

# Club Focus

## Crake Valley C.C.

"The Leven and Crake Valley Croquet, Tennis and North Lonsdale Archers' Club" to give our club its full and splendid title, is the one and only recognised croquet club in Cumbria. You will find us in Greenodd, where the rivers flowing out of Coniston Water (the Crake) and Windermere (the Leven) meet the sea in a wide estuary. At how many other clubs can you see - while your opponent is making an all-round break - herons and cormorants, dragon-flies and high above - buzzards?

Crake Valley, established about 100 years ago, very nearly went the same way as the defunct clubs recorded in Prichard's history of the game. By the late 1980's it was on its knees. Amazingly, however, the Crake Valley story is one of decline, fall and against all the odds - revival and renewal.

Historically, croquet was the first game to be established at the club. Later, that pushy newcomer, lawn tennis, threatened to oust it. In fact, our records show that tennis was introduced here in 1909 "against considerable opposition". Diversification into tennis and archery, however, helped the club to survive. Meanwhile, the kind of croquet played at Crake Valley by the remaining few seems to have been stuck in a Victorian or Edwardian time warp. We haven't actually found a "cage" with a bell in it, but they did play a "sequence" version of croquet right through to recent years. Some of the equipment we found in the clubhouse was not exactly modern, either. (How many of you have seen pegs with small wooden extensions set at right angles to the main shaft for holding clips?)

Sadly, even though the club as a whole struggled on through difficult times, by the mid -1980's croquet had gone, tennis had declined and archery was only a memory. The lawns had begun to revert to nature - at an alarming rate.

What about the picture now, ten years on from that low point? At the close of the 1995 season we had 65 members (croquet and tennis) and the number of croquet players - drawn from a wide geographical area - had doubled in the last year or so. Croquet, in fact, had returned centre stage. We run a full and lively programme of club and inter-club events, and our membership includes many rapidly improving players.

The agent for this turn-round in our fortunes has been the chance coming together of the right people at the right time. It began with the conversion of an existing tennis member to croquet through a friend who was already a player at Bowdon. Information from the CA about former players now living croquet-less in Cumbria and an advertisement in the local papers brought together a nucleus of keen



The smallest court - a wilderness in 1990.

new members with backgrounds in business, engineering, education, agriculture, surveying, medicine, the law - all useful trainings, it emerged, for the work ahead.

To begin with, that work was more like archaeology than restoration. We, the members (a number increasing rapidly over the last year or two), have learnt and put into practice all kinds of skills: how to unblock silt-clogged drainage systems; how to scythe, and how to "make hay" in November; how to rebuild mowers; how to remove a six inch layer of "thatch" from one of the lawns (We're still working on that problem with help from Edinburgh University); how to map and correct irregularities in the playing-surfaces; and not least, how to be patient when it looks as if things are getting worse rather than better - when, for instance, the mower conks out yet again just before an important event.

At the same time, while the courts were improving and interest growing, we have been working hard to increase membership and the quality of our play. We have organised Open Days and Open Weekends; we have taken courses to train as coaches; we have run courses for beginners and brought in experts to help our more experienced players; we now also have a qualified referee.

We have run courses off-site at Windermere and the National Park Centre at Brockhole; we have publicised the club in local press and on local radio; we have held social and fund-raising events. Oh, and broadcast on BBC Radio 4 (their flagship programme, Today, no less) and Radio 5.

Although the practical work has all been done voluntarily by members, we have had help from the CA and the Croquet North Federation, from our "neighbours" at Southport (60 miles away!), and from clubs like Bowdon and Cheltenham. We have valued and made full of all their generous assistance.

At the end of last season we held our usual Short Croquet event. To see all three lawns (two full-size and one half-size) graced by white clad players on a warm September afternoon with seven games in play, does at least encourage us to continue our efforts.

Future plans include the revision of our constitution and committee structures and the generation of an education programme, linking us to at least one local school. There's also the small matter of our Centenary to celebrate - a Centenary that might well never have been.

Come and see us for yourselves on your next Lake District holiday. All visitors are welcome.

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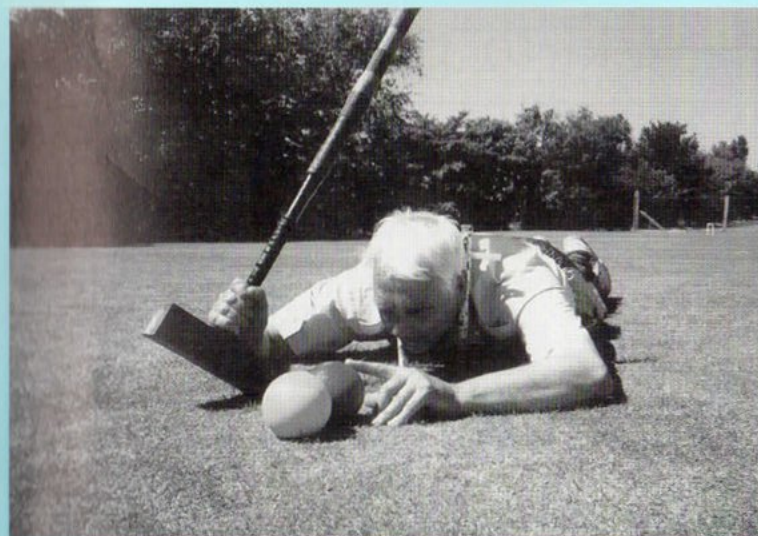


Tea at the end of the day - fairly informal!

# The CROQUET Gazette

Issue 242

March 1996

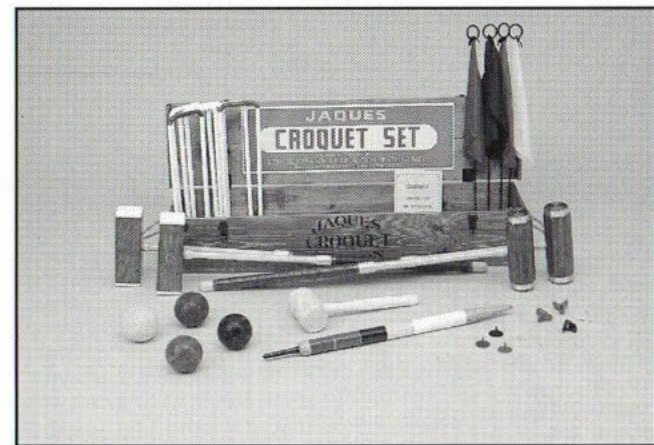


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- Club Focus
- Tournament Reports

- 1995 C.A. AGM Minutes
- Laugh With Jack
- Complete British Rankings
- Letters
- Plus Much More



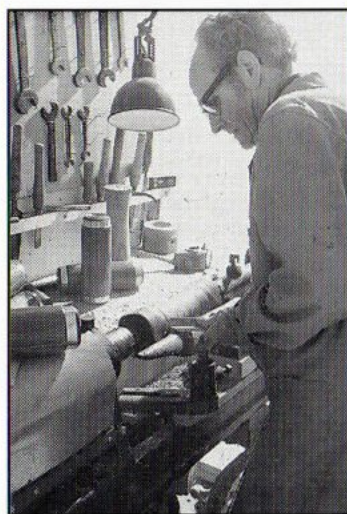
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Front Cover: Entries from the 1995 Photographic Competition by Val Wilkinson, Georgina Llewellyn, Brian Kennedy & Carol Lewis.

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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

**More Food For Thought**

Following on from my editorial in the last issue which broached the subject of publicity, later in this issue you will find that the Chairman's Column contains an explanation of the lack of a publicity committee.

Given that the subject of committees and how they work has been placed on the agenda I would like to explore this subject a little further. It seems feasible that council members indicate which committees they would wish to serve on. However, this seems to have one basic flaw, which is, that which has occurred with publicity committee this year could quite easily occur with any other committee or even committees in the future if nobody was willing to serve on them or chair them. I cannot help but wonder what would happen if, say for example, the tournament committee fell out of favour with council members? I may be being trenchant here, once again, but my own view is that if there is a vacancy of any sort that could lead to a particular committee's work's being undertaken to less than expected committee standards, council members have a duty to fill that vacancy. After all, they are elected by the membership and therefore entrusted with the smooth running of the whole of the Association, not just the small areas they are particularly interested in. Having said that, I do understand why the chairman has not dragoned a council member into fill the vacant publicity chairman's position, but perhaps if council members cannot fulfil the responsibilities that the membership expects of them, they should consider carefully their reasons for being on council and whose interests they are serving best.

On the subject of how committees actually work, I have only experience of one in the CA, that of the Editorial Board. I am afraid I have to disagree with the former chairman of this board on his definition of the role of the board, which was published in issue 239. My own view is that the board should play an active role in the planning and obtaining of information for publication within the Gazette, as well as actively gauging reaction from members and relaying this to the editor. This is also the view shared by my counterpart in Australia, who recently placed an advertisement in his publication for a new committee, stating clearly that the Gazette was "not a one man band".

Alas as yet I cannot define the majority of the board's contribution as voluntarily active under any heading, not a word since October from most. I cannot help but wonder if the "watch dog" would have barked by now if the editor had been so dormant? Perhaps what we need is a committee, and not a board after all.

**Looking Ahead To The Future**

We have much to look forward to in the new season, which will be upon us all too quickly. One look at the fixture book shows that there are 143 tournaments on offer this year, and no matter what your level of play you are guaranteed to find something to suit your croquet needs.

Hopefully the Gazette too will continue to meet member's needs. The Tournament Review supplement and colour photographs will be included with three issues this year, following the response to their first appearance last year. Therefore it is once again hoped that all tournament reports that are forwarded will be published. If you happen to be one of the many report writers please bear in mind that all reports should be sent within seven days of the completion of the tournament, as they can take some time to collate and it would be I think preferable to publish them in chronological order.

Gail Curry

## ~ Obituary ~

## Ian McClelland

It is with deep regret that I have to report the death of Ian McClelland on 4th January from a severe and totally unexpected heart attack. He was 65. The loss to croquet in the Midlands and to his many friends will be immeasurable.

Ian took up croquet some ten years ago after many years of distinguished participation in rugby, cricket and squash, and applied himself to it with total dedication and determination. He was delighted when, briefly, in 1994 he achieved a minus handicap. For some five years he was a leading member of the Warwickshire team at the Inter-Counties and a regular "presence" at tournaments around the country.

After a lifetime in the legal profession he regarded the Laws of Association Croquet as a splendid challenge and after qualifying as a referee many will remember him not merely giving a decision but defining it precisely by quoting the Laws paragraph by subparagraph.

During his five year term as Chairman of Edgbaston a number of capital projects were carried out under his wise counsel and guidance. He was also Treasurer of the West Midlands Federation for many years.

The Edgbaston club benefited from another of his interests - woodwork and carpentry. The club abounds in beautifully designed and turned bisque markers and other specially conceived items. Members could be sure of getting another five years out of their mallets after a McClelland repair.

Not least, Ian was an ardent promoter of the game and an able and willing (if at times unsolicited!) coach at all levels.

It has to be said that he was not the quietest of players on the lawns and was frequently heard to voice his astonishment at the vicissitudes of fortune which he thought visited him more than most, but his irritation was always with himself and he was a generous opponent in both victory and defeat.

Away from the game Ian's range of interests was remarkable. For many years he was a noted actor and director in local drama societies and apart from being a fine bridge player (bridge/croquet player of the year 1994) he had an encyclopaedic knowledge of board games and could discourse authoritatively and amusingly on a wide range of scholarly topics.

Outspoken and sometimes daunting, Ian was nevertheless the most loyal and supportive of friends who would spare no effort to give help when needed.

Above all he was a devoted family man and our sympathies go out to Jean, his wife of 28 years, and their daughters Sally and Wendy.

Chris Bennett



## The Chairman's Column

Gail's trenchant views on the wisdom of discontinuing the Publicity committee, expressed in her editorial in the last issue, deserve an explanation from me, and I shall start with the way committees are appointed. Every August all continuing and prospective council members receive a form requesting them to indicate in order of preference three committees on which they would like to serve. They are also allowed to name those committees on which they are not prepared to serve. The Chairman of Council then appoints council members to committees taking into consideration their preferences and the need for some continuity. In general, this is a successful and sensible way of proceeding but some committees are very much more popular than others: Tournament and International are the most popular; Publicity the least. However, this year as last, all council members were appointed to two committees of their choice, although not all to their first choice. The Publicity committee attracted three members of council in addition to the three ex-officio members, but no-one was prepared to be chairman or to devote any time to committee work. In fact, when papers were sent out in advance of the meeting, it transpired that only one person other than myself would attend. I could have dragooned a few people on to the committee but that is not my style. If people are not willing, they are not likely to be effective.

That is the background to the situation, but it is not a disaster. You must bear in mind that committees do not actually do anything. They are collections of people who sit around and talk and take decisions. The actual work comes afterwards and is usually performed by individuals, often members of the relevant committee. The fact that the committee is inoperative does not mean that work will not be done. Other committees have been asked to take on the responsibility for publicity in their own areas. In particular, the International committee will be looking after publicity for the MacRobertson Shield. Clubs will still be supported in their own efforts with posters and other material from the office; results will still be faxed to newspapers, but we cannot force them to publish; we have adequate stocks of leaflets and all enquirers to the office will receive an information pack and their local clubs will be informed; manufacturers will be supplied with booklets to include with their croquet sets. In short, we are reverting to the position about five years ago before the Publicity committee came into existence and I do not think that you will notice the difference.

Gail's other point about reporting of events like the Golden Mallet, the Croquet Classic, etc. is valid. The responsibility, as for all tournaments, lies with the organiser and manager as stated in tournament regulations and perhaps this needs to be reinforced. All tournaments are important to those who play in them, but particularly so in the case of national tournaments.

Finally, I should like your co-operation in providing a good response to David Appleton's survey on croquet injuries. Who knows, the results may extend your croquet-playing life!

Bill Lamb

## NEWS &amp; INFORMATION

## Change Of Venue For Eastern Championship

The Eastern Championship will now take place at HUNSTANTON on 26th - 28th April.

The Colchester lawns were resurfaced/reseeded over the winter. Unfortunately the lawns will not be ready for the Championship in April.

It is therefore fortunate that the venue can be changed to: Hunstanton, managed by Richard Hilditch. Please send entries (£20) to: Sarah Hampson, 23 Sandringham Road, Hunstanton, Norfolk PE36 5DP (Tel: 01485 - 532207)

## Attention All Croquet Playing Solicitors

Solicitor Neil Griffin is trying to arrange a Solicitors v Bar croquet match. Would anyone interested please contact him at Scott Rowe, Solicitors, Axminster, EX13 5DS, Tel: 01297 32345, (DX 43303 Axminster).

## Centenary Exhibition Planned

The Centenary Committee are planning to organise an exhibition of historical material relevant to the CA's forthcoming centenary. This could consist of books, pictures, photographs, artefacts, trophies or anything else of interest in the context of the last hundred years. No doubt many readers will have such items in their possession. If so, Stephen Badger would be happy to hear from them to discuss whether a loan would be possible or a copy provided.

The exhibition may possibly be mounted at Chasleton House (the home of Walter Jones Whitmore in the last century) when it opens in August 1997 and it might be possible to stage it before that at other properties of the National Trust or English Heritage.

## MacRobertson Shield Dinner

The opening event of the 1996 MacRobertson Shield series will be a dinner, to be held on Friday, 14th June, in the Senate Chamber of the University of Nottingham, at 7 for 7.30 pm. In addition to the teams and other official guests, some places have been earmarked for touring spectators, but a number are available for others who wish to attend.

Tickets, priced £25, can be obtained from Dr. I. G. Vincent, 29, Thoresby Road, Beeston, Nottingham NG9 3EN, and will be allocated in order of request with a closing date of 28th May. Cheques should be made payable to the Nottingham Croquet Club, who are arranging the dinner on behalf of the Croquet Association. Please state any dietary requirements. Wine will be provided during the meal and there will be a cash bar for drinks before and afterwards. Dress: jacket and tie. The Senate Chamber is in the Trent Building, the one with the clock tower which overlooks the lawns from either side of the lake. Enter the University South entrance and follow the road round till you reach it.

Why not make a weekend of it and watch the opening matches the following day?

## Coaching Course Details Update

Following a good response to the advance notice of Croquet Association coaching courses provided in the last issue of the Gazette, anyone who has booked a place on a course, or is intending to book a place, should consult the fixture book to confirm all of the relevant details of their chosen course, as there were some changes made after the item appeared in the Gazette.

## MacRobertson Shield

Readers are invited to have a drink on Mr Mac. If anyone can provide a name and telephone number which leads to the sale of a page of advertising in the MacRobertson Shield Souvenir Programme, a mixed case of red and white wine will wing its way to you.

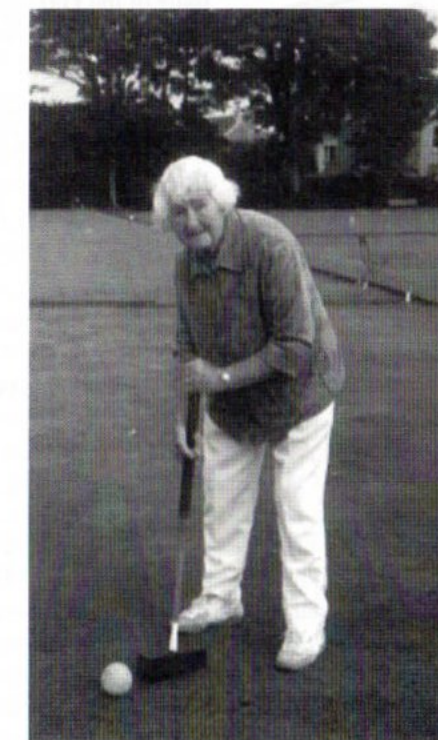
In theory there is nothing to stop anyone winning case after case but the response to Keith Aiton's request for similar information in the November issue suggests that Oddbins' stock will be decimated.

Please contact Robert Porter by telephone on 0171 - 935 1897 or fax 0171 224 6754 if you think you have any possible contacts.

## Birthday Celebrations at Southwick

Southwick club celebrated Ann Smith's 90th birthday, on 24th November, with a lunch party. John Solomon led the congratulations, and singing of happy birthday whilst Ann cut her cake.

Ann still enjoys practice and playing games, having made an excellent recovery after a hip replacement over a year ago.



Ann Smith, still enjoying the game, at ninety years young!

# NEWS & INFORMATION

## Croquet Injuries Questionnaire

Fixed into the centre of this issue you should find a questionnaire regarding injuries in croquet. This has been produced by Dr. David Appleton, a medical statistician and croquet player, employed at Newcastle University.

All players, whether they have been injured or not whilst playing or spectating are asked to complete the questionnaire, to provide as complete a statistical record as possible. If you happen to fall into the dreaded spouse category and only receive one copy of the questionnaire please answer the questions in two different coloured pens, or photocopy the form.

Simply detach the questionnaire, complete it as directed and then fold it and put it in the post, as there is no stamp required.

The results of the questionnaire will be published in a future issue of the Gazette, as well as in the Lancet, David hopes.

## 1997 WCF World Championship Venue

The WCF has accepted a bid from the West Australian Croquet Association and the

Bunbury Clubs to host the 7th WCF World Championship at the Bunbury Clubs (Moorabinda and Bunbury Central) in November 1997.

As a host city, Bunbury with its port, beautiful beaches and picturesque surroundings, offers all the necessary amenities, and is an excellent base for touring and sightseeing.

## Photography Competition Results

Many thanks to all of the members for their entries for the 1995 photography competition, which were judged in November at the Ripon Spa Hotel. The results will be published in the May issue of the Gazette, as the competition was open to affiliates as well as associates.

## Now Read This Please

Would members please note that all photographs sent for inclusion in the Gazette, are returned to the sender, unless otherwise instructed.

Contributors are requested to supply their name, address and telephone number on the rear of the photograph as well as the details of the subject of the photograph. Doing this will not only speed up the operation of

returning your photographs but will also save production time.

Written contributions likewise, should also have the contributor's name, address and telephone number. Your name may be withheld, or you may use a pseudonym, if you wish, but your name must be supplied to the editor. The inclusion of telephone numbers is simply to save editorial time, should there be any query arising from your contribution, as writing a letter and waiting for a reply takes far longer than a phone call.

## Fantasy Croquet Entries

Readers are reminded that entries for the Fantasy Croquet Competition '96, launched in issue 241, close on April 20th. Anyone who has not entered, but wishes to do so, should consult issue 241 for full details.

## Can You Help

The editor has been provided with a fairly extensive reference library of past issues of the Gazette, however there is a significant gap from issue 180 to issue 199, inclusive. If anyone who has the relevant issues would be willing to make them available for loan, please contact the editor who would be grateful to hear from you.

## New Editor & New Chairman

Bruce Rannie has been appointed as the new editor of the Scottish Croquet Association Magazine 'The Bulletin'. Bruce has replaced David Appleton, who is now the new chairman of the Scottish Croquet Association.

## Referees' Courses

Details of referees' courses are in the fixture book. Course participants need not take the examination and players of all levels should find the courses of interest.

# Letters...

## Over 50's

Dear Gail,  
Regarding the British Rankings in the Croquet Gazette. Would it be possible to list the top 100, not just the top 50? The names in the lower half tend to be more or less the same, but change more often at the higher end, and, who knows, my name does enter from time to time.

Colin Wild - Bowdon

Dear Colin,

You have raised a point which I have given much thought to, and have consequently formed a policy on the publication of the rankings. Towards the back of this issue you will find the top 200 rankings, and yes you are in there, which will be published in the March issue each year with a summary of how they are calculated. As well as this, in the other five issues there will be the top 100 rankings listed.

I realise that this information is not interesting to everyone, and some may think that it smacks of a class elitism. However, I can assure any of these people that the rankings contain players from a very wide spectrum of handicaps, as well as the fact that I feel a balance is obtained by the regular publication of handicap changes.

Ed

## Thanks Colin

Dear Gail,  
I would like to thank Colin Irwin for his response in issue 240 to my suggestion that umpires be given wider powers. His critique was much appreciated and I look forward to his further recommendations in due course.

Yours sincerely  
Mike Hammelev.

## Post Haste, Or Post Waste?

Dear Gail,  
At the beginning of November the C.A. subscription renewal notice arrived in the post, followed a week later by the Gazette and a further week later by the Development News. Three postings in three weeks would

appear to be extravagant. The renewal notice always used to be an insert in the Gazette, why has this changed to a separate posting? If modern technology cannot cope with this a page of the magazine could be used for this purpose. Similarly the Development News could be a supplement to the Gazette giving a considerable saving in postage costs.

I note that there is again no rise in subscriptions. Has the C.A. found a magic way of avoiding inflation? How can they maintain or improve services to members on falling income?

I suggest that in future years subscriptions rise at least in line with inflation possibly every second year to avoid very small increases and that every effort will be made to combine postings to members.

Yours sincerely

Roger Jackman - High Wycombe

Dear Roger,

OK this isn't as simple to explain as it might appear, but I will try. The Development News is the domain of the National Development Officer Chris Hudson. This publication is sent to only a minority of people, is funded by his own budget and I have nothing to do with this publication, and would not wish otherwise, although I would agree that some of the information within it should be included within the Gazette. The subscription renewal was sent out separately for two reasons. Firstly there was a decision made by the executive committee when I took on the job of editor, and we changed from Royal Mail to Mailsort, that inserts would no longer be used. Secondly, according to the Secretary, Tony Antenen, if the subscription renewal is not sent out as a separate sheet, surprise surprise, some members can't return it.

I do not wish you to think that I condone the postage costs you pointed out. Far from it, as I am sure we could make considerable savings, as was the case with the insert for the clubs conference in the January issue. This did cost £60 to print, and a further £20 to have it inserted within the magazine, but

this was far less than it would have cost to post out individually if one adds up the cost of photocopying, envelopes, postage, and of course the time to assemble it all.

I have recently asked for the ruling on inserts to be lifted, as I am sure this is the way to avoid some of the costs you mentioned, my only reservation being that, a healthy regard for deadlines is going to have to learnt quickly by some, as well as good forward planning.

Ed.

## O.T. Or O.T.T. ?

Dear Gail,

My letter is a comment on something I've been watching every year during my visits to Britain in August to play croquet. Lots of matches finish O.T. (on time) and I think "O.T." is not croquet. Half an hour before time players don't think of building on the game and winning, but just settle for their opponent not winning.

Wouldn't it be better if managers, depending on the handicap of players and the difficulty of the lawns, reduced matches to 22 or 18 point games so they could be completed?

I have passed my idea to Barry James who manages the excellent tournament at Southwick in August, and he agreed with my idea.

Yours sincerely

Fernando De Ansorena - Spain

## Why Whites? And How About A Change?

Dear Gail,

The ending of the drought last season produced muddy lawns from worm casts and bare corners bringing back the season of dirty marks on white clothing.

When did white clothing become a rule? Pre-war photographs show players in a motley collection of clothing some even looking as if they have come straight from the garden to the court. While not advocating a return to an unkempt look, I am suggesting that coloured clothing would be far more suitable for play in some conditions. Apart from Wimbledon, Tennis is relaxing the all white rules and County Cricketers wear coloured outfits on Sundays courtesy of AXA Equity and Law. Surbiton Croquet Club has recently had some dark green shirts produced for club play and they are very smart indeed.

I can find no rules regarding clothing in Tournament play although some clubs do have regulations insisting on white.

## Croquet Association Secretary

The CA Secretary, Tony Antenen, is due to retire in November this year and a replacement is sought.

The principal duty is the smooth administration of the CA's business including the running of the office with part-time paid and voluntary assistance, and the servicing of the various committees and CA tournaments. The office is situated at the Hurlingham Club.

The opportunity to re-schedule the office staffing and re-define the duties of the Secretary may be taken and the position could be part-time with full-time assistance. The terms of employment and salary are therefore open to negotiation. A knowledge of croquet and familiarity with office procedures and equipment including computers working in the Windows environment would be an advantage but are not essential.

Interested parties are requested to get in touch with the Chairman of Council, Bill Lamb, (Tel 01482 840739) for preliminary discussions.

However when it rains the whole scene soon becomes a multicoloured picture. Which club will be the first to allow players in coloured clothing that will not show dirty marks so plainly and will reduce players' clothing bills?

Roger Jackman - High Wycombe.

Dear Roger,

Not that long ago someone suggested to me that perhaps there should be a 'heretics' section to this magazine, and I am sure if I started such an item there are a few readers who would put you in it for such a suggestion. However, I am a liberal minded person, the section has not started, and I look forward to the responses to your letter from other readers with great anticipation.

Ed.

P.S. In answer to your opening question I don't know either, but I expect somebody does, and will of course enlighten us with their knowledge.

### Practising Debate Warms Up

Dear Gail,

May I take issue with our President, John Solomon over his reasons for practising. As one for whom the suppleness of youth is a very distant memory, I find I need at least five minutes' gentle exercise before I start a game to get my joints moving in a reasonably consistent manner, particularly if I have been sitting in a car for over an hour before I start to play and what better way than hitting a few croquet balls. All other sports have a proper warm-up period, so why not croquet. Our aim must be to convince the non-believers that we are a serious sport and not a genteel pastime.

The tournament regulation of no practising without the manager's permission is a very necessary regulation if managers are to control their lawns but it is not really applicable in the case of inter-club matches or competitions. Unfortunately so much folklore and tradition has grown up around this regulation that it can lead to arguments and to counteract this at Southwick we have declared club policy which in no way limits practising. Our only stipulation is that if you have been playing all morning before a match, out of courtesy tell your opponent and allow him/her some time to practise if he/she so wishes. Naturally this policy does not apply to managed tournaments.

Bill Aliss - Southwick

Dear Bill,

Thanks for raising what must be the most

sensible and appropriate reason for practising, which is also very timely given the questionnaire enclosed in this issue regarding croquet injuries.

Ed.

### Thanks For Your Contribution

Dear Gail,

Congratulations on the January issue of the Gazette. You've cracked the question of photo quality, produced a format that is physically much easier to read, and provided us all with a series of articles to suit a wide range of tastes. And thank you, also, to the authors of those articles for the pleasure they have given us!

Chris Hudson - National Development Officer.

### Internet Activity

Dear Gail,

I have a web page on the internet which now has a directory of all CA registered clubs who wished to be listed together with any information they wanted to be included under their entry.

The URL is "http://www.ftchnet/~johng/" If any club wishes to amend its entry the secretary can write to me at Cherry Down, Vicarage Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN4 0SN or e-mail me at "john@johng.ftch.co.uk"

The number of visitors to the page has settled down at about 180/week which I hope will rise as the new season approaches. I would be interested to hear from any club which gains a new member via this route.

John Greenwood

### Sounds Wonderful, But.....

Dear Gail,

On Saturday 20th January Sussex County Croquet Club held an E.G.M. in order that members could sanction an application to the lottery fund for complete renewal of the eleven lawns. Most members voted to go ahead. The cost is estimated at £165,000, £60,000 of which the club must find to even be considered for a grant. John Solomon presented a well prepared case and suggested we approach various benefactors who could then have a brass plaque on the lawn they wished to nominate. In return we would have perfect lawns and a possibility of prestigious tournaments held at Southwick.

It all sounds wonderful but I worry about the actual game of croquet. To me croquet has always seemed a game for

eccentrics and the fact that every club is different and every lawn has its individual characteristics, a slope at corner three, a slight hill at hoop four, all adds to the charm of the game. Do we really want fine manicured lawns as in America with all that goes with it? Numerous expert groundsmen, guards patrolling the perimeter and high subscriptions to fund the upkeep. Do we want our lawns called 'Brook Bond Tea' or 'Playtex'?

Yes, lawns must be regularly cut, watered and marked out with perfect hoop setting but let's keep the idiosyncrasies of our courts and the cost for the average player at reasonable rates.

Dorothy Miller - Southwick

### Discovering More Artefacts

Dear Gail,

While spending a few days in Devon last autumn I came across a medal of the Croquet Association in a bric-a-brac shop in a village in Dartmoor and acquired it as a matter of interest.

It is a coincidence that I obtained this medal which ties up with David Carpenter's information at Buxton published in his letter in the January 1996 issue of the Gazette.

The medal is in its original case which shewed that it was supplied by J. Jaques and Son Ltd. The medal records the Croquet Association as founded in 1896 and was awarded to Miss G E Eade at Buxton in 1903.

Barbara Evans - Bristol C.C.



### The World Croquet Federation (WCF)

In response to "Verges" letter about the World Croquet Federation, the WCF Constitution and Minutes of its meetings are available in the CA Office for anyone to see. The WCF was formed in 1986 and currently has 18 member countries. Its work is directed by representatives of these countries at WCF Council meetings, held during each World Championship. The English Croquet Association obviously has an important input to the work of the WCF, both as a founder member and as one of the largest individual associations.

The WCF is not a secret organisation, as "Verges" seems to believe. It is an organisation set up by croquet playing countries to promote World Championships, and to enable all its members to discuss matters of common interest. The ease with which communication can now be achieved between individual countries is quite remarkable, compared to the situation ten or even five years ago.

The difficulty lies in making sure that communications within each national organisation are sufficiently well established to ensure that everyone who needs to know something does in fact receive the information. Most croquet organisations of any size have an "International Committee" or a "Chief Executive" and these are the prime points of contact with the WCF. What happens from there on is something that each member organisation has to sort out for itself.

A phone call to the CA office could have put "Verges" in touch with the WCF itself or with any of its constituent organisations. The WCF published a newsletter in January, giving information about its current activities and I will gladly forward a copy of "World Croquet" to anyone on request. The procedure for maintaining the Laws is clearly laid down in the WCF's constitution, drawn up and agreed by its member organisations. At the last World Championship in Fontenay-le-Comte, an "International Laws" meeting was held to review the method by which the Laws were currently administered. The Chairmen of the Laws Committees of Australia, New Zealand, and the United States were present, but unfortunately there was no equivalent representative from England, the fourth country charged with Law maintenance. Those present at the meeting felt that future administration of Law maintenance should

come under the aegis of a formal WCF Working Party, rather than the current ad-hoc arrangement. In this way, more regular meetings could be achieved, and it would be easier to keep other croquet playing countries informed of any new proposals on the Laws.

Following on from this, those present proposed that the next International Laws meeting should be held as a formal WCF Working Party during the MacRobertson Shield matches in 1996, and that the meeting after that should be held during the World Championship at Bunbury, Western Australia, in November 1997. The intention is to speed up decisions on Law changes, not to let them stagnate.

Chris Hudson - WCF Secretary General

### Opponent's Option - A Reply

Dear Gail,

I think Alex Jardine is confusing the possible consequences of a penalty with the penalty itself in his letter in Issue 241. The penalty for playing away from or failing to move or shake the croqueted ball (Law 32(a)(15)) is the same as committing any other fault under Law 32, namely end of turn: it is not that the opponent should gain the innings or have a good chance of doing so. A possible conflict is avoided if the turn would otherwise end under Law 20(c) (sending either the striker's ball or the croqueted ball off the court in a croquet stroke) by allowing the opponent to choose which Law shall apply (Law 32(b)). There is no conflict to resolve if Law 20(c) does not apply, as is the case if the striker's ball is woefully short of its intended position.

Of course, that does not invalidate Alex's suggestion that the opponent should always have the option of playing the balls as they lie after a fault under Law 32(a)(15) but logically that would have to apply to all faults under Law 32 or become an exception. The same principle could be extended to the errors which result in end of turn. However, this would be a major revision and would require the agreement of the other countries who administer the Laws. Whilst I accept that there is a case to be made, my own view is that laws in general, whether for croquet or any other sport, are more easily applied if there is a prescribed procedure rather than an optional one, except where necessary.

Bill Lamb

### Disappointing Publicity

Dear Editor,

Having waited months for a report of the Golf Croquet Championships, to no avail, imagine my disappointment when reading the 1996 fixtures, that the winners of the Ranelagh Challenge Cups were "(Holders ?)".

My son Simon, then age 14, and Don Beck of Medway C.C. were the 1995 winners. I would have thought the fact that a 14 year old was a partner in a winning National Championship should have warranted some mention. Of course there are shades of proud parent in this letter, however, I feel there was an opportunity missed in encouraging youngsters and gaining publicity for the game.

Yours sincerely

Paul Miles.

Dear Paul,

I am sorry that no report of the Golf Croquet Championships was forwarded to the Gazette, as it would have been published if it had, for with the publication of this issue all reports that have been forwarded to me have now been published. Unfortunately it would appear that many events pass without accounts of them being written. My own view is that the reason for this is because some managers fail to arrange for reports to be written, and there is a reluctance on the part of many players to undertake such duties. Together with these reasons, there is the added fact that many reports are not forwarded until an inexcusable amount of time after the event. To illustrate this point, I received on February 10th a report of a tournament which took place in September. This sort of tardy reporting is not only detrimental to the guidelines which state that reports should be sent to the Secretary within seven days of the tournament, but make sensible publication of events almost impossible and such reporting will not be tolerated or published in future.

Whilst you have rightly questioned the lost opportunity for publicity, perhaps I should ask whether the Medway Club publicised their members' win? I ask this not to try to shift the focus away from the CA but simply to inform that there are many other sources of publicity as well as the Gazette. If the club did use other sources, well done. If not, perhaps you should contact your local newspaper and see what they can do for the club and its members.

Ed.

**THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1995**

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at the Hurlingham Club on Saturday 21st October 1995

Present: J W Solomon (President) - in the Chair

W E Lamb (Chairman of Council)

S T Badger (Vice-Chairman of Council)

Dr R W Bray (Treasurer)

A J Oldham (Vice President)

L W D Antenen (Secretary)

and 47 Associates

Apologies were received from: J Beech; G Cuttle; W Gillott; A Hope; Mrs C Irwin; Dr G S Liddiard; J Mays; Prof B Neal (Vice President); Mrs E A M Prichard (Vice-President); A Ramsay; Mrs D Shaw; Miss P Shine; I Smith; R J Smith; C Townsend; L Wharrad (Vice-President); and P Wright

**Opening Address**

The President opened the meeting and welcomed all present with the following address:

Before we begin the Meeting I should like to refer to the deaths of members of this Association, in particular Edward Duffield, my predecessor as President, and a very distinguished holder of that office - Jim Townsend and Derek Caporn, both Vice-Presidents, Jim having held that office for many years, Derek alas, only for one - two well known members, Edgar Jackson and Robert Prichard, Edgar at a considerable age, Robert, alas, at a tragically early one.

Edward was a considerable statesman, a diplomat who could always be relied upon to find the right solution to a difficult problem; Jim's analytical mind ensured that the rules of the CA, and Standing Orders of Council were what we intended them to be - he also edited the Gazette for a time; Derek gave us much legal advice when it was required and provided a synopsis of Council decisions for publication in the Gazette; Edgar had been a President's Cup player but was most noted for his managing skills - I believe he introduced weekend tournaments to the calendar and his analysis of games has proved useful to managers since; and Robert was a member of Council, something of a rebel perhaps, but always with the good nature and his tournament accounts were always the most readable and amusing to be published. All of these gave great service to this Association in a variety of ways and we must be grateful that they did so, for we

have all benefited from their love of croquet and their various contributions to it. I would ask you to stand for a moment in their memory.'

**1. MINUTES**

1.1 The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Saturday, 15 October 1994 were signed as a true record of that Meeting.

**2. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

My predecessor, Colin Irwin, suggested in his last report that I should have a lively time in office. It is true that the last year has been an eventful one and a time of change for the Croquet Association.

Some change was forced upon us. I was unfortunate at the beginning of my term of office to lose, perhaps misplace would be a better word, an Editor. It became clear that the pressures of producing the magazine on time, combined with ill-health, were getting too much for John Walters, as issue after issue slipped further and further behind schedule. The magazine is one of the benefits which you pay for in your subscription and you are entitled to feel aggrieved if those benefits are not forthcoming. Perhaps the situation was allowed to go on for too long. I apologise to you all for that. I am grateful to everyone who responded or suggested names, particularly those who behind the scenes were encouraging Gail Curry to apply for the post. In total, we lost two issues, mainly through the slippage but also because Gail had no material at all to work with, when she took on the job. I think you can take it as a tribute to her good common-sense if I tell you that, knowing she had no material, I sent her a fifteen page article on Principles of Handicapping. So far it has not appeared, and rightly too. The magazine is not the right forum for such a lengthy piece. Perhaps it spurred her on to find material. I don't think any of us realised how much work is involved in starting up from scratch, not just soliciting material and editing the magazine, but arranging for its printing, coping with a new distribution system and saving the Croquet Association a good deal of money into the bargain. Gail does this in her spare time and will only accept an honorarium which would make any trade unionist wince. You can imagine, therefore, how I felt saddened and angry when I heard last week that she had been subjected to an anonymous, abusive and obscene telephone

call about the magazine. There is always room for differences of opinion to be expressed but in a sport like ours, which prides itself on its inherent fairness and good sportsmanship, that kind of conduct is despicable. I trust it will not happen again.

Perhaps the major event, and one which implies change for the Croquet Association, was the negotiation of further support from the Sports Council for our development work. We have enjoyed such support for more than ten years and in the early years our development efforts were rewarded by a substantial increase in the number of Associates and in the number of clubs. Unfortunately, over the last four-year Forward Plan that success came to an end and our numbers started to go into a gentle decline. The prime objective of our current Forward Plan is simple: to increase the numbers of people playing croquet in registered clubs. Embedded within that prime objective is the secondary objective to increase the number of players who join the Croquet Association as Associates. We were fortunate to get an increase in our grant this year to £30,000 but the writing is on the wall. The grant is set to decline, to £28,000 next year then to £25,000 and £20,000 for the next two years. The Sports Council's intention is that we should become more self-sufficient in development work. The final two years of the plan are not guaranteed. It may well depend on how successful the first two years have been. It is too early to say how successful we have been this year, at least as far as the Affiliate membership is concerned. Club secretaries have been circulated with lists of their members according to the Croquet Association database and asked to correct them, so that we can see if the membership has increased. We await their replies with interest. The position as far as Associate numbers are concerned is not too good. The recruitment rate of Associates is only marginally higher than last year, and recruitment last year was the lowest for ten years. However, the drop-out rate has gone down thanks to renewed efforts from the office to chase up subscriptions. We should finish the year with a small increase in the number of Associates and any reversal of the declining trend of the last four years is welcome.

If the future of the Forward Plan is uncertain, the change in prospects for croquet clubs and sport in general is good.

The success of the National Lottery has made huge sums of money available for sports development. We were perhaps a little slow in getting off the mark and to date there is still only one firm application from a croquet club under consideration by the Sports Council's National Lottery panel. I hope there will be many more. Of course, there are drawbacks: lottery money can only be used to fund capital projects and will only provide a maximum of 65% of the cost of those projects. That is why the Executive Committee brought a proposal before Council to help clubs finance their development by means of short to medium term loans from the Croquet Association. I had hoped that the loans might be interest-free but common-sense dictates that a modest rate of interest is necessary to protect the value of the Croquet Association's assets. I stress that the interest rate is modest; it is far better than you would get from a bank or building society. In theory, loans have always been available but the National Lottery has provided us with the incentive to promote our loans policy more actively, and loans need not be tied to National Lottery applications. The Croquet Association is setting out to use its money for the benefit of clubs and that can only be in the long-term interests of clubs, players and ultimately the Croquet Association. I hope that clubs will be equally far-sighted in promoting the benefits of joining the Croquet Association as individual Associates to their members. The stronger the Croquet Association's financial position, the more we shall be able to help.

There has been change in our working practices. Although we entered the computer age some years ago, and I pay tribute to Bill Gillott for his work in getting us started in that direction, the decision last year to move to a tailor-made Windows based system has been put into effect by Geoffrey Cuttle. The people's side of this system, that is members' individual records, yours and mine, has largely been completed and many of our routine office tasks are now handled by this system at the click of a mouse button. Lists of all kinds, club lists, new members lists, lists of Associates and Affiliates as well as statistics can be produced more readily. I mentioned earlier a new distribution system for the magazine. This is now handled through MailSort, thanks to Duncan Hector's firm, Inter-Counties Office Furnishings. We send off a floppy disk instead of printing out a large batch of sticky labels. It all helps to improve

office efficiency, although the work load imposed on our Secretary, Tony Antenen, ably assisted by Paul Campion and Brian Macmillan, never seems to decrease.

Council has also changed. Colin predicted a lively time for me because there was an election for Council membership last year for the first time for several years. There has been an election again this year. New faces are present on Council. The first three Federations have elected their representatives to take their place on Council. Standing Committees have been given more responsibility to get on with their work without the need always to refer to Council. The Executive Committee has taken on the role of management and forward planning. A new committee has been formed to look after the interests of Golf Croquet players. All of these changes are intended to make Council more responsive to the requirements of clubs and players and to govern the Croquet Association more effectively.

Of course, there are some things which do not change. Croquet is fundamentally an amateur sport controlled by those who love and play the game. Council is composed entirely of active croquet players and we do not have the difficulties experienced by other sports controlled by administrators who do not play. I hope that will always be the case. On the playing front we still lead the world in standards of play: the four semi-finalists at the recent World Championships in France were all CA players, and I congratulate Chris Clarke on winning the title. I am sure this augurs well for the MacRobertson Shield test series next year. 2.1 The Chairman presented his report, a copy of which is attached to these Minutes. Report Adopted nem con.

**3. TREASURER'S REPORT**

3.1 In presenting his report the Treasurer, Dr. Roger Bray, called attention to the fact that the certification of the Accounts for the year 1994 by Messrs Nicholas Ames & Co. did not amount to an audit in the technical sense of that word. He assured members that this did not represent any change in established practice, nor was it in contravention of the rules of the Association.

The Treasurer then announced that the C.A. had recently received three very generous bequests: £2,000 for the Benefactors' Fund from the estate of the late Derek Caporn; £3,000 to be divided

between the Four Court and International Funds, from the estate of the late Robert Prichard; and approximately £17,500 from the estate of the late Edward Duffield which is to be used to establish a new fund, the Duffield Bequest - income from investments in that fund being then used to help defray the costs of British teams travelling outside Europe for MacRobertson Shield Test Matches. The Croquet Association is extremely grateful to Derek, Robert and Edward for this magnificent support for the game that they so dearly loved. The Treasurer's Report and the Accounts for 1994 were approved and adopted nem con. (The full accounts together with a commentary were published in issue 238 of Croquet, May 1995)

**4. ELECTION OF THE HONORARY TREASURER**

4.1 The President thanked the Treasurer for his continuing efforts on behalf of the CA, and there being no other nominations for the post, Dr R W Bray was re-elected unanimously and to acclamation.

**5. ELECTION OF AUDITORS**

5.1 The Proposal by S N H Gray (Letchworth), seconded by D S Cornelius (Newport), THAT Messrs Morgan, Brown and Spofforth (formerly practising as Messrs Nicholas Ames & Co) be re-elected as Auditors, was approved nem con.

**6. ELECTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS**

6.1 Seven members retired by rotation, there was one resignation and one unfilled vacancy arising from the election of the late Derek Caporn as Vice-President. Three places were reserved for elected Federation representatives. Nine nominations for the six remaining places have been received, necessitating a postal vote. The President announced that the following candidates had been elected:

W H Arliss; S T Badger; C D Clarke; A K Gregory; D W Shaw and D W Trotman.

6.2 In response to a question from A J Oldham, the President gave the names of the elected Federation representatives: D J Magee (South West Federation); W J Sidebottom (West Midlands Federation) and R J Smith (Southern Federation).

**7. BENEFACTORS' BOOK**

7.1 The Secretary read the names in the Benefactors' Book.

**8. OTHER BUSINESS**

1996 MacRobertson Shield Team

8.1 The President announced the composition of the team for the 1996 MacRobertson Shield and wished them every success; I J BurrIDGE; C D Clarke (Captain); S Comish; Miss D A Cornelius; R I Fulford and D B Maughan.

#### 1996 Fixture Book

8.2 D L Gaunt (Bear of Rodborough) announced that he had available the 1996 Fixture Book (albeit it yet incomplete), and invited members present to peruse it.

#### Membership Classification

8.3 Mrs I Dwerryhouse (Sidmouth), commented that ladies appear to be second class members of the Association, as her membership was now as a 'Player's spouse'. The Chairman explained that, with concessionary joint membership for married couples, this was an administrative convenience and in no way lowered the status of the 'spouse'. He added that it would be equally in order for the husband to be the 'spouse' rather than the wife if that were preferred.

#### Handicap System

8.4 H Hall (on behalf of D Purdon, Budleigh Salterton) commented that either winning or losing a game by 1 on time resulted in a change of 10 index points on one's handicap card. Perhaps this system should be changed. The Chairman replied that all competitive games should count towards the handicap system. Games going to time should not be discounted, but the Handicap committee will consider the point that had been made.

Mrs D J Magee (Cheltenham) suggested a sliding scale for the change of index in very close games. The chairman replied that we should consider the effect if this idea were implemented, particularly regarding the position of scratch players.

#### Artificial Surfaces

8.5 S N H Gray (Letchworth), in telling the Meeting that his club was planning a fourth lawn, asked for the opinion on the available artificial surfaces. Replying on behalf of the CA, D W Trotman said that investigations into artificial surfaces were currently in hand, and it is hoped that a conclusion would soon be reached. He further suggested that Letchworth Club and the CA maintain close contact during these investigations.

#### 9. THE PRESIDENT'S CLOSING ADDRESS

9.1 Two years ago I spoke of the emergence of croquet on the continent and subsequently provided addresses of clubs

there, and I am delighted that some visits were made by groups last year, and I understand they had an enjoyable time. Last year I spoke of the need to attract new members to the CA and I focused my remarks on those members of clubs who were not CA members. This is a difficult area, and in retrospect I suppose there is a very limited amount that any of us can do about them. I am sure that most of them have a high regard for what the CA does and that there are valid reasons why they are not members.

Some may think that all our emphasis is placed on the expert game, the Opens, President's Cup, International, European and World Championships. For propaganda purposes it is inevitable that our publicity focuses on this aspect, which is what will attract the media. But Council is well aware that 95% of associates are not in this class, are ordinary club members with handicaps from 2 to 24, and I can assure you that the majority of time spent in Council, and its Committees, is spent on matters which affect the clubs, their tournaments and their members.

For many years it has been Council's hope that beginners and long bisquers would be willing to play a 14 point game in the belief that they would prefer and benefit from such a game in which they could peg out in a couple of hours instead of struggling with the full game and still not finish it after five hours. But these players have invariably said that since the experts play 26 points then they should do so too, as they wished to play the same game.

Within the last couple of years we have seen the emergence of the Croquet Players Association. This is in no way a splinter group. They have affirmed that they wish to work with the national Associations, some 16 of them, for the benefit of the sport. I applaud the efforts and the progress they have made which has concentrated primarily upon the development of the 14 point game, under advanced rules. I have played this in competition and I believe it has a good future under certain circumstances and I wish them every success in their venture. Perhaps, if it becomes more common for the average player to see this game it might become more acceptable for it to be played as a matter of course by the average player in clubs throughout the country.

Looking at the position in our clubs I am not aware of any club which has a waiting list for membership. Perhaps there are some small clubs with one or two lawns

who are comfortably full but I am certain that larger clubs could all accommodate a considerably increased membership. As the Chairman has said club membership needs to be addressed. - indeed I believe that Chris Hudson, in the many and varied paperwork he disseminates from time to time, has referred to this regularly.

I wonder whether the appropriate committee of the CA, (I suspect it is the F & GP) might consider a prize to the club obtaining the greatest percentage increase in membership, which might perhaps be that that club pays no CRF in the following year. It might be more fair if there were three categories - one for clubs with less than 50 members, one for 50 to 100 members and the third for clubs with more than 100 members.

I have not discussed this with any Council member and, as I have said, it is not new. One thing that binds us all together is our love for the sport we all enjoy. We are being less than honest if we do not go out and spread the gospel rather than hiding our light under a bushel. I know that many players have made enormous efforts to attract players - how else would the considerable number of new clubs which have blossomed in recent years have got off the ground in the first place? But these are a relatively few people who have done this. There are another 90% of club members who have done almost nothing in this respect, and I count myself as one of them.

Let us make 1996 the year in which every club gains 10, 25, 50 new members, to the great benefit of the club and the eventual benefit of the CA.

#### 10. PRESENTATION OF TROPHIES

10.1 At the conclusion of his address, the President announced the presentation of the Apps Bowl for the most improved male player to David Kibble (Cheltenham). It was accepted by Mrs D J Magee on his behalf.

10.2 The President announced that the winner of the Prize Draw in the CA's recruitment scheme was Ron Gosden (Hunstanton), and presented him with the prize - a croquet statuette created by Tyneside sculptor Ron Nixon.

10.3 A J Oldham (Vice-President) drew the attention of the Meeting to some famous CA trophies which were on display, and gave a brief resumé of the background to each one, in particular to the new Solomon Trophy.

There being no further business, the Meeting closed at 12.00 noon.

### Extracts from the unconfirmed Minutes of the Council meeting on 9th December 1995

1. There were present W E Lamb (Chairman) and 22 members of Council with Ms Gail Curry (Editor of Croquet), Chris Hudson (National Development Officer) and L W D Antenen (Secretary C.A.) in attendance.

Members observed a minute's silence in memory of S.S. ("Jim") Townsend, past Chairman (1970 - 72) and a Vice-President, and of R.S. Stevens of Budleigh Salterton (member of Council 1982 - 86).

2 The Chairman was authorised to continue discussions with the World Croquet Federation about ownership of the Wimbledon Cup.

3 Guidance as to the acceptability of synthetic surfaces for tournament play having been sought by the Letchworth Club, Council considered the matter. The general opinion was that in principle synthetic surfaces were acceptable provided that their playing surfaces were comparable to grass.

4 Reports of Committees of Council resulted in the following matters being noted and/or approved.

#### Executive Committee

The Chairman advised that on the termination of the National Development Officer's contract in September 1996, the intention would be for specific development projects to be contracted out as appropriate and that the Executive would come to Council with their proposals.

The Chairman reported that the Sports Council had declined to make a grant for the MacRobertson Shield giving their reasons (1) that there had been no specific mention of the event in the C.A.'s Forward Plan and (2) only four countries were involved.

#### F & G P Committee

The 1996 Budget was approved.

Subject to an explanation appearing in a general letter to be sent shortly to Club Secretaries, the recommendation that in future only one issue of Croquet should be sent to Affiliates was approved.

The increase to £10 per day in Lawn Hire Charge proposed by the Tournament Committee and endorsed by the F & G P Committee was accepted but it was agreed to have the matter further discussed at the forthcoming Club Conference.

#### International Committee

The election of C.J. Irwin as Chairman was noted.

It was agreed that the responsibility for organising a Golf Croquet Match with Egypt rested with the International Committee.

It was noted that the total resources for financing the 1996 MacRobertson Shield matches would be £12,000; £6,500 would be taken from the International Fund, £3,000 from next year's allocation to this fund, £2,500 was expected from sponsorship and outside sources and there would be no other allocation of C.A. funds.

#### Development Committee

D.W. Trotman outlined arrangements for the Club Conference on 24th February 1996 which were approved.

#### Tournament Committee

Council accepted the advice of the committee that for 1996 only entries would be limited to an absolute maximum of 19 for the Inter-County Championships, so as to accommodate all of the counties who participated in 1995.

#### Coaching Committee

Council recorded its appreciation of this committee's work during the past year which had stimulated a widening interest in coaching.

#### Centenary Committee

The suggestion made at the Coaching Committee meeting that a Solomon Lecture be instituted in Centenary Year and retained thereafter as an annual feature was supported by the Centenary Committee and approved by Council.

#### Editorial Board

It was agreed that the official title of the C.A. magazine should revert to "The Croquet Gazette".

5 Council confirmed the election of 10 new Associates. It was reported that the number of paid-up Associates was 1540.

6 The Chairman, on behalf of Council, warmly welcomed the return of G.S. Liddiard following his recent illness; Mr Liddiard expressed his thanks for the many good wishes he had received from members of Council.

### \* Caption Competition \*




Can anyone guess what Eileen Magee has just heard from Colin Thursfield? Or, can anyone guess why Colin Thursfield looks so guilty? Put your entries on a postcard or in an envelope and send them to the editor by April 1st. The winning entry will be published in the May issue and the sender of that entry will receive a framed print of the cartoon by Roy Wallis, featured on the front cover of the September 1995 issue.

# A Glossary of Croquet Terms

by Dr. Ian Plummer (C)copyright 1993-1995

- Advanced Play.** A game of croquet where extra rules are invoked. The games are played level, and contacts and lifts can be conceded.
- Angled Hoop.** Where the ball is well off the midline of a hoop it intends to run.
- Aspinall Peel.** A promotion peel where the peelee is jawed in the croquet stroke and then struck by the striker's ball again in the same croquet stroke.
- Backward Ball.** The player's ball which has made fewest hoops at the start of a turn.
- Baulk.** Two regions of the boundary of the lawn from which the balls are played on to the lawn at the start of the game or when a lift is taken. The A baulk extends along the yard line originating from the first corner to the midpoint of the South boundary. The B baulk extends along the yard line from the third corner spot to the midpoint of the North boundary.
- Bisques.** Wooden sticks used to indicate the number of 'free turns' remaining to the weaker player in a handicap game.
- Boundary.** The edges of the lawn. The boundary is defined as the inside edge of the marking lines.
- Break.** A sequence of shots which allows many hoops to be made in one turn.
- Building.** The process of moving balls to advantageous positions from which to play a break.
- Cannons.** Croquet shots involving more than two balls.
- Clips.** Clothes-peg-like markers coloured to match the balls, and used to indicate the next hoop a ball has to make next. Clips are placed on the top of a hoop on the first circuit and on the uprights of the hoop for the second circuit.
- Condone.** To excuse a breach of the rules
- Contact.** An option in advanced play arising when the opponent has been through 1-back and 4-back with their forward ball in a single break. A contact involves picking up one of your balls and placing it in contact with any of the other balls and playing a croquet shot.
- Corner.** The point of intersection of two boundaries.
- Corner Spot.** The point where the two yard lines meet in the corner.
- Croquet Stroke.** The stroke following the initial hit-in (the roquet) where the two balls are placed in contact and the striker's ball struck. Past tense croqueted (crow-kay'd).
- Cross-pegging.** Where two balls are obstructed from hitting each other by placing them either side of the peg.
- Cross-wiring.** Where two balls are obstructed from hitting each other by placing them either side of a hoop.
- Crown.** The horizontal part (top) of a croquet hoop.
- Crush.** Either, when the mallet strikes a ball which is in contact with a hoop or peg and the direction of aim is not away from the hoop or peg, or when a ball is hit predominantly downwards into the ground in a stroke.

- Cut Rush.** A cut rush is a roquet shot in which the roqueted ball moves sideways. A difficult shot to gauge the strength of.
- Damage.** A major defect in the surface of a croquet court. The result of a shot improperly executed. This is a fault under the Laws of Croquet.
- Deep.** Meaning further away than normal, at a greater distance.
- Delayed Peel.** When a peel is attempted at a later point in the break than when it would normally be done.
- Diagonal Sweep.** A stroke played to roquet a ball when the striker's ball is nearly hoop bound. The mallet is swung across the aiming line but still facing along the aiming line.
- Double Bank.** To use two sets of four balls on one lawn. The second set of balls is coloured Brown, Green, White and Pink.
- Double Peel.** A manoeuvre in which a ball is peeled through its final two hoops during a single break and pegged out.
- East.** The boundary of the lawn spanning hoops three and four.
- Escape Ball.** A second ball at a hoop where a peel is taking place. Once the peel has been made the escape ball can be roqueted and the break continued.
- Face.** The striking surface of a mallet excluding its bevelled edges.
- Fault.** A breach of the Laws of croquet.
- Follow Through.** The continuation of the swing involved in a stroke after the mallet has made contact with the ball.
- Forward Ball.** The ball of a side which has made most hoops at the start of a given turn.



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## How's Your Wrist?

It is always dangerous to make judgements on the basis of unscientific anecdotal evidence, but recently I seem to have noticed a lot of players with sprained wrists and similar injuries, and a pilot study has done nothing to persuade me I am wrong. The questionnaire over the page is an attempt to quantify the problem, and, if the prevalence of injury is high, to see if it is possible to detect an association with any likely risk factors such as grip, type of mallet, age, sex or time spent playing. May I emphasise that it is just as important that I receive replies from the (many) uninjured among you as from those who have more to tell me; otherwise the problem will seem more widespread than is the case. I am also interested in replies from readers who no longer play croquet – who may even have given up because of injury – but not from those who have never been members of a croquet club. If, as husband and wife, you only receive one copy of this magazine, you are welcome to photocopy the questionnaire, phone me at work (0191 222 7256) or double-bank, as long as one of you uses a second-colour pen.

It should not take long to complete the questionnaire, particularly if you have nothing to report, and you can return it to me **anonymously and free** – at least you can if you post it in the UK, so I shall in fact not be analysing any replies from abroad though **I shall be grateful for any correspondence on the topic from any recipient of this magazine anywhere in the world**, particularly from anyone who knows of any previous comparable surveys. If you do have an injury story to tell, which would illustrate the dry statistics, please write to me with the details, and of course if you want to give me your name in that case, so much the better, though no individuals will be identified in any research report. In the UK you may use the FREEPOST address for a letter just by writing it on an envelope.



One of the many delights of croquet is that one's normal day job is irrelevant – one can merely be a croquet player among other croquet players – but just this once it may be necessary to confess that I have some qualification to carry out this research. For twenty-five years I have been a medical statistician at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, and am used to designing and analysing this sort of study. It is true that this questionnaire is less comprehensive (and assumes a more intelligent recipient!) than my usual ones, but I have felt constrained to keep it within the bounds of two pages of the *Croquet Gazette*. As a result the information gained may be less detailed than would be ideal, but I have published in the past in the *British Medical Journal* and the *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, and I hope that if the response rate is high enough and the results are sufficiently interesting, the report of this exercise may also appear in one of these journals.

So, ignore my previous contributions to this magazine; **this is not a joke!** I hope you will treat it as a serious contribution to investigating the possibility of injury in the sport we play. It may be safer than rugby, but let's find out. **I need you all to reply.** Please do.

My thanks to the Editor for her co-operation in this venture, and also to my friends in the Scottish Croquet Association and the Newcastle Department of Medical Statistics who have helped me test the questionnaire in advance of it appearing here.

David Appleton  
(DSc FRCPATH CStat)



## Croquet injuries questionnaire

1. How long have you played competitive or club croquet? \_\_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_\_ active seasons
2. What age were you when you began? \_\_\_\_\_ years
3. Do you still play?  
no  yes, but infrequently  yes, frequently
4. If you no longer play, how long ago did you stop? \_\_\_\_\_ years
5. What is the lowest handicap you have achieved? \_\_\_\_\_
6. When you were most active, approximately how many games per season (competitive and club 'friendlies' but not solo practice) did you (or do you) play? \_\_\_\_\_
7. When you were most active, how extensively did you (or do you) practise on your own (try to give an estimate of the frequency and length of practice sessions)?  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What sex are you?  
male  female
9. During your playing career which grip have you normally used for single ball strokes?  
Solomon  Irish  conventional\*  other \_\_\_\_\_   
(\* i.e. top hand knuckles forward, bottom hand palm forward)
10. Have you normally played single ball strokes with your hands together or apart?  
together  apart
11. Which grip have you normally used for a big split croquet stroke?  
Solomon  Irish  conventional\*  other \_\_\_\_\_
12. For how many seasons have you used each of these kinds of shaft on your mallet?  
wood \_\_\_\_\_ metal \_\_\_\_\_ fibre-glass \_\_\_\_\_ carbon-fibre \_\_\_\_\_
13. Have you ever, while playing croquet, sustained **any** injury to your hand, wrist or arm?  
no  yes, once  yes, more than once

If your answer to question 13 was 'no' please go to question 20.

14. What type of injury was it, and was it to your top or bottom hand? What grip and type of shaft were you using at the time? If there have been several injuries, confine yourself to the one you regard as the most serious. Describe the others in answering question 17.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

15. How was this injury caused, and how long ago; or did it develop over time? Give as much detail as you think important (e.g. 'Big split shot early in game on cold morning last spring' or 'Tried to jump peg; hard ground, about 5 years ago' or '4-ball cannon last week' or 'Tripped over boundary boards last year').  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

16. How serious was it? (Tick any number of appropriate responses)

- I gave up croquet for good
- The injury needed a hospital operation
- The injury needed medical treatment or physiotherapy (but no operation)
- I now use a support for the injured site almost all the time
- I now use a support for the injured site to play croquet
- The injury gives me some pain and inconvenience
- I suffer no long-term effects

17. Briefly list other injuries to your hand, wrist or arm, sustained while playing croquet; please continue on another sheet of paper if necessary.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

18. Have you as a result of injury to your hand, wrist or arm changed your grip or mallet?

no  yes

19. If so please give details of what you changed from and to.  
\_\_\_\_\_

20. Have you ever, while playing croquet, suffered injury requiring treatment to any part of your body other than hand, wrist or arm?

no  yes

21. If so please give details.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

22. Please give any other information you feel may be of relevance to this study (e.g. if you have hurt yourself setting out a lawn, been injured while coaching or while refereeing a stroke, or suffered an illness like pneumonia or sunstroke through playing croquet). If you wish, please continue on another sheet of paper.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Extracts From A Bibliographer's Casebook by David Drazin

### II. SERENDIPITY STRIKES AGAIN!

Despite attempts by recent commentators to set the record straight, the bibliography of croquet remains in a frightful mess. Cumulative losses of subject material and publishers' records have been compounded by errors of commission by later chroniclers, so now the bibliographer's cardinal rule, "see for yourself", is doubly imperative. Happily, however, the rigours posed by this rule are relieved by frequent incidental revelations.

Take, for example, a reference to the *Croquet Polka* in the charming catalogue *Winslow Homer: The Croquet Game*, issued in 1984 by the Yale University Art Gallery for an exhibition of Homer's sumptuous paintings and graphics. The author notes that this piece of music was published in 1855 by the Boston house of Oliver Ditson in a cover illustrated by Homer. On first spotting this reference two years ago, the mind boggled. According to all accounts, the game crossed the Atlantic from east to west, not the other way, and no other croquet literature seems to have been published in the US before the first American edition of Capt Mayne Reid's book *Croquet* in 1863. So how come a US croquet *pop song* eight years earlier, long before the game had achieved popularity over here?

Having traced the music reference back to a 1972 article in the US magazine *Sports Illustrated*, I hit an impasse. The authors merely mentioned the polka as one of a dozen sheet music covers Homer dashed off for Oliver Ditson round about 1855 when he was apprenticed to the Boston lithographer, John Bufford. And the citation in another exhibition catalogue produced by The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, which referred to the same article, read ominously, "the lithograph is otherwise unrecorded".

There the case rested until recently I had occasion, in pursuit of another quarry, to examine the indexes to the Registry Books of the Stationers' Company, now held at the Public Record Office. To my astonishment I chanced upon the title *The Croquet Polka*, registered by the London publisher Addison and Lucas on 14 May 1864. Could this have been a reference to the same work and, if so, what could have been the connection between Oliver Ditson and Addison and Lucas? Scenting a scoop, I turned to *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* and there read to my further amazement that the firm of Oliver Ditson was founded in 1857, two years after the music was allegedly published by them.

Chances are that we shall never know exactly what happened, when, or who done it. Homer's work has commanded astronomical prices for so long that the odds against a putative music cover by him, which has not seen the light of day for many years and which may never have existed, surfacing in the foreseeable future must be on the long side. Meantime, my best guess is that there was just one croquet polka, the one registered by Addison and Lucas in 1864, and that this was republished by Oliver Ditson in 1865.

Sometime afterwards, I suppose, someone simply miscopied the year and the error was perpetuated by later commentators. But this is just guesswork and, if that someone got the year wrong, maybe he or she also got the *illustrator* and *publisher* wrong. Surely, one might suppose, a strong case to close the file. But hold on! Could serendipity not strike again?

## Competitions '96

### Cover Design Competition

As you are no doubt aware the Croquet Association is celebrating its centenary in 1997. There will hopefully be many events and occasions planned for croquet players to participate in, as well as opportunities to get involved in the centenary through various items planned for the Gazette throughout 1997.

The front cover of the Gazette has had various designs throughout its history, some lasting longer than others. For the six issues which will be published in the centenary year the editor is offering the opportunity for Associates to design a front cover for the Gazette. There are no hard and fast rules governing this competition, and it is not strictly for the artistically gifted, as it is the idea rather than a polished masterpiece that is required.

Entries should be drawn on an A4 sheet of plain paper vertically orientated, with the name, address and telephone number of the entrant on the reverse, and sent to the editor. The closing date for entries is November 30th 1996. There will be a prize for any designer of a cover used for the Gazette in 1997.

### Photographic Competition

Entries for the 1996 croquet photographic competition are now officially required. The topic for this year's competition is 'SUCCESS'. Any photograph taken after March 1st 1996 is eligible for entry, whether black and white or colour. All entries should include on the reverse of the photograph, the name and venue of the subject(s), as well as the name address and telephone number of the photographer. Entries should be marked 'photographic competition' and sent to the editor. If entrants require their photographs to be returned after the competition they should include a stamped addressed envelope. The prize for the winner will be a 35mm compact camera, as well as several prizes for runners-up, all generously donated by J.Neil Fletcher Photography of Tynemouth. The closing date for entries is October 1st 1996 and all prize winning photographs will be published in the November issue of the Gazette.

### Creative Writing Competition

Once upon a time there was a short story competition in the Croquet Gazette, and there have also been numerous poetic contributions which have graced its pages from time to time, but such contributions seem to have dried up in the recent past. Many readers of the Gazette gained pleasure from not only reading such contributions but also from writing them, hence the new competition which will hopefully awaken past writers and encourage new ones to put pen to paper.

Entries should have some croquet connection, may be factual or fictional, and can be submitted hand written or on computer disk in text format. They should be sent to the editor clearly marked 'Creative Writing'. All entries will be considered for publication within the Croquet Gazette and there will be an appropriate prize for the winning short story and poem. Entries close on August 1st 1996. The winning entries will be selected by the famous literary croqueteer Dorothy Rush and will be published in the September issue.

Many thanks for your help. I hope that the results of this survey will be published in the medical literature in due course. They will certainly be summarised in the *Gazette*.

Now please fold these pages as indicated (so that the address is on the outside!) and post them as soon as possible. You don't need an envelope, and you don't need a stamp.

Encourage your croquet-playing friends to take part in the survey too.

Fold here and tuck in

Fold here and tuck in



Fold here

Fold here

2

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# CLASSIC COACHING TIPS

## HELPFUL HINTS No.3

by Don Gaunt

A Series of short tips and ideas for beginners and improvers

Please note that these hints may not always be the best solution, consider your options carefully.

### No. 3 Approaching your hoop

In this section of Helpful Hints I want to talk about the croquet stroke which is intended to put your ball in the ideal position in front of its hoop.

The first thing that we have to consider is - what is the 'ideal' position?

The answer is, as so often in croquet, a compromise. An inch in front of the hoop may for some be perfection, but for others this would be too close to the hoop for comfort. Again, some would be happy with two feet away, while others would find that distance daunting.

Another thing that needs consideration is the accuracy of your approach. If your croquet stroke is being taken from 3 feet in front of the hoop, then accurate positioning should be easy. If you are three feet to the side of the hoop, positioning is much more tricky!

My personal recommendation is to try for an approach which puts you one foot in front of the hoop. This makes your hoop shot reasonably secure and also gives you some room for error in your approach. The rule is not hard and fast. If you are good at hoop approaches, or you are good at hoop running, then the approach distances might well be different. If you are good at both, don't bother reading any more - this article can teach you nothing!

#### Approaching from in front of the hoop

N.B. In HH No.4 I will deal with the croqueted ball and where to send it. For this HH it is sufficient to imagine the croqueted ball being sent somewhere beyond the hoop.

A nice spot from which to take croquet is a yard in front of your hoop and

slightly to one side. From here, the approach will normally be played as a standard drive shot. Being slightly to one side allows for easier placing of the croqueted ball, see note above. Fig 1 shows the placings.

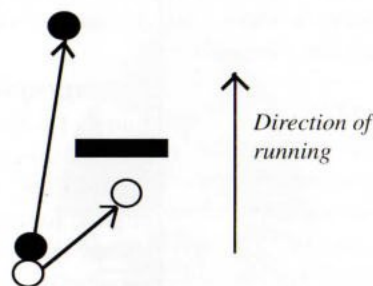


Fig. 1 Approaching a hoop from in front

Something often forgotten by beginners (and not so beginners!) is that this hoop approach is a croquet stroke. In consequence, they aim at the spot where they want their ball to go instead of splitting the angle. If you find that your ball is constantly going across the face of the hoop and ending up as an angled hoop shot, perhaps this is what you are doing.

There are two useful tips here.

1. If you are sending the croqueted ball so that it just misses the hoop (as in fig. 1) your aiming point is more or less directly at the hoop upright on your side (in fig. 1 it is the left-hand upright).

2. If the croqueted ball is not passing close to the hoop, then aim at a point (point Y in fig. 2) which is half-way between the point where the croqueted ball is level with the hoop (point X in fig. 2) and the middle of the hoop (point Z in fig. 2).

#### Approaching from the side of the hoop

This is probably the most difficult position from which to approach, particularly if you

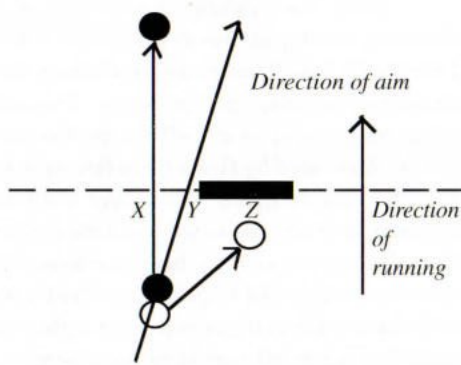


fig. 2 Aiming Point

are looking for a forward rush having run the hoop. The thing to remember is that it is *your* ball which matters most. If that is not right then your turn ends. So the advice I give here is 'play the approach using the shot you are best at'. This may mean you do not get the rush you wanted having run the hoop. So be it - you have run the hoop.

#### Approaching from some distance behind the hoop

Normally in this situation there is little option but to play a take off shot. Sometimes though, you may have the opportunity to decide just *where* from behind you are going to play. Consider fig. 3. You (white) intended to get to position A so that black could be rushed in front of the hoop. Unfortunately it ended up where you see it. You obviously have a choice of places where you can rush black - but where is best? Answer in the next issue - or buy a copy of "Plus one on time"!

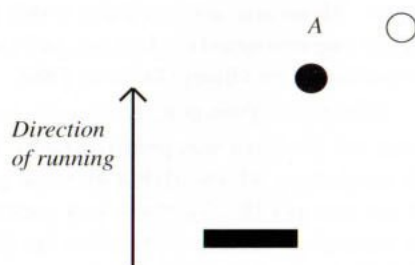


fig. 3 Approaching a hoop from behind

### Contributions- The final word

At the risk of sounding boring, I regret to inform you that the contributions coffers are mostly empty, or very near to it. I am still awaiting many items I have requested, some as long ago as March of last year. I therefore attempt, for the final time, to appeal to your better natures and persuade you all to make a contribution in the light of the following verses.

(If your response is not favourable, I do still have a definitive and lengthy work on handicapping which could be serialised, and several other items that would cure even the worst cases of insomnia, if that is what you really want in your Gazette.)

### The Editor's Lament

I've been editing just for a year now - anything but a bit of a laugh; all the typing and phoning and writing with me the sole member of staff.

The hot-line I thought would be useful for players to pass on their views, but it's been quite surprisingly quiet - can there be such a shortage of news?

I've tried having the odd competition but without a great deal of success as the entry rate is a bit sorry (about 2% more or less).

The supplement came as a bonus with tournament facts and reports (but there were some basic things missing which had to be spotted, then sought).

I'd like you to mention the venue and likewise the author and date, as if any of those bits are missing the Editor has to work late.

There's nine federations in England (and there's six issues published each year) but what is it that they get up to? I don't know, I'm waiting to hear.

My computers are working their disks off and I know I am not error free but Margaret is working on that one; what's your contribution to be?

Some coaching perhaps, or a letter, or maybe a point on the laws? No, you're more a points of view person - then again, was it something on lawns?

There's a shortage of letters and comments, there's a shortage of items on laws, there's a shortage of photos and coaching and I bet one of them could be yours.

I used to look forward to "Croquet" but I'm getting fed up and forlorn. I'm still putting in 200 hours but it's not that much fun on your own.

I thought that the Ed's job was part-time. Well, it is on the day after print, but the rest of the time it is bedlam with regular eight hour stints.

I could name most of my contributors as the list is appallingly short - about 1% of the readers (except for results and reports).

There's Tommy and Colin and Lionel, not forgetting Mike, Bill and Don. (Aren't you all just a little embarrassed? I've even had one from John!)

Oh where are my regular readers? Where's their comments and witty retorts? They're not coming to me at my office, (all I get are the dreaded reports!)

If everyone sent in a missive I'd be thrilled, overjoyed, full of glee, that would fill up the whole of each issue and I'd stick to my own page, that's three.

Players charm me with light conversation at tournaments and matches with tea; "We like what you're doing to Croquet. A contribution? No, sorry, not me."

And now I've been asked for a budget, which means I must pull up my socks, 'cos my maths is worse than my spelling (so Council are in for some shocks!).

It's difficult getting no feed-back no hint if you're right or you're wrong; all it takes is a pen and some paper, or a phone-call that needn't be long.

So come on you players and readers, get vocal and fierce, but get through. Please don't sit on the yard-line forever hoping someone will send in your view.

Am I making myself quite apparent? That is, I'm not living a dream? The Gazette is for all sorts of players and you're all a small part of the team.

So whether you're a dour "Aunt Emma" or an attacking progressive young thing, get your contributions down on some paper or quicker still, just give me a ring.

I'm taking myself to the pub now for a Guinness or perhaps three, in the hope that the readers take notice and send in some copy to me.

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# Open Verdict

The concluding part of the story by Coral Hill

A perfect exposition of the New Standard Leave, left Mike with nothing more promising than a shot to his forward ball nine inches from the peg. Just three swings over the ball and the crack of the shot echoed around the silent arena. The ball clipped its target and the crowd erupted. In that second Hugh saw that it was time to resign his captaincy of England. He would issue a statesmanlike announcement that it was right to make way for new young blood.

Mike finished off the game quickly. The old-timers shook their heads at the sight of the nearest thing to a pitch invasion ever seen at Hurlingham. We all congratulated the new Open Champion and Celia planted a warm kiss on her doubles partner. What a shame that Sue was not there to share her husband's victory.

It was an hour later that we knew why. Our wild party was interrupted by a sombre man in an unseasonable mackintosh. He asked to speak to Mr Michael Osmond privately. Mike returned ashen-faced to tell us that Sue was dead. She had apparently been brutally beaten to death in their apartment that very afternoon.

Our jubilation turned to desolation.

At first the police considered that Sue's

missing jewellery and the general mess in the flat suggested a burglar, perhaps disturbing a sleeping Sue and panicking, but then the detectives noted that the pattern of ransacking was not consistent with a housebreaking. Furthermore, there was no evidence of a forced entry. So the police enquiry turned towards a theory that Sue let in somebody that she knew and that the murderer took jewellery to make it look like a burglary.

We were all routinely questioned. Of course, three-quarters of the names in Sue's address books were at Hurlingham that afternoon and so, in the words of the crime writers, had "rock-solid alibis". Mike revealed that his wife had not been unwell on Saturday and Sunday; rather she was very depressed about something she would not discuss. The police found that the antiques business which Sue ran with a friend had been doing very badly and that they had argued about what to do. The partner said she was quietly reading at home that afternoon, and so was a prime suspect. However, no further evidence was found and so, in time, the police moved their resources onto other cases and this one looked likely to be assigned to the 'unsolved crimes' file.

In the closed season, Mike's friendship with Celia blossomed. However, many of us

thought it was with indecent haste that they announced in February that they were to be married within a month.

It seemed that I had been staring at Mike across the room. I was jolted back to the present when his eyes met mine. In an instant I saw his look that told me I was right. He knew that I had worked it out and was both pleading and daring me to voice my knowledge.

While Hugh had been meticulously taking his forward ball through nine hoops of the fifth game of the Open Singles Final last July, Mike Osmond went to his car, drove through the light Sunday traffic across Putney Bridge to his apartment in Roehampton and viciously beat his wife to death. Yes, his wife was depressed - but not over her business, but because she had discovered her husband's affair with Celia. Had she threatened to blow the whistle on them or try to deny Mike a divorce? Who knows.

It was clear to me that my friend had callously planned his wife's murder and carried it out with unsurpassed audacity. Yet, to others it was plain to see that Mike could not possibly be responsible - he was playing in the final of the Opens, witnessed by hundreds of people ....

# Points Of View

Beatrice McGlen poses some interesting questions of the lady members of the Croquet Association.

Now that Christmas is over and all the present-buying, decorating, card writing and cooking are completed, perhaps all you ladies have a little time to reflect on the role of women in croquet. No, I'm not talking about making the teas or arranging social events but about those ladies who join croquet clubs to play croquet. I don't know what proportion of members are ladies and I suspect the CA don't know either, but it must be around 50%. Yet, looking through the November issue of the Croquet Gazette, the following extracts would make one think the proportion was far less:

- Of the 39 contestants in the open selection events only two were women. The Barlow Bowl attracted its full complement of 8 but there were no reserves when one competitor fell ill.
- There were insufficient entries to hold the Longman Bowl, again.
- There are, at the time of writing this, only 4 women in the top 100 of the British rankings.
- Debbie Cornelius is the first woman since 1966 to have any degree of success in the British Opens.

- The organisers of the S.E. Federation Ladies Day were disappointed to have only six teams.
- In 1994 (as in 1992) there were no nominations for the Steel Bowl, a trophy for the most improved female croquet player.

It has not always been thus. The great women of croquet history included Miss D.D. Steel and Miss Lily Gower (later Mrs Beaton) who, between them, won the Open Championship 5 times and were runners-up 7 times between 1903 and 1939. According to 'The History of Croquet' (D.M.C. Prichard) the committee passed an unequivocal resolution in 1909 'that women could not enter for the Men's Gold Medals nor the men for the Women's.' The reason being that the Open Championship and the Men's Gold Medals had been won by women five times since 1901 and the men had had enough.

So what is the problem? Do you think there is a problem?

I think the reason women are not getting to the top of croquet in greater numbers is largely

a matter of the amount of time they are able to devote to the game. There seems to be plenty of young men in their 20's and 30's rapidly pushing their way through the ranks, but young women are increasingly combining jobs and raising families and don't have the time to pursue a sport seriously until their children leave home. This is not just a problem in croquet but in many sports. It is perhaps significant that 3 of the top 4 female croquet players are unmarried - husbands are very time consuming!

But getting to the top in croquet is not the be all and end all, and the majority of croquet players, both male and female, are quite content to play at a less elevated level. So what is the explanation for the lack of nominees for the Steel Bowl and the Federation Ladies Day? Maybe women prefer to always play in open competitions. Certainly one of the game's major attributes is that everyone, regardless of sex, age or ability, is able to play. All the same, it makes a pleasant change to occasionally play in an all-female tournament (where there are no young and not-so-young men throwing tantrums!) Maybe it is a feeling of 'not being good enough' - lack of self confidence is a peculiarly female characteristic and the only way to prove if you are good enough or not is to have a go.

Whatever the reason, or reasons, I think it is a shame that tournaments very rarely have a field which is 50% female and that the few all-female competitions are not better supported. So, ladies, when the new fixture book drops into your lap bear this in mind and perhaps you'll be tempted to be slightly more ambitious than last year and the whole of croquet will benefit.

# It's A Funny Old Game

Andrew Bennett recounts some incidents relating to the toss of a coin.

The toss before the start of the game is not actually defined in Law 5. Strange things have happened.

A player, who shall remain nameless, tossed a coin which landed on its edge in long grass. A referee, who shall also remain nameless, was called. Rather unsportingly, the referee ordered a re-toss on the court.

The same player, having realised that a coin can land on its edge, took to calling "edge". He once won the toss this way. The same player tossed a coin which landed in his large American hat. The same cheerful referee was called. His ruling was that one should "stop messin' abart".

On another occasion, the writer was playing in a foreign tournament (East Riding). The opponent called "heads" in an accent not totally familiar to the writer's otherwise wide linguistic experience. Both players spent some time in silent contemplation. It transpired that each thought the other had won the toss and was deep in tactical planning.

At another foreign tournament

(Carrickmines), the English visitors enjoyed calling "harp", "fish" and other images to be seen on Irish coins. Having had some success with "cow", the writer inadvisedly called "pig". Hoots of laughter ensued. The call was doubly inappropriate: there is no pig, the coin was English, and the Monarch concerned would certainly not have been amused.

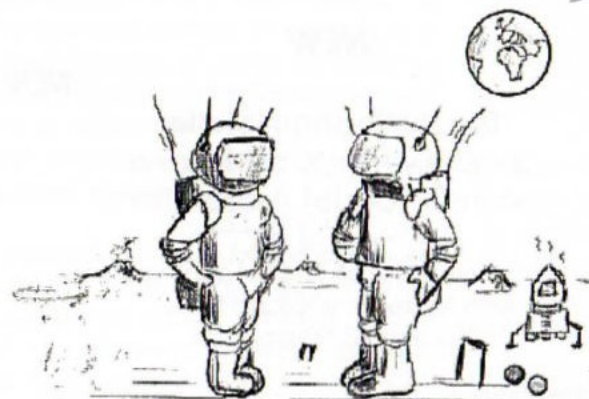
The result of a toss decided one important doubles game in which I had to play alone until my partner turned up after an hour and a quarter. The opponents won the toss and made the mistake of putting me in. I declared that I chose to play black and that I was placing my absent partner's blue in first corner. The best reply would probably have been to place a ball in third corner. Instead of this, they took contact, did a good approach to fist hoop and failed it. From the roquet, I made first hoop, placed a ball near the peg and laid up with a wide rush to second hoop. Their shot at the ball in the middle was missed and I embarked upon a break which surprisingly (?) failed at 2-back. Yellow then

made a very slow (another mistake!) break to 4-back. We had previously agreed that my partner could not take the first shot after turning up, if he ever did. Their leave was three balls spaced from the west boundary to offer no sensible target from B-baulk, with my ball nowhere in particular. It was an indifferent lawn (I don't intend to mention the club), so from A-baulk I aimed at the middle ball and hit the one on the right. I started to think about peels, but making 2-back seemed a sensible first course, followed by putting the opponents into useless places.

My partner arrived after two hours of trying to locate Harrow Oak club by car. He played his break very quickly, leaving me with an easy finish, which proved decisive in Bowdon's victory in the 1990 Mary Rose final against Surbiton. Blast, I wasn't going to mention when, where or how this happened.

And it all depended on the result of the toss. It may be worth your while to think about the consequences of the toss when you start a game!

## Laugh with Jack



Do you think we should tell N.A.S.A or the C.A.?



Boy are they in for a surprise!

# Tournaments '95

## The Final Round-up of Last Season's Reports

### 1995 Schools Championship

#### Nailsea

report by Hamish Hall

"7th July 1993. A lower entry this year, unfortunately, but this was partly due to the state of the economy and the lack of a sponsor". So wrote Chris Hudson in his introduction to the match report on the School's Championship in 1993. Last year the Gazette editor had to look elsewhere for copy to fill the space reserved for the Schools' report. Apparently an even lower entry, as there was no final. Although still no sponsor, and questionable whether the economy had moved up or down a notch, 1995 witnessed the revival of the Schools' Championship, as Wolverhampton Grammar School, the holder of the Royal Bank of Scotland Cup, travelled to Nailsea to contest the event.

The visitors' team was captained by Michael Blackwell, playing off 8, and in his 5th year and already showing interest in both the administration of the game, as well as playing. Michael had warmed Council's heart, by using their carpet, and running an indoor tournament last winter! He has also mastered the laws of the game, qualifying as a referee, and for good measure, he keeps Himley Hall's finances in order, being their treasurer. Their number 2 was the 1994 holder of the Trevor Williams Cup - the All England Champion, playing off 11. But the event was level play. How would he perform without that forest of bisques? Ben Elwell, handicap 12, made up the team.

This line up did not frighten the Nailsea school team. They took comfort in their home advantage. They were accustomed to playing on full sized courts whereas they knew that those of the visitors' school were only marginally larger than half size. And at any rate, their captain, Kristian Chambers, now down to 6, had benefited from Strat Liddiard's gold coaching course, a factor evident in his improved tactics. And he was in form being bolstered by recent successes at the All England area final. James Dixon was clearly delighting the school coach, Peter Dyke. He had responded positively to intensive tuition, and was still a bandit at 10. Peter Spencer, 14, completed the team.

Although the CA Calendar indicated that the format for the Championship would be both level play, as well as handicap, with schools competing locally before a play-off at regional finals, and winners progressing to a national final, the sad fact was that, apparently, only the two contestants had entered the Championship -



Hamish Hall presents the Schools Championship Trophy to Michael Blackwell of Wolverhampton Grammar School, with Ben Elwell looking on.

a sad reward for all the work put into promoting croquet in schools. The calendar also stipulated that the matches should consist of 3 games, understandable for earlier rounds, but to make round trip of over 200 miles for a single game prompts debate.

But what of the actual play itself? Opponents played against their opposite number according to handicap, although play was level. In the game on court one, Peter demonstrated his forte of sound rushing, and long hoop running - all perfected through enjoyable games of golf! But he has yet to master the percentage game. What cost the failed hoop off the opponent ball, or a missed roquet on an opposition ball on the boundary. Ben capitalised on these tactical errors, possessing considerably more patience. Wolverhampton's coach, David Iddon, explained that he encourages his boys to play level games, so they tended to keep their games tight, waiting the opportunity to pounce. Peter continued with his attacking play, which was to prove his downfall, as Ben notched up the first victory....+16

Over on court three, the captains gave a display of correct dress. Michael set the standard with a tie and cap correctly worn - and the standard was reflected equally in the strokes. Both players showed great respect for one another, but it was Michael who was first to strike. But whether he had not mastered Nailsea's course grass, he left himself a hampered stroke after running hoop 1, and this first chance

escaped him. But the 2 handicap difference eventually came through. Kristian slowly got the upper hand, and when turns finished through unforced errors, there was seldom a free shot for Michael. But like all good captains he hung in, knowing that he had the skills to punish any error. But keeping an eye on the progress of the other games, Kristian knew that he had to win, as he noted Peter's game slipping away....and win he did +18

From the spectators' point of view, the game on court 4 was the game to watch, as in all honesty, in the other two games the lower handicapped player always had the edge. But here the difference was one only. James knew of the imperfections on this court and he started off in confident style, being the first away, with an early lead. Peter Dyke visibly excited at the prospect of a Nailsea win, whilst David Iddon ensured that there was a photographic record of the match. But David Mathews had not won the All England by being a bandit. He had learnt to hang on in against his stylish opponent. He remained cool against the mounting pressure, and it was this match experience which gradually showed through. Traps were confidently laid, putting pressure on James, and he fell into them just too often. And so it was this early lead was whittled away, as David took control, winning +16.

So Wolverhampton won the match 2-1, and they alone are the only school to have their name on the cup along with the early winners of

the event, Queen Elizabeth School, Blackburn. Both teams reflected great credit on their coaches. David's daily lunch time coaching at Wolverhampton gives every indication that he will follow in Peter Dyke's historical success in producing "A" class players. But Peter will be striving to produce that success whilst his charges are still at school!

### 1995 National Junior Championship

#### Bowdon 12th - 14th July

report by Chris Hudson

There were only four players to challenge for this year's Junior Championship, and two of them were from overseas - Othello Ravez (France), fresh from the World Championship, and Matthew Burrow, a promising player from Jersey. The home players were James Death (Nottingham), and Michael Blackwell, from Himley Hall.

The semi-finals of the draw and process were played on the first day, managed by Bowdon's Howard Taylor. Play was generally of a high standard and all four players looked impressive, James in particular demonstrating some wonderful rushes, with a lovely relaxed swing of his long-handled mallet. Othello pulled off his first triple peel, having benefited no doubt from some coaching by Reg Bamford whilst the South Africans were playing England at Bowdon a few days earlier.

Both matches in the process went to one game all and had to be completed on the second day. Eventually James triumphed over Othello. Having been some way behind, he got his nose in front and pegged out one of Othello's balls. Othello hit in beautifully on several occasions, but created only one more chance, failing to gain a vital rush near the peg for his 3-ball break.

In his third game, Michael pegged Matthew out, to leave himself on peg and 4-back against Matthew's ball on rover. Michael lived dangerously with his leaves and was perhaps fortunate to win, as Matthew missed several roquets that could have put paid to Michael's chances.

The draw and process then merged so that Michael played Othello for the right to challenge James for the title. In their first game, Michael pegged Othello out with a scatter shot, having missed his initial attempt at a more orthodox peg out. However, Othello hit in with a long shot that just grazed his opponent's ball when Michael was ready to peg out, and went on to clinch the game. In the second game Othello played fluently, and was unstoppable, winning by 26.

The final was thus between James and Othello. In game one, James completed all of the peels for his triple, but then failed to run the rover hoop with a jump shot, being hampered by the other balls. In the second game, Othello was quickly round to 4-back. Some scrappy play followed before James completed the peels for a TPO and then missed the peg out, a fate that also befell his attempt to peg out with a scatter shot on the same turn. However James managed to peg out Othello's ball on a later turn, and then having reached peg and 2-back against 2, he pegged out his own ball to coast home comfortably.

The B-level competition, introduced for the first time this year, was played between Matthew and Michael. Their first game was well worth watching, Michael's steady persistence eventually brought him up from way behind to challenge for the lead. Matthew had a chance to finish the game, but missed the peg out with his first ball, pegging out the second.

Then the same thing happened to Michael, leaving both players with one ball each on the peg. Lots of positional play and then Matthew shot at Michael's ball on the yard line about seven yards away and hit, pegging out as a result. An absolute suicide shot, but it worked.

The handicap block was won by Matthew who played quickly and for the most part accurately, winning his game against James with several bisques still standing. A final advanced doubles match was probably the first ever played in a Junior Championship, and resulted in a win for "England" against "France & Jersey".

A most enjoyable occasion, a good sporting atmosphere, and a lot of help from

Bowdon members who provided accommodation for the players and their supporters.

In 1996 we plan to expand the competition, but it is a matter of picking the right dates and the right venue. Suggestions please, so we can perhaps attract more entries!

Results:

Junior Championship

Draw: Othello Ravez bt Matthew Burrow -5 +20 +23TP; James Death bt Michael Blackwell +9 +12.

Process: Death bt Ravez -11 +12 +7; Blackwell bt Burrow -11 +8 +2

Semi Final (variation B): Ravez bt Blackwell +7 +26

Final: Death bt Ravez +26 +8

"B" Level Final: Burrow bt Blackwell +1 +20  
American Handicap: Burrow bt Death +19;  
Death bt Blackwell +15; Burrow bt Blackwell +13.

Winner: Burrow (2 wins).

Advanced Doubles: Death & Blackwell bt Ravez & Burrow +20.

### All England Final

#### Colchester 23rd/24th September 1995

Report by Pat Hetherington

The six finalists gathered at Colchester in warm sunny weather and before the daylight faded eight of nine games had been completed, the ninth being pegged down overnight, allowing a later start for four of the six players on the Sunday morning. Over night the weather changed completely and Sunday's two rounds were played in wet windy conditions.

There was a happy atmosphere throughout and after four rounds three players, Mark Homan (Cassiobury), Ian Lines (Bowdon) and Chris Tuthill (Cardiff) each had three wins, so all depended on the final round, which began a little late after a celebratory lunch.

Mark lost fairly quickly to Paul Torrington (Hurlingham) but Ian and Chris had a titanic battle against one another which ended

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when time was called with Ian the winner by three hoops. Alan Oldham had arrived early in the day with the new winner's trophy and the New Zealand tray for the Winner's club and these were duly presented to Ian by Roger Bray.

Results:  
4 wins - Ian Lines +57  
3 wins - Chris Tuthill +28  
Mark Homan +8  
2 wins - Donald Beck -23  
Paul Torrington -31  
1 win - Jeremy Scott - 39

### Woking Croquet - Open Weekend and Triples Week: 24 June - 2 July

Woking's main annual week-long Tournament, Triples Week, was as ever preceded by its Weekend Open Tournament. The field for this, though less numerous than in many recent years, was enriched by John Walters' return from retirement, and by Annabel McDiarmid's return to her 'nursery' courts, they and two other scratch/minus players being seeded in the knockout.

Those losing in each round joined a progressive consolation Egyptian, bringing with them their results from the knockout. At all stages therefore there was everything to play for ..... save that is for poor old John W., who lost so many points in the first round, from being despatched in a match of see-sawing advantage by the tight and efficient play of Adrian Wadley, that it was arithmetically impossible for him subsequently to accumulate enough to win a prize - though this didn't deter him from a splendid TPO on his inaugural game in the 'cage', Woking's answer to the Gladiators, nor from beating all remaining opponents.

By late Saturday afternoon, the knockout field for the semi-finals had thinned to Adrian and the three unbeaten seeds, and sufficient time was available for best-of three contests in these last rounds. Adrian was eventually beaten by Annabel, the overnight pegging-down in the second game requiring her to re-start on Sunday morning with her lift shot: whatever had been on the breakfast menu was a secret, but she hit in, the rest being (+8, +5) history. The other semi, between home rivals Colin Southern and Bob Smith, was disturbed and interrupted by the latter's management duties; but Colin, keeping a private (but amicable) dialogue going - with his alter-ego? - coolly won through +3, -21, +7. The Southern/McDiarmid final produced some croquet which was perhaps more exciting than excellent, with Colin winning +4, +6.

Meanwhile the Egyptian had been rolling onwards, picking up more participants as the round-losers progressively joined in. The analogy with a snowball may have seemed apt on the chilly Saturday; but by Sunday, when the temperatures which would characterise Summer '95 had set in, it was more a case of 'Where's the ice-cubes?' We toiled, oh how we toiled, in

the unaccustomed sunshine.

The 'A'/B' class split on handicap basis resulted in Peter MacGowan's +7 points (from 4/7 wins) giving him the Caporn Casket, for the best-performing 'B'-class entrant; though the overall winner of the Egyptian was Adrian Wadley, with +10 points (from 4/6 wins.)

Come the Monday morning, all the competitiveness of the weekend (or perhaps more exactly, most of it) was swept away, and Triples Week began, with the experimental 14-point Advanced event. The field was so compact that the advertised Doubles side of the event was abandoned in favour of Singles-only games, thereby permitting use (to the evident relief of novice Manager Peter Mac) of the pre-ordained games sequence for eights events. Both varieties (lifts/contacts at 3+4, and 1b+4b) of the shortened game were played, though with no clear preference emerging. However what was evident was that both types were so enjoyable that the players refused to finish matches quickly, with the effect that the winner - Roger Hayes - was declared from a disappointingly meagre number of games.

There was further experimentation in store, with an event unique in the Calendar - a two day Handicap Doubles - which was to have been the much-missed Derek Caporn's speciality. One might think that an American block among the 7 pairs, with shortened 18-point games, would be a doddle to get through without time limits. Not so. Managerial consternation loomed on the very first round, with one match - let's leave names out of it! - overstaying their welcome, and causing court jams worthy of our nearby M25 for the rest of the day. The position was retrieved somewhat by the last game to finish doing so nearly in the light of the silvery moon, rather than be pegged-down - despite being prolonged by Ted Matthew's hitting-in, which had become devilishly accurate once dusk set in.

Time-limits were thenceforth not avoided, and amidst some bullying, the last four rounds were completed on the second day - by which stage the interesting outcome was that three pairs were tied on 4 wins, with each having beaten both of the others. Sounds like a case for Regulation 15(b): a count-up of net points totals showed that Roger and Sue Best, leaders throughout until this last round, had been narrowly overtaken by Ian/Betty and Lionel Wharrad/Geoff Cuttle (the CA Council team?), this latter pair just managing to take the prizes by virtue of the points gained from their final winning game against the former. A tight finish indeed, with two days of competition being decided by the last turn in the last game: who said Doubles is boring?

After all that excitement, the tyro Manager (aka your humble reporter) had to go for a little lie-down, and an experienced hand took over for the final Handicap Weekend. Geoff Cuttle had devised a cunning format, with an initial qualifying phase using 4 American blocks of 5 participants, from each of which the two

leaders then went into a separate X-Y-Z knockout, the remainder being reallocated to two 'consolation' American blocks for the remaining three games. There were prizes galore, and hence at all stages, again everything to play for.

A week of sun had started to make the first two courts notably faster, though the other two seemed immune, thereby producing a challenging contrast, and a need for adaptability. This unobtrusive attempt to favour local players didn't succeed however, as two of the Sidmouth Contingent got to the X-Y-Z knockout; though perhaps the remainder had worked out that their best chances were to hang back in the American blocks and do their slaughtering in the dreaded cage.

Come Sunday afternoon, the knockout final was played between Brian Smith - a Sidmouthian relatively new to the sport but already pretty adept at strokes and tactics, with a downwardly mobile handicap of 8 - and the home-grown Malcolm Bigg, about whom more or less the same can be said! The close-fought match was won by Brian, with Roger Bell and Roland Henderson taking the blocks.

Prizes were presented by our favourite centenarian, Mrs Smith (the Croquet Tea Lady until she retired in her eighties) - who was preparing to embark on her first hot-air balloon flight, a birthday treat from Club Members. Thus was rounded-off a splendid nine days of Croquet, with plenty of handicap changes, mostly downwards.

Your reporter may not be entirely impartial, but considers that Woking lays on a fine Tournament, and recommends more visitors should dip their toes in this water. Excellent catering, excellent beer, excellent company, excellent weather - who could ask for anything more?

Peter MacGowan

Open Weekend : final: C.Southern beat Mrs.A.McDiarmid +4 +6

Egyptian: A.Wadley

14 pt Advanced: winner: M.R.Hayes  
runner-up: R.J.Smith

Handicap Doubles: L.Wharrad & G.Cuttle  
runners-up: I.McDiarmid & Mrs.B.Mobsby

Handicap Singles: winner: B.Smith  
runner-up: M.D.Bigg  
consolation: R.Bell

### Southwick: 82nd Summer Tournament 26th June - 1st July Change of Format after 12 years

The Southwick Club took due note of player feedback and decided to change the format this year to provide for more play: advanced play and advanced handicap play as well as handicap play, plus doubles and some evening handicap play, giving anyone entering all 3 events 11 or 12 singles and 5 or 6 doubles. The Club provided extra trophies as well as useful and attractive engraved glassware and shields for winners and

runners-up alike. What a pity it was that only 7 players came from outside clubs. Southwick in the sun is superb!

The advanced play event (the Maurice Reckitt Rose Bowl) and the advanced handicap event (the Southwick Cup) were won respectively by the Manager Paul Macdonald (Hurlingham) and Gene Mears (Southwick) in a novel format, not fully understood by all who entered (which perhaps explains why the Manager and the Tournament Secretary won!).

A considerable crowd watched the sudden-death play-off between David Lethbridge (Tunbridge Wells) and Martin Rogers (Southwick) in the handicap singles event (the Martlets Shield). One could sense all the sound and conflicting advice being willed to the players as they each made tactically unsound moves that only served to prolong the agony before David finally made a hoop. David, however, could only come second to Peter Gosney (Southwick), both having decreed at the outset that the block would be decided on a "who beat whom" basis.

Doubles with players of widely differing ability is always a fascinating and nail-biting affair, with the higher-handicapped players under severe pressure, despite all assurances, and the lower-handicapped players often playing badly because they have to keep stopping rather than making long breaks. In one game I decided I could do no worse if I made a break; I managed to do so with 11 hoops, a casual 6ft peel of my partner and a rover peel and peg out of an opponent. That got a round of applause, but better than that, it made my partner play 200% better. In spite of this the event (the Ron Whetstone Cups) was won by Arthur Nelson (Compton) and Pam Arliss (Southwick). But spare a thought for the Manager and his wife who lost 3 of their 5 games by -1(T)!

An interesting managerial puzzle emerged in the unrestricted handicap singles event. four players had each won 3 of their 5 games. Gene Mears had beaten each of the other three, and was declared the winner on a "who beat whom" basis. The other three could not be separated in this way, so net points had to decide the runner-up: Gene 6, John Hobbs 11, Christine Constable 14 and Paul Macdonald 15. Paul was thus runner-up, but he would have been the winner had he as Manager decided to abide by Regulation 15(b).

All in all, this was an enjoyable and very busy week, with brilliant sunshine throughout, extremely fast lawns and very tightly set hoops. Worth a visit next year?  
John Hobbs

### Crawley Over 50's Handicap Tournament 3-4 August 1995

This was the first time Crawley had run a tournament for the over 50's. It was based on the assumption that most people eligible to play would be available mid-week. Players came from a variety of clubs in the south - Reading, Medway, Southwick & Reigate - with three

members of our own club. As handicaps ranged from 20 down to 5 and with only two full sized lawns it was felt that a modified Swiss format would be more appropriate with a separate Egyptian format to be run in the evening if players felt energetic. In the event, the weather was so hot and the lawns so fast, the over 50's felt ice-cold drinks in the gathering shade was a more than welcome relief from the toils and tribulations of the day. Thoughts of cold showers were rather more uppermost in their minds than continuing in the 'Phar-ao' heat.

The tournament proceeded very smoothly and produced an outright winner in Mrs. Pica Hose (10) from Reigate, who successfully beat handicaps of 14, 5, 10 & 18 in her bid for a small silver salver (next year we hope to acquire a perpetual trophy). The runner-up was Peter Highton (18) with Bob Crowne (10) a close third, both players from Medway and Southwick.

Jean Nash

### Hibiscus on Vicar's Lawn Parsons Green 3rd August

Sponsored by PG Tips, 16 assorted chimps, champs and chumps, including a stray fox, and all bearing 10 or more little white sticks, assembled for a one-day carnival at a well known stadium in Fulham, West London. There, with a veteran whip-cracking Ringmaster putting them through their paces (and not a few hoops), they took part in a four-ring circus (X,Y,Z & Omega) from dawn 'til dusk - each performing four or even five 14-point games with varying degrees of skill, speed and grace.

Supreme Champ (X) was Anne Robillard, Galway reared but now housed locally. The Y chump was the wily Fox (Roy) from a lair in Merton. The Z chimp, also from Merton, was David Bayly (without camera) and the Omega chimp was Belquise Ismail, born in the land of the springbok and now roaming happily among the deer at Roehampton.

Tip for next year: PG will be holding another tea-party next summer - all high bisquers welcome!

Note - all animals were fed and watered throughout the day to standards well above the minimum set by animal welfare legislation.  
Sue Davies.

### Nottingham CC Annual Tournament 13-19th August

The relentless sun beat down upon play during the week of the Nottingham Croquet Club Annual tournament, and as a result, hard, fast courts and ungenerous hoops challenged players' concentration and skill. Difficult hoop approaches brought out the best from crash bang wallop players who opted to run hoops from two yards, "just to be safe". The conditions also meant that many games took over four hours to complete, but credit must be given to Ian Vincent

for his excellent management, ensuring that all events had been completed by Saturday evening. Manager and players alike were also assisted by the new floodlighting on Lawn One, allowing play to continue well after dark. Not only did this allow evening games to be completed, but also encouraged many to remain at the club after their games had finished, drinking, chatting and playing bridge well into the night. Slightly more entertaining than the croquet at one point was the sight of David Harrison-Wood and Alain Giraud climbing on the roof of the pavilion making final adjustments to the direction of the floodlights; thankfully the police did not arrive to investigate.

Event 1, the Robin Hood Handicap Trophy was won by Richard Edwards, whose solid play was impressive throughout the tournament. The runner-up was David Harrison Wood, who with a handicap of -1.5 was astonished that he managed to reach the final. The Open Singles was won by Peter Death who beat Ian Vincent in the final, mercifully peeling white through hoop 1 for him after Ian had failed it for the sixth time! The B level singles, also advanced play, was won by Alain Giraud, beating Philip Pawson, the runner-up.

In a marathon game, pegged down twice over two days, John Handy beat Jean Ackermann to win the C levels. Another member of the Giraud family, Anthony, claimed the prize in the D handicap event, beating May Ollett and earning a Bronze Award in the final. Only one game in the Handicap Doubles was won by a peg-out: the rest, including the final which was won by Mark Roberts and John Handy against Gordon Hopewell and Barbara Noble, went to time.

Yet again the Nottingham Croquet Club provided excellent tournament facilities and exceptional catering. This together with glorious sunshine resulted in a thoroughly enjoyable week of croquet.  
Mark Roberts.

### Cheltenham August Level Play Tournament 26-28 August

The heatwave having ended, this tournament took place in cool, pleasant mainly dry conditions. There were four bands based on handicap. The manager Michael Rangeley

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arranged the first games of the day; thereafter players arranged their own games. In an interesting twist, a lower handicapped player was obliged to accept a challenge from a higher.

The lawns were fast and hoops tightly set. This combination meant that there were no triple peels, and although the manager offered prizes for running 12, 9 and 6 hoops in the lower bands, only one prize was won - by Bernard Weitz.

It was a delight to have a non-playing manager, always available and friendly. A curiosity was that blue balls were consistently bigger than the others, causing interesting tactical diversions. An excellent tournament! Peter Darby.

Block 1 Winner:	Stephen Badger
Runner-up:	Lionel Tibble
Block 2 Winner:	Edward Dymock
Runner-up:	Alan Bogle
Block 3 Winner:	Dennis Regan
Runner-up:	Andrew Potter
Block 4 Winner:	Gerry Eccles
Runner-up:	Veronica McClements

### Hunstanton's 96th Annual Tournament, 26-30 August

The Hunstanton Hurdles  
(Commentary by Peter O'Sully-Toye)

Welcome to this historic course for the 96th Annual Handicap Hurdles. The going is good with the turf remaining surprisingly green, given the long dry spell of the last few weeks. All credit to the ground staff. The main event of the day is the Handicap Egyptian, run over four and a half circuits of the course, with a full entry of 22 riders competing for the Holcombe Inglesby Challenge Cup.

Many famous riders have had their names inscribed on its surface over the course of the century - Miss Joan Game in 1914, Mrs E Reeve in 1937, '47 and '57 and more recently Paul Day in '90 and '91. Who will take the honours today I wonder?

And they're coming out onto the course now. First out is David Tutt, last year's winner, on White Hat and he's followed by Betty Carter on Fag End from the Surbiton stables of Mr J C Straw. They're followed by a stream of riders. There's Ian Mantle on Mr Nice Guy, Beryl Gosden on Bodywarmer, oh, and there's her husband Ron on Bodywarmer's Mate, from the same Hunstanton stable of Miss S G Hampson. Nigel Gray on Mr Blue and John Christmas on Wells Fargo; Malcolm O'Connell on Roll Your Own (out of Samson by Rizla). And there's the evens favourite George Noble on Triple Peel and he's followed by another fancied runner Nick Harris on Y'know accompanied by his stablemate Mobile Phone ridden by Neil Chalmers.

And the starter is calling them together now. Oh dear, Celia Pearce is having a spot of

bother with Teacher's Pet but she seems to have things under control and they're under starter's orders and ... they're off!

And it's Ian Birdseye first off on The Captain and Martin Kolbuszewski on No Stetson and Celia Steward on Martin French's Aluminium Head (by Foundry Lodge out of Bauxite) and they're followed by Jonathan Toye on Banana Boat hotly pressed by Celia Pearce on Teacher's Pet and Graham Fowler on Little Walrus (a previous winner in 1992) and hot on their tails are John Reeve on Worried Expression and Gordon Hopewell on Furniture Store. And there's Su Stenhouse in the startling fourball colours of Corla van Greithuysen on Mr Butt and alongside her, Roger Ivill, in his debut hurdles, going well on Knobbly Knees and coming up fast on the outside Malcolm Harbord on Colchester Lad.

And they're coming round to the finish for the first time now and in the lead at this stage is Celia Steward on Aluminium Head followed by Malcolm Harbord on Colchester Lad and Jonathan Toye on Banana Boat and hot on their heels Celia Pearce on Teacher's Pet and there's Little Walrus with Graham Fowler urging his mount on and he's hard pressed by John Reeve on Worried Expression.

[Time passes ... numerous tasty sandwiches, cakes, cups of tea and bananas later...]

And they're approaching the final furlong and it's a real battle between Celia Steward's Aluminium Head and Jonathan Toye on Banana Boat with Celia Pearce snapping at their heels in her customary fashion on Teacher's Pet. And as they pass the main pavilion now it's a fighting finish with Banana Boat first then Aluminium Head then Teacher's Pet with John Reeve on Worried Expression and in fifth place Malcolm O'Connell on Roll Your Own.

Other results coming in now...

Block A (Advanced Steeplechase) George Noble on Triple Peel  
Block B (Advanced Steeplechase) Ian Mantle on Mr Nice Guy  
Block C (Handicap Hurdles) Celia Pearce on Teacher's Pet  
Block D (Handicap Hurdles) Roger Ivill on Knobbly Knees

Jonathan Toye.

### Northampton Open Weekend 1-3 September

The threatening weekend weather and the near skating-rink conditions of the hard, bare lawns did not augur well for Northampton Croquet Club's open weekend; but in the event impaired neither the play nor the enthusiasm of the players and visitors.

A shower at the start of the second day's play (the Saturday) failed to develop and after an initial 20 minutes or so the competitors managed to stop the balls rolling off the lawn,



Lionel Tibble, Chairman of the Northampton Club (right), presents Brian Hallam, also of Northampton, with the winner's trophy at the Northampton open weekend in September.

they were that fast.

The setting is so very lovely: a large area of lawns with the noble St. Andrew's Hospital buildings as a backdrop, combined with an awning for spectators made the event memorable, particularly for one such as your commentator whose first CA event this was, having been 'thrown in' at the last moment due to a cancellation.

The 2 day tournament, starting Friday at mid-day, consisted of two American-style blocks for the preliminary rounds from which were selected the top two in each block. The remainder played for a consolation prize.

Brian Hallam and Lionel Tibble, both of Northampton, contested the best-of-3 final. It was a close thing until the end when Brian forged ahead to win 2-1.

Steve Platt from Lancashire won the consolation prize, with Phillip Shaw of Northampton coming second, Phillip hitting in with astonishing accuracy.

In spite of the quality of play, the high spot, universally voted so, was the food provided on both the Saturday and the Sunday by Club secretary Nora Smith with the help of the usual bevy of 'tea ladies'. The spread was truly fabulous.

Owen Bryce

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### Jellicorse Cup Southwick (5th-8th September)

This 4-day mid-week handicap tournament at Southwick with handicaps ranging from 0 to 20, was well down on the 40 entries last year. The home club provided about half the entries and visitors represented Cheltenham, Ipswich, Reigate, Letchworth, Colchester and Medway. The tournament was well managed by Dennis Moorcraft, ably assisted by his wife Ingeborg.

Day one, Tuesday, was dry and sunny and the lawns still had some glassy patches from the drought. On Wednesday it rained for the first two hours of play, pleasing some players despite their getting wet since it made the lawns easier to play. The sun made Thursday and Friday more enjoyable.

The knock-out tournament for the Jellicorse Cup was won by Don Beck of Medway with runner-up Philip Eardley of Ipswich. Graham Gale of Letchworth won the Egyptian tournament. John Solomon was runner-up despite being white-washed in one of his games.

The final between Beck and Eardley became quite tense towards the end. Beck used some of his bisques to get his black clip on rover. Eardley took one ball round, peeled black through rover and pegged it out; his other clip was still on hoop 1. Beck used his last three bisques to get blue from hoop 2 to penult. The ensuing battle looked as if it might end when Eardley managed to get a three ball break going. When he broke down by missing a roquet a frustrated Eardley attempted to hurl his mallet into the sea but was foiled by the railway embankment. He had to watch Beck make penult and rover. Eardley made another two hoops while Beck was taking long range shots at the peg, which he finally hit.

This tournament was most enjoyable in the friendly atmosphere always found at Southwick supplemented by excellent salad lunches prepared by Joan Weir and her helpers. Peter Highton

### Newport Handicap Tournament 9-10 September

A few days' rain had turned the lawns into a good condition and we were blessed with sunshine until the Sunday afternoon. At the end of the first day three players had won 3 out of 3, but two of these lost on Sunday morning. Michael Percival had won all his 5 games by early afternoon and was tempted to stop; but Dan Windham had now won 4 out of 5, and since they had not met, they were sent out for a final in the rain. Both made some good long hits and had chances of winning but in the end Michael won +3, giving him 6 out of 6 and a handicap reduction.

Shot of the weekend was by Dan on the Saturday when he ran 3-back and 4-back in the

same shot, finishing with a simple rush of the ball across to penult.

Don Cornelius

### Budleigh Salterton Mid-September Handicap Tournament 15-17 September

Saddened by the recent loss of Brian Redford, Budleigh's most liked and respected player and tournament organiser, the task of planning the September event was taken up by Shaun Carter. With great gusto and very evident humour he presented all arrivals with an 'Egyptian' tournament.

35 people entered (34 if you count Andrew Potter who, forgetting it was a 3 day event arrived late Friday night!). With superb weather obliging most to seek the suncream and sunhats there was ample opportunity for as many games as desired with many managing 8 and a few hardy stalwarts 10. Grumbles were heard from Shaun Carter who only completed 6 games - but then, he was only the Manager and so got little sympathy! Commiserations were however shared with those who, so used to playing in summer '95 desert conditions, just could not cope with the green stuff. Cries of "I can't control the ball anymore - the grass is too long" brought tears to the eyes of many!

The final game produced a fascinating mix of Father and Son finalists, Tim Danby (16 yrs.) against his father Richard (age undetermined). Much to his surprise Richard won with 72 points having never beaten his son previously this season! John Toye was runner-up with 69 points and Tim Danby 3rd with 65. A Silver Award was won by Brian Smith (Sidmouth) and a Bronze Award by Vera Henderson (also Sidmouth).

Shaun Carter, in organising this event at such short notice had done a very commendable job. Everyone seemed to voice how well the event had been run and he gained the full support and appreciation of all at the Presentation Ceremony. Well done Shaun, the job is yours next year - for the same pay of course. Brian Smith

### Roehampton End-of-Season Tournament 28/9-1/10/95

As a visitor from Pretoria, currently spending 5 months' sabbatical leave in London, I took part in the end-of-season handicap 4-day weekend at the Roehampton Club. It was in fact my second visit to Roehampton and I should like to compliment them on the excellent condition of their lawns. The tournament was ably run by Paul Macdonald who introduced a novel "elimination" variant of the popular Swiss system and also managed to play in the event.

The tournament also saw a number of first time participants, most of them playing off handicap 20 (!) and notably Ian Smith, the head

groundsman and greenkeeper of the Club's golf course and therefore responsible for the upkeep of the croquet lawns; he amazed everyone by his grasp of the game after only 3 or 4 months playing it. My own personal highlight was a nine hoop 2-ball break to win a game by one point against Gary Bennett from Harrow Oak after he had pegged out one ball.

The tournament was won by Neil Jackson (Ipswich) - a two-time previous winner of the trophy (the Hussars Cup) - who was declared the winner in a triple tie with Edward Dymock and Pauline Healy (Parsons Green) on the basis of "who beat whom" and "quality of wins" (known in chess circles as the Sonneborn-Berger formula).

I thoroughly enjoyed the tournament, excellent weather, friendship of the participants and the hospitality of the Club. Dr. Gary Culligan

### Cheltenham's Last Weekend Tournament of 1995 13-15 October

No rockets marked the last bisque of each game this year - Hugh Smorfitt and his contribution to the weekend were missed by the regulars, but it was good to meet several new visitors to Cheltenham and to play on green lawns once more in the glorious sunshine of a St. Luke's summer.

The format used is a little complicated, but it can be recommended as a useful variation. Players are divided into 7 blocks of 6 competitors, giving 5 predetermined games for everyone, as promised in the fixture book. Extra games, against players not in one's own block, are available at the end of each day. All results are entered on individual Hands score cards that have been prepared in advance by the manager, Ian Maugham, with everyone starting at the same rating. These show one's block opponents in order, but leave gaps for the possible extra games. The winner of each block is the player with the highest Hands rating when play finishes, thereby combining the benefits of block play with the freedom of a Hands ladder. (NB Cheltenham prefers the title 'Hands ladder' to 'Egyptian' so that Paul Hands, the inventor of that flexible method of tournament organisation, is given recognition.)

Of the 42 competitors, 16 played 6 games and 4 managed 7 games. The winners (and runners-up) were Colin Thursfield (Nick Evans); Jean Powell (Stephen Badger); Alison Thursfield (Brian Hewitt); Dab Wheeler (David Brydon); Mike Hammelev (Audrey Whitaker); Eileen Magee (Michael Rangeley); Louise Bradforth (Tim Danby). DAW.

# British Rankings

UK List at 31 October 1995 10 game minimum

	Grade	Gms	Wins
1 Fulford RI	2805	131	100
2 Bamford RL [SA]*	2766	73	53
3 Maugham DB	2675	105	77
4 Clarke CD	2659	147	109
5 Mulliner SN	2648	57	39
6 Cornelius DA Miss	2611	101	59
7 Burridge IJ [W]	2609	149	99
8 Dawson JP	2597	65	43
9 Openshaw DK	2539	67	41
10 Comish S	2501	83	49
11 Goacher DJ	2485	79	50
12 Irwin CJ	2428	58	38
13 Walters JO	2374	51	37
14 Day PE	2368	47	23
15 Heap MEW	2360	33	19
16 Avery MN	2356	63	32
17 Liddiard GS [S]	2351	41	21
18 Cordingley P	2351	84	45
19 Symons AJ	2341	16	10
20 McInerney R [I]	2328	56	35
21 Prichard WdeB [W]	2326	12	8
22 Gaunt DL	2320	89	51
23 Guest JE	2315	42	28
24 Goddard JP	2312	10	6
25 Bond ID [S]	2297	41	20
26 Hallam BG	2282	124	77
27 Surgenor J [S]	2276	38	25
28 Palmer LJ [W]	2270	75	48
29 Taylor HP	2258	36	23
30 Noble GW	2251	66	48
31 Williams S [I]	2241	56	33
32 Farthing CN	2235	18	13
33 Linton AM	2233	54	34
34 Schmieder Cvon [I]	2230	22	15
35 Burge TR	2229	28	16
36 Williams CN [W]	2228	82	38
37 Evans MJ [W]	2224	32	22
38 Duckworth ET	2222	65	43
39 Cunningham AE [I]	2216	35	22
40 Patmore CJ	2210	43	23
41 Brown RJ	2206	57	31
42 Watson JPG	2204	16	7
43 Toye JS	2203	19	14
44 Harrison-Wood D	2193	85	43
45 Foulser DR	2192	27	17
46 Rogerson F [I]	2180	17	12
47 Gunasekera DL [W]	2178	26	13
48 Coles WT	2160	24	10
49 Tribe R	2154	25	16
50 Murray M [S]	2150	24	11
51 Gregory AK	2148	90	39
52 Tibble LG	2146	124	72
53 Maugham FI	2136	28	12
54 Mrozinski AJ [W]	2135	20	12
55 Lamb WE	2134	29	13
56 Haggerston MJB	2130	22	14
57 Trimmer PC	2123	44	31
58 Ormerod WP	2119	26	18
59 Curry GE Ms	2117	50	34
60 Scott PS	2111	18	13
61 Smith RJ	2102	22	11
62 Storey BJ	2090	11	5
63 Leggate ATR	2089	88	42
64 Browne TN [I]	2084	18	8
65 Badger ST	2080	37	20
66 Palmer AJ Mrs	2077	38	21
67 Ames JP	2076	48	23
68 Eardley P	2072	44	25
69 Vincent IG	2071	42	20
70 Carter KJ	2069	51	28
71 Southern C	2068	93	48
72 Steadman W	2067	45	27
73 Willard GM	2064	21	9

74 Solomon JW	2055	22	10
75 Dyer JS [S]	2054	10	4
76 Jones CS	2048	24	13
77 Wheeler JA	2045	23	14
78 Le Moignan AS [Jer]	2042	13	8
79 Wadley AM	2035	63	34
80 Jenkins RS	2032	43	27
81 Magee DJ	2031	65	33
82 Neal BG	2027	25	10
83 Smith PL	2023	28	10
84 Hayes MR	2003	12	9
85 O'Connell MJ [S]	1998	43	24
86 Shorten JAI Miss [I]	1998	43	22
87 Sandler MH	1996	23	10
88 Harris NR	1994	12	4
89 Haslam JH	1993	33	16
90 Fewtrell R	1991	32	16
91 White DM	1985	15	9
92 Best R	1973	36	17
93 Ransom RW	1971	36	15
94 Audsley E	1970	10	7
95 Scott EE	1970	18	12
96 Rangeley MW	1969	28	15
97 Fowler GE	1967	54	25
98 Death PJ	1954	23	14
99 Shaw DW	1954	23	8
100 Bottomley HJ	1948	19	8
101 Landor FJR	1946	19	3
102 Carter SE [W]	1945	41	22
103 Wild CH	1937	14	5
104 Bennett GJ	1937	56	29
105 Morrow NW	1935	51	19
106 Smith J	1934	43	19
107 Collin GK	1920	21	11
108 White RK	1920	10	4
109 Hopewell CG	1918	29	17
110 Hammeley MA	1916	117	52
111 Mantle I	1915	22	18
112 Wood R	1913	16	11
113 Hawkins JD	1912	33	17
114 Kibble DJ	1907	55	28
115 Storey IE	1902	13	7
116 Latham LV	1900	12	4
117 Ward WH	1895	14	10
118 Kimmerling RL	1889	23	12
119 Death J	1888	20	14
120 McClelland IR	1887	17	8
121 Arliss WH	1887	23	11
122 Whittaker FL	1880	30	15
123 Williamson JD	1877	14	5
124 Coates DT	1877	19	9
125 Darby PA	1877	28	13
126 Gugan R Mrs	1875	49	24
127 Granger-Brown M	1875	25	11
128 Anderson TW	1874	23	7
129 Dinwoodie CL [S]	1865	22	9
130 Taylor PM	1861	23	12
131 Ranshaw MJ [S]	1859	24	11
132 Reed AA	1858	10	4
133 Teague BT	1857	25	15
134 Sheraton-Davis J	1855	39	20
135 Davis R	1854	14	9
136 Smorffitt HW	1850	58	25
137 Gale GK	1847	36	17
138 Brand IB	1838	11	6
139 McMordie JA	1838	10	5
140 Williams RAW [S]	1834	25	10
141 Jackson NG	1827	31	19
142 McElwain G [W]	1827	12	9
143 Dorke PJ [W]	1822	15	2
144 Moorcraft DH	1819	17	11
145 Wainman BR	1818	18	10
146 Jackman RT	1814	18	9
147 Campbell A [S]	1814	12	9
148 Stephens DR	1812	31	10
149 Appleton DR [S]	1808	25	8
150 Ransom FE Mrs	1807	63	27
151 Tutt D	1806	34	12
152 Hoskyns RF	1797	12	7
153 Nicholson DJ	1796	17	10

154 Sutcliffe AF	1796	19	7
155 Dent CJ	1796	14	10
156 Edwards RR	1795	21	8
157 Town MD	1794	23	12
158 Barklie R [I]	1793	13	7
159 Ford CJ	1766	20	7
160 Dymock E	1765	69	33
161 Hilditch JR	1764	91	23
162 Bennett CG	1762	16	6
163 Jardine AW	1761	61	26
164 Pennant-Jones R	1757	30	12
165 Hobbs JA	1756	14	7
166 Nash P	1753	10	8
167 Butler LS	1744	10	3
168 Cuttle G	1744	19	9
169 Carlisle V Mrs	1742	12	6
170 Davies SB Mrs	1736	12	8
171 McGlen BA Mrs	1735	18	10
172 Rajotte AL	1734	17	9
173 Campion PWP	1734	15	7
174 Bonnett GD	1733	22	11
175 Murdoch BRP [S]	1733	12	7
176 McInerney A [I]	1731	16	8
177 Addis AJW	1728	10	5
178 Thomas AH [W]	1725	10	2
179 Scott IW Dr	1723	17	8
180 Ashwell R	1713	16	8
181 Regan D [W]	1713	25	13
182 Salisbury P	1712	13	5
183 Brand RS	1708	11	3
184 Brown A [I]	1708	15	6
185 Thursfield A Mrs [W]	1704	11	7
186 Smith CA Mrs	1698	13	6
187 Hanley P	1694	10	6
188 Harris B Mrs	1694	21	9
189 Harding WTS [W]	1693	10	4
190 Whittall KM Mrs	1690	15	7
191 Allnutt PC	1688	15	7
192 Burrow M [Jer]	1683	10	3
193 Gurney DJF	1677	24	13
194 Howell P	1677	19	6
195 Anderson J Mrs	1671	17	9
196 Swaffield P	1671	13	5
197 Steward CM Mrs	1660	61	24
198 Chamberlin GEJ	1660	11	4
199 Watson PA	1659	13	5
200 Townsend C Mrs [S]	1659	13	3
201 Windred P	1656	14	5
202 McCoig FC Miss	1655	22	5
203 Whittaker AM Mrs	1650	32	12
204 Macdonald IPM	1647	13	7
205 Stenhouse S Ms [S]	1644	19	6
206 Snowdon CB	1642	15	8
207 Latham D Mrs	1641	18	7
208 Carpenter D	1640	11	3
209 Gugan D	1639	19	9
210 Firth MR	1639	12	6
211 Wankling JL	1619	12	3
212 Healy PV Mrs	1614	56	19
213 Cornelius DS	1610	26	10
214 Potter A	1610	29	10
215 Miller DM Mrs	1601	10	3
216 Osmond C Mrs	1596	34	10
217 Fewtrell FA Mrs	1594	17	4
218 Selmes RH	1589	23	7
219 Mahoney TR	1576	11	4
220 Davis KR	1575	12	3
221 Haslam BL Mrs	1573	39	5
222 Anderson G [S]	1571	12	4
223 Weston T [Jer]	1569	22	4
224 Wallis RE	1556	23	4
225 Mansfield PJ	1554	10	0
226 Wharrad L	1551	15	5
227 Weaver RV	1545	11	3
228 Gray SNH	1543	31	10
229 Ruscombe-King D	1540	20	8
230 Goleworthy T [W]	1535	17	3
231 Wheeler D Mrs	1505	19	5
232 Reeve JE	1495	17	3
233 Gosden RA	1488	16	3

## The Basis of the Croquet Grading System

Written by Stephen Mulliner and reproduced from issue 228 (August 1993)

The Croquet Grading System (as approved by the C.A.)  
Every player has an index which is a number lying between 0 and 200 and is changed after every game a player plays. The index can be a volatile number and is exponentially smoothed to produce the grade which is much less volatile and is used to produce ranking lists. The Croquet Grading System uses the results of all level single games in C.A. Calendar events and some overseas events.

The C.G.S. algorithm has a strong theoretical foundation supported by empirical research. The rating of competitive performance has been extensively studied (see the bibliography in The Rating of Chessplayers, Elo A.E., Batsford 1978) and supports the basic tenet of both the C.G.S. and the Elo Rating System, namely that "the many performances of an individual will be normally distributed when evaluated on an appropriate scale". In practice, accuracy is improved by using the closely related Verhulst distribution which is represented by the logistic function. This function requires that the increment added to the winner's index (and subtracted from the loser's index) be calculated as follows:

$$INC = K / (1 + 10^{(IW - IL/50)})$$

IW and IL are the winner's and loser's indices immediately before the game. K is set at 4 for low significance events, 5 for normal events and 6 for high significance events.

### \*STOP PRESS NOTICE\*

On Sunday April 21st The British MacRobertson Team of 1982 (Keith Wylie, Stephen Mulliner, Andrew Hope, Martin Murray, William Prichard and David Openshaw (unconfirmed)), will play a match at Bristol C.C. against the British team selected to play in the MacRobertson Shield later this year. Spectators will be welcome and play will commence at 10am.

## Handicap Alterations

### Southwick Club

M. Rogers	14	to	12
Mrs J. Weir	12	to	14

### Tyneside Club

D.R. Appleton	2.5
A. Burn	9
Ms G. Curry	-0.5
R.B. Kennedy	8
B.M. Rannie	4
J.B. Portwood	2.5
Ms S. Stenhouse	9
D.W. Trotman	4.5
D. Wright	7
M. O'Connell	0.5
B.E. Thompson	0.5

### Victorian Open, Melbourne (AUS)

A.S. Le Moignan	0	to	-0.5
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### Worthing Club

P. Morris	12	to	10
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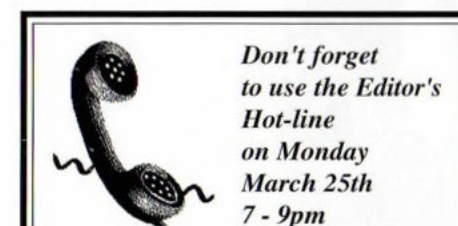
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Mr P.M.A. Corke	Surrey
Mr R.R. Flood	Eire
Mr A.A. Phillips	Lancs
Mr C.M. Power	Eire
Mr I.D.R. Price	Kent
Mr D.C. Rogers	Lincoln
Mr R.A. Sherlaw-Johnson	Manchester
Mrs A. Taylor	Cornwall
Mr T. Treglown	Wilts

### New Club

Merton Croquet Club

Next Issue Published  
May 11th  
Copy Deadline  
April 12th  
Stop Press Deadline  
April 19th



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Details of how to place an advert and booking forms will be made available to all clubs in the near future, as well as being available direct from the editor or the CA office.