

AROUND & ABOUT



The Avon team, winners of the Centenary Inter-County Championships (L to R Roger Jenkins, Roger Tribe, Raymond Ransom, Edward Duckworth, Alex Leggate, Frances Ransom and David Goacher.)



Surbiton members swept the board at the 99th Peel Memorial tournament. Chris Osmond won the Women's event for the third time, Julian Straw won the Men's and Nelson Morrow & Sue Thrussell won the doubles.



Participants and coaches at the Bronze coaching award held at Parkstone in April.



Some of the participants with coach Chris Clarke during the junior coaching course in April held at Cheltenham.



The Berkshire County team who secured promotion to the first division this year. (L to R Jonathan Symon, John McMordie, Kevin Carter, Adrian Wadley, Joe King, Bernard Weitz, Nelson Morrow. (James Wankling not shown.)

Inter-County Championships 1997

County	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	9
Avon	2-1 1-2 2-1	2-1 2-1	3-0 2-1	2-1 3-0	9
Surrey	2-1 2-1	1-2 3-0 3-0	3-0 2-1 2-1	1-2 1-2	7
Cheshire	1-2 2-1 0-3	2-1 1-2	3-0 3-0	2-1 2-1	0
Lancashire	2-1 0-3 1-2	1-2 2-1	2-1 2-1 1-2	2-1 2-1	0
Middlesex	1-2 3-0 3-0	1-2 2-1 0-3	1-2 3-0 2-1		
Dorset	1-2 3-0	1-2 1-2 3-0	0-3 3-0 3-0	1-2 1-2	
Gloucestershire	3-0 1-2 2-1	1-2 1-2	1-2 0-3	1-2 3-0	
Gloucestershire	3-0 1-2 2-1	1-2 1-2	1-2 0-3	1-2 3-0	
Essex	1-2 2-1 0-3	1-2 2-1	1-2 0-3 0-3	3-0	
Northumberland	2-1 2-1 1-2	2-1 0-3 1-2	0-3 1-2 1-2	0-3	
Northamptonshire	1-2 1-3 2-1	1-2 2-1	2-1 0-3 1-2	1-2	
Northamptonshire	2-1 2-1 3-0	3-0 2-1	1-2 1-2 2-1	1-2	
Berkshire	2-1	1-2 2-1 3-0 1-2	2-1 2-1 2-1	0-3 3-0	
Sussex	3-0 0-3 2-1	2-1 0-3 1-2	3-0 2-1 3-0	2-1	
Kent	2-1 1-2 1-2	2-1 2-1 2-1	2-1 2-1 2-1		
Suffolk	1-2 3-0 2-1	3-0 3-0 2-1	3-0 1-2	1-2 1-2	
Warwickshire	3-0 3-0 1-2	1-2 1-2 0-3 2-1 1-2	2-1 3-0		
Bedfordshire	1-2 3-0 1-2	3-0 0-3	3-0 2-1 1-2	1-2	
Yorkshire	0-3 0-3 2-1	1-2 2-1 2-1	0-3 1-2 2-1	1-2	
Dublin	1-2 2-1	0-3 1-2 1-2	3-0 1-2 0-3	2-1	
Centenary	1-2 2-1	1-2 0-3 1-2	0-3 1-2 1-2	1-2 2-1	
Hertfordshire	0-3 0-3 0-3	0-3 1-2 2-1	0-3 1-2	3-0 1-2	

The focal point of the Inter-Counties - the score board.

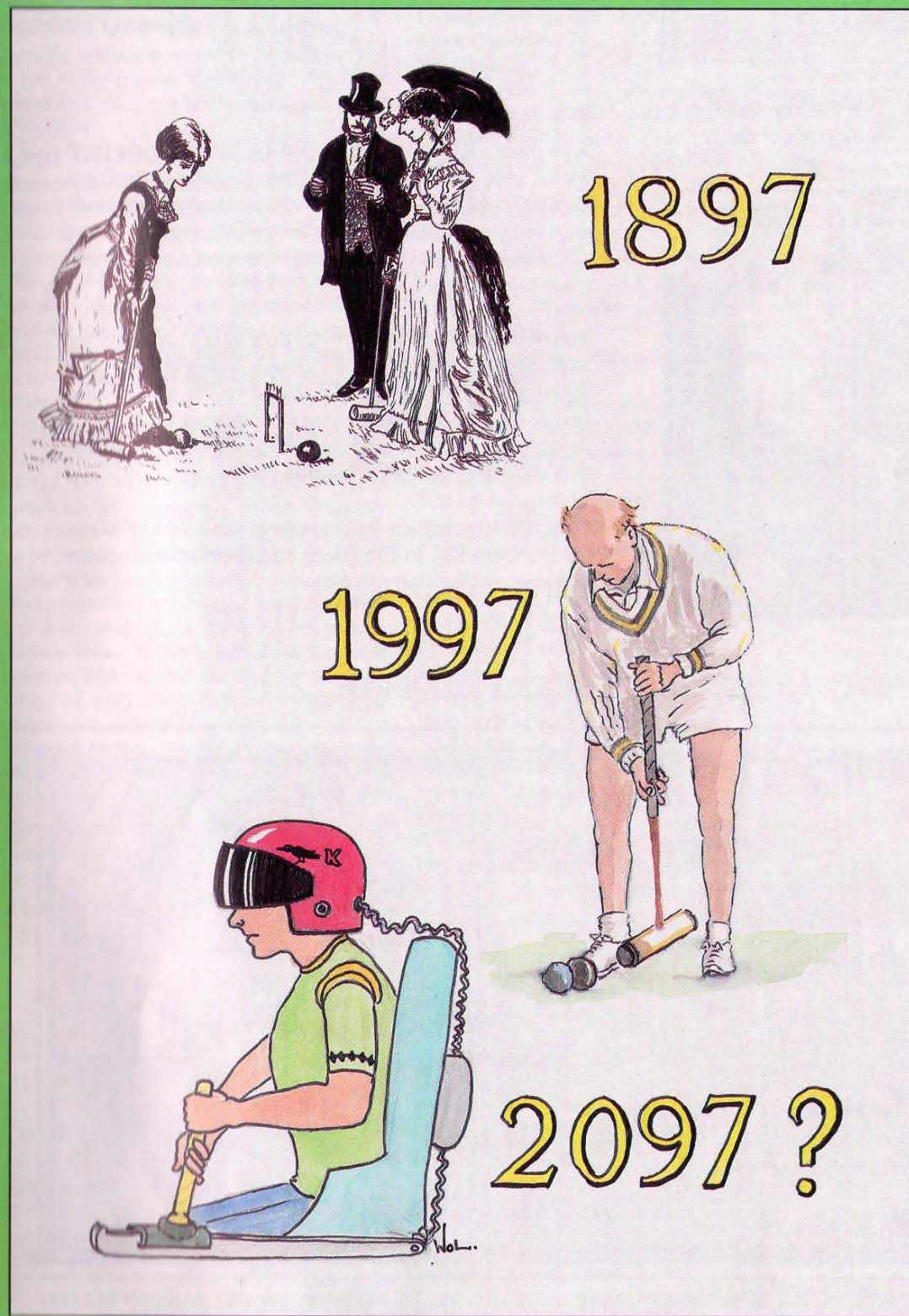


Mixed Doubles champions Don Gaunt & Kismet Whittall, with manager Andrew Gregory on the right and Bernard Neal on the left.

The Croquet Gazette

Issue 250

July 1997



1897

1997

2097?

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COLUMN

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U.K. RANKINGS

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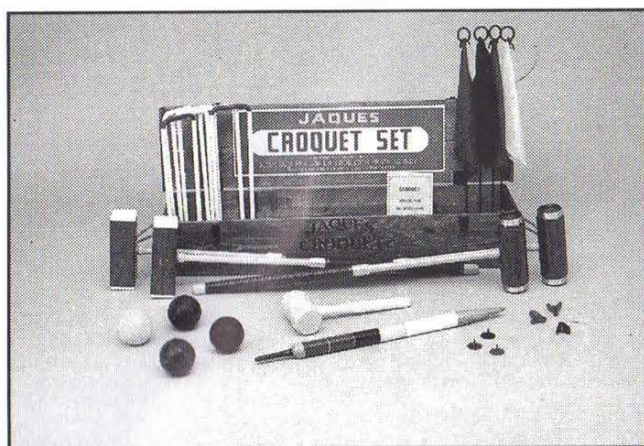
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CROQUET AROUND
THE WORLD

MINUTES OF
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AROUND & ABOUT



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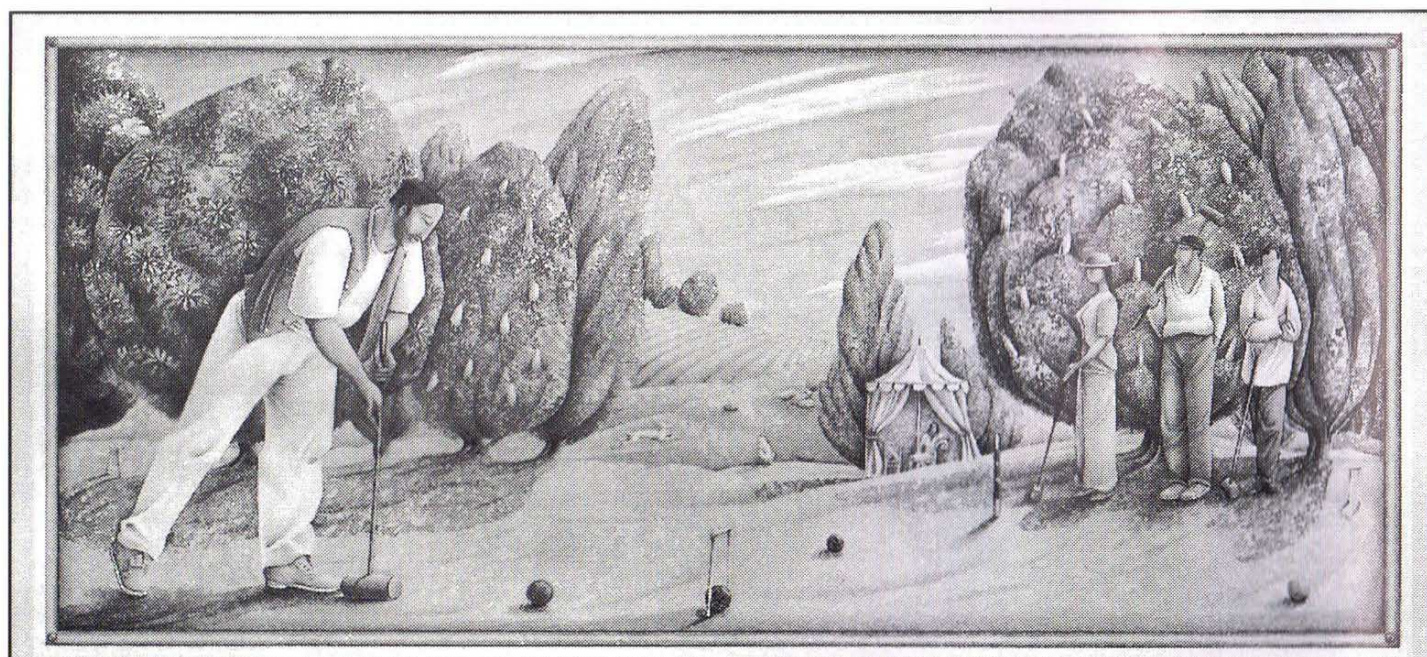
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Specific Questions & Queries

Specific questions or queries should be sent direct to the relevant CA official, e.g. Laws questions to the chairman of the Laws Committee.

Copy Details

General copy and contributions should be sent direct to the editor on floppy disc (text or ASCII files). Typed work or clear handwriting is also acceptable.

Photographs are always required. Both black and white or colour prints can be utilised. Please detail on the reverse of all photos the subject of the picture, and if you require the photographs to be returned please include your address on the reverse.

Tournament Reports

These 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. 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 numbers 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.

Delivery Queries

Queries regarding delivery of the Gazette to members should be directed to the Secretary of the Croquet Association and not to the Editor.

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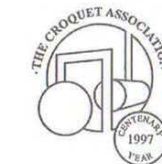
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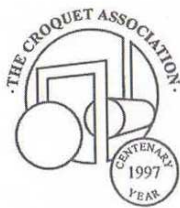
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THE CROQUET GAZETTE



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Editorial

By all accounts this is not precisely the 250th issue of *The Croquet Gazette*, or whatever else it has been called over the years. However, as the issue number has reached the '250th' mark during the centenary year, I felt that it was only fair not to let this minor landmark pass unnoticed.

I am not fan of croquet history, however I have spent some interesting hours during my editorial duties sifting through back issues of the Gazette, noticing with relative ease how far the Gazette has evolved in the relatively short period of time since the 1960's. No doubt part of this revolution in the changing face of the Gazette was due to the ever advancing technology, but equally I am sure that those responsible for the Gazette realised that it could serve a better purpose than it had been, and its content blossomed from that point on.

There have been a number of editors in recent years, some more memorable than others it could be argued, but there is no doubt whatsoever that each and every one of them has made a unique contribution to the game. I may be wrong but it is my belief that the times of long standing editors have passed. The demands

Chairman's Column

I used the first of these columns in the January Gazette to point out that any associate is entitled to stand for Council. Councillors are normally elected for three-year terms running from the AGM in October. If you are interested in standing for the next term, now is the time for you to take action. All you have to do is to find two other associates to propose and second you (and I mean associates - they do not need to be members of Council, or minus players, or anything else in particular) and then get your nomination in to the Secretary by 1st August. This is the important date.

If you think you have something to contribute do ring either me or Paul Campion to discuss the procedure if you would find that helpful, but above all don't feel bashful about putting yourself forward. Do something now.

What else is happening? There are some promising juniors about and we intend to re-form the national junior squad for 1998 under the tutelage of Ian Burrigge and Chris Clarke. They will be running a selection session at Cheltenham on the first Sunday in August. I hope most juniors have already been personally informed about this, but our information systems are never perfect and if you know of one who has been left out (or if you have been left out yourself despite being under 21 in 1998 and having, or thinking you should have a handicap in single figures) let us know. 'Us' is either me or David

of modern life together with the expectations of the readership are surprisingly wearing on energy and enthusiasm, and it is perhaps best for the Gazette that fresh approaches and ideas are stimulated by a change of editor every few years. Rest assured this is not my last issue, but there will come a point in the future when I will be ready to hand over the reins to someone with a driving force to carry on the good work of those who have preceded them.

On a slightly different note, some of you may have noticed that the May issue was in fact not received until June. I accept full responsibility for this due to circumstances beyond my control. I shall endeavour to get everything back on schedule for this issue, but if that is not possible it may take until the September issue to have everything running smoothly again, so please be patient. One other point regarding the May issue was the use of the internet, which provided the photograph of the GB Solomon Trophy team on page 18, courtesy of Bob Alman. Whilst the standard of the print was not quite crystal clear, it was in my view acceptable. This therefore opens up a source not previously available but which could in future be used to obtain photographic and other coverage of both national and international events far quicker than conventional methods.

Magee (01452 700353)

As I mentioned in the last issue, we have set up a small free-standing group, composed partly of members of Council but partly of others with differing areas of experience, to act as a planning nucleus. They have been turning their minds to the CA's next Forward Plan in particular and to the requirements of our next century in general. We thought it would be useful if they could outline some of their initial thoughts, and at the same time obtain feedback from club members, at the earliest possible stage. We are therefore planning two informal club conferences in the second half of November, one in London and one in the north. Details have been circulated elsewhere, so do arrange to come along or, if you have any queries, ring the office.

Finally, my usual reminder about the events of centenary year. The croquet exhibition at the Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum duly opened in May. It can be visited every day except Monday so I hope you will be able to see it. Then you will find elsewhere in this issue an application form for tickets for our centenary dinner on Saturday 18th October. This too is at Wimbledon. The exhibition will be open specially late beforehand and there will also be miniature croquet. So if you haven't got your tickets do so now before the cost increases on 1st September. The value is excellent and it will be a good way to mark the CA's 100th birthday.

I am happy to be contacted by anyone with comments or suggestions to make. 01712748126 or 01242 516603

Stephen Badger

A Message from the President

I wonder how many of you reading this can say, without now looking at the front cover, what number appears on it. Had I been in your position it is quite probable that I would have noticed it. My first observation on opening my copy is to take in the picture, cartoon, illustration, whatever and attempt to guess where it might be or what message it wants to give. Some of you will obviously know, others will have to look, and can say that it is issue 250. Being such an auspicious number the editor has asked me to write a few lines.

When Gail asked me to write something for this issue I immediately jumped to the conclusion that this was it - 250 - terrific - have we been going for that long? - and then my mental arithmetic began to go into overdrive. Hang on, it used to be 8 issues a year, now less, 8 into 250, that's about 30 odd years, so issue No.1 must have been about 1967. So what happened before that?

The Centenary Exhibition

With Mallets Aforethought

Report by Bob Porter

The opening of the Croquet Centenary Exhibition at the Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum in early May had everything for the discerning launch partygoer - Pimms, people to talk to, and plenty to look at. The absence of hoop-shaped canapes was the faintest of disappointments.

Bernard Neal opened proceedings interweaving a concise history of the game with the changing role of the CA over one hundred years. He went on to thank the Wimbledon Museum Committee, and in particular the museum curator, Valerie Warren and freelance exhibition design consultant, Pat Hodgson for their work in arranging such a superb display. David Drazin was congratulated on assembling such a croquetopia of books, paintings, costumes and equipment. David was also responsible for the publication of the CA Centenary Year Book written and edited by the illustrious team of Colin Prichard and Alan Oldham.

It was then the turn of John Solomon who after an amusing anecdotal speech got down

In fact issue No.1 was April 1954, the thirteen year difference being accounted for by the fact that after the first couple of years there were usually only 7 per year, even less when Brian Lloyd Pratt was editor in 1970 for the short spell of 5 notorious issues. So how were all those Gazettes earlier than 1954 numbered? In fact they weren't, they had the year and month only. My own collection starts in July 1946 when the austerity of the post-war years meant an extremely boring looking publication on rather flimsy paper. It was edited, and had been since 1937, by H.F. Crowther Smith whom many will know of by his caricatures. His style was not exactly exciting. I remember more than one occasion when one read such things as "At the end of the turn his clip adorned the 4-back hoop". The 500th (un-numbered) edition appeared in June 1925 and the first known edition appeared in 1904 as the Croquet Gazette although earlier there had been Lawn Tennis and Croquet, copies of which are in the library at Wimbledon.

But we have done enough looking back in this centenary year. I remember the advent of issue No.1 when Brack (the Rev. BVF Brackenbury) who was then Vice-Chairman of Council showed us a mock-up of the new format, in colour and with a photo on the front. Poor



John Solomon, President of the CA, and Chris Gorrings of the All England Lawn Tennis Club at the opening of the Centenary Exhibition at Wimbledon.

to the serious business of presenting complimentary Centenary Year Books to Chris Gorrings, Chief Executive of the All England Club, and Valerie Warren before cutting the centennial cake and declaring the exhibition open.

The exhibition itself is a harmonious mix of informative graphic panels and display cases. The panels, with well chosen line illustrations and photographs, describe the history and evolution of the game, and the influence of various larger than life players and CA

Crowther had to go if this new format was to succeed. Since then a succession of editors has adopted varying styles and the present incumbent has been doing the job for just two years. Her efforts have been rewarded by much favourable comment, she does her best to present a balanced view and cover various levels of handicap and above all to include a good deal of humour.

The earlier Gazettes contained the results of every round of every tournament but this practice was abandoned quite a few years ago. There are of course purists who took the view that it was an essential element of the Gazette to record such things, so that a complete archive was maintained. But that has not happened for a good many years and it cannot now be undone. For myself, I believe the regular flow of articles, mostly of general and varied interest, make for much more worthwhile reading than some dreary statistics.

I am sure that Gail would not seriously be thinking of being the editor when issue No.500 is produced but I know that I speak for all in hoping that she will continue doing an excellent job for as long as possible.

John Solomon

luminaries down the ages. Early Edwardian pictures showing crowds which would not have disgraced a tennis final give the lie to the opinion that croquet cannot be an interesting spectator sport.

The display cases offer a fascinating slice of English sporting fashion with the Victorian bent for invention given full rein in gadgets and machinery to enable a girl in a crinoline to hit the ball. Trophies and salvers gleam from every corner, none more impressive than the huge Beddow Cup which has been described as magnificent and monstrous.

There are mallets aplenty including the 'winning' mallet of Ms DD Steel and a beautifully crafted centenary mallet by Woodlands Croquet. Hoops of all sizes and shapes and wooden balls no bigger than cricket balls demonstrate how modern hoop running is the art it is. Mention must be made of three glorious artworks on loan from American collector, Tremaine Arkley; two magnificent oils, one of beach croquet by Louise Abbema, and a Heath Robinson watercolour.

For followers of fashion, students of social history and certainly all croquet players with an interest in their sports evolution, this is an exhibition not to be missed. There will not be another like it.

The exhibition is on until spring 1998. The museum is open Tues to Sat from 10.00am till 5.00pm and on Sunday afternoons. (During the tennis championships the museum is only open to tournament visitors.) Admission is £2.50, senior citizens and students £1.50

The Centenary Year Book is available, price £12.70 including postage, from Brian Macmillan at the CA shop (Tel 0171 7363148).

Letters...

Parkstone welcomes Paul Campion

Dear Editor
Having decided to hold a social evening in February, we were delighted when Paul Campion, the new CA Secretary, agreed to come and speak to us.

Paul gave an entertaining account of his past employment and his present work for the CA in the centenary year. He brought us some interesting leaflets to inform us and encourage new members. During the buffet he mingled with those present answering questions and showing the friendly side of the Association. I understand it was Paul's first visit to a club in his capacity as CA Secretary and can only recommend that other clubs invite him along for a visit.

Jill Lonsdale
Parkstone CC

Disturbing lack of evidence

Dear Editor
At the recent Budleigh Salterton May week, I was a little disturbed to observe quite a number of the 48 participating competitors never seeming to fill in, or indeed possess, a handicap card. I wonder how long it will be, if we are indeed to have an 'automatic' system, before cards have to be handed in at the start of the tournament and returned at the end.

What comments do others have on this subject?
Ron Selmes
Budleigh Salterton

Wonder no more. At the August tournament cards will be scrutinised by the management, and if absolutely necessary, provided also. Ed.

Croquet and the U3A

The University of the Third Age (U3A) is a national organisation, with branches in many parts of the country, offering education in a wide variety of subjects to people over fifty who are not in full time employment. Classes/groups are tutored/led by U3A members who are volunteers and receive no payment for their services.

The Bournemouth branch has 700 members and offers about 80 classes each week in three 10 week terms.

As a member of Parkstone CC and the Bournemouth U3A, I suggested to the Parkstone committee that I offer to run a 6 week course in

the summer term for Bournemouth U3A.

The aim of the course was to educate the wider world about the sport of croquet in all its aspects and to give those taking part an opportunity to learn some of the elementary practical skills of croquet. Additionally one hopes to eventually recruit a few new members.

The club made a modest charge for the use of the lawns and equipment which was recouped by a small fee charged to each U3A member enrolling for the course. Twenty U3A members took part in the course, and with help from two club colleagues, thoroughly enjoyed learning the theory and practice of croquet.

If you have a local U3A, offer them a course - it might pay dividends!

John Lonsdale
Parkstone CC

Does the answer lie in the lines?

Dear Editor
I would be most interested to hear from other clubs who are in a similar situation to my own, Northampton, regarding preventing the lawns from turning a horrible brown during the summer months as our lush grass is singed by the unrelenting sun. Yes, we like many others, have no fixed watering facilities.

It seems to me that the days of the recent droughts in various regions of the country are far from over and if anything is certain, there will be restrictions on the use of watering equipment for the near future. One of our lawns has only recently recovered from the severe drought-induced damage incurred 2 years ago.

But there may be a ray of hope. During dry spells it is remarkable to note that the boundary lines still retain their lushness, to such an extent that it is hardly necessary to white line them as they are so clearly defined against the coir matting of the playing surface. You may attribute this to moisture applied during the process of re-lining; however our lawns are moved a yard both ways each season, and the previous boundaries going back THREE seasons, are just as noticeable.

To what can this phenomenon be attributed? Well our investigations revealed that a wetting agent is included in the white liner and it could be this that is encouraging deeper root development and the amazing drought negating properties. It didn't take Sherlock Holmes to work that one out. This year, a little into the season, we are hoping to treat the whole of two of our lawns with an application of wetting agent

injected sub-soil, as a trial to see if such is the case.

This may already be standard practice at golf clubs to help the greens. Could anyone enlighten me on this point?

Lionel Tibble
Northampton CC

"Handicapping 1997"

Dear Editor
Your March issue article on "Handicapping 1997" said that the average handicap of Associates was "higher than expected and shows the potential for coaching to improve the standard of play and the level of enjoyment". There are two errors here: one philosophical the other statistical.

I know, and indeed coach, players with handicaps in range 14 to 20 who frankly are never going to get very much better. Yet their enjoyment of the game over many years remains undimmed, and their occasional tournament triumph all the sweeter for being unexpected. By all means let us strive to improve but let us not confuse enjoyment with playing standard.

As for handicaps, surely it is true that the automatic Handicapping System in essence is a zero sum game. I can only improve my handicap by winning tournament games in such number to ensure that, over time, someone else's handicap worsens. It is true that the occasional "bandit" beats the system by a handicap level or two but this will have minimal statistical impact. I am all for a general improvement in play but I am at a loss to understand how this can have any effect on the average handicap.

Antony Fathers.

Adult education classes

Dear Editor
In response to an enquiry in issue 248 from Paul Brunsch, I would like to give readers some details about Northampton Club's approach to coaching and recruiting new members which may be of benefit to other clubs.

About 5 years ago, for 2 successive years, Northampton Club made a tremendous effort in recruiting, involving local press and radio advertising, posters etc, to encourage the public to 'come and try it'. More often than not, this was run in association with National Croquet Day.

The results gained for all our hard work were disappointing, attendance being low and

the follow up with new members being lower still.

Then, 3 years ago now, we approached the local Adult Education Centre and proposed that we offer to provide a 'Croquet for Beginners' course for them to include in their prospectus sent to every household in Northampton. This was greeted very enthusiastically and subsequently we outlined the criteria for the course, which are:

Two beginners' courses per summer season, 2 hours each session 7 to 9pm, 5 weeks each course. One coach/tutor for every 12 pupils up to a maximum of 24 pupils (restricted by the amount of club equipment available for pupils to use) for which the tutors would receive £15 per hour. Obviously, the payment is made direct to the club as tutors give their time voluntarily.

Our first season's efforts resulted in the recruitment of 27 new members, though sadly, some have drifted away again. The following year was the complete opposite with nobody joining as a result. Two conflicting results, and as this scheme is in its infancy, a little too early to draw conclusions from.

I can see no way that clubs can lose out if they adopt a similar approach, in that you stand a very real chance of boosting membership and do not have to worry about advertising. The cherry on the icing is that clubs are paid handsomely to provide the courses. Heads you win, tails I lose.

Lionel Tibble

It never rains but it pours

Dear Editor
As you will know it hardly ever rains in Pendle. However on Wednesday the 7th of May I visited the club to find it raining heavily.

There was no one else there except for an 8 handicap and an 18 handicap, who were playing one another in a club competition.

The 8 was for hoops 4 and 5 and the 18 was for 2 and making a break to the peg with her second bisque during which the lawns began to flood. After three turns in which nothing happened the 18 started a second break, and I remarked to the 8 that I was surprised they didn't peg the game down. His response to this suggestion was to ask if we could do so and when they would be able to do so. I suggested the end of turn.

The 18 was now struggling to strike the balls any distance at all and took 7 of her remaining 8 bisques to get to 2-back, breaking down with all four balls within a few yards of each other in the middle of the lawn. When the 18 left the lawn the 8 suggested that they peg down the game to which she readily agreed.

When I spoke to her days later she said to me that she should not have agreed to peg the game down under the circumstances, and that she should have played two further turns.

What I would like to know is: Was I right to suggest pegging down or should I have said nothing?

Having mentioned it to one player should I have mentioned it to the other, although this would have meant forestalling her between the end of her turn and her next bisque turn?

Was the out player right to wait until his opponent had finished her turn and taken 7 bisque turns before asking to peg the game down, avoiding any turns in the flood for himself?

Roger Schofield

Turn and turn about

Dear Editor

I hesitate to take issue with the distinguished author and examining referee, Don Gaunt, but I believe his commentary on 'Turn' in his 'Helpful Hints' No.7 to be not entirely accurate.

Law 26(d) is the definitive reference. A turn starts as soon as the previous turn has ended, and it ends when the striker quits the court in the belief that his turn has ended. But Don's commentary implies that he turn ends when you are no longer entitled to play, all balls having stopped and legally replaced. But is this correct?

I am reminded of a game between two players at Bristol last year. Having made hoop 3 a player was faced with a long roquet on his ball in corner 4. He missed, and the corner spot being occupied, chose to place his ball on the south boundary in contact with the corner ball. He then turned round to place his clip on hoop 4, only to see his opponent stalking her ball on the northern boundary, preparing to fire at the two ball target. Realising what he had done, he asked whether he could change his mind and place his ball on the east boundary in contact with the corner ball. His opponent said no.

I was asked for an opinion. The player had not quit the court. I had no hesitation in ruling that the turn had not ended, and that he was therefore entitled to change his mind on the replacement. Another referee was appealed to, whose view coincided with Don's commentary. The balls had come to rest and been replaced legally and hence, the turn had ended.

Long after the game was over the then Laws Committee chairman, Martin Murray, confirmed my ruling.

Hamish Hall

Overseas handicaps

Shaun Carter is incorrect in his interpretation of the CA system when he states that overseas games played between CA members count towards the AHS. The AHS is a purely domestic system for games played within the domain of the Croquet Association and all overseas games are excluded. This is done for simplicity, so that we do not have the situation where some overseas games count and others do not. Handicapping is carried out in different ways and to different standards in different countries. In Australia itself, each state has its own system: in at least one state the best players are rated at scratch; in others -5. One state has a computerised system,

others do not. The distances are so vast that there is little interaction between players in different states. We are fortunate that we have a large cohort of players in a small country with a lot of interaction and our system works reasonably well for us. It would not work with smaller groups of players playing amongst themselves. Our handicaps go up to 24 or higher whereas in most countries the limit is much lower. It would be very difficult to try to work out a handicap conversion scheme for different countries and probably not worth the effort given the amount of interchange. In reality, this is a small problem. The number of players involved in this way is a tiny percentage of the number within the AHS and their handicaps will soon be adjusted via the AHS or through evidence on their cards of rapid improvement.

Handicap points

Mary Ollet's letter in the last issue of the Gazette is but one example of points covered in Principles of Handicapping. A copy was sent to all clubs for the information of their members and to all handicappers. The reason why the closeness of the result is not taken into account in AHS points is fairly simple. Handicap games are intended to produce close results: when they do not it is usually because the winner is a high bisquer receiving a lot of bisques. For example, it is impossible for a low-bisquer to beat a high-bisquer by 26 but he can be quite often on the receiving end of that kind of score. The object of the game is to win and that is what counts in handicapping. A close game adds to the enjoyment whether one wins or loses, but that has nothing to do with handicapping.

Bill Lamb

Even more "stickiness"

In reply to the letter from Ken Dawes (Issue 248 March 1997) on the "Croquet is Oquet" sticker.

No, this is not a new idea. This sticker was first sent out in approx 1986 by the then CA Publicity and Development Committee of which I was a member. At that time the Committee was brilliantly chaired by John McCullough who was then living in Bristol. When we were looking for a slogan for car stickers I brought back a selection from Australia - what do you think of these, Ken?

(You need to imagine the Aussie accents and the pictures of crossed mallets on some):-
Croquet is No 1. Croquet is O.K.

I'm hooked on Croquet
Croquet leaves the rest for dead (skull and crossbones)

Colour your day play Croquet

Croquet. Be in it.

I'm in love with Croquet (heart shaped)

Croquet is great mate (kangaroo)

Is there also an interest in fridge magnets, what do readers think?

Judy Anderson.

Croquet Around The World

Winter in Florida

By Derek & Gwen Stooling

Three weeks in the sun in February with a little croquet thrown in was just the tonic we needed. Florida seemed the best place to go to so we decided to explore the croquet scene there.

Last season some American visitors had come to the Bath Club so we contacted them. They spend the winter in Naples on the West Coast of Florida and they immediately invited us to visit their club. We booked the first week in Naples which is a very sophisticated town with up-market modern housing and shopping centres. It appears that a large proportion of the population are resident only in the winter and return north for the summer. We played croquet with our hosts twice (to American Rules) at the lovely Audubon Country Club. We shall never forget watching groups of egrets and ibis just beside the court. The club has one and a half courts and there is quite a heavy demand to play at this time of year.

Whilst in Naples we also took the opportunity to visit the island of Useppa. This small island with only four year-round resident families has a club with an excellent lawn in exotic surroundings. The island was reached by a 20 minute ferry trip, the weather was perfect and we had a wonderful day there. Bob Sumwalt, the club founder, and his wife used to spend part of their summers in Bath and Maurice and Hilary Boardman from the Bath Club visited Useppa some years ago.

One very expensive night was then spent at the PGA Resort Hotel in Palm Beach. This hotel which boasts five golf courses is the former headquarters of croquet in America and their championships were held here. There are four croquet courts and we hired one for 1.5 hours at



Transport from the court on Useppa.

a cost of \$25.

Whilst in Palm Beach we sought out the new Headquarters of the US Croquet Association at the Polo Club. We turned up on chance on a Sunday morning and found Shereen catching up on a bit of filing in the office. She was very helpful and let us have a list of all the clubs in the USA. As only one of the four courts was being used by club members we were invited to have a game.

We had an introduction to the Winter Park Club in Orlando where we were told that a group would be playing on the day we proposed visiting and we would be very welcome to join them. There was only one court but a total of six of us shared it playing of course to American Rules.

Finally we moved up into the State of Georgia to stay at the Jekyll Island Hotel. This is a historic hotel built as a millionaires' retreat in the days before Florida was opened up. It has a croquet court now shared with a local club and we were able to play together for two sessions as hotel guests.

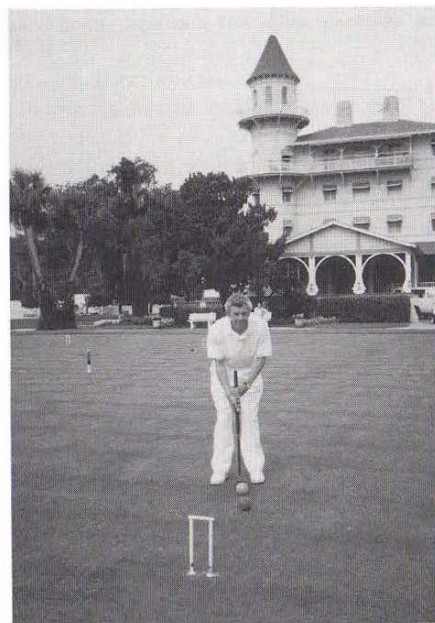
The points that surprised us most about American croquet were the shortness of play, generally a maximum of 1.5 hours which is invariably inadequate to reach peg, and the small number of courts at each club. The club list that we received showed that about half the clubs had only one full sized court. The three one-court clubs we visited all hold invitation tournaments for thirty-odd people. All courts were of a very high standard and situated in delightful surroundings.

We didn't find American Rules too difficult to pick up but they obviously require a different strategy from Association Rules. We didn't feel any inclination to be converted to them and the worst aspects seem to be:

- ◆ The dead ball rule dominates all thoughts and conversation throughout so distracting one from other aspects of the game.
- ◆ It is almost impossible to get behind a boundary ball so boundary balls tend to stay there.
- ◆ It is too risky to roquet a ball anywhere near the boundary.

There is one aspect of American play that we would like to see adopted here. They never use secondary colours. For lawn sharing the second set of balls have a one inch wide white ring painted round them. This instantly separates the sets of balls in one's mind and we found it much easier to ignore the other set.

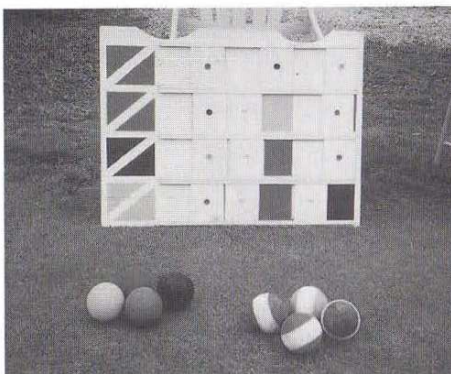
It was lovely to play croquet in the winter sun. How nice if winter play could be organised for groups, possibly in Southern Europe!



Derek at the Jekyll Island Hotel

AMERICAN RULES

The major respects in which American Rules differ from Association are as follows- After running a hoop any ball roqueted becomes "dead" meaning that it cannot be roqueted again (even in a subsequent turn) until another hoop is run. In order to keep a record of which balls are dead a deadness board is prominently displayed which has to be kept up to date after each roquet. A ball crossing the boundary is put back on court 9 inches from the line. In a rush it is end of turn if the ball is rushed off court. In a roquet it is end of turn if the roqueted ball goes off court. All four balls are played in turn so that a player does not have a choice of ball to play.



The deadness board and balls

The John Hobbs Mallet

Hold the handle how you like, you can align the head to fit your grip and idiosyncrasies.

Light shaft, nylon shock absorber, padded grips, range of woods. Details from:

John Hobbs, Kingsbury, Argos Hill,
Rotherfield, E. Sussex. TN6 3QH
Tel: 01892 - 852072

NEWS & INFORMATION

Western Province Tournament

The 26th Annual Tournament of the WPCA will be held 7-14 March 1998. A full programme of eight Association Croquet events will be played during this week, preceded by a Golf Croquet tournament of five events 27 February-1 March. Full details and entry forms will become available closer to the time but it is hoped that this advance notification will help prospective entrants to start organising their arrangements to take part in this well-known tournament.

The WPCA has seven clubs within a 50 km radius of Cape Town which are used during the Tournament. They provide opportunities for contestants and their spouses to visit and enjoy the local areas around Cape Town with its spectacular mountains, beaches, vineyards, scenic and historic places of interest.

In between playing croquet there are many organised tours available, varying from a day to a fortnight, all at reasonable prices. Hotels, guest houses and bed and breakfast establishments are well situated and give excellent value - especially in view of the pound-rand exchange rate. A holiday in the sun combined with first-class croquet sounds irresistible, doesn't it? An early visit to your travel agent may be a start, or write to the WPCA at my address.

David Cunningham, 4 Bucksburn Rd, Newlands, South Africa 7700
Tel 027 21 642556

Centenary Croquet Rally - Hyde Park 7th September

Starting at a clubhouse 8:30am Friday 5th September

Entries are invited for this new competition. This fun event is designed to bring together croquet players, of mixed ability, from all corners of the country.

Format - Teams of 2 players to start at a clubhouse at 08:30am Friday 5th September, (more than one team may travel in the same transport). Substitutions within a team will be allowed but awards will be issued based on 2 members per team.

In the next 50 hours the pair are to visit croquet clubs playing one game of GOLF CROQUET, ONE BALL CROQUET or SHORT CROQUET each, two games in total. Teams to arrive at Hyde Park by 10:30am Sunday 7th September.

The route and play arrangements are the responsibility of the team. Gail Curry still has a few copies of her Guide to Clubs available at £4.95p including postage. Please check availability before ordering.

Points will be awarded for:

CLUBS VISITED: 100 points each
GAMES WON: 50 points each
DISTANCE TRAVELLED: 5 points per mile

These scores will be added to in a competition to be played on short lawns at Hyde Park Club. Players would report by 10:30am, Sunday morning and play will commence at 11:00am and finish at 4:00pm. The lawns are on a bowling green with changing facilities and refreshments nearby.

Fund-raising - Sponsorship of teams based on number of points scored could raise funds for clubs or local charities. The scorecards will be signed off at Hyde Park. Local media may be interested in the event; following teams, picking up on sponsorship (croquet players rally to the cause!!).

RULES:

1. Start at a registered club.
 2. Tripometer to be zeroed at the start.
 3. Only the mileage of the most direct route will be accepted. THIS IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT WHERE THERE IS AN OVERNIGHT DIVERSION. If in doubt use MS Autoroute or similar program. Any errors will incur a penalty points deduction.
 4. Scorecards to be signed at each venue, mileage noted, and match scores recorded.
 5. Clubs may only be visited once.
 6. Team members are to wear whites at Hyde Park. Any Sponsors / Team logo is to be discreet.
 7. Entries will be accepted in order of receipt.
 8. The tournament manager's decision is final.
- ENTRY FEE: £20 PER TEAM.
Cheques payable to the South East Croquet Federation.
CLOSING DATE: 31st JULY 1997
ENTRIES TO :
Donald Beck. Publicity Officer
S. E. Croquet Federation
25 Canon Close, Rochester
Kent. ME1 3EN
Tel/Fax 01634 407266
email: Donald-Beck@msn.com

Croquet Fun Days

Starting three years ago we have run a number of 'fun days' at the Jersey club which are an excellent chance to get all members of the club together and to introduce new members and occasional players into the club. A variety of games are played, each taking between 20 minutes and an hour.

Most games are played as alternate shot doubles, ensuring that weaker players get as much play as the stronger players. Also included are some golf croquet variations to involve both

association and golf croquet members.

The games vary from the well known (two ball croquet) to the invented (flamingos, getting in the washing, marauders) to the adapted (10 minute croquet, alternate shot full bisque doubles). Following interest from other clubs, a pack is available with everything you need to run a 'fun day'. Proceeds go to charity.

What the pack provides:

The pack consists of an organiser's booklet and a set of master copies including:

- * Advice on how to make the most of your courts with an alternative way to mark them out half size.
- * Full instructions on the 10 games including pocket size rules, a bisque chart, pre-printed chance cards, etc.
- * Timings for each game, two suggested timetables for the day, team sheets, results sheets, etc.
- * Suggestions for arranging teams, explaining the games, adding other elements such as bonus puzzles, etc.

How do I obtain it?
Send a cheque for £20 made payable to "The Jersey Hospice" to: Martin Hodge, Waldeck House, Mont Cochon, St. Helier, Jersey JE2 3JA

If you prefer to give to a charity of your choice or if you need more information please contact me first [01534 80751 or email: mnl@itl.net].

The quiz:
For a further £5 I can include a master copy of a quiz for middle to high handicaps. The master photocopies to an 8 page A5 booklet with questions on the laws, wiring, general croquet knowledge and decisions in play with diagrams. This has proved popular and leads naturally to discussions/coaching. Sample pages from the quiz and full details of the pack are also on the Jersey CC internet site [http://user.itl.net/~mnl/jcc].

National Club Events

First Round

Longman cup.
Newport bt Medway 3.2
Wrest Park bt Edgbaston 4.1
Southport bt Beverley 3.2
High Wycombe bt Blewbury 5.0

Mary Rose
Nottingham bt Bowdon 4.2
Walsall bt Surbiton 5.2

Interclub
Harrow bt Hurlingham 7.0
Surbiton bt Nottingham 5.2
Woking bt Cheltenham 4.3

~ Obituary ~

Clive Llewellyn

The Llanfairfechan and North Wales Croquet Club owes everything to Clive Llewellyn who died on 2 April 1997 after a courageous battle against cancer.

Clive was born and bred in Bethesda in the Ogwen Valley, at the heart of the Welsh slate industry. Educated at Dyffrn Ogwen Grammar School, Bangor Normal College and Liverpool University, he became a teacher and spent his career in various schools in Liverpool and north Wales enjoying deputy headship in the last seven years of his school work.

His contribution to croquet was immense, but he did not discover this wonderful sport until he met David Barrett, now Chairman of the North West Federation, on holiday in Scarborough in 1988. Clive and David played as partners in a form of doubles. That taste of croquet was enough to fire Clive into a passion for the game that was to move mountains to establish the first croquet club in north Wales.

Life had been full and satisfying for Clive before he played croquet, but after his first experience of croquet in Scarborough in 1988 he returned home determined to share his new found fascination with others. The croquet bug had bitten him and he decided that there had to be a local club. He bullied the Borough Council and cajoled the good citizens and by May 1989 he had a dozen people playing croquet every Sunday afternoon. Clive had turned his vision into a club in under a year. His aspiration was to provide the area with the best croquet facilities that could be afforded. By 1994 the dream was finally achieved. A croquet club by the sea with two full sized lawns and a pavilion with 70 members. He was so proud when Colin Irwin presented the club with the Townsend Award in 1995.

Notwithstanding his utter dedication to the Llanfairfechan club, Clive was very active in the wider croquet world playing in CA tournaments regularly at Pendle, Nailsea and Cheltenham and elsewhere. He was captain of his short croquet team which he brought into the North West League and made special arrangements for Llanfairfechan to be part of the North West Federation, as the other Welsh clubs were too far away for there to be regular contacts.

St Mair church was packed for Clive's funeral and appropriate accolades were made to his very considerable leadership contribution to the community in general, but particularly to his significant success for croquet in the last nine years of his life.

To his wife Georgina and his family we extend our deepest sympathy. Your loss is shared by the whole of the croquet world in North Wales and the North West of England.

John Beech

Celebrating Success & Coaching

Plymouth Croquet club's Shona Vaissiere has returned in triumph from a winter in Australia with two national titles. In a remarkable coup Shona became the first woman to win either the Australian National Handicap singles or the handicap doubles and she is the first ever to win both events.

The victories came at Rich River, New South Wales, just two years after Shona first picked up a croquet mallet. "It was a wonderful feeling," says Shona. "Croquet tends to be rather restrained, so, after I won the singles, I went into the ladies' loo and screamed. I had to scam somewhere. It was the first time I had won at that level."

Shona, 35, beat field of about fifty players from all over Australia in the ten day tournament. Her doubles partner, Ken Hopkins, was paired with her on a handicap basis by tournament organisers.

In just two years Shona has climbed from a novice 24 handicap to a seriously competitive 3.5.

Saturday 27th April saw 10 keen juniors arrive at Cheltenham for a coaching session given by Chris Clarke and Ian Burridge. A fun day of theory in the class room complemented by structured practice on the lawns left the squad tired but enthusiastic and Chris and Ian optimistic about the quality of our latest crop from the youth tree.

It is intended to hold another session on the 3rd of August and any juniors interested in attending should ring, or write, to David Magee: Hurstwood, Moorend, Hartpury Glos. GL19 3DG. Tel 01452 700353.



Coaches and participants at the Junior Coaching session held earlier in the year at Cheltenham



Shona Vaissiere pictured at Budleigh Salterton

Lottery Success

Pavilion Foundations Laid At Nailsea

Nailsea broke with tradition at this year's AGM. Beer and skittles, normally providing the high spot at this parochial chore, were well and truly knocked for six, as champagne corks popped! Confirmation that the Club's bid for Lottery funding for a pavilion had that day been phoned through to the delighted Chairman, John Jeffrey!

The project, budgeted to cost £56,000, had received the maximum 65% support from the National Lottery, but with grants of £3000 and £500 from Nailsea Town Council and the Croquet Association also promised, the Committee had felt confident in negotiating loans for the short fall.

Without doubt, it is Chairman

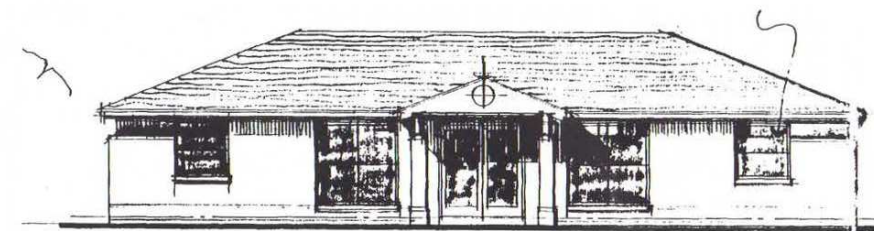
The Opening Of Bath's New Courts

Report by Gill and Mike Cope

The big day dawned - 9th May. After months of planning, endless committee meetings, tidying of the huts and complete cosmetic remake of the Club including paved paths, a terrace, turfed area, steps to the courts plus handrails, handkerchief sized garden and spanking new picnic table, opening day was here. All these things were additional to what had been paid for by the Lottery Grant - the result of enthusiasm and a labour of love by many of our members.

Our working party comprising most of the active club members had been appearing in waves from 9 a.m. onwards. The whole thing had been planned like a military operation, so well in fact that the 4 courts, set up as two full and four half lawns, briefings and changing into the rig of the day, had been completed by 10.15. Coffee was required to steady nerves. Then Colour Sergeant Chris Hicks of the Corps Commissionaires arrived in full regalia. The Marquee, which had been erected the previous day, was draped with sponsorship banners and staff from the Bath Spa and Francis Hotels were dressing the tables ready for lunch.

At just gone 11 a.m. the first guests arrived (David and Eileen Magee) bringing with them the Croquet Association Flag which was proudly hoisted aloft on the vacant flagpole. From then on everything went with a swing and activity again overtook nervousness. The members who had been allocated to meet and host V.I.P's were fully occupied and thus unable to renew acquaintanceships. Among the V.I.P's were Ged Roddy (Director of Sports Development and Recreation at the University



John Jeffrey who has been the driving force keeping the club afloat over the years. Happily David Murphy took up croquet 3 years ago, and it has been his skills, as Treasurer, that enabled the club to produce the projection and accounts so necessary for success in, not only the lottery application but additionally negotiating grants and loans from Nailsea Town Council and the CA.

The club looks forward to welcoming both old and new friends at their Open Tournaments. Gail Curry and Mike Evans' 'Help' has clear Instructions on how to reach us. Parking is no problem. But forgive me if I

add a final thought. Nailsea's future is not without difficulties. It will take time to build up its membership to 100 or more, but incredible costs have been incurred. Insurance and water, sewage and general rates are obvious. There is also the need to repay £1500 annually on the loans, quite apart from interest and general maintenance. The club will be sailing fairly close to the wind.

Would you consider supporting the Club's Interest Free Loan Scheme, or better still, send them a donation. Their Treasurer is David Murphy, Flat 2, 29, Edgehill Road, Clevedon, BS21 7BZ. He will be delighted to hear from you.



Bob Whitaker, the Mayor of Bath Margaret Feeny MBE, John Solomon, Counsellor David Hawkins, Don Foster MP and Ged Roddy Director of sport development and recreation University of Bath.

of Bath) who was opening the proceedings, Don Foster our Liberal Democrat Member of Parliament, the Chairman of Bath and N.E. Somerset Council who is especially interested in sport for all, the Mayor of Bath and the Croquet Association President John Solomon who was accompanied by his wife Barbara. Nine other Croquet Clubs (within an area encompassed by Nailsea, Cheltenham, Swindon and Wells) were well represented in addition to the South West Federation committee and the Croquet Association.

Our Chairman, Bob Whitaker, welcomed our guests and outlined the background to our Lottery application, the basis for which was largely due to the late John Papworth who was our Treasurer at the time of his death. Next Natalie Beckerman who represented the English Sports Council (S.W. Region) made a speech and presented the club with a large sized token cheque for £10,000. After this Ged Roddy made a speech, cut the tape and formally declared the

new courts open. Following this a group of V.I.P's walked to our (10' x 8') "Club House" to unveil the English Sports Council's indoor plaque.

Next came the photo call. Apart from a very large group photo (did all 110 get into it?), the most popular subject appeared to be the V.I.P's trying to run a hoop under the expert direction of John Solomon. The Bath Spa and Francis Hotels who were both sponsoring and providing the reception had provided a delicious full blown cold buffet with wine, desserts and cheese - a magnificent display, and Bath Croquet Club is most grateful to them.

Guests gazed in envy at the game between John Solomon and Martin Murray. The club was busy all afternoon and there was a foursome still in play at 5.45 p.m. - still no rain. It really could not have been a more successful day and we hope our guests enjoyed it as much as we did. Judging from the letters we have received we know that to be the case.



Issue No 250 may not seem much to crow about, but in this centenary year who would deny that it is a good enough pretext to look back over the history of the CA's official organ?

As any librarian will tell you, serials present a minefield to the unwary scholar. Title, frequency of publication, numbering of issues, contents, and all else are subject to change and happenstance, so nothing can be taken for granted. An extreme example of this chameleon-like quality is provided by one of the gazette's unofficial predecessors, *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*. Spun off from *Illustrated London News* in 1874, as sports and drama attracted increasing press coverage, it served croquet well, along with *The Field* and *Lawn Tennis and Croquet*, on the revival of the game in the mid-1890s, until the Association launched its own official organ on 27 April 1904. When sport and drama went into partial eclipse during World War II, and as sections of its readership later transferred their allegiance to new niche journals, its title changed successively to *Sport and Country*, *Farm and Country*, and *Big Farm Management*.

Though the gazette has remained faithful to the interests of croquet and the CA, its history has been scarcely less chequered. Originally, 30 or so issues appeared each year and, following the custom of the times, they were numbered within nominal 'volumes' (1904 running through Vol. 1 Nos 1-31, 1905 through Vol. 2 Nos 1-30 etc.), and real volumes were actually supplied to libraries. This practice persisted in modified form through World War I (though the journal then only appeared monthly), but was finally discontinued on the outbreak of World War II, after which no editor was so naive as to imagine that the CA could ever again afford to produce enough issues annually to fill a full volume. On HF Crowther Smith's resignation as editor, the incoming editorial team launched the present series in April 1954. Unless I have failed to note any irregularity which was not subsequently made good, that makes precisely 1220 issues to date.

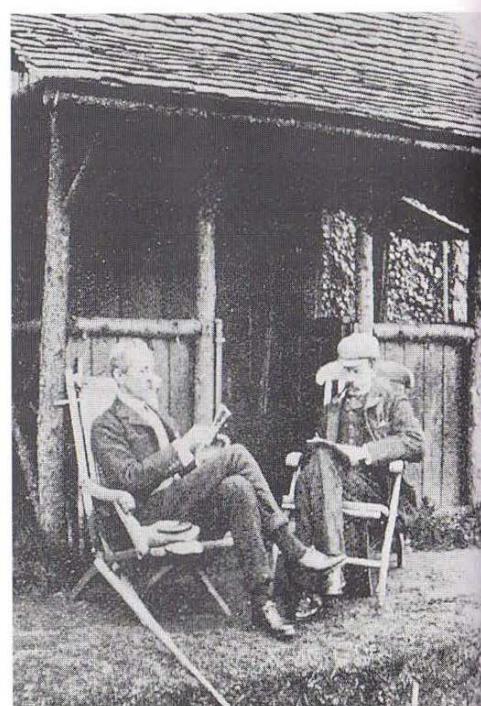
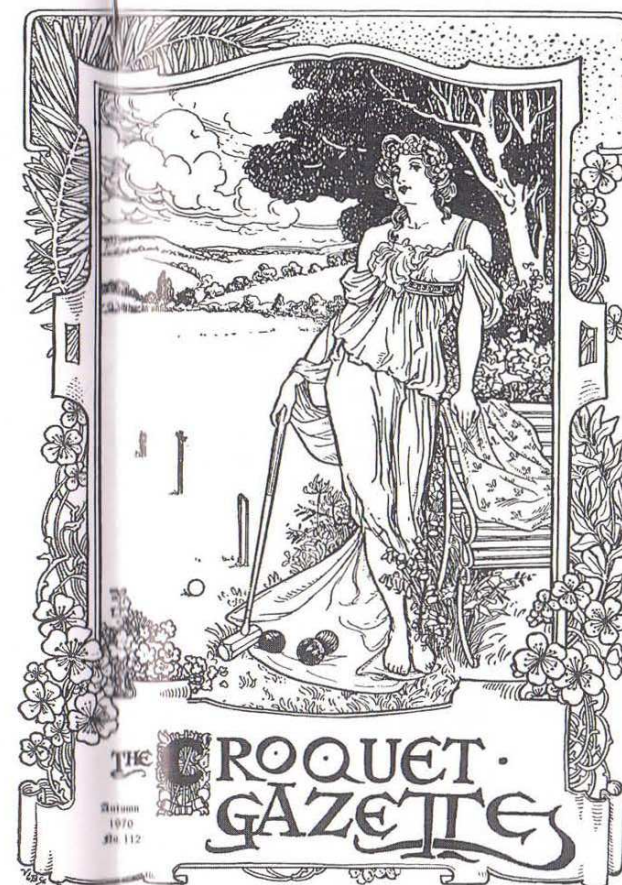
Though a few long-established journals (eg *The Field*) have stuck to their original titles through thick and thin, our gazette has undergone numerous name changes - but hardly to much effect. It started life as *The Croquet Association Gazette*, first became *Croquet* in 1954, and has since oscillated between *Croquet* and *The Croquet Gazette* according to editorial taste or, just recently, in response to a reader's poll.

But enough of statistics. What about the gazette itself, its contents, and the editors who have agonised how best to reconcile their own ideals or perceptions of associates' interests with the constraints placed upon them by Council? In the beginning, the editor's job was reasonably straightforward. The gazette was a journal of record and the sole medium through which readers could exchange notes and queries, and

A SALUTE TO THE GAZETTE ON THE OCCASION OF THIS '250TH' ISSUE

by David Drazin

Winter 1970. 'The Rape of Roquetetta'. Brian Lloyd Pratt kicks over the traces. In an editorial note he reminds the reader that the first 't' is silent.



Col. Needham and Mr C. D. Locock discussing arrangements for the first number of the Gazette, which appeared on April 27th, 1904.



clubs could advertise their facilities and events. The labour costs of printers being somewhat less in real terms than they are today (or associates being considered content to pay the going rate for a quality product), the editor could rely on an experienced production team to put every issue together with comparatively little pain. So the early issues were model collations of official announcements, news and comment, tournament reports, editorial notes, readers' letters, the odd feature article, occasional lists of associates together with their handicaps, and lots of colourful display advertising by clubs, hotels, and equipment suppliers. Punctuated only by periods of semi-dormancy during World Wars I and II, the essential format of the gazette changed little until the cupboard was found to be bare in the 1950s.

Until 1954, the gazette had only had three editors - CD Locock, R Leatham Jones, and Crowther Smith. All three now appear as literary giants, every issue emanating the highest authority and exemplary taste. Thenceforward, the editorship became less a labour of love or pious exercise, and more a personal challenge or chore. The mould was shattered in 1970 by Brian Lloyd Pratt, who immediately injected his own flamboyant personality into the mix. His brief reign, peppered by controversy, has never since ceased to be a talking point. His most celebrated front cover (see illustration) was certainly good for a giggle, but perhaps more is the surprise that he did not push the bounds of propriety and originality harder still. This image first appeared in 1899 as the frontispiece of a stolid textbook by Leonard Williams and had been reprinted in 1947 in Stephen Potter's *Gamesmanship*.

The more recent history of the gazette has been influenced by all sorts of developments, perhaps chief amongst which are continued financial stringency, various innovations in printing technology, the appearance of the *Fixtures Book* in 1969 (dispensing with the need for club advertising), and the publication of numerous books and niche serials. The task of the editorial function in reshaping the magazine to keep in touch with its readership is infinitely more complex than ever before.

Who is to say what the gazette, whatever it may be called, will or should look like when it celebrates its true centenary in 2004? If a week is a long time in politics, then surely seven years is an age in publishing. Far be it from me, or any commentator today, to forecast the future but, as a firm adherent of traditional publishing values, I do fervently hope that Gail and her successors never lose sight of the original and essential function of the Gazette as a journal of record. Unless the hard news of the day, on and off court, in meetings of Council, and on the street, is faithfully reported in these columns, future generations of croquet players will never be able to piece together their heritage. And we shall not be around to defend ourselves!

Extracts from the unconfirmed Minutes of the Council Meeting on 22nd March 1997

1. S T Badger (Chairman), J W Solomon (President), A J Oldham and L Wharrad (Vice-Presidents) and 16 other members of Council were present with P W P Campion (Secretary) in attendance.
2. Dr. G S Liddiard has resigned from Council through pressure of work and for medical reasons. His place as Chairman of the Equipment Testing Committee has been taken by W J Sidebottom. Owing to T J Haste's absence abroad during the coming summer, C J Irwin has assumed general responsibility for the Coaching Committee with certain coaching responsibilities devolving on other persons.
3. L Wharrad gave notice of his intention to propose a motion in support of "Wharrad Turns" in time limited games.
4. Re Executive Committee Report It was agreed to grant honorary life membership to John Solomon and Major Freddie Stone. The setting up of a small ad hoc committee, consisting of some members of Council and others with differing areas of experience, to assist with forward planning was approved. It was noted that although the Sports Council's Grant for 1997 has been confirmed some uncertainty surrounds the amount of the grant for 1998. This matter is receiving attention from the F & G P Committee.
5. Re Finance & G P Committee Report The subscription rates for 1998 (broadly a general increase of £1) and the C R F for 1998 (£5.40 per capita) were approved. The 1996 Accounts were approved for submission to the A G M It was noted that the Committee had approved a loan of £2500 to the Berkshire club at Thatcham.
6. Re Tournaments Committee Report The arrangements made for the Inter-Counties, dividing the 22 entries into two divisions were noted. A review of the financial aspects of tournaments is to be undertaken before the 1998 season.
7. Re Development Committee Report A development grant of £500 has been made to Bury St. Edmunds C C in connection with the installation of a synthetic surface croquet court, and financial assistance has been given to four Federations to support regional development projects. The Apps-Heley Award for 1996 has been made to Cheltenham C C
8. Re Publicity Committee Report. The "car stickers" sent to all Associates have been well received and additional supplies have been ordered. New publicity leaflets are being developed.
9. Re Editorial Board Report The Board had considered various economies that might be made in the cost of producing the Gazette. Council unanimously agreed to a proposal that the Editorial Board should in future assume responsibility for the financial planning of the Gazette.
10. The Reports of the Selection, International, Coaching, Laws and Golf Croquet Committees and that of the Commercial Manager were received and adopted
11. Articles commissioned by the Centenary Committee and written by Bob Porter have been accepted by "The Field" and "The Lady" magazines".
12. The Chairman of the Handicap Committee (W E Lamb), in reply to a request from D L Gaunt for a conversion chart for overseas handicaps, declared that it was not possible to construct one because of the different systems used elsewhere.
13. A paper by L Wharrad entitled "Making better use of the game's resources" and suggesting a radical change in the structure of the Association's membership was considered and referred to the F & G P Committee.
14. The Secretary reported that (1) one of his assistants, Mrs Hazel Sherrington, had resigned on grounds of ill health and had been replaced by Miss Janet White (secretary of the Merton club); (2) a very satisfactory number of Associates (928) had agreed to pay their subscriptions by Direct Debit; and (3) 38 clubs had paid their 1997 C R F
15. Council confirmed the election of 39 new Associates. Since 1 Nov 1996 news had been received of the deaths of 6 Associates and 18 had resigned. As at 12 March 1997 the number of Associates was 1626 including 64 overseas.

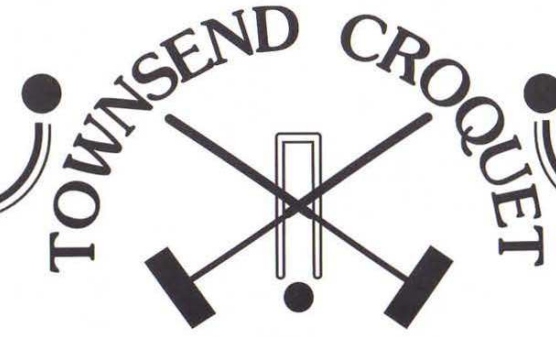
Development Committee

Apps-Heley Award

Initially known in 1960 as the Apps Gift and in 1972 revised as the Apps-Heley Award, this honour has been bestowed on the croquet club considered by the Development Committee to have made the greatest advancement on behalf of itself and croquet in general in the preceding year. Its existence represents a lasting memorial to two ladies, who in addition to being very talented at croquet also contributed an enormous amount of time and effort to the development and promotion of the game - Lorn Apps as CA secretary 1946-58 and Rut Heley as the driving force behind the Cambridge University CC after the second world war.

In recent years the number of applications for this award has been disappointingly low and the Development Committee have had a long discussion in an attempt to identify the reasons for this apparent lack of interest. The two main conclusions that have been reached are that the award needs more publicity and the qualifying criteria needs revision so that success and development is not limited to one twelve month period. The first of these items is fairly easily overcome by regular reminders to clubs in the Gazette and club circulars. On the second item a decision has been made that in future the award will only be made every other year, commencing at the end of 1998. It is thought that this will give clubs greater scope in preparing their applications and enable them to include results of longer running projects. In addition John Beech has kindly donated a trophy for the winning club to hold for a two year period. A plaque which will represent a permanent memento to be retained by the club will still be presented and the financial benefit will be increased to £100.

(Continued on page 18)



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1997 CENTENARY DINNER - THE CROQUET EVENT OF THE CENTURY

Readers will know that the first committee meeting of the CA (or UAECA as it then was) took place on 15th October 1897. We are marking the actual centenary of this event by holding a celebratory dinner in the Debenture Holders' lounge of the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club at Wimbledon on the nearest Saturday, 18th October 1997. This is also the day of the CA's Annual General Meeting.

The venue is particularly appropriate in view of the All England Club's close connection with early croquet. This will be commemorated by a challenge match between the CA President's side and a team from the croquet section of the All England Club to be played at Wimbledon on Saturday 6th September 1997. Spectators may attend by prior arrangement and tea will be available in the museum tea shop.

The sequence of events on 18th October will be as follows:-
 11 am AGM at the Hurlingham Club

The croquet exhibition at the Wimbledon lawn tennis museum will be open from 10.30 am; it will close to the public at 5 pm but will remain open thereafter until 7 pm to those holding dinner tickets who will also be admitted free from 1 pm onwards.

From 6 pm onwards there will be an indoor miniature croquet competition in the Debenture Holders' lounge managed by Bernard Neal.

7 for 7.30 pm Centenary dinner. This will commence with a complimentary drink. Thereafter a full cash bar will operate including wine for purchase with dinner. A vegetarian meal will be available for those who request this with their application. The principal guests will be Sir Peter Yarranton, former chairman of the Sports Council, and Lady Yarranton. Dress will be lounge suits, etc.

Tickets for the dinner (including entry to the croquet exhibition and optional participation in miniature croquet, but excluding wines) are available now from the CA Office price £27.50 per person. Note that after 1st September the price will be £30. The Office also has details of local accommodation for those who request them. To apply for tickets please fill in the form below. Tickets are limited and will be issued in the order of receipt of applications, so you are advised to act promptly.

Centenary Dinner Ticket Application

Name _____

Address _____

Tel. no. for any query _____

No. of tickets required _____

State any seating preference (tables seat 10 so applicants for this number of tickets may reserve a whole table)

Please indicate number of vegetarian meals required

Cheque enclosed for £ _____ payable to the Croquet Association

Please ensure you include your cheque and enclose a SAE. Then return to The Croquet Association, The Hurlingham Club, Ranelagh Gardens, London SW6 3PR.

A date for your diary

NOTICE OF AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the Croquet Association will be held at 11.00am at the Hurlingham Club on Saturday 18th October 1997.

All Associates are welcome to attend.

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No. 9 Court Etiquette (1)

Although the way you behave on and off court may not make any significant change to your winning or losing, it can make a significant difference to your enjoyment of the game. More importantly it can make an even more significant difference to the enjoyment of other players. If your behaviour is particularly bad you may find a tournament is unaccountably "full" even though you applied early.

In most cases, however, things are not that bad and just a few moments thought will stop irritation.

Double Banking

This is by far the area where most problems occur. All of us will have transgressed from time to time when we are concentrating so hard on our game that we forget the other. When something happens, as it will, apologise properly to the other game, don't just mutter something and carry on playing. If you are on the receiving end, draw attention politely, don't just hurl abuse.

Don't walk across someone's line of fire. Having to start again and reconcentrate because some oblivious fool strolls across your line ruins many a roquet. This rule applies to out players and spectators as well as double-banked players.

Don't stand in the middle of the court deciding what shot to play, especially if you are playing doubles. If you must deliberate - and more of that later - do it at the side.

If both games are contesting the same

HELPFUL HINTS No.9

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.

hoop or piece of ground, give priority to:

- (a) The game that is short on time
 - (b) The game that is in a break
 - (c) The game that was there first
 - (d) The game that has a critical ball
- (a) to (d) are approximately, but not absolutely, in order of priority.

Marking balls. Always carry something to mark balls. The ideal things are those little plastic markers used by golfers. Avoid using coins if you can. Some clubs are very anti this, probably those with damaged mowers!

Some do's and don'ts on marking.

Do ask permission of the ball's owner first. Do put the marked ball somewhere where it is obvious that it is marked, like in a hoop (not one that is about to be run!) or off the court.

Do not mark balls that are critical eg very near to a hoop. Either call a referee or wait until it is moved from that position. If time is near you should ask for your clock to be stopped.

Do take care in marking. If necessary, use two markers. If you mark at the side, take careful note of the side from which you mark eg towards corner 2. If you lift the ball and mark the middle don't press on the ball to make an indent in the lawn, do it by eye. If you can't do it by eye, mark from the side.

Do remember to replace the ball as soon as possible and recover your marker(s).

Do help with marking if you are the non-playing partner in doubles.

What happens if you forget to replace a ball and the other game continues to play with the misplaced ball? Firstly, you are a twit and can expect to be told so! As far as the other game

is concerned the marked ball is a misplaced ball, laws 29(f) & 33, but a strict use of only these laws can give very unfair results. You might think law 35, playing when misled would come into this, but not so because this law only deals with misplaced clips and false information by an adversary. So any referee (you are bound to need a referee!) may have to use good old law 51 (emergency). Since each case must be dealt with on its merits I cannot say here what I would do. Often, however, there is dissatisfaction, so aren't you ashamed of what you did!?

Ball interference. This also causes a lot of aggravation, so try and avoid it by marking. However, it sometimes cannot be foreseen and you should know what to do when it happens. There are two main points to consider.

- (a) The ball yours hits is stationary. Keep a careful eye on the position of the other ball so that you can put it back as accurately as possible. Draw in your mind a line from that ball's position to the original position of your ball (ignore whether you hit the ball full or on the side; you are only guessing anyway). Guess how hard your ball was travelling when it hit the other one and send it at the speed along the imaginary line. Note that the rules prohibit you from assuming a roquet or running a hoop, so if there are any difficulties in guessing where it would have gone, call a referee.
- (b) The ball you hit is also moving. It is amazing how often this happens. Basically, it is the same procedure as above, but for both balls, but if (as is likely) this is impossible to judge, play the shot again.



The start of play on the final morning- still everything to play for and/or everything to lose

In centenary year, the inter-counties saw more players than ever compete. The number of entries was, at twenty two, the highest ever, and practically double the number since combined counties were disallowed. It remains to be seen whether two entries will be repeated next year: Dublin and a 'Centenary Team'; the latter intended to make up the numbers but presenting a fine opportunity for players unable to compete because they do not qualify for a county which enters or find it difficult to gain a place in a strong team.

How can the event take place with almost twice the number of entrants? Oddly a fairly simple answer: divide the event into two divisions, each with eleven teams (and hence one bye) and with relegation and promotion between divisions. This is the first time there have been 'official' divisions. The general response was that Andrew Gregory and the Tournament Committee had found a good solution since the threat of relegation, and the hope of promotion, ensured a competitive edge. The alternative view is that the split tends to limit interaction between the divisions and also denies the so-called weaker counties the opportunity to topple a leading team.

In the first division, Avon and Surrey confirmed their position at the top by reaching seven wins by the end of the third day. The first match of the final day saw them in opposition, and double-banking with your reporter (excellent management, but denied by Andrew's electronic messages, which imply he thought the teams might be part of a relegation tussle).

Playing with Roger Tribe, Alex Leggate (for Avon) was pegging out from about a yard. His stop shot was so full-blooded that the front

ball ended in a baulk, and he knocked the second ball into the peg. It was only when Alex reached the South boundary that it was apparent the first ball had not managed even a glancing blow on its passage past the peg. George Noble started a break which, unexpectedly, finished at 3-back. Although Alex missed the first shot, he was soon pegging out for real.

At one game all, attention focused upon

THE CENTENARY INTER-COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIPS

SOUTHWICK & COMPTON MAY 24TH - 27TH 1997

REPORT BY GRAHAM FOWLER PHOTOS BY FRANCES RANSOM

the Surrey pair, David Wiggins and Graham Gale against Ed Duckworth and Ray Ransom. Gale and Duckworth had reached 4-back some time earlier. Wiggins and Ransom had more difficulty, although Wiggins made it to the peg. Duckworth hit and pegged out Wiggins. A protracted period saw Ray Ransom making steady and careful progress. Time became pressing, then very pressing; the scores were level. Gale hit and played a stop shot attempting to get position at

4-back and dispose of the other ball. The shot was short; he took position. Next turn he would run the hoop. Ransom had a long, long shot, but Duckworth's ball had only been sent to around hoop 4. Ed took one look at the television crew, and possibly the attractive young lady who had just interviewed Mark Saurin; he knew what he had to do. Standing over the ball, lining up the shot at the peg, he seemed cool (though he later admitted he wasn't). The ball looked good all the way. Ed was celebrating; Avon were joyous; Surrey were gutted, in a mildly disappointed sort of way. Ed got his interview. Avon took the trophy, and deservedly so, because victory in their final game and Surrey's loss meant they were two matches clear.

At the bottom end of the first division, Essex, Northumberland and Nottinghamshire were relegated. They will be replaced next year by Northamptonshire, Berkshire and Sussex. Northants looked untroubled, winning their first five games. Kent were unlucky to win seven matches and not be promoted.

A new county, Hertfordshire, were struggling. They lost their first four matches 3-0; won a game in their fifth; won their sixth and penultimate matches. True they acquired the wooden spoon, but the experience will prove useful in their next attempt.

As usual, there were amusing times; indeed this seemed a witty year. Enjoyment and competition go together. Given the size of the event, the detailed planning and the different venues, the administration worked wonderfully well this year. Thanks are due to the many involved, at whatever level, who help to make this almost legendary event such a success.

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The Centenary Dinner at Shoreham College

Centenary Inter-Counties` Results

Division ONE	A	R	C	L	M	D	G	O	E	U	N	M'ches	G'es
Avon	A A	2-1	1-2	2-1	2-1	2-1	2-1	2-1	3-0	2-1	3-0	9	21
Surrey	R 1-2	R	1-2	1-2	3-0	3-0	2-1	2-1	2-1	3-0	2-1	7	20
Cheshire	C 2-1	2-1	C	1-2	0-3	2-1	2-1	3-0	2-1	3-0	1-2	7	18
Lancashire	L 1-2	2-1	2-1	L	0-3	2-1	1-2	1-2	2-1	2-1	2-1	6	15
Middlesex	M 1-2	0-3	3-0	3-0	M	2-1	0-3	1-2	3-0	1-2	2-1	5	16
Dorset	D 1-2	0-3	1-2	1-2	1-2	D	3-0	3-0	3-0	1-2	3-0	4	17
Gloucester	G 1-2	1-2	1-2	2-1	3-0	0-3	G	3-0	1-2	2-1	1-2	4	15
Glamorgan	O 1-2	1-2	0-3	2-1	2-1	0-3	O	0-3	0-3	3-0	3-0	4	12
Essex	E 0-3	1-2	1-2	1-2	0-3	0-3	2-1	3-0	E	2-1	1-2	3	11
Northumberl'd	U 1-2	0-3	0-3	1-2	2-1	2-1	1-2	0-3	1-2	U	2-1	3	10
Nottingham.	N 0-3	1-2	2-1	1-2	1-2	0-3	2-1	0-3	2-1	1-2	N	3	10

Division TWO	P	Q	S	K	F	W	B	Y	I	X	H	M'ches	G'es
Northampton	P P	1-2	1-2	2-1	2-1	2-1	3-0	2-1	1-2	2-1	3-0	7	19
Berkshire	Q 2-1	Q	3-0	3-0	1-2	2-1	2-1	2-1	1-2	2-1	0-3	7	18
Sussex	S 2-1	0-3	S	2-1	2-1	3-0	0-3	1-2	3-0	2-1	3-0	7	18
Kent	K 1-2	0-3	1-2	K	2-1	2-1	2-1	2-1	2-1	2-1	2-1	7	16
Suffolk	F 1-2	2-1	1-2	1-2	F	2-1	1-2	3-0	3-0	3-0	3-0	6	20
Warwickshire	W 1-2	1-2	0-3	1-2	1-2	W	2-1	3-0	3-0	2-1	3-0	5	17
Bedfordshire	B 0-3	1-2	3-0	1-2	2-1	1-2	B	1-2	2-1	3-0	3-0	5	17
Yorkshire	Y 1-2	1-2	2-1	1-2	0-3	0-3	2-1	Y	0-3	2-1	2-1	4	11
Dublin	I 2-1	2-1	0-3	1-2	0-3	0-3	1-2	3-0	I	1-2	1-2	3	11
CA Centenary	X 1-2	1-2	1-2	1-2	0-3	1-2	0-3	1-2	2-1	X	2-1	2	10
Hertfordshire	H 0-3	3-0	0-3	1-2	0-3	0-3	0-3	1-2	2-1	1-2	H	2	8

UK Rankings as at 15 June 1997

Qualification 5 games since October 1996

1 Westerby AJ [NZ]	36 Storey BJ	71 Jardine AW
2 Fulford RI	37 Williams CN [W]	72 Eardley P
3 Clarke CD	38 Browne TN [I]	73 O'Shaugnessy M [I]
4 Maugham DB	39 Guest JE	74 Gregory AK
5 Mulliner SN	40 Kibble DJ	75 Willis JH
6 Comish S	41 Carter KJ	76 Badger ST
7 Avery MN	42 Linton AM	77 Southern C
8 Dawson JP	43 Liddiard GS [S]	78 Rangeley MW
9 Cordingley P	44 Schmieler CS von [I]	79 Dymock E
10 Cornelius DA Miss	45 Mrozinski AJ [W]	80 Arliss WH
11 Irwin CJ	46 Tibble LG	81 Shorten JIA Miss [I]
12 Openshaw DK	47 Le Moignan AS [Jer]	82 Bell E
13 Goacher DJ	48 Wadley AM	83 Smith PL
14 Tribe R	49 Hawkins JD	84 Bennett GJ
15 Hallam BG	50 Ormerod WP	85 McInerney AE [I]
16 Gaunt DL	51 Foulser DR	86 Gugan R Mrs
17 Burge TR	52 Magee DJ	87 Williamson JD
18 Aiton KMH [S]	53 Gale GK	88 Morrow NW
19 Burrige IJ [W]	54 Burrow M [Jer]	89 Hammelev MA
20 McInerney RN [I]	55 O'Connell MJ [S]	90 Scott EE
21 Trimmer PC	56 Hope AB [S]	91 Davis R
22 Williams S [I]	57 Hort PMG	92 Dent CJ
23 Cunningham AE [I]	58 Murray M [S]	93 Haslam JH
24 Saurin MA	59 Fowler GE	94 Scott IW
25 Palmer LJ [W]	60 Williams RAW [S]	95 Pidcock A
26 Brown RJ	61 Patmore CJ	96 Granger-Brown M
27 Prichard WdeB [W]	62 Jenkins RS	97 Smith J
28 Noble GW	63 Taylor PM	98 Thompson PW
29 Goddard JP	64 Neal BG	99 Grimshaw JE [W]
30 Bond ID [S]	65 Jones CS	100 Darby PA
31 Surgenor J [S]	66 Nicholson DJ	101 Smorfitt HW
32 Farthing CN	67 Curry GE Ms	102 Daddo-Langlois S
33 Evans MJ [W]	68 Hopewell CG	103 Stevens MJ
34 Harrison-Wood D	69 Solomon JW	104 Jackman RT
35 Taylor HP	70 Dyer JS	105 Gale NFC

UK Events missing from calculation
 May 3-5 Hunstanton May 17-18 Bristol
 June 6-8 Surrey Plate June 7-8 Edgbaston

(continued from page 14)

Details of the award including the criteria and the application forms are contained in the 1997 amendments to the Registered Clubs Handbook which have been circulated to all CA registered clubs. Application forms should be progressed through your Federation Development Officer to reach the CA by 31 December 1998. It is recommended that clubs commence logging their successes, activities and development projects as they occur so they have a comprehensive record of their achievements when they complete their application form.

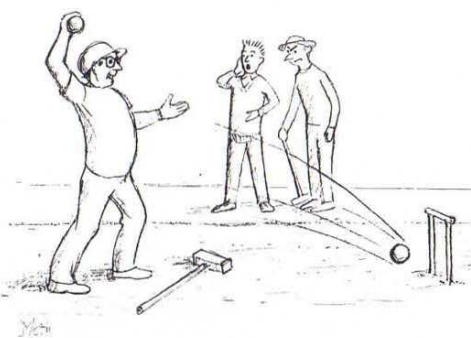
Townsend Award

This award comprises a trophy donated by Townsend Croquet Ltd in 1986 to be held by the winning club for a period of one year. The object of this award is to encourage newly formed clubs as they develop from the inaugural stage into a stabilised form and is limited to clubs less than 5 years old. The final decision on who wins the award is based on the evidence of development such as, increase in membership, improved facilities, improvement in playing standards and involvement in CA activities.

The award will continue to be made annually as it is possible for a new club to achieve considerable progress in a year.

Application forms are in the Registered Clubs Handbook together with the criteria. Completed forms should be progressed through the Federation Development Officer to reach the CA by 31 December each year.

Derek Trotman
 Chairman Development Committee



On the whole, I think it was a mistake to suggest to him that he consider Hurlingham!

NEW GUINNESS RECORD FOR CROQUET

Report & Photos by Bob Vaughan

The Leven and Crake Valleys Croquet & Lawn Tennis Club lies at the confluence of the rivers Leven & Crake in southern Lake District. Hereafter known as Crake Valley the club was formed sometime during the 1890's when croquet was in its heyday. As the actual date is unknown the club decided to use the CA Centenary as a good time to celebrate our 100 years.

Wishing to do something entirely different the club committee during 1996 used their imagination to dream up exceptional ideas to make 1997 memorable. Examples range from playing on top of England's highest mountain (an impossible task as it's all rocks) to a 24 hour croquet match. The one day match was chosen as it would involve many players and best of all could possibly get in the Guinness Book of Records as we were sure it had never been attempted before.

After 7 months of negotiations with the Guinness organisation and the CA in the form of Stephen Badger and Bill Lamb, agreement was reached on a format that both would support.

While this was going on efforts were made to find a club who would be prepared to challenge us. Belsay Hall in Northumberland kindly agreed to take part in the experiment and the weekend with the longest day, namely June 21/22 1997 was chosen.

Preparations were made and the day dawned dull and damp. However as the weekend progressed the weather got better and the challenge match was started at 4pm by a local dignitary firing a starting pistol.

The essence of the game is standard singles full lawn association croquet with all forms of pegging out eliminated. Therefore on getting both balls trough rover each competitor completes their turn and hands over to the next relay player in their team. Level play was chosen as it was thought to be essential that possible handicapping errors be eliminated.

The two teams were found to be very evenly matched with Crake Valley taking an early lead which was held until 1.40am when Belsay drew level. At 3.26 however Crake Valley once again got in front only to lose it again at 6.45 am. At 8am Crake Valley put in their best player who regained the lead by 9am and Crake Valley held on to win by 190 hoops against 182 at 4pm.

All players said the challenge was an enjoyable which opened up a new dimension in croquet in that if you were playing badly there was no "out" when your opponent beat you; you had to hold on in there until 24 hoops were scored.

My own memorable experience while playing was watching dawn appear, soon followed by the electricity generators being switched off at 5am and in almost perfect silence which followed the dawn chorus could be heard. What a time to play croquet!

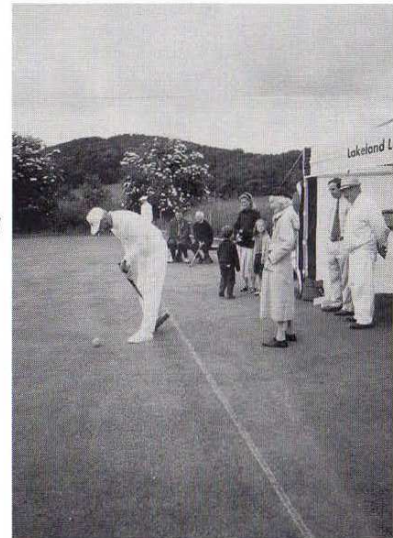
The times taken by all the competitors are given below and it is seen that lower handicaps do not necessarily mean short times.

Crake Valley	H'cap	Time	Belsay Hall	H'cap	Time
Neil Williams	7	2.37	Ernest Smith	9	3.10
David Maddocks	9	2.21	Alice Fleck	6	2.56
Peter Wardle	5	3.14	Syd Jones	5	3.32
Rob Callingham	4.5	3.10	John Grant	14	3.28
Bob Vaughan	16	4.32	Roger Peters	6	1.35
Dave Nicholson	0.5	1.05	Honor Smith	14	4.04
Mark Miller	9	2.05	Charles Topaz	16	1.43
Harry Padgett	18	4.48	Liz Nisbet	14	1.43
	(22 hoops)		(14 hoops)		

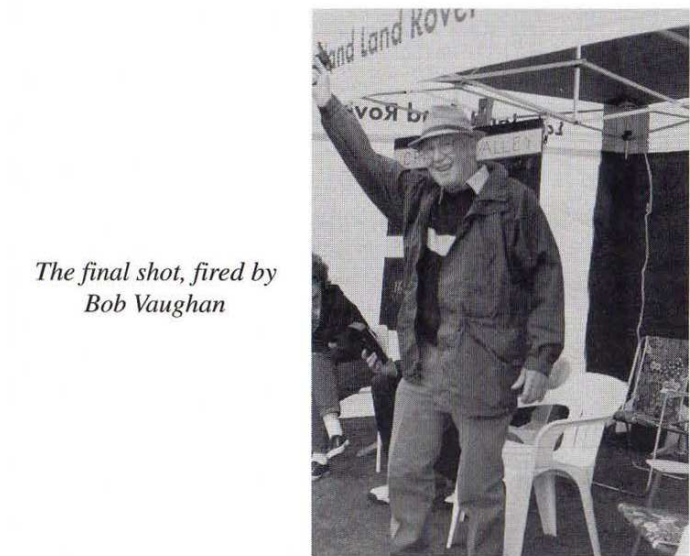
The full report as required by the Guinness Book of Records organisation is being sent in and hopefully ratification will follow.

Accordingly Crake Valley are now offering the challenge to all affiliated croquet clubs. If any clubs are seriously interested in taking up the challenge please write to me at Croft End, Lowick Bridge, Cumbria, LA12 8EE and I will be delighted to send a copy of the rules used and requirements to have a go.

The first shot played by Neil Williams



The final two players, Liz Nisbet of Belsay Hall and Harry Padgett of Crake Valley.



The final shot, fired by Bob Vaughan

POINTS OF VIEW

WAS IT REALLY ALL SO EASY?

Keith Aiton (ex-Chairman of Selectors)

Is it just my imagination, or was Great Britain's retention of the MacRobertson Shield something rather in the nature of a non-event as far as the general croquet playing public is concerned? Did I sense a wave of sympathy for the visitors who had come such a long way when they had no real chance of winning? After all we have the likes of Fulford, Clarke, Maugham etc, and since all they do is play croquet who would have a chance of beating them? It would have been more interesting if we had played our "B" team, but of course we would still have won. OK, so I'm exaggerating, but I do find the mixture of arrogance and complacency among the top players that induces apathy in everyone else very, very irritating, particularly as the events of last summer demonstrated to me that such an attitude is simply not justified.

Despite the apparently comfortable win over New Zealand by a score of 14-7 it should

be remembered that after two days NZ led by 5-2, and that on day 3 Clarke played his only decent match of the entire series to complete two TPs in the doubles against NZ's best pair of Stephens and Baker. Was that luck or did Clarke respond to the challenge?

As I know how hard he was trying in all the other matches I was just thankful that it all came right when it did on that particular day. Moving on to day 4 I believe that a "fair" result would have been 2-2, rather than 4-0 to GB, although Burridge and Maugham both played well at crucial times when the opposition faltered. If the score had been 7-7 or 8-6 to NZ with two days to go then perhaps the outcome would have been different.

Let us take the conjecturing a stage further and suppose that instead of Messrs Wislang and Johnson, NZ had been able to call on the services of Messrs Jackson and Westerby. Assuming that the latter gentlemen had played as 1 and 2 in the singles and as a doubles pair, with the rest of their team keeping the same order then I suggest that the results might have been as follows (using actual results where possible):

Doubles		
Clarke / Fulford	v Jackson / Westerby	GB
	v Jones / Skinley	GB
	v Baker / Stephens	GB
Comish / Maugham	v Jackson / Westerby	NZ
	v Jones / Skinley	GB
	v Baker / Stephens	NZ
Burridge / Cornelius	v Jackson / Westerby	NZ
	v Jones / Skinley	GB

Singles		
Fulford	v Jackson	GB
	v Westerby	GB
Clarke	v Jackson	NZ
	v Westerby	NZ
Maugham	v Jones	GB
	v Skinley	GB
Comish	v Jones	NZ
	v Skinley	GB
Cornelius	v Baker	NZ
	v Stephens	NZ
Burridge	v Baker	NZ
	v Stephens	NZ

Result: New Zealand 11 Great Britain 10

Being cynical you will no doubt point out that I have manipulated the results to prove my point, which of course I have, but look more closely and you will, I hope, see that I have tried to take a balanced view. For example, you might argue that if Clarke had been in better form he would have won at least one of his singles. However, if Skinley had been in better form, he might well have won at least one of his, and possibly he and Jones would then have won a doubles. So, I do not think that the above result is at all implausible. Having said that I consider that NZ have an advantage in the above scenario in that on then current form Baker and Stephens were stronger than Jones and Skinley, and that playing the latter pair at 5 and 6 in the singles would have altered the result in GB's favour.

If anything can be drawn from all of this then I believe it is that if GB sends the same team to New Zealand in 2000, and if NZ pick their best team, and if everyone plays reasonably well (but not necessarily to their best form) then NZ will win. Of course those "ifs" are rather large, and the next test series is still nearly three years away, but perhaps now would be a good time to start addressing the problem (always assuming that I have managed to persuade you that there might be one). I would like to concentrate on the first of those ifs, as the third cannot be addressed until much nearer the time, and the second is out of our control. Now I should stress that I was very happy with the selections made for the 1996 team, as they were clearly the six best available players. However, were one to be a proactive selector, rather than a reactive one, where would one look to improve on last year's team?

Firstly, and I think most obviously, Stephen Mulliner should be in the team, as indeed I believe he would have been if he had been available last year. He has not played in the Mac since 1990, perhaps because he has felt that his services were not required. If that is the case then I hope he will take a different view for the 2000 series, when a repeat of his 1990 heroics which won the Shield would be just the ticket.

Secondly, there is Mark Avery, who, on his form of the late 1980s, would challenge Fulford for the top spot. After a period in the doldrums he is beginning to return to form, although for his many fans, and no doubt also for him, it is a maddeningly slow process. I was pleased to hear that he had been picked for this year's Solomon Trophy team, and I hope that a return to International duty will further restore his confidence. The sight of Mark Avery in full flow is something quite special.

Finally, I would like you to spare a thought for John Walters. It is worth remembering that he won the World Championship in 1991, and very nearly defended it successfully the following year. He played in the Mac in 1993, but since then has not played enough to maintain "match fitness". However, from the few fleeting appearances he has made I think it is apparent that it would only take the conjunction of available time and sufficient incentive for his game to reach the heights once again. Hopefully the 2000 Mac will provide the stimulus.

Phew, I'm glad I've got that lot off my chest. I would like to think that it will generate some interest. While I am personally not often impressed by people who rely on the fact that they have been doing such and such for X number of years so "I know what I'm talking about...", I have seen the last three Macs as coach of the GB team and have seen nearly all (and played some) of the World's best players over the last fifteen years, so I suppose there is always the possibility that I just might have a valid opinion. Anyway, I need to go and practise now in case I have to play Steve, Debbie or Ian with a point to prove.

Tournament Reports

Surbiton Easter Open - 30/31 March 1997

Report by Ian Bond

We had a very strong field this year for the first Open weekend of the season, with 19 (out of 28) players of scratch or better and five of the England team for the Solomon trophy dusting off the winter cobwebs - and the sixth turning out to practise on the Monday afternoon.

The event was played as a flexible Swiss without time limits, most players getting seven games and the best - who quickly rose to the top of the draw - comfortably completing eight.

After eight rounds, Avery, Comish and Fulford were tied on seven wins - each having lost to one of the others. The first two were, however, somewhat fortunate: both had narrow escapes against a still-improving Terry Burge, who let clear winning chances slip. In the one-ball knockout to resolve the tie, Fulford retained the trophy - which he had confidently left at home - by beating Avery +2 (despite forgetting the lift and taking position at 2-back Avery's hoop) and Comish +3.

The two days saw twenty triples in all and the welcome re-appearance of my fellow-Scot Jeremy Dyer, who has relocated from Glasgow to London and plans to resume his playing career. We also registered three handicap increases against one reduction: and Robert Fulford doubtless extracted some more points from the system too - when will the artificial floor of -2 be removed?

Referee's footnote: One player was a little put out to encounter a referee who was not prepared to stand outside his line of sight when judging a hoop-bound hampered shot. For those of you not fully versed in the Regulations, it is worth remembering that referees are enjoined in Reg 5(c) to take up the most favourable position for adjudicating the fairness and effect of a questionable stroke. Referees will always try their best to keep out of the way and to avoid casting distracting shadows. But they do need a proper view of the action and so cannot always stand out of sight.

Newport Open Weekend 17/18 May 1997

Report by Richard Hilditch

The event proved as popular as ever with a previous world champion being unable to get in. The weekend was humid and sultry throughout, which did not help the lawns which were a little on the slow side. It seemed that everyone was intent on pegging out opponent balls in the event, although there was only one TPO from New Zealander Andrew Johnson (now based in London). The first seed to fall was Debbie Cornelius to the fearless Lionel Tibble in a close pegged out encounter. The other seeds progressed OK until Tibble beat Robin Brown in 2 convincing games in the semi-final. The other semi-final between Lewis Palmer and Phil Cordingley was much closer with Phil triumphing eventually in the third game. The final saw a gritty Cordingley overcome a tiring Tibble in 2 close games with another Riggall.

Although Phil has now won the event 3 times Don Cornelius did not let him keep the trophy. The Swiss was won by Brown but was notable for Gary Bennett's first delayed TP to beat Patrick Host +3 late on the first evening to rapturous applause.

Tyneside International 1997

Report by David Carpenter

A cold and wet few days preceded this year's gathering of international stars in Exhibition Park, but fortunately the rain held off more or less for the two days of the tournament. The sandy base to the two courts meant that playing conditions remained comfortable and no changes of footwear

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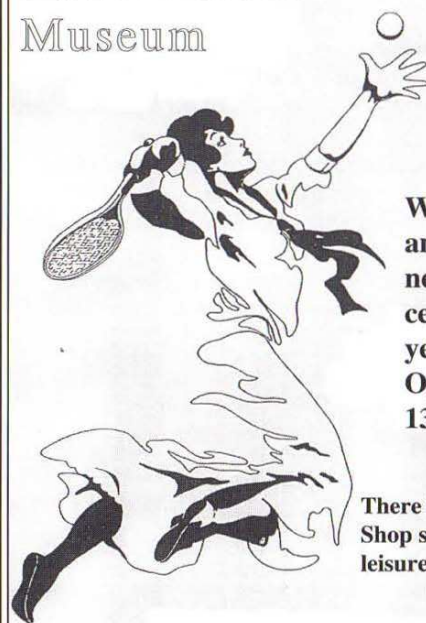
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were required. An Egyptian format was favoured by Manager Bruce Rannie and the absence of players sitting out indicated that this was a good choice. Dave Nicholson started well, and never faltered, winning a total of eight out of eight games over the weekend. This, he said, was the fruit of the coaching he had received from John Haslam at Southport, to whom he is eternally grateful. The only player who really caused Dave any problems at all was fellow Crake Valleyman Rob Callingham who, but for a couple of nervous shots in the twilight, could have pulled-off a lucrative win. Dave received the handsomely engraved glass trophy, together with a well earned handicap reduction and Rob also went away heavier in handicap terms than he came. Finally, I must mention Brian 'I must work on my end-game' Kennedy, who kept smiling in the face of wind and adversity for the whole weekend, despite several defeats snatched from the jaws of victory. P.S. Anyone making the trip to Newcastle should be aware that excellent fish and chips can be had at 'The Friary by the Priory'.

Winchester One-ball Championships 14th-15th June

Report by George Winter

This was the fourth Winchester One-ball Championship, but the first in which it had the status of national championship. This made it even more puzzling that the events were undersubscribed. The eccentric layout of this year's fixtures book no doubt contributed to entries to the handicap event being down (handicap weekenders tend not to look under 'Championships'), but the clash with the Men's and Women's Championship must have affected entries for the advanced level event. Is it not time for the CA to influence the timing of the calendar's more important tournaments?

All the more's the pity that some missed this delightful tournament at the hospitable Winchester club. Devotees of the one-ball game acknowledge its intricate tactics and the substantial skills required to perform at the top level. It is interesting that Chis Clarke legitimised the form at Sonoma recently.

The 'Cryptorchid' Handicap on Saturday comprised a flexible Swiss. By tea-time the tournament's highest ranked player, Lionel Tibble, playing off -1 had notched up 7 wins out of nine games. David Burns, fresh from Oxford University bandit country was second, with 7/10, Adrian Wadley third and Robert 'Penult'-Jones fourth. These four went into semi-finals.

Wadley was a late entry, having failed to overcome Mark Saurin in the Men's Championship at Cheltenham and nipping across country to Winchester Saturday morning. The Tibble-Wadley SF was the battle of the big shooters, which Wadley narrowly won. In the other SF, Robert took a comfortable lead, before David applied his customary late pressure, but the former prevailed by hitting the peg from corner one.

Robert Pennant-Jones has suffered a difficult period with his two-ball game and his handicap has trebled in two years, but at one-ball he is so relaxed that all his old skills come out. This was so in the final. He took an early lead against Adrian and, with two bisques to apply when necessary was never headed.

On Sunday morning the high-bisquers traditionally drop out and more 'big guns' join the field for the advanced-level championship event. This is, of course, a mistake, since one needs a day to get one's eye in properly. We were, however, delighted that Mike Town, sporting his USCA badge, had made it from San Francisco.

The Swiss preliminary went predictably enough, with Lionel Tibble and Kevin Carter - last year's winner - both on 6/7, Hugh Smorfitt third and a four-way tie for fourth place being decided in favour of David Burns, playing out of his skin.

The semi-finals had an unusual format in that they were best-of-three with the result of the morning's Swiss match being counted as the first leg. I think the jury is still out regarding the wisdom of this format. It certainly made Tibble's and Carter's passages to the final little more than a formality. Carter was, as usual, rolling up from anywhere but Tibble's shooting prevailed - he barely missed any shot less than 12 yards all weekend - and he ran out a comfortable 2-0 victor.

So, Robert Pennant-Jones and Lionel Tibble collected the engraved decanters for their wins. Bottles of bubbly are traditionally offered for

those who complete all-round breaks. Surprisingly, and for the second year running, nobody did so. Kevin Carter's was the highest break: ten hoops.

The booby prize for the Cryptorchid handicap is a white stick. Readers of this family magazine should be spared the grizzly details. Suffice it to say that this year's winner was a lovely lady from Ipswich who should know better.

The Student Championships Oxford University 21 - 22 June

Report by Chris Dent

The Student Championships were hosted by Oxford University Croquet Club in the attractive setting of their lawns in the University Parks. The team event was played on the first day with Oxford and Cambridge the only participants. The format played was teams of four with one round of doubles and two of singles. Cambridge won 8-2 to repeat their victory in the Varsity Match the previous day.

The individual event had eight entries from Oxford, Cambridge and Exeter, and was very cosmopolitan with players from as far away as Dublin and Australia. The entry was about as strong as it could have been, despite rumours that Robert Fulford is a student at Essex and running scared. Two blocks of four were played on the Saturday, the most exciting game being a 26-25 victory after time by James Death against John Wentworth. The blocks were won by James and Chris Dent, the other semi-finalists being John and Matt Davey.

The semis went according to handicap and James and Chris contested an exciting final in which Chris failed a TPO after peeling 4-back accidentally, James managed the penultimate peel and then broke down immediately and Chris took a break round, peeled James through Rover and pegged both James' ball and his own to leave a game of 1-ball with Chris on 2-back and James on 3. Chris eventually won +1 after running a long, angled Rover and hitting the peg from 9 yards with James having a 7-yard shot at peg to win on the next turn.

The tournament was managed expertly by Doug Burns. Oxford's hospitality was excellent as ever, and the play was notable for excellent performances by the less experienced players, particularly Gabrielle Higgins who, playing off 16, ran everyone in her block much closer than the expected. The one disappointment was the narrow range of Universities sending teams, but I hope that there will be more next year.

C.A. NEWS

Hoist with our own petard?

The success of the direct debit scheme for the payment of subscriptions has had one unfortunate consequence. The number of associates choosing to pay by this method has been far greater than ever anticipated and now amounts to more than two thirds of the membership. This proportion is greater than that previously claiming discount by paying before February 1st and, therefore, the income generated will be lower than expected. However, the number of associates who failed to pay their subscription by May 1st is much lower than in previous years.

Sports Council grant

Although it has been conceded that the division of the grant to the Croquet Association between the English Sports Council and the UK Sports Council is not logical, we have been forced to accept the situation for this year. The position with regard to funding of the final year of the current forward plan is uncertain.

Sponsorship

The Croquet Association has not had any significant sponsorship income for several years. Indeed, under the forward plan, we were spending more of our grant income than we were receiving in sponsorship and that clearly could not continue. Nevertheless, sponsorship can be a useful source of revenue and the Treasurer would like to hear from any associate who has relevant experience in fund-raising and who is prepared to help. Please contact Roger via the Croquet Association office or telephone 01206 263405.

Croquet Association and the Internet

F & GP has agreed that the Croquet Association office should have internet access, primarily for communication via e-mail. We do not expect to have a web site initially, because of the lack of

technical expertise in the office. However, thanks to the good offices of Ian Plummer, who has provided the stimulus, Croquet Association information is already available at the Oxford University web site. This is our official presence on the web and we shall continue to expand here. John Greenwood is providing club information from his own web pages and these are linked to the Croquet Association pages at the Oxford University site. We are grateful to both John and Ian for this facility. Bill Lamb has agreed to co-ordinate Croquet Association information available via the world wide web, and associates who wish to provide information via their own web pages should contact him in the first instance. Likewise, if anyone wishes to suggest additional information that should be flown, Bill can be contacted at 01482 840739 or via e-mail at bill.lamb@bondyke.demon.co.uk. The Oxford University site is at <http://users.ox.ac.uk/~croquet/general.html>

Croquet Association Council

The closing date for nominations to Council is August 1st. Eight members of Council retire in rotation and are eligible for re-election. The final three federation representatives will be appointed this year. At the moment there are two vacancies on Council. Anyone interested in serving on Council should send in their nomination, proposed and seconded by two Associates to the Croquet Association office.

Bill Lamb

Secretary's Notes

On the weekend of 13-15 June I spent a very informative and enjoyable weekend visiting some of the clubs in the West Midlands Federation, under the watchful eye of Chris Bennett, federation Secretary.

Despite the rain which dogged the first two days, I was able to meet a good number of members of the clubs and learn at first hand how croquet in the West Midlands is progressing. It is clearly in good heart, with evident enthusiasm not only for the sport, but also for improvement plans at several clubs.

First stop was at Solihull Club. What a wonderful site they have, close to junction 5 of the M42, surely one of the most convenient and central clubs in the country. Their grounds have great potential and members were clearly determined to continue with the exciting progress that has been made in the last few years.

Himley Club, near Dudley, is fortunate enough, rather like Belsay Hall in Northumberland, to be situated in a glorious position immediately in front of a former stately home, in this case Himley Hall. A match against Solihull was being played as Chris and I arrived; alas, before long rain came and whilst dampening

us onlookers, did not succeed in stopping play. With several young (well, teenage) players, Himley members are working hard to promote the club locally, so that more people may enjoy croquet at this idyllic site.

Edgbaston, with three courts, is one of the longest established Clubs in the Midland Counties, having been founded in 1907; set in green and wooded surroundings, it is nevertheless the closest to the centre of Birmingham and thus has a large catchment area. Members there are delighted at the quality of the court that has recently been entirely re-made; it has stood up well to the dry weather suffered earlier in the year, but the drenching rain while I was there seemed to be doing it quite a lot of good!

My final call, on Sunday, was to Kenilworth. Founded only eight years ago, these courts are included as part of a tennis club complex. Last year the second court was created after the removal of hundreds of tons of earth and much hard work by members levelling, raking and seeding; it is now in good playing fettle. The refreshment facilities that the club offers - a friendly bar and facility for good wholesome lunches - help to make this wonderful croquet venue in this lovely part of north Warwickshire.

What has struck me forcibly since I became Secretary, and with particular emphasis since my club visits in June, is the commitment that very many people are prepared to make to our sport. I am constantly impressed by the amount of time and hard work that are put into making clubs successful. It speaks well for the future that there is such enthusiasm to be found.

In August I am making further visits to Croquet North and the North West Federation Clubs and look forward to meeting many more members and sharing their enthusiasm.

Paul Campion

Handicap Alterations

Cheltenham Easter Handicap

A Bogle	3	to	3.5
D Burns	8	to	7
A Cowing	10	to	9
G Eccles	10	to	11
G Edgler	11	to	12
C Edwards	20	to	18
Mrs Edwards	18	to	20
J Exell	18	to	20
Mrs Godson	16	to	14
S Patel	7	to	6
A Treglown	11	to	10
B Weitz	5	to	4.5
Mrs Weitz	12	to	14
B Whittaker	12	to	14
Surbiton 30/31 March			
G Bennett	1	to	1.5
S Carter	0	to	0.5
R Jackman	1.5	to	2
N Morrow	2	to	1.5