

Three more clubs visited, and a contact with Japan...

The end of April saw me down in the South West where, thanks to the generous hospitality of Donald and Rosemary Gagan, I was able to make a long weekend of it and, in so doing, visit three clubs in the locality. A busy weekend commenced on Friday when D and R played host to some 20 plus members and friends of Bristol CC.

A mutual question-and-answer session to the accompaniment of an excellent buffet supper was followed the next day by a visit to Nailsea in the company of John Mann where I was able to see at first hand both the potential and the problems relating to the club. I spent the rest of the day at Bristol where, amongst others enjoying some competitive club croquet, young Ben Green gave us yet a further example of the wealth of young talent that exists around the country.

The following day, Sunday, I took a ten-minute train ride to Bath where Chairman Maurice Boardman met me and conducted me to the Club where some 15-20 members had kindly given up their Sunday morning to be present at what turned out to be an open air "Mastermind" programme with yours truly 'in the chair' answering questions on a wide-ranging series of croquet-related matters. Maurice and his wife, Hilary, kindly provided lunch for Kay Yeoman, Bath CC Secretary and me. It was with considerable regret that I boarded the train back to London at the end of a very busy and very rewarding weekend.

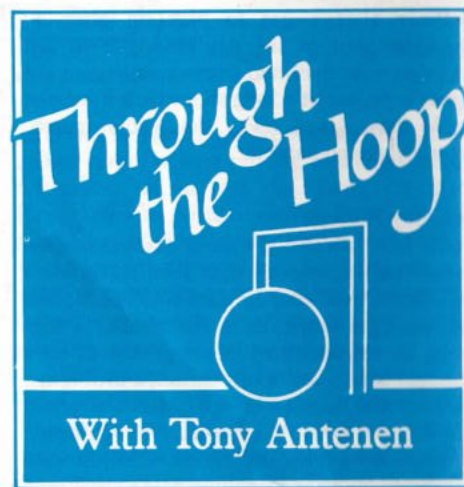
Three clubs seen. Three quite disparate problems affecting their individual development. Bristol, constrained by its physical geography, currently a splendid three-lawn club with club house facilities which are good now and have the potential to be even better. Their need is for a fourth lawn, sited as near as possible to the club. I wish them every success, for here is yet another club where one senses immediately that 'togetherness' that is both the hall-mark and

requisite of a true croquet club.

Nailsea, Bristol's not so distant neighbours, on the other hand, have four-lawns playing space and literally nothing else save a small storage shed! They are at the commencement of the development curve with lack of funds and low recruitment of new members locked together in that frustrating circle that so many of the now established clubs will doubtless remember and sympathise with. It is a long, hard road to travel and it takes determination and unrelenting effort in recruitment and fund-raising to achieve the desired goal of a full blown, up-and-running four-lawn club. I hope Strat Liddiard and Ian Maugham down there in the South West Federation will keep in touch with Nailsea, even though the CA's chronic shortage of development funds must restrict the practical help that can be provided. Sometimes it is just as important to an emerging club for them to feel they are not alone in their efforts to become established.

Bath have a 'city centre' location with a view past that glorious Abbey and on to the Somerset hills. Here the problem is created by their hugely successful Rugby club neighbours who feel the need to expand at the expense of the adjacent cricket ground which will, in turn, require re-shaping Bath CC's playing surfaces. At one time there was a danger of their overall playing area being reduced. This danger, I believe, has now receded thanks to the energetic efforts of all concerned, albeit at the expense of the existing lawns being successfully 'turned' without detriment to the playing surfaces.

During May, we were honoured by a visit from Mr Atushi Mitsui, one of the technical staff of the Croquet Association of Japan. After a tour of the house and grounds at Hurlingham, we discussed - through his charming interpreter - general matters appertaining to croquet and, in particular, the difficulties inherent in the development of the game in Japan.



One or two domestic matters now, folks. The tournament season is upon us with a vengeance. Please, please, PLEASE, let me have your tournament returns ASAP after the conclusion of the event. Most Treasurers (bless their hearts) have been prompt with the rendition of tournament levy cheques and my band of brother secretaries are rallying round with their bits and pieces. I cannot stress too highly the importance of speed in getting to me any handicap changes for onward transmission to Bill Lamb (Remember - there are no changes being recorded here on the office data-base nor are changes being published in "Croquet"). Mention of "Croquet" leads me to remind match report writers to keep it short and get it in quick! One or two are now almost past the sell-by date and in danger of losing their flavour.

There are still club and individual membership registration fees due and I will have written to individuals on that score by the time this edition of the magazine has gone into print.

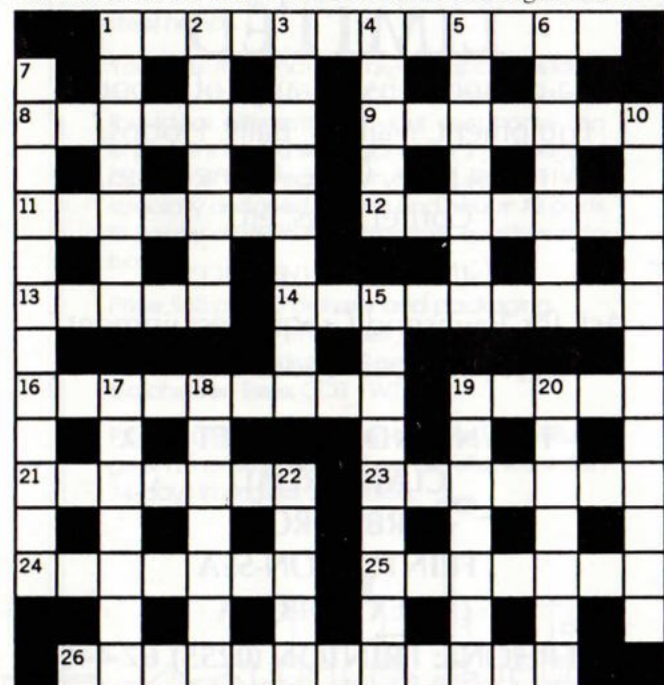
And now, finally, WE DID IT!! Sutton RFC carried off the Surrey Cup for the second year running. The game was well won - the post-match celebrations memorable!

CROQUET



CROSSWORD By "Crofter" No 2.

(Chambers 1988 is recommended but does not give 1 across).



See page 21 for information about Crofter Crossword.

ACROSS

1. Father unwell, mother unwell but both have energy for the earlier game. (6-6)
8. The old harlot could be yellow or even pied! (7)
9. To fix the boundary one mile back in data transmission. (7)
11. The ideal grass for bare mud cultivation. (7)
12. Scot's grave long time used for holding cattle. (7)
13. Clean wriggling eel-like fish. (5)
14. Heartlessly played about bad fault. (6,3)
16. What P.C.'s carry on night duty - in hand or in pocket? (5-4)
19. From the north a shower causes growth in the desired manner. (5)
21. Old mature organisation for powerful (but peaceful) development. (7)
23. First general surgeon to sparkle in years gone by. (7)
24. Thrill not on for a beginner. (4-3)
25. Part of the natural element is to poise badly. (7)
26. The direction in which a

straight 42 yarder has to travel? (12)

DOWN

1. The banking system in a 4½ gallonner found in rough bars. (3-4)
2. Where to find tooth-paste - in part of a cycle we are told! (2,1,4)
3. Idleness of first driver with lorry all broken down. (9)
4. A poser in grammatical mood first to last. (5)
5. Evil command causing enmity (3-4)
6. but in Lamb a stranger gets severe reprimand. (7)
7. No cannons possible in this successful turn. (3-4,5)
10. Does it remove three drips in revolution? (3,4-5)
15. There's no intake of breath when I hung sign awry. (9)
17. The effusive form of Lily Car? (7)
18. A snub to put in writing? (3-4)
19. Tom and Rita playing with a red hot poker. (7)
20. Originators of thunder God in Australia. (7)
22. Plain clothes lawyer in M.E. (5)

Croquet's Growth Continues!

A new croquet club has been formed at Kirklees. This is the fourth new croquet club to register with the Croquet Association during the past month.

The photo above shows play during the Open Day at the Forte Hotel, Brighouse, when the Kirklees Club attracted 25 people keen to try their hand at the game.

Anna Giraud, President of the new club, is an ophthalmic optician with a business in Huddersfield. Just recently installed as President of the Huddersfield Branch of Soroptimist International, she has lived in Brighouse for some 14

years.

She became hooked on the game when she first played it in her grandmother's garden. Since then, she has played croquet in Nairobi and a variety of places in Scotland and England.

Chris Marsden, the new club's Publicity Officer, achieved notable coverage for the Open Day, with articles in the Yorkshire Post, Huddersfield Daily Examiner, Spenborough Guardian & Herald, and Halifax Evening Courier.

Photo: Courtesy Yorkshire Post.

In this issue ...
 News & Views
 Coaching Notes
 Championship Reports
 Solomon Trophy Results
 "Crofter" Crossword
 ... and lots more



Published by
The Croquet Association

● **Allen Parker continues his trawl through the pages of old Gazettes. The code of conduct that appeared in the Croquet Gazette dated 31st May 1906 does not appear to differ greatly from that accepted today. It did however give rise to some controversy.**

The Code of Etiquette recommended by the Committee more than a year ago appears for the second time on page 43 of the Year Book. Unfortunately a large number of tournament players still appear either to be ignorant of its contents or intentionally to ignore them.

The result is that before beginning a game, a player has to say to his opponent: "I play according to the Year Book Code," which, in most cases, turns out to be entirely unknown to the opponent. Whereupon explanations have to be given, involving waste of time, and the opponent either agrees or states that he prefers to play according to some private code of his own, which he considers more "sportsmanlike".

With the latter reply we have no sympathy. The Committee's Code is founded on the results of a plebiscite held in the Gazette in the Autumn of 1904. The questions therein asked and now provided for were decided by large majorities, and those who did not take the trouble to record their votes on the occasion are not justified in setting up their own private opinions against those who did.

For instance, the Section headed "Interruption of Adversary" provides by implication that a player should not (unasked) inform his opponent which ball he ought to play with, and so prevent his playing with the wrong ball. There are at least two good reasons for this decision. One is that the attentive player who watches the game as he ought to, would otherwise be at a disadvantage as compared with the inattentive player. The other is that the warning, if permitted, would virtually lay the opponent under an obligation to "do the same for you" should occasion arise, or, if he does not do so, to lower him in the opinion of many of the spectators, who do not know better, and to make him feel that it is considered that he has done something very mean. To put one's opponent in such a position is the most "unsportsmanlike" action we can imagine.

Players who consider themselves too sportsmanlike to adopt the recognised code might well look a little nearer home, and see whether they act up to their own standard in other vital points connected with the game. Let them ask themselves whether they always give themselves away on doubtful "no shakes" and foul strokes; whether they always turn their backs on the ground when replacing a boundary ball which may be wired from some other ball; whether they always insist on having their possible crush strokes watched, and whether they ever give themselves the benefit of a rush when putting on a boundary ball when they are not quite certain that the balls should not be placed in contact.

Let such players show themselves to be faultless in these respects, giving their opponents the benefit of the doubt in doubtful cases. Then, and not till then, will they be entitled to a hearing as to whether it is or is not sportsmanlike to act according to the recognised code when the opponent is about to make a blunder.

Croquet Etiquette in 1906

From "Notes"
(by the then Editor)



Mr M. Barry, 6th in the 1906 President's Cup, won the event in 1907 after a tie with Mr R.C.J. Beaton.

This somewhat provocative communication elicited an indignant response.

Sir,
As the paragraph in this week's issue, under the above heading, is a gratuitous insult to those who do not play the game of Croquet in the same spirit as the writer, I must request you, in common fairness, to give equal prominence to a protest against the insinuations there made, which would be too ridiculous to be noticed had you not given them such a prominent position in the C.A. Gazette.

The suggestion that those players who do not wish to take advantage of accidental mistakes on the part of their adversaries would be more likely, or even as likely, to attempt to cheat in other ways, is too illogical to require refutation, and savours much of a laboured effort to defend the writer's own position.

I will venture to assert that the possibility of anyone wishing to cheat by some of the methods suggested by the writer has never even entered the minds of the majority of those players whom he sneers at as "considering themselves to be too sportsmanlike", and I will challenge the writer, whoever he may be, to state, truthfully and clearly, if he has ever met any of these players who are not, in his own words "faultless in these respects".

With regard to the section of the Code ref-

ferred to, I would point out that it is almost always before, and not during, his turn that anyone who wishes to do so informs his adversary that he is about to play with the wrong ball; but whatever be the interpretation of the section, it is really absurd to suppose that those who have played games all their lives, and have always held to the English tradition of endeavouring to win on their own merits, and in friendly rivalry, are to have the spirit in which they play any game determined for them by the majority of those who have attained a certain proficiency in Croquet, although the latter may have had no other experience of games or sport.

It is impossible to deny that Croquet is still despised by the majority of players of other games, such as golf and tennis; a result no doubt chiefly due to their ignorance of the game, but a state of things that is not likely to be improved by the publication of such paragraphs as the one under notice.

I am not suggesting for a moment that there are not large numbers of players, who in the light of their own reasoning, consider it against the spirit of the game to inform their adversary when about to play with the wrong ball, and who are just as "sportsmanlike", to use the writer's word, as any others, and probably sufficiently so not to fear "the opinion of many of the spectators, who do not know better". I would only ask these, as the opportunity has arisen, what they would think of their opponent at golf or billiards if he knowingly, for his own advantage, allowed them to play with the wrong ball, or at tennis if he knowingly allowed them to serve into the wrong court?

With these, however, we have no quarrel, for in matters of honour - and this is one - every man is a law unto himself; but when those who do not wish to play a generous game attempt to defend themselves by insulting those who do, it is fully time to protest.

Yours faithfully,
Arthur E. Mudge.
June 2nd, 1906.

To which the Editor appended the following note:

Your expression "generous game" begs the question, and the "gratuitous insult" is quite imaginary. There was no suggestion that those who declined to act in accordance with the recognised code were ipso facto more likely to be lax in other respects. It was merely suggested that some of them might be. In reply to your "challenge", the writer of the Note unhesitatingly answers "yes" which he hopes is as "clear" as it is "truthful". He would add that it was for many years his invariable custom to inform his opponent when he was about to play with the wrong ball, and having done so three times in one game against a well-known player, he was politely requested to hold his tongue, on the ground that the opponent was put off by the interruption. ■

Palm Beach Gardens: 12th-16th April

Solomon Trophy still ours- but United States improves again

By David Openshaw
(Great Britain & Ireland Captain)

The fourth annual Solomon Trophy match between Great Britain & Ireland and the USA took place at the USCA headquarters club at PGA National Palm Beach Gardens, Florida from April 12-16. The club is situated in the PGA National Resort which comprises a Sheraton Hotel, 2 golf courses, a tennis club, sailing facilities and private dwellings.

Both teams fielded strong sides. The Americans had Jim Bast playing for the first time in this event, with Jerry Stark and Kylie Jones at Nos. 1 and 2 as they had been for the two previous years. World Champion, Robert Fulford, was No. 1 for Great Britain & Ireland; Martin French, who had such a good result in last year's President's Cup, and Chris Clarke were making their debuts.

The Trophy was competed for as usual over 21 matches (9 doubles and 12 singles). Great Britain got off to a flying start on the first day, winning all three doubles. However in each match the Americans could have taken one of the games and confirmed that they were not to be taken lightly. This was further emphasised on the second day when they won two of the six singles; Jim Bast beat Chris Clarke with a near faultless display and Erv Peterson won an 8-hour battle against William Prichard.

Earlier the British captain, David Openshaw, had achieved a quick victory against the American No. 1 Jerry Stark. Robert Fulford narrowly beat Kylie Jones after Kylie had failed to finish from 4-back and peg in the third game. Nigel Aspinall and Martin French beat Tremaine Arkley and Bob Kroeger respectively, both in three games.

On Day 3, Britain's strength in the doubles again achieved a 3-0

score although, as on the first day, with some close games. The morning play took place in heavy rain and play was stopped for half an hour just before lunch because of waterlogged courts. The Florida sunshine and the fast draining courts soon ensured we were able to restart. In the evening both teams played a Pool competition organised by Anne Frost and Patti Hopkins of the USCA.

Britain went into the fourth day leading 10 matches to 2 and therefore needing only one more victory to secure the trophy. All of the singles matches were close contests but in the first to finish Robert Fulford ensured the trophy would return to Britain with a fine recovery in the third game against Jerry Stark. However, the US fought back well and Jones, Arkley, and Peterson all won. Aspinall ensured a further British victory in a close game against Bast. William Prichard played beautifully in a match which started later than the others and won with two triples against Kroeger.

On the final day, the only British pair to win were Prichard and French, making the final score Great Britain & Ireland 14, USA 7. A convincing win for Britain but further evidence of the Americans' continued improvement and commitment to Association Croquet.

Match Details:
(GB&I names first)

Openshaw & Aspinall bt Arkley & Kroeger +3, +25.
Fulford & Clarke bt Bast & Peterson +19, +10.
Prichard & French bt Stark & Jones +9, +15(TP).

Fulford bt Jones +17, -4, +4.
Openshaw bt Stark +23, +23.
Aspinall bt Arkley +12, -17, +12.
Clarke lost to Bast +17, +7.

Prichard lost to Peterson +12, -25(TP), +26.
French bt Kroeger +13, -12, +16.

Openshaw & Aspinall bt Bast & Peterson +15, +26.
Fulford & Clarke bt Stark & Jones +3, +10.
Prichard & French bt Arkley & Kroeger +18, +4.

Fulford bt Stark -17, +26(TP) +5.
Openshaw lost to Jones +21, -25, +5.

Aspinall bt Bast +16, -4, +8.
Clarke lost to Arkley +18, -15TP, +26.
Prichard bt Kroeger +18TP, +26TP.
French lost to Peterson +2, +5.
Openshaw & Aspinall lost to Stark & Jones +17, -5, +26.
Fulford & Clarke lost to Arkley & Kroeger -9(TP), +12, +7.
Prichard & French bt Bast & Peterson -7, +20, +10.

FINAL SCORE
Great Britain & Ireland 14; U.S.A. 7.



Chris Clarke made his debut in this fixture.

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1990 he was too ill to attend.

Ian eschewed the setting up of four ball breaks but he would hit in across the lawn, carry on with a two ball break until he picked up the third ball and then make great progress with his magical mallet.

Sunday afternoons will not seem the same without Ian's dry sense of humour, the contented puffing of his pipe and his ardent advocacy of short croquet.

Roger Jackman,
Secretary: High Wycombe C.C.

Obituary

IAN BIGGS

It is with great sadness that the High Wycombe Club reports the death of Ian Biggs. Ian was a founder member of the club nine years ago, a committee member, a regular member of the league team and a great devotee of short croquet.

On several occasions he reached the final stages of the National Short Croquet singles competition and I am sure it was a great disappointment to him that having qualified for the finals in

NOTICE BOARD

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CHANGE OF DATE

Compton Open Weekend will now be played on August 10th and 11th to avoid a clash with the Opens.

**AFFILIATE MEMBERS TIES**

These are now available, with a single motif gold CA logo and a blue background.

Price **£11.67** (including VAT and postage)

Please order from the CA Office.

Over 200 Croquet Demonstrators appointed

19 Croquet Demonstrator courses were organised by the Croquet Association during May this year, and 207 people were awarded their Croquet Demonstrator badges as a result.

The Demonstrator courses have proved to be very popular. Applications have already been received for more courses to be held later this year - a glowing tribute to the CA coaches concerned.

Pictured above is Mrs Joan Buckle (standing, 2nd left) of the Bucks WI who qualified as a Demonstrator in 1990. She has set up the Winslow Croquet Club, and is seen above with other club members and local personalities when the Club's new lawn was officially opened in April.

Photo: Courtesy Bucks & Herts Newspapers Ltd.

MAJOR FIXTURES STILL TO COME

10 July	The ROYAL BANK OF SCOTLAND National Schools Championship Final - Bowdon Croquet Club, St Mary's Road, Bowdon, Cheshire.
18-20 July	The Junior Championship - Bowdon Croquet Club, St Mary's Road, Bowdon, Cheshire.
20 July	The GIEVES & HAWKES British Seniors Championship Finals - The Hurlingham Club, Ranelagh Gardens, London, SW6 3PR.
21-28 July	The ATCO British Open Championship, The ATCO British Open Doubles Championship - The Hurlingham Club, Ranelagh Gardens, London, SW6 3PR.
17-26 August	The Northern Championships - Bowdon Croquet Club, St Mary's Road, Bowdon, Cheshire.
8-15 Sept	The World Croquet Championship, held under the auspices of the World Croquet Federation - The Hurlingham Club, Ranelagh Gardens, London, SW6 3PR.
14-22 Sept	The South of England Championship - Compton Croquet Club, Saffrons Sports Club, Compton Place Road, Eastbourne, E. Sussex.
5-6 October	The CROQUET ASSOCIATION National Club Championship Finals - Cheltenham Croquet Club, Old Bath Road, Cheltenham, Glos, GL53 7DF.
9 October	The ROYAL BANK OF SCOTLAND National Schools Handicap Final - Bowdon Croquet Club, St Mary's Road, Bowdon, Cheshire.

PUBLICATIONS & OTHER ITEMS AVAILABLE FROM THE ASSOCIATION

	CA Associate Members	CA Affiliates & non-members	Postage
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'Know the Game'	£ 1.65	£ 1.99	27p
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Video			
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A bumper bundle. Two books by the late Peter Danks 'Teach Yourself Croquet' and 'Simplified Croquet'. Associates £7.50. Affiliates £9.00. Both plus £1.00 postage.

CROQUET

Croquet Grows Internationally

Busto Arsizio: 7th-9th June

Italian CA Stages First "Coppa delle Alpi"

Early this June, France, Italy, and Switzerland met head-to-head in the first International Croquet Match on mainland Europe.

The three countries competed in the first "Coppa delle Alpi", in what could prove to be a momentous event for European Croquet. The match took place over three days at Busto Arsizio, just outside Milan, on the club's two lawns.

The event was organised by the Italian Croquet Association who went to considerable lengths to ensure its success. In addition to the croquet, they organised an exhibition of Croquet Art, which is to tour Italy, and a musical evening which featured the Busto Arsizio Musical Society and a member of Busto's World Champion Mandolin team.

The match was won by France, despite the non-arrival of their top player, Rodolphe Dourth. Jean-Baptiste Grochain and Yohann Ravez (son of the French CA President) played well to ensure six victories - sufficient to give them a clear lead over the other two countries.

Italy scored three welcome wins, amid much patriotic waving of the National Flag, to equal the score of the Swiss. However, the Swiss took second place in the match by virtue of their better net-hoop score.

An additional triangular event for "La Coupe des Dames" in which each country was represented by a lady, was also won by France. Mireille Sowerby, wife of the Secretary of the Jersey Club, took to the game quicker than the others and ran out in fine style by a comfortable margin of 5 points.

The Italians are to be congratulated on such a marvellous start to what we all hope will become an annual event. Next year, it will be the turn of the Swiss to host "La Coupe des Alpes".



The Italians celebrate their third victory. Their doubles pair, Gianni Leoncini (left) and Luigi Carnaghi (centre) beat Switzerland's David Underhill and Ian McLaren 11-10 on time after a most exciting finish.

CHANGE OF EDITOR

My spell as Editor has come to an end and I shall be relinquishing the post after publication of Issue No 219 (January 1992) or earlier if my successor is appointed before then.

This gives me an opportunity to thank all those who have contributed to the magazine during my period as Editor, either as members of the Editorial team or as contributors of articles, photographs, and other material. Thank you also to those who have written with helpful suggestions and encouragement from time to time.

The post of Editor will be advertised in the next issue of *Croquet*, but potential Editors who would like to consider the matter before then should contact Stephen Mulliner. Whoever he or she may be, I wish the new Editor every success in what is a most rewarding task.

Chris Hudson

French Juniors to play at Bowdon

The French CA will be sending four of their Junior players to compete in our Junior Championship at Bowdon.

Jean-Baptiste Grochain, the French National Development Officer, has been concentrating his efforts to promote the game on French schools. He will be travelling with the players, who are already showing promise. The party will be put up by Bowdon members whilst they are here.

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CROQUET

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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 the Editor.

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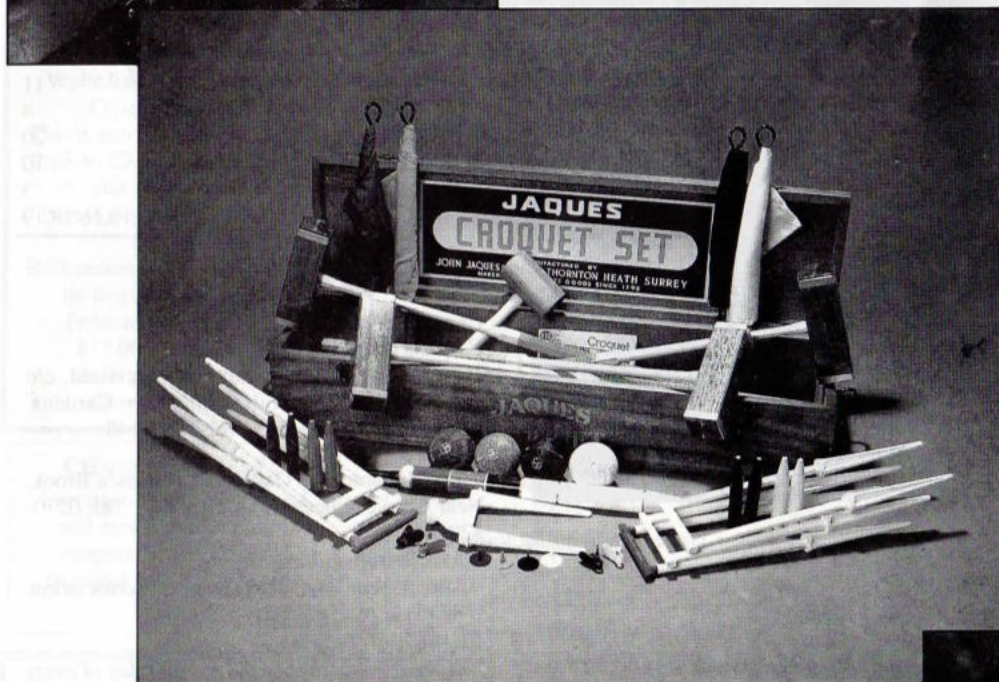
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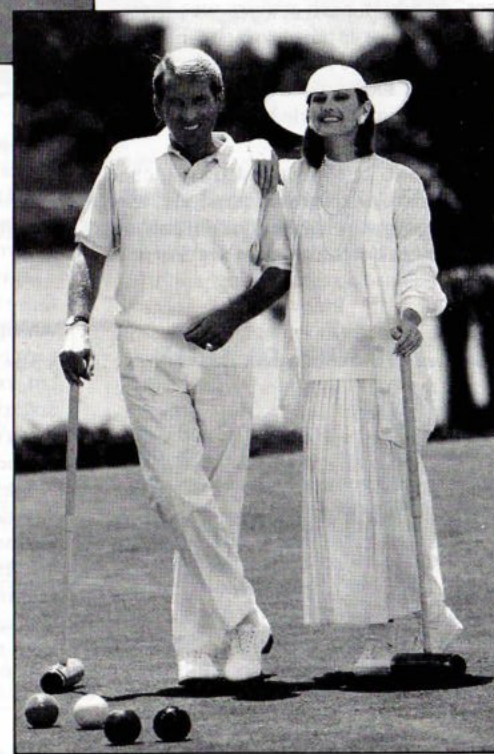
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INTER-COUNTIES CHAMPIONSHIP

Southwick: 25th-28th May

Eastern Counties taken to the brink by Surrey

Report by Simon Tuke and
Michael Llewellyn-Williams

Following the end of the Cannes Film Festival, the world's paparazzi look around to choose their next destination. The Counties seems an obvious candidate, and sure enough this year saw the Leica-wielders out in force.

In addition to the local rags, TVS put in an appearance, and the man from the Times Saturday Review made a concerted effort to drain all of Mark Saurin's blood into his head by ordering him to maintain an anatomically improbable position behind a hoop, for what seemed, to those waiting to play on the lawn, to be at least half an hour. Mark's discomfiture was compounded by the fact that the shot was only reproduced an inch square and in black and white the following weekend.

These antics may have explained Mark's new "number 2 at the back, number 6 on top" hairdo, bringing some much-needed competition into the tonsorial stakes traditionally dominated by Ivor and Richard "Today we settled all family business" Brand. Simon Tuke could only muster a number 3, and Freddie Reynold went to the other extreme with his "fly-away" style.

As for the croquet, pleasant surprise was expressed by one and all at the near-miraculous recovery of Southwick's lawns from the rav-

ages of the last two years. Despite their easy pace, however, a significant number of games managed to go to time, suggesting that consumption of the local real ale was as copious as ever.

It is always difficult to select individual games out of so many, but a couple of incidents stand out. Lewis Palmer found himself partnerless when Mark Avery failed to appear (a defunct alarm clock battery cited as the reason). Lewis succeeded in completing 6 peels on his partner ball before finally succumbing. He apparently refrained from claiming two 'loser's drinks' afterwards.

There can be no dispute about the turn of the tournament. David Goacher comes to the end of the sixth turn TP but finds himself unable to peg out his partner. With the first opposition ball he promotes his partner to 2 yards from the peg, then completes the combination peg-out with the other opposition ball. A rarely-seen coup that received the hearty applause it deserved.

The final day saw a tremendously tense conclusion to the tournament. Eastern Counties won their final match (against Lancs and Cheshire) 3-0, leaving Surrey needing to win one game of their final match (against Avon) to draw level. Surrey were unbeaten in matches at this stage, and had already inflicted their only defeat of the tournament on

Eastern.

Surrey lost the first two games, including a straight triple by David Goacher. The third game was getting very close. Avon seemed to have the advantage until, in pegging out George Noble, Roger Jenkin's ball also rolled on to the peg. Both the other balls were for 4-back. After a multitude of missed 10-yarders, Bob Race of Avon crept in ahead of Mike Stephens, allowing Eastern Counties to retain their title after what must be one of the closest finishes ever.

Dennis Shaw, the Kent captain, proudly presented the engraved wooden spoon to Hampshire, Sussex and Isle of Wight, Kent having made great strides from bottom place last year to 8th this. Eileen Shaw consolidated her unchallenged status as the Queen of Croquet Mullinery (as opposed to Mullinery) with a splendid red and white deckchair-striped tifter that brightened the often gloomy skies. Out of character incident of the weekend was Tom Coles, usually a player of precision and finesse, executing a big split. A cry of "ouch" mingled with a sharp crack as the shaft of his mallet snapped in two.

Bernard Neal was to be seen patrolling the vast acreage every morning in his ROT capacity. Although Nigel Aspinall was listed as manager, the lion's share of the administration was handled



Pat Shine handled the lion's share of the administration...

by Pat Shine in her usual exemplary fashion. She started by reading the riot act to the assembled captains at 9.15 on the first morning, and succeeded in keeping the serried hordes pretty much to schedule. That has to be the hardest task anybody has in the tournament!

FINAL ORDER

	Games	Won
1. Eastern	9	23
2. Surrey	9	22
3. Yorkshire	6	16
4. Gloucester	6	15
5. Lancs & Cheshire	5	15
6. Avon	5	14
7. Bedford	4	15
8. Kent	4	12
9. Middlesex	3	13
10. Sussex & Hants	2	11

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Cheltenham: 29th March - 1st April Handicap system survives first trial

Fifty-four players started the season in the face of a bitterly cold northerly wind. The Cheltenham lawns looked resplendent, being newly mown and marked out. The lush green of the spring grass acting as a canvas backdrop to the newly laundered whites and punctuated by slashes of colour from new sets of Jacques.

The tournament consisted of six American blocks of nine players, with each player having two games each day. The manager greeted each player with his own personalised schedule for the weekend, providing details of opponents and start times. The computerised organisation of the tournament provided considerable clarity to the event and was generally complimented as setting new standards. One or two players expressed a concern for the environment in terms of the bulk of paper used. However, the manager assured these individuals that it was recycled paper.

Recycling was the order of the day on the lawns, with players struggling even on the easy lawns to find the rhythm and standard that had been achieved at the end of the last season. Innings tended to be short and many games went to time on Day 1. This effect was compounded by the need for three hour time limits on the first two days, as once again Easter coincided with the changeover to "summer time". However, Days 2 and 3 were bright, sunny and warm enough for shorts. (Credit to Alex O'Connor and Alan Bogle who managed to play in shorts on Day 4.) Day 1 saw two games pegged down, whilst all games were finished by seven o'clock on Days 2 and 3; proof that sunny weather speeds up games.

Block A was dominated by Chris Williams with seven wins. He lost only to Charlotte Townsend who finished a veritable second with five wins. David Maugham also had five wins proving that his handicap reduction to -2½ was justified.

Block B was a two horse race between croquet's leading "Impressionist", Roy Weaver, and the fast improving Mike Hammelev. Both finished with seven wins, with the maestro of the canvas taking the verdict on the head to head clash.

A similar picture in block C saw Don Cornelius pip John Willis, with both winning six matches. Block D saw a runaway win for Roger Jackman who won all eight games with a performance that would have made a player of half his handicap very happy. Second place went to Colin Snowdon.

Block E was won by Roger Jenkins from Bristol, who played good tight croquet to just pip Neil Jackson from Ipswich. Finally Block F was won by Dennis Moorcraft who played some of the best croquet of the weekend. Runner up was Steve Garner from Oxford, driven by Oxford's success in the boat race.

On the lighter side, there were several choice moments. A highlight was Don Cornelius dancing a jig on Lawn 8 in attempting to get out of the way of a rogue ball from the double banked game. Dennis Moorcraft and Ray Ransom provided a fashion show for headgear in their game by wearing two of the most outrageous "Tammy Touries" to grace a croquet lawn. On the topic of fashion, the Scottish CA jumper was in evidence threefold.

On the playing side, the standard was generally early season especially when the easy lawns were taken into account. Only the three lawns which had been played over the winter posed any challenge due to their faster pace. Credit to David Maugham for the only triple of the tournament, although Alan Bogle had a creditable attempt in his last game, having gone to 4-back on the third turn.

Referees were in demand, with over twenty faults between them. An incident in Ian Plummer's game saw him give his opponent erroneous advice regarding ball placement for a corner cannon and resulted in six referees including the ROT watching the ensuing shot. Indeed, the ROT complained of wide hoops to be proved wrong by the gauge.

Finally, this tournament saw the introduction of the new handicap point system. How did it fare? Well, 6 players had an automatic handicap reduction - Chris Williams, Roy Weaver, Mike Hammelev, Roger Jackman, Roger Jenkins and Dennis Moorcraft. These were offset by 6 players who had an automatic handicap increase. In addition, Sue Bray and Charlotte Townsend were reduced by the handicappers for exhibiting the usual features of bandits. Both won bronze awards, as did Basil Townsend.



Dennis Moorcraft played some of the best croquet of the weekend...

Surbiton: 31st March - 1st April

Here We Go Again!

By Annabel McDiarmid.

The entry of the Easter Surbiton Open Tournament was very Cosmopolitan, with players from New Zealand, England, Ireland, Wales, Scotland, and Egypt. The Easter Bunny (called noblet), had visited the lawns before the arrival of players, and two cream eggs were to be found by each set of balls.

The tournament started badly for me, as I was told that I had to do this report. Fortunately, a large supply of beer was available, and a quote from John Walters summed up the cooking expertise very well: "Hazel is the most immaculate croquet cook in the entire universe". The food must have been good for John, (who by the way is now sporting a 'trendy' ponytail), as he almost had 3 triples in a row.

George Noble had everyone discussing his sanity when he started digging up the lawn (after his game) saying he was looking for drains, and Debbie Cornelius, winner of a 'Can' for 'Quote of the Year' last year, is on-line for winning it for a 2nd year: players were informed by Debs that "if a strange man turns up at the club this afternoon, he's mine"!!

We had a strange mix of weather: Sunday was sunbathing weather, and saw many people lounging around in the afternoon, reluctant to produce an exciting game due to the effects of the mix of sun, beer, and the extremely alcoholic and delicious trifle. Monday was the op-

posite, freezing cold and well windy, with many people running across the lawns to warm themselves up.

Biggest surprise of the weekend was probably that no April 1st stunts were made - sad - perhaps we can work on it for the next year.

Anyway back to croquet. Robert Fulford, although losing one of his games to Adrian Judge, won the tournament and a pewter tankard for his coke. Debbie Cornelius came second, also with 6 wins out of 7.

ROUND THE LAWNS

SOUTHWICK: 13-14 April

Advanced Play Knockout
(15 entries)

Semi-Finals:
A.R.K. Miller bt M.J. Llewellyn-Williams +11, +9; J.O. Walters bt S.M. Tuke +16, +23.

Final:
Walters bt Miller +22, +9.

WOKING: 19-21 April
Handicap Singles
(22 entries)

Block Winners:
Miss A. McDiarmid (3); J.P. Dawson (-1); J. Smith (7 ½); J.D. Goddard (2 ½).

Cheltenham: 4-6 May

● Peter Dorke reflects on the Western Championships: the first time he has made the cut...

The Perils of Perfection

Like Gulliver approaching his first Brobdingnagian, "I was struck with the utmost Fear and Astonishment" as I slunk into Cheltenham at 11am on a cold May morning. For not only was this my first major Championship, I was also on a late start and I hate late starts on the first day: all those lucky people playing croquet while I mooch around the club reading notices and eating my sandwiches too early.

Ian Maugham was a compact ball of total concentration on lawn 8 as I scurried into the club-house. Hurrying into the changing-room, I found my prospective opponent, Colin Irwin, trying to obtain a replacement for his bank-card which he had inadvertently melted the night before. How, I wondered, could he be so concerned with mere money when the most important match of my life was only minutes away. Perhaps Colin, with some justification, was already pondering tactics for his semi with Mulliner.

It is difficult enough to write a tournament report at Edgbaston, where the entry is hardly ever more than 16. To give a clear and informed view of an ordinary Cheltenham Tournament is a mammoth, nay Brobdingnagian task. How much more demanding to do the same for the Westerns.

Perhaps I make too much of this but I know many of my readers and even some of the participants in this particular tourney will know the emotions caused by getting, at last, into one of the big ones. I can see Alan Sutcliffe nodding here, for there's a man who takes his croquet seriously. No-one tried harder to reach the final of these particular Westerns and when he fell, gunned down by Andrew Hope on Sunday night, it was a hero's death. He left Cheltenham with 8 wins out of 12, pretty good going in this company.

Not that it was all brilliance: I shall mention neither names nor cases but I had to sweep up the shreds of a few illusions after watching the ill-advised tactics of some well-known players.

Much of the week-end will, however, live gloriously in the memory: I had never before seen Steve Mulliner in action but his performance in the final against David Maugham, and especially in the fifth and deciding game, was a croquet master class. I hope Maugham was paying close attention. But there's no doubt of that, for on the one occasion when Mulliner attempted to play a roquet to which he was not entitled, Maugham burst from the tea-

room with the plaintive bellow "STEVE!"

The biggest surprise for this newcomer to the bigtime was the hoops. Bernard Neal, our friendly



Peter Dorke assists the local constabulary to round up a stray dog at Cheltenham.

Manager, insisted that the hoops were firmly set at the regulation width but I swear they were the easiest hoops I've encountered since Budleigh Salterton in 1988. Positively welcoming. But perhaps that's not it: perhaps I got in front of them more often and perhaps I was concentrating more than usual. For - and this was the joy of the Westerns - I felt the demands of the competition were bringing out the best in my play. No great shakes, maybe, but the best I could do. And for this reason I not only enjoyed this tournament more than any for some long while (and again Budleigh '88 comes to mind) but also became almost completely relaxed about the outcome of my matches. I had read somewhere, probably in Solomon, that to be successful in croquet you must not care whether you win or lose. And I had scoffed, believing that winning depended on wanting to win, on hating your opponent, on channelling the adrenalin into the very shaft of the mallet. Well, perhaps it does, but at the Westerns I did not feel that way and I rediscovered much lost enthusiasm for this tantalising

game. Perhaps the curious nature of croquet is summed up by Tony Mrozinski's reply when asked why a complicated manoeuvre had not resulted in the scoring of a single hoop. "Ah!" quoth he, "It's not that kind of a game".

What kind of a game is it then? Martin French has reached that pinnacle of perfection from which, should I ever reach it, I would be tempted to jump into oblivion be-

that was only Monday morning: we had yet to see Mulliner's sextuple fail at 4 and 2-back in the fourth game of the final, when he was two games down. He completed a successful quadruple in his next turn. Sure, he had the run of the balls once or twice but no-one has ever rushed his partner ball to within 3 inches of the winning peg with such insouciance. And then done it again in the final game as though the risk was minimal.

RESULTS Western Championship

Round 1:

* S.N. Mulliner bt A.J. Bogle +25, +26; A.K. Gregory bt A.J. Symons +8, +15; I. Burridge bt J.M.C. Evans +23, +10TP; * C.D. Clarke bt S. Williams -4, +15, +17; G.S. Liddiard bt * J.E. Guest -13, +5, +5; D.L. Gaunt bt M. Murray -8, +24, +19; D.R. Foulser bt F.I. Maugham -23, +8, +1; * C.J. Irwin bt P.J. Dorke -24, +17, +14; * M.R. French bt A.J. Mrozinski +17, +10TP; A.F. Sutcliffe bt B.G. Neal +12, -14, +26; A.B. Hope bt E.W. Solomon +26, +8; * J.O. Walters bt A. Bray -11, +21, +5; * D.J. Goacher bt S.M. Tuke +16, -19, +17; F.J.R. Landor bt D.J. McCormick -24, +8, +26; P.L. Smith bt I.G. Vincent +24, +24TP; D.B. Maugham bt C.N. Williams +25, +25TP.

* Seeded Player

Round 2:

Mulliner bt Gregory -17, +26TP, +15TP; Clarke bt Burridge +22, +4; Liddiard bt Gaunt +11, +17; Irwin bt Foulser +23, +24; Sutcliffe bt Mrozinski +25, +6; Hope bt Walters +4TP, +15; Landor bt Goacher +17, +9; Maugham bt Smith +2TP, +26TP.

Round 3

Mulliner bt Clarke +13, +23; Irwin bt Liddiard +24, +16TP; Hope bt Sutcliffe -2, +1(T), +4; Maugham bt Landor +5, +12.

Semi-Finals

Mulliner bt Irwin +26TP, +26TP; Maugham bt Hope +17TP, +2.

Final

Mulliner bt Maugham +26TP, -25TP, -26TP, +14QP, +26TP.

3rd Place Play-Off

Hope bt Irwin +21, -26, +23.

● David Coates of Worcester sends us a short story he has written

I Dream of Genie

To the best of my recollection, I first encountered Desmond at a weekend handicap event somewhere in the South West. How often we fail to recognise truly interesting characters at a first meeting; sometimes it takes years and the benefit of hindsight before we assess people accurately. Anyway, on that spring morning Desmond looked very ordinary indeed, a middle aged man of average height and build, with thinning hair and a thickening waist.

The first round of the tournament had us playing in double-banked games on the same court. We were each receiving an odd bisque or so from our respective opponents. After the initial skirmishes, my opponent set up a reasonable break and Desmond's appeared to have complete control of a four ball break. Desmond and I arranged our deckchairs on the lee of a thick hedge and settled back to watch; I recall feeling that delicious tingle which I associate with the start of a new competition.

Desmond's opponent made hoop two off Desmond's red ball and croqueted it to within three feet of hoop four, while his own blue ball stopped about two yards away from the yellow pivot, near the peg. "Hey ho," beamed Desmond, producing a handsome curved pipe and leather pouch, "time to call upon the genie of the pipe." He carefully filled the bowl with a deep brown aromatic mixture and then, with that contortion which is characteristic of pipe smokers, contrived to light a match while using both hands to make a windscreen. Puffing vigorously, he soon had the tobacco glowing bright orange red; meanwhile his opponent ran hoop three.

"Funny thing," said Desmond, poking down the red hot tobacco with the blunt end of his smoker's knife, "when you get it just right the other fellow breaks down and you have to leave it." He drew gently and evenly, expelled a stream of blue smoke and radiated pleasure. From the lawn there came a stifled oath as his opponent clanged hoop four. "There you are, must be a genie," chortled Desmond, laying down the pipe and seizing his mallet.

Desmond's opponent had broken down in the grand manner; Desmond had a simple roquet with his red ball near hoop four. The blue was despatched to hoop two, and a take-off from yellow left a simple rush on black to hoop one. My attention was switched back to my own game, and a little while later I noticed Desmond placing his red clip on penult; he still had his one and a half bisques for his backward ball.

My game ended early, I lost heavily. As I had no new game to start I watched the conclusion of Desmond's game. It had developed into quite a thriller, and my most vivid memory is of Desmond's opponent being hopelessly hampered, after only just running rover, and of Desmond carefully placing his pipe on the ground before emerging from a cloud of smoke to run his last three hoops and peg out.

My form improved and I won my next four games. This resulted in my meeting Desmond, who had also won four out of five, in the deciding game of the tournament. Early in the game I threw away the innings by missing a very short roquet at Desmond's corner ball; I looked up to see Desmond raising his pipe in the same way that one sometimes raises a glass to an

aquaintance across a crowded bar. Two hours later I was favourite to win when I heard the scrape of a match. Perhaps it distracted me; I overhit a simple croquet and my ball came to rest in contact with the peg, totally wired from the pivot ball.

At the presentation Desmond collected a modest silver cup of little intrinsic worth, but massive symbolic value. He also received the winner's cash prize, and a notification of a half bisque reduction in his handicap. The runner-up's prize was modest enough anyway, and I shared it with two others, being left to reflect on what might have been!

Twice more that summer I met Desmond at tournaments. At the first he again came out on top, took the trophy, and had another half bisque cut in his handicap; I was amongst the also-rans. At the second we were both also-rans, I asked him if the genie had deserted him. "Played like a drain, old boy", smiled Desmond, "the genie can help, but you have to take the odd chances he provides."

In the November issue of 'Croquet', I learned that he had won another event late in the season, and that he had ended the year with a handicap of three and a half.

Before the next season my career took an unexpected turn; I was invited to work abroad, preparing draft Euronorms to promote trade within the Common Market. The original plan was that I should be based in Brussels for twelve months, however most Common Market plans are revised and extended; this one was no exception, and it was four years before I worked in England again. In fact I hardly returned to England during that time as I have always enjoyed travel, and found Brussels a perfect centre from which to start my many expeditions.

During the first year I maintained my CA membership, the 'Croquet' magazine kept me informed, and I noticed that Desmond continued his winning ways; by the end of that year his handicap was down to two. Over the next three years I completely lost touch with the world of croquet, but on my eventual return to England I took up the game again with all the enthusiasm of a new convert!

The first tournament I attended was at one of the larger clubs, and there were several events running in tandem. I was in the handicap section, but there was also an open, level play con-

test to advanced rules, and the first person I saw taking part was Desmond; it transpired that he was now a scratch player and had just entered the top fifty in the rankings. I had a long chat with the manager, and it was inevitable that Desmond should be one of the topics for discussion. The manager could not understand Desmond's success, "His tactics are suspect," he said, "and his hitting is none too accurate, he sticks in hoops, but he wins more games than he loses. He does seem to be a very lucky player."

I suggested that perhaps it was the pipe that made the difference. "Ah yes," murmured the manager, "you have been away, haven't you? There used to be some sort of joke about Desmond and his pipe, but you know he had pneumonia three winters ago and hasn't smoked since!"

Later that day I was walking around the lawns and almost fell over Desmond; he was huddled into a corner, formed by the intersection of two hedges, trying to keep out of the wind. He greeted me like an old friend and we chatted, in a whisper, for a few minutes. "You are managing to win without the genie then," I commented. "Genie!" snapped Desmond, his eyes darting to and fro rather shiftily, "there never was a genie; it was just a joke; another way of describing Sod's Law!" He seemed unreasonably agitated, and I hastened to reassure him that it was, of course, only a joke.

He concentrated on the lawn and made it quite clear that our conversation was over. I started to walk away but, after a few paces, had second thoughts and turned back: however he did not see me as he was totally engrossed, fumbling in his sports bag. His opponent was attempting a long take-off down the boundary from corner three to Desmond's ball at corner four; as his ball passed hoop four it found a little slope, invisible to the eye, and drifted out over the boundary.

There was something terribly familiar about the way Desmond rose to his feet.

I sidled back to the corner where I had talked with him, and waited until he was setting up a croquet with his back to me; then I very inquisitively peeped into his sports bag. There, on top of his waterproofs, lay the pipe: it did not look as though it had been neglected for several years. On the contrary, the briar bowl had a rich gloss as if it had just been polished - or perhaps rubbed!



● Debbie Cornelius & Annabel McDiarmid continue their travels...

And so, after previous adventures chronicled in earlier magazines, Debbie arrived in America for the Sonoma Cutrer World Championships 1990. England, Ireland, New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and the USA were represented. The winery welcomed us with fine weather, fine wine and above all, fine lawns.

Social events were scattered through the week, including a most enjoyable baseball match at Candlestick Park. The Patmore Draw was used for the tournament, block winners go to a three way medalist block, winner goes automatically to the final. The other two slot into the draw in the final stages.

The Intrepid Explorers Part 3 AMERICA

All the English players qualified, although I was lucky to scrape through in a tight match against Wayne Rodoni; the winner of the match would go through. I was forced to sit on the edge of my seat for half an hour after time was called as Wayne battled his way back to within a few points before breaking down.

The English players were unable to make the final, which was between Allan Cleland and last year's winner Steve Jones, who had won the medallist block. At this stage people were beginning to ask if you had to be called Steve to win the event, the only winners in five years being Steve Mulliner (86,87,88), and Steve Jones (89). However, Allan stopped the rot, and walked away with the \$7000 watch.

Then on to San Francisco and a little shopping. Having discovered that public transport is not only incredibly expensive in America but inefficient as well, I decided to buy a car in time for the return trip to Santa Rosa to play in the Sonoma Cutrer International Rules tournament; a smaller but no less enjoyable tournament. The temperature was well over 100 degrees every day, so sun burn, red noses and ice cubes down the back were very much the order of the day. A two-day USCA coaching school for beginners in the American rules, was a new experience for me; it was a lot of fun, the enthusiasm of new players in America making coaching them a joy. Although teaching American rules strategy was just a little difficult considering my experience in their game at that stage.

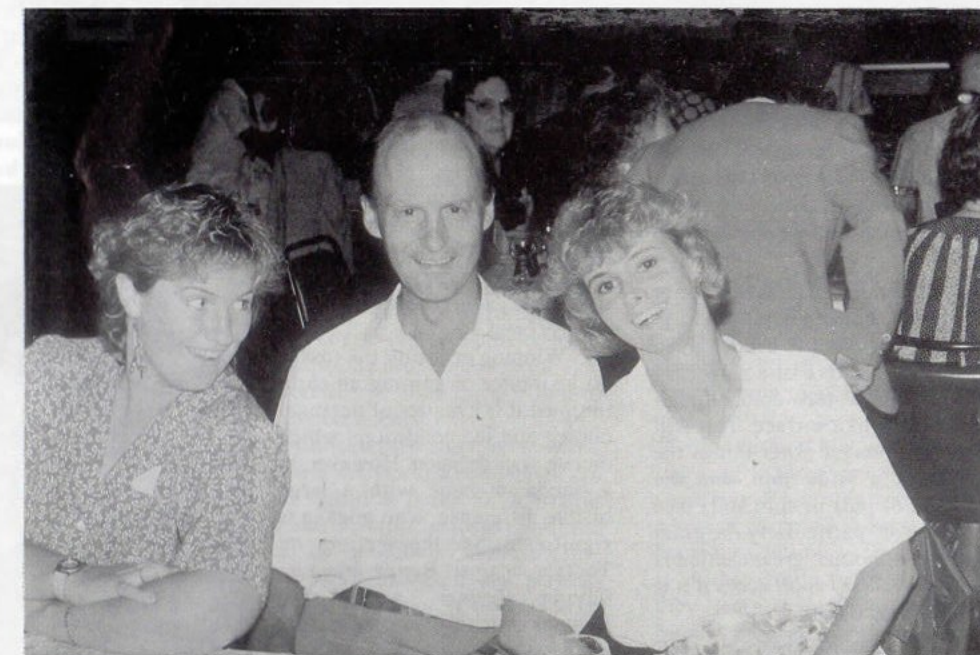
Then onto the Regionals at the Meadowood Resort in the lovely Napa Valley. Sonya Stephens from New Zealand and I teamed up in the Doubles, determined to show the Americans we could play their game. We had some tough matches, and many games we won in the last turn by one point. However our luck ran out on us and we lost the final by one point to Ellery McClatchie and Charlie Smith. I lost the singles, also by one point in last turn, in the semi-finals to Erv Peters, one of the best of America's new players I met.

Now, a bit of sightseeing before Annabel arrives. In two weeks I went from Northern California into desolate Nevada, through famous Salt Lake City, glamorous Las Vegas, awesome (to use an American's favourite word) Grand Canyon and the spectacular scenery of Utah's Canyonlands and Arches National Parks. Two flat tyres and a lot of scenery later I was back in San Francisco meeting a hung-over Annabel at the airport.

The next day we were off to Oregon (a 10 hour drive) to celebrate the 4th of July at a tourna-

famed Redwoods, photographing ourselves under the tallest tree in the world (they think) the Derberville giant. Many of the tree trunks here are so large that holes are cut in them for cars to drive through and sign the visitors book, whilst others have been converted into tiny Tree houses. Unfortunately, it was extremely commercial.

Arriving back in San Francisco we dropped in to watch a tournament in Berkeley, US rules. Mid afternoon one person dropped out and Annabel was voted in (by coin) as his replace-



Annabel McDiarmid, Jerry Guest, and Debbie Cornelius in Australia.

ment, run by Mike and Susie Hanner. Set amidst natural pine forest, both the Hanner's house and their croquet lawn enjoy one of the most private and enchanting settings a club could possibly have. Imagine soft, relaxing music, drifting down through the trees from the house, the whistling of birds in the trees, sunlight shining through raindrop covered leaves. Although the club boasts only one lawn, the tournament managed to cater for some 24 keen CP's in a delightful Handicap Doubles tournament (our rules). The weekend seemed to be over much too quickly, but I think this may have been due to the ample portions of gin passed around by our host. Although Annabel couldn't play (late entries) she supported everyone as Social Secretary in which role she succeeded in keeping us out on the floodlit lawns until the early hours of the morning! The tournament was won by Erv Peterson and Art Park in an exciting final where their two bisques kept Debbie and her partner Julie O'Dea on the defensive for much of the game. However Debbie did succeed in getting another flat tyre!

We were lucky to have our route South arranged for us by a Travel Guide writer we had met, who knew all the tips for a cheap but enjoyable tour, and started our journey on coastal route 101. Oregon must surely be one of America's most beautiful states; our trip was interrupted by stops at sea-lion caves, sandy bays and scenic lookouts.

Leaving Oregon we travelled through the

ment for the following day. Even though she didn't know US rules, Annabel was given a scratch handicap to make sure there was no advantage for the partnership. Normally used as a small putting green, the lawn was probably about quarter size, oval, with deliberate hills and holes just big enough for the balls to fall into. Oh yes, and the grass was 2" tall.

Onwards to Yosemite National Park, where we camped, an experience in itself as Debs had never camped before. She couldn't believe we had to sleep on uneven ground. There was lots of fidgeting from Debbie's quarter which Annabel tried to ignore. Finally, after about 5 minutes of settling down and fidgeting, a fire cone was produced, and a large sigh of satisfaction escaped from Debbie's lips.

From Yosemite we drove down to Las Vegas, surely one of the most amazing man-made sights to be seen. The gaudy neon lights are everywhere, even McDonalds has forsaken its plastic sign for an eye catching flashing electric monstrosity. The most incredible sight was outside the La Mirage casino where imported Palm Trees stand atop small hills which back a smooth lake. Pleasant... artistic... well yes, but when it explodes every 15 minutes in a fiery, noisy imitation volcano - well, really, it's too much.

Annabel somehow succeeded in spending an hour and a half losing \$1 of nickels, and by doing so succeeded in getting us free double gins (players perks).

● Ian Plummer passes on more hints for improving players

Section 4 THE START OF THE GAME

There are a number of things to be noted at the start of a game.

4.1 Before the game starts you should make yourself aware of the condition of the lawn. Lawn speed, the speed of the lawn, is affected by the length of the grass, its moisture content, and its sparsity. Early in the morning there will be dew and late in the evening the dew will form again. This has been called the Anne Frank effect - or the Hidden Dew. Obviously wet grass slows the balls down quickly.

4.2 You should note the colour of the grass, both generally and in specific regions. A deeper green lawn is indicative of a slow easy lawn, whilst a straw colour threatens a glass-like surface. This will dictate amongst other things the width of a wide join, and the amount of pull in split rolls (see later). Note particularly the grass in front of hoops; great caution is needed on hoop approaches if it is both short and dry.

4.3 You should also cast your glance around the lawn for any features which will affect play; sloping boundaries, hills, especially rough patches etc. These can be used to tactical effect.

4.4 If you are single banking on a lawn it is to everyone's benefit if you ensure that none of the hoops is loose in the ground. These should be corrected before the start of play.

4.5 Before the game starts, any regions of special damage must be pointed out and any special rules appropriate to a specific lawn disclosed.

4.6 In a handicap game, it is useful to confirm the number of bisques involved with your opponent. Once the game has finished and you walk off the lawn, it is too late to do anything about it.

4.7 The game starts with the toss, conventionally done by the stronger player. If you have choice of balls, get down and look at them. Just selecting red and yellow because you always play with them is not good enough. Identify any bogus balls - avoid chipped and split ones, and choose the best ones for yourself. If a ball is unreasonably deformed, it should be replaced before play starts.

Section 5 OPENINGS

An opening refers to the positioning of the four balls on the lawn at the start of the game. The intention is to place your balls in a position where if one should be hit by an opponent it is difficult for them to build a break. The position should still give you the upper hand should they miss.

Given that there are options after every ball is placed on the lawn, it is not possible to carry the analysis very far without it becoming complex and irrelevant.

5.1 It is important at the start of the game not to give your opponent an easy start. This can boost their confidence and make them play better. Consequently do not try heroics which will give away an easy break.

5.2 Winning or losing the toss is no guarantee of gaining an early innings. It is a matter of personal choice and the conditions which dictate your decision. However, in a handicap game with a large bisque difference, who goes in is significant. See the sections on Tactics against Better Players, Giving Bisques, and Using Bisques which will appear in later issues.

5.3 The opening is the first time that you have the opportunity to gauge the speed of the lawn. When hitting your first ball you should attempt to get it to stop somewhere specific, say on the boundary line or some distance behind it (if there is space).

5.4 THE STANDARD OPENING. This consists of:

- Ball to East boundary level with hoop 4.
- Ball to West boundary between first hoop and Rover.
- Second ball near to first ball on East boundary.
- Shoot from Corner 1 through the ball on the West boundary to Corner 2.

The point behind each of these shots is now considered.

5.5 FIRST TURN. Ball to East boundary level with hoop 4. The intention here is to obtain a position remote from hoop 1 where, even if the opponent hits in, they have a most difficult time getting first hoop. The shot is normally taken from the right hand end of A-baulk.

5.6 The position of the ball is not arbitrary. You want to be close enough to fourth corner so that you can hit a ball there. If you are too far up (North of) the East

boundary, your opponent can shoot at you from Corner 3 to Corner 4. You must guard fourth corner.

5.7 Conversely if you place your ball too near to fourth corner it is awkward shooting at it in the third turn since a near miss means that you will leave a large two-ball target on the East boundary. The further North along East boundary that you are, the further apart the balls will end up after a miss.

5.8 SECOND TURN. Ball to West boundary between first hoop and Rover - Laying a Tice. You have an option to shoot at the first ball on East boundary, but this course is discussed below. The intention is to place a ball on the



Who is coaching who? Ireland's Ray Flood and Joe Cunningham watch Yohann Ravez, son of the French CA's President.

West boundary beyond hoop 1. This ensures that if it is hit it will move further away from the first hoop. The distance up the West boundary should be at a length where you reckon you could hit the ball say 50% of the time. If you are playing a strong player you would increase the distance.

5.9 The ball is called a Tice - an enticement for your opponent to shoot at it and give up the innings they would have gained after the fourth turn. The tice is 'laid' by shooting from A-baulk in front of hoop 1 to the West boundary. This guarantees the position of the tice. If you were to shoot along the boundary from Corner 1 the length the ball would travel on an unknown lawn would be uncertain.

5.10 THIRD TURN. Second ball to East boundary. An option is to shoot at the tice - see below. If you doubt that your opponent can hit their tice, then you can shoot at

your partner ball on the East boundary. If you think that they will hit their tice, then you should join up wide on the East boundary.

5.11 If you hit in third turn you can lay up a rush, hidden behind hoop 4, to the opponent's tice. You also have the option of taking off to it, if you feel confident, and moving their ball further from the baulk, before returning to your partner ball and leaving a rush.

5.12 If you are concerned that your opponent will hit their tice in fourth turn, then you should make a wide join on the East boundary. You must remain close enough to your partner to be sure of hitting in and consequently remain a threat to the opponent.

5.13 FOURTH TURN. Shoot at the tice. As your opponent is joined up you cannot afford to join up yourself (this would give them a rush to anywhere on the lawn). Consequently you shoot from Corner 1 through the tice to Corner 2. If you hit, you take off to the opponents, get a rush to hoop 1 and build the break. If you miss, the opponent has a lot of work to do to get a break going.

5.14 A suggested improvement to shooting through to Corner 2 is to shoot at the tice from 9 to 12 inches outside of Corner 1 so that if the ball fails to hit the tice, it leaves the lawn level with hoop 2. The intention is to improve your chances of hitting your tice when you shoot back at it (in sixth turn) and therefore discourage your opponent, joined up by hoop 4, from just using the fifth turn to set up a wired rush to hoop 1.

5.15 If your opponent has left a double on the East Boundary then you have the option of shooting at them. The disadvantage, should you miss, is that they will be able to use your ball to get a perfect rush to hoop 1.

5.16 FIFTH TURN. The Player joined up on the East boundary has two choices. The less aggressive is to roquet their partner ball and leave a rush to hoop 1 guarding Corner 4. The opponents will normally then shoot back at their tice from around Corner 2 as described previously.

5.17 The bolder scheme is to rush your partner up to the centre of the North boundary, take off and roquet the ball in Corner 2 and use a thick take-off to approach the tice from the North. This is then rushed if possible to hoop 1 and the hoop attempted.

Some of the alternatives that can take place during the first four turns will be considered in the next issue of "Croquet".

World Croquet

Dear Sir,

Since croquet is becoming more and more a 'World Game', to have a sense of what is happening everywhere, could we have the complete results of main events as they go to press, viz., Open & Invitation events in New Zealand, Australia, U.S.A. and South Africa.

It would also be helpful to have their end-of-season ratings.

In just giving the bare results without comment, it will keep printing space to a minimum. After all, the results are better than nothing at all, as at present!

W.E. Black.
Bowdon.

Unfortunately the size of our magazine is constrained by the available budget. However, the World Croquet Federation publishes a list of national croquet magazines, with details of subscriptions, relevant addresses, etc, which could be useful to anyone wishing to subscribe to overseas magazines.

Readers who would like a copy of this WCF List should send £3.00 to Chris Hudson, making cheques, etc, payable to "The World Croquet Federation".

Croquet in Hong Kong

Dear Sir,

I thought readers might like to know that croquet is alive and well in Hongkong. When I was there in February, we played on part of the outfield at the Hongkong Cricket Club. We were only allowed to 'take possession' once a week on Wednesday nights as it was the middle of the cricket season.

Members are fiercely adamant that this is a CRICKET club but the club's founding charter provides for cricket, lawn balls and croquet and the membership of the club includes a growing band of devotees of croquet determined to get their share of one of the few flat, 'green' spaces.

We had to play by floodlight which made it rather hard to see the balls. The lawn was burnt brown and very fast and occasionally we had the added hazard of circling wild dogs which seemed to be attracted by the rolling croquet balls. The players (one is only twelve years old) are a very friendly crowd and would I'm sure, be happy to welcome those who want to include Hongkong in their Far East circuit!

Cliff Bennett is in charge and I gave him some information about the Croquet Association and suggested that he make contact to dis-



Leslie Riggall may opine that croquet is not a spectator sport (see his letter on this page), but this shot of the 1990 World Championship seems to have caught the spectators rivetted by the action.

cuss the possibility of setting up a Hongkong Croquet Association. Who knows, they might one day send a competitor to the World Championships.

Whilst I was there, there was an attempt "to get up a match" in Hongkong - I had the Royal Regt of Wales, who are currently stationed there, ready to take on all comers!

Nicky Smith,
London.

Handicapping

Dear Sir,

I have read with interest the articles and correspondence on the new handicapping system. So far no mention has been made of what, to me, is one of the more significant effects of the system.

I refer to Weekend Handicap Tournaments - probably the most widely played form of competition both as to the number of events and, I guess, competitors. Except for tournaments with large entries and surplus lawn capacity which permit the more exotic formats, most managers have to choose from (a) Swiss, (b) American blocks, or (c) Draw and Process with a consolation Swiss for early losers.

Any player losing 3 games on Saturday (and I have a wealth of experience in this area) knows only too well that his Sunday games will have little effect on the outcome of the event. Although these games are not 'dead', they lack any competitive edge.

Consolation events are generally the means by which a Manager performs his obligation to provide 6 games.

The drawback of the Swiss format is that it does not provide a competitive climax as it is often possible to identify the key game as early as round 4 and lesser players are often deprived of their final game by early departures. The knockout event does provide a climax to the tournament but it also produces a high proportion of early no-hopers.

Consider the situation now if a player arrives at a tournament on, or within a point of, a trigger point. Even if he loses his first 5 games in a Swiss his last game will be fiercely contested, particularly as his opponent is likely to be in a similar situation. In other words, the new handicapping system gives an edge to every game in the tournament including 'dead' games in consolation events.

This also gives flexibility to the manager in his choice of format and will I hope give rise to Draw and Process knockout events now that everyone is assured of meaningful play throughout the week-end.

Chris Bennett,
Birmingham.

Full-Bisque Games

Dear Sir,

I would like to support Messrs Jackson and Lee in their recommendations of the Full-Bisque game. I think the Council should carefully consider the advantages before continuing the 30 year procrastination of a reform which is inevitable sooner or later.

1. It is completely illogical to allow, say, 16 bisques to a beginner, because he cannot play proper croquet without them, and then deny him all his bisques if he plays an opponent with 16 or more bisques.

2. He then flounders for hours in a game which is boring to play and to watch.

3. The results of (2) are very serious for croquet. Thousands of po-

tential supporters are lost because the game at first is too difficult. I and my wife felt like giving up at the beginning, after struggling for 5 1/2 hours.

4. Unable to pick up a break, the high-bisque develops the awful game known as "Aunt Emma", becomes fixed in that mode, and never learns to play proper croquet.

5. Play without bisques takes far too long. Most people cannot spare 3 or 4 hours for one game, whereas all could spare 1 1/2 or 2 hours for a full-bisque game. This is all that would be needed once they learned how to use the bisques wisely, because they must become the equivalent of scratch players.

6. Croquet developed in the 19th century, when land was plentiful, life was lived at a more leisurely pace, and there were not attractive alternatives like playing tennis or watching top-class sport on television. In the modern world, playing without the full use of bisques is quite uneconomic. Land is becoming ever more scarce and valuable, and croquet, which is not a spectator sport and therefore is expensive for players, has to compete with other sports which use much less land per player. A hundred bowlers could be accommodated very comfortably on land which provides for only a dozen croquet players. The full-bisque game would solve this financial and space problem and keep the game economic.

7. There are absolutely no disadvantages to the full-bisque game, therefore the delay in implementing it can only be due to reluctance to change an established habit. Croquet players should remember the slow-moving dinosaurs, which became extinct because they did not adapt to changing circumstances.

Leslie Riggall,
Kloof, South Africa.

YOUR LETTERS

Fees for Juniors

Dear Sir,
Unfortunately I have found it necessary to write this letter as a follow-up to my brother's letter in issue No 209 concerning special tournament entry fees for students and juniors.

Whilst reading my fixtures list it has become apparent that the Croquet Association have ignored his comments.

Consider the new entry fee for this year's British Opens for example, which has risen from £30 in total to £40 - a well-above inflation rise. For one so young as myself, this is a considerable amount of money, for which I would wish to play quite a lot of games. What incentive is there to play in the Opens when I can play in 4 weekend tournaments (even 5 in some places) for the same amount of money which would probably guarantee me three times as many games.

Can the Croquet Association not see that if it wants to give young players the opportunity to gain valuable top-level experience in such events, it must give some sort of concessionary rate. Has it plans to do so or must 8 weeks' newspaper-delivery wage be spent on minor tournaments elsewhere?
Adrian Saurin,
Darwen, Lancs.

The Advanced Handicap Game

Dear Sir,
Lionel Wharrad in Issue 214 told of his enthusiasm for the advanced handicap game. I have always been keen on new methods of play, but to be any good they have got to attract. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. Surely he should get his club to put on a weekend or so with this game to find out whether it appeals. There seems little point in adding it to the Good Book otherwise.

Over a dozen years elapsed after we had introduced the method before the word Swiss got a mention, meanwhile several of the events offered as a Swiss do not conform to what is now laid down. Currently we have Paul Hand's splendid though unmentioned Egyptian method which has not only caught on but has begat a new slant on handicapping. However it's hardly worthwhile detailing it as, no doubt, it will change as time goes by. Croquet tournaments, like everything else, should change with the times.

To go back to the advanced handicap game, it seems to have a demerit. From the evidence I have seen the game takes longer than

the current handicap game; by perhaps half an hour. Until this is shown to be untrue what club is going to put on games which average 2 hours 45 minutes - rather than the present average of 2 hours 20 minutes - and so deny themselves the fees and bar profits of the reduced entry?

Nevertheless, welcome to all things new! Try it and hope for success. Good Luck!
Edgar Jackson,
Cheltenham.

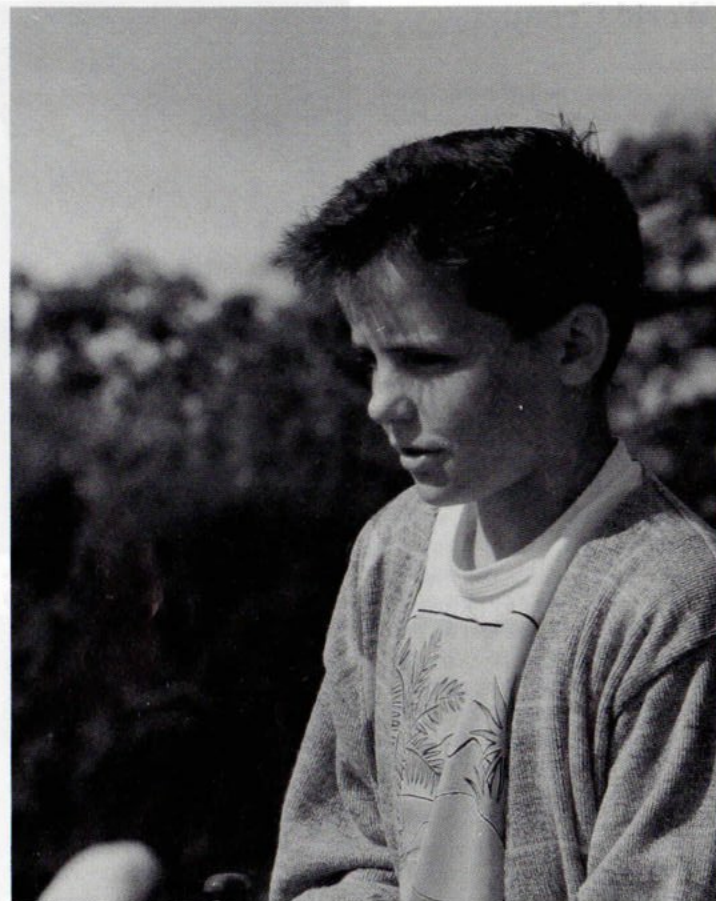
Dear Sir,
The Council at their March meeting introduced a new variation of the game to allow the playing of croquet under advanced laws but with bisques. This can have a significant effect and I thought it would be sensible to provide a brief note of what it can mean.

Many players of low handicap, say from 1| upwards, are unable to gain entry to some A class events because of the large number of players who now play from handicaps of 1 to minus 2 or who have a good enough grading. In a number of weekly tournaments such players often have no alternative than to enter the B class event which starts variously from a handicap of 2, 3, or 4, and is usually played under the Laws of handicap play.

I believe, as I am sure do almost all A-class players, that the Advanced game is a better game than the Handicap game, and it is only sensible and proper that the CA should encourage as many people as possible to play to the Advanced Laws. I would expect that the new game will be first used in such tournaments in place of B handicap events, but will in due course spread to other events.

I would like to emphasise that the new game is the advanced game played with bisques. IT IS NOT the handicap game played with lifts and contact, and it is important that it should be recognised as such. It will enable players to become familiar with the advanced game before they are skilful enough to enter into level play. It will enable developing players to practice the skills and subtleties of the advanced game whilst still having bisques to help them in their attempts at triple, quadruple or sextuple peeling.

One of the curiosities of croquet is that it has a handicap system which is intended to allow people of differing skills to play against each other with both having a reasonable chance of winning, but which has not been allowed (until now) to be used when playing the best game i.e. the advanced game.



Andrew Saurin, 1990 National Junior Champion.

Of course this is a reasonable rule if you are trying to find the best player in regional, national, or international championships, but it may not be the rule best calculated to give a competitive edge (which is part of the pleasure of playing croquet) to ordinary tournament or club games.

If, as I hope, most B-class tournaments will be played in future under the advanced laws, then because the handicap range of the players can be anything from 1 1/2 to 8 or more, bisques become necessary in order to give every player some sort of a chance against any other player.

I know that there are a few clubs have already started playing advanced croquet with bisques but some have restricted the use of bisques at the lift shot. The Council have not included such a restriction in the approved variation. The only concession to the handicap game that the Council have agreed is that in doubles play the number of peels of the partner ball will be restricted to four. I accept that the ability to use a bisque at the lift shot gives some small advantage to the holder of bisques, but it is not in itself a bad thing to give the weaker player this slight additional advantage.

I hope that players generally will welcome this opportunity to play more croquet under the advanced laws, and that it is not too late for some events this year to be

organised on this new basis.
Lionel Wharrad,
East Clandon.

Target Luxembourg!

Dear Sir,
I hope you will allow me, through the Gazette, to contact my many friends in the croquet world. As some of you already know, my family and I are about to embark on a new life in Europe. I have a new job with the European Investment Bank in Luxembourg and we are all looking forward to the prospect with a mixture of excitement and trepidation.

I have not so far been able to locate a croquet club in Luxembourg and CERN looks a bit too far away for a mid-week evening knock-about. However, I shall do my best to establish Luxembourg on the croquet map, so Italy, France, and Switzerland, beware! A qualification for Yorkshire and Luxembourg is probably fairly rare, so I shall make it my ambition to represent both!

When we are settled, I shall let you know my address and croquet players will be most welcome to drop in as they are passing through.

So to all of my friends I say "Au Revoir et a bientot".

John Davis,
Yarm, Cleveland.

By Peter Dorke

It is Southport on a bright, cold morning. A few daisies have invaded the lawns but of moisture there is none, far less the duck-ponds of croquet player's lore; the mighty Squeegy and the Aquashuv will remain in the clubhouse this tournament. The talk on the veranda is of foreign balls and there is much comparison of trouser lengths, for a few bravos are sporting their winter knees in the razor-sharp sunlight. Of the two ladies present only Pat Hague has dared a skirt - an act of pure altruism.

A further feature of this gathering is the number of magnificent beer bellies on display, with, as if in deliberately mocking contrast, the newly svelte figure of Alan 'Smokey' Sutcliffe. And amongst these venerable worthies dart the lithe young Saurins, looking perhaps for a warm rock on which to bask. Unseen by the assembled croquet players, two old ladies are sitting in the nearby council shelter. We shall call them Glad and Esther because these are in fact their names.

Glad: Why are they hanging about?

Esther: They're not hanging about; they're waiting.

Glad: What are they waiting for?

Esther: Not what but who. They are waiting for Eddie.

Glad: I see. But who's... Oh, look Esther, some of them are coming out.

Gradually the lawns fill up as the veranda empties, until nine white figures are quietly busy upon the lawns, watched solemnly - or perhaps numbly - by nine others. Only Anthony Miller keeps a lonely vigil at the door of the clubhouse. On the courts there is a deep seriousness and the standard of play is high, considering that it is early season and the wind is gusting. Before long Anthony, too, takes to the lawns in company with a red-headed lady of considerable charm, who is, however, improperly dressed - for a croquet tournament, that is. We wonder what is the explanation for her appearance, as do Glad and Esther in their cosy shelter:

Glad: Ee, Esther, look at her! Why's she dressed like that?
Esther: She's a substitute. Glad. An ersatz Eddie. They've decided not to wait any longer.
Glad: Isn't Eddie coming then, Esther?

Esther: I have to say, Glad, that I fear the worst. I suspect that he's forgotten that the tournament is this week-end. That young lady is Barbara Haslam and she's going

to play Eddie's games. Do you see that very tall chap playing against the slim gentleman with the fat cigar? That's John Haslam and he's Barbara's husband. She thought she was only here for the catering and here she is, thrown in at the deep end. And she's only a seven, Glad.

Glad: Is that bad, Esther? I'm a six-and-a-half myself but I have no trouble at all getting wellies to fit. Has she tried Truform...?
Esther: Pull yourself together, love. Try to concentrate on the croquet, there's a dear.

TOURNAMENT REPORTS

Southport: 20th - 21st April

WAITING FOR EDDIE

in intimate confusion that great care is required in selecting the correct bat at the beginning of a turn. Only once, however, does a pretty player purposefully, though probably not on purpose, pick up a pair of purple Pidcocks, property of other persons.

Esther: That's alliteration, Glad.
Glad: Yes, and it's about time the Council did something about it - and the dog mess - look at that big dollop on Lawn 1.

Esther: Big dollop? Have a care, Glad: You can't talk about one of England's finest players like that. Now shut up a minute and watch Mr Bennet play this pass roll.

Glad: (leaping to her feet) Author! Author!
Esther: Glad! For Pete's sake! Sit down... I said 'Bennet' not 'Becket'. Andrew Bennet's the one who just said a rude word. Sotto voce, of course.

Glad: Very probably, Esther - though it's a bit early in the day.
There is a long moment of silence, then:

Glad: Esther, when is something going to happen?

Esther: Probably never, Glad. Unless Eddie comes.

Glad: Who is Eddie, Esther?

Esther (patiently): Well, you've heard of La Belle Dame Sans Merci, haven't you, Glad?

Glad: Oh, yes... read it at school.

Esther: Well, Eddie is Eddie Bell and this tournament might be described as "Mersey Sans Damn Bell". That would be a literary joke, as it were... and might be a good title for the tournament report, only the Reporter used something similar the last time he was at Southport. Is that all clear now, Glad?

Glad: Oh aye, Esther. Clear as the beer in Paul Stoker's glass.

Esther: Hush, Glad! We're not

supposed to notice the beer - it's against the bye-laws.

Glad: Why don't they drink shorts, then, Esther?

Esther: Because it's not Short Croquet, love; it's an Advanced Tournament.

Glad: Is that why nothing's happening?

As Saturday runs into Sunday it begins to rain but the shape of the tournament is now becoming clear. As expected David Maugham has reached the final without apparently taking croquet and he will meet the winner of a Miller-Saurin three-game semi. This is Andrew Saurin, Adrian having been mashed ruthlessly by David Appleton in round 2.

The Tournament Reporter determines, come what may, to see Maugham actually in play in the Grand, Five-Frame Final. "Bronto" Saurin takes the first game off Big Dave. Nothing interesting has happened so far, as Glad and Esther observe when they return to their shelter.

Glad: One of the many things that I have failed to grasp about this game, Esther, is why neither of these top class players seems able to get in front of hoops, hit a straight rush, play a roll, run a hoop gently or get a break under control.

Esther: Ee, lass, you are becoming observant! Perhaps that's why it's so uninteresting. All in all, it's a shame Eddie didn't come... Oh, look, Glad, David Maugham seems to have won the final.

(Exeunt, followed by dog)

RESULTS
Semi-Finals
Andrew Saurin bt A.R.K. Miller +8, +22(TP); D.B. Maugham bt D.J. Appleton +26(TP), +26(TP).

Final
Maugham bt Saurin -7, +26(TP), +3, +18.

Indeed, young Maugham, hot favourite to win this tournament, has been kept under constant scrutiny by our Tournament Reporter but as yet has not been observed in play. He is most often to be seen practising swings with his amazing ebony mallet, hand-crafted for him by Alan Pidcock.

Professor Pidcock himself is in the company, playing a steady and skillful game, a fine advert for his mallets, many of which are here present. So many of the players are using a Manor House mallet, in fact, that Glad has become firmly convinced that the whole affair is a promotional exercise for the Pidcock products. Moreover, so many purple-headed, black-handled mallets are lying lawnside

David Appleton, Semi-Finalist at Southport.

Glad: But nothing's happening. And you haven't yet told me who Eddie....
Esther: Oh, good hoop! See that Glad? Young Adrian is banging them through as usual, though David Maugham's not doing much...

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Compton: 4th - 6th May

Cold Work at Compton

By Peter Howell

It rained, it blew, it was cold - how could anyone enjoy a Bank Holiday croquet tournament in such conditions? Well we did - all of us, gathered from London, Nottingham, Brighton, Bedford, Isle of Wight and elsewhere. A melange of high and low handicappers, all with good humour at this great little club where we were spoilt on arrival each morning with a cup of tea or coffee provided by the ladies of the Club. Lunch and the usual excellent afternoon tea were also available in the clubhouse for all to enjoy.

Then there was the Manager, Gordon Drake, managing a tournament for the first time. I have to give him top marks - he organised everything like clockwork and the only hiccup was one rather long semi-final which delayed the final itself with the result that many had to leave before the end to begin their journeys home. The tournament was in blocks with winners of each going forward to the finals.

BLOCK B - The winner was Adrian WADLEY from the 'exclusive' Jealotts Hill club which has one lawn provided by ICI for its staff and where Adrian is one of only six members. He arrived at Compton with a 16 Handicap

but was quickly reduced to 12. He won his block with 5 wins.

BLOCK C - This was also won with 5 wins by Don MEARS (8 handicap) from Southwick. It was a long semi-final between these two block winners but Adrian WADLEY finally won through by 13.

BLOCK A - Results were evenly balanced with 4 wins each for Pat ASA-THOMAS (4 handicap), Peter HOWELL (1 handicap) and Hugh WILLIAMS (7 Handicap). Hugh was the block winner with most points.

BLOCK D - Bob FEWTRELL (6 Handicap) from the Isle of Wight was the block winner with 5 wins.

This was a worthy semi-final. Hugh was away to Rover with his first ball, then Bob did likewise but broke down at Hoop 2 with his second ball. Hugh was in but broke down at Hoop 3 but with the benefit of his bisques continued and won the match.

The final between WADLEY and WILLIAMS finished late into the cold evening, Adrian forging ahead with his first ball, using three of his 5 bisques but Hugh, playing careful, efficient croquet ran out the eventual winner to receive his trophy from Gordon Drake.

Thank you, Compton, for an enjoyable weekend despite the weather!

NATIONAL COMPETITION RESULTS

1991 Inter-Club Round 1

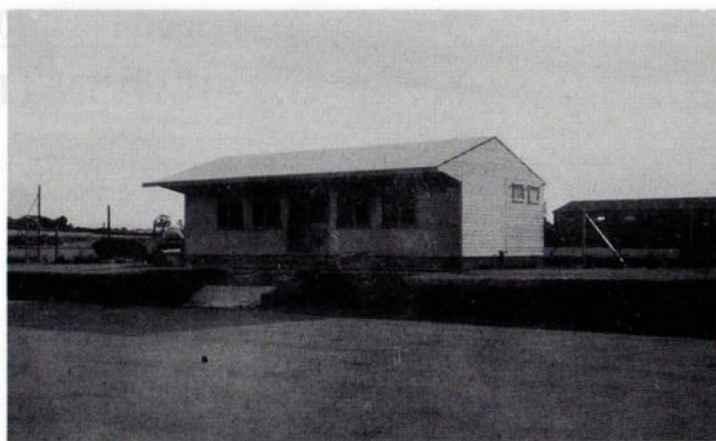
Coal Research 0	Colchester 7
Hurlingham 3	Surbiton 4
Bristol 2	Parsons Green 5
Woking 3	Harrow Oak 4
Southport 7	Parkstone 0
Ipswich 3	Bowdon 4

1991 Mary Rose Round 1

High Wycombe	lost to Woking
Dyffryn 2	Roehampton 5
Cheltenham B 2	Parkstone 5

1991 Longman Cup Round 1

Plymouth 4	Parkstone 1
Bath 3	Ryde 2
Cheltenham 4	Reading 1
Letchworth 4	Roehampton 1
Colworth 2	Norwich 3
Parsons Green 2	Surbiton 3
Woking 4	Hurlingham 1
Oxford U 3	Northampton 2
Nottingham 0	Bowdon 5
Ellesmere 2	Edinburgh 3



The new pavilion at the Newport (Essex) Croquet Club, grant-aided by the Sports Council.

Hunstanton: 4th - 6th May

Now we know why he manages!

By Donald Cornelius

Hunstanton was much luckier than some other parts of the country on this Bank Holiday weekend for it saw no rain, but it did have 25mph winds coming straight from the North Pole on Saturday and Sunday.

Most players were well wrapped up with an interesting collection of coloured woollen hats and many put on their waterproofs over several sweaters to try to keep warm. All except Anthony Miller who stayed in shorts and was one of the best responders when a referee was called from the clubhouse.

Feature of the day was Duncan Reeve's 3 triples and 1 TPO: 4 Mars Bars from the manager. Paul Day had a good day with 4 wins and was involved in a most interesting finish to the last game of the day on Lawn 1, which ended at 8.40pm in the dusk. Stephen Comish had yellow for the peg with all the other clips on rover. Paul failed to manage to line up blue for the rover peel so went through with black, pegged out yellow, and laid up in the middle of the south boundary. Steve brought his red from near Corner 2 to half way down the west boundary - tacticians in the clubhouse were getting excited.

Paul went through rover with blue but missed the black pegout, so pegged out blue. Steve hit black but did not roll both up to rover; he sent black behind hoop 4 and lined up. Paul did not shoot at red he rolled up stopping to the east of the peg. Steve went through rover and reportedly shot at the gap between peg and black allowing for the wind to help hit the ball. Slightly off, he hit the

peg for a plus 1 win.

Despite the cold wind, Sunday saw more interesting croquet with Paul Day continuing to do well and finishing with 6 wins out of 8 games. All in contention who had only lost two games were Steve Comish, Lewis Palmer and Robert Prichard, with Gordon Hopewell and Celia Stewart on one loss only, at 4 out of 5 and 5 out of 6 respectively.

Lunchtime Sunday saw a gaggle of referees on lawn 3 to discuss a decision about whether a ball was through 1-back or not. When the player (a referee) called on his opponent (a referee) to ask if he wanted his next shot watched because it was hampered, the ball had rolled back. George Noble, the referee on call, decided the ball was not through but the player did not accept this so Robert (the ROT) Prichard was called. Applying Rule 22, b, 2 and also Rule 45 he decided the ball was through but not all the referees around agreed. When and where did the ball come to rest?

Sunday afternoon saw a lovely change in the weather to bright sunshine and a gentle breeze. As the others had lost games in the morning, Robert Prichard played Lewis Palmer in a final as both were 6 out of 8. Robert won a careful game continuing his sequence of winning in odd years (others 1987 and 1989).

So ended a pleasant weekend, with thanks for the usual excellent hospitality at the Hunstanton Club, and during which Bill Lamb had us fairly busy trying out a system for adjusting handicaps in level play where more points were gained by a higher handicapper beating a lower than the reverse.

By John Walters

Over the past five years, the words "Sonoma Cutrer" have become familiar to all the world's top players. To those who have been lucky enough to visit this jewel of California, they bring a smile of pleasurable reminiscence. To the others, a sharp intake of hopeful breath. Since 1986 Santa Rosa Vintner Brice Jones has taken on the role of croquet's only great benefactor, flying the best lawnsmen (and women) across the globe and hosting them in the lap of America's wine-growing country. This May, I joined David Maugham, Colin Irwin, and Mark Avery as the GB four, together with Sonoma regular, Andrew Hope.

My flight to San Francisco, about an hour's drive from Santa Rosa, was booked on the ailing Trans-World Airlines (are there any American airlines that aren't ailing?! When I complained about a lack of pillows on the return journey, one hostess pulled her glasses along her nose, and gazing down it sternly replied "Darling, don't you know what is happening to this airline?"). Although travelling via Los Angeles, my stay there was so brief that not only was their insufficient time to see Hollywood or Beverley Hills, but my opportunity to do lunch as only the LA beautiful can do it was limited to an airport pizza hut! Then on to San Francisco - not, like LA or New York, a terribly violent city but one where your life expectancy can be curtailed by the use of the term "Frisco" in earshot of a local; or as one postcard put it "Go on punk, make my day - call it Frisco!"

There I was met by a man always capable of clearing the stubbornest jet-lag blues - Neil Spooner. Though five years since I last saw him (when he captained the '86 Australia team), I soon remembered what a pleasure it was to be in Neil's company. Now Brice Jones's Director of Croquet, Neil has organised all the Sonoma internationals and his legendary sense of humour remains - he probably needs it! After several abortive attempts to navigate our way out of the airport car park we finally made it to the Golden Gate park. Here is the home of San Francisco Croquet Club, who were holding the final stages of their annual Open on

1991 Sonoma Cutrer Tournament

David Maugham keeps watch whilst others flounder

lawns which may (they claim) seem mediocre to them, but would appear supreme to us.

After breakfast those few of us who had already arrived were driven to the winery. A short drive from the hotel, we soon turned into a private road which wound up a small hill climbing to show vineyards in most directions as far as the eye could see. Atop the hill stands a large wooden building which houses Sonoma Cutrer's administrative headquarters, and in front of which is a stone patio that looks down on two croquet lawns. Croquet lawns of such quality that having played on them one can see how the locals come to regard the San Francisco one as mediocre! They were green, but deceptively so - playing faster than the vast majority of British lawns ever tend to; watered to counter the same fierce California sun that creates the grapes to which they owe their existence, but cut twice daily. Indeed, as a day wore on, the growth of grass was actually sufficient to change lawn pace quite substantially.

Unfortunately, the sandy ground which creates matchless lawns also makes for hoops which cannot be set firmly. On our practice days, the old hoop settings made for the easiest conditions I have ever played under - failing to run a hoop was inconceivable, despite the fact that they were barely bigger than the ball (certainly less than a sixteenth of an inch clearance). The special hoops used here in an attempt to counter the problem have deep cross-wing carrots which are designed to bite into the sand. With these and relentless hoop setting, reasonable but by no means firm or challenging hoops were made possible. Every day the hoops were moved to get a new grip; which meant that the lawns moved up and down the grass, occasionally reversing the direction they faced! This could certainly confuse unwary competitors, especially those still weary from the previous night for their 7.30am first game. Innovations like a 7.30 start and 2-hour time-limited, double-banked, single game matches are necessary when you have 28 competitors to get through two lawns on six days!

I soon discovered that I had managed to find refuge in the strongest block, together with Prince, Pickering, and Spooner. Our token American was Erv

Peterson, who had comfortably held his own against GB a few weeks earlier in the Solomon Trophy. There were 4 blocks of 7 altogether; the bizarre "Padmore" draw (named after long-standing manager Stan Padmore) takes the top four from each block and places them at various stages in a knockout, depending on block position. The block winners first play another block of their own to decide their fate in positioning for the knock-out; the winner of that "Medalist block" goes straight to the final.

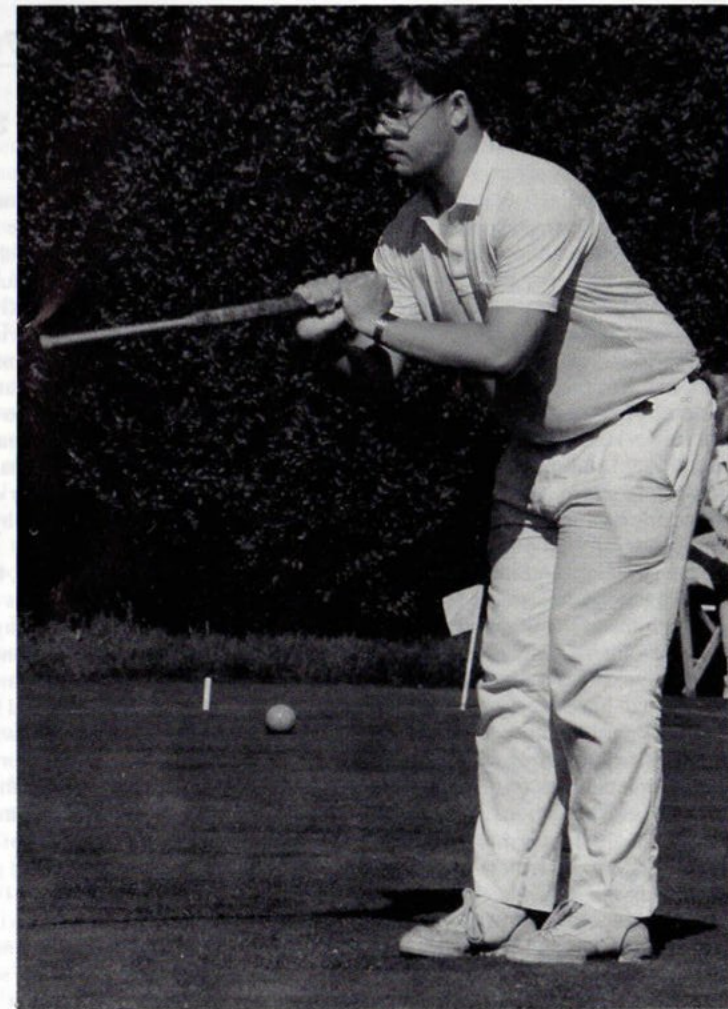
After his success at the Westerns the previous week, Andrew Hope seemed totally demoralised by his initial defeat to Damon Bidencepe. Mark Avery started with a triple, but then continued with the disappointing play he has been producing for the past year. With these two and myself placing 5th in our blocks, Colin Irwin and David Maugham saved the day by placing 4th and 1st respectively in theirs and thus qualifying.

In the last stages it was Jim Bast

who surprised the pundits by becoming the first American to reach the final. This he did by winning the Medalist block made up of the original block winners (Pickering, Maugham, Wayne Rodoni, and himself). From the knockout, Maugham and Prince battled on for the honour to challenge him, Maugham winning.

The final day of this tournament is unlike that of any other - a genuine spectacular is laid on. Over 1000 spectators, paying either \$85 a seat or \$750 a table, collect around the lawn to eat well and drink wine. A barbershop quartet amuse them initially; players parade bottles around the lawn for a charity wine auction which raises over \$50,000; a spectator hoop-shoot has a jackpot prize of \$1000.

The final is given with a live commentary, and just to make it more nerve-wracking the first prize is a watch worth \$7500! David Maugham won after a close, tense game, and with the serious business over, everyone got down to Brice's business - wine tasting; and very good it was too.



David Maugham, winner at Sonoma Cutrer

TOURNAMENT REPORTS



Paul Stoker had his moment...

Cheltenham: 25th - 28th April

Handicaps rise in the April sunshine

At the April Restricted Advanced Play Tournament at Cheltenham, there were more handicap increases than decreases, probably the first time this has ever happened at a CA tournament.

Cheltenham members include 'level' play games under the handicapping system. This resulted in many of them getting handicap increases of up to 1½ bisques.

Among Cheltenham's many excellent tournaments, the two 'Hands' tournaments managed by Kevin Carter are arguably the best. This tournament was no exception. The tournaments allow players to play as many games as they want with no worries over time limits. Prizewinners at Kevin's tournaments are awarded small trophies, such as an engraved goblet or salver instead of the ubiquitous small brown envelope. 'Come and see my trophy collection' sounds so much better than 'Come and see my brown envelope collection'.

The entry (handicap 1½ to 6½ - Hands ranking 195 to 135) was divided into three sections in handicap order. The player in each section who had the largest rating increase won an engraved goblet. Special prizes were also to be awarded for:

- * attaining the CA gold medal qualification for a first tournament triple (won by Paul Day).
- * being the second player to fill in the card with

18 games. (Anthony Miller was expected to be the first, but could only manage 17 games in the four days. He did play six on the second day, but could manage only three on the final day.)

* jumping the peg to successfully avoid a cross-wiring. Hugh Smorfitt cleared the peg by six inches from four yards. His blue ball landed just in front of black, also four yards from the peg, and bounced right over it. Kevin Carter also cleared the peg, but missed the target.

One noticeable early absentee was Les 'Easy Rider' Chapman. No tournament is quiet when Les is around. He turned up on the second day on his new Harley-Davidson; which inspired Juliet, the Bar Manager, to say "It is typical of these Elderly Gentlemen, who think they are still young, to have a powerful motorbike." The 21 participants in the tournament dinner in a local curry house were greatly entertained by various card tricks by Les. Unfortunately we didn't see Les carry out his threat to levitate Paul Smith. Perhaps at the 'Counties'.

The most consistent performances in the tournament came from the players who had travelled the farthest. Namely John Haslam, Gail Curry, Paul Day, and David White. At one point on the third day John, Gail, and Paul each had a higher rating than virtually everyone in the top block. Gail in fact at one point had the highest rating achieved by anyone in the tourna-

Southwick: 27th - 29th April

Southwick's lawns are much improved

By Simon Tuke

Southwick's Spring Handicap Weekend was managed by Pat Shine, with her usual exemplary efficiency, for what was reportedly the eleventh successive year. Colour-coded blocks, all games pre-ordained, even the weather behaving itself, at least until lunchtime on the final day, when the heavens opened.

Southwick's Lawns are a revelation following the very difficult conditions resulting from two drought summers. A five year programme of work is approaching its final year and the treatment is now bearing fruit. John Eardley-Simpson has recently taken over supervision of the lawns from Ron Smith, with a highly experienced new groundsman, and they all earned the gratitude of the players for their sterling efforts. The Inter Counties will have been played by the time this report is published and competitors will have been agreeably surprised.

The Tournament was divided into four blocks of 6, competing for the King Cup, and a high bisquers block of 6 with an unnamed cup as the prize.

High bisquers was perhaps a misnomer, as handicaps ranged from 11 to 15. Games were played full-bisque with a base of 6. In a closely contested block, Claire Heritage and Veronica Tuke both ended up with 4 wins out of 5, Claire taking the cup having won the game between them. Diana Brothers secured third place with 3 wins. All three demonstrated a solid grasp of

the game, with no recourse to Aunt Emma tactics, encouraged by the full-bisque system. I am sure we will see them sheltering behind a rather shorter fence in the future!

In the first of the King Cup blocks, Donald Cornelius prevailed with 4 wins out of 5. John Greenwood found himself having to hope that Donald lost his last game, having already suffered his only defeat to Donald. Seasoned local campaigner Frank Beard made a strong start, but faded in the later stages. Beryl Irwin was the unluckiest competitor of the Tournament, losing all five games but by margins of only -2, -3, -7 and -10!

In the second block, Peter Howell won all his games, continuing his excellent record in this competition, including winning it in 1987. Bryan Teague was runner-up with 4 wins.

The third block came down to a decider between Simon Tuke and Mike Hammerlev on the final morning. Mike was let down early in the game by missing shortish roquets, but made good progress before the bisques expired. After a series of errors, Simon found himself convinced that he had lost on at least five occasions, each time being given a reprieve, finally sneaking home from 1-back and 4-back when Mike stuck in rover with his other ball for the peg. Philip Kennerley needed a Hammerlev victory to take the block, so was probably as upset as Mike by the disaster. He ended up as another 4 win bridesmaid.

The final block again saw a tie with 4 wins between locals Bill Arliss and Dorothy Miller, Bill taking the block having beaten Dorothy. Last year's beaten finalist Mike Town recovered from a disastrous start to win his next 3 games, but it was all too late.

The first semi-final saw Peter Howell overcome stolid resistance by Donald Cornelius to win +22 as the drizzle began to fall. In the other game Bill Arliss started with a textbook Don Gaunt opening, clearly intending to use his bisques aggressively. However, after going off with an astonishing 2:1 dead straight pass roll, he went back to mother. Simon hit the 15 yarder and went to rover. Bill was pressured into using up his bisques on the first ball, and they ran out before he could attempt the peel and peg-out on the opponent. After that, he had few more chances.

The rain became heavier as the final got under way. Simon hit in and made a strong leave. Peter took a bisque and approached 1, only to stick dead centre. So the other bisque went straight away. Peter then stuck in 5, letting Simon in, who went to penult before sticking inexplicably. Things then became more scrappy. Simon got in, successfully executing the death roll penult peel going to 4, only to stick in 3-back later. Peter picked up a good break, attempting the rover peel on Simon and completing the straight 4-back peel with a fine half-jump. Simon hit after a great cross-wire at

ment (212). Paul won his first seven games and his maiden triple was achieved in the pouring rain on the first evening against Gail Curry.

Other notable performances included a well-controlled TPO by Gordon Hopewell against Roger Jenkins; eventually this game was reduced to a one-ball game. At one point Gordon was for rover whilst Roger was for hoop 5. Each ball was about a yard from the hoop on the non-playing side and wired from the other. This state of affairs continued for quite a while with each player moving his ball a slight distance. Eventually Gordon managed to hit and win the game.

One humorous moment occurred when Paul Stoker began playing the wrong opponent on the wrong lawn. He had made two hoops before being told.

RESULTS

(41 entries: 217 games played)

Orange Block

(Handicaps 1½ to 2½)

1. Hugh Smorfitt (2½); 2. Alvar Bray (1½); 3. Anthony Miller (2).

Green Block

(Handicaps 2½ to 3½)

1. John Haslam (3½); 2. Paul Day (3½); 3. Gail Curry (2½).

Pink Block

(Handicaps 3½ to 6½)

1. David White (6); 2. Rick Davis (4); 3. Ron Selmes (4).

TOURNAMENT REPORTS

Roehampton: 25th - 28th April

Edward Dymock Attracts the Crowds

By David Magee

9am on Thursday saw the start of the first games in this year's Roehampton Spring Tournament. Come Sunday afternoon we had an undisputed winner and congratulations are due to Alan Stockwell for his 8 wins from 8 games.

He played very steadily throughout the tournament with an ever present smile and charming manner. He even survived an attempted sabotage before his game on Saturday afternoon with Neil Jackson. However the extended lunchtime 'session' had more affect on Roehampton's bar profits than Alan's performance, and he duly trounced Neil +18. In fact he obviously decided that this was the way forward because he repeated the lunchtime performance on Sunday and easily despatched my opposition in his progress towards a 100% record.

The runner up, with 7 wins, was Robin Brown. Robin's stylish play only faltered twice; once against Alan and again when, having believed the myth that Paul Macdonald always manages good weather as well as good tournaments, he had to contest his match on Friday afternoon in horizontal rain and no waterproofs.

And now for THAT MATCH between Paul Macdonald and Edward Dymock.

It started in a fairly routine fashion, idly watched by a few people waiting for the bar to open. Edward, using all his bisques, took his pink ball round to Rover. The dangers of this were soon revealed as Paul promptly hit in, took his ball round, and pegged out Edward's Pink. Thoughts of that first beer faded while we were entertained with the sight of Paul cautiously progressing his second ball and the sound of Edward's comments which accompanied his several 'near misses'. During these tense moments the growing crowd of kibitzers, led by Nigel Aspinall, debated if, and when, Paul should peg-out his forward ball. However, Paul, ignorant of the consensus opinion, continued using both balls until he reached 'peg and peg'.

The bar begins to call - the only point of interest is that Edward's ball is in front of hoop 2 and Paul is concerned that, if his front ball misses the peg, it may end up near the White. In the end Paul opts for caution, takes off from Green, and pegs out his Brown. Right, lets get to the bar. However Edward now decides to hit in and all he has to do is take a 2-ball break from hoop 2 to the peg.

The first outlandish roll leaves him 4ft short and slightly to the side - no sweat, the hoop is run but no sort of rush to hoop 3. Paul is waiting confidently to finish the game but Edward, with a series of long rolls and audacious hoops staggers round to 1-back. A concerted groan is wrung from the watching crowd as White blobs in the hoop.

Well, it was good sport, but the bar has been open some time now and there is a temptation to drift away as Paul walks on to the lawn. Wait though: Edward's efforts have had an effect on

Paul and he debates for a long time whether to go for the White or the peg. He decides the White is too risky, rolls up to the peg... and misses.

Edward is on the lawn in a flash, runs 1-back... and hits Green. The chatter rises to an even higher pitch, Paul's face wears a more and more disbelieving expression as Edward, with true Yorkshire grit, advances hoop by hoop with another series of outrageous rolls and incredible hoops. 4-back is successfully negotiated, a heart-stopping moment at Penult and, unbelievably, Edward has got to Rover.

The crowd is silent; in comparison to previous hoops the 4ft approach is nothing - will the incredible become fact. Edward seems immune to the tension and White sails through the hoop and an easy roquet of Green follows. Paul seems in a state of shock as a game that he thought he must win is now lost. The babble of the crowd suddenly ceases... Edward's take-off has gone almost no distance at all and he is left with a 15ft shot at the peg. In silence Edward aims, swings... and misses.

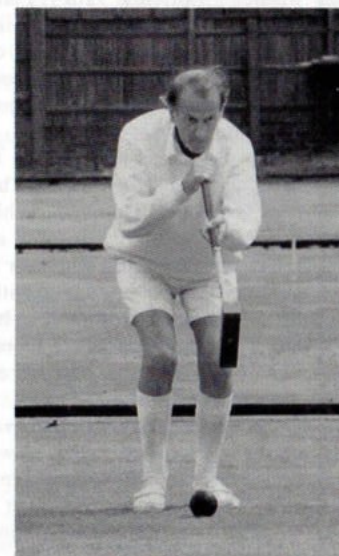
This is impossible; Paul is rejuvenated while Edward stares at the offending peg in disbelief. Conversation breaks out again - commiserations for Edward losing after such a magnificent effort, balanced by the feeling that it is only fair that Paul wins after all. But wait again - one last twist: Paul has also missed the peg and now Edward is back on the lawn with a grim look of determination in his eye. He takes careful aim, swings and... hits the peg.

Never mind the academic record for a 2-ball break listed in the Croquet Almanac. This was a match and a performance which will undoubtedly go down in the folklore of Croquet: 'Even the ranks of Tuscany could scarce forbear but cheer'.

Paul managed to overcome his disappointment sufficiently to win one of the subsidiary prizes on offer - that for the veteran with the most wins. Ted Matthews was the most successful high bisquer and Eileen Magee won the lady's prize. Eileen also gained a CA bronze award as did Ted, Ginny Greig and Anne Stephens - congratulations to them all.

There were also a number of players participating in their first tournament. It is always welcome to see new faces prepared to dip their toes into the competition arena and I hope they enjoyed the experience and will return for more.

All in all a very pleasant and highly memorable tournament. Once again Paul managed, at least for the last 2 days, to organise some pleasant weather to grace another of his well run tournaments. He was ably assisted by Robert Pennant-Jones whose more forceful presence is a perfect foil to Paul's subtle style of management. I admit to not being enamoured with the 2½ hour time limits which seemed to be unnecessarily pressurising, but if that is the penalty of playing in such a convivial atmosphere next year, then I shall gladly bear it.



Peter Howell, losing finalist at Southwick.

rover, then again with Peter for penult and peg, to take the King Cup for third year running.

The catering was excellent as always, with a seemingly endless progression from morning coffee to lunch to tea. For many players, this was their first experience of the new handicapping systems and it passed off without any confusion. Everybody could see their handicap developing in one direction or the other!

MEMBERSHIP

WORLD CROQUET
CHAMPIONSHIP

Who will reach the final this year?

From John Walters, Chairman, Organising Committee.

The 3rd World Championship will be held in England this year from September 8th to 15th, and will be staged once again in the delightful surroundings of the Hurlingham Club. Spectators can expect to see the finest croquet played by the very best players in the world. This year competitors from Australia, England, France, Ireland, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Scotland, Switzerland, USA, and Wales, will be amongst those attempting to prevent Robert Fulford's successful defence of his title. Robert won last year in a final against Mark Saurin, where the sum of the finalist's ages was barely over 40 years!

Chris Irwin will be masterminding the management this year, guiding successful competitors through four seeded blocks of eight players and into a 16 person best-of-three knockout. Expect some exciting play, especially from knife-edge specialist David Openshaw, brilliant and enterpris-

ing Fulford, octuple-peeling Bob Jackson, and of course the world No 1 Joe Hogan.

Once again the Hurlingham club grants CA associate members (not affiliates) an open invitation to watch the championship at their beautiful club, on production of a valid membership card. Affiliates are also very welcome and may purchase invitations in advance only from the CA Office at £5.50 each, including VAT. Please make cheques payable to "The Hurlingham Club".

Do come and visit this unique croquet experience; the Championship may not return to these isles for some years as the World Croquet Federation's intention is that it should be hosted by different member countries in turn.

Four places in the Championship are reserved for players who pre-qualify. There are pre-qualification events at Surbiton and Southport: see the 1991 CA Fixtures Book for details; closing dates are 29th July.

Awards Presented at AGM

Some 40 members attended this year's Annual General meeting, held at the Hurlingham Club on 20th April.

Mrs Betty Prichard was elected as a Vice-President of the Association with acclamation, in recognition of her considerable contribution to the game over the years.

Mr Alan Oldham was re-elected as Honorary Treasurer for his 25th year in office.

There were 10 candidates for 10 vacancies on Council and the Meeting confirmed the election of the following members: Mrs J. Anderson, Mr D.L. Gaunt, Mr W.E. Lamb, Dr M. Murray, and Mr J.O. Walters (under Rule 7(a)(i)); Mr W.P. Gillott and Mr R.D.C. Prichard (under Rule 16 and Rule 7(a)(i)); and Mrs C. Bagnall, Mr S.T. Badger, and Mr

G. Cuttle (under Rule 7(a)(ii)). The last three named were welcomed as new members of Council.

The following Awards were then presented:

Club Awards
The Apps-Heley Award: Newport Croquet Club.
The Townsend Award: York Croquet Club.

Player Awards
The Apps Trophy: Mr C. Jones.
The Steel Bowl: Miss A. O'Connor.
Coach of the Year
Mr D.L. Gaunt.

The following Trophies were presented at the Meeting:
The Inter-Club Salver:
Colchester.

The Selectors' Weekend Trophy:
Mr I.B. Short.
National Short Croquet Cups:
Winner - Mr C. Wood.
Runner-up - Mr R. Jackman.

Membership
Recruitment
Scheme

The existing membership recruitment scheme will run until the end of this year, after which it will be replaced by a new system.

At present, clubs that have joined the existing scheme receive a £12 voucher for every three new members they recruit for the CA. New recruits for whom a voucher has not yet been awarded can be carried forward from one year to the next.

The vouchers can be put towards the payment of any membership subscription, and can be used in any way the club thinks fit - for example, they could be given as prizes for club competitions.

So if your club has some recruits outstanding, you have 6 months to find some more recruits to bring the total up to a multiple of three to qualify for your subscription voucher(s).

Clubs wishing to take part in the scheme for the first time should contact Chris Hudson (Tel: 0270-820296) for further details.

Equipment Insurance
offered through
the Association

Following the success of the CA's Master Policies for Public Liability & Employer Liability Insurance, the Association can now offer a Master Policy to cover the Insurance of Sports Equipment.

The Policy covers Sports Kit and Equipment, for Fire and Theft and Accidental Damage. Whilst not in use, it is also insured and the insurance applies wherever the equipment is used or stored within the UK, including transit. Theft cover is limited to where there is evidence of forcible entry or exit to secured premises.

The first £25 of each and every claim is excluded and it is warranted that when any equipment is stored in a vehicle, this must always be kept locked when unattended.

The cost is based on £1 for each £100 value of equipment, with a minimum premium of £20, and it is essential that this accurately reflects NEW REPLACEMENT VALUE. A brief description of equipment has to be provided on the Proposal Form by those wishing to be insured.

Further details can be obtained from Chris Hudson (Tel: 0270-820296). Please note that from 1st August 1991, all matters relating to the CA's Insurance schemes will be handled by Tony Antenen at the CA Office.

HINTS FOR STARTERS

Setting Golf Croquet Handicaps

According to the Laws of Golf Croquet, 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 following table.

Assoc'n Croquet H'cap	Golf 13pt game	Cqt H'cap 19pt game
-5 to -1	0	0
-1/2 to 2	1	1 1/2
2 1/2 to 6	2	3
6 1/2 to 9	3	4 1/2
10 to 12	4	6
13 to 16	5	7 1/2
17 to 20	6	9

This is fair enough for those with an Association handicap who only play the occasional game of Golf Croquet, but how is a handicap fixed for those who only play Golf Croquet?

Using the above figures, someone new to the game with no CA handicap would be given a provisional handicap of 6 bisques if entering a CA Golf Croquet handicap tournament for the first time (assuming 13-point games).

However, as with Association Croquet handicaps, clubs where Golf Croquet is played regularly can decide, if they so wish, to allocate "club" handicaps to their Golf Croquet players in excess of 6

bisques. The Club handicappers can then subsequently reduce (or raise) their members' handicaps

GOLF CROQUET

according to the results of the games and matches that they play.

A bisque is an extra turn given

in handicap play and can only be played by the striker with the striker's ball of the preceding turn. A half-bisque is a restricted extra turn in which no point can be scored for any ball.

In Golf Croquet therefore, each bisque would entitle a player to another turn, (i.e. one more stroke), to be taken before the next player in sequence plays. If the player so wished, all available

bisques could be taken one after the other.

A half-bisque would entitle the player to one more stroke, but this stroke could not be used to score a point with any ball. The player could, however, immediately follow a half-bisque turn by a full bisque turn (assuming one was available) to give another stroke with which a point could be scored.

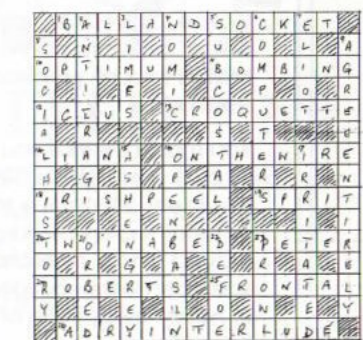
The number of bisques to be given by the lower-handicapped player to the higher is the difference between their handicaps. A bisque may not be split into two half-bisques.

In time-limited games, bisques cannot be played during the extension period, or immediately thereafter by the player in play when the extension period ends.

In doubles play, the number of bisques to be given by the lower-handicapped side to the higher is half the difference between their aggregate handicaps. A fraction of a bisque above a half is counted as one bisque, a fraction below as a half-bisque.

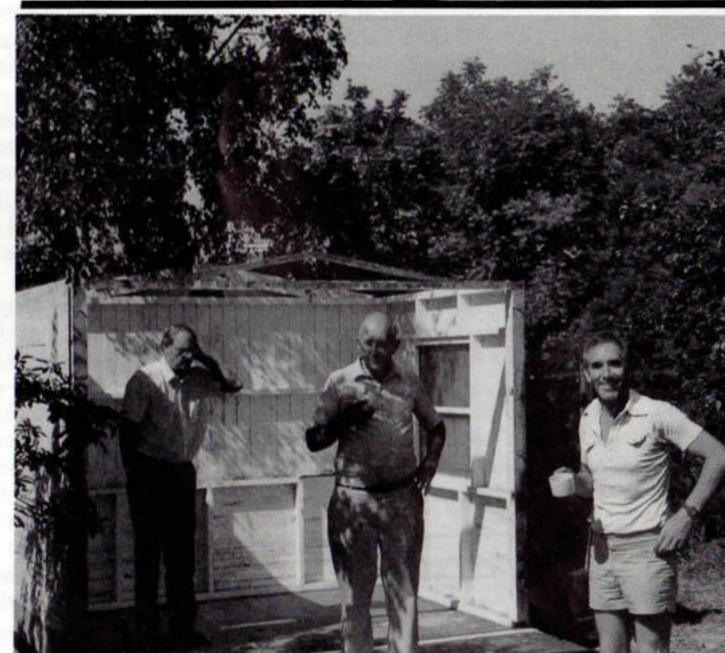
The "Crofter" Crossword
Seven solutions were received to "Crofter" No 1, and a £5.00 voucher will be sent to Duncan Reeve of Reepham, Norfolk, for the first correct entry received.

The correct solution to "Crofter" No 1 is shown here.



Solutions to Crofter No 2 should be sent to the Editor, The Oaklands, Englesea Brook, Near Crewe, Cheshire, CW2 5QW, marking the envelope "Crofter No 2". No other material, apart from the solution and the sender's name and address, should be included in the envelope.

All solutions received will remain unopened until 21st August 1991, when a draw will take place. The first correct solution drawn from those received will earn the sender a £5 voucher to be credited against books or goods sold through the CA Office.



A tea break for Tyneside C.C. - as work progresses on their new chalet!

PRACTICE WITH A PURPOSE

It is wise to start with the shots you find most difficult, and to play them a number of times until an improvement is evident. But don't do so much that you become sick and tired of the whole thing.

If you want to master a fine take-off, an ideal test is to place two balls in a corner and take-off on the inside of the lawn down the boundary. Then gradually increase the distance until you can get as far as the next corner without sending the other ball off the boundary.

You can then put a ball in corners one, two, and three, and take-off from each to the next one, returning to the first corner again. From corners one and two, always place your ball on the boundary side for the take-off. This ensures that a bad shot resulting in a thick take-off will not send the other ball off the lawn and so bring your turn to an end. However, from

corner 3 to corner 1, practice taking off from either side.

Another most important stroke is the approach to a hoop. You should practise putting the forward ball to the position that will be most helpful to you after the

should aim to rush the forward ball to a position where you have a straight shot to send it to the hoop after next, stopping at the centre ball yourself. It is easier to do a straight shot accurately than it is to do a split or roll shot, and if you think of the position you need for the ball on the other side of the hoop, you can make your break much safer.

I have often heard people say how easy croquet looks when someone is making a good break, but if you watch carefully, you will see the reason is that every ball is accurately placed, and therefore no difficult stroke has to be made. When watching a good break, anticipate what the player will do next, and if he does not do what you expected, try and understand why he has played differently - you will find you learn a lot from watching with your mind, as well as your eye.

ASSOCIATION
CROQUET

hoop is run. To achieve this, practise approaching a hoop with every type of shot - a stop shot for a forward rush afterwards, a roll shot for a backward rush, and split shots to be able to rush afterwards to either side of the hoop. Unless you can be fairly certain of doing this, you will find your break is difficult, and you will have a tendency to leave balls behind.

After running a hoop, you

Council Appoints Chairman and
Committee

At the Council Meeting immediately following the AGM, Stephen Mulliner was elected Chairman and Alan Oldham was elected Vice-Chairman.

The following members were elected to the Selection Committee: Messrs G.N. Aspinall, W.E. Lamb, S.N. Mulliner, M. Murray, and B.G. Neal.

The following were elected as Chairmen of Committees:
Executive: Steve Mulliner.
F&GP: Colin Irwin.

Development: Syd Jones.
Publicity: Charles Townsend.
International: Steve Mulliner.
Tournament: John Walters.
Handicap: Bill Lamb.
Equipment: Tim Haste.
Laws: Steve Mulliner.
Coaching: Bill Lamb.

The following were elected to be members of the Executive Committee: Ex officio: Messrs S.N. Mulliner, A.J. Oldham, C.J. Irwin, and by co-option: Messrs B.G. Neal, and C.P. Townsend.

MEN'S & WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIPS

Cheltenham: 29th May-3rd June

David Openshaw and Gail Curry take titles

Report by Peter Dorke

Wednesday May 29th

This has been Male Chauvinism Day - an opportunity for the men to push the women around in the Mixed Doubles. My partner, the New Zealander Pamela Fellows (and wasn't I lucky to get her) opined that: "Women are regarded here as unable to think for themselves". Men, she felt, have a low opinion of women's tactics. John Haslam provided a happy exception to this rule, allowing his partner, Gail Curry, to dominate him unmercifully. Highlights of the day were: Gail's classy play; Paul Smith's missed roquets at crucial moments; Strat Liddiard's long-distance shooting; the awful chill in the Cheltenham air.

Thursday May 30th

The doubles have continued apace (well, a very slow pace, in fact). Hague and Lamb (a faint aura of whisky and rum here) perpetrated a dreadful shambles in the final stages of their match with Curry and Haslam, so allowing the latter pair to proceed in both halves of the competition. This was to hold up matters to such an extent that waiting couples were able to play leisurely friendlies, in which some of the ladies proved who was really the dominant partner. I mention no names but whoever said that New Zealand provided the world with tender little lambs was wrong. (What's friendly about a

TPO?) The Haslams were everywhere today, losing some, winning more, and entertaining the crowd on and off the lawns. Barbara Haslam, having failed to modify Strat's reckless tactics and having thereby lost in both halves, found her loyalties split as husband and son went on their winning ways. Chris Haslam was fortunate to have the assistance of Carol Lewis, who is a serious and improving player.

After a long 2 days wait, the final of the Draw (Ransoms v. Fellows and Dorke) began at 7pm in already fading light and was pegged down in almost complete darkness amidst vehement antipodal complaints. Thursday's highlights were: distinguished visits from Edgar Jackson, Keith Aiton and Carmen Bazley; Ian Maugham - your amiable manager - contriving to lose to Gugan and Goacher with an indiscreet clang of penult after a fairish take-off; slow play all round; complaints about the draw (Strewth! These slipshod English Laws!); the awful chill in the Cheltenham air, as the Great Ones began to gather for the morrow's singles.

Friday May 31st

The Mixed Doubles having been temporarily (it was hoped) abandoned, the hard stuff could begin. Pin-striped suits were much in evidence early on. A sore throat, streaming cold, and an abscess on a molar did not enhance my prospects against Andrew Gregory but fortunately he was well out of form and lawn 4 was very welcoming. Gregory was not the only one to make a shaky start: Landor and Guest went to a four-hour time-limit; Mrs Fellows struggled and lost to Liz Taylor-Webb; Bo Harris, though distinctly unhappy, overcame a determined Carol Lewis in 3 very long games. But Haslam and son were still doing well and the weather looked positively perky. This last observation was, however, soon proved wrong as the cold set in once more. Frances Ransom and Gail Curry were ladies-in-waiting throughout this slow-paced day.

Question of the day was: how does Stephen

RESULTS

Men's Championship Round 1

J.H. Haslam bt T. Griffith +15, -14, +2; *D.B. Maugham bt P.L. Smith +18, +26(TP); D.L. Gaunt by A.J. Symons +16, -14, +14; *D.K. Openshaw bt A.F. Sutcliffe +26(TP), +5; F.I. Maugham bt R.W. Ransom +2, +1; P.J. Dorke bt A.J. Gregory +13, +7; K.M.H. Aiton bt W.E. Lamb -26, +4, +19; *D.J. Goacher bt Dr G.S. Liddiard +21, +13; Dr M. Murray by S. Comish +2, +23; C.J. Haslam bt C.N. Williams +10, +22; J.E. Guest bt F.J.R. Landor.

Round 2

D.R. Foulser by J. Haslam +23, +15; D. Maugham bt Gaunt +10(TPO), +26(TP); Openshaw bt A.J. Bogle +15, +6; B.G. Neal bt I. Maugham +2, +7; *J. Burridge bt Dorke +3, -26, +7; Goacher bt Aiton +26, +2; C. Haslam bt Murray +3, +26(TP); *S.N. Mulliner bt Guest +13, +22.

Round 3

D. Maugham bt Foulser +24(TP), -20, +17(STP); Openshaw bt Neal +13, +1; Goacher bt Burridge +16, -16, +13; C. Haslam bt Mulliner +26, +14.

Semi Finals

Openshaw bt D. Maugham +24(TP), +25; C. Haslam bt Goacher +16, +14.

Final

Openshaw bt C. Haslam -23, -26, +1, +16(TP), +4.

* Seeded Player.

Women's Championship

Round 1

Mrs R. Gugan bt Mrs B. Haslam +11, -16, +5(T); Mrs G.D. Harris bt Mrs C. Lewis +16, -1, +7(T).

Round 2

Mrs E. Taylor-Webb bt Mrs P.M. Fellows +12, +1(T); *Miss G. Curry bt Mrs Gugan +8, +12; Mrs P. Hague bt Mrs D.A. Wheeler +7(T), +3(T); *Mrs F. Ransom bt Mrs Harris +15, +17.

Mulliner always get to play on lawn 8. Cheekiest shot of the day belonged to Ian Burridge, who declined a reasonable one yard roquet in favour of a long shot which if missed would have given away the whole match. Naturally, the bounder hit.

Saturday June 1st

There were some very early starters today. David Foulser, one-all with John Haslam ("I could beat David after 17 pints of Guinness...but how can I get him to drink that much?"), was trying to win the third game quickly to ease Manager Maugham's self-inflicted problems. Mulliner was back on lawn 8. Miss Curry and Mrs Ransom got to play at last, though being the seeds, not against each other. Compliments from every quarter were now being showered upon Ian Maugham: "He'll be alright when he grows up." (John Haslam, a Very Tall Person). Mulliner was now on lawn 7, facing another Haslam (and another Very Tall Person). After what seemed a very short time, Chris returned to the clubhouse a winner by 26 and 14, prompting another spate of quotable aphorisms: "The lad done well". (John Haslam again); "I want to beat Burridge more than I wanted to beat Mulliner." (Chris Haslam).

The Haslam family was now in a state of unquenchable joy. So infectious was their pleasure that it did not seem to matter that Mulliner, as is his custom, pushed off home at this point and left us mere mortals to contest the Du Pre without him.

An indication that we were now into June and close to the countdown to Christmas was to be seen in the beginnings of Ray Ransom's yearly metamorphosis into Santa Claus. The red woolly hat has appeared and the beard is noticeably whiter. Perhaps tomorrow he will give out with the odd "ho, ho, ho!" The weather has certainly been appropriate to the Festive Season.

Sunday June 2nd

Today the Du Pre has occupied most of us and a lot of fun has been had. Francis Landor performed his first-ever sixth turn T.P. I know: I was that outplayer. Chris Haslam ploughed

Semi-Finals

Miss Curry bt Mrs Taylor-Webb +11, +17; Mrs Hague bt Mrs Ransom +4(T), -9, +3(T).

Final

Miss Curry bt Mrs Hague +23, +19.

* Seeded Player.

Mixed Doubles Championship

DRAW

Round 1

Mrs C. Lewis & C.J. Haslam bt Mrs R. Gugan & D.J. Goacher; Mrs G.D. Harris & F.I. Maugham bt Mrs D.A. Wheeler & A.F. Sutcliffe.

Round 2

Miss G. Curry & J.H. Haslam bt Mrs P. Hague & W.E. Lamb +5; Mr & Mrs R.W. Ransom bt Mrs Lewis & C. Haslam +5(T); Mrs Harris & Maugham bt Miss H. Pritchard & P.L. Smith +13; Mrs P.M. Fellows & P.J. Dorke bt Mrs B. Haslam & G.S. Liddiard +10.

Semi-Finals

Mr & Mrs Ransom bt Miss Curry & Haslam +4(T); Mrs Fellows &

through Swifty Goacher on his way to the Mens final. David Openshaw demolished a nervy David Maugham. The Ladies took longer but eventually we knew that Gail, the inevitable finalist (pace Bo Harris) would meet Pat Hague, who managed, after dour striving, to beat the dogged Frances Ransom. The Mixed Doubles would be between the Ransoms (aka Father and Mother Christmas) and Chris Haslam and Carol Lewis.

Work now beckoned your reporter whose further involvement with this tournament was to be entirely telephonic.

Monday June 3rd

This should have been Haslam's day but it was not to be. In a best-of-five final, Chris took the first two games +23, +26 and reached a peg-out position in game three. This is it! I'm Men's Champion! Front... ball.... misses.... peg! Some time later, David Openshaw pegs out. A great deal later he wins -23, -26, +1, +16TP, +4. (Note use of narrative present to convey excitement). Meanwhile Gail defeats Pat Hague. At last we can hold the final of the most important event, the Mixed Doubles, which has been 6 days in the brewing. In a truncated game, the Ransoms win on time, a well-deserved triumph for Frances but another disappointment for Chris Haslam, though I think it would not be unfair to elect him Man of the Tournament.

This is my last tournament report. Many thanks to those kind readers who have said that they have been entertained by my prolixity.



Gail Curry, 1991 Women's Champion.



Chris Haslam - Man of the Championship.

ROQUE

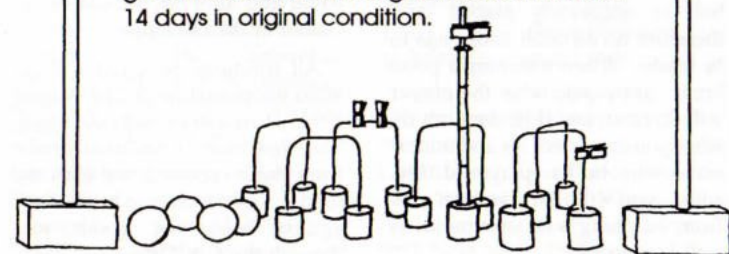
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