

**Tony Antenen**

**G**iardini National Croquet Day, Saturday 23 May (remember??) and to Woking and Surbiton to put shoulder to wheel and support the splendid efforts made at both venues. Woking first, on a sunny May morning with the courts a hive of activity as some 40 or so visitors were encouraged to "try your hand". Club members had turned out in force which meant small groups being shepherded and individuals attended to in a very good PR exercise including attractive and informative handouts. Thanks to pre G-Day planning the local media were supportive and both Club and the game itself were beneficiaries of valuable publicity.

Surbiton in the afternoon where again, thanks to pre-activity preparation and the efforts of club members, visitors were well received and welcomed and presented with a written introduction to the Club and a guide to the day's activities which invited them to watch a demonstration game in the company of a club member - easily distinguished being in whites - then to "have a go" on one of the small courts after which, if the visitor wished to pursue matters, there was the offer of two free coaching sessions on specified dates.

It may be that the clubs themselves were somewhat disappointed at the numbers who turned up - Surbiton had some 25 to 30 visitors - but were those numbers to be repeated country-wide the impact would have been considerable. As it was I hear from various sources welcome reports of good local media coverage and publicity while at national level the event was photo-captioned in both "The Telegraph" and "The Times". Chris Hudson would welcome any feedback from clubs as to how their particular day went. I, for my part, will try to persuade the Tournaments Committee to have the 1993 National

## ...What did you do on "The Day"?

Croquet Day entered in bold in next year's Fixtures List so that clubs can make adequate preparations well in advance.

Final words on "The Day". Seems to me that those clubs who really put themselves out and made an effort reaped the rewards of local recognition and, hopefully, won friends and influenced people. Lessons, in handling the media, PR, communications, etc., have been learned and experienced gained which will stand in good stead for next year.

The next day (Sunday) saw me back at Woking by kind invitation of Dr John Dunham the Club President on the occasion of the official opening of the refurbished clubhouse. It being a combined tennis and croquet club Mark Cox who performed the opening ceremony represented the tennis side of things and I was pleased to represent the CA.

The following Sunday I was at Cheltenham for Finals Day of the Mens' and Womens'. Nice to be on hand to present my Chairman with the Men's

Casket and the Challenge Trophy. Makes a change. It's usually me on the receiving end! Finally, took a couple of hours off on Friday, 5 June, to pop across to Roehampton on the penultimate day of their "Summer" week. Despite the almost daily deluge Paul Macdonald ran his usual tight ship and kept all and sundry well up to the mark.

Finally, spare a thought for the indefatigable Brian Macmillan. There he was out on the Hurlingham green sward with a group of some 20 or 30 when the heavens opened and the mother and father of all cloudbursts exploded overhead. He herded his flock under the nearest cover - the small cricket pavilion veranda and I watched with fascinated horror from the security of my office as the cricket pitch slowly flooded and the waters lapped towards Brian and Co. He finally made his escape when the rains eased I was able to cancel the air-sea rescue helicopter. If that's what retirement is about may the good Lord keep us all working!!



*Replies to last month's "Caption Contest 1"*  
Thankyou for the overwhelming response. Some of the suggestions included: "Hoopopotamus"; "Can I Riggall through this one?"; "Can I have

## Puzzles

a lift?"; "Rabbit-runs I can handle, but please Hippo-runs ....!".

But the winning suggestion was from Mrs Pamela B Williams of Maidstone: "That Fulford diet seems to get him through the hoops, but it hasn't done me much good!" Pamela wins a special inscribed edition of the new Townsend Croquet Almanack.

Incidentally, the winner of "Crofter" crossword number 5 (solution published previously) was Ms M J Ollett of Beeston, who is entitled to £5 off the value of goods purchased from the CA. office.

## THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION

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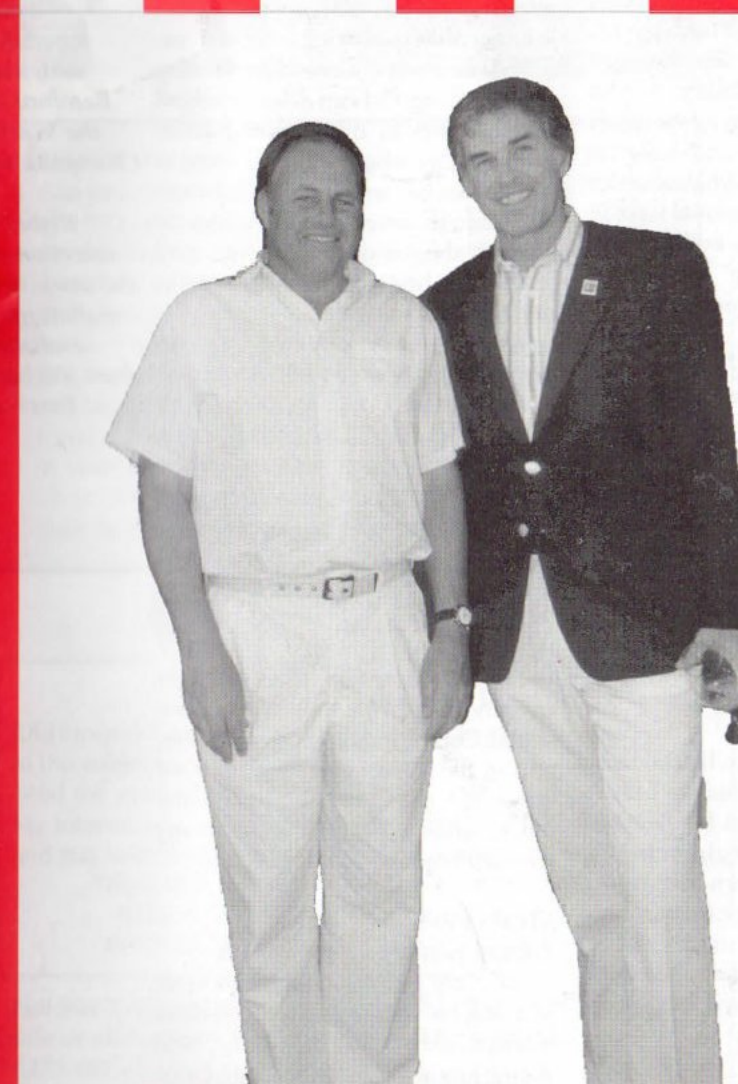
**T O P I C S**

The CA: Working for Croquet - Worth Your Support!

# Croquet

MAGAZINE & NEWS

Issue 222  
July/August 1992



## Stars & Stripes

Inside the seventh year of Brice Jones' Sonoma Cutrer International Croquet tournament

PLUS The fourth WCF World Championship hits the USA

AND Bill Lamb, Chris Hudson, News, Reports, Comment

SPECIAL WORLD CROQUET CHAMPIONSHIP ISSUE

**National Croquet Centre**

The CA aims to establish a National Croquet Centre at Rowheath, Bournville, Birmingham to be used for coaching and other national courses. The centre will also serve as a geographically-central neutral venue for clubs competing in national competitions.

The proposed croquet centre, situated in a major conurbation area including several schools, is located within 2 or 3 miles of both the M5 and M42 motorways. It is within half a mile of Bournville station, with a local service every 20 minutes or so from Birmingham New Street. Within a radius of 1 or 2 miles of the Centre, there are many business hotels and guest houses, and Birmingham University's Halls of Residence are only a few minutes away.

The Centre would have 4 full size lawns, one half-size grass court, and two half-size artificial surfaces. The artificial surfaces will provide all-weather lawns available for coaching throughout the year and will give us a chance to develop the use of such surfaces. They will also provide facilities for handicapped players.

Provision for floodlighting and automatic irrigation has been included in the specification, together with a pavilion and office accommodation that could provide for a future transfer of the CA's administrative function should that be deemed desirable in the future.

The Rowheath Centre has been booked for this year's Federation Conference, to be held on 14th November, and Chris Bennett, Chairman of the West Midlands Federation, is running courses for beginners at Rowheath to build up membership throughout the coming season in readiness for opening the centre.

**STARS & STRIPES NEWS**

**1. Money still talks in USCA**

(from US 'National Croquet Calendar')

A proposal by Ray Bell that would have given limited voting rights to USCA members was overwhelmingly defeated at the USCA's annual meeting held April 8 during the Club Team Championships in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida.

Amid confusion over whether certain proxy votes had been cast as intended, the motion was defeated by 48,436 to 7412. Voting power is determined by the amount of dollars raised by each USCA club through membership dues.

These block votes are then cast by the Presidents of clubs. USCA Management are withholding a breakdown of votes pending completion of "permission slips" by the electorate, although according to the US "National Croquet Calendar" the USCA constitution does not give its Management or Administration the authority to do this.

The defeated motion was a compromise proposal, but still aimed to remove voting power from club Presidents in favour of a one member one vote system. A flurry of letters and memos for and against the proposal included one from San Francisco CC President Bob Alman which stated that it risked letting people vote who "don't know anything about the issues or processes involved and have no personal accountability whatsoever for their decision or any personal stake in its consequences." Ray Bell accused him of "flawed thinking" and said his "entire treatise is transparent and self-serving."

**2. USCA VP's acrimonious departure**

Don Degnan has resigned from the USCA's Management Committee, accusing the Association of spending too much time developing the International Rules variant of the game. The long-standing Vice President also criticised the influence of "indefatigable, long-winded" Western representatives who he said had "dug themselves in as spokespersons" for the entire management.

Jack Osborn made similar claims in one of his last articles as USCA President in 1990. Then he objected to the Western Region being responsible for encouraging International Rules play (rather than the US's own variant of croquet), "killer player" and "play for pay" approach. The USCA later published a full-page rebuttal of the article.

**3. USCA rejects National Champion**

Current USCA national singles Champion Johnny Osborn was declared ineligible from participating in the WCF World Championship last May. He was not only unselected as one of the US representatives, but was also told that he could not participate in either of the qualifying competitions.

The controversy arose from drinking while playing. Osborn acknowledged that he likes to drink during some tournaments where beer or wine is served, but he denied bad behaviour. He said he never makes scenes or disrupts the conduct of games, and said he had never been complained to during a tournament.

Since Osborn claimed that no warnings had been given to him during a tournament (in accordance with Article VII of the USCA standing orders, on suspension), the authority of the Association's Management to take such action has again been questioned. Following a statement issued by the USCA on what it required from its representatives, the question of whether all participants in the WCF event are representatives of their country or individuals has also been raised. Osborn maintains it is the latter, and in the 1991 event Reg Bamford was only able to compete on the understanding that he was not in any way representing South Africa.

**STOP PRESS:**

**GB safe and dry in Test Match**

Our final piece of American news will not be welcomed by American readers. In the Solomon Trophy, held during July at the Surbiton Club, Great Britain retained the trophy by 19



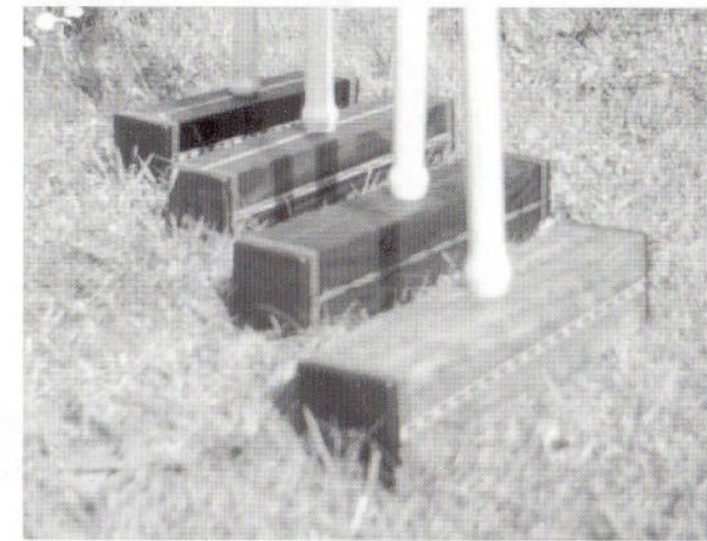
**Above: USCA Executive Director Anne Frost takes a few moments from her busy schedule, with Reg Bamford at the World Championship**

**Right: A selection of the attractive mallets now available from Michael Percival**

matches to 2. In all the US team secured 6 games to the tally of 38 for GB. A feature article will appear in the next issue.

**More mallets**

Readers interested in buying a new mallet have an increasing array of suppliers from which to choose. New on the scene is Michael Percival, who can accommodate you for any head length 9 - 12 inches, and weights of 2lb 8 - 3lb 12! The USP here is the unusual and beautifully grained woods from which the heads can be made, including tulip, rosewood, cocobolo, olive, ringwood, as well as good old reliable Lignum Vitae. These hand-crafted and very attractive mallets are priced between £45 and £85 and are guaranteed for a year. For more information telephone 0449 613917.



**SPONSORSHIP:**

**Can you help?**

In 1993, the Croquet Association has a wide range of sponsorship options, including events as diverse as the World Croquet Championship and the Golden Mallet Competition.

A new CA sponsorship brochure will become available in July, outlining the benefits for sponsors and the opportunities available through croquet.

If you are in a position to influence sponsorship decisions in your own organisation or elsewhere, please contact Chris Hudson (tel 0270 820296) for further information. Your help in finding sponsors would be most welcome.

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**Croquet**

'Croquet' No. 222 (July/August 1992).

Cover: "Stars & Stripes"

Featuring: Brice Jones & Neil Spooner (Sonoma Cutrer Vineyards)

Photography: John Walters

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Tournament results & reports should be sent via the CA Secretary; any correspondence about non-delivery of the magazine should also be addressed to the CA Secretary.

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Early arrivals at the May Tournament, in which there were 32 players, many of whom seem to come in the main from Surbiton or Wrest Park, had time to discover that we were to play for the "Prichard Biennial Cup" on a percentage of wins, for the subsidiary prize by increasing our Lambic Points and that the inventor of the same was a Media Star in France - "Un Arbitre international-sympathique - avec une accent exquis!" et aussi pour le Tournoi - Le Chef Des Arbiters. We also observed Richard Hilditch arriving laden with double juice and later we were saddened to see that the Hilditch/Hyne headgear has lost one of its deedles. With so many players and games so admirably managed by George Noble and in the interest of brevity one can only report upon the choicest moments.

Throughout the three days the weather was excellent except at lunch time on Saturday when those unfortunate to be still in play had to endure Hunst'onic wind and rain. In these atrocious conditions the Club President and son, in order to conserve precious stocks of beer laboriously transported from Surbiton, won the Oates award by declaring they were "just going out to the Pub" and we were left to conjecture as to whether they "might be some time".

ARK Miller was involved in at least two incidents of note. Having hit in and gone round to finish after time, spectator referees were left to wonder if damage had occurred as a result of his leap of triumph whilst quitting his stance (which might be construed as uncontrolled) then would his peg out have been null and void? Also in his continued experiments with Post Portwood tactics he devised a devilishly cunning leave which is not in Wylie - namely four balls

The players arrived for Southport's annual neo-seasonal tournament only to be greeted with heavy winds. What was to be an atypical day for this ever-popular tournament, together with the well set hoops, saw most people playing what can only be described as a 'hackers' game. The majority of games came very close to the timed limit with only the 'experts' easily seeing their way through the first few rounds. For us lesser mortals, the games were enjoyable if not enduring as the lack of practice over the long Winter break shone through (well something had to shine as our Solar Star certainly didn't feel like making an appearance!).

That evening, Haslam Snr. and his band of merry weekend residents had decided to take our frustration, and for many 'dampened' hopes of winning the main event, out in the space-aged world of Quasar, the new revolutionary laser zap-zone! Well not quite all of us as a couple of mature oldies (!) sat it out in the bar. The new Rambo had been discovered. It was our manager, Richard Hilditch, who dared life and limb to kill his victorious opponents of that day! A nice relaxing game of 10-pin bowling then followed with the new style in bowling being demonstrated by James Hawkins-if

## Lamb - "Champignon!? D'Hunstanton"

around the peg with contact.

Law 35 came under discussion at Tea time on Saturday with your correspondent claiming that he had been misled by incorrectly placed clips. Le CdA seemed unimpressed and let tea continue, however when the Ladies discovered that my claim was in fact true I was allowed to have my turn again and this time have an Egg sandwich whose plate had been incorrectly shown with a Cheese and Prawn clip.

The gallery had full value from Ian Bond who caused opponents to perform strange wonders. Merely the examination of an angled hoop resulted in the request for a referee to which Le CdA responded. He in turn asked for a second official for an attempt at an angled jump shot played as a Hammer stroke. So unnerved was the player with Referee in front and another behind that his attempt failed so badly that spectators claimed I was seen to be completely in midair whilst playing a complete air shot. It did go through on the second attempt! In another game oppo, Jon Watson, having accurately failed to rush peel Ian at penult in one ball finish then took off to Three back to give himself a round of applause and a straight two footer, sadly the hoop decided to rebuff him and Ian took the initiative and then the game.

Richard Hilditch quit the lawn having broken down as a result of sadness - attempting a Cutlet of over 90 degrees. Judy Anderson and Robin Hobbs having started

at "half past" clean forgot which hour and then when time was eventually called an hour late still hadn't finished. This was partly due to a lost ball marker which had players of all colours searching for until it was discovered hidden under a leaf.

Asked for a memorable quote Robert Prichard said "Try to avoid the Traffic lights by the Sugar Beet factory! It is an even year and I don't expect to win, so after 4 victories I have to stop playing."

Le Chef des Arbiters had plenty to do with Hoops on five lawns to set but still found time to discharge his other duties including a compound error (see below) and win the Tournament undefeated. At the Presentation as well as thanks for Sarah Hampson and her excellent helpers for the magnificent catering, a Bottle of Vino Noblet was given to George for his management. Richard Kimmerling from Ipswich with an increase of 75 by the end of play was the Lambic Pointilist.

Finally test your knowledge with ... John Read having roqueted white with pink paused to discuss a point with the Referee. He then "roqueted" pink with white. Don Cornelius forestalled with "Wrong Ball". Another Referee without knowing there had been a previous roquet ruled the balls be replaced and Don play. He went on to make 5 Hoops. Before his next turn John then called the Le CdA and explained the circumstances fully... What Happened Next et Pourquois?

Nick Harris

## Shining at Southport

only James had sent the bowl down the alley rather than backwards into the spectators...!

Easter Sunday brought more bearable weather with light winds and the occasional glimpse of the sun. With the better weather came a better standard of play with T.P's and no timed finishes.

In the semi-finals, Andrew Collin beat Dave Goacher and Colin Irwin beat Adrian Saurin only after Adrian played a foul stroke from a hampered position behind Rover. Colin came back from one and one versus peg and peg to win +2; a very 'gritty' game!

The Swiss was a very close-fought contest with John Haslam losing to Adrian Saurin which left Andrew and Adrian Saurin in the Final of the Swiss. The game was as close as Adrian's game against Colin but he had learned from his mistakes and went on to win +3.

The majority of players left after the prize-giving ceremony, leaving twelve people to play in a fun doubles on the Bank Holiday Monday. Everyone that entered won an Easter egg, but salivary amylase was still drooling down the players' faces for that coveted giant egg sitting amongst the

countless smaller ones! Everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves and as the pairings were picked at random in every round, it gave a lesser experienced player the chance to play with a different, more experienced player every time. Thus learning different tactics in every game.

The games attracted some rather unorthodox methods of spectating as a Police helicopter hovered thirty or so feet above lawn one for a short while. It was apparently looking for harboured criminals and provided a welcomed break as most watched the Police, in a real-life crime bust, apprehend a handful of criminals in nearby houses with the use of The Helicopter!

The overall single winner of the doubles was Andrew Saurin with Alice Dawson, a late entrant to the doubles, in a close second place.

The weekend was only plagued with bad weather for the Saturday but everyone still thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Thanks must go to the manager, Richard and to the Southport Caterers for providing the excellent meals. See you there next year!

Andrew Saurin

## News from the clubs of the South Coast

### Compton Croquet Club

was not burnt to the ground, but a fire in the Club house on the 17th January 1992 ignited by an intruder causing £25,000 of damage, was a major set-back. So when 24 players gathered for a Tournament to play for the Knight Cup at 9.30 am on 2nd May 1992 there was a sense of elation, difficulties surmounted, and Compton was back in business.

The Contractors were ahead of schedule (confirm ahead of schedule), most, but not all, of the work of re-instatement was done, and harried by Don Daintree and Margaret Ward the Contractors quit for the weekend leaving the clubhouse in good order and the kitchen usable.

Eastbourne is still the suntrap of the South Coast and the next three days were to confirm this. Much work had been done on the lawns in the winter and it showed. The competition was in American Blocks and over the weekend the guarantee of five games was met in full. There were very few games of the total of 63 where a time limit applied and with five referees and the experienced players the Tournament almost ran itself to the relief of the Manager, Barry James and Tournament Referee, Roy Wallis.

Does making a non-fraudulent error about the number of bisques by both players invoke the full consequences as set out in Rule 22 Responsibility for Correct Handicap, in the Regulations for Tournaments? Both players owned up to the mistake. Disqualification is unnecessarily harsh so by mutual agreement a re-play went ahead and the same player won this time by 2 instead of 1. Someone suggested a severe reprimand was required, but no-one severe enough could be found to give it.

Winners of the Blocks emerged quite early Sunday morning, Block A Adrian Wadley winning all of his 5 games, Block B Bryan Teague 4 matches and points, Block C Bernard Weitz 4 matches and points and Block D Brian Christmas 5 wins. The final was won by Bryan Teague by 15 against Brian Christmas in front of an informed audience of Compton supporters. Handicappers Pat Asa-Thomas

and Betty Weitz did their stuff. The Knight Cup was presented to the winners and players set off home through the press of the Bank Holiday traffic.

### SOUTHWICK SALVER:

#### Elements confound pundits in post-poll upset by Simon Tuke

24 hours after the election result upset all the predictions, another 'racing certainty' bit the dust. The Southwick Salver is traditionally ushered in by biting winds, rain and occasionally snow. This year, however, it came in like a lamb, greeted by cloudless skies, morning dew, and a warm sun. So warm, in fact, that your under-thatched correspondent was reduced to the ultimate shame, borrowing one of the less offensive hats in Anthony Miller's copious collection to ward off acute sunburn.

The lawns were slow, making big rushes something of a lottery, but very true, a far cry from their ravaged state a couple of years ago. The field was less strong than in previous years, and the play predictably early-seasonish, with plenty of what manager Richard Hilditch aptly described as '8 lift games.'

Richard, incidentally, sported both a new sunhat and a new mallet. The mallet will presumably look more lived-in after it has bashed in a few hoops at Harrow Oak, and it was also not sporting the Welsh dragon on the side like its predecessor. Was this as a mark of respect for the Welsh wonder/windbag's demise on Thursday night?

An entry of 14 allowed a knock-out format with best of 3 semi-final and final and consolation Swiz. Cunning Hilditchian management also interposed early Swiss games for those still in the main event but waiting for their next opponent. This nearly caused an upset, when Andy Gregory (-1), waiting to play in the final, came within a whisker of being beaten by Mark Firth, playing off an alleged 9. The new handicap system duly caused a great deal of scratching of heads amongst supposedly cerebral competitors.

There was little truly worthy of note in the

play itself. ARK Miller took off to a foot in front of 1 from the fourth corner with practically his first shot of the tournament, thus living up to his well-earned reputation for precision break-building. Simon Tuke completed the first three peels of a straight sextuple.

Although the draw was not seeded, the final matched the two minus players, Andy Gregory and Simon Tuke. This at least produced a few breaks, together with several attempts to give up 'unloseable' positions by the balder of the two. Andy finally clanged an attempted jump shot through 4 - B in the third game, in a gallant attempt to bring some class to a TP-less occasion, with a straight triple, allowing Simon to sneak in at the death.

Southwick's customary calorie-rich teas were provided and eagerly consumed. And the hoops were firmly and tightly set under John Eardley-Simpson's keen supervision. All in all a most enjoyable start to the season.

### SOUTHWICK SPRING

#### HANDICAP WEEKEND by Simon Tuke

The King Cup was run this year as a simplified Egyptian for the first time. This enabled 24 players to play between 3 and 6 games, enjoying unseasonal sunshine throughout the Saturday, offset by torrential rain for most of Sunday.

Southwick member Bill Arliss rapidly emerged as a force to be reckoned with. His nonchalant and repeated running of 8 foot hoops on Sunday morning helped see off the challenge of joint manager Simon Tuke, the winner in the previous three years.

Ruth Pitt from Swindon, an extremely promising 16 handicapper, was also making impressive progress, culminating in a tight battle against Bill. All seemed lost when the last of her bisques fell, but she battled on to leave Bill one behind when time was called, needing to hit in and get a good rush to rover, which he coolly managed to do, and duly ran it. The sizeable crowd lurking in the canteen, to avoid unduly affecting the players' nerves, saw Bill hang on to clinch the vital extra point, and the King Cup.

David Ruscombe-King made a latish charge to clinch outright second place. Congratulations also to David Prescott, who won his silver award. Pat Shine handled the entries with her usual exemplary efficiency, and the catering was of customary Southwickian lavishness.

## THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION

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## Next issue:

A summary of the results from tournaments around the country during the first half of the 1992 croquet season.

Plus more reports from the events of May and June.

The tournament was held in Glasgow for the third successive year and combined the best aspects of the previous two years. Only two venues were used and most of the visiting players were accommodated at a Strathclyde University Hall of Residence, where the end of term celebrations proved too noisy for most on the first evening, although the two students playing were not aroused.

Before play much of the talk centred about the controversial selection of Colin Irwin for England having represented Ireland the previous year. The rules for the competition are rather slack and such a transfer is perfectly legal, however the opinion of many was that, as for the Inter-Counties, the player involved should have to take a year off from the competition.

Play began with England against Wales and Scotland playing Ireland. England were too strong for the first Welsh team ever not to contain at least one Prichard, winning 5-0. Wales only managed to take one game from the defending champions, Lewis Palmer winning a tight two ball ending against Stephen Mulliner in the second game. After a nervous start to the ending, Stephen caught up from hoop six to square the game with both players on penult, the game was settled when Lewis hit in after Stephen had failed a good chance at penult and he duly finished to win +3. Stephen then replied with a good triple in the third to take the match. John Walters chose his debut for his country to make his first domestic appearance of the year and after a rather lacklustre, nervy win in the first game against Ian Burridge he sealed the match with a good 6th turn triple in the second. Dayal Gunasekera, the Welsh captain, could not find the consistency needed to beat Chris Clarke, although he was given some good chances. At numbers four and five Colin Irwin and David Maugham proved too strong for the new Welsh caps, Chris Williams and Peter Dorke, both winning in two straight.

Scotland beat Ireland 4-1, the inexperienced Tom Browne having a good win over Martin Murray at number two for Ireland. Simon Williams also began his weekend of bad luck, at number one for Ireland, losing by 3 in the third game against Duncan Reeve. However lower down the order the match was dominated by Scotland and the match result was never really in doubt.

England now moved on to play Ireland who showed some reasonable form but were still steam-rollered 5-0 by an England team getting stronger with every match. The most interesting match was at number one where Simon Williams was completing a whitewash triple peel in the third game to beat Walters, however he failed to jump over the jawsed rover peel and having missed his subsequent lift shot he had lost to another

## Crushing victory for England

Walters triple. Clarke beat Tom Browne with two triples and Mulliner did likewise to Adrian Brown. The Irish lower order showed their best form in this match Robert Barclay could have won a game against Irwin but fell away when victory was in sight and Jane Shorten had a fourth turn ball to 4-back against Maugham but the Englishmen still won comfortably, 2-0.

Wales against Scotland was the closest fought match of the weekend, Scotland took the early lead with Reeve beating an out of form Burridge 2-0. This lead was extended to 2-0 as John Surgenor beat Dorke 2-0, having staged a good comeback in the second when Peter looked to have control. At number two Gunasekera started to play well when it mattered most completing a well controlled triple in the third against Murray to put Wales back in with a chance. Palmer then tied the match with a 2-1 win over David Appleton although he was lucky not to lose 2-0 when Appleton stuck in rover when finishing in the second. So the match now all hinged on the protracted struggle at number five. The first game had been a long nervous affair after Rod Williams had pegged out Chris Williams, Chris struggled to the peg only to miss after rover and it was some time before he managed to hit in to win the game. In the second, after a good start by Rod, Chris Williams took control but stuck in Rover with his second ball, to leave himself penult and rover, which soon progressed to rover and peg. Some good shooting by Rod kept Chris at bay for a while but at the second time of asking Chris was able to seal the match for Wales 3-2.

This match actually took place across the two days, the intervening period being filled by the tournament meal held courtesy of Strathclyde University which was good but rather expensive and a good nights sleep in the now much quieter Hall of Residence.

The final round saw the Welsh team all playing well to whitewash Ireland. The Irish captain Simon Williams again put up the most resistance for Ireland losing 2-1 to Burridge despite completing a triple in the first game. For Wales, Palmer was probably the pick of the bunch completing two triples against Adrian Brown although he did give away some easy chances. The other three matches were all won easily by Wales, their opponents being outclassed.

England set new standards against Scotland, although the lawns were very easy, they won 5-0 with ten of the eleven

games played being won with a triple peel, Irwin being the one player to miss out. Appleton won the solitary game for Scotland with a triple peel against Mulliner, however Stephen's two triples in reply meant that he equalled Clarke's feat of the previous year of completing six triples in the event. Walters completed a further two triples, against Reeve, taking his weekend tally to five, confirming his status as one of the World's top players. Clarke was in good form to beat Murray who looked like he might be regaining some form after disappointing performances recently. In the lower order Irwin and Maugham continued to play well and despite not having to play the toughest of opponents over the weekend both continued to produce a high standard of play. Maugham stood out particularly in a game with Rod Williams after a third turn ball round he had the misfortune to play with the wrong ball, at hoop 2 on his second break, so denying himself the opportunity of a rare fifth turn triple.

England thoroughly deserved to win, the fact that they did not drop a match and completed 22 triples from 30 games won speaks for itself, they were a class above the opposition. Wales after a poor start losing their first seven matches recovered well to win their last eight and consolidate on their second place last year and are now looking forward to their forthcoming international with the USA. Only Appleton in the Scottish side really managed to find top gear and although they managed to take Wales to the wire are probably disappointed with third place. The Irish team was simply not up to the standard required for an international competition and there was no surprise in them bringing up the rear. One can only hope that disagreements between top players and selectors are (continued on page 7)



**Below:**  
*The English team, who didn't drop a match at the Home Internationals and notched up 22 triple peels in 30 games. (left to right) John Walters, Flipper, David Maugham, Chris Clarke, Colin Irwin, Stephen Mulliner.*

## Eastern dominate



**Above:**  
*The Eastern Counties team that continued their outstanding record of recent years at this event - despite missing their top players this year. (left to right, back row first) Martin French, Steve Comish, Duncan Reeve, Lewis Palmer, Debbie Cornelius, Justin Goddard.*

The advance party of the Bedfordshire team arrived on the eve of the event just in time to see the ground staff putting the final touches to the lawns, which appeared to be in excellent condition. We were invited to be the tournament reporters so after a cup of tea and a little golf croquet we made an early start on the social activities for tomorrow we were to play the reigning champions. At the captains meeting, on day one, Pat Shine stressed that we must agree on rules to cater for absentees at the appointed start time. If one of the opposing team was absent after ten minutes from the morning start time his ball would be placed on a baulk corner spot and the game would proceed without him. If both opponents were absent twenty minutes after the start time

(continued from page 6)

resolved prior to next years championship, as the presence of an unnecessarily weak team reduces the competitive nature of the event for all the other teams involved. Throughout the weekend many players produced a very high standard of play and the future for British croquet is looking very rosy, however I expect England's performance in this event to remain unsurpassed for many years to come.

The event ran very smoothly and finished conveniently early for all the travelling players. Many thanks are due to the SCA for their efficient organisation of the entire event enabling the players to concentrate on playing without having to worry about other matters.  
*Ian Burridge*

the manager would be informed and the absentees would forfeit the game. This scheme seems to have done the trick because most games started on time without a lot of fuss. Bedfordshire, who last won the championship in 1977, under the watchful eyes of Boris and Pandora the team mascots, joined with Eastern Counties in a match which proved to be the shock of the tournament. It was supposed that Boris' remarks were confined to apt comments on the play of his team, illegal of course, but Bedford came out on top, two games to one. Duncan Reeve, partnering Steve Comish in the number two match against John Wheeler and Tom Anderson, was obviously disadvantaged by driving down from Manchester that morning and his usual cure touch was missing. It must be very rare that Duncan loses a game on time. Reaction set in for Bedfordshire in their next match, when they lost to Yorkshire. The first day of the Inter-Counties is always likely to be a day of mixed fortunes which may not show teams true strength, as we have already seen. Lancashire and Cheshire, another strong team and likely contenders, were beaten three nil by Avon. At the end of the first day Gloucester were the only unbeaten team and Midlands were the only team without a win. Yorkshire were becoming the centre of controversy. Was Ben Green qualified to play for them having played for Avon last year? It turned out that he had mistakenly agreed to play for Avon on the understanding that this would not debar him from playing for Yorkshire, his preferred county, should he be selected. Bill Lamb pleaded his case and permission was granted from on high.

On the second day the stronger counties were playing to form, Eastern, Lancashire and Cheshire and Surrey winning all their matches. Bedfordshire, Kent and Yorkshire failed to log a win but Midlands broke their duck with a convincing win over Kent. The reporting team had decided that the only way to boost their confidence was to go for a curry. The cross-table talk that evening touched on the theory that with a little luck we may have won at least one of our matches that day. We also marvelled at the nonchalance and the skill with which George Noble had successfully approached hoop one with a roll from somewhere near hoop four, the clinching factor in his side's win over the Bedford pair. Magic! Curry is the obvious spur for a successful Bedfordshire side. Proof, three matches won the following day which started with a bit of a scare. Tom Anderson and passengers were missing. Had Tom been booked for speeding?

Hardly likely, you say, but we know Tom better. Fortunately team captain's crew had spotted the radar trap in time. Were Bedfordshire, keen disciplinarians, to be the first team to be penalised under the late start rule? The team relaxed when Tom arrived just in time after an unsuccessful shopping expedition. It was part of the opposing Kent team who had incurred the £40 fine. By the end of the third day Eastern had established themselves as favourites to retain the championship but all was not lost for two other teams who had yet to play them, Avon and Surrey. Gloucester had lost a needle match to Bedfordshire and were now out of the running as were Lancashire and Cheshire who were beaten by Eastern in the final match of the day. John McCullough was visited by a snake during the match with Sussex, Hants and Isle of Wight. Was this an evil portent; a sign that Yorkshire would win the wooden spoon?

Avon were eliminated from contention when they lost to Eastern on Tuesday morning but Surrey kept their hopes alive by beating lowly Kent two games to one. The outcome of the tournament would be decided in the final round match between Eastern and Surrey. To be champions Surrey needed to beat Eastern three games to nil. The match was well contested but the senior stars were defeated three nil by the youthful team from the east. Eastern were worthy winners of a tournament which always gives a great deal of enjoyment to the lesser teams who have their moments. Bedfordshire, a side with a good team spirit, managed the only defeat of the champions but provided Yorkshire with their only win. Sussex, Hants and IOW under the steady influence of Roger Wood are no longer a soft touch and wily William of Devon and Dorset is still good value if your taste is for interesting tactics. There were one or two niggles about expedition of play but the tournament was played keenly but sportingly and your reporters are already ticking the days off in anticipation of next year's event. When Bill Lamb accepted the wooden spoon from Roger Wood he was able to touch, good humouredly, on the Ben Green affair. I expect that Ben is now a confirmed Yorkshireman but not 'bart'at'. No report on 'The Counties' would be complete without a special thankyou for the work put in by the Southwick members and their aides. The lawns get better as the years go by but the food could not be better and the service is top class and friendly. Pat Shine keeps order under Nigel's managerial eye and Bernard keeps the hoops tight. What better way could you wish to spend a long weekend by the sea.

*Bedfordshire alias  
Wrest Park Croquet Club*



**Feud? I see no feud Hardy!**

Dear Editor,  
In the game of golf, I believe Nick Faldo and Sandy Lyle grew up as childhood rivals, enjoying a rivalry only young players can understand. However this competitiveness is now very seldom mentioned and each player is left alone to play his sport without constantly being reminded of his earlier days.

How unfortunate it is that you, more than anybody else in the entire world, must repeatedly take it upon yourself to remind everyone that there was once a very intense rivalry between myself and Chris Clarke. Every article you ever write on either of us, seems to have a necessity to contain some mention of it.

There is no denying that schoolboy contests are very emotionally important in the eyes of two competitive schoolboys but I, along with members of Southport Croquet Club where both Chris and myself started playing, was disgusted and sickened to read in the last issue of the gazette of the way you talk about our rivalry and the so called "hype" that went with it, as you put it. Unfortunately I have not been able to gauge Chris' opinion on the article but I would like you to print this so that all can read that no fierce animosity exists between us now and has not done so for some years.

I plead with the editor to possibly remain non-opinionated in more areas of the gazette for a change, like his predecessor was.

Yours Sincerely,  
Mark Saurin, The Wirral

**Those boys and their toys**

Dear Sir,  
Mark Saurin, in Issue 221, suggests that the CA should view the end of the 1980s' glut of young Players as a matter of concern. I was once fooled into

believing that the game would benefit from an influx of young players and consequently misdirected my energies into doing so, with embarrassing short-term success. I now realise that the question of recruiting young players is to be thought of, if at all, with indifference.

What benefit have the young players of the 1980s brought to the game? They have increased enormously the number of high-class competitors in the top events. (It is arguable whether the actual standard of play is higher, but there are certainly more players capable of that standard and capable of pushing one another up to that standard. This is a separate question which should remain in parentheses.) So what does this mean for the future of the game? What does it matter if there exists in the world one player capable of a sextuple peel or thirty?

What else have young players done for the present and future of the game? They have certainly changed the atmosphere at tournaments. A blast of false camaraderie strikes you when you invade their airspace, and when they think you're out of earshot they talk as if you are too old either to hear or to react in any way other than being quietly upset.

Their language reverts to incomprehensibility if an innocent long-bisquer wants to know what is going on, but in any case they would not be able to explain it if they tried. And why bother anyway (asked two of them the other day) when we do automatic sextuples all the time? Anyone who isn't a quick sextupler shouldn't think about taking up the game. (Some of us can remember more than one spate of correspondence about "A-class boredom", an attitude as familiar as it is fallacious. Again that's a question to be left in parentheses once I've ventured the translation: "I went through a brilliant patch once and don't now wish to step onto a lawn and ruin my reputation by being seen to play the usual rubbish.")

The CA will stand a better opportunity of survival if the clubs which are already flourishing are given a chance to concentrate on themselves. The schemes which I reluctantly obeyed orders to support in the mid-1980s to create clubs on every patch of grass have been rightly discredited. Can we not now dispose of the equally fallacious notion that young players are automatically the best thing for croquet? This is still widely regarded as a self-evident truth, whilst the facts

of the past seven years tell a different story.

Yet another notion to be discounted is that croquet confers on the youngsters a maturity well in advance of their years, a gentlemanly, civilised behaviour which is a credit to themselves, their parents, their school, their coach and their club. Just try listening to them when the veneer of civilisation wears thin, either in the clubhouse when they think you aren't listening or in the car on the way home.

The best point in Mark's letter is that youngsters are tempted away from croquet to play other sports. Good. Hothouse croquet is particularly unhealthy at that age. I know because I've seen the results of the mental imbalance it creates, and I can certainly claim to be uniquely qualified to pronounce on that subject.

There are various places in the world where one might suffer the unfortunate experience of an argument picked by an aggressive young man who finally waves a fist in your face. One would hope that a croquet club would not be one of those places. This happened to me during a Championship event. Back to the playground, please, boys.

Who, then, do we want to see joining the croquet world? People with an established residence near a major club. People with time and money to spend. People who will happily pay a hefty club subscription, the CA membership and entry fees for many minor tournaments. People who will give up their time, at the expense of practising their own game, for committee work, coaching, recruitment, lawn-care, equipment, catering and all sorts of physical and mental dirty-work unseen and unsung.

Mark himself is one of the shining exceptions to the generalised picture I give of young men who derive a lot from the game, give nothing back and disappear from the croquet world.

Will somebody please put forward a reasoned argument for the encouragement of youngsters to play croquet? We can't offer them anything apart from an obsession, unhealthy at any age but especially in their teenage years.

Croquet should be reserved for the elderly, disabled and wealthy. I don't qualify on the last count, but I'm working on it. Do readers agree?

Yours faithfully,  
Andrew Bennet, Bowdon

**A blast of false camaraderie strikes you when you invade their airspace, and when they think you're out of earshot they talk as if you are too old either to hear or to react in any way other than being quietly upset**

**I used to enjoy reading 'Croquet' from cover to cover, but now I don't even read reports of top-class events ... I can predict that this letter will be edited (if printed at all)**

**More, More, More**

Dear Editor,  
I feel I must protest in the strongest terms about the amount of space given over to John Walters in the latest issue of Croquet (221).

Despite careful reading, I could find NO mention of John whatsoever on 11 of the 24 pages. And another thing, why were there only 3 pictures of John? Some of the more tedious pages, such as the 1991 accounts, would have been much improved by another snap of that famous smile.

I trust as new editor you will make strenuous efforts to ensure that such lapses do not occur in future.

Yours sincerely,  
Disgusted of Ipswich  
(Martin French).

**Illiterary criticism**

Dear John,  
I am writing to you to complain about the way in which the editing of 'Croquet' has been carried out of late. I know I am in no position to comment on how to edit a magazine as I, for one, do not have many literary skills (I blame it on being a science student!) but when one flicks through the pages of any of the recent editions of Croquet, it is not difficult to notice how many times the names John Walters, Robert Fulford, and Chris Clarke appear. Not only names but pictures (latest edition)!

Don't get me wrong as I have absolutely nothing against any of the above players as they are the crème de la crème of croquet! I only wish I could perform (at croquet) as well as they do!

But seriously, not everyone wishes to read about croquet at the highest level. They also want to read about the tournaments that they have participated in and maybe see their name printed a few times. O.K. so you do still print tournament reports but I have a sneaky suspicion that they are highly edited versions of the originals that are sent in so as to make more printing space so that the names of the Elite can yet again be mentioned.

I used to enjoy reading 'Croquet' from cover to cover, but now I don't even read reports of top-class events as I can predict which names are going to get 'prime reading space'. I just look for any tournaments that I have played in, but even those are boring with a report that I could write on the stamp that was on the front of this letter. And I can predict that this letter will be edited (if printed at all).

Another thing that I would like to mention whilst I'm on a roll is what is

**I write with reference to the forthcoming MacRobertson Shield test matches ... In order that the best team is sent, some means of subsidy/ sponsorship will presumably need to be provided ... I would protest strongly if my annual subscription were to be used to this end**

with this 'Ye Olde' look that goes with the front cover. My personal opinion is that it is boring and I would like to see the photographs that people have gone to the effort to take being reinstated!

Please print this letter as I would like to hear any further views from anyone else on this matter.

Yours faithfully,  
Andrew Saurin, Liverpool.

**Communication let us down**

Dear Sir,  
Last Saturday, May 26, National Croquet Day, no less, I listened to 'Sport on 4' as I drove to Cheltenham Croquet Club. There was no mention of croquet, neither of the aforementioned National Croquet Day, nor of the World Championship, which it was rumoured, was about to begin in the USA. My newspaper, The Guardian, seemed quite unaware of these events, as did the Observer the following day and the Telegraph Sports Section on Monday. The TV has carried no croquet news. The GB Mens & Womens Championships begins tomorrow and as yet the media seem not to have been told about this event, either.

Most baffling of all, however, is that while the May edition of 'Croquet' (arriving late enough to coincide with the above events) has a full page plug for National Croquet Day, the only mention of the World Championship comes in the brief item on John Solomon. The Mens & Womens get no advance publicity. I am told that croquet players are turning in their droves to Gail Curry's alternative publication 'Taking the Bisque'. Hardly surprising if the most we can expect from 'Croquet' is a plethora of photographs of & articles about the Editor and friends.

You, sir, may speak disparagingly of "Moaning Minnies", in the manner of our late unlamented Prime Minister, but if you really want to see a croquet boom, or at the very least a stemming of the 25% annual loss of players, someone in the CA had better learn something about communication: with the Press, with the Radio & TV and not least, with the membership.

Yours faithfully  
P Dorke, Ludlow

**Funding the Test Tour**

Dear John,  
I write with reference to the forthcoming MacRobertson Shield test matches, to be held in Australia in March 1993. Several of this country's

best players are likely to be unable to meet the considerable financial costs solely out of their own pocket. In order that the best team is sent, some means of subsidy/sponsorship will presumably need to be provided for those who are unable to meet the full costs themselves.

Perhaps you could tell me John, if the C.A. intend to provide any subsidy; and if so, where will this money come from. It seems to me entirely inappropriate that such money should come from the general C.A. funds, and I would protest strongly if my annual subscription were to be used to this end. I would however, welcome the setting up of a special tour fund (If one does not already exist.) to which individuals could contribute specifically.

Yours sincerely,  
Duncan Reeve, Chelmsford  
*Any CA Councillor could tell you how sympathetic I am to your point of view, having fought vigorously on Council to prevent precious CA general funds from automatically being spent on international activities of this kind. The latest chapter in this saga was something of a draw, with several hundred pounds being allocated to "entertainment expenses" for the US team visiting here in July. Although Council accepted my arguments to the extent of removing a ban on fund-raising for MacRobertson Shield Test Tours (which it had implemented having been persuaded that such activities were 'demeaning'), any fund-raising must be approved by Council. This puts an extra hurdle before those who would like to see some attempt made at fund-raising. With the MacRobertson Series drawing ever closer, Steve Mulliner and others who feel these activities should be subsidised entirely by the CA must feel that time is on their side.*

**Ties in croquet after all!**

Dear John,  
Whilst playing in the Inter-Counties, I noticed that a 'Counties Tie' was on sale. May I point out that both men and women were playing in the event and that women rarely wear ties. Also, men wear ties less frequently than they used to and very rarely whilst actually playing.

Perhaps the CA would like to consider selling something useful and unisex: for instance hats, belts or T-Shirts. Surely this would increase their sales and their profit!

Debbie Cornelius, Colchester

### Restful at Wrest Park

Dear Sir,  
Fortunately I had plucked up courage to enter my first tournament before reading the article by John Anstey in your January issue. Having now returned from this tournament (Wrest Park May tournament), I must say how much I enjoyed it, and what a friendly and relaxed atmosphere it was played in. As a high bisquer (handicap 15), I found my fellow competitors particularly helpful and friendly, especially the members of the host club. I hope that my experience is more typical than that described in the article, since it is extremely important that players from smaller clubs should feel able to enter, and be welcomed at, tournaments run by larger clubs, since this may well be one of the few opportunities such players get to play on relatively good lawns.

Yours sincerely  
John Norris, Yorkshire

### A correction in South Africa

Dear Mr Walters  
In your March/April issue you referred to the Western Province Championships as South Africa's top event. In fact this is one of the two provincial championships held in

South Africa, the other (and longer-standing) event being the Natal Championships which are usually held each May. The top events in South Africa are in fact the Riggall (note correct spelling!) Gold Trophy invitational for the best seven or eight players and the J&B South African Championships.

Visiting overseas players are always welcome at our national championships, which this year will be held in Pretoria in mid-December. When possible visiting low bisquers are considered for inclusion in the Riggall Gold Trophy invitational which is scheduled for November this year in Cape Town.

Finally, Alan Oldham's plea for accuracy in attribution leads us to point out that in the note on croquet slang, the name of our joint Vice-President, Leslie Riggall, is spelt incorrectly, that is, with only one "g"!

Yours sincerely  
E Loubser, Secretary  
Suid-Afrikaanse Croquet Vereniging

### Devonshire Park Salver

Dear Sir,  
The above bears the signature of all winners except the late Frances Joly. If anyone has a document bearing her

signature, or knows of anyone who might have it, could I be informed and either her signature or a photocopy be provided, so that her name can be inscribed on the Salver.

Yours faithfully,  
Derek Caporn, Surbiton

## OBITUARY

### J Orchard

His many friends in the croquet world, and that will include all those who played in CA tournaments at the Ryde, IOW club between 1967 - 88, will be saddened to learn of the death of Joe Orchard.

A man with an infinite capacity for friendship he endeared himself to all who met him and as the President of the Ryde LT & CC and Chairman of the croquet section for 17 years he gave unstintingly of his time and effort for the benefit of the club as well as being most generous. Although not a very active player he was chosen as the IOW Sports Personality for the year 1984 at the age of 80. An award which he greatly appreciated and richly deserved. A.R.

## Report on the Western Championship Class of '92

(By John Haslam & a man)

Name	Result	'lost to' & Comment
<b>Bill Aldridge</b>	1st -26 -26	Irwin; 1st game since August 1990 & it showed. More commitment needed.
<b>Alan Bogle</b>	2nd -14 -15	Clarke; Back is better; play isn't
<b>Ian Burridge</b>	2nd +13 -11 -13	Saurin; Must improve consistency at start of year. Worked hard for his exams.
<b>Chris Clarke</b>	Winner	Steady improvement.
<b>Gail Curry</b>	2nd -18 -17	Irwin; Good performance despite the Guinness
<b>Peter Darby</b>	1st -8 +4 -20	Burridge; Chairman takes a game, despite beard!
<b>Jeff Dawson</b>	3rd -25 -26TP	Fulford; KO'd bearded seed in first round.
<b>Peter Dorke</b>	1st -12 +15 -7	Beard fails again
<b>Martin French</b>	1st -19 -14	Improved during term but that wasn't difficult.
<b>David Foulser</b>	3rd -26TP +7 -26TP	Mulliner; Bearing up for the holidays.
<b>Robert Fulford</b>	Runner-up	Must practice his sextuple peel.
<b>Don Gaunt</b>	1st -17 -18TP	Fulford; Somebody had to draw Robert.
<b>David Goacher</b>	1st -1 -20	Hope; Seed dismissed; more health food needed?
<b>Andy Gregory</b>	3rd -23TP -9	Clarke; Had to meet a seed sometime.
<b>John Greenwood</b>	1st -12TP +18 -13	Haslam; Felled in a giant of a match.
<b>John Haslam</b>	2nd -25 -23	Fulford; Worried about absence of your son.
<b>Andrew Hope</b>	2nd +12 -10 -25	Gregory; 5 games a day is too many at your age.
<b>Colin Irwin</b>	Semi +26TP -26 -3	Clarke; Englishman does well.
<b>Ken Jones</b>	2nd -16STP -21	Dawson; Good to see you back.
<b>Strat Liddiard</b>	1st -12 -2	Gregory; Keep taking the tablets.
<b>David Maugham</b>	Semi -26TP -26TP	Fulford; Best of the beards.
<b>Ian Maugham</b>	1st -6 -11	Clarke; Acting, assistant, deputy Manager's duties take toll.
<b>Stephen Mulliner</b>	3rd -9 -26TP	Irwin; Gone
<b>Bernard Neal</b>	1st -22 Ret	Bogle; Excellent Manager
<b>Mark Saurin</b>	3rd -21 -25TP	Maugham; Keeps "things" clean.
<b>Paul Smith</b>	1st -11 +5 -13	Symons; Mr K falls at first hurdle.
<b>Eric Solomon</b>	1st -26TP -16	Mulliner; Poor little red.
<b>Alan Sutcliffe</b>	1st -13T +20 -7T	Curry; Did not set anything on fire.
<b>Andy Symons</b>	2nd -17TP +2 -7TP	Maugham; Will do better next term.
<b>Simon Tuke</b>	1st -4 +24 -6	Jones; Baby's support could not help despite lack of hair.
<b>Ian Vincent</b>	1st -26 +3 -26TP	Foulser; Out-bearded
<b>Chris Williams</b>	1st -26 -13	Maugham; Welsh dragon slain

### Departmental Reports

**Engineering dept:** A good improvement in hoop settings.

**Domestic science dept:** Afternoon teas continue to improve; keep up the good work.

**Biology dept:** Lawns in excellent condition and well maintained.

**PE dept:** Not all members are 100% fit; exercise needed!

**Matron:** Worried about Bernard's health. Never seems to last the course.

**Headmaster:** The class worked hard to finish the course on time even though some members had to stay late. Everybody enjoyed themselves and no cautions were needed.

It was at the semi-final stage of the tournament that the standard of play suddenly improved. Robert Fulford beat David Maugham +26TP +26TP in a match almost identical to their semi-final in last year's Open Championship.

The other semi saw Colin Irwin take the first +26TP against Chris Clarke. Chris levelled with another +26 but with no triple. The third saw Colin reach 4-back and peg vs 1 & 1 before Chris hit his last shot and pegged out Colin leaving his own balls in corners I & II for the contact. Colin took off from the ball in corner I to 4-back which he then ran and took poor position at penult. Chris shot with his hoop 1 ball in corner II at the ball near corner I, hit, approached hoop 1 and finished +3.

The final was played as best-of-five with Chris first to 4-back. Robert hit the lift and had a TPO leaving one ball in corner II and the other on the East boundary just north of hoop 4 to try and impede any split-shot from it sending a ball to hoop 1. Chris took off from corner II and managed to move the other ball a little further up the boundary. The split to hoop 1 left a long angled hoop which he clanged, wiring himself from the in-lawn ball. Robert dribbled off his 20 yarder and finished.

The second game again saw Robert hit the long lift after Chris had taken the first ball to 4-back on the third turn, but this time he was hampered after running hoop 1 and had to just join up. Chris hit in and finished on the fifth turn to level the match.

Chris was again round first in the third game but left all the balls in the middle of the lawn! Robert again completed the TPO with an identical leave to that in the first game. Chris' reply was also the same apart from this time he ran hoop 1, hit the ball in the second corner and finished in that contact turn.

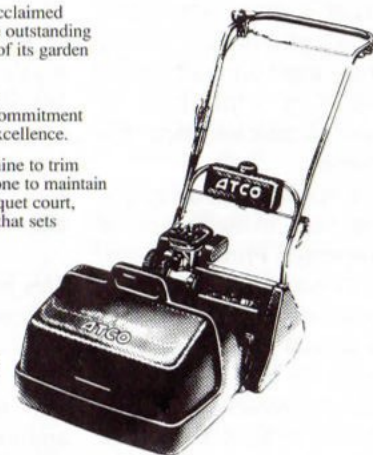
In the fourth game Chris was once again round first, but he failed hoop 1 when starting his second break. Robert broke down on a TPO when trying an 'Aspinall' peel (ie. attempting to 'jaws' a peelee, but then knock it through in the same stroke by the striker's ball following on). Chris took his penult ball to the peg and finished very shakily after Robert missed, to banish the ghosts of his 1988 final here - when he grabbed defeat from the jaws of victory against Eddie Bell.

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I shall mention no names, to avoid being accused of writing only about "himself and his friends" again. I shall say simply that for three English players: The World Champion; The British Open Champion and The British Masters Champion, it was a case of "today is May so this must be the US".

Flown out to the US courtesy of Brice Jones' Sonoma Cutrer International, the three went on from the Californian tournament to the World Championship at Newport, Rhode Island, where they were joined by David Openshaw and Steve Mulliner. In fact the WCF/USCA benefited substantially from Brice Jones and his sponsors, since two Australians did the same. While the New Zealand contingent remained unchanged at both events and were paid for throughout by their Sports Council. Having saved on these airfares it was therefore a little surprising that the USCA left players to pay for the flights between San Francisco and Newport. One might have thought that not only should these have been paid for, but that in addition some contribution to the Starcross Charity might have been appropriate.

Ironically, British Airways were one of the sponsors of Sonoma this year - the Croquet Association have been trying to get the home arm of BA to support British croquet for years without success! Well I hope they keep trying, because flying with BA was a real pleasure. I remember last year reporting on the trials and tribulations of using TWA, what a contrast.

David Maugham, defending Champion, made up the English foursome. New players included Shariff Abdelwahab, originally from Egypt (where he began playing - mostly golf croquet), whose legendary "hard-hitting" proved to be more than rumour. Later he was to register the speed record for hitting a croquet ball - measured by radar. South Africa's Reg Bamford played in both events, and 17 year-old Aaron Westerby was among the New Zealand contingent.

The general standard of play at Sonoma was exceptionally high, with the strongest field of players yet assembled for this event taking full advantage of the easy conditions. TPO's therefore littered the draw, but on two

## Shhhh! It's "you know who"!



Valerie Jennings

occasions they were immediately followed by the opponent finishing from the contact: Aaron Westerby against Colin Pickering, and Robert Fulford in the final against Chris Clarke. During the block play Robert became the second person in the history of the event to complete a sextuple peel, and was rewarded for his efforts by a special bottle of Brice Jones' wine.

The schedule is always tight for this event, so the 7.30am starting times were again in force. Probably the worst thing about this is the fact that it can be (and was) so very cold up to 11.00-12.00am. Until then a dingy layer of cloud hangs in the sky and it is freezing! By contrast, once the cloud has burned off in the afternoon it is roasting hot - you can't win (but I certainly prefer the latter!). Stan Patmor managed with his usual panache (could anyone else cope with the byzantine "Patmor Draw"), although his life wasn't made easier by the late insertion of an extra Australian after the ACA failed to select their top player - making 3 blocks of 7 and 1 of 8! It was a pleasure to see New Zealand's Ashley Heenan (WCF President) again; he refereed at both Sonoma and the World Championship.

Westerby, Clarke, Bob Jackson and Fulford won their blocks, and thus got a chance to play each other in the "winners"

block. Clarke emerged from this unbeaten, with two TPs and a TPO to his credit and thus went straight through to the final. In the single game knockout for the other place in the final, Westerby and Fulford looked to be the outstanding players but Australia's John Tyrell battled his way through the early rounds and proved himself to be no walkover, despite the use of some "innovative" tactics. In the event Fulford ended Westerby's highly successful debut in International croquet, for a place in the final. The near flawless exhibition of croquet in the final was a deserved way to end the week, and a feast for the 1000 gathered spectators - if they were able to appreciate it after the lavish luncheon, wine auction and commentary by Simon Williams. Simon himself might be considered a little unlucky: on his final day of play in the blocks he scored 3 wins out of 3 (all with triple peels) to add to the win (again with triple peel) he scored earlier in the week - but still didn't qualify!

So Robert Fulford was able to "tick off" another title from the shrinking list of those he has never won, in the process collecting an Omega watch with a \$7500 price tag. He even managed to make \$5 profit on the "book" he ran (quite an achievement to take some \$200 in bets and

### Sonoma Cutrer - a proud history

The first International Singles Championship was held in 1986 at Sonoma-Cutrer. Sonoma-Cutrer is a winery in the heart of California's wine country, owned by Brice Jones. Brice's vision was to stage an unprecedented event, an annual tournament to which the world's finest croquet players would be transported.

The 1986 and 1987 tournaments raised over \$20,000 for children affected by Downs Syndrome. Since 1989 Sonoma County's own Starcross Community has become the beneficiary of the funds raised by the event. Last year alone the event raised over \$50,000 for Starcross - a substantial proportion of the community's budget. Starcross is a lay-Catholic community that provides a caring home for children with AIDS.

Since 1990 a live-bidding large-bottle wine auction has taken place, with many of the "star lots" being taken round the bidders by the players, creating a spirited and festive affair. On the final day around 1000 spectators gather for a sumptuous lunch at tables around the lawn. Following lunch and the wine auction they watch the final, and afterwards may try their hand at the "spectator hoop shoot" for \$10 a go - with a rich prize for success.

The tournament uses the intricate "Patmor Draw" format. For several years now ex-Australian Test Team Captain Neil Spooner has been Brice Jones' 'Director of Croquet', and Neil now organises the event.



to end up just about breaking even!). To make absolutely sure that the week was the thoroughly enjoyable and professional occasion it always is, an array of social activities was again organised. Thoughtlessly both San Francisco's baseball teams were playing away that week, so the pilgrimage to Candlestick Park was abandoned (typical, in a year they're actually winning - last year we saw them slaughtered 6-0!). Barbecues scattered the itinerary, including one where the moral dilemma was raised: "is it OK for a vegetarian to stand next to the pig roast when it's the only warm place?" And Aaron Westerby demonstrated that successful young croquet players can have souls too, when being struck by the mystery and beauty of nature while looking up at the stars - thus securing for himself accommodation from a similarly hopeless romantic during his visit to England next year. If anything, Brice Jones' delicious wine flowed even more freely this year than in the past - and certainly freely enough at the Players' dinner to ensure that David Maugham didn't make it the next day, maintaining another tradition! New Zealand's "Stephens family" staged the usual reunion, this time bringing another talented but modest daughter: Erica. Sadly, Dad wasn't able to add to her midweek birthday celebrations with a croquet triumph. Tony being picked out by spectators in several games as having been extremely unlucky - he must have wondered when his luck would change, sadly it was not at this tournament. Brother Perry almost made up for it, qualifying for the final stages of the "hoop shoot" competition (for non-players) where this year a car was the prize. The sponsors were able to breathe a sigh of relief when none of the finalists managed to run the 30 yard hoop - but a couple did get in the jaws. The tournament wound up with a poolside pizza party at the hotel, where Tony and Aaron demonstrated that whatever happens between Great Britain and New Zealand on the croquet lawn they can certainly manage more on the vertical bars than several of our team!

Sonoma must be the source of so many fond memories for those who have been

lucky enough to play in the tournament. The wonderful thing being that it also generates a lot of money for such a worthwhile charity. So that's a great debt of gratitude owed to Brice Jones and Neil Spooner for making it all happen.

For the intervening week between Sonoma and Newport the New Zealanders were straight off to the East Coast for some early practise; Sonoma's English finalists hung around for some play on the west coast; and John Walters took a week off in Florida! Detail about the Championship itself can be found elsewhere.

On the social side (again expertly put together) the free beer at the Casino Bar (renamed the "Croquet Bar" during the Championship) was a nice touch, particularly welcomed by some players. John Solomon almost proved himself to still be the best stop-shooter in the world, before Chris Clarke just pinched his record in this side-show activity. The New Zealanders were lodged miles away from anywhere, which excluded them from much of the after-hours fun - more of a blow to some of their team than others! The English bar our President found themselves in a palatial residence, courtesy of the Frenchs. John found the local police force well up to scratch when he unwittingly tested the burglar alarm, and Stephen Mulliner discovered that there are after all some things (like burglar alarm codes) that it's best not to keep secret. We were often impressed with the photos displayed by our hosts showing them partying down with the likes of Ronald Reagan and George Bush. David Openshaw suggested that in the photos with Reagan he looked like a cardboard cutout, and then we realised that Ron has given the impression of cardboard in all his performances.

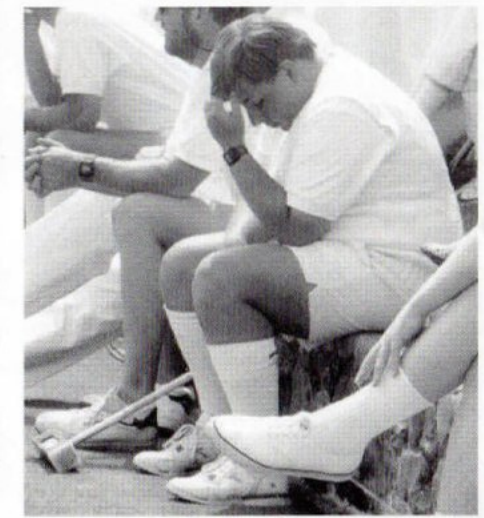
Barton Gubelmann added extra sparkle to her party by wearing a shimmering dress of scarlet sequins. She housed the assembled masses in a large marquee in her garden, where Barbara Solomon won the admiration of everyone with an impression of Maurice Chevalier (complete with straw boater) that brought the house down. Sally French assembled players and officials round the longest dining table I've seen, for the stylish tournament dinner on the eve of the final. But though a stickler for a seating plan, fell shy of the manoeuvrings ("all ladies move 2 places to the right and face the man on your right") brought into play to keep the conversation going during a meal earlier in the week. It was clear that there's years of experience necessary for hosting functions at this level, and Sally was obviously an expert. She also thanked husband John, who'd tolerated the invasions of his house, for Sally was the croquet convert of the household - a reverse that many a British croquet player's wife would be pleased to hear of.

Robbed of our baseball in California, we found a new sport to watch in Newport: "Jai Lai". This involved men with

scoops instead of hands marching onto a large squash court to the sounds of something like "Bolero", and proceeding to hurl a ball at the wall for all they were worth. It is a betting game, but the combinations you bet on are sufficiently obtuse to have kept us guessing all evening. We roped in some young locals to help out. It became obvious that a lot of the fun is in shouting catchphrases at the players, so David Openshaw taught our young friends some new ones from his days of supporting Burnley Football Club! "Come on you Clarets" (which became "Come on you Clarence" in American) and "Who's the \*\*\*\*\* in the black" soon became favourites of theirs! Despite sitting alone and closely studying the form all evening, Steve still lost his \$5 as well when he took the plunge.

The audience for the final was a little disappointing - both in the light of that for Sonoma and past World Championships, which are fairer comparisons, though it is probably only a reflection on the size of America and dilution of its croquet playing population. It was unusual to stop after game 1 for a (very) lengthy prize-giving, followed by a champagne lunch (the champagne part of which finalists felt they ought to refrain from), but this all seemed to add to the general atmosphere - which was good despite the relatively small audience. The climax over the next two games made this the best and most exciting World final yet. Though it was disappointing that one woman in the crowd decided that jeering and shouting was appropriate, actually cheering an error from one player! One could be generous and say that she probably exceeded her capacity at lunch time; hold on though, why should I be generous - she wasn't cheering for me! Fortunately, the loyalties of other spectators (on both sides) were kept more under control and limited to the customary applause for good shots. But all in all it was a distinctively American World Croquet Championship - and none the worse for that. We look forward to their next one.

Photos: Foxy presents, Walters applauds, Fulford grins; Spectator hoop shoot; Stan Patmor/Ashley Heenan; Fulford's moment of concern.



Aaron Westerby

By Steve Mulliner

After 3 years at the Hurlingham Club, the World Championship crossed the Atlantic to Newport, Rhode Island accompanied by concerned interest in how the USCA would measure up to the task. We were not disappointed. The USCA is accustomed to spending comparatively lavishly on administration and organisational details and the accommodation and social programme was straight out of *The Great Gatsby*. Newport is the summer retreat of the better class of American millionaire and the English "team", as everyone persists in describing Chris Clarke, Robert Fulford, Stephen Mulliner, David Openshaw and John Walters, were boarded in a house that appeared to be a medium-sized museum but was in reality the summer home of John and Sally French. As they say, we had a ball and Mrs French will be remembered as one of the liveliest hostesses that any of us are likely to meet.

The Championship venue was the Newport Casino, best known as the home of the Tennis Hall of Fame and the sight of one of the few Real Tennis courts in the USA. The tennis courts were converted into seven croquet courts which, in all honesty, left something to be desired in terms of speed and flatness, but proved to be a surprisingly good test of skill. The hoop-setting of Teddy Prentis and his team was particularly impressive aided with an ingenious hoop clamp. Most of the players were also required to spend a day at Point Judith Country Club, where four courts of equal interest had been set up. The format followed previous years with 32 players competing in four round-robin blocks to produce 16 qualifiers for the best-of-three single elimination stage.

Despite the prestige properly associated with the World Championship, the quality of the field reflects a significant representative element. Accordingly, each of the four blocks could be regarded as containing 2 favourites, four evenly-matched players vying for the remaining 2 slots and 2 minor country players with less exalted ambitions. There were no real surprises although the defending Champion, John Walters, made very heavy weather of reaching the single elimination stage, the USA squad was probably a little disappointed at providing only 2 qualifiers and Chris Williams did Wales proud by reaching the last 16.

Block A was dominated by David Openshaw and Bob Jackson. Openshaw, playing in his first event of the season, demonstrated his usual relaxed competence in achieving 7 straight wins. Jackson, fresh from his 9th NZ Open Championship victory, looked in far better form than last year and lost only to Openshaw. Blaise Northey, an amiable 19 year-old from New South Wales, and Chris Williams, the Welsh representative, both qualified with 4 wins. The rest of the block included such distinguished names as Jerry Stark, the US number 1, and John Solomon, who had intended to visit the event in his official capacity as President of the CA but then qualified "by accident" in the French preliminary. Charles Smith, another American, and Ichiro Nagashima from Japan set a new Championship record



when they required 7 1/2 hours to complete a game. Nagashima's attractive wife, Akiko, drew admiring glances from the men and admiration for her stamina in watching every minute of the marathon and deservedly qualified for a special award on finals day!

Stephen Mulliner won block B with 6 wins closely pursued by Colin Pickering of Australia on 5. John Walters had a wretched start to the defence of his title, culminating in a loss by 7 to "Stormin'" Norman Eatough, the Swiss representative from Blackburn. Norman's alpine skills were much in demand when they met on court 3 at Port Judith and John could do little to avert defeat. However, he refused to give up and ended in a tie on 4 wins with the young and highly promising New Zealander Aaron Westerby and whichever of the 2 Americans, Kylie Jones and Rhys Thomas, won their last encounter. Kylie triumphed to enter a play-off with John and Aaron but ended up the loser. My words to John after he had survived another "testing" moment in his title defence proved to be true: "You're hanging on to your title by your fingertips... but it does make for very strong fingertips!" History of another sort was made when Jean-Baptiste Grochain gained France's first ever World Championship victory at the expense of Norman Eatough.

Block C was the preserve of a robust Barrie Chambers who appeared to be enjoying himself hugely in accumulating 7 wins. He was followed closely by Chris Clarke and an in-form Tremain Arkley from the USA. Reg

Bamford, a quarter-finalist last year and at long last able to represent South Africa officially, qualified with 4 wins and claimed to be "cruising" into form. Steve Jones, who reached the final of the 1992 NZ Open, and Erv Peterson, who had impressed at Sonoma, never reached their best but finished ahead of Andrea Landini from Italy and Tony Le Moinghan, the Jersey Champion.

Robert Fulford, who started as most people's favourite for the title, dropped only 1 game in block D. This was to Greg Bryant a much improved New Zealander who also scored 6 wins but by much narrower margins. Damon Bidenope, now representing the USA, and the hard-hitting Queenslander, Greg Bury, edged out Bob Kroeger and Scotland's Rod Williams. Fred Rogerson, the Irish representative, had a low scoring week and Philip Archer, an Irishman representing Guernsey, kept his sense of humour despite losing all his games.

The USCA, superbly led by their President, Foxy Carter, won deserved thanks and admiration. Anne Frost, the USCA Executive Director, ran the tournament office with flawless efficiency. The modern USCA sees no problem with being committed to both croquet codes and have proved they are at the heart of the Association game. We look forward to their first appearance in the MacRobertson Shield next year. Our final thanks go to the Newport hosts and hostesses who looked after all the players so generously, and entertained them in such tremendous style.



Photos: Competitors; Barton's cushion; England; Barbara Chevalier; Barton + Maurice Marsak

By Chris Clarke

The last 16 was played on four lawns, removing the slowest of the others. Although this meant that not all eight matches were completed in one day, this was by far the lesser of two evils. Fulford saw off Chris Williams in straight games despite a brave recovery by Chris in the second. Mulliner beat Bamford in two in a match that developed bad feeling - with Steve standing behind Reg when he was shooting. This set up a promising quarter-final with Bob Jackson, who was playing unspectacular winning croquet. The final match in the bottom half of the draw finished the next day, with Aaron Westerby out-shooting Chris Clarke to win in three games.

The top half of the draw appeared to be significantly weaker. Openshaw and Chambers had played well to be undefeated in their blocks, but were not fancied to win the event. Tremain Arkley took Colin Pickering to 3 games. In the third game Tremain looked set to repeat an earlier whitewash after Colin missed his last shot against 4-back and peg. However, Tremain opted to attempt a safer but more difficult finish and so failed. Colin went to peg and Riggalled (pegged out) Tremain. The pegged out ending was not clinical, with Tremain making all 3 hoops but only having one shot at the peg before Colin wrapped up the match. Blaise Northey became the second Australian in the quarters with two very close wins against Greg Bryant. Both games included Riggalls with defensive tactics being used by the player with two balls. Throughout this event, such tactics were very successful probably due to the poor quality of the lawns which made large rolls and long hoop approaches difficult. I can remember only one game in about a dozen in which the single ball player won. The final match to finish was Walters against Chambers. Game down overnight after Chambers completed one of only two TPOs in the tournament, John came back comfortably to take the next two with some good play.

Fulford against Westerby was eagerly awaited, but it was only when facing his last shot in the second game that Aaron sprung into life. Two breaks by Aaron gave Robert a last lift which would have comfortably missed had it

not bounced off a hoop to hit giving the match to Robert. So, to complete an all English semi-final line-up, Mulliner had to beat Jackson. Steve played the sort of croquet that has been typical of his play during the last year. When he had the innings he produced a high standard of play, but he often seemed to approach his shooting with the attitude of trying to hit in the vague direction and hoping that he got lucky.

By the time Steve took croquet he was 47 points down. He then had a good break with an excellent leave followed by another break to Riggall Bob. With Steve laid up with a guarded boundary in third corner when for 4-back, Bob took a 25 yarder, hit, and finished.

The first semi was a repeat of the 1991 final between Openshaw and Walters. Whilst it may seem strange to say that Openshaw "cracked", he certainly looked very nervous and his standard of play dropped appreciably. John also looked nervous at the start, but gained confidence with each of his opponent's mistakes until by the end of the match he was playing well to become the first defending Champion to reach the final.

By the time Openshaw and Walters had reached 1 & 4 vs 2 & 3, Fulford had pegged out to win his first game against Jackson with a triple. Robert was employing a leave that encouraged the opponent to take shots along a boundary that was very bumpy with a large slope. In the second Robert was unfortunate enough to have Bob hit his "impossible" shot but he soon broke down allowing Robert to set up a triple. However, Robert broke down and Bob double-peeled him out. Bob had chances in the ending before Robert finished from 3-back.

So, we had an all English final for the third consecutive year, bringing into doubt the allocation of places which this year meant that both Irwin and Maugham were unable to compete and will mean that next year, England receives even fewer places. Perhaps one might be able to automatically allow the last eight players to play the next year. This would be a similar system as is used by several other sports in their major tournaments and should strengthen the event.

The first game of the final was break all when Robert picked up a triple. The turn

which followed was an embarrassment to anybody who has seen Robert play over the last few years. He opted to go for a very defensive attempt at the triple, a tactic he has been known to condemn. Not only did he not get any peels, he also left John's 4-back ball so it would rush to hoop 1 and to top it all gave John a 13 yard lift shot. John quite rightly lifted the backward ball, hit the short lift and finished with a good triple. A two hour lunch-break then interrupted proceedings after which Robert looked increasingly worried and John increasingly confident. Robert had made only one hoop when John started a triple peel to win the match. The lack of a 2-back pioneer caused the rover peel to be straight and his rush hilled into a very angled peeling position. John opted to try and jaws the peel but failed to jump over it leaving Robert all the balls. Robert then played well to finish in two turns. In the third game, John hit on the second turn and left a double in the middle. Robert missed by a large margin but John was unable to capitalise on this chance allowing Robert to have the first break. John hit the lift and replied with a break to 4-back and a diagonal spread. Robert hit in centre-ball but immediately split into a hoop and had to concede the innings. John set up a delayed triple which was very unlucky to stop at hoop 6 when a large hill caused him to misapproach from six inches. Robert took his chance and finished with a triple to become the first person to win the World Championship twice.

John had played the better croquet in the final, but since he could easily have been eliminated in the block stage it is difficult to say that he deserved to win. Openshaw and Jackson had both played solidly but Fulford had played well more often than any other player.

Thanks should go to Ted Prentis who did a good job as Manager. He was always willing to listen to advice and remained cheerful throughout the event. Whilst it was a pleasure to spend the week in Newport with our excellent hosts and hostesses, the general feeling of the players seemed to be that a venue with better quality lawns should be sought for future World Championships. It is to be hoped that the USCA can build on its successes next time they host the event.



Valerie Jennings





**Bill Lamb**

# The Comfort Zone

about; my reply was that it is all about playing good croquet strokes. The tournament scene is full of players in the A class who are good enough shots but rarely achieve triples because their croquet strokes are simply not good enough. My advice to all players who want to improve is to concentrate on croquet strokes; unfortunately, I am usually approached by people who want me to improve their shooting!

The basis of good break play is control of the striker's ball in croquet strokes. Consider the position shown in the diagram. You have just made hoop 1 and roqueted the pilot. The break is not yet under control - the nearest ball to hoop 2 is only a yard in court from the yard-line - so there is still a bit of work to do. You could, of course, concentrate on getting a good pioneer to hoop 3, roquet the pivot and take off to the poor pioneer, hoping to get a rush to hoop 2. If you fail to get the rush, you plan to roll up to the hoop from six or seven yards. However, this kind of play should only be undertaken as a last resort. A better plan is to rush the pivot a lot closer to the poor pioneer, ideally off the court somewhere in its vicinity so that you can stop the pivot back out a few yards into court and get the required rush to hoop 2. But the position

from which you are taking croquet is not ideal - why should I make it easy for you? - the line of travel of the striker's ball is almost at right angles to the rush line on the pivot, therefore good control is required to get this rush.

Actually, the position is not too difficult, the distance ratio is about 4:1, a fairly easy drive with a three-pound mallet but suppose you have to play the stroke from position 1 or 2.

From position 1 you need to stop the back ball about a yard short of the position it would reach in a normal drive. This can be done quite easily by playing a drive with a very relaxed grip with the hands towards the top of the mallet. Naturally, you do not follow through but you do not need to ground the mallet on impact, so avoiding the need for accurate timing.

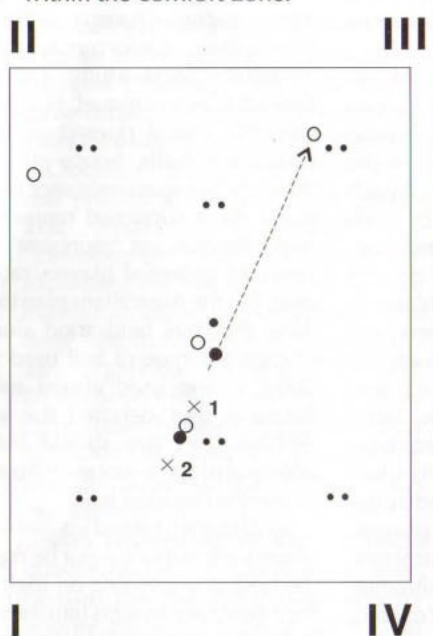
From position 2 you need to make the back ball travel a couple of yards further than it would for a drive. Stand a little closer to the ball and play a normal drive so that the mallet makes contact with the ball slightly above centre and on the down-swing just before the mallet head becomes horizontal.

Both of these shots are very easy to play but need a little practice so that you will be able to put them into effect in play. Establish

**My advice to all players who want to improve is to concentrate on croquet strokes)**

first your own drive ratio by playing a few drives from the south boundary so that the croqueted ball finishes level with hoop 6. Mark the position where your ball stops. Then using the techniques described above try to stop your ball a yard short and a couple of yards further.

These strokes lie at the extremes of what can be called the comfort zone. Not a super stop shot not a half-roll just a nice easy stroke. You should always try to roquet a ball to a position where the next croquet stroke may be played within the comfort zone.



## Expert Tactics - The Series With Charles Townsend

I read with interest Robert Fulford's article on TPO's. I have always found the most interesting aspect of TPO's is the question of which players (if any) should attempt them. Robert stated that himself, Clarke, Hogan, Bamford, Jackson, Mulliner, Maugham and Prince all regularly performed TPO's. It is interesting to analyse these players' success with TPO's.

If one player goes round to 4-back and the other hits the lift, that player is then faced with the choice of either taking his ball round to 4-back or attempting the TPO. This choice can be analysed:-

### 1. Taking the ball round to 4-back.

Assume the player has a 90% chance of completing the break to 4-back.

If he gets to 4-back, his opponent has still an advantage since his opponent has a lift, which if he hits will give him an opportunity of finishing with a TP. Therefore assume that if he gets to 4-back his chances of winning are 45% (compared with 55% for his opponent who has the lift).

# Truth behind TPO's

If he fails to get to 4 back, his chances of winning are lower (particularly if he breaks down and lets his opponent in). Assume that if he fails to reach 4-back his chances of winning are 35%.

Therefore if the player decides to take his break round to 4-back his chances of winning are:-  
 $(0.9 \times 45 + 0.1 \times 35) \%$   
 (reaching 4-back) (failing to reach 4-back)  
 =44%

### 2. Attempting the TPO.

Let the chance of the player completing the TPO be A% then the percentage chance of failing to complete the TPO is 100-A%.

If the TPO is completed, the chance of that player going on to win the game can be assessed from Croquet records since failed TPO's are recorded separately as OTP's. In 1991 Championship games, the 8 players Robert listed as regularly attempting the TPO's, (himself, Clarke, Hogan, Bamford, Jackson, Mulliner, Maugham and Prince) between them performed 13 TPO's.

Of these 13 games, 9 were won and 4 lost.

This suggests that if a TPO is completed, the player's chance of winning the game is 70%. This figure is supported by looking back to Keith Aiton's record. 3 or 4 years ago Keith was probably the most frequent exponent of TPO's. In the 1989 and 1990 Almanacks he is recorded as having performed 9 TPO's. Winning 6 and losing 3 of the games. Again a winning percentage of about 70%.

If the TPO is not completed, at best the opponent will probably have been peeled through 4-back and so relieved of a lift. At worst the game will be as good as lost. Assume if the TPO is not completed, the chance of winning is 25%.

Therefore if the TPO is attempted the chance of winning is:

$$A \times 0.7 + (100-A) \times 0.25$$

(completing the TPO) (failing to complete)

Comparing these two tactics, the break point where you should consider performing a TPO rather than going to 4-back is when the chances of winning in both are equal.

Therefore the breakpoint is when:-  
 $44 = A \times 0.7 + (100 - A) \times 0.25$   
 $A = 42$

Therefore a TPO should be attempted if the chance of completing it is better than 42%.

It is interesting to compare this figure with the statistics of the percentage wins with TPs that the players achieved in 1991. Opportunities for TPs do not occur in all games. If we assume that opportunities for TPs occurred in 70% of the games won, then Hogan completed TPs in 82% of his attempts, Bamford 71%, Jackson 70%, Fulford 67%, Mulliner 61%, Prince 61%, Maugham 60% and Clarke 45%. So all the players listed by Robert improved their chances of winning by attempting TPO's.

These figures suggest that TPO's are a valuable option for the very best players. For the slightly less good players, TPO's should be approached with more caution and only attempted if the courts are particularly easy or they are playing particularly well.

Charles Townsend conceived the idea of a Croquet Almanack (containing a statistical analysis of croquet results) which he originally published & remains a crucial part of.

Next issue: Robert Fulford returns.

**In the 1989 and 1990 Almanacks Keith Aiton is recorded as having performed 9 TPO's. Winning 6 and losing 3 of the games**

# Teach yourself croquet

by **DON GAUNT.**  
 publ. Hodder and Stoughton £5.99

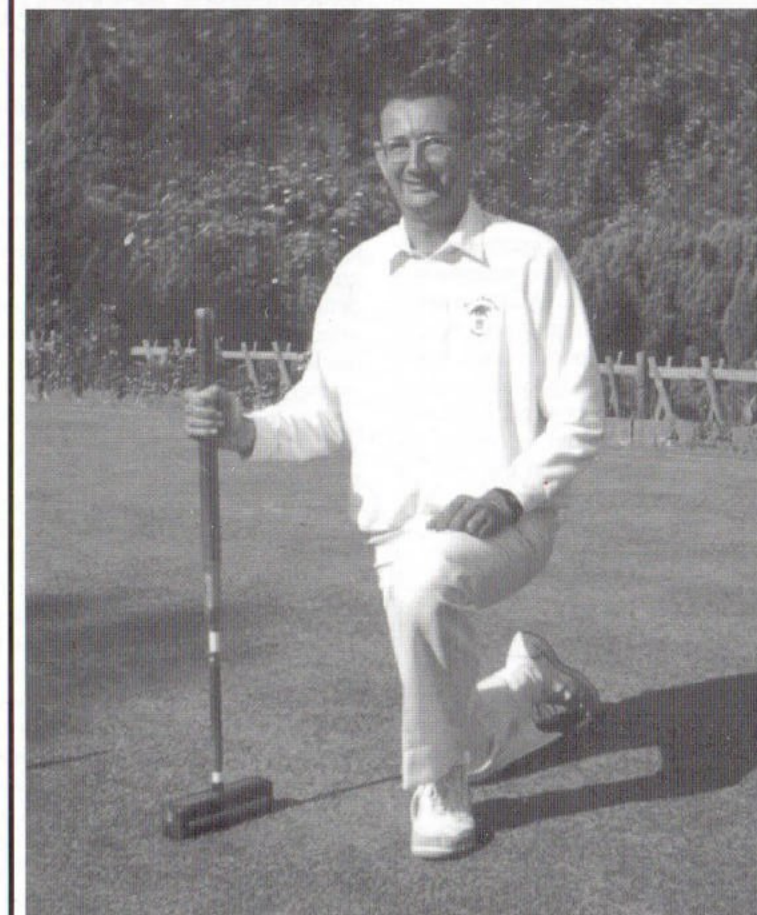
### Review by Peter Dorke.

Does the world need a Teach Yourself Croquet? And if it does, is this the right book for those hundreds of thousands of people who, we are told, play croquet in their gardens at every opportunity? To my surprise, the answer is: 'Yes, it does' and 'Yes, this is it.' This is the manual that reaches the parts uncharted by 'Know the Game' at one extreme and 'The World of Croquet' at the other. Whether you are the sort of International Star who sports a permanent peeling stain on knee and elbow or whether you have just bought your first Guardian Offer croquet set in its cardboard box, you will find something - probably a great deal - of interest and use in this well-written, well-presented book. While the clear and attractive print and the simplicity of Don Gaunt's style and language will make it easy for the beginner to understand, there is a full treatment of every aspect of the game

from basic rules, through break-building to the tactics of pegging out. The discussion of basic tactics is excellent and the tone encouraging. The beginner is never patronised nor is the game of croquet, which gains stature from this book. As for the inevitable diagrams, I always have trouble with this aspect of croquet literature but most of Don's are perfectly clear and some are very good indeed.

I have only one criticism: Don's introduction to golf croquet comes at just the point where I was expecting to learn about the real game and I found that irritating. Beginners, on the other hand, might find it encouraging to put their new skills to use in an instantly accessible form of croquet. If truth be told, I was searching for something not to like and this was the best I could do.

Don Gaunt's latest contribution to croquet must become the standard work for beginners at club and garden level. Every club should have a few on hand to sell to new members and manufacturers of garden croquet sets should pop a copy into every box.



**T**he Croquet Association has many great traditions, and there are several areas in which it could teach a thing or two to other (often "more popular") sports. One of the finest such traditions is the way in which we govern ourselves. The Croquet Association Council and its Committees are not controlled by a handful of ex-players, totally out of touch with the modern game - frequently a problem in other sports. Nor are they controlled by the "great and the good", eeked out of an establishment to present an impressive sounding front for the sport and heap greater glory on themselves. It is to the eternal credit of the Association and its members that we are governed day-to-day by **players** [see "News" page 2 for an insight of the USCA internal organisation].

Now it has been said that the concentration of "top class" players on Council is too great, and that as a result a disproportionate amount of time, effort and money is spent on the game at the highest levels. This has always been more fantasy than fact; recent years have seen tournament players (particularly the keener ones) bear the heaviest financial burden while thousands of pounds are poured into development at the other end of the game (see Martin French's critique of this policy in "Talking Point" on page 19). Of course the top class game will always have the media profile - we are finally interesting the press and even TV, and getting them to take us seriously, but the Budleigh Salterton week (which has numbered among the most enjoyable events I have played in) will remain of interest largely to those playing in it! But despite not accepting the criticism, Council is now moving closer to its rank and file by restructuring around a system of Federation representatives.

Particularly so far as the Championship game is concerned the Croquet Association has always proved to be government for the people **by** the people, and for decades has thus avoided factions and splits. However "World Croquet", and in particular the more recently formed World Croquet Federation, is a different matter. The WCF is "controlled" by the handful of random national representatives that make it to the annual AGM, usually without mandate from their governing bodies because those governing bodies don't know what the WCF is up to! The day-to-day running of the WCF is down to its small Executive Committee, and their annual report has the expectation of acceptance "on the nod" at each AGM. The WCF therefore in no way represents the will of players, but has its own agenda - governed by the facilitation of Worldwide croquet development. That's all fine, except that the "jewel in the crown" of the WCF is the World Croquet Championship - and that **is** a concern of players.

The WCF awards the World Championship to a Governing body (the CA, USCA etc) who has bid for it (in return for a license fee), in a similar way to that for the Olympic games. Apart from a skeletal format details are up to the host. For minimum standards of lawn quality, venue, hoops and balls, players may be surprised to find themselves at the mercy of the host country with no "protection" given by the

## Time to stand up & be counted!

WCF. So for the 1992 event while Newport were able to offer some of the kindest & most generous hosts, expertly executed management & organisation and a prestigious venue (though lacking warm shelter from the occasional blast of cold weather), question marks over whether the converted tennis courts really constituted World-class croquet lawns cannot be run away from. While a secondary venue used included a lawn not up to tournament standard.

The existing format of the World Championship is a compromise. The two extreme positions are: a) the Championship should contain the best 32 players in the world, even if the UK and NZ have 10 each and some other countries none; b) each country should have equal representation, even if that means the World No.4 doesn't get in. The compromise gives 1 place to countries without World Class players, and splits the remaining places between the major croquet-playing countries and qualifying competitions. A new WCF resolution seeks to increase the provision made for some minor countries from 1 to 2 places, simultaneously reducing opportunities for the World's top players. Even in 1992 the World Ranked number 6 player was unable to get in, now the situation could be made worse. Sadly New Zealand, croquet's second "super power", has often been too keen to ensure that the CA doesn't hijack the WCF to secure advantage for its top players over New Zealanders. That feud has ensured that both countries fail to get the 5 or 6 representatives each that they should have! The Open qualifying competitions (from which the 1991 Champion came remember) and WCF wildcards, now phased out, were a great bonus. The former ensuring greater participation and a way in for the better players not quite good enough to be selected, the latter ensuring that none of the world's top players lost out in the political mathematics of place allocation.

Keen to recruit new governing bodies, the WCF seems to have a flexible approach to what constitutes the governing body of a country - and of course a place in the World Championship is the incentive offered to join. Now the UK supplies the WCF with no fewer than 5 governing bodies: England; Scotland; Wales; Jersey; Guernsey! Since the states in both Australia and the US have more autonomy from national parliament than any of the above countries, one wonders what the WCF would do if those countries split into their constituent parts? In Australia in particular croquet is governed very much on a state-wide basis. Again, this is fine for the internal and development workings of the WCF but it creates chaos in the linking used to the World Championship.

Meanwhile, the MacRobertson Shield

marches on without the WCF. Dating back to 1925, this is the team competition held every 4 years that will take place between Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand and the US in Australia during March 1993. Here again the host country takes on organisation and here again players are left searching for someone to defend their interests. They should look directly to their representative - Chairman of the International Committee. Unfortunately the current incumbent Steve Mulliner takes a *laissez-faire* attitude to croquet. His own attitude is currently that it doesn't matter what the conditions, balls, hoops etc are, and has therefore put up no resistance to some radical plans. As a supposed representative, one hopes he may yet "represent" the contrary views of potential players rather than his own. For the Australians plan to change one thing that has held good since 1925: to change the type of ball used to "Dawson 2000" - one used almost exclusively in Australia (but detested the world over). Perhaps they too should listen to their potential players - not even Australians want to use the dreaded ball!

So it is time to stand up and be counted. If players are not or cannot be represented by the bodies organising on their behalf then they must take matters into their own hands! Insist that organisation for the events in which you take part is done along the lines that you want. Gail Curry has already been successful in affecting the format of the British Womens Championship by standing up; without that stand she made (supported by other competitors) nothing would have happened. The WCF must be made to understand that it cannot just pursue its development interests, that in connection with the World Championship it must represent those players who have a **right** to play. It must understand that the event it organises is not the World Championship because the WCF say so, it is only the World Championship so long as the top players say so! Therefore the international event at Sonoma Cutrer (see page 12) will not inherit the full-blooded title while double-banking, single-games and 2 hr time limits remain. But should Sonoma find a way round these problems, the WCF has only to pursue its current policy and the undisputed World Champion will emerge each year from California alone. If the WCF does not very soon start to respect the top players it relies on for credibility then they will form a kind of "Professional Players Association", and organise for themselves. *If the WCF does not very soon start to respect the top players it relies on for credibility then I for one will be at the head of the queue to help form such an organisation for those players!*

**John Walters**

**Unlike Leslie Riggall, I mourn the demise of Dorothy Rush and hope the new editor will be trying to coax the shy Dorothy out of retirement!**

**How long will people give their time willingly in so many areas of the game, when others are getting paid?**

## Is this progress?

*While the CA continues with its expansionist policies, CA Councillor Martin French argues for a different perspective.*

**S**tephen Mulliner's bullish description of croquet now and in the future (Croquet 221) prompts me to write. Further away from the large and expensive clubs of London and the Home Counties, other views of the status of croquet, the CA and the future can be found.

Notwithstanding John Walter's pre-emptive strike against any alternative thoughts ("Moaning Minnies!" in the same issue), I believe there are other, valid views on the future of croquet.

Croquet in the UK does have some real problems. Despite major energy and expenditure devoted to "Development" with the express aim of expanding the membership of the CA, even a succession of good summers has done little to boost CA membership to any significant degree. Current Development initiatives seem to focus on re-classifying existing club members as CA Affiliates, which I suppose is one way of boosting the apparent CA membership tally!

John Walters reports that we lose a quarter of CA members every year. Perhaps, then, we should place a higher priority on better serving the regular croquet players who form the core of CA membership. All too often, attention focuses on changing the nature of the game in the hopes of appealing to new (and short-term?) members.

It would be interesting to know more about the turnover in CA members. Is the attrition rate the same for all members, old and young, established and new, male and female...? I speculate that it takes some time for people new to croquet to get gripped by the game, and so the turnover will be higher among the CA's newest members. If this were found to be the case, then the CA needs to ensure it draws these new members further into the game. Most importantly, the CA must ensure that it continues to satisfy its established members, to minimise the loss from amongst this core of members.

What does (or should) the CA offer the regular club players, who form the bulk of its membership, over and above the facilities offered by their local clubs? The areas that warrant the existence of a national croquet organisation for these members are:

- coaching schemes, and approving coaches
- defining the laws, and approving referees
- defining equipment standards
- maintaining a handicap system
- organising and publicising competitions.

I am glad to say that the CA has already taken steps to improve its services in all these areas in recent years. These are the "rather intangible benefits" of membership to which Stephen Mulliner refers. I believe they should be regarded as the CA's core business - looking after its members. I observe that CA Development activities of recent years have focused on NONE of these areas!

The other area that should be covered by a national croquet organisation is the magazine - largely because of the need to inform the members about what is going on - it should help members feel "in touch". However, over the last decade we have seen big changes in the magazine - which as the 'Gazette' had been focused clearly on the interests of club members.

The aim of these changes was to make the magazine more accessible, so as to attract new members and perhaps even a new class of member. I remember it being stated that the nature of 'Croquet' should be such that it could be offered for sale on news stands. I have to question the understanding of public interests and desires that this implies. Gone are the tournament results, the handicap changes, and few and far between are the equipment notes, for example. Unlike Leslie Riggall, I mourn the demise of Dorothy Rush and hope the new editor will be trying to coax the shy Dorothy out of retirement!

Stephen Mulliner describes changes in CA organisation. We are moving from a volunteer-run organisation to one with numerous partly-paid employees. We are moving to increase federal administration at the same time as seeking to expand the central administration - and yet this is not in order to support more members or additional services. We are considering a massive increase in the costs of taking up the game, by adding a significant CA element to the joining fee for new club members.

Stephen Mulliner argues that the "enthusiastic new recruit is unlikely to be discouraged" by paying a CA subscription on top of £50 club fees. I clearly inhabit a different universe - out here in The Sticks, where club fees are often sub-£30 (and less for the young or old) the new recruit would often dematerialise if asked for a CA membership fee on top of their first club fees. By the way, are these "enthusiastic new recruits" the same members we lose a quarter of, every year?



Stephen correctly states the dilemma facing the game - accepting a limited level of service, or expanding the CA's income base. Given that we have found it so difficult to do the latter, perhaps we should reconsider the former - cutting our clothes to suit the cloth. The CA cannot afford to start paying for help in too many areas - taken individually, each new honorarium seems very reasonable, but where does it stop? We now have a paid Secretary, and honoraria for Treasurer, Editor and (sometimes) Press Officer, and we are considering adding full-time office assistants. How long will others give their time willingly in so many areas of the game, when others are getting paid? Will we have to pay coaches soon, or referees? Seriously, do we imagine that a largely steady CA membership will, in the foreseeable future, support a growing band of paid officials? If not, we need to reconsider the current path the CA is treading.

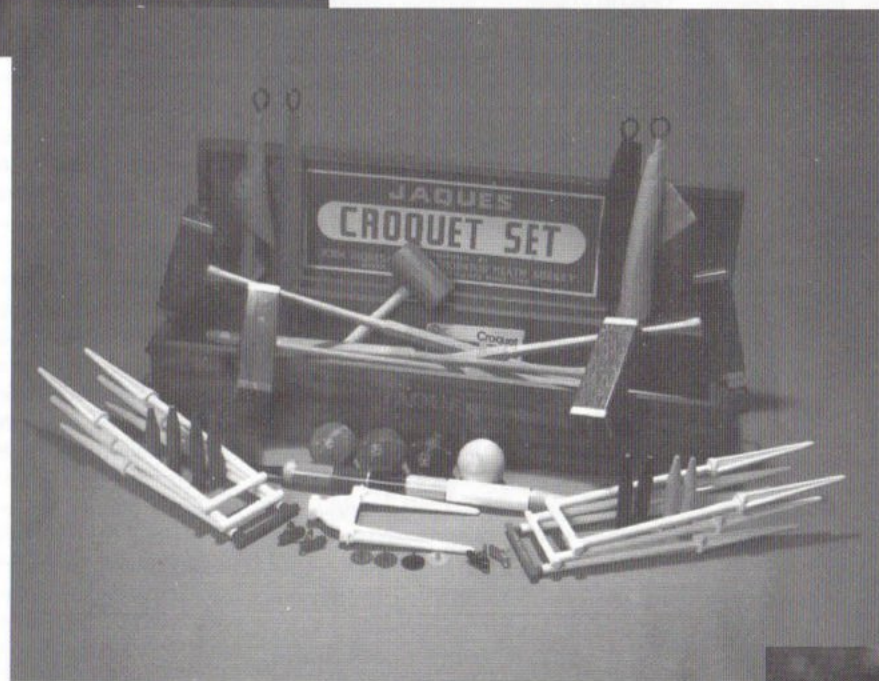
In conclusion, I believe the CA should focus its efforts on the needs of club members - our core membership. We should investigate the profile of members lost each year, and attempt to understand what makes them leave. Only then can we tailor our activities to minimise this loss. The attention of the CA Development Committee should be focused on the needs of the core members and on minimising this annual loss of members. The CA will continue to rely on volunteers - there will never be enough money to pay all the volunteers for their (freely given) time. We must ensure we do not alienate our helpers by paying some and not others for their time. Why pay editors and not coaches, or managers or examining referees?

Stephen Mulliner, John Walters and I all want the future of croquet and the CA to be secure, and want more people than at present to appreciate the qualities of the game. The question remains, however, as to which is the right way to ensure that future.

*Responses to this article, and new articles of a controversial nature suitable for inclusion in a future "Talking Point" are welcomed by the Editor.*



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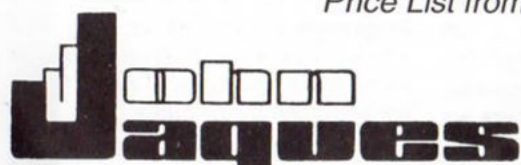
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**Formal dress for Ramsgate**

Members of the Ramsgate Croquet Club were invited to contribute to the Ramsgate Spring Festival by staging a Costume Croquet Tournament.

Members in the photograph: Mrs Cynthia Street, Mrs Zoe Hawkins and Mrs Beryl Daulby.



**Open at Worthing**

Worthing Croquet Club hosted an Open Day on National Croquet Day. 100 or more visitors enjoyed watching demonstrations of several versions of croquet and some "had a go" themselves, while the less brave went round the fun skills circuit - a light-hearted way to get acquainted with a mallet and ball. Among the interested spectators was a 94 year old non-playing member of the club, who learnt

to play croquet during the reign of Edward VII!

Visitors enjoyed a glass of Giardini, sponsors of the national event, in the pleasant club setting. As the photograph shows, members really entered into the spirit and the Worthing club should be better known as a result of this highly successful event.

**New Club at Woodhall Spa**

Registering with the CA for the first time this year, Woodhall Spa began the year with 16 members, four of whom had attended a Golf demonstrators course two years ago plus five who attended a Short Croquet course at Easter.

The club promoted Giardini National croquet day, and secured coverage in the local media and on Radio Lincolnshire. They were also integrated into a video on the area which will be shown at such events as the Lincolnshire Show. Highly visible on a hotel front lawn, 14 new people came to try out the game on the day - 4 of whom joined the club at their next session.

**OU for croquet?**

On June 11th The Open University Graduates Association (Kent Branch) took part in a Croquet Awareness evening, kindly tutored by Peter Howell, Chairman of the Royal Tunbridge Wells Croquet Club.

The keen and the curious were drawn to "have a go". If OU Graduates thought that croquet was about flamingoes and hedgehogs, then this was the course for them!

Peter guided us expertly though the various types of strokes and strategies used. Our efforts sometimes caused peals of laughter, other kinds of peels were far too advanced! But for how long? Enthusiasm and effort were high, some members had built on from a

similar event of last year. The OU Grad.s are keen!

By the end of the evening we were all pegged out (by our efforts)! We retired to the local pub to have congratulatory drinks, and to drink to Peter who so kindly and expertly tutored us. Many thanks Peter.

**Exceeding Tournament Chairmans new hoop specifications**

At Tyneside Croquet Club, where the club Chairman Alice Jones (pictured) was hard at work on National Croquet Day:

People came from far and wide, they'd heard about the famous club, the one they call Tyneside.

The club has won the Longman Cup, has been top of the League, and why we're blessed with this success may fill you with intrigue.

It isn't for our lush green lawns or the battered blue Jaques ball. The reason's very clear to see. The hoops are ten feet tall.



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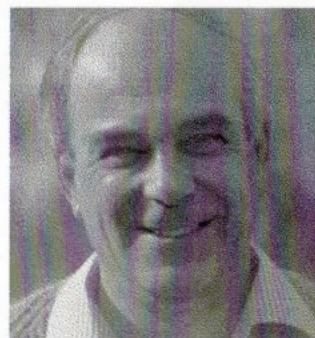
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From early reports, the Giardini National Croquet Day held on 23rd May was a great success, and I hope it worked well for all our registered clubs. Some 5000 posters and 10,000 leaflets were distributed by clubs prior to the event, and many clubs prepared special press releases for their local papers. The event was launched by Toby Jessel, MP, a life member of the Croquet Association, whose photo appeared in both the Times and the Daily Telegraph peering through a hoop on St Stephens Green in front of the Houses of Parliament.

I am most grateful to the Club Secretaries who have sent me press cuttings and details of how successful their Days were. The sixteen clubs for which I have detailed figures attracted 517 visitors, 33 of whom signed up as club members on the Day itself. Ten of these 16 clubs achieved local radio coverage, and all obtained local press coverage, in some cases quite extensive articles on the club and the game itself. In twelve cases, Giardini's name was included in the article.

Whilst it would probably be realistic to assume that the clubs who have sent me details are the ones that were most successful, scaling up these figures indicates that some 4500 people could have visited clubs on May 23rd to see croquet being played or to try the game themselves. Reports from the 20 or so clubs to whom bottles of Giardini, banners, and T-shirts were supplied indicate that those who sampled the drink enjoyed it and found it an attractive addition to their range.

I shall shortly be reviewing the success of the Day with the sponsor's PR advisers, with a view to repeating the event in 1993, and making it a major feature in the Calendar Fixture List for next season. The distribution of the leaflets and posters supplied to clubs must have created a local awareness of the game and the

## Development Continues!

existence of a local club. A similar exercise next year could build on this awareness and bring more people into the clubs, but meanwhile, if your club is looking for more members, keep on sending reports of your activities to the local press. As with all publicity, a continuous drip is most effective in the long term.

### The World Championship

The 4th World Championship was hosted by the United States Croquet Association at Newport, Rhode Island, using 7 lawns at the Newport Casino, and for the first two days, 4 lawns elsewhere.

A full report of this event will be given on another page. Suffice to say that the scale of hospitality provided by the Americans was most generous, their organisation was superb, and their efforts in organising the Championship were much appreciated by all concerned.

The final between two former champions, Robert Fulford and John Walters, was a most intriguing match. Both played magnificently (with triple peels in all three games) and when it looked likely that John would retain his title, after surviving round after round on a knife-edge, Robert found a little extra and pipped him to the peg.

During the course of the Championship, the World Croquet Federation held two meetings - the WCF Management Committee met to discuss various matters, and then there was the WCF AGM. Depending on the availability of sponsorship, it was decided to hold the next World Championship in England, in September 1993. After that, subject to the availability of funds, the Championship will return to America in 1994, then to France for 1995, Australia in 1996, and New Zealand in 1997.

The allocation of places in previous World Championships was discussed by the WCF Management Committee and it was agreed that the allocation for the next Championship would be as follows: four places each to England, New Zealand, Australia, and the United States. Two places each to Scotland, Ireland, and South Africa. One place to Canada, Jersey, Guernsey, Switzerland, France, Italy,

Wales and Japan. One place to the host country. One place to the winner of a qualifying competition open to players from countries allocated only one place.

The current World Champion will automatically be given a place, which will be deducted from the total allocation to the Champion's country. As a general principle, it was agreed that for future Championships a maximum of 25% of the places in the final stage would be allocated to "emerging" countries and qualifying competitions. Organisations joining the WCF in future will be entitled to a place in the next but one World Championship after their election.

### Grass Roots

Having returned from the World Championship, I ran a weekend course at Denman College, the Women's Institutes Adult Education College. Most of the 14 ladies and 2 husbands on the course had attended previous courses for Croquet Demonstrators and were now keen to increase their knowledge of Short Croquet.

For me, as National Development Officer, it was a most rewarding experience. Joyce Critchley has set up a club, Sapcote C.C., which fields a team regularly in the East Midlands Federation league. Rosemary Hendrick and three other ladies had joined Worcester Norton C.C. and having played in tournaments at Cheltenham, are now considering setting up their own local club to cut down the distance they have to travel to play croquet. Marian Welch is setting about forming a club in the Southampton area. Carolyn Dehnel and Beti Wyn-Roberts from Wales reported four WI groups were active in Gwynedd alone. Jill Lord has persuaded a Local Authority in Middlesex to provide her with croquet facilities, and her group is meeting to play Golf Croquet 2 or 3 times every week.

During the past few months, I have been assisted by other coaches in running one-day Short Croquet courses for members of Womens Institutes and Townswomens Guilds. There are now over 400 Croquet Demonstrators, and many of them are moving on to Short Croquet. There are three active croquet

*The event was launched by Toby Jessel, MP, a life member of the Croquet Association, whose photo appeared in both the Times and the Daily Telegraph peering through a hoop on St Stephens Green in front of the Houses of Parliament*

*those who sampled Giardini enjoyed it and found it an attractive addition to their range*

*After watching the object on my plate graze on the side-salad for a while, I decided to go and have a word with the manager*

*you only get on the CIA blacklist if you can spell potato*

## Zombie croquet flesh eaters

It was my first visit to the States since becoming a vegetarian a year before. I have some advice to vegetarians planning to visit the States: don't. Well, perhaps that is a little extreme but at least be prepared for a very hard time. Americans simply don't understand the concept of vegetarianism. You are just not catered for at all, and if you find some situation where you are taken into account they seem to think that vegetarians only eat vegetables. I do mean "only vegetables" - we're talking broccoli and potatoes here, not sauces and nuts and soya protein etc.

So alien is it to their culture that near the end of the trip, when I had given up even looking for "vegetarian" food, Chris Clarke spotted "VeggieBurger" on a menu. Well, I was over the moon of course; until said "VeggieBurger" arrived. At first sight it seemed to be doing the best impression of a dead cow that I've ever seen, it was even pink on the inside, so before it dropped any more hints by "mooring" at me or something I tugged the sleeve of our waitress. "Excuse me, this is a VeggieBurger is it?" I asked. "Yes, sir", at least in America they smile and are polite - even if they are trying to serve your grandmother up for dinner.

After watching the object on my plate graze on the side-salad for a while, I decided to go and have a word with the manager. Ooops, I seemed to break some cardinal rule; as soon as I stepped behind the serving barrier staff looked at me aghast. I felt a firm grip

*(continued from page 22)*

groups in the Romney Marsh area of Kent, two active groups in Cornwall, several groups in Buckinghamshire, and some thirty others. Some of these groups are already in contact with their local clubs. Others are potential clubs in areas where at present there are no established clubs. As they continue to develop their knowledge of croquet, they will need help, and I am sure that local clubs and federations will do what they can to assist.

### Developing playing facilities

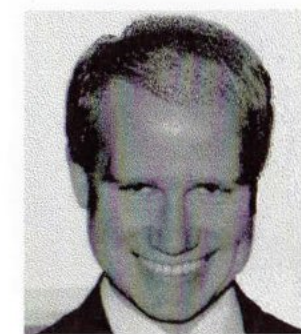
Funds are still being sought for the construction of the Rowheath National Croquet Centre at Bourneville,

on my shoulder, "Excuse me sir, you are not permitted here". Oh dear, I'd heard things about not fitting in with the 'American way' - if the best President the US ever had wasn't safe from a CIA bullet what hope did I have? I started making a mental list of all the reasons for which America of the 1950's would have had me thrown in jail before you could say "Freedom, democracy, justice, apple pie and undesirable alien". But these are the nineties, the era of the nice guys, of George and John; when you only get blown up if you've got an oil well, only get on the CIA blacklist if you can spell potato.

Reinvigorated by my new-found confidence I pursued my query, as question and answer sessions go it was about as fruitful as asking a Maxwell brother who he banked with. This firm-handed manager had only one thing to say to me (with or without his solicitor) and it was obvious he would continue to stonewall until I was on the other side of his wall. Wondering en-route what deep dark secrets he was trying to hide and trying to remember if we passed a barber's shop on the way in, I back-tracked. Ready to try again, I decided to use some subtle ploy that would trick him into revealing the truth about my burger. "My VeggieBurger looks like it's meat!" Haha that would catch him off guard. "Yes that's right - it's a burger!" He caught me off guard, but recovering my wits quickly I countered. "But it's supposed to be a

Birmingham, and news is expected shortly about the outcome of various grant applications that we have made.

The development of new four-lawn facilities is becoming more urgent as more people take up the game. One interesting fact to emerge from Giardini National Croquet Day is that some of our larger clubs are becoming full and are actively considering establishing waiting lists. This is good news for the clubs concerned, but not such good news for those who want to play the game. Perhaps in the not-so-distant future, we shall have a network of major clubs, with a host of smaller satellite clubs springing up around them.



John Walters

"VeggieBurger", now he'd have nowhere to hide I thought. "Yes, it's a burger with vegetables." Reduced now into a semantic entanglement which a) as a philosophy graduate I knew was by definition intellectually vacuous, and b) he obviously couldn't care a toss about, we retired bloodied but unbowed.

Stephen Mulliner (ex-lawyer, ex-medical student, ex-British Champion, ex-Steve) was on the case. In the USA, he gushed, this was an opportunity for a major litigation coup! I was worth millions. Here I was, a sensitive vegetarian, being confronted by this carnage on a dinner plate: think of the emotional stress; think of the moral indignation; think of the money. He snapped up the case, and the Agent's commission; I'm sure we'll get to court - probably shortly after the next ranking list appears, so I won't hold my breath.

Meanwhile my cow, unimpressed by the whole affair, trotted off to the kitchen - back to the sacred melting pot of American cuisine. I could tell that my mascot Flipper was just glad I hadn't opted for the dolphin steak!

### Croquet on Television

We now have available in the CA Office copies of the one-hour programme on Croquet transmitted by Yorkshire Television. This programme features two games of "Speed" Croquet, the first between Debbie Cornelius and Robert Fulford, and the second between John Walters and Stephen Mulliner.

The programme may be transmitted at a later date by Channel 4, but in the meantime if any club would like to hire a copy of the tape, please send £5.00, payable to "The Croquet Association", to the CA Office to cover the cost of postage and packing.