

Schools & Universities

Oxford University Cuppers 1988

Report by Ben Webster

Cuppers, the inter-collegiate knock-out tournament held in Trinity term, was once again keenly competed in 1988. The enthusiastic response, with 64 teams and over 250 players entering, was no doubt partly generated by the laced cherry of champagne prizes, courtesy of Laurent-Perrier.

The matches in Cuppers are played throughout the summer term, and on a variety of lawns. The latter range from the flat and well manicured, to those where alarming gradients, elephant grass and the odd tree or bush between hoops make life all the more entertaining. As a result the home advantage is considerable, and even the most experienced University players can be overcome on foreign 'lawns' by relative newcomers to the game. Some, whose lust for champagne ended only in the procuring of sour grapes, might see this as a factor in Keble's victory this year. Each match consists of 2 games of doubles: one at home and one away.

The usual pre-draw gerrymandering occurred, with colleges putting their best players in their third or fourth teams in the hope of gaining an easy run through to the finals. Keble, however, somewhat speciously demonstrated that honesty is the best policy, for by the masterly double bluff of putting their strongest side as their first team, they succeeded in luring other colleges into the fatal error of underestimating Keble 1.

Owing to this, Keble sailed easily through their early rounds, whilst in the other half of the draw a clash occurred early on between two Oxford croquet Titans: Balliol and Wadham (the former being last year's losing finalists, the latter being this year's losing finalists). A fine roquet shot from University number two, David Orchard (which certain Balliol supporters considered a little too fine), put paid to Balliol's aspirations in Cuppers '88. The Club was sorry to see Doctor Ian Plummer depart from the competition without a sip of Laurent-Perrier champagne passing his lips.

In the semi-finals Wadham beat New College, and Keble finally overcame St John's after recovering from a strong attack by Mark Wormald in the first leg. The final took place on Keble's Liddon quad in glorious sunshine with the two legs played simultaneously on separate lawns.

The match did not produce such a nail-biting finish as occurred last year, but in one leg, David Orchard (Wadham) held Mike Ainley-Walker and William Lock (Keble) to victory by only one point (19/18). By this time, however, the game on the other lawn had decided the match, with Richard Colthurst and Ben Webster overcoming Wadham (whose pair included University player, Andy King) by 26 points to 8. Final score was 45/26 to Keble.

The fact that this was Keble's third successive



The winning team with their prizes, kindly provided by sponsor Laurent-Perrier.

Cuppers victory indicates the hereditary nature of college croquet, with experienced players teaching novices, and skills being passed on, as it were, genetically. But through their loss of blues player Richard Colthurst, and two other players having the pressure of finals in Trinity Term 89, Oxford's croquet cognoscenti predict a collapse of Keble's recent domination. Keble, of course, fully intend to prove them wrong.

THE 1989 CROQUET CLASSIC

This year's Croquet Classic will run on similar lines to last time. So if you've just started to play croquet, why not have a go.

Men and women, boys and girls, every age group - all are welcome. That's half the fun. Even if you feel you're far too inexperienced, there's no need to worry; anyone who has ever been handicapped at 18 or below is barred from competition - just to cut out the very serious types!

You can enter as an individual, and be matched with near neighbours in your early matches. Or you can get together with your friends and enter as a group. Once your own group competition has been decided, the winner then joins the relevant round of the national event.

The first two years of this competition have been a lot of fun, meeting new people, hosting matches, visiting stately homes for Regional Finals, and then the climax of the National Final with all its thrill and excitement.

Clubs can run a group competition for members who join them early in the new season, or indeed, for any of their members whose handicap is not yet 18. Club members can run their own competition for their friends who 'dabble' at croquet in their own gardens. Local newspapers can be persuaded to run sponsored 'qualifying rounds' to help with club recruitment



The scene at Polesden Lacey during the 1988 National Final.



Gillian Noble-Jones, one of last year's sixteen National Finalists.

drives.

Last year's Croquet Classic saw group entries from local garden croquet leagues, hotels, universities, schools, croquet clubs, businesses, polytechnics, and croquet-playing neighbours, as well as individual entries from garden croquet players all over the country. This year we anticipate that even more people will take up the challenge.

Many enthusiastic garden players have joined their local clubs as a direct result of entering the Croquet Classic. Some of them have even formed their own croquet clubs in areas where no facilities were available. Others are already appearing in CA tournaments all over the country. So take this opportunity to enjoy yourself and bring the fun of croquet to others.

Entry fees: Individual £5.00; Groups (minimum 8 players) £25.00. Entry forms will be available in early March and can be obtained from Chris Hudson, The Oaklands, Englesea Brook, Near Crewe, Cheshire, CW2 5QW (Tel: 0270-820296) or from your Club Secretary.



Tony Whyte preparing for a croquet shot at Oxford.

The result was 4-2 to Bishop Vesey's, who won 3 singles and 1 doubles game. Their win was finally clinched when Richard Southgate made six hoops in the last 20 minutes to come from 4 down to win 22-20 on time.

The second match was played at Bishop Vesey's and the school fielded their '2nd' team, this time with Tony Whyte as captain. Oxford went down 6-0, with Al Griffiths staging a late recovery for the school to win 26-15 after being 13-15 down, Alope Kapur winning 12-10 (from 9-10), and Andy Nickerson 11-10.

Still, all is not lost for Oxford. Tony Whyte went up to Merton in October to read Law, and this season will no doubt be playing for the other side!

Bishop Vesey's score twice against Oxford

Report by David Isgrove

Bishop Vesey's scored two wins in their matches against Oxford last year.

In the first match, played at Oxford, Bishop Vesey's fielded their 1st team, which included Stewart Hemus (Junior GB squad), Richard Southgate (later to win the All-England), Tony Whyte and Neil Ashcroft.

CROQUET

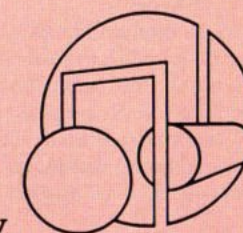


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Hurlingham: 16th - 23rd July

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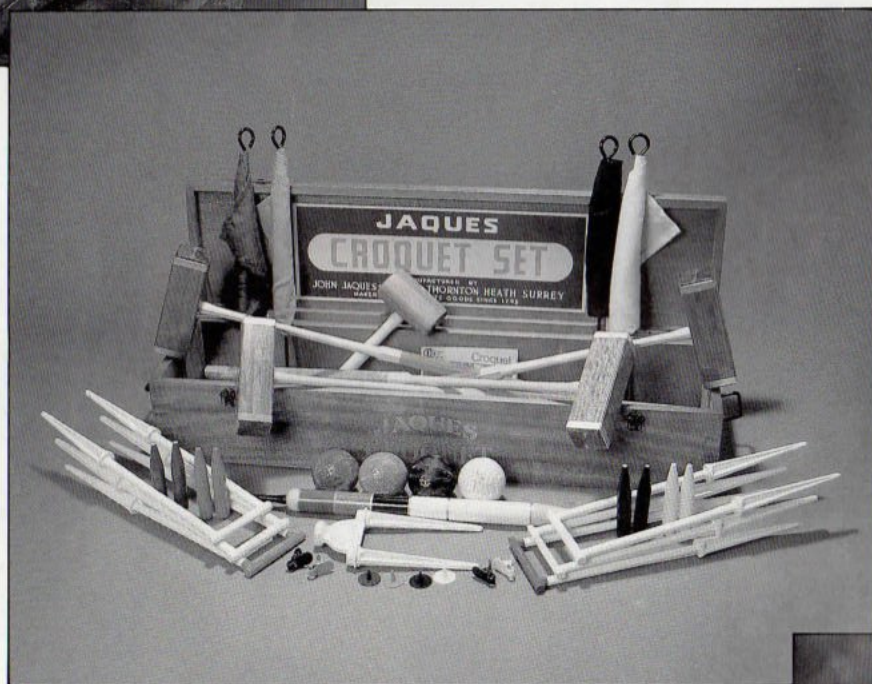
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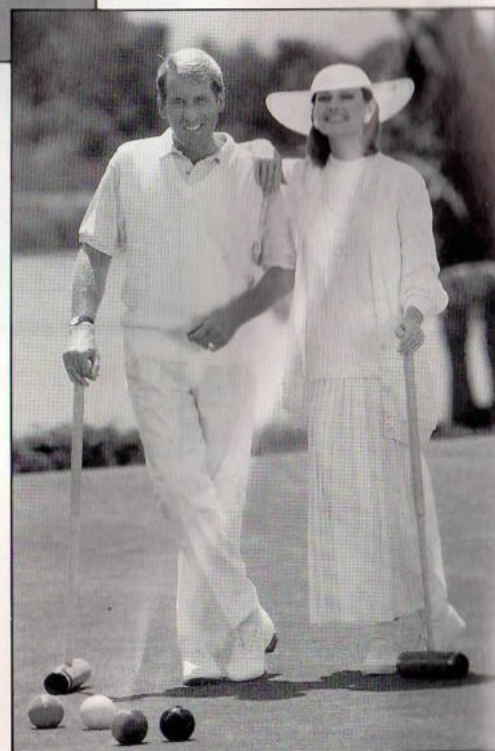
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'CROQUET'

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

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Editorial

TARGET 2000!

We stand a very good chance of reaching 2000 members for the first time for many years at the end of this season. This represents a doubling of membership over the past four years, and means that about 50% of all club members will then be members of the CA.

Details of this season's recruitment scheme were given on page 3 in our last issue, and several clubs have already undertaken to give positive encouragement to their members to join the CA during the coming season. Lansdown, under their Secretary Monica Catling, have already recruited three more members for the CA and earned their first £12 membership voucher before the end of January - a very good effort indeed!

Perhaps we need to spell out the advantages of joining the CA nowadays. Besides this magazine appearing regularly on your doormat, membership offers quite considerable discounts on books, equipment, coaching courses, tournament fees, and weathersuits, and provides free entry to Hurlingham to watch CA competitions. We hope that many members will take advantage of this to come to Hurlingham in July to watch the inaugural World Croquet Championship, made possible by a recent sponsorship deal we have completed with Continental Airlines.

Elsewhere in this issue you will find details of the Championship and some information about Continental Airlines. Their generous sponsorship will enable 10 of the top overseas players to fly to this country to compete in the Championship which will be combined with the British Opens. We hope that a full field of 80 players will take part, and that we shall all be treated to a feast of first-class play.

This issue sees a debate about the size of prize money which is highly pertinent. The latest issue of the 'Croquet Calendar', a US croquet magazine, carries a list of the 1988 US Prize Money Winners. It points out that thirteen prize money croquet tournaments held in the United States and Canada were reported in the 'Calendar' in 1988, compared with one major purse tournament in 1987.

The total purse in 1988 was \$75,350, compared to \$15,000 in 1987. Top money winner was the Canadian, Reid Fleming, who picked up \$6775 from 5 tournaments, followed by Neil Spooner with \$5725. Three more players won over \$5000, a further four won over \$4000. Top earner from our side of the water was Fred Rogerson of Ireland, who won \$1625.

The 'Calendar' comments that professional croquet is still fragile and without central control, but years from now, looking back, we may see 1988 as the last days of a golden age of amateur-

Photographs in this issue by: John Airey, Iris Dwerryhouse, David Higgs, John Hobbs, Chris Hudson, Ray Jones, John McCullough, Jean Nash, Gary Norman, Vernon R. Place, Leslie Riggall, The Sports Council, and John Walters.

Front Cover: Some of the world's top players who may be seen in action in the Continental



Tim Haste, Manager of the Continental Airlines 1st World Croquet Championships.

ism. I hope not, as I believe that amateurs and professionals can exist perfectly well side by side. Both have a contribution to make to the game, and the advent of the World Croquet Federation should do much to ensure that a healthy outlook prevails on this topic as on many others.

CHRIS HUDSON

NOTICE OF AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the Croquet Association will be held at The Hurlingham Club on Saturday, 22nd April, 1989, commencing at 11am.

Details of the Agenda are given on Page 11 of this magazine.

Members should note that only those who have paid their 1989 subscriptions are entitled to vote.

SOLOMON TROPHY

The Great Britain and Ireland team for the Solomon Trophy match against the U.S.A. in Palm Beach in April will be as follows:

D.K. Openshaw (Capt.), K.M.H. Aiton
M.N. Avery, P. Cordingley
R.I. Fulford, M. Murray

May their endeavours be successful!

Airlines World Croquet Championship at Hurlingham this July. (Left to right, top to bottom): Bob Jackson, Joe Hogan, Nigel Aspinall, Steve Mulliner, Paul Skinley, Neil Spooner, Phil Cordingley, John Prince, Reg Bamford, William Prichard, David Openshaw, Graham Beale, Mark Avery, Johnny Osborne, Alan Cleland and Chris Clarke.

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Prize Money & Professionalism

Dear Sir,
Seeing that it is a new year, let me not be uncharitable in thinking that your Cheltenham correspondent seeks to fly a kite anonymously on prize money, but rather that the Editor could not decipher his or her signature.

The satisfaction of progressing from being a winner of a Lassale watch in the Classic two years ago to now having a handicap in single figures has been enormous. The delight in beating my original coach, Donald Gugan, in a club competition, very real. And for one whose previous trophies in the Sporting world have been wooden spoons, the three trophies that temporarily sit on my sideboard provide reminders of games against serious adversaries where we have been demonstrating our respective skills in friendly rivalry, but with the knowledge that, win or lose, the prime object was to have an enjoyable game and most certainly not to win a fat cheque.

Are we now reading the initial reactions on Council's ruling on prize money and professionalism? It is my belief that the possibility of winning a substantial cheque would only introduce thoroughly undesirable elements into the game. I suspect that quite a few players spend a week or more earning £200 (tax free). It is not peanuts. And I illustrate instances to support my view.

Did I not read of the 'A' class player hurling his mallet into the hedge in a fit of pique following defeat in a Tournament? I also remember one double-banked game at Cheltenham, in the pouring rain. I was held up whilst a 'B' class player in the other game played a hampered shot. Perhaps out of sympathy for the referee, he was not called, but standing within three yards or so, I was quite certain that the stroke was a push. The adversary, sheltering in the hut was oblivious of the fault, and the turn continued. At another tournament, my opponent, a 'C' class player, was faced with an acutely angled shot at the hoop. The position was sized up, both from in front and behind the hoop, the player getting down on his hunkers before taking three or four practice swings. There was no doubt in my mind that he would call the referee, but in a flash, the ball was hammered through the hoop and my remonstrations were purely academic. I can only ask, would this type of behaviour not be bound to increase if substantial prize money was at stake?

It is also worth asking what effect these big prizes would have on the

smaller Club's Open Tournaments. At Bristol we stage a thoroughly enjoyable and instructive weekend which attracts a goodly small number of scratch and 'A' class players. Having only three lawns the entry, of necessity, is limited and the prize money modest. Will these players still come or are we, the rank and file of Associates, to be denied the pleasure of witnessing the skills of the Murrays and Goachers of the croquet world, simply because we cannot offer or raise cash for enhanced prize monies?

One is prepared to pay the going rate for Tournaments, but to increase the fees simply to boost prize money would be quite wrong. The whole concept of each player being his own and a joint referee would be placed in jeopardy. After a season or two, I suggest that Managers would cease to worry about double-banking, as entries fell off. Instead, the concern would be to recruit sufficient referees to oversee each stroke in the game - and what a tragedy that would be.

If 'A' class players need the inducement of cash to motivate them, so be it, but let them continue with their commitment to support the smaller Clubs' Open Tournaments. And as for the 'B', 'C', and 'D' class players, let's have no change.

Hamish Hall,
Bristol.

The 'unattributed letter' was written and signed by Andrew Hope. Unfortunately this information got lost in the publishing process and was not noticed at the proof reading stage. Apologies to all concerned - Ed.

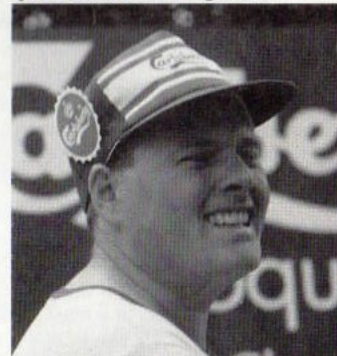
Dear Sir,
Although forewarned, I was still saddened to read the formal announcement of the new-look Western Championships (formerly the Coles) in 'Croquet' issue 201. This is the first step down the slippery slope towards professionalism and I hereby call upon our top 50 players (those who could reasonably expect to obtain automatic entry) to join me in voting against professionalism by not entering this year. Why not instead come to Hunstanton or to an overflow event that I will organise in London if necessary.

I take this opportunity to reply to the announcement from the Cheltenham Club Committee in public since such a critical event must not go undiscussed. Let us examine some of the points from the announcement:

1. I agree with the writer that

tournament entry fees need to finance the long term future of a club and not just wear and tear on equipment. However the event described will net a mere £30 from entry fees (32 entries at £25 less 30% CA levy and £530 prize money), and the discussion of club finances with the statement that 'we are attempting to make the financing of the event independent of the sponsors' is thus a complete red herring. A more realistic entry fee of £12 would net well over £200 with our traditional nominal prizes.

2. An entry fee of £25 would probably be acceptable to the top players, providing that this money was truly going to buying a lawn mower or building a toilet or whatever. Indeed the entry fee for the Open Championships was £27 for singles and doubles combined last year, and still there were people queued on a waiting list.



Richard Hilditch.

3. The comparison of entry fees and prize money back to the 20s and 30s is of course totally meaningless, since any back-calculation based on average income or cost of living would fail to take into account the huge upper class bias of the sport in those days.

4. We all know that the lack of prizes does not prevent us from taking our major events seriously. The Sport is an end in itself.

I realise that the temptation to play in this event is high (not for the money, but because of its prestige and good organisation), but I urge you all to make a stand on a matter of principle in this case. I am sure that many of our top players quietly oppose the CA Council's current attempts to try and buy publicity by prize money that at worse will split our sport asunder. The Cheltenham Club are simply acting as a pawn in that plan.

I urge further letters to the Gazette on this subject, since we were unfortunately unable to take up the matter at a club conference this winter.

Richard Hilditch,
Harrow.

Dear Sir,

The strong preferences for amateur croquet expressed by Richard Hilditch and Hamish Hall are worthy of respect. However, may I draw attention to an alternative viewpoint and express my disappointment that the tactics of the picket line are attempting to invade the world of croquet. Calls for boycotts or similar demonstrations are liable to substitute the real harm of schism for the hypothetical dangers associated by some with professionalism.

For many players, including myself, the game is indeed reward enough and prize money is completely incidental. I have no ambition to become a croquet professional or to devote what holiday I do not spend with my family to attempting to win prize money other than titles. Equally, I have a mild ambition to compete in an American money tournament to see what it is like and I would have no embarrassment about accepting any prize money that I won. However, even if I personally felt extreme embarrassment or distaste about accepting substantial prize money, I would not expect my views to be shared by other players or imposed on them if they disagreed with me. The situation of a career banker playing croquet for recreation is very different from that of a youngster with no obvious asset other than a shining talent for croquet.

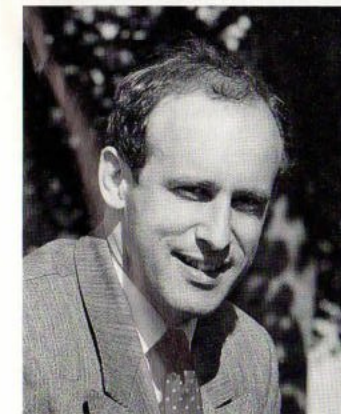
What right have I to stand in his way if he seeks fame and fortune as a croquet professional? What right have Richard Hilditch or Hamish Hall, for that matter? Unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the advent of prize money and/or professionalism will be destructive, the fact that A finds complete satisfaction in improving his game or decorating his sideboard has no bearing on whether B should restrict himself to similar ambitions. The statement 'The game should be sufficient reward' is rather smug and invites the reply 'Speak for yourself'.

Where is the evidence that the advent of professionalism would damage the game played by amateurs, the great majority of us? We should approach this matter free from prejudice. There is evidence available, from games such as lawn bowls, rackets and real tennis, which pours cold water on the assertion that the arrival of substantial prize money and professionalism would lead to an inevitable collapse in standards of behaviour. On the contrary, the emergence of a corps of professional

coaches would be a significant benefit to players and clubs alike. Lawn bowls went 'open' in 1976. The impact on the ordinary club bowler has been small, albeit entirely beneficial through the improvement of facilities and coaching.

It should be noted that within the last two years, both the Australian Croquet Association and the New Zealand Croquet Council have abolished any distinction between amateurs and professionals. While I would not assert that there are no dangers of any kind associated with the advent of professionalism, I believe that the CA and its governing body have the will and the ability to control the new environment. The real dangers lie in fighting yesterday's battles and exposing the game to schismatic tensions which it can and should avoid.

Stephen Mulliner,
Haslemere.



Stephen Mulliner

Dear Sir,

Having just read Richard Hilditch's excellent, if ample, letter (Issue 201) I was appalled to read the final paragraph of the letter from Cheltenham Croquet Club which states 'We believe that tournament play is too cheap in this country and that entry fees, prizes and, of course, profit to the clubs, should all increase substantially if Croquet is to have a healthy future'.

I have not played at Cheltenham (I can't afford to) but at the various tournaments at which I have played I have never known anyone to be in the slightest interested in the value of the prize money. While a typical weekend entry fee of say £7-50 is not itself a large amount, the overall cost of travelling, accommodation and food adds up considerably and I can see no justification for the claim that tournament play is 'too cheap' unless, of course, the Cheltenham Club wish to deliberately restrict entrance to the rich elite.

The writers place a heavy em-

phasis on club's 'profit'. This may be a trendy concept but the implication of making money for money's sake may not appeal to all sponsors or indeed tournament players.

The future health of Croquet lies in its players, not its bank accounts.

Andrew Beck,
Ipswich.

Dear Sir,

I write in reply to the letter in issue 201 of the gazette about the new Dunnett Ward Cheltenham Open Championships.

I appreciate that clubs may feel the need to increase entry fees for tournaments in order to swell club funds, but I oppose the idea of increasing fees in order to give larger sums in prize money.

Many sports, like football and tennis, can be exploited as commercial spectacles. The money this brings in supports many professional players, but inevitably alters the spirit in which contests between them take place, as the result is more to them than just the outcome of a game. Whether the overall balance here is good or bad I do not claim to know, but the Cheltenham proposal seems to me to risk the disadvantages without prospect of the benefit.

There is no immediate likelihood of people queueing at the turnstiles to pay to watch Aspinall against Mulliner. Why chance the introduction of 'needle' by getting players to compete for substantial sums of their own money? Croquet is not a big enough sport to be divided between the elite who play for money, and the Sunday afternooners who play for fun.

The suggestion in the Cheltenham letter that the sums suggested represent a return in real terms to the entry fees and prize money of the 1930s prompts me to wonder whether we want to go back to a situation where croquet is the preserve of the better off in our society. I don't agree that tournament play is particularly cheap when it involves travelling to a club some distance away and accommodation for the weekend.

I play in tournament croquet to enjoy games which are competitive whilst in progress, but not so much so that I feel compelled to watch my opponent in play if something really interesting is happening on the next lawn. After the game I want to have a friendly chat with my opponent and others about the vagaries and delights of our game, not sit knowing I would be able to afford to get a colour television if only I hadn't missed a two-yard roquet after rover.

I hope that anyone who shares

these motivations will join me in expressing the hope that modest entry fees and nominal prize money continue.

Jeremy Short,
Parsons Green C.C.

Stop Rush?

Dear Sir (or indeed Madam??), It is one thing for 'Dorothy Rush' to write fictional articles anonymously, but should we allow her to make serious criticism ('Straight Rush', Croquets passim) under this pseudonym? How long before he/she, or indeed another, is permitted to boldly libel under pseudonyms such as John Walters and Eric French?

Andrew Beck,
Ipswich.

Making Mallets

Dear Sir,
May I correct a printer's error in the third paragraph of my letter published in the November issue of 'Croquet'.

'Soft plastic' should have read 'solid plastic', a very important difference, because the nylon I

recommended is very hard and tough.

I did experiment with other plastics. One from New Zealand was very hard but too brittle, as the plastic end plates broke under punishment.

I tried various types of the softer tough material polyurethane, but even the hardest polyurethane available was rather soft for a mallet head, although useful for those who find croquet rolls and pass rolls difficult.

Polyurethane has been tried for croquet balls, but the bounce was very low as the material is not hard enough. We must hope that a suitable material to make solid plastic balls will be found soon, because the traditional balls are very expensive to make, and the thin skin over a totally different material causes problems.

Leslie Riggall,
Kloof, SA.

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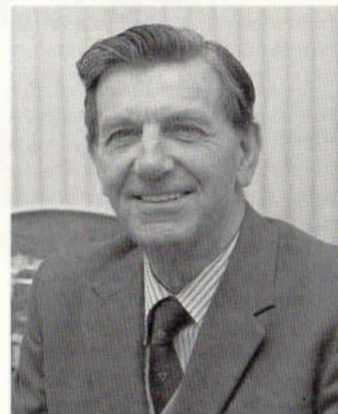
Your Letters

Contacts all the way

Dear Sir,
I was interested to read Leslie Riggall's suggestion for improving the laws of advanced play. I have long thought that croquet, at least in the 'A' class, was too much of a shooting match and depended too little on the other skills of the game. This applies not only to the top-flight players, who are generally very good shots, but more so to the average player who expects to hit only 29% of 16½yd shots according to Dr Grundy's observations (see Gazette No 182, November 1985, page 21), and hence only 50% out of the two, or 64% out of the three lift shots that he normally gets.

In few other games (billiards and snooker excepted) does the amount of play depend so drastically on the ability of the player. Indeed, in golf, the weaker player actually gets more strokes than his stronger opponent. Why should a player, on his Saturday afternoon off, be in danger of sitting out the whole time watching his opponent play, when his only sin is that he failed to hit a lift shot.

To improve the game (for all players, including handicap games - why not?) I would go further than Leslie Riggall. I would grant a con-



Allen Parker.

tact every time either one-back or four-back is made by the opponent, AND I would not allow the possibility of making both one-back and four-back in the same turn with the first ball to make one-back. Furthermore peeling partner through one-back or four-back would not circumvent the contact.

These arrangements would still encourage the triple peel, while giving the opponent at least one innings, and for average players, who do not triple peel, at least two innings. They would also make for more interesting laying up after making one of the contact hoops. Allen Parker, Parkstone.

Obituary

Nell Tyldesley

Many people throughout the Croquet world will be saddened by the news of the death of Nell Tyldesley. Nell died peacefully on the 26th November, 1988, after a twelve month illness which she bore with great fortitude.



She joined the Ellesmere Club in Worsley over thirty years ago, primarily to play bridge, but as there was no House membership, she joined the Croquet section. In those days the sequence game was played by the Ellesmere ladies. Together with her late husband, Jack, she visited other clubs where she discovered a very different

kind of game. Not only did Nell master Association croquet but she brought it back to Ellesmere and successfully converted the ladies to it - quite a fait accompli! Nell became a very good player. She was a great competitor and gave much confidence and encouragement to all those she taught and played with. She also played very good and competitive bridge.

Nell was Secretary at Ellesmere for many years and realised the importance of getting together with other clubs. The organising of 'friendlies' for a few seasons made her acutely aware of the necessity for a Federation. After long discussions with the then one and only Federation, the West Midlands, and with much help from Barbara Meacham and Liz Neal, Nell formed the Northern Federation in 1973. She was its Chairman for eight years and the North's first representative on Council. During her period of Chairmanship, Croquet in the North progressed from weakness to quite formidable strength.

Nell will be remembered for her great tenacity of purpose and her tireless work in the development of the game she loved so much. She will be sadly missed by her many friends.

Pat Hague.

Coaches Corner

Coaching Comments

By Bill Lamb

As most tournaments nowadays use double-banking as a means of increasing the number of games which can be played, it is important to be aware of the customs and conduct in such games. A guide to conduct is given in Appendix 2 of the Laws and Regulation book, part of which is reproduced below.

1. General

The players of each game should be aware of the course of play in the other game at all times, but especially when stepping on to the court. In particular, they should not cross another player's line of aim.

2. Expedition in Play

Players should be especially conscious of the need for expedition in play. In doubles play, mid-court conferences should be avoided if possible.

3. Precedence

(a) If one player is making a break, he should normally be given precedence. (b) If two players are approaching the same hoop and both are making breaks, precedence should normally be given to the player who is most likely to get clear of the hoop first (subject to 4(c) below).

(c) If two players are approaching the same hoop but neither is making a break, precedence should normally be given to the player who has made the first roquet towards the hoop.

4. Marking

(a) All players should carry ball markers (e.g. small coins). (b) If a ball from the other game is not in a critical position and might interfere with a player's next stroke, its position

may be marked and it may be removed temporarily with the permission of the players of the other game. Examples of critical positions include positions in or near hoops, wired positions and some positions on or near the yard line.

(c) If a ball from the other game is in a critical position and might so interfere, the player should normally interrupt his turn until it has been removed in the normal course of play in the other game.

By following the above guide you should be able to avoid the kind of 'After you Claude - No, after you Cecil' which can occur. In particular, if you have just stepped on to the court to start your turn, it is far better to mark one or more of the balls in your game than to rush a shot to get it out of the way.

Note that you need the permission of the players in the other game (normally the in-player) before marking a ball. Critical positions near hoops are fairly obvious but a ball in an apparently open position could have been left wired by the double-banker.

When marking a ball it should not be necessary to screw or press it down into the turf first: good lawns should be preserved and not pock marked, however temporary the impression may be.

Finally, when removing a ball temporarily, you should never place it in a hoop or tight against the peg. The reason is that it would then be impossible to determine what would have happened to a ball from either game, should it collide with the removed ball. If you are worried that you may forget to replace a ball, it is far better to remove it from the court; its absence will soon be noticed.

1989 Coaching Courses

Courses for Players

Grade 2 Courses
Grade 2 courses are intended for players in the handicap range 6 to 14. Past experience has shown that most players attending these courses subsequently achieve substantial reductions in handicap.

Courses will take place at the following venues:

| | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| Bristol | 29/30 April |
| Budleigh Salterton | 30 April/1 May |
| Hunstanton | 13/14 May |
| Ormesby Hall | 13/14 May |
| Southport | 13/14 May |

Course Fee:
£15 for CA Associates.
£25 for non-Associates.

Grade 3 Courses

Two courses have been arranged with a different emphasis at each.

The Bowdon course is intended for the player in the handicap range 2½ to 6.

The Colchester course is intended for the 'A' class player or near 'A' class player who has the desire and potential to become a 'minus' player.

| | |
|------------|-----------|
| Colchester | 13/14 May |
| Bowdon | 20/21 May |

Course Fee:

£20 for CA Associates.
£30 for non-Associates.

How to Apply

1. Applications for Grade 2 and Grade 3 courses should be made to Bill Lamb, 5 Bondyke Close, Cottingham, N. Humberside, HU16 5ND, enclosing a cheque for the appropriate amount payable to 'The Croquet Association'.

2. State your name, address, tel. no., club, handicap and your category of CA

membership (standard, veteran, junior, youth or non-tournament).

Courses for Coaches

GRADE 1

Aspiring Grade 1 coaches should be:

1. Handicap 14 or lower.
2. CA Associates.
3. Prepared to coach at least one group of beginners per year.

Course Fee: £3.00

Applications should be made to the Regional Coaching Officer, who will arrange a Seminar at a mutually convenient date.

GRADE 2

Aspiring Grade 2 coaches should be:

1. Handicap 6 or lower.
2. CA Associates.
3. Referees.
4. Prepared to coach outside their own clubs.

Course Fee: £3.00

GRADE 3

Aspiring Grade 3 coaches should be:

1. Handicap 1 or lower.
2. Referees.
3. CA Associates.
4. Prepared to coach on a regional or national basis.

Course Fee: £3.00

Courses for Grade 2 and Grade 3 coaches will be held in conjunction with the appropriate Courses for Players. Please note, however, that the Course for Coaches will start at 8pm on the evening preceding the opening day of the Course for Players.

Applications should be made to: Bill Lamb, 5 Bondyke Close, Cottingham, N. Humberside, HU16 5ND (Tel: 0482-840739), enclosing the course fee.

Continental Airlines to Sponsor first World Croquet Championship

Continental: The First Fifty Years

On July 15th Varney Speed Lines first took to the skies: four men piloting two airplanes. It operated between Denver-Pueblo-Las Vegas -Sante Fe-Albuquerque and El Paso, carrying passengers, mail and express parcels.

In terms of passengers it was an inauspicious start. Nine in the first two weeks to be exact. In the same year a Lockheed Orion took the first step to becoming the biggest carrier to Mexico: a flight from Los Angeles to Mexico City. The airline's founder Walter Varney had flying in his blood (this was his fourth attempt to get airborne) but alas, not money in the bank. One of his co-founders, Louis Mueller, did and it was he who now took the controls.

1937

Mueller was joined by Robert F. Six, who became President and remained so for 44 years.

It was he who changed the name from Varney Speed Lines to Continental and the company slogan from 'America's fastest Airline' to the more modest, realistic 'Fly the Old Sante Fe Trail'. A new logo also appeared. An American Pueblo Indian head, reflecting the Rocky Mountain origins of the airline. The number of employees rose from eight to sixteen. Continental was still a very small link in the complex air transport network now covering all of America.

1940

World War II brought financial stability to Continental. The Airline was commissioned to modify over 2000 aircraft for military purposes. The days of flying on a wing and a prayer were over. By 1944 passenger revenue exceeded that from mail. Kansas City, Topeka, San Antonio and Tulsa among others became destinations.

1951

In 1951 Houston, later to become the airline's home base, was added to the network giving it control of the American South West. Elsewhere Continental was building up an enviable technical reputation.

It was the first US airline to instal radar equipment on every plane. And it was the pioneer of 'progressive maintenance' which allowed aircraft to be serviced in stages without being out of action for long periods of time.

The Continental name became synonymous with quality and innovative air travel.

The airline began service on the coveted Chicago-Denver-Los

Angeles route in 1957, rolling out Gold Carpet Service (right down to the gold carpet on the tarmac) and introducing Directors of Passenger Service, the airborne equivalent of hotel managers.

1964

In 1964, the airline was once again commissioned for military service, this time in Vietnam. For ten years a subsidiary, Continental Air Services played a vital role in airlifting food, building materials and troops. The success of this operation resulted in the formation of Air Micronesia.

Between 1966 and 1978 growth was dramatic with the first international service, to the Pacific, beginning in 1968.

And on October 13 1978 a DC10 flew for the first time from Los Angeles to Taipei in the Pacific, via Honolulu and Guam. Six months later, Continental made it possible to fly from Honolulu to Sydney, via Pago and Auckland, for \$300 round trip.

Deregulation had already become law, spelling the end of protected routes and the introduction of fierce competition. Continental's costs, like those of all the major airlines, had spiralled and after four years of attempting to cut these costs the airline was purchased by Texas International Airlines, retaining the Continental identity.

Immediately a plan was put into effect to put the airline back on its feet. However if Continental was to survive, a more radical direction was called for. On September 24th 1983, Continental took the biggest gamble of its 43 years - it filed for re-organisation under Chapter 11.

Texas Air Corporation

Three days later the airline resumed domestic operations, however it never stopped flying its international routes. At first only selected cities were served at a \$49 one-way fare. Over the next few months the airline became profitable. By the end of 1984 Continental was flying to 70 cities, the workforce was up to 10,000 and profits registered at \$50.3 million.

The airline industry had witnessed perhaps the most remarkable recovery in aviation history.

Upon acquisition of Eastern Airlines, and Continental's absorbing Peoples Express, Frontier, and New York Air, Texas Air Corporation became the largest airline group in the Western world.



A Continental Airlines Boeing 747 parked ready for flight.

Today's Continental

In 1985 Continental took another major step forward. It started its first service across the Atlantic, a daily flight from London to Houston.

It was only the beginning. Early in 1987 London to New York was added. Then London to Denver. Followed by London to Miami. And finally Paris to New York.

In total Continental daily departures number more than 1550, involving over 347 aircraft and a total

of over 35,000 employees. Every day, more than 109,000 people fly Continental from the 109 domestic airports and 32 international cities serviced by the airline.

However one thing hasn't changed. Continental still offers 'more for less' just as it did 53 years ago.

A simplified, low fare pricing structure combined with the highest standards of service. Add the ability to innovate at every level and you have an irreplaceable force in the airline industry.

The World Croquet Championship

The CA has concluded an agreement with Continental Airlines under which the airline will sponsor a World Croquet Championship in England in 1989.

Under the deal, free air travel will be provided for 10 of the World's best players to travel to Hurlingham to compete in these championships, the first ever to be officially recognised by the recently formed World Croquet Federation.

Preliminary planning for the World Championships has been carried out by an ad-hoc Committee consisting of the Chairman of the International Committee and the Chairman of the Tournament Committee. Council has agreed that the best way to organise the Championship is to combine it with the British Open Championships at Hurlingham and Surbiton, so that the winner will hold both titles.

Application has been made to the World Croquet Federation for the event to be given the status of a 'World Championship' and this has

been approved by the WCF's member associations.

The total entry for the event will be limited to 80 singles and 32 doubles pairs. Allowing for up to 14 overseas entries (the 10 nominated players and up to 4 'wild card' foreign entries) this will allow 66 places for players from Great Britain and Eire.

The 32 singles entries with the lowest grade will play in the first round on Saturday, July 15th, at venues other than Hurlingham (eg. Surbiton, Wrest Park, Roehampton and Harrow). Losers of these matches will qualify for the Plate as usual. The remaining rounds will be held at Hurlingham and Surbiton from 17th to 23rd July.

Spectators are welcome to visit Hurlingham during these Championships. CA members can obtain entry on production of a current CA membership card. Non-members can obtain tickets (price £5.00) in advance from Brian Macmillan at the CA Office.

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Ban the Bad Roll Stroke!

Some Research by Neil Griffin

Eric Solomon is not unique in his concern over the roll-stroke. He and others having pioneered the application of physics and statistics to croquet, this article studies the mechanics of the roll stroke and suggests that 90% of all rolls are suspect, by incorporating an unacceptable degree of push.

Let us apply the principles of physics and in particular the 'Haupermann effect' first observed and studied by Professor Klaus von Bulow Haupermann in a monograph published in 1897. Haupermann was principally concerned with the acoustics of the organ and the transverse flute.

The effect can be illustrated in layman's terms as follows. If you strike a bell it gives out a clear note which then begins to waver in pitch. This effect is often produced by violinists and other instrumentalists of the modern music school and is called vibrato. Here we consider its application to croquet.

Consider a croquet ball. Its initial resonance is nil. When struck by the mallet it begins to vibrate at a certain frequency. Let us call it F. In this sense the ball is like any other ideophone. F varies according to the age of the ball and - more significantly - with temperature. This latter effect was studied by Dr

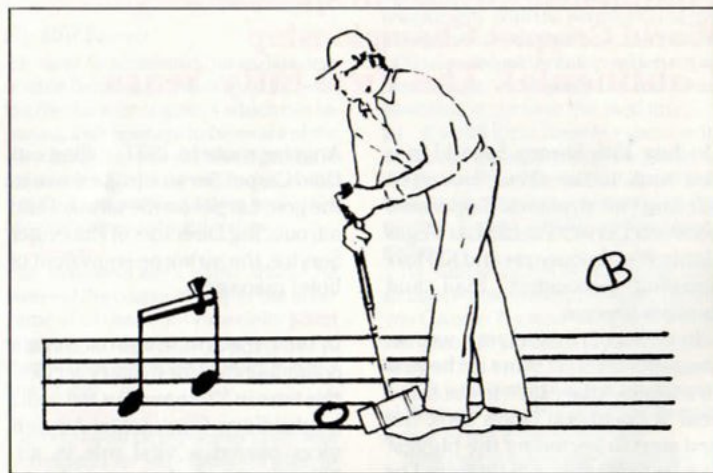
Wilhelm Klott in 1927 who calculated various formulae ('Klott's ratios') whilst researching into the acoustics of the glockenspiel. Klott demonstrated that the Haupermann tonal deviations increase with temperature.

Study by the writer suggests that most croquet balls when struck sound the note D-flat (their fundamental frequency). Some go to C and at one time a well-known English maker was turning out balls in E-flat.

On a hot afternoon the frequency of black can drop to C or even B-sharp.

Two croquet balls placed for a roll will be set into motion together by the mallet. They should emit notes of the same frequency which will sound as a unison chord. Then Haupermann's effect will take over and pitch modulation will appear.

However, when the stricken or backward ball is pushed the pitch of the notes will change. The frequency of the striker's ball will not vary but the frequency generated by the striker's ball will increase (sharpen) as the ball is pushed. The greater the push, the sharper the note. This was demonstrated by Dr M.W.L. Hardington in 1967 whilst analyzing the equal-tempered xylophone and its particular



Cartoon by Celia Bucknall.

problems.

The practical effect is that by listening to the chord produced a referee can adjudicate on the clean-ness of a roll-stroke. With a ball in D-flat the clean stroke will be a unison or perhaps the chord D flat-D or Dflat-E double flat. Anything else, such as D flat-E flat or higher is a foul.

Of course, if the balls are of different pitch the clean roll will not sound as a unison. If say black (the striker's ball) is in D-flat and the croquetted ball in E-flat, then a clean roll will still sound as the D flat-E flat chord. The referee must therefore be able to distinguish pitches: in the example above, a foul would be the chord of D flat-E or D flat-F flat.

The author listened to 277 roll-shots during the Budleigh Salterton September weekend. This tournament was selected because the low ambient temperature minimised distortion. The chords were tape recorded and pitch differences between balls equalized by computer. Then they were checked against the notes produced by the organ at St Ethelburga's Abbey, Devon, by kind permission of the Archdeacon of Budleigh Salterton. This organ is eminently suitable for such research because of its 32-foot great bombarde and bass racket stops. In addition the stops are tuned in mean tone temperament which is more accurate for our purposes. In fact A-flat was slightly out of tune but this did not affect the calculations.

Of the roll-shots, only 7 gave a unison chord. Of the remainder, most were either diminished seconds or inverted ninths but one player produced a clear G-sharp, the most blatant push of the afternoon. A-class players were no better: one, on a split-shot, produced a perfect fifth!

CONCLUSIONS

It follows that most roll strokes are suspect. Perhaps the Rules

Committee should meet to consider the position urgently and perhaps to hear for themselves the dreadful chords. It may be possible to establish parameters of tonal discord from which an assessment of legality can be made.

It also follows that referees urgently need training to be able to recognise the possible chords which can be produced on a roll-stroke, particularly if the balls are of different fundamental pitches (eg. a red in D-flat taking croquet from a blue in E-flat) when the legal chord will not be in unison.

Referees will need to carry a pitch-pipe or tuning fork to test the fundamental frequency of balls before a questionable stroke is played.

Examining referees must ensure that all candidates have training in elementary musical theory and an ability to recognize chords. Tournament and International referees will need to be accomplished performers on a variable-pitch instrument like the violin or trombone, or one where the pitch can be varied by embouchure control - such as a flute. No referee should officiate unless satisfied on that point.

In a future article I hope to develop these scientific arguments in relation to other strokes and in particular to study the crush-stroke.

NOTE: Referees who are trying to acquire the requisite musical ear should *only* listen to chords played on an organ tuned in mean tone temperament. Most keyboards and pianos are tuned in equal temperament which is no use for this purpose. Do not use diapason, reed, or mixture stops.

REFERENCES

Haupermann, C von B. 'Vibrato, tremolo and the transverse flute: a study in diapason tuning'. Monatshefte für Musikgeschichte vol ix (1897) (tr. D. Hamilton-Miller, 1957).

Continued on Page 9

NORWICH Progress at Norwich Report by Nick Harris

Several letters in the latest issue of 'Croquet' have prompted this report on Norwich in the hope that it will be of some use to other clubs in their search for progress and development.

After some 5 years of limited use of a very expensive single lawn on a bowling green we are about to move to all day every day use of two almost full size lawns set out on 3 surplus tennis courts. This move is a result of assiduously courting the Norwich City's Amenities Department with a clear indication of our willingness to promote croquet as fully as possible and offering to run courses for various age ranges promoted by the amenities department themselves (Norwich has full time posts for promoting Women's Activities and Activities for the retired).

Publicity for the club and croquet has been through local radio and press. We have been lucky in that we have had visits by the radio car and up to now practically all of our reports have been published along with some photos. Our reports have attempted to cover both the club and its activities and the successes of local players in Calendar Events. The local Evening News ran a half-page feature on Duncan Reeve and his father John when it pointed out how well Duncan in particular was doing in events and in the rankings.

Although the writing of reports and articles for the press was initially looked upon with some trepi-

dation, it seems to be a lot easier than we might imagine. Our local newspaper seems to be able to cope with handwritten copy, undeveloped B&W film, unsolicited reports and direct contact with feature writers. We plan to spearhead next season's promotion with our 'move', Duncan's 10th place in the rankings, the question of his 'availability' to represent the CA in the Solomon Cup, and an invitation to a feature writer to participate in a coaching session.

The Club Coach already has a full complement of beginners for next season as a result of an all day promotion by the Amenities Department of 'Sport for Women' at the end of last season. He has found that the existence of a formal

start that the 6-week course was only a beginning and that there was lots more to learn and 'loads-a-practice' would be needed. This honesty paid off as those who completed the course joined the club and continued to play and practice even though their initial progress seemed slow. After the two formal 6-week courses were finished the Wednesday evenings were designated 'beginners nights' and the coach attended to run informal sessions. Finally he organised a One Day Short Croquet Tournament for High Bisquers at the end of the season.

At club sessions with only one lawn we found that two Short Croquet settings were a distinct advantage, particularly when



Norwich's winning team (L to R): Bandit Derek Andrews, John Reeve (Captain and Club Secretary), Nick Harris, and John Read pictured at Hunstanton with the Handicap Bowl, the October Bowl, and the EACF Shield respectively.

Coaching Course - 6 Wednesday evenings from 6.00pm onwards, for which we charge £12 which is deductible from the full club subscription should a beginner join - is a major factor in encouraging beginners to take up the game.

Last season he began his own version of 'fostering', as coined by Ross Gillespie, by inviting club members to the final coaching session to meet beginners with the prospect of playing and/or practising with them during the rest of the season. He also used lower handicap club members as extra staff on the course with the purpose of giving the beginner a greater awareness of the club as a club. As and when beginners found that they wished to come to 'Club' sessions we used short croquet settings which they were familiar with and also Alternate Stroke Doubles with High/Low Bisque pairs which was extremely useful for making introductions.

The coach also found it prudent to warn beginners right from the

B Baulk. When double banking first colours start at blue top and second colours start at red top - this allows both games to start simultaneously without any real problems which is particularly useful during our One Day Short Croquet Events where starting at 11.00am we play up to 28 timed games of 55 minutes each by 6.00pm. Clubs with more than one lawn could run such a tournament for their beginners and still have lawns for established players to use.

As only a few of our members have as yet ventured to play in Calendar Events we have tried to stimulate competitive play by running a 'One Day' Event on a Saturday each month from June onwards. All the games, where ratings allow, are included in the Handicap Ratings Competition which is run throughout the season as outlined in the Coaching Handbook. Some 80 games were recorded and there results also form a very useful basis for the Club Handicapper to work from and the 'Blue Book' will be included as part of his records when he seeks upgrading to official CA Handicapper at the end of the next season.

Entering local competitions also serves as a means to introduce newer members to other clubs and though we as yet feel unable to play league games we have managed to win the East Anglian Federation's Northern Area Shield on the last two occasions. We have also inaugurated the 'October Bowl', to be played for on handicap by affiliated clubs in Norfolk, to increase opportunities for competitive play locally. Aided by one still rather tentative Club Handicap we beat Hunstanton a little too well. However we are trying hard to get it right for next season so perhaps we won't do quite so well next time. On the other hand, by then we should have some real bandits coming up from our beginners!

beginners came to play. We adopted a different setting to that proposed by Simon Tuke in the last issue. Based on the fact that the 6th and last hoop was a white top we placed the blue top in its natural position of hoop one on a Baulk but put the red top as for hoop three by

COMPTON Winter Activities Report by James Kellaway

Compton Croquet Club's 90th anniversary dinner, held at the Royal Eastbourne Golf Club on October 28th, was much enjoyed by all those lucky enough to get tickets. It is not for me to mention the after-dinner speeches but I was pleased that I had asked President Tom Entwistle to take the winding-up spot. The laughter he raised admitted no anti-climax. The golf club kindly provided a separate bar, normally a male preserve (one or two of our ladies revealed some unexpected snooker prowess) and even more kindly gave us club

prices.

During the second session, the Committee came to a decision in record time, the decision to make the dinner an annual event. Several weeks later it still seems a good idea. Compton, which has experienced more vicissitudes than most, surviving an evacuation of the town in the last war, is now enjoying a record membership. Monthly meetings are being held during the winter. A croquet quiz is promised for January but first there is a Christmas date at the Princes Hotel with the traditional fare. And croquet at Christmas is a possibility. Two lawns are being kept open for the winter eccentrics.

"Matchplay"

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Federation News

EAST ANGLIAN FEDERATION

Report by Judy Anderson

We are continuing to develop rapidly! It is difficult to keep up with the 'demand' for tuition and coaching and our EACF equipment was on loan at 11 different locations.

A new club has been formed at Downham Market with the enthusiastic Hunstanton member Jonathan Toye in charge there.

A 'Club' has been formed in Chingwell/Buckhurst Hill and we played at Old Loughtonians Hockey Club, but we are searching for a permanent home.



Albert Lawrance, 1987 Croquet Classic finalist, coaches local players at Soham.

Indoor Carpet at Soham

Report by Judy Anderson

The East Anglian Federation organised an Indoor Croquet Weekend at Soham (near Ely) on 14th and 15th January.

Mark Saurin won the Townsend Salver in the main event, which featured 12 of the country's best players. Mark beat Keith Aiton 2-1 in the final, with Nigel Aspinall gaining third place over Robert Fulford in a play-off.

The Swiss was won by Steve Mulliner - and all 12 high ranking players gave us a feast of skills.

Many thanks to player/organiser John Walters for persuading them to come EAST. Also grateful thanks to the Referee (in his own right) Richard Hilditch. We had a great weekend and were delighted to welcome spectators from as far afield as the Midlands, Cheltenham and Plymouth.

Charles Townsend sponsored us with Trophies, and the use of his novel Indoor Equipment - many thanks to him. The full Tournament Report will follow in the next issue of Croquet.

We are very grateful to the CA for the free use of the carpet, also indebted to Albert Lawrance for his inspiration and ability to obtain both Sports Hall and Transport for

the carpet. We certainly hope that the publicity gained will help him to get a strong Croquet Club going at Soham.

At Soham and Bottisham Albert Lawrance has been very active coaching groups with a view to forming clubs, and the indoor carpet came to Soham on 14th/15th Jan 1989.

As you will see from the other items on this page (National Trust, Indoor Carpet, Inter-Federation) - we are very active in the EAST.

PS. Newport (Essex) open their brand new 3 lawns in May. Congratulations and Best Wishes.



Mark Saurin and Keith Aiton, winner and runner-up respectively at the Soham Indoor Weekend.

Inter Federation Croquet East Anglian vs South East

Report by John Hobbs



The participants in the Inter-Federation match at Cassiobury (including the photographer and reporter John Hobbs). East Anglian Federation: John Vick (20), Jill Waters (14), Edward Wheeler (8), John Williams (8), Wally Wortly (14) and John Hobbs (12) (Captain). South Eastern Federation: Roger Best (10), David Collins (12), David Drazin (16), Neville Lisle (8) (Captain), Alan Stockwell (14), and Geoffrey Yonge (10). Referee: Colin Cumming.

This was an experimental friendly match at Cassiobury, on Sunday 14th August 1988.

The sides were made up with one player from each of six clubs, no handicap to be lower than 8 and at least four with handicaps of 10 or more. As one player remarked it gave one a chance to play among people who are not too uncomfortably different in standard.

Being a friendly match there was a conflict between being a good outplayer and getting to know something about most of one's own team and all of the opposition. Everyone obligingly wore a sticky label showing their name and club. However when one is finding out about other clubs' grounds and membership one is not being a good outplayer. As a result John Hobbs and Wally Wortly had a private competition to see who could go through the most wrong hoops - all unobserved by one's partner. Other players enjoyed the extra fun of a lawn with 50% close cut grass and 50% with longer. Those of us from vastly inferior lawns did not notice! It did not seem to trouble the medium range shooting of Geoffrey Yonge who

stormed round in 2½ hours, the only game not to go to time.

According to the impartial and much consulted referee Colin Cumming, the handicaps were just right and there was no 'Aunt Emma' play, although there was some lack of sophistication in the tactics - as befits handicaps ranging from 8 to 20 and averaging 12.

Thanks are due to Robert Bateson for organising coffee and tea and advising the captains on suitable matching of doubles and singles, double banked on both lawns. Thanks also to Cassiobury members for giving up their lawns for the day.

South East led by 3 games at lunch time but the final result was a draw, 4 games all and according to rule 15(b) the East Anglian Federation won by 36 points to 35. But more than that it was an enjoyable day. Timing was also perfect - the heavens opened as the last hoop was being pulled from the ground, where it had been driven (with a generous gap) that morning.

I think at least a return match is indicated!

Essex/Suffolk Croquet League

Report by Pat Hetherington

1988 saw a new name, on the winner's shield for the Essex/Suffolk League. Havering won each of their five matches convincingly to take the title for the first time in their five years in the league. Unfortunately the wet summer meant that not all the matches were completed - one match had to be abandoned at Ipswich because

of flooded lawns and a second match on the same day, at Boxford, was left incomplete when one of the lawns there became unplayable.

Results

- Havering, 5 wins
- Colchester 'A' 3 wins
- Feltingaye 2 wins
- Colchester 'B' 2 wins
- Ipswich 1 win.
- Benting 1 win.

SOUTH WEST FEDERATION

Report by Ray Ransom



The scene at Swindon Croquet Club during their match against Oxford University. In the not-too-distant future, Swindon hope to expand to two new full-size lawns at Wick Farm, with a shared pavilion.

The South West Federation has now completed four years of operations since its formation in the Autumn of 1984. From the outset its purpose has been to act as a focus for the clubs in the South West and to promote the game of croquet throughout the area. Under the leadership of Martin Murray ably assisted by John McCullough, as Secretary, and Ian Maugham, as Treasurer, the membership of the Federation has risen from an initial twelve on formation to a current level of thirty-five clubs with individual playing members exceeding one thousand.

An important role of the Federation is the development of croquet in the region and a major effort is in arranging coaching for the newer clubs and providing advice and assistance in their set-up. The Federation is also able to offer new clubs equipment on loan for the initial years at a nominal charge.

We also like to encourage the

clubs and their playing members to compete in inter-club matches and tournaments and an important activity is to arrange competitions. Two leagues are operated covering different handicap ranges with matches taking place throughout the season and culminating in finals in September. The leagues have always proved to be popular but our organised tournaments did not attract great support, perhaps because of the wealth of CA tournaments in the region, and are no longer part of our calendar.

In 1988 the league programme has been more successful than ever before. Fourteen clubs entered the Federation League (for handicaps 15 and below), four more than in 1987, and twenty-six entered the 'B' League (handicaps 16 and over), again four more than in 1987 although, disappointingly, two withdrew before playing any matches. 1989 looks to be another record for entries. Generally the results

EACF Tournament at National Trust Houses 1988

Moët & Chandon Champagne for the Winners

Report by Judy Anderson

This Tournament again attracted more entries than places. Each Club sends 2 players for this Short Croquet Competition, and we have adapted the format slightly to allow Doubles and Singles games.

The 'Stately Homes' make superb backcloths for croquet, and the players managed to play quite good breaks despite some rather long grass.

Highlight of the season was the 3 mandatory peels achieved by John Walters playing for Ipswich in the final.

The winners of the Tournament were Felixstowe (Bob Sutherland (4) and Brian Jones (18)) with runners-up Cassiobury (Watford) (Eddie Wheeler (8) and Steve Lewis (10)).

We were fortunate to be given champagne again by last years

sponsors Moët & Chandon, so it was bottles for the winners at each venue and magnums at the Final. Many thanks MOET!

Results

- Anglesey Abbey (24/7/88)**
Winners: Felixstowe
Runners-Up: West Park
Also competing: Cambridge University and Cambridge.
- Wimpole Hall (31/7/88)**
Winners: Ipswich
Runners-Up: Bedford Modern
Also competing: Bentley and Havering.
- Winners: Watford**
Runners-Up: Letchworth
Also competing: S.E. Essex and Newport.
- Oxburgh (21/8/88)**
Winners: Bury St Edmunds
Runners-Up: Norwich
Also competing: Thos. Cook and Cromer.
- FINAL**
Ickworth (11/9/88)
Winners: Felixstowe
Runners-Up: Watford
Also competing: Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds.

achieved by the newcomers were encouraging, with the Bear of Rodborough and Taunton Deane, both relatively new clubs, reaching the finals of the Federation League and the 'B' League respectively, although on the day they were beaten by more experienced teams from Nailsea and Bristol.

The Cheltenham & Gloucester Building Society again generously provided sponsorship for the leagues and without this help we would find it difficult to continue. The South West Sports Council were unable to offer any assistance this year. They have been good friends to us in the past, but with current levels of restricted finances they cannot satisfy all the requests they receive. The absence of financial support this year did not prove

League Report

From Iris Derryhouse

In the federation group, 2 matches were played. In the 'B' league, there were 61 matches.

The semi-finals were hosted by the Worcester, Bath, and Kingston Maurward Clubs, and the finals were held at Bristol. The Federation League winner was Nailsea, with the Bear of Rodborough as runners-up. The 'B' League was

won by Bristol, runners-up Taunton. Two new clubs to be commended are Plymouth and Kingston Maurward, who came second in their groups.

A League Golf Croquet tournament was held. Six Clubs held qualifying rounds and the final was played at Sidmouth. Tony Sammons won the Singles, and partnered Ann Sammons to win the Doubles as well.



A Short Croquet tournament was held at Sidmouth in May, open to all the clubs in the South West Federation. It was a popular event, and the photo gives an indication of the player and spectator interest, as well as Sidmouth's lovely surroundings.

AGM AGENDA

(Meeting to be held at Hurlingham on Saturday 22nd April, at 11.00am).

- MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING
The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 23rd April 1988 were published in 'Croquet' (Page 29 No. 198).
- PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS
- CHAIRMAN'S REPORT
- TREASURER'S REPORT
Copies of the Audited Accounts for the year ending 31st December 1988 will be available at the meeting. Copies will be sent to Associates resident in the United Kingdom on request to the Secretary when available.
- ELECTION OF TREASURER
The retiring Treasurer, Mr. A.J. Oldham, offers himself for re-election.
- ELECTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS
In accordance with Rule VI the closing date for the receipt of nominations was 1st February 1989.
The following retire by rotation by Rule ii (a) and seek re-election: D.C. Caporn, P.A. Danks, R.S. Eades, S.N. Mulliner, A.J.

- Olham and C.P. Townsend.
Miss S.G. Hampson and Miss J. MacLeod also retire by rotation but do not seek re-election.
The following seek election under Rule VI (a) (ii): W.T. Coles and M.R. French.
There are thus 8 candidates for 8 vacancies and an election will not therefore be necessary.
- MOTION
By K.M.H. Aiton, seconded by A.B. Hope.
"That Rule 2 of the CA be amended by the insertion of the word 'Wales' after the word 'Domain'."
 - ELECTION OF AUDITORS
Messrs Nicholas Ames & Co offer themselves for re-election.
 - BENEFACTORS' BOOK
The names of the benefactors will be read.
 - ANY OTHER BUSINESS
 - PRESIDENT'S CLOSING ADDRESS

Federation News

YORKSHIRE AND HUMBERSIDE REGION

Report by Ross Gillespie

There are four clubs in the region, of which only the East Riding Club has been established for more than three years, while the York Club was formed this year. So we have a preponderance of new and inexperienced players and only three qualified coaches (two of them in the Hull area) to cover the whole region. Also the Harrogate Club has had to play on one very rough half-sized court and at York there has been only one slightly under-sized court available. So there have been problems.

To help solve these we have done two things. We have held two very successful Newcomers' Tournaments, one in Hull at the East Riding Club's ground and the other at Rowley Manor Hotel, which is the Beverley Club's ground, with 14 and 26 players respectively taking part. These were not run competitively, so that new players were not under any great strain, and as far as possible each one was playing with and against different players in each game. We were lucky in getting good weather on both days and it proved a most enjoyable way

of getting acquainted with other players and of playing in fresh surroundings.

Partly as a result of members of different clubs getting to know each other at these tournaments it has been possible to form a short croquet league for all clubs in the region, including also members of the non-affiliated Shepley Club, most of whose members do not play under the present CA rules, and we are all looking forward to our first season's games in 1989.



A beginners' tournament in progress at Beverley Croquet Club.



Another view of the Beverley lawns.

SOUTHERN REGION

Report by Ken Cotterell

The old established clubs in the Southern Region have always included a high proportion of tied clubs; that is, clubs which are part of a parent organisation that only sees croquet as a minimal part of its activities. They vary from ICI, the Meteorological Office and the Atomic Energy and Weapons Establishments to the private Phyllis Court Club and Oxford University. There are also three 'overseas' clubs in the Channel Islands and the Isle of Wight.

For many years, a league has flourished; its name and coverage has varied but it has included most of the above clubs and one or two others that are now defunct. The usual format has been to play in the

evening, two games at home and two away. This has suited us very well, as most members are not interested in weekend club matches apart from the Longman Cup.

Recently, new clubs of a more conventional kind have been started, notably at High Wycombe, Winchester and Basingstoke. These, together with four of the original clubs and the welcome addition of Ryde, took part in this year's league, won by an undefeated Reading with Winchester as a close runner-up.

Until recently, it may be appreciated that most of the players in the region felt that they were adequately catered for and there was little incentive to form a Federation. With member clubs finding difficulty in meeting their existing

The East Riding Club was the only one in the region to take part in the Longman Cup and to play in the Northern Federation League, with mixed success. It held its usual week-end tournament in July, which was won by one of its own members, Keith Hutton, and its Open Weekend Tournament three weeks later, won by Colin Irwin. Beverley, now in its third year, has had a good season and has been able to get a second full-sized court fit to play on. Harrogate has been



A study in concentration!

York Croquet Club

Report from Mike Haslam

The York Croquet Club has had a most successful inaugural season, utilising the walled garden of a National Trust property, Beningbrough Hall, on the outskirts of York. We started with one full-size (or two half-size) courts, and anticipate a facility for two full-size lawns in 1989.

Some two dozen members joined the club in its first year.

The club has taken part in beginners get-together tournaments in Hull, Beverley, and York itself, and played one friendly match, narrowly beating Harrogate, at the end of the season.

The club handicap singles tournament attracted an entry of sixteen, and in a keenly fought final James Garner beat Walter Saunders to take the cup presented by the Hon Secretary.

In 1989 we hope to play within an East Pennine League. Applications for membership should be addressed to the Hon Secretary, Dr M.T. Haslam, Chapel Garth, Crayke, York, YO6 4TE.

beset with difficulties, but York has made an excellent start, playing at Benningborough Hall, which is a National Trust property, and has 27 members already.

match commitments, why should there be a major effort to found more clubs? Arguments that the Sports Council might help the Atomic Energy Authority to improve its lawns were unconvincing!

However, in spite of this unpromising position, there was muted support at a preliminary meeting held in April to discuss the possible formation of a Southern Federation. From this meeting, a suggestion was made to Council that each Federation should appoint a representative to Council, mandated to speak for the clubs in his/her region. In this way, the needs, doubts and worries, particularly of the smaller clubs, might be better appreciated centrally and we would be kept better informed of what was being proposed. Prob-

lems in the past have included changes of rules for club competitions and completion dates of rounds. Our suggestion has not been accepted by Council.

Meanwhile, three schools, another university and a polytechnic have formed clubs and there has been considerable interest in the Women's Institutes, culminating in a County competition.

In February there will be a meeting to decide whether a Southern Federation should be formed. Twenty seven clubs or organisations have been invited to attend. It is quite likely that the vote will be in favour, although whether the new Federation will function in the way of the existing ones in the South-East, North and West remains to be seen.

THE NORTHERN REGION

Report by Syd Jones

Review

Although being a static year for Tyneside Croquet Club 1988 has been a time of action and development in other parts of the North-East.

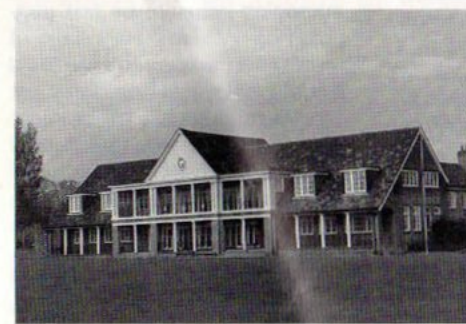
Interest by the National Trust has resulted in



Tyneside's burnt out pavilion at Smiths Park. They took the hint and left!

us being able to take advantage of a wonderful location and start a club at Ormesby Hall, Cleveland. The Club with two lawns and good off-court facilities is already expanding well. All this resulted in an item in 'Northern Country' on ITV on a Sunday in October, and although the programme basically featured Ormesby Hall, is served to advertise and promote Croquet throughout the area. The video began with costumed players using the original Hall equipment (very carefully) but soon led to the present day game (with some demonstrations of shots and playing sequences) and the development and structure of our sport in 1988.

Efforts to start a club in Morpeth were successful in attracting a number of prospective players, two of whom have been coming along to Cochrane Park for coaching. Finding a lawn however has been difficult; the council, having offered a disused Bowling Green at Pegswood, changed their mind at the last stage of negotiations. This in turn led to the reopening of the former Bowls Club so I did at least get something started!



The main pavilion at Cochrane Park, Tyneside's new venue.

Fortunately however two beautiful lawns have been discovered at Belsay Hall, an English Heritage property about eight miles west of Morpeth. They are interested in having croquet at the Hall and discussions are now proceeding hopefully to open a club there in 1989.

A large scale event 'Alice in Wonderland' was held at the Hall in September for three weeks, giving us chance to demonstrate Croquet and give thousands of people chance to play and find out that local clubs do exist. We restricted the playing mainly to Golf Croquet and found it a great help to participants in having the hoops numbered (with playing cards of course as it was

THE NORTH WEST & THE NORTHERN FEDERATION

Report by Angus Peterson

The North West had a successful year on the lawns in 1988. The Ladies of Ellesmere became the first all-Ladies' team to win the Longman Cup (having shared the same Trophy with the Hurlingham Club some twenty years earlier). The Secretary's Shield has stayed in the Federation, Teesside winning this time and taking over from the previous holders, Bowdon.

The President's Cup and the Men's Championship won by two men (boys) from the same year in the same school must be a unique double, and demonstrates that 'Coach of the Year' Bennet has not lost his touch with Chris Clarke and Mark Saurin. Even more exciting, however, is the next generation showing their prowess on the Club lawns in the North West. Finally, Eddie Bell hit his best form in winning the Coles.

Croquet players in the North were saddened to hear of the death of Nell Tyldesley in November. Nell was one of the founder members of the then North West Federation. She called the first meeting of the Federation in November 1973 and was Chairman for eight years. Nell maintained her interest in croquet and the Federation right up to her death and made the Ellesmere club its home.

Pendle continues to remain unrivalled in the North West on the development front. Whilst one wouldn't deny that their lawns are still open for improvement, they won the Northern League by a considerable margin with the other seven teams equal bottom or equal second, depending on your viewpoint. The North West Short Croquet League went very much the same way, although the margin was a little more acceptable to the rest of us. As Pendle only play

in Wonderland).

For Tyneside Croquet Club, the year has been one of change, as the locals burnt down the pavilion at our previous venue in Smiths Park. We took the hint and left, but the grass at the new site in the Newcastle University Cochrane Park Complex failed to grow fast enough and play was only possible on a prepared corner of the main playing field. Even though this was only a rough slope, most of the club kept going, and showed that good breaks and triple peels are possible anywhere. The grass is however looking good at Cochrane for this year and with two courts the club should find it's feet and settle down with increased membership.

Signs have appeared that Croquet is alive and well in Cumbria, with players competing in a local league. We have made contact and hope to get some games organised between the east and west of the area in 1989 in spite of a distance of about eighty miles between Clubs.

1989 and Beyond

It is hoped to publicise croquet in Newcastle during May 1989 in various ways leading to the opening of Belsay Hall with an 'Events Weekend' at the Spring Bank Holiday and offering coaching at Cochrane Park during June and July. So with Ormesby Hall we should have three two-court clubs by the end of 1989.

1990 sees the staging of the National Garden Festival at Gateshead and discussions are now proceeding to promote Croquet as an event

50% of their games at home, we can only blame some of their victories on local knowledge of the slopes and Walker balls. Maybe the famous Pendle witches travel with the team for away fixtures.

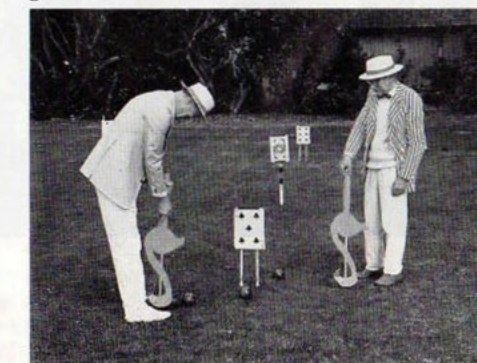
Southport have experienced an encouraging increase in membership and now have more than 60 playing members. Match experience is being sought for those graduating from Short croquet to the full game. The Club has submitted a five year plan to the local Council in the last few days which includes the acquisition of additional land. If successful, they will increase to a seven lawn club. The manufacture and marketing of Southport balls has been put on a firm commercial basis, and the company will now be able to sell a competitive range of croquet equipment.

Ellesmere have a new groundsman and should soon begin to see an improvement in the quality of their lawns, although the slope must of necessity remain.

The development highlight of '88 in the North West was the opening of the new croquet facility at the established Bury Sports Club. The new croquet section was formed by converting previously disused grass tennis courts. Croquet thus joins cricket, rugby, tennis, squash, hockey and netball as the sports played in this go ahead club with a membership of 330. Already coaching is arranged for 1989 under the auspices of Bury Adult Education Services.

In 1989 we are promised a similar development by Stockport Recreational Services and the Federation is fully committed to coaching and advising this venture.

there. With the prospect of over three million visitors during the summer this should make many more people throughout the country at least aware that Croquet is in existence and hopefully get lots more of them playing our game.



Syd Jones (left) and Jack Shotton having fun publicising croquet at Belsay Hall. Heaven knows what the hedgehogs and flamingos thought about it all!

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Championships

SOUTHERN CHAMPIONSHIP

Compton: 23-25 September

Mulliner beats Fulford in Straight Games

Once again nearly 24 keen croquet players arrived at Compton ready for an exciting weekend's play. I say 'nearly' 24 because 2 people unfortunately forgot they had entered and didn't arrive. However, the tournament was saved by two Colchester members, Graham Budd and Peter Turner. The weather on the Friday was not at its best but the manager, Roger Wood, easily got everyone through three games.

Friday evening saw your reporter and Tim Harrison on their way up to London to attend a Charity Ball at the breathtaking Kensington Roof gardens. They were met there by three other croquet players, Nick Hyne, Dayala Gunasekera and Jerry Guest. Although nobody won the raffle, everyone had a good time, dancing the night away until the early hours. Meanwhile, back in Eastbourne the evening was spent in the Deep Pan Pizza restaurant, followed by several hands of bridge and other card games.

Saturday morning saw some very tired faces: some (like myself) due to late night drives back from London (arrival 4am) and some due to the Mens 100m Final from Seoul.

By mid-morning the main event

had reached the semi-final stage; Mulliner beating French less convincingly than sometimes, due to a few missed short roquets, -8 +26, +16, and Fulford beating Murray +10, +25(TP). Meanwhile the spectators preferred to watch the fun and games on the bumpy cricket pitch lawns where the top of the Swiss was being played between John Walters and Alvar Bray. These lawns, located in front of the Saffrons Club House, were lamentably not Hurlingham Cricket pitch standard, requiring great strength merely to hit the ball half the length of the lawn.

The meal on Saturday night was at the usual Chinese restaurant. A nice leisurely meal of only four hours ensued. During our wait, two other parties gave up and left (much to the relief of the Chinese), leaving us in possession of the efforts of one cook. The meal, when it arrived, was well worth the wait.

By Sunday the main event had reached the final stages, and due to the amount of time available it was decided that the Mulliner v. Fulford match should be another best of five, following this year's trend. Hopes of a long and excitingly

Continued bottom of column 3

Comment

Around and About

By Peg Howt

I gave the original copy of this article to Dorothy Rush for comment, but on its return it met with a slight accident and I had to script a new copy that did not carry the remnants of my breakfast! I'm sure Dorothy would find the whole incident amusing, but it is still quite embarrassing and forms the reason for this article's somewhat belated appearance.

Incidentally, someone has apparently told Dorothy that Peter Danks stole her handbag. I find this hard to believe since I understand Mr Danks to be a member of Council, and therefore above reproach in my opinion. But Dorothy insists it is connected with a letter she wrote criticising the Publicity Committee, although she freely admits that virtually the only item of remotest value in the awful thing was a library ticket. It seems to me that a few weeks without her Agatha Christies would do Dorothy's imagination a lot of good.

However, Dorothy is trying to persuade me to write something for the magazine. She maintains that we lesser players in the clubs should stand up and be counted, and not let all the 'big guns' have everything their own way. She really is an inspiration, so here goes!

Managing very well, thank you Dorothy seems to have ruffled a few feathers with her recent contribution concerning the conduct of some players in tournaments. I'm sure she was only saying what so many people think, and it's only right to put the point of view of ordinary players sometimes. Of course, though competitors can be an infernal nuisance to other competitors, it is the hard task of the manager to see that everything runs smoothly.

Southern Championships cont'd

close finish late in the afternoon were dashed though when Mulliner, playing better than hitherto, won in three games before lunch, +25(TP), +14, +14.

In the Swiss, Richard Hilditch stormed his way into the front and won convincingly without losing a game. In the third place play-off, the battle of the Martins, Murray beat French in a best-of-five duel, coming from behind to win -24, -16, +4, +14, +9.

Thanks to all the members of Compton Croquet Club, and to Roger Wood our manager, for helping to make a most enjoyable weekend's croquet.

I think that managers show there to be as many different ways of running a tournament as there are ways of playing croquet. Of course there are no perfect managers - because a manager has to please all the people all of the time! However, I would like to offer a few suggestions.

I dare say that some players like nothing better than to be occupied with their games from dawn till dusk, and these weekend tournaments certainly seem to keep one on the go continuously. But I'm sure that most players are like me - certainly the friends I've spoken to who have played in tournaments like a rest occasionally.

Much as I'm loathe to name drop (especially since he's a modest chap, who won't take kindly to being held up as an example), a name that keeps cropping up in my little consultative chats is Dennis Moorcraft. 'Why don't you try one of Dennis's tournaments?' they ask me. 'You'll be sure of a relaxing week by the lawns'.

But now I hear some people complaining; it's infuriating how selfish some folk can be. Doubtless they're the same ones that are off home once they start losing - if they can't be on the courts all the time, they're off home without a thought for others!

You'd think that those who have to take a week's holiday from work for a tournament would be glad for the time that managers like Dennis work so hard to give you free from croquet. So the 'gentle' approach to managing seems to be fast disappearing - there's even talk of turning the Caskets into a weekend event! What would Humphrey say.

As usual, it's down to the silent majority to vote with their feet. If you want to play in the kind of tournament I'd like to see, send in your entry now. But I'd like to suggest an additional incentive. John McCullough's awards are an excellent idea - bronze for a break, silver for a break without bisques, and gold for a triple peel. I'd like to suggest the Moorcraft awards - bronze for a 24 hour rest between games, silver for 48 hours, and gold for 72 hours. Then we'd know, from the standard a manager had achieved, whether a tournament was likely to be the kind which we could enjoy.

If the CA really has our interests at heart (which I'm sure it has) they'd be hard at work encouraging the right kind of managers. So come on, everyone out there - let's bring back those halcyon days - boxwood, boaters, and 'breaks'!

THE MARY ROSE Southport: 17 September A Long Haul by Edgbaston Report by Alan Girling

This match was a very messy affair. Either side could have won and nothing was really resolved, apart from the destination of the trophy. No player seemed able to produce his best form on what was a big occasion for both clubs. Perhaps the key to success lay in the style of pre-match preparation; the Scots opted for early acclimatisation to local conditions, whereas the Midlanders settled for a pep-talk from their non-playing captain. (On the whole I prefer to suffer my pre-



Edgbaston's winning team, L to R (Back): Gerald Johnson, Alan Girling (non-playing captain) and Peter Dorke. (Front): Andrew Symons and Ray Jones.

match nerves in peace - but then I've never spent an evening in Southport.)

Play opened unconvincingly. For a while, both teams stood badly in all three games, but the experienced Glasgow pairing of Ian Wright and John Surgenor soon gained control over Peter Dorke and Andrew Symons. The morning singles both went Edgbaston's way, despite George Anderson's remarkable shooting which proved insufficient to contain Gerald Johnson. Ray Jones snuffed out Malcolm Smith's hopes with an heroic peg-out.

In the afternoon Edgbaston made heavy weather of converting a 2-1 lead. Arriving from an extended lunch, I found that Glasgow held the advantage in all 4 games, and although Symons experienced a partial return of his usual fluency to beat Wright, Jones never recovered from a poor start against Anderson.

Everything now rested on the Johnson/Smith and Dorke/Surgenor games, neither of which offered any comfort to the partisan spectator of whatever affiliation. All the clips in both games advanced hopefully towards the peg to the accompaniment of a practical demonstration of a long-suspected principle; that, under pressure, an improvement in shooting is to be had at the expense of control in other departments.

With all four players devoted to

SHORT CROQUET NATIONAL FINAL

Bowdon: 2nd October

Glasgow's Colin Rogers takes title

Report by Barry Keen

The National Short Croquet event is now well established after only two years, with 116 competitors taking part in 1988. These entries were reduced to four national finalists who fought their way through regional finals at Bristol, Leicester, Tunstall (Five Towns CC) and Edinburgh.

The final was run as an American block on a sunny October day at Bowdon, with the manager praying that he would not get a three-way tie!

In the first round, all four players started slowly (perhaps it was just due to nerves) with only Southport's Joyce Taylor showing any inclination to use her bisques constructively. Both games went to time with Dave White, from Leicester, being rather fortunate to beat Hamish Hall (Bristol) who was put off his stride during a winning break when the manager called time.

In the second round, both Colin Rogers (Glasgow) and Dave White had straightforward wins, thus leaving their third round match against each other as the final 'final'. Colin ran out the winner after pegging Dave out, with Dave failing to take his bisques when he had the chance.

Barry Keen presented Colin with his trophy on behalf of the Croquet Association, and congratulated the finalists on winning through to the last round.

RESULTS
Round 1: C. Rogers bt Mrs L.J. Taylor 10-7(T); D. White bt H.M. Hall 7-6(T).
Round 2: Rogers bt Hall 14-3; White bt Mrs Taylor 14-9.
Round 3: Rogers bt White 14-6; Mrs Taylor bt Hall 14-7.
Final Positions:
1. Rogers (3 wins); 2. White (2 wins); 3. Mrs Taylor (1 win); 4. Hall (0 wins).

ALL-ENGLAND HANDICAP Colchester: 24-25 Sept Richard Southgate's Clean Sweep

Report by Pat Hetherington

The final of the All England Handicap was played as a 5-round Swiss, with a 3-hour time limit for each game.

A very wet weekend slowed the lawns down considerably, and the game which went to time on the Saturday was only just completed before standing water made play impossible for the night.

The outright winner was Richard Southgate (ex Bishop Vesey's Grammar School), who won all his 5 games. There was a tie for runner-up position between J. Dawson, I Mackenzie-Bowie and P.

this precept it seemed doubtful that any further results would be recorded in the match. When the dust had settled, the law of averages was found to have prevailed, giving one game to each team and the trophy to Edgbaston. At least the hospitality of the Southport Club was up to its usual standard!

RESULTS (Edgbaston names first)
P. Dorke & A. Symons lost to J. Surgenor & I.H. Wright - 14.
G. Johnson bt G. Anderson +14.
R. Jones bt M. Smith +8.
P. Dorke lost to J. Surgenor -2
A. Symons bt I.H. Wright +11.
G. Johnson bt M. Smith +5.
R. Jones lost to G. Anderson -13.

National Events

Elliott, each with 3 wins. Elliott took the runner-up trophy as he had beaten both the others.

Southgate improved with every game and at the end, his handicap was reduced from 7½ to 5. Roe ran through his first two games with bisques standing, had his handicap reduced by 1, and then lost his next two games with bisques standing! His handicap was finally reduced from 12 to 10.

RESULTS
5 wins: R. Southgate.
3 wins: P. Elliott (Runner-Up), J. Dawson, I. Mackenzie-Bowie.
2 wins: B. Rannie, D. Roe.
1 win: C. Williams, D. Ruscombe-King.

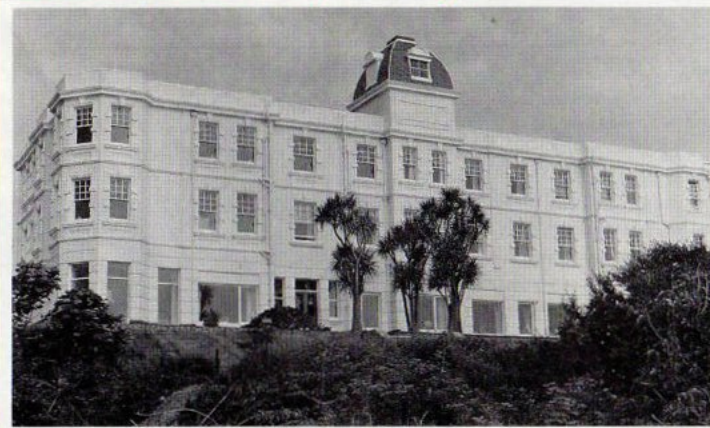
CA SELECT v/U-18 Match
RESULTS
CA names first
Doubles: J. Ross & D. Lendrum bt C. Ross & D. Thatcher +11; A. Bennet & C. Wild lost to S. Hemus & R. Harding -4(T); A. Bray & C. Bennett bt A. Leggate & A. Saurin +6(T).
J. Ross & Lendrum bt Leggate & Saurin +5; A. Bennet & Wild bt C. Ross & Thatcher +17; Bray & C. Bennett lost to Hemus & Harding -13.

J. Ross & Lendrum lost to Hemus & Harding -9; A. Bennet & Wild lost to Leggate & Saurin -7; Bray & C. Bennett bt C. Ross & Thatcher +14.

Singles
(Best of 3, a 2-0 win to count as 3-0)
Ross drew with Saurin +6, -3; A. Bennet bt C. Ross +7, +16; Bray lost to Harding -4, -13; Wild bt Hemus +4, +4(T); Lendrum bt Leggate +9, +21; C. Bennett drew with Thatcher -9, +10.

Match Result
CA beat Under-18s: 16-9.

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Natural History

WILDLIFE ON THE CROQUET LAWN

By Leslie Riggall

ENGLAND

A recent report on the Sidmouth seagull removing a black clip and carrying it 100 yards away reminded me of the Rondebosch Club at Cape Town and the seagull which is a daily visitor there. But this bird was attracted originally by feeding it, and it is difficult to explain the attraction of a black clip. Gulls eat black mussels, which they repeatedly carry up to about 50 feet and drop onto rocks until the hard shell is broken. But it seems unlikely that a bird clever enough to do this would be fooled by a croquet clip. Perhaps the Sidmouth gull was idly amusing itself, like a cat playing with a ball of wool as a substitute for a mouse.

I have made three croquet lawns, the first one at Titnes Park, Berkshire, in England. It was situated beside the lake, on and around which lived a large collection of waterfowl from every continent of the world. If one was bored by a long period of waiting for a turn the ducks, geese and swans were always interesting. There was always something happening, courtships, or quarrels and squabbles between different species. The one bird that never quarrelled was the Bar-Headed Goose, but strangely he always moved in on a quarrel among the smaller birds and stopped the fighting, so we called him 'the policeman'. Occasionally geese would graze on the lawn, but did little damage.

A beautiful wild pheasant had the lawn as part of his territory, and every day there was a most interesting scene at the edge of his territory, defined by an avenue of cypresses nearby. He would meet and challenge another pheasant which owned the adjoining territory on the other side of the avenue, and they would threaten and demonstrate each day in the neutral ground between the two lines of cypress, but they never actually fought, because each bird respected the territorial right of the other.

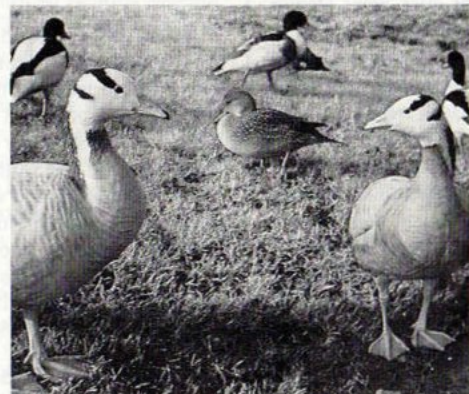
On one occasion the hen had chicks which behaved foolishly, walking up to me, and she tried to distract me from them with the 'bird with the broken wing' act. It was a most convincing act and one wonders how the instinct to do this has arisen, because the convincing portrayal of helplessness is so different from the aggressive demeanour when normally defending the young. When birds use this act they show excellent judgement, by employing it only against an enemy such as a fox or a human which would not be deterred by normal defence.

We had rabbits but they did not show any interest in the croquet lawn, presumably because the grass of the surrounding lawns was longer and more substantial. Their burrows were always among the trees and rhododendrons and they never dug into our croquet lawn.

Hedgehogs would cause slight disturbance of the surface, snuffling and pushing their noses into the turf. But we considered them to be beneficial. Not only do they eat many insects and larvae but they are selective in the right way. It was discovered that they eat destructive vegetarian beetles, but will not touch the carnivorous beetles such as the Violet Ground Beetle, which is a useful ally of green-keepers, killing worms and larvae in the turf.

An unusual and exotic inhabitant of this area

was a mink which had escaped from a mink farm. We were very concerned for our birds at first, as mink are ferocious killers in nature, but it seemed to do no harm here, and probably fed mainly on the magnificent Golden Orfe in the lake. This was not a matter for concern as they were so numerous and prolific. I introduced five adult Golden Orfe into the lake, and about



Bar-headed Geese, and Shelducks and a Pintail in Leslie Riggall's English Garden.

eighteen months later, as there were no other fish competing with them, there were thousands of these large and beautiful fish.

Of course these large fish would snatch food from under the noses of ducks, or nibble their feet by mistake, and the agitation this would cause was truly comical. I will never forget one scene where a pair of Chiloe Wigeon became frenzied with anger and did not calm down for half an hour. This was indeed very close to a Walt Disney cartoon.

A feral black cat also lived in this area. He was a mighty hunter, as once I saw him near the lawn dragging a rabbit as big as himself. At one time we had a terrier which had gone wild, living in the park. It was as wary and elusive as the foxes, which were rarely seen. It might have caught an occasional rabbit or rat, but would have been lucky to do so, as dogs are only efficient hunters when hunting larger prey in a pack. It must have survived mainly by scavenging.

But it is the birds we remember most. Every spring flocks of hundreds of the magnificent Canada Goose would cause excitement as they heralded their arrival by loud trumpeting, and we would go out to watch them flying over in chevron formation. About forty of them would settle on the lake and we knew we would have no sleep that night. All night they would battle for possession of our lake, and always the same pair triumphed every year. One year the gander almost killed a bar-headed goose which was rescued just in time, and I decided to get rid of the Canada Geese. We destroyed the eggs and nest and they went away, probably to Virginia Water, very unhappy at our betrayal of their friendship.

A few weeks later we were astonished to see Mother Goose marching up the entrance drive, followed by ten delightful yellow baby goslings, with the gander bringing up the rear. They had forgiven or forgotten our betrayal, and brought their babies to us with both pride and confidence. We never interfered with them again.

A truly breathtaking sight was a swift skidding down from the sky across the lawn and the lake, and swooping up with incredible speed skyward again, hotly pursued by a hobby (a species of falcon). The latter could well be the

fastest bird in the world, as it hunts the fastest prey such as swallows. They both disappeared from view in a second. But I will remember them always. And I will always remember the common birds, the friendly robin and melodious thrushes and blackbirds, searching the dewy lawn for insects in the sunshine of a spring morning.

PORTUGAL

Our next croquet lawn was in Northern Portugal, made in a neglected but once magnificent garden. An immediate link with the English lawn was provided by hedgehogs which I am sure were equally beneficial to the lawn.

The few rabbits in the garden kept well away in quiet areas, and we were not aware of any other mammals except small rodents.

But reptiles were more in evidence than around the English lawn, where the only reptiles seen were a few grass snakes and of course frogs and toads. There were more snakes in Portugal, mostly harmless species. But I once came across a huge viper, and would never have believed that this common species could reach such a size had I not seen it. I treated it with great respect, not moving a muscle until it decided there was no danger and moved away. Lizards basked in the sun or hunted insects on the stone walls and steps around the lawn. Most numerous were the very variable wall lizards, some very attractive. Lively, playful and inquisitive, they are intelligent and easily tamed. Considerably larger, (40cm) is the Green Lizard. The male green Lizards were very beautiful, a brilliant green with blue under the head and throat. They are more shy than the wall lizards, but become used to humans if they are not molested.

The Eych Lizard was the largest (50cm and often much more) and also the most spectacular lizard we had. The main colour is green or yellowish green, and on the sides were several rows of blue spots with a black border. These could also be tamed by feeding with pieces of meat, which astounded the Portuguese peasants, who had a dread of all reptiles even the smallest and most harmless. They believe that all lizards chase women and all snakes chase men. This daft superstition is contrary to all experience, and as these reptiles are very common even a child should know by experience that the opposite is the truth, they only try to escape from humans. The peasants gazed in horror if I handled a reptile. They are particularly superstitious about the harmless and defenceless salamanders, and on an occasion when I pulled out a cluster of hibernating marbled newts (a large, beautiful species) from a drain I think they were surprised that I did not drop dead.

Also feared and detested were the very useful owls and bats, associated in peasant mythology with witches and satanism. At dusk bats would appear over the croquet lawn as the moon was rising, but they did not come from miles away as is usual with these animals. They lived in the garden, and if one entered by the tunnel in daytime, many would panic and a stream of bats would fly past one's face, disconcerting until one got used to it, and realised that their echolocation system functioned perfectly, and there would never be a collision.

A pair of Little Owls shared our croquet lawn with us. They nested in an old building near the lawn and would sit in an old apple tree beside the lawn, watching our play with interest, and occasionally silently gliding onto the lawn to pick up a cricket or worm. Unlike most owls they

are active in daylight, and they were our frequent companions when we were playing. They had a very severe frowning expression which was very amusing, especially when combined with a lot of bowing and bobbing, or twisting and turning of the head until it seemed that something ought to break. If one walked towards the Little Owls there would be a lot of bobbing and bowing, as if they were greeting or trying to communicate with us. But as is usual with anthropomorphic interpretations of animal behaviour, the true explanation is quite different. Owls use parallax in judging distances, and these movements enable them to better judge the distance as one approaches. On one occasion when one of them had descended on to the lawn a ball rolled towards it, and this comical bird's disapproving reaction was very funny to see. The peasants shot them, and lied to justify this stupid crime, swearing that they saw the owls eating their peas.

A Barn Owl roosted regularly in a date palm between the lawn and the mansion, and coughed up large pellets of indigestible material daily. To prove that owls are beneficial to the peasants I dissected a pellet. This is very difficult because the bones and fur become so tightly interlocked into a solid mass that they seem to be welded. However I proved that the casting contained the skeletons of no less than NINE small rodents, but my effort was wasted and nothing would change their attitude.

Interesting inhabitants of the croquet lawn were hundreds of a species of mining bee. These small solitary bees make a vertical tunnel in the turf and place honey and pollen at the bottom, lay an egg on it, and seal it off. They they bring more honey and pollen, repeating this until several cells are completed. After this they die.

One day the bees were very active and attracted a swarm of swallows. I had always believed that swallows never alighted on the ground as they could not take off again. I was astonished to see them landing on the lawn, taking the bees and subsequently flying up again. The taking off did not seem to be too difficult, but most of the landings were very clumsy, and could be described as crash landings. Although one can see swallows scooping water from the surface of a pond in full flight, it must be very rare to see them actually landing and feeding on the ground.

But the most pleasant memory I have of the croquet lawn in Portugal is that of the Little Owls, with their comical expressions and mannerisms.

Our third lawn was in South Africa, where it provided a home for an even larger collection of wildlife.

DOLLY RUSH
Your Help is Needed!
Peter Danks would be grateful for assistance in publicising the World Croquet Championships through the Regional Press. Aspiring Press Officers please contact him for details.
TEL: 039 54 2711

Coach of the Year

1988 "Coach of the Year" Award for John McCullough

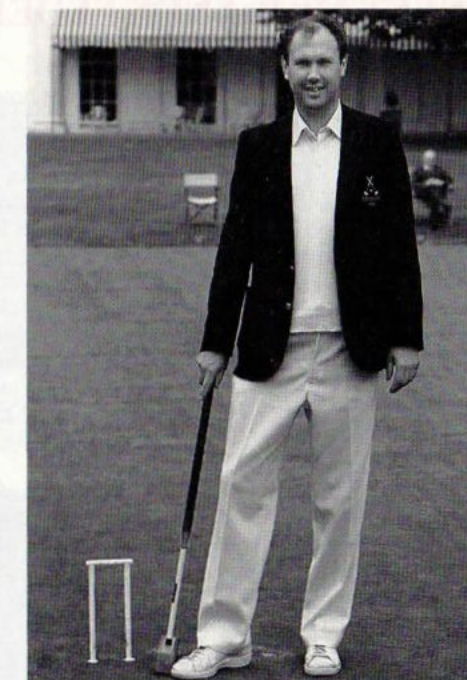
The 1988 'Coach of the Year' Award goes to John McCullough in recognition of his work in setting up the CA's National Coaching Scheme.

As Chairman of the Coaching Committee, John was instrumental in the development of the syllabus for many of the CA's coaching courses and he created a framework within which all officially appointed coaches could work. His own work as a coach was a major factor in building up the number of clubs in the South West Region and in the appointment of many coaches who were trained by him.

A member of the Irish International team for many years, John still found time to coach beginners. He joined the Bristol Club in 1978, where he introduced a structured coaching scheme in 1981, and a measure of his success came in 1986 when Bristol won 3 national titles in one season, having never before won a single trophy.

In 1985, when he visited Florida, he took the opportunity to study the methods of the then only World's professional coach, Ted Prentis, spending 4 days studying and observing at one of Ted's special schools. This led to the introduction of a new 3-lesson course for beginners not yet ready to progress to the level of the CA's Grade 2 programme. More recently, he has co-authored a book on Croquet with Stephen Mulliner, and has contributed a whole range of articles to 'Coaches Corner' in this magazine.

Players up in Yorkshire and Humberside must count themselves lucky to have a coach of John's calibre in their midst.



John McCullough, 1988 'Coach of the Year'. Congratulations!

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WEST MIDLANDS FEDERATION

Report by Chris Bennett

First, a look back to 1988. The year saw the establishment of three new clubs: two in the north of our area at Tunstall and Stafford, and one at Kenilworth in the south.

The Tunstall players have called their club the 'Five Towns Croquet Club' and they have two short croquet lawns laid out on a former putting green, with a splendid wooden pavilion available for use adjacent to the lawns.

Stafford play on a council lawn, and have already been successful in raising over £1500 in grants and loans from the Regional Sports Council and Stafford Borough Council to pay for new equipment.

Kenilworth is part of a long established tennis club which has surplus grass courts following the inevitable change to all weather tennis courts.

Kenilworth in particular lies in the heart of what ought to be croquet country. It is a remarkable fact that until the club was formed there was no club or public lawn in the whole of the County of Warwickshire. The Federation will be giving maximum support and help to all three new clubs and expectations are high.

On the debit side, the year saw the loss of the Ludlow Club due to a combination of the usual factors. This is particularly disappointing for Peter Dorke who had devoted so much time and effort to establishing two very satisfactory lawns. Fortunately, that most prestigious event - the South Shropshire Invitation Open Tournament - hopes to find an alternative home and if Peter can get his handicap down he might force his way into one of the Edgbaston first division sides.

The high-point of the season for West Midland Clubs was undoubtedly Edgbaston's success in the Mary Rose. Reports will probably appear elsewhere but the successful campaign was a tribute to Alan Girling's laid back management and captaincy skills - his team selection for the final was a minor masterpiece.

Richard Southgate of Bishops Vesseys G.S. won the All England handicap with Stuart Hemus not far behind. Both of them hope to be playing club croquet next season.

The season also saw the bringing into play of Edgbaston's re-sown third lawn. Although still somewhat slow it does appear to be admirably flat.

QUESTION: which club, apart from Edgbaston, has ten players in the 100 Ranking List? if the answer is 'lots', which club has 20% of its playing membership in the List?

Despite the triumphs and suc-

cesses however, it is apparent that there are fundamental problems underlying the game in the West Midlands. There is a dearth of young (post-school) members in the clubs. Indeed, excluding school teams, I could not name twelve players under the age of 30 in the entire West Midlands area. Nor is there a great influx in the other age groups and we do not seem to be keeping as many as we should of the new members who show up from time to time.



A view of the Five Towns Croquet Club taken whilst the area finals of the 1988 National Short Croquet Competition were in progress.

The Federation therefore has much to do in the coming year and must find ways to combat these problems. As an Area, while we have many chiefs, we do seem to be short of indians and the solution of holding major training schemes and coaching on a large scale and continuing basis would appear to be beyond our resources at the moment. I do however mention a few of the things we are doing to combat specific problems.

1. We have extended our League format into three divisions, with the third division being reserved for players of a sixteen handicap and above with all matches played on a full bisque basis. This has thrown up a number of interesting points.

a) It enables beginners to take part in competitive croquet much earlier than they might otherwise do so and in the company of players of a similar standard.

b) It has been surprising how quickly novices have understood the need to get on with the game and score some hoops if they are not to be beaten while still holding a fistful of bisques.

c) The full bisque basis shows up very quickly the player whose handicap should come down.

d) Because promotion from division three to division two rests on handicap rather than results

there is something to aim for and by the time a player ceases to be eligible for division three he is over the beginners 'hump' and, with his bisques, will be a welcome member of a division two side. This is particularly useful for bringing the schoolboy through from school to club croquet.

2. Subject to our member clubs agreeing, we are hoping to introduce a form of group membership for organisations like the Womens Institute. Under the arrangement,

ment will not be officially named but essentially the details are going to be as follows:-

CLASSES: Advanced, Handicap Singles and Doubles (level).

FORMAT: Seeded American blocks to be played between 1st May and 31st August. Thereafter, quarter finals and semi finals with the finals to be played probably at Edgbaston, on a date to be fixed in early October.

PRIZES: Advanced: Winner £250, Runner-Up £100, Handicap: Winner £100, Runner-Up £75; Doubles: Winner £100, Runner-Up £50.

ENTRIES: Entries will be accepted from

a) players whose place of birth was within the West Midland Federation area i.e. Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire and the City of Birmingham. Random production of birth certificates may be required.

b) Players who were bona fide playing members of croquet clubs affiliated to the Federation on 31st December 1988.

c) Players who have been bona fide residents for three years within the area immediately prior to 1st May 1989.

Peter Dorke has kindly agreed to manage the tournament so it will be in excellent hands. Subject to entries the likely number of players per block will be six or seven and it will be up to the players to arrange these matches within a four month period. There should therefore be no problems with clashing dates. Indeed, the only fixed date in the entire event will be the finals day.

We have had most encouraging promises of support from the local press who will conduct a photo call of the inaugural hoop and will also attend the finals. They have also promised to carry regular news of the progress of the tournament during the season. We are hoping to attract a very large entry to the handicap event and suspect that a number of people will find long forgotten links with the West Midlands.

Players wishing to enter should write to Peter Dorke at 15 Castle View Terrace, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 2NG. (Tel: 0584-4547) to request an official entry form. This form will have full and precise details of the terms and rules of the tournament.

All in all therefore 1989 promises to be a busy and, we hope, prosperous year for the Federation.

EAST MIDLAND'S FEDERATION

Report by Gary Norman

The 1988 season saw two major innovations in the East Midlands 'Matchplay' League. First, the securing of a sponsorship deal with Mr Geoffrey Day's company, 'Matchplay', which manufactures croquet mallets (see advertisement elsewhere in this magazine) and, second, the introduction of an Association Division alongside the Short Croquet Division.

Owing to a shortage of playing area at most East Midlands clubs, the Association Division matches were somewhat restricted, the format being 14-point games played on either Short Croquet or half Association size courts.



The longest rush of the week! Bill Lamb, Tournament Referee, returns to the pavilion from lawn 5 at Nottingham.

In 1987 the Loughborough Club were the first winners of the East Midlands Short Croquet League, and in 1988 they continued their success by taking the Association Division title with four wins out of four. Ashby won the 1988 Short Croquet Division title, also with a 100% match record. Full League results, along with results of other Regional Tournaments, are shown in the table below.

1989 Season

Development for the coming season will hopefully see the Association Division matches actually being played on Association size courts. Unfortunately this may cause additional travelling for some clubs as it may be necessary to play all matches at either Nottingham or Loughborough since the remaining seven clubs do not have the minimum requisite of two full-size courts.

Another improvement to the League scene should arise from our winter Handicap Review. One possibility being considered is to break the link between Association

handicaps and the number of bisques received in Short Croquet. The short game is very popular in this region and some players very rarely play the Association game. The formation of an independent Short Croquet handicap rating would obviously not be easy and not without its problems. However, it may be a necessary undertaking, given the attendant problems with the present system.



Tournament Manager Brian Melody presents Paul Robinson with the winner's trophy at the East Midlands 'End of Season' Short Croquet Tournament held at Loughborough last October.

| East Midlands Regional Tournaments | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Ashby | 6 Northampton 1 |
| Loughborough | 7 Southwell 0 |
| Ashby | 7 Loughboro' 0(wo) |
| Southwell | 2 Ashby 5 |
| Southwell | 1 S. Stratford 6 |
| Loughborough | 6 S. Stratford 1 |
| Ashby | 5 S. Stratford 2 |
| Southwell | 0 Northampton 7 |

Final Positions:

| | Matches | | Games | |
|-------------------|---------|------|-------|------|
| | Won | Lost | Won | Lost |
| 1 Ashby | 4 | 0 | 23 | 5 |
| 2 Loughborough | 3 | 1 | 17 | 11 |
| 3 Northampton | 2 | 2 | 16 | 12 |
| 4 Stony Stratford | 1 | 3 | 11 | 17 |
| 5 Southwell | 0 | 4 | 3 | 25 |

East Midlands 'Matchplay' League

Association Division

| Results: | |
|--------------|------------------|
| Ashby | 3 Leicester 4 |
| Leicester | 3 Loughborough 4 |
| Nottingham | 1 Leicester 6 |
| Leicester | 4 Northampton 3 |
| Ashby | 4 Nottingham 3 |
| Loughborough | 5 Nottingham 2 |
| Nottingham | 4 Northampton 3 |
| Northampton | 7 Ashby 0 |
| Loughborough | 7 Ashby 0(wo) |
| Northampton | 3 Loughborough 4 |

Final Positions:

| | Matches | | Games | |
|----------------|---------|------|-------|------|
| | Won | Lost | Won | Lost |
| 1 Loughborough | 4 | 0 | 20 | 8 |
| 2 Leicester | 3 | 1 | 17 | 11 |
| 3 Northampton | 1 | 3 | 16 | 12 |
| 4 Nottingham | 1 | 3 | 10 | 18 |
| 5 Ashby | 1 | 3 | 7 | 21 |

Short Croquet Division

| Results: | |
|-------------|------------------|
| Northampton | 5 S. Stratford 2 |
| Northampton | 3 Loughborough 4 |



Jim Kirby in play for Ashby against Stony Stratford in an East Midlands Short Croquet Division match. Ashby Council has constructed two new lawns for use by the club, one full-size and one somewhat smaller.

SOUTH EAST FEDERATION

Report by David Higgs

1988 again was supposed to be wetter than usual. The Federation might have some influence on the weather since all but one of its scheduled events took place with at worst a heavy shower to mar the event. Others, perhaps, were not so fortunate.

Membership: Seven further clubs joined this year to bring the total to twenty-one.

New Clubs: Last year it was the London region which had two new clubs - Eden Park and Vine Road - both of which are flourishing. This year, it was the turn of the South East region to have new clubs at Chichester and Cranleigh. Again both appear set to prosper. Possible sites for new clubs investigated include Ferring, Gillingham, Maidstone and Sutton.

Indoor Croquet was held at Crawley on the week-end before Christmas last. There were only two enquiries from the public. Club members, however, had a successful time. Our teams coped with the fast conditions to win the Southern league block, but lost to the North East Region in the final at Milton Keynes.

An Inter-Federation match against the East Anglian Feder-

ation for teams of 6 players was drawn at Watford. A return match is planned for 1989.

Development Plan: The committee prepared a development plan for croquet in the regions at the request of the Sports Council. This activity certainly concentrated the mind on what ought to be done.

This report was formally presented to the South East Council for Sport and Recreation (the London Council received it informally), and being the first of the required plans from sports organisations in the region, was well received. It has been circulated to Leisure officers in both regions.

A Regional Pamphlet giving the location of clubs, a brief outline of croquet, and who to contact was prepared at the request of the Sports Council. 1000 copies were printed with the help of the Sports Council's grant. Most copies were circulated with its general mailing.

Federation Tournaments: One day association handicap events were held at Parsons Green for 10+ handicaps, Compton (no restriction), and Vine Road for 10+ handicaps and we had 42 entries including 20 visitors. A Golf Croquet Tournament at Beckenham had 22



Len Nash coaching at Crawley.

entries, mostly visitors.

Coaching and related events: One day coaching events were held at Dulwich, Crawley, Compton, Preston, Caterham and Rottingdean. Sixty three players took part.

A beginners' coaching course of 10 sessions was held at the Bank of England Sports Club (8 members), with the extra sessions proving extremely effective. A special two-day course was run at Ramsgate for those who would like to help in coaching beginners. Coaching sessions were held at Lamorbey Park (Sidcup), St Paul's School (Barnes), Worth Abbey School, and

during the regional finals for the Schools Trophy.

'Come and Try It' days were held at Surbiton, Caterham, West Chillington and Crawley for Women's Institutes and at Caterham for Townswomen's Guilds (83 ladies in all attended). Demonstrations and 'Come and Try It' sessions were arranged at Gillingham to coincide with their Carnival, whilst a croquet facility was provided for BMW's promotion at Squerry's Court.

Equipment: A grant from the Sports Council enabled us to obtain a fourth set of hoops and mallets with two sets of Jacques balls to

complement the six sets of Walker balls. The equipment is available to Federation Clubs for loan or specific occasions subject to recall for special Federation needs.

Four mallets had shafts replaced. It seems that all 'Aspinall' mallets snap at the junction with the head. Does anyone know of other breaking points?

Leagues: The Association league play-off will be between Dulwich and Preston early this season. The Golf Croquet league was won by Wellcome (Beckenham). The top teams are given in the Table.

1989 PROSPECTS

Two one-day tournaments have provisionally been arranged at Cophorne Hotel for 15-16 April. A similar event will be held at St Mary's College, Twickenham later. Both are pilot schemes for later uses as venues.

There will be a Summer School at Ardingly College starting on 23 or 24 July.

In addition to the existing Association and Golf Croquet leagues, a 'B' league for teams of 4 with total handicap of 48 or over will be run, and a league for ladies of handicap 14 or over.

The regular events of one or two day tournaments and coaching days will continue. Already there will be more Federation tourna-

ments than in 1988.

Thanks are due to all those who helped in the Federation events, and those behind the scenes who encouraged others to participate in them.

STATISTICS

'Coaching' Data.

| | |
|--------------------|------|
| Miles travelled | 4320 |
| Miles as passenger | 475 |
| Hours on site | 344 |
| Number of sessions | 114 |

Time spent on each 'coaching' type.

| | |
|-----------------|-------|
| Development | 10.8% |
| Schools Trophy | 10.0% |
| Classic | 5.9% |
| Come and Try It | 17.1% |
| One Day Events | 22.6% |
| Courses | 13.4% |
| WI & TWG | 18.9% |
| Other | 1.3% |

ASSOCIATION LEAGUE

| Club | Played | Wins | Pts |
|-----------|--------|------|-----|
| Preston | 4 | 4 | 8 |
| Dulwich | 3 | 3 | 6 |
| Caterham | 4 | 2 | 6 |
| Eden Park | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| Ramsgate | 3 | 1 | 4 |

GOLF CROQUET LEAGUE

| Club | Played | Wins | Pts |
|-----------|--------|------|-----|
| Beckenham | 4 | 4 | 8 |
| Preston | 4 | 3 | 7 |
| Crawley | 4 | 2 | 6 |

Reprinted from the Sports Council's 'SportsNews'

CROQUET FOR ALL



Sharon Bayton, The Sports Councils South East Croquet Liaison Officer, ready for a spot of croquet.

A Development Plan for Croquet in London, Kent, Surrey and Sussex has recently been produced by the sports regional governing body the South East Croquet Federation. Anybody interested in developing croquet within the region is encouraged to read the plan, copies of which are available free of charge from the Croquet Liaison Officer Sharon Bayton on 01-778-8600.

Croquet as an activity has wide appeal since it commends itself to people of all ages. Men and women

compete on equal terms and the handicapping system enables less skilled players to compete against the best players with an equal chance of winning.

It is estimated that within London and the South East there are approximately 1000 players, playing at 36 recognised venues. Publicity of these existing opportunities and the development of new facilities are two of the key objectives of the Federation and one which the Regional Sports Council is happy to support.

Further Report on Alterations to the Laws

From Stephen Mulliner

A new edition of the Laws and Regulations for Tournaments will be published at the end of March 1989. This will incorporate most of the changes set out in 'Croquet', Jan 1988 (pages 24-25). Following discussions with Australia and New Zealand certain of these proposals have been dropped and there are a small number of additional changes which require publication in 'Croquet'.

The proposals which have now been dropped are (using the nomenclature in the previous article) paragraph 1 (incorporation of Regulations relating to Referees in the Laws), 2(b) (addition to Law 50), 9 (amendment to Law 35(a)ii), and 13 (amendment to Law 45).

The new proposals are set out below. The change to Law 8 now prevents a player from lifting a ball to baulk and then playing with his partner ball effectively without penalty. The amendment to Law 17 clarifies the intention of this Law and the remainder are simply consequential amendments which relate to the previously agreed changes.

Law 8 - amendment

OPTION OF STRIKER TO PLAY EITHER BALL

(a) After all four balls have been played into the game under Law 6, the striker may elect at the start of any subsequent turn to play that turn with either of his balls (but see Law 38(a) for handicap play).

(b) The election is made by (i) moving a ball before placing it for a croquet stroke (see Laws 16(c)(i) and 18(b)); or (ii) lifting a ball under Law 13 (or Law 36 in advanced or semi-

advanced play); or (iii) playing a stroke.

(c) In each case, the ball so elected becomes the striker's ball for that turn and the striker may not then play with the partner ball. If he does so and the election was made under (b)(i) above, Law 28(a) applies. If the election was made under (b)(ii) or (iii) above, Law 28(b) applies.

Law 17 - amendment
HOOP AND ROQUET IN THE SAME STROKE

If, before completing the running of a hoop in order, the striker's ball hits a ball that was clear of the hoop on the non-playing side before the commencement of the stroke and finally completes the running, as defined in Law 14(b)(ii), it is deemed that a hoop point is scored and a roquet is then made. A ball is clear of a hoop if no part of it lies within the jaws of the hoop (see Law 2(b)(ii)).

Law 26(f) - renumbering of old Law 26(e)

Law 28(a)(i) - amendment

(i) If the striker, having elected to play with one of the balls of his side under Law 8(b)(i), attempts to play with the partner ball and the error is not condoned, the partner ball is replaced in its lawful position if it has been moved and the striker continues his turn without penalty in accordance with Law 8(c).

Law 28(c) - addition of cross-reference

(See Law 38(h)(iii) for handicap play.)

Law 30(d) - addition of cross-reference

(See Law 38(h)(iv) for handicap play.)

DOPING REGULATIONS

The proposed new Regulations 2(d) to 2(g) are published below as required by the Rules of the Croquet Association.

An article explaining the background to the introduction of regulations for doping control will appear in our next issue.

2(d) Doping is forbidden. A player who uses any substance or procedure included in the IOC Medical Commission list of prohibited doping classes or methods in

(i) competitions designated by the Council; or

(ii) other calendar fixtures, where the substance or procedure has not been prescribed by a doctor,

is automatically disqualified from competing in calendar fixtures until the Council removes the disqualification.

2(e) Any player must, if requested

by an official designated by the Council for the purpose of doping control, submit to a doping control test. Failure to do so will be taken as if a positive result had been obtained and dealt with accordingly.

2(f) The identification of a forbidden substance and/or a substance produced in the body from such a substance, or the presence of specified amounts of natural body substances, in a body fluid, will constitute an offence as defined in (d) above.

N.B. For these regulations caffeine will be dealt with as though it were a natural body substance.

2(g) Any person assisting or inciting others in the contravention of doping regulations shall be considered as having committed an offence against the Council's Regulations, and may be subject to disciplinary action.

A Highlight of 1988 in the South East

Report by David Higgs



Leigh Roberts and Gary Lowman watch fellow 'Terrible Trio' member, James Grant, add to the 'Ashford Globetrotters' discomfort. The League rules have now been altered to make the use of the foot illegal.



Desperate teamwork from The Ashford Globetrotters as The Terrible Trio begin to dominate the game. Tom Woolnough and Simon Wood with Mark Gazzard directing the angle of shot.

I visited quite a few clubs during the year, and whilst croquet was the main reason for a visit, the distractions in many cases rivalled the lawn events. The Red Arrows put on their usual superb flying display at Ramsgate, the Red Devils dropped in at Preston (THE Preston, on the outskirts of Brighton), the fighting Dinosaurs did battle at Gillingham, the peaceful setting of the Kipling Gardens at Rottingdean, and many others all contend for the highlight of the year.

With no disrespect to these and the other clubs, the one which will remain a pleasant memory for a long time is the final of the Croquet competition at St Mary's C of E Primary School at Ashford, Kent. I had been invited to present the medals to the finalists by Lucy Simmons, the organiser. The Headmaster, the third and fourth forms watched the final played by teams of three



Back row: David Higgs and Lucy Simmons with 'The Terrible Trio' (L to R) Leigh Roberts, Gary Lowman and James Grant. Front: 'The Ashford Globetrotters' (L to R) Simon Wood, Tom Woolnough and Mark Gazzard.

using six inch hoops, two inch balls and six balls in a 21 point game.

I am still trying to work out what the rules and tactics ought to be! At the time however, I was more impressed by the skill and joy of the players, and the occasional footwork in some croquet strokes. More remarkable was the attention of the audience to the game, and the applause deservedly given to good strokes.

Somehow we appear to have lost the enjoyment in the current versions of croquet. I would dearly like to see a final played with such critical acclaim. Do we take croquet too seriously, or is it that our very young players know how to enjoy the game, and we have forgotten how to? Full marks to Lucy for developing this attitude.

Handicapping Problems in 1904

By Allen Parker (Parkstone)

In 1904 the use of bisques was restricted to one at a time, and hence the power conferred on a player holding several bisques was much less than with to-day's arrangement. The following abstracts from the 1904 Gazette should be read with this in mind.

Ladies' Handicaps

The following comparison between the sexes appeared in the 'Notes' in the issue of June 1st:

The disparity in the degrees of skill attained by men and women who play in tournaments has often excited comment, especially among men. The Official Handicap may be quoted to show to what extent that disparity exists, or at any rate is considered to exist at the beginning of the present season.

| HANDICAP | Ladies | Gentlemen |
|---------------|--------|-----------|
| Scratch | 1 | 7 |
| 1 Bisque | 0 | 14 |
| 2 Bisques | 2 | 20 |
| 3 Bisques | 10 | 19 |
| 4 Bisques | 13 | 40 |
| 5 Bisques | 26 | 56 |
| 6 Bisques | 51 | 84 |
| 7 Bisques | 72 | 105 |
| 8 Bisques | 90 | 59 |
| 9 Bisques | 92 | 52 |
| 10 Bisques | 120 | 23 |
| 11-14 Bisques | 100 | 14 |
| | 577 | 493 |

It will be seen from this list that, though the number of handicapped lady-associates exceeds that of the men, so far as the upper classes are concerned they are hopelessly outnumbered. For instance in classes 1-3 the proportion is nearly 14 to 1, and in the next four classes it is not very far from 2 to 1. After this, in the classes that do not necessitate 'captaincy' in doubles, the numbers are all the other way, the ladies having a handsome majority of nearly 3 to 1. Regarding particular points in the list, the case of Miss Gower is clearly exceptional, since no other lady is even in class 2.... The startlingly sudden change in proportion between the sexes, which occurs after the 7 bisque class, is no doubt due, to a great extent, to artificial reasons. The handicapping committee have a justifiable dislike to masculine 'non-captains'; hence the relatively large number of men assigned to the 7-bisque class and thereby saddled with the responsibilities of 'captaincy'.

So much for the statistics of the disproportion. And the cause of it all? We know not. Croquet is the one outdoor game in which the two sexes might be supposed to compete on equal terms. Activity is not required at all; physical force to a very slight extent; even a good eye is not really essential. Skirts, if properly managed, are no drawback to most styles of play. Unsuitable hats are mere vanity. Nerve (as distinguished from 'nerves'), manual skill and intelligence - these are the three main requisites for success in tournament play. In which of these are women deficient? Not, we think, in nerve. Men are at least equally nervous, and in addition, are burdened with the obligation of concealing their nervousness. Nor have they any marked superiority in manual skill. Intelligence is a point on which we prefer not to touch. A minimum of the quality is required for Croquet; perhaps 'forethought' would be a better word. In this, perhaps women

are deficient. Their tactics, as a rule, are too mechanical; they seem to lack the imagination required to adapt them to particular cases. It is this lack of imagination, or the coolness necessary for utilising it, which, in our opinion, is the reason why there are not more ladies in the very front rank.

The following letter from a lady-associate headed 'What is Sauce for the Goose is Sauce for the Gander', appeared in the next week's issue, written, apparently, without knowledge of the above pronouncements on ladies' handicaps:



Miss E.N. Coot, Winner of Ladies' Gold Medal and Ladies' Open Championship 1903, and Irish Lady Champion 1904.

Dear Sir, May I draw attention to the fact that as usual gentlemen's names predominate in the finals of the handicap singles. Is this fair? It points to the conclusion that the handicapping of ladies is far more severe than that of men.

Again it is almost always a man-captain who wins the Handicap Doubles. Already this season a well-known winner of the Handicap Singles and Doubles is once again by his fine play to the fore. Should he, after his long list of triumphs, receive even one bisque to assist him? There are many ladies who have never won a first prize in Doubles who lose a bisque this season, which does away with the slender chance that they had of ever again being in a final or semi-final of a medium-sized tournament.

I notice the names of several winners of large entries in the Handicaps last year, who easily put me out. If I meet them this season I shall have to give them a bisque. What is the object of handicapping? Is it to give all an equal chance, or is it done to prevent the medium players having an occasional 'look-in' - especially ladies? And country ladies are the most severely dealt with of any.

If I was to win the 'Peel Memorial' should I lose a bisque, or would last year constitute a precedent? Yours truly, Francis Wilmot.

This led to a reply by the writer of 'Notes' (The Editor) in the same issue:

After the pains we took last week to show how plentifully bisques are distributed among the ladies, the letter from Mrs Wilmot, printed in the

present number, and received before our remarks saw the light, comes very opportunely. Assuming that our correspondent is correct in asserting that gentlemen's names predominate in the finals of Handicap Singles, this does not necessarily show that they are too leniently handicapped as compared with ladies. It may merely mean that many ladies, so favourably treated that they have little difficulty in reaching the semi-final round, are apt to lose their heads at critical stages when the prospects of winning the handicap begins to loom large, and so come to grief before they reach the final.

Meanwhile these ladies have done the damage; they have spoiled the chances of many good men, who, but for their presence, might have won the event; and yet, just because they have only won a third prize and not the first, they expect to get an extra bisque. We have no sympathy with such claims. On the contrary we think that it is on these very players - players who do not win tournaments outright, but who are continually getting into the first four or the first eight, and so spoiling the chances of other players - that the Handicapper ought to keep his most watchful eye.

The statistics given in the last number show that, as a general body, ladies have nothing to complain of in the number of bisques allotted to them. The players who really are hardly treated are those at the very top of the tree, in classes 1 and 2, many of whom are deliberately penalised to prevent them having any chance in Handicaps. If occasionally they succeed in carrying their penalties through to victory it cannot be helped. They thoroughly deserve to win when they do; for they are handicapped, many of them with a view to their extinction in the first round. They are not intended to have an equal chance with the others.

Besides these 'weight-carriers', there is another class which probably has not, and is not intended to have, an equal chance with the rest; we mean players whose bisques range from 11 to 14. Most of these, if their bisques were doubled, would not be good to back in a big Handicap. And this is quite right. Till they improve they ought to have no chance. In no other game that we can think of, are handicaps given which will enable beginners to win first prizes in first-class tournaments. Till they have attained a certain respectable degree of skill, they are expected, and expect, to remain prizeless.

We would go further and suggest that the limit should be reduced to 12 bisques. The players who receive 13 and 14 bisques are only 12 in all; we doubt whether many of them would complain if their invidious distinction were removed. Rather should they rejoice in their promotion. There is too little ambition among croquet players for promotion: too much for prize-winning. So many are asking for more bisques: so few for less.

These provocative remarks prompted a not unexpected reply from another lady associate, and this appeared in the very next issue:

Dear Sir, May I say that I entirely disagree with Mrs Wilmot's letter regarding the too severe handicapping of ladies? Far from ladies being too severely handicapped, I think the exact contrary is the case, and that they are much too leniently dealt with in the matter of bisques, frequently

to their own disadvantage and disappointment; as I feel sure that, like myself, there must be many who would far rather lose a bisque, from having shown good form in play, than win a prize.

When watching ladies at play in tournaments, it has often struck me that their handicap would be less if they were men, and consequently I have sometimes wondered whether the handicappers (who are all men) are quite sufficiently alive to the skill at Croquet shown by ladies, or whether they are not a little too much inclined to consider it impossible for 'weak woman', even at Croquet, to compete on equal terms with themselves.

The interesting statistics given in the C.A. Gazette for June 1st, of the relative handicaps of men and women associates, whilst trying to prove 'the disparity in the degrees of skill attained by men and women who play in tournaments', may also, I think, be taken to prove the truth of my assertion, viz., that as a general rule (as apart from isolated instance), ladies are given too many bisques, instead of too few: possibly, as I have already suggested, from the perhaps not altogether unwilling blindness of the sterner sex to recognise our capabilities. If necessary, however, it would not, I believe, be at all difficult to enlighten their eyes to our power in wielding the mallet, by finding a great many women who would be easily able to defeat men having the same handicap.

Whilst humbly admitting our inferiority in many matters, I think that in Croquet we ought in time to be well able to hold our own. Yours unreservedly, 'A WEAK WOMAN'.

Apparently quite ignorant of the letter expressing these views, the original lady-associate was induced to write again under the heading 'More Sauce for the Goose':

Dear Sir, Thank you very much for your reply to my letter both before and after it was inserted. Your remarks are delightfully naive, and clearly show what you consider the position of the medium ladies in the C.A. should be. It is so interesting to know that they are looked upon as dangers to 'good men', and if the Handicapping Committee hold the same views, we shall certainly continue to see the gentlemen's names in the semi-finals and finals of all handicap events.

This undoubtedly accounts for so many ladies losing a bisque when they beat a man early in an event, instead of waiting until they win as the men do. The latter will be over-weighted with their triumphs, whilst the former must rest content with showing true ambition, and 'rejoice' that they are considered worthy to play at an impossible handicap.

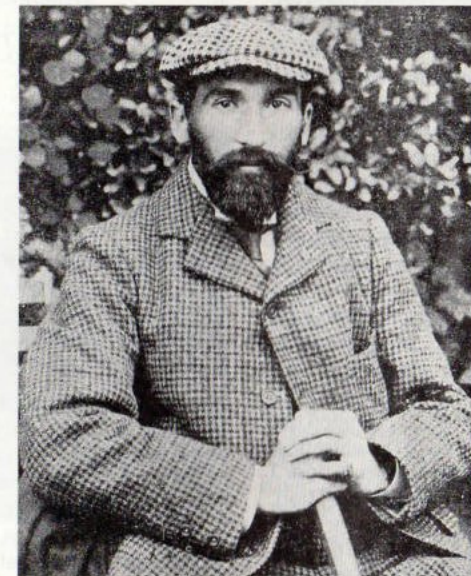
May I suggest to the consideration of all members of C.A. if the following idea could be worked in any way: That certain tournaments should be classed as First Class, and the winners of handicaps at these should lose one bisque, and the second prize winners half a bisque, whoever they happen to be; and at those tournaments considered second class half-a-bisque should be lost by the winner.... The present uncertain way is very perplexing; one is taken down for showing good form in an open event. Next week you hear it said by another authority 'Wins and good play in opens don't count; so and so has never won a handicap'. So everyone at present is handicapped by a different standard.... Yours, etc., Francis Wilmot

The Problem of Minus Players

The following comments on handicapping appeared under 'Notes' in the June 15th number:

The elevation of Mr Beaton to the 'minus one' class, in consequence of his victory in the Peel Memorial, provides us with a suitable occasion for bringing forward a suggestion which has lain dormant in our minds for some two or three years - a suggestion for a new addition to the present scheme of handicapping.

Two seasons ago there was a considerable number of players in the 'minus one' class, a few handicapped at 'minus two' and one to two, we believe, for a time at 'minus three'. Before the beginning of last season the committee decided to abolish the minus classes altogether: two bisques all round were accordingly added to the previous handicaps. The new allotment, for some reason, was not altogether popular: there was in addition some speculation as to what would be done in the event of a scratch player winning a handicap - would he remain as he was, or would the 'minus' system again come into being? Or would another bisque be added all round?



Mr Beaton, who later married Lily Gower.

Speculation changed to grumbling when it was found that scratch winners of handicaps suffered no penalty. Mr Beaton, for instance, won the Peel Memorial last season, and Miss Gower the Ladies' Peel Memorial, both playing at scratch, and neither being in consequence altered. This was considered unfair; if, it was argued, a '1' or a '2' player is penalised for winning a handicap, why should there be an exception in favour of scratch players? No doubt because the committee after deciding to abolish the 'minus' classes, were reluctant to stultify themselves by re-instituting them so soon.

By winning the same event this year Mr Beaton seemed to make his promotion compulsory, and has now been put in a class by himself. But should this be? Mr Beaton may be a better handicap player than, say, Mr Corbally or Mr Woolston; at any rate he deserves to be penalised for his success. But is this a reason for calling him the only first class player, and so degrading the next half dozen to the position of second-class players?

The suggestion which we have to make has perhaps an Irish ring about it. It is, briefly - why not have 'special handicaps for Handicaps'? Let players be classified according to their presumed

skill in Open events. If they are abnormally successful in Handicaps, then penalise them without necessarily altering their essential class. For example, Mr Beaton, and any other scratch player who wins a big Handicap, would on this plan be classified as 'scratch (H.-1)'. Again any scratch player who is notoriously unsuccessful in handicaps might be put at 'scratch (H.1)' or even 'scratch (H.2)'. His essential class - the class showing his 'Opens' form - would remain unaltered, while special distinctions would be made to suit the peculiarities of handicap play.

After all there is nothing radical about the idea. We already find special handicaps for Doubles: we merely suggest that they should be extended to include singles. Nor would any great complications ensue; for in most cases the two handicaps would be identical. For instance, a 4-bisque player who wins a handicap has probably shown such form as to justify his promotion as an 'Opens' player. In fact we think that it is only in the first two classes that the special distinction would be called for. A '1' player who wins a handicap, but has never shown any proof of being up to scratch form in Opens, might reasonably be classified as 1(H.O.); and similar distinctions would probably be found necessary among some of the present scratch players. But below these two classes we do not think that 'special handicaps for Handicaps' would be found necessary more frequently than the 'special handicaps for Doubles' which already exist.

The author of 'Notes' saw fit to take the matter up again in the issue of August 17th:

The continual success of scratch players in handicaps makes one wonder, not by any means for the first time, whether the bisque system of handicapping is the best and fairest. That is not by any means the only method is obvious from the fact that, with the exception of 'real' tennis, it survives in no other game but Croquet. A quarter of a century ago bisques were a recognised feature of lawn tennis. They were abolished, and no one regretted it, and it is not easy to see why they have so long been held sacred in Croquet.

The bisque system is seen at its worst when the two classes matched are most unequal. The inferior player, if beaten, has nearly always been prevented from taking most of his bisques, or has wasted them, or has taken them all and so caused a long and tedious game. If he wins, the game will also probably be a long one. We are strongly of the opinion that all starts exceeding the value of four bisques should be given in points; that is, the inferior player should receive four bisques and a certain number of points start in addition. Handicapping by points is the sole method in lawn tennis and billiards, and there is really no reason why it should not be introduced into Croquet, the number of points equivalent to a bisque being regulated according to the class of the player, by means of a sliding scale. In the case of a 12-bisque player a couple of points are as good as a bisque - probably better. Twenty eight points is too long a game for him.

But if the bisque system be retained, or until it be abolished, we certainly approve of the suggestion made in a contemporary that a player who fails to effect a roquet or make a point by means of a bisque should be entitled to take another in the same turn. We would go further and say - let him take them all, if he likes, until

Continued overleaf

Short Story

Croquet: How it altered the whole of my life

By David Charsley-Thomas

In 1939 I qualified and was admitted to the roll of solicitors. At school I had always been keen on and reasonably good at various sports. Then came disaster. I lost my right eye in an accident.

I found that being unable to focus accurately on distance, I could no longer play games involving a moving ball. I tried golf, but not being allowed to ground my club in a bunker meant I usually emptied the bunker of sand - leaving the ball where it was. Or I cut the ball in half, or missed it all together!

I had to find some other sport and croquet was the obvious choice. In those days anyone of my age playing croquet was regarded as an oddity. Many times I was asked why I was not playing cricket.

At the time I lived at Roehampton and belonged to the club. One Saturday afternoon I saw an elderly lady sitting by herself on a seat in front of the croquet pavilion. I screwed up my courage and asked if she would like a game. She was very pleased, and we had a most enjoyable game, after which we went over to the clubhouse and had tea together. During tea she introduced herself as Miss Cardew. She then began to ask me about myself and what work I did.

I told her I recently qualified and was having trouble finding a job. She thought for a moment and then said: 'I wonder if my brother, Arthur, could help you? I will give you his phone number and you can give him a ring. I will be seeing him this evening and I will tell him you will be calling. Looking at her watch, Miss Cardew suddenly said: 'Oh, I must be going. Thank you very much for the game.' With that she picked up her handbag and left.

The following Monday I rang the number Miss Cardew had given me. I gave my name and asked to speak to Mr Cardew. After a minute or so, a voice at the other end of the phone said: 'Oh! you are the young man who has been playing croquet with my sister. I gather you are

looking for a job? In that case I may be able to help. Come and see me on Wednesday at 10am. Sorry I can't spend more time talking to you now. See you on Wednesday morning.' Having given me his address, he rang off.

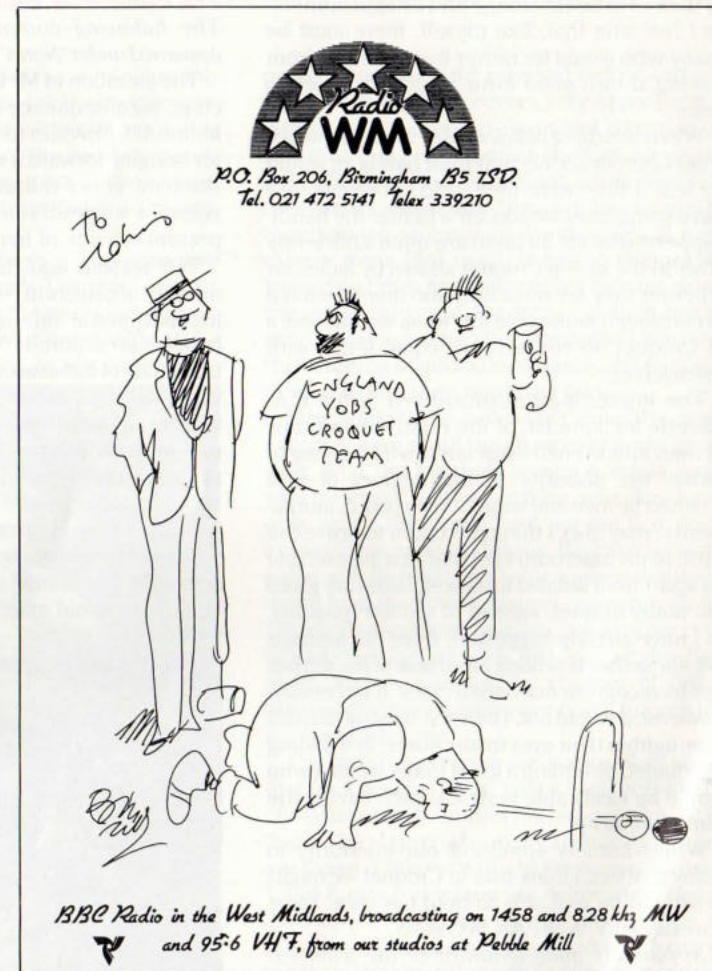
I started to wonder who Mr Cardew was, and what line of business he was in. I naturally wanted a job in the law, but so far no mention had been made of law! I felt like ringing up again and saying that if the job was not connected with the law I wouldn't trouble Mr Cardew. However there seemed chance of a job and whatever it was even a temporary one was something. I decided not to ring back but to keep the appointment fixed for Wednesday morning.

On Wednesday morning I took the tube to the Temple Station, and walked through the gardens to Norfolk Street, where I found Lennox House, the address I had been given. It was a huge building, and to the right of the entrance was a large brass plate engraved 'Joynson-Hicks & Co. Solicitors. Commissioners for Oaths.'

My remaining eye nearly popped out of my head. Joynson-Hicks, later to become Viscount Brentford, had been the Home Secretary! With trepidation I climbed the four steps leading to the entrance. Crossing a polished marble floor I entered a door marked 'Reception'. As I did so, the clock struck ten.

I gave my name and was told 'Mr Cardew is expecting you. Will you please come with me?' We went across the hallway and entering the lift stopped at the third floor. My guide walked across to a door marked 'Private', on which she knocked, and with a smile motioned me to enter.

It was a beautiful room. Bookcases lined the walls. At the far end was a large desk behind which sat an elderly man with white hair. He rose from behind the desk and pointing to a leather armchair: 'Come and sit down' he said, 'and tell me about yourself.' I told Mr Cardew that although I had quali-



BBC Radio in the West Midlands, broadcasting on 1458 and 828 kHz MW and 95.6 VHF, from our studios at Pebble Mill

A cartoon by Bill Tidy, drawn for Chris Bennett when they met in the studios of Radio WM.

fied in all branches of law I liked criminal law, advocacy, and litigation better than conveyancing. I thought for a moment he was going to say they were looking for a conveyancer - but he didn't. Instead he said: 'What a stroke of luck. You are the seventh I have interviewed. The only thing the others were good at was conveyancing and probate but we already have plenty of people who can do that. When could you start?'

'Right away' I replied. Mr Cardew smiled as he said: 'I shall have to have a word with my partners but I am sure they will accept my judgment. By the way, I am the senior partner here, and I deal with all staff matters. My sister told me quite a lot about you. She is a shrewd old Dear, and very seldom wrong. I will write and let you know what our final decision is. You should hear from us by Monday.' I got up and thanked Mr Cardew. We shook hands, and I left.

Sure enough on Monday morning a letter arrived. I had got the job. Not just any old job, but employment with one of the finest firms in England and at a generous salary.

What a strange thing fortune is! There had been so many 'ifs', but they had added up to a wonderful

result. If I hadn't lost my eye I would never have started to play croquet. If I hadn't played croquet I would never have met Miss Cardew. If I hadn't asked her if she would like a game we would never have got talking. Finally if we hadn't talked I would never have met her brother, and ended up getting one of the best jobs anyone could have hoped for!

Every time I pick up my mallet, even after all those years, I thank God and Croquet for my good fortune.

By the way, whenever I see anyone sitting by themselves I still go up to them and ask if they would like a game.

SHORT STORY COMPETITION

The winner of the
1988 Short Story
Competition will be
announced in our next
issue.

The Judges are now in
session!

Coaching Courses

LOUGHBOROUGH SUMMER SCHOOL

This year's Summer School at Loughborough will be held from 31st July to 4th August.

This course is aimed at improving the personal performance of 'beginners' - those players who have not yet obtained an official handicap, or those whose handicap is 12 or more.

Applicants will be sent a self-assessment form for completion on enrolment, and this will be used by the coaches, in conjunction with a series of practical tests on the first evening, to split the players into groups of equal ability.

The course will provide both coaching and competitive play. Major emphasis will be placed on good stroke production. As soon as groups have a good command of stroke technique, the emphasis will shift to tactical play. Players will be moved on to higher groups if they progress faster than expected.

There will be opportunities for individual coaching on particular difficulties and successful per-

ormers will be awarded a handicap at the end of the course, existing handicaps being adjusted if necessary.

Short lawns (24yds by 16yds) will be used throughout the course.

Full details are given in the Summer School Brochure, obtainable from: Mrs Shirley Sandover, Loughborough Summer School, University of Technology, Loughborough, LE11 3TU. (Tel: 0509-222773).

Bookings for the Summer School should be made through Mrs Sandover, but please apply early to make sure of your place - for the past three years, the Summer School has been over-subscribed.

Course Fees (including accommodation and tuition):

£146 (CA members)
£158 (Non-members)



The President's Team v USCA at Hurlingham, 1988.

BISHAM ABBEY SUMMER SCHOOL for Handicaps 6-12

Monday 22nd May (after lunch) to Friday 26th May (finishing with lunch).

This course is designed to improve the performance of players currently in the handicap range 6 to 12 who have the potential to progress to 'A' class level (handicap 3 or less).

Coaching will be interspersed with competitive play on full size lawns.

Fee per player: £169.50

Single and double rooms are available, but early booking is advised if specific requirements are to be met. The course is limited to 16 places which will be allocated on a first-come, first served basis.

The course is residential. The fees include all accommodation and coaching charges. CA members qualify for a 10% discount.

Applications should be sent to Chris Hudson, The Oaklands, Englesea Brook, Near Crewe, Cheshire, CW2 5QW. Tel 0270-820296. Please make cheques payable to 'The Croquet Association'.

ARDINGLEY COLLEGE SUMMER SCHOOL

The South East Croquet Federation is arranging a Summer School at Ardingley College, near Haywards Heath during the latter part of July 1989.

The School lasting one week can be residential or non-residential, and is intended for players of 6-20 handicap range. The course consists of instruction and competitions with optional excursions, eg. to the Bluebell Railway, and Kew's annexe at Wakehurst Palace.

A leaflet giving full details of programme, costs and application form is available now from David Higgs, 35 Shirley Avene, Old Coulsdon, Surrey CR3 1QY. Tel: 01-668 6525.

Official Business

COUNCIL MEETING

Extract from Minutes of a meeting of the Council on 22nd October, 1988.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

1) Publicity

The CA Logo may only be used by federations and registered clubs if it is clearly indicated on letter etc. that the federation or club is affiliated to the CA.

2) Laws

The amendments to the Laws and Regulations were approved unanimously.

3) International

Professor Neal first thanked Mr Danks for attending the whole of the Solomon Trophy match and congratulated him on getting first class coverage in 3 national papers. He then presented his report. Council approved unanimously:-

(i) The Solomon Trophy contest should be held annually, the venue alternating between GB and USA (1989 USA, 1990 GB etc.)

(ii) The format of 12 singles and 9 doubles, all Association Croquet, should be retained.

(iii) There should also be a one-day USCA rules match played annually for the trophy provided by John Solomon.

(iv) The visiting teams should in future be responsible for their travel, accommodation and subsistence costs.

(v) When the contest is held in the USA, it is likely to be linked with other USCA events at Palm Beach Gardens. The visiting GB team may then be offered a fee if they take part in coaching.

He also reported that we had applied for membership of the International World Games Association and that if successful croquet would be included as a demonstration sport in Karlsruhe in July 1989. Council approved the appointment of John Solomon as President and Chris Hudson as Secretary of the World Croquet Federation.

DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Mr Hudson tabled an impressive report and was congratulated. Amongst other items were:-

(i) The Croquet Garden Classic had gained in stature and entries had increased.

(ii) The WI had appointed sports officers in all their regions and were a fruitful source for recruitment etc.

(iii) Serious consideration must be given to paying a future Editor an honorarium as the work was extensive, now that the magazine was published six times a year. Advertising income was increasing.

(iv) Hoop and ball gauges can be

purchased from the CA as can weathersuits.

(v) Membership was increasing as were registered clubs.

(vi) Indoor Croquet was played at four venues in the spring with encouraging results. He was looking for a manufacturer able to make a second carpet of the width required.

(vii) The Lister and Carlsberg sponsorships were coming to the end of their term. He was attempting to find a sponsor for the Japanese visit in 1989.

(viii) Publicity and media coverage had been very good.

(ix) Calendar Fixture entries are increasing. In 1989 consideration might be given to more regional golf croquet tournaments, increased opportunities to enter the

Opens with maybe regional qualifying rounds, qualifying rounds for the Inter-Counties, one day CA tournaments and regional Short Croquet events.

He expressed his thanks to all who helped to promote the game, contributed to the magazine etc.

Council referred the honorarium for a future Editor and consideration of paying a future treasurer etc. to the Executive Committee for a report for the March meeting and also for the F & GP Committee to consider this.

ADMINISTRATION

Mr Macmillan reported that:

(i) There were 1006 full members, 375 reduced members, 13 students, 43 junior, 39 life and 154 overseas members - a grand total of 1630.

(ii) 20 clubs had not paid their registration fees.

(iii) 22 people had played in calendar fixture tournaments without paying tribute.

(iv) He asked that CA handicaps should not be given to non-associates and this was agreed.

(v) A painting of the former Croquet Pavilion at Roehampton by John Prince be offered to the Roehampton Club on indefinite loan. This was agreed with one dissenting vote.

(vi) A list of 175 applicants for CA membership was approved unanimously.

MOTIONS

Drug Taking

Proposed by Mr C.P. Townsend and seconded by Mr S.N. Mulliner.

(i) 'That Drug Testing Procedures should follow those recommended by the Sports Council'. Mr Townsend said that we had to take action because the Sports Council had

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he has effected his point or roquet. The object of the proposal is, of course, to prevent the receiver of odds from being practically defrauded of a chance of getting in by means of a single bisque, when he has to play his ball out of a hoop.

Handicapping committees, and individual handicappers, whether in 1904 or 1988, seem to suffer the same dilemmas, and might be forgiven for reminding us that you can't please all of the people all of the time.

