

Club Focus

Llanfairfechan C.C.

The seed was sown during a week's holiday at the Cober Hill Guest House north of Scarborough in the summer of 1988. Clive wrote his name on the croquet match list on the day of arrival. He was lucky enough to be partnered with an absolute stranger who turned out to be David Barrett of the Bury Club.

Upon return from holiday, Clive's only thought was to find a level patch of ground to turn into a croquet lawn - a very difficult task as the most part of Llanfairfechan is built on the side of a mountain which falls into the sea!

As luck would have it, during 1989 the work of dualling the A55 was in progress and there was a slim chance that a piece of hollow ground between the railway track and the new station approach road would be filled in with rubble and soil from the construction site. The Borough Council was approached but because a club had not been formed, we could not make any progress. We could not form a club because we had no land and if we had no land, how could we form a club? - a case of the chicken and the egg.

Finally, we took the bull by the horns in May 1989, put an advert in the local news papers and on the milk bills (!) and waited with bated breath for the whole town to arrive at the meeting place. Twelve people turned up. It took a while for the Borough Council to realise that we were serious about setting up a club and they finally arranged for the, by that time, coarse grass area to be cut. Most of the season we played in six inches of grass each Sunday afternoon with four mallets and a set of hoops kindly made for us by Peter Robinson of the Loughborough Club.

The following season, 1990, it was obvious that we would have to fence the area off and the Aberconwy Borough Council Parks Manager helped by supplying the materials whilst the club raised money by various means to pay a contractor to do the actual work. We bought a second hand Atco mower with a 30 inch cut, which on its good days did a beautiful job but on its bad days used up all of the club funds.

The membership fee was set at £7.50 so as to be within everyone's reach. We thought it such a good game, we wanted everyone to be able to afford to play. The fees were increased to £10 in April 1994 and the increase to £15 in the 1995 season because of having to pay the CA's capitation fee has meant a drop in membership but, hopefully, this is only temporary.

During 1991 we coaxed Hasting and Jean Wang of the Chester Club to give the members tuition, which was our introduction to Association Croquet having previously played to 'Cober' rules.

In 1992 the club embarked on a joint project with the Llanfairfechan Crown Green Bowling Club. We thought it was a brilliant idea at the time having the expertise of one of the bowling club members at our disposal. The plan initially was to create three level areas out of the basin shaped field which had come about

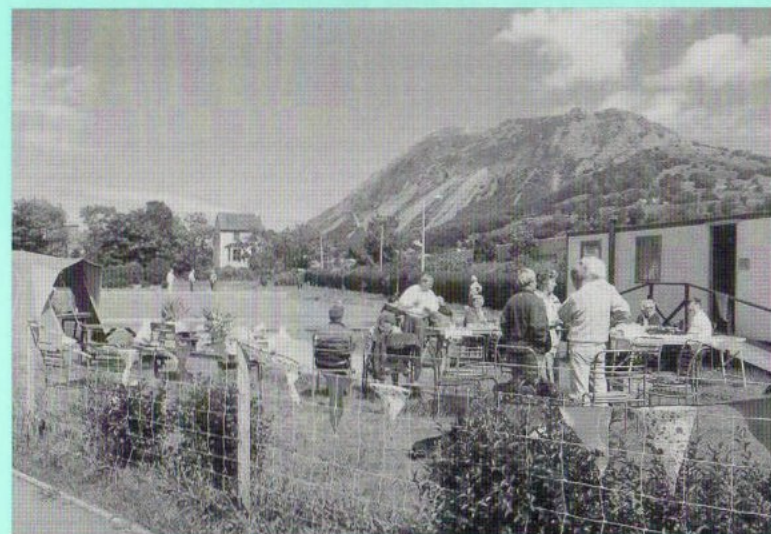


Summer 1989 - This was the scene before the club was formed.

after the settlement of the infilled ground when the A55 expressway ploughed its way through the town. The bowling club was to have an extension to the club house which would have facilities for disabled players and the green itself was to be re-contoured - the turf was to be transferred to one of the croquet lawns. The Aberconwy Borough Council contributed £20,000 towards the project of which our club had £4,000 to begin on the work of levelling. The turf was transferred and the work of laying it began, but before it was completed, winter set in and we found that there were problems with drainage and the top lawns were under water for over a month. One lawn however, was playable by the following May but the project had by now overspent and we had to pay the bowling club £1,000 for their turf (we are still paying off the loan). The Foundation for Sport and the Arts had granted the Bowling club £15,500 but as they did not recognise Croquet as a sport, our club was left high and dry with one soggy lawn and a mud flat. The second lawn was eventually seeded but was not usable until the spring of 1994.

1994 was a very successful season for the club, beginning with a well known Welsh television programme filming a golf croquet lesson which was televised prior to National Croquet Day and together with the co-operation of local newspapers, made for a very successful club open day. The Gwynedd-Caernarfon Federation of WI's held its croquet day on our lawns. Members of one particular institute, Mora Nefyn, were so delighted with the facilities, that they return on a regular basis and six of them have subsequently joined the club. Member have also been gained from other visitors such as the local Rotarians and we may in future gain further members from the Brownies and Girl Guides who have also enjoyed our facilities and croquet.

At the beginning of 1995 we were thrilled to learn that our club had won the Townsend Award and were pleased that the official presentation would be made by Colin Irwin. The presentation was held on July 23rd at the club pavilion followed by afternoon tea.



4th June 1995 - National Croquet Day on almost the same site as the photo above.

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The CROQUET Gazette

Issue 241

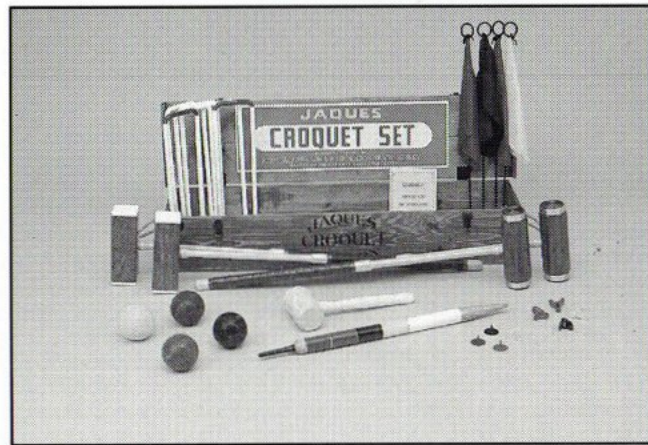
January 1996



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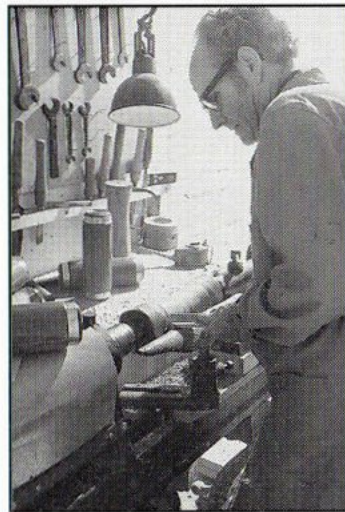
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**The
CROQUET
GAZETTE**

No.241 (January 1996) Price £2.50

Front Cover: Don Wright with the Longman Cup. Participants in the Ramsgate international weekend. Roger Bray, CA Secretary, presents Ian Lines winner of the All England Handicap with his trophy.

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Produced by Gail Curry for **Publication** in the second week of every other month throughout the year by the Croquet Association **Written contributions** on computer disk (IBM or Macintosh), typed or hand written **Photographs/illustrations** are welcome and should be sent to the Editor **Illustrations/Cartoons** are by Jack Shotton unless otherwise stated **Copy date** is shown on the back cover **Tournament Reports and Results** should be sent via the CA Secretary **Delivery queries** should be directed to the CA Office **Advertising** details are available from the Editor through whom advertising should be booked **Editor** Gail Curry **Design/Typesetting** Gail Curry **Printing, Binding & Imagesetting** by The Print House.

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The Croquet Association The Hurlingham Club Ranelagh Gardens London SW6 3PR (tel: 0171 736 3148) Secretary L W D Antenen Chairman W E Lamb

Food For Thought?

I had the experience of attending my first Croquet Association AGM in October, which I understand followed the usual pattern of events, with one exception, the exception being the presentation of a trophy for the membership recruitment drive run through the members handbook. No doubt I was not the only attendee who thought this idea for increasing our membership must have been successful, alas I think this was not the case, but that is arguable and rather depends on how success is defined or measured. The bare facts of the matter are that in total only some seven Associates were recruited.

It is commendable that the Association are seeking to increase the membership, and that some members have actively supported this venture. The point is though, that my own feeling is that our major difficulty lies with retaining our membership. This is a problem at both club and Association levels, and unless we strive to address and solve this problem, the recruitment of new members will always be more a process of treading water than making firm headway.

On the same day as the AGM was a Council meeting where no chairman could be found for the publicity committee. Subsequent to the meeting I found out that the publicity committee was to be discontinued. This seemed a criminal decision to me, as we had little enough publicity in the past with a committee, which I believe has some connection with our problem of retaining membership.

My illustration of this connection is simple, as most, if not all, top class events receive either external publicity through national or local press coverage and internal through the Gazette. This is good, but most of these events are played by long standing Associates or by Associates that will undoubtedly remain members for some time. The problems arise with the events that are more likely to attract the newer players and those with higher handicaps, in particular the Golden Mallet, Garden Classic, Short Croquet Team event, National Short Croquet Championship and the All England Handicap.

Last season I believe all of these events were played, although there was such a shortage of information on these events forwarded to me I could not be entirely certain. The sum total of information regarding these events that reached me being: Golden Mallet - nil, Garden Classic - nil, Short Croquet Championship - names of the regional finalists only, All England Handicap - reports and results of one regional final and the national final.

If any of the players of these events feel aggrieved at their lack of recognition in the eyes of the CA I feel they are fully justified, and should any of them not retain their membership because they feel they are second class members, we have no-one to blame but ourselves. We would not tolerate such treatment of the President's and Opens because they are recognised as top class events.

Perhaps in future if we gave all CA events consistent good publicity, and treated all of our members equally, they might just wish to remain members for longer than some do at present.

Gail Curry

~ Obituaries ~

Derek Caporn

In his Prep School days and at Dulwich College Derek Caporn was always an enthusiast; at that time it was for garden games (not yet croquet), cricket, Scouting and parties. After the war he promoted Rover Scouting and led tours to Germany and Austria.

When his father became a judge of the Nottinghamshire County Circuit the family moved to Southwell. It was there that his interest in croquet was aroused by finding a boxed set in the house. He used to play on a sloping, handkerchief-sized lawn using the sundial as a peg. The rules were acquired (incorrectly) from the lid of the box - but great enjoyment ensued.

Later Derek and his mother moved into a grace and favour apartment at Hampton Court Palace. In 1956 Derek decided to investigate an announcement in The Times of a Test Match to be played at Hurlingham. Alas the gateman halted us in our path. But, by then, the addiction had become too strong. Within a short while Derek was devoting his enthusiasm to croquet in Surbiton and elsewhere.

Derek will be remembered (particularly by those who received his Christmas newsletters) as a person of many diverse interests and with an enthusiasm for all of them. For me he was a staunch, true, lifelong friend and a strong link with my roots in England.

David Curtis

Brian Redford 1932 - 1995

The sudden death of Brian Redford at his home on August Bank Holiday 1995 came as a considerable shock to his many friends in the croquet world and caused great sadness to his family.

Brian was born in 1932 and educated at Tiffins School in Kingston upon Thames. He showed early academic and sporting prowess gaining prizes for mathematics, rugby football and water polo. He joined the computer firm of ICL in the 1950's to become a systems analyst. It was there, whilst on a management course in Cookham, in the late 60's that he first took an interest in and learned to play croquet. In those early years

he played with a few other enthusiastic beginners, on Ray Mill Island, then the home of Maidenhead Croquet Club, soon developing into a strong player.

In 1970 he left ICL and moved to Devon to train as a teacher at St Luke's College, University of Exeter, gaining an Honours degree at the age of 47 years. He joined the staff of Knowles Hill School in Newton Abbott and taught mathematics there for about ten years. His organisational and teaching abilities were quickly recognised and he was promoted rapidly to the Deputy Headship. Regrettably, he had to retire in 1988, after a particularly severe heart attack, modern medical skills bringing him back from near death. It took a great deal of determination to will himself back to apparent good health and few people would have realised, what must have been clear to him, that another attack was always a distinct possibility.

He recovered sufficiently to take up again his many interests. He was a fine craftsman and put his skills to use by restoring a near-derelict Devon thatched cottage. He liked dinghy sailing and also had a 24-foot yacht which he sailed with his son James in and around the estuary of the river Exe. His main interest, however, was croquet, and he devoted much of his time to the well-being of the Budleigh Salterton Croquet Club. He was a respected referee, examining referee, handicapper, manager and team captain. His teaching ability was evident in the interesting and entertaining talks he occasionally gave about various aspects of the game. In addition he regularly taxed fellow referees with perplexing situations which might arise in a game of croquet, and often came up with suggestions for the possible improvement of the game for weaker players.

Brian became Club Chairman in 1994. The period of service is intended to be two years but sadly this was not to be. His firm but genial guidance and warmth of manner are greatly missed. There is at least one permanent reminder of his presence at the club. The weather vane on the flag pole features a croquet player; the outline construction was based on the stance adopted by Brian.

He leaves a widow, Gill, son James, and two sons by a previous marriage, to whom we extend all our sympathy.

David Purdon

Ray Stevens 1917 - 1995

The death of Ray Stevens peacefully at his home on 12 October 1995 caused much sadness to his wide circle of friends in the croquet world.

Ray was born in 1919 and educated at St. Paul's school and at Guy's Hospital where he qualified as a dentist soon before the outbreak of World War II. He volunteered for the Army Dental Corps in which he saw service in the Middle East, Sicily and Italy. After the war he rejoined the family practice in Wembley but in 1966 he set up a surgery in Ottery St. Mary in order to lead a quieter life in more pleasant surroundings. He had always been a strong tennis player but, when his wife died in 1969, he joined the Sidmouth Croquet Club to discover the enjoyment and mental stimulation to be gained from a different game. He improved rapidly and joined the Budleigh Salterton Club which was a little nearer his home. In 1973 he married Myrtle with whom he shared almost identical interests. They were rarely seen apart, whether it was to do with the theatre, gardening, local conservation organisations, Bridge or, principally croquet. He retired in 1978 and in 1979 he and Myrtle went on an enjoyable tour of New Zealand to follow the fortunes of the British Test Team, many of whom they knew.

Ray had the interests of the Budleigh Salterton Club very much at heart. To players from other clubs he was best known as Tournament Secretary, a post which he held for seventeen years, but he served the club assiduously and selflessly in many other ways, including a three year period of office as Chairman. He became a trustee and his views on anything to do with the well being were always sought and respected. He remained a fine player until the last few weeks of life; his grasp of doubles tactics being particularly admired. Only a few days before his death he could still be seen at the club taking a keen interest in the finals of some of the club competitions.

Our sympathy is extended to Myrtle who must have many happy memories of their twenty-two years of marriage.

David Purdon

NEWS & INFORMATION

Thanks For The Information

After the publication of each issue I usually take a week off from my computer and all things croquet to recharge my batteries and catch up with the rest of the world. As some of you may imagine I was looking forward to this more than at any other time following the publication of the last issue of the Gazette, which was a bit of a monster in more ways than one. However my 'rest' was pleasantly and surprisingly interrupted in November on no less than 108 occasions, by a good cross section of readers who took the time to express their enjoyment and appreciation of the last issue, including one call all the way from Johannesburg.

Unfortunately I was unable to receive all of the calls in person, but would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the people who either wrote or telephoned me regarding the November issue. I place great value on such feedback as not only does it provide opportunities to communicate with a variety of players but it also acts as a good indication that the editor's idea of a good croquet magazine is common to others. So keep the comments and ideas coming as I shall do my best to act on them wherever possible.

Loans Reminder

Readers may remember that the CA is currently prepared make low interest loans to clubs. These may be used to support applications to the lottery or for general purposes. So far in 1995 loans have been made to Cheltenham, Caterham and Bath and other applications are under consideration.

This is a reminder to clubs which may be thinking of applying. Loans to be made in 1996 will be considered at the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 2nd March 1996. If you want to apply please get your application in at least two weeks before that date. A special form is available for the purpose and this should be accompanied by the latest accounts of the club and estimates for the work to be carried out.

Any queries should be referred to Keith Aiton who has now succeeded to the chairmanship of the F&GP c/o the CA Office or to

the treasurer, Roger Bray, or to Derek Trotman, chairman of the Development Committee.

South East Croquet Federation's Summer School

The Summer School will be held at Southwick, Sussex from 8th to 13th July 1996.

The school caters for players with handicaps of ten and upwards who wish to improve their croquet and enjoy a holiday. The fee of £75.00 includes coffee, lunch and tea.

Further details and a prospectus and entry form may be obtained from the organiser:

David Collins
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The SPORTS FUNDING GUIDE edited by Nikki Eastwood and John Smyth.

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Sent In Error

Somebody in the Oxfordshire area has sent some photographs in error to Bill Lamb. The photos are of the interior and exterior of two houses and are now safely tucked away in the editor's filing cabinet if anyone wishes to reclaim them.

Subscription Reminder

Remember the form you were sent in November for your 1996 subscription? Well if you want to take advantage of the discounted rate you have to return it before February 1st.

The National Croquet League 1995

	Division 1				
	P	W	D	L	Pt
Colchester	4	4	0	0	8
Ipswich	4	2	1	1	5
Bowdon	4	1	1	2	3
Parkstone	4	0	2	2	2
Surbiton	4	1	0	3	2

	Division 2				
	P	W	D	L	Pt
Northampton	4	3	1	0	7
Letchworth	4	1	2	1	4
Wrest Park	4	1	2	1	4
Leicester	4	1	1	2	3
Newport	4	0	2	2	2

Colchester became the first winners of this new competition with a 4-2 victory over Ipswich on the final day of the season to maintain their 100% record. Ipswich, who needed to win the match to overtake the league leaders, were not at full strength, but a victory in the morning by Cornelius and McDiarmid over Burrige and Heap kept their hopes alive, after Clarke and Day had won the other doubles for Colchester. The regional second division was dominated throughout the season by Northampton, who dropped only one point to Newport.

It is hoped to run the league again next year using the same format as this year (ie a national first division with regional lower divisions). Full details will be given in the fixtures book, however we would like to take this opportunity to encourage all clubs to consider entering the league, the more clubs who play the shorter the travelling distances will become. As well as providing top quality competition, for the better players in the club, the league also offers the ideal opportunity for the less experienced player to compete at other venues.

Ian Burrige

STOP PRESS...

Inter Federation Indoor Tournament

After the success of the indoor croquet tournament held at Bretby in March 1995 it has been decided to repeat the event in 1996. All nine Federations have agreed to support the tournament which will be held on the weekend of the 30th - 31st March 1996.

Croquet Association Coaching Courses '96

The Croquet Association have organised weekend Coaching Courses for CA Members at all stages in the game, covering both handicap and advanced play. Players in the appropriate handicap ranges are encouraged to apply for the courses listed below. Please note the new Improvers course introduced to help those just starting the game, and the Junior weekend, designed to meet the needs of young players.

Improvers Courses (Grade 1)

Aim: To help players in their initial stages of learning to play croquet; teaching basic techniques and understanding of stroke play, tactics, break play and the laws of the game. Recommended handicap range 18 to 24.

Venue: Southport and Birkdale Croquet Club
Address: Victoria Park, Rotten Row, Southport
Dates: 18-19 May
Manager: J D Williamson, The White House, 6 Walmer Road, Birkdale, Southport, Merseyside PR8 4SX (Tel. 01704-567268)

Course Fee: £14 (including lunch) Cheques: Payable to the North-Western Federation of Croquet Clubs

A second Improvers Course will be held in the North-East, organised by Croquet North. It will be run in a series of sessions, for example in evenings, to cover the same material as in the Southport course. Those interested are invited to contact: B Rannie, 7 Keswick Drive, Cullercoats, North Shields, Tyne and Wear NE30 3EW (Tel. 0191-252-9739) for further details.

Bronze Courses (Grade 1+)

Aim: To equip the participants to gain the Bronze Merit Award - including shots and tactics necessary to complete 4-ball breaks, and the use of bisques. Recommended handicap range 12 to 18.

Venue: Nottingham Croquet Club
Address: Highfield, University Boulevard, Nottingham
Dates: 11-12 May
Manager: Dr G E Fowler, 43 Blake Road, Stableford, Nottingham NG9 7HP (Tel. 0115-9395308)

Course Fee: £16 Cheques: Payable to the East Midlands Federation of Croquet Clubs

Venue: Parkstone (East Dorset) Croquet Club
Address: Salterns Road, Parkstone, Poole, Dorset
Dates: 27-28 April
Manager: J Simmonds, 1 Shipstall, 3 Bellevue Road, Lower Parkstone, Poole, Dorset BH14 8TW (Tel. 01202-740097)

Course Fee: £16 Cheques: Payable to the South-Western Federation of Croquet Clubs

Venue: Surbiton Croquet Club
Address: Alexandra Drive, Surbiton, Surrey
Dates: 13-14 April
Manager: T.B.A.

Course Fee: £16 Cheques: Payable to the South-Eastern Federation of Croquet Clubs

Silver Courses (Grade 2)

Aim: To pick up and develop break play, leading to the ability to gain the Silver Merit Award; core contents are break hygiene and management, and refinement of handicap play. Recommended handicap range 5 to 12 (Southwick) and 8 to 14 (Budleigh).

Venue: Southwick (Sussex County) Croquet Club
Address: Victoria Road, Southwick, Brighton, E. Sussex
Dates: 18-19 May
Manager: S T Badger, 154 Burbage Road, London SE21 7AG WA16 0UH (Tel. 0171-274-8126)

Course Fee: £27.50 Cheques: Payable to the Croquet Association

Venue: Budleigh Salterton Croquet Club
Address: Westfield Close, Upper Stoneborough Lane, Budleigh Salterton, Devon
Dates: 13-14 April
Manager: D Purdon, Otter Holt, 37 Granary Lane, Budleigh Salterton, Devon EX9 6XP (Tel. 0139-544-6235)

Course Fee: £27.50 Cheques: Payable to the Croquet Association

Gold Course (Grade 3)

Aim: Introduction to advanced play; openings, leaves, game management, single and double peels, standard triple peels, leading to the ability to gain the Gold Merit Award. Recommended handicap range 2 to 7.

Venue: Cheltenham Croquet Club
Address: Old Bath Road, Cheltenham, Glos.
Dates: 11-12 May
Course Leader: C J Irwin
Manager: D J Magee, Hurstwood, Moored, Hartpury, Glos. GL19 3DG (Tel. 01452-700353)

Course Fee: £31.00 Cheques: Payable to the Croquet Association

The Master Class (Grade 3+)

Aim: Mastery of the triple peel in its various forms, advanced tactics, psychology of the game. Recommended handicap range -0.5 to 2.

Venue: Surbiton Croquet Club
Address: Alexandra Drive, Surbiton, Surrey
Dates: 27-28 April
Course Leaders: R Bamford and S N Mulliner
Manager: Dr G S Liddiard, Knoll Hill Cottage, Knoll Lane, Corfe Mullen, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 3RF (Tel. 01202-694534)

Course Fee: £37.00 Cheques: Payable to the Croquet Association

The Junior Weekend

Aim: To pick up and develop break play, break hygiene and management, leading to an introduction to advanced play and the principles of peeling. Recommended handicap range 4 to 16.

Venue: Bristol Croquet Club
Address: Cedar Park, Stoke Bishop, Bristol
Dates: 2-3 June
Course Leader: P Dyke
Manager: R W Ransom, 36 Old Sneed Avenue, Stoke Bishop, Bristol

BS9 1SE (Tel. 0117-9682255)

Course Fee: £10.00 Cheques: Payable to the Croquet Association

General Conditions

1. All entries should be made directly to the relevant Course Manager, on the standard Tournament Entry Form, stating name, address, Tel. No., Club, Handicap, Category of CA Membership and the name of the course being applied for. A SAE is required for acknowledgement of entry.

2. An early application is advisable. Entries will officially close three weeks before the start of each course, although late entries may be allowed at the Course Manager's discretion.

3. Pre-course questionnaires will be distributed to all course members on receipt of their entries. Prompt return of the completed forms to the respective Course Manager is requested. The information on the forms will help the coaches to tailor the courses to meet better the needs of those taking part.

4. The coaching will start at 9.30am on the first day.

5. Lunches and teas may be available.

6. Players and visiting coaches will be made Honorary Members of the host Club for the duration of the course.

7. The Manager for each course will provide all players attending that course with full details regarding the local arrangements, at least one week before the start of the course.

COURSES FOR COACHES

New Grade 2 and 3 Coaches can be trained and assessed at the relevant Grade 2 and 3 coaches for players noted above. Prospective coaches must be CA members, with a handicap lower than 6 for Grade 2 and 1 for Grade 3, and should be referees. Applications will be considered from people who lack one or both of the last two qualifications, but they will not qualify fully until they attain them.

Course fee: £12.50, payable to the Croquet Association
Applications to: The Chairman of the Coaching Committee - Dr T J Haste, 81 Blackbird Close, Creekmoor, Poole, Dorset, BH17 7YB (Tel. 01202 658119)

Prospective Grade 1 Coaches (who should have a handicap of 14 or below, and must be CA members) should contact their Regional Coaching Officer (RCO), whose address may be obtained from the CA Office, or the Chairman of Coaching whose address is given above. The training for Grade 1 Coaches is arranged at Regional level; assessment may be possible at the Bronze and Improvers courses at the discretion of the local RCO.

Letters...

Discovering artefacts

Dear Gail,

In my continuing search for artefacts and documents relating to defunct tournament venues I have discovered the enclosed photograph of a tournament in Buxton Pavilion Gardens (probably in 1905). It is part of an extensive collection of plates held by the Buxton Museum & Art Gallery, to whom I am indebted for bringing it to my attention, and for allowing it to be published.

I have visited the site and little has changed, although it is now the site of a children's adventure playground. There are several other flat areas of ground which probably accommodated courts during the Northern Championships and the Championship of Derbyshire week, but I could not discern which was the 'Lover's Retreat' court where ladies had to be chaperoned when playing against gentlemen!

It is interesting that the 'A' baulk is painted onto the court ('B' baulk was not introduced until 1920- Prichard).

I wonder if any other associates have similar photographs or documents which could be published. We owe it to ourselves and future croquet players to ensure that such items are kept safe. I would certainly like to hear from anyone else who is interested in the history of croquet and related memorabilia, perhaps we could form a 'society' to keep each other informed of our new discoveries.

Yours sincerely

David Carpenter

Tel: 01332 - 864579

P.S. Does anyone have any information or photo from clubs such as Buxton, Leamington Spa, Bedford etc.?

And for my next book.....

Dear Gail,

This winter, I intend to put together a humorous book on croquet. It will contain anecdotes, puzzles, cartoons, articles and quizzes. I would very much like to receive contributions from readers. They do not have to be in any particular format, even



Play in progress at the Buxton Pavilion Gardens circa 1905.

handwriting will do provided I can read it! Amusing non-derogatory anecdotes are most welcome, but they must be true and if they involve anyone other than yourself, that person (if alive) must give permission to publish. Drawings in black please, and puzzles must include solutions!

Contributions should be sent to:

Don Gaunt, 5 Rosedale Ave, Stonehouse, Glos GL10 2QH Tel: 01453- 822507

Opponents option?

Dear Gail,

SCENARIO

Your balls are widely apart, a long way from my take-off, in which I fail to move the croqueted ball. Should either of my balls go off the boundary, then you may choose to ignore the fault and play the balls as they lie. This, quite rightly, probably gives you the innings as there is, most likely, a ball within decent roqueting range. However, if, as more usual, no ball goes off, my balls are replaced together, you have no ball within easy range and, effectively, I have not forfeited the innings.

COMMENT

I believe this to be inconsistent. It would provide more justice if the opponent had the ability to play the balls as they are. This could be achieved by removing the compulsory replacement of balls after this fault.

THOUGHT

How about making the replacement of balls at the option of the opponent in all cases? There are many other occasions when a possible advantage to the opponent is lost because the offender's balls are replaced adjacent, thus retaining the innings unless the opponent hit in. This just happens to be the most common and obvious.

Yours sincerely

Alex Jardine

Back from the dessert

Dear Ms. Curry,

I am a novice player and although I have been out of the country for the last three years, and I have therefore not played during this time, I have continued to support the CA by retaining my membership. My only connection with croquet during this time has been reading the Gazette - not a particularly entertaining experience!

I write however to congratulate you and your team on the major improvements I have noted over the last few issues, each better than the last. Well done!

If I may make some observations on

the format for the November issue. The concept of a reports and results supplement is first class. It can use a lower cost paper and allows all the reports to be placed together to be read and kept by those interested or pulled out and ignored by those not. (In this case me!)

Regarding the rest of the contents:-
 * The colour photographs are positive and will help the image of the Gazette.
 * The Chairman's column is always well written and topical.
 * The British rankings can be useful but without a description each time of how they are calculated are of little use.
 * Beginners' helpful hints a very good idea.
 * Points of view and club focus are both interesting.
 I would also like to see some technical notes (from manufacturers?) or perhaps how to maintain lawns and information on suitable grass types.
 Regards
 Simon Wood

Dear Simon,
 The 'team' thanks you for your letter, and will try to live up to ever increasing expectations. Your observations are welcome, as would be those of any other reader, good or otherwise.

Your point on the rankings and the lack of the way they are calculated has been noted. Unfortunately I doubt that it would be of great value or indeed good utilisation of space to print how they are calculated each issue. However, it may be useful to give this explanation at the beginning of each season, which could be referred to if required by any interested party.
 Technical information from manufacturers could be a 'hot potato' due to advertising aspects. However here too I am willing to consider including such information if it is felt it may be of value to players or clubs. So if anyone (perhaps the equipment committee?) wishes to forward such information to me, I will see what I can do. Likewise the information on lawns and associated matters, although I feel that I should warn you that not all requests for information from 'outside agencies' are responded to favourably.
 Ed.

A reporter's error

Dear Gail,
 In the first issue of "The Tournament Review" a report of the Tyneside handicap tournament was published. Unfortunately not all of the

information regarding the winners was included in the report and I would like to set the records straight.

Don Wright and Bob Gatenby contested the final of the swiss event, with Bob winning that final. The contestants in the knock-out final were Brian Kennedy and Su Stenhouse, with Brian winning that final.
 Bruce Rannie

I only ask because I think we have right to know

Dear Gail,
 From time to time, life throws up those imponderable questions like, has anyone actually rung the "cones hotline", why do sports teams now "clash" instead of "play" each other, why does every quoted phone number in an American film begin with the number "555", why do footballers run down "channels" instead of running into "space"? There is no written law book or set of commandments where you can try to find the answers, and they are not on the world wide web of superhighway information either. So we mere mortals are left to consider the implications of these momentous questions. If we get the answer wrong, we can say that we did not know or should we acknowledge that perhaps we should have found out?

For croquet players, this fundamental problem is actually closer to home. As you are tucking into your next stereotyped cucumber sandwich with the Rear Admiral at your club, ask yourself this question: "What do I know about the existence of the World Croquet Federation (WCF) and the Croquet Players Association (CPA)?" If the answer is "not a lot" or "who" then you are in good company.

Both suggest some kind of benign leadership within the game, yet, has anyone actually seen their constitutions and what they stand for? Obviously someone has, but I am willing to bet my next triple peel that there will be not many who have. The WCF suggest that they control croquet worldwide. Great, someone needs to, but are you aware that it is they who will now decide what changes to the laws of the game take place in future? No real problem there except, as the E.C. has found out, you try to get a large number of people to agree to something. Is this a recipe for stagnation? Well, that is the point, few people know.

As for the CPA, perhaps we need a non-CPA members' association? This may sound facetious but it is a fair question as

few know what they stand for or why they exist at all.

I think the croquet playing public have right to know.
 Yours sincerely
 Verges

A lack of understanding

Dear Gail,
 I write to you with some humility, as a new member of the CA, to ask if some footnotes could be given to those references in the magazine which new members cannot be expected to understand.

In one article players were described as having made a "TP", an "OTP" or a "TPO". What do these initials stand for, please? Is this triple peeling? And what is a "deem"?

In another article I read that a tournament was organised as a Swiss but with Wharrad turns. I can manage Swiss, which is described in the Laws, but who or what is a Wharrad?

As its editor you may be relieved that my difficulties in understanding croquet terms are not confined to what I read in the Gazette. In the Association fixtures for 1995 we were informed that some events would be played "Egyptian", and that the "Bagnall-Wild" system would be used. Does everyone but me understand what these terms mean?

I am enjoying my croquet, and have been warmly welcomed into my club, but I do feel excluded by my inability to understand some of the Association's written material. And that is not a nice feeling. Of course I can wait to ask someone, but would it not be better to make sure that all published matter is capable of being understood by all members, and particularly by the newer ones like me! Communication is about achieving a common understanding.

Yours sincerely
 Brian Kitching

Dear Brian,
 Thank you for pointing out this matter to me, as it is important that all members are able to understand the content of the Gazette. Therefore in future issues I shall endeavour to address such matters, and hopefully you and other newer members may feel less isolated from certain areas of croquet. In the mean time I shall be sending you a book token, which you may just wish to invest on a croquet book, but choose wisely, there is a lot of technical jargon out there.
 Ed.

Extracts from the Minutes of the Croquet Association Council Meeting on 8th July 1995

Minute 2.1
 The following variation of the 22 point game was ratified as an Approved Variation:
The game is started with all the clips on hoop 1 but as soon as one of the balls of a side runs or is peeled through hoop 1 in order, hoop 5 becomes the next hoop in order for its partner ball and the appropriate clip is placed on hoop 5 immediately. This variation is for singles play only.
 Minute 2.2
 The formation of a Golf Croquet Committee was ratified and S.O. Jones appointed Chairman.
 Minute 5.4
 Council agreed the recommendations for

the 1994 award of the most improved male player to Mr David Kibble (Cheltenham) and noted that no recommendation had been made for the most improved female player.
 Minute 6.2
 Chris Clarke was formally congratulated on his winning of the 1995 World Championship. The administration and financial arrangements for the World Championships were discussed.
 Minute 7.1
 Although the drop-out rate had been reduced, recruitment showed no overall improvement and the Forward Plan target for new Associates was unlikely to be met.

Minute 7.2
 The discrepancy between the numbers of Affiliates recorded and those reported by CRF returns was discussed and the matter of the Affiliate scheme referred to the Executive Committee.
 Other Matters
 Council also discussed the Development Grant, the timing of the CA Magazine and the Directory, loans to clubs, the indoor carpets, the World Croquet Federation AGM, the timing of Council meetings, Council vacancies, the CA Archives and replacement of the Solomon Trophy.

The Croquet Association Standing Committees of Council 1995/6

F & GP	Tournament	Development	International	Coaching	Equipment
WE Lamb ST Badger RW Bray <u>KMH Aiton</u> CD Clarke AB Hope DJ Magee DW Trotman + NDO	WE Lamb ST Badger RW Bray IJ Burridge DL Gaunt AK Gregory IPM Macdonald <u>DW Shaw</u> CN Williams	WE Lamb ST Badger RW Bray J Anderson WJ Sidebottom RJ Smith <u>DW Trotman</u> + FDO's NDO	KMH Aiton CD Clarke AB Hope <u>CJ Irwin</u> SN Mulliner M Murray	WH Arliss <u>TJ Haste</u> CJ Irwin GS Liddiard + FCO's	IJ Burridge TJ Haste <u>GS Liddiard</u> WJ Sidebottom
Handicap	Laws	Trophies	Centenary	Golf	Editorial
WE Lamb RJ Smith <u>CN Willimas</u>	ST Badger WE Lamb <u>M Muray</u> DW Shaw	<u>AJ Oldham*</u> DJ Magee IPM Macdonald M Murray	ST Badger <u>HM Hall</u> AJ Oldham* JW Solomon*	SO Jones	AK Gregory <u>HM Hall</u> SN Mulliner
Selection	KMH Aiton IJ Burridge CD Clarke WE Lamb SN Mulliner CN Williams				

Key:- C, VC & T - Constitutional membership of the Council Chairman, Vice Chairman and Honorary Treasurer.
 * - Vice-President — - Committee Chairman NDO - National Development Officer
 FDO's - Federation Development Officers FCO's - Federation Coaching Officers

The Croquet Association Council & Committee Meeting Dates 1996

February	17th	Tournament	October	5th	Development
	24th	Club Conference		19th	AGM & Council
	25th	Development		26th	Tournament
March	2nd	F&GP	November	9th	Coaching
	23rd	Council		23rd	F&GP
July	6th	Council (provisional)	December	14th	Council



CLUB NEWS .. CLUB NEWS .. CLUB NEWS

Innovation At Ipswich In 1996 Tournament

During an idle moment at their end of season committee meeting, members of the Ipswich Croquet Club toyed with the notion of devising a tournament which would encompass as many variants of the beloved game as possible. With some reluctance, and since the pubs were threatening to close at any moment, we set aside Golf Croquet and after considering the possibility of a handicap-advanced-short-doubles-against-the-clock version decided to eliminate 'short' from the discussion, since the general level of physical fitness in the club simply would not run to more than, let us say, eight such games over the space of a weekend, and finally settled upon the above format.

The club has run three serious C.A. tournaments in the past. This year, we tinkered with the format of one of them by making it an advanced handicap event. Next year we intend to go all out for innovation in the hope of attracting a quality entry bent on fun.

I hasten to add that the fine tuning of such an event still needs attention but the tournament which is eventually turned out

from the workshops will not only be brand spanking new but will also be taken seriously for all its brashness and chromium plate.

We're talking about the Cadillac of croquet tournaments here which, when combined with an outing of some sort on the Saturday evening, to the Snape Proms perhaps, or to our excellent Wolesey Theatre, should mean that you will have to fight to simply get your entrance application considered!

In all seriousness though, we hope to be able to cater for ten pairs. Time limits will be set at one hour per team against the clock. This concept will present no problems to those who have played indoor croquet but to those who have not it means that each team has exactly one hour in which to complete its turns; which in turn means that each round lasts two hours precisely - a tournament managers's dream! Otherwise, the rules of advanced handicap play (i.e. 'advanced' with bisques), will apply. No handicap restrictions will be imposed and if a natural partner does not spring to mind, 'marriages' can be arranged.

So when your C.A. fixture book drops through the letter box at the start of next season think FUN, think 'THE CADDY', think Ipswich.

Richard Kimmerling

Success For Isle of Man Players

It has been a very successful season at the park, Onchan and at Port St. Mary Golf Club in the Isle of Man where croquet was a played all season.

Only one lawn was available to us at Grand Island Hotel so most of our competitions were held at Onchan Park. Jean Wilcock won the Golden Mallet Competition and Bob Corrin and Peter Connor qualified for the Garden Classic. All three members also competed in the All England area finals at Solihull in September.

Local competitions were well attended with Richard and Laura Bellwood winning the Douglas Bell Trophy in May. The singles tournament winners were Barbara and Ron Thornton in August. The

end of year handicap singles tournament was held on October 7th, the finalists being Richard Bellwood and Bob Corrin, Richard winning +8.

In August the Onchan Village Commissioners played a friendly game against the Peel City Commissioners, with tea in the Onchan Commissioners' boardroom afterwards.

The season finished with 'Croquet on the Lawn' at Onchan Park followed by afternoon tea at the Stakis Hotel.

Although a lot of interest has been shown in the croquet this year membership growth is still rather slow.

Doreen Corrin

Ramsgate International Weekend

The name of Ramsgate may not spring to mind as a likely venue for an international croquet event, however, the last weekend in September it was just that! It was truly international with 9 Belgian, German, English and Hungarians - members of the Brussels Croquet Club playing as much croquet as possible. Darkness was not accepted as an excuse for missing roquets - after all we had the street lights!

Apart from 3 who came for the day (there's dedication for you!) our visitors stayed with club members and were made so welcome they have already begun to return as friends. Although the primary objective was to play croquet it was a very sociable weekend. Saturday's play was followed by a barbecue and an evening of social intercourse at the secretary's home. After playing for as long as possible on Sunday our friends wended their ways home with the assurance that they would be back.

We are eagerly looking forward to becoming international players ourselves when we go to Brussels next season. (I'm only going for the chocolates!)

Cynthia Street

Artificial Surfaces - A Problem For Compton

Recent visitors to Compton Croquet Club in Eastbourne can hardly fail to have noticed the new all-weather hockey pitch under construction directly in front of the clubhouse, some 40 yards or so from lawn 1. The week following the South of England Championships has seen the installation of six 15 metre high pylons for floodlights. By chance Don Daintree and I met the hockey section's project coordinator after a committee meeting. He, like us, had been wondering whether it would be possible to play croquet on the new surface. He assured us that it is ideal for bowls, but the method of construction seems to rule out getting firm hoops. We wondered if any other clubs have experience with artificial surfaces or have ideas of what can be done to overcome the problems outlined below?

The base has a 6-9 inch layer of hardcore, a comparable thickness layer of centimetre diameter lava granules with a 20% admixture of rubber pellets (to give an elasticity similar to soil) overlaid with sand for a smooth finish. Wide strips of a white, water-permeable plastic are laid lengthways down the pitch, slightly overlapping, with the rolls of astroturf (green carpet with a one inch pile) laid at right angles across the pitch and glued, non-overlapping, to the white plastic. The final stage is to add more fine sand to fill the pile of the astroturf until only the green tips of the pile are showing. The combination of the pile and the sand is said to give a very good imitation of a mown grass surface: the sand also protects the material of the carpet against the effects of ultra-violet radiation, which in any case limits the life to something like 15 years.

The main problem for croquet is that there can be no question of penetrating either of the plastic layers. Hoops mounted on a metal plate would slide on any impact from the ball and perhaps the best that could be done would be to provide a number of short (just less than the pile length) spikes on the underside to give some resistance in the compacted sand. Also there seems no obvious way to prevent the plates from standing proud of the surface and giving lip all round. An alternative might be to remove all the top layer of sand in an area round the hoop position, lay the hoop plate flush against the carpet base with the pile flattened, and then replace the sand to level the surface. This might well give better hoop rigidity in the ground, but would almost certainly give a different playing surface in the immediate vicinity of hoops, and might be much more difficult to keep flat.

Since marking the surface with white lines would not be allowed, boundaries would have to be delineated with string stretched from the extremities of the pitch. Corner pegs could probably be stuck into the sand without much trouble. Stopboards would be required to minimise the amount of walking, especially for hard-hitting players!

Compton's requirement for access to an artificial court is not a strong one: the numbers of members playing the winter through is generally quite small; and the likely cost of renting time might well kill the idea from the start. But we would be interested to make experiments to determine the feasibility of using the pitch, and to hear from others who have done so.

Roger Wood

Lionheart Designs Wordsearch Competition

WINNING OFFER FOR ALL WORDSEARCH ENTRANTS

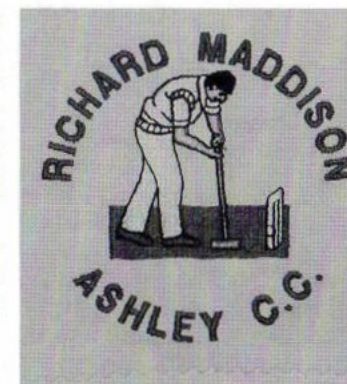
Win your own Personalised Leisurewear!

When you enter our Wordsearch Competition, you are sure to be a winner!

Everyone who submits an entry will receive a voucher for £2 off a Polo Shirt or T-Shirt complete with an embroidered logo. If your entry happens to be one of the first 10 correct ones drawn on the closing date of 16 February 1996 you will qualify for either a FREE T-Shirt or Polo Shirt, embroidered with a logo of your choice.

The Croquet logo featured on the right has been specially designed in conjunction with the Croquet Association, and you can also add up to 16 characters of personalised text above or below the logo.

Please send your entry, marked "Lionheart Wordsearch" to: 33 Percy Gardens, Tynemouth, North Shields, Tyne & Wear NE30 4HQ



M	J	P	P	B	S	V	E	G	K	P	S	P	E	C	T	A	T	O	R
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Z	Y	S	E	R	I	P	M	U	E	O	I	W	J	B	V	J	G	V	W
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F	A	B	P	S	C	Z	I	O	B	Q	X	C	M	A	F	K	G	K	P
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WATERPROOFS	TOURNAMENT	SPECTATOR	HANDICAP
OPPONENT	DOUBLES	REFEREE	PARTNER
TACTICS	MANAGER	CANNON	MALLET
ROQUET	RESULT	UMPIRE	CORNER
BISQUE	COURT	DRIVE	CLIP
HOOP	GRIP	PEEL	LAWS
ROLL	TIME		

Name.....

Address.....

Post Code.....

Longman Cup

Tyneside Croquet Club

Don Wright, Bruce Rannie, Brian Kennedy and Alan Burn went to Cheltenham for the semi-final and hopefully final of the Longman Cup competition, and came away with the trophy that the club last won ten years ago.

In 1985 the final was in Nottingham, and, being that much closer, the team had supporters and all gathered at the Wooden Doll public house for the celebrations. This year, Cheltenham is a long way to go for any reason, and the team was supported in spirit and by phone, as a couple of lost causes were turned into the ultimate triumph.

Semi-final v Bury

The semi-final match against Bury, who tend to be good players with one or too many bisques for comfort. The format of two doubles in the morning, and a doubles and two singles in the afternoon, saw Don and Bruce paired together twice, and Alan and Brian paired, to be followed by their singles games. At lunch we were 1-1, with a massive scoring (!), as on very disappointing lawns, bumpy, slopey and fast, breaks were impossible. Brian and Alan could not get going, and lost 9-15 after three and a half hours. Bruce and Don gradually came good to drag back a lost cause, Bruce equalising probably just too soon at six minutes before time, and getting ahead in the turn when time was called. Dave Barrett, known from Pendle too, ran a hoop after time, thought he'd equalised, and missed a short roquet, giving Tyneside a 14-13 victory in front of Don 'Plus One On Time' Gaunt, the match referee.

In the afternoon, Don and Bruce never got into the game, and lost 9-26 to Dave Barrett and Tony Phillips. Alan and Brian's games went to time as the rain started in earnest. Brian won +4T having overtaken Ken Anderson towards the end, while Alan's game was nearly level, with three balls on 1-back and one on six as time was called. Ian Farkin's final shot hit, but to the amazement of all and the relief of Alan, he picked up the wrong ball and played it, and had to concede another +1T defeat to give Tyneside the place in the final. It was the second year in a row Bury had lost a semi-final in this competition, and they were a touch disappointed, although very supportive of their northern cousins even in defeat.

Final v Dyffryn

The final on the Sunday pitted Tyneside against the club who had dumped them out of the Secretary's Shield earlier in the year. The same pairing tactics were used, although during team meetings in hostels in a wet Cheltenham on the Saturday, the Alan-Brian pairing was questioned (by Alan and Brian - Don and Bruce thought it would be OK!), this time the morning was disastrous, as Bruce and Don could not get going (again), kept hitting hoops and pegs rather than balls, and lost 10-26 to Tim Lacy-Hulbert and Alison Thursfield. Brian and Alan were

never really in the hunt, losing 16-22 to John Grimshaw and Colin Thursfield, although Alan's final break after time went from five to pegging out John's ball and himself (needs the practice for peg-outs, and the evil look was brilliant!). So, 0-2 and out of form with a mountain to climb.

In the afternoon, Alan continued his form from the end of his previous game and beat Alison +17 with an hour to spare. Brian was inspired by this, and after having been ahead earlier, came from behind to level with Colin at penult all, where the scoring stopped for thirty minutes. Brian gained the initiative, the innings and won +5 to put all onto Bruce and Don in the deciding game.

The doubles game was back on the lawn. Bruce and Don had struggled all day and from turn three John had put Dyffryn into the lead. After tea all four players missed their first shot, but Dyffryn had the advantage, which they failed to take. Bruce then scrambled round eight hoops to 4-back, while Don was on three, and Tim and John were also on 4-back.

Then the fun really started. With about half an hour to go, Don got the innings, and with coaching, cajoling and the occasional placing by Bruce, Don got round one hoop at a time until he

was also on 4-back. But again this was too soon, there were three minutes left and Tim hit. But he made only one hoop. Bruce came in as time was called, with the advantage, made the equalising hoop, scattered and left a reasonable rush for Don - if Dyffryn hit they were equally well set also. John missed down the slope, Don got his reasonable rush and take-off and the hoop with ease. The cup was ours, the first time we were in the lead was when Don sank that putt!

Alan Oldham graciously presented the trophy to Don Wright, and thanks were extended to Don Gaunt for his superb handling of the event.

Bruce Rannie

The Secretary's Shield
Dyffryn Croquet Club

Lazarus coaches Dyffryn?

The final of the Secretary's Shield took place at Cheltenham with the competing teams being Dyffryn CC and West Park CC. On a cool damp day, play commenced at 10 am with the format of doubles and two singles. Games began slowly, with the usual struggle for supremacy in the doubles. West Park took early leads in the



Longman Cup finalists.

L to R Dyffryn - Alison Thursfield, John Grimshaw, Colin Thursfield, Tim Lacy-Hulbert. Tyneside - Brian Kennedy, Don Wright, Bruce Rannie, Alan Burn.

National Club Competitions 1995

Grimshaw now played an exciting finish, Ashwell for 1-back, Grimshaw for 4. Some very crafty play saw Grimshaw eventually peg out - along with his three team mates! - to give Dyffryn the Secretary's Shield 4-3. The most exciting finish to a day's play any neutral could have wished for and fitting that Dyffryn's founder and team captain should receive the trophy.

Paul Pristavec

Inter-Club

Woking Croquet Club

Your reporter was commandeered for this task during a short period of temporary absence from spectating (which enabled him also to explore the cul-de-sacs and roadworks-hold-ups of the beautiful spa town of Cheltenham which was hosting the final) - and consequently will never leave his seat mid-match again! He promises to get through the whole article without once mentioning the absence this year from the Inter-Club competition of several clubs who are instead participating in the National League.

The conditions were rather challenging, all 8 participants remarked at least once during the day. What with tight hoops, and the unshorn grass; and corner 2 on court 2, a veritable canyon of a hidey-hole, requiring a turbo-powered sand wedge to extricate balls.

The "old firm" of Dawson & Wiggins, so nearly successful at the Opens (if it hadn't been for their opponents) managed to scramble a win past John Watson and Wheeler, even though they didn't seem to be running many hoops on their apparently infrequent visits to the court. Colin Southern likewise overcame his morning opponent, Howard Bottomley, leaving the normally imperturbable (but for once, strangely perturbed) Roger Hayes struggling against Tom Anderson. After 3 hours the clips were no longer all on hoop 1 - thus encouraging Manager Don Gaunt, deferring to David Wiggins' nightshift commitment back in Woking, to declare a time limit for the game's completion rather than peg it down. Despite being lured into shots of adventurousness bordering on the reckless, Hayes finally contrived the longest break of the match to overtake Tom and squeak through "Plus One On Time": a promotional ploy for the Manager's book shop?

So 3-0 to Woking at Lunch. Lots of pressure on West Park - but Woking were keeping quiet about the final outcome on the previous occasion in the Inter-Club when they were in this position (which they lost 3-4.)

The chill of the October afternoon perhaps started to get to the scantily clad Wiggins, as he refused to take advantage of the several opportunities offered by John Wheeler, who was himself having a rough time getting through hoop 4. Practice makes perfect however, this hoop (and the rest) were run, and David bowed out with his customary good grace, to seek solace at the bar.

Another Woking collapse in the offing? Well, not this time. Dawson, playing marginally

Dyffryn's hopes of a first ever club national knockout victory appeared to be dead and buried. Only the last rites of the afternoon games remained.

The afternoon singles saw a reverse of the morning games. Firth took command early on against Pristavec while Jennings was behind to Mahoney. Jennings contrived to wrinkle the bisque out of Mahoney and promptly fell behind by 10 hoops! Play in the other singles saw Grimshaw fall behind to Rod Ashwell and Tim Lacy-Hulbert of Dyffryn edge in front of West Park's David Woolley. At this point Lazarus arrived.

Pristavec beat Firth +11. West Park 3 - Dyffryn 1. Jennings beat Mahoney +16. West Park 3 - Dyffryn 2. Was the improbable possible? All eyes were on the remaining singles. West Park were up in one, down in the other. Lacy-Hulbert was steadily increasing his lead and eventually won his match +21. West Park 3 - Dyffryn 3!

Meanwhile on the same lawn, Grimshaw managed in a controlled break to take his ball to peg performing the peel and pegging out his opponent from south of rover. At least 3 people could not bear to look. Both Ashwell and

singles with Terry Mahoney and Mark Firth showing their opponents Paul Pristavec and David Jennings how to construct and maintain breaks. However, Dyffryn were determined to win one of these and got their chance when Pristavec was able to peg out his opponent's ball. There followed some long attempts by Mahoney who hit in and promptly won the game +3. West Park 1 Dyffryn 0.

Firth was well in command in the other singles but some inspired play - including playing the wrong ball to run the wrong hoop - by Jennings gave the game a close finish. Firth held on to win +3. West Park 2 - Dyffryn 0.

By now the doubles, progressing slowly to the middle of the game was four and a half hours old with honours just about even. An hour's time limit was agreed by the two captains and at 3.30pm the morning games ended with West Park taking the game +2T. West Park 3 - Dyffryn 0

At this point the Dyffryn team received their captain's team talk - "I'd rather be 3-0 down at lunch". The rest of us fell about at this thinking that John Grimshaw had finally flipped, but



Dyffryn's winning Secretary's Shield Team
L to R Paul Pristavec, Dave Jennings, John Grimshaw & Tim Lacy-Hulbert.

less badly than John Watson, got to grips with the latter's preferred tactic (laying up at the dreaded corner 2) which for a time had held Jeff at bay, and managed the vital 4th win. Roger and Howard were meanwhile enjoying themselves so much that they persisted to their game's conclusion, Roger winning +14. Time was now running out, so the trophy was presented by CA Vice President Alan Oldham, and the last match (Colin vs Tom) was abandoned (to Colin's relief?)

The scrappy scorelines, and far from infallible play, indicated the difficulty of the conditions rather than nervousness at the occasion. Some long shots were deflected reputedly at the last minute by tufts of grass (though interestingly, there were no parallel complaints at the near misses which hit at the last minute!) and several hoops were tighter than others!

Peter MacGowan

Mary Rose

Wrest Park Croquet Club

Cheltenham was sunny and busy with Longman semi-finals as Don Gaunt 'the manager' met us for our biggest challenge of the season so far.

'Where is Gordon? Eric's near name sake could have written. The Nottingham guys did get anxious as 10.20 approached hope welling he would arrive at 10.30 which he duly did. The delay did give us time however, to contemplate the presentation of the lawns and facilities which were offered for such an occasion.....perhaps more of that later.

The wait proved useful to Nottingham who fielded Gordon in the doubles and a team which included three 1 handicaps was going to be no push over.

The doubles saw Eric and Howard have fun in the corners, eventually losing out, but you've guessed it, good old George was there to bring us level:, with the determined Rod proving you can top prawn cocktail with 'marie rose' sauce etc., courtesy of our gastronomic supporters, with lunchtime successes particularly the corner two pick-up following 1-back, causing us to see off a bottle of wine on its own.

At 2-1 and now feeling no pain we ploughed on (technical term). Eric recorded an early win although his peg-out was a little premature, Howard made some ground but faltered again as did George, leaving it to our man in the field (another technical term) to secure the trophy, photographs and the delight of our supporters.

A major trophy for Wrest Park, hooray, a day to remember, well deserved, a pleasure to celebrate, thanks to John Bevington for the Champagne, Jon Watson for lunch, congratulations to the players and let's look forward to our defence.

Judy Anderson

Short Croquet Team Event Leicester Croquet Club

The concept of a four team final was revived on 2nd September for the 1995 National Short Croquet Team Event. Oxford University provided an approximately equidistant venue for teams from Ashby, Leicester, Nailsea and Medway, with Ian Plummer giving his time to make it happen. This provided a pleasant day out for supporters and a sense of occasion for the teams. The playing order enabled each team member to play his (no women this year!) opposite number in each of the other teams. Tea was held in the splendour of the cricket pavilion and Alan Oldham represented Council and presented the cup.

The standard of play was mixed, with the firmly set hoops rejecting inaccurate strokes and some tactical errors going unpunished. Onlookers adjudged Ashby's Adrian Page particularly promising for the future, largely from the style of his stroke production. Adrian was beaten in the third round by his friend Scott Raynor of Leicester who had by then recovered from a handicap reduction immediately before play. The relatively experienced Leicester team led from the first round and managed to keep out of trouble to retain the cup.

Teams (with bisques and wins):

Leicester	8 wins	Medway	4 wins
John Riddington	(5), 3	Richard Mann	(4), 1
John Hansen	(6), 2	Jon Roche	(5), 1
Scott Raynor	(6), 1	Adrian Dickens	(7), 2
John Randall	(7), 2	Andy Sinclair	(7), 0

Nailsea	6 wins
Peter Dyke	(2.5), 2
James Dixon	(3.5), 1
David Murphy	(5), 1
Daniel Clayton	(10), 2

Ashby	6 wins
Gary Norman	(2), 0
Richard Sanville	(5), 2
Adrian Page	(7), 2
Jeremy Staley	(10), 2

Preliminary round:
Ashby 8 - Pendle 4
Leicester 9 - Blewbury 0
Nailsea 8 - High Wycombe 4
Ealing 5 - Medway 7

Lawrence Whittaker



Wrest Park's winning Mary Rose Team celebrating in typical Wrest Park style.
L to R George Collin, Eric Audsley, Howard Bottomley and Rod Ashwell, with John Watson.

A Couple Of Croquet Mysteries

EXTRACTS FROM A BIBLIOGRAPHER'S CASEBOOK by David Drazin

I. A NEW TWIST TO AN OLD TALE

Anyone who has looked into the early history of croquet will have read the tale of Mr Spratt and the Macnaghtens. Round about 1851 one of the Macnaghtens is said to have seen the game played in France or Italy and to have passed the word to Mr Spratt, a Bond Street toy dealer, who recorded and published the rules. Failing to make a commercial success of the game, he sold his stock to John Jaques Junior. Though the story was soon shrouded in mystery, it is widely accepted to this day that the first published rules of croquet were those entered by Mr Spratt at Stationers' Hall in 1851 or 1852 and reprinted in an editorial in the periodical *Land and Water* on 18 December 1869.

But it now seems that our historians will have to think again. As a collector of croquet books and pamphlets, I had wondered why no one claimed to have seen an original copy of Spratt but thought little more about it until I happened to reread the *Land and Water* editorial recently and was struck by a wild idea. Suppose this editorial was a *creative* contribution. Walter Jones Whitmore, the acknowledged father of the modern game, was the croquet editor of *Land and Water* at the time, and we know that he had been suspected of creative accountancy. Could it have been mere coincidence that his editorial appeared just one month before the conference of leading players convened to draw up a new authoritative code of laws? We know that Whitmore hoped to dominate the conference and perhaps it suited his purpose to present the original rules of the game in a particular light.

Three lines of investigation yielded remarkable results. First I checked the media which gave most space to croquet in the early days - *The Field*, *The Queen* and *Land and Water* - and found just one earlier reference to the contents or origins of Spratt's rules, a letter from "Un Vieux Croquetier" which appeared in *The Queen* on 24 September 1864. This seemed strange because the origins of the game and its rules were matters of intense interest during those years. Stranger still, the only two rules cited by the writer - no "pushing or spooning" and "a ball which has not passed through its first hoop can neither roquer nor be roque'd" - were not among those subsequently quoted by *Land and Water*.


Were Spratt's rules really entered at Stationers' Hall and, if so, when? I searched the Registry Books for 1851 and 1852, now held at the Public Record Office, systematically and found no reference to Spratt or anything at all about croquet. But the classified index did reveal a later entry, and hence I established that Spratt registered the title "Rules of the New Game of Croquet" on 15 November 1856 and the claim to have first published this document on 2 August 1853.

I then checked the catalogues of the British Library and other national libraries and all recent books in my collection which contain facsimile reproductions of old rule books, and I consulted some of the leading authorities on the literature of croquet at home and abroad. But I found no evidence of anyone who now has an original copy of Spratt or knows where one can be seen!

So what does all this mean? Only two things are reasonably

certain. Spratt *did* publish a code of rules, probably in August 1853, and it must have had very limited circulation. As to its contents, we have two conflicting accounts, "Un Vieux Croquetier's" and that in *Land and Water*. We know nothing else about "Un Vieux Croquetier" but his letter appears genuine enough and it is hard to imagine that he could have had any motive to misrepresent the rules he mentioned or their source. The *Land and Water* version is less convincing because its publisher may have had cause to depart from the original text and because it purports to be a faithful reproduction of the original but has two dubious features. Its title, "Spratt's New Game of Croquet", does not square precisely with that registered at Stationers' Hall in 1856, and its sub-title, "Entered at Stationers' Hall", could not have been valid when the original document was first published in 1853.

Would any reader who happens to have what looks like an original copy of Spratt's rules or knows where one can be seen please stand up and be counted? If this appeal bears fruit and the rules which emerge are as given by *Land and Water*, I shall be the first to apologise to Whitmore's memory for entertaining a dishonourable suspicion as to his integrity. If, however, they proscribe pushing and roquet before the first hoop or if, as I fear, this appeal bears no fruit, we shall be left to speculate as to the circumstances in which *Land and Water* acquired its copy of Spratt's rules and who was responsible for the inconsistencies I have noted.



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The Chester Legend

By Roger Croston

Legend information copied from a poster in Chester by 'Grahame the Ferryman'

As part of the Chester Summer Sports Festival, Chester Croquet Club plays a short croquet competition the first weekend of July each year at the Anchorite Cell bowling green; otherwise known as the Hemitage. The club was founded here in 1977 and after two years moved to Westminster Park on the west side of the city in order to obtain two full size flat lawns. The Anchorite lawn is crown green which makes croquet most interesting because cross wiring can be beaten by judicious use of the lawn!

The location is perhaps one of the most historic sites in the country on which croquet is played as the Anchorite Cell is central to the Chester Legend.

Near the river Dee in Chester is a sandstone building known locally as the Hermitage. The ground floor dates from the tenth century, the upper floor being a rebuild of a later date. Originally it was an Anchorite Cell, the Anchorites being a closed order of monks.

In 1188 a monk named 'Gerald of Wales' paid a visit to Chester in the company of Abbot Robert of Hastings. Whilst in Chester, Gerald of Wales wrote about the Anchorite Cell and King Harold, who according to the Normans had been killed at the Battle of Hastings in 1066. Gerald tells us the following:- about three months after the battle a woman came to Chester

accompanied by a monk. The monk had the hood of his habit pulled well forward so that his face could not be seen. He was stooped over and one could not tell whether he was elderly or infirm. The woman took the man to the Anchorite Cell leaving him there while she went to a local inn to book passage on a ship to Ireland. Some weeks later the ship arrived and the woman went to the Anchorite Cell as if to collect the man, but she sailed alone.

In 1340 a famous monk named Ranulph Higden repeated the story and additions have been made by other people.

The lady, it is now said, was known. She came from Chester and was the mistress of Harold. She returned some years later saying she was ill and if she was going to die, she wanted to be buried in her church, St. John's, which is just above the Cell, to be near the man she loved.

The legend suggests that Harold did not die at Hastings (would not the Normans have displayed the body?), but was seriously wounded and was trying to make his escape to Ireland. He was, however, too ill to travel any further when he reached Chester and stayed for the rest of his life in the Anchorite Cell.

In the sixteenth century it is said that some royal regalia was found in the churchyard of St. John's but was later stolen.

Did Harold die at Hastings? If he did what happened to his body? Why did his missress on her return say that she "Wanted to be near the man she loved"?

It is for you to decide.....



Chester Club short croquet tournament 1995 at the Anchorite Cell, Chester. L to R: Margaret Davies, Hasting Wang, Chris Boon, Geoff Barker, Hon. Alderman Hignett and Roger Croston

~ The Chairman's Column ~

I hope everyone liked the last issue of the Gazette. I know from the number of telephone calls Gail received that it found favour in many quarters. It was nice to see club tournaments reported in full in the new Tournament Review, a feature which I hope will be continued. The original intention was for the Reviw to be detachable from the main magazine, but this was not possible because of technical problems. Andrew Gregory has kindly offered to be sub-editor for this aspect of the magazine in the future, to take some of the burden off Gail, and I thank him for his services. I believe the quality and the content of the magazine have improved enormously since Gail took over, but it has to be done within a fairly tight budget. We cannot afford to have so many pages in every edition, although the total number of pages allowed for next year is a very considerable increase.

Gail and the Editorial Board would also like your help in determining what the content of the Gazette should be. That is why it has been included as one of the topics for discussion in the forthcoming Club Conference at Hurlingham on February 24th. These conferences were once a regular feature of the croquet world, ably orchestrated by the late Derek Caporn. They were popular and well-attended and provided the opportunity for everyone to have their say on all aspects of the sport and its governing body. They only fell into abeyance when Federation conferences came into existence, but Council has decided that there is probably room for both. You will find included with this issue details of the programme and a request for alternative topics for discussion. I hope that there will be a good attendance and informative discussions. It is up to you: let your voice be heard to point the Croquet Association in the right direction.

I am pleased to say that the new loans policy is beginning to work. Loans have already been made to Cheltenham and Caterham and a loan has been approved for Compton. Congratulations to Bath, which is the first croquet club to gain a National Lottery grant and will receive a CA grant and loan. A grant has also been made to Kenilworth.

Finally, may you never miss short roquets, and I hope to see you at the conference.

Bill Lamb

Fantasy Croquet '96
The Results & Statistics

Congratulations to Dennis Regan on winning the 1995 Fantasy Croquet League. Below are the top 20 fantasy teams and their managers as well as a few statistics which may prove useful to prospective managers for the 1996 competition.

(best possible)	460	Fulford, Burrige, Hallam, Openshaw
Manager	Pts	Team
D Regan	384	Burrige, Fulford, Harrison-Wood, C. Williams
P Simmonds	345	Burrige, Cornelius, Leggate, Mulliner
D Guban	331	Avery, Burrige, Hawkins, Maugham
A Westerby	321	Avery, Burrige, Comish, Cornelius
J Walters	314	Avery, Clarke, Haslam, Openshaw
T Danby	314	Cornelius, Fulford, Gaunt, Toye
C Clarke	312	Clarke, Cordingley, Gregory, Haslam
J Anderson	311	Clarke, Cordingley, Gregory, Tuke
J Death	311	Aiton, Clarke, Cordingley, Gregory
M Regan	310	Bamford, Burrige, Harrison-Wood, C. Williams
R Hilditch	290	Burrige, Goacher, Leggate, Mulliner
R Fulford	287	Comish, Fulford, Gregory, Leggate
Team C	283	Clarke, Coles, Cordingley, Curry
A Leggate	280	Avery, Cordingley, Fulford, Leggate
F Gaunt	280	Bamford, Cornelius, Harrison-Wood, Leggate
S Lusty	279	Clarke, Gaunt, Gregory, Wiggins
M Hammelev	278	Ames, Clarke, Cordingley, Curry
C Patmore	274	Burrige, Cordingley, Dawson, Goacher
D Gunasekera	274	Burrige, Cordingley, Dawson, Goacher
C Farthing	269	Avery, Bamford, Cornelius, Leggate

Player (best 32)	Pts	Cost	Player (best 32)	Cost per point
Clarke	227	3,600,000	Burrige	8,965
Fulford	191	3,000,000	Hallam	9,375
Maugham	160	3,400,000	Cornelius	15,596
Burrige	145	1,300,000	Fulford	15,706
Bamford	117	3,000,000	Gregory	15,789
Cornelius	109	1,700,000	Clarke	15,859
Mulliner	74	2,600,000	Openshaw	18,333
Hallam	64	600,000	Southern	19,047
Openshaw	60	1,100,000	Maugham	21,250
Goacher	54	1,700,000	Leggate	23,529
Cordingley	46	1,400,000	Harrison-Wood	24,324
Comish	41	2,000,000	Gunasekera	25,000
Gregory	38	600,000	Bamford	25,641
Harrison-Wood	37	900,000	Walters	26,923
Irwin	35	2,000,000	Patmore	27,272
Westerby	31	2,400,000	Cordingley	30,434
Dawson	29	1,500,000	Goacher	31,481
Avery	26	900,000	Avery	34,615
Walters	26	700,000	Liddiard	35,000
Patmore	22	600,000	Noble	35,000
Southern	21	400,000	Mulliner	35,135
Gunasekera	20	500,000	Comish	48,780
Liddiard	20	700,000	Dawson	51,724
Noble	20	700,000	Irwin	57,142
Leggate	17	400,000	Gaunt	57,142
Gaunt	14	800,000	Foulser	62,500
C. Williams	11	800,000	Lamb	62,500
Guest	11	700,000	Guest	63,636
Foulser	8	500,000	McDiarmid	66,666
Lamb	8	500,000	R. Brown	66,666
Day	7	1,400,000	C. Williams	72,727
McDiarmid	6	400,000	Westerby	77,419

Fantasy Croquet '96
Entry Details

Fantasy croquet was born in 1994, the brain child of Chris Clarke, to provide light entertainment for croquet players. Advertising the competition in the Gazette generated over 70 entries last year, so we are intending to run it again. The rules have been changed slightly, and the prices have been adjusted to reflect "current form".

There are six main events to be considered next season: Opens, Mens, Northern, Westerns (not the Coles Cup), Easterns and Southern. Points are scored in these events as follows:

	Opens	Mens & 4 regionals
Winner	30	20
Runner-up	20	12
3rd	12	8
4th	8	6
Plate winner	8	6
Each triple peel in these events (including plate)		1 pt
Each sextuple peel in these events (including plate)		5 pts
Each plate game won in these events		1 pt
In addition players can gain points for the following:		
Each singles match win in MacRobertson Shield		5 pts
Winner of open singles weekend in CA fixture book		5 pts

As a manager, all you have to do is pick four players from the price list below for your team, making sure that their total cost does not exceed 6,000,000. You are not allowed to pick any foreign MacRobertson Shield players other than those shown. You can buy any other player in the UK ranking list for 400,000 pounds. No substitutions will be allowed during the season.

Entries should be sent to Steve Comish, 23 Bridgewood Road, Woodbridge, Suffolk, IP12 4HA.

As in previous years, there is a small salver for the winner to keep for a year. Have fun and good luck!

Chris Clarke and Steve Comish.

Clarke	3,900,000	Bond	800,000
Fulford	3,600,000	Gaunt	800,000
Maugham	3,400,000	Noble	800,000
Bamford	2,800,000	Patmore	800,000
Burrige	2,600,000	Heap	700,000
Mulliner	2,400,000	Symons	700,000
Cornelius	2,300,000	Guest	700,000
Comish	2,000,000	Goddard	700,000
Westerby	1,900,000	Farthing	700,000
Goacher	1,800,000	Palmer	700,000
Irwin	1,700,000	C. Williams	700,000
Openshaw	1,600,000	S. Williams	700,000
Cordingley	1,600,000	Leggate	700,000
Harrison-Wood	1,400,000	Gunasekera	600,000
Dawson	1,300,000	Southern	600,000
Gregory	1,200,000	Symons	600,000
Walters	1,100,000	Foulser	500,000
Avery	1,000,000	Lamb	500,000
Hallam	1,000,000	Murray	500,000
Day	900,000	Vincent	500,000
Liddiard	900,000		

Open Verdict

A Short Story by Coral Hill

I looked across at Mike. It was good to see him so happy after the last few traumatic months since Sue, his previous wife, was murdered. And now he had married again and here we all were celebrating at a quite superb reception party.

Celia was pretty, vivacious and very clever. I had once harboured a hope that she and I might extend our partnership beyond croquet, but it was not to be. She had always got on very well with my best friend, Mike, and last year I even lost her as a croquet partner when she and Mike entered the Open doubles together.

Not that I could blame Celia for switching her allegiance to Mike. She had begun to mount a serious challenge to Debbie's long-held supremacy as top UK lady player. Mike Osmond, of course, was brilliant on his day. He was third in the President's Cup two years ago, but until last year's Opens the wise heads said he would never reach the top because of his devil-may-care attitude.

I began to think again about the events of the last few months and I began to form an insight into what really happened. My theory was horrible, but everything now fitted together. Could I trust the answer? Dare I trust it? I needed to go over the facts again.

The Open Championships were held, as usual, last July at Hurlingham. Mike's form was superb. He sailed through the early rounds (including a 70-minute, 2-0 trouncing of yours truly), then, sensationally, he saw off Robert in the semi-finals +26TP, -26TP, +26TP, booking his place in the final against Hugh.

Sir Hugh Morrow is now past his peak but continues to earn his captain's place in the England team. As Chairman of the CA, and now of the investment bank his grandfather built-up, Hugh is a pillar of the establishment. As a croquet player he is respected; his book on the game is rated one of the best ever, and nobody has done more for the CA over the years. The trouble with Hugh is that he is boring. His whole character is boring, his speeches are boring and, frankly, his croquet is boring. He plays slowly and meticulously. His success depends on minimising risk and constructing superb leaves. He never attempts anything

more tricky than a standard triple.

How different from Mike who, on the day before his finals show-down completed a straight quad to win the final of the doubles with Celia! We all went out to celebrate that night - all except Sue, who complained of not feeling too well. I vaguely remember that at 2.00am in the night club I reminded Mike (as he drank champagne out of Celia's shoe) that he did have the most important match of his life beginning in just eight hours' time.

I should not have been concerned. He sauntered down to the front lawns at five minutes to ten, fresh as a daisy, but in answer to my enquiry regretted that Sue was still poorly and would remain in their Roehampton apartment until later.

It seemed as if every croquet player in London had dropped into Hurlingham to see the climax of this epic duel

Mike began the best-of-five final in typical buccaneering fashion by hitting the twelve yard tice and going round to four back. Hugh took a full eight minutes composing himself to aim at half a ball of the slightly careless leave - before missing by a coat of paint. Mike's completion included an outrageous four yard angled peel at penult.

The second game went all Hugh's way: a +17 victory in 2+ hours and after lunch the third, also to Hugh +26, took only slightly less time. Then Mike found his form again with another, well-controlled +26TP in under an hour.

And so we were set for the fifth game showdown. In the 1950s it was not uncommon to have spectators five deep for the final of the Open. In recent years this has declined and recently 80-100 spectators would be good. However, last year there was a real buzz. It was more than a croquet match. This was the brash young upstart taking on the establishment. It seemed as if every croquet player in London had dropped into Hurlingham to see the climax of this epic duel. Bowls stopped and even some tennis players, drawn by the crowd, wanted

to see the attraction.

Mike hit the tice and quickly set up a tight break. However, after five he despatched the pivot ball to one, shortly to be joined by his pioneer from six. He laid up for a sextuple! Hugh could not believe the audacity of his opponent. He had secretly begun to admire his opponent's skill and ice-cool temperament. He was even considering him for a place in the England tour to South Africa in the winter, where Hugh could work on Mike's rough edges and turn him into a world-class player. Not now. This was beyond the pale. Not only was Mike showing scant regard for the occasion, it seemed to Hugh as if he was deliberately setting-out to humiliate him.

The England captain turned down the shot and firmly played a ball into corner four. Undeterred, Mike rush-peeled his forward ball right down in front of two-back, made one and completed a second peel. After two-balling to four he picked up Hugh's second ball and set up the third peel. Five; three-back. Victory was now within his grasp. Six, and the four-back peel on the way to one-back - it was beginning to look easy.

Then, after one-back: disaster. A simple take-off behind the forward ball near corner three trickled over the boundary. The crowd gasped, Hugh barely concealed a smirk and Mike flung down his mallet, striding up the grass slope towards Hurlingham's famous portico to console himself with thoughts of what might have been.

Hugh did not hurry. Hugh never hurries. Composed, he surveyed the scene, decided exactly how he was going to construct his break, planning as many shots ahead as a chess grandmaster.

As he neared the end of his 45-minute break to four-back (eschewing the opportunity to peel and peg-out his opponent - "unnecessarily risky", he thought), the crowd's attention turned back to Mike. There he was, by the east boundary, gently exercising with his mallet in preparation for a shot at the lift. If he missed it would probably be his last in this year's Opens.

To be continued.....

Feedback

For some reason - could it be the inspiring influence of the new Editor? - the last edition of the Gazette was filled with items which seemed to deserve comment.

Firstly, Colin Irwin's reply to Mike Hammelev. While there may be a demand for more and better umpires, in my opinion there also needs to be a demand for less umpiring. People seem to call for umpires on strokes about which there is going to be no doubt at all one way or the other, and both the 'in' player and the 'out' player are going to know if a fault has been committed. If umpires were only called for when there was really likely to be doubt, they would not be needed so often.

I am sure that eventually croquet is going to become a timed game like chess, and each player is going to have some time on their clock. There will be those who will say that this produces a great increase in the cost of the game; but I am sure more games of chess are played than games of croquet, and the provision of clocks has never been a difficulty. Playing in a recent league

match my opponent, to whom I was giving several bisques, fumbled a shot and was left with his ball sitting 3 ft away from mine, giving me an easy break. I swear that he took five minutes before deciding to take a bisque. I am sure that these people do not do it deliberately, but it is absolutely infuriating for the 'out' player when this sort of thing is repeated time and again.

I have a very simple solution to practising - apart from not caring whether my opponent does so or not - which is to play my opening shot, should I be given the opportunity, towards the east boundary from corner 1, which gives you a much longer length of lawn over which to gauge the speed of the shot.

On the subject of trophies, I come from the sailing world where it is almost invariable that as well as the trophy to hold for a year, which is duly engraved, the winner gets a memento - and frequently much lower placed people as well. At some clubs, the rule is that prizes go to the square root of the entries: i.e. sixteen competitors /four prizes. The prizes do not have

to be very big. At the last committee meeting of our club, three of the members were given teaspoons which I had won as sailing prizes. I therefore do not agree with David Magee's suggestion that mementos should be substituted for engraving: I think we need both.

I do agree with Andrew Gregory that the Automatic Handicapping System is not yet perfect. As I happen to be the chairman of the national handicapping organization for sailing, I know that providing the perfect solution is impossible while people are imperfect. Systems can be fine, but they depend upon people playing fair by them and using them in the proper way. However, minus systems surely cannot be fair anyway. As I understand it, the number of bisques given to a plus player is reckoned to be the number of extra strokes they will take to get round. Therefore, if a plus player playing to their handicap meets a minus player, then unless the minus player goes round in two turns, the plus player is going to win, because he has more strokes in hand than he theoretically needs.

John Anstey

It Could Be You!

Bath Croquet Club have secured the first, of what will hopefully be many, grants from the National Lottery. Here they share some knowledge with prospective applicants.

At some early stage in your deliberation you must obtain an "Application Pack" from the Sports Council (0171-388-1277). That contains a lot of helpful reading material:

Guidelines for Applicants and a Guide to Project Development in addition to very detailed ten page application form. That form has to be submitted in original. Photocopies are unacceptable. Make sure that whoever phones for the application form has a firm understanding of your project because in the course of that phone call they will want to record: the name of the club/organisation and the title of the project; broad details of what is involved and the amount of your bid;

the name of the person who will sign the application form and with whom all future contact will be made.

You are also allocated a unique application number at that time which has to be quoted on the application and all future correspondence.

The application form seeks details of the club and its plans and facilities, specific details of the project - including drawings or plans and full estimates of the costs (copies of contractors' estimates are sought); exactly how the project will be funded and so on. They will want to know the objectives of the project and what the benefits

will be. Security of tenure and planning approvals will be important aspects and it will be helpful to your cause if one of your major objectives is youth development.

So far as the funding of projects is concerned, it should be realised that the MAXIMUM the lottery will grant is 65% of the total costing. The smaller the percentage you apply for, the more likely you are to succeed. We sought a 60% grant and have to obtain the balance of 40% from other sources. In this connection, the Croquet Association and the Bath City Council Sports Development Organisation were extremely helpful. (We are due for 3 years of fund raising projects to repay the loan!) Self-help by volunteers in carrying out work is also of considerable benefit as its value is taken into account in arriving at the percentage figure.

You should be a properly constituted club as they will want to see a copy of your constitution. If you need to borrow money it would help if your constitution contained an 'Authority to Borrow' otherwise your members are legally entitled to refuse to help repay the loan. If the club had to be wound up in the future, it may be that the funds and equipment should be offered to similar voluntary organisations.

As for timings, it is quite a good idea to make sure your application will arrive at the relevant address just a day or so into a new

quarter, i.e. 1st/2nd July, October, January, or April because I believe they break their allocation periods up in that way.

Do NOT expect a speedy response. Our application was a simple one involving mainly the levelling of lawns and was for a comparatively small amount of money. We were told that small projects were dealt with more speedily than large ones. Even so they told us we would hear the result in 12 to 14 weeks. It actually took 18 weeks as the Lottery Fund Sports Unit had been inundated with more applications than anticipated. So be patient - and do not expect to be able to carry out work immediately you do hear.

You should bear in mind that you may be granted a provisional award. There will be a full press release as a result of that award just as if it were final but you will NOT be given the go-ahead to start work until they are satisfied with your response to any further points they have made. At this stage they threaten that the award can still be withdrawn if they are not completely satisfied with things - or if you start work before you get the go-ahead! On the day of the Press Release the local press is likely to ring you up for your comments, so be prepared to give yourself some free publicity. GOOD LUCK!

Michael Cope
Hon. Sec. Bath C.C.

Tournaments '95

Championship of North West England

Southport & Birkdale
31st July - 3rd August

After a good breakfast in their tent Peter and James Death considered the task before them. As in previous years Peter had brought the family to Southport's Victoria Park camping site so they could enjoy the resort's amenities while he managed the four day tournament. Recalling previous years they donned wellies and waterproofs and set out to clear the lawns of their various sized lakes. Moments later found them outside the club house, mouths gaping, eyes wide in amazement; not even a puddle, just lawn after lawn of dry green grass. What bliss, thought the manager. And so it was that by 9.30, bedecked with gleaming white hoops, brightly coloured balls, clips, flags, parasols and cushions on white chairs, the scene was set for four days of good company, good weather, good food and, of course, good croquet; well, for some.

Those that didn't fare so well had their excuses. Firstly there was the weather! Each day became hotter than the previous one, no wind, little shade, many players wilted in the heat. Then there were the ladybirds, millions of them on day two. Some players complained they were unable to pick out the red ball so how could they possibly roquet it? Brian Lewis claimed that

an encrusted hoop had a reduced width which caused him to clang it, or should that be crunch it. Nature conservationists found that every shot caused mass slaughter and spent much time gently clearing a path to the roquet.

Throughout all this Chris Farthing strode through the A class opposition unaffected by either blistering sun or black spotted creatures. Only the two Deaths took games from him during the two series and this resulted in a close fought final between him and the manager, Peter Death. Peter was the first to 4-back, followed immediately by Chris. Peter's attempt at a triple, always speculative, ended at 2-back and penult, Chris's at 4-back and rover. Some in and out play followed, the innings changing hands on long shots. Peter got his forward ball to the peg, but then stuck in penult with the other, allowing Chris to make the last three hoops and a rover peel. Unable to peg out his partner ball Chris pegged out Peter's peg ball, leaving partner close to peg, and when Peter missed his lift shot it was all over.

In the B class advanced play event, David Nicholson and Peter Handley dominated the class, Peter eventually won through with a maximum 5 wins. The key games were a hard fought +2 against Carol Lewis and a +8 against his nearest rival, David.

The C/D class, handicap singles, was played as a full bisque base 10. Leonard

Ainsworth lead the group until a strong 3 wins finish by Brian Kerr produced a play-off. There was an unusual conclusion to the final when Brian came from 4 and 3-back against peg and peg to beat Leonard +2.

The format each day, for most players, included at least one class game and several main event, handicap games. The latter was played as a knockout combined with a consolation event for losers to play each other, losers and winners until dusk. In the knockout, Chris Dent (5) and Don Williamson (0.5), who had both experienced mixed fortunes in their class events, played their way through formidable opposition to meet in the final, while at the same time taking on all comers from the consolation event. Chris actually managed to play 4 games in the latter event, winning all of them. By the time he reached the knockout final he had won all his seven handicap games and was playing with great confidence. Don, always having to give away bisques, had played extremely well to reach the final, including wins against two class winners, but he knew that with 4.5 bisques against him his chances of winning the final were slim. So it turned out to be; Chris's confident play continued and he won +26 without Don taking croquet.

Two other players deserve special mention, David Nicholson and Rachel Anderson. David was the runner-up in the B class, only losing one game, then just one



Play in progress during Southport's September advanced play weekend.

more to the eventual winner of the handicap. He finished the tournament with 11 wins in 13 games. This was Rachel's first tournament, having only taken up the game a few weeks earlier, understandably she found it difficult to create breaks in her earlier games. However, it was clear that she had been coached and she kept trying to gain the maximum out of each bisque. By the end of the tournament Rachel was holding an innings together for 4 or 5 hoops at a time and thoroughly enjoying herself; 3 wins out of 7 is an excellent achievement for a beginner.

A final mention must be made of the nature conservationists. By day three, some of the ladybirds, having long run out of aphids, wondered whether humans would provide some nourishment; from then on the conservationists turned into Rambos. The ladybirds retreated to safer pastures leaving the lawns for the humans to play the final day on crunch free green grass. So ended four days of bliss for the manger and periodic bliss for the players.

Brian Lewis

Championship of the South West of England, Budleigh Salterton 31st July - 5th August

Summoned by Gulls

*Bright by the gleaming sea the daily games,
With speeding balls and unremitting sun
And breathless heat and pints of lemon squash,
Outplayers dozing damply in the shade.
And while the steaming players stride the lawns,
The circling gulls shout loudly from above
And chuckle wickedly at each clang'd hoop.*

(with apologies to John Betjeman)

The summer week at Budleigh this year evoked memories - or fantasies - of the archetypal seaside holiday, with brilliant sun, glinting sea, butterflies in the buddleia and day-long outdoor games with friends. In reality, the excessively dry spell had created considerable problems for the club in preparing for the tournament. With no rain for weeks, all the lawns would have been parched and straw-coloured but for the efforts of certain club members who supplemented the work groundsman by carrying out an intensive watering programme to keep the better lawns in reasonable shape for playing. Available

resources, in both manpower and finance (lawn watering is a costly business), would not extend to giving this attention to all ten lawns. The club therefore decided to provide some well-watered lawns and others as the weather dictated, enabling players to have opportunities on the decent ones through the normal rotation of games, as well as having to cope with the difficult surface and inequalities of the lawns normally used only for golf croquet.

Towards the end of the week it became very difficult to control the balls on the driest lawns, and had it been possible to arrange for overnight watering during the course of the tournament, conditions might have been a little easier. Most players, however, accepted the situation cheerfully, or at least philosophically. As one was heard to remark: "The lawn giveth and the lawn taketh away." A few excelled in difficult circumstances; David Magee beat Shaun Carter on lawn 10 (generally reckoned to be the worst) in an hour and a half with two beautifully controlled breaks.

The tournament was fully subscribed, with competitors of all degrees of experience. Angela Moore and Esther Jones were novice players venturing a little apprehensively into their first tournament, and Angela reached the doubles semi-final, partnered by Lionel Tibble. A very wide handicap range (-1 to 20) made for some keen competition in the A class event and some heavily afforested handicap games, including one between the highest and the lowest bisquers in the tournament; when Margaret Selmes faced Gail Curry with a vast palisade, she felt that her birthday had arrived early, and Gail celebrated the event by setting up a row of birthday candles as bisques, lighting each one as it was taken!

All events were played in American blocks, with playoffs at the end of the week. Initially games were not timed, but heat and lawn conditions necessitated time limits from Tuesday morning. Games in the class and handicap singles blocks could be supplemented by additional Egyptian games, Farouks, with prizes for the man and woman whose index had most improved by the end of the tournament (won by David and Eileen Magee) and a prize for the person who had played most games (Mike Hammelev, who seemed to be continuously on the lawns!).

Much of the week's play was affected in some way by the heat and the speed of the ground. Many games went to time and many competitors found it an effort to forsake the shade of the bar or verandah to be scorched

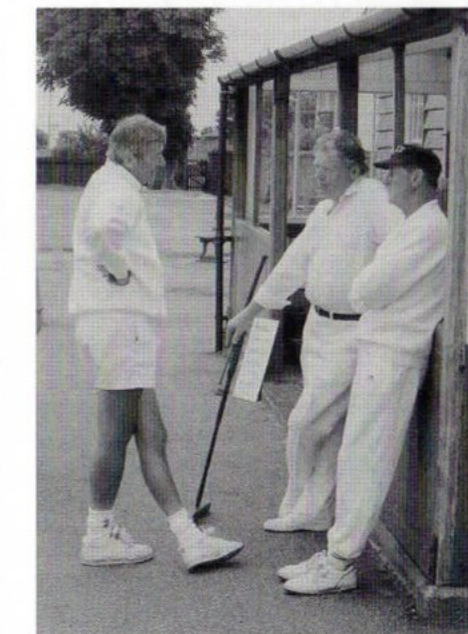
on the lawns. Few triples were attempted and only one successfully executed, by Peter Trimmer who won a bottle of wine from the manager (Peter Dorke) for his achievement.

The proposed Tuesday evening Bridge session which Chris Bennett had offered to organise was abandoned. The tournament dinner (an innovation this year) was moved outdoors to the verandah and terrace overlooking lawn seven, and the occasion was generally declared an excellent feature of the tournament, although many felt that the meal did not compare favourably, in price and range of dishes, with the excellent lunches available each day.

A montage of images developed to epitomise the week: Martin Grainger-Brown striding out in shorts and pith helmet; players on lawn nine double banking with a small flock of sea gulls; David Purdon (ROT) with hoop-setting gear, conscientiously making his morning round; a squirrel peering over the boundary board of lawn 4 to watch play; the club flag hanging limply for most of the week but taking life in a slight breeze and for a moment attaining full rectangularity (a precise sighting made at 11.14 on Wednesday morning).

Saturday surprised us all with a grey damp morning. Semi-finals were played before lunch, as well as more Egyptian games for those keen to play (Mike Hammelev still on the lawn!). There was also an advanced one-ball event in which Roy Weaver carried off the prize with four wins.

By early afternoon, the weather was in brilliant mode once again and club



Ron Selmes, Mike Hammelev & Bob Whitaker in deep discussion at Budleigh.

members who had arrived to watch the finals were able to abandon umbrellas and sit in the sunshine.

The handicap final between David Magee (0) and Tony Duston-Smith (4) saw Tony take one ball to peg with 2 bisques, leaving his partner ball on two. A minor disaster with the remaining two bisques left him on hoop three, whereupon David went round to peg him out and subsequently won +8.

The D class final between Bob Whitaker and Doug Taylor was also played on handicap. Bob surged well ahead with his bisques in the early stages of the game but, once they were gone, Doug slowly and steadily caught up. After the final turn in time the scores were even, and in a tense "sudden death" extension Bob managed to run penult and snatch victory.

The C class match between Eileen Magee and John MacBurnie-Wood was closely fought, with the opponents level-pegging for much of the game, and never more than two or three points between them. Scores were even when time was called, whereupon "Mac" made three more hoops

to win.

In the B class event Martin Grainger-Brown had dominated his block, winning games by large margins, but in the final he was unable to withstand the attack of Rosemary Gugan, who had played with authority throughout the week and gave Martin few chances. She won +22.

In the Championship event the finalists were once again Gail Curry and John Toye, but the match was very different from last year's when John did not take croquet and Gail won in less than an hour. (Surely a Championship merits a best-of-three final?) This year much of the game was more calculated and tactical and progress was slower. Eventually Gail was for peg and 4-back. John hit the lift shot with his backward ball and went round to peg, attempted to peg out one of Gail's balls but failed. Gail hit the lift shot and made 4-back but missed a long rush up the lawn to penult, leaving an easy lift shot which John hit and finished the game.

Presentations after tea, and thanks to the excellently unflappable Dorke management team (Peter + Geraldine +

Tilly the amazing croquet dog) everything was completed in good time except the doubles final, where a delayed start had been made inevitable by Tony Duston-Smith's previous involvement in the handicap semi-final and final. In the doubles final he partnered Roland Henderson against Robert and Marjorie Scaddon. The game was later resumed, Tony and Roland winning +9 on time.

After the presentations, Peter expressed his appreciation to the host club for the help and support he had received in preparing the tournament, especially from Christine Bagnall to whom he awarded the "Tilly" trophy (a Dorke innovation this year) as the player who had shown most generosity and forbearance to the management. Peter, who will not be at the tournament next year, concluded by passing his mantle on to Gail Curry - quite literally, as he gave her his inscribed manager's jacket.

So all that remained was the long road home after a marvellous croquet holiday. Thank you, Peter Dorke. We shall miss you next year.
Margaret Selmes

Ask the Experts

The column where members of the Laws Committee give their explanations on your queries on the laws.

Q1. Playing red, I failed to move the croquetted ball, yellow. I replaced red next to yellow, but so as to give my opponent only a single ball target. My opponent queried this, but I assured her that I had come across this situation before and Referee A at Bristol had said this was quite in order. My opponent missed the shot at my balls, the game continued and I won. Later, my opponent saw me and said that Referee B and C at Cheltenham said that I was not right, and that red should have been replaced exactly where it came from, ie giving a two-ball target. On returning to Bristol I consulted Referee A again and he again said that red can be replaced anywhere around yellow - (Law 32(c) "...the balls are replaced in their lawful positions before the stroke in which the fault was committed...")

In order to settle the matter I decided to go to the top and phoned Martin Murray, but before I give you his answer below, I would like to ask your readers (particularly referee readers) to consider also a similar situation:-

Q2. If again playing red, the player absent mindedly plays the wrong ball (ie yellow) can it be replaced in any position around red or must it be replaced exactly where it came from? (Law 28(b)(1) "...the striker's ball is then replaced in any lawful position to take croquet provided that

it is not within the yard line area.") I have asked a number of referees about these two questions during the last few weeks, and only about half gave the correct answers to both questions.

A1. Red has to be replaced beside yellow exactly where it came from (or the nearest point on the yard line). **Correct W.E.L.**

A2. Yellow an be replaced at any point around red (but not within the yard line area). **Incorrect W.E.L.**

You might like to ask for Martin's comments, as there is reasoning behind the two different answers to fairly similar situations. He has admitted that the wording of Law 32(c) could be clearer.

Rosemary Gugan

Congratulations, Rosemary, for making a successful contact with the Chairman of the Laws Committee. Your answer to question 2 is not quite correct, although it points out the difference between the two cases. As you have quoted the relevant Laws, I shall only comment on the reasons.

When an error or a fault which causes the end of turn is committed, the general principle is that the balls are replaced in their lawful positions before the fault or the stroke in error. The

exception for croquet strokes arises because there is a specific lawful position for the striker's ball when a fault is committed but not when a wrong ball is played. To understand this you have to consider what happens after the preceding roquet. When a roquet is made or is deemed to have been made the striker's ball becomes the ball in hand (Law 9(a)(4) and 5). As a consequence (Law 18(a)(4) or (b)) the striker places his ball according to Law 19 (a) "To take croquet the striker must place the striker's ball on the ground in contact with the roqueted ball however he chooses provided that the striker's ball is not in contact with any other ball..."

However, the striker may change his mind about the position of his ball at any time up to the point at which he strikes it. It is the striking of a ball that confirms a lawful position to which it can be replaced when a fault is committed. Striking any other ball ie playing the wrong ball, does not give a lawful position to the striker's ball. It is still in effect a ball in hand and may be placed in contact with the replaced roqueted ball in any lawful position.

In Q2 yellow should be retrieved and placed in the position from where it was illegally played; red is then picked up and placed around yellow in any lawful position. It is the striker's ball that is placed around the roqueted ball, not vice versa. Both these situations come under section D of the Laws. Referees are not expected to commit this section to memory but should be able to find the answers quickly by reference to the Laws book.
W.E. Lamb

Handicap Alterations

Edgbaston 21-23 July

C.G. Bennett	1	to	0.5
W.J. Sidebottom	11	to	10

Hurlingham July

Mrs H. Carlisle	2.5	to	3
A. Chance	4	to	3
N. J. Curran	10	to	9
J. Glynn	6	to	7
R. F. Hoskins	6	to	5
P. Joseph	9	to	8
R. D. Porter	18	to	16
de Roeck	20*	to	16

Hunstanton 26-30 August

Dr G.E. Fowler	0.5	to	1
M. O'Connell	1	to	0.5
J.L. Toye	12	to	11
D.C. Tutt	2	to	2.5
M. Kolbuszewski	4.5	to	5
Celia Steward	4	to	3.5
Celia Pearce	9	to	8
M. Harbord	14	to	12

Southport 23-24 September

D. Nicholson	3.5	to	3
Mrs B Haslam	4	to	4.5

Cheltenham 24 September

before play			
D. Gaunt	-1.5	to	-1
M. MacBean	4	to	4.5
after play			
U. Atter	16	to	14
N. Evans	6	to	5
D. Howson	11	to	12
M. MacBean	4.5	to	5
P. Pawson	6	to	5
B. Whitaker	14	to	16

Cheltenham 13-15 October

before play			
M. Ranshaw	3.5	to	3
Mrs B. Widdows	8	to	7
after play			
S. Badger	0	to	-0.5
L. Bradforth	11	to	10
D. Brydon	11	to	10
Maureen Evans	12	to	14
Jean Powell	18	to	16
Mrs E. Weitz	10	to	11
Mrs D.A. Wheeler	9	to	8
Kismet Whittall	3	to	3.5

Parsons Green Club

Mrs S. Davies	5	to	6
Dr J. Eden	3	to	2.5

High Wycombe Club

Mr J. Bone	9		
Miss J. Geddes	12		
Mr P. Higgins	18		
Mr R. Jackman	2.5		

Mr. R. Judson	12		
Mrs A. Lockyer	20		
Mr P. Mayers	4.5		
Mr K Noble	12		
Mr A. Oldham	12		
Mr D. Reeve	-1		
Mr. G. Youd	6		
Mrs G. Youd	18		

Hurlingham Club


D. Cross	4.5	to	4
Mrs I. Macdonald	8	to	9
H. Toller	14	to	12
P. Torrington	1	to	0.5

Belsay Hall Club

J. Anstey	3.5		
V. Beasley	20		
B. Bird	20		
Mrs S. Bird	20		
N. Cornick	16		
J. Grant	13		
T. Hughes	20		
Mrs D. Hughes	20		
D. Jelley	16		
W. Kendall	16		
Mrs E. Kendall	20		
Ms E. Nisbet	14		
R. Peters	6		
D. Price	16		
Mrs J. Price	16		
D. Robinson	10		
Mrs B. Seymour	16		
J. Shotton	14		
Mrs E. Shotton	14		
E. Smith	10		
Mrs H. Smith	12		
C. Topaz	16		
D. Trotman	4.5		

New Clubs

St Bartholomew's and the Royal London Hospitals Medical and Dental College Croquet Club.
(Is this the longest croquet club name? Ed.)



Don't forget to use the Editor's Hot-line on Monday January 22nd 7 - 9pm

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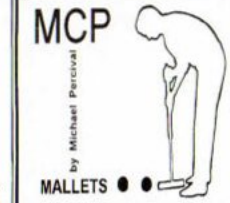
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