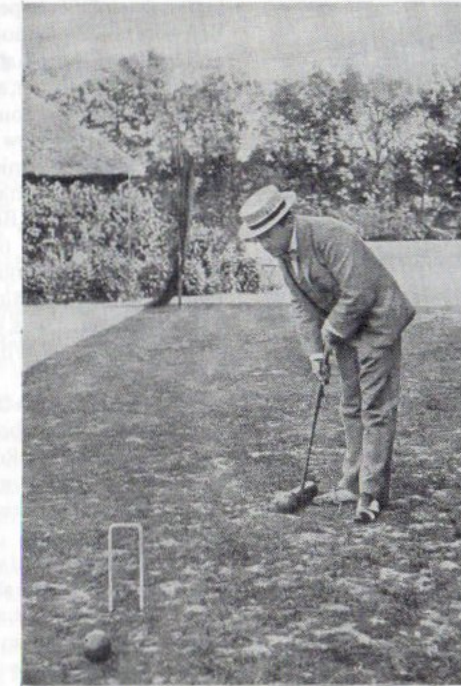
Austin's scythe-handled mallet was not the only one to appear with handles, as will be seen from the following complaint in the Gazette of 1904 from a somewhat disgruntled associate:

Dear Sir, As the handles of my new mallet seem to have caused a considerable amount of discussion, I should like to make it clear that the only reason I had them made was to get over the difficulty of playing with a sprained finger, and not in any way to get an advantage over other players.

After many objections to them (but what the objections amount to I have yet to find out), the Committee discovered that they were legal; at the same time they made an uncalled-for addendum, in which they suggest that I should not use them, thus putting me in a very unpleasant position. I hope that we shall soon know exactly what mallets we may or may not play with; some say it is illegal to weight a mallet with lead, others say it is not. Perhaps the Committee do not know that nearly all mallets over 3 lbs are weighted inside by the makers.

I cannot see myself why everyone should not have any sort of handle they like, as long as they manipulate it with their hands, and weight it where and how they like, with what they like. Anyhow, I hope the whole matter will come up and be settled at the next general meeting. Yours, etc., M. Barry, May 27th, 1904.

Many of the peculiar mallets were subsequently forbidden by the laws viz., 'end faces to be



Mr C.E. Willis - Champion of England, 1897.

parallel and same size and shape' (1899); 'rubber faces not allowed' (1901); 'mallet can be changed not more than once in a game (except for bona fide damage)' (1911), which was modified in 1947 to the present law - 'mallet cannot be changed during turn'. As regards the material used for the end faces, the difficulty of obtaining satisfactory wood, and the advent of modern plastics was dealt with in 1970 by - 'wood or any other material giving no advantage over wood'. Nevertheless there are still some odd-looking mallets to be seen.

CELEBRITY CROQUET

We are supporting the Mental Health Foundation again this year with a Celebrity Croquet match at Guildford & Godalming Croquet Club on:

Sunday 24th July

TV and Stage personalities will be competing with CA members, and tickets will be available at the Club on the day. Play will start at 2.30pm.

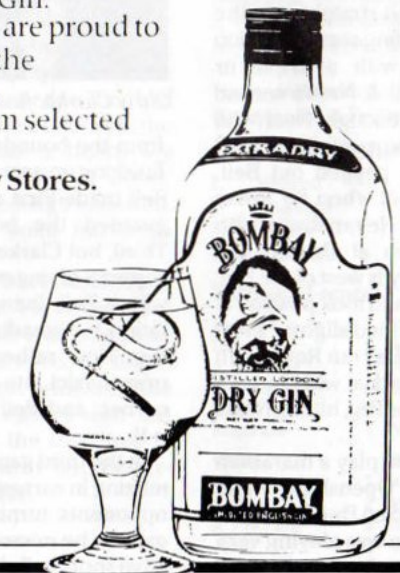

Created in 1761

The game of croquet is a great English tradition, played throughout the world on some of the finest lawns and enjoyed by many. Like Bombay Gin for some people, nothing else will do.

Bombay Gin has the flavour of a fine English dry Gin, and is the ideal base for the perfect cocktail to relax with when your match is over. The flavour is acquired by distilling from eight 'botanicals,' and the unhurried distillation process ensures that there is only one world's finest - Bombay Gin.

Bombay Gin are proud to be sponsors of the President's Cup.

Available from selected branches of
Army and Navy Stores.
Harrods.
Selfridges.
Peter Dominic
and good
Off Licences.



Championship Report

Cheltenham: 30 April-2 May SEEDLESS FINALS ARE JUICIER: Bell beats Clarke in dramatic Coles Final

Report by Simon Williams

For those interested in statistics, the mean handicap of the contestants was -1.01, the mode was -2 and the median -0.75. The temperature and precipitation, however, were not mean at all, giving a tolerable environment for the playing of 15 triples and one TPO, a figure only slightly down on last year's. The return to the earlier date kept the lawns slower than the ideal, and Martin Murray's best efforts could not stop the hoops from getting looser and looser; this was used as an excuse by the higher-ranked players for their frequent and dismal losses.

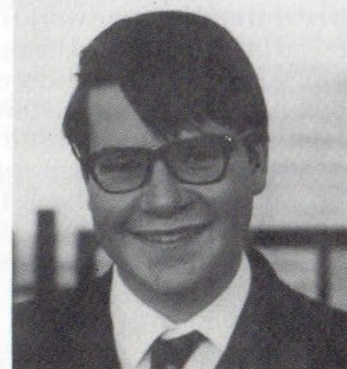
Almost at once the seeds - scarcely germinated - began to crumble. Clarke, playing with his customary aplomb, beat Aiton and went on to win a close one against your reporter. Bell, who has made a flying start to the season, conceded more shots than was prudent when for 3-back and Peg against Mulliner's Rover alone, but Mulliner missed them, and was soon scratching from the Swiss to make room for the eager first reserve, Debbie Cornelius. French beat Lewis, Walters beat Irwin - the day dragged on - Gaunt beat Avery, somebody beat Goacher (no human reporter can watch everything); of all the carefully sown ones, only Openshaw pushed his head up into the sunshine - if that is the word I am looking for - of the quarter-finals, where he beat Aldridge in two games.

Meanwhile, way down at the bottom of the Swiss, Fulford, attempting a Sextuple leave, ran 1-back by nearly a foot and then, after some thought, confidently smacked his ball straight into the Peg. Avery, finding some form too late, finished with a Triple or something. Bell & Neal's second game was close enough - Neal (who earlier had a confident TPO against Davis), pegged out Bell, and then his ball when for Rover against 4-back. He ran Rover with Bell in position at Penult, and lurked about 10yds west of the Peg. Bell ran Penult and took position at Rover, Neal trickled slightly short of the Peg, and Bell ran Rover with wire, and shot back at what he later admitted was the Peg, hitting Neal's ball instead!

Bell went on to play a marathon match against Openshaw, while Clarke crunched up Paul Smith and Don Gaunt, who was playing very well indeed, and now holds a

minus handicap - at last. Bell won the first, rather scrappy game, and Openshaw powered ahead to finish the second before darkness fell. Next morning, Clarke watched as, in the fourth hour of the third game, Bell - facing Openshaw's Peg & 4-back - hit centre-ball and went to Peg & 3-back, and then on to Peg and Rover, when he was forced to concede another shot. Openshaw hit, but failed to approach Rover off Bell's Rover ball, and had to lay up near Penult. Bell hit the one-finger lift and finished.

The final followed immediately. Bell, perhaps a little shaken by the sweaty ending described above, failed to take croquet in the first game; even missing a 7-footer when Clarke blobbed Penult while 'finishing'. The second was all Clarke's too. Bell hit the lift & got to 4-back but then Clarke 'bonked' back in and completed one, two, three Peels of an STP (the Penult Peel from nearly four yards). It was all over...or was it? As a particularly heavy shower made its presence felt, Clarke missed a Peg-out of similar length to the Penult peel, and could only Peg off one ball. Bell hit rather nervously, and laid up near First. Clarke missed the Peg



Chris Clarke, just missed the title.

from the boundary near Second, finishing up near the fourth corner. Bell made First and Second, and guarded the boundary behind Third, but Clarke shot at the balls anyway - giving away a 3-ball break which Bell, living up to his reputation for 'steadiness', took to the Peg. Now rather rattled, Clarke missed (sic) into the guarded 3rd corner, and Bell wobbled home, +1!

In the third game, Clarke started missing in earnest. His vanquished opponents turning green in the gallery, he missed one, two, three 13yd shots as Bell progressed with

impressive solidity to peg & 4-back. Bell now failed position at 4-back and laid up. Clarke had a ball just outside the 4th corner, and another some way into the court near the Second hoop. He now played the latter to about the middle of the South boundary (that's right - behind Rover!), and Bell, making 4-back and Penult off partner, gratefully popped through Rover to Clarke's ball and obtained a likely rush to the Peg. It was, once again, all over...or was it? With a characteristically accurate shot, Bell rushed Partner onto the Peg, his own ball stopping about halfway between the Peg and Rover. Clarke had a good chance on this occasion, if only he had remembered his lift!

But what happened was infinitely better value. Clarke shot with the ball in baulk at the ball near the fourth corner, again MISSING. Surely it could not be all over this time? No; that's right - Bell stalked his ball carefully and missed the Peg to the north boundary. Fate had given Clarke a handy rush to First, so he went to Peg, and Bell shot to a side boundary. Clarke now embarked on what one spectator called a 'two-ball scoopabout', with Bell dodging from boundary to boundary, until, with a touch of Bathos, Clarke stuck in 6th and Bell hit the ball in the hoop, peeling it for a very careful +8 finish to take the Coles Western Championship.

Openshaw beat Gaunt for third place. Bell, Clarke and Gaunt collected their handicap reductions, brown envelopes and trophy, and everybody went home happy. Cheltenham's excellent catering contributed to this characteristic post-Cheltenham feeling of well-being. Bernard Neal managed, aided by Ian Maugham.

RESULTS

Coles Western Championship (* = Seeded player)

1st Round
S.N. Mulliner(*) bt M. Suter +26(TP); E. Bell bt Dr M. Murray +7; B.G. Neal bt E.J. Davis +11(TPO); M. French bt S.E. Lewis(*) +6; D.R. Foulser bt D.J. Goacher(*) +13; W.O. Aldridge bt D.G. Palmer +24; A.B. Hope bt D.N.S. Peterson +3; D.K. Openshaw(*) bt S.J.H. Wright +19; P. Cordingley(*) bt Dr B.C. Sykes +18(TP); P.L. Smith bt D.S. Cairns +8; S. Williams bt A.F. Sutcliffe +23; C.D. Clarke bt K.M.H. Aiton(*) +14; C.J. Irwin(*) bt Dr E.W. Solomon +12; J.O. Walters bt D. Gunasekera +8; Dr I.G. Vincent bt R.I. Fulford +5; D.L. Gaunt bt M.N. Avery(*) +18.

2nd Round

Bell bt Mulliner +2; Neal bt French +8;

Aldridge bt Foulser +1; Openshaw bt Hope +25; Smith bt Cordingley +26; Clarke bt Williams +5; Walters bt Irwin +3; Gaunt bt Vincent +9.

3rd Round

Bell bt Neal +12, +1; Openshaw bt Aldridge +25, +5; Clarke bt Smith +8, +5; Gaunt bt Walters -25(TP), +12, +4.

Semi-Finals

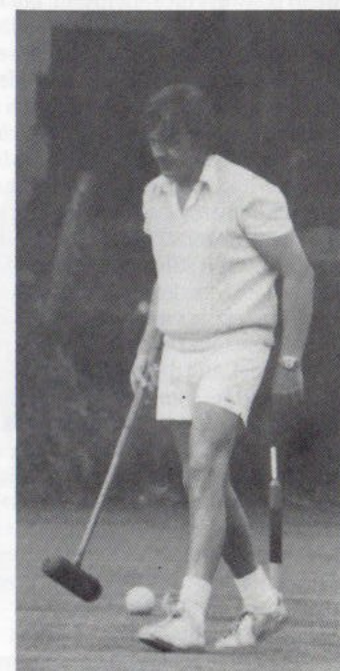
Bell bt Openshaw +3, -24, +3; Clarke bt Gaunt +15, +25.

Final

Bell bt Clarke -26, +1, +8.

Play-Off for 3rd Place

Openshaw bt Gaunt +25, +15.



Eddie Bell, 1988 Western Champion.

WHITE CA WEATHERSUITS

Sport & Country's white weathersuits are now available, complete with CA logo. They are made from Dartex Sport laminated polyurethane fabric manufactured by Courtaulds.

This is ideal material for a garment that needs to be comfortable, practical and 100% waterproof. All seams are stitched and welded.

The suits are vapour permeable, to minimise condensation. Ultra lightweight, strong and supple in all weathers. Pleasant and soft to handle.

The fabric is treated with Actifresh to prevent unpleasant odours or deterioration of the garment even after years of use.

The garments are not UNISEX but are individually tailored to fit both the gents or ladies shape. They can be handwashed and wiped clean.

For more details please contact Chris Hudson.

Budleigh Salterton: 4-5 June England's Slip Shows as Irish Triumph

By Peter Danks

This year saw the introduction of a new format for the Home Internationals, with each player playing two games against his opposite number in each of the other teams. The winner would be the team that won the most games, with 60 games to be played during the two days.

England v. Ireland

As it proved in the end, the match between the two No 1's was all important. Avery was confidently expected to play to his Open Championship form and beat Irwin. In the first game, Irwin hit on the fourth turn and went to 4-back. Avery hit the lift and made one hoop, but after a bit of jockeying, Irwin won with a delayed triple, +25TP. In their second game, Irwin went to 4-back after Avery missed on the fourth turn. Avery hit the lift and went round, also to 4-back. Irwin missed the lift. Avery started a triple with his second ball, but missed a short roquet at 1-back, whereupon Irwin finished with a triple +10TP.

Aspinall gave Simon Williams short shrift. Cordingley and McCullough had a slow first game until Cordingley stuck in 4, after which McCullough won +23. Cordingley went to 4-back on fifth turn in their second game. McCullough hit the lift and went to 4-back. Cordingley missed the lift, and McCullough did the triple +17TP.

Steve Lewis drew with Gerard Healy and George Noble saved England's face by beating Fred Rogerson, giving 5 games all.

Scotland v. Wales

Keith Aiton and William Prichard had a fascinating first game. Prichard went to 4-back, and Aiton missed the lift. Aiton hit and went to 1-back, cross-wiring Prichard at 1 and laying up in Corner 3. Prichard missed and Aiton did a TPO, pegging out both balls. Prichard took an angled position at 1. Aiton took position for 1-back. Pause for thought. Prichard hit hard. He ran both 1 and 2 in the same shot. The roar of applause must have been heard across the Bristol Channel. He started to catch up but failed at 2-back with Aiton at 4-back. He ran 3-back with Aiton in front of penult. He shot and hit the hoop, stopping a few yards away. Aiton ran penult, roqueted Prichard, took off to rover and ran it. He laid up adjacent to the peg. Prichard hit and had a long roll to 4-back. Again he had an awkward angled shot from fully eight feet

away. Much concentration. It stuck in the middle. Nearby Aiton hit and finished +4. Very good spectator stuff. Prichard won the second game +17TP.

Three of the remaining matches were drawn, giving Scotland victory over Wales by 6 games to 4.

Ireland v. Scotland

In the top match, Aiton took the only game off Irwin. Simon Williams beat Martin Murray, and the McCullough - Bond's game produced some rugged croquet. McCullough missed a 4 yard shot and Bond went to 4-back. Lift missed. Bond took his second to rover and stuck. McCullough on 1 and 2. In two breaks he went to peg and penult. Bond missed. McCullough hampered after penult. Bond hits. McCullough hits 30 yarder and wins +6. The second game was more sticky. Bond stuck in 5 and 2-back and McCullough stuck in rover. McCullough +19, giving Ireland 9, Scotland 1.

England v. Wales

Avery drew with William Prichard, and Croker forced a draw with Aspinall, winning his second game with a triple peel. Richard Prichard, smarting at his demotion from No.3 to No.5, improved the Welsh position by beating Noble +24, +13. Cordingley and Lewis cruised home for England against Jones and Peterson to give England 6, Wales 4.

Ireland v. Wales

The top game between Irwin and William Prichard went on from the start to finish last at tea time. It was dour. Secret impure thoughts began to be spoken aloud. Tut tut. At last Irwin won +11, +5.

Simon Williams won both his games against Croker, and in the third match, McCullough played Robert Prichard, who had popped up to No.3 again. In their first game, McCullough was pegged out, leaving him on 4-back with Prichard on peg and 2-back. McCullough made 4-back but missed. Prichard went to rover on a two-ball break but McCullough hit a 25 yard lift shot and finished +3. Perhaps Prichard really was what No.5's are made of. But no! He took control of the second game and went to peg and 4. McCullough failed at 6 and missed a 15 yard shot. Prichard wrapped it up +21. Result: Ireland 8, Wales 3.

England v. Scotland

Avery won the first game against Aiton +8. In it he had an interes-



International Champions - The winning Irish team (L to R): Back: Fred Rogerson and Colin Irwin. Front: John McCullough, Gerard Healy, and Simon Williams.

RESULTS

England 5; Ireland 5

M.N. Avery lost to C.J. Irwin -25TP, -10TP.
G.N. Aspinall bt S. Williams +23TP, +24.
P. Cordingley lost to J.R. McCullough -23, -17TP.
S.E. Lewis drew with G.P.N. Healy +26, -4.
G.W. Noble beat F.J. Rogerson +15, +26.

Scotland 5; Wales 5

K.M.H. Aiton drew with W.deB. Prichard +3TPO, -17TP.
M. Murray drew with D.J. Croker -16, +26TP.
I.D. Bond beat R.D.C. Prichard +6, +25
S.J.H. Wright drew with K.E. Jones -5, +8.
W.A.W. Williams drew with D.N.S. Peterson +20, -6.

England 6; Wales 4

Avery drew with W. Prichard +17, -4.
Aspinall drew with Croker +26TP, -4TP.
Cordingley bt Jones +2, +23TP.
Lewis beat Peterson +2, +23TP.
Noble lost to R. Prichard -24, -13.

Ireland 9; Scotland 1

Irwin drew with Aiton -24TP, +20TP.
S. Williams beat Murray +3TPO, +9TP.
McCullough beat Bond +6, +19.
Healy beat Wright +18, +13TP.
Rogerson beat W. Williams +6, +18.

England 8; Scotland 2

Avery drew with Aiton +8, -19.
Aspinall beat Murray +25, +26TP.
Cordingley drew with Bond +16, -4.
Lewis beat Wright +13, +5.
Noble beat W. Williams +1, +17.

Ireland 8; Wales 2

Irwin beat W. Prichard +11, +5.
S. Williams beat Croker +5, +21.
McCullough drew with R. Prichard +3, -21.
Healy drew with Jones +10, -5.
Rogerson beat Peterson +24TP, +15.

CHAMPIONSHIP RESULT

1. Ireland	22 games
2. England	19 games
3. Wales	10 games
4. Scotland	9 games

Individual scores

Ireland	England
Irwin	5 Avery
S. Williams	4 Aspinall
McCullough	5 Cordingley
Healy	4 Lewis
Rogerson	4 Noble
Wales	Scotland
W. Prichard	2 Aiton
Croker	2 Murray
R. Prichard	3 Bond
Jones	2 Wright
Peterson	1 W. Williams

Home Internationals

Is this a Mallet that I see before me?

By Dorothy Rush

As a fairly anonymous member of the CA but also as one who has made a point of trying out equipment of almost every kind, from the home-made to the mass-produced, from Jaques to Jackson, I can perhaps (only perhaps) comment upon the available hardware without claiming to provide the definitive opinion or, I hope, giving offence. I have carried out no scientific tests bar the only one that matters: ordinary everyday use. I have not sampled all the products available, even in this country alone - in particular I know nothing about the new mallets from 'Country Crafts', although I like the look of their mallet cases.

Most individual players are interested primarily in mallets. Value for money is an important consideration but a good mallet, if it can be found, will last a few years with proper treatment and cost therefore is not the main concern. The regular tournament players want to know that their mallets feel good, play well and will not fall apart. These criteria satisfied, most are happy to pay a fair price but few will go for a really expensive model whatever the supposed playing advantages.

The Jackson I know only slightly. It seems efficient, beautifully made, strong, durable - plenty of originals still giving good service - but it's a fairly complicated procedure getting one and the price is not the bargain it once was. I have played only one match using a Jackson and did not much like the feel of it but I have never heard anyone else make the slightest complaint about the Jacksons. They are also pretty and individually styled.

The Solomon, it has to be said, is very expensive. I do not care how well it plays, I wouldn't buy one. Moreover I have my doubts about the brass bindings: the rattle of a Solomon mallet is all too familiar

a sound - a good cover for a hampered shot but a source of acute irritation if you're playing against one. Why can't Jaques persuade the screws to stay tight? (Why can't the owners invest in a small screwdriver?)

Townsend's have thrashed around valiantly, trying to create a good, cheap, lignum-headed mallet. They have half-succeeded with the Aspinall, now that the problem of the facings has been solved by making them double. But do not buy a second-hand Aspinall with only one layer of Tufnell - it will drop off. Moreover, watch out for shafts wrongly set in the heads or with a slight lean, bend or twist. A good, well-balanced Aspinall is a nice mallet to use, with a good touch, but if you like your bat to look pretty, clean off that foul orange varnish and apply a drop of clear Ronseal. De-Luxe Townsend mallets have excellent leather grips, too but that puts up the price. I don't think I'd send for an Aspinall by post - it pays to swing a few first.

The very cheap Townsends are a bit of a joke, far too light and very subject to loss of end-pieces, in spite of the use of new wood which is supposed to take the glue but doesn't. The original design of these 'junior' mallets was a pleasant 2lbs 12oz affair but these 1lb 8oz mallets are a disappointment.

Walker mallets are not exciting. Some players seem very happy with the more expensive kind but the 'Club' model with squashy white head, bendable shaft and come-off-in-me-and-mum rubber grip is good for very little.

Walkers also make up the Neal mallet but don't hold that against it. Even the cheapest Neal is a good mallet but keep the head dry and make sure all your shots are in the middle of the face. Shots off the edge cause splitting and damp gets in, forcing the laminate apart.

Brass binding solves the problem. The rubber grip is a bit awful but it is serviceable. Far better and more expensive is the octagonal-handled model and this has a slimmer shaft which gives better touch. No different from wood as far as I can tell. The Neal mallets are very well-balanced. The only trouble with the deluxe Neal is the suede grip which soaks up water in wet conditions. But an attractive mallet.

Some of the most durable, most effective and undoubtedly the cheapest mallets I have tried have been home-made or produced on a very small scale. Mallets by Colin Irwin, Martin French, Stuart Packer and others are worth looking at if you intend making your own. It pays to buy a shaft from Jaques. Those who base their shafts on an old golf club may get used to the whippiness thereof but it ain't for me. Ken Townsend of Wolverhampton has produced the best and possibly the greatest number of this type but though you will see them throughout the length and breadth of the land, he has now ceased production.

Ken has also made a few hoops in his time and these, being of aluminium, have the advantage - especially if your lawn is a long way from the clubhouse - of being very light. They work well but will bend or break much more easily than the heavier varieties. Of other makes I have seen only Jaques, Walkers, Townsend's and a firm called Davison, which I imagine is now defunct. The only significant difference between them is price and thus Walkers seem a good buy for their solid strength and reasonable cost.

Mention of Walkers brings me to clips for I have never seen a Walker clip which will hold firmly to your trouser pocket, your belt, or even, for Heaven's sake, the hoop! Poor colours, too, hard to distinguish from a distance. If you must buy clips, then buy Jaques but some brands of clothes peg are just as effective, particularly those from Eastern Europe where they must have thicker clothes lines.

In similar vein, why buy centre-pegs when they are so easy and cheap to make? Ditto flags and yard-line pegs, of course.

Which brings me, at last, to balls, the most vexed question of all. Here you definitely pay your money and take your choice, with small chance of total happiness. Three balls in particular have their devotees: the Eclipse, the Walker and the Birkdale, once known as the Southport. If there is a Townsend ball of tournament standard I have not met it. For me the Eclipse performs as required, feels good, sounds good, responds well.

Trouble is, it falls apart, swells, goes out of shape, loses its 'bite' and costs an arm and a leg. The Walker lasts for ever, rushes beautifully, damages mallets and wrists, won't roll without (probably illegal) persuasion, loses its colour and is not cheap. And so to the Birkdale, billed as the answer to a maiden's prayer; the only ball with Jaques performance plus. (Plus rushability and the durability of Walkers, that is.)

My first reaction to the Birkdale was deep loathing. It appears to have distinct bias, particularly at the end of a long measured ordinary hit or take-off, when it may curl round, almost describing a circle. Moreover it must be fought in the roll-shot, especially the big split. Ordinary hits and rushes feel good, however, and I felt that it must be given a second chance, that I must try to get used to it. After all, it seems durable and has some of the finer characteristics of the Jaques. So I tried another tournament where Birkdales were being used and though they let me down crucially once or twice, I began to get the hang of them. They still curl, you still have to fight them and the price is you-cannot-be-serious but I would not be too chary of using them again. Just of buying them.

Incidentally, I know where there is a set of Aires balls in pristine condition. Enquiries as to their location should be made by letter c/o The Editor of Croquet, enclosing a five-pound note.

Well, there it is: prejudiced, inexperienced and uncharitable perhaps, but as honest as I can make it. The choice of equipment is a very personal thing - you have only to watch Howard Stanley of Himley wielding his 4lb monster mallet, a danger to double-bankers and low-flying aircraft, to see the truth of that. Therefore, it is as well to try before you buy - or failing that, to ask someone who's tried a few. Someone like Dorothy Rush. (See "Editorial" on page 3).

UNITED STATES

The Santa Barbara tournament at the Birnum Wood Country Club drew a slightly different crowd this year, including two players from England (Bobby Crane and Lady Carmen Bazley), but it featured the same magnificent setting, extraordinary weather (yet again I did



Capt Forrest Tucker with Lady Carmen Bazley at Santa Barbara.

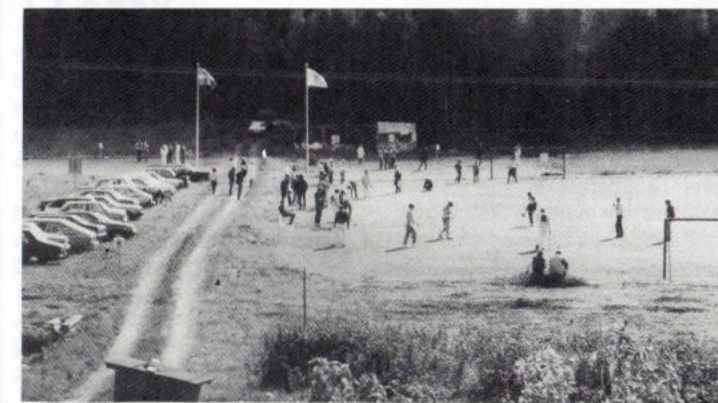
not have the opportunity to wet my snazzy rain suit, to say nothing of my long underwear, or three or four layers of scientifically-designed-for-warmth sweaters), and hospitality for which it has become famous. Captain Forrest Tucker, his wife Monica, and the rest of the Birnum Wood Croquet Club made all of the out-of-town players feel very happily at home.

The tournament format was one developed by Stan Patmor of Arizona for the Wine Country International Singles Championships and gaining in popularity in the United States. The eight doubles teams were divided into two blocks. The 'medal' winners of the blocks play a round robin against each other (in this case, just the two teams), with the winner of that medalist round becoming the 'holder'. The top four teams of the original blocks play a single elimination 'challenge' ladder, with the medalist winners (exclusive of the holder) getting byes in the first few rounds. The winner of the challenge round then plays the holder for the final victory. It guarantees the players many more games than our usual double elimination format, and it enables the tournament to accept more entries. As it was, there were people turned away from the tournament for lack of room, even though most of the games were double-banked.

Although Stan was not there this year, Arizona was ably represented

by Ren Kraft and Lenny Karbo, who never lost a match, and Patty Dole, who was Lady Bazley's partner and came in second. Tom and Jane Lufkin, who won last year, came in third this time. Ren was the only international-level player at the tournament, although it was

SWEDEN



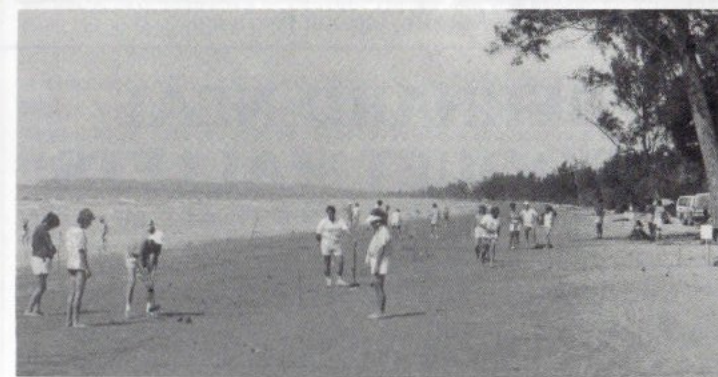
The Stockholm-based Högantorp Croquet Club has recently become affiliated to the CA. It is one of ten clubs that are currently affiliated to the Swedish Croquet Association (Svenska Croquetförbundet), and has approximately 50 members, of all ages. It is currently the most active club in Sweden.

The Rules of Croquet in Sweden are somewhat different to those used by the CA, and we have sent a copy of our rule book to the CA

at Hurlingham. Unfortunately it is only available in Swedish at the present time, but we would be glad to provide a translation at a later date if required.

If any member of the CA visits Sweden and wishes to play or discuss croquet, please do not hesitate to contact Hogantorp Croquet, c/o Folke Engström, Arstavägen 21 1 tr. 121 68 Johannesov, Stockholm. Folke Engström

SARAWAK



The photo shows the 'First Sarawak Closed Croquet Tournament' which was unofficially staged last November. As you can see, we had a very good turnout, with about 40 players taking part. The Men's Champion is to be seen approaching the fifth hoop on 'Lawn' A.

Play was somewhat hampered by a significant gradient on the landward half of the courts which made hoop approach shots very tricky - the balls often running back down the slope even beyond their initial positions: very frustrating! S. Rackley

PERSONAL COLUMN

20p per word. Min. £5. (Please add 15% VAT).

SOUTH DEVON: Farmhouse B&B with opt. EM overlooking River Dart. Full-size croquet lawn, heated swimming pool, horses, boats and tennis court. Tel: 0804-23278. Claire Grimshaw.

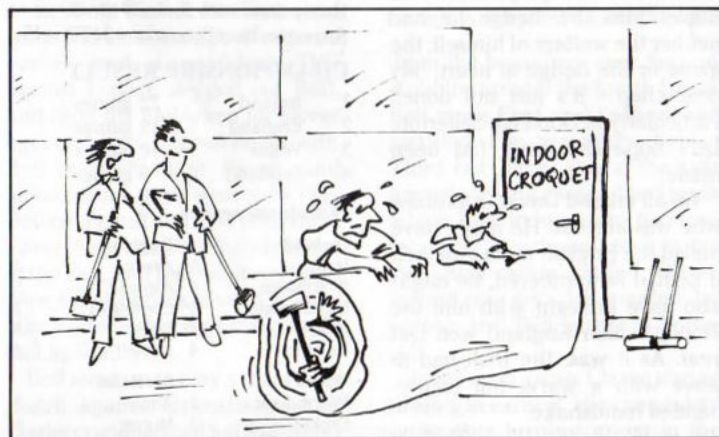
THE Simple CROQUET SERIES

Simplified CROQUET the MINI-BREAK way

A textbook by Peter Danks that concentrates on helping beginners (and possibly others) by removing the mystique of break making. Follow 150 pages and 50 diagrams of simple detailed instructions and your handicap will come tumbling down.

The book is with the printers and will be available shortly. Make sure of your copy by sending cheque for £7.95 plus 65p inland p&p to Shillingate Press, Budleigh Salterton, EX9 6SX.

(N.B. No cheque will be presented until book despatched.)



Just like Smithers, played in every match and nowhere to be seen when there's work to be done. (Cartoon by Jack Shotton)

Course Notes

CROQUET COURSES FOR TEACHERS

Worcester

From Ivor Brand

A very successful teachers' coaching course was held on 26-27 March at Worcester. The general level of interest in the course indicates that there is a demand for similar courses elsewhere in the country.

Eight teachers finally became 'pupils', and Richard Brand took 4 who claimed to have had some previous experience (although 'Jamie' did ask 'when he could put his foot on the ball and hit it with he stick'). I took the other four who had no knowledge at all.

Worcester provided an excellent lunch and the bar was well appreciated, especially by the coaches who found that 6 hours of non-stop

talking made the throat dry. Everyone left feeling exhausted at the end of Saturday, but after a good night's sleep, despite the clocks going forward, everyone was up and ready to start again on a splendid Sunday morning.

Sunday afternoon concluded with two small competitions which everyone enjoyed. At the end of the weekend both coaches felt it had been a worthwhile course, with all the 'pupils' showing significant improvement during the weekend.

The 'pupils' themselves commented that it had been a most enjoyable weekend, and maybe croquet has gained one or two more players. It is hoped to hold another similar weekend later on in the year.



Richard Brand with the Teachers Course at Worcester.

BERNARD NEAL CROQUET MALLETS

Aluminium Alloy Shafts
Permalin Heads

STANDARD Mallet

Rubber Grip
Length as required

OPTIONAL EXTRAS

Brass Bound Head
Octagonal Suede Grip

Brochure on application to:

**B.G. Neal, Moat Cottage, Kidnappers Lane
Cheltenham GL53 0NR
Tel: 0242-510624 or 01-731 6188**

Bath

From Jeremy Smithies

A Beginners Croquet Course for Teachers was held on 23-24 April at Bath Croquet Club - a change of venue from Millfield School where the courts had been reseeded. The late withdrawal of two of the participants led to an unexpectedly high ratio of coaches to coached. The organiser, Peter Dyke, instructed the more advanced players, being assisted by Jim Davey and Maurice Boardman, both from the Bath Club, who gave the less experienced participant spells of instruction. On Sunday morning we were treated to a demonstration of hoop running by Simon Garrett, also of Bath.

The course was intended to give teachers with limited experience of Association Croquet a thorough grounding in the game in order for them to be better able to encourage and assist their pupils at school. By setting a cracking pace, Peter Dyke was able to compress all the features of a 6-week beginners' course into the first day, leaving the second day to cover more advanced coaching suitable for the more

experienced pupil.

The range of topics covered was comprehensive and ran from grip and stance, through the various breaks, to an introduction to tactics. This ambitious timetable was completed as planned (with the sole exception of the proposed session on corner cannons) and time was found at the end of coaching to an introduction to a few fun games.

The importance of not underestimating the ability of young beginners to understand the game was stressed and it was recommended that they should be encouraged to start playing as soon as possible, with less initial emphasis on theory. It is considered beneficial to allow time in each coaching session for fun games such as Pirates and Golf Croquet.

All those attending expressed their appreciation to the organiser and his helpers, with a particular vote of thanks to Yvonne Arnold who was on hand throughout a very cold weekend with cups of hot coffee and tea.

Obituaries

ROBERT CHARLES CASE

Robert Charles Case spent most of his working life surveying and building railways in India.

Since returning to live in England, he took up playing Croquet at the age of eighty three and from that time became a complete devotee of the game.

He was Secretary of the Sidmouth Club for three and a half years, during which time he made a valuable contribution to the general progress and playing standards of the members.

He applied his engineering precision to every aspect of the game, perfecting his own stroke play with his intricate knowledge of geometric angles. He designed and introduced a two hour competition of stroke play, which came to be known as 'Robert's Shot Game'. This was featured in the Gazette a few years ago and is now used by other Clubs in different parts of the country.

It was always his ambition to achieve a single figure handicap, but this was not to be. At the age of ninety five on a bright sunny morning on the 9th of May 1988, having run a hoop in the middle of a break, Robert collapsed and died on the lawn on which he had made his first roquet twelve years before.

He was a character who will be talked about in many years to

come; he was kind, courteous, with a great sense of humour, always ready to help aspiring players many years his junior.

To say that he will be missed would be a supreme understatement, but strangely the game of Croquet seems to produce these outstanding characters and long may the game be graced by such salient personalities.

P.A.D.

HOWARD AUSTIN

Many will remember Howard Austin. The sad news of his death recently brought back many pleasant memories of his happy days with us.

He loved his croquet and generated great enthusiasm in those around him. His croquet started at the Compton Club and after joining the Sussex County Club in the early 1960s was invited to become the Honorary Secretary, an Office he held for ten years. He dedicated his life to the club and the game, always willing to help beginners and organise events.

The tradition of the Club at this time was to stage three own week tournaments and to invite either the Mens and Women, Gilbey, or Peels. Howard would be the first there in the morning managing and last in the evening to lock up. How much we had to thank him for. He made many friends and never failed to keep in touch.

CROQUET IN THE ISLE OF MAN

Report by Ann Cottier

We held our first Croquet Day school last week, at the home of one of our members who has the only Croquet Lawn on the Island, except for those owned by two of our millionaires.

Both Penny and her husband have played Croquet before and they helped me run the course. We had 30 students, 10 of whom were men and together with super sunny weather, we had a very good day.

Penny showed them how to hold a mallet and hit the ball, and had set up a practice hoop for one group. I had a group and taught them how to play Golf Croquet on a half size lawn, and I also did the singles exercise going round the course hitting the ball through six hoops in under 30 strokes. Our best player went round in 16.

Mr Leventhorpe took a group for Short Croquet and everyone alternated the groups and had a go at each course. We had arranged a light lunch at a Country Hotel next door (a 3 minute walk) and the course finished about 5pm.

Everyone was bitten by the

Course Notes

CROQUET IN THE ISLE OF MAN

Croquet bug and I had husbands measuring up the lawns and drawing sketches of the mallets and hoops. We had a lot of press coverage and I managed to do a report for our local radio, resulting in one of the big hotels on the Island giving us a lawn and club facilities to set up the very first IoM Croquet Club.

I have written to Brian Macmillan in London with the details of the hotel so that they can get the equipment from Carlsberg. We are all going to join the Croquet Association and then we will get a grant from the IoM Sports Council for £250 to get ourselves established. I have written to Jaques and they have sent me a catalogue, and there is a Sports shop on the Island who will provide us with equipment.

We also hope to set up garden Croquet Lawns and later on this summer we will hold our first mini Golf Croquet Tournament. Hopefully our club facilities will be ready soon and we can get ourselves on the Croquet map.

HOWARD AUSTIN (Cont)....

His leadership was greatly missed when ill health caused him to move to Lichfield to be looked after by his sisters.

A quote from his letter to Jane Piper dated Xmas 1987 about his 150 cards. 'Alas, this year I was unable to get to the City, and in any case I felt I could not face the effort of addressing all the envelopes, so most reluctantly I decided to cut it out. I have missed it so much I just hope all my old friends will know that I still have them in mind.'

N.C.

CROQUET DEMONSTRATORS COURSE

Two courses for Croquet Demonstrators were held on 24th April. The one at Bristol was organised by Ray Ransom and Chris Hudson took charge of the Wolverhampton course.

In all 13 people attended, and all were successful in gaining their 'Demonstrators' badge - in appearance, similar to the Coaches badge, but with a striking yellow background.

The object of the one-day course was to enable the Demonstrators to go back to their own groups and associations, and show others how to play Golf Croquet and organise Golf Croquet tournaments.



The Croquet Demonstrators Course at Wolverhampton. Ann Cottier is second from the right.

Some of those who qualified as Demonstrators want to become full Grade I Coaches in due course, to introduce Association Croquet to their colleagues. Meanwhile, they are having a great time playing Golf Croquet!

Croquet Demonstrators Badges were awarded to:

Mrs K.M. Bradley (Bucks WI)
Mrs A.C. Cottier (IoM WI)
Mrs P.J. Speer (Edgbaston High School)
C.G. Daniel (Warwick School)
Dr R.W. Fair (Warwick School)
E. Blackmore (Northampton Croquet Club)
Miss M. Macfarlane (Cornwall WI)
Mrs E.A. Featherstone (Dorset WI)
Miss E.R. Bell (Dorset WI)
J.A. Lawrence
Mrs R. Thomas (Herefordshire WI)
Miss J. Williams (Mangotsfield Lower School)
Mrs N.V.F. Rayne (Oxfordshire WI)

The Croquet Classic

GOOD ENTRY FOR 1988 CROQUET CLASSIC

The total entry for this year's Croquet Classic is slightly up on last year, with the same preponderance of players from London and the South East.

Individual players have been matched with their nearest neighbours and split into blocks of 8, with the winner of each block knock-out going forward to the relevant Regional Final. Entries include many players who took part in last year's Classic, ten students from St Bartholomew's Medical College, and 11-year old Toby Genillard who is probably the youngest competitor.

Group entries, for which there must be at least eight players, have been received from a wide variety of sources. They include two groups from the Sidcot Hotel at Winscombe, Avon; groups from Cambridge University, Oxford Polytechnic (2) and Heathfield

School, Ascot; groups of neighbours from Hampshire, Buckinghamshire, Cumbria, the West Midlands, and the Potteries; a group from the Wrotham St Georges Croquet League in Kent; and a number of group entries from Croquet Clubs keen to give their beginners a chance for some competitive play. Group entries organise their own competition and the group winner qualifies for the relevant Regional Final.

The preliminary rounds are already in progress. Individual groups have been put in touch with a local 'contact' who has volunteered to answer any technical queries and run the group competition. The Regional Finals will be held towards the end of July, with the National Final to be held at Polesden Lacey, near Dorking, Surrey, on Saturday, September 10th.

Cumbria seeks Garden Champion

Twenty four players are competing to find a Cumbria Champion who will be invited to take part in the Regional Finals of the Croquet Classic in July.

The Cumbria competition is being organised by the Revd Canon Gervase W. Markham, who lives in Penrith. The games will be played at Skirsgill Park, near Penrith, by kind permission of Dr Anthony Leeming who is preparing two courts.

The draw for the Cumbria competition has been arranged, not according to skill, which is an unknown quantity, but in such a way that close friends or neighbours do not knock each other out in the opening rounds. There has been a draw for 'Byes'.

Dr Leeming and Canon Markham will both be playing in the competition, in which they will meet players from Carlisle, Ambleside, Burgh-by-Sands, Penrith, Southwaite and elsewhere.

Regional Newspapers to Promote Qualifying Rounds

The following qualifying rounds are being promoted or publicised by local Regional newspapers.

18th June	High Green Playing Fields, Sheffield Sheffield Star.
19th June	Hodnet Hall, Near Shrewsbury. Shropshire Star.
25th June	Derbyshire County Cricket Ground. Derby Evening Telegraph.
26th June	Dyffryn House, Cardiff. South Wales Echo.
2nd July	Jubilee Park, Woodhall Spa. Lincolnshire Echo.

REGIONAL FINAL VENUES

The dates and venues selected for the Regional Finals are as follows.

Saturday, 23rd July	Hughenden Manor, High Wycombe, Bucks.
Sunday, 24th July	Denzell Gardens, Green Walk, Bowdon, Cheshire.
Sunday, 24th July	Winchester Tennis & Squash Club, Bereweke Road, Winchester, Hants.
Saturday, 30th July	Ormesby Hall, Middlesbrough, Cleveland.
Saturday, 30th July	Bear of Rodborough, Rodborough, Near Stroud, Glos.
Sunday, 31st July	Wrest Park, Silsoe, Beds.
Sunday, 31st July	Wellcome Research Croquet Club, Wellcome Research Labs, Langley Court, South Eden Park Road, Beckenham, Kent.

There will be two all-play-all competitions between four players at each venue, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. The winners of both competitions will go forward to the National Final, with the two best runners-up, making 16 players who will compete for the title at Polesden Lacey.

Indoor Croquet

Teeside: 13-14 February YND Triumph to Win Northern Section

Report by John Davis



Tony Miller and John Hessey of SCANA Leisure Surfaces show how the hoops are secured to the carpet by being bolted to a steel plate the same thickness as the rubber underlay.

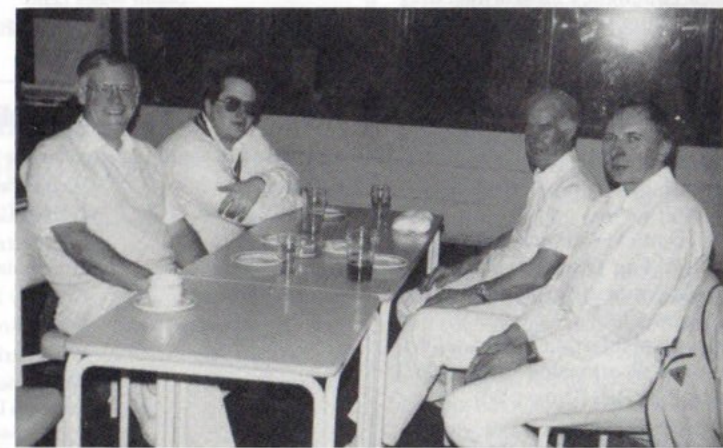
An indoor tennis centre was chosen as the venue for the home fixtures of the Yorkshire, Northumberland and Durham team. Following a trek to the Brierley Hill Leisure Centre the weekend before, an honourable 3-3 had been achieved with West Midlands and so the team were in high spirits for their two home matches.

Having been told that the lawn would fit on to a doubles tennis court we were a little surprised to find that it wouldn't. However some hasty rearranging meant that two tennis courts were available to us. An hour and a half later we were ready to go in conditions that can only be described as nippy, for the players, and perfect for the spectators! An unheated converted aircraft hanger can be very cold in February. But on the other side of the large paned (Everest? - it was cold enough) double glazing the spectators looked very comfortable in shirt sleeves drinking beer and gin and tonics.

The first morning was set aside for the carpet manhandlers and we soon discovered that tennis courts can have slopes. The local knowledge was to prove useful! The East Midlands sent a very strong team who were also good navigators. Follow the signs to Teesside Airport, you can't miss it! They duly arrived at lunch-time, were fed and watered and allowed to practice. At this point a team rundown may be timely. East Midlands were represented by Keith Aiton, Ian Vincent, Lawrence Whittaker and Gary Norman, whilst Yorkshire, North-

umberland and Durham (YND) had John Davis, Bill Lamb, Ted Scott and Walter Sanders.

The handicap doubles was first away and Ted and Walter played very well to sneak a win for YND. Keith and Ian then demonstrated how to play the game by demolishing John and Bill +13 in about 45 minutes. With the excitement building we almost forgot the cold. Two very close handicap singles resulted in draws between Lawrence and Ted and Walter and Gary. So it was 2-2 with the advanced singles to go. On paper John and Bill had little chance against Keith and Ian, but we weren't playing on paper, although the surface was nearly as fast. Bill played very well to keep his nose in front of Ian to win +1 and John came from well behind



Players relax in the cafeteria at Crawley during their indoor match last year. L to R: David Williams (Crawley), Phil Lewis (Swindon), and Peter Gill (Crawley).

with 20 minutes left to beat Keith +3 so YND had triumphed 4-2 and suddenly realised they were in with a chance to win the Northern Section. We then retired to the warmth of the bar, consumed a very pleasant tea and settled back to watch the next competition.

The evening had been set aside for a 4-way tournament between local clubs. 3-a-side double-banked singles and doubles with 45 minute time limits meant we played until 10.45 pm. Teams from Teesside, Norton Hall, Tyneside and East Riding took part, with East Riding having the distinct advantage of co-opting a very experienced Chris (I dream about this carpet!) Hudson. Tyneside mixed their team to give 5 players a chance and Teesside included 2 players, John Robinson and Ramsey Bettinson, who had just completed their first seasons of croquet. Norton Hall included very experienced Colin Snowdon whose wife Liz turned up to 'sketch some slow moving croquet players'. Unfortunately for her it was so cold that the players moved too quickly! East Riding came out on top but all the players deserve praise for adapting to the conditions and the standard of play improved noticeably as the evening wore on.

Sunday morning found Chris Hudson appearing (?) live on Radio Cleveland encouraging people to get out of bed and come along to try croquet. Eleven minutes later the first enthusiasts arrived! (To be honest, when asked, they said they hadn't been listening to the radio). By 11.00am we had about 30 people playing (I will never complain about double-banking again!). All in all about 40 people tried it out and if half of those come back in the summer we'll double our membership. One of the encouraging things to emerge from the morning was that about a dozen people stopped to watch the match in the afternoon. And so the

YND versus the North West.

The North West sent a team via the scenic route over the Pennines so they missed lunch. Chris Clarke, Mark Saurin, Roger Deacon and David Hopkins were the opposition who John Davis, David Appleton, Sid Jones and Carolyn Hay (fresh from a 17-mile warm-up run in the morning) had to deal with.

Sid and Carolyn adapted better to the fast surface to beat Roger and David H. John and David A. then played well to beat Chris and Mark. John was heard to say that it was the first time he'd played a doubles pair whose combined age was less than his. David A said it happened to him all the time! 2-0 to YND and plain sailing? Roger Deacon thought otherwise and beat Sid Jones, but fortunately for YND Carolyn (obviously long runs do her good) managed to beat David H. to preserve the two game lead. Now for the big guns. Chris Clarke then gave a croquet demonstration. Third turn to penult. John Davis hit the fourth turn, went to

Calshot: 26-27 March South East take title

Report by Chris Hudson

The 'Activities Centre' at Calshot is located in three former aircraft hangars where flying boats were designed and built. The buildings, and indeed the whole area, have an atmosphere redolent of an extinct industry, with photos lining the walls of the Centre and its adjoining pub 'The Flying Boat' (nearly a mile away) depicting the heyday of the industry. Newspaper cuttings describing the Schneider Cup races round the Solent and other memorabilia recall the days when aviation was in its infancy.

The Centre itself is unusual. First, it is situated on Fawley Spit, which is about as far as you can go without actually falling into the sea, and well away from the suburbs of Southampton. Secondly, the facilities at Calshot would be suitable for a national centre, and are no doubt designed to attract people from far afield - in fact, they do run residential courses there, with their own 'Hall of Residence'.

The main hangar boasts the world's only indoor cycle track, and pursuit racing continued throughout the weekend, providing an interesting diversion from croquet. At the other end of this hangar there were several artificial rock faces, with people easing themselves up whilst held on a rope by their instructor. In between these two activities were sandwiched two artificial ski slopes, not heavily used whilst we were there, plus tennis and squash courts. Facilities for refreshments, either drink

penult and tried the straight double but failed. Chris then laid up, John hit, took off across the diagonal and went off by about 4 inches, Chris then executed a perfect double peel to win by the definitive (for an 18 point game) +12 (DP). David A. meanwhile was playing very well to beat an ever faster moving Mark Saurin +1, having accidentally pegged Mark's other ball out with about 90 seconds left. So YND triumphed 4-2 to take the Northern Section championship.

In conclusion, a very enjoyable weekend, many thanks to Chris Hudson for organising everything. We all had a really good time playing on a fast surface and if the CA want a permanent home for the carpet I know just the aircraft hanger.... What's more I also know where the new breed of croquet professionals will be able to park their executive jets when they fly in to play on it!

MATCH RESULTS

YND 4, East Midlands 2
YND 4, North West 2

or food, were minimal, but this seems to be the pattern at most Centres.

Winchester members Les Chapman, Hugh Smorfit and myself laid the carpet with the help of a member of staff at the Centre. A few more club members arrived at the Centre during the morning to try out the surface before the first public session began after lunch. Response from the locals was not good, although some 10 people turned up and many returned again for a second session on the Sunday morning. Members from High Wycombe, led by Alan Oldham, arrived at tea time and played some games before hunger drove them to 'The Flying Boat' for a meal in preparation for their homeward journey.

Sunday afternoon saw the crunch match between the South East and the South to determine who would win the Southern section of the Regional league. The South East got off to a 2-nil lead, with Margaret & Ron Selmes (Reigate) beating Peter Carter & Norman Morgan 9-2, and Steve Mulliner & George Noble beating Ken & Margaret Cotterell 10-4.

In the third game, Peter and Norman kept the match alive by beating Margaret and Ron 6-1, but there was no denying Steve and George, who took their second victory over Ken and Margaret by 13-3. So the South East challenge the North East in the National Final, just as soon as we can find some way of financing the event!

MATCH RESULT

South East 3, South 1

Cheltenham: 21-24 April Roger Jenkins wins 'B' Levels

Report by Bill Bawden

The Cheltenham B level tournament, played as a Swiss, was blessed by fine weather this year, albeit devilishly cold, with strong east winds making the lawns faster day by day.

A 'B' tournament it certainly was, with not one of the highest ranking players, off handicap 2, playing well enough to deserve a cut in handicap and promotion to 'A' class. Lucky for some, for surely 'B' class encapsulates all that is good in croquet in sheer enjoyment terms. None of your 'A' class +26 wins with a triple peel thrown in, and the loser secretly thinking 'Why on earth did I bother to come all this way just to bite my fingernails?' It is a personal view, of course, but I think most competitors would opt for a fair share of the game.

Roger Jenkins (Bristol, 2) with 7 wins and George Anderson (Bush, Edinburgh, 3½) with 6 wins went into the final, offering promise of an exciting match, but both played below their best, with too many 'gifts' on both sides. Having stuck in rover with one ball on peg, and later having missed the peg-out, Jenkins finally scrambled home when Anderson failed to make 2-back off Jenkins' single ball, giving him an easy roquet and take-off to peg.

The outstanding performance came from the player with the highest handicap in the tournament, Alvar Bray (Bristol, 8) who had 6 good wins +13, +15, +2(T), +11, +5, losing only to stable-mate Jenkins (-21) and Cheltenham's Alan Bogle (-18). Bray was the only player to be awarded a cut in handicap, 8 to 5.

Teenager Chris Ross of the home club maintained the promise he is showing, with a meritorious 5 wins.

It was good to see an entry of 11 ladies in the field of 32 contestants, with Carmen Bazley putting in the best lady performance with 5 wins, though with her usual clutch of games on time. Regrettably, Betty Weitz, who was managing and playing, retired hurt on the second day, as did Wynne Browne (Rochampton) on the following day.

Otherwise, a happy tournament, with a well-attended fish supper in the clubhouse on Saturday night. This Cheltenham scribe may perhaps be forgiven for thinking that Cheltenham tournaments have an aura all their own. Why else would Colin Snowdon, for instance, living in Middlesbrough and playing no croquet at home, choose to become a far country member of



Chris Ross: maintained his promise at Cheltenham.

Cheltenham, giving us the pleasure of his company in not less than five tournaments each year. The same can be said for John McLaren, though a mere 70 or so miles away at Kettering. They, and many other far country members, help to give that little extra quality to Cheltenham tournaments, which, at least at 'B' level and handicap play, are quite obviously gatherings of old friends.

RESULTS

8 wins: R. Jenkins.
6 wins: G. Anderson, Dr A. Bray.
5 wins: M.J. Finn, C.B. Sanford, I.P.M. Macdonald, A. Bogle, R. Race, P. Darby, Lady Bazley, R.P. Jones, C. Ross.
4 wins: K. Carter, Mrs F. Ransom, J. MacLaren, R. Brand, I. Brand, J. Jackson, Mrs C.D. Harris, Mrs P. Hague, F. Newman.
3 wins: Mrs K. Whittall, Mrs D. Wheeler, Dr R.F. Wheeler, C.B. Snowdon, R.F.A. Crane, Mrs P. Macdonald, A. Ramsey.
1 win: Mrs M. Langley, Mrs W. Browne.
0 wins: Mrs F. Newman, Mrs B. Weitz.

WALKER CROQUET EQUIPMENT

TOURNAMENT MALLETS

Made to your choice of weight and length

CLUB MALLETS

The Mallet with a 5-year Guarantee on the Head

TOURNAMENT BALLS

Croquet Association Approved for Tournament use.
2-year Guarantee

also

COMPLETE SETS - FULL RANGE OF EQUIPMENT

Send for Brochure to:

WALKER CROQUET EQUIPMENT
82 Queens Crescent, Chippenham, Wilts. SN14 0NP
Telephone Chippenham 654319

Short Story

FINAL STORY

By Peter Dorke (Former Chairman, CA Schools Committee)

The Great Player rested his hand upon the glowing silver quail and smiled benevolently at the small crowd of young people gathered before the clubhouse. With an expansive gesture which embraced the immaculate lawns, the bright evening sunshine, the charm of the famous setting, he began his well-rehearsed speech:

'Ladies and gentlemen, my young friends, this has been a wonderful day's croquet. The Final of the Schools' Championship is always a special occasion...'

The Chairman of the Schools Committee, standing at his bedroom window, knew that he would not relax completely until every last one of the students and teachers who were to take part in the day's tournament had climbed back into their cars and buses and left for home, with or without one of the glittering prizes on offer. At least the weather had turned out fine, with a slight haze that promised a real scorcher. A day for the natty shorts, he decided, turning to his wife for confirmation, only to find that she had gone back to sleep, a half-full cup of tea balanced precariously on the eiderdown. Shaking his head at the hopelessness of woman-kind, the Chair-man removed the wobbling cup, tucked his wife in with a kiss and continued his preparations for the day. The day when all his efforts of the previous eight or ten months would reach their glorious climax.

He touched wood hastily.

Eighty miles to the South, the Headmaster of Beadles School was throwing a tantrum, the latest of several croquet-inspired fits of pique.

'I have been quite deliberately misled, Mr Graham, quite deliberately! Had I been aware that this ridiculous croquet match coincided with Founders' Day I should never have given permission for you to enter a team.'

'But Headmaster, the Governors fixed the date for Founders' Day after I spoke to you about the Schools Croquet...'

'Rubbish! Your behaviour over this matter has been entirely irresponsible. To add insult to injury you even gave me the wrong date: according to my diary the final of the National Schools Croquet Championship will take place tomorrow, not today. Why you wished to deceive me I cannot imagine but it was hardly professional behaviour.'

'If you put the wrong date in your diary, Dr Bryant, the fault is yours. I gave you a copy of the details sent by the CA and they included the date of the Finals Tournament. In any case, that cannot be helped now. I have a car-full of boys waiting for me outside and I refuse to tell those lads that all their efforts to reach the finals have been for nothing because you insist on their attending some out-dated celebration of a bunch of eighteenth century tradesmen.'

'You go too far, Mr Graham. I warn you...'

'I shall go as far as may be necessary, Headmaster, to see that my boys get their chance to win that tournament. I am sorry that we have had this misunderstanding but if you have anything further to say on the matter it will have to keep until we return this evening. We must go now or we shall be late.'

Dr Bryant did not reply but turned on his heel and strode away down the corridor. Charlie Graham (Music and General Studies) bent to the pile of mallets which littered the ancient oak floor.'

Grainger Street Comprehensive's minibus was already parked outside the padlocked gates of the croquet club. Vince Evans (PE and Geography) had allowed an hour for getting lost but, for once in his life, had found his way with ease straight to his destination. The croquet team and their supporters, though disgruntled at having suffered a dawn rising to no good purpose, were nevertheless enjoying the opportunity to pull the young teacher's leg. He bore their taunts good humouredly but there was a worried frown on his broad features: Grainger Street had come ill-equipped for the fray.

When he had introduced croquet to the school, Vince had been unable to raise the wind for a full set of equipment. He had persuaded the Design and Technology Department (i.e. wood and metalwork



Charlie Graham (Music and General Studies)..

to us ordinary people) to make hoops and a few mallets. One or two of the more practical boys had come up with their own 'bats'. A tiny amount of money had been squeezed out of the P.E. budget and with it Vince had bought balls. Lawn maintenance, such as it was, came courtesy of the LEAs 'gang' of groundsmen, who hurtled round the county's schools like commandos, every cut timed to the second and not a moment to waste on proper lawn care, not even to the extent of boxing the grass cuttings, which were left to cling wetly to balls and shoes. The kids did not mind, though: they were hooked on the game and would have played whatever the conditions.

Thus, improvisation and enthusiasm had carried Grainger Street through each succeeding round of the National Championship until they found themselves, unbelievably, in the Finals Tournament. Then on the eve of the big day, careless Fourth Years had broken two of their precious mallets, leaving them with only one that Vince would dare to use at a proper croquet club. He had assured his crestfallen players that mallets could be borrowed at the club where the finals were to be played but he did not know the club at all and could not be sure that there would be spare mallets available.

Thrusting these depressing thoughts away, Vince turned towards the back of the bus in time to catch Christopher Billings in a fast embrace with Jenny Carter.

'Stop that, you dirty little beggars - it's far too early in the day. Here, take a walk up the road and see if you can find a newsagents. Get me an 'Independent' or a 'Guardian', okay?'

Not the 'Sun', understand? I get all the sex and violence I need back at school. And don't spend my change. Off you go. Now then, Tracy, where's that flask of coffee?'

When comprehensivisation swept the country in the Sixties, St Jude's Grammar School for Boys had neatly side stepped (like the good rugby school it was) but had not evaded change altogether. As a compromise they had agreed to amalgamation with the local girls' High School, just across the street. The shock waves could still be felt, 20 years on, though most of the die-hard traditionalists on the two staffs had long since retired and the younger teachers had welcomed a mixed staff room while yet viewing with apprehension the prospect of mixed classes. Everything passes, however, and by the time Mrs Noreen Williams' croquet club was formed as a lunchtime activity in 1979, it seemed quite natural that it should attract both boys and girls, though few of the latter were destined to achieve much success at the game, even the best of them dropping out as they grew older and formed romantic attachments to non-croquet players. This sad state of affairs vexed Mrs Williams not a little. Whatever success her team enjoyed in the Southern League, beating most of the local clubs with ease, year after year, her failure to inspire any of the girls to take croquet seriously exercised her mind in those wee small hours known as the Teacher's Dawn. When others of her profession were lying awake with thoughts of curriculum development keeping them from much needed rest, Noreen Williams was devising schemes, all doomed to failure, to make croquet as irresistible to her girls as it was to her boys.

Until this season, that is, for suddenly, out of the ranks of the Lower Sixth girls had appeared a natural, a croquet maiden who could take on the men, and who, moreover, seemed as dedicated as they to perfecting her game, happiest when absorbed in a four-ball break, even more determined to win than any of her male opponents but much less inclined than they to throw a fit before the blobbed hoop or the missed three-foot roquet.

Maggie Hewson was not the best player in St Jude's croquet club, nor even the second or third best but she was the keenest and as such had been picked to represent the school on occasions when a better player could perhaps have been found - even in the early rounds of the Schools Championship. Now, though, it was the Finals Tournament and the school's 'A' team was through, a team whose members were three young gentlemen of the Upper Sixth, all of handicaps lower than 4. All very satisfactory, you might think. So why did Noreen Williams find herself awake at dawn on the morning of the National Finals, her mind filled with doubts and questions?

The problem was Noreen's decision to include Maggie in the team for the Finals, partly as a reward for her commitment to croquet, partly as an encouragement to the other girls who played, partly, perhaps mainly, because she wanted her team to be the first to win the Schools Championship with a girl in the team. Her ultimate ambition was that an all-girl team from St Jude's should carry off the silver quail but until that day she would be satisfied with a team which contained one girl, at least.

The students had received the news with ill-disguised horror, Maggie more aghast than the boys. Alter a winning team for the sake of making a gesture? It was pure madness. When they saw that Noreen was adamant they reluctantly proposed a compromise: all four players should go and Maggie

could play the first match. If she lost her game, she was out. Noreen agreed but the students' reaction had sown the seed of the guilt which racked her as she finally gave up all hope of sleep and went down to a much earlier breakfast than she had planned.

About the time that young Chris Billings was arriving back at the bus with Vince Evans' copy of the 'Independent', the Secretary of the Club was hurriedly finishing her breakfast, with a view to getting down to the club as soon as possible. It wasn't that there was anything particular to do - the hoops were already out and balls, suitably worn ('Can't let those young ruffians loose with our new sets of balls', the Treasurer had said, 'We don't have the money to replace them this year'), laid out in readiness just inside the clubhouse door. No, it was just that she was on pins at the thought of all those children running free in her club. Lord knows what they might get up to if she wasn't there to keep an eye on things. She wasn't sure whether she approved of young people playing croquet. Didn't know why the club had agreed to host the Schools Tournament, really. Certainly wasn't because of the money.

The Secretary of the Club eased her ample figure into her new Fiesta and fumbled for the ignition.

Somewhere in the fast lane of the M1, a large black Bentley of Fifties vintage was bearing a team from Mancastria Sixth Form College furiously towards the Finals of the National Schools Croquet Championship. That is to say, the driver was furious. The car was taking the whole thing in its stride, as befitted a classic motor, and its three passengers sat mutely in the back, afraid that if they spoke they might interrupt the picturesque flow of invective issuing from the driver. Basil Custerson taught Maths at Mancastria SFC. He was also senior tutor and, as such, not accustomed to being defied, as defied he had been that very morning - and by his number one player. Basil had scarcely been able to believe his ears when, on answering his 'phone just fifteen minutes before he was due to pick up the croquet team outside the college, he had heard the voice of Jeremy Farquar, handicap 3 and a bit of a bandit at that, the White Hope of Mancastria, telling him that he was sorry but he could not play in the Finals because he had to turn up at work at 3.45 as usual or lose his job.

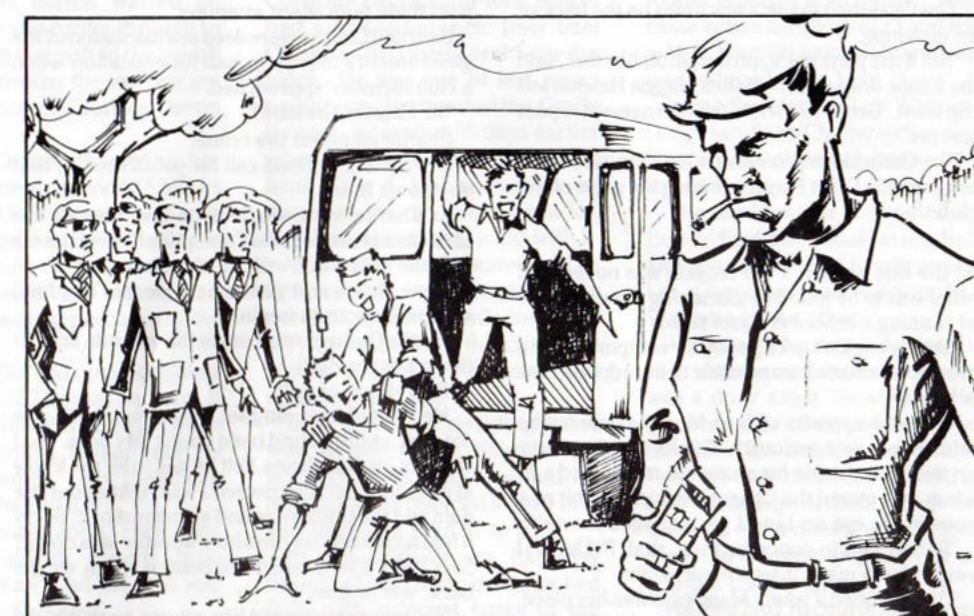
Turn up for work? What blankety work was this blankety college student doing on a blankety Wednesday afternoon for blank's sake? It seemed the boy helped in a garage. So, go sick. Impossible - he'd get the sack if he missed even so much as one evening: there was a queue of youngsters waiting for part-time jobs in the town and if you had a job you hung to it. So why the blankety blank didn't he mention it before? Why leave it till this blanking moment. Sorry, afraid Basil would go up the wall. Up the blankety wall? He'd say he'd go up the blanking wall! and he'd have his blanking guts for garters, too, the next time he saw him! And rang off.

It took three 'phone calls to find a replacement and by then Basil was way behind schedule. By the time he had picked up the new player (a shaky 13) at his home and collected the other two at the College, an hour had been lost. He forced himself to make time for one more call, then headed for the motorway.

The Chairman of the Schools Committee put down the receiver with a sigh. He picked up his car keys and made hastily for the front door, intending to get on the road before the telephone could ring again.

Charlie Graham's new Volkswagen drew up at the Croquet Club just as the Secretary was opening the gates, her attention only half on Vince Evans' explanation of his need for the loan of two mallets. When at last she realised that the flustered young man was talking about borrowing her mallets (or

pick a name out of the hat?'



...his scruffy band of delinquents came tumbling out and collided with the blazered young men of Beadles.

rather her club's mallets, she corrected herself hastily), she pursed her lips and looked a good deal less than pleased.

'We'll have to see. I'm not sure we have anything suitable. Perhaps one of the other teams can help you'. She smiled vaguely and strode off towards the clubhouse. In frustration Vince reached for his cigarettes and turned back to the minibus, just as his scruffy band of delinquents came tumbling noisily out and collided with the blazered young men of Beadles. Charlie Graham was striding ahead of his team. He now stretched out his hand to Vince with a broad smile. As Vince took the proffered hand, he took in the smart uniforms and the expensive mallets and swore silently that his less privileged team would show these public school wallies how croquet should be played. Then he remembered that without mallets the task might be a little difficult.

By 9.30 the Chairman of the Schools Committee was ready to make the draw. The Club Secretary had been persuaded to release a couple of mallets to the Grainger Street team, who in turn had agreed to stop littering the lawns with cigarette butts. The St Jude's party had arrived in good time but appeared rather subdued. Basil Custerson's Bentley would have left the M1 by now and be negotiating the last 20 miles of B road. If they kicked off now Mancastria would get here just when their double-banked game was due to start. They'd have no time to settle down before playing but it was their own fault - or Basil's anyway. Should never have got himself into such a mess. That's what came of leaving the organisation of the team to students. Got to keep a close eye on them or you're in trouble. It looked as though the Williams woman had something on her mind, too, and her team did not appear to be on speaking terms with her. Still, at least they were playing a girl. The Schools Championship would never achieve credibility (lawn cred?) until there were a lot more girls involved, especially in the Finals.

'Right Ho, boys and girls, gather round for the draw. Mrs Williams, would your young lady like to

pick a name out of the hat?'

As soon as they left the M1 Basil had begun to relax and was now in his singing mode, breaking off now and again to offer some piece of advice on

coming affray. Basil knew next to nothing about croquet, was probably the worst player at Mancastria College and had never presumed to coach any of his students, who simply taught each other. This did not prevent him believing that, as the founding father of croquet at the College, he was entitled to the respectful attention of his team on occasions like this. The students, who were, when all was said and done, kindly lads, agreed with this belief and allowed themselves to be advised by him. Naturally they ignored his advice entirely.

Three border ballads and a Buddy Holly number later the Bentley turned sedately into the wide avenue which led to the croquet club. One of the boys leaned forward:

'Come on Baz, keep her going. I'm dying for a pee.'

By mid afternoon the Secretary of the Club had begun to realise that every last one of her club's young guests was a serious croquet player. Even the doubtful looking crew who had accompanied the Grainger Street team had settled down, after a brief period of rowdiness, into an intense absorption in the play. She thought that she might even nip out to the town for a while without the risk of the lawns being desecrated or the clubhouse burnt down in her absence. As she made her way to her car she skirted lawn 3 where the four teachers sat, tense but on apparently good terms, watching in a kind of exquisite agony, the efforts of their proteges.

Over by lawn 5, where the number three players were slogging it out, the Chairman of the Schools Committee was discussing with the Editor of 'Croquet' the need to encourage girls' schools to enter the Championship. He gestured towards the lawn where Maggie Hewson, the only girl in the tournament, was about to pull off her second victory of the day.

'How many girls do you see playing with that kind of concentration?'

'Well, not as many as the boys, admittedly, but I think you'll find there's a good few girls coming

Short Story

Short Story

through now.

'I hope you're right - oh, good hoop! Looks as though this is going to work out very well, nice stagey final between the underdogs. Good for the Championship, don't you think? Shows anyone has a chance.'

The Chairman made a few notes on the back of an envelope.

'Not if she plays her approach shots like that,' said the Editor, drily, as a crestfallen Maggie Hewson left the lawn. 'Better not write the tournament report just yet!'

The Chairman was no longer listening, for he had just seen the Great Player entering the gates of the club.

At the side of lawn 3 the tension was no less but relief was to be found in discussing the problems of running a school croquet team:

'Simply couldn't get a penny for equipment. Told me the cuts made it impossible to introduce a new activity.'

'Quite the opposite with us. Money galore but he refuses to take it seriously. Thinks it looks pretty on the lawn outside his study but nearly had a fit when we entered the Championship. Be a bit of a poke in the eye for him if we managed to win.'

'Tell my lads to concede, then, shall I? That's if you'd like to make it worth our while.'

'I'll be satisfied if young Maggie justifies her place. She's done marvellously so far but there'll be no mercy if she loses a game. So ruthless, these boys; so dedicated.'

'Really? Wish I could say the same of mine. I couldn't believe it this morning when that little beggar phoned up to say he wasn't coming. Might lose his job! A three 'A' level student with a good chance of Oxbridge and his main concern is to keep his part-time job in a bloody garage. Never thought how good it would look on his UCCA form that he'd been a member of the team that won the National Schools Croquet Championship.'

'Hang on a minute, Basil, you're a bit previous - from where I'm sitting your lot are not even going to come third.'

'Don't be too sure, Mrs Williams, love. Pay close attention. You are about to witness the Mancastria late charge, famed throughout the croquet world.'

Vince Evans sniggered offensively and offered round his cigarettes.

The Grainger Street Supporters Club and the young gentleman of St Jude's displaced by Maggie's continuing success had settled themselves as far away from their teachers as they could and were lined up along the North boundary of lawn 4. From time to time, Chris Billings poured a generous quantity of liebraumilch from a large and innocent-looking thermos flask into the orange plastic cup held by each. The hot sun was making them drowsy, which was probably just as well.

The Great Player strolled by just then and nodded pleasantly. Great kids. Nothing wrong with today's youngsters.

The final session was to begin at 4 o'clock precisely, after a sumptuous tea provided by the sponsors. There was enough to feed even the spectators but when Vince Evans went over to invite the Grainger Street supporters into the club-house he returned hurriedly to say that he would take some food out to them to save overcrowding the small tea-room. He was seen to whisper furtively to Noreen Williams, who groaned, put down her cup of tea with a clatter and would have risen but Vince squeezed her shoulder reassuringly and whispered further, so that she sank back with a sigh.

The Great Player moved from table to table, telling a story here, giving advice or praise there,

impressing everyone with his amiable nature, his common touch, his way with young people but, above all, his Greatness. The Secretary of the Club, twittering constantly, stayed close to him as he made his rounds. The youngsters, engrossed in their eating and their self-centred conversations, paid them both scant attention.

Basil and Charlie were deep in a discussion of the government's new proposals for education when a club member approached.

'Mr Charles Graham?'

Charlie admitted the crime.

'There's a telephone call for you. Through that door, over there.'

As Charlie went worriedly to take his call, the Chairman of the Schools Committee tinkled the tea bell and called out with mock pomposity:

'Time, ladies and gentlemen, please. The final session is about to begin.'

Charlie Graham went out to the veranda and sat down next to Basil.

'Everything okay?'

'He wanted to apologise! How about that? - the old goat admitted he'd been wrong. My boss. That was him on the 'phone. Felt he had to let me know at once that he'd discovered I was right about the date and the Governors and all the rest of it. Sorry if he'd spoiled the day and how were the lads doing? Says there'll be a small celebration when we get back, win or lose.'

'You mentioned you'd like a Scale 4 as well, did you?'

'Only in passing. I reckon his secretary put him right. Keeps a stern eye on all his doings, she does. One of the few school secretaries I've ever known who recognises a few imperfections in her boss.'

'Well, I'm very pleased for you. Matter of fact I'm not nearly as fed up as I was. That new lad I had to play has done very well; he's improved enormously as the day's gone on. Watch him now. Taking his bisques much more intelligently. He'll be a fine player by next year.'

They fell silent as the lad in question raised his mallet for a referee and the Great Player himself walked onto the lawn to officiate.

Vince was returning to the club house from the minibus, where he had persuaded one of his more inebriated charges to lie down for a while, when he was accosted by the Secretary of the Club. Oh God! She must have noticed the condition of his pupils.

'Mr Evans, a word with you if I may.'

'Of course, Mrs. er. I'm sorry if my...'

'I've been thinking about those mallets. We have a lot of spares at the moment, so why don't you keep them? In fact I can find a couple more if you like and there's a set of old balls you can take, too. Would that help, do you think? It seems such a pity that such talented young players should be without proper equipment. And they've been so well behaved. I wasn't looking forward to today, I might tell you. We don't normally have so many children about the place. But I needn't have worried, need I. Well, there we are, then, that's settled. I'll go and look out those balls.'

Vince moved his lips wordlessly and groped for his cigarettes.

The Editor of 'Croquet' had fallen asleep underneath the huge turkey oak near lawn 4. His white sun hat had fallen to the ground and the monastic top of his head glinted in the evening sun.

'Cheer up, Mrs Williams. It was her reserve player.'

'Oh hello David. Was I looking glum? Probably just the sun making me frown. How has your day been?'



...a generous quantity of liebraumilch from a large and innocent looking thermos flask..

'Not bad at all, Miss. I've had a good time with the Grainger Street lot.'

'Yes, I could see that. Very strong coffee you were sharing, I believe.'

'Oh, yeah, well, I didn't have a lot. Had to celebrate Maggie's doing so well, didn't I?'

'You didn't mind then?'

'Oh, I minded, Miss, but I'm glad she played that first match. I'd never have beaten that kid with only 2 bisques but with 5 she had him on toast. She's better than I thought, you know. I expect they'll bring her down a couple if she wins this time.'

'How do the others feel about it?'

'They're all right. Everyone likes Maggie and, in any case, she hasn't let the side down.'

'Well, thanks for telling me, David. I must admit I was afraid I'd done the wrong thing.'

'What? You, Miss? Never! See you, Miss.'

There were now clips on the peg in five of the six games.

The Chairman of the Schools Committee was in a state of near euphoria. Everything had gone so well - hardly a hitch and just the sort of climax the competition needed. Marvellous that everything should depend on the last game to finish and especially good luck that it should have taken place bang in front of the club-house, with everyone sitting out on the veranda. A dozen or so club members had turned up in time to watch this match, confirming the Chairman's opinion that he'd chosen the right venue for the Finals Tournament. You could always rely on a bit of support here.

Now, just the speech and presentation by the Great Player and that would be it for another year. He wondered what the old fellow would say. No bother there, though: you could always rely on this chap to put it in a nutshell. Ah! He was ready by the looks of it.

The Chairman of the Schools Committee raised his hand for silence and introduced the Great Player, who, resting his hand on the trophy, a glowing silver quaich, smiled benevolently at his audience:

'Ladies and gentlemen, my young friends, this has been a wonderful day's croquet. The Final of the Schools Championship is always a special occasion.....'

NATIONAL TOURNAMENT REVIEW

By Barry Keen

The luck of the draw took a new twist this year in the draw for the InterClub when last year's finalists, Bowdon and Nottingham, were drawn together in the first round. With both Aiton and Irwin missing 'over the water', both teams were weaker than in the final. Vincent and Hyne soon disposed of out-of-touch Bell and Lewis, and with Peterson playing below his best Nottingham ran out 5-2 winners to make themselves favourites for the trophy.

In the Mary Rose, 5 of the first matches were walk-overs and two other matches were played with the visiting sides one short. This is extremely disappointing and shows that there are few players in the 1½ and higher handicap range who are prepared to travel for open play. The Tournament Committee



Barry Keen.

may therefore have to reconsider what was, in my view, an ill-judged decision to change the handicap limit for the Mary Rose from 0 to 1½.

The surprise of the Longman Cup has been the demise of Glasgow in the first round at the hands of Ellesmere. However, there are several recent winners going strong, and with the majority of wins by the slenderest of margins of 3-2, it appears that there are no over-handicapped 'dark horses' around.

RESULTS

Inter-Club

1st Round
Harrow Oak bt Edgbaston (wo)
Surbiton bt Bristol 4-3
Southport bt Hurlingham 4-2
West Park bt Colworth 4-2
Worcester bt Parkstone 4-1
Nottingham bt Bowdon 5-2
Roehampton bt Harwell 5-2
Cheltenham bt Ipswich 6-1

Mary Rose

1st Round
Roehampton bt Parkstone 4-3

Budleigh Salterton: 9-14 May Handicaps tumble in Devon sun Report by Peter Danks

As the first match started on Monday the sun broke through to bring Spring warmth to the lawns. Except on Tuesday the weather got hotter and hotter. Glorious Devon at its best.

Audrey Croker, managing her first tournament, provided 5 blocks of 7 and 2 of 6. She coped well with the many problems, including a large number of temporary absences. It was a very smooth performance much appreciated by the players.

Paul MacDonald opened against William Broad-Thomas and won. It decided 'A' block. Paul went on to win all his games. William won his next 5 games. His handicap dropped a half to 2½.

In 'B' block John Hatherley, leading a dozen players from Sidmouth, had it all his own way and won all 6 games.

The final between Paul and John, playing for the Godfrey Turner Challenge Cup, was all John - until. Near the end Paul caught up and was just ahead on time. Paul's handicap came down a half.

Block 'C' was of local interest.

Ryde bt Tyneside (wo)
Edgbaston bt Worcester 4-2
Himley bt Ramsgate (wo)
West Park bt Budleigh (wo)

2nd Round
Roehampton bt Ryde 5-2
Bowdon bt Parsons Green (wo)
Glasgow bt Worthing (wo)
Cheltenham bt Colworth 5-1
Himley bt West Park 7-0

Longman Cup

1st Round
Ellesmere bt Glasgow 4-1
Edinburgh bt Norton Hall 3-2
Tyneside bt Ashby (wo)
E. Riding bt Nottingham 4-1
Wolverhampton bt Bishop Vesey 4-1
Himley bt Stourbridge 4-1
Thos Cook bt Colworth 3-2
Colchester bt Hunstanton 3-2

2nd Round
Ellesmere bt Pendle
Southport bt Bowdon 3-2
Tyneside bt Edinburgh 3-2
E. Riding bt Bretby 4-1
Himley bt Wolverhampton 3-2
Edgbaston bt Walsall
Thos Cook bt Colchester 3-2
Ipswich bt Cambridge 3-2

Tournament Reports

week to win all her games. Her handicap was cut by 1 to 11.

In block 'G' the deciding match was between Hamish Hall (winner last year of a regional final of the Garden Croquet Classic) and Christopher Williams from Dyffryn, who came with a handicap of 13 and left with 9. Hamish won. His handicap was reduced from 14 to 11.


In the final for the L.G. Walters - Long Handicap Challenge Trophy Hamish got ahead of Jennie and stayed there.

The doubles was dominated by Pat and Paul MacDonald in one half and the fortunately handicapped Les Chapman and Christopher Williams in the other.

The final before a good crowd in shirt sleeves and summer dresses was a dour affair. Slowly the 5½ bisques came down and there was little in it. Towards the end Pat and Paul had their chances but failed to take advantage of them. The pressure was on. A minute or so before time Christopher pegged out to win the Daldry Cups.

Having had 10 courts full all day for 5½ days with super food and super weather life is now a bit humdrum. Why not move down here and brighten up our lives. You will be warmly welcomed. See you next year if not before. Don't forget - book early.

Block 'F' saw Jennie Broad-Thomas playing consistently all the



For a comprehensive range of Croquet Equipment, Mallets, Balls, Hoops, Winning pegs, Clips, Corner flags, Corner pegs, etc. All at competitive prices.

Ask for Townsend Croquet equipment at your local sports shop.

Write or 'phone for a free Croquet Aimer to help practise lining up the balls when taking Croquet.

TOWNSEND CROQUET LTD.
CLAIRE ROAD
KIRBY CROSS
FRINTON-ON-SEA
ESSEX CO13 0LX

TELEPHONE: FRINTON (0255) 67-4404

Weekend Round-Up

Southwick: 15-17 April New Swiss Format for Southwick Salver

Report by Ian Bond

This year, the Southwick Salver was contested not over Easter but in mid-April, starting at 2pm on Friday and finishing late on Sunday afternoon. If the switch of date was to escape the traditionally atrocious Easter weather, it was only partially successful: we did at least stay tolerably warm, but we were also treated to a day of persistent and at times heavy rain and afternoons wreathed in fog which drifted in over the railway line to the mournful baying of the foghorn nearby.

Some of the minor debris from the October storm was still in evidence, despite the great efforts that had been made to restore normality, and several of the familiar shelters were gone. One of the casualties was the glorious - though sadly decaying - construction (too grand to be a mere hut, too slight to earn the dignity of 'pavilion') which had for many years graced the centre of the grounds and commanded panoramic views of the lawns. Its replacement, though eminently serviceable, lacks its predecessor's character and we

have lost with it one of croquet's landmarks.

The play was passable for so early in the season: the odd triple, and some entertainingly speculative break play of a kind which should not (but undoubtedly will) be attempted when the lawns are faster; and the outcome decided by the final match between Phil Cordingley and Robert Fulford, the ante-post favourites. Fulford's defeat allowed Robert Prichard to edge into second place, and Cordingley himself dropped three games in all: one to Fulford, one to Andrew Gregory (who quite rightly caught the handicapper's eye) and one to your correspondent (who quite rightly did not). An honourable mention too for Tommy Vale, who stepped in at very short notice to fill the gap left by Mark Avery's late withdrawal, and acquitted

Cheltenham: 1-4 April Over-subscribed again!

Report by Peter Danks

The first tournament of the season provided Cheltenham with the usual hugely over-subscribed entry. More unusual, as the well insulated competitors gathered, was the greeting of amenable weather.

Players were able to discover up-to-the minute croquet developments by sticking close to the notice board. Paul Hand's bouncing baby boy development was heralded with a notice which ended: 'I have sent Ben's junior sub to the CA (just in case we had a boy!) - have you joined yet?'

On Day 2, we were informed of the CA's new 'award system' (Bronze - break with bisques, Silver - break, Gold - triple peel); manager Mike Finn endeared himself to cynics by ending the notice: 'John

Southport: 23-24 April Bowdon Boys' Final

Report by John Davis

The traditional season opener at Southport was again managed by Richard Hilditch with the usual early games confusing everyone. The knockout main event saw Eddie (I'm getting my temperament organised) Bell, Steve (If it's round and on my lawn, I'll hit it) Lewis, Alan (where's the fire?) Sutcliffe and David (I came here to play croquet as long as possible) Goacher progress to the Semi-finals. Two very tight games resulted in a Bowdon boys final. Meanwhile all the excitement

himself well.

But the most noteworthy feature of the event this year was the novel system of management adopted by Martin Murray. The first two rounds, on Friday afternoon, were standard Swiss with a three hour time limit. Thereafter, however, we effectively had two Swiss events running in parallel. Those in contention for the Salver faced three five-hour rounds in which up to three games could be played against each opponent (but with no game allowed to start after four elapsed hours); a varying population of the less successful entrants played two games - each against different opponents - during each of these extended rounds, with promotion and relegation between the two according to scores and, to some extent, the need to provide new opponents in the lower section.

Add to this the subtle ploy of crediting the winner of each game with the gross points he had scored - sufficient of a complication to give

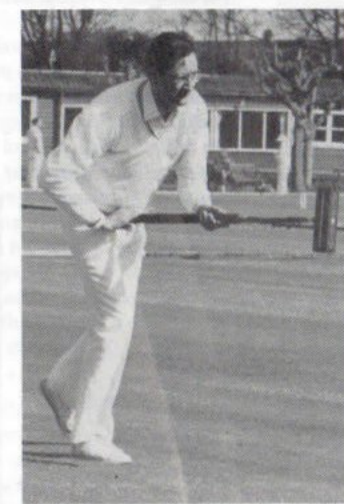
the Assistant Manager plenty of scope for arithmetical error and the players scope for ribald amusement at his expense - and one had a format which not only allowed the faster players the opportunity of up to eleven games in two and a half days (and half the entry did indeed manage ten or eleven) but also gave them the bonus of out-scoring any whose slowness had left them with wins from unfinished games.

It was by no means a flawless system: three 'long' rounds were too few to ensure that the main contenders would meet, and a 'false' result was at one stage a possibility. But as a method for encouraging faster play, of reducing the time which is lost between rounds in any Swiss, and of providing best-of-three opportunities in a compressed format, it had the makings of an interesting alternative. What if, for example, one were to try **two** game rounds, with 3 hours 20 minutes allowed...

qualify for Gold, but his genuine achievement of the weekend was manoeuvring the 4 balls into the correspondingly coloured corners.

Unluckiest player of the weekend was probably David Ruscombe-King, who was the victim of an incorrect refereeing decision which gave his opponent 6 hoops wrongly (after playing the wrong ball), with David finally losing by 1 on time!

Block winners came from a range of handicaps, but the low-bisquers fared surprisingly well; Peter Dorke was clearly benefitting from his Grade III coaching (have you booked yet?). Mickey Finn managed with calm efficiency; the caterers coped well with this large entry, helped by the usual mutinous-Hilditch contingent, who struck up a wonderful relationship with the local burger bar staff.



Don Gaunt, block winner

McCullough wanted this notice posted on April 1st, but I judged that to be inadvisable, although not inappropriate. Keith Aiton became the first player in the country to

was in the consolation swiz. Carol Lewis delighted the packed crowds on the pavilion steps by beating Andrew Bennet +1 including an excellent penultimate peel. The nearest to a triple came from Mark Saurin against Paul Smith. Unfortunately he missed the peg out. It looked as if we were going to have a seven way tie on 4 wins but David Maugham spoilt it all by beating David Goacher to stand in splendid isolation on 5/6.

Back in the main event Steve Lewis and Eddie Bell were at 1 game all and decided to retire to Bowdon where the decider was played on the Wednesday evening. Eddie Bell proved that he had his



John Davis, Teesside.

temperament organised by winning. As usual at Southport the organisation and catering were excellent. Unusually so was the weather.

Weekend Round-Up

Bowdon: 6-8 May A 'Non-Exclusive' Tournament

Report by John Haslam

On Friday the 6th May at 2.15 pm THE MANAGEMENT approaches Lawn 3. There must be something seriously wrong for him to be so far away from the Clubhouse. He looks serious and heads towards me. I begin to wonder 'Have I paid my tournament fees? Are we playing on the wrong lawn?' He speaks and I listen - as we all do when THE MANAGEMENT speaks. He asks if I will write the report for the Croquet Gazette. I say that I have never done it before. He encourages me to try 400 to 500 words

Wrest Park: 13-15 May TIME, TIME, TIME

Report by Eric Audsley

In three days an amazing total of 46 games ended on time. It was hot; it was the beginning of the season; the lawns were fast and the hoops set solid; there were a lot of high handicaps; the time limit was only three hours. But a score of 19-14 between two players with a combined handicap of 2! The joys of being a manager! On the plus side, many games were close with a total

Hurlingham: 30 April-2 May Good weather, but small entry

Report by Rev. Norman Browne

In spite of a forecast threatening depressions and 'blows', the weather was fine and reasonably warm, apart from some rain on Sunday morning. The courts on the cricket pitch, which were playing well, were used throughout the weekend. The main lawns, as could be expected early in the season, were a little slow and heavy.

In Block 1 the play was mixed, very good at times but frequently erratic and lacking in confidence. Worthy of mention were some notable wins by Bevis Sanford and Martin Haggerston. After a tie on 'games won' between Jerry Guest and Martin Haggerston, Jerry Guest emerged as winner, having the largest net points total.

Denis Cross and Paul MacDonald with seven wins each played an exciting game, from which Denis Cross came through as winner of Block 2.

It was disappointing that there was a somewhat low entry but this did not take from the enjoyment of those who participated.

Our thanks are due to Denis Cross whose contribution as manager helped to make this a most successful croquet weekend.

and not to mention the weather!

After that game, my mind turns on what I can write about. I look around to see if there are any unusual modes of dress; No, everybody looks very normal. The age range is not unusual for a handicap tournament, teens to over forties. Bowdon's facilities are up to their usual high standard and the welcome is as warm as ever.

That night, over a small beer, I hope that Saturday will bring an incident that will give me an 'exclusive' story to report. It is bound to happen as there are 24 players that have been split into 3 American blocks. Handicaps range from 1½ to 18 and it is encouraging to see three people who are playing in their first CA tournament.

of nine results of +1 (on time, of course).

Timed games should lead to dramatic endings with the backward player making a many hoop break to snatch victory. Not at Wrest park in May. Adrian Craxton, having stated he was going to put his balls in the corner, chose instead to try to make rover as it was so easy, leaving his opponent with a perfect break. But a half-made third hoop ended his misery. Alan Bogle could have beaten Steve Comish. Having recovered

Colchester: 7-8 May 'Eye of newt and toe of frog' (Macbeth)

Report by Robert Prichard

The sixteen players were mostly in one of two amphibian species: newts, who think they aim better after a pint or two, and frogs, led by French, who perform better on water. After three rounds of Swiss, the two unbeaten were French and Goacher. French went on to win all his remaining games, not by leaps or peels but by keeping just a toe ahead. Goacher, who had just done his first ever straight triple, turned from magic frog into mere mortal and lost his last four games. The fourth round between the two leading newts saw Palmer do five peels of a sextuple and peg out leaving Prichard both on first against rover. Much tight wiring and a few long shots led to Palmer never taking croquet again and losing by 2.

The Manager, Hobbs, started with two losses despite practising the evening before and sipping cola, but then joined the newts and won four of his last five, a welcome transformation from his zero at Hunstanton the previous weekend.

To exorcise his zero at Cheltenham, Peterson tried a new Irish grip with some success but used up too much luck against Wharrad. Not only did

Saturday night, I am still looking for my 'exclusive'. I know that in Block A David Lendrum is hitting hard and true and winning, but Betty Shotton is fighting every game and is determined to do well. In Block B, Gail Curry was making her presence felt even though Mike Wilkins and Don Williamson tried to overcome her. Block C was wide open with Roger Deacon and Walter Sanders, in his first tournament, battling it out with THE MANAGEMENT.

Sunday, news came from 'the lawn down the road' that Block A's hard hitter had won again and with one shot had destroyed the Club's thermos flask. It is not quite the 'exclusive' I want. I wonder if I could turn this report into a

from rushing his ball into the peg on the way to the sixth hoop, he somehow managed to get a ball between him and his rush to 1-back. David Appleton had a final break going against Duncan Hector, which would have ensured he won the block, but also found his ball too big for the fifth hoop. Not quite such a good break as his triple peel against Harry Green.

The blocks were remarkably close, with both A and B having 3 players with six wins out of eight. In block A there was only an 11

he deftly half-jump a roqueted ball to crosswire it and roquet the ball it had been occluding but later pegged out by bouncing off the crown of rover. A deft eft.

A third amphibian, fortunately rare but sighted at both this tournament and the Coles is the toad. This ugly, distasteful creature prefers a solitary life and is poisonous to double-bankers, especially those it regards as inferior. We must accept that some interference is inevitable and preferable to the long delays and excessive marking disruptive to both sides that too much diffidence produces, which would be exaggerated if suggested fierce penalties for interference were imposed. Anyhow, the newts and frogs generally slithered past each other amiably, enabling the Manager to fit in seven rounds, one more than last year. The lawns were not as fiery (except where Roy Alford's bonfire had escaped) and there was kinder hoopsetting by Paul Elliott. He remains largely responsible for the physical well-being of the club as does Pat Hetherington for the players, with her hearty lunches and teas.

medical bulletin on Colin Wild? He was starting to make an impression on Block B even though he was not fit enough to complete all his matches. I think I will leave the finer medical details to 'The Lancet'.

Late Sunday afternoon and the tournament is over and we all gather for the prize giving and handicap adjustments. I do not get an 'exclusive' story but now know how to have a superbly run tournament with one player always playing on Lawn 1. To do this, appoint Brian Storey as THE MANAGEMENT.

P.S. I did not mention the weather, Brian, but my sun-tan still looks good!

point difference in their total points. David Appleton who had finished was silently and successfully urging Heather Pritchard to score 15 hoops in her game with Eric Audsley to put him in second place. Duncan Hector couldn't catch up, but did very well in his last game with a +24 over John Wheeler to finish third.

In block B, Paul Smith spent all weekend trying to do triple peels against opponents with a forest of bisques. No success is recorded, but he did succeed in winning most of his games, which is the main aim (isn't it?), sufficient to outpoint Rod Williams and Tony Willbourn for the block. In block C, Howard Bottomley was beaten only by Vic Rees and pipped rapidly improving Steve Comish who also lost only the one.

RESULTS Open Weekends

Southwick: 15-17 April
(Murray Swiss: 20 entries)
Winner: P. Cordingley
Runner-Up: R.D.C. Prichard

Southport: 23-24 April
(Knock-out)
Winner: E. Bell

Hunstanton: 30 April-2 May
(Swiss & American)
Group A (13 entries):
Winner: J.P. Dawson
Runner-Up: G. Noble

Block B (8 entries):
Winner: P.J. Dorke
Runner-Up: P.J. Elliott

Block C (8 entries):
Winner: D.S. Cornelius
Runner-Up: A. Schonbeck

Hurlingham: 30 April-2 May
(American: 18 entries)
Block 1: Winner: J.E. Guest
Runner-Up: M.J.B. Haggerston
Block 2: Winner: D.C. Cross
Runner-Up: I.P.M. Macdonald

Colchester: 7-8 May
(Swiss: 16 entries)
Winner: M. French (Won 7/7)

Harrow Oak: 14-15 May
(Knockout & Swiss: 16 entries)
Winner: D.L. Gaunt
Runner-Up: W.O. Aldridge
Winner of Swiss: M. French

RESULTS

Handicap Weekends

Cheltenham: 1-4 April
(American: 54 entries)
Winners
Block A: Miss D.A. Cornelius (1½)
Block B: D.L. Gaunt (½)
Block C: A.J. Bogle (4)
Block D: C.B. Snowdon (2½)
Block E: P.J. Dorke (3)
Block F: P.L. Smith (-1)

Rochampton: 14-17 April
(Swiss: 20 entries)
Winner (after 7 rounds):
M.J.B. Haggerston: 6 wins

Ryde: 15-17 April
(Swiss: 17 entries)
Winner (after 7 rounds):
F.S. Burch (11) 6 wins
Runner-up:
P. Archer (10) 6 wins

Woking: 22-24 April
(Swiss: 18 entries)
Winner: R.J. Smith (1) 7 wins
Runner-Up: G. Cuttle (7) 6 wins

Southwick: 29 April-2 May
(Swiss: 24 entries):
Winner: T.D. Ballard (6½) 7 wins

Compton: 6-8 May
(American: 24 entries)
Play-Off between Block winners:
J. Riddock (5) bt
M.J.B. Haggerston (2½) +5:
G. Vince (1½) bt P. Howell (4) +2.
Final: Vince bt Riddock +2.

Bowdon: 6-8 May
(American: 23 entries)
Block winners:
Block A: D. Lendrum (6)
Block B: Ms G. Curry (10)
Block C: R. Deacon (7½)

Wrest Park: 13-15 May
(American: 27 entries)
Winners:
Block A: D. Appleton (2)
Block B: P.L. Smith (-1)
Block C: H. Bottomley (1½)

Comment

STRAIGHT RUSH

'It matters not who won or lost...'

An unsportsmanlike preoccupation with success is not - or used not to be - cricket. How does croquet match up to the standards once taken for granted in English sport, but now outmoded relics of a dimly and perhaps inaccurately perceived past?

There may be some who will be shocked that I should even think to ask the question: isn't croquet the game in which a player regulates her own conduct without benefit of umpire and in consultation with her opponent?

Quite. And the operative word is 'her', for the matter which I wish to raise with my readers is one which I can claim, with feminine self-righteousness, has more to do with male croquet players than with ladies.

It concerns three players, all male, who, at different tournaments held last season, having lost any possibility of winning the main event, pushed off home forthwith, disregarding their obligation to remain to the, perhaps, bitter end so that fellow players might get their full quota of games. The three players - and there may be others, for my spies are not absolutely everywhere - were a young beginner, an established but not quite top-flight player and (though I tremble to report it) one of Britain's most glittering stars.

The first of these just could not be bothered to turn up for the consolation Swiss of his tournament; the second lost all his games on the first day of an Advanced event and could not face further humiliation; the third did not wish to expose himself to the dangerous possibility of defeat by a lesser player, with its consequent loss of ranking points.

The third example is particularly disturbing, perhaps hard to believe, but I am told that this is common behaviour amongst croquet's finest. And all for the sake of ranking points! What have we come to when a player feels he must preserve his status in the game by not playing croquet? Professionalism?

Our first two reprobates were selfish and thoughtless but the third was something else: unsportsmanlike, perhaps?

: : : : :

Severely handicapped.

How often does the talk at your club turn to the iniquities of the handicap system? How many opinions are there as to how handicaps might be more accurately set? About as many as you have members? How many of your members are satisfied with their own handicaps, I wonder? How many would like a chance to set their own?

Well.....I was told at a certain

southern club the other day that one ambitious player has cracked the problem to the extent that he managed to get his handicap down *over the winter*, just in time, in fact, to gain a much coveted place in a top-flight Spring tournament.

No, you're wrong: they haven't been holding secret Christmas tournaments at Bowdon, Bristol and Budleigh. Nor did our subject spend the Winter on the New Zealand circuit, honing his skills on the hard stone of Jackson, Hogan and the rest. No, it's much simpler than that: he persuaded a handicapper to perform the vital surgery. 'Persuaded a handicapper?' I hear you cry. 'Fat chance! Hard men every one. They **never** put you down if you ask. Quite the contrary.'

Well, there it is: I have it on excellent authority that this strange tale is true - though, naturally, a gossip columnist never reveals her sources.

: : : : :

Short Rush

Anyone picked up a shabby brown leather purse, containing a little cash and one or two unimportant pieces of paper? Can't think where I left it, though it might be in the vicinity of Cheltenham. If you've got it drop us a line via 'Croquet' and I'll pick it up sometime.

Dorothy Rush

wins, Most wins in succession, Most triple peels, Any sextuple peels, Youngest and oldest players, Other outstanding records or feats.

Open Championship & President's Cup: Most appearances, Most wins of title, Most wins in succession, Most wins of games, Most triple peels, Youngest and oldest players, any outstanding records or feats.

Section 2: Individual Players Records.

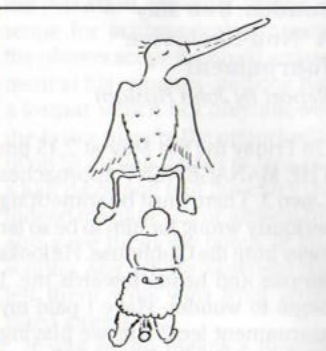
Most Championships/Tournaments won, Most triple peels in Croquet career, Longest run of successive triple peels, Instances of octuple, septuple, sextuple, quintuple, quadruple peels, Greatest improvement in rankings in one year, Greatest handicap drop in one year, Lowest ever handicap, Youngest winner of CA Silver Medal.

Section 3: Miscellaneous.

Most points scored in a single stroke, Most balls peeled in a single stroke, Most points scored in a turn, Most points scored for an opponent in a turn, Greatest number of points scored in a one-ball/two-ball break, Least turns to complete a game, Quickest game, Closest scoreline, Longest *intentional*

Your Letters

This must be a Record!



This is ridiculous before a delivery.

The Croquet Classic

Dear Sir,
I was gratified to see from Hamish Hall's letter in the March issue of 'Croquet' that my plight at Castle Drogo elicited some sympathy. I must say my reading of the rules agreed with his.

However, to put your mind at rest about my discouragement from pursuing the game of croquet, I have since joined two clubs (Southwick & Parsons Green), played in a handicap and a short weekend last season, was allocated a handicap of 12, bought a Neal mallet, and as I write am about to get in the car to go to the first of several tournaments this season! So I think you can safely say I was spurred on rather than discouraged.

Simon Tuke,
London.

hoop/peel, Highest jump shot.

If you think you might hold any of these records, or know of someone else who might hold them, please let us know. You may well be a world record holder and in November, when the Almanack is published, you will be able to find out.

When sending in details of a record feat, such as most points scored in a single stroke, we would ideally like corroboration from someone else who has witnessed the feat. However, we realise that this may be impossible, particularly if the record occurred some years ago. In this first year, to get the records established, we will accept reports without corroboration.

We are hoping that Townsend's Croquet Almanack will become an essential Croquet reference book for players, newspapers, and all those interested in Croquet, and that it will add to the fun of the game, with people trying to break the records.

I hope you will enjoy the book when it appears in November - meanwhile, please help us get the project going by sending us details of **your** records!

30th March 1988.

Dear Mr Macmillan,
I enclose a cheque to the value of £20 £14 as payment of my own Standard Rate subscription; £6 on behalf of BENJAMIN JOHN HANDS - due to be born on 4 April 1988! (Assuming it's a boy!) As you can see - this will be a JUNIOR member of the Association!

Paul Hands,
Cheltenham.

PS. If it's a girl, her name will be CHARLOTTE JENNIE HANDS - but of course that's most unlikely 'coz I want a son!

And it was! A very warm welcome to Benjamin John, and congratulations to all concerned - Ed.

The Grading System

Dear Sir,
Over the past two years, the croquet grading system has been the subject of much discussion and argument, with players only too ready to criticise. With its increasing use in determining cut-offs, it is vital that players have confidence in it. This can only come from an understanding of what the system is attempting to do.

The mechanics of the system were described very clearly by Steve Mulliner in the January 1987 'Croquet', but he only alluded to the underlying theory. In order to fill this important gap, I have written the article which appears in this issue on page 8.

I was however somewhat surprised to see John Walter's rather histrionic attack on the present grading system in the last issue. This contained several gross errors together with invalid conclusions and, to complete the hat-trick, a proposal which simply does not stand up to analysis. In this letter, I will restrict myself to correcting the major errors.

1. John says 'the inference about Hope and Healy may be 100 times removed from reality'. However, it only takes one player to have met both Hope and Healy for that inference to be once removed (and indeed, Martin French did so). Moreover, for a path that is twice removed, we need only two opponents of Hope and Healy who have met - surely this is not that unlikely (one such pair is French and Walters). A bit of thought will soon show that it is most unlikely that these are two

Your Letters

players in the top 100 who are more than five times removed, let alone 100 times removed.

2. The difference winning or losing a single game makes on your index is precisely 5 points (for middle ranked tournaments). This does not depend on the calibre of your opponent. Moreover, since the grade is averaged over several games, the immediate effect on your grade is much smaller. Furthermore, the effect on your position in the ranking list depends largely on the ability spread of the players.
3. The aim of the current system is to produce a figure for each player which indicates his current ability. This is different from his average ability over the past year. It is quite possible to produce such a figure and this is being examined. The present system should not be criticised, though, for something it makes no attempt to do.

The above three points invalidate John's evidence from which he makes his damning conclusions. That is not to say that the system is perfect and indeed, I have suggested one improvement in my article. Fundamentally, though, I consider the present system to be sound.

I do not propose to criticise John's proposal without more detail. However, one key point stands out. An inherent drawback with the croquet grading system is the lack of data - for each game, all we have is a winner and a loser. A system which just uses a player's tournament result is working on substantially less data.

Finally, I have written a further article describing a large computer simulation of several grading systems. It is rather too detailed for publication, but I would be delighted to send copies to interested readers.

Tim Harrison,
Enfield.
CA Grading Officer.

HANDICAPS FOR 1988

Council has accepted the recommendations of the Handicap Co-ordination Committee outlined on page 11 of Issue 197.

The highest official handicap will therefore be extended from 18 to 20 for the current season.

The bisque table for Short Croquet for 1988 is given on page 21 of Issue 195.

Handicapping

Procedures for Appointing Handicappers

By Barry Keen

Arrangements up to the end of 1987

In the past a CA Handicapper was only appointed following recommendations from other handicappers and after the candidate had satisfied the Committee that he had sufficient relevant experience.

With the rapid expansion of new clubs this procedure became unworkable, as it became obvious that a handicapper should be appointed to all registered clubs. It therefore became normal for the Committee, through its Chairman, to appoint a nominee from a new club, regardless of his or her experience.

The Committee feels that the situation should be improved, especially as new clubs are being formed all the time and schools and universities have begun to take up the game.

New arrangements for 1988.

For 1988 a new grade of handicapper is to be introduced - to be called a Club Handicapper - in addition to the existing CA Handicapper.

A Club Handicapper will only be appointed to clubs without a CA Handicapper. A Club Handicapper will only be permitted to control the handicaps of his club members and the handicaps given will not be official CA handicaps. Players who enter CA events with only a club handicap will play off that handicap but it will be always treated as a 'starred' handicap.

The role of the Club Handicapper will be as follows:

1. To give players within his club a handicap and to continue to monitor those handicaps, changing them as required using the guidelines of the Committee. In particular, club handicaps should always be brought into line with any handicap changes made to club members by a CA Handicapper.
2. To keep an up to date record of club handicaps. This record should include dates of changes and reasons for the change if the Club Handicapper wishes to apply to become a CA Handicapper at a later date (see below).
3. To take all opportunities available to discuss the handicapping within his club with a CA Handicapper and where possible obtain formal

CA status for his club handicaps by this route.

4. To make recommendations to the Committee for changes of official CA handicaps which may have been given to his club members, clearly stating the reasons why such a change should be made. Any recommendations will have no effect on a players handicap until approved by the Committee.

A Club Handicapper will be able to apply to become a CA Handicapper after 2 years' experience. Any application will require the support of two CA Handicappers and would normally require evidence of active and successful handicapping within the club. It would also normally require evidence of playing regularly at other clubs to demonstrate that the candidate has the experience to co-ordinate handicaps between clubs. In practice this will not be as onerous as it sounds as existing CA Handicappers will be asked to encourage and support the promotion of the right candidates.

Any registered club without a CA Handicapper is being invited by the Committee to nominate one of its members to be appointed as a Club Handicapper. Should a Club Handicapper need to be changed for whatever reason then the designation will be transferred to the new person, and the original handicapper will lose his title. Similarly, once a club has a CA Handicapper then any existing Club Handicapper will lose his title. These measures will prevent a proliferation of Club Handicappers.

Clubs would normally control their member's handicaps via a small handicapping committee chaired by a CA Handicapper, or a Club Handicapper where there is no CA Handicapper. It should be noted that the members of this committee are not required to be CA Handicappers and membership of any such committee will not automatically earn the title of CA Handicapper.

It is not intended that this new procedure should reduce the number of CA Handicappers but that the overall quality of CA Handicappers should be improved.

Barry Keen is the Chairman of the Handicap Co-ordination Committee.

THE CROQUET BOOK OF RECORDS

By Charles Townsend

Townsend Croquet Ltd are planning to publish an annual Croquet Almanack, and I would like to invite readers to send me details of any Croquet records that they think should be included.

The Croquet Almanack will be based very loosely on Wisden's Cricketers' Almanack, and so will contain much more than just croquet records. Some of the things it is hoped to include are: results of the year's calendar fixtures; lists of the players who competed, complete with their record of wins and losses; past winners of all major competitions; results of all past test matches and internationals; details of test match players, etc. There will also be a list of garden players who have their own Croquet court and much, much more.

The Almanack will be published annually in November - just in time for Christmas. It will be hard backed, with about 200 pages, and priced at £9.90.

The Editor of this new Almanack will be John Walters. He starts

work on it full-time on 1st August. John will also be working on a number of other projects, particularly developing the market for Townsend Croquet's Indoor Croquet equipment.

I believe that the part of the Almanack that many players will find most fascinating will be the Croquet records. I would welcome everyone's help, both in establishing the existing records and keeping us updated when records are broken. I would also welcome ideas or suggestions for new records to be included. So, if you know of any Croquet feats that you think may be record breaking, please write to Townsend Croquet, Claire Road, Kirby Cross, Frinton-on-Sea, Essex, CO13 0LX.

The initial list of Croquet records that we are trying to establish are divided into three sections:

Section 1: International and Tournament Results and Appearances. Test Matches & Other Internationals: Most appearances, Most

Coaches Corner

'WAFER' TAKE-OFFS

By John McCullough

Introduction

This article is aimed primarily at single-figure handicap players. It assumes you are aware of the faults to avoid when playing take-offs, that you know how to line up the balls to play take-offs, and that you are reasonably competent at ordinary take-offs.

Its purpose is to explain how to play and practise a special type of take-off, one in which the croqueted ball moves no more than a few inches or, better still, just shakes on its spot, while the striker's ball ends up close to its distant target. I shall call such a stroke a 'Wafer' take-off.

Application

The Wafer take-off has two main uses:

- To prevent the croqueted ball being sent off the court - the obvious case is when you need to play a take-off from a ball in one corner, going to a ball in the opposite corner. In this example the striker's ball must travel 40 yards or more, yet if the croqueted ball travels more than a few feet, your turn will have ended. There may be cases where you choose to take off from a ball to leave it on the yard line when going to another ball, thus deliberately risking sending the croqueted ball off.

- For precise leaves. The best example here is to maintain a crosswire of two opponent balls, whilst taking off to your partner ball which you have not yet roqueted. It may be that you find yourself in this position due to a fortuitous stroke, or as a result of a deliberate play that probably demonstrates a misunderstanding of how crosswires should be constructed. No matter, the wafer take-off, once mastered, is a powerful weapon in these circumstances.

Method

Make sure the two balls are lined up and touching. Place your mallet next to the two balls so that the shaft points generally towards the target ball (see Fig. 1).

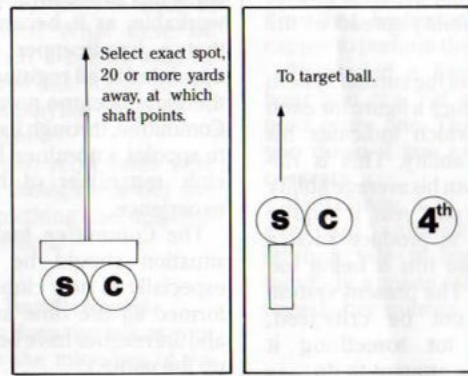


Fig. 1

Fig. 2

It is vital you then stand well back and note exactly a distant object at which the mallet shaft points. Now pick up your mallet carefully, so that neither ball moves. Make a final inspection to check the two balls are touching. Now, if the striker's ball is on the left (as in diagram), aim the mallet at a point just a couple of feet right of the distant object and hit the striker ball with the requisite strength to reach the target ball. If the striker's ball is on the right, aim a couple of feet left of the object. The croqueted ball should barely move.

Practice

Play take-offs to balls at least 10 yards away and at longer distances as you become more competent. Place a 4th ball one foot to the side of the croqueted ball and try to play a wafer take-off so that the croqueted ball doesn't hit the 4th ball and the strikers ball ends up near its target (see Fig. 2).

'Shakers'

Once you have practised enough and are confident of the precision of your aiming, you should be able to play long take-offs that shake but do not move the croqueted ball. Practise with a friend to make sure the croqueted ball does actually move!

If you decide to play a shaker in a game situation, call for your opponent or a referee to watch the croqueted ball.

GOOD SHAKIN'!!

Extract from Minutes of the Council Meeting held at the Hurlingham Club on 19th March 1988.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

Finance and General Purposes

Mr Oldham presented the accounts which were approved and he was warmly thanked for all his work. Mr Mulliner gave the Committees report and Council agreed unanimously to:

- Subscriptions at the following rates:

A new class of membership for those over 65, the Veterans, be created from 1.1.89 at £14 (£12).

Standard rate for 1989 be £18 (£15); Junior £12 (£10); Youth £8 (£6); Non-Tournament £12 (£9); and Overseas £35 for 3 years.

Tournament rate for husband and wife be standard rate plus non-Tournament rate provided that they would only receive one copy of 'Croquet' and of the Fixture Book.

- The grant of £6000 to the Surbiton Croquet Club.

Mr Rothwell asked what was the amount in the Benefactors Fund after paying the grant of £6000 to the Surbiton Club. Mr Oldham replied that the £6000 was roughly the interest earned and that the capital (less some loans) was virtually intact.

Mr Mulliner asked all Councillors to explain to anyone who asked why subscriptions and levy were being increased, that it was because the CA could not rely on Sports Council grants and sponsorship, and must become self-supporting as soon as possible.

Mr Mulliner was thanked for his sterling work over the last 4 years.

Development

Mr McCullough drew attention to the possible privatisation of leisure facilities in the Bill now before the House of Lords. He urged all Council, CA members and Club Secretaries to write to their local MP and/or the Minister of Sport, because if the Government did privatise leisure facilities, then things like reduced rental to new clubs and other assistance could be things of the past!

Council agreed unanimously to no levy being charged for indoor winter tournaments and adopted the Report.

Schools

Mr Brand reported on the Royal Bank of Scotland's National Schools Championship, the Schools leaflet, which had been circulated to over 200 schools and all registered clubs, and the planned weekend courses for Teachers. Council adopted the report including approval of a 'Certificate in Croquet' for teachers to show their competence to teach the game.

Handicap

Mr Keen said that hoop and ball gauges could be produced if clubs wanted them.

Ad Hoc

Mr Hope reported that a Grant of £6000 had been made to Surbiton Croquet Club out of the Benefactors Fund to erect a Clubhouse. The following conditions had been accepted by the Club:-

- Chairman of Finance and General Purposes can nominate a person to represent the CA on the Club's committee.
- The CA would have free use of lawns for 7 consecutive days and either 2 weekends or 1 weekend and 3 separate days each year.

Mr Caporn, as Chairman of the Surbiton Club, thanked Council for its support.

Development Officer

Mr Hudson tabled his development report for 1987. He reported for 1988 on (inter alia) the following:-

- Magazine had a new type face and inset. 2000 extra copies of the inset had been printed for publicity purposes. Advertising revenue had been increased substantially.
- New leaflets were being produced on several subjects.
- He dealt with the 'Garden Croquet Classic', the finals of which would be played at Polesden Lacey, near Dorking.
- The last Indoor Croquet event would be at Southampton on 26/27th March. There was no local club in the year.
- The NE Region was trying to raise enough cash to finance the Indoor Final in that area.
- Loughborough Summer School had already taken 12 bookings.

He was thanked for his efforts.

Mr Mulliner sounded a warning note about approving merchandise and it was agreed to refer the matter to the F & GP Committee.

Administration Secretary

66 new members were elected.

MOTION

'That the Council approves in principle the idea aired at the last Club Conference of eliminating the separate set of laws for Handicap play and asks the Laws Committee to make the necessary change in the Laws to bring this about.' Proposed by Mr Wharrad and seconded by Mr Caporn.

Mr Wharrad said that lifts were proposed in Council in 1946. In 1947 there was a conference on the subject when the Council bowing to pressure approved two variations, one of which lasted for several years and involved a modern version of the sequence game with lifts played at Open and Handicap events. It was eventually abandoned.

There would be the following advantages if lifts applied to all forms of play:-

- A single set of rules.
- As you improved you would not be faced with a major change in the Rules.
- More people would understand Open play because they played it themselves.

- There would no longer be two classes of player.
- Perhaps more 'A' class players would play in handicap events if there were 'lifts'.

Mr Caporn, seconding, said the idea had been tried at Woking in a club handicap weekend and had been favourably received.

Professor Neal suggested a temporary change in the Rules for one year to experiment. Mr McCullough thought it would be a disaster, as it was difficult enough to teach beginners the basic rules. It was not the only sport with different rules for different classes.

Mr C. Townsend said, as a high bisquer, he supported the Motion as he didn't like a 2 class system.



Fiona McCoig - 'the most improved lady player' - with the Steel Bowl. Her handicap came down from 8 to 3½ in 1987.

Mr Keen said he thought there should be another variation in the game to provide choice.

Mr Gaunt said 'lifts' added many tactical problems to the game and for that reason he opposed its introduction for high bisquers.

Dr Murray said he did not think he would get approval from Australia and New Zealand who had opposed our suggestion to abolish semi-advanced play. He believed high bisquers should only play 'Short Croquet' which had no lifts, until they reached a certain standard.

It was finally agreed to refer the Motion to the Laws and other Committees to consider the whole matter and that it would then be discussed in depth in the autumn.

COUNCIL ELECTIONS

The Chairman announced that he had appointed Mrs Carlisle and Mr Henderson as scrutineers.

Extract from Minutes of the AGM of the Croquet Association, held at Hurlingham on Saturday, 23rd April, 1988.

Present: J.W. Solomon (President), R.F. Rothwell, Dr W.R.D. Wiggins, L. Wharrad (Vice-Presidents) and 49 others, including Members of Council.

Minutes of Previous AGM
Taken as read.

Official Business

Chairman's Report

(Copy published in 'Croquet', Issue 197, page 30). No questions arising and the report was adopted.

Treasurer's Report

(Copy published in 'Croquet', Issue 197, pages 22-23). The Treasurer, Mr A.J. Oldham, answered questions, the main ones being on the indoor carpet capital cost and running costs. The accounts were adopted, and Mr Solomon thanked Mr Oldham for his report and lucid explanations.

Election of Treasurer

Mr Oldham was re-elected Hon Treasurer unopposed. Mr Rothwell proposed a vote of thanks to Mr Oldham for all his hard work which met with unanimous approval.

Auditors

Nicholas Ames & Co. were re-elected as Auditors.

Election of Council Members

292 votes were cast, with 4 voting papers void.

The members re-elected were Mrs T.W. Anderson, B.A. Keen, J.R. McCullough, Miss J. MacLeod, Dr M. Murray, D.W. Shaw.

New members elected were I.B. Brand, W.E. Lamb, D.L. Gaunt, J.O. Walters.

Mr Solomon thanked Mrs V. Carlisle and Mr M. Henderson for acting as Scrutineers.

Alteration to Rules

Mr S.N. Mulliner (seconded by Dr M. Murray) proposed on behalf of Council:

'That Rule 1 of the Rules of the Croquet Association be amended by the deletion of 'Wales' from the definition of the Domain.' Carried by 31 votes to 1.

Mr S.N. Mulliner (seconded by Mr A.B. Hope) proposed on behalf of Council:

'That existing Rule 5(c) should be replaced by

5(c) Contested elections shall be decided by ballot in accordance with Rule 7. Motions requiring notice under Rule 5(d) and motions to be proposed at Special General Meetings shall be the subject of a postal vote in accordance with Rule 8. All other questions shall be decided by a show of hands. In the event of an equality of votes, the Chairman shall have a second or casting vote.'

and that a new Rule 8 should be inserted after existing Rule 7 as follows:

'8(a) If notice of motion has been given under Rule 5(d) or a Special General Meeting has been called or requisitioned, a voting paper shall be issued to every resident Associate either with the gazette or by post not less than 24 days before an Annual General Meeting giving the terms of each motion to be proposed thereat.

(b) The voting paper must be signed and returned to the Secretary so as to arrive not later than the first post 10 days before the date of the meeting.

(c) Two Scrutineers who are not members of the Council shall be appointed by the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Council to count the votes. They shall announce the number of votes recorded for and against each motion in accordance with (d) below.

(d) At the conclusion of the debate

CROQUET ETIQUETTE AND CUSTOMS

By Chris Hudson

The CA's 'Coaching Handbook' lists some of the 'Do's and Don'ts' of Croquet. Here's a check list.

General Points

Clothing

Dress properly. Always wear flat-soled shoes. Wear white or light coloured clothing as appropriate, certainly in tournaments, and usually at weekends and for Club competitions, weather permitting.

Before the game. By convention, the player with the lowest handicap tosses up, and is also responsible for setting up any bisques.

In Play. Wait until your opponent has finished his turn and left the lawn before going on yourself.

Play as quickly as possible. Try to decide before your opponent has finished his turn what you are going to do next to avoid wasting time. Do not carry out long discussions in doubles matches with your partner when it is your side's turn to play.

Call a Referee (by raising your mallet) if you are about to make a stroke where there is a possibility that a fault may be committed. If no independent Referee is available, then ask your opponent to watch.

If you are aiming to roquet a ball

in the jaws of a hoop, have someone watch it to ensure contact is made.

Do not accept advice (or offer it), but query any point of law if uncertain. The only person allowed to give advice to you during a game is your partner in a doubles match.

Do not distract your opponent by walking about/talking loudly/catching his eye, etc. Do not stand directly behind him watching him shoot, or directly in front of him on the line of aim.

Be sensitive to your opponent during matches with respect to conversation. Some players do not welcome remarks during the course of a game. For the same reason, do not talk to any other outplayers, unless they clearly welcome a chat!

Whilst out of play and off the lawn, be aware of other games taking place. Stand still if you are in the line of play on another court, or near a player about to make a shot.

Be sure you know Part IV of the Laws 'Customs of the Game': Striker a joint Referee/Questionable strokes/Testing position of the ball/Players' opinions differ/Interruption of stroke/Presence on court/Replace balls on yard line with back to court/Testing for lifts/Advice and aids.

After Play. The winner normally clears the balls from the lawn, removes the clips from the hoops, and carries the bisques back to the Club house.

The winner also usually buys the drinks after the game (if appropriate). Surprisingly, it used to be unusual for opponents to shake hands at the end of a game, but the practice now seems to be coming back in!

At Tournaments

On Arrival. Report to the Manager, and confirm your handicap. (Regulation No. 10)

Be punctual. Allow yourself time to change, so that you can be on the lawn, *in play*, at the required time. Always be clear about the time you are needed for the next game.

Carry a watch (for time-limited games) and coins to mark balls (in double-banked games).

Find out from the Manager what arrangements have been made for players to take meals. Do not take a meal without confirming with the Manager that you will not be required for the time the meal will take.

Before the game. Do not knock up on the lawn, or indeed at all, without the Manager's permission.

After the game. Report your result to the Manager **immediately**, so he can put on other games, and plan ahead.

Obtain the Manager's permission to leave the ground before doing so, and confirm with him what time you are needed the following day.

The Manager's decision is final on all matters concerning the scheduling of matches. Give him or her all the help you can. Note that the Manager has powers of disqualification! (Regulation No. 12).

When Double-Banking

Do not walk across the line of aim of the other game.

Ask the other game if you can mark and lift any of their balls that may be at risk. Always err on the cautious side, even if you are playing well - nothing is more annoying to the other game than having to try to guess where a critical ball was, before you hit it.

Always let the other game through if a break is being played. Keep an eye out at all times to ensure that you do not impede the other game.

If you do lift and mark a ball, make quite certain that the player in play in the other game realises that you have done so, particularly if the outplayer has started a new turn.

Do not leave your mallet lying inside the yard line whilst you retrieve a ball that has gone off the lawn.

Read the 'Guide to Conduct in Double-Banked Games' contained in Appendix 2 of the Laws - before you play!

Official Business

on each motion, the Chairman shall call upon those present who have not cast a postal vote to vote upon the motion by a show of hands. He shall then call upon the Scrutineers to announce the result of the postal vote and shall then declare the total number of votes cast for and against the motion.

(e) An Associate who has cast a postal vote but attends the meeting in person may cancel his postal vote and vote at the meeting provided that he so informs the Scrutineers before the result of the postal vote is announced.

(f) The Chairman may require those who have voted at the meeting to identify themselves to the Scrutineers and that existing Rules 8 to 25 should be renumbered as Rules 9 to 26.

This motion was carried nem con after discussion.

Benefactors' Book

Mr Rothwell read out the names in the Benefactors' Book. No new names had been added in 1987.



Charles Townsend (left) and Vincent George (Pendle), whose club won the Townsend Award.

Other Business

Members present raised questions about various aspects, including standards of referees, editing of Council Minutes for publication in 'Croquet', prize money offered by sponsors, players selected to play for the 'rest of the world' team in the USA, and the lack of articles of interest to top class players in 'Croquet'. Council members and others joined in the ensuing discussions.

Awards

The Steel Bowl was presented to Fiona McCoig for the most improved lady player. Russell Collighan unfortunately could not present to receive the Apps Bowl for the most improved man.

The Apps-Heley Award for the most progressive club was received by Mrs E.J. Shaw on behalf of Ramsgate Croquet Club. Mr C. Townsend presented the Townsend Trophy to Mr V. George on behalf of the Pendle Croquet Club for the most progressive club under 3 years old.

New Associates

G.W. Chuff	Basingstoke	B.J. Mann	Taunton Deane
Mrs Y.M. Colbeck	Bournemouth	M.T.G. Ruggins	Tunbridge
Dr J.D. Scott	Bournemouth	P.C. Allnut	
Dr M.J. Gibson	Bretby	S.D. Bowman	
J.M. James	Bristol	A. Brett	
C.M. Bourne	Budleigh	Cdr J.R. Burnett, RN	
M. Pickup	Budleigh	K. Brooks	
J.L. Rankin	Budleigh	N. Clayton	
R.A. Scadden	Budleigh	P.J. Coker	
Mrs M.E. Scadden	Budleigh	P.G. Colson	
M.A. Turner	Budleigh	T. Griffith	
R.L. Jones	Cassiobury	J. Horrell	
E.C. Wheeler	Cassiobury	P. Humphries	
Dr A.H. Davidson	Cheltenham	L.W. Koch	
B.J. Hands	Cheltenham	W/Cdr B. Lewis	
Mrs V.A. McClements	Cheltenham	J.W. Malcolm	
E.W. Madams	Cheltenham	P.F. Mitchell	
Mrs E.H. Dalby	Compton	F.A. Osmaston	
Miss M.E. Lambert	Compton	C. Rogers	
Miss G.N. Ellis	Cranford	D.W. Rogers	
S.A.B. Hatch	Crawley	E. Sheehy	
Mrs S.A.B. Hatch	Crawley	V.E. Shephard	
Mrs E.G. Johnson	East Riding	J.R.E. Smith	
Dr D. Harrison	Eton College	C.E. Sparrow	
Dr S.M. Barnett	Harwell	Mrs J.M. Sproat	
J.R. Bone	High Wycombe	M.J. Tapp	
Mrs C.M. Greig	Hurlingham	M.T. Travers	
R.J. Stephens	Hurlingham	K.J. Turner	
Mrs A. Stephens	Hurlingham	R.F.H. Ward	
Mrs J.A. Gascoine	Phyllis Court	Dr D.S. Warhurst	
G.F. Goodchild	Reigate	Mrs J. Whittall	
K.H. Hope-Jones	Reigate	B. Williamson	
W. Platt	Ryde	J.W. Hoy USA	
F.I.R. Landor	Swindon	(Total: 67)	

Handicap Alterations

Surbiton Club J. Gosden	2½ to 4	Compton: 6-8 May Mrs N.W.T. Cox	5 to 6
Cheltenham Club Miss H. Pritchard	10D9 to 8	K.G.F. Ham	15 to 12
H.R. Moule	12D10 to 11D9	Lt Col R.P. Chappell	6 to 8
J.H. Willis	15D13 to 12D10	Ellesmere Club Mrs S. Meadows	16 to 15D14
D.Y. Harrison	18D14	Budleigh Salterton: 7-8 May A. Grimbaldeston	13 to 7
Cheltenham: 1-4 April A. Bogle	4 to 3½	R. Harding	9 to 4
Miss D. Cornelius	1½ to 1	S. Hemus	8 to 6
P.J. Dorke	3 to 2½	A. Leggate	9 to 7
Dr C. Snowdon	2½ to 2	R. Sinker	14 to 11
Queen Elizabeth's GS A. Saurin	13 to 12	D. Thatcher	10 to 9
Southport N.J. Hicks	13 to 12	Scottish CA: 7-8 May Dr C van Griethuysen	4½ to 4
Mrs D. Williamson	17D14 to 16D14	Budleigh Salterton: 9-14 May C.N. Williams	13 to 9
Woking: 22-24 April M.D. Town	9 to 8	T.M. Bower	8 to 7½
Southwick Club M. Cooperman	18 to 12	W.C. Broad-Thomas	3 to 2½
G. Pearse	13 to 11	Mrs J. Broad-Thomas	12D10 to 11D9
Ms G. Wiggins	15 to 14	L. Chapman	9 to 7½
Southport: 23-24 April A. Bennet	2 to 3	M. McF. Davis	10 to 9
D.B. Maugham	2½ to 2	H. Hall	14 to 11
A. Saurin	12 to 8	J.C. Hatherley	5 to 4½
Hunstanton: 30 April - 2 May J.G. Read	11* to 10	E.G. Kitchener	8 to 7½
E.H. Butler	12 to 10	L.P.M. Macdonald	4 to 3½
Cheltenham: 21-24 April Dr A. Bray	8 to 5	R. Selmes	9 to 8
Cheltenham: 30 April - 2 May E. Bell	-½ to -1	Col E.L.L. Vulliamy	3 to 4½
C.D. Clarke	-½ to -1	Colchester: 14 May A. Kirby	4* to 4
D.L. Gaunt	½ to -½	Ms C. Collis	14 to 13
D.J. Goacher	-½ to -1	Harrow Oak: 14-15 May D. Gunasekera	-½ to -½
M. French	½ to 0	G. Vince	1½ to 1
A.F. Sutcliffe	½ to 0	Southport: 15th May Miss P.M.H. Lewis	12 to 13
Hurlingham: 30 April - 2 May M.J.B. Haggerston	3 to 2½	Cheltenham: 16-21 May Miss E. Cheverton	14 to 13
D.C. Cross	4½ to 4	Mrs M. Evans	14D12 to 12D10
C.E. Wilkinson	6½ to 6	Mrs G.D. Harris	4½ to 4
Southwick: 30 April - 2 May Terry Ballard	6½ to 5	D. Harrison	12D10 to 9
S. Tuke	12 to 9	L. James	13D10 to 11D9
Mrs M.E. Selmes	14 to 13	Mrs M. James	14D12 to 12D10
Pendle Club V. George	15 to 13	Mrs J. Paddon	9 to 8
Queen Elizabeth's GS R.C. Harding	12D10 to 9	D. Reeve	1 to ½
Bowdon: 6-8 May R. Bettinson	18 to 20	J. Ross	1½ to 1
R. Deacon	7½ to 6	P. Darby	4 to 3½
Mrs C. Lewis	7 to 6	Cheltenham: 22 May N.J. Davren	½ to 1½
D. Lendrum	6 to 4	CERN Club N.G. Eatough	7* to 7
Mrs E. Shotton	14 to 13	Oxford University Club T. Marr	10
Ms G. Curry	10 to 7	S. Heyes	13
Mrs D. Williamson	16 to 14	J. Fraser	7 to 5½
		D. Orchard	9 to 8
		N. William	7½ to 7
		Parkstone Club Miss P.E. Parker	4 to 3½

1988 MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT COMPETITION Participating Clubs

We are grateful to the following Clubs who have offered to help in this year's CA Recruitment Drive.

Bath	Cheltenham	Norwich	Southport
Bowdon	Compton	Pendle	Vine Road
Bristol	High Wycombe	Reigate	
Budleigh	Leicester	Roehampton	
Cassiobury	Kingston Maurward	Sidmouth	

Their support is most welcome, and we hope that many more clubs will join in the scheme to help us reach our 1988 membership target.

Details of the Prizes awarded to successful clubs and the Conditions of the 1988 Recruitment Competition are given in Issue No 196, page 6.

Other clubs wishing to take part should contact Chris Hudson as soon as possible for entry details; don't leave it too late to win your prize!

Introducing "Matchplay" Mallets

Hand Built by Craftsmen - Heads Made From the Finest of Indian & African Hardwoods Shafts from Quality English Ash

- Traditional type and choice of three designs
- Choice of Mallets from each design i.e.:-



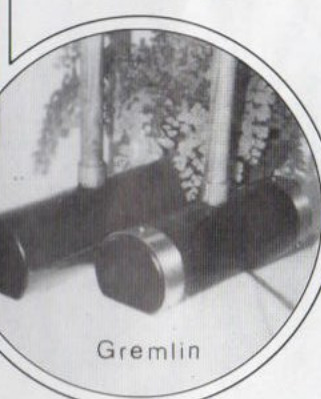
Grandee



Graduate



Gremlin



- Quality polished finish
- The very best of value
- Mallet carrying case in top quality blue and white PVC with shoulder sling and zip fastener

STANDARD (Un-weighted) Natural weight approx 2lbs

WEIGHTED With choice of weights. 2½, 2¾ or 3lbs

STAINLESS STEEL BOUND AND WEIGHTED

- Choice of shaft length 32" to 36"
- Shafts fitted with either luxury "Neumanns" washable calfskin grip with non-slip feel or with corded nylon grip.
- All mallets have sighting line
- Bound Mallets have rings of brushed satin finished stainless steel

ORDERS FOR CUSTOM BUILT MALLET TO OWN SPECIFICATIONS ARE WELCOMED

PRICE LIST

Standard Plain Head Nylon Grip	£33.00	S/Steel Ringed Head Nylon Grip	£47.00
Standard Plain Head Leather Grip.....	£38.00	S/Steel Ringed Head Leather Grip	£52.00
Weighted Plain Head Nylon Grip	£38.00	Carrying Case in Blue/White PVC	£19.95
Weighted Plain Head Leather Grip.....	£43.00		

Please add Packaging and Postal Charges: Mallet £3, C/Case £1, One of each £3.50

TO ORDER

Send Cheque or Money Order to:-

Country Crafts.,
Manor Cottage,
Widcombe in the Moor,
Devon, TQ13 7TB

INFORMATION REQUIRED

Your Name, Address, Telephone Number
Mallet Name, Grandee/Graduate/Gremlin*
Mallet Type, Standard/Weighted/S.S. Bound
Mallet Weight
Leather/Nylon Grip
Shaft Length in inches

All Weights and Measurements are approximate

IF REQUIRED, PLEASE TELEPHONE FOR FURTHER INFORMATION TO 036 42 218
YOUR ENQUIRIES WILL BE COURTEOUSLY WELCOMED — Geoffrey H. Day

* The Gremlin is only Half-Ringed, and is not available in weights of 3lbs.

New Clubs Registered

Welcome to....

Kenilworth Lawn Tennis Club
Crackley Lane, Kenilworth. Secretary (Croquet Section): Tony Wynn-Evans, 26 Park Hill, Kenilworth, Warwickshire, CV8 2JG. Tel: 0926-54207.

Parachute Regiment C.C. (2nd Battalion)
Clive Barracks, Tern Hill, Market Drayton, Shropshire. Secretary: Major D.M. Leigh.

Yelverton Croquet Club
Secretary: Mrs Margaret Bailey, 1 Great Mis Tor Close, Yelverton, Devon, PL20 6DH. Tel: 0822-854564.

York Croquet Club
Beningbrough Hall, Beningbrough, York. Secretary: Mike Haslam, Chapel Garth, Crayke, York. Tel: 0347-21726.

Overseas Clubs
Hogantorp Croquet Club
c/o Folke Engstrom, Arstavagen 21 1 tr., 121 68 Johanneshov, Stockholm, Sweden.

New Affiliated Organisations
The Underscar Hotel
Applethwaite, Keswick, Cumbria. Contact: D. Tinkler (Tel: 0596-72469).

Penmere Manor Hotel
Mongleath Road, Falmouth, Cornwall, TR11 4PN. Contact: D.R. Pope (Tel: 0326-211411).

Taychreggan Hotel
Kilchrenan by Taynult, Argyll, PA35 1HQ. Contact: John Taylor (Tel: 086-63-211).

Murray Arms Hotel
Gatehouse-of-Fleet, Castle Douglas, Scotland, DG7 2HY. Contact: R. Raphael (Tel: 055-74-207).

Outlands Park Hotel
146 Outlands Drive, Weybridge, Surrey, KT13 9HB. Contact: Angela O'Keefe (Tel: 0932-847242).

Tolcarne Hotel
Tintagel Road, Boscastle, Cornwall, PL35 0AS. Contact: V. Uglov (Tel: 08405-654).

Deaths
With regret, we have to report the following deaths:
Rev D. Anderson (East Riding)
H. Austin (Compton)
R.C. Case (Sidmouth)
E.C. Tyrwhitt Drake (Compton)