

## THROUGH THE HOOP

... the trickle becomes a flow ... do you know somebody we don't? ...  
... and thanks for the cards and good wishes!!! ...

I am writing this just before the Christmas break and am happy to report that the trickle of subscription returns has grown into a steady flow of some 30 a day arriving at the CA Office. Thanks are due for your prompt response and for taking the trouble to complete the form in its entirety. I am particularly grateful to those members who, paying as they do by Standing order, nevertheless have returned the form as requested. Thanks to your cooperation and Roger Jackman's tireless efforts

the membership records are improving all the time with spin-offs into other areas of computerisation.

If reading this jolts you into the sudden realisation that you haven't yet sent in YOUR 1994 subscription do it NOW! Remember that the 1st of February is the cut off date for early payment reductions and renewals received after that date are payable at the full rate.

Elsewhere in the magazine is an item advertising for a possible successor to Roger Jackman to help out here at the CA Office. I

mentioned this the last time I wrote but it has since occurred to me that there may be Mr, Mrs or Ms Right just waiting to start who may never see the magazine 'cos he or she ain't a croquet player! Do YOU know someone who might fill the Bill? It may seem an odd starting point but accessibility to Hurlingham is possibly one of the most important points to consider. Public transport using the District line into Putney Bridge Underground station is about the most convenient and effective method of commuting and avoids

the notorious Putney Hill bottle-neck. Think on it folks and if you do know a suitable someone pass the word. A call to me on 071 736 3148 will elicit further information but read the advert first - it sums up the requirement pretty well.

Finally thanks from all of us here, Brian Mac, Roger, Marie and yours truly, for the cards and seasonal inscriptions included in many of the returns received over the Christmas period. We can't reply individually but your kind words are very much appreciated. Thank you.

Tony Antenen

## A BUDLEIGH GOOD TOURNAMENT

By Dorothy Rush

While some mercenary croquet

players will be heading North East next August to help Southport celebrate the three hundredth anniversary of sub-aqua croquet (did you know, by the way that King Knut took his first paddle on Southport's lawns and even he couldn't repel the tides, with or without the dreaded aquashuv), the more discerning, heedless of the filthy lucre being offered by Liverpool's gangland suburb, will be enjoying a cornucopia of croquet at Budleigh Salterton. The management of the 1994 Championship of the South West of England (August 1-6) will be in the hands of that formidable team, Dorke, Dorke and Dog, whose paramount aim will be the provision of vast amounts of croquet. At considerable risk is Budleigh Salterton's reputation for croquet-free tournaments: this time it will be possible (I only said possible) to play 22 games of croquet,

though 16 may be more normal, and if you really don't want to play croquet, 3 gentle games of doubles is the minimum take-up allowed.

There will be a proper one-ball tournament to replace the hack-about formerly "organised" by the infamous partnership of Brand, Brand and Prescott and a massive Egyptian tournament encompassing the whole of the week's singles matches (both class and handicap) with a valuable trophy each for the most improved lady and gent. (These may not be won by the same players.)

To allow for more winners than ever and to give more fun to high bisquers, a fourth class will be introduced this year. It is hoped that every entrant will enter every possible event and no effort will be spared to see that the tournament runs smoothly with all players knowing, from the very first day, exactly where and when they will be required to play during the whole week. Thus spare-time activities (pebblecastle building, shark-fishing, getting

hopelessly drunk, sleeping off last night's binge) can be planned well in advance. Some of the Budleigh lawns are being overhauled this winter, to make even better one of the best croquet clubs in the country. Cunningly placed high on a hill to avoid the problems faced by Southport, the club enjoys the sort of sea view that the northern club would give its drinks license for - oh, sorry, they haven't got one, have they? Oh dear, what a pity, never mind! Budleigh, by contrast, has 2 excellent bars, providing a constant flow of whatever your particular tonic may be, with ample facilities for getting rid of the stuff afterwards.

One of the attractions of the place is the variety of the lawns, each with its peculiar characteris-

tics of position and pace. Another is the excellence and reasonable cost of bed and board, much of it within a few steps of the lawns. Not to mention the company [I thought I told you not to mention the company Ed.], though you can forget all that rubbish about Budleigh handicaps - we're all in Mr Lamb's little system now AND A WONDERFUL SYSTEM IT IS, TOO, even if Lambie's fine tuning can sometimes give you a sharp pain in the astroturf.

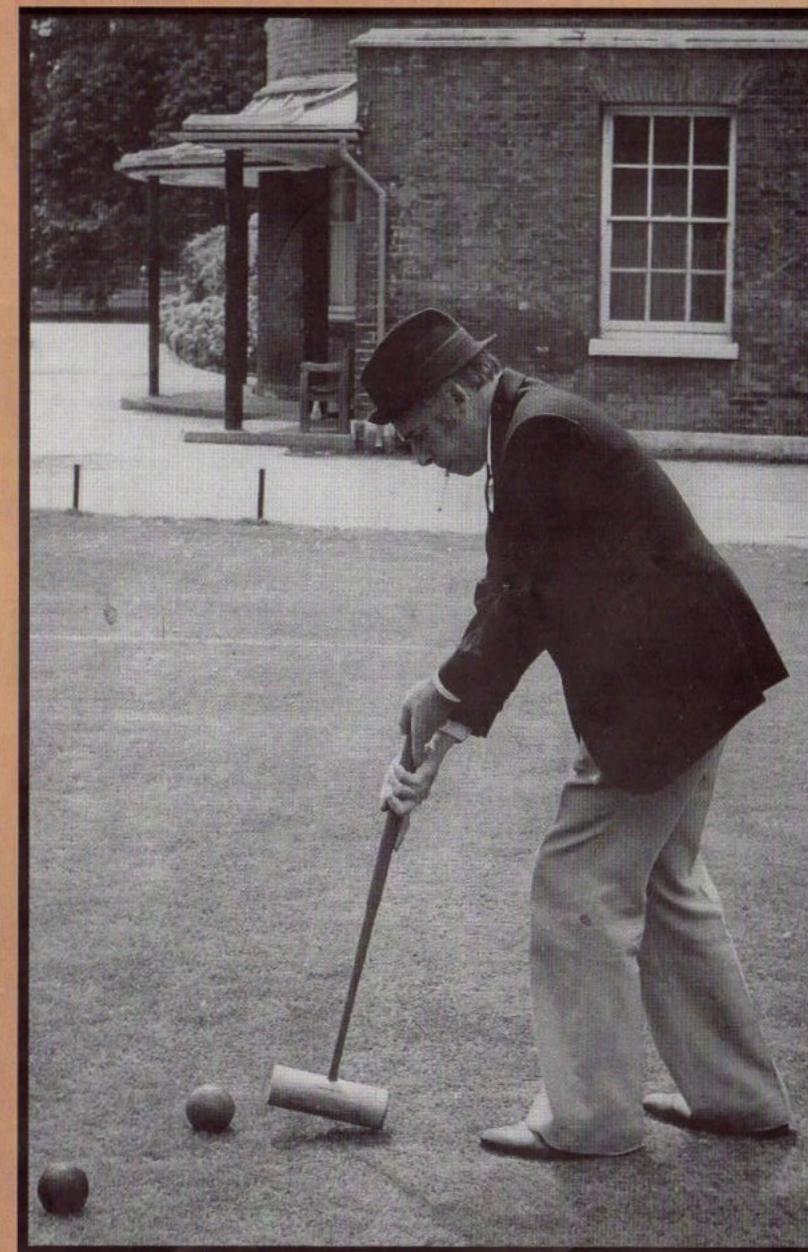
In fact, all that Budleigh lacks is .... you! So, while lesser, greedier men and women seek financial reward at the Southport centenary, join the search for croquet excellence at the Championship of the South West of England, August 1-6. See you there.

### CA OFFICE

A successor to Roger Jackman is required to work with the Secretary in the CA Office. Hours can be flexible but availability should ideally cover 2-3 days a week, an important factor being the ability to reach Hurlingham easily. Simple keyboard skills and a basic knowledge of computing would be an advantage. A sense of humour and the willingness to take on just about any task is also necessary. Remuneration is negotiable but not, unfortunately, generous. If interested, please contact Tony Antenen at the CA Office on 071 736 3148.

# croquet

## MAGAZINE ISSUE 231



Revealed at Last!

NOT the Lord Tollemache ...

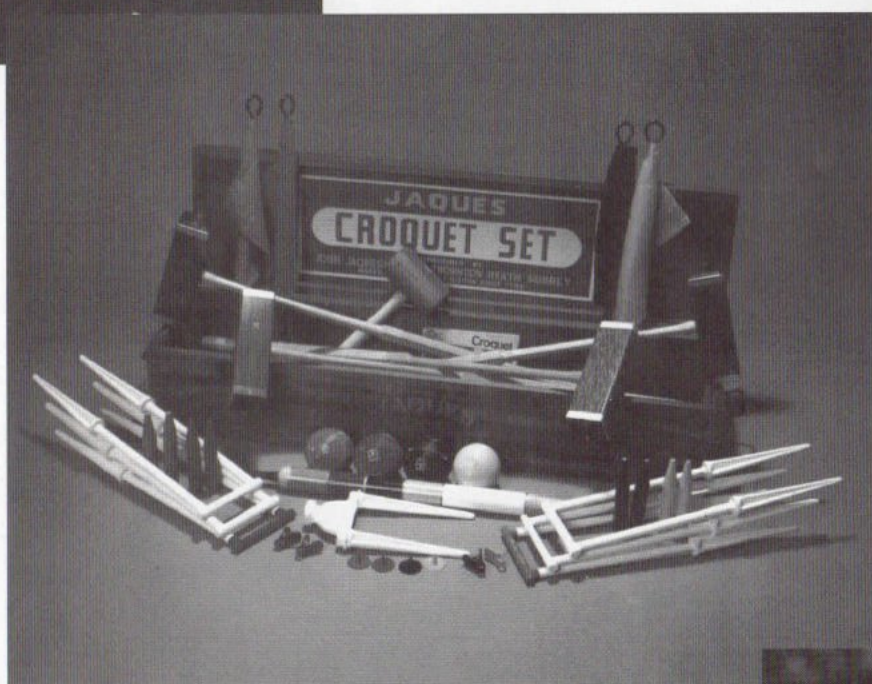
... Eric Solomon's proposals for a new exciting croquet, finally published

FEBRUARY

£2.50



**JAUQUES**  
craftsmanship and  
style has provided  
the finest equipment  
for over 100 years



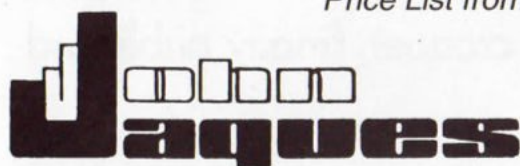
Still  
leading  
the way

**JAUQUES ECLIPSE BALLS**  
Chosen for the 1992  
World Championship in USA



SETS from £75 to £700  
Custom Made MALLETS, HOOPS,  
BALLS etc from £25 to £110

Send for Coloured Brochure and  
Price List from:-



**LEADERS IN SPORT**

361 WHITEHORSE ROAD,  
THORNTON HEATH,  
SURREY, CR4 8XP

PHONE: 081-684 4242



**CROQUET**

'Croquet' No. 230 (February 1994) PRICE £2.50 Cover "Revealed at last"  
Produced by Copy Cat 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 Advertising details (rates etc.)  
are available from Eastern Rose 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, R Q Barrett, J Broad Thomas Design/Typesetting Copy Cat  
Film Imagesetting via Copy Cat Printing & binding The Echo Press  
Copy Cat 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 WD Antenen Chairman CJ Irwin  
An official publication of the Croquet Association. The views expressed are those of the Editor and his contributors.

**Contents**

NEWS .....	3
LETTERS .....	4
TELEVISION CROQUET .....	6
COMMENT: REINVENTING CROQUET .....	8
CREME DE LACREME .....	10
(1993 SELECTION EVENTS)	
JAKE'S THING .....	15
(1993 S. OF ENGLAND CHAMPIONSHIP)	
AROUND & ABOUT .....	16
& FINALLY '93 TOURNAMENT REPORTS .....	18
LAST WORD .....	24

**The Lost Paper  
of Eric Solomon**

As promised in our last edition, this issue sees the publication of extracts from Eric Solomon's paper "Television Croquet" proposing ideas to create an exciting new variation of the game. To whet your appetite, here (bizarrely, admittedly) are Eric's Conclusions to the paper which highlight his feelings on the new game back when he devised it in 1982/83.

"It is submitted that the game proposed in this paper is worth the attentions of the best players, suitable for beginners, and will make an attractive television game. I believe the rich variety of tactics engendered by the peeling benefits law will more than compensate for the removal of lifts and contacts.

There will be some who will argue, with sincerity, that the game

proposed here is 'not Croquet'. They may single out the extension of hoop running benefits to a ball making a peel, and claim that the new tactics have no counterpart in the existing game. I would reply that the two games demand the same skills and strategic sense. I would also submit that the new game is more 'natural' in the way it attempts to rectify the imbalance between players of different ability, and between two players at different stages of progress in any particular game.

Whether Television Croquet is a 'good' game cannot be decided by debate and I hope players will try the game and report their experience. On the basis of 'simulations' I believe that it is a good game with much potential for producing those 'comedies of errors' which give the existing game of Croquet much of its appeal."



"SORRY PARTNER. STUCK IN BMW AGAIN."

**House exchange  
in New Zealand**

I have recently received a letter from some friends in New Zealand. Faith and I stayed with them when we visited there earlier in 1993. Their names are Lew and Connie Nunnerly and they live in a delightful bungalow in N. Auckland, in Takapuna District. They are visiting England from Mid July to Mid August 1994 and would like to do a house swap for that time. If there is anyone who would like to take up this offer, give

me a ring on 0453 822507 and I can give more details.

Don Gaunt

**NEW - Zealand  
Champion**

This time last year the Antipodean croquet titles were at the mercy of the Brits abroad. The first of these has just been contested and the New Zealand title has passed from our Robert Fulford to Aaron Westerby - back home only a few weeks after several successful months in the UK.

**OBITUARY**

Many Croquet players will be saddened to hear of the death on the 20th December, 1993 at a Nursing Home in Birmingham of Mrs Joyce Brash-Smith. Joyce was a founder Member of the re-formed Bath Croquet Club in 1976 and served as Chairman for the first full year of the Club's existence, putting in an enormous amount of time and effort to set the Club on the right road. Joyce was voted an Honorary Life Member and only ceased regular attendance at our Annual General Meetings in 1989. She will be greatly missed."

MEWC

**TROQUET™ CARPET CROQUET**  
FIELD COURT GAMES © 1990 PAT PEND

A new concept in carpet croquet  
judged by many top players to play like  
the real game.

**Excellent value at £69**  
(inclusive of postage)

For further information:  
Fieldcourt Games  
PO Box 1228  
Colchester CO1 1WT  
Tel: 0206 42629 or 0722 338981



**NEWS**



**Councillors  
dragging heels  
communicating  
with members;  
Full Bisque  
recreating 'A'  
class problems  
in handicap  
croquet**

## Big Head

Dear John,  
With the arrival of the 12 inch headed mallet, I am forced to question whether law 2(e) MALLETS needs revising.

I play with one of these monsters, and having made a hash of hoop 2, found myself with a hampered shot after my opponent failed to hit in. However, playing with a club mallet with a nine inch head, I had no difficulty in making the short roquet and building a useful break, which enabled me to go on and win.

At the time, I had not considered changing the mallet as unethical, but upon reflection, and after debate, I am prepared to accept the validity of the argument. Had my opponent put me in that position there is something to be said for being allowed to use an alternative mallet when starting one's next turn. But if the difficulty has been due to one's own error, should one not be required to continue with the existing mallet?

Yours sincerely,  
Hamish Hall, Bristol.

## Full Bisque

Dear Editor,  
It has been with some considerable interest that I have followed the discussions for and against the full bisque game in the pages of "Croquet". Indeed, it is as a result of Mr Riggall's letter on the subject, which appeared in issue 230, that I feel compelled to make my own comment on this variation of the game.

Firstly, may I say that my own experience of the full bisque variation is confined to a handful of games, played during the 1992 season. The majority of these games were played during a C.A. tournament, using base zero, at the Chelten-



ham club.

Mr Riggall states in his letter that the full bisque variation reduces the time taken to complete a game by a considerable amount. From my recollection of statistics on this subject contributed by Edgar Jackson, the length of an average game played under these rules is reduced to about half that of one played under normal handicap rules. In my own experience this is quite correct. Games typically only taking one and a half to two hours rather than over three.

I find myself broadly in agreement with what Mr Riggall says. However, where I do not agree with Mr Riggall is in his statement regarding the oneness of the game. It is true that the traditional game can sometimes favour the higher handicap player in conventionally timed games. However, my experience leads me to believe that the full bisque game can be equally one sided. To illustrate let me recount the course of a number of games I played in the aforementioned tournament:

In one game, playing an opponent of equal handicap to myself - at that time I was playing off a handicap of 6 - I took my first ball to Penult in turn 4, my opponent took her first ball to Rover in turn 5 and I finished the game in turn 6 with a double peel (completed using bisques).

In another game, my opponent, handicap 16, took a ball to Rover in turn 4. I took a ball to

peg peeling and pegging out my opponent in turn 5. My opponent, with 13 bisques remaining, finished the game in turn 6 with an all round 3 ball break.

The last game I wish to mention, my opponent - again handicap 6 - had some bad luck after setting up a break and gave up the innings in turn 4. In turn 5 I took a ball to Rover, my opponent missed and elected not to take a bisque and I finished the game +25 in the 7th turn.

In each of the above cases, the losing player still had one or more bisques left after the game finished and on two occasions simply was given no opportunity to use them.

In my view, the problem is similar to that which is referred to in the editorial column of issue 230. There Mr Walters states that the game at the top level is one sided because the top players do not make mistakes (OK I have over simplified it!). The full bisque variation provides a mechanism to players to negate the effect of any error they make and thus the game becomes equally one sided. The irony is that the very mechanism being promoted to speed up the game, leads to the very same outcome that is troubling the highest echelons of the croquet world.

Let me make it quite clear here, I am fully in agreement with Mr Riggall's call for shorter games and I broadly believe that the full bisque variation is a good thing. It most certainly leads to very attacking croquet but unless players waste their bisques by poor play or show no degree of intelligence, the game becomes a one sided rout, the outcome of which is decided by the winning of the toss!

Unfortunately, it is not obvious what can be done to counter this

effect. The suggestion of using the full bisque variation with a base other than zero has been tried. Whilst this does lead to an increase in opportunities for both players, it also increases the length of time a game takes to complete! Other schemes have been, and will probably continue to be proposed but most seem to advocate some sort of law changes to increase the complexity of the game. I believe this should be strongly discouraged. The game is already hard enough for most beginners to master. More complexity will surely only discourage still more people from taking up the game at the very time we need to increase membership.

Let me reiterate that this is just my personal view. No doubt others will present evidence which they claim refutes my opinion. I look forward with interest to future developments.

Stuart Daddo-Langlois  
Cheltenham C.C.

## Come on Council

Dear John,

It is with some reluctance that I take up my pen to give vent to some mild criticism of "Croquet" magazine. Your editorial in issue 223 contained a gentle reprimand to readers for not making the effort to spectate at events such as the British Croquet Masters. This was valuable comment.

However, may I suggest that "Croquet" could be used to better promote such events than at present? I noted that a preview of the 1993 British Open - scheduled for late July 1993 - appeared in issue 228. Apparently a laudable attempt to encourage readers to attend the event. The only problem was that issue 228 wasn't published until August!

May I suggest that

such attempts at promotion be better time in future? Perhaps a short calendar of forthcoming tournaments including The Open and The Masters could be published in "Croquet", possibly in place of the rather feeble "Agony" column. Such a calendar would surely act as a reminder to readers, who may wish to watch some top class croquet, that these events are approaching. I realise that this problem can be obviated by reference to the fixture list but be honest, who regularly consults the fixture list after March?

One other mild criticism, this time directed not just at the Editor but also the Secretary. Issue 224, December 1992's "Through the Hoop" contained a paragraph about a series of short personal profiles of CA Council Members. To date, only Colin Irwin's profile has been published. The same article contained the "demand" that the CA Council membership list and dates of meetings be published so that:-

"... at a stroke, we close the gap 'twixt Council and membership."

Unless I am very much mistaken, more than a year on, the membership are still waiting. Is it any wonder that the more cynical members amongst us believe the Council doesn't listen to the membership? Apparently nobody listens to the Secretary either!

Stuart Daddo-Langlois  
Cheltenham C.C.

## No Score Draws

Dear Sir,

I have read with interest the various measures which are being considered to achieve a general reduction in playing time; with a view towards discouraging those

players who are quite happy to record a victory, although it may have taken three plus hours with a nominal score of plus one on time.

It has occurred to me that instead of trying to adjust playing time, should we not be looking at the method of scoring a game; with a view to abandoning the present system and replacing it with results which are calculated on the number of points scored by each player.

I feel this would encourage all players to generally speed up their game, so that they have an opportunity to score the maximum number of points in a specified time. It would also be possible to award bonus points to any player who completes the game by pegging out both balls.

Whatever system is adopted, I am of the opinion it must have the object of impressing on all players that if a time limit is specified the game does not have to last for that period. Therefore, there must be some incentive to speed up play, so that both players have a more or less equal opportunity to score the maximum number of points their playing skill will permit. It is also my opinion, that scoring by points would give a more realistic reflection of a player's capabilities in relation to the current handicapping system.

P A Dwerryhouse  
Sidmouth

## Hello Haiku

Dear Sir

My letter isn't a complaint or a grumble it is merely a poem which I hope will take those end of season croquet blues away.

The poem is a Haiku, which is a poem of many verses but the verse must have three lines, the first line must have five syllables, the second



line must have seven syllables and the third line must have five syllables. Without any further ado, I present my hard worked upon Haiku.

*Why Does The Season End?  
croquet, roquet, rush  
Can all be used in croquet.  
Its time to peg out.*

*Whack it at the peg,  
It's going, its going, gone.  
Oh yippee! I've won!*

*Apple pie and cream,  
After croquet that's my dream  
They make a great team.*

*Going home I cry,  
In the car I wonder why,  
The season must end.*

I hope that this poem will help you through the close season and will remind you of the happy days of the past and the happy days that are still to come.

Yours faithfully  
Robert Davies, Walsall

## Buck's Players?

Dear John,

Are there any Croquet players out there who would like to play in the 'Counties' and are eligible for Buckinghamshire?

If you were born in the county, have lived in the county for at least a year or previously lived in the county for a period of 5 years you are eligible. You may also be eligible if you belong to a club in Buckinghamshire.

The 1994 competition will be played at Southwick from the 28th to the 31st. May. If you can spare the time and

are interested please contact the undersigned on 0753-642379.

Roger Jackman,  
Farnham Common

## Size does matter

Dear Sir

Having played on under-size lawns for some years, I have begun to form the view that, in a handicap game, the higher handicap player derives a slight advantage on such lawns if he receives the full complement of bisques to which he is entitled.

If a game of standard handicap croquet were to be played on a lawn measuring (say) 15 yds by 12 yds, I would expect the game to be easier for both players and for the skill difference between players of different ability to be less apparent than in a game on a full-size lawn. For example, shooting for a ball half a court's width away, a shot which a 14-handicap player would approach with no great expectation of success, becomes a much more attractive proposition on a lawn whose width is 3/7ths the width of a full-size lawn.

For a fair game on such a lawn, I suspect that the higher-handicap player should receive materially fewer bisques than normal. Intuitively, I feel that he should receive a reduction in proportion to the reduction in the linear measurements of the lawn. Thus, on a lawn measuring 30 yds by 24 yds (both measurements being 6/7ths of those of a full-size lawn) a 14 handicap player would, when playing a 7 handicap player, receive not seven but six bisques.

If the game were a full-bisque game with base n, the 7-handicap player would receive (7-n) bisques, while the 14-handicap player would receive (13-n).

A general formula applicable to all lawns

(whether or not they conform to the standard croquet lawn shape, in which the width is four-fifths of the length) is as follows: in a full 26-point handicap game on an under-size lawn, the higher-handicap player should receive bisques in number equal to the product of (a) the square root of the ratio of the area of the lawn to the area of a full-size croquet lawn and (b) the difference in handicap between the two players.

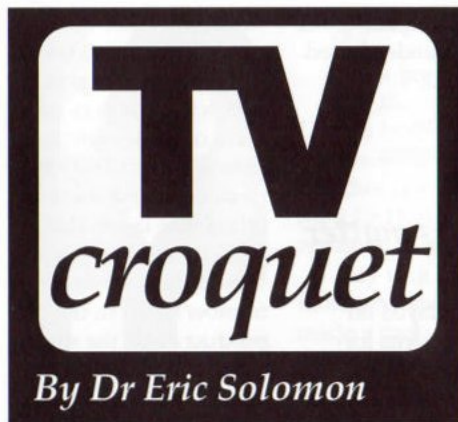
This sounds a bit of a mouthful but two examples may help. The area of a lawn measuring 30 yds by 24 yds is 720 sq yds; the area of a full-size lawn is 980 sq yds. The ratio between the two is 36/49, the square root of which is (not surprisingly) 6/7. Hence the number of bisques received by the weaker player is 6/7ths of the difference in handicaps. Similarly, a lawn of length 35 yds (standard) and width 21 yds (3/4ths size) has an area of 735 sq yds, again yielding a 1/7th (more or less) reduction in bisques for the weaker player.

The matter is of more than academic interest to our Club: we have access to two lawns, both under-size, whose measurements are those of my two examples. We want to establish whether handicaps decided primarily by playing on our lawns are fair or not.

Has anyone else encountered this problem, or come up with a better solution, or even experimented with compensating handicap adjustments for standard croquet on under-size lawns?

(To ardent feminists who object to my use of the masculine personal pronoun throughout this letter, I should explain that I was brought up to believe that the masculine line embraces the feminine.)

Ken Hope-Jones,  
Reigate Priory Club



## INTRODUCTION

During the Winter of 82-83 I have looked at small lawn Croquet from the point of view of a games designer aiming to produce a 'televisable' game retaining all the skills, all the indefinable 'spirit', and most of the features of the existing full-sized game. Those features which could lead to confusion or dissatisfaction on the part of the uninformed spectator or viewer have been ruthlessly purged.

The most fundamental proposal relates to the laws which deal with the hoop continuation stroke and the eligibility to make roquets. This proposal introduces to the game a radically new manoeuvre - the *PEELING BREAK* - which greatly increases the 'peeling-rate' of the game, and which is visually attractive. A short game under the current laws has the disadvantage that hooping breaks are too easy and peeling breaks are too difficult. I am convinced that the answer is not to make hooping more difficult, but to make peeling easier though not as easy as hooping. I think the present proposals would achieve this.

## OBJECTIVES

Television Croquet should satisfy the following criteria:

(a) **Duration** There should be a reasonable expectation that a game between top class (*Grade 1*) players will last between 30 minutes and one hour.

(b) **Appeal** The game should be intellectually and visually attractive. Despite the necessarily small number of points to be scored there must be opportunity for sophisticated tactics within any turn. The innings should be expected to change more than once.

(c) **Comprehensibility** The game should start at a hoop known as *HOOP 1* and should proceed in natural sequence to the Rover Hoop and the Peg.

An uninformed spectator (viewer) should witness no 'apparently' unfair nor 'arbitrary' events such as:-

\*\* a player lifting his ball to play a single ball shot from some part of the lawn remote from the point where it lies, or

\*\* a player who 'apparently' executes a good hoop approach being 'artificially' constrained from taking full advantage of his position.

The state of the game should be evident to spectators (viewers) who arrive after a game

*One of the top players in the '70s & '80s and a professional game designer, these are extracts from Dr Solomon's original paper - buried for over 10 years*

has started.

The full game is replete with ambiguous terms. Names for the various elements of Television Croquet must be chosen with care.

(d) **Visibility** Television viewers must be able to see all details of ball arrangement near hoops, particularly in relation to peeling.

## 3.SUMMARYOFPROPOSALS

This section summarizes in a very abbreviated form the main proposals for producing a game to meet the stated objectives. The proposals are repeated in more detail in the following section, together with discussion. The asterisks denote relative importance.

\*\*\*\* Game consists of 14 points with no 'N-back' hoops.

\*\* Court dimensions and hoop setting as 'in Short Croquet' but with new hoop sequence to produce more interesting 'course', and to aid television.

\*\*\*\* Players graded 1 to 7. Mandatory peeling for one (fixed) ball from hoop-number greater than or equal to striker's grade. In advanced play both balls liable to be peeled. Mandatory peeling requirements rescinded when opponent pegs out any ball.

\*\*\*\* Rewards for hoop running (continuation stroke and ability to make roquets) extended to peels. This introduces fascinating 'peeling breaks'.

\*\*\* No lifts and contacts whatsoever.

\*\* Wiring from any ball (opponent responsible) penalised by 'free stroke'.

\* Game starts from corner spots. There are no baulks.

\* 'Natural' specification of ordinary, advanced, level, handicap, and doubles play.

\* Any ball scoring a point may be sent off court in same stroke without penalty. Encourages long peeling attempts and allows for close boundaries of the small court.

## 4.DISCUSSIONOFPROPOSALS

This section informally details the changes which are proposed to meet the stated objectives. Because some proposals affect the attainment of several objectives, they have been grouped according to their relationship to elements of the game.

### 4.1 Hoop setting and sequence

A game will consist of 14 points comprising 6 hoops for each ball and 2 peg points. The court has 6 hoops in the setting already proposed for small lawn croquet. However, the hoop sequence is altered: hoops 3 and 4 are 'swapped over' and run in a South - North direction, in common with the other 4 hoops.

There may be very strong arguments for retaining the old hoop sequence. The new sequence has more the nature of a suggestion than a proposal.

The 'course' has both left-hand and right-hand 'curvature' which is of relevance to

strokes dispatching pioneers. The possibility of interference by the peg is greater than with the conventional sequence. Every hoop is scored in the Northwards direction which will aid spectators in orienting themselves, and will assist television directors greatly. Note that the uninformed spectator (viewer) will not have to wrestle with 'n'-BACK hoops!

### 4.2 Hoop running

The best solution to the problem of handicapping the stronger player would seem to be to reduce the number of hoops which may be scored in the rather mundane conventional manner. A well known television commentator is said to have remarked that the hoop-running stroke, which scores a point, should be a peak of interest in the play, but is not. Running a hoop appears to the spectator as a perfectly straightforward shot in general. Peeling has been accentuated in the present proposals because it 'appears', and indeed is, more difficult, and because it is visually much more interesting.

### 4.3 Mandatory peeling

Players are graded 1 to 7 inclusive. In 'ordinary' play (level or handicap) a grade 'N' player must peel one of his balls through hoop 'N' and all hoops thereafter. He is NOT required to peel onto the peg. In 'advanced' play (level or handicap) this requirement extends to both of a player's balls.

Clearly a grade 7 player has no mandatory peels.

When a player scores a peg point his adversary is relieved of all mandatory peeling requirements.

The worst catastrophe which can befall the careless player is to peg out one of his balls whilst his mandatory peeler still has hoops to score. This loses the game!

Note that the foregoing proposals do not preclude the mandatory peeler from being played as the striker's ball and scoring points for some other ball by peeling. In advanced play between grade 1 players **no hoops may be run** until someone pegs out a ball!

We discuss the various types of play 'singles', 'doubles', 'handicap', 'level', 'advanced' in more detail in section 4.10.

### 4.4 Improving the peeling-rate

One objective of Television Croquet is to produce changes of innings with reasonable regularity. However, the mandatory peeling requirement stated above could, if introduced as it stands, lead to a game comprising a very large number of non-progressive turns.

In the full game, players who complete a standard triple peel achieve a peeling-rate of about 4 hoop-runs per peel. In the rare sextuple peel the rate is about 2. Furthermore, it is usually necessary for the striker to run several hoops before he is able to execute the first peel. Obviously, in a 14-point game with perhaps 6 peels to be done (12 for top class players in advanced games) there would be little scope for organizing a turn containing more than one or two peels.

The following proposal revolutionizes the situation with regard to the peeling-rate and, incidentally, introduces a wealth of new tactics to the game. It relates to law 4(c) which deals with eligibility to make roquets, and law 14(c) which defines the hoop continuation stroke.

If the striker's ball causes a hoop-point to be scored, directly or indirectly, for itself or for any other ball, then a continuation stroke may be played, and the striker's ball may roquet any or all of the other balls before the turn ends or another point is scored.

As regards the laws, this change involves substituting 'causes a hoop-point to be scored' for 'scores a hoop-point' in several places.

The effect of this proposal is to enable breaks to be made in which all, or many, of the points scored are peels. Such a break is, of course, more difficult than the hoop-running break. In particular, it enables a ball being peeled 'behind' a hoop-running ball to catch up with and perhaps overtake the latter. It will encourage the peeling of opponent's balls in order to 'save' a break which might otherwise be in trouble, and possibly in order to make the opponent's peeling breaks more difficult.

Any sporting contest should include the possibility of a manoeuvre which is easily specified, highly beneficial to the executor, but which can be completed only by the most highly skilled players, perhaps with some luck on their side. This manoeuvre, in the context of Television Croquet, is of course, the sextuple peel. In the proposed ordinary (not advanced) game a grade 1 player would find this somewhat easier than a sextuple peel in the existing game. In the advanced game where both balls are mandatory peelers, the sextuple peel would be more difficult as it would be a 'pure' peeling break. In the latter case very accurate rushing would be needed, albeit over shorter distances than in the existing game.

### 4.5 Removal of lifts and contacts

All laws relating to lifts and contacts are abandoned.

Lifts and contacts were introduced to make the full game a more evenly matched contest. Such has been the interest in 'leaves' and 'lift shots' that some players seem to have overlooked that they merely rectified an inherent weakness of the original game associated, in the main, with the size of the court. It is submitted that the inclusion of lifts (let alone contacts) in the television game would destroy the viewer's interest and the game's credibility. It would be compared to a tennis player catching the ball during a rally, carrying it to the net, and executing an 'ace' serve.

As regards lifts awarded (in the existing game) as a result of wiring, the following important change is proposed:

At his discretion, a player may *nominate* an 'object ball' which he desires to roquet. If the opponent is responsible for the position of the striker's ball, and if the object ball is wired from it in the usual sense, the player is entitled to a 'Free Stroke'. This is an addi-

tional shot taken prior to the turn proper. On the next stroke he may make no roquet other than that nominated, nor may he score a point for any ball other than the nominated ball in that stroke.

It is submitted that the concept of the free stroke will be much more easily understood, by the uninformed spectator, than would the more indirect lift shot.

### 4.6 Starting the game

The game starts from the corner spots, there are no baulk-lines. Players have a free choice of which corner spot to use for any ball. All other laws relating to the start of the game remain unchanged.

This is not a crucial proposal, but it is argued that play will be more easily understood if discrete points are used. Neither does there seem to be any advantage in arbitrarily limiting the start to, say, corners 1 and 3. Obviously, the probability of an early roquet is increased if all four corners are allowed as starting points.

### 4.9 Peelee clips

If material clips are used, mandatory peelers will use clips positioned on the sides of hoops as this location is now available owing to the disappearance of N-back hoops.

### 4.10 Categories of play

The grading system and the mandatory peeling requirements lead naturally to the following specifications of the different categories of play:

#### SINGLES

**ORDINARY HANDICAP PLAY** Players play to their own grades.

**ORDINARY LEVEL PLAY** Stronger player assumes grade of the weaker player.

**ADVANCED HANDICAP PLAY** As ordinary handicap play but both balls liable to be mandatory peelers.

**ADVANCED LEVEL PLAY** As ordinary level play but both balls liable to be mandatory peelers.

#### DOUBLES

All categories as for singles. A grade for each side is obtained by averaging the grades of the two players and ignoring any fractions of a half. In addition a law specifying the alternate execution of strokes by the two players of a side has been proposed. Alternate play in doubles events has been found to be very successful in practice and it would undoubtedly make for an attractive television game.

### 4.11 Peeling off the court

Players will sometimes wish to attempt long peels (possibly as a desperate measure to save a turn), but might be dissuaded by the proximity of the boundary on the small court. To encourage such attempts it is proposed to relax the law relating to croquetting off the lawn. (Indeed, this matter has often been discussed in the context of the full game.)

Laws 4(c) and 19(c) are amended to permit the turn to continue when a ball croqueted off the court has, in that stroke, scored a hoop point.

In simpler terms, any ball may be sent off the court without penalty provided it has scored a hoop point on its way.

## 6.THEPEELINGBREAK

Just as there are many types of 3-ball break, and many types of 4-ball break, in the existing game of Croquet, so there are many types of peeling break in the proposed small lawn game. We describe two which might be regarded as the extreme 'cases'. Matters are simplified by assuming an ideal starting position.

### The 'simple' peeling break

A grade 1 player is about to take his turn in an ORDINARY game (level or handicap). He is playing red and yellow with both for hoop 1 and situated close to the hoop. White is also situated near hoop 1, and blue near hoop 2. Obviously he chooses red as his striker's ball (yellow is the mandatory peeler).

He starts by roqueting yellow, approaches hoop 1 putting yellow near the side of the hoop, and runs hoop 1 with red. He now roquets white and takes croquet to a position from which he can rush yellow into a peeling position - which he does and peels yellow through hoop 1 with a moderately firm stop shot. There is no need to peel it right up to hoop 2. Next, he roquets white (remember, the peel bestows all the benefits of a hoop running stroke). On his croquet stroke with white he sends it as the pioneer to hoop 3 and finishes with red near the yellow ball. He now roquets and croquets yellow up to hoop 2, his own ball also ending up near hoop 2, or rather near the pioneer, blue, at hoop 2. He roquets blue, approaches the hoop, runs it, and again roquets blue. On the croquet stroke he obtains a position from which he can rush yellow to the peeling position - and so on.

The important point to note is that the peeler can be croqueted to its next hoop, it does not have to be rushed with great accuracy.

Now - there is one simple way in which the above type of break can be made slightly more reliable. As an elementary exercise find the improvement. (The answer is given at the end of this section.)

The 'pure' peeling break does require more accurate rushing since both balls are mandatory peelers, but the ADVANCED game will only normally played by those capable of more accurate rushing. This kind of break also utilises 'firm' peeling and PSEUDOPIONEERS - which are chiefly used for cannoning balls, an important tactic in this game. The important point to note is that this kind of break is not as difficult as a straight peeling sequence in existing croquet. The latter requires greater accuracy in the peeling stroke which often has to serve as the hoop approach for the striker's ball.

### Answer to problem

The simple peeling break is easier if the peeler is the first ball to be roqueted after the peel has been executed. The player can then concentrate on accurately croquetting it close to its next hoop. The sequence described in the example will often require a roll stroke to the next hoop if he fails to get a good rush on the peeler.

# comment!

## CROWN CROQUET AND OTHER REFORMS

Keith Wylie proposes some changes to the existing Association game that could ease some burgeoning problems

Major abridgments to the original of this article are marked (\*). Notes will be made available at the CA office.

### There is nothing wrong with croquet ...

No one complained that croquet was too easy at Cheltenham during the 1983 Open Championships (one triple achieved), nor at Colchester during the 1991 President's Cup (again, one triple). The best players rather like to parade their ability to master difficult lawns, which are there to be mastered, not complained about.

It is by deliberate choice, not by accident, that croquet has been made too easy for our best players. People have devoted much time and money to making their lawns as flat and lush as possible, for such lawns are agreeable ("as good as Hurlingham's"). We have become neurotic. I am ashamed to recall some of the moans I have made. Visitors complain about "hills" and blushing hosts rush for their spades (or wallets) to flatten them.

We must take ourselves in hand. This obsession with perfect lawns is quite unnecessary, and if it is making matches between the best players boring then it is doing the game harm. The Croquet Association must make what it can of the lawns kindly made available by clubs, but it does have some choice. The simple remedy for the present malaise is to hold our premier events on indifferent courts. There were complaints after the 1974 Southwick test match about the state of the lawns. There is nothing wrong with the lawns, only with us. It costs so little to change our attitude. Indeed it would save money. Let us leave our lawns as they are and adopt the sportsmanlike tolerance of "the rub of the green" expected of golfers. Love those hills. Cope graciously with those bare patches.

### ... but if there is:-

If we are to consider a "new game", what should be our aim? Surely not just a game to test the best players. The trauma of evolving a new version of croquet (not to mention obtaining international agreement) cannot be underestimated. The effort could only be justified if the achievable goal were a game (a) recognizably like the present croquet (else why call it "croquet"?), (b) making a reasonable spectator sport when played by the best players (c) making a good game for all standards of

serious play, which for most people would imply that longish breaks would be attainable (d) making a recognizable and good game when played in private gardens and (e) more easily understood by the public. We should aim for no less.

Changing A class laws (eg lifts at 6 and 3-back, or limiting to two the permitted number of roquets between hoops (\*)) is messy and serves only to widen the gulf between the A class and the rest. It would only make croquet less popular.

Leaving all that aside I have some fairly radical proposals, which is what the Editor has invited. It is not necessary to depart from the basic laws of roquet and croquet. (1) Use uneven lawns, drawing inspiration from a game that has had a fair amount of television success, namely crown bowls. (2) Use a 5-hoop setting. (3) As a fall-back, adjust hoops 5 and 6 to curb peeling.

### The shape of the court

Irrespective of what changes we make to the laws, we could with advantage abandon the rectangular court and have a curvilinear one. This does away with the corner area laws and defensive yard-line shots, at one stroke simplifying the game and speeding it up (\*). An ellipse is much easier to trace on a lawn than many might suppose (\*).

Where the corners of rectangular courts meet there is often nowhere convenient to walk or sit. Corners usually get most use and have the worst turf. A rounded court, like a golf green, can look really attractive. Odd areas between courts may be planted with shrubs. By abandoning the present shape we may also become more approachable. Rounded courts will look more like gardens to the general public.

### Proposal 1: Crown croquet (\*)

Our courts are too flat. A crown croquet court will have a distinct slope near each hoop. It is sometimes impossible to make a croquet ball stop when you play it down or across a modest slope, and in this way we curb all-round breaks. No one should underestimate the difficulty of approaching and running a hoop set on the side of a slope. There will be shorter breaks, no lifts and more spectators.

General slopes never stopped a triple peel and would upset beginners. The slopes should be principally at the hoops, which

you set in the manner of a green-keeper placing the pins for a golf tournament. You choose level areas for beginners and nasty slopes for the experts. The improving player will need to learn no new rules, only to run more difficult hoops. No one complains that a golf course is not flat - indeed the very opposite. I have already mentioned the need to learn to love hills. When they are attractive and obvious, we shall take them in our stride.

Hoop positions will be more flexible. No longer will experts be able to rely on such well-rehearsed strokes as the approach to the first hoop from the first corner. On a crown croquet court there will be no stock shots, any more than there are stock shots in golf.

At the risk of detracting from the generality of my proposals, one simple modification of the present game may be enough. You build a modest mound (perhaps three yards wide, five yards long and two inches high, with a small, nearly level plateau) between the normal hoop 3 and the East boundary. For beginners and intermediate players you set the hoop as now. For A class play, the hoop sits at the top of the mound so that most approach shots veer away from the hoop. For the really expert, you set the hoop on the side slope, in a position chosen according to the speed of the lawn, so that he can hardly ever get a good position for a hoop stroke or peel. It would not be too difficult or expensive to experiment with this idea using an existing lawn. Such a court will enjoy the public relations advantage of being visibly difficult to play on.

Looking to the future, a full-blown crown croquet court will be smaller, probably oval, as pretty as a flower and attractive to non-players who want to "have a go". Our existing lawns are too big and daunting. New-comers seeing a crown croquet court will be more encouraged to feel that they might make room for one in their gardens. People (especially visiting dignitaries) can find it humiliating not being able to run a hoop from straight in front. It should be made more difficult to get in position for hoops (a difficulty readily understood by the outsider) and easier to run them.

### Proposal 2: a 5-hoop setting

A new setting will call for substantial (and unpopular) reorientation by existing players, but let us bite that bullet. We have the

wrong number of hoops (\*). The hoop order confuses some newcomers. On an oval court the corner hoops will be too near the boundary. The setting which I propose (diagram A) has 5 hoops pointing roughly parallel to the boundary, giving them "clockwise" and "anticlockwise" directions. The first course is taken clockwise, each successive hoop being two on from the previous one. The second course is the mirror image of the first.

The boundary of a formal court might be an ellipse or a rectangle and there are other possible shapes. Hoops 3 and 5 are deliberately set too close for comfort in diagram B (a formal small court). Experienced players will make something of it. Intermediate players will make interesting mistakes. Beginners will learn more quickly to use the opponent's balls. If a rectangular boundary were laid 4 yards from the hoops in diagram B it would measure 16 yards by 24 yards, the same as the present Short Croquet court. Diagram C shows a formal setting for a present full-size court.

This setting can be used informally (\*). Great latitude should be allowable in the placing of the hoops, peg (which may even be a tree) and boundary (which may be irregular).

Needless to say, the setting is appropriate for crown croquet and Short Croquet. There

is a plausible triple peel (peel 3-back before 3 etc) and a difficult quadruple; but peeling breaks are not trivial and any hiccup causes you to lose the chance to complete the peels with any comfort. Decisions about lift hoops and baulk lines can come later.

I consider this proposal capable of inexpensively fulfilling all the aims set out above. Experiments could start immediately. "Logo" designers, apparently abundant in the Association, may like to note the resemblance of diagram C to the human form (compare Leonardo da Vinci's celebrated drawing of the human proportions).

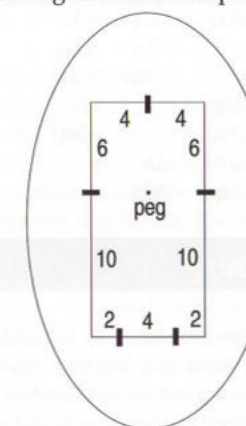


Fig. B

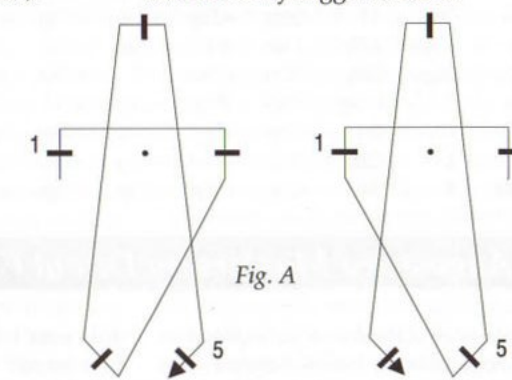


Fig. C

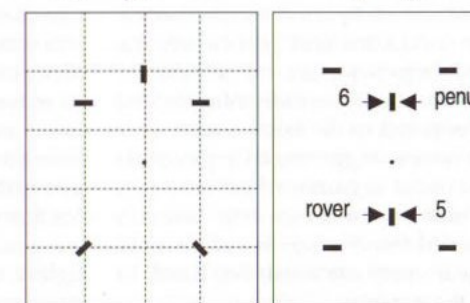


Fig. D

### WANTED TO BUY

Old croquet books, pictures, drawings or anything else related to the subject matter of croquet.

Send me your list and price of items to sell.

My interest is to see that these items do not get lost over time, and stay within the "croquet family" in a preserved collection.

**TREMAINE ARKLEY, 9775 HULTMAN RD, INDEPENDENCE, OREGON 97351, USA. PHONE: 503 838 4886. FAX 503 838 6121**

### CROQUET MALLETS

by Michael Percival

Hand crafted mallets made to your individual requirements, from beautiful high quality timbers selected from around the World.

Any weight, length, design or finish.

Repairs and alterations also undertaken.

For more information write to:-

Yew Tree Cottage, Mill Lane, Combs, Stowmarket, Suffolk IP14 2NF or telephone 0449-613917

### CROQUET BALLS by TOM BARLOW

'CHAMPIONSHIP' £77, 'XT' £110, per set. Both types C.A. Championship Approved 3 year guarantee

Mail order add £4 per set P&P

Also Garden Croquet Balls, Top Quality Mallets and complete range of C.A. Spec. Equipment

All available from U.K. Barlow stockists

J. & K.M. Beech

WOODLANDS CROQUET PRODUCTS

Woodlands, Skipton Road, Barnoldswick,

Colne, Lancs, BB8 6HH.

0282-813070

TOWNSEND CROQUET

LIMITED

For a comprehensive range of Croquet Equipment, Mallets, Balls, Hoops, Winning pegs, Clips, Corner flags, Corner pegs, etc.

All at competitive prices.

Ask for Townsend Croquet equipment at your local sports shop.

**TOWNSEND CROQUET LTD.**  
**CLAIRE ROAD**  
**KIRBY CROSS**  
**FRINTON-ON-SEA**  
**ESSEX CO13 0LX**  
**TELEPHONE: FRINTON (0255) 67-4404**

	DM	DJG	RB	CC	RF	CI	SNM	JOW	AW	JD
<b>DBMaugham</b> (13 wins, 1st)	x	-26tp	+25tp	+26tp	+18	+11	-26	+13tpo	+2	+13
<b>DJGoacher</b> (12 wins, 2nd)	+26tp	x	-26tp	+26tp	-24tp	-17tp	+26tp	+26tp	+17	+9
<b>RBamford</b> (11 wins, =3rd)	-25tp	-26tp	x	-26tp	-26tp	+25tp	+26tp	+24tp	+25tp	+26tp
<b>CClarke</b> (11 wins, =3rd)	-26tp	+25tp	+26tp	x	-23tp	+25tp	+26tp	+15	+25tp	-14otp
<b>RFullford</b> (10 wins, =5th)	-18	-26	+26tp	+23tp	x	-10tpo	+24tp	+26tp	+24tp	+19tp
<b>Clrwin</b> (10 wins, =5th)	-11	+26tp	-25tp	-25tp	+10tpo	x	-3tp	+17tp	+23	-16tp
<b>SNMulliner</b> (7 wins, 7th)	+26	-26	-26tp	-26tp	-24tp	+3tp	x	+25	+19tp	+26tp
<b>JOWalters</b> (6 wins, =8th)	-13tpo	-17tp	-24tp	-15	-26tp	-17tp	-25	x	+26tp	-21tp
<b>AWesterby</b> (6 wins, =8th)	-2	+18tp	-25tp	-25tp	-24tp	-23	-19tp	-26tp	x	+25
<b>JDawson</b> (5 wins, 10th)	-13	-25tp	-26tp	+14otp	-19tp	+16tp	-26tp	+21tp	-25	x

### First Angostura Masters by David Goacher

The event was played at Hurlingham as last year - obviously the best setting for such an event but one has to question whether the easy lawn conditions and particularly the large hoops which we are not allowed to interfere with actually do determine the best player as opposed to the best shooter. This year there were a staggering 69 triples peels performed out of 90 games which must easily be the highest percentage ever. You will notice from the results chart that there was a triple done in every game that Reg Bamford played in for instance.

Also as last year Keith Aiton was appointed Manager and it was he who appointed me as Scribe immediately after I had walked down-cast off the lawn at the end of the tournament having paid scant attention to the other games going on around me mainly because I was probably on the lawn longer than anyone else. No doubt Chris Clarke will confirm that from one of his charts. Needless to say, this appointment cheered me up no end especially as this year there are 18 rounds to write about. I now wish that I had got down to doing it sooner than the three months it has taken me because my recollections are now a bit vague but I'll do my best! Here goes:

**Round 1** The most exciting game of the round was a pegged out game between Maugham and Westerby, the latter with the single ball hit in a couple of times but ultimately failed to make rover. There were some uncharacteristic errors by Fulford as he lost to Irwin notably a missed four yard shot when he had the chance to establish a 3 ball break after he too had been pegged out. He later told me that his slow start was a result of having to do so many media interviews that he didn't get a chance to practice the day beforehand - what it is to be famous! Clarke's TPO against Dawson however was not successful, Dawson playing very well to win by 14. It was at this point that Clarke realised it was not going to be his year - he

only ever wins this event when he wins the first game! At the time the round's most surprising result appeared to be Goacher's +26 win over Mulliner at least it was to the victor as he had been involved in a mad dash to arrive on time from Bristol, had eaten no lunch and he never plays well on an empty stomach and, had never even taken a single game off Mulliner before in any event! It was Mulliner's shooting that let him down. If you are getting bored already you will be delighted to know that most of the other round descriptions will not be as long as this!

**Round 2** Dawson clocked up his second victory this time over Irwin with a solid triple to repeat his start of last year. He shared the lead with Maugham who had a comprehensive +26TP win over Clarke. Fulford and Mulliner both found their form with comfortable wins and Westerby too got off the mark against Goacher by commencing his TP by rolling his ball from 4th corner to his pioneer near 2 - a tactic which he apparently employs a lot! I personally would only recommend it when the lawn is easy, the pioneer very good and your wrists are feeling strong!

**Round 3** Didn't start until 6pm and in hindsight the manager may have regretted starting it at all as all four rounds on subsequent days were completed by at least 5pm. In the gathering gloom, Fulford, Clarke, Goacher and Walters had clinical TPs but the top game of Dawson v Maugham looked destined to run. Dawson had pegged out Maugham but then proceeded to first play with the wrong ball and later to miss a short roquet as a result of fatigue/poor light. When the game resumed Maugham hit a 15 yard shot and finished with a three ball break.

**Round 4** At 10am everyone was wondering if Walters had Waltered off again as he had not shown up for the official photograph especially as he had only recorded one win on the previous day. However he did turn up shortly afterwards and had ap-

parently been up since 4am on Gazette business. Irwin, Mulliner, Maugham and Fulford completed comprehensive TPs and Clarke beat Walters after the latter's TPO collapsed at rover. Bamford with only 1 win out of 4 was perhaps feeling the pressure of trying to win the hat-trick of trophies.

**Round 5** Maugham continued his winning ways with a +11 scrappy win over Irwin and there were comfortable wins for Westerby, Goacher, Bamford and Fulford.

**Round 6** Mulliner beat Irwin +3TP when Irwin broke down at rover on his triple attempt leaving four balls close by. There were easy wins for Clarke, Fulford, Bamford and that man Maugham again this time with a TPO on Walters. Was anyone going to stop him striding to his 2nd title?

**Round 7** The answer to the last question was Mulliner who for a while became the most popular man in the event by bringing

### Mulliner became the most popular man in the event !!!

about Maugham's first defeat. Clarke, Bamford and Dawson had solid TPs and Goacher made it 3 wins out of 3 against Fulford in this competition. He failed a TP at rover by running into the peelee, quickly abandoning a combination peg out and managed to leave Fulford about a 13 yard shot which he missed extremely narrowly.

**Round 8** Saw 5 one sided games with Goacher, Irwin, Clarke, Mulliner and Maugham all winning with only Maugham failing to triple.

**Round 9** Saw 4 +26TPs including Goacher, in determined mood, beating Maugham and Clarke registering his sixth win in his last seven games with a win over Mulliner and moving up to joint 2nd place.

One surprise after the first series was the appearance of Goacher in joint 2nd place. He was playing steadily and with a fair amount of confidence and anxious to fully erase his 0 out of 6 beginning last year. As last year, Dawson had not taken advantage of his good start. While Walters was perhaps wishing that his ban had not been overturned.

**Round 10** TPs for Bamford, Clarke and Irwin, the latter getting his second win over Fulford and fairly comfortable wins for Goacher over an edgy Mulliner and

Maugham over Westerby retained the status quo at the top.

**Round 11** This was the round in which Walters began to rally with a good +26TP win over Mulliner. Maugham had a vital win over Clarke by the same score but Goacher and Fulford kept up the challenge with comprehensive victories the latter a good one over a subdued Bamford. Goacher completed an excellent day with 4 wins out of 4 but his elation was short lived for when he returned to the changing rooms he discovered his expensive shoes had been stolen!

**Round 12** Maugham's lead was extended to 2 as he again narrowly beat Dawson while Clarke was losing to Irwin and Goacher to Bamford, the latter completing a steady standard TP after Goacher missed a hampered shot after penult stemming from a very poor split shot just previously.

### Maugham got away with poor leaves & scrappy breaks

**Round 13** Saw a vital +26TP win for determined Bamford over Maugham to put him back into contention within two wins of the leader. Walters clocked up his third win in a row to peg Clarke back while Goacher moved to within one of the leader with an extremely scrappy win over Irwin who despite hitting in well on three occasions kept making errors in his break play and at one point walked off the lawn shouting "I give up." Goacher was needless to say encouraged by this but still took some time to finish the game as Irwin hit in once more.

**Round 15** Irwin, Clarke and Fulford all won convincingly to give themselves a fighting chance but they were still two behind Maugham who had a win over Walters. Despite several errors, Bamford managed to beat Westerby eventually and moved into joint second place alongside Goacher.

**Round 16** Went as expected with clinical +26TP wins for Goacher over Fulford in 6th turn, Maugham over Mulliner and Bamford over Irwin. So it had now become a three horse race with Clarke in fourth place still with an outside chance.

**Round 17** The match between Clarke and Bamford took on extra significance when it was learnt that Fulford had scored a quick

TOTAL TPs		TP PERCENTAGE (Winning TPs as % of wins)	
1	Bamford 11	1=	Bamford 100%
2=	Fulford 10	1=	Fulford 100%
2=	Clarke 9+1otp	3	Irwin 90%
4	Irwin 9	4=	Walters 83%
5	Goacher 6	4=	Westerby 83%
6=	Maugham 5	6	Clarke 82%
6=	Mulliner 5	7	Mulliner 71%
6=	Walters 5	8	Dawson 60%
6=	Westerby 5	9	Goacher 50%
10	Dawson 3	10	Maugham 38%

win over Maugham. It was a game where all long shots down the East boundary were hit with Clarke eventually winning +16TP. Meanwhile, Goacher was steadily going around against Dawson when he unaccountably stuck in 3 back. During the course of his second break, Dawson took off from his ball at 4 back to Goacher's ball in the fast 4th corner of lawn 1 only to see it pick up pace and just roll off the lawn. At this point, bearing in mind that Goacher's ball was for 4 back, Bamford got up and trudged disconsolately away for lunch realising that his hat-trick chance had gone. In actual fact it took Goacher a further half an hour to finish as he had trouble in taking his 3 back ball to the peg later and then missed the peg out with his front ball only to hit the peg from 12 yards with the next shot after Dawson missed about a 7 yard shot.

**Round 18** So quite by chance the computer had come up with the prospect of an exciting finale as Maugham and Goacher, both on 12 wins had to play each other in the final round. 200 people were crammed in around lawn 5 waiting expectantly to see if Goacher could cause a major upset by winning the Masters. As a showpiece the game was disappointing as both players fell below the high standards their play had reached in previous rounds but it did produce more excitement for the crowd than would otherwise have been the case. As in the Opens Final, Maugham looked edgy at the start, clanging hoop 2 leaving Goacher with little more than a 4 yard shot which he promptly missed as he failed to line it up properly thinking it was easy! Maugham then made a very bad mistake by wiring himself at hoop 6 during an easy 4 ball break and this time Goacher was able to hit the 8 yard shot. Having set the break up, he took off to his pioneer 3 yards south of hoop 4 but went too far as the lawn had speeded up and promptly missed the cut rush. Maugham took advantage and got to peg and penult when a failed cross pegging let Goacher in again. He took his first ball round to 4 back from this but his lift leave and subsequent leave were not aggressive enough as he was fearful of Maugham's accurate shooting ability. Consequently he struggled to get his second ball round from hoop 4 and in trying to get a rush after hoop 6, his ball squirmed across the hoop making the angle virtually impossible

and leaving no chance of returning to his partner ball. So that was it - Maugham had won his 2nd title deservedly so as he had withstood the pressure of leading all the way through. His shooting had been more consistent than anyone else and this enabled him to get away with a few less than tight leaves and scrappy breaks as he was always confident he could get the innings back.

Overall Goacher came away with a lot of credit but it was laced with disappointment that he had come so close to causing an upset. Part of the secret of his success was that in 16 out of the 18 games he achieved the first innings and then (according to Clarke's statistics) had the highest % of missed lift shots against him. Although obviously luck came into this figure, he was very careful not to give short shots or large targets unlike some of his opponents. His shooting was also more consistent than it sometimes is. His attributes of concentration and patience are maybe more suitable to an event like this.

Bamford's break play was very steady and his triple peels were completed almost effortlessly but it was really his long range shooting that let him down. Nevertheless he can feel very satisfied with an excellent year's croquet achievements.

Clarke's break play was also first class and his touch very good but his shooting was very poor - a number of shortish roquets which top players would expect to hit were missed for example.

Fulford perhaps suffered from being the player who everyone wants to beat in view of his recent achievements. His shooting was also not quite on top form and maybe he was a little casual at times.

Irwin was very inconsistent - his long range shooting was better than anybody's and there were some immaculate TPs interspersed with some costly errors in his break play.

Mulliner was disappointing after doing so well last year - his poor shooting being the main reason for his 11 defeats. Won't do his ranking much good!!

Walters must also be disappointed that his devastating shooting has waned this year. He rallied after a disastrous start, suggesting more maturity about his game these days.

Westerby was at times exciting to watch and at others overly aggressive resulting in too many mistakes and large targets for opponents to shoot at.

Dawson's shots are as good as anybody's but he still seems to lack the conviction that he can consistently beat the top players. It is his nerve that still lets him down at vital moments.

Overall a very enjoyable event; at least it was for the scribe! Thanks go to Angostura for their generous sponsorship - I think they received quite a bit more publicity this year than last year - and I hope they will continue to support us. Maybe if they do they will bring along a few shirts that aren't designed to fit David Maugham! Thanks also to the amiable Keith Aiton for giving up his time to efficiently manage the event.



	GC	HI	IL	IR	DW	JA	HF	EM	wins	total
Miss G Curry	x	+23	+24	+8	+11	+20	+25	+24	7	14
(1)	x	+23	+20	+24TP	+19	+26	+18	+21		
Mrs P Healy	-23	x	-7	+17	+5	+2	+16	+3	5	10
(2)	-23	x	+5	-24	+8	+13	+8	+15		
Mrs D Latham	-24	+7	x	+4	+8	+20	+21	+6	6	8
(3)	-20	-5	x	-9	-19	-7	+16	+5		
Mrs F Ransom	-8	-17	-4	x	-2T	+12	+5T	+24	3	7
(4=)	-	+24	-	x	-8T	-12	+9	+14		
Mrs D Wheeler	-11	-5	-8	+2T	x	+16	+11	+21	4	7
(4=)	-19	-8	+19	+8T	x	-19	-12	+5T		
Mrs J Anderson	-20	-2	-20	-12	-16	x	+19	+1T	2	5
(5)	-26	-13	+7	+12	+19	x	-9T	-1T		
Mrs F Fewtrell	-25	-16	-21	-5T	-11	-19	x	-1T	0	3
(7)	-18	-8	-16	-9	+12	+9T	x	+23		
Mrs E Magee	-24	-3	-6	-24	-21	-1T	+1T	x	1	2
(8)	-2	-15	-5	-14	-5T	+1T	-23	x		

### Barlow Bowl at Cheltenham by Gail Curry

It has to be said that the Barlow Bowl of 1993 was unique in many ways in comparison with recent past competitions, although not necessarily always from a playing point of view. For instance we have all seen wives dutifully spectating and supporting their croquet playing husbands but how many of you have seen the roles reversed? Well you missed an absolute treat, as Bob Fewtrell, Lawrence Latham, Jack Healy, Raymond Ransom and Roger Wheeler all did just this and David Magee, well he was such a treasure he even transported Eileen's handbag back to the clubhouse.

The tournament was played in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere throughout interspersed with a good sprinkling of humour and mirth at most player's expense and even the manager's at times. Some of these more humorous moments being Faith Fewtrell being given black & blue to play with instead of her preferred red & yellow in round 10, Frances Ransom and Gail Curry bringing

Euro Disney to Cheltenham in the shapes of Minnie Mouse and Goofy in round 3, Eileen Magee's lunchtime commentaries, Everyone being privy to the whereabouts of Frances Ransom's mallet but Frances in round 9 and Gail and her amazing croquet playing hedgehog which gave two master classes on hoop running and roqueting in between various rounds.

The standard of play was generally good with few defensive shots taken and breaks were sought and played by all. On the peeling front there were numerous lifts saved by most players and the first triple was attempted by Dab, but unfortunately the goal-keeper in penultimate proved to quick for her on more than one occasion. Gail on the other hand proved too quick for the goal-keeper and completed the peels on several occasions but only managed to peg one of them out successfully.

Of those making their debut in this event, Deborah started very convincingly playing

confidently and scoring six wins out of six but unfortunately could not sustain this effort through the second series, although I am sure this will not be the case in future. Eileen showed why she was a worthy winner of the award for most improved lady last season and played some very attractive croquet, which unfortunately was not reflected in her final results but I am sure that will change in the near future. Faith was sometimes a little too unadventurous for her own good, but proved none the less that she too will improve in the future with more experience at advanced play. Pauline played some good solid breaks, which she was always on the look out for and this combined with her talent for hard accurate shooting made her a formidable opponent and a worthy runner-up of the event.

Of those more experienced players in attendance, Dab showed that she can still play more than adequately within her handicap and played some particularly controlled croquet which was a pleasure to watch. Judy too played some attractive croquet but unfortunately could not quite find the consistency to enable her to convert more games into wins. Frances played her usual brand of attacking croquet but uncharacteristically suffered both at the hands of hoops and short roquets in the first series and could not recover in time to challenge those above her. Gail started quietly (from a playing point of view only) on the first day but grew in confidence as the rounds progressed and managed to repeat her second straight wins victory in successive years. Thanks to Cheltenham croquet club for hosting the event, Bo Harris for managing, Cheltenham members for spectating and David Magee for proving that the 'new man' does exist even in ladies croquet.

### South of England Championship 1993

# JAKE'S 'thing'

by Andrew Gregory



Compton saw the emergence of a new talent this year. The player himself did look familiar, but nobody had seen the like of his mallet before. Its shaft was encased in cork, its head moulded from white plastic. On either side of the head, inscribed in injudiciously bright but undeniably friendly red letters, was what we took to be its owner's name - Jake.

Burridge and Westerby completed four triples on lawn 2 before lunch, and then had to play. After another Burridge triple, they shared two games of lesser quality, leaving Westerby only a consolatory stick of rock for his sweatshirt. Triples were also much in evidence on lawn 4, where Cornelius completed two to Hallam's one. Readers versed in the rarefied world of contemporary A-class tactics will have realised they yet have insufficient information whence to infer the result of the match, which was in fact Hallam's. Cornelius went on to share the peeling prize (another stick of rock) with six

triples, including four in games she won.

Fresh from Chairmanic success, Comish reached the final beating Shaw, Liddiard and Goacher. Only Dennis Shaw was able to take a game off him; his steady play and excellent shooting also claimed notable scalps in the consolation event. In the other half Jake had proved useful, and had won through to meet Burridge in the semifinal. The latter won the first +26, and confidently took the first ball round in the second, partly thanks to Jake missing two shots of under 4 yards. This prompted Jake to discard his unnatural mallet in favour of a more familiar weapon with a discreet R.I.F. on the side of the head. "My god!", exclaimed Burridge, and he was right. Jake was none other than World Champion Robert Fulford, who with his first turn with his own mallet hit the lift and completed a TPO. Burridge slumped to defeat.

More games than ever before were played at the weekend. This was because Roger Wood ran the consolation as an Egyptian

rather than Swiss, enabling the likes of Burridge to play seven games on Saturday by 5.15. This placed him in a strong position in the event, and he met Liddiard in the decisive game. Liddiard quickly reached peg and ball-box, with Burridge some way behind. A while later Liddiard claimed that he was the World's Unluckiest Player, since all his shots were suffering from such misfortunes as being deflected by nuts; encountering sudden precipices; and being hit in the wrong direction. Stung by this challenge to his title, Burridge devised a horribly unlucky way to put down a 3-ball break. After running hoop 5, he found himself 2 feet from Liddiard's ball, but entirely cross-pegged. Burridge ends 1993 still the W.U.P., leaving Liddiard with the stick of rock for the Egyptian.

Fulford had the first break of the final, but after the lift was missed was unable to pick up the second before Comish hit in and finished in two turns. I presume that Comish made two errors in the next game - how else to explain his clips on 6 & 6 as Fulford had a triple? In the third Comish reached 4-back and peg before Fulford hit and went round to peg out one ball. Comish made one hoop from the contact, but then did not make another shot, rather continually laying up just outside corners. This unfortunately did not prevent Fulford from getting a corner cannon, as he rushed his ball into Comish's, and both balls followed through to the corner. The fourth was won by another Fulford triple, to secure the result that had been inevitable since the rejection of Jake.

(Photo: Still swinging - Steve Comish)

**RIF Fulford** (\*) bt Comish -17tp+16tp+3+22tp; Burridge-26+13tpo+3+26tp; Avery-24+26tp+14tp; CWilliams+26+16 SComish(\*) bt Goacher+23+26+19; Liddiard+21+26; DShaw+14-11+13tp IJBurridge bt Westerby+26tp-14+7; D Gaunt+20tp+17tp DJGoacher(\*) bt Hallam+20+7; DMagee+26tp+3 MNAvery bt PL Smith+21+20 AJWesterby(\*) bt A Gregory+11tp+24tp SLiddiard bt PHowell+3+23 BHallam bt Miss D Cornelius+13otp-25tp+22tp

### Selectors Weekend - Faith Fewtrell completes Triple Meal but Paul Smith IS Mr Big

Mature players, players and young "wannabees" arrived at Nottingham for the Selector's weekend on a grey drizzly Friday morning to find Ian Vincent, our billeting officer and quartermaster, prepared to act as general too. He avowed that this year we should have a clear winner at the end of the event should we play the preferred Egyptian, so it was accepted that the four biggest winners after two days would play semifinals and a final on the third day.

Paul Smith created a strong feeling of deja fu in your reporter as he beat me in the first round after a very long game. Players then lunched well at the Arts' Centre on a table appropriately reserved for "Vincent". In the afternoon Faith Fewtrell arrived to spectate and stepped into the Caterers shoes with an offer to "help out"! At the end of the first day, out in front without losses were Brain Hallam and Paul Smith including an STP against Chris Fathing who had himself started well with a +26TP against Bob Fewtrell. Meanwhile Faith started on an

immaculate break under exceptional control; making Cod and Prawn Pie and assorted veg with chocolate chip pud and Custard off red. The top pair in the evening's Bridge were "Donald" Magee and Peter "Bacchus" Darby on table two.

On Saturday Brain won very steadily to finish with 7/7 (1st) and Paul 7/8 (2nd) in their head to head. Roger Jenkins who breakfasted on both a Kipper and Bacon & Eggs that morning was usually building good breaks but dropped a game against Alex Leggate whose quick and lively play saw him win 6/8 (4th) by the end of the day and Anthony Miller, although playing with his newfound passion (not necessarily for Croquet), just failed to get sufficient % of wins from his high speed games to make the big four. Meanwhile Faith made shepherd's pie and 4veg with pudding off yellow. Ian Vincent on 4/5 played Harris, also on 4/5, in their last game on Saturday but overran 3-back while on a peeling break, losing the innings, then the game and also

3rd place.

"Donald" Magee pleaded trouserlessness as an excuse to miss the evening meal but the majority made their way by convoy, (Bob Stephens' Escape was quite easy to follow), to the "Himalayan" where we were joined by Ray and Francis Ransom.

On Sunday morning in the semifinals, Mr Very Steady played Mr slow and Mr Adjust Fu played Mr Lively. Brain Hallam, ballbox and rover, hit in against Harris, peg and 4-back, to win +5 and Paul Smith took advantage of some nerves to win +7 against Alex Leggate. Faith Fewtrell produced a superb straight roast Chicken with trimmings and pudding off blue to complete her triple meal. In the afternoon the heavens opened soon after general play and the final started and Brain reached 4-back and 4-back clang before Paul had run a hoop so when the short lift was missed Brain appeared to be on his way. However, Paul fought back to level terms, peg and 4back each, and when Brain failed to move Paul's forward ball from A

bauk with a lift in the offing we soon were opening the Pavilion doors to allow the fug and the applause out for the finish +3 P.L. Smith was now Mr Big!

Even after the Final was over Bob Fewtrell after trebling up as sous chef, waiter and washer upper had the energy to go out to play "Donald" to give them 10 games each, Anthony had won 8 from 11 by Sunday lunchtime when he blushing left for London. Roger Jenkins had 6 from 12 but Chris Farthing had played 13 games including 2TPs by home time.

David Thatcher and Francis Ransom played good solid croquet to achieve a 54% and 50% win/loss record respectively.

Rick Davis now eschewing the Grecian 2000 and looking so much more distinguished, (he has subsequently sent me a bribe so perhaps I shouldn't mention it), played croquet and took charge of the beer and telephone money. Bob Stephens could well have hoped the hoops would have opened wider as might John Simmonds.

Kevin Carter missed the Parrot again but did much better this year than in 1991 when there seemed to be far more squirrels. The Oates award for devotion goes to Penny Simmonds who was by far the most consistent spectator and the Barrel of Laughs award, so aptly shaped, went to Peter Darby.

Thanks are due to the Nottingham Croquet Club and their Secretary Ian Vincent (who finished with 5 from 8) for his deft managerial skills (84 games in 3 days) and the Club's excellent facilities and hospitality and for Faith's efforts - she really should get a Mars bar and honorary Gold Award for her Triple Meal. Well done Faith and thank you!

**Semi-Finals:**  
Hallam bt Harris+5  
Smith bt Leggate+7

**Final:**  
Smith bt Hallam+3



# AROUND

... A year of Short Croquet  
Manager Peter Dorke reviews the National ...



## National Short Croquet Competition 1993

Manager's Report

This year 9 clubs entered 80 players, almost precisely last year's figures, with entries coming from the same clubs. I do not know, because I have not been able to check, whether the same clubs provided the entries for the team event but I am sure that there are clubs out there which play short croquet with enthusiasm but do not, for some reason, enter the 2 National competitions.

Those clubs which do play are grouped fairly conveniently around Cheltenham and Leicester, which generously continue to host the Area Finals (Ealing might disagree with the word "conveniently" but if they could persuade some London clubs to enter we might ask Ealing to hold an Area Final of its own.)

At Cheltenham Ian Maugham was wonderfully uncomplaining (for him) at being asked yet again to manage, while at Leicester the impeccably organised Lawrence Whitaker earned much more than gratitude for his efforts - though gratitude I'm afraid, is all he got. Do not underestimate the burdens of the job: club secretaries send in their entries late; or lose their instructions; or fail to read them; or simply ignore them. Trophies disappear, spouses fail to pass on messages, lawns are vandalised so that venues have to be changed days before the event.

This last was the fate of Chris Bennett, manager of the National Final, whose

Rowheath club hosted, unwittingly, a teenage motorsport event which culminated in the cremation of a vehicle in mid-lawn. With his usual sangfroid, Chris transferred to Edgbaston, where he provided an immediately organised all-play-all final.

An Ealing player, David Earle, was the winner, thus making all that travelling worthwhile. Terry Sparkes, from Norwich, another long-distance croquet player, came second, having conceded his only defeat to David, who had in his turn, lost only to Neil Chalmers of Norwich. This was Neil's only win of the day, clearly a brave but futile attempt to help his colleague win the competition.

(top picture: croquet-playing Earl family with David, Short croquet winner)

### Leicester Area

Neil Chalmers, Terry Sparkes (Norwich) 2 wins;  
Tony Gamer (York), John Riddington (Leic) 1 win;  
James Skelton, Eric Devereux (Northants) 0 wins

### Cheltenham Area

Alison Thursfield (Dyffryn), David Earle (Ealing),  
Nigel Grant (High Wycombe) 3 wins;  
Terry Eccles (Chelt) 2 wins  
Gwyn Doyle (Bristol), Nigel Mottram (Bristol)  
John Minter (Ealing), Ruth Youd (High Wycombe)

### National Final

David Earle Winner, Terry Sparks Runnerup 3 wins;  
Nigel Grant 2 wins; Neil Chambers, Alison Thursfield 1 win

To end on a stern, nay, school masterly note, no late entries will be accepted in 1994, whatever the reasons offered. Entries from the South and South East will, however, be especially welcome. Someone must be playing Short Croquet down there.



... The CA in Geneva - battling with the Swiss ...

... Back to school - handicap event ...

# & ABOUT

## Honours even in Geneva

Swiss C.A. vs English C.A.

In a summer which witnessed the complete humiliation of another England side and the enforced resignation of Mr Dexter amongst accusations of southern selectorial bias, an English C.A. team drawn from the four corners of Cheltenham C.C., set off for Geneva to restore English pride. Upon arrival at the Geneva club - headquarters of the Swiss C.A. and set in the grounds of the CERN laboratory virtually under the shadow of Mt Blanc - the English team of Peter Darby (C), Stuart Daddo-Langlois, Tal Goleworthy and David Kibble, were greeted by our opponents - Norman Eatough (C), Ian Sexton, Peter Payne and Steve Hillier.

That evening, Norman and Ferga Eatough hosted both teams in a pre-match dinner, the excellent atmosphere of which very much set the tone for the next two days.

The opening day was sunny and very hot. Temperatures were about 35 degrees Celsius and there was no breeze to ease the day. The agreed format of the match was simple, two doubles followed by two rounds of four singles each day making twenty games in all. In the event of a tie, the match would be decided on hoops scored. All games would be played under advanced rules.

The opening games saw Darby and D-L against Eatough and Sexton, whilst Goleworthy and Kibble faced Payne and Hillier. It goes without saying that England's top pairing were confident that their greater match experience would be the deciding factor, and so it proved...

... Eatough and Sexton winning +25

Critically, Switzerland also won the second doubles, +3T in a game were only 15 points were scored by both sides. Indeed it took nearly ninety minutes for England to score their first hoop point in either game. As England captain observed, D-L had the honour to be the first Englishman to score a hoop for England in Switzerland, adding to that distinguished record shortly afterwards by becoming the first Englishman to miss a return roquet!

No doubt about it, the English were struggling with conditions. In the heat, the balls lost a great deal of their resilience and the English found rushes very difficult to execute. Notably on the second day the problem was largely solved by dousing the balls in a bucket of cold water between games!

After lunch England got the score-board moving with wins for Darby and Kibble over Eatough and Hillier respectively. However, Sexton and Payne maintained their fine form with wins over D-L and Goleworthy. The final four games were also shared with wins for Darby and Kibble again, whilst Eatough and Hillier scored for Switzerland.

During the evening, the teams met at the local tennis club for the official match dinner at which the Swiss C.A. presented the English C.A. with a commemorative plate and medals to each of the English team.

The final day dawned bright and hot, though perhaps a degree or two cooler than the first day. Could the Swiss hold onto their lead? England's most successful pair, Darby

and Kibble, got England off to the start they needed with a tight win over Eatough and Hillier. However, D-L and Goleworthy, without a win between them, were overwhelmed +24 by Sexton and Payne. The two Swiss players playing with excellent control and heavily punishing unforced errors by the English pair.

Once again the captains did their part, recording wins after lunch. Darby over Hillier and Eatough over Kibble. D-L finally seized an opportunity as Payne's previously deadly long roqueting deserted him to pull a game back for England but Sexton continued his fine form with a win over Goleworthy.

Thus it all came down to the final round of matches. Could England manage to close the gap at the last or would the Swiss hold on for a memorable triumph and thus wins for Darby and D-L over Payne and Hillier respectively, and for Eatough over the luckless Goleworthy meant the fate of the match lay with Kibble and Sexton. Under a now cloudy and darkening sky with a threat of heavy rain, Kibble, playing green and brown both for 4 back lead Sexton by one point, with white for peg and pink for 6. Inexplicably, Kibble over rolled an approach to 4 back with green and croqueted white off in III corner. Sexton seized his opportunity, and hitting green, split white to the peg and pegged it out to level the game. Kibble attempted to take position in front of 4 back with green but over ran the hoop. Sexton tried to lay up in front of 6 but finished about four feet away and angled. Kibble tried to join up with partner which was south of 4 but stuck in the jaws of four instead. Sexton cleverly tried to run 6 with controlled weight and managed to jaws pink. As heavy drops of rain started to fall from the gathering gloom, Kibble, now playing brown, roqueted green clear of 4, took off to about six feet north of 6, roqueted pink clear of the hoop and split to about 2 feet in front of 4-back to win the game and level the match.

In circumstances, and under great pressure, this was an excellent turn from Kibble and a fitting climax to a very enjoyable match. Thus English pride was salvaged though Switzerland deservedly took the match overall having scored more points and generally played the better croquet.

For the last time during the weekend, the teams dined at the local Italian restaurant where we were joined by other members of the Geneva club before saying our farewells and extending an invitation for a return fixture during '94 in England. Finally, this report should not close with extending thanks to both the Swiss and English C.As., Messrs Darby and Eatough for organising the match and England's sponsors "Elgar financial services" for supplying the England team strip.

Perhaps the last praise should go to Tal Goleworthy, who having struggled with a loss of form during the match, bought his victorious opponent a pint of bottled Guinness to celebrate. At \$16-00 for two pints, one can only admire his contribution to Anglo-Swiss relations.

(bottom photo: back - Goleworthy, Payne, Daddo-Langlois, Hillier; front - Sexton, Darby, Eatough, Kibble)

Swiss C.A. - 10 Games; English C.A. - 10 Games  
Switzerland win by +17 net points.

## Schools Handicap Final

Solihull: Wednesday, 22nd September

This was the first time that Solihull Croquet Club had hosted a CA event, and it proved an excellent venue, with four full-size lawns (room for six), and easy to find just off Junction 5 of the M42 motorway.

Three schools played in the final: Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, Nailsea, and Stowe. Each school team had three players, placed in order of ability, and a draw was carried out to determine which school had a bye at each level.

At the top, James Coleman (4) of QEGS once again demonstrated a lovely swing, and proved incredibly accurate at hitting in on a lawn that was heavy with morning dew. Although the lawns are used as a hockey pitch during the winter, they need only a little work to bring them up to a good standard.

He played Oliver Schneider (15) (Stowe) in the first round and although Oliver wriggled when James accidentally pegged out his first ball when rushing to the peg to finish the game, his struggles were to no avail. James then met Nailsea's Roy Hawkins (11) in the final, and had a relatively comfortable win by +19.

The semi-final for the 2nd players was between Iain Leggate (20) (Nailsea) and Richard Parry (20) of Stowe. This game could have gone either way, with both players on peg and rover. Richard looked certain to win when he ran rover but he just failed to reach the peg with his front ball on an attempted peg-out, and laid up with two balls by the peg, and Iain's balls close together. Iain took off to the peg to split up Richard's balls, and then missed a two-foot roquet - a shot that will probably remain in his mind for ever - to give Richard the game. In the final, Richard found William Coleman (9) too strong for him, but went down fighting -16.

The third players' semi-final was between 11-year old Kristian Chambers of Nailsea and Gavin Lambert (20) (QEGS). This was a very level game and was a most interesting struggle to watch, with Kristian eventually winning +5 on time. The final saw Kris playing Tom Foss-Smith (20) from Stowe. Initially Kris was behind, but with his play seeming to improve throughout the day, he put together some 3 and 4 hoop breaks, interspersed with some effective rushes, and to everyone's delight won by +13.

Solihull provided a sit down bar lunch for the players, and tea by the lawn afterwards in a marquee erected by their members specially for the occasion.

The number of schools competing in the competition this year was unfortunately less than usual, perhaps because several of the teachers responsible for croquet retired last year. This goes to show how much we rely on their enthusiasm to keep croquet alive and well in schools, and those who have left will be difficult to replace.

The good news is that croquet is now in the sports curriculum at Wolverhampton Grammar School, where David Iddon is coaching 3rd and 4th year pupils. Peter Dyke, at Nailsea, has a group of 11-year olds "coming along nicely", and the next few years should see some interesting developments at these two schools at least.

by Chris Hudson

# 1993 & FINALLY

## tournament reports

**SE Federation Ladies' League Day by Margaret Payton**

*Blue skies at Southwick (... wick not port)*

Despite predictions of a foul day by the weather-forecasters of both the BBC and ITV 28 keen croquet players from 6 Clubs gathered at the Sussex County Croquet Ground on 4th August. In fact the abundance of wet-weather clothing, anoraks and rain hoods must have been anathema to the "lows" approaching the Atlantic as the sun shone on us for most of the day and the players got down to serious business.

Compton, Ealing, Havering, Ramsgate, 2 teams from Sussex County and Worthing took part. Each team consisted of 2 single players and 1 doubles. The contest was arranged as a Swiss event of three rounds, each being 18 points and 1.5 hours in length. The

first singles was won by Ramsgate, the second by the 2nd team from Sussex County and the doubles by Worthing. The overall winner was Worthing with 18 points and Sussex County 2, Havering and Ramsgate were joint second with 12 points each. The shield held by Ramsgate was therefore won by Worthing.

Although the rounds were perhaps a little too short as none of the games were finished, everyone seemed to enjoy the day and agreed to meet again next year or at some other tournament on the croquet circuit.

Finally out thanks must go to the Sussex County Croquet Club for allowing us to use 8 of their lovely lawns and for being such attentive hostesses.

### The Inaugural Alfred Purvis Memorial Cup 21/22 August by Robert Bateson

*57 years gestation for Watford's first Open Croquet Tournament*

The Courts were in near perfect condition and the sun shining when play started on Saturday 21 August. They were much admired by visitors from Dulwich, Ealing, Harrow & Reigate Clubs. Handicaps ranged from 1.5 to 18 in two blocks of six modified to provide four games each. This was the first Open Tournament that the Cassiobury Croquet Club had organised.

Bill Gillott (12), Treasurer, had the maximum four wins in 'A' Block & so appeared in the final against Mrs Welch (18) from 'B' Block, also with 4 wins. Arthur Reed (1.5) Secretary, David Drazin (10) Club Captain, & Adam Huby (12) had 2 wins each. Of visitors, Mrs Janet Davies (16) had 3 wins, Mrs Welch also had 3 wins but the larger margins, Mr A Grey (18) had 2, Mrs E. Hartley (18) & Mr R. Quiller Barrett (12) had 1 each.

Mrs Welch scraped through against Mr Drazin by only 1 point overtaking him her last turn & thereby gaining the final. Mr Gillott won against Mr Ron Welch (4.5) by the maximum 22 points for a Hoop 3 start.

In his block games Mr Gillott played consistently well getting four ball breaks going and fearlessly playing them out. In the final Mrs Welch's steady confidence & frequent 'hitting in' caused him to modify his play as all must when giving bisques. Both finalists made several hoops in the later stages. Mrs Welch, with bisques always at her disposal, played steadily, refusing to be awed by the occasion, her opponent or the phalanx of spectators watching every hit. She used her last bisques to advantage & was well ahead when "time" was called. She won by +6 on time after Mr Gillott had missed his last long shot.

At the end of play, Mr Bill Gillott gave a vote of thanks to Club members who had made the necessary preparations. Then the Tournament Manager, Mr Alan Oldham, presented the Silver Cup to Mrs Welch. The visitors were thanked for their attendance and asked to spread the word in their Clubs about next year's tournament in July or August. It is hoped that the Watford Borough Council will make another temporary Court available on the tennis courts so that more visitors may enter and that this event will appear in the CA calendar. It should be remembered that it is mainly through the efforts of Watford Borough Council Officers that the Courts were built in 1936/7.

1. Mrs J Welch
2. W P Gillott

### South West of England Championship - Budleigh Salterton, by Jennie Broad-Thomas

*Toothless chicken causes cancellation of World Championship*

A large gathering of croquet clans filled the ten lawns for the S.W. Championships held the first week in August, all eager to prove their infallibility. By 9.30 most matches were under way with battles ensuing until 8.30 each evening: breaks of course were permitted for lunch, tea and liquid refreshments.

Although double-banking was used extensively several late entrants could not be accommodated. With so many events in progress i.e. Class, Doubles, Egyptian and Single Ball games it would not be politic to pin-point any one particular match or player; suffice to say that by the perplexed expressions of several new onlookers and the wistfulness in the eyes of other more mature croquet players the contestants had an atten-

tive audience.

Apart from off-lawn comments consisting mostly of the score card system and disappointment over the cancelled World Championships (sadly affecting our local pressmen who were hoping for a field day) grumbles about the Tournament were like the proverbial chicken's teeth, few and far between.

The complexity of the order of play expertly understood, arranged and managed by Martin Granger-Brown resulted in 216 games completed. A mammoth task indeed. Thanks were conveyed to all concerned by Peter Dorke on behalf of the visitors. To avoid disappointment book early for next year. Come and enjoy the hospitality of beautiful Budleigh.

#### Event 1 - Class Events

##### The Colman Cup

1. P Dorke
2. R Fewtrell

##### The Longman Cup

1. F de Ansorena
  2. J Mc B. Wood
- ##### The Stone Cup
1. E B Marsh
  2. P Mayers

#### Event 2 - Olive Bowl - Handicap Singles

1. R Fewtrell (2)
2. S. Orr (8)

#### Event 3 - Handicap Doubles

1. M Hammerley & L Tibble
2. Mr & Mrs Fewtrell

### North Cumbria Challenge

*A Highland Fling*

As part of the continuing development programme to promote Croquet in Cumbria, Croquet North, in association with the Sports Council and Carlisle Cricket Club, arranged a Short Croquet teams tournament on 19 September 1993. Four teams of four were invited to participate, one representing the Scottish Croquet Association, one from Tyneside Croquet Club as 1993 finalists in the English Croquet Association Short Croquet teams championship, and two from Cumbria, one representing the South, and the other the North, based on Carlisle Croquet Club, for which the publicity was aimed.

Press and radio publicity has been arranged beforehand, and press photographs were taken of the teams prior to play commencing. Although the weather was unkind, five rounds of the scheduled six Short Croquet singles matches were completed, and there was a small amount of interest recorded from members of the public, generating new potential entrants to the Croquet Club.

The team from Scotland, Malcolm O'Connell, Dave Farmer, Allan Ramsey and Su Stenhouse, recorded 15 wins from their 20 matches in the five rounds, to win the individual prizes, presented by Derek Trotman, Chairman of Croquet North. Carlisle and Tyneside each recorded nine wins, and Crake Valley seven. Despite the weather, and the newness of the lawns, two of which were on the cricket outfield, and two on the area of ground that will be developed as the full-size lawn for Carlisle Croquet Club, the standard of croquet was generally high, with few matches going to time even though double banking and a one-hour time limit were in force.

The spirit of the event was friendly, the bar was open during the day, and there is a determination to hold a similar event, cricket, weather and funding permitting, earlier in the season in 1994.

Five rounds Short Croquet, one hour time-limit:

1. SCA (15 wins)
2. Carlisle
- Tyneside (9 wins)
4. Crake Valley (7 wins)

### S of England Week 18-23 September by Derek Caporn

*Derek Caporn invites readers to compare 100% & 86%*

This delightful week tournament was tinged with sorrow at the start with the CA flag, donated by the late Victor Evans, flying at half mast to remind us of the death of Blanch Dennant, the Secretary and a stalwart supporter of the club for over 20 years, but after her funeral, attended by a large gathering including many of the competitors, was raised to full height. thereafter the happier climate culminated in a visit from the Mayor of Eastbourne, Councillor A E Leggett. The beautiful Devonshire Park Salver inscribed with the signatures of all the winners since its presentation in 1922, except for the late Frances Jolly, had been filled by the name of 1992 winner Roger Hayes. The Council of the CA had agreed that the Salver be placed in a mahogany case. Roger Hayes had kindly agreed to deal with this, resulting in a beautifully hand crafted case. the Mayor had agreed to make a generous donation towards the cost, the Salver having been presented by the Eastbourne Corporation on permanent loan to the CA for this tournament which used to be held at Devonshire Park, Eastbourne. The Mayor presented the prizes and in his remarks requested that a photograph of the Salver and case should be taken and supplied to the Corporation for its archives as the Club founded in 1898 was nearly as old as the Corporation which was chartered in 1893. He said he was delighted to have been invited to present the prizes and although not a croquet player he knew there were at least three different variations of the game, short, golf and Association or "Croquet proper" although is not always played properly!

As to the Tournament play, there were several interesting features. Event 3 for 10+ was played full bisques from the base of scratch. In one game there was a total of 35 bisques which had all been used on the outward half, whilst in another between a 14 and a 26 was won by the former +26!

The player dominating the Tournament and giving the Manager problems was Don Gaunt, who lost only 1 game all week - 1st round of 'X' doubles, Roger Hayes, Bill

Gillott who won all his games in the Trevor Williams and all but the final in the Devonshire Park Cup and David Collins who won 5 out of 6 in the Luard Cup as well as the doubles and reached the semi-final of the Devonshire Park Cup.

The Salver had to be divided between Don Gaunt who won all 6 of the matches which he played and Roger Hayes who won 5 out of 6 there being no time to complete the 7th game. Our readers are invited to solve this situation - there are no prizes! There were several pegged out games which left a number of players bemused and befuddled. I suggest this type of game be practised by introducing in Clubs a competition on handicap (1/3 of bisque difference) in a best of 3, one player having his single ball for 1 back and the other 2 balls, one for 1st hoop and the other for 2. Maurice Reckitt instituted this game many years ago but it did not appear to catch on. Woking played it for the first time this year and it was greatly enjoyed as well as being instructive.

The weather was kind, only literally a few drops of rain and mist whilst I understand, other parts of the country had foul weather. There was a cloudburst at Seaford only a few miles away but Eastbourne lived up to its reputation for sunshine.

The catering was up to its usual very high standard, and of course the management was brilliant and the Manager was rewarded by a bottle of Champagne, whilst Eve Dalby won the Manager's bottle of gin in the Sundowner single ball handicap. The Manager stipulated that to claim the bottle a player had to contest 6 games to qualify and Eve was the only one to do so. Next year he will increase the minimum number!

Next year, subject to the CA Tournaments Committee approval, the format will change to handicap doubles each morning except the first, singles in the afternoon and the open handicap, limited to 16, played on its own, the first day reaching the final. So if you want to get in all the events and have a glorious week filled with Croquet, you must send in your entry early.

Thanks Compton and to all its members who worked so hard to make this the most enjoyable tournament which I have had the privilege of managing for 6 years.

- Devonshire Park Salver  
D Gaunt & R Hayes (shared)  
Luard Cup  
D Collins  
Trevor Williams Cup  
W Gillott  
Devonshire Park Cup  
D Gaunt  
Felixstowe Cup  
B P James  
Anna Milnes Salvers  
D Collins and Dr Parkins  
Gilbert Spoons  
D Gaunt & Mrs J E Lindfield



Cup Winners and Runners-up, Budleigh Salterton August Tournament

First ever pile up in Hunstanton - one casualty: Tournament Manager

When, turning into the park from the Kings Lynn road, you see Sarah Hampson's bicycle leaning against the gate you know you have arrived at Hunstanton Croquet Club. What was surprising on this occasion was to find the lawns were green, the result of a damp summer and a 22inch downpour two weeks previously. However, in this week the weather was fine and sunny and the lawns became quite fast as the tournament proceeded. With R.O.T., Nick Harris, setting tight hoops controlled breaks were difficult to achieve; but not impossible as Paul Day proved with a T.P. and a T.P.O.

The assembled players were a good mix of handicaps (-1 to 14) but disappointingly included only 4 home based players. Pat Hague brought two fellow club members from Ellesmere, cheerful ladies whom we hope to see again, and there were strong contingents from Ipswich and Letchworth. Play started at lunchtime on Saturday. Surprisingly only the first round of the X handicap was played that day. Was this the cause of a slight pile up of games on the following Wednesday? Monday saw the start of the blocks; 4 groups were divided by handicap, with A and B playing advanced and C and D handicap games. First round losers in the X entered the Y and there was a Z handicap for those with plenty of energy wanting more than the leisurely 2 games a day.

The highlight of the quarter finals of the X was Ian Mantle's defeat of Paul Day. Ian used his last bisque at hoop 4 and finished the game with a break to the peg and a peg-out. Roger Jackman had his chances against Duncan Hector but lost his concentration at

1 back and wasted his last two bisques. Duncan finished the game in style. When his brown ball had only just run penultimate with no chance of a forward rush, he roqueted pink just in front of the hoop, took off to green on the east boundary and cut rushed it to 1 foot in front of rover.

In her semi-final, against Ian Mantle, Claire Heritage proceeded steadily, often one hoop at a time, to peg and rover. Ian hit in and took his first ball to peg but in pegging out Claire's ball he let his own ball trickle on to the peg. With his other ball on 3 back he left himself too much to do. In the other semi-final Nigel Gray ("I wish I could always play like that") defeated Duncan Hector and despite using 2 bisques for the rover peel and peg-out still had 5 left. Duncan's comment "I take back all I've ever said about your play, ....."

The Y handicap semi-finals produced an easy win for Peter Alnutt over Jonathan Toye who was somewhat fazed by forgetting his glasses. David Coate's steady play wore down Sheila Meadows in spite of her 9 1/2 bisques.

In the final of the X Nigel Gray seemed to have lost his previous form and adopted over cautious tactics against Claire Heritage's six bisques. As he was unable to hit in, Claire often chose to ignore his balls altogether and proceeded, a hoop at a time, to build up a sufficient lead to enable her to win fairly comfortably by 8 on time. The final of the Y was, likewise, an in and out rather slow game but with the interest reserved for the end. Peter Alnutt was 3 hoops behind David Coates when time was called but in his last turn he achieved victory with

a splendid break of 5 hoops from 1-back. A clean sweep for the Ipswich Club.

Paul Day was the runaway winner of A block. A T.P. against Pat Hague (who was not at her best having played very little since May), a T.P.O. against Ian McClelland and a peg-out of both balls from corner 1 against Nick Harris being the highlights. B block could have been a 4 way tie but Beryl Gosden's +1OT win over Sheila Meadows in the last round proved decisive. Many of the games in this block were won by small margins & 12 of the 15 games also went to time showing how fast the lawns were and how tight the hoops. Would shortened games have produced more peg-outs?

The only black mark of the week goes to the pickpocket who blatantly walked into the gents changing rooms and helped himself. This necessitated them being kept locked resulting occasionally in frantic searches for the key. As usual the Hunstanton catering was excellent thanks to Sarah's early morning activities, her band of helpers and the gentleman who prepared coffee and did the washing up. What would croquet do without these volunteers? Prize giving at 5.15 gave us all an opportunity to thank our hosts and the manager, Martin Kolboszewski, for yet another splendid Hunstanton tournament.

The bad news first: It did rain during this Nottingham event. Generally, though, if you steered clear of mornings you hardly noticed wet weather. Ian Vincent's adaptable yet unobtrusive management could probably have meant everyone avoided the rain if that was what everyone wanted. Having suffered a slight back twinge the previous week I was happy to take advantage of Ian's flexible approach. Limited play was fine but it did make one a prime candidate for tournament reporter.

The six croquet events were almost equalled by the different social events. The formal dinner was held on Friday evening. Before that, Tuesday had seen a substantial barbecue. Tournament players were joined by members, guests, and a group just finishing a coaching course. More than 40 people in total, so considerable appreciation to Gordon Hopewell who organized and then produced the whole thing. Thursday saw a bridge and pizza evening. The success of Thursday can be gauged by the fact that for the rest of the week there was usually a bridge table in operation. All this, together with Tim Smith's successful debut as chief caterer, made for a very enjoyable week despite the rain.

Regular players - home and away - were here again; several determined to repeat good performances of the last 2 or 3 years. Lawrence Whittaker and Irvine Smith, for example, had retained the doubles trophy last year. They finally lost a game in the semi-finals this year to Richard Edwards and Philip Pawson. This was no disgrace as the final showed: Richard and Philip scored 26 points more than their opponents, Ian Vincent and Beatrice McGlen, and did so quickly too. Philip's play improved noticeably during the week. So much so that he reached the

previous evening, it was doubtful whether Elaine's cherishing would have restored his back.

Pam Arliss had been playing remarkably well, despite what looked like crippling and painful arthritis but she could take the Rawkins cup if she could maintain form in the game against Roland Henderson. Octogenarian Ted Owen, (and newly qualified referee determined to sort out the laws committee on the ambiguities in the little red book) playing as fast and erratically as is his wont, had clocked up 5 wins. But not sufficient to lift the trophy. Plymouth bandit, Stuart Orr and Gene Mears had better figures.

On the final day, adrenalin was flowing in the protagonists as play started under a threatening sky. Wet weather gear was donned, but then the heavens opened up. Firstly, play was stopped on the new lawn,

Sidmouth June Tournament by Hamish Hall

Anticlimax at Sidmouth

If there was any logic in determining the winner of the Apps Heley award, surely Sidmouth should be in the frame. Last year, tennis courts gave way to their fourth lawn: this year, lawn 1 has been levelled and turfled at a cost of over £4000, barely in time for the June tournament. Once bedded down, it should be a joy to play on, without the aggravation of balls trickling off the eastern boundary. But this year, it is not possible to cut the lawn to the recognized height, and the longish lush grass presented problems in long rushes and hoop approaches.

All three events had been played in American blocks, and were all in contention on the last day. If Michael Davis could score 12 points in his last game against Tony Dunston Smith, Southwick's Bill Arliss would win. If not, Tony would polish the silverware. But as poor Michael had hobbled off injured the

"Debbie Manoeuvre" surfaces again

With the Eights selections having just been made, the ranking paranoia was substantially relaxed among the top players for this event. The fourteen entrants, handicapped between -1.5 and 5, were drawn into a seeded knockout, Cornelius, Burridge, Palmer and Liddiard being the seeds.

The top half of the draw went as planned up to the semi-final but then Lewis Palmer came from a game down to beat Ian Burridge 4TP in the decider.

The bottom half was turned upside-down by Terry Burge who beat Debbie Cornelius and then Strat Liddiard in the semi-final. Against Debbie, Terry came from behind in a one ball ending to win by 2. Perhaps it should be mentioned that during this game, Debbie repeated her Opens gaffe of last year by going into third corner after running a lift

hoop!

The final, a best of five, was won by Palmer in straight games although Burge came close in the third going down by 3.

Patrick Hort was literally stung into action by a wasp on the first day and played very well beating a number of people including Burridge who made it a little easier for Patrick by peeling his opponent's ball from 1-back to 4-back in three consecutive short peeling turns. Ian claimed he was going for the fastest ever 6PO, 5PO and QPO and indeed they only lasted about 2 minutes each!

Nick Harris, in his own inimitable style collected his victories, also beating the unfortunate Burridge who this time on a straight TPO missed the eight yard peg-out and also the three yard peg shot. Nick finished from the contact, and went on to win the consol-

ation swiss.

The Harrow catering was excellent as usual with a selection of victuals from Sainsburys served on a plastic bag! This and Richard Hilditch's management always makes Harrow a very relaxing and enjoyable venue.

On the subject of food, it was interesting to note the unhealthy dietary preferences of the majority of the players, preferring white to brown bread. It was not until Dr Liddiard came in for his lunch that the brown bread was finally opened.

- From Quarter-finals
L Palmer bt Burge +17+26TP+3;
Burridge -22+3+4TP; Hilditch +22
TBurge bt Liddard +23+12; Cornelius +2
IBurridge bt Ames +11
SLiddard bt Bennett +9

Nottingham Week 9 - 14 August 1993 by Graham Fowler

Gordon Hopewell is efficiency incarnate: 3 games won +1 & a game pegged down with 1 marker

The bad news first: It did rain during this Nottingham event. Generally, though, if you steered clear of mornings you hardly noticed wet weather. Ian Vincent's adaptable yet unobtrusive management could probably have meant everyone avoided the rain if that was what everyone wanted. Having suffered a slight back twinge the previous week I was happy to take advantage of Ian's flexible approach. Limited play was fine but it did make one a prime candidate for tournament reporter.

The six croquet events were almost equalled by the different social events. The formal dinner was held on Friday evening. Before that, Tuesday had seen a substantial barbecue. Tournament players were joined by members, guests, and a group just finishing a coaching course. More than 40 people in total, so considerable appreciation to Gordon Hopewell who organized and then produced the whole thing. Thursday saw a bridge and pizza evening. The success of Thursday can be gauged by the fact that for the rest of the week there was usually a bridge table in operation. All this, together with Tim Smith's successful debut as chief caterer, made for a very enjoyable week despite the rain.

Regular players - home and away - were here again; several determined to repeat good performances of the last 2 or 3 years. Lawrence Whittaker and Irvine Smith, for example, had retained the doubles trophy last year. They finally lost a game in the semi-finals this year to Richard Edwards and Philip Pawson. This was no disgrace as the final showed: Richard and Philip scored 26 points more than their opponents, Ian Vincent and Beatrice McGlen, and did so quickly too. Philip's play improved noticeably during the week. So much so that he reached the

final of the C class event before losing to Roger Berkeley. Neither Philip nor Roger had played in the Nottingham week before, which was unusual. Barbara Noble, for instance, retained the D class trophy in a timed game against John Hansen. Arthur Weightman sought to defend the B class trophy and reached both finals, as did James Death; so they played what was effectively a best-of-three. James won the first, Arthur the second; the third was close: Arthur reduced James to one ball. Yet James was by now playing outrageously well; he hit in unbelievably at times: [Nigel] 'James has hit the red'; [Arthur] 'He could only see the red!'. So finally, victory to James.

James and Arthur could have played more often as both reached the semi-final stage of the knock-out section of the main handicap competition - the Robin Hood. Last year James had beaten Arthur in the final; this year Arthur lost in the semi-final to Richard Edwards. The other semi saw James playing Gordon Hopewell (to whom he himself had lost the Robin Hood two years ago).

Gordon was not quite ready to play James though. He was very much engaged in the Open event. Having completed a triple to defeat Ian Vincent in the semi-final of the draw, he was playing Peter Death. Moreover from being the odd inch away from defeat Gordon came back to win by 1. Lawrence Whittaker had beaten Ian in the final of the process. The match between Lawrence and Gordon was to be as close as Gordon's first. The result once more: Hopewell by 1.

Now Gordon was ready (if not exactly eager) to resume his semi-final against James. A point about the state of play, and how to peg down a game with three balls with one marker. James had gone to peg. Gordon had pegged him out. James had retired to third

corner. Gordon, with both balls around hoop 1, suggested to the manager that he make his roquet thereby meaning only one needed marking - since it was in the corner there was no need to mark James' ball. Having come through two difficult and tiring games, Gordon could have been forgiven for wilting. But although James had his chances Gordon triumphed again. The score, quite naturally, was plus 1. When was the last time you remember someone playing three games and winning all by the smallest margin?

The negative side of this was that it was only an hour short of darkness. Gordon was scheduled to play in the Mary Rose the following day, and substitutes were not available - one of us had a bad back, did I mention that (subtle eh Nigel), so the final was rearranged for Monday morning. Yes, Monday morning. As it happened the postponement may not have been necessary as Richard Edwards scored his 26 points rather quickly; indeed so quickly that Gordon had not replied.

In a way, though, this was not a week about winning and loosing, but welcoming some new faces and extra social activities to the Nottingham Club. Welcome changes indeed, and thanks to all involved, especially Gordon and Ian, for their industry and for making light of time-consuming chores.

A personal highlight of the week was watching Peter Hallet pick up a difficult break and proceed effortlessly to a devastating controlled leave: it will be unfortunate if there are no side-style players in the future.

- Event 1 (Robin Hood Cup - Handicap Singles)
Richard Edwards
Event 3 (B Level Singles)
James Death
Event 5 (D Handicap)
Barbara Noble

*Wine Tasting at the Croquet Pentathlon*

As the newcomers to this competition, the third of its kind hosted by the Surbiton Club, the Basingstoke team was invited to write the report. Since we are a small club with just 11 members and only one Council maintained lawn, few people will have heard of us, (until now) and so we regarded this invitation as a privilege.

We had entered solely for the experience, not entertaining any expectations of winning and had managed to include 9 of our 11 members over the two days, 5 of whom were beginners. We therefore found it most gratifying to have won 9 of our 25 matches.

There were teams from Surbiton (naturally), Woking, High Wycombe, Ipswich, Ealing and Basingstoke taking part in the five events. The Pentathlon was comprised of, advanced handicap singles, handicap doubles, full bisque singles, short croquet singles and one-ball handicap singles. The one-ball competition formed the grand finale of the tournament in which 5 players from each team took part simultaneously, triple banked in many cases! Hilarious chaos would not have been an unfair description.

Not all the clubs taking part had managed to field full teams, however. They were fortunate to make up their numbers with guests from the host club and visitors. High Wycombe, in particular, were one player short for the whole tournament so they conscripted the manager, Derek Caporn (6) for the Saturday. He was not expecting to play and had not brought any kit, so he played in his ordinary clothes. It was apparent that his performance could not have been satisfactory, however, because he was dropped from the team on the Sunday in favour of a scratch player, Dennis Shaw, who had by chance come along to watch, also without his whites. Life is a struggle for some.....!

Woking brought along their secret weapon, an enormous cigar, with James Wanklin on one end of it. Those of us old enough to remember thought he gave a creditable imitation of one of the Marx Brothers. Full marks (sorry) to James (4) though, having narrowly trounced Betty Rice (20) from the Basingstoke

Club, in the short croquet event, he proceeded to coach her to improve her stop shots in the time remaining.

During one of the doubles matches, a closely contested affair from all accounts, one pair of players were observed lying prostrate on the lawn near a hoop, apparently sighting a peel shot. 7 or 8 minutes later, they were still there! Well that is not strictly true; they had, in fact, exchanged places. An innocent by-stander was heard to ask, of no-one in particular, what they were doing. The sotto voce comment from one of their opponents was hard to discern, but it sounded rather like, "wine tasting". (Names have been suppressed to protect the guilty).

The prizes were presented in her own inimitable and charming manner by Eileen Shaw wearing one of her splendid hats. A make-shift podium had been created for this purpose and the winning teams were suitably dubbed with very handsome, beribboned medals. The gold medal team also received a bottle of champagne and each player, a glass goblet.

Ipswich won the gold medals by a convincing margin. The silver medals were won by High Wycombe (and guests) and the bronze went to Woking (and cigar).

The sun shone most obligingly throughout the tournament to enhance a most enjoyable weekend. Our sincere thanks to Derek Caporn for his competent stewardship of the proceedings and for keeping the events flowing smoothly. We were all very grateful to the Surbiton Club for their warm hospitality and in particular to their lady members who prepared and served the superb lunches. The Chicken Pentathlon was first class.

*Derek Caporn adds: I hope this type of competition will spread. The Worthing Fourplay in July is a good example. It brings into Tournament play those who have never played in Tournaments before. It can easily be run as Federation events. In the not to distant future I hope it may reach its pinnacle as a grand final to rival the Inter-Counties as a handicap event. Further details can be obtained from me.*

*We roqueted and croqueted  
Ran hoops by the score,  
Made Jump shots and stop shots  
Though rain, it did pour.*

*Rolls and drives and split strokes  
Were but child's play,  
Cut rushes were so easy  
We did them every day!*

*Until we met in combat  
What was it we were told?  
Set four ball breaks at outset  
How could we be so bold?*

*The mind is blank, spirits low,  
Balls never go where sent,  
The hoops, we're sure, have really shrunk  
Or else their legs are bent!*

*Our bisques forgotten, "TIME" is called,  
In panic miss the shot  
Opponent nips in very quick  
And run the blooming lot!*

*Our quarters, they were not "Four Star",  
But adequate and clean  
En suite bathrooms not the norm,  
What mattered when your keen?*

*They fed us well, we must admit,  
Three good meals a day,  
The walking kept us very fit  
It kept the flab at bay.*

*Our coaches worked so very hard  
They kept us on the hop  
The only snag, if now we're good  
Our handicaps will drop!*

B.T.

*Tom Anderson's "Never again!" after hurrying on wet croquet lawn*

Friday - Efforts to be on time frustrated by level crossing and a lumbering line of HGVs. Take alternative route but rejoin main road about 30 seconds too late. HGVs now preceded by tractor towing water tank. Arrive a few minutes late, but while walking through the orchard past the pond and the statue of Zeus am relieved to spot several other white-clad figures, so not alone.

First game is against Peter Dennis. Arrange his team of bisques in new 4-4-3-1/2 formation. Five are on their backs before the first point is scored. Take advantage of a fortuitous roquet peel at 2-back, some decent long hoop approaches and Peter's lack of practice on smooth short-grassed lawns to get home + 11.

After lunch, Len Gatenby. Only giving away 4 1/2 bisques this time, but Ian's handicap of 9 soon revealed to be on the generous side as he reels off textbook breaks. Consider side bet on him as block winner, but no bookie or odds available. Make three hoops before inevitable demise, Len still having bisques standing.

Last game today is against Mike Hammelev. I have a half bisque. He goes to 4-back and I follow. We both peel our partners through hoop 1 on the way - he on purpose and me by chance. As I turn to announce the taking of the half-bisque his hand is already poised over it. The plan goes awry in the first shot when the rush from corner 4 goes off the east instead of the north boundary. Thoughts of a previous encounter on this lawn in which I was successful fail to improve my aim, and I go down -11.

ROT Tom Anderson was called into action early in the day by a raised mallet on soggy lawn 5. He ran, he slipped. His clothes were soaked and his trousers stained (green) and for the rest of the day his attire was predominantly blue. Whether his language at the time of the incident was of a similar hue is not recorded. Other incidents of note included Ron Atkinson's attempted roquet from near hoop 2 at a ball halfway down the lawn towards hoop 1. The shot missed, but the ball went through hoop 1 to caress a ball waiting on the other side.

Later on the Chairman of the Handicapping Committee would have been pleased to see the goings-on on lawn 6, which had John Wheeler playing John Rustead and Howard Bottomley playing Bill Sidebottom. At one point there were five clips on the peg with the two players on the lawn both going for rover. John Rustead and Howard won by 4 and 2 respectively.

Saturday - Our club captain, Rod Ashwell, had declined to enter the tournament because he had to go to a wedding - his own. Have asked all the tournament entrants to take part in a commemorative photograph before the start of play today, all lined up with their mallets held up in an arch. Heartened by sunny skies as I set off in plenty of

time to set up the tripod and line things up.

Good mood lasts all of two minutes as blue smoke starts billowing from rear of car. AA diagnose fractured brake vacuum pump. Am towed to garage and given lift home. Call English Heritage and get a message sent down to manager Eric Audsley, who re-programmes the Swiss accordingly. Have time to do shopping and other domestic tasks that usually get ignored on tournament weekends. Wonder what amazing feats of skill are going unrecorded as I cut the grass and dead-head the roses. Healthy car returned in the evening, so play and photograph possible tomorrow.

Sunday - Eric tells me that according to the computer I played three games on Saturday and lost them all. He then relates the story of the game between the two Ians - Messrs. Mantle and Gatenby. Ian G was for the peg with both balls, Ian on 3 and 4-back. Ian M



had a technical lift - although blue could have easily hit black there was less than a ball's width between black and the hoop. Red and yellow were in baulk. Ian M lifted blue and went round. Ian G got back in, split up blue and black and pegged out red leaving yellow next to the peg. Ian M hit in from 30 yards and made steady progress as Ian G kept missing the peg. Ian M finally got black round but could only peg out black. Ian shot at blue from corner 2, hit and won + 1.

Am drawn to play John Rustead on lawn 5, which is shaded first thing in the morning and holds the dew. Giving away 7 1/2 bisques. Try Howard's opening by going into corner 1. Unbeknown to me John had had this done to him earlier in the tournament and promptly replied by going into corner 3. I take croquet from corner 1, approach the hoop and run it all too cleanly, leaving a decidedly dodgy return in the wrong direction. Decide to attempt hoop 2 instead and slide past on the right. Instead of taking croquet from his partner in corner 3 John plays from A bulk and needs a bisque to

get going. Partner is ignored until he fails to get position at hoop 4. Unconcerned, he shoots back at partner and hits, going on to complete an all-round break after pausing to check the conditions for a bronze award. Walk on for the fifth turn and, with first stroke, play the wrong ball. Quit the court, move chair round into sun. Consider analyzing reasons for error but give up after about five seconds. Ponder anew what the high bisquer can do as John carries on to win + 25.

It turned out he had been misinformed about the conditions for the award, as his adviser had said a twelve hoop break was required. In fact it is only 10. Had I won (for instance, after pegging out his forward ball), could he have claimed that he was playing while misled and would not have run penultimate and rover had he known the truth? One for our legal correspondents.

Last game is against Mike Percival, who is using one of his own splendidly inlaid mallets. Dramatic change in conditions, as lawn 1 is hard, fast and occasionally economical with the truth. Fail at hoops 2 and 3 when seeking control for a two ball break. Mike goes round smoothly until he fails at rover. Get back into the game and manage impressive take-off from corner 3 to within a few feet of his balls in corner 1. Make 2-back, but the perfect rush to 3-back is over hit, likewise the approach. Stick in the hoop and Mike takes advantage, finally winning +8.

Set up camera pointing down the lawns towards the Long Water and the Archer Pavilion. After the prize giving, with grateful thanks to the weather and the BBCC (Bottomley & Bottomley Catering Corporation), all those that are left come out and raise their mallets, and the deed is done. Watch the closing stages of the last game of the tournament - Peter Smith versus Steve Harbron. It had looked all over for Peter earlier on as he was well behind and Steve was for peg and rover. Steve has trouble with the rush to rover and allows Peter to make up ground, but he finally gets one right and goes on to peg out black. Peter takes advantage of Steve's failures to peg out by going round until he has yellow in position for rover with red (for peg) waiting close by. Steve shoots but his ball cannons off rover. Peter's peg out fails, leaving red vs blue, and Peter is the first to get there winning + 1 just before seven o'clock.

The winners? Derek Powell and Don Cornelius won their blocks, and in the Swiss Ian Gaténby had 7/8 and David Woolley 6/7. The inconsistency was due to the fact that David had been unable to play on Friday and had persuaded Vic Rees to play instead, but the computer somehow failed to take account of the fact that Ian had played three times on Friday and Vic had only played twice. As David had beaten Ian he was awarded the prize.

**Colchester Over 50 Handicap w/e 1-3 October**

*Senior players clear up after accidents at the foxtrot*

Colchester's October Over 50 handicap swiss tournament got off to a slow start, the first delay being caused by the local foxes, which had uprooted several hoops and dug various holes in their nightly search for worms, the second by two separate road accidents which delayed the arrival of six of the players

from Havering by up to 45 minutes.

Heavy showers marred the first day's enjoyment, but Saturday and Sunday saw blue skies and sunshine, in marked contrast to many parts of the country.

Overall winners was Mary Cook from Bristol, who won five out of six games and

earned a handicap reduction from 16 to 14 in the process, while Bill Lamb was runner-up with an undefeated four wins from four games.

- 1. Mrs M Cook, 5/6
- 2. W Lamb, 4/4
- 3. Mrs J Burgin, CB Sanford, R Atkinson, J Burgin, 4/6

**A PICTURE SPEAKS A THOUSAND WORDS!**

*Shorter tournament reports and more photos would make your readers more happy and create room for a greater number of reports. From 1994 only tournament reports submitted on computer disk or typewritten will be accepted for publication.*