

AROUND & ABOUT



Regional finalists for the Golden Mallet pause at Northampton.



Day 1 of the South East Federation Centenary Tournament at Surbiton (photo by Ray Hall)



Speed doubles participants gather outside the Surbiton Club



South East Federation Summer School participants at Southwick.



Croquet magic at Southwell (photo by Brian James)



Edward Knapton receiving the Masters Trophy from Chairman Mike Morley at the Shrewsbury Club



Richard Hilditch managing to look relaxed at the Opens (photo by Frances Ransom)

The Croquet Gazette

Issue 251

September 1999



"SPORTS" SERIES

100 Designs

No.14 CROQUET

(C. Corbally.)

Corbally at his best, is the finest exponent there has been of the modern game of Croquet, he is the originator of the pendulum style of play, and his execution is delightful to watch.



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No.13 CROQUET

(Lord Tollemache.)

A much improved player who has adopted the Irish, or pendulum style: the mallet used is a heavy one, with an interlocked grip, and is allowed to swing freely between the feet.



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No.12 CROQUET

(E. Whitaker.)

The present open Champion of 1911, is a front player, although the stance is different to Beaton's. The mallet is held very high, but the powerful wrists control the strokes admirably.



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100 Designs

No.11 CROQUET

(R.C.J. Beaton.)

Is a typical exponent of the front style of play. It is necessary with this stroke to follow well through, as at golf, to prevent pulling: this player has won practically all the chief events at croquet.



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100 Designs

No.19 CROQUET

(K.H. Izard.)

Izard is often considered the most brilliant, and dashing player of all, and on his day, will do the most astonishing things. He is a front player, with a very quick and easy style.



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No.18 CROQUET

(Viscount Doneraile.)

Chairman of the Croquet Association, and a member of the various sub-committees, and has taken a keen interest in the welfare of croquet for the last 10 years.



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100 Designs

No.17 CROQUET

(H.F. Birley.)

This is another variation of the Irish style, for making easy breaks it would be quite effective, but for doing the more difficult strokes of croquet, is not to be recommended.



"SPORTS" SERIES

100 Designs

No.16 CROQUET

(C.E. Pepper.)

This player, who won the chief handicap event of 1910, has a style of his own, and one not to be recommended: it appears to be a mixture of front play, and pendulum style.

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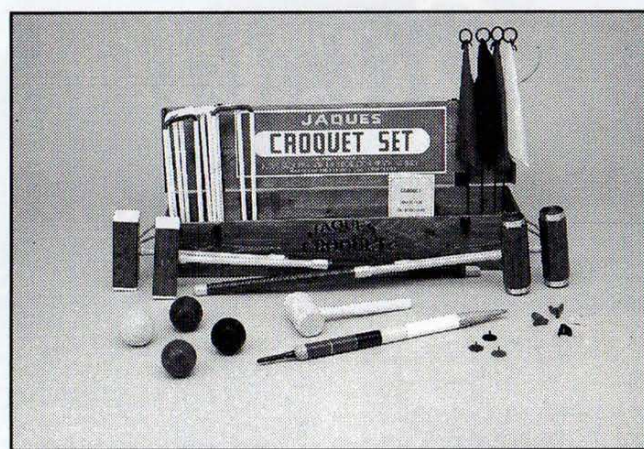
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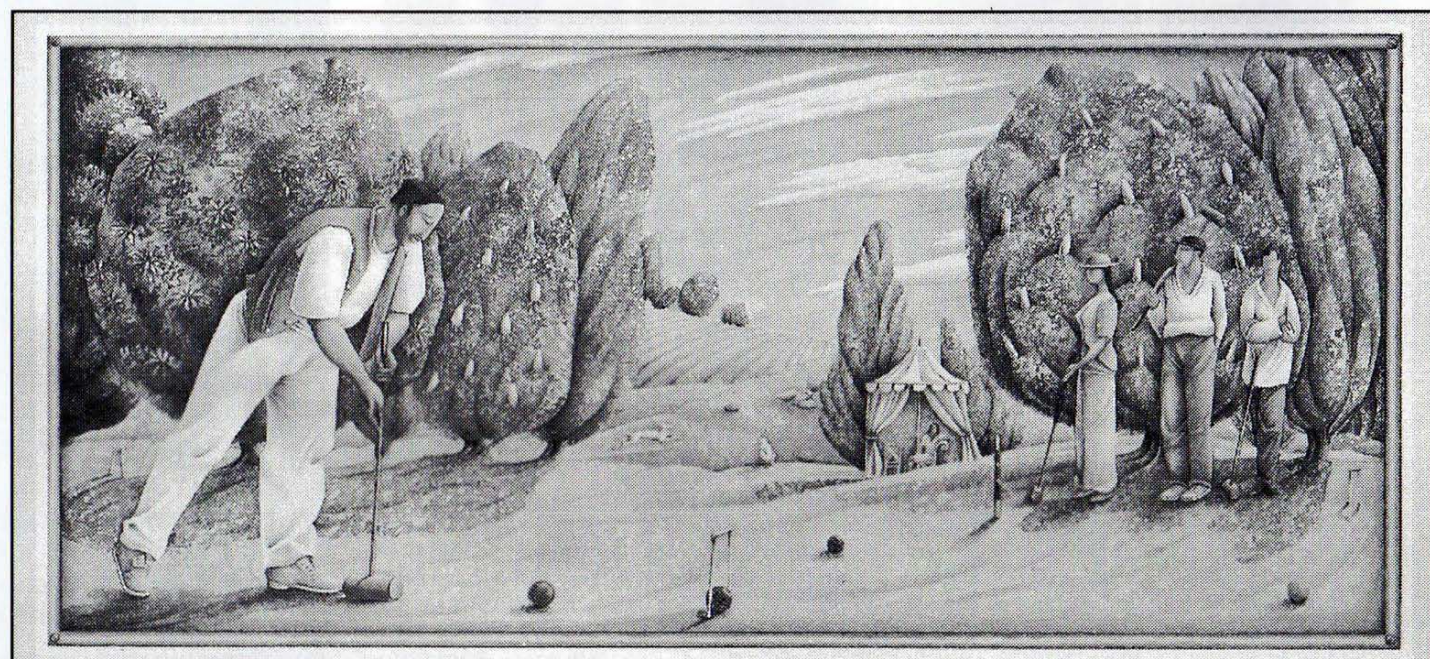
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Specific questions or queries should be sent direct to the relevant CA official, e.g. Laws questions to the chairman of the Laws Committee.

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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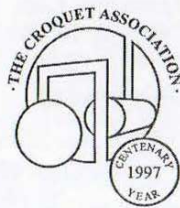
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Editorial

In two of the last three issues readers have been asked for their opinions on possible changes to the Gazette. The response has not been overwhelming, but there have been two common elements which the respondents suggested.

The first was the cry that there is still a bias towards 'A' class play, a claim which I do not agree with and believe I produced sufficient evidence to support my counter claim in a past issue. I can understand why this old chestnut keeps rearing its ugly head, as it is due to the Gazette being a journal of record and the requirement for all championships to be reported, but there the 'A' class coverage stops. Think for a minute about the coaching articles; are they for the benefit of the 'A' class players? Are the contents of the letters page exclusively for the 'A' class, likewise 'Points of View', 'News and Information', 'CA News'? Need I go on?

The second point, and you probably don't have to be a genius to work it out, was, the bane of the editor's life, tournament reports.

The commonest complaint is that the vast majority of reports are just too long and simply regurgitate the play/happenings of a game which are mostly only of significance to the players who were present at the time, and because they were there they have no need to read about it two months later.

So what does the ideal tournament report consist of? All of the opinions expressed supported the view that it was the role of a good report to convey the general atmosphere of the tournament, together with some mention of amusing and/or unusual incidents. Managers please note, it is the wish of the readers, and that of the editor that a summary of results should accompany such reports. By a summary of results I do not mean a copy of the order of play, it is for American blocks the names and results of block winners, for Swiss and Egyptian the 1st -3rd and their results and for knock-out events the draw sheets with results. Now I realise that a few managers have thrown their hands up in horror and are about to demand my retraction of the above or my resignation but, if the managers of events could see their way to spending perhaps 15 to 20 minutes compiling the above, they could improve the standard of reporting greatly, or is this too much to ask?

There is of course one final option, which is that for each issue of the Gazette the editor simply selects the best reports which meet above the criteria to publish and disposes of those which do not make the grade or the deadline. I do not favour this solution but suspect that my hand may be forced if the readership's wishes are not heeded. After all, there is no point in asking for opinions if one cannot or will not act upon them.

Gail Curry

Chairman's Column

Readers may recollect that a while ago we established a small group to act as a planning nucleus, partly as a basis for producing our next four year plan for the Sports Council and partly to ensure that the CA is ready for its second century. Bill Sidebottom, who is chairman of the group, has already invited submissions from anyone who wishes to contribute. We are particularly keen that all associates should feel personally involved and committed to the objectives which are established. As I mentioned in the last issue we are therefore proposing that two club conferences should be held at which members of the group can outline their ideas and club members can make their own comments and suggestions in return.

One of these conferences will be in the north and one in the south, but what is important is that as many clubs as possible should participate, so if you cannot go to the one in your region please try to attend the other instead. The northern one will be combined with the AGM of the Confederation of Northern Croquet Clubs which is being held at the Zeneca Club in Huddersfield on Sunday 16th November and the southern one will be one week later at the Parsons Green Club in London on Saturday 22nd November. A mailing will be sent to clubs giving more background information nearer the time but if you have any queries in the interval please contact the CA office. In any event please make sure that you keep the relevant date free.

We are now approaching the high point of our centenary year. The first meeting of the committee of the predecessor body took place on 15th October 1897, just a century ago. Our AGM this year is accordingly scheduled for Sunday 18th October at 11 am at the Hurlingham Club and the same evening the centenary dinner takes place in the debenture holders' lounge of the All England Club at Wimbledon. I hope that you are all making the most of centenary year and that as many associates as possible will come to one or both of these occasions to mark the centenary in proper style.

Other events which you may like to make a note of are the inaugural Solomon lecture, to be given by our president at the AGM of the SouthWest Federation of Croquet Clubs in the Bristol area on Sunday 2nd November, and a series of indoor tournaments to be held throughout the winter, the first in Wolverhampton on 13/14 December. Details of all these events are given elsewhere in this magazine. The indoor tournaments will culminate in a play-off in March 1998 between the most successful teams in earlier tournaments to decide the overall indoor centenary champions. It could be you so make sure you enter.

Stephen Badger

0171 274 8126 or 01242 516603

Coaching Thoughts

by Tony Fathers

I'm new to coaching, and quite happy to change my ideas when necessary. For example I have a fairly elaborate routine for running hoops. Mostly my pupils find it helpful. However the other day I was giving a newcomer to the game his first lesson and we'd got to the stage of running hoops. I explained how it was done. "So what do I do after I've stalked the ball?" Bob asks. I remind him. Finally he strikes the ball and misses. He tries again and misses. And again. Inspiration. "Forget everything I've said, Bob. Just hit the ball any way you like through the bloody hoop". He does so, just. Next time the ball goes through cleanly. And the time after that. "Well done, Bob, You've got it. Let's move on to the next shot: this is called the roll". Lesson to coach: a little humility and remember there's more than one way of killing the cat!

But one thing I do feel very strongly about. That's the need to introduce the four ball break in the very first lesson. This is because croquet is about break building not running the occasional hoop. Obvious, surely, you will say and yet at a recent high bisquer tournament I was managing no fewer than 3 out of the 12 participants had no idea how to maintain a four ball break, whilst few seemed to be aware how to construct one by the judicious use of a bisque. So, you will demand, how does a beginner manage a four ball break if he cannot do a big croquet shot (like getting a ball to 3 and one to the pivot after running hoop 1)? Easy: the coach takes the shot but naturally only after explaining why we are doing it.

My first lesson now consists of the following elements:-

- ◆ Grip and swing and walking the hoops in correct direction.
- ◆ Roquet. 4 attempts each at 3 yards, using two sets of balls.
- ◆ Hoop Running. 4 attempts each - straight at 3 feet.
- ◆ Roll. 4 attempts each near the hoop from same angle.
- ◆ Four ball break. I set this up with red and yellow near together and near hoop 1 with black and blue the pivot and pioneer at hoop 2. Pupil roquets, croquets, and runs hoop. "Well done," says I "now what?" I am rewarded with a look of total incomprehension. So I explain. "We now need to send a ball to our next hoop but one, that's hoop 3 over there" And so on. Pupil roquets ball then I do the croquet shot sending partner ball to 3 and striker's ball to pivot. Pupil roquets pivot ball, then follows a brief lesson on the take off. Finally pupil takes off and sends the ball near the waiting ball at hoop 2 (sometimes with the help of a quick kick from the coach; coach kicking ball, that is, not pupil). Pupil roquets, croquets and runs hoop. "Well done," says I, "now what?" I do not expect to be rewarded with a five hundred word exposition on where all the balls should go after running hoop 2. However this time the incomprehension is less total and indeed some pupils actually say "we hit that ball". "Yes indeed, "I say in those circumstances, "but before that we stand back and consider how our break should continue, rather like a snooker player will pause to consider how his break will continue."

And so we move on. I take the big croquet shot, pupil takes all the other shots (with the occasional help of a kick from me). After hoop 3 and even more after hoop 4 the pupil is beginning to take over the commentary, always urged to plan and consider the implications of each shot.

Following the planning session after hoop 4 I cry enough. Pupil - and coach - are tired. Tired both physically and mentally. In the final moments of the lesson I explain that croquet is a very difficult game, difficult both technically and conceptually but highly satisfying. To play it you'll need to practise, to read the CA book *Croquet*, to have some more lessons and later on to play games.

Of course introducing the four ball break into lesson one is only possible when coach is teaching one pupil at a time. But as I know from both receiving and giving lessons the one-to-one relationship is far and away the best method anyway.

Centenary Indoor Tournament

As a final event of the Centenary celebrations, an indoor croquet tournament will be organised during the 1997-98 winter. Entry will be open to all CA registered clubs who may enter one team at a fee of £25.

The format will consist of doubles played under speed croquet rules as formulated by the East Anglia Federation but subject to any changes resulting from a scrutiny by the Laws committee.

Three heats with a maximum of 12 teams will be run on the following dates at the venues indicated:

1	Wolverhampton Grammar School	13-14 December 1997
2	RAF Innsowth, Gloucester	17-18 January 1998
3	Soham Sports Centre	14-15 February 1998

A number of the leading teams from each heat will be invited to compete in a final to be held on 14-15 March 1998 at RAF Innsowth, Gloucester for the Club Indoor Centenary Championship.

Clubs may only enter for one heat and it is suggested that the North & West Midlands clubs enter the Wolverhampton event, East Anglia and E Midlands enter for Soham and the remainder for Innsowth.

Entries together with the appropriate fee should be sent to the CA office and will be accepted in order of receipt. Should there be vacancies at any venue 14 days before a heat, unsuccessful applicants from other heats will be invited to make up the numbers.

Entry Form

Centenary Indoor Tournament

Club:

(players' names must be given to the manager on the first morning of the event)

Address of contact:

Tel no:

Venue: **Wolverhampton 13-14 December**
Innsowth 17-18 January
Soham 14-15 February

(please tick appropriate venue)

Completed form to be returned to the CA office together with entry fee and a stamped addressed envelope if a list of local accommodation is required. (Cheques made payable to the Croquet Association)

Letters...

Better late than never

Dear Editor,

In response (belatedly) to the issue regarding the future content of the Croquet Gazette I for one would like to see the current size and format at least maintained or even increased in order to accommodate all the tournament reports, photographs, new features, print quality and the like. Apart from the obvious benefits to the readers I feel this approach would maintain a suitable showpiece publication for croquet which could only help awareness of the sport nationally.

The challenge to provide this surely comes from both the natural budget restraints imposed and the ever increasing costs incurred.

One way is to increase the budget, which would probably mean a slightly higher subscription or to impose a 'Gazette Levy' on members. Whilst I would support this view to a degree (i.e. an increase of a few pounds per annum) it may be unpopular to other members. Another idea would be to make the Gazette available for sale to the general public, increasing both revenues and interest for the sport.

On the cost side I feel it would be acceptable in the short term to produce the tournament results supplement on plain paper, perhaps even with similar supplements from the Area Federations so combining their production costs with those of the Gazette to achieve savings. This could provide 'local' advertising opportunities for tournaments, B&B's, etc. on a national basis.

It is likely that an overall solution would be a combination of various ideas and opinions from all members and if the interest is there, perhaps a way of gauging opinion would be by using a questionnaire.

Andrew Cowing

I could respond in various modes from 'strongly agree' to 'over my dead body'. I have thought about the possibility of using a questionnaire, but don't see it as a viable proposition because of the time, money and probable lack of response. Ed.

More talk about handicaps

Dear Editor

Mary Ollett (letters issue 249) raises the point that the handicap system appears to be somewhat unrefined, and at first sight there is much to be said for a modification which might improve the accuracy of the system. Nevertheless, the main

limitation on accuracy is the players themselves, who rarely perform with even the accuracy implied by five ten-point steps to the bisque, especially in the higher bisque reaches. I currently play off 12 and know quite a bit about inconsistency!

The handicap system can only ever be an approximation. It should result in a judiciously handicapped player, competing against a range of players in a number of games, winning about half of those games. A reasonable number of games for this purpose needs to be at least 20, I would think. The test of any proposed change is not how the index allocation appears for the last few games, but how it might affect the outcome of the next 10 or 20 games. Having played both well and badly for a number of years, I can certainly vouch for the fact that automatic handicapping produces much better results than the pre-existing "handicapper" methodology.

There are well-known problems with handicap contests. For example a difference of two bisques as between players at 3 & 5 produces a very different game from that between players of 12 & 14, which is why some managers use a full-bisque system. Of course it is much harder to earn your way down from 5 to 3 than from 14 to 12, but this is because of the players you encounter, rather than the arithmetic of the system.

It is also very difficult to produce a sensible contest when there is a large bisque difference. Typically, this becomes a game of distinct halves in which the bisque holder gets round as far as the bisques allow, after which the low bisquer attempts to get round before the time limit expires. To counter this, tournament managers may restrict entries, or divide into blocks &c, on handicap basis.

The success of the high bisquer will generally be greater on a slow lawn, and the low bisquer on a fast lawn, but (so far, thank goodness) I have not seen proposals to adjust handicaps on lawn conditions. However, a player whose games are played on a variety of lawns against a variety of opponents should end the season with a success rate within sight of 50% without the need for finer tuning of the system.

Having said all that, it is always interesting to see more ideas and more information on handicapping. What may be due sometime soon (though I may have missed something?) is a comparison of outcomes of grading and handicapping for those players active in both systems.

Ray Hall

Ball characteristics

Dear Editor

I think that David Appleton, dedicated experimentalist though he is, has missed out an important variable in his two articles on wrist injury, interesting though they are. From personal experience I think the characteristics of the ball affect the apparent shock to the arms. Perhaps he could include this in any further work he might contemplate on injury. There is, however, a further problem he could investigate with profit. The Association has a specification for ball resilience which I believe is essentially a straightforward coefficient of restitution measurement. I am sure that many players will agree that many makes of ball, although apparently meeting this specification, in practice play totally differently. This suggests that the simple test is inadequate to define ball characteristics so that we can use a variety of different makes without having to adjust our strokes as at present. With the forthcoming change when traditional Jaques balls will no longer be available I would like to suggest that David should investigate the causes of variation in resilience of balls (possibly including why a composite ball might behave differently from a homogeneous one).

Roger Deacon.

More talk about the AHS

Dear Editor,

In an attempt to stop the whinging at handicap tournaments from the low bisquers of the apparent unfairness of the A.H.S. may I suggest that at the start of each turn the first bisque used (whether full or half) should have the status of a half bisque i.e. no hoop/peg point can be made. This would have the following benefits:-

A. For Low Bisquers

1. Give them more than three shots in a game
2. Address an imbalance in the A.H.S. where there is a large difference in handicap

3. Stop the whinging

B. For High Bisquers

1. Encourage a break to be set up properly using two bisques (or one and a half)
2. Discourage an 'Aunt Emma' style of play
3. Increase the value of a handicap victory

I look forward to any comments that may be made.

Andrew Cowing

In praise of Golf Croquet

Dear Editor

I am pleased that I can now read about Golf Croquet within the Croquet gazette. Although I do not play the game very often I have found it very good practice for gauging accuracy in length

and direction. It has its own tactics and like association croquet one can get stuck on a hoop for too long.

Recently we had a fun day and introduced a variant which borrowed some of the rules of association croquet while maintaining the essence of golf, each hoop in sequence. The play is still in the colour sequence once the order of play has been established, the additional rules being:

◆ A ball running and winning the hoop has one continuation shot.

◆ A ball roqueting another has a continuation shot but played from where it comes to rest after the ricochet.

◆ The turn finishes if and when all three other balls have been roqueted unless a hoop has been run.

While this has none of the shots associated with the croquet set pieces one can develop cannons (as in billiards) and other tactics to win a hoop or despoil one's opponent's chances.

Tony Miller

Whose fault?

Dear Editor

Hamish Hall's letter to Croquet (issue 250) causes me to raise another point with those who govern the laws of the game.

During a recent game, I found myself about to peg out from about 4' West of the peg. Due to my own carelessness I managed to hit the striker's ball twice during my attempted peg out. I duly declared the fault to my opponent and replaced the balls as close to their original positions ie aligned broadly East-West. My opponent's position was at this time well separated, one ball on the North boundary and one on the South. He took the obvious shot from North boundary at the double I had considerably left in the middle of the court and, needless to say, hit and subsequently won the game. I had no problem with this - the fault was entirely mine.

I subsequently related the details of my self inflicted misfortune to a fellow player who pointed out to me that the laws only required me to replace the croqueted ball and to place the striker's ball in any legal position. That is I could have placed the striker's ball in contact with the croqueted ball but aligned them North-South thus denying my opponent the double target.

Whilst the laws would appear to be very clear on this subject, is it fair that a player committing a fault in such circumstances should be able to gain an apparent advantage when replacing the balls?

Clearly if a player commits a fault in a hampered stroke (typically an attempted roquet after a hoop) the balls are replaced in their original positions and the striker cannot gain any advantage when the balls are replaced.

Presumably if the striker commits a fault in a hampered croquet stroke (perhaps a roll shot

to Rover or hoop 6 from close to the peg) the striker's ball can be replaced in any legal position.

This seems rather anomalous to me. Should the laws be changed to compel a player to return the balls to their original positions when the fault was committed? After all it was the strikers decision to play the shot in the first place; should they not face the full consequences of their carelessness?

Stuart Daddo-Langlois

The laws are indeed very clear on this point (see law 32(c)) and you acted properly. Your informant was wrong and has confused the above situation with the case of playing a wrong ball in a croquet stroke.

Bill Lamb, Chairman Laws Committee

More Publicity, but only if.....

Dear Editor

While I appreciate Hamish Hall's call for more coordination of publicity at club level, I find myself at odds with some of his views.

Any steps to publicise the game must be taken with a view to development. No-one can doubt that croquet has a poor image in the media, which can only inhibit growth of the sport.

For croquet to succeed, publicity efforts must be directed towards what we want to achieve. As Hamish says, it's sensible to target the local paper's Features Editor, rather than the Sports Desk. Our target market for recruitment is unlikely to be reached by consigning croquet to the back pages of the newspaper. Worthy though they are, results of matches - either in the South Liverpool Weekly Star or the Daily Telegraph - are unlikely in themselves to pull newcomers into the game.

We have the considerable advantage of something on offer which is actually interesting to outsiders. However, I don't believe our purpose is best served by Hamish's suggestion to pander to the preconceptions of journalists. I would think very seriously before using the phrases "Cucumber Sandwiches" and "Lewis Carroll" in an opening exchange with the press.

The media are fully aware of croquet's past image, which hardly warrants reinforcing. Few of them are aware of our "serious side" - the fact that the CA celebrates its centenary in 1997, that it is thriving at club level, and that it remains pre-eminent on the world stage. That a game such as ours has a World Championship or features regular Test Matches is a surprise to most. These are the themes that croquet must promote in order to continue to expand.

In an age where politicians promote the concept of Sport For All, croquet comes close to the Great Socialist Ideal. There are no advantages to be gained through age or gender. Its appeal lies largely among those neglected by other more strenuous sports. And, compared with golf or tennis (for example), it's remarkably cheap to play.

Looking back at the 1994 media circus surrounding the "Beast of Bowdon", I was aware at the time that some quarters of the game may have had misgivings on the reporting of the story. Being largely responsible for the promulgation of the David Maugham Severe Haircut Incident, I was merely reflecting the mood of the game at its top flight. I believe it's more important for the Press Officer - at no matter what level of the game - to report on the truth of what modern croquet is, rather than rely on the whimsical gimmickry of promoting a game that died out long ago.

James Hawkins

Marking, and marked balls

Dear Editor

Don Gaunt's Helpful Hints article in Issue 250 prompts me to add some of my own experiences of marking balls and double-banking.

Often the marking has to be done near a hoop. For accuracy, I find it preferable to line up the edges rather than the centres. This gives more choice of where to place two markers (as long as you remember which edges you used) conveniently so as not to interfere with likely lines of play.

Many players follow Don's advice about placing a marked ball in an unoccupied hoop. On several occasions I have seen a ball in that position clobbered by a wayward shot in the other game. It is the devil of a job to decide what would have happened if the marked ball had not been there, and a replay would give an unfair advantage to the player whose shot went in the wrong direction.

Now, here's a double banking situation for you. Some while ago, in an A-class event, a player did an excellent cross-court take-off to the opponent's yard-line balls, landing within inches. What he didn't know was that they had been rolled off the court by the double-banker. He could not see the line from the far end and had been aiming to land as near as possible to the balls. The opponent was vigilant throughout and the double-banker had not drawn attention to the fact that the balls had been moved.

The referee declared that the shot should be replayed with the balls correctly placed. The opponent objected because the take-off had clearly gone off the court. Appealed to as Tournament Referee, I supported the first referee's decision, on the grounds that balls had been misplaced (Law 29) and therefore the adversary should have drawn attention to this fact immediately. Not every referee present agreed with my ruling. Law 29 is designed to protect the opponent, hence the use of the word 'remedy' and the instances listed in the law book. Some argued that, as the stroke was not forestalled, it is deemed to be valid. Would a decision have been yet more difficult if the opponent had exercised his right under Law 45(a) not to watch the game?

Digest and discuss!

Andrew Bennet

AMERICAN BLOCKS

Deciding the winner and/or runner-up by Bryan Teague

Most people would accept that the highest number of WINS determines the winner but in the case of a tie on the number of wins - what next? Following Alan Locket's article in issue 245 which refers to Croquet Tournament Management by Gaunt & Wheeler I note that they recommend "that the most satisfactory solution in the event of a tie is to use the principle of who beats whom". The ideal solution of course is to have a play off but this is usually precluded by time; especially so, if more than two players are involved.

The criteria "who beats whom" can be taken as a sensible equivalent to a play off and certainly is to be preferred to the method given in the CA Regulations based on each player's net points. If more than two players are involved in a tie it may not be possible to use "who beats whom" and some form of points totals must then be used. The tables of results with the plus and minus net scores placed symmetrically about the leading diagonal are very familiar but are somewhat nonsensical in that the net scores of each match are counted twice!

How did the Regulations on this matter arrive in their present form? The answer I think lies in the interpretation of 'NET POINTS', back in June 1968 in an analysis in the 100th issue of the Croquet Gazette under "Notes by Rover". These were written I believe by Maurice Reckitt, then president of the CA, so that it was no surprise that his new recommendation was adopted by the Laws Committee and Council in November 1968. His note on American Tournaments is reproduced below, from which it can be seen that in the absence of a play off the resolution of a tie has four possibilities, three based on points and also "who beats whom" which is dismissed as 'unusual'! The Regulations currently prescribe the poorest of these three alternatives based on points and have done so for 28 years

NOTES by ROVER June 1968

AMERICAN TOURNAMENTS

The President's Cup and other such events are played along the lines of an American Tournament. In the event of a tie on games, there is naturally provision for a play-off. This is quite impractical in the countless American Tournaments which are now played during the Croquet Season. What then is the appropriate method of ascertaining the winner? Should it be the player who has scored the greatest number of points? Only a handful of players could subscribe to this method. There is an

Regulations should provide for the contingency that two players may be equal both on games and points and this Rover Note has already given a possible solution.

Let us take a look at the alternatives:-

1) Entering for each player the total points scored for each match.

The winner then being the player with the highest total. This arrangement has considerable merit and before 1969 a table constructed on this basis was to be seen in many reports of tournaments as the norm to decide the winner. At my club in Worthing it is used for the bi-monthly American Golf Croquet competition with matches over 3 hoops. There would be much consternation if losing 0:3 was counted as -3!

The main criticism, as Rover points out is that the quality of the game (or games) lost decides the winner, ignoring the "comparative supremacy" in the winning games. This can be measured by the winning margin or net score.

2) Add the net scores of games won

If the quality of a win or Rover's 'supremacy' is measurable by the net score, then it seems reasonable that the total of the net winning scores resolves the player with the better quality of wins. Rover objects to this method as having no practical way of keeping a running score. This is just not so, since the presently constructed tables do exactly that if the minus "scores" are ignored. Entering the minus score has the one advantage of looking for the symmetry across the leading diagonal to check that the figures have been entered correctly.

3) Take the total points scored less those scored against

This can be achieved as Rover states by entering the usual plus and minus net scores. Note; that adding the total points in the table gives zero! A player losing a game by say 10 points has certainly not lost 10 points but actually gained 16. The extreme case of losing by 26 points will give a points difference of 52 between the two players. Surely not what was intended.

Rather it is my belief that Rover intended to offer an alternative to the established practice of method (1) which looked at the winning games and that method (2) yields the result that he was looking for. In method (3) the net scores are effectively counted TWICE, and using Rover's phrase are (doubly) relevant.

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It is quite easy to construct a Table of results such that in a 3-way tie, three different winners could be found by the methods discussed. All the more reason to have a method that has some merit and to specify it in the Regulations. The present method specified, in my view has little merit.

Gaunt & Wheeler state quite clearly that the method of deciding a winner should be specified at the start of any tournament and I would recommend to the Laws Committee that Regulation 15 should be amended to give managers a choice of "who beats whom" or the total net positive points or why not include the pre-1968 method also?

I should add that the Regulations for Swiss Tournaments could also benefit from a revision since ties, including multiple ones are quite common. Gaunt & Wheeler have good advice to offer here also.

Bill Lamb, chairman Laws Committee replies:

There is a general but unwritten principle in tournament management that where it is important to find the winner, the event must be two-life, i.e. nobody should be excluded from winning by losing a single game. Clearly, that is the case for best of three (or more) knock-outs and draw and process.

However, these formats have the disadvantage that players can be eliminated early and be left with few, or even no games for the rest of the tournament. That is why American blocks, Swiss and, more recently, Egyptian formats have become popular particularly for weekend tournaments. They share out the games more evenly amongst the players but do so at the expense of lessening the chance of finding a true winner. Most managers recognise this and it is implicit in their use that finding the winner is not very important. Monetary prizes can be divided or trophies shared in time.

Arguments about the best method to resolve ties are specious. There is no perfect method, or even a best way, to resolve ties. Net points has at least the advantage that it takes into account all of the games that each player has played. Net positive points includes only a selection of games and opponents, probably different for each player in the tie. Who beat whom effectively reduces the selection of a "winner" to a single game. However, when the event is played on handicap, any method involving net point count is simply unfair. A low-bisquer can never beat a sensible high-bisquer by a wide margin, but the reverse is often the case. That is why who beat whom has become more popular, but there is no rational argument for its preference in level play events.

My own view is that tournament regulations for these formats should not be prescriptive. When it is deemed necessary, good managers will find a suitable way to resolve ties according to the nature of the event; others can always arrange a shoot-out at the peg.

Tournament regulations will be reviewed by the Laws committee and revised in the next edition of the laws. In the meantime, experienced managers will continue to turn a blind eye to this regulation and advertise the conditions to be employed at the start of the tournament.

National Club Events

Longman Cup Round 3.

Colchester bt Newport 3 - 2
Ipswich bt Surbiton 3 - 2
Northampton bt Watford ?
Wrest Park bt Nottingham 3 - 2
Southport bt Croquet for Leisure 5 - 1
Bowdon bt Pendle ?
Bristol bt Cheltenham ?
Dyffryn bt High Wycombe 4 - 1

Mary Rose Round 3

East Dorset bt Woking 4 - 3
Wrest Park bt Northampton 4 - 3
Pendle bt Cheltenham 4 - 3
Bristol bt Walsall w/o

Interclub Round 2

Bowdon bt Harrow 4 - 3
Surbiton bt Ipswich ?
Northampton bt Wrest Park 5 - 2

THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION

NOTICE OF MEETING

The Centenary Annual General Meeting of The Croquet Association will be held at the Hurlingham Club on Saturday 18th October 1997 commencing at 11.00 a.m. Coffee will be available beforehand from 10.15 am.

AGENDA

1. **Minutes of the previous Meeting held on Saturday 19th October 1996.** These were published in the "Croquet Gazette" No. 248 (March 1997). Copies will be available at the meeting and will be sent to Resident Associates on written request to the Secretary.

2. **Chairman's Report**

3. **Accounts for Year to 31st December 1996 and Treasurer's Report.** These Accounts and the Treasurer's commentary are published in this issue of the "Croquet Gazette" No.251. Copies will be available at the meeting and will be sent to Resident Associates on written request to the Secretary.

4. **Election of Hon Treasurer.**

Dr R W Bray offers himself for re-election.

5. **Election of Auditors**

Messrs Morgan Brown and Spofforth offer themselves for re-election.

6. **Election of Council members.**

The following six members retire by rotation under Rule 2:

Mrs TW Anderson, Messrs DL Gaunt, HM Hall, WE Lamb, and IP Macdonald, and Dr M Murray.

Dr GS Liddiard and Dr T.J. Haste have resigned and there are two other unfilled vacancies.

Three of the consequent nine vacancies on Council are reserved for representatives from the East Midlands, London & South-East and Yorkshire & Humberside Federations.

Mrs T W Anderson and Messrs D L Gaunt, H M Hall, W E Lamb and I P M Macdonald seek re-election under Rule 7A(a)(i). Other nominations have been received as follows:-

A M Wadley proposed by A J Oldham, seconded by Dr T J Haste

R W B Judson proposed by J L Wankling, seconded by A J Oldham

Consequently there are only seven candidates for the other seven seats on Council and an election will not be necessary.

7. **Benefactors' Book.**

The names of the Benefactors will be read.

8. **Presentation of Apps Bowl and Steel Bowl (replacement)**

9. **Any Other Business.**

10. **President's Closing Address**

P W P Champion

Secretary

5th August 1997

EXTRACTS FROM A BIBLIOGRAPHER'S CASEBOOK

by David Drazin

VI. CROQUET CHINESE STYLE

In truth, this case is more about a game than a book but, all the same, it makes a good story. It all started a couple of years ago when I got connected to the net. Blundering about the online systems of the libraries of the world, I chanced upon an intriguing reference in some Hong Kong library to a Chinese title, Ch'ui Ch'iu Chiao Shih, published in Taipei (to quote the citation generated by the 'CNIDR http->Z39.50 gateway, with LC modifications'). Making no headway with local sources like the British Library, international directory inquiries, the London oriental book trade, or Whitaker Bibliographic Services (the UK custodians of International Standard Book Numbers), I tried the Taiwanese embassy. They kindly gave me the current fax number of the National Central Library in Taipei, who put me in touch with the publisher. One more fax did the trick.

The book arrived by airmail a few days later. It was a beautifully presented paperback - quite the best produced croquet book of all time. Only problem: it was all in Chinese! But you can get a pretty good idea about the game from the illustrations. Very clearly, it was trendy (at least until very recently), well endowed, and played by thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, in Taiwan alone. Heaven knows how many millions now play the same game, or something very much like it, on the Chinese

mainland. For a first approximation, take your best guess for Taiwan and multiply it by 50 (the 1991 population figures for the Peoples and Island republics were respectively 1154 and 20.6 million). No less clearly, the game is croquet, inasmuch as it is played on fine turf, amongst other surfaces, with mallets, balls, and hoops, and embraces the croquet stroke, which most of us would agree is the essence of the game. But there the resemblance ends. The court measures 25 x 20 metres; the yard line lies 1 metre outside the boundary; 'tight croquet' (meticulously regulated) is at least a permitted option; single-ball strokes are played golf style across the body; there are three hoops, set asymmetrically, one at right angles to the other two, and a peg; the balls weigh 140-240 grams and are 7.0-7.5 cms in diameter; and the game is apparently played by two teams of five, who play with red and white balls, numbered (in Arabic numerals) respectively 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 and 2, 4, 6, 8, 10. And so on. The players, dressed mostly in white (the red team with matching vests) with baseball caps, are seen having a ball. Young men and women of athletic build are portrayed as in total command of finely tuned ball skills, and players of all shapes and sizes are shown exercising in rapt contemplation, stretching muscles and tendons etc possibly unknown to medical science in the western world.

In fact, the whole scene is quite an eye-opener. A feast for thought indeed! What should the CA and other national governing bodies which subscribe to the code of Association Croquet do about it? Should we continue to let the Chinese get along with their game while we mind ours, or should we seek some entente? But obviously before anyone starts planning a diplomatic initiative, it would be useful to establish a few facts. If anyone out there is proficient in Chinese and prepared to tell us what my little book says, whoever feels moved to set the ball rolling would know whom to consult for a better account of Chinese croquet than I am able to piece together from the pictures.

Croquet Association News

Most Improved Players 1996

The Apps Memorial bowl for the most improved male player in 1996 has been awarded to Austin Sherlaw-Johnson of the Bowdon Club.

The glass goblet to replace the stolen Steel Memorial Bowl for the most improved female player for 1996 has been awarded to Naomi Green of the Bristol club.

Both players have indicated that they will attend the AGM in October to receive their awards.

Join Now - Pay Later

Players who join the Croquet Association now and arrange to pay by direct debit in 1998 will receive the full benefits of associateship free for the rest of this year. Their mandates will not be exercised until January 1998. Over two thirds of our associates now pay by this method. The Croquet Association office can supply direct debit mandates and details of the correct subscriptions.

Recruitment

In spite of a poor start to the year, recruitment of new associates has caught up with last year, thanks to a surge in July. This is normally a poor month for recruitment, as new associates usually hold back until August.

As there will not be a poster campaign in clubs this year, the assistance of all associates in helping to recruit more members would be most welcome.

Centenary Dinner

A few tickets are still available for the Centenary Dinner to be held at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club, Wimbledon in the evening of 18th October. This is the same day as the Croquet Association AGM.

Bill Lamb

Points Of View

Clock Croquet - The Experiments of the Northampton Club

by John Anstey

I am happy to tell you that this is not a variant on that other game - you know, the one that isn't really croquet. It is, instead, an effort to bring increased fairness to timed games, and to penalise those who infuriate every opponent by spending ten minutes deciding which ball to play, and a further ten on whether to aim for a roquet or to corner.

In the Northampton Club, we play quite a few tournaments in which it is essential to have a short time limit on games, and to play to "dead" time, if we are to get enough rounds into the day. By "dead", I mean that when time is called play stops immediately in mid-swing. For one player to hog three-quarters of the available time by unconsciously slow play, especially if he is ahead, is therefore very unfair.

A number of us have experimented with play against a chess clock, as is done in most indoor tournaments, and found it very successful.

Playing an aggressive game, Lionel Tibble and I can always complete a game in 40 minutes each, without coming under serious time pressure. Most players are likely to need a little longer, however, and high bisquers need some extra time, to allow for them missing, taking their bisque, and picking up the break again. For a full game we think that a minute a bisque should be about right.

For a full game, when the very existence of the clocks is going to speed things up, we think that two hours should be plenty, and if scratch plays 10, the time should be divided 65 minutes to the high bisquer, and 55 to the expert. In shorter games, the bisques can be reduced pro rata to time, so that a one hour game would be played with 5 bisques, and the time split 32 minutes to 27. You would not need to set a 14, 18, or 22 point game, because the strict time limit would do it for you. What's more, with dead time, the A class player cannot afford to bide his time, and then play a long, winning, last turn.

The club has bought 8 chess clocks, so that we can double bank on all four courts, and we propose to try the system in all our closed tournaments this season. If other competitors agree, we will also use clocks in our open tournaments, but as we have not advertised the idea in the fixture list, it will only be done if everyone is happy to do so.

Two problems remain: double banking, and how to effect the switch of clock running. I think that double banking should be straightforward, though we have not tried it yet: if the striker has to wait while the other match continues, the out-player stops the clock.

Switching over is a little more tricky. For those who do not know how chess clocks work, I should explain that there are two knobs on top. When you push one (which we intend to mark red and yellow), the blue/black clock runs. When you push the blue/black knob, the red/yellow clock runs. The question is, at what point is the out-player allowed to play? We have experimented with not allowing him on to the court, or not to strike the ball, before his clock is running, but this has proved difficult to do or to police.

On balance, we think that the simplest idea is just to play the game normally, and the player going off pushes the clock as soon as he gets to it. Sometimes, his opponent will already have missed by this time, but his clock ticks on until he in turn has come off the court and pushed his clock.

If you have any suggestions for improving or refining the system, please let us - and the Gazette - know.

Alternative Games

The Six Hour Challenge

by Bill Lamb

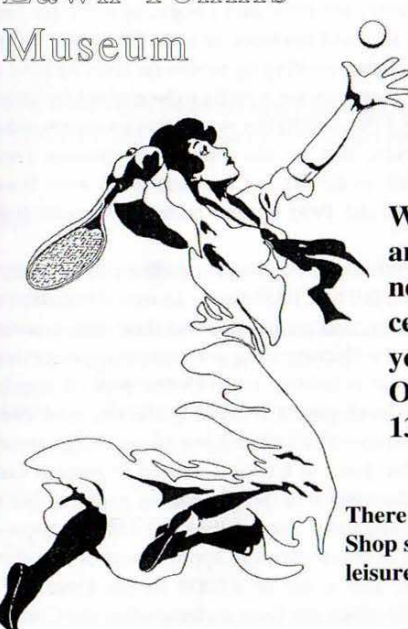
The idea for this format occurred when some doubts were cast over the validity of records when teams of players were playing against each other. Bob Vaughan sportingly agreed to try it out alongside the 24 hour challenge, and Belsay Hall and Crake Valley formed teams of four from players who had already played or were waiting to play in the main event.

Initially, most players were puzzled by the rules but once the event was under way, they suddenly seemed quite simple. After all, if you tried to teach beginners to play croquet by giving them the law book to read, they would never get started. Each player in a team was nominated as Blue, Red, Black or Yellow and had to make a twelve-hoop break with his own colour ball, using his allocation of bisques (one half his normal handicap). At the end of his break, the following player in the sequence did likewise, and so on until all four players had played through the sequence, when they carried on for further sequences. Each player's turn ended as soon as his ball had run over and the following player had to start from where the balls lay. If a player failed to complete his break because his bisques had run out, it had to be completed by the following player before he could start his own colour break.

Substitutions in the teams were allowed and most players in the main event had a try. It proved to be a welcome and enjoyable addition for players who would otherwise have played only one game over the weekend. In fact, Belsay were so enthusiastic that they are going to take the idea back as a coaching and training system for high-bisquers. If any other club wants a copy of the rules, please let me know.

For the record, Belsay claimed 361 points in five hours and fifty-five minutes, and Crake Valley, playing at a more leisurely pace, 238 points in five hours and thirty minutes. Why not six hours? Well, they were a little bit slow getting organised on the Sunday morning.

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Commentary on the 1996 Accounts

by Roger Bray, CA Treasurer

Readers scrutinising the 1996 Accounts may find it paradoxical that in a year when there is a surplus of income over expenditure of £1200 (figures in the commentary are given to the nearest hundred pounds) the Association's net assets have fallen by £1500. The reason for this is that net assets include not just the Association's general funds, which have risen by £1200, but also six special funds which have decreased in total value by £2700. The table of Other Funds shows that £8400 was expended from these funds to help meet the cost of the MacRobertson Shield (£7400) and Development Grants to the Bath and Edgbaston Clubs (£500 each). But this was compensated in part by interest accrued to the International, Benefactors and Duffield Funds, by the final instalment of the late Edward Duffield's bequest and an allocation to the International Fund of £3000 from the Sports Council grant.

The Balance Sheet shows that the Net Assets comprise Fixed and Current Assets less Current Liabilities. The figures for 1995 and 1996 show four significant changes under these sub-headings. In reverse order, the first is a fall in Accrued Expenses from £16300 to £8900: money was set aside in previous years for office rent and an invoice for the backlog was eventually received in 1996. Subscriptions received in advance have fallen by £3400 as a result of the introduction of subscription by direct debit, since many Associates who previously paid by cheque in December have changed to direct debit and now pay in January. Loans to clubs have risen by £3400, those current at the end of 1996 being to Bath, Caterham, Cheltenham and Edgbaston. Finally, Investments have fallen by £16,100 as a consequence of all the changes listed above. It should be noted that during the year four gilt stocks were purchased. One of these, the index-linked stock, is specifically allocated to the Duffield Bequest.

I now highlight the major changes in the Income & Expenditure Account between 1995 and 1996. The rise of £1400 in income from Levy is probably due to more players entering club open tournaments, rather than an increase in entry fee rates, and I hope, as much for club finances as the CA's, that this will continue to rise. Brian Macmillan had a remarkably successful year pushing up profits on Sales by 66% to £7200, and the Coaching Committee are equally to be praised for lifting the surplus on Coaching by 37% to £2700 by promoting a very attractive range of coaching courses. But on the downside income from Advertisements fell by 36% to £2300, not because there were fewer advertisements, but because the 1995 figures included receipts from earlier years.

There were two significant savings on expenditure in the general account. Rent and Insurance fell by £1000 due to an over-estimation of rent for previous years (see second paragraph) and there was a saving of £3700 on costs associated with computing and maintenance services and equipment as there was relatively little in the way of regular computing maintenance or development. Inevitably, though, other costs have risen. Thus Publications rose by £3400 not just because of increased printing and paper costs, but because Council wished to support Gail Curry's drive to improve the quality of the Gazette by enabling her to produce more pages and photographs. Salaries rose by £4300 consequent on the change of Secretary in November, the appointment of two part-time assistant secretaries, and a rise of £1000 in the Treasurer's honorarium. For decades the office has been under-staffed and Council now hopes that the increased assistance for Paul Campion will prove adequate for effective and efficient administration for some time to come. It should be noted, though, that the Secretary's duties have been extended by additional development responsibilities following the abolition of the post of National Development Officer (see below). Printing and stationery rose by £1100 partly due to the increased cost of paper.

The second part of the Income & Expenditure Account covers income from Sports Council grants and expenditure on development

and international activities. This is the first year the CA has suffered a fall in grant income (by £3000). Moreover the situation is going to become worse with further falls over the next two years and possibly no grant thereafter. Council regards both development and international activities as essential aspects of its remit and will strive to develop active and effective programmes in these two areas as well as aiming at a balanced budget. During 1996 Chris Hudson came to the end of his term as National Development Officer. We are extremely grateful to him for his many years of service during which he has been instrumental in bringing about many significant and far-reaching changes. Paul Campion has taken over some of Chris's responsibilities and in 1996 the changeover led to a net saving of £4500. Grants to clubs were comparable in 1995 and 1996 but, as already noted, they were funded from the Development Fund in 1996 whereas in 1995 they came direct from the general account. General Publicity and Development costs rose by £4800 most of which is accounted for by the cost of developing the direct debit system. We are very grateful to the Sports Council for enabling the Association to put this system into place not least because it should lead to considerable administrative and financial advantages in the coming years. International activities include the residual cost of £2800 for the MacRobertson Shield after deducting £7400 already referred to as being met from the International Fund (see first paragraph).

This is the sixth successive year there has been a surplus of income over expenditure. But, with a rapidly declining grant income, the Association is now facing a much tougher future. A notable feature of those same six years is that income from Subscriptions (and total membership) has remained virtually static. UK subscriptions rates were last raised in 1991, although, of course, Associates now also contribute to the CA's finances through the Club Registration Fee. Council therefore reached the almost inevitable decision to raise the subscription rates in 1997. It has also recently decided to raise both subscription rates (by more than inflation) and CRF (by less than inflation) in 1998.

ACCOUNTANTS' REPORT

In accordance with your instructions, we have examined the books, vouchers and other records maintained by the Croquet Association for the year ended 31 December 1996 and obtained such further information as considered necessary. In our opinion, without having carried out an audit, the accounts as presented by The Association are in agreement with the accounting records for the year ended on that date.

Morgan Brown & Spofforth
Chartered Accountants

27 March 1997

The Croquet Association Accounts As At 31 December 1996

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

	1996	1995
	£	£
Income		
Subscriptions	23,243	23,331
Registration fees	15,653	15,437
Levy	10,423	9,067
Sale of books, equipment, etc (net)	7,218	4,345
Advertisements	2,304	3,595
Surplus on tournaments	3,792	4,136
Coaching (net)	2,736	1,990
Investment income on general funds (net of tax)	1,819	2,127
Royalties (net of tax)	-	511
	67,188	64,539
Expenses		
Publications (Croquet, Fixtures Book and Directory)	19,221	15,813
	47,967	48,726
General Overheads		
Rent and insurance	2,602	3,574
Staff salaries and national insurance contributions	27,594	23,338
Council travelling expenses	2,571	1,990
Postage and telephone	2,339	2,749
Printing and stationery	3,343	2,199
Sundry expenses	1,072	691
Accountancy charges	2,040	1,950
Computing and maintenance services and equipment	1,081	4,744
	42,642	41,235
	5,325	7,491
Grants, Sponsorship and Related Expenditure		
Income:		
Sports Council grant	28,000	31,050
Sponsorship (net)	(2,500)	(1,875)
	25,500	29,175
	30,825	36,666
Expenses:		
Development officer's fee	15,000	19,523
Grants to clubs and federations	100	1,350
General publicity and development (net)	8,202	3,389
International	6,292	5,448
	29,594	29,710
Surplus for the year before exceptional items	1,231	6,956
Exceptional items	-	8,349
Surplus for the year transferred to general funds	£1,231	£15,305

BALANCE SHEET

	1996	1995
	£	£
Fixed Assets		
Furniture and equipment at written down value	950	950
Trophies	10,000	10,000
Investments, at cost	84,420	100,560
	95,370	111,510
Current Assets		
Stock of literature and equipment for sale	5,100	4,700
Loans to member clubs	6,896	3,500
Sundry debtors and prepayments	6,307	6,193
Cash at bank and in hand	15,040	14,710
	33,343	29,103
	128,713	140,613
Current Liabilities		
Subscriptions received in advance	4,752	8,147
Accrued expenses	8,901	16,264
Taxation	577	232
	14,230	24,643
Net Assets	£114,483	£115,970
<i>Represented by:</i>		
Accumulated general funds as at 1 Jan 1996	53,934	38,629
Surplus for the year on activities	1,231	15,305
	55,165	53,934
Other Funds, as per attached schedule		
Life membership	1,360	1,360
International	8,332	12,367
Benefactors	23,476	22,689
Tournaments and trophies	3,182	3,182
Development	3,800	4,800
Duffield bequest	19,168	17,638
	£114,483	£115,970

We hereby certify that these accounts are a complete and fair record of the activities of the Croquet Association for the year ended 31 December 1996.

22 March

S.T. Badger - Chairman
R.W. Bray - Treasurer

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

1. INVESTMENTS AT COST	1996	1995
Quoted		
6% treasury stock 1999	9,853	-
7% treasury stock 2001	9,988	-
6½% treasury stock 2004	10,027	-
48% index linked treasury stock 2030	18,810	-
(Market value at 31 December 1996: £48,450)	48,678	-
Unquoted		
Bank and building society deposits	35,742	100,560
	£84,420	£100,560

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

2. OTHER FUNDS	Life membership £	International £	Benefactors £	Tournaments & trophies £	Development £	Duffield bequest £
Balance at 1 Jan 1996	1,360	12,367	22,689	3,182	4,800	17,638
Add:						
Interest on invested funds	-	365	787	-	-	781
Donations	-	-	-	-	-	749
From general funds	-	3,000	-	-	-	-
	1,360	15,732	23,476	3,182	4,800	19,168
Deduct:						
Allocation in year	-	7,400	-	-	1,000	-
Balance at 31 December 1996	£1,360	£8,332	£23,476	£3,182	£3,800	£19,168

Tournament Reports

Men's & Women's Championships

Cheltenham 9 - 15 June 1997

Men's Championship

Round One

Robert Fulford beat Brian Hallam +11 +26tp, David Goacher beat Chris Patmore +15 +23, David Magee beat Ian Burrige -23 +19 +6, David Harrison-Wood beat Bernard Neal +24 +14, Don Gaunt beat Andrew Gregory -4 +25 +11, Aaron Westerby beat Graham Gale +3tpo +10, Chris Clarke beat James Hawkins +26tp +20tp, Keith Aiton beat Malcolm O'Connell +17 +17tp, Stephen Mulliner beat Roger Tribe +3 +21 Mark Avery beat Paul Smith +5 +23tp, Mark Saurin beat Graham Fowler +13 -1 +7, Adrian Wadley beat David Foulser -23 +10tpo +18.

Round Two: Fulford beat Goacher +26tp +12tpo, David Kibble beat Phil Cordingley +2 +20, Magee beat Harrison-Wood -4 +6tp +26, Westerby beat Gaunt +4 +2, Clarke beat Aiton -26tp +9tp +14otp, Mulliner beat Avery +26tp -26tp +5tpo, Saurin beat Wadley +26tp +1, David Maugham beat Roger Jenkins +7 +21tp.

Quarter-Finals: Fulford beat Kibble +6tp +3, Westerby beat Magee +26tp +26tp, Mulliner beat Clarke -26tp +14 +13tpo, Maugham beat Saurin +26tp -7 +26tp.

Semi-Finals: Westerby beat Fulford +13tpo -12tpo +14otp +14otp, Mulliner beat Maugham +26tp +26tp +6tp

Final: Westerby beat Mulliner +26tp -26tp +17 -17tp +3

3rd/4th play off: Fulford beat Maugham +16sxp +25sxp +4sxp

Women's Championship

Round One: Bo Harris beat Gail Curry +5 +13, Frances Ransom beat Eileen Magee +19 -2 +23, Pauline Healy beat Su Stenhouse -2 +1 +1, Rosemary Guban beat Beatrice McGlen +12 -22 +8

Semi-Finals: Harris beat Ransom -24 +8 +1, Guban beat Healy +17 +5

Final: Harris beat Guban -13 +4 +5

Mixed Doubles (Draw)

Mrs Harris & Neal beat Mrs & Mr Wheeler +23, Mrs Guban & Goacher beat Mrs Whittall & Gaunt +9, Mrs McGlen & Harrison-Wood beat Mrs Healy & Gregory +3, Mrs Ransom & Ransom beat Miss Pritchard & PSmith +10, Mrs Harris & Neal beat Mrs Guban & Goacher +8, Mrs Ransom & Ransom beat Mrs McGlen & Harrison-Wood +18, Mrs Ransom & Ransom beat

Mrs Harris & Neal +14

(Process)

Mrs Healy & Gregory beat Mrs Harris & Neal +16, Mrs Whittall & Gaunt beat Mrs Ransom & Ransom +16, Mrs McGlen & Harrison-Wood beat Mrs & Mr Wheeler +17st, Mrs Guban & Goacher beat Miss Pritchard & PSmith +12tp, Mrs Whittall & Gaunt beat Mrs Healy & Gregory +19, Mrs Guban & Goacher beat Mrs McGlen & Harrison-Wood +8, Mrs Whittall & Gaunt beat Mrs Guban & Goacher +8

Play-Off: Mrs Whittall & Gaunt beat Mrs Ransom & Ransom +5

Du Pre:

Winner: Don Gaunt

Runner-up: Mark Avery

Z: Winner: Phil Cordingley

National Junior Championship Bristol 17-19 July 1997

report by Raymond Ransom

The Junior Championships have never been over subscribed and this year the entry of eight was a little above average. Included in the eight were last year's winner of the Junior Championship, Kristian Chambers (in case there is any doubt), Matthew Burrow, much improved since last year and on paper the favourite and two dark horses, Michael Blackwell and James Dixon. Michael's brand of careful and precise play can produce upsets as can the flair of James. To complete the line up we had Naomi Green, (latest winner of the Steel Memorial Bowl), Rachel Scott, James Mackay and Niall Carter and although none of these four were expected to do well in the advanced Championship event, you never can tell. James Mackay, aged 14 and Niall, aged 13 were playing in their first Junior Championships. Niall was rather surprised to find his name down for the advanced level event. His dad had not told him!

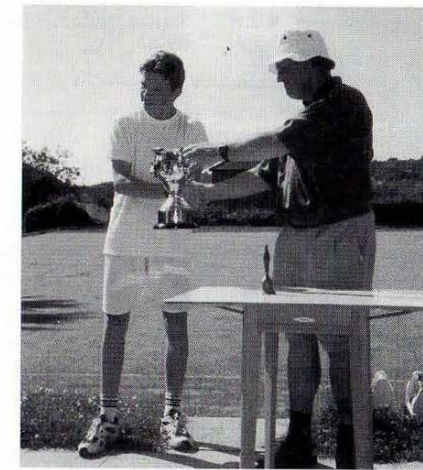
Thursday was advanced and level play day. The manager had planned to complete two rounds of the Draw and one round of the Process in the Championship and one round in the 'B' and 'C' Class events. Because of the limited number of players the 'B' and 'C' Classes had been combined and arranged as an 'all play all'

block. The winner of the block would take the 'B' Class title and the most successful of those eligible would take the 'C' Class title. There was some concern about the time available because the event had been shortened to three days and it was possible that some of the competitors would have to play 12 games. Any worry was soon dispelled as on the first day two rounds of both Draw and Process and almost two rounds of the block games were completed.

Only one upset occurred during the day when Naomi beat Michael in what turned out to be one of the longest games of the championships at 2 hours. Other games went as expected although in the late morning James Mackay ran Kristian close. Matthew looked particularly impressive beating Rachel +26tp in 37 minutes and later on having the same result against Naomi in 32 minutes. Later during the early afternoon James Dixon completed the 3 peels of a triple, but failed to peg out. Matthew went on to complete a good day for himself by beating Kristian in the second round of the Draw and James Dixon in the second round of the Process.

In the block a monumental struggle was taking place between Niall and James Mackay culminating in Niall pegging out James' forward ball leaving peg and penult against rover. James promptly hit and finished +4.

Friday was allocated to the Open Handicap which was run as a Swiss to give all entrants at least 4 games. The day produced some exciting games and certainly the most bisques left standing in total that I remember seeing. Matthew was round to the peg in double quick time in his game against James Mackay and pegged his ball out. Fortunately this was spotted by a spectator referee and remedied before any time was lost. James then proceeded to take his first ball to the peg. Matthew missed and James finished with bisques standing. In his next game James beat Michael +26 in 38 minutes and again had bisques standing. In his final game of the day James was paired against Kristian and took his first ball to the peg using only 3 of his 9



Kristian Chambers being presented with the Junior championship trophy by event manager Raymond Ransom. (Photo by Frances Ransom)

bisques. His unnecessary aggressive leave was punished when Kristian hit, made 12 hoops and pegged out James' ball. Unperturbed James used 2 bisques to set up the 3-ball break and finished using 2 more bisques. More bisques left standing!

Meanwhile Niall was quietly moving up to the top of the Swiss. Did I say 'quietly'? A totally inappropriate word when applied to Niall who gives a continuous running commentary on the state of the game and the effectiveness of each of his strokes. He had beaten Rachel and James Dixon convincingly in his first 2 games and followed these with successive wins against James Mackay and Naomi after he had pegged out their one of their balls. He always signalled his intention to peg out an opponent ball by producing an evil grin on his face.

Rachel was suffering from lack of match practice and showed only glimpses of how well she can play. She did get it together against Kristian winning easily with a bisque standing but against James Dixon the bisques ran out and James won a close game.

Kristian was having a wretched day. He was not playing at his best and just to rub it in, his opponents all hit purple patches. But still it was good preparation for Saturday's big test and the last chance for a successful defence of his title.

Saturday's play would determine the winners of all events other than the Handicap which had effectively been decided. Niall had won 4 out of 4 and had beaten all his main rivals but had not yet twigged that he was the winner. At this stage the manager was not letting on and after some banter between him and Niall, the youngster said that 'if he didn't know him, he would say that he was senile'. This proved to be a great source of amusement, especially to the manager's wife.

The day started with the final of the process half of the Championship between Matthew and Kristian. Kristian had regained his form and was soon lining up his peg out. The croqueted ball struck the peg but he failed to

remove it from the lawn. As he played his next shot the pegged out ball moved and deflected the striker's ball which failed to hit the peg. Opponent was quick to say that the shot could not be retaken and neither consulted a referee. Matthew made 8 hoops before Kristian managed to hit the peg.

In the final of the draw half Matthew Burrow was a trifle lucky to beat an erratic James Dixon and thus set up a return match against Kristian. Meanwhile the decider of the 'B' class was taking place between Naomi and James Mackay. James had secured the 'C' class title by his 2 wins which neither of the other contenders could equal. Perhaps Naomi was not playing at her consistent best but she had had some good wins, including a handicap win against Matthew with 5 of her 8 bisques standing at the end. She had also achieved her Silver Award in a game against Rachel earlier. In a game which saw James eventually come out on top and thus took both 'B' and 'C' titles. In his final game against Naomi, he also achieved his Silver Award.

In the Championship Play-off Matthew wished to play best of 3 and as Kristian was happy to do so and time was not a problem, the manager agreed. In some respects the match was disappointing. Kristian was playing well and won easily in 2 games with Matthew making little of the chances which he had. So Kristian retained the title and received the cup and a CA centenary medal but it was a pity that no trophies or medals were available for the other winners.

It was a pleasure to manage the Juniors Championship. There was no whining and no asking for leave. They just got on with their games, playing quickly and with good humour. I wish that all tournaments were thus.

Results:

Junior Championship (Draw) Round 1: James Dixon bt James Mackay +24, Naomi Green bt Michael Blackwell +13, Kristian Chambers bt Niall Carter +8, Matthew Burrow bt Rachel Scott +26tp. Semi Final: Dixon bt Green +9, Burrow bt Chambers +24. Final: Burrow bt Dixon +9.

(Process) Round 1: James Dixon bt Niall Carter +24, Matthew Burrow bt Naomi Green +26tp, Kristian Chambers bt James Mackay +8, Michael Blackwell bt Rachel Scott +25. Semi final: Burrow bt Dixon +13, Chambers bt Blackwell +17. Final Chambers bt Burrow +18.

Play Off: Chambers bt Burrow +21 +16.
B/C Class: Winner James Mackay 3/3 wins
Handicap: Winner Niall Carter 4/5

The Five Day Tournament

Cheltenham 25th - 29th June 1997

report by Andrew Cowing

The tournament started on Wednesday during the lowest recorded weather pressure for a century bringing with it horizontal rain, gale force winds and temperatures below 10 degrees C. With all this to contend with play was erratic. David Harrison-Wood's failed sextuple against Roger Jackman in block A and fine wins for Audrey Whittaker +23 over Colin Snowdon in block B and Ray Floods' (from Carrickmines) +19 win over Marjorie Boyd in block C to Mitch Watts

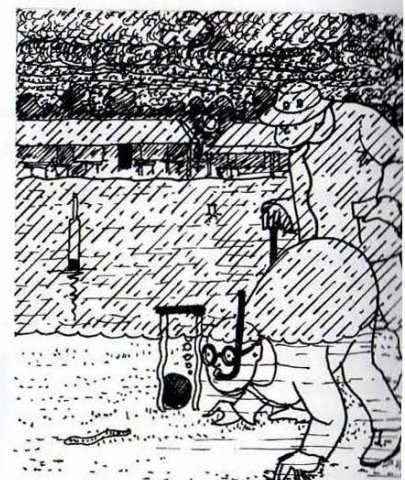
epic encounter with Bob Whitaker, Mitch got both balls nicely to rover, then taking hours to complete the win! The day ended with David Harrison-Wood's triple peel with the peel being made from behind 4-back (hit jawed ball hard against the wire causing peel from the wrong side!)

In block D the extraordinary game between Martin Kolbuszewski and Una Martin. Una being in the lead with peg out when Martin got his second ball to rover missed the peg-out, pegging out the striker leaving the other about 1 foot from the peg. Una in corners 2 & 4. Una, admirably doing a difficult thing by hitting in, unfortunately the process managed to rush Martin's ball to the peg giving Martin victory by +2!

On Saturday Una Atter-Martin was involved in some extraordinary play paralyzing Alison Thursfield against Penny Crow and Roger Jackman. Una and Alison, on 3-back, were left with a cross-wire which they tried to hit. The ball hit the hoop full on, but back a little and then spun forward to partner ball. A little later with Una & Alison over and rover, Roger (with a half bisque having just made penult. himself trickled the rover balls wishing to take the half bisque to make the leave, only to see his ball run to rover; proving luck's habit of evening its books.

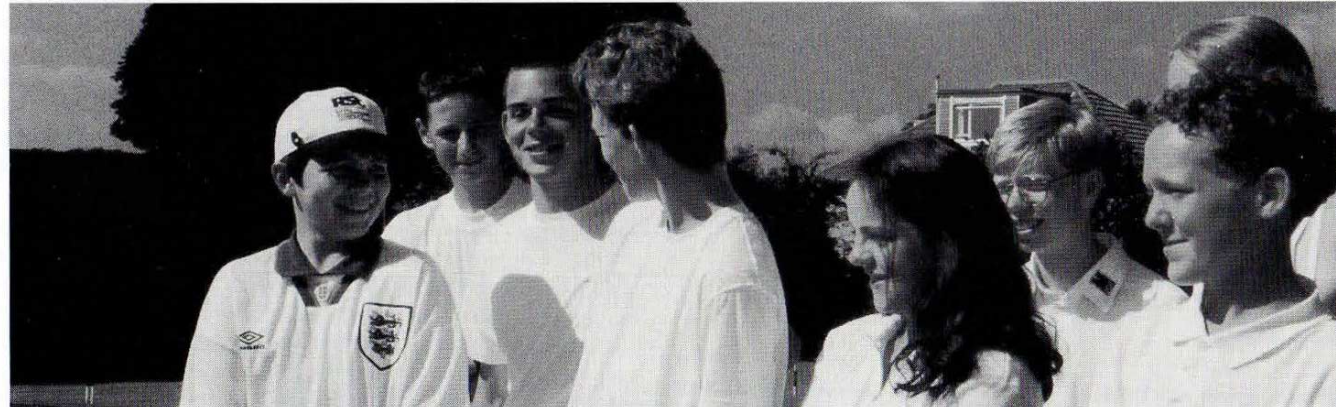
In a unique encounter on Saturday Group F match, 177 years were shared by octogenarian Maisie Peebles (87) and nonagenarian John Excell (90), culminating in a triumph of youth over experience with running out the winner by +3.

By the end of play on Sunday (weather) Stephen Badger had secured Gladstone Salver with 4/5 from David Harrison-Wood and David Magee on 3/5. The B class was won by Andrew Cowing following his +5 over Bernard Weitz, 5/5, over Derek Braithwaite. Kismet Whittall took the C class with 5/5.



'Yes, it's there'

Geoffrey Edgeler's vision of Cheltenham



James Mackay, James Dixon, Matthew Burrow, Kristian Chambers, Naomi Green, Michael Blackwell, Niall Carter and Rachel Scott assembled at the Junior Championships held at Bristol C.C. (photo by Frances Ransom.)

Derek Harrison at 4/5. The D class was won by Dab Wheeler 4/5 from hubby Roger 3/5 and Martin Kolbuszewski 3/5 and Jim Godson 3/5. The E class was won by Jean Ackerman 4/5 from the combined effort of Edith Bailey/Sue Edwards 4/5 and the multi-talented Geoffrey Edgeler 4/5 (17pts) to whom many thanks go to for producing a cartoon depicting a typical 5-Day scene. Penny Crowe took class F with 4/5 (48pts) from Charles Atter-Martin 4/5 (32pts) and Jean Powell 4/5 (11pts) with both Penny & Charles having their photograph playing in the rain published in the local paper on Friday.

The low bisquers doubles was won outright by Stephen Badger 5/5; how nice it is to see the tournament manager winning both singles & doubles, especially as Katherine Badger made the presentations of the prizes (from Stephen to Katherine, handshake; to Stephen, kiss; and back to Katherine again - twice!); from the runner up Colin Snowdon with 4/5.

The high bisquers doubles was won outright by Craig Edwards 5/5 with Sue Edwards and Dab Wheeler tied for runner up. A one ball play-off was agreed to the entertainment of all the players taking tea. Sue narrowly won providing a family one-two in the event.

The tournament was rounded off with a special medal to Eileen Magee for her unstinting work at the Cheltenham club, to much appreciative applause.

WrestPark H'cap Tournament May 16-18 1997

report by John Bevington

The first ever Wrest Park tournament was held in June 1972, so 1997 marks our 25th tournament season and it was fitting that two club members who took part in the first tournament were also playing in this one. Of the two, Tom Anderson had a rather better weekend than John Wheeler, winning half his games including a five hour epic against club chairman Peter Smith. John was unable to play on Saturday due to a prior engagement (Northampton vs Australia) and arranged for another club member to take his place. Imagine Nigel Gray's surprise when he was confronted with Tim Brewer, in his first

tournament, armed with 18 bisques and playing rather well. Tim had another good win against George Collin, and on this evidence won't have all those bisques for much longer.

The conditions were very easy: medium-paced lawns, holding turf and firm but not over-tight hoops. If you got in with a break on, the only problems were whether to run rover and what sort of leave to arrange. Higher bisquers who knew what they were about were bound to profit, and so they did. Block A was won by Ray Hall (12) with 7/7 including two +26 scores and four more in double figures. David Woolley (10) came second with 6/7 - three +26 and two +25, and Jim Potter (8) was third with 5/7, two of these being +20 and +23. Yet although both David and Jim had their handicaps reduced, Ray's stayed the same. His index had been nearer 14 than 12, so the 70 points were not enough under the automatic system, nor had he fulfilled any of the conditions for a reduction as a rapid improver as he had not accumulated 80 index points, was not new to croquet and was playing in his first tournament of the season. A case for flexible interpretation?

The other players in the block had to scrap over what crumbs were left. Peter Thompson, for example, came to practise for the Counties and break in a new mallet, failed to score twice and lost two other games by one and two but at least had a good win against manager Eric Audsley, who himself managed three wins playing off 0.5, no mean achievement in the circumstances. Block B, like block A run as an American, also had three clear front runners. Roger Ivill (14) and David Harley (7) both finished with 6/7, closely followed by Kevin Ham (10) with 5. David had a +26 and a +25 and won the game against Roger, but Roger's five solid double-figure wins gave him more net points and the prize. Following in the wake of these three musketeers were Judy Anderson and Claire Heritage with three wins each.

The other block of ten players was run as a Swiss, and included John Hall from Letchworth, playing off 12. John has been coming to Wrest Park for some years, and he would be the first to admit that he had never exactly set the lawns on fire, but on this occasion

the corner was turned, the light was seen and the penny dropped all at the same time. He won all eight games, three +26, one +22 and the rest by double figures and was a clear winner. His nearest rival was John Bevington (4) with 7/8, whom he beat by the maximum margin. Tom Anderson, Nick Evans, Derek Humphrey and Ian Mantle led the rest with four wins apiece. And let us not forget Justin Davies, who although he did not manage a win would appreciate the wisdom of Virgil's comment: "Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas".

No report can be regarded as complete without a note on the weather. The forecast was not good, and on Friday and Saturday afternoons one could feel the temperature and humidity rising alarmingly, but there was no rain to speak of. And yet on Saturday evening, only a few miles away, there were floods and hailstones that shattered windows and pebble-dashed the roofs of cars. It's not that we wouldn't have appreciated the rain, but why were we spared? Could it have had anything to do with the fact that Robert Runcie was in Silsoe to speak at a commemoration service at the church on Sunday morning? To finish, a word of appreciation for Margaret, who came down from Tyneside for a quiet weekend and found herself preparing lunches and dispensing tea and coffee, which she did with grace and charm. Many thanks from us all.

Bristol Advanced Weekend 17/18 May 1997

report by Raymond Ransom

Bristol Croquet Club are seriously considering a ban on players with the name David in their future tournaments after a conspiracy resulted in the 1997 advanced weekend entries consisting of thirteen Davids, one Dave and two Davinas. The Dave had obviously muddled his entry form and the two ladies felt that Davina was more refined than David. To add to the manager's nightmare, three of the Davids had the reputation of being among the slowest players in the game.

It seemed likely from the start that a David would win, or possibly a Dave or Davina, unless all competitors were disqualified for

continued on page 19



HELPFUL HINTS No.10

by Don Gaunt

A Series of short tips and ideas for beginners and improvers

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

No.10 Court Etiquette (2)

Although the way you behave on and off the 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 that 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.

The start of the game

It is conventional for the lower bisquer to spin for start and to get and set out the bisques, but there is no need to get dogmatic about it. I often haven't got a coin and if my opponent has, ask him or her to spin.

Unless you know your opponent well, avoid facetious remarks. I get irritated by comments such as "well of course you are going to win, you are a minus player", particularly when that player then wins by 26 with three bisques left.

During play

There is no compulsion to watch your opponent play, but if you do not, then you are taking away from yourself any right to stop your opponent if a fault or error is made by him or her. I was once able to stop my opponent from roqueting the same ball twice when he was on a winning turn. I then won the game which I would not have done had I not been watching. It is also

discourteous to your opponent to wander miles away so that you have to be fetched to play your turn. I cannot understand the thinking of the player who fails to watch his or her opponent making a break, yet stands watching someone making a break on a different lawn!

Do stay still while you are watching, it is bad form to prowl round the lawn after your opponent. If you feel that faults are being committed, seek the advice of a referee. If you think that your opponent may be about to commit a fault or error, forestall (stop) him or her and discuss the matter, calling a referee if necessary. Remember that you as the out-player can call a referee even if your opponent disagrees. Make sure that your calls are not frivolous or you will soon incur the wrath of the referee!

On the same topic, if you are the in-player and you are unsure about a shot, ask your opponent if he or she wants it watched. Even if your opponent is happy for you to play and you are still uncertain, call a referee. Do, however, learn from this. If a referee when called says that a particular shot does not need watching because there is little chance of a fault, note the shot for future reference. Referees are happy to explain a law (but not how to play) but do not want to keep on explaining it!

If you are signalling the taking of a bisque, do so clearly and ensure that your opponent has removed it so that there are no arguments about how many you have used. If you are taking a half bisque, indicate this clearly as well. Do note that if you say you are going to take a bisque, you can change your mind before starting the bisque turn BUT if you say you are not going to take a bisque you cannot change your mind.

If you are a spectator, avoid making loud comments about the game. Apart from being distracting for the players it places them in a very difficult position if they hear unsolicited advice. The regulations intimate that you should ignore such advice but what do you do if you hear someone say "Oh look he has run the wrong hoop!"

Similarly, if some sort of problem occurs, do not leap up and interfere. If a referee is called, go up quietly and say that you observed the problem, otherwise say nothing even if it is patently obvious that the game has gone terribly wrong. If at the end of the game no-one has noticed KEEP QUIET!

After the game

What I am about to say next is probably the most difficult of all. Be a sporting loser This does not mean that you have to enjoy losing, in fact the late Edgar Jackson used to say "You should hate everyone for 30 seconds after losing - then forget it!"

Do not be grumpy or sarcastic. If you played badly or your opponent played well - so be it; vow to do better next time. If luck was against you, live with it; next time it may be your turn.

This is the last in my series of helpful hints. I hope that beginners and improvers have found them useful. I am not planning to do any more but if there is a particular topic that you would like me to write about, let Gail know and I may oblige.

Thank you Don. I have one or two coaching items for future issues, but if anyone would care to provide a few more they would be most welcome. Ed

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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.

NEWS & INFORMATION

Jaques to replace Eclipse ball

John Jaques, manufacturers of the Eclipse ball, suffered a fire three months ago which unfortunately destroyed not only stocks of the ball, but also the machinery used to create them. After lengthy consideration Jaques have decided not to pursue production of the Eclipse ball, by attempting to replace such machinery, but will instead be replacing the Eclipse with their own solid one piece ball.

This ball has been developed and tested over the over the past five or six years, and will shortly be available on general release. Several sets of the prototype ball have been on test with international players overseas, and those that have used it have reacted very favourably, comparing its playing characteristics to those of the old Eclipse ball.

Hyde Park rally

This event was cancelled due to insufficient entries. Many thanks to all those who volunteered their time and services in making the Rally possible. Special mention to the Ramsgate club who not only helped in the planning but also entered a team.

Advice & suggestions welcomed

Medway CC have recently become involved with a local physically handicapped group, with a view to establishing some sort of croquet activity to suit their abilities. Our first task was to work out with each individual how best they could use a mallet, as they range from using a walking stick to being wheelchair bound. The club and the group have decided that, with few exceptions, indoor croquet would best suit the needs. Their enthusiasm for a different activity was amazing, so we must continue. Through the Gazette we would welcome any advice/suggestions from any club involved in a similar venture.

Bob Crowne Tel: 01634 - 378321

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failing to register their names with the CA. In this case the manager would scoop all the prizes.

Round one went much according to plan with seven Davids and a Dave surviving to the next. All of the competitors struggled to cope with lawns which had been slowed by heavy rain over the previous 12 hours. However only one upset occurred when Coates beat Duckworth convincingly.

The second round saw a major upset with last year's winner, Goacher, beaten by Jenkins with the first of the weekend's triples. It also saw the elimination of the only Dave from the main event when Kibble was beaten by Harrison-Wood.

The semi-final saw Wadley and Symons winning through. The final was fairly one-sided, Symons winning with a triple in the first game and a failed triple (all three peels completed) in the second.

Meanwhile in the consolation event, the only certainty was that David was doing well. 'VR man' having been eliminated by Goacher in the first round was improving with each game. A shaky win over Lilly; a bit more convincing against Guban and the scene was set for what was the most interesting game of the weekend against Leggate. Some way into the game Patmore picked up a break and after hoop five cross-wired Leggate at one with the intention of ending with a sextuple leave. Unfortunately he stuck in hoop 6 conceding a wiring lift. Leggate obligingly missed the double, hit the wire and stayed close enabling Patmore to complete the first peel early.

As the turn progressed and the peels were done, the odds on the successful completion of the septuple were shortening. It finally came down to a straight triple but the ball positions were far from ideal and when rover was reached there was no escape ball available. The final peel went well down towards the South boundary but after running the hoop, the rush was South rather than North. Patmore made a valiant effort to finish but alas without success. The story did not end there and Leggate came back from nowhere to finish on peg and 4-back before Patmore hit and pegged out. A rivetting game which held crowd interest until the last shot.

And so the weekend finished as it had begun with Goacher playing Patmore to decide the winner of the Swiss. This time the result was different, Patmore winning +26tp.

South-East Centenary Celebration at Sunny Surbiton 13 & 14 July 1997

report by Ray Hall

The South-east federation's concept was to involve players from all constituent clubs in a weekend of handicap doubles, with a sociable emphasis but with CA cups for the winners and medals for four teams. Surbiton's catering (World famous in Surrey) and a Saturday night BBQ were further attractions.

Manager Chris Osmond eased personnel problems in her invitation letter by allowing

flexible team membership. The out-turn was 41 players in 18 teams from nine clubs: Caterham, Crawley, Dulwich (2), Ealing (2), Harrow Oak (2), Hurlingham, Medway, Surbiton (4), Sussex (4). Team handicaps ranged from 7.5 in a steady progression to 29. The plan was a five-round Swiss with 3:15 time limit indicated by the manager's hand-bell.

Saturday started misty, and though the moisture on the grass was dew, not rain, many participants had wet-gear to hand following the regional thunderstorm on Tuesday and unenthusiastic weather forecast for the weekend. Nevertheless, the dew evaporated leaving the lawns fast, with hills and ridges to test the out-of-form. The hoops were in fact less forgiving than those set up for the Opens down the road at Hurlingham, and one or two rabbit runs were the cause of a grief-provoking roll-back or two.

Round 1 was off promptly at 09:30. The lawns became faster and sweaters came off. Round 2 was one of those soporific after-lunch sessions typified by chairs in the shade and a fox quietly observing events from lawn 7, corner 2. Few players were giving exact reproductions of their singles form and David RK started an heroic quintuple in the time-call turn (to no avail). Towards the end of round 3 the BBQ was alight and refugees had arrived from Hurlingham to counterbalance the team of that name who had forgotten about the after-tea round. Bill Arliss & Daphne Gateley (Sussex), Mike Burrow & Martin Burger (Surbiton), Simon Miles & Don Beck (Medway) and John Boardman & Alan Grey (Harrow Oak) went to bed with the satisfaction of 3 wins in the bag.

Sunday 09:30, Round 4, the clouds were mustering but it was still warm enough to encourage the devotees of shorts. Around coffee-time someone reported possible rain but the clouds moved off (Surbiton's magic microclimate?). Bill & Daphne were out in front with 4 wins, but the Harrow duo could not improve on 3. Meanwhile in the lower orders Gene Mears & Peter Pullin (Sussex) had picked up their first win leaving Quiller Barrett & Brian Rees (Ealing) contemplating the wooden spoon.

Round 5 was played in splendid sunshine, but we crept out of our shady corners to find that for all the splendour of Bill's braces,



Bill Arliss & Daphne Gateley (Sussex) with Jean & Len Nash (Crawley). (photo by Ray Hall)



Alan Oldham presents winners' cups to Simon Miles & Don Beck. (photo by Ray Hall)

he and Daphne had dropped a game, whilst Jean & Len Nash (Crawley) had grabbed another win, leaving 4 teams with 4 wins. This neatly allocated the centenary medals but La Managera needed a winner to collect the cups. No problem, she forthwith decreed an alternate-stroke two-ball knockout - spectator sport comes to Surbiton!

Thus at least it seemed on lawn 1, where the Sussex and Crawley pairs had arrived at 1-back, engaging in classic two ball cat & mouse for some minutes. Len resolved the stalemate by reversing through the hoop for position and Jean ran through on a bisque. This resulted in them arriving at 4-back with Bill for 2-back, whence he hit in, and Daphne played a good looking split shot which, alas, ran off near the hoop and also conceded a lift in the jaws of 4. All the same, they were the first through 4-back, resulting in a sequence of hit-in followed by no runnable position. From all this Len was first to the peg, which he missed (chorus: Aahhh), allowing Bill to get to the peg and miss a roquet (more chorus) letting Jean & Len into the final.

Over on lawn 2 Simon Miles & Don Beck against Mike Burrow & Alec Thomas (substituting for Martin) had a less spectacular time. Don & Simon used bisques to establish a good lead and stayed there to peg out with the last bisque. Back on for the final, with just one bisque, they were into a quick lead after Don hit Jean's tice, and Len missed his shot at their position. Don & Simon generally played better position shots and stretched their lead. A possible reversal came at 3-back when Jean hit in, but Len stuck in 5. After that the Medway pair's heaviest task was to lift the cups, presented by Alan Oldham on behalf of the CA. There was no wooden spoon since nobody had lost all their games, though five teams came near. So we sped away into the evening sun wondering if other Centenary events will be as enjoyable.

Golf Croquet Inter-Counties Northampton CC 27th July

report by Don Beck

Four counties played a single block to generate two finalists. Kent ran away with the block

winning 16/18 games but the other finalist was not decided until the last two games left the lawn. Northampton beat Essex 7-5 leaving Oxford doubles to beat Kent to qualify and it went to the deciding hoop.

Oxford triumphed 7-6 to meet Kent in the final.

Results:

Final Kent 2- 1 Oxfordshire
3rd place Essex 2-1 Northampton

Northampton who came so close to going into the final finished in 4th place. Special mention to E Dymock, Kent, who went all day undefeated. Teams:

Kent: E Dymock, D Beck, S Miles, R Mann
Oxfordshire: N Rayne, J Pheysey-Jones, J Rickards, J Munro
Essex: R Longbottom, M Davis, A Lee, B Hickman
Northamptonshire: A Billingham, N Smith, J Carrick, B Simon

The weather and food were superb and everyone had an enjoyable day - except for the traffic on the way home!!!!

Surbiton Speed Doubles, 19th & 20th July
report by Peter McGowan

A dozen pairs of Speed Freaks gathered in the sweltering summer sun for what was to be the inauguration for many into Croquet a la Chess Clock. There was a smattering of low-bisquers and minuses, but plenty at the other end of the handicap scale - a good cross-section of the playing community in fact.

The event was played as an eleven-round American block. Each game was a 14-pointer, and each pair had their own 1/2 hour time limit; though if your time had run out, you could still play single ball shots and score hoop/peg points.

The all-white rule had been daringly abandoned, each pair being encouraged to appear in matching "mufti". So we'd already been indulging in team talk well before the starting gun: "Pink? Well, I've got the socks, if you've got the shirt..." All had suitably risen to the occasion, albeit that

in some cases, Good Taste had also been daringly abandoned - I mean, fancy appearing in 1996's season's colours! Special commendations here to Balliol Costumiers Inc © for the Plummer/Repp garb, and to - well, no-one really owned up! - for the Kaleidoscopically Unchallenged attire of David Mooney/Sharon Wood.

After a brief learning curve in electronic engineering, ie the clocks, we were at it.

Not a second to be wasted!! As soon as your turn ends (= quitting the court!) hit the button, and your opponents' turn starts... My goodness they'll be finishing soon, which ball to play? Oh no! Red's best but it's at the far end, better get going. Right, I'm on, start the clock. Can't dawdle, but can't not stalk, c-a-l-m c-a-l-m. [roquet] Great! But why don't the balls stay together? Next year bring glue. [croquet] Forget the 4th ball, too far to walk/run, try 3-balling it. Long hoop but have a go. [clang!!] Damn! [dash for boundary] I'm OFF!! [hit the button...]

Entrants began to develop their preferred methods of saving time, notably with some fine partnerial-working-together in the turn ending/clock change-over routines. There wasn't much you could pre-plan however for the unproductive time taken up by the ricochet after a not-full-on roquet, or setting up a croquet shot on a knobbly patch of grass (not that Surbiton has too many of those, he said hastily.) Nonetheless, very few games went to time, to time expiry by both sides that is; and only a few had the extra challenge of the single shot ending, though even some of these finished with the single shooters winning.

Six games on Saturday, and some Oxford Rules 1-ball (the victor was a one-armed bandit,) were followed by a relaxing summer BBQ; and then home to a Radox bath.

Sunday's rounds saw the steady downfall of George Noble/Celia Steward (due to a shortage of cider?) and the relentless upsurge of Robert Pennant-Jones/Ron Benson, both now co-ordinatingly reclad in (I am advised) eau-de-nil.

Anyway, after the 11th and last round, three pairs were tied on 7 wins; and after analysis on a laptop (a laptop clipboard that is) Kevin Carter/Gina Lewis were judged third, leaving Ian Plummer/Jon Repp and Robert/Ron to play-off for the title. (Your reporter refuses to acknowledge any irony in Ron featuring in a Speed Croquet final.) And what a play-off!! The crowd made lots of appreciative noises, and the Bookie was hard put to keep up with the shifts of fate between the combatants. Early advances by R/R ran out of steam; Jon R caught up, though developed a tendency to miss the roquet after the hoop, and Ian P had to ride to the rescue, eventually pegging out both balls with 5 seconds to spare: a finely judged performance.

The event was co-managed most effectively by Nelson Morrow (who had generously presented a handsome tray as the prize) and Chris Osmond, to whom many thanks; which are also due to Claire Heritage for the clocks, to Surbiton for their hospitality, and to just about everyone for the splendid Saturday barbecue! If run again, as surely it must, we'll be back (though on a personal note, a few sessions of circuit training beforehand wouldn't go amiss!) I recommend to everyone who's ever complained about time-wasting by oppo in a time-limited game that they should enter, and have a go at an alternative.

Wrest Park advanced weekend, 4-6 July 1997
report by Graham Fowler

Pre-tournament favourite, Terry Burge, arrived in reasonable time on Saturday; alas the tournament had begun on Friday morning. With some catching up to do, Terry joined the bottom of the draw and, playing Judy Anderson, laid up for a sextuple. Judy hit the wired ball and made progress. Later Terry began, and failed, a triple. Judy continued to make steady progress and, eventually, pegged out. Later Terry lost a further game and, more importantly, his mallet... not necessarily in that order.

Gordon Hopewell was undefeated on Friday. On Saturday morning he hit the last lift shot against Graham Fowler, when Graham was for penult and peg; Gordon went round but it was not enough to prevent a reversal of the result of the previous weekend.

The Wrest Park event featured the welcome arrival of portaloos contiguous to lawn two. These were not intended for the benefit of croquet

continued on page 22



Omega Croquet embraces all croquet happenings that are inadvertent - whatever the cause or outcome. David Wedmore has imagined a Grand Order of Omega Players (Goops) which is dedicated to putting this kind of croquet onto a properly organised basis (!) and which reports here.

4. 1997 Fixtures

The Grand Order is giving priority to competitions catering for needs to which the Pi Croquet world seems completely indifferent.

Take the case of the Away Team which, having travelled far since daybreak, arrives to find no one at the Home Club to receive it. Some elementary misunderstanding has occurred - within or between clubs - concerning day, time, or selection perhaps. To provide an appropriate vehicle for such events, Omega has inaugurated -

The "Marie Celeste" Inter-Club Trophy
- for which the scoring is dictated by the number of absentees:
1 pt per Away absentee, 2 points per Home, doubled if complete team.

For Clubs who play each other, only to find later that they are in fact entered in different competitions, Omega runs -
The F 1 Hybrid League
- so that these results will not be wasted.

For Veterans who (not unreasonably) wish to limit the number of games and the level of exertion required of them, Omega offers -
Zimmer Week
- with use of frames permitted on court, and a very user friendly format known as the Stannah Ladder.

Expansion of these activities requires Sponsors: but we have been having great difficulty in attracting them. It seems that we still project the wrong sort of image in some way. Lloyds did look at The Marie Celeste, but decided they 'could not afford the risk'.

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The South West Federation Invites You To The Solomon Lecture

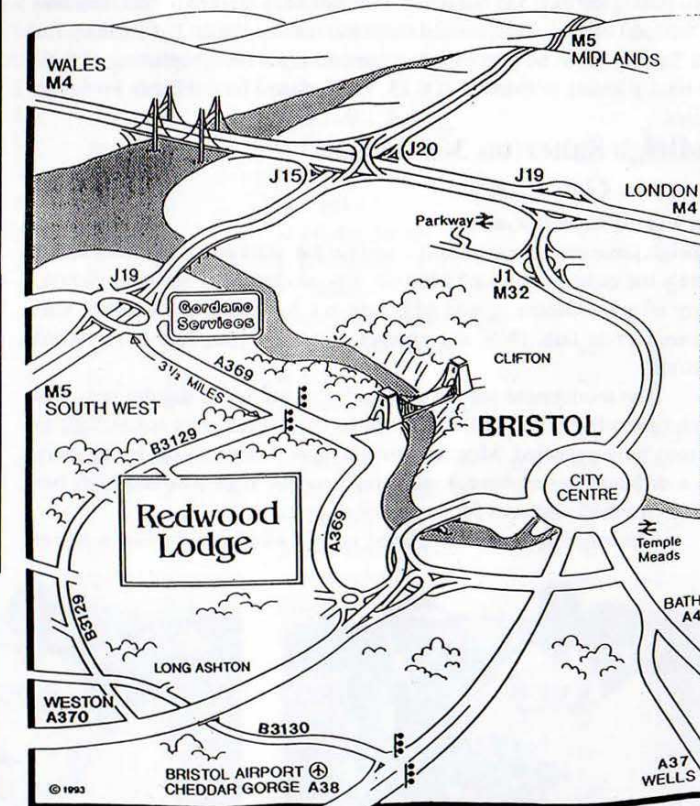
As part of the Centenary Celebrations the South West Federation are hosting the inaugural Solomon Lecture on Sunday 2nd November 1997

The lecture entitled 'Croquet: How was it for you?' will take place at the Redwood Lodge (off J 19 of the M5) at 12.30 and will be followed by lunch, which is available at a cost of £6 per person.

Anyone wishing to attend the lecture and/or the lunch should contact David Magee by Friday 17th October, on 01452 700353.

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players but for those attending a demonstration of the Army from 1745-1785. Such are the advantages of playing croquet in the grounds of an English Heritage property! The cannons seemed to become progressively louder during the day, and perhaps lost a little of their charm by the middle of Sunday afternoon!

By Sunday lunchtime, Gordon had only one loss, as had Graham - to Lionel Tibble, which probably involved the shot of the tournament. Lionel had been round and done a couple of peels, then Graham went round and completed two peels. A little later, with only two balls on court, Lionel was stuck on the left hand wire of rover; although he could run the hoop, he could not gain much clearance. Graham played his peg ball to just north of the peg - no target from the position Lionel could reach. Lionel ran the hoop, checked that he could see nothing, called for an umpire, played a gentle shot which curled inexorably into the peg.

Gordon's final game was against Tom Anderson; Graham's against Eric Audsley. If Graham won he would secure his first advanced tournament victory. He played in such a manner that Gordon had every right to be hopeful. Eric may have been fortunate to begin a break by running hoop two from just north of the peg, but was unlucky late in the game to take off just to the line. Taking advantage of a final error Graham was able to clinch victory by two.

Gordon was a clear runner-up. George Collin won the prize for the most handicap points gained during the weekend. Cliff Jones achieved two triple peels, and made the three peels on two or three other occasions. More crucially, he won the Sunday lunchtime sweepstake for the time the final round would begin.

Thanks are due not only to Eric Audsley for his management and patience but to all those involved in making the weekend such a success, whether it be preparing the lawns, arranging the evening meals, or providing meals during the day. On Saturday, Tom and Judy arrived to find they had left the food behind. Tom missed some time on the lawns, but made up for it on Sunday when he played two games on lawn four, beginning at 9.30 and finally losing to Gordon at 6.15; I understand he did break for lunch though.

Budleigh Salterton 3- 9 August

report by Gail Curry

That was the week that was.....

Budleigh promises so many things, and for the most part it provides them. There's the quiet easy paced lifestyle, a good choice of accommodation, plenty of great Guinness, and of course not forgetting the weather, that famous Devon rain. (No, not another editorial typo, rain is the word required.)

The tournament started on Sunday morning, as did the rain, and by tea time when it was still damp, spirits in the club were not as high as one may have expected. Monday brought more dampness but by tea there was a different atmosphere, one of high spirits, high jinx and high bar profits - a sound platform for any week of croquet.

The handicap event was played as eight blocks, with block winners

going into quarter finals, the winners of those going to semi-finals and the two remaining playing in the final. The block winners, somewhat surprisingly, contained a high percentage of players with handicaps of 5 or less, the one exception being Mary Goodhart on 11.

The handicap doubles was played as an 18 point event with two hour time limit and the added feature of bisques being allocated to the individual rather than the pair. This together with the fact that it was being run as a Swiss on points scored rather than wins, gave the somewhat novel scenario that pairs were actually trying to score, and win, quickly. To further encourage such tactics, the first match finished inside the two hour time limit of each round could claim a bottle of wine to celebrate with, and four bottles were duly claimed in well under two hours.

The class events were divided into four A - D with two blocks of six in each class, the block winners contesting the final. The A & B classes played level advanced, the C's level and the D's full bisque base 6.

The one new event to this tournament was a golf croquet event, which was played without bisques as a straight knockout event.

The tournament dinner was, for the first time, held exclusively indoors, due to climatic conditions, however the same could not be said for the very informal 'Heretics Ball' and pirates evening which was held on the Friday evening, in glorious technicolour and in the majority of cases fancy dress. Those particularly pirate like in their apparel were Cliff Jones, Mike Hammelev, Robert Scaddan, Bob Whitaker, Sharon Wood and others, but the fancy dress prize went to Jo Carter for her uncanny portrayal of Minnie the Minx, closely followed by husband Shaun as Desperate Dan.

In a week that could have so easily been tarnished by the weather there was little to worry about; the lawns whilst slow because of the weather were unyielding in their capacity to drain, apart from a brief period on Thursday evening when 3 inches of rain fell in 45 minutes, but how many lawns could cope with that? Otherwise the hard work and determination of the Budleigh Club on its lawns is already paying dividends, and further improvements will only further improve lawns of an already enviable standard for many clubs.

Results:

A class - Colman Cup Terry Burge bt David Magee, B class - Longman Cup Shona Vaissiere bt Gail Curry, C class - Stone Cup John Wilkinson bt Cliff Walker, D class - Dorke Trophy Bob Whitaker bt Margaret Selmes.

Handicap - Oliver Bowl Quarter Finals: Lousie Bradforth bt Stephen Badger, Gail Curry bt Brian Smith, Mary Goodhart bt Ron Selmes, Gordon Porter bt David Magee. Semi Finals: Gordon Porter bt Lousie Bradforth, Gail Curry bt Mary Goodhart.

Final: Gail Curry bt Gordon Porter

Handicap Doubles Winners - Terry Burge & Sharon Wood Runners-up - Lionel Tibble & Mary Smith

Golf Croquet- David Kibble bt Louise Bradforth

Advanced One Ball Lionel Tibble, Handicap One Ball Eileen Magee

Egyptian - Overall - Shona Vaissiere, Most improved Gentleman - Bob Whitaker

Most improved Lady - Shona Vaissiere

Moonlight Trophy - Shaun Carter

Triple Peel Award - David Kibble.



Men's Champion 1997 Aaron Westerby, Women's Champion Bo Harris, Du Pre Winner Don Gaunt all pictured being presented with their trophies by Alan Oldham, with manager Andrew Gregory looking on.

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NEW ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES

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- Mr M Gano IV USA
- Mr J Haggerston
- Mrs M Hayhurst
- Mrs P Jackson Southwick
- Mr G Porter Plymouth

Handicap Alterations

- Roehampton 24 - 27 April
- V.J Corney 4.5 to 4
- R.F Knapp 16 to 14
- E.F. Robinson 11 to 12
- Woking 25 - 27 April
- Mrs G Lewis 8 to 9
- P.J. Pullin 4.5 to 3.5

- Colchester 27 April
- M Percival 2.5 to 2
- A.N. Chalmers 9 to 7
- Mrs V Lester 20 to 18
- Compton 3 - 5 May
- Mr B James 5 to 4.5
- Hurlingham 3 - 5 May
- M Bigg 5 to 4.5
- J Bowman 6 to 7
- M Burrow 7 to 6
- N Morrow 1.5 to 1
- Dr J Ruddock 4 to 4.5
- D Ruscombe-King 4.5 to 5
- Mrs R Stephens 11 to 10
- M Stephens 0 to 0.5
- Southwick 3 - 5 May
- Mrs C Constable 7 to 6
- Miss C Heritage 10 to 11
- Mrs K Priestley 16 to 14
- Mr B Weitz 4.5 to 5
- Parkstone 3- 5 May
- M Burrow 1 to 0.5
- Himley Hall 3 - 5 May
- S Tudor 7 to 6
- D Matthews 10 to 9
- Bowdon 3 - 5 May
- J Potter 9 to 8
- A Sherlaw-Johnson 6 to 5
- D Watts 18 to 16
- Budleigh Salterton 12 - 17 May
- Mrs J Babbage 14 to 12
- R Bowen 18 to 14
- Miss J Goodhart 11 to 12
- H Hall 3.5 to 4
- Mrs J Hull 18 to 16
- R Judson 9 to 8
- B Smith 2.5 to 2
- Peel Memorial 15 - 18 May
- J Straw 5 to 4.5
- Mrs C Osmond 7 to 6
- Nailsea 17 - 18 May
- M Pullin 20 to 18
- J Mackay 14 to 10
- J Dixon 5 to 4.5
- Newport 18 May
- G Bennett 1.5 to 1
- J Boardman 8 to 7
- West Park 16 - 18 May
- J Hall 12 to 9
- K Hart 10 to 9
- J Potter 8 to 7
- J Bevington 4 to 3.5
- R Hall 14 to 12
- G Collin 3 to 3.5
- R Atkinson 6 to 7
- D Wooley 10 to 9
- Colchester 24 May
- Mrs V Lester 18 to 20
- R Harris 8 to 9
- Southport & Birkdale 24 - 26 May
- Mrs B Haslam 4.5 to 5
- Mr D Jenkinson 14 to 12
- Mr B Lewis 8 to 7
- Mrs M Sweeney 20 to 22
- Mrs A Rimmer 18 to 20
- Mr E Dalley 12 to 14

- Cheltenham 24 - 26 May
- A Cowing 7 to 5
- Mrs P Crowe 20 to 18
- D Kibble 0 to -0.5
- Dr A Laidlaw 12 to 14
- J Lansdown 9 to 10
- Mrs J Powell 14 to 16
- B Wainman 1.5 to 1
- Mrs M Watts 14 to 12
- G Edgeler 12 to 11
- Mrs Edwards 18 to 16
- R Elleray 6 to 7
- Mrs R Gugan 1.5 to 1
- M Kolbuszewski 9 to 10
- J Mackay 10 to 11
- D Moorcraft 1.5 to 2
- D Taylor 9 to 8
- Dr P Watson 6 to 5
- F Exell 20 to 18
- Plymouth 24 - 26 May
- B Smith 1.5 to 2
- A Treglown 10 to 9
- Miss S Vaissiere 5 to 4.5
- Hurlingham 25 - 26 May
- N Graves 16 to 18
- J Kaye 11 to 10
- R Hoskins 4 to 4.5
- P Joseph 9 to 10
- Sidmouth May
- Mrs V Henderson 12 to 11
- Miss S Rogers 20 to 18
- Cheltenham 1 June
- A Jardine 1.5 to 1
- Tyneside 1 June
- A Foster 8 to 7
- Sidmouth June
- D Clarke 18 to 16
- A Dustin-Smith 3 to 2.5
- E Kitchener 6 to 7
- J Coombs 18 to 16
- Budleigh Salterton June
- J McBurnie-Wood 7 to 8
- R Scaddan 6 to 5
- Edgbaston 7 - 8 June
- D Lilly 1 to 0.5
- A Gregory -0.5 to 0
- Bowdon 7 - 8 June
- A Sherlaw Johnson 5 to 4.5
- Mrs L Taylor-Webb 4.5 to 5
- A Pidcock 0.5 to 1
- Colchester June
- M Harbord 11 to 10
- Sidmouth 9 - 13 June
- T Doughty 14 to 12
- J Carrick 14 to 12
- Mrs v McClements 10 to 11
- Mrs M Smith 18 to 14
- Hunstanton 13 - 15 June
- D Tutt 3.5 to 4
- A Chalmers 6 to 5
- L Hawkins 6 to 7
- R Will 11 to 9
- Harrow Oak 14 - 15 June
- D Goulding 2.5 to 3
- R Hall 12 to 11
- J Hilditch 3 to 2.5