

## THROUGH THE HOOP

... paper floodgates open ... HQ fights off a takeover by Development Chairman! ...  
... to Solihull for a working weekend ... and Farewell Roger ... Welcome Paul ...

The past month has seen the Office at full throttle. First, the despatch to individual members of the '94 Membership Card with, where appropriate, the Fixtures Book, and accompanying bits and pieces. Next, the All Clubs despatch with the Club copy of the Fixtures Book plus an assortment of literature from various sources. Running concurrently with that lot the Office was blessed/cursed (please delete as appropriate!) with the presence of Syd Jones the CA Development Committee Chairman. He took over the photocopier to turn out the 200 plus copies of the Secretary's Handbook - and the photocopier took one look at the intending workload and had an attack of the vapours! Marie de Laurey, our irrepressible Girl Friday

became our irrepressible Girl Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, organising Syd, (and the rest of us!) and helping to overcome the difficulties presented by a succession of unrelated but nevertheless potentially disastrous incidents.

At the end of a period which is but a blurred memory the CA can thank Marie de L, Roger Jackman (of whom more later), and SOJ for their Herculean efforts and, perhaps ponder, albeit briefly, on the thinness of the shoestring on which we run our business.

To Solihull for a Development Committee meeting on the Saturday and the 1994 Federation Conference on the Sunday. The former was a good, workmanlike affair attended by both Council reps and Federation Secretaries while the latter, well

attended by some 30 plus Associates from Federations and Council - and Chaired in his usual urbane fashion by Colin Irwin - provided a forum for some lively debate and positive comment. There will be a report for the magazine in due course but I am sure that all who attended will back me when I congratulate Syd Jones on the success of the weekend which was a direct result of a prodigious amount of preparation on his part. (That'll be £5.00 please SJ)

Finally, the bad news first. Roger Jackman takes his leave of us at the Office after many months of painstaking effort involving difficult travelling to and fro and hours of 'own time' work on behalf of the CA. His all-round involvement at the Office has been invaluable but the system he set up to oversee this

year's issue of membership cards and fixtures books has been particularly noteworthy. Of the 1200 to 1300 cards sent out the error rate is well below one per cent which, given the minimal resources available, is remarkable. Knowing my man, he won't thank me when he reads this but what the Hell! He's done a fine job for the CA and will be sorely missed.

The good news is that we have a successor in Paul Champion of Roehampton Club who actually said he was looking forward to working in the CA Office, a remark I equate to seeking the post of General Custer's bugle boy!! Anyway, welcome aboard Paul, your crossword solving skills will be useful in dealing with some of the more bizarre demands made on us here at HQ.

Tony Antenen

## POET'S CORNER

*The tournament starts*

*It's dawn when the bell tolls,  
Where to? this misty morn,  
Down the road? Far afield?  
Which flat or borrowed lawn?*

*Gather one's kit, breakfast devour,  
Late as usual, what's been forgotten?  
Prepare for the oncoming hours,  
Not so good, feeling rotten.*

*Arrive with only minutes to spare,  
What's the format? When and where?  
Who's the opponent? are they good?  
Not down as low as perhaps they should.*

*Advanced the rules, finished off fast,  
Shake hands, collect balls and clips,  
Return to the club house for repast,  
Where liquid gold wets the lips.*

*Diminutive and dainty, that's Min Peach,  
Her handicap obtained in a raffle;  
With looks like venus, she's out of reach,  
As each hoop I make, she makes double.*

*Game three begins straight after tea,  
Four of us set to do battle.  
It's an even game, played shot for shot,  
With everyone true to their mettle.*

*Dusk begins to gather around,  
Lights appear across the town.  
First day finishes, as per usual,  
Won one, lost one and one pegged down.*

W. Heaton-Ward

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# croquet

MAGAZINE ISSUE 232



## Through the Hoop!

Brian MacMillan & Ron Welch

Working to ensure a bright new future for croquet

APRIL 1994

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Royal Residences for Rent; A host of CA Silverware; Book early for coaching & the World Championship

## 'Croquet' back numbers

The CA has a stock of some issues - largely since 1970 - which is an embarrassment to the office because of the space they occupy. If any member of the Association is interested in acquiring back numbers of 'Croquet' will they please contact *A. J. Oldham, Terriers Green, Terriers, High Wycombe, Bucks HP13 5AJ. Tel 0494 -526527.*

Mr Oldham would also be interested from any Associate wishing to dispose of old copies (particularly bound volumes) of 'Croquet' dated prior to 1965 because he wishes to strengthen the library archives. The post 1964 stock also needs augmenting in a few instances.

## Loughborough Summer School

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

The course is restricted to Associate members of the Croquet Association. Details of how to join the CA may be obtained from Tony Antenen at the CA Office (Tel: 071 736 3148). Short lawns (24yds by 16yds) will be used throughout the course.

Fee: Tuition £160  
Accommodation £105

Date: 1st - 5th August, 1994.

A brochure giving details of the Loughborough Summer School can be obtained from: *Mrs Shirley Sandover, Loughborough Summer School, Loughborough University of Technology, Loughborough, Leics, LE11 3TU. (Tel: 0509 222773).*

The course, now in its 8th year, has proved to be extremely popular and worthwhile. All bookings for the Loughborough Summer School should be made through Mrs Sandover. Please apply early to make sure of your place, as the course has often been oversubscribed in the past.

## Grass germination sheets

Tildenet, the Bristol-based international netting company now well-known for its unique, patented grass germination sheet, has introduced a lighter, cheaper version which will make large projects more viable.

Effective all the year round, Tildenet Grass Germination sheet speeds up germination, extends re-seeding periods, and encourages rapid, uniform growth. At the same time it protects the seed from wind and frost, pests and bright sunlight, and helps retain moisture by reducing evaporation.

The new lighter version performs all the same functions as the original product but has been designed primarily for large landscaping or re-seeding projects

where its manoeuvrability and price make it a more viable option. *Sheelagh Capstick-Dale, 0272 669684*

## Country house dream

Many people dream of living in an historic country house but few have the resources to maintain one. This was the problem highlighted by Rear-Admiral Bernard Wilberforce Greathed in a letter to the Observer newspaper in 1955. His solution was to let apartments in such houses as living accommodation for people from compatible backgrounds and so the Country Houses Association was born.

Nearly forty years later the Association (which owns 9 restored & listed houses in the South of England) still upholds the same two prime objectives:- firstly to save for the benefit of the nation, outstanding houses of historic or architectural interest and secondly to help breathe new life into them by creating apartments within the houses for use as residential accommodation.

The Association believes that the residents, who are mostly retired, should be put first. All meals are provided, along with cleaning and laundry services. Guest rooms are available. Potential residents are encouraged to stay to experience the way of life.

Houses range from the Elizabethan to the Gothic, from the Palladian to the Victorian. Behind these facades each has a library, one has a ballroom where the exiled Louis XVIII of France held court, another a great hall where the War Cabinet of Lloyd George met.

Apartments available for a returnable capital

sum of £25,000 - £65,000 and a monthly charge of £800 - £1,750 inclusive. *Fiona Dean, 071 836 1624*

## Association of Bridge-playing Croqueteers

The ABC will be holding its third weekend tournament at Cheltenham Croquet Club on June 25th & 26th. For those new to the idea of bridge-croquet events, it will involve some doubles croquet (advanced and handicap), combined with teams-of-four bridge. A team must prove its skill in both disciplines in order to win the competition.

The original concept of a bridge-croquet tournament occurred to Chris Bennett of Edgbaston. As many other bridge-playing croqueteers, he had often been frustrated when, about to settle down for a Sunday afternoon rubber, some croquet manager had called him away to play a consolatory Swiss game. Why not, he thought, hold a tournament where bridge is given equal priority, and is fully incorporated into the order of play? So it was that at the start of last season, six pairs gathered at Edgbaston to play croquet into the night and bridge into the next morning.

This first event was won by Debbie Cornelius & Steve Comish. In the second event, held last October at Colchester, Chris Clarke & Ian Burridge came first of nine pairs.

For further details of the Cheltenham event, and for a copy of FINESSE, which is the organ of the Association of Bridge-playing Croqueteers, please contact *Andrew Gregory at 79 Cambridge Road, Waterbeach, Cambridge, CB5 9NJ or telephone 0223 573560.*

'Croquet' No. 231 (April 1994) PRICE £2.50 Cover "Through the Hoop" Produced by Eastern Rose Publishing for Publication every other month throughout the year by the Croquet Association Written contributions on computer disk (any IBM compatible format ASCII text) or typed and photographs/illustrations preferably black & white are welcome and should be sent to the Editor at the Publisher's address Ordinarily the copy date is the 20th of the month 2 months before publication Tournament results & reports should be sent via the CA Secretary any correspondence about non-delivery of the magazine should also be addressed to the CA Secretary Advertising details (rates etc.) are available from 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, D L Gaunt, B C MacMillan Design/Typesetting Eastern Rose Film Imagesetting, Printing & Binding via Eastern Rose Eastern Rose Publishing 17 Wroxham Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP3 0PH (tel 0473 253950) The Croquet Association The Hurlingham Club Ranelagh Gardens London SW6 3PR (tel: 071 736 3148) Secretary L W D Antenen Chairman C J Irwin An official publication of the Croquet Association. The views expressed are those of the Editor and his contributors.

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## The Lady Murray Vases

These particularly beautiful matching vase-shaped cups were presented to the CA in 1929 by Sir George Murray, a popular manager of the day, in memory of his wife. They are awarded to the winners of the mixed doubles event in the Peels. Unfortunately one of them was stolen from the holder in 1975 in a burglary at her home. Council, at that time, decided not to replace it and ever since then the winning doubles pair have had to share the single remaining cup.

Last year thanks to the enthusiasm and generosity of Hugh Smorfit it was found possible to create a replica of the missing cup, the balance of cost to be met by the CA itself and by an appeal to previous

winners of the trophies. Contributions have been received from the following persons and are hereby gratefully acknowledged:-

Derek Caporn, Stephen Mulliner, Don Cornelius, David & Eileen Magee, Elinor Grant, Edgar Jackson, John Solomon, Bernard Neal, Edward Dymock, Barbara Meacham, Jim Townsend, Chris Osmond and others who wish to remain anonymous.

The appeal is still open and if any other member of the CA is willing to contribute, any such donation (£10 to £20 was suggested in the appeal) would be gratefully received and acknowledged in 'Croquet'.

Cheques should be drawn in favour of The Croquet Association and sent to *Alan Oldham, Terriers Green, High Wycombe, Bucks HP13 5AJ.*



## The Devonshire Park Salver

This large silver salver was presented by the Devonshire Park Company in 1922 as a Challenge Prize (level Play Class B) in the former Devonshire Park Tournament. In recent years it has been awarded to the winner of the 2nd division of the primary event in the South of England Week Tournament at Compton.

The signatures of the winners have always been engraved in facsimile on the salver but by 1993 there was no space remaining for this practice to continue. Council therefore commissioned a mahogany case to house the salver and enable the names of future winners to be recorded on silver plates fixed to the inside of the lid. The lid also bears an inscription giving the date the case was provided by the CA



and acknowledging the generous donation towards its cost by the Mayor of Eastbourne, Councillor A E Leggett.

The honour of winning the trophy in its new enhanced form was divided in 1993 and so the first names to appear 'off the salver' were therefore Don Gaunt and Roger Hayes.

Thanks are due to Roger Hayes for

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arranging the construction of the case, to Roger Jackman for further cabinet work inside it and to Denis Shaw who was able to interest the Mayor of Eastbourne in the matter.

## Stage set for outstanding World Championship

10th -17th August, 1994

Carden Park, 6 miles south of Chester, will be the venue for the 5th World Championship to be staged under the auspices of the World Croquet Federation.

Carden Park is one of England's newest sporting Estates. It was chosen to host an array of Olympic sports for Manchester's Millenium bid, and provides an ideal setting for a World Championship.

Carden Park's 1200 acres in rural Cheshire offer a host of country and leisure pursuits for guests, from Shooting and Fishing to Golf and Hot air ballooning.

The 83 rooms of the Birches Hotel, designed around 3 rustic courtyards, provide 5 star quality (tel 0829 731000). Offers for the Championship include: **Club groups** - day packages including 3 course lunch

at "Le Croquet", restaurant which overlooks the lawns, and a grandstand seat for £20 per person. **Overnight stays** - from £28.50 per person per night (meals extra). Discounts available for early bookings and large parties.

Two small lawns will be available throughout the Championship for visitors. Two "Croquet Classic" competitions will be played each day, consisting of blocks of 4 people, for those who have never had a handicap of 18 or less.

There will be an extensive social programme during the Championship, including a civic reception and visits to the outstanding local attractions.

Entry alone to the ground will be £6.50 per day, but the various package deal available are recommended.

Chris Hudson has more details: 0270 820296.

## Coaching 1994

**Grade 2** (intermediate): Techniques and tactics for CA members of handicap 6 to 14. Courses will be held at Southwick 7-8 May and Hunstanton 4-5 June. Fee £23.50 incl. VAT.

**Grade 3** (advanced): Introduction to advanced play, for CA members of handicaps 4

to 9. All aspects of advanced play will be treated, except expert topics such as the triple peel. A course will be held at Cheltenham on 14-15 May. Fee £29.38 incl. VAT.

Applications as soon as possible to: Tim Haste, 81 Blackbird Close, Creekmoor, Poole, Dorset BH17 7YB, stating name, address, telephone number, club handicap, category of CA membership, SAE and cheque payable to the CA.

**National Junior Squad:** Given sufficient interest, one under-21 squad will be run this year. Nominations are requested before the end of April from clubs and individuals.

Nominated players should be under the age of 21 on 1st January 1994, and have handicaps 8 or below. Planned events include a 2-day advanced play coaching weekend and a match against a CA Select side, dates and venues to be arranged in the latter half of the season to suit players needs. Nominations and any enquiries please to Tim Haste.

## CA Coaching Awards

The address for claiming CA coaching awards (bronze, silver,

gold) is now: Chris Clarke, 50 Chagny Close, Letchworth, Herts SG6 4BY.

## Sporting China

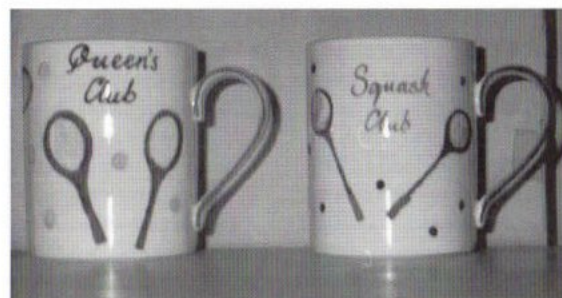
For all those sporting fanatics with every gadget, ONGLAZE have come up with something original. Hand painted china has taken on a whole new dimension and entered the world of sport.

Racehorse owners now have ashtrays, mugs, plates, vases etc with their own racing colours hand painted on. Rowers can have similar products with their colours, as can Polo players, football players and even football supporters.

How about a mug with your favourite fishing fly, or a plate with your treasured brand of skis?

Onglaze has the perfect gift solution for the person who has everything. By painting to commission, there is nothing they can't capture on the side of a mug, or a plate, or a vase ...

Imaginative, skilled, well priced and conveniently situated in South Kensington, ONGLAZE makes the perfect place for present buying. Kate Kimmins, Parker Holt Associates, 071 584 1744



## OBITUARIES

### Ian Wilkinson

Tracy Park croquet sustained a great loss by the sudden death of Ian Wilkinson on January 30th.

Although in the relatively short time he had played croquet, he made many friends. He was a sportsman and a great Ambassador for croquet. He will be sadly missed in the game.

JWE

### Mr R H C Carder

known as 'Bob', passed away on Friday 11th February 1994 at the Alderney Hospital, Poole, Dorset.

Bob had been a member of the East Dorset Tennis and Croquet Club since 1952 as a tennis player. In 1962 he became club secretary and served until 1977, he was then made Life President. He took up croquet in 1969 and played until the 1993 season.

After Bob's funeral his wife, Joan, gave me all the croquet books and papers he had accumulated over the years. Amongst these papers I found the following poem, written by him, which I think sums up the man.

John Simmonds

*The memoirs of a croquet coach  
(Unqualified with apologies to poets)*

Who ever would a coaching go,  
with mallets balls and clips,  
to talk of rushing things about,  
and Bisques to cover slips?

Old and young it matters not,  
it just depends on what you've got.  
To make a hoop you must take care,  
to see your head does not hit air.

And when it comes to croqueting  
you must remember just one thing,  
the position of the striker's ball  
will certainly decide it all.

To take off here or split them there  
requires some thought and also flair,  
and then the roll, so difficult,  
to learn to do without a fault.

So why do I give so much time  
to teaching those who seem so blind?  
Just say it simply is sublime  
occasionally to coach a "FIND".

Bob Carder (Parkstone Club)

## Selsdon Park (Croydon) gets into the swing

Already well known for its excellent sporting facilities and Golf course, Selsdon Park are going into croquet in a big way.

Previously they had one lawn used by guests at the hotel, they have now added three more and have room for additional lawns when necessary. They have also taken on as advisor and professional coach Ron Welch.

Not only are they supporting National Croquet Day but are having an Open Day on Sunday 17th April with a follow up on the

Wednesday 20th April in the evening for those who cannot attend on the Sunday. This will give the opportunity for the public to go along and swing a mallet.

They hope to hold an Open Golf Croquet tournament in August for the Selsdon Park Cup, which it is hoped will be the first of many. Details can be obtained from the Sports Office, Selsdon Park, Addington Road, Sanderstead, South Croydon, Surrey CR2 8YA. Telephone 081 657 8811 or from the Croquet Association Office, 071 736 3148.

Why not go along and give your support? (This month's front cover shows Brian MacMillan and Ron Welch at Selsdon Park.



"I SEE YOU FAVOUR THE IRISH GRIP"



Carden Park

# REFORMERS

A cry to preserve croquet in amber; doubts about the reformed magazine; wowing out on coloured balls in the nineties.

## Done that!

Dear John,  
Reference letter in February Croquet from Stuart Daddo-Langlois headed 'Come on Council', regarding the publicising of Council members names and meetings.

Good news! We've done it!

All Clubs will, on paying their registration fee this year receive for the use of all their members a 'CLUB REGISTRATION PACK'. This gives lots of information and help and includes a full list of all Council members and election dates plus membership of all C.A. Committees and meeting dates.

We do listen to members and will continue to listen to all comments and ideas for the Pack which will be updated annually.

Syd Jones Chairman,  
Development Committee.

## Back to Basics!

Dear John  
Whilst it might be a dangerous path to tread in politics, in the more important world of croquet, I do think it's time to call a halt to the wacky ideas and get back to our roots.

I believe that what many members would like the CA to focus on is improving the *quality* of croquet, not changing the *character* of croquet. The several proposals for changing the game and creating yet more variations to make it more exciting to televise, or whatever, all miss the point. I think that CA members are more concerned with the quality of things like club facilities, lawns and equipment, coaching and refereeing, handicapping and tournament organisation, rather than with efforts to develop the game into something different.



*"thank goodness there is Dorothy Rush to restore some grace and elegance to your pages!"*

Likewise, in Croquet 230, the editorial called for changes to the laws of advanced play, because some of the top events were one-sided in 1993. After 5 or so years being around the top of the sport, I cannot recall being involved in *that* many games which went +26 one way or the other. Some did, but often because one or other player made errors or failed to capitalise on opportunities. And it has to be remembered that the other 200 people playing advanced play probably find the format fine as it is. The remedies to the problem described in the editorial continue to be tight hoops and fast lawns - the report of the event in question in Croquet 231 reveals in the opening paragraph that the lawns were easy and the hoops wide. Get the conditions right - don't change the laws!

The lesson the CA Council and the Croquet gazette needs to take on board is that members want the CA to make things better for *them*, rather than chase some elusive vision of a bigger and better (and different) membership, if only they can get the game's character "right".

yours Luddite-itudinously,  
Martin French

PS: thank goodness there is Dorothy Rush to restore some grace and elegance to your pages!

## The new magazine

Dear John,  
The June 1993 edition of 'Croquet' included a readership survey questionnaire. The editorial explained: "Croquet is standing at a crossroads .... I look forward to the results of this largest ever reader consultation exercise, and to the exciting prospect of the new magazine it will create". In October we were

still looking forward to seeing the results but had to be satisfied with an assurance that processing was in hand. December: nothing; February: nothing.

Croquet is still standing at those crossroads. Do the results of the survey contain unpalatable truths? Have the results been conveniently buried?  
Meanwhile the CA mouthpiece continues to serve the elite at the expense of the rank and file. In the February edition no fewer than five pages headed "Creme de la Creme - British Masters and Selection Events" were accompanied by a two page article on what to do about the game being too easy.

It may be too easy for our top two dozen players but the country's other 6,976 players find croquet challenging. Furthermore they want a magazine that meets their needs and interests. Come on editor; you asked what your readers want, now tell us what you have discovered.

Yours sincerely,  
Kevin Carter, Beenham

*The Editor replies: On the first point, of the questionnaire: while it was pleasing to have some 150 forms returned, processing these into meaningful statistics has been difficult because of the many and varied ways that respondents completed them. A large number contained just a few ticks; a significant number used the opportunity just to jot down a few comments; those who completed it in the manner I hoped for - precisely to allow for a "scientific" statistical summary that could be published - were in a minority. Nevertheless I will attempt to find a way of abbreviating responses so that something can be published in the magazine. In the meantime one of the*

*clearest impacts of the survey returns, all of which were read and taken careful note of by the Editor, can be seen in each issue of the magazine!*

*I am surprised that you feel the magazine has not changed significantly since the survey. It is an opinion unique amongst anyone I have spoken to. Regarding the February issue, the five pages you refer to covered 5 invitation events containing some 50 players. I suspect that even the most hardened critic of "Top Class Coverage" in the magazine might accept that croquet's premier event (The 'Masters') receives a little more space than other tournaments, and this apart the events in that section received a similar amount of space to any other event. I would appeal to tournament reporters to avoid unnecessary verbosity and point out that recently the only report I have cut at all was that of the 'Masters'! All other reports received, high or low, have been published in full. The editing down of reports was heavily criticised when I instituted that policy, so now I appeal to reporters to be their own editors! Also, one issue of 'Croquet' may contain several pages of tournaments, others (like this one) will contain none.*

*The idea of cutting reports on top events altogether would require CA Council permission. A new-style Editorial Committee will soon be in operation - its purpose, to act as a conduit for readers of the magazine to the Editor. However while I am able to continue the current practice, the way to get something covered in the magazine is quite simple: write it yourself and send it in!*

*I fear that you have missed altogether the point about creating a new version of croquet. Eric Solomon's original recommendations encompassed ALL LEVELS, and the idea was stimulated by a desire to create a shorter more snappy game for everyone (and it is the very*

*highest handicapped players - not the minus players - who would sometimes most welcome a shorter snappier game!). In addition, it would be in all our interests if we could encapsulate croquet into a "spectator sport" form. Who knows; if the game played by the best players was more interesting, perhaps even you might be more interested to watch and read about it!*

## A kind of Magic

Sir,  
I was fascinated to read the long discussions of proposed needs to change the game in Croquet No. 230. Many of them forestall wearily long contributions by me! I have a raft of alternative games prepared, but no good tournament game for two yet; I have been concentrating on games for 4 or more.

Your own criticism of present-day competition Association Croquet tallies with my own, except that I do not admit that it creates an unfair situation - merely a tedious one. It is becoming a problem when even other players lose interest in watching a game that has never attracted the public.

What is really irritating, is that the more routine games are considered the better ones. These good games share the property, once ascribed to the music of Wagner, of containing great moments and very dull quarters of an hour. And most less 'surgical' games merely contain more errors: few are of interest to the connoisseur of tactics. We are deceiving the public, which is not just a gallery, but the source of future players: the vaunted sophistication and intellectuality of croquet is in practice a rarity.

The following is no criticism of coaches - I share the blame, and have no quick answer:



*"good games share the property, once ascribed to the music of Wagner, of containing great moments and very dull quarters of an hour"*

Most people taking up croquet are attracted to it as a sort of occult art, rather than by the actual features of Association Croquet, which they only learn about later. Why, then, do so many of the game's proponents seek to dispel the first impression? Watch any beginner feeling his or her way around the hoop: they are obsessed with all sorts of psychic subtleties and obscure manoeuvres. We laugh indulgently. They will learn, we say, that these things are not a "percentage play". The four-ball break's the thing. And we go and tell them so. Years of plain four-ball breaks later, the very same players learn with wonder of straight peels, laying for rush-peels, funny-looking leaves, and so on: the very things they yearned for when they first saw croquet. But how many survive to this point? The point is, that croquet is magic. The rolling of coloured balls across smooth turf is fascinating. Cannons, rush-peels, and cheeky leaves are fun. Sitting down to watch your opponent play for 20 minutes at a time isn't, and the perverse pleasure of knowing that later, you will subject them to the same ordeal is surely not the great sport that our marvellous game promises!

What price Dawson balls now, eh John? Actually, Dawson balls, except brand new ones, are no more difficult to peel than any others - just different.

Lionel Wharrad's turn-limits are excellent. I and a few others have been using a similar idea for advanced practice games for some time. Our idea is, that if the game lasts more than, say, 4 turns without a ball being pegged out, it is just too awful, and should be abandoned!

I thank Mr Cameron for his remarks and

verse, which I enjoyed. Being Irish, I have no problem with using figures of speech, and indeed, count it an achievement to say a thing plainly. But personification or transfer of attributes will surely succumb in the rigorous climate of the Laws book. For example, although "the jaws of a hoop" started life as a metaphor, it was swiftly embalmed in a definition [Law 2(b)2]. I would be glad to hear of other examples of poetry in the Laws.

sincerely yours,  
Simon Williams,  
Carrickmines

## Q & A

Dear Sir,

I am semi-disabled from spinal surgery, heart complaint and blood disorder. Having reached the big five-o, and been an International Rugby Player, International standard Javelin thrower, Cricket County colt, Cross-country District Champion, County Golfer, Silverstone Sports car Champion, Snooker Club Champion, District Table Tennis Champion and Area League footballer, I decided to try croquet! After five years of two games a week, one six day tournament and three week-end tournaments per season, I am now 2 handicap and play for Warwickshire. Besides blowing my own trumpet I thought that a few comments from someone who has come down the ladder fairly quickly and who has had a number of dealings with various committees and rule queries over many years, might be of some use.

1. Although there is a CA pamphlet of rules etc for beginners, I would suggest that it would be useful in order to enrol casual watchers etc if there was a very simple

# LEADERS

pamphlet available that easily explained the object of the game and the means by which the balls are moved about in a four ball break.

2. A considerable bone of contention in many games and at all standards is: did the ball move in a fine take-off croquet shot? It is so easy for balls to spring apart and more often than not, the player does not see because he is looking elsewhere. Placing an inverted golf tee peg on the object ball for thin take-offs would solve this problem.

3. Playing in a tournament last year, I asked for a particular jump shot to be watched by a referee/International player. My opponent broke the lawn surface and was not faulted. When I queried the decision with the referee later on, he replied that there had not been intent. I consider this as being incorrect.

4. I personally do not think that the taper of hoops should be allowed to be taken advantage of. In other words jump shots through the hoops should only be allowed when baulked by another ball.

5. Advanced handicap play is a good thing. I cannot for the life of me see any difficulty over bisques. If you incur the same lift and contact rules as in normal advanced play, whether with the use of bisques or not then what's the problem?

6. The handicap system gives a very good basis but as pointed out in several articles in the magazine, there are a number of intrinsic faults. Rightly or wrongly I was pulled from 11 - 5 handicap on general play, correctly in my opinion. At one tournament which I won I was pulled 3 shots and when I said 'is that all', I was told that there were lots of sharks on the tournament circuit. Clubs are the best



place for general play alterations, but sometimes they are wary of cutting National Club event players. Following several complaint letters in the magazine, there was a reply to the effect: "We are not aware of there being a problem." Well there is a problem and someone should ask around tournaments and clubs. I for one doubt whether I shall play handicap events again. Last year five times in one tournament I only played three shots and my handicap went up too.

7. I would request from the mathematical, ball bounce genius, that he might draw up a peeling chart covering: distance of peel, angle of peel, power of hit, surface type, wear etc, rain effect etc. I wait in anticipation please!

W. Heaton-Ward

This letter was distributed to the relevant Committee Chairmen for reply, however none have done so. I shall do my best with some of your questions: 1. There have been a number of such spectator pamphlets, usually available at 'big' events - the CA Office should be able to help you. 3. For lawn damage to be a fault it must be a) a likely outcome given the nature of the shot and b) have been caused directly by the mallet (ie not by the ball). 4. Jump shots through hoops are not simply an attempt to take advantage of a wider gap near the top: a perfectly executed jump shot through a very angled hoop will 'stick' at the top but be spinning because of the jump; when it drops to the ground (in the jaws) the spin carries it through.

## AHS Table

Dear John,  
When the AHS was extended to level play, I welcomed it with open arms, but soon noticed that the calculation of Index change, with its several steps, was susceptible to accidental

errors (eg using handicap difference instead of steps difference).

Because of this I created the tables on the enclosed sheet, which I have been using for the past two seasons. Perhaps you may care to publish them in the magazine for the benefit of other players.

The cross-reference table stops at handicap 8 for reasons of manageability and the fact that not many players of higher handicap will be playing level. the HSV table caters for all handicaps, obsolescent ones being marked with a cross.

Yours sincerely,

David Harrison-Wood, Poole

## HANDICAP STEPS DIFFERENCE

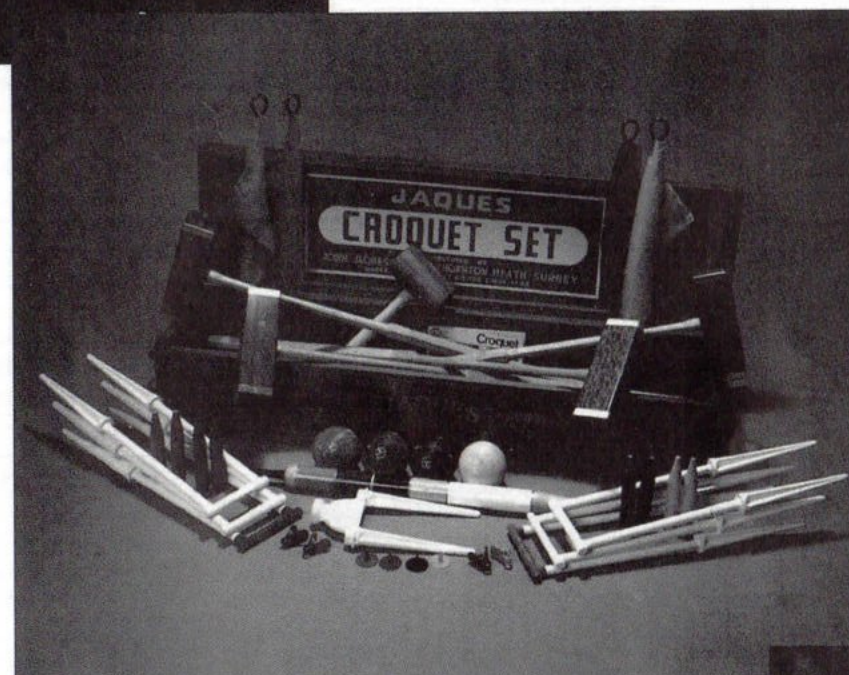
Associated with each handicap is a notional Step Value (HSV). To find the Handicap Steps Difference use the table on the right to obtain the HSV for each player's handicap and subtract them, then refer to the Level Play Table to find the Index Change arising from the match. Alternatively, use the cross reference table below to obtain the Index Change directly. Where there are two values given, the first applies when the lower-handicapped player wins; the second applies when the higher-handicapped player wins.

-2	-1.5	-1	-0.5	0	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5	5.5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8
10	6/14	2/17	2/18	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19
	10	7/13	4/16	3/17	2/18	2/18	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19
		10	7/13	5/15	4/16	3/17	3/17	2/18	2/18	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19
			10	8/12	7/13	6/14	5/15	4/16	3/17	3/17	2/18	2/18	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19
				10	9/11	8/12	7/13	6/14	5/15	4/16	3/17	3/17	2/18	2/18	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19
					10	9/11	8/12	7/13	6/14	5/15	4/16	3/17	3/17	2/18	2/18	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19
						10	9/11	8/12	7/13	6/14	5/15	4/16	3/17	3/17	2/18	2/18	1/19	1/19	1/19	1/19
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																				10



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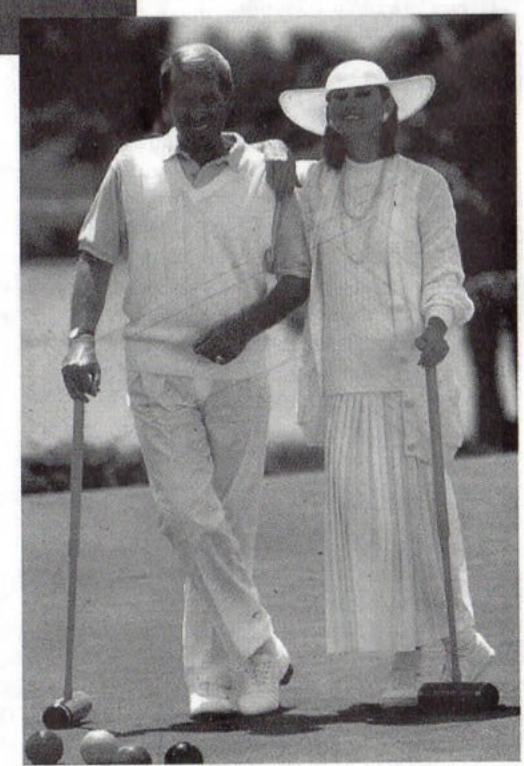
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# FULL bisque handicaps

## Top CA Manager Christine Irwin presents her findings after a statistical analysis of 1500 results

In a letter to "Croquet" Issue No 224 (December 1992), Margaret Jones questioned whether higher handicapped players were disadvantaged in full-bisque games. Her argument being that a lower handicapped player could do far more with their bisques than the higher handicapped player.

Bill Lamb as Chairman of the Handicap Co-ordination Committee discussed this with Margaret and me. After consideration, Bill wrote to me saying:

*"We (the HCC) have examined the problem of full-bisque play off a modified base and reject the argument that this gives the better player an advantage as fallacious."*

*Consider two players, handicaps X and Y; each bisque is worth 26/X and 26/Y points respectively. In a full-bisque game off base B they will score with the aid of bisques 26(X-B)/X and 26(Y-B)/Y points. The points they have to score without bisques will be 26 minus the above, which works out to be 26B/X and 26B/Y. The ratio of these two is the inverse ratio of their handicaps and the system is therefore fair as it stands."*

I was inclined to agree with Bill's reasoning. However the issue rumbled on and in an attempt to resolve it I volunteered to analyse the actual results of all the full-bisque games that were available.

A request for results was published in "Croquet" Issue No 230 (December 1993).

I am indebted to all the tournament and Club organisers who replied; particularly to Don Waterhouse for his 21 pages of manually typed results from the South West Federation B League going back to 1985. In total I have examined something over 1500 results from as far afield as Hull and Plymouth. While these are nowhere near all of the competitive full-bisque games that have been played they are a sizeable sample.

So what do these results show? As a first step I filtered out the games where one player's handicap was below the base - in effect these become normal handicap games with only the higher handicapped player receiving bisques. I also excluded games where both players had the same handicap.

This left a sample of 975 games where both players received bisques. In total only 41%

(400 games) were won by the higher handicapped player while 59% (575 games) were won by the lower handicapped player.

Thus overall Margaret Jones' concerns do seem to be borne out. The better players do appear to have an advantage.

Does the "base" make a difference? In this sample only 3 different bases were used - 0, 5, and 13. The results show that the discrepancy is even more marked for the games played off a base of zero where even players with handicaps of 1 or 2 are receiving bisques but for the other two bases there is no difference.

Base	Higher Handicap wins	Lower Handicap wins	No. of Games
0	36% (59 games)	64% (103 games)	162
5	42% (34 games)	58% (46 games)	80
13.5	42% (307 games)	58% (426 games)	733

Is there any difference depending on the players' handicaps? At all levels except for the A-class player with bisques, the results of higher handicapped players are consistently worse than the lower handicapped players.

Either Players Handicap in Range	Wins by Higher Handicap Player	Wins by Lower Handicap Player	No. of Games
2 or less	53% (23 games)	47% (20 games)	43
2.5 - 6	40% (46 games)	60% (69 games)	115
6.5 - 10	40% (48 games)	60% (71 games)	119
11 - 16	37% (175 games)	63% (304 games)	479
17 - 20	42% (370 games)	58% (508 games)	878
21 or more	44% (138 games)	56% (178 games)	316

Looking at the bisque difference between the two players gives even more interesting results. The greater the bisque difference between the two players the less chance the higher handicapped player has of winning.

Bisque Difference Between Players	Wins by Higher Handicap Player	Wins by Lower Handicap Player	No. of Games
2 or less	44% (188 games)	56% (244 games)	432
2.5 - 6	41% (162 games)	59% (230 games)	392
6.5 - 10	36% (39 games)	64% (70 games)	109
10.5 or greater	26% (11 games)	74% (31 games)	42

My conclusion is now that there is something wrong with this system. It appears that the higher handicapped players (be they 2's or 20's) have only a 40% chance of beating a better player in a full-bisque game instead of the even chance they should have and the greater the difference between the two players the worse this chance becomes.

The Handicap Co-ordination Committee has been advised of these results. I look forward to their response.

## AUTOMATIC HANDICAPPING SYSTEM

# 1994

## general guidelines

Bill Lamb

These guidelines, published by the Handicap Co-ordination Committee (HCC), supersede all previous guidelines.

There are no major changes this year to the guidelines. The AHS is now operating as a national system for the benefit of all players. Its principal function is to regulate the handicaps of those players who play a reasonable number of competitive games; these players then set the standards by which club handicappers can adjust when necessary the handicaps of those players who do not play many games. It is impossible to modify the AHS to cater for players who do not play many competitive games and therefore it can never replace the club handicapper in this respect.

Any automatic system relies upon the honesty of the players using it. Sadly, it was brought to my attention last year that a few

players were failing to enter losing games in order to avoid a handicap increase. This is akin to cheating and should not be tolerated in a sport which is as fundamentally honest as croquet. Two players were also disqualified from tournaments last year by playing off the wrong handicap.

The number of handicap changes reported last year was lower than expected, particularly for handicap increases. For statistical purposes and as a check on the operation of the system we need to be notified of all changes. If your handicap has changed between CA Calendar Tournaments, you should notify the tournament manager or handicapper at the start of the event and have your card initialled.

At a CA Calendar Tournament, a handicap change can only be triggered at the end of the event. Then, if your handicap index is on or

past a trigger point for a handicap change, you must notify the tournament handicapper or manager of your change of handicap before you leave the tournament, so that it can be notified to the CA as soon as possible. The tournament official will initial your card on the front cover to acknowledge the change.

In club and federation matches, one-day events and rounds of extended tournaments, changes of index and handicap will normally be calculated at the end of each day's play. As a matter of courtesy you should always tell your club handicapper of any handicap change whether at a CA Tournament or not. If you are a CA Associate but do not intend to play in any later CA Calendar Tournament, you should ask your club handicapper to notify the change to the CA.

All singles games in CA Calendar Fixtures, Federation Leagues, inter-club contests, and designated club tournaments qualify for the system, provided that they are played to normal handicap or level play rules. Club handicappers should provide a list of designated club tournaments at the beginning of the season. All such games should be played with hoops set to CA tournament standards.

Short croquet, golf croquet, friendly or ad hoc games, walkovers and abandoned games, and games where the allocation of bisques differs from normal or their use is restricted are specifically excluded from the system. Players do not have the option to include these games by mutual agreement or to exclude qualifying games.

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## Oh! My Poor Bunyon

### Chapter 1

*In which our hero, Don Guantes and his Faithful Doñana get totally mixed up in the wrong story and go on a pilgrimage to the Antipodes.*

We were not going back to Australia or New Zealand. That much was clear. We had spent a superb 3 months on a World tour in 1992 which included games or visits to croquet lawns in South Africa, West Australia, New Zealand and British Columbia. We were going to take things easy. Then came an invite to the 1993 Perth Masters Games!

Shall we, shan't we go? Oh, all right, just for a short holiday. Hang on though, if we are going all that way we might as well take the trip to New Zealand that we promised ourselves, and if we are going there we might as well stop off in NSW for a bit and of course we want a stopover in Singapore on the way out and one in Hong Kong and Bangkok on the way back. Hey ho, there goes another 4 months!

### Chapter 2

*An encounter with a fabulous beast and a challenge from the mysterious gods of the east present a daunting (or is it gaunting) challenge.*

We left England on 14th January for the first destination, Singapore. As always, the time difference, heat and humidity mean that the first couple of days or so are rather tiring. Having some experience by now we did not overdo things and managed to acclimatise fairly quickly.

Singapore is a place we like very much. The rule there is supposed to be rather authoritarian, but most of the rules - clean streets, no spitting, no gangs of yobs hanging around, good, clean transport - seem well worth it to us. We also found more to do than we could see in a week, so there is something to go back for.

Singapore means Lion City. Looking out from the city towards the harbour is the Merlion, half lion half fish. This is supposed to symbolise the linking of the land and the sea. It certainly seems to work as Singapore now rivals Hong Kong in many aspects of trade.

Getting around is easy. Many sights are within walking distance of the MRT (Mass Rapid Transit) train. Buy the multi-journey tickets - you get a refund on any unused travel. Buses are cheap and well signed. There are also plenty of taxis but we never needed to use them. These are some of the

things we saw and what we thought of them.

**River trip on a "bum boat".** Inexpensive, lasts about an hour. Gives nice views of the city.

**Harbour trip.** There are lots of these, short and long. We did an afternoon trip round the islands and thought it good value. You can get evening trips with a meal included.

**City bus trip.** We weren't over-impressed with this. It was supposed to give an overview of the city and to a certain extent it did, but we felt that it could have been done better.

**Chinese and Japanese Gardens.** Nominal entry fee. If you like gardens this is a must. They are splendid and the bonsai collection is terrific. About 20 min on the MRT. Take an umbrella for shade or rain.

**Singapore Zoological Gardens.** We are not really into zoos, we don't like to see large animals in small cages. However, this one generally has large enclosures and the setting, tropical jungle by a lake, is superb. MRT and Bus or just Bus (the ride itself is good).

**Sentosa Island.** An island about 1.5 km

*Singapore means Lion City.*

*Looking out from the city towards the harbour is the Merlion, half lion half fish.*

*This is supposed to symbolise the linking of the land and the sea.*

long, dedicated to leisure. There are walks, sports, train rides, a museum, hotels etc etc. Several means of access but the most exciting is by cable car.

**Haw Par Villa Dragon Park.** These were originally the Tiger Balm Gardens, a fantasy garden donated by the maker of Tiger Balm (there is another one in Hong Kong). It has been turned into a sort of oriental Disney World by the addition of exhibits and a few rides. Don't go at the weekend! We made that mistake, it was packed. It is interesting and the original gardens with fantastic statues representing ancient Chinese myths of good vs evil are well preserved. We felt it to be pricey for what was there although to be fair, it was so crowded we lost interest in going round.

### Chapter 3

*Temptation in the form of decadent living beckons our pair but the Great Wizard of Oz casts a barbed arrow and sets them straight. Old friends are met and worship is made at the shrine of Bass and Dean, the ice dancing cello players. The Doñana undergoes an ordeal by fire.*

We arrived in Perth very late at night and made our way to the Burswood Resort Hotel. This is a very posh hotel but we were only staying three nights and we had a special rate as Qantas fliers. The room was real luxury with a Japanese-style bathroom. The view from the 7th floor was over Perth and the Swan River - wonderful!

The next day we spent some time making arrangements for our stay in April for the Masters Games and seeing old friends. In the evening we made our way to the Bassendean CC where we had spent many happy hours the year before. There we met Tom & Doreen Crawford who had come over just to meet us. Several other old friends were there including Elsie Solly and Norma & Mick Motteram.

May I apologise at this point to anyone that I don't mention. We literally saw hundreds of people in our travels and time plays havoc with the memory! Special apologies to Managers, Officials, Ground staff, Caterers and all those without whom tournaments just wouldn't happen, but often do not get noticed.

After a pleasant evening we retired to bed and the next morning called on Tom & Doreen to deliver some books and a card from the Bear Of Rodborough CC annual dinner menu signed with greetings from the members. We then continued to Fremantle for the day.

Fremantle is a historic town. It was the port where thousands of migrants arrived on the assisted passage to make a new life in Australia. Earlier, less willing passengers had also arrived and they built many of the historic buildings. The port is still busy and many of the old buildings are preserved and can be visited. A good way of seeing Fremantle is to take a ride on the Old Town Tram. This is a replica of an old tram and has excellent guides. There are several routes, including one that combines a harbour tour. You can also take a ride out to Rottnest Island, a low island about 20 km out to sea with some strange small marsupials called Quokkas. We did this most enjoyable trip the year before.

On this occasion we took the historical

tour and saw many old buildings including the Round House, Fremantle Old Prison, The War Memorial, The statue of O'Connor who masterminded a water pipeline from Perth to Kalgoorlie and a sheep ship capable of carrying 120,000 sheep (Baal\*\*y Hell!).

The last of the three days we spent with our friends Geoff & Margaret and had a good old Australian Barbie in Kings Park. Kings Park is a huge and scenic area only a kilometer from the centre of Perth. There are bush walks, BBQ areas, a memorial avenue and sports facilities. There are also terrific views of Perth and the Swan River from lookout points. Despite staying in the shade and high factor cream, Faith got burnt. Well it was in the high 30's!

### Chapter 4

*Out into the distant blue and over, into the Kingdom of Bacchus. Our heros fly like birds, swoop like eagles and sweat like pigs. They meet with a servant of Bacchus who gives them a gift.*

After some problems due to a strike by Qantas staff at Sydney we finally took off from Perth to Sydney for the overnight flight. This is the well-named "Red-eye Flight" as it arrives at 5.30 in the morning. Red-eyed, we drove off towards the Blue Mountains, arriving there at about 8.30. A kind hotelier gave us a room and we crashed out until lunchtime.

Much refreshed, we spent the afternoon visiting the Zig-Zag Steam Railway. The zig-zag was an old method of getting trains up a

*We saw the statue of O'Connor, who masterminded a water pipeline from Perth to Kalgoorlie and a sheep ship capable of carrying 120,000 sheep (Baal\*\*y Hell!)*

steep hill. The train goes at full speed upwards as far as it can get and stops. About 200 metres back down the track, points are installed and the track goes upwards again in the opposite direction. The train gets up speed on the 200 metres of downhill, then again climbs as far as it can. This process is repeated as many times as needed. Nowadays trains are rather more powerful or (as in this case) a tunnel is built.

The next day we spent touring round the Blue Mountains. The blue comes from the haze of eucalypt oil evaporating from the trees. The scenery is magnificent with cable cars, the steepest scenic railway in the world, walks and viewpoints. We would have liked to stay much longer but time was limited.

We set off northwards, noticing a sign to Hazelbrook CC, through the mountains

towards the Hunter Valley Wine district. We took the road that goes past the oddly-named village of Putty. This is a lovely road, almost deserted when we went along it. The temperature was in the 40's (well over 100F) so we were very glad of the air-con in the car. The road to Tamworth, through Hunter Valley district is busy and not very scenic but Tamworth is a nice place and the wine is delicious.

A nights stay and onwards north as far as Armidale where we tuned right to cross the Great Dividing Range. This range, so-called because it separates the coastal and inland regions goes for hundreds of kilometers along eastern Australia. We called in at a little general store in a place called Woolombi. We try to do this wherever we are because we often meet interesting people. In this case we may never be able to do so again as the village has been bypassed since a bridge washed out. Now there is virtually no passing trade, and the owner is probably going to sell up.

We continued to Coffs Harbour on the coast, where we stayed for a couple of days just relaxing before starting back towards Sydney along the Pacific Highway. We diverted off the Highway at Bulahdelah to visit Stroud. We live in Stroud District, England. Stroud, NSW is a small town of about 600 inhabitants. It is quite historic for a small place, with some old guns, an underground silo built by convicts, and several old buildings including the old school which is now a museum. It also has an



Me & Jane Horkins at Morrinville

annual Brick and Rolling Pin throwing contest each July! We stopped at the Central Hotel for a drink. We got chatting to the landlord who was most interested in our Stroud. Before we left he went inside and came back with two free tee-shirts for us. These commemorated last years Brick and Rolling Pin throwing contest.

Continuing towards Sydney, we stopped at the Richmond to Pelaw Main, Steam Railway. This was an old coal mine and power station. Much remains but there is an enormous amount of work and very few to do it. Well worth a visit for steam buffs. On our way into Sydney we saw two croquet lawns with people playing on them but had no time to stop. A last night in Sydney before going on to NZ.

### Chapter 5

*Life begins under a cloud, a long white one. More old friends are met and the pair are taken to the hallowed grounds at Papatoetoe (NZ for Father has stubbed his foot) and Pakuranga (NZ for pack your ranger, a kind of coat). They visit the mysterious land where the sea steams and pray for the return of the seal.*

Arriving in Auckland we were met by Lew & Connie Nunnerley, two croquet players from Takapuna who had put us up the year before. We were made most welcome at their lovely house looking out over the entrance to Auckland Harbour across to the volcanic island of Rangitoto. Reading a recent copy of the NZ croquet magazine I came across a very kind review of my latest book "Teach Yourself Croquet" by Ashley Heenan.

The next day, after seeing to various travel formalities we went firstly to Papatoetoe CC, where Lew was playing. We met a couple of people we knew including Faith Fewtrell. Then we went across to The Auckland Area HQ, Pakuranga. There we met several more people we knew including Bob Fewtrell, and Harry? I had played a friendly with Harry at Takapuna the year before.

After a couple of days we said goodbye to Lew & Connie, "See you in 9 weeks". Gosh that seemed a long way ahead at the time! We made our way south and east to Thames. This is a small town at the beginning of the Coromandel Peninsula an area which juts back towards the north. We stayed here for 3 nights so that we could explore the

*Before we left the Landlord went inside and came back with two free tee-shirts for us. These commemorated last years Brick and Rolling Pin throwing contest*

peninsula. The main things seen were:-

**Rapaura Water Gardens.** Several acres of very pleasant gardens. Not expensive and worth visiting.

**Driving Creek Railway** at Coromandel town. An odd place. Run by one Barry Brickell who has this area of land which he is trying to restore to its original state that existed before the loggers desecrated it. To see the area he has built a miniature railway which winds its way to the top. The starting area is a sort of hippy pottery. Not too expensive and the money goes towards a very laudable objective. You will get very wet if it rains - we did!

**The Hot Beach.** NZ has many hot springs. This one surfaces along the tide line along the east coast of Coromandel. It is just below the surface so if you dig a hole in the sand it

fills with hot water. Very hot water if you are not careful! When the tide comes in you can stand with your body freezing and your feet cooking! Free but care is needed to find it.

**Old Gold Mine at Thames.** You get a guided tour along an old working and a description and demonstration of a rock crusher and separator. Inexpensive but not for those who don't like dark tunnels and loud noises.

We went to have a look at Thames CC - a lovely setting by the Firth of Thames.

In the Coromandel we re-encountered some more of NZ's fun things - unsealed, or as we say in England un surfaced, roads. I love them, my wife hates them, so travel on them is a rather mixed affair!

I should make a comment at this point for the benefit of anyone who is reading this to get an idea of NZ's attractions. NZ is very "active sport" minded. Hiking, cycling, running etc are very popular and facilities exist all over the country for those who want an energetic outdoor holiday. Me? Chasing a roqueted ball is quite enough exercise thank you!

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*Hiking, cycling, running etc etc are very popular and facilities exist all over the country for those who want an energetic outdoor holiday. Me? Chasing a roqueted ball is quite enough exercise thank you!*

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## Chapter 6

*The lines are drawn and battles rage. Don Quantes is defeated in Mortal Combat by The Old Master and the Young Knight and even finds a compatriot's hand against him. He is mollified however by rediscovering the rare Te Pe and the even rarer Te Peo. He is greatly pleased to have the support of the June Queen and together they gain the silver grails.*

So, it was Feb 13th and time for the 1993 NZ Mens & Womens. This was to be played at two venues in north central North Island, Te Aroha and Morrinsville. I had only entered the single events initially, but after a phone call when I arrived in NZ, I was very kindly given a partner in the mixed doubles, June Hoskins.

I had been given a NZ handicap of -2.5 and this seems to have been an accurate choice as in the handicap event I won three and lost three.

In the Mens, I came third, losing to Bob Jackson, Aaron Westerby and Bob Fewtrell. I was successful against Peter Harding, G Young, B Baker, C Jones and B Massey (sorry, Christian names escape me). It was interesting to note that the Number of triples done also determined the first three places -

Bob 1st & 8 triples; Aaron 2nd and 7 triples; Me third and two triples (one of these was a TPO, my first one in a tournament).

The mixed doubles June and I won despite dropping a game to Dallas Cooke & G Young. It was very nice to be presented with a cup - thank you partner!

Things I remember about the tournament:

- \* The wonderful welcome that we both got from players.

- \* The evening meal with Nyree & John.

- \* The heat and the damned sandflies!

- \* The parched lawns at Te Aroha and the green lawns at Morrinsville.

- \* The evening meal at the restaurant overlooking Te Aroha, eating and watching croquet being played as the sun set.

## Chapter 7

*The descent into Hell. The heroes return unscathed but smelling of sulphur and Steinlager.*

We made our way from Te Aroha to the east coast at Waihi. We noticed many relics of the gold mining era and took a ride on the Goldfields Steam Railway, but this was one of the few times when rain really spoilt things. As we made our way south it cleared up, and the rain had eased by the time that we booked in at Tauranga. This place was to figure in the news for the whole time that we were in NZ as there was a furore about the MP for Tauranga resigning and standing as an independent. We visited the Tauranga Historic Village - inexpensive and lots to see, and took a ride out to the beach at Mount Maunganui - very pretty. We had an ice cream there, one of many, NZ ice creams are delicious!

The next day we went to see a Kiwi Fruit farm at Te Puke. This was a very interesting trip. We saw the vines(?) and packing halls. We also saw a fascinating old machine that took a kiwi fruit, weighed it mechanically, then threw it a predetermined distance into the correct hopper. It would appear from items that we saw on TV that the Kiwi Fruit industry is going through a crisis. I hope that things get better. We bought some kiwi fruit wine at the visitors centre which turned out to be very nice.

We carried on inland to stay for three days at Rotorua. This place is a must for visitors. There is easily enough to do for a whole week and there are lots of inexpensive motels. I impressed my wife by driving straight to the motel that we had used the year before, without using a map. Things we saw included:-

**Whakarewarewa (year before).** Probably the best known of the hot springs and geyser areas. In town, fairly pricey but you get a guide. As well as seeing nature in action, you get demos of Maori art and building and a look at a Maori Village. Choose this if you have limited time.

**Orchid Garden and Water Organ (year before).** Fairly dear. The water organ is fascinating if you have never seen one but nothing new if you have. The orchid collection is not huge.

**Tikitere (Hells gate).** Lots of mud, steam etc. reasonably priced and worth visiting first if you have plenty of time, miss if not. About 15 km north.

**Waiotapu.** Much bigger than Tikitere and more impressive. It also has a geyser which performs early in the morning. We thought that the Champagne Pool, a large boiling lake was the most impressive. About 30 km south.

**Waimangu.** More of the same, but this time you can add a boat trip at the end if you wish. This is a linear, rather than round, trip, all downhill past a boiling stream. You are brought back by coach. The boat trip is on Rotomahana (= big lake. Rotorua = second lake). The guide points out many interesting features and describes the events of the 1886 Tarawera eruption which destroyed Maori villages and was heard hundreds of miles away in Christchurch. Fairly expensive but you get a lot for your money. 30 km south.

**Agridome.** All for the tourists. See the sheep! Touch the sheep!! My God, smell the sheep!!! Even so, we enjoyed it, but it is not cheap, and a couple of things were not

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*We also saw a fascinating old machine that took a kiwi fruit, weighed it mechanically, then threw it a predetermined distance into the correct hopper*

---

available when we went.

**Boat trips on Rotorua.** There are lots of these, mostly inexpensive. We took a trip to Mokoia, a Maori-owned island in the middle of the lake. There we were taken on a short guided tour and saw some artifacts and a glimpse of a North Island Robin. This looks like the European version but is blackish with no red breast.

**Maori Village.** Free to look round, but respect the villagers life. St Faith's church and the Village Hall are interesting. By the lake.

**Maori Hangi (feasts).** Lots of places do these. How authentic they are we're not sure but we went to one and enjoyed it. Traditional food and dancing. Reasonably priced.

There were other things to see but time was pressing and we had to move on.

## Chapter 8

*Loki rumbles in the distance but bides his time. Ever southwards, past echoes of great explorers and Nordic settlers, to large and windy metropolis. Here Loki strikes.*

The next few days were travelling days. We made our way via Whakatane to the East Cape road. The East Cape is quiet even by

NZ standards and few tourists have the time to spend the whole day that is needed to drive round it. This is a pity because it is a beautiful drive. In the distance we saw White Island, a semi-active volcano. We stopped in the small town of Tolaga Bay. Near here Captain Cook is supposed to have landed.

Pleasant but not spectacular roads took us onwards past Gisbourne, Hastings and Napier (next time we will see this area properly) towards Wellington. We stopped for the night in Woodville. Just back up the road is Dannevirke, which was founded by Danish settlers in the 1870s. We went back there for a meal but found that there was little to indicate any Danish heritage. We did, however, find the croquet club and I was fortunate because someone was there practising, John? Stephens, so we had a chat. He had stayed with Andrew Hope in England. It was, unfortunately, too late to play a game.

Continuing through Masterton and Upper & Lower Hutt, we reached Wellington. This was a Friday. We went to book a ferry crossing to South Island.

"Yes sir, we have one on Wednesday".

No wonder everyone goes by air! Fortunately I had been warned that this might happen and there were lots of things to see in and around Wellington. That evening we had a meal in our first Burmese restaurant. This was in Petone, just outside Wellington, and was very nice.

## Chapter 9

*The questers visit an apiary, then wander through the bee's larder. Te Rangatira takes them to his patuwhare above the repository of all knowledge, then treats them to a hangi on a waka.*

Making the most of our enforced stay in Wellington, we set off to see the sights. These included:-

**The Parliament Buildings.** The main building was being renovated while we were there, but we were able to see the "beehive", an office and conference centre. Tours are free.

**The Botanical Gardens.** These are magnificent. Entrance is free. I recommend that you take the cable car (in Lambton Quay,



Te Aroha Lawns, New Zealand



Faith, Ashley & Maureen Heenan at Wellington

small charge) to the top. You can then meander down by the many paths, stopping at the visitor centre (free) and the observatory (small charge) on the way. At the bottom

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*In the distance we saw White Island, a semi-active volcano. We stopped in the small town of Tolaga Bay. Near here Captain Cook is supposed to have landed*

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make your way to the Lady Norwood Rose Gardens for tea, then finally back to the city via the early settlers memorial park.

**Scenic Drives round the harbour.** You can go either way, but the one round past Palmer head is the prettiest and could take all day if you stop off at places. You can also watch the planes land and take off. The road to Eastbourne is more industrialised,

although if you are looking for an isolated beach, take the coast road from Wainuiomata.

**Lookout point near Karori.** This is pretty tricky to find, you will probably have to ask a couple of times. The trip is worth it for a panorama over the whole of Wellington and the Hutt.

**Silver Stream Steam Railway.** A small line in Upper Hutt.

**Southward Vintage Car Museum.** A huge collection of cars and motor-cycles in Paraparaumu about 40 km north. If you have time, make a circular trip using the scenic road between Waikanae and Upper Hutt. Reasonable charge. If you are at all interested in old vehicles, allow a half day.

**Paekakaiki Tram Museum.** Free, small charge for rides. Collection of about 20 trams and a km of track.

A few km south of the car museum. A short distance from here is a view point from which South Island can be seen.

We gave Ashley Heenan, the National Secretary a call, as he lived very close. I wanted to meet him not only because of his position, but to thank him for reviewing both of my books. He not only agreed to meet us but took us out for a great meal on the "Tug Boat", a floating restaurant in the harbour. The next day we were taken to see the HQ of NZ croquet. This was a very smart office over the top of the new library. A large number of sports have there HQ there. One of these was table-tennis, where I met Peter Hirst, the national coach. It turned out that he had coached Paul Day in England. I also learned that Bob Jackson had been a champion at the sport in the fifties. Some people are just good at everything!

The evening before our meal with Ashley and his wife Maureen, we received a phone call from Steve Jones, a member of the NZ test team in the (then) forthcoming MacRobertson Shield in Australia. He wanted a game but unfortunately could only make the evening that we were going out for a meal. I promised to ring when we were coming back to Wellington in a few weeks.

DLG - to be continued.



# AROUND

## .. OLD MEN REMEMBER ..

This month "Around & About" looks back further than usual, to the sixties and seventies, with the help of CA Vice President S. S. (Jim) Townsend's reminiscences

A dozen or so years have passed since I wrote two articles, reminiscing on changes that had taken place in croquet since I played my first competitive game in 1948. As illustrations of those which I described, most of which would have surprised many readers, I can single out Wearing of whites (virtually unknown in 1948), Shaking Hands after games (which I could not recall ever seeing in my early years), and Timed Games. I assume that the Tournament Regulations current in 1948 must have contained provision for time limitations, but be that as it may, I can recall at least two games in the early 1950s in which I was concerned which started at 10am and finished at around 5pm, both in August Hurlingham Tournaments.

The first of these remains vividly in my mind, having been played on a glassy lawn during drought conditions before the water-sprayed system had been installed, my opponent Mrs Fotiadi and myself failing time after time to stay in position in front of the sixth hoop. At no time did the Manager put in an appearance to urge greater expedition in play.

There have since my earlier articles been further significant changes, but having been out of the mainstream of croquet for the best part of ten years in my West Country outpost, I do not feel competent to flesh out, as I did earlier, their merits or otherwise. Suffice to say that whatever faults (if any) exist in the revolutionary change in the system of Handicapping, there can only be unqualified approval of a need for the change, recalling as I do that when Chairman of the Handicap Coordination Committee in the late 1970s, handicappers only too often, in spite of regular exhortation, conveyed the impression that their duties could be confined to examining the results in the Manager's tent

at the close of the Tournament, and making their decisions on little more than a perfunctory basis.

On the adoption of the Croquet Grading System, as an actuary I am not unversed in the realms of Mathematics, but having read Stephen Mulliner's recent articles in 'Croquet', I confess relief that now rising age 86 I do not have to undergo a rigorous test on the validity of his formulae.

The purpose of the present article is however the recollection of offbeat incidents in croquet which have been surfacing in my mind in recent weeks, most of which will certainly be new to readers.

*Having read Stephen Mulliner's recent articles, I confess relief that now rising age 86 I do not have to undergo a rigorous test on the validity of his formulae*

### *The Case of the missing clips*

Keith Aiton had not been long out of his croquet prenticeship days when he was the centrepiece of a Handicap Doubles game at Hunstanton against Paul and Pat MacDonald. Paul having advanced to four-back early in the game, Keith gained the innings and set about triple-peeling Paul. Before long he had three clips in his pocket, having performed the customary peeling of his partner (Mrs Zinn, if I recall correctly, a regular contender from Ipswich [and teacher

of the game to both Mark Avery and myself - Ed]). In the course of making two-back he then, presumably in a puckish mood, peeled Pat's ball through the first hoop, all four clips then having been removed from their hoops. at this point, Sarah Hampson, the Tournament Manager, who was planning the ensuing games, was making the rounds of the lawns, and seeing Keith on a lawn bearing no clips, was about to march on the lawn and reprimand him for indulging in practice at the expense of valuable tournament time when fortunately a spectator put her wise to what was happening.

### *The Episode of the missing partner*

In the Open Championship Doubles 1972, John Solomon was partnered as usual with Patrick Cotter, the pair having already been the winners a record ten times. On this occasion, Cotter was absent when their first round match was due to start, on account of a delayed return from an overseas trip. John however, in no way discomfited, started the game by placing Cotter's yellow ball on the first corner spot. he then proceeded by a series of controlled leaves and rushes to peel yellow through all twelve hoops, his opponents Terence Read and his Mother making scant progress on the few occasions when they were able to gain the innings. By lunch time John had won the first game by no fewer than twenty-four points. Although the Reads adopted different tactics in the second game they were able to score no more than five points. This must arguably be the tour de force par excellence in croquet history. To everyone's surprise, Daisy Lintern, the

Manager, then put John on again for his second round match at around 6 o'clock. His opponents this time were Ian Baillieu and Bernie Duthie. Ian, a master of tactics, was able to put some restraint on John's progress, and when the game had to be pegged down, he and Bernie were a few points ahead. On the following morning Cotter materialised, and Ian's efforts were then set at nought fairly rapidly. Cotter, as I remember, while naturally pleased with John's remarkable play, seemed less than fulsome in his congratulations than might have been expected, with a possible inference that he himself could have been no less resourceful, but on this I may well be doing him an injustice. A footnote to the story is that there were a few misgivings that a doubles match is designed for two players competing against two others, and that the yellow ball could hardly be regarded as having acquired human lineaments. Bobby Wiggins in fact put down a motion for the first Council Meeting in the autumn that the limitation on partner peeling in Handicap Doubles games should be extended to Open Doubles, thus effectively killing off any chance of a repetition of John's exploit. Council however would have none of it, some members feeling that the pinnacle should remain as a possible challenge for the future.

On doubts that were raised on the legal aspect of a Doubles game being played with less than four contestants, perhaps Hugh Carlisle or any other croquet-playing QCs would like to address their minds to the matter. It may, in words from the "Forsythe Saga", be a 'nice point'.

### *The Incident of the double barrelled shooting*

Most of my recollections appear to come from Doubles games, the following being no exception. Some years ago a Handicap Doubles was in progress on the Hurlingham cricket field, in which two elderly sisters were paired. the game was far advanced with the sisters trailing badly when they found themselves confronted by a tempting double for each of their widely separated

balls. After a prolonged discussion on the lawn as to which sister should aim at the target double, their opponents were startled by the sight of each sister, on leaving the lawn, about to address her ball, and before taking whatever action (if any) they could summon up, both sisters had completed their strokes. In the event one ball hit its target, with the other speeding to the boundary well wide of the mark. Presumably the correct

*an Emergency Law  
eventuality ... perhaps  
Hugh Carlisle QC and  
his learned friends would  
find this incident one  
on which to dine out*

course of action would have been to summon a referee, but being on the wilds away from the main action, they endeavoured to sort things out without aid, interspersed by mutual recrimination between the sisters on their misunderstanding. The opponents, who had the game virtually sewn up with only a few points to make, suggested that justice would be done if all balls were replaced in their original positions (with or without penalty of losing the innings being a subsidiary solution). The lady however whose ball had made a successful hit claimed a roquet on the footing that her ball had reached its target before her sister's ball had arrived in the area. The opponents, although justifiably unconvinced of this somewhat dubious solution, knowing that the game to be safely in their hands, conceded the point, still being too lazy or indifferent about summoning a referee, which would have added to the already prolonged delay in resumption of play. In fact, the game finished as anticipated, with a heavy defeat for the sisters. At the time of writing I have no copy of the latest Laws Booklet, but I doubt whether any guidance could be found on this case, recourse then being had to the Emergency Law which ordains that any situation that does not appear to be covered

by the Laws must be dealt with as best meets the justice of the case. I am no longer on the Official List of Referees, but having served in the past must confess to relief that any interpretation of an Emergency Law eventuality never came my way. Perhaps, as mentioned earlier, Hugh Carlisle and his learned friends would find this incident one on which to dine out.

### *The Story of the devout Competitor*

Among the competitors some years ago in a tournament during which Ascension Day fell was a highly devout lady who hoped to attend divine service on that day as a Day of Obligation. She was relieved to discover that a nearby Church held an early morning service at 9am, but was a little taken aback after finishing her game on Wednesday evening to find that she was listed among the 10 o'clock morning games scheduled for the following day. Although hopeful that the service would be over in good time for her to report punctually, she enquired of the Manager whether he would be kind enough to be indulgent if she were five or ten minutes late. The Manager however, who had a reputation as a martinet, told her that she would be scratched if not ready to play at the time appointed. Torn between her devotions and her game, she decided to risk attending the service, being fairly confident, as she thought, of not putting herself in great hazard of arriving late on the lawns.

It was however unfortunate that the service was taken by a priest very advanced in years, the proceedings being conducted at a snail's pace. As the minutes ticked away, the lady became visibly agitated, to the point that neighbouring worshippers were startled by an only too audible cry "Do get on with it or I shall be scratched." Whether the incident had a happy ending I cannot recall.

*With a handful of further untoward happenings within my memory, this is a suitable point for their deferment to a later article, the more so because all of these have a common link, that of our former President, Maurice Reckitt, playing a role.*

# & ABOUT

# comment!

## REINVENTING CROQUET

Some reader responses to the original Editorial and to the articles by Eric Solomon & Keith Wylie

### Dr Solomon's Postscript

Dear John,

I have been flattered, naturally, to read the recently published comments on my proposals for a modern croquet. But lest anyone gains the impression that the original proposals were unfairly dismissed I would like to mention that a full weekend tournament was held at Woking to test the game. This was organised during 1985 by Lionel Wharrad who, at the time, was chairman of the Small Lawn Croquet Committee.

Around sixteen players, including such experts as John Solomon, Bernard Neal, and David Openshaw took part. It was evident that the game 'worked' although the peeling benefits law took some getting used to, and many opportunities were missed. I recall being faced with a difficult backward hoop approach and completely overlooking that fact that I might have taken off to another hoop and 'bought' the safe continuation of my break by peeling an opponent's ball through its next hoop!

It must be remembered what, at that time, were the objectives of the committee. Important amongst these was the requirement to produce an 'introductory' version of croquet which would attract new players, hopefully future CA associates, into the game. Over the weeks following the test tournament it became clear that most people felt that the new game was too radically different from the official game. They were worried that new players would be upset to find that the game played in official tournaments was not that which originally attracted them to try croquet. I concurred with that view.

I would be interested to hear from any players who try the game over 26 points on a full size court. I shall be somewhat less interested to hear from players who have played it solely with map pins on a felt covered board. For the 26-point game the suggestions regarding hoop order should be ignored as they related mainly to visibility issues in the context of television. Neither is it necessary to use the corner points for starting the game - baulk lines are probably preferable as corner spots tend to get worn. To summarise what should be retained in a game purporting to test the proposed laws I offer the following list:

(1) **Peeling benefits.** A ball scoring a

hoop point or causing a hoop point to be scored gains a continuation stroke and the ability to roquet any other balls.

(2) **Mandatory peeling according to player grade.** For the 26-point game complete beginners would be graded at 13 (no mandatory peels), and the strongest at 1 (all hoop points scored by peeling). Even allowing for the practicality of peeling-only breaks I rather doubt whether any player should ever be graded as low as 1. The advanced play rule should be used. Hence, for example, a grade 10 player must score all hoops from 4-back onwards by peeling. The ordinary play proposal involved mandatory peeling for only one ball and I feel that there are some unsatisfactory features in this, although it does make the 26-point turn (the duodecimal peel) feasible.

*It was evident that the game 'worked' although the peeling benefits law took some getting used to, and many opportunities were missed*

(3) **No lifts or contacts.** The nominated-ball/free-shot mechanism should be used in wiring situations. I recognise that very careful laying up can make even a free shot of limited value. That was intended.

(4) **No penalty for peeling off the court.** This proposal should be retained as peels often have to be attempted from long distance. The peelee is simply replaced on the yard line and the turn continues. This is the rule which already applies to a ball scoring its own hoop point.

(5) **Pegging out.** When any player pegs out a ball the opponent is immediately relieved of all mandatory peeling requirements.

The tactics of the proposed game demand some concentrated thinking. It is obviously important to exploit the peeling benefits law to makes peels long before they become mandatory, and peeling an opponent's ball assumes a new significance here. In the official CA game it is usually very clear what constitutes optimal tactics in any given situation. In the proposed game optimal

tactics depend far more on the current position and state of play. And I think that is how it should be.

Yours sincerely  
Eric Solomon

### View from the Top

Dear John,

In reply to the editorial in the last issue here is a modified game for expert players which would lead to a more difficult and hopefully more exciting game without really changing the game very much.

I suggest playing an advanced fourteen point game, hoop 1 to hoop 6 and then the peg, with hoop 1 and hoop 4 being lift hoops exactly as 1-back and 4-back respectively are now.

In the current game at the top level breaks are virtually never put down. Mistakes by experts are often failing to pick up a break, failing to complete a triple, failing to make good lift leaves. Making a lift leave is easy for an expert because he has so much time to prepare. Doing a triple is easy, an expert can fail to peel 3 times and still complete a triple.

In the modified game there is little time to prepare a leave so if the balls are in defensive positions it will be very hard to make anything like a diagonal spread. The next player will often get a short lift shot. If the lift shot is missed the expert will still attempt a triple but it will be much harder. Even if he has all the balls to work with the first opportunity for a peel will probably be peeling 4 getting a rush back to 3, a severely delayed triple. Another consequence of the rules is that a lift will often have to be conceded before it is at all certain a break will be established. This adds to the chance that the innings will change hands.

All of these consequences are desirable because they make the game harder and make it more likely that the out-player will get more shots.

There may be some other tactical consequences. Going to the peg on the first break is much more attractive than before because finishing in two turns in the normal way is so much harder. After being pegged out an expert may be able to finish on only a two ball break especially if he got a couple of peels in on partner on the way around. Another change might be that players occasionally shoot at hoop 1 at the start of the game because it is a lift hoop.

To begin with there would be far more

close games with this modified game. If the standard of play continues to rise there will be 14TP games but these will be quick.

The main effect of the changes is to eliminate simple break play. The expert will have to be permanently thinking about leaves and peels. The only problem with the change is that it does not simplify the game, indeed it deliberately removes the simplest part. However because it is harder it should be more exciting to watch.

Yours  
Robert Fulford

### Let's play croquet

Dear Editor,

I am all in favour of reinventing croquet. The laws are absurd, and a situation in which top-class players are so frequently beaten 26-0, would never have been tolerated by the controllers of any other game. Often the defeated player never takes croquet, which means that he HAS NOT PLAYED CROQUET in that game.

I will be very interested to read Eric Solomon's blueprint for a new game, but as it would take a long time to finalise, and even longer to establish in world croquet, I offer the following simple change in the laws of advanced play, to eliminate those 26-0 scores with immediate effect.

Law 36 would read :- If a player scores 1 back with either of his balls, or if he peels his partner ball through 1 back in order, then at the end of that turn his opponent may begin his turn as is allowed at present under 36 (b) 1 and 2.

The only way a player could deprive his opponent of an innings would be to complete a sextuple peel, which would ensure a game exciting to play, and to watch, while the risks involved would give the opponent a very good chance of taking over control, until he in turn makes 1 back.

Those who would not risk attempting a sextuple would have other options besides stopping at 4 back, for example making all 12 hoops in the first break. Some might include pegging out their forward ball in that turn, as Nigel Aspinall would have done in his youthful days. In such cases one hit-in by the single ball should win with 3 ball-break. All games would be exciting.

In handicaps the full bisque game would ensure that control passed to the opponent after the first break, provided that each player had at least half a bisque. And when players learned to use their bisques correctly "Aunt Emma" play would be replaced by making breaks, and on average the time taken for handicap games would be halved.

Whatever new form of croquet may be adopted, it must invalidate the genuine criticisms of the current game, that it is "vicious" and takes up too much time. It would be a wonderful relief if double-banking and timed games could be eliminated from croquet.

Yours sincerely,  
Leslie Riggall

### Minimal Revision?

Dear John,

For sheer simplicity and minimal change to the laws:

a) A maximum of, say, FIVE points (of any kind) to be scored in any "full" turn (ie initial turn plus any bisque turns taken thereafter); b) An optional lift at the start of every "full" turn after the fourth.

For the experts, no peeling but more leaves, more chances to hit in, thus hopefully more "turnovers" and thus tighter games

For the rest of us, more options for scoring, probably faster games (I feel that bisques ought to be halved) and a more gradual transition into constructing leaves. Also, wiring lifts would become history, with consequent saving of referee time!

Yours sincerely  
Alex W Jardine

### Too easy for some

Dear Sir,

Two main points arise from your interesting article "Time to reinvent ourselves".

Firstly, is croquet too easy? Answer: Almost certainly "yes" for Robert and Stephen but for me, hanging on to a handicap 6, the game is quite difficult enough. And for many like me I suspect.

*Often the defeated player never takes croquet, which means that he HAS NOT PLAYED CROQUET in that game*

So how are we to change the game for top players while still relating, it closely to life on the average club lawn? Here are some ideas:

\* put a limit on the number of points allowed to be made in one turn.  
\* provide for more lifts or contacts.  
\* Allow for lift shots to be taken from any position on N/S yard lines.  
\* prohibit or limit the use of the most fruitful but not the only source of peels - the 4 ball break(!).

And, secondly, you ask how the game could be modified so as to produce popular TV material? I do not know the answer to this but it seems fairly clear that changes designed to make the existing Advanced Game more difficult would be unlikely to provide it.

I await with interest your publication of Eric Solomon's proposal and I keep an open mind. But I do have one basic principle - that I would prefer to keep our present game rather than emasculate it in a possibly vain attempt to get more small screen Time.

I wonder how other croquet-playing nations see the question.

Yours faithfully,  
Michael Davis

### No-good opponents!

Dear Sir,

I was interested to read your article concerning the possible need for a revision of the Association Croquet rules. I think the rules do need looking at. They make for a marvellous enjoyable game for the novice and the intermediate player, but a rather poor one, it seems to me, for the expert - and for his opponents and spectators. No game can be described as good in my view if a player can keep his opponent virtually idle throughout a game of an hour or more, and if the rules allow him to do so. Quite apart from the effect on the spectator I don't believe most people enjoy winning (in croquet or any other game) by denying their opponent a chance to compete. It seems to me that the expert croquet game is one to enjoy primarily if you have more than the usual measure of ruthlessness and will to win, and then you presumably enjoy it only when you are actually winning.

At my own more modest level breaks collapse often enough to ensure that both players have a number of chances to get going. Whoever wins, both of us have our share of the action and the sporting fun. It is an odd situation that under the present rules we can expect these even-handed pleasures to be progressively lost as our skill improves. (It is odder still that the CA is advising us to play full bisques even in friendly games, thus ensuring that we are introduced still earlier to the grim one-sidedness of the expert game.)

The game under the rules that I was used to before starting to play Association croquet last year does not, I think, suffer from these defects even when played expertly. (I cannot be entirely certain of this since I do not suppose any of us were as good at our game as the modern expert is at the Association game.) Non-Association rules seem to vary a good deal, but some features are common and are perhaps relevant here. In particular:

- The balls are usually played throughout the game strictly in order, usually in the order in which the colours are painted on the peg from top to bottom.
- One ball - Y say - may croquet (roquet and take croquet off) another ball only when Y has made a hoop since last croqueting that ball; Y does not have a fresh set of croqueting targets at the start of each turn unless it made a hoop at the end of its last turn and, less significant:
- No ball may croquet another before both have made the first hoop.
- In doubles each player sticks to one ball throughout.

These rules, particularly a and b above, have the effect that long breaks are generally poor tactics and effective leaves difficult. However disparate the levels of skill and however one-sided the outcome, at least the action changes hands frequently and the loser is not made to feel that he has not had



## Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at The Hurlingham Club on Saturday, 23 October 1993

Present: J W Solomon (President) C J Irwin (Chairman of Council) W E Lamb (Vice-Chairman of Council) R W Bray (Hon Treasurer) L Wharrad (Vice-President) L W D Antenen (Secretary) and 44 Associates

Apologies were received from: Mrs C Bagnall; Mr and Mrs D L Gaunt; W P Gillott; R T Jackman; G S Liddiard; Mr and Mrs D J Magee; D Middleditch; B G Neal; Mrs E A M Prichard (Vice-President) and S S Townsend (Vice-President)

### OPENING ADDRESS

The President opened the Meeting and welcomed all present, some of whom, he noted, had travelled a considerable distance, requiring an early start, to attend the Meeting.

### 1. Minutes

1.1 The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Saturday, 27 June 1992 were signed as a true record of that Meeting.

### 2. Chairman's Report

2.1 The Chairman presented his Report a copy of which is attached to these Minutes. The Report will also be published in full in "Croquet".

2.2 Thanking the Chairman for a wide-ranging and detailed report, the President paid his own tribute to those who, for whatever reason, would no longer be serving as members of Council. He went on to remind the Meeting of the time spent and efforts made by Council members, all of which was voluntary, in their efforts to promote the smooth running of the game.

There being no further comments, the Chairman's Report was Adopted nem con.

### 3. Treasurer's Report

3.1 Dr R W Bray, CA Hon Treasurer, reminded the Meeting that the Accounts for 1992 had been published in the June 1993 edition of "Croquet", (No 227) along with a comprehensive Summary. [Copies attached] Before answering any questions concerning the Accounts there were, he said, three items to which he wished to draw particular attention, viz:

The generosity of CA Members, illustrated for example, in their donations to the Test Tour Fund; the acquisition by the CA Office of a larger, up-to-date photocopier thanks to a substantial donation by Mrs Betty Prichard, CA Vice-President, in memory of the late Lt Col David Prichard; and the substantial contribution to the Benefactors Fund which had been received from the estate of the late Mrs Kay Longman.



THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION

3.2 Continuing, he said there was one individual in particular to whom the CA was indebted for his tireless efforts. Without Brian Macmillan's promotion of Sales, Coaching and Advertisements, the CA's Balance Sheet would look sombre indeed and, although as Treasurer he warned against too much reliance being placed on such resources, he thought that Brian Macmillan's flair, energy and generosity had been remarkable. In addition, Brian continues to make a significant contribution to the running of the CA Office. The Meeting then recorded, with acclamation, their appreciation of Brian's work for, and on behalf of, the Association.

3.3 There being no questions or further comments the Treasurer's Report and the Accounts for 1992 were Adopted nem con

### 4. Election of Treasurer

4.1 Introducing this item, the President said he was sure that he spoke for the Association in thanking Roger Bray for his efforts over the year which, he said, involved a considerable amount of work. His contention that a formal proposal was unnecessary received the unqualified support of the Meeting and Dr R W Bray was re-elected unanimously.

### 5. Election of Auditor

5.1 The Proposal by A J Oldham, Seconded by D C Caporn, THAT Messrs Nicholass Ames & Co be re-elected as Auditors was approved nem con.

### 6. Election of Vice-President

6.1 The President reminded the Meeting of the presentation, marking 25 years of service as Hon Treasurer, made to Mr A J Oldham on the occasion of the last AGM which was fully reported in "Croquet", Edition No 221. He could, he said, do no better than quote in full Council's Proposal THAT Mr A J Oldham be elected a Vice-President of the Association in recognition of his outstanding contribution to croquet

over the past quarter century.

6.2 The Proposal was Carried Unanimously and to acclamation by the Meeting.

6.3 A J Oldham, in a brief acknowledgement, said that he was very conscious of the honour that Council and the Association had bestowed upon him, an honour not lightly awarded. There was, he said, no tradition of long acceptance speeches and he did not propose to set a precedent but asked that the Association accept his sincere thanks for this prestigious award. Further acclamation followed.

### 7. Election of Council Members

7.1 The following having retired by rotation under Rule 2 had sought re-election under Rule 7(a)(i):

Messrs K M H Aiton; S T Badger; T J Haste; A B Hope; S O Jones and C J Irwin.

7.2 The following also retire by rotation but did not seek re-election: G N Aspinall and Prof B G Neal

7.3 Mrs Christine Bagnall had resigned: there were two other vacancies on Council.

7.4 The following had sought election under Rule 7(a)(ii): Messrs I Burridge; C D Clarke; B C Macmillan and C N Williams

7.5 There being 10 candidates for 11 vacancies an election had not been necessary and the Chairman formally declared all the candidates duly elected.

### 8. Motions

The following Motions were proposed by S N Mulliner on behalf of Council:

8.1 (A) THAT the Annual Club Registration Fee be £4.00 per croquet playing member in 1994 and £5.00 per croquet playing member in 1995 and that in both cases it be subject to relief for those who are croquet playing members of more than one Registered Club.

(B) THAT future increases in Club Registration Fees be limited to inflation unless otherwise approved by a General Meeting.

8.2 An Explanatory Note had been included with notice of the Annual General Meeting in "Croquet" No. 229 [Copy attached to these Minutes] S N Mulliner further explained that the Working Party, charged with the responsibility for formulating a subscriptions policy designed to place the Association on a more secure footing in the foreseeable future, had taken careful note of the responses received from over 40 clubs as well as the views expressed at the Special General Meetings held at Rowheath on 27 February 1993 and reported in "Croquet" (Edition No 227). The SGMs, brought about by those members who objected to the proposals had provided a forum not only for the Working Party to explain its reasoning based on the financial needs of the CA but also for members to present their views and to question the Working Party at some length.

8.3 SN Mulliner also said that paramount in the written and verbal exchanges was the good humour and courtesy which had prevailed in the expression of strong views held by both sides.

8.4 General discussion followed during which both Roger Wheeler and Ian Maugham made significant contributions. The following points emerged:

\* Concern at the rate of charges to be levied on schools and universities, to which the response was that a sensible level had been sought while acknowledging that some schools might find any amount too much.

\* Criticism of the shortage of notice given of the Motions. This was accepted although it was emphasised that the publication of the Motions and the circulation of the voting papers complied with the Constitution. This led to further discussion on the validity of amendments being proposed to motions put forward for discussion at the AGM and the Meeting was advised that this was not proper practice.

\* Concern was also expressed that multi-club relief might prove difficult to operate.

\* Attention also centred on paragraph 3.(3)(a) of the Explanatory Note which intimated that from 1994 onwards CRF will be based on both Affiliates and Associates whereas previously it was based on Affiliates only.

8.5 RDC Prichard, speaking on behalf of his mother, Mrs E A M Prichard, CA Vice-President, reminded the assembly that the proposals under discussion were neither new nor rushed and that she had a clear recollection that similar actions had been mooted in 1960 and that if the CA had grasped the nettle at the time the present discussion would not be taking place. The Motions had her strongest support.

8.6 S N Mulliner, summarising, stated as his recollection that the objections raised at the SGM were not directed at the principle behind the proposed changes but at the speed of change and this had been taken into account in the Motions as now stated.

8.7 There being no further discussion the President requested that any members present who had cast a postal vote should either refrain from voting when the Motions were put or, if they wished to vote should reclaim their postal vote from the Secretary.

Tellers having been appointed, Motion A was put, the voting by those present being FOR 37; AGAINST 2; ABSTENTIONS 2. The Secretary then announced the Postal Voting to be as follows: No of Voting Papers returned 139; FOR MOTION A 116; AGAINST 23. Motion A was declared Carried.

Motion B was then put, the voting by those present being FOR 33; AGAINST 3; ABSTENTIONS 4.

The Secretary then announced the Postal Voting to be as follows: FOR 128; AGAINST 10; ABSTENTIONS 1. Motion B was declared Carried.

The President then directed that all postal votes should be destroyed.

### 9. Benefactor's Book

9.1 The Secretary read the names in the Benefactors Book.

### 10. Other Business

Golf Croquet - Pre-Season Notice to Clubs

10.1 D Cornelius (Newport) requested a more comprehensive notice to clubs advising the premier golf croquet dates to be available as soon as possible before the commencement of the Season. The President directed that the CA Tournaments Committee, along with the Publicity Committee give this matter their attention.

Sponsorship

10.2 Mrs D Brothers (Sussex County) requested a statement of policy governing sponsorship of local events. There had, she said, been lost opportunities in the past due to local sponsorship offers not matching CA expectations or requirements.

10.3 D Shaw (Ramsgate) supporting said that CA demands should not be allowed to stand in the way of an offer made by a small local sponsor.

10.4 In the general discussion that followed, C Hudson, the CA's National Development Officer, called for improved communications between clubs and the CA in this matter. A balance was needed whereby clubs should seek out local sponsorship of their own club events but national CA events should be the primary concern of Council. The argument that "a couple of hundred pounds in the kitty [for a CA event] was better than nothing" was not necessarily true and, in fact, after the costs of entertaining the sponsors and their guests, there might well be a financial loss to the CA.

10.5 The President said that Council would take note of the feelings expressed and reiterated the need for clubs to advise the CA as soon as possible of any possibilities of sponsorship for CA National events while, at the same time, making a positive effort to seek out local sponsorship for their own club events.

### 11. President's Closing Address

11.1 The President referred to the Chairman's mention of International croquet and said that he wished also to say something on that subject - not the MacRobertson Shield or the Solomon Trophy, which were only open to the elite, but a form of international play that was open to all.

It had been fascinating to observe the development of croquet on the Continent during recent years. There had been a club in Switzerland for some 20 years, but only in the last four or five years had croquet emerged in France and Italy. After struggling with very indifferent courts, new lawns of very high standard had now been laid down in these

countries and although the number of players was relatively few they were very keen to learn and would be delighted to have visits from British players, who would be assured of a warm welcome. The principal clubs were near Bayeux, only half an hour's drive from Caen; Fontenay-le-Comte, near Nantes, and Paris, and one just north of Milan in Italy. These clubs, and others in Geneva, Jersey and Guernsey would be delighted to welcome visitors of any handicap, either as individuals or as small teams.

The President went on to say that he would be delighted to assist with addresses and advice. A slight knowledge of French or Italian would be of assistance! He hoped that players who made these visits would note the wonderful hospitality provided and be able to reciprocate to visitors from any country who visited us.

Next, he paid tribute to the great amount of work done by those in the CA Office and, in particular, Tony Antenen, who had to cope with moving the Office from one side of Hurlingham to the other, a break-in and theft of the computer and other equipment, and an ever-growing mountain of paperwork which Council and its Committees were generating.

Finally, he reiterated his thanks to all members of Council for the time and effort they all put in and all those attending the AGM for their interest.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 12.10pm.

DONT MISS IT  
GO THROUGH IT NOW!

NO!! NOT THE HOOP!



THE CLUB REGISTRATION PACK

Available to all clubs who register with the CROQUET ASSOCIATION