

THROUGH THE HOOP

... the Secretary and assistant off ill ... break-in at the CA office ...
... increasing sales ... the Open Championship ... and a croquet card ...

That was the week that was, first Tony Antenen was off with the dreaded flu, also Rodger Jackman is off with shingles, I have every sympathy for you Rodger, I understand it is very painful. Finally to complete the week we had a break in at the office, the computer and the fax machine were stolen, plus two cups, my department was lucky as although they took some equipment they had to ditch it as they escaped over the cricket ground, they damaged one mallet using it as a lever to get in a cupboard.

I am pleased to inform you that sales of equipment have increased in the first three months of

the year against 1992 figures, this is mainly because clubs and members are taking notice of the letter I put out to support the C.A. when purchasing equipment and sets. Thank you. Another reason is the publicity from the media and magazines have created an interest and we are getting lots of inquiries. I hope this also gets members for clubs and the C.A.

I have already done two Croquet days and look as if I am going to have a busy summer by the amount of dates in my diary. This is a lucrative way of getting funds for clubs by running these, it takes very little effort and is a good introduction to the game.

July has the British Open Championships at Hurlingham so make a

note in your diary now 18th - 24th inclusive and make the effort to come along and see all the top players in action including the current holder also World champion Robert Fulford. Why not make a party up? Non members entry fee to Hurlingham is £6.00, members of the Croquet Association get in free on production of their current membership card, if they cannot produce it I regret they will have to pay the entrance fee. Cheques to be made out to The Hurlingham Club, not the C.A.

We have been looking for an appropriate all purpose card for use by members of the association and have now got in stock the beautiful "Croquet" by James Tissot, it is ideal for Birthdays, Christmas and

also Notelets, normally you would pay at least a pound for these, we are offering them at £4 for Eight complete with envelopes and postage and V.A.T. paid, a real bargain.

I am increasing my range of mallets and equipment held in the office plus I will be having some Track suits in next month, we do have Sweat shirts and "T" shirts in stock. I am already open for suggestions that will bring in some money.

I will close by wishing you a very successful season, if you are in London come and visit us, you will be made very welcome.

Finally, come back Tony all is forgiven.

Brain C. Macmillan.

AGONY

It is, perhaps, time the Croquet Magazine had an Agony Column to assist worried players confronted with exceptional difficulties. I recount a few instances that have come to my notice.

Gerald Hallett Colchester

Ques. We have at Colchester a very playful cat that frequently invades the court. One day I sadly rushed my ball onto the animal hitting him on the front left paw. How should my game have proceeded?

Answer. You have obviously made an outstanding roquet. You cannot replace the ball because the cat is not a foreign body, being born in a respectable house in Essex. You should therefore take croquet off the cat, and be thankful you have the best chance you will ever have to become a scratch player.

Ques. To my amazement the other day, in a windy north wind, my hat flew off and landed on a

hoop. Is this a record?

Answer. It may not qualify for the Guinness Book of Records, but the shot was certainly a good example of the difficult Hoop-La shot. You should certainly receive a prize. I recommend you miss a turn and be allowed to take your chosen article from the club's Very-best-and-not-claimed-or-wanted-Box, preferably the rather horrid yellow trousers left in the club in 1981.

Ques. I often go to the Club on Tuesday morning when the Club bore is usually there. How can I avoid this player?

Answer. Go to the Club on Friday instead.

Ques. I am a little partial to gin, and one afternoon when attempting a peg-out I saw two pegs. Which peg should I have aimed at.

Answer. Dear Mr Baillie always recommended aiming at the middle of a two ball double. His rule could apply to this case. Have a go. Also go on the orange juice more.

Ques. I get very nervous when attempting the Rover, my wrist becomes rigid, and perspiration pours from my face. I feel awful. How can I cure this condition?

Answer. One good cure that has come to my notice is to relax, and not care a damn, say to yourself the heresy that croquet is only a game (drummed into you by your wife), shut your eyes, and try to hit the ball when you feel it

may not be looking.

Ques. Why is it when I attempt a peel or a corner cannon I invariably make a hash of things?

Answer. The reason is obvious: you are an incompetent twit and have not yet fully read the 101 books on croquet now available. You need to master much more theory and cut down on your actual practice on the courts.

Poets Corner

It's R & Y v B & K
Upon a sunny summer's day
When to the lawn stride Fay and Ray.

In textbook confrontation they
The basics of the game convey.

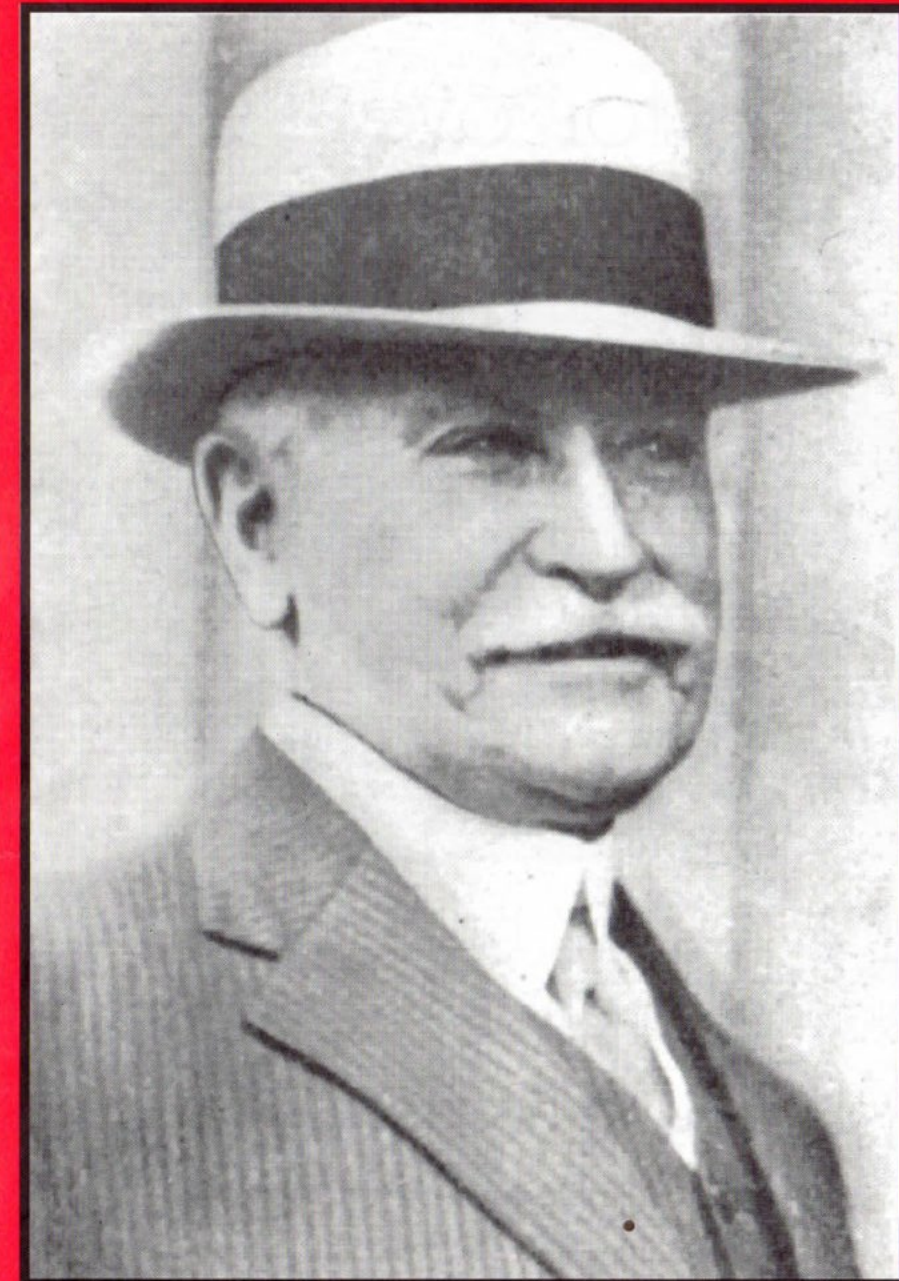
As countless diagrams display
With line and length that rarely stray
A rare precision they essay.

Would that I played like Fay and Ray,
But hasn't it been warm for May.

*Tommy Cameron
Clifton, York*

croquet

MAGAZINE JUNE

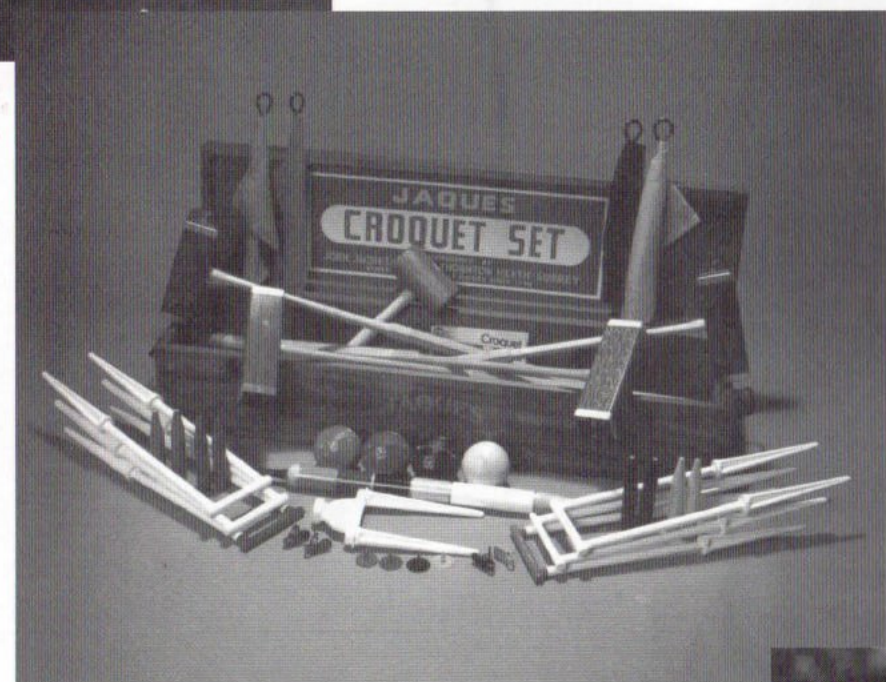


"Mr MacRobertson"

Sir Macpherson Robertson KBE, founder of the MacRobertson Shield, looks on as Great Britain & Ireland become the first team to retain the MacRobertson Shield since 1974 and are hailed as possibly the strongest Test Team ever.



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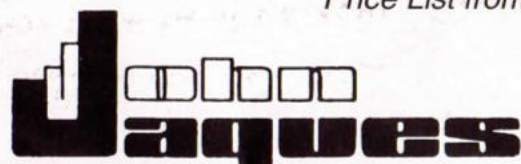
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CONTENTS

'Croquet' No. 227 (June 1993) PRICE £2.50 Cover "Sir MacPherson Robertson" Design John Walters Photograph provided by Alan Oldham
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Secretary L W D Antenen Chairman C J Irwin

Hello again to an old friend?

Croquet is standing at a crossroads; this is a crucial time for our sport and the CA. We cannot afford members to in any way feel alienated or neglected by the sport magazine. Therefore I have reached agreement with the Editorial Board to seek the opinions of our readership through a readership survey and you will find a questionnaire enclosed in this issue. There are no sacred cows; we want to know exactly what the membership want to read about in their magazine so that we can do our best to provide it for you. We may still be limited by practicalities (I cannot give you tournament reports I do not receive or hilarious stories and cartoons that no-one has written or drawn!), but if we know what you want at least we have the right starting point.

At the start of my period as Editor I took as my brief a desire expressed previously that "the magazine aspire to News-stand quality". However, it has become increasingly obvious to me that we are currently failing to meet the expectations of a body of Associates. That is despite recent efforts to tweak and tinkle with the magazine, trying to align it more with the requirements of its readership. It is not possible to sustain a publication such as "Croquet" in the face of strong criticism from valued members. Concern at the current situation is shared by both myself and the CA Council.

One of the most obvious concessions to mainstream publishing has been the move towards design, particularly since the redesign of the February issue. I have been employing techniques to generate eye-catching layouts, to give a striking and professional appearance to the magazine. This approach impresses new & casual readers, sponsors, the media etc., which has been an important objective. The question now is: is it what our core readers want?

The questionnaire attempts to tackle several areas but your general comments on anything will be very welcome. I do hope that you will take the time to complete this form and send it to me so that we can tailor the magazine to your wishes. I look forward to the results of this largest ever reader consultation exercise, and to the exciting prospect of the new magazine it will create.

Hands across the World

Another MacRobertson Shield has ended, with British croquet having every right to be proud of its achievement. "World Croquet" is still in its infancy, although the Shield competition is around 70 years old. In the past this event was very different: ocean transport across the world took weeks and consequently representing one's country could require those involved to devote months of time. Restrictions of time and cost could dictate whom a team

contained. More recently air travel and financial support have changed the nature of the event; though the great experience of meeting incredibly talented players of the present, as well as legends of the past, has ensured its unique character. But things are constantly changing. The competition grows ever shorter to allow working players the minimum time off work - this year just 3 weeks for the main event and 1 week of practice, despite the inclusion of an extra team. The use of a single venue in 1993 was also a radical innovation, and together with the US involvement led to a new format. Already talk is underway of an even shorter format when the next competition takes place in the UK during 1996. Speculation also concerns the possible inclusion of South Africa in the future.

Perhaps the biggest changes to this event are down to the backdrop against which it takes place. No longer do the players see each other just once every four years, or even once every three years - the new shorter cycle over which the Shield will now operate. The WCF and its annual World Championship, the even longer standing World Invitation at Sonoma Cutrer, new events like the French Open and a greater willingness by players to travel for individual competition in other countries have all contributed to a more casual attitude on World Croquet - including the MacRobertson - by the

world's top players.

Now we find ourselves talking about World Doubles Championships and new World Team events to include minor countries. It is important that the WCF's "World Calendar" does materialise - to give form to what might otherwise be chaos (any collapse of a 1993 World Championship is an omen to be taken note of). Those making the decisions will have the great responsibility of widespread effects, by altering the attitudes of World Class players to croquet and by association those of all croquet players.

In the meantime, those of us lucky enough to have been present can reflect on the success and the comradeship of the 1993 MacRobertson. Hopefully we can also communicate the great croquet experience of representing one's country to others and put back something into the game, that has given us so much, by encouraging other people to explore the joy of croquet.

NEWS	4
CLUBS	6
LETTERS	8
COACHING	9
MACROBERTSON SHIELD ..	10
SGM REPORT	14
SUBSCRIPTION POLICY	15
ACCOUNTS	16
HANDICAP	
ADVANCED PLAY	18
EQUIPMENT	18
COUNCIL REPORT	19
TOURNAMENTS	20
LAST WORD	24

NEWS

Highlights from Australia; Professional croquet in the US; Croquet in hotels; and a Crimewatch

Sir Macpherson Robertson KBE

An extract from "Who was who":

b. Ballarat 6 Sept 1860
d. 20 Aug 1945

Governing director of MacRobertson Confectionary Manufacturers of Melbourne.

Financed British Australian & New Zealand Antarctic Expedition 1929, also an exploring expedition by motor vehicles which made the circuit of Australia 1928.

Placed £100,000 at the disposal of the Victoria Govt. for use in connection with the Centenary Celebrations of the establishment of Melbourne 1933.

Recreations: croquet and ball punching.

MacRobertson News

On the victorious path defending the MacRobertson Shield, GB team members scored some notable achievements. World Champion Robert Fulford completed only the second sextuple peel in the history of the event (against NZ no. 1 Bob Jackson), and the only one to have been completed in a "live" match or a singles match. Earlier, in practise at Rich River, Robert completed his first octuple peel.

David Maugham com-

pleted what will doubtless be recorded as one of the most impressive turns in croquet history, a 12 hoop two-ball break that is given the detailed account it deserves in Chris Clarke's report of the event later on. Again the opponent was the luckless Mr Jackson, who must find consolation in the reason for opponent's top form against him: their rating of him as one of croquet's greatest ever players!

More gold for Britain

Great Britain's success on the International Croquet stage continued after the MacRobertson, with Cheltenham's Don Gaunt winning a Gold and a Silver medal in Perth at the Australian Masters Games.

Top US money earners

Johnny Osborne heads the list of top US tournament money earners of 1992 with \$1,650 total prize money. Robert Fulford is the highest Brit at number 4 with \$700. Six year rankings reflect the drop in prize money of recent years. In 1992 total purses reached \$8590, up \$3600 from \$4990 in 1991 but tiny compared to the \$75,350 of 1988 and \$64,365 of 1989.

Canadian Reid Fleming heads the six year totals

with \$17,887. Ireland's Fred Rogerson reached number 10 with \$6375 and Mark Avery was the top Brit at 12 with \$4,787.

Meanwhile a plan for a "pro tour" has been put forward in the US, with a projected purse total of \$250,000. If it went ahead the first circuit tournament could appear as early as April 1995. Before anyone scrambles for an air-ticket though: remember that money events in the US, real and projected, tend to be played according to US rules.

Stuart Croquet

Readers may have spotted a new advertiser in the last issue, and indeed a new sponsor gracing 1993 handicap cards. Stuart Leisure Products Ltd is a family owned business based in the heart of the Black Country, where the experience of five generations in working with fine timbers "is now brought to bear on the creation of some of the best croquet equipment available today".

The Grosvenor range of sets and mallets are available from sports shops and department stores. The mallets feature a hard, dense wood called balau: coming from production forest estates managed on a sustainable yield basis by the Malaysian Timber Board. The mallet heads are of square section, with a brass

hooped Tufnol striking face at each end. (Stuart Leisure Products on 0384 69231)

Swiss Rolls?

The second Coupe des Alpes between the national teams of France, Italy and Switzerland was played at Lesigny Golf Club near Paris. The result was: France 9; Italy 5; Switzerland 4. Currently France has 12 clubs and a full-time professional in Jean-Baptiste Grochain, Italy has 8 clubs and Switzerland just 1 club of 25 members. The French Federation can be proud of their young team and of the excellent organisation and new lawns they engineered for this event.

Norman Eatough (who scored 3 of Switzerland's 4 wins in the above event) won the Swiss Championship shortly after, beating Peter Payne 2-0 in the final.

Bath Spa Hotel

Good luck to Robin Sheppard, who has become General Manager of the Bath Spa Hotel (RAC Hotel of the year 1991/92). Previously Robin has been at the Royal Berkshire Hotel, Ascot, where his love of croquet has involved him in promotions for the game with Chris Hudson. These included an event launched by actor Nigel Hawthorne (pictured with Robin). Local & national organisers will



doubtless remember Robin's continued enthusiasm to raise the profile of our game when considering future activities.

Last year, as part of the celebrations which always accompany the Bath International Music Festival, the Bath Spa Hotel ran a Pimms & Croquet competition. The light-hearted competition attracted over 50 entries and the first prize of a weekend for 2 in Dublin at the Shelbourne Hotel was won by Mr & Mrs Layden of Atworth, Wiltshire. (Bath Spa on 0225 444424)

Hotel Sport Stay packages

Hotels with an enthusiasm for croquet to match that of the Bath Spa may be very rare, but you may be able to benefit from special rates offered for visitors to sporting events.

The 21 hotels of the Holiday Inn chain offer special rates for groups of players/supporters who book at least 5 rooms. Prices start from £25 per room per night (depending on location), and can be shared by up to 4 people in one of the twin rooms - which all have double beds.

The 6 UK Hotels (and those abroad) in the French Hotel Ibis chain offer a sporting weekend package (Friday, Saturday or Sunday nights) called Vitabis. There is no minimum number of guests necessary to take advantage of the £18 rate for rooms outside London and £40 for those inside. All rooms are double or twin-bedded.

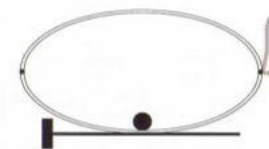
Approved Balls

Following tests carried out on 29th November 1992, Barlow XT balls have been granted CA Championship approval, and standard Barlow Balls have been re-approved following expiry of the original three-year approval. The average bounce figures achieved following drops from the standard height of 60in were 31.6 +/- 0.3in (average on each ball in the range 31.3 to 31.8in) and 32.3 +/- 0.4in (range 32.0 to 32.6in) respectively. For comparison, the Barlow standard balls tested in 1989 reached on average a height of 33.0 +/- 0.5in.

Stolen chain

From Simon & Veronica Tuke:

"Please would all readers be alerted that on January 21st a much treasured croquet bracelet, in gold, was stolen from our house, (amongst other things). There is a slight possibility that this item could be sold on, though I fear melt down is its fate. It is an oval gold bracelet, safety chain and motif of a croquet mallet and ball (also gold). Overall length when closed, about 6.5 - 7 cm. Please contact either Simon or Veronica Tuke (081 743 4617), or Acton Police Crime Desk (081 900 7517) quoting ref E139 if you can help in any way."



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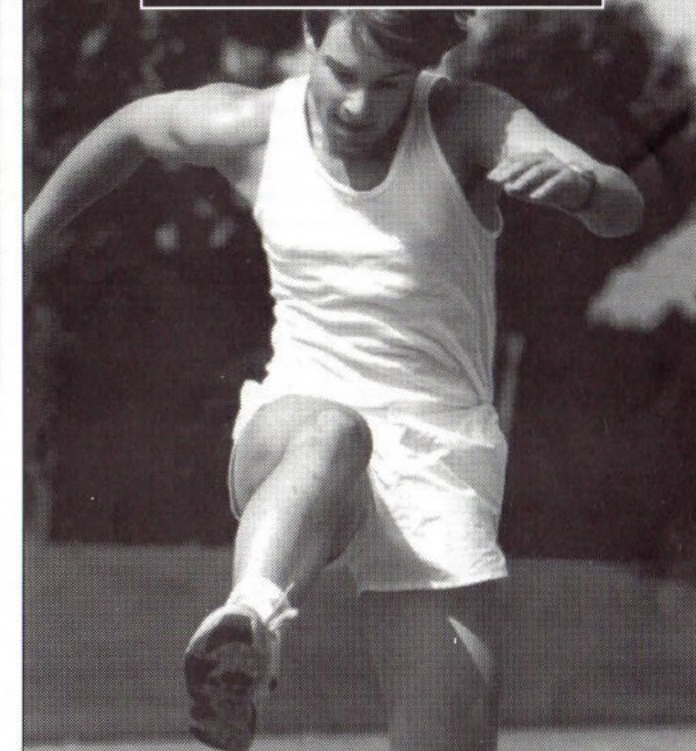
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RESULTS

Doubles in the North; Leagues and Ladies' Days in the South; plus the English Handicap All over

There was a disappointing turnout for the final at Surbiton for the new All England One Ball event, and clearly the problem of fitting it in to club schedules and to the play off and final rounds was too great. As it was, but three players contested the final, two having got through a regional play off that had five contestants at Surbiton, one arriving from a club entry and no-one from the other parts of the country that had been scheduled to send contestants.

This is a pity since the one ball game has plenty of challenges that reward good play. The strategic element is considerable and my short experience of playing it suggests to me that it would be an excellent game for television, played by the top players who would need good hoop running and positional shots, and might also rise to the challenge of a two-ball break well played. The game lasts about half an hour, more if cat and mouse tactics are employed around critical hoops.

In the final Robert Pennant Jones of Roehampton and Peter

Mayers of High Wycombe won 3 of their 4 matches leaving David Tutt of Letchworth winless, though David nearly pulled off an improbable win, pulling back a 7 hoop deficit to run over and delicately curl his peg shot past the peg missing by no more than an inch. Peter, who had with his previous shot elected to make sure of the peg by rolling up to it, finished off. In the subsequent game he had to beat Robert, which he did handily and in the resulting play off the two bisque advantage allied to excellent approach play and hoop running proved too good for his opponent who was left to attempt improbable shots which he made occasionally but not often enough to disturb Peter's relentless progress. Well played.

With no disrespect to the three finalists, I hope that clubs and organisers persevere with the competition to provide a bigger and better entry for next year and certainly for the play offs which the Surbiton Club managed with their usual superb hospitality. It is an excellent game, well worth its place in the calendar.

All England Area Handicap Final was held at the Surbiton Club on 3rd & 4th October 1992.

The outcome of the All England Handicap Final was very apparent from the opening game between Stephen Harbron (14) and Nelson Morrow

(5). Morrow hit in with the 4th ball and skilfully stuck in the first hoop. Harbron made good use of this with a break to penultimate without the use of bisque. Morrow missed the long shot and Harbron wasted no time in making a double peel and pegging out with only 3 out of 9 bisques used. Not bad for someone with a

SW Federation League final played at Sidmouth on September 27th between Bristol and Parkstone.

Both teams had a mix of male and female, and of the young and the not so young.

The mornings singles games were won convincingly by the young men Peter Trimmer (P) and Paul Scott (B) and the doubles went to Bristol. 2-1 to Bristol at lunchtime. Peter and Paul had to play each other in the afternoon - an interesting battle. Eventually, the swing of the game seemed to be going in Paul's favour, but an error at 5 put Peter in the forefront and poised to

win. But Rover was the sticking point for him, giving Paul the chance to take over and win.

The next two games to finish went to Parkstone, one with a T.P by Cliff Jones (the first in a SW Federation match), so with the score at 3-3, the last pair on the lawn, Penny Simmonds (P) and Sue Bray (B) provided a nail biting finale, with Sue emerging the winner. So, by the narrow margin of 4-3, the SW Federation Shield returned to Bristol for the first time since the inaugural season in 1985.

Kingston Langley won the SW Federation Intermediate League and Plymouth won the 'B' League.

Rosemary Gugan



handicap of 14!!!

Harbron went on to win all his 5 games. The runner up was a much closer thing with both Len Hawkins (9) and Chris Wood (7) winning 3 games each. The outcome went in Wood's favour scoring more hoops. Morrow and Barry Marsh (9) finished with 2 wins each and Paul Sharrock

(7) who did not quite find his form, finished without a win.

The wonderful food cooked by Hazel Kittermeister made up for the appalling weather of rain and wind which at times made you feel as if you should be playing with a sledge hammer and not a mallet. *N. Morrow.*

Croquet North (the Federation of croquet clubs in the north of England) held an autumn progressive doubles tournament at Tyneside Croquet Club on Sunday 27th September 1992.

Twenty-four entries were accepted for 1992's second Progressive Doubles Tournament organised by Croquet North, and the event was over-subscribed. The entries were split into Senior and Junior players, and the initial draw made. Six rounds of Croquet Association doubles play were scheduled, each

round of strictly one hour duration, started and finished on the sounding of a whistle.

Although games were played on short courts, normal CA handicap rules applied (including lift rules), with some changes. These were that Junior players scored two points for each hoop or peg scored, giving a maximum team score of 39 in any round, and peeling (team or opponent) did not score, although pegging out any valid ball did. No account was taken of any movement on a ball after the closing whistle. In

addition any bisques allocated were for use by the individual alone, not by the partnership.

The tournament produced two winners, Senior and Junior, by calculating total team points scored over the six rounds. Progression occurred after each round with the winning partnership moving lawns (Senior up, Junior down), and the losing partnership splitting to receive the new players on that lawn. A match ending level was resolved for progression by toss of a coin.

Although the day commenced in fog, and

SE Federation Ladies' Day on Saturday August 1st and the sun shone upon the lawns of the Sussex Croquet Association where teams from Eastbourne, Havering, Ramsgate, Southwick and Worthing gathered for the third one-day tournament. Owing to the number of teams and limited time, the day was organised as three single-

life contests, a doubles and two singles, one for the lower bisquers and one for the higher and they were won by Southwick, Havering, and Ramsgate respectively.

Many members had met in previous years so that the tournament provided a means of greeting old friends, exchanging news and doing friendly battle. By the end of the afternoon a real garden party

atmosphere had developed and we all cheered when Ramsgate were presented with the Shield for winning the most games in all three contests. Our thanks must go to the Southwick Club for allowing us the use of their beautiful lawns as well as supplying us with drinks and tea. Hopefully this enjoyable day can be repeated next year.

Margaret Payton.

developed to continuous rain, the event was highly successful, being played in an excellent spirit throughout, and the range of players from scratch to raw beginners showed that, by combining coaching, competition and variety into the one event, much can be learned by many players.

The tournament was successfully managed by Derek Trotman. Catering was gratefully received by all players from Tyneside Croquet Club, in the persons of Margaret Smith and Nora Hill, helped on the day by Jean Allan, one of four

visitors from Northallerton, the other three of whom played in their first Association Croquet event, and were greatly helped by the attention given by their respective Senior Player partners.

Croquet North is also very grateful to the efforts of the Ground Staff of the University of Newcastle, landlords of Tyneside Croquet Club, in preparing the courts, especially with the dreadful weather over the preceding two weeks.

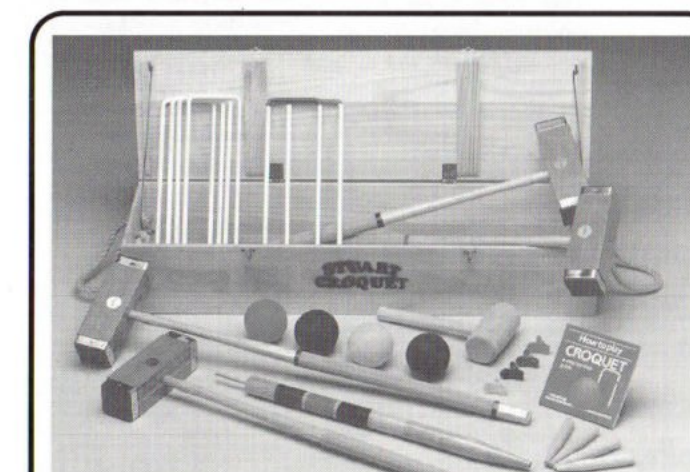
Seniors winner: John Portwood; Juniors winner: Bill Hill. *Bruce M Rannie*

It was third time lucky for Leicester, 1991 losing finalists, in the 1992 Secretary's Shield, the final of which was played at Cheltenham. The home club were in opposition, the idea of a neutral venue being sacrificed to the practical reality of finding somewhere to play as late as 17 October. Indeed, the start was delayed while frost cleared from the courts. Leicester perhaps benefited from their limbering-up exercises in the cold

changing room, for they won all three of the morning games without difficulty.

By afternoon, the weather was very pleasant. Lawrence Whittaker put the match result beyond doubt by winning quickly against Malcolm MacBean, and Cheltenham had to be content with a single win, secured by Mike Ranshaw after Richard White missed the peg-out and lost his shooting form with the single ball.

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LETTERS

More votes at General Meetings; ranking problems; minus handicaps; and the All England Handicap

Voting members

Dear Sir
At the same time as we discuss the prospect that every club member should be taxed to finance the CA, we should also consider altering our Constitution radically so that every member has a vote at general meetings of the Association.

What was good enough for the American Revolution should be good enough for us: no taxation without representation. One member (however described), one vote should be our battle cry!
from
R Quiller Barrett
London W13

Mallet problems?

Dear Sir
I wonder if any other readers are having trouble with their Jaques mallets bought within the last three years?

Four of my club members are having trouble with theirs and I feel they cannot be the only unlucky ones.
Monica Catling
Secretary
Lansdown Croquet Club

Ranking List omissions

Dear John
It was interesting to see last seasons ranking and your two new lists in the last edition of Croquet, but I find it hard to assess their accuracy, as, not for the first time, there seems to have been under-reporting of results. My own CGS rating is based on 29 matches, but I actually played 65 last year (in Britain; I had another 12 in Australia and New Zealand). As far as the best-of-three matches are concerned my three in the Home Internationals last year are doubtless included - Since Stephen Mulliner was there in person with his portable computer - and probably so were the two I played in the same event the previous year. But where were the other 4 matches I played for the



SCA against the CA and CA? Shouldn't they count too?

I don't want to make too much of this, partly because I'm not all that concerned about where I stand, though as you point out the rankings are used to determine eligibility for some tournaments. I also know that I am slightly odd (but only slightly) in that I play in Scotland as well as England. However, the CGS rankings do claim to include 'ALL eligible singles games' and be 'most useful for players outside the top 20-30' and that does seem to be a bit optimistic.

David Appleton
Suffolk

The Genuine Handicap

I do not understand the minus complex. A far simpler, and more realistic, system would be for beginners to start with a handicap of 0 and allow the handicap to indicate the number of bisques you have to give (less those of your opponent). This would mean that the 'elite' player would be, say, +26. If necessary, as players improve the handicap can be adjusted upwards as far as required.
S E Black
Cheshire

All England Handicap Final

I was very sorry to read the letter from Len Hawkins in the issue 225 of "Croquet". He has obviously not appreciated several facts:

1. The event is open to all players throughout England, Wales Scotland and Ireland.
2. Although the headquarters of the CA is at Hurlingham, it has no control over the lawns. Indeed the CA at present does not have a Headquarters Club which it controls but it does have a Regional Club at Surbiton. The local club operates under a licence from the CA which owns

the long lease and which gives it the right to stage the CA National and International events there. Hurlingham, a private club, naturally limits its permission to the CA to 'play' events there. Thus it was not at "any" club but at its only Regional club.

3. Unfortunately due to vandals and thieves we have to take up and lock away every evening all our hoops etc and they have to be reset every day.

4. Although we knew the number of players qualified to play in the Final they do not always appear. Therefore the format cannot be finally decided until the morning of the first day - hence when only 6 players attended the Manager decided to play it as a 'Round Robin' rather than a Swiss as advertised, as this formula was more satisfactory to all concerned.

5. As to the trophies, the one for the winner had been cleaned and refurbished in 1991. I have inspected the runner up trophy in the CA office last March and found it in reasonable condition but requires cleaning. The CA cannot accept blame if trophies are returned by the previous winner in a tarnished condition! Both trophies are engraved: "presented to the C.A by Major R Tingey as a Challenge Trophy for the Winner/Runner Up in the All England Final".

The original inscription referring to the Australian Open was retained for historical interest. Major Tingey won both these trophies. He was a distinguished player who became the first croquet professional. No explanation of how winner/runner up of these trophies did not win the Australian Open is necessary.

6. All trophies are secondhand after their initial presentation and none the worse for that!

There should have been a referee organised for the
(continued on pg 9...)

INTERMEDIATE COACHING NOTES by Ian Plummer

Section 10. TACTICS AGAINST BETTER PLAYERS.

The following paragraphs discuss considerations on playing against better players in a handicapped game. The main thing to be aware of is your opponent's ability. There is no point in consuming bisques to prevent your opponents going round if there is little possibility that they can make any advantage from your present position.

10.1. 'A' class players have handicaps of 2 or less. They will be able to hit in confidently over 1/4 the length of the lawn and hit painfully often over half the length or more of the lawn. Consequently you must expect them to hit if you leave a short shot. You must plan to use distance and wiring to prevent them from getting the innings.

10.2. 'A' class Players may be assumed to be able to go through as many hoops as they wish with either a three- or four-ball break. In addition they can be expected to try triple and lower order peels. Players

with handicaps of 0 or less will generally be successful with their triple peels.

10.3. 'A' class players can often finish the game in two or three breaks. That means that if they have one ball on the peg they are probably only one break away from finishing. Consequently you cannot afford to let them have an easy innings with all the balls in the centre of the lawn. Normally YOU would start attacking with your bisques in these circumstances.

10.4. In addition even if the 'A' class player has only got to 4-back with their forward ball there is a strong possibility that they can again finish in one more break by peeling. Depending on how well they were playing and exactly where they had stopped you would start attacking with your bisques.

10.5. When an 'A' class player finishes their break under control you would expect that you will only be left with expensive shots should you miss. It will normally be advisable for you to keep using your bisques when you get the innings.

10.6. 'B' class players cover the range from 2 to 6 or 7 handicap. We will consider perhaps a player of handicap 5. You will tone up or down the following paragraphs depending on your opponent's handicap.

10.7. 'B' class players can be expected to play four-ball breaks confidently through 9 or more hoops. They will have more difficulty with three-ball breaks making six or so hoops depending on where they are in the break. The centre hoops are easy. You can generally rely on them not going all the way around in one turn - you will get another chance.

10.8. 'B' class players are less consistent in their hitting in, again they will hit balls 10 or so yards away but would perhaps hit only 50% of balls more than half a lawn away.

10.9. 'B' class players will be able to retrieve easy boundary balls.

10.10. Their leaves can be expected to be less lethal than those from 'A' class players. You will be left certain shots ('free' shots) which you can take without penalty whereby they gain no advantage.

10.11. A 'B' class player is only one turn away from finishing when they have their forward ball at or through rover and their backward ball at least through the first two or three hoops.

10.12. 'C' class players have handicaps ranging from say 6 to 10 or there about. Taking an 8 handicap player. They will be able to play a four-ball break through five or six hoops, but will have difficulty obtaining more than three or four hoops in a three ball break.

10.13. They will be expected to hit a ball a quarter of a lawn away in one turn - they will not be able to retrieve balls easily from boundaries and corners.

10.14. They will seldom design a leave, but finish where they break down. This will give you breaks and the innings in many circumstances and nearly always a 'free' shot.

10.15. A 'D' class player is one turn away from finishing when they are on the peg with one ball and have four or so hoops to make with their back ball - assuming that YOU do not leave them a break on a plate.

("Letters" ...continued)
first day and I apologise for our omission. On the second day there was a different manager and he was a referee.

Unfortunately I was unable to be present at the Final as I was on holiday as was George Noble. We are all sad that the event, in Mr Hawkins' opinion did not live up to his expectations but we hope the other five enjoyed it. We are all volunteers who try to do our best. I do not consider the very sarcastic tone of the letter was justified. "You do not quench your thirst with bitter water".

Derek Caporn
Chairman of the Surbiton Croquet Club and a C.A Council Member.

"the CA at present does not have a Headquarters Club which it controls but it does have a Regional Club at Surbiton"

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COACHING

1993 MacRobertson SHIELD

The Captain's Report: Great Britain and Ireland retain the MacRobertson Shield

by David Openshaw

A famous and emphatic victory was achieved to retain the MacRobertson Shield. Great Britain and Ireland started the event as favourites, but as we all know the favourites don't always win. We were determined to make sure that the favourites did win this time and we did so in style.

We had a slightly shaky start in the first four days of the tournament, but day 5 and particularly day 6 showed us at our best and we never looked back from then on.

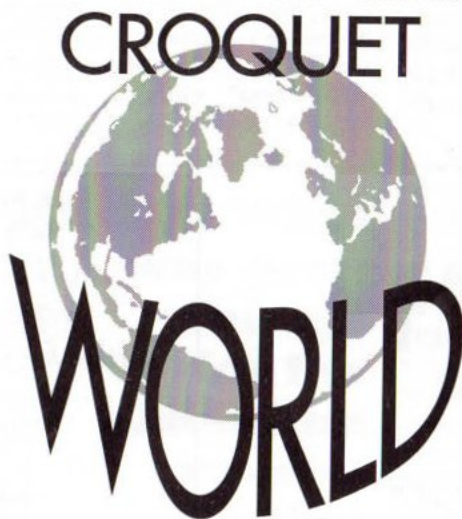
However, let me begin at the beginning. Soon after the team was selected last September we began our campaign. During the winter we met on several weekends together with Keith Aiton our coach and Graham Jones of Loughborough University, in order to develop as a team and of course to keep in practice and prepare to play with the unfamiliar Dawson balls. Under Graham Jones guidance we agreed goals for the tour, how we would support each other, and the expectations of the role to be performed by the captain and coach. I must say this kind of preparation helped us enormously when we were in Australia.

Robert Fulford and David Maugham set off earlier than the rest of the team and had a very successful time touring New Zealand and Australia, reported on elsewhere. We were all due to meet in Queensland prior to the tournament proper. However as we were about to leave Singapore Colin Irwin learnt of the death of his father and returned immediately to the UK. After practise at the four lawn Stephens Club in South Brisbane and the two day test match there against Queensland, it was on to Melbourne. There we joined the US team for the 3 hour coach journey north to the Rich River Golf Club, venue of the 1993 MacRobertson Shield and 'home' for all the teams for 3 weeks.

The Rich River Golf Club like many clubs on the state border between New South Wales and Victoria exists as a result of the difference in gambling laws in the two states. Poker machines (one arm bandits) have been allowed in New South Wales for many years and Victorians cross the state borders to play them. Often arriving by the coach load. The revenue from approximately 300 machines has enabled the Rich River Golf Club to develop excellent facilities. There are two golf

courses, flood lit tennis courts and 3 permanent croquet lawns. These lawns were of Hurlingham standard but somewhat faster. Some 200 yards away from these lawns a further four were created specially for this tournament. These lawns resembled the Hurlingham cricket pitch although unfortunately there were patches in all four of these lawns which had needed reurfing.

This year the U.S.A. were making their first appearance in the MacRobertson Shield - a very welcome move. Each of the teams were missing one of their best players because of work commitments - Hogan, Mulliner, Cleland and Bidencope a former Australian team member now qualified for the U.S.A. There was a new format to this years Shield. In the first phase each team (of six players) played each other in a 'short' test consisting of 6 singles and 3 doubles. From this phase the top 2 teams would contest a 21 - match test



consisting of 12 singles and 9 doubles to decide the winner. The 3rd and 4th placed teams in phase 1 would also contest a long test to decide 3rd and 4th places. Generally each day 3 doubles matches were played at the croquet club lawns and four singles matches were played on the new lawns.

We had an 11-2 lead when we passed the finishing line and were able to enjoy an evening of celebration. This did not stop us winning games on the following two days and we finished the match with a 17-3 result (one game remaining unfinished). It was a great team effort with everyone in good form and determined to win. A great result.

Of our opponents I'm sure the Americans enjoyed their baptism of fire and the experience gained will help their game develop. The Australians showed themselves as determined fighters and pushed us to the limit in our individual match. Newcomer to their team Michael Taylor had a particularly successful debut. The New Zealanders found us at our best and couldn't match us on the day. Bob Jackson as always was difficult to beat and really brought out the best of Robert Fulford and David Maugham. Paul Skinley showed his class and was mainly responsible for New Zealand wins (2 singles and 1 doubles) Greg Bryant impressed on his first appearance with his strong shooting and aggressive break play. 17 years old Richard Baker impressed on his debut with his excellent temperament for the game. I suspect his shooting during the tournament was not at its best but he's a player who looks certain to represent his country on many more occasions. I think its also apposite to mention two players who were not competing, John Prince of New Zealand who had played in the last seven series and William Prichard who had played in the last five series. Both were missed and I for one would like to see them back for the next series!

Amongst the spectators at Rich River were a number of former players and I enjoyed discussions and recollections of past MacRobertson Shields with Eddie Hunt (Australia 1935 and 1937) Tom Howatt (Australia 1969), Grace Edwards (Australia 1969 and 1979), Spencer Buck (Australia 1974, 1982 and 1986) and David Curtis (GB 1963). Tom Howatt probably Australia's best ever player told me how he believed that a 26 point break was possible. He used to practice with partner ball in the jaws of one and the opponents at hoops 1 and 2. From this position he made 23 points (10 peels and a peg out on the strikers ball) on a number of occasions and he has set a challenge to Robert and others to do better.

Finally on behalf of all the team members I'd like to thank all those both here and in Australia who helped to make this tour possible - particularly the Cheltenham and Hurlingham clubs for making practice facilities available, all those individuals and clubs who made contributions to the Test Tour Fund and who through their enthusiasm for the game offered us such a lot of encouragement. Graham Jones who helped so much

with team preparation, Stephen Mulliner who did so much organisation at this end. Spectators who made the long trip Jerry Guest, Tom and Judy Anderson and particularly Richard Hilditch and Catriona Aiton who were with us for the whole tour. In Australia our thanks go to the Australian Croquet Association, the Croquet Association of Queensland, the Stephens Club in Brisbane and the Rich River

Golf Club and particularly to Kit Miles Manager of the tournament, Ian Reid and all the referees, Ken Boal, Kate Fox and all the individual members of the Rich River Croquet Club for a tour excellently organised and conducted in a most friendly manner. Also thanks to all the other teams and their managers for the spirit in which the competition was played. And finally (the last finally) on behalf

of the six players I'd particularly like to thank Keith Aiton our Coach for the contributions he made to our success. As in the previous tournament he was a valuable member of the team throughout the whole tour.

The next MacRobertson Shield will be played in Great Britain in 1996 so the team can now reflect on their success this year in Australia and then begin to prepare for future challenges.

Chris Clarke reports back on details of matches in his first World Team Championship

Preview

The Mac dates back to 1925 and this was the 15th time it has been contested. England/GBI had 8 wins, Aus 3 and NZ 3. GBI were again the favourites but NZ were expected to put up strong resistance with Australia having an outside chance. This was the first year the USA had played and they were expected to bring up the rear.

The event was, for the first time, to be held at a single venue, which in a country the size of Australia, must be a good idea. The week before the Mac, all the visiting teams played representative matches against various state teams as a warm-up.

The Build-up

At last the 12th March had arrived. A motley assortment of croquet players were gathered at Heathrow to begin their quest to become the first team to retain the Mac since 1974: DKO, Colin, Chris, Richard Hilditch (minder) and Keith & Catriona. Unfortunately, due to food poisoning, John had been forced to cancel his flight and book a later one.

The flight proved that Keith was the best chess player and therefore fully justified in his role of team tactician. We stopped at Singapore where Colin was informed that his father had died. A rather dejected team landed in Brisbane to meet Robert and David and say goodbye to Colin who was flying back to Ireland immediately.

During our week in Brisbane, we were guests of the Stephens Club whose hospitality was warm and generous.

The club had four lawns, all of which were flat but rather slow. We had four days practice before a representative match against Queensland. John joined us the night before the rep. match. Queensland had a team mixed in both age and ability. At 19, Simon Roast seems to have a lot of potential but needs to play more regularly against top players - Australia's greatest problem. Greg Bury and Bruce Fleming have both represented Australia in the past and Aggy Read is a strong inter-state player. The other two team members were Betty Belz and Fred Barton.

The first days play was two singles and two doubles. Chris beat Bruce +26TP, +26TP and Robert beat Greg with two triples. Both doubles matches went our way in straight games despite the odd error to give us a 4-0 lead overnight. The second day saw everybody win in straight games, although John had to hit a 30-yarder in the first against Betty Belz. So, a convincing 9-0 win to start off our campaign

with no games dropped. Thanks to the Stephens Club and all the players and officials who gave up their time to help our preparation.

It wasn't all croquet in Brisbane. Some of us went to see the local wildlife and cuddle some koalas whilst others preferred the more metropolitan sights such as visiting the GABBA. It rained every day we were in Brisbane, making a mockery out of Queensland's title of "The sunshine state". However, we had been warned that the Rich River County Club where the Mac would be played was going to be hot, dry and have a lot of flies - so we didn't complain too much about the rain!

Phase One

Colin joined us the day before the start of phase one and at last our team was complete. Our confidence had been lifted by the win in Queensland and Robert seemed to be about to hit top form having just completed an octuple in practice. The draw for order of play was made at the welcoming function which lasted an astounding 4 hours. The result of this was that we would play NZ at doubles the next day.



Size really isn't important. Messrs Hilditch, Aiton, Maugham

Day 1

Clarke & Fulford took the first against Bryant & Skinley with a Fulford triple but Clarke only pegged out 1 ball on his triple in the second. Bryant hit in and went to peg with partner on 1-Back. Fulford shot at the target of peg and half a ball and a superb shot meant GBI were 1-0 up. Unfortunately, Irwin & Maugham were in trouble against Baker & Beale. Colin was still fighting jet-lag and finding it difficult to concentrate and we soon lost the match in straight games.

Meanwhile, Openshaw & Walters were dominating Jackson & Jones. A high quality

first game had seen an excellent triple from John to win +17TP. In the second, John had gone to 4-Back and David was taking his ball round until he decided to attempt a long angled 4-Back peel on an STP and broke down. This allowed Jackson & Jones to square the match at one game all and then completely control the third to give NZ a 2-1 lead at the end of day 1. A disappointing start, but at least there were obvious reasons for our losses which we could work on.

In Aus/US match, Australia led 3-1 with a particularly good match between Blaise Northey and Jim Bast which went to Blaise in three.

Day 2

Clarke got off to a good start against Skinley, winning the first on the sixth turn. The second was much closer and Paul missed a 4 yarder whilst finishing. This allowed Chris to recover and peg Paul out who soon lost to an aggressive finish. GBI:2 NZ:2

Maugham had an excellent match against Bryant. In the first, Greg double-peeled David out and was soon finishing on a 3-Ball break. However disaster struck at rover and David took the game +3. In the second David was TPO'd by Greg. Eventually David was in position at 1 with a ball at 2 and the other in 4th corner. Greg took the strange decision to put his ball from hoop 2 onto the boundary behind 1 hampered from David's ball. David refused his hoop, hit the ball in corner 4 and used the ball behind 1 as a pioneer to win the match with an excellent turn. GBI:3 NZ:2

Walters had a tough match against 17 year old Richard Baker. John lost the first to a triple but recovered well to take the second 26TP. Both players had chances in the third, but it was John who took them to put us on the brink of victory at 4-2.

The final game was a battle of the captains, Openshaw/Beale. It was both slow and of poor quality. The first two games were shared but David built up a strong lead in the third. Graham missed his last shot but David stuck in rover. Graham then stuck in 2 off David's backward ball which allowed him to stick in rover again. The match was eventually pegged down after David missed his lift against 2 and 4-Back. A good day for us, although slightly annoying not to have it sewn up.

Australia won the doubles 2-1 to take a match-winning 5-2 lead against the States.

Day 3 GBI v Aus Singles

Fulford had a high quality match against

Pickering. Colin took the first with a triple but this only allowed Robert to reply with two of his own to take the match.

Maugham played poorly against Chambers and soon lost in straight games. Irwin had a good +3 win in his first game against Prater and soon won the second to take us into a 2-1 lead.

Meanwhile, the Walters/Taylor match was swinging from one side to the other. John was in trouble in the first but won +3 which seemed to force Taylor to up his game a couple of gears. A break to 4-Back by John in the second saw a TPO from Taylor and a 3-Ball break to win. John had a chance in the third but it was wasted and Michael made no errors to complete another triple to make it GBI:2 AUS:2. The Australians had played well against us and deserved their wins. We were now under significant pressure to beat NZ on day 4.

NZ v US saw NZ take a 2-0 lead with one match unfinished.

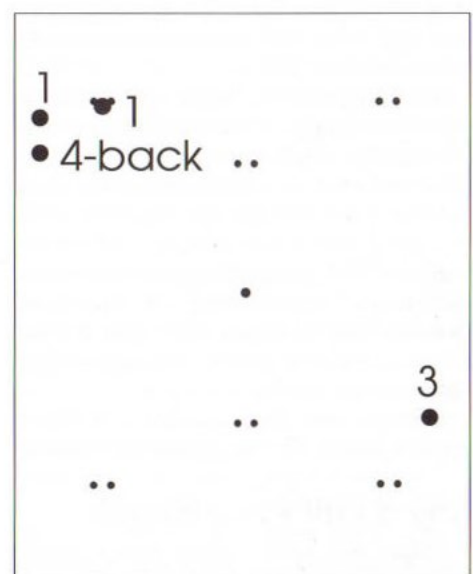
Day 4

Saw the match the spectators wanted to see - Fulford/Jackson (played on the old lawns). Robert went to 4-Back peeling Bob to hoop 3 with what is now his standard leave after this manoeuvre (see below).

Bob missed and Robert finished. Robert got going first in the second game and went to 1-Back with a delayed sextuple leave. Bob missed and Robert finished only the second ever sextuple in the MacRobertson Shield to clinch the test 5-2 against NZ. A great turn. Soon after, Colin beat Steve Jones in straight games after an excellent recovery in the first to make the final score GBI:6 NZ:2 (1 match abandoned).

Clarke was playing Northey (Aus) and won in straight games despite being pegged out in the second, to make it GBI:3 AUS:2. Openshaw was playing Tyrell and again broke down trying a straight peel. Both games were close, but this did not bring the best out of David who lost -3 and -2 to allow Australia to pull level once again.

Meanwhile Kiley Jones had beaten Barrie Chambers +3TP in the third and Stark had lost -1 in the third to Pickering.



Day 5 GB v US doubles

Saw Clarke & Fulford demolish Arkley & Kroeger with a triple apiece and Maugham & Irwin play well under pressure to win +5TP, +17TP against Stark & Jones. Openshaw & Walters also won comfortably in straight games but it took three hours longer. GBI:3 USA:0

On the other lawns, Australia were playing NZ. The Kiwis were 2-1 up with Taylor/Baker still in progress. Baker had taken the first 26TP but Taylor performed another TPO in the second. He pegged out on the TPO at 12:30 and the game eventually finished at 4:30. It became a one ball game and reached penult v penult. Neither player was willing to take position and stayed near corners 2 & 3. Eventually, Baker took position and Taylor missed. Baker ran the hoop and took position at rover. Taylor took position at penult. Baker ran rover and went to a side boundary. Taylor ran penult and took position at rover. Baker missed the peg. Taylor ran rover and dribbled past the peg. Baker hit in centre ball to win +1 OTP and take NZ into a 3-1 lead.

Day 6

Saw GBI hit top form. Walters annihilated Peterson +26TP, +26TP; Irwin played extremely well to beat Kroeger +26TP,+13TPO; Maugham beat Jones with two triples and Fulford beat Stark +15TP,+10OTP. It was all over by 11:30 which meant that Openshaw was allowed to go and watch an Aussie rules game in Melbourne.

NZ beat Aus 2-0 in the doubles (1 unfinished) to effectively clinch their place in the final.

Day 7 GBI v Aus Doubles

Saw GBI look a little shaky. We were 3-3 with Australia, and when both Clarke & Fulford and Irwin & Maugham lost their first games, things were not looking good. However, Clarke & Fulford came back to take the match with two triples and Irwin & Maugham also won. Openshaw & Walters had an excellent straight games win over Northey & Taylor. GBI:6 Aus:3

NZ took all four matches against the US to take a 6-0 lead.



1993 MacRobertson Shield: The Players

Day 8

The final day of phase 1 allowed GBI to finish off the USA. Clarke and Openshaw both won in straight games against Bast and Arkley respectively. GBI:9 USA:0 with all matches won in straight games.

New Zealand beat Australia 6 -1 with 2 matches abandoned. Bryant beat Jones, and Jackson beat Stark in three. Jackson was trying an octuple and laid for it five times. However Jerry hit it four times and when Bob eventually had a go it never really got off the ground. NZ beat USA 8-0 (1 unfinished)

Phase Two

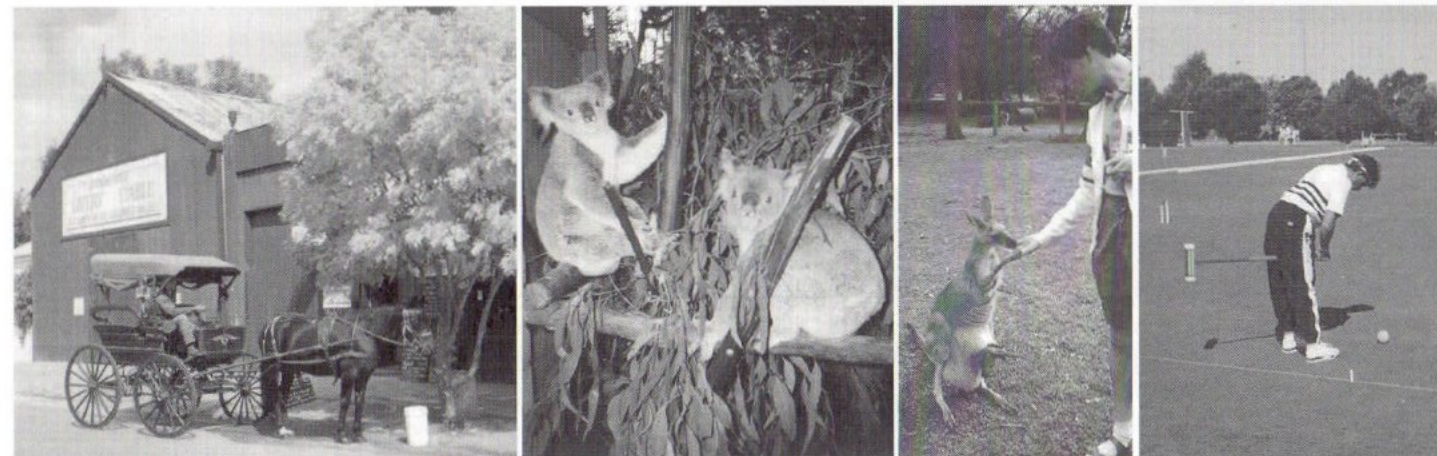
We were very confident going into the final. We had won all our singles against NZ in phase 1 and were sure that we would improve on our doubles performance.

Day 9

Was a rest day used to go on river boat trips, play golf or just laze around.

Day 10

We were soon 2-0 up, Clarke & Fulford beat Bryant & Skinley and Irwin & Maugham beat Baker & Beale. We had already improved on our previous doubles performance, but could we make it a clean sweep? Openshaw and Walters were playing Jackson & Jones and had lost the first 26TP. In the second both Openshaw and Jones reached 4-back, but Walters was first to begin a delayed triple that appeared to be going well with some well executed shots to achieve the peels. However, the rover peel had to be straight and this had been shown to be a rather more tricky manoeuvre with the Dawson balls - bringing several triples to grief during the event. Here as well the peel shot caught in the jaws of the hoop and John failed to get enough "jump" into his half jump over it, giving Jackson all the balls for a triple to take the match. However, Jackson struggled to get his peels done and ended up having to complete an identical straight rover peel. Surely, thought the team, Jackson would not make the same error? In



Historic Port of Echuca; Indigenous Ozzies; the ubiquitous photo of Paul Skinley's swing!

fact Bob did exactly the same thing as John, allowing John an easy finish from rover and peg to level the match. The GB side then went on to take the third game and rescue the match - to the delight of the whole team, who had been totally absorbed in their support from the sidelines.

The match had done two things. It had produced an excellent team spirit in the British camp and had demoralised the New Zealanders. I felt at this stage that it was simply a matter of keeping it together and the eleven wins would come of their own accord.

Day 11

Fulford took the first game against Bryant +26TP, but then missed a 4 yarder when finishing in the second. Bryant peeled Robert out and left the balls in corner one and level with 3 on the east boundary with Robert for 1-Back. Robert split in front of 1-Back and finished.

Irwin played Baker and managed to extract sufficient errors for a comfortable straight games win. Openshaw started to find some form against Jones and took the match in straight games to put us 6-0 up.

Walters had failed to finish from 4-back in the first game and Skinley had taken his chance. In the second, Skinley played faultlessly although John had hit to extract an opportunity but failed to capitalise. Nevertheless, we had a commanding 6 -1 lead.

Day 12

Saw us go 7-1 ahead when Clarke & Fulford beat Jackson & Jones. Openshaw & Walters bounced back to take their third game +26 and the score to 8-1 but the other match was turning against us. Irwin & Maugham had taken the first 26TP against Bryant & Skinley but had failed to get home by three in the second. The third saw Irwin round quickly but David missed an easy chance when Bryant broke down. However, he was given a chance to recover with a 10 yard last lift shot. Unfortunately David failed to connect and it went 8-2.

Day 13

We knew that we could seal victory today

with three wins out of four. The day started very well with Irwin overwhelming Jones to end the series having won all his singles matches without dropping a game. Clarke beat Beale despite dropping his first singles game of the event. Meanwhile, the match of the event was taking place between Maugham and Jackson. David had taken the first game comfortably 26TP. In the second, Bob went to 4-Back on the fifth turn, David had a TPO on the sixth turn and Bob finished from the contact on the seventh turn - an excellent game considering that the lawns were not easy.

The deciding game saw David round to 4-Back only for Bob to reply with a break to 1-Back. Bob was unable to cross-wire David at 1, so just left a ball at 1 and a ball at 2 and joined up in the middle of the east boundary. David missed and Bob TPO'd David and pegged 2 balls out leaving 1-Back v 1. After some play, David was in angled position in front of 1 and Bob who was now for 2-Back was in the middle of the east boundary. The next turn was definitely the best turn of croquet that I have ever seen. David hit Bob's ball, rolled in front of 1, ran a five yard hoop and started a two ball break. After hoop five, he became hampered but played an excellent sweep shot and rolled off 6. He failed to get a rush out of 1-Back, but rolled to 2 yards straight position and ran it. He failed to get a rush out of 3-Back but rolled to 1 yard straight position and finished to win the game, match and MacRobertson Shield for Great Britain. A tearful David just couldn't believe it himself and the team celebrated by throwing a bucket of iced water over our coach Keith Aiton.

Meanwhile, Openshaw was playing Baker who had taken the first. In the second, Baker stuck in rover when about to finish and smiled, with Openshaw only on 1 & 4. He was not smiling two hours later when Openshaw had won -12,+2,+26TP. So, it was 12-2 and the team went out for a celebratory meal and the usual Burnley FC songs that accompany it.

The next morning, the team agreed that winning was not enough and that we should try and maintain our concentration to obtain an emphatic scoreline. Irwin & Maugham quickly saw off Jackson & Jones but Fulford was not playing well against Baker & Beale. The game went to three before Clarke &

Fulford pounced on a Beale error to take the game by seven and go through the series unbeaten. Openshaw & Walters had taken the first by 3, but an excellent triple by Skinley levelled the match. The third saw Bryant hit two long shots to save the match which was eventually abandoned.

The final day's interest lay in another Fulford/Jackson match. The quality was not as high as the first match but the result was the same. After winning a close first game, Robert TPO'd Bob in the second and won soon after without conceding a shot. Maugham & Walters both won in straight games but Clarke was having trouble with Skinley who had taken the second 26TP to square the match. In the third, Chris was unable to capitalise when Paul broke down on rover and rover and lost a couple of turns later.

The final score was therefore GBI:17 NZ:3.

The result showed the overwhelming superiority of the GBI team. The NZ team were weakened by the absence of Hogan and Westerby, but Jones and Baker played reasonably. Beale, however, played very poorly; whilst at the top, we were simply better than they were. Skinley came out of the event with his reputation intact, being involved in all of NZ's wins. So why were we better. In my opinion, there were three main reasons:

- (1) We broke down less often
- (2) We made better leaves
- (3) We played more aggressively.

The 3rd/4th place play-off saw the USA take a 4-3 lead before going down 11-6. The play of Michael Taylor from Australia and Kiley Jones from the States stood out with both looking dangerous.

The Result of the peeling competition was:
1st Robert Fulford - 12 Triples + 1 Sextuple
2nd David Maugham - 8 Triples
3rd Michael Taylor - 7 Triples

The event was very enjoyable and efficiently organised by the ACA. Kate Fox was always willing to help out and George Latham looked after the interests of all four teams, not just Australia. There are so many people to thank that to list all would be impossible. I only hope that when Britain holds the next Mac in 1996, the Australian team will be treated as well as we were.

SGMs

Report on the two
Special General
Meetings held on
27th February 1993

Why two SGMs some of you may be wondering? Only one Council decision was being challenged. Well, amazing though it seems, it was discovered that as the Rules of the Association stood, you, the membership, had no right to reverse any decision of Council. Before the members' SGM could take place Council had to call another SGM to change the Rules to allow its decisions to be challenged. There was no objection from Councillors to my calling this SGM, something which perhaps should be borne in mind by the proponents of the "elitist Council" theory.

At this same SGM a lacuna in the Rules which would have allowed a majority of those present and voting to override a larger opposite postal vote was also corrected.

The SGMs were attended by 72 Associates, one non-voting Affiliate, and the Chairman of Council, with the President of the Association in the chair. The essential points put by Dr I.G. Vincent for the Associates who called the meeting were that:

The substance of the decision was to implement the first stage of a three year plan as put forward by the Working Party in mid 1992. In the proposers' opinion the changes had been rushed through with inadequate consultation, and the Council had not given due consideration to the concerns voiced by numerous clubs both large and small.

The proposers were dismayed at the ever rising costs of CA administration which should not in their opinion be allowed to continue. If their motion caused a shortfall in CA finances in 1993 then publication of Croquet News could be suspended for one year, and the third part of their motion would allow Council to increase subscriptions as normal.

The timing of the announcement of the proposed changes had given clubs insufficient time to budget for the increased amounts they would have to pay.

Responding for Council the Chairman of the Working Party, Mr S.N. Mulliner, said that the responses to the Working Party proposals had related to the whole three year plan which was no longer under consideration, not to the current one year and one year only decision. There was in fact no "average" view to be drawn from the responses. Views expressed ranged from completely against to completely in favour via in favour of some parts but not others, (and then not the same parts in all responses), with a certain amount of disinterest thrown in.

Regarding finances, Mr Mulliner used a selection of detailed overhead transparencies to illustrate key dates in CA finances. In 1976 the Sports Council grants provided 75% of office costs, including the appointment of a full time Secretary, in total 39% of our income. In 1982 this was replaced by a development grant, dependent on achieving targets for expansion

as described in the Forward Plan. In 1991 this grant was cut because of economic constraints on the Sports Council. He also showed slides to illustrate the changes in income and expenditure in real terms, i.e. inflation adjusted, since 1980. Expenditure had been kept well under control, but also subscription income had not increased, so that we were dependent on revenue from CA tournaments and levy, which had increased steadily over the period and were paid by the tournament players, and notably in recent years by the excellent work of Brain MacMillan, the commercial Manager, without whose efforts we would have been in deficit.

He argued that this was a fragile base on which to build for the future and that day to day activities of the CA should be funded by subscriptions from players. We should not be dependent on ephemeral sources of income like profit on sales of goods, advertising revenue, allocation of costs from sponsorship etc. for our bread and butter activities. The CA needed to get its finances on a more secure footing for the future and the Council decision

**"A few felt we should
go back to voluntary
staff, however
no-one volunteered"**

being challenged was a stop-gap measure for 1993 only to allow time for further consultation. Tinkering with the problem, which we have had for many years, will not solve it. Firm decisions and possibly radical ones are needed to secure the future of the CA.

Much discussion followed, with many present expressing their views such as:

The CA should deal with clubs individually, advise each club of any increase of CRF and let the club raise the money as it wished. People kept returning to this point, though it was pointed out that this is what happens now. The CA does not tell clubs how the CRF should be raised, only how much it is.

The need to increase membership to gain access to grants or prevent grants being cut was recognised. It was also generally accepted that it would be good for the game if all club members were CA members with voting rights, but there were objections to coercion. Some felt strongly that membership should be voluntary.

A plea for unity was voiced, with the view that all who played should contribute to the CA.

Concern was expressed as to the motion being the first of a series of phased increases. Once again the meeting was assured that this was not the case.

It was suggested that the CA should identify its

core business and cut out everything else, that we reduce services to what we currently afford rather than try to raise money to improve services.

A few felt we should go back to voluntary staff, however no-one volunteered.

It was suggested we cut the magazine and have a photocopied newsletter.

Concern was expressed over small clubs with few CA members who might disaffiliate. It was pointed out that the subscription income from one associate was equal to the income from 6 affiliates, and we equally could not risk losing Associates.

Some present felt that we were too worried about people with no interest in the CA or the growth and future of the game, and that the CA should be run for the benefit of those who pay for it, the tournament players. We were starting too many small clubs which ran on an unrealistic financial basis and this was the cause of our problems.

Dr Vincent, replying to the debate, opined that the CA, facing a loss of members if it increased individual subscriptions had passed this increase on to the clubs in the form of increased CRF, but that individual clubs had the same problem if they increased their subscriptions. He argued that the loss of a club was more serious than the loss of individual members.

The President then reported that some 25 years ago he had also suggested that all who played should pay, with a negative response. In his opinion such a system was the correct way forward for the future continuation and expansion of the game and that club members who did not play tournaments got the benefits of having a club, quality of lawns, good equipment and so on at very little cost.

The first motion to reverse the Council decision was then put and including the postal vote was carried by 225 for (65.6%), with 118 against and 2 abstentions.

The second motion on subscriptions and CRF for 1993 was put, and following clarification from the Chairman of Council that we would then revert to the pre October 1992 situation pending decisions of Council in line with the motion, and that clubs which had already paid CRF in line with the October decision would be reimbursed, was carried by 256 for (76.6%) to 78 against, with 9 abstentions.

The meeting was valuable with a good attendance by CA standards. Altogether 345 members voted, about 20% of the membership. A conference followed, reported elsewhere, which was also very valuable and positive. However, one has to wonder how much consensus we can get from consultation when even over such an apparently emotive issue, and faced with an apparent fait accompli only 20% of the membership felt inclined to put a cross on a paper and invest in a second class stamp.

Colin Irwin, Chairman of Council

NEW

Directions

Subscription Policy for 1994 - further proposals

As you will already know, the Special General Meeting held on 27 February 1993 reversed a Council decision relating to the 1993 Club Registration Fee ("CRF"). However it is fair to say that the main objection was the speed of implementation in 1993 rather than to the underlying principle. A Club Conference attended by 65 club representatives was held in the afternoon following the SGM to discuss what should happen in 1994 and later years. I am pleased to report that the discussions were constructive and that a definite consensus emerged.

The conclusions were reported to the Council meeting on 27 March 1993 and it was agreed that all clubs should be asked to consider new proposals for 1994 and beyond based upon Conference conclusions. If

these new proposals do not give rise to significant objections they will be placed on the agenda of the October 1992 AGM for approval. If there are significant objections, a further Club Conference will be called during the summer.

Accordingly, I would be most grateful if you will consider the proposals set out in the Appendix to this article and discuss them with your committee and club members. Please let the C.A. Secretary have any comments by 30 June 1993.

With many thanks for your co-operation
Stephen Mulliner
Chairman, Subscription Policy Working Party

The main conclusions of the Conference were:

- (1) that all croquet members of a registered club should contribute a reasonable amount towards the central administration of Croquet;
- (2) that this should take the form of a CRF paid by the clubs and calculated on a per capita basis (with appropriate relief for membership of more than one club);
- (3) that the amount of £12 originally suggested in "The Way Ahead" was too high;
- (4) that an amount of £4 to £5 should be generally acceptable.

APPENDIX

(A) Established Clubs

1994

- (1) CRF is set at £4 per club member (subject to multi-club relief).
- (2) all club members receive one issue of 'Croquet'.
- (3) individual subscriptions remain in current form and at current levels.

1995

- (1) CRF is increased to a maximum of £5 per member (subject to multi-club relief).
- (2) all club members receive one or two issues of 'Croquet'
- (3) Individual Subscriptions are simplified:
 - (a) tournament players pay a Tournament Registration Fee ("TRF") of (say) £20 for the right to play in tournaments and to receive the Fixtures Book and all issues of 'Croquet'.
 - (b) non-tournament players can pay a Croquet Magazine Fee ("CMF") of (say) £10 to receive all issues of 'Croquet'.

1996 and later years

- (1) CRF, TRF and CMF are increased in line with inflation only.
- (2) all club members receive two issues of 'Croquet'.

(B) Clubs in the first three years of existence.

- (1) Clubs pay a flat fee of £50 per annum.
- (2) Each club receives all issues 'Croquet' but members do not.
- (3) Members may pay TRF or CMF to the C.A. if they wish to play in tournaments or receive 'Croquet'.

(C) Schools and university clubs

1994 and later years

- (1) Schools and university clubs pay a flat fee of £25 per annum.
- (2) Each club receives all issues of 'Croquet' but members do not.
- (3) Members may pay TRF or CMF to the C.A. if they wish to play in tournaments or receive 'Croquet'.

FIXED ASSETS

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 1992

1991

Office Furniture and Equipment at Written Down Value	1,500	2,000
Croquet Equipment at Written Down Value	1,500	1,600
Trophies, estimated to realise Investments, as per attached schedule	10,000	10,000
	45,131	41,068
	<u>58,131</u>	<u>54,668</u>

CURRENT ASSETS

Stocks of Literature and Equipment	5,700	6,000
Loans to Member Clubs	3,500	5,500
Sundry Debtors and Prepayments	4,735	7,669
Cash at Bank and in Hand	12,403	7,504
	<u>26,338</u>	<u>26,673</u>
	<u>84,469</u>	<u>81,341</u>

CURRENT LIABILITIES

Subscriptions Received in Advance	6,205	4,418
Accrued Expenses	14,754	20,778
Taxation	1,741	1,931
	<u>22,700</u>	<u>27,127</u>
	<u>61,769</u>	<u>54,214</u>

NET ASSETS

Representing:-		
Accumulated General Funds as at 1st January 1992	26,489	25,365
Surplus for the Year on Activities	2,486	1,124
	<u>28,975</u>	<u>26,489</u>

OTHER FUNDS, as per attached schedule

Life Membership	1,605	1,605
Test Tour	7,739	4,605
Benefactors	18,452	16,478
Tournaments and Trophies	2,948	3,087
Four Court (formerly Four Lawn)	2,050	1,950
	<u>61,769</u>	<u>54,214</u>

Quoted

Nominal Value		
£7,557.40 9% Treasury Stock 1994	7,342	7,846
£7,779.22 8 1/2% Treasury Stock 1994	7,488	7,937
	<u>14,830</u>	<u>15,783</u>

Unquoted

Nationwide Building Society	30,301	
	<u>45,131</u>	

INVESTMENTS HELD AT 31ST DECEMBER 1992

	Life Membership	Test Tour	Benefactors	Trophies	4 Court
Balance at 1st January 1992	1,605	4,605	16,478	3,087	1,950
Add: Interest on invested Funds	-	363	908	-	-
Donations	-	771	1,066	-	-
From General Funds	1,605	2,000	-	300	100
	<u>1,605</u>	<u>7,739</u>	<u>18,452</u>	<u>3,387</u>	<u>2,050</u>
Deduct: Allocation in Year	-	-	-	439	-
Balance at 31st December 1992	1,605	7,739	18,452	2,948	2,050

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 1992

INCOME	1991
Subscriptions	23,859
Registration Fees	23,106
Levies	5,551
Sale of Books, Equipment etc. (net)	7,326
Advertisements	6,823
Surplus on Tournaments	4,013
Coaching (net)	2,798
Investment Income on General Funds (net of tax)	4,334
	3,349
	2,041
	<u>57,594</u>
	<u>46,698</u>

EXPENSES

Publications (Croquet, Croquet News and Fixtures Book)

	20,050	16,013
	<u>37,544</u>	<u>30,685</u>

GENERAL OVERHEADS

Office Rent	2,340	2,100
Rent of Land	600	600
Staff Salaries and National Insurance Contributions	15,508	12,090
Council and Committee Travelling Expenses	1,584	1,098
Postage and Telephone	2,662	2,163
Printing and Stationery	2,809	2,867
Insurance	560	425
Sundry Expenses	1,307	1,051
Accountancy Charges and Computer Services	3,754	3,600
Maintenance of Office, Furniture and Equipment	806	2,240
	<u>31,930</u>	<u>28,234</u>
	<u>5,614</u>	<u>2,451</u>

SURPLUS ON ORDINARY ACTIVITIES

	23,000	23,000
	<u>3,959</u>	<u>5,147</u>

EXTRAORDINARY ITEMS

Income		
Sports Council Grant	26,959	28,147
Sponsorship (net)	32,573	30,598
	<u>22,826</u>	<u>22,964</u>
	<u>525</u>	<u>1,450</u>
	<u>6,736</u>	<u>5,060</u>
	<u>30,087</u>	<u>29,474</u>
	<u>2,486</u>	<u>1,124</u>

Expenses

Development Officer's Fees and Expenses	22,826
Grants to Clubs and Federations	525
General Publicity and Development (net)	6,736

SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR

C. J. Irwin (Chairman of Council)	
R. W. Bray (Hon. Treasurer)	

We have examined the books, vouchers and other records maintained by the Croquet Association for the year ended 31st December 1992 and obtained such further information considered necessary. To the best of our knowledge and belief the Accounts as presented by the Association on pages 2 to 4 give a true and fair view of the State of Affairs of The Association at 31st December 1992 and of the Surplus for the year ended on that date

Alhambra House,
27 Charing Cross Road,
London WC2H 0AU
26th February 1993

NICHOLASS, AMES & CO.
Chartered Accountants

COMMENTARY

By **ROGER BRAY, Honorary Treasurer of the Croquet Association**

ON THE 1992 ACCOUNTS

Readers who have followed recent debates on the funding of the Association may well raise an eyebrow or two at the apparently healthy surplus of £5600 on **Ordinary Activities** in 1992. (Figures in this commentary are to the nearest £50.) That result is, however, due almost entirely to the increased efforts of one man who celebrated his seventieth birthday during the year and who ostensibly retired over two years ago from major involvement in CA affairs. Through his promotion of **Sales, Coaching and Advertisements**, Brian Macmillan achieved a net revenue of £8700 in 1992 - an increase of £4700 on 1991, or 85% of this year's surplus. We thus owe Brian an immense debt of gratitude for such a magnificent result. But Associates must not come to rely on such fragile resources: when Brian's contributions come to an end - but may they long continue! - will we be able to find someone to take on his many activities, someone with equal flair, energy and generosity?

All the figures in **Ordinary Income** have either remained static or show an increase on the previous year. This is remarkable in the case of **Investment Income** - a result which is due

"Through his promotion of Sales, Coaching and Advertisements, Brian Macmillan achieved a net revenue of £8700 in 1992"

to the foresight of my predecessor, Alan Oldham, in investing in fixed interest stock. With bank accounts earning less interest and with the threat of increased bank charges there is faint hope that this result will be repeated in 1993. The extra £2000 in **Registration Fees** was due to an increase in rate to £2.50 per Affiliate and is a disappointing result because estimates of the number of Affiliates suggested a higher return. It should also be noted that the Association did not benefit financially from the increased fee since Affiliates were provided with 'Croquet News' which cost an extra £2550 (included in **Publications** in 1992, but in **General Publicity and Development** in 1991).

During 1992 a number of additional advertising opportunities (e.g. reprint of the Laws, leaflets on Golf Croquet) were exploited which led to the sharp increase in **Advertisements**. All of this extra income came from our sponsors (see below) and, in view of the current parlous state of sponsorship, should be regarded as a 'one-off'. I have already referred to Brian Macmillan's contribution (£1500) to **Coaching**. That item also includes £1350 new income from Chris Hudson's courses for Women's Institutes and Townswomen's Guilds.

On the **Ordinary Expenditure** side under **Publications** the cost of the Fixtures Book was pegged at the 1991 figure of £2,150, but 'Croquet' cost 8% more at £15,000, as agreed in the Budget.

Under **General Overheads, Staff Salaries** of £3,000 in 1992. The rise in **Committee Travelling Expenses** follows from the greater participation in Association affairs by players not based in London or the Home Counties: this trend must be expected to continue and is to be welcomed, despite the increased cost to the CA.

A new computer was purchased during the year for £1,450 to replace the small, slow and old computer now used by the Secretary primarily as a word-processor. The new machine should be able to cope with expected demands for the foreseeable future, including the computerisation of all administration records. Another ageing piece of office equipment, the answer machine, finally gave up its ghostly machinations and the opportunity was taken in its replacement to purchase an answer and fax machine for £650. The latter has already proved a most useful additional facility. I intend to continue my predecessor's practice of spreading the cost of major equipment purchases over a number of years and a total of £2,600 has been written off for this purpose in 1992 compared to £1800 in 1991. The larger sum was made possible by a donation of £1,000 from our Vice-President, Mrs. Betty Prichard, specifically to help with the purchase of the photocopier which was acquired at the end of 1991. We are extremely grateful for this generous gift in memory of the late Lt.-Col. David Prichard.

The costs of writing down the value of equipment are included in **Computer Services and Office Equipment** in 1992, but only in **Office Equipment** in 1991. This accounting change masks a saving of £1,450 between the two years achieved by scaling down the level of computer training and software development. This marks the end of the first phase in computer development during which a comprehensive membership system has been established.

A legacy of £1,000 deposited in the **Benefactors Fund**, and a number of medals were received during the year from the late Mrs. Kay Longman.

Extraordinary Activities are those areas of development which are financed by sponsorship and the Sports Council grant. They include certain membership activities, publicity, development, the use of indoor carpets, and international activities. The biggest shifts between 1991 and 1992 under **General Publicity and Development** were: the absence of anything in 1992 equivalent to the televised indoor event which resulted in net income of £950 in 1991; an extra £850 spent on the publication of leaflets; and an increased net expenditure of £700 on the Golden Mallet and Croquet Classic events.

The largest single item of expenditure under this head was the allocation of £2000 to the Test Tour Fund (the same figure as in 1991).

The £550 for **Grants to Clubs and Federations** compares starkly with the budget figure for the year of £1500. It would seem that many clubs are unaware of the availability of grants (and loans) and information about them is being disseminated more widely in 1993. A loan of £2000 was repaid by Salisbury Club during the year after the collapse of a project to establish a sporting complex including four croquet courts. (This item appears in the **Balance Sheet**.)

Sponsorship was received during the year from Atco, Angostura Bitters, the Royal Bank of Scotland and Giardini, and provided funding for the Open Championships, the President's Cup, the Schools programme and the National Croquet Day. Gross income was comparable with that in 1991 and the fall in net income is attributable to technical adjustments. It should be noted that the net figure is after deduction of certain expenses some of which would have appeared in the Ordinary Account if there had been no Sponsorship programme, thus reduc-

"It would seem that many clubs are unaware of the availability of grants (and loans) and information about them is being disseminated"

ing the Ordinary Activities surplus by a substantial amount. Sponsorship prospects for 1993 look bleak but Extraordinary Activities will be protected against such recessionary effects by an increase of £5000 in the Sports Council grant.

I have argued against complacency in the outcome of these Accounts. The **Overall Surplus** of £2500 is thankfully received and will help to bolster general reserves which certainly need strengthening to provide adequate support for the ongoing work of the Association. But the existence of that surplus is somewhat fortuitous and does little to change one's perception of the future. A year ago, Council agreed that subscriptions and/or registration fees should be increased in 1993 to produce extra revenue of at least £3000 and I suggest that the 1992 Accounts underline the need for such a move. In the wake of the recent Special General Meetings that target will not now be achieved and it is very important that a consensus be reached this year on subscription and registration fee rates for 1994 so that we can begin to rectify a basically weak position.

Roger Bray, April 1993

Advance Handicap CROQUET

LIONEL WHARRAD makes an appeal for an interesting variation of the game

Due to an unfortunate chapter of errors, the decision by the Council in March 1991 to authorise Handicap Advanced Play as an official game was not recorded in Croquet, nor was the letter I wrote to the Editor at the time explaining the advantages and intentions of the game ever printed. Unfortunately the Tournament Committee did not take the new game into account when preparing the 1992 tournaments, nor did they show much enthusiasm when considering the 1993 Calendar. To add further to this list, the reprint of the Laws book in October last, failed to take into account the approval of the new game, which it should have done whilst incorporating some other law changes.

Fortunately a number of members had been made aware of my activities in trying to introduce this game, partly because of correspondence and partly by word of mouth, so that the game has been played in a casual way at a number of clubs.

So although the new game received considerable discussion in council and its rules were agreed in March 1991, there has been no formal circulation of these rules. I expressed grave dissatisfaction at the last October meeting of the Council that so little support had been given to the Council's decisions as a result of which I had expected that both Croquet and the Tournament Committee would have taken some steps to support the Council's introduction of this new game.

I hope the Editor will allow me this space to

make clear what are the agreed rules for Advanced Handicap Play.

The wording of the Council minute approving this variation of the game is as follows:

"Regulation 19(b) is amended as follows: "when a game is played under conditions of advanced handicap play the laws of handicap play are modified as follows. Laws 36 and 42 apply. Law 39 does not apply"

The game was introduced by way of regulation 19(b) as there was at the time an agreed embargo

"Give the higher bisquer the option of playing Advanced Handicap"

by the Australian, New Zealand and English international representatives on any changes in the laws for a period of several years, and this was the only way in which it could be introduced.

I hope this note makes it clear to everyone that the game is a Handicap Game, and that there is no intention to change the conditions concerning the use of bisques. A bisque can be used at the lift shot just as it can by a bisque holder at the start of any turn. This may not be much liked by experienced and expert advanced players because it can frustrate the opportunity for going out with a

triple peel in the next turn. They should bear in mind that this is a game for handicap players and the fact that its rules should give this slight advantage to the receiver of bisques is probably no bad thing.

Anyway I am very much opposed to changing an agreed game before it has been properly and extensively tried out, and I hope that Managers and clubs will give it an extensive introduction in its officially agreed form.

The question has been raised as to whether contact is given when a bisque is used after one back to enable four back to be run. The answer is that no contact is given as the two hoops were not run in the same turn.

Finally may I make a plea to all Managers of both club and Calendar tournaments that DURING THIS SEASON in any handicap event they should give the higher bisquer in any game the option of playing that game either as Advanced Handicap or Handicap. This will have the effect of enabling more players to play advanced croquet, and at the same time allow the game to be introduced at a pace acceptable to the higher bisquer. No doubt the game will then be featured more often in the 1994 Calendar if this season proves its popularity.

I am sure the Editor will be delighted to hear from the first double-figure bisquer who successfully completes a triple peel!!

TIM HASTE (Chairman C.A. Equipment Committee) gives the official low-down on ball types

balls, and generally have a "harder" feel in play. The bounce under normal conditions is slightly lower, averaging 31.6". There is little U.K. experience regarding their durability, however they have been successfully marketed for some years in such countries as the U.S.A. and South Africa. The improved performance at high temperatures is reflected in their higher price, typically £110 per set.

Birkdale Mark 2 balls are made in the U.K. and are characterised by a wider groove specification

"...price, durability, playing characteristics and simply personal preference all play a part"

than other balls on the market, designed to reduce pull. The resilience is greater than those of other approved balls, bounce heights typically being 35.1"-35.3" but still well within the approved range. This extra resilience is reflected in the playing characteristics. The guide price is of the order of £100 per set.

Dawson 2000 Mk2 balls are of Australian manufacture and have similar playing characteristics to Barlow Championship balls. The bounce is slightly lower, at 31.2"-31.3" for normal playing conditions. Unlike Barlow balls, the Dawson variety increase their resilience at higher temperatures.

The price is typically £100 per set.

Jacques Eclipse balls, unlike the others on the list, are of traditional two-piece constructions, with a plastic shell enclosing a resilient core (which in recent years has varied amongst cork and plastic compositions). The average bounce height of 31.1" is at the lower end of the approved range. They are the type currently favoured by the C.A. for official events such as the Open Championship. Reports on durability have been mixed; recently there has been some improvement but experience at Cheltenham suggests the need for replacement after about a year's hard tournament play, owing to the balls becoming undersize. Prices are higher than for the other kinds of ball (matched sets to £185 and ordinary sets to £145) though discounts of up to 25% are sometimes available.

The choice of balls in a given circumstance depends on a number of factors; price, durability, playing characteristics and simply personal preference all play a part. Further advice may be obtained from the C.A. Equipment Committee, which administers equipment standards on behalf of the Council. The Committee produces a list giving price and availability information on a range of croquet equipment, including balls. The list is available from the Committee itself, from the C.A. Office or from the Federations.

Further articles are planned on other items of croquet equipment. In the meantime, readers are encouraged to seek advice from the Equipment Committee. Views on Equipment will be welcome!

Extract from Council Minutes of 5th December 1992 of interest to Associates

EQUIPMENT

Council was advised that sets of feeler gauges for measuring hoop/ball clearance were now available.

After hearing further details of the hoop and ball tests carried out by the Committee Mr T J Haste confirmed that standards for the CA Championships were higher than those set for other tournaments.

In the discussion which followed the following points emerged:

- that championship tolerances were much tighter than those set down in the Laws and there may be a case for re-wording the stated requirements.
- Could guidance be provided on balls generally, including which balls fell outside required Championship tolerances and on the use of different balls in the same event, listing balls with an acceptable similarity?

These questions were referred to the Equipment Committee. The Laws Committee would then consider any changes resulting therefrom.

DEVELOPMENT

It was agreed that an Improvement Grant Fund be set up to assist Clubs other than Four Court Clubs.

FEDERATIONS

Following discussion on a proposed "pyramid" structure of Council - Federations - Clubs, it was agreed that the matter be referred back to the Development Committee to provide and circulate a discussion paper.

PROPOSED C A SUB POLICY

See page 4 of Issue 225 of "Croquet".

C A EVENTS

Council agreed that the Tournament Committee establish dates for the major CA Tournaments related to fixed points in the Calendar, (This is so that the timings for these events may be known eighteen months to two years in advance) Consultations with the clubs involved will be necessary.

EUROPEAN CROQUET FEDERATION (ECF)

Mr C Hudson informed Council that Italy have a sponsor for a possible European Championship which the WCF might organise. The ECF if established would generate publicity for Croquet

COACHING

Payment of Coaches Expenses. A brief discussion revealed general support for the payment of expenses to coaches. However, these would be submitted in the usual way and be subject to the same scrutiny as any other expenses claim.

FINANCE

Test Tour Funds Council agreed the allocation of £2,000 to the Test Tour Fund for 1992 which was part of the Sports Council Grant

Overseas Subscriptions Council agreed that the subscription for overseas associates be raised to £60 for 3 years, that they be provided with an Abridged Fixtures List and that their copies of "Croquet" should be despatched by airmail.

Budget 1993 The Chairman of the F& GP Committee, Mr S T Badger, drew the attention of

Council to the decrease in Tournament Income which was, he said, the first such decrease year in year out in some 10 years.

Following a general discussion during which various matters arising from the Budget were dealt with to the satisfaction of Council, the Budget as tabled, was accepted, unanimously.

The Surbiton Club The terms of the Licence by the C A, who are the lessees of the ground, to the Surbiton Club had been agreed except for the amount of the fee to be paid by the club to the CA. Following further negotiations with the club terms had been agreed (1) that from 25th March 1993 until the year 2007 the licence fee should be an amount equal to the rent payable by the CA to the Kingston Council and would thereafter continue on the same basis unless Council decided at any review date to increase it to an amount not exceeding an addition of 10% above the rent and (2) that this agreement should be entered into without that delay.

HANDICAPS

See Page 4 of Issue 225 of "Croquet". Mr. W E Lamb responded to a question about high bisquers and emphasised that, above 12, handicappers have freedom of choice to adjust.

TROPHIES

Council agreed THAT a Trophies Committee be formed. Messrs D C Caporn, A J Oldham and M Murray volunteered to form the committee which was approved.

Extracts from Council Minutes of 27th March 1993 of interest to Associates

SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

S N Mulliner gave a brief report on the SGM held at Rowheath on 27th February full details of which will be published in 'Croquet'

The decision to adopt a new subscription policy as set out in Minute 8.2 of the Council Meeting on 24th October 1992 was rescinded.

THE CLUB CONFERENCE

A Report on the conference by S N Mulliner was discussed at length. (For further details see the separate report in 'Croquet'.)

FINANCE

The Accounts for 1992 were presented by R W Bray, CA Hon. Treasurer. He mentioned the significant contribution to CA finances made by Brian Macmillan, the CA Commercial Agent, and Chris Hudson, the National Development Officer.

The Accounts were approved as were the payments to the Treasurer of £3000 for 1992 and £4000 in 1993.

Subscription Rates for 1993 It was agreed that the Club Registration Fee for 1993 be set at £3.50 per Affiliate and that no attempt be made to increase the existing level of subscriptions for Associates.

It was also agreed that only the July issue of Croquet should be sent to Affiliates in 1993.

EDITORIAL BOARD

It was clear from the feed-back to Council from the membership that there was a wide-spread feeling that recent editions of the magazine had exhibited lapses of judgement on the part of the Editor, that the content had not been satisfactory and that it had been consistently late in publication. This had not only reduced the standing of the magazine but also reflected badly on Council which had a responsibility for maintaining the standards expected of the Association's official publication.

The Editorial Board was instructed to take urgent action to resolve the situation.



DEVELOPMENT

It was agreed:- that the July issue of 'Croquet' should contain information regarding the Federations; that a £75 improvement grant be given to the Dulwich Club; that the Apps-Heley award be presented to the Southport & Birkdale Club; and that the Townsend Award be presented to the Belsay Hall Club.

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. C. Hudson reported that his revision of the Forward Plan would have to await the developments which follow the decisions of the SGM and at his suggestion Council agreed to set up a Working Party to examine the organisation and structure of the CA with a view to possible changes to meet the needs of croquet in future years.

Mr. Hudson reported that some 700 letters had been circulated to potential sponsors and agencies but people were reluctant to commit themselves although there were signs that the situation was improving slightly. There was no main sponsor for the World Championship and the WCF were likely to set a deadline at the end of May. If no sponsor had been found by then the Championship would not take place.

He also reported that 67 clubs had forwarded

their membership lists containing a total of some 2500 names. It was particularly encouraging that Preston Lawns and Worthing had both registered. These clubs played mainly Golf Croquet and he suggested that it would be helpful to have a Golf Croquet player on Council to represent the interests of those players.

EQUIPMENT

Mr. Haste reported that the 1993 list of suppliers was now available from the CA Office.

OFFICE PART TIME STAFF

The Secretary reported with regret the departure of Alan Stockwell, the part-time assistant in the CA Office. The Secretary's tribute to the significant contribution made by Mr. Stockwell, not only in the office but in practical terms during major tournaments held at Hurlingham, was echoed round the table. Council agreed to recognise his work with a present of £100 and to send a letter of thanks to him.

The Secretary also reported the sterling work, totally voluntary and unpaid, performed by Eileen Magee over the last twelve months and was instructed to record Council's gratitude for her generous contribution to the CA Office.

The Secretary was pleased to report that Roger Jackman had commenced work at the Office on a part-time basis.

ROWHEATH PROJECT

Mr. Hudson reported that a feasibility study had now been carried out by a team of consultants paid by the Sports Council. It was agreed to form a Rowheath Project Team to collaborate with the National Development Officer.

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Budleigh-Salterton Mrs. C Bagnall advised Council that the local Chamber of Commerce at Budleigh-Salterton had set aside the sum of £500 towards the costs of mounting the World Championship.

EARLY Birds

Cheltenham Easter Tournament by Bob & Faith Fewtrell

Rain makes heavy lawns & the Manager in Kazakhstan?

Competitors for Cheltenham's Easter Tournament arrived in an absolute downpour to discover that the manager had disappeared in the direction of Kazakhstan. All was not lost however as Alan Bogle and his computer had left precise instructions for his deputies, Messrs Maughan and Darby. Miraculously the downpour abated to a more tolerable level and play got under way on time. The 54 entries were divided into 6 blocks, each with a full range of handicaps. The lawns were looking superb if a little heavy due to the spring growth and the extra rain. Mixed fortunes were experienced on the first day as some of the players took a little while to reactivate skills which had lain dormant for a while. Only 15 managed to win both their games.

Saturday was a more clement day which helped the lawns to dry out. Spirits improved in the sunshine as did the play. The standard rose and there were some very exciting finishes. By the end of the day the ranks of the undefeated had fallen to 7. They were in Block A: Stuart Daddo-Langlois (5), Block B: Alan Pidcock (1), Block C: Peter Dorke (0), Block E: Mike Renshaw (2) and Block F: Chris Williams (0). In Block D

the two highest bisquers, David Kibble (12) and Doug Taylor (18) both had 4 wins. David even passed his referee's exam that evening.

By the end of Sunday Alan Pidcock and Chris Williams were still undefeated but it was inevitable that either David or Doug would have one loss as they met in the Battle of the Bandits. It was the first time David had had to concede 6 bisques. A tense game ensued which was won by Doug. Five Competitors had yet to break their duck but they shall be nameless.

It was only Alan and Doug who reached the end of Monday with the full 8 wins but all the players and their supporters enjoyed the weekend, even those vying for the wooden spoon. The hospitality of the club and the efficiency of the management were of their usual high standard.

Block winners and runners-up were as follows:

A: **Stuart Daddo-Langlois** (7 Wins), Dr M Wormald (6 Wins)
 B: **Alan Pidcock** (8 Wins), Dennis Regan (5 Wins)
 C: **Margaret Selmes** (7 Wins), Roger Schofield (6 Wins)
 D: **Doug Taylor** (8 Wins), David Kibble (7 Wins)
 E: **Dennis Moorcraft** (7 Wins), John Willis (7 Wins)
 F: **Chris Williams** (7 Wins), Audrey Whitaker (6 Wins)

Southport Open W/E 24/25 April 1993 by Richard Hilditch

"Quite tall" Adrian Saurin falls short of the winning post

Following his success with the GB&I test team, Colin Irwin proved the strongest player in the event. It was also necessary for Colin to win as he had forgotten to engrave the trophy from last year. He was given a good match in the final by the now quite tall Adrian Saurin who took the first game before falling to two Irwin TP's. The Swiss came down to a play off between the losing semi-finalists John Haslam and Gail Curry. This carried extra special significance as they are the holders of the mixed doubles championships and do not seem able to determine a senior player. In the end John won a drawn out game. Despite excellent weather on the first day, it was necessary to drop two lawns on the Sunday as the 'magic sponge' was brought on to protect the remaining lawns from the humid conditions.

From quarter-finals

C J Irwin bt A J Saurin -12 +18TP +16STP; Curry +25 +26TP; B Haslam +23
 A J Saurin bt J Haslam +21 -24 +22; M Sandler +17;
 J Haslam bt P Dorke +10. G Curry bt Harrison-Wood +6

Consolation Swiss event

Winner: J Haslam 5/7; Runner-up: D Harrison-Wood 5/7

Southwick Open Weekend 17/18 April 1993 by Richard Hilditch

Ian Burrige not "unlucky" with peeling finishes

This year saw a welcome growth of entries to 21 with many club members joining regular visitors. On the first day Ian Burrige looked to be the man to beat when he won his first three games with triple peels. This feat is all the more extraordinary when one considers his previous unluckiness with peeling finishes. Andrew Gregory was undeterred by Ian's form and beat him quite easily to set up a best of three final with top seed Jeff Dawson. Jeff won the first but Andrew fought back by hitting his last shot and surviving some failed finishes to win the second. After this Andrew seemed the stronger player on the quite slow lawns and ran out the winner in the Salver. Back in the Swiss Ian swept all before him finishing with 9 wins from 10 games.

From quarter-finals

A K Gregory bt Dawson -11 +5 +16; Burrige +13; Llewellyn-Williams +15tp;
 J Dawson bt Coles +22; Hornby +18;
 T Coles bt Arliss +26tp; I J Burrige bt B Teague +22tp

Consolation Swiss event

Winner: I J Burrige 9/10

Bowdon w/e 1-3 May by Peter Hanley (Ed. Brian Storey)

A variety of insects enjoy rhubarb fool & raspberry jam

Bowdon weekend was my first tournament and couldn't have been a nicer initiation! The only ones who weren't pleased to see us were some rather large Bumble-Bees who buzzed us at regular intervals, or perhaps they were protecting the many Sand Wasps whose sleep on the grass we were about to disturb. I'm not sure whether I felt honoured or daunted when the manager (Brian Storey) expertly induced me to volunteer to be a journalist, at least I got a chance to put my new palmtop computer to good use on the day. 24 people came, 5 disappointed didn't. The weather forecast was favourably inaccurate if a touch cold, but not enough to deter most self respecting players. Food was good. I'm not sure of the significance of the Rhubarb Fool nor whether the pips in the raspberry jam were tactical weapons, but they tasted yummy. The court layout is a picturesque group of four, two on each of the two terraces.

David Barrett (holder of the cup) on day 3 managed to shoot with black from hoop 3 at Blue behind 2-back (black's hoop) and run the hoop, much to Mike Evan's disgust who thought he'd set a good wired leave. Some distinctive features I noticed were Blue Hat, Brown Gloves, Carrots and a Plaster Cast; your task is to fit them to somebody. Colin Wild (Bowdon) demonstrated ESCBA Extra Sensory Croquet Ball Avoidance (twice)! Despite being colour blind, mistaking blue clips fitted with peeling green paint for a BLUE one (Don Wright got confused the other way round), and needing the strength to hold your mallet aloft (will the EC Manual Handling Directives affect the way we call for a referee?) it was a very enjoyable 3 days. Even the Chancellor of the Exchequer got something right for croquet players, if not by design, the new 10p pieces are just the right size for marking balls. Mallet production increased in Lancashire when Alan Pidcock found there was no room in the inn! Peter Taylor (Bowdon) was a clear winner, but it cost him a drop of 11 in his handicap! Don Wright (Tyneside) was a worthy runner-up. The tournament was testimony to the Manager's organisational skill, resulting in 85 games played, with only 17 going to time, demonstrating the benefits of the Base 6 (full bisque) system. I look forward to the next one.

1st P Taylor (20*) 8/9, 131pts. 2nd D Wright (10) 6/8, 117pts
 3rd= M Evans (14) 5/7, 116 pts. 3rd= A Linton (4) 5/7, 116pts
 5th C Waterfield (4) 5/7, 112 pts. 6th D Barrett (10) 5/8, 111 pts
 7th C Wild (1.5) 4/6, 110pts. 8th= R Webb (6) 4/7, 105pts.
 8th= S Jones (7) 4/7, 105pts

Bristol Advanced Weekend 8/9 May 1993 by Deborah Latham

"Baroque" boundary lines and David Goacher bolts away a TP

Managers: Co-managed by Ray Ransom on the first day and David Goacher on the second.

Format: Seventeen participants (highest handicap 5). Main event knock-out semi-finals best of three - final best of five! Second event Hands 'Egyption'.

Weather: Generally fairly damp, with a number of brave souls risking the advanced stages of hypothermia by playing in shorts despite the low temperatures. David Goacher was heard to comment morosely on the appearance of the sun and warming atmosphere immediately after the presentation of the trophies...!

Lunch: Very Plentiful - excellent quality - cheerfully provided!

Courts: Ever improving (despite facetious pre-tournament comments by the locals about someone's well-meant efforts resulting in 'baroque' boundary lines!). Much suspenseful speculation among the visitors concerning the location of the 'mysterious' court 4 available this year. If you're really curious, ask David Thatcher - he seemed to be in permanent residence there and was consequently seen infrequently other than by his opponents...

Play: The semi-finals were contested between Alan Bogle and Andrew Symons on one hand and Peter Dorke and David Goacher on the other. Alan started well against Andrew, but Andrew finished the better, and that was the result on the score sheet. Peter made one hoop in the first game before David got the bit firmly between his teeth and bolted away with a TP. Despite Peter's evident intention that he wasn't going to get away with that sort of behaviour again, David got the three peels but failed to achieve a longish peg-out - only delayed by one turn, though.

If you don't count another three failed triples in the final (a plague on that rover peel!) David really was in charge all the way - no mean achievement against Andrew, who despite being possessed of formidable ability and a confident and decisive style of play just couldn't seem to get into his customary stride, and the end result was +26, +17, +16 to David.

Having been put into the second event by Andrew, Francis Landor was retaliating by triple peeling all over the shop. Several other players achieved seven games, but Francis' total of seven wins out of eight games put him at the top of the 'Egyption'.

Footnote to Bristol members: Laurence Latham suffered the longest series of defeats he's ever had in his playing career - six - not the way he'd hoped to mark the fact that he first played croquet at Bristol twenty-five years ago!

From quarter-finals

D J Goacher bt A Symons +26 +17 +16; P Dorke +25tp +16; C Williams +23
 A Symons bt A Bogle +16 +11; P Scott +26
 P Dorke bt R Tribe +5. A Bogle bt L Latham +5

Consolation event

Winner: F Landor 7/7; Runner-up: C Williams 4/5

Cheltenham Advanced Play (Handicap 1-6) 22/25 April by Mrs R F Wheeler

Complete and uncut - winner is in the pink!

"All Cheltenham Tournaments are good, but this one is one of the best". More than one of the players made this or similar remarks to me.

"Then will you write it up for 'Croquet'?" "No thanks, it'll get cut or not published." So muggins is sending a short report.

We are ever grateful to Paul Hands for his 'Egyptian System' so ably applied by the manager, Kevin Carter. The competitors are divided by handicap into three differently coloured (blue, pink and orange) sections. At the start the Hands cards are arranged in a horizontal holder so that blue, pink and orange bars are continuous blocks of colour. By the end of the tournament the colours are apparently randomly arranged. This is not the case. One starts by playing someone of equal Hands ranking, ie

Early tournament results for which no reports have yet been received

Surbiton Easter Handicap

9/10 April 1993

1. T Fathers 5/5, 125pts. 2. N Jackson 4/5, 114pts
 3. R Benson 4/5, 113pts. 4. S Harbin 4/6, 111pts
 5=-. C Heritage; J Straw; B Teague; G Younge; 3/4 110pts

Surbiton Easter Open

11/12 April 1993

1. D A Cornelius 5/5.
 2=-. L J Palmer; M J B Haggerston 4/5
 4=-. G W Noble; A J McDiarmid; R Pennant-Jones; C Osmond; 3/4

Southwick Spring Handicap

The King Cup

Could the Manager please resubmit the results in a form which may be used for publication in August 'Croquet'

Roehampton 15-18 April

American Blocks + K/O

1. Mrs J Oades 7/8. 2. I P M MacDonald 7/8
 3. M Donelan 5/8. 4. Mrs P Healy 6/8

Consolation Swiss

1. B Sanford 5/8. 2. W Steadman 5/8. 3. N Jackson 5/8

Woking Handicap w/e

23-25 April 1993

(some games Advanced Handicap)

1. P McGowan (8) 6/7. 2. A M Wadley (5) 6/7
 3. I H McDiarmid (12) 5/7.
 4=-. Mrs J Wankling (18); E Matthews (16); Mrs P Healy (5);
 A Huxley (4); A J Nelson (14); D Goulding (1.5); 4/7

Ryde Handicap w/e

24/25 April 1993

Block A

1. W Platt (6) 5/5. 2. R Fewtrell (3) 3/4
 3. B Christmas (7) 3/5. 4. G Youd (8) 3/5

Block B (Full Bisque)

1. M Pitt (12) 3/4. 2. Mrs M Robinson (11) 3/4
 3. J Bourn (17) 2/4. 4. J Wilkinson (20) 2/4

someone of the same colour. The result of the game changes the ranking. Soon the successful players are out of their section and competing with lower bisquers.

The outstanding 'pink' man was Paul Scott. His card soon shone as a bright pink flash in the blue section. Watch his progress! His reward, apart from winning his section, was earning a handicap reduction from 3.5 to 2.5. I'm sure it will soon be lower than that. The other section winners were John Willis (blue), and Ian Storey (orange) who also earned a 2-point reduction in his handicap: watch him too! The 3 runners-up were Peter Darby, Stephen Badger and Dennis Regan. Kevin's special prizes this year were for those who cleverly played continuously for 4 days and yet managed to finish with exactly the same Hands ranking with which they started.

Blue: J Willis (7/9), P Darby (9/13)
 Pink: P Scott (10/12), S Badger (8/11)
 Orange: I Storey (7/9), D Regan (6/9)

Compton Handicap w/e

1/3 May 1993

G Thompson bt Payton +16; Mrs E Asa-Thomas +9
 M Payton bt S Badger +6

Hurlingham Level w/e

1/3 May 1993

Block I

1. J P Goddard 8/9. 2. L J Palmer 7/9. 3. A J McDiarmid 5/9

Block II

1. R Pennant-Jones 6/7. 2. S M Daddo-Langlois 5/7.
 3. I P M MacDonald 5/7

Block III

1. R Hoskyns 5/6. 2. J Glynn 4/6. 3. Mrs I P M MacDonald 4/6

Budleigh Salterton May Week

Blocks A & B Handicap play-off

N Betts (3) bt R Fewtrell (3) +3

Blocks C - F Handicap play-off

A Potter (7) bt Mrs Dwerryhouse +15; Mrs Howell (12) +7
 Mrs Dwerryhouse (10) bt D Regan (5) +21

Block G

1. S Carter (14) 7/7. 2. Mrs D Regan (12) 5/7

X & Y Handicap Doubles (X listed first)

Hornby & Carter (17.5) bt Grainger-Brown & Goodchild (16) +17
 Orr & Addis (19) bt Mr & Mrs MacDonald (9.5) +15

Parkstone Open w/e

15/16 May 1993

From quarter-finals

A Westerby bt Goacher +16tp +24tp; Landor +25tp +15;
 S Liddiard +14
 D Goacher bt Aiton +3 +11tp; J E Guest +15
 F Landor bt I J Burrige +4. K M H Aiton bt C Williams +10

Consolation swiss event

1. D Harrison-Wood 7/8. 2. I J Burrige 6/8

report features

SURBITON'S OLYMPIC PENTATHLON by Gladys Austin

Barcelona's sun could hardly have shone more brightly on its competitors than did that in Surbiton on Saturday and Sunday the 1st and 2nd August, for the second Croquet Pentathlon Trial. A unique event in which six clubs were invited to send teams of five to try five ways of playing croquet on a round robin basis. These clubs were Dulwich, Ealing, High Wycombe, Parsons Green, Woking and Surbiton, but as Parsons Green had to drop out, a scratch team, to be known as the Barbarians was made up of two experts plus three Ealing players some of whom had not been on a full size lawn. Handicaps thus ranging from 1/2 to 22, all of which added to the general camaraderie.

The five ways of playing comprised Handicap Doubles, in which the combined handicap had to be not less than six and the same pair could play together only once; Advanced Handicap Singles, Short Croquet, One Ball Singles, and Full Bisque Singles. All except the One Ball Singles, which provided an amusing climax after tea on Sunday, were played simultaneously in five sessions, three on Saturday and two on Sunday, made possible by Surbiton's six lawns and made the more enjoyable through the excellent facilities there and the delicious food provided as always by Surbiton's ladies.

ARDINGLY SUMMER SCHOOL 1992 by Nigel Gardner

The fourth Ardingly Coaching week organised by the South East Federation took place from the 3rd to the 8th of August.

The venue again was Ardingly College (part of the Woodward Corporation) and the course was accommodated in the Sixth Form block at a standard one would expect from a modern university. The food was excellent and ample, served by cheerful staff for whom nothing seemed to be too much trouble.

The course was again led by "Le Patron" David Higgs on vacation from his French country estate, his assistants being Harry Brooks (Reigate Priory), Geoff Coker (Beckenham), David Collins (Dulwich), Gordon Drake (Compton), Tommy Vale (Southwick) and Nick Waters (Ardingly College).

A feature of the course was the amount of effort the coaches put into all aspects of the game; they seemed to be tireless and have endless patience with those of us having difficulty with some aspect of technique or tactics, or when we were just being downright stupid.

The majority of students were of course

What gave the programme its peculiar interest was the combination of serious 'in depth' croquet with e.g. the light hearted element of the One Ball (which nevertheless had its own difficulties built in, not allowing for prolonged tactical play since the hoop approach is limited to a maximum of three shots). The triple banking needed to accommodate everyone for this one ball game must have given a truly 'Alice in Wonderland' impression, even without flamingoes and cards, to the onlookers peering through the wire netting separating the lawns from the public footpaths.

Permeating the whole weekend was a 'fun' element, a friendly good humoured atmosphere, helped rather than hindered by the beginners who, having entered for sheer enjoyment, could laugh at themselves when achieving unexpected glory by making a clever jumping shot intended for a roquet or accidentally running long distance hoops which they would not have dreamed of trying - the disbelief on their faces causing hilarity among the spectators. At the same time such players benefited enormously from the expertise of other players and the friendly tips and coaching given.

Coinciding as the competition did with the Olympics, it was a happy thought that the

from the South East with representatives from Bournemouth, Crawley, Dulwich, Fishbourne, Parkstone, Ramsgate, Southwick and Tunbridge Wells. Margaret Hornby had come from Australia via Budleigh Salterton (Budleigh Salterton?) and one fellow from Scotland (must have got lost trying to find Loughborough).

On the Monday, Wednesday and Friday the first part of the morning was taken up with instruction on how to play various strokes and the latter part with setting up breaks, laws of the game and tactics. A specific topic was explored for a short time as well such as lifts, hampered shots, cannons etc. In the afternoon a Swiss tournament was held enabling everyone to have some match practice. Tuesday and Thursday afternoons were exeats to look at steam trains, Soay sheep or even catch up on the sleep.

Each evening was taken up with what at first sight appeared to be a "silly game" such as 'pirates' but each was a laugh a minute, an excellent way of mixing people and exercised a particular aspect of the game such as roquets



liquid prizes presented to the winning teams had colours approximating to gold, silver and bronze, these being won by Surbiton, Woking and Ealing, in that order.

The success of the weekend must have given pleasure to its originators, Derek Caporn and Alan Oldham whose presence and participation contributed to the general enjoyment. Thanks are due to both and to Derek for his general management of the programme, keeping everyone on the right lines and ensuring that the timetable was adhered to.

It is hoped that this Pentathlon may become a Croquet Association Calendar Event. Certainly those present this year look forward to being invited again.

or hoop running.

In all Ardingly was an excellent week; offering good coaching with the opportunity for extended practice, congenial company of like-minded people and a break from normal life in pleasant surroundings. If you have a high handicap or none at all, this is the place to be in August 1993.

ARDINGLY 1993

A few places still remain for those who would like to join in the fun at the 1993 Ardingly Summer School.

It will take place 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 forms are available from:

Mrs M Payton, 21 Marine Parade,
Seaford, East Sussex BN25 2PL

SHORT Croquet

WOKING SHORT CROQUET WEEKEND by Geoffrey Cuttle

The Short Croquet Weekend held at Woking over the 5th/6th September again demonstrated the advantages of this variation of the game for providing a great deal of fast moving fun in a limited amount of time and space for a large number of players of very mixed abilities.

The entry was again full (twenty-four players) and double banked over six small lawns they made an impressive sight. The weather, though variable, never stopped play and over the two days six rounds of singles and three of doubles were packed in with time to spare for two full game tiebreakers.

In the doubles Roger Schofield and Peter MacGowan romped home so decisively after three rounds that the manager was able to exercise his discretion and declare the result without further rounds. This left the majority (six) of the remaining pairs as joint runners-up.

In the singles, Johnny Haigh had similarly defeated all comers as the only player with five wins by the sixth round, but then had to drop out as his heart protested at the excitement! But having defeated all likely contenders he nevertheless won the outright winners trophy without playing the last round, leaving three players (Ted Huxley, Mike Town and Roger

Schofield) to battle it out for the runners up award. After two tiebreaker games Roger Schofield emerged as the official runner up and collected a second goblet to go with that for his doubles win. We look forward to his return next year.

Discussions during the tournament raised a number of questions that should perhaps be put to the Laws Committee. First, there needs to be a statement on bisques for Doubles play - the system we used seems to work well but is totally unauthorised. Secondly, since the original ruling on bisques for Singles play was produced there have been a number of changes to the handicapping system for the full game and it is possible that the Short Croquet ones are now a little too generous for the higher bisquers. Thirdly, where should the red-topped hoop be put on a Short Lawn? We placed it on hoop six, the short croquet Rover but this causes chaos if ever you try to play a full game on the short lawn! Finally, (which is why we tried a full game) what about rules for Advanced Play in Short Croquet? If he has enough low bisque entries the manager would like to try out an Advanced block next year.

NATIONAL SHORT CROQUET CHAMPIONSHIP by Peter Dorke

Richard Whiting of Leicester has won a narrow victory at Rowheath in the finals of this championship, beating Derek Bradley of Cheltenham on points when each had gained 3 wins in a round robin tournament. The other finalists were Jeff Youd of High Wycombe, Barbara Evans of Bristol and Terry Sparks of Norwich each of whom managed at least one win.

The entry this year was well down on 1991,

only 9 clubs entering 83 players. Only 2 Area Finals were necessary, at Leicester, where Lawrence Whittaker took on the organisation, and Cheltenham, where Ian Maughan carried the burden. I am most grateful for their help and that of Chris Bennett who managed the Rowheath final. Armchair management suits my lazy temperament but it would be impossible without such unstinting help.

NATIONAL SHORT CROQUET TEAM EVENT by Lawrence Whittaker

The 1992 competition was won convincingly by Pendle, who defeated Nailsea by 10 wins to 2 in the final, played at Leicester. Nailsea were indebted to the youthful Roy Hawkins (14) - his handicap, not his age - for both their wins. They were weakened too much by the absence of Phil Slingsby (6) to give a struggle to the rampant Coleman of Pendle (Roger Coleman (14) and his sons James (7) and William (9), ably supported by Alan Siddall (9)).

Pendle already had a decisive 7-1 lead after two rounds when William Coleman distinguished himself by winning +10STP against

Kevin Garrad (16). The other Nailsea team members were Peter Dyke (8), Captain, and Nigel Pettinger (15).

Results for the whole competition were:

Preliminary round:

Pendle 8 beat Tyneside 4 Leicester 10 beat Norwich 7 and Nottingham 1 Nailsea 8 beat Dyffryn 4 and Northampton scr. Ealing 9 beat High Wycombe 6 and Reading 3.

Semi-finals:

Pendle 7 beat Leicester 5 Nailsea 9 beat Ealing 3

Final:

Pendle 10 beat Nailsea 2. F L Whittaker

SOHAM INDOOR CROQUET TOURNAMENT 1992 by Michael Percival

The much awaited repeat of last years indoor short croquet tournament was held on 21-22 November at Soham, Cambs. with the surprising number of 14 teams competing. What an enjoyable weekend it turned out to be with several new participants playing for the first time, namely Maldreth, Rottisham, Chelmsford and Cassiobury (Watford).

All teams played 6 games each, against the clock, which was set for 30 minutes per team, so there was a great deal of sprinting about the lawn. Some players must have forgotten that it is not necessary to whack the balls, as one is apt to do on a slow grass lawn, consequently some balls ended up in strange places i.e. through the door into the adjoining store-room. Did someone say Steve and Celia from Ipswich were guilty of this?

Downham Market arrived on Sunday with only one mallet between two players (they were unable to get into their clubhouse to get another), which proved difficult until someone was able to lend a spare mallet. For the teams that hadn't played indoor croquet before it was a very new experience and many didn't quite know what to expect, which could be the reason why one participant, after his first game, asked if he would be playing his next game on the same court!! Between games players could try their hand at Troquet carpet croquet kindly supplied by Fieldcourt Games, which proved to be popular and entertaining. The food was excellent and very reasonably priced. A few problems were encountered with the primary colour scoreboard, or was it that the wrong buttons were pressed?

The final was a real cliff hanger between Colworth and last years winners Soham. Soham (Paul and Ian) led for much of the game, but Colworth were able to take the honours in the last few minutes, after several attempts by Soham to peg out. A really exciting game to finish the tournament. Congratulations Colworth and commiserations Soham.

Our very grateful thanks must go to Soham Leisure Centre staff for their hospitality but more so to Judy and Tom for their unflinching drive and hard work, without which the event would not have taken place, from all of us our heartfelt thanks to you both. We all look forward to next years tournament with anticipation.

INTER COUNTY The Office Furniture Specialists (Letchworth) sponsored this Indoor Carpet Croquet Event by transporting the carpet for us.

We are most grateful to Duncan Hector's company for their generosity.