

Editorial

Welcome to the first edition of 'Garden Croquet News'. 'Garden Croquet News' is for the many thousands of people who play croquet in their gardens with their families and friends. It is for people who like the informality and fun of garden croquet and would like to know more about what is going on in the rest of the croquet world.

This first edition is aimed at getting the ball rolling. The next two editions will be four pages each and we hope it will grow quickly to become an indispensable magazine for garden croquet players.

We want 'Garden Croquet News' to contain the type of articles that garden croquet players want to read. So please write to us with your ideas or indeed about any aspect of croquet.

The sort of articles we are planning to include are: croquet news, gossip, and stories about croquet 'characters'; details and results of garden croquet competitions; hints on tactics and how to play; details of coaching courses; news of new equipment; book reviews; croquet puzzles and quizzes; readers letters; surveys of garden croquet players opinions; and features on a whole range of subjects such as organising croquet parties and croquet games like 'pirates'.

We hope you will want to subscribe to 'Garden Croquet News'. To do so please send a cheque for £2.00, made payable to 'The Croquet Association', to Brian Macmillan, The Croquet Association, The Hurlingham Club, Ranelagh Gardens, London SW6 3PR. In return you will receive the next two editions of 'Garden Croquet News', and become registered with the Croquet Association.

Next year we hope to offer lots more coaching



Editorial combat: Charles Townsend, seated, Editor of 'Garden Croquet News', plays garden croquet with John Walters, Editor of 'The Croquet Almanack'.

courses for garden croquet players, particularly one day courses, and to provide you with more chances to play croquet with other local players.

A subscription to 'Garden Croquet News' will enable

you to keep in touch with all these developments and everything else in the world of croquet.

CHARLES TOWNSEND - Editor

GARDEN CROQUET COMPETITIONS

The Garden Croquet Classic is now in its third year. This year a record number of garden croquet players have entered, to make this the largest competition of its kind ever held.

You can enter the 'Classic' as an individual, or as a member of a 'group'. Players entering as individuals are paired with players living close to them. This means that they can meet other croquet players in their neighbourhood. They arrange the match to suit themselves and send the result in. The winner is then paired with another winner living close by.

If you enter as a member of a 'group' (minimum 8 players), then you can organise your own competition. The winner of your 'group' then goes forward into the relevant round of the national competition.

The competition proceeds to 8 regional finals held at stately homes or similar venues around the country. So if one member of the family is in the regional final, all the family can come and watch the croquet, visit a place of interest, and have a great day out.

The winners of the regional finals go on to the national final on Saturday, 16th

September. This year the national final is being held at St Mary's College, Twickenham, the former home of Hugh Walpole. Why not come along and watch one of these finals?

Spectators are always welcome, and there is usually a spare lawn available for you to try the game and have some coaching, if you want to. It will be a good day out, with some keenly fought croquet if previous years are anything to go by.

This year's regional finals are being held at the following venues:

Sat 22nd July	Denzell Gardens, Bowdon, Cheshire.
Sat 22nd July	Hughenden Manor, High Wycombe, Bucks.
Sat 22nd July	Skirsgill Park, Penrith, Cumbria.
Sun 23rd July	Winchester Tennis & Squash Club, Winchester, Hants.
Sun 23rd July	Wrest Park, Silsoe, Beds.
Sat 29th July	Langley Court, Beckenham, Kent.
Sun 30th July	Himley Hall, Nr Dudley, Staffs.
Sun 30th July	Tracy Park, Wick, Bristol, Avon.

We hope to see you there! More details of venues from Chris Hudson. Tel: 0270-820296.

THE REGISTER OF GARDEN CROQUET PLAYERS

The Register of Garden Croquet Players contains names and addresses of garden croquet players arranged by area. In it, you can find other garden croquet players living near you.

When you feel like further challenges or want to meet other garden croquet players you can invite them for a game.

The Register is published in November as part of Townsend's 'Croquet Almanack'.

Entry on the Register is free of charge. If you would like to be included, write to: Townsend Croquet Ltd., Claire Road, Kirby Cross, Frinton-on-Sea, Essex, CO13 0LX.

CROQUET COACHING

A four day croquet coaching course, designed specifically for garden croquet players, has been arranged at Loughborough 'Summer University'. Coaching will be carried out by a qualified Croquet Association coach.

The course will cover how to play the strokes, how to play a break, and the basic tactics. No previous knowledge is assumed, but those who have played before will find the course is so designed that they can proceed at their own pace. The course includes some practice games, as well as providing opportunities to try out some 'fun' variations of

croquet.

There are 12 places available on the course, which starts on the afternoon of Monday 7th August and finishes at lunchtime on Friday 11th August. The all-in price, which includes full board, accommodation, and coaching, is £178.00, inclusive of VAT. All equipment is provided, although players may prefer to bring their own mallets.

For more details and an application form, please apply to Chris Hudson, The Oaklands, Englesea Brook, Near Crewe, Cheshire, CW2 5QW. Tel: 0270-820296.

SOME RECENT BOOKS

The last two years have seen a spate of new books published on Croquet, reflecting the current interest in the game. Amongst these are:

Croquet Handbook

Published by the Croquet Association, this booklet provides an introduction to the basic rules of Croquet, adapted to the short court. It also briefly covers stroke technique, break play, and tactics. Price £1.00. 20pp. (Free to all who enter the Croquet Classic).

Teach Yourself Croquet

By Peter Danks, author of the 'Simple Croquet' series. Published by Shillingate Press. This book provides a step by step approach to learning croquet, as well as a guide to croquet equipment and laying out the court. Price £7.95. 155pp

Plus One on Time

Written and published by Don Gaunt, an active 'A' class player. This book outlines croquet tactics for the high handicap (beginner) to medium handicap player. Very useful for players who have reached that 'difficult' stage between being a beginner and pro-

gressing to 'A' class play. Price \$5.00. 157pp.

Play the Game: Croquet

One of the new 'Play the Game' series published by Ward Lock. Written by Stephen Mulliner, a Great Britain International player, this book contains many diagrams and drawings helpful in understanding basic stroke technique and tactics. Price £3.99. 80pp.

Croquet

By John Solomon. This book, the croquet players' 'bible' for many years, has recently been reprinted in paperback by Adam & Charles Black, relevant sections having been revised by the author to reflect current practice. Price £7.95. 120pp.

The Croquet Almanack

Edited by John Walters and published by Townsend Croquet Ltd., this hardback book is the croquet players' 'Wisden'. Published for the first time in 1988, it contains a host of statistics about croquet world-wide. Price £9.90. 216pp. More details about the above books from the Croquet Association: 01-736-3148.

CROQUET



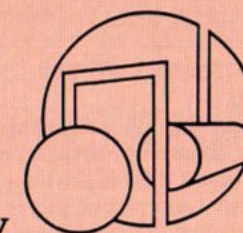
Continental Airlines World Croquet Championship
Hurlingham: 16th - 23rd July

See inside for free Programme

Inside:
News & Views
Solomon Trophy
Championship Reports
Garden Croquet News
Your Letters

....and lots more!

£2.00



Published by
The Croquet Association

Your Letters

The Second Croquet Almanack

Dear Sir,
By now I am sure most of your readers will have heard of, and hopefully have read, 'Townsend's Croquet Almanack 1989'. We are already beginning the work necessary for the 1990 edition. There will be a number of changes in the next volume, both to minimise the amount of material which is repeated, and to build on those innovations which were of greatest interest to readers in the original.

The large section on the season's tournament results will mostly be drawn into the Player Statistics section. So that by looking up any particular player one can see at which events they played, and how well they fared. We also intend to expand this section to include all Calendar Fixtures of the 1989 season. Replacing the bulk of tournament results and also the MacRobertson Shield Results (which will reappear after the next International Series, in the 1991 Almanack) will be the results of the major New Zealand, Australian and American Championships. Overseas players will now appear in the Player Statistics section, and we aim to produce a 'World Computer Ranking', listing some 200 players.

Of course we will continue our commitment to publishing articles of interest to all croquet players, and would like to hear from anyone who thinks they might be able to make a contribution in this area. The section which readers of 'Croquet' will most likely be able to help in developing is the 'Records Section'. Readers of the 1989 Almanack will have seen that the records section is broken down to include not just the awe-inspiring feats of croquet greats, but anecdotes, items, and incidents of general interest. We would be very pleased to hear of any possible entries to this chapter. As an encouragement, we will be giving away copies of the 1989 Almanack to readers who come forward with the most impressive or interesting records and stories. I look forward to reading them all.

John Walters,
Townsend Croquet.

Croquet Customs

Dear Sir,
When starting to play tournament croquet, about four years ago, I was taught that it was the privilege of the lower handicapped player to toss the coin at the beginning of the game. I had thought this to be an ancient tradition of the game, but have found, whilst playing a good deal of croquet, that it is not always

adhered to.

Is my impression that this custom is declining a false one? As I play almost entirely in advanced tournaments it is possible that what I have noticed is true only at such tournaments, where one often does not know the handicap of one's opponent.

If the custom that the better player tosses the coin is to continue then perhaps players' handicaps could be shown next to their name in the draw, as is done at some advanced tournaments. We have

after all told the manager our handicaps on our entry forms. Or possibly, as rankings are better publicised, should they be decided according to ranking?

Until this point is clarified there are inevitably going to be a number of 'faulty' tosses. I am left wondering which is the greater impoliteness: to toss when not entitled to do so, or to ignore a 'faulty' toss and 'replay' the toss in accordance with etiquette?
Duncan C. Reeve,
Reepham.

CA NATIONAL JUNIOR SQUADS

Congratulations to the following who have been selected for the Under-21 and Under-18 Squads in 1989.



Robert Fulford, already a Solomon Trophy player and a member of the 1989 Under-21 Squad.

Under-21

James Carlisle (Hurlingham)
Chris Clarke (QEGS & Southport)
Russell Collighan (QEGS & Southport)
Robert Fulford (Colchester)
John Mann (Nailsea)
David Maugham (Cheltenham)
Mark Saurin (QEGS & Southport)
Mark Suter (Cheltenham)

Rolls Research

Dear Sir,
If David Purdon had commenced reading my article as early as the second paragraph he would have encountered the phrase 'moving in the same general direction'. I thought that this was sufficient indication that I was concerned with balls moving in the same general direction - subject, of course, to the constraint that the striker's ball does not catch up, and buffet, the croquetted ball.

By the way since no one seems disposed to apologise for, or even criticise, the preponderance of errors in the mathematics, perhaps I could add that what was published does bear a superficial resemblance to what I submitted. But, as the Editor remarked to me, 'Double differentials are asking for trouble.'

Eric Solomon,
Harrow Oak.



Richard Harding (QEGS), a member of this year's Under-18 Squad.

Under-18

Ian Burridge (Colchester)
Richard Harding (QEGS)
Chris Haslam (Southport)
Alex Leggate (Nailsea)
Graham Pearson (Bishop Vesey's)
Chris Ross (Cheltenham)
Andrew Saurin (QEGS)
David Thatcher (Nailsea)

Croquet in Switzerland

Dear Sir,
We are completely isolated out here at the CERN club, so anyone passing through will be very welcome to have a game or two. Please contact me beforehand, if possible, or otherwise on arrival. We have 25 members, ranging in handicap from 7 upwards. Low bisquers would be especially welcome.

My address is Norman Eatough, CERN, CH-1211 Geneva 23, Switzerland. Tel (+41 22) 767 3333. Norman Eatough, Chairman, CERN CC.

Wrong Author?

Dear Sir,
Thank you for publishing my story 'How it altered the whole of my life' in your March issue of 'Croquet'. BUT where you got 'DAVID' as my christian name from is beyond me!! I typed the correct name which is 'DERRICK'.

Derrick Charsley-Thomas,
Bournemouth.

Sorry - it's beyond me too! - Ed

Andorra Park Hotel

Dear Sir,
Our Hotel has been a member of your Association since last year, and we are building a full-size croquet court in our gardens which we believe will be ready in May 1989.

We are looking for someone who knows croquet well to give lessons during the Spring and Summer. Our customers are select and the Hotel has 40 rooms, with a big garden, swimming pool, tennis, practice golf and croquet.

The coach would need to speak Spanish, as most of our guests are Spanish, and be good at human relations. The person would be provided with a room in the Hotel and meals. Salary to be negotiated.

The approximate dates of the Croquet season are from May 15th to October 15th 1989. Anyone interested in this offer should apply to the Andorra Park Hotel, Carrer Les Canals S/N, Andorra La Vella, (PRINCIPAT D'ANDORRA), sending personal particulars and a recent photograph.

Joaquin Garcia Marco,
Director.

Sponsorship

Dear Sir,
Recently for the second time I had the honour to play in the Inter-Counties Championship which I very much enjoy. It is one of those opportunities to play against some very good players, and this year the weather was particularly kind.

Of course I am new to the 'Counties' scene, but it was with some pride that I took up my mallet on behalf of my team.

This year I was disappointed to find that there was no sponsorship. Surely we could do better than this, particularly if we invested in help from CA members. It is easy to see the long term potential of such a competition - perhaps eventually on the lines of the Davis Cup in tennis.

The 'Counties' should be one of the most prestigious events, to be enlarged and developed in the future - let's get to it and make it so.

Peter Howell,
Tunbridge Wells.

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

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

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

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Editorial

CONTINENTAL AIRLINES WORLD CROQUET CHAMPIONSHIPS 16th - 23rd July

We hope that many CA members will take the opportunity to come to Hurlingham or Surbiton to see these championships.

If you do intend to come to Hurlingham, please remember that you must show your current CA membership card on entry. Failure to do so will result in your having to pay the \$5.00 entry fee.

Any club party intending to visit Hurlingham by coach or otherwise should advise Brian Macmillan as soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

The new project, to which I refer above, is the publication at the end of this magazine of the first issue of 'Garden Croquet News'. As a result of the development work we have all been doing over the past five years, we now have a list of many people who play croquet outside the recognised clubs, and this magazine is designed for them.

Charles Townsend, who has a lot of empathy with garden croquet players and perhaps understands their needs better than most, has undertaken to edit this new magazine. This first issue outlines his plans for the future, and we wish the new publication every success.

CHRIS HUDSON

CLUB CONFERENCE

Hurlingham: Saturday 25th November, 1989.
We hope all registered Clubs will be represented at this Bi-Annual Conference postponed from last year. As usual, the format will be small group conferences discussing subjects of interest. Topics for discussion will include some of the following:-

The results of trials during the year of Advanced Handicap Singles (see 'Croquet' - May issue) - has your club tried it yet?

The full bisque game in preparation for next year's 'All England' championship which will be played to these rules.

The Garden Croquet Classic - how to promote it to get new members for your club.

Prize money for Croquet tournaments.
How to recruit and retain new members for your club.

Local sponsorship and media coverage.
In to the 90's and beyond - Croquet on the move.

Indoor Croquet.
I hope you will discuss these and other matters in your Club. Why not hold a supper or barbecue during the summer for this purpose?

Your representatives can then come to the Conference briefed with your views and ideas. Please let me know if you have other subjects you would like discussed.

Derek Caporn
Conference Organiser.

PROJECTS OLD & NEW

This issue contains two items that mark the fulfilment of one project and the start of another.

The first World Croquet Championship, made possible by the generous sponsorship of Continental Airlines, brings to fruition a dream that was first expressed some five years ago - to hold the first World Croquet Championship under the auspices of the World Croquet Federation in this country.



The England team that won this year's Home Internationals (L to R). Back: David Foulser and Steve Mulliner. Front: Phil Cordingley, Eddie Bell and Nigel Aspinall.

Included in this issue, as part of the magazine, is the programme for the event, giving the draw and some background information about some of the players. We are delighted by the response that the event has evoked around the world and extend a very warm welcome to all our visitors from overseas.

By its very nature, it is likely that this event will take place in future at other venues round the World. Representatives of the member associations of the World Croquet Federation meet at Hurlingham on July 15th to discuss many matters connected with international croquet, and as with the Olympic Games, other national croquet associations as well as the CA will be bidding to stage the next World Championship.

Now that we have paved the way to a world 'individual' championship, we are looking ahead to a 'team' event. Towards the end of July, Colin Irwin and John McCullough will be playing a demonstration match at the World Games in Karlsruhe. If all goes well, the 1993 World Games in Holland could well provide the stage for a World Team Championship.

Photographs in this issue by: Andrew Bennet, Jeff Bowden, Peter Danks, Phil Gamble, John Hobbs, Peter Howell, Chris Hudson, Deborah Latham, John McCullough, F.R. Ross, Eric Solomon, and Liz Taylor-Webb.

Front Cover: Debbie and Donald Cornelius playing in the 1986 Barwell Salvagers at Cheltenham.

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Short Story

The Bedevilled Mallet

By Brian Bucknall

This afternoon I burned the mallet. I knew that it would be a struggle but by chaining it to a stake and dowsing it with petrol I was finally able to dispose of it. No longer will it be a danger to other croquet players.

Now that this task has been accomplished I can, in what I suppose are the remaining hours of my life, complete the account of how I rose from obscurity in the croquet world to become a leading player. Many people were greatly surprised by my sudden elevation, so I suppose the story had best be told, since it is the nature of a final confession.

The story started thirteen years ago to-day. My wife and I, together with Peter and his wife, decided to spend an Autumn weekend at an hotel in mid-Wales that advertised croquet playing facilities.

We arrived towards noon and found the hotel to be a newly converted country house situated in a picturesque wooded valley. But whether it was a sudden drop in temperature caused by clouds passing in front of the sun, or the mournful crowing of rooks in the trees, I suddenly felt a transient sense of chill and unease as we walked from the car to the hotel. At the time it was quickly forgotten although I remembered the sensation again later.

In the afternoon Peter and I played open singles while our wives departed for the local shops. Neither Peter nor I were experts, being at the lower end of class B. Peter was the better player and after some four hours of play he won by a small margin. This was fairly typical play for both of us, yet I was continually irritated and frustrated by my failure to improve. Peter merely enjoyed playing and didn't much mind whether he won or lost.

That evening Mrs Griffiths, the wife of the proprietor, joined us for coffee after dinner. She said how nice it was to see the croquet lawn being used again. She said she remembered as a small child watching her grandfather play on the lawn. He had been, she believed, a very good player who had played for England. When he retired he bought this house and laid out the croquet lawn. Unfortunately there had been an accident. He was struck by lightning whilst pegging-out.

Her father had inherited the house but was uninterested in croquet. Upon his death only a year ago, she and her husband had in turn inherited the house, to

which they decided to retire and open a small hotel. She said that they had no time to learn to play the game.

Further discussion revealed my interest in croquet history. She said that her grandfather's trophies and press cuttings had been kept and would I be interested in seeing them? I readily agreed to a quick look before we settled down to play bridge. Peter declined the offer so she and I walked upstairs to the attic.

There I found several trophies and replicas on a dusty ledge, together with a folder of press cuttings from the 1920's, a diary and on the floor a croquet box. I glanced at the papers and asked if I could take them back to my room for further study over the weekend. I said the 'Croquet' magazine could be interested in an article on the subject. Mrs Griffiths thought this would be splendid.

I put the papers down and opened the box. Inside was an old blackened croquet mallet but seemingly in a good state of repair. I leaned over to pick it up but as I touched it I thought I experienced an electric shock so I let go quickly. 'That's funny,' I said to Mrs Griffiths, 'I thought I received an electric shock just then, but it is impossible. There aren't any wires. Maybe it was static electricity, but it's a wooden mallet so it can't be that either.' She said that it probably was static electricity because the box hadn't been opened for many years. In fact, she didn't even realise it was there. I thought the whole episode to be distinctly odd as I gingerly reached out again and picked it up. This time there was no shock, but there was another sensation. The mallet seemed to be pulling me to the door like a dog straining at the leash.

I asked Mrs Griffiths if I could borrow it to play with in the morning. She said that would be quite all right. Indeed, if I wanted to keep it I was welcome to it. She didn't want it in the house after what had happened to her grandfather.

Thereupon we left the room with the mallet almost pulling me along, although I didn't mention this to Mrs Griffiths. I deposited the papers in my room, thanked Mrs Griffiths, and took the mallet to the open conservatory, where our own equipment had been left. I then rejoined the bridge party only briefly describing my findings in the attic.

That night after bridge, I glanced at the papers again but felt tired and therefore decided to leave them until the next day. But I could not sleep. There had been the mental stimulus of bridge com-

bined with my earlier evening experiences. I must have been dozing off, when I thought I heard the clink of croquet balls. I was immediately awake and listened intently. Yes, I heard the distinctive sound again, so I got out of bed, went to the window and looked out. In the moonlight, I could just make out a croquet ball going across the lawn. I could not see anything else but I now knew what was happening. I didn't care to investigate further so I returned to bed and went to sleep. The background to all this would no doubt be revealed in the papers.

Next morning Peter and I were to play handicap singles whilst our wives went out again. Doubles had been arranged for the afternoon.

We went to the conservatory to collect our mallets and I noticed there were bits of grass on the balls which we had cleaned after our previous game. I had not been dreaming. I showed Peter the old mallet but he was more interested in getting on with the game. I picked it up. No shocks this time but I could again feel it pulling. Peter tossed for the innings and I elected to go in first, with blue.

The mallet pulled me to the boundary opposite hoop 1. It was clearly asking me to aim for it which I did. The ball went through perfectly and came to a halt by hoop 2 which was also made. Peter raised his eyebrows. 'I don't believe it', he said. I left blue by the peg. Peter then went to the fourth corner with red. I then hit red with black, croqueted it to hoop 2 and roqueted blue to hoop 1, which I made, and then went round to rover with the three balls. Peter failed to roquet with yellow and then minutes later the game was all over. We had another game, which I also won within half-an-hour. Peter was dumbfounded! We played a third game which I lost, using my own mallet. I must say I was worried in case the old mallet became jealous and acted strangely, but it didn't.

The afternoon game using my own mallet proceeded uneventfully. In the early evening, I found time for a more detailed study of the papers. The significant item was the diary from which I now quote the following relevant extracts for 1923 and 1924.

20 May. Have been playing croquet for 4 years. Should be getting better but there is no improvement. This is most frustrating.

14 August. Am getting worse. Coaching isn't helping. I badly want to win. I wonder if Damon could help? Didn't his father know Aleister Crowley of the left path?

21 Sept. Met Damon and explained



'I knew now what was happening.'

problem. He said he would try to help but would first need to consult Q.

15 Oct. Letter from Damon. He said come to Q's house on 31 October, bringing the mallet.

31 Oct. Halloween. Went to the address given. Mallet was placed in a chalk circle and surrounded by people dressed in black robes and hoods. Some foul-smelling liquid was wiped on the mallet. Mumbo-jumbo words invoking the devil which I didn't understand although I did hear that thirteen years of life were granted to all who used it. Mallet was marked with 666. (I must remember to ask Damon what this means).

1 Nov. All Saints Day. End of season but had a practice. Played brilliantly. Hopeful now for next year. 21 April. Easter Monday and start of season. First game beat J easily. Obviously my problems are over. (Further entries revealed success after success including eventual selection for the President's Cup which he won several times. He also played in international matches. The diary stopped at the end of October 1936, the day before he was struck by lightning).

Likewise, after we returned from Wales, my croquet was consistently of the highest standard, that is, when I played with the old mallet, which was most of the time. I began to be noticed and was selected for, and won, many major tournaments and test matches. Like the grandfather I became a major celebrity much to the amazement of my fellow club members who knew what I was like in the old days.

Now, thirteen years later, on this night of the 15th October 1987, my confession is complete. Because I had played with the mallet well realising the curse upon it, I doubt my life will be spared. I have had a lot of fun and presumably the price will have to be paid. My wife will be sorry but she is well provided

Cheltenham: 29 April - 2 May Avery wins Westerns

Report by Alan Bogle

A strong field assembled at Cheltenham to contest the Dunnett Ward Western Championships, many players with an eye on the forthcoming World Championship.

Manager Bernard Neal was so confident in the players' ability to speed through the games that he played best of three from round one. However, he sensibly displayed a notice encouraging fast play. Fulford took this to heart and finished his first round match with Jones in an hour forty including two triples. Meanwhile, the manager had to be content with losing his first game by two on time.

In the event, the first two rounds were completed on schedule. The only seed to fall was Cordingley who went out to Gaunt in three games. Cordingley contrived to lose the first from peg and rover when Gaunt was still to start. Gaunt subsequently lost to Debbie Cornelius in the second round, again in three games. The other highlight of the early rounds was the footwear of Openshaw, who had forgotten his shoes and played in grey casuals!

The Championship started to come alive in the quarter finals. Cornelius took the first game from Avery, but a fine triple saw Avery win the second. The third game was a scrappy affair with opportunities for both players, Avery just taking it. The match between Clarke and Murray suffered a loss of accuracy. The Fulford and Mulliner match was very close with Fulford just having the edge in three games. A similar story in the last match saw Aiton home against Openshaw.

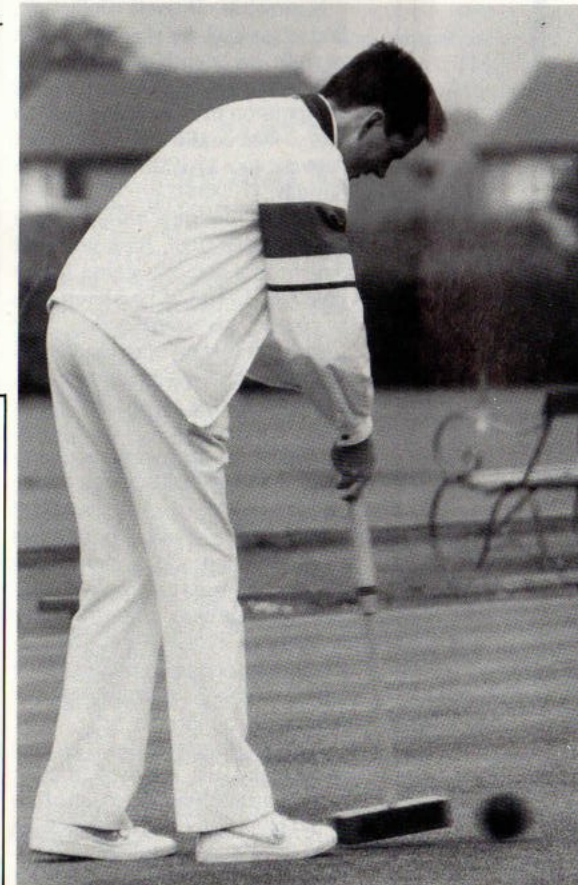
The first semi-final saw Avery dispose of Clarke in two games, when Clarke's customary accuracy deserted him. Aiton beat Fulford by the same margin, after the manager insisted on completing the match on the Sunday evening in order to allow a best of five final.

The final lived up to expectations. In the first game Aiton then Avery went quickly to 4-back. Aiton hit the lift and started chasing his 9th consecutive triple. However, having successfully completed the three peels on Avery's ball, some bad luck at rover left Aiton with a long peg out attempt which he missed, sending the ball off in B baulk in the process. First game to Avery.

The second game was a similar story. Both players were soon on 4-back. Avery in play subsequently failed to get the 4-back peel on three occasions, and his turn ended at penult having completed two peels of a STPO. Aiton failed to take advantage of the situation and Avery was able to take the game. The third game was of an excellent standard. Avery was first away, but Aiton hit and completed a TPO pegging out his opponent. He chose to leave one ball near corner two, the other in corner four. Avery took advantage by rolling up to hoop 1 from the ball in corner four. He ran the hoop, splitting that ball to three, going to the ball near corner two. A good approach to two followed and the Championship was won by Avery with a well controlled three ball break.

Fulford beat Clarke for third place in three games. The notable game was that won by Clarke. Clarke advanced to 4-back on the fifth turn. Fulford hit the lift shot and pegged out Clarke, leaving one ball in corner two, the other on the east boundary level with penult. Clarke took off from the ball on the east boundary, finishing inside the yard line south of hoop one. He ran hoop one off the north boundary and roqueted the ball in corner two. A successful roll to two followed and the game was won on the seventh turn with a nice three ball break. Gregory beat Murray to win the swiss.

Runner-up Keith Aiton, who completed eight successive triple peels.

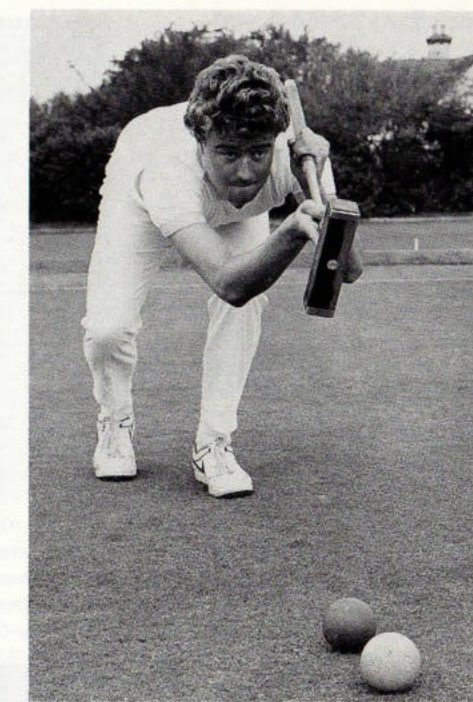


Story (continued)

for. Now that I have finished I will go to bed and more than likely shan't wake up again. There are worse ways to die, I suppose.

Footnote. Later, in the early hours of the morning a severe storm arose. At six o'clock a banging noise woke him up. His first thoughts were 'I'm still alive!' He observed that his greenhouse door was banging in the wind. He dressed and went down his garden to secure it. On the way back to the house he was killed outright by a falling oak tree.

Championships



Mark Avery, winner of the Dunnett Ward Western Championships.

RESULTS

Round 1:

D.L. Gaunt bt P. Cordingley +3, -23, +3(T); Miss D.A. Cornelius bt M. French -24, +26, +17; F.I. Maugham bt B.G. Neal +2(T), +23; M. Avery bt C. von Schmieder -3, +24, +15; C.D. Clarke bt G.A. Vince +5, +15; S.E. Lewis bt B.G. Hallam +26, +16(T); W.O. Aldridge bt J.O. Walters +14, +17; M. Murray bt A.B. Hope -1, +5, +26TP; R. Fulford bt K.E. Jones +20TP, +25TP; D. Cairns bt E.W. Solomon +14, +11(T); E. Bell bt D.J. Goacher +12, +1(T); S.N. Mulliner bt D. Maugham +3TP; +26TP; K.M.H. Aiton bt E.J. Davis -25, +17, +16TP; P.L. Smith bt D.R. Foulser +9, -6(T), +15; A.K. Gregory bt A.F. Sutcliffe -4, +17, +14; D.K. Openshaw bt C.J. Irwin +15, -26, +17

Round 2:

Cornelius bt Gaunt -25, +17, +15; Avery bt F.I. Maugham +22TP, +16; Clarke bt Lewis +12, +23; Murray bt Aldridge +16, +20; Fulford bt Cairns +23, +23; Mulliner bt Bell +1, +26; Aiton bt Smith +9TPO, +9TP; Openshaw bt Gregory +26TP, +9.

Round 3:

Avery bt Cornelius -24, +14TP, +6; Clarke bt Murray +19, +14; Fulford bt Mulliner +17, -16, +15; Aiton bt Openshaw +23TP, -10(OTP), +13TPO.

Semi-Finals:

Avery bt Clarke +12, +26TP; Aiton bt Fulford +16TPO, +26TP.

Final:

Avery bt Aiton +3, +13, +14(OTP).

Play-off (for 3rd place):

Fulford bt Clarke +16, -14(OTP), +17.

Weekend Tournaments

Bowdon: 22-23 April 'Not the Southport Weekend'

Thanks to the controversially late appearance of the fixture book, there were five minus players unable to get into the Southport Weekend, looking for something to do. Despite the short notice, a tournament was organised at Bowdon.

Saturday produced two surprises. The first was that after two hours play between Steve Lewis and John Davis, the score was 3-1 to John. The second was the sight of Bill Aldridge, under pressure from Brian Storey, playing a controlled break and finishing a triple in the first game. Readers who may be shocked by this unexpected development will be relieved to hear that he did not sustain the illusion of being a master of touch in his subsequent games.

Liz Taylor nearly produced upsets against John Davis and Nick Hyne, and generally the standard of play was 'early season A class'.

RESULTS

5 wins: W.O. Aldridge, S.E. Lewis, B.J. Storey, D.B. Maugham.
3 wins: J. Davis.
2 wins: N.G. Hyne.
1 win: M.H. Sandler.
0 wins: Mrs L. Taylor-Webb.

Southport: 22-23 April Le Bell Homme Sands Mersey

Report by Peter Dorke

The grub is always good and cheap at Southport but for this St George's Day event it was curiously inappropriate, leeks featuring prominently on both days and not a slice of roast beef in sight. Mind you, some of the games did drag-on (geddit?) on the Sunday, after steady overnight rain had flooded lawns one and two. This is a perennial Southportian problem and, in typically British fashion, they are always surprised by it, never ready with mops and squeegees an hour before kick-off. The simplest equipment would suffice and anything would be better than the present arrangement whereby the younger element frantically sweep the water



Bill Aldridge.

away with their mallets ten minutes before the start. Alternatively, perhaps they ought to write to Dorothy Rush for advice on the best mallets for drying-off lawns.

But it is a funny old place, Southport: smooth as silk on the surface and all-hell going on underneath. More crime than Liverpool they told me over breakfast at the Halpin and a night-life to make your hair curl. Not much of this was in evidence at the croquet club, though there were one or two impressive hangovers on Sunday morning. Too many Southport shrimps perhaps.

There were some contentious issues in the air from the start. Much talk of the new rules on handicapping, some discussion of the Law's assault on careless jumpers.....and the question of seeding. Now there's an interesting item: Manager Richard Hilditch decided not to seed the entry, which led to the likely first and second seeds, Messrs Eddie Bell and Mark Saurin, playing each other in the first round. Saurin, who managed to win this match with a belated TP, was clearly very much off-form. He struggled against Alan Sutcliffe, beat your reporter by a +26 which belies the succession of free shots which he gave generously and which were as generously missed, then scraped through to the final via a +5 defeat of Chris Haslam, whom, on a better day, he would have eaten alive.

Meanwhile Russell Collighan, laid so far back he was almost out of sight, had demolished Andrew Bennet, Andrew Saurin and Rod Williams on his inevitable path to glory. We could therefore look forward to a QUEGS final on the Sunday.

What, though, might have happened if Bell had not met Saurin in a scrappy game in the cold wet dawn but had been able to make his immaculate way through the draw, warming up all the while? Perhaps a different final, if not a different result. Perhaps it doesn't matter.

Meanwhile, the Swiss was under-way and Alan Sutcliffe, like a terrier with a particularly juicy bone, had set himself to win it. No match is trivial to Alan and every shot is played with the same painstaking care. In another context we'd be calling him 'Sir Geoffrey'. He won the Swiss, of course: the rest of the suckers thought croquet was for fun!

But that's moving on a bit, for we've only just reached Sunday morning and I have yet to tell of the Jolly Green Giant and the Ravening Scots. Besides, I should have mentioned right at the start that a good

quarter of the players were products of QUEGS. It is pretty clear to me, at least, that at Queen Elizabeth's they remove the student's brains on entry and replace them with copies of 'Expert Croquet Tactics'. You've heard all about the Saurins, the Clarkes, the Collighans - let me now introduce you to Richard Harding, who is as deadly a shot as ever left the Blackburn production lines.

The man in charge of quality control at the QUEG's factory, A. Bennet, was the initial organizer of this tournament and I hope he will not mind if I dig up another bone of contention that was gnawed a little between matches: The Great Fixture Book Scandal.

The Southport Open Week-end was almost completely filled before the C.A. Fixture Book appeared, Andrew having promised acceptance of entry to the large number of people who phoned him up when that slim volume failed to fall through our letter boxes at the appointed time. The question now in the air was: 'Had he the right to accept entries for a C.A. Calendar Fixture before the details of the tournament had reached the masses of C.A. members huddled pitifully on their doormats?' The answer is, apparently, that he had that right and there's nothing the C.A. can do about it. So what do we pay our subs for, if, having received



Russell Collighan, winner at Southport.

our Fixture Books, we are too late to get into the best of the early tournaments?

(Answers on the back of a cheque for £18 to the P. Dorke Retirement Fund). Don't misunderstand me, Mr. Bennet, I think you were dead right to fill your tournament as fast as you could, but I do wonder about the role of the C.A. in all this. Can they, for instance, enforce their new ruling that only full members of the C.A. will be eligible to play in C.A. Calendar Fixtures? I have

mentioned above their latest advice on handicapping at Advanced Tournaments, advice which happily was ignored here, as the club had not been informed officially. It would in any case have been greatly unjust not to award Chris Haslam his substantial cut. I suspect, however, that there will be problems with this ruling. Will all Open Tournament entries now be accepted on the basis of the Rankings? And will it now be necessary for the A class player to inform his club handicapper of every detail of his performance at tournaments? What if he is the club handicapper? What if he doesn't belong to a club? What if his club has not got a C.A. handicapper - which seems to apply to a heck of a lot of clubs?

These and other matters were exercising the minds of Southport's croqueters while Saurin and Collighan played out their final as a best-of-five. The sun appeared at about 11 o'clock and though the weather never got warm enough for the Chairman of the Scottish C.A. to remove his Father Christmas outfit, all our spirits were lifted. Well, not all, for while Mark Saurin crouched in misery before the pavilion fire, the imperturbable Collighan smashed balls about the lawn as if a missed roquet or a clanged hoop were unthinkable. Oh, he gave his opponent the odd turn but victory was quickly his in straight games. Whatever I have said above about seeding, it is hard to conceive that anyone else present could have got the better of Russell.

The only one who might have, the gentlemanly Mr Bell, delayed his urgent departure so that your reporter might get in one final game - and was sporting enough to lose.

A fine man.
Andrew Bennet replies:
There was no skulduggery by the Tournament Secretary. Not having been informed that all deadlines before 15th March were to be put back when the Calendar eventually appeared, I examined the entries on 1st March as printed and acted accordingly. Readers might not believe it from Peter's account, but our tournaments are very popular and all oversubscribed this season. The early enquiries in February are a measure of this.

RESULTS

3rd Round:

C. Haslam bt R. Hilditch +11; M. Saurin bt P. Dorke +26; R. Williams bt R. Harding +8; R. Collighan bt A. Saurin +13.

Semi-Finals:

M. Saurin bt Haslam +5; Collighan bt Williams +23.

Final:

Collighan bt M. Saurin +17, +17, +15

Hurlingham: 29 April - 1 May Enjoyable Hurlingham Weekend Report by Ann Browne

There was an entry of 26 players for the first Hurlingham tournament of the season. It was a most enjoyable weekend, with nine courts, double banked and full all day, with excellent and exciting croquet. The courts on the main lawns and the cricket pitch were in first class condition and playing well. An added bonus was the weather which remained fine apart from a little rain on Saturday morning.

The competitors were divided into three graded American blocks with advanced play throughout. It was good to see so many visitors to Hurlingham, which included Charles Jones and Chris Shilling from New Zealand.

The play in block A was to a very high standard, with a close and gripping finish to many of the games. Triple peels were successfully completed throughout the weekend by Jerry Guest, Geoff Roy and David Croker in this block.

Two games from many are worthy of mention. In Jerry Guest vs Geoff Roy both players were unbeaten before the game and it seemed that Jerry had the game won after completing all three peels of a triple. But disaster struck when he rushed his partner ball on to the peg, thus ending his turn and unable to peg out his other ball. Geoff kept his composure and went on to win by 4 and thus went to the top of the block.

Dayal Gunasekera failed to peg out his opponent's ball when playing William Ormerod, and was himself pegged out, with his second ball at 4 back. The game ended with a very good display of tactics by William, including laying up wired rather than attempting a peg-out from 10 feet. Dr Ormerod went on to win +3.

At the end of all the keen and thrilling play, Jerry Guest emerged as the winner of Block A with 8 wins out of 9, while Geoff Roy was second with 7 wins after losing to Charles Jones and Ian Plummer. Creditable results were also achieved by Dayal Gunasekera, David Croker, William Ormerod, Lionel Wharrad and Francis Landor.

In Block B the general play and competitiveness was in no way inferior to the higher block. This was emphasised by Andrew Symons who achieved his first

Cheltenham: 24-27 March Easter Egg and Maugham Day Money! Report by Alan Bogle

The weathermen had egg on their faces as once again the Easter handicap tournament at Cheltenham received some fine weather. The winds on the first two days helped to blow away the cob-webs of the winter lay-offs. The sunshine on the last two days helped warm up the aching joints and we saw some fine croquet, including two triples from Phil Cordingley and one from David Foulser. The good condition of the lawns following the mild winter also contributed. Overall, a dozen players received handicap cuts.

The fifty four players competed in six American blocks. Debbie (our rules are different!) Prentis won 7 out of 8 games to take Block A narrowly from the assistant manager, Alan (lawn 3 is not that bad!) Bogle. Ian Plummer was most unlucky, in that he defeated both these players, but had lost too

many games early in the tournament.

In block B, David Magee pipped fellow Cheltenham member Ian (that's my beer) Maugham. Both finished with 7 wins, David securing first place with a 21 point win over Ian.

Block C was won by David Maugham (8 out of 8) which was just as well as his winnings were to prove useful in paying his entry fee. Gill (only my fifth game ever) Bogle, in her first CA tournament, finished second. Having picked up a mallet for the first time last August, Gill started the tournament on 15, was cut to 13 after day one, and finished it at 11. Peter Darby was noted as saying that at this rate of progress, Gill would be -3 in two weeks and a good outside bet for the World Championship.

In block D, Robert Prichard also won all eight games, with Andrew



Bevis Sanford, block winner at Hurlingham.

competitive triple peel and came very close to repeating the process in his next two matches. The eventual and most deserving winner with 6 wins out of 7 was Paul Macdonald who used all his experience to overcome strong challenges from many up and coming players. Martin Haggerston was runner-up (5 wins, +60), followed by Andrew Symons (5 wins, +44), Tom Browne (5 wins, +44), and Mark Wormald (4 wins). Mike Pearson, David Ruscombe King and Denis Cross posed as ever a serious threat to the block leaders throughout the weekend, even though wins were hard to come by.

In block C, Bevis Sanford was the clear winner, with six good wins, losing only one match. The excitement was for the runner-up spot where Norman Browne, Roger Deacon, John Ruddock and Pat Macdonald had 4 wins each, Norman coming through on net points total. Jim Tennant was a welcome late entrant to the tournament, while Barbara Mansfield and Pauline Healy fought hard throughout the weekend.

Our thanks are due again to Denis Cross for managing so excellently. It was a most efficient performance greatly appreciated by the players.

RESULTS

Block Winners:

G.C. Roy; I.P.M. Macdonald; C.B. Sanford.

Potter emerging from the pack to take second spot.

Block E was won by Joe Jackson from Newport, despite having arrived at the tournament driving a three wheeler, the fourth wheel being tenuously attached to the car. Barbara Sutcliffe played very well to finish second.

Finally block F in a close finish was won by one of Wales's best known exports(?), Peter Dorke. For those who have trouble keeping your head down, buy a hat to cover it with an assortment of badges. Bill (touting for new coaches) Lamb finished second, when Peter (my good fellow) Darby fell at the last fence to David Foulser.

Mike Finn's organisation helped the weekend run smoothly as always. Sadly Mike was unable to play this year due to illness, but all the players wish him a full and speedy recovery.

RESULTS

Block Winners:

Ms D.F. Prentis; D.J. Magee; D.B. Maugham; R.D.C. Prichard; J.J. Jackson; P. Dorke.

Weekend Tournaments

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Weekend Tournaments

Hunstanton: 29 April - 1 May Veronica Loses Face

Report by John Wheeler & George Collin

Conditions - Fine and cool to start with, sunny and warm for prize-giving.

The tournament was over-subscribed by the leading amateurs from eastern England. The Bedfordshire Inter-Counties team were there in force and proved their form by all losing their first round games. Ipswich had also sent a large squad. The rest of the players were mostly Richard Hilditch and the London mob.

The tournament was run as two Swiss blocks with the two leading players from the lower block promoted after round three. What is more they joined the leaders of the top block with equal status. The merit of a B block with handicaps ranging from 2½ to 14 was proved when the 14 beat the 2½, albeit in a shortened game.

Duncan Reeve, from Norwich, Ipswich, Hunstanton and West Park executed the first triple peel of the tournament in his round one match against Robert Prichard. In round two Robin Hobbs was twenty-six by Howard Bottomley. This defeat was quite understandable when one noticed the electrical device clamped to Robin's head. This apparatus was obviously worn for therapeutic reasons but caused him some discomfort judging by the wailing noises he made.

By the end of round three, 'A' Block men, Bond, Dawson, Harrison, Lamb and Noble seemed to be the players in form, while in the 'B' Block Celia Steward and Nick Harris were established as the promotees.

On day two attention centred on the pavilion where viewers gathered to see Steve Davis proceed towards another World Championship. Out on the lawns the promotees, after losing their first games in block 'A', played each other with Nick winning. Celia had a hard time against Bond and Noble who achieved the second and what was to be the last triple peel of the tournament. Nick went on to give a fright to front runner Dawson who eventually won by five.

On the final day, while the leaders were contending for the championship, there was drama on lawn three where hard hitting Veronica Carlisle lost the end-face of her mallet and had to seek the R.O.T.'s permission to continue with the now illegal weapon.

Block B was won by Mark Senior and Robert Prichard won the A block by virtue of a close fought battle against Tim Harrison and

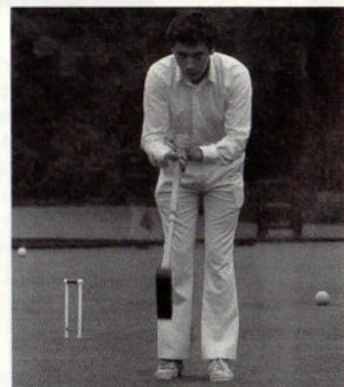
an earlier victory over Geoff Dawson who had an equal number of wins.

The Hunstanton club enabled players and spectators alike to have a most enjoyable weekend away from the pressure of big time croquet and George Noble managed the tournament without harassment but there was rarely an unoccupied lawnspace.

RESULTS

Block Winners:

R.D.C. Prichard; M. Senior.



Duncan Reeve, who did the first triple at Hunstanton's weekend.

Bristol: 20 - 21 May Edward Duckworth Wins

Report by Hamish Hall

The weekend handicap tournament attracted 11 visitors to the 3 lawns at Cedar Park, and the fact that all four semi-finalists were club members might suggest that local knowledge of the conditions of the lawns might have been an advantage. This was far from the truth. The baking sun, and the daily cutting the previous week had transformed them from sluggish to very fast.

Tony Sammons demonstrated his improving play by running hoop 2 from hoop 4, and David Coates playing in his first tournament quickly adapted to the conditions, and won his silver award in his game against Deborah Latham. Simon Tuke confounded the spectators by chasing every ball, despite the thermometer nudging the eighties. In his game against Kevin Carter he was 2 behind when time was called. The leave was fairly cruel - balls on the east, north and south boundaries. Simon showed neat skill in getting a break going and winning by 1. Hardly recognisable as the player I first met in the area final of the Garden Classic at Castle Drogo three years ago.

The tournament produced an unusually large number of games where one player pegged out his

Compton: 5-7 May 50 Spectators at Final

Report by Ron Selmes

After a week of missed fortunes with the weather, Friday dawned a bright sunny day; had summer arrived? Was this the start of the real Croquet season?

Compton in the sunshine is one of the really beautiful grounds and the lawns looked in excellent shape. The subsequent three days proved that this was the case and I am sure that all players would wish to say thank you to Tom Mewett the Groundsman for such first class playing surfaces.

Blanche Dennant, managing her first Tournament, was wise enough to be a non-playing manager and handled everything efficiently. From the first morning, lists were posted on the notice board showing who played whom for the whole three days and the times they would be playing. Her plan progressed without a hitch and no-one had to sit around wondering when they would next get a lawn. Well done Blanche, it was a pleasure to play in your Tournament.

Compton also has one major advantage over many other clubs, an endless army (or so it seems) of charming and competent ladies dispensing superb coffee, lunch and afternoon tea. Despite a poltergeist in the kitchen on Friday, everything ran smoothly. Pat Asa-Thomas presented them with a large box of chocolates on Sunday as a small token of our appreciation. They deserved it.

The Croquet? Well, four American blocks of six, each containing a good mix of handicaps, ranging from 2 to 16. Five games each with a semi-final and final between block winners.

Block 'A' was won by Bernard Weitz with 5 wins and 61 points. Block 'B' by Ron Selmes with 5 wins and 58 points; he beat Dennis Shaw by two in the crucial game.

opponent's ball. Dennis Regan, the highest handicap player in the event and somewhat reluctant to use his forest of bisques, featured in 3 of them. Derek Trotman won't forget one of them. Having pegged out Dennis's brown ball, he later pegged out his forward ball, but, although only 5 feet or so from the stick, chose to roquet green - 6 feet away. His ultra cautious play resulted in a miss. Dennis not believing his luck took his equally short shot. But it was several windscreen wipers later before Dennis finally hit. I believe that the Secretary's stock of '12 Hints to Beginners' was reduced by one at the end of the game.

The final for the Latham Cup was



Peter Howell, winner of Compton's handicap weekend.

Having got to peg when Dennis was for 2-back and 4-back, he pegged out one ball and finally won by hitting in when Dennis was for peg and peg. Block 'C' was won by Gordon Drake with 5 wins and 71 points and Block 'D' was won by Peter Howell with 5 wins and 61 points. Again in this block Paul Campion was unlucky to meet Peter playing at his best and like Dennis had four wins but progressed no further.

After lunch on Sunday the two semi-finals saw Ron Selmes beat Bernard Weitz +17 and Peter Howell beat Gordon Drake by the same score.

The final, with over fifty spectators, saw Peter in sparkling form beat Ron +17 in 1 hour 15 minutes to win the Knight Cup. Mrs Knight, who had watched the final, presented the trophy which her late husband had donated to the Club. This report may be full of superlatives but I firmly believe Compton and all its members gave us all a Tournament to be remembered.

RESULTS

Block Winners:

Dr B.G.F. Weitz (2), R.H. Selmes (7), H.G. Drake (2½), P. Howell (2½).

Play Off

Semi-Finals:

Selmes bt Weitz +19, Howell bt Drake +17.

Final:

Howell bt Selmes +17.

an anti-climax to the tournament. Andrew Symons (1), gave the 16 year old Edward Duckworth 3½ bisques. Winning the toss Andrew had first crack at the four balls and made a competent start by hitting his tice and getting his 4 ball break under way. It was to be short lived, as a careless approach shot at 3 over-ran. He then compounded his error by joining up with his partner ball near hoop 2. Duckworth, sitting next to me, could hardly believe his luck. All four balls well in off the boundaries. An excellent 30 yard roquet saved him a bisque, as he competently, if rather untidily, set about his task. Andrew had one more shot before the inevitable

Bristol - continued on Page 9

Cheltenham: 20-23 April Entry of 28 for 'B' Levels

Report by Maurice Boardman

Everyone else shivered inside woollies and water-proofs. But Alver Bray (Bristol) insisted it was summer, winning the Cheltenham 'B' Level Tournament in the mini-shorts and milk chocolate fedora which he has made his croquet trade mark.

Kevin Carter (Cheltenham) was the only player to beat him in eight games - by three. Bernard Weitz (Cheltenham) also had seven wins but had lost to Bray by 16.

Their respective journeys to the top -

Bray: beat D. Wheeler by 6, R. Brand 7, P. Darby 5, K. Whittall 7, B. Weitz 16, R. Jenkins 1(T), B. Harris 11.

Weitz: beat J. Haslam 20, D. Magee 8, P. Stoker 20, R. Jenkins 17, P. Darby 12, B. Harris 10, K. Carter 12. 'B' Level Tournaments are undeservedly rare birds. Manager Betty Weitz believes Cheltenham's is one of only two in the calendar. There was an entry of 28 with handicaps ranging from two to nine. Players came from Southport, Henley, Budleigh, Bristol and Bath.

But where were the triples? Frances Ransom delighted herself with a tournament first but muffed the peg-out for gold.

RESULTS:

7 Wins: A. Bray, B. Weitz.

6 Wins: K. Carter, R. Jenkins, K. Whittall.

5 Wins: R. Brand, D. Williamson, D. Magee, J. Jackson.

4 Wins: B. Harris, C. Smith, P. Darby, J. Haslam, M. Boardman, R. Wheeler, F. Ransom, K. Jackson, D. Wheeler.

Bristol - continued from Page 8

happened 40 minutes after the start. Edward used his 3 bisques which he might just have saved had he played with a little more care.

Martin Murray, fresh from his successful trip to America, arrived in time to be nobbled into presenting the prizes. Congratulating Rosemary Gugan on her management of the event, little did he realise that the manager had just inscribed a further hint in The Tournament Manager's Guide. When using a Japanese 24 hour alarm clock for signalling the end of time, remember that 2.30 can also mean 2.30am. Whilst we have a new clubhouse, the flood lights have yet to be installed!!

RESULTS

Latham Cup

Semi-Finals:

A. Symons (1) bt D. Gugan (6) +16; E. Duckworth (4½) bt M. James (6½).

Final:

Duckworth bt Symons +24.

Surbiton: 11-14 May Surbiton hosts Peel Memorials

Report by Derek Caporn

We hope the revival of this old and famous event, launched in 1898 to commemorate the man who invented the peel, is now under way following the successful four day event at the Surbiton Club. Entries rose from 11 men and one lady last year at Guildford & Godalming to 18 men (2 failed to arrive) and five ladies and the revival of the 'mixed' doubles (not played for the last two years) produced 16 entries.

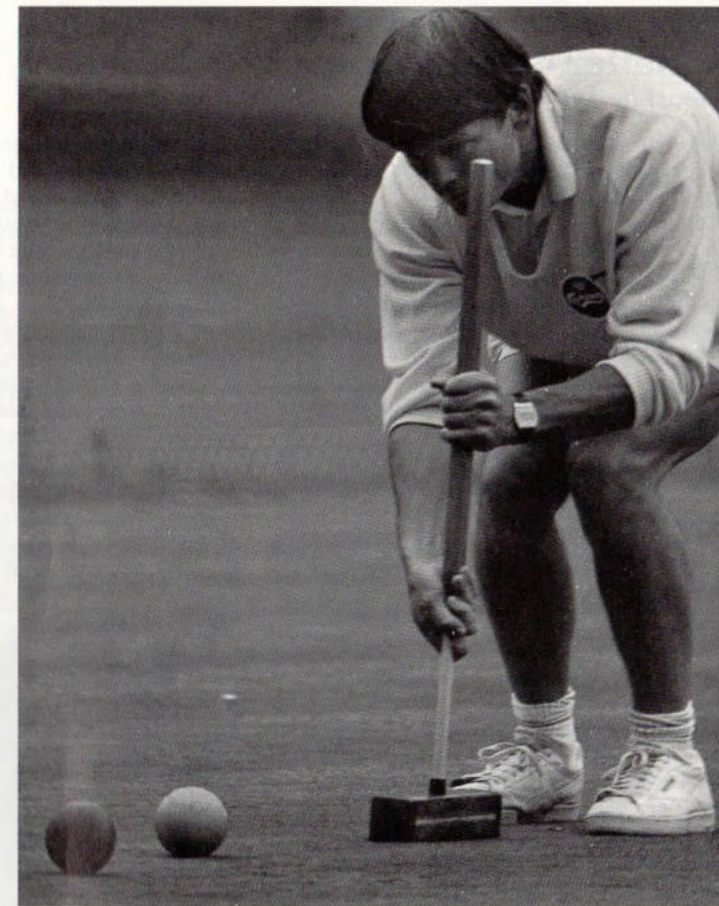
The Manager exercised the power of the Almighty and changed players' sexes in order to pair. Unfortunately there were only three mixed doubles pairs but the event was brilliantly staged to produce a final between two of these pairs! The winners, George Noble and Eleanor Grant had a walkover in the first round as D. Williams failed to appear but won the next 2 rounds including an exciting final by 3. This was completed in one day. The five ladies in the Ladies Peel Memorial were all long bisquers so the games started from the 3rd hoop. The outstanding player was Mrs Eleanor Grant who won all four games. She had benefitted from coaching from George!

The men's event was fiercely contested, the highest handicap being 8. There were several pegged out games. Generally the standard was typically 'start of season', the play being mostly bad or indifferent!

At the end of round 4 the holder, Les Chapman, had won all his games and had it been a knockout would have claimed the bowl. Unfortunately for him, it was a swiss, with another four rounds. Chapman lost the next two rounds, first to Alec Thomas and then to Smorfitt, who like Lazarus, rose from the dead to take the lead only to be beaten by George Noble who then beat Jerry Guest to become 'Lord' Peel. He was one of the few players to play consistently well, except he did have some problems in finishing his last game!

The catering in the hands of Hazel Kittermaster was very good with a banquet on the Saturday evening. The new Clubhouse and improved grounds were appreciated by all. Our thanks to George and Jerry for all their hard work on the grounds. The Management was, of course, at its usual high standard and the event was brought to a happy conclusion in sunshine at teatime!!

We hope the Peel Memorials will continue at Surbiton, grow from strength to strength, and attract



George Noble, winner of the Men's Peel Memorial Trophy.

more handicap players of all standards, particularly the ladies. This, after all, is the premier handicap event in the Calendar.

RESULTS

Winners:

Men: G. Noble (-1)

Women: Mrs E. Grant (11)

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Harrow Oak: 13-14 May A Matter of Rankings

Report by Tim Harrison

One of the attractions of the croquet circuit is the varying characters of the different clubs and different tournaments. Harrow Oak is situated in the middle of a busy park in North West London. Whilst not enjoying the luxurious facilities of more prosperous private clubs, there is always plenty of activity if the croquet happens to be dull. For those interested in natural history, it is possible to see all kinds of dogs ranging from what looked like two wolves to two small but fierce puggish dogs complete with gold chains.

Once again, there were several late withdrawals from this tournament with the major culprit being the necessity to arrange Inter-Club fixtures. Since the strongest club teams contain mainly tournament players, there is surely a good case for restricting the entry for the Inter-Club to eliminate those teams which have no chance. This would make it both easier to arrange the fixtures and also help support the tournament circuit. Perhaps some formula could be derived using the rankings.

Despite the withdrawals, there was still a full field of sixteen players. Three of the four seeds won their initial matches with the large exception of our manager, Richard Hilditch, who lost to the rapidly improving Steve Comish. I shall make no reference to Islamic religious leaders apart from saying that I consider personally abusive letters as having no place in 'Croquet'. In fact, they are almost always a sign of defeat.

The second round saw the fall of two further seeds. Alan Sutcliffe came back from 2nd and 4th hoops against peg alone to beat Duncan Reeve. Duncan had about a dozen long diagonal shots at the peg, but did not have the luck needed in such a situation on not the flattest of lawns.

The other seed to fall was Dayal Gunasekera who lost to a faultless performance from Tim Harrison. This included Tim's split shot of the season when from on the boundary near 1st hoop, he got behind a ball 2 feet out of corner 2 and at the same time put a ball a foot in front of 3rd hoop. In many tournaments nowadays, such ambitious shots are rarely attempted because of the concern/paranoia with not losing and the rankings. And why is there this obsession with rankings? Is it so that entry to the next tournament is guaranteed, and so the next weekend can also be spent worrying about not losing? John Walter's letter in May's 'Croquet' pinpoints this change in attitudes exactly. Surely it is only by attempting difficult manoeuvres that one's game improves and at the same time a sense of achievement is gained when successful. Or is winning everything?

How ironic it was that in the latter stages of the game, Dayal was heard to mutter about loss of ranking points and promptly lost. However, I do not wish to denigrate Dayal as he is arguably the most elegant of A-Class players and despite his result over the weekend, he is always a good bet against the top player (witness his narrow defeat by Steve Mulliner in last year's Opens).

One of the difficulties in reporting a tournament managed by Richard Hilditch is getting to watch any games apart from your own. All I can say about Steve Comish's semi-final against Alan Sutcliffe was that he won in two games. In the other semi-final, Tim Harrison had two chances

to finish in the first game but stuck in penultimate both times and after some erratic play, Martin French raised his game to win. The second game was probably the best of the weekend with Martin winning by +3TP in the eighth turn. Tim's one mistake was a failed half-jump at rover.

With the benefit of subsequent practice, I discovered that the Southport (Birkdale) balls make this shot considerably more difficult than with Jacques balls. This was the first tournament I have played in which used Southport balls throughout and I was impressed with them. Before now, Harrow has had a combination of types which at best is difficult and at worst is frustrating and annoying. I am sure this has been a key factor behind some of the adverse comments about the new balls.



Martin French, who completed some immaculate triples at Harrow.

The conditions were particularly easy, even for Harrow, and so the emphasis was on good shooting, making no mistakes and executing triple peels. This is precisely what Martin French did in the first two games of the best of five final, giving him three triples in a row. By the time a mistake came midway through the third game, Steve Comish's confidence had been undermined by Martin's devastating display of faultless croquet. After a scrappy period, Martin eventually won and almost had a fourth successive triple. Yet again, Martin showed what a consistent player he is and how difficult he is to beat.

Much of the entertainment and excitement at weekend tournaments such as this come from the consolation games. Who says they don't matter? I was privileged to double-bank with the most exciting game of the weekend between David Ruscombe-King and Dayal Gunasekera. In normal circumstances, this would be a sure win for Dayal, the significantly better player. However when the conditions are easy and the lesser player gets the first break, it becomes a totally different game. Indeed, David adopted the unusual but very effective tactic of going to rover and conceding a contact.

Having lost his last two games by +26, this is when the better player thinks how unlucky he is that everyone plays like an absolute master against him. He then thinks all those ranking points he is about to lose and finally with a ball near 1st hoop, he is now expected to show his class, make an all-round break and peg out his lesser opponent. How often is it that the better player is reduced to a total nervous wreck in such circumstances? It was not surprising then when Dayal broke down at the 6th hoop on a four-ball break.

The next act in the play involves the lesser player getting a break with his backward ball.

It is now his turn to think of the glory of beating a top player and all those ranking points he will gain. And so we have two very tense players. David now proceeded with a precarious break, obtained his rover peel and eventually reached penultimate. Here, a poor approach left a sharply angled hoop. The experienced spectators knew now that David's moment of glory had ended and Dayal would have a narrow victory.

But no! To everyone's surprise, not least the players, penultimate was run and with a ball at rover, it was all over. This was when Dayal played his masterstroke - the so-called minus player's stopping bisque. David agonisingly managed to miss the ball at rover from three feet. David admitted later that he had been put off by running penultimate which he had not expected.

Dayal could not afford to concede a contact and so could only go to 4-back, and just hope the lift shot was missed. It was not, but now the pressure was beginning to tell on David with the result that he failed to get close to rover and had the inevitable stick.

The excitement was not over yet. Dayal duly went to the peg with his other ball and pegged David's ball out. Then when routinely finishing off, Dayal accidentally peeled his opponent's rover ball and followed by just grovelling through the hoop. The game was in the balance again as Dayal was severely hampered, with the added pressure that a miss guaranteed an instant defeat. This is where it should say turn to page 33 or worse still, wait till next month. In fact the hampered shot was hit and so the game ended with the expected win for the better player.

Such games are part of the appeal of tournament croquet - it is not all about the main event. I have lost similar games as both the better and the lesser player and I know how it feels, so I offer my commiserations to my fellow club member.

On a final note, congratulations to Alan Sutcliffe who achieved his first tournament triple peel.

RESULTS

Round 1

D. Reeve bt A. Symons +7; A. Sutcliffe bt D. Ruscombe-King +21; S. Comish bt R. Hilditch +17; C. Southern bt A. Reed +3; M. French bt G. Vince +25; L. Wharrad bt M. Kolbuszewski +12; D. Gunasekera bt J. Dawson +7; T. Harrison bt I. Plummer +5.

Round 2

Sutcliffe bt Reeve +1; Comish bt Southern +23; French bt Wharrad +17; Harrison bt Gunasekera +17.

Semi-Finals

Comish bt Sutcliffe +7, +16; French bt Harrison +4, +3TP.

Final

French bt Comish +18TP, +26TP, +21.

Southwick: 26-29 May INTER-COUNTIES CHAMPIONSHIP Gloucester take title for first time

Report by John Walters

The Inter-Counties is an event dear to the heart of its many followers. A peculiar event, there are pretensions of top class croquet (it is representative, contains the country's top players, and sets teams playing advanced croquet), but it is perhaps the camaraderie of the event which keeps it good natured and reminiscent of restful summers past. Although one of the first CA events ever to be sponsored, this year the Inter-Counties avoided both the minefields of professionalism and drug-taking, while the absence of any 'Natal Counties' team avoided a third!

An Eastern Counties team (which has got gradually younger each successive year for the past five) arrived this time looking for their fourth victory in five years with an age range of 22 to 27. The holders were soon to find that bad things do indeed come in threes, with the third - 3rd place in the competition (and their worse performance since 1984) - not the biggest disappointment for certain team members. For prior to that John Walters became involved in a motor accident, when his car brakes failed on the way to Brighton; while perhaps the biggest shock of the tournament was the theft of Debbie Cornelius' purse from the Southwick Ladies' changing rooms on day 1!

The only damaging aspects of the pernicious 'professional attitude' were the 'posthumous scratching' of Middlesex from 2 matches at the end of day one (reducing them from 3 out of 3 wins to 1 out of 3) because their squad contained 10 people (9 being the maximum). Also the response of one well-known CA dogmatist to Don Gaunt's admirably pragmatic approach of calling for a 'second opinion' when testing a very close 'wired ball'. The critic said that Don 'should just have given the benefit of the doubt' and left him understandably marked!

Otherwise day one proved uneventful; Eastern counties scraping home against all opposition including Avon, their supposed 'closest rival'. More of a surprise was Avon's loss to Bedford, where in the deciding game a nervous Tom Anderson took advantage of an even more nervous Roger Jenkins when the latter stuck in a short, angled hoop 6 for the match. Perhaps Tom's +1(T) win in that match made up for his +1(T) loss against Lancashire and Cheshire, where a missed 6 inch straight rush to his hoop gave them a straight 6 inch rush to their hoop - for victory! We also discovered a new angle to the perennial debate over British Summer Time, with the discovery of another BST - Brighton, Southwick Time. This occurs when the tea ladies won't serve tea because the manager has decreed no tea until 4.15, but the time is already 4.17!?! John Walters' mobilisation of the hungry troops further established his reputation as a 'radical and revolutionary'!

On day two Avon's defeat of Gloucester and Devon and Dorset's more predictable(?) defeat of Eastern ensured that no team was on 100%. Gloucester (aka Cheltenham), Surrey (aka Surbiton) and Eastern (aka Ipswich) now seemed to be battling for the title. Debbie Prentis (of Canada) became the latest addition to the Middlesex team, showing how helpful it is in fulfilling qualification criteria if your county

doesn't actually exist!!

Both David and Ian Maugham were playing for Gloucester this year. More naturally, they should have been playing for Somerset - then they would have been Somerset Maughams! The pairing of David with Don Gaunt seemed to be developing nicely after Don hit a medium length roquet, and his response to David's 'Did you have to rush it to the peg?' was simply 'Shut up! Your're lucky I hit it at all!'

Day three started with a crucial match between Eastern and Surrey, with Steve Mulliner now added to the latter's side. In the top game Walters went to 4-back on the 6th turn and Mulliner hit the lift to reply in kind on the 7th. Both Debbie Cornelius and Danny Palmer stuttered, but finally Danny took a break to peg with Steve finishing after a missed lift - an impressive match considering the treacherous conditions of a fast lawn. The bottom match was a drawn-out struggle which finally went Eastern's way and the middle match looked a certainty for them as well. Eastern for 4-back (Mark Avery) and penultimate (Tim Harrison), Surrey for 2 (Mike Stevens) and 4-back (George Noble) 5 minutes before time was up. After making 1 hoop Stevens missed a roquet, allowing Avery to go to peg; Harrison finally made penultimate (having had a number of previous attempts) but left a 10 yard roquet which Stevens hit. Two leaves later Mike Stevens made 3rd hoop with an opponent ball in each of 2nd and 4th corners when time was called. Astonishingly, he not only took his ball to peg (and pegged it out) but achieved the two peels he needed (a straight 4-back peel and a peel through penultimate after making rover) to go 1 point ahead, so that when Tim missed the last shot victory was Surrey's!

It looked like some comfort might be given to Eastern by a Middlesex defeat of Gloucester, but though a 3-0 scoreline seemed likely Gloucester managed comebacks to take the final games +2(T) and +1(T)! Eastern's hopes were finally crushed by a 2-1 defeat at the hands of Gloucester (including a nervous pegged out game which pitted Debbie Cornelius on 2-back, against Paul Smith on 1, Dave Foulser having rid Debbie of partner; although given chances, a dejected Debbie failed to capitalise).

The final day dawned with Gloucester almost certain to take the Inter-Counties title for the first time in its history. However, after a 2-1 loss to Yorkshire a 3-way tie (Gloucester/Eastern/Avon) was still possible. Hopes were pinned on Lancs & Cheshire to pull off a 3-0 coup against the favourites; on paper a strong team, Lancs & Cheshire had suffered a disastrous run - could they now prove themselves? The 3-0 result, in Gloucester's favour, answered both questions, including the destination of the trophy.

Only second place remained in the balance. David Goacher in the last game of the tournament to finish (swiftly to the last), held together a break to peg-out and win by the definitive +1(T), to steal 2nd place for Avon from Eastern.

Thus ended another Inter-Counties. Manager Nigel Aspinall appeared for the prize-giving, but fortunately sub-manager Don Gaunt was there for the rest of the tournament. The treacherous

transfers from Eastern (Don Gaunt to Gloucester and Danny Palmer to Surrey) had proved decisive - but we're still waiting for the transfer fees!



Mike Stevens, who won a critical match for Surrey against Eastern Counties.

RESULTS

1. Gloucestershire	8 wins
2. Avon	7 wins
3. Eastern Counties	7 wins
4. Surrey	7 wins
5. Yorkshire	6 wins
6. Bedfordshire	5 wins
7. Sussex/Hampshire/I.O.W.	4 wins
8. Devon & Dorset	3 wins
9. Lancashire & Cheshire	3 wins
10. Middlesex	3 wins
11. Kent	2 wins

The ties were broken by counting the number of games won.

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The Croquet Association has for sale new stainless steel hoop gauges at £5.00 each (plus VAT and postage = £5.89).

The CA's Equipment Committee recommend that these gauges should replace the old plastic gauges issued previously, as the new gauges make for easier and more accurate hoop setting. To assist clubs in this matter, the CA will exchange old plastic gauges for new stainless steel gauges at a special price of £4.50, inclusive of postage and VAT.

Please send old gauges and cheques to Brian Macmillan, The Croquet Association, The Hurlingham Club, Ranelagh Gardens, London, SW6 3PR.

Mechanics

What the Balls do

By F.R. Ross

Some people believe that Croquet is a game to be played and enjoyed, without any attention to what is happening. But 27 years ago Calladine and Heyman wrote for 'Engineering' a paper on the mechanics of the game, and some of us thought it might be a good idea to test out the theory. So we constructed the Croquet Machine, capable of hitting a ball with repeatable power, in an accurately known direction, with a known mallet angle. One problem on the agenda was the vexed question of 'pull' when peeling, and the effect of rain on this. Several hundred shots were recorded, and some preliminary results were reported in 'Croquet', but we got bogged down because the figures for energy and velocity and so forth just didn't add up. When two bodies come in contact, such as mallet and ball, or ball and ball, the coefficient of restitution, 'e', controls the exchange of energy between them. 'e' cannot exceed unity, yet it often appeared to do so. It all boiled down to finding out the velocity with which a ball left the mallet. The distance it goes should be proportional to the square of this velocity.

Now one can measure this velocity exactly by hanging the ball on a string and seeing how far it rises when struck. These simple experiments

still didn't make sense of 'e'. So we took off the mallet handle and hung the head on a string too, and light dawned. If anyone tells you that a mallet handle behaves like a piece of string at the moment of impact, he is talking nonsense! We can now begin to analyse our hundreds of data, but meanwhile here is an important feature not dealt with by Calladine and Heyman. When a ball is struck along the grass, it starts by skidding, moving without rolling; friction from the grass slows up the bottom until this stops and the ball is fully rolling. It is then going quite a bit slower than it was after you hit it. If it hadn't lost any energy at all by friction with the grass it would be moving at only six-sevenths of the speed it started with.

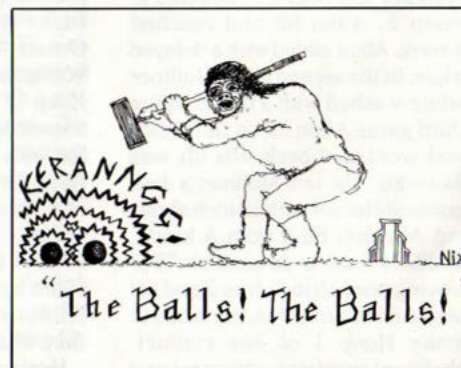
Let us consider the *rush*: if you hit down on your ball, you squeeze it into the turf, start it rolling at once with less of its energy in the forward velocity and the risk of causing it to jump and hit the ball to be rushed above its centre, or even go clean over it. If you stand too far back, your mallet can bodily lift your ball off the ground, with the same result, except that your ball is not rolling. If it is struck exactly horizontally, it won't have begun to roll much in the first foot of travel, but after 2 feet or more,



The Croquet Machine.

20% of the energy you gave it will no longer be available to transfer to the rushed ball, and on contact it will try to roll that ball backwards: very inefficient.

We have seen expert players do spectacular rushes right up the court, and the same experts miff an occasional one: so consider the ideal rush, and how precise it is. Your ball should hit the rushed ball, exactly at ground level, and with its full velocity, which means it should not touch the grass between the mallet and the impact. You should stand far enough back to lift it slightly. Bearing in mind that we do not yet know exactly what the ball speeds are, the following are not of practical use, but they illustrate the problem. For a 2 foot rush, the vertical mallet should be 4 inches behind the ball for 10 feet per second, but only 2½ inches for 15 feet per second, and just over 1 inch for a harder stroke still. 4 inches back would be fine for 20 feet per second and a 3ft 4ins rush, but that ball would go clean over a ball at half the distance, and might well bounce in front of a ball a bit further away and so not contact it at ground level. It should be no surprise that rushes sometimes fail.



Palm Beach: 7-11 April England Retain Solomon Trophy: US Hoists Warning Signals

Report by Martin Murray

The second contest between Great Britain and the USA for the Solomon Trophy was held in West Palm Beach from April 7th to 11th. The British team showed three changes from that which won so convincingly in Cheltenham last year, Nigel Aspinall, who declined the invitation to travel, Colin Irwin, and William Prichard being replaced by Mark Avery, Robert Fulford and Martin Murray, the latter two being first time visitors to Florida. The players who had retained their places from last year were David Openshaw, Keith Aiton, and Phil Cordingley, who, like Mark, had also played in Florida in 1987, in a match which was half CA rules, half American rules.

The USA team only showed two changes from last year, the newcomers Teddy Prentis and Jerry Stark joining Kiley Jones, Johnny Osborn, Bob Kroeger, and Tremaine Arkley from last year's team. The team would have been different if some players had not preferred to enter a tournament in California which offered record prize money, though they must have felt they made the wrong choice when that tournament was cancelled because the bad winter weather ruined the preparation of the courts.

The British team arrived in Palm Beach at varying times before the start of play, five choosing the boring route via Miami, Martin in typically complicated style deciding that a route via San Francisco seemed more attractive. Keith cut things close by arriving only the evening before play started, missing the opening cocktail party, and was perhaps a little jet-lagged when the three doubles matches started in a temperature over 80 degrees F at the Palm Beach Polo Club.

By lunch the USA were leading in two of the matches, and Teddy and Kiley held on to their lead in the afternoon to equal on the first day the total score the team had achieved in the whole match last year. David and Mark (with the first triple) had a relatively easy win in their match, but Robert and Martin were fortunate to be playing on a court equipped with floodlights, as their match lasted until well after dark before they took the second and third games after losing a close first.

If the British team thought that the US success on the first day

could be ascribed to a combination of jet-lag and unfamiliarity with the warm Florida weather, they got a shock the next day when the singles started, three at the Polo Club and three at the PGA centre, the USCA's national headquarters. At the PGA, Johnny had an excellent win over Phil, nearly completing triples in both games, and Jerry was even more impressive in beating Mark, who made only one significant error in each game. Luckily for GB, Martin had discovered how to shoot, so had an easy win over Tremaine, who was himself shooting well enough to lengthen the second game, but not taking full advantage of the opportunities. Back at the Polo Club another win for USA looked on the cards as Keith and Teddy shared the first two games, but Keith held on to take the third. David and Robert had comfortable wins, but the score at the end of the second day, 6-3 to GB, was rather different from what had been expected after last year's near whitewash.

The improved performance of the US team was obviously putting the GB players under considerable pressure, which was reflected on the third day by the slowness of play in all three doubles matches. By lunchtime none of the first games had finished, all were very close, and GB were lucky to take two of them after lunch. Play was then halted for some time while both teams attended a gala function at the Polo ground, where they were presented to the crowds after riding round the ground in Cadillacs. Martin and Robert finished the second somewhat quicker to take the match in two, but neither of the other two matches finished that day. An early start on Monday was therefore required, and to all-round surprise Bob and Tremaine took the second and third games of their match against David and Mark, a fitting reward in particular for a fine effort from Bob in the second game, when, Tremaine having been pegged out, he hit the lift and finished from penultimate in one turn.

With GB only leading 8-4, there was everything still to play for, but the second round of singles showed the British team getting somewhat nearer to the expected results, the bottom four all producing triples in straight-game wins. The top pair were in more trouble, Mark again being swept aside by a very positive performance, this time from

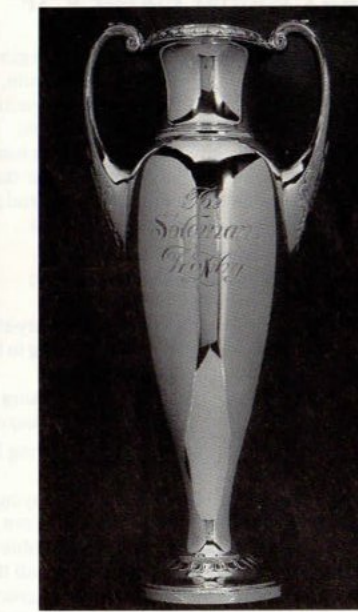
Kiley, who completed the first triple for the US in the first game and gave Mark little chance in the second either. David also looked like losing in two straight games until Jerry failed on his triple in the second game, allowing David to produce a typical 'grinder's' performance, scoring the required 52 points for victory without reply.

The match now being won for Britain, the final day's doubles were of less importance, and as David had to catch an early flight home, his match was abandoned. Both the matches played went GB's way, despite a triple from Jerry in his match, and the final score for the match was 15-5 to GB. The improved score from the US point of view can definitely be ascribed largely to an improvement in their standard of play, particularly from their top two, Jerry and Kiley, both of whom were definitely playing to MacRobertson Shield standard. The remaining four players were not quite that strong, but still presented a serious test for the British team who were perhaps a little rusty after the winter lay-off. The more opportunities the top Americans have to play CA rules the better they will get.

The hospitality provided to the British team throughout the visit was very generous, and all the players thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Four of the team, joined by Colin Irwin, stayed on to earn some money as coaches in the USCA's spring coaching school, which was hard work in the hot sun, but provided an excellent opportunity to meet more American croquet players, who are as interesting and varied a cross-section of American society as their British equivalents. All of us made many new friends and look forward to the next opportunity to go again.

After the coaching school the final croquet engagement was the Presidents' match, which is played to American rules, nine single games (one and a half hours time limit) in one day. Chris and Colin Irwin made up the six needed for the British team for this match, and the improved US performance in the Solomon Trophy, coupled with the unfamiliarity of most of the British team with American rules, made us less than optimistic. Certainly as the match started some of the antics of the British team proved the point about unfamiliarity, but the American team, which also showed three changes from the Solomon Trophy match, seemed to suffer from almost the same bewilderment with the obscurer points of tactics of the American game, and GB eventu-

Solomon Trophy



The Solomon Trophy; still in Great Britain's possession, but a warning has been sounded.

ally ran out relatively comfortable winners by 6-3.

The social highlight of the tour came the next day in the form of the annual croquet ball, a festive occasion at which croquet players are encouraged to appear in the incongruous dress of tuxedo and sneakers, the only possible advantage of this being that it is possible to tread on one's partner's feet while dancing and do less damage than wearing shoes (as your correspondent inevitably discovered). The British players also luckily avoided winning free croquet lessons in the raffle, or any significant prizes in the wicket-shooting contest, and finally set off for home tanned and tired with the Solomon Trophy and Hooter's t-shirts (ask Mark about those) safely in their baggage.

RESULTS

1989 Solomon Trophy Match

Doubles:

D.K. Openshaw & M.N. Avery bt J.C. Osborn & J. Stark +13TP, +17; lost to R. Kroeger & T. Arkley +6, -4, -17. P. Cordingley & K.M.H. Aiton lost to K. Jones & T. Prentis -5, -10; bt Osborn & Stark -3, +3, +9; bt Kroeger & Arkley +13, +17.

R.I. Fulford & M. Murray bt Kroeger & Arkley -3, +12, +16; bt Jones & Prentis +4, +14; bt Osborn & Stark -13TP, +7, +17.

Singles:

Avery lost to Stark -6, -16; lost to Jones -26TP, -17.

Openshaw bt Jones +17, +23; bt Stark -21, +11, +26.

Cordingley lost to Osborn -1, -17; bt Prentis +26, +24TP.

Aiton bt Prentis +17, -20, +14; bt Osborn +25TP, +25.

continued overleaf Page 18

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Poets Corner

The Croquet Player's 'IF'

If you can start your game from the beginning
With keenness and enjoyment as your aim,
And whether you are losing or are winning
Remember always croquet's just a game.
If you can play with quickness and decision,
If you can wipe 'Aunt Emma' from your map,
And make each stroke with cleanness and precision,
And never never shove nor double-tap.

If you can hide what you are feeling
When your opponent puts you in a fix,
And smile as he is gaily triple-peeling
Although you're going to lose by twenty-six.
If you can play a forward game, refusing to blame the
court for long shots you have risked
And never when a handicap you're losing
Complain that your opponent's over-bisqueed.
If you can, in a tournament when playing be always
up to time and on the spot
And never ask for leave of absence, saying -
'My work is most important', when it's not.
If you can show a spirit meek and humble
When given a court that's worse than all the rest,
And start your game without a single grumble
And simply say - 'The Manager knows best'.

If you can joke when hoops are causing trouble
And be the same should fortune smile or frown,
And never after playing in a Double
Be heard to say, 'My partner let me down'.
What's more, if you can use discrimination
In speaking of opponents you have fought,
You'll be voted by the whole Association
A welcome acquisition to the Court.

Dr N.H. Oliver

The Finnish

Its been a Sods-law Sunday
We are both on Two.
They are already on the Stick
But their peg-out proves untrue.

Solomon Trophy continued from Page 17

Fulford bt Kroeger +8, +11; bt Arkley +26TP, +19.

Murray bt Arkley +26, +17; bt Kroeger +4, +14TP.

Final Score

Great Britain 15 United States 5.

1989 President's Match (USCA Rules)

Doubles:
C.J. Irwin & M.N. Avery bt J. Stark & T. Arkley

P. Cordingley & R.I. Fulford bt J. Osborn & D. Dribben

M. Murray & Mrs C. Irwin lost to R. Kroeger & M. Gibbons.

Singles:

Avery bt Dribben.
Cordingley lost to Stark.
Fulford bt Arkley.
C.J. Irwin bt Kroeger.
Murray bt Osborn.
Mrs C. Irwin lost to Gibbons.

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My leader is a smallish chap
But today - he's a mighty Finn
For he goes right round - pegs one out
And darn-well gets me in!

Throughout the ten other lawns
There falls a breathless hush
As patiently - he gets me round
Although I feel like mush!

Our peg-out is a simple thing
For some-one good - like me!
Come next year - I will lead
And put the wind up he!

Les James

Whose bisques are they anyway?

It happened at a tournament in Ryde:
The manager had authorized five bisques -
Or so Mike thought! It cannot be denied -
He'd play it cool - not take too many risks.

Five rods we sent into the ground. Mike tossed,
His opponent called out 'heads' (but wondered why
Shouldn't the low-handicap have?) he lost!
Mike started well, beneath the azure sky.

His adversary made a break of seven,
Mike's handicap was six, he thought that this
Was very good for one who was an eleven!
He'll have to be more careful and not miss.

The game progressed, both players level pegging
No bisques were being used by either player
Each wondered why the sentinels went begging
It was touch and go to see who'd be the slayer.

'Twas only when his opponent was on Rover,
Mike realised the bisques were his to use!
For his opponent (handicap of ONE) it was all over
With five bisques to hand Mike could not lose.

Mike polishes the trophy won at Ryde
While telling this quaint, but authentic story.
In future he will double check which side
Should get the bisques! Here's to his future glory.

Cliff Cardis

A Croquet Player's Lament

Just a 4-ball break
Is all I want and all
I ask, for heavens sake
Just a 4-ball break.

Just one more Bisque,
I know that if I had one
I'd just get ahead of Yvonne
Just one more Bisque.

Just one more chance
To play Williams at singles
My defeat by him still tingles
Just one more chance.

Just one fine day
It's awful in macintosh and wellies
With the rain reaching almost to our ankles
Just one fine day.

Just one more game
With Marjorie and I thought I'd slate her
Now she's my best friend and how I hate her
Just one more game.

Just one great day
When Parkstone played on our pad
We beat them and they were rather sad
Just one great day.

Just one more chance,
To say that '88' was divine
And to look forward to '89',
For just one more game.

Muriel Berry

Dorothy Jane Rush

Blond bombshell of the croquet courts,
White-skirted witch of the speculative roll.
Devourer of bisques and buttered biscuits
With refined mayhem in your croquet-playing soul.

Cellan Jones

Profile Major Gerald F. Stone (Freddie)

Congratulations to Freddie Stone, who has recently celebrated his 90th birthday. Gerald Cave writes about some of Freddie's remarkable achievements.

Freddie Stone, born in 1899, started playing at the age of 6. He was 'coached' by his father who was a member of the 'best ten' in the years 1911 and 1914.

Freddie's first tournament was at Sidmouth at the age of 10 in 1905. He played in the handicap doubles, but despite making a break from 4 to 4-back, lost. His handicap for the event was 5*, the then beginners handicap, which was confirmed as his handicap.

At the age of 14, in a handicap doubles at Exeter, he made his one and only quadruple peel! He was recommended for a reduction in handicap from ½ (as he then was) to scratch. The Association Handicapper refused to confirm this reduction, saying that he refused to have a small boy as an Association Member with a scratch handicap. Inevitably he was already a Silver Medalist, which he won in 1912 (aged 13).

Freddie was twice invited to join GB touring sides, once to Australia when he was still serving, but couldn't get 'leave' and once to New



Zealand after retirement (1949), which he had to refuse for personal reasons. He did however play against New Zealand in 1956 in all 5 test matches in this country.

He has lived in Budleigh Salterton, where he was renowned for his very hard hitting of the croquet ball. The legend that he once hit his ball into the sea is exaggerated; the ball only reached the High Street.

He was a delightful partner and opponent and never questioned (on court) the decision of a referee, though once, when a 'decision' had cost him a championship, the referee did afterwards apologise for wrongly interpreting the Laws!

Freddie had his 90th birthday early in 1989. He still watches croquet - and plays bridge which is as deadly and as accurate as was his croquet.

Champions of the Past

(The following brief biography appeared in the Croquet Gazette dated 8th June 1905 p47).

The late Dr A.C. Prior

Our photograph today is of a former patron of the game to whom croquet players owe a great deal. Dr Alexander was born in 1809, and as a young medical man practised in Kensington, but gave up his practice and took the name of Prior on coming into an estate in Somersetshire. He then travelled about the world studying botany. Coming across Mr Walter Jones Whitmore in London, he learnt the game of croquet from him and became passionately fond of it, but though a good player, was nervous, and did not like playing in tournaments. At Halse, his place in Somersetshire, he had a ground nearly as true as a billiard table but he liked it slow and green, and therefore did not have it mown as close as most people like a lawn these days. On Sundays he used to walk about the lawn, and if he saw a weed he would put a peg to mark it for the gardener to deal with on

Monday. He constantly entertained the great players of his time: Gray, Peel, Whitmore, Law, James D. Heath, Spong, Eveleigh; and many great games have been played on his lawn; he kept up the game all through the years that it went to sleep as a tournament game. He published among other works 'Notes on Croquet' and 'Popular Names of British Plants'. The former work is very interesting in relation to the history of croquet, and some of his opinions therein expressed are very quaint. He was exceedingly angry over the term 'roquet'. After giving the etymology of the word, 'a woman's smock, chemise, or shift', he says, 'and let who will, in joke or in earnest, have given it its slang sense of 'hit and go on', we hope that for the future the ladies will forbid the familiar reference to this part of their dress on the croquet lawn, and insist upon the word being eliminated from the glossary of the game'. The ladies do not seem to have acted on this advice.

Dr Prior assisted Mr Whitmore in his search for a ground for the



Dr A.C. Prior.

headquarters of croquet, and persuaded the committee of the Botanical Gardens to allow the club to be started there. His project however fell through, owing to some want of tact on Mr Whitmore's part. Dr Prior then helped Mr Whitmore to acquire the ground at Wimbledon which became the headquarters of croquet. Mr Whitmore had differences with the other leaders in the game and

dangerously near. Only fifteen yards! Of course Red will hit. Before the majority have grasped the position, the lithe figure has straightened as the mallet swings and Red - misses.

Black will not make such a mistake, say the wisecracks, as she proceeds to roquet, split and rush the balls for the easy break left; and, as before, the automatic game goes on with a leisurely swing, and point follows point with a certainty that bodes ill for Yellow. But there is always, or nearly always a but - Black repeats Blue's error, and comes to rest close indeed to Blue, but with the wire of 1-Back between them, and no ball open. There is nothing for it but to trust Yellow again. This time the slashing golf stroke is truly struck, and Yellow roquets Red in the centre at 14 yards.

As has been aptly quoted of her, 'When she is good she is very very good', and with the perfect nerve and brilliant rapid execution, Yellow dashes off the 4-ball break to the first Rover hoop and lays the break for Red, Blue safely wired in 4-Back.

Blue can but corner, and Red repeats the break, making no semblance of a mistake till 4-back; there, with Black close by, she is short in her approach and leaves a difficult hoop - 3 yards and barely open! But she is well set in her game, and decides to take the risk - the ball takes the wire at the angle and spins through. A round of applause greets the plucky player,

broke away from Wimbledon and, with Dr Prior again backing him, started a roving club. Subsequently he came to the assistance of the Wimbledon Club when they wanted it badly. Dr Prior, when he was 83, thought his lawn (the best probably ever seen) not good enough, so he had it relaid. He continued to take interest in the game to the time of his death at the age of 93.

We are indebted to him for most of the photographs of former champions, as he made a large collection of them, and Messrs. Maul and Fox of 187a Piccadilly, used to take them for him. Unfortunately this firm quite lately destroyed an album full of photographs of croquet players of 35 years ago, but luckily they had the plates of most of the Champions of early days, and so are able to reproduce them for the Gazette. Several of them will appear in subsequent issues.

who finishes up the break by making all Red's points except the peg, placing Black near No. 3 corner, and leaving Yellow with Blue and Red close by, all three protected from Black by inter-vening wires. Black lets drive rather on the principle of the slayer of Ahab, at a venture, but without analogous success, for the ball glances from a wire and runs harmless off the boundary. Yellow makes the last two hoops, gets a rush on Red and pegs out, winner of a brilliant game, to the enthusiastic delight of the large gallery, who have followed every stroke with keen appreciation and hail the victory of what was undoubtedly the best play.

Very marked is the difference of the two styles. The machine-like perfection of one is such as to evoke surprise when anything goes wrong: the rapid brilliancy of the other leaves the impression of a succession of tours-de-force with danger always near. Yet the machinery is, when necessary, capable of studied brilliancy, the less remarkable because of ease of execution; while the constant brilliancy resolves itself on analysis into real accuracy of stroke, disguised, or maybe embellished, by extraordinary rapidity.

When next they meet, may I be there to see, and let not the issue be confined to a single game.

J.A.M.

Early Days

