

LAST WORD

... it's that time of year, again ... carpe diem my young Turks ...
... a coming vacancy in the CA Office ... and early Seasonal Greetings ...

“Clap your hands
and give a cheer,
CA Subscription
time draws near”

O.K.! O.K.!! It's not your Stratford Bard - but it scans! Enclosed with this edition is the Annual Drop On Your Boots Subs Sheet or DOYBSS for short. Arriving as it will (I hope) in mid-to-late November puts it in danger of getting overlooked in the build-up to Christmas with all that entails. I know it's a pain in the whatsit but it really doesn't take more than a couple of minutes to complete the form, write the cheque, lick the stamp, address the envelope and - most important - post it. Sorry! We are not yet at the stage where we can institute a Direct Debit payment system - next year maybe...??

I know, also, that you need one more form to fill in like I need a weekly haircut but the form is the vital link between you and the CA computer. Changes do occur. Last year's Non-Tournament player can well be next year's dynamic entrant onto the tournament circuit but that involves a modest rise in the sub.

On the other hand you Sir, or Madam may, by nature of your advancing years, now be eligible to join the ranks of our Veterans in which case the cost of the sub goes DOWN (Eat your heart out Ken Clarke!!).

In a (to us at the CA Office at any rate) mammoth computer exercise we cross-check every form against the current entry on the membership data base so please be accurate and concise and you will be twelve-month blessed by St Philiminrite, the patron saint of membership secretaries and their like.

With the turning of the year and another Season ended I was pondering on the game at the top and the attitudes of some of our younger protagonists. I certainly get the impression that some of our young men haven't cottoned on to the fact that winning carries an in-built responsibility to be gracious in victory, generous to ones opponents, grateful for the opportunity of competing - made possible by a combination of voluntary management and, hopefully, commercial sponsorship - and to take that particular moment

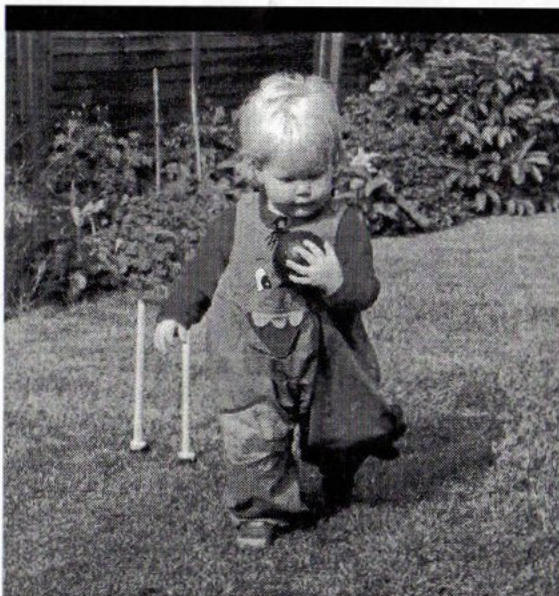
to put something back into the game.

Carpe diem lads. Seize the day! This just might be the one time in your life when you could be highly regarded but winning by itself is simply not enough. As a top exponent you have to socialise and actively promote the image of the game and huddling together in your own private clique does not impress the general public - croquet-playing or not - and it certainly does not help those of us within the sport who spend much time and energy seeking sponsorship. No offence guys but if the cap fits.....!

Roger Jackman, the CA's part-time assistant, has forewarned of intending departure early next year. Roger followed Alan Stockwell ("Mr Fixit") - a very hard act to follow - and set about taming the computer beast that sits glowering behind me. I can't adequately express, and this column is probably not the appropriate place for me to try, my gratitude for the quite considerable contribution Roger has made in more than one field of activity here in the CA Office. Typically,

Tony Antenen

CHILD'S PLAY



*"I'm sorry, but we'll just
have to call a referee to look
at this black ball
- it just won't go where I want"*

croquet

MAGAZINE ISSUE 230



French Kissing

in the inaugural FFC Open Championship

DECEMBER 1993

£2.50

NEWS

Warm welcome in South Africa

The annual Western Province Croquet Championships will be held in Cape Town in March 1994. Players are assured of eight days of good croquet and sunny days. We certainly hope that there will be some entries from Great Britain, and we can offer - to a limited number, of course - free accommodation near the courts.

Enquiries to:

Brian Bamford
47 Sandown Road
Rondebosch
Rep of S. Africa
7700

Croquet in Europe

The inaugural European Croquet Championship was recently staged in Italy. Held from 24th to 26th September, the Championship was played at Solbiate, near Milan and was a great success. The title was won by Stephen Mulliner (England) who beat John Evens (Wales) in the final.

Paolo de Petra (Italy) and Johann Ravez (France) demonstrated the progress that croquet is making in continental Europe. Both showed

great promise and significant improvement since last year, Paolo scoring 21 points in his game against Stephen Mulliner.

Top players from England will be invited to France next year to carry out advanced coaching. 1994 could also see the first European Championship for Junior players.

Members of the Swedish Croquet Association are showing an interest in joining the WCF. The Swedes play a Nine Wicket game at present, but plans are afoot to get a WCF party together next year to tour Sweden and play some games against local clubs to demonstrate International Rules.

Membership of the European Croquet Federation is open to any WCF member who qualifies geographically. For further information about the European Croquet Federation, please write to Antoine Ravez at: Federation Europeenne de Croquet, 4 rue du Chateau, 85200 Fontenay le Comte, France, or ring him on 51-69-7058.

Danube cycling tours

300 kilometres of cycle paths right along the

river (see photo).

For many centuries, ships were pulled upstream along the River Danube by teams of up to 60 horses and towpaths were created to accommodate them. These paths, which run directly along the banks of river, were built some 500 years ago and until recently were always closed to traffic.

Now, though, the towpaths have been converted into the Danube Cycle Paths Network and small bridges, crossings and wall reinforcements have been built.

This makes it the ideal place for family cycling, as cyclists are totally protected from road traffic. As an added bonus, the route passes some of the most stunning of Austria's cultural treasures. Vast monasteries, only still to be seen in Austria, Italy and Bavaria, baroque towns and castles all

feature on the route.

The monasteries are the most impressive feature, some with more than 1,000 rooms, such as St Florian, which boasts five state rooms decorated with over 2,000 kg of gold leaf. In comparison the Habsburg palaces seem like modest family homes! The two most beautiful monasteries, Melk and St Florian can be visited as part of the itinerary of Thomson Holiday's cycle tours.

Thomson Holidays and the upper Austrian Tourist Board are offering cycling tours from Schärding to Spitz, at a price of £432 for 7 days half board and including bicycle hire, luggage transfers from hotel to hotel and return flight to Salzburg.

Further details from Thomson Holidays or the Upper Austrian Tourist Board (tel: 071 629 0461).

ISSUE No. 226

Certain comments in Croquet No 226 called into question the integrity of Roger Murfitt, President of the NZCC. Over many years Roger has distinguished himself as both a player and administrator of the game. Our President, John Solomon, wrote a personal apology immediately he saw the article and the Editor also wrote an apology to the NZCC shortly thereafter. It is most regrettable that such

comments appeared in a CA publication. We apologise for the offence that was caused, and I want to assure the NZCC that such an incident will not happen again. We have always enjoyed excellent relations with the NZCC and I trust that this affair will not be allowed to sour many years of friendship and co-operation.

Colin Irwin,
Chairman of Council.

ISSUE No. 229

Apologies for a few errors that crept through the net in issue 229 of Croquet magazine. Corrected here for historical accuracy.

The desirable cup that appeared on our front cover, flanked by the two men who fought for it at the 1993 British Open Singles Championship, is the Coronation

Gold Cup - not the Ranelagh Gold Cup as stated on the cover.

The anonymous "Robert" who reported on that event (pg. 12) was Mr Prichard.

Finally we seemed to lose our 1/2s, as Jim Townsend points out in the 'Letters' page of this issue

Editor.

CROQUET

'Croquet' No. 230 (December 1993) PRICE £2.50 Cover Antoine Ravez & Jean-Baptiste Grochain Design John Walters Photography John Walters Produced by CopyCat Publishing for Publication every other month throughout the year by the Croquet Association Written contributions on computer disk (any IBM compatible format ASCII text) or typed and photographs/illustrations preferably black & white are welcome and should be sent to the Editor at the Publisher's address Ordinarily the copy date is the 20th of the month 2 months before publication Tournament results & reports should be sent via the CA Secretary any correspondence about non-delivery of the magazine should also be addressed to the CA Secretary Advertising details (rates etc.) are available from CopyCat Publishing with whom advertising should be booked. Editor John Walters Production Controller Aaron Westerby Development Chris Hudson Coaching Bill Lamb Photos/Illustrations J O Walters, C Hudson, C Townsend Design/Typesetting CopyCat Film Imagesetting via CopyCat Printing & binding The Echo Press CopyCat Publishing 15 Norwich Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP1 2ET (tel/fax 0473 230010) The Croquet Association The Hurlingham Club Ranelagh Gardens London SW6 3PR (tel: 071 736 3148) Secretary L W D Antenen Chairman C J Irwin An official publication of the Croquet Association. The views expressed are those of the Editor and his contributors.

Contents

NEWS	2
LETTERS	6
PC DICTIONARY	9
AROUND & ABOUT	10
FRENCH OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP	12
IF THE GODS PLAYED CROQUET	14
SIMON WILLIAMS	15
PROVISIONAL 1994 CALENDAR	15
COMMENT - WHARRAD.TURNS	16
AUG / SEPT '93 TOURNAMENT REPORTS	18
LAST WORD	24
CHILDS PLAY	24

Time to reinvent ourselves

If you care to look back through "Croquet Gazette" of the past few decades you will find one constantly recurring theme: Croquet is too easy. Letters and comments on this subject were sprinkled with tales of A-class results being a litany of +26 'Triple Peel's' (which are whitewash games where often the loser's only sin is to miss a couple of 12-18 yard shots). The response, often from the 'top players' who were basically the subject of the debate, was that the whole issue revolved around exaggeration: 26 TPs were rare, furthermore even in games where the score indicated a whitewash the losers had in fact often had chances but failed to score from them.

I suggest that what was exaggeration in the past is now fact. The standard of play at the very top of British croquet is now so extraordinary that the current laws FREQUENTLY reduce it to no more than a competition over a handful of 16 yard shots in a match of three games. I suggest that this is boring both to play and watch; what is more that unless we act, the potential of our sport can never be realised and its future is jeopardised.

The problem is compounded by the unchallenging lawn conditions on which

many events are played (as they were in the past), but "make the lawns faster" is no solution because it is neither practical (we can't control it) nor at the heart of the matter.

Of course croquet has faced up to the problem in the past. What we call "Advanced Play Laws" were introduced to put a few hurdles in the way - to make the game more difficult and encourage less one-sidedness (though their introduction was controversial at the time). But now "hi-tech" leaves (obscuring balls behind hoops or the peg) and the fact that the best players are so good that triple peels have become genuinely routine, have largely circumvented those hurdles.

I can call evidence in support of my case. Exhibit 1 is the 1993 British Masters Championship - the highest quality croquet event to be played in the history of croquet, I suggest! Triple Peels in an astonishing 3/4 of all games. I can call on personal experience of one day, where I won my two morning games by 26 TP on the sixth turn of each game and lost my two afternoon games in exactly the same fashion. Some friends who had come to watch were not impressed by croquet as a spectator sport!

Amongst other fine examples in support of my case is the 1993 French Open Championship. When Reg Bamford did the first 'Sextuple

Peel' of the event (peeling partner ball through its last six hoops and pegging out, to circumvent all the "penalties" imposed by Advanced Laws!) people were impressed. When Robert Fulford then did one in a crucial game against Reg people were very impressed. When Robert won the first game of the final with a whitewash sextuple peel people were beginning to get used to it. When Robert won the second game of the final with a whitewash sextuple peel it was starting to get boring!

It is obvious that there is a flaw at the heart of top class croquet. Compare it with other sports in terms of errors by one player (and opportunities for the other player) per unit of time. In real-time sports like tennis, one can make the generalisation that most "good plays" from one side can always have the chance of being bettered by the other side. Other non-interactive sports (like snooker) survive by each period of "shut-out" by one side being both short (a few minutes) and a very small slice of the whole match - giving both players numerous opportunities; they are also sufficiently difficult to ensure a large number of errors. That is the key to exciting and interesting games, both from the point of view of the player and the spectator. That key can also be seen as ensuring a reasonable number of errors per

time unit; opportunities that may only be fully capitalised on with the most skillful play; and the feeling that at almost any time a mistake could be made (where else can tension come from?). For higher bisquers playing croquet these criteria are met; that is why it is quite rightly said that less good croquet players often make for far better spectators than the best! It is now time to change the game to ensure that the criteria are also met for the top players. Just as in other sports, it is only the spectacle of the top players that will attract media attention; it is only successful media attention that will attract large numbers of players.

During the '80s there was a drive for a "new television-friendly version". Top player and games inventor Dr Eric Solomon produced a brilliant blueprint for the game that could have been the foundation for our long awaited breakthrough. Sadly that opportunity was lost by the feint-hearted and Eric's radical proposal was finally bastardised into 'short croquet'. As a game for beginners 'short croquet' is actually quite a success, but as a televisable game for the experts it is a dead loss. Eric Solomon's conception was a brilliant one: it used substantial law changes to preserve the skills of croquet while achieving the objective of making it easier to understand, shorter and more exciting to watch and play. By contrast

'short croquet' had mild law changes which lost many of the skills of croquet and made it less exciting to watch and play!

Exclusively in our next issue of "Croquet" magazine we will be publishing extracts from Eric Solomon's original proposal, that make clear exactly what was intended as the croquet game of the future. Now more than ever we should be pushing for the adoption of revolutionary changes, for a game that can take croquet forward rather than hold it back.

In the approach to publication of "Television croquet" I invite readers to write in to the magazine with their own feelings on what are the shortcomings of our game. If you have been blinded by the light of revelation - a game that could put croquet development on the fast track - please do send suggestions for a new version in to us here at "Croquet" Magazine, CopyCat Publishing, 15 Norwich Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP1 2ET.

We should regard our responsibility now as one of giving birth to a new game that can attain the benefits which current croquet cannot. Exactly like Snooker to Billiards the new game would reap reward for both, not detract from or replace the older game. As often is the case, the only question now is do we have the courage to take the prize which awaits the brave?

J.W.



NEWS

The "Full Bisque" project

The CA Tournament Committee desperately seeks the assistance of Managers and Club Secretaries. Members have asked that the fairness of integrating Full Bisque games in the Automatic Handicapping System be tested. We therefore need to get as many results as possible from games played according to Full Bisque Laws. What we require are game by game results with handicaps and what the 'base' handicap was.

Chris Irwin has kindly offered to analyse these results. We would be most grateful for information sent to Chris at 5 Hawthorne Road, Plumley, Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 0UH.

OBITUARY

Blanche Dennant

Blanche Dennant died on 7th September after a long and courageous battle against throat cancer. She retired from the Bank of England after 30 years service and came to care for her mother in Eastbourne. After her mother's death she looked around for a pastime which would suit her caring and determined character.

Blanche joined the Compton Croquet Club

The Art of Croquet

The National Croquet Gallery, Hall of Fame & Archives will open its doors this summer with a major exhibition of nineteenth century croquet paintings, including works by Winslow Homer, Tissot and other American, English and French painters of note. Located within the Newport Art Museum on Bellevue Avenue, Newport, Rhode Island, the Gallery will celebrated its opening with an Inaugural Gala in honour of fifty-seven members of the US Croquet Hall of Fame. Celebrated names from the early days of croquet include Averall Harriman, Harpo Marx, Louis Jourdan, Moss Hart, Richard Rodgers,

Sam Goldwyn and Darryl Zanuck.

The Gallery has been established by the Croquet Foundation of America to commemorate and exhibit the fascinating world of croquet through its art, memorabilia and archives. Drawing from the private and public collections, its exhibitions will travel to museums in many parts of the United States, England, Canada and France. A major part of the opening exhibition came from two remarkable private collections of



croquet art; one belongs to Tremaine Arkley of Independence, Oregon and the other to Richard Pearman of Bermuda.

Theo Holcomb, Director of the National Croquet Gallery, says there are many important works of croquet art from seventeenth century Flemish tapestries to contemporary avant-garde sculpture and paintings - mostly in private hands - that he plans to exhibit.

Theo Holcombe
US 212 861 6293

in 1978 at a time when new members were rare. Indeed, faced with a paucity of information about croquet in Eastbourne, she had to persevere in her attempts to join. Happily for the club she succeeded, and this determination began to benefit the club from the start. She was soon organising the catering, and as her confidence built up, managing tournaments.

There had been a lack of tournament play for the less accomplished members of the club -

those who shrank from exposing their weaknesses to visiting players, preferring to share their inexperience with understanding friends with matching ability. Blanche was largely instrumental in developing an annual internal tournament week for such players, and came to make it her own.

Blanche has for many years supervised the teaching of new players who came to the club with little or no knowledge of the game, and she has set the coaching standards of the club.

Her strength was her encouraging attitude to beginners, and her sympathetic understanding of their learning difficulties.

She progressed to become a good and elegant club player, much in demand as a doubles partner by members and visitors alike.

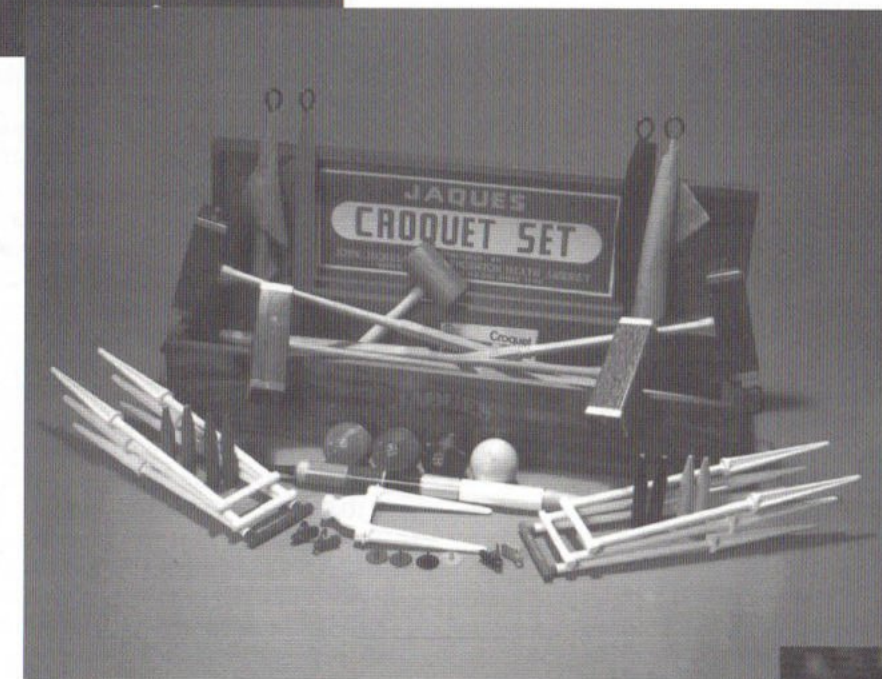
No lady has done more for the club, and, in recognition of this, she was chosen as one of the three vice-presidents. She will be greatly missed by members

R.E. Wallis



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LETTERS

Grasping the handicap thorn; are we thinking coherently when starting a game? criticism of the 'time' system; rethinking the span of croquet seasons

Laws Index

Dear Editor,
I have compiled what I believe to be a much needed index to The Laws of Association Croquet booklet. The index is on three pages and in a format suitable for pasting it into the blank pages at the end of the latest booklet. The index is especially valuable for cross-referencing. I will send a copy to anyone who sends a s.a.e. and a cheque (or P.O.) for £1.

R E Wallis
28 The Fieldings
8A Mill Gap Road
Eastbourne BN21 2JJ

Poetic Justice!

Dear Sir,
Issue 229 of the Croquet Gazette shows a vast improvement, so much so that I have been forced into doggerel as follows;

*At last I've read the
Croquet Mag
quite the best of the recent
bag
nice to read of Clubs
around,
name of players did
abound.
Lots about the lower breed,
that's the stuff on which we
feed.
Keep it up and your Mag
will sell,
there's ample scope for
more to tell.*

[I would have sent this to the Editor but was unable to decipher the instructions on page 3. If you think it worthy of print would you kindly send to appropriate address.]

Yours faithfully
Bob Carder
Parkstone

Handicap reductions

Dear Sir,
I write to express my considerable disquiet



regarding the handicap system and this is not particularly concerned with the 'new' system but the traditional method used in Handicap play.

In Croquet, the convention is to take the difference between the high and low handicaps. This gives a considerable advantage to the high bisquer.

The nearest sport using a handicap system is golf. There a handicap of one means one stroke and this must be taken at a particular hole. In Croquet a bisque or bisques may be taken at any time. It also means a complete new innings. In golf the players take $\frac{3}{4}$ of the difference in handicaps.

e.g. Diff.	Bisques given
1	1
2	2
3	2
4	3
5	4
6	5
7	5
8	6
9	7
10	8
11	8
12	9 and so on.

I suggest we should adopt the golf system and for singles the difference should be $\frac{3}{4}$ and in Doubles $\frac{7}{8}$ this.

The present system is too heavily weighted against the low bisquer. A high bisquer on a good day can play well below handicap. A low bisquer can rarely do this.

I commend these suggestions to you and look forward to comments.

Kind regards
Dr Allan J. Laidlaw

Handicap Cards - Sign Here Please

Dear Sir,
Most would seem to agree that the Automatic

Handicapping System is much, much better than that which went before. It clearly depends for its success on the completeness of match records.

But - how often are some 'inconvenient' results, whether wins or losses, simply forgotten?

In golf, a handicap card is always countersigned by the opponent after the round. Why not in Croquet also? What do other people think?

Yours faithfully
Brain Redford

Missing half

Dear Editor,
I am writing to avoid the risk of my letter which appeared in the October issue bearing the status of a "fly in amber".

Its main purpose, to correct the Quiz answer on the lowest ever handicap, was marred by an unfortunate misprint. Humphrey Hicks' handicap was in fact reduced to a new low record of minus $5\frac{1}{2}$, not minus 5 as printed, for a few months at the end of the 1940's, before the imposition of a lowest limit of minus 5.

Yours sincerely
S.S. Townsend (aka Jim)
Westward Ho!

Openings

Dear Sir,
In the 'A' class the first turn of going right into corner 4 is generally regarded as being

refuted by the opponent shooting at the ball since, if he misses a perfect double is left which the opener cannot really afford to shoot since if missed a massive target is left with excellent chances of establishing a break. The standard opening is thus regarded as sending the first shot level with hoop 4 noting that a shot at this ball will not leave a double

target if missed.

However there is nothing at all to stop the second person deliberately shooting his ball off the lawn at such a position that, when put on a yard, a double target is left for the fourth turn! I have never, yet, seen a game when this has intentionally been done but for a reasonable shot it would seem to be an ideal opening tactic - after all there is nothing in the rules stating that a player must shoot at a ball! Please note that leaving a double target means that the fourth turn shot will be the equivalent of 7-8 yards as opposed to a 10-12 yard tice.

Suppose, now that the second player shoots at your ball, despite the above, and leaves two single ball targets. What should you do. It is obviously foolhardy to shoot at your own ball as a miss will leave a big target. (This assumes that the opponent's ball has finished North of your own which is usual.) You may decide to shoot at the opponent's ball leaving 3 balls fairly close to each other but no double target. If the opponent takes the short 'Lift shot' all four balls will be close together giving a good chance of a break. The opponent could, however, play from 'B baulk' at what presumably would be a triple target i.e. equivalent of a 10 yard shot.

The recommended plan is to shoot at both balls from 'B Baulk' finishing in fourth corner. Please note, however, that it will be nearly impossible to construct a break from that position. Are there any alternatives?

You may note I used the 'Lift Shot'. This is not inappropriate as at the start of the fourth turn the ball is being played from hand and there are

two balls on the boundary with a rush up the lawn for the first player. By analogy, therefore, it must be good tactics for the opener to put his ball IN THE MIDDLE OF THE COURT. Obviously the point chosen must be such that there is no large target available from 'B Baulk' but it should be possible to create a 3 ball break without too much problem.

Yours faithfully
J B Portwood

Timed games

Dear Editor,
Whatever dissensions there might be regarding the problem of croquet being a time-consuming game, I am sure that every player will agree that timed games are universally detested. It follows then that our goal ought to be complete elimination of timed games.

Our problem is that the average game under the current laws takes too long. But it is important to note that this does not apply to scratch and minus players, who normally average only 1.5 hours per game. I will refer to this again later.

The excessive time taken by the average game of croquet has a considerable bearing on the problem discussed by Mr. Walters, on the opposite page to Lionel Wharrad's article, where he pointed out there are only 7000 members in a population of more than 50,000,000. And this is a game which was already well-established before lawn tennis began.

The fact is that tens of thousands of potential players are put off by the time it takes when they first try to complete a game, usually against another unskilled player, and thus not using their bisques. Even after they have acquired some skill



in the game, it still takes far too long. If games took up less time, many more people would play croquet, and more players would be able to play on each court, which is very expensive to maintain with the present number of users.

The disadvantage of Mr Wharrad's suggestion of a limited number of turns after two hours of play is that it still allows for a game of approximately three hours. It is not really a "new system of shortening games", and the underlying problem is not addressed. Another disadvantage is that it adds another complication to the bother with timing clocks. After watching the clock for two hours, players would have to switch over to counting their turns, with the probability of errors and occasional disputes. The real solution to all these problems is to speed up croquet and thus make all timing of games unnecessary.

There are so many occasions when a timed game is unfair to one player, who for one of a number of possible reasons is lagging behind his opponent. We have nearly all had the experience of playing a high-bisquer who plays very slowly, and after using all his bisques, leaves the opponent with insufficient time to catch up. Shortened games would be a much better alternative, being fair to both players, as handicaps are reduced in such games, and they could be used by managers in emergencies.

The only way in which games in general, which are mostly handicap, can be speeded up is to play the full-bisque game. I have already explained the advantages of this in other correspondence, and no one has denied them. Also no one has ever explained why,

after giving a player bisques to enable him to play as well as a scratch player, all or some of his bisques are taken away again, except on the rare occasion when he plays a scratch or minus player. We have seen that scratch players do not need to be timed, and when the plus players have learned to use their bisques constructively instead of defensively as they do at the present stage of the development of croquet, the time taken will be similar to that of top-class players, and timing will be quite unnecessary.

The full-bisque game would also greatly reduce the one-sided character of many games. I will give just one example, but there are many others. A plus 3 playing a plus 1 could obtain a break by using one or two bisques, leave his opponent cross-wired at the first hoop and retire to the third corner with a rush to the second hoop. His opponent is unable to prevent the second break unless he hits a very long shot, but if he could use his bisque the situation and the leave would be entirely different.

The current restrictions on the use of bisques are so illogical that it would appear that the original intention was to slow down most games of croquet, which would have been acceptable in more leisurely times. Be that as it may, we cannot afford such a waste of time in modern conditions. Certainly the reluctance to change the law has no logical basis, and seems to be an aversion to change itself. As with all human affairs, we have to adapt or die.

By allowing players to actually use their bisques, and by shortening games in emergen-

"Our problem is that the average game under the current laws takes too long. But it is important to note that this does not apply to scratch and minus players"

LETTERS

cies, there would never again be any need for the very unpopular timing of games, while that other curse of modern croquet, double-banking, could be greatly reduced if not eliminated.

Yours sincerely
Leslie Riggall

A Case of Subjunctivitis

Dear Sir,
I suggest that a search among the figures of speech which so liberally enrich our native tongue will find something to ease Simon Williams' problem of seeing Law 15(d) as nonsense. ('Legal Queries': Oct '93).

The wording of the law, by which a pegged-out ball "...may not cause any other balls to score hoop points..." may appear inadequate in that an inanimate object cannot be forbidden from doing other things.

But what about personification, i.e. treating the ball as one of us, who are forbidden many things?

Or transfer to the ball, as striker's agent, attributes of the striker himself. This device may or may not scrape into the category of a transferred epithet. And remember the adage "a Jaques is as good as his master".

Not that all balls are inanimate. Law 4(d)(2) outlines what the striker may do if his ball "...scores a hoop point for itself..." and Law 22 deals with a ball which "...apparently scores a hoop point between strokes...".

Out there somewhere is the last player to have done the deed in question:-



The last to score hoop points with his pegged-out ball;

To whom does this fluky distinction befall?

Though for such an exploit the chances were small

By Law 19(d) there's now no chance at all.

Your truly
Tommy Cameron

A Man for all Seasons

Dear Sir,
Our club's season has traditionally run from early April to early October. We hold a number of internal club competitions, most of which culminate in a single-game final. In recent years we have sought to encourage spectators and raise interest by holding a Finals Day on which all the competition finals are held. The day ends with tea and prizes and a jolly time is had by all.

Well, sometimes not so jolly. "What a pity," I mused to my fellow committee members last October, as the darkness closed in at the end of yet another rainy dull wind-swept chilly Finals day, "that we could not have Finals Day in June, when the evenings would be long, the weather would be balmy, the leaves would be on the trees not on the lawns and one need not play in two sweaters and water-proof clothing."

And we looked at each other, and said "Why not?"

So, as from this year we have changed our playing season: it now runs from 1 July to the end of June. For this past year only, we ran a once-off curtailed three-month season, from April to June, as a transition period. We

held a shortened Finals Day on the last Saturday in June, and we were blessed with a warm fine day. After the prize-giving at 6pm, we had a barbecue by members and their families: and we lingered long into the evening over our bangers, burgers and beer, and played some alcoholic croquet, and agreed it was a wonderful world.

We think our experiment has been a success. Accordingly I now write to you on the club's behalf in case other clubs may, on hearing of it, wish to consider introducing a similar change themselves

Ken Hope-Jones
Reigate Priory Croquet Club

Club saves £105 - Thankyou CA

Dear Sir,
As Treasurer of Cassiobury Croquet Club I had to insure the contents of our hut (mallets, balls, silver cups etc) against fire and theft. We also needed public liability insurance (what happened if our Calor Gas cylinder blew up and killed someone?). Our existing insurers increased the premiums fivefold to £160. It was obviously time for a change. We turned to the CA office who gave us the name of a firm specialising in this sort of risk. They have provided cover for £55. We have therefore more than recouped our Club Registration fee for this year, and indeed for all future years.

And so I say
CA
Hooray!

Yours sincerely
Bill Gillott
Rickmansworth

*"What a pity.
I mused to my fellow committee members last October, as the darkness closed in at the end of yet another rainy dull wind-swept chilly Finals day"*

the "PC" dictionary

In these days of Political Correctness, I am surely not alone in deploring the discriminatory language in tournament reports in Croquet. I hereby give a guidance to reporters in avoiding such sensitive phraseology.

To be avoided
a miss a ms
advanced play unplebaean play
Aunt Emma parental blood-relation (PBR)
backward ball status-postponed ball
bandit advantaged improver
black afrochrome
blue coelochrome
bonus strike properly earned non-continuation stroke
break down unintentional resignation from play area
common tangent behavioural-innocence tanperson
corner biboundary junction
corner cannon biboundary junction historic propellant device
court play area
dolly rush child-person's plaything rush
double-banking dual asset-management
drive environmentally friendly walk
enemy ball parallel-player's ball
expansion of black ball global warming
experience invasive ballistic behaviour
far wire proximity-different wire
fault unconventionality
first colours historically-senior colours
forestalling politely requesting
forward ball status-advantaged ball
handicap constantly mobile social distinction
high bisquer differently abled player
hoop crown least-gravity hoop portion
indifferent court wildflower conservation area
Irish grip near-Atlantic grip

PC terminology

To be avoided
irregularity of boundary hole in ozone layer
join up forestall the draft
lay up leave geometrically enhanced
lawn chemically-treated non-green sward
line-of-centres proportional representation
long hit in serendipitous user-friendly trajectory
manager Friday panicker
minus player elite but numerically-challenged player
missed short roquet superfine cut
one (etc.)-back one (etc.)-counterdirectional
outplayer player temporarily inactive
penultimate ultimately-challenged
red amerindochrome
referee outdated judgementalist
sextuple rumpypumptytuple
stalking advancing on the biglobal extension
straight drive hetero-environmentally-friendly walk
striker labour-withdrawer
thick take-off intellectually-challenged assisted relocation
thin take-off calory-controlled assisted relocation
to cross-wire unfairly to impede by linearly obstructing
to lift to change potential energy
to peg out to enter new game phase
triple peel three-step status-promotion
yard-line 0.9144-metre-line
Yellow orientochrome

Wol.
Eastbourne

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AROUND

... Final of the Golden Mallet
National Golf Croquet Competition ...



What goes up must come down: Anthony Biddles' marquee at Solihull for the 1993 Golden Mallet Final

The Golden Mallet Final

Solihull: Sunday 26th September

The Golden Mallet final was played at Solihull, and it proved to be an excellent choice. The Old Silhillians is a multi-sport club, with better clubhouse facilities than most, and its own paid catering manager.

Solihull members erected a marquee under the omni-present direction of Anthony Beedle, and made the competitors most welcome. The club's four lawns are surrounded by a high beech hedge, and form a nice private area for competitions of this sort. Many competitors brought their supporters with them, and altogether 10 clubs were represented.

The final consisted of six rounds of progressive doubles, at the end of which Chuck Ward of Tyneside was a clear leader, with Rosemary Longbottom (Rayleigh WI) and Bob Bembridge (Sapcote) equal second. Tony Welford (Winslow) and Barry Mitchell (Zeneca) finished equal fourth, and played a 7-point singles game, won 4-3 by Tony, to decide who should go into the semi-final.

The first 13-point semi-final between Chuck and Bob went the full distance with Chuck winning on the last hoop. The other semi-final produced a quick win for Rosemary, who beat Tony 7-2.

We expected the final to be a battle royal, but Chuck won quickly, 7-2, with Rosemary having to concede two hoops where the balls dropped a little unkindly for her, right up

The Croquet Classic Final

Heathfield School, Ascot
25th September

This was the 7th Classic final, and the third to be held at Heathfield School. For the first time, three ladies had reached the final, but unfortunately two of them had to drop out before the day, due to illness on the one hand, and domestic ties on the other. Their places were taken by Paul Abercrombie, a North London school teacher who had played every year in the competition since it started, and by Malcolm Daines, another Classic regular, who was the losing finalist in this year's Essex Championship.

The day itself was dull and murky, with a heavy dew and lots of worm casts on the surface of the lawns. Fifteen of the sixteen finalists arrived at the start line, the absentee's place being taken by a spectator, Brian Allen, who played in the 1992 final, and had come to support his colleague, John Lewis, also from Chartham Hatch.

Despite the conditions, players coped well, and adapted their play to the heavy lawns. Particularly noticeable in the early stages was Jon Bartlett of Sapcote, who won his first two matches very quickly. In fact, all the four blocks were won by players scoring the maximum of three games, with three of them finishing all their games within the one-hour time limit.

The block games finished at 3pm, just as the weather deteriorated, and the tea provided by the girls at the school was most welcome. The first semi-final, between Jon Bartlett and George Lewis of Solihull, saw the youngest player in action against the oldest, and a fine match it was, closer than the score might suggest. In the second semi-final, John Roche (Medway C.C.) beat Peter Rawlings (Chelmsford) +3 on time. Both had looked impressive in their block games, and their semi-final was an interesting game to watch.

The final was thus between Jon and John. Sapcote's Jon started off with some unusual tactics, running hoop 1 with both balls in turn from the start line, but then having no break to continue. John, joined up on the East boundary, made a break to take his blue ball round to the peg. Jon then made a break with yellow to the peg, and pegged out blue.

Results

Semi-finals: Chuck Ward bt Bob Bembridge 7-6;
Rosemary Longbottom bt Tony Welford 7-2
Final: Chuck Ward bt Rosemary Longbottom 7-2

by Chris Hudson

... 1993 Croquet Classic competition ...
... SE Federation Golf Croquet ...

& ABOUT

John succeeded in making one long hit-in, but Red crept round remorselessly, and it was all over before the bell. 14-8 to Jon.

by Chris Hudson

Results:

Block A: Jon Bartlett (Sapcote)
Block B: John Roche (Medway)
Block C: George Lewis (Solihull)
Block D: Peter Rawlings (Chelmsford)

Semi-finals: Jon Bartlett beat George Lewis + 11;

John Roche beat Peter Rawlings +3T

Final: Jon Bartlett beat John Roche +6



Phil Curtis (Sapcote) bt Joan Barr (Woodhall Spa) 7-4 in the final of the Southwick regional for the Golden Mallet



Shaun & Jo Carter receive the trophy after winning the Golf Croquet Doubles Championship, in the national final at Hurlingham

South East Federation Golf Croquet Tournament

11th July 1993

On a lovely day in July, 32 enthusiasts from Beckenham, Compton, Havering, Medway, Ramsgate, Sussex County and Worthing Clubs descended on the Compton lawns at Eastbourne and quickly started going "through the hoops". This was the first one-day Golf Tournament and it was arranged on a block basis with singles in the morning and doubles in the afternoon. The

overall winner was Havering on 108 points with Beckenham running them a close second on 105 points.

It was marvellous to see the lawns so well used. If croquet is considered to be only for the aged, then someone should have sent a photograph to the Press to prove it otherwise! not only was a request made for a similar event in 1994 but also several cynics of Golf Croquet decided that perhaps there was some point to it after all!

Thank you Compton for hosting this Event.

by Margaret Payton

The 1993 Croquet Classic Finalists

Paul Abercrombie

Paul is a 59-year old teacher at Bexley Grammar School, where he teaches French and Russian. He has played every year in the Classic since it started.

Brian Allen

Brian is a Civil Engineer with Southern Water. Aged 54, he took up croquet 4 years ago when the Chartham Hatch Garden Croquet club was formed, and has become an addict. Chartham Hatch organises matches against other croquet clubs in Kent, and has a growing membership.

Stuart Allen

Stuart is a Health Physicist with the National Radiological Protection Board at Harwell. His family took up croquet this year as it was a game they could all play together, and they joined the recently-formed Blewbury Croquet Club. Aged 49, Stuart has a 15-year old son.

Jon Bartlett

16-year old Jon has just started preparing for "A" levels at John Cleveland College, Hinckley. He is taking Chemistry, Biology, Maths, & Further Maths. First played croquet in 1991 and is a member of the Sapcote Croquet Club. He also plays village cricket for Sapcote, batting and bowling for both Senior and Junior teams.

Malcolm Daines

Malcolm, single, 39, runs his own computer software business. He has played garden croquet since he was 10 years old and has entered every Classic apart from the first year. A garden player by choice, he particularly enjoys "away" matches and the chance to meet other people. In the winter, he plays football for a local amateur team.

Steven Dodds

Steven is Finance Director of the Carleton Furniture Group. In his mid-thirties, he read maths at Cambridge University, where he was first introduced to croquet. He is

a keen squash and tennis player, has a young family, a girl and two boys, and comes from Harrogate.

Pat Frith

Pat, 55, is a farmer's wife, whose husband has an arable farm in Romney Marsh. She started to play croquet some 4 years ago and has formed a croquet group from friends in the Womens Institute. They play regularly in her garden.

Mike Hedderwick

Mike used to run his own furniture making business, and now drives a car ambulance in his retirement. Aged 61, he was introduced to croquet 3 years ago by his son-in-law. Tim Masterton, who was a semi-finalist in the 1989 Classic. Mike plays on his own lawn at home and has four children. He comes from Bruton, in Somerset.

Andrew Hester

Aged 52, Andrew has played garden croquet since the age of 15, when he was taught to play by a neighbour. He has built his own croquet lawn at home, and won the Croquet Association's Essex County Championship for garden players earlier this year. He is Western Europe Marketing Director for Del Monte International Ltd, and lives in Colchester.

George Lewis

George is 73, and started playing croquet two years ago when his family gave him a croquet set. Now retired and living in Warwick, he served in the army for 33 years, and then spent 8 years in business. He plays the game for fun, mainly with his wife and children.

John Lewis

John, aged 50, from Chartham Hatch, is a professor of medical statistics at Kent University. A keen gardener with two grown up children, he started playing croquet last year when he joined the local club in Chartham Hatch.

Richard Maynard

Richard is Chairman & Managing Director of Nationcrest PIC, a construction and retailing company. Entirely a garden player, he started playing when young, and has played in previous Croquet Classics, although never surviving more than one or two rounds. A keen race-goer, he lives in Great Missenden, Bucks, and also plays tennis and squash. His 13-year old daughter also played in this year's Classic, notching up a win over a 1992 regional finalist.

Chris Midgley

Chris is the head of a primary school in the Isle of Man, where croquet is now a sport option in the summer term. He helped to found the Castletown Croquet Club 2 years ago, and is now in the club Chairman. He plays classical guitar, races radio-controlled model yachts, and enjoys fly fishing for trout. Aged 49, with 2 grown up children.

Peter Rawlings

Peter's working background is financial administration. Aged 40, he learnt to play croquet when he was 12 years old. He is a keen collector of recorded music and joined Chelmsford Croquet Club some two months ago.

John Roche

Aged 39, married with a 5-year old daughter, John is a Town Planner with Rochester-upon-Medway City Council. He started playing croquet in 1990 after attending a "Come & Try It" session organised by the City Council. A year later, he was a founder member of the Medway Croquet Club.

Bill Wood-Roe

An accountant working in industry, Bill is an active tennis player who has only recently started to play croquet at the Woking Club. Aged 50, he has two children at University. A keen yachtsman, he sails a 24-footer out of Chichester, as well as finding time to play both bridge and chess. Walking a springer spaniel keeps him fit.

FRENCH OPEN championship



Beautiful Fontenay le Comte in the Vendée, venue for the inaugural French Open Championship

First Championship, 28th August to 4th September - Report by Chris Clarke

In future years, we may look back on this event as one of the most important in the history of the game, we saw France and Italy both produce players of sufficient quality to threaten the best players in the world and we saw the sextuple peel become a realistic tactical manoeuvre.

The Championship was held at Fontenay le Comte, a small town in the Vendée. It marked the 5th anniversary of the Fédération Française de Croquet and brought 24 players from 14 countries together. The event was, in many ways, a practice run for the World Championship which will be held here in 1995.

Six lawns had been sown in April and the players were understandably concerned that it might be like playing on a field. These worries were soon to be allayed however, as we arrived to find a vast expanse of flat lawn with excellent grass quality.

The interest in the town was quite extraordinary. There were displays of croquet in almost half the shops and all the players were put up by locals, most of whom did not play croquet. The kindness and hospitality shown to us here is something that we could learn from at home.

The croquet had a rather strange format, designed to give the weaker players as many games as possible, 6 blocks of 4 were followed by 6 blocks of 3 and then 4 blocks of 3, with the block winners automatically going into the last 16. These block games produced

some very good and interesting play.

Colin Pickering (Aus) won his block with a +2 win over Chris Williams (Wales) and a Quadruple Peel against Norman Eatough (Swiss). British Open Champion Reg Bamford (SA) had a very close game against Giampietro Donati from Italy. Giampietro looked set to win as he took his second ball round with only a single peel to do. However, disaster struck at penultimate and despite conceding a further chance, Reg won +4, which enabled him to win his block having completed a Sextuple Peel against Jean-Baptiste Grochain (F). Jean-Baptiste is currently the French #1, and his casual play is good to watch. He looked as if he might complete a Triple Peel against Donati, but with two peels done, an error at 2-back cost him not only the triple, but later the game. Fulford, Clarke, Westerby (NZ) and Walters all won their blocks. Toru Takano (J) showed that he has improved, with an excellent turn against Jerry Stark (US): from very little, he picked up a controlled break and went all the way to 4-back, including a peel on partner through hoop 1 after 2-back.

The second block stage qualifiers were George Noble, Chris Williams, Ross Robinson (Can), Barry Chambers (Aus), Jerry Stark and Giampietro Donati. Barry Chambers only scraped through on net points, having lost to Rodolphe Dourthe (F). The final block stage saw Tony le Moignan (Jer), Norman Eatough, Patty Dole (US) and a

delighted Toru Takano all qualify for the last 16 which was to be played best-of-three knockout.

Throughout the week we were entertained with guided tours of local chateaux and traditional jovial meals with wonderful atmosphere. These elements were combined to excellent effect on the evening of day two, when a barbecue was arranged about a number of round tables in the courtyard of the Chateau de Terre Neuve - the old castle that stands on a big hill overlooking Fontenay. The result of letting Walters and Rodolphe Dourthe join forces on a table of the young French was predictably raucous, though there was the odd glass of wine left over for other tables. When there were enquiries about 'vegetarian options' did I hear a voice from another table suggest "let him eat cake"? Some of us took the chance to brush up on our French whilst others were content to rely on key phrases - usually asking for more wine. The format led to original block winners having a couple of days off (and the second block winners one day off) before the knockout stage began. Also the original schedule took a 'conservative' view about how quickly the world's best players could get through games, but reality was more radical. Consequently, the envisaged start times of 8.30am were able to gradually slip through later 'am's and into the early 'pm's as the week progressed! These two factors allowed for sightseeing by some, or recovering from the excesses (and length) of the previous evening by others - see above.

Trips went as far afield as the vineyards of Bordeaux, but the nearby historic port of La Rochelle was a more popular destination. La Rochelle was also the best hope of America's hamburger king Jerry Stark to find a McDonalds; needless to say he failed, though he reported back on a satisfactory burger from another vendor. For those with a less specific (as opposed to discerning) palate, French food was an enjoyable revelation - particularly for the visitors lucky enough to sample French family dinners courtesy of their hosts.

The last 16 knockout progressed according to form, apart from an excellent win for Tony le Moignan over Chris Williams. The



The Chateau de Terre Neuve, a treasurehouse of the Renaissance whose guests have included Octave de Rochebrune and Georges Simenon

quarter-finals saw Clarke beat Pickering, after finishing off the contact following a TPO by Pickering in the first and a less clinical second. Westerby beat Le Moignan. Walters and Bamford had drawn the "short straw" of the format to play each other at this stage; Walters lost to the South African in a high quality match. Fulford beat Noble with a Sextuple Peel in game 2. Westerby played well to beat Clarke (who himself didn't) in the first semi-final, whilst the other was a memorable match. Bamford deliberately stopped at 3-back in the first game (to discourage the TPO should Robert hit his lift shot) and finished with a Quadruple Peel after Robert missed the lift. The next game appeared to be following an identical pattern until Reg misapproached 1-back having completed the first two peels of his quadruple. Robert barely hit the 10 yard shot this left him, after taking some time on the lawn



Rodolphe Dourthe & Jerry Stark

to mentally compose himself for it. Obviously concerned about a significant chance of Reg hitting a lift shot and finishing the match, Robert declined to give him that opportunity. Instead Robert left Reg the 30 yard shot of a Sextuple Peel leave and, after Reg missed, completed the Sextuple to some admiration from the spectators. Robert then won the deciding game with a more traditional whitewash 26 Triple Peel - an excellent performance.

That night we all went to watch "Le Puy de Fou", a spectacular 'Sonnet at Lumière', performed by a cast of 1500 locals which we all enjoyed greatly despite not being able to understand a word. It was also fortunate that our experienced hosts, on being told of the evening entertainment, disappeared to fetch woolies, vests, blankets etc. The 2 hour spectacle being held around a lake and castle, commencing at about 10pm, and being watched from a vast open-air stadium.

The final produced a clinical display of pure class from Fulford who won 26 Sextuple Peel, 26 Sextuple Peel - the first ever "perfect match". The delayed Sextuple Peel had become a realistic option. Eight had been attempted during the week and six had been completed. The conditions were very easy - slow, flat lawns with hoops that give when the ball hit them - but nevertheless such conditions have existed in the past and

sextuples have not flooded from the mallet. Opinions differ between 50% - 85% as to what percentage of completing the sextuple is needed before it becomes the correct option - only time will tell.

So, the 1993 French Open ended. The Presentation was made by the Mayor and financial backing was guaranteed for 1995. French croquet enjoys the kind of support from government (local and national) and local business, that we are unlikely to see in the current political climate in the UK. Our President John Solomon was on hand and thanked for his efforts in developing French croquet. As was Antoine Ravez (ably assisted by Emanuel and Genevieve de Cointet of the Fontenay club) for his organisation of the event. I feel sure that the development of the game in Europe will progress rapidly and that it will benefit the sport as a whole. I look forward to 1995.



Le Puy de Fou

EUROPEAN CONTACTS

It would be sensible for anyone wishing to visit any of these clubs to contact them 2 or 3 weeks in advance.

They would also welcome visits from teams of 4 to 8 people, in which case it would be advisable to give initiate contact at least 8 weeks ahead.

Information kindly provided by John Solomon

FRANCE

Fédération Française de Croquet
4, Quai Victor Hugo
85200 Fontenay-le-Comte
Tel: 010-33-51.69.70.58
Fax: 010-33-51.69.12.75
PRESIDENT & CHIEF EXECUTIVE:
Mons. Antoine Ravez

BAYEUX
Croquet Club Le Douet
14400 Condé sur Seulles
Bayeux
CONTACT:
Dr Monique de la Gontrie

FONTENAY-LE-COMTE
Croquet Club Fontenaisien
45, rue B. Fillon
85200 Fontenay-le-Comte
CONTACT:
Mons. Emanuel de Cointet

PARIS (North)
Croquet Club de Franconville
53, avenue des Marais
95130 Franconville
CONTACT:
Mons. Jacques Gabette

PARIS (East)
Croquet Club Lesigny
Golf du Réveillon
Ferme des Hivernaux
77150 Lesigny

FOUSSAIS PAYRÉ
Croquet Club du Mail
Mairie
85240 Foussais Payré
CONTACT:
Mlle. Louise de Clory

JERSEY
Mr Tony le Moignan
The Byre
St Mary, JERSEY C.I.
Tel: 0534 485150
Fax: 0534 485151

GUERNSEY
Mr Philip Archer
Le Cloture de Bas
Little Sark, SARK C.I.

ITALY

Associazione Italiana Croquet
C.P. 367
21052 Busto Arsizio (VA)
CONTACT: Sgn. Carlo Farioli

The principal club is at Golf Club 'Le Robinie' at Solbiate Olona, about 30 miles north of Milan.

SWITZERLAND

CERN Croquet Club
(near Geneva)
c/o Norman Eatough
La Forge Fenieres
Thoiry, F-01710
FRANCE
Tel: 010-33 50.41.21.87 (Home)

"if the gods played croquet ..."

A quote from Keith Wylie's "Expert Croquet Tactics", when he hypothesised they would use '1-back tactics'. Perhaps the St Pauls club is the nearest we get - and they play something entirely different!

From St. Paul's United Reformed Church
S. Croydon Croquet Club

The St. Paul's Croquet was founded many years ago, some time well before the second world war. I thought you might be interested to see a copy of our version of Golf Croquet.

I am enclosing a copy of our Rules of Play from which you will see certain differences, the main one being that a player is able to take a second stroke if he/she roquets his/her partner's ball.

This rule alters the tactics of the game and it is often advantageous to place one's ball in a strategic position for one's partner to pick up, rather than attempting to run the hoop.

It is possible that our rules date back to pre-1922 when I believe two posts were used - one at each end of the court.

I wonder whether readers of 'Croquet Magazine' would be interested in the above and I would be very interested to know if anyone can enlighten us on the origin of our form of the game.

K.E.Pascall

Rules of Play

1. Starting Point

The four balls are placed two on either side of the post.

2. Commencing Play

All four players, on the word "GO", hit their balls towards hoop 1 (in singles, the Blue and Red balls are hit and then Black and Yellow balls). Blue and Black are partners, Red and Yellow are partners.

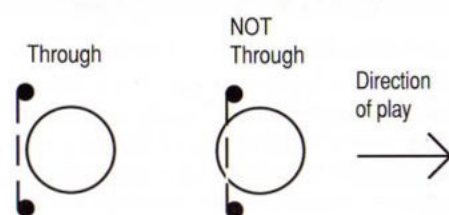
The player whose ball rests nearest hoop 1 (whether in front or behind) is the first to take stroke.

In the event of a ball going through the hoop, this counts a score and the next player takes

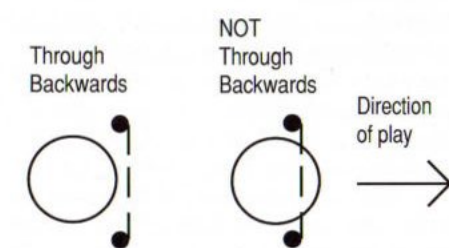
first stroke. The sequence of play is Blue - Red - Black - Yellow - Blue etc..

3. Scoring a Hoop

The ball must pass completely through the hoop in the correct direction.



If a ball enters the hoop from the wrong direction it must be completely through the hoop before it can go forward and score.



4. Scoring

When a player's ball has scored a hoop, all players proceed to the next hoop, and so on, until each hoop has been scored twice. The 13th score is the hitting of the post (7th score in the case of a half-game).

In matches, the player(s) to first score 7 points is the winner.

5. Hitting Your Partner's Ball

If when you take your stroke you hit your partner's ball you may take one further stroke

(usually known as a Roquet).

6. Hitting Your Opponent's Ball

You may hit your opponent's ball to remove it from its position or to go "in off" through a hoop, but no further stroke is permitted.

7. Playing out of Sequence or the Wrong Ball

If you play out of sequence or play the wrong ball you do not lose your turn. The balls are replaced and the correct player plays or you play the correct ball.

Tournaments

1. The first named person for each match is responsible for arranging the game. The date for completion of each round is important and if not kept to, causes problems. If a match is not played by the date the second name will go through to the next round, unless on consultation with the Captain or Secretary an extension is agreed.

2. Matches may not be played between 3.00pm and 5.30pm and not started later than 2.30pm on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays unless the circumstances are exceptional.

3. When there is a match being played with an umpire, the umpire should call out the next colour ball to be played on each occasion and players should not take stroke until this has been done.

4. Any player who considers they have a reasonable chance of reaching the finals should, if at all possible, keep the final date(s) free.



SIMON WILLIAMS

LEGAL QUERIES
Part 3 in a series

ODD & AMBIGUOUS WORDINGS

Law 14 contains an ambiguous wording. In Law 14(b), the verb "complete" means "to make complete" the running of a hoop, but in Law 14(c) it means "to make completely". Read carefully the definition of completing the running of a hoop in Law 14(b)(2) and you will see that it can only occur once, i.e., in the stroke after which the ball lies clear of the hoop. Law 14(c), however, says that a ball may complete the running of a hoop in two or more turns.

In Law 8(c) and Law 28(a), the phrase "playing with a ball" is also ambiguous. The original reference is "...the striker may elect...to play that turn with either of his balls" in Law 8(a). One can argue that the phrase is redundant, as we already have "playing a ball" [Law 4(c)] and "playing a wrong ball" [Law 28(b)]. Law 8(a) could say "...may elect...to play either of his balls in that turn". Law 8(c) goes on to specify that "the ball so elected becomes the striker's ball for that turn", so there is no possibility of being unsure about what "either" means, as some people are. But listen to Stephen Mulliner (then Chairman of C.A. Laws Committee) in 1990:

"Law 8 uses the expression "play with" (a ball) in (a) and (c). This is intended to include activities other than striking a ball (in Law 28(a), etc). Playing with a ball includes moving it before playing a croquet stroke or lifting it under Law 13 or Law 36, or moving it in error, but not wiping it under Law 23(e)."

Obviously Stephen is expressing the spirit of Law 8, which could be summed up crudely as, "choose one ball and don't be fooling with the other!"

Obviously Stephen is expressing the spirit of Law 8, which could be summed up crudely as, "choose one ball and don't be fooling with the other!", but it must be admitted that the phrase 'play with a ball', which in my view has been arrived at accidentally, is rather messy.

Law 27(b) contains the unique expression "points scored in order by peeling". Surely this should read merely, "points scored by peeling" as no point is scored either 'in order' or 'out of order'. A hoop point is scored when a ball "runs a hoop in order" [Law 14(a)]; A peg point is scored by "hitting the peg in order" [Law 15(a)]. Note that only hoop points can be scored by "peeling". Law 14(e) defines peeling as causing another ball to score a hoop point, so one cannot 'Riggall' the opponent ball when in breach of Law 27, even if the error is condoned.

This third article concludes the current series of points raised by a careful study of the croquet lawbook

Yours litigiously
Simon Williams

PROVISIONAL CALENDAR 1994
H - H'cap; A - Adv; L - Level; D - Doubles
R - Restricted entry; G - Golf; S - Short

Month	Date	Event	Location
APRIL	1-2 H	Surbiton	9-10 H Nottingham
	1-4 HR	Cheltenham	9-11 A EASTERN CHMP
	3-4 A	Surbiton	Colchester
	14-17 H	Roehampton	9-10 FR S'port & Birkdale
	15-17 H	Ryde	High-Bisque
	16-17 A	Sussex	10 A Winchester 1-ball
	21-24 AR	Cheltenham	13-15 A JUNIOR CHMP Bristol
	23-24 A	S'port & Birkdale	16-17 H East Riding
	29-1 H	Sussex	16-17 AR Ipswich (2+)
	30-1 HR	Plymouth	17 G GOLF CHMP
	30-2 F	Bowdon	17-24 A UK OPEN CHMP
	30-2 A	Cheltenham	Hurlingham
30-2 H	Compton	Edgbaston	
30-2 HA	Dublin University	23-24 HR Parkstone	
30-2 AR	Hunstanton	25-30 HAR Cheltenham	
30-2 AR	Hurlingham	30-31 A Harrow	
30-2 H	Woking	30-7 HAL CENTENARY CHMP S'port	
7-8 AR	Bristol		
7-8 A	Colchester	AUGUST 1-6 HA Budleigh Salterton	
7-8 H	Himley	5-7 H Cassiobury	
7-8 H	Ramsgate	5-7 H Colchester	
9-14 HA	Budleigh Salterton	6-13 HA Hurlingham	
12-15 H	PEEL MEMORIAL	7 S Himley	
	Surbiton	8-13 HAL Nottingham	
14	CROQUET DAY	8-13 HAL Sussex	
14-15 H	Carrickmines	13-14 A G'ford/Godalming	
14-15 A	G'ford/Godalming	13-14 WREST PARK	
14-15 A	Parkstone	17-24 A WORLD CHMP	
18-22 HALR	Cheltenham	Carden Park	
20-22 H	Nottingham	20-21 H Harrow	
21-22 A	Newport, Essex	20-21 H Ipswich	
28-31 AD	INTER-COUNTIES	20-21 A Roehampton	
	Southwick	20-22 H Colchester +60	
28-30 HR	Cheltenham	20-25 HAL Bowdon	
28-30 H	Colchester	26-29 A NORTHERN CHMP Bowdon	
28-30 H	S'port & Birkdale		
29-30 HR	Roehampton	27-29 AR Cheltenham	
3-5 A	Champ'ship	27-29 H Hurlingham	
	Surrey Surbiton	27-31 HAR Hunstanton	
3-6 HAL	Carrickmines	28-29 AR Surbiton	
6-11 HAL	Roehampton	29-3 HA Parkstone	
10-12 HR	Hunstanton 50+	SEPTEMBER 2-4 H Ryde	
11-12 A	HOME I'NAT'LS	3-4 AHR Budleigh Salterton	
	Budleigh	3-4 H Newport, Essex	
11-12 A	Bowdon	3-4 H Surbiton	
11-12 HR	Budleigh Salterton	6-9 H Sussex	
11-12 H	Crawley	8-11 A MASTERS	
11-12 A	Edgbaston	Parkstone	
11-12 H	Harrow	CHAIRMANS	
11-12 A	Ipswich	Hurlingham	
13-17 HR	Sidmouth	SPENCER EL	
13-18 HA	Parkstone	Southport	
13-18 HA	Ryde	9-11 FR Cheltenham	
14-19 A	MENS/WOMENS	10-11 A SELECTOR'S	
	Cheltenham	Bowdon	
18-19 H	Newport, Essex	10-11 H G'ford/Godalming	
20-24 H	Compton	10-11 H Sidmouth	
24-26 A	Nottingham	10-11 S Woking	
25-26 H	Bristol	14-18 A LADIES' WEEK	
25-26 A	Harrow	Cheltenham	
25-26 HAL	Himley	16-18 A SOUTH ENG CHMP	
25-26 AR	Woking	Compton	
27-3 HA	Woking	19-23 HA Compton	
1-3 AD	S'port & Birkdale	16-18 H Budleigh Salterton	
2-3 A	Budleigh Salterton	16-18 H Nottingham	
2-3 H	G'ford/Godalming	16-18 H WREST PARK	
2-3 AR	Roehampton B	17-18 H Carrickmines	
4-9 HA	Sussex	24-25 A S'port & Birkdale	
4-6 HR	Colchester 50+	25 S NAT SHORT	
5-7 HR	Cheltenham 50+	29-2 H Roehampton	
7-10 AH	CHALLENGE & GILBY	30-2 H Colchester +50	
	Surbiton	1-2 HAL CA FINALS	
7-8 HA	Colchester	Cheltenham	
8-10 AR	Wrest Park	8-9 HA Compton	
9 H	Winchester 1-ball	14-16 HR Cheltenham	
9-10 H	Ramsgate	15-16 AH Surbiton	

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comment!

"WHARRAD" TURNS

Reviewing Lionel Wharrad's suggested replacement for the present system of 'Time Limiting' games

Lionel Wharrad reports he has already had returns from two tournaments where his suggested system for dealing with the aggravation of timed games has been tried out. He has written to most managers and requested their help in trying out this system which involves giving each side a fixed number of turns after (say) 2 hours of play. There is some evidence that 2 hours play plus 10-12 turns for each side will on average give each side 3 hours of play. At Roehampton in a 4 day tournament 78 games were involved - a basis of 1.75 hours & 10 turns was used - average game time was 2hrs 26 mins and the average time taken for a turn by both sides was just under 5 minutes. It would be helpful if the idea could be tried out at other tournaments - both singles and doubles - and reports sent to him so that the idea can be examined.

Roehampton

You may be interested to know we tried the Wharrad System at the Roehampton Spring Tournament, and the enclosed is some empirical evidence for you.

As a manager (with limited lawns) timed games are inevitable. As an individual who hates timed games my vote is unequivocally for a system that breaks clock watching in the late stages - for all the reasons Lionel enumerates in his letter. For that manager, however, it slightly speeded up games particularly since high bisquers and (usually) the slower players failed to do much in their turns.

We found that we had gained 15 minutes on Days 1 and 2 (1.75 hours and 10 turns was supposed to equate to 2.75 hour manager's limit). So on Days 3 and 4 we made it 2 hours and 10 turns with no noticeable extra time being added. By Day 4 people were playing better and finishing quicker anyway.

I think we "proved" the following:

1. A turn takes 5 minutes
2. 2 hours is psychologically far better than 1.75 hours.

3. Despite a 12 bisquer who should have been an 8 there is no evidence that the higher bisquers are favoured at the expense of the lower despite the feeling that it did. The point is the high bisquer has an advantage in any timed game, and negative play is always possible if the high bisquer is ahead. In this tournament - high bisquers won 39 games almost exactly 50% which is the point of handicapping! Of games that had time called high bisquers did a bit better 33/62 or 53%, but the bandit won all his games, usually against low bisquers!

I enclose some comments from the players, which I have not analysed for myself. My own comments are those above.

Robert Pennant Jones

Roehampton Spring Tournament 1992

	Day1	Day2	Day3	Day4	All
	(1h45m+10)		(2h + 10)		
Games Finished	1	0	3	9	13
Before time called	11	5	9	6	31
Within time	9	14	8	3	34
Went to time					

After time called

Total turns (Both players)	158	167	135	69	529
Minutes	702	792	747	365	2606

Av. time for complete turn

for both players (min)	4.44	4.74	5.53	5.29	4.93
------------------------	------	------	------	------	------

Av. match time

	2h30	2h28	2h35	2h12	2h26
--	------	------	------	------	------

Of games that had time called

	9	8	7	5	29
Won by low bisquer	3				3)
(Equal handicap					
Won by high bisquer	8	11	10	4	33

Comments from competitors in Roehampton weekend

1. An uneasy feeling that the game was coming to an end at the beginning of the "ten turns", but realising that the turns were averaging 40-45 minutes, familiarity with the system reduced the unease. 2 hours of "main time" much better than 1hr 45mins.

2. I much preferred this system to the Bray Formula; but with 2 hours "main-time". This system does give the benefit of a full game.

3. Prefer 3 hour limit full game.

4. You get used to it.

5. I found the counting part of the system at the end of a game when one is concentrating on playing rather a nuisance. Prefer time limited full game.

6. As my games finished before all the ten turns ran out, it was difficult to tell if it would benefit or not. However in principle it seems fairer in that people are not clock watching or worrying about the other game in a double banked game hogging the lawn. However I think at least 2 hours should be allowed before the "ten turns" comes into play.

7. The main advantage is that it avoids the problems in double banking and calling for a referee when the time is running out. I found the system preferable to 'normal' time limits but at least 2 hours is needed of normal time. The number of turns afterwards needs to be monitored.

8. I think ten turns after time is too many - it seems to drag out the "end game" period rather too long.

9. Entirely neutral. Happy to play either way.

10. I approve of the Wharrad System as the game cannot be spoiled by slow players.

11. I love it.

12. I'm not quite sure but felt it favours the high bisquers.

13. A sense of impending doom as the turns disappear! I found myself playing more and more defensively - however it seems inherently fairer! I would say 2 hrs + 12 turns would be about right.

14. I liked it (though 2 hrs is better for the opening period). Thereafter, having 10 turns, means you know where you are so that (I think) there is less pressure on you than with a time limit.

Surbiton

The first round of the Surbiton Easter Handicap (17/18 April 1992) was played following the Lionel Wharrad format: 2 hours plus 10 turns each. It was played as an experiment following a request from Lionel himself. The decision to give it a try was mine alone and it was limited to just the first round of the first day. (People were confused enough by the Egyptian format and the new handicap guidelines).

As the tournament was probably the first to try out Lionel's suggestion, I thought it might be useful to record what happened as a contribution to the debate on this issue.

* Time was called after 2 hours. The in-player finished; the out-player had a turn; then it was 10 turns each.

* Bisesques were allowed throughout i.e. there was no restriction on bisesques after time was called at 2 hours. And for the purposes of counting turns, a bisque was regarded as a turn extension. i.e. taking a bisque in turn 5 did not make it turn 6.

* Of the fourteen opening games in round 1, six went into the Wharrad format and completed it.

* There was significant variance as to how long the turns took:

Players handicaps	Time for 10 turns
3.5 vs 6	30 mins
13 vs 10	50 mins
1 vs 4	1 hr 10 mins
16 vs 19	35 mins
3.5 vs 12	40 mins
4 vs 19	20 mins

* Reactions of players involved were mixed: - Just under a half were quite keen: "Either you go for it or you don't. You know where you stand. It stops you worrying about time" (Those that were keen tended to be lower handicaps)

- Just over a half were not impressed. These tended to be higher handicaps who found it muddling. Thinking about turns appeared to interfere with play. Writing turns down was essential and Aunt Emma tactics became very tempting in the time-turn period. "Joining up seems a terrible waste of a turn" said one. Another said "I'm not impressed. I had nine misses and one turn."

* The issue of a referee being called to adjudicate a disagreement over the number of

turns taken thankfully didn't arise. What would have happened is anybody's guess.

My subjective view is that regardless of whether there is one hour left or ten turns left, if a player (or team) wants to be negative then neither format will be capable of preventing it. However, the evidence does suggest that Aunt Emma can reduce ten turns to a paltry 20 minutes and that has to be a serious weakness. In other words, given a choice of playing an hour or ten-turns against

high bisquers playing Aunt Emma, give me the extra hour every time, so not recommended for high bisquer singles.

It only remains to be said that for a broader evaluation of the format it does need to be tried out in other tournaments, particularly advanced ones where time delays due to double-banking and team consultations are expected - maybe round 1 of the Inter-Counties.

Michael Llewellyn-Williams

wharrad turns

Time limits are a quite absurd way of delimiting a croquet match and every effort should be made to abolish them. They lead to quite unreasonable annoyance with the players in a double-banked game if that game causes excessive interference or requires frequent refereeing - and some players can become very irritated if their opponent is a referee or manager who gets called away for official duties. The whole atmosphere at a tournament with extensive time limits can be tense and unhappy. Lionel Wharrad's suggestion certainly removes most of these difficulties, but his solution is not as satisfactory as avoiding time limits in the first place. Indeed, our only real criticism of his proposals is that, if they become popular, they may divert attention from the campaign that we should all be waging to eliminate all (or almost all) croquet games that do not finish by pegging out.

One must distinguish between the 2 different types of time limit. There is (1) the limit that is imposed on all games in a tournament or an event and is in operation as soon as the game starts and (2) the emergency time limit that is applied to isolated, stagnant games that need to be curtailed in order not to hold up the progress of a tournament (especially one with a Swiss format) - or to try the patience of lunch caterers!

To impose time limits of the first kind (with the possible exception of doubles events, of which more later) is indefensible, since the Bray system provides a completely satisfactory managerial solution by shortening the beginning of the match rather than its exciting climax. If a Bray system is reasonably chosen, the need for any sort of artificial termination should not arise. It does, of course, sometimes happen that a manager has not assigned a sufficiently strict Bray system: that is a matter of inexperience. If problems of the second type do arise as a result, then Lionel's proposals would be particularly appropriate.

It is ridiculous for anyone to argue that a fixed number of turns is more likely to lead to defensive play than a fixed period of time. We have all seen timed games in which the player or side in the lead has tried to sit on a 2 hoop lead for the last three quarters of an hour, to the immense frustration of the opponent(s), without making any serious

attempt to achieve a win by pegging out, and adopting tactics they would never have resorted to if they had known that the game would have to be completed properly. We do not suggest that this will be any better under Lionel's proposals - but it will certainly be no worse. This problem is an inherent feature of all methods of artificially truncating a game at its conclusion: it is another compelling argument against timed games.

We suggest that the number of turns should normally be 12 for each side. 'Turns' here really means 'visits to the lawn' since, in handicap games, a bisque turn must not be counted separately from the immediately preceding turn. Bisesques should only be allowed to be taken during the first 10 of these turns. Any bisesques left standing would only become active again if both sides are level after completing their 12 turns. It is obviously important that counting the turns is done accurately and the simplest practical solution to this problem is to issue a prepared card of the design shown at the time when the limit is imposed. The side in play completes its turn and then the spaces on the card are marked with crosses as succeeding turns are completed.

										No bisque	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

Incidentally, with this system there is a good case for changing the rules so that, instead of a turn being deemed to have finished as soon as the side has played the last stroke to which it is entitled, a turn would be deemed not to have begun until a side has played the first stroke of that turn.

Handicap doubles is the only competition in which, when managing, we (reluctantly) tolerate a blanket time limit on all games and here the possibilities of using a fixed number of turns rather than a fixed interval of time are particularly attractive.

The system was tried for the doubles events at this year's Cheltenham July Tournament,

even though the arrangements there are somewhat complicated. Our previous practice has been to have doubles games starting at 0930 and 0945, some double-banked with a 3.5 hour time limit and the rest single-banked with 3.25 hours, but all finishing at either 1300 or 1315. So, instead of ringing bells at these times, cards were distributed to each at the start of the day and bells rung at 1200 and 1215 (to determine which side was in play) and then, after the current turn had been completed, the card system operated.

Players were asked to record the time the extension turns took. The evidence we accumulated was somewhat scanty, as 21 of the 56 doubles games finished within the initial period of 2.25 and 2.5 hours and only 6 games took the full 12 additional turns and yielded a result 'on time'. Of the 13 games that went to 11 turns or more, one took 90 minutes but the times taken for the remainder ranged from 35 minutes to 70 minutes: the average was 54 minutes. So it seems that 12 is probably the right number of turns.

Both managers thought that the 'Wharrad turns' were a considerable improvement on conventionally timed games and certainly reduced the aggravation. When invited to write their comments, most players who replied were in favour of the new idea (some quite strongly): a few, however, could 'see no advantage'.

One point made by someone discussing the new procedure was that it ought to be modified if a ball (or balls) have been pegged out during the assigned turns. At Parkstone (with conventional time limits) they sometimes use a system under which, if a ball is pegged out during the last hour of allotted time, the game continues for an additional 0.5 hour. This is a partial antidote to the pegging out of a ball at a time that might not be tactically sound in a game that was destined to reach a proper conclusion. It does, of course, introduce additional tactical opportunities in its own right! Perhaps provision should be made in Lionel's scheme for an extra, say, 6 turns to be allocated if any ball is pegged out during the first 10 of the additional 12 turns, with bisesques inactivated during turns 17 and 18 instead of 11 and 12. (Second crosses could be inserted on the grid in positions 7 to 12.) This additional suggestion is certainly worth an experiment.

AUGUST
'93

**Woking Short Croquet
11/12 September
by Roger Schofield**

*Gill McDiarmid tops Woking
Wonder-boy Wharrad in her
'excellent adventure'*

Twenty two players took to the lawns at 9.30 on a very pleasant Saturday morning while Roger Hayes waited patiently in the Club for his opponent (me) to arrive late, for the Woking Short Croquet Weekend.

The courts were finely cut and in excellent condition, and the Courts 5 and 6 in the cage (they're also used for tennis) were in better condition than I'd known them.

The format was 6 American Blocks in the singles and 3 in the doubles. Due to being well managed by Geoff Cuttle and Pete MacGowan we got through all the singles and 2 of the doubles on Saturday.

The tournament Dinner was held at a local hostelry and a good time was had by all.

Sunday morning commenced with the last game of doubles; the last for us also rans anyway.

The 6 winners of the singles blocks went through to 2 semi-final blocks and the 3 winners of the doubles went through to the finals block. The rest of us were organised into friendly games by the management but after 2 or 3 rounds this fell to bits, the weather having changed, except for Peter MacGowan and Roger Bell who declared that they'd paid to enter and were having their money's worth, nothing to do with being desperate for a win.

Gill McDiarmid had an excellent tournament winning 6 out of 6 singles games culminating in a final against Lionel Wharrad who was runner-up having won his previous 5 singles games.

In the finals of the doubles all 3 pairings won one game each. Gill McDiarmid and John Haigh running out winner on hoop points and receiving the winners goblets.

This really was an enjoyable weekend. Woking have both the catering and the competition so well organised.

Singles 1. Jill McDiarmid 2. Lionel Wharrad
Doubles 1. Jill McDiarmid & John Haigh

tournament reports

**Colchester 6-8 August
by Pat Hetherington**

Revenge of the minus players on Colchester's fast lawns

Colchester's August handicap weekend tournament, played on the usual fast sun-drenched lawns, saw 18 players with handicaps ranging from -2 to +12 competing for the John Foreman Cup.

Everyone completed three rounds on the Friday but after the fourth round the top eight players moved into an eight-round Swiss, leaving the remaining 10 to complete

a more leisurely seven rounds.

Overall winner (despite giving away 59 bisques over the weekend) was Robert Fulford, his only loss being to fellow minus player Lewis Palmer who, with six wins out of eight, shared the runner-up spot with 1992's All England winner Stephen Harbron.

1. R Fulford 7/8
2= L Palmer; S Harbron (6/8)

**The Finals of the National Short Croquet Competition
by Quiller Barrett**

A Day Out in Birmingham

Let's face it, croquet is not the most compelling of spectator games. You need to know a bit about it and, even then, watching the pundits playing at Hurlingham rarely sends the adrenalin racing. An hour or two of near-perfection interrupted by the occasional drama is not the sort of stuff to cause more than short gasps from onlookers. Whereas...

...on a chilly Sunday in late September the Ryder Cup was being played to the north of Birmingham. There you found a partisan crowd, players under intense pressure who made mistakes, but also some nigh-perfect shots. The mental strain showed through too: unexplainable lapses contrasted with balls finding their certain way into narrow openings, time after time - till the spell broke.

And this scenario was repeated a few miles away to the west on the very same day: the National Short Croquet Finals were being played at the Edgbaston Club. Fewer spectators maybe, but just as partisan. Neil Chalmers and Terry Sparks from Norwich, David Earl from Ealing, Nigel Grant from High Wycombe and Alison Thursfield from Dyffryn, Cardiff had all made it to the finals day, just 5 from 80 players who had entered at the start of the season; the others had been knocked out in club and area competitions.

Like the golfers, the finalists had their families and friends along for moral support. The Famous Five, too, made mistakes (more interesting mistakes than you see at Hurlingham). And they had their moments of glory when bisques were ignored and their games flowed with concentrated certainty - for a while.

The toss matters and so does the number of bisques: if you have a lot the winning tactic seems to be to press on from the start with just three balls on the lawn. Use bisques as necessary to get your first ball to or through

rover and figure out a leave that forces your opponent to use a couple of bisques to get going. Then, with a modicum of luck, you steam through with your second ball.

It was decreed winning games would decide who won the trophy. If two tied there would be a play-off. Two did and David Earl and Terry Sparks settled into the final game.

Earl had 7 bisques and Sparks 3.5. The Ealing player stopped at rover with his first ball, using just one bisque. Sparks countered and made it to the peg.

On his second ball break Earl's nerve or his concentration gave trouble and he missed some easy roquets: very quickly his bisques had gone. Terry Sparks waited with an air of expectancy. Earl made rover and pegged out the Norfolk player's forward ball.

Earl's striker ball was inches from the peg and his second ball lay close to rover, the one hoop he needed to make. Sparks was for hoop one. It looked like a one-ball ending for both players but Earl opted to keep all three balls in play and joined up a rover. Which left Sparks a 20-yarder: if he hit, the trophy was surely on its way to Norwich.

He missed and David Earl became the first member of the Ealing Club to win a National trophy.

C.A. officials chose not to attend the finals of their own competition (don't they realize grass roots appreciate occasional nourishment?) so the trophy was handed over by the attentive and efficient manager, Chris Bennett. The Edgbaston members were congratulated on being excellent hosts and we set off home to find the motorways already jammed. The golf crowds may have been bigger - but the short croquet finalists have something to remember from their day in Birmingham.

Wrest Park Advanced 14/15 August by John Wheeler
One visitor joins locals in attempt on the Mattahorn

This tournament had the appearance of being the Wrest Park Club Championship. Ten of the fourteen players were from Wrest Park and three were from Letchworth; Walter Thornhill from Hurlingham was the only non-local. The six lawns were in fair order, the hoops were set firmly and correctly, the weather was splendid and with just the occasional double banking games moved on apace. Some players completed four games by early evening and were then able to relax in the delightful setting. We had a large number of visitors and casual spectators. Some of them were keen to find out more about the game without appreciating that croquet players, like golfers, prefer quiet while making crucial shots. 'Noises off' seemed to create more tension than they would in the hurly-burly of double banked games but players were able to see the funny side of things in the end.

The tournament was represented as an assault on the Matterhorn where we were

able to follow stage by stage the progress of the climbers. Duncan Hector reached the summit by outclimbing the others. Tom Anderson almost dislodged him but ran out of time. Bottomley, Wheeler and Hallam tried to reach the top but encountered some loose rocks on the way.

Walter Thornhill had a close game with John Wheeler. Near to time black, Walter, was layed up to make penultimate with blue on the stick. Red, on two back, was near rover and yellow on the east boundary. Yellow, on one, hit black then went round and pegged out blue. Black hit in once and made penultimate, but without control and red and yellow pegged out as time was called. Judy Anderson won the award for gaining most Lamb points. The golden banana was erroneously awarded to Paul Sharrock, after prize-giving he beat John Bevington who became a joint bananist.

1. D Hector (6/6)
2= H Bottomley; J Wheeler (4/6)

Nottingham Handicap Weekend 17-19 September by David Carpenter

A bisque that was there for the taking

An Egypto-Swiss! midway between an Egyptian and a Swiss. After consulting an atlas, Rick (the manager) had considered calling it a Greek but decided against it in case trouble spilled over the Balkan borders.

Twenty-six players competed, the locals being joined by others from Surbiton, Hurlingham, Cheltenham, Tunbridge Wells, Cambridge, Worcester and somewhere in Cumbria, the name escapes me. There was also a healthy waiting-list, making up for recent low attendances at Nottingham tournaments.

The previous weekend at Guildford & Godalming I had witness Guy Willard complete three triples, and that after copious quantities of cider. On the Saturday morning, as I watched him confidently juggling with four croquet balls, I thought a quiet side bet might be in order but decided to wait for the result of his first game; -25 to the local boy David Brooding playing off 16, I dismissed the idea. David continued this form for the next three games until he beat the Tournament Handicapper, Lawrence Whittle +26. He played then the rest of the tournament off a handicap of 13, but undeterred still gave Chris Osmond a twenty-sixing.

The recent departure of the usual caterer to cooler climes had been something of a worry to organisers. However Tim and Hilary Smith filled the breach, and many a hungry stomach, with excellent fare (no exaggeration, it really was notably good).

The following day saw the arrival of the big-gun, Brian Hallam. Many were anticipating him following up on the success of his

previous appearances in this tournament with peels flowing from his mallet like sonnets from the pen of a metaphysical poet. Alas, this time it was not to be (-26 in 35 minutes to Ron Welch).

The Saturday evening B-B-Q was well attended, highlights being the home made Hopewellian Boston baked beans.

David Brooding continued his run to five out of five but then met his nemesis in the form of Roy Milner. After a bruising from Roy, he never seemed to recover, but still finished the tournament on a highly creditable 5/7.

Here's an interesting little scenario: whilst laying his leave, Norman Bircumshaw moves his ball gingerly to avoid giving a lift. His opponent Nelson Morrow comes on to the lawn to play but not before the double-banked player has moved and replaced the critical ball. Morrow claims a lift, Bircumshaw disputes it and calls for the ROT (Gordon Hopewell) who, after some ground level sighting, adjudicates that it isn't a lift after all. During the lengthy discussion Gordon's opponent Joan Welch has tea! But what if it had been a lift?

Question: "Who's was the half bisque?" Whittaker thought it was Willard's, Willard knew it was Whittaker's, having brought it to the lawn and tossed the coin. Result: bisque remains unused and game is lost by a mere 7. Moral: Check your opponent's handicap before you start.

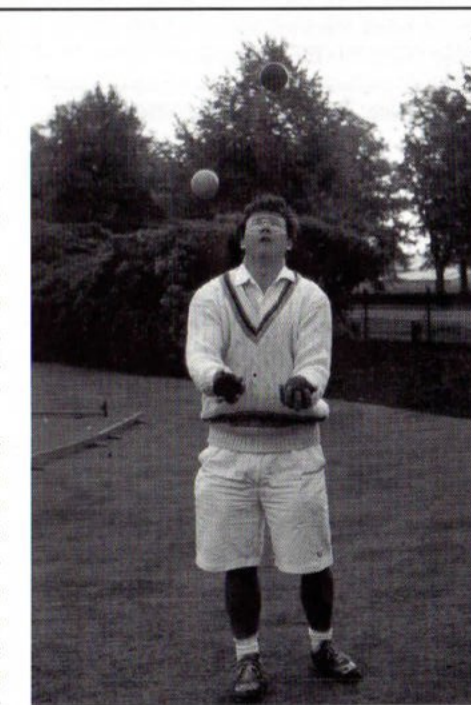
By the final afternoon Tal Golesworthy had claimed a silver award against a bemused Jean Ackerman and two people were

**Cheltenham Over 50s
Handicap 5/8 July
by John Lansdown**

Pink knees & faces for the over 70's

The modified blocks form of eight players per block playing six opponents gives everyone two games each day, and it reduces the number of late evening games. With fifty six entrants it all worked very smoothly; the lawns were only clear during change-over until after tea. The weather was splendid, hot sun all day relieved by a cool westerly breeze - there were many pink faces and knees and an ambience of Ambre Solaire! This was a nice relaxed little tournament - next year it is hoped to have an Over 70s Block.

Blk A, 1 Mrs M Evans (14) 5/6
Blk B, 1 J Lansdown (12) 6/6
Blk C, 1 I McClelland (0)
Blk D, 1 K Davis (7) 6/6
Blk E, 1 J de Winton (4) 5/6
Blk F, 1 D Cornelius (5) 5/6
Blk G, 1 Mrs E Bailey (14) 4/6



Guy Willard in confident mood prior to winning at Nottingham 17-19 September 1993

on +5 net wins. Roy Milner and Beatrice McGlen (no surprises there then (incidentally, people at Parkstone will be pleased to hear she is now playing off 10)). However, Guy Willard was on +6 net wins, giving him both the tournament, and a handicap reduction from 1.5 to 0.5. Wish I'd made the bet.

1. Guy Willard 8/10
2= Roy Milner 7/9; Beatrice McGlen 7/9

**Guildford and Godalming
14/15 August by Nick Harris**
*Exceptions and Additions to
General Conditions.*

1. The weather will be fine throughout the weekend although there will be at least two Gales (Nigel & Graeme).
2. The majority of the players will be expected to take leave to go to the Cider house each day, leaving games unfinished on the lawn. Some players will have a large 3+ pint Lunches (Wiggins, Miller, McDiarmid, Chapman, Mrozinski, Smorfitt) some will have less (Osmond, Ames, Harris, Palmer) some will drink Mineral water (Browne).
3. The Manager (Hilditch) will juggle the so called "crunch" game into round 2, (Palmer beat Wiggins) other jugglers will be seen (Hort, Willard).
4. The CA office will be represented (Jackman).
5. A WELSHMAN will defeat another welshman!? win the Event with 6 wins from 7 rounds by first grievously rushing his own peg ball onto the peg and then hitting his 'last shot' - a 30 yarder. (Dorke beat Palmer)
6. There will be several quality games with a QP and 3 TPs from Palmer (who will place second), 2 TPs from Wiggins, 2 from Hort and 1 each Mrozinski and Willard.
7. There will be more chairs than last year (Hard black stacking ones) and it will be a most enjoyable tournament.

**Ryde 3-5 September by
Christine Bourn**

Read the wrapper, chuck the Times!

Ryde has never been famous for the speed of its lawns, but this September's Open tournament, which took place in permanent sunshine, produced the fastest surfaces any local players remember.

The skewed nature of the handicap distribution allowed Roy Newnham to manage his first Egyptian event. Its flexibility permitted the energetic and enthusiastic players those extra games they sought.

Sunday morning saw Leonard Ainsworth (20 the first day, 18 the next) determined to follow established theory and take a ball round to peg early on. Had his opponent not been totally beguiled by the Sunday Times (save for bisque pulling), somebody might have realised that Leonard was happily running hoops with his opponent's ball - all the way to 3 back! N.B. The replay allowed his opponent to finish the paper - a rare treat.

Bob Fewtrell won the 'A' block and the runner up was Philip Kennerley. Graham Gale triumphed in the 'B' and David Carpenter came second. Despite his above lapse, Leonard Ainsworth was victorious in the 'C' block and Christine Bourn was runner up.

Thanks go as usual to Roy Newnham (the only manager to get his Sunday newspaper delivered in a plain brown wrapper (!)) His insouciant manner continues to belie his organizational skills.

**Christchurch Park,
Ipswich 21-22 August by
Jonanthan Toye**
JABBERCROCKY

Small child to parent: "They played that game in Alice in Wonderland didn't they?"

*Twos Ipswig, and the smalmys hats
Did flump and crample in the shlade
All brightful was the Saturday
And the SunTag grew fullrained.*

*Behold the Jabberhats my son!
SPARKY'S FLOPPY, WILKINS WIDE
Behold the PERCIVAL BLUE TENT
The JACKSON NAUTICAL SIKH beside.*

Small, irksome male to Dan Windham, midstroke in front of hoop two, after a slowish start: "That's easy that is." "You try it then." Pause. Then irretrievably past midstroke: "You won't do it."

*He took his clangful bludge in hand
Longtime the wheezy brat he sought
So rested he as ALLNUT hooped
And paused in goresome thought.*

*And as in bloodstruck thought he stood
The barblicoo, with fiercePEARCEflame
And WATERS' crematosossamjees
Did histle as they came.*

*One two! One two! And black an black
The Sossamjees were darklied
They nashed three score
Came back for more
And then deplete reparted.*

*And hast thou seen the PERCIVAL?
The sandles brown, the sockies white?
He proved quite imperceroibal
Won all his games both day and night.*

*Twos Ipswig, and the PALMER
Was sat on by his ANNABEL
All mangled was the managell
But Smilefull was the tournable!*

Small female to grandmother: "Let's watch this." Grandmother, thirty seconds later: "This isn't going to very interesting. Let's go somewhere else."

**Cheltenham August Level
Tournament 28-30 August
by Lionel Tibbles**

(The view from a Bridgeroom)

After a week of very chilly and disappointing weather, the day of the Cheltenham levels dawned clear, bright, warm and sunny. The Tournament got underway with the hushed anticipation of great feats about to unfold.

The games on lawns 9 & 10 on the first morning, came under attack from a local in an adjoining garden, after the phrase "make smoke number one" filtered through the dividing hedge. The ensuing black smoke would have done the Kriegsmarine credit, either that or they still burn witches in Cheltenham.

There were fortunately, very few other made originating from outside sources to mar the day's play. The managers and managers were firmly at the helm throughout, running a very tight ship. Some mutinous dogs did however, jump ship for a brief lunchtime visit to the nearest grog shop, the manager commenting "Back in half an hour, Mr Christian".

Sunday began with a court-martial chaired by Peter Dorke, who had before him Dolly Rush and Willy Hittin accused of interfering with the club chronometer, which had mysteriously lost 15 minutes during the second dog watch. Able seaman Hallam scrambled over the yardarm to effect repairs and all was well once again.

Overheard on Lawn 2 (by just about everyone within 1/2 a mile) "Gosh Roger, that's a long one". Roger Wheeler vs Faith Fewtrell.

John Smith was awarded a new pair of spectacles after approaching Peter Darby from astern mistaking the profile for one of the lady-players.

Flag raising and lowering was ably performed by Chief Petty officer Hammelev, bosins pipe to the fore, with much tugging of forelock in the direction of the quarterdeck (managers desk)

Games finished towards 5pm on the Monday with a chance for those still not satiated to indulge in a friendly, or as Margaretta Regan put it so succinctly, "to be toyed with". Results already recorded.

Woking Triples Week 21-28 June by Dennis Goulding

Open Singles & Doubles

Three Day Handicap Singles

One Day Handicap Doubles

The beginning of Triples Week was played as doubles in the morning and singles in the afternoon. The doubles started off slowly with only 1 game finishing before time. After the first day in the A block singles Bob Smith advised the manager that the most crucial game looked likely to be Roger Best vs Roger Hayes, Bob having lost heavily to Colin Southern who in turn lost to Roger Best. The order of play was hence changed to play this match on Day 3, leaving Bob to play both Rogers on day 2. Much to the manager's upset Bob promptly won both these games and his last game to take the block with four out of five. Roger Hayes position as runner up was softened by his triumph in his game against Colin Southern when he executed his first Triple Peel and hence qualified for his Gold Award.

The B Block was won by Nelson Morrow with 5/5 who deservedly reached a trigger point and had a drop in handicap to 4. The doubles was taken with 3 straight wins by Bob Smith and Adrian Wadley, the final game being a good game of breaks. Bob Smith has now won the doubles cup four times always with different partners!

A Block: 1. R J Smith (4/5); 2. R Hayes (4/5)
B Block 1. N Morrow (5/5); 2. A Wadley (4/5)
Doubles: 1. R J Smith & A Wadley (3/3)

**Harrow Open Weekend
26/27 June by Richard Hilditch**
Comish carries all before him

Beating sun for this event saw Steve Comish beating everyone the manager put before him, it is very bad form to win a swiss with 100%, no chance for the others. Simon Tuke was among the 8 that Steve dispatched, so Simon's 7 wins were to no avail in perusing the traditional Harrow Fiver. The good weather made for fast lawns and plenty of activity in the park, although there was no cricket game to watch.

1. Steve Comish (8/8)
2. Simon Tuke (7/8)

Southport & Birkdale Restricted Advanced Weekend 2-4 July by Syd Jones

Few drops of moisture below the British Standard to be described as 'rain'

This was my first 'level advanced' tournament which I approached with little confidence and not enough knowledge of the rules, as I soon discovered by giving the Manager contact. At least the courts were level and the weather dry but windy, I was informed that the few drops of moisture were below the British Standard to be defined as 'rain' so my style of bare feet and rolled up trousers for the trip to the seaside were not after all appropriate in the event for Southport.

Difference in playing 'level advanced' seemed to be the extra thinking of 'lifts and levels', low bisque players give less chances and isn't it interesting playing against a player who is rated better than you and isn't it great to win!

Without doubt my biggest triumph was beating Charles who is better than me, but maybe it was not really fair that I accidentally trod on his pipe before the game, a ploy that must be worth a couple of bisques. How about the idea of non-smoking courts anyway!

19 entrants in a 7 round Swiss was won by Dennis Goulding with 7 wins; Jonathon Smith with 6 wins and Ian McDiarmid with 5 wins were runners-up. The main talking point was the behaviour of the Barlow balls in the heat. I thought all the talk of the balls not travelling far and tending to stick in hoops was imagination until my final game on Sunday afternoon in hot, brilliant sunshine. The balls behaved like dollops of blanc-mange needing careful coaxing through hoops and a lot of power to get them across the lawn. Of course it could have had something to do with the lunch time downing of several Pints of King and Barnes Festive ale!, another feature of the Woking Triples Week! All in all it was a good 3 days of croquet in perfect weather, ably managed by Player/Manager Geoff Cuttle.

The only disappointment at the end was the realisation that it will be 12 months before we can do it all again! Thank you Woking for a splendid tournament.

1. D Goulding
2. J Smith

Woking Open Weekend 19/20 June by Dennis Goulding

Croquet player in space, but Derek fails to make contact

The tournament was run in two halves according to handicap. The A group (of 6) as an American Block and the B group as a six round Swiss. Jeff Dawson emerged as the clear winner of the block winning all of his games, the scorelines were +26, +26, +26TP, +23 and +17TP! In one of his games in 'The Cage' (a dead slow tennis court borrowed for the weekend) Jeff tried a sextuple (against the manager, Derek Caporn), failing only after four of the peels were complete. Derek was so amazed by this he completely forgot to take his contact! Roger Hayes considered himself the worthy runner-up having scored 9 hoops against Jeff, three times more than the nearest.

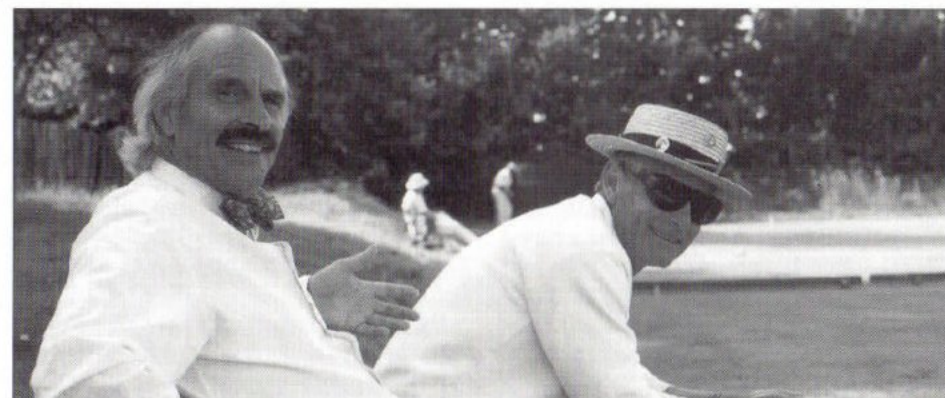
The Swiss had an entry of 10 with a strong contingent from East Anglia. Due to pressures of time all games were played as 22

The "premier" event was as usual, this event; always a fun day with three doubles games for every entrant. The winners were Roger Hayes and Maureen Bell who overcame the challenge of Bob Smith and John Haig in a closely fought final. Although this final was rightly played with due deference to the normal rules of the game, the other finals (Y, Z and ZZ!) were played as fun games with a traffic cone for the peg, interrupt bisques and "snakes and ladders" - peel a partner ball and it moves forward two hoops, peel an opponent and it goes back two hoops. Someone had it in for Lionel Wharrad who had to run hoop 3 four times as his opponents peeled him through hoop 5 on three separate occasions, sending him back to hoop 3. Lionel and his partner, Gina Pelligrini, fought back to get both balls on rover, only for their opponents to peel them both through rover in the one turn sending both of them to four back and defeat. No doubt manager Derek Caporn will be working on other innovations for next year.

1. R Hayes & M Bell
2. R J Smith & J Haigh

points with a 3 hour limit. During Sunday the prospect loomed of five players on 4 wins but Stuart Daddo-Langlois emerged from the throng to take the competition with five out of six having won over Barry Huxley who finished on the same number of wins. Stuart had to finish the last game in 1 hr 45 mins to catch a 'plane to The Hague' and finished with 10 minutes to spare, just enough time for a hurried prize-giving and then the dash to Heathrow. Barry Huxley must take the prize for the most outrageous approach shot of the weekend - he took off from the West boundary hoops 1 & 2 with his ball for rover attempting to get to oppo in corner 4. He clanged into rover spun round and ended up dead in front!

Block: 1. Jeff Dawson (5/5); 2. Roger Hayes (3/5)
Swiss: 1. Stuart Daddo-Langlois (5/6); 2. Barry Huxley (5/6)



Cliff Jones & Bob Fewtrell sitting out at Ryde

Southwick's Autumn Tournament 9-14 August by Bob and Faith Fewtrell

The world & his wife (& their brothers, etc, etc) descend on Brighton

This turned out to be a very international affair Fernando de Ansorena was there from Jerez, Spain to defend his 'B' Class title. The Dourthe brothers, Rodolphe and Boris, came from La Rochelle, France via a tournament in Jersey. Michael and Margaret Hornby who had Perth, Australia connections are now resident in Budleigh Salterton. Bob and Faith Fewtrell, although British have strong New Zealand connections. It was good to see new faces in the British entry. Tony Collyner from Tunbridge Wells took up croquet when he retired after being introduced to the game in South Africa and won his first tournament game. At the other end of the scale Brett Adams, aged 13, with a handicap of 9 showed that youth was a force to be reckoned with by winning the combined 'Y' handicap.

On our arrival Simon Tuke, the manager, assured us that with 11 lawns for 45 entries we would not have to wait for a lawn and there would be virtually be as many games as we wanted, although we occasionally may have

to wait for an opponent. The week began with the Men's and Women's Handicap Knock-outs with the first round losers. Tuesday and Thursday were Class Event days with 40 entries divided into 4 classes. Wednesday was Doubles play with an 'X' and 'Y'. There were many tight finishes with changing fortunes in the closing stages and scores of +1 and +2.

By Friday the strong wind was easing and the games were hotting up. In the 'A' Class Peter Howell and Bob Fewtrell hitherto undefeated, both contrived to lose their last games thereby letting Simon Tuke and Rodolphe Dourthe in as block winners on hoop count. 'B' Class block winners were Bill Arliss with 4 wins, and Arthur Rajotte with 3 wins. The 'C' Class was dominated by the ladies with Beryl Irwin, 3 wins and Pat Wain, 3 wins coming through. The 'D' Class saw Christine Constable meeting David Parkins.

There was a lot to get through on Finals Day as some semi-finals had still to be played. The manager's headaches were relieved as

only Beryl Irwin ended up in two finals. Simon even managed to accept a challenge from Rodolphe in the Egyptian in the morning which Rodolphe managed to win in spite of having one of his balls pegged out. However when the two met again in the afternoon Simon had his revenge and beat Rodolphe to win the 'A' Class final. In fact the silverware was well distributed with only Bill Arliss winning two events, his class and the Egyptian.

'A' Class: 1. Simon Tuke; 2. Rodolphe Dourthe
'B' Class: 1. Bill Arliss; 2. Arthur Rajotte
'C' Class: 1. Pat Wain; 2. Beryl Irwin
'D' Class: 1. David Parkins; 2. Christine Constable
Men's H'cp 'X': 1. David Carpenter; 2. Michael Hornby
Women's H'cp 'X': 1. Catherine Storey; 2. Veronica Tuke
Combined H'cp 'Y': 1. Brett Adams; 2. Ian Storey
Mixed Doubles 'X': 1. Roger & Sue Best;
2. Peter & Audrey Howell
Mixed Doubles 'Y': 1. Boris Dourthe & Gladys Wiggins;
2. Bernard Weitz & Beryl Irwin
Egyptian: Bill Arliss

Jersey Open 31 July - 1 August by Don Gaunt

"You will have to do a jump shot" ... "Ow you do a jump shot" ... "Ah!!"

Faith and I were very kindly invited over to Jersey by Richard and Mireille Sowerby to stay with them and play in the 1993 Jersey Open Tournament. We were delighted to accept, not only to see the Sowerbys and play croquet, but to see Jersey for the first time. We flew from Bristol, it is an hours flight, and were met by Mireille. She took us through pleasant scenery some 4 miles to their house. This is right in the country with views of farmland. At the house were Mireille's nephews, Boris & Rodolphe Dourthe, plus Severin, Rodolph's girlfriend. Boris and Rodolphe are French croquet players. I very soon found out how little French I remembered! Although I did my best it was as well that everyone spoke good English.

We were taken to see the croquet lawns which are set in a sports ground near the airport. We were also introduced to several club members who were there. Mireille and I had a friendly double against the French lads and were soundly beaten!

Next day, Saturday, was doubles day. In the preliminary rounds (2hr games) Mireille and I beat John and Ursula Taylor and lost to Martin Hodge and Phillip Archer. We gained enough points, however, to get to the semi-final where we lost to Tony Le Moignan & Richard. It was in this game that Mireille had her moment of triumph. It was the last turn after time. Mireille had to hit in, make 10 hoops and do a peel. She hit in and set up a break but had a 45 degree hoop to make at three.

"Well Mireille, you have to go for it, you will have to do a jump shot"

"Ow you do a jump shot"

"Ah!!"

"You show me and I will try to do eet!"

"OK, stand like this, hold your mallet like this and hit the ball like this"

The next shot was a text book jump shot. Mireille carried on with the break, but found herself with an almost identical shot at hoop 6.

"Well, just do what you did last time"

So she did.

Sadly the fairy tale ended at 2-back but Mireille had made not one but two shots of the tournament.

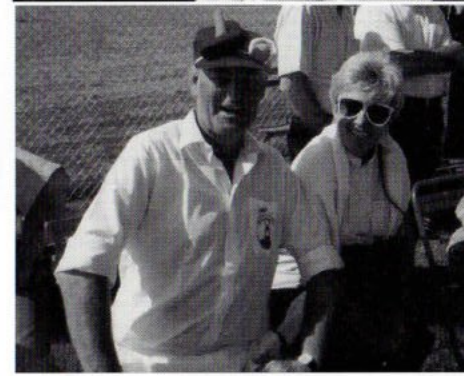
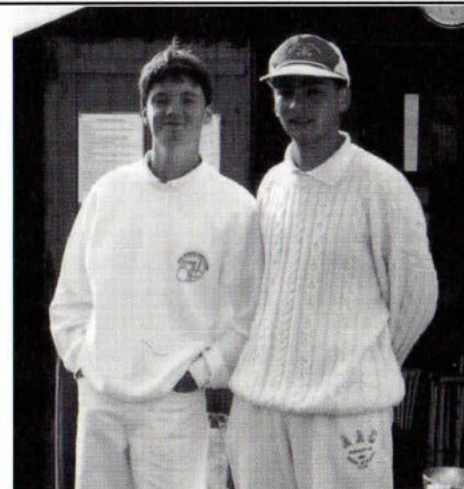
In the evening there was a croquet buffet at the Sowerby's, which was nice for us as we could just crawl upstairs to bed when we had had enough!

The weather next day was fine and bright for the singles. Rodolph should have beaten me in the semis but stuck in penult. I played badly in the final, missing short shots. This gave the game to Tony Le Moignan +15. The plate final was won by Tom Weston, beating Iris Cotillard +8T.

The picnic lunch was superb, lots of goodies, including an enormous crate of strawberries. It was a very enjoyable tournament. Jersey are thinking of advertising their tournament next year in the fixtures book. I would recommend you to go, it is a lovely place to visit. I hope that Jersey CC cut the lawns short though. They were very long and it was not easy to get a ball the length of the court, even when dry. If it had rained it would have been impossible.

Next day, Richard had to go to work, and Mireille took us for a tour of the island. We saw castles and beaches, had a walk in St Helier and had lunch with Richard. All too soon, Le Weekend was over and we took the short flight home, not forgetting the duty-free of course!

Singles 1. Tony Le Moignan; 2. Don Gaunt



Mischievous looking Dourthes, Boris & Rodolphe; Faith & Don Gaunt; Richard & Mireille Sowerby

Southwick Summer Tournament 28 June - 3 July

The Day of the Jackal (or Fox or Badger)

The leisurely nature of the format of the Southwick Summer Tournament, designed by Edgar Jackson many years ago, provides for just one singles in the mornings and one doubles in the afternoons and has always been popular with those beavers no longer eager for 3 or 4 games a day.

This year, with 6 days of brilliant sunshine and intense heat it was particularly welcome; indeed most of the competitors would probably have fainted at the prospect of having to play a third game.

The week was notable for the activities of a fox (or squirrel or, as events unfolded, perhaps a badger) which nightly managed to dig holes on and around the lawns, so much so that lawn one, usually regarded as one of the best could not be used at all.

The singles was played as a 7 round Swiss. Although a generous time limit of 3.5 hours was allowed, the extremely fast lawns, uncertain hoop approaches and tight firmly-set hoops resulted in an unexpectedly high

number of games (40%) going to time (including a dozen by the legendary margin of 1). The entry was low compared with recent years (? something to do with the automatic handicapping system) and a late withdrawal through injury was replaced by a succession of Southwick stand-ins (collectively known as the "Southwick Fox" playing each day to keep the numbers even. The event was won by Stephen Badger (Dulwich) the ever-active Secretary of the South East Federation who won 6 out of his 7 games, losing only to Dorothy Miller of Southwick. No fewer than 5 people finished with 5 wins, a situation incapable of resolution under standing regulations; the manager's tie-breaker involved the use of the Sonnebohn-Berger method (complicated but much preferable to a shoot out at the peg) and under this Dorothy Miller emerged as runner-up, which seemed only right and proper as she was the only person to beat Stephen. The doubles (Swiss) was played without time limits, which was gen-

erally welcomed, but, due to persistent infringement of Law 48 (b), resulted in some matches remaining uncompleted even after 5 hours or more and thus finished with a particularly stigmatic "T". The winners were Audrey and Peter Howell who won all their 5 games, with Stephen Badger and Simon Whiteley second with 4 out of 5, losing only their game against the winners by the slenderest of margins (+1).

The trophies were presented by Elspeth Jackson, a former Chairman of the Southwick Croquet Club and once one of the country's leading lady cricketers.

A friendly sunny tournament enjoyed by all, including doubtless Basil Brush, who probably celebrated his fellow-digger's victory by digging another hole or two!

Handicap Singles: 1. Badger; 2. Mrs Miller

Handicap Doubles: 1. Mr & Mrs Howell;
2. Badger & Whiteley

The Veterans at Compton by Hamish Hall

An Admiral Tournament

No, not a printer's error, the Veterans' Championship was indeed an admiral tournament. Drake, out of form, met his Waterloo on day 1, whilst Nelson triumphed: not a drop of rain all week: bar prices most reasonable: food, as always at Compton, excellent: and yes some hard fought games too.

Three irritants, or possibly four, caused intermittent debate. Firstly, the arrival of the Delors wasp, which the local radio warned as being thoroughly objectionable. Happily the first aid box remained closed. Secondly, the furry grey squirrels which delighted in spiting out husks and kernels from the beech tree by lawn 2, keeping the bissum sweepers busy. Joint third were the Caterham handicapper and Alan Oldham, both of whom allowed the Parsons to remain the undisputed bandits of the week. The final irritant was the automatic handicapping system!

The Championship saw some new faces. The locals, Margaret Ward and Roy Wallis quickly let the regulars know that some fresh competition had arrived. Using her bisques wisely, Margaret remained in contention for the Strickland cup up until the end. Roy lost no time in demonstrating his knowledge of the lawns, making and attempting peels with determination. And our President, John Solomon, and Barbara, added anticipation and excitement for both opponents and spectators alike.

On day 3, after hoop 1 on lawn 1 had been run a score or more times, Alan Oldham stuck, and pronounced the hoop to be illegally set. The ROT (Dennis Shaw) was summoned. Feeler and ball gauges produced. Nothing defective other than Alan's stroke!

Paul Mac Donald was equally aggrieved. He told me that he had missed a two foot and a four foot roquet, both of which caused him to lose games -3 and -2. But the real aggro was a loss of 40 points on the card!

Peter Howel was in form all week, winning the Rothwell cup, but Donald Cornelius had to watch anxiously the tight game between Derek Caporn and myself, as the outcome determined whether he would retain the Felixstowe cup. I pleased him. And the final game of the tournament ensured that the Strickland cup went to a spectator, Doreen Parsons, in play in the time turn, had only to calculate the score, and scattered the balls to boundaries, to be almost certain of cleaning the trophy. As it was, she failed rover, allowing Nelson another victory, and the cup to go to Jean Nash. Doreen had to console herself with taking the doubles with husband Keith, who also walked off with the handicap trophy.

Two more J.B. Gilbert spoons had been found, and had been mounted on a pair of shields generously presented to the Association by Dennis Shaw, as trophies for the "Y" doubles. I am delighted to report that spectacular play by my partner, Dianna Brothers, ensured that we have another tangible memento to trigger joyous memories of a fine week - truly an admirable tournament.

Rothwell Open Challenge Cup - P Howell
Felixstowe Cup (Open 3.5+) - D S Cornelius
Strickland Cup (Handicap 7+) - Mrs L J Nash
Meredith Cup H'cp Singles - X: K Parsons; Y: R E Wallis
Sussex Trays Handicap Doubles - X: Mr & Mrs Parsons; Gilbert Spoons Y - H Hall & Mrs D Brothers

Wrest Park July Weekend by H Bottomley

Celia Steward sees the light

The Friday start found the manager cornered in a meeting, the sparse undergrowth being ruthlessly cleared, mysterious deliveries from Stabrite and no Jeff Dawson.

The site of old formal gardens and mazes may have presented problems before, but the fast lawns and uncompromising hoops, whilst appreciated by many, along with the groundsmen, presented difficulties for Eric (the management) Audsley as games took advantage of the summer sun.

So much so, it was though Eric could sense the number of rounds slipping away from his swiss, as he summoned George (the ROT) Collin to check his blobbed hoop 6, only to blob 1-back and 2-back before changing his green.

for Eric it would only get worse, for the rest of us, it was a challenge, as the first game to finish took 2 3/4 hours and the last 5+ hours.

Honours of note were John (most Lamb points) Wheeler's, whose excellent golf shot over the peg managed to clear both target balls with the first bounce and triples by Jeff (two-day) Dawson and Cliff (Wrest Park promoter) Jones.

Side shows were provided by jugglers, pirates, shaving by David (factor 15) Harrison-Wood, and stories of blue lights from (Cider) Celia Steward.

The 'Senior' Duncan Hector and the 'improved' George Collin took the prizes for their wins, and as another game took over five hours, I can only mis-quote Roosevelt who, had he been a croquet player, could have said - Never have we had so much time in which to do so little.