

THROUGH THE HOOP

Sunday, 8th May and Belsay Hall by invitation of the

Chairman and Officers of the Club to attend the official opening of their newly acquired gazebo! [Well! At least a more interesting start to your piece than usual. Ed] Background. The Club is situated in the grounds of the Hall and plays there courtesy of English Heritage with whom there is a close rapport. So much so that, thanks to the generosity of English Heritage on the one hand and determined fund raising by the club to contribute their share, there is now, carefully sited at the side of the courts, a beautiful gazebo, constructed in Western Red Cedar from Vancouver, which is totally in keeping with its surroundings. The Club is indebted to Stephen Anderton, English Heritage's Horticultural Officer at the Hall, for his vision and pursuance of this project which is a tangible expression of the close cooperation that exists between the two

The day, blessed by perfect weather, drew a sizeable crowd and achieved local media coverage from which the Club must surely benefit. Last year, Belsay Hall attracted some 60,000 visitors from all over the country and abroad practically all of whom stopped to ponder over the most English of games being played in a truly pastoral setting (whites are de rigueur). David Price, the Club's energetic Chairman, is to produce a leaflet which could provide significant publicity for the CA and clubs generally. The Hall and grounds are well worth a detour if you are up in that neck of the woods with the possibility of arranging to play

... English Heritage & the Belsay Gazebo
... a slow boat to croquet ... and literate
(and taxing) croquet at Surbiton ...



Sports Council & Surbiton Club President Sir Peter Yarrington presents the Winner's Salver to Sir Anthony Battishill, Chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue

not ruled out. Contact David Price (0670 860558) for further details.

My thanks to all at Belsay, both Club Members and Hall Staff for a memorable day.

Croquet is up and moving on the Isle of Man! There are two Clubs on the Island playing at three venues. In Ramsay, the Grand Island Club has three half-lawns and one three-quarter size lawn (convertible to full-size on occasion) while Castleton Club has 2 half-sized lawns at Port St Mary and are hopeful of better facilities in the near future. The message is that they would extend the warmest of welcomes to any intrepid croquet players from the mainland. It struck me that if, as with my Rugby Club, you were thinking about an end of Season short tour, either individually or as an ad hoc team, you could travel further and

fare worse than the IOM! Alternatively, if any of you newly emerged coaches want a truly receptive forum here's one ready made for you!

Despite being a tax haven the clubs haven't the money to pay travelling expenses but might well be able to help out with accommodation. Ring Kevin Garrad on 0624 815340 (Home) or 677877 (Office) for further details. Go on! Give it a shot!! Widen your horizons and be trail blazer for the game!!!

Sunday, June 19 and Hurlingham at its Summer best for the Annual pre-Wimbledon Garden Party. Quality tennis with Nastase and Cliff Richard in sparkling form in the doubles, International Exhibition Fencing and Bowls and Hurlingham V Roehampton on the front four! Then, immediately on to Surbiton, as a guest at the Stacey International V The

Board of the Inland Revenue match.

Tom Stacey of Stacey International, the prestigious publishing firm, threw down the gauntlet and Chairman of the Inland Revenue Board Sir Anthony Battishill picked it up! The result was an OK Corral style shoot out at Surbiton with, among others, the Noble George patrolling as referees and adjudicators. However, as George and Co are somewhat limited in their experience - being mostly confined to the game as we know it and being confronted with several variations on a rococo theme - their tact and diplomacy were, to say the least, the stuff of legend. Need I report that the evening was a staggering success, my choice of words dictated in part by the generous provision of very drinkable wine to be had for the asking.

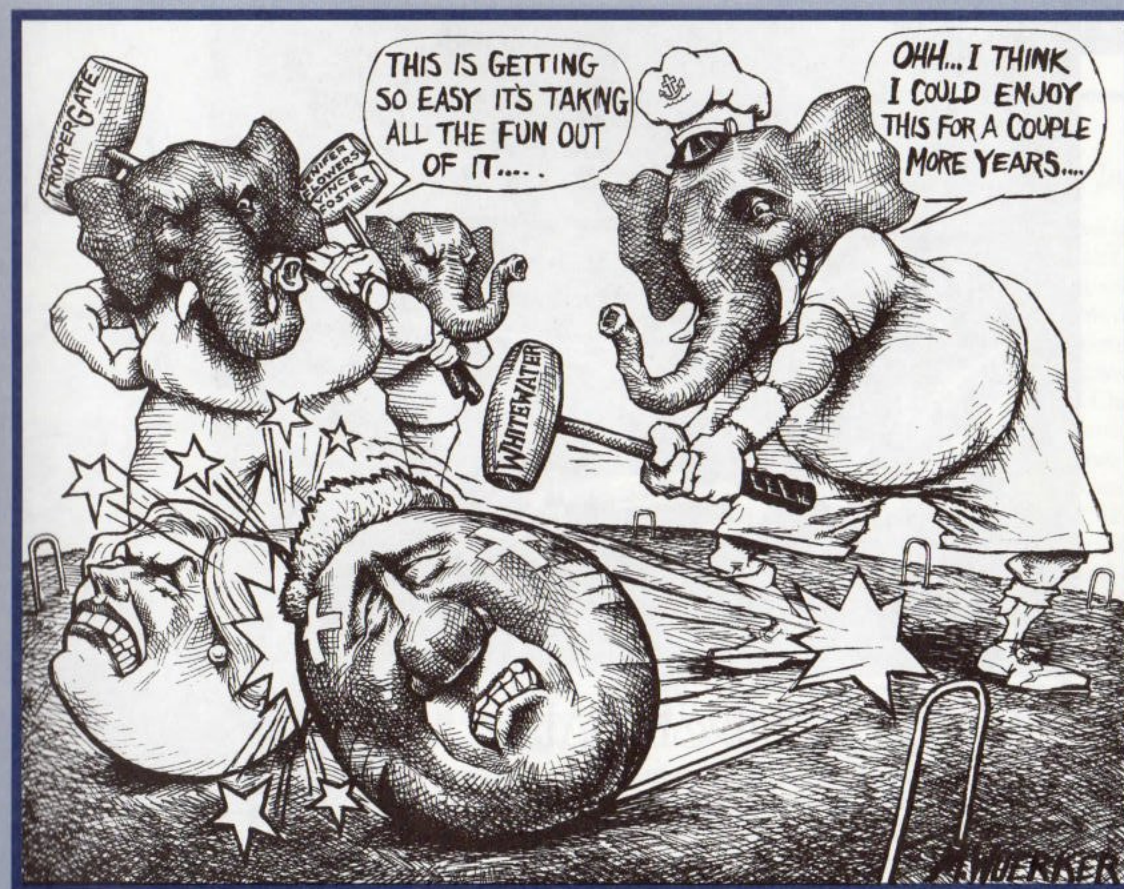
Supper was up to the usual Surbiton standards (and we all know what that means!) following which the winners, based, so far as I could make out, on a combination of Differential Calculus, the moon's phase, the going rate for the ECU and the birth dates of the entrants divided by the sum of the squares on the other two sides, were declared to be the Inland Revenue Board. Sir Peter Yarrington, President of the Sports Council and Club President presented the handsome salver to Sir Anthony and I am indebted to Lady Gilean Mackenzie-Welter for the photograph which says it all!

Tom Stacey, in a speech which confirmed his reputation as writer, wit and general man of letters, responded to a gracious acceptance from Sir Anthony who promised a return match next Season.

Tony Antenen

croquet

MAGAZINE ISSUE 234

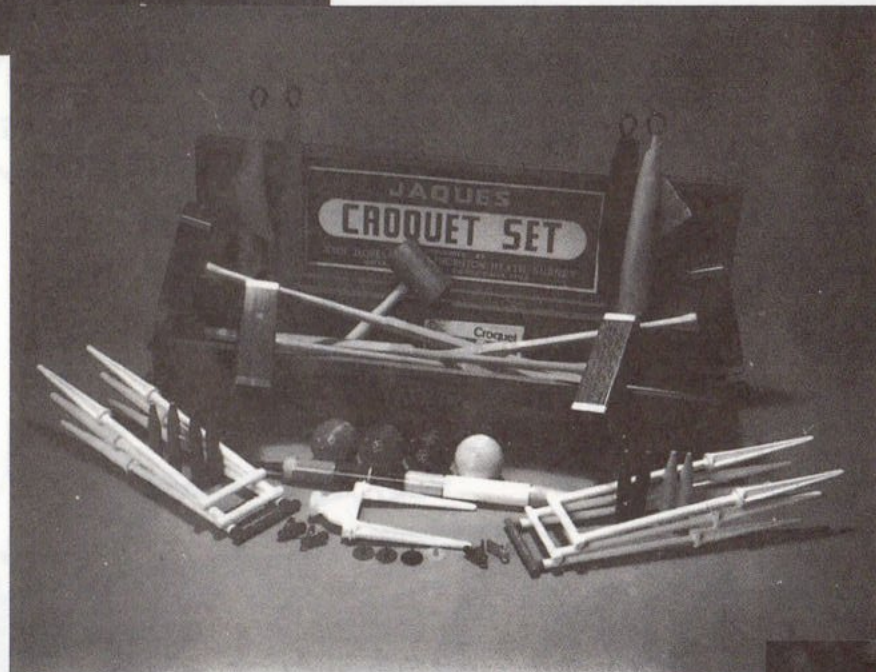


"Republicans play dirty, Bill"

INSIDE this special issue for Associate members of the CA: more tournament news than you could wave a stick at!



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Why I'd call "Time" on the WCF!

A personal view by John Walters

The World Croquet Federation is still but a fledgling organisation. Set up in the 1980's the WCF was something of a dream fulfilled for many people and I doubt whether anybody saw its formation as a bad thing (although I have spoken to senior overseas players who from the outset were concerned that the WCF might be the colonial wing of the CA). The Objectives of the WCF have broadly been to encourage our sport in "croquet developing countries" and to further international integration; the most visible achievement has been the creation of a World Championship, a long-standing aim for many, which has just been played for the fifth time.

The Croquet Association is undoubtedly the most important governing body for croquet in the world. England has the strongest players at the top as well as the greatest depth, but our contribution to the game is much more than that. The historical birthplace of organised croquet remains the centre for progress and innovation -

the flag bearer of our sport.

Our contribution to world croquet is not merely the several hundred pounds received from us by the WCF each year. Of the 5 World Championships 4 have been staged in England. They have been built on the blood, sweat and tears of British organisers and I myself am proud not only to have played in two World Finals but also to have been the organiser for one of the English events. From these events the WCF has not only gained more hundreds of pounds in license fees, but also its very reputation.

Just as the World Championship has had to come to terms with representing the numerical dominance of top class English players, one might expect the WCF to represent this English influence elsewhere. The CA's proposed candidate for the WCF Management Committee is the universally respected figure Keith Aiton, but at its AGM in August the WCF chose not to support our candidate.

I have since been led to ponder over what benefit we get from the WCF. At its next meeting, Council will discuss what costs this latest World Championship may have placed on CA resources. At the moment I am inclined to think that CA influence and finance is best exercised outside the WCF. I hope others too will reflect on whether now might be the time for the CA to leave the WCF entirely to its own devices.

'Croquet'

Readers will have noticed that the last issue of the magazine appeared rather later than usual. This was due to teething troubles with the CA computer database that provides mailing labels, exacerbated by the extended "affiliate" run of that issue. The inevitable 'knock-on' effect will mean this issue also reaches you late, though less so. By the time of the next issue we should be right back on target. Thanks for bearing with us.

NEWS

Joe Hogan Mallets & Equipment

From B C MacMillan, CA Commercial Agent



So successful have the Joe Hogan Mallets been that we now are stocking their Croquet Sets, which are remarkable value at £348.00 delivered and VAT paid.

The set is a Garden version with four Joe Hogan mallets, set of 1/2" hoops, corner flags, centre peg, four 1lb composite balls. This is in an attractive wooden box, included also is a copy of "Play the Game" and the official Laws of Croquet.

Bill bursts into print

CA Vice Chairman Bill Lamb has two recent additions to the bookstall.



"Know the Game" -



"Croquet" will be familiar to many

players - it's often a first written introduction to the game. The latest revamp, done with the assistance of Bill, introduces colour to the format. The rewrite looks effective and includes the use of my long-favoured technique of introducing first 2 then 3 and only finally 4 ball breaks to beginners.

"Know the Game" remains principally a fair aid memoir for players going through the long process of being coached at their local club. One thing this most recent updating doesn't include is current photographs; they may be in colour, but the subjects of photos remain firmly in the '70s and '80s!

The eighties saw a spate of books extensively utilising "court diagrams" (something to do with the rise of DTP I suspect). It was always ironic that the deepest and most complex croquet book ever written, "Expert Croquet Tactics", managed to avoid the mind-bending complexity of beginner book diagrams. "Croquet - the skills of the game" is now available in paperback, still boasting a handful of those 'navigationally challenged' dotted lines plus the famous "roquet distance vs odds" graph that tells us of a handicap +2's 50% (critical distance) record on 20 yard roquets! For all that this book is a perfectly reasonable 'filling out' of the basics touched on in "Know the Game", though in truth that is the substantial difference - the book does not attempt to cover significantly more. When originally published this book was seen as the replacement (and abridgement) for the "World of Croquet"; it is very sad that in fact there is no longer any book

with the scope of that work. "Skills of the Game" is a book for beginners who want more than in "Know the Game" - perhaps because they don't have sufficient coaching available.

WIN BILL LAMB

We have copies of both books available. To have a chance of winning one, write in telling us (in no more than 50 words) what you would most (and/or least) like to see in a croquet book. The Editor will select the wittiest, most profound replies or the ones that happen to tickle his fancy most!

South East Federation Ladies Day

29th June 1994
Held at the Sussex County Croquet Club, Southwick

Margaret Payton, who usually manages this day, was unable through illness to run this event and asked me if I could do this for her. I accepted the challenge not knowing what this would bring, as up to date I have only helped the manager at tournaments and only had second hand knowledge.

However, after hours of studying form decided to run the event as a club Swiss, having three rounds of 18 points for both singles and doubles, each game lasting for 2.5 hours.

On the day we woke up to another wonderfully sunny sky and hoped this was a good omen. Those taking part this year were Compton, Ealing, Havering, Worthing (last year's winner) and two teams from Sussex County C.C.

Havering had to leave at the crack of dawn due to the train strike, and all clubs managed to arrive before 10.0 o'clock, with Compton giving me the

only real problem of the day - one lady was sick and unable to play, so a quick call to a local lady and the day was saved. Sussex County A team got off to a good start, winning both singles and the doubles in the first round; and again in the second round and third they succeeded in winning all games, which made them the undisputed winners, which thankfully for the new manager saved any lengthy calculations! The 2.5 hour games worked very well as quite a few games were finished before time.

Everyone enjoyed the day and promised to come back again next year. I also enjoyed managing the day and must say a 'thank you' for the help I received, without which the day would have lasted a lot longer.

Thanks also to the Sussex County Croquet Club for hosting this event, with their very good lawns and catering facilities.

Our best wishes to Margaret who we hope will be well enough to come back next year.

Gene Mears

New venue proves a success

The Committee of the South East Federation decided to change both the time of year and venue for their A.G.M. holding it this year at the Surbiton Club House. The decision proved to be a popular one as the meeting was very well attended with representatives from fifteen clubs filling the hall. Also present were Tony Antenen (CA Secretary) and Syd Jones (Development Committee).

After John Knight had successfully presented the 1993 accounts to the meeting Richard Hilditch (Chairman) caused some hilarity by proposing a change to

the Constitution, namely being able to hold the A.G.M. at a later date than specified in the Constitution. As this action had already been taken and was obviously a success the motion was ratified without any problem. It was proposed that next year it may incorporate the Federation Club Conference as well on the same day.

The Trophy for the "U" League was presented to Crawley (in absentia) and the "B" league to Ealing. It was announced that Ramsgate would Represent the Federation in the Secretary's Shield. Of the other Tournaments held during the year-Worthing had won the Ladies Day, Haver-

ing the Golf Day and the Team Tournament had been shared between Medway and Chichester. Richard Hilditch then led a discussion on possible changes to the format of the Leagues for the 1994 season. It was generally felt by the assembled throng that four matches must be completed to qualify and that points should be awarded for playing (regardless of the outcome of the match). A number of other points were also raised and are incorporated in the 1994 League rules.

In 1994 it was proposed to hold a Short Croquet League, those interested contact Ron Welch, and a one ball tournament.

The following stal-

warts were elected for the committee for 1994: Richard Hilditch, Stephen Badger, John Knight, Ron Welch, David Collins, Hyacinth Coombs, Roy Ware and Quiller Barrett.

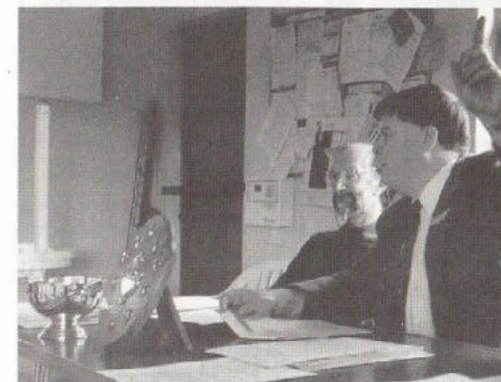
Syd Jones spoke briefly about the Federation Conference and the meeting was rounded off by George Noble who spoke on the present status of croquet in France and his experiences there. Anyone interested in joining a trip to play croquet in France should contact Stephen Badger.

The meeting closed with an expression of thanks to the Surbiton Club and many stayed to enjoy one of the clubs famous lunches.

Roy Ware



Tony Antenen raises a point from the back of the room, during the meeting



Chairman Richard Hilditch requests permission to leave the room; Stephen Badger poised to take over!



Richard presents "B" league trophy to Quiller Barrett of Ealing

1994 UK RANKINGS

Current positions, as at 25/7/94

1	Bamford RL [SA]*	191.3	46	49	Schmieder C von [I]	107.8	17
2	Taylor M [A]*	178.1	108	50	Coles WT	107.5	33
3	Clarke CD	177.8	74	51	Patmore CJ	106.6	32
4	Fulford RI	177.5	29	52	Haslam JH	106.3	27
5	Maugham DB	165.7	61	53	Aiton KMH	106.1	34
6	Mulliner SN	165.5	61	54	Hallam BG	106	30
7	Irwin CJ	161.6	40	55	Mrozinski AJ	105.9	18
8	Dawson JP	161	48	56	Smith RJ	105.3	14
9	Walters JO	153.9	19	57	Vincent IG	104.6	20
10	Openshaw DK	153.2	29	58	Hawkins JD	104.5	31
11	Cornelius DA Miss	151.9	65	59	Southern C	104.4	56
12	Comish S	151.4	61	60	Haggerston MJB	104.1	32
13	Goacher DJ	148.1	59	61	Ormerod WP	104.1	20
14	Day PE	145.7	45	62	Farthing CN	103.8	31
15	Cordingley P	141.8	68	63	Ransom RW	103.7	20
16	Symons AJ	141.7	31	64	Dorke PJ [W]	102.7	46
17	Avery MN	141.2	27	65	Hayes MR	100.2	16
18	Gaunt DL	135.7	58	66	Fewtrell R	100	18
19	Curry GE Miss	135.4	21	67	Willard GM	99.8	12
20	Bond ID [S]	134.7	44	68	Wheeler JA	97.4	10
21	Noble GW	132.7	42	69	McInerney R [I]	97.3	11
22	Goddard JP	131.5	46	70	Stephens RT	94.8	30
23	Prichard WdeB [W]	131.5	12	71	Carter KJ	94.4	31
		131.5	12	72	Smoritt HW	94	53
24	Palmer LJ [W]	130.7	42	73	Wadley AM	93.6	40
25	Wiggins DCD	129.1	38	74	Willis JH	93.4	10
26	Hope AB [S]	128.1	16	75	Bennett G	93	37
27	Harrison-Wood D	127.1	31	76	Green BG <J>	91.9	12
		127.1	31	77	Whittaker FL	91.4	10
28	Williams CN [W]	126.4	58	78	Jenkins RS	90.1	17
29	Guest JE	126.4	59	79	Sutcliffe AF	89.2	22
30	Burridge IJ [W]	126.2	100	80	Hammelev MA	89.1	22
31	Murray M [S]	123.7	15	81	McClelland IR	89.1	15
32	Rogerson F [I]	123.4	10	82	Badger ST	87.5	25
33	Lamb WE	122.5	21	83	Darby PA	86.7	16
34	Landor FJR	120.4	43	84	Arliss WH	86.4	13
35	Gunasekera DL [W]	120	14	85	Thatcher DFS	85.9	18
		120	14	86	Smith J	84.6	45
36	Liddiard GS [S]	119.8	53	87	Coates DT	84	21
37	Evans MJ [W]	119.5	17	88	Ward WH	83.7	10
38	Smith PL	119.4	19	89	Rangeley MW	83.2	16
39	Ames JP	117.1	58	90	Sandler MH	83.1	14
40	Tuke SM	116.2	33	91	Paddon MT	82.8	13
41	Gregory AK	115.7	76	92	Gugan R Mrs	82.7	16
42	Brown RJ	113.9	15	93	Morrow N	82.5	56
43	Browne TN [I]	113.5	31	94	Steadman W	82.3	51
44	McDiarmid AJ Miss	113.4	27	95	Tibble LG	81.3	29
		113.4	27	96	Jackson NG	81.2	13
45	Leggate ATR <J>	112.8	41	97	Ransom FE Mrs	81.1	39
46	Jones C	112.6	47	98	Wainman BR	80.9	10
47	Toye JS	109	12	99	Shorten JAI Miss [I]	80.4	15
48	Li-Williams MJ [W]	107.9	19	100	Storey IE	80.4	13

* = Overseas players currently playing in the UK

LETTERS

Budleigh Brilliant!

Dear John,
I have just returned from Budleigh's May Tournament having enjoyed good croquet in an idyllic setting and amongst good friends. Even after a very wet winter and the subsequent late treatment of the lawns, I found them to be in excellent condition. One groundsman not only tends ten lawns but also keeps the edges, hedges and paths in immaculate order. After reading in past numbers of hills, dales, holes and meadows, I wonder do these people think before they write ill-chosen words and make flippant remarks which can be so very damaging to tournament clubs? Many croquet clubs are struggling to make ends meet and tournaments are a very helpful source of income for them. They need and deserve all the help they can get. Of course one will always get the odd nucleus who only wants to play and doesn't care to socialise between games, but for myself and many others croquet has brought many happy hours, not only of playing but enjoying all the clubs amenities, getting to know people and making many lasting friendships. So come on Croquet Players, Play the Game, blame your bad play on yourself and not on the lawns and enjoy the wonderful ambience offered by the Queen of Games.

Yours sincerely,
Patty Hague

Winning croquet - the AHS way

Dear Sir,
Once upon a time, in a picturesque town



somewhere in the heart of England, there existed a croquet club. 'Perfect' is gross understatement in describing the setting. The lawn was exactly regulation size, with a single marked border. On the smooth, flat, playing surface no weeds and no moss were ever seen. Somehow 'rabbit runs' never appeared in the six exactly calibrated regulation hoops which were firmly placed to the exact millimetre and which were hammered in perpendicular. Even the winning peg had a 6" white base, was vertical and the correct size. Each day the club would put out the 4 corner flags and 8 yard markers to ensure that nothing could spoil a perfect day playing croquet.

In this picturesque club there were only two players. Their real names do not matter but they each had nicknames. The one, due to his habit of shouting 'HIT IT!' when making a long roquet was called, appropriately 'Mr. Hit' whilst the other, from the time when he was a rapidly improving player and would shout 'TAKE A BISQUE' was called 'Mr. Take'.

These two players were evenly matched - so well matched were they that you could guarantee that whichever of them won one match between them would lose the next. Over the years, however, they improved so much and played in many tournaments that they each had a Croquet Association handicap of '0'. They had both, in fact, reached a plateau wherefrom they deviated in neither direction.

Each of them had married and each had a daughter and this year both daughters joined the club where, inevitably, they received the nicknames 'Miss Hit' and 'Miss Take'. In order

to encourage them our two men decided that they would not compete in any tournaments this year but devote their time to their proteges. They decide, therefore, that they would hold a large number of handicap tournaments, drawn at random, and that the results should be noted in the pristine Croquet Association handicap cards.

Peculiarly a pattern started to arise. The two girls turned out to be developing equally well in that the games between them always resulted in the winner alternating, just like the men. However they were improving at such a rate (2 or 1 1/2 bisques every 5 games) that they ALWAYS defeated their parents.

Over the year the handicap changes were faithfully noted as follows:-

Games	Ladies	Gentlemen
0	18	0
5	17	1/2
10	16	15
15	1	1/2
20	14	2
...
60	7	7

It was at this stage that the men suddenly realised that, due to no fault of their own, they had suddenly gone from playing 'A' class croquet to playing 'C' Class croquet even though their standard had remained the same. They also realised that their daughters, even though they had only improved by 11, were, in fact, playing the equivalent of 'scratch' croquet. They could thus appreciate that the new CA handicapping system would enable them all, next year, to win a large number of events whilst their handicaps gradually returned to the correct values. In fact they all decided to join separate clubs, enter the 'All England' handicap competition where they met at Colchester in the

final.

Although this has taken the idea to the extreme several pertinent points do arise.

1) A player may only improve his handicap at the expense of the handicap of his opponents.

2) More people start playing croquet a year and improve than there are people who are gradually getting worse. This is exacerbated by the fact that those who are improving will play more games, and presumably win more games, than those who are in the twilight of their career. As these players drop out, moreover, it will be impossible for their handicaps to be utilised by improving players.

3) The net effect, thus, is that overall the average handicap of croquet players especially those who, in the past have had fairly constant handicaps, will gradually increase over the next few years.

4) It is recognised that the definition of a 'scratch' handicap player is one who will develop

two breaks and make all twelve hoops without recourse to bisques. Surely there must be some way in which absolute, rather than relative, handicaps may be determined.

5) The Croquet association could, in its wisdom, provide a standardised test which could be taken by any member (perhaps with a nominal fee) to try and lower their handicap. Each test would have several phases with marking based on performance. There would be, say, 4 tests namely for 'A' 'B' 'C' 'D' class players. The score would be out of, say, 100 and your handicap would be based on your score e.g for the 'D' class player a score of 20 would be a handicap of 18, a score of 50 would be a handicap of 14 whereas a score of 90 would be a handicap of 10. Only after reaching a prescribed score would a player be eligible to try the next test.

6) The advantages are obvious. A rapidly improving player could have his handicap



"provide a standardised test which could be taken by any member (perhaps with a nominal fee) to try and lower their handicap"

assessed and altered (a compulsory test would be free) and an award could be made at the end of a tournament. This removes, at a stroke, the problem of 'bandits'. Similarly a player who played well below their handicap could be asked to take such a test (again free) in order to realign their handicap.

The test would be standardised and the requirements would be known to the players so that practise in the required areas would occur. This would therefore give to players, in fact, a coaching plan to improve their game.

8) The next point is, obviously, what questions should go into such a test? There are several obvious sections:-

Shooting - e.g 5 shots at 2 yards, 3 yards, 4 yards, 5 yards. Rushing - e.g straight dolly rushes to longer cut rushes. Croquet - drive, roll, stop shot, split. Hoops - straight & angled - approaches on clock system Breaks - 4 ball break from 4 to 1 back going to all round break - 3 ball breaks and 2 ball

breaks, triple peels Bisques - To build a break, repair a break. Tactics - When to shoot, join up, corner etc Laws - Faults, When does turn end, wiring lift, limit claims.

The level of difficulty chosen in the paper would reflect the CA interpretation as to the ability each player should have to hold a specified handicap.

Yours faithfully,
J B Portwood

Spare the pound & spoil the ball?

Dear Sir,
Having played with Barlow Balls of different types at competition lately, I along with many other people feel it is a pity to spoil a good game just to save a few pounds and that club Committees should think twice before depriving players of Jaques quality balls

Yours
George Chamberlain, Leeds

WANTED TO BUY

Old croquet books, pictures, drawings or anything else related to the subject matter of croquet. Send me your list and price of items to sell.

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The Editor trots off despondently, since no-one seems to want to write to him anymore!

"for myself and many others croquet has brought many happy hours, not only of playing but enjoying all the clubs amenities, getting to know people and making many lasting friendships"

NEWS

Preliminary notice of Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Croquet Association will take place on Saturday 15th October 1994 at 11.00am at the Hurlingham Club.

Please note that this date has had to be brought forward from the originally intended date.

The agenda will include, in addition to the normal items of business, a motion for the election of two Vice-Presidents, viz Mr D C Caporn and Professor B G Neal, and a motion for a further change to Rules 2 and 7 of the Association. A formal notice of the meeting will be posted to Associates in September with a voting paper relating to the rule changes and, if necessary, to the election of Councillors.

A note of explanation about the rule change appears below.

Proposed changes to the rules

A significant change to the Rules of the Association will be proposed by the Council at the Annual General Meeting on 15th October 1994 and will be the subject of a postal vote. This note sets out the reasons for the change.

In 1992 Rules 2 and 7 were changed to allow direct representation of the nine regional Federations on the Council. It was subsequently discovered that the altered rules contained flaws in their wording which could cause practical difficulties in their operation. The Council

has also come to recognise, as a result of views expressed through the Development Committee and at the last Federation Conference on 20th February 1994, that the method of selecting the Federation Representatives as incorporated in the changed rules was not in keeping with the wishes of several of the Federations.

The amendment now proposed to Rules 2 and 7 remove the flaws in the wording and preserve the newly created provision of nine places on the Council for Federation Representatives. The main change is that each Federation, when electing its representative, instead of being required in all cases to adopt a postal voting system restricted to Associates resident in the Federation's area, will be able within certain guidelines to choose whatever democratic system suits it best.

Some other minor improvements in the wording of the rules have also been made and therefore for ease of comprehension the proposal is to replace the whole of the existing Rules 2 and 7.

The first three new places for Federation Representatives will become available at the Annual General Meeting in October 1995 and it is anticipated these will be taken by representatives from the West Midlands, Southern and South-West Federations.

A J Oldham
17-7-94



Extract from Minutes of Council, 26th March 1994

Calendar of CA Tournaments covering the years 1994-98 has been produced.

Missing CA Trophies Solomon Trophy - replacement. Following its theft was agreed at cost of approximately £750.

The 3rd Trevor Williams Cup, last contested in the "Gilby" at Cheltenham in 1978, is still missing.

National Croquet Centre. C D Hudson reported that the discussions with Old Silhillians R.U.F.C. at Solihull as a possible venue for a National Croquet Centre would not be proceeded with at the request of the club.

The Rowheath option was still open but immediate action was needed to proceed. Rents of some £1000 per annum for the first two years rising to £3500 thereafter were advised. While there was some concern expressed that a matter involving the possible expenditure of funds to this amount had been brought to Council without prior warning.

Council agreed nem con that a letter of intent be sent to the Rowheath Trust subject to a draft lease being approved by Council, which will

await a further report from its sub-committee.

CRF/Subscription Rates for 1995. Following discussions on the merits/demerits of raising individual subscriptions Council agreed the Committee's recommendations that:

(1) For 1995 the CRF be increased from £4.00 to £5.00 per playing member, and

(2) There should be no change in subscription rates, this last decision to be given early - and prominent - publication in "Croquet".

(3) Schools. It was agreed that the rate for Schools be reduced from the present £25 to £10 by one vote!

Development Committee

Council approved unanimously the presentation of the Apps-Heley Award to Ashby Croquet Club and the Townsend Award to Medway Croquet Club recording, in the case of the latter, its appreciation to C P Townsend for the generous donation of a mallet to accompany the award.

Handicap Committee

Ruling in Lifts and Contacts in Advanced Handicap Play.

That the application of Law 36 to Advanced Handicap Play is subject to the proviso that references in that Law to "the preceding turn" mean 'the preceding visit to the court', bisque turns being considered as continuations of the turn for the purpose of this Law only.

In addition, the Advanced Play pegging out law applies including the loss of entitlement to lift or contact by a player who has already pegged out a ball.

Centenary Committee

Council agreed that an existing tournament or tournaments should be specifically designated in 1997 as part of the centenary celebrations.

Council also agreed that they should embrace both top-class and grass roots Association players and that the main event be staged at Hurlingham. However, other events should also be arranged outside London to which dignitaries could be invited.

It was further agreed that a Centenary Lunch should be arranged to take place on the primary celebration day. This would not preclude the organising of a "Centenary Dinner" at other venues outside London.

Editorial Committee

The following members were elected: K M H Aiton, G Cuttle, S N Mulliner.

THE TOWNSEND AWARD

Is your new club as good as the Medway C.C.?

That annual boost to a new club's morale, the Townsend Award, was graciously presented to Medway Croquet Club by Syd Jones, chairman of the C.A. Development Committee. The occasion was further enlivened by the presence and interjections of the inimitable C.A. Secretary, Tony Antenen.

Since we at Medway (which is in Kent - our axis is Maidstone and the Medway Towns) have been adjudged the most improved new club of 1993, some of our experiences may help other clubs. So here is how we thrived and how we won - we think!

Have an enthusiastic coach to run an advertised coaching course. Thanks to Ron Welch (S.E. Federation), Medway started 1992 - its first season - with twelve committed members.

Obtain support from the local council. Rochester bought equipment for a municipal site with reduced green fees for season ticket holders. It was also responsible for the coaching course.

Work hard to find a suitable site, even if it means visiting a couple of dozen. It can be surprising how many sports clubs, derelict bowling greens, etc. there can be in an area. Best of all, end up as Medway has done, affiliated to a supportive club, Cobdown Sports and Social Club, in a lovely setting and with superb groundsmen.

Turn to the local area's Federation for support. Ron Welch encouraged us to form a club and was our first president.

Find a highly experienced player in

the area. Thank you Vincent Camroux for retiring to Rochester!

Recruit, recruit and recruit, and do not despair. Publicise, hold open days, advertise coaching courses and - best of all - use personal contacts to recruit. Nurture new members and keep existing ones by holding social events: a barbecue, a fun croquet evening, a day out at a large club with many lawns (thank you Sussex C.C. and Diana Brothers). Cater for all interests and standards.

Submit an entry for the Townsend Award a year before you are ready. Next year's submission will look so much better!

Show well in some tournaments, and

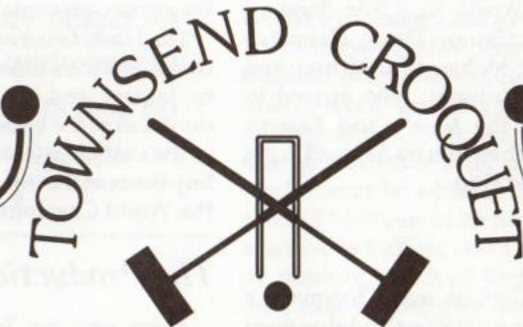
especially enter high bisquer and local federation tournaments. A new club's best players are probably rapidly improving. Insist that anyone who is short of employment practice four ball breaks every day, so that he can do them with his eyes shut in tournaments!

Do not be shy of visiting other clubs on your travels. Most clubs welcome visitors and their green fees. The experience of meeting other players and seeing how other clubs operate is invaluable. (The author wishes to thank all the clubs and their secretaries which he has visited during his business travels.)

Finally, make your detailed submission for

the 1994 Townsend Award highly presentable with plenty of photographs. Demonstrate how hard you have worked in finding a new site, raising funds, recruiting, socialising and so on.

Medway Croquet Club is still having to work hard to become fully established with sufficient members and lawns to generate its own momentum, but we will get there. We are grateful to Charles Townsend for encouraging the development of croquet by donating the Townsend Award to the C.A. and a mallet to us, and to officials of the C.A. and the S.E. Federation for their support.



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The Cast

As last year the entry was one short of a pack. Most of the obvious cards were there, so it is easier to say who wasn't. 1965 was the last Championship to lack the old Ace of Spades, 9-times winner Nigel Aspinall, but he was last the Champion in 1984 and sadly sees no point if you know you cannot win. Bernard Neal, excluded by a bad back, had missed only once since 1969. Let's hope he returns even though he must know he cannot win. Colin Irwin and John Walters chose August's World Championship.

The new Father of the Tournament, Michael Heap also complained of a bad back (he threw something into a bin), but it didn't seem to slow him down much. 1994's Upper Ten were: 1974 Heap, 1975 Southern, 1977 Mulliner & Openshaw, 1978 Stevens, 1979 Bond, 1980 Noble & Vincent, 1981 Cordingley, 1982 Avery.

Last year I noted the rising age of our top players. Indeed 1994's youngest British player was Chris Clarke (23), an old hand who won the President's Cup as long ago as 1988. The youngest British newcomers were 25, the pony-tailed Chrisses from Oxford, Patmore & Farthing. The other new Britons were older: Ames (slightly) and McLelland (greatly). The only teenagers were from overseas: from Capetown, William Louw (18), whose brother Wynandt played last year; and the French Champion Yoann Ravez (16); an image of Robert Fulford at the same age: running his fingers through fair hair and balls through difficult hoops. His croquet strokes need a heavier (than 2 1/2 lb) mallet. The other foreigners were World No.1 Reg Bamford (also from the Cape); Doug Grimsley (Virginia); Mick Mehas (California) and Michael Taylor (Victoria), who arrived in high esteem, as the Men's and Eastern Champion, though beaten by Aspinall in the Roehampton Gold Cup.

The Stage

When Hugh Carlisle was Chairman of Hurlingham in the early 80's, the club waived its lawn hire charges for the Opens and the President's Cup, and this generosity continues under his successors. Many thanks

to all of them. The four front lawns can have a verdant softness that makes top class croquet too easy. This hot, dry summer and a commendable forbearance by Mr. Pontin from keeping the lawns moist and green meant that conditions were testing, even more so than the last fast year, 1989. A large area around the hoop 1 on Lawns 3 and 4 was glassy brown, which provided endless fun for viewers and woe for the manager. Robin Brown read it well when he overapproached 2-back to level with the hoop but the ball rolled back (surely wind not hill) so that he could run it. Even parts of the normally quiet and easy Lawn 1 became tricky. (Many may not know that it is much younger than the other three, having been reclaimed from the putting course in the early seventies, when the bowlers annexed a top lawn. A perfect example of the dress code was the freak albino peacock that lives on the cricket field. Needless to say, the lawns there were fiendish. When it reverted to cricket, 570 runs were scored in a short day. Boycott could have put several car-keys in the cracks in the pitch itself, though our outfield was only just dusty enough to dry Atherton's hands.

The Props

All the hoops were truly firmly set, though a fashion for smashing in the later rounds meant that they were often reset between games. Maugham, like Burridge and several others, said he simply could not run the hoops softly - but still managed 4 TPs his first 4 games. Some were illegally narrow even at the crown, presumably overpainted.

Tim Haste failed only 1 of the 40 new balls, compared with 10 last year. Congratulations to Jaques and thanks for their annual donation of the balls, worth almost as much as the entry fees (though this year we had to buy them as the free balls are being used for the World Championship).

The Production

Every year the Tournament Committee discusses "resting" Richard Hilditch, to avoid being trapped in a rut, but no alternative manager is found, hardly surprising given

the effort required. He left my house before 9a.m. and never returned before 10p.m. Then he made plans and was called from players wanting to eke a few more hours at work or in bed. He couldn't watch the Tour de France on David Peterson's video till after midnight. He was provided with two official assistants. He admits "I totally ignore non-players", so handling the press was given to Keith Aiton, who did not have a busy time. Burridge passed his assistant managership to Gregory, but neither could prise Maugham's feet from under (often over) the desk. Gregory was actually guilty of a 105-minute lunch + tea break: "My partner fell asleep and I didn't like to wake him."

There were strict penalties for all but the first lateness offence. 3 out of the first 4 warnings went to Surbiton members. For doubles Richard ruled that an absent doubles partner could not join the game till after the opposition had started their next turn. This was invoked on Mark Avery, as partner Debbie Cornelius wisely started without him to avoid a yellow card.

This statutory ferocity was mollified by managerial kindness in granting leave. Dawson & Wiggins v Goddard & Day was pegged down from Monday to Thursday. Normally unflappable, Richard announced at 4.30 pm on Wednesday: "I am going to be in trouble soon", but he wasn't. Kindness to some means cruelty to others: on Saturday Justin Goddard played the last game of a doubles and 4 of his 10 Plate games with only two 5-minute breaks.

Aspinall overheard the kind manager offering players a choice of lawns and snorted: "In my day players had no choice. I was always put on Lawn 4." Another blow to tradition was allowing 5-minute practice, spurned by true gentlemen like George Noble and Thomas Coles, but not by brother Matthew. After his -26-26 defeat by Jeff Dawson he sighed: "I practised hooping, not shooting, and never had the chance to try a hoop."

The Referee of the Tournament was Ian Bond. His toughest decision was to refuse a replay to a steaming ex-Chairman of the Laws Committee, whose ball seemed to have "touched both sides on way through", a ruling I had to give against a senior New Zealander in the last Test series here.

The Audience

The oldest spectators were Alex and Mary Karmel, 90 years each, the youngest was Antonia Goddard, at barely 90 days, who only watched Daddy, so also saw a lot of play.

The usual band of yesterstars came to watch. Among former winners of CA national trophies there were both Solomons, two Williams (Ormerod & Prichard), the '69-'76 Champions (Aspinall, Wylie, Neal) two Women's Peels winners (Prichard and Carlisle), two Men's Champions (Murray & M. Saurin), two DuPre/Plate winners (Bray & Hopewell); and senior to all, Teddy Miles (Golf Croquet 1948). We glimpsed John McCullough, down to Parsons Green to win this year's golf croquet. Thus every Open Champion since 1963, except Joe Hogan, came.

The Plot

Defending Champion, Reg Bamford, started gallantly by allowing Frances Ransom 10 hoops, but one of his was ungallant. He "ran" penult after lodging in the jaws from the wrong side. Because Frances then took croquet from it three times without shifting it nobody, except husband Ray, noticed until the game was over.

While Nigel's GNA1 was rarely in the car park, PD1 was, which was sad for new seed Steve Comish, who lost in the first round to unseeded Paul Day. The last 8 were 7 seeds plus Day. No seed had dropped a game, except Taylor to Openshaw; Dawson to Aiton; and Maugham to Cordingley - who had started croakily +1+3 against Goddard. Another narrow early win was Chris Farthing's +2+4 over the Welsh Champion, Chris Williams.

In the quarter-finals Day was nervous against Fulford and fluffed several chances, losing by 24. This lulled Fulford who only just woke up in time (his words) to take the second by 3. Bamford responded well to a slim +2 over Dawson, but took the second +24TP. Mulliner only beat Taylor +18+9. Clarke and Maugham were the two players who best adapted to the conditions: Clarke's -26TP, +24TP, +26TP v Maugham was reminded of softer years.

In the semifinals, Clarke's fourth turn was followed by Fulford who laid a rare 2nd corner New Standard Leave "because I'm playing badly and need an easy triple". Clarke gave him two chances by blobbing 1 & 3 but then did a delayed triple. In the second game Fulford failed to punish a split off the court by Clarke, whose winning triple was adjudged by Keith Wylie "not perfect, but then nor is everything in my book." On the next court Mulliner, appearing in a straw hat for the first time ever, missed a return roquet after the fiery hoop 1, giving Bamford +25TP. In the second game Bamford's duffer tice ("the best opening", nodded Wylie) was hit by Mulliner, who stumbled at 2-back, but went on to 4-back after a Bamford error at 6. He laid a dolly rush at 1. "Oh how nice to see that", chortled William Ormerod. Later, a risky 30 yard miss gave the game to Mulliner

by 10TP. In the decider, he could not get going after Bamford missed the duffer tice and towards the end just missed the many shots left by Bamford, who took a poor game +12.

Last Act

The Championship final was played only best-of-three because Reg and Chris were in both finals. In the first game Clarke picked up a difficult break to 4-back. Bamford hit the long (22yd) lift and did the same, but Clarke then missed the short (15yd) lift. Each was foiled by the dreaded hoop 1 and then missed 4 yd roquets. Hopes of a "real" game were dashed by a sudden Bamford triple, +17TP.

In the second game three 20+yd misses by Clarke allowed Bamford, who hit a 17yd tice and was let down only once by his huge splits, to embark on a delayed TP; but he only managed one peel and a subsequential one. Clarke then missed the final short lift. The smart money had been attracted by the generously modest 8-1 starting price given by Clarke (bookie) against Clarke (player) winning his first Championship, so one Clarke welcomed Bamford's successful defence of his first Championship. Corbally, Duff Matthews, Wylie, Neal and Fulford are the only ones to have done this before. The last three have never won again (yet), but the two Irishmen did so several times. Let's hope that Reg's fine croquet is not too impeded by his impending marriage. Congratulations on both, especially the latter.

Aspinall overheard the kind manager offering players a choice of lawns and snorted: "In my day players had no choice. I was always put on Lawn 4."

Duets

The doubles on the first Sunday were a good overture for Hurlingham on Lawns 3 & 4. Guest & Stevens were on peg and 4-back v Farthing & Patmore soon after breakfast, but waited till lunch to win +8 and till tea to win +9. In T. Coles & Gunasekera's winning third game v Openshaw & Ravez, Ravez played an oppoball while the other oppoball was misplaced (off the lawn). Limit of claims and duty to forestall translated into French with difficulty.

After losing by 3 on time to Goacher & Heap, Comish asked a ref for some expedition. This was done with noble tact, to Burridge's relief as Heap is his boss. (Clarke also works for a croquet-player, Duncan Hector.) Burridge pegged himself out accidentally in the next game, but he and Comish went on to win the match.

Two early upsets: the longest running partnership, Noble & Vincent, lost the deciding game to Taylor & Gaunt, who made 8 hoops in the time-call turn to win +8. Ames and Smorfitt won +6+7 v Maugham and a

shaky Aiton, who had revenge over Ames in the singles. (So Smorfitt beat Maugham??)

Later features included Guest & Stevens taking the second two from Gregory & McLelland +2+1 both on time. Clarke & Fulford beat Coles & Gunasekera +26+26TP (no croquet). Fulford's TP was a Houdini act: at both 1- & 4-back, the opponents stood up, so sure were they that he would fail. His half-jumped rover was through by 1mm, but he hit a ball on the South boundary by less.

In the semi-finals Clarke TPO'd Goddard. Thomas Coles won the bet on how many turns Fulford would allow Day (5). In the second game, Day started to TPO Fulford but stuck in 6. Clarke missed from a foot. Day then stuck in the inevitable 2-back. Clarke hit in from 6 inches and went out. In the previous round Gaunt had won the match v Avery & Cornelius with a much-cheered TP on Lawn 4, but in the semi-final privacy of Lawn 8 he blobbed hoop 3 in each game. Bamford TPO'd Taylor and he and Mulliner switched to extreme caution. Don finally approached 3 from the second corner, but lost by 5.

Clarke was in the doubles final for the seventh year running, equalling Humphrey Hicks' record. In the first game he tried to TPO Mulliner but problems for both sides at 2-back & first, meant that an "economical" (=fluke) approach to 2, left Bamford an easy break to finish. For the next game, the defending champions changed colours, a bad move as Fulford soon played with the wrong ball. While Bamford and Fulford were having hoop trouble, Clarke went to 4-back and Mulliner's TPO was dashed by a missed 2ft straight peel at rover. A beautiful take off behind a boundary ball took Fulford round but he pegged out Mulliner not his partner. Bamford missed from baulk to peg, so the match went on beyond tea. Mulliner misapproached 2 on the third turn of the final game. After a bit of "real" croquet, Clarke went to 4-back but a fluffed leave allowed Mulliner to do the same. A missed short lift by Fulford and a short angled first by Bamford deprived Clarke & Fulford of their fifth consecutive win, which would equal Cotter & Solomon's record. For Steve it was his sixth doubles title in 15 years, compared with two in the singles. Perhaps he could devise Doubles Rankings.

Sub-Plot

The effect of the conditions on the number of triple peels was a constant theme. There were only 34 in the singles; 23% of games, cf. 42% last year. In the doubles the figure was 16%, cf. 31%. The Solomon Peeling prize went to Clarke with 8 in singles and 3 in doubles, a splendid accomplishment. Other totals (for both) were Bamford 6, Maugham 5, Mulliner 4. These four accounted for 26 out of the total of 34 peels. Fulford, the man who did 19 consecutive TPs last year, only managed 2 in his 19 games. He ascribes his disappointing form to a nasty bout of pneumonia in June in the USA, through which he was nursed by Doug Grimsley's mother. An unhealthy business, this professionalism.



Chris Clarke (left) and Robert Fulford (right) are sidelined, as Reg Bamford takes centre stage again.

104th Open Championship

Hurlingham, 17th-24th July 1994. Report by Robert Prichard

or

Oh! My Poor Bunyon

The continuing pilgrimage of Don Guantes and his Faithful Doñana - mixed up in totally the wrong story, in the Antipodes

Chapter 16

In which a short description covers a long journey.

Leaving Wellington, we drove up the west coast to New Plymouth. The road was pleasant but not spectacular. Drizzle spoilt the view approaching our destination. We booked in for two nights, hoping that the weather would improve so that we could visit Mt Egmont.

Next day did not look too promising but we set off, and once again, the clouds parted

Maori legend has it that Taranaki (Mt Egmont) was originally situated in the centre near Lake Taupo. He and some other volcanoes fell in love with Pihanga but Tongariro won the day and Taranaki fled west, his tears creating the Wanganui River

to give a wonderful view. Maori legend has it that Taranaki (Mt Egmont) was originally situated in the centre near Lake Taupo. He and some other volcanoes fell in love with Pihanga but Tongariro won the day and Taranaki fled west, his tears creating the Wanganui River. To this day they glower at each other over the miles. Well, he smiled briefly to welcome us to the visitor centre and see the view right down to the coast, but frowned once more as we were leaving and showed why walking in this area is not for the inexperienced.

We discussed whether we should go inland to Taupo or carry on back to Auckland. The weather forecast, overcast and rain decided for us and we continued north. The forecast was right and we had a damp, dreary ride to the city. A bright interval was our lunch stop at Te Kuiti where preparations were under way for the annual sheep shearing contest. A couple of days later we saw the event on TV. I think an Australian won, Oh dear!

Chapter 17

The explorers look for the sales in the city and buy some clothes. One dog is rescued, One tree is climbed and Onehunga is mispronounced.

I haven't really made much mention of our accommodation in NZ so far. We stayed almost exclusively in motels and found almost all of them to be clean, cheap and comfortable. It must come as a shock to Antipodean visitors to England to find that motels here do not have cooking facilities as standard. We were very impressed by both NZ and OZ accommodation. Our favorite motel in NZ was also the last. This was the one at Half Moon Bay in south west Auckland, just a few minutes from Pakuranga CC. We would certainly stay there again.

In 5 days you cannot see all that Auckland has to offer. We saw:-

Half Moon Bay area. Scenic drives and view points, especially at Musick point. We had some excitement here as a dog had fallen over the cliffs and was rescued by the fire brigade, fortunately unharmed.

Hill viewpoints and Domains (parklands). There are lots and lots of these, all with splendid views and walks. A lot of them also have remains of Maori Pa (fortified villages) We went to see One Tree Hill, Wellington Hill, Auckland Domain, Devenport Domain and Devenport Fort.

Scenic drives. Again, lots of them. We particularly enjoyed; Tamaki Drive from City Centre to St Heliers; Northern Motorway from Takapuna to the City; Beach Road from Torbay to Takapuna.

Shopping. Walking round shops is not something we do a lot, but we did enjoy a walk round the city centre from Albert Memorial Park, down Queen Street to the Harbour, where we bought a couple of sweatshirts. We also liked Victoria Market.

Museums etc. We expected to see quite a lot of these as the weather was forecast poor, but in the event it was mostly warm and sunny, so we did not go. We did go to the New Zealand Pavillion near the airport. This was OK but we felt that something which is supposed to give the atmosphere of a country loses its impact when actually situated in that country. Don't go to the Heritage Centre at Mt. Wellington, it's closed. So is the Blockhouse at Onehunga except on special

occasions. Our absolute favourite was MOTAT & MOTAT2. This is a collection of artifacts ancient and modern situated near the Zoo in two large compounds. MOTAT2 contains mostly aircraft and is the smaller of the two. MOTAT has vehicles and machinery of all sorts and sizes, radios, old shops and a hands-on science area for the kids. We saw a girl there from a childrens TV program called Arvo (or something like that). We quite liked the zoo, but felt that the cages were too small for many of the inhabitants.

We also had a day out north of

Lew had arranged for me to give a coaching session at Pakuranga. I was happy to do this and repay some of the hospitality I had received. What I was not prepared for was to see a crowd of 110 people!

Auckland, visiting Muriwai beach (surfing and gannet colony) then across to Whangaparaoa, a town on a peninsula jutting into the Hauraki Gulf with very nice views.

Chapter 18

The clans gather on the hallowed turf to hear words of wisdom from Don Guantes. He tells them the secrets of the ancients. They learn the use of small white spears and how to avoid the wrath of Refarearea. Sadly it is time to say haere-ra to New Zealand.

Our last two night were spent like the first, staying with Lew & Connie Nunnerley at Takapuna. Lew had arranged for me to give a coaching session at Pakuranga. I was happy to do this and repay some of the hospitality I had received. What I was not prepared for was to see a crowd of 110 people! Well, I did my best, I hope people felt it worth coming. It was certainly a wonderful end to a super holiday.

My coaching was not quite over as the next day I went to Takapuna and did a little

bit of individual tuition. The pleasure of the day was marred by the loss of one of Lew & Connie's cats which had been run over that night. Poor Bud, we will remember you.

It was time to leave. Where had 9 weeks gone? We took our car back to the hirer, Lew & Connie took us to the Airport and we took off. All that was left were memories.

But darned good ones!!

Chapter 19

Don Guantes and the Faithful Doñana hang their coats up in Sydney. Republic or not a Republic, that was the question. Will the Royal Botanic Gardens become the Presidential Botanic Gardens? Will Elizabeth Bay become Paul Bay and Hyde Park become Central Park? It's enough to make a cross Queen cross Kings Cross. "Sydney, do you like Keating?" "I don't know, I've never Keated."

We enjoyed our week in Sydney. It is a lively, cosmopolitan city with lots and lots to do. We hope to return.

We very much recommend buying a Sydney Pass. These are available at the airport, information centres and ferry offices. They are available for 3, 5 and 7 days and give unlimited travel on the Airport Express



The famous Sydney Opera House



Sydney harbour bridge

Bus, the Sydney Bus network, The Sydney Explorer and Sydney Tramway (two circular bus routes which stop at most of the cities attractions), and the Sydney Ferries (including day and night harbour cruises and Jet Cat routes). A tip - buy your ticket in the late afternoon, the day before you want it to start. The ticket is then valid for that evening as well. We got this bonus by chance. The Information Centre at the International Airport has a vast array of brochures. Try and get a copy of "Sydney Best Visitors Guide - The Harbour Connection". It has some very useful location maps in it.

We stayed in a hotel in Kings Cross. This is the Soho of Sydney and there are indeed aspects of the seedier side of life there, but we are not night birds and we had no trouble. The hotel was comfortable and reasonably priced. Kings Cross is also very lively and it is easy to get to the city centre.

On our first full day, we took a bus from our hotel to Circular Quay. This is the hub for bus and ferry transport. It is also a good

We stayed in a hotel in Kings Cross. This is the Soho of Sydney and there are indeed aspects of the seedier side of life there

place to start for a walk to many sights. The two most famous of these are here, the Harbour Bridge and the Opera House. We took a guided tour of the Opera House. It is quite expensive but we thought it worth it. We also booked to see a show. Next to the Opera house are the Royal Botanic Gardens. These are splendid gardens with the harbour providing a backdrop. They are big, and it took us the rest of the day to see them. Fortunately there was a very nice restaurant in the gardens. Returning to Circular Quay, we bought a three-day Pass. These were A\$45 each but we had a A\$5 discount through Qantas. To give some idea of the value of

these tickets, I have starred (*) all the trips that we made during the next 3 days (+ evening).

We took the ferry* to Darling Harbour. This area has been modernised with shops, exhibition halls, malls and museums. We had a walk round, and some refreshment, then caught the Sydney Explorer* back to Kings Cross.

Day 1. Caught a bus* to Circular Quay then the Jet Cat* to Manley Beach. Spent a

Chinatown and the Chinese Garden, very peaceful. Near the gardens is the Pumphouse Brewery with some very tasty (and potent!) beers.

pleasant morning walking round and had lunch. Returned* to Circular Quay and walked to The Rocks. This is a historic part of Sydney with many old buildings. It is also packed with shops, restaurants and galleries. We booked a day trip to Canberra for later on in the week. We visited the Earth Exchange here, a natural history museum - more for children than adults, we felt. We caught the Tram* to Circular Quay then a bus* to our hotel. After a rest, when it was dark, we caught the Sydney Explorer* and did the complete 2 hour round trip seeing Sydney by night.

Day 2. Caught the 324 bus* to Watsons Bay. This is at the entrance to Sydney Harbour. The area is called The Heads. Watsons Bay is on South Head, while across the water, Manley is on North Head. There is a small reserve there with views of the harbour right back to Sydney Bridge, some 10 km away. There are some nice fish restaurants at Watsons Bay, we had lunch in one. We took the bus* back to Circular Quay then the ferry* to Meadowbank. This is some 15 km up the Paramatta River and is an attractive ride. A short bus* ride to Ryde, and we caught a 501 bus* back to Sydney. In the evening we saw "Into the Woods" by

Stephen Sondheim from the book by James Lapine at the Opera House.

Day 3. Bus* into town, and a look at the Sydney Tower, entrance fee, which rises 300 metres above the city. Views for miles on a clear day. We then took a ride on the Monorail, a short automatically controlled loop between the City and Darling Harbour. Not really worth it in our opinion. After lunch we took the Sydney Ferries Harbour Cruise*. This was very interesting and had a good guide. It lasts between 2 & 3 hours. On our return, we took the Tram* to Chinatown and the Chinese Garden, very peaceful, reasonable charge. Near the gardens is the Pumphouse Brewery with some very tasty (and potent!) beers. Tram* and Bus* back to the hotel for a wash and brush up before a bus* back to circular Quay for the Evening Harbour Cruise*. This lasts about 2 hours and only partly duplicates the day trip. Super views of the City, Bridge and Opera House. Final use of the Passes to take the Bus* back to our hotel.

What's been happening in Championships in the run-up to the British Open? We look towards Surrey and Colchester, but first to the Junior Championship for a British Champion of the future?

NATIONAL JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIP

Bristol: 13th to 15th July

A new venue this time, through the kindness of the Bristol Club, and a local champion, Ben Green, out to win the Junior Championship for a third time to make it a hat trick.

Once more, a strong contingent from overseas, with Yoann and Othello Ravez from France, and William Louw from South Africa. For Yoann, it was his fourth appearance in the Championship, and he was clearly determined to win it.

Day 1 was blisteringly hot, and started with some confident play from Nailsea's Kristian Chambers, winner of a recent handicap weekend at Bristol. Othello Ravez played nonchalantly and looked in good form, whilst Rachel Scott ran some excellent hoops. Elsewhere, William Louw and Ben Green had a somewhat nervy game. William got well ahead and looked like winning easily, only to stick in 4-back to give Ben a chance, but William finally made it, winning by 9.

The semi-finals of the Draw saw two relatively easy wins by Yoann and William, with Yoann beating William in the final and impressing spectators by his improved tactics.

Bristol member Peter Dyke had alerted the media before the event about local players competing for the title, and his efforts certainly produced results. Bristol Radio arrived before the tournament started to interview the players, and during the day we were visited by BBC TV. An HTV cameraman arrived on the second day to

film the Championship, and a reporter and photographer came a little later to prepare a feature article on Croquet that appeared in the Western Daily Press on the final day of the Championship.

On the second day, William produced some glorious shots in his match in the Process against Yoann, who was initially very defensive and cornering at every hint of danger. But then William seemed to seize up and could not get his game flowing again, eventually letting Yoann get ahead and win. Ben played impressively against James, with some superb hitting in and hoop running. The Process final between Yoann and Ben was close. Ben pressed forward early to hoop 5, and then, later, when well ahead, broke down at Penult, giving Yoann an easy break with his backward ball. However, Ben hung on, and finally took the game +4. The lawns were fast and difficult in the blazing sun, with brown patches and dry conditions emphasising any irregularities that existed.

In the play-off between Yoann and Ben, Ben took red round to 6 playing, for him, a rather scrappy break that was only kept together by a number of good long roquets. Yoann played a good controlled break round to 1-back but fluffed the hoop after a good approach.

Ben then left a potentially suicidal leave for Yoann with blue at 1-back in front of its hoop and his own two balls at hoop 1. Yoann ran 1-back hard, shot at Ben's balls at 2-back but missed, letting Ben temporarily off the hook, but then came back with a beautifully controlled break to take black round to the peg. The game finally hinged on two short (5-yard) roquets. Yoann missed the first, and gave Ben a chance to take the title. Ben's accurate swing deserted him for once, and he missed the second, giving Yoann a final

chance to win the Championship which he duly took, demonstrating an icy calm as he made the last two hoops.

The handicap event was won by Kristian Chambers, and both he and Rachel Scott had their handicaps reduced. Rachel, playing initially on a handicap of 18, was certainly not overwhelmed in the level games she played, and she kept her nerve particularly well to peg out like a veteran and win her handicap game against Othello Ravez. All three of these players have potential for significant improvement as they gain more experience, and next year's Junior Championship should be an exciting affair.

C Hudson

Results

DRAW 1st Round: Yoann Ravez bt James Death +10; Kristian Chambers w.o.; William Louw bt Ben Green +9. Othello Ravez bt Rachel Scott +15. Semi-Finals: Y. Ravez bt Chambers +11; Louw bt O. Ravez +17.

Final: Y. Ravez bt Louw +16.

PROCESS 1st Round: Ben Green bt James Death +24; Othello Ravez w.o.; Yoann Ravez bt William Louw +12; Kristian Chambers bt Rachel Scott +16. Semi-Finals: Green bt O. Ravez 24; Y. Ravez bt Chambers +15.

Final: Ben Green bt Y. Ravez +4.

PLAY-OFF Yoann Ravez bt Ben Green +6.

Handicap Event

Winner: K. Chambers (12) (3 wins)

Runner-up: O. Ravez (8) (2 wins)

1994 Championship of Surrey 3-5 June

Three days that provided all the elements of an alleged British summer. Gale force winds, followed by heavy rain, with finally some sun on the third day. The Surbiton

courts, which were in good condition, stood up well to the rain, coming as it did on top of one of the wettest Mays on record.

If the weather kept everyone guessing, so did the final. A rematch of 1993, when Jeff Dawson sneaked the 5th game after a surprise Mulliner error, it turned out to be even more exciting.

Jeff took the first game +17, Stephen the second +25TP and the third +12. It all looked over in the 4th when Stephen only needed a straight rover peel to complete his triple. The peel stuck and his other ball rolled too close for him to jump. He had to retire to comer 4, and Jeff subsequently took the game +4TP.

So once again it all came down to the final game. More errors began to creep in, and the innings changed hands several times. Eventually Jeff missed a 3 yarder when for rover and rover, and Stephen embarked on a delayed triple. He ended the turn for rover and peg, with a diagonal spread marred by Jeff's ball near the peg having a shot at the ball near the west boundary. He duly hit, made rover, and laid up in comer 1 with Stephen's rover ball on the middle of the east boundary and his peg ball in comer 2. Jeff's final stroke had hilled off to leave Stephen a double. He shot fairly gently, and was giving it some slightly tentative fist till about halfway, when it also took some hill, and missed. Don't trickle on Surbiton lawns! Jeff rushed to nearer peg than rover, but managed to finish. Who says top class croquet is predictable and boring.

George Noble won the Swiss, notching up four consecutive triples on the final day, and only being denied a fifth by some slight carelessness.

This tournament is now well established as a leading event, and looks set to go from strength to strength in the future. After winning it three years on the trot, so does Jeff Dawson.

Simon Tuke

J Dawson bt Mulliner +17 -25tp -12 +4tp +3; Taylor +26tp +17; Tuke +22 +16; Steadman +22 +21tp.

S N Mulliner bt Bond +26 +25tp;

Haggerston +25 +26tp; Ames +20 +26tp.

M Taylor bt J Guest +8tp +23tp; H Smorffitt +24 +24.

I Bond bt Noble +4 +25; Morrow +21 +2.

M Haggerston bt Southern -25 +18 +3.

G Noble bt Wiggins +22 +8tp. **S Tuke** bt Coles +11 +24.

J Guest bt Thomas +16 +19

J Ames bt R Hilditch +3 -2 +4. **C Southern** bt

J Sheraton-Davis +12 +3. **N Morrow** bt

G Gale -2t +22 +10t. **D Wiggins** bt J Smith +22 +8tp.

W Steadman bt P Healy +8 +22. **T Coles** bt

F McCoig +17 +15. **A Thomas** bt C Steward +19 +16.

H Smorffitt bt C Osmond +24 +24.

Eastern Championships Colchester, 9th-11th July

"Mad Dogs and Englishmen"

I should start by dispelling a false inference which the reader may have drawn from the title of this report. There were no dogs in this tournament. There were two men who were

not English (discounting those who claim Celtic ancestry in order to play in certain events); but neither Australian Michael Taylor nor Mick Mehas from the U.S.A. has any canine tendencies (though the latter did sport a tail). There was also one English player who is not a man, but Debbie Cornelius is no dog either.

The appropriate titular inference is that the midday sun was hot. Very hot. So hot that at least four players went down with heatstroke while the Colchester bypass melted. Too hot to play croquet on lawns baked to a crispy crust on which seeing a ball come to rest was as likely as seeing David Goacher run - though both these events did occur during the weekend. The sole relief from these infecund conditions was around the hoops, where turf oases had been established, green and well watered. (The reason for these turves, which will soon consolidate with the lawns, was that during the winter foxes had dug around the hoopholes.) These mats in front of the hoops were indeed welcome to us weaker players, since without them all our games would have gone to time, rather than most.

In these conditions even the best were prone to error, and most eschewed even the triple peel as too hazardous. The honourable exception to this was Chris Clarke, whose commitment was rewarded with three triples and a quadruple during the weekend. The most unfortunate error was by Taylor, who thought the time limit for the first game in a match was 3 hours rather than the standard 4. Playing what he thought was the time turn, with the opponent's clips on rover and rover*, he brilliantly equalised by leaving one ball in front of its hoop, 4-back, and pegging his other ball out. He won't do that again. Taylor recovered from the loss of that game eventually to reach the final without dropping another game.

Time was genuinely called after seven hours in two first-round matches. In one match, Mehas ground down Liddiard, while the other match featured David Goacher. With about seven minutes to go, with both backward clips on 4-back, Goacher decided to peg out his opponent's ball. The crowd did consider it unwise to concede a point at so late a stage, and, tragically, seven minutes proved insufficient for Goacher to score another point. He thus lost on time.

The longest match was between Steve Comish and Paul Day. This length was due not to their incompetence but to their evenness of struggle from which Comish emerged to face David Maugham. Their first game produced an ending with Comish on one and peg, Maugham on six alone. Despite Comish burying one ball in a corner, Maugham hit the other ball, rolled to hoop six from the middle of the West boundary, crashed through, made one-back, and then underapproached two-back. He was straight in front, but he was ten yards away. No matter, he tore through the hoop and finished the game that turn. Should Maugham ever write his autobiography, he should entitle it the same as tennis-player Brad Gilbert's

recent offering: "Winning Ugly".

The Match of the Championship was between Stephen Mulliner and Debbie Cornelius, who won the first game. Mulliner reached four-back and peg in the second before Cornelius came back well, and was finishing her second break intent on pegging out one of Mulliner's balls. Owing to discoloured clips, she was sadly intent on pegging out the 4-back ball. The ensuing poor leave was hit by Mulliner, who finished. In the third game Cornelius was first to reach 4-back and peg, while Mulliner caught up to 4-back and break. This break foundered at penult, and Cornelius set up to finish. Mulliner challenged her by placing a ball just out of baulk, and she failed this challenge at rover. Mulliner then took one ball to the peg and pegged out Cornelius's ball. In the pegging-out stroke, however, the same fate befell Mulliner as had befallen his first round opponent (me): his own ball dribbled uncontrollably onto the peg. This left Mulliner on penult alone, Cornelius on rover alone. After a turn each, Cornelius was faced with a difficult angled hoop. This was run by one inch, enabling her to turn around and hit the peg through the hoop. A good victory for Cornelius, for Mulliner remains a difficult man to beat.

David Goacher would like me to tell you that his consolation game was the first to finish on Sunday morning. He might not like me to tell you that at the end of Sunday, he had not one but two pegged-down games on the same lawn. Why the manager spurned the opportunity to have Goacher double-banking with himself on Monday morning, I shall never know.

Also on Monday morning Maugham won the third game in his semi-final with Chris Clarke, who went on to win the plate. Maugham went on to lose the final to Taylor in three games. As did the rest of the Championship, the final contained more errors than might be expected at this level, but conditions were difficult. Michael Taylor won because he was best able to come to terms with these conditions, to cope with his own errors, and thus to make fewer errors than his opponents.

Andrew Gregory

M Taylor bt Maugham +13 -15 +20;

Cornelius +13 +20; Goddard +7 +19;

I Burridge -4 +15 +26tp.

D Maugham bt Clarke +21 -7tp +17;

Comish +14 +10; C Farthing +10tp +11.

D Cornelius bt Mulliner +15 -5 +3; D Goacher +15 +2t.

C Clarke bt Mehas +11qp F Landor +22 +26tp.

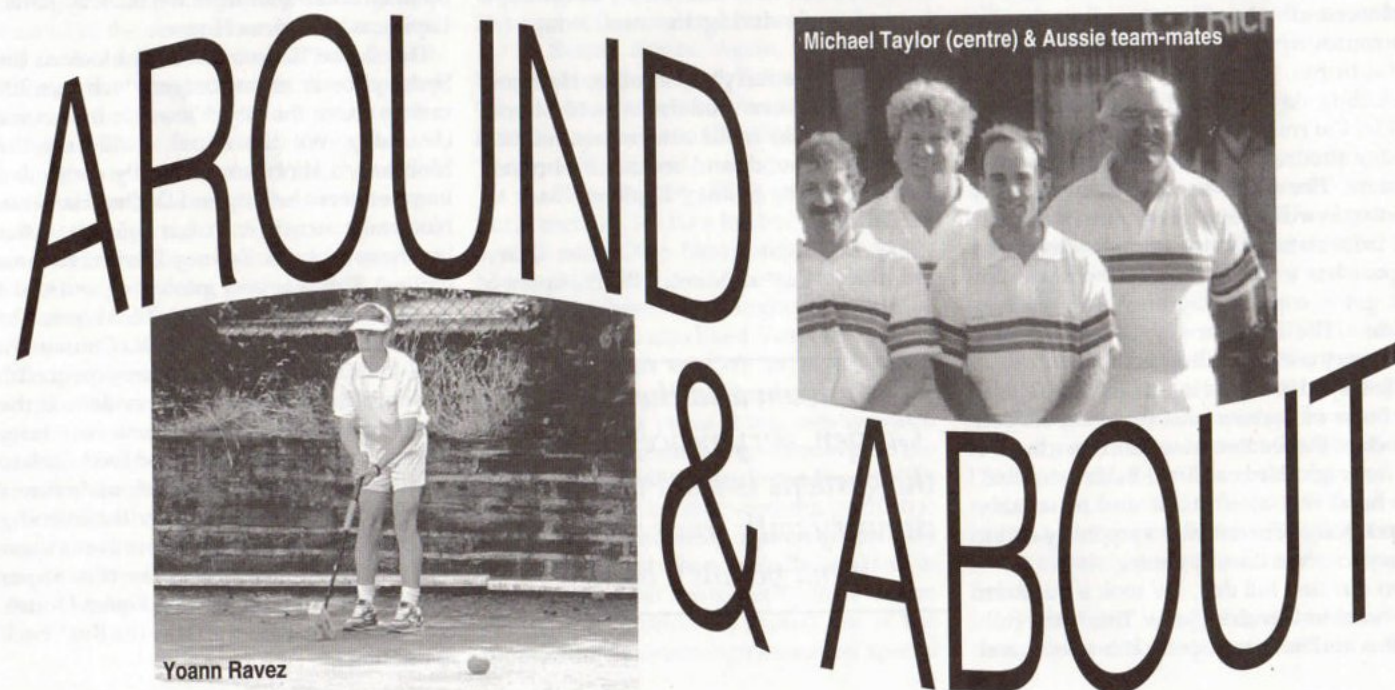
J Goddard bt R Brown +7 +19. **S Mulliner** bt

A Gregory +24tp +3. **S Comish** bt P Day +5 -7 +17.

M Mehas bt S Liddiard +11 +10.

Consolation Swiss: C Clarke 7/9

* I generally strive not to inflict jargon on the reader, but an important addition to the canon should not go entirely unnoted. Coined by manager Richard Hilditch, clips on rover and rover are henceforth to be known as "ears" at rover (since the clips should be placed atop opposite wires). Similarly ears at penult, ears of death, etc.



Yoann Ravez

Michael Taylor (centre) & Aussie team-mates

'94

MAY JUNE JULY

tournament reports

Bristol Handicap Weekend 25 - 26 June

Player Bites Manager

Bristol's Handicap Weekend has gone from strength to strength over the years and, from my experiences, this year gave us a huge diversity of skill and experience. A strong youth squad represented Nailsea school and their talents were enough to worry the low handicapped players into woeful cries of "How many Bisesques?"

Kristian Chambers swiftly dispatched Nigel Mottram to the Swiss event, setting a precedent for middle bisquers to play very good croquet on difficult fast lawns. Alison Thursfield also won in the first round against Roger Jenkins, giving him little chance to play to his usual form.

It was these two players who battled through to the final on a very hot Sunday afternoon. Alison was the favourite, having beaten a one handicap in the first round and a half in the semi-final, but Kristian's reputation had permeated up the ranks to instil thoughts of trepidation in everyone's minds.

Following the impressive build up, the final was disappointing and a lack of bisesques on fast lawns didn't help at all. Four ball breaks were difficult to set up and Kristian used his bisesques too late in the game to put in any lengthy breaks, and so the final lacked the skill we were promised as opportunities were realised too late.

We were however treated to some lovely games over the weekend with the tremendous hitting of Nigel Betts and the comedy created by our manager Hamish Hall. Hamish's brisk attitude certainly inspired his players as Paul Pristavic was pushed into action with the words "I'm not quite sure why he's here!" It was enough to rile Paul into winning his final game.

Congratulations must go to the victor Kristian, who won his Bronse award and the coveted Latham Cup. Thankyou to everyone who assisted and played, and made the tournament so enjoyable.

Ben Green

Bristol Advanced Weekend 7 - 8 May

Goacher goes for more games

To give some added interest to the consolation event in this year's Bristol advanced tournament the manager had decided on some format changes. The swiss was to become a second life event with entry open to everyone losing in the knock-out, including the losing finalist. The swiss would be organised so that only one player, the winner, would survive with a life intact. The trophy would be awarded to the winner of the best of three match between the winners of the knock-out and the swiss.

Well that was the idea anyway and although it did work out in the end, the manager did lose more of his hair and a great deal of sleep. With the lawns slowed down by a considerable amount of rain overnight and the hoops not ultra tight (although they were very firm), games were not expected to take long and initially there were no time limits. Many competitors took advantage of this and decided to re-enact the 100 years war, so on the second day punitive time limits were imposed. The time problem was exacerbated by agreeing to take all the applicants for the tournament, which turned out to be 23 after withdrawals rather than the usual 20.

The favourite, David Goacher, started slowly scraping a win against David Coates (complaining at having to play him yet again in an early round). However David was relegated to the swiss in the next round by Bill Ward but there was no truth in the rumour that he lost in the knock-out in order to get more games in over the week-end. Bill seemed to be more consistent than many of the other players and was striking the ball well. Witness him running his hoop (4) from the north boundary.

With Goacher gone and Gaunt being disposed of by Ben Green in the first round, the spotlight turned to Chris Williams, Andrew Symons, Francis Landor and Chris Farthing. Symons and Landor were very impressive in their first games winning in under an hour and allowing their opponents no chance. In the following round Symons wobbled home against Chris Patmore and Landor lost to Adrian Wadley. Wadley in a

good semi against Farthing managed the 3 peels of a TPO but rolled into the peelee after the straight rover peel and suffered the consequences, eventually losing by 9. In the other semi both Williams and Symons seemed determined to give the game to the opponent with Chris managing finally to give it to Andrew by 1. The final of the knock-out was a bit of an anti-climax after the semis with Andrew triumphing over his third Chris.

Meanwhile in the swiss Goacher was beginning to gather some momentum although he was proving that even in a two life event you could use more than two lives. One was beginning to wonder whether he had any feline ancestry, although if there were, then it was unlikely to be a cheetah.

As the swiss drew to a close, four contenders met in effective semi-finals and both games tured out to be close, Goacher beat Farthing in a last turn effort after Chris had rush peeled through 1-back and 2-back in the same shot. In the other game, Francis Landor looked to have it in the bag when after run-ning penult he missed a four footer finishing close to Chris Williams penult ball. Chris made the 2 gift hoops and pegged the ball out to win +1 on time. In the decider David Goacher won convincingly.

So at long last we moved on to the Event final, Andrew Symons against David Goacher. The first two games were divided, Andrew taking the first. The final game turned out to be the most interesting of the three. David had the first break but relaxed his concentration towards the end and stuck in 3-back. At this point Andrew peeled David's ball through 3-back but managed to wire the ball he was playing with from all others. At this point David had what seemed to be a fairly routine triple but not managing the penult peel after 6, attempted the death roll before 2-back. With the 8 yard roquet missed into baulk, Andrew had an easy break, completing the peels and pegging David's ball out. From this point Andrew played very carefully allowing David only long shots, or no shot at all. Finally David made a mistake allowing Andrew to make the last 6 hoops and finish to take the trophy after losing to David for the previous two years.

Knockout: A Symons bt C Farthing +16

Swiss: D Goacher 6/7

Play-Off: A Symons bt D Goacher +16 -16 +3

Champ's of Co. Dublin Carrickmines June 3 - 6

Gone with the wind

Finding myself briefly "resting", to borrow a term from the thespian fraternity, I decided to try my luck in the County Dublin Championships. This was perhaps a mistake as my participation in that particular event was in fact all too brief. A McInerney (Alan, then Ronan) double whammy sent me crashing out of both the draw and the process in the first round. However, in the age old tradition of the football manager, I could then concentrate on other events. Incidentally, prior to the tournament I was driving through the Wicklow Mountains and chanced upon a film crew making the sequel to "Gone with the Wind" and I can here and now shatter your illusions when you go to the cinema to watch it by telling you that the idyllic thatched cottage in the mountain scenes is devoid of a rear elevation. The Championship went on without me with excellent quality games. In the one between Fred Rogerson and Edward Cunningham (more of him later), Fred went to 4-back on the 3rd turn, Edward TPO'd Fred on the 4th turn and finished + 1 3TPO on the 6th. Edward continued his form by beating Alan McInerney + 2 in the draw to meet Jane Shorten in the final, Jane having beaten Charlie Von Schmieder + 11 in the process. Edward came out victor.

In the Boxwell Cup (unrestricted handicap) the long route to the final was made by Ronan McInerney and Edward Cunningham. Edward also won this, +6.

The Duff Mathews (advanced 5+) saw Gerry Reynolds meet Ivan O'Brien in the final. Ivan played well to take the very handsome trophy + 14. However, in the higher handicap block, Nick Webb was not so fortunate. His +6 victory over Gerard Osborne-Burke meant that no amount of protest could avoid him becoming custodian of the Mirabeau Trophy for the next year.

The doubles proved very entertaining, witness Gerard Healy bet his partner Nick Webb £5 that he could not possibly go through the middle of a double target. Nick it seems considered that it would be easier to get £5 pounds from Gerard than to take the trophy into the pawnbrokers in Capel Street and thus aimed gently enough to accomplish the task and claim his just rewards. John Harington brought down the blessings of Heaven on Simon "Sadness" Williams after he successfully negotiated a difficult hoop. Simon it should be said was earlier heartened out of a despondent phase by Evan Newell's observation that "the game is yet a pup". But in the end it was Edward Cunningham and Gerard Osborne-Burke who took away the silver.

And so we come to the plate event named in memory of Nick Webb's father Hillary Webb. This event had to be decided by a game of golf croquet between Philip Archer, Ray Flood, David Carpenter, Evan Newell

and Barry Rogerson. Evan Newell dictated the early progress of the game by meeting out severe punishment to any ball that got anywhere close to a hoop. His exuberance became his downfall when he took aim at Barry Rogerson's ball which was placed nicely to go through next turn. "You'll be amazed how far I knock the white this time, Somewhere into the middle of next week" were his words. Unfortunately it was his pink which soared skywards, narrowly missing assorted spectators and plate glass windows. The rest paled into insignificance, but congratulations to Philip Archer who took the cup back to Sark.

Bartholomew Snodwinkle had been much fancied to get his name on several of the trophies after previous such achievements, but alas his challenge faded both effectively and corporeally.

Charlie Von Schmieder was also unlucky not take home any of the silverware, but he informed everyone that power is an aphrodisiac, "why do you think I'm manager" he explained. Many thanks to all at Carrickmines for the hilarious hours spent long into the blackness.

David Carpenter

Cheltenham Five Day 18 - 22 May

Stephen Badgers holder

This intricate but enjoyable tournament occupied eight of Cheltenham's eleven lawns, and the only damper on proceedings was the weather, which grew steadily colder and wetter till midday on the Sunday, whereupon it relented considerably for the final.

I say "intricate" because this was in effect five separate competitions all taking place more or less simultaneously. The days each began with doubles - different partners daily - and when your game was over you were immediately slipped into your singles slot. And there were four singles contests. There were those for the 'A' Block, 'B' Block and 'C' Block, for low, middle and high bisquers respectively; on top of which those in the 'A' Block were competing - with a draw and process knockout system - for the Gladstone Trophy.

In the final of the top half of the draw Michael Rangeley (the '92 winner) beat Stephen Badger, while in the bottom half Badger beat Paddy Paddon. So in the final Rangeley was hoping to snuff out Badger again. But it was not to be. Badger went to peg and rover before Rangeley had even started. A long period ensued with Rangeley coming within five or six points of finishing. But Badger regained control and ended the Rangeley run.

The Blocks were run on the Hands system. However, when you had finished one game you did not have to go round touting for another opponent, being rejected perhaps because your rating was too low or too high

(or you had an "Aunt Emma" reputation). But the Manager (David Kibble) immediately informed you of your next opponent. He dealt well with the tournament's intricacies. Moreover he was human. If you asked him a question he would actually answer it, instead of practising "tail-between-your-legsmanship" with remarks like "there is a notice board. Most of the words are of one syllable!"

Andrew Potter

Gladstone Trophy

S Badger bt M Rangeley +13

A Block: M Paddon

B Block: G Chamberlain

C Block: D Howson

Cheltenham Handicap w/e 28 - 30 May

Bray & Wheeler get together

Sixty players from far and near descended on Cheltenham's verdant courts, diverse in years and handicap - an age gap of 72 years and a bisque difference of 17 1/2. Competitors were divided into three Swiss blocks for six rounds. Games were played using the Bray formula rather than conventional time limits; if play spanned more than two meal-times, Wharrad turns were imposed.

The tournament was seamlessly run by Dab and Roger Wheeler with well presented and clear instructions as to the how, the when and the where. However, that did not prevent some of us from succumbing to instant forgetfulness and cries of 'Who is my opponent' and 'What lawn am I on' must have, occasionally, driven the management to drink

Eileen Magee

At close of play on a beautiful day, the Block winners were:

- A. John Dawson (14).
- B. = Angela Hall (8)
= Veronica McClements (11)
= Alex Jardine (7).
- C. Dave Kibble (4).

and nearly all the winners achieved a reduction in handicap.

Cheltenham 50+ Handicap 5 - 7 July

Scratch, Fickle & partners

The weather forecasters predicted rain and bad weather but apart from a few showers on Tuesday and Wednesday, Thursday was a scorcher. It is always a pleasure playing at Cheltenham. All the scratch players boasting about the numbers of bisesques they had pulled out if they won, or complaining if they lost. There were an inordinate number of high bisquers and a few scratch players. It is very good experience for the high bisquers to play against 'A' class players to see how the game should be played. Congratulations to

Jolyon Kay, John Lovett, David Howson and Dee Dennett, who won their bronze medals.

Cliff Cardis

Block Winners: D Bradley, F Smith, K Davis, A Laidlaw, G Edgeler, F Fewtrell, A Hall

Colchester Open Weekend 7 - 8 May Wet Noise

The tournament was not full this year, apparently because some unwarrantedly considered it too strong. While there were a number of minus players, the event was also enriched by the presence of Miss McCoig and Messrs Ames, Storey and Hilditch, who I'm sure would appreciate more positively handicapped players next year. Early season is a good time to play the nominally stronger players, since then their strength is indeed nominal, few yet finding the form to justify their handicap. Fiona McCoig was particularly unlucky not to beat Ian Burridge having been five points ahead in a two-ball ending.

There was a good reason not to play in this tournament, i.e. that it poured with rain for much of the time. This fact eluded Lewis Palmer, who challenged your reporter to a game despite rumbles of thunder rolling around the ground. When I pointed this out, he replied "That's just a lot of noise." This prediction puts Palmer in the same weather-forecasting league as Michael "Definitely no hurricane" Fish, but at least he had the grace to abandon our game when we were both entirely drenched by the large amounts of noise descending from the sky. (Maybe he was worried about the potential conjunction of his metal mallet with the forks of lightning.)

Two years ago I reported on the presence of Debbie Cornelius at a tournament purely as a tea-lady. Colchester 1994 marks her graduation into that noble band of women (whose patron saint is Faith Gaunt) who attend tournaments solely to give succour to their menfolk. Ian Burridge (a literally noisy player) may have needed this after his sextuple attempt. Having left peelee in front of 1-back, on the next turn he wanted to rush-peel it hard down to 2-back. While his shot was perfectly straight, its vertical co-ordinate was less controlled, and his ball struck the hoop six inches from the ground, bounced, span, and failed to make the roquet. At three strokes this is one of the shorter failed sextuples in history: the record for the shortest is held (jointly, I suspect) by Ian Burridge at one stroke (vs. Richard Hilditch, Southwick Salver 1993).

Triple attempts met with greater success. Annabel McDiarmid should have had one in her first game, but when it came to rushing to the peg, the back of rover displayed its customary magnetism. Arriving at the same position in her second game, she took the precaution of cannoning the peelee away from the hoop before rushing to peg out. Keith Aiton had a triple of triples on Sunday:

TP, TPO & OTP. Chris Clarke had five triples, including four consecutively with Debbie's mallet. (His grip is disintegrating.) This was enough for Clarke to win the event, despite dropping a game to Paul Day.

The only player yet unmentioned is Bill Lamb, who was involved in the weekend's Double Banking Incident. Taking croquet with black off yellow from by 3-back, he attempted a half-roll sending yellow towards the middle of the West boundary, and black to the two balls at the peg. Misjudging his angles, yellow made a firm hit on the critical pink near rover. Pink was apologetically replaced, and Lamb decided that it was best to replay the shot. Strangely he did not mark the pink, and yellow duly travelled a different line, missing pink. Bill's black ball, however, possessed a wicked sense of irony, and squirted from the mallet unerringly into the still critical pink. Lamb lacked the gall to replay the shot again, and missed his next roquet.

Let us hope for a drier (should that be quieter?) and more popular tournament in 1995.

Andrew Gregory

Winner: C Clarke 6/7

Colchester Handicap w/e 28 - 30 May Recarpeted Colchester

The first dry sunny weekend of the season and 16 players with handicaps ranging from -1/2 to 18 enjoyed a seven round swiss on Colchester's refurbished lawns. Clear winner was Paul Salisbury with seven wins - and a handicap reduction from 7 to 5.

Pat Hetherington

Winner: P Salisbury 7/7

Colchester over 50s 4 - 6 July banished boxes but bulging belts

Whilst cricket matches around the country were being washed out, Colchester enjoyed three days of brilliant sunshine. Four players were taking part in their first ever CA tournament and happily nobody went home without at least one win under their belt. Don Cornelius carried off the Franklin Bowl with six wins out of seven and the three-way tie for second place was resolved when Pica Hose beat Jean Ackerman at one-ball croquet, to carry off the Lexden Goblet; Ron Harris having been eliminated in a roll-up to the peg knockout.

Pat Hetherington

Winner: Mr D S Cornelius 6/7

Egdbaston Trophy 11 - 12 June Egdbaston Haiku

Tibble and Kibble.
Tight hoops, Clarke triples and wins
Despite the Ransoms.

Andrew Gregory,

inspired by Margaret Selmes
(see letter page of June issue)

C Clarke bt R Ransom +6 +12
Egyptian: 1. L Tibble 3/5
2. D Kibble 4/6

Harrow Open Weekend 25 - 26 June

Mens Champ fails to take Ame

Phil Cordingley made a successful return to Harrow, beating Jerry Guest 2-0 in the final, them both having seen off giant killers Jeremy Ames and Gary Bennett 2-1 in the semis. Bennett had accounted for Burridge in the 2nd round and Ames beat the new Mens Champion Michael Taylor.

Ian Burridge

P Cordingley bt J Guest +26 +24
Swiss: M Taylor 6/7

Hunstanton over 50s 10 - 12 June

Players have breakdowns as a result of Barlow balls

Twenty enthusiasts arrived to find 'Sunny Hunny' blasted with a bitter North wind, grey sky and a hearty drizzle. However the sun came out, the wind dropped, shorts appeared and sun protection cream was necessary as the thermometer passed into the 70s (nb the more mature player registers temperature as Fahrenheit). The lawns became fast and the firm, very accurately set hoops together with "Barlow XL" balls caused many early break downs. Some players were unfamiliar with the balls and blamed them for every failure, on the other hand most did not notice any difference. As a club we are fortunate in having a team of skilled "hoop setters", and we always play, friendlies and all, with firm and accurate hoops, together with full-sized balls. Players from clubs where the hoops are just put into the available holes, and play with elderly worn balls, frequently have problems hooping when conditions are tightened up. However, it was a really happy tournament, the newcomers to Hunstanton entered into the fun and are determined to come again, we even gained three new members.

Some managers are lucky with a swiss and have an outright winner, this was not the case as we had four contenders for the Jane Neville-Rolfe Salver: Ian McDiarmid, David

Tutt, Ron Gosden and Ian Birdseye all had won 5 out of 6 games. They had all played only two of the other three, and one result had been incorrectly reported. Regulation 16(d) did not really cater for this problem. So regulation 12(f)(6) was applied and Ian Birdseye declared the winner.

The energetic whiled away the evenings with a fiercely contested 1 ball competition (it is amazing how long and seemingly impossible hoops are run with ease, once the pressure is removed). David Tutt was the undoubted victor having won all his games, and was presented with a Hunstanton silver (plated) spoon.

Sarah Hampson

Winner: I Birdseye 5/6

Ipswich Advanced w/e 11 - 12th June

Goacher absent for 3 1/2 hour peal

The Ipswich club has one of the most delightful settings of any I have visited, an arboretum within the town's Christchurch Park. It has two lawns, laid end to end on a terrace cut into a hillside, and a wooden pavilion, which is approached along the Mayors' Walk. This is populated by green plaques recording the names of former holders of the office (valuable information, no doubt, for quiz enthusiasts), and it is perhaps appropriate that the one inscribed "G.F.Mallet 1934-5", should be placed between the pavilion and the lawns, though it failed to prevent the author leaving his implement locked in the hut after fetching a can to drink.

The Park lies just a few hundred yards North of the town centre and has the additional attraction of being within earshot of the bells of St. Mary-le-Tower, a notable 32cwt ring of 12, which were pealed in about 3 1/2 hours on the Saturday morning. As I discovered when I ventured up on Sunday, the local ringing should be advertised as a championship event: fortunately I stayed awake long enough to avoid any blatant crushes in a touch of Stedman Triples, though there was undoubtedly scope for improvement in my positioning!

While the bells were being pealed, the balls were being peeled: the tournament was a more relaxed affair, flexibly managed by Steve Comish. A three round knockout was completed on the first of the two days, the two seeds, Steve Comish and Paul Day, duly contesting the best-of-three final. The first game had a tight ending, with a succession of long shots hit by both players, but Paul reached the peg first and took the second more comfortably to take the Nan Zinn trophy.

The Egyptian was dominated by Phillip Eardley, with 7 wins out of 8 and an impressive +74 on his handicap card. A small barbecue by the third corner of one of the lawns, ably tended by Celia Pierce and helpers, kept us well nourished. All this,

good company and plentiful sunshine, with, for once this year, a degree of warmth to it, added up to a very enjoyable weekend.

Ian Vincent

P Day bt S Comish +2 +10tp
Egyptian: P Eardley 7/8

Newport Open weekend 21 - 22 May Golden Boy Wonder

This event again attracted a strong entry of players, the action was spoiled slightly by moist conditions. The final saw Don Gaunt beating Ian Burridge in three straight games, although they were by no means clinical or one sided. Ian was a little too aggressive for the conditions I think. In the swiss the local player Justin Goddard swept the rest of us aside finishing on 7 wins including a couple of TPs. 'Boy Wonder' Alex Leggate showed great promise, obtaining his Gold Award with a TPO and a handicap reduction before having to retire due to illness.

Richard Hilditch

D Gaunt bt I Burridge +13 +7 +16
Swiss: J Goddard 7/9

Ramsgate Handicap w/e 9 - 10 July

On a clear day you can see rover

Overlooking the English Channel, in a hot July sun tempered by sea breezes and if more was needed there was croquet. The tournament was an Egyptian expertly managed as usual by Cliff Jones.

A warm welcome awaited 'old' friends and newcomers alike. First time visitors were Daphne Franks and Sheila Harris from Havering and Elizabeth Fox-Davis and Roger Le Sevre from Caterham. It was also the first CA Tournament for the two members of Caterham.

At the end of Day 1 the field was led by Andy Mitchell (6) of the home club and Joan Welch (18) from Reigate. Both had notched up 3 straight wins. Sadly on Sunday Andy had developed a 'twitch' at the hoops and could not maintain his form of the previous day, but Joan held on well and was joined at the top of the leader board by Roy Ware (4 1/2) of the home club with some quality play, and by Roger Le Sevre (18).

So a three way shoot-out at the peg was ordered by the Manager Cliff and everyone enjoyed a happy and light-hearted end to a successful tournament. Joan Welch was the first to gather 3 hits and so collected the trophy and a reduction in handicap to 16. Roger Le Sevre was runner-up and gained his official CA handicap. Thankyou Ramsgate for a very successful weekend supported as usual by excellent catering from the ladies.

Clive Horton

Sidmouth 13 - 17 June Short Break Resort

Fifteen visitors from seven clubs spread countrywide joined a dozen local members to enjoy a very friendly welcome and near-perfect croquet weather at Sidmouth's third June tournament. The first hot spell of the summer had encouraged the seagulls to escape the dry land. At times we envied them! The lawns were fast. Shots near hoops and yard-lines were prone to wander. The conditions inspired some highly tactical play in which large breaks did not predominate. A majority of games in the B and C blocks went to time and even among the low bisquers in block A progress through the hoops was often slow. By contrast, Les Toye's twelve-hooper to gain his Silver Award in his last game was a truly remarkable achievement.

More than half of the players came to the tournament with the hope or fear of an imminent change of handicap. Most accepted their state of limbo with stoicism, no doubt drawing comfort from so many fellow sufferers. In the event four fulfilled their hopes and seven realised their fears

Iris Dwerryhouse succeeded admirably in managing the tournament for the convenience of players. Where else are drinks delivered by prior order to players on the lawn? John Hatherley (ROT) couldn't believe his ears when a player from up north said one southern hoop was too tight. He dealt with the complaint so promptly and cheerfully that he must have been in a state of shock.

Roland Henderson (Sidmouth) soon emerged as the front-runner in block B and finished undefeated with 8 wins to carry off the Fortfield Cup. Alison Thursfield (Dyffryn) was runner-up with 6 wins. The other two blocks provided more excitement with the outcome uncertain until the last session on the last day.

Block C was dominated by members of the home club. In a tense final game for the top place Elaine Woodward was eventually defeated by Brian Smith who took the Dwerryhouse Challenge Cup with 7 wins. Esme Owen (6 wins) emerged as the runner-up and Elaine (5 wins) finished in third place.

In block A the battle for the David Rawkins Cup was between John Beech (Pendle) and Shaun Carter (Plymouth). In a game of rapidly changing fortunes John showed just how easy it is to rush Barlow balls, even in the heat, to win by 14 points and take the trophy with 8 wins. Shaun was runner-up with 6 wins.

Colin Thursfield

A Block: J Beech 8/8
B Block: R Henderson 8/8
C Block: B Smith 7/8

Sonoma Cutrer

Stars & Stripes in their eyes

In 1993 I had to pull out of this event at the last moment, due to commitments connected with opening a new shop. So it was two years since I had been at Brice Jones' annual croquetfest. For some reason that led me to contemplate some of the strange situations international croquet leads its followers through. That familiar rectangle of grass makes anywhere a home and any fellow travellers friends - until proved otherwise! Relationships and surroundings connect through some space-time warp: great friends and fond acquaintances are carried forward as if the last meeting was yesterday, rather than months or years ago; thousands of miles crushed as a handful of familiar square miles are linked together in a croquet jigsaw that excludes the places beyond the frontier. I strolled down a Santa Rosa Street and felt it was more like a road on the outskirts of Ipswich, that I occasionally chose to wander down, than a place half way round the world from my home. Croquet makes time seem to stand still while we aren't present somewhere, with people and places ready to take up from where we left off after our last visit. Because that can't possibly be the actual case, it makes me wonder whether a 'croquet world' doesn't encourage rather too much distance to be put between us and the true reality of any person or any place.

Sonoma Cutrer is perhaps one of the most 'unreal' events you can visit! Climaxing with a large collection of Californian wealthy in an extravagant event where the croquet is almost a sideshow. Nevertheless the experience is extremely enjoyable; unparalleled excellence in terms of croquet facilities with both friendly and generous hospitality. There is always a substantial reality bonus at this croquet tournament - it raises in the region of \$100,000 for a local charity. For less altruistic reality, this year the tournament made the record books with

Croquet's richest ever prize - found at Sonoma Cutrer in 1994



the largest single winning "purse" in croquet history - a new car or \$8000 in cash!

I am not aware that the prize was the cause, but for whatever reason the standard this year did not match that of the past (which also meant many games falling foul of the 'random factor' - the draconian 2 hour time limits). Compensation of course was in the extra excitement that could be had from spectating. Sadly, that equation was reversed in the final where Australian Michael Taylor beat South Africa's Reg Bamford +26tp no croquet (to a booming commentary throughout from Stephen Mulliner, that I suspect the amplification system supplied perfectly satisfactorily as far as Hurlingham!).

The British perspective was depressing. This was probably the tournament when it became clear that the position in recent years, of the Brits beating any "rest of the world" team, was no longer the case. Fulford had been forced to withdraw with pneumonia, but his form in later tournaments was less then sparkling. Loss of brilliance by the Brits was universal: none made the last 3; Walters was unlucky not to qualify with three wins (after a loss in his final game to Ireland's Charles von Schmeider by -26 no croquet); Mulliner was luckier in qualifying with his three wins; but ultimately all went down prematurely with barely a fight.

The sun duly roasted down for finals day, where more people than ever spectated and enjoyed the carnival atmosphere with the selection of mallet-ball-and-hoop games spread around the food and drink stands. More wine was auctioned for more money for the 'Make-a-wish' Foundation. Finally, a number of the players enjoyed the traditional hospitality of Neil Spooner's pizza party to wind down; where this year they plotted the creation of the 'Croquet Player's Association' while Stephen Mulliner's beady eye darted across them warily, in his capacity as CA International Committee Chairman!

I for one sincerely hope that I shall be contemplating one part of northern California as my home for many Mays to come!

*Written grudgingly by John Walters
(in the absence of the commissioned report!)*

Southport Long Bisquers 9th - 10th July

Soft spot at Southport

I have a soft spot for this tournament.

It was the first tournament in which I played three years ago and where I caught the tournament bug. The relaxed and friendly welcome of the Southport members was a great help to those playing in a tournament for the first time. Alice Dawson managed the Swiss format efficiently and I heard no complaints and John Haslam never failed to embellish his refereeing decisions with helpful explanations of the rules and advice on procedural matters.

As in previous years the grapevine had selected the winner after the second round and Peter Wilson playing in his first tournament with a handicap of 20 lived up to his early reputation as chief bandit winning all of his 5 games.

Julian Tonks showed a welcome return to form after watching his handicap rise from 14 to 18 over the last two years and was runner-up losing only to Leonard Ainsworth. Somehow he managed to avoid Peter Wilson!

One comment I would offer for consideration in future years is that the 2 1/2 hours time limit and full bisques from base 10 meant that very few games finished. I feel that base 6 for the bisques and 2 3/4 hours would lead to more experience of the end game for the competitors and the extra 3/4 hour to the length of the first day seems a small price to pay.

Those clubs worried about falling numbers in their major tournaments might well consider a long bisque tournament to encourage beginners who would find a full tournament rather daunting. This will be particularly important to those clubs who are reducing the maximum handicap level for their main tournaments to meet the complaints of their low-handicap members who are unwilling to risk their handicap by playing high-bisque players.

J.W. Wilkinson

Winner: P Wilson 5 wins

Southwick High Bisque 21 - 23 June

Changing colours at Southwick

Tuesday was grey, wet and windy as 40 stalwarts battled against the elements and each other, but on Wednesday and Thursday the sun shone benignly casting a golden hue over a truly English scene and the players' faces grew redder from its warmth or from foolish error.

The lush and well kept lawns retained their verdant green and the pristine white of the players was maintained throughout the tournament.

The delicious lunches enticed us each day with colourful varieties of salads and desserts

on which to feast our eyes and appetites, and the bar dispensed appetisingly colourful drinks to quench our thirst. The welcome cups of tea and coffee varied in strength and colour according to the wishes of the consumer.

Until the final the matches were played in the normal way with both primary and secondary colours. However during the final there was an interesting change to the normal mode of play. Bob Crowne, playing with blue, ran 2-back off black and then switched to playing with black. After running 3-back off red he then proceeded to play with red! The amused spectators were deprived of seeing him complete the colour change sequence, for before he had a chance to play with yellow, his opponent, Brian Burt, challenged his playing with the wrong balls. The whole tournament was a great success, instructive and fun, thanks to Pat Shine and her team, especially Pat Asa-Thomas (who taught us so much) and Ron Smith. When the second day finished with just two competitors having won all their matches, Pat went home under the happy illusion that the format for the final would be quite simple. However by lunchtime on the final day Pat found that both her prospective finalists had managed to lose their fifth matches and there were now no less than nine competitors with 4/5 wins, these being:

Brian Burt	(Parkstone)
Bob Crowne	(Medway)
Myra Gosney	(Sussex County)
Pat Gould	(Winchester)
Norman Kettle	(Chichester & Fishbourne)
John Lonsdale	(Parkstone)
John Roche	(Medway)
Martin Rodgers	(Sussex County)
John Young	(Crawley)

Two finalists were eventually selected by calculating the total points from the five matches, these being Brian Burt (37) and Bob Crowne (33). The winner of the Pat Shine Trophy was Bob Crowne from Medway and Brian Burt from Parkstone was runner up.

The Club Secretary, Gene Mears, so friendly and helpful, ran a raffle and treasure hunt competition; Dorothy Miller kindly supplied a list of accommodation. We owe a big thank you to all at Southwick who worked so hard to make the occasion so memorable. Please run another High Bisque Tournament next year. We advise all High Bisquers to get their names in early. You won't regret it.

Jill & John Lonsdale (Parkstone)

Southwick 4 - 9 July

ANYONE FOR CROQUET? asks Peter Howell

For many years clashing with Wimbledon Finals week, the tournament changed its dates this year - a move liable to increase the entries, although sadly on this occasion, the

attendance was low. The usual manager, Paul MacDonald, was unable to attend due to the incapacity of his wife - best wishes, Pat, for a speedy recovery from all. At short notice, Brian Teague took over and ran the event with quiet efficiency, ably assisted by Audrey Howell who masterminded the Doubles. It was a very pleasant, if leisurely week, with good weather, sociable competitors and, as always at Southwick, a warm welcome and good catering. Compliments are due for the hoop setting which were regulation tight, making for good competitive games. The tournament was run as a Swiss under the 'Bray' system which did not seem popular as it resulted in far too many short-point games (a 7 handicapper playing a 3 handicapper in a 22 point game over three hours is surely unnecessary?) and, with few exceptions, the majority of games finished well before time. This system may well help a manager in a busy tournament when a number of games must be completed each day but in a leisurely event, such as this one - a singles match each morning and one doubles each afternoon - there seems little point in saving time. My own feelings are that if this system is applied in future, it may well convert the event into a High-Bisque tournament, with lower-handicapped players giving it a miss. Perhaps this was the reason for the poor turnout this year - many low and medium handicapped players were notable by their absence. There were some stars during the week - Peter Pullin (Southwick) playing off 10 is improving rapidly and was one of the five competitors to tie for first place, resulting in a shoot-out at the peg. Perhaps not the best way to find a winner (Italian footballers would no doubt agree) but good from a spectator point of view. Kay Kendall (Preston Park) who had played well all week emerged as the player most able to hold her nerve and strike the peg, receiving the Maurice Reckitt Bowl for a year. She was also presented with a small trophy as a permanent reminder of her success. (Other clubs, please note) The Doubles was won by a new partnership of Peter Pullin and Gene Mears (Southwick) who won all their games, the runners-up being John Hobbs and David Lethbridge (Tunbridge Wells) who were beaten only by the winners. Again, the Doubles were shortened - to 22 points. 'Mr Bray' please note - 18-point games may be acceptable for one high-bisquer playing another high-bisquer but they should have no place in an Open tournament. Have a rethink for 1995.

Singles
5 wins: Kay Kendall (Winner), Peter Pullin, Arthur Rajotte, Gene Mears, Don Mears.
Doubles
Mears/Pullin - 5 wins. Hobbs/Lethbridge - 4 wins.

Winchester 'One-balls' 9 - 10 July

The shape of things to come

This tournament will go down in history as the one that marked the beginning of the new era. The next generation will for a while recall how croquet used to be played with four balls, there was no quadruple banking and how games used to last two, three or even four hours - very different from the fast and furious two ball game that will have become one of the most popular and frequently televised sports of the 21st century.

This is where it all started - at Winchester in July 1994.

The first day was handicap play for the silver 'Cryptorchid' trophy. The Swiss format ran to eleven rounds (with the manager, Kevin Carter, exercising his mathematics to the full to succeed in having no two games between the same pair). As the 7.00 pm conclusion neared there was a danger of a tie between seven contestants. The key match, between ARK Miller and Nigel Hind, proved a tour de force. Hooping was spectacular, the contestants' touch unimaginable. The advantage was first to one, then the other. Nigel hit in, ran rover and joined ARK for the peg. His trickle was roqueted by ARK from corner three and victory in the game and the whole event was secured for the genial Miller.

His triumph was fitting, especially since ARK had earlier scored a spectacular victory against Claire Heritage by two-balling from five to win with all of his opponent's bisques still available.

The special prize - a pot of the manager's jam - for the most entertaining shot was awarded to Kathleen Clarke for scoring a hoop and roquet at rover from near to corner three.

Sunday saw the 'Monorchid' advanced level. Many have asked the origins of 'Cryptorchid' and 'Monorchid' as names for one ball tournaments. Suffice it to say that Hugh Smorfit is a retired stud manager and has in his time dealt with many deficient stallions...

Hugh was also responsible for setting the hoops at a punishing 1/32" gap and very firmly in the ground (at least until Miller thwacked them a few times)

This time the winner of the special prize for the most entertaining shot was the first nomination received. Don Gaunt was posing for photographers (!), pretending perhaps to have blobbed four-back. Only Shaun Carter could run three-back and rush Don's ball onto the photographer's tripod.

The advanced level format was also a Swiss, but the best of three each round. Good wins were recorded for the Thrussell sisters and David 'the fencer' Mooney, but after five wins from five matches Don Gaunt emerged unbeaten and was uncatchable. The prized trophy - a mounted golden ball - was his. The management determined he should play the

last round, against Tony Mrozinsky, using only one hand. Everybody else thought this a splendid idea and the whole triple-banked assembly on both lawns did likewise.

Don still won while Richard Brand, finding one-handed one-ball croquet to be his true vocation, emerged to glimpse a rare sight of the far side of rover. He celebrated his peg-out by simultaneously holding in his spare hand a spinning plate atop a corner flagpole. The serried ranks of spectators went wild. True theatre. Surreal.

George Winter

'Cryptorchid' One-ball handicap

8 wins: ARK Miller
7 wins: Ken Smith, Kathleen Clarke, Sue Thrussell, Rov Harmer, Kevin Carter

'Monorchid' One-ball advanced play

6 wins: Don Gaunt
4 wins: Chris Osmond

The First Official One-ball Computer Rankings

1. Don Gaunt 519
2. Chris Osmond 202
3. Tony Mrozinsky 198
4. Kevin Carter 191
5. Hugh Smorfit 191
6. ARK Miller 154
7. Shaun Carter 122
8. David Mooney 114
9. Sue Thrussell 101
10. Richard Brand 69

**Wrest Park Handicap
20 - 22 May**

Anywhere but here!

The Guardian recently ran a story in their Diary section which recounted someone spotting two bedraggled hitchhikers standing in the rain somewhere outside Basingstoke. One of them carried a sign which said simply: "Anywhere but here". The weather at Wrest Park was such that one half expected similar mottoes to be attached to the upraised mallets of those who had to stand waiting for a reluctant referee. It rained steadily on Friday, more insistently on Saturday and fitfully on Sunday. Those not in play kept umbrellas close at hand: (picture 1).

In keeping with the tradition of keeping me on my toes at May tournaments (on one previous occasion I had been omitted from the draw altogether) Eric now had me playing in two blocks simultaneously. This was quickly sorted out and I faced my first opponent, Philip Windred. He cruised round effortlessly to win +22, and went on to peg out on seven further occasions, of which this is one: (picture 2), and won Block A with 8/8, gaining his silver medal in the process.

There were no time limits. One game took this to extremes as it started on Friday morning, was pegged down on Friday afternoon and remained so for the rest of the tournament. Peter Smith and Ted Robinson battled away in the rain for 4 1/2 hours (or was it more?) to the despair of the lunchtime caterers. Could this have been the game

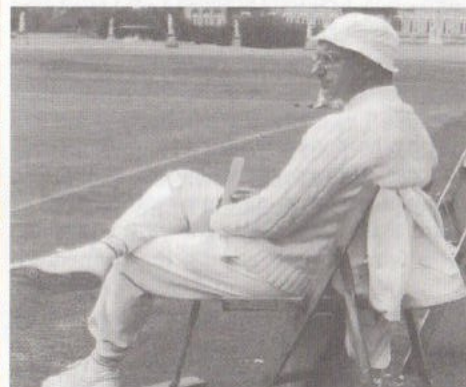


1.

which manager Eric Audsley is seen here observing with such keen interest? (picture 3).

The fortunes of new visitors Martin and Ruth Pitt contrasted sharply and were in direct proportion to their abilities at bisque management. Martin suffered a succession of defeats, but was able to take advantage of the double banking for some informal coaching (here, Lionel Tibble demonstrates the roll stroke): (picture 4). Ruth showed a relaxed style (picture 5) which brought her seven wins in seven games and victory in Block C. She said that she and Martin will be playing more full bisque games between themselves in future, and I suspect Martin will catch on quite quickly...

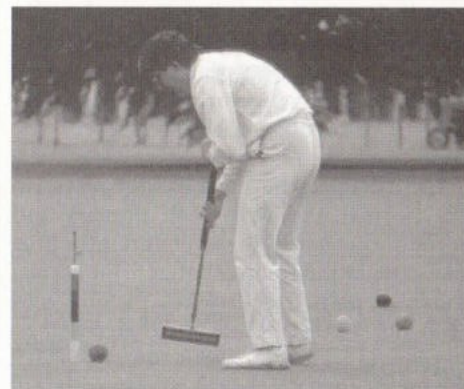
Notable incidents? Well, there was Nigel Gray's pegout of George Collin's forward ball when George's other ball was for rover and Nigel's for somewhere much earlier. Somehow Nigel's ball ran onto the peg as well. John Wheeler was cross-wired at the peg by Lionel Tibble, the balls being some 20 yards apart. He decided to try the jump shot,



3.



5.



2.

but was then unable to remove the extension to the peg. Undeterred, he shaped up for a golf swing which took the face off his mallet and sent the ball some 3 1/2 feet in the air. The shot missed.

It was only fair that after the miserable weather of the first two days (yes, we did have ducks on the lawns) Sunday afternoon should become warm and sunny. At the prizegiving we applauded Philip and Ruth and David Tutt, who won Block B with 7/7. Wrest Park also has a tradition of rewarding the losers, and here Eric is seen handing the golden banana to club president Peter Smith, who in turn is about to present it to Block B loser Mike Hammelev: (picture 6). Mike's attacking if somewhat reckless style led to a number of heavy defeats. His closest game was losing by 2 to Ron Atkinson on Friday morning (a game postponed from the Sunday of the previous September's tournament!).

John Bevington

- Block A: P Windred 8/8
Block B: D Tutt 7/7
Block C: R Pitt 7/7



4.



6.

Results (tournament reports not received)

Mens Championship
Winner: **M Taylor** bt Bamford -26tp +26tp +26tp;
Maugham +19 +26tp; Mulliner +25tp +18;
Gaunt +26tp -4 +17; R Ransom +23 +23.
Runner-up: **R Bamford** bt Clarke +30tp +26tp;
Openshaw +4 +6; Cordingley +13tp +24tp;
C N Williams +20 +21.
D B Maugham bt Burrige +5tp -10 +10tp;
Symons -26 +17tp +25tp; M N Avery +10 +16tp.
C D Clarke bt Comish +12tp +16; Smith +14 +17;
D Harrison-Wood +11 +17.
S N Mulliner bt Liddiard +2 -17 +7; L S Palmer
+17tp +7. I Burrige bt Gregory +5 -16 +3t; C J
Irwin +9 -13tpo +9. S Comish bt Landor +2 +15; C
J Patmore +26 +17. D K Openshaw bt D J
Goacher -24tp +9 +26; F I Maugham -21 +24 +2.
D L Gaunt bt S M Tuke +19 +12. G S Liddiard bt J
H Haslam +21 -16 +17. A K Gregory bt W E Lamb
+4 -18 +18. A J Symons bt I R McClelland +24 +26.
P L Smith bt P Day +1 -17 +2. F J R Landor bt P J
Dorke +4 +9. D J Goacher bt B S Hallam +12 +25.
P Cordingley bt D R Foulser -4t +17 +24.

Womens Championship

Winner: **D A Cornelius** bt Guban +26tp +6;
Harris +20 +26; J Shorten +24tp +22.
Runner-up: **R Guban** bt D Root -4 +10 Opp Scr;
McDiarmid -12 +20 +15; B L Haslam +8t +4t.
D H Harris bt Taylor-Webb +2 +13; D A Wheeler
+11 +9; Root bt Ransom +4t -3t +26.
L Taylor-Webb bt V Carlisle +5 -9 +11.
A J McDiarmid bt C A Smith +21 +8.

Mixed Doubles Championship

L J Palmer & A McDiarmid
bt D Harrison-Wood & J Shorten +16

Inter Counties Championship

1st **Cheshire** 9 wins
2nd Gloucester 9 wins
3rd= Dorset, Essex, Lancashire, Nottingham,
Surrey, York 7 wins
9th= Avon, Middlesex 6 wins
11th Suffolk 5 wins
12th = Bedford, Glamorgan, Hampshire, Kent 4 wins
16th Buckingham 3 wins
17th Sussex 2 wins
18th Warwick 1 wins

World Championship Qualifiers

Carden Park
1. S Comish 4/4 2. D K Openshaw 3/4
Surbiton
1. P Day 4/5 2. D J Goacher bt D A Cornelius +16 +8

Peel Memorial

Mens H/C: 1. A Thomas (4) 6/7
Ladies H/C: 1. S Best (12) 7/7
Mixed: H/C: Mr & Mrs Jackson bt
J Wankling & C Heritage +7

Challenge & Gilby

A Block, Adv: 1. G Noble 4/5
B Block, Adv: 1. G Bennett 4/4
C Block, Adv: 1. S Harbron 4/4
Swiss H/C: 1. M Haggerston (-0.5) 6/7

Bowdon

May Handicap Egyptian
1. P Hanley (9) 131pts 7/7
June Advanced Egyptian
1. J Guest 7/8

Budleigh Salterton

May 9 - 14
A: M Granger-Brown bt R B Huyshe +10t
B: A Potter bt V McClements +7
C: B Smith bt C Thursfield +7t
Doubles: P Mayers & D Wickham bt
Mr & Mrs Scaddon +1t
June Handicap Egyptian
1. P M Taylor (5) 130pts 7 wins
July Open Swiss
1. M Taylor 7/7

Cheltenham

1-4 April Handicap Blocks

A: R Schofield (7) 7/8
B: T Exell (10) 7/8
C: A Whitaker (4) 7/8
D: C Farthing (1) 7/8
E: M Selmes (18) 7/8
F: D Kibble (5) 8/8

Compton

Spring Handicap Play-off
A Fathers bt C F Horton +23; B P James +25

Guildford

May Open Swiss
1. L J Palmer 7/7

Harrow

June Handicap Swiss
1. D Ruscombe-King 5/6

Hurlingham

May Level Blocks
A: J O Walters 9/9
B: M Hammelev 7/7
C: L G Tibble 6/7
D: C Osmond 6/7

Newport

June Handicap Egyptian
1. J Rusted (12) 5/6

Nottingham

May Handicap
G Hopewell (2) bt J Ackerman (16) +14
Egyptian: 1. G Fowler

Parkstone

May Open
A J Symons bt P Cordingley +2t +17
Swiss: 1. D A Cornelius 5/6

June Advanced Blocks

A: **S T Badger** bt W P Ormerod +17
B: **J A Packer** bt L A D Hawkins +10
13 - 18 June
'X' h/c **J Lonsdale** (16) bt W H Arliss (2.5) +13
'Y' h/c 1. J W Wilkinson (12) 127pts 5 wins
Mr & Mrs Arliss bt Hawkins & Street +15
July Full Bisque block play-off
B McGlen (10) bt C F Moon (5) +3

Ramsgate

May Handicap knockout
K Wells bt N Gray +22 +23
Swiss: 1. R Fellows 5 wins

Roehampton

May High Bisquers Swiss
1= East, Fathers, Grant 5/6

July Advanced Blocks

A: 1. G Bennett 4/5
B: 1. S Daddo-Langlois 3/5
6 - 11 June
A Block, Adv: 1. G N Aspinall
B Block, Adv: 1. P W P Campion
C Block, H/C: 1. J Geddes (16)
'X' h/c: **D J F Gurney** (4.5) bt A G Fathers (10) +10
'Y' h/c: **P V Healy** (4) bt O K Jackson (18) +5
G N Aspinall & Mrs Stephens
bt E Dymock & C Osmond +16

Ryde

April Handicap Swiss

1. P Kennerley 6/6
13 - 18 June
A Block, Adv: 1. C Jones 7/8
B Block, Adv: 1. N Gray 2/3
C Block, H/C: 1. I McDiarmid (10) 4/5
'X' H/C: N Gray (4.5) bt C Jones (0) +15
G & I McDiarmid bt A Leggate & J Corrie +6

Southport

May Handicap Blocks
Play-Off winner: H Turner

Southwick

April Open
C D Clarke bt D A Cornelius -1 +26tp +3
Swiss: 1. D C D Wiggins 5/6

Surbiton

April Handicap Egyptian
1. H Smorfit (1.5) 5/5
April Open Swiss
1. J Dawson 6/6

Woking

Spring Handicap Swiss
1. N Gray (6) 6/7
June Open
A Swiss: 1. J Dawson 7/7
B Block: 1. P MacGowan 5/6
"Triples" 27 - 29 June
A Block, Adv: 1. Smith 4/5
B Block, Adv: 1. G McDiarmid 5/5
Blue H/C: 1. G Cuttle 5/6
Red H/C: 1. R Fewtrell 5/6
Yellow H/C: 1. P MacGowan 4/6
Doubles: 1. Smith & Wadley 3/3

Tournament Reports

Acceptable forms for submission

Previously I have stated that only reports typed or on computer disks will be published. Although I have printed, and will continue to print, short and legible handwritten reports I have two reports that have not appeared because they are lengthy and in indecipherable longhand. If their authors want them published I suggest they see their secretaries! ALL other reports that have been received to date have now appeared in 'Croquet', unabridged. Readers may notice that tournaments for which no report has been written include, for the second year running, the Mens & Womens Championships. I am sure this will be a matter for reflection by the managers of CA events, whose official duties include the appointment of a reliable and willing tournament reporter, or failing that to do the job themselves.

John Walters