

The CROQUET Gazette

Issue 247

January 1997



"To err is human, to referee divine" - The Laws Committee

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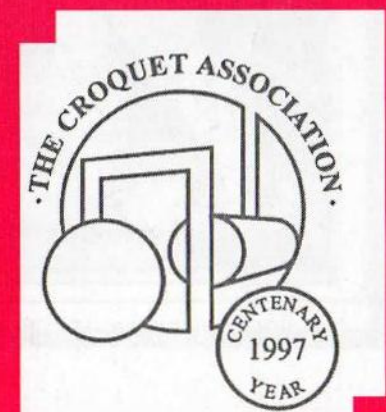
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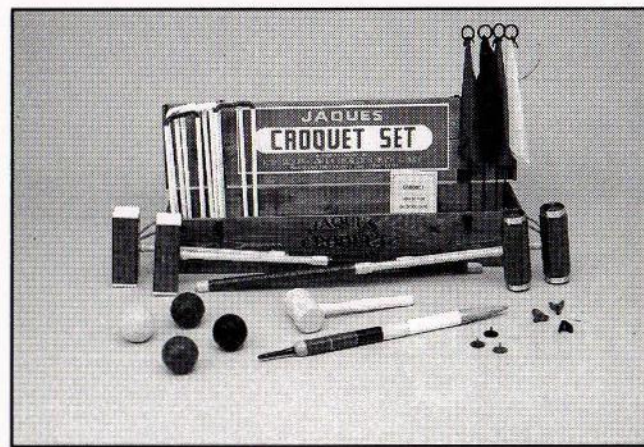
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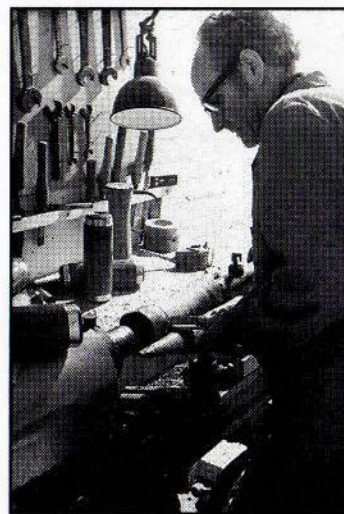
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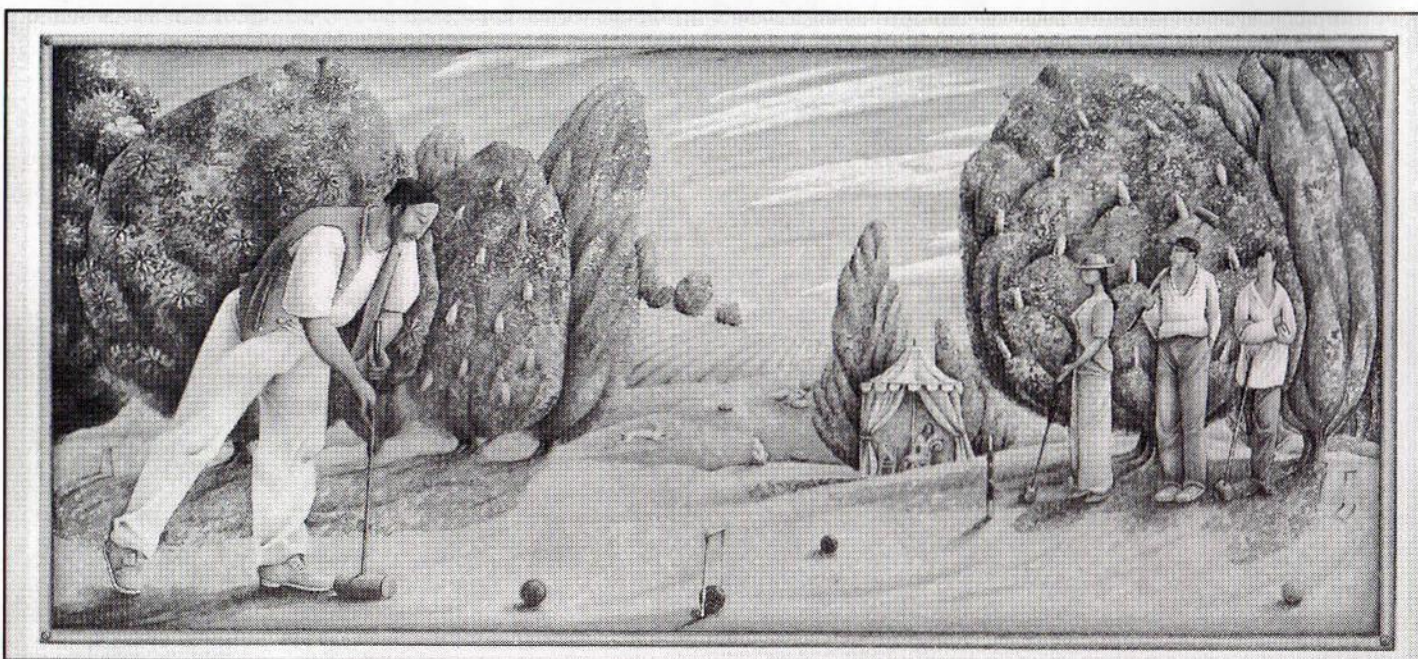
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**The
CROQUET
GAZETTE**

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Front Cover: Cartoon by Roy Wallis

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Published in the second week of every other month throughout the year by the Croquet Association *Written contributions* on computer disk (PC or Macintosh), typed or hand written *Photographs/illustrations* are welcome and should be sent to the Editor *Cartoons* are by Jack Shotton unless otherwise stated *Copy date* is shown on the inside back cover *Tournament Reports and Results* should be sent via the CA Secretary *Delivery queries* should be directed to the CA Office *Advertising* details are available from the Editor through whom advertising should be booked *Editor* Gail Curry *Design/Typesetting* Gail Curry *Printing, Binding & Imagesetting* by The Print House.
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The Croquet Association The Hurlingham Club Ranelagh Gardens London SW6 3PR (tel: 0171 736 3148) Secretary Paul Campion Chairman Stephen Badger

Decisions, decisions.

In October I was asked to produce a budget for the Gazette, which I duly did and gave the Treasurer a metaphorical heart attack. He was not too confident that the Finance & General Purpose Committee would accede to my needs. Fortunately to all intents purpose they did, with the proviso that four pages should be trimmed from the total number in 1997, and granted a budget of around £19,000.

A cut of four pages from a total of 152 does not appear to be much of a reduction, but if production costs continue to rise at the rate they have in the last two years, it may be that some other changes to the Gazette may have to be considered in the not too distant future.

The changes, if there have to be any, will be of a physical nature; that is glossy paper may be replaced, the colour from the front cover may go, there will be a standard 24 page issue throughout, the tournament review may be scrapped and we shall have to return to printing reports on a first come first served basis. These are only some of the options.

The editorial board will be considering very carefully all options and opinions on the possibility of changes being made to the Gazette in the future, and all readers are asked either collectively at your clubs, or individually, to let the editorial board know what your thoughts and ideas are. Whatever decision is reached, it is important that you play your part in it, so don't let others make decisions for you, think about what you want and let us know.

Please send your comments by post c/o the Editorial Board to Secretary Paul Campion. Or if you prefer to talk to a board member, you can contact any of them by telephone: Bill Arliss -01723 728204 Hamish Hall - 01179741683 Bruce Rannie - 0191 2529739 Andrew Gregory - 01223 573560 or myself - 0191 2579045.

For some time now there has been a substantial quantity of correspondence regarding various opinions on the subject of Golf Croquet. It is obvious from such contributions that there is an issue to be resolved, or at very least addressed, but it is my belief that any further correspondence should be addressed to the appropriate club, federation or Council representatives. My reasons for this are that it would appear that continuing to publish endless letters alone will not accomplish anything so, unless you have some singularly different angle on either side of the Golf Croquet debate to air, you may consider the debate suspended in the Gazette until further notice.

Gail Curry

NEWS & INFORMATION

Proposed Indoor Centenary Tournament

For the last two years the CA has organised an indoor federation tournament at Bretby. Unfortunately this venue is no longer available. However through the good offices of David Magee we have been offered alternative indoor facilities at RAF Innsworth near Gloucester. It is currently proposed to hold a centenary tournament there over the weekend of 15 / 16 March 1997. Any Federation which wishes may make an entry but we are primarily looking for entries (either pairs or foursomes) from clubs. On this occasion the facilities are free so we hope entry fees can be set at a reasonable level. Would all interested parties please give preliminary indications of interest to David Magee (01452 - 700353) or Stephen Badger 0171 - 2748126) as soon as possible. They will then receive firm

details in the second half of February.

Bisque Taking For Fun & Profit

Roger of Wheeler of the Cheltenham Croquet Club has produced an 8 page A5 pamphlet entitled 'Bisque Taking for Beginners'. The booklet costs a very reasonable 60p, of which 20p from each copy sold goes towards the club funds.

The pamphlet is easy to follow and has plenty of good advice. If you would like a copy send a cheque, made payable to Roger Wheeler, to Roger Wheeler, The Old Quarry, Brimpsfield, Gloucester, GL4 8LF.

Play Croquet Where No Man (or Woman) Has Ever Played Croquet Before

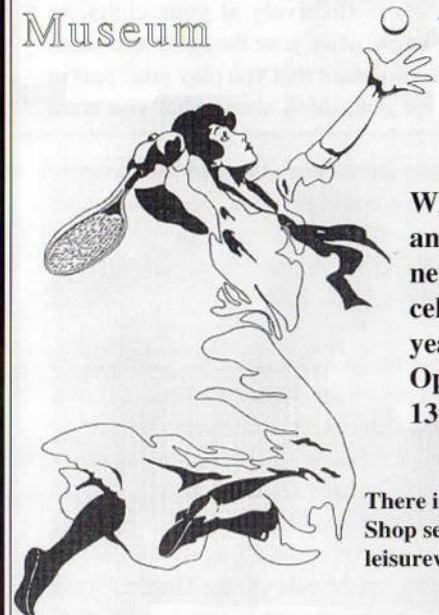
It is evident from the lack of entries to most

competitions run in the Gazette in the past that many readers are not too enthused by the normal hum drum, run of the mill challenges. Therefore, in order to entice more entries, the editor is setting a challenge to individuals, clubs or perhaps even federations, to go and play croquet in places where the game has never been, or quite possibly will never be, played again.

All you have to do to enter is go to your chosen venue, play some croquet, take a photograph, write a few lines detailing the members of the party and the chosen venue and send it to the editor. All entries will be published and there will be a prize for the most outrageous venue used.

Should you require some suggestions for venues to get you thinking on the right lines, here are some I prepared earlier: local market place, a beach, a cross channel ferry, the airport, any mountain, a public house.....etc etc.

The Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum



Visit the Museum at the home of Lawn Tennis and find out why Wimbledon is more than just two weeks of the year

Why not come and visit the new exhibition celebrating 100 years of Croquet. Opens Tuesday 13th May 1997.

There is a Tea Room, and a Shop selling Wimbledon leisurewear, gifts and books.

The Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum. At the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club, Church Road, Wimbledon, London. SW19 5AE

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THE CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

As readers may know, the chairman of the Council of the CA may not hold office for more than two years in succession. Accordingly I have succeeded Bill Lamb in his position and Tim Haste has become vice-chairman. Details of the membership of Council and its committees were set out on the back page of the last Gazette. I am pleased to say that reports of the death of the Publicity Committee, like that of Mark Twain, proved much exaggerated. It is in fact alive and well and Syd Jones has been restored as its chairman. But effective publicity certainly remains a problem; if readers have any new ideas or expertise of their own in this field do please let him (or me) know.

It may be that some croquet players regard Council as aloof, remote, irrelevant or all three. But if that is your view it is your fault. It is your Council and your CA so join in and play some part yourself. The CA is essentially an amateur organisation and we need volunteers at all levels. You do not need to be a minus player, or even to know one, to stand for Council. You simply need to find two other associates who will propose and second you and get your nomination in to the CA office by 1st August, and off you go. Everyone is welcome to try and the wider the range of talents available for selection the better.

There are several areas where volunteers would be especially welcome. If you have literary talents the editor would no doubt be delighted if you sent her a sparkling article. In addition to this from time to time we have the opportunity of feature articles in the national or regional press and there may be particular opportunities in centenary year. We want to build up a bank of potential authors in readiness. We already have some candidates, but if this is your forte let us have your name too. Similarly, if you have management or marketing skills that might be applied to croquet, tell us. Or if you might like to become involved in a public relations role, let us know. The croquet world is small enough and we need to draw on all the skills we have available.

Who is 'us'? In the first instance it is probably Paul Campion in the CA office, but it can as well be me, or your federation representative on Council, or any member of Council if you feel you know them better. Like my predecessor I set out my contact numbers below and am very willing to be contacted by anyone with anything to say.

Finally, remember that in many ways the best way you can play a role is in recruitment, either in recruiting members from outside for your club or in recruiting club members to join the CA. This is after all our centenary year; let us make sure that the CA goes forward as a strong and responsive organisation.

May I wish all readers a happy and enjoyable centenary.

Stephen Badger
0171 - 2748126 or 01242 - 516603

~ OBITUARIES ~

Colin Thursfield died on 27th September 1996 at the Holme Tower Marie Curie Centre in Penarth at the all too young age of 60. Like so many of us, Colin came to croquet relatively late in life and embraced the game with infectious enthusiasm. As beginners 11 years ago Colin, and his wife Alison, were founder members of Dyffryn Croquet Club and helped to establish what has become a flourishing outpost of the game in south Wales. They worked hard to create a pocket handkerchief lawn in their garden on a scale such that the yard line was generally decreed to be about nine inches! they joined the Cheltenham Club so that, amongst other benefits, they could continue playing in the winter.

Colin and Alison became stalwart supporters of tournament venues in the south west as well as making sorties further afield to Nottingham. Colin was never going to be an A class player and regarded a single figure handicap as a real achievement. Yet he was the very antithesis of Aunt Emma and frequently delighted in choosing the ambitious and satisfying shot rather than playing safe. Of course he sometimes paid the price and lost games that might have been won. The gain for both his partners and opponents was that, with Colin on the lawn, the croquet would not be dull.

It was fitting that in 1995, in what was to be his last season, Colin was Chairman of Dyffryn and that his last game representing the club was in the final of the Longman Cup against Tyneside. Just days before he finally lost his fight against cancer he expressed his longing for a game of croquet.

Colin's career was spent mainly in education. After graduating from Oxford he taught chemistry for 10 years. Following a brief flirtation with computing he moved into the university world as a careers advisor at Aberdeen then Cardiff. Early retirement in 1990 from his last post as manager of student accommodation in Cardiff happily allowed him more time to see the family and more time on the lawns.

Our deepest sympathy goes to Alison and to Clare and Martin and their families.

Barry Marsh.

It is with deep regret that I have to let you all know of the passing of two stalwarts of the Southwick croquet scene last November; Frank Beard and Ron Smith. Both had been croquet players for many years and associated with Southwick for much of the time. Both were keen coaches and between them were responsible for my wife and I learning the game and getting addicted. Ron was a club and a CA handicapper and Frank was - well, Frank! - one of the real characters in the game, as well as being a very useful player. Both will be sadly missed by our club and I suspect by the very many friends they made over the years through the game.

Bill Arliss
Southwick CC

SUCCESS AT BOWDON

Andrew Winn was the winner of the Fotiadi Bowl for the Bowdon novices tournament, with Robin Morgan and David Cotton joint winners of the Novice Egyptian competition. There were 12 entries from this year's record number of 20 new members, which is due much to the advertising at the time of the MacRobertson Shield. The competitions were organised by Chris Irwin and Derek Buxton.

Pictured right: Chris Irwin, Robin Morgan, Andrew Winn, David Cotton and Derek Buxton.



Letters...

Not the card but the recording

Dear Editor

I was pleased to see the debate opened by Robert Alexander and Richard Mann in the latest gazette on handicap cards. I believe that the use of handicap cards in the automatic handicapping system (AHS) has been very successful in controlling handicaps and that it does not require any basic changes. I disagree that we need to store more information on each game on the cards. Some players have been keeping varying levels of detail of their games since time immemorial in books that they update like diaries, but this is not the point of these cards. One improvement would be to list the valid handicap points (and trigger point) on the front of the card (I know people struggle knowing the number of steps between two given handicaps). I always copy these onto the front of each new card that I get.

The most important thing is to encourage universal usage of the cards. Most of us have seen the odd tournament player who is not filling in a card (to try and protect an unrealistic handicap for some reason of pride). To this end I would propose the following changes: - Introduce a target for the players on handicap - 2, say -2.5 at 2850 with a 5 step gap. Many of them openly disregard the system precisely because they have no such target and set a bad example for the lesser players.

- Put in place a rule to allow the manager of a tournament to fill in (or supervise) all cards. This would need to be optional as some managers would not have the time or inclination. Managers would report defaulters (those who cannot produce a card) to the handicap committee who would make central handicap changes in exceptional cases at year end.

- Do not provide advertising to tournaments comprising regular association croquet that have as a condition that handicap cards will not be used. I will be raising this at the South East Federation AGM (we do advertise such events).
Richard Hilditch

Dear Editor,

I have some sympathy with the idea expressed by Robert Alexander and Richard Mann of the Medway Club for a re-designed handicap record card, because the present card is rather cramped. It was designed to incorporate the minimum information necessary to operate the AHS. This was done deliberately in order to simplify record-keeping. There are many players who would

does it really warrant eight pages? But to the more humble members, the smaller tournaments, mainly handicap, are of more immediate interest because they can read about their friends and acquaintances in venues that they know and in context that they can better understand.

To make my moan more personal, why no report of the Woking Triples week finishing up with the 3-day handicap event (28 to 30 June) or the Sidmouth handicap (21 to 22 September)? I know you had a report of the latter because I sent it off to you within a week.
Tony Backhouse.

In the November issue (246) I did offer an apology and a brief explanation as to why the MacRobertson Shield report was late and why it was so lengthy. Unfortunately it would appear that you missed it. As to the inclusion of photos of A class players in every issue, having looked through the issues for this year I can state that, including the November issue, there have been 29 photographs of A class players/events whilst there have been 48 photographs of other players/events. In short, and backed up by facts, there is no A class bias in the Gazette.

Concluding, on the subject of tournament reports, congratulations on sending your report in within the stipulated guidelines. If only other reporters were as conscientious as you! The Woking triples report did not turn up until December and I am still waiting for the report of the Junior Championship held in July. Whilst in an ideal world I would like to publish them as soon as possible after I receive them, it is not always possible, as I have to prioritise contributions and produce a broad based publication purely from the material at my disposal, which at times is no mean feat, given that so few appreciate the meaning of the word 'deadline'. In short, the position of editor is, in my humble opinion, a position of trust, that is that I am trusted to make the decisions to produce the Gazette and publish it on time. To the best of my ability I believe I do this, but if from time to time there are disappointed readers I apologise, as it would appear it is impossible to please all of the players all of the time even though I do try. (Ed.)

Letter of the Law

Dear Editor

As the unnamed sinner in David Goacher's letter "Spirit or Letter of the Law?" I feel I need to defend myself. To fully explain the circumstances, I was in the middle of a break when I nearly cross-wired myself from my hoop 5 pioneer. In such situations, where both balls are near a hoop, I use the wire of the hoop for lining up my shot. Whilst it is difficult to explain or visualise, should the wire of the hoop be at an angle it makes this process very difficult as the distance between the mallet and the hoop varies at different points in the practice swings. By having the hoop reset I had no desire to acquire an advantage, only to remove my disadvantage.

I have no moral problem whatsoever with my actions and would do the same thing again without hesitation.

However I do agree with the sentiments of David's letter as the law can create significant moral problems, for example when your opponent has carefully set up a perfect cross-wire only for you to have the peg/hoop straightened so that you can see the wired ball (this is perfectly legal). I have also experienced this type of position and have not had the hoop straightened as it is so obviously contrary to the spirit of the law. The grey area which I cannot remember encountering is obviously when an opponent sets up an imperfect cross-wire which causes "sighting" difficulties because of the close proximity of a hoop at an angle. If I encountered this latter scenario I think I would ask for the hoop to be reset.

Quite why the law was changed I too am unsure, I can think of no useful purpose for it other than the situation I encountered and the other more common scenario which arises when you approach a hoop from the side to perfectly in front, only to find that it is not square in the ground and you have an angled hoop to run. This being the case I can only assume this was the reason the law was developed, so far from contravening the spirit of law I was actually putting it to its intended use. It is the duty of all players (top class ones in particular) to know the rules of the game they are playing and whilst they should not contravene the spirit of these laws they should use those rules provided for their assistance whenever possible. I find it extremely hard to believe that I was the only player present aware of this rule.
Ian Burridge

Addressing a 20th century problem

Dear Editor

Why does the CA only give joint membership to named couples? Isn't it time we dragged them into the 20th century? I see no reason why father/son, mother/daughter, brother/sister or any other combinations can't benefit so long as they share the same address.
Celia Steward.

'Handicapped' doubles

Dear Editor

I think we should review the rule which reduces a high bisquer's handicap to 17 in doubles play. Doubles is a good introduction for a new player to the fun of tournament play and can also be very instructive, and yet we discourage the high bisquers (who may already be playing off a handicap lower than their club handicap) by applying an 'extra' handicap.

One of the arguments for this rule is that a partner's superior tactical knowledge compensates for the reduction in bisques. This assumes, firstly that the partner is a better player and secondly, that tactics is the only difference

between a 16 and a 20 handicap. Many who coach high bisquers would agree that the major difference is actually stroke play and not tactics.

I know that there are players whose only tournament play is doubles and therefore remain 20 handicaps despite improvement, but surely we can address this problem by reducing their handicap and not by penalising every true beginner.

At worst, by changing this rule, we may allow more new players to be successful in their first tournament, which surely can only benefit us all in the long run.
Celia Steward

I see no clips

Dear Editor

How many times have players trudged across the court to check whether it's a black or brown clip on the far hoop? Very hard to tell particularly if you are looking against the light. So why don't we make them a different shape?

If all primary clips had a round top of approx 25 - 30 mm diameter and all secondary clips were oblong 15 mm wide by 50 mm long the problem would be solved. mend Law 2(d) to be more specific in respect of clips used in C.A. Tournaments with an implementation date of say 01/01/2000. This would give manufacturers, as long as we inform them, time to get their act together and clubs to do a swap around.
Len Hawkins

A question of time

Dear Editor

Near the end of a double banked doubles game, we gave preference to a player in the other game who was making a break. One opponent in our game asked that our clock should be stopped whilst our play was held up. He said that this was allowable in the last 15 minutes of the game.

My response was that allowance for delays due to double banking was already made by increasing the time for the game from 3 hours to 3 hours 15 minutes. A very experienced member of the other game on the lawn, a low handicapper and referee, agreed with my point. He was not aware of any provision to stop the clock during the last fifteen minutes of the game.

When the manager of the tournament was consulted, he upheld the request by our opponent that the clock be stopped during the last fifteen minutes of a game due to double banking delay.

It appears to me that the ordinary player in a tournament has a need to know of this possibility of stopping the clock. In our game it did not affect the result, but in a closely contested game it might well have been critical.

In my view simply giving preference to the other game is already covered by the extra 15 minutes for double banking, but there may be other occasions when equity requires that the clock should be stopped. Examples are when a referee has been called to adjudicate on some

doubtful point, in which case he authorise stopping the clock, or when a player in the other game is lining up a peel, possibly lying on the lawn in the path of an intended shot.

Perhaps you could prevail upon someone to write an article for the Gazette on what the ordinary club player needs to know about timed games.
Peter Read.

The extra fifteen minutes allowed under standard time limits for double-banked games is intended to compensate for possible delays at any stage of the game. Delay during the last fifteen minutes is no more important than during any other fifteen-minute period in its effect on the game: it merely seems so to the players involved.

Nowadays, in many tournaments all games are double-banked, and players must assume that if the manager has set non-standard time limits, he has done so with appropriate allowance for delay.

According to Appendix 2 of the Laws, Guide to Conduct in Double-Banked Games, the Manager may temporarily suspend play in a game if the double-banked game on the same court is within FIVE minutes of its time limit. However, this power should be used sparingly and only if both games are approaching their respective time limits. Otherwise, the situation can be avoided by players giving preference to the game about to finish. Players should bear this in mind and not make unnecessary demands on the Manager.
Bill Lamb

In search of warmer play

Dear Editor

I do miss my croquet and it is only December! Please, where are the indoor lawns? Do such facilities exist? What is the opinion of them? What are the economics of building and running an all-weather croquet facility?

Are there clubs in those warmer parts of the world where some of us might go to soften the effects of our winter? If I knew I could play in Lanzarote, say, I could choose to go there rather than to another resort.

What is the experience of other associates?
Brian Kitching

For details of the possibility of playing on the indoor carpets see 'News & Information' page 4. The other questions, I hope, will be answered by those who can. Ed.



HELPFUL HINTS No.6

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. 6 Law 32 part 3

In this, the last Helpful Hints on Law 32 (faults), I consider penalties, definitions and special circumstances.

32 (c) If you break one of the rules of law 32 your turn ends and all balls are replaced to their positions before the fault. Any points made during or after the fault are lost.

Exceptions.

i) In one special circumstance, see Law 32 (a) below, the fault may be waived by the opponent.

ii) If the fault is condoned, see Law 32 (d) below, there is no penalty.

32 (a) If you break Law 32 in a croquet stroke AND send either ball off court, law 20 (c), your opponent may choose which penalty to use.

Example 1

You are taking croquet from brown with green and intend taking off across the lawn to white which is on the yard line. You fail to move or shake brown, Law 32 (15), also green goes off the court, Law 20 (c). Your opponent declines any penalty under Law 32. Green is replaced on the yard line near white and your turn ends.

HOWEVER!!! If green hits white, then goes off, there is no end of turn under Law 20 (c) so there is no option. Only Law 32 is broken so green goes back in contact with brown,

white is replaced and turn ends.

Example 2

You are taking croquet from white with green and intend taking off across the lawn to brown which is on the yard line. You accidentally hit white with your mallet, Law 32 (13), also green goes off the court, Law 20 (c). Your opponent declines any penalty under Law 20. Green and white are replaced to their original positions before your croquet stroke and your turn ends.

Note. If the original position of green was inside the yard line area, it is replaced on the yard line in contact with white.

32 (d) If law 32 is broken and no-one notices before the next stroke of your turn it is said to be condoned and there is no penalty.

If you notice but say nothing you are cheating.

32 (e) (1) A hampered shot is one where you need to take special care due to the hoop, a ball or the peg potentially being in your way. Notice potentially. You may not intend to hit the offending object but if you are quite likely to do so, you are probably hampered. If in doubt, ask a referee. This 'potentially' bit is also important in wiring decisions, which I might deal with another time.

32 (e) (2) This was covered in Helpful Hints 5 but is repeated here for completeness.

You must not maintain contact between mallet and ball. This can range from simply playing your stroke too slowly so that your ball rolls along 'pushed' (or 'pulled' if it is towards you) by your mallet, to a blatant 'steering' of your ball in a croquet stroke.

Definitions.

I have used a lot of definitions such as 'fault', 'condoned' etc during the last 3 Helpful Hints. Next time I will look at these and say just what they mean (or not).

Calling a referee

If you are playing in a tournament or match and you are about to play any shot which might cause a fault, always ask your opponent if he or she wants it watched by a referee. Note however that even if your opponent does not want it watched, you should call a referee yourself if you are uncertain about the outcome. If you are a beginner, do not hesitate to ask for a referee for advice on the law (but not on how to play the shot!). Do remember what you are told, however, so that you don't make a nuisance of yourself.

Remember that you are entitled to ask for any shot that your opponent is playing to be watched, even if they do not ask you first. If your opponent is an experienced player and you are not, this does not mean that you cannot stop him or her, but remember that most experienced players will know when to call a referee.

Notes from the Secretary.....

For the last two months I have been kept happy, and very busy, in the office learning to be the Secretary and trying to follow the examples of my predecessors (particularly Brian Macmillan and Tony Antenen) in the great work that they have done for the Association over a number of years. In some ways I am more fortunate than them as I have the marvellous help of two new part-time assistants, Shirley Moore and Hazel Sherrington; already I can see that they are going to be invaluable not only to me, but to associates and all others who call in or telephone the office in the cause of croquet duty. It is our aim that together with Commercial Agent Brian Macmillan, between us we shall be able to answer your every enquiry and respond to (almost) every croquet need! We all look forward to getting to know many more members and enthusiasts over the coming months.

One of my new areas of responsibility is development and liaison with clubs, so I eagerly take this opportunity of inviting you to invite me to visit and meet your members. If this seems rather forward of me, it is just a symptom of my eagerness to find out more about the workings of our affiliated clubs, and to talk to you about both your successes and any difficulties you may be encountering. I hope that a really beneficial exchange of ideas will result through improved communications and understanding.

The next major task in the office will be the dispatch of your 1997 membership packages - membership cards, handicap cards and other information for our centenary year, which officially began in October. I hope you will make the most of our centenary events to celebrate a hundred wonderful years of the Association and the development of our sport.

I certainly want to keep you all in touch with developments within the office, similarly I hope you will let us have your comments about what we offer. It is, after all, your Association and everything we do should be done with that in mind.

Paul Campion

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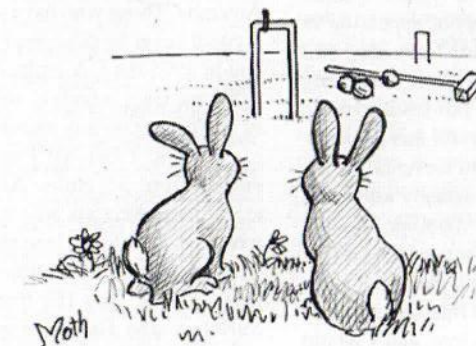
I said I would think about this topic over the winter and I have. As usual, it is not as easy as it first appears, but the following are my thoughts.

In NZ under their Regulation 5A an umpire is allowed to judge 'matters of fact'. The Laws differentiate between 'matters of fact' and 'matters of Law' in that a player can appeal against a referee's decision on a matter of Law, but not on a matter of fact. For example, if a referee rules that you made a double tap and it is the end of your turn, you might have a valid argument that it was in the making of a roquet and therefore not a fault, so the turn should not end; but you have no argument that there was only one sound and he can't hear properly so there was no double tap. You can dispute the legal basis for the consequence of the double tap, but not the actual fact that the double tap happened. Other typical matters of fact are wiring decisions, was a roquet made, faults, replacement of balls off the court etc. This distinction should be clear to players, as it is a fundamental part of their rights, so it is quite a sound basis for distinction between referees and umpires.

So what Laws does the umpire need to know? Fundamentally it is the practical part of our referees' exam, but with some additions. I suggest the relevant Laws are:

Law	Comments
4. Outline of the game.	Need to understand fundamental definitions.
10. Ball off the court.	Rule if ball is on or off the court.
11. Ball in the yard line area.	
12. Replacement of a ball off the court or in the yard line area.	Rule on correct replacement of balls.
13. Wiring lift.	Test and rule if ball is wired and whether a lift is conceded.
14. Hoop point.	Has a ball begun to run the hoop or completed the running.
15. Peg point.	Did it hit or not?
16. Roquet.	Did one ball actually hit the other, which of two balls close together was hit first, is a roquet deemed to have been made for example after replacement of a ball off the court?
17. Hoop and Roquet in the same stroke.	
18. Consequences of a roquet.	
19. Placing the balls for a croquet stroke.	
22. Ball moving between strokes.	Has implications for decisions under some laws above.
24. Interference with a stroke.	Principle is as for a wiring due to a hampered swing, so an umpire could decide.
31. Definition of stroke and striking period.	
32. Faults.	

An Umpire on Call acts as a referee on Call within the restriction that he adjudicates only on matters of fact. I suspect that this is rather more involved than may have been thought by the initial proposers. It might be possible to reduce the scope of these powers, but the problem is that if we move away from the quite simple distinction between fact and law, we will create confusion as to when an umpire will suffice, and instead of improving things we may just cause chaos. However, a system like this does work in New Zealand, so there is precedent. It would be interesting to establish if there is a sufficient demand for or interest in becoming this type of umpire for Laws Committee to develop a training course and an examination. Perhaps each club Secretary could put a brief notice on their board in the club to ask for interested parties at the start of the season and forward the list to the CA office.



I think it's some sort of trap, but I can't figure out how it works.

CROQUET ASSOCIATION NATIONAL INDIVIDUAL COMPETITIONS

All England Handicap Final Southwick 21 - 22 September 1996 Report & photos by John Bevington

The All England Handicap was inaugurated in 1923, and was apparently referred to in some quarters as the Grand National. The CA certainly cracked the whip; the first competition was launched in mid-May and clubs had to finish their own competitions by the end of June. 529 players from 48 clubs entered (fee 2/6d), and area winners received a silver medal and a sovereign. Ten of the thirteen area finalists met at Roehampton in early August, and the first winner was J. P. Hubbard (4.5) from Sleaford. The All England still attracts the biggest entry in the calendar and remains the premier handicap competition, but although it may be national its standing no longer seems very grand.

There are several reasons for this. Few players today have the time to play as much as they would like, and a club's own handicap championship will often attract more support than the internal competition for the All England. Handicap play also appears to have an increasingly limited appeal to more advanced players. John Solomon alluded to this when presenting the trophy after this year's final, and made the point that although a good player might find the handicap game dull and unrewarding it still represented a worthy challenge (he once reached the All England final playing off -4). It also offers weaker players the opportunity to learn from much better ones. About ten years ago, as a nervous beginner, I played Colin Irwin and Phil Cordingley in handicap tournaments at West Park. Like the best of the BBC it was informative, educational and entertaining, even in defeat.

The All England also receives scant attention in the pages of the Gazette, which was one of the themes of the January 1996 editorial. The record of the 1995 final was typical: a rather fuzzy photo and a skimpy report, appearing in separate issues. Invitation events and championships, on the other hand, invariably have extensive reports with full results, often with photographs. The reasons for this disparity are obvious. At advanced rules events all the players and management are usually known to each other, the venue will be familiar, and the importance of the results and the need for a report (usually written by one of the participants) is understood. At the All England final the complete opposite is more likely to be true, and I would suggest that in future the club hosting the final



John Solomon, CA President, presents 1996 All England Handicap Champion Lisa Jones of Bristol with the winner's trophy.

should also be responsible for providing a full illustrated report. This would be of interest to all handicap players and is no more than the competition deserves.

There are some well-known current players amongst past All England winners, including Michael Heap when -2 and Nigel Aspinall off -4 (in case anyone thinks they are slipping it should be remembered that handicaps were raised by two bisques in 1974). The record of the last ten years reveals an early success for David Goacher, particularly impressive when playing off 0.5, and wins for brothers David and Richard White in successive years:

1986 R. England (10)	1991 C. Wood (9)
1987 D. Goacher (0.5)	1992 S. Harbron (14)
1988 R. Southgate (5)	1993 P. MacGowan (6)
1989 D. White (10)	1994 P. Matthews (16)
1990 R. White (10)	1995 I. Lines (8)

For a long time the winner had only memories to take away, but in 1951 Robert Tingey donated a trophy he had won at an event celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of croquet in Australia. Those who have seen it will know that it could never be described as a thing of beauty, and in 1995 the CA replaced it with the Trevor Williams Cup, which is old, silver and worthy of star billing on any mantelpiece.

The 1996 All England attracted 357 entries from 35 clubs. After the preliminary stages there were six area finals, held on the last weekend in August, and three weeks later the winners arrived at Southwick for the national final. Martin Gay (6) from Woking won the Surbiton area final. He and his father were introduced to the game at a summer school at

Ardingly in 1991. Martin played in the Junior Championship at Bowdon three years ago, and was hoping to emulate the achievement of his club secretary Peter MacGowan who won in 1993. Johnathon Simon (3) is a member of the Blewbury club, between Oxford and Newbury, and won the area final at Harrow. He has been playing for ten years, with a two-year break, and was part of the winning team in the 1989 National Schools Championship. Barney Lewis (11) from Tunbridge Wells, has been playing for four years and admits to a dread of long roquets. He won the Southwick area final, his most memorable moment of which, apart from winning his bronze award, was losing to a 16.

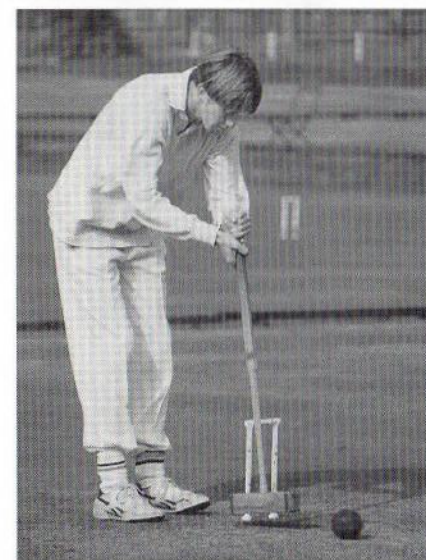
John Bevington (5), playing since 1986, won the West Park area final on home ground. His best and worst ever croquet moments occurred in the same game: in the concluding doubles of the 1990 Longman Cup final he got to 4 back in the third turn, made 4-back and penultimate in the fifth and was peeled through rover and pegged out in the eighth. The game and match were lost. Robert Essler (8) made the long journey south after winning the area final at his home club, Pendle. Robert started playing at Cambridge University in 1972, but stopped after graduation and took up the game again seven years ago on his return from working abroad. Lisa Jones (9) from Bristol, winner of their own area final, has been playing for six years. She dislikes playing in the rain and gets anxious when pegging out and doing long take-offs to boundary balls. With hindsight I would have been well advised to have elicited this last piece of information before our game.

The final was arranged as a single American block, with three games on Saturday

and two on Sunday, with three-hour time limits and no double-banking. As the handicaps varied from 3.5 to 11 the full bisque base 12 regulation was not required. The weather was windy and cool, but the sun shone intermittently and the rain held off on both days. Brian Teague explained the time limits, bags, balls and bisques were collected, coins were tossed and play commenced. Brian was deputising as manager for Bill Arliss, who was in turn deputising for Chris Williams. Chris was out of the country, and Bill had the best of excuses for a temporary absence as he was at that very moment in the process of winning the Ionides Cup at Compton's South of England Week.

In the first game to finish Lisa Jones beat John Bevington +24. It was a quick death, but it should have been +26. After two immaculate turns, finishing with a rover peel, Lisa played a croquet stroke to get a rush on yellow to the peg, but the croqueted ball came to rest just behind her own ball leaving her with a hampered stroke which missed. John's reply got as far as hoop 3, where a tentative roquet on the pioneer was followed by an over-enthusiastic backward take-off and disaster. On lawn 2 Robert Essler beat Martin Gay +21, and on the faster lawn 4 Barney Lewis held off Johnathon Simon to win +10.

After lunch, and a visit from CA Secretary Tony Antenen and Syd Jones (immediately pressed into service as a referee), Lisa had a rather closer win against Barney by 6 in a game that, according to the observers, Barney ought to have won. Robert also maintained his form by beating Johnathon +17, and John recovered some of his composure with a +10 win against Martin, aided by some reliable hitting-in and Martin's propensity to attempt hoops from rather further away than was advisable. During the short tea break Brian could be seen checking hoops, which were commendably firm and tight enough to punish loose approaches. The lawns themselves were in wonderful condition considering the lateness of the season, being smooth and true, but corner pegs would have been appreciated. The view



Johnathon Simon in play at Southwick



All England Finalists 1996. Back L to R: Johnathon Simon, Barney Lewis, John Bevington. Front L to R: Robert Essler, Lisa Jones, Martin Gray.

from the middle of the lawn sometimes ends in a false horizon, so without the pegs the final resting place of a ball aimed just outside the corner can be open to doubt. As everyone was playing positively cornering was relatively rare, but several corner cannons were played, varying by degree in alignment and success.

The third round started a little late and it became clear that if any games went to time pegging down might be necessary. Not for Barney Lewis, who beat Martin Gay +26 and in the process gained his silver medal to go with a bronze won at the area final a fortnight before. There may be triples ahead... John Bevington was well in front against Robert Essler when an attempt at peeling yellow through 4-back landed on the wire. In attempting to put red (also for 4-back) just through to leave a single ball target the ball stuck in the hoop, wired from yellow. Robert shot with black from the middle of the lawn but missed, whereupon John played red gently back through the hoop. Robert then shot with blue (for hoop 2) at black and missed, but took his last bisque, managed to roquet yellow away from the wire and after approaching the hoop from a distance caught up with a good break. Both this game and that between Lisa Jones and Johnathon Simon were pegged down.

On Sunday morning John and Robert played the remaining 15 minutes of their game. Robert was carrying two injuries: a cut finger sustained the previous evening and indigestion caused by having to rush his breakfast in order to make the earlier starting time. Nevertheless he managed to win by 4 on time after two failed attempts to run rover denied him the chance of pegging out. Johnathon's delayed arrival meant that the finish of his pegged-down game against Lisa, which was at a critical stage, had to be postponed until after the next round. This saw the two favourites, Lisa and Robert, playing each

other in what was likely to be the crucial game, since Robert had three wins and Lisa would also have three if she won the pegged-down game. Lisa eventually won +5 on time in what, from occasional glances, looked like a war of attrition with the balls encamped like opposing armies on opposite sides of the lawn. While these games were in progress the sight and sound of two maroons signalled the launching of the local lifeboat. Martin might have wished it was coming to his aid as he went down for the fourth time, on this occasion to Johnathon by 9. In the other game John Bevington went round from hoop 3 to snatch victory from Barney Lewis +3. After lunch the pegged-down game was decided in Johnathon's favour by +5 on time, so going into the last round Lisa and Robert had three wins each, Martin none and the rest two.

Lisa then got both hands firmly on the cup by demolishing Martin +24. Although Robert beat Barney +14 on time his loss against Lisa proved decisive. In the other game John took advantage of the receipt of one and a half bisques from Johnathon to take a break to penultimate, and kept control to win +14, a performance marred by missing two short shots when under the critical gaze of John Solomon who was watching from the shelter of the hut adjoining lawn 5. And so to tea and the prize giving, where John Solomon presented Lisa with the Trevor Williams Cup and the New Zealand Tray, and we all applauded a very worthy winner. If you are drawn to play Lisa next season and she has a bisque or two, do not be tempted to end your turn with an attacking leave too early in the game. You may be ready for lunch long before it is ready for you.

Participants are not always best placed to comment objectively on the standard of play, but there were plenty of good things to see: many long breaks, intelligent bisque management, consistent hitting in, some wired leaves and the odd peel. These outweighed the unforced errors, such as the missed three-yarder, the timid take-off and the misjudged split half roll that leaves the rush pointing in the wrong direction. And, yes, we probably all tried a hoop too far and took a tactical decision we later regretted, but even minus players have been known to do such things once in a while.

Finally, with many thanks to Brian, Bill, Chris and everyone at Southwick for looking after us all so well, and also to Alan Oldham for supplying historical information, a plea for as many of you as possible to enter the All England Handicap in 1997, in what will be the Croquet Association's centenary year. Anyone is eligible - you do not have to be an Associate nor even a member of a registered club (something clubs themselves might consider publicising locally). The handicapping system theoretically gives everyone an equal chance, and it only costs £2 to enter.

It could, just possibly, be you.

The All England Golf Croquet Finals

Colchester 22nd September 1996

report & photo by Syd Jones

This was the first year that this Croquet Association competition has been run and the final held at Colchester Croquet club on Sunday 22nd September.

It was expected that there would be six players in the final but one club, which shall be nameless, forgot that they had entered, so the five players assembled on the day for the competition expertly organised by Pat Hetherington.

The event was run as a block with each match as a best of three, 13 point games. The winner was Jeremy Scott, of Letchworth Croquet Club, incidentally the only player giving bisques. The cup was presented by Syd Jones, Chairman of the Golf Croquet Committee, who hoped that now this event had started that we get even more entries next season to establish it as a regular CA competition.

Thanks from the Golf Croquet committee go to Pat Hetherington and all the other ladies from the club who provided marvellous hospitality and made it a great day for everyone present.

National Short Croquet Final Solihull 22nd September 1996

report by A.J. Lovett

The competition went very well and a good day was enjoyed by all. The weather was fine, a few warm sunny spells but in the main a chill East wind made conditions rather more cool than desirable for playing croquet.

The four block winners in the morning with three wins each, were William Winham, Trevor Billard, Chris Bennett and Philip Tidswell.

In the afternoon the winners were Trevor Billard on a tie-break with William Winham, 2 wins each; Tony Tizzard on a tie-break with Tom Sampson, 2 wins each; James Mackay on a tie-break with David Earl, 2 wins each; Keith Noble with 3 wins.

Therefore I had the pleasure of presenting the trophy to the current holder Trevor Billard, who retained his title. I also presented each of the four afternoon block winners with a £ 5 prize as requested.

1996 Croquet Classic Competition Solihull 28th September 1996

report & photo by Chris Hudson

There was a disappointing entry for this year's Croquet Classic, with only three clubs organising a preliminary round. A pity, because this event provides an excellent opportunity for new club members to gain experience of competitive play, free from the formality of a normal tournament.



Jeremy Scott with the cup surrounded by fellow players, Derek Burton, Tony Goode, Rosemary Longbottom and Joy Goff, with Syd Jones and Pat Hetherington.

As it was, six players arrived at Solihull to contest the final, two from each club, and it was decided to play the event as an all-play-all. For September, the day was remarkably hot and sunny, and the players found the lawns fast and tricky.

A strange feature this year was a noticeable tenseness amongst the players in the early stages, perhaps brought on by the difficult playing conditions. Ian Tupling, from Penrith benefited from his experience, and was the first player to regain his assurance. This began to show in his results, when he became the first player to finish a game within the one hour time limit.

When hoops were drawn, Ian was the outright winner with 5 wins. Liz Batin from Woking just got her nose in front to become runner-up by beating Ted Thwaites (Cumbria) in the penultimate round. Liz had five low scoring games, but the lowest game score was Michael Hague's 3 -2 win over John Munroe. The efforts of the Solihull club members in laying out the lawns for us were very much

appreciated, and a very pleasant day was rounded off by the winner treating us all to tea - thank you Ian.

Results

- 1 Ian Tupling (Cumbria) 5 wins
- 2 Liz Batin (Woking) 3 wins
- 3 John Munroe (Blewbury) 2 wins
- 4 Michael Hague (Woking) 2 wins
- 5 Richard Brockbank (Blewbury) 2 wins
- 6 Ted Thwaites (Cumbria) 1 win

1996 Golden Mallet Competition Solihull 29th September 1996

report by Chris Hudson, photo by Brian James.

Thirteen clubs and a WI group from Cornwall entered this year's Golden Mallet competition. The four northern clubs in a regional competition organised by Croquet North, Margaret Macfarlane organised the ladies down in Cornwall. The other clubs were split into two regional finals which were held at Guildford &



1996 Croquet Classic finalists. L to R Back: Ted Thwaites, John Munroe, Ian Tupling. Front: Michael Hague, Liz Batin, Richard Brockbank.

The Tournament Review

The Reports & Results Supplement of the Croquet Gazette

Vol. 3 No.2

January 1997

Woking Spring Handicap Weekend

26-28 April 1996

report by The Danby Duo

All games were fiercely contested in the blistering heat so familiar to those fortunate enough to live in the leafy suburbs of this select stockbroker belt.

The Manager's recommendation for shortened games seemed to go down well with everyone, enabling up to five games a day to be played by some people. The Egyptian format worked very successfully and over the three days an impressive 72 games were played on the three courts in use.

The Manager assumed a non-playing role - this had nothing to do with seeing the strength of the entries (he said!) The final day's play saw a competitive end to the tournament: father and son battled it out late into the evening. It eventually took young Danby junior to finally get age and experience banged to rights, by just

edging a narrow 18-1 victory. Virtually all entrants signed up for a very enjoyable social evening spent over dinner at a local hostelry.

Many thanks go to the referees who were few and far between, but always very willing. At the end of the weekend the top of the leaderboard was as follows:-

- 1. Tim Danby 119*
- 2. Ian McDiarmid 119
- 3. Richard Danby 117
- 4. Bob Fewtrell 112
- 5. Malcolm Bigg 106

*Tim Danby beat Ian McDiarmid when they played each other early in the tournament.

The Not So Brave New World Parkstone High Bisquers

28 - 30 May

report by Tony Miller

The advertisement on the back of the SWAN (South West Area Newsletter) offered a three

day tournament with six games guaranteed at Parkstone CC. Of particular interest was the handicap range: 16 to 24 with full bisque play to base 10.

At handicap 20, mid range, would I be able to change my handicap without exposure to the wiles and skills of a 7 or 5 as previously?

The first day dawned with dense fog and chilly weather. This was partly dispersed when our genial host Michael Clark (in the guise of Manager) welcomed us. We were not expected to know all the rules and the etiquette associated with double banking. We were to ask for help and advice, how rules applied in certain situations, when to be watched and such like. Beryl Saunders was the quietly firm referee ably helped by John Lonsdale and others as umpires to whom we all owe a debt of gratitude for extending our knowledge and understanding of the rules.

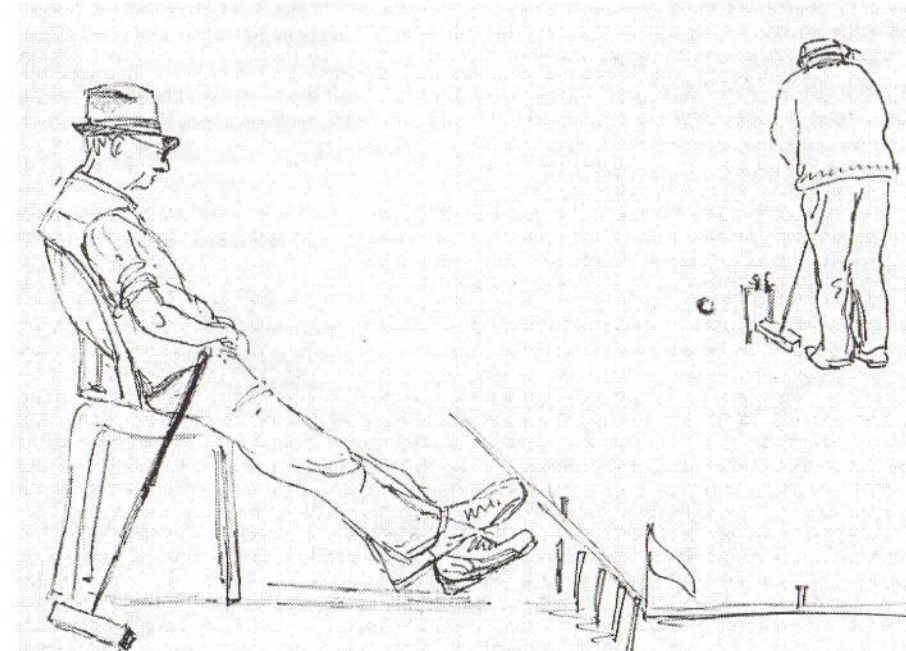
The start was not the confident opening strokes so carefully remembered and practised after coaching. In fact the chilly fog had penetrated body and mind, and balls did not go where intended. "Pressure Shot" seemed to describe every stroke. In my case it was not until the fourth game that I managed to set the balls up in the classic four-ball break positions and run three hoops.

But notwithstanding all the tensions, the ups and downs, hoops run the wrong way and such like, was the tournament a success?

The answer was a resounding 'Yes'. Parkstone received applications from 20 players from 9 clubs. All those at the prize giving very heartily endorsed the vote of thanks offered for putting on such a tournament and providing such helpful and sympathetic officials. The request for another tournament was much applauded.

Jill Lonsdale won all her 6 games and the cup specially donated for the tournament. She was congratulated by the Club Chairman, John Simmonds, who declared Denise Johns second with 5 wins. Four others, Eric Butt, David Perkins, Joy Phillips and Ron Sheppard each won 4 matches.

If other clubs want to encourage high bisquers (16 - 24) to stay with the game, improve



the situation as he lost by 24 and 6(T) to George Williams, who had been in second place in the block.

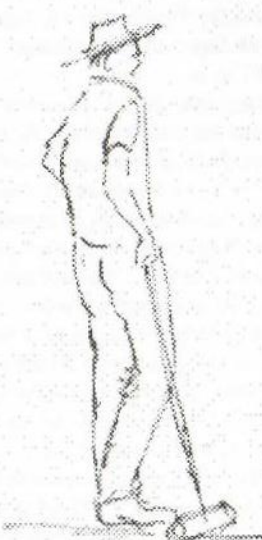
The real veterans, the over 65's, also competed in blocks with the top award going to Hamish Hall, with four wins to Gordon Drake's three. The second block, also played to advanced rules, saw an undefeated Ron Atkinson clearly ahead of the rest of the field with Dorothy Miller in the runner-up spot.

The third group of over 65's were involved in a handicap Swiss event with Jean Nash emerging undefeated after 5 rounds with Jim Martin and Mrs Betty Salmon in second and third place.

And so to the doubles, always a popular and hotly contested event at these championships. This year many of the pairs whose names have appeared on the Sussex Trugs and Gilbert Spoons in recent years found the competition tough and failed even to reach the later stages of the event. Hamish Hall and Diana Brothers, last year's winners, went out in round two to Don Cornelius and Nigel Gray, who subsequently lost to the eventual winners Myra Gosney and Joan who beat Peter Gosney and Mrs Pat Wain in the final.

The Y doubles, for the Gilbert Spoons, seemed to offer a second chance to Hamish Hall and Diana Brothers who reached the semi-final only to go down to Alan Oldham and Bill Gillott. This seemed to put the latter pair in the favourites' position for the final but the Nash family had other ideas and the husband and wife team of Len and Jean eventually held on by +1 to take the trophies.

This brought to an end a most enjoyable week for the participants and an end to the series at Southwick. President John Solomon profusely thanked the Sussex club for their hosting of this event over the past three years. Next year the veterans of the croquet world are summoned to meet at Budleigh Salterton where taking part will be more important than winning as one venerable gentleman said.



Cheltenham July Week

22 to 27 July

report by Peter Darby

Cheltenham's main tournament of the year was directed as usual by Roger and Dab Wheeler. There were five class events, an open handicap and three separate doubles events.

The A class event (The Cheltenham challenge Cup) was won by David Kibble who beat Paul Smith in an interesting final. In David's second break the clips were on 1 and 4-back. At the end the clips were on 4-back and peg. Observers of David's style will not be surprised to learn that he achieved this the hard way by completing 3 peels of a triple and then breaking down at 4-back.

Class B (Money Salver) was won by Peter Darby who beat Bo Harris in the final. Class C (the Asa-Thomas trophy) was won by 16 year old Michael Blackwell from Wolverhampton Grammar who managed to get the better of Don Gugan.

Margarethe Regan beat Louise Bradforth in the D event and after a superb struggle 89 year old John Exell beat Audrey Mead in the E (the Calthrop Cup). Not only that, John with his grandson Tim won the family handicap doubles. John has now won the event three times each with a different member of his family - a unique record.

Cheltenham is proud of its innovative record and this year we introduced alternate stroke handicap doubles. Some did not want to play, but those who did enjoyed it. All doubles finished with Wharrad turns and apart from the book keeping everyone thought these a success. A case in point was the end of the ordinary handicap doubles final between David Foulser and Mitch Watts against Michael Blackwell and Sam Tudor. David and Mitch were 1 down with one turn left. David for peg hit in with a seven yard shot and with a series of accurate shots got partner within peeling distance of its hoop only to see it jam in the jaws. The time taken in discussions was not a factor. Each side knew exactly what had to be done within the allotted turns regardless of how long it took.

The alternate stroke doubles was won by Betty Widdows and Una Atter-Martin who beat Lawrence Whitaker and Les Kershaw in a well fought final. The handicap singles was won by Lisa Jones who beat Peter Darby in the final, Peter bitterly regretting his feeble attempt to peg her forward ball out. The Hands ladder handicap was won by Tim Exell. In one game George Chamberlin ran penult and rover in one shot and then turned round to hit his ball back through rover, missing the ball at rover but hitting the one at penult. Nigel Mottram did a superb TP without bisques in a handicap singles against John Toye.

As always an excellent event well managed and enjoyed by all.



South West of England

Championships

Budleigh Salterton

July 28th - August 3rd 1996

report by Roger Jackman

The August tournament consisted of 3 main events with a multitude of subplots, a new one appearing daily or so it seemed. The Doubles, Handicap and Class events were augmented by an Egyptian, expedition in play competition (yellow Speedy Gonzalez T-shirt), an index improvement competition, a Pirates evening and a One-Ball tournament. This may sound like fitting a gallon into a pint pot but Gail Curry, ably assisted by Mike Hammelev, had it so well organised that it did indeed all work out as scheduled.

On arrival at Budleigh the first task was to read all of the notices. Easy you may think, but Gail had a computer and printer in the managerial cave, hence the walls were plastered, with extras appearing daily throughout the tournament. When large headlines appeared announcing 'Shearer to Newcastle' Dorothy Miller said "who's Shearer?" When the £15M transfer was explained to her she responded "Oh, he's worth as much as Lady Di!"

All games were timed at three hours with a hooter (small, but very noisy) denoting time. It is questionable whether 3 hours is long enough for double banked games on tricky lawns, especially in handicap games, but few people took advantage of starting their games early, and even more decided to shorten their late afternoon games by taking longer for tea.

The Doubles block games were played on Sunday, with the semi-final on Monday morning and the final on Tuesday morning. Audrey & Bob Whitaker won their block with 3 out of 3, the other blocks were decided on who

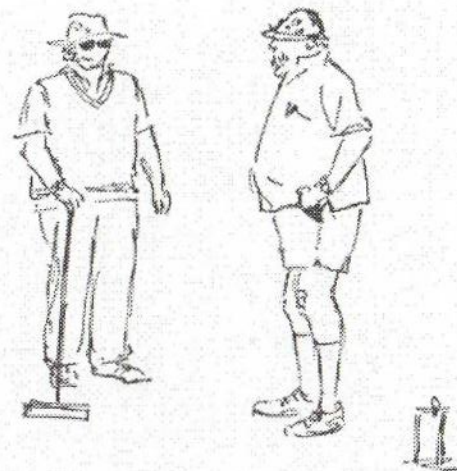
beat whom. Stephen Badger had run three hoops on lawn 10 with his partner's ball before he declared the error. This seemed some very moderate play for a minus player and the seagull critics duly dive bombed him and scored a direct hit on his glasses causing much amusement all round. The semi-finals were fairly typical dour doubles with the finalists finally being Audrey and Bob Whitaker against David & Eileen Magee. With time rapidly approaching David Magee managed to get 4 hoops ahead and separated the balls to far places. Time was blown, but Audrey hit in and made 3-back off the ball in corner 4. She then proceeded to pick up a 3 ball break and ran 4-back and penult, but was fatally hampered, so the Magee's won by that most popular of scores +1T.

The handicap, which was split into eight blocks, ranging from Daffy Duck to Bugs Bunny and all the characters in between. The handicaps ranged from -0.5, of which there were several, to 20, of which there were two. The quarter finalists were Frances Ransom from Sylvester's block, Margaret Selmes from Tweety's block, Stephen Badger from Wile E' Coyote's block, Bob Whitaker from Road Runner's block, Derek Trotman from Daffy's block, Ron Selmes from Speedy's block, June Wankling from Bugs' block and Roland Henderson from Tazz's block. The semi-finalists were reduced to Sylvester, Tweety, Speedy & Bugs, with the final being contested by Speedy & Bugs, with Bugs finally winning +8.

A tournament dinner was held at the club on Wednesday evening and 56 players and club members enjoyed not only a very good meal, but also some very amusing chat. Sun Life generously sponsored this part of the proceedings and their genial representative Louis Ten-Holter joined in the caper.

The class events produce some good play but no triples despite the presence of several players capable of doing so. John Toye was an easy finalist in the A class, winning all 5 of his block games. The match to decide the other finalist was not so clear cut and depended on the outcome of the game between Gail and Ray Ransom. It looked as though it was going to be Ray, but with very little time left Gail hit a lift shot. The turn required to make her go one point ahead was to take a ball round to the peg from two, and peg it out, as well as a peel on the partner ball. This was accomplished some forty minutes after time, leaving Ray with a lift shot to save the game. A hit was scored with the peg ball and having moved his partner ball he made the game level by pegging out his ball. This left the game level, with both parties requiring penultimate. Finally, approximately an hour after time, Ray made the crucial point, and proceeded into the final.

John Toye retained his title in what proved to be two rather lack lustre games. The B class final saw Nigel Betts get a runaway start to peg and rover before his opponent James Wankling had made a hoop. James could only manage six hoops before Nigel ran rover and won. The C class produced the closest of the finals, between



Su Stenhouse and John Wilkinson. There was some good hitting by both players but Su had the better breaks, including a lengthy one in the middle of the game which she maintained by the use of her bisque. She kept her head well at the end of the game when John was beginning to catch up and won by +3. Bob Whitaker and Ian Birdseye contested the D class final, with Bob eventually winning the dour battle +6.

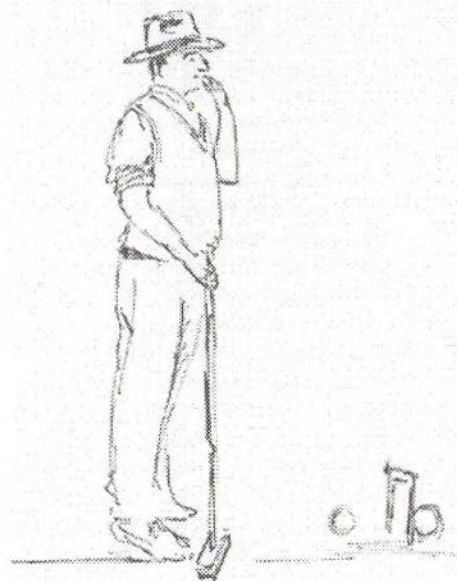
The event ended with traditional Budleigh prize-giving with thanks all round to the many people who had played a part in making the tournament a success. The management is to return next year with some changes and a new theme, so I suspect most of us will return to find out exactly what is in store for Budleigh '97.

Colchester Handicap Weekend

2 - 4 August

report by Pat Hetherington

Warm sunny weather and easy paced lawns contributed to a very happy August weekend tournament. Played in a block, 28 games were



easily fitted into the three days. The most enthralling game was in the final round when a rapidly improving Jim Potter battled against the also improving Peter Allnutt. Watched by a near silent group of spectators, Jim finally won by +1 on time to become outright winner of the John Foreman Trophy and received a handicap reduction from 3 to 2.5 whilst Graham Bond, the runner-up, saw his handicap fall from 5 to 4.5.

7/7 J.G. Potter

6/7 G Bond

5/7 P Allnutt

4/7 R Harris

2/7 Mrs I Brazier, Mrs V Lester and J.G. Williams

0/7 Mrs B Carter

Parkstone Handicap Weekend

3 - 4 August

report by J Simmonds

Saturday: 9.30 am and fourteen players at Parkstone to pay the handicap weekend. Sunny weather and fast green lawns - a speciality at this club. Three games to play on Saturday, a late finish expected.

Sunday: Sunny again and leaves falling faster. Only one player with three wins on the first day so Penny Simmons was the one to beat. After the first game in the morning Penny on four wins and three players on three.

Round 5 - Penny Simmons v David Price

Charles Trimmer v Paul Rowcliffe

Results - David Price +3, Paul Rowcliffe +9T

As David had beaten Penny and Paul he was declared the winner on who beat whom. Best remark overheard at Sunday lunch when roast pork was on the menu: "I don't like pork - have you got any ham?"

Compton Open Weekend,

Eastbourne, Aug 3 - 4 1996

report by Roy Wallis

In near-perfect weather on very good lawns, 12 competitors, more than half of whom were scratch or better, enjoyed some entertaining croquet. Nevertheless, many of the players were more than a little distracted by the adjacent county cricket match, and, when they were the out-players, ran off to peep at the scoreboards or to watch the dogged batting of the Sussex cricketers as they beat the league leaders, Yorkshire. (Yorkshire got their revenge on the Sunday in the 40-over, one-day, 'pyjama game' match.)

With such a high profile event in the croquet calendar, players were a trifle disappointed that there was no streaker, as some of them had not managed to attend the tennis at Wimbledon or the polo at Windsor and had not witnessed such a sight. Perhaps it is a measure of the public knowledge of croquet that we are not graced with the enhancements that other sports enjoy.

Local players, Dennis Shaw and Roy

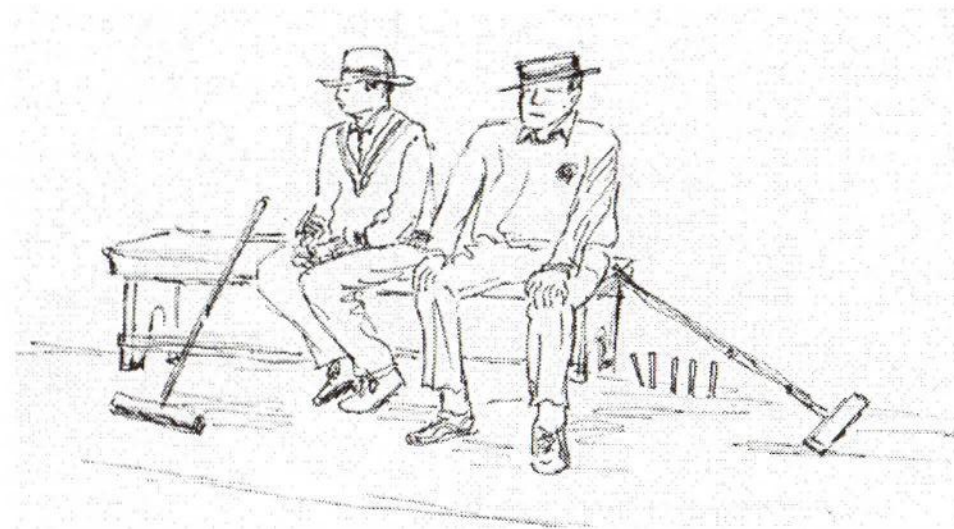
Wallis, played well enough, but finished some way behind the visitors, the all-day, best-of-5 COWHORN final being contested by George Noble and Jerry Guest - both from Surbiton (George beat Jerry by 3 games to 2), and the consolation Swiss, the COWBELL, being won by Phil Cordingley from Harrow Oak with 5 wins.

Several of the players have been coming to this event almost since its inception in 1978, and one, David Wiggins, remembers coming to Compton as a child with his father, Bobby, more than 25 years ago. So does Geoffrey, his older brother, who visited on the Sunday to watch progress. However, though he remembers the club and surroundings fairly well, he seems to have been immune from the croquet bug to date, and had to have the play explained to him by David. As lawns became free later in the day, David was seen to be coaching Geoffrey, who showed some (not unexpected) ability at the roquet. Does this signal another Wiggins in the game?

The highest handicapped player, Rodney Parkins (6) from Tunbridge Wells, who tentatively entered for the experience, by no means disgraced himself and, by very careful play, beat two players and made the others fight hard for their victories.

Those who have participated in the event will know that there is an award for the Ace Peeler (a bobby's helmet, naturally), but there were only three separate triples and the trophy was not awarded this year. It was also impossible to decide a runner-up in the Swiss, as the usual criteria did not really have any statistical significance. An interesting suggestion by the winner (the Olympics still being contested) was to follow the weight lifting procedure, which is that, in the event of a tie, the lighter contestant wins. This would have made Graham Fowler a clear runner-up, since his rivals were Kevin Carter and David Wiggins, but the idea was abandoned amid fears that it could lead to an outbreak of Anorexia Nervosa among croquet players. So the stick of Eastbourne rock was donated to the children of Joe King, who had come to see their Dad struggling in his final match. His daughter constantly reminded him that, "After all, it's only a game."

Though Adrian Wadley, followed around the court by his faithful bum-bag, soundly beat



the writer, he was a little disconcerted by the running of hoop 5 from three yards and from a highly angled position. (It was a shot born of despair, and the return roquet from somewhere near the north boundary missed anyway.)

Unfortunately, Roger Wood was the non-playing manager as there was an odd number of entrants, except that he stood in for Richard Hilditch in his last match, doing little to help Richard's virgin score as he was the only player not to have sampled the speed of the lawns over the weekend. Roger desperately tried to find a reason to present an OXO cube, which he held in reserve, to the BSE, but could think of no suitable bovine acronym and considered that the suggestion of 'Bull S**ter Extraordinaire' both offensive to participants and insulting to the receiver.

Irish Open Championship Carrickmines 3 - 10 August
report by Nial McInerney

As customary the Irish open croquet championship took place in Carrickmines during the first week of August. Unusually this year the number of entries was down due to summer holidays and a smaller number of overseas visitors. Once again the tournament was very successful followed by the traditional end of week dinner which was attended by some 50 persons. The competition commenced on Saturday for home based players thus relieving any potential match pressures later in the week.

Handicaps, and in particular chief handicapper Simon Williams, attracted the by now perennial negative criticism. Carrickmines members are reasonably well penalised thanks to Simon, however members from other clubs tend not to suffer the same regular handicap reductions largely because Simon is not around to assess their ability and can only evaluate handicaps of infrequent appearances at Carrickmines. Despite all that the handicap axe was wielded with authority and totally liberally almost leading to a hospital visitation by Simon.

The main event - the championship - was won by Ronan McInerney who at 18 was the youngest ever winner and also a defeated finalist in each of the previous two years. Ronan beat Scottish International Malcolm O'Connell +6 +22 in the best of three final. A very notable feature of the championship was the limited number of triple peels despite very deceptive lawns. The major surprise of the championship was the defeat of the holder Ed Cunningham in the preliminary round by Michael O'Shaughnessy. This match had all the hallmarks of a three game thriller but a number of mistakes by Ed, punished by Michael, allowed Michael to win the second game and the match.

In the first semi-final Michael could not repeat his earlier form and lost by two games to one against Malcolm O'Connell. The other semi-final was noticeable for the number of mistakes and missed opportunities. Ronan luckily won the first game against Simon Williams and went on to win the second.

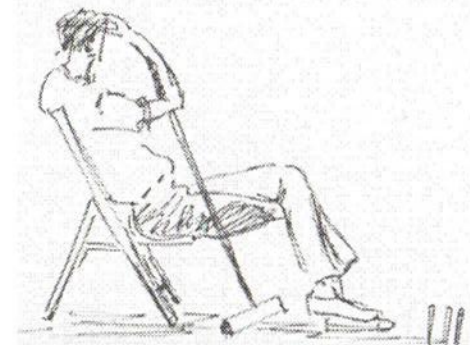
The final was a two game affair. Nervousness on both players' parts resulted in a lot of missed shots and very influid croquet. The first game could have gone to either player. The second was more decisive with Ronan having the extra edge helped by his victory in the first game.

Malcolm retrieved some glory however by partnering Simon Williams for a decisive +26TP win in the open championship doubles final against Ronan and Alan McInerney.

The handicap matches provided a number of new winners with Mark McInerney (younger brother of Ronan and Alan) and at 13 years of age the youngest winner of a trophy winning the over 5 level play Green cup.

Unlike the heat wave conditions of summer 1995 which resulted in glass-like lawns, conditions were slower making for truer shooting and ball positioning. Hoops however were fair - but not presidential.

Results: Open singles
round 1: M O'Shaughnessy bt R Flood +26 +4.
round 2: M O'Shaughnessy bt E Cunningham +5 +5, M McInerney bt A Brown +13 +6, M O'Connell W/O L Tibble bt G Healy +1 +21 S



Williams W/O S Stenhouse bt R Hobbs +18 -1 +16 J Shorten bt S Strong +4 +5 R McInerney bt R Barklie -16 +15 +4 Qtr Final: M O'Shaughnessy bt M McInerney +22 +17 M O'Connell bt L Tibble +12 +13 S Williams bt S Stenhouse +20 +24 R McInerney bt J Shorten +16 +25 Semi Final: M O'Connell bt M O'Shaughnessy -14 +17 +25 R McInerney bt S Williams +3 +3TP Final: R McInerney bt M O'Connell +6 +22.

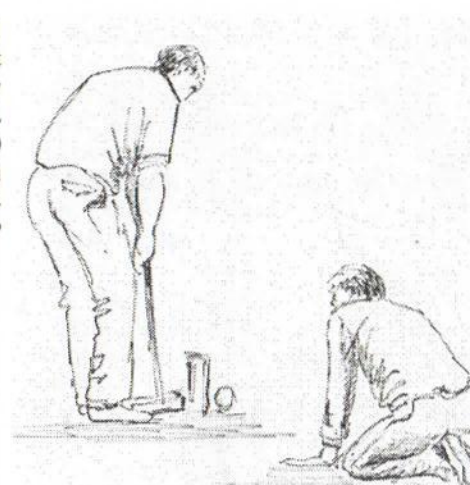
Hurlingham Week 3rd -11th August 1996
report by Simon Cawdell

Another Mallet goes missing!

Picture the scene; lawn 4 on a sunny Saturday evening. Contented spectators amble round the edge of the court sipping their drinks below the Georgian vista of Hurlingham House. Your reporter, doubling as assistant manager, is playing a leisurely semi-final in the handicap Y against Audrey East. He takes the opportunity to work on the order of play for finals day, pausing only to extract the odd bisque (Audrey is playing well). Finally, he emerges as she lays up at peg and rover to take what looks as though it is his last shot, and reaches for his mallet.....Mallet gone! Calls go out for a missing Pidcock, but to no avail. In the meantime an ownerless Hogan is found by the manager's tent. It did eventually reappear the following afternoon accompanied by a very apologetic Hurlingham member, new to the game, who took his tutorial on the difference between a Hogan and a Pidcock with good grace. Veronica Carlisle, a previous victim of a different mallet napper commented that she thought it odd when she saw the offender disappearing with Pidcock when she knew he had just purchased a new Hogan earlier in the week!

The week was full of enjoyable incident. The mens', ladies' and mixed doubles were played over the first weekend as an X/Y knockout. The first of the week's 6 TPs (Eardley 3, Brown 2, Solomon 1) occurred in the men's doubles as Philip Eardley, playing with David Wickham, succeeded in pegging out Philip Pawson. Unfortunately he also pegged himself out. TPO became OTP. When asked for his view for the report Philip's comment was "B*%!&*s." David Mooney and Anne Robillard had the bad luck to lose two games of mixed doubles by 1 on time with all four balls having been for peg in both games.

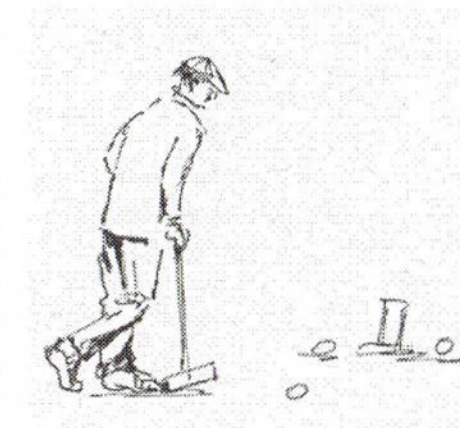
The preliminary round of the class events (other than the D class) where played as a modified Swiss which allowed some merging between classes. This was done by staggering the starting scores of the classes by 2 so that by round three those in the B and C classes who had won both games were eligible to play people in a higher class who had won none. It worked well and allowed players performing well in lower classes a chance of gaining notable scalps. The biggest beneficiary of this was Geoff Cuttle who was in the B class, and had three games against A class



opposition, from seven rounds, winning two of them. Not surprisingly he trounced all opposition to win the B class playoff. The A class proved very tight, with Robin Brown, defending champion and manager, only just qualifying (having had a game against a B class opponent), along with Ian Plummer, Philip Eardley, and Roger Best.

The handicap was played in blocks, with winners going through to the Silver Jubilee Cup and runners up to the Baillieu Plate. Philip Eardley achieved his second TP of the week, this time to beat Mike Lambert with 7.5 bisques standing. It was a lesson unlikely to be forgotten. Plummer complained to the ROT that the hoops were too wide having been beaten twice by 26. Inevitably he then lost his next game by 25 after sticking in hoop 2.

Semi-finals began on Friday evening, and should have seen Brown out of the Hurlingham Cup. Best won the first game, and was recovering from 1 and 1 against peg and peg in the second when he had an aberration and took his first ball right round to peg and left joined up, giving away a contact. Another semi-final of note occurred in the Silver Jubilee, Malcolm Bigg(5) playing Archie Peck (2 USCA). After a tight game Archie completed his time turn for Penult and Peg, leaving Malcolm for 2 back and 4 back with the balls in or near 2nd, 3rd, and 4th corners, and 3 yards south of rover. With his



backward ball behind rover he proceeded to hit in on the ball in 2nd corner, and took off in an attempt to get behind the ball in 3rd corner. This failed, and he then went to 4th corner, again failing to get the rush. He then split rolled to 2 back and ran it from 4 yards angled, leaving a shot to his reception ball near 1st corner. He then rolled to 3 back and ran it. A split shot to penult and 3rd corner followed. After the roll up to 4 back it was perfectly straight forward. He continued round to peg, whereupon he proceeded to peg out in order to level the game, and forced the manager to intervene as a spectator referee, informing him that he was not entitled to do so as his partner was not a rover. His opponent went on to win the event.

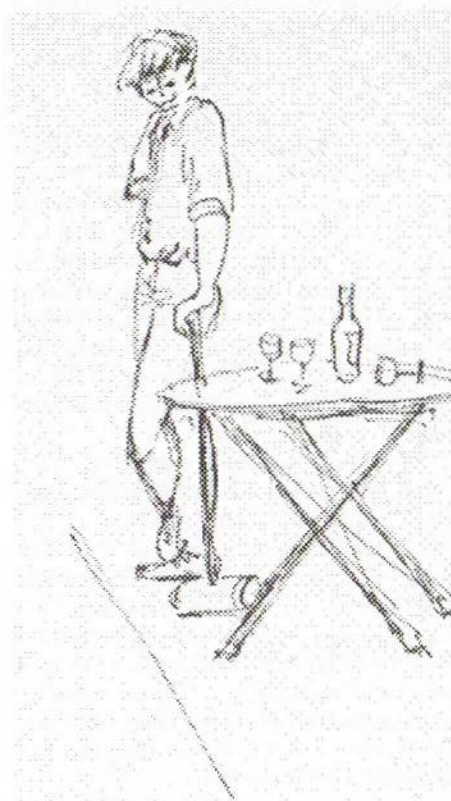
Finals took place on Sunday, bringing a crop of close games. The men's doubles was hardest fought, Brown and Cawdell losing by 1 to Fathers and Calender in a one-ball finish after Brown intentionally pegged both Fathers and himself out leaving both remaining balls for 4 back. The strategy looked sound, especially when Cawdell was for Peg with Callender still for 4 back, but a combination of brilliant hitting by Callender, and two missed peg-outs from 10 feet and 4 feet by Cawdell changed the game. The doghouse door remains bolted.

Elsewhere the 'C' class was won by David Ruscombe King in a close game, the 'D' class by Lily Schayek. The Ladies doubles was won by Audrey East and Sue Best. Sue reached the play offs of all four events, resulting in the customary managerial headache! The Hurlingham Doubles was won by Digby Bridges (another popular USCA visitor) and Pauline Healy, and the Mixed Handicap by John Lindsey and Bronagh Reid. Following recent tradition the manager (Brown) won the A class, beating Philip Eardley with a candidate for the wettest TP of the summer as the heavens opened for the first time in the week.

A most enjoyable week was had by everyone, and many thanks were offered to our Hurlingham hosts. We are looking forward already to August 1997.

Crawley Croquet Club 50+ Handicap Tournament 7 - 8 August
report by Jean Nash

Fine weather, fast lawns and a friendly atmosphere summarised the second Crawley tournament for the 50's and over. Handicaps ranged from 2 to 20, the winner being a founder member of the Crawley Club - David Williams (7), closely followed by Brian Rees (11) of Surbiton and Keith Noble (14) of High Wycombe. After several years absence from croquet, owing to ill-health, it was wonderful to see David back in fighting mood again. His name will be the first to appear on the silver trophy presented to Crawley Club by Len & Jean Nash for this annual tournament.



Guildford & Godalming Weekend 10 - 11 August report by Richard Hilditch

The main open weekend at Guildford and Godalming only attracted 8 entrants this year. Following heavy rain the lawns were pretty slow but the rain itself held off until the Sunday. The first semi-final saw Richard Hilditch overcome local hero Graham Gale in three games. I was lucky to hit on the 4th turn in each game and get a lead. The other half saw holder Pete Trimmer come though easily. In the best of five final Hilditch was able to take advantage of the lunch break at the cider house to sneak the 3rd game off Pete after he failed a TPO at rover. Pete won 3-1 to retain the trophy but was hardly convincing, he did not seem strongly motivated having to play nobody better than a 3.5 handicap.

Wrest Park Advanced Weekend August 10 - 11 1996 report by John Bevington

Visitors to Wrest Park's August Tournament have become used to sharing the park with various summer events staged by English Heritage. Last year it was rehearsals for a classical concert, this year we had a Regency weekend, with a tented village occupied by what appeared to be descendants of the Sealed Knot. Cannons were fired at irregular intervals at the far end of the formal canal known as the Long Water. Some were heard to express the view that it was a pity

that the bagpipers could not have been banished there as well.

If the opening of the tournament had been serenaded by music it would have come from an earlier period and been scored by Handel. After heavy overnight rain there was an early morning deluge which left the lawns flooded, but they drained quickly and play commenced only an hour late, much to manager Jon Watson's relief. Alex Leggate made light of the conditions to record the first triple peel against David Tutt. The sun returned and stayed with us for the rest of the weekend. In the next round David Lilly brought off a TPO when playing John Wheeler to claim a gold award. Brian Hallam and Ed Duckworth were winning consistently but others were finding the tight hoops getting in the way of extended breaks. In the third round John Bevington lost by 2 to Tom Anderson after being pegged out. Next time he might not be quite so energetic in fielding his opponent's ball when ahead with time about to be called! Pints and postmortems in the Star and Garter followed.

On Sunday morning Jon Watson punishes John Bevington's late arrival with a triple peel, but his euphoria is supplanted by a managerial crisis when Ed Duckworth beats Alex Leggate to leave them both level with Brian Hallam on five wins each, each one having beaten one of the others. The winner is determined by net points scored, which leaves Leggate rueful and Duckworth the winner.

Peter Allnut and Rod Ashwell both record four wins, Rod's handicap dropping to 3 as a result, and they are followed by George Collin, Graham Fowler, Philip Windred, David Lilly and Ian Mantle with three wins. At the other end of the table John Bevington failed to trouble the scorers and Howard Bottomley, Nigel Gray, Terry Mahoney and Jon Watson managed one win each. In spite of the tricky conditions only 11 of the 54 games went to time (no names, no pack drill). A thoroughly enjoyable weekend, but those intending to come again should remember to bring waterproofs and ear plugs at the very least, for who knows what English Heritage have got planned for next year!

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'Listen Very Carefully - I shall say this only once'

Notes for prospective tournament reporters in 1997 - and a gentle reminder to those who should know better.

Tournament reports should be written and sent to the Secretary of the CA within SEVEN DAYS of the completion of a tournament. Failure to comply with this guideline may result in reports failing to be published. Reports may be forwarded in either handwritten, typed, or disk format (preferably TEXT or ASCII). ALL REPORTS should be accompanied by a copy of the tournament results. For knockout events please include draw sheets. For American blocks, Swiss, and Egyptian formats please supply a list of the top three positions with the number of games won/lost. Order of Play Sheets are not required to accompany reports for publication, but are expected to be sent in to the office together with the results by tournament managers.

Photographs, preferably in print format, of either black and white or colour finish are acceptable for publication. Please detail the subject(s), event and date on the reverse of any photographs submitted. If photographs are required to be returned following publication please print clearly your name and address on the reverse.

Godalming and Southwell by kind permission of the clubs concerned. The support of all these organisations in staging this competition was most welcome.

A feature of this year's event was the high standard of turn out. Everyone looked immaculate in their whites, and provided a splendid example that all croquet players might do well to follow. Also very apparent this year was an improved standard of play, with accurate hitting in, better tactics and stun shots much more in evidence.

At Southwell, there were 12 regional finalists from four clubs - Sapcote, Zeneca Huddersfield, Southwell and Ashby. Mary James (Southwell) just beat Gerry Broomhead (Sapcote) in a play-off to take the winner's medal in a most exciting match. Playing a normal 13 point game, Gerry gave away two hoops with rather careless shots, but pulled the match back to reach six all. Mary made the final hoop from about four feet to take the title when Gerry failed on the previous stroke. The Southwell club provided an excellent tea for all the players, finishing just as planned in time for the cricketers to have their tea.

Five clubs (Thames Valley, Worthing, Winslow, Southwick and Rayleigh WI) were represented at the Guildford & Godalming regional final. Vera Moore (Thames Valley) beat Mavis Lee (Worthing) in the play-off by 7 points to 3. Gerald Mitchell (Thames Valley), Pauline Softly (Southwick), and Di Kemp (Winslow) won through to the national final, but unfortunately Mavis and Pauline were not able to progress to the next round, due to other commitments.

1996 World Golf Croquet Championships Busto Arsizio, Italy 26 ~ 29 September 1996

report & photos by Roy Edwards

I was introduced to croquet in the Fleet air arm in the early 1950's. At Lee on Solent we were fortunate to take over an airfield constructed by the Royal Air Force in the thirties which had had a croquet lawn in the formal garden outside the Officers' Mess. I was taught a six hoop sequence game by a roguish Irish Lieutenant with terms like 'bilge happy' and 'bung free' for having run rover. After the day's flying, with a glass of gin and tonic, it was ideal relaxation on a summer's evening before dinner. Years later, now with British Airways, I taught my family and friends this form of the game on a half sized sloping lawn. I was unbeatable and thought I was rather good (my family thought I made up the rules to my advantage). Divorce brought me to my sisters' at Bowdon and Wow! - a proper croquet club. But what a come down. I was accused of playing the American game and all of my best strokes were declared illegal, especially my shepherded curve ball and my hundred to one stop shot (for deliberate use of the bevel - only



Finalists in the 1996 Golden Mallet Competition held at Solihull.

The national final was held at the Solihull club on 29th September, which was a blisteringly hot day. 16 players took part, and at the end of the preliminary progressive doubles, Barry Mitchell (Zeneca Huddersfield) was well in the lead. His play had been characterised by making long hoops, and as result, games in which he was involved generally finished quickly. One of them actually finished in eight and a half minutes! Another highlight was Ernest Lowthian (Belsay Hall) rolling up to peg out, but falling on inch short on the north side of the peg. His partner, Margaret Macfarlane (Cornwall WI),

was then dispatched by the opposition to the south boundary, well out of the way as they thought. However, she shot at the peg and hit, much to everyone's delight!

Second and third places in the progressive doubles were taken by Anna Mitchell (Thames Valley) and Eileen MacDonald (Tyneside), so they played off to decide who was to play Barry for the title. Eventually Eileen triumphed by 7 points to 4, but she found Barry in overwhelming form in the final to lose by 7-1. Barry thus won the title at his fourth attempt, and took home the Golden Mallet trophy.

the Irwins spotted it). The hoops were disgustingly tight and I was given a handicap of 16.

Why all this preamble? Well I consider myself a croquet player. I enjoy any competitive game on a croquet lawn; advanced association is my favourite but I also enjoy handicap, short, one-ball and golf. I cannot understand the current attack on golf. I think it is the best introduction to the game as it teaches the ball strokes which are difficult enough to begin with, it allows beginners to play competitively at an early stage which maintains their interest. So many have been lost to the game because association seems to be too difficult. I can enjoy a competitive game of golf croquet with my wife which I cannot do with the full game as she has not in the past had the time to develop the extra skills necessary for that game. To those with the skills and time to practise it is not as satisfying as association but it gives pleasure to many who would otherwise be lost to the game. Alan Oldham told

me that the media interest in Italy at the Golf Croquet World Championships was more than the media interest shown at all Association Championships combined in the last ten years. I remember playing demonstration games of association for Granada T.V. and all the Director was interested in was a shoot out at the peg The



Roy on his way to the clubhouse.

golf croquet game as played by the Egyptians is exciting visually, easily understood by the public and could well interest our T.V. producers. Who amongst us would sneer at any source of income for the sport as a whole?

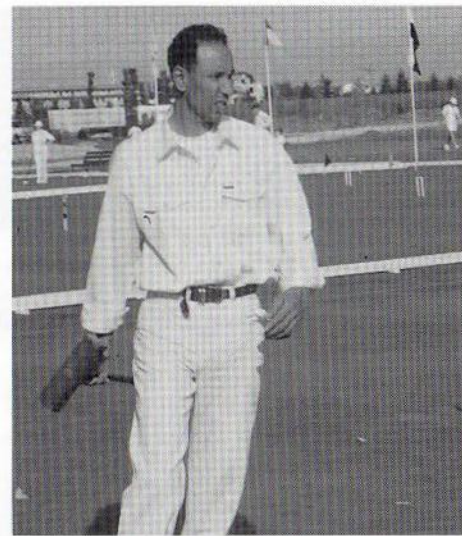
The finalists of the 1995 CA Golf Croquet Championships were invited to represent England in the first official world championships to be held in Milan in September 1996. An unofficial world championships had been held there the year before, the winner and runner-up being Egyptians.

Busto Arsizio, is a very busy small town 20 miles north west of Milan. Just outside the town, alongside the A8 motorway from Milan to Varese is the Golf club Le Robinie, where three years ago a piece of ground was levelled, seeded in a sand base, equipped with an automatic watering system and used for the European championships twelve weeks later.

At the end of the Italian summer I was expecting to see some very brown lawns of a dubious quality, but the three flat lawns were of a standard of a good golf green.

After the reception dinner held at the golf club on the evening of our arrival the referee of the Championship, our own Chris Hudson, ran through the CA rules that were to be used for the tournament. This took some time due to the translations necessary. We were given our programme for the first day of the four day event and Arthur Addis and myself were disappointed to find we were in the same block although all other countries' players, including six Egyptians were in separate blocks so could not knock each other out in early stages.

I had been told by Chris Hudson, who had recently been to Cairo to demonstrate the



Khaled Kasem of Egypt, the 1996 World Golf Croquet Champion.

association game to the Egyptians who only play Golf Croquet, of the power and accuracy of their shooting. I was nevertheless amazed at the distance and angles from which they ran hoops. When you see 45 degree eight yard hoops run you tend to regard it as luck. When such hoop running becomes a regular occurrence one begins to realise the enormity of the task ahead. The amount of shooting required when playing these Egyptians makes the game very tiring indeed.

I reached the quarter finals before being knocked out by last year's winner and this years losing finalist. Charles von Schneider from Ireland was the only non-Egyptian to progress further, being beaten by the same man in the semi-final. We both took one game off him so I think our top players, especially straight hard

hitters like Fulford and Maugham, could win. But would they have the time, inclination or interest in golf croquet at this level? No, judging by the interest shown of late by the top players in our national championships. It is a pity because the splendid cup bears all the top names of croquet over the years since 1904. It is only a few years since Mulliner and Clarke won it. Why not give it a try in 1997? The regional finals will only cost you one Sunday of your time and the rewards will be substantial including a trip to Cairo in October or November where the hospitality threatens to outdo even that of Italy.

The Egyptians have never heard of Fulford but they all use his modified Irish grip and the winner has an almost identical swing as well. They were in their thirties except for the winner who was in his twenties and their lady champion was a grandmother. The General, who managed their team said he had left better players at home!

The championships were extremely well organised and managed. All players and officials were met at the airport and transported to the pre-booked four star hotel. Transport was arranged every day, not only to and from the croquet lawns, but also to restaurants in the evenings. The final dinner was attended by the Egyptian Ambassador, John Solomon, Tony Antenen, Alan Oldham and Syd Jones. The top trophies were magnificent and every player received a prize and present. The speeches were kept short, Fred Rogerson of Ireland, President of the WCF, has the wonderful knack of saying just the right thing at just the right time in a succinct and pleasant way. I hope the event gives Golf Croquet a shot in the arm and look forward to seeing the Egyptians playing Association in the near future.

JERSEY CROQUET CLUB WIN SOUTH WEST FEDERATION ADVANCED LEAGUE

The 'A' team of the Jersey Croquet Club, captained by Tom Weston, won the Parkstone trophy this year, which is the prize for winning the advanced league of the South West Federation.

Jersey beat Plymouth by 6 games to 1 and Bristol by 5 games to 2 in the preliminary rounds. Although losing to Parkstone 4 games to 3 they qualified for the final because of a better average of wins.

The other finalists were the Bear of Rodborough, who got through by beating Cheltenham 4 games to 0, Bath 4 games to 1, Dyffryn 5 games to 4 and Worcester 3 games to 2.

The final, which was played on 6th October at Parkstone was won by Jersey 6 games to 1, which does not reflect how close the individual games were. It was a very exciting and entertaining match and the team of Tony Le Moignan, Matthew Burrow, Tom Weston and Philip Archer are looking forward to defending the title next year.



The Jersey 'A' Team with the Parkstone Trophy. Photo by Tom Weston.

CROQUET ASSOCIATION NATIONAL TEAM COMPETITIONS

Inter-Club Final: Bristol v Bowdon 29 September 1996

report & photo by Ray Ransom

It began with a telephone call. "Hello Ray, it's Jeff Dawson." "Hello Jeff. What can I do for you?" "Who are Bristol playing in the Inter-Club final?" "Bowdon. Why do you want to know?" "I've got the trophy and I've got to get it to Cheltenham by the 29th. I'm going to Manchester in the next few days and I can drop it in on Bowdon on the way." "Fine. Nice talking to you Jeff. Bye for now." "Bye Ray."

This part of the story closed when we arrived at Cheltenham on the morning of the 29th. "Afraid there's no trophy", said Don Gaunt. "It's been stolen." Ah well, funny how these things happen. Still I'd better continue with the real reason why I am writing this report.

The games started at about 11.00am. Bowdon were somewhat weakened by the absence of Colin Irwin due to the burglary whereas Bristol, having chosen its team on acting ability, were at full strength. The 2 singles games progressed rapidly with Bristol (Andrew Symons and Ben Green) having balls round. Ben did have a mishap sticking in 3-back but James Hawkins peeled him with his eyes on the quad. James' turn was however terminated after hoop 1 when he cross-wired himself. At this point Ben had to choose between a 19 yard double with his ball for hoop 1 and a 1 foot roquet with his forward ball. After deliberating for some time, he played with his forward ball and took it to the peg. James missed the lift shot and Ben finished in the next turn. Game 1 to Bristol at 12.05.

Soon after Andrew completed his game to put Bristol 2 up, Brian Storey having failed to capitalise on his one chance.

Entertainment then followed with David Maugham attempting to leap from lawn 1 to lawn 8. (For those of you who do not know Cheltenham, this procedure does not involve jumping over lawns 2 to 7. Lawns 2 and 8 are adjacent.) For the record, David failed and landed in the mud which replaces the grass path between the clubhouse and the Bridge House. David's leap of 2.04 metres did however beat the previous best jump of the 1996 Mac team by a long margin.

Meanwhile the doubles had been progressing slowly. Bowdon (Alan Linton) had



1996 Inter-Club Champions Bristol Croquet Club. L to R Edward Duckworth, Andrew Symons, Ben Green, David Goacher and Raymond Ransom with the 'substitute' trophy.

looked set to complete a break to 4-back but had completely missed a short rush after hoop 3. Shortly after this Bristol (David Goacher) started a break and the spectators settled down to sleep. All went peacefully until after 2-back when David's break was disturbed by a worm that had mistaken the thigh slapping for the patter of rain and had poked its head above ground. At this point David wanted a referee to decide whether the worm constituted an outside agency, special damage or an indifferent lawn. Having been told to get on with it and suffering more verbal abuse from David Maugham, David Goacher snapped and flung the worm towards the opposition. The poor worm expired from a heart attack brought on by the prospect of having its head bitten off by the Beast of Bowdon. David G was immediately shown a yellow card for worm abuse. Twenty minutes later David had arranged his leave and had left the lawn.

By this time the morning singles pairs had changed partners and the games were well under way, this time with first blood to the Bowdon players. Eventually, the doubles game came to an end. Ed Duckworth, continuously stalked by his partner, had reached the peg with one peel and David had then laboriously made the last 2 hoops, in the process running what appeared to be an impossible rover.

As the doubles was finishing, Ben Green was starting a triple. All went well until he ran into partner after a straight rover peel. In attempting to peg out he croqueted partner to just outside B baulk. Brian punished this indiscretion by taking his back ball round but was unlucky to rush a ball into the jaws of hoop

1 after making penult. A tentative take-off left him well short of the rover pioneer which he proceeded to miss. Shortly after Ben pegged out to clinch the match for Bristol. The other match in progress promptly terminated and the others breathed a sigh of relief since the rain was now falling quite heavily.

What then of Don Gaunt? During the match Don had been using all his powers of improvisation and had produced a trophy which he then engraved once the result of the match was known.

Thanks are due to Don for his organisation and to the Cheltenham Club for their hospitality.

Secretary's Shield Final, Nottingham, 6th October, 1996

report by Ian Vincent

The final of the Secretary's Shield, a competition for the winners of regional leagues in the previous year, was held between Bowdon and Northampton, in autumnal conditions at Nottingham. It was keenly contested, though possibly not as entertaining as the other contest between boys of all ages and the squirrels for the conkers from the chestnut tree, expertly refereed by the park keeper. The lawns were apparently deceptively quick, though rather in need of a winter's rest and recuperation.

The morning matches were completed

in reasonable time and all went Bowdon's way. In the doubles, blue made an early break to rover, inviting red to peel it out. The peel stuck, but a good jump shot, followed by a long return roquet and a rush peel, allowed an attempt at an eight yard peg out, which missed by a ball's width. A good few turns later, after some cornering and a few changes of innings, red finally completed the manoeuvre, with black on 2 and yellow on 4. Black failed to score another hoop.

Sandwiches consumed, the second round got underway about 1:30pm. John Anstey wasted no time in reducing the deficit, but the other games made little progress. However, the floodlights were not required, as, unbeknown to the manager, the captains had agreed a 3 1/4 hour time limit, so the spectators were deprived of the anticipated climax. When the points were counted up, Bowdon had won 4-3 and so were presented with the trophy.

**LONGMAN CUP 1996.....
a player's point of view
28~29th September**

report & photos by Judy Anderson

'+1T or first to 4 back = 5 - 0'

The Longman Cup Semi-finals and Final were played at the Club Finals weekend at Cheltenham on 28/29th Sept, 1996. We rubbed shoulders with the Mary Rose Final on the Saturday (Cheltenham beating Ipswich), and the elite Inter-Club Final on Sunday (Bristol and Bowdon). It was difficult to concentrate on own's own game with friends playing alongside.

The first thing I noticed was that there were no obvious "bandits" about - this was a great relief as in my last Longman Cup Final match I had one shot - to put my Ball on the Lawn!

The Cheltenham Lawns were glorious to play on, only some problems with "corners"



1996 Longman Cup Winners Colworth Croquet Club team members
Judy Anderson, Steve Jones, Trevor Williams and Laurie Aspinall.

and "worm casts". The hoops were not tight. It was interesting therefore that so many games had close finishes/went to time/could have gone either way. *The writer would like to make it known that she was "first to 4 back" - before even the Mary Rose.

The Semi-Finals.....

East Dorset beat Dulwich 4 - 1

My E.Dorset correspondent tells me that the match could be described as fairly steady, nothing spectacular. E.D. were 2-0 up at lunch, the match could have "gone either way", but E.D. gradually got into the lead. Ray Cleaver made good breaks in all his matches - the 3 Ladies in the Team always played better after a Tea Break!

Colworth (Unilever Research Club) beat Beverley 4 - 1

The score was 1-1 after the morning doubles, and the match looked to be very delicately balanced. The Colworth higher bisquers, however, played better and were not struggling as in their morning games. This gave all the Team more confidence. Beverley were very generous in defeat and we thanked them

for their good wishes, and their B & B rooms!

THE FINAL

was played in drizzle and rain all day. I hope we gave the valiant East Dorset supporters value for money. Colworth managed a 2-0 lead after the morning doubles. After lunch it looked like a win as their No.3 Trevor Wilkins strode round to penult with both balls. However, as usual, his 3.30am daily rising (work) meant that he could not last the afternoon. Penny Simmonds fought back brilliantly.....but lost by 1. Laurie Aspinall took a very long time to beat Peggy Nutland +8, lots of changes of innings. E.D.'s Ray Cleaver and Beryl Saunders were well ahead in the Doubles but in another sudden death finish Steve Jones and Judy Anderson made it. 5-0 does not reflect the closeness of the match - 2 games won +1T.

Conclusions

East Dorset do better after Tea breaks. Colworth win with GRAPES... (private scientific knowledge). Analysing their play, why they won, I think they are all very tough under pressure.

Don Gaunt presented the Cup, and photos were taken in the increasing gloom. We all applauded and agreed with COLWORTH's Captain Steve Jones' speech (after receiving the Cup) when we thanked Don Gaunt for Managing and Refereeing, Cheltenham Club for Lawns and Ladies for Teas, and EAST DORSET for being most sporting kind opponents.

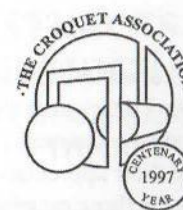
Results:-

COLWORTH		EAST DORSET
Steve Jones (8)		Beryl Saunders (6)
Trevor Wilkins (10) +1T		Peggy Nutland (9)
Judy Anderson (6)		Ray Cleaver (7)
Laurie Aspinall (12) +1T		Penny Simmonds (9)
Judy Anderson		Ray Cleaver
Steve Jones +1T		Beryl Saunders
Trevor Wilkins +1		Penny Simmonds



Secretary's Shield Finalists Northampton & Bowdon.

Continued on page 18



The Centenary Update



We must be very ineffectual if everyone does not now know that 1997 is the Croquet Association's centenary year. Those of you who read Alan Oldham's article in the last Gazette will know exactly what happened 100 years ago. Those of you who want to know yet more about our history can go to the croquet exhibition opening at the Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum on 13th May and continuing throughout the year or read the centenary yearbook which we hope to publish at about the same time.

So what is the purpose of the centenary? That is really up to you. But the CA has set up a centenary committee and we see the objectives as being to encourage everyone to enjoy themselves and in the process to remember that it is the CA that has promoted and developed the game over the last century. So we are arranging a number of parties and special tournaments and encouraging federations and clubs to do likewise. do please come along, enter and enjoy yourselves. If you do, get your friends to join the CA as well. The more members we have the more representatives we shall be for our next century.

First, what have we failed to do? The post office would not issue a centenary stamp for us (they prefer things like the 50th anniversary of the British Horse Society and even the centenary of the National Federation of Sub-Postmasters). English Heritage would not agree to erect a Blue Plaque on 106 Gloucester Road (they did not consider WH Peel eminent enough to warrant commemoration under the scheme and who is to say that they were wrong?) Finally, we had hoped that our patron The Queen might attend an event. But unfortunately, in the year of her Golden Wedding, her programme was under too much pressure for this to be possible.

Nonetheless we have done some things. We are republishing four historic prints for those who wish to decorate their walls with croquet mementos (if you have lost your details contact the CA office). There is a yearbook and the exhibition mentioned above; for the latter we are most grateful to the All England Club for their organisation and financial backing. 1997 is also the centenary of the Inter-Counties

tournament. To mark this there will be a reception and party at Southwick on the Sunday of the tournament (25th May), not just for participants but for all croquet players wishing to attend, and Southwick are also staging their own centenary week in July.

Many other clubs and federations are putting on their own events. For instance Yorkshire and Humberside are having a centenary day at Ripon on 22nd June and the South East a centenary doubles on 12/13th July at Surbiton. You will be receiving details locally. There are also private initiatives. For instance David Drazin is canvassing support to produce an unpublished album by Crowther Smith (see page 17 of the last Gazette) and John Beech of Woodlands Croquet is to market a centenary mallet.

The main tournament organised by the committee is on the 1st weekend of august when there will be a centenary doubles tournament at Cheltenham for up to 160 high and low bisque players, again with a party on the Saturday evening. We

also hope to raise the profile of the of the All England Handicap. Certainly there will be centenary medals for the finalists and an extra trophy for the winner of this tournament. So let us see more club members having a go. Remember that minus players have won in the past as well as long bisquers.

Then as the playing season finishes, we come to the AGM at Hurlingham on Saturday 18th October. This is all but the precise anniversary of the centenary and will be followed by the centenary dinner that evening at the All England Club, Wimbledon. And finally on 2nd November there will be the inaugural Solomon Lecture given by our president John Solomon, at the AGM of the South West Federation. Do come along to these and as many of the other events as appeal to you. And if nothing we are doing, and nothing your federation or club is doing, appeals to you - don't blame us organise what you want for yourself. We want the catalyst.

Have a good time.
Stephen Badger
Chairman of CA Centenary Committee

Centenary Calendar 1997

- 13th May** Special exhibition on croquet opens at the Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum, Church Road, Wimbledon, London SW19 5AE (tel: 0181 9466131)
- 24 - 27 May** Centenary Inter-County Championship at East Sussex CCC (Southwick) and Compton. On Sunday 25th evening reception and party at Southwick open to all (tickets available from March onwards from Mrs Christine Constable c/o the club.
- 21 - 27 July** Centenary week at Southwick (see fixtures book for details).
- 30 - 31 Aug** Centenary doubles tournament at Cheltenham for high and low bisque players. for details see entry form and fixture book.
- 20 - 21** September Finals of all England at Colchester. Finalists will receive centenary medals. Initial entries through club secretaries.
- 18 October** 11 am AGM of CA at Hurlingham.
7 pm Centenary dinner at Wimbledon. Application procedure for tickets will be advertised in the Gazette near the time.
- 2nd November** Inaugural Solomon Lecture to take place at the AGM of the South West Federation of Croquet Clubs in the Bristol area (for more information contact David Magee, federation secretary tel: 01242 - 700353).

Mary Rose Trophy Cheltenham 28th September 1996

report by Dennis Moorcraft

Cheltenham, hosts to the Inter-Club, Mary Rose and Longman Cup finals, were threatened with the worst weekend weather since last winter. Luckily, the Mary Rose was played on the Saturday and although windy the rain held off.

The Ipswich team of Peter Alnut, Philip Eardley, Jill Waters and Celia Steward sensibly arrived the night before, allowing an early start. Cheltenham were soon two matches up with wins by Dennis Moorcraft and Bo Harris against Jill and Celia, but the remaining Cheltenham players, Michael Rangeley and Peter Darby, were struggling in the doubles against Peter and Philip.

Extracts from the unconfirmed Minutes of the Council Meeting on 6th July 1996

Compiled by Alan Oldham

1. There were present W E Lamb (Chairman) and 12 members of Council with C Hudson (National Development Officer) and L W D Antenen (Secretary C A) in attendance.
2. Direct Debit Scheme: Following representations made by H. Hall, Council agreed to reduce the junior rate of subscriptions for 1997 to £11, whether paid by Direct Debit or otherwise.
3. The Apps-Heley award to the Royal Tunbridge Wells Club had been presented to them on June 30th.
4. Changes to Council's Standing Orders incorporating the formation of the Golf Croquet Committee were ratified.
5. Council agreed to the recommendation of the Executive Committee that Paul Campion be appointed CA Secretary with effect from November 1996.
6. Council agreed to the executive Committee recommendation that the honorarium paid to the CA Treasurer should be increased to £5000 per annum.
7. Council noted that the handicap committee had awarded the Apps Bowl for the most improved male player of 1995 to Mr Ian Lines (Bowdon) and the Steel Bowl for the most improved female player to Mrs Ailsa Lines (Bowdon).
8. In response to a request from S.O. Jones the chairman agreed to write an article on Golf Croquet Handicapping for publication

Don Gaunt saved their blushes however, by pegging them down at 1.00 pm.

Lunch was a relaxed affair, with the Ipswich team training on a cider diet. This seemed to pay off in the afternoon when for long periods only Ipswich players appeared to be on the lawns. Nevertheless Bo finished first with a rover peel and peg out. Dennis was heading for defeat against Celia (4-back and peg) when she blobbed 4-back and got pegged out for her pains. Dennis scrambled home with the other ball to give Cheltenham the 4 wins required. The senior players, playing senior tactics, went on and on but both games were narrowly won by Ipswich.

All concerned resisted the temptation to resume the doubles. Speaking as a Cheltenham player, it was a pleasure to welcome the Ipswich team. I can't quite understand how we won - call it a triumph of age and experience over youth and beauty.

in the Gazette.

9. A modified version of the CA logo for use in the Centenary Year 1997 was approved.
10. It was noted that the Cheltenham Club had agreed to host the final stage of the Centenary Handicap Doubles tournament on 30/31 August 1997.
11. S.T. Badger reported that the Centenary Committee hoped to publish the "History of the CA" in the early part of 1997.
12. The National Development Officer (C Hudson) was congratulated on the production of the club survey. In anticipation of C Hudson's retirement in a few weeks time, the Chairman expressed the thanks of Council for the work he had carried out as Development Officer for the past eleven years.
13. The election of 41 new Associates was confirmed. The Secretary reported that at 5 July 1996 the number of associates was 1524 including 67 members overseas.

Extracts from the unconfirmed Minutes of the Council Meeting on 19th October 1996

Compiled by Alan Oldham

1 There were present W E Lamb (Chairman) and 20 members of Council with L W D Antenen (Secretary CA) and P W Campion (Secretary elect) in attendance.

Messrs Arliss, Burridge, Haste and Jones had been re-elected to Council at the AGM held earlier this day. The Chairman welcomed the three new Federation Representatives, viz, SNH Gray (East

Anglia), BM Rannie (Croquet North) and CJ Irwin (North West). There were two unfilled vacancies on the new Council.

Council recorded their appreciation of the contributions made by those members who had retired at the end of the last session and, in particular, of the considerable part played by Stephen Mulliner and Andrew Hope in Council affairs.

2 S T Badger was elected Chairman for the new session on the proposal of RW Bray and seconded by DW Shaw.

TJ Haste was elected Vice-Chairman on the proposal of GS Liddiard seconded by CJ Irwin.

3 Following a vote of thanks to the outgoing Chairman, Council considered the general procedure for the election of chairman and Vice-Chairman, a matter which had been raised by the President in a letter to Council, and agreed to adopt a procedure for the future which would remove the objections of those who felt the existing system might be seen to be insufficiently open and democratic.

4 The Inter-Club salver was reported as having been stolen during a burglary at the home of CJ Irwin. The Trophies committee were asked to consider a suitable replacement.

5 After some debate the recommendation of the Executive Committee that the May issue of the Gazette to Affiliates would be via bulk distribution to clubs was agreed by 11 votes to 8.

6 Council ratified the conferment of Honorary Life Membership of the Association upon John G Prince, captain of the New Zealand Team during the recent MacRobertson Test Matches, in recognition of his outstanding contribution to International Croquet both as a player and as an ambassador for New Zealand croquet.

7 It was noted that Mr David Haslam had agreed to take on the post of CA Schools Promotion Officer. The appointment of Mrs Shirley Moore and Mrs Hazel Sherrington as part time assistants in the CA office was approved.

8 It was noted that to comply with Sports Council requirements the Gazette will in future contain an explicit section covering matters such as recruitment and development, to be provided initially by W E Lamb.

Continued on page 21.

EXTRACTS FROM A BIBLIOGRAPHER'S CASEBOOK

by David Drazin

V. OF THE RISE AND FALL OF THE HOUSE OF AYRES

Over many decades FH Ayres was a prominent supplier of sports equipment and supporting literature. In the field of croquet, in particular, they shared the lead with Jaques from early days until World War II. But whence they came, how they went, and what they did in between is none too clear.

My curiosity was first aroused only recently by two studiously anonymous editions - of 1876 and 1878 - of a book entitled *Rules for Playing the Game of Croquet* I saw in the British Library. Anonymity was not in itself unusual in those days: many manufacturers and retailers issued unbranded rule books with their wares, to protect the name of the publisher or to throw the copyright holder off the scent. What struck me as singular was that both editions contained several pages of games' advertisements but gave the reader no clue as to where they could be obtained or how much they cost. What a senseless waste of effort, I thought. But at the time I had no idea that here I had two pieces of a jigsaw, yet alone one of any significance.

Then, over the course of very few weeks, a series of coincidental discoveries led straight to the heart of the matter. At the time I was looking forward to the sale of the year, Dominic Winter's 1996 spring auction of sports literature. In the catalogue I was intrigued to see two lots including the title *Rules for Playing the Game of Croquet*, both dated 1875 but apparently of different issues. Outbid in either case, I wrote to the buyers care of the auction house for details as to authorship and publisher. (No response to date.) But at the same sale I did succeed in picking up *Guide to the Compendium of Games*. Bearing the FH Ayres imprint, this proved to be a key piece because it also contained many of the same advertisements I had seen in the rule books at the British Library. So clearly all these rule books were from Ayres, who must have been very active in croquet in the mid-1870s. But perhaps not then among the front runners, or surely they would not have hidden their light under a bushel.

Being aware that BC Eveleigh's work, first published by Ayres in 1893, was the leading rule book of the mid-1890s, just before the foundation of the United All England Croquet Association (later renamed the CA), I was left to wonder whether Ayres had entirely abandoned croquet until then. But not for long. Quite coincidentally, an Australian friend happened to mention that a friend of his had an old rule book, which inquiries soon revealed to have the self-same title. This edition, published by Ayres in 1892, turned out to be the missing link. Piecing the picture together, Ayres had grafted along from the the mid-1870s, through the doldrums of the 1880s and, come the 'rebirth' of croquet in the 1890s, were in a position to challenge Jaques's hegemony. As the game promised to explode into renewed popularity, realising that they needed a more authoritative rule book to impress the experts, they signed up Eveleigh. This must have been a real coup. They then landed a licence to publish the UAECA's first 'official' edition of the laws in 1897, and later editions in 1920, 1924 and 1939.

I wonder what happened to Ayres then? A tennis friend tells me they were swallowed up by Dunlop Slazenger soon after World War II. And no doubt they were. But their demise may already be half way to oblivion, which is a sadness to me because I would like to check their publishing records. No information is now available from Companies House or from Dunlop Slazenger archives.

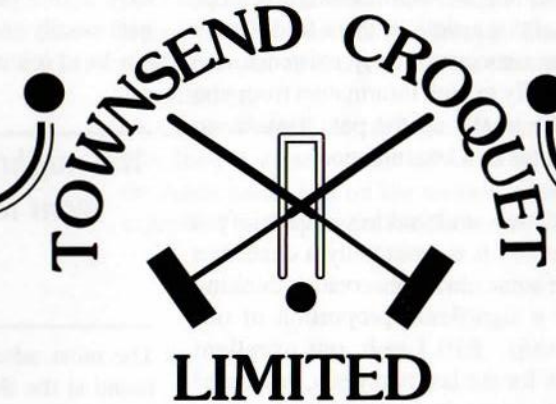
A side aspect of this case I found no less satisfying. Many years ago my family acquired a handsome mahogany games' compactum and I had long wondered when it was made. There it was, the 'Winged Compendium of Games' (and also in ancient Greek), beautifully engraved in an advertisement in all Ayres's anonymous little rule books, clearly going back at least as far 1875.

NEWS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

by Derek Trotman (Chairman)

A summary of the decisions made at the recent meeting of the Development Committee are given below. Further articles on grants and Apps-Heley award will appear in later editions of the Gazette.

1. A revised note on the finances available to clubs from the CA was approved and will be published in the Gazette and circulated in the next Registered Club Handbook.
2. The Apps-Heley and Townsend Awards will be made in 1997 based on the existing criteria. Revised criteria have been drafted by the committee which subject to Council's approval will operate in the future. These new rules will be published in the Gazette and be included in the Registered Club Handbook.
3. A revised Registered Club Handbook will be published in 1997.
4. It was decided not to hold a Federation Conference in 1997.
5. It was recommended that the detailed forward plan for 1997 should include a sum of £3000 to support Federations undertaking specific approved development projects or to enable them to pay honoraria to identified Area Development Officers managing such projects. Federations to submit their bids by 1 January 1997.
6. Progress has been made on developing a performance standard for a synthetic surface croquet court. A standard recently issued by the World Bowling Board is proving useful.



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DO WE NEED THEM?

THE FUTURE OF SCHOOL LINKS

by David Haslam, School Liaison Officer

I read with interest last July that the work undertaken by Chris Hudson was to be divided up and one of his duties, the promotion of croquet in schools, required a co-ordinator. I was due to take a very early retirement from my post as Head of Training with the University of London Examinations and Assessment Council and this CA task had much appeal. Having worked with schools throughout the United Kingdom and abroad over the last ten years I felt my contacts would be useful. I had also been involved in the development of the first GCSE examination syllabus in Physical Education and saw further useful experience here.

As was reported in the last edition of the Croquet Gazette, I have been appointed to undertake the development work in schools and I am looking forward to getting "stuck in" to what most see as a daunting task. The purpose of this article is three-fold: firstly to inform associates of my existence and role, secondly to seek information from you and finally to stir up the pot. I make no apologies for this last intention.

The task I am undertaking is certainly a challenge and it is essentially a challenge to change some ultra-conservative thinking amongst a significant proportion of our membership. Bill Lamb, our excellent Chairman for the last two years, circulated to all clubs in the Summer a questionnaire concerning existing links between clubs and schools. The responses have been passed to me and provide interesting reading - such as they are. A total of only 25 clubs out of the total membership of over 120 have taken the trouble to reply. Reading the replies leads to alternate feelings of despair and jubilation. One gets a feeling similar to when the senior civil servants were asked by the P M for their views about ways to increase the number of women in the senior positions. All thought it a splendid idea but.. it wouldn't work for my department because..... A number of croquet clubs responded in similar terms giving general support to the idea of closer club/school

links but all our laws are needed for our members, or we prefer people from university, or students damage the balls and hoops, or there are no suitable (sic) schools nearby. Another gripe is that school pupils play for a while at a club and then depart for higher education and are never seen again. This is inevitable and should be no cause for concern even if it is for regret. These players will resurface somewhere at some time and take with them the skills you have enabled them to acquire.

What I suspect I should infer from these comments is that really we don't want links, although we feel we perhaps should.

Fortunately the replies also contained a significant number of enthusiastic comments and evidence of a more positive attitude to school links. There are several clubs who have active programmes of co-operation with usually one, but in some case more than one local school.

You might wonder why do we want to have links with schools?

The most advanced programme is to be found at the Bath Club where a complete youth development plan has been developed with the local authority. I hope to be in close contact with Michael Cope, their chairman of the youth development committee, in the hope that their forward-looking strategy can be used as a template for other clubs.

You might wonder why do we want to have links with schools? I have little doubt that it is not only desirable to promote croquet amongst young people but that it is essential so to do. Have you heard in your own club the sort of comment about the collective age and "there's no-one to do this job or that"? I ask the question have the younger members been asked? Croquet clubs can be less than effusive in their attitude to

younger and newer members and there is little doubt that those in full-time work or education can feel left out as they miss the daytime play for much of the summer. We need to consider ways of not only involving youngsters more but making them feel they are really welcome. We need them.

It is worth mentioning that Robert Fulford and Ian Burridge emerged from the link between Colchester Royal Grammar School and the Colchester Club whilst Chris Clarke was at Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, Blackburn where there were links with the Southport club. Sadly both of these links have lapsed as have others which existed some ten years ago. With the change in staffing at a school the departure of a croquet enthusiast can signal the demise of the game in that school. We now have the formidable task of reversing the trend. We can do it, but not singly. I have plans for action which I shall write about in the next edition of this magazine.

In the meantime I would like more information. For clubs that have not responded to Bill Lamb's letter please do so now by contacting me. I need to know your attitude to revitalising or establishing links. This year a modest amount of money is available and I hope to target about eight clubs who have expressed positive support for the venture. I envisage that this year's experience can be used to demonstrate what is possible in the hope that further clubs will come aboard the development plan for 1998 and 1999. I need to know of players willing to assist in furthering school links whether this be in coaching, overseeing or administrative roles with a particular link. Finally we need to have more schools and individual players participating in the 1997 championship. Please tell me of likely schools I can target immediately.

I am contactable on 01206 210658 or by fax 01206 213636 or by letter at 11 Orchard Close, Copford Green, Colchester CO6 1DB

OMEGA CROQUET

Celebrating success can be difficult enough in some circumstances, but celebrating failure and enjoying it?

David Wedmore, and quite possibly others, intends to do just this in a series of light hearted articles on the various aspects of the game of croquet.

1 - Basics

"Trust your judgement, trust Omega" - Cindy Crawford.

In the world of Omega croquet (issue 246) misunderstandings are commonplace and, indeed, valued: but we are assured that Cindy's comment truly is intended as a wholehearted public endorsement of the Omega Movement and of the stylishness of the Omega image.

In response to this support THE GRAND ORDER OF OMEGA PLAYERS has been formally incorporated. Its mission is to satisfy the needs of all players whose croquet is inadvertent - whether this arises through their own incompetence, through the state of the courts, or purely by chance. Members of the Order are now fully entitled to be described as 'Goops'.

The order is following the precedent that a small organisation should have a large committee structure. But titles such as "Chairman of the Grand Order Of Omega Players Finance and General Purposes Committee" are a bit of a mouthful. Therefore, the chairmen of its committees will be known by the very much shorter titles listed below. It is hoped that these will prove memorable.

Executive - The Sleeper	Finance & GP - The Sweeper
Development - The Leaper	Tournament - The Beeper
International - Le Pipeur	Coaching - The Weeper
Equipment - El Christi	Handicap - The Reaper
Laws - The Keeper	Editorial - The Peeper
Trophies - The Heaper	Centenary - The Creeper
Selection - The Cleeper	Golf - Bobby Jones
Publicity - The Cheeper	

The order now invites applications for the position of Secretary to these several Committees. Only goops need apply.

By order of the Grand Order
D B Wedmore

Registered office
29 Mount Pleasant Rd

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Continued from page 18

9 The report of the Centenary Committee giving further preliminary details of the programme of events for 1997, the centenary trophies and the selection of centenary prints for sale to associates was approved.

10 Council confirmed the election of 68 new associates. The Secretary reported that at 18th October 1996 the number of Associates was 1587 including 69 overseas.

11 The membership schedule of the standing committees of Council for 1996/97 was approved.

12 AJ Oldham reported the gift to the CA archives of a copy of Crowther-Smith's "Croquet Nonsense Book" from Mrs Dorothy Devitt of New Zealand.

13 DL Gaunt drew the attention of Council to the fact there was less than a year before the next world championships and inquired whether there were any matters relating thereto which required Council's consideration. CJ Irwin reported that no communication had yet been received from Australia, the host country.

14 SO Jones reported on the excellent arrangements that had been made by the Italian Croquet Association for the first World Golf Croquet Championships at Busto Arsizio, Italy on 26th - 29th September 1996 at which the Egyptian players had been outstandingly successful.

15 Council raised no objection to a request from the Croquet Association of Western Australia to reprint the Laws in a changed format but subjected their approval to that of the Australian Croquet Association.

16 Council noted that this was the last meeting that Tony Antenen would attend as Secretary of the Association and on the motion of RW Bray expressed their appreciation for his services.

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CROQUET ASSOCIATION

... NEWS ...

Recruitment

To the end of November, 164 new Associates had joined in comparison with 143 to the same date last year. That may not seem many more but, at last, our associate membership is growing. We now have 1531 Associates, excluding overseas, an increase of 47 on last year's final number. Welcome to all our new Associates and thanks to all those who have assisted and persuaded them to join.

Direct Debit

Direct debit goes from strength to strength! 700 associates have signed mandates and have been entered on the Croquet Association database. When the direct debit system was first planned, we thought that to sign up 500 Associates would be a good estimate. The actual number has exceeded our expectations and even our hopes. It shows that croquet players do not live in the past and are not afraid of new technology. The saving in office time will be considerable.

Forward Plan

At a meeting with the Sports Council Liaison Officer the revised budget allocation was broadly agreed. The only difficulty arose over the CA proposal to increase the allocation to the International fund, as last year the Sports Council turned down our application for a supplementary grant for the MacRobertson Shield. However, the proposed increase was relatively small and changes can be accommodated elsewhere. In view of the poor return over the last few years, no money will be allocated to sponsorship activities and more money will be made

available to fund regional programmes. Nevertheless, we are still trying to obtain sponsorship; anyone with likely leads should contact the Croquet Association Secretary.

The Sports Council is still urging us to move towards self-sufficiency. Our present four-year plan comes to an end in 1998 and, although we shall submit a plan for following years, there is no guarantee that we shall continue to be funded. Therefore, the F & GP committee has decided that it will be prudent to plan for a budget surplus next year.

Affiliate copies of the Gazette

Although only about fifty percent of clubs replied to the letter requesting their opinions on the distribution of the affiliate copies of the Gazette, those that did showed themselves solidly in favour of a bulk distribution to clubs rather than individual posting to affiliates. The majority was two to one in favour and, when the number of affiliates those clubs represented was taken into consideration, the majority rose to almost three to one. Council does listen to the opinions of clubs (but can only do so when they are expressed) and has therefore decided to try a bulk distribution in May.

Coaching

It has been another good year for coaching courses, with 102 players receiving coaching in comparison with 76 in 1995. The new improvers courses, targeted at players with high handicaps, were successfully introduced.

Courses planned for 1997 are: Improvers, to be run by the relevant Federations at

Solihull, Newport and Thatcham; Bronze, to be run by the relevant Federations at Parkstone, Southport and Southwick; those to be run by the Coaching committee are Silver at Cheltenham and Surbiton, Gold at Bowdon and a "B-Squad" by invitation only at Parkstone. Details of these courses will be found in the Fixture Book.

The Coach of the Year has been awarded to Claire Heritage for long service to the East Anglian Federation and to the Coaching committee. Congratulations to Claire and thanks for all her efforts over the years.

Council Committees

Syd Jones has agreed to take over the chairmanship of the Publicity committee, and Ian Burridge has been elected chairman of the Selection committee.

Veterans get older!

The qualifying age for the popular Veterans' tournament has been increased to its former age of sixty-five years. This brings it into line with the qualifying age for Veterans' subscriptions.

National Lottery

The latest edition of Lottery Link shows that Budleigh Salterton Croquet Club have been awarded £4,437 for the construction of a borehole. This is only the second award to a croquet club and we are lagging behind many other sports. One problem is that many of our clubs do not own their own grounds or have security of tenure. Those that play on local authority sites and want to improve their facilities should press their local authorities to apply for a grant on their behalf.

Bill Lamb