

ATCO Sponsors the British Open Croquet Championship

Atco, Britain's leading manufacturer of premier lawnmowers and garden machinery, is the official sponsor of the British Open Croquet Championships in July. An agreement has been reached with the Croquet Association to host the event annually until 1992.

The Open Singles and Doubles Championships, to be held at the Hurlingham Club this year, will take place from 15-22 July. They are set to attract a record number of players from all over the world which is further evidence of the growing popularity of the sport. During the last four years, the Croquet Association has doubled its membership and is now attracting players to its national network of over 160 clubs and associate organisations.

'We are delighted to be the official sponsors of the championships' says Andrew Thorpe, Marketing Manager of Atco. 'We are always looking for ways of demonstrating the importance of fine grass cutting to the public and these events provide the ideal opportunity to do so. The playing surface of a competitive croquet lawn has to be exceptionally smooth - a finish that can only be achieved using a power cylinder mower such as an Atco Imperial or Club.'

A logo has been specially designed for the Atco British Open Croquet Championships that will appear on all leaflets and publicity material, including clothing for the players. The logo will continue to be used throughout the three year sponsorship period.



The Atco Imperial makes light work of croquet lawns.

CONTINENTAL AIRLINES WORLD CROQUET CHAMPIONSHIP Entries for Qualifying Competitions

The first qualifying round for the Continental Airlines World Croquet Championship is for overseas players and will be held at Surbiton on Thursday and Friday, 12th and 13th July.

Entries received so far include Tarik Al Sa'eed, from Dubai, Jean-Baptiste Grochain, the Champion of France, and Norman Eatough from Geneva. Three players from the United States are expected to play - Peyton Ballenger, Tremaine Arkey, and Ray Bell.

The other two qualifying competitions, open to players domiciled in the UK and Eire, will be held at Surbiton on Friday to Sunday, 3-5 August, 1990, and at Southport on Friday to Sunday, 10-12 August, 1990.

Entries for these two competitions should reach the Croquet Association not later than first post on Monday 23rd July 1990. The entry fee is £15 and the successful qualifiers will be required to pay an additional £25 to play in the World Championship.

A maximum of 16 players will take part in each qualifying competition, and although the format may be affected by the number of entries received, it is intended to divide each qualifying competition into two American blocks of eight.

Entrants must have a grading of at least 80 according to the CA Grading List compiled immediately after the 1990 Atco British Open Championship. Other tournament conditions are available from the CA Office.

CHOOSING A MOWER FOR YOUR GARDEN

By leading horticultural expert John Negus

To give any lawn the best finish, you should always mow at right angles to the previous cut.

There are two types of mower - cylinder and rotary.

You will already know that not all mowers cut grass in the same way. With a cylinder mower, each blade of grass is cut between the revolving blades of the cylinder and a fixed lower blade to ensure a neat, clean cut and encourage the growth of healthy new, lush grasses.

Rotary mowers, on the other hand, have a tendency to 'smash' each blade of grass, leaving a ragged tip which quickly browns.

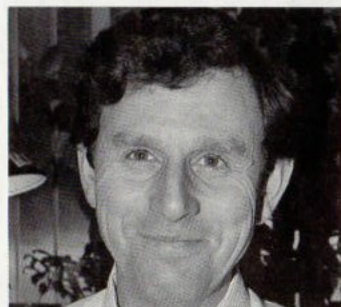
While a rotary machine is convenient and cuts relatively long grass, a closer, finer finish is achieved by using a cylinder mower. For more than sixty years, Atco has pioneered cylinder-bladed machines. Apart from the Super Clipper, all have rear rollers which guarantee that greatly admired light and green banded finish. No matter what size of lawn you have, Atco's models manicure it to perfection.

For small areas, the Atco Super Clipper - a welcome newcomer - will serve you well. A five-bladed hand-mower with side wheels and grass-box, it's ideal for cutting awkward corners, long grass, banks and under bushes. It comes in two cutting widths - 14in and 16in - priced respectively, at around £80 and £85.

Another breakthrough for domestic lawns is the self-propelled, petrol-driven Atco Ensign, available in three cutting widths 12in, 14in and 17in.

Its six-bladed cylinder delivers an immaculate 73 cuts per yard and it's very easy to start. It costs from £395 to £485. The company is also proud of its quartet of Commodores which won the Garden Machinery Association's Best New Product of the Year Award last year.

Cutting widths vary from 12in to



John Negus.

20in and prices range from £435 to £935. You have the option of electric starting, too.

For that croquet lawn finish, opt for the sophisticated Imperial. With a cutting width of 17in and a steel comb to raise flattened grass, its ten-bladed cylinder ensures a superfine finish. It costs £1,045.

Why walk when you can sit and mow! That's the philosophy behind the six-bladed Atco Royale, a petrol-driven ride-on designed for trimming vast swards in the shortest possible time.

It now features a full-width fail-safe clutch bar control. There are three models with cutting widths of 20in, 24in, and 30in, priced from £1,275 to £1,650.



The Atco Super Clipper.

★ ATCO SUPER CLIPPER WORTH £79.95 TO BE WON! ★

If you have always wanted a perfect lawn - but have never managed to achieve that close, cropped look - maybe you're using the wrong lawnmower. Why not try your hand at our easy to enter competition and you could win a fabulous Atco Super Clipper.

The Croquet Association has teamed up with Atco to offer you the chance to win a fabulous Atco Super Clipper worth £79.95. With adjustable cutting heights and a large capacity grassbox, the Atco Super Clipper hand pushed lawnmower delivers 35 cuts per yard and will give your lawn a scissor-sharp finish fit for any croquet game.

Based at Stowmarket in Suffolk, Atco has been manufacturing quality lawnmowers for over 60 years.

All you have to do to enter is answer the following questions correctly and complete the tie-breaker:

1. The Atco Super Clipper is:
 - (A) an electric hover mower.

- (B) a petrol powered cylinder mower.

- (C) a cylinder hand mower.

2. The Atco Super Clipper ensures a neat clean cut because:

- (A) the grass is cut in a scissor action between the fixed lower blade and the revolving blades of the cylinder.

- (B) the rotary blades smash the tip of each blade of grass.

- (C) the rear roller produces those much admired stripes.

3. The winner of the 1989 British Open Croquet Championship was:

- (A) Robert Fulford.

- (B) Joe Hogan.

- (C) Steve Mulliner.

Tie breaker

I think an Atco lawnmower is best for a croquet lawn because

(Complete in no more than 12 words.)

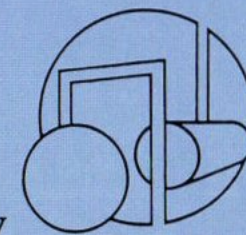
Please send your entry to: Atco Croquet Competition, 5 Berners St, London, W1P 3AG by 1st September 1990.

CROQUET



Inside:
News & Views
Sponsorship
Solomon Trophy Teams
Tournament Reports
Your Letters ...and lots more

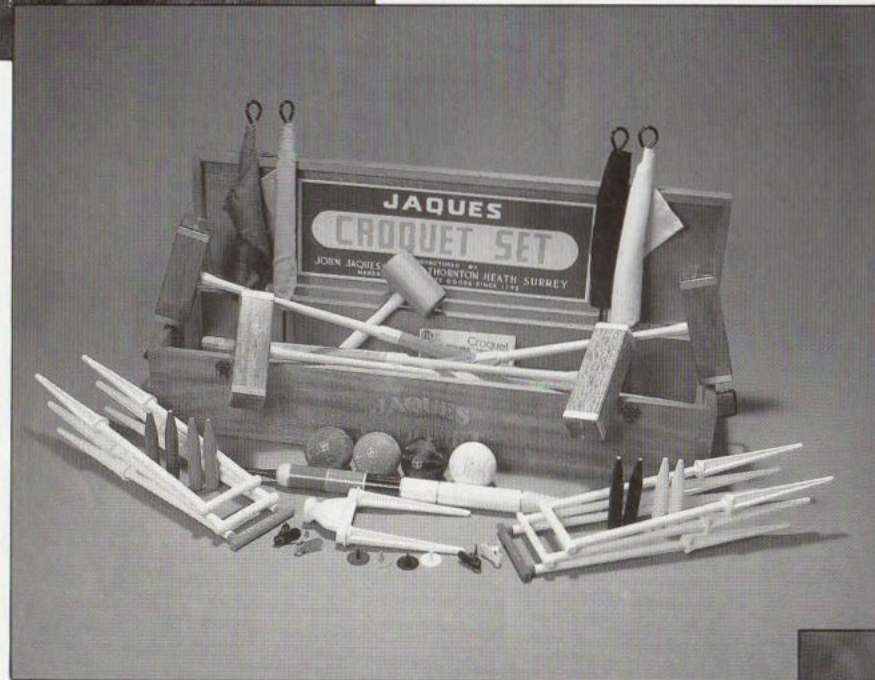
£2.00



Published by
The Croquet Association



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



Still
 leading
 the way

*Selected for
 The 1990 World Championship*



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

Send for Coloured Brochure and
 Price List from: -



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

LEADERS IN SPORT

PHONE: 081-684 4242



INDEX

	Page
Affiliate membership	23
Bisham Abbey House	12
Championships:	
Inter-Counties	11
Westerns	13
World	3,28
Club News	5
Coaches Corner	12
Demonstrators	23
Features	
Early Days	4, 5
Letters	13,20,21
National Garden Festival	17,18
News	17
Official Business	26,27
Overseas News	27
Short Story	10
Solomon Trophy	14,15
Sponsorship:	
Atco	28
Bombay Sapphire Dry Gin	14,15
Continental Airlines	3,28
Derwent Valley Foods	19
Pilkington Glass	7
Tournament Reports	6, 8, 9, 16,22,24,25

**CROQUET
 Contact Addresses**

CA Secretary: Brian Macmillan, The Croquet Association, The Hurlingham Club, Ranelagh Gardens, London SW6 3PR. Tel: 071-736-3148.

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

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

Publication Details
 'Croquet' is published on the first day of every second month. Copy should reach the Editor on the 20th of the month, two months before the month of issue (i.e. on 20th May for the issue being published on 1st July).

Contributions (except tournament reports and results) and photographs (preferably black and white) should be sent to the Editor. They are most welcome and will be acknowledged when published.

Tournament results and reports to be sent direct, within 7 days of completion of the tournament, to the Secretary of the CA. All correspondence about non-delivery of 'Croquet', changes of address, telephone numbers, handicaps or officials should be sent to the CA Secretary and **not** to the Editor.

Photographs in this issue by: Andrew Bennet, David Carpenter, Chris Hudson, Syd Jones, Francis Landor, Ian McDiarmid, Gary Norman, Gina Pellegrini, Andrew Saurin, and Geoffrey Yonge.
Cover photo: Two youngsters at a 'Come & Try It' session organised by Crawley Croquet Club.

Editorial Team
 Editor.....Chris Hudson
 Coaching.....Bill Lamb
 Features.....Allen Parker
 Pictures.....Chris Hudson
 Advertising.....Brian Bucknall

Annual Subscription Rate **£12.00**

Editorial

THE NEXT FOUR YEARS

The Croquet Association's 3rd Forward Plan (for the years 1991 to 1994 inclusive) is now with the Sports Council, and we expect to hear the result of our Grant application towards the end of July this year. The major objectives listed in our Plan are as follows:

1. To establish and develop 8 more Regional Competition Venues (clubs with 4 or more full size lawns and facilities of sufficient quality to justify their being termed 'RCVs').
2. To increase membership of the Croquet Association to at least 6000.
3. To increase coaching effectiveness.
4. To increase public participation.
5. To maintain international leadership.
6. To establish Croquet as a TV sport.
7. To develop indoor croquet.

These are ambitious objectives, and are dependent on the relevant funds being available through sponsorship, grants, and our own efforts.

Our gross expenditure has increased from around £50,000 in 1985 to an estimated £148,000 in 1991. During this period, we have reached a point

where our membership income is balancing our expenditure on membership services.

Over the next 4-year period, we are aiming to convert development projects into revenue-producing activities.

Our successes to date have been due to the efforts of many volunteers who have worked very hard indeed and to whom we owe a great debt. As a result of their efforts since 1985, we have increased our membership considerably, doubled the number of clubs, set up seven new Federations, and implemented our National Coaching Scheme.

The number of international matches, championships, and club tournaments has increased considerably, and again we have been fortunate in having sufficient volunteers to manage and administer these events for the rest of us.

In this issue, we welcome Bombay Sapphire Dry Gin, Derwent Valley Foods, and Pilkington Glass Ltd as new Sponsors, and we look forward to working with them. Sponsorship forms a very important part of our development activities, and will become increasingly valuable in the future in helping us promote our sport.

CHRIS HUDSON



View of the club house at Cheltenham during this year's Western Championships.

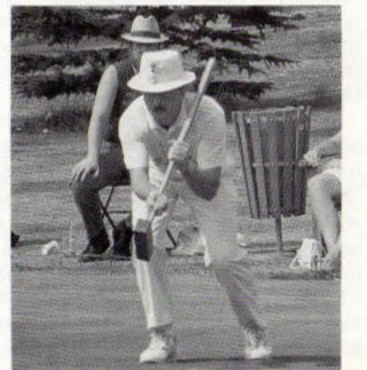
**THE CONTINENTAL AIRLINES
 WORLD CROQUET CHAMPIONSHIP
 1990**

The following players have been nominated by their National Associations to play in the 2nd Continental Airlines World Croquet Championship, to be held at Hurlingham from 2nd to 9th September, 1990.

Australia
 Colin Pickering, George Latham, Bruce Ford, and Ken Boal.

New Zealand
 Graham Beale, Joseph Hogan, Graeme Roberts, and Paul Skinley.

United States
 Ted Prentis, Jerry Stark, and Kiley Jones.



World Champion Joe Hogan, who returns to Hurlingham to defend his title in September.

'Croquet', incorporating the Croquet Gazette, is published by The Croquet Association, The Hurlingham Club, Ranelagh Gardens, London, SW6 3PR. Tel: 071-736-3148
 Printed by DDS Colour Printers, 9/10 Worle Industrial Centre, Weston-super-Mare. Tel: 0934 516902

Early Days

ETIQUETTE

By Allen Parker (Parkstone)

The following article under the above title appeared in the Croquet Gazette of 9th May 1907. It was written by 'Medicus'. Modern views of etiquette in general may have changed considerably since then, but it seems that croquet etiquette has not altered appreciably, and the article can still be read with advantage by all who aspire to play the game today.

In paragraph 11, reference is made to a 'foul' when the ball strikes the striker's foot, and the writer insists that the striker should give the opponent the opportunity of deciding whether the ball should be replaced or not. In to-day's laws a 'foul' is called a 'fault'; the ball MUST be replaced, AND the turn ends. Indeed the ball must be replaced even if this is to the disadvantage of the opponent, unfair as this may seem.

Towards the end of the article there is an allusion to 'Referees' and their duties. In those days the referee combined the duties of manager of a tournament AND referee, and it is of course to his duties as tournament manager that the author refers.

THE NEW PENDULUM MALLET
(PATENT APPLIED FOR)

For Front Players. Prevents "Pressing."

JUST OUT. QUITE NEW.

Swings like a pendulum. Offers a Mechanical Advantage.

J. J. LONDON

CAN BE SUPPLIED IN VARIOUS WEIGHTS AND SIZES.

PRICE: With 9-in. by 3-in. Bowled head, 12/6

SOLE MAKERS: JOHN JAQUES & SON, Limited
102, HATTON GARDEN, E.C.

An advertisement from the Gazette of Thursday, July 18th, 1907.

The unwritten laws of croquet, like those attached to other games, are only learnt by playing against those who are familiar with them. Nevertheless it behoves all who wish to play the game seriously to endeavour to become thoroughly 'au fait' with its moral laws as soon as possible, since nothing is more potent to spoil the harmony of a croquet match or tournament than a breach of these laws.

Much might be written on the subject of unfairness, direct and indirect, which can be imported into croquet as into any other game. It will be assumed that every player is really anxious to play with strict fairness, yet occasions arise when the keenness of a close struggle may tempt a player to obtain some slight advantage over his opponent in a manner that is not quite fair, though not actually violating the rules. Such an action may introduce into the game a bad feeling quite out of proportion to the real effect of the offence on the game.

The Spectators

For the sake of convenience some points of etiquette affecting the spectator of the game may be taken first. Let it be remembered that all croquet players are frequently spectators and therefore the remarks are not only applicable to strangers who come solely to look at the game.

It is now pretty generally understood that an onlooker must on no account offer advice directly to a player. But this restriction has considerably wider application than the bare statement conveys. Thus a spectator must take care that no remark of his on the game shall be overheard by the player, who may be standing within earshot though not in conversation with the parties concerned.

The writer has on more than one occasion heard his play criticised when in the centre of the ground by friends who would have been rather concerned had they known of his acute hearing. Again, should a friend be about to play with the wrong ball at a critical moment, it requires considerable restraint to avoid an expression of the face, or attitude of anxiety which might affect the player, if in a position to notice it.

Consideration will not only prompt the onlooker to avoid standing (still less moving) either directly in front of, or behind the player's line of aim; but also to avoid any movement that might possibly divert his attention from the stroke. For example a sudden hearty laugh, or other exclamation at the moment of striking would certainly annoy many players, and a person moving on the boundary towards the line of aim is equally objectionable.

There are many, no doubt, who are superior to these trifling details, but there are also many who are not. Those playing the match are providing the entertainment, and probably would be quite as pleased to be without attention, and they may therefore claim these indulgences.

The court is the sacred ground of those using it, and others have no right on it at all; hence, though to cut across a corner may save time in reaching the pavilion, it will only save time at the expense of courtesy. One would certainly not avail oneself of such a short cut if two crack players were using it, and the worst twelve-bisquers that ever missed a short roquet have just as much claim on our forbearance. The writer has in mind a court just in front of the pavilion at Southampton, and every few minutes of the day in tournament week this thoughtless breach of manners might be noticed.

The Players

With these preliminary remarks we may pass on to Croquet Etiquette in relation between two parties in a match. The court, we have said, is the temporary property of those using it, but only for one party at a time. When your opponent is playing you have no right on the court without his sanction till his turn ceases. It is one of the gravest breaches of Etiquette to dog your opponent's steps over the court to watch his strokes. No doubt it is only interest that excites this action, but it savours strongly of the detective element and is certain to be resented by the most amiable opponent.

It is far harder to exercise that self control which refrains from expressing impatience and annoyance at some personal peculiarity in an opponent's play. Some mannerism may get terribly on one's nerves, especially if all is not going so well as it might from our point of view. Some players are naturally very quick both in thinking out a position and acting on it. Others are equally slow. The slow player is perhaps a bore but you won't make him quicker or add to the harmony of the game by letting him see you think so. After all it is only impatience to have your innings that is the fons et origo of the trouble, and as you haven't a train to catch you cannot better employ your spare time than by cultivating self-control. Never therefore comment on your adversary's game unfavourably, and as little in the opposite sense as necessity demands.

When a ball crosses the boundary the spot should be marked accurately with the mallet, if possible

as the line is crossed, and replaced with the back to the court. Possibly an inch or so one way or the other may make the difference between leaving it open or wired to another ball, and human nature being what it is, it is wiser not to allow a glance over the court to embarrass the judgment. Should the ball go off near your adversary, do not expect him as a matter of course to replace it, though by so doing he can save you a good many steps. If he offers to do so, do not forget to thank him for his courtesy, and should you do the same for him, take care to see that he is perfectly satisfied that you have replaced it correctly.

The writer recently observed a match between a good gentleman player and a lady. The former always accepted this courtesy from the lady without thanks and never returned the compliment when in a similar position. It would have been much to his profit, though a shock to his complacency, had he heard some of the spectators' comments on his behaviour.

Of all the rules of Etiquette that were ever made and broken there is none that is of such practical importance as that which should govern the action of a player when about to play a stroke that may be open to criticism. Thus a ball is near a wire, and a crush stroke is possible, or aim is being taken at a ball near a wire where the ball may be moved without being hit; it is invariably the striker's duty to ask his opponent if he wishes an umpire before the stroke is made. In a private game the adversary should be invited to judge the stroke. The neglect to observe this duty is at the bottom of most of the unpleasant episodes that lead to ill feeling between players. If this rule is neglected and a dispute occurs there is no mending it. Whatever solution of the difficulty is adopted there will most certainly be a soreness left on one side or both. On the other hand the observance of this point universally would put an end to practically all disputes on croquet lawns.

It sometimes happens that in playing hard at a hoop or peg the ball rebounds against your mallet or foot. This is of course a foul, and though it may be of little importance to your opponent whether the ball be replaced or not, it is your duty to ask him which position he prefers. It is astonishing how often this little duty is neglected, and it is particularly hard on your opponent who cannot help being reluctant to press for so small an advantage after your failure to make the desired stroke.

JAQUES' DUPLEX-SPAN CROQUET HOOPS
(Patent applied for.)

These Hoops are so constructed that the span of a whole set can be changed in a minute from 4-in. to 3 1/2-in., or vice versa, WITHOUT LIFTING THE HOOPS.

The only Hoops on the Market possessing the advantage of a convertible span.

INDISPENSABLE TO CLUBS
NO SPRINGS, SCREWS, or LOOSE PARTS
ABSOLUTELY ACCURATE

Made with cruciform bases which ensure a firm support in all directions.

PRICE: Set of 4 Hoops in 1/2-in. iron, with manacle grip, 36/-

MAY BE HAD OF ALL DEALERS.
ASK FOR JAQUES' NEW DUPLEX-SPAN ASSOCIATION HOOPS.

SOLE MAKERS: JOHN JAQUES & SON LIMITED
102, HATTON GARDEN, LONDON

An advertisement from the Gazette of Thursday, August 8th, 1907.

Early Days

A difficulty that everyone must be familiar with is this - 'What shall I do if my opponent plays with the wrong ball?' The answer is emphatic: in any game of importance exact the full and proper penalty and insist on your opponent doing the same to you should occasion arise. The arguments for and against this point are familiar to all. By letting your opponent off you compel him morally to do the same to you, and as the error may at one time be of little importance and at another mean the loss of a game, it is impossible to call this a fair practice. If both parties like to agree before the game begins to exact no penalty, well and good, but it is much to be desired that the rule of enforcing the law should universally be adopted as a matter of course.

The 'Referee'

Before closing this chapter a brief allusion to Referees may not be out of place. A Referee is nearly always a good exponent of the game. He may therefore be assumed to be 'au fait' with the laws of Etiquette, as well as those of the game proper. No tournament can be properly conducted without a good referee, and the thanks of all players are due to him. Yet how many of those who enjoy the fruits of his organisation ever thank him at the close of a meeting. Is it not more usual to blame him because all cannot play on the best court simultaneously? or because he cannot say on Monday afternoon what time on Wednesday you will be wanted in the Doubles?

It must happen occasionally in a big meeting that here and there a competitor is inconvenienced, but it is nearly always some other competitor, whom the referee in his kindness of heart, refuses to scratch, who is really to blame. The referee has a thankless enough task as it is, and it is the duty of everyone under his jurisdiction to do everything in their power to help him.

Finally, the Etiquette of common politeness and good manners is equally applicable to croquet. Add to this a little tact, forbearance and cheerfulness, and when you can lose the game and not your temper a very little knowledge of the game will leave you master of the moral code of croquet.

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP CROSSWORD SOLUTION

(See Issue No 208, page 28)

G	U	N	A	S	E	K	E	R	A	W			
A	E	P	I	I	A	D	E						
S	T	E	V	E	N	S	F	U	L	F	O	R	D
H	D	C	S	T	I	W	N						
W	Y	L	I	E	S	V	I	N	C	E			
	M	N	O	B	L	E	P	S					
B	A	R	K	L	E	Y	L	B	O	N	D		
D	I	N	R	O	Y	E	U	A					
H	Y	N	E	M	M	U	R	R	A	Y			
E	G	A	I	T	O	N	R						
S	Y	K	E	S	N	H	O	G	A	N			
I	O	H	S	A	P	V	E						
V	I	N	C	E	L	E	A	N	D				
E	G	S	P	E	A	L	I	D					
S	C	O	R	D	I	N	G	L	E	Y			

Club News

South Derbyshire Croquet Club Winners of the '89 Townsend Award

Report by David Carpenter

'What are those blue remembered hills, what spires what farms are those...'

South Derbyshire is an area of scenic contrasts, from the declining industrialised coalfield along the Staffordshire and Leicestershire borders, to the rolling farmlands which grade northwards into the hills of the Peak District.

Croquet has been established in the area for quite some time in the guise of the Bretby Club, but this is essentially a private club exclusive to British Coal employees working at the National Technical Department establishment near Burton-on-Trent. This naturally limited the possible development of croquet in the area, until South Derbyshire District Council requested a 'Learn to play' course from the East Midlands Federation of Croquet Clubs.



Gary Norman with the Townsend Award.

Gary Norman, a member of the Bretby Club and Secretary of the East Midlands Federation, organised the 'Learn to play' course in the summer of 1988, and it was enthusiastically attended. As a result of the interest generated by the course, South Derbyshire Croquet Club was inaugurated in the October of that year at a meeting in the back room of the New Inn at Woodville near Burton-on-Trent.

The summer of 1989 saw the club established on a former putting green and bowls lawn at Woodville. Unfortunately, the hot summer, and an over-zealous council green keeper, resulted in playing conditions which were difficult to say the least. In spite of this, the club entered the East Midlands Short Croquet League, and finished a creditable third

behind Loughborough and Ashby, two of the regular team being first season players! An East Midlands Regional Tournament was held, the winner being the club's own Gary Norman, and the runner-up Leicester's Richard White.

The highlight of the first season occurred in the National Short Croquet Team Event final at Leicester. The Club having beaten Ashby and Norwich in the semi-final at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, were pitched against Loughborough, High Wycombe and a powerful Glasgow team. After a dismal start the South Derbyshire Team rallied to finish with 6 wins, matching the other three teams and the title was decided by a peg shoot-out. Glasgow won by hitting four out of four with South Derbyshire managing two to become runners-up (unofficially, as there is no runner-up in the National Short Croquet Team Event).

The club ran two internal competitions during the 1989 season, a club handicap for established players which was won by David Carpenter, and a high bisquers handicap for first season players which was won by David Fairbrother.

The year ended on a sad note with the untimely death of George Henshaw who as a founder member of the club, had given a great deal of time to help with the coaching of new players. George was also a stalwart of the Nottingham Club, and I believe also well known at Cheltenham. He will be sadly missed.

The year ended on a sad note with the untimely death of George Henshaw who as a founder member of the club, had given a great deal of time to help with the coaching of new players. George was also a stalwart of the Nottingham Club, and I believe also well known at Cheltenham. He will be sadly missed.

The 1990 season has begun with a move to a new lawn at Bretby Country Club, just off the A50 and less than a mile from the British Coal Bretby Club. The new lawn will be shared with bowlers, but is far superior to the old lawns at Woodville and should lead to rapid improvements in the standards of play (rushes now being possible!). Toilet facilities, which are a great improvement on those at Woodville, and a bar are available at the country club, which also provides other entertainment. 'Learn to play' courses and an improvers course are planned, and probably another tournament.

Finally, the club's development effort was rewarded with the Townsend Award for 1989. Much of the credit for the gaining of this award must go to Gary Norman (and his extremely tolerant wife, Sue), a man peerless in his ubiquity. He has attended countless meetings, written all manner of publicity letters, and in spite of the incompetencies of the club secretary (me) kept everyone informed of developments.

Everyone is welcome in South Derbyshire's happy highways, and unlike the words of Houseman, we hope you will come again.

Tournament Reports

Cheltenham: 26-28 May Sixty players at Cheltenham

Report by Hugh Smorfitt

60 keen players, 10 good lawns and 3 days of perfect weather, together with management so efficient that one hardly noticed it, combined to make this weekend a great success.

3 blocks of 20 competed with the desirable benefit of having no time limit on games (this particularly suited J.G. amongst others!). On several occasions this contributed to thrilling finishes, with winners having had 1 ball pegged out by the opponent.

In group A, victory was shared by Peter Dorke, Jonathan Smith and Chris Williams. In hot pursuit of this trio were Chris Bennett and Terry Burge and also that great match commentator Cliff Cardis.

In group B no-one could compete with an excellent Joe Jackson who won all his games. However, he nearly faltered when in one game his opponent almost came back in the last moments of the contest after discovering his remaining half-bisque by tripping over it on the way back to his chair! Jon Wurmlli was a good second with several players equal third, amongst them the delightful and fast improving Alex O'Connor.

Block C, with a wide handicap range from -1/2 to 16 saw some close battles and some easy wins (coming to some perhaps too well endowed with bisques). Roger Jackman led with 3 wins until defeated by Jeremy

Glynn who then lost to Adam Mears in an absorbing final game. Each of these 3 shared the prize money and deservedly caught the eye of the



Joe Jackson, Block winner at Cheltenham.

handicappers. Malcolm MacBean and Peter Darby were amongst the runners-up, Malcolm using his last 3 bisques to rover-peel his backward ball but failing to peg-out. Peter, gleefully avoiding -26, missed his next roquet. Does -25 sound so much better Peter?! Mike Ranshaw had a

good tournament and should be worth watching in the future.

Our thanks to all the helpers (especially Juliet) who help to make

3 wins: T. Golesworthy, W. Madams, Mrs E. Weitz, C. Edmonds, Mrs K. Yeoman, M. Boardman.
2 wins: J. Mays, R. Wheeler, Mrs C. Smith.
1 win: Mrs M. Evans, Dr A. Laidlaw, Mrs M. Warrington, C. Snowdon.

Block B

6 wins: J. Jackson.
5 wins: J. Wurmlli.
4 wins: R. Weaver, Miss A. O'Connor, Dr G. Yonge, P. Leach, Mrs D. Wheeler.
3 wins: H. Smorfitt, M. Davis, J. Sturdy, N. Allenach, A. Davidson.
2 wins: Mrs A. Hall, Mrs M. Batham-Thornhill, Mrs M. James, D. Clay, D. Regan, Mrs S. Clay.
1 win: Mrs H. Coombs, Mrs K. Yonge.

Block C

5 wins: J. Glynn, A. Meares, R. Jackman.
4 wins: M. MacBean, P. Darby, Mrs M. Allenach, Dr B. Sykes.
3 wins: Mrs M. Selmes, Dr B. Weitz, R. Selmes, M. Ranshaw, M.L. Town, R. Gosden.
2 wins: D. Harrison, Ms S. Foden, L. James, J. Soutter.

Cheltenham Tournaments such a pleasure.

RESULTS (3 Swiss blocks of 20; Handicap)

Block A
5 wins: P.J. Dorke, J. Smith, C. Williams.
4 wins: D. Magee, T. Burge, C. Cardis, C. Bennett.

Newport: 19-20 May An Excellent New Tournament Venue

Report by Phil Cordingley

At the risk of upsetting the 'Privileged Few' in the know, I am going to let you into a secret: three of the Country's finest croquet lawns are to be found in a small village in Essex just off the M11 between junctions 8 & 9 at the Newport Croquet Club.

The ground is very firm and fast, the surface is very flat, and the hoops are of a firmness which would bring a tear of joy to even such a seasoned old pro as Steady Eddie Bell. Whilst the odd imperfection exists, you need to look hard to find one. Thus it was in as fine and fair set of conditions as one could hope for that the 'Privileged Few' gathered to contest the inaugural Open Weekend Tournament.

The format was best-of-three knockout, with the usual Swiss consolation event. The first round produced no surprises as the fancied players progressed, all with straight games victories. In the first semi-final, Keith Aiton faced Tim Harrison. Keith was playing well generally, but committing too many unforced errors for comfort. An ultimately tight first game culmin-

ated in Tim pegging two balls out, leaving himself for ? and Keith for fifth.

Visions of the '85 Rowlock appeared as Keith hit the lift from B baulk in the general direction of fifth. Unfortunately, as tends to happen when things are going 'not quite right', the roqueted ball ended up sufficiently close to fourth hoop to render reasonable approach to fifth impossible. Tim ultimately won the game +5 and the match 2-0 with a comfortable +26 in the second.

In the other semi, Phil Cordingley faced Richard Hilditch. Phil reached 4 back and rover against 3 and 4 back in the first and hit a 30+ yard shot to gain the innings. A strong leave (opponent 4 back ball by 4 back and ball for 3 just off east boundary by first, ball for rover with a yard line rush out of corner 2 at ball for three) suffered the disadvantage that it left a ball by opponent's backward ball's hoop.

Richard took full advantage by hitting the big shot with the backward ball and finishing for a +6TP. In 'whole match' terms, this may have been a mistake. It was 51 points later

that Richard next took croquet as Phil completed a triple in the second and had all three peels in the third, but only pegged one ball out. A stick in fourth by Richard on opponent's remaining rover soon provided the coup de grace.

The semis having been completed by 6 o'clock on Saturday, the final was played best-of-five. An extremely scrappy first game ended with Phil pegging out Tim with the other balls for fourth and 4 back respectively. The lift and subsequent leave at fourth were missed, and Phil finished. In the second Phil had two peels of a straight triple done when the rover peel (6 feet, slight angle) bounced away. The win +25 soon followed. In the third Phil had two peels of a standard triple in the bag when a missed 4 foot roquet at 1 back extinguished the possibility of a fifth turn win. After some in and out play, including a ball round from Tim, Phil hit a 16 yard lift centre ball and finished next turn from peg and rover to complete a 3-0 victory.

Meanwhile, in the Swiss, successive opponents were unable to punish Keith Aiton's continued spate of

unforced errors as competently as Tim had, and Keith took the consolation prize with no further losses.

The club has made remarkable progress in the last two years, culminating as I write with the building of a clubhouse. This has been due to the unstinting efforts of its membership (increased by two over the weekend), which have been both energetic (in terms of lawn preparation) and imaginative (in terms of financing). Individuals are too numerous to expound, but Ron Atkinson and Don Cornelius deserve special mention. You will be doing both yourself and the club a favour by lending your future support.

RESULTS

(Advanced Play, Knockout, 8 entries)

Round 1

K. Aiton bt A.R.K. Miller +9, +4; J.C. Ruddock bt T. Harrison +23, +25; R.J. Hilditch bt D. Ruscombe-King +18, +13; P. Cordingley bt L. Palmer +13, +19.

Semi-Finals

Harrison bt Aiton +5, +26; Cordingley bt Hilditch -6TP, +26TP, +23.

Final

Cordingley bt Harrison 4, 25, 17.

Pilkington Glass to Sponsor President's Cup

This year's President's Cup, to be played at Bowdon Croquet Club from Thursday 16th to Sunday 19th August, is to be sponsored by Pilkington Glass Ltd.

Pilkington Glass has had an enormous impact on our building environment whilst being largely overlooked by the public, because the point about glass is that you usually look through it rather than at it. The company therefore has an uphill struggle to persuade people to think about glass rather than windows, especially when much of the information presents itself most readily in a difficult technical form.

The need to overcome this problem has led the company into sponsorship, with its diverse opportunities to impart a basic and correct awareness of glass. As a result, the company currently has a major involvement in British tennis, spearheaded by the Pilkington Glass Ladies Tennis Championships at Eastbourne. Other sports involvements include sponsorship of Doncaster Rovers and the National Squib Class Yachting Championships.

Now croquet joins the list, with the sport's top invitation event, the President's Cup, benefitting from generous sponsorship by Pilkington Glass.

Introducing Pilkington Glass

Pilkington Glass Ltd is one of the largest companies in the Pilkington Brothers Group. The group have substantial interests in such wide ranging industries as ophthalmics, electro optics and insulation materials, but the core of their business makes them the biggest flat and safety glass manufacturer in the world.

The greater part of the Pilkington Glass operation is devoted to making glass for buildings, from basic window glass to special architectural needs. Few buildings in this country do not use its products, and the company's consistent record of innovation has had a major impact on the environment.

Pilkington Glass has a number of important subsidiary operations. Biggest of these is Triplex, with a lion's share of the British automotive market and an impressive history of innovation in its own right. Triplex was the first manufacturer of heated rear windows, and has pioneered the use of thinner laminated and toughened safety glasses in Europe to achieve significant improvements in car weight, economy and performance.

The need for improved aerodynamics has also given Triplex unmatched expertise in specially shaped safety glass screens - an expertise which is passed on to the needs of specialist building design. Other major subsidiaries in this cross fertilisation of innovation and capability are the Aircraft and New Technologies Business Units. From its revolutionary 'Hyviz' coated glass (the most highly transparent heated aircraft windscreen available) to 'display up' screens and advanced glass-to-plastic laminates for high penetration resistance, Pilkington has dominated the relevant world market with its aircraft products.

As information technology becomes a regular part of our lives, glass has found an important new area of application. Pilkington Glass has developed 'Permabloc', the best and most practical material for liquid

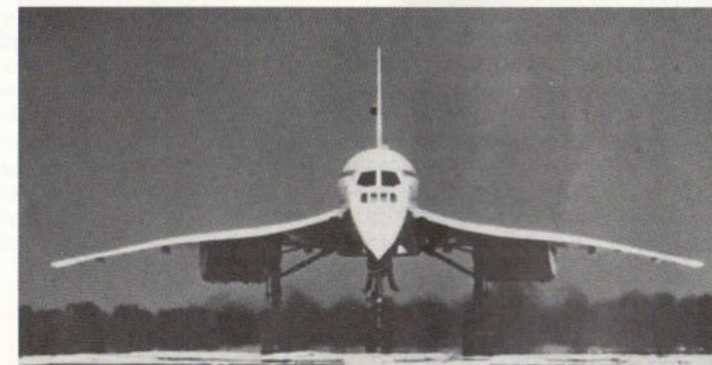
in twenty seven countries.

Any glass manufacture starts with the mixing of various silicates and their subsequent melting in a furnace. Until the advent of the float process high quality plate glass was made by a number of involved, labour intensive processes.

In the float process a ribbon of molten glass moves out from the melting furnace and literally floats across the surface of a bath of molten tin. It is held at a temperature of 1000°C harnessing the natural force of gravity to render both glass

surfaces perfectly flat, regular, and parallel. The ribbon is then progressively cooled until the glass has solidified enough to be removed from the molten tin on to rollers without damaging the bright fire-polished surfaces. It moves down the line (called the annealing lehr) until at the end it is automatically checked for quality, cut to stock size, and taken off for warehousing.

Today's plants are fully automated with computerised control of every stage from delivery and mixing of basic ingredients to the cutting and despatch of glass according to specific and often complex orders. The process is only interrupted for total shutdown of the plant: this happens every ten years or so for 'routine' rebuilding of the furnace areas. When operative a float plant will produce up to 6000 tonnes of glass a week, and the availability of such quantity and quality has played a major part in the increasingly diverse use of glass in our environment.



Making glass that will stay clear and intact at high speeds and altitudes calls for advanced technology in itself. Concorde uses highly specialised windscreens from Pilkington Glass Aircraft and Special Products.

crystal display screens available. Other such glasses for the electronics industry are in the pipeline, including anti-reflection screens for VDU's electro-conducting films on glass, digitiser panels for computer-aided design systems, electro-magnetic (anti-bugging) screening glasses, and glass discs for electronic data storage.

The company is based in St Helens in the North West, with several factories in the town itself. There are also factories in Doncaster, Birmingham, and Corby.

Some of the more specialised architectural glasses are sold direct to building contractors, but most are sold through major processing and distribution companies, then on down to builders and High Street Glaziers.

Float Glass - The Watershed Development

In an area where innovation has become practically the norm, Pilkington Glass has maintained its position as one of the most dynamic forces in the marketplace. New developments continue to open new horizons, but one Pilkington innovation - float glass - was absolutely fundamental.

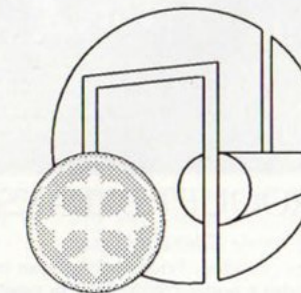
The float process was developed at St Helens in the late 1950s. It revolutionised flat glass manufacture and Pilkington had to be careful in its licensing of the technology to avoid havoc in the worldwide industry. Ninety-seven percent of the world's glass is now produced by the float method, with over a hundred plants

Sponsorship



PILKINGTON

Always
on the
ball.



Pilkington Glass

Tournament Reports

Southwick: 28-30 April Just another handicap weekend!

Report by Don Gaunt

There has been a recent re-run of the old chestnut:

'Should Croquet concentrate on reports of major events or should it contain much more about club matters?'

The arguments will continue as long as croquet does and the only thing of which we can be certain is that the poor editor will always be wrong!

I have a sneaky feeling that apart from a dedicated minority, most people only read tournament reports if

a. They played in the tournament and want to see what has been said about them.

b. The report looks unusual, libellous or both.

If (a) is true, then I should get at least 36 readers, while those looking for the latter part of (b) can stop reading now!

So, what happened? Nothing to hit the tabloids certainly. There was no crowd trouble, no-one was disqualified for drug offences, no-one was accused of cheating, no huge prize money was offered. Perhaps this is why croquet is only a minority sport. If it is, I hope that it stays that way, if that is what is wanted for popularity.

What we had was three days of pleasant croquet, with glorious weather, in delightful surroundings, under the relaxed but efficient managership of Pat Shine.

It was very nice to be playing without time limits. The event proved again what I have always believed, time limits often slow games down overall because people start

worrying about time up to an hour before the end. In consequence they fail to make the break that they would otherwise have made which would have finished the game.

The tournament was played in 6 blocks of 6 with block winners of A to D playing off a knockout to decide the winner, while blocks E & F were played as full bisque for high handicap players with a play-off for the two winners.

In block A, Simon Tuke gained a narrow win over yours truly which was enough for the block despite a loss to Ted Robinson who played some good croquet at the end of the game. B was dominated by Peter Howell despite giving away a total of 33½ bisques. In C, Freddie Reynolds showed himself in good form, winning all games. Block D was a fight between two improving players, Bob Fewtrell and Mike Town, with Mike coming out the victor.

The semi-finals resulted in wins for Simon and Mike, giving what promised to be a fine tussle in the final. Unfortunately Mike seemed to let the occasion overwhelm him and wasted his bisques, so that Simon came out a fairly comfortable winner.

In the E block, Gene Mears and John Simpson won all matches except against each other, where Gene triumphed. Peggy Allansan had a fairly comfortable tour through F block, although Jean Nash got close. The play-off was a much tighter affair here, with Gene only winning by 3. Veronica McClement was pleased to get a bronze medal.

As an ex-member of the Ipswich

'hit squad' to attack the Isle of Wight on previous occasions, I was delighted to see a large contingent of 'Vectis Vikings' descend on Southwick, including the Fewtrells who travelled daily so that they could get home to milk the goats!

I think that the last word on the tournament should go to my wife, talking to me on the way home after playing in her first CA handicap event. Maybe there is a lesson in attitude for all of us here.

'Well, I only won one game, but that was better than I expected and I enjoyed myself very much.'

RESULTS
(6 Handicap blocks: 36 entries)

Block A
Winner: S. Tuke (4 wins).
Runners-Up: D. Gaunt (4 wins); R. Hick (2 wins); P. Kennerley (2 wins); E. Robinson (2 wins); Mrs Coombs.

Block B
Winner: P. Howell (5 wins).
Runners-Up: R. Newnham (4 wins); Mrs D. Miller (3 wins); L. Nash (2 wins); J. Green (1 win); Mrs G. Wiggins.

Block C
Winner: F. Reynold (5 wins).
Runners-Up: A. Rowland (3 wins); Mrs B. Irwin (3 wins); R. Goodwin (2 wins); D. Middleditch (1 win); J. Exell.

Block D
Winner: M. Town (5 wins).
Runners-Up: R. Fewtrell (4 wins); D. Shaw (3 wins); F. Beard (2 wins); Mrs M. Green (1 win); Mrs M. Robinson.

Block E
Winner: G. Mears (5 wins).
Runners-Up: J.E. Simpson (4 wins); Mrs V. McClements (2 wins); Mrs E. Goldsmith



The long and the short of it! Adrian Saurin and John Haslam (right) square off at Southport.

(1 win); Mrs D. Brothers (1 win); Mrs B. Widdows (1 win).

Block F
Winner: Mrs P. Allanson (5 wins).
Runners-Up: Mrs J. Nash (3 wins); Mrs A. Mead (2 wins); Mrs F. Fewtrell (2 wins); Mrs B. Grein (1 win); Mrs F. Gaunt (1 win).

Surbiton: 13-14 April Four Stars at Surbiton's Easter Handicap

Report by Alec Thomas

Because of last summer and the extra dry ground it appears that the moisture is not holding in the soil. This has led to unusually dry courts for the time of year. At Surbiton this means more hills and burrows. To avoid this a rain dance was urgently needed. Whoever was in charge of it left it until 8.30am Good Friday morning when the heavens opened, drowning everyone taking part.

The monsoon conditions could not stifle a good tournament played in a friendly atmosphere and ably managed by Alec Thomas. Another bonus was the superb lunches concocted by George Noble over the two days. If croquet handicaps were given on culinary exploits, George would qualify for a -10.

On the playing side the result wasn't clear until the last game. Burge had won all five games up until the sixth and final round. His opponent was Graham Brightwell, winner of four out of five. Whoever won the rubber carried off the prize. After some indifferent play by both competitors, Burge eventually finished in the increasing gloom, pegging out his last ball from a good fifteen yards to keep the tankard in Surbiton.

RESULTS
(Handicap Swiss: 22 entries)

6 wins: T. Burge.
4 wins: G. Brightwell; J.W. Potter; Mrs C. Osmond; J. Sheraton-Davis; M. Stevens; M. Thursfield; A.R.K. Miller.
3 wins: A. Thomas; M. Llewellyn-Williams; J. Straw; G. Yonge; M. Poole.
2 wins: M. Haggerston; L. Wharrad; R. Noble; Miss C. Collis; Miss F. McCoig.
1 win: Mrs P. Healy; Mrs A. Robbilard; Mrs H. Potter; Mrs K. Yonge; D. Caporn.

Nottingham: 12-13 May Alternate Doubles Weekend

Report from Dab & Roger Wheeler

Nottingham had planned this doubles weekend as an introduction to tournament play for high bisquers. The intentions, however, were somewhat spoiled by the lack of a comparable number of low bisquers among the entrants! This resulted in the handicap gap coming between 15 and 14, with the enthusiastic but inexperienced James Death playing as a 'senior' partner.

The managers had requested that the tournament be played under alternate stroke rules and with full bisque provision, and these decisions worked well and seemed popular. There were 6 (shortened) games during the weekend and each player had a different partner for each game, using the system devised for the doubles in the 5-day tournament at Cheltenham. The winning low bisquer was (perhaps unfortunately!) one of the managers and the winning high bisquer was Graham Fowler. Several of the new players showed considerable promise. The managers' prizes for the pair scoring the largest number of points for their side (using bisques) during a single visit to the lawn were won by Rick Davis and Gordon Boyce with 11 points.

Surbiton: 15-16 April Great Work at Surbiton

Report by John Walters

Screaming Lord Ian Bond presided over his Rainbow Alliance of monster raving looney croquet players (inevitably they may be described thus, for they came out of hibernation for Easter). The alliance itself consisted of a red block (the 'hot-stuff' players; adding weight to the saying 'better dead than red') and a green block (the dregs of humanity); however, by round 2 all had turned blue on the manager's 'masterplan' - presumably due to the seasonal temperatures.

Though a time of year for miracles, defeat for Robert Fulford and the reappearance of grass on many a bare patch at Surbiton looked equally unlikely. Indeed the latter would have required a resurrection not seen for two millenia! Consequently, the closest we came to miracles was our own screaming Lord promoting 4 of the 'dregs' to 'hot-stuff' after round 2; green to red being our approximation for water into wine.

At this time of year players prefer quilts to quotes, and so it was left to a non-player, Steve Mulliner, to produce quote of the tournament: 'Robert Fulford will become the best of the young GB players'. Perhaps greater things yet might await Robert if he could secure the job as CA gradings officer!

En route to victory, Robert Fulford's only real challenges came from Ian Burridge, who found himself pegged out having reached penultimate and peg. Astonishing the crowd by cornering to give Robert a 6 yard roquet for a break, Ian was to see both that and a subsequent 7 yarder missed by his opponent, and yet still Captain Bob won out. The other challenge was from Francis Landor in the final round, but Robert avoided a messy 3-way play-off by capitalising on Francis' errors in the later game.

Tournament Reports

The manager permitted a club friendly on lawn 7 as the tournament began its death throes. It was there that we saw the shortest missed roquet of the weekend; no, not in the high-handicapped friendly but in the double banked match of Hilditch vs. Hyne. The shot in question was 3 inches long - about an inch too far for Richard Hilditch. Since the target ball which wasn't reached with this rather casual tap belonged to an opponent who was for peg alone, defeat was swift.

The friendliness of this tournament and of Surbiton was summed up in the raffle, where the 3 people who had expressed an interest in particular prizes were the 3 winners - and of the right prizes! Though easy, even fashionable, to criticise the Surbiton lawns, their state given the length of time they have existed is impressive. The work lavished on them by dedicated members like George Noble is amazing - he has calculated a 10 mile walk is necessary when he cuts the 6 lawns - and thanks from all to Ian Bond for building some huts!



Nicola Currie (Colston Girls School & Bristol C.C.), the first girl to win a place in one of our national junior squads. Congratulations!

Famous for its beer (or at least its beer drinkers), I shall remember Surbiton for the wonderful food. Dare I suggest the best use for currently ploughed lawn 2: a vegetable garden for Hazel Kittermaster's excellent cuisine!

RESULTS
(Advanced Play Knock-out: 22 entries)

Round 2:
R. Fulford bt D. Goacher +22, +17; D. Wiggins bt K. Aiton +10, +20; J. Walters bt R. Hilditch +4, +26; C. Clarke bt M. French +21, +14.

Semi-Finals:
Fulford bt Wiggins +13, +25TP; Clarke bt Walters +8, +11.

Final:
Fulford bt Clarke +26TP, +24, +17.

GREAT CROQUET BREAKS IN GLORIOUS DEVON



CROQUET BREAKS

2 day breaks £76.00 per person
5 days (Sunday-Friday) £190.00 per person
includes a bottle champagne in your room
Special reductions for club parties (min. 8 persons)

COURT BARN COUNTRY HOUSE HOTEL
Clawton · Holsworthy · Devon EX22 6PS · Telephone: (0409-27) 219

- * Warm hospitality and caring resident hosts
- * Country House atmosphere with log fires
- * Splendid traditional breakfasts
- * Use of hotel's chip and putt and 9-hole putting green - reduced rates at 3 local courses
- * Full-size croquet lawn with use of top equipment
- * Enjoy free Cream Teas after your game (winners of Tea Council's Best Teas in Britain 1988)
- * Daily Croquet Competitions with free wine, for the winners.
- * Meet in the intimate bar and select from 320 exciting wines (Winners of Mercier Wine List of the Year 1989)
- * 7 course candlelit dinners complete the perfect day before relaxing in the elegant lounges with your friends.

Recommended by Egon Ronay · Ashley Courtenay, Derek Johansen
BTA Commended Hotel

Short Story

Dourcula; A Nasty Story

By Bram Rush (no relation)

I have never beheld a country that so filled me with a sense of doom. The trees, the houses, the very land itself seemed weighed down by the bloody burden of its past. Only the mountains raised their heads, but with a clarity that suggested only the cruel sharpness of a thrown stone, the raw mouth of a freshly-hewn tomb. The people, vacant and listless, bowed to receive the accustomed blows of an all-seeing, ever-present fate; their faces blank, except for the brief, hectic spark of wrathful dread which lit up the eyes of the innkeeper's wife when I mentioned the name of my host. A sudden silence greeted my words. I turned and surveyed the clayey, expressionless faces of the twenty or so peasants who filled the cramped, smoky parlour.

All at once, a loud clattering outside announced the arrival of the carriage that was to take me on to my final destination. I was surprised to see that the box was deserted, the reins resting on the seat, and the horses standing quietly, steaming in the light of the low sun, which even now was touching the craggy horizon.

I was forced to lift up my own boxes, as I could prevail on none of the locals to venture forth from the inn. Then, as I looked about for my conductor, I heard the door slam and a loud murmur spring up within. Despite my insistent knocking, they would not reopen. After a moment I decided to climb into the carriage for warmth, there to await the driver. Scarcely had I done this when the vehicle started off with a jolt that threw me to the floor.

The drab countryside flashed past the window. Then, just as the sun disappeared behind the mountains, we were plunged into the deeper gloom of a dense forest. The carriage thundered over the rough track and boughs of trees scraped against both its sides. I did not relish the wild career and called to the mysterious driver, but he paid no heed; indeed, he cracked his whip again and again over the already wild horses' heads. Sinking back in my seat, I wondered at the sequence of events that had brought me, a humble Federation Development Officer, to this place. Who was this solitary nobleman, seemingly so shunned in his own demesne, who spoke in his letter of making the tiny village of Dourysky a Transylvanian 'Centre of Excellence'?

At length, we were out of the wood and galloping over cobbles. Looking out, I caught a glimpse of velvety turf and the dim ghosts of familiar court equipment. Then we screamed to a halt before the heavy ironclad door of what I took to be the main hall.

My host was gracious enough, even genial. We dined in the echoing hall before a blazing log, and the

meal, though served by an unpromising, loutish fellow, spoke well of the Castle's kitchens - and cellar.

I say 'we', but more accurately, I dined. My host excused himself by mentioning a trifling disorder of the stomach, but begged me to make free. We talked, and he astounded me by his grasp of history, the arts and sciences and the affairs of the World. He sensed my astonishment.

'Does it surprise you that such a hermit can keep up to date?' he asked, 'You must see my library, where I keep all the current periodicals as well as the accumulated wisdom of the centuries. I have devoted much time to reading - longer than you might guess. I hope you will excuse my retiring; I seldom stay up so late.'

I was glad to, as my journey had left me exhausted, and the fine food and wine had done nothing to alleviate my drowsiness. He lit me to my room, a handsome one overlooking the croquet court. As he left me - 'Perhaps tomorrow, a friendly trial of skill...?' I was happy to consent, and was soon between the sheets.

I did not sleep well. Whether it is that the strange circumstances of my arrival have disturbed my mind, or that the unaccustomed altitude of the place has interfered with my regular hours, I know not. In any case, I tossed about all the night, and half-awoke several times, when I am sure that I heard a gentle clicking noise. 'Strange', I wondered, 'Who could be playing croquet at this hour?'

The morning's bright sunshine dissipated some of my melancholy. I rose to find a note from my host, saying that he had unexpectedly been called out on business, and that our game would have to wait until later. My meals were served to me in the hall by the uncouth servant, whom I could not induce to respond to my efforts at conversation. Then, as he leaned past me to remove a dish, I started with shock as I saw in his open mouth the horrible stump where the tongue had been. The man gave me a sudden look of such unutterable antagonism that I also was silenced for the remainder of my meal!

The remainder of the day I spent in the Library, where I found that my host's description was no overstatement. There was a particularly fine collection of croquetabilia, and I spent many hours thumbing through the carefully-bound old numbers of 'Croquet'. As I opened each volume, I seemed to be irresistibly drawn to the columns at the back that detailed the dark work of the Handicappers. Who has not heard stories of these creatures - these unquiet demons who cast no shadow; silent in their machinations; reeking of pure malice? The legends and the facts were familiar to me; indeed, I had

made a study of such things.

I once visited an asylum where I knew there to be one who had defeated a handicapper and survived, but in such a condition that made further wins - or any form of excitement - out of the question. The man had once been a fine player, but when I saw him, his condition was pitiable. Not permitted to have a mallet in his room, he ceaselessly practiced his swing in the empty air, making clicking noises with his mouth to represent the impact of the balls. At other times he would gibber about a system to eliminate the missed short roquet and blobbed 6-inch hoop, until a burly attendant administered one of his regular doses of a powerful sedative.

1989 APPS TROPHY



Dan McCormick, 1989 winner of the Apps Trophy for the 'most improved' man. Dan's handicap came down from 13 to 0 during the season.

It was dusk when I again saw my host, though I had not heard him returning. I lamented that the croquet must once again be postponed; but smiling, he showed me the court garishly lit by dozens of torches, which stood on tall iron standards around the border. Although obviously an accomplished player, he failed to get the innings and I made capital of my recent Grade II coaching and finished with bisques standing. In a return game, my opponent, still genial, hit and made a fine break to the peg, but after I had again won in two turns I noticed that behind his polite expression lurked dark resentment, and there was a light in his eyes that boded no good

to any who should cross him. Consequently, in our third game I played less aggressively - in the interest of courtesy. Although I gave him several chances to shoot, he always played away to a neutral corner. This made it difficult for me to lose, although something told me that it would be prudent to do so. Tight-lipped, he swept away without wishing me goodnight, and the taciturn servant started to extinguish the torches.

As I made my way back to my room through the murky corridors I heard a sinister, echoing chuckle coming from a remote part of the castle, though I could not determine from which direction the sound emanated. I hurried on, and on reaching my room straightaway commenced to pack my bags. I am determined to quit this place without further delay. Even as I write an object has just been pushed under the door of my room. What can it be? I lay down my pen to inspect it.

Following the recent sensational events at Castle Dourcula, it fell to me to search the foul place from top to bottom and to find out and destroy every trace of its former master and his doings. In a bedroom overlooking the croquet court I found the body of J— H—, and the journal of which the foregoing passage constitutes the final entry. The unlucky man was stretched out on the ground near to the door. His face, pallid and drained of blood, was twisted in a hideous grimace of horror and despair. Clutched in his hand was a small white card...

CA WHITE WEATHER SUITS

We regret the considerable delay that has occurred in delivering orders placed early this year for CA White Weather Suits.

This delay is the result of a motor accident in which the manufacturer and a key member of his staff were killed.

Despite this dreadful setback, the company has decided to continue in business, and we hope that any outstanding orders will be delivered shortly.

CA White Weather Suits will continue to be available (price £39.50 to Associate members; £46.00 to others), but if you place an order, please be aware that in the present circumstances we cannot guarantee a delivery date.

Southwick: 26-29 May INTER-COUNTIES CHAMPIONSHIP Eastern Counties Win Again

Report by Robert Prichard

One night two complete sets of hoops and pegs were stolen from the courts; a sad reward for the Southwick Club's hard work and hospitality, providing ninety players from twelve counties with four days of almost unbroken croquet and sunshine.

It is easily the largest fixture in the calendar and many of us hope that any changes in format do not destroy the atmosphere deriving from its sheer size, which is more important than trying to devise a fair or logical set of rules. Southwick may be losing three of its eleven courts, so play in future may be less relentlessly continuous. With its wide range of handicaps (-2 to 6 this year) and freedom from ranking blight encouraging some unusual tactics (e.g. Nick Hynes's starts), there is always something amusing to watch.

Some hoops were stolen in play too. Freddie Reynold followed a series of magic hits in with a 10 yard penult to snatch a game where he started on first alone versus second and peg for Lionel Wharrad and Andrew Gregory. Mark Saurin went out from the unpromising position of an angled yard in front of penult with all other balls in corners. People generally wanted to make their own hoops and I only heard of two triples: by Paul Smith (straight) and John Mann.

Honourable but bottom were Midlands and Kent. Midlands had two good wins over Avon and Northern, but rather ran out of players after the draught beer ran out on the third day. Kent lost their first six matches with only one game won but were inspired by beating Middlesex, Ewan Mackenzie-Bowie and Michael Llewellyn-Williams (such Kentish names) winning a splendid tactical battle in which they should have been receiving four bisques. They won at least one game per match thereafter, gaining their second victory over the depleted Midlands.

Bedford only beat the two counties below them and Avon. They included half of the four women competitors, Gill Bogle and Judy Anderson who played together much of the time and the smartest blazer, that of Jon Watson, one of only two competitors to play in a tie. The sartorial highlight of the Yorkshire team was the changing colours of Martin Kolbuszewski's hats. They beat the three teams below them but also won a surprising whitewash against lofty Gloucester.

Also on four wins were Sussex and Hants, who until the last match always either lost all their games or won the match. Beware of those southern sharks when they have tasted blood. In the first two days Middlesex won four, helped by an

unbeaten bottom pair, who both played with the same Browne grip: Tom and one John Solomon (who first played in the Counties, for Surrey, in 1951). Thereafter their only win was a 2-1 over Yorkshire, both wins being +1 on time. Their captain, Thomas Coles, is recovering slowly from a bad skiing smash and could only manage two games, but his desperate frivolity was welcomed by friend and foe alike.

Four counties were equal third on seven wins. Avon (winners in 1987) and Gloucester (winners in 1989) started and finished well but stumbled in between. Devon and Dorset did not look so strong on paper but were difficult to bear. Their twins Ivor and Richard Brand got them off to a good start by beating Middlesex's Robert and Colin Prichard. I offer a small prize to anyone who can find another instance of two pairs of brothers playing each other in a CA event. Northern Counties' most unusual match was Eddie Bell and John Rose's victory over Bedford's Gill Bogle and Howard Bottomley. When time expired all four clips were on hoop 6, so the match was won without a lift being conceded. With full double banking, about half the games went to the 3 1/4 hour limit. (Back in 1951 they preferred a 2 1/2 hour limit, which would have caught almost everybody).

The two leaders both had nine wins. Surrey had Steve Mulliner on its list but his only appearances were telephonic. Bernard Neal's squad almost gained their first title since 1984, but their wins were not wide enough and they won only 22 games. Thus for the fourth time in six years the trophy went to Eastern Counties with 27 games. They had much the youngest team, and the youngest supporter: Aston French, whose toys included a transparent ball containing an aeroplane that may well be the prototype for a gyroscopically controlled ball that would roll straight over any surface. Meanwhile with a team starting with British Internationals Mark Avery and Robert Fulford and ending with the latest Welsh cap Ian Burridge and Welsh reserve Lewis Palmer they coped too well with traditional balls.

Team	Matches	Games	Pos'n
Eastern	9	27	1
Surrey	9	22	2
Northern	7	21	3
Avon	7	20	4
Gloucester	7	20	5
Devon & Dorset	7	20	6
Middlesex	5	17	7
Yorkshire	4	16	8
Sussex & Hants	4	13	9
Bedford	3	10	10
Midlands	2	8	11
Kent	2	7	12

Inter-Counties Championship

1990 INTER-COUNTIES CHAMPIONSHIP	AVON	BEDFORD	DEVON & DORSET	EASTERN	GLOUCESTER	KENT	MIDDLESEX	MIDLANDS	NORTHERN	SURREY	SUSSEX & HANTS	YORKSHIRE	WINS	FINAL POSITION
Avon		1-2	2-1	2-1	2-1	3-0	1-2	1-2	0-3	3-0	3-0	2-1	7	4 =
Bedford	2-1		1-2	0-3	1-2	2-1	0-3	3-0	0-3	1-2	0-3	0-3	3	10
Devon & Dorset	1-2	2-1		1-2	2-1	3-0	2-1	3-0	1-2	1-2	2-1	2-1	7	4 =
Eastern	1-2	3-0	2-1		1-2	3-0	3-0	2-1	3-0	3-0	3-0	3-0	9	1
Gloucester	1-2	2-1	1-2	2-1		3-0	2-1	3-0	3-0	0-3	3-0	0-3	7	4 =
Kent	0-3	1-2	0-3	0-3	0-3		2-1	2-1	0-3	0-3	1-2	1-2	2	12
Middlesex	2-1	3-0	1-2	0-3	1-2	1-2		3-0	0-3	1-2	3-0	2-1	5	7
Midlands	1-2	0-3	0-3	1-2	0-3	1-2	0-3		2-1	0-3	1-2	1-2	2	11
Northern	3-0	3-0	2-1	0-3	0-3	3-0	3-0	1-2		1-2	3-0	2-1	7	3
Surrey	0-3	2-1	2-1	0-3	3-0	3-0	2-1	3-0	2-1		3-0	2-1	9	2
Sussex & Hants	0-3	3-0	1-2	0-3	0-3	2-1	0-3	2-1	0-3	0-3		2-1	4	8
Yorkshire	1-2	3-0	1-2	0-3	3-0	2-1	1-2	2-1	1-2	1-2	1-2		3	9



Talent scouts at the Inter-Counties?

Teams

(Captain: first named)

Eastern: Steve Comish, Mark Avery, Robert Fulford, Martin French, Duncan Reeve, Tim Harrison, Ian Burridge, Lewis Palmer.

Surrey: Bernard Neal, George Noble, Jerry Guest, Mike Stevens, Tony Mrozinski, David Wiggins, Gordon Vince.

Northern: Eddie Bell, Mark Saurin, John Rose, Brian Storey, Alan Sutcliffe, Tim Haste.

Avon: Ray Ransom, Frances Ransom, David Goacher, Alvar Bray, John Mann, Roger Jenkins, Andrew Symons.

Gloucester: Ian Maugham, David Maugham, Don Gaunt, Paul Smith, Francis Lander, Alan Bogle, Dennis Moorcraft.

Devon & Dorset: Les Butler, Ivor Brand, Richard Brand, Strat Liddiard, David Harrison-Wood, John Toye, Ian Plummer.

Middlesex: Thomas Coles, John Solomon, Robert Prichard, Colin Prichard, Phil Cordingley, Debbie Prentis, Paul Torrington, Alan Chance, Tom Browne.

Yorkshire: Bill Lamb, John Davis, John Greenwood, Martin Kolbuszewski, Ted Scott, Peter Thompson.

Sussex & Hants: Roger Wood, Steve Battison, Les Chapman, Nigel Gale, Robin Hobbs, Freddie Reynold, Bob Rogers, Simon Tuke.

Bedford: John Wheeler, Howard Bottomley, Tom Anderson, Judy Anderson, Jon Watson, Gill Bogle, Brian Hallam.

Midlands: Derek Caporn, Nick Hyne, Lionel Wharrad, Julian Straw, Andrew Gregory, Gerald Johnson, Smokey Eades.

Kent: Dennis Shaw, Ewan Mackenzie-Bowie, Tim Hayter, Peter Nash, Gordon Drake, Peter Howell, John Ruddock, Michael Llewellyn-Williams, Vincent Camroux.

Coaching Comments Split Croquet Strokes

By Bill Lamb

Split croquet strokes are perhaps the most interesting strokes to play because of their wide variety: the stroke can be played so that the balls diverge at any angle up to 90 degrees with the relative distances travelled by the striker's ball and the croqueted ball dependent upon the type of action used. Expert players can play the stroke with precision, although they prefer to play simpler strokes in a fully controlled break, but beginners and high-bisquers find the stroke difficult.

If we leave aside for the moment the way in which the ball is struck, the principal factor affecting the outcome of the stroke is the line of swing or, in other words the direction of aim. Ask an expert where he aims when he plays a particular split and the response will usually be a puzzled look and an answer 'Somewhere over there'. This is because good players have a feel for the way to play a stroke, acquired through practice and experience, and they do not need to calculate where to aim.

However, beginners and high-bisquers require some guidance and may find the situation confusing because there are different methods recommended by the various authors of books on croquet. The two methods are splitting the angle and

splitting the distance. With the angle method the line of swing bisects the angle formed by the direction in which the two balls move; with the distance method the aiming point bisects the distance between the balls in their final positions. Of course, if both balls travel the same distance (diagram 1), there is no difference between the two methods. However, if the balls travel different distances as in diagram 2, there can be a considerable difference between the two aiming points. The question is: is it better to split the angle or split the distance?

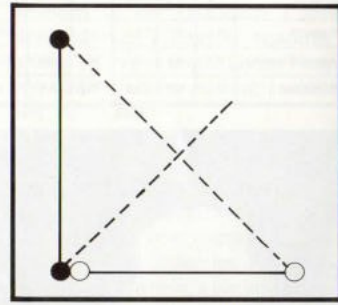


Diagram 1: If both balls travel the same distance, there is no difference between the two methods.

My preference has always been for the angle method, so I was interested to see an elegant demonstration by

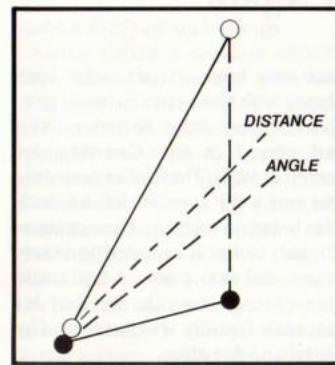


Diagram 2: If the balls travel different distances, there can be a considerable difference between the two aiming points.

Bernard Neal on a recent Grade II course at Cheltenham showing that the distance method was better. It was only later that I realised that Bernard had played the strokes with a roll action, on some occasions sending the striker's ball further than the croqueted ball, and that this might be a clue to answering the question.

Consider the position in diagram 3, which is a standard split in a three-ball break when a useful rush has not been obtained after running hoop 2. In the diagram the stroke is played from a point one yard north of hoop

2 and the intention is to split the balls to one yard north of hoops 3 and 4. The distance method gives an aiming point one yard north of the peg along the line between the hoops 3 and 4 and the line of swing towards this point is just to the south of hoop 6. The angle method gives a line of swing more to the north of hoop 6.

My experience of watching people play this shot is that most players aim to the north of hoop 6; in my own case, I aim even further north than would be indicated by the angle method. The stroke can be played with a fairly strong drive action and is one that is well worth practising.

But now suppose that you want to reverse the position and send the striker's ball to hoop 4 and the croqueted ball to hoop 3 with a split pass roll. Here the angle method is completely wrong and the distance method is much better. I aim even further south.

So perhaps I might offer a general rule of thumb to high-bisquers. If the stroke is played with a drive or stop-shot action sending the croqueted ball much further than the striker's ball, then splitting the angle will give a better result. On the other hand, if the stroke is played with a strong roll action then splitting the distance is better.

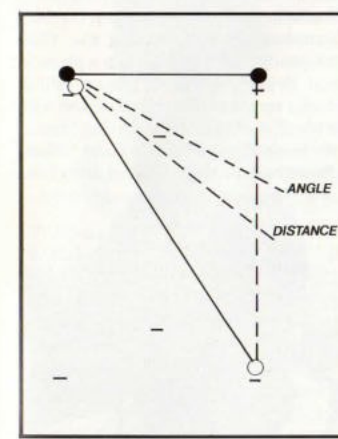


Diagram 3: Showing how the aiming points differ if the balls travel different distances.

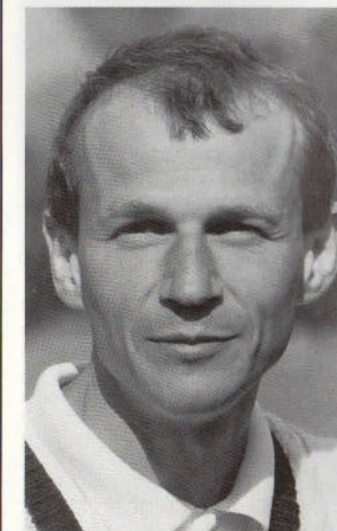
Split croquet stroke practice should be regular part of every improving player's practice routine, particularly those strokes useful in a three-ball break, so that ultimately a feel for the shot can be acquired and the necessity of aiming points avoided.

WESTERN CHAMPIONSHIP Mulliner Falls from Number One in Rankings

Report by Chris Clarke

This year, the major surprise of the Westerns was the weather. The sun beat down on the lawns so that the moisture from the watering system was only obvious in the morning. In fact, the lawns almost reached medium-paced at some stages of the tournament.

The first round match between Goacher and Clarke produced a tight finish. The match went to three with two hours for the final game. After 70 mins, Goacher was on rover and peg vs. 1 and 1. Clarke hit and had a ball to 4-back in 9 mins. Goacher hit the lift and had a leave in 10 mins. Clarke hit and took his 4-back ball to the peg and, after Goacher had taken some time to corner, Clarke established a break, but took off after 1-back. Goacher split up the balls and won on time. Chris probably spent less than 1 of the 6 hours on the lawn.



Francis Landor, who found some cracks in Fulford's armour.

Another first round encounter of interest was between Fulford and Landor. Robert had won his first 16 games of the year, but Francis soon ended that with some good play. Fulford levelled and it was only then that Landor allowed errors to creep into his game. Fulford later admitted to cracking in this match and perhaps with some tighter play from oppo, he might have been out.

Goacher played Maugham in the second round and again played very well, hitting all his lift shots. It looked as if Maugham would square the match in the second with an excellent delayed triple, but a cruel hill on the straight rover peel cost him the match. All the other seeds reached the quarters.

Aiton was not playing well and lost to Saurin, Mulliner beat Goacher who missed his first lift shots of the tournament, and Fulford beat Murray with two more triples, taking his tally over 100. However, the best quarter was between French and Irwin. This was a very interesting encounter

between two aggressive players who aren't afraid of using the corners. Both played some good croquet, with French in particular playing very confidently with several aggressive break pick-ups. French had a TPO in the first, but after a close pegged out game, Irwin turned it into an OTP. After a close second which went to French, time was becoming a factor. Neither of the players were slow or overly defensive and so the 6-hour limit may well need re-thinking. Nevertheless, Martin managed to peg out just before time to score an impressive and well deserved victory.

The semis saw Fulford beat French, who lost some form, and Mulliner beat Saurin despite several inexplicable errors. The Swiss was also in progress with Aiton, Clarke, Irwin and Maugham all unbeaten. Maugham beat Clarke 26TP and Aiton beat Irwin. Aiton was playing with carefree abandon and this enabled David to win the Swiss. French beat Saurin in straight games to take third place.

The element of contention was the second place in the Swiss. The manager, wishing to get the prize-giving over, told the 5 players who might possibly finish on 5 wins to shoot-out at the peg. This was done and Foulser won with 2/5 with Irwin the only other to hit. However, Foulser then lost to Burridge and so had only 4 wins - the prize money should have been Irwin's. After conversations in which Foulser said that Maugham in the Chairman's Salver 'should do what his conscience decides', this was put to him over the issue of the prize money. Foulser did what his conscience decided and kept it!!!!

And so to the final - a splendid best of five affair. Fulford won the first 26TP after an opening in which Mulliner refused to shoot at Robert's 10 yard join, but instead had a wide

join himself. The second saw Mulliner coming back to win 17TP. The third was the only game not to have a triple and went to Fulford by 17 despite an error. The next was all Mulliner 26TP, who thereby set up an exciting decider. Steve was confident that Robert would now be tired and that his own athleticism would reap dividends. Robert won 26TP.

This finally allowed Robert to usurp Steve from his in-built number 1 position. (Steve's computer nearly died. Later at the Men's, it tried to put Steve on top again after losing 3-1 to Robert). The players cheered, Robert grinned, and Steve started thinking about new formulae to allow him to top the charts once more.

RESULTS Western Championship

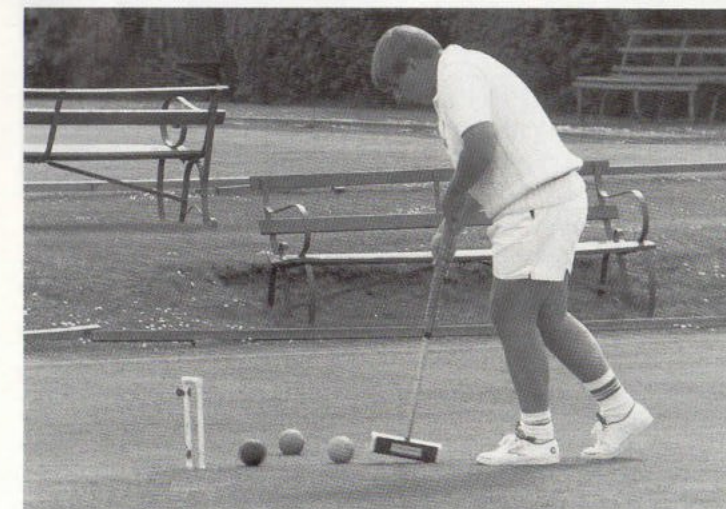
Round 1
R. Fulford bt F. Landor -25, +26, +6; D. Gaunt bt R. Brand +4, +5(T); A. Symons bt B.G. Neal +24, +16; F.I. Maugham bt M. Murray -8, +25, +26TP; M. French bt A.F. Sutcliffe +17, +12; I.G. Vincent bt A. Gregory -17, +18, +4; D.L. Gunasekera bt A. Mrozinski +21, +15; C.J. Irwin bt S.E. Lewis +24, +12; M. Saurin bt S. Comish +16, +22; A. Bray bt P. Smith +11(T), +10(T); I. Plummer bt J. Jackson +8, -22, +16; K.M.H. Aiton bt I. Burridge -4, +6TP, +22TP; D. Maugham bt A. Bogle +15, +20TP; D. Goacher bt C.D. Clarke -12, +16, +4(T); D. McCormick bt R. Ransom +15, +26TP; S.N. Mulliner bt D. Foulser +24TP, +19.

Round 2
Fulford bt Gaunt +25, +17; Murray bt Symons +17, +20; French bt Vincent +17, +17; Irwin bt Gunasekera +3, +17; Saurin bt Bray; Aiton bt Plummer +17, +3; Goacher bt D. Maugham +17, +3; Mulliner bt McCormick +22, +26TP.

Round 3
Fulford bt Murray +23TP, +26TP; Aiton bt Irwin -7OT, +2, +10; Saurin bt Aiton +21, +4TP; Mulliner bt Goacher +26TP, +26TP.

Semi-Finals
Fulford bt French +2TP, +23TP; Mulliner bt Saurin +13TP, +17TP.

Final
Fulford bt Mulliner +26TP, -17, +17, -26TP, +26TP.



Robert Fulford doing the 4-back peel in the final game to beat Steve Mulliner 3-2 in the final.

THE BISHAM ABBEY COURSE: 1990

Report by Chris Hudson

This was the second year we had held a coaching course at Bisham Abbey for players in the handicap range 12 to 6. The course, based on Don Gaunt's book 'Plus One on Time', was once again run by the author himself.

As in the previous year, the course attracted 8 players who attended from Monday tea-time until Friday lunchtime. Alan and Elizabeth O'Dair lived locally and travelled to Bisham every day. The rest of us took advantage of Bisham's residential facilities which provide bedrooms and lecture rooms within a 30-second walk of the 2 full-size lawns available.

Monday evening included a re-cap of basic strokes and shots, with one or two specialities known to Don and those who have been to Bisham thrown in for good measure. Tuesday morning concentrated on 'knowing your own ability' - quite a salutary exercise for most of us! - followed by demonstrations of hampered shots and the four-ball break. How to pick one up, both with and without bisques, covered by Don very thoroughly with theory and practice sessions.

A feature of the course is the 'homework' that Don gives to each student at the end of every session, providing three or four examples and techniques to work on throughout the following practice period. For some, it all started to come together - for others, it will take a little longer! But the practical sessions were very helpful in consolidating ideas, and providing food for thought in future.

Wednesday dealt with 'planning your game', the three-ball break, and some helpful hints, followed in the afternoon by a discussion of tactics with and without bisques and how to play when giving bisques. Then came the first competitive game, with George Chamberlin, Stephen Allen, Elizabeth O'Dair and Keith Parsons winning through to the semi-finals.

On Thursday our thoughts were directed towards the end game, with some interesting practical examples. In the afternoon, the tournament semi-finals were followed by sessions on how to handle pegged-out games. The tournament was won on Friday morning by George Chamberlin, who beat Keith Parsons in the final.

Looking back on the week at the end of the course, we all agreed it had met its objectives. The food was considered to be better than the previous year, as were the lawns, although it was difficult to play a break accurately, particularly when the grass was damp. At such times, it required quite considerable strength to reach one end of the lawn from the other.

It would have been nice to have had the CA's video camera available to provide 'action replays' of stroke-making by those on the course, and we shall try to organise this in future. Some course members would have liked to start the course at lunchtime on Monday, and thus made time for an extra half day on break building.

Some consideration must be given to the best



Alan Laidlaw practising during the course at Bisham Abbey - he attended the course in 1989 and came back for more this year!

place to hold a course like this. Bisham Abbey has good facilities, where course members can live together for the duration of the course and much useful discussion can be had in the bar or elsewhere after the formal course is over. But the lawns at present are not up to good club standard, although they are getting better.

Attendees: Stephen Allen, George Chamberlin, Alan Laidlaw, Pam Kendall, Alan O'Dair, Elizabeth O'Dair, Keith Parsons, and Derek Powell.

Coaches: Don Gaunt and Chris Hudson.

Golf Croquet Handicaps

Dear Sir,
I was recently buttoned-holed by an enthusiastic croquet player whose club played only Golf Croquet.

Having read the rules of Golf Croquet, she was looking for guidance on how to set Golf Croquet handicaps.

Now I know that many clubs have Golf Croquet sections and that some clubs play in regular Golf Croquet leagues. But I have never come across the game played with bisques.

Does it happen and, if so, how are the handicaps awarded?

The Laws of Golf Croquet provide that unless a player has been given a special Golf Croquet Handicap, his handicap shall be determined from his Association Croquet handicap in accordance with the table set out in the Laws.

However, this seems to be putting the cart before the horse, as most people learn Golf Croquet before learning Association Croquet.

With interest in Golf Croquet increasing, perhaps our Handicap Committee could give some thought to this. And, come to that, why don't we enlarge the Golf Croquet Cups Tournament to include a handicap event?

Chris Hudson,
Englesea Brook.

Bombay Sapphire Solomon Trophy

A Great Match in Prospect

Both Great Britain & Ireland and the United States have announced their teams for this year's Bombay Sapphire Solomon Trophy match, and profiles of the players are given below.

The match will be played at the Roehampton Club from Saturday 7th July to Wednesday 11th July. Entry to the lawns are free for CA members by kind permission of the Roehampton Club. Visitors who are not members of the CA will be required to pay an entry fee of £5.00.

Tickets are available for the welcoming cocktail party on the evening of Friday 6th July and for the Farewell Dinner on Wednesday 11th July. Both events will be held at the Roehampton Club, and full details are available from the CA Office. Please make early application to avoid disappointment.

The match will be decided as the result of 9 doubles matches and 12 singles matches, each best-of-three games. The doubles are scheduled for the Saturday, Monday, and Wednesday of the event, with the singles on Sunday and Tuesday. However, some singles matches may start on the previous day if the doubles matches finish earlier than expected.

UNITED STATES TEAM



Peyton Ballenger
Peyton, from Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, is the Croquet Director at the Croquet Club at PGA National. She is currently ranked 26th and considered to be the top woman player in the United States. She was a member of the 1988 US International Challenge Cup team and is the former Florida and California State Champion. She began her croquet career at Pinehurst Country Club in North Carolina in 1984. Peyton was the first US woman to play in the 1989 Continental

BOMBAY SAPPHIRE SOLOMON TROPHY

WELCOMING
COCKTAIL PARTY
Friday 6th July

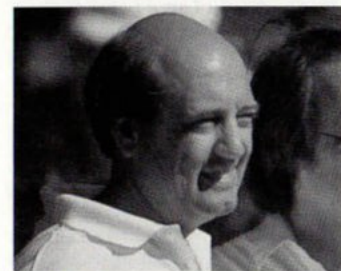
FAREWELL DINNER
Wednesday 11th July

Both events
at the Roehampton Club

Full details from the
CA Office

071-736-3148

Airlines World Croquet Championship, and in April 1990 she was named the most valuable US player in the 1990 Gieves and Hawkes US International Challenge Cup.

**Ray Bell**

Ray, the US team captain, is from Scottsdale, Arizona. This 41 year old real estate developer also holds the office of Vice-President of the USCA's South-western Region. Ray is currently ranked 7th in the USCA Grand Prix Ranking system. He is a 5 time US National Champion and he won the US National Singles Championship in 1985. Returning as the Captain of the US team, Ray has represented the United States on numerous National teams since 1984.

**Kiley Jones**

Aged 22, Kiley is from New York City, New York. He is an elementary school teacher in New York City. A past US National Doubles Champion, Kiley also won the National Club Team Championships in 1988 for the New York Croquet Club. No stranger to British croquet lawns, Kiley has been a member of the US Team since 1983, competing against Great Britain in 1985 and 1988. He has also competed in the British Open and is a certified British referee. Kiley has been nominated by the USCA to play in the 1990 Continental Airlines World Championship to be held in London this September.

**Bob Kroeger**

Robert (Bob) Kroeger is from Boston, Massachusetts. A musician and croquet professional for the Newport Casino, this 38 year old is currently ranked 5th in the United States. Bob placed 5th in the 1989 National Singles and 4th in the Doubles with John C. Osborn. He is the author of the instructional book/audiocassette 'Croquet ... How to Play the Perfect Game' and recently collaborated with Ted Prentis on a new instructional video, both produced by the Croquet Foundation of America. He was a member of the 1988 US International Challenge Cup team and the 1989 Solomon Trophy team.

**Teddy Prentis**

Teddy is from West Palm Beach, Florida. A full-time croquet professional, this 40 year-old began playing at the age of 14. Ted teaches croquet in South Florida in the winter and in New York in the summer. He was the world's first full-time instructor and has just produced a new instructional video in conjunction with Bob Kroeger. A member of the US Croquet Hall of Fame, Teddy is the holder of 8 US National titles and has represented the United States in both Solomon Trophy and International Challenge Cup teams. Ted has been nominated by the USCA to play in the 1990 World Championship.

**Jerry Stark**

Jerry is from St Helena, California. Aged 35, he recently became a full-time croquet professional at the Meadowood Resort in the Napa Valley of California under the direction of current US National Singles Champion, Damon Bidencop. A member of the 1988 US Challenge Cup team and the 1989 Solomon Trophy team, Jerry competed in the inaugural World Croquet Championships in London in 1989 and won the 'Fun Cup'. He has been nominated by the USCA to play in the 1990 World Championships.

GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND TEAM

**Nigel Aspinall**

Nigel comes from Surrey and has been one of the world's top players since the early 1970s. Aged 43, he is a computer programmer. He has won the British Open Singles Championship 8 times, the Open Doubles Championship 11 times, and the President's Cup 11 times. He has also played against Australia and New Zealand 4 times since 1969.

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 a finalist in the 1989 British Open Doubles Championship and winning the 1989 President's Cup. This won him a place in Great Britain & Ireland's team which recently returned from New Zealand with the MacRobertson Shield, having beaten both Australia and New Zealand. Whilst in New Zealand, Robert played in the New

**William Prichard**

William Prichard is a seasoned international campaigner. He has played in 5 Robertson Shield series, and 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.

Zealand Open Championship and lost in the final to World Champion, Joe Hogan. A hard and accurate hitter of the ball, Robert has become one of the most feared opponents in British Croquet, winning the 1990 Men's Championship in May this year. He is currently reading mathematics at Durham University.

**Colin Irwin**

Colin, aged 38, is from Plumley, Cheshire. He is a seasoned international player, having played for Ireland since 1985. He represented Great Britain & Ireland in the MacRobertson Shield series in 1986, and was selected again for the 1990 tour, when his consistent play did much to ensure victory for his team. In 1989, he reached the semi-finals of the World Championship, and was third in the President's Cup. He is a Sales Manager for Speciality Chemicals.

**David Openshaw**

David Openshaw, the Great Britain & Ireland 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. David has captained the Great Britain and Ireland team in three MacRobertson Shield Series. He is Managing Director of Lex Specialist Car Group.

THE NEW SPIRIT OF THE SOLOMON TROPHY
Bombay Sapphire Dry Gin to Sponsor the Event.

The Solomon Trophy, the Ryder Cup of Croquet, returns to the UK this year and will be contested at Roehampton from the 7th to the 11th of July. Making its debut in the UK at this event, following its success in the States, is Bombay Sapphire, a remarkable gin as true blue as the game of croquet itself.

Bombay Sapphire Dry Gin is the new sponsor of the Great Britain & Ireland Solomon Trophy croquet team, to be captained by David Openshaw.

Named after the Indian sub-continent's most celebrated jewel, Bombay Sapphire - like croquet - is the essence of style and elegance.

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 Mens Championship, winning the Junior Championship a year later! Mark was not available to play in the 1989 World Championship, but he showed his form by coming 4th in the President's Cup. He was selected for the 1990 MacRobertson Shield and performed with distinction. He is currently a student at Sussex University.

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGES

From 'Foxy' Carter, President of the United States Croquet Association.

This is my first visit to the United Kingdom since becoming the President of the United States Croquet Association. I am delighted to be here and look forward to meeting with the officers and members of the Croquet Association. My congratulations to your new Chairman, Steve Mulliner. The members of the United States National team and I are honored to be here on this occasion for the playing of the 1990 Bombay Sapphire Solomon Trophy matches, one of the highlights in the USCA calendar.

John Solomon has for many years been a great friend and an inspira-



tional force to the USCA. He helped us develop our organization and rules of play, and by kindly providing the Solomon Trophy has given us the impetus and will to develop a growing core of USCA players dedicated to playing in International Rules events. To John, our special thanks.

FOXY CARTER

From John Solomon, President of the Croquet Association

I am delighted to extend a welcome to the USCA team which has arrived here to compete for the Solomon Trophy and we extend our thanks to Bombay Sapphire Dry Gin who have agreed to sponsor this event.

It was a great personal pleasure when this competition was inaugurated that my name was associated with it. I was privileged to be one of the team which first visited the United States in 1967 when we discovered for the first time the intricacies of American Rules.

Since then the USCA has appreciated the world-wide dominance of International Rules and has made enormous strides to achieve understanding of the new techniques in-

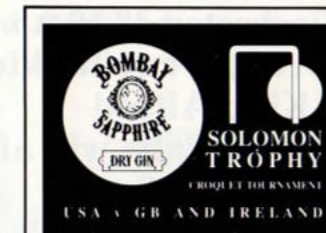


voled.

We are very pleased to welcome Mr Foxy Carter, on his first visit as President of the USCA, together with what we understand is a very strong team, and look forward to a closely fought contest.

JOHN SOLOMON

Bombay Sapphire Solomon Trophy

Test the Taste of
Bombay Sapphire
for Yourself!

For the opportunity to be amongst the first in this country to sample Bombay Sapphire, simply answer the following questions:

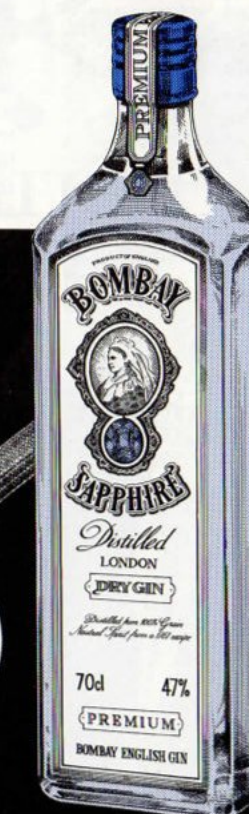
- What is the essential ingredient of gin?
- How many botanicals are used in the distillation process of Bombay Sapphire?
- Which famous Royal was presented with a sapphire and diamond engagement ring?

The first fifty correct entries to be pulled out of a hat will each receive a miniature bottle of this quality gin.

Please send your entries on a post-card to:

Bombay Sapphire 'Croquet' Competition, The Public Relations Business, 5 Berners Street, London, W1P 3AG.

True Blue.



BOMBAY SAPPHIRE. POUR SOMETHING PRICELESS.

Tournament Reports

Winchester: 13-16 April Cornetto-cut Junkie on the Courts of King Alfred Barlow Balls win at Winchester

Report by Peter Dorke

To chocolate cake junkies like young Tony Mrozinski and your venerable reporter the Winchester Club's first calendar tournament was an Easter treat to remember, not just for the croquet - which showed marked signs of winter practice - but for the magnificence of the club's rum and chocolate gateau, available with ice-cream for a mere pound.

On Saturday we celebrated my thrashing him soundly with 2 solid slices of this confection, each slice framed by ample dollops of frozen nectar. On Sunday we celebrated again as he avenged himself with a gold medal triple. Sadly, this time, due to a misunderstanding at the sweet bar, my portion appeared without ice-cream and covered with that insubstantial and taste-free cream that you squirt from a can. Mrozinski, like his old friend and doubles partner Ken Jones (whom I certainly did not expect to be mentioning in this report) did rather better in the food stakes and got his ice-cream, though the quantity was somewhat reduced.

This, plus a series of games tossed cavalierly away, was the only blot on an otherwise delightful long week-end. The local members had gone to extraordinary length to make this a successful first tournament. Les Chapman had even managed to purloin the World Championship



Andy Symons, winner of Block D.

Cup - borrowed, he said, from a Mr Hogan - to stand in for the tournament's proper trophies which had got lost in the post. No expense was spared in providing tankards and tee-shirts for the winners. Other clubs might well do likewise but not everyone is as generous as ol' 'Bracers': would you lend the tournament reporter your second best BMW for the weekend? Cynics would say he was hoping for a good write-up of the new Barlow balls, recently imported from South Africa by our Les, with a view to personal gain and the benefit of all croquet-playing mankind. Well, cynics would be wrong, for this reporter's opinion of said balls was formed in a rather revealing way:

Barlow balls, we were informed on Friday morning, would be used during this tournament and our views would be noted with interest. My heart sank somewhat, for I have always been a Jaques man deep down. From time to time such interested parties as 'Whiskery Joe' Jackson and 'Gentleman Bob' Smith, our excellent manager, enquired earnestly - timorously, even - as to how I was getting on with them. Well, I opined, they're okay but I'm having trouble with big pass rolls. However, a thought finally struck me and, on the nervous enquiry being made yet again, I admitted that I was having problems only with the first colours, the second colours being totally satisfactory. Aha! they cried, the first colours are all Jaques; only the seconds are by Barlow. Need I say more? Les claims the balls are indestructible - all I can say is that they look like Jaques', they sound like Jaques', they feel like Jaques' but they play not as a Jaques ball too often does but as it always should. Maybe with a couple of dollops of ice-cream they would even taste good.

(Will that do, Les? Usual fee in used fivers, please.)

The above-mentioned Mr Smith did a fine job, as is, I am told, his wont. He passed the Dorke grumble-like-hell-on-the-last-day test with flying colours: I have rarely met a better-natured-manager - shades of the inestimable Paul Hands. Speaking of whom, a most important part of the tournament was the Hands' Egyptian, to which all had been looking forward eagerly. The Winchester version, modified by Kevin Carter, resulted in a win by -er - Kevin Carter and I'm still trying to work out how he fixed it. One criticism I would make of this particular Egyptian was that it did not provide the large number of games that this type of event should. Perhaps it was too ambitious of the organisers to run three events in one

week-end.

The lawns, carved from the living turf of the Winchester Tennis and Squash Club, were entirely satisfactory, despite the looming presence of ancient Saxon burial mounds on last season's base lines. Significantly, in the heavy rain which graced much of the tournament, the lawns remained water-free, while nearby brand-new 'all weather' tennis courts had large areas of standing water.

The setting out of hoops and general dressing of the lawns were the work of Hugh Smorfit, who appeared at the club each morning as dawn's rosy fingers caressed the tip of King Alfred's sword in Broadway. Hugh featured in a rather public infringement of Law 39 which caused much fluttering amongst the referees ranged along the windows of the lawn one commentary box.

Remarkably, half the entry in the Grayson Challenge managed to come first, so it was lucky that only a cardboard replica of the trophy was available to be divided equally amongst the winners. The Asa-Thomas Salver for handicap play was available to be presented by the donor herself to the, fortunately, single winner, Dennis Regan. Dennis was anxious to have it known that his home club is at Kington Langley. 'Where?', I hear you cry. You know...Kington Langley...somewhere near Kingston Maurward. 'Oh, Kingston Maurward... now I know where you mean!'

Runner up in the same competition, Bob Fewtrell has a rather less specific address, being a man of the world in a very liberal sense. His sailor's roll as he crossed the lawns in white bell-bottoms and blue jacket told the whole story of his wandering life. When he gives up his favourite tactic of joining up near the peg he will be hard to beat. Faith, his First Mate, is a warlike player who is also determined to improve and will do so if she takes all the advice I've given her (he said modestly).

So to the tournament dinner, an event I usually strive to avoid. At Winchester this was unnecessary, as Les did not invite me. Still smarting from this oversight (and 5 straight defeats), I retired on the last afternoon to the sweet bar to console myself in a dish of chocolate gateau, only to find that the price had gone up by 10%. Beaten once more by inflation, I took a last look at the cathedral then set out on the long road to Ludlow.

Cheltenham: 13-16 April A Full House at Cheltenham

By Rachel Darby

The cold wet weather did noticeably suppress the new season's competitive aspirations, expectations and apprehensions met on the lawns of Cheltenham this weekend.

We were amiably and efficiently pitched into the fray by Alan Bogle who managed this weekend as a most able and natural successor to the late Mike Finn.

Alan had a good tournament, winning five out of his eight games with the demands of management surely costing him the game against Ivor Brand. After sticking in hoop 5, his attention was distracted by his duties and when his turn came again he stepped confidently on to the lawn and after a series of elegant shots ran hoop 5 perfectly, only to be told by Ivor that his turn stopped there because Ivor in his previous turn had already peeled Alan's ball through the hoop.

Tony White, the Oxford bandit, was reduced after the first day from 6½ to 5. Despite this reduction, he was playing well against the eventual block winner Peter Darby, until Peter pegged out Tony's forward ball leaving Tony somewhat confused as to how to play a pegged out game. When Ian Plummer, also from Oxford, who was watching the game was asked his views on Tony's tactics, he commented 'how can you criticise something that does not exist?'

A feature of the tournament was the number of pegged out games. In Block B Peter Leach seemed to have the advantage when he pegged out Mike Ranshaw's forward ball. However, Mike made a sensational break when he hit in from 25 yards and went from one back to the peg in one turn. At no stage did he have the break under control, but he kept going with spectacular hoop approaches and won by just two points.

Another peg out involved Dennis Moorcraft and Andrew Gregory in Block E. Andrew had failed in his peg out attempt on Dennis' ball and Dennis promptly hit in, failed to get a rush on Andrew's ball, but pegged it out from the yard line near hoop 4. Dennis proceeded to play a very careful game always hiding from Andrew Gregory's ball and hardly giving Andrew a target throughout.

Mark Wormald played well to win all his eight games in Block E. For the first time in well over a year, Gill Bogle's handicap seems to be about right as she won four out of her eight games, but no doubt this season she will continue to outstrip the handicappers as she did last year.

The star performer of the tournament was David Maugham, who not only won all his eight games but won them with distinction, including

many double peels. The most spectacular was probably his game with John Willis in Block F when, having made the rover peel, he was unable to peg out his forward ball because an opponent's ball completely blocked the way. In the croquet shot, he placed his partner ball as close as he could get it to peg and then used the opponent's ball in the subsequent croquet shot to peg it out. A good example of a combination peg out.

Andrew Symons played well to win Block D with David Ruscombe-King in second place and Derek Trotman won Block C, although three of his games went to time. All players and the few hardy spectators spent the weekend wrapped up against the elements, with the one notable exception of Alex O'Connor who played her usual stylish game in shorts throughout while the hailstones danced.

RESULTS

(6 handicap blocks of 9 players each)

Block A

1. P.A. Derby (2) 6 wins.
2. A. Whyte (5) 5 wins.
3. Miss A.H. O'Connor (9) 5 wins.

Block B

1. M. Ranshaw (8) 8 wins.
2. Dr R.C. Jones (2½) 6 wins.
3. J. Ross (1) 5 wins.

Block C

1. D.W. Trotman (5) 6 wins.
2. D. Cornelius (6½) 5 wins.
3. Dr I.R. Plummer (1½) 5 wins.

Block D

1. A.J. Symons (½) 7 wins.
2. D.R.T. Ruscombe-King (3½) 6 wins.
3. Mrs G.D. Harris (2½) 5 wins.

Block E

1. M.R. Wormald (2) 8 wins.
2. D.G. Magee (3½) 6 wins.
3. A.K. Gregory (0) 5 wins.

Block F

1. D.B. Maugham (-1) 8 wins.
2. Mrs D.A. Wheeler (2½) 5 wins.
3. J.H. Willis (4) 5 wins.

Croquet North at the National Garden Festival, Gateshead Qualifying Rounds Sponsored by Derwent Valley Foods

Report from Syd Jones

Well, at the start of June, so far, so good! On the credit side we have sixteen trained staff, who are enthusiastic and enjoy playing; we have about three hundred visitors who have played and apparently also enjoyed Golf Croquet; and we have completed the first two heats of the Regional Finals of the National Garden Croquet Competition, sponsored by Derwent Valley Foods. On the debit side, we do have a number of rather exhausted Grade One coaches who I hope will be fully recovered by the next event.



Staff training - how to mark out a Croquet Court. The staff soon learnt the ropes, but it must be easier than it looks!

It seems a long and different time from the days of October 1988 when I first started explaining the glories of Croquet to the Festival Producer and we began negotiations to include Croquet as an event. In fact the whole scheme was really hatched in the bar of the Royal Station Hotel in Newcastle, a good spot to develop a good idea.

Actually doing something started on a couple of cold days in April when we held a training session for sixteen members of the Festival Staff at Cochrane Park. In spite of the awful weather this was very successful. All the players enjoyed themselves and we all survived frostbite by playing Golf Croquet quickly and eating chicken curry! Coaches wore whites; the players anything warm, jackets, jumpers etc, all except Russell Cambridge that is, who survived (just) in a tee shirt. But he did win, as did Melanie Howe and Davna Stranahan.

By the time we came to set out the courts on site we were hoping that the summer would be here but no, we chose the day of torrential rain, lightning flashing round the Ferris wheel and local flooding, very local it was, all over the courts! The N.G.F. were kind enough to lend us some waterproofs so we could complete the job, which we did even if it was in an inch of water, before retiring to the pavilion to dry out. By going



Before the rain! At least we started to lay out the courts in the sunshine, under the empty stands and the Ferris Wheel.

home time, it was rush hour, so it took me over an hour to drive David home; only then did we remember that I had picked him up from work and his car was still in the city centre and the traffic! We went to the local for a Guinness.

We were still waiting for the sunshine etc. on the day the Princess Royal came for the official opening.

Attendance on site at 8.30am for a parade at noon somewhat reduced our number to Alice Jones, David Appleton (in Scottish blazer) Betty and Jack Shotton and myself; a loyal group dressed in white with faces to match, we strode with mallets high and were immortalised on TV. During the parade two horses walked across our still waterlogged croquet

TOWNSEND CROQUET LIMITED

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

All at competitive prices.

Ask for Townsend Croquet equipment at your local sports shop.

TOWNSEND CROQUET LTD.
CLAIRE ROAD
KIRBY CROSS
FRINTON-ON-SEA
ESSEX CO13 0LX
TELEPHONE: FRINTON (0255) 67-4404

courts; should make for a few difficult take-offs!

If you keep trying you've got to win in the end as we started the "public playing days" in beautiful hot sunshine. The morning started slow, the people didn't seem to realise the opportunity which was their's, but by the afternoon we had a queue and working with twelve coaches on four short courts with double banking we must have had about three hundred people who had played Golf Croquet by the end of the day. Many showed an interest in this, some in Association Croquet, and all enjoyed themselves. A brief chat on local radio and a photo session with a newspaper gave a couple of breaks; otherwise it was continuous action till we drew hoops at 6.30. I thought Gail Curry and Alice Jones looked a bit tired as I drove them home; hope they want to come back again.

Too good to last. Sunday 3rd June was the first heat of the National Garden Croquet Competition. It was dry and sunny but very windy, too rough to get our sponsor's hot-air balloon off the ground, unlike the croquet which had the first eight players competing for places in the Grand Final on the 25th August.

Entries from Carlisle, the Lake District, North Yorkshire as well as local players took part in morning and afternoon sessions. Winners were Richard Neville and John Norris. Our sponsor Derwent Valley Foods were on site and the young ladies spent the day giving samples of Phileas Fogg crisps to the public; the players seemed to do quite well too. Local press in attendance again, photographer and a reporter who attempted to interview players during a break (four-ball, not tea!)

We had another successful 'visitors playing' day on Monday 4th, but now have time to pull ourselves together for the next Phileas Fogg competition on Sunday 24th June. Places for heats on 15th July and 5th August are still available which at £5 entry fee is excellent value with £6 Festival entry cost included. Please ring me on 091-252-2962 if you intend to enter.

British Men's and Women's Championships

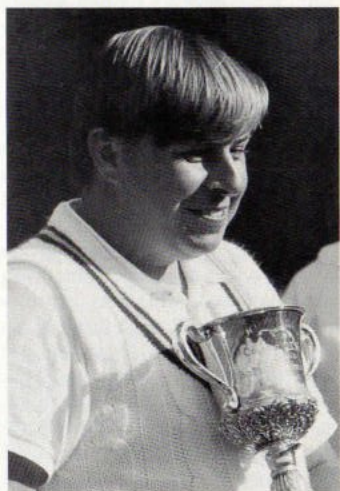
Cheltenham: 30 May - 7 June
Fulford Reaches 4 out of 5

Report by Chris Clarke

The new 3-day weekend format attracted what must be the strongest field for many years and gave credibility to its 'major' status. The pre-tournament gossip was related to seeding - not done by ranking, but selected by Mulliner and Neal. They said that they had selected the best eight players, but whilst not wanting to be disrespectful to Francis Lander, I find it beyond belief (a common feeling) that defending champion Keith Aiton was not seeded.

And so to play. Seeding appeared to count for little. Avery lost 2-1 to Brian Sykes, despite hitting a last shot in the first to take the game. The game had a psychological influence as Brian had placed a £5 bet on himself with Avery at 100-1 to win the tournament. Brian played with greater confidence as the day progressed, defeating Don Gaunt in straight games with some excellent play.

2 and 2. Mulliner, under pressure, reverted to his old style, hit and soon finished with a triple.



Robert Fulford, 1990 Men's Champion.



Women's Champion, Frances Ransom, receives the Silver Challenge Bowl from Steve Mulliner, whilst Manager Ian Maugham looks on.

Cordingley lost to Symons after Andrew hit what one spectator called 'a 300 yard last shot' to win the deciding game. Saurin lost 2-1 to an in-form Guest who revelled in the rain. Openshaw lost to Comish in straight games in the second round where Lander also went down to Hope.

Mulliner and Fulford both lost games to McCormick and Foulser respectively. Clarke, however had beaten Lamb with two triples to earn a re-match with Goacher. Again it went to three and although Clarke was penult, and peg after 5 turns, he still had to hit a last shot to reach the quarters.

In the quarters, Mulliner looked to be in dire trouble against Symons. Obsessed by thinking that he cannot shoot straight, he is trying to play with the Fulford swinging over the ball style. The only thing that this achieved was to amuse the crowd. In the final game, Symons was on 4-back and peg with a leave against

Fulford was game all against Guest who had nearly finished a quadruple in the second. It looked as if a shot of Fulford's in which the croqueted ball glanced off another off the lawn might be costly, but a Guest error allowed Robert through. Clarke wasn't quite firing on all cylinders, but still beat Sykes in straight games, whilst Comish lost to Hope.

The Fulford/Clarke semi was played on Saturday. Clarke was soon round with an aggressive leave which Fulford hit, going to 4-back with two pops and a forcing leave. Nevertheless, Clarke played with the backward ball, hitting and obtaining a rush to his hoop where he stuck. Fulford hit and finished.

The second saw a TPO by Clarke who pegged out two balls, leaving himself for 3 vs 1. Robert's shooting deserted him and Chris won easily. A rattled Fulford then played the wrong ball on the first turn of the third game and opted to put it in first corner. Chris reached hoop 6 on a

2-ball break before failing. A disastrous third turn by Robert gave Chris another chance, but it wasn't taken. Robert made a 1-back leave and had three peels before clanging 2-back. Chris went to 4-back, but did not take croquet again after Robert hit the lift.

Mulliner/Hope was played on Sunday morning and started with some dreadful play. However as soon as Mulliner got going, the match was over in a very small number of turns.

It came as no surprise to hear that a best of five final was to be played. Fulford won the first 26TP as is becoming a habit. In the second, the crowd watched a rare spectacle - a delayed triple from Robert in the pouring rain. It looked all over as Robert approached 4-back in the third with two peels completed, (Bernard had just said to Steve 'well

causing her to lose games to both Dab Wheeler and Betty Weitz on her way to the final. The other half saw Bo Harris, the defending champion, go out to Frances Ransom in the first round, whilst Gill scraped home against Gail. The only thing that remains to be said is that Frances won by playing some high quality turns which were greatly enjoyed by the spectators. Let no-one say that Frances won because the event was weak, because it wasn't.

The Mixed Doubles was dominated by two pairs who reached the final of both halves. Both the Boggles and Saurin/McCoig provided some open and entertaining croquet. The finals were shared and my spies tell me that the play-off ended at 10.30pm under car headlights and was won by Saurin/McCoig.



Mark Saurin & Fiona McCoig, Mixed Doubles Champions.

it looks all over'), but a poor approach cost him both the triple and the game.

It looked like a similar story in the fourth as Fulford misapproached 2-back with 2 peels done. Mulliner went round and single peeled Robert out. Fulford clanged 2-back off the contact and missed his next shot, giving Steve a break. However, this was not taken and first corner was guarded. Fulford hit and established a break, but approached 4-back badly. Mulliner was up out of his seat, but just before he stepped onto the lawn, Robert ran a superb hoop and finished. And so Robert needs only the Opens to complete a grand-slam of the top 5 events in Britain at the moment: Northern's, President's Cup, Westerns, Mens, and Opens.

The Women's brought some new players onto the scene. Gill Bogle (Cheltenham), Fiona McCoig (Colchester), Gail Curry (Ipswich) and Celia Steward (Ipswich). Fiona played some excellent turns but also suffered from some poorer patches

The new format was successful and although many of the early losers went home, the atmosphere was maintained by a regular turnout of Cheltenham spectators - thank you.

RESULTS Men's Championship

Round 1
*F. Lander bt I.F. Maugham +7, -7, +17; A.B. Hope bt K.M.H. Aiton -26, +26, +15; S. Comish bt E. Bell +19, +16; *D. Openshaw bt I. Burridge +23, +25; Dr B.C. Sykes bt *M. Avery -3, +16, +17; D. Gaunt bt P. Smith -13, +6, +19; D. Goacher bt R. Ransom +17, +21; *C.D. Clarke bt W.E. Lamb +17TP; +15TP.

Round 2
*S.N. Mulliner bt D. McCormick -21, +26TP; +25TP; A. Symons bt *P. Cordingley +26 +16; Hope bt Lander -16, +26, +3; Comish bt Openshaw +26, +5; Sykes bt Gaunt +26, +16; Clarke bt Goacher +10, -12, +5; J.E. Guest bt *M. Saurin -25, +25TP, +26; *R. Fulford bt D. Foulser +26TP, -9, +24TP.

Round 3
Mulliner bt Symons +25, -14, +5TP; Hope bt Comish +3, +17; Clarke bt Sykes +15, -12; Fulford bt Guest +26TP, -14, +16.

Semi-Finals
Mulliner bt Hope +21TP, +26; Fulford bt Clarke +14TP, -8TPO, +11.

Final
Fulford bt Mulliner +26TP, +7TP, -6TP, +14.

Women's Championship

Round 1
Miss F. McCoig bt Dr. S. Foden +15, +12.

Round 2
McCoig bt Mrs D.A.B. Wheeler -8, +14, +12; Mrs B. Weitz bt Miss C. Steward +14, +9; Mrs F. Ransom bt Mrs G.D. Harris +5, +20; Dr G. Bogle bt Miss G. Curry -1(T), +11, +9.

Semi-Finals
McCoig bt Weitz -6, +12, +8; Ransom bt Bogle +5, -12, +17.

Final
Ransom bt McCoig +25, -25, +13.

Mixed Doubles Championship DRAW

Round 1
D. Appleton & Miss G. Curry bt P. Cordingley & Ms D. Prentis +17; I.F. Maugham & Mrs G.D. Harris bt D. Gaunt & Mrs D.A.B. Wheeler +13.

Round 2
M. Saurin & Miss F. McCoig bt Mr & Mrs R. Ransom +17; Appleton & Curry bt S. Comish & Miss C. Steward +18; Maugham & Harris bt Dr & Mrs B. Weitz +15; Mr & Dr Bogle bt C.D. Clarke & Mrs

K. Yeoman +8.

Semi-Finals
Saurin & McCoig bt Appleton & Curry +12; Mr & Dr. Bogle bt Maugham & Harris +4.

Final
Saurin & McCoig bt Mr & Dr Bogle +16.

PROCESS

Round 1
Mr & Dr. Bogle bt Mr & Mrs Ransom +2(T); Saurin & McCoig bt Clarke & Yeoman +13.

Round 2
Mr & Dr. Bogle bt Appleton & Curry +26TP; Comish & Steward bt Maugham & Harris +5; Saurin & McCoig bt Grant & Wheeler +14; Cordingley & Prentis bt Dr & Mrs Weitz +22.

Semi-Finals
Mr & Dr Bogle bt Comish & Steward +5; Saurin & McCoig bt Cordingley & Prentis +12.

Final
Mr & Dr Bogle bt Saurin & McCoig +8.

PLAY-OFF
Saurin & McCoig bt Mr & Dr Bogle +1.

* seeded player

"Matchplay"

Bespoke Croquet Mallets

The Quality is Right
and the Price is Right

Send or telephone for a copy of our
updated bi-monthly Newsletter
giving availability and prices of all mallets.

Evening calls welcome.

GEOFFREY H. DAY

Country Crafts

Manor Cottage

Widecombe in the Moor

Devon TQ13 7TB

Tel: 036 42 218

WE ARE PLEASED
TO BE SPONSORING THE

BRITISH OPEN

CROQUET CHAMPIONSHIP



ATCO
FINE GARDEN
MACHINERY

Your Letters

Court Dimensions

Dear Sir,

Where do the hoops go on a court of non-standard proportions?

A standard croquet court is a rectangle measuring 35yds by 28yds. The standard length unit of 7yds is a quarter of the short side of such a rectangle. The standard proportions of such a rectangle are 5:4. But the laws also define a short croquet court measuring 24yds by 16yds, based on a length unit of 4yds, but having the proportion 6:4.

If the same piece of lawn is to be used both for a standard court and for two small courts, because of general shortage of space and the variety of uses that the club will put it to, it is attractive merely to paint a line across the middle of the lawn, thereby producing two rectangles each with proportion 8:5 or 6.4:4. A significant advantage of this is that players on the big court are not confused by an irrelevant (to them) multitude of white lines. The question then arises as to exactly where in the north/south direction the hoops should be placed in a court with this or any other non-standard proportion.

My preference is to ignore the long side altogether and take a quarter of the short side as the length unit. Then hoops 1, 2, 3, and 4 are placed one length unit from each of the adjacent boundaries; hoop 5 is placed 1½ length units north of the south boundary, and hoop 6 is placed 1½ length units south of the north boundary. Note that 'by accident' the existing definition of a short croquet court defines the same positions for hoops 5 and 6, but does so by reference to distances from the peg. The essence of my formulation is that each end (north/south) of the court always has the same angles, whatever the proportion of the rectangle.

All existing non-standard courts would be included in a general description accepting any proportion in the range 5:4 to 7:4, together with my simple rules for the positioning of the hoops. Could something on these lines be considered for inclusion in the next version of the Laws, or perhaps some less formal but equally accessible place?

Michael D. Poole,
Nailsea and District Croquet Club.

Croquet Mallets

Dear Sir,

May I suggest that in working towards an ideal mallet Mr E.C. Owen (May 1990) should probe further into mallet head momentum, mass times velocity.

The mass sought is not that of the mallet head but is a quantity got from a calculation involving the centre of gravity of the mass which forms the pendulum-like shape of the swing.

For instance, in a let-the-mallet-do-all-the-work swing hinged about the tip of the mallet, the higher the Centre of Gravity is located, the greater will be the transfer from mass

to velocity in the momentum formula $m.v.$ And the greater will be the ball departure velocity, always provided.... and this may be the rub, that the co-efficient of restitution and/or the durability of the mallet are not impaired.

By contrast, in an upright stiff-wristed side-style swing or in a swing using the Irish grip, it may be valid to regard shoulder-level as the point of hinge. The mass includes one or both arms in those examples!

T.F. Cameron,
York.



The first-ever Isle of Man Championship, held at the Grand Island Hotel, attracted 8 players and bad weather, the final being held in torrential rain. Dentist Mark Hanraham (right) beat stockbroker Richard Bellwood for the title.

Full Bisque Play

Dear Sir,

The two letters by Edgar Jackson on full bisque play (Issues 205 and 207) and the comments by Kevin Carter (Issue 206) and Simon Tuke (Issue 207) prompted me to suggest a modified system of full bisque play which would, I think, retain the advantages claimed by Edgar Jackson while going some way to overcoming the disadvantages of applying it to games involving low bisquers.

My suggestion is as follows. Let the first two 'bisques' of all handicaps be split into HALF bisques, and let all handicap games be 'full bisque' games. Thus a player with a handicap of 6 would receive four half bisques and four full bisques. A 16-bisquer would receive four half bisques and fourteen full bisques. A handicap of 3½ would entitle the holder to five half bisques and one whole bisque. A minus 2 would have to give four half bisques to his opponent, so that if the latter were a 4-bisquer he would play with four half bisques and four whole bisques.

This scheme is not as crazy as it might seem at first. It removes the premium on hitting in (except for scratch and minus players) and shifts it on to the other skills of the game. It still gives the high bisquer a large number of bisques to play his 4-ball

break with, but allows his low bisque opponent a much better chance of getting the innings, although he may not be able to keep it. So long as the half bisques held out, the low bisquer could take very dangerous shots that he might otherwise decline.

Of course the value of four (or five if the handicap includes a half) for the maximum number of half bisques may not be the optimum, and the choice of the value for this would be for discussion.

Edgar Jackson and the Cheltenham Club have experimented with

is eligible. This should give more valuable evidence in using scratch as the base handicap. During the discussion one or two speakers subscribed to the belief voiced by Simon Tuke and Leslie Riggall that the present handicap game encourages Aunt Emma while the full-bisque game promotes break-building which is the essence of the game of croquet. With this I too, agree.

To answer Allen's final paragraph:

a) We will certainly consider using his half-bisque formula soon.

b) As I don't think his formula bears close relationship with the full-bisque game having scratch as base, I don't see how it could be considered an improvement.

c) Nevertheless his new game is worthwhile. Maurice Reckitt devised a game rather like this I seem to remember but I don't know if it was ever tried. Perhaps someone will tell us.

Edgar Jackson,
Cheltenham.

A Reflection

Dear Sir,

On a cold wet Easter Monday here in York, I found myself composing the piece of verse which I now place at your disposal:-

REVENGE.

The green ball, when you fail
to stroke him right,
Tells all to his green chum
the traffic light,
Who will most likely engineer
a fault,
And grind your journey
homewards to a halt.

Tommy Cameron,
York.

Professional Coach Required!

Dear Sir,

I have just retired from Council after ten very interesting and happy years, and have seen many progressive changes! Council spends much time discussing the business around the 'A' class player, seeding, professionalism and international affairs - all of great importance. Few lay people can realise the time and energy unselfishly given by the members.

The majority of middle bisque players, the backbone of all Clubs, especially those recently formed, do not appear to get much consideration. Recently Council voted a sum of money to provide an honorarium for a Press Officer. Should further money become available I should like to see it spent on a professional coach helping players with handicaps of 6 to 16, and who would make suggestions to Club handicappers.

I can visualize a representative invited and given hospitality by Clubs, in exchange for Coaching. Any sum of money voted for his or her activities would go towards travelling expenses incurred during

the summer season. So a professional coach please, and may the South Coast Clubs be put at the top of the list!

PS: Should anyone feel like giving a donation to help get this project started, I would do the same.

PPS: Who would like to be the coach?!!

Patricia Shine,
Worthing.

Tiebreaking systems

Dear Sir,

In response to 'Time for Change' in issue 207, I would like to say that I do not agree on the idea that head to head is the best tiebreaker for 'American Events'. I am also not sure that gross points is a better judge than net points.

In the example given I do not think it is fair to say that B met D when D had his bad game. Is it not possible that D made his error earlier against B than he did against A? It looks like A possibly had a good chance to beat C and maybe just could not put him away while B did put him away or C made his mistake earlier against B than he did against A.

I do not know the exact definition of an 'American Event' (or as we call them a Round Robin event) but it seems to me that it is not a head to head knock out event but rather an event that tests a player's overall performance against several players. I also do not know how the tie-breaking system for Law 15 came about but it seems in the example given that B overall beat his opponents by more than A did. B did score 10 less points than A, but he also allowed 13 less points to be scored against him than A did.

I am not sure which would be better, net or gross, maybe a combination of both or a combination of points scored and points allowed. I do however think that going head to head for the first tiebreaker is not the best solution for what I assume is the definition of an 'American Event'.

To me it comes down to the thought that B scored 15 against A so somewhere he made a mistake and, if he had not, he could have won. Like most things in this world, our game is not perfect, a score of 26-0 does not necessarily mean that it was a mistake-free game on the winner's part, while a 26-25 score does not mean that the winner did not play a mistake-free game.

Before making any changes in the rules I think the problem should be looked at from all angles. I do not think the letter in 207 looks at all of the different possibilities. I am sure my response does not cover all of the angles either but it at least gives everyone something else to think about.

Jerry Stark,
Meadowood Croquet Club,
St. Helena, California, USA.

Triple Peels

Dear Sir,

Having read the replies to the article about the triple peel, I am not surprised that, when a sacred belief is attacked, the first reaction is to lash out without fully considering the new idea.

Let us consider the state of the game when the Lift shot is about to be taken, both from the position of the 'in player' and that of the 'out player'.

In a 'standard game' the out player has a 17-yard shot which, if missed,

would be expected that it would be possible to run 2 back as a direct result of the contact, leaving only 4 hoops to be run and a very good chance, especially for 'A' Class players, of making them.

Consider, now, the position at the start of the, admittedly crucial, second break when the opponent has foregone the 30-yard shot. (Keith Wylie wrote that, against him, the shot had never been hit (page 91)). Where does Martin French expect to hide his second ball? Obviously 1, 2, and 3 are out of the question and in

ting a leave. These are

a) to lengthen the shot of the opponent.
b) to give yourself an easy finish.
c) to try and make the opponent play with a particular ball.
d) to deprive the opponent of a break should he hit.

I would conjecture that the 1-back leave would certainly leave a longer shot for the opponent to take and leave yourself an easy continuance. It does not, however force an opponent to play with a particular ball. However I envisage the position arising when the opponent is for 1 and 1, which means that this section is irrelevant. The opponent will get an easy break if he hits, but how often will he hit? Surely he gets (for an A Class player) almost an easy break if he hits the 13-yard shot of the OSL or the 17-yard shot of the Diagonal Spread? Remember it is amount of gain and frequency of gain that is the important factor here.

Thus, in summary of the shot position, we have, in effect 2 extra (30-yard) shots given to the opponent as opposed to the difficulty of completing a delayed triple peel or leaving an extra shot which will be MUCH MUCH shorter. Even without allowing for irregularities on the lawn the chance of hitting two 30-yard shots is less than hitting a single 13 or 14 yard shot.

I would now like to ask my 'A' Class critics:

1) how many times have you laid up for a triple peel?
2) what happened?

I suggest you supply percentages to the following answers:

1) Completed delayed triple and won game.
2) Failed to get break started and had to lay up.
3) Broke down involuntary through trying to get break under control.
4) Missed 4-back, penult, rover peel and had to lay up.
5) Left a short shot for opponents at end of failure.
6) Hit by opponent taking short shot (if he did TPO and pegged you out for which hoop was your other ball?).

Keith Wylie recommends 1-back tactics against a good shot, suggesting that going to peg with one peel done only was a reasonable suggestion and advising that 4 peels on the forward ball was possible. Not yet having reached that degree of mastery and realising that the majority of the readers are endeavouring to reach a skill level slightly below that of the true expert, I have proposed this whole game tactic which will, at least, help train people in the right way for when they do reach the exalted pinnacle of a croquet expert.

J.B. Portwood,
Durham.



Andrew Bennet coaching Paul Nutter, a promising beginner from QEGS. Paul will be in action at this year's Junior Championship (Southport: 27-29 July).

leaves the in player with the prospect of having to complete a delayed triple peel in order to win the game without conceding another short shot. In fact Keith Wylie makes the comment that a lift shot following a failed delayed triple is often a very short one (page 89).

Now admit it: apart from our top 10 or 20 players, how many people would expect to complete a delayed Triple regularly (i.e. 75% of the time)? In my version, however, all that has to be done to complete the game is a simple three ball break, not one 'with added complications' and the vast majority of players must expect to be able either to complete it or set up an effective leave from that position.

Now consider the position if the out player should hit the 17-yard shot (approximately 1/3 of the time only, remember). Assuming that an all round break be established (not certainty but likely) then the final position would be 1 and peg against 2 back with a Contact to come. It

corner 4 the simple method of getting the ball out is to:

a) rush partner's ball to second hoop.
b) take off to ball in fourth corner.
c) roll this ball to centre of lawn, going to pioneer at one.
d) continue to play 4 ball break.

I would like to point out that John Solomon wrote his excellent book in 1966, whereas the development of 1-back tactics started a few years later. In his book, as well, the main leave discussed was the Old Standard Leave whereby if the short shot was missed an easy triple ensued and if the long shot (ball at centre from B Baulk) taken then even Solomon had 'one moderately difficult and one very difficult shot to do' in order to perform the triple (Keith Wylie has a different opinion here).

The comment that any leave should take into account opponent's break opportunities should they hit is taken slightly out of context. This is only one of 4 objects in construc-

Tournament Reports

Roehampton: 26-29 April Sonneborn-Berger System at Roehampton

Report by John Greenwood

The cool, dry start to the first day gave way in the evening to the last rains of April. The initial poor weather could not, however, dampen the usual warm reception for visitors to the Roehampton club. Their names were listed in the pavilion with one exception, and the condition to have my name added was to accept an invitation to write this report.

The three lawns had different extents of 'indifference' along what used to be the South boundary. The lawns had been reversed to try and minimise the effect of this 'indifference' on games and help the recovery of the lawns but this caused confusion for one or two players familiar with the old setting. This was compounded by the use of third hoop starts for the shorter, Bray formula, matches. Some stopped at 2-back thinking their efforts had carried them to 4-back, others seemed to have enjoyed the tour from 1-back to 4-back so much that they wanted to go round the outer hoops one more time.

The tournament format was two blocks of ten, with eight games over the four days - handicap blocks with one game missing.

John Greenwood paid the penalty for underestimating his opponent when he attempted a take-off from eight yards in court to Ted Matthew's boundary ball to get a rush towards the peg for a peg-out. He assumed it would be safe if he went off the lawn. It wasn't. Ted rolled John's ball to about a yard from the peg, roqueted partner, took off back to the peg and finished with a scatter peg-out. This manoeuvre was rewarded by a win.

The end of day three saw Martin Haggerston leading block A, on no losses, and Edward Dymock, Jeremy Glyn and Dennis Goulding sharing the lead in block B.

Alec Thomas beat Martin by a decisive 26 points

Compton: 5-7 May Entertainment for the Out-Player

Report by John Wheeler

Five Wrest Parkers fancied a croquet weekend at a south coast resort and came to Compton. They were well pleased with their choice.

The club occupies the NW corner of the Saffrons and elsewhere on the site is a football pitch and two cricket grounds. The five croquet lawns are laid out in an L shape and there is a large tree next to the base of the L which gave much needed shade. On this particular weekend we were able to watch two cricket matches and a game of football with a display by a pipe band at halftime. So you can see that if the croquet is not going too well there are other interests. The clubhouse is small but very pleasant. A warning however: the office and chair-store doorways are only 5ft 4in high so remember to duck.

Now for the croquet. The players were divided into four blocks of six players. Block winners would be the semi-finalists. The lawns played pretty well, although the effect of last year's drought was still evident. Compton does not have a bar for hard drinks and this may have improved our concentration, but there was little inspired play. Players were so well matched that few games were won by a two figure margin and twenty of the sixty block games went to time. Tom Anderson needed an extra half hour before securing the point he needed to beat Mrs Selmes.

Block A was won by Peter Howell with four wins.



Dennis Goulding, runner-up in Block B at Roehampton.

in the morning of the fourth day. This gave Ron Selmes a chance to tie with him for the lead of block A going into the last round. He took it by beating Chris Osmond. Martin and Ron both finished with a further win so the tie was resolved using the Sonneborn-Berger system. (The number of wins of each player's beaten opponents is summed: the player producing the higher sum wins). Martin picked up 7 useful points from a good +24 win against Ron but only Martin (of the two) had been drawn against a player who won no games. Winning this match did nothing for him, literally, leaving Ron the clear winner 27 points to 24.

The three way tie in block B was repeated going into the final round. Jeremy was down ten points when Wyn Jones set a peg-out rush. He hit in across court and kept the innings until he won +2. This was the only win of the tying group so it gave him the block B victory.

RESULTS

Block A

Winner: R.H. Selmes (7 wins).

Runner-Up: M.J.B. Haggerston (7 wins).

6 wins: A.A. Stockwell, J. Sheraton-Davis.

4 wins: J.D. Greenwood.

3 wins: Mrs P. Macdonald, A. Thomas, E. Matthews.

2 wins: Mrs C. Osmond.

0 wins: Mrs P. Healy.

Block B

Winner: J. Glyn (7 wins).

Runner-Up: D. Goulding (6 wins).

6 wins: E. Dymock.

5 wins: I.P.M. Macdonald.

4 wins: R. Bateson, L. Wharrad.

3 wins: Mrs B. Mansfield.

2 wins: Mrs M.E. Selmes.

1 win: Mrs W. Jones, R. Stephens

Roger Best won Block B with some determined play losing only to Pat Asa-Thomas who also won four times but scored one less net point than Ron. Simon Tuke won Block C with four convincing wins; his one loss was by minus one on time to Don Daintree who could not muster enough points to win the block himself. The players in Block D were much more vigorous than the others; only three games went to time. These games involved a very determined Miss V Gadsby and were decided by a single point. Bob Selmes was the block winner with four wins.

In the semi-finals Best beat Howell and Selmes beat Tuke. In the final Ron Best beat Bob Selmes. Roger seems to possess the ideal temperament for croquet, quiet and undemonstrative.

RESULTS

(in order of final position)

Block A

P. Howell, Mrs E. Wietz, M.A. Hammerlev, B. Christmas, J.A. Wheeler, W.E. Philp.

Block B

R. Best, Mrs P. Asa-Thomas, T. Anderson, D.W. Shaw, Mrs M.E. Selmes, R.T. Jackman.

Block C

S. Tuke, D. Daintree, J.P.G. Watson, Mrs A.C. Mead, E.F. Robinson, A.J. Oldham.

Block D

R.H. Selmes, G.W.R. Goodwin, Mrs J. Anderson, Miss V.S. Gadsby, Dr B.G.F. Weitz, Mrs M. Grout.

Colchester: 12-13 May The Digger Turns Over The Opposition

Report by David Goacher

WARNING - The following report was constructed in a very slow and deliberate manner and could be dangerous if read by anyone of a fast disposition, particularly George Noble and Peter Dorke! It is however perfectly safe for Tom Anderson and David Maugham to read!

Ian 'Digger' Burridge was in fine form, winning the tournament with six victories out of eight including completing his first two tournament triples. It shows what can be achieved when you practice with Robert Fulford nearly every day! He was pushed hard by David Maugham but kept his nerve in hitting the last lift shot. He defeated Steve Comish after Steve uncharacteristically missed a couple of short roquets and was seen trooping off the lawn wearing a hound dog expression. Keith Aiton was also beaten by him after Keith had done an excellent TPO and pegged both balls out.

He was beaten by Francis Landor (who is a referee!!) who maintained his Spencer Ell form by also defeating David Goacher and David Maugham before running up against a rejuvenated Martin French. Martin had made some feeble excuse of being woken up 7 times in the night by his son for his first two defeats but then proceeded to complete 4 triples in a row. There was however an exciting climax to the tournament (after the reporter had left, causing him to have to re-write the report) when Fiona McCoig pulled off a shock victory over Ian in a close contest. This meant that Francis had to beat Keith Aiton to force a play off but became the victim of yet another Aiton TPO and this time he was ahead when he pegged both balls out.

Fiona McCoig also featured in the shot of the tournament, after Andrew Symons had pegged her out. To loud applause she ran penult from the North boundary but was unfortunate enough to hit the peg. To add insult to injury she then proceeded to hit one of Andrew's balls on the South boundary when he was lined up to peg out and finished.

Earlier Andrew had been the victim of some Portwood tactics by Keith Aiton. At first everyone thought he was going to try yet another sextuple but instead did only one peel and laid up with his clips on 1 back and 2 back. His plans were however frustrated when Andrew hit the 35 yard shot but failed to take advantage of the situation. He admitted that he had found it harder to keep getting wirings than do a triple.

Crazy Shot of the tournament must go to Andrew Gregory who unfortunately also maintained his Spencer Ell form. From 5 yards he tried to peg out his opponent by rolling both balls up to the peg. He missed with the forward ball but very nearly hit with his own ball. Cue inane grin!

A mention must be given to Pat Hetherington whose lunches were even better than last year. Even Richard Hilditch was seen to neglect his chocolate biscuits for a couple of hours afterwards although unfortunately they didn't seem to improve his croquet. He did however set very firm hoops which Bill Lamb whinged about all weekend because they were too tight for him! A final mention to Robin Hobbs whose efficient, amenable management resulted in 8 games for everyone who wanted them.

RESULTS

6 wins: I. Burridge (winner); M.R. French (runner-up).

5 wins: K. Aiton, D. Maugham, F.J.R. Landor.

4 wins: D. Reeve, S. Comish, A. Symons, F. McCoig.

3 wins: D.J. Goacher, W. Lamb, J.R. Hilditch, L.D. Palmer.

2 wins: R.M. Hobbs, A. Gregory.

1 win: P. Hetherington.

Hurlingham: 5-7 May First Hamster at Hurlingham?

Denis Cross has run the May Tournament for 6 years, and the fixture runs in as smooth a groove as the manager's swing. He even organised marvellous weather this year, and the event produced the usual high standard of games.

On the first morning a counter-point to the swing of the mallet was provided by the pile driver working on the club's re-building programme; perhaps this caused one game to last for six and one quarter hours! By the third day Group IV had a three hour time limit imposed.

Referee John Greenwood and his assistants Paul Macdonald, Bill Ormerod and Arthur Reed did all that was required of them in their usual efficient manner - John's back is completely recovered from his disc operation; he was running from lawn to lawn, getting down on his hands and knees to umpire, and winning Group 1 with a clean sweep of seven games.

Martin Haggerston at one time looked set for a clear run; but was stopped by a Triple Peel from Jerry Guest who was second in Group 1 with 5 wins and 80 points - Dr. Ormerod also had 5 wins, but 64 points.

There was a very exciting game in Group II between Chris Ford and David Ruscombe-King. This became a pegged out game when Chris was on 6 and David on penult. Chris managed to get round, through rover, when David was for the peg. Chris shot for David's ball.... and missed. David won plus one.

We often have mascots at tournaments - teddy bears, dogs, etc. Fiona McCoig, in Group II brought a hamster. She won 5 games, only losing to Paul Macdonald. Paul and Dr Liddiard both had 4 wins but Dr Liddiard scored more points.

Group III was won by John Ruddock with a clean sweep of 6 wins. He was playing with a mallet head

he got from Graham Martin who used to run Harrow Oak during the Seventies. The head is solid Lignum Vitae and only 7½' long. It dates from about 1880 or 1890 and has had several new shafts during its lifetime with John; it helped him get his handicap down at the end of the Tournament from 4 to 3½. Martin Fox was doing his usual stalwart job as Handicapper.

Group IV was decided by eight o'clock on Monday evening. Douglas Gurney won (5 wins). Gerald Wombwell with 4 wins and 17 points just beat Richard Hoskyns with 4 wins and 15 points.

Just a few spectator comments:-

'Do you mean you are your own umpires?!'

'Do you have any McEnroe types in this game?'

'Who is the best player here?' (and after watching him get stuck in a hoop)

'Really! How can you tell?'

'I'd really feel one of the nobs playing Croquet at Hurlingham.'

(The important adjointer 'in Denis's competition' was not actually said).

RESULTS

(in order of final positions)

Block 1

J.D. Greenwood, J.E. Guest, Dr W. Ormerod, M. Haggerston, D.C.D. Wiggins, T.N. Browne, A.A. Reed, C. Southern.

Block 2

Miss F. McCoig, Dr G.S. Liddiard, I.P.M. Macdonald, L. Wharrad, D. Ruscombe-King, D.C. Cross, C.J. Ford.

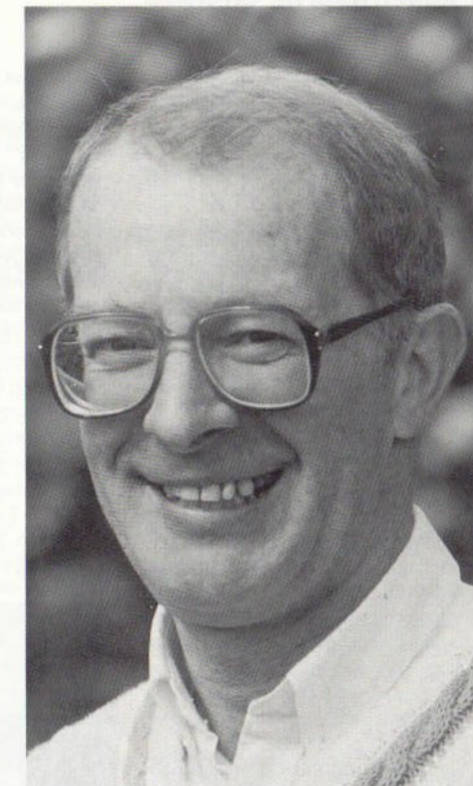
Block 3

J.C. Ruddock, Dr M.J. Llewellyn-Williams, Mrs B. Mansfield, R.T. Stephens, C.B. Sanford, Mrs I.P.M. Macdonald, Mrs P.V. Healy.

Block 4

D.J.F. Gurney, G. Wombwell, R. Hoskyns, J. Glyn, W. Thornhill, J.D. Tennant, Miss C. Collis.

Tournament Reports



Chris Boon, winner of Bowdon's Handicap weekend in May.

Wrest Park: 18-20 May Full Bisques and 18 Points

Report by Howard Bottomley

With every effort to help complete games, the hoops were generous, no time limits set, the grass longer, (green? well no, not after the ferro-sulphate), 18 point games used for high handicap differences, and full bisques used with a base of 6.

The cool north wind blew, the apple blossom had fallen and play commenced on heavy lawns, with shorts restricted to the hardy.

The format was two American blocks and a Swiss.

John Bevington arrived on time, paid up, but no name on the order of play to be seen. Managerial expertise came into play and Bye was swiftly replaced and a corresponding change to the data for the Quick Basic program effected. Whew.

Play on day 1 saw John Coutts & Adrian Judge ahead in Block 'A' with 3 wins, Terry Burge & Eric Audsley leading Block 'B' with 2 wins, and Duncan Hector & Alex O'Connor looking good in the Swiss on 3 wins.

In Block 'A' Derek Powell saw his shot from the west boundary at George Collin's lay up to penultimate miss, but make 4-back which was his hoop! Derek had another go at the roquet, missed again and returned to the same place on the boundary.

Judy Anderson & Gill Bogle, once BEDS hockey players, were paired against each other in Block 'B'. Judy won a close game and we hope the pairing is repeated as the BEDS players are re-united in the Counties at the end of the month.

Day 2 saw lawns 1-4 mown, the wind still cool and Scottish CA jumpers in evidence.

Neil Wilson apologised to the manager for

arriving a little late, only to find out he was 24 hours 10 minutes late believing it to be a 2-day tournament. The Swiss was on the increase yet again.

Tony Parry may have wished that the manager would 'put games out of their misery' as his game with Tom Anderson went to 4 hours, with Tom literally having a running buffet.

Charlotte Townsend started against Howard Bottomley with a standard opening to the East boundary. Howard shot and hit, putting the forward ball at hoop 3 and his own in corner 1. Charlotte rolled from corner 1 to the middle, shot at the ball at hoop 3, hit and rolled back to the middle. Howard, dismayed, shot and missed. Charlotte using her bisques well finally approached rover with 4 bisques left. She managed to use them all including two attempts at a 3 inch peg out.

Alan Bogle was also under pressure from Mona Wright. A close finish saw Alan slowly reduce the balls on the lawn from 4 to 3 to 2 while the pundits debated the play. Mona's last shot missed by a fraction, giving Alan the win by 3.

Day 2 ended with John Coutts one ahead of Adrian Judge in Block 'A', Terry Burge one ahead of Eric Audsley in Block 'B', and Duncan Hector leading the Swiss from John Wheeler.

The final day brought the sun and a magnificent cake from Paul Sharrock, the puzzle being how to cut the cake and preserve the layout of hoops, balls and mallets etc..

Crunch matches settled blocks 'A' & 'B' with John Coutts beating Adrian Judge and Terry Burge beating Eric Audsley to win all his games.

Duncan Reeve showed his class with a TPO against Alex O'Connor on lawn 5, followed by the decider for the Swiss against Duncan Hector with John Wheeler & John Bevington leading the pack.

Duncan Hector played well and in a late finish, debated his 3 foot angled rover shot in front of a concentrated audience. Duncan made his decision and ran the hoop smoothly to clinch the game and 1st place.

Kevin Wells & Cliff Jones sporting matching head gear achieved bronze awards.

Duncan Hector, Terry Burge and John Coutts saw their handicaps reduced by 1, 1, and a half respectively.

A surplus of bananas provided booby prizes, and thanks went to Eric's mum & dad and Howard's mum for the catering. John Hall in his first tournament thanked the club and fellow competitors for their welcome, efforts and support.

The new format of no time limits proved successful and generous hoops led to an interesting discussion on the merits of the 18 point game.

RESULTS

(in order of final position)

Block A

J. Coutts, A. Judge, A. Bogle, M. Cowan, G. Collin, K. Wells, M. Wright, D. Powell.

Block B

T. Burge, E. Audsley, Mrs J. Anderson, C. Townsend, Dr G. Bogle, H. Bottomley, D. Drazen, J. Hall.

Swiss

(Handicap play: 14 entries)

Winner: D. Hector.

Extract from the Minutes of a Meeting of the Council held on Saturday 17th March 1990.

1. The Chairman announced with great regret the death of Mr P. Danks, a member of Council. The members stood in silent tribute.

2. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND OFFICERS.

(a) Publicity: Mr Townsend tabled the proposals for a Broadcast TV series from Airtime International who were seeking sponsors. It was approved unanimously as a basis on which they could proceed. It was agreed to appoint Mr David Foulser as C.A. Press Officer.

(b) Development: Mr McCullough asked for a decision by Council as to the manner in which donations to the 'Four Lawn Fund' should be acknowledged in 'Croquet'. Council agreed that donors' names should be published (unless anonymity was requested) grouped according to the amount given, into 3 or 4 categories. It was also agreed that if a league winner was unable to compete for the Secretary's Shield that the runner up could enter in lieu.

The Development Committee's proposal that a copy of all information sent to Council members for its meetings should also be sent to each Federation Secretary was passed by 12 votes to 3.

It was unanimously agreed that nominations for Apps-Heley and Townsend Awards will only be accepted on behalf of clubs affiliated to the C.A. Federations.

The Apps-Heley Award for 1989 would go to Sidmouth and the Townsend Award to South Derbyshire.

Mr McCullough was warmly thanked by Council for his 3 years Chairmanship of the Development Committee on his retirement from Council.

(c) Finance & General Purposes: Mr Irwin gave his report and the accounts for 1989 and the budget for 1990 were tabled and approved. It was agreed unanimously that

(i) No entry for any CA event would be accepted unless accompanied by the entry fee,

(ii) 30% levy would continue for 1991,

(iii) subscription rates for 1991 be as below:

Basic	£21 (£18)
Veteran	£16 (£14.50)
Junior	£14 (£12)
Youth	£9 (£7.50)
Non-tournament	£13 (£11)
Overseas	£42
Husband/wife:	£34 (£29)
Non-tournament	£21 (£18)

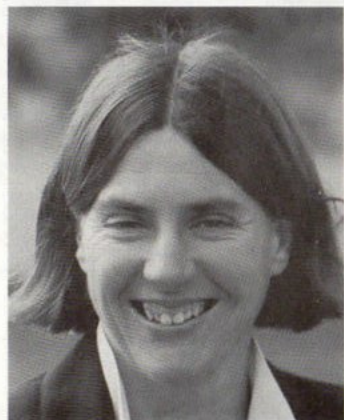
(iv) A loan of £1,000, interest free for 3 years, would be granted to the Newport (Essex) Club.

A legacy of £1,000 from the estate of the late Mr Gerald Williams was reported. This had been acknowl-

edged and his name recorded in the Benefactors' Book.

Mr Mulliner proposed and Mr Oldham seconded that the Executive Committee be authorised to sell the CA's 10 shares in the Roehampton Club at the best possible price. After discussion, this Motion was treated as a matter of urgency and approved nem con.

(d) Ad Hoc Committee on Club Registration Fees: The report was presented by Mr Oldham. Mr Gaunt said it was unworkable as some Clubs' turnover of members was in the region of 20%. After discussion, Mr Oldham proposed and Mr Townsend seconded that Affiliated Members' privileges should include rights of entry to Golf and Short Croquet events. The proposer and seconder later accepted an amendment to delete 'Short Croquet' and the amended Motion was carried by 14 votes to 2.



Gill Bogle, winner of the Steel Bowl for the most improved lady player in 1989.

The Committee's recommendation limiting the benefits strictly to those in its report and with the proviso that the Hurlingham Club might not agree to free entry to Hurlingham for the World Championships was then passed by 12 votes to 3.

The Finance and General Purposes Committee was requested to review the workings of this scheme in the Autumn.

(e) Handicap Co-Ordination: Mr Keen, its Chairman, announced the winners of the following awards for 1989:-

(a) Apps Bowl - Mr D. McCormick

(b) Steel Bowl - Dr B.G. Bogle

(f) Executive Committee: Dr Murray reported that several applications for the post of Administration Secretary had been received. An offer had been made, but no formal acceptance had yet been received.

(g) The Development Officer, Mr Hudson reported (inter alia) that:

(i) he would achieve savings in magazine costs for 1990.

(ii) the first issue of 'Croquet News' had been printed.

(iii) the Gateshead Garden Festival and Derwent Valley Foods would sponsor the Northern regional finals of the Garden Croquet Classic.

(iv) local clubs were being encouraged to find sponsors for their own Club competitions.

(v) the number of schools playing the game was increasing. A School Directory had been circulated containing a list of schools that were believed to play croquet.

(vi) the Sports Council's Grants Panel would meet on 12th June to consider our 'Forward Plan' for the next 4 years.

(h) The Administration Secretary, Mr Macmillan, said that 1319 members had paid their subscriptions, 345 were in arrears, 106 overseas members had paid and 68 were in arrears. He tabled a list of 56 new members who were elected.

3. CORRESPONDENCE

Mr Macmillan reported that the CA had received a letter of congratulation from the Scottish CA on Great Britain and Ireland's victory in the Test Matches and on winning the MacRobertson Shield.

4. MOTION

'That Mrs. Betty Prichard be recommended to the A.G.M. for election as a Vice-President of the CA' was proposed by Mr Caporn, who said this recognition was long overdue for someone who had done so much for the sport as Tournament Manager, Handicapper, and doyenne of referees. She had been Editor of our Magazine for 3 years at a crucial and very difficult time, and had assisted her late husband, David, in his researches for his 'History of Croquet'.

Mr Oldham seconded the Motion and it was passed unanimously. The Chairman, however, pointed out that due to constitutional requirements, the recommendation could not be implemented until next year.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman congratulated Mr Gaunt for producing the Fixtures Book in good time, thanked Miss Shine and Mr McCullough, who were retiring, for their work on the Council, and also recorded his thanks to Mr Brand and Mr Greenwood who had already retired. He warmly thanked Council members for their support during his 2 years in office and gave his best wishes to the incoming Chairman, Mr Mulliner.

New Associates

A. Jaquiss	Harrogate
Mrs A. Jaquiss	Harrogate
Mrs J.B. Miller	Isle of Man
C.H. Walker	Sidmouth
A.R. Bannister	
C.W. George	
Mrs C.W. George	
L.H. Young	
Dr N.D. Walsh	

(Total: 9)

Handicap Alterations

Tyneside: 1 April	
B. Rannie	12 to 11
J. Taggart	9 to 8
B. Thompson	6 to 5

Ryde: 6-8 April	
D. Ruscombe-King	4 to 3½
P. Kennerley	7 to 6

Surbiton: 13-14 April	
T.R. Burge	7 to 5
A. Thomas	6 to 5½
J. Sheraton-Davis	12 to 10
L. Wharrad	1 to 3

Winchester: 13-16 April	
D. Regan	10 to 9
R. Fewtrell	12 to 11
Brig R.G. Harmer	12* to 12

Cheltenham: 13-16 April	
P. Darby	2 to 1½
C.J.C. Davey	5½ to 6½
Dr R.C. Jones	2½ to 2
D.G. Magee	3½ to 3
D.B. Maugham	-1 to -1½
M. Ranshaw	8 to 6
A. Symons	½ to 0
D.W. Trotman	5 to 4½
Dr B.G.F. Weitz	1½ to 2
Mrs E. Weitz	5 to 6
A. Whyte	6½ to 5
M.R. Wormald	2 to 1

Cheltenham: 16 April	
Mrs V. McClements	18D16 to 16D14
M.A. MacBean	18D16 to 16D14
W. Madams	7 to 5
Miss G. Holliday	14D12 to 12D10
Mrs A. Hall	17D15 to 15D13

Southwick: 23 April	
Mrs H. Coombs	4½ to 5½
D. Mears	10 to 8
A. Rajotte	8 to 6

Cheltenham: 26-29 April	
J. Evans	2 to 1
N. Gooch	4 to 4½
J. Haslam	4½ to 4
J. Jackson	1½ to 1
D. Magee	3 to 2½
A. Miller	3½ to 3
B. Sanford	3½ to 5
H. Smorfitt	5½ to 4½
P. Stoker	2½ to 3
J. Wheeler	2 to 3
C. Williams	3½ to 2½
Mrs K. Yeoman	4½ to 5

Roehampton: 26-29 April	
J. Glyn	10 to 9
Mrs P.V. Healy	6 to 7

Southport: 29 April	
Adrian Saurin	3 to 2

Bowdon: 30 April	
Mrs C.E. Irwin	5½ to 5
P.G. Walker	15 to 13

Southwick: 30 April-1 May	
Mrs M. Robinson	9 to 10
R. Fewtrell	11 to 10
S. Tuke	3½ to 2½
Mrs H. Coombs	5½ to 6
M. Town	6 to 4
Mrs G. Mears	12 to 11
Mrs P. Allanson	13 to 12

Hurlingham: 5-7 May	
J.C. Ruddock	4 to 3½

Compton: 5-7 May	
R. Best	6½ to 6
R. Selmes	5 to 4½

Bowdon: 5-7 May	
C. Boon	12 to 9
A. Linton	11 to 10
J. Hawkins	8 to 7
Mrs A. Jones	9 to 8
A. Beck	8 to 7½
P.G. Walker	13 to 12
J. Wastell	18 to 15

Bowdon: 12-13 May	
Miss N. Currie	8 to 7
R. Probyn	9 to 5
D. Reekie	14* to 9
J. Simon	10 to 7

Ramsgate: 12-13 May	
Miss C. Pearce	10 to 8
R.H. Ware	5 to 4½

Cheltenham: 14-19 May	
P. Darby	1½ to 1
A. Hall	15D13 to 13D11
D. Howson	9 to 8
Dr A. Laidlaw	15D13 to 13D11
M. MacBean	13D11 to 11D9
J. Orchard	18D16 to 16D14
J. Underwood	15D13 to 13D11

Wrest Park: 15 May	
J. Coutts	1½ to 1
T. Burge	5 to 4
D. Hector	3½ to 2½

Scottish CA: 16 May	
M. O'Connell	4 to 3½
F. Mann	5 to 4½
B. Rannie	11 to 10
B. Townsend	15 to 14
Mrs C. Townsend	15 to 14

Budleigh Salterton: 14-19 May	
A. B. Brand	10D9 to 9
B.G. Perry	2½ to 5
Mrs B.G. Williams	17D15 to 16D14
A.J.W. Addis	14 to 12D11
Mrs C. Bagnall	6½ to 5½
T.M. Bower	4½ to 3½
R.S. Brand	1 to ½
H. Hall	9 to 7½
P. Mayers	16 to 15D13
D. Wickham	11 to 10
Dr W.R. Bucknall	8 to 9

Parkstone: 19-20 May	
R.C. Sowerby	7 to 5½

Bristol: 19-20 May	
M. Poole	10 to 9
P. Young	6½ to 7
A. Young	8 to 9

Cheltenham: 26-28 May	
Mrs M. Allanach	13 to 12
C. Cardis	9 to 8
J. Glyn	9 to 8
R. Jackman	7 to 6½
J. Jackson	1 to ½
A. Meares	11 to 10
J. Smith	14 to 12
Dr C. Snowdon	1½ to 3

Southport: 26-28 May	
A.G. Holgate	15 to 12
A. Bennet	1½ to 1
J.H. Haslam	4 to 3½
D. McCormick	0 to -1
A.T. Saurin	2 to 1
J.D. Williamson	3 to 2½

Nottingham: 26-28 May	
A. Addis	12 to 11
R. Rhite	18 to 16
A. Tunbridge	6 to 5½
K. Wells	16 to 15

Compton: 1-3 June	
C.S. Jones	12 to 9
Mrs K.S. Parsons	20 to 18
E.F. Robinson	12 to 11
R.H. Selmes	4½ to 4
H.W. Smorfitt	4 to 3½

Parkstone: 2 June	
P.R. Bradshaw	14 to 13
D. Harrison-Wood	3 to 2½
W. Steadman	8 to 6½

Budleigh Salterton: 3 June	
T.M. Bower	3½ to 3
W.G. Iredale	7 to 6
J.L. Rankin	21D17 to 18D16
Mrs R.A. Scaddon	17D15 to 15D13
G.E. Webb	12D10 to 10D9

Intrepid Explorers

Report from Annabel McDiarmid

(Annabel and Debbie Cornelius are on a croquet tour of the world. Here is Annabel's first report - Ed.)

Rucksacks were packed with the bare necessities for a year of back-packing hardship. T-shirts, shorts and shoes were discarded; how else could the portable CD player, 9 CD's, 9 cassettes, hairdryer, large bottle of mousse and portable iron possibly fit.

After an over 30 hour flight, we arrived in Auckland New Zealand to be shepherd immediately to the Papatoetoe lawns. (There don't appear to be any sheep here; what else are they supposed to shepherd). The lads were practising on the lawns, and we were offered a game by the locals; so our play in New Zealand began. Our main problem at this stage was to pronounce and remember the names of the clubs, as follows.



Annabel McDiarmid in exultant mood.

(Spelling, followed by pronunciation)

Orewa	Auraywa
Papatoetoe	Papatoeyo/
	Papatoeytoey
	Papatoetoes
Manurewa	Menuraywar
Howick	Harwick/Hoick
	(team version)

Fortunately we didn't have to remember the names of all 16 clubs in Auckland.

Where are these millions of sheep we keep hearing about?

The first Test. Due to the rain, the Opening Ceremony at Pakuranga was held indoors. Someone forgot to tell the Mayor that we were now inside and so his loud voice boomed his praise of the bowling greens for the Commonwealth Games, through the ears of those present in the 25 foot by 20 foot club house. Now, did I see somebody with their fingers in their ears?

Play began slowly and wetly. However Greg Bury, dubbed 'Cannonball' by the Kiwi's, had little trouble and effortlessly slammed his ball across the lawn, up the hill, through the fence and bushes, and on to the Commonwealth Games Bowling Greens. It finally came to rest in the ditch at the other end of the green.

I'm sure someone said they kept lots of sheep in this country!

As the days went by, the spectators

began to look dangerous - bandido's stalked the edges of the lawns, and hid in the shadows. Protection was important. Handkerchiefs, umbrellas, anything to escape the sun which 'is very strong because the hole in the ozone layer allows the sun to even burn through the clouds'. We became used to the locals advising us to put endless layers of no. 64 sun block on our 'delicate English skins'.

The spectators, when not deserting play for the attractions of Ollies Ice Cream Parlour, or the dubious delights of a trip around the Kiwi farm, maintained more interest than some of the players. One Aussie was caught sleeping during play (he claims he was meditating!) Another used the curious trick of juggling to

CHALLENGE!

After the victorious team had departed, the important event 'The Championships' wasted no time in getting under way. Play commenced at 9am, a late start for the Kiwi's who normally start at the early (practically day-break) hour of 8.30am. They claimed the later start was specially to pamper the English but we reckon they wanted a lie-in too!

With the start of the new event the sun decided to shine with a vengeance and the dreaded norwester (a hot wind) sprang up just to make matters worse. Croquet should never be played in 37 degrees - it's hard work I tell you! The clubs' sprinkler system was in great demand - not by the lawns but by the players.

Certain tournament customs were different to most British events; tea and lunch breaks were set with regimental precision - bell rings, drop mallet, eat. The Kiwi's were not always good at time limited games - one notable player, who should have known better, frequently worried about the oppo playing for time whilst there was nearly an hour and a half to go!

The Opens went fairly predictably, with a Fulford v Hogan final. Hogan won that, and went on to win every event he entered; the Men's, the Mixed Doubles with Debbie Cornelius, and the Open Doubles with Bob Jackson. The Women's was closely fought, the final between Debbie Cornelius and Madelaine Hadwin a nervy affair, victory going to the English. Annabel McDiarmid won the Women's Handicap beating Pamela Fellows from Wellington, making the Women's events totally British.

After the Champs, the Intrepid Explorers hired a car and 'did' the South Island in 4 days. Beautiful, rugged, breathtaking.... the Kiwi's certainly know how to describe their scenery; one mountain range is named 'The Remarkables'.

Congratulations to the Brits all round; goodbye New Zealand; Australia here we come.

Watch this space for the next thrilling instalment of the Intrepid Explorers adventures.

BOMBAY SAPPHIRE SOLOMON TROPHY

The Roehampton Club
Saturday to Wednesday
7-11 July 1990

SPECTATORS WELCOME

Entry: £5.00 (CA Members free)
Details from CA Office
Tel: 071-736-3148

And so to Christchurch for the third and final Test.

Sheep! - Lots and lots of sheep!!!! Christchurch was different to that expected - it was noisy. Not the quiet, dreamy Oxford-like atmosphere we'd been led to believe - no, we were deafened by the Sekada's - no crickets - no sekada's; we were corrected either way. The only time they were quietened was during bagpipe practice. Strangely enough, the bagpipes seemed to crop up everywhere - even 20 yards out at sea!