

# Club Focus

## Southport & Birkdale C.C.

Croquet started being played in Southport at the Palace and Smedley hotels, and a Club was formed named Birkdale & Southport Croquet Club which played in Victoria Park from 1894. It was 1902 before the local Council allowed the Club to erect a pavilion which at that time had a thatched roof and steps alongside the whole verandah. A tournament was held in 1905. The clubhouse did not change, apart from having the thatched roof replaced by roofing felt, until it was remodelled internally (retaining the original ambience) in the mid 1980's to provide changing rooms. The gas lighting has been retained and electricity was only installed as our Centenary Project in 1994.

In common with most croquet clubs, Birkdale & Southport suffered a decline after the war and was kept going by a few stalwarts. At some date between 1945 and 1979 the club name was reversed to become Southport & Birkdale. Tournament play was revived in the mid-1970's and has continued to feature strongly with a full programme now included in the Calendar including the Championship of North West England which is



*Pleasant conditions and good company make a good tournament.*

played in August for the Broadbents and Boothroyd's Trophy. The other tournaments are two advanced weekends, one at the beginning and one at the end of the season, a handicap tournament, a not too serious family doubles tournament, a long-bisquers' tournament and a week tournament in August.

We have five lawns and for the last six or seven years have been negotiating with the Council for additional lawn space which would give us another four or five lawns bringing the total to nine or ten. Progress has been made and, as part of the overall upgrading project for Victoria Park, drainage has been installed under the new lawns and work has now commenced on levelling.

In the mid-1980's, Andrew Bennet started coaching pupils from Queen Elizabeth Grammar School in Blackburn, and bringing them to Southport to play. Players who started then include Chris Clarke and Mark Saurin.

In common with every other club, we are continually



*A full verandah during the North West Federation Championship.*

trying to expand our membership and hold regular coaching courses for both beginners and improvers.

We have hosted various events over the years, including the preliminary match of England v New Zealand prior to the 1986 McRobertson Shield, the Spencer Ell, Selectors, Barlow Bowl, Home Internationals and CA v Ireland. The North West Federation hold an annual inter-club competition with teams playing short, handicap and advanced croquet and this is also held at Southport.

We enter teams in the Inter-Club, Mary Rose, Longman Cup and North West League, Full & Short. Over the last few years we have been runners-up twice in the Inter-Club and won the Longman Cup. In 1992 Southport won the Apps Heley award for the most improved club.

New faces are always welcome at our tournaments and we hope you will make a journey to see us. Being a seaside resort, Southport is well-endowed with hotels and guest-houses to suit all pockets.

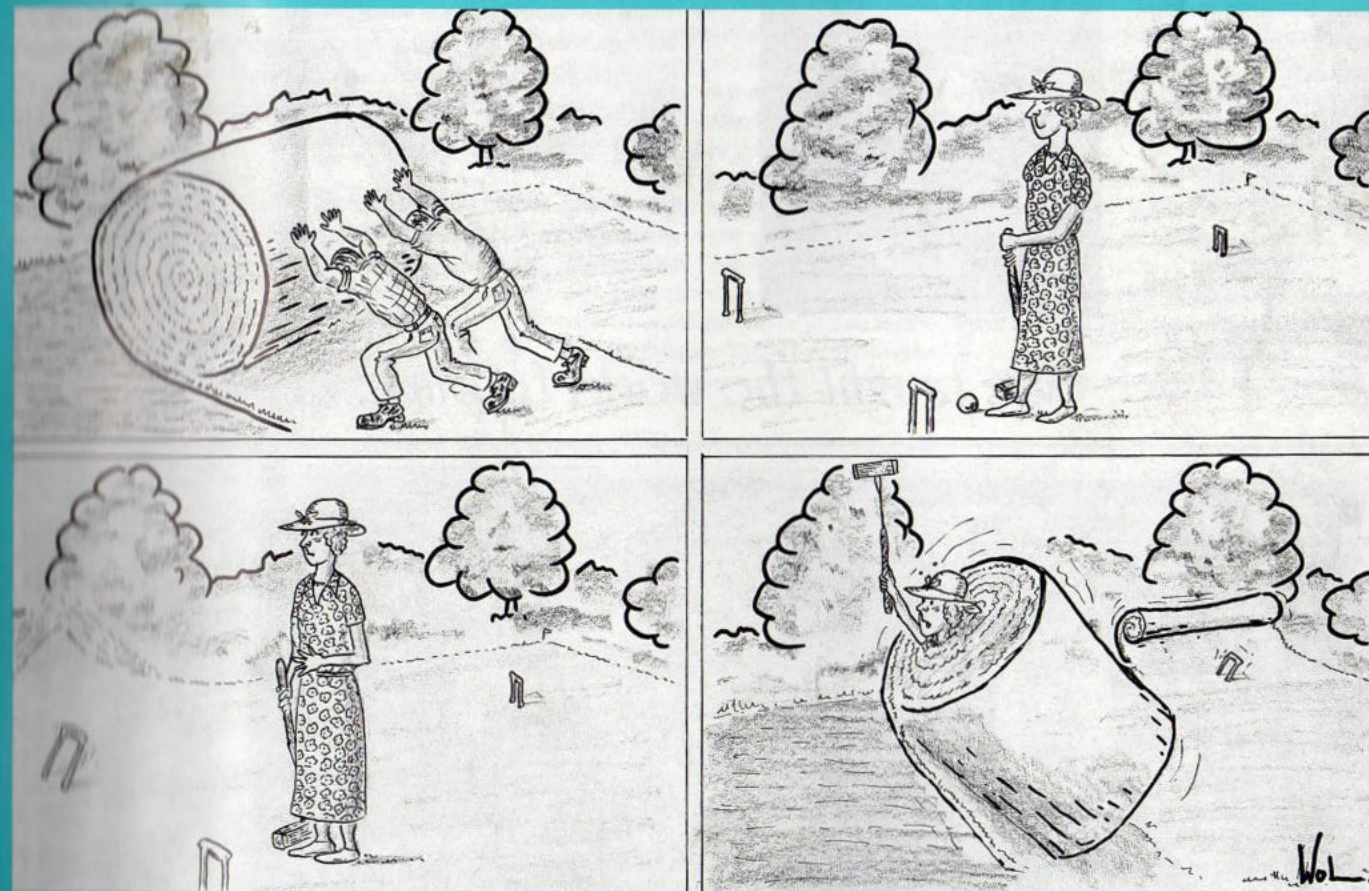
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# The CROQUET Gazette

Issue 244

July 1996

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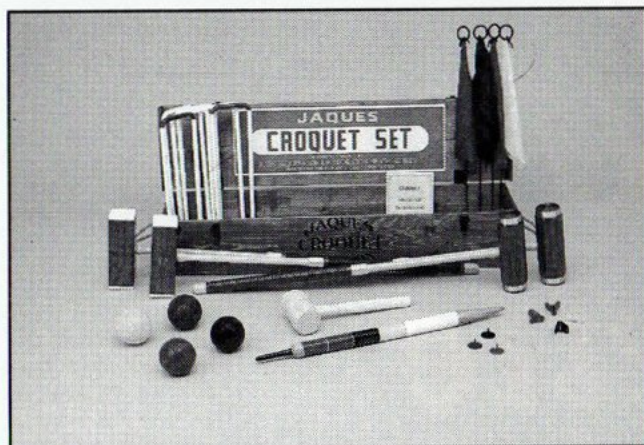
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Test Match Results

Artificial Courts  
Ask The Experts  
Laugh With Jack



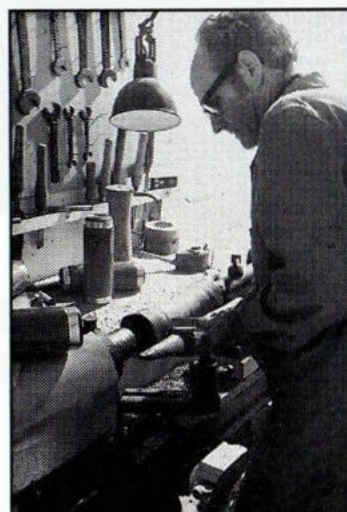
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**John Jaques**

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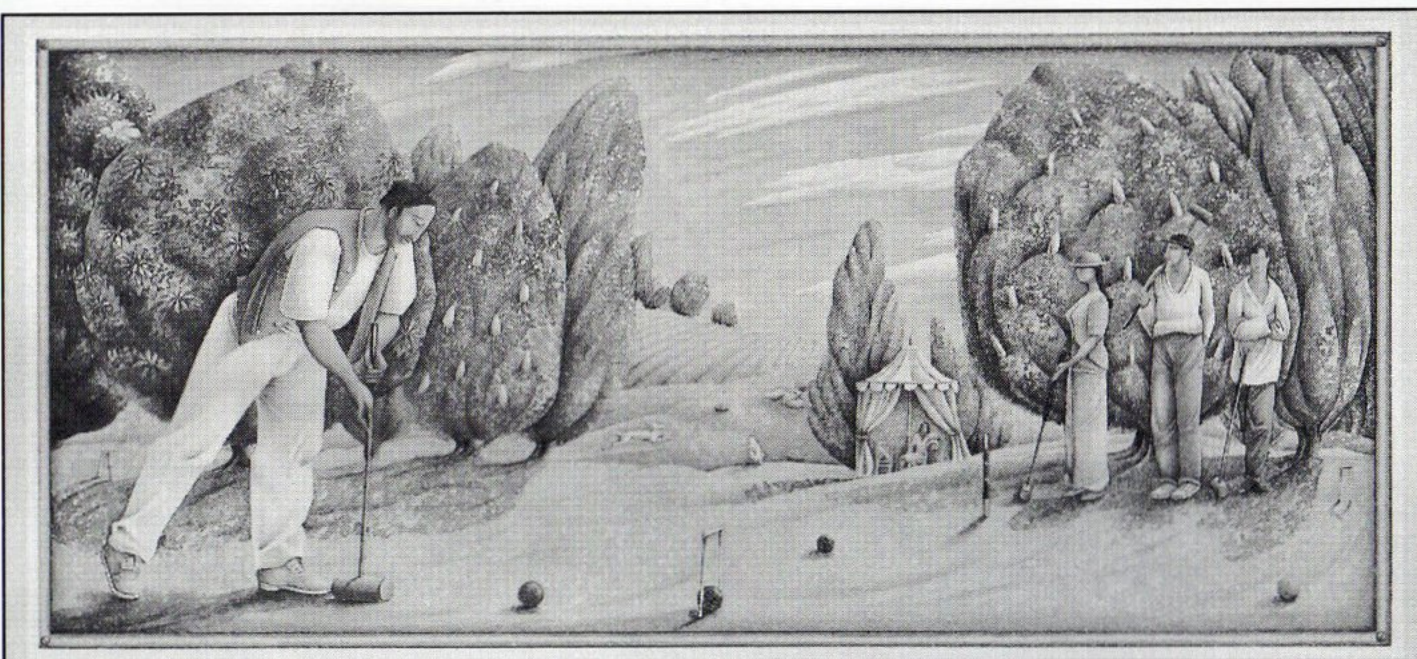
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**The  
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GAZETTE**

No.244 (July 1996) Price £2.50

Front Cover by Roy Wallis. Photo's in this issue from Audrey Whitaker, Peter Pullin, Raymond Ransom, Rosemary Gugan, Pauline Healy, Roger Croston and Don Williamson.

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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

**Answers Please**

Here we are at the mid point of yet another season and it seems only yesterday that the fixture book arrived. In the last issue I broached the subject of communication, suggesting that there was some room for improvement in the croquet world. In the same issue there was a report of the Clubs Conference held in February and some feedback from some of the issues discussed at the conference. However since then things have been strangely quiet.

I purposely titled the feedback section "part 1", expecting that there would at least be a part 2. However, as yet it has not materialised. It is possible that the committees involved in the production of such information have not yet had the opportunity to meet, but if this is the case, how much longer will members have to wait to hear the comments on the issues they raised? By September hopefully, or November probably? But should it really take seven or even nine months for members to receive the replies to their questions and issues? Does this passing of time not endanger the credibility and worth of such events as the Clubs Conference with the members who take the time to attend and participate?

It may be that many members have already forgotten about the conference, but I suspect that others are still waiting for some answers and explanations. Surely one of the points of such a conference is to make members feel valued and encourage them to participate in more than just the playing of the game. Unfortunately it may just be that by taking so long to respond to members, rather than encourage them, we simply underline the fact that at best their views are not very high on the list of priorities, and at worst, they aren't on the list of priorities at all.

I don't suggest for one minute that either of these scenarios is true, but it would be easy for them to be interpreted in such a way, given the lack of response. Perhaps we have to be more proactive in organising events such as the conference. Perhaps in the years that Club or Federation Conferences are held we may have to hold more committee meetings than in a usual year, or perhaps we may just have to consider more carefully the choice of date for the conferences to facilitate a quicker response to the membership. But whatever happens in the future, is there any chance it could happen a little more quickly, for the benefit of the Association and its membership?

Gail Curry

**Secretarial Assistance**

On the retirement of Tony Antenen in November and the appointment of a new Secretary, the Croquet Association wishes to appoint one full-time or two part-time secretarial assistants for the Croquet Association office.

The office uses modern computers working under Microsoft Windows and using MS Works for Windows software and an Access related database. Familiarity with this kind of equipment would be an advantage but it is more important that the assistant(s) should have good keyboard skills and typing speed and a willingness to learn. A knowledge of croquet would help but is not essential. The office is small and friendly and there will be times when the assistant(s) will have to work without supervision.

The office is pleasantly situated in the grounds of the Hurlingham Club, which is within walking distance of Putney Bridge Underground. There is ample car parking space at the club. Some flexibility in working hours can be arranged to avoid rush hour travelling.

Would anyone interested, or knowing of someone who might be interested, please contact the Chairman of Council, Bill Lamb, Tel 01482 - 840739.

~ Obituaries ~

**Mrs Kay Yeoman**

Mrs Kay Yeoman, one of the West Country's leading croquet personalities, died in hospital in Bath on Saturday the 6th April, after a long illness.

Six months after she had had a double hip replacement operation in 1983, she was back on the lawns of her home club, Bath, on the Recreation Ground, and she played croquet right up to her illness last summer.

Kay Yeoman was the only daughter of Mr and Mrs Charles Garrett Tovey of Midsomer Norton. Her father was a builder, and she had three brothers.

Hillside, the house in which she lived as a child, was a large detached house with a tennis court and a large L shaped lawn which was used for croquet, provided you could negotiate an apple tree at one end and a greengage at the other. Kay's first recollection of croquet was of "a wire hoop which seemed big enough to crawl through". She was four years old. The centre of these large hoops consisted of two of the hoops set crosswise in the form of a cage, and which she recalled had a bell hung from it.

She would proudly recall that her brother John played croquet at Cambridge and regularly partnered Captain Vaughan Jenkins, sometimes against Daisy Lintern, one of croquet's greats. Kay Tovey married Frank Peterson Yeoman in 1942. He was an army captain and she a member of the Voluntary Aid Detachment. His father was one of three brothers who founded the Somerset quarry firm.

Croquet has been played in Bath for well over 100 years, this year 1996 is the centenary of competitive croquet in the city. Kay joined the Bath club after the death of her husband in 1977, shortly after the reforming of the club in 1976.

She was a member of the croquet club committee until recently, arranging fixtures and teams for club matches in the South West Federation.

She played all over the country, being invited to play in the ladies eights from 1982, until her hip replacements. In 1983 she won the mixed doubles championship partnering Martin Murray, and won the ladies doubles with Susan Wiggins at Hurlingham in 1987.

Kay Yeoman leaves a son, Peter, and a daughter, Jane. Peter his wife and three sons live in Canada.

*Maurice Boardman.*

**Jack R. Osborn**

Jack R. Osborn, a passionate popularizer of the venerable sport of croquet, died at his home in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, on Sunday May 12th. He was 67.

Besides devoting himself to popularizing croquet, which originated in France in the 15th century, Mr. Osborn was ranked among the world's best players at the peak of his career,



*Kay Yeoman presenting trophies at Bath Croquet Club in October 1995*

founded the United States Croquet Association, reconfigured and standardized the size of the court, brought uniformity to the rules and co-wrote two books on the game.

In 1980, three years after he founded the Croquet Association, the governing body of the sport in the United States, Mr. Osborn said, "I look forward to the time when I can go from one city to another, 52 weeks a year, like the Johnny Appleseed of croquet." He lived to see the 3,500 member organization sanction some 80 tournaments, 10 of them major championships, played annually around the country.

*(Obituary by Lawrence Van Gelder - extract from the New York Times)*

**Johnny Haigh**

His many friends whom the news has not already reached will be sad to read that John Haigh died in early 1995, after a short illness. We at Woking, and indeed Croquet in the South of England, will miss him. But why? He was not especially witty, nor especially intelligent, nor especially skilled at croquet. Why was he universally liked by both men and women? Perhaps one of the reasons was that he was of small stature and had a sort of vulnerable innocence, which generated no threat to either sex. Johnny had a generous nature and never gave offence to anyone .... he was never a grumbler. He was in the true sense a real sportsman, in that he never sulked when he lost or crowed when he won. He loved competitive sport in many forms, playing the ones he attempted with enormous enthusiasm; and with his natural eye for a ball, at least three with some considerable success .... lawn tennis, table tennis and croquet. He played table tennis as a young man to a very high standard, and later on when he had stopped playing tennis (in which he was for some time one of the Club coaches) he played croquet well enough to be invited on a number of occasions to take part in one or other

of the national selection events. The sport of croquet he took up almost by accident, starting by knocking some balls around to occupy himself for a few minutes whilst waiting for a tennis opponent who was late for a match. However he rapidly got bitten by the bug, and was soon finding himself leaving his business earlier and earlier so that he could get to the lawns to practise his triples!

He loved the badinage around the lunch or tea table, or even better around the bar - he never took offence when his leg was pulled, nor gave any when he returned the compliment. He was the kind of man who was always welcomed when he came into the clubhouse because he was such a cheerful person who enjoyed nothing more than a gossip about croquet and the many colourful characters that the game attracts. Johnny's contributions to these conversations were enriched by great narrative skill and excellent recall of detail - such as from decades before, in his childhood years in Hong Kong (where his father was Medical Officer of Health, at the forefront of combatting the killer TB.) the sound effects of the sedan-chair trip up to the Peak; and from his service years as a pilot, all the "marks" of the various aircraft he had flown.

When it came to Croquet though, this remarkable memory of his could become a little daunting. "Do you remember..." he would start "...the game we played in 1979 at Compton when you were on the peg and rover and I had only made two hoops, and I fell over and hurt my leg and limped around with my blue ball to the peg and then ....." By the time he had started on describing his black ball the only effective action was to interrupt to remind him that the bar was open and to suggest a large scotch. Many now-established players have Johnny to thank for the encouragement and tuition received from him when they were starting. He was a natural teacher, with a clear eye for what was going wrong, and a succinct way of advising on the cure.

He fought deteriorating health for some years with great courage, but with no complaint or despondency. He always came back from his hospitalisations to play with undiminished enthusiasm, as his handicap slowly rose from near scratch to double figures. He took special delight in being able to play with a long row of bisques, which he used with much glee often to win: in what was to be his last season, he won the Club Doubles competition with Derek Caporn (now sadly also departed.)

We shall indeed miss Johnny - not too many people are capable of generating as much affection as he was able to ..... the world of Croquet is a duller place without him.

*Lionel Wharrad.*

NEWS & INFORMATION

**Centenary Car Sticker**

The Centenary Committee are inviting members to design a car sticker which will be given to members with a later issue of the Gazette.

Your design can be either of a circular or oblong shape in any medium and should be sent to Stephen Badger 154 Burbage Road, Dulwich, London SE21 7AG.

**Barlow Croquet Equipment**

Notwithstanding Tom Barlow's untimely death, Barlow croquet will continue to produce the whole range of equipment. Woodlands Croquet are stockists of the Barlow range for the UK and Europe.

**Competition Reminders**

Entries for the photographic, creative writing and centenary cover design competitions are still open and in some cases the first entry is still eagerly awaited.

**Ham House Croquet**

Ham House, a marvellous National Trust house built in the seventeenth century and remarkably never altered or added to, is to host a croquet match for the first time in its three hundred year history.

Inspired by the tremendous work done by Judy Anderson in East Anglia, Tony Fathers has arranged for Roehampton to play Hurlingham on Saturday 27th July.

Since up to 1000 people normally visit Ham House every Saturday in July it would be helpful if CA members would come along not just to watch but also to act as commentators to any non croquet playing spectators and - who knows

- recruit a newcomer to the game. And of course it is worth going just to see the recently refurbished house itself, open from 12.30 - 5.30. Gardens open from 10.30 to 6.00. Ham House is situated on the south bank of the Thames, just west of the A307 between Richmond and Kingston.

**Wordsearch Winners**

Congratulations to the following members who successfully entered the wordsearch competition offered by the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund.

- Mr G. E Halls Mr D.T. Coates
- Mrs S. Davies Mr J Kelly
- Mr J. F. Green Mrs B. Holding
- Mr D. Howson Mr K Plater
- Mr L. Hull Miss M. Catling
- Mr M. Garner Mr A. Heighway
- Mr P. Dennis Mr L. Howes
- Mr D. Humphrey.

**Record Attempt - Please Help**

Craig John is seven years old and has terminal cancer. It is Craig's wish to be included in the Guinness Book of Records and to achieve that aim he is hoping to amass the largest number of business/compliment slips collected by one individual.

Anyone wishing to help Craig should send any slips to:  
Craig John  
36 Selby Drive  
Carshalton  
Surrey  
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**National Action Day**

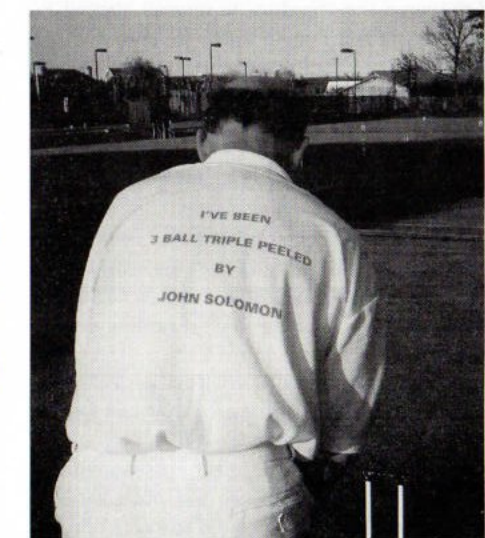
National Action Day on Sunday 15th September is going to be the biggest most ambitious sports and activities

day the UK has ever seen. A host of celebrities and sports stars invite you to take part, get the nation more active, and raise millions of pounds for children's charities NSPCC, its sister charity in Scotland, Children 1st, and UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund.

For general information call the National Action Day Information Service on 0990 785782 (calls are charged at local rate). To register your activity and draw on the resources of the National Action Day Team call the Registration Line on 0891 300123 (calls are charged at 39p per minute cheap rate and 49 p per minute at all other times. The £2 registration fee will be waived).

**Thirty Years On**

The headlines of the Southwick Salver, played in April, were grabbed by John Solomon. His opponent, Peter Pullin, decided to play safe by putting one of his balls in a corner. John Solomon simply ignored it and completed the triple peel using just three balls. "I haven't done that for thirty years," said John.



*Been there, had it done to me, bought the T-shirt says Peter Pullin.*

**Caption Competition No. 2**

The winner of caption competition No. 2 featuring David Magee, was Peter Pullin with - "I only came to cut the grass".

~ CROQUET DEVELOPMENT ~

For some years now, croquet Development work has been funded by means of a Sports Council grant and the Croquet Association has employed a National Development Officer. When the current NDO's contract expires this year, we shall move to a different system where individual projects under the Forward Plan will be contracted to people with appropriate skills. Such projects would include:

- Recruitment: administration of recruitment schemes.
- Publicity: review and re-design the Croquet Association's information leaflets.
- Schools: promotion of croquet in schools.
- Sponsorship: seeking sponsorship for Croquet Association events.

Although each project is separate and a fee would be negotiated for each, it is possible that some might be combined for one person or be an extension of the duties of the Croquet Association Secretary. Their continuation would depend upon continuing Sports Council support. Would anyone interested in any of these projects, please contact in the first instance the Chairman of Council, Bill Lamb - Tel. 01482 - 840739

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# Letters...

## Heretics of the world unite

Dear Editor,  
I would like to stand with Roger Jackman (Why whites? issue 242) and reserve my place in heretics' corner by agreeing with him that mandatory whites should be relaxed in favour of more expressive styles of clothing for their own sake as well as saving on the laundry bill. Personally I would like to see club and county colours widely used by those who wish to wear them, status shirts for participating in and/or winning the major domestic competitions and uniform shirts for referees and other officials. Of course the freedom to choose should be paramount. There could still be whites only clubs for example.

A move in this direction would only succeed if a majority of tournament players supported the idea. Perhaps an experimental relaxation of the whites requirement would allow players to vote with their shirts.

Heretics once challenged the notion that the earth was flat, which brings me neatly to the support of Dorothy Miller's remarks (Sounds wonderful, but..... issue 242) regarding perfect lawns.

I too would be worried that perfect lawns would require the "professional" green keeper who would have firm ideas on what could or could not happen on his, or her, cossetted turf. A shorter playing season and less ordinary club play at the very least I would suspect. Why do we need perfect lawns? Did they ever exist more than briefly in the past? And if they did was that not just another example of the variability of the surface that we play on?

Move aside all white flat earthers, the day of the multicolour heretic is at hand!  
Mike Hammelev.

## Publicity

Dear Editor,  
I welcome the call for the revival of the publicity committee, but I feel that it will require abnormal levels of persistence. Some months ago I wrote to the sports editors of the Times, Telegraph, Guardian and Independent, suggesting the idea of a feature article, possibly based around the activities at a club. The theory was that while many people have heard of the game few appreciate that it is played at clubs. A sports club, on the other hand, for games such as cricket, bowls or golf, is a familiar concept. I mentioned the MacRobertson Shield and the impending centenary, and included with each letter a Wrest Park club leaflet, two photographs from recent

tournaments and a copy of the Basic Laws of Croquet (a little CA booklet which I believe is now regrettably out of print. Perhaps it is worth reviving?).

I have yet to receive so much as an acknowledgement from any of the papers to whom the letter was sent.

John Bevington - Wrest Park CC

## Two replies for the price of one

Dear Editor,

There are two letters in the May issue (243) which I would like to comment on.

Firstly Iris Dwerryhouse of Sidmouth C.C. Golf Croquet is a very enjoyable game that all can take part in, not having one or two playing and the rest sitting out watching! No wonder she has had no success with press coverage with her attitude. As to skill, there is just as much required in fact some would say more as instead of being able to put the balls where you want, you have to wait to see where your opponent puts their balls! Golf Croquet is a very good game to introduce others to the sport and if they then wish to play association it's up to them.

Secondly Anna Giraud of Zeneca (Huddersfield) C.C. I only see the magazine because our secretary passes on the extra copy he receives so it is purely by chance that I read this letter. I was a "member" when the Winslow club was first set up, but as Golf Croquet did not get a mention at all, even the Golden Mallet competition got scant coverage, so I did not renew my membership once the club was established. I feel that the tiers of membership are very limiting. Why cannot there be one basic membership fee, and then those that want to play tournaments pay to enter them as and when they wish? The General comments in the club re the content of the magazine is it is not interesting to us as we only play Golf Croquet, and as I said before that is not mentioned and it would appear from the previous letter that that's a dirty word!!! Chris Hudson did a good job getting the Women's Institutes interested in the sport but the Association has not given the back up to keep our interest or to participate more, so over to your Executive Committee members - have a deep think!

Joan Buckle  
Winslow C.C.

*I shall comment only upon the direct issue of the Gazette, leaving all of the other topics mentioned for responses from other sources.*

*Golf croquet players may very well feel*

*that they do not find the Gazette of interest to them; this is probably because they do not contribute anything about their game. I would happily include information or articles regarding Golf Croquet if I had some to publish.*

*On the subject of the Gazette still, but on a slightly different issue, I find it somewhat irritating that some players feel that the Gazette is the only benefit they receive for being an Associate member. There are many other benefits, although most of them are unfortunately less visible. Such benefits include the birth and development of many clubs, the laws of the game, national competitions (such as the Golden Mallet), development work such as that by Chris Hudson and the W.I., as well as many more. In short, individual Associate membership supports the game at all levels both now and for the future of croquet, and I would urge anyone to become an Associate member. At a lot less than 50p a week it has to be value for money for any true enthusiast of any branch of the game.*

*Ed.*

## Golf Croquet - The Responses

Dear Editor,

Congratulations must go to Iris Dwerryhouse for encouraging members to forestall any plans by the CA Council to promote the game of golf 'croquet'.

Our own implacable opposition to according this game the oxygen of publicity is well known. The problem is not the game, but its name. It can be readily conceded that a skilful executant will find some modest challenge in playing it. But those who have been introduced to this activity often believe that they have been playing croquet itself; and at least 3 clubs we know of have been so enthusiastic in encouraging it that they have soon found the golf 'croquet' tail wagging the association dog.

It must be obvious to all players that the public perception of croquet as a vindictive game that involves dispatching so-called 'enemy' balls into the shrubbery has been fuelled by golf 'croquet' (or some garden clone), and certainly not by the genuine game. Everyone in the croquet world must have spent many frustrating sessions trying to counter these widely held and glibly parroted dogmas - especially prevalent among representatives of the media. Why is the CA so obsessed by the lure of obtaining sponsorship income and the belief, probably correct, that finance is more likely to be available for a relatively trivial game that will appeal to the Boeotians, that it is willing to encourage and perpetuate these damaging public misconceptions?

Just as there is more than one game that can be played with coloured balls and a set of hoops, so there are many games that can be played with a pack of cards. An analogy that appeals to us, despite its obvious imperfections, is that a beginner going to a bridge club to learn the game would be unlikely to be encouraged to play snap as a sensible introduction to bridge;

and even if, by some quirk of history, it had been called snap 'bridge', one would be surprised to find the EBU promoting it.

It was an Irish friend who introduced us to croquet and, as soon as we returned home, we started to inquire whether such things as croquet clubs existed and eventually found our way to the nearest, 28 miles away. We have always been grateful to him for the fact that it was association croquet that we were shown: had it been golf 'croquet', there is not the slightest chance that we should have investigated the matter any further. How many other potential enthusiasts will be lost, we wonder, if the CA is not prevented from pursuing this misguided policy?

This dilemma is not new. In 1984, Roger resigned from Council in order to be able to oppose an earlier proposal to seek a sponsorship deal for the promotion of golf 'croquet', which we and others believed was not in the best interests of our sport. At an AGM that was the best attended in living memory, we succeeded, by the narrowest of margins, in persuading the members to halt the Council's plans. The motion was 'that Council's decision of 29 October 1983 to seek sponsorship for Golf Croquet be reversed and that the Council be debarred from making any further attempts to attract sponsorship or publicity for that game without obtaining the explicit authority of the Croquet Association's members at a General Meeting'. This averted the immediate crisis, but we were not successful in correcting, so to speak, the inaccurate trade description, by removing the word 'croquet' from the title of the game in which the distinctive glory of the croquet stroke is so conspicuously absent.

These conflicts that we and Iris are so passionately concerned about are likely to keep recurring until golf 'croquet' is given a change of name. If only the members could persuade the officials of the Croquet Association to adopt this reform, they would be making a really significant contribution to next year's celebrations marking the start of its second century of existence.

Roger & Dab Wheeler  
Cheltenham CC

Dear Editor,

Reference Mrs Dwerryhouse's letter in the May issue of 'The Croquet Gazette' decrying Golf Croquet and the Association for at last putting some of its efforts towards the players of this game. Why all this desparagement of Golf Croquet? Why do some people so belittle a game enjoyed by others? Why should all members not be entitled to a fair share of the Association resources?

Why should it be considered after all these years that association croquet will somehow grab the press and increase our membership? Golf Croquet is undervalued and should be given an equal chance.

I intend to stand for re-election to Council in October and to do so on the basis of the Association allocating more of its efforts to golf croquet players. If the majority of members

support this I will do my best to promote the work of the Golf Croquet Committee. If not of course it will be up to others to decide Association policy on this issue.

Syd Jones - Chairman Golf Croquet Committee

Dear Editor,

I was very surprised to read the letter from Iris Dwerryhouse in the May issue. I remember in September 1990 and again in 1991 two very good South West Federation Golf Croquet finals at Sidmouth arranged by Iris.

This was the beginning of what is now a successful annual competition attracting both Association and Golf Croquet players.

I have been privileged to play in five finals and it is noticeable how much the game has improved since 1990. You can gauge the seriousness of Golf Croquet when you meet the players from as far away as Plymouth, at Nailsea (130 miles).

I can understand the purists wanting to maintain the Association game but it will never appear as a spectator sport on television - Golf Croquet might. That would be serious!

John Eatman - Tracy Park CC

## Lack of Counties Spirit

Dear Editor,

I was always under the impression that one of the main functions of the Croquet Association was to encourage players to play the game. Am I wrong or have the Tournament Committee and our Chairman, Bill Lamb, changed this desirable aim?

This committee, in their wisdom, have decided that only eighteen teams could enter this year's County Championships (unless all nineteen teams who entered last year had entered again this year, in which case all nineteen would have been admitted). As it was nineteen teams did enter, but not the nineteen from last year, as one of them did not enter. The nineteenth team was in fact Lancashire who, except for 1995, have entered the event throughout its history. So nineteen teams can enter so long as it is not Lancashire. What is going on?

What Association which is in the business of encouraging a game could possibly leave just one entrant out, especially when that particular entrant had been such a staunch supporter of the tournament?

The counties tournament was always an event which I thought enjoyed. I now however find myself totally disenchanted and at the moment want nothing more to do with the event until sanity returns and the event is run in the spirit found in previous years.

Alan F. Sutcliffe.

*I can understand Alan's reaction, but the Tournament Committee tried to find the best solution to a difficult problem. The Inter-Counties has become an extremely popular event and has expanded considerably with the encouragement of the Croquet Association and*

*with the availability of Compton as an acceptable second venue. Unfortunately, last year Compton lost the use of a lawn and the format with nineteen teams proved to be unwieldy. It can be difficult enough to find a true winner when the top teams have not all played against the same opponents, but when they have not played the same number of games it becomes unfair. The Inter-Counties is not just a jamboree for players to get together: it is a serious tournament.*

*In these circumstances, the Tournament Committee reluctantly decided that the maximum entry with the present number of available lawns should be eighteen, with preference going to those who had entered in 1995, but that it would be unfair to enforce un-warned relegation on any teams which had played in that year. As it happened, eighteen teams from 1995 entered this year and were accepted. Lancashire's entry unfortunately could not be accepted but there is no bias against any them or any other county.*

*However, this is a temporary solution to a continuing problem. Therefore, the Tournament Committee also decided to consult the counties this year, to find the most acceptable solution for the future. This may lie in having a third venue to provide more lawns, running the event in two divisions at completely separate venues with promotion and relegation, or enforcing relegation for one year on the bottom team or teams.*

*Bill Lamb - Chairman of Council*

## Call for Counties Debate

Dear Editor,

I have just had the pleasure of leading the Berkshire team in the Inter-County Championship this year. Unfortunately we only won one match and thus picked up the wooden spoon, but as usual we enjoyed meeting everybody and having the chance to play. I am writing for a number of reasons, not least the unresolved issue of whether we will be allowed to compete in next year's event. One of the pleasures of the Counties for me, and I believe for many others, is that it is a 'Festival of Croquet' - the biggest gathering of croquet players for one tournament anywhere. If the event is to be changed permanently to restrict entries (as it was this year to prevent Lancashire entering) and may be so next year then I believe this will be a change for the worse. Relegation will only serve to discourage counties from entering rather than encourage competition to get in. What other events during the year does a County Croquet team get together for and which could serve to spur on an annual attempt to get in to the Counties if entries were restricted to 18 teams? None I believe. Relegation is surely just a way of putting off teams that want to play croquet rather than encouraging competitive team play. Let's have an open debate about the Counties and think about what's best for the game without limiting ourselves to the options in Andrew Gregory's briefing paper.

*contd. overleaf*

With a little forethought and planning and perhaps some compromise over the use of byes I believe the Counties can readily accommodate more teams than currently play. How about allocating some of the entry fees disproportionately towards Worthing so that they could be helped to improve their lawns this autumn and next spring? Surely the addition of three lawns and the possibility of accommodating four more teams would appeal to many, especially next year for the Centenary. In the past I believe some lawns were prepared across the road from Sussex County Croquet Club in the school grounds. Could this again be done to accommodate as many teams as would like to play? Or both? The prospect of having a second division playing in London is unappealing; much better to play on a wider variety of lawns but all close together so the divisions can mingle, if that is how it is to go.

At the end of this year's tournament on Tuesday we were faced with the prospect of playing at Compton (a pleasure as usual) but we arrived to find we had played all but one of the other teams present. We then played our afternoon match in the morning and had to wait an extra half-hour in the afternoon to play another team, again - Yorkshire, who repeated their score-line against us. What was going on? Why did this farce happen? What was wrong with us playing Glamorgan as planned?

I can understand that it is an ideal to have the championship winners playing at a venue where the prize is located (usually Southwick) but is it essential? Surely not! The question is even more ludicrous for the Wooden Spoon - it can easily be posted and I'm sure winners of this illustrious piece of culinary equipment wouldn't mind waiting a few days for it to arrive in the post. It certainly isn't going to get pride of place in my trophy cabinet!

At the end of the tournament at Compton we eventually found out who the winners were by ringing Southwick and a club member there let us know that Dorset had won. However why didn't someone organising the event bother to give us the full results?

The future of the counties? Let's keep it large, keep it friendly and let as many teams as possible enter. I look forward to seeing you there next year.

Yours sincerely,  
Adrian Wadley

*There were other letters of a nature very similar to this, but their inclusion would only duplicate the information in this letter. Therefore, in order to give other equally important issues space they have not been published in this issue. Ed.*

## CA CENTENARY EXHIBITION 1997 APPEAL FOR EXHIBITS

Along with other exciting events to celebrate the CA's centenary next year, and thereby promote the spirit of croquet among a wider public, the committee appointed for this purpose is planning to mount a special exhibition. With the generous support of the All England Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club, this will be staged in the permanent tennis museum at Wimbledon with the benefit of the expertise of their professional staff.

All we have to do is to plan the show and round up the exhibits. Themes have yet to be settled, but it is already agreed that we should use this occasion to celebrate all aspects of our game from its early beginnings through its flowering in the 1860s to the present day, both at home and abroad. Early soundings have revealed quantities of old books, equipment and images which clubs and known collectors would be prepared to offer on loan in the cause. But in order to ensure its success the committee would still like to hear from others who have quality memorabilia to offer - especially photos, very early hardware and one-off curios. So, if you have a clubhouse full of polished ivory mallets in your attic, a fine walnut rack of ringed turkey boxwood balls, a photo of "The Best Ten" of any vintage, a gleaming anti-Aeolian\*, a silver pot or two - or if you think you might talk friend or foe into parting with such treasure next season - the time to act is now. Get in touch with David Drazin, CA Centenary Exhibition Coordinator, at Roefield, The Green, Croxley Green, Herts WD3 3HJ, phone 01923 774048, fax 01923 710113. He is already poised, waiting to hear from you. And if you suffer from risk aversion, assume that insurance and shipping both ways will be covered by the organisation!

\* *"An ingenious wire cage to keep a lady's voluminous skirts in trim during play"* (DMC Prichard, *A History of Croquet*)

## 1997 - CENTENARY UPDATE

report by Hamish Hall, Centenary Committee

It was in November last that our Editor, Gail Curry, challenged Associates to focus on ideas as to the manner in which we should celebrate our CA Centenary in 1997. Eight months on, it is perhaps appropriate to report what the Centenary Committee have been up to in the interim.

It is still too early to say whether HM the Queen has accepted our invitation to attend an event. Her engagement diary for next summer will not be pencilled in till the autumn, so we are uncertain which event will carry the 'Centenary Banner' so to speak. But we are hoping that the large number of players who gather at Southwick and Compton for the Inter-Counties early in the season will kick-start the festivities with a Centenary Barbecue, or some similar social event.

On the same theme, the Committee are planning a Centenary Dinner, to be held in conjunction with our AGM, as well as the inaugural Solomon Lecture to be given by our President, John Solomon. We hope that this will be hosted by the South West Federation at the end of the season.

On the playing side, the calendar is already fairly full with established events, some of which may be embellished to engender a celebratory flavour. But the grass roots suggestion of running a Centenary Doubles Tournament, similar to the All England has received the thumbs up. Ian Burrige has prepared a constructive paper on the alternative arrangements for accommodating 240 players, possibly over the last weekend in August. Definitely a climax to the celebrations for the run of the mill players!

Council has loosened the purse strings, which has enabled the Centenary Committee to consider some special Centenary trophies. Further news once costings have been evaluated.

My particular brief in all these proceedings is one of publicity. And I would be less than honest if I did not convey a measure of apprehension. The reason is fairly obvious. As I write, Stephen Hendry and Peter Ebdon are battling it out in the World Snooker Championship, an event attracting massive TV coverage - but barely 12 column inches in the press. So, what hope have the CA in attracting any national comment in 1997?.....Frankly, very little.

But I do believe that publicity can be generated at the local level. The local press can be persuaded to feature your club. Get some local dignitary along and have him/her photographed with one of your members. Your youngest and oldest players, in an eye catching pose, may well be of greater interest to a features editor. Sadly, croquet is still tarnished with the image of cucumber sandwiches and curates. But an article of human interest, embracing your local players, can become a reality, with a little spade work. I will be happy to provide a 'shell' for an article that could be adapted for publicising your club in the Centenary year.

Another useful suggestion is to stage your own display in your local library or sports shop. The Bath club publicised their centenary with some ancient equipment, account books and photographs, all depicting the evolution of the game over the century. The box containing their 'handouts' had to be replenished every other day. Will this interest be converted into more players on the Rec?

## A Glossary of Croquet Terms

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

- South.** The boundary of the lawn spanning hoops one and four.
- Spin.** The rotation of a ball about a horizontal or vertical axis. The former is used to assist running hoops and trueness of the ball's travel, and the latter is a consequence of certain roll shots giving rise to pull.
- Split Shot.** A croquet stroke in which the balls diverge.
- Split Roll.** A roll shot in which the balls travel similar distances but with a divergence in their paths.
- Stab.** To hit a ball with a brisk stroke with no follow through.
- Standard Grip.** One of three common methods of holding a croquet mallet for single ball strokes. For a right handed player:- the left hand is at the top of the shaft with the thumb at or over the top of the shaft and the knuckles facing forward. The right hand is placed about half way down the shaft, gripping it with the palm against the shaft and facing forward.
- Stop Shot.** A croquet stroke in which the croqueted ball travels a proportionately large distance compared with the striker's ball.
- Take-off.** A croquet stroke in which the striker's ball is played off the side of the roqueted ball. The latter hardly moves and the striker's ball travels some distance.
- Three-Ball Break.** A manoeuvre involving three balls which allows multiple hoops to be scored in a single turn.
- Time.** The call made when the time limit is reached in a timed game.
- Timed Game.** A game played to a predefined time limit. Special rules apply to the use of bisques and the determination of who wins when there is a draw at the end of the timed period.
- Top Spin.** Spin of the ball about a horizontal axis normal to the direction of travel. The direction of spin is such as to enhance the forward motion of the ball.
- Toss.** A coin is tossed at the start of the game to determine who has the first choice of the opening options; colour of balls or who goes in.
- Triple Peel.** Manoeuvre where the backward ball is peeled through its final three hoops as the forward ball makes a break around all the hoops and both balls are pegged out.
- Turn.** A turn consists initially of one stroke, but extra strokes can be earned by running the correct hoop or by roqueting a ball.
- T.P.** Abbreviation of triple peel.
- T.P.O.** Abbreviation of triple peel on opponent's ball.
- Upright.** The vertical part of a hoop.
- Wafer Cannon.** A three ball croquet shot in which the roqueted ball lies between the striker's ball and a third ball. These outer balls do not touch but are separated by a very small gap.
- West.** The boundary of the lawn spanning hoops one and two.
- Wire.** The vertical part of a hoop, and also describing the process of wiring.
- Wired.** Being unable to hit a target ball due to the presence of an obstacle - usually the peg or a hoop.
- Wiring.** Deliberately arranging balls so that they are unable to hit one another due to a hoop or peg obstructing the shot.
- Worm Cannon.** A simple three ball cannon in which you only get two balls away from the boundary. The centre ball just overlaps the line joining the centres of the outer balls. A light tap leaves a rush.
- Yard Line.** This is an imaginary line located one yard in from the inside edge of the marked boundary of the court. It does not extend into the corners but the two adjacent yard lines meet at the corner spot.

## Artificial Courts

I noted with interest, Roger Wood's article on the above subject in the January Gazette (issue 241) and as Synthetic Surfaces features in the latest C.A. Forward Plan, I felt a few comments on the present position would be of interest to members.

In answer to a query from one of the clubs interested in artificial surfaces, Council, at their December 1995 meeting, agreed 'that in principle synthetic surfaces were acceptable provided their playing characteristics were comparable to grass courts'. This decision allowed the club to continue discussion with their local Council concerning expansion of their croquet facilities with artificial grass courts which might be partly funded by a successful Lottery grant application.

However in attempting to define the requirements for a synthetic court we have been advised by the Sports Council to produce a performance specification for the surface which in addition to requiring unidirectional properties should also include a speed criterion. Chris Hudson's recent questionnaire on club facilities requested the results of a court speed test based on the time taken for a ball to travel the length of the court and stop at or near the north boundary. This information revealed that during last year's hot summer the fastest recorded court was 14 seconds with many others in the 11 -12 second range which gives us useful data on which to base a decision on a desirable court speed.

The only custom built synthetic croquet court we have located in the UK is Stephen Mulliner's and our tests on this facility have shown that there is no problem with hoops, as fixing points into which hoops are inserted in the normal way can be built into the sub-surface during construction. The court was however rather fast (14 seconds on a wet day) which may suit 'A' class players but may be a considerable disadvantage to visiting players of only average ability who have to play league or other competitive games on them. Discussions are therefore in hand with a consultant to identify a slower carpet.

Contrary to many people's opinion synthetic surfaces are not maintenance-free as they can suffer from moss growth and constant use will flatten the pile and increase the speed of the court. Regular brushing with a wide stiff bristle brush and spraying defeats the moss problem. The application of an abrasive mechanical brush to Stephen's court to lift the pile and remove embedded debris appeared to reduce the surface speed by about one second on the test mentioned above. The frequency required for such maintenance and the annual costs still need to be determined and discussions on the subject continue with the suppliers.

I would be pleased to hear from anyone wishing to discuss this subject in greater detail or from anyone who has information which may help the project.

Derek Trotman - Chairman Development Committee.

## MCP Mallets by Michael Percival

Used & Endorsed by Chris Clarke

You may not have the same level of skill as Chris Clarke, the 1995 World Croquet Champion, but you can have a mallet made by Michael Percival who will use the highest level of skill and care to make your mallet to the same high specifications as he did for Chris.

All mallets are hand crafted from the finest materials and custom made to individual requirements. Moderately priced club mallets are also available as well as a full repair service for all types of mallets.

Mike Percival Potash Farm, Church Road, Crowfield,  
Suffolk IP6 9TG Tel: 01449 - 711406



# CLASSIC COACHING TIPS

## HELPFUL HINTS No. 4

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. 4 After The Hoop

In Helpful Hints No.3 I discussed the positioning of your ball, ready to run its hoop. Now I want you to consider the positioning of the croqueted ball.

Firstly though, the question set last time, repeated here, Fig 1.

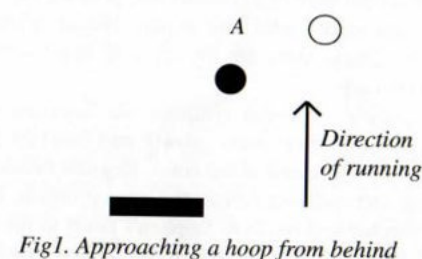


Fig 1. Approaching a hoop from behind

You (white) intended to take off 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? You could make a gentle roquet and take-off on the right; make a firmer roquet and take-off on the left; or you could try an ambitious cut rush.

The first option will probably leave you a take-off behind the hoop, which can be tricky.

The third option is fine if you are good at cut rushes, but if you are not you could well end up several yards from the hoop, or even worse, jammed against the upright behind the hoop.

The second option is, once again, a compromise. From directly behind, a take-off to a position in front of the hoop is fairly easy. Getting the **right** distance in front is not; from the side, getting the right distance in front is fairly easy but getting in **front** of the hoop is not. Play a rush to finish up at

point B in Fig 2. Now you can play a take-off which evens out the advantages and disadvantages of the two approaches.

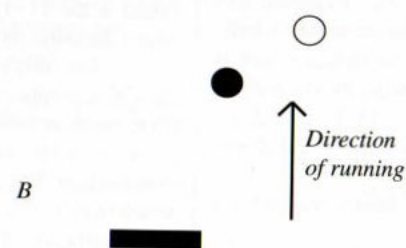


Fig 2. Approaching a hoop from behind

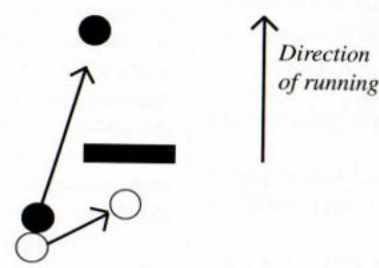


Fig 3. Getting a forward rush

### The Croqueted Ball

In Fig 3 the intention is to get a forward rush on black after running the hoop. The commonest mistake made here is not putting black far enough past the hoop. So often have I watched players approaching this shot with a roll, putting black about a yard past the hoop. Then the hoop is run firmly, leaving a reverse rush. Even worse, an attempt is made for control, resulting in a blobbed hoop. Play a drive, or even a stop shot approach, putting black two or three yards past. Don't overdo it or your forward rush may turn into a sweaty 3 yard roquet!

In Fig 4 a rush to the side is desired. Black should be sent about one yard past the hoop. Now, ideally white should be in position Y, but could end up near X or Z. If

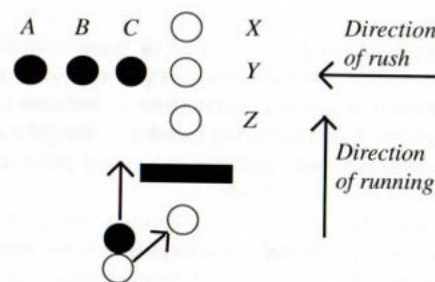


Fig 4. A rush to the side

black is in position C, the margin for error (i.e. how far you can be away from position Y and still be able to rush black where you want it) is small. If black is in position A, the margin is large, but it will be too far away to rush accurately. Again, the compromise, B. The distance from B to Y should be about two feet.

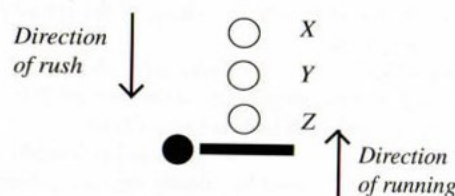


Fig 4. A reverse rush

For a reverse rush, Fig 4, a position about 3 inches to the side of the hoop, gives the best range of choice from positions X Y & Z. Great care is needed here. This is not an easy approach shot to play. Remember the main point of the approach - get **your** ball in front of the hoop. Try to arrange things so that your approach croquet stroke is played from about two feet in front of the hoop; this gives a half roll approach shot. It is better to have black just past the hoop rather than just short (it would be hidden from point Z). If your desired rush is not directly behind, place black on the side of your rush (obvious? - it's often forgotten!). A good exercise in rushing is to practise a two-ball break from 3-back to peg. This gives the ball the rushes described here.

# CLUB NEWS ... CLUB NEWS ... CLUB NEWS

## Torbay Take to the Courts

report by Hamish Hall

Torbay is now on the croquet map, boasting two and a half lawns at Paignton's Oldway Mansions. Owned today by the Torbay Council, the former stately home of Isaac Singer provides an outstanding venue for the game. All the usual facilities are at hand, including the use of the 'Herbert Room', although chairman Bryan Bearne hopes to see a small pavilion one day.

The South West Federation were at the official opening of the lawns by the mayor, Councillor Mrs Ann Williams, who ran a couple of hoops, before David Magee and Shaun Carter took on Ray Ransom and Don Waterhouse in a demonstration game. No prizes for who gave the expert commentary to the crowd of 60 or so! Interest there certainly was in the 'taster' sessions that followed an excellent tea, and Katy Johnstone, Secretary, tells me that membership is already 43.

The Federation has put in hand coaching courses, and with such useful players as Arthur Addis from Plymouth and David Purdon from Budleigh Salterton, not to mention Tony and Ann Sammons, former Bristol B class players, but now resident locally, all anxious to assist, the Executive are confident of the success of the club.

Details of the Club are not in the 1996 Directory, but Associates on holiday in the area and wishing to get a game should ring the Secretary, 01803 296277.

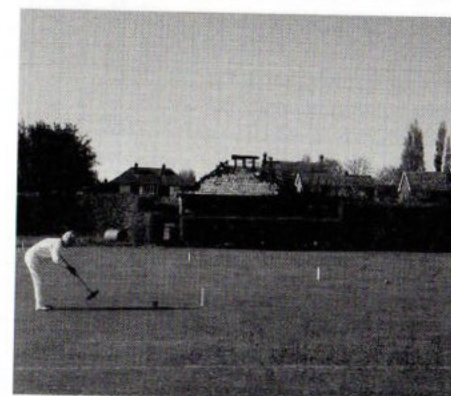


Photo: Bryan Bearne & Mayor, Councillor Mrs Ann Williams, pose for a picture at Torbay C.C.

## Disaster At Chester

Chester Croquet Club was the scene of a devastating fire on Sunday May 5th. The fire, started by an unknown arsonist, completely destroyed the club house and all of the club's equipment.

Fortunately the club was insured and the claim is to be settled., but all clubs should perhaps check the value of their insurance, as a precautionary measure, should they have to rely on it in the same unfortunate circumstances Chester found themselves in. Some equipment has been made available by Vale Royal Council in Cheshire, but if any club has some that they would be willing to donate to Chester it would be very welcome and well used. (Contact Roger Croston 01244 - 335955.)



Play must go on. Janet Davies of Chester C.C. plays in front of the burnt-out pavilion at Westminster Park in the N.W. Fed League match against Southport.

## Lym Valley CC Take to the Table

Not many of the members of the club want to play out on our field ( I use the word advisedly!) during the winter for what with the ducks and the scuba divers it is sometimes difficult to find anywhere to practise a decent cannon - especially as the rifle club use it to shoot the ducks and, besides, there is always a danger of getting drowned by falling into that deep hole near rover hoop! (That's the one near the dog kennel!)

We did think of indoor croquet but carpet at £10,000, plus the rent of the village hall was a bit more than the membership of 25 could stand! So, we went back to Victorian times and decided to play table top croquet. We soon found it was not possible to buy any PRACTICAL table top set and so we decided to make our own with lots of bad language and a large sheet of goodness knows how many ply wood and lots of baize and velvet underlay. The fridge was raided for an old shelf and provided nice plastic covered heavy wire which was converted into hoops - duly painted blue and red where appropriate.

The balls are ordinary glass marbles of the correct colours and the mallets were carefully fashioned from lengths of dowelling. The "court" even has correctly coloured flags at each corner and "clips", (tiny clothes pegs of the correct colours), intended for the display of Christmas cards were found at the local stationers.

During the winter, therefore, Lym Valley gathers in the Secretary's lounge and do their best, to wear out his new carpet! The uninitiated may think that it is a fruitless exercise only suitable for kids but they would be wrong. All the strokes may be executed, as on the field; rolls, drives and stop shots work with the small mallets just as they do with the full size variety. The same tactics may be employed, with reasonable success, on the table top though I have yet to see anyone execute an all round break.....but that goes for the field as well!

The table top has proved an invaluable aid for coaching purposes for one can demonstrate placings and tactics in a way that would be quite impossible shouting a draughty field. So, for some eight years past, we have held a table top tournament which never fails to attract the maximum number I can accommodate in the lounge. At the moment of writing, we have just one more session to play after Easter. This year has been marked by a record achievement which had never previously been attained by any member: Mrs Raff Bint, managed to score the maximum 14 points in every one of her games in order to be a participant in the final.

Anyone interested in further details of the table top is welcome to enquire and I can recommend the activity to any club that finds it difficult or uncomfortable to fight against the east wind during the winter months.

Bill Simpson  
10 Hays Close, Lyme Regis, DT7 3LR

## Commentary on the 1995 Croquet Association Accounts by the Treasurer, Roger Bray

In 1995 the CA was the beneficiary under the will of the late Edward Duffield, Robert Prichard and Derek Caporn. During their lives these three gave so much to Croquet and now we have yet further evidence of their great generosity towards the CA. Edward asked for a new fund, to be known as the Duffield Bequest, to be established, the money to be invested and the income to be used (initially) to help meet the costs of sending CA teams overseas for the MacRobertson Shield. The legacy, £17,400 in 1995 and £900 in 1996, is by far the largest received by the CA in the last fifty years. Robert bequeathed £3,000, divided between the International and Development Funds, and Derek £2,000 for the Benefactors Fund. Such donations are of enormous help since they go beyond the day-to-day needs of the present and contribute towards the long term future of the Association. We hope that this will encourage others to add codicils to their wills and hence benefit the CA whether the sums involved follow these fine examples or are more modest.

### Income and Expenditure Account

The healthy surplus (£6956) in 1995 before exceptional items is a marked improvement on the situation in 1994. In broad terms this was achieved by a combination of significant increases in income from registration fees, advertisements and tournaments and a reduction in the cost of publications, offset by a fall in sales and increases in general overheads.

**Subscriptions** showed a modest 2% rise which more than compensated for the fall in 1994. But income from this source has stayed within a narrow band for the last five years. This contrasts with the steadily rising income from **Registration fees** resulting from the subscription policy review of a few years ago. The increase in 1995 is due to the last step (from £4 to £5) in the per capita fee approved at the 1993 AGM and we are very grateful to clubs for their loyal support through this period of transition.

What may seem an alarming fall in **Sales** is due to a technical adjustment: the stock held in the CA Office, as any visitor will testify, has grown to impressive proportions and it was felt prudent to write down the value of many of the items; on a like for like basis, profit on sales was compatible with that in 1994.

The figure for **Advertisements** includes £1630 for advertisements placed in 1992 and 1993 which were written off in the 1994 Accounts: excluding these, advertisement income fell by £542 in 1995 due mainly to less activity in reprinting the Laws and leaflets.

In 1994 almost £1800 was spent on purchasing balls for CA events. There was nothing similar in 1995, but lawn and ball hire costs rose by about £500 (to £5650) thus accounting for a net improvement in the **Surplus on tournaments**.

The change in Editor and printer led to a reduction in the cost of producing the Gazette of £3050. Only five issues (rather than the scheduled six) were published in both 1994 and 1995, but two issues in 1995 included extra pages equivalent to an additional issue and one of those even had colour photographs. Thus on financial grounds alone, Gail Curry's achievements in her first year were magnificent. Considerable savings were also made in postage by utilising the Mailsort system: comparison with 1994 is difficult since not only were two issues larger but Jaques' bicentenary booklet was posted with one of the Gazettes; nevertheless postage and packing costs rose by only £250 to £3690. We are extremely grateful to Duncan Hector for suggesting this change and particularly for allowing the CA to use his company's facilities to bring it about. An additional feature of **Publications** in 1995 was the production of the Directory (£425).

**Staff salaries** rose by £3533 in 1995. All but about £500 of this is accounted for by interaction with the section of the Account dealing with **Grants and Sponsorship**: £2000 is covered by the Sports Council grant for development work listed in the Forward Plan and carried out by the Office; and in 1995 salaries also includes just over £1000 which, in 1994, had been deducted as a cost against sponsorship.

1995 is the first year of the new Forward Plan and, whilst the basic **Sports Council grant** has risen initially by £2000, it will fall sharply in the next three years, the Sports Council having indicated that the CA should work towards a self-financing position. The grant was supplemented in 1995 by £1050 to help defray the expenses of CA delegates attending meetings in France and Ireland (the residue of their costs being met by the individuals concerned, not the CA). This accounts partly for the increase in the **International** figure, which also includes the cost (£780) of the Solomon Trophy event and a tour by a South African team.

CA Development **Grants** were given in 1995 to Kenilworth and Littlehampton Clubs (£500 each) and the South East Croquet Federation (£250), starter grants of £50 each were made available for new clubs in Cornwall and Grimsby.

Individual activities covered by **General publicity and development** changed substantially in 1995 as a result of the new Forward Plan. However the reduction in expenditure on this item was not due to that cause but mainly to a saving of £877 achieved by terminating the storage contract and insurance cover for the two indoor carpets.

There are two exceptional items appended to the Income and Expenditure Account. For some years a sum has been earmarked in general funds for video production and equipment and from time to time expenditure of this nature has been incurred. However Council felt that there was little likelihood of the CA spending most of the £5422 remaining for this purpose, hence the inclusion of the release of this provision. The second exceptional item concerns VAT transactions: £2056 interest was received for a VAT refund recorded in the 1994 Accounts, and a further refund of £871 was received for two sales transactions which also occurred in 1994. It should be noted, though, that this last adjustment is subject to inspection by Custom and Excise.

### Statement of Accounts and Special Funds

The sizeable increase in **Investments** is due mainly to the bequests and surplus already noted. During the year the Surbiton Club repaid the final instalment (£1000) of its loan, and new **Loans** were granted to the Cheltenham (£3000) and Caterham (£500) Clubs.

Transfers between special and general funds during the year were: £140 from **Life Membership** consequent upon the deaths of four life members; £3000 (£2800 in 1994) to **International** covered by the Sports Council grant; £350 to **Tournament and Trophies** in lieu of an insurance premium for trophies and £751 from the same fund to replace the stolen Solomon Trophy.

### Conclusion

The CA's financial position improved considerably during the year, strengthening both general reserves and special funds. This will, for example, enable the CA to pursue its more active loans to clubs policy agreed by Council in 1995 and help meet the costs of holding the MacRobertson Shield in England in 1996. However, as an analysis of the details given in my comments will show, some of the causes of the favourable outcome for the year are either unsustainable or unlikely to be repeated in 1996 or beyond. The future is therefore likely to become much tougher.

### THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION ACCOUNTS

#### AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 1995

In accordance with instructions, we have examined the books, vouchers and other records maintained by the Croquet Association for the year ended 31st December 1995 and obtained further such information as considered necessary. In our opinion, without having carried out an audit, the accounts as presented by The Association are in agreement with the accounting records for the year ended on that date.

Morgan Brown & Spofforth  
Chartered Accountants

Statement of Accounts as at 31st December 1995

FIXED ASSETS  
Office furniture & equipment at written down value  
Croquet equipment at written down value  
Trophies

Investments, as per attached schedule

1994

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900  
1,250  
10,000  
60,191

200  
750  
10,000  
100,560

# The Tournament Review

The Reports & Results Supplement of the Croquet Gazette  
Vol. 2 No.1

July 1996

## MacRobertson Shield 1996

Nottingham 15th ~ 20th June

Information supplied by Brian Storey

### Day 1:

The first day's play in the MacRobertson Shield took place at University Boulevard Nottingham. An early shock for Great Britain, the current holders, in their match against Australia occurred when veteran player Colin Pickering (AUS) did consecutive triple peels with his partner Harley Watts to beat David Maugham and Steve Comish (GB) to take a 1-0 lead.

In the second doubles match, current world champion Chris Clarke and world number one Robert Fulford (GB) left it late to win their first match by one point.

In the third doubles match Debbie Cornelius and Ian Burridge (GB) were overwhelmed in their first game by their opponents, Greg Bury and Ashley Faulkner (AUS). However they came back strongly to win 2-1.

*Australia 1 ~ Great Britain 2*

### Day 2:

Harley Watts the Australian 21 year old from Victoria today gave a fine display of controlled croquet in beating David Maugham of Great Britain. Colin Pickering continued on from day one by winning easily against Chris Clarke who showed a distinct lack of form. The only good news for the British team was the win for Debbie Cornelius against John Newcombe (AUS) as Ian Burridge failed to make any real headway against Ashley Faulkner.

*Australia 4 ~ Great Britain 3*

### Day 3:

After trailing Australia in day two of the tournament, the Great Britain team needed some form of confidence booster for the remaining games - and they got it.

They took all three doubles games. Clarke & Fulford found little resistance from Pickering and Watts. Meanwhile Maugham & Comish (GB) gave an almost immaculate display of croquet. The third match was much closer. Although the first game was over quickly, the GB team of Burridge & Cornelius began to suffer in game two. The Australian duo of Hewitt & Newcombe were given too many chances but fortunately failed to capitalise upon them.

*Australia 4 ~ Great Britain 6*

### Day 4:

Robert Fulford (GB) took just over two and a half hours to complete his two-game win against Brett Hewitt (AUS).

The best singles game of the day saw Greg Bury (AUS) take an early lead against Steve Comish (GB) with a triple peel. In the second game Bury should have won, but he allowed Comish to take it by three. The third game saw Comish dominate his opponent, allowing him little chance.

The fourth singles game saw Debbie Cornelius (GB) take on Ashley Faulkner (AUS). Cornelius took an early lead in the first game but by failing hoop four on two

occasions allowed him to take the advantage by double peeling and pegging out her forward ball and winning. In the second game Cornelius gained her revenge. The third game was overtaken by nerves. However it was Faulkner who came through, ending the winning streak of Great Britain's team of six matches in a row.

*Australia 5 ~ Great Britain 9*

### Day 5:

Great Britain made the first steps towards retaining the MacRobertson Shield today by winning two of the day's three doubles matches.

The win for GB was expected but they did not find it easy to get going. The Australians could have done better despite some very good personal performances from members of their team.

*Australia 6 ~ Great Britain 11*

### Day 6:

Great Britain team members Robert Fulford, David Maugham, Chris Clarke and Steve Comish won the four remaining singles matches of the test to give them victory over the Australians by 15 matches to 6.

*Full reports and results of all of the MacRobertson Shield Tests will be included in the September issue of the Croquet Gazette*

**1st January 1996 - Surbiton Frostbite Tournament**

report by Alec Thomas

The sixth annual frostbite tournament was held at the Surbiton Club on New Year's Day. The weather between Christmas and the new year had been very snowy and frosty, however 24 intrepid croquet players assembled at 10.00am and were rewarded with a pleasant sunny and warm (for the time of year) day, together with mulled wine, hot garlic bread and nibbles which was followed by a good substantial lunch to get us all off to an excellent start to 1996.

The tournament followed its usual pattern of handicap one-ball croquet with seven rounds completed. It was a very close run thing but in the end Sharon Wood triumphed with six wins, to take the tankard trophy, the joint runners-up on five wins each being Pauline Healy, Terry Burge and Kevin Carter, who of course went home empty handed, except for fond memories of opportunities missed. Still there is always next year.

Nobody has yet managed to win this tournament twice; perhaps once is enough for anybody at this time of year.

**Surbiton Winter One-Balls**

report by Alec Thomas

For the second winter Surbiton Croquet Club ran a series of four winter one-ball competitions, held on the first Sunday in November, December, January, February and March.

Each tournament is a Swiss one-ball handicap with six or seven rounds. On average there are about 18 players and play progresses quickly until a winner is declared and a late lunch can be served.

1996 winter winners were:  
November - David Mooney  
December - Kevin Carter  
January - Sharon Wood  
February - Beryl Sheraton  
March - Ted Matthews

As a matter of interest, Surbiton CC keeps two lawns open for play for members, subject to conditions, throughout the winter.

**Cheltenham Croquet Club Easter Weekend 5th - 8th April**

report by Alan Bogle

Day 1 - Fifty-four players gathered to do battle on a mixture of lawns which tested

room floor - some wag responding that rush matting on lawns four and five seemed a more urgent priority. Indeed on one of these lawns Malcolm O'Connell managed to 'accidentally' jump a hoop!

Day 4 - In block A Brian Hewitt won both his games to pip David Maugham who lost to Brian Smith. Debbie was relentless in Block B taking all 8 games finishing with a TP win over Judy Anderson. Su Stenhouse pipped Doug Taylor for runner-up spot. Block C went down to the wire with four players on five wins. Magaretha Regan won the block with Ian Fratter from Oxford University second with Tom Anderson and David Magee just pipped at the post. Block D was won by Ian Plummer well ahead of Dennis Regan. Tal Goleworthy won Block E with Mike Ranshaw close behind - Tal's win over Mike on day 2 being decisive. Ian Maugham had a full house of wins in Block F closely followed by Andrew Potter. Andrew won 7 games with a total margin of only 17 points including three games by one point.

Summary: Croquet OK. Weather dry. Beer consumed. Thank goodness for the brilliant meals provided daily for which all players were grateful.

**Southwick Salver April 13th-14th**

report by Andrew Gregory

This is my traditional opening to the season. Some zealots start at Easter, and those players found the lawns at Southwick in better condition than their previous venues. It's always good to find a club where the lawns are improving.

The field was incredibly strong, with 5 of the GB MacRobertson team playing. Two former test players were also in the field: Mark Saurin, who certainly had not forgotten his way around the lawn, and John Solomon, who proved to have an even better memory.

It must have been a while since Steve Comish was unseeded in a domestic tournament. Debbie Cornelius was the unlucky seed to be paired against him, though she seemed to have matters well under control until she failed 2-back having done 2 peels of a triple. Comish took advantage and pegged her out. There followed a 3-ball end game best described as protracted, in which Cornelius missed her chances and lost.

Comish had won through to play Chris Clarke, who had already eliminated

Solomon, Gene Mears and Phil Cordingley. They shared 2 one-sided games, and Steve won the opening in the decider, but could only lay up at first hoop. Clarke took on a 25-yarder whose outcome might well decide the match. He hit, and Comish had one more shot which was missed.

The other half of the draw was altogether less predictable. Terry Burge has been rising steadily in the rankings with his uncomplicated approach to the game. He is just the sort of player not to be fazed by playing World No. 1 Robert Fulford. Their game reached a one-ball ending: Burge, needing just the peg point, was just a yard from the stick. Fulford hit him from the South boundary, and as a bonus rushed to his hoop, penult. Fulford failed to get a forward rush after the hoop, failed to play a good approach, and failed rover. Burge hit a six-yarder to consign Fulford to the consolation event, in which he lost to Brian Hallam and to Steve Comish.

Burge played Ian Burridge in the semi-final. Burridge won the first 26TP, and went round to 4-back on the third turn of the second. Burge at last hit something, and the match turned into more of a scrap. Burridge had a clear chance to win in the second, when with one ball left he clanged penult. The third was also decided by three points, as in another one-ball ending Burge rode his luck to record a famous victory.

Burge perhaps celebrated his notable success a little too well on Saturday night, and the final was one-sided. Burge did essay a triple in the second game. The wisdom of this manoeuvre was called into question when after an error by each side, Burge attempted to 'run' 4-back with the ball that he had previously peeled to penult.

So for the second year running Chris Clarke finished the best-of-5 final before lunchtime. This was Clarke's third consecutive victory at the Southwick Salver. Nor did the Swiss provide much excitement for the afternoon spectators, as Steve Comish crunched up four opponents conceding a grand total of one hoop.

A total of seventeen triple peels were completed in the weekend, an average of one per player, though the actual distribution was not so even. No dearth of top talent then, in fact what we need next year are more 2s and 3s. There were three locals handicapped at around 5 - Gene Mears, Christine Constable and Peter Pullin - who all battled valiantly, but then there was no-one between Parkstone's Ian Scott (4) and Adrian Wadley (1). Though Scott did bridge

that particular gap in another one-ball ending: Wadley, for penult, shot at Scott's ball near rover. Scott had only the peg-point to make. Not only did Wadley miss, but he finished glued on the back of penult. Scott could trickle to the peg with complete impunity as Wadley had an entirely hopeless last turn.

The Club Conference told me that people like to see names in tournament reports, and there are two players I am yet to mention. This gives me the excuse to write that in the first round Chris Williams lost to Andrew Gregory.

Oh, one other thing. After lunch on Sunday John Solomon played Peter Pullin in the Swiss on lawn 7. Solomon took one ball round to 4-back. Pullin decided not unreasonably to hide his ball in corner one. Solomon duly ignored that ball and completed a triple peel using only three balls.

It is difficult to convey the rarity of this feat. Our American cousins tell me that it is about as common as a major-league no-hitter in baseball. We may better judge its infrequency by John Solomon's own comment: "I haven't done that for thirty years."

**Cheltenham Advanced Play (B Level) 18th - 21st April**

report by Ron Selmes

This early season tournament always attracts a keen group of 'B' level players eager to dust off their mallets and start some really serious (or otherwise!) play. This year we had the pleasure - no, indeed luxury - of a very competent non-playing manager who was always on hand to organise and control the forty players from all parts of the country (and even one from, Ray Flood, from Ireland) whose handicaps ranged from 1 to 8. In John Landsdown, Cheltenham have a real gem. Well done, John! We all want you back next year.

Thursday was not the best day for croquet, with chill winds and rain and the usual wide diversity of results from 3 wins to 3 losses. Friday dawned a much better day and players were greeted by the R.O.T. (Hugh Smorfitt) announcing that since the rules book insisted on a peg diameter of exactly 1.5 inches, with no tolerance in either direction, he had checked all the pegs and found that only those on lawns 1 and 8 were legal; he therefore concluded that all results on lawns 2 - 7 should be null and void as the pegs were over-size. (He

subsequently decided to condone the error!) During Friday's play the R.O.T was kept busy with tight hoops. Several players had a ball stick in a hoop (and I do mean stick). It was at this point that the R.O.T. requested the handing in of all gauges and sets of feelers.

By the end of the second day the Hands ladder was beginning to take shape with Adrian Wadley (1) and Chris Tuthill (6) leading the field.

Saturday was mainly fine and sunny and the tea-time audience was treated to a fine game on lawn 8 between Michael Rangeley and Brian Wainman. As tea got under way, Michael was for 4-back and peg, with both Brian's clips still on one. Brian hit the lift from B baulk, took his first ball to peg and pegged out his opponent's forward ball, conceding contact. A fine tussle then took place with Brian reaching 4-back on a 3-ball break before Michael finally got to the peg and won.

On Sunday, an unbelievable spring day, many played in shirtsleeves. The battle at the top was in full swing. Adrian Wadley, leader of the blues, lost to Alex Jardine, leader of the whites. Peter Darby and Graham Gale crept ever closer. Roger Jackman, with 5 wins out of 6 and 66 points, was not in contention as a minimum of 8 games had to be played to gain a prize. Nick Heriz-Smith and Chris Tuthill (yes he could be beaten!), both from the lowly pinks, each with 6 wins from 9 and 61 points shared the pink block first prize. Alex Jardine won the white block with 6 from 9 and 62 points. Derek Bradley with 5 wins from 8 and 58 points was runner-up. (He also does a good job as the Lawns Manager, and despite tight hoops - down to the R.O.T. - he saw to it that we had some reasonable lawns to play on.) The winner of the blue block, and indeed the overall winner, was in doubt right to the last with Adrian Wadley playing Graham Gale and Peter Darby playing Alex Jardine on lawn 8. Peter beat Alex but this still gave no clear result. In the deciding game Adrian pegged out one ball while Graham was in corners 3 and 4 - you've guessed it, Graham hit in! Eventually, after several shots, Adrian hit the peg from the west boundary, and won the first prize with 7 wins out of 8 and 71 points. Peter was second with 67 points and Graham won a special prize for most games played (11 with 62 points).

No report on Cheltenham is complete without mention of the fine teas. Thank you ladies, they were great - but



lunch at Cheltenham is really Eileen Magee and it was, I assure you, up to her usual standard.

### Newport Open Weekend 20th - 21st April

report by Andrew Gregory

On an unseasonably warm weekend, the four seeds reached their appointed semi-finals with varying degrees of difficulty. Lewis Palmer looked in most trouble until Jon Smith stuck in rover to let Palmer squeak home by 2. Justin Goddard was re-learning the game just quickly enough to get past Gary Bennett and Mike Hammelev by narrow margins. Sadly he had not remembered that a straight double peel is not the wisest manoeuvre when oppo is 4-back and peg. Don Gaunt reminded him in winning +6. Gaunt had earlier eliminated Guy Willard and Lionel Tibble.

The longest game was between the top-ranked player Paul Day and the manager Andrew Gregory. Gregory established an early lead, and held on to it for three hours or so, but without ever running 4-back. Day finally remembered how to roquet, and came back to reach peg and peg with Gregory still on 4-back and 4-back. Gregory hit back in, and not for the first time in the game a passage of manoeuvring in and out of baulk ensued. Gregory eventually ran 4-back, but unable to get both Day's balls out of baulk did the next best thing and left one of Day's balls on the first corner-spot. This guaranteed Gregory one last shot which he hit. More baulking, which reaped an unexpected reward when Gregory croqueted Day's ball from corner 4 into the jaws of hoop 2. The concession of a lift proved fatal. Note that had we been playing under the time limits favoured by less enlightened managers, the game would have been brought to a premature close some 90 minutes earlier. I would probably have won, but would not have enjoyed doing so.

The next morning Day was overcome by Palmer, who then faced Gaunt in the best-of-3 final. Neither player was hooping with any conviction, but Palmer's shooting was close to his best and this proved decisive. It was yet early season, so this final does not give any real guide to performance in the coming months, it is rather an overture to the action ahead.

The player who most nearly beat Palmer, Jon Smith, was now languishing at the wrong end of the Swiss, providing wins

for David Tutt and John Robinette, the latter in his first advanced tournament. What a difference a hoop makes.

### Southport & Birkdale Advanced Weekend 20th - 21st April

report by Eddie Bell

Hello there folks, anybody out there remember me (Steady Eddie)?

This was my first tournament after 5 years of total abstinence and as a reward, the manager, Richard (The Charmer) Hilditch sweet-talked me into doing the report.

We had 14 contestants spread between -2 and 4 with a good few hungry sharks around scratch. They all remained highly motivated and cheerful throughout the weekend despite some inclement weather. This attitude was promoted no doubt by the excellent food, regular visits to the bar and watching Richard mince around in his shorts whilst directing operations (sorry Richard but you did beat me and I had to get my own back). In addition to most parts of England being represented, there was an international flavour in the form of Charles Von Schmieder (Eire) who I remember watching at Carrickmines as a 12 year old thrashing everybody. There were two completely new faces to me, Bill Ward (Walsall) and David Nicholson (Crake Valley, Cumbria), both of whom have come into the game during my absence and got instantly hooked. David was telling me that if he can get to county standard (and we all know how low that can be in the pressure bowl of Southwick and Compton!) then it will be the sixth sport at which he has represented his county. I didn't get a game against Bill but played David and just pipped him (after time) by hitting the last shot. David, you are of county quality now, so start sliding those brown envelopes to the selectors.

The main event was won by the favourite, Colin (the Pro) Irwin who gave his usual impressively consistent performance. If I may digress for a moment into a reverie, I once gave Colin 15 bisques and beat him. I suspect the reverse would happen now! James Hawkins gave him a good run for his money in the final (-11 -7) and was unlucky not to take it to the third game. The Swiss was won by "Son of Liz" (Howard) after a simultaneous three-way play-off with Mike Sandler and Roger Tribe in a "Hilditch Variation" of the one-ball game, ie sequence play and one roquet only between hoops. Howard managed to get a

flying start (6 point lead) before Mike and Roger twigged they could gang-up on him. With Howard displaying some petulance at the "winner" discrimination, they advanced on him but finally crumbled in the face of intense pressure and Howard triumphed.

### Northampton Croquet Club - Opening of Season Tournaments

report by Owen Bryce

The Easter weekend, holidays in general, tournaments elsewhere in which some of our top players were involved and the murky weather of the Saturday and the Sunday resulted in a poor turn out, far below our usual average.

Saturday's Association tournament was an all day event while Sunday's short croquet tournament was mid-day onwards.

John Anstey managed the Association games which were played in two blocks of four each, the overall winner decided by a game between the winners of each block. John Anstey came first and Les Carrick was second. The two seconds fought it out and the two thirds but not all contestants played the same number of games so, apart from the winner, nothing was truly decisive.

The short croquet tournament only involved six players, playing five games each, something of a marathon, allowing breaks between games of only a few minutes. Owen Bryce and Jill Carrick both won three of their games and drew one. In the final play-off, a few days later, Owen Bryce emerged the overall winner.

### Croquet in Pendle - Easter Tournament

report by Norman Hicks

If you have not yet been to a Pendle tournament you should seriously consider it. I've known for many years of "Croquet in Pendle's" friendly welcome and excellent hospitality and after recent development work it now boasts four courts and a new pavilion.

So, Easter 1996 I decided was the right moment to return to do battle, see new croquet faces and renew old friendships. I was heartened, as I set off on Good Friday morning, to hear the weather forecast predict that the warmest place in Britain was to be west of the Pennines. I was not disappointed as I was greeted by the Lancashire hills basking in the spring sunshine. I detected an international air, when the first two competitors I met were

Tom Weston from Jersey and Clive Llewellyn from Wales. Soon the courts were bustling with 16 players engaged in fierce combat. I had a taste of success in the first round with a win over Chris Dent (Bury). But, alas, this flurry was short lived, as Len Forkin's (Bury) dogged accuracy defeated me in the second round. I had never played an Egyptian tournament before. I was impressed with its flexibility. About twenty players were able to take part over the weekend and it was easy to arrange time off, as long as the required minimum number of games were played. There was also great optimism of knowing that the rating system does allow for a glorious comeback even after one defeat. In my case however, this was not to be.

There is no way back when faced with the consistency shown during the weekend by Philip Tidswell (Pendle). There was no stopping him. One by one, Len Forkin (Bury), Colleen Forkin (Bury), Vincent George (Pendle), Clive Llewellyn (Llanfairfechan), John Wilkinson (Bowdon), Chris Dent (Bury) and David Walters (Bowdon and 1995 champion) all fell in his inexorable rise to supremacy. 7 wins without defeat gave him the trophy.

There was a good battle raging for the runners-up prizes in the high and low handicap sections.

Even as my campaign waned, Len Forkin went from strength to strength winning four in a row to contend for the runner-up position in the high handicap section. Clive Llewellyn was the other contender winning his first 3 games, then after a lapse of two losses, coming good with two more wins. Thus Len and Clive, with five successes each, fought for the runners-up medal. On the final day Clive's form proved supreme and he won the prize.

In the low handicap group David Walters, last year's champion, opened his defence with two consecutive victories, before the rot set in as he lost his next four games. However, he returned to form on the last day and two more successes were sufficient to earn him the runners-up medal.

So a successful and sociable tournament was concluded. The sun had disappeared for a while and a little drizzle had briefly dampened the spirits -perhaps in sympathy with my defeats! But this was amply balanced by the excellent lunches and teas.

So if you're looking for adventure in the north of England, why not try a tournament at "Croquet in Pendle?" I'm sure you'll not regret it.



### The Robert Prichard Weekend Hunstanton 3rd - 6th May

report by Kevin Carter

Activity weekends have come a long way since my kids started going off with their schools. This particular multi-sport seaside holiday included groups from Surbiton (strength in depth), Wrest Park (who had the best woolly hats), Nottingham (full of talent) and Ipswich (full of cider).

Newmarket races was on the agenda for day one. Ian Bond was a non-starter, since he only completed his econometric model of the betting market after the sixth race. Gordon Hopewell had the best pin and Chris Osmond, with the advantage of her husband Bob's tips, was the most successful numerically, with three winners. James Carlisle was not allowed in without his mum, but nevertheless managed to place his entire pocket money on an 8-1 winner in the last.

Except for Robin Brown, who was misplaced by railtrack, the full party assembled in two pubs and a caravan before the first evening bender - cannot remember too much about it though.....

While many tried their hands at croquet, day two also saw an organised excursion by a few to play golf. Apparently Nick Hyne scored about 100. However, he did not play so well at the second hole.

A car full of truants were seduced by George's description of "one of the world's ten best pubs, not far from here". It is the Lord Nelson at Burnham-something. Unfortunately, every third pub in the area is called the Lord Nelson (since he lived nearby) and every other village was Burnham-something, so it took a long time to find. Thanks to the uniquely fragrant Woodeford's Wherry bitter on offer it took even longer to leave. Consequently, when they reappeared, the miscreants were in deep trouble with Sarah Hampson, brandishing her bean ladle.

Sunday began with the nauseous sight of David Peterson appearing at breakfast in full Manchester United strip. It seems that the final match of some obscure football contest was to be decided that day. For this reason another excursion was organised - to find a Sky TV receiver. It seems this is not easy in deepest Norfolk and the intrepid explorers found they had to join the Meacham Working Men's Club to satisfy their desires.

More croquet was played on Hunstanton's very fine lawns. There was an hiatus when Veronica Carlisle lost her mallet and employed a notable barrister to cross-examine the other 27 players. It was found under a pile of clothes in the ladies' changing room and 'Tiger' returned to the bar.

The hoops were exceptionally testing (though usually of a greater dimension than the balls). The Noble variation of the Bond-Hilditch Flexible Swiss system was employed, and at lunchtime on the last day the Nottingham duo of Dr Vincent and Mr Hopewell were at the head of affairs.

The scene was set for a memorable final. The previous winner - cool, precise, nerves of steel - versus the upstart contender - brilliant but volatile. They battled like gladiators and the crowd of spectators gaped at each glorious shot and groaned when a miss put the opponent in. At Hendry 14, Ebdon 10 there was a break in the snooker, so somebody put their head outside to see if Ian and Gordon had finished yet.

Ian Vincent emerged the victor, so we had a prize-giving before heading off home. He received the handsome Robert Prichard trophy, and everyone agreed that the weekend was spent in a spirit of which Robert would have thoroughly approved. Mars bars were awarded for TPs to Ian Vincent, Philip Eardley and Robin Brown (a king size for a quad). Ian Bond won the Asil Nadir award for making money disappear, and then reappear, the fastest. The John Prescott award for once nearly went to David Peterson and Philip Eardley won the Ed Dymock award \*\*\*\*\* with four \*\*\*\*\* in one \*\*\*\*\*.

### Hurlingham May Weekend

*Southern No Comfort*  
report by Neil Jackson

My original report ran - 37 players, 5 nice ladies, 4 winners, 1 plausible manager and the cricket pitch green and slow for the first

time in living memory.

However, popular interest has led me to extend it as follows:

"You're not here to enjoy yourselves" said manager Dennis Cross. How wrong he was! All games were level advanced with generally no time-limits. Colin Southern, Ron Selmes and Philip Pawson had a whale of a time, winning every game in Blocks 1, 3 & 4. The rest of us, from -0.5 to 12, had really just come to shake off the winter in our first real tournament of the year.

"Perhaps I should sue the caterers for losing the tournament" wailed Bob Stephens, muttering darkly about the best temperature for incubating listeria. He did in fact have some cause for complaint because sickness removed a win from him and a loss from Ed Dymock, giving Ed Block 2 on points.

Dymock comes from interesting stock. The Daily Telegraph noted on an alleged breach of the Treason Act of 1351 - "Hewitt should be challenged to a duel by the Queen's Champion, a hereditary appointment held by the Dymock family for 34 generations. Past Dymokes would threaten anyone insulting the monarch with a scrap to the death." Which definitely sounds like our Ed.

Bob was not consoled by Neil "lost-them-all-except-to-Penult-Jones" Jackson saying that it was probably salmonella because salmon's what the man ate.

Meanwhile out on lawn 6, Sue Davies and Michael Donelan went off to the loo for a minute. They came back to find two club members playing a game with their balls. Sent away, they came back later with their own balls and asked if it was OK to play "only using one end".

It could only happen at Hurlingham.

### Bowdon Handicap Weekend

4th - 6th May

report by Mike Evans

Once again the sun shone at the Bowdon May tournament which is fitting for such an enjoyable introduction to their tournament season.

Alan Linton's amiable but competent management of an Egyptian format, with a top 8 knockout ensured a specific final. In the semi-finals Austin Sherlaw Johnson beat Chris Van Essen (alias Chris Van de Bandit!) +21 and Ian Lines beat David Mooney in a close encounter +1T. In the final Ian Lines was a decisive winner +19.

The quote of the event was attributed to James Hawkins "It was close, as +26 games go!" He then put the record straight with a triple peel and beat your reporter +1.

In the game between Ailsa Lines and Dr Colin Fletcher an all round break without bisques by both players spawned a needle match to win the game and claim a silver award. There were 4 awards. Silver, Dr Colin Fletcher and Mike Evans both of Beverley and Bronze to Austin Sherlaw Johnson and Andrew Elliot, both of Bowdon.

### Compton Spring Weekend

4th - 6th May

report by AJN

"Farmers fear unkindly May,  
Frost by night and hail by day".

So goes the song about the weather by Michael Flanders and Donald Swann. Over the May bank holiday weekend these amusing gentlemen were half right, in that there was no hail. However to adapt some more lines from that same song, "The sun was shining.

Was it hot?

Here in Eastbourne,  
It was not"

Despite the bitter east wind, some of the more hardy (perhaps fool hardy) gentlemen wore shorts. More sensible players wrapped up in several sweaters and water proofs. There was even one fur coat!

The lawns were in excellent condition despite the weather and the croquet was of a high standard. The Knight Cup was won by Dennis Shaw (-0.5) with 5 wins out of 6. Richard Wainman also won 5 matches but his one loss was to Dennis Shaw, hence he received the runner-up prize.



Dennis seemed to spend the whole weekend sitting on the side lines pulling out bisques. He gave away 65 in total. All this time he wore his brief white shorts.

The event was ably managed by Margaret Payton without mishap or dispute. She did however make one small clerical error which yours truly had the temerity to point out. Guess who was asked to write the report? Be warned!

### Southwick Handicap

4th - 6th May

report by Peter Highton

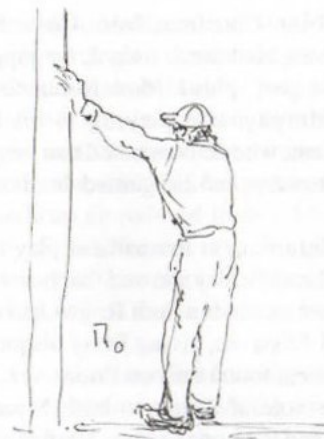
This 3-day bank holiday weekend handicap tournament at Southwick attracted 29 entries with handicaps ranging from -0.5 to 20, and the home club provided four substitutes. Thirteen of the entrants were Southwick members and visitors represented Cheltenham, Reigate, Cassiobury, Harrow Oak, Medway, Surbiton, Eastbourne and Colchester.

The tournament manager, Cliff Jones, unfortunately cried off due to illness 36 hours before the start of the tournament and Bill Arliss stepped in, learning the hard way on his first occasion as tournament manager. He did a first class job, ably assisted by his wife Pam.

The tournament was run as a Swiss with seven rounds, three on the first day. The lawns were in good condition and the weather was dry and mainly sunny but with a cool N.E. breeze most of the time. Many players opted for thermal underwear but the manager wore shorts, determined to prove that it was really warm spring weather! For those who finished their games early there was a "Manager's Plonk" one-ball competition.

The tournament winner with seven straight wins was Peter Pullen (5) of Southwick. Runner-up with five wins was Pam Arliss (14) after a shoot out with Bernard Weitz (6) of Cheltenham, Catherine Storey (6) of Colchester and Paul Miles (12) of Medway. The bottle of plonk for the one-ball was won by Catherine Storey.

This tournament was well run and most enjoyable in the usual friendly atmosphere at Southwick. The low bisquers (two at 1.5, one at 0 and one at -0.5) should be admired for entering such a handicap tournament. In one game a low bisquer faced a fence of 18.5 bisques, hit 5 times only including the opening, and lost by 26. His handicap opponent had three bisques to spare.



### Budleigh Salterton May Week

6th - 11th May

report by Hamish Hall

Budleigh Salterton's May week never fails to produce that pleasurable atmosphere that should prevail at all our games. But this May, the elements were not totally kind. Not a drop of rain all week, and the sun shone more often than not, but a strong wind from the north produced more wind cheaters than shorts. Perhaps the manager, Mc Burnie Wood (who did sterling work) best epitomised the situation, wearing with aplomb his Panama hat and a sheepskin coat!

West Country Live TV carried our banner, and Chairman Mary Goodheart's article for the journal, was accompanied by two good photos of herself and Pat Hague. Perhaps Council should adopt Publicity Secretary Jenny Broad-Thomas!

But the serious tournament players will be more interested in a first hand report on the state of the lawns, than reading of the exploits of the faithful. I would be less than honest if I did not convey a feeling of disappointment at the outcome of some considerable expense and effort on the club's part in their endeavours to restore the lawns to their former excellence. Vertidrainage (boring holes to a depth of ten inches, thus improving root growth, drainage and oxygenation) combined with reseeding and top dressing had not been totally successful. Over the winter, nature had continued to dog the Ground Secretary's efforts with minimal rain and prolonged cold both stunting recovery prospects.

So the lawns were tricky, but to compensate, the hoops were fairly and firmly set. Martin Grainger-Brown, playing in his 30th consecutive May tournament, showed that peels were possible, although over running rover, failed a straight triple

peel. And John Beech demonstrated that he can play with Jaques balls as well as Barlow, by winning his block, retaining the Godfrey Turner cup, defeating David Purdon in the final.

Roland Henderson, whose handicap is still too high, lost the JK Brown cup, rather than Keith Parsons winning it. As time was approaching, Roland had at last got a 4 ball break together, and only needed to run rover and scatter the balls. But for reasons best known to himself, he stopped at rover, with the scores even, and laid up. But time was called, and in his final turn Keith hit from 20 yards, and made the winning point.

The third division was won by Brian Judson, who seemed to be more confident than when playing in the doubles. But only Margaretha Regan's psychotherapist will know whether she lost by being wound up with the irritation of slow play.

The doubles were played each day after tea. Bo Harris and Tony Duston Smith, after surviving a close second-round game against Diana Brothers and myself, went on to overcome Veronica McClements and Peter Mayers +4. But the high point of the week for me was the beating Diana and I gave to my bete noire, Andrew Potter, playing with Maureen Evans. Relegated to the Y, they soldiered on to meet Martin Grainger Brown and Brian Judson. Martin executed the maximum number of peels with Brian's ball, whilst Andrew squandered his bisques in attempting to peg out Martin. Perhaps he should remember that bisques are for breaks!

### Bristol Advanced Weekend

11th - 12th May

The David and Goliath contest which failed to happen.

report by Raymond Ransom

David 'Mr Nice Guy' Goacher, the Steve Davis of Croquet, has after two years in the wilderness regained the John McCullough Challenge Trophy. Commenting from his penthouse flat overlooking Horfield marina, surrounded by trophies collected from various sports, including weight lifting, David said "I could not have done it without natural yoghurt. Rubbed into the joints it renews the body's suppleness." Certainly it does seem to have done the trick with each of David's games taking less than 2 hours. He certainly deserved his win with consistently high play throughout the weekend. David, a fancied seed in the 1996

Men's and Women's Championships, is currently negotiating a lucrative sponsorship contract with the Bio-Pot Wholefoods Company.

The entry was of a high standard with both the 1994 and the 1995 winners (Andrew Symons and Chris Patmore) taking part. Chris Patmore's defence of the trophy was short lived with Alex Leggate winning their first round match 'plus 1 on time' in a game which, but for the time limit, looked as though it would go on all weekend. Chris, probably suffering from too much wine and can-can looked rather jaded, (much the same as last year I suppose). And even the Carling Black Label failed to help him. Andrew Symons fared better going all the way to the final before Goacher said 'GOTCHA!'

The pre-tournament favourite, however, was Chris Clarke who had been playing well enough to reach the final in the Western Championships the previous weekend. Unfortunately, Chris showed only glimpses of his best form and lost a scrappy game to Alex Leggate in the second round. In his following game in the consolation event he completed a sextuple peel against Philip Camp, to the best of my knowledge the first one to be achieved at Bristol. Further attempts all failed at various stages, the most spectacular being when Chris failed to ensure that his opponent, Roger Tribe, could not run hoop 1! Whoops another game lost.

Throughout the weekend Alex demonstrated examples from the 'Leggate Book of Leaves' culminating in the classic variation of the NSL, ie. the one with the hampered ball on the 'A' baulk side of hoop 4. His opponent, Shaun Carter, unsportingly took the short shot and hit it. Later Shaun was involved in an entertaining game with James Hawkins with both running around the lawn like headless chickens before James pegged out to record the fastest game of the weekend.

The final was a bit of an anti-climax. David won the first game +26 in his usual clinical fashion, but the second was looking distinctly more interesting until Andrew got bored with the proceedings and decided that watching the Indian tourists play cricket was a better prospect.

Results

Semi-Finals: Andrew Symons beat Alex Leggate -5, +26tp, +12 David Goacher beat Roger Tribe +17, +25.

Final: David Goacher beat Andrew Symons +26, +14

Swiss: Chris Clarke 5/7, Chris Farthing 4/6, Roger Tribe 4/6



### Ramsgate Handicap Tournament 11th - 12th May

report by Michael Clarke

Ramsgate Croquet Club welcomes 14 players from 5 different clubs for a 5 round Swiss.

Cliff top location ideal for quick exit if things go really bad, but prospects of forgoing excellent club catering discourages obvious candidates.

Defending champion Kevin Ham (Dyffryn) travels furthest, but fails to retain title despite copious quantities of his trademark 'no tea-leaves tea'.

Handicap spread is wide too, from Dennis Shaw (-0.5) to Peter Highton and John Sanderson (20).

John Ruddock celebrates his birthday on day one in generous style by losing all his matches.

Playing against Michael Poole, certified (right word? but he probably should be) coach Len Hawkins makes all us high bisquers feel better by demonstrating how to play with the wrong balls.

Joan Welch single-handedly defends the honour of the fairer sex, and at great cost to nerves is involved in the only two matches to go to time.

Early unbeaten leader and youngest entrant Jamie Burch (one to watch) loses to Michael Clarke in last round to set up 4-way tie for 4/5 and make the manager work for his living.

After much perusal of regulations, knockout 1-ball tournament decided on as a tie breaker.

In the 'semi-finals' Clarke loses narrowly to John Roche having missed vital rover, while Sanderson defeats Burch with flurry of bisques.

Final looks all over with Roche at Penult and Sanderson at 1-back with no more bisques, but some impressive hitting-in takes Sanderson to penult before Roche

finally administers coup de grace. Bandit in chief Sanderson in first tournament takes home runner-up trophy, bronze award (qualified twice!) and substantial handicap reduction. Also establishes tournament record for winning with most bisques still standing (believed to be 11 but I lost count).

Other handicap reductions (and about time too said some) for Clarke, Highton and worthy tournament winner John Roche. Twin consolations for Burch - being only one to beat Roche all weekend, and finishing ahead of father Frank (not for the first time I suspect).

Consolation too for Paul Miles who had the hardest draw, being only one (apart, appropriately, from Roche) who had to play more than two of the four semi-finalists. Thanks to Roy Ware (manager), Mary Currie (assisted by Margaret Fello, Daphne Willis, Pam Wood and Cynthia Street) (catering) and Bernard Smith (you name it) for a great weekend.

### Nailsea & District Handicap Weekend May 18th - 19th

report by Hamish Hall

In the ten years that I have been playing at tournaments, I cannot recollect an event at which the elements have been so unkind. A bitterly cold wind on the Saturday, followed by torrential rain on Sunday, left the manager posing the question: should the tournament be abandoned? The players were made of sterner stuff, and although one round was reduced to 14 points, the majority completed the full programme.

It was the first time that Gina Llewellyn, from Llanfairfechan, had played on a full-sized court, but she and husband Clive had caravanned down, and more than earned their keep by getting up in the night to secure the tent, which might otherwise have become an insurance claim! But enough of the asides - what of the croquet?

Nailsea has a tradition of producing promising juniors, and this season James Dixon is likely to be in more than one frame. Gaining his silver award, he went on to win the Amelia Hall plate with six wins, and I was not alone in thinking that he deserved more than a reduction of 1 in his handicap! The other junior, Kristian Chambers, is finding the going tougher without the forest of bisques, but to fail seven or more times at hoop 3, only to find it set to President's standard, did little to endear him to the ROT. Also aggrieved was the aforementioned

Clive. Brian Christmas from Cassiobury denied him his bronze award, by pipping him at the post - plus 1. More fortunate was David Murphy, also playing in his first tournament, who demonstrated that bisques are for breaks, and he gained his bronze award.

Returning to tournament play after 4 years, David Lilley showed that he retains his former touch, but both Roger Jackman and Paul Pristavec, giving away bisques in most games, found the conditions vexing.

A vote of thanks to both Maureen Murphy and Pat Long for their sterling work in the galley in the tent, was never more richly deserved.

### Jersey v Ireland Carrickmines 25th - 26th May

report by Tony Le Moignan

Jersey	Ireland
Tony Le Moignan (-0.5)	Fred Rogerson (-1)
Paul Duckworth (4.5)	Jane Shorten (1)
Matthew Borrow (4.5)	Robert Barklie (2.5)
Iris Cotillard (14)	Ronan Rogerson (10)
Alasdair Crosby (15)	Mark McInerney (12)
Sarah Burrow (16)	Nathaniel Healy (14)

On paper, it appeared that Jersey were up against a stronger side, away from home. A combination which had the Channel Islands team keen to be at least a match in the bar on the evening prior to the start!

Having accomplished this in Guinness (if not in spirit), the Saturday morning started with three best-of-three doubles games to "loosen up" or, more appropriately, "sober up"!

Paul Duckworth & Matthew Burrow for Jersey, made a strong start in their first game against Jane Shorten & Robert Barklie (+22), while Ireland redressed the balance with Nathaniel Healy & Mark McInerney (+12). Tony Le Moignan & Sarah Burrow put Jersey into a good position against Ireland's Fred & Ronan Rogerson (+18), soon to follow up with a 2-0 win, the second at (+11). Moments later, Ireland levelled the match at 1-1 with a straight games win for Healy & McInerney.

The final double went to the final game before Jersey's Duckworth & Burrow put Jersey into a 2-1 lead going into the following day's singles matches.

Ireland took the first two singles matches 2-0 courtesy of wins from Mark McInerney against Iris Cotillard and Ronan Rogerson versus Alasdair Crosby. Meanwhile, Jane Shorten was finding better form to beat Jersey's 16 year old junior

champion, Matthew Burrow +15 +17. Paul Duckworth played extremely well against Ireland's Robert Barklie and, after a very close +1 win in the first, took the second game and the match +16; a result that was to see the Irish handicappers suggest his handicap be reduced from 4.5 to 3. Jersey lady, Sarah Burrow, was also playing well above previous form and beat Nathaniel Healy +4T +15, also reducing her handicap from 16 to 12.

All of the first five singles had been straight games wins with the overall match poised at 4 wins each.

The final singles with the Irish and Jersey number 1's meeting, produced the only match to go to three games, Fred Rogerson taking the first game +5 with Tony Le Moignan winning the second +7. With all other singles matches already over and the weekend's play poised on the outcome of the final game, the two players were moved to the main lawn in front of the clubhouse to increase the already heavy burden of pressure being "enjoyed" by Rogerson and Le Moignan!

Noisy excited crowds are not normally associated with the game but this proved not to be so in this particular case, with the many errors by both players being met by equal cheers, groans and bar-till rings! The game can most kindly be described as gutsy, but more accurately as ugly, with Le Moignan finally scraping home at +6, to give Jersey a very unexpected victory, at 5-4.

The awesome and seemingly unending hospitality of the Irish continued afterwards at "the highest pub in Ireland", but modesty and, quite frankly, a total loss of memory (obviously due to the high altitude), prevents the writer from confirming who actually won the concurrently running Guinness sponsored tournament!!!

In the words of a nearby neighbour to the club - a chap by the name of Bono methinks - "Thank you Ireland"!

### Southport & Birkdale Handicap Weekend 25th - 27th May

report by Don Williamson

22 assorted souls, with handicaps ranging from 0 to 20, played in American blocks. Players came from far and wide, from the north (Tyneside) and the west (Carrickmines) but not from the south. There were 4 people playing in their first tournament. The highest number of bisques

conceded over the weekend was over 80 and in spite of some torrential rain all games were played and no flooding occurred. Saturday afternoon and Monday brought out the sun hats and creams as arms and legs appeared. One player, more used to advanced tournaments, was forestalled from removing his ball after hitting the peg close to time as the partner ball was still not through rover.

The missed shot of the tournament was played under the watchful eye of a referee. The opponent ball came to rest in the hoop 1mm from the striker's ball. It was for rover and only the gentlest of roquets was required and an air shot was played!

The block winners were Ray Flood (5), who had come all the way from Carrickmines, Brian Kerr (9) from Southport, Sheila Watts (20) from Tyneside playing in her first tournament who won all her block games, and Joyce Taylor (16) from Southport. They played in a mini block on the Monday whilst the other players played against their opposite position from another block. Ray won all his games to become a clear winner, with Sheila Watts as runner-up.

### Pendle Spring Handicap 25th - 27th May

report by John Beech

Pendle Croquet Club lies in the heart of the Pennines. The club has four lawns, one pavilion and two mowers. The spring tournament was due to start on Saturday 25th May, and with the green keeper on holiday, the Chairman Stephen Pratt, had undertaken to prepare the lawns. One mower died through seizure and the other failed to drive! Panic produced answers!

The tournament ran well. The croquet was mixed, like the weather. Philip Tidswell (12) looked favourite to repeat his Easter win until David Barrett (5) beat him +10 in the penultimate round. The other contender for the cup was Myer Cohen (14), the famous Bury bandit, but in the final David Barrett proved too skilful and beat Myer +11. Myer was however rewarded with a handicap reduction from 14 to 12.

### Colchester Spring Bank Holiday Weekend 25th - 27th May

report by Pat Hetherington

As lack of rain had slowed the recovery of lawns 1 and 2, only two lawns were in use for the tournament and the entry was

therefore reduced to 10 players.

Initially play was in two block of five, with the top two players in each moving on to a winners' block, the remaining six taking part in a three round Swiss. Nigel Gray, Vi Lester, John Wilkinson and Ron Harris battled for the Forbes Memorial cup and everything depended on the last matches. John and Nigel eventually tied with two wins, but on hoop difference the winner was John Wilkinson. The outcome of the Swiss also depended on the last two matches, with John Rolfe winning his third game +26 to end up the clear winner.

### Cheltenham Handicap Weekend 25th - 27th May

report by Deborah Latham

Enticed by the alluring odours of Eileen Magee's now legendary lunches, no doubt, 52 players assembled at Cheltenham under the managerial wings of Roger and Dab Wheeler. Wharrad turns had to be imposed infrequently (but, oh dear! - mea culpa!), though I believe only once were all needed to settle the outcome of a game (that one wasn't mea culpa). They proved once again a highly successful alternative to time limits. Though nobody won all their games, of all of the competitors only four attained a total of less than two wins, showing a general satisfactory degree of success. A pre-tournament casualty was Louise Bradforth, who unfortunately suffered something of a catastrophe at her college, the main constituents of which were (a) a fire and (b) her course work. Sadly, therefore, she was unable to join us, her appearance being metamorphosed into that of Kismet Whittall and Edith Bailey (by courtesy of whom she accrued three wins).

In block A, though the likes of Tal Goleworthy, Maisie Peebles, Michael Evans and Carol Smith were offering the stiffest challenges, in the end the places were decided between Dab Wheeler and Audrey Whitaker, first place going to Dab on the 'who beat whom' principle.

Block B was perhaps the most hotly contested in terms of individuals' numbers of wins. You may remember (but probably not, in which case refer to the Tournament Review No 1 insert in issue No 240!) that last year Bo Harris shared her block's honours with John Jeffrey and Nick Heriz-Smith. This year Bo opted for a change of personnel by starting Nick down the slippery slope out of contention, and

Laurence Latham provided the final 'push', thereby putting himself into the company of Dennis and Margaretha Regan and Neil Williams in the 'almost-but-not-quite' places. The result was that this year the cast of leading players, each with five wins, showed the names of Betty Widows and Roger Schofield alongside that of Bo.

Block C contained all the players who would, in days of yore, have been branded "bandits" had not the automatic handicapping system rendered such a notion unthinkable (!) - though it didn't feel much like that to those of us who had to play them! Derek Bradley gave the closest chase, but Roger Deacon, Peter Higgins and "local boy makes good" Jim Godson (handicaps 10, 18 and 18 respectively) not only displayed a quality of stroke play far superior to their handicaps but also refused to defer to each other, with five wins apiece. Since they hadn't had the foresight to arrange a tidy conclusion to all play by all playing each other and thus invoke the 'who beat whom' principle, there was again a three-way tie for first place. In the course of all this Peter was successful in attaining his Bronze award against Rosemary Guban (which just shows how good he had to be!).

Parenthetically, ponder, if you will, the mysterious events on court 8 in the game between Ernest Fabian and Charles Atter-Martin, when the yellow ball was pegged out by the opponent. Some seconds later, with no-one in the vicinity, the yellow clip suddenly shot off the peg. "Ah - the ghostly referee," intoned Geoffrey Taylor from among the ranks of those waiting for their next game.

The entire proceedings were overlooked - as will all at Cheltenham from now on - by the new weathervane atop the Bridge Room erected on 1 May this year as an enduring tribute to Edgar Jackson. It was my privilege to have submitted the design, but I particularly want to commend the quality of workmanship by Michael Roberts of M.E. Roberts, Functional Ironwork (Fireplaces), Miserden, Gloucester. It is a superbly crafted tribute to a very memorable man. I remember the managerial pen oft poised to record the result of a game, accompanied by the genial prompt, "Was there something?" There certainly was, and now the weathervane will be there as a tangible reminder of what it was.



### Plymouth Handicap Weekend 25th - 27th May

report by Brian Smith

Walking on water never has been a problem to those webbed-footed Plymouth players, but even they were reluctant to splash about in the downpour that greeted the second of the 3 day tournament. It was, as one member ruefully put it, akin to playing in rather than on a reservoir. But, bearing in mind the underlying message of tournament manager Stuart Orr "We are here to enjoy ourselves", grins were fixed in place; mallets slung over slumped shoulders and battle commenced.

Playing an Egyptian game based on the Bray handicap system without time limit certainly seemed to work, most games being concluded within normal times. The event was well planned and organised and most enjoyable, which makes it rather a pity that only 5 'visitors' out of a total of 15 players were able to benefit.

However, enjoy ourselves we did, and with weather improvement the games raced onward with most getting at least 2 games each day (some even managed 4...but we won't go into the scores!). Shona Vaissiere and Gordon Porter, fresh from a winter's (?) play in sunny Australia shocked everyone with their quality play matched to 14 and 16 handicaps, and were swiftly asked to reduce to 11 and 12 respectively. They continued unabated - playing very well indeed. But the most consistent and worthy winner of the Armada trophy was Alan Newman with 120 points, closely followed by runner-up Gordon Porter on 118.

### Inter-County Championship 1996 Southwick/Compton 25th ~ 28th May

report by Graham Fowler

#### The Setting

More croquet players assemble for the Inter-Counties than any other competition. There are a minimum of six and a maximum of nine players in each team, with six playing at any given time, from - this year - 18 counties. Given that the majority of players are relatively skilled and have been playing for several years - more in some cases - together with the fact that the event is usually quite early in the calendar, and you have the basis for the celebration of croquet that is the Inter-Counties.

Almost as an indication of the emergence of a new season, the Inter-Counties serves as a renewal of the game and friendships within it. It is this sense of conviviality that makes the 'Counties' (as it is known) a special event. This dimension, alongside a sense of tradition and the element of representation, accounts for why about two-thirds of the top 100 or so players attend a tournament exclusively devoted to advanced doubles - a form of the game played relatively rarely. The focus of the event is the extensive facilities of the Southwick Club, although, currently, there is also the opportunity to sample the welcome and the delightful lawns provided by the Compton Club.

#### The Missing Years

The last published report of the Counties appeared in 1993. Then, to the surprise of an assembled gallery around lawn one at Southwick, Colin Irwin missed a comparatively straightforward hoop (admittedly from an approach half a lawn away). This gave Avon victory over Cheshire. The consequence of this result was that Avon denied Surrey the title. For the first time 1993 had seen counties divided into two divisions, with teams playing most games against members of their own division, but with some important interchange to secure the unity of the event.

Cheshire had not had a good tournament (not helped by the fact that one of their team, thinking it was a three-day event, had booked a flight for the Tuesday); they were relegated. But Cheshire were not a weak team and, in 1994, they had David Lendrum for four days rather than three, and the addition of David Maugham strengthened the first pairing.

Ideally, as had happened the previous year, the strongest teams fight before a packed gallery at Southwick. Alas, in 1994, the supposedly weak Cheshire beat Gloucester at Compton; this rather reduced the photo-opportunities when the trophy was presented. Warwickshire did what they could in accepting the wooden spoon - the result of promotion the previous year - but it wasn't quite the same.

Last year, Dorset, Essex, Middlesex and Surrey performed well as has become the norm. Bedfordshire disappointed in that there were no new variations on some of their excellent manoeuvres when time approached - surely there are coaching tips here to be shared! The real story was elsewhere, although fortunately at Southwick.

Before the last round, Cheshire had proved that 1994 was no fluke, as they had nine wins out of ten, mainly from within the top division. Nottinghamshire were performing better than expected; they also had nine wins, garnered mainly from the lower division. Cheshire and Nottinghamshire had not met; the management toyed with the idea of arranging a play-off, but resisted the notion. Events validated the decision: although Cheshire lost one game to the strong Dorset squad, Nottinghamshire lost their match against Middlesex. So, Cheshire deservedly retained the trophy; Essex moved into second place above Nottingham, Dorset were fourth.

#### Some Stories from 1996

Many of the really interesting stories are tangential to the croquet itself. On Saturday afternoon, David Carpenter quit the lawn less pleased with his turn than he might have wished. He sat down, said, "I'm not drinking any more" and turned over a beer glass that was more than half full. It also belonged to his partner. On Sunday, there was a revision to the Cheshire team, including suspending the partnership of David Maugham and Howard Taylor. Thence the sum handicap of the Cheshire first pair became minus Howard.

Pegging out seemed to be a problem. Roger Jenkins reached the peg and was attempting a rush; he missed the rush but not the peg. Partner Goacher hit eventually and saved Roger's blushes. Phil Cordingley was all set to peg out David Maugham's ball but, having knocked it a couple of yards from the peg in making the roquet, Phil missed the peg with the forward ball. It was

soon Maugham essaying the peg out. Your reporter was not immune: true, I managed to peg out, but eagle-eyed Dennis Shaw was there to point out it is customary to run rover first; fortunately not a costly oversight on this occasion.

And my story is trumped with ease by Martin Granger-Brown. Having played a second colour game against Martin, partnered by Andrew Gregory, on the second day I heard Martin relate that he preferred to play with the G-B colours and that he, himself, would play with Brown. A pleasant if trivial comment at the time. Yet the following day Martin and Andrew are playing together; Andrew has completed a triple peel on opponent and pegged out the pink ball, with white for penult. So, Martin is left playing a three-ball break. Having run rover he taps into white with brown and takes off to the peg with white. Thus, a TPO becomes an OTP. It is hard to believe Martin would do such a thing but, unfortunately, in the final game of the tournament - again playing with brown - Martin forgot his maxim once more, and but for a final successful long shot would have cast aside another game.

#### Early Jostling in 1996

The first day ended with only three teams undefeated: Middlesex, who had won all their matches three games to nil; Nottingham, who finished the day with a good win against Essex; Dorset, who had potentially the most significant victory in their win against Cheshire.

No county was undefeated by the end of the second day. Middlesex did not lose a game until the afternoon, but then lost their final two matches. One of Middlesex's opponents, Gloucester, won all their games on day two, giving them a total of five. Cheshire also had five victories. Nottingham and Dorset remained undefeated in the morning. Dorset won in the afternoon, whilst Nottingham lost their first match to Sussex, who had not previously won. In the evening Dorset and Nottingham were to play, double-banked with Cheshire, who gave notable support to the Nottingham cause! Whether it was this support or the TPO by Nick Hynes that swayed it remains unclear, but Nottingham prevailed. So Dorset and Nottingham had also gained five wins.

Cheshire and Dorset had fairly comfortable third days, with their best victories coming against Surrey and Essex respectively; they were both on eight out of

nine. The Nottingham bandwagon hit quicksand: having lost only three matches in the previous six days of Counties play, they were not to win again. Two teams who defeated Nottingham on Monday also won their other matches; so Gloucester had eight wins and Glamorgan seven. This left the manager, Andrew Gregory, with a problem. The recent two divisions had been restructured into three this year. Glamorgan were apparently in the weakest third, so were scheduled to play the last day at Compton against other weaker teams. On the basis of their performance, Glamorgan were very likely to gain two more wins - potentially enough for the title. Perhaps a second division team might be allowed to win (Cheshire in 94, potentially Nottingham in 95), but a third division outfit!

#### Towards Resolution

Andrew had decided to recall Glamorgan to Southwick for the final day, but he still had to arrange the rescheduling of matches. Thus it was he rose at 5.30 a.m. and, not wishing to disturb other members of his team, took his problem and his notes, heading in the general direction of Brighton Marina. Despite the early hour, Andrew noticed a number of young gentlemen out strolling, as though walking a dog, yet Andrew could see no dogs. A little while later, he also noted that a few other gentlemen were driving rather slowly through the area; clearly they were not in a hurry to get to work. Being the kind of person who can arrange the inter-counties order of play, Andrew began to put two and two together. Shortly afterwards he opted to continue his deliberations elsewhere. A fuller version of this story may appear in The Amateur but, recounting it later, deliberations focused upon whether Andrew was engaged in official CA business and what might be the financial implications of this.

The main purpose of the revised draw at Compton was the destination of the wooden spoon. This involved Berkshire and Yorkshire playing a second time; although not ideal this did allow Berkshire to claim the spoon with a degree of certainty.

At Southwick, Gloucester lost to Cheshire and the re-planted Glamorgan leaked all three games to Dorset. So it was between Cheshire and Dorset. A clear (three-nil) win for Cheshire would see them keep the trophy once more. Again, though, Glamorgan outplayed what seemed a stronger side, beating Cheshire twogames

to one. In contrast, Dorset claimed a two-one victory against Gloucester and, with it, the trophy for the first time ever. This meant a great deal to Dorset, as indicated by non-playing captain Les Butler's somewhat emotional, rather long, yet pleasantly sentimental, victory speech.

Despite the final loss, Cheshire remained in second place, Gloucester, Glamorgan and, somewhat unheralded, Northumberland and Middlesex were next with eight wins each.

The exact formula for the event next year is currently being considered. It is to be hoped that we remember the 'Counties' is something of a festival of croquet. In that case, the destination of the trophy matters, but is not the whole story. In addition, the days when there were clearly weak counties seem numbered, as this year, like others, has seen counties emerge. Some evidence of the increasing strength of the event is that 70% of matches were determined by the odd game. So the future of the 'Counties' offers both competition and celebration; long may it continue.

Results:

- Dorset 10 wins (24 games)
- Cheshire 9 wins (24 games)
- Middlesex 8 wins (22 games)
- Northumberland 8 wins (22 games)
- Gloucester 8 wins (20 games)
- Glamorgan (8 wins 18 games)
- Essex 7 wins (20 games)
- Surrey 6 wins (18 games)
- Nottingham 5 wins (17 games)
- Suffolk 4 wins (15 games)
- Avon 4 wins (14 games)
- Sussex 4 wins (14 games)
- Bedford 4 wins (13 games)
- Warwick 4 wins (11 games)
- Northants 3 wins (13 games)
- Kent 3 wins (12 games)
- Yorkshire 3 wins (9 games)
- Berkshire 1 win (11 games)

The following letter was circulated to all county team captains shortly after the event was completed. It was thought that it might be advantageous to circulate this to a wider audience, so it is reproduced here.

Dear County Captain,

The purpose of this letter is to remind you to return your questionnaire, and also to attempt to explain what happened at the end of this year's event. I fear some confusion may have reigned, though you all

accepted the re-drawing with good grace and remarkable lack of complaint, for which many thanks. There are important lessons to be drawn - both for the Manager, who certainly made some mistakes, and more generally as an illustration of the inevitable problems of a split venue. These problems will only be increased by having more teams (and venues!).

Two tables of results are enclosed: the final table, and what I want to consider first, the position after Round Nine. In this latter table, the Counties are arranged into their original seeded divisions - the middle division is italicised. As you can see, at this stage each team had played three teams from each division, so nominally had had an equal draw. If all had gone according to seeding, those at the top would have at least 6 wins, those at the bottom at most three.

- Cheshire 8 wins 21 games
- Dorset 8 wins 19 games
- Essex 6 wins 17 games
- Middlesex 6 wins 17 games
- Nottingham 5 wins 16 games
- Surrey 4 wins 14 games

- Gloucester 8 wins 18 games*
- Avon 4 wins 12 games*
- Bedford 4 wins 11 games*
- Suffolk 3 wins 12 games*
- Warwick 2 wins 7 games*
- Yorkshire 2 wins 7 games*

- Glamorgan 7 wins 16 games
- Northumberland 6 wins 18 games
- Sussex 4 wins 12 games
- Northants 2 wins 10 games
- Berkshire 1 win 9 games
- Kent 1 win 7 games

Nothing ever goes according to seeding. In the second division Gloucester were tied with the leaders on matches, while the rest of the division were doing more or less poorly. More importantly, Glamorgan and Northumberland were belying their lowly status. In particular Glamorgan had 7 wins, and thus could amass 9 matches, potentially the winning score. As a lowly seeded County, Glamorgan had been scheduled to play at Compton on Tuesday against two other lowly teams.

There are three options in this scenario: (a) maintain the published order of play, allowing Glamorgan to win "by the back door"; (b) maintain the order of play, but disqualify them from winning; (c) reschedule the order of play, transferring

them to Southwick. (a) is unacceptable - this year Glamorgan might have won on the odd game from Cheshire, Dorset and/or Gloucester without having played any of them, or might have ended in an irresolvable tie. If we are going to call someone "County Champions", then we should ensure that they deserve the title. (b) is possible, since Glamorgan's low seeding was directly due to their own poor past performance (ie not an arbitrary decision). I do feel that (b) would act as a disincentive to lower counties, though if we allow more counties, it may become necessary (see 4.4e in my paper).

So (c) is the answer, and the only one available this year, since that is what Rule 9 in the Fixtures Book provides for. So Glamorgan were summoned to Southwick, and in view of Gloucester's success as well, I decided that the only fair solution was to discard the original order of play and produce the pairings for Rounds 10 and 11 according to Reg. 16 (Swiss format). This worked well, ensuring an exciting finish at Southwick.

Now to the other end, which did not work so well. Since Glamorgan were being transferred to Southwick, one County had to be transferred from Southwick to Compton. I decided on Yorkshire, as the County with the lowest position (Yorkshire caught up Warwick in Round 9 by beating them 3-0). However, the teams scheduled to play Glamorgan in R10 and R11, ie Berkshire and Northumberland, had already played Yorkshire, so those two ran out of oppos after R10 - I had stymied myself. In the event, I decided on an order of play involving two replays (Northumberland & Northants and Yorkshire & Berkshire) rather than the minimum one (Northumberland & Berkshire). This was because since the Wooden Spoon might be more significant this year (potential relegation), it seemed unfair to ask Berkshire to replay Northumberland, the strongest county at Compton. Berkshire & Yorkshire thus became the Wooden Spoon decider.

Replays are clearly unsatisfactory, and I regret that they happened this year. What could I have done to avoid them? (i) If I had been completely on top of things, I could have stopped Berks/Northumberland (and Suffolk/Bedford) going ahead in R9, and substituted Bedford/Northumberland and Berks/Suffolk. This would have left Berks/Northumberland free to play on Tuesday. To make this sort of instantaneous decision would require a computer. This is

not an idle point - I do intend writing a program to improve my grasp on various contingencies as they arise. (ii) Instead of sending Yorkshire, send a team who had played neither Berks nor Northumberland - eg Suffolk. I think this may have occurred to me, but this would have caused considerable inconvenience to Suffolk. Also, Yorkshire (and Warwick) were very much involved with Berks (and Kent and Northants) in the battle for the Wooden Spoon. (iii) I should have swapped two more teams. The obvious candidates were W & U, but there were little local difficulties. I also didn't fully realise this until 7am on Tuesday morning, and I had not procured Northumberland's phone-number. [After this letter was originally sent out, I realised that this would not fully solve the problem, since Berks had already played both Yorkshire and Warwick.]

The basic failing in management was not making it explicit that R10 and R11 might be varied, even to the point of teams changing venue. It is implicit in Rule 9, and also more clearly in 1.5 of my paper, but I should have drawn your attention to this at the Captains' meetings, rather than crossing my fingers and hoping it didn't happen. When an order of play is stipulated for R10 and R11, it was natural for you to assume that this would be adhered to, but I hope that I have explained that the nature of the draw for the Inter-Counties is very different from most tournaments - indeed "Draw" is a complete misnomer for something so assiduously contrived.

So for future years. I certainly now endorse my comments in 1.4 about adopting the Swiss format for R10 and R11. Indeed it might be worth extending it back to R9 or earlier if we admit more Counties. Scheme Four would probably entail Swissing from R7 onwards. However my thinking on the first sentence of 1.5 has changed after this year's experience. I would now propose that the teams sent to Compton on the last day are those occupying the lowest six positions after R8, provided these allow an order of play without replays. (R8 rather than R9 to avoid teams waiting around on Monday evening in order to learn where they're going the next day.) R10 and R11 would be completely unspecified on the pre-arranged order of play, and all teams should be prepared to play at either venue. I say all teams - many teams can be reasonably confident of where they will end up, the more so as the event progresses. I would

however exclude Surbiton from any sudden rescheduling, were we to use Surbiton. Thank you for your co-operation. Yours sincerely, Andrew Gregory

**Roehampton High Bisquers**  
26th - 27th May

report by Tony Fathers

A full house for this popular event; indeed -and sadly - oversubscribed.

Everybody played five 22 point games, 2.5 hour time limits, and full bisques to base 8. An astonishing number of matches (no fewer than five) were won by one point, which must say something in favour both for the automatic handicap system and for the tournament format! The winner was Michael Donelan, the only person to win all five games in his block, who beat Tim Dutton in an exciting final.

A feature of the tournament was the session devoted to "speed doubles", a mini competition for those not involved in the final or play off. Speed doubles requires a chess clock and on this occasion allowed 20 minutes for each side to play a 14 point game. It caused much shouting and hilarity, a pulled muscle for Quiller Barrett as he raced to get off the lawn, plus not a little earnest debate about the correct tactics for a form of the game which is great fun.

Much admiration was expressed for the lawns. These were considered good at any time, but a real triumph of the groundsman's skill given the cold dry spring following a cold dry winter.



**Surrey Championships**  
31st May - 2nd June

report by Richard Hilditch

This year's competition coincided with the start of the summer weather. As a consequence the lawns were in very good repair but a little slow and moist allowing the hoops fairly easy movement (thus TPs were fairly common). We had sunshine most of the time particularly on the faces of the enthusiastic players. 20 entries were received and the event was quite strong given that the test team were practising at Nottingham.

The first round saw a good win for Graham Gale over Colin Southern; Graham is just starting to exert himself at this level. Overall Colin was disappointed with his performance. Gale continued his efforts by disposing of giant-killer Terry Burge in the next round although it took 3 pegged-out games with a total net score of only 8 points. The other seeds proceeded through to their allotted places without substantial incident.

The quarter final between Stephen



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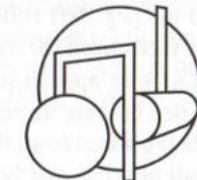
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Mulliner and David Harrison-Wood got off to a good start. David went to 3-back to prevent a TPO, although his cross peg leave was not optimal. Stephen duly hit, went to 4-back and started on a TP. He overstretched himself by making do with a pioneer for hoop 4 on the east boundary and David was let in. David finished with a quadruple (ending with a good straight triple). The second game was taken rather easily by Stephen. The third started as a carbon copy of the first with David stopping at 3-back and Stephen going to 4-back. This time David got in and started on another quadruple. Things looked good as he had the second peel taking a rush back to 3-back. At this point Stephen remarked to me that he was definitely getting another turn. He was right (in fact about 10 more turns), these stopping bisques really are something! David played several sub-standard strokes and was only able to get to Penult and peg with a poor leave. After some messing about Stephen finished with a TP +3.

The first semi-final saw Mulliner facing Ian Bond who had narrowly defeated great mate George Noble +2 in the third. Bond played well to win the first with a TP and then we saw another expert tactic from the test player, taking some evening leave. In the morning Ian was not in the game at all and Stephen got a couple of nice TP's.

The second match pitted the newcomer to the event, Mark Avery, against Jeff Dawson. In any other sport Jeff would have already locked up the trophy at home having won it 3 times in a row before Fulford turned up last year. He was close to being a god in this event with people like Mulliner falling before him year after year. I tried to warn Avery about this but he did not seem to take any notice. The first game started with a good 6th turn TPO from Jeff. Mark was careful and Jeff on 1-back and peg against Mark for hoop 2. Mark was on the east boundary level with hoop 4 (3-back) and Jeff had a rush to 1-back. He made 1-back and had a good rush to 2-back which he took but had to make 2-back from a little way away and ended up hitting the escape ball to near rover after making the hoop. What should he do now? There was lift due and both players knew that Mark was likely to hit a 15 yard lift and take any 3 ball break to the peg. Jeff rolled his partner a couple of yards from the east boundary and tried a stop shot approach to 3-back. When this failed he went three yards south of corner 2 (being wired from the corner). Mark hit the ball near the east boundary, played the big

roll to second and finished. In retrospect two other options were mooted, go to corner 1 after failing the approach to 3-back (a little bit like a sacrifice in chess, giving him a ball in baulk that is not much help!). Another option was simply roll the balls to B tice and corner 4 after making 2-back. What would you have done? The second game proved to be a shooting contest that Mark won thus knocking out Jeff.

The final did not have the atmosphere of the great Mulliner/Dawson battles of old, it only took 4 games, the temperature was only 60 degrees not 80 degrees and in the end Mulliner made the fewer mistakes.

George Noble emerged unconvincingly to take the Swiss title, he being the only player with just one defeat in the Swiss. When told that the trophy was still in New Zealand and would return next weekend he announced his intention to go to France in a huff for that weekend (the French and the New Zealanders get on about as well as the Greeks and the Turks following the Rainbow Warrior incident).

### Northampton Handicap Weekend May 31st - 2nd June

report by Owen Bryce

The event attracted entrants from as far afield as the Medway area of Kent, Bottisham in Cambridgeshire, and Nottingham. The format was a combination of American blocks with play-offs and a consolation event played to Egyptian tournament rules. These were fully explained to your reviewer by the event manager, but not, it must be confessed, thoroughly understood.

One block ended with a tie between three people, finally decided on a hoop count. The Egyptian games left three players within three points of each other, but was finally won by John Leader.

The standard of play was excellent and several players triggered their handicaps, notably Peter Stansfield, Roger Ivill of Bottisham who played to an exciting finish with Peter finally winning. Third was John Hansen of Sapcote.

The manager of the event was Norman Hicks who had had the difficult task of organising the three day's play and accommodation for some of the visitors. This he did superbly: superb too was the organisation of the meals, some members of the Northampton Club being on hand throughout the tournament.



### European Championship Qualifying Round Compton 1st - 2nd June

results by Dennis Shaw

Final Positions:

Paul Day 4/6  
Chris Williams 4/6  
Tom Browne 4/6  
Shaun Carter 3/6

### Budleigh Salterton Handicap Weekend 1st - 2nd June

report by Eileen Magee

I always enjoy the journey from our farmhouse B&B to Budleigh croquet club, and this weekend the hedgerows were still crowded with late bluebells, hedge parsley and pink campion. On arrival, the congenial manager, Stuart Orr, had provided every possible form of information in a high quality display. It was a select gathering of 16 players, playing in a Hands Egyptian format using the Bray system to avoid time limits. However one or two games went on a bit and the manager had the cunning ruse of asking you politely to go to lunch at one and finish your game at two. Where do one's priorities lie? Dorothy and her team certainly provided very enjoyable lunches, what a shame to rush them. There were many close tense finishes, rover and peg doing good business in many games, but it was the relaxed David Purdon who purred to victory by tea on the second day. Then having had a lovely time we all went back home. I wonder what will be in the hedgerows when I come back in August?



### Tyneside Handicap Weekend 1st - 2nd June

report by Derek Trotman

A relatively new addition to the fixtures calendar, this tournament is proving to be popular with players and a maximum entry of 16 turned out on a sunny Saturday morning. The split sites offered no problems, with those who played at Cochrane Park on the Saturday playing at Exhibition Park on the Sunday, and vice versa. Meals were supplied at both sites by the expert hands of Gail Curry.

The playing format consisted of four blocks of four giving everyone three matches on the Saturday and play-offs on Sunday. The semi-finals of Blocks A/B were contested between Julian Tonks and Don Wright, Julian winning +3, and Tony Foster and Tony Garner, Tony Foster winning +19. In the final Tony Foster beat Julian Tonks +13 to take one of the winners' trophies. Meanwhile in blocks C/D the semifinalists were Brian Kennedy playing Derek Robinson, Brian winning +14, and Nigel Stanbridge playing Alan Burn, Nigel winning +13. The final between Brian and Nigel was closely contested, but finally Brian won +8 to take his second trophy in this event in as many years.

Tyneside tournaments may not be the most competitive events in the calendar, but we are a very sociable bunch who try to ensure all our visitors enjoy their visit and their croquet. If you want to give this claim a test, come and visit us next year, we're sure you won't be disappointed.

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### Cobblers at Edgbaston: Edgbaston Open 8th - 9th June

report by Andrew Gregory

Duo from Northampton Brian Hallam and Lionel Tibble dominated the Edgbaston Trophy. Clearly a class above anyone else, their play was at the level of the Chairman's. Against Gregory, Tibble was hampered after his first hoop of the match, and his second error was failing the straight rover peel in what would have been his third consecutive triple.

The first game of the final saw Tibble peg out Hallam, but Hallam hit a crucial almost-wired shot. 2-0 down at lunch, Tibble was encouraged by some errors from Hallam and quickly levelled the match.

The fifth game started with Hallam going to four-back. There was a brief period of scrappy play, with both players obviously tense. Hallam then got going on a standard triple, but blobbed 2-back with 2 peels done. Tibble picked up a break, but was hampered after 2-back. Hallam took his backward ball round to the peg, and made a reasonable leave. Tibble hit his last shot, picked up a break with his backward ball, and decided to peg out Hallam.

Hallam's clip was on rover, Tibble's backward ball was on three-back. Tibble made a 5-yard join on the East boundary, carelessly leaving one ball a few inches off the yard-line. Hallam shot at the double but missed into fourth corner. Tibble hit, took off to Hallam's ball and played a stop approach. He made the hoop, hit partner on the boundary, and one good aggressive split shot and it was all over.

This is Tibble's first victory in an Open tournament, though he did win the Selectors' Weekend last year. Other firsts include:

- First best-of-5 at Edgbaston
- First semi-final for David Coates
- First scratch handicap for Chris Bennett

David Coates also achieved his first Swiss victory as in the final of the consolation event he beat Magee in an exciting finish. Pegging out from three yards, Coates missed with his forward ball but his backward ball rolled on to the peg. What should have been +12 almost turned into -1 as Magee made careful progress, but Coates finally hit the stick with Magee on rover and peg.

### Sidmouth 5 Day Handicap 10th ~ 14th June

report by Roy Edwards

As a southerner domiciled in Cheshire summer tournaments always appeal so this year, having noticed that Jaques balls were to be used, a visit to Sidmouth was added to my schedule in spite of it being an all handicap event. Sidmouth Croquet Club has four good lawns by the cricket ground overlooking the sea, a beautiful setting on a fine summer's day, and lawn one, recently relaid is very flat. The club has a fine history and was the club of Humphrey Hicks, whose trophies, medals and mallets are on display. It went into decline after the 39-45 war but is now thriving and this tournament was well over-subscribed. It's an easy routine with just two matches a day with the 24 players divided into three groups of eight according to handicap. There is plenty of time to take in the small seaside town, watch the cricket or avoid seagulls. Monday dawned damp and drizzly but quickly improved. Tuesday was simply horrible with gales blowing drizzle and rain all day but all the scheduled matches were completed. The handicaps were working out pretty well with everyone winning and losing matches but Brian Smith was edging out in front of the low handicap section with some very steady play. A nasty rumour spread that he had been practising on the lawns every day for weeks. High summer arrived on Wednesday and not another cloud was seen all week. Croquet became an absolute delight in such a setting.

Brian Smith continued in good form and won the David Rawkins cup with 5 wins out of 7, beating Don Waterhouse on superior points difference. Visitors from the Jersey club, John and Ursula Taylor, made a successful raid on the homeland, winning the Fortfield and Dwerryhouse cups, again with 5 wins out of 7.

A very pleasant relaxed schedule was enjoyed by all, although perhaps not quite so relaxed for the manager Iris Dwerryhouse, who had to spend some midnight oil to ensure the smooth well-run event. Owing to an indiscretion of the tongue made to the editor I am forced to admit to trying to run rover twice with the wrong ball during one game, an occurrence only too frequent in my game, which she threatened to report if I failed to do so.

**The Editorial Zone**

Here finally is the second issue of the Tournament Review. I say this because it contains in excess of 16,000 words and I have had to retype most of them. It would appear that some reporters have heeded the wishes of the membership in not being too extravagant with their accounts of tournaments, while others have not. (Well done to the former and hard lines to the latter, as the editorial pencil has been exercised.) Unfortunately, it would appear that some reporters are still unable to record the date, venue, or indeed their own names on their works. Alas, you are not being led by example as even the Chairman of the Editorial Committee was guilty in this department. For the last time I searched through the fixtures book and telephoned managers to glean the missing information. In future I will not do so and any reports with such information missing will be exiled to the unpublished pile for good.

One slight change from the first edition of the Tournament Review is that you should be able to detach this edition from the Croquet Gazette, without either publication falling apart. It is probably too early to tell whether or not having the majority of reports published separately is a good move or not. I will be led on this matter purely by readers views, so if you have a view on this please make it known.

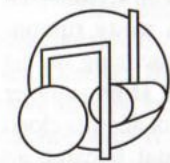
The next issue of the Tournament Review is scheduled for September, together with the intention to include colour photographs in the centre pages of the same issue of the Gazette. There are still plenty of vacancies in the photograph department and, it would be appreciated if tournament reports could be forwarded as quickly as possible to allow a realistic amount of time to prepare both publications so that they reach you on time.

Finally a thanks to Liz Taylor-Webb who kindly provided the sketches within this issue. If anyone else would like to provide some sketches for use in future issues they would be most welcome, and of course returned to the owner after use.



**Contents (in order of appearance)**

- Surbiton Frostbite
- Surbiton Winter One Balls
- Cheltenham Easter Handicap
- Southwick Salver
- Cheltenham B Level
- Newport Open
- Southport & Birkdale Open
- Northampton Opening Season Tournaments
- Pendle Easter Tournament
- Hunstanton Robert Prichard Weekend
- Hurlingham May Weekend
- Bowdon Handicap
- Compton Spring Weekend
- Southwick Handicap
- Budleigh Salterton May Week
- Bristol Advanced Weekend
- Ramsgate Handicap
- Nailsea Handicap
- Jersey v Ireland
- Southport & Birkdale Handicap
- Pendle Spring Handicap
- Colchester Spring Weekend
- Cheltenham Handicap Weekend
- Plymouth Handicap Weekend
- Inter-Counties Championship
- Roehampton High Bisquers
- Surrey Championships
- Nothampton Handicap Weekend
- European Qualifiers
- Budleigh Salterton Handicap Weekend
- Tynesdie Handicap Weekend
- Edgbaston Open Weekend
- Sidmouth 5 Day Handicap



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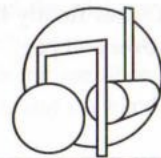
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	1995	1994		1995	1994		1995	1994
<b>INCOME</b>								
Subscriptions	23,331	22,829		4,700	7,700		29,103	28,247
Registration Fees	15,437	12,799		3,500	1,000		140,613	100,588
Levy	9,067	9,612		6,193	3,648		24,643	26,082
Sale of books, equipment etc (net)	4,345	6,219		8,147	6,714		£115,970	£74,506
Advertisements	3,595	2,507		16,264	19,323			
Surplus on tournaments	4,136	2,934		232	45			
Coaching (net)	1,990	1,655						
Investment income on general funds (net of tax)	2,127	2,588						
Royalties (net of tax)	511	61,143						
	64,539	18,237						
<b>EXPENSES</b>								
Publications (Croquet, Fixtures Book & Directory)	15,813	42,906		38,629	29,316			
<b>GENERAL OVERHEADS</b>								
Office rent	2,671	2,544		53,934	38,629			
Staff salaries & national insurance contributions	23,338	19,805		1,360	1,500			
Council & committee travelling expenses	1,990	1,690		12,367	8,061			
Postage & telephone	2,749	2,367		22,689	19,933			
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Insurance	903	871		4,800	2,800			
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Accountancy charges	1,950	1,985						
Computer services & equipment	3,992	3,381						
Maintenance of office, furniture & equipment	752	499						
Bad debt provision		3,075						
	61,050	28,000						
	(1,875)	(3,877)						
	59,175	24,123						
<b>GRANTS, SPONSORSHIP &amp; RELATED EXPENDITURE</b>								
Income:								
Sports Council grant	31,050	28,000		195	1994			
Sponsorship (net)	(1,875)	(3,877)		100,459	60,191			
				101				
				£100,560	£60,191			
<b>EXPENSES:</b>								
Development officer's fees & expenses	19,523	18,300						
Grants to clubs & federations	1,350	725						
General publicity & development (net)	3,389	4,219						
World croquet championship (net)		104						
International	5,448	3,671						
	27,019	27,019						
Surplus for the year before exceptional items	6,956	810						
Release of provision for video production & equipment	5,422	-						
Taxation and interest adjustment	2,927	8,503						
	£15,305	£9,313						
<b>Surplus for the year after exceptional items</b>								

# Men's & Women's Championships Cheltenham 13th ~ 19th May

report by David Goacher

*Third time lucky for Goacher but no-one can uproot Daisy.*

The opening of the singles championships was greeted by an extremely "lazy" east wind as they say in these parts (lazy as it would rather go through 'ee than round 'ee!). So it was particularly surprising to see Tony Le Moignan arrive in an open-top sports car and shades to do battle with David Goacher. Maybe it was the cold or his rush to arrive on time that caused him to stick in hoop 3 from about a foot but the initiative was given to Goacher who duly completed a delayed triple peel. Having lost the second game to some poor shooting he was trying another triple in the third when he broke down at 1-back and was subsequently pegged out. Le Moignan's 3 ball tactics proved adequate until, having failed to get in front of penult, he laid up with a wide join on the south boundary with Goacher for 2-back. Goacher hit and finished from this but realised what a lucky escape he had received.

Readers will not be surprised to learn the author was playing for eleven hours a day for all four days and consequently he had very little idea what was going on in other games!! Suffice to mention that an improving Lionel Tibble had a good win over Phil Cordingley in the second round whilst the highlight of the quarter finals was David Magee v Ian Burrige. In the first game Magee completed his first ever TPO and although Burrige hit in a couple of times, he failed to make much progress - on one occasion missing a five-yard roquet after hoop 2 with a three-ball break set. The third game was scrappy and at the end Magee's break from 4-back to peg should have been sufficient but his take off from rover to his own ball at penult was woeful and he missed a long peg-out by a fraction giving Burrige on 2-back and rover the chance to finish in the next turn. He failed to do so but then finished in the following turn with an excellent cut rush and roll to rover, to the amusement of his opponent who had retired to the side boundary not expecting Ian to finish.

The following morning Burrige met Goacher in a best of five semi-final. Goacher went 2 - 0 up without having to play very well as Burrige's control was poor and he gave the innings away several times by sticking in hoops. However Burrige did win the third game with improved play, and in the fourth decided to peg out his opponent whose backward ball was for penult whilst his own was still on hoop one. He made very slow progress by constantly wiring his balls and then taking a lot of time getting the

perfect rush to first four, then five and finally 1-back where he rearranged the rush at least 15 times so as to prepare for peeling his own ball through. All this effort proved to be in vain, as the peel failed and a lack of concentration saw him roll one ball off the lawn giving Goacher only a ten yard lift shot which he hit. However he still had a twitchy-five yard take off to get inside the ball on the boundary which he just about did and a cut rush and an excellent roll to rover saw the demise of the second seed.

Meanwhile in the other semi-final, Steve Comish was comprehensively destroying Chris Clarke with far better shooting. He completed two solid TP's and took advantage of a missed cut rush by Clarke at 2 after he had completed a TPO. His confident play spilled over into the final and he was 2 - 0 up by lunch time, coping well with a strong wind which was conversely

creating havoc with Goacher's normally good hoop running. However after lunch Comish's play started to falter - maybe he was starting to think he was getting close to the big prize at stake instead of concentrating on each shot as it came. He also had a bit of bad luck when he snookered himself in trying an angled penult peel going to 4-back in the fourth game and Goacher took full advantage by completing a delayed triple peel himself. The final game was a nervy affair with mistakes on both sides. Comish's normally excellent shooting and rushing seemed to have deserted him. Goacher's shooting had been improving however and his determination not to lose a third Men's final resulted in him taking his second ball from hoop four to the peg on a very difficult break albeit from a roquet which was intended to be a wide join but which hilled considerably. His leave caused great amusement amongst the twelve spectators who had stayed to the bitter end of 9pm. He failed to get cross pegging in trying a diagonal spread and because there was no thigh-slapping or at very least a shake of the head everyone thought that he had made it. There was uproar when Comish strode on confidently to hit the short shot. Shortly after however, Comish missed a seven yard shot into corner two and Goacher laid up for a finish. Comish's shot missed and Goacher's easy last break from 3-back to peg was probably the quickest he's ever made in the excitement of it all - indeed Ray Ransom told him afterwards that he should slow down!

Meanwhile in the Women's Championship, a special mention must go to Pauline Healy who with accurate shooting and confident long hoop running beat both Rosemary Gugan and then Frances Ransom in a tense semi-final. In the third game of this match Frances pegged out Pauline while still for hoop 2 against 3-back. Near the end, after Pauline had taken good position at penult, Frances's rush to rover fell short by three yards and her take off to Pauline's ball ended up five yards from it. She missed and ended up four yards out of corner one on the south boundary. Pauline ran penult but missed the ball at rover, ending up at the end of A baulk. Frances missed her partner ball on the boundary, then Pauline hit the shot along the boundary and finished.

Pauline also put up a good performance in the final against Daisy Root (aka Gail Curry). Apparently however she seemed to be tiring by the end of the second game and maybe it would



The Mixed Doubles Finalists (L to R) Pauline Healy, David Goacher, Rosemary Gugan and Andrew Gregory.

have been fairer to have played the third game on the Sunday as there were no time limits. This fact was demonstrated when in the third game she missed a three foot roquet after 2-back when on a simple 4-ball break to the peg. Gail hit the lift and went to the peg and finished in the next turn.

It seems sad that there were only five women competitors - one lower even than last year. I feel that more could be done by the tournament committee to encourage more to play.

Briefly, the Mixed Doubles was won by David Goacher and Rosemary Gugan. They were pushed hard in their first game by Gaunt and Whittall and let off when Gaunt missed a rush after running rover going into baulk. In the second round Ray Ransom had only to take a 4-ball break to the peg to win but his hoop running let him down once again. In the finals Pauline Healy was not able to carry her partner Andrew Gregory as she had done in the previous rounds and so Goacher and Gugan were able to win both sides fairly comfortably in the end. The performance of the mixed doubles should go to Kismet Whittall who in the final of the Y found

herself on her own for hoop two (after Don Gaunt's failed TPO) whilst her opponent was already for 3-back. She managed to win from this position with a series of good roquets. This part of the tournament seemed very quiet this year without the abuse of Ian Maugham, apparently under the thumb, and the wit and repartee of John Haslam and Paul Smith. However it was pleasing to welcome back John Solomon to his first major championship for 20 years, although unfortunately he was not able to reproduce his 3 ball triple from a couple of weeks previously. I hope he enjoyed himself and his results will not deter him from entering others soon.

Finally, mention must be made of what seems to me our only up and coming star, Pete Trimmer, who beat Don Gaunt in the final of the Du Pre.

**Results**

Mens Championship:  
First round: David Magee bt Roger Jenkins +11 -5 +23; Roger Tribe bt John Solomon +4 +25; Brian Hallam w/o; David Harrison-Wood bt David Kibble +4 +11; Paul Day bt Pete Trimmer +14 +12; David Goacher bt Tony le Moignan +24TP -26 +4; Steve

Comish bt Chris Williams +15 +25tp; Don Gaunt bt Chris Patmore +9 -10 +17; Alex Leggate bt Raymond Ransom +8 +1; Phil Cordingley bt Andrew Gregory -24tp +26tp +13. Second round: Ian Burrige bt Paul Smith +24 +17; Magee bt Tribe -3 +9 +6; Hallam bt Harrison-Wood +9 -8 +9; Goacher bt Day -15tp +22 +22; Comish bt Gaunt +14tp +14; Edward Duckworth bt Leggate +8 +17; Lionel Tibble bt Cordingley +4 +16; Chris Clarke bt Mike Hammelev +19tp +24tp. Quarter-finals: Burrige bt Magee -11tpo +25 +1; Goacher bt Hallam +24 +20; Comish bt Duckworth +22 +23tp; Clarke bt Tibble +13tp +26tp. Semi-finals: Goacher bt Burrige +19 +17 -15 +7; Comish bt Clarke +26tp +13tp +17tp. Final: Goacher bt Comish -14 -25tp +17 +7tp +17.

Women's Championship:  
Quarter-final: Pauline Healy bt Rosemary Gugan -23 +8 +18. Semi-finals: Healy bt Frances Ransom +21 -13 +3; Daisy Root bt Liz Taylor-Webb +23 +26. Final: Root bt Healy +13 -4 +9.

Mixed Doubles Championship:  
(Draw) First round: Trimmer & Mrs Harris bt Magee & Mrs Magee +13; Gregory & Mrs Healy bt Ransom & Mrs Ransom +1(T). Quarter-finals: Harrison-Wood & Mrs Widdows bt Solomon & Ms Root +5(T); Gregory & Mrs Healy bt Trimmer & Mrs Harris +17; Patmore & Mrs Whitaker bt Stephen Badger & Mrs Hall +2(T); Goacher & Mrs Gugan bt Gaunt & Mrs Whittall +5. Semi-Finals: Gregory & Healy bt H-Wood & Widdows +5; Goacher & Gugan bt Patmore & Whitaker +24. Final: Goacher & Gugan bt Gregory & Healy +16.

(Process) First round: Gugan & Goacher bt H-Wood & Widdows +8(T); Solomon & Root bt Gaunt & Whittall +14. Quarter-finals: Goacher & Gugan bt Ransom & Ransom +2(T); Trimmer & Harris bt Patmore & Whitaker +19; Gregory & Healy bt Solomon & Root +6(T); Badger & Hall bt Magee & Magee +24. Semi-finals: Goacher & Gugan bt Trimmer & Harris +16; Gregory & Healy bt Badger & Hall +8. Final: Goacher & Gugan bt Gregory & Healy +10.

Du Pre:  
Quarter-finals: Lionel Tibble bt Rosemary Gugan +24TP; Roger Tribe bt Chris Williams +16. Semi-finals: Pete Trimmer bt Tibble +5; Don Gaunt beat Tribe +16. Final: Trimmer bt Gaunt +5.

1912. Capt. J. Kirk	1927. Mrs. A. Armstrong	1949.
1915. Col. J. M. Carruthers	1928. Mrs. N. M. Fidler	1950.
1914. Mr. A. Slater	1929. Miss. E. K. Brewer	1951.
1915. L. R. Peel	1950. Mrs. R. P. Entwistle	1952.
1916. L. R. Peel	1951. Mrs. F. G. Entwistle	1953.
1917. L. R. Peel	1952. Mrs. J. L. Goodwin	1954.
1918. Mr. L. R. Peel	1953. Mrs. M. M. Priddy	1955.
1919. Mrs. A. Crawford	1954. Mrs. G. J. Goson	1956.
1920. C. Tibble	Ransom Gordon	1957.
1921. Sgt. Fisher	Col. J. H. Mervin	1958.
		1959.
		1960.



Third time lucky. David Goacher finally gets his hands on the Men's Championship trophies at approx 9.00pm after a long and hard fought final against Steve Comish.



'Daisy Root', winner of the Women's championship, accepts the trophies from President of the CA John Solomon.

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# Ask the Experts

The column where members of the Laws Committee give their explanations on your queries on the laws - this issue supplied by Bill Lamb.

During a South of England Championship doubles match, my opponent trickled his white ball back to join partner at hoop 3. He left himself a perfect, 2 foot rush to my ball in corner 2, except that white was a little less than a foot from the upright, with all three balls and the hoop exactly along the same straight line. As one does, I tested the possibilities white had in hitting pink by inserting my mallet between the hoop and ball and finding that I had only an inch or so clearance. I concluded that my opponent might hit but there was no way that he could rush to green.

Later it occurred to me that an opponent with a particularly short mallet head might have had a better chance of a rush, whilst one with a long mallet head would not even get a vestige of a swing. Out of curiosity I enquired of a number of referees if I could have borrowed my opponent's mallet to test the swing? All seemed agreed that I could not, but for a variety of reasons ranging from breach of etiquette to use of an outside agency! I then fell to wondering if I could measure my mallet against that of my opponent either overtly or surreptitiously, but the general opinion seemed to be that I could/should not. Am I therefore reduced to assessing the situation by distant and visual inspection of my opponent's mallet? - and if so how distant!? Could I please have a definitive opinion please? Roger Wood

The simple reason why Roger or any other player may not elicit information about the size of his opponent's mallet head is because he is not entitled to under the Laws. It is nothing really to do with breach of etiquette or outside agencies or anything else. The only questions you are entitled to ask your opponent (in the sense that he must give you an honest answer) are those concerning the state of the game (Law 44). The length of his mallet or whether he is wearing a vest, etc. has nothing whatsoever to do with the state of the game. There is nothing in the Laws to stop you asking but equally there is nothing to compel your opponent to reply. There was an incident in a MacRobertson Shield match in 1986, I think, when a GB player was approached by his opponent to find out the size of his mallet head: the GB player quickly put the mallet head in his sports bag and zipped it up! Of course, you may have gained an impression of the size of your opponent's mallet head during the course of the game and what you do with that information is up to you, but remember he may start his turn with any legal mallet. I am sure you will continue to play the game within the spirit of the Laws.

Can you help me? My opponent keeps joining up on the yard line, less than a ball's width apart but not in contact. When I try to shoot at them, I always seem to miss by a fraction. I do not mind this too much because when I replace my ball on the yard line, I am allowed to put it in contact with either ball.\*

Imagine my dismay when again I shot and missed, but this time one of the two balls was a corner ball. Even though I missed on the side of the non-corner ball, I was obliged to replace my ball in contact with the corner ball. This seems a grave restriction on my freedom. Can the laws committee help or will I simply have to improve my aim?

\*(Provided that a yard in from the point where my ball first crossed the boundary is less than a ball's width from the centre of either of the two balls).

Colin Dinwoodie

The answer to Colin's query lies in the framing of the laws to avoid impossibly difficult decisions and to keep the laws as concise as possible. When a ball cannot be replaced on the yard line nearest the point at which it left the court or came to rest in the yard line area because of the presence of one or more yard line balls, a dispute could arise about its replacement under Law 12 (a) (1 or 2). This is avoided by giving the striker the option to replace the ball in contact with any of the other balls directly interfering with the replacement under Law 12(b). When one of the interfering balls is a corner ball, the two cases of the ball to be replaced going off either in the corner or off a boundary are covered concisely by directing that the ball is replaced in contact with the corner ball on its unoccupied side. The dispensation of Law 12(b) for the general case is removed for the specific case. If this leads to a "grave restriction of Colin's freedom" under Scottish law, may I suggest he occupies his time whilst detained by studying pp21-23 of a well known book on croquet to improve his aim.

George Collin's query about a misplaced clip in his tournament report in Vol. 1, No. 1 of the Tournament Review (a player ran a hoop in the wrong direction and in the same stroke roqueted a ball he was entitled to roquet; he then removed the clip) is answered by Law 35(c). This states "If any player sees a misplaced clip he must immediately call attention to it and it must then be properly placed. It is the duty of both players to ensure that the clips are properly placed during the game." Clearly, if a clip is in someone's hand or pocket or attached to his clothing when it should be on a hoop, it is not properly placed. This is further amplified by Law 45 "...the adversary must immediately draw attention to any error he observes,....., notwithstanding that it may be to his disadvantage. ...." Law 45 later draws attention to Law 35(c).

Finally, James Malcolm is incorrect in his letter in issue 240 p 8 when he states there is nothing in the Laws to deal with slow players. Law 48, Expedition in Play, is quite specific: "The striker must position the balls and play his strokes with reasonable dispatch. In time-limited games the adversary should anticipate as far as possible with which ball he will play so that he may waste no time approaching it at the start of his turn. In handicap play, the striker must indicate at the earliest opportunity whether or not he intends to play a half-bisque or bisque. In doubles play, time must not be wasted in prolonged discussion." Regulation 5(j) gives a referee the power to penalise any player for breaches of the Laws or as a last resort to disqualify him.

I can recall two instances, both of which occurred during the Northern Championships. In the first, a notoriously slow player was ordered in ringing tones by the manager from a distance of thirty odd yards to "stop prating about and get on with it!" In the second, an experienced referee asked for a referee to be put in charge of his game because of the opponent's slow play. I was so appointed and explained the position to the opponent. The effect was dramatic: he scuttled around the court like a demented crab. Alas, the other referee and I were so amused and distracted that we failed to realise until too late that he had taken a lift when not entitled to do so! Referees and Managers should not be afraid to deal with intolerably slow players. Of course, in club games it is more difficult, but experienced players should always be prepared to take to one side the culprits in their own clubs and explain the requirements of the Laws to them

Bill Lamb

## Past versus Present G.B. 1996 v G.B. 1982

report by Chris Clarke

A match was held at Bristol on 21st April between the 1996 and 1982 G.B. MacRobertson Shield teams. All 12 players had enjoyed a meal together the previous evening at which several wines were served, each one being from a vintage in which we had won the MacRobertson - '93, '90, '82, '74, '69 and '63.

Three best-of-three doubles matches were played to give some doubles practice to the current team. The match itself was well supported with over 30 people coming to watch this unique event. The general comment of the spectators as they arrived during the first hour was 'why are all the 1982 team on the lawn?!', the answer was that they were fired up to beat us.

Mulliner & Prichard had sprinted away from Clarke and Fulford, but an error from Stephen allowed Chris to double peel him out and Robert soon won the pegged out ending. The second went to Clarke & Fulford more comfortably.

Comish & Maugham had also recovered to take the first game off Hope & Murray, but were soon 23 points down in the second. It looked as if David was going to triple out to win by 3, but he failed at 4-back off Martin's rover ball, leaving a ball at penult and the other at rover. Martin took off to the ball at penult and finished cross-wired to the amusement of the on-lookers. However the error did not cost the match as David uncharacteristically missed a 6 yarder and

Martin finished. This seemed to fire the Open Doubles Champions into life and a Comish T.P. soon clinched the third and the match.

The third match between Burridge & Cornelius and Openshaw & Wylie was progressing at a more sedate pace. In the first, Keith had opted for a leave instead of a possible finish which allowed Debbie to hit her extra shot to take the first game in over 3 hours. The second became bogged down largely due to Keith continually hitting in, but being unable to hold a break together. After chances on both sides, David and Keith won the second to level the match. As it was

now 4.30, a draw was agreed, allowing the '96 team to remain unbeaten and the '82 team to avoid a whitewash.

The match was very helpful and the '82 team are to be congratulated on not only being prepared to play, but also ensuring that all three matches were competitive. Thanks also to the Bristol club for the use of their lawns and an excellent lunch. We hope that the spectators enjoyed the play and look forward to seeing as many croquet players as possible during the Test matches later this year - remember it will be 2010 before another MacRobertson Shield is held in Britain.



Team of '96 back row L to R: Chris Clarke, Steve Comish, David Maugham, Ian Burridge, Robert Fulford, Debbie Cornelius. Team of '86 front row L to R: William Prichard, Martin Murray, Steven Mulliner, Andrew Hope, Keith Wylie.

### Eastern Championship Hunstanton 26-28 April

Report by Chris Clarke

The Eastern Championship moved away from Colchester for the first time since it was inaugurated in 1988. Hunstanton was the new venue and provided excellent facilities for the Championship. It was therefore somewhat unfortunate that so few people entered, probably caused by the short notice of change and the fact that the Robert Prichard was the following weekend. Hopefully both these problems will be resolved next year.

The best match of the event was between Lewis Palmer and Robert Fulford. Robert looked set to win the first game 26TP, but an error at rover allowed Lewis to go to 4-back. Robert missed the lift, but Lewis was unable to make any peels of his triple before 4-back. This, however, did not seem to concern Lewis as he took the first

game +2STP. Robert responded to take the next two games 26TP, 26TP and move into the semi-final.

Don Gaunt beat Brian Hallam and took a game off Chris Clarke in the quarter. Mark Avery looked uncomfortable as he went down 2-0 to Paul Day and Debbie Cornelius reached the semi-final without causing concern. Meanwhile, Brian Hallam had reeled off 3 consecutive TPs in the Plate to give renewed hope to those players who had picked him for their fantasy teams. The opening of his game with Paul Day was interesting. Brian played the wrong ball third turn and placed the incorrect ball in third corner, telling Paul to change them over when he went up there. Paul heard Brian, but forgot and played the wrong ball anyway! The semi-finals were completely different matches. Fulford beat Day 3-0, his only error being sticking in a hoop which was later found to be too tight.

Clarke v Cornelius on the other hand was far from perfect and went to the fifth

game which Chris won despite making two errors to Debbie's none.

The final was as one-sided as the semi-finals suggested it would be with Robert maintaining his excellent form to complete another straight games win. The Plate was won by Lewis Palmer who played well throughout the event. Thanks to the Hunstanton club for the use of their lawns and providing the refreshments. It was my first visit to the club and it certainly won't be the last.

#### Results:

**First Round:** Don Gaunt bt Brian Hallam -10 +15 +25; Debbie Cornelius bt Andrew Gregory +22 +16tp; Mark Avery bt Richard Hilditch +25 +26tp. **Quarter-Finals:** Chris Clarke bt Don Gaunt +9 -23 +25tp; Debbie Cornelius bt David Harrison-Wood +22 +16tp; Paul Day bt Mark Avery +19 +17; Robert Fulford bt Lewis Palmer -2stp +26tp +26tp. **Semi-finals:** Clarke bt Cornelius -14 +10tpo +4tp -15 +17; Fulford bt Day +26tp +26tp +23. **Final:** Fulford bt Clarke +26tp +26tp +16tp.

# Winning, Not Losing

Part one of an article by Colin Irwin on how to cut down on errors in your play and win more games.

Over the years there have been many articles in this publication offering advice on practising, playing breaks, using bisques and so on. It is all about improving your stroke play and consistency and using your bisques to construct breaks, thus playing better than your opponent and winning. This is great, I have no argument with it. In the longer term this is the only way you will improve your game. There is no substitute for practice if you want to be a better player. But this is a longer term strategy and there are a lot of players I have seen out there who could win more games immediately if they thought a bit more about not throwing the game away.


So what does that mean? Simply this. How many games have you won because you dug out the break with a couple of brilliant shots, went round, made a solid leave and finished in the next turn when the shot was missed? How many have you lost because your opponent did it? Not many I suspect. On the other hand, how often have you seen a player make a lot of hoops after the opponent dug the balls out, only to put down the break and leave an easy innings? Mostly games are won and lost on errors, and if you make less errors than your opponent you will win.

Which leads me back to practising. Practising to get better is good, everyone should do it. But more important, your practice should tell you what you can do and what you can't do, and improve the consistency of the things you can do. If anything this aspect is more important than learning new shots. As a personal example, I have never been able to do controlled pass rolls, at least not without faulting. I have given up trying to learn how, I just accept they are a low percentage shot for me to try so I modify the way I play to do without them. Now, imagine a player who can only approach hoops with take-offs or little drives, who can't do split and stop shot approaches, so never gets control at hoops. Also this player can only play one longer croquet shot, a fairly straight full roll, no further than 9 or 10 yards. No big splits, long drives, stop shots, half rolls etc, only this straightish short roll. He is a passable rusher, he can take a dolly rush and hit it fairly accurately up to 10 yards or so. But all in all he is pretty awful. What can he do to make a break? A normal 4-ball break won't work, he can't play drives or half rolls to lay up the pioneers whilst going to the pivot. He can't get forward rushes or do big rolls or splits so he can't play a 3-ball break. But he can roll 10 yards and he can rush 10 yards, so what if he has two pivots? He makes a hoop, roquets the escape ball gently, rolls to the middle, uses one of the two waiting pivots to get a dolly rush on the other, and leaving two pivots behind, rushes to the next hoop, makes it from a take-off or whatever (he doesn't need a rush remember), taps in, rolls back to the middle and so on. All he needs for this break are short rolls, rushes and simple drive or take-off hoop approaches, no real hoop control is needed. Obviously this is an extreme example, but it illustrates two points, (i) it is usually possible to devise a strategy for playing breaks that suits your abilities and (ii) with two balls close together and a half decent rush you can recover from most things, so for example, if you put up a bad pioneer, if possible give it a friend. Indeed, if the croquet shot needed to put up a good pioneer is difficult, deliberately having two short pioneers but retaining control of the striker's ball may be the safest way to keep the break going. You have to balance the chance of messing up the difficult shot that gives a good pioneer against the chance of messing up the dolly rush to the hoop from the two short pioneers.

So, for example, after making four you had a longish return roquet which you had to strike firmly and now you are taking croquet near to the pioneer

for five. The pivot is a yard or two beyond the peg. Is it better to try the three quarter roll putting a pioneer to six, going to the pivot and taking off back to five, or to just stop shot the croqueted ball down somewhere towards the pivot, concentrating on control at five, and accepting that you will have to make a dolly rush to six from three or four yards? Are you sure you won't put the pioneer beyond six on the roll, or that your ball won't hit the peg or be wired by it? If the pioneer is short will it be much better than where the pivot is now? Will your line for the take off back to five be unobstructed? And so on. Remember with control at five you can leave a controlled backward or sideways rush after the hoop to leave room for the drive putting a good pioneer to 1-back. Without control at five you may have to leave a short 1-back pioneer which will be a lot harder to sort out than a short six pioneer where everything is in front of the hoop. I would choose control at five.

Another example. You have made five and are taking croquet, but the pivot is rather close and the pioneer for six is behind the hoop. Why try for a 1-back pioneer now? Play the croqueted ball to somewhere a few yards south west of six, but concentrating on a rush on the pivot to beyond the pioneer at six, almost anywhere beyond will do. Now you can get solid control at six, probably with a reasonable pioneer at 1-back, but at worst with this pioneer half way between the deep pivot you just played and 1-back, easy to send a pioneer to 2-back after six going past the pivot, so that hitting the pivot moves it closer to the loose pioneer for a dolly rush to 1-back (a couple of feet north and west of it is perfect to give a little drive to the middle and the dolly rush to 1-back). These are the things you have to constantly think about, eliminating the small errors. Small errors are cumulative, and if you really analyse the course of events leading to the situation where a big shot is needed to prevent loss of the break or innings you will find that the position is usually the sum of a number of small, avoidable careless errors.



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## Extracts from the unconfirmed minutes of the council Meeting on 21st October 1995

There were present WE Lamb (Chairman) and 23 members of Council with Ms Gail Curry (Editor of the Croquet Gazette), C Hudson (National Development Officer) and LWD Antenen (Secretary CA) in attendance.

The postal ballot of Associates had re-elected Messrs Badger, Clarke, Shaw and Trotman and elected Messrs WH Arliss and AK Gregory to Council. Council also welcomed the first three Federation Representatives, viz. DJ Magee (S. West) WJ Sidebottom (W. Midlands) and RJ Smith (Southern).

1. SN Mulliner was co-opted for one year to fill the casual vacancy arising from the resignation, subsequent to the recent elections, of WP Gillott.

2. WE Lamb and ST Badger were re-elected Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively.

3. The Executive Committee reported the following decisions which were approved by Council:-

(i) The feasibility of a direct debit scheme for the payment of subscriptions should be investigated.

(ii) The CA should contribute one ninth of the cost of the European Championship Trophy.

(iii) The appointment of WE Lamb as CA representative on the European Federation.

4. Arising from the Executive Committee's report it was agreed that:

(i) A national Club Conference, to include all clubs whether registered with the CA or not, will be held in February 1996.

(ii) The Chairman was authorised to continue his efforts to secure the return of the Wimbledon Cup from the World Croquet Federation. Arrangements were to be made for it to be photographed.

5. The International Committee reported on international events held in the UK in 1995 and on the arrangements for the 1996 MacRobertson Shield. The team to represent Great Britain would be: IJ Burridge, C Clarke (capt), S Comish, Miss D Cornelius, RI Fulford and DB Maugham.

6. The Editorial Board AJ Oldham undertook to meet the editor's request for a nominated person to summarise the Minutes of Council for publication. It was agreed that each Committee of Council and each Regional Federation should also nominate an editorial contact. It was agreed that the 1994 World Championship results inadvertently omitted from Croquet should be published.

7. Commercial Agent Council expressed admiration for the efforts of BC Macmillan and noted that he had achieved a sales turnover of over £52,000 in the previous ten months.

8. Council confirmed the election of 50 new Associates.

It was reported that the number of paid-up Associates was 1539 and the estimated number of Affiliates was 3624.

9. Selection Committee - It was agreed to increase the membership from 5 to 6 for 1995-96 and Messrs Aiton, Burridge, Clarke, Lamb Mulliner and Williams were elected to serve on the committee.

10. Editorial Board - Messrs Gregory, Hall and Mulliner were chosen to constitute the board for 1995-96.

11. The list of members of the standing Committees of Council 1995-96 and a list of meeting dates for 1996-97 were circulated.

12. Concern having been expressed at the clash of dates of the new Western Championships at Parkstone with the Coles Cup at Cheltenham, the chairman agreed to write to the Cheltenham Club chairman to explain the circumstances.

## Extracts from the unconfirmed minutes of the Council Meeting on March 23rd 1996

1. There were present W.E. Lamb (Chairman) and 21 members of Council with Ms Gail Curry (Editor of the Gazette) and L.W.D. Antenen (Secretary CA) in attendance.

2. The chairman reported that the WCF had withdrawn its previously stated rights of ownership of the Wimbledon Cup and that the conditions of its loan by the CA to the WCF had been clearly stated in a Memorandum of Understanding.

3. Concern having been expressed at a very limited success of the recruitment competition inaugurated by the NDO in 1995, Council agreed to reserve the right not to make an award in 1996 if it was felt that such would not be justified by the results.

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

Executive Committee - Chris Hudson's contract with the CA expires in September 1996. Arrangements are being made to continue development work but in a different way without a National Development Officer. F&GP -

(i) The 1995 Accounts were approved.

(ii) The recommended increase in subscription rates and new scheme for discounts for prompt payment by direct Debit were approved. Council asked for a letter explaining the background to these changes to be sent to all Associates.

(iii) A special budget of £2,000 for the Centenary Committee for 1997 was approved.

International Committee - A paper by CJ Irwin on "The future of the MacRobertson Shield in the context of World Team Croquet" was received and Council expressed support for the views set out in the paper.

Development Committee - The points raised at the recent National Conference were summarised in the Development Committee's report and the Chairmen of Standing Committees were asked to take note of these.

National Development Officer - Following a request for updated copies of the Schools Directory the Chairman advised that this would be discussed with the NDO.

Tournament Committee - Owing to an error in detailing the conditions for entry of the Secretary's Shield competition a non-registered club had been admitted for 1996. Council agreed that in future years only registered clubs would be accepted as qualifiers in this competition.

Laws Committee - Council was informed that a WCF working party to study matters concerning the Laws had been formed. Council reconfirmed the arrangement whereby changes to the Laws would only be made with the agreement of the CA, ACA, the NZCA and the USCA; subject to condition, input from the WCF working party would be welcome.

Trophies Committee - (i) Council agreed that engraving of trophies for other than the major prestigious events should be gradually superseded by the introduction of Scrolls of Honour and further agreed the practice in 1996 using, for a start, those events where there is at present no perpetual trophy.

(ii) Council agreed that failing recovery of the Franc Trophy, the replacement for the Steel Bowl (most improved woman player of the year) shall be a glass goblet or other memento to be retained by the player plus a scroll of honour.

Centenary Committee - (i) The All England Lawn Tennis & Croquet club has agreed to mount an exhibition of one hundred years of croquet in their tennis museum during 1997.

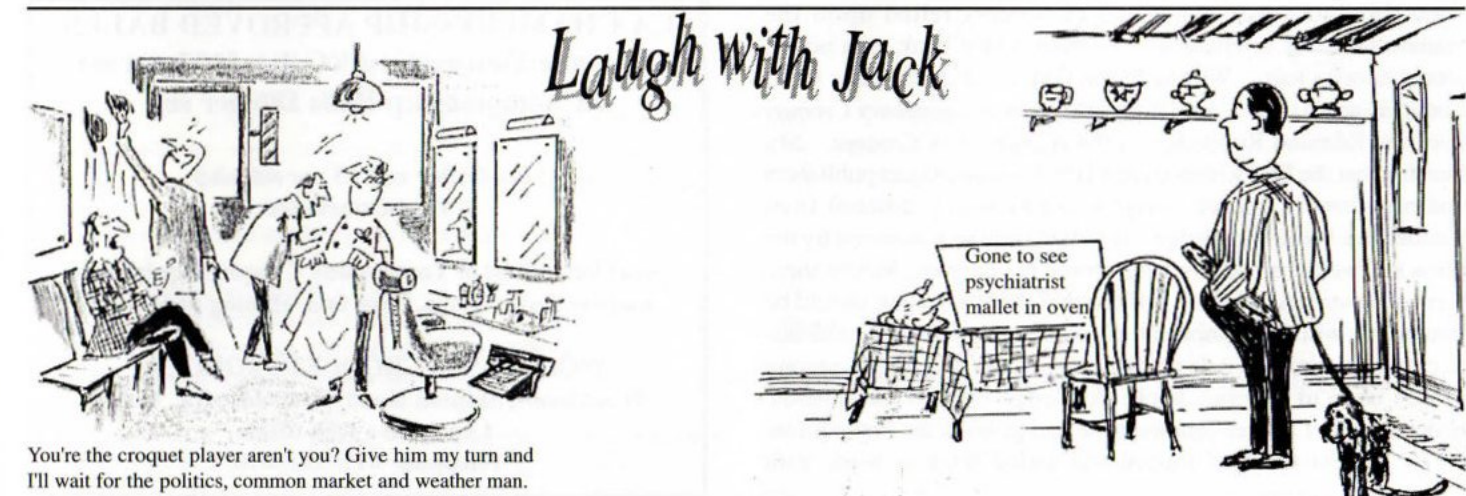
(ii) Council agreed to use the special centenary logo for a period beginning in October 1996.

Golf Croquet Committee - Council approved the decision by S O Jones to nominate the finalists of the 1995 Golf Croquet Championships as the UK representatives at the International Golf Croquet Championships to be held in Milan in September 1996 under the auspices of the Italian CA.

5. Council confirmed the election of 55 new Associates. The Secretary reported that at 22nd March 1996 the number of Associates was 1588 including 68 members overseas.

6. It was reported to Council that the European Championships in 1996 would be held in Jersey. Details would appear in the Gazette.

Extracts of minutes compiled by A.J. Oldham



You're the croquet player aren't you? Give him my turn and I'll wait for the politics, common market and weather man.

## EXTRACTS FROM A BIBLIOGRAPHER'S CASEBOOK

By David Drazin

### III THE CASE OF THE ERRANT EARL

As a member of Cassiobury - now renamed 'Watford (Cassiobury) Croquet Club' to give the uninitiated a better chance of finding us - I had been intrigued by cryptic references in earlier bibliographies to two undated books: *Rules of the Eglinton Castle and Cassiobury Croquet*, an anonymous work attributed by William Longman to Edmund Routledge, and *Eglinton Castle Croquet, The Game of Croquet; its Laws and Regulations*, linked by DMC Prichard with the name of T Turner. On finding a copy of what might have been a late edition of either work, I wanted answers to some basic questions. Were these references to the same work or two distinct works, who were the authors and publishers, when were they first published, how did Turner fit in, and what about Eglinton Castle and Cassiobury? Although I had played for some years in a corner of Cassiobury Park, which was until 1927 the country seat of the Earls of Essex, I knew nothing of these matters.

Visits to the British Library, our own Watford Borough museum and the Public Record Office in Chancery Lane (which still houses tons of legal records going back to the time of Richard II), information supplied by the biographer of the lady in the case and examination of books kindly lent to me by other Associates yielded rich rewards.

Arthur Algernon Capel, the sixth Earl of Essex, turns out to have been quite a lad. We may never know when his fancy first turned to croquet, but we do know that he was a noted host to high society in the early 1860s and he may have thrown his first croquet party even earlier. In the first years of the decade, with the discretion which behoved a nobleman in trade, he manufactured the 'Cassiobury Set' of 'croqueterie'. Earlier historians have told how, to further this enterprise, he and his printer, Miss Emily Faithful, plagiarised a rule book published by Capt Mayne Reid in 1863 and were promptly stopped in their tracks by the doughty captain and his lawyers. But they didn't connect this little contretemps with the references which bothered me, and they may have missed some of the juicy bits.

As to the books, the details remain sketchy but the broad picture is clear enough. When the law caught up with the Earl in August 1864, he was in dead trouble. He needed a new book of laws to send out with his croquet sets because few people knew what the game was about and customers relied upon the manufacturer for orientation. Without a rule book, production would have to halt. Writing in the Gazette of 20 October 1921, Longman noted close similarities in the texts of *Cassiobury Croquet* [etc] and Edmund Routledge's 1864 *Handbook of Croquet*. My hunch is that the Earl whipped round the London croquet publishers and negotiated a licence to reprint anonymously material from Routledge's book. Routledge's laws had been well received by the press and would obviously have served his purpose. Maybe there were other strings attached, perhaps that the Earl's book should be issued only with his equipment, not sold separately. The evidence is circumstantial but it is perhaps significant that, in the second (1865) issue of his own book, Routledge omitted the fulsome endorsement of Jaques equipment he had given in the first edition.

I guess the Earl topped and tailed his new work with

advertisements for his own products, inserted a frontispiece featuring Eglinton Castle as a plug for the eccentric version of the game favoured by his son-in-law Lord Eglinton, and put his troubles behind him. The book went through several editions, at least until 1870. All the copies of the various editions I have now seen were 'printed for the proprietor'. No mention of the Earl, though he had been rumbled by the captain and *The Spectator*, and he never denied that he was the proprietor. Turner, who enters the scene on the last page of a late edition, presumably continued grinding out the hardware in the Earl's saw mills, or perhaps he was a mere figment of his advertising agency's imagination.

And now the juicy bits. When first challenged, the Earl dashed off the following robust reply to the captain's solicitors: 'I have this morning received the enclosed from Miss Faithful the Printer of "Rules of Croquet by 'An Old Hand'". I beg to state that those rules were printed for me for the purpose of sending out with the sets called "Cassiobury Croquet" and were written for me by a friend of mine. Some 300 or 400 have been I believe on sale at various railway stations but at the end of 3 months not 1/10 of them have been sold and most of the others have been returned. Therefore as regards this part of the business I am quite indifferent to it and might as a matter of courtesy refrain from sending out any more in that manner.

'As regards the sending out a copy with each game of the "Cassiobury Croquet" I must continue to do so until forbidden by the judgment of a court of law which I think is scarcely likely to be given to that effect.

'Captain Mayne Reid was [not] the Inventor of the game and can have no claim whatever to arrogate to himself the exclusive right of making rules for it. Rules were made for the game and sent out with each set long before Captain Mayne Reid made his. Yours [etc] Essex'

Having thus acknowledged responsibility for the contents of his first ill-fated book, he had no hang-ups in handing out blame to all and sundry. Notwithstanding that Miss Faithful needed no further dose of Chancery at that time (she had been cited as co-respondent in a very nasty divorce case which was then in full flow), he allowed her name to be joined with his in the ensuing proceedings and, to cap it all, in a letter to the Editor of *The Times*, he blamed her for her ignorance of copyright law and the captain for having spurned his generous offer to settle their differences amicably - an offer the captain denied ever having received. Which all, I suppose, proves that noblesse oblige!

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# The CA Council & Its Committees

The third part of the series in which the chairmen of the various committees explain the role and responsibilities of their respective committees.

## The Trophies Committee

The Trophies Committee which only recently became a standing committee of Council is charged with:-

1. The care and maintenance of all of the trophies belonging to the Croquet Association.
2. The engraving of winners' names on the trophies and plinths and maintaining a record of these.
3. Allocation to tournament events of new trophies and reallocation of trophies which have become redundant. This function is carried out jointly with the Tournament Committee.

The Association owns about 90 trophies, a number of which are on permanent loan to various clubs. Some have a long history and exhibit high quality workmanship which would make them difficult and expensive to replace. Nevertheless the CA has not felt able to afford to insure them and a considerable degree of responsibility for their care, particularly for their protection against damage, therefore rests with the holders while the trophies are in their possession.

The functions of this committee were previously carried out, in an ill-defined way, partly by the CA Secretary, partly by the Tournament and Finance committees, and partly by individual cup holders. Over a period of time maintenance had been neglected and some

engraving had been done in a haphazard way; but working since 1993 these defects have been gradually rectified.

Alan Oldham  
Chairman, Trophies Committee.

## Golf Croquet Committee

Purpose: to achieve, for the game of golf croquet, the objectives of the Association expressed in rule one.

Reason: A large number of our existing members are Golf Croquet players and we need to give them more encouragement and help. We also need to get a wider field of people and clubs to join the Association and its activities.

Changes to Standing Orders: Generally to take responsibilities for Golf Croquet from other Committees regarding publicity, coaching, tournaments, and competitions, international matters, handicapping and development.

My plans: my ideas for this committee are still at a preliminary stage, but I would hope for a start to contact all golf croquet playing groups and provide contact between them and the Croquet Association. I hope to promote the existing CA Golf Croquet Events and if possible add new competitions to those already being held.

Syd Jones  
Chairman, Golf Croquet Committee.

## Tournament Committee

The responsibilities of this committee are as follows:

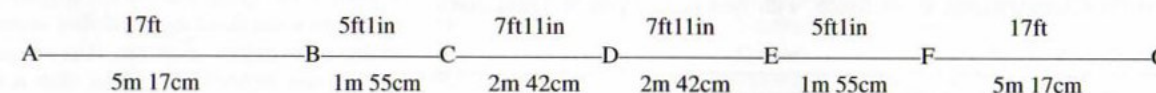
1. To fix the dates of all CA events (which is now done two years in advance), as well as to arrange suitable managers, and to ensure that clubs hosting these various events have the facilities and meet the required conditions.
2. Arranging the production of the Fixture Book each year.
3. To look into any complaints from competitors regarding tournaments, as well as suggestions that might improve the smooth running of tournaments.
4. To fix lawn and ball hire fees for CA events.
5. To work in close contact with the Laws and Handicap committees.
6. To trial variations of the game. (In the past we have attempted to utilise full bisque play with a variable base in the All England. We are now looking into a 14 point game at advanced level.)
7. Most of all to ensure we maintain the high standard that has been achieved, and to encourage newcomers to croquet to compete on an equal footing with the more advanced players.

Dennis Shaw  
Chairman, Tournament Committee

## "How's Your Pythagoras?"

The simple way to mark out Short Lawns  
by Arthur Addis

See issue 243 for full details of the principle of this method.



Each letter represents a small ring on the length of rope.

Steps for marking the position of hoops.

1. Fix A and G on corners 1 and 4 respectively with large nails or something similar.
2. Using D, draw the strings taut and mark the middle hoop 5.
3. Insert a thin stickthrough rings B and C together, then, adjusting the position until both parts are taut, mark hoop 1. The string section BC is just a loose loop.
4. Marking hoop 4 is similar putting E and F together instead of B and C.

To mark hoops 6, 2 and 3 the process is repeated from corners 2 and 4.

The advantages of this method are speed, that it can be easily done by one person and, once made, there is no further need of a tape measure.

**Correction From Issue 234 - An Apology**

Readers of the second article in Handicaps for high bisquers - Building the Break (issue 234 May 1996) were probably as confused as the author on trying to match the opening text and Fig. 1. Those with eagle eyes, or perhaps cross-eyes, may have noticed that Fig. 1 was identical to Fig. 3 and concluded that something had gone sadly astray. Of course what had gone astray was Fig. 1 itself. The editor wishes to apologise for any inconvenience this may have caused and is wholly responsible for the error (which was not condoned by the author. The correct Fig. 1 is reproduced alongside to the same scale as that of the originals and may be cut out and placed over the incorrect Fig. 1 in issue 234 if readers wish to do so.

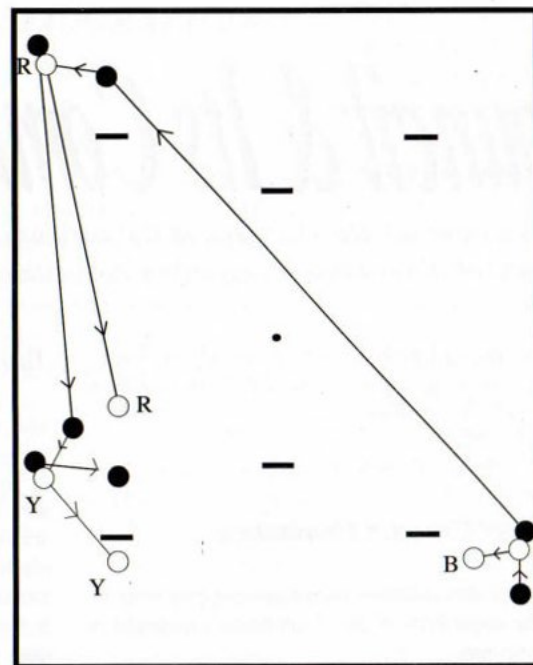


Fig. 1



**Traditional Yorkshire Brewer Backs Traditional Game**

Yorkshire brewer, T&R Theakston, sponsored the first ever Yorkshire Open Golf Croquet Championship, held at the Ripon Spa Hotel on May 22- 23. The two-day tournament attracted a great deal of players, including England's Roy Edwards, the holder of the National Golf Croquet Cup, who will be representing the country at the World Golf Croquet Championship in Milan, Italy, in September. Roy is pictured (right) in a private croquet duel with the manager of the Championship, Keith Smith, with first prize a pint of Theakston's bitter.

**STOP PRESS NEWS**

*MacRobertson Shield Results  
Nottingham 15 ~ 20 June 1996*

GB ~ 15                      Australia ~ 6  
USA ~ 9                        New Zealand ~ 12

Full reports and results of all matches in the September issue.

**Chairman's Column**

It was disappointing that so few clubs carried out the lawn speed test in the recent club survey, and even more disappointing that during a summer which was so warm and dry the results were so poor. Briefly, for those unfamiliar with the test, the idea is to time a ball which just travels the full length of the lawn. Ideally, hit from one boundary, the ball should stop on the other, but anywhere within a yard or so will do. The faster the lawn, the longer the ball will take to travel the distance. In fact, the speed of the lawn is roughly inversely proportional to the square of the time. Many clubs reported results around seven or eight seconds. The fastest lawns were about 14 seconds. The difference is enormous when it comes to rushing a ball. On a seven second lawn most players will find it impossible to rush a ball the length of the lawn and will have difficulty rushing it across the lawn. Shorter rushes will have to be hit harder than desirable for accuracy.

The rush is one of the important strokes in croquet, particularly when it comes to break building. One of the advantages of croquet is the fact that it is not a sport requiring great strength or stamina but that advantage is nullified if the lawns are too slow. What the results would have been like in a wet summer, I shudder to think. It was no surprise to find that the best lawns were those where the club spent most on lawn maintenance.

The cost of keeping a croquet lawn in good condition is around £900 per year. (Where the lawns are rented from a local authority and are in good condition the charge seems to be between £700 and £800 per year.) But very few clubs spend that amount of money on lawn maintenance. I realise that in some cases clubs have no control over their lawns or no security of tenure and therefore no incentive to improve them. However, the problem in other clubs seems to be the low level of subscriptions.

Many clubs are charging less than £40 per year compared with the £100 or more for clubs with good lawns. In comparison with golf or tennis, croquet is already a very cheap sport. I do not believe that croquet players are such skinflints that they will not pay a subscription adequate to maintain the playing surfaces properly, or that the norm should be accepted at a poor level. One northern club asked its members some years ago what they would like to see their money spent on. The resounding answer was better lawns. That club now has some of the best lawns in the country and an enthusiastic membership. If your lawns are slow, ask your club committee to do something about it. Regular scarifying or combing of the lawns before cutting will help to improve the speed but all lawns need a proper schedule of maintenance.

Bill Lamb

**Handicap Alterations**

<b>Pendle 8 April</b>			
Dr P Tidswell	16	to	14
<b>Cheltenham 5 - 8 April</b>			
Kismet Whittall	3.5	to	4
Debbie Cornelius	-1.5	to	-2
Andrew Potter	5	to	4.5
Tal Goleworthy	6	to	5
Brian Smith	5	to	4.5
Margaretha Regan	11	to	10
Dennis Regan	4	to	3.5
Brian Hewitt	4	to	3.5
Gerry Eccles	11	to	12
<b>Cheltenham 21 April</b>			
Tuthill C.J.	6	to	5
Davis K.R.	6	to	5
Heriz-Smith N.	4.5	to	4
Mrs A Whitaker	3	to	4
Mrs C Smith	3.5	to	4
<b>Newport 20 - 21 April</b>			
J. Smith	1.5	to	2
<b>Southport &amp; Birkdale 20 - 21 April</b>			
Nicholson D.J.	3	to	2.5
Bell E.	-0.5	to	1
Hawkins J.D.	0.5	to	0
<b>Woking 26 - 28 April</b>			
M. Bigg	6	to	5
D. Gurney	4	to	4.5
R. Danby	4.5	to	4
T. Danby	9	to	6
<b>Cheltenham 4 - 6 May</b>			
D.J. Kibble	1	to	0.5
G. K. Gale	1.5	to	1
<b>Southwick 4 - 6 May</b>			
Arliss Pamela	14	to	12
Pullen Peter	5	to	4.5
Storey Catherine	6	to	5
<b>Western Championships Parkstone 4 - 6 May</b>			
Adrian Wadley	1	to	0.5
Alex Leggate	0.5	to	0
<b>Hurlingham 4 - 6 May</b>			
P Windred	5	to	4.5
Pawson P.R.	5	to	4.5
Selmes R.H.	5	to	4.5
Waterfield Dr C.G.	1.5	to	1
Davies Mrs S.B.	7	to	8
<b>Budleigh Salterton 6 - 11 May</b>			
J. Beech	3	to	2.5
F.J. Exell	18	to	20
Goodheart Miss M	9	to	10
Hatherley J.C.	2.5	to	3
Henderson Mrs V.	12	to	14
Judson R.W.B.	12	to	11
Mayers P.	4.5	to	4
Potter A.	4.5	to	4
Regan D.	3.5	to	4
Wilkinson J.W	8	to	9
Woodward Miss E.	12	to	14
<b>Ramsgate 11 - 12 May</b>			
Peter Highton	20	to	14
Michael Clarke	14	to	12
John Roche	14	to	12
John Sanderson	20	to	14
<b>Guildford &amp; Godalming 11 - 12 May</b>			
G. Gale	1	to	0.5
H. Smorfitt	1	to	0.5

**Men's & Women's Championship**

<b>Cheltenham 13 - 19 May</b>			
P.C. Trimmer	-0.5	to	-1
<b>Hurlingham 18 May</b>			
Yates G.P	6	to	5
Whitaker Dr. F.L.	1.5	to	2
Vincent Dr. I. G.	0	to	-0.5
<b>Wrest Park 19 May</b>			
David Harley	12	to	9
Nick Evans	4.5	to	4
Terry Ham	9	to	10
Terry Mahoney	7	to	6
John Hall	12	to	14
<b>Cheltenham 25 - 27 May</b>			
Watson P.A.	5	to	6
Bradley D.	3.5	to	3
Mc Clements Mrs V.	10	to	9
Magee Mrs E.	8	to	7
Paddon M.T.	1.5	to	2
Taylor G.	3.5	to	4
Harris Mrs G.D.	4	to	3.5
Schofield R.	5	to	4.5
Leach P.F.	5	to	6
Watson P.A.	6	to	7
Regan Mrs M.	10	to	9
Whitaker R.	16	to	18
Bradley Mrs J.	18	to	20
Higgins P.	18	to	16
Godson J.	18	to	14
Deacon R.	10	to	9
<b>Southport &amp; Birkdale 25 - 27 May</b>			
Taylor Mrs J.	16	to	14
Jenkinson D.	14	to	16
<b>Pendle 27 May</b>			
Cohen M.	14	to	12
Gillett D. M.	9	to	10

**New Associates**

Mrs E. M. Batin	Woking
Mr P. Brunsch	Taunton Deane
Mrs I. Cartwright	Swindon
Mr E.J. Cartwright	Swindon
Mr B. A. Elwell	Himley
Mrs H. Hudson	Bath
Mr A. J. Hudson	Bath
Mrs A. C. Martin	Cheltenham
Mrs J. Perkins	Lansdown
Mr D. Perkins	Lansdown
Mrs M. Purdon	Belsay Hall
Mr D. Robinson	Pendle
Dr P. Tidswell	
Mrs D. Trickey	
Mr A.C. Brightman	Edinburgh
Mr O. Bryce	Northampton
Miss K.E. Burt	Dorset
Mrs T. Burt	Dorset
Mrs P. Davey	Purley Bury
Mr J. Davey	Purley Bury
Mr H.A. Dutton	Pendle
Mr R.D. Essler	Skipton
Mr S. B. Gardner	Southsea
Mr S.M. Miles	Medway
Mr P.J.M. Quinn	Hurlingham
Mr E.R. Smith	Norwich
Mr D.G. Taylor	Kenilworth
Mr I. Tupling	Cumbria

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Southport & Birkdale CC Championship of N.W. England, 9 - 11 August. Entry Fee £12.50 (50% discount for students). Tournament Secretary Diana Williamson 01704 567268. See fixtures book for address.

**Wanted**

Players. Nailsea CA weekend tournaments. Short croquet 6/7/96. Handicap 18/5/96 & 17/8/96. See fixtures book page 55. J Jeffrey 01275 - 852508.

Collector seeks old croquet books (Tollemache 1914), prints and memorabilia. Don Williamson Southport 01704 567268.

**For Sale**

Croquet Postcards. Set of four reproduction Punch cartoons by John Leech, £1.30 inc P&P. Bowdon Croquet Club, Whitegates, Morley Green Road, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5NU.

"The Lighter Side of Serious Croquet", which was reviewed in the last issue of the Gazette, is available from David Appleton, 4 Southwood Gardens, Newcastle upon Tyne NE3 3BU. Single copies are £7.10 inc p&p in the U.K.

**NEW ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES**

Classified advertising has now been introduced to the Gazette at very competitive rates, to both individual members and clubs as well as rates for non-members and trade/commercial. Details of how to place an advert should be available now at all clubs.