

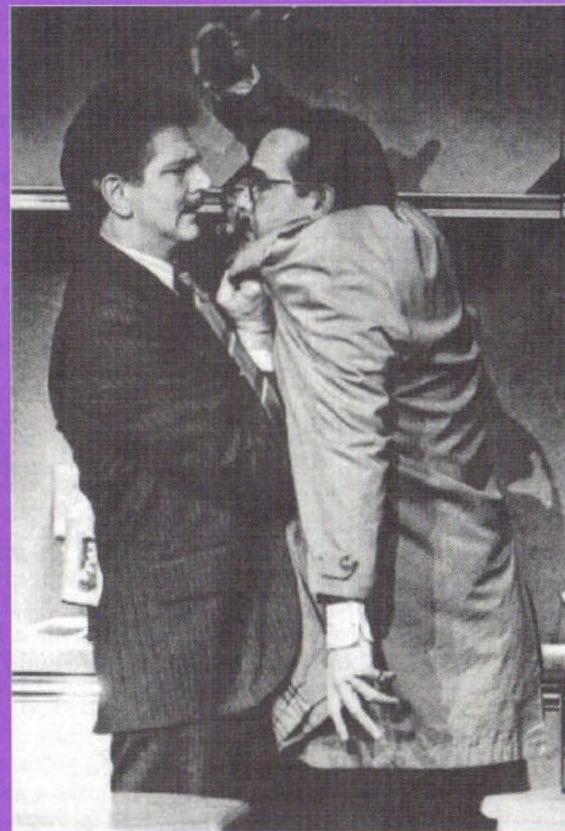
THROUGH THE HOOP ... Subscriptions, a heartening response from the Members ... still time to beat the early pay deadline ... and people say croquet is slow?

My 'drop-on-your-boots' insert into "Croquet" concerning 1993 Subscriptions has evoked a heartening and cooperative response. In the first three working days of receipt 'Stockers' and I found up to a dozen returns containing changes to members personal details which have been programmed thus enabling us to tighten the screws on the membership data base. I know it's a pain in the whatsit to have to fill in yet one more **%\$£**!! form, especially when one is paying by SO but it is, from the point of view of the CA Office, a valuable exercise and I really am very grateful for you taking the time and trouble to complete and return. Hopefully, one day will see the implementation of payment by Direct Debit when, given due warning about any proposed increase to the sub the CA can instruct the bank concerned of the amount to be recovered. Alas! That day is still some way ahead and may be overtaken by events.

On the subject of the 1993 Subscriptions don't forget that payment before 1st February by existing members entails a reduction as published in the last edition of the magazine. Go for it! Don't delay! Send today!!

Mixing socially at my club the other evening I was introduced to one of those rather self-important people who declaim opinion as fact. "Croquet", he said, "must be the slowest game in the world bar none"! Thanks to the Daily Telegraph I was able to set him right. "Compared to Shogi", I countered, "croquet is bullet-fast". I then went on

explain that Shogi, a board game thought to have originated in India some 3000 years ago and 'modernized' in 14th Century Japan is very big bucks in that country with wide media coverage and, thanks to corporate sponsorship, millionaire top players. One game can last up to eight hours (Now where have I heard that before?) and is played over two days while the



What do you mean? You forgot to send off my CA Membership Subscription!!!

seven games final of the Ryu O, possibly the game's most prestigious tournament, will last three months! (Come to think of it the Challenger, Yoshiharu Habu looks uncommonly like an Oriental version of one of the 1992 ATCO Opens victorious Doubles combination - guess which one!!)

Now! About those subs.....!!!

Tony Antenen

A BEGINNER WRITES

I started croquet in March last year. At the beginning of my first lesson (having agreed the grip) my teacher says: "Let's see you hit a ball". We were standing on the yard line in front of Hoop 1. "Shall I aim to hit it through the hoop?" says I. Maestro smiles indulgently. "Well we don't

be so lucky - the ball actually passes between the wires then the combination of the rabbit run plus the back spin will cause it to roll back.

In May I heard talk of a high bisquers tournament. As a keen gardener who boringly knows all the Latin names ("attractive isn't it. Yes, it's an Acer palmatum dissectum atropurpureum Crippsii") I didn't have to ask about the title. For an esoteric game like croquet no mere Rose bowl would do; naturally it would be called a Hibiscus tournament.

Next a doubles event. As the worst player I was obviously partnered with the best. His croquet skills were only equalled by his equanimous temperament. He spent the first 2 1/2 hours of every game nursing me round; scattering the oppents' balls and leaving me dead straight and about nine inches from the hoop. "Think you can manage that" he would say - and with such confidence in my stiff jab technique that I mostly did. Despite the handicap of me for a partner we actually won. Very good for Beginner's morale! And I must add for the benefit of any new beginner: there's no better way of improving one's croquet strategy than partnering a low handicap player.

At the season's end my handicap was down to 18 (triumph!). As an indifferent games player who has played a bit of squash, fives, hockey and cricket I can honestly say there's no game to touch croquet if only for the friendly help so many people give one.

This is my first and only article as Beginner. Next year (Editor willing) it will be under the headline: "An Improver writes!"

Anthony Fathers

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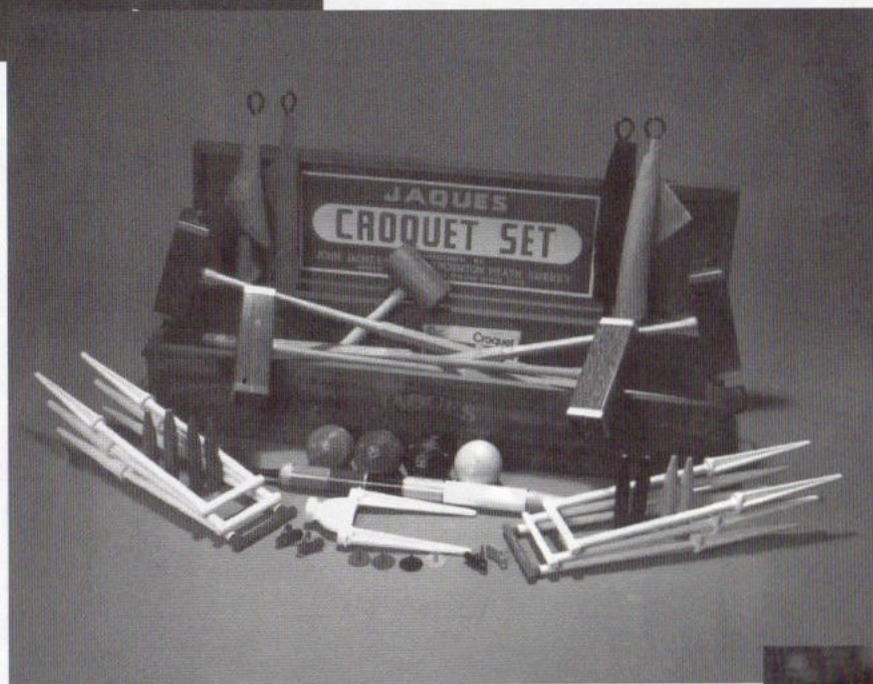
WHICH WAY NOW?



We look at responses to Stephen Mulliner's "Way Ahead" and ask where the CA goes now



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Gazing into the abyss

A FAIRY STORY

"Dark clouds slid across each other in the sky overhead and began to sprinkle a light rain over the ground. The rain ruffled leaves and nourished lawns. But against the shadowy house that rose up from a rolling hillscape on the banks of the Thames, it beat hopelessly without effect. Water splattered on grey columns; dribbling down crusty grooves that soared up, penetrating the mother clouds.

Inside the house one face stared out of a nearby window, watching the force of nature outside and contemplating the immunity from it of the discussion inside. His attention was snapped back to his colleagues by an order barked from the head of the table. Shuffling papers on the table in front of him and stumbling over words, he struggled to assemble a verbal report on his designated area. Lines of unsympathetic eyes stared at him, fronting minds that would have been similarly unsympathetic had they not been long-since vacated.

Dissent was no longer a profitable enterprise in the Empire and dissenters were only tolerated so long as their private thoughts remained on that intangible level. Tolerated for the

moment at least. It might have been surprising that a single individual was permitted to remain in the homogenous will of Council, except that Council had ceased to be the mother of policy and was now less than a mid-wife. Control rested with the Emperor himself, assisted by his personal Executive; Council did what it was told.

The individual finished his hurried words and, lacking the incentive to give any structure to prose when he knew bureaucracy incapable of pleasure or appreciation, he sat down abruptly. A silence of terrified anticipation descended on the hall as the appointed time arrived. Huge doors at which their long table pointed slowly began to swing open and out of the shadowy corridor beyond, the vaguest indications of a figure approached. When the figure passed through the doorway he appeared almost to radiate darkness; beams of dullness struck the walls, floor and ceiling, extinguishing the glow of light that previously had stole in through the windows. The Emperor crept forward to his throne at the head of the table. Power surrounded him: vivid as the folds of black cloth that fell about him, and equally frightening. A small grey face was the only indication of residual humanity, it rose and from it a deep cracked voice addressed the assembled Councillors with a sneer.

"My Councillors. I have come to you personally, on a momentous occasion, to announce a new beginning

for the Empire. This is my contribution to the celebrations which all our children will make in their enthusiasm.

"In order that the full benefits of citizenship within the Empire may be enjoyed by all, we will generously spread these benefits beyond our existing nationals. I hereby announce that all those currently resident in our associated lands will be honoured with full citizenship of the Empire. They will be recruited into the industries and service of the Empire immediately and this will bring reward to all.

"From today Government will be by direct Imperial decree. You will be relieved of your onerous duties - free to serve the Empire in other less demanding roles. The Federal Regions will be taken under central control and facilitated as necessary, according to judgement by the Executive - which will ensure proper efficiency and control of their administration.

"This is my gift to everyone. Now go and

spread the word of our most glorious conversion."

A face returned to the nearby window and to contemplation on the effect of the forces of nature upon man-made monoliths."

I am afraid that mine is not the only imagination that has been working hard recently. It seems that the CA has been cast very much as an "evil empire" by some people, in the style of the previous few paragraphs. This despite the reality of a voluntary Council and executive. There may be differences between visions of the future. We must not let those differences destroy any hope of future, when practical and constructive dialogue will ensure it. My little story illustrates the way that a few might like to paint the CA at the moment, and in so doing I hope shows how ludicrous the idea is. These are dangerous fictions and as we gaze over the edge into the abyss of croquet without the CA, or with an emasculated CA, I hope we will turn back older and wiser. **John Walters**

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NEWS

council quashes the federation conference but upholds the ahs, more funds raised for the test tour, French croquet fixtures and summer schools

CA COUNCIL IN DECEMBER

At its meeting in December, Council reversed a decision of the recent Federation conference. The conference had voted to accept Stephen Mulliner's plans that Federation fees be collected from clubs by the CA, as part of the registration/affiliation fee, and passed on to the Federations. Several Federations had vigorously opposed the plan. Council felt that the narrow Federation vote was insufficient justification to impose the change on reluctant Federations, particularly since they included two of the largest, and was concerned about the propriety of some voting. Therefore the status quo will be maintained and Federations will continue to collect their own fees.

Lionel Wharrad was unsuccessful in his bid to abolish, or implement a major review of, parts of the Automatic Handicapping System. He expressed particular concern over the operation of the AHS in level play games and the negative effects that the system was having as a disincentive for many people to play. Council did not support Lionel's views and the AHS will continue in 1993 with only minor changes. New handicap cards will be distributed to Associates with the Fixtures List; clubs will also receive cards for their non-Associate members.

1993 FIXTURES LIST

Associates should receive their Fixtures Lists in the first week of February. Unfortunately there are already changes to some of the dates:

Bowdon June Open weekend, advertised as being over the weekend 5/6th June will take place one week later - over the weekend 12th/13th June.

All England Area Finals, the dates advertised are incorrect; Tournament

Manager Nigel Aspinall will advise host clubs of the correct dates, and will give notification through the pages of "Croquet".

APPS & STEEL AWARDS

Club nominations for the male and female players who have made the most improvement during the 1992 season should be made to the CA Secretary before the end of February.

JUNIOR SQUADS

If there are sufficient players, two Under-21 squads will be run this year. Nominations for these squads are requested from any club or individual.

Nominated players should be under the age of 21 on the 1st January, 1993, and should have single figure handicaps. Squad meetings will normally be held mid-week during school or university vacations and last for two days.

Nominations should be made either to the CA Secretary or direct to Bill Lamb, 5 Bondyke Close, St Margarets Avenue, Cottingham, N Humberside HU16 5ND.

GRIPS FOR THE MACROBERTSON SHIELD

At the Federation Conference held in November, £140 was raised by the sale of rolls of self-adhesive mallet grip material. These rolls, donated by Bernard Neal, were sold for £10 each, with all proceeds going to the MacRobertson Shield test Tour Fund.

The rolls, which contain about 30 metres of material - enough for at least 25 mallets, can still be obtained at the CA Office at the same price. An enterprising club or individual could sell 25 grips at a bargain price of £2 each, and thereby make a substantial profit

which it is hoped would be for the benefit of club funds.

Meanwhile the Bowdon annual meal, reported on last issue, made a profit of £350 for the MacRobertson Fund. So a very heartfelt thankyou is due to the generous club and its members for their very welcome gesture.

FRENCH CROQUET

The Fédération Française de Croquet has announced its 1993 Fixtures. The eight fixtures include representative matches, a Womens Championship, Junior Championship and French Open. The latter is hoping to attract the World's top players to France at the end of August, after which they will go on to the World Championship at Budleigh Salterton.

REFLECTIONS ON SOUTHWICK

Sussex IT & CC, or Southwick, near Brighton is one of the largest Croquet Clubs in the world. Each year they host the British Inter-Counties Championship - an event of some 100 players which well needs the 9 courts on offer! Croquet has been played there since 1901, but like many clubs survival is often a struggle. Southwick are currently involved in a number of initiatives to stimulate interest in the club. Anyone interested to know more of the history and background to Southwick may be interested in "Reflections on The Sussex County Croquet Club at Southwick", written and illustrated by John Eardley-Simpson, price £1.00 (+20p P&P) from Sussex County Croquet Club, Victoria Road, Southwick, W Sussex BN42 4DJ.

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The school is intended for resident or non-resident players of handicaps between 10 and 18. The likely cost will be £185 for residents, and from £46 for non-residents. A Prospectus and entry form are available from: Mrs M Payton, 21 Marine Parade, Seaford, East Sussex BN25 2PL.

COACHING COURSES

Loughborough beginners
The aim of this course is

to improve the personal performance of "beginners" - those players who have not yet obtained an official handicap, or those whose handicap is 12 or more. Initially, major emphasis will be placed on good stroke production, but as soon as groups have a good command of stroke technique, the emphasis will shift to tactical play. Coaching will be interspersed with competitive play and time will be made available for individual coaching on particular difficulties.

The course is restricted to Associate Members of the Croquet Association. Details of how to join the CA may be obtained from Tony Antenen at the CA Office. Short lawns (24yds by 16yds) will be used throughout the course.

Fee: Tuition - £148.
Accommodation - £92
A brochure giving details of the Loughborough Summer Schools can be obtained from: Mrs Shirley Sandover, Loughborough Summer School, Loughborough University of Technology, Loughborough, Leics, LE11 3TU (Tel: 0509 222773).

The course, now in its 7th year, has proved to be extremely popular and worthwhile. All bookings for the Loughborough Summer School should be made through Mrs Sandover. Please apply early to make sure of your place, as the course is usually oversubscribed.

Coaching Holiday at Ardingly

South East Croquet Federation's Summer School will be held at Ardingly College near Haywards Heath, Sussex. From 8th to 14th August 1993.

The school is intended for resident or non-resident players of handicaps between 10 and 18. The likely cost will be £185 for residents, and from £46 for non-residents. A Prospectus and entry form are available from: Mrs M Payton, 21 Marine Parade, Seaford, East Sussex BN25 2PL.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

On Saturday 5th of December 1992 Keith Aiton married Catriona Peterson. The wedding took place in Bowdon, a stone's throw from the croquet club which was the cause of their initial meeting. Keith is the Great Britain coach and has himself played for GB, he is currently a Tax Lawyer for Price Waterhouse. Though daughter and sister of players Catriona has never herself been tempted, she is a Dental Surgeon. Catriona met Keith in

August 1984 when a number of players (including her brother, David) came to stay with her parents for the Northern Championships (a practice that has continued ever since!). The couple will accompany the GB team to Australia in March, though their honeymoon was in the Seychelles - without them!

Cathy and Martin French are delighted to announce the safe arrival of Innes Thomas - a brother & doubles partner for Aston.

OBITUARY

DR. W. R. D. WIGGINS
'Bobby', as he was affectionately known to many croquet players, died suddenly on 17th October 1992 aged 79 years, while attending a stamp auction.

He was born into a croquet playing family, and started playing when still a schoolboy at Bradfield around 1927. During the War, he served in the R.A.F., and later became a distinguished Consultant Anaesthetist in London - also a philatelist of international renown.

He resumed his tournament croquet career around 1950. His quality of play is shown by some of his achievements: - Open Champion 1957, defeating H. O. Hicks in the final; President's cup, eleven appearances, nearly winning this event in 1951 with eleven games to Hicks' twelve - Pat Cotter and John Solomon won seven and nine games respectively.

He loved to play at Compton, winning the South of England Championship on many occasions. He was a successful member of the British international Team in 1956 and 1963.

He was a prominent C.A. Council Member for

many years, and was chairman of the Council from 1966 to 1968. In 1967 he had the honour to receive, and with Maurice Reckitt's help explain, the game to Her Majesty the Queen at Hurlingham for the Centenary croquet match. His service to the Council and the games administration was recognized by his appointment as Vice President in 1979.

During much of his playing career he was somewhat overshadowed by Hicks, Solomon and Cotter. His playing weakness was his hoop stroke, a stopshot stab instead of a smooth swing. However his stopshot rushes were of the highest standard and accuracy; the fine cut rushes on fast lawns he executed in 1963 in New Zealand were quite staggering, and have never been equalled. He loved to test the strength of the lawn in his opening shot; joining wide to him meant at least four yards, not his best shooting distance, and he was not averse to tell bemused opponents they had joined too close, especially at the start of the game. His break play, at his best, was exceptionally accurate - but he remained a solid

BOOKS

CROQUET - An Annotated Bibliography from the Rendell Rhoades Croquet Collection by Nancy L Rhoades.

Dr Rendell Rhoades, born March 1st 1914, was an American academic from Ohio who travelled widely in connection with his scientific work. Hobbies included medieval and Renaissance natural history, stamp

collecting, postal history, local history and humour. But his enthusiasm for croquet led him to develop an esoteric collection of books and materials on the game. This bibliography represents a listing of his finds, and the all-engrossing interest he maintained for the game.

Included are references to books, pamphlets, periodicals, catalogues,

trading cards, newspapers, photographs, postcards, scrapbooks, art prints, and advertisements; 679 references to croquet. The book is stunning in its breadth. Quite extraordinary, quite unique. (244pp., 8pgs of plates, h/b) PRICE: £22.15
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Peg and 4-back player always keen to pounce on Cotter and Solomon's failed triples.

In 1979 he managed the British Croquet Touring Side to New Zealand. He stayed on there, and Bobby surprised us all

when he returned a few years later to live in Bournemouth, and bringing his new wife Susan. Susan is the only player in history to have a plus handicap in golf, and a minus handicap in croquet.

One of Bobby's sons, David, is following in his father's footsteps as a fine croquet player near international standard.

Our warmest sympathy goes out to Susan and all the family.

Dr. W. P. Ormerod

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History of Croquet (Pritchard) £9.00 £1.00
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Queen of Games (Smith) £12.95 £1.00
A well written book
Croquet - The Complete guide (Gill) £6.00 £1.00

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SAPCOTE

We must get a complete and finalized fixture list from the Cricket Club otherwise how can we possibly plan our home fixtures for this summer?"

"I know that Long Eaton Croquet Club have several members who attend evenings on a Sunday, and they would rather like to play the friendly match here on a Saturday".

"We must decide on a date when we can select a team to defend our Golden Mallet team title".

Hurlingham? No. Nottingham? Closer, but no. This is Sapcote Croquet Club in Leicestershire, where a triple peel is most likely to have been the laughter of three players on the lawn, after the performance of the fourth!

This is not to say that the standard of play is poor, far from it, it has already been indicated that we can win things. We are not village bumpkins either, at the A.G.M. of the East Midlands Federation there were more Sapcote members than from any other club. What is unique about Sapcote is that we play on the village green and we play all the year round.

Whilst I must allow a moment for the smirks and chortles, and for the comments of those who fear that the image of the game is being tarnished, I must at the same time crave your indulgence for a further moment, so that we might examine the potential of an arcadian venue.

We play all-year-round

because the village green needs little conservation. Several of our members are retired and on a Wednesday afternoon in December, Eileen can be seen emerging from one corner of the green with head scarf, duffle-coat and Wellington boots; mallet carried in the 'close-port' position. Bob carrying his mallet at 'the trail' arrives from the opposite corner, sporting his favorite head gear and protected by muffler and mits. You have to understand that winter croquet is the means by which we acquire our experience and expertise in court-surface evaluation. In December for example the ground is soft and the balls will find their own level; in a hollow, one does not rush anything, 'sticking in a hoop' means sticking in the surface beneath the hoop, and a fine take-off means that you have actually been able to separate the balls.

In February, however, things are quite different. The moisture within the hollows has frozen and the hollows no longer exist. You can rush anything and everything. The term take-off actually describes the action, in that the ball will certainly leave the ground. One dare not double-bank in February, and the number of dog-walking spectators will almost certainly have increased.

Finally, there is the street lighting. Whilst most fair-weather croquet players are seated cozily in their lounges, the Sapcote Club are out until 6 o'clock guided by the sodium hue, no one chooses blue and black in December.

John Hansen



Cassiobury beat Phyllis Court 5-1 in a friendly inter-club back in June

In the November 1991 issue of the Croquet Magazine, it was reported that the intention of the Ferring Sports and Leisure Association was to provide the village of Ferring with the three sports in order of priority as requested by its residents. Bowls and croquet being the most popular in this village which has a largely retired population, and tennis being third on the list.

However, the Parish Council subsequently set up an Advisory Group for Sports and Leisure. Ignoring the obvious findings of the FSLA, the Parish Council is now spending public money on refurbishing tennis courts with a very vague promise of a bowls club sometime

in the future. Whilst the FSLA can be justly proud to have awakened the Parish Council's interest in sport, the present programme excludes the provision for croquet for the 100 members who have given written support for a village croquet club.

Confronted with this situation, the FSLA negotiated to lease a plot of land on the edge of the village. A cottage and farm buildings had once occupied this site, but for more than 30 years it has lain derelict and now forms a tiny corner of land which is known as the strategic gap. Whilst legislation permits certain sports activities on such areas, the planning application for the proposed croquet club

Worthing Croquet Club and

the Borough Council's Sports Development Unit organized introductory croquet sessions at Worthing Leisure Centre during the summer of 1992. The aims were (a) to promote the game of croquet and (b) to encourage membership of the local club.

The innovative element of the project was that it involved adapting an astro turf pitch to the game of croquet.

Prior to 1992 taster sessions were held at the Croquet Club's headquarters at Hill Barn Golf Course, but there was a low level of attendance. It was felt that access to Hill Barn was too difficult by public transport and a venue which was easier to reach was required. The problem was to find somewhere which had a suitable playing surface.

Worthing Leisure Centre's Astro turf Pitch, which is used mainly for hockey and football, had been used in the past for lawn green bowls which indicated it was flat enough for croquet and trials proved that it was. The problem of fixing hoops to the surface was overcome when it was

discovered that a three inch nail could be hammered into it. Normal indoor croquet hoops were adapted by drilling four holes for the nails in the base plates. These were found to be sufficient to hold the hoops in place and allowed for them to be removed after each session. The winning peg had to have a metal plate attached to it as the wooden one with which it was supplied was too weak to take the nails.

The pitch area was large enough to accommodate two full size croquet lawns, which were marked out using string. Given the alternative uses of the pitch it was desirable that the croquet areas were only temporary.

The main problem with using the astro turf pitch was the length of time involved in setting up the lawns. Half an hour per lawn had to be allowed for fixing the hoops.

In all other respects the venue proved to be satisfactory. The Leisure Centre is a well known facility and it is accessible by both bus and train. It also has extensive car parking. The astro turf surface although faster than grass was adequate for introducing croquet to beginners.

The initial programme involved a free taster day

sparked off a major campaign by local conservationists who had previously not given this privately owned land a passing thought. This organized campaign against the proposed Croquet club resulted in the District Council being persuaded to refuse permission for the application. This decision was made despite the support of the Parish Council and the two local District Councils, and indeed an encouraging site meeting with the local representative of the National Sports Council and knowledgeable persons in the world of croquet.

The FSLA feel that the objections to the application do not come within the framework of planning

followed by two introductory sessions designed to develop the skills of the players. The first phase culminated in an Open Day at Worthing Croquet Club which was timed to coincide with the National Croquet Day on 23rd May 1992.

The second phase of the project involved four sessions in June at which the participants could either play golf croquet on a casual basis or join in a coached session of Association Croquet.

The coach for the project was Mr. Ron Welch. The administration and publicity was provided by the Borough Council through the Sports Development Officer, Mr. Julian Stevens. Small items of equipment and links with the Worthing Club were supplied by Miss Patricia Shine.

The project was advertised through a leaflet drop to a variety of community outlets such as libraries, sports centres, and community centres. Press Releases were sent to the local media and as a result a live interview with Radio Sussex took place and there were pieces on the project in the Worthing newspapers.

Attendance on the Free Taster Day (5 May) was 29 and on the Introductory Sessions (12 & 19 May) 45;

law and practice and will be appealing to the Department of Environment against the decision.

In the meantime, as an affiliated member of the Croquet Association, the Ferring Sports and Leisure Association continues to encourage interest in croquet and on 26th July held its third Open Day on private lawn. On that day about 50 enthusiasts, some beginners, some players enjoyed the specially adapted tournament organized by Bryan Teague of the Worthing Croquet Club.

Friends and members of the FSLA will work hard to keep croquet alive in the village until the day when it can be recorded that Ferring has its very own village club.

Open afternoon in Ferring during 1992



Average = 22. Follow On Sessions (June) attracted 64; Average = 16.

About fifty per cent of those involved in the project went on to join the Worthing Croquet Club.

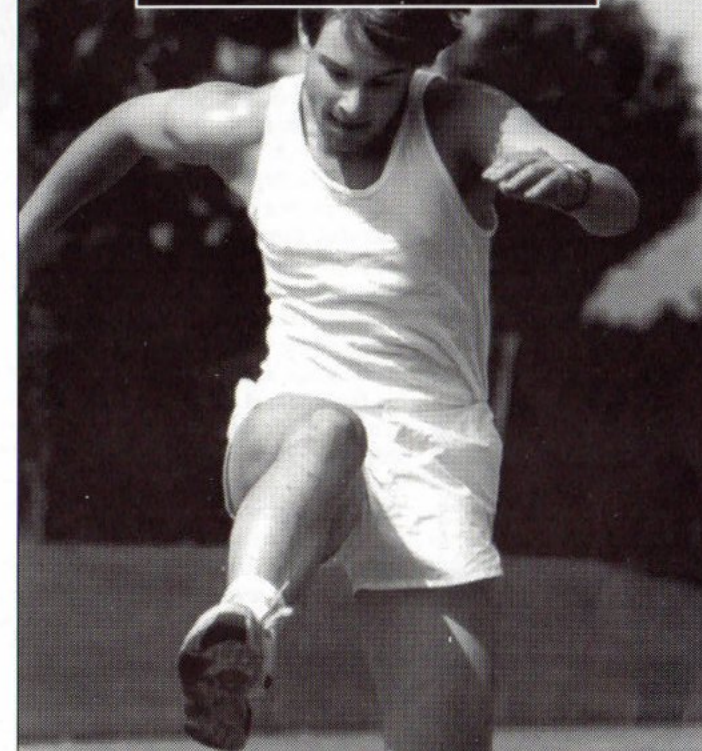
The project was successful on two levels. In the short term it helped to promote the game of croquet. In the long term it proved that astro turf pitches can be used for croquet and the project was successful in recruiting new members for the local club.

A similar promotion is planned for 1993 but if croquet is to take place regularly on the astro turf the issues of facility and coaching costs along with the time involved with setting up the lawns must be addressed.

Worthing revolutionary astro-turf croquet



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DTW03/CQ/01/93

REFLECTIONS

The Automatic Handicapping System; savings available from the magazine; the All England Handicap Final and a new National League

Handicap system

Dear sir,
The Automatic Handicap System has won approval as a very good step forward but it seems to me that it is still not up to the task of equalizing handicap standards between clubs. John Evenett in the December issue highlighted 'the fixed number of points available'. One consequence is that a club with a significant number of improving players needs to import points steadily; but there simply are not enough inter-club games for this to happen in sufficient quantity. So regularly players from northern clubs (where most are of working age and improving faster) travel to a tournament in a retirement area, win easily and have their handicap reduced. They then return home and promptly lose all their games. This is fun for neither party; several people have mentioned that it can affect their choice of tournaments.

What is needed is an additional mechanism, such as a benchmark. We have one, namely the very best players who are all fairly accurately handicapped, whichever is their home club. But the higher a player's handicap the greater the variation, both in their overall standard and in their play from one game to another. So I suggest a simple change - when the handicap difference is more than say 5 (10?) points then recognise that the outcome is largely dependent on the play of the high-bisquer - the result should be that only the points of the high-bisquer are adjusted. Alternatively the point change for the low-bisquer should be small.

With this change :-

1. Players' handicaps will be determined by how they play against similar or better opposition, not by games against much higher bisquers.

2. Low bisquers will not be so worried about the effect on their own handicap of playing a possible bandit. Nor will there be an opportunity to

when the handicap difference is more than 5 points the outcome is largely dependent on the play of the high-bisquer



message handicaps downwards by selecting opponents who cannot yet play to 24.

3. It is precisely the 'asymmetry' in points awarded that makes it possible for the total number of points in a club to alter, in the right direction, as a result of internal games, rather than just external games as at present. The increased flow of points would lead to better handicaps.

Roger Huyshe,
Bowdon Croquet Club

Dear Sir,
Margaret Jones's letter (Croquet 224) on full bisque-play, whilst superficially attractive, is fortunately fallacious. The effect of giving bisques to a player is to shorten the course the player has to run without bisques.

Taking Margaret's example when a handicap 20 plays a handicap 10 with normal bisque difference, i.e. 10 bisques to the handicap 20, those bisques should be sufficient to get the handicap 20 half-way round the course, leaving the other half to be done without bisques. The handicap 10 has to do the full course without bisques, i.e. twice as far as the handicap 20.

If we consider full-bisque off base 5 (rather than using 6 as Margaret did, as it simplifies the argument), the handicap 20 with 15 bisques has sufficient to get three-quarters of the way round, leaving one quarter to do without bisques. The handicap 10 with 5 bisques has sufficient to get half-way round with bisques, leaving one half to do without bisques, which is again twice as far as the handicap 20.

In both cases the handicap 10 has twice as far to go without bisques as the handicap 20, but then he is twice as good a player. There is therefore no advantage to either player.

It is quite easy to extend this argument with the use of algebra to show that normal bisque difference and full-bisque off any

base are quite fair and consistent.

Yours sincerely,
Bill Lamb, HCC Chairman

Magazine savings?

Dear Sir,
In the December issue No.224 Stephen Mulliner asks for suggestions for solving the financial problems of the CA. Here is one that would save money.

I suggest that 'Croquet' should be reduced to two 24 page issues a year. This would save £8000. (See October Issue No.223 p.12). This glossy publication could then be reserved for photographs, articles and other items requiring diagrams. All other copy, e.g. tournament reports, could then be issued as much cheaper news sheets at considerably less cost than £8000. For example the cost of the South Western Federation news sheet of four A4 pages was £360 last year.

Incidentally I think the CA's proposal a bad idea. We find it difficult enough to recruit (and keep) new members even with an active recruiting drive every season. The majority of recruits have no interest in the CA, and the further addition to the club subscription would simply cause them to look elsewhere for their leisure activity.

Yours faithfully,
Allen Parker, Parkstone.

Dear Sir,
May I, as a humble reader of your Magazine, make a small suggestion, viz-

Perhaps it might make it easier to fit all the national and international news, coaching, comments and editorials etc, into your glossy main magazine if you put all the reports from individual clubs, on their Tournaments, into a separate insert - not necessarily on the same high quality paper.

Trusting you do not feel that I am interfering too much.

Yours sincerely
Richard Wainman

Comments and suggestions on the magazine are

always welcome. Unfortunately, there are a number of misconceptions regarding costs of the magazine. Two years ago the cost of the magazine was slashed by a) installing more competitive printers; b) cutting the number of pages. On taking over the publishing in 1992, Eastern Rose preserved these efficiencies. Nevertheless, it does seem that 24 pages per issue is too few to cover all the material that readers would like. It is disappointing that reaction to a proposed "Tournament Supplement" at minimal subscription has been 'slow', and puts a question mark over just how much players genuinely want this service.

For a publication of the print run that "Croquet" has, paper quality is not a significant cost. After taking off postage costs (which at 28p per copy could not be reduced without a significantly reduced service) and netting off advertising (which we hope to increase, but which would be damaged by some proposed changes), the magazine costs the CA about 3p per page (4p if advertising is not netted off). This covers origination, printing, collating, binding and packaging. Competitive, I suggest, even in comparison with the SW Fed' Newsletter!

The All England Handicap Finals

Dear Editor,
WHAT a grand sounding title, excellence amongst the lesser mortals!

WHAT a lot of games played by a lot of clubs all over the country. (I wonder what Ireland, Scotland and Wales do?) A superb SEF area final organized by Southwick and then THE FINALS.

WHAT a fiasco. Held at our great headquarters! No chance but hived off to whatever club willing to take it on. *The title is becoming a little tarnished.*

You arrive at the venue, someone 'drops' a few hoops in the holes, puts out a few flags, tells you

that ONLY SIX are coming so we shall play it as an American and off you go. Fortunately one of the contestants was a referee so we had someone to adjudicate on the first day. *The title becomes a little more tarnished.* The Secretary of the CA graced the event with his presence on both days and presented the second hand, tarnished trophies. How does the winner explain to his friends that he hasn't just won the Australian Open? *The title has now become extremely rusty.* Thank goodness the food was excellent.

WHAT are we paying for? The National Championship for your average Club Player being treated with less aplomb than a club tournament! Are we inferior croquet players just here to make up the subscriptions? With a bit of luck the results may appear elsewhere in the magazine if it doesn't interfere with the "better players" news but just incase Steve Harbron won with 5 wins.

WHAT a cynic you say but after 40 years in the Army I know what little effort it takes to make an occasion and for the participants to feel special. The more special the event the more people want to take part. A second rate event only attracts a small following and the consequent loss of income.

Come on CA you can't Make hay without good grass roots and you are killing yours.
Yours disillusioned,
Len Hawkins, Ramsgate

National Croquet Leagues

Dear John,
If the Croquet Association is to maintain the momentum of development of the sport over the next few years there are few better ways of doing it than through the sponsorship of various competitions. Already there are examples of this by Angostura, Atco, Pilkingtons and others in the past. Regretfully, because of these recessional times, companies, which have been supportive of minor sports in the past, will consider long and hard about the return they can expect from promoting Croquet.

It follows therefore that the sport itself has to make itself attractive to future sponsors. Most notably this has included the introduction of the Short and Indoor versions of the game. I suggest that the Tournaments and Development Committees of the C.A. consider the introduction of a National Croquet League played under Advanced Rules.

Although the details of such a competition would be subject to much debate by clubs and individuals I have given the matter much thought and venture to suggest the following structure as a basis for it.

1) The League would replace the current Inter-Club and Mary Rose knock-out competitions.

2) The League would be constituted of one or more divisions, each of eight teams.

3) Each team would play each other team in that division once per season, giving three matches at home and four away, or vice-versa. The fixtures to be reversed the following season for those teams still in the same division. This would give a total of seven games per season, per club (i.e. one match per calendar month, April - October)

4) Matches would consist of two doubles and four singles games thereby making a draw possible. Failure to play on the appointed date would mean that the responsible club would automatically lose 0 - 6.

5) Points would be awarded as follows:-
Win - 2 points
Draw - 1 point
Loss - 0 points

6) Promotion and relegation between divisions should follow at the end of each season.

7) Constituent teams of the various divisions could be determined by performances either in the last year of the knock-outs it replaces, or over a longer

period of time.

8) Clubs would be allowed to enter more than one team in the League but not be allowed to have more than one team in any one division. The respective players of clubs entering more than one team to be notified in advance of the commencement the season.

9) Although not originally intended for this purpose, the winners of Division One and Two could be awarded the Inter-Club and Mary Rose trophies respectively. Additionally new trophies could be purchased or sponsored. Who knows, actual prize money may be available for successful clubs.

10) By far the biggest stumbling block will be the allocation of fixture dates. In order that clubs holding or promoting events are not disadvantaged in the first year, a close scrutiny of the calendar should be made so that clubs can be notified in good time that the proposed league fixture dates will clash with their tournament. This will enable the club to arrange other dates if they so wish. In subsequent years these fixture dates can be altered using the natural calendar progression of dates. After all, this is what most clubs do now anyway. This will mean that even if the idea was to receive immediate official support, it would be unlikely that it would commence before the 1994 season.

With this structure in place, I believe it would be more likely that sponsorship would be forthcoming. Certainly other sports have benefited from the formation of a National League, with all the attendant publicity that is generated. I can see no reason why the National Croquet League should not have a place on Ceefax or Oracle.

Remember the actual organization of the League is open to argument what I am proposing is the idea of the League itself.

Yours Sincerely,
Brian Storey, Bowdon

I suggest the introduction of a National Croquet League played under Advanced Rules



SPENCER ELL - Hunstanton September

East Anglia experienced its "Rainy Season" during August after 2 years of drought, so lush green and somewhat slow lawns awaited the 8 selected for this prestigious event. As they dried out and speeded up becoming more difficult, the firmly set hoops became less inviting. The standard of play was rather lower than normally found in the Ell, in that few triples were attempted, Duncan Hector being the sole competitor who achieved the 3 peels -- it must have been the thrill of accomplishment that caused him to miss the simple roquet on the extra ball prior to attempting the rush to the peg.

The fates of the late replacements varied, Roger Jenkins was not on form and did not do himself justice on the lawns, Peter Darby fared rather better and cheerfully played with determination, winning 5 games in the series. Chris Williams took the first round to get going and then played to his true potential and had some good wins in the second round.

Mike Llewellyn-Williams' play was inconsistent, very good on occasions marred by unfortunate errors at critical times. Francis Landor was an early "favourite" and played accurately when on flow, then suddenly the muse departed and he would have a poor game.

Justin Goddard had a good tournament and played a precise and tight game, possibly his greatest achievement was the 56 miles from Cambridge in 60 minutes dead! Obviously there are fewer speed cops around at 7am. Both Strat Liddiard and Duncan Hector played well, and after the first round were tied in the lead with 6 wins each. Strat's luck ran out in the second round and several defeats put him out of contention, but Duncan did not have it all his

own way, when his shooting went away there was the possibility of a 3 way tie -- no one was more relieved than the manager when he recovered his composure in his final game and pegged out the victor.

14 Games in 4 days is a tight schedule for any competition, no manager can MAKE the players play more quickly and a 12 hour day is pretty tough on all. It was all too obvious that the standard of play dropped during the second round, the players admitted they were tiring and more errors crept in. Surely these invitation events should be enjoyed by all? Must they become an endurance test? It is a great credit to our ground staff that they were on duty by 6am in order to complete the mowing and linemaking so that play could start at 8 o'clock, I hope the Tournament Committee will rethink this experiment and make the Ell a 5 day event again in future. *By Sarah Hampson*

	MW	JG	PD	CW	SL	DH	FL	RJ		
M.L-Williams	-11	+1	+4	-18	-4	+4	-2	3	5	
	+15	-2	-20	+4	-6	-2	+16	3		
J Goddard	+11	+21	+4	-1	-3	+17	+15	5	2	
	-15	+14	+4	+9	+2	-13	+23	5		
P Darby	-1	-21	+3	-11	-17	-9	+6	2	=6	
	+2	-14	+11	-8	-13	-15	+9	3		
C Williams	-4	-4	-3	-13	-21	-22	+5	1	=6	
	+20	-4	-11	+17	-12	+10	+19	4		
S Liddiard	+18	+1	+11	+13	+7	-3	+15	6	=3	
	-4	-9	+8	-17	-15	+8	+14	3		
D Hector	+4	+3	+17	+21	-7	+19	+21	6	1	
	+6	-2	+13	+12	+15	-15	+25	5		
F Landor	-4	-17	+9	+22	+3	-19	+15	4	=3	
	+2	+13	+15	-10	-8	+15	+13	5		
R Jenkins	+2	-15	-6	-5	-15	-21	-15	1	8	
	-16	-23	-9	-19	-14	-25	-13	0		

SELECTOR'S WEEKEND - Parkstone September

Ten of us met in Parkstone to contest the Selector's Weekend instead of the usual sixteen. There was much speculation as to what had caused the large number of withdrawals from the various selection events; was it the late notification or just the recession? Be that as it may, the promotion of some players to higher things left our numbers somewhat depleted. Not that we minded as it meant that we only had one lawn double-banked.

The format was an 8 round Swiss, ably managed by Tim Haste, which meant that we all played everybody else except one. The lawns were fast on the first two days but overnight rain and drizzle slowed them down somewhat on the last day. Hoops were carefully and firmly set with 1/16" clearance by Cliff Jones, assisted by David Harrison-Wood. They also took steps to alleviate any "rabbit runs".

At the end of the first day David Harrison-Wood and David Thatcher were the only ones with 3 wins. The latter had survived having his forward ball pegged out in two of his games but in both cases the 'oppo' ball also trickled on to the peg leaving a two ball finish and both Bob (Stephens and Fewtrell) cursing their own carelessness.

By the end of the second day David Harrison-Wood had 5 wins with David Thatcher, Cliff Jones and Ian Plummer all on 4 wins. Significantly, David's only defeat had been at the hands of Ian. Much head and beard scratching

by the Manager as all the main contenders had already played each other, leaving games against us lower order mortals to try and sort things out.

The first upset came in Round 7 when John Ruddock, a late starter who hadn't broken his duck until Round 5, beat a rather crestfallen David Harrison-Wood. So it was now 5 wins each for David, Cliff and Ian. David Thatcher, David Magee and Kevin Carter all had 4 wins.

All to play for in Round 8. Mutterings were heard from the manager about having to have play-offs, etc. Bob Fewtrell resoundingly beat Cliff Jones in the now very soggy conditions on lawn 3 thereby ending his challenge. Ian and David both came through with 6 wins but Ian took the trophy under the normal rules of a Swiss. Hugh Smorfit got a special prize for the best loser.

Repeated attempts to make triple peels, particularly by David Harrison-Wood and Cliff Jones were sadly doomed to failure in the closing stages in most cases. The only completed triple being by David in his first game.

Copious thanks are due to the Parkstone club for not only providing excellent facilities outside but appropriate sustenance and fortification on the inside. When the business on the lawns was over and equally intense competition took place on the pool table. It was also appreciated how many local members came down to spectate and support.

By Bob Fewtrell



- 1st Ian Plummer (2) 6 wins
- 2nd David Harrison-Wood (-1/2) 6 wins
- Cliff Jones (1) 5 wins
- Kevin Carter (1 1/2) 5 wins
- David Magee (1/2) 5 wins
- David Thatcher (2 1/2) 4 wins
- Bob Fewtrell (3 1/2) 3 wins
- John Ruddock (2) 3 wins
- Bob Stephens (1) 2 wins
- Hugh Smorfit (2) 1 wins

CHAIRMAN'S SALVER - Budleigh Salterton September

	SC	IP	IB	AG	DW	WL	WC	AH		
S Comish	-4	-22	+26	-20	-17	+19	-26	2	5=	
	+4	-1	+15	-21	+17	-6	+24	4		
L J Palmer	+4	-16	+20	-16	+17	+12tp	-26	4	7	
	-4	-26	-24	-4	-3	+14	-4	1		
I J Burridge	+22	+16	-3	-22	+9	+25	+11	5	2	
	+1	+26	+14	-2	-15	-26	+26	4		
A K Gregory	-26	-20	+3	-3	+24	-4	-10	2	8	
	-15	+24	-14	-11	-26	-15	+16	2		
D Wiggins	+20	+16	+22	+3	-2	+24	+15	6	1	
	+21	+4	+2tp	+11	-26tp	-26	+17tp	6		
W E Lamb	+17	-17	-9	-24	+2	+19tp	+16	4	3=	
	-17	+3	+15	+26	-26	-1	-9	3		
W T Coles	-19	-12	-25	+4	-24	-19	-16	1	5=	
	+6	-14	+26tp	+15	+26tp	+1	-24	5		
A B Hope	+26	+26	-11	+10	-15	-16	+16tp	4	3=	
	-24	+4tp	-26	-16	-17	+9	+24	3		



THE BIG IS

BARLOW BOWL Report Class of 92 Manageress's Remarks

- Celia Steward Started the week well, very pleasant and co-operative with the manageress. Needed a certain alcoholic artificial aid to see her through the week but not in the usual amounts. Qualified for a managerial prize having been the first game finished on Saturday. One failed triple.
- Judy Anderson A very good week from Judy, the model of a serious player. She sanded the faces of her mallet religiously after every game as instructed by its maker, but I think she should have used 'wet and dry' paper instead. No artificial aids used during the tournament, and was chuffed to bits with her stick of rock.
- Barbara Haslam The manageress's right hand woman, what a brick. Excellent debut in the event, should go far and will be a force to be reckoned with in the near future. Qualified for silver award. One failed triple.
- Frances Ransom (Alias, 'Biggles') Started the week as she meant to go on, a real thorn in the manageress's side. If there had been a flag pole she would have been hoisted up it. Unfortunately qualified for three managerial prizes, but the manageress had the last laugh. Handicap reduction earned through good steady play. Failed triples and a failed sextuple. (Consistently bad at peg-outs however.)
- Carol Lewis started the week well, but soon fell under the bad influence of Ransom. Another excellent playing debut in this event, shame about her behavior. However, with a good role model she should become a force to reckon with too in the near future. Qualified for one managerial prize. One failed triple peel.
- Gail Curry A sound managerial debut, considering some of the competitors antics. Did well not to turn to the Guinness when the going got tough. Set a new record for the number of artificial aids to be used in one game (5). One failed sextuple, one failed quad and several failed triples.
- Dab Wheeler An excellent role model for the trouble makers. The epitome of tact and diplomacy and very co-operative with the management. A slight problem with adjusting to different equipment but carried on without any problems.
- Kay Yeoman Another fine role model for the less well behaved ladies. Proved to exert a calming influence on the gang leader Ransom. Coped well with some difficult conditions and adjusted her game accordingly. *Report by Gail Curry.*

LONGMAN BOWL: Christine Osmond does it again

Competition for the Longman Bowl, Event 2 of the Ladies Week, nearly ran into disaster before it even started as two of the six chosen participants found themselves unable to play. With only days to go two local Hurlingham members, Ginny Greig (11) and Anne Stephens (11) were persuaded to make up the numbers.

Christine Osmond (6), Parsons Green and Surbiton, last year's winner, and Pat Macdonald (6) were the only ladies with any experience of this event. Pat has played 'about ten times' so she had four new recruits to guide. Both Pat and the highly organized and efficient manager, Paul MacDonald, looked after the small group of ladies very well and made them welcome to their home club of Roehampton. Dorothy Miller (4 1/2) from Southwick and Faith Fewtrell (8) from the Isle of Wight were the only ladies resident outside London who took up the challenge of the event. I wonder if some ladies who might otherwise play are rather apprehensive of staying alone in the capital and dealing with the city traffic. By the end of the second day Christine, with four straight wins, proved to the rest that she was not about to relinquish her hold on the Longman Bowl. We all did our best but only Dorothy, the eventual runner up, managed to claim a victory against her all week.

Even if the general standard of croquet left a little to be desired, all six ladies enjoyed the week and developed a very pleasant camaraderie. We all played each other twice to Advanced Rules. There were no attempts at triples but several lift shots were saved with appropriate peeling.

Christine's 'best shot of the tournament' was when she took off beside Hoop 3 for a poorly placed pioneer near Hoop 4, accidentally ran the hoop and stopped in a perfect position for a rush to Hoop 5. Ginny had a spectacular shot in her first game against Dorothy when she roqueted a ball out of the jaws of Rover from about ten yards at 45 degrees. From this Ginny set up a four ball break and went on to beat Dorothy by 2. Faith's "kamakazie" hoop attempts resulted in some spectacular, hoop runs but also the occasional expensive mistake. Having pegged out one of her balls in a tight game against Pat, Dorothy was having a very difficult time regaining the innings. Many mutterings and self recriminations were heard. Eventually Dorothy decided to ignore Pat's tempting doubles and go for the peg. She hit it resoundingly from the East boundary and won the Game +4.

Faith Fewtrell

	CO	DM	FF	PM	VG	AT		
C Osmond	-10	+15	+7	+4	+14	4	1	
	+19	+6	+19	+24	+22	5		
D Miller	+10	+6	+9	-2	+12	4	2	
	-19	-6	+4	+17	+16	3		
F Fewtrell	-18	-6	-11	+5t	+14	2	3	
	-6	+6	+3	+8	+17	4		
P MacDonald	-7	-9	+11	+19	+17	3	4	
	-19	-4	-3	+5	+14	2		
V Grieg	-4	+2	-5t	-19	-15	1	5	
	-24	-17	-8	-5	+19	1		
A Stephens	-14	-12	-14	-17	+15	1	6	
	-22	-16	-17	-14	-19	0		

Which

THE WAY AHEAD - A PROGRESS REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

The SPWP proposals resulted in responses from 58 clubs, five Federations and 17 individuals. Opinion ranged from strong support for the full proposals to vehement opposition. There is no such thing as a standard croquet player or a standard club. The main conclusions are as follows:

(1) almost all clubs and Federations agree that all club members should contribute towards C.A. administration;

(2) many are concerned about the effect of a £12 levy on membership and recruitment and the full proposals leading to a £12 levy did not attract majority support;

(3) a significant minority feel that there has been insufficient time for consultation, and/or are concerned about action being taken quickly, and/or want a General Meeting;

(4) a significant minority are concerned about the absence of relief for those who are members of more than one club;

(5) there was some criticism about the lateness and contents of 'Croquet' and agreement that it needed to be refocused.

2. COUNCIL DECISION

(a) In the light of the above, the Council approved only the 1993 element of the proposals. This increases the club registration fee ("CRF") from £2.50 per Affiliate to £3.50 per member. It was accepted that more time was needed for discussion of the steps to be taken in 1994 and later years and, on this basis, the motion was passed by a substantial majority.

(b) Two issues of 'Croquet' (probably the May and July issues) will be aimed mainly at novices and ordinary club members and will be distributed to all Affiliate members of clubs paying the CRF. The SPWP were asked to find a way of giving "multi-club relief" and it was accepted that the proposals resulting from the 1993 discussions would be brought before the Annual General Meeting in October 1993.

3. COMMENTS ON THE RESPONSES

The response to the SPWP proposals has

KEY POINTS

- the recession has badly affected the C.A.'s immediate financial outlook
- raising subscriptions in 1993 would risk serious membership losses
- the full SPWP proposals did not receive enough support to justify adoption
- the Council has therefore only implemented the 1993 proposal
- 1993 is to be a year of discussion to find a long-term solution

been valuable in its own right. Never before has the Council been supplied with so much direct comment from the croquet world about a specific idea and related matters. The responses have given considerable insight into the views, needs and fears of organised croquet players. They have also revealed that there is not always a clear understanding about C.A. finances and activities. It is hoped that the comments set out in the following paragraphs will help.

4. THE REASONS AND THE TIMETABLE

(a) The strategic reasons for the SPWP proposals appear to have been generally understood. However, a need for urgency also arose during the SPWP's deliberations. We began work in April. Then, raising C.A. subscriptions for 1993 in the usual way seemed feasible and we expected to put forward a range of options. However, as the summer progressed, both the national economy and the C.A.'s subscription outlook worsened sharply. Raising subscriptions always causes some membership loss. The SPWP concluded that the C.A. risked a serious membership loss if it raised individual subscriptions in 1993 by the amounts

originally envisaged.

(b) This is why such a detailed case for a specific set of proposals was presented. If the full proposals had received strong support, the C.A.'s financial outlook would have been greatly improved. In the event, sufficient support for the full proposals was not forthcoming and the Council proceeded only with the 1993 proposals to protect the C.A.'s immediate position. It is surely right to focus the burden of generating income on more active Associates (as evidenced by their membership of a registered club) and to increase by a small amount the contribution of Affiliates. We also believed that Affiliates would benefit by replacing 'Croquet News' with two issues of 'Croquet' focused at their needs and interests.

(d) In lawn tennis, all club members pay the L.T.A. a levy of £3.50 p.a. via club subscriptions. This is a general contribution to tennis administration and gains no direct or tangible benefits in return. The Council decision will mean that the C.A. will also receive £3.50 on behalf of every individual who is a member of a registered club. However, every individual will also receive two issues of 'Croquet' per annum. The C.A. "membership levy" offers better value than the L.T.A. levy.

(e) Recently, a further strategic reason has emerged. The Sports Council awards development grants to many sports associations and has decided to monitor the ratio of Sports Council grant to association membership. The C.A. grant is about £15 per member if based on Associates only but would fall to below £7 per member if Affiliates became Associates. We understand that the Sports Council may consider reducing grants in appropriate cases to bring the ratio down to the region of £8 per member.

5. C.A. FINANCES

(a) There is an important distinction between ordinary income and expenditure and extraordinary income and expenditure. Ordinary income consists of subscriptions, CRF, tournament income and levy, sales, coaching, advertising and investment income. It finances ordinary expenditure (staff salaries, office overheads and publications) which

represents the cost of carrying out the C.A.'s basic functions.

(b) Extraordinary income consists of Sports Council grant and sponsorship and finances extraordinary expenditure, namely the costs of the C.A.'s development work. The disappearance of extraordinary income would be painful but not disastrous. The C.A. would simply not carry out any significant development work. A fall in ordinary income is more serious because it directly threatens basic C.A. activities. The C.A. depends on the enthusiasm of volunteers to perform a variety of tasks. A permanent reduction in C.A. activity is likely to reduce this enthusiasm, both on the Council and among the activists who are the driving forces at many clubs.

(c) It was encouraging that no respondent disputed the need for a central governing body or thought that C.A. staff costs and office overheads were unreasonable.

(d) Some respondents thought that the magazine could be produced less expensively. However, printing the same number of pages as at present (144) in four issues would actually cost more because postage savings would be outweighed by reduced advertising revenue. Publishing on a direct subscription basis would increase the unit cost, prevent its automatic provision to newcomers and reduce the effectiveness of communication between the C.A. and its membership.

6. SHOULD TOURNAMENT PLAYERS BE CHARGED MORE?

(a) Tournament players contribute much more than is realised and effectively subsidise the general player. An average tournament player pays a subscription of £15-21 (depending on category and discount), pays about £12 in tournament levy (£7,200 divided among about 600 active players) and, if entering C.A. events, will pay from £30 to over £100 in entry fees. Hence, given the relative contributions of tournament players (from a minimum of £27 upwards) and Affiliates (£2.50), it is reasonable to increase Affiliates' contributions to some extent.

(b) Some respondents suggested that tournament players could be "soaked" almost indefinitely. However, in 1992 C.A. tournament income failed to rise for the first time in 10 years. This indicates that C.A. entry fees are now correctly priced and that there is little scope for further significant increases. Others proposed increasing tournament levy. Although levy rose from £6,800 in 1991 to £7,200 in 1992, an increase in the levy rate from 30% to 45% would be needed to boost C.A. income by the necessary amount. However, in order to leave the club with the same

net income as in 1992, an entry fee of £20 would have to rise to over £25 (an increase of 27%). If the club wished to increase its net income by 10%, the entry fee would have to rise to £28 (an increase of 40%). Would tournament-holding clubs wish to impose such increases on the tournament-playing public?

7. THE EFFECT ON MEMBERSHIP AND RECRUITMENT

(a) Half of all respondents expressed concern about the effect of the SPWP proposals on membership and recruitment. The middle of the worst recession since the 1930's is not a good time to raise club subscriptions and some clubs charge less than £30 p.a. For such

otherwise face an increase in individual C.A. subscriptions of about £4). If it has a 50/50 split, it will add £2.25. None of these are huge sums in the context of a club subscription and, given the amount of explanation from the C.A., they should be acceptable to club members.

(c) The effect of amounts up to £3.50 on recruitment will be very small. Even an increase of £10 in a small club subscription is likely to have far less effect on recruitment than many respondents expect. There is an important difference between the psychology of an established member and that of the new recruit. The former will see an increase in subscription as additional expense for the same service. The latter does not have experience of the previous year's subscription and will not make the same comparison. It appears that a subscription has to be at least twice that expected before it deters. Indeed, in a society which tends to equate value and cost, negative implications can be drawn from a low subscription.

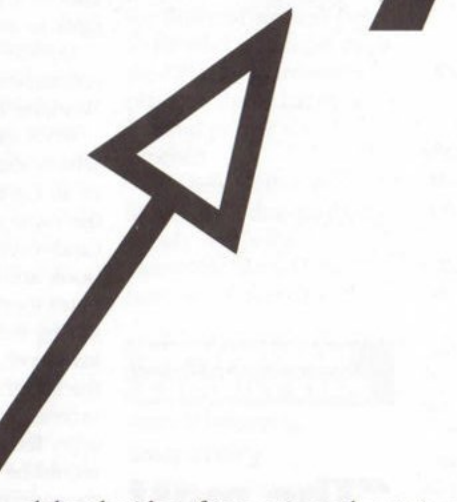
8. INTERIM CONCLUSIONS

(a) Financing the C.A. is now a topic of current interest to the clubs, the Federations and to at least part of the C.A. membership. This is to be welcomed as for too long the subject has been buried, surfacing periodically but briefly in the form of grumbles about the latest C.A. subscription increase. We must capitalise on this level of interest to reach an effective and generally acceptable long-term solution.

(b) The SPWP will put forward more ideas in the New Year but we should not be regarded as the only source. All contributions are welcome and should be sent to Stephen Mulliner at Witherden, Weydown Road, Haslemere, Surrey GU27 1DT.

Stephen Mulliner
Chairman, Subscription
Policy Working Party

way



NOW

feedback

Here is a presentation of the comments returned from Federations and a selection of croquet clubs, who were asked by "Croquet" to comment on the subscription proposals laid out in "The Way Ahead" document.

FEDERATION OF EAST MIDLANDS CROQUET CLUBS

Graham Fowler, Chairman

The general point about poor communication is well founded, and was a problem repeatedly cited by Federation Chairpersons at the recent Conference. Perhaps, though, this argument only supports the view that more money is required to secure adequate administration for a growing sport.

'The Way Ahead' has been one of the better communicated issues. True the time-scale has been short, but long enough for many people to respond, and for changes to be made in response to comments.

The most significant change is the move from the original three year plan to a one-year trial period, which will be fully ventilated at the CA AGM in 1993. This is a compromise to be welcomed.

Those who disagree with current drifts will have the opportunity to say so then. Now is not the time to force the issue, since in many respects there is no longer an issue to force.

For the services of the CA are assuredly worth £4 to any affiliate. When we discussed the original proposal, there was considerable opposition within the Federation (and especially particular clubs). It was helpful to have Chris Hudson along to gently remind us of the ways in which associates subsidize affiliates: from paying tournament levy to helping to improve lawns for all club members. So, £4 as a basic capitation fee surely cannot be questioned.

Whether or not we go further down this route is still to be decided. There remains considerable disquiet within the East Midlands Federation. Next year will be the time to consider whether it is better to move beyond the current compromise position or not. Either way, we must do so as a united Association.

"The most significant change is the move from the original three year plan to a one-year trial period, which will be fully ventilated at the CA AGM in 1993"

WOKING LAWN TENNIS & CROQUET CLUB CROQUET SECTION

Peter MacGowan, Committee Member

Woking Croquet discussed the question of the CA Subscription policy at its AGM on Sunday 22 November, attended by 33 of our 65 Members.

After a lengthy and stimulating discussion, including a presentation by Geoff Cuttle (Croquet Chairman) who is a member of the CA Working Party, on the background to its deliberations, we held a 'straw poll' of those present, choosing between three options as follows:

(a) The proposals recommended by the Working Party.

(b) A variation on (a), which retains the principle of all CA members paying the same subscription/levy (and receiving the Fixtures book and being able to enter tournaments), but setting this at a relatively low level, and making up the shortfall in income by increasing Tournament entry fees. By this means would be provided a measure of differentiation between the total amounts paid to the CA by a 'social player' and by a 'Tournament player'.

(c) An out-and-out two tier system (as at present?) with different levies being paid to the CA by the Club for Tournament and Non-Tournament grades.

Those present voted unanimously against proposal (a), and overwhelmingly (78%) in favour of (b), with 16% for (c) and 6% abstaining."

In my view, this is a fairly clear demonstration that the negative feelings of the membership to the Working Party proposals is not a result of poor communications, as the 'vote' followed a thoroughgoing discussion with all viewpoints articulately presented.

SURBITON CROQUET CLUB

Derek Caporn, Committee Member

1. We believe those who benefit most from the CA, ie tournament players, should not only pay more for their croquet ie the tournament levy system, but they should continue to pay a higher CA subscription as they have to date. We consider the fee for an Associate member should be increased by 25%.

2. There must be only one charge on players who belong to more than one club.

3. Although the general idea of a subscription paid by all croquet players is admirable, it is indeed in existence at present via the Club Registration fee. This is only acceptable if the subscription is a low one, say £3 to £4 per head.

4. We feel many clubs may de-register which would be a disaster at a time when we should be encouraging all clubs to register.

5. "The increased subscription base will reduce future increases for everyone". This was said when income tax was first introduced!

6. The views of our members will be obtained at the AGM on 28th Feb.

The Committee are unable to support the scheme as originally presented to us in "The Way Ahead" until it has been amended and is acceptable to our members. More time, discussion and consultation is required.

COLWORTH CROQUET CLUB

Norman Davren, Chairman

In response to your call for comments from clubs on the proposed new subscription/funding policy of the CA, I am writing to let you know that the main concern of the Committee of this club is that, irrespective of the merits of the new scheme, any plan for the introduc-

tion of such major changes should have been made known far enough in advance to allow full general discussion before implementation of any part of it. The extremely short notice will cause some clubs practical problems in relation to their own subscriptions policies that could have been avoided given sufficient advance warning.

EAST ANGLIAN CROQUET FEDERATION

Tom Anderson, Committee Member

I fully support the principle of the CA as the governing body of the sport and agree that it should be adequately funded.

I have, however, three basic objections to the new CA subscription policy.

1. its excessive speed of introduction

The CA new subscription policy proposals start taking effect from 1st January 1993. They involve clubs collecting substantially more money from all of their members.

To impose such significant changes so quickly, providing insufficient time for proper discussion to reach a general agreement, is not a recipe for success.

I believe at least a year is necessary to enable a successful result to be achieved.

2. the unnecessary complication of collecting clubs' federation fees

The CA plan to collect clubs' federation membership fees on behalf of the federations. They are going to collect a fixed amount per person for all federations, unrelated to what the clubs can afford and unrelated to the job the clubs want their federations to do.

I believe any savings that might arise from this proposal are heavily outweighed by the difficulties it will bring to the relationships between

clubs, federations, and the CA.

In addition, its imposition will only further increase the antagonism of croquet players to the CA's attempts to produce a new subscription policy.

3. the lack of equity in what people will pay

The CA plan to do away with the individual CA membership fee and to charge everyone an annual subscription to the CA through the club registration fee. The charge will be the same for everyone irrespective of their level of involvement in the croquet playing world.

I believe that the principle should be that people should pay according to the benefit they receive.

Since the people that gain the most benefit are the tournament players, the majority of the money required by the CA should be raised from the tournament levy. The club registration fees should only be a small amount per club member, definitely no more than £3.

I would therefore urge the CA to reconsider its current proposals, and allocate sufficient time to enable a generally agreed solution to be found.

BRISTOL CROQUET CLUB

Mrs R Gugan, Secretary

The Committee of the Bristol Croquet Club is alarmed to read that Council voted in favour of Phase I of the proposals laid out in The Way Ahead, despite the fact that only 40% of the responding Clubs supported the principles.

The CA is proposing to use a blanket levy, eventually to be £12, for every Club member as the CRF payable by Clubs. However, we believe that it is not reasonable to charge all Club members, through their Club membership subscription, for CA services (including CROQUET) whether they want them or not. The present arrangements

appear sound insofar as those who use the CA most pay individually, as Tournament members, and others wishing to receive CROQUET pay for it individually, via the non-Tournament rate.

We endorse the broad view that all Clubs should support the governing body by payment of a moderate fee, and our Treasurer, John Phillips, suggests that a % of the actual amount of subscriptions received by a Club might be an appropriate way of calculating CRF, but full membership of the CA must be an individual choice for those who feel that the expense is justified by the benefits. "The Way Ahead" actually proposes a reduction in the financial support from those who gain most from the CA, the Tournament players - this is hardly a fair and proper way to proceed.

We believe that the SPWP has a duty to find a widely acceptable alternative method of funding CA activities.

NOTTINGHAM CROQUET CLUB

Ian Vincent, Secretary

These (rather condensed and hence forthright) views of "The Way Ahead" proposals are personal, though I believe they reflect the opinions of many of the Nottingham and other players with whom I have discussed the issues.

I take the essence of the proposals to be that all members of registered clubs would be treated as full Associates and that their subscriptions would be collected through the clubs.

Whilst I agree that all players should contribute something to the costs of the CA, to expect a beginner, junior or casual player to pay the same as an enthusiast such as myself is both unreasonable, and a deterrent to recruitment and retention of members.

The scheme would represent a fundamental

change to the constitution of the CA, in that individuals would no longer have a choice whether or not to join it.

Clubs would be subject to taxation without representation, an additional administrative burden, and the difficulty of justifying the inevitable increase in subscriptions to their members. I suspect that the scheme would be counterproductive, in that significant number of clubs would deregister or seek to avoid it.

Any attempt to change "Croquet" to appeal to a much wider audience seems likely to result in something like "Croquet News", which, from the piles left lying in our pavilion, would be of interest neither to the existing nor projected readership.

I believe that the CA should retain its present basis of membership and, if it needs to increase its income, should seek to do so by presenting its case to existing and potential Associates.

BUDLEIGH SALTERTON CROQUET CLUB

David Purdon, Croquet Secretary

The news that the C.A. Council had acted, with uncharacteristic haste, in imposing a sharp increase in affiliation fees was greeted with dismay here. Clubs have had little time to make the necessary provision to meet the additional costs. A rough approximation indicates that this Club will face a five-fold increase in affiliation fees for 1993; if the further proposals in "The Way Ahead" are effected the increases will be crippling. It would be disastrous if Clubs were to disaffiliate from the C.A. or to establish exotic categories of membership to avoid paying affiliation fees for members who, up to the present, have shown no inclination to join. The supposed benefits of affiliation given in "The Way Ahead" are

"I fully support the principle of the CA as the governing body of the sport and agree that it should be adequately funded"

too nebulous and there are already signs that smaller, newly-established Clubs will not affiliate, preferring to put the money towards improving their own Clubs' facilities.

The C.A. clearly needs adequate funds to carry out its functions as a regulatory body, and croquet players should be prepared to support it both financially and in practical ways. Regrettably, all too often the message that comes through from the pages of 'Croquet' is that the C.A. is interested in only the very best of players, and that the game's peculiar jargon makes it an exclusive game only for the initiated. It seems that the C.A. has, with dubious authority, imposed membership upon people who have hitherto been unable to discern any benefit. There is a need for improved recruitment and this can only come about by making membership seem relevant to the interests of players of all abilities, including those who wish to play only socially.

COLCHESTER CROQUET CLUB

Pat Hetherington, Chairman/Secretary

Colchester Croquet Club has 83 members, of whom only 45 (54 per cent) are playing members owing primary allegiance to Colchester. 28 (34 per cent) are second or multi-club members, paying greatly reduced subscriptions. 10 are purely social members. Significantly, only 14 (31 per cent) of the 45 actually choose to belong to the C.A. Choice is an important factor in one's leisure activities.

Colchester is both lucky and unlucky in that it owns its own clubhouse and lawns. Lucky in that we enjoy good lawns and excellent amenities which attract a large membership. Unlucky in that we have to pay business rates, pay for public services, for

machinery and equipment, for repairs and maintenance and, most significantly, for the services of a groundsman and cleaner. Annual expenses total some £6,000. We operate to a tight budget - we have to. It is morally wrong that the CA should benefit twice (or more) from multi-club members. It is unfair to compel club members to become C.A. affiliates when they do not want to join of their own accord. And it is not right that clubs should have to start looking for loopholes

NOTES & observations

Sadly, two predictable observations can be made. Firstly, it is mainly groups that are in general opposed to the proposals who have replied - clubs known to favour the policy have not replied. Consequently, a rather more biased impression may be given than was apparent from the research done by Stephen Mulliner. Secondly, a number of misconceptions remain in the minds of players. The facts about the proposals can be found in the original document, Stephen Mulliner's reply to

to avoid payment of an unfair levy. Let those who wish to belong to the C.A. join and enjoy the benefits of membership. Please do not discourage people from joining our club by the imposition of unacceptable conditions.

SOUTHPORT CROQUET CLUB

Alice Dawson, Secretary

I enclose a few of my comments not in my capacity as a Club Officer but as a C.A. Associate Member-

I am not in the least bit surprised at the strong negative reaction from some of the Clubs to the C.A. subscription proposals - I expected it.

Personally as an Associate member of the C.A. I would be prepared to pay an increased

subscription if required and extra for the Fixtures Book the Magazine and the Directory if I wanted them.

I don't want ANYONE to pay extra for my sport or alternatively have the extra cost charged up to the Club funds.

Does anyone agree with Me?

If the cost became more than I was prepared to pay or I didn't think I was getting value for money I should - quite simply - RESIGN! THE CHOICE IS MINE!

comments made by Martin French ("The Way Ahead" and "Talking Point - Feedback", October "Croquet"), also on previous pages.

Many of the criticisms made in the following comments have already been listened to, acted upon, and therefore answered. In particular, Federation Fees will not be collected from clubs by the CA on behalf of Federations (a proposal strongly criticised by some correspondents); these will be set and collected directly by Federations as in the past.

HUNSTANTON CROQUET CLUB

Sarah Hampson, Treasurer

The Hunstanton Club is not in favour with this proposal, it was discussed at length at our recent AGM and the following points were raised:

1) The whole scheme is being put into operation with unsavoury speed, although we are told 1993 should be regarded as a trial period.

2) We were told "Most sports governing bodies are financed by a capitation fee levied on every club member..." This is partly true (so is the WII!), but look at the huge difference in total numbers of players of Tennis, Bowls, Golf etc, which means they pay around £2.00 a head, the 2-3 thousand Croquet players

are threatened with £12.00 by 1995 and no guarantee it will stop at that figure.

3) Many clubs have a large number of "social players", who enjoy their croquet and the club atmosphere, they may play in club competitions but will never play in a CA tournament. These members are mainly elderly, retired, possibly lonely, and resent being compelled to join the CA. In this club the majority of this group have refused to allow their names and addresses being sent up to the office. Some have already resigned.

4) The Club will not pay the Registration Fee at the beginning of January:

a) I have no idea what the membership for 1993 will be, resignations are already coming in.

b) The Club's finances are at their lowest ebb and will remain so until our own subscriptions come in.

c) I will not pay on the 1992 numbers, when I know for a certainty we have lost some members.

5) Hands off the Federations. The EACF gives us excellent service, and must be allowed to collect its own subscriptions. Anyway 50p paid to the CA rapidly loses 1/5 of its value by the time VAT and handling charges have been removed, this is wasting money.

6) The CA cannot expect multi-club players to pay the registration fee at each and every club they support (some belong to 4 clubs). This would be grossly unfair, and result in the smaller far-distant clubs losing greatly valued members, and the often small but welcome subscription they pay.

7) The Clubs and Federations have to survive and conduct their business, within their available income. It seems the CA over the past decade has made little attempt to, situated in possibly the most expensive venue available, it might be wise to move.

INTERMEDIATE COACHING NOTES by Ian Plummer

9.8. Repair. We have discussed how to use bisques attackingly before, but some inevitably end up being used for repairing a break which has gone wrong.

9.8.1. The time to consider the use of a bisque is your *penultimate shot* of a turn.

9.8.2. A frequent mistake is not to take a deep breath and look around the lawn when you make a mistake. The first (incorrect) thought is to repair the damage that your mallet has just inflicted.

9.8.3. You see frequently players roll into a hoop and fail to get into a hoop running position. The line of options you see tried are, starting from the brainless to the more sophisticated: a). Stab the ball at the hoop then take the bisque. b). knock the ball in front of the hoop then take the bisque to run it. c). Play the ball to get a fresh rush on your pioneer then take the bisque to re-approach the hoop. d). Obtain a rush on a remote ball, take a bisque rushing it into position then take-off to your hoop and re-

approach the hoop. **9.8.4.** You should generally look up when you make a mistake and review the whole lawn. You should look for the balls which are out of Your break, say at a boundary. You would get full value from your bisque by aiming at that boundary ball intending to get a useful rush on it. You will then take your bisque, rush the boundary ball into the lawn, then take-off to your reception ball at the hoop at where you broke down. There may also be the opportunity to go via the other ball to the reception ball giving you the opportunity of also improving its position.

9.9. Defense. You will on occasion be forced to use a bisque to prevent an opponent gaining an advantage. A good example of this is where you use a bisque to create a good leave. This could involve a cross-wiring. *A good leave is worth a break.*

9.9.1. At the start of a turn, when faced with a joined-up opponent, you should aim to get both of their balls away from the

boundaries - otherwise they will just rejoin in the next turn. You should aim at them, then use a bisque to rush one of them away from the boundary. You then take-off back to the other one and play a croquet shot to place it in a position useful to you - typically at your hoop. You are now probably one bisque away from a four-ball break. Even if you do not have bisques to spare you have prevented your opponents joining-up again.

9.10. The above paragraphs have assumed that you have an ample supply of bisques. When you have a small number left you should always weigh up the power of keeping just one bisque standing.

This will still modify your opponent's tactics. They will not be able to set up easy breaks when they know that if they fail the bisque will let you in. It will also deter them from joining-up too close to their partner ball, etc. In short it will cause them to

play tactics which make their game more difficult. See Section 11 *Giving Bisques* to appreciate the effects of this standing bisque.

9.11. It is *VITAL* to realize when you are facing the prospect of playing Your last turn. That is, from which position can your opponent stand a good chance of pegging out? This detail is crucial in dictating whether you must use your bisques for all you are worth, or chance getting another turn.

9.12. Remember also that bisques *cannot be used* after Time is called in a *Timed Game*. Therefore you should plan some intense bisque activity just before Time is called. There are no prizes for having any bisques left at the end of a game you have lost! The next section attempts to indicate from which positions you can expect different classes of players to finish.

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results + reports

BUDLEIGH SALTERTON

Handicap (Blocks)
18-20 Sept
 Blk A, 1. ■rs H Evans (1) /5
 Blk B, 1. C H Walker (9) 6/6
 Blk C, 1. L E Toye (6) 3/5
 Blk D, 1. ■ G Tompkinson (3) 5/6
 Blk E, 1. ■ P Wills (11) /5
 Blk F, 1. J C Hatherley (3.5) /5

CHELTENHAM

Full Bisque (Egyptian)
11-13 Sept
 Cheltenham is the club to which you bring every item of croquet gear you possess. This weekend shorts were in evidence often teamed with mottled legs and large Sou'wester; a waterproof skirt was nicely set off by flat-soled wellingtons and sunglasses. The 2 1/2 day tournament was played with full bisques using the Hands system. To qualify for a prize, competitors had to play a minimum of 5 games including 2 games on the final day. Apres le deluge on Sunday morning, several players abandoned the hope of a prize and went off home to dry out.

Opinion of the full bisque game was varied, ranging from "never again" through "once in a while" to "this is how the game should be played". The system perhaps altered tactics here and there. It is possible to deduce that players once in, were encouraged to go as far as they or their bisques would allow. Certainly the weekend resulted in the following players qualifying for a bronze award: Peter Bailey, Derek Bradley, ■aureen Evans, John Lansdown and ■argaret Leach - well done. The system obviously suited Trevor Howard who won all 7 of his games. The whole event was managed most ably by ■ike Ranshaw, his first stab at the management side of things not hindering the winning of his group. Winners were those players within a handicap range who achieved the best rating at close of play

David ■agee
 Blk A, 1. D J ■agee (1) 6/8 119pts
 Blk B, 1. Dr ■ J Ranshaw (2.5) 5/7 116pts
 Blk C, 1. T Howard (3.5) 7/7 132 pts
 Blk D, 1. ■rs A ■ Whitaker (9) 5/7 11 pts
 Blk E, 1. ■rs ■ S Tope (11) 5/7 113pts
 Blk F, 1. ■rs ■ E Evans (16) 5/7 11 pts

Handicap (Blocks)

9-11 Oct
 Silver, green and red stars fell from the sky when the last bisques were taken in the last games of the last tournament of the Cheltenham season, as the rockets, kindly provided by Hugh Smorffitt, were lit in the rather damp conditions.

You may think that one should win 5 games to win one's block of six players, but this only happened once. Five block winners won games, of whom Stan Harding got through on points, as did Dab Wheeler on 3 wins - both after the "who beat who" deciding rule didn't work. The fact that the handicap range of the winners was -0.5 to 1 suggests the automatic handicap system is working satisfactorily.

Dab Wheeler
 Blk A, 1. D L Gaunt (-0.5) /5
 Blk B, 1. P Leach () /5
 Blk C, 1. S Harding (11) /5
 Blk D, 1. P A Darby (1) 5/5
 Blk E, 1. ■rs V ■ Clements (1) /
 Blk F, 1. ■rs R F Wheeler (.5) 3/5
 Blk G, 1. G Edgeler (10) /

COLCHESTER

"Over 50" Handicap (Swiss) 2-4 Oct
 20 players enjoyed a happy weekend marred only by showers on the Saturday. Clear winner was Ron Atkinson. Congratulations to Graham Bond and Joe Burgin, who both achieved their bronze awards; hard luck Arthur Adams, who saw his award disappear in a last minute charge by Bob Fewtrell during their game.
 1. R F Atkinson (5) 6/6
 2. R Fewtrell (3.5) 5/6
 2. J Reeve (7) 5/6

COMPTON

South of England Week 12-17 Sept
DRAGONFLIES & HELICOPTERS
 There is nowhere quite like Compton. Good lawns, good croquet, good food, good management; and always a nice welcome from a very friendly club. But there are Outside Agencies. Like the the three-inch dragonfly who quietly observed the doubles match between your correspondents and the eventual winners, Don Gaunt and Joyce Lindfield. Exactly what Outside Agency the insect worked for wasn't revealed, but he must have filed a speedy report,

for half an hour later his big brother, a frighteningly large tin dragonfly in the shape of a Red Helicopter, landed on the nearby cricket field.

Did the sighting of the Fewtrells' caravan, plus the occult behavior of the strange figures dressed in predominantly druidical white, suggest some weird sect of travelling folk?

The powerful beast and its blue-uniformed driver took no action however and soon whizzed off, barely missing the famous beech tree overhanging lawn 2 and blowing down a storm of leaves and twigs. "A couple of feet lower" said our hard-pressed ■anager, Derek Caporn, "and they'd have toppled over into the middle of a game. Then some of our grizzlers over nuts and worm casts would have had an Outside Agency worth grumbling about".

Reasonable weather, with occasional less-than-water-logging showers, kept the programme going briskly, so that our ever-resouceful ■anager added a Z handicap to the X and Y events, in order that players beaten in the first rounds of both should have a third opportunity to get beaten all over again.

Several new, and some unexpected, winners emerged. Roger Hayes, the two-metre two-handicap bearded wonder from Woking won the Devonshire Park Salver (advanced levels), beating several higher rankers en route and looking every inch a Class A player. Glamorous Grandmother Superstar Faith Fewtrell, much improved since last year, gave us a pleasant surprise by winning the elegant Luard Cup (Class 2/3 advanced levels), beating her husband Bob (3.5) plus several others all at sixes and sevens, and getting her own handicap down from 8 to 7 in the process.

Your correspondents JD (Pere, 8) and ■ J (Fils, 6 later 5)) ensured direct experience of the final of the main X handicap by meeting in the semifinal, whereat Fils unfliningly won and went on to win another good game in the final against local hero Gordon Drake (1 1/2 and giving away too many bisques) to carry off the beautiful Devonshire Park Cup.

Joyce Lindfield (a very good 20), with help from celebrated author Don Gaunt (-1) as well as the celebrated dragonfly, won the handicap

doubles by Plus One On Time (Does He Read His Own Book?) in a spirited final against ■ichael Hornby (3 1/2) and ■argaret Ward (16); and ■ick Belcham (16), rising star from Tunbridge Wells, won the High Bisques' Goblet as well as reaching the semifinal of the X handicap. On the last afternoon, our much loved (by now) ■anager Derek Caporn (6) earned his reward by winning the Y handicap final and the handsome Felixstowe Cup, beating another local hero Graham Thompson (12); and local heroines ■argaret Payton (8) and Joan Chittenden (17) played steadily and unswervingly to beat the Fewtrells in a close final to win the Gilbert Spoons (Y Doubles). Gilbert...? Spoons...?

It seems that four rather nice silver teaspoons engraved 'JB Gilbert' were noticed a few years ago in the Compton cutlery box and Dennis Shaw promptly had them cleaned, replated and mounted on wooden shields to make two nice trophies; the other two were passed on to the CA.

During tea on the last day, your correspondents found themselves issued with two more, making six in all now discovered and giving Dennis further manufacturing work. It is believed that the spoons were once presented to Brian Gilbert, noted Tennis and Croquet player at Wimbledon and Eastbourne in the good old days. He it was who played the last tennis stroke on the old Centre Court at Worple Road in 1923, scoring an Ace Service to win the final of the ■en's Plate, before the demolition crew moved in.

(Further old-fashioned tea spoons, elegantly engraved CBOE, were also discovered. Some old Empire honour for Croquet? Charles Bradley O'Endicott, no doubt a distant cousin of Duff ■athews? These and other silly ideas were quite properly shot down by a spoilsport who suggested it stood for County Borough of Eastbourne and the spoons should be returned to the sea front caff, with apologies for 60 years' absence).

Once again, thanks Compton, thanks Caporn, thanks Gallant Cooks and thanks to the sponsors, Chartered Accountants Knill James, for yet another well-fed, well-organised and very well-enjoyed South of England Week.
 JD & ■ J Evenett

Class Events (Level Blocks)
 A Class, 1. ■ R Hayes 6/6
 B Class, 1. ■rs F Fewtrell 5/6
 C Class, 1. ■ C Belcham 6/7
Handicap (K/O)
 X, ■ J Evenett bt H G Drake
 Y, D C Caporn bt G P Thompson

Handicap Doubles (K/O)
 X, D L Gaunt & ■rs J E Lindfield bt A ■ Hornby & ■rs ■ Ward +1 on time
 Y, ■rs ■ Paynton & ■rs B Chittenden bt ■r & ■rs Fewtrell +1 on time

EDGBASTON

Advanced Level (K/O) 4-6 Sept
DAVIDS TRIUMPH
 If you were playing in this tournament it was best to be called David. In the knockout competition, nobody called David lost - unless they played someone else called David. Three Davids reached the semi-final; all of them winning their quarter final matches by 26, with messers Lendrum and Goacher completing triples.

In one semi-final David White met David Lendrum; obviously only one David could progress. However the result was uncertain: Lendrum was shooting at the peg from the East boundary to the West, and back, whilst White made steady progress through 2-back, 3-back, -back and penultimate. Then Lendrum hit. The other semi-final featured David Goacher and Edward Duckworth. Edward deserves special mention for reaching this stage without being called David, and for putting up a good fight against the tournament favourite. Indeed, but for tension - possibly caused by the fact he was playing with one of Goacher's old mallets - and some injudicious play towards the end, Edward could have made the result even closer than 6 points.

These four semi-finalists ultimately shared the spoils: David White won the Egyptian with consummate ease. Perhaps other players could benefit from David's practice technique which appears to consist of playing about one tournament a month (and performing very well) and allowing the mallet to rest between times. Edward was the most successful of the players with a handicap of 3 and over.

The final began in fairly typical manner: first game to Goacher by 19. The second saw a triple by Lendrum. The

third and deciding game found Goacher on rover and -back before Lendrum had started. Then in successive turns Lendrum went to -back, took the second ball to peg completing the three peels on the first ball, pegged out. Both players contributed to a final of good quality.

Away from the Davids, Roy ■ilner seemed to hit everything. No one could remember him missing a lift on Saturday; with typical modesty, Roy said he had, but could not be more specific. He did miss one or two on Sunday.

Sunday afternoon saw a double banked game with only 5 balls. This after Peter Dorke had done his fairly familiar trick of taking his first ball round and pegging it out. In the other game Graham Fowler had pegged out Chris Bennett's forward ball and then, almost too late, his own. With 5 balls on the court, the manager quipped that as soon as another ball was out the pegged down game could resume with whatever colors were available.

Andrew Gregory's relaxed management - supported by Chris Bennett and Ian ■cClelland - resulted in a fun tournament, enjoyed by successful and unsuccessful players alike.

One reservation held by some players, but not all, concerned the outpost at Rowheath - not the proposed site but an existing bowling green (on the opposite side of the lake to the Pavilion). Referred to throughout the tournament as the penal colony, this lawn was flat but very spongy and slow.

Overall this detracted little from a tournament which attracted players from Bristol to Scotland. A feature was the number of improving players with handicaps between 2 and . In addition to those already mentioned, Jeremy Ames, Richard White, Graham Fowler, ■ike Hammelev and David Lilly performed well.

Graham Fowler D Lendrum bt D J Goacher -19 +15TP +6
Consolation Event (Strict Egyptian) 4-6 Sept
 1. D White 5/6 +30pts

GUILDFORD & GODALMING

Handicap (Egyptian) 12-13 Sept
 1. A Wadley (7) 7/7
 2. H Smorffitt (2) /5

HUNSTANTON

Class Events (Blocks)
29-2 Sept
 Adv Blk A, 1. W Lamb 6/6
 Adv Blk B, 1. I Storey 5/6
 Hcap Blk C, 1. D Hopkins 5/6
 Hcap Blk D, 1. ■antle 6/6

Handicap (K/O) 29-2 Sept
 G Fowler (3.5) bt D Hector (-0.5) +20

HURLINGHAM

Handicap (Egyptian) 29-31 August
 "Shall we dance now the Egyptian Bacchanals?"
 Antony & Cleopatra Act II Scene 7

Hurlingham broke new ground this year in playing their August week-end tournament as an Egyptian instead of the usual Swiss. The result was a very successful and enjoyable weekend. Not only did everyone get their own sufficiency of croquet but those entrants who had won their way through in their respective clubs to the Area Finals of the All England handicap were, thanks to the flexibility of the system, able to compete in that event as well. (It does seem a pity however, that the Area Finals should be held on what must be the busiest weekend of the season with tournaments being held at several clubs, thus giving many club qualifiers an invidious choice to make).

In all a total of 1 players competed, 1 Hurlingham members and 27 visitors, the latter including strong contingents from Ipswich and Surbiton and a number of new-comers from Nottingham as well as the regulars from Roehampton and Parsons Green. It is good to see a wide range of players from different parts coming to Hurlingham to enjoy the club's splendid lawns and facilities. The ultimate winner, with 8 wins out of 8, was Philip Eardley from Ipswich, who had also as it happened won this event last year, all be it off a somewhat higher handicap, and so now has two Hurlingham goblets for his dinner table. Hurlingham also presented a goblet to the highest finishing lady (emulating Roehampton's recent example); this delighted the feminists, particularly as the prize was of equal value - Wimbledon tennis take note! - and the winner appropriately enough, was Celia Steward, also from Ipswich. ■ention must also be made of Nelson ■orrow, a King from Parsons Green who not only won the area

final at Surbiton, but also only lost one game at Hurlingham, that to Philip by a very narrow margin. There was the usual abundance of +1 OT's and a number of +26s. Only two triple peels, but both worth mentioning: Bob Stephens, laying aside his ■anagerial concerns on Sunday, tripled Terry Burge and just before the close on ■onday Terry took his revenge by doing the same against Bob's wife Anne - rumour has it that he paid very heavily in the bar afterwards for his temerity! Terry also took the Oliver Twist award by coming up to the ■anager's table no fewer than 11 times after his initial game.

The event was excellently managed by Bob Stephens and Jeremy Glyn. ■anagerment was efficient and firm throughout - the DIY managers and the wide boys among us were kept well under control - but also considerate and compassionate. This was certainly no "foul Egyptian" which some may have feared and I was not aware of any player wanting to break the "strong Egyptian fetters". The warmth of the thanks at the concluding ceremony was well deserved. Well done Bob and Jeremy.
 Paul ■acDonald
 1. P Eardley () 8/8 +28pts
 2. D Drazin (11) 6/7 +20pts
 Ladies 1. ■rs C Steward (3.5) 6/8 +13pts

NEWPORT

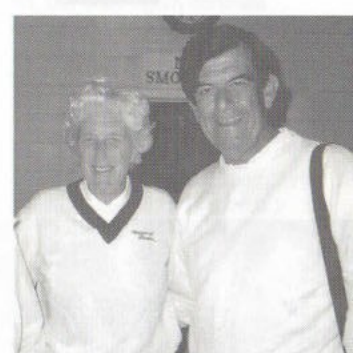
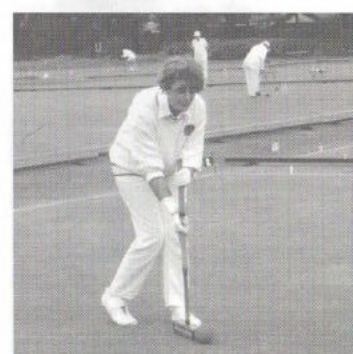
Handicap (Strict Egyptian) 5-6 Sept
 1. P Eardley (3) 5/6 + Opts
 2. ■rs G Burgin (11) /5 +30pts

NOTTINGHAM

Handicap (Egyptswiss) 18-20 Sept
WHITE WEATHERS WET WEEKEND

Apparently playing croquet in the rain adds something to the game, exactly what is not clear. Nottingham is usually dry, and even this weekend the rain was, for the first and second days, a regular drizzle rather than a downpour - waterproofs were not really required.

The rain did cause people to huddle in the huts on their respective lawns, and thus social intercourse, which does add to the game, was reduced. One conversation likely to interest tournament players involved ■ichael Cowan. Rick Davis, the manager, suggested that ■ichael play your humble



Bob & Faith Fewtrell at Hurlingham.

Audrey Howell - a regular on the South Coast.

Fernando de Ansorena and Pat Shine

June High Bisquers Tournament at Southwick

results + reports

reporter; Michael replied that he would prefer not to; Rick, taken aback, suggested it again, Michael indicated that with only that option he'd rather withdraw from the tournament. This may not have been a bad option since Michael had added to the July tournament by entering and then just not turning up. Rick, however, with a mixture of tact and generosity, found another opponent for Michael - possibly one the latter thought he would have more chance of beating! The number of players Michael can play with or against declines once more.

By the end of Saturday evening John Horry looked a winner, with Guy Willard a sound second. By the middle of Sunday they both had 6 net wins, and Richard White had 5. If John won his last game, against Alan Tunbridge, then he would win because he had beaten Guy. If John lost, but Guy beat Roy Milner, then Guy would win. In the event, they both lost and Richard White in defeating Barbara Noble secured first place. The performances of Barbara and Mark Roberts in their second and first tournaments respectively merit a mention; Mark finished fourth overall.

Several handicap reductions (all of one unit) followed from the tournament: Richard White went to 1 1/2; Guy Willard to 2; Roy Milner to 2 1/2; Alan Tunbridge to 6; John Horry to 8; Norman Bircumshaw to 9; Barbara Noble to 18.

Thanks are due to Gordon Hopewell and all those involved in background arrangements. However Rick Davis deserves special credit for (in addition to tact) arranging 97 games in three days at this time of the year, which allowed several competitors to play 10 or 11 games.

Graham Fowler
1. R K White (2) 8/10
2. J Horry (9) 7/9

PARKSTONE
B Class Handicap (Swiss)
26-27 Sept
1. A Clark (10) 5/5
2. R Cleaver (11) /5
(after shoot-out)

ROEHAMPTON
Rowlock Advanced (Swiss)
22-23 August
Rowlock bursting and bust
Last year's apathy has passed and the Rowlock was once again gloriously oversubscribed, with 1 1/2

the worst handicap accepted. The trophy, lost in Colchester for two years, reappeared though the manager's first task was to superglue it together again. The format was also his handiwork, a 3-tier Swiss designed to keep everyone in with a chance of winning one of the three prizes for as long as possible.

Just selected for the President's Cup, Jeff Dawson soon looked set to win the Gold Tier. He despatched David Magee (easily) and Robert Prichard (just) to meet George Noble in the semi-final; which he won +1 TP, +1 (OTP). George went on to win the Silver Tier with the aid of a TP and a TPO (successful this time) in the final against Simon Tuke; who won all his matches except the first and last. Andrew Gregory won the Bronze Tier tankard, inspired by an evening at the Hotel de la Gare, Wandsworth.

The kind lawns were unkind to some: Martin Haggerston, fresh from winning the Hurlingham Cup, won only two games all weekend, while Tom Coles, Opens semifinalist, failed to reach the same stage here by losing to Nick Harris. Nick was then crushed by two Robin Brown TPs and did not win another game. Robin's reward was to lose three straight games in the Gold Tier final. This momentum carried Jeff on to win three of his first four games in the President's. Playing in the Rowlock is good for you.

Robert Prichard
Gold, J Dawson 7/7
Silver, G Noble 6/9
Bronze, A Gregory 5/7

Full Bisque (Swiss)
1-4 October
Manager: Paul MacDonald.
"Three score and ten I can remember well
Within the volume of which time I have seen
Hours dreadful and things strange, but this sore night
Hath trifled former knowings"
Macbeth Act II Sc.(iv)

Shakespeare's Old Man might well have added "not least in the world of croquet" had croquet then been invented and he a croquet player or manager. Certainly, for the old man managing this tournament the 12 hours of the "sore night" immediately preceding the start of play were dreadful indeed with 3 last minute withdrawals (involving a broken car, a broken head, and no doubt a broken heart).

Apart from this the opening day went smoothly and swiftly enabling the leaders to play three rounds of a Swiss, thanks to the availability of an extra lawn kindly provided by Roehampton Club by temporarily making use of the adjacent tennis courts, the first time this has happened for very many years. "Strange things" continued with half the players playing a round ahead of the rest and many (including the manager) not only wondering what round they were in but also what day it was. "Owl's screams" and "crickets' cries" emanated from players and onlookers alike clustered around the manager's table as everyone continued to be plunged into the chaos. Suffice it to say that the possibility of a 7-way tie was narrowly avoided and, after 8 rounds two players emerged with 6 wins each (and another 9 with 5 wins). Perhaps the strangest thing of all (some would say the most dreadful) was that the manager himself won the unenviable prize to Anne Stephens; other prizes went to Eileen Magee (highest finishing lady), and Tony Fathers (highest finishing High Bisquer), with a special consolation prize to Nigel Gray, judged to be the most hard done by of the 5 "1(T)" losers.

1. I P MacDonald 6/8
2. Mrs R T Stephens 6/8
after play-off

RYDE
Handicap (Block play-offs)
4-6 Sept
J Bourm (16) bt
Mrs F Fewtrell (8) +

SOUTHWICK
Summer Shine
This was my first visit to Southwick for six years, and the first thing that struck me was the amount of work which has gone into improving the lawns. The grass was of even fast quality, closely shaven despite wet weather the day before and maintained to that standard throughout the week. The hoops had been perfectly set by John Bowman. It was interesting that they expected me to find them wide and Bernard Weitz to find them tight. We both pronounced them excellent. The only one I presumed to correct all week, as it was slightly loose and unvertical after two games,

was measured and proved to have the precise one-sixteenth clearance. To produce that standard on eleven lawns required some work. Well done John and helpers.

Pat Shine and Betty Weitz had a difficult job to do. Managing a tournament is always an awkward business, especially when you have three last-minute withdrawals, a burglary in the clubhouse and two days of the vilest weather it has been my misfortune to play croquet on (and that includes East Ridin'x Hunstanton and Southport). Just my luck to have to lie down for ten minutes for a disputed wiring—lift decision! As the opponents were not convinced let me put it in print: the relevant wording of Law 13 is "any part of the hoop ...", and the ruling is that if the carrot stands proud, as it did slightly, it is a part of the hoop. The carrot interfered with the swing prior to impact, and a lift was awarded. The hoop may not be banged into the ground because regulation 5(h) specifies that only "width or alignment" may be corrected during a game: in other words, horizontal and not vertical adjustment.

Sorry, back to Southwick it was a lovely friendly atmosphere, enhanced by the barbecue on the Friday (postponed by Thursday's monsoon), and I enjoyed renewing old acquaintances and making new friends. I must mention especially Bim and Pam Arliss, who drove me everywhere, organized the barbecue and played good croquet to boot! They won the doubles final convincingly by 16 against the strong team of Philip Eardley and Diana Brothers, and Pam's game improved from stroke to stroke as she played a controlled break (off handicap 20) of six hoops in the final of her class.

Bernard Weitz had a particularly good week, winning the men's handicap and beating John Hobbs in the final of the A-Class. I hope the Weitzes have a large mantelpiece because Betty won the trophy for the ladies' event.

Another feature I liked was how seriously the Y events are taken, and the singles Y is quite large, consisting of first-round losers from both the ladies' and men's handicap. It was won by Peter Nash from Dulwich in a tense final against John Hobbs, but the attention of the crowd was on

the Y doubles, a close affair in which the steady play of Don and Gene Bears overcame the much more spectacular but less consistent partnership of Hyacinth Coombs and Bernard Weitz (him again! my spelling-checker is going berserk).

The B-class final was in progress at the same time between Fernando de Ansorena and Ivor Meredith: in fact a replay because of a mixup about the timed ending of their first attempt. Fernando's play was the more solid and he's going to have to come back from Jerez de la Frontera next year "para a reganar la copa", as he put it. He has been coming to tournaments for five years and he was evidently pleased with his first success.

Have you ever tried refereeing in Spanish? It's interesting I learned at university that "lift" is "ascensor", but they never taught me that "3-back" is "tres-back".

Other isolated memories which should not escape the record include Gladys Wiggins' amazing hoop-running and Arthur Rajotte's accidental pegout, only to realize that being two hoops behind is about the best position in a two-ball ending.

Clive Horton completed the line-up of winners for the prizegiving. The Chairman, Frederick Reynold, expressed very well the appreciation of the work that Pat Shine has done as manager and tournament secretary for twelve years, and we are sorry to see her retiring from that position, not to relax her efforts but to concentrate them on the club she has founded at Worthing, which is to hold its first CA calendar tournament next year organized by Lionel Wharrad. Long may Pat continue to shine!

After that, the raffle prizes were drawn. I was happy with the bottle of wine (the first and most appropriate prize I've won for some time) and ordered my next two wins back into the bin.

The raffle raised over "100 for the building work needed on the sagging clubhouse: thankfully, the burglars had done no more than unstructural mayhem, and while enjoying the whisky they had taken from the bar, they failed to notice the artistic layout of raffle prizes! Whew!

Well done, Southwick, and I hope to make it much less than six years before my next visit.

Andrew Bennet

Handicap (K/O)
10-15 August
Ladies: Mrs E Weitz (7) bt
Mrs B Saunders () +7
Mens: B Weitz (3) bt
R Rogers (2.5) +13

Level Play (K/O after Blocks) 10-15 August
A: B Weitz bt J Hobbs +15
B: F de Ansorena bt
I Meredith
C: C Horton bt Mrs J Weir

Handicap D Class (K/O after Blocks) 10-15 August
Mrs Rogers bt Mrs P Arliss

Handicap Doubles (K/O)
10-15 August
W & Mrs P Arliss (8) bt
P Eardley & D Brothers (7) +16

Handicap (K/O after Blocks) 8-11 Sept
P Eardley (2.5) bt
A Mitchell (8) +6

Handicap (Swiss) 8-11 Sept
Swiss A, 1. P Howell (2) /
Swiss B, 1. B Rannie (6) /

SURBITON
Handicap (Egyptian)
5-6 Sept
1. R Benson 5/5
2. G Noble 5/6

WREST PARK
Advanced (Egyptian)
15-16 August

The competitors were welcomed with sunshine, as Howard's mum protested about the presence of a lifeless newt in the pavilion. No not the referee of the tournament but the real thing recovered from lawn 2. Had the newt been overcome by illegal substances, which had had no effect on the worms, of was it just unfortunate to linger as John Wheeler advanced on the ATCO?

The arrival of our manager Jon Watson presented us with wine, cakes and Gruyere i.e. a Swiss with holes in, his words not mine.

Duncan Hector's TP's followed his comic foreplay, not due to 'Penguin Trivia', and knocked Robert Lowe from top spot. A lot of us have trouble with hoops but Francis Landor got stuck on lawn 1 and watched 7 games slip by before being transferred to lawn 5 for his first win. Cliff Jones could have played more but was hampered by the triple 'whammy' of Hector, Anderson, and Harrison-Wood.

Saturday night was spent under the 'STAR', as the rain tumbled, the manager

frowned, and David Harrison-Wood awaited the verdict from Bill Lamb.

The manager overcame the casual water on lawn 5 by despatching our groundsman, keen hoop setter and top weed cutter, George Collin together with the squeegee board to play John Bevington. George mastered the difficulties with nonchalant roll ups while John responded by rolling his own.

The once spirited dragonfly gave up the ghost on lawn 6 and joined the newt. The day brightened for some as the alternative match reports were spotted, and Duncan Hector remaining undefeated adding a further triple, with Rod Ashwell, Don Cornelius, and William Steadman collecting the most points.

The shadows and the day lightened, when an extra crate of beer was found in the ladies changing room, where else?

Rod Ashwell having already delighted the gallery with a notable win against Paul (I only made one mistake) Smith, ended the day with another splendid game. Trevor Howard finally sealing the match, as a clangorous 6 ball golf croquet match developed between the Letchworth 'all stars' and the rest of the world.

by a caterer and edited by a groundsman.
1. D Harrison-Wood 5/7
2. D Hector 5/5

Full Bisque 18-20 Sept
Recipe for Wrest Park
Preserve Ingredients: 2 short lengths firehose 3 lengths guttering 1 downpipe 7 plastic chairs 1 roll of roofing felt 1 gall petrol 20 pieces of wood 1 water pump
Method: Mix dry ingredients. Add large amount of water. Reduce for three hours.
[PHOTO ENCLOSED]

Day 1 awoke with a bang and a thunder of rain at 2am in the morning as 25mm of rain landed. Not only were British Rail's signals at Bishop's Stortford not working, Wrest park's lawns weren't either. Cliff Jones arrived to manage his first tournament at Wrest Park to find he had to get 30 people to play seven games on just two lawns (and even they were a little swampy in places). Lionel Tibble obtained a pump from Silsoe Research Institute and half a dozen club members were busy trying to get the water away from the lawns. Unfortunately the pipe that came with the pump was too

short to get the water over the higher ground round the lawns. So the guttering from the pavilion was dismantled and a construction of which Heath-Robinson would have been proud, conveyed water as far as possible from the lawns. By 10am the labourers had prepared lawns, but it took until noon to pump away all the lake on lawn 6. However by teatime all six lawns were in play and the major remaining problems were several potential cases of trench foot and players with swollen hands from midge bites.

Fresh from his exertions, Lionel Tibble (1) was busy disposing of all opposition. Heather Pritchard was first to suffer +26 with 3 bisques remaining. Eric Audsley hit after LT's first break, went round and pegged him out with 6 bisques left. This however did not stop him and he once again went straight round and still had 3 bisques left. John Norris (16) was next. Playing full bisques with a base of (too low I consider), his play was to peg out both balls leaving himself with 5 bisques to LT's seven. He only lost by 7. Paul Sharrock, winner of the All



England Area Final was next. LT used 5 of his 10 bisques to get to penult and then put three balls in corners. Paul's hopes collapsed at hoop and LT then used one bisque to go round. Paul hit but didn't make a hoop, so then LT duly hit and finished with, you guessed it, 3 bisques left. By general agreement he reduced his handicap to 10 - and never won another game!

Meanwhile Ron Atkinson after losing his first game was rising to the top, only to be undone by Paul and then Sheila Meadows. This left John Norris, Ian Storey and Paul looking likely winners. John, who had only lost to Lionel, duly disposed of both of them, ending up clear winner with 79 points to the nearest 66 by Judy Anderson. She came from

behind having played John earlier. Third place was tied between Doug Taylor and Ian Storey, both on 65, and won by Doug in a one ball play-off.

Award for the best hoop attempt was easily won by Charlotte Townsend. Her approach to hoop 1 left her 5 yards dead in front. After considering the matter for a long time, she decided to have a go and spent several minutes lining it up. After cannoning off the wire, she turned to her opponent and said "Don't tell me, I shouldn't have done that." "No, you had just taken a half-bisque". Her three day game with Nigel Gray also takes 'longest game'. This was started on Friday but darkness intervened. For reasons only understood by the manager, the pegged-down games were not continued next morning and this game was restarted after tea, but once again darkness won. It was finally finished on Sunday morning - a win +1 to Charlotte. With no time limits unless absolutely necessary, Tom Anderson and Rod Ashwell tried to break the manager's patience, but failed despite a

truly magnificent effort. Miss of the tournament was closely contested. Perhaps Doug Taylor's miss from six inches? Or perhaps John Wheeler's miss of his opponent's ball on the boundary from a yard only to notice he was playing the wrong ball. The opponent offered to waive the fault! On his next turn, John took off to the same ball - and missed it again! A true gentleman.

The tournament ended on Sunday evening much as it had started, with a dozen players who had not taken a hint from the black clouds and departed quickly, cowering in the pavilion from more torrential rain. Remember there is a hosepipe ban due to the drought! Eric Audsley

report features

HUNSTANTON SEPTEMBER WEEK by Rupert D Webb

At Hun'ston, as the locals call it, on Saturday, 29th August, at 10.00 am it was blowing a Force 6 gale, raining horizontally, cold and a forecast of similar weather over the next few days.

The 28 competitors were due to start the 93rd Annual Tournament at 14.30 hours that day, finishing on Wednesday, 2nd September, by 19.30 hours, and that is exactly what happened.

By the time we arrived at the Club House the five lawns had been made ready, hot coffee and tea with biscuits were available for the players and the Tournament Manager, Bill Lamb, had the first games under starters orders by 14.30 hours. From that moment on the sun never stopped shining, a fair wind blowing and no rain prevented play.

I have read many reports in the Croquet Gazette, which at times I find difficult to concentrate on long enough to follow the lengthy descriptions of some of the games, so I have avoided this particular aspect in this tournament.

The five referees were seen to be running from one lawn to another as a considerable number of games were won, or lost, on the three hour time limit. Referees' decisions are final and I am sure not influenced by the players as was noted on one occasion when Martin French agreed no crush was made by Celia Pearce, he then received a large hug and kiss. A similar decision was given to Simon Whitley, but on making the hoop his opponent Martin Kolbuszewski informed him he had gone through the wrong way.

The shot of the tournament must go to Celia Pearce, who was in front of Hoop 1, aiming at her opponent's ball 40cm away (16") also in front of Hoop 1. She managed to jump over the hoop, but unfortunately hit no other ball. The longest and most difficult decision to be reached by a referee was when Martin French was asked by Ian Storey if he could have a lift. His ball was lying behind Hoop 5, and his opponent's ball just to the right of four back. After placing three other balls on the lawn, Martin viewing at cheek height from one side then the other decided no lift. Many of us felt this was a hard decision.

The Drawings: 1. Simon Whitley; 2. Martin Kolbuszewski; 3. Martin French; 4. Bill Lamb. Drawn by Liz Taylor.



However, when Ian Storey hit the 'left' hand wire of four back, it proved the referee a better judge. Meanwhile, young Ben Green made his first tournament triple peel.

Whilst all this activity was going on Sarah Hampson was attending the garden, cutting the borders, and carrying the food parcels backwards and forwards from the car park, playing board croquet with the children and, believe it or not, pushing an enormous lawn sweeper to remove the needles from the Pine trees.

I marvel at the dedication of the Tournament Manager and Staff, and especially the team of ladies and one man who started work at 9.00 am and had hot coffee and tea, biscuits and cake ready by 10.00 am.

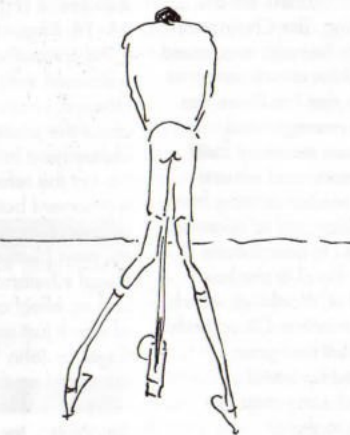
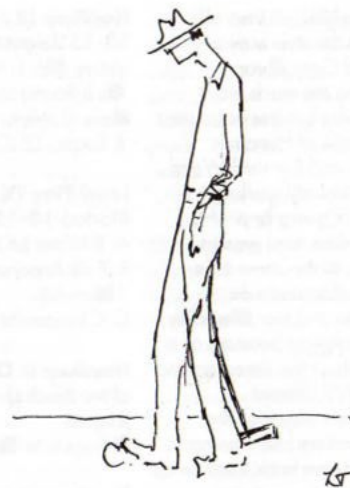
The lunches consisted of hot soup, hot chicken legs, meat pies, home made pattie, ham, beef, cheesecakes, cold salads, and there were delicious sweets of apple pie and cream, gateaux, fresh fruit salad and fresh fruit, and no overseers to see that you put too much on your plate, or to make unnecessary remarks about your appetite.

Then came the teas, which had many varieties of home made cakes, scones, malt bread, jam and, believe it or not, as much as you wanted. To them all, including Arthur Claxton, the latter having spent every day from 11.00am to 6.00 pm washing up and cleaning up in the kitchen, we thank you and recommend that Roneys Good Food Guide take a good look at Hunstanton Croquet Club.

An article in the local paper read, "Hats off to croquet players! Shades of Royal Ascot shown during play."

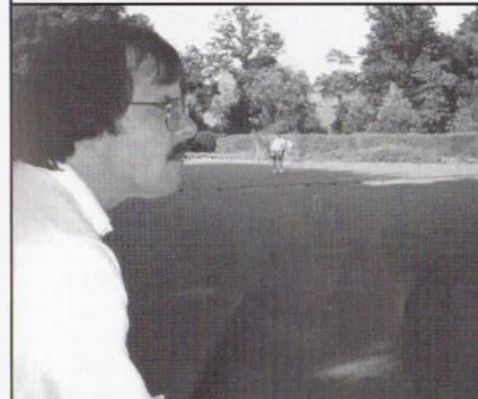
On a personal note, our digs were equal to any five star hotel and who amongst you can get served breakfast by the Mayor of Hunstanton! The journey from Bowdon took 3 1/2 hours, but would recommend you allow four.

Can you recognize any of the players sketched. Finally, the results (see previous pg.), the most remarkable of all being that of Bill Lamb, who obviously thrives on working hard and being continuously interrupted during his game to answer questions as Manager and as referee.



IPSWICH: Handicap Swiss weekend Report Card

P Alnutt (11); 5/6; av gm 1hr 51
Best: Against French, got to peg and peg before running out of bisques.
Worst: Lost to the eventual winner - Farthing.
Comments: A successful tournament although over-handicapped for the slow, easy lawns. Deserved his reduction to 10.



P Eardley (4); 3/5; av gm 2hr 27
Best: A very dour win over Kimmerling by 14.
Worst: Lost by 26 to Alnutt despite having several good chances.
Comments: Needs to speed up his play and his thinking. His three wins were all long drawn-out affairs.

C Farthing (3.5); 6/6; av gm 2hr 12
Best: A nice double-peel to beat Eardley in a very important game.
Worst: Beating Percival in the final round by 5. Showed a few nerves although he pulled out a good final break to win with time approaching.
Comments: Can't really fault him. Played very well and deserved the trophy.

M Firth (7); 2/5; av gm 2hr 41
Best: Beat Sutherland by 15.
Worst: Lost to an out of form French despite receiving 8.5 bisques on an easy lawn.
Comments: Needs to cut out a lot of mistakes in his game and improve his shooting. Stays cheerful though.

M French (-1.5); 2/6; av gm 1hr 39
Best: Beat Firth showing some qualities of an 'A' class player.
Worst: Lost by 26 to Percival wasting several chances including a missed (hilled off) 5 yard double target.
Comments: Was always going to struggle with very easy conditions but made too many mistakes given his few chances.

R Kimmerling (2.5); 2/5; av gm 1hr 49
Best: Beat Sutherland but so did everybody else!
Worst: Lost to Farthing by 25 early in the event.
Comments: Played adequately but struggled against the bisques. Played his games well inside the 3 hour time limits.

I McDiarmid (11); 2/5; av gm 3hr 4
Best: Beat Toye by 2 on time, getting to rover and rover.
Worst: Lost to Percival by 19.
Comments: Found it hard judging the pace on the Ipswich hills and shooting was very erratic. One of his 'Exocets' propelled the object ball over a two foot fence just missing a couple of interested spectators.

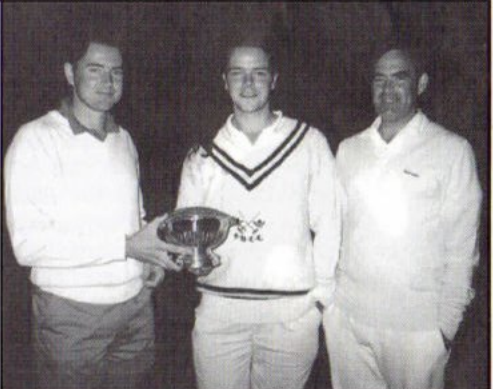
C Patmore (6); 3/5; av gm 2hr 47
Best: Beat French by 14 in under two hours.
Worst: Lost to Percival by 9 on time in a game littered with errors and long hit-ins.
Comments: Perhaps needs to extend pony-tail to improve significantly, but managed to cross a handicap line to become a 5.

M Percival (12); 4/6; av gm 2hr 43
Best: Beat French by 26 although very lucky (see above). Coming to rover with his other ball also on rover he had six bisques left. When he pegged out he had one left!
Worst: Failed to beat Farthing in the final game which would have brought them level.
Comments: Needs to work on the tactical side of his game and to speed up a bit. A good performance though for a relative beginner.

B Sutherland (4); 0/5; av gm 2hr 35
Best: Lost to McDiarmid by 8 on time.
Worst: Lost to Williams by 16 but any of his games could be mentioned here.
Comments: Won't be a four for much longer although, again, the conditions did not suit the lower handicapped players.

J Toye (14); 1/5; av gm 2hr 25
Best: Beat French by 26 no croquet in the first round.
Worst: Lost to Farthing by 13 despite receiving 10.5 bisques.
Comments: Not enough beer available so had to make do with cider. Right attitude but could kerb his language a bit on the lawn.

J Williams (8); 2/5; av gm 2hr 7
Best: Beat Sutherland, including a bronze award for an all-round break in under 15 minutes.
Worst: Lost to Alnutt by 14.
Comments: Played well enough and kept his games fairly short to please the Manager.



J Waters & C Pearce n/a
Best: Brilliant Bar-B-Q lunches and wonderful teas.
Worst: Smoke on the lawns.
Comments: Kept us all going.
L Palmer n/a
Best: Keeping the lawns occupied at all times and writing a superb tournament report.
Worst: Faulting a hammer shot played by his future Father-in-Law!
Comments: Enjoyed the weekend and relieved he wasn't playing