

The Croquet Gazette

Issue 259

January 1999



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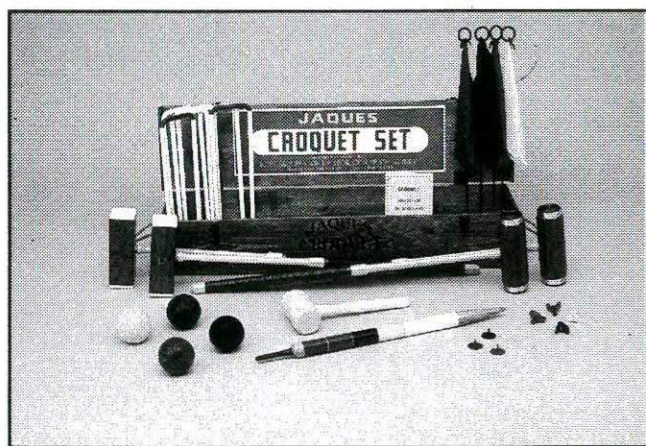
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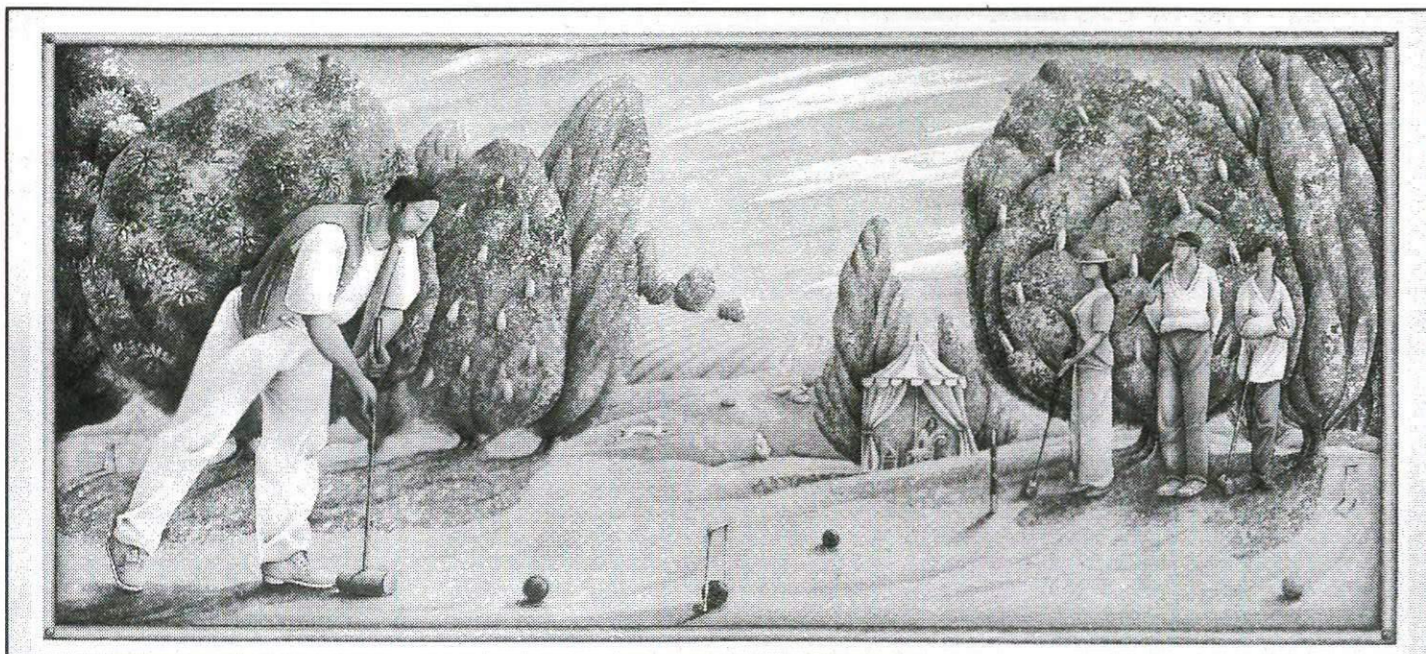


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Photographs are always required. Both black and white or colour prints can be utilised. Please detail on the reverse of all photos the subject of the picture, and if you require the photographs to be returned please include your address on the reverse.

Tournament Results & Reports

Tournament results should be reported on the new tournament return sheet. These have been issued in a bid to make the reporting of events and the administration of the rankings easier. Please ensure that the forms are used.

Tournament reports should be written and sent to the editor within SEVEN DAYS of the completion of a tournament. Failure to comply with this guideline will result in reports failing to be published.

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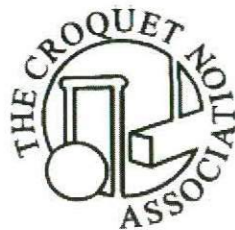
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THE CROQUET GAZETTE



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Disclaimer

The opinions expressed in the Croquet Gazette are those of the editor and contributors. The Croquet Association is not responsible for statements other than those clearly defined as being made on behalf of the Croquet Association

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Chairman's Column

One of the 'perks' of the CA Chairman's job is the occasional invitation to social functions run by member clubs. It's an ideal opportunity to meet fellow croquet players in a relaxed and convivial atmosphere. One such invitation recently was to the Reigate Priory Club supper after their AGM. It was in fact their 75th anniversary. You may remark that there are quite a number of clubs around with similar or older vintages but one remarkable fact about Reigate is that they started with one lawn 75 years ago and have survived and prospered with only adding a further half lawn, although they are now looking to expand. This small club supports a membership of 53 and is very active in the local Federation affairs. Whilst we need our bigger clubs to provide the tournament venues, the small clubs are just as essential to our sport in maintaining a croquet presence across the country. Well done Reigate, may you reach the magic 100.

With the close of the playing season, our various committees have been very busy. You will see in this issue proposals from our Constitutional working party on suggested changes to our Association. We cannot guarantee that we are always going to get it right first time and we do rely very much on your comments, so please get in touch and let us have your views, even if you agree with what we want to do.

The Development Committee have finished another round of recommendations for grants and loans to clubs who are improving their facilities. This committee has also organised the updating and reissue of two small booklets, one on the maintenance of lawns and the second on the formation of a croquet club. Whilst the latter is more likely to be of assistance to Federation development officers, I am sure the one on lawns will be very helpful to the smaller clubs who manage their own lawn maintenance. Our thanks must go to John Beech of the Pendle club who has carried out all the updating. A free copy of the lawns booklet will be sent to all registered clubs in the new year.

You may have noticed the subtle changes to our logo. We now have a square mallet in place of the round one and a change to the printing. This is just part of the recommendations from a recent documentation working party. Overall we hope to give a much more professional look to all our documentation.

During this last season I have chatted to quite a number of new-comers to our sport. Almost to a person their response has been 'If only I had tried this in earlier years' Are the



delights and possibilities of croquet such a secret? Our publicity committee recognises the importance of good publicity but understands many of the difficulties that face our clubs in getting effective publicity. They are therefore proposing to run a workshop for club and Federation publicity officers on Sunday 24 Oct 99. Further details will be announced later.

One way in which the CA can help clubs in their publicity is via the Internet. For some time we have had first class assistance from members such as Ian Plummer and John Greenwood who have published English croquet data on their own web pages. At last the CA is making positive moves to launch our own web pages early in 1999. A questionnaire has been sent to all Secretaries asking for confirmation of club details and for any further information they would like displayed. Secretaries, please get these back as soon as possible!

I would like to make an apology in advance to all tournament players. The fixtures book may be two to three weeks late. As you may know Don Gaunt edited this book for about ten years but decided enough was enough and this year has handed over to Graham Gale. Graham has found out the hard way about the time it takes to collect all the necessary detail. Our sincere thanks to Graham for taking on such a daunting task.

I hope you all had a good Christmas and may I wish you all a happy and prosperous New Year and a successful playing season to come.

Bill Arliss

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Editorial

Having excused myself the rigours of writing an editorial in November, thanks to a lengthy but comprehensive contribution from the chairman, I don't think I can excuse myself again although the thought did occur as I have never found the editorial a particularly easy task, and it is made all the more difficult at this croquet-free time of year.

Even though we are once again at the start of a new year, I'm afraid, boring and repetitive as it is, my first plea has to be for a comprehensive selection of contributions as soon as possible, if the next issue is to be kept at the usual size of 24 pages. The editorial files are sadly at a very low ebb, apart from letters, which for some reason are coming thick and fast, which is good and to be continued I would hope.

I would like to thank all of the tournament managers who took the time to send in their results as requested. This has made it possible to publish all of the tournament results that were reported.

Alas, as I have said before, it is impossible to publish every tournament report I

continued on page 22

~ Obituary ~

Roy Newnham, longtime chairman of the Ryde club's Croquet committee, its regular Tournament Manager, Handicapper and Referee, died on Remembrance day after a short illness. He was 68. His friends knew that a diffident and apparently insouciant persona camouflaged an astute brain and a conscientious, yet pragmatic, approach to management. Roy's wicked sense of humour and his ability to calm "difficult" players at tournaments was legendary!

He had been a member of the club for many years and had an encyclopaedic knowledge of croquet rules and etiquette. He loved travelling to mainland tournaments, playing regularly at Budleigh Salterton and elsewhere, as well as representing Ryde in the Southern League and the Isle of Wight at the Inter-Counties.

Roy was a globetrotter, with a particular interest in Albania, the Andes and Ireland. He also had a passion for remote islands. On a recent visit to New Zealand he was runner-up in a croquet tournament.

He knew many of the game's diverse and diverting personalities and his stories about them were recounted consummately. There will be many of you around the country with an abiding image of Roy with his 'Douglas Hurd' hair, a gin in one hand and a cigarette in the other, giving a careful and intelligent analysis of people and events. You will miss him nearly as much as the Ryde members.

NEWS & INFORMATION

JEAN ARMSTRONG SHIELD Brighton Croquet Club (South Australia), October 1998

This event was two years in the planning and the idea arose out of comments made that although women enjoyed playing against the men as it helped to improve their games, they would love to have an event of their own.

Brighton Croquet Club was able to accommodate this request when the move to a new venue was made about 18 months ago to a complex with 3 lawns. During this time the event was referred to as the Women's Invitation Challenge. Originally it had been envisaged that this would be an international event, but eventually it became an all Australian event with each state having two representatives: Judith Faulkner, W.A., Betty Belz, Qld Lorraine Le Blang, N.S.W., Susan Wharton, W.A. Robyn Pierce, Qld, Chris Prater, N.S.W. Ann Crow, Vic., Claire Bamford, Tas. Shirley Carr, S.A., Fay Pearson, Vic. Brenda Roberts, Tas., Creina Dawson, S.A.

The eventual winner of the three day event was Creina Dawson, with Betty Belz second and Shirley Carr third. Excellent sponsorship provided the \$1,000 purse and it is very much hoped that this event can be built upon next season. Players wishing to find out more about next year's event can contact Creina Dawson at 1 Jessie Street, Seacliff Park, South Australia 5049 - Fax 08 8296 4275.

New dates for MacRobertson Shield

Following expressions of concern from GB about anticipated travel problems and the extremely high cost of travel to NZ in December 1999 the



Creina Dawson winner of the Jean Armstrong Shield, presented by Jean Armstrong.

NZCC have agreed to put back the MacRobertson Shield 3 weeks from the original dates of 3rd - 21st January 2000. The new dates are 24th January to 13th February 2000. At the time of writing the fares for January 2000 had not been published, but advice from the airlines is that the maximum concession on fares is usually available from circa 16th January, so this will allow a saving from the UK of probably £800 - £900 per person in fares compared with December flights. The CA are grateful to the NZCC for their consideration.

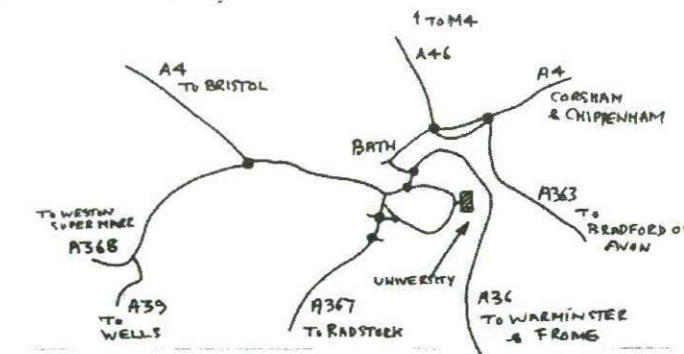
Summer holiday coaching school

The South East Croquet Federation will be holding its annual summer school from 12th - 16th July at Southwick. The course is intended for players with handicaps of 10 and above and costs £85, which includes lunch, coffee and tea. Anyone interested in knowing more can gain a prospectus and entry form from David Collins, 18 Vale Road, Bromley, Kent BR1 2AL (tel: 0181 4678589).

STOP PRESS . . . STOP PRESS . . .

Indoor Tournament venue change

The March indoor tournament which was to be held at RAF Innsworth, is now to be held at the University of Bath.



Letters...

A definitive answer please

Dear Editor

I would like to raise an aspect of handicapping in which various official publications appear to offer conflicting advice. When preparing a questionnaire for the All England finalists in order to provide material for the report I thought it might be worthwhile not only asking for their current handicap but also what their handicap had been at the start of the season, in order to show their rate of progress. This could then be further refined by establishing their current index, as it might be the case that a player whose handicap was currently 14, say, might in fact only be one win away from becoming a 12. This led to my asking other club members what would happen in such a case. Would such a player, in winning the first game, play the rest of the final off the new handicap? Oh no, they said, handicap changes only take effect at the end of a tournament. This view was confirmed by two statements in the booklet 'Principles of Handicapping':

5 - The Automatic Handicapping System

"Spurious changes are reduced to some extent by the restriction that changes can only take place at the end of a tournament or event rather than take immediate effect."

13 - General Guidelines for Players

"At a CA calendar tournament a handicap change can only be triggered at the end of an event."

"In club and federation matches, one day events and rounds of extended tournaments, changes of index and handicap will normally be calculated at the end of the day."

If we now turn to the Laws, and in particular the Regulations for Tournaments, the section on handicaps appears to have a conflicting view:

10 - Handicaps

"(a) Handicap Events. In a handicap event a competitor must play at the handicap that has become effective at the start of each game in that event."

I can understand why, in the days before the new system was introduced, handicaps were not changed until the end of the tournament, because handicaps were assessed subjectively and a number of games were needed to decide whether a change should be made.

Since the introduction of the new system this is no longer the case, and it could therefore be argued that our imaginary 14 handicapper who is within 10 points of becoming a 12 and wins the first game could be said to be playing the rest of the tournament with a false handicap and a two bisque advantage in each game.

Is there, therefore, any reason why changes in handicap should not take immediate effect as indicated in the Regulations for Tournaments (written I am sure, before the new handicapping system came into being)? The new system does after all include the word 'automatic' in its official title, which would suggest that changes occur instantaneously through the application of the system without regard to other considerations.

Would it be possible to have the Handicapping and/or Laws Committees resolve this point and publish an answer in the Gazette?
John Bevington
Wrest Park

There is no inconsistency between Regulation 10(a) in the law book and the AHS guidelines for players. The latter makes it clear that in tournaments a handicap change can only be triggered at the end of an event and is therefore not effective until then.

The restriction in the guidelines is deliberate. It would be unfair in handicap tournaments if players' handicaps changed during the event. It also helps to stabilize handicaps against random sequences of wins or losses causing spurious changes.

Bill Lamb

Chairman, Handicap Co-ordination Committee

Signing handicap cards

Dear Editor

There are strong practical reasons for supporting Roger Wheeler who wrote opposing this idea on ethical grounds.

I have not come across any evidence of falsified results on handicap cards. As Roger says they are quite outside the spirit of the game. The 'errors' arise from not recording results when they conflict with the player's self-image.

The would-be star protects his low handicap status by omitting losses, the bandit keeps his high by omitting victories. The countersigning of cards would only legitimise their childish fraud, since no result could be recorded legally if the card were 'misaid' when the time came for counter-signing, and the result would be omitted legally from the offender's card!

I hope we will hear no more of this misguided approach. The current system is imperfectly human and much better than the arbitrary process it replaced. At the serious end of the game, decisions that really matter are based on the ranking system rather than handicap. Stick

with that, and the truly aspiring stars will be evident independently of the 'handicap', which is required only at the social end of the game, where cheats in a world of their own only delude themselves.

Martin Granger-Brown
Bowdon

DD - Direct Debit or Disadvantaged dodderer?

Dear Editor

Having just received the subscription renewal notice from Paul Champion I am incensed, yet again, to see the poor "old wrinkly" being disadvantaged. The subscription rate for Tournament player, Husband & Wife Composite players, paying by Direct Debit, has been increased by £3. The Veterans, the main stay and worker in most clubs have had their subscription raised by £5. Why, did a bead fall off the abacus? Also now a Veteran and his standard Non-Tournament Wife, increased by a massive £8 (I wonder where one can get a non-standard tournament wife?) might just as well be a Husband & Wife Composite for the same cost i.e. V + N = T & TS = £38 not forgetting to add the Affiliation fee of £5.70 for each of them. As one gets older not only does the game get more difficult, I'm sure the courts were smaller in the "old days", it also gets more expensive.

Len Hawkins

Ramsgate CC

More thoughts on handicapping

Dear Editor

Having got on my hind legs at the AGM and expressed my thoughts on the automatic handicapping system, I feel obliged to summarise them for the benefit of those who were not present.

I do not wish these observations to be viewed as critical of any of our voluntary officials as I well know how much effort they put into the CA and how little appreciation they get out. Having said that, we are all custodians of the game and have a responsibility to do the best by it that we are able.

The automatic handicapping system has been running for some 6 years. It is not perfect, nor will any system ever be, but I believe it can be, and should be, improved.

For a substantial number of players of a relatively stable handicap, it works well. For rapid improvers it is poor: the embarrassed improving high bisquer apologising to the irritated low bisquer after a "bisques left standing" thrashing is a scene that brings the game into disrepute. If high bisquers are to improve, part of their learning process should include playing low bisquers in handicap matches. If low bisquers are to play handicap, they must perceive the handicapping system as being reasonable or else they may opt out into level/advanced matches in their own class. I'm

sure there are other justifications for a sensible handicapping system.....

I would like to see some changes:

1. High bisquers regularly having their handicap cards checked by a club handicapper who, with supporting evidence of sustained wins on their handicap card should cut their handicap to an appropriate level. (Yes, I know this provision already exists but where is it implemented?)
2. Club handicappers should have the power to manually cut handicaps down to 8 or 7 rather than the current 12.

It only takes a minority of individuals to spoil most things in life, ergo addressing the minority of over-handicapped improvers IS worth doing and may significantly improve the game for many.

Tal Golesworthy

Cheltenham

Food for thought

Dear Editor,

Here at Colchester we run a number of well-supported tournaments during the year. There is always lunch and tea available, and our modest bar is at the disposal of visiting players. As well as being an enjoyable social event (at least we hope so), the meals and the drinks that go with them provide a useful source of income for the club.

The vast majority of our visitors do take advantage of our meals and bar. There are usually one or two participants at each tournament who make it clear beforehand that they do not wish to take lunch and tea, and who do not join in. No-one could possibly take offence at this. However, at one event this summer (which I attended just as a spectator), I was dismayed to see a number of competitors go to the local pub rather than drink our beer, and visit the local Macdonald's rather than eat our food. To add insult to injury, the Macdonald's meals were brought back and eaten in the club-house. Speaking afterwards to the ladies who had cooked and served the food it was clear that they had been quite upset by this.

May I through the pages of the Gazette appeal to those players in the future to spare a thought for the feelings of the rank-and-file members who have given of their time to provide food and other facilities? Please ask yourself if it is not more polite to buy your meal and drinks from the host club. If after all you must go and buy food elsewhere, please eat it elsewhere too.
Colin Hemming

Tee'd off, or just par for the course?

Dear Editor

Some points occurred to me when reading the Croquet Gazette (Issue 258).

The Chairman's Column, centre column second paragraph. This seems to suggest that

most golf croquet players in this country are 'garden enthusiasts', this is presumably players who are not in the CA. Golf croquet players don't really come into the CA scheme of things, even three out of the four CA golf croquet competitions do not require CA membership, and it is interesting to see that the majority of the players operating the recent World Championship were not CA members! Also is it not rather patronising to state that 'golf croquet is exciting and requires considerable skills, as demonstrated by Egyptians', or perhaps it simply admits that English Association croquet does not demonstrate these qualities!

Letter, 'Unfortunate omission', editor's reply, page 7. The editor notes that she has not received any report of the Golf croquet World Championships. I wonder who she asked? A full report by Peter Payne has I believe been on the internet and the WCF site gives full results. Peter's report with pictures and full results are in my golf croquet magazine published in December and every club secretary should have a copy.

Parkstone tournament report by Graham Fowler, page 19. Are these opinions typical of the CA membership? It seems that in Mr Fowler's opinion this letter should not soil the pages of the Gazette! (I don't suppose it will!) It seems that if you can't knock the name knock the game. It's pitiful isn't it? Amazingly the fellow seems to have enjoyed golf croquet, "more fun than association croquet", he says. My word truly amazing! We don't want fun getting into the pages of our Gazette do we?

Is this really the way association players think? And as most golf croquet players don't seem to think it is worth joining the CA, maybe it is time to form an English Golf Croquet Association to look out for the interests of the majority of English players!
Syd Jones

The Chairman replies: "Golf croquet players don't really come into the CA scheme of things" is far from the truth, as Syd Jones must know. He was a member of the CA Council last year when it agreed as policy that the current efforts of the CA, Federations and clubs to foster variations of the game should be strengthened. Syd Jones played a valuable part in promoting the game as past chairman of the CA Golf Croquet committee and, of course, with his own 'Croquet for Leisure' business enterprise.

In my yearly report I said "The contribution made by the club golf croquet player to the playing facilities in this country is very significant and without it some clubs simply would not survive. ...the strengthening of golf croquet can only reflect positively on all other forms of the game."

So there should be no doubt about the CA's policy towards golf croquet. I was pleased to read in a recent Croquet for Leisure publication that Syd Jones says he supports the CA's efforts to develop golf croquet. The CA looks forward to working with him and others to

put our policy into effect.

The editor replies: Having received, and used, press releases issued by the WCF prior to the Championships, I would have thought that a report and results would have been forthcoming without the need for a request. I was eventually proved correct and the information was passed on by the WCF, alas not quite in time for the November issue but that information can be found within this issue.

As to Graham Fowler's tournament report, there have been three responses arguing against the comments made and none in support. Hardly the basis to conclude the way all association players think. Whilst I do not agree with Graham's comments, I think it would be wrong of me to censor all remarks made which do not hold with my own views or those of the CA. Like it or not the Gazette is there to be used to voice opinions from all sides, not just those that we want to hear or promote to suit our own interests.

The road to success

Dear Editor

Bill Arliss rightly congratulated Robert Fulford on his major victories in 1998 in his report of the year. For the record I think that we should also note the feat achieved by our number 2, David Maugham. In 1998 he became the first player to win all 4 of the compass point championships. I am sure that El Tel just forgot to mention this in his otherwise excellent report of the southern's.

Richard Hilditch

The case for golf croquet

Dear Editor

I am not sure whether or not Graham Fowler's remarks in his report of the tournament at Parkstone in issue 258 of the Gazette concerning golf croquet, were meant to be provocative in order to stimulate correspondence or more regrettably an attempt to create a rift in the croquet fraternity. Either way I have been prompted into responding.

The Croquet Gazette, as I see it, is the journal of the Croquet Association, an association that supports all variations of the game of croquet. For proof of this, just look at the association's book of laws which refers to golf croquet on the cover! Readers of the Gazette can therefore rightly expect to see reports on golf croquet, as they would on any other topic relating to our sport.

All versions of the game have a place in the promotion and enjoyment of croquet. The three almost unique features of golf croquet which commend the game are:-

1) It is a good way to introduce newcomers to the techniques of hoop running and hitting to length.

2) It is a very sociable game, especially doubles.

Continued on page 11

THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at The Hurlingham Club on Saturday 17 October 1998

Present: JW Solomon - in the Chair, WHA Arliss (Chairman of Council), Dr RW Bray (Treasurer), AJ Oldham (Vice-President), PWP Campion (Secretary) and 40 Associates

Apologies were received from John Beech, Gail Curry, Roy Fox, Douglas Gurney, Hamish Hall, Ray Hall, Brigadier Roy Harmer, Colin Irwin, Prof and Mrs Bernard Neal, Dennis and Eileen Shaw, Chris and Liz Williams.

OPENING ADDRESS

The President welcomed all those present to the Meeting and thanked them for their support.

1. MINUTES

1.1 The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 18 October 1997 were signed as a true record of that Meeting.

2. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

(Reproduced in *The Croquet Gazette* issue No.258, November 1998.)

3. ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR TO 31 DECEMBER 1997 AND TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer introduced his commentary on the Accounts and spoke of the current year's, and the likely future, financial situation.

A question was asked by Ian Bond (Surbiton) concerning the wisdom of devoting financial resources to very small clubs.

Brian Macmillan was congratulated on his success as Commercial Agent and concern was expressed as to how this work might be continued in the long term.

Adoption of the Accounts and Treasurer's Report was proposed by David Magee (Cheltenham), seconded by Pauline Healy (Parsons Green) and carried nem con.

4. ELECTION OF TREASURER

There being no other nominations for the post, and he being willing to continue, Dr RW Bray was re-elected unanimously and to acclamation.

5. ELECTION OF AUDITORS

The Proposal by Don Gaunt (Cheltenham), seconded by Bruce Rannie (Tyneside) THAT Messrs Morgan, Brown and Spofforth be re-elected as Auditors, was approved nem con.

6. ELECTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

6.1 Messrs CD Clarke, AK Gregory, DW Shaw and DW Trotman having retired by rotation under Rule 2, Mr AM Wadley having resigned, and a vacancy having arisen from the death of Mr ST Badger, the number of vacancies on Council was six.

Mr CD Clarke and Mr DW Trotman sought re-election; Mr AG Fathers had been proposed by Mr AJ Oldham and seconded by Mr DJF Gurney; Mr DK Openshaw had been proposed by Dr M Murray and seconded by Mr AJ Oldham; Prof. A Pidcock had been proposed by Mr WH Arliss and seconded by Mr DW Trotman and Dr IG Vincent had been proposed by Mr ID Bond and seconded by Mr GW Noble.

There had been no further nominations, no election had been necessary and the meeting declared these six persons elected to Council.

7. BENEFACTOR'S BOOK

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

8. PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

8.1 The Apps and Steel Bowls: The President announced the award of the Apps Bowl to Andrew Cowing (Cheltenham) as most improved male player and of the Steel Bowl to Shona Vaissiere (Plymouth) as most improved female player of 1997. Andrew Cowing was present and received his trophy from the President to acclamation; the presentation to Shona Vaissiere had been made in August at Plymouth Club by the CA Secretary.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 The Chairman replied to a number of comments on the operation of the Automatic Handicapping System.

10. PRESIDENT'S CLOSING ADDRESS

10.1 In his address, the President referred to the success of the Centenary year celebrations, noting particularly the Centenary Dinner at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club in October 1997 and the first Solomon Lecture, given in Bristol in November. Copies of the latter were available from the CA Office. Further centenaries were approaching, notably that of the Sussex County Club at Southwick in the year 2002.

The President said that he hoped there would be further experimentation with the 14 point game, which has achieved considerable popularity in recent years; and he spoke of the success of the WCF Golf Croquet World Championships, held at Leamington Spa earlier in the month. The excitement of seeing it played to such a high standard surely vindicated the time and effort that the Association had recently been giving to this version of the game.

The President thanked Council for its continuing efforts during the last year and closed by expressing his gratitude to those who were present at the Annual General Meeting.

There being no further business, the Meeting was closed at 12.01 pm.

WANTED AND FOR SALE

by Collector /Bibliographer

CROQUET BOOKS, PAMPHLETS, AND SERIALS

Good prices paid, especially for old books and pamphlets, back-numbers of the CA Gazette (1904-38, 1954-86), CA Laws (pre-1972), Year Book/Directory (pre-1993), Official Handicap Book, and Fixtures List (pre-1992).

Apply for catalogue of mixed bag for sale - old swaps, some very scarce, and new books by HF Crowther Smith and Australian writers John Riches, Max Hooper, and Peter Rudge.

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PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CA'S CONSTITUTION

In March 1998 Council set up a Constitution Working Party (CWP) to study in detail, and prepare an implementation plan for, a number of the Planning Group (PG) proposals it had approved in principle (see pages 10 and 11 of the May 1998 Gazette).

These proposals required us to consider:

- i) how clubs become members of the CA and what voting rights they should have;
- ii) the constitutional relationship between the CA and Federations;
- iii) the requirement for all clubs in a Federation to be registered with the CA by 1st January 1999.

The CWP was also asked to consider whether or not the CA should become an incorporated body and to review the present procedures, membership and terms of reference of Council and its committees.

The CWP presented its report to Council in December 1998. The recommendations concerning voting rights, Federations and clubs were given broad approval and Council agreed these should be published in the form of a consultation 'green paper' so that Federation and club committees, as well as Associate members, have an opportunity to comment. After Council has considered this feedback, it intends to propose changes to the Rules of the CA at a general meeting of the Association to be held later in 1999 or early in 2000.

CWP recommendations concerning incorporation and the structure and procedures of Council and its committees will be considered in detail at a Council meeting to be held in February 1999.

Council now asks for written comments on the following CWP recommendations. These should be sent to the chairman of the Constitution Working Party, Quiller Barrett, The Croquet Association, c/o The Hurlingham Club, Ranelagh Gardens, London SW6 3PR as soon as possible, and in any case before 6th March 1999.

CONSTITUTION WORKING PARTY RECOMMENDATIONS (Recommendations are in bold type)

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Proposing answers to many of the matters we considered was not an easy task. We kept in mind certain principles to guide us and our recommendations reflect these.

(A) Our terms of reference precluded us from re-opening the debate that preceded the PG final proposals: we are essentially an implementation working party.

(B) When considering CA membership and Federations we found the closer we came to guaranteeing fairness to all, the more complex (and expensive in terms of administration) our draft solutions tended to be. Our final recommendations therefore sometimes involve compromise and we make no apology for this; taken as a whole they will give effect to the PG proposals and they should be relatively simple to administer.

1 Introduction of CA Club membership

Council has agreed to the principle that the present basis for individual Associate membership should remain unchanged. In future all members of CA clubs will have the franchise through their clubs.

1.1 Membership (R1 - R3)

R1 Affiliate membership will be abolished and the two categories of CA members will be Member Clubs and Associates.

R2 All clubs registered with the CA on the day the change from club 'registration' to 'membership' is put into effect ('the appointed day') will be accepted as CA members en bloc, subject to them paying the appropriate fee and agreeing to comply with the CA Rules and regulations.

R3 After the appointed day a club wishing to become a member of the CA must apply and be approved by Council. Such approval will be based on criteria thought appropriate by Council at the time.

1.2 The Club franchise

The PG agreed that it was impractical to give club members who are Affiliates individual voting rights in the CA: the views of these members will be taken into account by the Member Clubs.

We recognized the strength of feeling in some Federations that as few changes as possible should be made to existing Federation procedures regarding the governance of croquet.

The CWP concluded it should make separate recommendations regarding the exercise of the Club franchise at CA general meetings and when clubs in regions elect Council members to represent them.

1.2.1 Franchise at CA General Meetings (R4 - R9)

We concentrated our attention on 'checks and balances' and our proposals address the issues of the voting strengths of a) Clubs and Associates, b) small and big clubs.

After considering various alternatives we recommend that Member Clubs should be given one vote each regardless of the size of the clubs' own membership because -

a) In larger clubs the opinions of Associates are more likely to dominate and prevail over the views of non-Associates. If these clubs were to be given more votes apiece than smaller clubs (which generally have a higher proportion of non-Associates), we should in effect be adding to the voting strength of Associates at the expense of non-Associates.

b) 'One club, one vote' avoids arguments about how to determine membership numbers (e.g. social members?, golf-croquet-only members?, Affiliates-only as Associates already have a vote?, schools and university clubs with floating membership? etc). Even if a satisfactory basis could be agreed it would be likely, in our opinion, to be unnecessarily complicated, to be troublesome in practice and therefore expensive to operate.

R4 The Clubs' vote will be quite distinct and separate from the Associates' vote.

R5 The CA will require Member Clubs to empower one person in a club to vote on the club's behalf.

R6 Clubs and Associates will have the same voting rights as far as is practicable and will vote on the same issues. To succeed, motions at general meetings must achieve separate majorities in both Club and Associate categories.

R7 When electing the Treasurer at a general meeting, if a person receives a majority of either the Club or the Associate vote, but not the other, then Council may make an appointment according to Rule 5(e).

R8 The Rules regarding postal voting will apply to Member Clubs

and Associates.

R9 Each Member Club and each Associate will have one vote.

These procedures will ensure that if there should be a conflict of interest between Clubs and Associates neither category will have a built-in voting advantage. We recognize that our proposals may make it somewhat more difficult to get further change and reform accepted at general meetings.

1.2.2 Election of Council Members (R10 - R14)

We propose no change to the current system of electing 15 Council members by the votes of Associate members only.

We recommend that the nine Council members who presently represent the Federations should in future represent the Member Clubs of the CA and we are not proposing any radical changes to the present election procedures.

We saw the creation of nine constituencies to be of great benefit to the CA as it enables regional, as opposed to national, views to be identified and considered by Council. We therefore recommend that the election of these 'Club Representatives' should be conducted by the Federations on a regional basis as has hitherto applied to Federation representatives.

We spent some time debating what to recommend regarding:

- clubs that are members of the CA but not members of a Federation,
- clubs that are members of a Federation but not members of the CA.

Our conclusion was that all such clubs should be entitled to vote for Club Representatives to Council.

The number of clubs in category (a), above, is very small and the extra administrative burden we are asking Federations to shoulder is not great.

Although there are several clubs in category (b) we did not think they should be denied the right to vote for a representative on Council even though they will not have other voting rights or any other say in CA affairs. Permitting them to vote in elections to Council keeps matters simple and may encourage them to become Member Clubs of the CA.

R10 The existing nine 'Federation' representatives on Council will remain elected under current conditions regarding retirement.

R11 When a new representative is to be elected, all clubs accepted into CA membership (including those that are not members of a Federation), situated within the Federation boundaries, will be notified by the CA secretariat that they may exercise their votes to elect a Club Representative to Council according to the procedure determined by the Federation operating in their region. The onus will be on non-Federation clubs to contact the relevant Federation to make the arrangements.

R12 These newly elected Council members will be 'Club Representatives' and the term 'Federation Representatives' will be abolished.

R13 Club representatives will be elected to serve on Council for three years. A new representative, whose term of office shall terminate on the same date as had been authorized for the previous incumbent, may fill any mid-term vacancy.

R14 If a Federation so wishes it is permitted to allow any club that is currently a member of the Federation, but not a member of the CA, to vote in the ballot for Club Representatives to Council.

The CWP recognizes the CA will be asking Federations to accept new

conditions and, as independent bodies, they are perfectly entitled to say they do not wish to get involved with clubs that are not their members; nor may they wish to agree to elect a Club Representative for exactly three years. If an impasse should be reached the CA secretariat will organize the ballot and impose conditions in the region(s) concerned.

2 The Federations

In fact Federations were not established as "devolved bodies" from the CA as is assumed in PG 15. They were not appointed by, nor are responsible to, the CA Council.

Federations regard themselves as autonomous bodies and the only reference to the link with the CA in their constitutions we have seen is that they "shall be run under the auspices of the Croquet Association".

We concurred with the PG conclusion that Federations are doing a difficult job with some success and that decentralization gives a desirable regional flexibility. We do not consider it appropriate to demand that Federations should require all their clubs to register with the CA by 1st January 1999.

Having consulted Federations we proposed that Council should rescind its approval of Planning Group proposals 15 and 16 and instead approve the undermentioned text. (*Note: Council agreed to Recommendation R15 at its December 1998 meeting.*)

R15 Current text

PG 15 "The Federations, operating as devolved bodies, should continue but have their operations reviewed periodically. There may be a case for some adjustments to the boundaries of the Federations."

PG 16 "Federations should require that all their registered clubs be registered with the CA by 1st January 1999."

Proposed new text

PG 15 "The Federations should continue but have their operations reviewed periodically. There may be a case for some adjustments to the boundaries of the Federations."

PG 16 "Federations should encourage any of their member clubs that have not registered with the CA to join the Association."

R16 Federations will retain their existing status as bodies independent of the Croquet Association.

The PG was concerned, and so were we, that CA funds should only benefit CA Member Clubs or very new clubs, so we make a further recommendation regarding the uses to which CA grants are put and the control of such funds.

R17 Any CA funds for development and coaching will only be granted either to CA clubs or to Federations. The CA will control the use of this funding by recipients to ensure that it is in line with current CA policies, and the CA will hold recipients accountable.

We recognized that interaction between Federations is likely to benefit them. We make no proposal to change the boundaries of Federations as this is something for the Federations themselves to decide.

R18 The CA Development Committee should act as a catalyst, encouraging Federations to plan together how better to achieve the aims of the Croquet Association.

Members of the Constitution Working Party are: Judy Anderson, Quiller Barrett (Chairman), Roger Bray, Michael Evans, David Magee, Alan Oldham and Bruce Rannie.

Continued from page 7.

3) After a demanding game of association croquet, it is a relaxing and fun game to play. Graham even admitted this in his report!

For some club members the game of golf croquet is all they want for their pleasure but for others the greater challenge of association croquet, which cannot be denied, is for them the essence of croquet. There is no reason why these two games, or any other which might emerge in the future, cannot exist under the aegis of a central governing body, namely the Croquet Association.

If Graham is concerned that golf croquet will outstrip association croquet in popularity, he should not be, as it can only be advantageous to croquet and the Association if more players are brought into the sport.

Brian James

Southwell CC

Unlawful designation

Dear Editor

There is, as yet, no European Directive which designates a croquet playing area either as a 'court' or a 'lawn' so Diana Brothers and others are perfectly free to use their 'unlawful' designation if they wish.

I survived on Council for some years listening to chairmen and vice-presidents referring to 'lawns' rather than 'courts' but I was never told why, if that is the wish, the laws decree that they are courts.

Perhaps Council might consider amending the laws if that is the wish of members. Until then I shall continue to play on a 'court'.

Smokey Eades

CROQUET BALLS FOR CHAMPIONSHIPS, TOURNAMENTS AND CLUBS

The BARLOW GRANDE TOURNAMENT ball, known as the 'GT' will set the standards for Championship and Tournament play into the new century.

The 'GT' is approved by the CA for Championship play at the highest level, comes with a 3 year warranty against warping and splitting and is stable in performance in all climatic conditions. Recent CA tests revealed remarkable consistency in size weight and resilience. All sets are matched to these exacting standards.

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New Refereeing Examinations and Tournament Regulations

A new two-stage examination for the qualification of referee will be introduced, with appropriate courses for each stage. The first stage will comprise those laws and procedures that are required to judge static and dynamic situations on the court. This will lead to the qualification of Assistant Referee. The second stage will comprise the remainder of the laws and will enable Assistant Referees to gain the full qualification of Referee.

There is no doubt that croquet can be a very complex game, particularly when something goes wrong on court, and the laws have to cover, as best they can, all situations. Yet, when a call is made for a referee, it is usually to deal with comparatively simple cases rather than those that require a detailed knowledge of error laws: for example, to judge whether a ball has completed the running of its hoop, or is on or off the court, or whether a fault has been committed in a stroke, etc. These are the common situations that occur in croquet and their resolution should be within the grasp of most players.

The old examination system has proved disappointing in recent years, both in the number of players attending courses and in the percentage of those players taking the examination and passing. This has led to a shortage of qualified referees at some tournaments. The new procedures are intended to encourage more players to come forward and qualify to carry out these duties.

The Assistant Referees course will last for one day, with a good deal of time spent on court. Courses can be arranged at either club or federation level. The requirement is for a minimum of eight players to attend. Candidates will not be examined on the course but arrangements will be made for examinations to take place at a later date. I shall contact federations to try to arrange courses but, if any club wants to arrange a course, please contact me as soon as possible.

If, as I hope, the new system proves to be successful in attracting many candidates, it will put some strain on examiners and only stage one will be implemented this year.

In order to accommodate the new qualification, some revisions have been made to tournament regulations, which are printed here in accordance with Croquet Association rules.

Regulation 4(a) has been redrafted to free the term Assistant Referee for the new qualification. The powers and duties of Assistant Referees are defined in a new Regulation, with a temporary number 8A. The opportunity has also been taken to return Regulation 5(h) to its former state, i.e. that hoops, peg and boundaries may not be adjusted when the position is critical. A new Regulation 5(i) has been introduced to authorize the common practice of repairing special damage to a court.

Bill Lamb, Chairman of the Laws Committee

THE LAWS OF ASSOCIATION CROQUET Regulations for Tournaments**4. THE TOURNAMENT REFEREE**

The powers and duties of the Tournament Referee are as follows.

(a) To nominate, at his discretion, Referees or Assistant Referees from the official list of referees to assist him in the duties specified below. If there are insufficient official referees available, he may nominate other suitable persons. There is no appeal from the decision of a Referee or Assistant Referee except to the Tournament Referee, before the next stroke, on questions of law and decisions under Law 51 and Regulation 5(j).

If the Tournament Referee will be absent or unavailable at any time, he must appoint a Deputy, from whose decision, while acting as Tournament Referee, there is no appeal.

(b) To check the accuracy of court settings and tournament equipment.

(c) To place himself or a Referee nominated under (a) above in Charge of a

game, either at his discretion and after informing the players accordingly or at the request of either side.

(d) To be available or to see that an official nominated under (a) above is available to act as a Referee on Call or as a Referee on Appeal or as an Umpire.

5. REFEREE IN CHARGE

The powers and duties of a Referee in Charge of a game are as follows.

(a) If he takes charge of a game already in progress, to ascertain the state of the game. If the players disagree, he must settle the dispute as a Referee on Appeal.

(b) To give his attention entirely to the game and to act as an ever-vigilant adversary. The presence of a Referee in Charge neither relieves the striker of his obligation nor deprives the adversary of his right to warn that a questionable stroke is about to be played or to draw attention to any error that may have been committed.

(c) To take up the most favourable position for adjudicating the fairness and effect of a questionable stroke. The Referee in Charge should not go on to the court unless a questionable stroke is about to be played.

(d) To decide all questions of fact and law, subject to the right of either player to appeal to the Tournament Referee under Regulation 4(a). When adjudicating whether one ball is wired from another the benefit of any doubt should be given to the claimant.

(e) On request, to give any information to any player concerning the state of the game at any time. However, a decision whether one ball is wired from another may not be given unless a player is claiming a wiring lift at the start of a turn.

(f) To state at his discretion or if appealed to what the law on any matter is. Such information may be given before any stroke likely to be affected is played. He may not otherwise advise a player. He must not state whether a ball has been moved or shaken when a wiring lift may ensue unless asked by a player.

(g) To explain to a player who has committed a fault the nature of the fault, either at his discretion or on request.

(h) To correct the setting of hoops, peg and boundary lines unless the position is critical, in which case no correction may be made until the position has ceased to be critical, except when a replay has been granted under Law 51.

(i) At his discretion, to repair any special damage on the court.

(j) To penalise any player for breaches of the Laws or other blameworthy conduct as best meets the justice of the case. In the last resort, he may disqualify a player. These powers should be exercised sparingly and any player aggrieved by a decision of a Referee may appeal to the Tournament Referee under Regulation 4(a).

(k) To do anything else necessary to discharge his duties as a Referee in Charge.

6. REFEREE ON CALL

A Referee on Call is the Tournament Referee or other Referee nominated under Regulation 4(a) who is asked to act before an event has occurred. Subject as follows, his powers and duties are identical to those of a Referee in Charge while he is so acting. He remains in charge until he quits the court in the belief that his duties have been discharged.

(a) He must first inform himself of the state of the game so far as it relates to the matter on which he has been called. If the players disagree, he must settle the dispute as a Referee on Appeal.

(b) If he is called to adjudicate a wiring lift, he must confirm that the claimant has not yet started his turn and that the adversary is responsible for the position of the relevant ball.

(c) Either player may appeal to the Tournament Referee under Regulation 4(a).

7. REFEREE ON APPEAL

A Referee on Appeal is the Tournament Referee or other Referee nominated under Regulation 4(a) who is asked to give a decision on any matter of fact or law after an event has occurred. He may decide the matter by observation or investigation or both. Subject as follows, his

powers and duties are identical to those of a Referee in Charge while he is so acting. He remains in charge until he quits the court in the belief that his duties have been discharged.

(a) If the Referee on Appeal witnessed the relevant event and is satisfied that he can decide the matter without investigation, he must inform the players that he is deciding the appeal by observation and give his decision accordingly.

(b) In other cases the Referee on Appeal must decide the appeal after investigation. He should hear both sides and, at his discretion, other witnesses. He must inform the players of anything that he has observed that may be relevant. He must then decide the matter to the best of his ability.

(c) In the last resort the Referee on Appeal may give a compromise decision. This may involve arbitrary adjustment of the positions of the clips and balls, the number of bisques outstanding or the amount of time remaining and the order of play. The Referee on Appeal may direct that a game must be restarted.

(d) The Referee on Appeal may not decide that a fault has been committed under Law 32 unless he is satisfied of the fact by personal observation or by the evidence of the striker or a Spectator Referee who personally observed the fault.

(e) Either player may appeal to the Tournament Referee under Regulation 4(a).

8. SPECTATOR REFEREE

A Spectator Referee is a Referee not in charge, on call or on appeal whose powers and duties are confined to the following.

(a) To intervene to ensure that play is lawfully continued after an error is claimed or admitted.

(b) To intervene if he hears a player giving erroneous information on the Laws to his adversary.

(c) To intervene in a handicap game if a ball is wrongly removed from the game in breach of Law 39.

(d) To volunteer relevant information to a Referee on Appeal.

(e) To apply to the Tournament Referee to be placed in charge of a game. If so appointed after he has observed that a particular error has been committed, he may not act in respect of that error or draw attention to a misplaced clip until the error has been claimed or admitted or the limit of claims has passed.

8A. ASSISTANT REFEREE

An Assistant Referee nominated by the Tournament Referee under Regulation 4(a) may act in a limited capacity as a Referee on Call or a Referee on Appeal. When so acting, his powers and duties comprise the following.

(a) To act as a Referee on Call to decide whether

- (1) a ball hits another ball; or
- (2) a ball is moved or shaken; or
- (3) a ball hits the peg; or
- (4) a claim for a wiring lift is valid; or
- (5) a fault is committed in a stroke.

(b) To act as Referee on Appeal to decide whether

- (1) a ball has run a hoop in order or is in position to do so; or
- (2) a ball is off the court.

9. UMPIRE

An Umpire is a suitable person nominated by the Tournament Referee under Regulation 4(a) whose powers and duties are confined to the following.

(a) To act as a Referee on Call to decide whether

- (1) a ball hits another ball; or (2) a ball is moved or shaken; or
- (3) a ball hits the peg.

(b) To act as Referee on Appeal to decide whether

- (1) a ball has run a hoop in order or is in position to do so; or
- (2) a ball is off the court.

COACHING IN 1999

Get on course to improve your play

By Bruce Rannie, CA Coaching Committee Chairman

The Croquet Association Coaching Committee comprises Members of the CA Council, and the Federation Coaching Officers. Our responsibility is to set and improve playing standards at all levels in all Clubs. Therefore, to help in achieving this aim, the CA and the Federations have organised weekend Coaching Courses, covering both Handicap and Advanced play. If you want to make strides this season, then steal a march on your compatriots and apply for one this Spring. Full details will be in the Fixture Book, and are also available from your local Club or Federation.

Improvers

There is an Improver Course arranged by the South East Federation at Southwick in May. This is open to Associates, and to any player who is a member of a Club affiliated to any Federation. The Handicap Range is 18 to 24. The aim of the course is to help you make progress after the induction course at your Club. It teaches basic techniques, understanding of strokes, the Laws and etiquette of Croquet, tactics, and break play in the Handicap and Short Croquet games.

Much of this material may be covered in larger Clubs as they encourage and support new players, but this Course is aimed at those who cannot get such local help, or who want the formal, concentrated teaching such a course gives. The Federation Course is intensive - the material is covered in two full days - and it is based on the CA standard approach.

You will be encouraged to consider taking part in competitive or tournament play following completion of the course, and it is a good pre-season refresher if you are starting your first or second full season.

This year's course is at Southwick on 15-16 May, priced at £16, and the Lead Coach is Bryan Teague, one of the CA's best coaches at this level.

Bronze

Three Federations have arranged Bronze Courses, also open to Associates, and to any player who is a member of a Club affiliated to any Federation. The Handicap Range is 12 to 18.

The aim of this course is to equip you to gain your Bronze Merit Award (10-hoop break, with bisques, winning the game). It teaches the shots and tactics necessary to complete four-ball breaks in the Handicap Croquet game, and includes use of bisques in beginning a break, during the break, and on concluding the break.

You will have already competed in several singles games, either in Clubs or in Tournaments, and are now prepared to practise techniques, and learn new skills.

The three choices are all priced at £18, on 17-18 April at Budleigh Salterton, with David Purdon, on 8-9 May at Southwick, with Bryan Teague, and on 15-16 May at Southport, with Don Williamson. Other experienced CA coaches will be assisting these experts.

Silver and Silver/Gilt

The next level of training is covered by the two types of Silver Course. These are arranged by the Croquet Association, and are open only to Associates. The first is the Silver, for which the Handicap Range is 6 to 11.



Bill Arliss, CA Chairman of Council, in action during a coaching course earlier this year

The aim of this course is to equip you to gain your Silver Merit Award (12-point break, without bisques, winning the game). It teaches break management and hygiene in the Handicap Croquet game, and concentrates on how to compete when giving away bisques. It covers leaves, and the endgame, with Rover Peel and Double Peel being included.

You will be an experienced improving Handicap Player, wishing to continue developing in Handicap Tournaments, and are used to spending time practising and learning new skills.

You have two choices of venue for the same weekend, 24-25 April, at Dulwich with Bryan Teague, or at Parkstone with John Simmonds, and naturally each is supported by other expert coaches. The fee is £30, and last year several students won their Silver Merit Award within a few weeks of attending this course.

The second one is the Introduction to Advanced Play (Silver/Gilt) Course, arranged by the Croquet Association, also open only to Associates. The Handicap Range is 4 to 9.

The aim of this course is to equip you to start to play the Advanced Rules game seriously. It reinforces break management and hygiene and covers the Advanced Rules with leaves and contacts. It covers the endgame, with Rover Peel and Double Peel being included. The Triple Peel will be introduced to show how it fits into the game, but there is no expectation that you will attempt one in competition at this stage.

As you can see, there is an overlap with the Silver Course, but for this one, you will be wishing to win games in Advanced Tournaments, and will therefore practise the new skills learnt here.

This year's course is on 8-9 May, price £38, at Cheltenham, with Ray Ransom, and other experts in the Advanced game.

Whichever direction you are wishing to go, better Handicap results, or breaking seriously into the Advanced game, one of these intensive courses will make a big difference.

Handicap Ranges Exceptions

If you are outside the handicap ranges specified for the course you fancy, you may still be considered for inclusion if you have the written approval of your Club Handicapper or the Federation Coaching Officer, certifying that you are likely to reach the required standard for the Course. The final decision on whether anybody is accepted onto a Course lies with its Lead Coach, who will take into account the requirements of all participants, and the aims of the Course.

All of these courses offer a one-day follow-up session later in the season to reinforce lessons learnt and covering problems you have found putting the theory into practice. Follow-up courses are at the same venue,

and are half the price of the original course.

Gold

As part of the highest level of training, we have arranged a Gold Course, open only to Associates. The Handicap Range is likely to be 1 to 5, but as the course has not been offered for two years, those with the appropriate skills who require to learn the techniques will be accepted.

The aim this time is to equip you for all facets of the Advanced game, including openings, leaves / contacts, and how to complete Triple Peels and therefore qualify for the Gold Merit Award (first Triple Peel, winning the game). This intensive CA Course covers triples in all their forms for two full days, including TPO.

You will be already be a reasonably experienced Advanced Player, now wishing to climb the Rankings and win Advanced Tournaments. It will be on 8-9 May at Wrest Park, price £40, and some of the country's top coaches will be there to show and tell.

Other Materials

The CA is also preparing formal courses for Golf Croquet, and material to bring all Coaching of beginners in Clubs onto a standard base. The CA Coaching Manual is available from the CA Office, price £10, and this contains all the relevant material. The Committee's plan is to enhance this into modules, so the Club Coach can pick and choose according to the different levels the players have reached, to make sure nobody is left behind, and that the rapid improvers keep up their progress. Details of how you can get your Club Volunteer Coaches registered will be sent to all Clubs during the summer.

In the meantime, there is lots of reading available from the CA Office, with "Know the Game", "Skills of the Game" and the many Coaching books for the improving player to choose from. There's no need to wait for the sunshine - apply for a course and be two bisques ahead of the rest!

BECOMING A CA REGISTERED COACH

By Bruce Rannie, CA Coaching Committee Chairman

If you wish to qualify as a CA coach, it can be done through a mixture of learning, practical coaching, and assisting in Federation or CA sponsored courses.

Golf Croquet Coaches

The CA is developing Golf Croquet Coaching Materials, and it is intended to set qualification levels for CA accreditation during 1999.

Club Coaches - Introducing People to Croquet

The CA is developing standard material, based on the CA Coaching Manual, for use by Club Coaches in introducing beginners to the various games of Croquet. Details of the recognised qualification will be sent to all CA registered clubs during 1999.

Grade I Coaches - Taking Players through the Next Steps

Prospective Coaches at Improvers or Bronze level should initially contact their Federation Coaching Officer via their local Croquet Federation. The Coaching Officer will arrange a Coaching Seminar and will arrange training locally. In addition, attending an Improvers or Bronze Course as an Assistant Coach to be assessed. The fee is set by the Federation, to which the cheque should be made payable.

The Lead Coach will make a recommendation (based on satisfactory performance as an Assistant Coach at one or more courses) to the Coaching Committee for approval of the student as a Grade I Coach, or will recommend additional learning to develop the necessary skills. Prospective Grade I Coaches should have a handicap of less than 14, and have a good working knowledge of the Laws of Association Croquet. Only Associates will be entered onto the CA Register of Coaches, and receive the Grade I Coach's badge.

Grade II and Grade III Coaches - Developing the Tournament Player, and the Advanced Tournament Player

Prospective Coaches at Silver or Gold Level should contact the CA Coaching Committee to seek placement as an Assistant Coach on a Silver, Silver/Gilt or Gold Course.

Prospective Grade II Coaches should have had at some time a Handicap 6 or below, and be a qualified Referee. Prospective Grade III Coaches should have a handicap 1 or below, and be a qualified Referee. The fee for the Grade II or Grade III assessment is £13.

Qualified Grade II and Grade III Coaches are entered onto the CA Register of Coaches, and receive the appropriate Coach's badge.



Mitch Watts, John Handy, Craig Edwards and John de Winton, all event winners at The Cheltenham Club's centenary celebrations.

WCF 3rd WORLD GOLF CROQUET CHAMPIONSHIP

Leamington Spa, 4 - 10 October 1998

Quiller Barrett's edited version of Swiss competitor Peter Payne's daily Internet reports. Photos by Chris Hudson.

Khaled Younis, a 34-year old sports instructor, is the new world champion. In a final that was anything but one-sided the Egyptian, who regained the crown he lost last year in Cairo to Salah Hassan, played a tactical defensive game, attacking only when his opponent, the American motion picture producer Mik Mehas, showed signs of weakness. On the almost perfect lawns this was always going to be the winning tactic.

Khaled uncharacteristically showed his nerves in the first of the five games final and although he never lost touch with the Californian, conceded the game 7-5. Mik made the winning hoop from five yards with the Egyptian's next ball in position to run the hoop had he missed. Game two was distinctly one-sided with Khaled coming into his stride. With a succession of long hoop runs he effectively closed the American out of the game, winning 7-1.

Defensive tactics dominated the third game. After Khaled took a 3-1 early lead, Mik saw the danger and dug in with some very accurate shots. He dragged himself back into contention winning four hoops in a row to go ahead 5-3. However Khaled was concentrating and after 90 minutes of play he finally took the tiebreak hoop to win the game 7-6 and go 2-1 up in the match. The fourth, and ultimately final game, continued in the same style but as the night closed in and the floodlights were turned on, the superior experience of the Egyptian showed through. To the delight of his numerous compatriots watching the final, Khaled won the game 7-4 to become world champion for the second time.

Mik, 57, for whom the game of golf croquet was a new experience, had a wonderful championship and is the living proof that Association croquet players can do well playing against the best of the golf croquet hierarchy. A 47-year old company director from Dublin, Evan Newell, who was totally unrated, upset all the form by beating the current Egyptian men's champion, Yasser Esmat, in the third place play-off.

With 48 players representing 12 nations and four continents, the third world golf croquet championship was truly international. The five immaculate lawns of the English Women Bowls Association at Leamington were the venue and with the national flags flying, scoreboards recording the progress of each game as it was played, referees on the courts directing operations and new 'world' rules, the scene was set for an exciting and spectator-friendly championship. The 'world' rules allowed a player to take two or more strokes to go through a hoop; also to play towards the hoop beyond the one being contested, but no more than half way. Jumping over an obstructing ball to score a hoop was not allowed.

The head groundsman and his team did a fantastic job throughout the week. The hoops held firm in the soft, sand-based lawns despite the heavy rain and the assault by hard-hitting players. Fortunately for the spectators, scorers and 'ball boys' each bowling green had a foot-high wall round it. Nevertheless I got in the habit of parking my car on the far side of the road, just in case.

The format was eight blocks on the first two days, followed by a best-of-three knockout. The top four from each group went through to the final 32 places while the others played off for positions 33 to 48.

The first and second rounds of the knockout saw many favourites beaten including reigning world champion Salah Hassan who lost to Ireland's Evan Newell, and last year's runner-up, Walid Salah to third placed Hany El-Shobaki who himself was knocked out by 1996 world champion, Khaled Younis. In all there were only four Egyptians in the quarterfinals, the remaining places going to Ireland (Evan Newell), Italy



Khaled Younis of Egypt celebrates his victory with fellow finalist and runner-up Mik Mehas of the USA.

(Giampietro Donati), Switzerland (Peter Payne) and USA (Mik Mehas).

The quarterfinals produced some exciting matches, with three going to the third game. Evan Newell, still on a high after his sensational win over reigning champion Salah Hassan, continued his remarkable run, beating the Egyptian ladies' champion, Naheed Hassan. Khaled Younis managed to block Giampietro Donati, a business consultant from Milan, but only after losing the first game. The final scores (4-7, 7-3, 7-5) do scant justice to the Italian's excellent play.


Yasser Esmat from Cairo's Zamalek Club was made to work hard by your reporter. The tie went to the third game with Yasser finally winning through on the twelfth hoop. In the last match Mik Mehas steamed past Egyptian journalist Mohamed Anan in straight games to take the last available berth in the semi-finals.



The spectators' view of the courts and pavilion at Leamington.

The fair play shown by all the competitors over the week was exemplary. Despite certain troublesome situations arising due to either the wording, the understanding, or the application of the new laws, there were surprisingly few incidents thanks to the good sense of the manager John Jeffrey and the RoT Tony Hall. However one of the semi-finals had the mother of all incidents, which was brought to an end by the RoT giving a yellow card to . . . a spectator!

Evan Newell finally found his match in the form of Khaled Younis. Khaled brought Evan's fantastic run abruptly to an end when he was beaten in two games in the first semi-final. In the other match Mik Mehas was made to work hard to oust Yasser Esmat in the third game. Mik was the aggrieved party in the yellow card incident when one of his compatriots incurred the RoT's displeasure. If some people claim that any argument on the lawn brings the game into disrepute, I would counter that this just shows the intense feelings the sport generates and the commitment of the players. No bad thing in a game that is still not taken entirely seriously by the media, and often not by fellow (Association) croquet enthusiasts either.



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The event was organised by the World Croquet Federation with assistance from Warwick District Council who hosted the championship dinner and gave much help in other ways. Lots of croquet players came along to support this world championship and it was nice to see some of the leading lights of the CA and the Association game during the week. One can only hope the game will now be taken more seriously in England. For the record the English had mixed results, six players out of eleven qualified for the final 32-place knockout.

I think I can say that the participants had a great week in Leamington. It is worth noting that the players were expected to pay for their own accommodation and meals since there was no sponsorship other than that of the Warwick Council. However, a black mark must be given for the lack of free time to visit this very interesting corner of England, and the total lack of any officially organised social events over the entire week, except the championship dinner. After the Egyptians' marvellous efforts last year this was rather disappointing.

Why did the Egyptians have such a tough time in Leamington? The weather was undoubtedly a factor: playing in near freezing conditions is not really their cup of tea. The balls used in Egypt are lighter than our standard Barlow GT's or Jaques Eclipse, and the Egyptians had difficulty getting used to them. Likewise the lawns, which were perhaps too perfect, gave an advantage to the gentler, more tactical, players over the hard hitters. Finally it must be said that the Europeans especially, but the other non-Egyptians too, are getting better at the game. Personally I found that I learned a new trick each time I played an Egyptian.

Final Championship Rankings:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 Khaled Younis (Egy) | 25 Don Beck (Eng) |
| 2 Mik Mehas (U.S.A.) | 26 Nader Al-Shanti (Pal) |
| 3 Evan Newell (Ire) | 27 Rod Williams (Sco) |
| 4 Yasser Esmat (Egy) | 28 Samia Mahmoud (Egy) |
| 5 Giampietro Donati (I) | 29 Walid Salah (Egy) |
| 6 Mohamed Anan (Egy) | 30 Roy Edwards (Eng) |
| 7 Naheed Hassan (Egy) | 31 Derek Old (Eng) |
| 8 Peter Payne (Sui) | 32 Sherine Hamdy (Egy) |
| 9 Hazem Mahmoud (Egy) | 33 Tony Hall (Aus) |
| 10 Hany El-Shobaki (Egy) | 34 Ivor Brand (Eng) |
| 11 Salib Eryan (Egy) | 35 Edward Dymock (Eng) |
| 12 Ayman Abd El Wahab (Egy) | 36 David Underhill (Sui) |
| 13 Jim Houser (U.S.A.) | 37 Samantha Curry (Eng) |
| 14 Sherif Abdelwahab (U.S.A.) | 38 Alan Pidcock (Eng) |
| 15 Salah Hassan (Egy) | 39 Vernon Tomes (SA) |
| 16 Andrew Hutchinson (Eng) | 40 John Jeffrey (Eng) |
| 17 Hisham Abou Esba (Egy) | 41 Syd Jones (Eng) |
| 18 Mark McInerney (Ire) | 42 Carl von Schmieder (Ire) |
| 19 Charles von Schmieder (Ire) | 43 Charles Jones (NZ) |
| 20 Richard Brand (Eng) | 44 Simon Miles (Eng) |
| 21 Andrea Pravettoni (I) | 45 Koen Heidbuchel (Bel) |
| 22 Kristian Chambers (Eng) | 46 Ray Flood (Ire) |
| 23 Ihab Abdelwahab (U.S.A.) | 47 Rana Al-Alami (Pal) |
| 24 Grahame Tomes (SA) | 48 Khalil El-Haj (Pal) |

Federation Round-Up

Artificial surface breakthrough in the East Midlands

Report by Mrs Duke-Cox, photo by Roy Taylor

The Woodhall Spa Croquet club is the originator of the new development of playing croquet on any commercially available Astroturf surface.

One of their members has designed and made croquet hoops, pegs and markers which gained approval from the East Midlands Federation. Permission was obtained from the landowners, Lincoln City Football Club, to insert 6 inch nails through the Astroturf into the tarmac and asphalt below, thus securing a firm fixing of the equipment. An initial trial with one set of equipment was held in September with a small group of interested players trying out the surface for a couple of hours. A positive response enabled the club members to go ahead and produce more equipment with some modifications. The next step was to hold a tournament within the East Midlands Federation with three lawns double-banked, enabling 12 players to experience the game.



One Sunday in November an area of Astroturf, large enough to accommodate three full sized lawns, was hired for six hours from Lincoln City and the first ever regional tournament on Astroturf held with representatives from Woodhall Spa, North Hykeham, Ashby de la Zouch and Southwell. The cost, at £60 for the six hours it was hired, meant a charge of only £5 per head.

Twelve players each played 3 singles games of no longer than 105 mins. No player was drawn against a member of their own club and everyone played on each of the three lawns in turn. At the end of

The John Hobbs Mallet

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the tournament the winner was decided by number of wins followed by a point score. The outright winner was Pauline Taylor from Ashby. The event was well run by manager Roy Taylor, who plays for Woodhall Spa. It was his idea originally to find out if the game could be played on this surface and he was able to design the necessary equipment with backing from the East Midlands Federation and the Croquet Association.

All the players had an excellent day's play on a surface that was even and level thus enabling them to be very accurate in playing their shots. Most players were able to make a roquet, take croquet and build up a satisfying break during their turns. This new venture might now be copied across the country as it makes use of local authority grounds or other commercially available premises.

Anyone wishing to know about the event should contact the Woodhall Spa Secretary, Mrs Pam Overton, 9 Tower Drive, Woodhall Spa.



Derek Trotman of Croquet North presents John Moore with the handicap singles trophy, the first of many for John.

Croquet North responds to need for competitive croquet

Report & photo by Gail Curry

Being one of the smaller Federations, which unfortunately found itself without a CA calendar event in the 1998 season, the Croquet North Federation's response to a need to provide competitive croquet within their confines brought about the Croquet North Championships. This provided the opportunity for players from any club within the Federation to enter for any, or all, of the events, which ranged from golf croquet through to advanced play in both singles and doubles. The events were then played over the season with players being given details of each individual event, playing a variety of players from other clubs and at other venues and informing the organiser of the result of each match.

The finals were due to be played over a weekend in late September; however due to Brian Kennedy and John Moore qualifying for multiple finals there had to a slight change of plan. Event organiser John Norris took this all in his stride and ensured that all of the events duly came to a conclusion. Perhaps what no one would have been able to foresee though, was the haul of trophies John Moore of the Tyneside Club took home following the last of the finals. John managed to win the handicap singles, doubles with Bruce Rannie, golf croquet singles, and golf croquet doubles with Malcolm Gibson. Fortunately John's success has not put anyone off from playing again in 1999, and it is hoped that this year's competitions will be equally enjoyable, even though there will be CA calendar events at the Tyneside Club. Well you can't have too much of a good thing, can you?



David Hill, Paul Strover, Ron Harris and Ken Wheeler, the winners and runners-up of the grand final pictured at Ickworth.

East Anglia celebrates another year of partnership with the National Trust

Report and photos by Judy Anderson

Another successful year of croquet partnership with the National Trust, giving a quality appearance and showing the sport as a serious pastime and encouraging spectators to enquire further about the game and finding their nearest club.

In total there were seven events, with Anglia TV filming at Oxburgh during the short croquet day. The presenter spent time being taught golf croquet, with the subsequent interview going well. Hopefully it won't be too highly edited and is due to be screened in Jan/Feb.

Honours Board

	Winner	Runners-up
Long Melford	Colchester	Bury St Edmunds
Anglesey (1)	Letchworth	Bottisham
Anglesey (2)	Bottisham	Meldreth
Oxburgh	Wells-next-the-Sea	Cromer
Ickworth (Final)	Colchester	Bottisham
	(Ron Harris & Paul Strover)	(Ken Wheeler and David Hills)

Golf Croquet Doubles at Anglesey Abbey (16 pairs)

Winners: Don Cornelius & Alan Edwards (Newport)

Runners-up: David Haslam & Vera Powis (Colchester)

Golf Croquet Singles at Ickworth (24 competitors)

Organisers: Rhona & David Kerswell

Winner: Rosemary Longbottom (Mount Rayleigh WI)

Runner-up: May Walker (Bottisham).



Golf croquet doubles winners Alan Edwards and Don Cornelius with David Haslam and Vera Powis at Anglesey Abbey.

Technical Matters

The Equipment Committee and its new equipment

Over the past twelve months the CA's Equipment Committee has been buying and commissioning several pieces of hardware to support and extend its range of activities. The availability of funding within the CA happily coincided with the desire of the Department of Engineering and Design at the University of Central Lancashire (at Preston) to develop a laboratory associated with a new course in Sports Technology. The Department has helped to design and build some of the equipment which is stored and used in the laboratory.

One of the principal roles of the Committee has always been in the testing and approval of croquet balls. The testing of resilience requires the measurement of rebound height when balls are dropped 60 inches onto a steel plate embedded in concrete. Although the relevant test regulation was framed to allow very simple equipment to be used (hand, eye and a ruler in addition to the plate), it is more convenient to use a device which can release the ball without imparting any spin to enable the resilience of specific regions of a ball's surface to be recorded. A design for such a device, by Mr R.W. Le Maitre of South Africa, was in the Equipment Committee's files and has now been constructed. Along with a thermostat bath and minor items for measuring the weight and roundness of balls, it will be the basis for official testing of balls and the investigation of other aspects of their properties.

Lawn speed in croquet is defined as the time (in seconds) taken for a croquet ball to just travel 35 yds. On a fast lawn, a relatively slow moving ball will travel the required distance, so long times indicate fast lawns. Measurements of lawn speed are best made by timing and measuring the distance of shots ranging around 35 yds and then interpolating the time for an exactly 35 yd shot. However, in the specification of speeds for artificial croquet surfaces, it is necessary to use the system of measurement of the World Bowls Board with which carpet makers are more familiar. The WBB measurement involves measuring the distance travelled by a standard unbiased bowl when released from a height of 1 metre down an inclined track. Bill Aldridge of the Bowdon Club has built a ramp to WBB specifications and over the last season we have been correlating the two methods of measurement on various artificial and grass surfaces.

The economics of a popular sport like golf has stimulated much research on the dynamics of the golf swing, and in comparison croquet is a very impoverished relation. However, a start is to be made using a new gated timer which accurately measures the speed of croquet balls or mallets over a 15 cm distance of travel. Its first active outing will be to the World Golf Championships in Leamington Spa in an informal competition to find the hardest hitter - and by weighing the contestants, also to find the hitter with the best power to weight ratio! It will be interesting to see how the legendary Egyptians compare with our own contestants and whether special mallets and styles have evolved among the hard hitters at the top of the one ball shot game.

Whilst the above items are largely for the use of the backroom boys of croquet, the final set of kit is available for hire to clubs or CA members. The key device is a 'Robolaser' from the U.S.A. which is the self-levelling 'Dalek' pictured on page 7 of the July (1998) issue of the Gazette. It emits a steerable laser beam that is horizontal to within a quarter of an inch in 100 ft and it provides a simple and effective way of surveying lawn levels. Charles Trimmer (Parkstone) and Bob Whitaker (Bath) have pioneered its use and David Parkins (Medway) has given us a very substantial surveyors' tripod. It comes with a full range of

instructions and supporting equipment and it moves around the country (on request to Alan Pidcock) generally through the goodwill of tournament participants. If you are planning some lawn levelling, a



The familiar picture of watery contours - could your club use the 'Robolaser'?

survey would be a sound start and good value too with the hiring fee currently at £30. Bear in mind that a 1 yd grid has over a thousand intersections on a full lawn, so a team of at least three should be on hand for about 3 hours per lawn (- probably 4 hours for the first). What a useful way to spend a fine winter's day (if we have one)!

The Committee is keen to address and assist with any of the technical aspects of the game and its equipment, so please look us up on the Contacts List at the front of the Gazette if you think we can help.

Alan Pidcock,
CA Equipment Committee Chairman

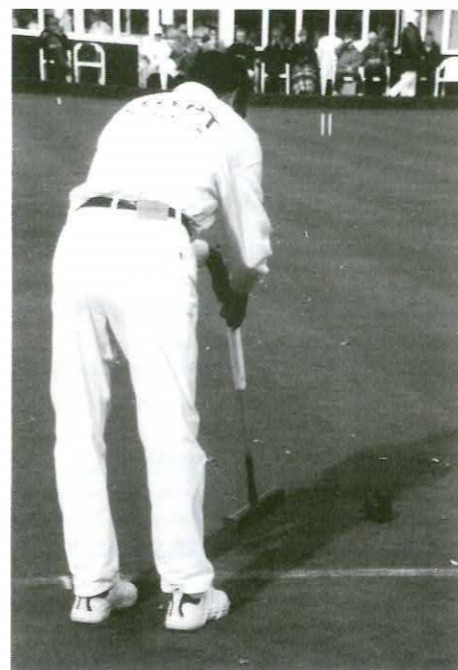
Mallets for Golf Croquet

by Alan Pidcock

In Association Croquet the need to play roll shots in which two balls in contact weighing 1 lb each are sometimes both moved many yards - in a 'big' roll - results in an almost universal preference for mallets weighing around 3 lbs in total. Good rolls are difficult with lighter mallets and stop shots more difficult with heavier ones. In Golf Croquet all shots are with a single ball, so the question arises as to whether a mallet as heavy as 3 lbs is either necessary or desirable. Of course, players who divide their time between these two versions of the game may prefer to know one mallet well and to make it serve for both games. In such cases, a 3 lbs mallet is essentially dictated by the requirements of the Association game, so it is my guess that in regions of the world where Association Croquet is dominant the Golf game is rarely played with mallets substantially lighter than 3lbs.

Not so in Egypt, however! At the World Golf Croquet Championship in Leamington Spa I was able to appraise four mallets of Egyptian origin: they were all relatively light - weighing between 1110 and 1200 grams (2 lbs 7 oz to 2 lbs 10 oz; 3lbs = 1361 g), with head lengths of 9 - 10", overall lengths 29 - 36", and notably high balance points 15 - 20 cm (6 - 8") from the base of the head. All had wooden shafts (-which presumably survive well in the absence of roll shots) and some had very highly built-up grips, up to 11.7 cm (4.6") circumference (3.7 cm/1.5" diameter). From these measurements I have estimated that

the weights of the mallet heads were only 810 - 850 g, much lighter than in a typical 3 lbs mallet, which would have a head weight of 980 g (approx.) with a wooden shaft or 1080 g with a carbon or aluminium alloy shaft. The Egyptian mallets had composite faces (fixed with exposed countersunk screws) and were often thoroughly worn and battered - the owner of one of the mallets assured me that it had been found in a Pyramid!



Golf Croquet World Champion, Khaled Younis of Egypt in play at Leamington. (photo by Chris Hudson)

The mallets examined appeared typical of those used by the Egyptian and Palestinian players, who, irrespective of sex, are nearly all capable of producing very high ball velocities with them. This they do by generating very high mallet head speeds in classic double pendulum style - strong initial arm swing with well timed release of the wrists. The ball in such shots takes little notice of lawn undulations and skids a long way before rolling takes over; in a straight rush the skidding ball can despatch an opposing ball without the striker's ball also losing position. With a light mallet, less effort is needed to generate high mallet head speed, and light mallets also make for better length control of the very important single ball positional shots of Golf Croquet.

Although the design of Egyptian mallets may be affected to some extent by the type of balls they use and by their local playing conditions, it seems likely that they have simply progressed further in the optimisation of mallets for the Golf game. Certainly, the lightness of the mallets is no accident: many of the mallets were spectacularly perforated with holes to lighten the head. Built-up grips may also be significant. Perhaps the time is ripe for Golf players and mallet makers here to experiment!

New Feature

CROQUET ON THE WEB

by Dave Kibble

No, it's not a new artificial surface I mean the World Wide Web. This is not an article about the Web but about croquet on the Web. This time I will concentrate on what is available and how you can join in. I plan to bring a flavour of what's going on to those of you who don't have access to the Web.

I will concentrate mainly on the Nottingham List. That's not a misspelling, it's an automatic system that sends a copy of every email it receives to everyone who has chosen to join the list. "Subscribers" is a technical term; unlike most things in this modern world, it's actually free of charge.

Enough of the technology, how's it used? Well, people send in all sorts of things: laws queries ("this happened yesterday, what should I have done?"), requests for help ("I'm starting a club has anyone got spare hoops?"), information ("Match of the Day is covering the Cheltenham July week"). Actually, I made that last one up, but the principle is there.

Many Law questions in the early days led to responses from experienced referees (amongst others) starting "I don't have my laws book to hand but I think..." In reaction to this the CA agreed to allow the laws to be published on the Web. Oxford University hosts this site and there are many other interesting croquet-related items there. These include official rulings where examples of applying the Law are spelled out. Soon it may include unofficial rulings, a sort of guide for referees so that common practice can be determined and disseminated.

Many of the law discussions are taken to the extreme. A competitor asked if it was a fault when his hat fell off onto the ball he was about to strike. The law says it's a fault if during the striking period the striker touches any ball with his body or clothes, so a resounding "yes, it's a fault" was agreed. "What if I left my hat on the bench and it blew across the court?" "What if I had lost my hat when I played there some months ago and then it blew across the court?"

This is an example of one of many

situations not explicitly covered in the Laws. Most people would make a 'common sense' judgement.

A few believe that the Laws should be re-written to cover all conceivable (and believe me many extremely contrived) things that could happen during a game. This is the most controversial topic that arises. One of the main protagonists has offered a \$5000 prize for anyone that can point out the exact wording from the Laws that will allow specific situations to be resolved consistently, rather than by the particular Referee making the judgement.

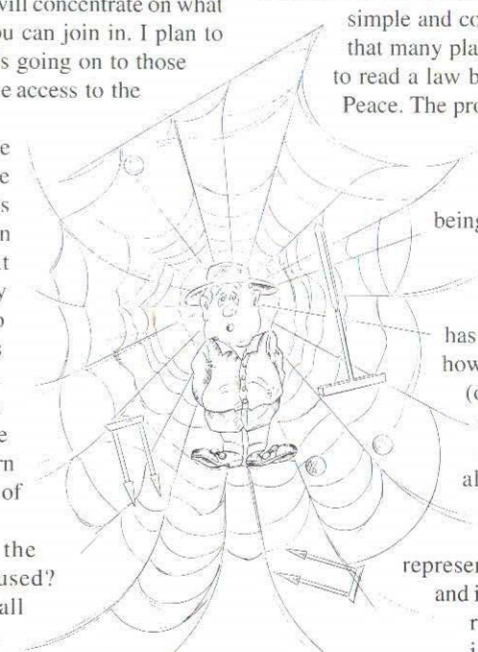
Several members of the list were involved in writing and revising the Laws. They believe that the Laws should remain relatively simple and concise since it is unlikely that many players would even attempt to read a law book the size of War and Peace. The problem is compounded by the use of human language to express the laws, the meaning being different to each reader; there's no real answer to that!

This discussion has led to the revelation of how law changes are made (or not as seems to be the case). Since the Laws are now adopted universally, all countries must agree any change. We enjoy an amateur sport so representatives who have time and inclination are adopted to represent their country's interest. There is no pressure or time limit from the governing body to reach conclusion. This has resulted in an impasse on exact wording.

During the Commonwealth Games someone asked why Croquet should not be included. Soon more than a dozen people from several countries had responded and constructed a list of those countries they knew played croquet. A discussion started on how to get organised to promote croquet into the 2002 games. Traditionalists would say that's a matter for a CA Committee. Maybe it is but in that simple example the Internet has demonstrated its capability for rapid communications and hinted at a considerable power to mobilise action for change.

Almost every computer on offer today comes with everything necessary to connect to the Internet. Even if you don't have your own computer many local libraries offer access for a relatively small charge, or you may have an internet cafe near you.

If you have access to email all you need do to join the Nottingham list is send an email containing the word "subscribe" to croquet-request@Nottingham.ac.uk. So if you haven't tried it you're missing out; get wired and enjoy a lift.



Tournament Reports..... Tournament Reports..... Tournament Reports.....

The Golden Mallet 1998 final at Solihull September 13th *Report and photo by Rosemary Longbottom*

The Golden Mallet again had entries from as far apart as Northumberland and Sussex. This is the eighth year of this popular competition. 137 players from twelve clubs took part in the preliminary group rounds, with players willing to travel some long distances to play golf croquet.

This year at group, regional and the national final, several rounds of progressive doubles were played, the top four players then took part in semi-finals followed by a final.

Regional winners:

- Worthing - Cynthia Teague (Worthing)
- Northampton - Joyce Critchley (Sapcote)
- Newport - Ian Berisford (Bury St Edmunds)
- Belsay Hall - Colin McDonald (T'mouth Priory)
- Southwell - Brian James

of Woodhall Spa. The latter two had identical wins and points so had to have a play-off to decide which semi-final they entered, with Brian winning 2 - 1.

The semifinals saw Pam beat Brian 7 - 5 and Colin beating Patricia 7 - 2. The final took place between Pam and Colin, which Colin won again by the margin of 7 - 2. Pam was presented with a runner's-up medal, Colin the trophy and winner's medal.

I know many players are disappointed that we no longer give medals at group level, but we really are not financially able to, in fact the competition has gone into the red.

Very many thanks to the Solihull Croquet Club for hosting the competition once again, both I and the players appreciated the work and effort put into setting out the lawns for play, as well as the welcomed refreshments.

Hopefully more players will participate in this competition in 1999. If you do not have enough from your own club, invite some from another close by. Full details will be in the fixture book.

6th European Championship Jersey 16th - 18th October 1998

Report by Richard Sowerby

The Championship was to have been held in Italy but due to unforeseen circumstances had to be cancelled. However, at the 11th hour, Jersey stepped into the breach and offered to host the event. This offer was gratefully accepted by the committee of the European Federation and within 5 weeks the championship was organised and held - a considerable logistical achievement of which everyone involved in its organisation can be justly proud.

The championship took place from the 16th - 18th October at the Jersey Croquet Club, whose courts were in first class condition, and was most ably managed by Stephen Mulliner. Fortunately the weather (it had been raining almost continually for the week before) changed and the players arriving on Thursday were greeted by blue skies. This continued on the first day's play but on the second skies darkened and there were showers - some very heavy and strong winds. However, for the final the sun once again came out and the winds dropped and though the day was a little cool the playing conditions were perfect.

The players were seeded according to their world rankings and placed in four blocks.

On the first day all the block events were completed and some of the first round games played. On the second day the remaining first round games, which produced a major upset when Martin Hodge (Jersey) and ranked 15 beat Phil Cordingley (England) ranked 4 to go through to the quarter finals, were played. The finalists were Stephen Mulliner and Colin Irwin who beat Malcolm O'Connell (Scotland) and Ed Cunningham (Ireland) respectively. Stephen Mulliner playing some of the best croquet ever seen in Jersey, or anywhere else, won the first of the best of three games final +26TP and the second +13TPO. The plate event was won by Matthew Burrow (Jersey), who beat Phil Cordingley +23TP.

11 Countries were represented among which, for the first time, were Germany and the Isle of Man.

Countries and players:

country	name	ranking
Belgium	Jonathan Lamb	13
England	Stephen Mulliner	1
	Phil Cordingley	4
Germany	Jorn Vinnen	15
Guernsey	Philip Archer	14
Ireland	Edward Cunningham	6
Isle of Man	Kevin Garrad	12
Italy	Eduardo Lualdi	10
Jersey	Matthew Burrow	3
	Martin Hodge	15
Scotland	Malcolm O'Connell	8
Spain	Fernando de Ansorena	11
Switzerland	Peter Payne	9
Qualifiers	Colin Irwin (Eng)	2
	Tony Le Moignan (Jer)	7
	Alan McInerney (Ire)	5

Southwick advanced 26 - 27 September

Report by Paul Smith

The weekend coincided with the annual Tipulidae hatch (the crane fly to the entomologically-illiterate) and most of the long-legged creatures on view were enjoying the brief spell of freedom and a chance to mate. The rest of us were impelled to watch or to play croquet, as unsatisfactory a substitute for our natural urges as man has yet devised. On Saturday afternoon, when it bucketed with rain - poor weather for mating - watching was definitely the lesser evil, though it wasn't long before the lawns were thoroughly waterlogged and play was abandoned before tea. And while on the subject of anything but the croquet, mention must be made of the blowing up of the magnificent brick chimney in the harbour area. Poor management robbed the players of what must have been a splendid spectacle, by allowing it to coincide with Sunday breakfast. Nevertheless a good pile of rubble was available for inspection later.

Back to the long-legged non-mating creatures. Don Gaunt was tournament favourite and duly did the business. But he was given a mighty scare in the first round by Heather

Pritchard, who with good long shooting and a very steady nerve came close to causing a major upset. Our manager may not have been upset to lose a seed in the first round; spectating from a distance he was heard to chortle "she's pegged the b.....d out!" She had too, and had reached penult with her backward ball before Don hit in with the last lift. With hindsight she may regret not attacking penult instead of laying up, but it was a most creditable effort at pinching 19 points. Don went on to despatch his other opponents much more easily, including the dangerously long-legged Lionel Tibble and defeating Paul Smith (shorter legs, long body) by 24 in the final with the only triple of the weekend. Paul had been run close in the semis by the improving John Low, who was let down by his tactics more than his execution.

Southwick as always was a very hospitable venue and the weekend was played in an excellent spirit with the local middle bisquers leading the way. Well done all.

Edgbaston B level 5 - 6 September

Report by Ben Elwell

After a night of torrential rain, 10 players from various clubs across the country arrived to play their first match on squelchy lawns (oh for a pair of wellies!) Despite the forecast, however, the weather remained perfect for the rest of the weekend.

Henry Fellows doubled as the manager, and as the squirrel patrol (the hoopholes were enlarged or filled in by the start of play. The squirrels were even busy at work whilst two games were in play on the lawn!)

The first day of play had few upsets, despite Ben Elwell (3.5) losing narrowly to Neil Chalmers (8) due to an excellent hit in by Neil. However, Ben bounced back in the next game to beat John Leader (7) +25tp, gaining his gold merit award. At the end of the first day, only Terry Sparks (5) and Michael Burrow (5) remained undefeated.

Sunday saw the meeting of Michael and Terry in the fourth round, Michael emerging the

victor, +7. The final round between Ben and Michael proved to be the deciding game of the competition. It looked to be in the bag as Ben started his 6th turn triple, until it all went horribly pear shaped at 2-back. This let Michael in, to make the game very close. It ended with an impressive display of long distance shooting from both players. With only two balls left on the lawn, Ben had the last word when he hit his opponent's ball by the peg to win+1, and to take the Sally Nichols trophy.

All in all an excellent weekend's croquet. The players were kept extremely well fed by Rosemary and Dennis Gregory, and Henry Fellows kept the competition running smoothly.

Surbiton advanced handicap

10 - 11 October

Report by Nelson Morrow

The Editor is always asking for concise tournament reports, well here goes.

Weather brilliant, food superb, croquet and management outstanding. Thirty players, handicaps ranging from -1 to 14, from clubs as far apart as Budleigh Salterton and Glasgow, playing ninety games in two days. Philip Eardley Ipswich completed a TP and a TPO. The final positions were Robin Noble (Surbiton) winning with 6/7, second was Gary Bennett (Harrow) also on 6/7, and third was Marjorie Boyd (Nottingham) on 4/5.

(Thank you Nelson. Perhaps you would consider doing the Opens or the President's reports? Ed.)

Sidmouth handicap 5 - 6 September

Report by Ron Selmes

Despite a rather negative weather forecast, sixteen players with handicaps ranging from -1 to 16 met at the delightful Sidmouth club under the relaxed management of John Toye, to play two games

each day. The Bray system of shortened games was used when higher handicap players met. The format (four blocks of four with crossovers between blocks for the fourth game) meant that there would be two equal winners, the prizes being attractive engraved goblets.

Saturday, although becoming windy at times, remained for the most part fine, with the sun shining for much of the time. Sunday was however, another story.

After Sunday morning's games, played under very grey skies with ever rising wind speeds, all four blocks were clearly won, with three wins each for Jane Babbage (12), Brian Smith (0), Jonathan Coombs (10) and Vera Henderson (10). Brian beat Jane +12, and Vera beat Jonathan by the same score. The final matches for everyone were played in torrential rain and gusting winds. All credit to the Sidmouth lawns - despite the very heavy rain, all four remained playable and did not become slow, sodden surfaces.

In spite of the downpour, everyone appeared to have had a good time, and their enjoyment was increased by the excellent catering of Tony and Elaine Hope.

Edinburgh Festival croquet tournament 15 - 21 August

Report by Jolyon Kay

The Edinburgh croquet tournament - you either love it or you hate it. For those for whom the gentle undulations of the fine fast turf (though, after this rainy summer, not as terrifyingly fast as last year) are anathema, never again! But 28 competitors this year came, mostly once again, from all corners of the isles from Sidmouth to Dunfermline, to brave the Scottish winds and to appreciate the relaxed atmosphere of one of the liveliest elements of the Edinburgh Festival. The manager, fringe programme always at his elbow, posts a notice diffidently asking for applications for leave to reach him, if possible, the day before. Fergus McInnes, in his first venture as manager, must receive the credit



Pam Mason and Colin McDonald in play during the final at Solihull.

Sixteen players took part in the national final. The weather was fine but a cool wind sent the leaves scurrying across the lawns. After the six rounds of progressive doubles the top four players were Pam Mason of Southwick, Colin McDonald of Tynemouth Castle & Priory, Brian James of Southwell and Patricia Duke-Cox



Andrew Cowing and Nelson Morrow, winner and runner-up of the 1998 Selectors' weekend held at Sidmouth. (photo by Sue Rogers)

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for an outstandingly enjoyable tournament. How appropriate that, after an extraordinary ten-minute spell conducted at the sprint at the end of the final, he should win the Silver Jubilee Salver.

Brian Durward also came from behind on his last turn to win the final game of the singles handicap (4 and over) against Jim Potter for the Ian H Wright Trophy. But Stuart McKendrick was playing too well for him in the final of the Swiss, to win +20. The day before both Maria Limonci and your correspondent achieved +26 wins in the Swiss to lift themselves just off the bottom of the table. Another wide margin was achieved by Stella McCraw, to win the final of the handicap singles (11 and over) +12 against John Seddon. Peter Thompson won the unrestricted handicap singles for the Edinburgh Croquet cup, also against John Seddon, to bring his handicap down to 4. John, losing only his two finals throughout the tournament, brought his own handicap down twice, from 16 to 12, nevertheless.

John Beech won the open singles for the Cramond Cup; Rod Willimas won the final event (John's fifteenth game of sixteen he played in the tournament) but by an insufficient margin to win the event. But he did manage to maintain his handicap at 0.5.

Edinburgh, well known for its philosophers, produced (as usual) some fine debating points for tournament referee Rod Williams to resolve. For a competition labelled advanced play with bisques did Rule 39 (restricting the striker's right to peg out) apply? Ruling - it did not. The logic was impeccable - the purpose of playing advanced rules with bisques is to give middle ranking players experience of the advanced singles game, which includes the rigours of playing with only three balls. But the manager was not totally convinced.

More difficulty when Charlotte Townsend failed to spot that her opponent was playing with the wrong ball. A spectator remarked on it in her hearing. Was she then obliged, or entitled, to draw the fact to her adversary's attention? She consulted a referee, who consulted another, who consulted the ROT. Ruling - she should warn her opponent. Any other course would lead one too far into the realms of fantasy. The spectator concerned shall remain nameless.

And lastly to the doubles, where there were once again no married couples playing. It used to be said that folk came from miles around to watch them fighting on the court. No such sport this year. The Norton Wright Trophies, each one a major silver polishing task, was won in front of a good audience nevertheless by Ruth Goudie and Peter Smith, who managed to hang on to their lead in a tight finish to win +2 on time. Donald Lamont and Mona Wright (combined ages over 170) played together again, to universal pleasure, but were defeated in their first round, as was the other comparative veteran, Esme Owen, badly let down by a partner who managed to stick in every hoop.

TIMES PAST

Robert Fulford's feat this year, of winning the President's Cup, Open Championships and Men's Championship, repeats that of Humphrey Hicks fifty years ago. As the Gazette of October 1948 records, "Congratulations to Mr H O Hicks for having won the Men's Championship and Gold Casket, the Open Championship [and - with Dudley Hamilton-Miller - the Open Doubles], and the President's Cup, all in the same year.

Accustomed to triple peels, his triple success in the three premier events in the croquet world required even more exceptional skill; it needed a consistently high standard of play throughout the 1948 season; and this Mr Hicks has shown in the quality of his games, both in these three London tournaments, and at Budleigh Salterton (where he won all three events) and at Cheltenham (where he won the Opens and Handicap Singles).

But this three-fold triumph has been achieved before. Mr C L O'Callaghan was Open Champion in 1910; the same year he won what was then known as the Gold Medal and Gold Casket - now as the Men's Championship and Gold Casket; and in the 'Best Ten' of that year he was the winner with 13 games.

Miss D D Steel won the Open Championship, the Women's Championship (then the Gold Medal and Gold Casket) and the Beddow Cup ('Best Ten'), all in the year 1933 ... One of the conditions regarding this trophy (presented by Mr A E Beddow in 1901), was that it could only be won outright if it were won three times in succession, or four times in all. This being Miss Steel's fourth win (for she had previously won in 1922, 1923 and 1931, she thus won the famous Beddow Cup outright. In 1934, Mr Trevor Williams (then President of the CA) presented another cup ever since known as the President's Cup."

In some respects, things were different fifty years ago: as the reporter of the President's Cup observes, "The feature of this important competition was the preponderance of women among the Best Eight, no fewer than five of those selected being of the fair sex. And, as the final result shows, four of them proved clearly that the selectors had fully justified their choice."

But some things never change. A letter from Ernest Rigby raises the perennial question, "Why do not more people take up this most interesting game? I will suggest a few possible reasons why the game is not more popular:

(1) The game is mostly played in seclusion - there are few places like Buxton where the public may look on. Even if they do ... the occasion can be very boring and tedious especially if the play is slow.

(2) The game is difficult and beginners are disheartened by their inability to carry out successfully the actions indicated by their instructor.

(3) The courts are too large and the hoops are too narrow, making long shooting and hoop running a nightmare to the beginner. Consequently:

(4) The ordinary game takes too long for ordinary players and this tends to create a wearied and frustrated state of mind.

(5) The many rules are complex and complicated and need simplification."

Continued from page 5

receive, there are just too many of them. Bearing in mind that there were in excess of 160 events in the fixture book alone, to say nothing of the national team and individual events, as well as international events, I hope you can see the size of the problem. Some disappointed authors seem to accept this fact with good grace others are, shall we say, are not quite so understanding. I can't give absolute guidelines for reports, but what I can say is that a report is more likely to be published in future if it is accompanied with a photo, **it is concise**, and it arrives on time.

One other problem area of the previous two issues has been its late delivery. The September issue was a victim of most if not all contributions arriving after the deadline, probably due to most of the authors either being on holiday or playing croquet, and alas by the time they arrived the editor was on holiday. The November issue was simply a victim of a distributor which ceased to trade. Hopefully once the seasonal holidays have finished a replacement mailing house will be found and the previously reliable delivery can be continued without further problems. *Ed.*

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

NEW ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES

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

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Tournament Results

WREST PARK 18 - 20 SEPT
 Manager: C Jones Format: American
 Winners: J Norris, T Mahoney, J Shelton.

SOUTHPORT & BIRKDALE 19 - 20 SEPT
 Manager: Mark Saurin Format: KO & Swiss
 Winner: Adrian Saurin Runner-up: Sam Tudor.

ROEHAMPTON 1 - 4 OCTOBER
 Manager: Paul Macdonald Format: Swiss
 1st Mrs B Ismail, 2nd R Knapp, 3rd Mrs M Boyd.

COMPTON 3 - 4 OCTOBER
 Manager: Roy Wallis Format: 3 Legged Race
 1st P Castell & A Gerrard, 2nd A Nelson & M Buist, 3rd H Smorfitt & C Osmond.

CHELtenham 9 - 11 OCT
 Manager: Ian Maugham Format: American
 Block Winners: C Edwards, L Bradforth, C Snowdon, R Burns, A Martin, P Higgins, G Edgeler.

SURBITON 10 - 11 OCT
 Manager: Nelson Morrow Format: Swiss
 Winner: Robin Noble Runner-up: Gary Bennett.

NORTHAMPTON ONE BALL 24 - 25 OCT
 Manager: Lionel Tibble Format: American
 Handicap winner: P Stansfield
 Advanced winner: L Tibble.

Handicap Alterations

Surbiton B level 19 Sept			
Brian Rees	5	to	6
Nelson Morrow	1	to	-0.5
Southwick Club			
J Baxter	12	to	10
M Power	10	to	6
Pat Shine	14	to	16
P Gosney	12	to	11
Pat Jackson	20	to	18
Jean Nash	9	to	8
Jack Davis	6	to	5
David Marcus	26	to	16
Diana Brothers	10	to	9
Gary Bennett	0.5	to	0
Marjorie Boyd	10	to	9
Niall Carter	7	to	6
Robin Noble	8	to	5
Claire Heritage	8	to	9
Hurlingham Club			
R Porter	12	to	11
R Stephens	1.5	to	1
Roehampton 1 - 4 October			
R Bell	7	to	6
A Mooney	5	to	6
Cheltenham 9 - 11 October			
U Atter-Martin	16	to	14
J Bradley	3	to	3.5
D Cross	4.5	to	5
C Edwards	10	to	9
Mrs A Martin	16	to	14
D Mills	11	to	10
H Pritchard	5	to	4.5

Bath Club November
 Miss L Bradforth 3.5 to 3

Inter-County Organisers

County Organisers for the Inter-Counties, 1999 are as follows. Should you qualify to play for a county (see fixture book) you should contact the relevant person below.

* indicates to be confirmed by the name in question

AVON	
Ray Ransom	0117 968 2255
BEDFORDSHIRE	
John Wheeler	01525 860134
BERKSHIRE	
Joe King	0118 9481004
Joe.W.King@oslo.pgs.com	
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Brian Storey	0161 941 6696
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Brian Smith	01395 516652
DORSET	
Les Butler	01202 386441
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chris@butedock.demon.co.uk	
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Ian Maugham	01242 234737
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Chris Bennett	0121 455 6426
YORKSHIRE	
David Coates	01905 427040

CLUB FOCUS On Kenilworth

Although an established croquet club came late to the historic Warwickshire town of Kenilworth its activities are now firmly fixed in the area's sporting calendar. The progress made since the club was formed in 1989 bears witness to the enthusiasm and ambition of a small team of pioneers. So sound is the club's position - with a growing membership - that it was able to assist, including the use of two lawns for additional matches, with October's 3rd World Golf Croquet Championships in neighbouring Royal Leamington Spa last year.

Nine years ago the original founders - Doug Taylor, then president of Kenilworth Lawn Tennis and Squash Club, and nine other members of the club - were presented with a unique opportunity. The Tennis Club having extensively invested in resurfacing its playing areas had left two grass courts redundant. It was on these foundations that the first lawn was created and croquet commenced in 1989 with a series of coaching sessions by Chris Hudson.



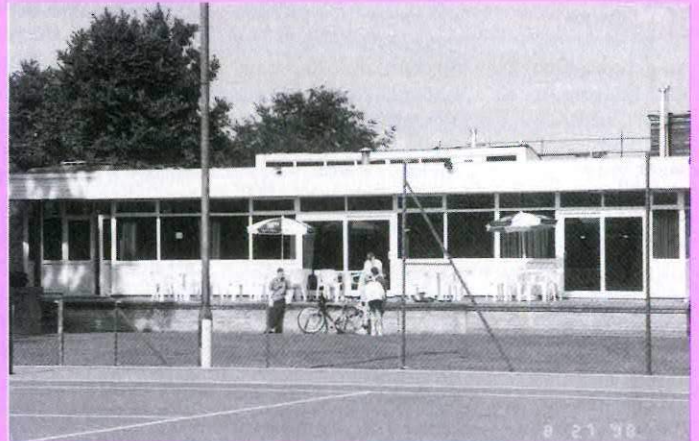
Chris Hudson and Doug Taylor 'help' club members Peter Dennis and John Loader erect the pavilion.

As interest in the game grew the Kenilworth members travelled to Oxford University in 1993 for their first ever away match. This has now become an annual event marking the start of the club's season and has been instrumental in encouraging a growing number of regular home and away fixtures.

It was inevitable, therefore, that if the Club was to attract more members and be able to enter tournaments, a second lawn was needed. This was started from scratch in April, 1995 with the members toiling to remove an encroaching embankment, clearing the ground, adding 100 tons of topsoil, levelling off and sowing the grass seed just twelve months later. The lawn was opened for competition in August 1996. A grant of £500 had been made by the CA to assist the project, but the physical 'blood sweat and tears' work was carried out by 'Doug's Army', as they had become known. And these volunteers have continued ever since with a planned programme for maintaining and improving lawns.

Now with a membership exceeding 30, the Club has joined the West Midlands Federation Leagues, stages Federation matches, organises handicap events and members compete for the St. George's and Taylor trophies.

While Kenilworth Croquet Club benefits from the extensive facilities of the large lawn tennis club it was also recognised that to cater for a greater number of events a near-lawn amenity was needed. It was apparent that a pavilion adjacent to the lawns was essential for the club's future development and with the main club's approval the croquet members embarked upon a programme which included designing,



Kenilworth Lawn Tennis and Squash Club provides all the facilities required by a thriving sports venue.

making and finally erecting the pavilion, everything being completed by June last year.

By offering open invitations to people to 'come and try croquet', and reinforcing this by arranging annual 'teach-ins' of local groups such as the WI, local schools and so on the Club is seeking to increase its membership substantially.

From its inception the croquet club has received the full backing of its parent Lawn Tennis and Squash Club. It is, however, the efforts of the croquet club members in constructing a new lawn and pavilion which have brought full credibility to the croquet section. Its members now regard the achievements to date with some satisfaction and look forward with optimism to future developments.



Tennis Club President David Burton, runs a hoop at the opening of the new pavilion in June. (Photo Marcus Mingin, Leamington Observer.)