

Why I lost my last match!

By Gerald Hallett

Surprisingly, I lost a game last week and have tried to think why. Of course the lines were not too clear and the ground was rather bumpy round several hoops, and the hoop at one-back being a trifle loose, and I suspect the rover was a shade to narrow as I failed that hoop twice.

My particular favourite is court one, and I had to play on court three, adjoining which there lives a man who will glare at me over his fence. Of course the bonfire blowing over the club grounds didn't help.

My opponent was obviously over-handicapped, and his whistling between shots annoyed me, as did his extreme

slowness in playing. I also counted twelve wiggles of his mallet before he hit the ball, in my view eight wiggles too many.

I must also mention I was on a time limit and was double-banked. It seemed that I was always having to wait while the other game wanted the same hoop as I wanted.

In fairness, I must state I'd had an argument with my wife and was in rather a

bad mood. The late dinner party with curry didn't help; nor did the two large bills that landed on my mat as I left the house to play.

I consider my opponent had a lot of luck, but it was really my own problem with my mallet that became loose in the game that let me down.

Did I play badly? Of course not!

The late dinner party with curry didn't help



THEN ... Wait! Wait! You'll like this bit! ... When they finally whack the ball through the last hoop - this is killing me! ... They hobble back to the beginning and start again!

starts at 1.30 and stops again when the tea bell goes at 3.30. Club notices are then read and the play recommences, although many players finish at this stage.

We played at 4 clubs, Rotorua, Alexandra, Christchurch and Dargaville, a small town in the north west of North Island. We were made very welcome, particularly at the latter club, who were so delighted to have English visitors that they called out the local press. We received a copy of the "Northland Times" newspaper photo and press report a few weeks later.

While at the Dargaville club we saw a poster on the club house wall with the following piece of croquet prose:

Croquet Among the Kiwis

"CROQUET

It is a science, a study of a lifetime in which you may exalt yourself, but never your subject. It is a contest, a dual or a melee, calling for skill, strategy and self-control. It is a test of temper, a trial of honour, a revealer of character. It affords a chance to play the man and act the gentlemen. It means going into God's out-of-doors, getting closer to nature, fresh air and exercise. A sweeping away of mental cobwebs, and general recreation of the tired tissues. It is a cure for care and an antidote for worry. It includes companionship with friends and social intercourse, and opportunities for courtesy and generosity to an opponent. It promotes not only physical health, but also moral force."

So, if you want to be sure of playing croquet during our winter time, in warm weather, scenic surroundings and in a friendly atmosphere, I would strongly recommend croquet among the Kiwis.

Beginners commence with a handicap of 14 and reduce in half steps. Club coaching is well organised so newcomers soon reach a good standard.

Croquet is very much a 'social' affair in New Zealand. The 'club day' commences with a draw for partners at 1pm. Play then



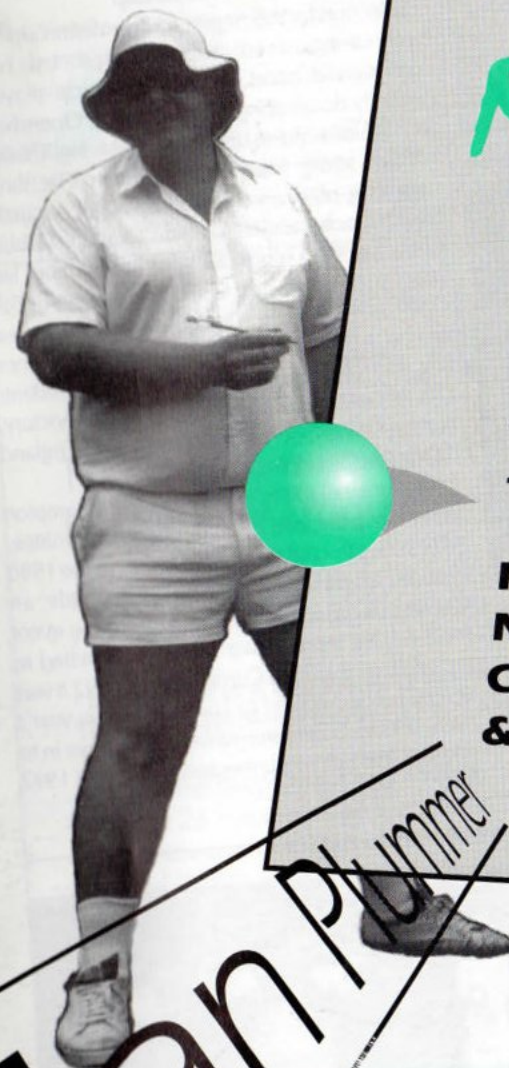
As a visitor you weren't to know of course - but we don't allow trick shots off the club kiwi! Nor do we approve of you hiding the senior members' walking frames!

Croquet

MAGAZINE

& NEWS

Issue 223
October 1992



Magic Dorothy RUSH
Manager!

Richard Hilditch
conjures with the
Atco British Open
Championship
- Report Inside

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Giardini National Croquet Day

So, Giardini by Bulmers is good? That's what other players tell us but we wouldn't know. Croquet in Pendle was not one of the chosen few selected for distribution although we had been all set for a lively day at some benefit to our sponsors. We had croquet available at all levels and a picnic lunch, but no "sparkling, herbal fruit drink" to wash it down. 26-0 (+26) for resourcefulness to those clubs also excluded from selection, who approached Bulmers direct. They had a special delivery and **have** tasted this heady drink. I have heard that their standard of croquet on that day was more superb than usual!

Our Day went well too. The Pendle team drew 8-8 in a friendly 'demonstration match' with Crake Valley, Ilverston - an appropriate result we thought for such an occasion. Throughout the day the event attracted a steady stream of interested people of all ages including senior members of a Youth Group. Golf Croquet also was available and very popular with other visitors. So why did only four people show interest in the Beginners' Coaching Course set up to start the following week?

Had they only come for the GIARDINI?
Top Photo: Pendle & Crake Valley members (by courtesy of "Citizen" Burnley).

Half a lawn, half a lawn ...

To those unfamiliar with the sport, croquet is perceived as a gentle, elite recreation played on sunny Sunday afternoons. The occasion is always sustained by a delicious tea which includes cucumber sandwiches and Madeira cake,

Four members of the Ryde Club have done their bit towards perpetuating that illusion by playing an exhibition match as part of the Isle of Wight Tennyson Festival. The poet's former home, Farringford, is now an hotel, but still boasts a half size croquet lawn. We were invited to 'perform' on 28 June, to provide ambience (!) at An Afternoon With Tennyson which culminated in poetry readings, by the actor Gabriel Woolf, over tea.

By dint of begging, borrowing, improvising and hasty sewing, Hilary Terrey, Philip Kennerley, Roy Newnham and Christine Bourn attempted to transform ourselves into Victorian gentry. We eschewed the Rules current at that time - the hard ground made it impossible to hammer in the extra peg - and played doubles in the casual and



sociable manner it is rarely possible to achieve when one's handicap is on the line. In accordance with tradition, a significant part of the afternoon was spent retrieving balls from the shrubbery!

Our performance drew a large and interested crowd, which provided other Club members with the opportunity to explain the game and, hopefully, gain new recruits.

The weather was glorious. It was a wonderful day out and we did get the appropriate tea! The Poet Laureate might have expressed it in terms of the poem below (with apologies to Lockesley Hall)
Bottom Photo: Roy, Philip, Christine, Hilary.

Go getta grant!

The CA "four lawn fund" has, in line with the official terminology for the Laws of Croquet, been renamed the "four court fund"! Or, more poetically:



*This is the fund that builds the lawn
It's how the tournament clubs are born
It buys the mower that cuts in the morn
That keeps the grass all shaven and shorn
But now a new era is about to dawn
We've scrapped the name of all fourlorn
It's called a court and not a lawn*

*It's got more drive
The fourcourt fund
So Clubs apply
To use the cash
That lies in the fund that we built.*

ABOUT THE FUND:

AIM. To help establish new clubs with four full size courts, or to help the expansion of existing clubs to that size. To provide tournament centres, coaching courses and venues for regional competitions and national events.

CONDITIONS. That the club is Registered with the CA. The CA may attach certain provisos to the grant (eg. 2 or 3 weekends use per year for coaching etc).

APPLICATIONS. To be made on a standard form. To be discussed with Regional Development Officer - who will present the application.

Photo: Syd Jones (Development Committee Chairman) 'Live' on Radio Newcastle, for Giardini National Croquet Day

**STOP PRESS:
Controversy over Presidents Cup**

Selection for the Angostura Presidents Cup has been announced accompanied by two controversial notes. Of the seven top players currently dominating British croquet, Openshaw and Walters were unavailable leaving Clarke, Fulford, Irwin, Maugham, Mulliner. The three remaining places were filled by Nigel Aspinall, David Goacher and Jeff Dawson. Omitting Debbie Cornelius, who scored six wins in her debut last year and this year beat Chris Clarke at the British Open Singles in July - finally running him a close second in the consolation plate event there. Since her controversial absence from the Presidents Cup list Debbie has scored another notable victory, beating David Openshaw at the North of England Championship in August.

The 'unavailability' of 1991 World Champion Walters was decided by the Selection Committee. After failing to complete all his games in the 1990 Chairmans Salver the Committee made an ambiguous ruling excluding him from the event for the "next year or two". Later interpreted to include the Presidents Cup as well, in 1992 it was agreed he be allowed to compete in this year's event but the Committee subsequently gave in to pressure from other players and enforced a 1992 ban.



*Tennyson, our Island poet, died one hundred years ago
And his Festival arrangers asked us to put on a show.
Artists painting water colours, readings from the Great Man's work
Plus the four of us committed to play croquet, couldn't shirk.
Cumbered by long skirts, the ladies roqueted gamely from the side
Whilst the gentlemen, in blazers, wondered why we hit balls wide.
All in white, high necks, straw boaters - we looked fetching, so they said.
Modest, muted maidens? Hardly! Yet we tried, we really did!
Roy and Philip, 'A' Class players, found the pace a little slow
But our public, somewhat baffled, simply yearned to have a go.
Both arcane and picturesque, this was croquet played at leisure
No referees or handicap adjustments - merely pleasure!*

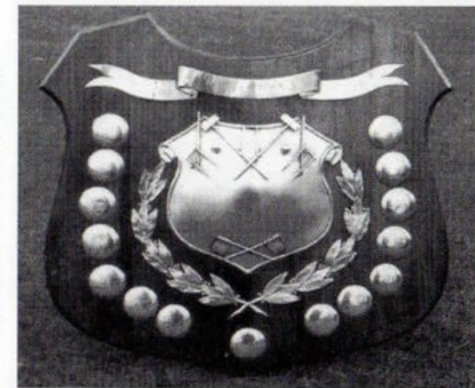
MacRobertson Shield

The 1993 MacRobertson Shield will be held in Australia during March. The GB team has been announced: C Clarke; R Fulford; C Irwin; D Maugham; D Openshaw (capt); J Walters.

Already the enterprising Alan Oldham (erstwhile long-time CA Treasurer) has initiated fund-raising proceedings with a special day for the High Wycombe Club. Keith Aiton (GB Coach) and John Walters will be playing an exhibition match, then joining members for some doubles and

finally giving a coaching clinic session.

Hopefully other Clubs and Associates may come forward to help the GB team, with fund-raising efforts, in its bid to retain the shield. Despite the welcome assistance for international activities in our Sports Council grant, the Test Tour Fund will again be important to making GB participation in the Shield possible and ensuring that no burden is placed on CA finances. The CA, and members of the GB team in particular, remain indebted to Alan and others striving to help maintain Britain's position at the heights of international croquet.



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T O P I C S

The CA: Working for Croquet - Worth your Support!

Next Issue:

Another selection of news, humour & information from the croquet world. We apologise for the fact that it was necessary to cancel the September issue of 'Croquet News & Magazine' and replace it with this unscheduled October edition. This was done in order to include a number of important items that were not available until the beginning of September, including official CA business. The next (November) issue will be back to our scheduled cycle. A new extended copy date of the 1st of the month preceding publication will be adhered to more rigorously to help ensure that future editions are distributed in the first half of the month of publication.

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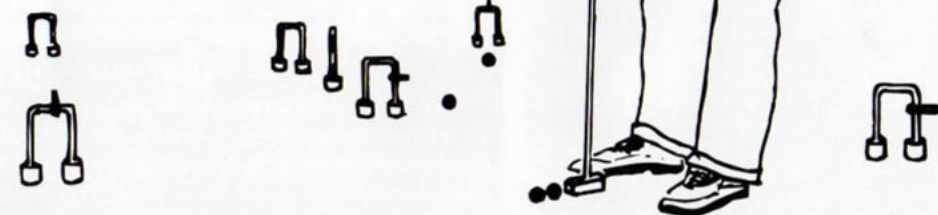
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Grand Slam?



Having won back the World Championship in America during May, Robert Fulford has now taken the second leg of the new Croquet "Grand Slam" by winning the ATCO British Open Championship. Only the President's Cup remains. **Stephen Mulliner** reports from Hurlingham, with an introduction by **John Walters**.

Aaah, Hurlingham! Restful croquet heaven. Perhaps it is unsurprising that visitors to British Croquet's top events (invariably held here) sometimes find it hard to grasp the idea of fierce competition in such surroundings. Green after all is the most restful colour and one is swamped by the hue at Hurlingham. But have no doubt - the top players out there are after each other's blood.

Sometimes perhaps things get a little too hot, though that can rarely be said about the weather. This year the highest temperatures raised were registered in matches between an old sparring partnership and, more surprisingly, a young partnership who are usually supposed to be on the same side. The latter match between doubles partners Ian Burridge and David Maugham raised eyebrows after another famous "heard but not seen" Maugham roquet. While the former was simply old rivals Mulliner and Walters accusing each other of cheating and gamesmanship, to ensure that everyone realised that any appearance of comradeship is purely cosmetic.

Adrian Saurin was undoubtedly demonstrating that he was 'hot' as a prospect for the future, at 15 years old one of the youngest players to ever compete in the Championships. Fulford was positively on heat as his run of consecutive peels stretched on over the horizon. Despite the hopes of assembled masses, no heat however between the no.2 doubles seeds when Openshaw started their first round match before the delayed arrival of his partner. Instead croquet's most laid back partnership explained that sheer confidence of hitting fourth turn and an arrival during a lengthy follow-on had dictated actions. Ah well, the best-laid plans...

Elsewhere players and officials were starting to get hot under the collar at the insistence of the Hurlingham groundsman to reset hoops personally when they worked loose. This led to a 3/4 hour wait for one match while the high-priest of hoop-setting was sought. Hugh Carlisle (Hurlingham incarnate to some players) later pointed out that we simply had to learn to "go through the right channels"; the wait was our fault since we had been looking for the hoop guru ourselves - once we went through a Hurlingham Member then THINGS HAPPENED!

Such phenomenon can only underline what a mystical place Hurlingham is. As someone once said about somewhere else "they do things different

there". The picturesque old house looks down upon croquet players worshipping on the lawns, in this cathedral of croquet. But just like believers of primitive religions, no professional camera may be pointed at the frontage lest it lose its soul to the modern world of commercialism. Time stands still here (explaining the frequent lateness of some players to the Championship) and it is always tea-time. Elsewhere croquet history may be a cold fact of the past, but here it is recollected with the vivid warmth of yesterday as people reminisce about when CA Secretary Vandeleur Robinson fell in the lake one night, "that's why we've put the handrail up now".

Let no-one passing comment on how easy the lawns were that year or how simple to run the hoops this, doubt that croquet regains its lost romance within these walls. Like the ravens at the Tower of London, one can't help feeling that if Hurlingham were to lose its croquet then old kingdoms would indeed have fallen. **JW**.

The Singles final was played over five games subject to the new condition that the winning game could not be played until after lunch. It turned out to be the best for several years. Court 4 was in perfect condition for accurate croquet and was really a little too easy as evidenced by the fact that the players committed a total of only four playing errors in the match.

The first four games were split equally. Mulliner elected to play first in the decider with the result that Fulford hit the tice and developed a break with the assistance of a spectacular split approach to hoop 1 from near Corner 4, a boosted hoop and a lengthy return roquet. He dispensed with a 3-back pioneer and then made the hoop off partner almost as an afterthought. He might have paid a heavy price because he only just ran the hoop and was faulted in the continuation stroke. However, Mulliner just missed the slightly obscured ball and Fulford made no mistake with the triple to take the game and the championship.

The British Open is currently the strongest national championship in the world. Robert Fulford has clearly assumed the mantle of best player in the world and deserves appropriate congratulations. He has also become the first player in history to win two Atco motor mowers!

HISTORY OF THE GRAND SLAM

Since the World Championship began in 1989 no-one has accomplished what Robert Fulford now has a chance of achieving. Before the days of the World Championship three other British events could be considered as the Grand Slam of the day: The Open, President's Cup and Mens/Womens Championships. On only 4 occasions did a player scoop 3 of these in one year: 1933 Miss D D Steel, 1948 H O Hicks, 1959 & 1964 J W Solomon.



Despite a wet July, Hurlingham's lawns were in as fine a condition as at any time in the last fifteen years. The cricket pitch lawns were the greenest anyone could remember and the show lawns were of a uniform easy pace that emphasised the importance of shooting for the leading players. Robert Fulford, fresh from a close victory over John Walters in the World Championship, started as favourite with Walters, Chris Clarke and David Openshaw expected to provide the main challenge. The field also included four of the U.S. Solomon Trophy team although the draw was unkind and they all ran into strong opposition.

The seeding for the Doubles Championship was, as usual, only partially successful. The defending champions, Clarke and Fulford, had a close shave against the American pair of Tremaine Arkley and Erv Peterson who took the first game by 26 and reached peg and 4-back in the third. However, Fulford hit a weak leave and tripped out and after that they progressed to the final without too much trouble. They should have met the new pairing of Justin Goddard and Paul Day who accounted for the seeded Ian Burridge and David Maugham in straight games. Unfortunately, Day celebrated by repeating an achilles tendon injury and he and Goddard had to scratch. In the other half, Steve Comish and Lewis Palmer made impressive progress to the final. They recovered from game down to the seeded Nigel Aspinall and Colin Irwin in the quarter-final and then, in the biggest upset, eliminated Openshaw and Walters in straight games.

The first round of the Singles Championship threatened to be another seeds' graveyard. Goacher made a disappointing exit at the hands of Simon Tuke from Parson's Green and Debbie Cornelius eliminated Clarke on Court 7. Clarke was first to 4-back in the decider but Cornelius hit a crucial lift and reached 4-back and peg in two turns, laying up on the east boundary with a rush to 3rd corner. Clarke now astonished the gallery by rashly shooting with his backward ball from the middle of the west boundary at his forward ball tucked behind penult. He missed into B-baulk and Cornelius gratefully accepted the help to record a fine win. To add to the seeds' discomfort, Stephen Mulliner dropped the first game against a straight-hitting Arkley but replied with two triples to take the match and end American interest in the competition.

The main feature of the second round was the elimination of the three ladies in close contests. Annabel McDiarmid lost to Jeff Dawson in straight games but only by 5 in the second and Cornelius took the first game against George Noble. But the best chance fell to Frances Ransom who looked

clearly the better player against a fitful Jerry Guest for most of the match. She stood at peg and penult in the third before a hooping error cost her the innings, the game and the match.

In the third round Openshaw dropped the middle game to Robin Brown and Mulliner the opening one to Guest, but recovered to reach the quarter-final stage for the twelfth consecutive year.

Maugham & Walters had much tougher times. The gentleman found himself in the deepest trouble against Burridge. At one stage, Ian needed only to finish a 3-ball break to take the match in two games. Sadly, his nerves and 2-back got the better of him, and Maugham scraped through. Walters was seeded to reach the final but was nearly eliminated by Adrian Saurin, 15. The youngest Saurin had already made an impressive Opens debut by winning one doubles and two singles matches so far. Against Walters, he squared the match with a fine triple but lost an exciting decider by 5 after Walters hit a 'last' long-lift-shot.

The seedless quarter-final involved the elegant Tom Coles and Jeff Dawson. Hitherto, Dawson could be fairly described as one of Croquet's more invisible characters but he has improved steadily in recent years and won the Surrey Championship in June. Dawson made a strategic error in accepting the Coles Gambit (i.e. winning the first game) and like 2 previous opponents duly paid the price. Coles shares Noble's approach to the game which can persuade the unsuspecting that he is unconcerned about the result.

The other quarter-finals were generation games. Maugham was shooting well against Openshaw, who was not, and the younger man unsurprisingly won easily.

Mulliner and Walters had the closest match. Mulliner took the first with a TPO but Walters replied with a bloodless sixth turn 26TP and reached 4-back on the fifth turn of the third. However, his wide cross-peg leave was slightly open and Mulliner hit and produced another TPO, albeit marred by an accident with the leave which Walters capitalised upon to begin extracting a 3-ball break. However the last tricky shot for the break was a 5 yard approach to third hoop which curled to leave an extremely angled hoop that was failed. Mulliner, aided by an aggressive pick-up, took the match with his own 3-ball break.

In the first semi-final, Coles made a bright start against Fulford by hitting and going to 4-back. However, Fulford hit, secured his sixteenth consecutive triple with a TPO and trundled to the final with his seventeenth. In the afternoon, Maugham's shooting was expected to give him an edge against Mulliner but in fact let him down on two crucial lifts. He started well enough by hitting Mulliner's duffer tice on the third turn and going smoothly, if very slowly, to 4-back. The lift was

missed but a certain lack of care in aiming the 4-back peel cost him the triple and he finished on rover and peg leaving a 13 yard shot at a ball in corner 4. Mulliner hit and went to 4-back with a most forcing leave in which Maugham's peg ball was placed behind hoop 1 and the rover ball on the west boundary near hoop 2. Refusing the force, Maugham shot at the east boundary balls from A-baulk but missed. Mulliner made short work of the triple and polished off the match with another, his ninth triple of the championship, after Maugham missed the identical lift.

The final began by Mulliner winning the toss, putting Fulford in and missing his own duffer tice. Fulford completed his eighteenth consecutive triple in the seventh turn. In the second, Fulford put Mulliner in and missed his own tice with the result that Mulliner reached 4-back with a new standard leave. Fulford hit the east boundary balls from A-baulk and completed a good TPO with a disastrous ending. He rushed the peelee onto the peg and gave away a relatively easy chance for a 3-ball break. Mulliner made no mistake and squared the match.

The third game featured two disasters. Mulliner hit on the fourth turn but under-approached hoop 3 with a break laid. Fulford then picked up a break, somewhat mysteriously stopped at 3-back with a sub-standard leave but was soon on course for a quadruple and a remarkable twenty consecutive triples (or better). However, with two peels safely done, he failed to approach 3-back so comprehensively that he had to play away. Mulliner took his forward ball to the peg with a double peel on the opponent but Fulford rose superbly to the occasion by finishing from the contact after taking off from Corner 3 into good position for 3-back. After lunch, Fulford started the fourth game by going first and sending a ball into the middle of the court. Mulliner hit gently and laid a wide double by the peg. Fulford now hit, established a 3-ball break but unaccountably over-rolled hoop 4 leaving a slightly wide double from A-baulk. Mulliner shot straight through the gap and Fulford duly reached 4-back with a diagonal spread. Mulliner now showed his mettle by hitting and performing a TPO. Fulford made no progress from the contact and a 3-ball break levelled the match once more. Thus was the scene set for a deciding game which, as I have already reported, went to Fulford with a whitewash triple peel.

Our grateful thanks are due to Atco for three years generous and sympathetic sponsorship and to the Hurlingham Club for their continued support of the CA in general and the Open Championship in particular.



Croquet

'Croquet' No. 223
(October 1992)

Cover: "Magic Manager"
Featuring: Richard Hilditch
at the Open Championships
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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Eastern Rose Publishing:
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The Croquet Association:
Secretary: A W D Antenen. Chairman: C J Irwin.
The Hurlingham Club, Ranelagh Gardens,
London SW6 3PR (tel: 071 736 3148)

Editorial Policy & Your Magazine



John Walters

Firstly, I would like to thank all the people who have written and spoken to me saying how much they enjoy the new magazine. It is nice to know that in redirecting the magazine towards a larger readership than the group of regular Tournament Players (for whom the vast majority of it was previously written) we are entertaining and informing that readership! I would like to think that the magazine, like the sport of croquet itself, is now joining the sporting "mainstream". We are leaving behind the days when we felt that we were somehow "different" and that different rules therefore applied to us. We are not at the end of the road, but we are at least travelling along it. I will continue my efforts to make the magazine the kind of publication that you could readily expect to find on the newsstands. Please do judge us by the same standards you would judge any other professional publication. Moreover, please do write and tell me how you feel about the magazine. Your letters don't have to be for publication (most I've received have not been); we would love to hear what you think about the contents and ideally what you would like to see included.

Where are we going?

Of course, just like any sporting magazine, "Croquet" will continue to lead on the world's top events and players. However, one evolution that has yet to take place to my satisfaction is the way these events are reported. Our heritage has been the technique of reporting any events almost exclusively to an audience of peers. This is completely inappropriate for a mainstream magazine. In the future expect to see the best croquet made accessible to everyone by being reported in the same way you would expect to see sport reported in the newspapers: ie. in a way that is understandable by and interesting to both club players and near laymen - yes, it's time for those dreadful "class-barrier" acronyms to bite the dust and the latest mind-bending tactical manoeuvre to find a new home!

Like tournament players in general "A" and "B" class players can expect to find a section of the

magazine for them, but most of the magazine will be aimed at the croquet community in the widest sense; though about the top players, reports of the top events will not be aimed specifically at the top players! Here as elsewhere the main problem we face is a shortage of professional writers contributing to the magazine, because of limited resources that is unlikely to change in the immediate future. However, I shall do what I can and will be releasing guidelines for reporters of the premier events.

You should be able to get to know the personalities of our sport better - by interviews with names from the past, present and future. That will be part of the extended coaching section of the magazine. Discussion articles and the letters page will remain an integral part of the magazine. I hope that clubs and federations will write to tell readers about their plans and experiences. Features articles are always welcome - especially those with a humorous slant. Dorothy Rush makes her return in this issue, as will Allen Parker's retrospectives in future issues. One over-riding principle applies when I am looking for material, which amounts to this: if an article is well written it's as good as in! Anyone who would like to influence the magazine by joining the Editorial team, helping to create and instigate articles, is very welcome.

Tournament Reports

Perhaps it is understandable that some tournament players are disappointed to find the magazine no longer devoting up to 90% of its space to their exploits. In the past (particularly before our reduction to 24 page issues, and even more so pre-1985) the magazine or erstwhile "Gazette" acted almost exclusively as a newsletter for a relatively small number of players to read about their croquet and keep up with friends. With a circulation of thousands rather than hundreds it is not possible for "widespread appeal" to equate with "mentioning all readers & their friends at some stage"!

As so often in life, the problem we face is not so much in defending the justice of the present situation (which is fairly transparent to an unbiased mind) but in defending the fact that change has occurred.

The magazine will continue to carry news of ordinary tournaments and some reports will appear in full. The "ideal" report (which maximises its chances of appearing in full): is interesting (even to club and non-players) and well written (possibly humorous); does not consist of regurgitated results, prosaic comments on the weather and expressions of gratitude; is accompanied by a good photograph or cartoon; will occupy about half a page (including aforementioned graphic) and comes supplied as an ASCII text file on IBM compatible disk - or at least clear typewritten script.

Which side are you on?

The saddest thing about the reaction that a small minority of tournament players have had to the new magazine is the way it mirrors certain players' attitude to croquet in general. One often finds the club players beavering away keeping their club going, enjoying their croquet but also keen to support the sport and interested in what is going on. They sometimes travel considerable distances to watch a British Open or World Championship and like to know about the world's top players and how they are getting on (especially British top players in world events). How wonderful it is to play in the South of England Championship and see so many of the Compton Club's members enthusiastically coming to watch. It shouldn't be a surprise, it isn't to them; as they say, "this is our chance to see the best players play". Bizarrely, a few of those who are supposedly "keener players" (which usually means play in more tournaments) sometimes seem to have an almost completely selfish attitude to the game - only being interested in their play not in watching others, even the best. Try comparing that attitude to the one in other sports!

In a typical example of selling croquet short, their excuse when cornered is often "well, it's not interesting to watch"/"it isn't a spectator sport". RUBBISH, ABSOLUTE RUBBISH. When not playing, I find enjoyment both in watching the top game AND AT OTHER LEVELS. Over the past three weekends I have watched play at two handicap tournaments and a Mary Rose club match. The latter being one of the most enjoyable spectator sporting occasions it has been my

pleasure to watch for some time. Notably, none of the players in that match "returned the compliment" by spectating when the two strongest club teams in the country played an inter-club match at the same venue a few weekends later. And I do not expect that many players from the handicap weekends will be watching the British Croquet Masters at Hurlingham.

That is the extraordinary background to some tournament players' equally extraordinary complaints about the reporting of top croquet in the magazine. I just hope it transpires that their reaction is more to the style of reporting (as previously mentioned) rather than the subject and that they may in future look to fellow members, who really enjoy CROQUET, for a lead.

However, the Croquet Association values all its members and affiliates. Certainly it has no intention of ignoring any section who look to it for further services. This issue devotes more space to ordinary tournament reporting than previous 1992 issues, including a results summary for those events where no report was available. While it is impossible for the magazine to extend coverage of ordinary events beyond the current level, the Association is looking at ways of giving tournament players the information they want. A possibility suggested by one player is a Tournament Supplement, delivered to and paid for by those members who want it. Such a supplement could contain whatever its readership desired: fuller reports; full results; alphabetic lists of players and their success; possibly lists of handicaps or handicap changes; bronze, silver and gold awards. The last two items are currently under consideration for inclusion in the

magazine, but others are impossible. A supplement like this of around 8 pages per issue, produced 3 times during the summer could probably be published on a subscription of a few pounds per year providing a minimum readership of about 100 people existed. While we consider the rights & wrongs of such a venture I would certainly be interested to hear views, and indeed some indication of demand.

In the meantime I hope all our readers will continue to enjoy the magazine and offer suggestions to me of how we might further improve it.

Conditions of acceptance

Anonymous articles or those written under a *nom de plume* may be published. However, Croquet Association Council has decreed that the Editor must be made aware of the actual writer in such situations. In these cases requests to the Editor that the writer's identity not be revealed will be honoured, except when the Editorial Board or CA Council demand to know that information. Correspondence whose sole purpose is a gratuitous personal attack on the character of another cannot usually be published.

Tournament Reports are accepted on the understanding that they may be abridged or supplemented, without recourse to the writer, as the Editor sees fit. Mention will be made in the by-line of reports that have had additions made. Articles other than tournament reports are not ordinarily substantially altered.

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A letter FROM the Telegraph!

Dear Sir,

Croquet, perhaps rather like snooker and golf, is a selfish game — but it seems to be unique in nurturing inward-looking, small-minded attitudes.

That message could be drawn from the letters page in the last issue of "Croquet", number 222. And the impression might even be accurate.

As your despairing reader Andrew Bennet commented, croquet can become more an obsession than a sport. It is addictive, yet a teeny weeny sport in terms of national popularity. How fortunate we are, one would think, in having John Walters, a recent World Champion, editing the core magazine, with his ability to deliver informed comment on the state of the game.

Players such as Walters, Fulford, Mulliner, Clarke and Cornelius have brought credit and wider public awareness to croquet through their competition successes. They, surely, would be well worth reading about and hearing from.

Yet Peter Dorke, in his letter, complained of what he regarded as a plethora of photographs and articles about "the editor and his friends" as though these champions belonged to some sort of clique — a conspiracy to hog the media, perhaps.

He suggested that readers would be turning away "in droves" from this magazine. If his prediction is correct, I despair for the sport and for the people attempting to advance it.

Even Andrew Saurin, a teenager approaching the highest level, said he did not like reading about top class events because the names that appeared were too "predictable". How an editor can be blamed for this is beyond my comprehension.

Andrew did mention he wanted more about events HE competed in, and it looks as though the absence of consistent detailed results is a problem for Croquet magazine as well as for the Daily Telegraph. I agree with him there, but the reports seem long enough generally by most standards.

Peter Dorke said, as a Guardian reader, he could find nothing in the press about Croquet Day. This is not surprising, because he reads the wrong newspaper. The Daily Telegraph carried a news feature about croquet on the very day in the sports section, and I can assure him the Croquet Association did a good job informing the media.

The national media presumably did not regard Croquet Day as a particularly worthwhile event in itself, bearing in mind the sports tiny minority status. The Daily Telegraph's feature mentioned the day, and sponsors, the main topic being an interview with that fine ambassador for the game David Openshaw. In addition the top 20 rankings and the summer's main tournaments were listed. This seems to answer much of Peter's classic Moaning Minnie letter, but then perhaps Openshaw as one of those "friends" does not count any more.

Yours sincerely,

Charles Randall,

Daily Telegraph croquet correspondent

Some damned child

Dear Sir,

Andrew Bennet says many things about the younger players which strike a chord in the crusty old breast of this ex-Chairman of the Schools Committee, but while I would like to see as much encouragement given by the CA to older beginners as is lavished upon the youngsters, I cannot regard the latter as a total blot on the croquet landscape. Andrew rightly compliments Mark Saurin on his exemplary attitude but implies that Mark is a rose amongst thorns. This is not so; the roses are much thicker on the bush than Andrew would

have us believe. While the brat pack en masse has often been a pain in the proverbial its constituent parts usually prove sensible, helpful, friendly and intelligent. Look, for example, at how Andrew's own protégés would cheerfully sweep water from the lawns at Southport (in the bad old days, that is, of course!), manage tournaments, set hoops and generally be useful. As croquet players they were often arrogant but that, I am afraid, is part of the secret of their success. As people they are usually nothing of the sort. I am happy to declare publicly that my own bête noir, a player whom I would cheerfully have strangled on many occasions, turns out on closer acquaintance to be quite civilised and not half so assured as he appears. Next time I'm double-banked with him I dare say the old rage will flare up again but probably I'm half to blame anyway.

Which brings me to the older players, amongst whom is to be found much worse behaviour than ever displayed by the youngsters. Have you never heard X abusing his opponent coarsely? Have you never seen Y's displays of bad temper? Has Z never cheated when he was playing you? And off the lawn, is it the young or the old that disrupt the tournament dinner with their bumptious behaviour, their loud bragging, their taunting of the lesser players? The arrogance of the youngsters on the lawn may well be matched by that of some more mature players in the clubhouse. If croquet does not confer on the young players maturity and gentlemanly (or ladylike) behaviour - and who on earth ever suggested that it did - perhaps it is their treatment by some older players that is the cause of this. The best and most enthusiastic player ever to come out of the Ludlow stable was driven from the game by the jealousy, abuse and lack of appreciation of a few older players. We don't like being beaten, do we? In my time on the Schools Committee I met every possible type of youngster: the rowdy; the coarse; the drunken; the polite; the helpful; the downright charming. More often than not the behaviour of the student reflected the ethos of the institution from which he came or the character of the person who coached him. Those that moved on to tournament and international play have turned out to be pretty nice people, about as far from perfect as the rest of us. In any case, croquet attracts very few youngsters and of course they are tempted away, for it really is a very dull old game certainly not worth watching and only worth playing if you have the sort of inner needs that are satisfied by its gentle patterns and introverted skills. There is not much to match the excitement, the speed, the violence of a host of modern sports. Besides, the schools do not want croquet: it takes people away from cricket and athletics; there is no grass left to play it on; there is no money for equipment; neighbouring schools don't play so fixtures are impossible; the staff are not interested. We should therefore cherish the few young people that croquet has managed to seduce. For the short time that croquet holds their attention they extend the bounds of the game and encourage the rest of us to improve our own performance. After all, which player would you most like to beat at your next tournament? It's not Andrew Bennet and it's not me, is it? It's some damned child, barely big enough to hold a mallet but set fair to be the next Men's Champion.

While I would not encourage the young as a group to play croquet, there being so many more interesting things to do, I hope there will always be young players and that I shall be glad to play against them.

Finally, consider that perhaps they deserve not just our help and tolerance but also our sympathy. After all, as Edgar Jackson is fond of saying: "I pity you young croquet players - you've got 50 years to get worse".

Yours faithfully,

P Dorke, Ludlow.

Dear Sir,

One has only to glance at the names and ages of the most successful players and teams of recent years to see that, at the top level, croquet is largely a game for the young, or at least for those who learnt it when young. For our world standing, and for such publicity and funds as flow from it, we rely on our young players. Occasionally they bite the hand that feeds them. Andrew Bennet (letter, issue 222) must take that in his stride. A successful Croquet Association will be an alliance, however uneasy, between the generations.

The young are no more to be criticized (as Mr Bennet does) for taking everything and giving nothing than are the players of any other generation. It gives countless members of the Association pleasure to watch good croquet and satisfaction to learn of our players winning abroad, things which are direct consequences of the keenness of young players. George Latham wrote eloquently in the Australian Croquet Gazette about the various ways in which players and club members contribute to the game. I shall not attempt to paraphrase the article but I recommend it to Mr Bennet.

Let me take an example of the late Humphrey Hicks. Those who knew him better than I did may correct me, but I do not take him to have been a man to mow a lawn. He was not a committee man. He did not write. Though a profound tactician, he was not a good communicator. He was sometimes rather a cross-patch. His means were not so substantial as to permit him to be a great benefactor. Yet he was without doubt an adornment to the game, and a strong contender as "the greatest player ever". To watch him play well was a revelation and a joy, and it did not cost us a penny. Even to watch him play badly was to learn something new about tactics. It would have been laughable had anyone suggested that he put nothing into the game.

Nor do the young all disappear from the croquet world (Bennet again). Some do, of course; but many have to take a break to pursue careers and raise families. They will return in due course to mow the club lawns and coach beginners, just as Mr Bennet would have us all do. Then they will tell the youngsters of those days, when Mr Bennet is otherwise forgotten, of the crusty folk who gave them such a hard time when they took up croquet.

However much one may suspect his reasoning, Mr Bennet is correct in concluding that the campaign to promote croquet in schools was a mistake, and would have been so even if no money or effort had been expended. Life should be too varied, interesting and important at school age for croquet to become a principal occupation, let alone "an obsession". Every examination failed by a young croquet player, and every job opportunity lost in consequence of croquet, is a damning reproach to those in the Association who think otherwise.

Yours faithfully,

Keith Wylie, Southampton

A Protest

Dear Sir,

I am writing to protest that you altered my report of the Western Championship (Issue 222) without my consent. You also added to my report.

Did it not enter your mind to have the courtesy to contact me before you acted? I am very annoyed that your tampering has made some of my comments appear sarcastic and rude. Your actions are surely outside your terms of reference as Editor.

I hope you will have the decency to print this letter in full, as written, in the next issue.

Yours faithfully,

John Haslam, Southampton



Brilliant Brownies from Ipswich

By Ian Burrige

Heavy rain the day previous to the competition led to the lawns being somewhat slower than they might have been. In the easy conditions 3 of the 4 seeds, Stephen Mulliner, Robert Fulford and Chris Clarke, all raced to +26TP wins in their first games, pegging out within moments of each other against Roger Wood, Paul Day and Lewis Palmer respectively. Only Robert was able to reproduce the scoreline in the second game but Chris and Stephen still won comfortably. Meanwhile the final seed, David Maugham, appeared to be in no such hurry to beat Don Gaunt, giving his opponent plenty of chances, which he was unable to take. When Don did finally play a good turn at the end of the second game, having already lost the first, disaster struck. David had one ball for the peg and Don had just completed a break to the peg with his first ball and was laying up but in taking off from David's ball in third corner to his partner in first corner his ball hilled into the peg, hence leaving himself the almost completely lost position of hoop one against peg. David won the game moments later.

In the second round David again gave Ian Burrige several good chances especially in the first game,

Eastern Championship Results

Winner (1): D B Maugham (seed) bt

Clarke +25, +26TP, +18; Fulford +26TP, +9;

Burrige +14, +15TP; D Gaunt +10, +13.

Runner-up (1): C D Clarke (seed) bt

Mulliner -12TPO, +17, +25; French +26TP, +17TP;

L Palmer +265TP, +23TP.

Semi-finalists (2): R I Fulford (seed) bt

Goacher +24TP, +25; P Day +26TP, +26TP.

S N Mulliner (seed) bt

Gregory +16TP, +16TP; R Wood +26TP, +25.

Quarter-finalists (4):

D J Goacher bt S Comish +12, +10.

I J Burrige bt Miss A J McDiarmid +5, +5.

M R French bt J R Hilditch +14, +19.

A K Gregory bt W O Aldridge +4, +8.

Consolation Swiss

Winner: D J Goacher (8 wins; 0 losses).

Runner-up: R I Fulford (6 wins; lost Goacher).

when he failed a TPO, but again never looked in trouble winning 2-0. Fulford had no trouble overpowering David Goacher who had beaten Steve Comish in the first round and Clarke likewise had no trouble seeing off Martin French who had previously beaten Richard Hilditch. Stephen had a little bit more trouble with Andrew Gregory, who had kept waiting most of the day by taking nearly the full seven hours to beat Bill Aldridge 2-0. In both games Andrew won the opening and was able to convert this into the first break as Stephen's shooting was very poor, however as soon as Stephen gained the innings in both games the result never looked in doubt as his break play was very good and Stephen duly won 2-0.

The semi-finals were eagerly awaited as Robert and Chris who were both playing very well now had some opposition which might test them. However there was a surprise in store for Robert as the previously casual Maugham stepped up a gear or two to win the first game +26TP, he also looked destined to win the second +25TP, after Robert had wasted his chance in the match by splitting off the lawn after hoop one going to his poorly placed hoop two pioneer. However he got into difficulty at rover and was only able to peg one ball out leaving his partner by the peg and Robert's balls by hoops two and five. This is the type of position which one might expect to bring the best out of the World Champion, however this was certainly not the case. Having lifted the ball at hoop two he missed the ball at hoop five but was fortunate to hit David's ball at the peg with which he had made a double. Shortly afterwards Robert established a three ball break but after hoop three rushed rather close to the peg, the crowd watched in disbelief when in the croquet stroke his mallet glanced the peg and missed the balls entirely, an air shot. David then managed to miss the eight yard peg and balls treble but Robert finally made one mistake too many sticking in a hoop off David's peg ball when trying to pick up his second break. So David kept up his record of always beating Robert in a match if he makes a hoop!

Chris and Stephen also managed to produce an

interesting match. Chris lost the first game when he appeared to be more interested in extending his run of nine consecutive triples than winning the game and eventually lost to a TPO from Stephen. However he came back to win the final two games which were just as scrappy as the first one had been and could easily have lost the match had Stephen taken one of the chances or if Stephen had been shooting well. Indeed he was shooting so badly that he was reduced to cornering on occasions when in the past he would probably have shot.

The final between Clarke and Maugham was rather one sided although not entirely without interest. The hoops were significantly more difficult than for the rest of the weekend and both players began by sticking in a hoop each. However David's error went unpunished as Chris was shooting poorly and David won the first comfortably +25. He quickly won the second +26TP and it wasn't until he broke down on his second break in the third game that Chris took croquet for the second time in the match, however he over approached three back and David won the Championship two turns later.

The main talking point arising from the final was related to two hampered shots by Maugham. On two separate occasions he just grovelled through a hoop and was hampered from his escape ball and whilst looking at how he was going to play the shot he accidentally hit his ball, before it had been marked. Hence he had to replace the ball where he thought it had been without penalty. On both occasions he went on to hit the shot. Several of the spectators thought that it would be reasonable for such an accidental shot to be a fault unless the balls had been previously marked, indeed one referee thought that this was already the rule (wishful thinking on the editor's part).

The contrast between the top four players was very interesting Robert and Chris both played brilliantly for the first two rounds, as did Stephen when he had the innings. However in the semi-final Robert played very badly but to prove that this was more a result of the occasion than his form he promptly completed a sextuple peel in the swiss. Chris and Stephen also played worse in the semi-final than they had previously and when Chris lost all confidence in his shooting in the final the result was never really in doubt. David on the other hand started the tournament playing only as well as he needed to win and although he was not as clinical as the other three he was never in danger in the first two rounds. Once in the semi-final he visibly slowed his game down and began to concentrate and produced his best form of the weekend when it mattered most and was a worthy winner.

In the swiss most of the shock results were provided by the late reserve, Annabel McDiarmid. Having narrowly lost to Burrige in the main event she had good wins over Palmer, Day, Comish and Gregory and only narrowly lost to the eventual winner David Goacher who beat Fulford in the final round, despite Robert completing a TPO.

The tournament was managed by Richard Hilditch in his usual relaxed style and the catering was provided by the Celia's from Ipswich, whose chocolate brownies were as good as ever.

Photo:

Pat Hetherington presents the trophy to David Maugham.

By Ray & Frances Ransom

For those of us who had travelled up from the sizzling lawns of Sussex, the change in the weather came as a bit of a shock. Yes, the sun was shining on the first day of the Mixed Doubles but that cold Cheltenham wind brought out the heavy sweaters, and worse was to come.

The Championship started with the Mixed and with only eight pairs participating it was a quiet day, no dissention this year - at least after the tournament started, and the Manager had a really easy time, completing the draw on Wednesday and the process on the Thursday. It was a great pity that only 8 ladies decided to compete, leaving many of the men who would have liked to have played without partners. A few men in drag would have solved the problem but this would have been frowned upon by the straight laced manager. Gail 'see what one or toucan do' Currie and John 'hope I am not tested' Haslem were the most impressive pairing finishing all their winning games within the 3 hour time limit, almost unheard of in the mixed. In the final of the draw they disposed of David Goacher and Rosemary Gugan who had just scraped through the previous round with 'a plus 1 on time' result over Colin Irwin and Kismet Whittle.

The Thursday provided the most impressive fireworks of the whole tournament when an electrical storm hit Cheltenham, not much rain but plenty of lightning and thunder claps. Certain of the more timid players seemed reluctant to play through the pyrotechnics, behaviour which did not go unnoticed by those of us observing from within the viewing room of the clubhouse. However we were entertained by the sight of David Goacher moving around lawn 8 at just about the same speed as the lightning flashes, a once in a lifetime experience. Later that day and after the storm had subsided, David and Rosemary had their chance of revenge over Gail and John in the final of the process, and this they succeeded in doing.

This left the final of the event to be decided between David/Rosemary (top photo left pair) and Gail/John (right pair). Due to the failing light on the Thursday evening the game had to be pegged down with Gail and John on peg and peg with 36 minutes remaining. Resumed on the Sunday morning the game continued just a few minutes with Gail and John worthy winners.

Throughout its long history, croquet and controversy have never been far apart. This year with no overseas visitors, we had to make do with pre-tournament antics organised by the tournament



Boys & Girls Games

committee who decreed that the Women's Championship would consist of single games until the semi-finals and then best of three. We shall have to await the publication of the Currie diaries before we know the full story of the resulting confrontation and until that time we can only allow our imaginations to run riot, but the outcome was that the committee ate humble pie and the women played best of three throughout. (Perhaps if the committee had drunk Guinness instead they would have achieved a different result).

Of course 'single games until the semis' turned out to be the first round only, the entry level was so scant. In fact you have to go back to 1946 to uncover a smaller entry, and not even the manager remembered that! The Womens Championship is one of the oldest events in the CA calendar, only the Open Championship pre-dates it, and it is sad to see it neglected during a period of significant improvement in the standard of ladies croquet.

Friday came and with it the singles events and the wet stuff (not Guinness this time). The first match to finish was, yes you've guessed it, a Womens match (between Gail Currie and Carol Smith). Not the shortest match of the tournament, that honour belongs to the second round match between David Maugham and Cliff Jones, but not far behind. Most of the other matches were severely hampered by standing water so much so that some of the games were moved to less affected lawns. The manager even resorted to double banking some of the games in the main event.

The weather steadily improved during the rest of the tournament, although it had little effect on the excitement content of the croquet. Both singles tournaments seemed to be moving inexorably towards finals between the first and second seeds. In the womens semis Frances disposes of Celia who missed the chance of levelling in the second game. But wait a minute, in the other semi Gail is a game and two breaks down on Bo and looks in desperate need of the black stuff. Bo, peg and 4-back, with the balls in good positions must win her way through to the final. Alas no, she fails and Gail with true northern grit claws her way back to win

the game and then the match.

Meanwhile in the alternative womens Colin Irwin has a decisive win over Mark Avery to take his place in Sundays showpiece. The other semi between the David 'the tortoise' Goacher and David 'the hare' Maugham is not going well for either of them. David G is starting on a standard triple and the first peel goes well through but finishes between the strikers ball and the escape ball. (You might well ask how.) After some thought the offending ball was jumped and the roquet duly made. At this point insanity took over as after yet more intense thought he took off to get a rush on - yes you've guessed it - the peelee. More thought revealed the full magnitude of the disaster, but he still won anyway as predicted by Aesop.

And so to Sunday and the finals. A short delay while the mixed final finished and then on to the singles finals. Colin looked to have the first game in the bag, 3 peels completed but he failed to peg out both balls and careful play by David enabled him to win a good game. Game 2 was scrappy with both players making mistakes and could have gone either way, but eventually Colin got it together and won with a delayed TP. The third game went to Colin (bottom photo) without David taking croquet and gave him the title for the first time.

In the Womens final Frances started all fired up and had a clip on 4-back on the fifth turn but couldn't get going with her second ball and eventually Gail took the game. Gail played well in the second and won it convincingly to take the title for the second year in a row.

Manwhile back in the Du Pre, Andrew Gregory was disposing of all those that the manager threw at him. In a last ditch attempt, he threw in the Mighty Murray but all to no avail and Andrew finished undefeated.

Special thanks must go to Colin Irwin and David Maugham for ensuring that the hoop settings were right and this added to the enjoyment of the tournament. David even had to take time out to purchase a tape measure (surprisingly Cheltenham did not have one) in order to ensure that the lawns were set out properly.

Jewel in Surbiton's crown: Sublime chef to croquet's stars, Hazel Kittermeister, joins GB and US captains David Openshaw and Kiley Jones. Together with the freshly visible Solomon Trophy!



The Emperor's new Trophy!

By Rhys Thomas

SURBITON, ENGLAND. There really was no question as to who would win the 1992 Solomon Trophy. But where was the trophy? That question distinguished the 5th annual test match between the USA and Great Britain, played July 14-17 at Surbiton.

This year's host showed a presumptive MacRobertson Shield team to USA's second six and victory came easily to Britain by a match score of 19-2. And it wasn't that close. Squashed like a ladybug under paw of a mighty tiger, the Yanks succumbed to world class pressure. But they performed well enough to win the last laugh.

For the Brits, the missing trophy put an embarrassing blemish on an otherwise handsome performance. Of 45 games played, the homeboys won 39, accomplishing a test match record 20 triple peels (including a ladies QPO). To say the British team was on form merely salvaged their

own dismay at failing to pummel their game but pitiful opponents, 42 games to nil. But two upsets—one singles, one doubles—gave the overwhelmed Americans a measure of respectability and provided proper framework for the squeeze play to come.

It was, after all, a relatively new American team, featuring three fresh rabbits, a second year man, one imperious warrior and a well-seasoned kid for captain. If they weren't having fun on the court, they didn't show it. Pulling together, defeat after defeat, they endured the slaughter, laughed at their own comedy, shared their collective agony, cheered their fifteen minutes of glory, and with firm smiles remained proud to represent their country. By week's end, they said, they could still find solace in the fleeting flash of a team photo, all members surrounding the hallowed silver trophy.

"Yes," said G.B.'s captain, David Openshaw. "The Solomon Trophy—have

you seen it?"

It was a funny question to ask the Americans, nonetime holders of the sterling vase. Why would they know? Had they ever won it? Of course not.

Throughout the bruising, four-day test, Capt. Openshaw inquired as to the whereabouts of the trophy. Had it been left in Palm Beach, site of last year's competition? A phone call determined no. Had it been misplaced? Surely not.

After searching various possibilities, Openshaw came to the lonely conclusion that Solomon's vase had to be in the Croquet Association office at Hurlingham, safely ensconced after last year's match. CA fact man Steve Mulliner concurred. To be sure, Openshaw and Mulliner plighted the very honor of the CA on the reliability of that conclusion, staking the Americans a week's worth of drinks at the Hurlingham Club Bar on the claim. This was witnessed and verified on Friday of the competition, 17 July 92, during the second course at the bar-b-que dinner and awards ceremony.

With desert and coffee time came for speeches and presentations and Captain Openshaw dutifully rose to compliment the US team and the hosts at Surbiton. He then launched into a brief soliloquy, recounting the fable of the "Emperor's New Clothes," and how it aptly applied to this year's contest. Finally, hands held out to the side and clutching nothing but still air, Openshaw said:

"If you use your imagination, here is the Solomon Trophy." Polite applause accompanied Openshaw's admission, which clearly proved unsettling for the conquerors.

It was only then that US team captain Kiley Jones stepped forward with a few simple congratulatory words for the powerful team of English and Irish. Then Captain Jones removed a blue box from a yellow shopping bag and presented the victorious their Solomon Trophy to a rousing chorus of laughs and cheers.

But lest schemers reveal the diabolical conspiracy behind this practical offering, suffice to say the Americans were not 100% responsible. And that happy sound you hear? Perhaps it is the chuckle of the Hare in the Vale of ap Richard.

"Yes," said G.B.'s captain, David Openshaw. "The Solomon Trophy—have you seen it?"

It was a funny question to ask the Americans, nonetime holders of the sterling vase!

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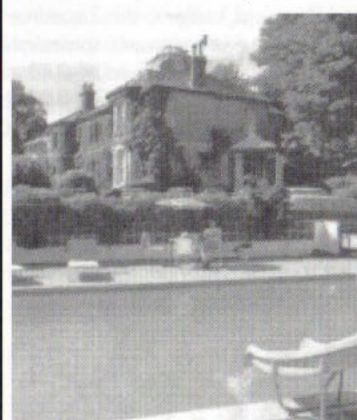
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The Way Ahead

A PROPOSED SUBSCRIPTION POLICY FOR THE CA

A REPORT FROM THE SUBSCRIPTION POLICY WORKING PARTY¹

1. Introduction

The demands on the Croquet Association have increased significantly over the last ten years and are expected to increase further. The Council believes that the medium-term financial outlook for the CA gives cause for concern as outlined in the 1992 Chairman's Report (see 'Croquet' No. 221, page 14) and explained below. A Working Party was established in April to review the situation, consider what needs to be done and then present proposals for establishing CA finances on a sounder footing for the future. The Working Party's proposals will be put to Council at its next meeting on 24 October 1992. The purpose of this article is to inform everyone of the Working Party's conclusions so that the Federations, Clubs and members can give their comments before the Council meeting. In this way, everyone has an opportunity to contribute to establishing an acceptable policy.

2. The problem

(1) The basic problem is that the CA has faced significant increases in unavoidable operating costs over the last few years and faces further increases in the future. The main examples have been rent, audit fees and the depreciation and maintenance of office equipment. The CA now faces a situation where cost increases in these areas will continue and increases in other areas will arise. Recent subscription increases have been minimised by reducing expenditure where possible and by taking advantage of steady membership growth. However, membership growth has eased off, possibly affected by the recession, and the opportunities for cutting costs have been exhausted. The Working Party concluded that, if the existing subscription structure were to be retained, subscription rates would have to rise quite steeply over the next few years. This might be expected to discourage less active Associates who subscribe out of loyalty or a desire to keep in touch through the magazine. The CA could then face a vicious circle of falling membership, followed by further subscription increases to meet the shortfall in income and then by further falls in membership.

(2) The existing subscription structure is outdated and needs to be revised. Most sports governing bodies are financed by a capitation fee levied on every club member and collected by the clubs through the members' club subscriptions. This ensures that the cost of financing the governing body is spread as widely as possible and that newcomers to the sport gain the full benefits of the work of the governing body immediately. However, the CA Council has always believed that Affiliates (club members who are *not* Associates) would be unenthusiastic about a request from the CA for more money and, without an urgent need for change, such an idea has never been seriously proposed.

(3) However, as explained above, the need for urgent action has arisen. The most immediate additional cost increase referred to in (1) arises from the retirement of Alan Oldham as Honorary Treasurer after 25 years service. This has ended a period of significant hidden subsidy of the CA's ordinary activities because Alan charged nothing for doing an essential job which became very complicated and time-consuming. In addition to carrying out the book-keeping and monitoring the CA's cashflow and budgets, the Treasurer is responsible for preparing management accounts, VAT accounts, sponsorship tax accounts, Sports Council accounts and statutory accounts. The job specification runs to 12 pages and the time required to be devoted by the Treasurer is 1-2 days per week. His successor, Roger Bray, is doing the CA a favour by accepting a retainer of only £4,000 p.a.

(4) In addition to these specific extra costs, the staffing of the CA Office should be improved if at all possible. Most governing bodies of equivalent size and activity employ at least two full-time staff. However, the CA can currently only afford the Secretary and a part-time assistant (three mornings a week) who are both paid at the lower end of the relevant scale. In practice, the CA Office is itself heavily subsidised by the goodwill of Brian Macmillan, who is effectively full-time, and a small band of volunteers in order to cope with a workload which is much greater than most Associates realise. This state of affairs is neither desirable nor ultimately sustainable.

3. Possible solutions

(1) The Working Party began by examining whether the CA's services and activities, and thus its expenditure, could be further reduced to fit available income. However, it is clear that there is no scope for making significant cuts in expenditure while retaining worthwhile services. Using 1991 figures (see 'Croquet' No. 221, page 12), the CA's ordinary expenditure can be divided into three parts, namely salaries (£12,000), office overheads (£16,000) and publications (£16,000). Salaries cannot be cut without dispensing with a full-time Secretary. Half of office overheads consist of items unrelated to activity such as rent, audit fees, insurance and equipment depreciation. Items such as photocopying, postage, telephone and stationery cannot be cut without drastically affecting the CA's service to the enquiring public and essential administrative activity. Extensive cuts have already been made in relation to publications. The Directory has not been printed for two years. The Fixture Book has had to be condensed and printed on A5 paper. 'Croquet' has been reduced from 180 pages a year in 1988 to its current 144 pages and large production savings have been made. It should be appreciated that, in order to save £8,000 p.a., the magazine would have to be reduced to two 24 page issues a year (£10,000 production cost savings less £2,000 lost advertising revenue). This would be an unacceptable reduction in the quality of service to members. The truth is that the CA provides reasonable services to the domestic croquet world at a bargain price. There is no more fat left to cut, but only bone and muscle.

(2) We concluded that cutting expenditure while retaining meaningful services is not realistic and that it was right to propose that the CA's services and activities should be maintained at current levels by raising additional subscription income in the medium term to cover the anticipated increases in costs. As explained in 2(1) above, we also concluded that the existing subscription structure was unsuitable and that the time had come for the CA to seek a modern and simplified subscription structure in which all members of registered clubs contributed a reasonable amount in return for the basic benefits that they all enjoyed because of the CA's existence and work.

(3) The Working Party also concluded that it was essential that the CA should explain the situation fully and spell out why the CA matters and is worthy of support (see next page). The value of the CA may be obvious to enthusiasts but it will be less obvious to club members who mainly play social croquet. It will be vital for the contents of 'Croquet' to be refocused on the needs of club players and novices. It is clear that tournament players gain additional benefits from the CA and that this should continue to be recognised through the tournament levy. CA tournament entry fees and levy should continue to be reviewed to ensure that tournaments and their administration remain a self-financing CA activity and do not burden the generality of members. Development work will continue to be financed by Sports Council grants and sponsorship and so will also continue not to be a burden on the CA's ordinary budget.

4. The proposed subscription structure

(1) At present, CA subscription income arises from individual member subscriptions and club registration fees ("CRF"). The proposed structure will eliminate individual CA subscriptions for members of registered clubs in return for a phased increase in CRF over three years.

(2) The benefits

- The CA, which benefits all club members, will be supported by all.
- All club members will receive 'Croquet'. It will give club members who are not Associates at present valuable information about the activities of the CA and the Federations.
- New club members will become CA members automatically and will receive 'Croquet' and other CA membership benefits immediately. This is both a carrot with which to attract new members and a means of stimulating and retaining their interest in the game.
- The increased membership will stimulate and encourage the CA to improve further its services to all members and especially those brought into membership by the proposals.
- The increased membership will make croquet more attractive to sponsors and grant-giving bodies such as the Sports Council.

- The increased subscription base will reduce future cost increases for everyone.
- The increased circulation of 'Croquet' will increase advertising revenue and reduce the unit cost of production.
- Clubs will no longer be confused about whether they should register with a Federation or the CA or both. Under the proposed scheme, clubs will register only with the CA and the CA will reimburse the Federations on behalf of the clubs.

WHY THE PROPOSAL DESERVES SUPPORT

Support for the proposal requires that the value of the CA is recognised by all croquet players and their clubs. It is easy for the role of the CA to be underplayed because it is rarely necessary to make an issue of it. However, this is not the time for reticence, and the principal benefits of an effective governing body should be clearly understood by everybody.

Structure

The CA gives the game of Croquet a reality as an organised activity and provides a central point of contact for members of the public, the authorities, the media, sponsors and grant-giving bodies such as the Sports Council. In particular, if there was no CA, no croquet club or Federation could obtain a Sports Council grant. The existence of the CA has been vital to the establishment of many croquet clubs in the recent and not-so-recent past. Current members of such clubs should recognise that the club facilities that they now enjoy came into existence at least partly because of the activities of the CA. Most of us would like to share the enjoyment that we obtain from the game with others. This entails the maintenance of a healthy CA so that it can continue to assist the establishment of tomorrow's clubs and to spread the pleasure of Croquet to tomorrow's players. This is perhaps the most fundamental and altruistic reason why all who enjoy organised Croquet should be prepared to support the CA financially.

Publicity, recruitment and coaching

The CA gives direct and indirect assistance to clubs in the recruitment of new members. Information and direct help is provided free of charge by the CA Office and the National Development Officer to new clubs and to others which wish to improve the effectiveness of their Open Days. The CA, as a central point of contact, receives, answers and re-directs several hundred enquiries each month from members of the public interested in learning more about Croquet and in joining a local club. Most of these enquiries are stimulated by the publicity generated by the CA through the organisation of national and international events. Once the new member has been recruited, the CA makes a further contribution to his or her encouragement and retention through coaching. As a direct result of the CA Development Program and support from Sports Council grants, the CA has trained and appointed over 570 Coaches and Croquet Demonstrators since 1984. This has led to a vast improvement in the standard and availability of coaching services.

Tournaments and matches

It is commonly said that tournament players benefit most from the existence of the CA. However, the indirect benefits that tournament activity brings to social club players are important. A club's tournament players are often the keenest to improve the quality of the lawns and the most willing to devote spare time to lawn maintenance. The improvement in playing conditions benefits all club members. If the club hosts calendar tournaments, the extra income from visitors' entry fees and bar profits helps to reduce the level of club subscriptions for all club members. The CA has two distinct roles in promoting tournament activity. First, it co-ordinates and distributes the tournament calendar to ensure that events are sensibly dispersed throughout the playing season and are then advertised effectively to the tournament public. Second, it trains and appoints Handicappers, Referees and Managers. Without these individuals and their central co-ordination, organised play would be much more difficult.

¹The members of the Working Party are: Stephen Mulliner (former Chairman of Council), Stephen Badger (Chairman of Dulwich CC and CA Finance & General Purpose Committee), Roger Bray (CA Treasurer), Geoffrey Cuttle (Chairman of Woking Croquet and CA Council member), Bill Gillott (CA Council member) and Chris Hudson (CA National Development Officer).

PROPOSED DETAILS OF THE NEW SUBSCRIPTION STRUCTURE

(1) The principal details of the proposed structure in 1993, 1994 and 1995 are set out below. The CRF levels proposed are based on conservative estimates of the CA's ordinary expenditure and the number of members of registered clubs ("MRC") involved in the scheme. These CRF levels are the maximum amounts that might be charged. The CA is acutely aware of the need to keep the CRF to a minimum and improved membership numbers or, indeed, other suggestions emanating from the Council, the clubs or their members may permit the CRF to be set at lower levels.

(2) The scheme is intended to be as simple as possible. Hence the proposal that the sum payable to the CA by a club should be determined simply by reference to the number of its members multiplied by the CRF. However, this choice of calculation method does not force clubs to raise the total CRF by increasing all categories of subscription by the same amount. Clubs remain free to organise their subscription structures as they wish and may, indeed, choose to raise some or all of the total CRF from other sources.

(3) Procedure

- 1993**
- individual subscriptions remain the same as in 1992 and are paid directly to the CA as usual
 - CRF is increased from £2.50 per Affiliate to £4 for every club member
 - clubs no longer need to pay separate Federation affiliation fees
 - from September 1993, 'Croquet' is posted to the homes of Affiliates
- 1994**
- the non-tournament subscription rate is abolished for MRC and becomes £15 for others
 - the tournament subscription rate becomes £12 for MRC and £25 for others
 - CRF is increased from £4 per member to £8 per member
 - registered clubs and MRC can take advantage of the CA's public liability insurance scheme
- 1995**
- the tournament subscription rate is abolished for MRC and all club members become full CA members; the tournament and non-tournament direct rates remain at £25 and £15
 - CRF is increased from £8 per member to £12 per member
 - the Fixture Book is now incorporated with 'Croquet'

(4) Other details

- Members of unregistered clubs.* Individuals who wish to play in tournaments will be able to subscribe directly to the CA at a cost of £25 from 1994. Those who wish to receive the magazine only can subscribe directly at a cost of £15 from 1994. There will be no other direct UK membership classes.
- Multi-club membership.* The Working Party gave careful consideration to the position of those who are members of more than one club. It was recognised that most would be members of two clubs and would already be Associates. As the effect of the proposals is to halve the cost of CA individual membership, these individuals will be no worse off than at present. After prolonged discussion, it was concluded that it was preferable to avoid the considerable complications of a necessarily cumbersome rebate scheme which would be expensive to operate.
- Life members of the CA.* The Working Party recognised that the 34 surviving Life Members had entered into a contract with the CA which must be honoured. Accordingly, Life Members will be entitled to obtain a rebate from the CA in respect of the additional sums paid by them through club subscriptions.
- Multi-sports clubs.* The Working Party proposes that the CA should negotiate directly with such clubs to establish a registration scheme if possible. If it proves not to be possible, members will have to subscribe directly to the CA as described in (4)(a) above.
- Clubs in the first three years of life.* Clubs formed in 1991 or 1992 will continue to pay £25 per annum for their first three years. Thereafter they will need to pay the CRF for the relevant year if they wish to remain registered.

QUESTIONS, COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

All Club and Federation Secretaries have already been sent a briefing note on the proposed subscription scheme which gives fuller details about its implementation. We hope this will answer in advance most of the questions that might be expected to arise. However, I am available to answer any questions club and federation officials may have on 0428-643504 (home) or 071-638-5702 (office).

Federations, clubs and all club members are sincerely invited to send written comments and suggestions to me at Witherden, Weydown Road, Haslemere, Surrey GU27 1DT. These will be considered by the Working Party and by the Council at its meeting on 24 October 1992. A summary will be published in the November edition of 'Croquet' together with a further report on the scheme.

On the assumption that the new subscription scheme proceeds, Chris Hudson will take over responsibility for the scheme and its implementation with effect from 1 January 1993. In particular, he will operate a "help-line" to answer queries from Club Secretaries about the new scheme and to ensure that everything works smoothly.

Stephen Mulliner, Chairman, CA Subscription Policy Working Party

damage. It was not as detailed as I should have liked. A golf-style card of the course would have been useful, to be consulted during breaks. eg "Lawn 3, hoop 4: set on EW hill, pit 1 foot to NW. Hoop is wide today, so approach no closer than four feet and hack through to boundary." (Actually, I always play like that anyway.)

Yes, it did get hot on Saturday, and yes T P Greenwood did go home during his second game. Since Terry also leaves early if it rains, or if he loses, his tournament appearances are increasingly rare and brief. This 1992 event could have been his farewell. Sadly T P Greenwood never achieved his initials. *Andrew Gregory*. Advanced Blk, 1. **A Gregory** 5/6 Level Blk, 1. **P Rees** 5/5 H'cap Blk, 1. **M Wills** 4/5

HUNSTANTON

"Over 50" Handicap w/e 12-14 June (Swiss) Customarily well supported until the PLAGUE STRUCK, with many last minute withdrawals requiring the roping in of many "A N OTHER" club members - who did surprisingly well. "Sunny Hunny" rose from the ashes of a chilly first morning until hotter and hotter weather induced increasingly difficult conditions in the well manicured lawns. Well set hoops also proved to be the downfall of many, sadly with "+1 ON TIME" a common sight.

Andrew Potter is always a jolly fellow to have at a tournament and he reinvigorated those who wanted invigorating by helping to organise a 1-ball competition for extra games. Famous "croquet parents" John Reeve and Don Cornelius provided the winner's greatest competition (both have had handicap increases this year - it seems it is possible to "work the system"!). Visitors enjoyed the holiday seaside atmosphere of the club that invented the "Over 50s" format. A happy weekend, and even a Car Boot Sale on the adjacent pitch to snap up bargains. 1. **D Hector** 6 wins 2. **D Cornelius** 4 wins

HURLINGHAM

Level Advanced w/e 2-4 May (Swiss)

MAY BALLS

Good reader, let your mind be free To travel time and space with me; I'll take you, ('tis a privilege), Down River Thames, past Putney Bridge, To sit beneath a chestnut tree With pint of ale or cup of tea, At Hurlingham, in early May, And watch a tournament in play.

The Manager is Dennis Cross, A firm but amicable boss; Wee Dennis Shaw, the R. of T., Has feeler-gauges, one-two-three; Equally keen, not quite as dapper, Is Paul Macdonald, handicapper; The three conifer, down by the tents, Then draw apart, "Let play commence".

All anxious to improve their ranking, Thirty-two players, double-banking, Engage in contest at the start; Three others wait to take their part; American blocks for 'A' and 'C', A Swiss format for players, 'B'; The sky is grey, but sun will shine; Hurrah for croquet; Shucks to rhyme.

The first to fall is Thomas Coles As Haggerston, with stunning rolls, Pegs out to win, plus twenty-five; (Some games have barely come alive). Ed Dymock, in round two, pegs out His oppo. then, with northern shout, Takes second ball through 2-back; Dumb! Its clip's on 3-back; "Ee-by-gum"!

Day two dawns sunny; sky is blue; In 'B' there's not much croquet, true; Round IV's held up 'cause Tel was found To be asleep 'fore previous round. At lunch-time, Cross v. Pennant-Jones: "I pegged him out", poor Robert moans, "Then in hit Dennis, 'cross the lawn; Went round to peg. My chance was gone".

Sunday evening; tension's mounting; Who is leading? Let's get counting: Magee and Wiggins, in block 'A', Have only lost one match, they say. John Ruddock leads block 'B', we find, With Best and Stephens just behind. Leading block 'C', unbeaten yet, Osmond and Healy, (Even bet).

It's Monday. Who will win the glory? I'll tell you later; first a story, Of a match, I hope you'll like, Twixt Stephens Bob and Cowan Mike.

From corner 4, with Black, Mike fired At Red at 1-back, not quite wired, And profited from a deflection Off the peg, in the direction Of hoop 6, (black clip was on it); It ran through sweeter than a sonnet. He thence a six-yard roquet struck To make a break. Oh Mike, what luck!

Yet later, Bob got both balls round To peg; and laid a rush so sound That red was pegged out on the roquet, And yellow's left with naught to croquet. He tore his hair and cursed the name Of Croquet, "What a crazy game"! Three shots he missed, or maybe more, But finally pegged out plus four.

Tom Coles, fresh from the lawns of France, Looks wistful; throws a backward glance At Hurlingham. He'll soon depart To U.S.A.; new life to start.

Results and prizes after tea; The ladies dominate block 'C'; The group is won by Pauline Healy; Chris Osmond second, not quite, nearly. John Ruddock wins block 'B' outright From Roger Best, with one game light. Block 'A'd be won by David we reckoned; Wiggins is first and Magee is second.

And so each player wends his way, To Woking, Surbiton or may-be Cheltenham or other journey Home, to think of next week's tourney, And possibly to reminisce, On this weekend of croquet bliss, A haze of matches watched and played, The taste of Pimm's with lemonade.

A.S.

IPSWICH

Level Advanced w/e 20-21 June (Swiss)

- L J Palmer**
 - Miss D A Cornelius**
- "B" Level w/e 18-19 July (swiss)
- Miss J Waters** 4/5
 - R Kimberling** 4/5

NEWPORT

Level Advanced w/e 16-17 May (K/O & Swiss)

Manager: Richard Hilditch

Debbie Cornelius was not on the lawns of her home club. A promising playing career had clearly gone sadly awry over the winter, for here she was prematurely incarnated as a tea lady. A very good tea lady at that, chivvying players along, anxiously enquiring "Do you think they've all come in yet?" One tip though, Debbie. A-class tea ladies never interrupt their pouring to referee a hampered shot.

Despite facing a position of Penultimate alone against Duncan Hector's Hoop 6 and peg, when their semi-final deciding game was reconvened on the last morning, Lewis Palmer managed to scrape home (scoring his last 3 points in 3 separate turns!) - aided by Duncan's inexperience. A few shots into the final and my suspicions were confirmed. I was playing badly.

On being offered the customary drink one opponent said that he was not thirsty so much as desperate for a cigarette. What an excellent alternative to established custom this would be! Buying pints can be very expensive, particularly for impoverished students, but two packets of cigarettes should last the whole season. And since most croquet players don't smoke, this could replace the card system for Automatic Handicapping. Here's how: 1. At the start of the season buy a box of five cigarettes, plus an empty box. 2. After each game make sure you give or receive one cigarette. 3. If you run out of cigarettes, reduce your handicap. If you fill the second box, it's time for an increase. Smokers will not get as many bisques as they should - which is fair compensation for inflicting their unpleasant habit on the rest of us! Andrew Gregory

ROEHAMPTON

Full Bisque w/e 23-26 April (Swiss)

Manager: R Pennant-Jones

Blustery showers and cold win had competitors adding layer after layer this weekend; except for the winner - who played most of the event in just shorts and a tee-shirt. Use of the new Wharrad Time Limit scheme helped relieve many of the traditional time-limit frustrations. 1. **G Gale** 8/8

High Bisquers w/e 24-25 May (18pt Swiss)

Manager: Paul Campion

Mark Blundell led throughout the event (despite a dry period against Martin Burger, during which no points were scored for 25 minutes - until Mark finally decided to use his bisques). He only met his match in one of the final games, against Jean Oades. Sue Best took the "Ladies Prize" and Derek Powell secured a Silver award. 1. **Mr M Blundell** (14) 5 wins 2. **Mr D Powell** (12) 5 wins

NOTTINGHAM

Level Advanced w/e 23-25 May (Egyptian+K/O)

Manager: Peter Death

The only cloud on the horizon one or two players with a determination to win at all costs, including boring opponents and spectators alike. Surprisingly (or is it just my naivety) even those who do not employ the tactics of the dullards say that winning is everything.

The knockout finalists demonstrated the positive side of the game (one having beaten his father - the manager - earlier) in a best of three, despite the fast difficult lawns and tight hoops. It was nice to see a blast from the past in the Egyption final - two Nottingham stalwarts from days gone by recapturing their youth!

- K/O, 1. **J Death**
K/O, 2. **D Carpenter**
Egn, 1. **G Taylor**
Egn, 2. **G Hopewell**

PARKSTONE

Level Advanced w/e 16-17 May (Swiss)

1. **Dr G S Liddiard** 5/6

2. **I J Burridge** 4/6

Class events 15-20 June (Block winners play-offs)

Advanced class, **Dr G S Liddiard** bt

F I Maugham +15

Level class, **A Potter** bt Mrs E Asa-Thomas +13

Handicap class (22 pt), **M Clark** (16) bt

L A D Hawkins (12) +16

Handicap 15-20 June (Egyption)

1. **R F Bailey** (0) 6/7 (123 pts)

2. **R R Edwards** (6) 5/6 (116 pts)

Handicap Doubles 15-20 June (Block winners play-off)

A Potter & Mrs M Evans (19) bt

Dr G S Liddiard & G E Chamberlain (10) +3 OT

RAMSGATE

Handicap w/e 16-17 May (K/O & Swiss)

Manager: Dennis Shaw

Bright and sunny but a cutting wind necessitated the wearing of two pullovers by most players; however, Dennis put us all to shame by wearing shorts the whole time. (But perhaps as a local resident he has been "hardened off"). A superb new no.1 lawn has just been re-laid to bowling green standards and will be ready for play late in 1992.

G Drake (2) bt R Ware +11, +3

Consolation Swiss: 1. **C Horton** (14) 4/4

Handicap w/e 11-12 July (Swiss)

1. **W Arliss** 4/5

2. **D L Gaunt** 4/5

SIDMOUTH

Handicap 1-5 June (K/O)

X, **P Kennerley** (3) bt M Tompkinson (2) +7

Y, **W Platt** (7) bt V Tompkinson (7.5) +10

Handicap Doubles 1-6 June (Swiss)

1. **W Platt & J Bourn** (24) 3/3

SOUTHWICK

Handicap 1-5 June (K/O)

This was the first tournament organised by the Sidmouth Club since the mid 50's and restarted a tournament tradition which originated in 1908. The provision of a fourth lawn during the last year has made the running of a tournament more feasible and on the success of this year's event, it must become a permanent fixture in the future. The entry was well supported by visiting players from Bristol, Buddleigh Salterton, Southwick, Surbiton, Wellington, Worthing, and the Hornsby's from Australia.

Regrettably day one turned out to be very grey and with a strong lasting drizzle but with the usual hardness of tournament croquet players, the first round of the knockout was successfully completed by lunch. Unfortunately the weather had other ideas and manager Iris Dwerryhouse finally had to call a halt to the proceedings when lawn one started to look more like the local boating lake than a croquet lawn.

Early form predicted Michael Homby as a good possibility in the A block as he never appeared to miss a roquet under 30ft and never stuck in hoops. Michael looked set to carry on with his winning ways in the X knockout but some 20yard hooping by Ross Dawson of Sidmouth relegated Michael to the Y competition. Things were slightly tighter in B block and it needed a points count to give Sidmouth's Gwyneth Dart victory over Don Mears from Southwick. In the C and D blocks seasoned campaigners Ted Owen from Sidmouth and Heather Perron from Bristol triumphed.

Overall despite the two days of bad weather and some of the slopes on the lawns which took some getting used to, all competitors agreed if had been a superb tournament and if possible would return next year. Well done Sidmouth and in particular Iris Dwerryhouse for her excellent management. **Mrs D Mears** bt Dr E C Owen

M Homby bt Mrs G Dart
Miss H Perron bt Dr E C Owen

Advanced Class, **Mrs P V Healy** bt

D J F Gurney +3

Handicap Class (18pt), **Mrs R T Stephens** bt

C P Diver +14

"X" & "Y" Handicap 1-6 June (K/O)

X, **D C Powell** (11) bt N Jackson (6) +3

Y, **D J F Gurney** (4.5) bt C Southern (2.5) +26

Handicap Doubles 1-6 June (K/O)

D J F Gurney & Mrs J Oades bt

Mr & Mrs MacDonald +13

RYDE

Class Events 1-6 June (Blocks)

Manager: Roy Newnham

Rainy days and Mondays can be deeply depressing. However, armed with the comforting knowledge that our Open Week only ever has one wet day, ten waterproofed souls battled off to cries of "Drought! What drought?" and "I came south for the sun!" Doubles proved to be the event providing the most entertaining play. A pair who play more tennis together at the club than croquet won all their games to take the title, including an exciting plus one on time in the semi. It was good to receive compliments from our visitors about the improved quality of the lawns. How can I motivate you to join us? A friendly club, calm and effective Manager, perfectly edible food! Why not consider us for your June diary next year? IOW Championship, 1. **R Fwetrell** 5/6

C Class, 1. **M Robinson** 3/4

"X" & "Y" Handicap 1-6 June (K/O)

X, **P Kennerley** (3) bt M Tompkinson (2) +7

Y, **W Platt** (7) bt V Tompkinson (7.5) +10

Handicap Doubles 1-6 June (Swiss)

1. **W Platt & J Bourn** (24) 3/3

SOUTHPORT

Level Advanced w/e 18-19 April (K/O)

C J Irwin bt A J Collin +25TP +19TP

Handicap w/e 23-25 May (Blocks & Play-offs)

1. **Brian Lewis** 7/8

=2. **John Haslam** 7/8

=2. **Paul Stoker** 5/8

Long Bisquers w/e 4-5 July (Swiss)

1. **Mike Evans** 5 wins

"B" Level Advanced w/e 10-12 July (Egyption)

1. **Rick Harding** 9/10

2. **Howard Taylor** 7/9

SURBITON

Handicap w/e 17-18 April (Egyption)

Those who entered the Handicap Tournament and had played at Surbiton in previous years knew they could expect both good play and excellent food over the following two days. And they were in luck - George Noble was cook. This meant we would not only have the usual Surbiton fare but, more importantly, he wouldn't be giving us a hard time on the lawns.

The first round of this Egyptian was an experimental one to see the effect of Lionel Wharrad's suggestion that the last hour of a time limit is replaced by a fixed number of turns. There were no complaints that I heard of, although those games affected resulted in a fair spread of play from 20 minutes to 1 hour 10 minutes for the "time turns". A reflection of the ability lower bisquers have to string out a turn longer, Lionel is rumoured to be investigating a "Bray System" style calculation for the number of turns to be

SOUTHWICK

High Bisquers June (Block play-off)

Manager: Pat Shine

A little notice at Cheltenham, illustrated by Pat Asa-Thomas, brought the tournament to our attention. It also guided us through a scenic route via Chichester and Arundel to the Southwick club. Pat Shine was right at the start when she told us the tournament would be fun. A wonderful social occasion (with 1-ball games between matches), but after which we all came away feeling we had learned something.

M Blundell bt Ms M Wainman

Handicap 29-4 July (Swiss)

Manager: Paul MacDonald

In winning the singles Audrey Howell marked her birthday by joining such luminaries as Hope Rotherham, John Solomon, Pat Cotter, Maurice Reckitt (who gave his name to the trophy) and her own husband Peter! On the way she qualified for a bronze award, as did Joan Weir and Den Norman - winner of a special "high bisquers" prize.

The doubles result continued a tradition that a Weitz appears in the winning partnership every 4 years. Competitors came from a wide range of towns - including Perth, Australia, whose sons the Hornbys must have enjoyed Southwick since they purchased an adjacent flat. The appearance of lakes instead of lawns on Friday afternoon only served to encourage players to finish their games quickly, customary incentive already being given in any case by the tournament's coincidence with Wimbledon week 2. Coverage of which was kindly facilitated as usual by Pat Asa-Thomas' TV set.

1. **Mrs P Howell** 6/7

2. **S T Badger** 6/7

Handicap Doubles 29-4 July (Swiss)

1. **S T Badger & Mrs E Weitz** 4/5

SOUTHPORT

Level Advanced w/e 18-19 April (K/O)

C J Irwin bt A J Collin +25TP +19TP

Handicap w/e 23-25 May (Blocks & Play-offs)

1. **Brian Lewis** 7/8

=2. **John Haslam** 7/8

=2. **Paul Stoker** 5/8

Long Bisquers w/e 4-5 July (Swiss)

1. **Mike Evans** 5 wins

"B" Level Advanced w/e 10-12 July (Egyption)

1. **Rick Harding** 9/10

2. **Howard Taylor** 7/9

SURBITON

Handicap w/e 17-18 April (Egyption)

Those who entered the Handicap Tournament and had played at Surbiton in previous years knew they could expect both good play and excellent food over the following two days. And they were in luck - George Noble was cook. This meant we would not only have the usual Surbiton fare but, more importantly, he wouldn't be giving us a hard time on the lawns.

The first round of this Egyptian was an experimental one to see the effect of Lionel Wharrad's suggestion that the last hour of a time limit is replaced by a fixed number of turns. There were no complaints that I heard of, although those games affected resulted in a fair spread of play from 20 minutes to 1 hour 10 minutes for the "time turns". A reflection of the ability lower bisquers have to string out a turn longer, Lionel is rumoured to be investigating a "Bray System" style calculation for the number of turns to be

given in the "Time" period.

Although he had the event won after playing his compulsory two games on the last day, Roger Jackman sportingly agreed to a final game with Adrian Wadley - that would decide the final winner. Adrian got the early lead but after jamming at hoop 4 with his second break the game became a tight one. An edgy ending, which was better for the spectators than the players, involved a certain amount of missed peg-outs as well as short and medium length shots - the last of which gave Roger an easy chance to finish from peg alone.

Thanks were given to Mike Llewellyn-Williams for managing this his first tournament, and to George - but he was in the distance, busily mowing the lawns for the Advanced play event that was to follow.

1. **R Jackman** (4.5) 6/6 (130 pts)

2. **H Smorfitt** (1.5) 5/6 (119 pts)

Advanced Level w/e 19-20 April (Swiss)

1. **G W Noble** 6/7

2. **J Dawson** 6/8

Level Advanced w/e 5-7 June (K/O & Swiss)

Manager: Richard Hilditch

The full best-of-three format failed to attract any stars from afar, nor Mulliner to defend his title (though he did squeeze in a bit of practice when he came to return the cup). The success of the extension from a two day tournament, which drew a larger entry, is still *sub judice*. With 13 Surbiton members plus several from nearby clubs, most of whom would play anyway for Hazel Kittermeister's cooking and George Noble's beer!

Jeff Dawson's winning streak of 9 games included 3 consecutive +26TPs and a best-of-five final finished before lunch. The manager's usual "flexible friend" approach allowed players a number of games ranging from 9 to 15, depending on whether they wanted to watch the cricket at Edgbaston and French Open tennis. In play the manager managed 3 games with margins of 1: a) pegging out from being wedged in rover after opponent missed a 1 yard pegout; b) winning in the turn after time when opponent rushed his partner onto peg prior to a planned pegout; c) after George Noble proved himself to be as good as Irwin (see Fulford's article in issue 221) by completing his second TPO of the weekend.

Local Mike Burrow (handicap 10) blew a fuse in the new handicap adjustment scale with wins over Mike Llewellyn-Williams and David Wiggins (most recently, winner of the Chairman's Salver!). No other fuses were blown, though the neighbouring bowls club had to wheel away a player past our court 1 to an ambulance. *Robert Prichard* Championship of Surrey, **J Dawson** bt F Landor 3-0 Swiss, 1. **J Greenwood**



WOKING

Handicap w/e 24-26 April (Swiss)

Searching for the places that drinks do require, players found themselves wandering through the debris of a clubhouse in the middle of major refurbishment - it will be worth it when finished. This also meant that Harrow style catering came to Woking: snacks and drinks from cartons into plastic cups. We had the unexpected pleasure of a visit by the CA Tournaments Chairman, John Walters (on his way to a friend's wedding at the local church!), who asked who the Tournament Referee was. He was told that was "Top Secret"!

1. **A N Wadley** (10) 8/8

2. **G J Bennett** 7/8

Advanced Level w/e 20-21 June

All events of Woking's marathon tournament were oversubscribed. Kicking off with a very strong weekend A-class event, we were soon into the fun for the week events. The traditional Hat Parade was greeted by much merriment. The Y doubles presented opportunities for players to 'dustbin' their opponent, plus there was the 'interruption' bisque, 'snakes & ladders' (peel opponent and he goes back 2; peel partner and he goes forward 2) and the rule compelling a drink to be taken after scoring a hoop! Truly "Alice in Wonderland" croquet.

Blk A, 1. **D C D Wiggins** 5/6

Blk A, 2. **J Dawson** 4/6

Swiss B, 1. **C Southern** 5/5

Advanced Level 22-24 June

Blk A, 1. **T I Wood** 7/7

Blk A, 2. **M J B Haggerston** 6/7

Swiss B, 1. **M R Hayes** 5/6



Stephen Mulliner

Wrong! Martin French

"that CA Development activities of recent years have focused on NONE of these areas" (his emphasis). What an extraordinary statement! In relation to laws, handicapping and tournaments it is as logical as criticising the Foreign Office for failing to mend the roads. These are basic CA activities with specialist CA Council committees established to monitor, service and improve them. CA Development activities, with which the CA Development Committee is concerned, mirror the aims of the Sports Council grant scheme, namely to introduce Croquet to non-players and to extend the range of activities carried out by the CA for its members. It would be strange if the CA Development Committee's brief was to usurp the roles of the CA Laws, Handicap Co-ordination and Tournament Committees.

In relation to coaching and equipment standards, Martin's criticism is impossible to understand. Coaching has been a major part of every Forward Plan since 1984. The establishment and growth of the National Coaching Scheme is the principal achievement of the whole Development program so far. The development of coaching has resulted in the training and appointment of over 170 Official Coaches and over 400 Official Demonstrators and represents one of the most concrete examples of the CA's contribution to the health of the clubs. The transfer of Coaching as a self-financing activity from the Extraordinary Account to the Ordinary Account took place as recently as last year. Equipment standards is still a development program under the 'Membership Services' heading and the CA can take much of the credit for the fact that the World Croquet Federation now has an international ball standard.

Martin's description of CA staffing plans is misleading and disguises the truth about the CA's current situation. His suggestions that there will be "numerous partly-paid employees" and that the CA is "moving to increase federal administration at the same time as seeking to expand the central administration" are simply false. The CA is trying, as ever, to survive by getting essential jobs done for the bare minimum of expenditure and, far from having plans to expand the central administration, is trying to maintain its present level of activity.

We have had a paid Secretary since 1976. The idea of a paid Press Officer (from grant funding) was tried, tested and dropped over two years ago because the benefits were too uncertain. The current Editor, John Walters, does not receive an honorarium of any sort. What he does do is to act as both Editor and typesetter of the magazine and in the latter capacity retains part of the production cost which would otherwise be paid to the printer as in the past. The important point is that he does the typesetting job more cheaply and saves the CA money.

The major change this year has been the retirement of Alan Oldham as Honorary Treasurer after 25 years extraordinary service to the CA. How few Associates really appreciate how much Alan did for the Association and how few have the slightest idea of how demanding the Treasurer's job is for even a relatively small organisation with responsibilities to various central authorities. The Council realised in 1989 that it was unrealistic to expect another volunteer to fill Alan's shoes and spend the 75-100 days a year needed to keep the CA's finances in order by being personally responsible for all the

basic book-keeping and cheque-signing, preparing management accounts, VAT accounts, Sports Council accounts, sponsorship tax payment accounts and statutory accounts. The job specification runs to 12 pages. The honorarium of £4,000 p.a. payable to Roger Bray for providing an essential service is a bargain for the CA. If we had to combine the task with the Secretary's job, a suitable individual would require significantly more than the sum of the Secretary's salary and the Treasurer's honorarium.

CA Office staffing is a real problem. The CA's success in acting as a well publicised central contact point means that the telephone keeps ringing. The Office handles over two hundred enquiries in an average week in the summer and about half as many in the winter months. 75% of these could lead to a new member for a club and require a friendly and encouraging conversation and the despatch of an information pack at the CA's expense. It is impossible for one person to (1) man the telephone in a civilised and friendly manner, (2) organise and dispatch information packs to enquirers, (3) cope with the paperwork, information requests and projects generated by the Council and its committees and (4) carry out all the general dogsbody jobs ranging from opening letters to the annual subscription frenzy. At present, Brian Macmillan makes a nonsense of the notion of retirement and is virtually full-time. In addition, Alan Stockwell does three mornings a week, usually accompanied by his wife Pauline, and Eileen Magee and Ron Welch lend a hand by working for one morning a week. Only Alan is paid anything for his time in the Office.

The CA has achieved reasonable success in the last eight years. The game is better known and more people play in more clubs. This welcome increase in organised croquet activity certainly costs more to achieve and to maintain than the tiny CA of the 1970's. Up to now, increasing costs have been absorbed by CA Associates and tournament players without too much strain but, looking forward, the outlook gives cause for concern. It must surely be right to consider the problem from a positive standpoint, namely seeking ways to preserve the gains by maintaining the CA's current level of activity. If that means examining the way the CA is financed and suggesting changes, so be it.

Martin implies that subscriptions could be held near present levels for several years by "accepting a limited level of service" and "cutting our clothes to suit the cloth". However, he does not appear to have thought about where the economies can be found or what the effect would be upon income. If the CA Office was relocated from Hurlingham to the Secretary's home, we would save the rent but lose much more financially in forgoing the considerable privileges the CA enjoys there. If the magazine was cut in frequency, size or quality, the apparent savings would be reduced by lost advertising revenue. If the CA reduced its role as the central contact point for the public, both its membership and that of croquet clubs would suffer. The truth is that the CA already gives good value for money. In my opinion, significant savings are only achievable if the CA retreats to its pre-1980 state with half the present membership, no development activity and no capacity to do anything more than survive. This is a last resort and a counsel of despair and should not merit serious consideration.

Ladies Events - No Thank You!

A view on Women's croquet by World No.1 and President's Cup player Debbie Cornelius



Essentially, I believe that the events have little justification for existing at all.

For many years now I have declined to play in the Ladies Selection Events:- the Barlow Bowl and the Longman Bowl. My reasons for this have undergone many changes but I think I can now state them clearly. Essentially, I believe that the events have little justification for existing at all.

Women can play croquet on equal terms with men. It is one of the few sports where strength plays no part and where women

can be as good as their male counterparts. Why therefore, do they need their own special events?

I have frequently heard the Ladies Selection Events justified on the grounds that they provide quality events for ladies to play in. However, few up and coming players seem to enter more than once, as they quickly realise that two games a day is not enough to justify a week off work. Instead there are many events of an equal playing

standard available. For instance, the emergence and growing popularity of 'B' Level tournaments has given both men and women the chance to play against opponents of a similar ability. Advanced PlayWeekends provide top quality play without many days off work. The Mens and Womens Championships provide segregated play - indeed for many years the ONLY event restricted just to men has been the Mens Championship!

The Longman Bowl (the 2nd six), was donated in 1980 by Kay Longman with the purpose of forming a training ground for ladies aspiring to play in the Ladies Field. The Selectors Weekend was formed partly for the same reasons - to give improving players experience. This year's schedule has the Selectors Weekend clashing with the Barlow Bowl - does this imply that our top women are not held to be either improving or good enough for that event, or is it just a horrific scheduling mistake on the part of the tournament committee? The two women's events have had little support in recent years. It is difficult to find clubs prepared to host them and managers prepared to run them. Even competitors are difficult to find! It is also my understanding that these events consistently lose the CA money which it can ill afford. Surely it is time that these largely unwanted, out of date events are laid to rest.

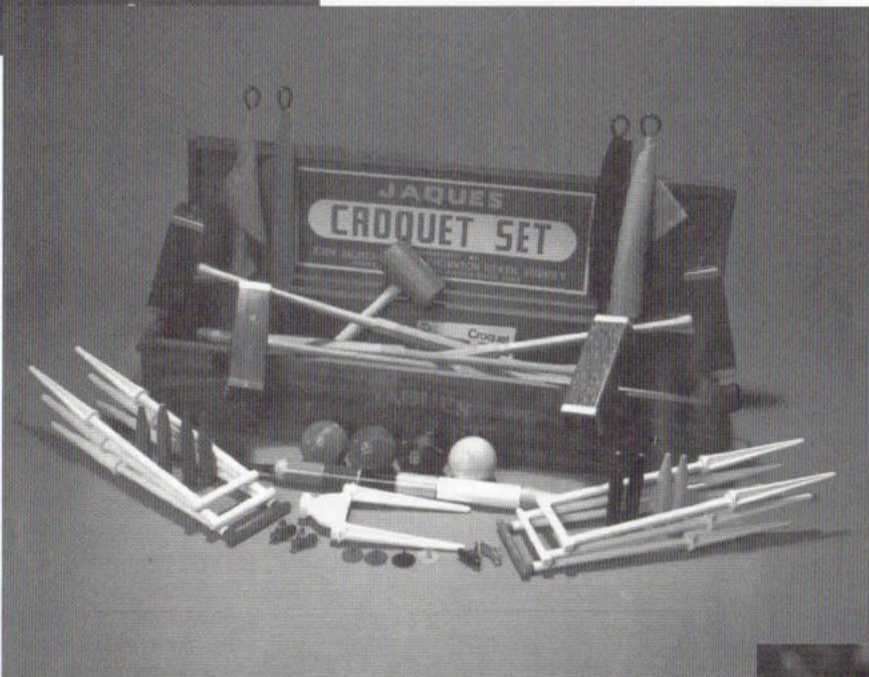


A sizeable problem may have a small & simple solution. But how does reigning women's Champion Gail Curry (left) feel about her nemesis Debbie Cornelius (right), World no.1 ranked woman?

name	grade	gms											
1 Fulford RI	185.9	72	23 Comish S	126.2	52	47 Hector JD	111.9	24	71 Bottomley HJ	98.5	15		
2 Openshaw DK	171.8	25	24 Aldridge WO	126.1	23	48 Storey BJ	110.2	16	72 Miller ARK	98.3	45		
3 Clarke CD	169.2	76	25 Gregory AK	125.7	60	49 Murray M	110.2	18	73 Williams RaW [S]	97.7	13		
4 Maugham DB	166.7	63	26 Saurin MA	124.7	34	50 Greenwood JD	109.7	38	74 Darby PA	97.5	30		
5 Walters JO	163.4	46	27 Tuke SM	124.2	39	51 Prichard RDC	109.3	14	75 Harding R	96.3	11		
6 Irwin CJ	163.4	52	28 Symons AJ	123.3	49	52 Ormerod WP	108.2	13	76 Stevens MJ	96.3	19		
7 Mulliner SN	161.8	52	29 Hope AB	122.9	12	53 Browne TN	107.9	40	77 Dorke PJ	95.3	41		
8 Goacher DJ	156.3	49	30 Day P	121.8	12	54 Curry GM Miss	106.7	41	78 Jenkins RS	94.8	16		
9 Aspinall GN	148.6	11	31 Gunasekera D	120.3	13	55 Ruddock JC	106.6	35	79 Sutcliffe AF	94.7	33		
10 Dawson JP	144.4	44	32 Llewellyn-Wlms MJ	119.3	62	56 Wood TI	106.3	13	80 McClelland IR	94.5	16		
11 Cornelius DA Miss	139.2	28	33 Guest JE	119.0	26	57 Smith PL	105.6	30	81 White DM	94.0	13		
12 Reeve DC	136.0	11	34 Saurin Andrw J <->	118.6	10	58 Magee DJ	105.5	50	82 Hilditch JR	93.3	73		
13 Palmer LJ	134.7	56	35 Goddard JP	118.3	32	59 Harris NR	104.7	22	83 Ames JP	92.8	35		
14 Coles WT	133.5	19	36 Haslam JH	118.2	35	60 Vincent IG	104.3	22	84 Bogle AJ	91.6	33		
15 Burrige IJ	132.1	53	37 Hallam BG	118.2	19	61 Maugham FI	104.1	17	85 Willis JH	91.4	15		
16 Saurin Adrian T <->	131.8	14	38 Gaunt DL	116.7	52	62 McDiarmid AJ Miss	103.9	36	86 Smorfit HW	90.7	44		
17 Bond ID	131.4	18	39 Landor FJR	116.7	36	63 Jones KE	103.4	10	87 Ransom FE Mrs	90.1	20		
18 Noble GW	130.9	53	40 Foulser DR	115.6	13	64 Appleton DR [S]	100.5	26	88 Best R	89.6	38		
19 Wiggins DCD	129.0	50	41 Liddiard GS	115.1	46	65 Ransom RW	100.2	19	89 Audsley E	89.1	11		
20 Williams S [I]	127.6	21	42 Harrison TD	114.4	14	66 Collin AJ	100.1	12	90 Davis R	88.9	11		
21 French MR	127.4	42	43 Haggerston MJB	114.3	50	67 Pidcock A	99.9	16	91 Anderson TW	88.8	13		
22 Lamb WE	127.0	22	44 Brown RJ	113.5	33	68 Harrison-Wood D	99.6	26	92 Stephens RT	88.5	30		
			45 Solomon EW	112.5	34	69 Torrington P	99.3	10	93 Kemmerling R	88.4	26		
			46 Williams CN [W]	112.4	64	70 Jones C	98.6	36	94 Hopewell CG	88.0	24		



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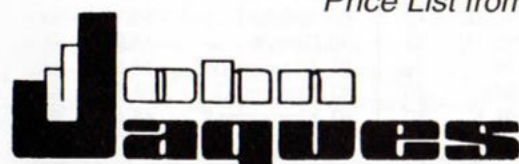
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WINNING

by Dorothy Rush

Part 14: When All Else Fails

All too often the roquet is not made, however, carefully you have stalked the ball (see page 5), however straight the swing. Time and again the croqueted ball (see page 9) goes out, against all expectations. More often than you care to remember your ball runs its hoop (see pp.1,6, 15, 19, 27 et al) and rolls gently back into the welcoming rabbit run. It happens to the best of us but more often it happens to the worst of us, which seems rather unfair.

What to do, then, when all else fails? The answer is perhaps revolutionary but undoubtedly simple, a panacea for all croquet ills: cheat! This is the nettle that Solomon failed to grasp, the hot potato that Cotter refused to nibble. Look in Wylie: no mention of cheating as an 'expert tactic'. Search in Miller and Thorpe: the very thought would have pierced these young idealists to the core of their being. Only in Rush will you find the advice that every croquet player, great or small, needs, if he is to come safely through that awful moment when all else fails.

This chapter, then, is a guide to the countless ways of cheating at croquet. (Might we, perhaps, call them 'Rush tactics'.) Some are crafty and secretive, some blatant. Some are available only to the A-class player, some open to all. A few the prerogative of the high-bisquer, lead where no minus player has ever dared to go.

I shall begin with the roquet - or rather, the missed roquet. Much here will depend on the geography, the weather, the seating arrangements, on whether there is double-banking or, vitally, whether the opponent has gone to the lavatory. In the latter case, no problem, continue as though the roquet has been made - deem it made without further ado. There may be a crowd of spectators at the lawnside but, fear not, they are not watching you. Besides, most of them want your opponent to lose, giving them a chance to win the block. The same applies if the opponent is definitely looking away from the lawn though care must be taken in this instance, as many players have perfected the art of following the progress of their opponents' game while apparently fast asleep beneath a newspaper.

If the opponent is present and watchful, deem the roquet only when the striker's ball (that's yours) passes on the side of the object ball away from the opponent. In this case, wipe the brow, utter a relieved 'phew' and, without looking directly at the opponent, exclaim in a clear voice, 'Just nicked it!'

When there is double-banking the opportunities for cheating are multiplied. Often the confusion can be such that there is no need even to attempt the roquet, particularly after running a hoop, the ball being simply lifted and placed as for a croquet shot. No comment is necessary and any query on the part of the opponent (this is very unlikely) should be answered with a blank stare.

When balls are replaced after marking, anything is possible, including reversing the direction of a rush, improving a hampered lie, etc. etc. (See also Appendix IV: Marking a Ball in Your Own Game)

In the croquet shot the field of operations

opens up. A multitude of sins is covered by law 32 (vii): 'in a croquet strokepushes or pulls the striker's ball after the balls have parted contact'. The trouble, or rather the advantage, is that no-one has yet found a satisfactory means of separating the pushers from the clean-hitters. This is where you come in: does your ball tend to stray in the hoop approach? Steer it gently into position. Having trouble with the pass roll? Give it a good shove! Of course, your opponent will appeal to the spectators: 'Did you see that, Brian? Was that a push or was that a push?' The important word is 'was'; in vain may he ask for a replay - the deed is done. And how often have you known a referee to be called to watch a player's croquet shots? Right! Never! Nor me! In the unlikely event of this happening, you revert immediately to a more legal performance of the shot and your opponent gets a flea in his ear from the Referee in Charge, whose afternoon nap he has interrupted.

What about a ball which has gone off in a croquet shot? Can anything be done? Gone off? Who says so? With any luck at all, your opponent, slouched in his deck-chair on the South boundary, cannot see the faded North boundary and will believe, however reluctantly, your thumb and finger representation of the distance by which the ball has failed to go out. If it is the striker's ball, get on with the game fast; if it is the object ball, make great play of replacing it on the yard line but do not forget that the head of your mallet, as you place it 'on the boundary' must be seen to be several inches beyond the ball.

Next, the take-off shot. The Big One! A rich field for the skilled croquet cheat. I will assume that you have avidly devoured the advice in Coaches Corner and that you are perfectly aware that take-off shots are (a) easy (b) deadly accurate. Well, they may be for McCullough but you and me, we know different (see p.59 'Going off in the take-off shot'). We know that nothing fails like a take-off. So what's to do? Again the solution is diabolically simple: don't play one! Just hit your ball directly to where you want it to go. 'Oh, yes,' I hear you cry, 'And what about the shouts of 'Did the yellow move?' (Why is it always the yellow?). The answer, dear reader, is 'Yes', spoken calmly and quietly or 'Yes. Of course!', rather more sharply but without guilt. This should be practised. Get a friend to stand at the lawnside,

with
Rush

while you play take-offs, and let him cry out peevishly at every stroke, 'Did the yellow move?' To which you reply instantly and without shame that it did. It is advisable to change the colour of the ball occasionally, just in case it should happen in a match that your opponent calls out 'Did the blue move?' If you are not prepared for this you may be trapped into a disastrous 'No' or even an embarrassed, 'Er... sorry... I don't know'. This last is unforgivable. Never hesitate. Always answer in the affirmative. (See also, in hoop shots, the question 'Is it through?' which must be answered with a brisk nod and the next shot played immediately, before the opponent can rise from his chair.)

Incidentally, some authorities recommend not running hoops which are distant from and side on to your opponent. Simply play past to hoop on the opposite side from the opponent's vantage point. The illusion is of a hoop run under perfect control.

The high-bisquer's principal advantage over the A-class player is his lack (sic) of knowledge of the game and its laws. If he has heard of hampered shots he does not recognise them when they arise in his own game. He may be quick to see that his opponent is hampered but when his own ball trickles through a hoop, leaving him with no room to swing, he plays a vigorously unabashed shove and carries on. There is danger of a crush? Bang it through before the opponent can open his mouth? Unforgivable in the experienced player but these beginners just don't know the rules, do they? Tell them politely and tolerantly and they won't do it again. Not in this match, anyway.

The A-class player has his own perks: 'Don't want this watched, do you? It's bang in the middle of the hoop. I'm only going through softly.' Or better: 'No need to trouble a referee - I'm one myself - I'll tell you if it's a fault.' Or best of all, addressed to a beginner: 'Would you like to watch this?' Followed by the grossest of double taps as the novice stands by, wondering what he is supposed to watch.

Some notable players have brought cheating to a fine art. I have the fondest memories of that Great Pretender, Albert Livingstone, who would totter round to hoop 5, crash it spectacularly then affix his clip carefully to the side of the hoop. Thereafter he would insist that he had gone round to Rover and crossly advise his opponent to pay more attention in future. Albert also played with panache the famous 'Eleven Hoop Game', in which a difficult hoop is missed out entirely from the break while the opponent's attention is distracted.

Another much admired ploy was perfected by that great belle dame of the Thirties, Agatha Talbot-Brown. She solved the problem which arises so often and so inconveniently in the best-planned games, when, at the beginning of a turn, the better placed ball is not the one you would like to play. The answer: swap balls in the middle of the turn - in the croquet shot for preference or when the other ball has been rushed off the lawn. Points to note: (i) make sure the clip you want to move finds its way onto your belt ('Look, I must be playing red.') (ii) deny vehemently that you started playing (continued on inside back cover...)



Ian Plummer

More Special Shots

Peel and promotion in one stroke. It is used when peeling from an acute angle near a hoop. The aim of the manoeuvre is to jaws the Peelee with a near roll shot, but to arrange the striker's ball in that croquet shot to follow behind the Peelee and Promote it through the hoop.

8.17. **Jump shots** are where you deliberately cause your ball to jump when hitting it. The purposes of jump shots are to clear an obstacle, peel a jawsed ball or run an angled hoop. A wide cross-wiring is an occasion where jumping the hoop may be an option. Jump shots however lack any subtlety, the ball will bounce on landing (probably over its target) and travel a large distance. An advantage of the jump shot is that it confers a great deal of spin on to ball. It is this feature which makes it popular for running angled hoops. The intention is that the ball strikes the far upright of the hoop spinning greatly, falls into the jaws and pulls itself through. Some people advocate that hoops are slightly wider at the top, they are however more likely to give the higher up you hit them and hopefully allow the ball to snake through them. If you have to jump through a hoop it's as well to have your reception ball a long way from the hoop.

8.18. Jump shots are achieved by standing over the ball and hitting down on it at an angle of say 30-45°. The ground must be firm to get a jump shot since a spongy lawn will absorb most of the energy - do not try them on wet lawns. Most jump shots should be refereed. There are a number of possible faults. The two major ones are playing a push (maintaining contact between the mallet and the ball for an appreciable time Law 32. a, viii) or damaging the lawn. There is a recent Law which says that if you play a shot which is likely to damage the lawn - and does, then you have committed a fault. To play a fair jump shot you must lift the mallet as soon as it has made contact with the ball. If you cannot play a jump shot without damaging the lawn - don't.

8.19. **Half Jump.** This is a combination of a jump shot and a peel. With a ball in the jaws of a hoop you jump your ball so that it just clips the top of the jawsed ball pulling both through. In my experience it is better to err on the high side of a jump since too little height results in your ball bouncing back out of the hoop and a red face. This shot can have the beneficial result of reversing the original orientations of the balls leaving a rush to peg after rover.

8.20. **Irish Peel.** This is a roll shot played to send both balls through the hoop. This shot should be refereed since there is a good chance of playing a crush stroke if the balls are close to the hoop. Unless the balls end up in contact after running the hoop you can then roquet the forward ball again once you have run the hoop.

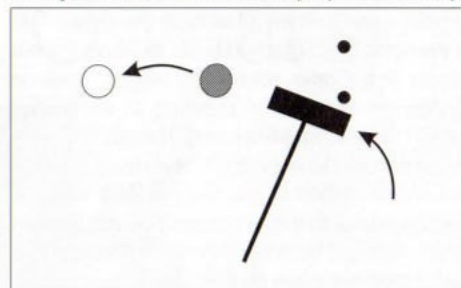
8.21. **The hammer shot.** This is a single ball stroke where the mallet is swung in the manner of a pick axe hitting down on a ball and driving it between one's legs. It has two main uses: to allow you to hit a hoop bound ball where there is very little room for a normal back swing, and to run an angled hoop where the ball is close to the hoop's uprights.

8.21.1. The ball is hit at an angle of 30° or more to the ground, the mallet being lifted as soon as contact has been made. All hammer shots should

be refereed since its is possible to push the ball into the ground, or damage the lawn - both faults. If the hammer shot is used on a hoop bound ball, you must be careful also not to infringe the extra constraints invoked for a hindered shot. It can be tempting to rest your arms on your thighs but this is a fault.

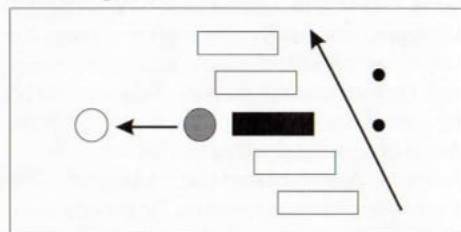
8.21.2. The idea in using a hammer shot to run a short angled hoop is that there is a reduced chance of crushing the ball on the hoop uprights, as the mallet is lifted as soon as the ball is struck. Hitting down on the ball confers top spin on it which assists it through the hoop.

8.22. **The 'Aiton Special' (aka 'von Schmieder' sweep).** This is a novel stroke played on a hoop-



bound ball when it lies about 9-14" directly behind the hoop. It allows you to roquet a reception ball lying further behind the hoop. The position being such that a conventional straight swing to hit your ball cannot hit it in the direction of the ball you wish to roquet, due to being hampered by the proximity of the hoop. The Aiton Special allows you a 'curved' swing rather than a straight one - with the tangent of that curve at the point the striker's ball is hit by the mallet being a straight line in the direction of the ball you wish to roquet. The stroke is played with the mallet held horizontal with the shaft 2-3" off the ground. The ball is also believed to be pulled in towards the striker rather than travel exactly along the tangent to the sweep. The head of the mallet is positioned between the hoop-bound ball and the hoop, so that it just clears the hoop when pivoted back from the other end of the shaft. Remembering not to rest any arm or hand involved with the stroke on the ground, the mallet is pivoted about the lower end of the shaft (to allow a "sharper" curve).

8.23. **The Diagonal sweep.** This is a more conventional method of dealing with a ball which is nearly hoop bound from roqueting another ball. The mallet is swung on a diagonal across the aiming line but with the mallet face always perpendicular to the aiming line. The ball will move away at the moment of impulse in a direction normal to the face of the mallet and hence along the aiming line.



Section 8 from Ian Plummer's "Intermediate Coaching Notes" (continued from "Croquet" no.219)

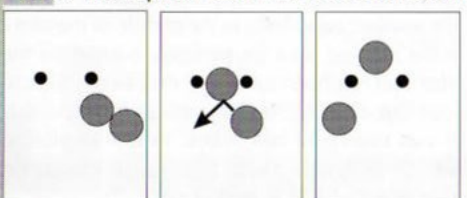
8.12. **Peels.** Only the technicalities are discussed, the mechanism of peeling is described in Section 15: *The Triple Peel*. Peeling is causing a ball other than the striker's to run its hoop. We saw in section 8.10 that a peel can be gained by a promotion. More usually they are achieved by croqueting the Peelee ball through its hoop.

8.13. When lining up balls for a peel you should look over the tops of the balls. It does no harm either to look along the sides as well. Most people prefer to lie with their eye just behind the balls and to look along in the direction of the peel. The tops of each of the balls are aligned to point in the required direction. The alignment can be checked by looking from the other direction through the hoop - but it is more difficult to see the precise disposition of the balls.

8.14. The stop shot is the most accurate stroke with which to peel. The forward ball travels faithfully along the centre line linking the balls in the croquet stroke. What should be borne in mind however is that the forward ball will skid for the first part of its travel before picking up spin. Therefore it can be beneficial on angled peels to hit the balls gently rather than play a tight stop shot. The stop shot is ideal for long peels since the ball has time to acquire spin. It is advantageous at times to 'jaws' the peelee and a stop shot can be a reliable method of doing this on an angled peel.

8.15. Peels attempted with a roll shot suffer from an effect known as *pull*. The forward ball no longer travels faithfully along the line of the balls as set up in the croquet stroke but arcs (Pulls) towards the aiming line of the shot. The amount of pull is dependent on many things: the heavier the lawn the more pull, thus wet or long grass increase the effect. Rolls at around 45°, have most pull, straight rolls next to none. The rougher the balls the larger the effect - the G.B. team in 1987 claimed that aligning the centre of the 'bulls eye' of the strikers balls milling at the contact point with the croqueted ball reduced pull! A 45° split 2ft. from a hoop on a heavy lawn could demand up to 2" compensation. Unfortunately it is up to experience to determine this.

8.16. The Aspinall Peel. This is a combination



Western Province Championships

7-14 March 1992, By Chris Clarke

Having received an invitation from the South African Croquet Foundation to play in the Western Province Championships, I found myself in the heat of Cape Town in early March. The idea was to try and improve the standard of play in South Africa and also to help re-establish links between our two countries now that South Africa has been welcomed back into international sporting circles.

During the week before the tournament, I was able to practice at Rondebosch half the day and then either sight-see or visit other clubs during the remainder. This proved a very enjoyable combination aided by Maureen Bamford my hostess, tour guide, chauffeuse, supporter and fellow devoted cricket fan. I visited both Fish Hoek and Somerset West to give exhibition games or coaching and was warmly received at both venues. One of the most pleasing sights of my tour occurred one afternoon at Rondebosch when the local school sent half a dozen boys down to play.

(*Winning with Rush, . . . continued*)

with yellow (see advice on take-offs above).

This ploy can be adapted to suit other circumstances. For example blue, having run hoop 3 and needing a rush on black to 4, rolls past black. Solution: play the rush with black, then continue with blue. I have seen a minus player use this manoeuvre with devastating legerdemain against an experienced but inattentive opponent. Unfortunately, so adroit was the move that a keen-eyed spectator applauded enthusiastically, giving the game away entirely and ruining a beautiful friendship.

In order to cheat effectively, a good working knowledge of the Laws is de rigueur. Make yourself particularly familiar with page 61 - Guide to Limits of Claims. How many people are aware, for example, that you can get away completely with faults committed under Law 32 by quickly playing two more strokes before the opponent can get out of his chair to complain. Even referees can be fooled. You would be amazed how many referees

with some remark or other. Our main challengers were Reg Bamford and Charles Barlow. We won the final of the Draw but lost the final of the Process - to set up the decider. A cagey start saw Clarke and Louw play themselves in before conceding the initiative. However, a vital 12 yard hit-in from Wynand saw him round, allowing Chris to finish with a 'Triple Peel' (peeling partner through the last three hoops and pegging out in one turn) after the opponents missed: +26 'TP'.

The Open Singles was played as two American Blocks with the winners contesting a best of three final. Reg Bamford comfortably won his block being undefeated and completing a 'Sextuple Peel' (as per the 'Triple Peel' described above, but for the last SIX hoops!) in one of his games. However, my block was very tight with Charles Barlow, Wynand Louw and myself finishing with 6/7. Charles had beaten Wynand +26, Wynand had beaten me +26TP, and I had beaten Charles +26TP. Fortunately, I progressed to the final on net points.

The first game of the final saw Reg miss a 10 yard shot after hoop 1 allowing me to complete my 9th Triple Peel of the tournament (+25TP). In the second game I got round first, but failed to get going with my other ball after Reg missed. He did a Triple Peel on MY ball and pegged it out, but I managed to pick up a '3 ball' break next turn anyway and finished.

The sight of three coloured and three white boys playing a fun game says a lot for the changes that South Africa has experienced.

It was with some relief that I welcomed the arrival of some semblance of playing form a couple of days before the start of the tournament - I was beginning to dread the embarrassment of a series of losses. I was entered in three events, the Open Singles, Open Doubles and big Handicap. The first weekend was devoted to the handicap event where I reached the semi-final before the inevitable -26. The final was between Ken Halland (2) and the younger of the Louw brothers, William, whose handicap started at about 14 and finished at about 7. Despite the reductions, William triumphed +26.

Open Doubles is my favourite way of playing croquet. I had been paired with Wynand Louw, one of South Africa's up and coming players, aged 18, and already in their top 4. It was an excellent pairing both on and off the lawns, with Wynand often managing to relax my rather worried state of mind

there are who would not recognise a fault if it gave them a double tap on the nose. Indeed, a judicious choice of referee can make a big difference to the outcome of an appeal. Before you raise your mallet, look around slyly, select your referee with care and embellish the traditional gesture with the hopeful cry: 'Are you in play, Jack?' Jack will be so flattered at being chosen, he won't dream of calling a fault. Even if, as is unlikely, he spots it.

I have left until last the easiest way of cheating undetected. It is possible only in handicap play and best employed when the difference in handicaps is greater rather than smaller. There are two techniques, each equally useful: the first requires the lower handicapped player to remove bisques which have not been taken; the other case is, of course, the replacement of the little white sticks by the long-bisquer. Either ploy may be easily effected while the opponent is engrossed in his break. If the manoeuvre is spotted the out player can always claim to be moving the bisques to a more convenient

spot. I have seen this ploy used to good effect when only three bisques were involved and only one had been taken. When there are, say, fifteen bisques in the ground, who's to know if you accidentally knock a couple over? This, too, can usefully be practised. When it is the lower handicapped player who is illegally removing his opponent's bisques and there are spectators present, it may be found that the raising of a hand in acknowledgement of an imaginary signal from the lawn will divert the suspicions of those standing round. In fact, the risk of discovery when there are more than seven bisques is so slight as to be non-existent. Remember the last time you looked in desperation to see how many bisques you had left? Were there as many as you expected? ... No, I thought not. Proves my point, doesn't it?

I hope you have found these suggestions useful and that they will increase your enjoyment of the wonderful game that is croquet. Remember though, it is not the game that counts but winning!