

To Nottingham spend a day with the Club during their August Tournament. Met at the station by the indefatigable JFS (Stephen) Thomas who brings a whole new meaning to the in-car expression 'belt up', it being applied to that majority of road users who fail to anticipate his mercurial thinking!

Arrived at the Club at midday and met by Ian Vincent, whereupon the good Doctor poured me a pint of Chiswick and introduced me to club members and visitors alike. The event was well supported, given the number of club events competing for custom at that particular time and, in spite of less than friendly weather, generated an atmosphere of cordiality and keen, but friendly, competition.

I left reluctantly at the end of, for me at any rate, a rewarding day, and with the clear impression of a club in good heart and well set to face whatever the future might hold in store.

Earlier this Season, Surbiton staged the second Lords versus Commons Annual Croquet Match about which more elsewhere. The point of my comment here is that this is the second such social event that the Club has staged this year, the first being Stacey International versus the Inland Revenue Board [reported on in the last edition of "Croquet"]. Such

events generate their own publicity and bring the name - and existence - of the club into prominence. Local papers love such out of the ordinary ventures and happily provide coverage. So? So what are the local possibilities in your area? The formula is to seek out a major organisation and approach them with the offer of a club assisted fun day (with the emphasis on "fun"), negotiate a sensible price to cover

And now, remarks attributed to me concerning David's haircut at the World's - and if you are asking "David who?" skip this paragraph. I was phoned by the Press for a comment on David's unconventional hairstyle at a time when I knew absolutely nothing about it. My comment was Quote "Croquet does not demand conformity of personality - it does require conformity of dress and behaviour on

view I have considerable respect for it. No hint, even, of fogyism here. My last word on this is a sad one. Obviously the publication of the attributed words caused comment. Obviously those comments were exchanged in various quarters including being directed to some of the senior members of Council. No one approached me! And that I am sorry about!

To finish on a higher plane. We were honoured by a visit from the Executive Secretary of the Japanese Croquet Association, Prof Masaru Ikeda accompanied by his charming and attractive wife, Hiroko. Also in the party were close friends Mr and Mrs Shuichi Horiyama. Happily, the visit coincided with Finals Day of Hurlingham's Annual Tournament so my guests were able to watch some keenly contested croquet and meet players, officials and spectators during their stay. I am particularly indebted to Bob Stephens who, though managing the tournament found time, along with wife Ann, to chat in the company of, among others, Veronica Carlisle, Chairman of Croquet at Hurlingham and husband Hugh, Paul Campion and Hurlingham's Chief Executive, Paul Covell. My thanks to all who helped to make my guests feel so welcome and thus strengthened the already strong bonds forged between the CA and our Japanese colleagues.

Tony Antenen

... Robin Hood country ...

... Lords v Commons

(another Surbiton venture) ...

... a croquet "Grand Slam"?? ...

... 'old fogies': the Secretary sets the record straight ...

... and a distinguished visitor from Japan ...

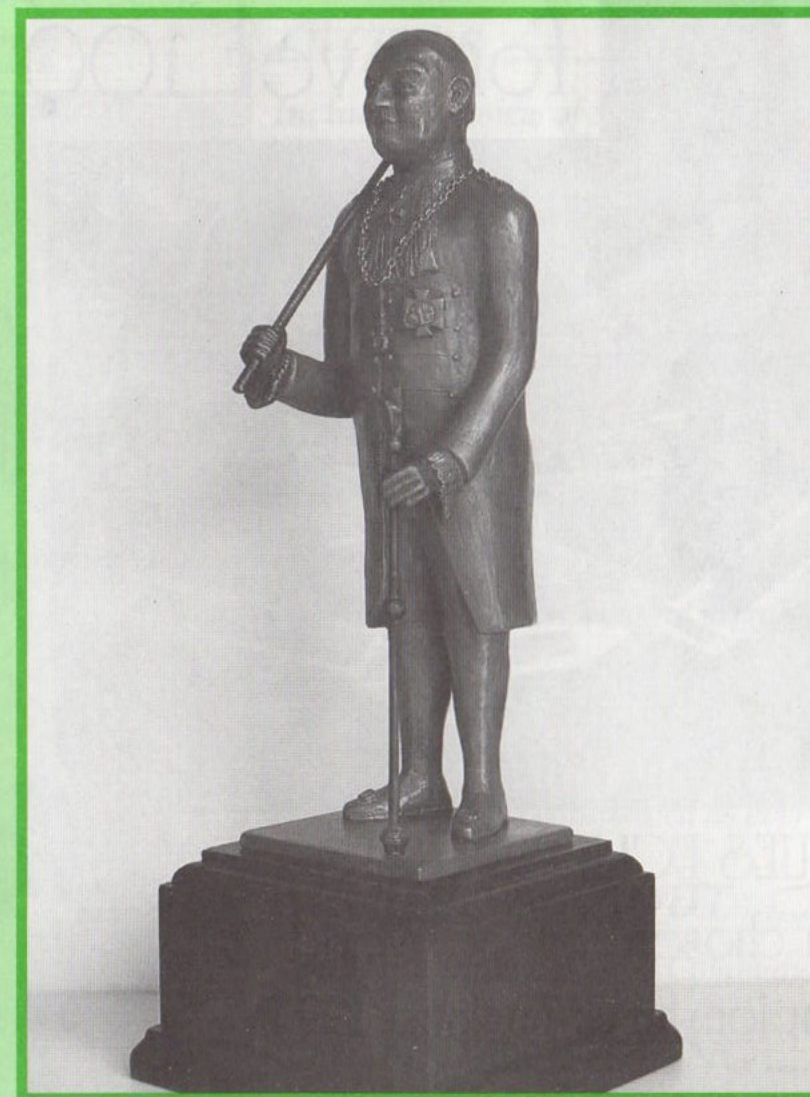
meals and refreshments (unfussy food and drinkable wine and beer nicely presented) and the friendly support and cooperation of club members smartly turned out should ensure a successful, and profitable venture. For local press contacts and further advice, get in touch with Brian Macmillan, CA Publicity Chairman on 071 736 3148.

Got involved in a light-hearted discussion on which five events might comprise a croquet 'Grand Slam'. There was general agreement that it should include the World Championship, the Opens, The President's and the Mens' and Women'. Thereafter, we encountered a lack of unanimity - any ideas?

court", end of Quote. Not the most illuminating utterance maybe, nor one destined for the Oxford Book of Quotations but acceptable, I would have thought, in the circumstances. All else, including the reference to 'old fogies' is either down to journalistic creativity or stems from another source. For the record, the term 'old fogies' is not one which comes to mind. The reason? Because in my four years as Secretary I've not met any 'fogies', young, old or of indeterminate age! I have met die-hard traditionalists who are fearful of changes to 'their' game enforced by commercial or other pressures and, while I may not agree with their point of

croquet

MAGAZINE ISSUE 235

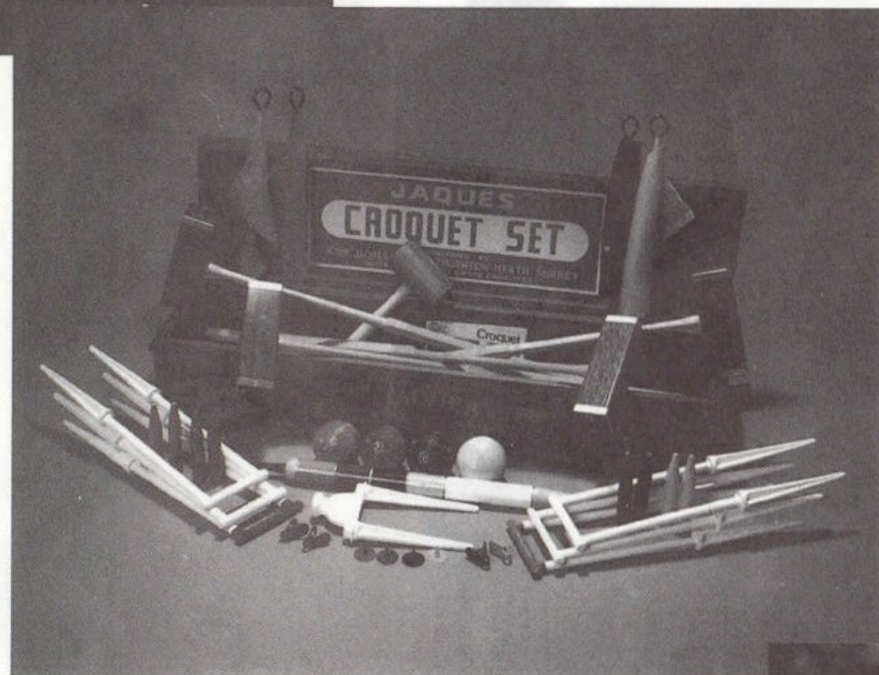


Lords 'a' Leaping

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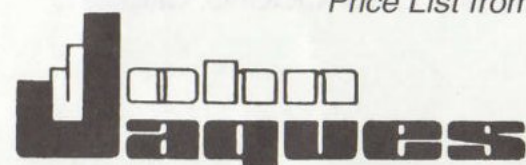
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croquet

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Lords vs Commons croquet match.

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Tony Antenen in a hair-raising incident with the press!

May Day

The Government has decided that in 1995 the early May Bank Holiday will be held not on the first Monday in May but on the second Monday, May 8th, to link with events on and near the anniversary of V E Day. This has not been well publicised but can be confirmed with the Information Office of the Department of Employment. Clubs who arrange 3 day tournaments around the May Bank Holiday may like to note the change before they arrange their 1995 Calendar.

Waterhog

The C A receives copies of 'The Groundsman' and an advert for a machine to remove surplus rainwater from lawns caught their eye recently, so they sent for more particulars. It should be of interest to a number of Croquet Clubs so we find space to mention it here.

The WaterHog junior is a simple walk behind model. It consists of a robust plastic drum with a perforated polyurethane pad wrapped around it and a 10 gallon collection tank inside. Price of the Junior is £495 delivered (spare pads are £45).

WaterHog is already used widely for clearing water from cricket, bowls, tennis, golf and football surfaces.

A few extra copies of the particulars will be deposited with the C A Office for the information of interested enquirers. Or contact *Camus Ltd, 5b Oakfield Ind.Est., Clondalkin, Dublin 22, Ireland. (Tel. 010 353 1 457-6066)*

Lady Murray Vases

Further to the note in the April 1994 issue of

Croquet Alan Oldham is pleased to report that further donations have been received:- from Mr. & Mrs. N. G. Jackson, this year's winners, and from others who wish to remain anonymous. Derek Caporn and Stephen Mulliner have, between them, agreed to meet the remaining balance so that the entire cost of replacing the stolen vase has been met without recourse to C A general funds.

WaterHog Junior - answer to Southport's dreams?



Binding of Croquet

From: Alan Oldham (Hon. CA Archivist)

An archival library of bound copies of 'Croquet' is maintained in the C A Office. For many years we have been fortunate in that a member or friend of the Association has carried out the binding for us at minimal cost to the C A. The time has arrived when more binding needs to be done and I am appealing for any Associate who is able and willing to do this

work for us on a similar basis to get in touch with me.

A Silent Auction

11 August 1994

Relying on the generosity of its members to donate good quality unwanted items, Sussex County CC staged a very successful silent auction during the August tournament. Visitors joined members in bidding for items and over £400 was raised for club funds, an ample reward for the hard work put in by members, most of whom were playing in the tournament.

Other clubs, struggling for finance, may wish to hold a similar event and I am sure Pat Shine would be only too pleased to advise on the procedure of a silent auction on request.

From: a silent bidder

Winter Croquet

From: David Barrett (Bury C.C.)

Can I through the medium of The Croquet Magazine pass on some wonderful news about being able to play croquet all through the winter.

Having just booked the lawns at Carden Park nr. Chester for the final of the Secretary's Shield, I learned of an excellent offer the Hotel and Country Park are making for the winter months, ie the lawns will remain open throughout with a Special Offer of £12.50 per person per day inclusive of Morning Coffee and a light lunch.

You would need to check arrangements re the balls etc, but I am assured that they will look after you.

What a chance to hold your own mini World Championships or at least play where they played!

For details phone 0829-731000, Brian Hatton or Andy Campbell.

Croquet raises £350 for charity

On August 21, with Roger Wheeler commentating, Don Gaunt & David Magee gave a croquet demonstration at Burleigh Court, Minchinhampton. The event was in aid of the Pied Piper Appeal, which aims to provide a children's hospital in Gloucester. People paid £10 to have tea on the lawn, watch the croquet and hear a short harp recital by Margaret Knight. The weather was glorious and the afternoon judged a success.

From: Don Gaunt

CROW KAY



Cartoon by M Wuerker, reproduced by kind permission of Gail & Tremaine Arkley

Council Minutes

From: Derek Caporn

Unfortunately a whole line was omitted from the Council Minutes extracts 26/3/94, published in issue 234 of 'Croquet'

Therefore, readers may like to note that: "Council approved the recommendation of the Handicap Committee to present the Apps Award to Mr Peter Taylor of Bowdon Croquet Club and the replacement of the Steel Bowl (the RBS Quaiche) to Mrs B A McGlen of Bretby Club." Congratulations to both these players and apologies to them.

1993 All England

The Manager, Derek Caporn, is very sorry that he omitted to send the results to 'Croquet' because he forgot to do so and apologises to those who took part, in appalling weather conditions. They all deserved better than this and Derek is sorry to have failed them. His grateful thanks to them for not lodging a complaint to either himself or the CA, which saved a chatishment!

The results were:

- Winner -**
Peter McGowan,
Woking (6) 4/5
- Runner-up -**
Peter Nash,
Dulwich (6) 3/5
- Third -**
Nigel Mottram,
Bristol (4) 3/5
- Fourth -**
Donald Lamont,
Edinburgh (12) 3/5
David Barrett,
Pendle (6) 3/5

Peter Nash beat Nigel Mottram +3 in a single ball handicap to be runner-up.

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BARLWS

Consistent ball standards required; Spectator's solution to 'boring' A class croquet

Return of the balls debate

Dear John
In many clubs there appears to be a movement away from Jaques balls in favour of Barlow balls for tournament play. On the two occasions that I have played with Barlows this season (Plymouth and Parkstone) the general impression I had was that the balls do not rush nearly as far as you expect. This is particularly true of short rushes into position. The next point was that in hot weather (at Parkstone the heat was searing) the black ball in particular softens to the point where it is possible to squeeze it. Consequently many gentle hoop strokes stuck quite firmly in the hoop. The third and most important point is that they just do not feel nice to play with; they lack the satisfying smack of a well hit Jaques ball and I have heard it said that "it's like playing with a Christmas pudding."

My experiences aside, last week-end I was able to put myself in the position of an impartial observer of Barlow balls in play during the Hunstanton 4.5 day tournament. I spent two days just watching games during which time I was not involved in any competitive play. The rush problem was very apparent in most games and appears to stem from the fact that the playing ball almost invariably jumps as it strikes another ball and thus a significant proportion of the energy intended for the rush is used in elevating the playing ball. Cut rushes were a great source of annoyance to many players and the reason seems to be that the rushed ball seems to be moved momentarily in the direction of travel of



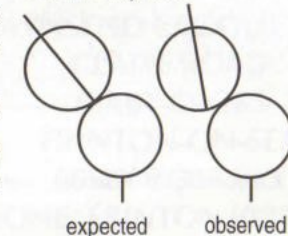
the playing ball before it separates to follow its own path (see diagram). These factors, in particular, detract substantially from the pleasure of watching a good player perform.

Balls left unintentionally half way through hoops at the end of a turn were another common feature of the games, so much so that several of the players were beginning to use a new term for this instance: "oh look, he's just Barlowed penult...".

The pull on Barlow balls is much stronger than Jaques and a number of players were left with very black looks on their faces when a croqueted ball slammed firmly into an inconvenient hoop or the peg. Nick Harris (-0.5) tried a four-back peel from very close, with not a large amount of split, and after allowing for a larger than normal pull, still almost managed to miss the hoop entirely in the other direction.

Barlow balls have been approved by the CA for tournament play, presumably because they pass the bounce test etc., but unfortunately the real proof of the pudding (Christmas or otherwise) is in how the players feel about playing with them. If I were on the Committee of a club that was thinking of changing from Jaques to Barlow for their tournaments, I would think very carefully, because the number of players I heard say, "I'm not going anywhere again where they use Barlows" was frighteningly high.

David Carpenter



"the number of players I heard say, 'I'm not going anywhere again where they use Barlows' was frighteningly high"

World Champs timing

Dear Sir:
Having read John Walters 'personal view' of the W.C.F., I'm not sure I agree that the C.A. should withdraw entirely as that action might be regarded as lack of 'sportsmanship' on our part.

What I do strongly suggest however is that the W.C.F. gets organised! I think I am right in saying that we had FOUR world tournaments in 3.5 years since its inception and now we have just played a fifth - far too many.

May I suggest that consideration be given to a re-scheduling of the event. We have the MacRobertson Shield every four years. I suggest the World Tournament be played every four years so we get a real top class tournament every two years and hence expense will be reduced considerably and the tournament will then become a regular, well spaced event in the calendar.

David Godfree
Hon Sec AELTCC & CC

The Late Andrew Gregory

Dear Sir.
There has been a burden weighing on my conscience for two years now, and the time has come to expiate my sin. I was appointed to write the report for the 1992 Chairman's Salver, and I have not done so. Mea culpa. I apologise to the players, to the host club, and to your readers.

There is little point in me trying to give you a full report now, since my impressions are somewhat faded. For instance, I recollect that Ian Burridge spent every evening in argument

with Bill Lamb, but I cannot recall about what they argued.

So, what follows is what I remember: what was to be my opening paragraph; one of the best games in which I have played; and one of the two most remarkable shots I have ever seen.

Chairman's Salver,
Budleigh Salterton,
September 1992

We were the second best eight, and we knew it. "I'll always be a Chairman's player", one of us mourned, "I'll never be good enough for the President's." Even the local estate agent's signs proclaimed "Fulford's Streets Ahead".

By the second day, David Wiggins had already established a clear lead, with Ian Burridge in second place.

Burridge v Gregory, Round 7: Burridge took the first break round to 4-back. Gregory hit the lift, and at the end of his next turn had completed three peels of his triple, but could only peg out one ball. Burridge missed, and then Gregory missed the peg from three yards. Soon after, Burridge took his 4-back ball round to the peg. At the end of his turn, he was taking croquet from his partner ball on the South boundary, directly behind rover. He took off towards Gregory's ball, which was near penult. Despite being allowed "at least a yard" of hill, his ball curved elegantly around rover and straight onto the peg.

So there were now two balls on the lawn: Gregory's, for the peg, and Burridge's, for hoop one. Gregory trickled up close to the peg. Burridge hit from the South boundary, played a thick take-off to hoop one, crashed through,

and embarked on a two-ball break which involved improbable numbers of long roquets, roll shots and hoops. I think hoop 3 was particularly impossible. This lasted till he ran 4-back, and was faced with a 5-yard roquet straight towards penult. He missed the ball entirely. There were a few turns of cat-and-mouse, but Gregory eventually hit to win +3.

In the next game, Burridge should have completed a straight triple peel against Wiggins, but spectacularly failed to peg out. Wiggins won that game +2TP, and went on deservedly to secure the salver.

Tom Coles had had one ball pegged out, and his other was for hoop 4. He was taking croquet in corner 2, with the other ball in corner 3. I shall never know how he did it, but the croqueted ball finished at hoop 5, while his ball ended up in the third corner area with a straight rush to hoop 4.

Results: Wiggins 12 wins, Burridge 9, Hope, Lamb 7, Coles, Comish 6, L Palmer 5, Gregory 4

The 1994 Spencer Ell report is in preparation. Let me warn you, it's a big one.

Yours faithfully,
Andrew Gregory

AHS 'Drift'

Dear John,
In respect of J B Portwood's letter on the AHS in issue 234 and his mythical club of 2, then 4, members, the handicaps would not have equalised at 7 but at 5, since there are 10 official handicap steps from 0 to 5 and the same number from 18 to 5. However, what is interesting is that the two ladies, having each brought into the system a burden of 18 bisques, which during improvement



they have proceeded to offload onto unsuspecting and erstwhile scratch players, have nevertheless dissipated 8 bisques each along the way.

The sum of the four handicaps when the ladies were novices at 18 was 36, yet now that all four players have reached the same handicap mark of 5, the sum of the four handicaps is only 20. 16 bisques have disappeared. Why? Because during the change from 0 to 1/2 which corresponds to the "bandit's" change from 18 to 16, 1 1/2 bisques disappear. This progression occurs until handicap mark 12 is reached. Then 1/2 bisque per step becomes lost to the system until the handicap mark of 5 is reached. Thus an 18 bisque, progressing from 18 to 5 does not offload 13 bisques to his various opponents but only 5, since 8 bisques are lost along the way. In short, it would need 10 high bisquers, if joining a tournament circuit of 100 players and progressing in one season from 18 to 5, to add 1/2 bisque to each of those players' handicaps during that season.

In any case it is relative values which matter in handicaps, as I know from my horse racing experience. What does it matter if scratch players at ten year intervals produce slightly different standards? Who is measuring?

Yours sincerely
Edward Dymock

View from the sideline

Dear John,
"Croquet is too easy, the rules need a change" - so say the top 100 players. As a spectator at Carden Park for the final three days, this

certainly appeared to be true, endless demonstrations of precision, never a ball out of place and skill at hitting the lift. Maybe it is as boring to play as it is to watch, certainly not a spectator sport. Let us consider the conditions, Astraturf like lawns, new and evenly matched balls; how different from the average club game. Maybe a simple solution would be to stage these prestige events at clubs that offer less than perfect playing surfaces, hills and hollows would be more fun to negotiate, plus a few boundaries that fall off an inch or so. Change the balls too; there are now several alternative makes available, each type having its own characteristics - change them frequently during the contest, this might offer a greater challenge.

Carden Park may have been the ideal choice for the players, it certainly wasn't for the spectators - remote and difficult to get to by public transport, expensive; true for the daily charge of £6.50 there were chairs available but no attempt at any shelter and it was very windy and cold. The catering facilities were abysmal, waiting 40 mins for a plate of sandwiches soon loses its charm, it was indeed fortunate so few spectators turned up. And why was there so little croquet to watch? 2 matches only on the penultimate day, that were over by 3.30pm and the final on Wednesday completed by 3.15pm.

I hope this experiment of putting the World Championship at a Golf Club will never be repeated"

"Carden Park may have been the ideal choice for the players, it certainly wasn't for the spectators

... I hope this experiment of putting the World Championship at a Golf Club will never be repeated"

LETTERS

ships should be played at our own croquet clubs? Then the ordinary player will have a chance to see these skills demonstrated on their own, possibly less than perfect lawns.

S G Hampson

Postcards from the past

Dear John,
I recently came across this postcard whilst looking through some photographs at a friend's house. It shows the hospital where her great grandfather was sent to recuperate after being gassed in the trenches in 1915. I noticed the sunken path and the bank between the two courts in the foreground and the one in the background and realised that it was probably a very early picture of Bowdon Croquet Club.

Although there are no pegs visible on the near courts, there is a peg barely visible in the one above the bank close to



the boundary (above the empty bench), this suggests a Hale setting is being used and thus dates the picture as before 1922 (Prichard). Also, hoop one has dark coloured crown (post 1904), but rover does not (pre-1924). Two mallets are visible on the original, resting against the fence below the right most window of the building. Reading "The queen of games" by Nicky Smith, I discovered that Bowdon was laid out in 1911 and that tournaments were played there in 1912 and 1913, but then not again until after the war, when the lawns were said to have suffered. As the



Bowdon c1915 - one of many historical photographs fading away in attics?

soldiers seem to be playing football on the court, perhaps this explains why.
It occurs to me that there must be many historical photographs fading away in dusty attics around the country. In particular, I would be interested to see photographs of important old venues such as Buxton, Leamington and Bedford (I have seen one of Bedford). Also, I wonder what happened to the records of those clubs, were they given to the CA for safe-keeping or did they end up on some house clearance bonfire? I understand Alan Oldham keeps the archives of the CA, I wonder if he would be willing to write a short account of some of the most interesting things that are held, with some photographic examples? Perhaps a portable exhibition could be put together to do the rounds of the tournaments.

Yours sincerely
David Carpenter

Croquet Association, 1993 Accounts



OTHER FUNDS	Life Membership	International Benefactors	Tournaments & Trophies	Four Court Improvement
Balance at 1st January 1993	1,605	7,739	2,948	2,050
Add: Interest on Invested Funds	-	167	265	-
Donations From General Funds	-	1,027	-	-
	1,605	4,500	300	1,000
	13,433	19,078	3,513	3,050
Deduct: Allocation In Year	-	8,374	100	1,000
Balance at 31st December 1993	£1,605	£5,059	£3,413	£2,050

Income and Expenditure Account for the Year ended 31st December 1993

1992	1993
INCOME	
Subscriptions	23,859
Registration Fees	5,551
Levy	7,326
Sale of Books, Equipment, etc (net)	6,791
Advertisements	4,368
Surplus on Tournaments	4,394
Coaching (net)	3,349
Investment Income on General Funds (net of tax)	2,016
	57,594
EXPENSES	
Publications (Croquet, Fixtures Book & Directory)	19,839
	37,544
GENERAL OVERHEADS	
Office Rent	2,340
Rent of Land	600
Staff Salaries & National Insurance	15,508
Contributions	1,584
Council & Committee Travelling Expenses	2,662
Postage & Telephone	2,438
Printing & Stationery	2,809
Insurance	560
Sundry Expenses	1,307
Accountancy Charges & Computer Services	3,754
Maintenance of Office, Furniture & Equipment	2,928
	728
	32,603
SURPLUS ON ORDINARY ACTIVITIES	
	3,714
EXTRAORDINARY ITEMS	
Income: Sports Council Grant	28,000
Sponsorship (net)	(2,060)
	25,940
Expenses: Development Officer's Fees & Expenses	29,654
Grants to Clubs & Federations	18,012
General Publicity & Development (net)	2,625
	8,676
SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	
	29,313
	£ 341
	£ 2,486

1992	1993
FIXED ASSETS	
Office Furniture & Equipment at Written Down Value	1,050
Croquet Equipment at Written Down Value	1,250
Trophies, estimated to realise	10,000
Investments, as per attached schedule	46,668
	58,131
CURRENT ASSETS	
Stocks of Literature & Equipment	5,700
Loans to Member Clubs	3,500
Sundry Debtors & Prepayments	4,735
Cash at Bank and in Hand	12,403
Taxation Recoverable	687
	29,603
	84,469
CURRENT LIABILITIES	
Subscriptions Received in Advance	6,205
Accrued Expenses	14,754
Taxation	1,741
	22,700
	£ 61,196
NET ASSETS Representing:	
Accumulated General Funds as at 1st January 1993	28,975
Surplus for the Year on Activities	341
	29,316
OTHER FUNDS, as per attached schedule	
Life Membership	1,605
International (formerly Test Tour)	5,059
Benefactors	19,078
Tournaments and Trophies	3,413
Four Court Improvement	2,050
	675
	£ 61,196

Quoted	Nominal Value	Cost	Market Value
	£7,557.40	7,342	7,815
	£7,779.22	7,488	7,801
		14,830	£15,616
Unquoted		31,838	
		£46,668	

We have examined the books, vouchers and other records maintained by The Croquet Association for the year ended 31st December 1993 and obtained such further information as considered necessary. To the best of our knowledge and belief the Accounts as presented by The Association on pages 1 to 2 give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of The Association at 31st December 1993 and of the Surplus for the year ended on that date.

NICHOLASS, AMES & CO.
Chartered Accountants

Alhambra House,
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28th February 1994

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CARROTS, HORSES, HELICOPTERS and GRAND OPERA

(or Trials and Tribulations settled on the Court)

It all started one raw January afternoon. I had taken my son to Brough railway station to get his train back to university. A biting east wind was driving snow from the adjacent Humber Estuary across the very exposed and deserted platforms. Whilst waiting I had observed two well dressed gentleman alight from the London train. They were looking forlorn. One of them looking very sombre approached me. Snow had settled on his furry Russian hat. "A car from British Aerospace was supposed to take us to Rowley Manor Hotel" he said. "Do you know where we can get a taxi?". "I am afraid not" I said. "There's a telephone outside the station yard", I added. "I know" he said. "It's out of order!" After looking longingly at my warm car, he trudged back to his companion who was sheltering in the lee of the deserted booking office.

Under Ice

Contrary to anything you may hear from Colin Wild, of Bowdon Croquet Club, there is (occasionally) a charitable side to my nature.

I had an idea that Rowley Manor was not far off my route home. I called out to them that if they could risk getting lost on the Wolds in a snowstorm I would give them a lift. They accepted with alacrity.

The journey to Rowley was uneventful. On arrival, my grateful passengers pressed me to have a drink with them. I declined the alcohol but indicated that a hot coffee would be welcome. Coffee was produced and secure in the warm we were able to enjoy the beautiful scene from the lounge window. It was like one of Liz Taylor Webb's croquet Christmas cards. I asked the owner David Kaye if there were lawns under the snow and if they were flat. Somewhat puzzled he gave a positive response to both questions. Thus commenced six years happy association with Rowley Manor Hotel. At the time Beverley croquet Club was homeless and about to dissolve.

What has all this to do with carrots, horses and grand opera one may ask. What follows about the problems of maintaining your own, not specially laid, croquet lawns is dedicated to all those newly formed less fortunate clubs that struggle to maintain their own 'rough

pasture' lawns. They surely look with envy at the bowling green 'lawns' of Hurlingham, Cheltenham, East Riding, Bowdon et al. Those prestigious clubs no doubt have their problems too. Worry not however lawns do recover whatever the trauma. An account of some particularly bizarre incidents and remedies at the Beverley Club may be of interest and encouragement.

Early days

In our first season at Rowley with some trepidation we entered the Longman Cup. Imagine our consternation to find a full size marquee on Lawn 2. David Kaye assured us there was no problem. The marquee would be taken down 3 days before the match. True to his word it was. There were however about 40 or more holes 2 inches in diameter and 2 or 3 feet deep! We tried filling them with riddled soil. Using a desert spoon it took about 15 minutes per hole. At that rate it would take hours. Brushing soil backwards and forwards was tried without much success. Time was pressing. Lawns required mowing. Hoops needed moving and resetting because of an extended boundary. There was no option but to cancel the match and concede victory. The deadline was up and we could not play away. Our opponents lawns were not available. Dispirited I drove home. I called at the village shop. I forget why. Waiting in the queue I heard a lady complaining *sotto voce* to a friend about some outsize carrots. "They lose their flavour." "The baby ones are so much sweeter." My eye followed her gaze to a bin of carrots, some of which were indeed on the large side. The ladies were very suspicious when ignoring their caveat, I darted from the queue and carefully selected carrots of approximately 2 inch diameter. Disturbed by their gaze, and having no confidence in their acceptance of any explanation about holes in a lawn, I filled my basket overflowing, paid and left.

Our President, at that time, Ross Gillespie and I had great fun knocking carrots into the lawn. All that was necessary was to hammer them in until their wedge shape made a perfect seal. The top was cut off at lawn level. A tap in of 1/2 an inch, a spoonful of fine soil and sand, and the repair was complete. The

fixture with Edinburgh was duly played. Jocular and gloomy predictions about a forthcoming carrot field proved groundless.

Is it a bird? Is it a plane?

It was in the early part of next season that Norman Best and I discovered three large depressions. They were about the size and shape of half an



Edam cheese. Norman found faint tyre marks in one of them. There were no tracks leading to it. It was a 3 wheeled vehicle for sure. It was the barmaid that solved the mystery. "Oh that", she said, "it's the British Gas helicopter." (one of the north sea gas terminals is about 50 miles due east)

Repairing the helicopter holes simply involved, fine soil and grass seed. The season had only just begun. We discovered that the

best way to fill the holes so that they were flat was to fill them proud of the lawn level. They could then be levelled off with a golf course switch. If your club suffers from wormcasts I can recommend one. Forget about poisons you are not licensed to use. I can assure you that flailing left and right with a 20 ft fibreglass rod is satisfying and sadistic. It gives you that killer instinct before the match.

It also pulverises wormcasts and speeds the drying off of the morning dew; presumably by spreading and mixing the globules. At levelling the filling of helicopter holes, and the hoof marks of escaping horses they are superb. A lawn soon recovers from hoof marks, but the activities of horses can be more sinister.

Seeing red

Beverley members should never get disoriented on strange lawns. They know well that the red flag marks corner 2. Pauline Best had made two beautiful sets of flags. It was this flag that some poltergeist was throwing into the meadow that runs along the west boundary of lawn 2. Sometimes the pole was broken but Pauline's flag was unharmed. Always the red flag. Exuberant hotel wedding guests have very occasionally led conga's with flags or played at semaphore but the colour of the flag was irrelevant to them. It was not until one of our members spotted a horse trotting sedately away with the red flag like the escort preceding Puffing Billy that the mystery was solved. Frank Meadley has now made some metal ones which horses fight shy of. So much for carrots, horses and helicopters but what of grand opera. Well we waited with some apprehension, an invasion of 700 opera patrons and an orchestra in July.

Vocal critics

The roof of the charming 12th century church adjacent to lawn one is in grave need of repair. An enterprising church council in cooperation with the hotel had capitalised on the idyllic setting and organised an outdoor performance of the Marriage of Figaro with firework display and all the trimmings.

The initial 500 tickets were sold out within days and a further 200 were issued. The event was bound to be a financial success. The hotel was fully booked for the interval dinner, Picnic hampers sold like hot cakes and good luck to all concerned. My wife and I got our tickets early as did Frank our President. We prayed for fine weather for us and the patrons. Any damage would then be minimal. Seats on the lawns were banned. If it rained there might be some temporary damage. We doubted even then if any patron could make a mark as big as a helicopter wheel or a galloping horse. If they did East Riding Club had kindly offered their lawns to us, to play any league fixtures until the lawns recovered. Note 'until' and not 'if'

The message I have for other clubs depressed about lawn problems is whatever

besets your lawns, do not despair. Short of the deliberate vandalism that happened at Headingly some years ago it is very hard to destroy croquet lawns. We are the temporary residents "strutting and fretting" our hour upon our croquet lawns like Shakespeare's poor player. The beautiful lawns at Rowley that we are privileged to play on will be flourishing centuries on, when spacemen are executing triple peels on Mars or wherever.

The Opera has now been and gone: weather proved to be ideal - the ground was very hard. Gog and Magog would not have caused any noticeable damage let alone the perceived social elite of the East Riding. The organisers banned chairs on the centre of the lawns and put down coir matting around the edges.

The lawns were used 3 days later to play a successful 'friendly' with an emerging club from Bridlington.

Trench warfare?

Of course if your lawns are of bowling green standard the events I have described would be a tragedy. The Geneva club I am told play on beautiful lawns but await the possible digging of a 4 ft. trench across their nurtured sward. One hopes it does not transpire.

If however your lawns are more of the converted cricket outfield type you have less to fear. I should perhaps say that it really is only for the very expert players that lawns falling short of bowling green standard are frustrating. Many an all round break has been played at Rowley by lesser mortals. May I finally comment that what at first seemed like disaster can be turned to advantage.. The opera was a splendid opportunity to advertise our beginners course (which by a strange coincidence was scheduled to commence the week after the opera) to no less than 700 potential new members. The owners of the hotel Mario and Chris Ando know how grateful we are for the continued use of their facilities and their help and support.. If any of your readers want a pleasant croquet weekend in a first class hotel with easy access to the ancient towns of York, Beverley and Lincoln you know now where to go.

Mike Evans, Beverley Croquet Club.

A GRIM POMS PROGRESS

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 20

"Let's build a new seat of government!" "Great idea, we will put it here" "No, I think it should be here" "OK where does no-one want it? Let's put it there!"

Although a lengthy journey, we booked for a day trip to Canberra. In retrospect we wished we had hired a car for the day (or flown) as the coach trip was very tedious. However, the city was well worth seeing and it was a warm sunny day. We saw the embassies, the old parliament building, had a guided tour of the new parliament building which included seeing the two houses (parliament wasn't sitting), the high court building and the magnificent and moving Anzac memorial and museum. We did not see the croquet lawns although I later, at Hurlingham, met a chap from Canberra CC.

Chapter 21

Don Guantes is sent up the Swanee, goes bush and ends up in prison. "I Wannaroo!" "Walyunga no more!" Lots of old friends are encountered as he prepares for the final battle.

We had a very comfortable flight to Perth and settled ourselves into a flat, ready for the 1993 Masters Games. We had a few days in hand and took advantage of these to see a few sights that we had missed on our longer holiday of the previous year. We drove up the Swan river into the wine growing district, and out around the Avon valley via Northam, York and Beverley. These were very attractive rides, we picnicked by the Avon and also saw an emu.

We went for a short bush walk with friends Eric & Jean (not croquet) around Walyunga and saw some kangaroos. We re-visited the Railway Museum at Bassendean and the Market and the Botanic Golf at Wanneroo. We finished up with a very interesting visit to the old Fremantle Jail. Built by convicts, it is a grim place, especially the hanging chamber. The wall paintings made by prisoners have been preserved and are of especial interest.

During the run-up to the Masters, we were invited to a couple of friendly games. Terry and Judith Spears invited us to Como, where we met Peter Heydorn from South Africa, while Tom and Doreen Crawford came specially to Bassendean after a meeting so that I could have a game. All competitors

were invited to Floreat for a get together and here we met lots of friends from the previous year, including Mick and Norma Motteram & John and Anne Middlemas (who had put us up at Bunbury the previous year). We also met Leslie Riggall from South Africa.

In the evening we went to the opening ceremony at Freemantle. This was a chaotic affair with thousands of people milling about everywhere. The opening spectacle of a diver jumping some 60 feet of the top of a tall ship was somewhat spoilt by the chap knocking himself out and being carted off in an ambulance. I understand that he was later OK. We had free food and drink vouchers and quite enjoyed the evening but were not terribly impressed.

Chapter 22

Silver! Gold!! The Quest of Don Guantes and the Faithful Doñana is done - Floreat Croquetus Omnes!!!

The Masters kicked off on ANZAC day with a day of progressive doubles at Moorabinda in Bunbury. This is a very pleasant town some 3 hours drive south of Perth. I had played there the year before, in a doubles tournament, winning with my partner Pat Hodgson. I was delighted to find that she was there as were many others that we had met. It was a lovely sunny day and we enjoyed it very much. Somewhat to my surprise, I ended up the highest scoring male and got a gold medal. Ruth Rowell from Victoria got the ladies gold.

The next two days were the class singles. I managed to beat all except Bob Harewood, who, playing with his usual consistency, pipped me for the gold. Good on ya Bob - I'll get you next time! I did at least have a consolation TP against Jill Donisthorpe from South Australia. Olga Lindon won the bronze.

We had a very nice meal in Northbridge (a large restaurant area just off the centre of Perth) one evening with Tom and Doreen Crawford & Ian and Margaret McPhee. It was Ian who, the year before, had arranged WA CA membership so that I could play, but we had not been able to meet.

The final three days were the handicap doubles. I was partnering Audrey Burrows from Bassendean. Unfortunately medals for us were not forthcoming this time. Golds were won by Peter Heydorn from South

Africa partnering John Middlemas from Bunbury, who won all their games.

Chronologically the last event of the games was the closing ceremony at the Perth Superdome. However, we found it to be a crowded, noisy event with too much loud music for our taste. We much prefer to remember the croquet BBQ in Kings Park the evening before. This was much more enjoyable, chatting and saying farewell once again to friends old and new. The evening was enlivened by the Japanese contingent passing round lashings of Sake!

The croquet wasn't quite over. Tom and Doreen Crawford had been coaching at Leederville and invited us over for a friendly before we left. This we did, meeting many of the members. The weather turned nasty with lightning and torrential rain so the Crawfords, the Gaunts and Alan? and his wife went to a food mall in Bedford district. Here we talked croquet since we couldn't play it.

A short time was left to us before we left, much of which was spent with our non-croquet friends. With them we went bush walking and paid a visit to Tumblegum Farm near Armadale. This is a new venture which sets out to show rural and Aboriginal life. It features sheep shearing, Boomerang throwing (except we didn't see any as the guy had forgotten his boomerang!) and Aboriginal dancing.

Our last evening we spent at the Elizabethan Village in Armadale. This has a copy of Anne Hathaways Cottage (we've now seen three of these; this one, the original, and one in Victoria British Columbia) and an Old English Pub. It was very pleasant, and perhaps prepared us for the return home.

Chapter 23

In the street of a thousand artisans; By the sign of the Flying Flak; There lived a Pommy Governor; His name was Pat Ton Bak. The travellers go where east and west meet, before returning home.

Our flight to Hong Kong took us via Singapore where we had about an hour. On the way we passed over the island of Krakatoa, or what is left of it. It is still smoking. We had chosen to spend a week in HK as we had been in 1984, and wanted to go before it is handed over to the Chinese in 1997. As we had seen the major sights last time we concentrated on the smaller things.

Because HK is an unbelievably crowded place, visitors are tempted to visit sights on organised trips. While these certainly get you there, they are expensive and you spend a lot of time just waiting for, or in, the coach. I will describe some trips we made using public transport which cost next to nothing and only need a little initiative to undertake.

Firstly, a word about public transport.

The easiest and speediest is the MTR (Mass transit Railway). There are three lines covering a large part of the Kowloon and HK Island conurbation. Buy a Stored Value Ticket for multiple journeys. Tip:- The last trip on the ticket is accepted no matter what the value left in the ticket, so you can take a \$10 trip when only \$1 is left on the ticket.

SVT's are also accepted on the KCR (Kowloon Canton Railway) which runs up the eastern side of the New Territories and on into China. Use it to visit the 10,000 Buddha Monastery, and for access to buses to Lok-Ma-Chau, the China overlook point.

Buses. These are very cheap, get a route map from the tourist office at Star Ferry terminal. They give no change, so take plenty with you. The drivers speak little English, but the fares are printed in English as you enter, and at the termini. Air-conditioned

the Station, go to the ground floor on the left and take the 66M bus to Tuen Mun terminus. Go upstairs, it's a great view. At the terminus turn right, then left along Tsun Wen Road for 300 metres to a large bridge. On the right is Ching Chung Monastery, quite impressive. Leave by the opposite end (near the wall mural) and turn left. In 200 metres you reach Ching Chung Station on the Public Light Railway. Go to Yuen Long (buy ticket from machine, you may have to change at Siu Hong). Stop in the town to get lunch or continue to the terminus. Outside on the left is the bus stop (not in the bus station on the right) for No 64K to Tai Po. At Tai Po is a KCR station back to Kowloon, but if you have time (allow 2-3 hours, otherwise return another day) stop at Sha Tin and follow the signs to the Monastery of the 10,000 Buddhas. Note. It is a very steep climb, but it is well worth it. Tip:- Whichever path you take up, leave by the opposite corner of the Monastery and you will find a different path down.

A trip to the Sai Kung Peninsula away from people (not weekends).

Take the KCR to Sha Tin and catch the 299 bus below to Sai Kung Terminus. This is a pleasant ride. Buy a picnic lunch at the shops in Sai Kung, but also have a snack on the

Chapter 24

Wat next? Don Guantes in Los Angeles? Well, it's a long tail baht we'll cut it short.

There were just two more days left of our trip. These were spent in Bangkok. One day we are going back to have a proper visit to this friendly country. On this occasion we took a couple of official trips which, like anywhere else are more expensive. You can go independent, indeed on a previous visit we did, but public transport, language and the heat make this more difficult and for two days it wasn't worth it. The Thais call Bangkok Krungthep which means city of angels but I think that the traffic noise would have forced the angels out years ago!

Our first trip was a boat ride on the Chao Phraya River, the main river through the city, then round the klongs or canals. The trip uses a Thai speciality, the long-tailed boat. The idea is to take a big engine, say from a lorry, mount it on a gimbal and attach a propeller to the prop shaft. Rev up and drop this lethal device in the water and you have a boat capable of 50kph. Fill the river with these and pray to whatever God you believe in!

One of the things that we noticed on the



buses are a bit more expensive.

Public Light Buses. These minibuses are all over the place. They are a bit more expensive than buses, but often go to out-of-the-way spots. Often however the route only appears in Chinese. Why worry, if you get it wrong you can always return by the same route, and it might be interesting anyway!

Public Light Railway. This is a modern, air-conditioned network around the north-west of the New Territories. All stations have very clear maps.

Ferries. Apart from the famous Star Ferry from Kowloon to HK Island, there are dozens of ferries to outlying islands, Macau and China. They are inexpensive. Most run from Kowloon but there are others, see the information office (not your hotel, they will try and sell you an expensive trip). We went to Tai-O fishing Village on Lantau Island for a quarter of the price of the official trip.

A trip to the New Territories.

Take the MTR to Tsuen Wan (terminus). 100 metres from the Station is Sam Tung Uk, a preserved walled Chinese Village. Back at

peaceful waterfront. Catch the 94 to Wong Shek Pier. This is a lovely ride, it passes through a designated park area. Have a picnic lunch on the beach, take 1 hour and return on the next bus to Sai Kung. Catch the 92 bus towards Choi Hung, but get off at the University turning and catch the 91 bus to Clear Water Bay. These are both scenic rides. Clear Water Bay is an ideal spot for an afternoon cup of tea. Catch the 91 bus to Choi Hung, then the MTR or No 5 bus to Kowloon. The cost of all these rides will be about \$60 HK!

Circular trip of HK Island seeing major sights.

Start at Exchange Square Bus Terminal (Central). No 7 bus to Aberdeen Harbour; Nos 72 or 73 bus to Ocean Park; 73 bus to Repulse Bay; 73 bus to Stanley Market; 63 bus to Shau Kei Wan; tram to Happy Valley; tram to Central. Notes. There are also direct routes from Central to the sights. some buses do not run on Sundays.

tour was that the river and canals were much cleaner than on our last visit. Our guide said that a vigorous clean-up campaign had been waged. I understand that the King has now ordered that something now be done about the unbelievable traffic chaos, it certainly needs it.

Our second trip was to the Grand Palace. This was a repeat trip. I don't know how many visits would be needed to see everything properly, but it's more than most visitors could manage. Words cannot describe the splendour of this place, it is one of my all-time highlights of world travel.

So after that brief interlude in Thailand, it was all over. Well, not quite. Fate decided that our flights had all gone too smoothly, so gave us a 4 hr wait in the hotel, an hour in Bangkok traffic in a taxi, and another 4 hrs at the airport before the 12 hr flight. Still, we got some sleep and had a superb view of London and the Thames, passing over Hurlingham.

Back home, our cat looked up from a sleep. "Oh hello, have you been away?"

AROUND

PEERLESS COMMONS! LOWLY LORDS!!
LORDS VERSUS COMMONS ANNUAL CROQUET MATCH

& ABOUT

Surbiton hosted the Second Lords versus Commons Annual Croquet Match on Wednesday, 13 July and provided a suitable backdrop for a nice mix between keenly fought matches and a relaxed social occasion.

The Commons team, skippered (or shepherded) by Richard 'Dick' Tracey, comprised MPs Toby Jessel, Ian Taylor, Andrew Rowe and Iain Duncan Smith and proved too good for a Lords team led by Lord Elton with Lords Brabazon, Gisborough and Cadman and Baroness Strange.

This year saw the inauguration of the Black Rod Trophy which now bears the winning inscriptions for 1993 and 1994 - both of which read "The Commons"! Lord Elton, graciously conceding defeat,

promised a mighty effort next year to wrest the trophy from the victorious Commons. 'Dick' Tracey, accepting the award on behalf of the Lower House,

anchored a smooth presentation on "Westminster Live" the following morning with the CA Secretary providing a brief introduction, the presentation of the Trophy providing an 'action backdrop' as the TV programme drew to a close.

A splendid "Kittermaster lunch" prompted urbane and witty speeches from both sides and drew to a conclusion a very happy occasion.

The Surbiton Club are indebted to Ron Nixon, up in Syd Jones country, for his superb craftsmanship in creating the Black Rod Trophy. This is only one - but

said he looked forward to a continuance of what had been a highly successful day in every sense.

Rodney Foster of BBC TV Westminster

perhaps the most prestigious so far - of numerous awards Ron has produced to order for croquet. For further information contact him direct on 091 285 1647.



OBJECTIVE: To liberate the French from the tyranny of boules.
PRIMARY DESTINATION: Le Douet, near Bayeux.

Two divisions from Dulwich Croquet Club travelled to France, landing at separate sites. Stephen Badger (alias M. Blaireau), Peter Nash, and Tim Hayter (the latter drafted from Eden Park and Beckenham Croquet Clubs), travelled in the armoured vehicle "Bilbo", complete with mountain bikes to be used in assisting their penetration of the hinterland. They established a bridgehead at Le Havre and began their approach to Bayeux (Le Douet) via Caen. The other arm of the pincer movement were Sue and Roger Best who landed at Ouistreham, travelling in a light personnel carrier. They dug in overnight at Omaha Beach (Hotel Mercure).

Our resistance contact was Monique de la Gontrie, who had established a club at Le Douet, on the road between Bayeux and Tilly sur Seuelles. The club had been under surveillance from our British Intelligence unit (David and Joan Higgs) who established that the club had a full-size lawn, proper hoops and good facilities for beginners. We hoped they played Association rules, as plans to drop thousands of copies of "Croquet - Know The Game" had to be aborted when Joan Higgs' ambition to take up hang-gliding went unfulfilled. However, to avoid a concentration of British personnel in the area and reduce potential ambush targets for the pro-boules French movement, the Higgs' cancelled the first rendezvous arrangements and replanned the location of our initial briefing. The Dulwich Division therefore pulled back into the bocage to break open extensive high protein rations of pork pies, salad and meringues, and plan their advance.

Now read on. .

Monique de la Gontrie has founded a club at Le Douet, south of Bayeux. There is one full-size lawn surrounded on three sides by buildings and on the fourth by a high wall separating it from the main road. In an adjoining walled courtyard are three small lawns which are ideal for beginners. The club membership is small and most members play in the evenings and at weekends. Club president, Bernard Witas, played a series of doubles matches with the Dulwich players and David Higgs, and although the grass was rather long and the lawn somewhat slow, Tim and Peter were soon into their stride having learnt to play on similar surfaces. Monique and Bernard were charming hosts and plied us with beers and patisserie during our visit. One of the buildings enclosing the main lawn forms the croquet clubhouse, in which Monique has amassed and displayed a unique and extensive collection of croquet-related postcards and photographs, including some delightful ones of her family playing croquet outside the family home nearby, taken in 1905.

The weather during the first few days of our visit had been hot and humid, but on the Friday afternoon, within the space of half an hour, the sky darkened dramatically and we were treated to a spectacular storm with howling winds, torrential rain and huge hailstones which effectively put an end to play for the day. We spent the following day sight-seeing in Bayeux - the cathedral, the Bayeux Tapestry, and then a

visit to the American Cemetery at Omaha Beach. Although we were some weeks after the D-day celebrations, there were still coach loads of visitors, mainly American, and most of the hotels in Bayeux were full, or at least hotels likely to have satellite TV! Roger was unwilling to forego his regular diet of World Cup football, thus the first question on reaching a hotel was not "Do you have a double room with bath?" but "Do you have satellite TV?"

Monique had invited the group to dinner at her home on Saturday evening, with Bernard Witas and two club members who spoke excellent English. Peter Nash earned numerous brownie points for attending the dinner in a suit and bow tie, although how he managed to produce such sartorial elegance from such a microscopically small tent must remain a mystery. Despite Monique's protestations that she didn't enjoy cooking, she produced a wonderful meal at her house, located in a small village near the club. As might be expected, the meal featured many of the gastronomic specialities for which Normandy is famous, including many alcoholic liquid forms of apple! The house was built by Monique's family in the 1880's and was full of associations with previous literary and musical members of her family. A delightful home and a charming hostess.

Sunday saw us all travelling to Fontenay-le-Comte for the second stage of our tour. In order to disrupt our progress the French

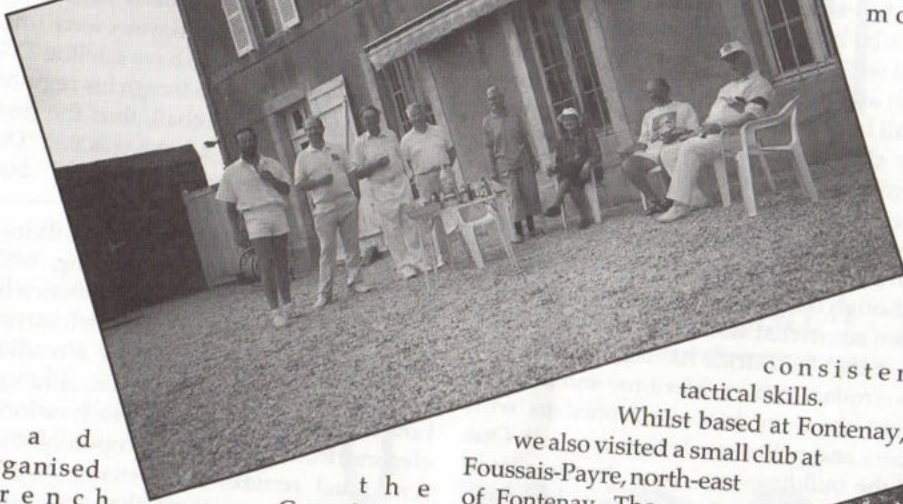
"C-DAY LANDINGS IN NORMANDY"

Dispatch from Sue Best, Dulwich Croquet Club. Date: 22nd-29th June 1994.

Channel Hopping!

Channel Hopping!

continued



had organised French

the Cycling Championships in

and around Fontenay during the weekend of our arrival. As we approached the town we were sent on various diversions through the surrounding countryside. However, the French could not hinder the truly remarkable navigational abilities of Peter Nash and Roger Best who directed their respective transports to their chosen campsite and hotel.

Sue and Roger Best went into Fontenay that evening to find something to eat and have a sneak preview of the lawns. And what superb lawns! They were quite simply the flattest, greenest lawns we have ever seen. Fontenay has a banner over the main street proclaiming it to be the "most sporting town in France" and for a relatively modest-sized club (about 30 members) they have six full-sized lawns with an integral sprinkler system. The lawns are regularly watered which helps prevent them from becoming ridiculously fast despite the frequent intense heat. The only drawback is the lack of a club-house, or more basically, the absence of any form of shade in what was to be, over the next couple of days, the searing heat. The Fontenay club knew of our arrival, and during the next two days, their best players - French champion Yoann Ravez and his younger brother Otello, plus the French team captain Jean-Baptiste Grochain - played against Stephen, Roger and Peter. The French play with great style and shoot extremely accurately with a swinging style between closely positioned feet. The

lawns were not of the same excellent quality of Fontenay, but there are plans to relay

Dulwich players won four of the five games, perhaps due to their more

them next year. We played two doubles matches with two Foussais members, Andre and Rachel, but before the games were concluded, we were taken to Andre's house for drinks. Plans to eat up the lunch leftovers on this, our last day, were foiled when Louise recommended lunch in the local creperie, situated in a fourteenth century moated chateau. We were escorted there by Andre with Peter bringing up the rear of the convoy on his mountain bike. The creperie lunch was excellent, accompanied by a chilled bottle of the local rose wine that went by the unfortunate name of Pissotte (it was - that's why we were drinking it!)

One last game at Fontenay towards the end of Tuesday afternoon rounded off the croquet tour. The trip was a great success, for which we must thank David Higgs for his hard work in contacting the French clubs and putting together an itinerary. If you are in France, I would strongly recommend visiting the clubs and playing at them. Fontenay-le-Comte is especially recommended for its superb surfaces. All the players that we met were very proud of their facilities and extremely hospitable. Contact names for the French clubs are in the December 1993 issue of "Croquet" magazine.

P.S. The village of Foussais-Payre is looking to twin itself with a similarly-sized village or small town in England, obviously with croquet-playing connections. Anyone interested in taking this contact should contact Andre at Foussais-Payre. Sue Best

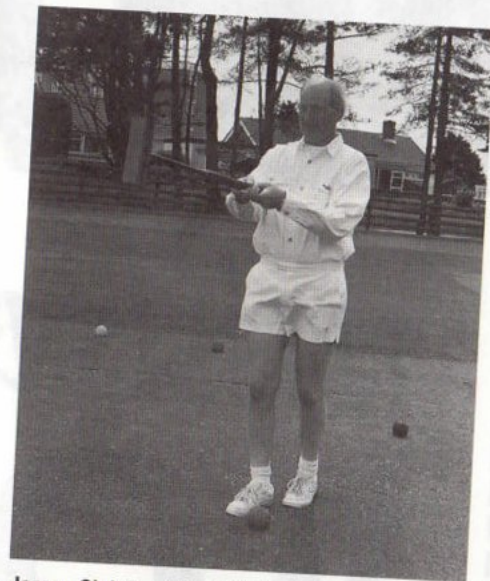


been founded by Louise de Clory, and has two lawns on the outskirts of the village in a very picturesque setting surrounded by trees. The



1. Croquet Club at Le Douet near Bayeaux. 1 to r Peter Noon, Tim Hayter, David Higgs, Bernard Witas, Monique de la Gontrie, Joan Higgs, Stephen Badger, Roger Best. 2. Lunch in the "Bocage". 3. Getting ahead of ourselves!

THE JERSEY NIVEA OPEN CROQUET CHAMPIONSHIPS



Jersey Club President, Richard Sowerby

The Jersey Croquet Club, currently going from strength to strength, held its annual Open Championships in the last week of July. The word "Open" has, in the past, sometimes meant only that the tournament was distinguished from the club's various closed tournaments by the appearance of Philip Archer, a notable croquet player from Sark, or of those terrible twins of French croquet, Rodolphe and Boris Dourthe, in Jersey for their summer holidays. 1994, however, has seen a steep increase in the Club's profile; not only in Island affairs, (a modest enough achievement, perhaps), but also in the big wide world away from Jersey. The Club team is playing 'away' matches in Switzerland and Italy and the Club's most famous export, Tony Le Moignan, attends the World Championships regularly. At home, membership has significantly increased with the start of both a golf croquet and a junior section. An enlightened and civilised government has contributed towards the cost of constructing a spacious new pavilion for the Club, situated overlooking the international standard full sized lawns. Thus the warm Jersey sun has shone brightly this year on the Club and on its 1994 Open Championships... but before we continue, a thank-you to our sponsors:- Although lesser promised lands may flow with milk and honey, Jersey flows with Nivea Cream and heather honey.

The generous sponsorship of the Tournament by Nivea Cream contributed largely to the success of the event and the writer of this article can attest to its efficacy as a balm to legs which normally lurk inside the obscurity of long trousers for most of the year, but were unwisely exposed to a hot July sun for the duration of a week's concentrated croquet playing.

The story now resumes....
New faces from abroad who came to

Jersey for the Open Tournament included members of both the Italian and the French national teams. From England, (i.e. "the mainland"), the tournament was fortunate in having John and Barbara Solomon playing as well as John Walters.

18 players took part in total. The event consisted of two qualifying days, quarter and semi finals and the final. A doubles tournament was held concurrently. In the semi finals, Tony Le Moignan beat Boris Dourthe (+7), and John Walters beat John Solomon (+16). The final was watched by some forty spectators (which in croquet terms is equivalent to a full Wembley stadium) and various interested sea gulls. The latter often invaded the lawns, apparently to measure the length of the grass with their beaks and to umpire chancy shots around hoops.

The final game was an extremely exciting match and provided excellent entertainment for spectators and gulls alike. Both John Walters and Tony Le Moignan were able to seize the innings in turn, with John Walters the ultimate victor. (+16).

Just as there always has to be a winner, so there always has to be someone coming last. This year Mireille Sowerby had the honour of being presented with the wooden spoon by Club President (and husband) Richard Sowerby. As the spoon turned out to be four foot long, with an undeniable potential as an offensive weapon, Richard looked much more in need of condolence than Mireille at the prize giving ceremony.

Of course it is the quality of the apres croquet which makes or mars an event of this sort. Jersey is an holiday island, so there was plenty to do and see for non-croquet playing partners. There was an enjoyable reception held in the evening before the opening day and also a tournament dinner in a 17th Century farmhouse, in which visiting croquet players were introduced, among other things, to traditional Jersey gastronomic delights such as home made apple brandy. (Sales enquiries, please, to the Hon. Secretary, Jersey Croquet Club). A memorable meal; the next morning was a non-playing "free" day, which was probably just as well.

Next year the Jersey Open will take place during the week of the 3rd to 8th July and will be held under the auspices of the Croquet Association. Participants will be limited to 32, who will be chosen on a "first come, first in" basis.

As an eminent (Jersey) author once wrote:- "Why look for the 'islands of the Blessed' in the fables of Greek mythology, when they are here, in real life, washed by the cold waters of the English Channel?" Why indeed?

Richard Crosby

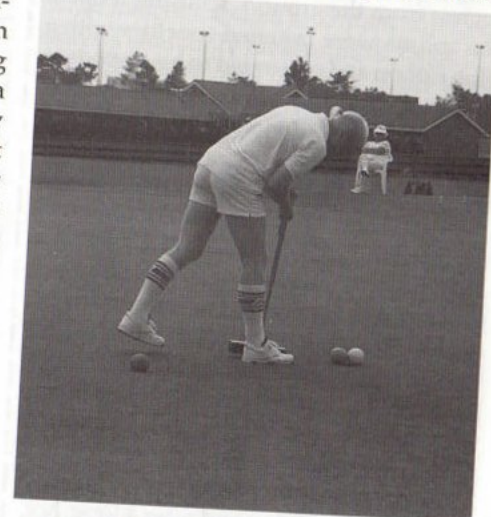
Italian Team member, Giampero Marcora



Jersey's Tom Weston ponders his next move, whilst Sark's Croquet Champion Philip Archer rolls



John Walters on his way to winning in the finals



Channel Hopping!

Fin

TOURNAMENTS

Cheltenham July 25th to 30th

Quintessential England

Eleven close-cut lawns, venerable clubhouse, charming shelters dotted around the perimeter, the ladies serving cucumber sandwiches and home-made sweets for tea, rolls of honour lining the walls and creeping up the sloping ceiling: Cheltenham in a good spell of English summer weather is a real treat, especially for players from abroad where sporting traditions are often less well-established. Such was the setting for the 78th Cheltenham July tournament, where some 64 players, ranging from -1 to 20, contested a wide range of events; some who entered the Hands Handicap singles notched up many more than the minimum of six games and seemed to be on one court or another from dawn till dusk. Highlights of the week: Dave Kibble running his remaining ball through 4-back from 2 metres behind 3-back; Shaun Carter peeling red through hoop 1 then when rushing red to 2, peeling it again; John Toye snapping the peg off 2 inches from the ground, splitting it open: the splints were fastened together with a blue ribbon and presented to his opponent Jo Carter (peg cordon bleu?); FTPs galore; the high-bisquer (anon) who bemoaned the fact that 'we high-bisquers leave our brains under the tree'; Ed Dymock's wild accented tale of near-penniless Yorkshire friends who contrived to put £2000 on a dog and arranged for one of their number to throw a teddy bear at the leading dog on the last bend if it wasn't the one they had backed (the miscreant was chased for miles by incensed dog owners, finally escaping with his life but tearing his clothes to pieces on bushes and barbed-wire fences); Dennis Regan seen practising on lawn 10 after the prize giving and after a long, hot, humid, exhausting week on the lawns. Results: **Cheltenham Challenge Cup** (A Class): Stephen Badger, setting all doubts aside, weaseled his way through a few more hoops than John Toye, winning +15 **Money Salver** (B Class): Dave Kibble beat Carol Smith +7

Asa-Thomas Trophy (C Class): Richard Wainman beat Dennis Regan +4 D Class (22-point ordinary level play): Veronica McClements beat Alison Thursfield +6 **Calthrop Cup** (E Class): the incredibly accurate John Exell, now 87 years old, beat Mary Wainman +6. **Secretary's Spoon** (family doubles): Bernard and grandson James Weitz beat Shaun and Jo Carter +8. **Barwell Salvors** (handicap doubles): The Swiss pair, Ian Sexton and Peter Payne, Geneva, reached the semi-finals. In the final, Norman Eatough and Dave Underhill, CERN C.C., Geneva (handicap 3 and 13) beat Michael Rangeley and John Lansdown (2 and 12). The end was dramatic: on their 11th Wharrad turn (this was the first time the Swiss players had encountered this laudable system), the Swiss pair were 3 ahead and retired to corners 1 and 4. On the local pair's 11th turn, Michael reeled off 4-back, penult and rover, but missed the return roquet, leaving both balls sitting in mid court with the scores now even. On his last turn, Norman hit Dave's yellow in corner 1 from corner 4, made rover, scattered the opposition and hit the peg. Following a week in which referees could not be found for love nor money, a dozen referees now rushed out from the terrace to instruct Norman to replace this ball on the peg - and didn't he know he couldn't peg himself out?! John's last turn came: he hit Michael's ball from some 18 yards, took off to red at the peg to rush it to l-back - and missed, almost doing a Toye on the poor old peg. +1 on time for the Swiss pair, who now join a galaxy of illustrious previous winners including John Solomon, Humphrey Hicks, D. D. Steel, D.M.C. Prichard, Edgar Jackson, Dennis & Ingeborg Moorcraft. The result was the more remarkable for the fact that this was Dave's first-ever UK tournament (he usually just does 2-day Internationals!). (PS: should anyone think, even for a moment, that this Swiss business is a bit of a swiz, let it be noised abroad - and round Cheltenham - that two of us at least hold British and Swiss passports). **Daniel Cup** (Hands Egyptian handicap singles): Peter Mayers and Laurence Whittaker tied for first place on 71 points (it was decided not to stage a play-off and they will share the

midsummer 1994

honours), joint 3rd were Peter Payne, Dennis Regan and Norman Eatough, with Ian Sexton next on 61. Roger Wheeler announced the winners and Ingeborg Moorcraft presented the prizes. Roger especially mentioned how pleased he was to see the Swiss contingent, his enthusiasm for the spread of the game being tempered only by the thought of allowing some of their priceless silverware to leave the country, for the first time in the history of the club. He was assured that it will be returned safe and sound before next year's event, Scout's honour. The week's proceedings ended: - with thanks by Roger to all the helpers, especially the tea ladies, barbeque king S. Badger Esq., Dave Underhill's daughter Nina who butted so smilingly most days, - with an invitation by Norman Eatough to any players travelling Geneva way to drop into CERN for a warm welcome and a game, though with a degree of culture shock in store as far as the two lawns are concerned, - and with a final flourish by Stephen Badger (badgers are positively pullulating round Cheltenham these days, and not only at Ch.C.C.), in the form of a vote of thanks to Roger and Dab Wheeler for yet another most enjoyable well-run Cheltenham week.

Report by Norman Eatough,
CERN C.C., Geneva

Nailsea May Tournament

Middle age spread too thin

Rumour had it that John Jeffrey had breathed new life into Nailsea, as he undertook, yet again, the task of stimulating interest in Croquet in a community not 7 miles from Bristol. Certainly, the 4 lawns had never looked better, having benefited from autumn top dressing, and spring treatment. The new summer-house facilitated the provision of refreshments, and along with the two superior shelters, only lawn 4 was without protection from rain.... happily non-existent over the week end.

Competitors were arranged into two blocks whilst John de Winton and Paul Pristavec demonstrated sound controlled play, the dark horse was Nailsea's junior, Kristian Chambers, who clearly had not been day dreaming whilst being instructed in the art of bisque taking. In Block "B", Jeffrey showed that he had lost none of his skills during his year's sabbatical, winning all his games, (although both Susan Shaw and Stuart Orr gave him a fright!) But in the final, against Block "A" winner, Pristavec continued in a winning vein, being rewarded with, not only the prize, but one less bisque in future games.

Nailsea has a lot going for it. Its school

has produced John Mann, David Thatcher and Alex Leggate, all playing off 1 or thereabouts. The current clutch of juniors includes the Spencer twins as well as Kristian, quite apart from a goodly number of non CA players. The problem for Peter Dyke, their coach, (as well as the loyal band of mature players) is the dearth of players in the 20 - 60 age bracket. So, if Associates know of friends or relatives in the West Country.... spread the word.... Nailsea is alive and kicking but in great need of an increased membership to support their 4 lawns.

by Hamish Hall.

Parkstone (East Dorset) Handicap Weekend

23/24 July

Firm but Fair

In through all those Gatekeepers, dodging the Large Whites, I came upon a Meadow Brown. What an idyllic start to the weekend! But wait - there's more than just the butterflies to attract you to Parkstone! More likely it's the wonderfully warm welcome, the friendly mix of local and visiting players, and the lovely lush green lawns.

The Egyptian format for the July two day tournament was very well suited to the soaring temperatures! Competitors also had to contend with horribly high humidity, and maybe it was inevitable that so many games went 'to time', this despite the full bisque (base 6) play. On Saturday, those with stamina played on until dusk, but most of us just 'melted away' after the two games required by our genial Manager, Cliff Jones from Wrest Park.

Sunday morning dawned hotter, if possible, and total concentration was required to run David Harrison-Wood's "firm but fair" hoops - or was it that some of us were still getting used to the Barlow balls? It was just as well that Cliff and David were both non-players; they were much in demand to referee around the hoops!

Thank you to all our East Dorset hosts

for a thoroughly enjoyable weekend - which had its excitements too! When the final "time" was called, both Beatrice McGlen (on a return visit from Nottingham) and Charles Moon (playing on 'home ground') had added a surplus of 30 index points to their scorecards. In a six hoop and peg one-ball play-off, victory gave Beatrice the larger of the two delightful Poole Pottery plate prizes.

Susan Davies

Southport and Birkdale Centenary Tournament 30 July- 7 August

Spirit of Dorke's water

I have been a member of the Club for only eighteen of its hundred years. In that time, the clubhouse has been modernised, we now run numerous tournaments, four more lawns have been acquired, and the level of activity and commitment has increased enormously, although I do not wish anyone to forget the stalwarts who kept the Club going during the fallow years. If I try to mention all the members who have contributed in so many different ways, I shall only omit some of them.

Much work had already been done before the start of the tournament, including the installation of electricity. (No, we hadn't only just thought of it.) The early-morning arrivers saw hoops being set, tents being put up, and "a groundsman" disappearing into the gents' and stepping out as half a manager. Don and Diana Williamson were running the first two days' event, the Family Doubles. I know it's not an original idea but it's the first time we had tried it, and it attracted a wide variety of pairs to enter, creating an atmosphere new to me. Hillary Turner arrived, looked around, and asked: "Is that the divorce tent?" Much as I would like to mention all the jolly competitors, including most of the usual Tyneside contingent, I shall just say how good it was to see Colin and Chris Irwin, frequent supporters of our tournaments, winning through to the semi-finals despite dispensing vast numbers of bisques. Other

memories include two tense pegged-out endings: in the first-round encounter between Ernest and Margaret Dalley and the Managers, Ernest pegged Diana out, then himself when Margaret was for rover and Don for one-back. The Williamsons won. Andy and Carole Knox, from South Africa, were level with Brian and Carol Lewis after time, with one ball for peg remaining on each side. Brian's last long shot had to be at the peg, because the ball near the peg was wired. His expression of despair changed to disbelief as he just missed the peg but hit the hidden ball. Lawn 5 became more popular.

Although play was no speedier than one might expect in this sort of event, only one pair deserved a reprimand for contravention of both Law 48(a) and the double-banking code. A word was had at the request of both the opponents and the double-bankers, and this ought to be done more often.

We don't claim that it never rains at Southport. Well, the spirit of Dorke moved upon the face of the waters. The final, between Joyce Taylor with her grandson Jonathan Alpert, and the pair from Lytham, Liz Frazer and Peter Wilson, had to be postponed, and we shall never know what would have been the outcome of the other final (for the "ton of manure", as Hillary put it), between her partnership with her gentleman Ted and mine with my mother! I wish someone had had a camera to capture the sight of our opponents approaching first hoop together, huddled under a large umbrella like a galloping tortoise, followed by the appearance of a raised mallet from under its carapace, resulting in another pair of legs rushing out to join in the fun. The following Saturday, the Fylde pair won on time on dry lawns with championship hoops and Diana gallantly acting as Referee in charge.

Chris Patmore at Southport



Peter Death, who took over on the Monday, is a superb manager. Everything had to be re-organised owing to the reduced number of lawns available, but only the B-class final had to be deferred. Chris Farthing and Brian Kerr were the serious blockers, fighting their way into the big handicap final amongst other things. In that event, Brian, who had already lost three off his handicap after the weekend, finished with eight bisques standing and was rightly brought down to ten. He actually lost the D-class final against Myer Cohen, who admitted to pegging out for the first time ever in a full-lawn game in one round. I had wondered why he asked me about the peg-point law! Myers fellow club-member from Bury, Chris Dent (named by the club ladies as Mr Hop-Skip-and-Jump) won the C-class outright.

The B-class was won by (fairly) local

Paul Stephenson against David Nicholson, an improving player from Cumbria and a most entertaining character. He had gone to the peg against Barbara Haslam, working out a contact leave from first principles.

Chris Farthing was the clear leader in the A-class. He pleased the Manager in one sense by beating him +17TP very quickly so that he could play another game. In another sense, the Manager would have liked the result to be reversed. Mike Sandler knocked Chris out of one half, which pleased the Manager up to a point. Chris replied by beating Mike with a TP. The only other triple peeler in this event was Chris Patmore, of whom we shall hear more shortly.

Tim Haste took over the management for the last three days, deciding on a best-of-three format for the knockout. We were joined by an elderly Adrian Saurin, widely rumoured to be past his best, and Peter Trimmer, an enterprising player from Parkstone. Chris Farthing, having lost his first game against Colin Irwin, took the next two and won his place in the final with another TP in the semi-final against John Haslam. Chris Patmore had a slightly easier passage through to the final.

In the Swiss, Adrian laid up for a sextuple three times. Against the writer, he broke down at penult and penult. His game against Don Williamson pleased the spectators: the ball that was supposed to lie in the jaws of 1-back from three inches away just plopped through. Don went to the peg doing two peels on his 4-back ball. Adrian did a lot of work but clanged hoop 4. He can nowadays enjoy that sort of misfortune with equanimity.

The double-banked game on the same lawn also enthralled the crowd. Colin Irwin pegged one ball out with hoops still to make, underestimating John Haslam's

capacity for creeping round, and for once Colin's usual ability to hit the peg from anywhere deserted him. John eventually used the ball that Colin had trickled to the peg for a neat combination pegout.

Mike Sandler had played all week on a handicap of 3. The automatic system had not touched him before, as he doesn't play very often. In the old days, we would have put in a recommendation to be queried and bounced. As things turned out, he finished with a handicap of 0.5, which was precisely what the handicappers and ex-handicappers would have planned. Tim's "swizzling" aimed at producing a definite winner of the second event without recourse to the book, and so it happened. Mike won it, and I hope that we will see more of him on the tournament circuit if work and family will allow it.

Lawn 1, normally the favourite, became unpopular with some. After the floods, it had a hill that even I didn't know about, to the chagrin of Alan Sutcliffe when my take-off curled around in third corner when it should have gone off! The final between Chris Farthing and Chris Patmore, was therefore on Lawn 2. Both have similar styles, with the emphasis on straight hitting and the ability to run difficult hoops. If a middle-bisquer may comment, they could both develop greater variety in their croquet strokes and emulate Colin Irwin's magnificent break-building splits. Chris Patmore took the first game by 16 and was first to 4-back in the second, but an error while trying to get the second break started let Chris Farthing in. Later on, he seemed to have gained control for a fight-back until his take-off from the partner ball which he had rush-peeled through 4-back, left him with a rather wide position on his hoop 5 pioneer, and his gentle shot failed to connect. Chris Patmore, for 4-back and peg, had to jump through

penultimate but otherwise had a straightforward finish to become the centenary champion.

This was a most enjoyable nine days, well worth while my travelling 3000 miles for. I may not be there for the bicentenary, but I shall make every effort to be there next year.

Report by Andrew Bennet

Championship of SW England Budleigh Salterton August 1-6

Dorke's Devon Haggis

The ideal tournament reporter should be a non-player and, as I have long since hung up my battered Solomon, I was the right choice to investigate the Championship of the South West of England and the success, or otherwise, of its Manager - Peter Dorke.

To judge fairly the outcome of the tournament I determined to find out, well before the first tice was laid, what were the Manager's hopes and fears for the week. His well-known affection for Budleigh led me to assume that he would want to perpetuate the relaxed managerial style of recent tradition: it has been said that if you do not want to play croquet, then Budleigh Salterton is your tournament. Manager Dorke confirmed that he would hate to destroy the laid-back atmosphere of Budleigh but described his aims for the August week as:

- i) To create the maximum opportunity for play;
 - ii) To give everyone a good time;
 - iii) To play as much as possible himself.
- This last would depend on whether he

could organise things so that he would not have to spend all his time arranging matches, allocating lawns, filling in score sheets, adjudicating disputes, allowing or refusing leave, counting them out and counting them back in again. In some tournaments he has managed, this problem has been solved by leaving all the hard graft to Geraldine Dorke, of fabled efficiency and calm. At Budleigh, although she would fulfil the essential role of Assistant Manager, she had insisted on a holiday and, therefore, a policy of total organisation-in-advance.

One important effect of such preparedness, it was hoped, would be the possibility of letting all players know, in advance, exactly when and where they would be required to play during the entire week, thus allowing them to plan ahead their lie-ins, shopping trips, walks along the sea front and the whole galaxy of Budleigh entertainments. As a total of 48 entries was expected for each event, proper management of the 10 lawns would be absolutely essential (as would double-banking, long anathema to Budleigh) and the Manager knew that he would not be able to decide order of play and allocation of lawns on a daily basis without causing an enormous muddle. This, therefore, he planned to the last possible detail well in advance of August 1st. As much of each event as possible was arranged in self-servicing blocks, employing the revolutionary device of allowing players to fill in their own results on the final score sheets (irony intended).

To encourage people to stay on for the finals on Saturday afternoon, an Egyptian competition would be added as an extension to the handicap and class singles. This would be conducted via the CA handicap cards, which seemed a logical progression from the more customary use



Chris Farthing - Pony Tail II



Don Williamson calls for an umpire



John Haslam and Alan Sutcliffe "relax and enjoy" while their opponents play



The elderly Adrian Saurin



Carole Knox - out of Africa, into Southport

of special Egyptian cards. A one-ball competition on the Saturday would, it was hoped, please enthusiasts of that variation of croquet and ensure almost half the players of some meaningful action right to the end of the tournament.

New trophies, such as those for Most Improved Gent or Lady, Most Games Played etc., would mean that, in theory, more than one third of the entry could go home a winner or a runner-up.

With the co-operation of the players, the weather and the fickle gods of croquet, all might just go smoothly. Of course, all that was needed for complete disaster was for Mr and Mrs A. Player to reach the final of the Doubles, the Handicap singles and 2 of the Class competitions. And then for it to snow on Friday afternoon.

Hoping that Burns' strictures on mice and men were a load of old haggis, our heroes set out for Budleigh Salterton.

When your reporter reached the croquet club on Sunday afternoon, she was impressed to find that more than 40 players out of an entry of 57 had popped in during the day to register their presence with the management, read the tournament notices and collect their personalised programme of the week, thus ensuring that Monday morning would begin smoothly and painlessly. Well ... almost. This set the pattern of the week, with players picking their way with relative ease through the maze of doubles, handicap singles, class and fat Egyptians (may I recommend (*en passant*) that in future Mr Dorkes' plumper version of the Hands Egyptian should be known as a "Farouk". Older players will doubtless get the joke).

Croquet players are notoriously slow to respond to a new system and indeed the handicap index numbers required for the Fat Egyptian - sorry, Farouk - were not all provided, as requested, "before play on Monday." However, the introduction of a Black List, with its concomitant threat of flogging round the lawns at tea-time, did the trick and by Friday most people had begun to remember to register their new indices each evening. There can surely be no truth in the rumour that some players did not register their index number because they did not have one - were not in fact in the habit of using the handicap card. Nevertheless, a beneficial side-effect of this variety of Egyptian is to enforce the use of the handicap card. Certain minus players please take note.

There were certainly management errors, some reflected to use of lawns ("Sorry about lawn 10, Mike", *Manager*), some to failures of communication, some to a perceived lack of flexibility in the programme. In the event, this latter problem was easily solved: even though the evenings are drawing in during the

first week in August and there is not much play possible after nine on a dull evening, a 4 session day is not a manager's fantasy but a useful tool in the completion of a busy programme. The only break-downs in the use of the fourth session were due to the Manager's wits not working fast enough. In particular, Doug Taylor, one of the week's major successes, could not complete his part in the Handicap Singles because the Manager was unable to bend the system to fit in with Doug's commitments. One of Mr Dorke's aims for the future must therefore be to achieve even greater flexibility. To any one player, the success of the tournament is measured by his or her own satisfaction in it and the second of Mr Dorke's criteria for a good tournament (see above) is not met if any one of the paying customers justly feels let down.

It is, however, fair to say that the great majority of players enjoyed their week at Budleigh, whether because of the management's efforts or because of the superb facilities provided by the club. The food, for example, was out of this world - undoubtedly the best at any croquet club anywhere (and I've had some delicious meals at Southport, Edgbaston, Bristol, Winchester and a few other places). It would be invidious to mention the luxuriant pond weed in one of the gent's loos, so I shall not do so. (But you, dear reader, will appreciate the lengths which I am prepared to go to check out a croquet club!)

The smooth running of the system depended heavily on the co-operation of the players and so honourable mention must be made of Don Gugan, Ron Selmes and other who played late, played quickly or, in extremis, lost quickly ("*Thanks, Ron*": *Manager*) in order that Finals Day should proceed at a dignified pace towards the distribution of the Glittering Prizes. [Message to all prizewinners from the Chairman of the Budleigh Salterton Croquet Committee: All trophies are to be returned by next August, including those newly provided by the Management].

The week was a busy and serious time, as befitted the status of the tournament, but even heavy and prolonged rain on Tuesday could not dampen the spirits. After all, things were a lot worse at Southport, according to the croquet grapevine, and the weightiness of the proceedings was lightened by the usual tomfoolery to which croquet players are prone. Whether James Hawkins was the bigger twit for refereeing a shot on the wrong lawn or Val Tompkinson for letting him is a judgment I leave to my readers. Gail Curry's generosity in distributing 19 point presents to all and sundry in her Farouk games (see how quickly the term

has become common currency!) was equalled only by the Manager's willingness to accept drinks from people to whom he had only recently been introduced.

And what of the croquet? There were disappointments: why did no high bisquer go for the "Highest Bisquer to Perform a Triple with Biscues" award; why did John Toye not hit one of his lifts and give Gail a bit of a fight in the final; why did the Manager play as badly (helpful answers on a postcard please); why did Marjorie Boyd's game go to pieces on Saturday afternoon after such a marvellous week; why did the worthy winner of Most Improved Gentleman, Kevin Wells, play such an awful (truly, truly awful) game in beating Marjorie; why did the ladies not take all the prizes, as seemed tantalizingly possible on Saturday morning but was a fading dream by tea-time (perhaps I should have entered, after all); why did Tony Wickham play a turn of unspeakable beauty and then lose to that robber, Cliff Jones?

And so, in the end, James Hawkins (0.5) was the highest bisqued tripler and won the fastest game in 31 minutes 30 seconds; Gail Curry was a superb Champion and played 19 games in the week; Marjorie Boyd's handicap index went up by 120 points as she won her class and almost everything else; Bob Whitaker got a bronze medal in his first tournament; Iris Dwerryhouse also qualified for a medal; Mike Hammelev achieved a fine win over Gail on a soaking lawn and later won the B class; Barry Marsh carried the Manager through 3 games of Doubles and still had the strength to win his class; Val Tompkinson almost foiled him but her hat was too big a handicap; in spite of Ivor Brand's multi-coloured management of the Womble, a result was reached before 3pm, Lionel Tibble the winner. Oh, and the Manager asked me to mention his amazing backward triple in the Doubles but who on earth wants to know about that?

But, I hear you cry, did the Management of Dorke, Dorke and Dog achieve their stated aims (see para 2)?

Certainly, it was possible but not compulsory to play an enormous amount of croquet. Gail Curry proved that without ever breaking into a trot.

Certainly, there were many people ready to swear that they had had a good time. Credit for this must go, I believe, to Tilly and her mistress, who spread goodwill wherever they went, though it was unwise to leave your sandwiches lower than 5 feet from the ground. A satisfying number of people stayed and played right to the end.

However, the Manager's third aim: to play lots and lots of croquet himself, not only was not achieved but was, perhaps, a

reckless goal. In the end he was glad to have enough free time on Saturday to complete the tournament paperwork.

In a final interview (conducted rather embarrassingly in the shower of the gentlemen's changing rooms - the things I do for you, dear reader!) Mr Dorke revealed that he has plans for further refinements and innovations for next August (BSCC volente). Maybe I should try and find that old mallet of mine.

By Dorothy Rush

A Class winner: Gail Curry
B Class winner: Mike Hammelev
C Class winner: Barry Marsh
D Class winner: Marjorie Boyd
Open Handicap winner: Kevin Wells
Handicap Doubles winner: R & M Selmes
Egyptian Gentlemen winner: Kevin Wells
Egyptian Ladies winner: Marjorie Boyd

Golf Croquet Cups Belsay Hall, 19th June

McCullough on way

Played on one court with double-banking, between 10.30am and 4pm. Players had five 13 point games each, with play-offs when necessary. All had a great day with very even games, considering handicaps ranged from John McCullough at -2.5 to the Golden Mallet holder - Chuck Ward.

Winner: John McCullough 4/5

Veterans Tournament 18-23 July 1994

Bye-bye Mr Bye

Six days of unbroken sunshine, fast lawns and tight hoops awaited the veterans at Southwick, plus a warm welcome from the secretary and members of the host club, with excellent service in the way of coffee, lunches and teas.

The results tell some of the story of the croquet, in which a majority of the games went to time in the prevailing conditions. John Solomon won the senior singles trophy, a popular win which resulted on the final day in the President of the CA receiving his cup from the Vice-President, Alan Oldham, who presented the trophies.

Another noteworthy performance was that of Peter Read, who won the Y Open Handicap singles, the Y Handicap Doubles with Betty Salmon and was one of the runners-up in the Strickland Cup: a fine performance for one of the oldest players present, based, as his opponent in the Y singles final so aptly put it, on "an excellent example of precision croquet

A hampered shot at the Veterans 1994. Paul MacDonald refereed by Peter Howell



and keeping one's head down."

Don Cornelius also had a good week in singles, regaining the Meredith Cup for the Open Handicap; Event 3, played as a swiss, produced a very close contest, with Doreen Parsons gaining the Strickland Cup by reason of having beaten 'Mr Bye'.

All participants would wish to thank Paul MacDonald for his efficient and friendly management, aided by his wife Pat; the use of the Z 14pt additional event as a 'filler' towards the end of the week was generally welcomed. Further thanks are also due to Southwick for the donation of two tumblers as trophies for the Y Open Singles and the Z. K & D P

1. **Veterans Championship**
Winner: J Solomon 5 wins
Runner-up: B Teague 3 wins
2. **Advanced Level 3.5+**
Winner: D Miller
Runner-up: A Rajotte
3. **Handicap Singles 7+**
Winner: D Parsons
4. **Open Handicap Singles**
X Winner: D S Cornelius
X Runner-up: W Gillott
Y Winner: P Read
Y Runner-up: R Atkinson
5. **Handicap Doubles**
Winners: G Mears & G Cuttle
Runners-up: D Brothers & H Hall

Other Tournaments

No report received

Edgbaston Handicap weekend 22-24 July
D Kibble (2.5) bt J Lovett (11) +1 ot



Alan Oldham, CA Vice President, presenting Meredith Cup to Don Cornelius - Veterans 1994