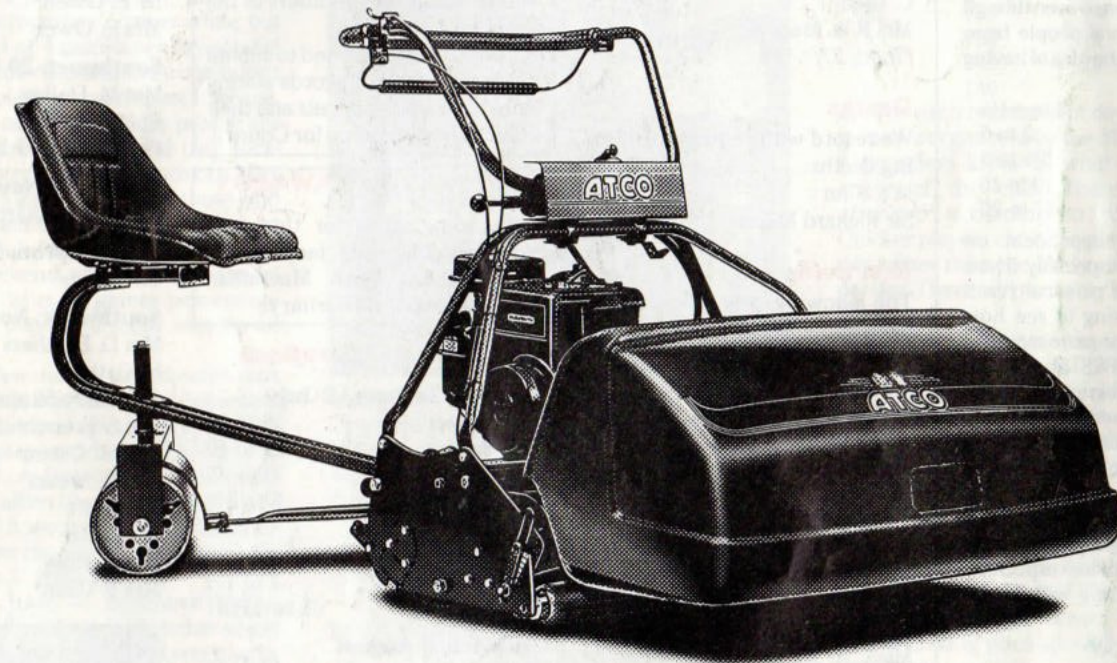


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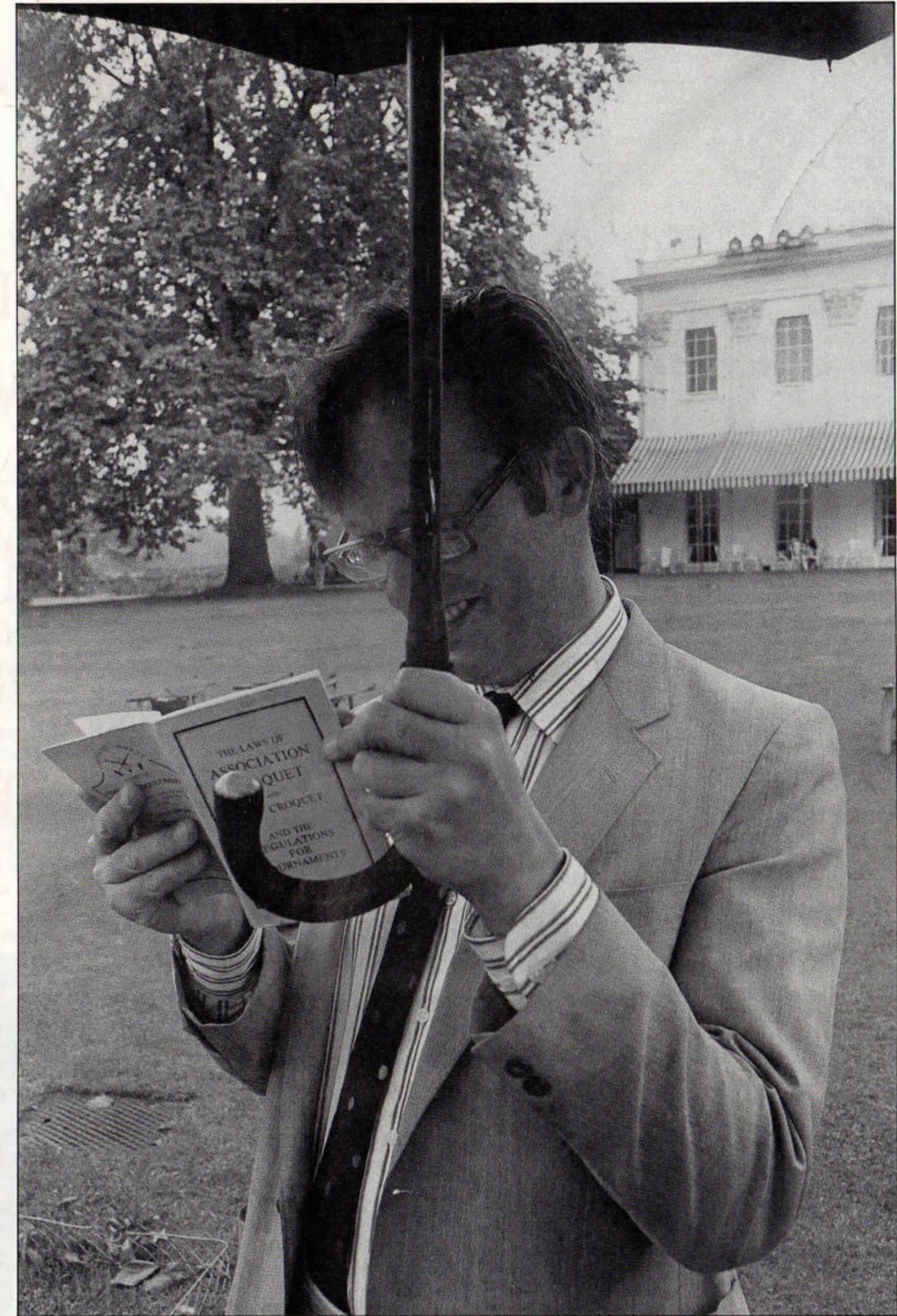


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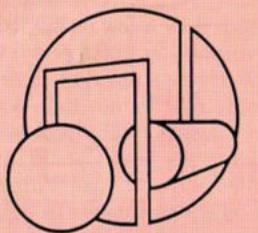
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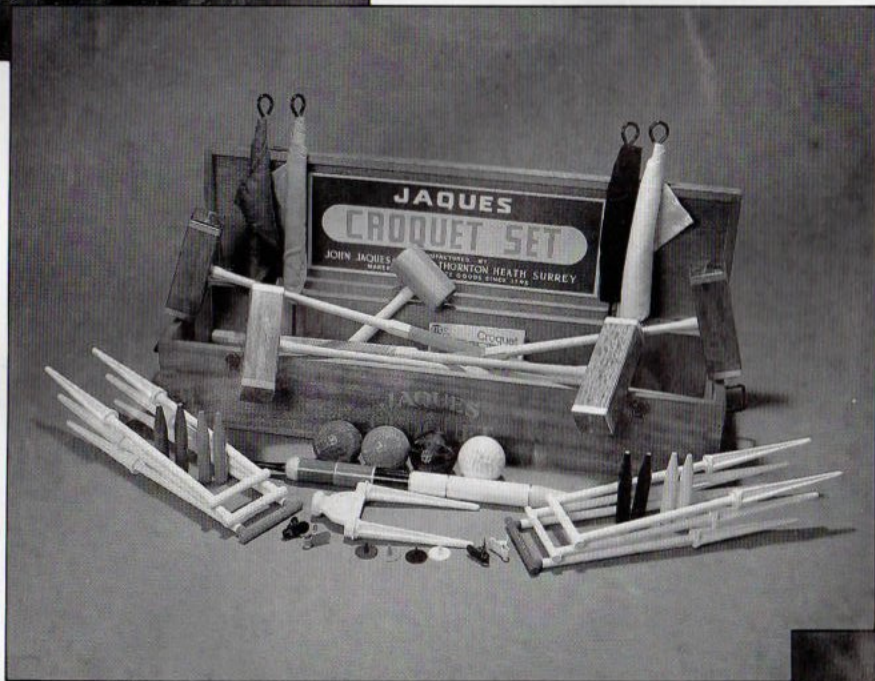


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CROQUET

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All-England

Colchester: 23-24 September ALL ENGLAND FINAL

Report by Pat Hetherington

The final of the All England competition, played as a five round Swiss on Colchester's hard, fast lawns with tight 'near presidential' hoops, proved a tough test for the eight stalwarts who had won through the area finals.

Handicaps ranged from 4½ to 11 and play proved to be very much of the C class variety, with one- or two-hoop breaks being the norm. In several games the backward ball never got beyond hoop 6. The three hour time limit meant that only four of the 20 games played did not go to time and only two players, David White and Adrian Judge, had the pleasure of actually pegging out, each achieving the feat twice and Judge being involved in three of the completed games.

The result of the competition was in doubt until the end of the final match and at one point it seemed the All England trophy might be going across the border to Edinburgh as Mark Ranshaw battled in the last round against White. However solid unflappable play saw White win all five games to return to Leicester with the winner's trophy and a two bisque handicap reduction, whilst Judge (representing the East) took the runner's up trophy to Chester.

Two games ended with the proverbial +1T result, the longest game of the weekend being the first round battle between John Taylor and Alan Stockwell, which lasted for 3½ hours before Alan ran the winning hoop.

One Game

By F.R. Ross

Apparently the Editor wants contributions. It is a habit of editors to put into their waste-paper baskets 5 times as many offerings as they print. We will see what happens. The tournament was running a bit behind, and the Manager wanted a quick game. He won the toss.

1. I put Brown in the tice position.
2. He hit it with Pink, failed to get position for hoop 1, and ran Pink towards hoop 2.
3. I hit it with Green, ran hoops 1 and 2, but failed 3.
4. He observed: 'I think we can say you have won the opening', and proceeded to hit with White from B-balk and make 9 hoops, failing 4-back, leaving his balls on the west boundary near hoop 2.

At this stage I might explain that I played in Mevagissey before the War, knowing nothing of breaks or rushes, and while I can usually do a competent croquet shot or get through a hoop, an ingrained bad habit of swing makes roqueting so uncertain that a handicap of 8 flatters me. I was reduced from 9 when I changed from my 50-year-old mallet to a Neal one. But I have never had to shoot hard because I re-learned the game a decade ago on my own lawn in Reigate, which took four years to make and was so true that there was an Inquiry if a ball deviated from its straight line; one could roquet a ball on the opposite yard-line without sending it off the court. The new owners take pride in it, and still allow Reigate Priory Club to use it, as visiting teams have experienced.

The manager was kept very busy as a referee and was somewhat surprised by the number of questions that arose on the laws of the game - indeed in one game (which involved players who wish to remain anonymous) both players in consecutive turns managed to play the wrong ball!

A strenuous two days ended with three handicap reductions and nobody going home empty handed, thanks to the generous gift of a LORUS sports watch to all finalists.

RESULT:

- 5 wins:** D.White.
- 4 wins:** A. Judge.
- 3 wins:** M. Ranshaw.
- 2 wins:** D. Regan, J. Taylor, and M. Ansell.
- 1 win:** A. Stockwell and J. Haslam.



Margaret Selmes in play during the Cheltenham September weekend.

I was entitled to 5½ bisques and the remaining 7 turns were:

5. Intending to take a bisque if I missed (how often a virtual bisque can be 'used' this way!) I hit him with Green, made ten hoops and put the Green clip on penult, needing 2 bisques on the way. I have a crude rule that I will use a bisque if I see making 2 hoops with it.
6. Must have been a good leave, because he shot and missed, again leaving both balls up the west boundary.
7. I shot at them with Brown and missed, took a half-bisque to arrange the balls, and then a full one to start Brown round from hoop 3. With Green on penult, and reckoning that my opponent could well peel Brown through rover if he wished, I put the Brown clip on the peg, needing one more bisque on the way.
8. He hit in with Pink, attempted a triple peel but failed with White at penult; after going through rover with Pink, he pegged out my Brown. I had a bisque left. Fatal(?) for him to leave his balls together. He left them 15 yards apart on the west boundary.
9. Too far apart? Green was a yard south of the peg. I gambled on getting position to run penult. 2 inches more in 8 yards and it would have been a good shot, but it was suicidal because penult was also White's hoop.
10. He missed; White rolled off and was replaced a yard from Pink.
11. Victory in sight! Get through penult, aim

Cont'd on columns 3 & 4, Page 15

SURBITON Official Opening of Surbiton's New Club House

The official opening of Surbiton's new clubhouse took place on Sunday, 11th June 1989. The ceremony was performed by Mr Peter Yarranton, the new Chairman of the National Sports Council.

Surbiton's Chairman, Derek Caporn, welcomed the very important guests, who were:-

The Mayor and Mayoress of the London Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames, whose Council granted Surbiton a 42 year lease in 1987 after allowing the club to hold a licence from 1985 to ascertain if the project of a seven lawn Croquet Club was a viable proposition.

Mr Richard Stevens, a Director of Hambro Legal Protection Ltd., who sponsor the Surbiton Club.

Mr Douglas Reynolds, the President of the Rotary Club of Surbiton. Messrs Brian Wride and Mark Weymouth, the representatives of the well-known London Brewers, Fullers, who provided a substantial grant and loan towards the costs of the Clubhouse.

Mr Alan Oldham, the Treasurer of The Croquet Association.

Mr Gary Roberts, the President of the Surbiton and District Chamber of Commerce.

AND most important of all, Mr Yarranton whom he thanked for the Sports Council's grant and loan of £13,500 which made the Clubhouse possible.

He did not include Mr Richard Tracey, the MP for Surbiton, because he is an honorary member.

All the above were accompanied by their charming ladies. He then invited Mr

Tracey to introduce Mr Yarranton. Before doing so, Mr Tracey praised the hard work of the members in getting the Club to such a high standard, both of the grounds and of the Clubhouse. When it had been first erected, the clubhouse was just a shell. Ian Bond and George Noble had built the bar and fitted out the kitchen; Diana Wright, the Club's membership secretary, had worked like a trojan on the interior, George Noble and Jerry Guest had mown the lawns since 1985, Hazel Kittermaster and her daughter had beavered away at the catering and her husband, Michael, at Publicity, etc.

Grants and loans from the Sports Council, the Brewers, the Kingston upon Thames Lottery Fund and the Croquet Association with sponsorship from Hambro Legal Protection Ltd had provided £33,500.

The members had raised £11,000, making a total of £44,500. Bentalls, the well-known Kingston Store, had also donated, as had several local firms. The Fund Raising is continuing as the Club has to find an additional £50,000-plus to bring the Club to a 'Centre of Excellence'.

He also paid tribute to Mr Phil Sida of A.J. Sida & Co Ltd., a local builder, for constructing the foundations at cost and giving his services free.

He then introduced Mr Peter Yarranton, the former International Rugby player, saying that today he had a living example of Sports Council grants which generated private funding and substantial labours of love from the members to produce the largest Croquet Club to be founded for well over 50 years.

Mr Peter Yarranton gave a witty speech with several Rugby stories and also



A group of players at the opening ceremony with Richard Stevens, Director of Hambro Legal Protection Ltd, whose sponsorship has done so much to help the club since its formation. Back row (L to R): Jerry Guest, George Noble, Keith Wylie, Phil Cordingly, and Ian Bond. Front row: Robert Fullford and Ian Vincent.



Peter Yarranton, Sports Council Chairman, about to cut the tape to open Surbiton's new clubhouse. (L to R): Derek Caporn, Richard Tracey, Peter Yarranton, The Mayor, and Richard Stevens.

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A general view of Surbiton's clubhouse. one about the Golfer who had had an awful round and turned to his caddy to say he felt like drowning himself. To which the caddy replied, 'You would never succeed as you couldn't keep your head down long enough!' - this also applies to Croquet!

He referred to Croquet as probably the fastest-growing minor sport in the Country, and that the Sports Council Grant of £26,000 per annum had made it possible for the CA to appoint a Development Officer, Mr Chris Hudson, who had greatly contributed to this growth, assisted by numerous volunteers throughout the Country.

The CA had attracted sponsorship. They had formed the World Croquet Federation who were holding the 1st World Croquet Championship in July at Hurlingham and at Surbiton sponsored by Continental Airlines. Soon they hoped to be a sport once again competing in the Olympic Games. He referred to the great expansion of Coaching and that the Sport was now played at most of the major universities and in about 100 schools.

He then cut the ribbon, and declared the Clubhouse officially opened. An excellent buffet lunch followed prepared by Hazel Kittermaster and during the afternoon all the guests stayed on to watch the final stages of the Surbiton Open Tournament sponsored by Hambro Legal Protection Ltd. On leaving, Mr Yarranton said he and his wife had thoroughly enjoyed themselves and that as a moment they would like to present a clock to the Club, which was gratefully accepted.

The Opening was an outstanding success on a beautiful Summer's Day.

KINGSTON MAURWARD A Year of Consolidation

Report by Peter Bradshaw



Alan Bowers receiving the Wilcox-Young Trophy from David Bayly.

1989 began with the winning of the Townsend Award and ended with a club trophy provided by our sponsors, local investment managers

Wilcox-Young. It was a year of consolidation for the now three year old Kingston Maurward Association Croquet Club.

Playing on the outskirts of Dorchester at a College of Agriculture the club has been blessed with a continually high membership. This year saw 68 members playing on the one and a half lawns. The pressure was relieved by the creation of one and a half temporary lawns on the edge of a cricket square. This quick solution exemplified the benefits of close working with the College - both lecturers and students training to be groundsmen and women.

The year started quietly with fewer new members than before but high demand for coaching. This was expertly provided by David Purdon and John Toye and benefitted some 30 members. It was soon clear that the standard of play was continuing to increase and players selected for

the South West Federation's beginners league team soon approached and passed the 16 handicap limit.

We entered groups for all three individual CA competitions and saw one of our beginners, Alan Bowers, progress to the final of the regional All-England Handicap at Surbiton. This had been the second occasion when we had reached for our road maps for we had not expected to be in the West London Region! In the Longman Cup a similar trip saw us placed in the Midlands Region for a trip to Stourbridge and a narrow 3-2 defeat.

Narrowly beaten in the national short team croquet competition we were destined to be the runners up in the Federation B league as well. Just when we thought that we would have no outright success Alan Bowers was awarded a CA silver award at Cheltenham in his first season.

The final day of the season saw the sun triumph over the forecast rain as six club members assembled for the playing of the club finals. This was for

a silver salver - the Wilcox-Young Trophy - evidence of the continued sponsorship we have enjoyed since our formation. It was no surprise to see Alan Bowers win his first three games and a defeat by William Steadman in the fourth could not deny him the trophy. Graham Skilling also won three games in the Swiss event.

We look forward confidently to the future with the expansion and much needed pavilion that are part of the College's planned developments. We have never had much trouble recruiting members through constant press coverage but their retention really seems to hinge on an active social side to the club as well. We will of course arrange as many matches as possible in 1990 including those with our friends at Parkstone and Bournemouth, contacts which have been so useful in establishing our new club. This way all members are able to play croquet both for fun and (slightly) more seriously.

DOWNHAM CROQUET CLUB

Report by Jonathan Toye

As our first full blown season draws to a close, it is pleasant to reflect on the development of Downham Croquet Club, from rough and ready beginnings to a more relaxed and settled state.

The Club was founded in 1988, following a week's 'Come and try it' session during the annual Downham Market Festival. Scores of youngsters - and the occasional adult - tried their hand at the gentle art. Because of this response I continued to pile the cast iron hoops and trusty Walker mallets and balls (kindly loaned by Judy Anderson of the East Anglian Croquet Federation) into my capacious wheelbarrow, and cart them out to the section of the football pitch that had been negotiated with the local Sports Federation. ('Yes, don't worry Bert, I'll fill in the holes at the end of the season so that your footballers don't suffer sprained ankles!')

We held regular Sunday sessions through that damp summer of '88, watched by intrigued cricketers strolling by and children and parents straggling across the field to the swimming pool. After a month or so the more enthusiastic and responsible players were coming to the door and asking for the wheelbarrow to set up the equipment themselves. Everything was going really well. I decided it would be an idea to hold a meeting and make the whole thing official. This will sort out who is serious about croquet, I thought. Too true!

The meeting took place in the Sports Pavilion overlooking the playing fields. We elected a chairman, treasurer and secretary; established a constitution and set membership rates.

The ensuing Sundays showed the effect of having to pay to belong. Playing numbers plummeted from twenty to two or three and by the end of the season we had four paid up members.

The AGM (attended by three-quarters of the total membership) was held in my study and proved a time for serious contemplation over a glass of sherry. What were the reasons for the sudden drop in interest rate, as far as croquet in Downham Market was concerned? Could the introduction of membership fees have played a crucial role in the depreciation of value in which the gentle art was held? Or were there other, underlying reasons which might go some way towards accounting for the initial large response from teenagers but minimal reaction from their elders?

We began to examine the nature of the club. Its location first of all - on the far side of Downham Town's pitch. Was the rutted, studmarked surface really ideal for croquet? Then there was the old football stand, directly alongside. Haven for illicit lovers and graffiti artists. Very handy for a dash in summer showers, but.. wait a minute.. weren't all the people who had started playing in the early days the same ones who continued to hang around, in, on and behind the stand, while the remaining two or three of us played on? Did this not provide food for thought?

The assembled throng of three, after due debate and discussion, decided on a Plan of Action. Possibly a change of venue would help. A mile away from Downham Market lies the peaceful hamlet of Stow Bardolph, a farming estate owned by the Hare

family for generations. Set right in the middle, in spacious grounds, is Stow Hall. The Hare family lived in the Hall till the outbreak of the Second World War when it was requisitioned by the Ministry of Defence. The NHS had it for a spell, as a maternity hospital and later a convalescent home. Since the early 70's it has lain empty, a great galleon becalmed in a swaying sea of trees.

In between the trees are some splendid areas of lawn. I approached Sir Tom and Lady Rose. Delighted, they said. And really, that was when the club took off.

We continued to borrow equipment from the E.A.C.F. until a member held a coffee morning and raised enough money to buy it all. Coaching sessions took place, run by Sarah Hampson from the Hunstanton Club, and followed by more sessions given by those who knew a bit more about the game to those

who were just starting.

We mowed a second lawn. And tried to mark it out at right angles, unlike the first one. This proved an entertaining exercise. Somehow, right angles never look quite right.

All the equipment is stored in what was the game larder of the Hall. In it, suspended from one of the many hooks around the wall, hung an enormous frying pan. A member took it home, spent an industrious morning sanding, scrubbing and polishing, and returned a shining griddle to the larder. Thus was the Stow Pan, our first trophy competition, born.

All in all, it has been a delightful season. Lots of people taking up the game in a friendly, relaxed atmosphere and beautiful setting. With that and the wonderful long summer we have had I think Downham Croquet Club is firmly established and here for a good time yet!



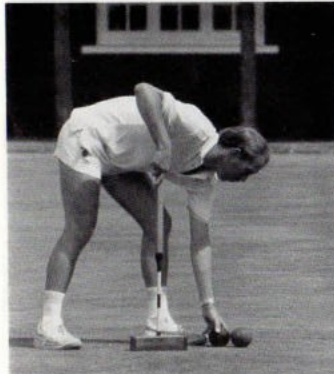
Members enjoying a sunny day's croquet in Stow Hall's peaceful grounds.

Tournaments

Cheltenham: 26-28 August Arithmetic Progression at Cheltenham

Report by Michael Cowan

In the event the bank holiday weather at Cheltenham was better than forecast. A distant circle of clouds beyond Cleeve Hill held back to give fine weather most days with just the odd brief shower. There was a rather black cloud on Saturday as I was going down to Bernard Weitz -25, who I had been assured was off form. The last day happily was sunshine all the way and I won three games.



Richard Brand had 7 wins at Cheltenham.

Last year Paul Hands founded and managed the first ever Egyptian tournament and this year, slightly modified, it was repeated under the control of Kevin Carter. It was popular with everyone except Dennis Moorcraft who remained to be convinced and anyway was not playing.

Edgbaston: 1-3 September Not the Dorke Report

Report by Andrew Gregory

The Edgbaston Swiss took on a new meaning as hills of Alpine proportions were revealed by the parched patches around the hoops. There was much debate on whether 3-back on lawn 1 or hoop 1 on lawn 2 was the more impossible, but both approaches shared Terry Alderman's ability to swing the ball both ways. The ball would all but stop in perfect position, then gently and irretrievably accelerate on some downslope. Had more petulant players been present, the air would have been thick with flying mallets and stifled obscenities, but we were a restrained lot. We would sigh, replace our clip with dignity, retire from the lawn and go for a long walk into a neighbouring car park. Then we would swear blue murder and throw our mallet away.

In the testing conditions, only one fourth round game was finished on Saturday, involving Brian Hallam. He was exhausted by this, and unfortunately withdrew, a victim of the mystery virus which affects players who lose a number of games (psittacosis?) The competition for the resul-

ting tie was intense. Ray Jones claimed one in unusual circumstances, as he was not actually near the bottom of the tournament. He must have been exercising some obscure right of ex-chairmen of ECC.

Overnight five games were pegged down on the 3 lawns, so the astute management introduced time limits in the fourth round. One player jumped at this opportunity, and promptly went to time in each of his three remaining games. At one point he did try to save time by not marking a double-banking ball which was on a wire. This measure proved to be a false economy, when he took off into said ball, and spent ten minutes trying to guess where his own ball would have gone.

Gregory beat Goacher (on time) to become the only undefeated player, but in the next game he had a ball pegged out by Ivor Brand, with his remaining ball on the dreaded 3-back lawn 1. Brand left Gregory rather too many shots, but the latter failed to get going until Brand's backward ball was for rover. An inspirational break came to a pathetic end at rover, and

TABLE 1

Kevin Carter modified the original Hands table, and this is a further modification to eliminate some unintended discontinuities. Players are divided into four blocks. To start each player plays one of the others next in rating. Thereafter players are given opponents within a reasonable rating range

Handicap Rating Table		
Base is -2 = 100		
For each 1/2 difference in handicap the rating is reduced cumulatively		
Handicaps	Adjustment	Rating
-1 1/2 to 1	4	96 to 76
1 1/2 to 3 1/2	3	73 to 61
4 to 6	2	59 to 51
6 1/2 to 12	1	50 to 39
13 to 18	1/2	38 to 33

amongst those available to play. After each game players' ratings are adjusted up or down for winners and losers relative to their ratings at the start of the game:

Rating Difference	Higher rated player wins	Lower rated player wins
0 to 6	4	4
7 to 12	3	5
13 to 18	2	6
19+	1	7

TABLE 2

If the difference at the start of a game was 9 then ratings are adjusted up and down by 3 if the higher rated player wins and 5 if the lower rated player wins. As the tournament proceeds players move up and down the ratings, usually both, their progress shown by the movement on the scoreboard of personal record cards. For each initial block the winner is the player who after a minimum of six games has improved the most. In this tournament all games were level advanced.

The Hands system's main advantage - that each player can play as few or as many games as wished - is shown by the range of games played:

No. of Players	Games Played
9	10
10	9
17	8
4	7
3	6
2	5

TABLE 3

Brand left only four more shots before winning by 2. This brought Nick Hyne briefly into contention. It's good to see Hyne playing to his handicap again, and he was the only man to beat the eventual winner. Sadly Hyne lost to Goacher (on time). Coming up on the rails was Ken Jones, who had played the Swiss gambit of losing in the first round; but he blew his chance against Landor. Landor's results might have been better, had he not hid behind a tree every time a mallet was raised. Not until Sunday afternoon was the truth discovered, so for future reference, FRANCIS LANDOR IS A REFEREE.

Back down the field, Martin Granger-Brown and Andrew Symons had reached peg and peg against peg and ball-box. Symons trickled his lone ball to within a foot of the peg. Brown negotiated a five-yard roquet successfully, took off to Symons' ball, and - you've guessed it - rushed it onto the peg. This brought to mind a game from the 1988 Edgbaston Handicap weekend, where Symons' opponent pegged out three balls

In all, 186 games were played in three days. Unlike the Swiss there is usually little delay before a player gets another opponent once a lawn is available. Delays of several hours are common with a Swiss. An hour's wait is usual in a Hands. Originally Paul Hands used a continuous arithmetical function to adjust ratings, but it seems that players found the need to resort to a calculator tiresome. Kevin Carter's adjustment table is easy to use but its obvious discontinuities not easy to justify. The world is invited to offer alternatives.

Cheltenham is well known for its good lawns and fine facilities. The Hands system will make it even more of a must for those who want many games.

Winners:

Quartile 4 and overall: Andrew Symons: 9/10 wins
Quartile 3: John Evans: 8/10
Quartile 2: Christopher Williams: 6/8
Quartile 1: Edward Dymmock: 6/8
Andrew Symons final rating was equal to a handicap of -2 1/2
Consolation prizes for 7 wins: Paul Hands, Richard Brand, Joe Jackson and Michael Cowan.

CA Gold Awards

(and Chateau Carter champagne): Joe Jackson and Alvar Bray
Other triples: Andrew Symons (2), Paul Hands (2), Ray Ransom, and Bernard Neal.

during the game - and lost!

The final round had Goacher and Ivor Brand playing for at least a tied first place, with Gregory in contention if he beat Ken Jones. An eager crowd became dismayed as both games plumbed the depths of awfulness. If you concentrated on Goacher misapproaching 3-back in one game, you might have missed Gregory blobbing one-back in the other. Eventually Brand held on to beat Goacher (on time) while Gregory

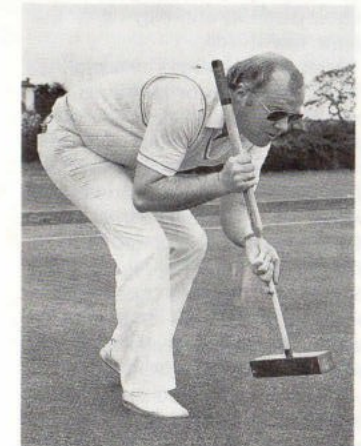


Ivor Brand won at Edgbaston.

Southport: 23-24 September Colin Irwin Shows his Class

Report by Alan Sutcliffe

The presentation of water removal equipment, reminiscent of a manually operated bulldozer, by the Peter Dorke Company of 'Aqua-Shuv' P.L.C. (Peter's Ludlow contrivances), made sure that the weather for the whole of the weekend stayed dry and sunny. An early morning demonstration of the apparatus on the autumn dew



Colin Irwin in fine form at Southport.

showed conclusively that one ton of timber can indeed remove dampness from a lawn - provided someone is strong enough to 'shuv' it.

Colin Irwin, playing with the confidence and precision of a World

Championship semi-finalist, carried off the main event whilst resisting a strong challenge from the ever improving Russell Collighan.

The consolation Swiss-event was won by a maturing Chris Haslam who only needs to realise that it is possible to miss 30 yard roquets in order to become a top player of the future. He gave Irwin a tight game in the semi-finals of the main event but could not match his experience.

The other semi-final produced a match full of 'interest', with Collighan over-coming the 'chatter' of the youthful McCormick by +6.

Triple peels were not part of the general play but Colin Irwin, Dan McCormick and Russell Collighan completed same, McCormick putting an off-form John Meads through the trauma of a fifth turn triple. Meanwhile Alan Sutcliffe, still in a phase of being unable to finish things off, completed a contrived triple only to miss a five foot peg-out.

Sunday morning, possibly reflecting Saturday night, got all games well underway until some-

one realised that there were vast spaces in the centre of each lawn. Colin Irwin did his bit by providing the necessary centre pegs.

'Bucket', whilst demonstrating that management of a tournament does nothing to improve one's play, made several trips with 'the bucket' to adjust some rather enthusiastic hoop setting.

A great end of season weekend as usual, supplemented by the excellent fare offered by the enthusiastic ladies in the kitchen and for once no lakes for Peter's 'Aqua-shuv'.

RESULTS

Main Event
24 entries: Advanced play, knock-out)

Round 3:
C.J. Irwin bt A. Symons +13;
C. Haslam bt C.H. Wild +3;
D. McCormick bt K. Jones +20; R.J. Collighan bt Mrs C.I. Irwin +16.

Semi-finals:
Irwin bt Haslam +3; Collighan bt McCormick +6.

Final:
Irwin bt Collighan +25TP, +17.

Swiss Event
Winner: C. Haslam (5 wins)

Colchester: 6-8 October Over 50s Handicap Weekend

Report by Pat Hetherington

The coldest wettest weekend for over five months saw 16 intrepid over-50s playing a 6-round Swiss handicap tournament at Colchester. Fortunately there was plenty of hot coffee and excellent hot lunches so, with the aid of hot baths and showers, all survived to enjoy the event.

Entry had been restricted to 16 players to ensure that all games would be completed before the light failed and that nobody would be left to sit out waiting too long for a court. Using the Bray system no time limits were needed and all 48 games were completed by 5pm on the Sunday.

Several players were competing in their first-ever CA tournament and they appeared to be learning more about the game and improving their performance with every game. Bill Lamb emerged convincingly as the winner, not losing a single game. Don Gaunt, Vincent Camroux, Dennis Shaw and Diana Richardson shared second place with four wins each. A strange player, P & J Willington, appeared to replace Barney Butler,

who sadly had to withdraw at the last minute. This turned out to be manager Pat Hetherington who played the first two games and John Williams who played the last four. Both are on handicap 7 and both won half their games.

At regular intervals throughout the weekend the age limit of those present at Colchester was lowered and the sound level rose with the arrival of Chris Clarke, Robert Fulford, John Walters and Debbie Cornelius. Were they checking up on future opposition or trying to get some idea of what croquet would be like for them some 25-32 years ahead?

RESULTS

6 wins: W.E. Lamb.
4 wins: D. Gaunt, V. Camroux, D. Shaw, Mrs D. Richardson.
3 wins: J. Robinette, D. Ruscombe-King, E. Davey, J. Osborne, J. Plummer, Mrs B. Camroux, P & J Willington.
2 wins: Mrs B. Carter, Mrs P. Osborne.
1 win: M. Watt.
0 wins: Mrs J. Plummer.

Tournaments

Cheltenham: 6-8 October

Report by Cliff Cardis

The last of this year's Cheltenham W/E tournaments lived up to what we have come to expect of this excellent club. It was ably managed by Ian Maugham, who promised to be all sweetness and light throughout the tournament. I think he kept his promise most of the time, but he did blackmail me into writing this report by saying he would not sign my C.A. Merit Award Certificate for a silver medal if I did not!

Apart from a few bare corners, the lawns had recovered quite well from the drought and were playing reasonably slow. The resident fox obliged with its appearance in the evenings. In spite of being overcast on Friday and Saturday, Sunday was bright with the pennant flapping towards the club-house, signifying a chill north wind.

Bob Adlard brought a bottle of damson wine, generally agreed to be worth one bisque per glass either way. On Saturday night Dab Wheeler kindly organised a supper to which about 15 people stayed. I was asked to convey thanks to Dab for making it so enjoyable.

Kismet ('I'm not a 2 1/2') Whittall suggested that I should report the fact that Val Tompkinson (7) playing a -2 with 9 bisesques won her match by 26 points, peeling penultimate and rover in the sixth turn. I understand she ran rover prior to peeling her partner ball and used a bisque to finish.

Most of the Friday and Saturday matches finished well within the 3-hour time limit. My match with Peter Leach started at 1 o'clock and finished at 2.30. Peter playing very poorly - missing two-yard roquets and leaving me with easy breaks to pick up. The score was +20, and only reinforces my theory that I only win when my opponent is playing badly.

By four o'clock on Sunday four of the blocks had produced winners. One of the blocks in the balance involved Dab Wheeler - 'time' was called during her turn when she was for 2-back and rover - she kept to her task and went on to win, peeling through rover. She would have won the block had it not been for Roy Goodwin snatching a game which continued into the dusk.

I do not know the collective noun for referees. We had a 'rumination' (?) of referees considering what should be done when a high bisquer playing against Ian Maugham started his turn with the black ball and several shots and bisesques later was observed merrily playing the blue ball!

There were 6 blocks of 6 in each block. Denis Moorcraft and John Brudenell won all five of their games, the other block winners were: Michael Rangerley, Jon Wurml, Roy Goodwin and Peter Leach.

Hurlingham: 25th November 1989 CLUB CONFERENCE

Report by Derek Caporn (Hon Secretary, Croquet Association)

The Club Conference was held, as usual, at the Hurlingham Club, on Saturday, 25th November. It was opened by Mr John Solomon, our President, who read some extracts from previous Conferences. They had been held, usually bi-annually, in their present format since 1963. Chris Hudson, our Development Officer, then gave an extremely interesting and well presented resume of our progress over the last 4 years.



Derek Caporn, who took the chair at the Conference.

In 1985 the total membership of the CA was 996, and this had risen to 1810 this year. One of our major objectives was to balance our 'ordinary' budget. In 1986, 'ordinary' expenditure had exceeded membership income by nearly £11,000, and this deficit had been reduced to a forecast £1000 in 1989. Sponsorship over the years 1985 to 1989 had averaged approximately £15,000 per annum. The number of tournaments listed in the CA Fixtures Book had increased from 80 in 1985 to over 120 in 1989, with a corresponding increase in the number of clubs holding such tournaments from 25 to 31.

Over this period, the number of registered clubs had increased from 73 to 130, the number of registered schools from 6 to 24, and the number of registered universities from 4 to 9. The number of Federations had gone from 2 to 7, and the number of 4-lawn clubs from 13 to 15. Additional facilities for play were also now available in the form of the 2 Indoor Carpets.

Development programmes had been implemented to introduce croquet more effectively to Universities, Schools, Hotels, Womens Institutes and Townswomens Guilds. Croquet facilities and events were being introduced at more and more National Trust and English Heritage properties.

The Croquet Association had made grants totalling £18,000 over the five year period, £6,000 to Federations and £12,000 to clubs. During the same period (1985-89), loans of £5,000 had been made to clubs and much of this had already been repaid. Media coverage of croquet had increased enormously during the five-year period. As for coaching, there were no registered

coaches in 1985 but by 1989 there were 147. Coaching courses were being run at Loughborough, Bisham Abbey, and many other venues, and the coaching programme was already almost self-financing. The CA now had its own video camera and equipment to assist with coaching, and it was planned to produce a number of coaching videos.

On the International front, the World Croquet Federation had been formed in 1989, and croquet had been demonstrated at the 1989 World Games in Karlsruhe. There was now an annual international match between Great Britain and the USA for the Solomon Trophy, and this year for the first time we had funded our MacRobertson Shield team to New Zealand without having to ask individual CA members for donations.

Chris Hudson pointed out that the progress described above had been brought about through the efforts of many members of the Association, to whom we owed a great deal, and that the development programme would not have been possible without Grants from the National Sports Council to whom we are most grateful. He reported that income from Sports Council grants during 1985-89 totalled £150,000, and that income from sponsorship during this period was £74,000. Allowing for £20,000 to balance the 'ordinary' budget, this meant that some £204,000 had been spent during 1985-89 in developing croquet facilities.

We now had to prepare a new application for Grant Aid from 1991 to 1994. The CA Council will be considering how to improve services to members. By 1994, we might need a larger 'secretariat' - with a 'chief executive', press officer, tournament manager and membership secretary. Over the next four years, the role of our Federations might evolve so that each Federation had its own regional plan and some activities could be decentralised. The structure of Council and its committees might need reviewing to allow these changes to take place.

On the financial side, we must aim to bring our 'ordinary' budget into modest profit, so that membership subscriptions at least cover the cost of providing membership services. At the same time, we should aim to increase sponsorship to enable further development work to take place.

Subscription income should be spread fairly to reflect value obtained. At present, club croquet players who were not members of the CA contributed approximately 60p per annum to the work of their governing body. In view of the fact that facilities were only available to many players because of the development

work carried out by the CA and its members, 60p seemed a little on the low side when compared to £204,000 spent on development work over the past 5 years.

One way of ensuring a fair distribution of contributions might be to increase the club registration fee, and Chris Hudson said that he would welcome views from clubs on this. With more income from club registration fees, the CA could introduce a scheme that would enable all members of registered clubs to become members of the Croquet Association automatically, with associated privileges.

There were great benefits to be obtained for everyone in croquet from economies of scale. For example, the Croquet Association could provide all its registered clubs with public liability insurance through an insurance scheme available to governing bodies. Two clubs have already indicated that the resultant saving on their current insurance premiums would exceed the cost of their additional registration fees, and if this is the case generally, then both the CA and its registered clubs would gain income from the arrangement.

The CA could also provide all members of registered clubs who were not 'full' members of the CA with a regular newsheet similar to 'Garden Croquet News'. This would provide an additional facility for clubs to offer their new and existing members.

Over a period of time, the benefits available to registered clubs and their individual members through this scheme could be enhanced. Given that such a scheme was accepted and introduced, then the end of 1994 could see the CA with 6000 members.

A major part of the next Forward Plan would be the establishment of 4-lawn clubs, with security of tenure, to form a country-wide network of regional competition venues. To this end, a club census was being carried out by regional development officers and Federations to find out how secure were our existing clubs, and which clubs had plans to expand to 4-lawn status. The development of a 'second-tier' programme of one-day or afternoon tournaments was envisaged to encourage 'garden' players to join the tournament circuit.

On publicity, it was proposed to arrange for external publication of our magazine 'Croquet' and to develop television opportunities.

Discussions were being held with the National Coaching Foundation to evaluate the effectiveness of our coaching scheme and to develop the skills of our official coaches. We were looking at ways of introducing mental training into croquet -

perhaps initially through a sports psychologist working with our national junior squads, and by our more experienced coaches working with such a specialist to design specific coaching courses for croquet. Efforts to set up an indoor croquet coaching centre would continue.

On the international front, our aim would be to play a leading role in the administration and playing of the game worldwide.

After Chris Hudson's presentation, there was time for questions and comments from the members present. A few questions were then raised concerning the Fixture Book, and the hope was expressed that it would be published earlier than March. There was a request for support, not only for 4-lawn clubs, but also for the few larger clubs. It was suggested that a large increase in Club Registration fees might deter some clubs from registering.

Conference then adjourned from labour to the refreshment of the bar and restaurant! Thus refreshed we had the opportunity of joining 4 discussion groups on different subjects which was an innovation as these groups usually discuss the same subject. After 45 minutes discussion the Group Leaders only had 5 minutes to report their Group's views which to my surprise they managed to do! Congratulations!

1. Mr John Walters acted as leader for the group discussing 'Advanced Handicap singles and the Full Bisque game'. He reported that his group thought the latter would encourage beginners to use bisques but more coaching must be given in clubs on the use of bisques. The group suggested that a similar handicap system to that used for Short Croquet might be an advantage. On the first item they felt that more experimentation should be done and that the CA should do its best to encourage this.

2. Mr Peter Danks reported on 'Prize Money'. When they began their discussions, he said they thought it would be a difficult matter to discuss, and at the end they came to the conclusion it was very difficult! Regulations were already in place to restrict tournaments to amateurs only if so desired, although only sponsored events were likely to attract prize money seekers. The group was worried by the possibilities of backhanders and gambling and whether large prize money would have an adverse affect on the game. It was, however, agreed that prize money should, if possible, be enough to cover engraving of the trophy.

3. Mr Dennis Shaw reported on 'Club Recruitment and retention of new members'. Personal contact was

the most important followed by media coverage and posters. Reports should be regularly supplied to the press by 'Press Releases' including a photograph. Give new members a handicap quickly so they can feel that they are making progress as it is reduced.

Two clubs in his group would not allow Golf Croquet to be played - one lost a large proportion of its new members, the other kept them all - so you pay your money and take your choice! The other 12 clubs in the group started with Golf Croquet, and moved on to Association Croquet. They felt that a 2-hour coaching session for new members was far too long, that it should be broken up with a tea break, etc. If your club has difficulty in keeping new members it may be that you try to teach them too much too early and also that they are not welcomed and integrated into the club from the beginning. It is often easier if say 4 people join at the same time.

3a. There were so many people who wanted to discuss 'Club recruitment' that they were split up, and Mr Martin Murray volunteered to lead a second group. He said that it was agreed that the average decline in membership of clubs was about 10% per annum. Therefore to keep the club expanding you have to aim at recruiting 20% more members each year. A number of clubs found that people who come in response to publicity e.g. an Open Day, often don't stay, whilst those from personal approach usually do. Schools are a good source of recruitment for your club, even if they soon move away, as they are likely to join another club and the principle of swings and roundabouts applies. Ideally your membership should have both retired and working members; then you can increase the recognised average of 25 members per lawn considerably.



Chris Hudson (left) and Colin Irwin (centre) at the 1989 World Games in Karlsruhe. The World Croquet Federation is now a reality.

4. Mr Bill Lamb reported on 'Indoor Croquet'. All agreed it is a great game. There should be more opportunity to play it. One problem was the cost. A suggestion of £1 per hour per player was totally inadequate - probably £5 to £6 per hour was more realistic. It was thought that Town Halls might be a lot cheaper to hire than Sports Centres.

There were other forms of Indoor Croquet such as that made by Townsend Croquet which people felt was not sufficiently like the real game. A miniature set produced by Mr Caporn, with snooker balls, miniature mallets and hoops which can be fixed by picture hooks to a wooden floor with a druggit over the floor. This did produce the real game in miniature although the balls were more lively than Croquet balls.

After a short break we joined other groups as follows:-

5. 'The CA and your Club' Bill Lamb reported back that members would like a faster response to correspondence and in particular requested that the answer phone should not be turned off! They also asked for a member of Council to be present on the Final Day of all CA events, that they would like to see more high bisquers represented on Council, that if possible Federations should be represented, that clubs should be encouraged to exhibit CA posters both for members and merchandise, and what about a CA sweatshirt and jersey?

6. John Walters, who again attracted a huge gathering (must have something that we others haven't got!) chaired 'Croquet in the 90s and beyond'. The CA should try to decentralise to the Federations e.g. coaching should be local. There were mixed views on Croquet and TV. It was agreed that we cannot stand still either as a CA or as a club. We have to expand or we decline, but expansion should ideally be controlled.



A group of participants at this year's Loughborough Summer School. Coaching activities are expected to be self-financing.

Hence there was concern about TV.

Coaching standards are very mixed and needed clarification. If we lost out on Sports Council grant we would have to do the best we could. It might be difficult to expand, most would like to move towards all club members becoming members of the CA. It was felt that more information should reach club members who were not Associates and that often 'Croquet' sent to the Secretary was not passed to the Club. A suggestion was made on the possibility of forming partnerships with other sports to develop Multi-Sport Centres. Finally, do we want to expand to make money, or make money to expand? - a question that should be carefully considered by all Associates.

7. Dennis Shaw led the group discussing 'The Garden Classic and the Garden Player'. The group felt that we had not begun to tap the huge reservoir of Garden Croquet players, and that there was great potential here for clubs. They should actively promote the Garden Classic locally, form their own groups in the club, encourage others to play there, hold one day short croquet events for them, and make contact with any WI and/or TWG in their area.

8. 'Your Club, Publicity, PR and Local Sponsorship' was the subject tackled by Peter Dank's group. Make newcomers welcome, each club should have a pamphlet to send to Libraries, Town Halls, etc. and to distribute through the local newspapers. Clubs have to attract attention, they should contact their local paper's Sports Desk, they should if possible call with press releases rather than posting them, as this makes personal contact.

Local papers like photographs of local people. Each club should have a Press Officer. Be careful you are well organised for 'Taster Days' if you

hold them, or you could be overwhelmed. For local sponsorship, try Estate Agents, Building Societies, Banks etc. and if successful mention their name at every opportunity.

The Chairman of the CA, Martin Murray, wound up this very successful Conference, which was attended by 67 people representing 34 clubs. He thanked the representative of the Sports Council, Fiona Carter, for attending and told her how grateful we are for the Sports Council's support. He felt we had to bear in mind that we largely relied on voluntary effort, and there were limits to what could be achieved. More volunteers were needed! He did try to ensure that Council members were present at CA events, but occasionally arrangements went awry. Those who criticised the CA Administration should spend a day with Brian Macmillan at the CA office, where he worked so hard on our behalf.

Council were already considering how to involve the Federations more, but Federations were already strongly represented on the Development and Coaching Committees. He felt that we should not try to avoid a chance of appearing on TV, that standards of service depend on volunteers, and that the CA has to expand in order to be able to employ people full or part time.

The Conference closed at 4.15 when I thanked the members for their attendance and wished them Godspeed.

Alternative Croquet

Elimination Croquet

Report by David Higgs

There are many variations of croquet that are used to fill up an odd half-hour or so, or played just for fun. All of these involve running hoops, and occasionally pegging out, with the side with the maximum points or first to the peg becoming the winner.

There are, however, games such as draughts where the aim is to eliminate an opponent's pieces from the game. This version of croquet is based on this principle, with elimination through pegging-out or peeling. Fortunately, like draughts, the rules are fairly simple. This was tried at Ardingly Summer School this year for the first time.

RULES

1. The game is played by two sides. Each side has the same number of balls, preferably of the same colour or standard pairing, i.e. one side has black, blue, green, brown balls; the other red, yellow, white, pink. Any number of balls greater than 4 per side may be used.

Each side consists of any number of players who play in strict rotation as determined by the side's captain. The number on each side need not be the same.

The Game of Indoor (Pub) Croquet

Report by Andy Schonbeck

Here in Ipswich as we sit out the long winter months, we are faced with a perhaps not uncommon problem; our winter venue is just not big enough for the Indoor Croquet carpet. It does, however, have a dartboard which has most of the features of a croquet lawn given the following rules.

The game is played with four darts which need not be distinguishable. However, one player is blue/black and the other red/yellow; at the beginning of each turn the player declares which ball is being played.

The game commences with the toss of coin (or beer mat) with the winner choosing colours or innings. However, play begins with all four balls on the lawn.

In order to run a hoop, the dart must stick in that number on the board (including doubles and triples). The player then retrieves any darts in the board and continues the break.

A roquet+croquet is made if the dart sticks in the sector either side of the desired hoop number (including doubles and triples). This entitles the player to throw again. This can happen up to three times before a hoop must be scored.

In addition, if any triple section is scored, the player has made a 'long hit in' which counts as a roquet+croquet.

If a player fails to make a roquet+croquet or a hoop, the turn ends. A player may also declare the turn to have ended at any time.

If another ball is for the striker's

2. Home territory: Each side has a home territory of either the north or south half of the lawn.

3. Start: Balls of a team are placed anywhere in the Home territory, but not in the yard-line area. Once in position, the captains toss for start.

4. Play: Each player has a turn which consists of not more than three roquets and associated strokes (See 'handicap', para. 8 below), regardless of any hoops that are run.

5. Elimination: A ball is eliminated and removed immediately from the game after it is peeled through any hoop in any direction or is pegged-out.

6. End: The game ends when one side has one ball left.

7. Laws: Association laws apply, unless over-ridden by these rules.

8. Handicap: As peeling and pegging-out are not the simplest operations, more experienced players should be handicapped by having fewer roquets in each turn. A suggested scale is:

Handicap 5½ or less	1 roquet
Handicap 6 to 11	2 roquets
Handicap 12 or over	3 roquets

Dynamite Croquet

Report by Chris Hudson

Set out the balls one mallet's length North, South, East and West of the peg.

One player then selects any ball, and has ten minutes to make as many hoops as possible, using the ordinary rules of Association Croquet, starting at hoop 1.

Each hoop made scores one point for the player. Having made hoop 6, the player must then continue the break by making hoops 1 to 6 again in sequence, continuing to play round this sequence of hoops until the 10 minutes is up.

A missed roquet results in one point being deducted from the player's score, and the award of a

bisque to start a new turn from the current position. Note, however, that the hoop that now has to be scored is the one previous to the one being attempted when the shot was missed. (For example, had the player been going for hoop 4 when the shot was missed, he must now score hoop 3, after taking the bisque, and then carry on from there with the hoop sequence as described above.)

When the first player has played for 10 minutes, the score is noted, the balls replaced around the peg, and the next player then plays for 10 minutes to try to better the previous score.

Club News.....

ELLESMERE Croquet on Radio

Report by Alan Sutcliffe

It was the sound of the mallet on the ball and the click of ball upon ball which became important when Radio Piccadilly, Manchester's premier commercial radio station, visited the Ellesmere lawns on Tuesday 1st August.

Local radio stars, intent on learning the basic rules of croquet, joined the members on the lawns and bathed in the sunshine.

In between the playing of records and quiz competitions, the stars interviewed several members live on

radio about the rules and etiquette, and played croquet over a period of three hours.

All references to 'Alice in Wonderland', 'Cucumber sandwiches' and 'Victoriana' were skillfully sidestepped whilst the stars extolled the virtues of the game with great aplomb.

Feed back from listeners has been most favourable and now we await the hundreds of applicants wanting to join us!

LANDSDOWN

The men from the Gas Board



These young men from the Gas Board asked Lansdown if they could play an Inter-Office Golf Croquet Tournament at the Club. They enjoyed it so much that they returned the next two weeks to find out more about Association Croquet. The Gas Board subsidises their other sports, so perhaps Croquet could be included as well! - Monica Catling.

The Rutland Opens

By Don Gaunt

Since the last report that I wrote of the famous Rutland Opens a couple of years back, I have had hundreds of requests from several people to produce another one. Unfortunately, due to a severe attack of ennui, last year's event went unreported. I am pleased however to be able to give details of this year's event. It will be grander than ever, with many events not seen before in the CA calendar.

Class events will include the following:

The Oak Ham award

For the best display of acting having failed a simple shot.

Holder: Commander Bud Lee Terton RN, who, having missed a two foot roquet, swung at his wooden leg. Unfortunately due to a bad memory and the inability to tell left from right, he ended up in hospital for 6 weeks.

The Empingham Cup

For players who like to win plus one on time.

Rules: Each player has one ball, which is for peg. Time is called just before the first stroke of the game.

Holder: Miss B Vristol, (the Avon lady).

The Catmose Cup

This is a Z class event for players who are unable to make short roquets, run hoops, or make consistent breaks. Open only to players handicap 1 or below.

Holder: King Stononull of Umber (0) who won +2 when his opponent fell asleep.

The Thistleton Bowls Handicap Doubles

Open only to high/low handicap pairs, where the high bisquer goes to peg without bisques and the partner fails to get anywhere even with the bisques.

Holders: Ed Burg and Al Dermaston. Ed (16) finished for Al (1½) with a delayed quad.

The Hambleton Bowls Open Doubles

Open to players who hate doubles, but enter them anyway because there is nothing else to do on a Wednesday.

Holders: Miss Beverley Yorks and Sir Biton-Surrey who won when their opponents were removed by police for fighting on the lawn.

The Barleythorpe Salver

Often called the four-balls-round-rover Salver. Limited to players who never know when to give up the triple.

Holder: Mrs Tracy Park. Tracy won after having failed a combination TP and TPO, when her opponent Duff Frin pegged both of her balls out by mistake.

Know the Game!

1. Handicap doubles. B.P. triple peels and pegs out an opponent. He subsequently completes a second peel for his partner ball. The opponent claims that as this is B.P.'s 5th peel it is not allowed. Is this correct?

2. Red takes ½ bisque and is left half-way through the 1st hoop (its correct hoop). Can the striker

(a) take a bisque and complete the running?
(b) complete the running in a subsequent turn if he happens to find himself still there?

3. Blue takes a shot at Red in a hoop; it hits the wire which causes Red to shake.

(a) Is Blue now responsible for Red's position?
(b) Should a Referee volunteer this information to the opponent?

4. A ball rebounds from a hoop. In order to avoid it hitting his foot, the striker topples back and treads on another ball. Has a fault been committed?

5. Black runs the 4th hoop and lays up by the 6th hoop with Blue (who is for that hoop). He leaves Red near 5th hoop but walks off with Black's clip in his pocket. Yellow shoots and misses. Black then plays and approaches 5th hoop. Has Red any redress?

The Rutland Opens

This is of course the main event. We expect a large turnout this year. Favourites will again be Beau Don and Qaz, but there are some promising challengers this year.

Thomas Cook will be travelling down with his colleague Peter Brough, after a dummy run.

Phyllis may be caught coming up for the ryde, but Bishop Auckland is hovering.

Rod Burrow, the old bear, wants to bury Saint Edmund but we feel that he is just jellotts.

Ipswich were going to provide the foods for the event, but unfortunately our boat 'um. Inspector Clouseau is investigating.

It is rumoured that Angela Ripon will play. She will be most wellcome, as will the wrest of the players.

The Met office have promised fine weather, so we have preston regardless, and are reading good signs as the tournament hoves to.

We expect the events to be fylde, after all there is norton anywhere else.

Please send all entries, plus a \$5 cheque for each event to:

Don Gaunt.

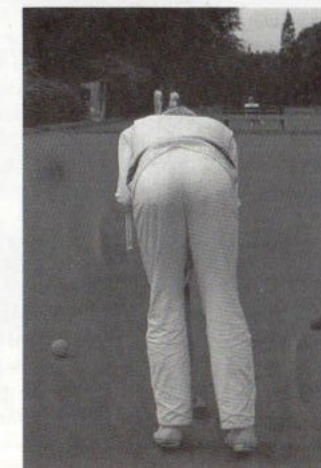
PS: If you think that you recognise anyone real, it's a coincidence! However, you may spot thirty clubs.

Puzzle Corner



Who are they?

(Answers next issue)



BOMBAY
ENGLISH DRY GIN
Created in 1761

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

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

Bombay Gin are proud to be associated with Croquet.

Available from selected branches of

Army and Navy Stores.

Harrods.

Selfridges.

Peter Dominic

and good Off Licences.



Parkstone: 7 October Bristol win Mary Rose for Second Time

Report by Frances Ransom

For the second time since the inauguration of the 'Mary Rose' Bristol set off to compete in the final at Parkstone, the venue of Bristol's earlier triumph in 1986. The team (two of whom, Alvar Bray and Frances Ransom, played in the winning Longman Cup team of 1986) arrives to find the Wrest Park team and supporter already there, Margaret McMordie busy preparing for the match and coffee ready for the teams.

The match starts promptly at 10am with a new doubles partnership for Bristol, Joe Jackson and Alvar Bray, since Joe's handicap had reduced to 1½ putting him at No. 1. Gone the flexibility of three 2's. The team noted that in earlier rounds the doubles had been won; winning the doubles therefore equated with winning the match. The doubles against Eric Audsley and Jon Watson is the first to finish. Wrest Park wins!

Bristol makes no early running in the three games but Frances hits in when Vic Rees is for 3 and 4 goes from 1 to 4-back. Oppo. misses the lift. Frances fails to get a rush to 1 at the same time putting her partner ball in the jaws of hoop 2. Oppo. again misses but she now takes her second ball round to peg and later finishes the game with Vic making no more hoops. In the other singles both

players make slow progress to 4-back after which Roger Jenkins plays well, taking his second ball to peg in one turn. He finishes after cross-wiring John Wheeler at 4-back with John making no further progress.



Bristol raise the Mary Rose. (L-R): Alvar Bray, Roger Jenkins, Frances Ransom, and Joe Jackson.

Bristol has been encouraged in their endeavours by the arrival at the start of the match of supporters Sally and Naomi Green and Heather Perren. Play continues in the afternoon on the 3 lawns at the teams disposal, the bottom two singles double banking. The first game to finish is Joe Jackson vs

A losing captain's view

By Jon Watson

We have arrived in good time and are confident. We badly want to win the doubles as we feel we can split the singles games 3-3. Eric Audsley and I win the toss and go in. The tice is hit (as it was in all three games that morning) and they make two hoops. Eric asks for a lift on a long shot but is denied it, so he hits in anyway. He lays up, they miss and I play. I have to lay up and they try to corner, but the ball hits the peg.

I have a rush to them, joined six yards apart between peg and the sixth hoop. Partner ball hits the hoop, but I'm okay. I get to first with a stone cold four ball break. The first hoop is horrible - I'm shaking like a leaf - but somehow it goes through. Each hoop now gets easier and by 1-back it's really flowing. The leave is good and they miss the lift.

Eric has a little trouble digging out the fourth ball and fails at 2-back, however he looks in good form. They get in and get to 1-back, failing the hoop off Eric's ball with the break laid. Eric makes no mistake with this. He is beginning to whistle. I take this as a good sign but later he says it was the opposite. 4-back and peg.

They miss the lift. I make 4-back and penult, leaving Eric at the stick. Rover is about a yard, but straight. The ball wipes its feet but runs, and the relief is immense. The peg-out is about two and a half yards. It hits. We have won in one and a quarter hours by a street. Eric is jubilant and tears onto the lawn, and we slap hands like two American basketball players.

In the singles John Wheeler is holding his own against Roger Jenkins, but Frances Ransom has Vic Rees on the rack. We go into lunch 2-1 down, and it's not looking good. Frances and Roger Jenkins are playing well.

Eric Audsley - Eric playing well to give an early win for Wrest Park (2 all). Frances had made a good start against John Wheeler, a ball to 4-back on the fifth turn, but the second ball is proving more difficult. A missed short rush by John enables her to go from 6 to peg and eventually to win the game.

Bristol needs one more win but is behind in the two remaining games. Alvar Bray and Jon Watson are both making errors but Vic Rees is playing well and has made good progress. Uncharacteristically Roger Jenkins is unable to hit in. Both games suddenly seem to turn in Bristol's favour. Alvar is in play, position penult and rover. He makes penult and rover but then misses a short roquet. Jon for peg and 4-back plays with the 4-back ball. He makes 4-back but there is a reprieve for Alvar when a missed roquet on his ball for rover (in corner 2) lets him back in. He makes rover and in his next turn pegs out to win the game and the match for Bristol.

Meanwhile Roger had made good progress with a clip on peg and a break under way which he completes but fails to peg out the croqueted ball. Vic, for 2-back and rover, plays a 3 ball break to the peg but is unable to get the peel in. He leaves oppo. wired from the peg but undeterred Roger fires at Vic's balls and hits to win +3. The final score at 5-2 does not suggest the closeness of this match which hung on a few vital shots.

Parkstone were generous with their time, lawns and hospitality, providing referees all day and a lavish and very enjoyable tea for teams and supporters. Thank you Parkstone for once again so admirably hosting the Mary Rose final.

After lunch I'm playing Alvar Bray. We are both making lots of errors. Frances looks to be in commanding form against John, but Vic is doing well. Eric wins comfortably, and now I must win. We get to stick and rover versus stick and penult. I've been having trouble with noises off. It's only a three-yarder into the corner, and it misses by nearly a foot. It's all over. I've lost by four and the trophy has gone to Bristol. I feel awful.

Later, Vic gets to stick and rover after a missed peg-out. He wants to peel his partner, but the other ball gets in the way. He leaves the opponent behind rover, wired from the stick, and retires to a corner. The shot is hit, so we lose 5-2. I feel a little better. Tea and the presentation follow. Parkstone put on a good spread for us, but we are very down. We stop for a meal on the way back - as we don't deserve a restaurant we make do with Fleet service station, where we decide that we make conditions at Wrest Park too hard and so we play too defensively.

Oh well. Try again next year...

RESULTS

(Wrest Park names first)

Doubles

E. Audsley & J. Watson bt J.J. Jackson & Dr A. Bray +19.

Singles

J. Wheeler lost to R. Jenkins -17; V. Rees (2) lost to Mrs F. Ransom -21; Audsley bt Jackson +16; Wheeler lost to Mrs Ransom -21; Watson lost to Bray -4; Rees lost to Jenkins -3.

Letchworth win the Longman Cup

Report by Tony Parry (Letchworth)

Letchworth Croquet Club was formed 2½ years ago; we have therefore just completed our second full season - and what a season it has been!

We are a small club with 28 members, of whom about 16 play regularly, and yet our list of successes this season has been far longer than any of us could have dared to anticipate six months ago.

There have been some fine individual performances:

- Duncan Hector, Derek Powell and Tony Parry have all won tournament blocks at Wrest Park

- Derek Powell won the Hussar Challenge cup at Roehampton

- Duncan Hector won the Hunstanton Challenge Bowl

- Adrian Judge and David Tutt were winner and runner up respectively in the regional final of the All-England Handicap, and Adrian went on to take second place in the National Final.

The club has also won all its games in our local Herts and Beds league, and our crowning achievement was to win the Longman Cup at our first attempt, our team being chosen from Tony Parry, Duncan Hector, Anthony Harris, David Tutt and Derek Powell.

We entered the Longman Cup with some trepidation, prompted by Judy Anderson's assurance that it would be useful experience, and were surprised when we beat Compton with some ease in the first round. In the second round we entertained the gentlemen of Oxford University (for whom our Adrian Judge had elected to play, thus both backing the wrong horse and ensuring that he was not eligible to play for us later in the competition).

Oxford really wanted to win, but accepted their 4-1 defeat with good grace. We defeated Stourbridge in the third round, whereupon our captain made a severe error of judgement in calling 'Tails', with the result that we had to travel to Sidmouth for the fourth round. The long journey was worthwhile, though, for we spent a delightful and successful day by the sea. Now we were in the semi-final against Tracy Park from Bristol, and the Surbiton club generously allowed us to play the match there; to our surprise we had another comfortable victory.

All through the competition we had been expecting things to get tougher, not least because our team was steadily reducing its gross handicap; in fact the five players from whom our team was selected shed an aggregate of 14½ bisques during the season. Our progress to the final, however, had been remarkably smooth.

The final, against Bowdon, was played at Himley Hall; the previous day had seen foul weather (as did the following day), but on the Sunday we

had glorious autumnal sunshine all day! The morning looked like being a disaster for Letchworth, and with half-an-hour to go I was sure - in fact everyone on both teams was sure - that we would be 2-0 down at lunch. Somehow, though, Duncan Hector and Derek Powell contrived to squeeze four hoops in the dying minutes of their game, from what seemed a hopeless position, to win +2(T).

In the other game David Tutt and Tony Parry were on penult, while for Bowdon David Watkins had his ball to the peg; with three minutes to go Ken Cooper ran rover and pegged out. Tony managed to hit in, ran penult and rover, sent the opponent ball to the South boundary, then took off to his partner ball near penult; time was called three seconds after he had laid the rush. David Watkins shot and missed to the North boundary, and with the final turn of the game David Tutt - having been instructed by his captain to feel under no pressure at all - played a magnificent little 2-ball break through penult and rover, then pegged us both out to win +1.

Our lunch time euphoria was not to last; David Watkins was stung into action by his narrow defeat in the morning, and played very well to defeat David Tutt +13, and after a brave struggle Derek Powell went down by 8 to Alan Linton. Meanwhile things were not going well for us in the remaining, and deciding, doubles match; although Duncan Hector had taken his ball to the peg, Tony Parry had just missed an angled 3-back, leaving Roy Edwards for rover and Ken Cooper about to run penult with every prospect of going to the peg. But to everyone's surprise Ken missed a short roquet; Tony ran 3-back, had the good fortune to rush his partner ball within six inches of 4-back, then discovered that the balls were placed well enough to enable him to go round and peg out both balls.

This had been by far our toughest match; in retrospect we were glad the final had been close, although at the time we were all conscious of our hair getting greyer by the minute.

So the season has come to an end, and each of us will have our own memories to see us through the winter months. For my part, I shall remember the almost unbroken sunshine, of course, and the sheer good humour which we encountered amongst our opponents. Above all, though, I shall treasure the memory of an incident from one of the early rounds of the Longman Cup: Anthony Harris's opponent ran rover and pegged out Anthony's forward ball; he returned confidently to his seat, turned to the spectators and announced 'Game to me, I think!'. Alas, on the next turn Anthony hit in from twenty yards, ran his remaining

four hoops and pegged out to win. Perhaps this epitomises the deter-

mination which the Letchworth team has displayed throughout the season.



The Longman Cup finalists. Back row (L to R): Bowdon's Ken Cooper, Alan Linton, David Watkins, and Roy Edwards. Front (L to R): Letchworth's David Tutt, Duncan Hector, Tony Parry, and Derek Powell.

What a match

Report by David Watkins (Bowdon)

A beautiful October morning and a delightful setting at Himley Hall in Staffordshire provided the background for the 1989 Longman Cup between Bowdon and Letchworth.

Play was tense in the morning doubles. Bowdon appeared to have gained substantial ascendancy in both matches, but a spirited late rally by Letchworth changed all that. Tony Parry came with a burst at the end to get to peg with 3 seconds of time left, leaving his partner laid up for penult and a difficult hit for Bowdon. This was missed and David Tutt then kept his head to make penult and rover with two balls and finally peg out, winning by 1.

In the other game, Duncan Hector managed a tricky peel of his partner's ball in pomoting his own, which again led to a win by the slenderest of margins on time. So late

was this turn-around that neither Letchworth pair could believe that the other game had been won! But there it was at lunch - Letchworth 2, Bowdon 0.

The drama continued into the afternoon. Although both singles went to Bowdon, the doubles became a real ding-dong battle, fluctuating continually in the last hour. At the very end, with seconds to go, Letchworth missed making a crucial hoop, but Bowdon then missed a possible roquet and Letchworth had another chance to win which they took.

It was a splendid contest, at a beautiful venue, which both teams thoroughly enjoyed. There followed an excellent tea and expressions of hope that both teams might meet again next season at the same venue for the same purpose.

One Game by F.R. Ross

Cont'd from page 3

for his balls, use last bisque, rush one of them to rover. Would penult be kind to me at that angle? Yes. Bisque needed when roquet missed, but the rush placing was muffed, and instead of going to rover White ended up almost in contact with hoop 1. Of all the awkward take-offs! Green went over and a couple of feet beyond the spot 2 feet in front of rover that was aimed for. Victory fast receding, nerves at a pitch...But Green accepted the challenge of the 4 foot angled shot and could then see the peg 9 yards away. But

White at 7 yards was mathematically twice the target, and whichever was missed would lose the game. White was hit. As Manager, and we all know what a good manager he is, Bill Lamb was pleased, in spite of losing, at the scoring of 48 points in 90 minutes. He wrote a Letter to the Editor about it.

Croquet can be full of surprises. In November 1988 my opponent claimed a lift after I had run 1-back. They play advanced rules for all games at that club in Adelaide.

Croquet Reform in 1905

By Allen Parker (Parkstone)

By the year 1905 the skill of the best croquet players had improved to such a degree that quite a large proportion of the games in open tournaments were won by 26 points. Although this sometimes happens today, it is nothing like so prevalent as it was at the beginning of the century, in spite of the fact that today's best players have developed even greater skills.

What then were the reasons for the difference? There were several. First, the game in those days was the sequence game in which the balls had to be played in the order Blue, Red, Black, Yellow. This meant that the player who had the innings could, at the end of his break, very easily lay a break for his partner ball. Furthermore, there was no penalty for wiring one's opponent from ALL other balls so that the opponent could be left in the jaws of a hoop, or against a wire, without any shot, and yet have no lift or other redress - the best he could do was to shoot away to the nearest boundary.

Thus, for example, in playing his break with Blue, the in-player could leave Red (the next player, or 'live ball') against the wire or in the jaws of 4-back, and at the end of his break lay up Black with Yellow at hoop 1, and with his final shot take himself to hoop 2, thus leaving Black a certain easy 3-ball break, with the possibility of an easy pick-up of the fourth ball.

Of course there was always the possibility of a breakdown in playing the 4-ball break, but breakdowns were less frequent in those days, and this for several reasons. First, the hoops were 4 inches wide instead of to-day's 3 3/4 or 3 11/16 inches, making recovery from bad approaches or long roll-ups more likely. Second, the setting was easier. The Hale setting had 6 hoops, but two pegs, one at each end of the court. The absence of a centre peg, and the smaller separation of hoops 5 and 6 (7 yards instead of 14 yards) rendered the passage up the centre of the ground much easier than with the Willis setting used today.

Furthermore, the peg at the North end of the court was the 'turning peg'. Hitting the turning peg after making hoop 6 and before making 1-back, counted as a point and allowed the player to take croquet from all the balls again. This point was so much easier than making a hoop that it acted as a rallying point with which to recover from a disintegrating break, since, if the worst came to the worst, one could roll up to the turning peg, hit it, and then have all the balls again.

So easy was the passage up the lawn through hoops 5 and 6 to 1-back via the turning peg, that it was given the special name of 'The Ladies' Mile', although it is not made clear why ladies should be any less efficient than gentlemen at the game. Possibly it was considered that the voluminous skirts interfered with the front style of play (what we now know as side-style), rendering the use of the golf style more usual with the ladies. Of course the centre style for ladies was quite out of the question in those days.

All these considerations gave rise to an enormous number of suggestions for improving the game, making it less one-sided in first class events, and hence more enjoyable for players and spectators alike. Spectating at first class events was a popular pastime in itself, much more so than it is today. Many suggestions appeared in the 1905 Gazette, particularly in the issues that appeared after the end of the playing season. There were far too many to quote them all here, but the following excerpts will, I hope, give some idea of the sensible and nonsensical ideas put forward, and the general attitudes at that time, which of course led ultimately to the development of the game as we play it to-day.

Abolition of the Four-Ball Break.

Some of the more radical schemes proposed to make the game less one-sided included the suggestion that players should be barred from playing a 4-ball break. Here are excerpts from some of the letters describing various schemes for achieving this end.

....Mr Lillie's well-known book tells us that croquet was formerly killed by the reduction of the hoops to 3 3/4 inches, which choked off all but the best players. Would-be reformers had better avoid this precedent.The real parallel is that of billiards, where the general increase in skill made it necessary to bar a series of spot strokes. It seems



Miss Ruth Weightman (Birkenhead) who won the Hooton Park Open Singles tournament in 1905.

to me that the most promising reform in croquet would be to bar the 4-ball break, which is the chief cause of the monotony of which your correspondents complain. This could be done without interference with the materials or principles of the game by the following law: 'The player, at the beginning of his turn, may roquet all three balls; but, after making his first point in order, if he roquets more than two balls without making a point in order, he shall not be entitled to make another point in that turn.'This law would oblige the player to confine himself to the 3-ball break, without in any way hampering him in picking up a break, or in concluding his turn and laying for his other ball.... If wiring were also abolished, by Mr Godfrey's principle of giving the player a half bisque whenever he was left without an open shot at a ball or a point in order, croquet would become a livelier and more sporting game, though some might consider it less scientific.

....Mr Fisher's suggestion in last week's issue, of the abolition of the 4-ball break is a step in the right direction, but even this restriction is not sufficiently severe to really handicap the best players.... I would therefore go one better and suggest 2-ball breaks for all Open Singles, and under the difficult restriction of no points being made except with the live ball. I would give the player the right to roquet all three balls before making a point, but directly the first point has been made with the live ball, I would have the others regarded as dead for all purposes of the continuation of the break....

....I consider that the game is sufficiently difficult as it stands for ordinary players, but for Championship games and for all open events, I would suggest that the dead ball can only be roqueted once during a turn (following the rule for the spot stroke in

billiards). This does away with the 4-ball break....

....the only practical way to abolish the 4-ball break is to have only 3-balls on the lawn. If this is so, obviously if both players are to have two balls to play with, they must both play with one of them. Let, therefore the black and yellow be merged in a piebald ball, half black and half yellow....

....Many of the various changes which have been proposed as reforms are distinctly complicated, and would lead to much confusion in play. It appears to me that both simplicity and reform might best be attained by sometimes playing with the live ball barred. Under this arrangement croquet could only be taken from the dead ball and from the partner ball. The 4-ball break would thus become impossible....

....With reference to the desire to limit the present facility of making 4-ball breaks, I would strongly urge on the Committee that if any method is adopted to make the game more difficult, it should not be of general application, but should be graduated by some method of classification.... In croquet the rank and file find the game under the present conditions difficult enough, and any method adopted which would make it more difficult for the inferior players, who are in an overwhelming majority, would detract from its popularity.... Classification might be adopted in the following ways: A player should be permitted to take croquet off all three balls between each point made, as at present, but he should only be allowed to make his points off certain specified balls. For instance, Class A to make points off the live ball only; Class B off either of the opponent's balls; Class C off any two balls selected before the commencement of the game, and Class D, as at present, off any of the three balls....

The Problem of the Ladies' Mile.

....I would earnestly ask the Committee to deal with the matter, not by artificial restrictions or rules as to what strokes may or may not be played, but by increasing the natural difficulties by altering the setting of the game. We do not want artificial boundaries or little squares or duck ponds marked out on the lawn, out of which no one may play; we wish to avoid all fanciful rules as to not being allowed to play certain recognised strokes, or with the ordinary sequence of the balls.... The whole difficulty of the present game arises from the ease with which the 'ladies' mile' or centre hoops can be managed and the opportunities they give for rearranging and re-starting a break. 'Delenda est Carthago', as the Romans said, or, as croquet players would put it, 'The Ladies' Mile must be abolished'. If we had only four corner hoops and one in the centre, the game would be much shorter, while at the same time more difficult.... If we are to have pegs they should count as a point but should not give the right of hitting all the balls again....

....The most dismal part of a 4-ball break (when your opponent is making it) is when the player has full control over the balls after the third hoop, driving them before him and then crawling along the 'Ladies' Mile' by inches, with no reasonable probability of breaking down on a good lawn.... I suggest the easiest remedy would be to give him one roquet only instead of three after passing through any hoop from the fourth to 1-back or after hitting the peg (at the beginning of each turn and before making a point he would of course be allowed the usual three). These five points are often made in this way by quite moderate players. After passing through 1-back freedom would again be allowed, and the player could take advantage of any disposition of the balls he had previously made....

....I claim that it would be a most unwise course to legislate for the whole of the players, when a simple alteration which would affect the minority only would supply a remedy.... For first class open events, the two centre hoops should be narrower

than the remainder.... The advantage I claim lies in the fact of the contrast. The knowledge that one is approaching an exceptionally narrow hoop is sufficient to arrest the eye and focus, and thus prevent an all-round break. The effect on the mind would promote nervousness and over-care in approaching, whilst carelessness at those particular hoops would bring its own reward....

....Any player's turn, after hitting the turning peg with his own ball, should cease, thus making the consequences of hitting both pegs alike in this respect.... This would keep up the interest in a losing game among good players, and one more stop amongst the many breakdowns of inferior players would not matter.... One of the great charms of a good game is the alternations of hope and fear which it excites, and these are all but eliminated from many of the present tournament games....

....I would abolish the right of croqueting each ball again after the turning peg.... To roll up a long distance to the peg so as to croquet your ball again is too easy. I should look upon it as a 'point' and no more. In fact it would be a kind of bunker, unless the four balls were in play, the continuance of the break would be much more difficult, and there would be more breakdowns....

Some Good and Bad Suggestions.

....Diminishing the size of the hoops would tend to make the game more 'finkin'; rather expand and produce a bolder game. To romp round a number of hoops is by far the most pleasant part of croquet. It would make croquet a dead dull game to limit a break, either by seriously limiting the number of points in a break, or by making the hoops smaller, which would have the same effect; rather make it a bolder game by increasing slightly the width of the hoops and going oftener round....

....I, and many who think as I do, protest most strongly against any alterations, such as smaller hoops, which tend to make the game more difficult, purely, of course in the interests of the better players. With average players there is too much drag in the game already, without bringing in new factors to make it longer still....

....After the first stroke no ball shall be allowed to pass the boundary without penalty, not even after going through a hoop. Mind, 'after the first stroke'. So a man can make his hoop and pass the boundary to get in.... and he may shoot hard in his first stroke, but not after....

....Everyone is agreed that wiring is a fine art, but that close wiring is a brutal outrage. Make a rule that anybody whose ball is wired from the other three balls, if the head of the mallet cannot pass between the ball and the wire, may move it the length of the mallet's head in any direction, for the purpose of making any stroke. This will add to the difficulty of wiring, by eliminating one hoop to

measure, why not say the player's foot?; this would lead to some very pretty judgement on the part of the adversary, whilst it would occasionally greatly add to the excitement of the measurement. Make the hoops tighter and you ruin the game for 95% of its votaries.

....A ball going off the boundary should be placed one foot inside the court instead of 3 feet. This would add to the size of the playable ground, and in many ways make the game more difficult. The three-feet-limit crept into the Rules, I imagine, because of the banks surrounding many of the courts. These banks are now absent from grounds where tournaments are played. There therefore seems no valid reason why the distance for the placement of a ball should remain at three feet.



A group of players at the Teignmouth Croquet Meeting: August, 1905.

....The making of each point should be made more difficult. There should be a certain forbidden area in front of each hoop, from any point of which no attempt to make the hoop should be allowed. With the centre of the hoop as centre, and a length of AB as radius, an arc of a circle should be described with a chord CD of a definite length. Then any ball coming to rest in the segment ABCD on its way to the hoop should be replaced at once on the circumference of the segment, at the point where a line joining the centre of the hoop and the ball would cut the arc. The hoop must then be attempted (if attempted at all) from the circumference....

....I am sure the whole difficulty can be simply solved by having the hoops 3 3/4 inches wide, and the pegs of one-inch wire. The peg is the easiest point on the ground; it should be the most difficult....

....If the four corner hoops were turned half round, ball to go from inner to outer side of the court, it would prevent hard hitting and preserve the lawn at the starting point....

Some Suggestions That Bore Fruit.

....I suggest 3 3/4 inch hoops. It has been said that this killed croquet 30 years ago, but this is not altogether the fact. There were very few good players, and croquet was not so popular as it is now, most people looking down upon it, chiefly

because they only knew the old-fashioned childish game. Such people would not go to the trouble of taking pains to learn the new setting with small hoops. But lawn tennis was just coming into fashion. Everyone took it up with enthusiasm. It was more quickly played and was considered more manly. This killed croquet, not the narrow hoops. Everyone was bitten with the mania for tennis, and croquet became obsolete. I am convinced that the smaller hoops would not kill croquet.

....The No. 2 setting with the peg in the middle should be used....

....To my mind the best game of croquet will not be arrived at until the average game can be finished in an hour, and any ordinary event in a tournament can be played through in a day. To do this the size of the regulation lawn should be greatly

reduced, even if it were divided in half, and the system of tournament management entirely altered....

....My remedy is a simple one, namely, after Blue, Red, Black and Yellow have each played, the first player shall have the choice of playing either of his two balls.... This will also give the out-player a chance, as it will be impossible to lay a break for your next ball. Having gone round with one, the most you can do is lay a one-ball break.... Also each of your opponent's balls may become the next player, so it doubles the chances of the out-player coming in.... In conclusion, I should have no pegging out of your adversary's ball; but for those who prefer the pegging-out game, when a ball is pegged out they could allow the one who has a ball pegged out to play after each ball played by his adversary. -Gilbert W. Coventry.

To which the editor added the note: 'This was suggested by Mr Payne about two years ago, and did not meet with approval.'

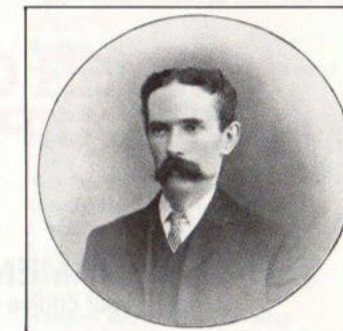
Conclusion.

A hoop width of 3 3/4 inches was first introduced in 1873, but reverted to 4 inches in 1896. Not until 1920 was it agreed to reduce the hoops to 3 3/4 inches again. The law whereby the turn ends when a roqueted ball goes over the boundary was never introduced as a part of the British game: it does however apply in the American 6-wicket and 9-wicket

games, which incidentally are sequence games. There were no balks in 1905, and no redress for wiring, but the March 31st, 1906 issue of the Gazette reported the following new addition to the laws: 'When at the commencement of a turn a player's ball is found placed by an adversary within 3 feet of a hoop, and wired from every possibility of making a roquet, it may be moved to any spot within 3 feet of where it lies.' The lift to A Balk was introduced in 1907, and B Balk in 1910. Although the Willis setting was first considered in 1902, and was an option in 1905 ('The No. 2 Setting'), it was not made official until 1922.

The above letter by Gilbert Coventry in the 1905 Gazette is probably the first time that the Either-Ball-Game was proposed, and apparently did not meet with approval at that time. It was introduced as an alternative in 1913, but Lord Tollemache's great textbook published in 1914 (and the most detailed account of croquet technique ever published) unfortunately spends three quarters of its text on the then obsolescent sequence game and the old Hale setting. The either ball game was adopted exclusively in 1920.

It is interesting that the modern game of Short Croquet was foreshadowed by the correspondent in 1905 who recommended a half-size court and a one-hour game.



Mr W. Barry, winner of the Roehampton Challenge Cup in 1905.

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Tournaments

Carrickmines: 7-12 August CHAMPIONSHIP OF IRELAND Irish Championship goes to Carl von Schmieder

The first Monday in August; ten visitors from Scotland, England and New Zealand have come to Carrickmines to drink the Guinness, eat the food and play the croquet. But what is this on the notice board? 'Play will commence at 9.30am. If you are late your balls will be placed in 1st and 3rd corners and play will continue.' No nonsense from Carl von Schmieder, the manager, this week, and no late arrivals! But some swift departures; Alan Mcinerney allowed Don Gaunt only one shot and promptly had his handicap reduced from 13 to 11. P. Thornton was out of the championship and the handicap by Monday evening, which left him free to take some excellent photographs.

Tuesday saw Simon Williams' second triple and a determined win for Carl von Schmieder in a long defensive three setter against Don Gaunt. Charles, Carl's son and Michael O'Shaughnessy despatched their opponents in a manner that suggests that the Irish are bringing on their teenage talent. Perhaps the closest match was David Appleton's

win in the third game. David was pegged out when his ball was for fourth and his opponent for second. A good hit in, a controlled three ball break and careful defence saw him through. Wednesday; doubles day and rain. It always rains on doubles day at Carrickmines, and so with each rack of balls we found four miniatures of Irish Whiskey to help keep the cold out. Steven McAuley, aged 14, traded his in for a couple of cokes, Rohnan Mcinerney aged 11, didn't!

By lunch the rain had stopped and by the evening all the favoured pairings had been knocked out. Most surprisingly Carl von S. and his partner Doreen Clarke lost on time with one and a half bisques standing. Carl has now re-read that section of the laws and was presented with his one and a half bisques in a flower pot to mark the occasion.

Thursday dawned fair and a mixture of serious championship and entertaining handicap games kept everyone interested. Gerard Healy, having lost the first game +23, placed his ball a yard in from the end



Carl von Schmieder, Champion of Ireland, 1989.

of 'A' baulk and played an air shot. Carl took the two ball break to 2 back in the second turn, and in the sixth turn it was all over +26. Meanwhile Simon Williams failed a TPO to lose the second set to M. Strachan, recovering with more restrained play to reach the semi-finals and complete the match in time for lunch.

In the semi-finals of the handicap Rod Williams pegged out both balls for a one ball ending against Charles von Schmieder but Charles' excellent tactics and accurate play were too much for the Scot.

Friday was colder and grey; even Corla wore long trousers and shoes, but as the morning wore on it brightened up and so did Simon Williams who despatched Rod Williams with a triple peel followed by a quintuple peel in a display of accuracy and speed lasting 2½ hours. His only error was to break down at 2 back to allow us to watch a quintuple. The other semi-final was altogether a slower affair with Michael O'Shaughnessy who had done very well to reach this stage struggling to put off the inevitable. He then lost to Malcolm O'Connell in the handicap. Malcolm's game improved throughout the tournament and by the end no-one was surprised to see him win the Green cup (level play) and the doubles with Martin Gill. More fun in the Plate with much confusion about who could peg out whom, a jump shot over first hoop to hit a wired double, a TPO which saw the minus player lose the two ball ending and the delight of seeing an 11 year old and an 87 year old on the same lawn.

The tournament dinner on Friday night was excellent and the club buzzed with anticipation of the final between Simon and Carl. Would Simon do a sextuple? Would Carl's solid defence and careful play be enough?

In the event it was Carl's game. Simon had run out of flair and Carl's confidence and precision increased as the match went on. He emerged the worthy winner on the day. As did his son Charles in the handicap

beating Malcolm O'Connell, both of whom had handicap reductions. Charles from 4½ to 3 and Malcolm from 6½ to 5. Gerry Reynolds kept up a family tradition and won the plate earning a ½-point reduction to 7 and Michael O'Shaughnessy also had a ½-point reduction to 4. He will be at Oxford next year so we look forward to seeing him playing in England.

So who were the heroes? Yes you guessed. John and Carmel Edwards whose bar and kitchen are as fine as in any club. The lunches were only bettered by the suppers and the Guinness was not bettered at all.

Oh! and the manager - three times a hero; for not using his bisques, for winning the championship, but mostly for running a splendid, friendly and enjoyable tournament.

RESULTS Championship of Ireland (19 entries)

Semi-Finals

S. Williams bt R.A.W. Williams +26TP, +25(QP); Charles von Schmieder bt G. Healy +23, +26.

Final

von Schmieder bt S. Williams +7, -1, +15.

Green Cup (Level Play)

Semi-Finals

M. O'Connell bt R. Barklie +5; S. McAuley bt J. Shorten +16.

Final

O'Connell bt McAuley +16.

New Cup (H'cap play; 9 bisques & over)

Final

R. Flood bt A. Mcinerney +8.

Founder's Cup (Handicap Play)

Semi-Finals

O'Connell bt O'Shaughnessy +16; Ch. von Schmieder bt R. Williams +4.

Final

von Schmieder bt O'Connell +8.

Stonebrook Cups (Handicap Doubles)

Final

M. Gill & M. O'Connell bt C. von Griethuysen & G. Heatherington +5.

Steel Cup (Handicap Plate)

Final

G. Reynolds bt Ch von Schmieder +6.

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Cheltenham: 6-10 September Don Gaunt bags Gladstone Salver

Report by Richard Barnes

Not content with running the handicap doubles according to the Wheeler Rules, which gives one a different partner each round as a twin Swiss of high and low bisquers evolves, manager Peter Leach also ran the singles event in a novel way.

Paul Hand's 'Egyptian' system (so called because it took him a 'pharaoh' time to devise) is a ladder with initial rankings assigned by handicap. One's ranking is altered each game depending on the result and the difference from one's opponent's ranking according to a simple look-up table. (This simplification of the original system which required a calculator and a maths degree is due to Kevin Carter).

Subsequent games are usually arranged so that players with similar current rankings meet, but challenges involving large differences are also allowed and merit extra points if they go against form.

I feel there are two main advantages to this system. First each player can have as many or as few games as their time and energy allow, and secondly players who are 'on form' can ascend the ladder, out of their handicap class, to meet tougher opposition. The only weakness is in how to assign any prizes, as those in contention for each class may (unlike in a Swiss) not have played each other. In practice the combination of ranking increase and number of games won, with a play-off where these differed, proved a satisfactory way of deciding winners at Cheltenham. Games were advanced, level or handicap play according to the sum of the rankings.

Enough of the theory; what of the games. As the only minus player it was not surprising that Don Gaunt won his first few singles, but on Thursday afternoon Peter Darby, defending the Gladstone Salver, gave him a close game before Don came home +3. Richard Barnes, having made only one hoop while Dab Wheeler progressed to Rover with each ball, fought back in the twilight to win +4.

After 2 days in the sunny high 70's the weather slipped in the rankings to overcast low 60's on Friday. With partner Liz Neal, Dab had revenge over Richard and Millicent James in one of many nail-biting finishes in the morning handicap doubles, winning 'plus one on time' while Don Gaunt advised which chapter of his book of that name we should have read!

Upset of the week occurred that afternoon when the only two unbeaten players in the singles met. Richard Barnes struggled to 4 & 4 while Don Gaunt went to 4-back with his first ball and set off with the other, only to over-roll his approach to 2-back and retire to the second corner. Richard picked up a break

from the lift and took it to 4-back. Foregoing the lift, Don missed a 12 yard shot at the opposition by a whisker, giving Richard a second break which he took to rover, and soon after to peg. After a tense defensive tussle Don got in but stuck in Penult and Richard won the game +7.



Paul Hand, designer of the new 'Egyptian' system.

Saturday dawned even colder and now only Des Willetts and Peter Darby were braving the elements in shorts. Don Gaunt remained undefeated in the doubles despite rushing partner Eileen Cheverton onto the peg from near 4-back. When their opponents missed a shortish roquet, Don calmly pegged out from 14 yards to win +3. Don's closest game was against David Magee. Each had contrived to peg out one ball and David's other stood 4 yards from the peg while Don was about twice the distance. Despite being interrupted by the tea bell while aiming, Don hit the 12 yard roquet and won +1.

As if that was not enough excitement, in his second singles that day David pegged out Peter Leach's rover ball plus his own accidentally, the remaining balls being each for hoop 5. Peter won the subsequent one ball game +2.

Having gained his fifth successive win +7 over Paddy Paddon, Richard Barnes was challenged by Peter Darby and a 2 hour time limit was agreed. Going for points Richard took his first ball to Rover, but stuck in hoop 1 with his second giving Peter a break which he took right round to peg. As darkness descended Peter, in his XXL sweater and Nike (Greek goddess of victory) socks, was always a few hoops ahead and, when Richard missed a return roquet at 1-back, triumphed +3(T).

With another win Sunday morning, Don Gaunt was the clear low-bisquer winner of the Doubles event, and Les Chapman with 4 wins was runner-up (a term that could also be used of the dynamic way he moves about the court). Joint

winners of the high-bisquers half were Kathleen Turtle and Leslie James with 4 wins each. Meanwhile Bernard Weitz and Don Lenfesty (playing very nicely despite a cracked rib) nearly invented a new form of doubles when they each took stance at their respective balls at the same time!

Although he had most wins, Don Gaunt had only a modest points increase on the Hand's system. When Les Chapman beat Peter Darby +18, it was Les who had the best points increase in block 1, so the manager decreed a play-off which Don won +12 giving him 8 wins from 9 games and making him the worthy winner of the Gladstone Salver.

Having seen his ranking rise from 58 to 80 at one stage, Richard Barnes was now wilting, and Dennis Shaw, shooting and rushing with devastating accuracy, beat him +10 despite another spirited fight back late in the game. Nevertheless, Richard had done enough earlier in the week to win block 2, while Betty Weitz came through strongly in her later games to be runner-up.

The outcome for blocks 3 & 4 rested on the very last game - a 5-hour marathon between Jean Paddon and Gwen Holliday. Jean's win also won block 3 for her, with Kathleen Turtle as runner-up, and left Maureen Evans as winner of block 4 by just one ranking point over Millicent James.

One third of the 30 strong field were visitors, including Nelson Leech from Pretoria and Bob and Barbara Sumwalt (playing in their first C.A. Fixtures Tournament) from Florida. Des Willetts and Les Chapman were the most 'Egyptian', finding the time and energy to play 10 singles games. Our visitors from the States presented the trophies and prizes to round off a very friendly and enjoyable tournament, quietly and efficiently managed by Peter Leach and well oiled by Juliet Povey at the Bar.

Are you 60 on or after 18th June 1990?

If so, read on

The Veterans' Tournament will once again be held at Compton Croquet Club, Eastbourne, from the 18th to 23rd of June, and the big news is that the age for entry - both ladies and Gents - is now 60.

Double banking will be kept to a minimum and a maximum of 2 games a day is envisaged.

Dennis Shaw will be both Manager and Secretary, and is looking forward to seeing all his 'younger' friends, as well as his older contemporaries.

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RESULTS

Singles

(Hand's 'Egyptian' system; 30 entries)

Gladstone Salver

Winner: D. Gaunt (8 wins)

Runner-Up: L. Chapman (5 wins)

Block 2

Winner: R. Barnes (5 wins)

Runner-Up: Mrs E. Weitz (4 wins)

Block 3

Winner: Mrs J. Paddon (4 wins)

Runner-Up: Mrs K. Turtle (3 wins)

Block 4:

Winner: Mrs M. Evans (4 wins)

Runner-Up: Mrs M. James (4 wins)

Doubles

(Wheeler Rules, Swiss; 28 entries)

Low-Bisquers: D. Gaunt (5 wins), L. Chapman (4 wins)

High-Bisquers: L. James (4 wins), Mrs K. Turtle (4 wins)

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Tournaments

Junior Matches

Cheltenham: 2-3 September UNDER-18's vs C.A. Juniors Triumph.

Report by Richard Harding

At 9.30 on Saturday morning the teams met in sunshine for a day of open doubles matches. With six players on either side, the pairings were as follows.

The U-18 team:
Chris Haslam and Andrew Saurin;
Ian Burrige and Richard Harding;
Graham Pearson and Chris Ross.

C.A. team:
Ian Maugham and Ray Ransom; Alan Bogle and John Ross; Andrew Bennet and Frances Ransom.

Every pair played all the opposition pairs in turn, i.e. three games in the day. This meant that a three hour time limit had to be imposed. Three lawns were set aside for our use which gave Andrew Bennet a chance to prove it possible that no lawn be used twice by the same pair. (Opinions on its feasibility had been strongly voiced over a drink the previous evening). One point was allocated for each victory and went towards the final score.

The games were, on the whole, completed rapidly (Chris Haslam and Andrew Saurin obediently +26-ing their final game to allow one of the opposition a speedy 'get away' for an important meeting).

An exciting one-ball finish with balls positioned on 6 and 4-back, saw

OBITUARY

George Alan Hutcheson

(An appreciation by Pat Shine)

Many will be sorry to learn of the death of Alan Hutcheson on August 5th 1989.

Alan was twice married; he met his second wife Doris at the Compton Croquet Club. After several years there, they joined the Sussex County and finally in 1983 they became founder members of the Worthing Croquet Club. He was on the Committee at both Southwick and Worthing.

Alan loved the croquet and was a good B class player; he will be remembered for his kindness and thoughtfulness. He was always ready to help, whether to study insurance papers, to find contractors to level the lawns, or to use his strimmer to cut the grass banks at Southwick. He was a generous and respected member of all three clubs, and Worthing will mourn his loss for many years.

Your Letters continued from Page 21.

winner of the game between the two contenders if there are two. However I have not proposed that above. I do however strongly feel that the total points principle, rather than the net points principle, is much to be preferred in the circumstances described.

Robert Pennant Jones,
London.

Ray Ransom, in the commanding position, beaten after being on the wrong end of a lucky shot through penultimate and rover.

The under-18's, with luck like this and a little skill, found themselves in a 7-2 points lead going into day two.

The second day comprised 'best of three' singles games:-

Chris Haslam vs. Ian Maugham
Ian Burrige vs. Alan Bogle
Graham Pearson vs. Andrew Bennet
Andrew Saurin vs. Ray Ransom
Richard Harding vs. John Ross
Chris Ross vs. Frances Ransom.

The scoring system engineered by John McCullough for the second day was as follows.

1 point for a 1-2 defeat
2 points for a 2-1 victory
3 points for a 2-0 victory

For those mathematically minded, I think this system ensures that a draw is impossible, even taking into account the points from the doubles games. One may also see that the under-18 team needed only seven more points to be victorious.

Ian Burrige gained three points by defeating Alan Bogle 2-0; but the C.A. team suddenly appeared to awaken and took six points when Frances Ransom and Andrew Bennet won their games 2-0. (Andrew taking the second game with a triple peel to the astonishment of his 'Bandits' looking on, rather taken aback that their coach was still very much in command of his reputed croquet talent).

The three remaining games were taken into a third game leaving all to play for. Although the under-18's needed only one more game for victory, the C.A. team had experience in their favour. A triple peel by Chris Haslam was required to ensure a well deserved under-18 victory, as the other two games were very close, only just being won by the already victorious team.

1990 will bring a new under-18 team to challenge the experience of the croquet circuit and with it a new captain to write the operose report.



Richard Harding.

Southport: 16 September CA UNDER-18 V IRISH U-18 Irish Juniors Show Promise

Report by Andrew Bennet

Simon Williams has been doing some sterling work to promote the future of croquet in Ireland, and we were pleased to receive his Irish under-18 players at Southport. Conveniently, most of the best English junior players are from Southport Club!

The lawns were in fine condition and the hoops very testing. Not surprisingly, one doubles match nearly went to time, with much disagreement between partners, to the amusement of spectators.

In the handicap singles, Ronan Mcinerney used his bisques very effectively but Dan McCormick showed that he can give away eleven bisques and still hit in and go round. Charles von Schmieder played very accurately and did not use all his bisques. Richard Harding and Adrian Saurin also gave bisques, more than justifying their recent reductions by winning substantially.

There was an upset in the advanced singles when Charles, clearly a promising prospect for future representative matches, beat Chris comfortably. Otherwise the results were predictable, but Dan's first competition triple peel deserves special mention.

All credit to the Irish for their venture and their invitation for our under-18's to go over to Carrickmines next year. I have many happy memories of playing there (more

than 10 years ago, I'm ashamed to say!).
Well done, Simon: see you next year!



Dan McCormick.

RESULTS

(CA names first)

Advanced Doubles

C. Haslam & D. McCormick bt Ch. von Schmieder & R. Mcinerney +17
R. Harding & Adrian Saurin bt S. McAuley & A. Mcinerney +18

Handicap Singles

Haslam (-1/2) lost to von Schmieder (3)-18;
McCormick (2) bt R. Mcinerney (13) +7;
Harding (2 1/2) bt A. Mcinerney (11) +12;
Saurin (5) bt McAuley (8) +11.

Advanced Singles

C. Haslam lost to Ch. von Schmieder -12;
D. McCormick bt S. McAuley +18TP; R. Harding bt A. Mcinerney +26; Adrian Saurin bt R. Mcinerney +11.

Administration Secretary

As most Associates will be aware, Brian Macmillan has filled the post of Administration Secretary for some seven years, and few will question the dedication and diligence he has shown over that period.

However, Brian reached the age of 65 a year or so ago, and, in accordance with the Association's policy of requiring its employees to retire at 65, has been asked to retire in the summer of 1990.

We are therefore inviting applications for the post from anyone who considers themselves eligible, not necessarily Associates, though obviously a knowledge of the croquet world would be a definite advantage.

Although Brian has officially been classified as a part-time worker, all those with experience of the workings of the office will know that the demands of the job have grown to make it almost a full-time position, though there is some scope for flexibility on working hours.

Attendance at Council and certain committee meetings on Saturdays (about ten times per year) is also expected.

There is no fixed salary scale, but the ability of the Association to pay its employees is restricted by its income. There is therefore little flexibility for negotiation over the exact salary for this post, which will be approximately £10,000 p.a. (not pensionable).

Interested applicants should apply to the Chairman, Martin Murray, 69 High Kingsdown, Bristol, BS2 8EP, in writing by Monday 12th February.

Our team sets sail!

The seven players representing the Great Britain & Ireland team in the forthcoming MacRobertson Shield Series will leave for New Zealand shortly after Christmas.

The unusual number of seven players is explained by the fact that William Prichard will play in the first Test against Australia, and then his place will be taken by Stephen Mulliner for the Test against New Zealand.

Great Britain & Ireland narrowly lost the MacRobertson Shield to New Zealand in the 1986 Series played in this country when, to quote from an article written by Martin Murray just after the event, 'three of their players (Jackson, Hogan, and Skinley) played consistently at world class throughout the event'. Jackson and Hogan went on to contest the final of the British Opens that year.

Perhaps the only clue to current form that we have is the recent World Championship, sponsored by Continental Airlines at Hurlingham last July. Here New Zealand had one player in the semi-finals (Jo Hogan who eventually took the title); the other three semi-finalists were from Great Britain & Ireland. Australian players had a disappointing time.

Perhaps this gives us cause for cautious optimism, but insofar as we shall be playing away from home, out of season, and with some members of our team relatively new to international croquet, it will need effort and concentration of a high order to bring the Shield back to this country.

In his article, Martin mentioned that a number of teenagers were starting to make their mark, perhaps too late for 1990, but promising for 1993. Well, two of them have made it, and we wish them particularly, together with David Openshaw and the rest of our team every success

David Openshaw

David Openshaw, the team Captain, is one of the most careful tacticians in the game. In particular he is the great specialist of the end game. He rarely wins by +26, more usually scraping home by a handful of points often when all has seemed lost. David reached the semi-final of the 1989 World Championship, and won the British Open Championship in 1979, 1981 and 1985. He won the British Doubles Championship in 1985 and 1987, and the Mens Championship in 1981. This will be David's fourth MacRobertson Shield Series and his third as Captain. He is Managing Director of Lexmead.

Robert Fulford
Now still only 20, Robert Fulford is fulfilling the early promise shown when he won the Junior Championship at the age of 16. In April 1989, when he represented Great Britain against the USA and won all his matches, he became the youngest Test Player for 33 years. Since then he has continued to improve, being finalist in the British Open Doubles Championship and winning the 1989 President's Cup. A hard and accurate hitter of the ball, he has

become one of the most feared opponents in British Croquet. At present, he is a student reading mathematics at Durham University.

Stephen Mulliner
Throughout the 1980's, Stephen Mulliner has been one of the World's leading players. With an aggressive, muscular style he seems to exude energy as he strides purposefully about the court with his 12-inch headed mallet, or does his 'press-ups' in front of the hoop to check his line of aim. His games make compulsive watching and at tournaments the biggest gallery of spectators will usually be found where he is playing. He won the British Open Championship in 1988, the President's Cup in 1981, 1983, 1986 and 1988, the Men's Championship in 1985 and 1986, the Open Doubles Championship in 1980, 1981, 1984, 1986 and 1988, and the Sonoma-Cutrer International in 1986, 1987 and 1988. This will be his third MacRobertson Shield Series, having competed in the 1982 and 1986 series. He is an Investment Banker.

William Prichard
William Prichard is a seasoned MacRobertson Shield campaigner. This



The 1986 MacRobertson Shield Champions. New Zealand's team pose on the steps of Southport's pavilion before playing a warm-up match against a representative England side. On the left, England (L to R): Andrew Bennet, Keith Wylie, Michael Heap (top), Tim Haste, Phil Cordingley, Steve Lewis, and Eddie Bell. On the right, New Zealand (L to R): Bob Jackson, Graham Beale, Paul Skinley (top), Roger Murfitt, Jo Hogan, John Prince and Ashley Heenan.

THE PROGRAMME

28 December

Team leaves for New Zealand

5-10 January

G.B.&I. v Australia (Auckland)

13-14 January

G.B.&I. v N.Z. reps team (Hamilton)

17 January

G.B.&I. v N.Z. reps team (Napier)

13-18 January

Australia v New Zealand (Wellington)

22-27 January

G.B.&I. v New Zealand (Christchurch)

29 January - 4 February

New Zealand Open Championships (Christchurch)

OUR TEAM

will be the fifth series he has played in and only John Solomon, John Prince and Nigel Aspinall have won more rubbers than he has. Since becoming the youngest winner of a Croquet Association Championship event in 1969 by winning the Open Mixed Doubles, few major titles have eluded him. He won the President's Cup in 1972, the Open Championship in 1980 and the Open Doubles Championship also in 1980. He is a Stockbroker.

Mark Avery

Mark Avery has been winning Championships so long it is hard to believe he is only 24. In 1982 aged 16 he won the Northern Championship. Since then he won the British Open Championship in 1987 and the Open Doubles Championship in 1985 and 1987. Although he has made few recent appearances, his form this season has been impressive. He won the Western Championship and was runner up in the World Championship after a marvellous display of aggressive croquet. Mark Avery represented Great Britain in the 1986 MacRobertson Shield Series and also against the USA in the Solomon Trophy.

Mark Saurin

At just 19 Mark Saurin is the youngest member of the Great Britain and Ireland team. In 1988 aged 17 he won the English Men's Championship. In 1989 he won the Junior Championship becoming the only player to win the Men's Championship before winning the Junior Championship. Mark Saurin was not available to play in the World Championship in 1989 but he showed his form coming fourth in the President's Cup.

Colin Irwin

Colin Irwin will be celebrating his 38th birthday during the MacRobertson Shield Series. He is a seasoned international player, having played for Ireland since 1985. He represented Great Britain in the 1986 MacRobertson Shield Series and also against USA in the Solomon Trophy. His form this season has been impressive. He reached the semi-finals of the World Championship, finals of the Northern Championship and was third in the President's Cup. He is a Sales Manager for Speciality Chemicals.

MacRobertson Shield

in their endeavours over the next two months.

MATCH FORMAT

Each country will play each other once.

Each Test will consist of 21 matches, and each match will be the best of three games. The 21 matches in each Test will comprise 12 singles matches and 9 doubles matches.

The ranking order of players in each team will be announced before the series starts, according to current form.

In the singles, the schedule of matches will be as follows, giving 12 matches in all:

First Round

A1 v B1; A2 v B2; A3 v B3; A4 v B4; A5 v B5; A6 v B6.

Second Round

A2 v B1; A1 v B2; A4 v B3; A3 v B4; A6 v B5; A5 v B6.

In the doubles, all three pairs will play each opposing pair, giving nine matches in all.

Each Test will last for 6 days, 3 days being required by the singles matches, and 3 more days by the doubles.

If there is a 3-way tie (ie each team wins one Test match), then the tie will be decided by the number of matches won by the teams.

If, after considering the number of matches won, there is still a 3-way tie, the two challengers (Australia and Great Britain & Ireland) will play a one-day abbreviated Test match to decide which team will challenge New Zealand in a final one-day Test play-off to decide the Series.

If after considering the number of matches won, there is still a 2-way tie, the Series will be decided by a one-day abbreviated Test match between the two teams concerned.

Ardingly: July Ardingly Summer School

Report by Irene Underwood

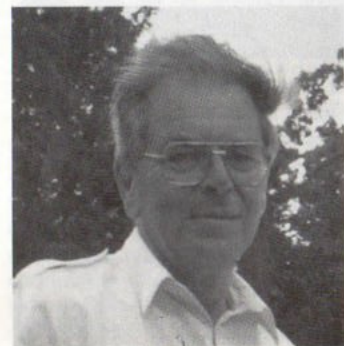
'So this is it' I thought, as we assembled in a science room in Ardingly College at 5pm on a hot July Sunday afternoon. Forty people of both sexes, with an age range of roughly thirty upwards (mostly upwards) and at the moment only one thing in common - croquet! It was a preliminary meeting to acquaint us with - surgery times (should they be needed), mealtimes and a suggested outline of the course.

We met David Higgs (coach and chief spokesperson), who had until now been a signature at the bottom of a letter or a voice on the telephone; also Geoff Coker, another coach, and Nick Waters, assistant chaplain at the school, who, at this stage seemed also to be cast in the mode of general facilitator. He became well-known to us all during the week as a rather magnificent Pooh Bah. His job specification seemed to range from catering to coaching to chauffeuring, whilst doing a great P.R. job for the church. We broke for the evening meal and then repaired to two small lawns in front of the college for various assessment tests to determine how we should be grouped.

Monday morning saw us all on the cricket field by 9am, bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, ready for the day's events. We met the other three coaches, who were non-residential - Major Tommy Vale, his wife Marjorie, and Dorothy Miller. Nick's son Greg proved to be a useful member of the team. During the night (or early morning) thirteen lawns had been set up on the field - ten half lawns and three full ones. We were sent off to 'test the lawns' whilst coaches conferred and then we were put into groups of about eight people, allocated two lawns, a coach, and issued with a small-sized syllabus (convenient for pocket), which had basic stroke units and building blocks laid out. These were to prove most useful and, though creased and dog-eared by the end of the week, most folk

bore them off home amid murmurs of 'photo-copy for club'.

The general outline each morning was as follows:- 9am. Start on lawn - review of yesterday and basic strokes to 10am. 20 minutes on topics followed by standard problems. Break in pavilion for tea or coffee (most welcome as the weather was uniformly hot throughout). After coffee a bisque problem was set out on one lawn for the groups to study and decide the best way to tackle it. Then, until lunch, building blocks or a structural game or particular problems.



David Higgs, Secretary of the South East Federation and organiser of the Ardingly Summer School.

During the morning sessions, one's coach came round to each member of the group for individual tuition and so, from strangers on Monday, they became our guides, mentors and friends. We changed coaches three times (keeping the same groups) so had the advantage of getting to know them all - each having their own individual skills, hints and tips to leave with us.

On Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoon we played two games of singles each in a Swiss Competition laughingly referred to the 'Ardingly Handicap' Trophy Event. David's computer came into play to pair us up and all entered into the spirit of the game, though the lawns left a lot to be desired with the hot weather and no watering. I make no mention of the 'lie of the land'.

After the evening meal (and some non-residents stayed on for this) we had another session for about an hour and a half, of light-hearted croquet games - some named, such as 'Pirates' and 'One Roquet Croquet' to others, which had no official nomenclature but were great fun and enjoyed by all. You may think that by now the day was over! Not so!! Nick was at hand with the red Ardingly mini-bus (and it took some handling to cope with its idiosyncrasies) and, for any folk still willing and able, would drive to one of several local hostleries where a drink was enjoyed - usually outdoors - in the cool of the evening and talk of the day was exchanged.

Most quotable quote of the week from one of our female members (after a game of 'Pirates' but this was known only to us): 'I was chased round the lawn tonight by five men and it was exciting.' Other folk found their own ending to the day - some playing bridge or whist, or swimming in the attractive college pool, or just reading or walking in the college grounds.

Tuesday and Thursday afternoons were free. An excursion was arranged - Tuesday to the Bluebell Railway and Thursday to Wakehurst Place (Kew's Annexe) but not obligatory. Saturday morning we had a short session on lawns then it was clearing up time - final lunch and, once again we found ourselves back in the Science Room, the atmosphere so different from a week ago - warm, friendly and relaxed. David presented the 'Ardingly Trophy' (a very attractive cross stitched picture of croquet scene) - a unique memento,

which Jim Butler of Tracy Park won. (He had his 72nd birthday with us earlier in the week) and then Nick showed us a video he had taken during the course and a great hoot it proved to be, rounding off a memorable week.

Before I close, some domestic details. We were housed in a sixth form block in small but adequate single study-bedrooms. Kitchen facilities for making early or late drinks were available. Washing arrangements (and they were tested to the full because the weather was extremely hot and sticky) were very good indeed. Meals were served in hall on the buffet/cafeteria principle and were very good, both in amount and variety.

It was the first time the S.E. Federation had run a Summer School at Ardingly and, inevitably, there were some minor hiccups initially. From the comments I heard there will certainly be another one in 1990.

Roehampton: 13-15 October Season of Mists and Mellow Fruitfulness

Report by Simon Tuke

Autumn was ushered in by the inaugural end of season Tournament at Roehampton, the final fixture in the CA calendar. Paul Macdonald, our 'close bosom-friend of the maturing sun', lived up to this title by providing weather that was predominantly sunny, with the exception of a couple of squalls on the first morning. The mists were nowhere to be seen, and these balmy conditions enabled Ron Selmes to sneak the knobbly knees award, challenged closely by your persistently short-clad correspondent. Paul informs me that the sun always shines on tournaments he manages, so there's a tip for when you are looking through next season's calendar.

The croquet consisted of a seven-round Swiss for 18 players, giving the ideal combination of at least two games a day, at least one lie-in for most people, and generally a reasonably early finish each evening. Bray-shortened games meant there were no standard time limits, and only a few games had to have them imposed. All in all, an impeccably smooth operation by Paul, who earned the heartfelt thanks of all the players.

By the end of the second day Simon Tuke was undefeated with 5 wins, closely followed by Derek Powell with 4 out of 5. Derek proved a formidable opponent off a handicap of 15, showing little inclination to let a 4-ball break go once he had set it up. On Sunday morning Simon could only watch from behind the 'fence' as Derek made his inexorable way round. Any suspicion that he relied solely on the cushion of his bisques was dispelled when he used them all comparatively quickly against Ron Selmes in his final match, only to proceed just as inexorably without them. He ran out a worthy winner of the Hussars Cup with 6 out of 7, and was duly cut to 12.

Second place was shared by Douglas Gurney, Paul Macdonald and Simon Tuke, all with 5 out of 7. Paul had the added kudos of being the only person to vanquish the rampant Powell.

All in all a thoroughly successful weekend, leaving the players in that end-of-season state so well described by Tennyson:

'Looking on the happy Autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are
no more.'



I'm off to pay my Subscription.
Get 1990 off to a good start by
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COACHING COMMENTS: No. 9

By Bill Lamb

From time to time questions are raised about the validity of the advice given on the standard coaching courses. One example concerns the question of where to stop with your first ball when you are not playing too well against a good A class player. In this circumstance you are advised to stop at 4-back with an attacking leave, if by then you have used more than half your bisques.

However, some coaches believe you should go to the peg with the first ball, as you should do if you have half or more of your bisques still standing. The thinking is that you have a better chance of winning if you have to concentrate on only one ball and get that to the peg with your remaining bisques without giving your opponent a chance. But you will then be pinning all your hopes on playing not merely to your normal standard but well above it. If you fail to do that, your bisques will run out with the second ball well back; you then run the risk of having your forward ball pegged out. Of course, if you have gone to peg and your opponent hits in immediately, you may be pegged

out with your backward ball still for hoop 1.

If you follow the standard advice and your opponent does not hit in, you have a fair chance of getting the second ball as far as 4-back before the bisques run out. (You should only need one bisque to set up your second break, as you already have the innings.) Now, it is probably easier to make the last three hoops twice, i.e. with both balls, with two-ball or three-ball breaks than it is to make a similar break with one ball from, say, 1-back. Even if your opponent hits in straightaway at the end of your first break, there is little chance of your forward ball being pegged out if you have stopped at 4-back.

If you feel like a gamble or are not worried about playing a three-ball ending against an A class player when you are the single ball player, you might try going to the peg. However, all things considered, I believe the standard advice to stop at 4-back with an attacking leave to be best, but you must choose for yourself.

CA COACHING COURSES 1990

These CA coaching courses have two purposes. Their prime function is to help players improve their standard of play. Each course is structured to give equal emphasis to technique and tactics with theory and practical sessions. Players are divided into blocks of similar abilities within the handicap range for each course. There will be at least two qualified CA coaches at each venue - we work on the basis of one qualified coach per four players.

The second function is, of course, to train more coaches at that particular level. If trainee coaches are present, the ratio is one trainee coach per two players.

All players are taught by each of the coaches, and time is allowed for individual problems to be sorted out in a clinic session. The courses are very intensive, but past experience shows that most players achieve considerable handicap reductions after attending them.

Unfortunately, it has been necessary this year to increase the course fees to cover the costs, and to include VAT. (Coaches give their time freely but are entitled to travelling and accommodation expenses.)

Courses for Players

Grade II (Intermediate)
These courses are intended for players within the handicap range 6 to 14, although rapidly improving players with higher handicaps may be considered. All players must be members of the CA.

Courses will take place at the following venues:

Cheltenham 7/8 April
Budleigh Salterton 6/7 May

Tyneside 13/14 May
Southwick 9/10 June
Wrest Park 23/24 June
Nottingham 7/8 July
Course Fee: £23, inclusive of VAT.

Grade III (Advanced)

This course is intended for players with handicaps lower than six, although rapidly improving players with higher handicaps may be considered. All players must be members of the CA.

Venue:
Wrest Park 4/5 August
Course Fee: £27.75, inclusive of VAT.

How to apply

1. Applications for Grade II (Intermediate) and Grade III (Advanced) should be made to:

Bill Lamb
5 Bondyke Close,
Cottingham,
N.Humberside HU16 5ND

2. State your name, address, telephone number, club, handicap, and category of CA membership (Standard, Veteran, Junior or Non-Tournament.)

3. Enclose an SAE and a cheque for the appropriate amount, payable to the 'Croquet Association'.

An early application is advisable, but no application can be acknowledged before March 1st.

Courses for Coaches

Coaches can be trained at any of the above Grade II or Grade III courses. There will be a preliminary meeting on the evening before the start of the course for players.

Prospective coaches must be members of the CA, should have had

MERIT AWARD SCHEME 56 Awards this year

Report by Bill Lamb

In its first proper season the Merit Award Scheme has got off to a successful start.

The new Merit Award Cards were posted or handed to all clubs before the start of the season and claims started to arrive in the first few weeks.

The race is now on to get the full set; two players have achieved bronze and silver already. I had hoped to achieve the full set in reverse order in my declining years but, alas, once you have obtained a higher award, the rules disqualify a claim for a lower one.

Congratulations then to the following:

GOLD AWARD (17):

David Appleton
Andrew Bennet
Alvar Bray
Jeff Dawson
Richard Harding
Chris Haslam
Colin Irwin
J.J. Jackson
Bill Lamb
Francis Landor
L.V.Latham
Dan McCormick
Duncan Reeve
Brian Storey
Alan Sutcliffe
Ian Vincent
Rod Williams

SILVER AWARDS (16):

Gillian Bogle
Alan Bowers
David Coates
C.Cardis
Gail Curry
Ross Gillespie
Don Guban
David Higgs
Deborah Latham
D. Magee
Alan Pidcock
M.W. Rangeley
Hilary Smith
M.D. Town
D.M. White
Diana Williamson

BRONZE AWARDS (23):

Betty Camroux
Gillian Bogle
Marjorie Boyd
Robert Fewtrell
J. Filsak
J. Glyn
Barbara Haslam
Leslie James

at some time a handicap lower than 6 for Grade II or 1 for Grade III, and should be referees. Applications will be considered from people who lack one or both of the last two qualifications, but they will not qualify fully until they attain them.

The course fee is £5.75, inclusive of VAT.

When qualified, coaches are expected to coach on a weekend course at least once every two years. Travel-



Leslie James, who won a CA Bronze Award this year.

Alice Jones
N. Kenward
Brian Lewis
Alan Linton
Celia Pearce
Alan Pidcock
Bruce Rannie
W. Sanders
Jack Shotton
I. Smith
Joyce Taylor
Hilary Turner
Peter Walker
Bill Ward
Rupert Webb

Please note that the only way to claim a badge is to have the card completed by your opponent (who will verify your claim) and the Manager (who will confirm that the tournament was a CA tournament), and then to send the card to me with an enclosed SAE. In order to minimise time in administration, claims by telephone or via tournament reports or the CA Office cannot be entertained.

In the event of clubs not having cards available at the tournament, I will accept an ordinary postcard provided that it contains all of the information and signatures. Clubs who require further supplies of cards should apply to me and not the CA Office.

ling and accommodation expenses are paid to qualified coaches but, as far as possible, coaches are asked to coach at a fairly local venue in order to reduce these expenses.

Prospective coaches from any region may apply. There is, however, a desperate shortage of Grade II coaches in the South and South-East and applications from these regions would be particularly welcome. Please apply as above.

