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September 1988

Issue No

# CROQUET

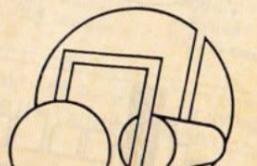


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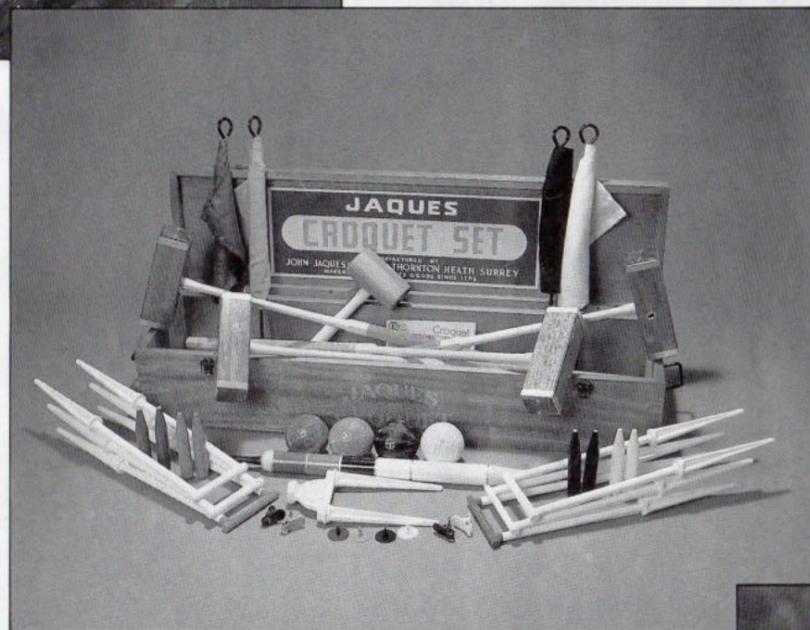
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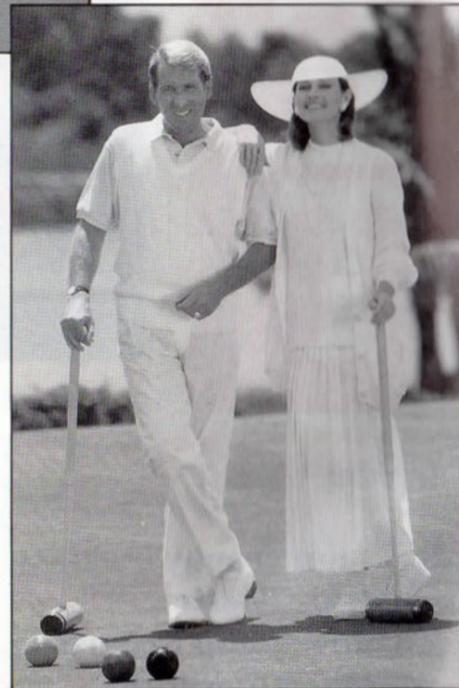




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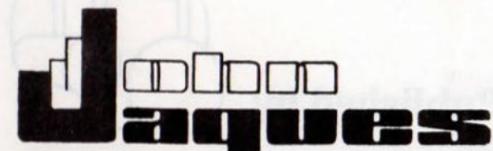


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**'CROQUET'**

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**Editorial**

**RISING STANDARDS**

Our defeat of the USCA by such a large margin has given rise to expressions of sympathy for our opponents. But whilst it is probably true that they allowed themselves insufficient time to practise and acclimatise properly before the start of their crucial matches, we should not lose sight of the fact that the standard of play in this country is rising rapidly.

An example of this, if one were needed, is the extraordinary progress made by 'Bennet's Bandits' and their colleagues. No fewer than five of them have been selected for the three invitation events in September - three of them at the highest level in the President's Cup. A glance at the Rankings at the end of July (see page 31) will show that our Ladies are also improving. At the end of last year, no lady was ranked lower than 50; now Debbie Cornelius ranks 30 and Mary Collin 39; at the other end of the scale, girls

are beginning to appear more frequently in the Regional Finals of the Schools Championship.

Much of this improvement must be due to our National Coaching Scheme, where we are fortunate to have so many coaches prepared to spend time passing on their knowledge and experience to others. Because of the coaching scheme, the time taken to learn the basic tactics of the game has been much reduced, and the situation has been further improved by the recent spate of new books for beginners - by Steve Mulliner & John McCullough, Peter Danks, and Don Gaunt. So instead of having to learn by bitter experience, today's player can get off to a flying start when compared to those who started playing many years ago.

To all our coaches, then, a big 'Thank You' for the work they are doing.

CHRIS HUDSON



13-year old Jonathan Rathbone, one of the National Finalists in this year's Croquet Classic. On the second turn of one of his games in the Regional Final, he made three hoops with his first ball before sticking in hoop 4.

**Obituary**  
**E.C. TYRWHITT DRAKE**

E.C. Tyrwhitt Drake, universally known as 'Tiny', died on 13th May 1988 in Eastbourne. As a schoolboy Tiny was introduced to croquet at Southwick where he quickly learned its rudiments. He was a natural games player with a passion for sports of all kinds and in his middle years was a particularly keen golfer. He was very proud of having won the men's golf championship at Roehampton in 1933 and was delighted when croquet players visiting the clubhouse half a century on spotted his name on the roll of honour.

He took to croquet again on retirement and quickly established himself amongst the leading players in the country. His comfortable, unhurried figure - invariably jacketed, whatever the weather, and puffing the inevitable pipe - was soon to be a familiar feature at many club and national tournaments, usually accompanied by his wife, Vera, herself a regular tournament player. At a distance his stature did not always impress since he was well proportioned and played with a long mallet; but close to, and drawn to his full height, (he owned to 6ft 8in!) he was an imposing figure.

In the late 1960's and early 1970's he made regular appearances in the Surrey Cup (now Spencer-Ell) invitation eight and was captain of the Sussex team at the Inter-County championships at Devonshire Park, and his name is to be found on many of its trophies. He won his silver medal in 1969.

His love of croquet was rooted in his fascination

with its tactics and nothing pleased him more than to lure his opponent into a trap and then pounce and reap the rewards. His determination to win was very strong, even in games which others would have considered hopelessly lost: he never gave up and had a happy (or unhappy if you happened to be the luckless victim!) knack of producing two faultless all-round breaks to snatch the game when defeat by 26 had seemed a certainty. Many aspiring young players caught his enthusiasm for the subtler points of break making and leaves, subjects which he was happy to discuss endlessly with those who took a genuine interest. Despite striking the ball with a stroke which never seemed to have enough back-swing, he was extremely effective at running hoops and in rushing the ball.

Between games at tournaments Tiny was more often than not to be found in his favourite chair immersed in a crossword from the Times or the Daily Telegraph. In parallel with his croquet he pursued a very active and successful bridge career.

Tiny Tyrwhitt Drake, Denno Harris and Dudley Hamilton-Miller, all Compton members of long standing, were born within a three month period. Though none of them will grace our lawns again in the flesh, it would be hard to find a trio who will live longer in the affections of that wide circle of croquet players who were fortunate to enjoy their friendship.

Roger Wood

**THE CROQUET CLASSIC**

The final of this year's Croquet Classic will be held at Polesden Lacey, near Dorking, Surrey, on Saturday 10th September. Play starts at 11am and continues until 5pm, the final starting at about 4pm. Spectators are welcome.

**THE PRESIDENT'S CUP**

The 1988 Bombay Gin President's Cup will be contested by:

K.M.H. Aiton	G.N. Aspinall	M. Avery
C.D. Clarke	D.R. Foulser	R. Fulford
C.J. Irwin	S.N. Mulliner	D.K. Openshaw
M.A. Saurin		

**Photographs in this issue by:** Jeff Bowden, Andrew Bennet, Chris Hudson, Don Williamson, Liz Taylor-Webb, Bernard Neal, Barry Gomer (Sunday Express), Andrew Saurin, Trident Midland Newspapers, Gervase Markham,

**Front Cover:** Take-Off: Steve Mulliner flying to his first victory in the Carlsberg British Opens.

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**Roehampton: 30 May-4 June**  
**Jerry Guest keeps Gold Cup**

Report by Andrew Symons

The rather persistent rain that plagued Roehampton's Summer Tournament did nothing to diffuse the assembled players' enthusiasm or enjoyment of this popular week. The fast and true lawns met with everyone's approval and the tight hoops, carefully set each morning by the manager, did much to dispel rumours of generous hoops to be found at Roehampton. Hence, a good balance between favourable yet challenging playing conditions was struck.

The Ranelagh Gold Cup for the Open Singles was retained by Jerry Guest (-1) (formerly Roehampton and currently Surbiton) who recovered admirably after losing his first game -26 to Peter Meakin of South Africa. Perhaps this was his reward for being the only player brave enough to wear shorts. This performance by Peter proved to be enough to place him in the runner up spot.

The Brooke Cup for players of 4 bisques and over was keenly contested by the 6 entrants. Paul Campion (5) (Roehampton) and Andrew Symons (4½) (Edgbaston) won their first four games before they met in what proved to be the final which Symons won +15.

The Thorpe Cup for players of 9 bisques and over was won by Gerald Wombwell (10) from Hurlingham, who played tidy breaks and hit a high percentage of intermediate roquets throughout the week; his reward was a loss of 2 bisques. The runner up was Paul Diver from Roehampton.

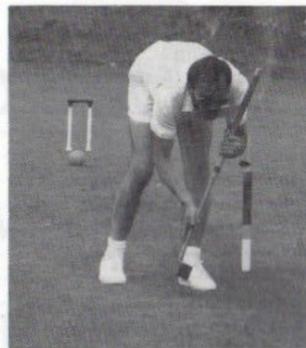
The Trevelyan Cup was run as a six round Swiss, and although four players were in turn favoured with a bye, this format ensured more play. Paul Macdonald, our hard driving and hard working manager, overcame all the intricacies and problems of management to win with five wins out of six games. This included a good win, giving 6½ bisques, over the in-form Wombwell. A complicated sequence of results forced a play-off for second place between Wombwell, Campion and Symons; in two 14 point games Wombwell beat Campion but Symons beat Wombwell and thus took second place.

The Croyke Cups for the handicap doubles was won by Frank Newman (Woking) and Wombwell who overcame the holders Paul and Pat Macdonald in a tense, yet in the end, exciting game, which went to time. Paul played well just before time to

level and score, but Frank held his nerve to secure the necessary next point.

It was perhaps fitting that Frank and Paul should both win a trophy as Paul could have changed the destination of the Ranelagh Gold Cup had he not missed a short roquet against Guest. Similarly, Frank played consistently in that event only to lose three games narrowly.

The majority of the games finished before the time limit, which was indicative of the good playing conditions and an eagerness not to be playing in the rain. Most competitors averaged 2 games a day which gave us plenty of what we came for, croquet; we all enjoyed the company as well as the croquet and



Andrew Bennet, winner of Southport's May Handicap weekend.

we look forward to coming again next year.

**Woking: 25 June-3 July**  
**WOKING'S 'IRISH WEEK' IS DEAD - LONG LIVE 'THE TRIPLES'**

Report by Derek Caporn

After 7 years Woking's 'Irish week' has passed into history, but we continue with the 'special to Woking' 4 tournament event. Tournament No 1 was an Open event for two trophies and commenced on Saturday 25th, ending on Sunday 26th. Both the 'Open Challenge Cup' and the 'B' class event were fiercely contested by a strong field. From Monday to Wednesday was Tournament No 2, again an 'open' event in 2 classes.

Then came the premier event the one day handicap doubles XY! The 'Y' finals, as usual, had a traffic cone as the peg, and a new innovation of running into a hat instead of hoop 5, plus a drink of wine when a player made a hoop - if he failed to do this his/her turn ended so the partner followed the player around glass in hand. 2 bottles were consumed during the final and the players returned to the Clubhouse in happy mood!!

Then followed Tournament No 4, the American handicap singles. The weather for this turned very nasty indeed on the Sunday but play went on and the event was completed under the able management of Geoff Cuttle, his first effort. He looked harassed on the Friday but got over it and actually won his block to boot! I managed the open weekend, and the 1-day doubles - the most difficult of all, as it included the 'funny hat' parade, a regular feature of this event, which contributed to the very happy mood of all these Tournaments.

There was also a Golf Croquet Challenge event at the Michael Young BBQ on the first Saturday when Ken Jones and Stephen Wright playing with umbrellas and tennis balls were defeated by Roger Hayes and Annabel McDiarmid with mallets and croquet balls! Bob Smith steered Tournament 2 to a successful conclusion. We had a dinner at the local pub on the last Saturday evening.

If you played for the entire 9 days you had a minimum of between 22 and 18 games, win or lose.

AND FINALLY THE 'LEAVE' OF THE YEAR! Steve Battison thought Christmas had come early when his opponent playing green and brown completed his turn by rolling up to white, leaving a perfect rush to Steve's hoop 3 with one ball at 4 and the other in the middle of the lawn! He was awarded the wooden spoon with a ribboned bow!

Why not come and join in the fun next year, but enter early.

**RESULTS**

- Woking Challenge Cup** (9 entries)  
Winner: T. Wood (7/7 wins)
- Caporn Caskets** (6 entries)  
Winner: J.J. Jackson (4/5 wins)
- Woking Goblets** (15 entries)  
Winners: J.J. Jackson (4/5 wins)  
R.T.H. Barnes (4/5 wins)
- Open Doubles** (8 entries)  
Winners: R.J. Smith & Mrs G. McDiarmid
- Handicap Doubles** (8 entries)  
Winners: J.S.H. Battison & M.J.C. Young (8)
- Handicap Singles** (28 entries in 4 blocks)  
Block Winners:  
G. Cuttle (7) 5 wins  
M.G. Tompkinson (2) 5 wins  
R.J. Smith (1) 5 wins  
P.M.A. Corke (8) 5 wins

**RESULTS**

- Colchester: 28-30 May**  
**7-round Handicap Swiss** (24 entries)  
Winner: M. Haggerston 6/7 wins
- Nottingham: 3-5 June**  
**Handicap Blocks** (28 entries)  
Block Winners:  
P.A. Watson (5 wins)  
C. Waterfield (6 wins)  
A.D. Tunbridge (6 wins)  
Mrs S. Watson (5 wins)
- Crawley: 18-19 June**  
**Handicap Blocks** (12 entries)  
Block Winners: N. Gale (2); M. Strachan (2½)  
Play-Off Winner: G. Norman (12)
- Bristol: 25-26 June**  
**American Blocks; Avanced Play** (16 entries)  
Block Winners: M. Murray; F.J.R. Landor

**Nottingham: 13 July**  
**THE ROYAL BANK SCHOOLS CHAMPIONSHIP**  
**Bishop Vesey's take title for second time**

Report by Peter Dyke

The storm clouds threatened as the four winners of the Regional Finals met at Nottingham to contest the final stages of the competition. The finalists included two schools from last year's Final - Bishop Vesey's Grammar School from Sutton Coldfield and Nailsea School from Avon (though oddly enough this year the Nailsea 'B' and Bishop Vesey's 'C' teams were successful) - and two newcomers to the Final - Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School from Blackburn (who have always been bisqued out of the competition in the preliminary rounds in previous years) and Worth School.

Queen Elizabeth's team had by far the lowest handicaps with Mark Saurin (-1), Andrew Saurin (6) and Dan McCormick (16). All the other players' handicaps ranged from 13 to 18. So Queen Elizabeth's had by far the strongest team, but would they once again be beaten by the other teams' handicaps?

Their first opponents were Worth and Mark took white round to rover at the first opportunity. James Maxwell-Scott replied by using 11 bisques to go round, peel white through rover and peg it out. A few sages who were watching felt this was unwise. However, Mark missed several long shots and made only two hoops while James took his second ball round and pegged out. He was immediately rewarded with a handicap reduction from 14 to 10, which some observers felt was somewhat severe.

Andrew Saurin set up a 3-ball break in the third turn of his game, but he failed hoop 3, leaving two balls by the hoop. His inexperienced opponent played the fourth ball from the 'A' baulk! Later in the game, in an attempt at a jump shot through a hoop, Andrew completely cleared the hoop, but he played skillfully to win by 14 points.

Meanwhile, Dan McCormick made a 7-hoop break without bisques to win his game by 21 points and promptly had his handicap reduced from 16 to 13.

The games between Bishop Vesey's and Nailsea were much closer. Andrew Bennet enquired 'Have you noticed any other conspicuously questionable handicaps?' Graham Pearson immediately obliged by successfully jumping through a particularly difficult angled hoop. He went on to beat Andrew Barradell by 5 points, despite running rover the wrong way at his first attempt.

The similarity in colour between the pink and red clips caused some



Gordon Fenton, The Royal Bank of Scotland's Public Relations Manager, with Bishop Vesey's winning team: Graham Pearson, Nick Ford, and Adam Jarvis.

confusion and early in her game against Adam Jarvis, Claire Thatcher ran pink's hoop with her red ball! With no bisques and insufficient skill to set up breaks without them, both players adopted 'Aunt Emma' tactics. As time approached, both players were level. Adam scored a hoop just before time and another after time had been called. He left all four balls well separated and Claire missed the hit-in.

Nick Ford got off to a commanding lead against Helen Harwood. Helen fought back and almost caught up at one point, but as time approached, Nick forged ahead again to gain a nine point victory on time. The four players whose games had gone to time paid the penalty by being caught in a heavy downpour while the others were busy tucking into a delicious lunch which had been prepared by members of the Nottingham Club and paid for by The Royal Bank of Scotland.

After lunch, the sun came out and steam could be seen rising from the far courts. Bishop Vesey's had a comfortable 3-0 win over Worth and all three of their players had their handicaps cut. Meanwhile, one of the best games of the day was being waged between Mark Saurin and Andrew Barradell. Andrew used up his forest of bisques, taking his balls to rover and penultimate with 3-ball breaks. Mark took a ball to rover. Andrew had a marvellous long hit-in and managed to take both balls to the peg, but in attempting to rush his partner ball to the peg it collided with the rover hoop and stuck in the jaws. His attempt at pegging out through the hoop stopped short of the peg and he left both

balls in the middle of the lawn. Mark had no problem in hitting in, going round and pegging out to win by 2 points.

In her game against Andrew Saurin, Claire Thatcher was trying to place the balls for her first ever corner cannon when she was stung by a bee (Was this one of Bennet's secret weapons?) and had to come off for emergency treatment. Andrew had taken red to rover, Claire had used up her bisques taking blue to 4-back with a 3-ball break (Hadn't the Nailsea coach taught his team about 4-ball breaks?) and black to hoop 2. At this stage the result seemed inevitable, but Claire battled on magnificently and managed to score a further seven hoops before Andrew was able to peg out. The remaining game was won by Nailsea's Helen Harwood.

After a lovely tea, the scene was all set for an exciting final round, with Queen Elizabeth's and Bishop Vesey's having knocked Nailsea and Worth out of the running. Graham Pearson used 10 bisques to take black to 4-back and blue to peg. Mark Saurin went to the peg and pegged out blue. Graham used his two remaining bisques to make 4-back and somehow before his opponent was able to get off the mark with his second ball he scrambled through the last two hoops and pegged out. On his five games in this year's Schools Championship, Mark had given away 82 bisques and had won three games.

Andrew Saurin played immaculately, as he had done all day, though he had a slight problem having completed the rover peel. He was hampered by blue and yellow when attempting to roquet

black, and all four balls had to be marked, but the roquet was successful and he completed the peg-out to win by 12 points. This was the first game of the day that Bishop Vesey's had lost.

The deciding game was between Dan McCormick and Nick Ford. Nick (handicap 12) made a 12-hoop break without using a bisque. Dan fought back but Nick always had the upper hand and won by seven points on time. So Bishop Vesey's won the Championship for the second year running, and are the first school to have won twice.

However one should not forget the equally exciting battle for third and fourth places. Andrew Barradell beat James Maxwell-Scott, but Claire Thatcher lost to Douglas Langford. Once again it depended on the third game. Helen Harwood made a 9-hoop break to take one ball to penultimate (it was good to see that at least one of the Nailsea team knew what a 4-ball break was). Martin Slocock fought back and managed to catch up as time approached, but Helen showed great determination and made two more hoops to win +2 on time.

Mr Fenton, of the Royal Bank of Scotland, our sponsors, was on hand to present the medals, the Royal Bank Quaich, and the Rothwell Shield to Bishop Vesey's 'C' team. All in all, it was a most enjoyable day. Early on there were signs of nervousness and inexperience, but as the day progressed confidence grew and skill improved. There was plenty of good attacking croquet and it was good to see the youngsters making breaks both with and without bisques. I am sure many of them achieved personal bests and they all benefitted from the experience. Seven of the twelve players went away with handicap reductions. It also made a refreshing change to see two girls, (both from Nailsea) in the final, which normally consists entirely of boys (though Ludlow once reached the final with one girl).

We are very grateful to the Royal Bank of Scotland for sponsoring this event once again, to Nottingham Croquet Club for their hospitality, to Peter Dorke, the manager, and Andrew Bennet, the handicapper, to all the schools who took part in this year's Championship, and to the teachers who freely give up so much of their time coaching the youngsters.

**RESULTS**  
**The Royal Bank National Schools Croquet Championship**  
**FINAL**  
**1st Round**  
**Bishop Vesey's v. Nailsea**  
(Bishop Vesey's names first)  
G. Pearson (13) bt A. Barradell (16) +5; A.  
Continued on Page 15

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## Weekend Round-Up

### Harrow Oak: 14-15 May Hard Cheese at Harrow

Report by David Peterson

The East Anglians seem to be taking over croquet as we know it. They were here in force spilling from the fens, and sure enough Don Gaunt won the main event to the delight of his large and faithful following and French took the Swiss. In presenting the prizes Hilditch, the Club's managerial heavyweight, re-affirmed his stance on professionalism pointing out that the first prize was only half of the entry fee. Fortunately one does not tend to leave Harrow with a hefty engraving bill. This is excused by the fund-raising nature of the event, which ought also to persuade some of the club's senior players to participate.

One novelty was that both Jaques and Southport balls were used during the tournament, a comparison which earned the latter no discredit in terms of elasticity (Young's modulus  $10^2$  GN/m<sup>2</sup>). There was a tendency to stick in some of the tightish hoops but a more serious problem arose when the incomparable Harrow catering machine ground to a halt. The plastic knife snapped at lunch on Saturday when attacking some cheese not dissimilar in texture to the balls. (Young's modulus  $10^1$  GN/m<sup>2</sup>) and thereafter tea-spoons were deployed on buttering duties.

### Southport 28-30 May Croquet Team Coach Survives Attack at Seaside Resort

Report by David Appleton

The 'Journey into Space' generation of schoolboys learned to count '10,9,8,7,6,5,4,3,2,1, zero', but the present one thinks it goes '18,14,11,8,5½,3,1, scratch'. At the spring bank holiday weekend at Southport Mark Saurin left us earthlings behind for the celestial realms of scratch and below. The surprise was that he lost in the final. His coach Andrew Bennet last won



Pauline Lewis who qualified for a Bronze Award by making two all-round breaks with bisques against Colin Irwin.

this tournament in 1978 and chose this year to repeat his success, winning all 5 games in his block and beating Barbara Haslam and Mark in semi-final. Andrew had recently had a handicap increase, but a new mallet restored form and handicap. Mike Wilkins broke the Southport monopoly of the semi-finals, but lost to Mark.

Of the 84 games played 11 were won by 1 point, so there was usually something interesting to watch even if the standard of play was variable. In spite of many negative thoughts Rick Harding had a particularly good break after time was called, to win by 3 from 7 hoops down. John Portwood qualified for a gold medal with the only triple of the weekend, and earned 2.8 for style for his dive into the puddle in front of the clubhouse. I haven't mentioned that Mark also managed the tournament, with maximal efficiency and minimal fuss. Everybody was keen to play, even though the weather was like sandpaper\*, so scheduling of the games never fell behind. As the manager said when asking me to play 'There's no rush'. Or he may have been commenting on my position after running hoops.

The food was, as always, delicious, the chicken dishes at Southport for some reason being particu-



Barbara Haslam, block winner at Southport.

larly fresh. The tournament, which used Southport balls on all lawns, was dominated by Southport members, but President Paul Stoker had omitted to hand in his entry form. Nevertheless he was to be seen narrowing hoops at dawn and dispensing hospitality at dusk and beyond. This weekend is highly recommended, but don't send in your forms for next year until after I have been accepted.

\* Wet and Dry

### Ryde: 15-17 April Rain-making rituals

Report by Neil Griffin

As darkness closed in over the Isle of Wight on 15th April, a group of white-clad people gathered for a rain-making ceremony. Their ages ranged from 15 (Derek Wood) to over 80, (Cyril Pountney).

They came from as far afield as Australia, Ireland and Guernsey. The Ryde Weekend had begun.

The ritual involved hitting coloured balls about a lawn with hammers. Some were more skilful at this than others. Derek Wood (10) - son of Terry - beat Frank Newman (3) by 26 and Neil Griffin (5) by 24. But the ritual worked - it rained all afternoon.

And all night long. By 9.30am on the Saturday two lawns were under water. We huddled in the clubhouse. Still it poured down. At about 10.30 the rain abated slightly. Nigel Williams suggested using a dustpan to scoop up the puddle water and pour it down a drain; and enthusiastically began. Soon we were all scooping, pouring, or sweeping water away.

The results were fantastic - by 11am the water was off all four lawns. Dab

Wheeler (expertly sweeping her besom) deserves special mention.

The croquet was hard going. Most players, at full whack, could hit halfway across the lawn. Long splits were impossible. Tactics were thus markedly different, especially on lawn 1 which looked like a paddy-field and played like a bath sponge.

By Sunday, the magic was failing. The sun came out and stayed out all day. No clear winner was emerging and by lunchtime it was still wide open. Amid high tension, Philip Archer (10) beat mark Senior by 3 but this was not enough to stop Frank Birch (10) from winning. Philip came second and Terry Wood third.

What Ryde lacks in weather it makes up for in welcome. Arthur Rowlands got well-deserved thanks for providing coffee, tea, and a hot lunch every day. Roy Newnham, managing with his customary efficiency, got everyone seven games and played broken his wrist. We all went home on Sunday afternoon tired but satisfied - and wet!

### Compton: 6-8 May New Players at Compton

The weekend tournament at Compton was the first tournament for many of the players and for some time this showed in the play. On the first morning one lawn saw a playing of the wrong ball, a running of a hoop the wrong way, a taking of croquet from a ball twice, a misplaced ball, and an air shot!

The tournament was run as four groups of six, with semi-finals and a final arranged for Sunday. By Saturday evening, Gordon Vince and Peter Howard had booked their places in the semi-finals.

Sunday morning saw the third group settled in exciting and spectacular fashion. In one group, Bernard Weitz needed to beat Martin Haggerston to qualify, while Martin needed to win by at least +18. They set off to play on the far lawn - and returned what seemed like 40 minutes later - +26 to Martin and a place in the semi-final.

In the fourth group, John Ruddock took a keen interest in the match between Norman Cox and Kevin Ham. Kevin needed to win to qualify, otherwise victory for Norman would leave John as the group winner. The game was long and tense and as time ran out, Norman stuck in hoop 5 off his own ball, while Kevin was two points ahead, with his balls almost in the first and third corners.

Kevin played the long shot from 1st corner to join up and Norman rushed onto the lawn and searched urgently for a Referee for the ball in the jaws of hoop 5. John Ruddock, acting as timekeeper, indicated there was only 58 seconds remaining, while Norman asked all the spectators if

they were a Referee.

Norman appeared to have no joy but eventually it dawned on him that the spectators, and Kevin, were trying to tell him something - Kevin's last 40 yard shot had hit! John called time and forlornly packed his bag, put his coat on, and set off for the car park.

Kevin took off to the ball by hoop 5, roqueted this and took off to within a foot of the ball in 5 - and missed!

Norman made 5 and 6 on his last turn to draw level and later made 1-back to win! John Ruddock had to be called back from the car park to take his place in the semi-final.

In the first semi-final, John beat Martin who for the second time in the weekend had his ball pegged out. In the other semi-final, Gordon Vince beat Peter Howard.

The final proved something of an anti-climax, with John using the 3rd of his 3½ bisques to make the first hoop, and Gordon eventually won +20.

The weather was good for the time of year with some shorts in evidence, but supplemented by plenty of pull-overs!

The tournament was marvellously organised by Dennis Shaw who was armed with a prolific selection of tables, charts and time-tables, and our thanks are extended to him.

Finally no tournament at Compton would be complete without the army of ladies in the kitchen. Organised by Truda Tom, and at times outnumbering the players, they provided a seemingly continuous supply of coffee and biscuits, soup and lunch, and teas - thank you.

## Weekend Round-Up

### Cheltenham 28-30 May Bandits lose their Bisques

Report by Richard Brand

These Handicap weekends are just the thing to sort out the 'bandits' who shoot from across the lawn and hit!!

Don Gaunt, ably helped by his wife, had what seemed an impossible task of organising 8 blocks of 7 players, and it looked as if this would affect his play, as he had scored only 3 hoops at the end of the first day. However, his play picked up even if the weather didn't the next day, and turned Cheltenham's white blanket of players into a multicoloured assortment of fashions, of which I must award first prize to young David Thatcher who played in shorts all weekend, and did well at his first tournament winning 3 games. Other first timers who did well were John Willis who won Block H convincingly, and was rightly brought down from 12 to 8 which isn't sour grapes, even though 'Bandito' (to his opponents) beat me +26. Alex Leggate, another first timer, was runner-up with 5 wins in the same block as J. Willis.

The Watson family fared well, with Paul winning block A by beating Bo Harris (also with 5 wins) in their final game +15. Sally Watson (8) won her block with 5 wins from David Cairns

(-½) who also had 5 wins by virtue of beating him +26 in their first game.

Other good performances were by Joe Jackson who won 5 games and the block, even though some went to time. Mike Finn put in a steady performance in his block to gain 5 wins and the block. C. Williams won block C with 5 wins with three others contesting the runner-up position on 4 wins, but this was finally awarded to a joyful Maurice Boardman. Block E was a close run thing with Jim Davey and Robert Selmes both with 5 wins, but Jim got the decision as he beat Robert by +3. Block F went a similar way. P. Lewis got the decision because he beat A. Symons +3 on time.

All in all it was a very interesting weekend with a dozen players being rewarded with adjustments to their handicaps, which I hope they appreciate as much as we do!

Other points worth mentioning were the excellent meals provided and the well stocked bar of cider, and a special note of thanks to those unsung heroes, the referees who, although only few in number, seemed to be everywhere fulfilling their endless duties.

### RESULTS

#### Harrow Oak: 14-15 May

(Open Knockout & Swiss: 16 entries)

Winner: D.L. Gaunt

Runner-Up: W.O. Aldridge

Winner of Swiss: M. French

#### Bristol: 21-22 May

Latham Cup

(Hcap knockout: 16 entries)

Winner: A. Sammons (6½)

Runner-Up: P.J. Dorke (2½)

#### Southport: 28-30 May

(Hcap Singles: American/Play-Off)

24 entries

Block Winners:

M. Saurin (1)

M.J. Wilkins (3)

A. Bennet (3)

Mrs B. Haslam (18)

Play-Off:

Winner: A. Bennet

Runner-Up: M. Saurin

#### Cheltenham: 28-30 May

(Handicap Singles: American Blocks)

56 entries

Block Winners:

P.A. Watson (4½)

Mrs P.A. Watson (8)

C. Williams (9)

J.J. Jackson (3)

C.J.C. Davey (8)

P. Lewis (12)

M.J. Finn (3)

J.W. Willis (12)

### BRISTOL: 21-22 May Good Win by Local Player

Report by Laurence & Deborah Latham

This report will start by making mention of the ever-increasing improvement in the courts at Bristol. Annual visitors (such as ourselves) have noticed their improving quality over the last few years from surfaces that produced Dam Buster like results to much smoother, if still slightly 'heavy' courts - no doubt a condition the further passage of time will alter.

Of the sixteen players performing on the aforementioned courts, only Bristol stalwart Elena Porter possessed a handicap of double figures, which she employed particularly well in the second round, only succumbing to Ludlow invader Peter Dorke by a mere six points.

Perhaps the most unusual occurrence of the first day (apart from nobody recognising Alvar Bray because he was sporting both a shorter hairstyle and a new hat) was a brief but spirited whirlwind which

moved across court 3. It first caused Jill McDiarmid's hat to circle its would-be rescuer like an anticipatory vulture, and then moved up the bank to take the loose grass across court 2 in its vortex.

But back to the tournament! Adrian Trickey from Dyffryn did his handicap no good (assuming he wanted to retain it) by twenty-sixing Laurence Latham - with three bisques still standing, to boot. This, statisticians will note, extends Laurence's 100% record of only ever being knocked out of the main event by the maximum score, to six occasions. Meanwhile local players Tony Sammons and Edward Duckworth won through against the far from negligible resistance of Frances Ransom (a last minute replacement) and Kevin Carter respectively. This meant one semi-final was a very '2D' affair, wherein Dorke defeated Duckworth (the 1987 winner). In the other, Tony

Sammons, whose only previous tournament was this event last year, found himself in the final after a close-run game against Adrian Trickey.

So (while David Gillett of Pendle unsuccessfully defended the Wooden Spoon against Deborah Latham!) the final took place on court 1 in beautiful sunshine. There was no doubt that the Cup would follow its apparent tradition of having a new name on it each year, as neither of these croquet giants had contested the final before. In the event it was a case of 'Local Boy Makes Good' as Tony took advantage of a minor lapse on Peter's part to win +17.

Altogether a most pleasant tournament under the first-time management of Rosemary Gugan, to whom go all the players' thanks for a very enjoyable weekend.



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## Championships

### Cheltenham: 13-19 June MEN'S AND WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP Young Players are the Champions

Report by Paul Smith

In the longer term the 1988 Men's and Women's Championship may be most significant as the setting for the first major championship wins by promising younger players. Some, though not many, will be able to say 'I was there'. Most of us however will ponder how best to come to terms with the clear scientific demonstration that the ability to win at croquet is inversely proportional to body weight...

There were few surprises in the early rounds of the Men's event. Mark Saurin gave due notice with a convincing win against the seeded Andrew Hope after being taken to three games by Dayal Gunasekera. John Mann looked very good against Jerry Guest but was undone by Ian Bond's greater experience. Robert Fulford completed two triple peels against Mark Suter and Duncan Reeve ran a slightly off-form Colin Irwin close. Meanwhile Bernard Neal with exemplary patience overcame a one game deficit to defeat another seed, David Goacher. Neal won the third game +3TP playing with confidence and care and showing no signs of feeling the pressure.



Mark Saurin, winner of the Men's title.

In the quarter finals Irwin beat Ray Ransom easily. Paul Smith repeated Gunasekera's error by winning the first game against Saurin, who responded by taking the next two in less than 90 minutes - the second in 28 minutes flat. The other matches were far closer. Neal beat Bond with a well-executed TPO in the third game. Dave Foulser won the deciding game in a 3-ball ending against Fulford by means of preposterous approaches to 4-back and penult, and running hoops from a distance which might even deter Chris Clarke.

Neal's good run ended in the semi-final as his inability to negotiate hoops clearly gave Saurin the few chances he needed to win the game before lunch. Irwin beat Foulser in an unremarkable first game, then lost the second as Foulser hit a purple patch of shooting. The deciding game was close and hinged on Irwin's missing a rush and finishing in a baulk with a lift pending.

In the first game of the final Saurin got going first and didn't let Foulser in until after making hoop 2 with his second ball. An attempt to bring a ball in the second corner into play indirectly resulted in his failing with a jump-shot at third. Foulser went to 4-back but Saurin hit the lengthy

lift shot down the East boundary, picked up the break and reached the point where only a straight double peel was needed to finish. At rover however he sent the peelee off the lawn only for Foulser immediately to stick in hoop 1 handing Saurin an easy finish.

We were never to discover whether the missing hordes of spectators were expecting the climax with afternoon tea as the second game developed rapidly. Foulser hit the tice, Saurin hit in (again) from B baulk but could not get going. Foulser hit and went to 4-back. Saurin hit the shot from B baulk (number three) and went round to 4-back also. Foulser hit the short lift, did the first peel of a triple, but came to grief at hoop 5 when unluckily knocking his pioneer to that deathly position just beyond the hoop and failing with the resultant half-jump hoop attempt. Saurin finished with an immaculate and expeditious triple peel.

Let there be no doubt that Mark thoroughly deserved to win. His play throughout the event was very positive without being over-aggressive, and always accurate and controlled. He was not put to any protracted or severe tactical test but in part that is a measure of his superiority on this occasion. He has a sound temperament and is in every respect a very good prospect.

Debbie Cornelius was fully tested in the final of the Womens. She and Mary Collins had made the predicted progress to the final, Debbie with convincing wins complete with splendid triple peel against Carol Smith, and Mary more steadily needing three games to overcome Veronica Carlisle in the semis. One felt however that Debbie had yet to be put under real pressure and that Mary was playing herself into form. Perhaps Mary's greater experience of the big event would be crucial. For a time it looked this way as Debbie struggled to find her rhythm. With considerable determination she rebuilt her game and confidence to win -25, +14, +16. She too plays an attacking game, perhaps a shade riskily, but she is to be congratulated especially for winning the internal battle. Like Mark's, her name is likely to appear again on the trophy.

A special mention must be made of Liz Taylor-Webb's good wins against Dab Wheeler and Lady Bazley and her creditable performance against Debbie. Her steady and attacking play quite properly brought her to the handicappers attention. One hopes other ladies will be encouraged by her and will provide the chaps with a few more partners next year.

As it was, only 10 pairs entered the Mixed Doubles. The fancied Dave Foulser and Carol Smith tested the managerial patience losing a five and a half hour marathon against Rosemary Gagan and David Goacher. Gagan and Goacher began to look the team to beat as they put out Colin and Chris Irwin in a tense pegged-out finish. They then lost heavily in the semi-final to Dennis Moorcroft and Dab Wheeler. Lady Bazley's consistent play had in the meantime taken her and Paul Smith into the final which they won reasonably comfortably.

The Du Pre was played a la Swiss for both Men and Women. Amidst a few eyebrow-raising results and events, John Walters won with seven wins and Lady Bazley won the Ladies Plate with



Debbie Cornelius (left) and Mary Collin, finalists in the Women's Championship.

four wins.

It is a pity that there was not a larger and therefore stronger entry, for this is one of our premier events. But, for many, time off work is at a premium and there are several high-class shorter events such as the various regional championships. In contrast the Mens and Womens offers much less play and on this occasion at least was curiously lacking in the tension and excitement expected of a major event. Is it time to look at the format?

One thing is abundantly clear, slimline croquet is here and here to stay. Your correspondent used to think that the Cambridge Diet consisted of orange squash and chocolate digestives but has now been thoroughly disabused!

#### RESULTS

##### Mens' Championship

###### 1st Round:

P.L. Smith bt I.R. Plummer +17, +6; M. Saurin bt D. Gunasekera -6, +25, +26; J.R. Mann bt J. Guest +25, +23; I.R. Bond bt W.E. Lamb -17, +20, +13; D.J. Goacher bt D. Peterson +10, +18; M. Murray bt F.I. Maugham +16, +26TP; R. Fulford bt M. Suter +12TP, +26TP; J.O. Walters bt D.H. Moorcraft +14, +9; D. Cairns bt B.G. Weitz +1, +16; D. Reeve bt L.W. Wharrad +24, +22TP.

###### 2nd Round:

Smith bt R.D.C. Prichard +18TP, -9, +15; Saurin bt A.B. Hope +26TP, +7; Bond bt Mann +7, -17, +4; B.G. Neal bt Goacher -26, +3, +3TP; D. Foulser bt Murray -26TP, +25, +17; Fulford bt Walters +12, -25, +26; R. Ransom bt Cairns +26, +9; C.J. Irwin bt Reeve +13, +7.

###### 3rd Round:

Saurin bt Smith -4, +26, +20; Neal bt Bond -14, +4, +5TP; Foulser bt Fulford +4, -17TP, +4; Irwin bt Ransom +26, +20.

###### Semi-Finals:

Saurin bt Neal +25, +24TP; Foulser bt Irwin -16, +4, +6.

###### Final:

Saurin bt Foulser +17, +12TP.

##### Womens' Championship

###### 1st Round:

Mrs M. Collin bt Mrs F. Ransom +17, +15; Mrs V. Carlisle bt Mrs B. Weitz +7, +11; Miss D. Cornelius bt Mrs C.A. Smith +26, +26TP; Mrs L. Taylor-Webb bt Mrs R.F. Wheeler +20, +1(T).

###### 2nd Round:

Mrs Collin bt Mrs K. Whittall +13, +13; Mrs Carlisle bt Mrs C.E. Irwin +17, +17; Miss Cornelius bt Mrs C.D. Harris +19, +22; Mrs Taylor-Webb bt Lady Bazley +1(T), +2(T).

### Phyllis Court: 11-12 June GOLF CROQUET CUPS

There was a plethora of brands at Phyllis Court this year: Nestle and Suchard would have been delighted. Tony Brand came with his twin sons Ivor and Richard: Richard won the Singles Cup 7-5 (from Ivor) and Richard and Ivor won the Doubles Cup 7-6 (beating Dennis Goulding and Terry Matthews in the Final).

Saturday (Singles Day) turned out to be a grey throw-back to November but, with manager David Croker ensuring that everyone had five games to play, we survived; at least golf croquet is, unlike Association, a continually active game. Jeff Roy was not around to defend his cup (strangely preferring a honeymoon to croquet) and the Brands swept the board, Ian Maugham and David Croker notwithstanding.

Sunday (Doubles Day) was sunlit and warm. All had a minimum of three games to play. The cup holders (Peter Howell and Smokey Eades) failed to find their form and went down to the Brand brothers as well as to Leslie Chapman and David Ruscombe-King. The latter running rover from the North boundary (23½ yards) for the winning shot!

Strange that the average time for a game seems to be getting longer. Is it because of better tactical play? Improved hitting out? Or a generally higher standard of skill? Certainly the playing of the stop shot rush, the use of the cannon and the execution of in-off hoops was much more in evidence. Whatever the reason the majority of games went to 7-5 or 7-6 and the average times were 49 minutes for singles and 65 minutes for doubles. In one of her games Kay Yeoman set a Tournament record of 93 minutes!

#### Womens Championships (cont'd)

##### Semi-Finals:

Mrs Collin bt Mrs Carlisle -10, +15, +21; Miss Cornelius bt Mrs Taylor-Webb +9, +15.

##### Final:

Miss Cornelius bt Mrs Collin -25, +14, +16.

##### Mixed Doubles Championship

###### Final:

Lady Bazley & P.J. Smith bt Mrs R.F. Wheeler & D.H. Moorcraft +16.

##### Du Pre Cup

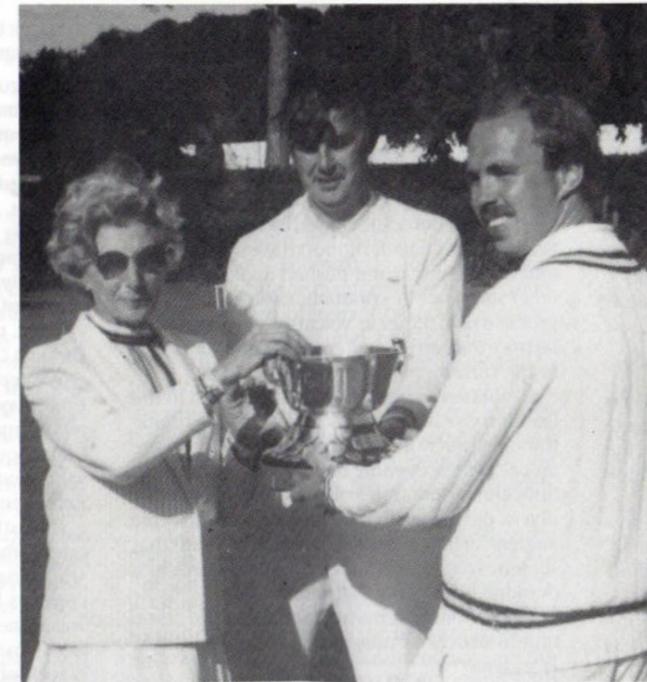
###### Winner:

J.O. Walters (7 wins)

##### 'Y' Doubles

###### Winners:

Mr & Mrs C. Irwin.



Richard Brand (right) receives his Singles Cup from Norah Adlam, Chairman, Phyllis Court CC, and Manager David Croker.

#### RESULTS

##### Singles

###### Semi-Finals

I. Brand bt P. Howell 7-6  
R. Brand bt D. Goulding 7-3

###### Final

R. Brand bt I. Brand 7-5

##### Doubles

###### Final

R. & I. Brand bt E. Matthews & D. Goulding 7-6

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## Golf Croquet

### Worthing - A Weekend Break From Grace Harvey

In June this year the Imperial Hotel at Hythe acted as host to the Worthing Club for an unusual event, a Golf Croquet weekend. The notice board in the foyer informed guests of our forthcoming tournament and provided a status symbol rarely enjoyed by players of our game.

Preliminary visits by the organiser, Worthing Club member Vera Payton, had kept the hotel groundsman busy improving the lawn to the standard required. With frequent mowings during our stay the size increased daily, and, unrestricted by a marked boundary line, games proceeded with great speed.

The focal point of the weekend was an American Doubles Tournament arranged by Muriel Bolton. This type of tournament is a popular bi-monthly feature at Worthing, our play having been adapted to cater for large numbers of players with limited time but not unlimited space.

At the moment of the draw for partners, the heavens opened with considerable force, a phenomenon repeated at intervals throughout the afternoon. For four hours ten couples did battle with each other and with the weather, skilfully quadruple-banking on a now larger than life lawn. The tiny gazebo became painfully packed during the heavier downpours, the slowest movers jostling for place under the scorer's umbrella. Predictably, rain ceased abruptly as the last match was completed, and the sun shone brilliantly for the statutory group photographs.

For the rest of the weekend the bars rung with the wisdom of hindsight. Crush shots were debated. Skilful in-off shots were envied. Stop shots and split angles were demonstrated on the snooker tables. The many other attractions available in the hotel received but the briefest attention.

The sociability of Golf Croquet and its speed ensures its popularity with busy people, and we are already eagerly anticipating a similar weekend in 1989.

Grace Harvey writes:

Fifty members of the Worthing Croquet Club are keen Golf Croquet players who play 'proper' Golf Croquet, not the feeble game so rightly derided by Association players. I am looking forward to the rules being formulated - I believe this is now under way - as our rules have been laboriously extracted by me from the 'Laws of Croquet'. The Golf Croquet clubs we meet have some extraordinary variations.

## As a Matter of Fact

A short story by Hal C. Sisson

'Did you read the last issue of 'Croquet'?' my doubles partner asked, as we sat on the sidelines at the Criterion Croquet Club, waiting patiently while one of our opponents commenced what we had little hope of being a short turn on the court.

'I took a look at it, yes. Why do you ask?'

'The article about the history of the Glasgow Croquet Club. The one which said no one knew how croquet began in Scotland,' said Bryce.

'Can't say I read that part.'

'Well the question that requires an answer is not how did Croquet start in Scotland, or Samarkand, or Stonehenge or Sydney, Australia; but when did it start anywhere? Where do you think croquet came from in the first place?'

'Like who invented it or did croquet derive from some other game?' I thought for a moment, then continued, 'No one really seems to know for sure, do they?'

'As a matter of fact, I do.' Bryce made the statement flatly, like he knew what he was talking about, which he always thought he did.

'Interesting if true Bryce,' I replied, 'perhaps you'd care to elucidate, or do we have time? I do believe that Roger has broken down. He didn't make that crosswire and is going to have to leave us a good chance for a break. Perhaps you should play Blue, it seems in the best position.'

'Good strategy. But look here mate - I am serious. I do know; have just found out as a matter of fact, on my holidays in the Virgin Islands. I'm writing an article on it because I think it is an important discovery.'

'You don't say.' I sounded a bit sceptical, but I never quite knew how to take Bryce, as he was prone to highflow amplification, which he now proceeded to supply.

'Light has at last been cast, old son, on that question. Light from the sun finally shining again upon a hitherto unexplained artifact from a former age, dredged from the depths of the Atlantic Ocean. He dug down into his croquet duffle and came up with a file folder which he handed to me as he went out onto the court. 'Read this. It's a draft of the paper I'm preparing on the matter to submit to the CA.'

'Let's not worry about what happened in croquet history. Worry about today. These blokes are good so try to get us some hoops,' I said, taking his file. Bryce was a competent player himself if he was on his game, which he always thought he was.

I would likely not be on the court myself for quite a few minutes, so leaving it to Bryce, I started to read the paper headed 'History of Croquet', -

'As our modern civilisation progressed, the complex game of croquet was likely only re-created, our own discovery of the game paralleling its initial invention several thousands of years ago by a vanished civilisation of prehistory.

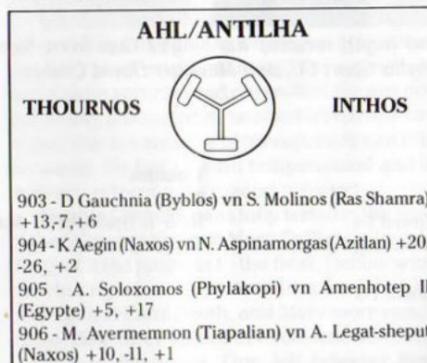
Something of considerable force happened to earth some 11,000 years ago, which is why man is now finding underwater ruins on the open Atlantic Ocean floor. Whatever happened caused land masses to descend into the sea, glaciers to melt and waters to rise, killing off most of earth's people and animals, and leaving unforgettable race memories of an end to the world by flood and fire.

It is no longer regarded as Greek myth, - this

speculative concept of the history of mankind, dividing it into two distinct eras separated in the distant past by a cataclysmic event; the same event that destroyed Atlantis. The land suddenly plunged below sea-level, perhaps in an earthquake of extraordinary energy, flooding the land with sea water. It has happened in many geological regions around the world. Or perhaps it was a subduction zone caused by one of the giant tectonic plates which support the earth's oceans and continents, being pushed underneath another such plate in a dramatic clash of forces that produce such things as volcanoes, as new material from the earth's molten mantle works its way to the surface, pushing the plates apart.

Undersea exploration has intensified in the last thirty years, aided by new scientific breakthroughs, vastly increasing our ability to explore and at greater oceanic depths. There are many little known examples of what has been found; divers deep sea divers have brought diverse ancient artifacts to the surface. (I read that sentence again, and shook my head. Bryce had outdone himself on that one).

One of these items has languished for some time in an oceanic museum in the Virgin Islands.



Part of the inscription found on the 'Virgin mallet'.

The experts who had examined it previously, purported it to be an ancient type of sledgehammer, by reason of its heavy head and long handle. Admittedly to them it might not have been as exciting a find as the dry cell batteries from Babylon and Nineveh, which still work after 2500 years when electrolyte is added, or the star computer found at the bottom of the Aegean sea; but the object was still a find from an unknown world, to which no-one had paid much attention after its discovery. But one day recently, chipping away at its sea encrusted surface, an archaeologist with time on his hands had found a great deal of printing of some kind still faintly engraved upon the surface of the head. Another chance to decipher a very ancient language, the vestiges of a ruined civilization. As I chatted with the director that rainy afternoon that had taken me to the museum, he told me that the artifact had come from a local undersea area at a depth of some eighty feet; an area comprised of stone walls, docks, roadways, heavy stone buildings, all of which seemed to form a villa or town. This primitive tool had been picked up in the courtyard of one of the palaces of complex plan. Neither archaeologists or linguists could decipher a meaning from the writings found on the object, but it was established that the entire hammer, head and handle, had been made of wood, before petrification took place. The lineal-A script and logo which they discerned conveyed no coherent

message to them, but is reproduced here in part, (see diagram) -

The linguists said they figured the writing was some kind of code or cipher perhaps, defying even computers without the requisite key and therefore daunting in complexity. And so it had remained until the day I, a Croquet Association member, attended at the Museum and chanced to closely observe this inscribed sledgehammer, whereupon the meaning became patently, even flagrantly obvious, and virtually leapt at me from the script. Of course - a trophy in the form of a croquet mallet, of the All Atlantic Handicap Croquet Championship in certain years of their existence, before the catastrophe which ended their play forever; recording who vanquished whom and by how much - thereby establishing that croquet came from Atlantis, has a ten thousand year old history, and is the oldest game known to man.

My attention returned to the game in progress, which I admit I had not been following while engrossed in reading the article, whose contents had almost convinced me that there was some truth behind the legend of Atlantis; and I can still visualise the ghostly croquet players of that vanquished civilisation, for such it must have been, stalking their balls across the now undersea grass of prehistory.

I looked up to find Bryce in the act of shooting blue at 2-back. I hadn't seen him stalk the ball, but he might have done so, as I was just back into observing the play. I thought he shot too hard with little follow through, and the ball was still skidding when it hit the wire, having no spin to aid its forward progress through the hoop. In any event he blobbed, and the ball was at best merely stuck in the jaws, at worst jammed against a wire, making our next innings a dicey proposition.

Bryce returned across the lawn, his turn over. 'How are we doing?' I asked. 'Did you read the article?' was his reply. 'Yes.'

'Good. Well as to how we are doing, my turn terminated just like Atlantis - in a sudden, wide-spread and mysterious disaster.'

I surveyed the court more closely and saw the position in which he had left us, which even included a Baillieu double for our opponents to aim at. 'I can understand the widespread disaster part Bryce, but why mysterious?'

'I was well into a four ball break when I tried a cut rush on their yellow to 2-back, which ended up in a far from ideal position - actually on the wrong side of the hoop - from which I had to try a worse-than-death thin take off. Sorry old man, you know how it is sometimes after you make a great recovery shot, and I did make a great croquet and ended up in a position to make the hoop. I know the hoop shot should have gone through, I did everything right, but as you see, the ball ended up against the wire. And that's the mysterious part, as a matter of fact.'

'What is?'

'That hoop must be from those same Islands; that hoop is one of those rare hoops you occasionally encounter. It is a genuine Virgin Hoop!'

'A What?'

'A Virgin Hoop - it can't be made!'

Hal Sisson lives at Peace River, Alberta, Canada.

## STRAIGHT RUSH

By Dorothy Rush

'This Chauntecleer stood upon his toos, Strecching his nekke, and heeld his eyen cloos, And gan to crowe loude for the nones'.

The people charged with the promotion of croquet's name amongst the populace are not doing their job. Oh, of course all sorts of things are going on at a local level - Hon Secs are offering short courses for beginners; clubs are running open days, often with great success - and at national level - tournaments are being sponsored by major companies; newspapers offer cheap croquet sets in conjunction with competitions for novices - but it is not enough and what there is is not being done well enough.

Worse, it is the wrong way to go about it. Clubs may be getting new members; there may even be a burgeoning of new clubs all over the country - though the case may be exaggerated - but many other clubs are losing members and several clubs are on the verge of total collapse. Efforts at this level can have only a minor and strictly local effect.

What is needed is very simple and need occupy one person - our Development Officer, say - for no more than 30 days in the year, time which can easily be saved from his tireless peregrinations on behalf of the Great Game, by cutting out the odd Garden Croquet Championship here and the odd coaching session with the massed WIs there.

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What is needed is regular coverage, by good photographs, by the national newspapers - all the national dailies and Sundays, not just the Telegraph - of all the major events. Not all calendar tournaments, of course (that is a local matter and a very important one), but certainly everything from the Northern Championships up to the International matches. Speaking of which, the only coverage of the 1988 Home Internationals that could be found in the papers was a short piece in the Telegraph, highlighting Colin Irwin's success in them. No pictures, no results - nothing at all until it was all over.

A sizeable part of someone's job (either the Development Officer or the Chairman of the Publicity Committee) should be to see that every such event is attended by a CA reporter, who should have informed all the important papers, several days ahead, of the imminence (and the eminence, for that matter) of the event, with perhaps a run-down on the more notable players taking part. The reporter should take good

action shots of the play - in the morning - to be developed immediately and copies delivered to the papers that same evening with a report of the days play up to, say tea-time.

All the major newspapers are prepared to give space to national sporting news - however 'minority' - if they get your contribution in good time. There are few important venues so far off the beaten track that tournament photographs taken early in the day could not be rushed (if you'll pardon the expression) to London or Manchester. The report itself, of course, can be telephoned in. Surely, indeed, technology is sufficiently advanced these days for even the photographs to be sent down the wire, along with the report.

Let the people see that croquet is vigorous enough to stand on its back legs and holler 'Here I am' from the sports columns of the national press and they'll find their own way to the croquet clubs.

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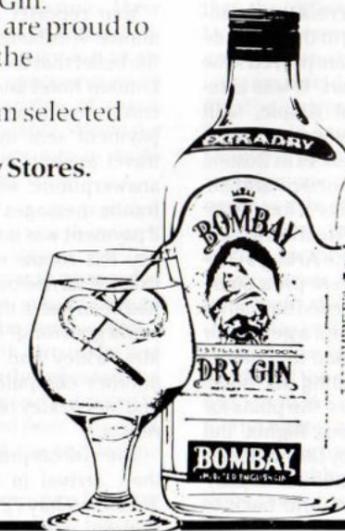
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## Solomon Trophy

### Cheltenham: 9-13 July GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND V UNITED STATES

#### A Sporting Occasion Report by Bernard Neal

The Solomon Trophy was given by the Croquet Association for an annual contest between Great Britain & Ireland and the United States, held alternately in Great Britain and the USA. All matches in the contest are played according to the Laws of Association Croquet, best of 3 games, Advanced Play. There are six members in each team, and the contest consists of 12 singles and 9 doubles. In Singles there are 2 rounds, arranged as follows.

GB1 v US2; GB2 v US1; GB3 v US4;  
GB4 v US3; GB5 v US6; GB6 v US5.  
GB1 v US1; GB2 v US2; GB3 v US3;  
GB4 v US4; GB5 v US5; GB6 v US6.

In doubles there are 3 rounds; each of the three pairs in one team playing each of the three pairs in the other.

The teams in this inaugural contest, in order of merit, were as follows:

#### Great Britain & Ireland

Nigel Aspinall  
David Openshaw (Captain)  
William Prichard  
Colin Irwin  
Keith Aiton  
Phil Cordingley

#### United States

Kiley Jones  
Ray Bell  
Bob Kroeger  
John Osborn  
Tremaine Arkley  
Peyton Ballenger  
Jack Osborn (non-playing captain)

At one stage on July 7 there were doubts as to whether the contest would take place as scheduled. The apparently simple process of flying the team of six Americans plus three supporters across the Atlantic and assembling in the Hotel de la Bere at Cheltenham proved to be jinxed from the start. It was actually never all that simple, with various team members setting off from such diverse places as Boston, New York, San Francisco and Seattle. While the flights of four of the party arrived at Heathrow and Gatwick on time, the Arkleys (Tremaine and Gail) were on a plane from Seattle that turned back after an hour in the air with a generator fault and had to shed fuel before landing. The resulting six hours delay duly disrupted the plans for meeting the various flights, but they were rescued by Dab Wheeler, who heroically made an unplanned trip to London and back to collect the weary pair.

To complicate matters further, it seemed that Kiley Jones and his mother had simply vanished. They originally planned to travel on an Air India flight, AI106, but then there was a message that they would come earlier and stay over-



The two teams before the match, with USCA President Jack Osborn (left) and CA President John Solomon (centre) holding the Solomon Trophy.

night at the Ibis Hotel near Heathrow. Mysteriously, the hotel denied all knowledge of two Joneses, nor were they on the AI106 passenger list. It eventually transpired that the Ibis had recorded two people named Joes as registered. The sequel was that Diana was first told that she could not check out because she had not checked in, and subsequently that she would need to pay twice to unscramble the computer.

Your reporter departed for his annual Wimbledon orgy secure in the belief that the Cheltenham and London hotel bookings had been confirmed by an appropriate prepayment sent by the CA to the travel agent. On his return, the answerphone was red hot with frantic messages to the effect that if payment was not made by yesterday the rooms would be reallocated. It turned out that the cheque had been lost in the post. What else could go wrong? Only that Mr and Mrs Arkley had been turned by another computer error into Mr and Mrs Arkley requiring separate rooms.

The visitors practised hard after their arrival in Cheltenham on Thursday (July 7), and again all day Friday, with the proceedings

topped off by a well attended buffet supper at the club.

#### Saturday July 9

Three doubles were scheduled for the first day. The United States first pair, Kiley Jones and John Osborn, their USCA Rules champion, had a close 3½ hour battle against David Openshaw and Keith Aiton, in which Kiley had an opportunity to finish with a break starting at 4-back. Alas, he over-approached penultimate, and the

form, suffering as they were from the disadvantages of jet lag combined with their relative inexperience of the tactics involved in Association Croquet, which are so different from those appropriate to the USCA Rules game.

This was evident in long tactical discussions which often ended in the wrong choice of shot.

#### Sunday July 10

The Great Britain Team, already with a good lead and home advantage, 'enjoyed' the further advantage of a typically English summer's day, with driving rain of a persistency reminiscent of the intended Men's Singles Final day at Wimbledon. Despite the conditions, Openshaw and Aiton were on top form, and after David's triple peel in the first game decided to play (and finish) the second game before lunch, in case the weather became even worse. Tremaine Arkley and Peyton Ballenger, their opponents, did not make use of the innings on the few occasions when they hit in.

Aspinall and Cordingley were given a fight in the first game by Bell and Kroeger. Phil Cordingley was first to 4-back, soon followed by Ray Bell. Nigel Aspinall, in attempting to set up his break, got position for hoop 1 with a take-off from corner 2, only to miss a cut rush after making the hoop. Later, he peeled partner through 4-back, but sent the peelee off. Despite these disasters, he soon finished for a win by +17. The second game also went to the British pair by +26, with the opponents only given one chance.

The match of the day was Irwin and Prichard against Jones and Osborn. The first game was great spectator value; the American pair (understandably) forgot a lift, but Irwin failed to profit from this error. Finally, William Prichard missed a short rush to 1-back; Kiley Jones then hit a 30 yard shot and went out from 4-back to record the first game won by the US team. In the second game American hopes rose when Kiley was first to 4-back and John Osborn established a break with the backward ball. But a missed return roquet after 2-back gave the British pair the innings, and Colin Irwin soon completed two peels of a straight triple attempt.

In the third game Irwin failed to get position for rover, with partner clip on the peg, before the American pair had started. Kiley then played an excellent break to 4-back and John picked up a break only to miss a short roquet after hoop 2. Sadly, he also failed at hoop 3 after a splendid 35 yard roquet, but was

rescued by Kiley who hit a target of half a ball at a range of 7 yards. A further break collapsed at 3-back, allowing Colin to hit a short lift shot and finish. The American pair took their defeat in a fine sporting spirit.

The British team thus established a commanding 6-nil lead after the second day. Again the US team must have rued their failure to convert chances into breaks, and the results perhaps reflected an unjustified lack of real belief in their ability to win.

#### Monday July 11

Phil Cordingley was the first to record a win. His victim was Tremaine Arkley, who picked up two breaks in the first game but broke down each time. The second game was dominated by Phil, who completed his triple in the seventh turn.

Colin Irwin beat an out-of-form Bob Kroeger, with two peels of an attempted triple in the first game. In the second game Colin declared a fault against himself in a soft croquet stroke, giving Bob a break to 4-back. However, Colin soon finished, but only after an attempted quintuple had come to grief.

Nigel Aspinall brought off his expected triple peel in the first game against Ray Bell. He was first to 4-back in the second game, but Ray responded in kind, and then embarked on his own triple attempt. After one hiccup at 2-back, he had his clips on peg and rover, and his leave met with the full approval of the watching aficionados. Nigel, who up to this point had been shooting badly, characteristically hit the lift, established the triple from an unpromising position, and finished.

It fell to Keith Aiton to register the winning match for the Great Britain & Ireland team by beating Peyton Ballenger in straight games. The first game was uneventful, but Peyton played well after lunch until she missed a return roquet after making 2-back. Keith then finished in style with an orthodox triple peel.

David Openshaw had a tremendous battle with Kiley Jones on Lawn 8. In the first game there was some excellent shooting by both players, but usually followed by scrappy break play. The second game produced an exciting finish when David pegged out one of Kiley's balls, with his other ball for penultimate. When David stuck in penultimate, Kiley was left with a 10 yard shot which, if it hit, would win the game. Alas, it just missed and David won. These were much discussion afterwards about the possible advantage Kiley would have gained by taking his lift shot from B baulk and forming a double

target, rather than playing the shot from where his ball lay.

John Osborn was first to 4-back against William Prichard, who retaliated by hitting the lift and also going to 4-back. After John missed his lift shot, William finished with a triple. In a lengthy second game full of errors, John shot better and won by +14. William began defensively in the third game and succeeded in teasing John into an error which led to the first break. Thereafter John had very little play and William won by +24.

So the third day ended with the trophy already in British hands. But there was a feeling that we had yet to see the best of the Americans,



The presentation supper at the Hotel de la Bere.

who may have been too much in awe of the three and eleven-sixteenths inch hoops.

A feature of the day was the tremendous attendance by television, press and photographers. The chairman of the Publicity Committee, Peter Danks, was present to see the results of his efforts, and on the following morning it was a delight to see sensible photographs and articles, rather than the usual slanted copy.

#### Tuesday 12 July

Relaxed after a splendid dinner for both teams hosted by the USCA President, Jack Osborn, the American team produced their best form thus far. However, it was the misfortune of Kiley Jones and John Osborn to meet the British first pair, Nigel Aspinall and Phil Cordingley, in no mood to give their opponents any easy chances. In a match distinguished by fine shooting by all four players, the main American threat came in the second game, when John followed Nigel to 4-back. But Phil hit the lift shot, went to the peg, and Nigel soon followed.

Keith Aiton and David Openshaw won the first game against Ray Bell and Bob Kroeger easily, but the Americans fought back and had both clips on penultimate be-

fore Keith had started. At this stage their tactics became too defensive, and they were far too ready to give up the innings by over estimating the likelihood of the opponents hitting in and establishing breaks. Keith eventually picked up a break and completed two peels of a triple, whereupon Ray threw caution to the winds, took an injudicious lift shot which missed and David duly finished.

The US team recorded their first victory when Peyton Ballenger and Tremaine Arkley beat Colin Irwin and William Prichard in straight games. The first game was a rather scrappy affair, but in the second game there was some good

## Solomon Trophy

lucky to escape when Ray just missed a peg out from 5 yards. The second game was notable for a rare leave by David. He pegged out Black after leaving his Blue ball in the jaws of its hoop, penultimate. Red was just to the north of the peg, with only a hampered shot at Blue and Yellow was in front of the rover hoop, wired by the peg from Red. Ray elected to shoot Red at Blue, missed, and David had an easy finish.

Against William Prichard, Bob Kroeger had the misfortune to play the wrong ball in the middle of a break, with disastrous results. In the second game Bob picked up several breaks but was unable to maintain control.

Colin Irwin brought off a conventional triple peel in his first game against John Osborn, and established a triple situation in the second. But then things went awry with the penultimate peel, the game, in Colin's own words 'became horrible', but he still won by +4.

Peyton Ballenger and Phil Cordingley had fitted in their match, won by Phil +23, +21, on Saturday and Sunday, so that Peyton could return to California early. It was therefore left to Keith Aiton and Tremaine Arkley to provide the afternoon's entertainment on lawn 8. Keith had won the morning's game by a triple peel, and he laid up for the sextuple in the second game. In the event Keith managed the six peels, but only in three turns, finishing with a straight double.

The anticipated revival of the American team thus failed to materialise, although their fighting spirit was never in question. Any sorrowful feelings were set aside at a convivial supper held at the de la Bere hotel, where the trophy was presented to the British captain, David Openshaw.

In retrospect, it should be said that the difference between the two teams was by no means as great as the score suggests. The US team would clearly have benefited by arriving a few days earlier. This would have allowed them to recover from jet lag, acclimatise, and play one or two preliminary matches to become accustomed to Association Croquet tactics. A second factor militating against their success was their unfamiliarity with the three and eleven-sixteenths inch hoops used for the contest. The choice between this width and the standard 3¾ inches was left to the visitors, who opted for the tighter hoops because they were staying on to play in the Open Championships which are played using these hoops.

(Continued overleaf...)

#### Wednesday 13 July

Nigel Aspinall was in no mood to give Kiley Jones any chance to show how good he can be. After a triple in the eighth turn in the first game, Nigel nearly repeated the process in the second but failed to carry out the third peel. However, this only delayed the end by one more turn.

David Openshaw won a long first game against Ray Bell, but was

## Solomon Trophy

(Continued from Page 13)

The experience gained by the US team during their visit will have been invaluable. When the match is played next year in Palm Beach, we can expect them, with the advantage of playing at home, to give a good account of themselves.

No account of this contest would be complete without mentioning two most pleasant features. The Cheltenham Club members clearly enjoyed the visit and did everything possible to make the team and supporters feel at home. Also, the visitors displayed outstanding sportsmanship in the face of what must have been a most disappointing outcome, and forged lasting friendships with their conquerors. They will be warmly welcomed on their return in 1990.

### RESULTS

(GB & Ireland names first)

#### Doubles

Aiton & Openshaw bt Jones & Osborn +4, +26TP; Irwin & Prichard bt Bell & Kroeger +3, +26TP; Aspinall & Cordingley bt Arkley & Ballenger +26, +25.

Irwin & Prichard bt Jones & Osborn -9, +9, +9; Aspinall & Cordingley bt Bell & Kroeger +17, +26; Aiton & Openshaw bt Arkley & Ballenger +26TP, +26.

Aspinall & Cordingley bt Jones & Osborn +24, +17; Aiton & Openshaw bt Bell & Kroeger +25, +5; Irwin & Prichard lost to Arkley & Ballenger -17, -3.

#### Singles

Openshaw bt Jones +8, +3; Aspinall bt Bell +26TP, +3TP; Irwin bt Kroeger +25, +16; Prichard bt Osborn +17TP, -14, +24; Cordingley bt Arkley +21, +26TP; Aiton bt Ballenger +18, +12TP.

Aspinall bt Jones +26TP, +26; Openshaw bt Bell +1, +16; Prichard bt Kroeger +16, +13; Irwin bt Osborn +24TP, +4; Aiton bt Arkley +26TP, +12; Cordingley bt Ballenger +23, +21.

## Hurlingham: 15 July USCA V PRESIDENT'S TEAM

After their resounding defeat over 5 days at Cheltenham for the Solomon Trophy, the last official match for the Americans was at Hurlingham against a team chosen by the President of the CA, John Solomon. But there was to be one essential difference to the earlier competition in that this was to be under USCA rules, a game which many of us find confusing. The main differences are that the balls are played in sequence, as in Golf Croquet (and this of course means that, for instance, blue can leave



John Solomon

yellow next to black and put red, next to play, at the other end of the court; you remain 'dead' on a ball you have roqueted until you make a hoop - imagine sticking in a hoop and being three-ball dead - you're still three-ball dead next turn!; you can't roquet a ball off the court; and the 'yard-line' is only nine inches.

The President had selected as many as possible of those who had visited the United States and played under these rules, and the Chairman of Council, Martin Murray, was the only one who had had no previous experience of the game other than an afternoon with Bernard Neal a couple of days before. To make the whole occasion entirely authentic we had deadness boards for each court and stop-watches, for only 45 seconds is allowed for each shot and the matches are time-limited too, and usually completed within, 90 minutes.

The morning session started with singles numbers 2, 4 and 6. Bernard Neal started well against Bob Kroeger but without getting full control, and Bob got a three-ball break going and looked as if he might go round, leaving just one shot for Bernard before taking his partner round. But Bob came to grief after the fourth hoop. Blue and Red were within a couple of yards, but Yellow, next to play, was away at the fourth hoop. However Yellow was dead on Blue and Red, and the only ball he was alive on

was Black which was the only one wired! The lift gave Bob the innings and he soon had his clip on rover. It was not until his other clip was on the peg that Bernard got in and was going round. After two-back he took off to Bob's ball on the East boundary, was only a couple of feet short, but roqueted it off. End of turn, and very soon of the game.

Debbie Prentis, from Canada, was reckoned to have a very tough opponent in John Osborn, but she played with great calmness and consistency to emerge a clear winner +16. The last single between John Rose and Tremaine Arkley was, after some 45 minutes, a very even contest, with one player on 3-back and the 5th, the other on 4-back and the 4th. But Tremaine picked up the vital shot, putting the US into a 2-1 lead at lunchtime.

After lunch came the doubles, where Martin Murray was paired with Debbie Prentis, the most experienced American rules player. But American President Jack Osborn and his partner Bob Kroeger were too strong for them. John McCullough and John Rose always had control and looked like winning, as indeed they did, against the top American pair of Kiley Jones and Ray Bell.

In the second double John Solomon, playing with his old form, went straight round to rover, when some in-and-out play followed with Tremaine Arkley reaching the peg. Bernard also got to the peg but was unable to peel John at rover. John hit though, made rover and failed a longish pegout. But Tremaine's ball was near at hand and was pegged out instead and the victory was assured. At the tea interval the scores were 3 all.

The final three singles were to decide the match and in the event the least important turned out to be that between the two Presidents (who had fiddled the order so they should play each other). Under American rules the game begins from one yard in front of the first hoop. Blue and Red both ran it and went respectively to the 1st and 4th corners. But Black stuck and Yellow failed the jump, knocking Black into an unrunnable position. For the next ten minutes Blue and Red waived their turns while Black and Yellow played a two-ball version of golf croquet to see who could make the first hoop, Black eventually succeeding in doing so. Thereafter the game lost what little sparkle it might ever have had and eventually ended on time with Jack Osborn six points ahead.

As the last match to finish it was not of real importance, because the other two singles had both gone the way of the President's team, John McCullough having a very close win of only +4 against Kiley Jones, while Martin Murray demonstrated that American rules held no fears for him, making two perfect breaks to beat Ray Bell by +24, normally the maximum score under US rules.

So the President's team emerged winners by 5 games to 4, and will hold the trophy presented by our President for competition between the two countries in conjunction with the Solomon Trophy until next year's competition in the United States.

### RESULTS

(USCA Rules: President's team names first)

#### Singles

J.R. McCullough bt K. Jones +4; B.G. Neal lost to R. Kroeger -14; M. Murray bt R. Bell +24; D. Prentis bt J.C. Osborn +16; J. Solomon lost to J.R. Osborn -6(T); J. Rose lost to T. Arkley -14.

#### Doubles

J.R. McCullough & J. Rose bt K. Jones & R. Bell +13; B.G. Neal & J. Solomon bt J.C. Osborn & T. Arkley +7; D. Prentis & M. Murray lost to J.R. Osborn & R. Kroeger -19.

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## Schools

### Schools Championship

(cont'd from Page 5)

Jarvis (16) bt Miss C. Thatcher (16) +2(T); N. Ford (18) bt Miss H. Harwood (16) +9(T).

**Result**  
Bishop Vesey's 3, Nailsea 0.

Queen Elizabeth's v. Worth  
(Queen Elizabeth's names first)  
M. Saurin (-1) lost to J. Maxwell-Scott (14) -11; A. Saurin (6) bt D. Langford (15) +17; D. McCormick (16) bt M. Slocock (15) +21.

**Result**  
Queen Elizabeth's 2, Worth 1.

**2nd Round**  
Bishop Vesey's v. Worth  
(Bishop Vesey's names first)  
G. Pearson bt J. Maxwell-Scott (10) +23; A. Jarvis bt D. Langford +17; N. Ford bt M. Slocock +18.

**Result**  
Bishop Vesey's 3, Worth 0.

Queen Elizabeth's v. Nailsea  
(Queen Elizabeth's names first)  
M. Saurin bt A. Barradell +2; A. Saurin bt Miss C. Thatcher +9; D. McCormick lost to Miss H. Harwood -9.

**Result**  
Queen Elizabeth's 2, Nailsea 1.

**3rd Round**  
Bishop Vesey's v. Queen Elizabeth's  
(Bishop Vesey's names first)  
G. Pearson (11) bt M. Saurin +14; A. Jarvis (13) lost to A. Saurin -12; N. Ford (14) bt D. McCormick +7.

**Result**  
Bishop Vesey's 2, Queen Elizabeth's 1.

Nailsea v. Worth  
(Nailsea names first)  
A. Barradell bt J. Maxwell-Scott +14; Miss C. Thatcher lost to D. Langford -12; Miss H. Harwood bt M. Slocock +2(T).

**Result**  
Nailsea 2, Worth 1.

### A failed peel?

By Ian Vincent

Readers are no doubt weary of reports of failed peels in these columns, but may be interested in an unusual attempt during the final of the Opens...

As Mulliner started his first break against Aspinall, six players (Judy and Tom Anderson, Ken Cotterell, Karen Noble, Hilary Smith and Ian Vincent) walked from Hurlingham across the river to the tower on the South-East corner of Putney bridge. As a change from clanging first hoop, they had met to attempt a quarter peel of Plain Bob Minor on the back six of the 12 cwt ring of eight, which had recently been rehung after the disastrous fire there a few years ago. The excuse was provided by the wedding of Sue Densem and Nick Hyne, members of the Nottingham Club, due to take place the following weekend near Bowdon, but at a church without bells.

Fortunately, the wind was in the wrong direction for the ringing to be audible on the lawns, as there were several false starts and the striking left something to be desired. The composition also lacked roll-ups (which are regarded as desirable in ringing, unlike croquet!), having been chosen for simplicity. We eventually got going,



Sue Densem and Nick Hyne were married at Hale on Saturday, 30th July. Congratulations, and best wishes for the future!

however, and made a creditable attempt, given that several of the band had not rung for some years and the lack of an experienced conductor. The 'break' crumbled after about forty minutes: say the equivalent of failing penult with the peelee in front of rover (though a championship referee would have detected an irregularity at the end of the first 540 of the projected 1260 changes).

Although unsuccessful on this occasion, we are determined to have another try. The birthday of Edward Duffield, who achieved



high distinction both as a ringer and player, later this year might be a suitable opportunity. I would be very glad to hear from any other players who ring: the ultimate goal of a peel of triples by a band of triple peelers looks some years off (indeed, I'm not sure whether it would be easier to teach ringers to play croquet, or players to ring, at the required standard!), but with a few additions to the band we could try on higher numbers.



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## Hurlingham: 16-23 July THE CARLSBERG OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS

Report by Colin Irwin

### Saturday

A bright, sunny morning. The Hurlingham lawns looked in great condition and with 26 pairs entered in the doubles and 56 players in the singles we looked set for a busy week. Having inveigled me into writing the report the Manager despatched me to lawn 5, well away from the action. Bob Kroeger of the US and I then engaged in an 8-hour battle with David Foulser and Paul Smith which further curtailed my reporting activities, and which we ultimately lost.

On the next lawn Gunasekera and Palmer were having a harder time than they might have expected against Jones and Osborn of the US, eventually winning 2-1. Down on the front lawns John Davis' game plan of getting to 4-back and leaving the rest to Mark Saurin seems to have worked against Guest and Walters. Aldridge and Lewis beat Colin and Robert Prichard, which qualified them to play the favourites Aspinall and Mulliner, who had just disposed of Stevens and Ransome. This second round match was played on lawn 6 and took rather less time than the last game of the lawn 5 epic, the favourites winning comfortably.

Back on the front lawns Carlisle and Clarke seem to have struggled a bit before putting out the US pair of Arkley and Bell. The surprise of the day was the early departure of Openshaw and Heap to Fulford and Suter out at Surbiton, where Hope and Murray clearly found the new lawns to their liking. Hope just missing a triple in the first by the fairly novel method of failing to peg out the striker's ball, and Murray making the triple in the second against Bell and Rose. The first session was completed with a win in two for Maugham and Reeve over Williams and Cornelius.

The late entertainment was provided by Aiton and William Prichard having to fight back from one down to Susan and David Wiggins, to end the day at one all.

### Sunday

The early morning was wet and miserable, as was the early play. However by 11.30 everything had brightened up. On lawn 1 Clarke hit the maximum length shot to steal the first game from Foulser and Smith, and he and Carlisle then took the second quickly. Fulford and Suter beat Hope and Murray in two, with a nice delayed triple from Fulford in the second. Aiton and Prichard were in trouble in the

third game against the Wiggins partnership, and might well have lost had Susan been able to make a long and angled penult with David for peg. Something of a surprise was the fall of Cordingley and McCullough to Bond and Sykes.

Meanwhile some early singles had started. John Osborn scraped home in the first against Bernard Neal, +2, but then showed what the US players can do with a +25TP in the second. Bob Kroeger was beginning to relax and came close to beating Eric Solomon.



Steve Mulliner receives the Opens Trophy from Mike Macdonald, Carlsberg's Managing Director.

In the second session Aspinall and Mulliner met little resistance from Bob Smith and Stephen Wright, Nigel getting a textbook TP in the first game. Clarke and Carlisle had a comfortable win over Bond and Sykes and these two pairs were looking a good bet for the final.

After a shaky start Aiton and Prichard beat Saurin and Davis, and Maugham and Reeve having returned victorious from Surbiton had time to go one up against Fulford and Suter.

In another early singles Debbie Cornelius, aided by her fan club, excelled herself to beat Steve Lewis in straight games. In a close first game Debbie hit in remorselessly, and in the second she played very steadily, while Steve's usually good shooting let him down.

### Monday

The 'official' start of the singles. Mulliner quickly got a shock, losing the first to Gunasekera, but recovered to take the second +23TP. However in the third he was in trouble again and only won after Dayal jawssed his rover peel and

failed to jump over it. Stephen had never won the Opens and we were wondering if he was too keen to win this year. Openshaw was also getting a shock on lawn 5, where Mike Stevens had two good chances to win the first game. He was unable to capitalise on these chances, and David put in another of his famous last turns to come back from the dead. In the second David went to 4-back on the third turn and made the triple in the fifth.

Simon Williams and Keith Aiton both started strongly with two triples each, and Chris Clarke showed that his temperament is improving by coming back from -26 in the first to beat Robert Fulford. The best game of the day was the first between John Walters and James Carlisle. With John's

Aiton on Aspinall threatened to liven up the first game but Mulliner is possibly the best exponent of the three ball end game currently playing and he took the game +10. The second game was another fairly routine +14TP to the favourites. Fresh from this victory Aspinall quickly saw off Vincent with two triples. Aiton nearly lost to Robert Prichard, only surviving because Robert was hampered after 3-back with one peel of his double completed and playing very solidly. McCullough lost to Guest and David Maugham beat Eric Solomon, two upsets, but the other second round games provided no surprises.

In the third round Aspinall easily beat Ransom, Aiton easily beat Kylie Jones, Foulser convincingly beat Bond and Hope beat Walters. Another seed fell when Cordingley lost to Reeve and Clarke had more trouble than he would have wished with Guest, the match going to three games before Clarke came through.

### Wednesday

Having been relegated to the Plate, I was sent to Surbiton where I was soundly beaten by Saurin, who refused to let a rather roly lawn affect his shooting and hit everything in sight. Half way back to Hurlingham I couldn't find my wallet so I drove back to Surbiton and finally found it. The result of this tour was that I missed a lot of the day's play. However, it appears that Mulliner had beaten Maugham without undue difficulty, William Prichard had achieved the interesting score of +26TP, -26, +17TP against Murray and Clarke had beaten Hope for a place in the quarter final against Aspinall or Reeve. In the doubles semi-final Carlisle and Clarke beat Maugham and Reeve to go into the final against Aspinall and Mulliner.

### Thursday

The last two singles semi-finalists were decided. The first game in the Aspinall v Reeve match started off a bit scrappy but eventually Nigel got control to win +23. The second was much closer, with Nigel pegging out Duncan when Duncan's other ball was on 4-back and Nigel was well behind, on two or thereabouts. Duncan eventually got to rover, but was hampered after the hoop. The gallery thought he should run back through the hoop to near the peg, leaving Nigel a half court shot with the peg ball, but Duncan opted for a side boundary, from where he missed his shots at the peg and Nigel won.

Mulliner's first game against W. Prichard was an in and out affair with several uncharacteristic errors from both players. In one notable

sequence Stephen wanted to pick up a ball near the N boundary a couple of yards out of second corner, so he ran two and shot at it. He missed this four yarder leaving William a short roquet. William was for two and had a ball waiting there and a ball at three. For some reason he rolled over to three to go to the ball there first. He rolled too far and missed the five yard return roquet only to roquet the ball he had left at two into a good hoop approach position! William won by 15. The second and third saw Stephen move into top gear, almost running after the balls. This is a sure sign that Stephen really feels on top of his game and he won both by 26TP.

David Foulser's good run came to an end against Keith Aiton -26, -10TP. The contest for the peeling prize was now hotting up with Aiton on 7, and Aspinall and Mulliner on 5 each.

### Friday

In the singles semi-final against Clarke, Aspinall was having no nonsense and won with a seventh turn TP in the first and a ninth turn TP in the second. Chris never took croquet.

Against Mulliner in the other semi-final Aiton hit the tice and went to 4-back. Mulliner hit the lift and laid up with black for two having been unable to establish a break. Aiton hit in with the backward ball, but missed a short roquet after two, joining up with black in the A-baulk. Mulliner made the TPO, but not without some excitement at rover when he only just peeled yellow and then had to jump over it, going to the boundary, make a seven yard roquet, cannon yellow clear of the hoop and peg it out from nine yards. Aiton's other ball was left near the middle and Stephen put blue half way down the west boundary and black in corner four. Keith, for three remember, took the contact from black and split it to south of three, rolling to blue, hoping to be able to get blue to four and position at three to give the break or at least the squeeze. He was unlucky to go off by only six inches or so, leaving Stephen the line rush to one, from where he finished in the next turn. This was the game where Stephen really began to see the championship within reach, as evidenced by the first three waves of the triumphant fist.

In the second game Keith hit the tice on the third turn and laid up. Stephen hit in on partner between one and two (fist) and began his break. For a while it looked as if he would make a 1-back leave, but he opted to go for a tight leave at 4-back. Keith hit the lift and got

good control, but declined the TPO. An unfortunate collision with the peg prevented him getting a 1-back pioneer after putting an early ball to 2-back so he made a 1-back leave. Stephen missed the shot, but a poor approach to one and a faulted hoop shot lost Keith the innings and Stephen made the triple to win.



Bryan Sykes lacquers his mallet in readiness for the fray, but for him the shine had gone after the first round.

The doubles final in the afternoon was an unspectacular affair. Carlisle and Clarke played well, but couldn't cope with the combined power of Aspinall and Mulliner both playing well.

### Saturday

In the singles final Nigel's previously good shooting deserted him. In the first game Stephen failed at 3-back leaving a very short lift shot, but Nigel missed. +26 to Stephen. In the second game Stephen hit the tice and developed a break. He made the new standard leave and Nigel missed the lift. Stephen tried a delayed triple, but failed the peel before six and then had a poor approach to 1-back which he failed on Nigel's ball. This gave the spectators some hope of a recovery from Nigel, as he had a laid down break taking croquet from a ball at two with a ball at one and a ball at three. Also Stephen had the impossible clips, 1-back and 4-back. Unfortunately Nigel's approach to one was poor and he failed the hoop. Stephen hit in and tried to set up the STP by rushing partner from pivot to peeling position. This was not successful, so he made the late peel and laid up for penult and peg. Nigel missed the lift and Stephen finished to win the Open Championship for the first time.

All this was over before lunch, but fortunately the Plate was still in progress, as was an unofficial third place play off, which was not without some needle as it was between Aiton and one of his junior squad, Clarke. For the record, Aiton won.

The Plate final was between Fulford and Hilditch. Richard had played well throughout the Plate and seemed to be regaining some of his old form, but not enough to beat Robert.

So, an early finish to a good week of croquet. Thanks are due to Tim Haste for his excellent management, to Carlsberg for their sponsorship and particularly their genuine interest in the game, and to Hurlingham for the use of their facilities. Finally, a special thank you from those of us who played at Surbiton to the members there who came along bearing sandwiches, cakes, biscuits etc. and stayed for hours making us tea and coffee.

### RESULTS

#### The Carlsberg British Open Croquet Championships

##### Singles Championship (\* denotes seeded player)

**1st Round**  
S. Williams bt M. Suter +12TP, +23TP; \*S.N. Mulliner bt D. Gunasekera -7, +23TP, +3; E.W. Solomon bt R. Kroeger +13, -22, +6; M. Murray bt D. Cairns +26TP, +26TP; M.R. French bt J.P. Dawson -7, +21TP, +13; \*WdeB. Prichard bt P.L. Smith -7, +7, +14; D.R. Foulser bt C.H.L. Prichard +15, +26TP; \*D.K. Openshaw bt M.J. Stevens +3, +26TP; I.D. Bond bt A.K. Gregory +12, -8, +15; Mrs S. Wiggins bt G.W. Noble +4, -12, +16; K.C.T. Jones bt J. Rose +17, +15; \*K.M.H. Aiton bt S.J.H. Wright +16TP, +26TP; J.R. McCullough bt \*E. Bell +17, +3TP; J.E. Guest bt D.G. Palmer +4, +17; C.D. Clarke bt R.I. Fulford -26, +17, +10; A.B. Hope bt W.O. Aldridge +4, +15; \*C.J. Irwin bt T. Arkley +22, +26; J.O. Walters bt J.W.H. Carlisle +2TP, -12, +11; Miss D.A. Cornelius bt S.E. Lewis +4, +17; D.C. Reeve bt W.E. Lamb +16, +5; \*P. Cordingley bt B.C. Sykes +5, +17; I.G. Vincent bt E.J. Davis +4, +12; \*G.N. Aspinall bt R. Bell +25, +17; B.G. Neal bt J.C. Osborn +2, +25TP.

##### 2nd Round

Mulliner bt Williams +26TP, +3; D.B. Maugham bt E.W. Solomon -17, +2, +20; Murray bt French +4, -26, +4TP; W. Prichard bt J.R. Hilditch +24TP, +5; Foulser bt Openshaw +2, +17; Bond bt R.J. Smith +2, +9; Jones bt Mrs Wiggins +6, +8; Aiton bt R.D.C. Prichard +26TP, -17, +5TP; Guest bt McCullough +23, +25; Clarke bt M.A. Saurin +15, +1; Hope bt Irwin +2, +6; Walters bt M.E.W. Heap +24, +25; Reeve bt Miss Cornelius +22, +5; Cordingley bt D.C.D. Wiggins +17, +18; Aspinall bt Vincent +26TP, -5, +16TP; R.W. Ransom bt Osborn +11, +25.

##### 3rd Round

Mulliner bt Maugham +26TP, +26TP; W. Prichard bt Murray +26, -26, +17TP; Foulser bt Bond +26, +20TP; Aiton bt Jones +26, +22TP; Clarke bt Guest +21, -4, +17; Hope bt Walters +26, +6; Reeve bt Cordingley +23, +26; Aspinall bt Ransom +23TP, +25TP.

### 4th Round

Mulliner bt W. Prichard -15, +26TP, +26TP; Aiton bt Foulser +26, +20TP; Clarke bt Hope +26, +22TP; Aspinall bt Reeve +23, +1.

### Semi-Finals

Mulliner bt Aiton +11TP, +20TP; Aspinall bt Clarke +26TP, +26TP.

### Final

Mulliner bt Aspinall +26, +26.

### Doubles Championship

#### 1st Round

D. Gunasekera & D.G. Palmer bt K.C.T. Jones & J.C. Osborn -8, +3, +16; E.J. Davis & M.A. Saurin bt J.E. Guest & J.O. Walters +14, +16; W.O. Aldridge & S.E. Lewis bt C.H.L. & R.D.C. Prichard +12, +20; \*G.N. Aspinall & S.N. Mulliner bt M.J. Stevens & R.W. Ransom +16, +17; D.R. Foulser & P.L. Smith bt C.J. Irwin & R. Kroeger +21, -5, +3; J.W.H. Carlisle & C.D. Clarke bt T. Arkley & R. Bell +10, -9, +4; R.I. Fulford & M. Suter bt \*D.K. Openshaw & M.E.W. Heap +12, +25; A.B. Hope & M. Murray bt E. Bell & J. Rose +20, +25TP; D.B. Maugham & D. Reeve bt Miss D.A. Cornelius & S. Williams -5, +22, +13.

#### 2nd Round

Davis & Saurin bt Gunasekera & Palmer +10, +17; \*K.M.H. Aiton & W. de B. Prichard bt D.C.D. & Mrs S. Wiggins -4, +12, +4; Aspinall & Mulliner bt Aldridge & Lewis +26, +15; R.J. Smith & S.J.H. Wright bt B.G. Neal & E.W. Solomon +21, +17; Carlisle & Clarke bt Foulser & Smith +3, +14; I.D. Bond & B.C. Sykes bt \*J.R. McCullough & P. Cordingley -9, +5, +12; Fulford & Suter bt Hope & Murray +13, +7TP; Maugham & Reeve bt G.W. Noble & I.G. Vincent -23, +7, +11.

#### 3rd Round

Aiton & W. Prichard bt Davis & Saurin +22, +16TP; Aspinall & Mulliner bt Smith & Wright +26TP, +24; Carlisle & Clarke bt Bond & Sykes +26, +17; Maugham & Reeve bt Fulford & Suter +5, -9, +13OTP.

### Semi-Finals

Aspinall & Mulliner bt Aiton & W. Prichard +10OTP, +14TP; Carlisle & Clarke bt Maugham & Reeve +5, +18.

### Final

Aspinall & Mulliner bt Carlisle & Clarke +16, +5.

(Note: OTP = Losing TPO)

### Association Plate

#### DRAW

### Semi-Finals

Hilditch bt Fulford +16; Lamb bt Williams +16.

### Final

Hilditch bt Lamb +17.

### PROCESS

#### Semi-Finals

Gunasekera bt Heap +25; Fulford bt Noble +25TP.

### Final

Fulford bt Gunasekera +26TP.

### PLAY-OFF

Fulford bt Hilditch.

## Handicaps and Grading Systems

Dear Sir,  
In your May issue John Walters gave us a useful contribution to the discussion on ranking of players. He came to the (reluctant) conclusion with which many will agree that a system can be no more than a reflection of a player's success in winning games.

May I make a comment concerning handicap play. I submit that handicaps should be such that a player has a 50% chance of winning a Handicap game. They have therefore nothing to do with prowess - success rate or indeed elegance - in Advanced play. Indeed, the tactics and pressures of the two variants have almost as many differences as similarities.

Let me illustrate. The ability to assess rapidly a player's strengths and weaknesses is much more critical when giving bisques to a player one hasn't met before than when confronting, say, No. 2 in the Mulliner Ratings, who can safely be assumed to be an excellent all-round player. Leaves at the end of a break when there are a few bisques standing are not so stereotyped as in advanced play, having to be tailored to both opponent and situation. But probably most important, the temperament which permits one to win the second and third games of a best of three having first watched philosophically as a sextuple was exquisitely

executed is not necessarily the same as that which is required after the over-bisqued player has finally broken down at rover and peg! I am not suggesting that one type of play is easier or better than the other, just that they require different skills.

Consequently, I propose that as in golf, handicaps should be adjusted as a matter of course according to success rate in relevant games. A method of assessing the significance of a game analogous to that outlined by John could be devised. Such a system would remove the ludicrous situation of last year when a player won all his handicap games in the season and was rewarded with an increase because of lack of success in the Opens!

In the rare cases when a player has recently played insufficient handicap games to allow a reasonable estimate to be made, his position in the Advanced Grading could be invoked. Perhaps the top 10 players could be set at say -2, the next 20 at -1½, etc. Using both Grades and handicaps, our statisticians might even be able to set the levels so that the current +1 and -2 players could have a valid handicap game!

K. Cotterell,  
Phyllis Court CC.



Dear Sir,  
Referring to Issue 198 and Tim Harrison's letter (which like the grading system, relies more on assertion than substance) I would usually deal with relevant points one by one, but since however there are none, I must adopt a different approach.

Tim says we should not criticise the CGS for something it does not attempt to do; my suspicions are aroused by his prefacing of this remark by a statement which amounts to an admission that the CGS does not attempt to be a grading system! Tim attempts to discredit my article by the rather underhand ploy of restating statistics which I quoted, this time in a different sense - appearing to contradict me; in fact both are

absolutely correct. This latter point and his defence of the validity of the CGS's inferences, are an attempt to undermine my argument that the evidence for accepting the lists produced by CGS is extremely flimsy. A more candid grading officer might admit that his own tests had demonstrated that the grades produced are subject to an error of at least 10 points, which is sufficient to make the difference between being ranked 26th or 56th!

As Tim rightly says (well, he had to say something rightly in a 500 word letter) 'with its increasing use in cut-offs, it is vital that players have confidence in it (the grading system)'; there can be no confidence in this sham, and I urge players to reject it before they have no choice.

John Walters,  
Ipswich.

Dear Sir,

Like many of the regular entrants of Advanced Play tournaments, I welcome the efforts being made by the CA to refine the Computer Grading System.

No system can ever be 'perfect' since form varies considerably, and there is some element of chance in every game. However, the current system does give a reasonable reflection of the relative effectiveness of players. The proposals of Tim Harrison (Issue 198) seem capable of improving the system further.

The existence of improved, publicised gradings offers an opportunity to address an even more contentious evergreen issue. Handicaps of the 'Top 100' are always problematic, for a number of reasons. Many of these players seldom compete in handicap tournaments yet require valid handicaps for the occasions when they do.

The CA Handicap Coordination Committee has attempted in previous years to adjust these handicaps at the end of year, on a subjective basis. This was not always well received. There has also been confusion over whether handicaps should be changed in the light of advanced play performance. At present, there is a 'one man war' on handicaps that are too low, being waged by one ubiquitous handicapper. He is to be commended for his efforts to reduce the number of under-handicapped players, but there are still many 'minus' players who have eluded his gaze.

Handicaps equate to status in the A Class, as much as at other levels. Everyone wants to become a scratch, then a minus player. Minus players suffering a loss of form seldom volunteer to be increased over the 'threshold'.

It is still a common practice to



Dear Sir,

I note from Tim Harrison's informative article in the July edition that with the current grading system, only half the time will a player's 'true' grade lie within 2.6 points of the estimated figure and, if the player is improving, the estimate will be biased on the low side.

In the light of this, I am disturbed by the way in which grades are used to limit entries to tournaments, including major events such

select entries to A Class events on handicap. This is frequently unfair on improving players, whose handicap lags behind their ability as reflected in their ranking.

I would like to propose a solution. At the end of each season, the End-of-Year Rankings should be used to allocate handicaps to the 'Top 100', on an objective and defensible basis. For example, handicaps could be set thus:

National Ranking	Handicap
1-8	-2
9-18	-1½
19-30	-1
31-45	-½
46-60	0
61-80	½
81-100	1

- or some such. I would not propose preventing later changes to players' handicaps, in the light of their good (or bad) performance in the following season. Some flexibility in the boundary points would be necessary, as there are often a number of players 'tying' on the same grading.

No doubt some of the players whose handicaps were increased under such a system would complain, but at least it would be evident to all that the increase was warranted. The improvers who are unable to play in many handicap events would perhaps see more justice in their handicaps, and would not be unfairly debarred from playing in Advanced Play events.

I would welcome comments on this suggestion, but do commend it to the CA as a way of improving the accuracy and objectivity of handicap changes for the top players.

Martin French,  
Ipswich.

as the Open and regional Championships. While I have no wish to go back to the use of handicaps for this purpose, it seems unreasonable that an insignificant one or two points difference in grade should make the difference between an entry being accepted or not.

There might be less objection to the use of grades for this purpose if the procedure were adopted of balloting those within, say, 5 points of the notional cut-off point, as used to be done for those with equal handicap. This, at least, would more openly reflect the inherent inaccuracies in ranking players and may serve to reduce the disturbing symptoms of 'grade paranoia' that have recently been observed.

Ian Vincent,  
Nottingham.

## THE INTER-COUNTIES

Dear Sir,

I enjoyed Martin Murray's report of the Inter-Counties in Issue 198, and as captain of the Eastern Counties side, would like to respond to a suggestion made in the article. This pointed to our recent successes, and suggested that single-county sides might be better. The Eastern Counties team comprises Suffolk, Norfolk, and either Cambridgeshire or Essex.

It is true that in the last few years we have had a good run of success in the championship. However, we have been far from over-whelming in the event. Most years we have suffered the loss of one or more matches, and several matches that we won 3:0 or 2:1 could easily have gone 1:2 against us. There have had to be play-offs and one-ball games to decide the winner on occasions.

This is, however, beside the point! If, for example, Surrey won five years in succession, would it be suggested that Surrey be subdivided? I think not, and yet many of the Home Counties teams can draw on a far larger pool of players than we can in the Far East! Suffolk has only one established club where Advanced Play croquet is common (this has under 30 members), Norfolk similarly has only one large club, Cambridge none and Essex one. (Please note that no disrespect is intended to the many

smaller or more-recently formed clubs in these counties, who have yet to supply us with team members).



Martin French receives the Inter Counties Trophy from Peter Bennett, Managing Director of Green Brothers.

It is a tribute to the individuals concerned, their clubs and the earlier long-running captaincy of Sarah Hampson that such a small pool of players can compete on equal terms with those more populous counties towards London and the West. Many of these single counties can draw their teams from several clubs, each having many lawns and large numbers of members.

By the way, the caption of the photographs is a little misleading - we did not receive a garden seat as a prize. Several of the team have

now wanted to know where I have hidden it, and when are they going to get their turn to sit on it!

Martin French,  
Ipswich.

Dear Sir,

I have watched the above event for many years and feel I am correct in saying that years ago each county used to have its name displayed on a notice on each lawn on which they were playing.

It is very confusing for spectators not to know who the players are, or which counties are being watched. A colour button for each county would help.

Once upon a time I knew many of the players, but as the years roll on the new players are unknown to me. This goes for many of the spectators and I am sure this is why spectator attendance is so poor.

This year's event, held at Southwick at the end of May when the weather for just two days was real summer, had only 2 or 3 spectators other than players, wives or sweethearts.

It's such a pity, for to see all the players on the 9 lawns at one time is a grand sight.

Edith Tucker,  
Southwick CC.

## ONE-DAY TOURNAMENTS

Dear Sir,

As a recent convert to this game from the garden version, I would like to suggest an addition to the manner of play which would attract a much wider potential number of players, if this is indeed what the sport wants.

In the past, it is evident croquet was very much a game chiefly played by those with plenty of time on their hands. Consequently, the preponderance of 'weeks' and relatively leisurely weekends. I would not want for one moment to suggest that these traditions should ever be changed, since there is obviously still a market for these events.

However, a large proportion of what might be the sport's market are now people, like myself, who do not have a lot of time to spare from job or business, family, children, home and garden. To achieve a weekend away takes some organising and, if the event starts on a Friday, either a day's leave, or for those of us who are self-employed, a day's loss of income. Not always easy to justify!

We have been trying to whip up interest in forming a Club in this

area based on a very successful Garden Croquet League but many of those potential players have expressed their unwillingness to commit themselves to a sport that can take up quite so much time.

Can I suggest that there be introduced an additional tier of events between internal Club games and the official CA tournaments. These would cater primarily for those who can justify one day of a weekend (even perhaps every weekend) on sporting activity but cannot take the whole two days (or more) without seriously affecting other responsibilities and their family's activities.

My proposal is that Clubs with more than one lawn might run 'Open Days' on Saturdays and/or Sundays which would be advertised to neighbouring clubs and through 'Croquet'. These would be open to all players (or perhaps Associates only?) on payment of a suitable extortionate sum to the organising club. Four entries would be taken per lawn so that each person would expect to have at least three games during a day, more being possible if there was

more than one lawn in use. The clubs would receive the entry fees and any catering/bar profits generated.

These events would give the possibility of gaining experience to those who cannot afford more than one day out of a weekend. This would in turn extend the attraction of the sport to a whole range of people who would not consider playing seriously under the present conditions.

Alex W. Jardine,  
Sevenoaks.

## Calling All Garden Croquet Players

Dear Sir,

A list of Garden Croquet players will be included in Townsend Croquet's new Croquet Almanack.

Many Garden Croquet players would like to meet and play against other Garden Croquet players, but they don't know any who live near them. The Register of Garden Croquet players will list the Garden players by area, so Garden players can easily find others living nearby. Entry to the Register is free.

If you know of any Garden Cro-

## A question of timing

Dear Sir,

Does the Croquet Association realise when the season starts for the majority of players?

On the one hand the first round of the Longman Cup starts in April before Council-owned grounds are open for play.

On the other hand tucked away in the corner of page 11 of May 'Croquet' we have the statement that handicaps may be raised to 20 if Council approves and club secretaries will be informed immediately.

Croquet leagues have started their matches by now (early June) and no official information has arrived.

Please could we have the Longman Cup starting in May and any changes to rules, handicaps etc. decided well in advance.

Roger Jackman,  
High Wycombe CC.

## A question of accuracy

Dear Sir,

Am I getting old? Could it be that my memory, like my play, is becoming erratic? Or is it that the 'Daily Telegraph' is not the only publication to be carrying erroneous croquet news?

In the July edition of the Gazette, I noticed that Peter Danks was taking the credit for that most excellent report of the Cheltenham handicap weekend - which I'm sure seemed most familiar! Meanwhile, our most esteemed new Chairman was exceeding his authority as usual, this time by rewriting history on the subject of the Inter-Counties! Even I draw the line with artistic licence at swapping the order of matches, so that he may claim Walters/Harrison dropped an important match to Gloucester near the final stage, when in fact this was a much earlier round - Walters/Harrison in fact winning the genuinely sweaty game against Middlesex on the penultimate day! John Walters,  
Ipswich.

quet player who would like to be included in the Register, they should write to Townsend Croquet Limited, Claire Road, Kirby Cross, Frinton-on-Sea, Essex CO13 0LX. They should include their name, address and whether or not they have their own Croquet court. Alternatively, Townsend Croquet can provide reply paid cards that the Garden player can fill in.

Charles Townsend,  
Frinton-on-Sea.

## Tournaments

### Ramsgate: 3-5 June First Tournament at Ramsgate

Report by Derek Caporn

There were 14 competitors who thoroughly enjoyed this handicap weekend. It began with a visit from the Mayor and Mayoress, who welcomed us, and the press who photographed us; and ended when the Director of Leisure gave away the prizes, a splendid shield for the winner of the handicap singles presented by Ramsgate Trophies and 'Donald Duck' on skis on a handsome wooden block for the Swiss, donated by Dennis Shaw.

Robert and Susan Wiggins entertained us with some class croquet - both claiming not to have played this year - but they seemed to resume where they left off last year! The remainder of us played like the curate's egg - good in parts - except for Dennis Shaw who was in great form, defeating Robert Wiggins in the final - poor 'Bobbie' was overwhelmed by the 3 bisques he had to give. Dennis having asked me to assist as handicapper found his reward in losing a half bisque - that will teach him!

Dennis and Eileen have put the club firmly on its feet, the members have responded to their leadership and all have achieved wonders in only their second year at the venue on the Royal Esplanade where croquet can be easily seen by passers by. Indeed, the roof of the pavilion provides a grandstand for watching the game which is so important for spreading the gospel of croquet. It must be seen and not played behind high fences or hedges. The stone pavilion had not been used for nearly 50 years and was a 'slum' but the club members have cleaned it up, decorated it, installed the essential loos, hot water etc. Soon they hope to take over the other half and then with mop, bucket scrubbing brush and paint they will have a fine 'Grecian temple' for their clubhouse. The 4 lawns had been a pitch and putt course which the council had

### Harrow: 18-19 June

Report by the other 'Fireman'

Richard Hilditch once again was manager, caterer, ROT and just for good measure winner of this tournament, completing the only triple peel. Triple attempts were numerous as were the failures. The unfortunately low entry of 10 did not appear to matter as there was plenty of play for all. Seven rounds would have been completed but for the travelling requirements of a few players.

David Ruscombe-King provided

'levelled' at considerable expense. Obviously they were not like a billiard table in their second year and they had to be read in parts like a golf green but this added to the fun as some competitors managed to make roquets on wired balls!

The catering was done by Mrs Barbara Munro and Mrs Margaret Flelo and other lady helpers and was first class. The hospitality was good. The visitors stayed at the Royal Temple Yacht Club which has an unrivalled view of the harbour from which we watched 'Sally' arrive and depart all for \$6 a night! What more could we want, except



"A man with time on his hands: Mike Wilkins waits for the bisques to go down at Bowdon."

for fine weather which we did not get.

Dennis also managed the event with his usual aplomb and succeeded in rushing his ball into the ex-BT plastic pipes, which he used as ball barriers between the lawns - very ingenious! With difficulty the ball was recovered!

I thoroughly recommend a visit. I shall certainly return next year.

### entertainment with his attempts at

quins, quads etc. One player agreed to play a late game on the Sunday after being convinced that if he lost the handicap, 'Dastardly Sir Richard' would not 'have' him!

Next year there will be no restriction on handicap (0-6½) which unfortunately deprived us of pitting our skills against Keith Aiton who would, I am informed, have been available. So for a very enjoyable week-end make a note in your diary for the Harrow Tournament.

### Hunstanton: 17-19 June

Report by R.A. Gosden

The calumny that an icy East wind always blows across the croquet lawns at Hunstanton was laid to rest at this year's 'Over-50s' tournament. The overcast conditions of Friday were replaced on Saturday and Sunday by blue skies and warm sunshine.

A total of 24 'mature-in-years' players with handicaps ranging from 1 to 20 assembled for what was intended to be a leisurely, sedate event in the absence of 'young tigers'. The 'old tigers', however, soon demonstrated that they could play quality croquet with determination and humour. The sunshine brought out one pair of shorts, and a quick wriggle-change into skirt and shedding of trousers in a shelter, which caused

at least one missed roquet.

A salver in memory of Jane Neville Rolfe, who had been the Club Secretary for many years and a familiar figure on the tournament circuit, was donated by the Club for this annual event.

The first winner of the 'Jane Neville Rolfe Trophy' is John Reeve, a Hunstanton member, who cruised steadily through his six games without loss. The runner-up was Geoffrey Yonge, a Caterham member, who lost only one game to the winner. They both received some well-merited attention from the handicapper.

The friendly atmosphere of this tournament and the Club catering were much appreciated, and contributed greatly to the general enjoyment.

#### RESULTS

**Ramsgate: 3-5 June**  
Handicap Knockout (14 entries)  
Winner: D.W. Shaw (3)  
Runner-Up: Dr W.R.D. Wiggins (0)  
Winner of Swiss: R. Best (12)

**Compton: 10-12 June**  
Handicap Knockout (16 entries)  
Winner: J. Ruddock (5)  
Runner-Up: D.W. Shaw (2½)  
Winner of Swiss: C.B. Sanford (4)

**Surbiton: 11-12 June**  
Swiss (7 games; Advanced Play) (24 entries)  
Winner: S.N. Mulliner (6 wins)  
Runner-Up: R.J. Hilditch (6 wins)

**Bowdon: 11-12 June**  
Knockout; Advanced Play (16 entries)  
Winner: S.E. Lewis  
Runner-Up: D.B. Maugham  
Winner of Swiss: M.J. Wilkins

**Hunstanton: 17-19 June**  
Handicap Swiss (6 games) (24 entries)  
Winner: J.E. Reeve (4)  
Runner-Up: Dr G. Yonge (13)

**Harrow Oak: 18-19 June**  
Swiss (7 games; Advanced Play) (10 entries)  
Winner: R.J. Hilditch (7 wins)  
Runner-Up: D.C.D. Wiggins (6 wins)

away from the game for some time and now playing off 5, showed that he will soon be back in the A class by despatching Walter Philp (7), Bevis Sanford (4) and Eric Salmon (9) in the semi-final to meet last year's winner (and our tireless manager) Dennis Shaw, who had beaten Mrs Jefferson (18), Ron Selmes (7) and Miss Kendall (7½) in the semi-final. The final on Sunday morning was a very quick affair finishing well before lunch with John winning +22, +21.

The Swiss event went its convoluted way with some interesting games and the eventual winner was Bevis Sanford, whose only loss during the weekend was to John Ruddock in the knockout event; otherwise, he beat them all (Mrs Grout, Mrs Hetherington, Selmes, Philp and Salmon) to record 5 wins. Since he had not entered Ramsgate's June tournament, the champagne was safe for another year.

At the prize-giving the manager apologised for the lack of sun, but since he had organised everything else so well we all forgave him. One last point: since Dennis was also the tournament handicapper, he took his revenge on John, who is now a 4!

## Short Croquet

### Ashby: 23 July THE SHORT CROQUET TEAM EVENT

Ashby through to third successive final

Report by Gary Norman

Excitement and tension were the order of the day at Ashby's new croquet lawns at Hood Park, as Ashby fought back from the brink of defeat to win through to their third successive Short Croquet Team Event final. They now have the distinction of being the only Club to appear in every final of this competition since its inauguration in 1986.

This semi-final was contested between teams from Loughborough, Norwich and Ashby. Loughborough started very well, losing only one of their first round games. After the first round the score was Loughborough 3, Ashby 2, Norwich 1. An even bigger gap had developed after the second round with Loughborough winning all of their games: Loughborough 7, Ashby 3, Norwich 2.

The match looked to be all over. Norwich were out of the running and with four games each to play in the final round Loughborough needed to win only one more game to go through. Indeed, if Ashby lost any of their remaining games then Loughborough would be victorious.

Gradually Ashby started to close the gap; first Graham Ensor winning, then Richard Wildblood, closely followed by Ken Hillier. Loughborough still needed just that one win - in a tight

dual on lawn three between two players as yet undefeated, John Read of Norwich won +3 against Loughborough's Alan Tunbridge. On the same lawn Gary Norman notched up Ashby's fourth win of the final round, Brian Melody's first defeat, Loughborough's third.

All attention then switched to lawn one where the last remaining game was reaching its climax. The match rested on the outcome of the struggle between Ted Riddel-Smith of Norwich and Paul Robinson of Loughborough. Just one more win needed for Loughborough to clinch a place in the final! The game situation was tense, Paul having pegged out one ball and Ted on peg and rover. Ashby and Loughborough players were anxious bystanders as Ted ran rover with black from four yards and then pegged out blue from an even greater distance. Ted's poor croquet stroke had left black a long way from the peg and his attempt at the peg from seven yards failed, going well past. It was now a two ball game, both for peg! Now Paul's chance - missed, finishing near the peg. Ted again, his last chance, - another seven yard shot - ROQUET! - peg out - 14-13 to Ted and loud applause from his Norwich team-mates. (Even louder from the Ashby team!).

In a dramatic comeback Ashby had levelled



Ashby's winning team (left to right): Gary Norman, Ken Hillier, Graham Ensor, and Richard Wildblood.

the match with Loughborough at 7 wins each, Norwich finishing with 4 wins. Reference to the rules of the competition led to a shoot-out at the peg (not many volunteers were forthcoming). Ashby's on-form Graham Ensor (played three, won three) was the choice for Ashby and Alan Tunbridge was to shoot for Loughborough.

In a nail-biting finale where it seemed the onlookers were more nervous than the participants, Graham snatched victory from the jaws of defeat with a tremendous display of accurate shooting, hitting the peg with his first three shots. Tie-break result: Ashby 3 Loughborough 1.

### NATIONAL SHORT CROQUET RESULTS

#### 1st Round

Ashby bt Werrington 8-4  
Reading bt Leicester 7-5  
Norwich bt Thos Cook 7-5  
Loughborough bt Tyneside 10-2  
Nailsea bt Bath B 9-3  
Bowdon bt Pendle A (shoot-out)  
Bath A bt Bristol 8-4  
Pendle B bt Wolverhampton (wo)

#### 2nd Round

Group 1:  
Pendle B - 8 wins.  
Team: N. Hicks (12), J. Beech (12), V. George (12), and D. Roe (14).  
Southport - 6 wins.  
Team: Mrs D. Williamson (10), J. Hawkins (14), A. Pidcock (14), and Mrs M. Dalley (20).  
Bowdon - 4 wins.  
Team: D. Lendrum (4½), G. Kane (20), D. Howe (20), and R. Izod (20).

#### Winners: Pendle B

Group 2:  
Ashby - 7 wins.  
Team: G. Norman (12), R. Wildblood (17), G. Ensor (17), and K. Hillier (14).  
Loughborough - 7 wins.  
Team: B.M. Melody (12), Mrs D.B. Melody (14), A. Tunbridge (8), and P. Robinson (20).  
Norwich - 4 wins.

Team: J. Read (10), D. Andrews (10), E. Riddel-Smith (20), and D. Joscelyne (12).

#### Winners: Ashby won shoot-out 3-1.

Group 3:  
Nailsea - 8 wins.  
Team: A. Leggate (6), P. Dyke (8), D. Thatcher (9), and P. Spiring (13).  
Reading - 8 wins.  
Team: D. Wood (8), C. Morrison (9), R. Tilcock (10), and A. Boddington (13).  
Bath A - 2 wins.

Team: Mrs K. Yeoman (5), Mrs M. Langle (7), M. Boardman (8), and S. Munton (14).  
Winners: Nailsea won shoot-out 3-2.

### SHORT CROQUET ROUND-UP

#### National Singles Event

One hundred and twenty four entries have been received for the National Short Croquet Singles Competition, with 9 English clubs and 5 Scottish clubs running preliminary competitions prior to the Regional finals.

The English Regional Finals will be hosted by two clubs that have never staged CA events before. The Leicester Club will stage one final at their grounds in Victoria Park, Leicester, and the recently-registered club at Stoke will host the other in Victoria Park, Tunstall. The Scottish Croquet Association will stage the third final in conjunction with the Glasgow Exhibition as part of their drive to publicise croquet.

#### Short Croquet Leagues

Several Federations have been running Short Croquet Leagues this season, and these are proving very popular, particularly with new clubs and those who have just started to play the game.

In our next issue, we hope to publish league results and a report on some of these activities. Contributions would be welcome.

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## Your Letters

### STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR

Dear Sir,  
The Standards of behaviour in Croquet are such that the examples of unsportsmanlike conduct referred to in the July issue came as a greater shock. I can recall only one comparable example in 40 years experience, when a player, disgruntled at sticking in a hoop, broke the shaft of his mallet in rage over his leg.

In a lighter mode, during the twelve months stoppage of THE TIMES eleven years ago because of a strike, an issue called 'NOT THE TIMES' was brought out, a glorious skit on its parent which contained an account by 'Our Croquet Correspondent' of the final of the Ladies' and Gentlemen's Pairs Shield. Much of it bears quoting.

'Canon Easley-Shaken soon allayed fears that he might have been affected by his recent appointment at the Rural Deanery of Budleigh Salterton, and the pass roll which

he executed on the seventh was as good as any we saw all day. The match was very much in the balance as the players struck for position in the approach to the penultimate.

There can be only sadness in relating what followed, and of course the Committee alone can pass judgement on the conduct of the two players involved (the behaviour of the Ladies happily was impeccable). Briefly, the Canon's croquet was challenged by Major de Tonge. Readers will not need to be reminded that a croquet must be accompanied by the perceptible shaking of the two balls, and the Major made a formal contention to the umpire that the Rural Dean had not in fact shaken both his balls. In so doing, the Major was within his rights. The 1928 Revision of the Laws is unambiguous on this point. But his appeal must be

### ONE SET OF LAWS?

Dear Sir,  
In the last issue you reported the discussion held at the Council meeting on the motion to eliminate the separate set of Laws for handicap play. The most serious objections to the proposal seemed to be the difficulties it would impose on high bisquers, both by adding to the complexity of rules confronting learners, and also by loading further tactical problems onto those already perplexed enough.

It might be possible to avoid these difficulties simply by deleting Law 53(b), so that the 14-point game was without lifts. This would hardly affect serious play (how often does one see a 14 point ad-

vanced play game?) and would mean that beginners could remain happily ignorant of the complexities as long as they confined themselves (as they often do already) to 'six hoops and the peg'. Further, if they were introduced gently to the full game through fifth and third hoop starts they could defer the extra complication of contacts and (psychologically important to them) not have to stop artificially at 4-back if they managed to get a good break going.

Geoffrey Cuttle,  
Woking.

### TOWNSEND MALLET

Dear Sir,  
There are a few points I would like to make on Dorothy Rush's article on Croquet equipment.

I was pleased that she liked the feel of the Aspinall Mallet. She mentioned that some are better than others. I was unable to tell from the article where she had tried out the mallets. But it should be realised that a number of clubs and individuals have bought 2nd quality mallets at reduced prices and these will have minor flaws in them.

I was particularly surprised at her comments regarding the Junior Club Mallet. She stated that the weight was 1lb 8oz. I am puzzled at one weighing as little as this. We designed the Junior Club Mallet to

be a low cost mallet for young players who might find a lignum vitae mallet too heavy. Each mallet will weigh slightly differently due to some blocks of timber being denser than others and slight differences in the dimensions. However 1lb 8oz seems extraordinarily light particularly since the shaft alone weighs almost 1lb. I myself play with a Junior Club Mallet since I prefer a light mallet. On reading Dorothy Rush's article, I immediately put mine on the scales to check its weight and found it weighed 2lbs 6½ozs.

Charles Townsend,  
Managing Director,  
Townsend Croquet.

judged in the context of the fact that no player has ever previously exercised this prerogative.

The effect of his action on a man of the Rural Dean's temperament can be imagined all too easily. It is no less painful to recall than it was to witness, and readers will not wish me to describe it. Suffice it to say that neither Canon Easley-Shaken nor his partner seemed to have any stomach left for the contest once order had been restored.

Although it is for others to apportion blame, this sad incident must call into question the wisdom of the Committee's controversial decision to double the value this year of the book token presented to the winners of the competition.

Jim Townsend,  
Westwood Ho!  
Devon.



Claire Thatcher playing for Nailsea School in the Finals of the Royal Bank Schools Championship.

### INTERFERING SEAGULLS

Dear Sir,  
I play croquet on lawns close to the sea, and very often one or more seagulls can be seen strutting on a lawn. Recently, while playing a match, my black clip and the red and yellow clips of my opponent were on hoop 3, when a seagull alighted near that hoop, contemplated the clips for a few moments and then took the black clip off the hoop and laid it on the ground, apparently with the object of eating it. On being threatened by me, the seagull picked up the clip and flew off to some 100 yards away, and again settled down to eat. The clip was eventually recovered as the seagull lost interest.

It seems that some alteration to the laws might be appropriate. For

### CROQUET RECORDS

Dear Sir,  
Croquet Records for the Croquet Almanack are now coming in....

The longest distance from which a hoop was intentionally run was 29 yards.

The furthest distance from which a jump shot has been played over a hoop was 6 feet.

The youngest player to be awarded a Croquet Association Silver Medal was aged 13½.

Unless, of course, you know otherwise....

If you have any Croquet achievements that you think may be a record, please write to Townsend Croquet Ltd., Claire Road, Kirby Cross, Frinton-on-Sea, Essex, CO13 0LX.

The Croquet Almanack, containing records, results, players, records, etc, etc, will be published in November, priced £9.00

Charles Townsend,  
Townsend Croquet Ltd.

Dear Sir,  
Again heartiest congratulations and thanks for all you and your colleagues are doing to make the Gazette so readable and to promote the game in so many ways. It must be a great satisfaction to see the results coming in.

Reginald Bamford completed a triple peel using only three balls in the Western Province Championships held in Cape Town recently, leaving black in the 1st corner. I seem to recall a reference to this as a rare occurrence in Prichard's History or in the Gazette a few years ago. Could a reader give me the reference?

Brian Bamford,  
Rondebosch,  
South Africa.

### Oxford: 1-3 July Remarkable Croquet at Oxford Peterson twice round to 4-back with 2-ball break; Aiton completes third-turn triple

Report by Robert Prichard

The third Oxford tournament of the modern era saw some changes. Dayal Gunasekera was the new manager, who also acted as hotelier to several competitors and taxi-driver to others, organised an evening barbecue and still won two-thirds of his games. Instead of the cantonal Swisses I had used, he embarked on an orthodox Swiss, but wisely allowed some flexibility to cope with developments such as Griffith making a guest appearance on Sunday as substitute, one player sloping off most of Saturday for Keith Wylie's wedding, and another loping off into the trees to vanish after a few rounds. A more notable change was that the beer, kindly ferried up from London in advance by George Noble, did not run out. This was partly because the two leading contenders (each a former winner) called a truce in

the beer-race, and partly because planning a barbecue caused the weather to be untraditionally wet.

One unbroken tradition was having an obvious winner. Having already done a TP, a TPO and an STP in the tournament, what else could Aiton do? The answer was something rarer than an octuple peel: a triple peel in the third turn! Pause, dear reader, to think what this requires: not only an intricate break with almost no 'trivial' shots, but a bold and skilful opponent. Hitting the Aitonic microtice launched Peterson into his second all-round two-ball break of the weekend, to 4-back. Aiton then did a 3-ball triple peel of the opponent, with the fourth ball still in the ball-box, and pegged both balls out. The ghosts of Ranjitsinhji and C B Fry joined the applause from the pavilion. Peterson elected to take

### Nottingham: 24-26 June 'Some like it hot'

Report by Martin French

I didn't want to do this. Like most CPs (Croquet Players) I try to hide when the manager is looking for a victim to write the tournament report. It was the terrible price I had to pay in return for getting the manager, George Noble, to carry four sets of President's Cup hoops from Budleigh Salterton to Nottingham.

You may wonder why I wanted to get these hoops to Nottingham. Even if you don't wonder, the reason is that we needed four sets of 'proper' hoops for the Eastern Championships that were to be run at Colchester a week or two later. These were exceptionally well-travelled hoops, having to go from London to Budleigh to London to Nottingham to Colchester to Surbiton, all within a few weeks. Let us hope that travel does not broaden the hoop!

A disparate group of players collected on the Friday, in the heavy and humid conditions that hinted of thunder and heavy downpours. Luckily, these waited until the Sunday to arrive. The drifts of lush vegetation surrounding the lawns added to the feeling that you were in a clearing in a tropical rain forest. This must explain the verdant and easy lawns - or was it the dreaded curse of automatic irrigation? Whatever happened to the challenge of playing croquet on hilly brown lino, that we all enjoyed

in the days when we used to have summers in Britain?

The first casualty of the event was the Gunasekera Patent Coin Tosser. This mechanical delight comprised a coin receptacle attached to a long wooden arm, balanced on a central pivot. Applying some impetus to the other end of the arm saves the operator from all that tiresome finger work. This worked fine until Richard Hilditch 'looked' at the other end of the arm with his mallet. It was rather like trying to ring a fairground bell with a sledgehammer.

The easy lawns and generous hoops might lead you to expect lots of quick games, but many players who should have known better struggled to +1 scores. Two games even got pegged down. One was between those notable slow-coaches Chris Clarke and Ian Vincent.

The other was a challenge match between representatives of the London Beer Drinkers and the Ipswich Pizza Eaters. Robert Prichard, for the Imbibers, played much the best croquet against Martin French, of the Gastronomists, but failed to peg-out to leave a three-ball game. Rain and darkness arrived before too long, so George pegged it down.

Inevitably, the next morning Prichard's first shot hit the 35 yard single ball target. It was later dis-

contact, but with his pegged out ball. The referee's ruling that playing with an outside agency did not constitute playing the wrong ball, so that contact (or lift) could be taken with the right one without penalty, was overruled by the Referee of the Tournament, who held that as the irregularity was deliberately done (to test the referees) it was unexpedient. Peterson was made to place his true ball in baulk and forgo a possible fourth turn win. However he quickly gained a three hoop lead which eventually saw him home, Aiton's only vanquisher in eight



Lady Bazley & Paul Smith, winners of the Mixed Doubles at the Men's and Women's Championships.

covered that Prichard had been practising, having requested a taxi on his way to the lawns!

The honour (if that's the right word) of the Pizza Eaters was soon restored, when Debbie Cornelius broke her duck against Prichard in a later round.

Another consequence of this late-night finish was that an overzealous park-keeper locked about a dozen CPs in the park. Eventually, a few scouts reported that there was a gap in the railings a little way away. Those of us who were on the skinny side managed to slip through the gap as easily as a Jaques Eclipse. The more generously proportioned Richard Hilditch, modelled more on a Birkdale, found the setting too narrow.

Much fun was had on the Saturday evening, when several CPs decided it would be a good idea to hold a tournament dinner. Inevitably, hours were spent deciding where to go - a distant country pub was selected. A convoy duly set off, because the route was said to be difficult. We went down narrower and narrower streets, into what was clearly a housing estate. An unlikely setting for a country pub we thought. Eventually the lead car (Peter Death) stopped. We all

games.

With six lawns set out on the cricket field, the two regular but remote Observatory lawns were hardly needed to keep the 30 entrants occupied, with up to nine games available to those who made Friday evening's optional session. Half the players were past or present Oxonians, ranging from Plummer and Wormald, whose kinetic keenness creates the tournament, to Landor, who has lost little of his elegant style during his years of Dutch exile. Another Dutch exile, Corla van Griethuysen and a Welsh one, Rhodri Williams, both from Glasgow, were successful; as generally were the pale blue visitors - of whom Hilditch persisted in his inexplicable return to form this season. Again we attracted an overseas visitor, Xandra Keyden from New England. A lucky thirteen Old Englanders also sampled for the first time the charms of this unusual but effective tournament.

RESULTS  
(30 entries)

Swiss: Advanced Play  
Winner: K.M.H. Aiton (7 wins)

stopped. Was this the pub? Well no, it was Chateau Vincent actually, Peter had not been joining the party of diners! Some of us eventually found the fabled hostelry, arriving at 22.01. Of course, they stopped serving food at 22.00!

The prime match of the weekend was the local derby between Nick Hyne and Steve Thomas. Steve ran out of bisques at rover and rover. Nick cruised round, peeled both of Steve's balls through rover, and pegged one out before wristing off a short shot, to lose!

The peace of the final afternoon was shattered by an outdoor Midsummer's Day rock concert across the lake, in front of the university building. A succession of loud and awful local bands bashed away, to the delight of some (Richard was seen bopping) and the misery of others (Mike Stevens' BBC sensitivities got the better of him and he resigned). Some of the singers were so bad, they hit the note even less often than Frank Sinatra!

Who won this weekend's entertainment? Well suffice it to say that George Noble gives one Mars Bar for every triple peel, and Chris Clarke was looking six Mars Bars bigger at the end! His only loss in nine games was to George in the final (optional) round; I think he might have been feeling a little sick after all the Mars Bars.

RESULTS  
(28 entries)

8-round Swiss: Advanced Play  
Winner: C.D. Clarke (8 wins)  
Runners-Up: Miss D. Cornelius and M. French (7 wins).

## Tournaments

## Tournaments

### Compton: 20-25 June VETERANS TOURNAMENT

Report by G.F. Rothwell

The veterans has come to be regarded as one of the most popular tournaments in the croquet calendar and this year was no exception. Eastbourne is such a delightful place and it is such a pleasure to meet so many old friends. Sadly there were some notable absentees and Compton can never be quite the same without Denno Harris and Tiny Tyrwhitt Drake. It was a most enjoyable week, being greatly helped by some glorious summer weather. This inevitably made the courts extremely fast and difficult with the result that an unusually larger percentage of games had to be decided on time. This obviously caused problems for the manager.

It is a moot point whether it is wise to play as well as manage. Dennis Shaw demonstrated how it can be done successfully. Not only did he manage most efficiently but he also had a very busy week playing. He very deservedly won the open singles although he had some very close games which could easily have gone either way. Dennis had a most able assistant in his wife, Eileen, who contributed

much to the smooth running and general enjoyment.

It was such a welcome change to have available an adequate number of willing referees. There was the usual criticism about the necessity for double banking. Personally, I dislike it intensely because I find it extremely irritating and frustrating. The reason is probably because I never play it and when the occasion arises, I am completely at sea. The answer is very simple. Double-banking is clearly a necessity now and must be accepted because it has come to stay. Unless you have it, the only alternative is to restrict entries. Some competitors complained that they had too much play but this is a penalty for being too successful. You cannot have it both ways but three long games in a day is a bit too much for most senior citizens.

Having been at one of Eastbourne's many prep schools, I have some happy memories of the famous Saffron's cricket ground which adjoins the Compton croquet courts. Never did I imagine that anything other than cricket could conceivably be played at the

Saffrons. I could scarcely believe it when I saw two croquet courts laid out. It did solve a few of the manager's problems but of course they were not up to the standard of the Compton courts.

John Exell always seemed to be playing and usually winning with the result that the handicapper has caught up with him. The same applied to Frank Beard. Paul Macdonald won the final of the X Handicap against Frank Newman. The latter also had a busy week, being the losing finalist in the Opens. Paul was partnered by his wife Pat in the Doubles and they were worthy winners against Peter Rowland and Dr Leonard Greenbury. The losers had proved to be a formidable combination in the earlier rounds and completed probably the quickest game of the week in 1 hour 40 minutes.

No report would be complete without mentioning the splendid work by the ladies who were responsible for the catering. This certainly contributed greatly to the success of what was a most enjoyable week.

#### RESULTS Veterans' Championship

(7 entries)  
Draw Final:  
D.W. Shaw bt G.F. Rothwell +3



Dennis Shaw, winner of the Veterans' Open Championship.

Process Final:  
F.H. Newman bt F.L. Shergold +11  
Play-Off:  
Shaw bt Newman +10

#### Felixstowe Cup

(11 entries)  
Winner: F. Beard  
Runner-Up: J. Exell

#### Strickland Challenge Cup

(16 entries)  
Winner: P. Derryhouse (7)  
Runner-Up: Miss Dennant (7½)

#### Meredith Challenge Cup

(30 entries)  
Winner ('X'): P. Macdonald (3½)  
Winner ('Y'): E. Salmon (9)

#### Longman Trophies

(17 entries)  
Winners: Mr & Mrs P. Macdonald

### Cheltenham: 16-21 May Promising Play at Cheltenham

Report by Peter Darby

The weather was very kind for this event. There were plenty of warm sunny days and only one day was a real three sweater day. There was virtually no rain either. There was an entry of just over 30 of whom 5 were visitors.

The tournament was managed ably by Denis Moorcraft and Betty Weitz. Unfortunately Denis was not well and had to retire after the first couple of days but Betty, despite not being very well herself, coped admirably with the burdens of management.

In the 'A' class the winner was Duncan Reeve who beat Bernard Weitz in the finals. Bernard failed to stick in the first hoop, contrary to his usual practice, and this appeared to unsettle him giving Duncan plenty of chances which he took.

The final of the 'B' class singles was between Peter Leach and Peter Darby. Both had played quite well to get to the final but their game together was no demonstration of the art of Croquet. These two venerable gentlemen were scratching about like old hens before Peter Darby managed to win by virtue of

making slightly fewer mistakes.

John Exell played superbly to win the 'C' class beating Peter Corke in the final. Peter shows signs of becoming a very good player in the next few years if he keeps at it.

Another player who shows great promise is Derek Harrison who won the 'D' class, winning both the draw and the process. He will find his handicap melting away like snow in springtime if he continues to improve at his present rate.

The handicap doubles was won by Duncan Reeve and Maureen Evans who beat John Ross and Eileen Cheverton plus 16.

Duncan also excelled in the Swiss handicap by winning 6 out of the 7 games. Bo Harris who played well throughout the week and John Ross who was also on excellent form throughout also won 6.

Mention also should be made of John MacLaren and Dab Wheeler who won 5 games out of 7 in the Swiss. Also noticeable were Les and Millicent James, each of whom also won 5 games in the Swiss. They were clearly learning all the time about the use of their bisques,

#### Tournament Results

##### Carrickmines: 6-11 June Championship of County Dublin

(11 entries)  
Draw Final:  
S. Williams bt G.P.N. Healey +9TPO

Process Final:  
F. Rogerson bt Williams +9TP

Play-Off:  
Rogerson bt Williams +10

##### Duff Matthews Cup

(14 entries)  
Winner: G. Reynolds  
Runner-Up: P. Thornton

##### Boxwell Cup

(19 entries)  
Winner: Miss J. Shorten  
Runner-Up: G.P.N. Healey

##### Coronation Cups

(11 entries)  
Winners: F. Rogerson & P. McInerney

##### Ryde: 6-11 June

##### Isle of Wight Championship

(5 entries)  
Winner: E. MacKenzie-Bowie  
Runner-Up: M.G. Tompkinson

##### 'B' Level Singles

(6 entries)  
Winner: R.W. Newnham

##### 'C' Handicap Singles

(17 entries)  
Block Winners:  
H.B. Brownsdon (4)  
M.J.B. Haggerston (2)  
E. Mackenzie-Bowie (2½)

Play-Off:  
Winner: H.B. Brownsdon (Dibley Cup)  
Runner-Up: E. MacKenzie-Bowie (Benest Cup)

##### Handicap Doubles

(8 entries)  
Winners: R.W. Newnham & Mrs D.E. Erith



Dab Wheeler, winner of the 'Y' at Parkstone.

although Les still reckons he cannot play properly until all his bisques are gone.

Duncan was the only one to achieve a triple peel in the week, in his game against Paddy Paddon. All in all a very enjoyable and congenial tournament.

**INDOOR CROQUET**  
including  
**1988 National Final**  
Stantonbury Leisure Centre  
Milton Keynes  
15/16 October  
More details from Chris Hudson

### Budleigh Salterton: 27 June - 2 July New star sighted?

Report by Peter Danks

After a three week drought the lawns were ice-fast. There was a prospect of exciting croquet, but on the Saturday night the heavens opened much to the relief of local gardeners and to the chagrin of fast lawn lovers. On Sunday the lawns were flooded and more rain ensured slow greens beloved of high bisquers. Throughout the week the weather was indifferent. It even included a hail storm.

One of the most noticeable features of the week was that Clare Collis, a Colchester 17-year old, seemed to be playing on every lawn all the time. She played with her (over)handicap of 13. Some eyebrows were raised when it was noticed that she was also playing doubles off 13. The locals are perhaps a bit old-fashioned. They still give a reduced handicap for doubles. The remedy was at hand. By Tuesday she had been reduced to 11(8D). She departed with a realistic singles handicap of 8. She is a natural player of whom lots more will be seen and heard.

Jonathan Collis played well and lost half a bisque. Graham Budd (10), another Colchester problem, played well in the big Open Handicap. He trounced Charles Townshend (3) +26 and Robert Fulford (-½) +24. He was rewarded in the field with a handicap reduction to 8, later 7½.

### Parkstone: 6-11 June Southport Players Shine at Parkstone

Report by Don Williamson

Arrived on Monday morning to the usual warm welcome (including the weather which stayed fine all week apart from one very short shower). The Managers, Dab and Roger Wheeler, were getting people started in the X as they arrived, to be followed later in the day by a game in the Class. There were to be no time limits in any games (except for Doubles) unless they decided that you had not got far enough in 3 hours. Time was only applied to five games all week. The games were to be a mixture of 18 point, 22 point or 26 point games according to the class, or, for those in the Y which was to be run as a SWIZ, the joint handicap of the two players. This caused a bit of confusion later in the week when two players in the C Class discovered one hour into their game that they should have been playing an 18 point game not a 26 point game. They restarted and eventually had a time limit imposed.

The week seemed to be full of games with close finishes and some very exciting 3-ball endings, several of which were created by accidental peg-outs.

Strat Liddiard (10), the local bandit, started well in the X by winning after his opponent had a controlled all-round break including SPO. His form improved all week and he won the X, beating Pauline Lewis (Southport) in a 4¼ hour final. The Y was run as a SWIZ which kept everybody knocked out of the X busy and was won by Dab Wheeler against Allen Parker.

The X Doubles caused the management some surprises when Bob Bailey (½) and Diana Williamson (14) won their first and second round games in record time +20 and +20. Most of the other games were more traditional and if not actually going to time, took up almost the whole 3½ hours allotted. Bob and Diana went on to win, beating Frank Shergold and Beryl Saunders +13. The Y Doubles was won by Pat Asa-Thomas and Alice Dawson, who beat Parkstone's Margaret McMordie and Netta Robertson.

Graham retired on Thursday and took flight to Moscow. Jonathan also retired to become Graham's fellow traveller.

The highlight of the 3-block South West of England Championship was the play of Peter Dorke. In the big handicap Susan Wiggins gave him 2½ and won +10. But in this event he beat her by +5. He also beat John Walters by +16. Impressive for a 2½ bisquer. The final against Robert Fulford was a disappointing spectator game. Robert went round to peg and rover - hit wire. Peter took the lift and hit in about 2 feet! He was in and out and made 8 hoops when he stuck in 2-back with Robert 3 feet in front. Shortly afterwards Robert won +18.

In the big Open Handicap event Kevin Ham (12) got egg on his face. He had played well to get into the semi-final where Susan Wiggins gave him 12 bisques. Kevin made 8 hoops using 5 bisques while Susan had gone round to rover. Kevin reckoned that he would have at least one more turn. Not so. Susan went all round peeling her other ball through rover and pegged out. Kevin returned his 7 bedridden bisques to the locker room. This incident is being reported as a cautionary tale for high/mid bisquers playing low bisquers. In the final Paul Gregg (3½) beat

Susan Wiggins (0) +11.

The level singles were played in five blocks, with Paul Gregg and Peter Howell playing the final. Peter won +2.

In the restricted handicap singles, Leslie Toye continued to improve and won through to the final, beating Diana Perry +12. In the other semi-final, Clare Collis beat David Wickham +3. Surely it's time David joined the CA? Clare beat Leslie Toye in the final +7. In the Open Handicap 'Y' event final, Clare beat Peter Howell +7.

On the first day of the Doubles, the Moorcrafts had an interesting game with the Collises. Collises on peg and rover. Clare had two faulted attempts at rover. Moorcrafts nowhere. This was not good enough. Dennis got in, peeling Ingabord through 4 and 5 en route for peg and peeling out Jonathan C. Slowly the Moorcrafts advanced. Persistently Clare shot and missed by a whisker. Eventually Moorcrafts round to rover. Laid up in Corner I with Clare on north boundary. She shot - she hit - she won. Later Susan Wiggins and Jim Davey beat them +6 to reach the final against the local John Wasdell and Sidmouth's Leslie Toye. Susan and Jim won +9.

Leslie Toye mentioned later how inductive he had found the Budleigh Salterton Grade II coaching course weekend in early May. In two months his handicap has been reduced from 11 to 7½. Perhaps the course did him good and there will

In the A class, I had three very enjoyable games with two close finishes but no wins. The block winner, Bob Bailey, went on to win the class final against Nigel Gale (Crawley).

In the B Class, despite three visitors in the semi final, Beryl Saunders upheld local honour, beating John Exell (Cheltenham).

In the C Class semi-final, there was the same mix of 3 visitors and 1 local. Strat Liddiard played Peter Corke (9) from Woking, winning +4 and Pauline Lewis played Diana Williamson in an all-Southport game which Pauline won +5. Strat went on to beat Pauline in the final.

In terms of honours for the week the result was Locals 5, Visitors 4 (well, 5 if you count the extra 1 ball event - and depending whether you count a combined Home/Away Doubles partnership as a whole or a half).

Bronze Awards were won by Diana Williamson and Strat Liddiard.

Congratulations to Dab and Roger Wheeler for their excellent management which introduced some less experienced players to competitive 'end games' of the

## Tournaments

be greater demand for courses next year.

A feature of this year's tournament was Manager Dennis Moorcraft's decision to have double-banking as the norm instead of the exception. It enabled more games to be played by those coming from afar, who are used to it. The comments of the locals who never double-bank are unprintable! Never mind, Dennis, all is nearly forgiven! You did very well and all games finished as planned. Thank you.

Same time - same place next year. Why not come to live here? The courts are underused.

#### RESULTS

##### The South West Championship

(Colman Cup)

(15 entries)

Block Winners:

R. Fulford

W.E. Lamb

P.J. Dorke

Play-Off Final:

Fulford bt Dorke +22

##### Longman Cup

(20 entries in 5 blocks)

Play-Off Final:

P. Howell bt P. Gregg +2

##### Stone Challenge Cup

(18 entries in 4 blocks)

Play-Off Final:

Miss C. Collis (13) bt L. Toye (9) +7

##### Oliver Bowl

(46 entries)

'X' Semi-Finals:

Mrs S. Wiggins (0) bt K. Ham (12) +19

P. Gregg (3½) bt Mrs B.G. Perry (8) (wo)

'X' Final:

Gregg bt Mrs Wiggins +11

'Y' Final:

Miss C. Collis (11) bt P. Howell (4) +7

##### Le Mesurier Cups

(Handicap Doubles: 23 entries)

Final:

C.J.C. Davey & Mrs S. Wiggins (7½) bt A.J. Wasdell & L.E. Toye (18) +9

Bob Bailey and Di Williamson, doubles winners at Parkstone.

3-ball variety.

Thanks to those providing the catering and the members who produced a memorable selection of delicious puddings.

#### RESULTS

##### Dorset Salver

(Advanced Play: 12 entries)

Block Play-Off Final:

R.F. Bailey bt N.F.C. Gale +20

##### Evans Trophy

(Level Singles: 8 entries)

Block Play-Off Final:

Mrs B.R. Saunders bt F.J. Exell +5

##### Cope Cup

(Handicap Singles: 10 entries)

Block Play-Off Final:

Dr G.S. Liddiard (10) bt Miss P.M.H. Lewis (13) +12

##### Cripps Memorial Trophy

(Hcap Knockout: 30 entries)

'X' Final:

Dr Liddiard bt Miss Lewis +5

'Y' Winner: Mrs R.F. Wheeler (3)

Summer Doubles Cups

(Handicap Doubles: 14 entries)

Final:

R.I. Bailey & Mrs D. Williamson (14½) bt F.L. Shergold & Mrs B.R. Saunders (7) +13

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## Ipswich: 4-5 June No Need for Rankling!

Report by Peter Dorke



Peter Dorke

In the middle of the second round of this knock-out tournament, the Manager decreed that standing water on both lawns made fair competition impossible and that, therefore, he would not be sending in the results. Despite this decision, play went on and this is the report thereof. In order to protect those fearful of suffering gross misplacement in what the Manager aptly called the Mulliner ranklings (sic) if the scores got out, I have recast the players:

### SECOND PART OF KING JOHN by William Shakespeare and a Man.

#### Persons Represented

John - a King amongst Managers	Martin - a Frenchman	) Comic Relief
David - King of Ruscombe	Dorcas - a Welshman	
Robert - Duke of Sutherland	Robert - an Irishman	
Gaunt - a Don	Martin - a Coward	
Cornelia - daughter of another Don	John - son of another William	
William - an absolute Lamb	Duncan - a Reeve	

Ladies and other attendants, several Hollanders

Scene - partly on a grassy plain, partly in a pavilion

#### Act 1

Scene 1. A pavilion. Enter Martin, a Frenchman, Robert, an Irishman, John.

FRENCHMAN: Once more we sit in Gypswyke's noble shed, All ready for the present tournament, While John our Manager is still abed, Or sulks like Old Achilles in his tent.

IRISHMAN: See, see, King John the Good doth now himself appear.

JOHN: (Aside) 'Tis time we got this tourney under way.

KING JOHN: I heard that, sirrah, heard it loud and clear, So get thee forthwith to the lawn and play.

Scene 2. A lawn, alone. Enter on one side Robert, Duke of Sutherland and Dorcas. On the other John and Martin, a Coward.

SUTHERLAND: The enemy are double-ranked upon the field And not for that shall I in haste take aim But with full care and thoughtfulness my mallet wield, Till from a certain 'Swifty' Goacher steal the name.

DORCAS: (Aside) By managerial decree it is my lot To scribe the doings of this motley crew And though I swear forsooth that I would rather not, I'll do't and give each devil here his due.

JOHN: I thank you sir and hope I did not long detain Your progress to the final; I foresee That you shall beat Old Gaunt, for he's in pain, Then beat that Frenchman by the score of three.

COWARD: Well, then to work, for now I can relax, Knowing my fate and theirs is early sealed. But water's pouring now through heavenly cracks.

Scene 3. Enter King John

KING JOHN: Count not the scores, I think this tournament's congealed.

Scene 4. A pavilion. Enter All.

ALL: Gobble, gobble, all this grub'll Keep our tummies out of trouble; You can keep your eye of newt, Gypswyke food is really beaut! (Exeunt all)

#### Act 2

Scene 1. A lawn. Enter on the one side, Gaunt and a Frenchman. On the other, Cornelia and William.

GAUNT: I swear i' Faith that croquet both my honour and my trews has stained

As I lay winded on the ground and still, But in fair Glostershire I would I had remained. Oh Sod! And now my balls are wired by a hill.

FRENCHMAN: What, good my lord, hast ill to say of Gypswyke's second court? Dost dare to criticise its hill and valley? I'll peg you out, so hitting in's the last resort And when you miss you'll look a proper Wally. Merciful heaven, he's hit!

DUTCHMAN: (Aside) Deze man has wrote het boek Off how deze game to spelen. Ja, I must have a loek.

CORNELIA: Debbie played a little lamb; she chose the brown and green.

WILLIAM: My pink and white found hoops too tight; she won by seven-

## Wrest Park: 1-3 July Nature Rules the Waves

The most notable happening of the tournament was the Catering Officer being struck down by food poisoning! Thankfully, if that's the right word, it was his whole family and none of the croquet players, who were all given pneumonia instead. It rained so heavily that the final round of the Swiss was cancelled, although most hardy souls soldiered on to finish their games to the amazement of the anglers watching from under their umbrellas.

The top ranking players at the tournament were David Openshaw and Phil Cordingley. Both however were undone by David Goacher on the Friday, making him look the likely winner, but things began to go wrong. First he was beaten by Duncan Reeve and then Tom Anderson started playing a break quickly - until he realised that if he made the last two hoops,

he would finish one ahead when time was called. Playing slowly he failed to get position at penult and left DG an easy lift shot to finish the game. The best he could do was a scatter shot when he failed to get position at rover and when Tom joined up, he couldn't even hit the peg from two yards. Time was called as Tom made penult but then stuck in rover off David's ball, which he thankfully pegged out. David still only had one defeat on Sunday when he was behind with the innings as time was called against Alan Sutcliffe. But a back take-off to penult from nowhere near left too long a hoop and his third one point score went the wrong way.

Meanwhile Openshaw and Cordingley were trying to avoid a second defeat - difficult when they inevitably had to play each other. The game could hardly be des-

## Southport: 9-10 July Long-Bisquers' Weekend

Report by Andrew Bennet

As usual, this event attracted an entry from various parts of the Northern Federation, with a wider than ever range of ages and handicaps.

Play was kept going by the presence of patrolling Referees-in-Charge empowered to walk on and sort out situations before they became too complex. Another duty performed by these club volunteers was to scoop up the puddles on Sunday morning to allow play to continue according to the

Manager's plan.

The final was won by Martin Bradshaw from Fylde and featured good use of bisques on both sides. His opponent, Alan Pidcock, had been drawn into the game through the Garden Classic and had joined Southport and started coming for coaching only a few weeks before. Martin and Alan were both reduced to 14 and we will follow their progress during the season with interest.

cribed as a classic but eventually progressed to peg and 6 (David) versus peg and 4-back (Phil). 'What time did we start?' asks David. But they hadn't checked the start time - after all who would expect them to take three and a quarter hours. They agreed to play to a finish, whereupon David pegged Phil out. Tromp, tromp, tromp, the MANAGER arrived! He ordered them to stop when time was called in another after-lunch game. But he gave in to their protests and David won in the end.

David Openshaw could easily have lost his game against Brian Storey. It progressed quickly to peg and 3-back versus peg and 4-back but then degenerated into a nervy end-game. David eventually made it to rover. Brian hit but stuck in penult with a ball in baulk. Peeling Brian, David then stuck in rover, luckily off the safe ball. After two attempts to get a rush to rover, Brian also stuck in rover! David who was joined up, overhit his take-

off but made the longish roquet and finished off the game. With no more defeats David therefore ended the overall winner.

The second prize was for the person who did best for his ranking (where in this case the novel ranking system of handicaps was used!). This was won by Robert Jones who started with the next highest handicap.

John Meads should perhaps be awarded a special mention. A dour game saw Debbie Prentis make 9 hoops in her final turn during which time was called. (Her other ball was on 5th). This left her one point ahead. John gave the matter much thought and eventually shot at yellow on the boundary and missed. The spectators could then take a breath and point out that he could have taken contact. John did however easily win the mallet throwing with a clear 20 yards without breaking his mallet. I understand he is willing to give lessons on how to do this.



'Scooping' in progress at Southport where bad weather affected both tournaments.

## Southport: 15-17 July B-Level below Sea Level

Report by Andrew Bennet

Our new tournament attracted some new visitors and (apart from the one who didn't turn up) all were a delight to manage. I organised sunshine for the first day but that was my last good weather card for the season. The players seemed to enjoy sitting in the clubhouse watching the lakes merge. They couldn't go and watch the Golf Open on television because that disappeared under water as well. Then they paddled about scooping up the water to give us three playable lawns on Sunday morning.

I told Russell Collighan to play all his games quickly because he had four on the first day. So he had a quick +10TP against Pat Hague and, even better, then lost to me very quickly. I was quite looking forward to playing Mike Wilkins in

the final, but Don Williamson ended my winning streak and Rick Harding very nearly turned up!

Robert Jones was unfortunate in his triple peel attempt with everything perfectly positioned when he failed to run hoop 5 by a millimetre or less. Andrew Saurin, suitably undressed for the conditions, had done three peels of an STP as puddles formed around him on lawn 2 on the Saturday.

Russell went to 3-back in the fourth turn of the final and beat Mike +22 soon afterwards.

There was never a grumble from any of the players and they will all be welcome next year except those whose handicaps are now too low. The minimum handicap for next year will be whatever mine is when the 1989 Calendar is compiled.

Ipswich (continued from Page 26)

teen.  
(Aside) This little lamb was in a jam. I lost, the truth to tell, Because this daughter of a Don hit every shot too well.  
(Exit carrying bucket of water).

#### Act 3

Scene 1. A lawn. Enter King John, followed by All.  
ALL: Come one, come all and gather at pavilion's gate, To see the King in woolly garment decked.

Tis plain - tis purl - his mother's needlework is just first rate, Tis just the poor girl's colour-sense is wrecked. Hang there, my hats will rival ought that John might wear, I've brought all three to fit occasion's bent.

Whereat the lawn whereon we shall our final contest bear?

CORNELIA & COWARD: Oh Lord! I had forgot the Main Event!

Scene 2. A forlorn lawn. Dorcas alone.  
DORCAS: Now battle's o'er and fair Cornelia has her trophy gained By seventeen-again-and one o'er ten. There's many see a different outcome had the rain not reigned They have next year to come and try again. But one there is who turning westward to his Gloster haunt Spurning the lawns where first this croquet fired his blood, Bears his bruised limbs away. Farewell old Gaunt! And farewell Gypswyke tournament devoured by th'unexpected flood.

## A Garden Break

By Chris Hudson

You're playing croquet in your garden with friends. Everyone has shot at the first hoop and missed, leaving the situation shown in diagram 1.

It's your turn and you're playing with the Blue ball; your partner has the Black. With Blue right in front of the hoop, you step forward without a moment's hesitation to run the hoop with Blue. It's one foot dead in front, and you can't possibly miss. Suddenly, your partner shouts 'Hang on!' But why?

Think about it for a moment. If you run hoop 1 with your first shot, how do you get to hoop 2, whilst at the same time setting up a 4-ball break to get round to the peg?

To set up a break at the start of your turn, it pays to think about getting one ball to your next hoop but one, and then using the other two balls to work your way back to the hoop you want now.

To set up a 4-ball break at hoop 1, you need a ball near the peg and a ball at hoop 2. So before running hoop 1, roquet one of the other balls and stop shot it into position.

But which is the best ball to roquet? Black is partially wired by the hoop, so it must be either Red or Yellow. Having roqueted one of these, do you send it to the peg or hoop 2?

To send a ball to a good position at hoop 2 requires a long shot, and if your stop shots are not too good (by which I mean you find it difficult to achieve a distance ratio of 1:10 or more), the Blue ball will have gone some distance past Black, leaving a rather long return roquet for your next shot. Better,

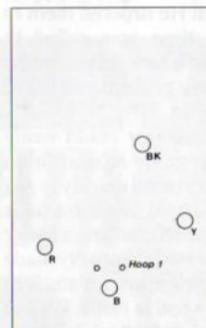


Diagram 1: Initial position of balls round Hoop 1.

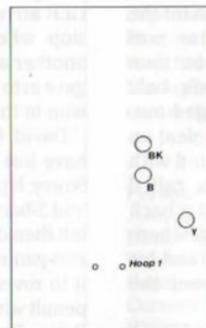


Diagram 2: With Blue South of Black, stopshotting Black to Hoop 2 takes Blue farther away from Yellow.

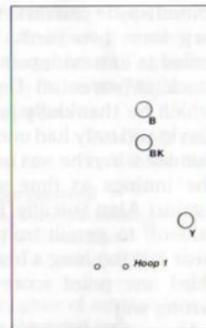


Diagram 3: With Blue North of Black, Black can be rushed towards the South boundary for the stop shot to Hoop 2.

then, to send the first ball you roquet to the peg. So do you roquet Red or Yellow first?

If you roquet Yellow, then your stop shot will take Blue further away from Black. Far better to roquet Red, so that your stop shot takes Blue nearer to Black, thus making your next roquet shorter and easier.

When you send Red to the peg on your croquet shot, you will aim to get Blue near Black, but think (before you play the croquet stroke!) just where you want your Blue ball to finish up.

Look at diagrams 2 and 3. If Blue finishes South of Black, then when you roquet Black and play a stop

then you will have a rush to hoop 1 and so make it easier to get a good position for the hoop.

By playing your turn like this, you have set up a break, and made the shots as easy as possible for yourself. The secret of croquet is to think ahead and position the balls so that all shots are as short as possible and within your capabilities. Never play to give yourself a shot that you know you cannot do!

The position in diagram 1 occurs frequently in garden croquet and brings out two basic principles. First, roquet as many balls as possible before you make your first hoop, and use the extra shots so obtained to build up a break. Second, use a backward rush to create space for subsequent strokes.

If you've got four balls close together like this, anywhere on the court, then it should be possible to set up a very accurate 4-ball break. Just think what an opportunity you would have missed if you had simply run hoop 1 with your first shot!

## LOUGHBOROUGH SUMMER SCHOOL

## Evaluation Tests

From Chris Hudson

Students attending Loughborough Summer Schools have a wide range of ability, ranging from those who have barely played before, to those with handicaps down to about 12.

When asked if they are 'beginners', course members have no yardstick by which to measure their experience. For example, a garden player who had played for 20 years would probably rate himself 'experienced' if he was unaware of the standards in most Clubs (and surprisingly, many are unaware that croquet clubs exist or that there is such a thing as a four-ball break). Similarly, a middle-bisquer might describe himself as a 'beginner' if he was comparing his ability to that of an International player.

To try to overcome this difficulty, a number of tests have been devised to evaluate individual ability so that each player can be assigned to a group with approximately equal playing skills. These tests are described below, and comments would be welcome on how they might be improved as benchmarks to demonstrate increasing com-

petence.

At present, some of the tests are too 'black and white' to be much use in measuring small improvements in ability. But it would be nice, on coaching courses for example, to be able to present players with a 'before' and 'after' report, showing how they had improved, and we are working towards this. After all, confidence is a major factor in achieving results - if you know you can do it, then you will!

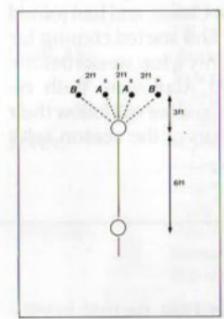
Next year's Loughborough students will be asked to carry out some form of 'self-assessment' prior to the course, and any suggestions as to evaluation methods would be most welcome. The evaluation tests used this year at Loughborough are described below.

## 1. Hoop Running

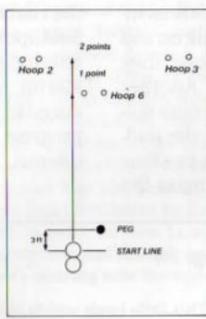
Ball placed 18ins dead in front of hoop. Object to run hoop and finish between 1ft and 4ft clear. Scoring: 3 points; Hoop run without touching wire, finishing within limits. 2 points; Hoop run, finishing within limits, but contact with wire. 1 point; Hoop run, but outside limits.

shot to put it up to hoop 2, your stop shot will take Blue further away from Yellow, giving you a long return shot for your next roquet.

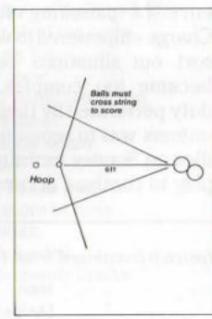
However, if Blue finishes North of Black, then you can rush Black towards the South boundary to give yourself plenty of room to play the stop shot to hoop 2. If you play Blue to the East of Yellow on this shot,



(A) Making a Roquet



(B) Stop Shot



(C) Split Roll-Shot

0 points; 'Clang'.

## 2. Making a Roquet

Balls 6ft apart. Scoring: 3 points; Roqueted ball moves to pass through gap AA. 2 points; Hit to side of centre when ball moves to pass through BB. 1 point; Snick, when ball moves to pass outside BB. 0 points; Miss.

## 3. Strength of Shot

Shot across width of lawn (16yds), from one boundary to the other. Scoring: 2 points; Ball finishes within 3ft of opposite boundary. 1 point; Ball finishes within 6ft of boundary.

## 4. Making a Rush

Striker's ball on boundary, with ball to be rushed 2ft away on direct line to the peg. Scoring: 2 points; Ball rushed to within 3ft of peg. 1 point;

Ball rushed to within 6ft of peg.

## 5. Stop Shot

Ball 3ft in front of peg. Stop shot one ball to peg, the other to hoop 6 or further. Scoring: 2 points if forward ball goes beyond hoop 3. 1 point if forward ball goes beyond hoop 6. 0 points if backward ball goes beyond peg.

## 6. Split Roll-Shot

Ball 6ft to side of hoop. Forward ball to be sent behind hoop, with striker's ball in front of hoop. Run hoop and make return roquet. Scoring: 2 points for making hoop. An extra point for return roquet. 0 points if either ball fails to cross string.

## THE CUMBRIA GROUP

From the Rev Canon Gervase Markham

Cumbria, land of lakes and mountains, the country never conquered by William the Conqueror, still cherishes its remoteness and individuality.

Take Croquet, for example. Lakes and mountains are not conducive to the construction of croquet lawns, yet the game has been played here for generations, mostly in the gardens of the older Country Houses, as an occasional family pastime.

In one such House, this spring, the family decided to invest in a new and level croquet lawn. The existing rambling garden with its Beck and Waterfalls had seen the game played in many different forms. The Croquet Box, for example, still bears on its lid a charming picture of Ladies and Gentlemen in late Victorian costume playing the game with stately decorum. The picture even shows a four-sided hoop with a dangling bell, both of which were still in use in the 1970's, till a local lad made off with the bell one night. (It was located with difficulty, and returned with due apologies, but now resides in the Family Museum). The days of Decorum have departed.

A more lively version of the game has found more favour in recent years, when half-an-hour of Pirate Croquet proved a desirable reward for attendance at Choir Practice in the village church next door. This version has the double merit of allowing as many players to take part as there are balls fit to play with, and enabling an experienced adult to manoeuvre the youngest child into winning, with every simulation of surprise.

But for the last 20 years, the high-light of the Croquet Season has been the annual Tournament between the Home Team and the Staff of the local Grammar School, who had developed the habit of playing in their lunch break (except when inhibited by the industrial action of their Union). It started as Preachers v. Teachers, but as years went by the supply of Croquet-playing Country Parsons dried up, and the Home team came to rely on the ever-growing army of young and active Land-Agents. Five Doubles Games are played simultaneously on five lawns, all of which would horrify the nobs at Hurlingham, for two are bumpy, two are sloping, and the fifth has a yew tree in the middle. But no cup could be more keenly contested: no Rules more gravely debated year by year.

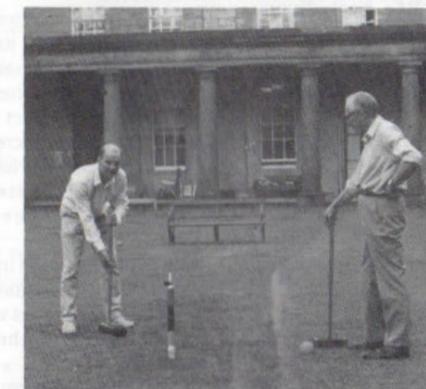
This then was the background to the need of a good new level Croquet Lawn. A local landscape-gardener undertook to plough and level and re-seed the flattest of the existing lawns. Then the owners had the bright idea of writing to the Hurlingham Club for professional advice. The Secretary promptly replied with copious notes of exactly how the work should be done, at vast expense, and also sent a wad of literature about modern Croquet. This opened the eyes of the recipients to the fact that there were many people in the South of the Kingdom who took Croquet seriously: they even wore white flannels, and had official Handicaps. News of Croquet as a Sport had crossed the Pennines to the land where the Conqueror never set foot.

One revelation was that our newly-sown lawn, destined to be the pride of Cumbria, was only half the size required for a Standard Court. It was neither a Lake nor a Mountain that dictated its size, but a cliff on one side and the Driye on the other made it impossible to enlarge, so

apparently it could only be given the derisory designation of a 'Short Court'.

Another revelation was the existence of something called a National Garden Croquet Classic. At first we thought this was a feature of the National Garden Scheme which operates in these parts. Then it dawned that the words really meant a 'National Tournament for Garden Croquet'. This sounded attractive but it was already mid-May, and too late to enter.

However, a call to the Organiser in Cheshire revealed that if we could collect a group of 8 before the end of the month, and would pay £25, we could enter the competition. Urgent enquiries were set on foot: the first half-dozen potential players sounded enthusiastic: one name led to another: a group of pensioners were located who played on the outfield of Ambleside Cricket Ground: another bunch were heard of



Watched by Gervase Markham, Michael Haymes pegs out in the Cumbria Final at Skirsgill Park.

who played somewhere near the Roman Wall: the Grammar School put up some names: and within a week we had identified 25 gentlemen prepared to put down a couple of pounds to pit their skill at Croquet against the flower of the Nation. They were all of indubitable professional status and impeccable social standing, but their proficiency at Croquet had yet to be determined.

The Organiser was uncommonly helpful. He supplied enough copies of the Rules (some hitherto unknown in these parts) so that every player could have one. A Draw was devised so that nobody should knockout his neighbour in the first round. And two Short Courts were marked out, according to instructions, on the large lawn of a mansion in the centre of the County, Skirsgill Park, the home of the Leeming family, where all matches were to be played.

June was now filled with a new excitement: young and old sallied forth to play Competitive Croquet against an unknown opponent at an unfamiliar location. The new Rules had to be carefully studied, and their interpretation and application discussed. We welcomed the homely proviso that players who disagreed should settle the point by tossing. So the days passed, with busy men driving up to 30 miles after work to meet their opponent at Skirsgill and play their match.

The last four left in the semi-finals were a Schoolmaster, a Retired Parson, a Land-Agent, and a Chartered Surveyor. The final was played on June 28th between the Retired Parson and the Surveyor. And in spite of the fact that the Parson claimed to have learned the game from a maiden aunt during the First World War, whereas the Surveyor claimed he had never touched

a mallet till 1987, the latter proved a better player. He had an uncanny ability to hit the target ball from the farthest corner of the court; but the Parson, while enjoying a temporary lead, made the cardinal error of running a hoop in the wrong direction. This so shook his self-confidence that he fell steadily behind.

So the Champion of Cumbria emerged as Mr Michael Haymes, BSc, FRICS, of Carlisle. His professional accuracy as a Chartered Quantity Surveyor is clearly reflected in his devastating accuracy on the Croquet Lawn, and his vanquished Cumbrian opponents wish him well as he ventures forth into the uncharted sea of a Regional Final.

## RESULTS

Regional Finalists  
(\* denotes block winner)

## Bear of Rodborough

Manager: Norman Gooch  
\* Alan Evans (Bristol)  
D.I. Holmes (Bristol)  
Dr Graham Perry (Churchill, Avon)  
Norman Wilson (Warwick)  
Tom Sampson (Lapworth, Warks)  
\* Jonathan Sheehy (Solihull)  
David Simpson (Cardiff)  
Duncan Wilson (Winscombe, Avon)

## Langley Court

Manager: David Higgs  
Phil Butler (West Ewell, Surrey)  
Matthew Freud (London W1)  
Keith Parsons (Caterham, Surrey)  
\* Alan Stockwell (Barnes, London)  
Robert Alexander (Dartford, Kent)  
Andre Genillard (Mayfield, E. Sussex)  
Robin Malcolm (Guildford, Surrey)  
\* Gillian Noble-Jones (East Horsley, Surrey)

## Ormesby Hall

Manager: Syd Jones  
Jim Cairns (Bardsey, W. Yorks)  
Geoffrey Dyer (New Longton, Lancs)  
\* Stephen Pratt (Colne, Lancs)  
Bob Snaddon (Saucie, Alloa)  
Michael Haymes (Carlisle, Cumbria)  
Freddy Markham (Penrith, Cumbria)  
\* Alan Pidcock (Preston)  
Ruth Pratt (Colne, Lancs)

## Bowdon CC

Manager: Chris Hudson  
Kirsten Balogun (Stafford)  
Andrew Langley (Rotherham, S. Yorks)  
Mart Martin (Alsager, Staffs)  
\* Howard Taylor (Manchester)

## Denzell Gardens

Manager: Chris Hudson  
John Brisby (Little Haywood, Staffs)  
Mike Galloway (Buxton, Derbys)  
Paul Hassall (Newcastle, Staffs)  
\* Oliver Linton (Bridgnorth)  
Roger Burton (Shrewsbury)  
Mike Hawthorn (Stafford)  
Martin Quayle (Stockport, Gtr M/cr)  
\* Jonathan Rathbone (Ruthin, Clywd)

## Winchester CC

Manager: Les Chapman  
\* David Blackwell (Selsey, W. Sussex)  
John Bramhall (Chiswick Village, London)  
W.G. Howell (Southampton)  
Arthur Nelson (Fleet, Hants)  
G.W. Chubb (Mapledurwell, Hants)  
Xanthe Critchett (Oxford)  
P. Knapman (Oxford)  
\* Will Steadman (Somerton)

## Hughenden Manor

Manager: Chris Hudson  
John Anstey (Northampton)  
T.A. Backhouse (Ascot, Berks)  
\* John Bone (High Wycombe, Bucks)  
Keith Goodship (Enfield, Essex)  
\* Andrew Brown (London W5)  
Simon Jacot (London W11)  
Allan Proctor (Farnham Royal, Berks)  
Marc Thompson (Oxford)

## Wrest Park

Manager: Chris Hudson  
Malcolm Daines (Borehamwood, Herts)  
John Goose (Spalding, Lincs)  
Phil Holcombe (Cambridge)  
\* Alex Lever (Cambridge U)  
David Hart (Digby, Lincs)  
\* W/Cdr Bryn Lewis (Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk)  
Derek Morgan (Derby)  
Andrew Prevost (Rochford, Essex)

