

# *The Croquet Gazette*

*Issue 262*

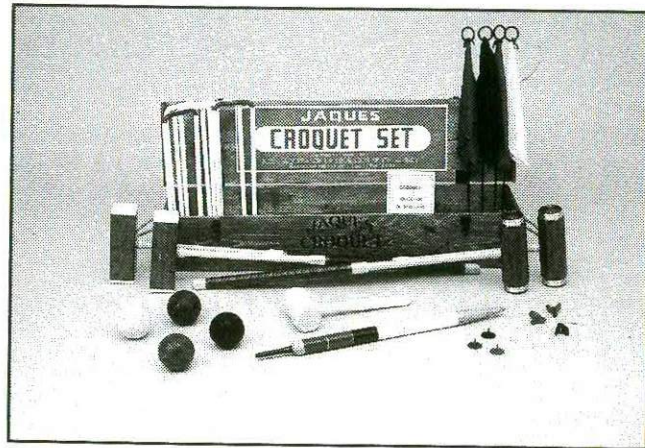
*July 1999*



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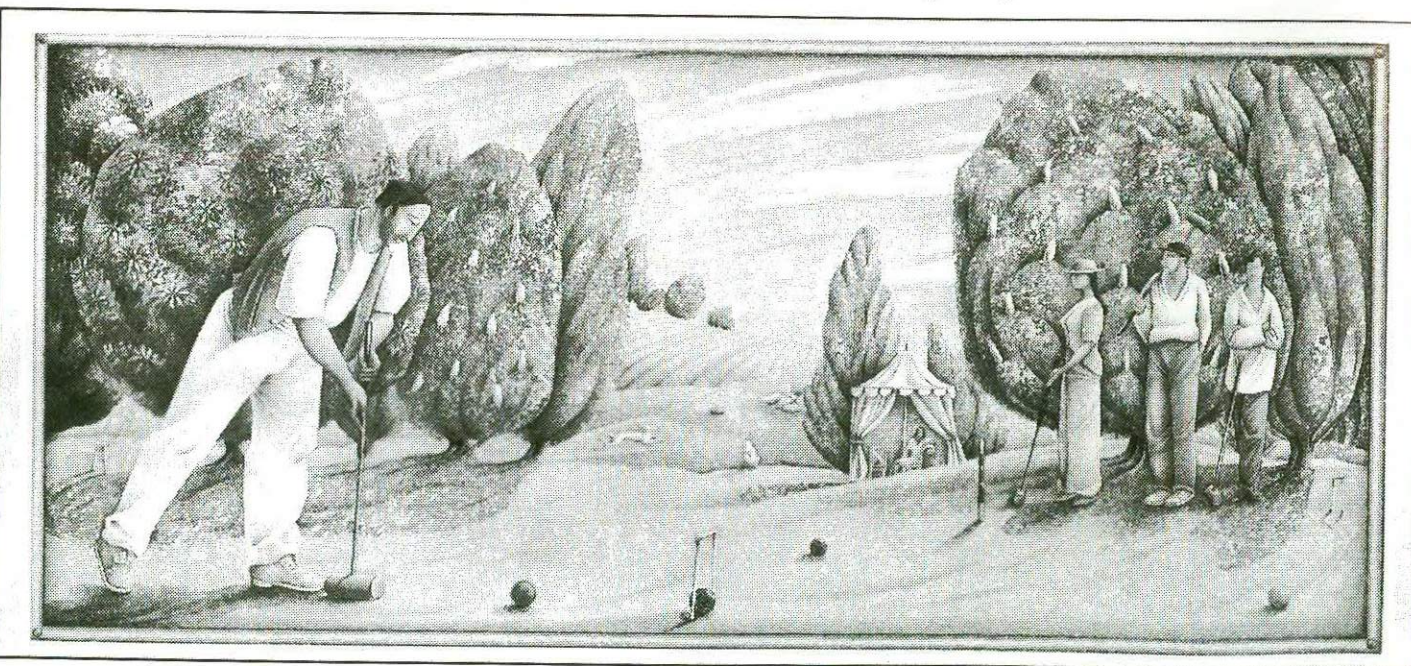


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**PUBLICATION DETAILS**

The Croquet Gazette is published six times per year in January, March, May, July, September and November.

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**Advertising**

Full details of all advertising rates and data are available at all clubs as well as through the Editor of the Gazette and the Secretary of the CA.

**Specific Questions & Queries**

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

**Copy Details**

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

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

**Tournament 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.

**Delivery Queries**

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

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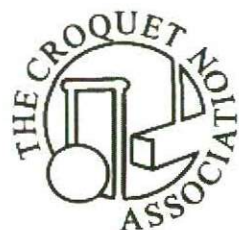
**To Golf Croquet Players & Tournament Secretaries**

Help us to help you to make 1999 a record year by sending in your entries now and avoiding disappointment of not getting in the events by your late entry. See the Fixture Book for events and costs.

Encourage your friends to play. The Golf Committee are doing their best to increase Tournaments and interest in the game - We want your support.



**THE CROQUET GAZETTE**



Issue 262 July 1999 £3.00

**Front Cover:** To the winner the spoils. The trophies from the Men's & Women's Championships. LtoR: Women's silver challenge bowl, Men's challenge cup, Du Pre trophy, mixed doubles silver trophies, gold caskets (one to each of the Men's and Women's champion), the gold locket for the winner of the Women's Championship.

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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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The Golf Croquet committee wishes to thank Keith Smith for the use of his golf croquet cartoon in the Croquet Gazette.

**Editorial**

*No more sticking plasters*

Not having the exact figures, I would hazard a guess to say that almost two hundred players gathered for the Inter-Counties this year and enjoyed the friendly competition and camaraderie that event offers to players. There was also a team wishing to compete, Devon, but unable to do so as they had been the unlucky losers in a ballot between three teams for the two remaining places, the ballot being necessary because of the format of the event and the availability of lawns.

To some this appeared to be a little strange, as an English county was being denied access to an event which had teams from Dublin, the Channel Islands and Glamorgan - hardly good English counties. The Tournament Committee's response to this problem is that they are in future to give preference to counties within the domain of the CA (England, Northern Ireland, Isle of Man, Channel Isles). This therefore would give preference to Devon, or any other English county, over both Glamorgan and Dublin in future years, should the event be oversubscribed.

This 'solution' is in fact no solution at all, we are simply denying one county instead of another, preferably one outside of the Croquet Association's domain. This might be all well and good if the CA were in the business of 'ethnic cleansing in croquet', but they are in the business of promoting the game, so surely they should be looking for a solution that can allow as many counties as wish to enter to play in the event.

Of course it is just possible that the solution to the problem may not be palatable to everyone. The perfect solution would be to split the event into two separate events, so allowing anyone who entered to play, plus the flexibility of being able to play on one site and playing the event as a Swiss, or continuing the all play all format. The opposition to this comes from those who enjoy it as it is, with that unique atmosphere



of any large event gathering. Would those people still feel the same way if it were their team being denied access to the event one wonders?

So let's hope that the Tournament Committee eventually, as there is no need to rush this decision, decide that cure is better than prevention, we have had enough sticking plaster rules applied to this event over the years. Let's keep 'the counties' friendly, uncomplicated, but above all, open to all who wish to play.

Gail Curry

**PLEASE NOTE**

**All tournament reports to be posted to the editor between Sunday 11th July and Sun 29th August should be sent to the following address:**

**Mr T Backhouse  
St Margarets Cottage  
Polgooth  
St Austell  
Cornwall PL 26 7AX**

**Any other contributions to the Gazette should be sent as normal to the editor's address**

**CA Appointments**

**Secretary of the Croquet Association**

The Croquet Association is currently seeking to appoint a new Secretary to the Association

If you feel the position of Secretary to the Croquet Association may be of interest to you, please contact Bill Arliss, Chairman of the CA on 01273 728204

**Chairman's Column**

I have just spent this last weekend managing the South East Federation doubles team tournament. There were 16 teams entered each with two doubles pairs and over the weekend we played a five round Swiss with a total of 80 games. Whilst there were many of the stalwarts from the region playing for their clubs, it was very pleasing to see quite a few first time tournament players and a few youngsters. Although the entry qualifications are very flexible and allow players to change from day to day, in fact round to round, to ensure the smaller clubs can maintain a full team, the competition is always fierce. Play may not always be in accordance with the best tactical standards but the enjoyment certainly seems to be there as witnessed by the steady increase in entries each year

Such tournaments as this, together with the local leagues, are the backbone of the various Federations' playing activities and I believe are often underrated and in fact scorned by some of the more experienced players. We must not forget that these events are the breeding ground for our major tournament players of the future and must be supported at all costs if our game is to grow.

For me this time of the year gets known in our household as the "If only season". I have already played a number of tournaments and have now lost count of the number of times I have finished a game and said to myself 'If only I had not blobbed that last hoop' or 'If only I had made that last four foot roquet', things would have been vastly different. At these times we tend to forget all the other times we did make that last hoop and that last roquet and ended up buying the drinks and one has to accept that we can not all be Robert Fulford.

Throughout the season I am now lucky to be able to visit many of our clubs for tournaments and matches and naturally I play on a whole variety of surfaces. In our old and well established clubs we usually find well manicured and reasonably flat surfaces whereas other have to put up with some incredible slopes and very bumpy greens. In most cases of the poorer surfaces the finances are simply not there to improve matters and one must congratulate the clubs on being able to function with their minimum facilities. However one specific issue I would ask all clubs to address is the hoop placings and settings. It is usually not a matter of cost but of discipline. Playing with hoops that are two or three times over the maximum limit and are sitting in massive 'rabbit runs' does not help club members prepare for tournaments and may give false impressions of a player's performance. Don't forget the automatic handicap system says all games that go on a handicap card should be played with correct hoop settings.

Continued on page 14

**News & Information**

**E-mail croquet directory**

John Taylor maintains a list of over 500 e-mail addresses for croquet players around the world. Are you on the list? Do you want to be? Check at (<http://members.aol.com/taylorsca>) to see if your name is included and if the information is correct.

**Kent Reliance Building Society extend their sponsorship of croquet in the county**

The Kent Reliance Building Society, the first major sponsor of croquet in Kent, is continuing their investment in the growing sport of croquet for a second season in 1999.

Their support comes at a time of significant growth, with croquet clubs expanding playing facilities and new clubs opening.

The sponsorship is targeted at grassroots development giving more opportunities for people of both sexes and all ages throughout Kent to experience the pleasures and frustrations of this most typically English of amateur sports.

The School Days at Medway and Ramsgate run under the supervision of the Regional Development Officer will give 50 children a first class introduction to the game and new clubs at Brenzett and Kemsing have received assistance in the purchase of equipment.

The Kent Reliance Building Society sponsorship also extends to the successful Kent Golf Croquet Team, winners in 1998 of the National Title, The Golf Croquet Inter-County Championship.

**Inter-Counties entry change**

Entries for the 2000 Inter-Counties tournament should be received by 1 September 1999. This will enable the Tournament Committee to resolve any entry problems at their autumn meeting and announce the list of acceptances by November, thus allowing teams to make their accommodation arrangements in good time.

**Golf croquet growth requires more venues**

Interest in golf croquet has been stimulated by the new rules on trial this year, judging by the debates and discussions going on around the country. If interest in golf croquet tournaments continues to increase, as it is hoped and expected, then more venues will be required for new and existing tournaments. If your club has two or more courts available for two or more consecutive days for a tournament next year please contact Brian Judson of the Golf Croquet Committee, so that arrangements can be finalised for next year's events and entered into the fixture book.

You can contact Brian on 01494 - 890210.

**Parkstone Tournament Entries**

Please note that Tournament Secretary Kathleen Priestley of Parkstone has recently changed address to:  
8 Regents Court, 10 Balcombe Road, Branksome Park, Poole, Dorset, BH13 6DY.  
Tel: 01202 - 757790  
Mobile: 0870 1336070

**NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**The AGM will take place at 11am on Saturday 16 October 1999 at the Hurlingham Club. All Associates are welcome to attend. A detailed agenda will follow in August.**

**Notice of motions intended and nominations for Council, proposed and seconded by Associates, are to be with the Secretary by 1 August.**

**Paul Campion  
Secretary**



# Letters...

Dear Editor

I was saddened when playing at Budleigh last week to learn of the death of an old friend, and vexed at not having written to his widow.

May I request that all Club Secretaries advise the CA Office of deaths, and that you in turn publish the names and clubs.

I believe that this information will be of concern to tournament players, and I am annoyed with myself for not having addressed the matter before.

Hamish Hall

## Chastleton House Memorial to Walter Jones Whitmore

Dear Editor

Readers may remember that in Gazette No.258 I wrote about Chastleton House in Oxfordshire, the house of the great Victorian croquet pioneer, Walter Jones Whitmore. The house has been taken over by the National Trust, and it seemed to me that we now had a golden opportunity to put up a memorial plaque to Whitmore, who did more than any other single person to establish agreed laws for croquet and turn it into a true sport.

The news is that my call to arms has been taken up. It fitted in with the thinking that had been going on independently, so that the timing could not have been better. The result is that soon there will be not only a plaque but also leaflets about the man and the game available to thousands of visitors to the house. Furthermore the croquet lawn where Whitmore played has been restored and will be brought up to playing standard in time for the unveiling ceremony.

That ceremony will take place this summer, when John Solomon, our President, will unveil the plaque. It will be oval in shape and

sited on the wall on the steps leading to the lawn. It will record Whitmore's dates and his principal achievement, the standardisation of the Laws.

The co-operation between the CA and the Trust on this project has been nothing less than magnificent. Many people have been involved in negotiations over the winter to bring about this good news, not least Martin Drury, the Director General of the National Trust, and Bill Arliss, our Chairman. I hope we can publish news and pictures of the opening ceremony in a future edition of the Gazette and also provide readers with some information on when and where to see the results.

Neil Williams

## Croquet, a weighting game?

Dear Editor

Early season, grassy and soft lawns, 3lb mallet, August, lawns like polished glass, same 3lb mallet. Why?

Instead of having difficulty adjusting to differing conditions, why not just have one light mallet and adjust its weight? Pop round to your local tyre fitter and he will sell you several strips of self adhesive flat wheel weights for about the cost of a pint. These can be separated into smaller 10 and 5 gramme sections an added or removed as you wish.

A few problems for ROTS perhaps? Do the weights have to be the same either end? May one add or remove (accidentally?) weights during a turn? May one have weights in any position (except the end face, obviously) of a mallet?

I shall be interested to hear players' results and opinions.

Hugh Smorfitt

## Corrections & apologies

Dear Editor,

A couple of errors crept into my Talking Croquet piece on Bernard Neal (Issue 261, May, 1999). I should be grateful if you would publish these corrections:

1. It was, of course, Bernard Neal who said of John Solomon that "he was the one to beat", not the other way round as printed in the Gazette (p.15).

2. The last paragraph of the interview lost an important section. The paragraph should have read: "Just as we are hearing more from John Solomon these days (in, for example, his recent lecture), and we meet people at tournaments who are benefiting from his help and encouragement, so we need to mine the richness of Bernard Neal's experience, a glimpse of which he gave me between games this summer at Cheltenham."

Neil Williams

Sincere apologies to Neil & Bernard for what must have been an error on my behalf. Ed.

## Golf Croquet - World Rules

Dear Editor

I would welcome comments from players who have played the new rules. Any "comments" will be collated and considered by the Golf Croquet Committee at the end of the season. Initial feedback in the South East is positive with minimal confusion over the interpretation of the rule book.

Don Beck, Golf Croquet Committee  
01634 407266  
dbeck@iee.org

## The cost of croquet in 1999

Dear Editor

Is it not time we reviewed the true costs incurred in running a club and maintaining the lawns? What should the CA hire charge be for a lawn? (Certainly more than the current £10 per day.) A new lawn costs over £10000 to build and about £1000 a year to maintain. Tournament entry fees are generally subsidised by lunches / bar sales. Some are less than £5 per player per day!

Most clubs would benefit from an increase in

income and I would suggest a review is long overdue.

Don Beck

## A warm welcome awaits you in Cornwall

Dear Editor

Over the past five years, largely through the efforts of Tony Backhouse, we have been attempting to get an active croquet club going in Cornwall. However, although we have formed the Cornwall Croquet Club it is hard to hold the interest of members with no full lawns to play on. Tony has negotiated with a number of organisations (golf clubs, hotels etc) with sufficient room for two full lawns, even to the extent of applying for planning permission (turned down!), but these efforts have as yet failed to bear fruit. At present there is a new glimmer of hope, but we still have some way to go.

In the meantime some of us play at Plymouth and recently, in the May tournament at Budleigh Salterton we made a good showing in the doubles. However, a minimum of two hours each way (and usually considerably more) for a game of croquet does limit the necessary competitive experience one can gain, as well as the necessary interaction with other players.

I am lucky enough to have my own short lawn overlooking the Helford River at Budock Vean, near Falmouth. If any CA members are in Cornwall and would like to give us a game and, most of all provide us with some experience of how the game is played on the other side of the Tamar, you would be most welcome.

Malcolm Hooper

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Email medco@globalnet.co.uk

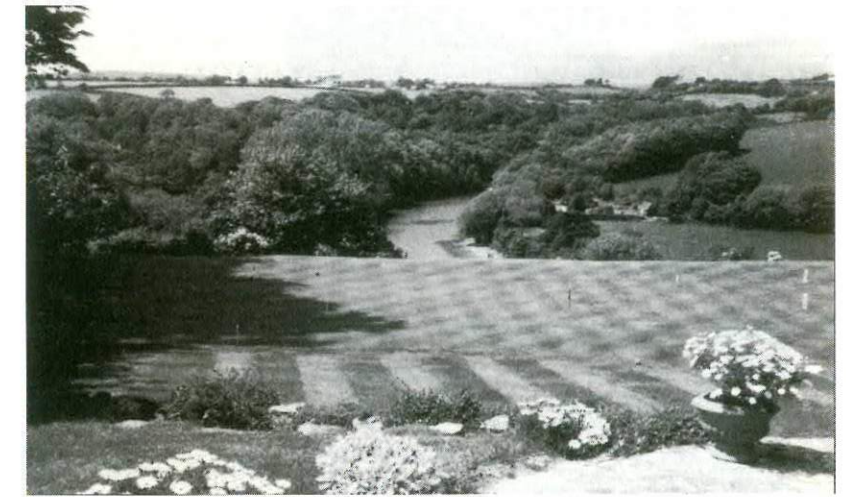
## Calling time on short croquet?

Dear Editor

I am not sure where John Hansen plays most of his croquet (Issue 261), for even though I can find much with which I would agree in his letter, I cannot subscribe to his general feeling that the short game should be 'consigned to history' - I think he has overlooked the difficulties of those clubs with limited lawn space. The short game has been the saviour of my club (York) which, currently, only has one full sized lawn and were it not for the short game, it would be quite impossible to accommodate all those who wish to play - short lawn double-banked doubles is a not unknown situation on club nights.

It is, of course, very frustrating for those of us who prefer the full lawn game, but since most of our members tend to go along with Bernard Neal's assessment of golf croquet (Issue 261), John's inference that the latter is a 'suitable introduction' would not find many takers up here!

At the same time, I share his view that the different 'wiring' rule compared with the full lawn game is (paraphrasing a bit) a fundamental nonsense; but this is not the only aspect of the short game which makes it somewhat less than



The view that awaits Cornish visitors.

perfect as a proper introduction to the 26pt game. I have no quarrel with the 14pt format and it has undoubted advantages for those with limited time availability; but where I do think changes might be beneficial is in the universality of 'full bisque' play on the short lawn which is not realistic in relation to most full lawn competitive play.

We have therefore come up with several unofficial alternatives which do get a bit closer to the real thing, all of which can be played double banked with those playing the 'official' short game. Firstly, we often play short lawn on a strict handicap basis (i.e. handicap difference); secondly, some of us elect to play a proper 26pt game on the short lawn (again based on bisque difference) taking some 2/3 of our full lawn handicap as the basis of bisque calculations. Thirdly, it can be quite challenging to play 'level' on the short lawn, either 14pt or 26pt. What all of these unofficial variants do achieve is to get closer to the feel of the full lawn game and, speaking purely personally, I find that more helpful in the context of the full lawn game, given that our particular restricted space problem does not allow as much full lawn play as some of us would like.

I would therefore like to suggest that rather than abandon the short game, I offer the following changes for debate in this journal, and, hopefully, official adoption in some measure by the CA:

- 1) The official size of the short lawn, while retaining the 16yd x 24yd option where so desired, be alternatively defined as half the size of a full lawn (i.e. 17.5yd x 28 yd), this being the *de facto* norm in most cases.
- 2) The wiring rule to be the same as that of the full game.
- 3) 'Full bisque' play to be merely one of several options available in terms of formal competition - i.e. again as per full lawn - the others being, of course, conventional handicap and level play.
- 4) Either 14pt or 26pt games (in all their variations) to be officially acceptable, albeit that the 14 pt formula is likely to be the most commonly adopted version.

I think that these changes would take care of most of John Hansen's points (with most of which I generally concur), not to mention having considerable psychological benefit to those beginners who turn to golf croquet simply because they are utterly intimidated by the sheer size of the full lawn in relation to the subtleties of the Association game. Indeed, rather than abandon the short game as he suggests, I would prefer to see those clubs which are fortunate enough to have a multiplicity of full lawns at their disposal devoting more time to rather than ignoring the existence of short croquet. Based on my own experience, it is probably the best way by which beginners can 'play themselves in' and, if suitably modified as I have outlined, can still be a challenge to the more experienced.

David Jenkinson

## Jumping the gun?

Dear Editor

A Henley we have just hosted the regional semi-finals of the golf croquet championships, using the new WCF rules. Even with 12 experienced players however, the courts show evidence of incorrectly played jump shots.

Jump shots, under the new rules, are essential (and personally I love them) but in the club we ban them in order to protect the sward.

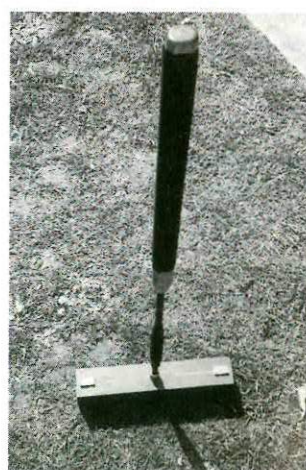
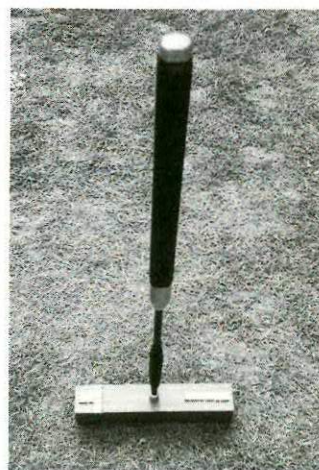
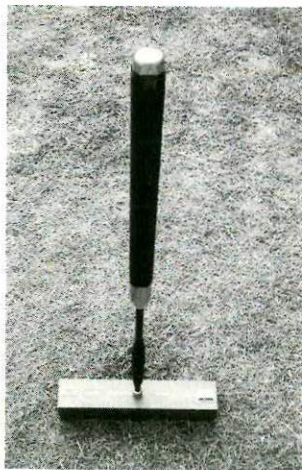
May I suggest that the WCF considers the following amendment to the rules:

'A ball which has only partially run a hoop can only score a point if its run is completed either by its being propelled by its partner ball or by the striker in a later turn.'

This would eliminate the need for a great deal of jumping.

Finally may I express my joy that the Croquet Association has finally woken up to the value of the Golf Croquet game. Many years have been wasted in attempting to popularise Association croquet rather than encourage the Golf game as a lead in, for some, to the enjoyable but loner's game.

R S Eades





## IN TOUCH WITH THE WORLD CROQUET FEDERATION

The regular communication update by WCF Secretary General, Chris Hudson

### Topics for the new WCF Management Committee

WCF President-elect, Australian Tony Hall, has wasted no time in calling the first meeting of the new WCF Management Committee. It is to meet at Ripon Spa on 1st August, the day the new members take office. On the agenda will be the forward championship schedule and the assessment of championship bids from member associations, comments received on the WCF's recent policy document on its relationship with regional bodies, the election of the Secretary-General and Treasurer for the forthcoming period, new membership applications, a draft document on WCF communications policy, and the setting up of a small administrative committee to manage the "Friends" Trust Fund.

Here is some background information on some of the matters the Committee will discuss.

All WCF member associations have been sent a tentative championship schedule up to the year 2006 and asked to confirm bids for proposals to stage world championships each year in various countries. The schedule covers association croquet, golf croquet and 14-point association croquet championships. Generally the WCF's policy is to encourage as many championships as possible, but to ensure that there is an interval of at least one year between two championships of the same sort.

The WCF's policy document on Regional Groups was circulated to member associations earlier this year, and contains three basic proposals.

1. The formation of regional groups should be encouraged.
2. Regional Groups, where they exist, should be part of the WCF structure, and not separate organisations.
3. The WCF Constitution should be expanded to include details governing the modus operandi of Regional Groups.

Having all organisations governed by the same Constitution ensures conformity on such things as requirements to be met by prospective members; definitions of countries and "jurisdictions"; qualifications to play for a country; and policies on drugs and race relations.

To implement this policy, the WCF is proposing that membership of regional groups should be restricted to WCF members, and that the WCF Constitution should be extended to include whatever amendments or additions are required to cover Regional Groups. It has been suggested that the sub-committee formed to carry out this work might be the Management Committee of the European Federation.

With nearly 100 "Friends" now enrolled towards its target of 250, the WCF "Friends" Trust account is growing significantly. The WCF Management Committee has always held the view that the "Friends" funds should be kept entirely separate from the WCF's current account, and that only interest from the "Friends" account should be used to augment the WCF's annual income. The Management Committee is now considering how the "Friends" account should be managed, and is considering the possibility of setting up a committee of "Friends" to do this.

WCF Achievements to date.

The occasion of a new Committee taking office is an appropriate time to review the WCF's achievements since its inception in 1986.

1. Membership  
The WCF has grown from 12 "Founder" members in 1986 to 20 members today.
2. Championships

The WCF has staged 10 world championships to date (7 association & 3 golf croquet). These have been held at venues in Australia, England, Italy, Egypt, France, and U.S.A. A team championship is planned for 2000.

#### 3. Rules

The WCF has drawn up a new set of Golf Croquet Rules to provide a common basis for international competition.

#### 4. Newsletter

The WCF publishes an 8 page newsletter every 6 months. 1000 copies are circulated to member associations, ranked players, WCF "Friends", and international contacts.

#### 5. Website

A WCF website has been established at: <http://www.worldcroquet.u-net.com>. It provides details of what the WCF does, past and future championships, world rankings, information about the "Friends" scheme, and a whole lot more.

#### 6. Fund Raising

WCF world championships have attracted over £100,000 of sponsorship. These funds have resulted in publicity for national associations and the provision of improved playing facilities such as new courts and clubhouse extensions. Over 90 WCF "Friends" have donated over £100 each to help finance international croquet. The total target the WCF aims to raise through this scheme is £25,000 sterling.

#### 7. Working Parties

WCF-appointed sub-committees have coordinated matters such as the Rules, Player Rankings, the Training and Qualification of International Officials, and Regional activities.

#### 8. Communications

The existence of the WCF has brought about much improved communication between national associations, through circulation of the WCF's list of international contacts and the use of modern technologies such as email, fax, and the internet.

#### 9. Publications

The WCF has produced a number of booklets to help WCF member associations promote world croquet and to record experience gained so far in staging world championships.

#### 10. Credibility

Setting up the WCF as the world governing body has given croquet international credibility. World Championships organised by the WCF and its member associations have given status to the sport.

#### 11. Publicity

WCF World Championships have provided excellent opportunities to generate media coverage in host countries.

#### 12. Playing skills

The effect of WCF World Rankings has been to raise playing skills enormously.

#### 13. Officials

The WCF provides a framework within which its member associations can coordinate the training and examination of Referees, Managers, and other Championship Officials.

### New President to visit all member associations during his term of office.

Tony Hall, as the WCF's new President, is planning to visit every member country during his two-year term of office, and this should help considerably to improve communications between the WCF and its members.

# Talking Croquet...

By Neil Williams

Many readers of the Gazette may not know any details about the careers or views of some of the people who have made a significant contribution to the game, in whatever shape or form. Our chances of seeing them, let alone talking to them, are necessarily few. It is hoped these conversations will bring them a little closer, so that we may benefit from their advice or experience.

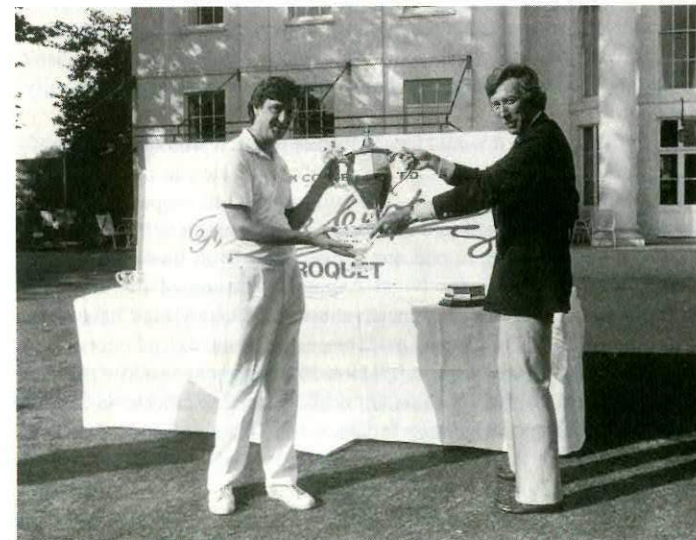
## No. 3 NIGEL ASPINALL

Nigel Aspinall and I meet at Roehampton, his home club, where he plays tennis and golf and - but only occasionally - croquet. He gave up competitive play 4 years ago. We talk in the Garden Room while down below the October (1998) End-of-Season tournament progresses on those perfect lawns.

Nigel's rise to the top was nothing short of spectacular. Arriving as a new member at the Bristol club in 1965 at the age of 19 or so (he was an undergraduate at Bristol university), he was given a handicap of 6. He had, he explained, played a bit at home from the age of 12 or so. His father had bought a second-hand croquet set, and the family had played on a former grass tennis court - despite two Victoria plum trees. They made up their own rules.

In Bristol he discovered the real game. "I could," he says, "hit one ball on to another, at, say, 10 or 15 yards, and I think I had a basic idea of tactics. But I was playing roll shots inaccurately, and I think I was still playing the sequence game."

A few weeks after arriving at Bristol his handicap was reduced to



Winner of the President's Cup in 1985



3. He had time before the end of the season for a weekend tournament at Cheltenham and a visit to Parkstone in the September. Next season, with a handicap of 1, he played in the Opens at the suggestion of a fellow club member, John Simon. Together, they won the Doubles. Both were then picked for the President's Cup, and Aspinall came joint second to William Ormerod.

He had gone from first tournament to President's Cup in 10 months. There were no lessons on the way. All he did was ask a few questions. "You pick it up like that, really." Neither did he ever enjoy the luxury of fistfuls of bisques.

The record books show that, having risen to the top so effortlessly, he stayed there for over 20 years. In that time he won the Men's twice, the Open 8 times and the President's an unequalled 11 times. In one particularly purple patch he won the Open 4 times in a row, and he won 4 President's back to back. He played in the MacRobertson Shield 4 times, from 1969 to 1986. Remember, too, that when he wasn't actually winning championships, he was usually runner-up.

I can see why Prichard in his *The History of Croquet* calls Nigel a 'practical, match-winning machine', and I put it to him that he was more or less unbeatable for some years. "No," he says, "not quite unbeatable. No. There were all sorts of people who would occasionally beat me, and equally there were one or two people who found me - um - difficult."

So what, I ask, is the key to success? "I think I had the ability to concentrate very well. If you are concentrating 100% it takes wild horses to drag you off your stride."

Another quality also emerges: self-belief. And as we talk about John Solomon - the player who gains the greatest praise from Aspinall - one technical factor must be added to the list: "naturalness" of swing, a quality which both he and Solomon showed to perfection.

"Solomon was the best, I reckon. He had the most titles and perhaps the most natural swing. But Hicks and Cotter were very close to him. It's also interesting to see that on the three occasions when Cotter and Solomon tied for first place in the President's, Cotter won all three play-offs."

When I ask about his own first championship game (in 1966) Nigel recalls that it was against Humphrey Hicks, and the memory remains sharp. Nigel had "sailed away" with the first game, and in the second was well on the way to victory, having pegged Hicks out. The great man then hit what Nigel was sure was a wired ball and finished the game.

It would be interesting to hear various views now on how the third game should have been approached. What actually happened was this:

"The third game started just like the second. He was for 4-back and peg before I'd scarcely started. And again I hit the last lift. And again I thought, 'Right, I should have won that second game'. So I went round



and pegged him out again. And in fact I did a whole lot better, and it was only because I got hampered at Rover...."

Nigel pauses here. He can still see the position, after all those years, etched on his memory.

"Wretched ball. And there was no way of playing even a fairly sensible shot. The best thing I could do was retire to a neutral corner. Hicks hit a nine-yard shot from baulk, and since by then Rover was his hoop, too, he won the game."

He thinks he was at his peak round about 1975, when from the end of 1974 to 1976 he won 24 consecutive games in the President's. "I'd won some in 74, all in 75 and the first 5 or 6 in 76. It was Colin Prichard who broke my run."

Nigel tells me he believes in practising "a little", and he offers this advice on the subject: "Try to make it exciting. For example, I have a routine of 6-yard roquets, where you put 4 balls in a line and another 4 parallel 6 yards away. And the idea is that you hit as many consecutive shots as possible. Say you hit 3 in a row and then miss. You then have to zero your counter and start again. But this time - say a week later - you have to improve on three. As soon as you do, stop. Don't let it become boring. In other words, give yourself a target and improve on it."



Nigel in play during the Granada TV final in 1986

"To start with, the hoops are not numbered. If they were numbered, the viewer would be able to see where the next hoop was just from the picture, and therefore have an idea where the striker was proceeding. But the hoops are not numbered, and, in addition, the clip is hidden away during a break. I'm really putting myself in the shoes of the new viewer [or the casual spectator at any demonstration or recruitment event], who comes to it and thinks, 'What on earth is going on?'"

and the clip is put on only at the end of the turn. And, of course, there's no score board. So the viewer coming to the TV screen doesn't know the score, doesn't know who's ahead. Doesn't know anything. It's shrouded in secrecy. It really is."

Staying with this theme of the future of croquet, I am keen to hear Nigel's views on the range of new versions of the game. Does he see them as a false trail?

"Yes, I do. And it's partly for that reason that I shall never support the idea of Advanced play in Handicap games, or bisques in Advanced games."

So are there changes he would like to see in croquet?

"Oh yes. My mid-Atlantic rules. I'd like to borrow a couple of things from the American rules. For championship level players - say handicaps 1 or 2 and better - I would like to add two rules. The first is: if you run a hoop and your ball goes off, your turn ends. Second, if you rush or roquet a ball over the line, your turn would also end, except in the first stroke of the turn."

"So, for example, you can make a hit-in, or you can hit your own or an enemy ball off and over the boundary. But the idea of sending the ball over the line at any other time lacks subtlety, and there isn't really any need to do it. I think that would add an extra bit of difficulty and control."

"And I think it would have a further point: it would give the out-player an opportunity to be a bit more defensive. He can put a ball in a corner, but at present it's not too difficult to get it out - especially if you are allowed to rush a ball into the corner without any touch or control."

It seems fitting to end our conversation with those two words "touch" and "control", for Nigel Aspinall was one of the supreme technicians of our game. His incisiveness and fluency may have been "machine-like", but, unlike any machine, he sought to extend our notions of the possible. To see Nigel in full flow in his hey-day, usually playing with a battered old mallet - one from his father's second-hand set, he told me - was to see croquet perfection.



The 1986 MacRobertson Shield Team L to R Stephen Mulliner, Mark Avery, Colin Irwin, William Prichard, David Openshaw and Nigel Aspinall.

I mention that John Solomon sees the biggest single improvement in the game as being in the one-ball shots, particularly hitting-in. "Well perhaps, but he was pretty good at that himself, and I'm wondering really whether the margin, the percentage of improvement has been all that noticeable - scarcely measurable. I'm not sure I agree with him."

I ask why he gave up top-level play and learn that he was diagnosed as having dangerously high blood pressure. "And I reckoned it wasn't a good idea to increase the stress levels." Nigel then goes on to describe as movingly as John Solomon has done how his play was "going down hill anyway."

It wasn't that he felt the next generation breathing down his neck, but rather "It was more in myself. Confronted with a 2-yard hoop or even closer, your brain wants to do it but in the backswing something happens." And he describes the doubts setting in when faced with a cut rush or a 3-yard roquet. His mother, he tells me, was a very good pianist and teacher, but when she developed arthritic fingers she couldn't bear to play "at a reduced level". Rather than do that, she stopped altogether.

Does he think croquet will expand in the future?

"I think it will stay largely static. It is a bit of an esoteric game if you stand back and look at it with very plain, simple eyes. It's an odd game also as far as TV is concerned, because if you stop and think about it, it's shrouded in secrecy."

## Technical Matters

### What is a Mallet?

by Eric Solomon

In the March issue of Croquet Gazette Dave Kibble raises the question of what constitutes a legal mallet head. As everyone knows, or would guess, this topic has cropped up for donkey's years, and it is not as simple as it at first seems. One of the delights of Croquet is that it provides so much material for the mathematical and legal pedant. I think it was Robert Prichard who said "Pedantry is fun", and it is, provided the tongue is kept firmly in the cheek.

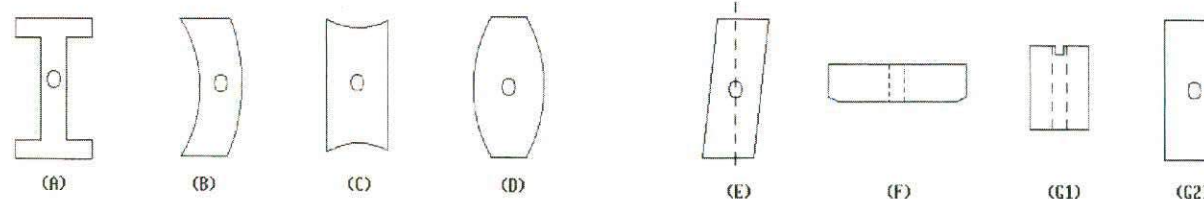
In my view the laws are far from watertight in the mallet specification department. For example, it is stated that end faces must be parallel, but parallel to what? They might be parallel only to each other, or parallel to the plane of the Greenwich meridian! Neither is it sufficient to say that the faces should be identical. Characteristics of the end face material are specified, but nothing is said about other materials in the head. Furthermore the laws say nothing about the overall shape.

The challenge is not only to provide a watertight definition of what constitutes a legal head, but to do so economically and preferably without unnecessarily difficult mathematics. But some recourse to mathematical concepts is unavoidable. This is to be expected - mathematics is by far the most precise language available to us. I propose the following which, although I have given it careful thought, might still be flawed. I wait to be shot down with happy anticipation.

#### A Geometrically Legal Head

*A mallet head shall be geometrically legal if, for an axis passing through the centroid of each end face, all complete planar cross sections perpendicular to this axis, and including material of the head, are congruent and have centroids coincident with the axis.*

'Congruent', of course, means identical in size and shape. Let us consider what would be ruled illegal by such a definition. Below are seven different mallet heads seen from relevant angles. Only (G), shown in two views, is legal.



Mallet (A) is illegal by virtue of the condition for a constant cross section. Mallet (B) has a constant cross section but is illegal because the axis does not pass through the centroid of every section. Mallet (C) represents the famous specimen with concave (parabolic) faces which exactly compensate for the head-twisting effect of the impulsive torque caused by off-centre striking of some particular strength. Sections of (C) which include part of an end face cannot be congruent to all other sections. Mallet (D) gives no advantage to a player, in fact is disadvantageous in

hampered strokes, but some early mallets looked like this. Mallet (E) has congruent cross sections for the dotted axis shown, but the axis does not pass through the centroid of each end face, so it is not legal. If the axis is rotated to pass through the centroids then the congruence condition is contravened for sections including part of an end face. Mallet (F) is shown in long section and represents a very long head with pronounced bevels aimed at avoiding court damage. Obviously the cross section is not constant so the mallet is not legal. The last example (G) has a deeply cut sight line but note that the proposed law above does NOT specify that the axis must be an axis of symmetry and in every respect the mallet shape is legal. The absence of a requirement for symmetry allows mallets to have an asymmetric, though constant, cross section including longitudinal grooves neither of which offer an advantage in hampered strokes. In particular, mallet heads of rectangular (non-square) section are perfectly legal.

The proposed law says nothing about planarity or parallelism of the end faces because these are guaranteed by the requirement for congruent cross sections.

#### Material Considerations

Apart from the geometrical characteristics which are the main concern here, a lot can be said about the material and construction of the head. The law is fairly adequate in ruling out end faces made of exotic materials such as rubber, diamond, and blanchmange. They must give no playing advantage over wood. But what about the body of the head? A rubber head with wooden end faces would give a considerable advantage for roll strokes because it would prolong the contact between ball and mallet. Such a mallet could be quite practical for other strokes. And may the head contain moving parts? Heads containing gyroscopic stabilisers and even liquids have been proposed, in a lighthearted vein - one hopes. Clearly the congruence requirement above would comprehensively rule out these. Other ideas have included various fixtures for improving the aim and helping with stop shots. Most are too silly to discuss - even here!

Rather than specifically referring to the end faces, I would propose that the laws should say:

*No materials in the mallet head should give a playing advantage over a solid wooden head.*

#### Shafts

The laws say nothing about mallet shafts. But these too might be shaped to help with hampered strokes. Surely they should be predominantly straight and perpendicular to the long axis of the head. Weighted sleeves, which can be slid down the shaft for roll strokes, have often been mooted but, thankfully, no one has had the nerve to appear with one. Perhaps it is

just a matter of time. I would suggest the following law:

*The shaft must be straight overall and set perpendicular to the centroidal axis of the head which passes through the end faces. Moveable parts may not be attached to the shaft.*

In the next issue I shall deal with the subject of special footwear for guiding the mallet swing, and complete with toecap mirrors for assisting the aim. On the other hand, perhaps I won't.



# The 1999 Inter-Counties Championships

## May 29th - 1st June

Report by Sue Mackay, photographs by Bill Arliss

Surrey won this year's Inter Counties in style, lifting the trophy for the first time since 1984. Their team of George Noble, Ian Bond, Chris Patmore, Terry Burge, Jeff Dawson, Graham Gale and Tony Mrozinski were obviously fired up by being dubbed perennial runners-up in a pre-tournament e-mail on the Nottingham list. Middlesex, similarly miffed at a perennial under-achievers tag, came in a close second. Both teams had 8 wins, but Surrey won one more game.

Colin Prichard played his 250th game in the Inter Counties for Sussex, where he now lives, appropriately enough against Middlesex, the county he first played for. Sadly Sussex did not fare so well in the competition, and were relegated to the second division along with Nottinghamshire and Lancashire. Lancashire only had two wins, but there was consolation in the fact that one of them was against Yorkshire - the first War of the Roses in the Counties. On the final day Cheshire beat Lancashire 3-0 in the local derby and plan to add the word, again, to the large banner in the Bowdon clubhouse.

The board that cannot tell a lie

Robert Fulford, playing for Essex, achieved two quintuple peels, but the second division saw most attempts at multiple peeling, as A class players were more often paired with higher handicapped partners. Mark Avery achieved a quintuple for Suffolk, cannon peeling his partner ball through rover and getting a perfect rush to the peg, and all this while the 'blonde bombshell' (better known as the 'blonde of Bowdon') juggled croquet balls on the south boundary! Matthew Burrow of the Channel Islands completed the peels of a quadruple but went for the deeper ball after running rover and just clipped his partner ball.

The Channel Islands were the surprise package in the second division. Last year they won the wooden spoon but they were undefeated at the end of the second day. Unfortunately they literally fell apart after that, as Tony Le Moignan broke the shaft of his mallet. Bedfordshire won the second division after a shaky start and gained promotion. Their team of Howard Bottomley, John Watson, George Collin, Tom Anderson, John



All smiles from Surrey at the end of a hard fought event.

Wheeler, Terry Mahoney, Rod Ashwell, John Bevington and Judy Anderson actually won three fewer games than Suffolk, but achieved one more match win. Suffolk also gained promotion, along with Northamptonshire, who finished level with Berkshire but gained promotion on the who beat whom rule.

Each team played at least one day at Compton, and there were several anguished cries as players had to adjust to the Jacques balls and lightning fast lawns after using Barlows on the slower Southwick lawns. Lawn 2 at Southwick appeared to have a resident squirrel, and one player was somewhat put off his stroke when he glanced up to find a cat impaling a mouse on top of the wall in front of him. Distractions at Compton on the Monday included a lacrosse game being played on the adjacent field and a weird heckler who kept shouting "Excuse me, why are you fiddling with your balls?"

As usual the Counties was a wonderful experience for all who took part. There was some excellent play and some appalling play, but every team had a win except Hertfordshire, who won the wooden spoon, and even they enjoyed themselves enormously. Special thanks are due to all the catering volunteers who provided such splendid food, and to Chris Williams for managing the event.

Division	Played Matches Games	
	Won	Won
<b>Division 1</b>		
Surrey	10 8	22
Middlesex	10 8	21
Gloucester	10 7	21
Essex	10 7	18
Cheshire	10 6	17
Avon	10 5	18
Dorset	10 4	14
Yorkshire	10 3	10
Sussex	10 3	9
Nottinghamshire	10 2	8
Lancashire	10 2	7
<b>Division 2</b>		
Bedfordshire	10 8	18
Suffolk	10 7	21
Berkshire	10 7	18
Northamptonshire	10 7	18
Channel Islands	10 6	20
Northumberland	10 6	17
Warwickshire	10 5	15
Glamorgan	10 3	13
Kent	10 3	11
Dublin	10 3	10
Hertfordshire	10 0	4

# Men's & Women's Championship 8 - 13 June 1999

Report by David Magee, photographs by Ian Vincent

Thursday morning dawned bright and fair for the start of the individual championships, reflecting the aspirations of the 23 men and 9 women who had entered the events. The only rain of the week fell as a light shower during the late morning and, though of little import in itself, it later proved to be a dark portent of a much more significant and noisy event, the thunderous clatter of falling seeds. First to fall was Men's number one, David Maugham, who was toppled before lunch by some inspired play from Don Gaunt. Soon thereafter two further seeds had departed; Steve Comish to David Harrison-Wood and Keith Aiton to Dave Kibble. Mark Avery arrived late and departed early, the victim of lawn 6 and some fortunate play by David Magee. Stephen Mulliner, Reg Bamford and Phil Cordingley all survived to prevent a complete wash-out and were later joined by Colin Irwin who eventually overcame stubborn resistance from Edward Dymock by winning the third game +3.

By comparison, Rosemary Gugan's transit through to the second round was relatively smooth, though the start of a series of extremely long and tiring days. The early rounds of the mixed doubles were played on Tuesday and Wednesday but, unfortunately, it had proved impossible to complete the event and the final of both the Draw and the Process had



Mixed Doubles Champions Dave Kibble & Louise Bradforth receiving their trophies from Bernard Neal.

had to be carried over. This involved a best of three between Rosemary and her partner, David Goacher and a new partnership of Louise Bradforth and Dave Kibble. The manager had insisted that the players started their doubles at the conclusion of their scheduled singles matches and played each evening until the outcome was decided. Thursday evening saw the first match completed, David & Louise winning by 5. A cloudy Friday evening meant that the second game had to be pegged down at 9.45pm and the game was resumed at 8.10pm on Saturday. A tense game, with time pressing, gave witness to the very rare sight of David Goacher actually running between shots! With little time left Dave Kibble pegged out both his and David Goacher's ball to leave Louise 3 points ahead of Rosemary whose ball was for hoop 4. Rosemary hit the lift and made a couple of hoops, then Louise made 1-back and, just before time was called, Rosemary made 1-back. After 10 minutes of cagey positioning and with total darkness approaching, the manager gave the players 5 minutes to resolve the impasse before he would intervene. Boldly, Louise took position giving Rosemary a ten yard shot which she unfortunately missed. The final drama involved Louise replying to Dave's gentle plea to "just run the hoop" with "if only I could see it". However run it she did to give the victory to the classic +1 on time.



David Magee, Bernard Neal and winner of the Women's Championship, Beatrice McGlen.

Meanwhile, back in the daylight, the remaining seeds were justifying their placings and progress through the rounds was much as expected. The last victim was Phil Cordingley who finally fell to a piece of crowd-pleasing play from Peter Trimmer. Phil had pegged out one of Peter's balls and was making cautious yet secure progress with his backward ball. He had, however, been unable to prevent Peter from reaching rover. Even when Peter ran rover Phil was not unduly dismayed as Peter was hampered by the hoop and Phil's balls were well hidden. But, Peter calmly jumps over rover and hits the peg - exit another seed. It became obvious that jumping was to be a theme. Reg Bamford cross-wired Ian Maugham at hoop 1 in laying up for his sextuple but saw Ian

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jump the hoop and complete the roquet. Unfortunately Ian then blobbed hoop 2 which allowed Reg to start and complete his sextuple. Stephen Mulliner also tried to join in on the act when he successfully jumped over the peg only to see his ball slide by the ball he was attempting to roquet.

David Maugham summarily despatched any opponent that the manager offered him in the Du Pre. The brutal, extravagant yet brilliant style of play that David has made his own was well illustrated in his match against Andrew Cowing. On an interesting opening by Andrew, ball in corner one, David went round to 3-back on the second turn and, when Andrew missed the lift, finished with a quadruple peel on the fourth turn.



Bernard Neal presenting Reg Bamford with the silver challenge cup for the Men's Championship

And so we reached the final day with Stephen Mulliner playing Reg Bamford in the Men's final, Rosemary playing Beatrice McGlen in

the Women's and David Maugham facing Keith Aiton in the final of the Du Pre. Perhaps it was the warm, rather humid day which ensured that, though the players may have been unhappy, the surprising mixture of exhilarating skill and inexplicable errors ensured that the spectators enjoyed a fair amount of drama and plenty of excitement. David Maugham won the Du Pre in two straight games. Reg Bamford, came back from two games down to win the Men's Championship 3-2, which left the crowd to savour the last nervy fifty minutes of the third game of the Womens Championship which Beatrice finally won by 2.

#### Results:

##### Mens Championship

###### 1st Round

Don Gaunt beat David Maugham +18tp, +24tp; David Harrison-Wood beat Steve Comish +17tp, -26tp, +26tp; David Openshaw beat David Goacher +25, -17, +3; Dave Kibble beat Keith Aiton -11, +10, +17; David Magee beat Bernard Neal +15, +15; Phil Cordingley beat Ian Vincent +23, +6; Andrew Cowing beat Ian Scott +2, +10; Stephen Mulliner beat Jerry Guest +26, +15.

###### 2nd round

Don Gaunt beat Paul Smith +2, +13; David Harrison-Wood beat Graham Gale +16, +5tp; David Openshaw beat Dave Kibble +14, +4; Reg Bamford beat Ian Maugham +26tp, +26sxp; David Magee beat Mark Avery +5tp, +17; Peter Trimmer beat Phil Cordingley +26, +4; Colin Irwin beat Edward Dymock +23, -3, +3; Stephen Mulliner beat Andrew Cowing +23, +19.

###### Quarter Finals

David Harrison-Wood beat Don Gaunt -26, +3, +14; Reg Bamford beat David Openshaw +26tp, +15tp; Peter Trimmer beat David Magee +5, -5, +26; Stephen Mulliner beat Colin Irwin +14tp, +21tp

###### Semi Final

Bamford beat Harrison-Wood -25, +26tp, +15tp, +19tp

Mulliner beat Trimmer +14, -25tp, +26tp, -11otp, +26

###### Final

Bamford beat Mulliner -17, -17tp, +26tp, +10, +16tp

###### 3rd Place play off

Trimmer beat Harrison-Wood

##### Women's Championship

###### 1st Round

Rosemary Gugan beat Audrey Whitaker +7, +21

###### 2nd Round

Rosemary Gugan beat Harris -8, +11, +10; Frances Ransom beat Eileen Magee +11, -6T, +9T; Louise Bradforth beat Pauline Healy +14, +10; Beatrice McGlen beat Kathleen Priestley +13, +11.

###### Semi Final

Gugan beat Ransom -14, +6, +6T; McGlen beat Bradforth +20, +17

###### Final

McGlen beat Gugan +19, -4, +2T

#### Chairman's Column, Continued from page 5

For those who have an Internet connection, I hope you have been able to look at our web pages. We are now well established and have the first three months' statistics. We have had an average of over 800 visits per month to our web site, the most popular being our laws and our product pages. I hope that the regular updating of all the CA competition results on the site is of help to you. I would like to expand the news pages with all the major tournament results as they occur and would welcome the assistance of a deputy editor to prepare the pages. Please get in touch by email if you are interested.

I know that opinions are already being formed about the use of the WCF golf rules and it is important we get feedback from all clubs who play golf croquet and specifically from all the members that play that format of the game. We will get the questionnaire out before the end of the season so please, Secretaries, please gather opinion in your clubs before you all hang your mallets up for the winter.

Bill Arliss

## Council Minutes

### Extracts from the unconfirmed Minutes of the Council Meeting on 20th March 1999

1. WH Arliss (Chairman), DL Gaunt (Vice-Chairman), JW Solomon (President), AJ Oldham (Vice President), RW Bray (Hon. Treasurer) and 15 other members of Council were present with PWP Campion (Secretary CA) in attendance.

2. Arising from the reports of the Standing Committees:-

2.1 At the request of the Federation Europeenne de Croquet a Golf Croquet championship will be organized by the CA in England in 1999 but it will be on a limited budget.

2.2 Dissatisfaction with changes in the CA logo having been expressed it was agreed to refer the design back to Paul Castell for reconsideration of the arrangement of the lettering.

2.3 The 1998 Accounts and the Subscription rates for 2000 were approved.

2.4 Development Grants have been made to Fittleworth, Tynemouth and Middlesborough clubs and grants totalling £1025 have been made to 9 clubs for schools projects. It was noted that several clubs in the East Midlands have applied for lottery grants under the 'Awards for All' scheme for local groups. The outcome, as an indicator for other areas, is awaited with great interest.

2.5 The Apps-Healey biennial award has been made to Nailsea; there were five contenders for the award. The Townsend Club award has not been made as there were no contenders for it.

2.6 Progress on the voucher scheme to recruit new Associates was reported. A publicity workshop for clubs will be held in October. Guidance booklets entitled 'Recruiting for Croquet', 'Publicity for Croquet' have been prepared and distributed in the South East Federation.

2.7 It was agreed that material from the 1999 Fixtures Book should be put on the CA web site.

2.8 The Tournament committee reported their intention to amend rules for entry to the Inter-Counties so that counties in England, Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man (i.e., the limited domain within which the CA claims control of the playing of croquet) shall have priority over other entries.

2.9 It was confirmed that all Golf Croquet Tournaments sponsored by the CA during 1999 will be run according to the latest WCF rules. The Golf Croquet committee also recommended that all club tournaments shall be run according to the same rules.

2.10 The Handicap Co-ordination Committee has decided:-

(1) the initial handicap test will be mandatory for all novices before they play in their first CA tournament.

(2) individual handicaps up to the maximum of 20 will be permitted in doubles play and the provision of different handicaps for singles and doubles play will be abolished.

2.11 It was agreed that Colin Irwin should be nominated as the CA representative on the WCF Management Committee. It was also agreed that the International Committee must present a recommendation regarding the World Championship in 2001 to the July meeting of Council.

2.12 A shield is to be acquired as the trophy for the Second Division of the Inter-Counties [Editorial note: it is understood that this will be a present to the CA from Paul Campion.] A redundant Trevor Williams Cup will be used as the trophy for the Seniors Championship. Manor House Croquet has offered to provide permanent mementoes for three years for the British Opens, President's Cup and the Barlow Bowl.

2.13 The Editorial Board presented a Statement about Editorial Policy, Publication Schedule and Responsibilities which was accepted by Council with the proviso that no attempt should be made for the present to change

the style of reporting of official matters from the Council.

3. Council considered the revised and reduced recommendations of the Constitutional Working Party.

3.1 The recommendations which relate to the introduction of club membership of the CA and the Federations and which had been revised in the light of comments made following their publication in the Gazette were agreed. These will now form the basis for a revision of the CA Rules (i.e. its constitution) and will be submitted by Council to the AGM in October.

3.2 Broad Approval was given to the revised proposals for:-

(1) The Council to meet three times a year, with an agenda determined largely by the Management Committee and which will concern itself mainly with policy and planning matters.

(2) The creation of a Management Committee to recommend policies and plans to Council, to manage the affairs of the Association and to ensure that agreed policies and plans are implemented by the standing committees of Council.

(3) An executive Committee responsible only for matters that require urgent attention between meetings of the Management Committee and for sensitive staff matters.

(4) Delegating executive powers to the Standing Committees enabling them to make decisions and act within agreed boundaries of policy and budgets.

3.3 Council agreed after further debate (and revising previous opinion) that the Chairman of Council should not also chair the Management Committee but that he should be chairman of the Executive Committee. Council reserved to itself the right to elect all members of the Management Committee.

3.4 Council decided not to change the position with regard to the right of Vice-Presidents to serve on Council.

4 The changes made to Tournament Regulations nos. 4, 5(h), 5(i) and 8(a) agreed at the December meeting and published in the January Gazette were duly ratified.

5 The deaths of five Associates and the resignation of forty-one Associates was reported. Council confirmed the election of 25 new Associates. As at 10 March 1999 the number of paid-up associates was stated to be 1647 including 63 overseas members. The attention of Council was drawn to the fact that recent recruitment figures were the lowest for many years.

6 Alan Oldham reported that Ashley Heenan had produced a small collection of articles written by the late Arthur Ross, the New Zealand international player, and had presented a copy of the booklet to the CA.

AJ Oldham

16 April 1999

## POINTS OF LAW


By Bill Lamb, Chairman, Laws Committee

From time to time people ring me with queries about the laws, usually to ask if they have done the right thing, but occasionally to say they are in the middle of a game and want to know what to do next.

One such query came from Colchester about lifts. The question was whether a player who has pegged a ball out is entitled to any lifts. That is not a question that can be answered with a straightforward yes or no. It all depends what kind of lifts and what kind of game it is.

There are two ways in which a player may become entitled to a lift at the start of a turn. The first is the wiring lift, when at the start of his turn, a player finds that one of his balls is wired from all other balls and the adversary is responsible for its position. He may then pick up that ball and play it from any position on either baulk-line. This applies to all forms of games.

The second is the optional lift that applies only in advanced play.



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This case occurs when in the previous turn the adversary has run either one-back or four-back with his striker's ball. The player may then start his turn by lifting either ball and playing it from any position on either baulk-line. There is, however, a restriction on these lifts. A player who has pegged out any ball loses any entitlement to this kind of lift.

In the Colchester game, it transpired that the game was a handicap game and the lift was a normal wiring lift. On both counts therefore, the player who had pegged a ball out was entitled to his lift.

A different query on lifts came from Cheltenham, from a referee who was checking whether his decision had been correct. In this case, it was an advanced play game and the player was entitled to an optional lift under law 36. However, he absentmindedly picked up an adversary ball but realized his mistake before playing it from a baulk-line. The question was whether he had elected to play that ball by picking it up and was therefore obliged to play a wrong ball. The answer is no (and the referee was correct in his decision). Under law 8, a player can only elect to play with one of the balls of his side by picking it up for a lift. If he picks up an adversary ball, that is not an election to play that ball and, provided that he replaces that ball before striking it, a correct ball should be played. Of course, if he actually plays the adversary ball, then he has played a wrong ball and law 28 applies.

I am happy to answer any queries from domestic players and I usually keep a copy of the Laws and of the Commentary on the Laws beside my telephone. The latter is particularly useful and both the above queries are covered in it. Nevertheless, the laws committee is always interested to hear about interesting cases, which may need a ruling.

### AS IT WAS - days gone by as recorded in the Gazette

The Editorial of June 1949 raised a subject which still excites controversy: "... we hold strong views as to the necessity for [Referees] being appointed - one on each court - at every Official Tournament ... The very nature of the game of croquet calls for continuous supervision, made up as it is of such a variety of strokes, during the making of which one or more of fifteen fouls might be made.

"During the Peels week, we were glad to note that our visitor, Mr Ashley Heenan, the New Zealand Open Champion (in the game in which he was constantly shooting at the peg), always asked for a referee to come up and watch the peg in case it was only just touched by the shot and could not be seen by the striker.

"The necessity for this part of the duties of a referee is even greater in the case of a long shot at a ball nearly the length of the court ..."

(Heenan, playing off -1.5, was one of six minus players in the twenty men contesting this premier handicap event, which was won by

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Col Adams off -0.5.)

The Editor mounted his Hobby Horse again in the July Editorial, using as his pretext a case of a player rushing a rover with another to the peg from 16 or 17 yards. Did it or did it not just touch the peg?

"... it seems imperative that when a rover ball is to be rushed towards the peg by another rover from a distance of half the court ... a referee should be called to stand by the peg and say whether the ball touched the peg or not. This is just as necessary as it is when a solitary rover ball is shooting at the peg from a distance."

But enough of the Laws: what of the play? The Counties in 1949 attracted an entry of only seven teams, four Counties (Gloucester, Middlesex, Surrey and Sussex) and three composites (Bedford and Hunts, Eastern Counties and Hants and Dorset). Time limits of 2.5 hours were imposed throughout, and the reporter bemoaned the fact that "... we did not see a triple peel even attempted during the four days'. Middlesex (including Daisy Lintern and Pat Cotter, who were unbeaten at first pair) won all their matches but the holders, Surrey, managed only two wins (despite including in their team Col Adams, two Reckitts and Dudley Hamilton-Miller).

Heenan naturally played in the Caskets in early June, as reported in the July Gazette. There he won the Mixed Doubles with Mrs Kingsford, defeating Hicks and Rotherham in what was regarded as a very lengthy 8 1/2 hour final. As the Editor noted, "... when it is observed that all four players in this match were minus players, the question naturally arises as to why the three games took such an incredibly long time. The answer is to be found in the time that was wasted in consultations on the court between partners, often when to the spectator there was only one thing to do, namely, to get on with the game."

There, the Editor has my complete sympathy and support.

### CONSTITUTIONAL WORKING PARTY

Progress Report by Quiller Barrett  
Chairman, Constitution Working Party

Many thanks to the Federations, Clubs and Associates who commented on our draft proposals for changing the CA's constitution. Members of the working party considered all the responses and we were pleased that no one objected to any of the major changes we put forward.

After discussing your suggestions we made a few alterations to our original recommendations and Council approved these at its last meeting. We are now working on revisions to the CA Rules that are necessary and we aim to have these ready for Council to approve in July. They will then formally be put to the members for ratification at the AGM

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later this year.

The working party's recommendations for restructuring the CA's committees have been discussed by Council, modified to bring them into line with majority views and are now in final draft form for approval at the next Council. Our intention is to establish Management and Marketing Committees and to give more authority to all committees to 'get on with the job' so that Council itself will be more concerned with longer-term policy matters. We hope in a year or two's time members will benefit by the improved efficiency of our organization.

## Tournament Reports..... Tournament Reports..... Tournament Reports.....

### Roehampton Spring handicap weekend 22nd - 25th April

Report by Paul Macdonald

There was something slightly strange about Roehampton at this annual tournament. It wasn't just that we were greeted by torrential rain and thunder instead of the usual warm dry spring weather that usually blesses this event, but also the odd appearance of the middle 'club house' court which was found to be hoopless. This, the best court in the club, had been laser levelled in the autumn and was unfortunately not ready for play so that one of the adjacent tennis courts had to be requisitioned. Tennis hadn't yet been started and the court played remarkably well - at least there weren't any rabbit runs which is more than could be said for the other two, which, unusually, showed marked evidence of Flopsy, Mopsy and Cottontail.

Much had been heard of a new crop of bandits at Roehampton. There was certainly evidence of this not shown up directly in the results because chief bandits managed to out bandit the minor ones. The Arch bandit was Mary Knapp who came first with 8/8, closely followed by Mary's better half, Dick 6/8. Equal third with 5 wins came Brian Rees and Derek Powell, the latter having to be congratulated on being the only non-Roehampton player in the finishing frame.

### Southwick Spring Weekend 1st - 3rd May

Report by Sue McKay

16 year old James Mackay retained the King Cup (7 round Swiss), but had to work much harder for his victory this year. Last year he was a bandit with bisques, whereas this year he was usually conceding bisques and having to come from behind. Last year's runner up, John Serase, had his revenge by beating James, but it was a scrappy game. It was the third game on the first day and both players were tired after a full day in unexpectedly hot conditions. Perhaps subconsciously neither of them wanted

to win, as they knew this would bring them up against another young bandit, Daniel Mills, the following morning!

Bill Arliss used his laptop to produce the draws for each round, and the computer had a malicious streak on the first day by coming up with matches between Sue and James Mackay, Betty and Bernard Weitz and Pauline and John Davey. Only Betty kept the flag flying for the women in the family battles, but elsewhere the ladies were doing quite well. Daphne Gaitley and Chris Constable both ended the tournament on five wins, and there was nothing much Chris could do about her -26 defeats at the hands of Daniel and James. Sue Mackay had a penchant for living dangerously, no fewer than three of her games involving dramatic shootouts for the peg.

On the second day Daniel continued his undefeated run, but lost to Graham Dodd and James on the final day. He did, however, win the one ball competition. Peter Gosney reached the final day on four wins, having only lost to Daniel 1 on time. He lost to James on the final day but beat Daphne to secure third position on points. Graham Dodd also reached the final day on four wins, having only lost to Peter Gosney. He then beat Daniel +1 and David Mundy +26 (David had earlier handed out similar treatment and won his silver award), but then had to wait for the result of the last game between James and Daniel, which James won +8. Both James and Graham

thus ended up on 6 wins but without having played each other. It was decided to have a 14 point play off, but James hit on the third turn and went round to peg with three balls, and that basically was that. Many thanks to all at Southwick for another highly successful tournament.

### Ramsgate Handicap 8th - 9th May

Report by Peter Highton

In previous years the Ramsgate tournaments have attracted players from Cardiff and Edinburgh as well as from Belgium. This time all 16 players were from clubs in the South East of England. Do Scottish and Welsh players now need a passport to travel to England? Handicaps ranged from 3.5 to 20 in a Swiss format.

Three games on Saturday suffered from a cool, gusty wind off the sea and warm clothing was needed. Fortunately it stayed dry. Sunday was a much better day, less wind, plenty of warm sun. Manager Marie Currie had everything very well organised including the catering. Roast lamb and all of the trimmings helped to ward off the cold on Saturday.

The winner was Roy Ware 5/5, second Peter Highton 4/5 and third Dave Mundy, also 4/5. Ramsgate now lease their grounds from the Council and are making many improvements, particularly a licensed bar! They are hoping to re-lay three of the four courts in time for next season.

### Nailsea Handicap 8th - 9th May

Report by Hamish Hall

Nailsea continues to capitalise on the benefits of their new clubhouse attracting 10 visitors from 5 local clubs, who together with 6 of their own members, ensured that competitors had as many games as they wished at this enjoyable tournament. The weather was kind, the lawns very fair, the hoops legally set - the only question was how quickly would players adapt to the new Barlow GT balls?

Nick Carter, playing in his first tournament, showed considerable promise reaching 'the final' of the Swiss - but losing out to Kevin Ham from Dyffryn. He had the consolation of receiving his bronze award.

In the main event, Kristian Chambers always had a forest of bisques to milk in each round. In the final, he staggered out with 16.5, to play the in form Pat Long, who had also won

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her bronze award in an earlier round. But Kristian's reputation intimidated Pat. Nerves took their toll, allowing the youth to easily retain the trophy, and demonstrate a much improved ability in delivering the customary vote of thanks to the hard working manager and catering staff.

Surprisingly, it was only James Dixon who managed a TP in the whole weekend. His little bit of glory was to TPO Rosemary Gugan. Both boys plan to do better at their next event, doubtless to impress their fan club.

**Colchester Open 8th - 9th May**

Report by Richard Hilditch

The new format for this event (originally the Hobbs Open weekend) was to have two advanced blocks of different handicap ranges. This proved very popular and will be repeated in the future. The lawns were easy paced with generous hoops.

The A block was very strong, featuring 5 internationals amongst the 10 players. Robert Fulford started in style with 3 sextuples on the first day, each on a different lawn. This is likely to be a first. Chris Clarke won through the other half, although not as convincingly. Considering the conditions the final threw up quite a few errors with only one error free game (which Chris won). With Robert ahead 2-1, the fourth game saw Chris do a TPO in two turns with a sextuple leave (1-back tactics), he pegged two balls out leaving 2-back against 2. Chris got the first break but could only advance to penult. Later he shot at Robert's ball in front of hoop 3 from about 10 yards away. Tragically he missed but hit the hoop hard and stayed nearby allowing Robert to make a nice 10 hoop 2-ball break that never looked to be in doubt to clinch the match 3-1.

In the B block we were very pleased to welcome Reg Girling back to tournament play after a gap of 15 years. He was in good form staying in contention up until the last game. However the Swiss block was won by another member, David Haslam with 5 wins out of 6.

**Budleigh Salterton 10th - 15th May**

Report by Hamish Hall

The cold wind and overcast sky barely

dampened the warmth of friendship that radiated from the bottom pavilion as old friends gathered. Half a dozen new faces, but none more pleasing than the Cornwellian Tony Backhouse and Malcolm Hooper - living proof that croquet had at long last developed west of the Tamar.

There were two new huts - one on court 7 and the other on 9. For some time Martin Granger Brown had recognised the cramped space in the hut serving courts 9 and 10, and generously provided a new summerhouse in memory of Ralph Bucknell - an old friend and colleague who introduced Martin to croquet 38 years ago. Recognising that Ralph had never played on those courts, the Committee decided that it should serve court 7, where it now happily accommodates even double banked doubles players, and the other hut was financed by general donations. What better way to mark one's appreciation of a man who gave Martin so much pleasure?

The experiment of arranging a fish and chip supper on Thursday was a great success - possibly on account of the illuminating talk on the physics, design and development of the mallet given by Alan Pidcock after the feast.

All six blocks in the singles were keenly contested. In block C Margarethe Regan pipped Michael Lester, and in E Sue Rogers lost out to Brian Shorney - all four having 6 wins out of 7 games.

The locals were delighted in John Turner taking the Godfrey Turner Cup demolishing Ian Scott quite comfortably. There was a more dogged fight for the JK Brown Trophy. Bath's much improved Daniel Mills really knew that he had a match on his hands as Margarethe fought like a tigress and eventually won +4.

The doubles witnessed the usual convivial sportsmanship. The Birdseyes were robbed of victory with some confusion as to whether a ball had been roqueted or croqueted off the court. The Parsons fought their way to the final of the Y. In the X the Scaddans and the Regans were surprising victims. Octogenarian Ted Owen and Esmie had lost no speed around the court, and their forest of bisques took the m to the quarter final, when Margaret Pena and

Hamish Hall extracted sweet revenge for last year's heavy defeat. Alas the joy was short lived with the Cornishmen eventually taking the place in the final to face Daniel Mills and Veronica McClements. Clearly Tony and Malcolm were on a rapidly ascending learning curve, comfortably negating Veronica's vast experience and Daniel's shooting ability. A dogged match followed, but I'll wager that the handicapper will be penning a rapid improvers report before too many moons pass, as I believe that they would have won without their 3 bisques.

**John McCullough Challenge Trophy, Bristol 15th - 16th May**

Report by Ray Ransom

Water polo might have provided a sensible alternative to croquet, or so it seemed during the week before the tournament. In the event the weekend was dry but inevitably we had to suffer slow lawns. However slow lawns are easy lawns and this gave the manager enough of an edge to run the weekend as a double elimination event once again.

As usual there was a good quality entry with Terry Burge favoured to retain the title. David Goacher had expectations and for the first time in living memory Don Gaunt had no broken limbs and was not suffering from the lurgi nor any other visible affliction. The two Nailsea youngsters, Kristian Chambers and James Dixon, were playing for the first time and were expected to do well although probably lacking sufficient experience to win on this occasion.

Kriss had a tough first round game against Dave Kibble but just crept home to win +7. James also had a tough game against Don Gaunt and looked likely to win in style but broke down at 3 on the second ball with the triple laid out. Don needed no second chance. Inevitably the first triple was completed by Terry, in spite of a late start.

After 3 rounds only Chris Patmore and Terry Burge had not lost a life. Chris had had a demanding passage, disposing of Goacher, Gaunt and Duckworth on the way. Terry, on the other hand, had an easier path but had almost faltered

against Kriss Chambers. The opening game, which Chris won +14, in the first life final was disappointing with errors made on both sides. When the match resumed on Sunday morning, Terry lost no time in taking the next game +26tp. The third game again saw errors from Terry and although Chris played well he was unable to peg out both balls after the rover peel. At one point Terry looked to be about to win the game but failed in a 3 ball break allowing Chris to finish.

Meanwhile both Goacher and Gaunt were progressing towards a second life final. David had beaten James Dixon narrowly, Tom Weston and Dave Kibble. The game against Kibble was one of the most entertaining of the weekend with Goacher winning +2tpo. Don also reached the final with wins against David Coates, Lawrence Whittaker and Ed Duckworth. In the second life final which took place on the Sunday Don won comfortably.

At the end of the first day following mutterings about barn doors the hoops were reset. At the start of the Tournament the balls for each lawn had been matched and the hoops set to 1/16. For the second day the hoops were set so that daylight was just visible between hoop and ball. This did nothing to slow the games nor to stem the flow of triple peels. In the first game to finish on the Sunday morning, James Dixon completed the triple by pegging out through the rover hoop, a great disappointment to Roger Jenkins who was expecting another turn. Later in the morning David Harrison-Wood completed the only Quad of the weekend.

The play-off between Chris Patmore and Don Gaunt was a one sided affair with Chris failing a triple when he ran into the wire approaching rover. Don failed to take maximum advantage of the error and Chris finished soon after. Chris had been the most consistent player over the weekend and thoroughly deserved his win.

In the swiss, both James Dixon and David Goacher finished with 5 wins out of 7 games with Terry Burge and Kristian Chambers on 4 out of 7. Both Nailsea lads finished with 3 triples as did Terry.

Looking back at the records of the first Bristol Advanced Weekend in 1984, only Martin Murray and David Goacher played in the first and in this weekend. Although the quality of entry 15 years ago was high with 6 President's cup players, including Wylie and Mulliner, and 2 Chairman's, it is interesting to note that not a single triple peel was completed over the weekend. 47 games were completed, 3 on time, a record which has stood until this year when 53 games were finished, none of which went to time, and of these 16 produced triples and 1 a quadruple peel.

**New Associates**

N Carter	Nailsea CC
C Dunkley	Watford Cassiobury
P Franks	Hampshire
M Lake	Derby
Lt-Cdr J Pugsley	Plymouth CC
N Thatcher	Ipswich CC
C Toy	Hampshire
Dr J Burn	Fittleworth CC
D Bray	Ramsgate CC
Mrs R Eaton	Devon
Mr C Figaredo	Spain
G Gaston	Preston LT & C Club
Miss G Higgins	Oxford University
Mrs E Larsson	Budleigh Salterton CC
Dr C Larsson	Budleigh Salterton CC
J Oxley	Jersey CC
H Quarrell	Sidmouth CC
J Randall	Leicester CC
P Rigge	Bury CC
J Smith	Preston LT & C Club
S Berry	Compton CC
P Bishop	Colchester CC
Mrs A Chrispin	Bury St Edmunds CC
J Hills	Colchester CC
Miss M Hof	Ramsgate CC
Mrs J Merchant	Torbay CC
A Mitchell	Ramsgate CC
R Mulligan	Phyllis Court CC
S Shah	Harrow Oak CC

**Handicap Alterations**

<b>Kingston Maurward April</b>			
Jeremy Marshall	8	to	7
<b>Cheltenham Easter weekend 2 - 5 April</b>			
Alan Bogle	5	to	4.5
Keith Davis	8	to	9
Craig Edwards	9	to	8
Maureen Evans	16	to	18
Tal Golesworth	3.5	to	2.5
James Mackay	9	to	7
Sue Mackay	16	to	14
Bernard Neal	-0.5	to	0
Mike Ranshaw	4.5	to	5
Paul Salisbury	3.5	to	3
Robert Whitaker	10	to	11
<b>Cheltenham Level play 15 - 18 April</b>			
Gerry Eccles	6	to	7
Craig Edwards	8	to	7
J Godson	5	to	4.5
Nigel Gray	3	to	2.5
Joe King	1.5	to	1
P Leach	10	to	12
Mrs E Magee	5	to	4.5
Mrs B McGlen	3	to	2.5
Mrs K Whittall	4	to	3.5
D Morgan	1	to	1.5
<b>Roehampton 22 - 25 April</b>			
Mrs M Knapp	16	to	12

R Knapp	8	to	7
<b>Colchester over 50's 23 - 25 April</b>			
G Bond	3	to	2.5
Mrs V Lester	18	to	20
Mrs A Fleck	8	to	7
<b>Woking spring weekend 24 - 25 April</b>			
M Belcham	9	to	8
A Davies	7	to	6
Ms Gina Lewis	10	to	9
Mrs E Batin	12	to	14
<b>Southport open weekend 24 - 25 April</b>			
Tom Weston	1	to	0.5
D Nicholson	0.5	to	0
A Sherlaw Johnson	2.5	to	2
P Wardle	5	to	4.5
Dan McCormick			0
<b>Himley Hall 1- 2 May</b>			
D Matthews	4	to	3.5
J Allen	14	to	12
<b>Hurlingham 1 - 3 May</b>			
G Bennett	0	to	-0.5
M Burger	6	to	7
R Knapp	7	to	6
Paul Macdonald	5	to	6
<b>Cheltenham Coles Championship 1 - 3 May</b>			
Ms L Bradforth	3	to	2
M Rangeley	1	to	1.5
<b>Ramsgate handicap weekend 8 - 9 May</b>			
Ron Welch	8	to	7
<b>Colchester open weekend 8 - 9 May</b>			
D Haslam	6	to	5
<b>Nailsea handicap weekend 8 - 9 May</b>			
Mrs Pat Long	16	to	14
Kevin Ham	9	to	8
Mrs Rosemary Gugan	0.5	to	1
<b>Budleigh Salterton 10 - 15 May</b>			
T Backhouse	11	to	12
Roger Bowen	11	to	10
Mrs Pat Hague	3.5	to	4
Dr M Lester	11	to	10
Mrs V McClements	10	to	11
Daniel Mills	10	to	9
Prof A Pidcock	0.5	to	1
Miss S Rogers	11	to	10
B Shorney	12	to	11
<b>Newport Open weekend 15 - 16 May</b>			
G Bond	2.5	to	2
N Gray	2.5	to	2
A Gregory	0.5	to	1
J Robinette	4.5	to	5
L Tibble	-1	to	-1.5
<b>Bristol open weekend 15 - 16 May</b>			
James Dixon	0.5	to	0
Kristian Chambers	-0.5	to	-1
<b>Cheltenham open weekend 22 - 23 May</b>			
Andrew Cowing	0	to	0.5
Mike Hammelev	1.5	to	2
Chris Ross	3.5	to	3
Tom Weston	0.5	to	0
<b>Cheltenham Club</b>			
Brian Hewitt	3	to	3.5
Les Kershaw	11	to	10
Peter Leach	12	to	11
Michael Poole	10	to	9
Mrs D Wheeler	9	to	8
Martin Kolbuszewski	10	to	9
John Ruddock	5	to	6
Owen Bryce	12	to	11

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# TAKING CROQUET TO THE PEOPLE

*By Bill Arliss*

**A**lthough there may be the odd croquet club that is full I am sure a very large majority of clubs would welcome a considerable increase in their membership.

If my own club, Southwick, is anything to go by, most clubs will go through the same routine every year of holding open days or even open weeks to try to attract more members into the sport. These events take a lot of organising and demand quite a time input by the members for generally what is a relatively small payback. One or two new members is usually a very good result. This year Southwick with local clubs, Worthing and Preston Park, the South East Federation and the CA got together to take croquet to the people. We found a local shopping centre with a large atrium and approached the centre manager with a request for a croquet promotion using the mini mat for demonstration. We were really in luck with the Holmbush shopping centre, just down the road from Southwick, the centre manager was a garden croquet enthusiast and felt that croquet would be the right image for his centre. Its not a large complex, just a big M&S and Tesco with a Macdonald's Restaurant between them. Instead of one day he suggested two and no charges for any of the facilities.



*A captive audience is always a good start.*

To date we have had about 15 people turn up at the club to sample the real delights of croquet as a result of the promotion. Whilst turning these interested parties into actual club members is a different matter, the enthusiasm that is being shown would indicate that most will become addicted. From the trial memberships that have already been taken out, I am sure we shall get at least 12 new members.

Well, on to the general organisation of the event; as you will see from the photographs, we separated the demonstration area from the main public area by roping off. I believe that this was essential to stop full-scale invasion of the mat by the children. Naturally children showed specific interest and many wanted a go and did have a try but it must be controlled. In hindsight it might have been wise to advertise demonstrations by club members every 20 minutes or so and this would have helped us to control use of the mat more easily and without offending some parents. In addition to the mat we also used the display boards owned by the South Eastern Federation. This showed various descriptions of the game plus photographs of past and present. At the corner of the display area we used some nice wooden tables to display the literature. This consisted of the 'Sign post' leaflet provided by the CA, the Federation leaflet and leaflets from the participating clubs. We found the best practice was to leave about a dozen

of each type on display and top up when necessary. Put too many out and they disappeared too rapidly. Overall I suppose we used between 300 to 400 of each leaflet over the weekend.

As to manning of the promotion, we found that we needed about six people throughout the whole period. Two were kept busy on the mat and the other four answering questions. We took a very positive approach and talked to everybody who stopped and showed interest in either the literature or the demonstrations.

About two weeks before the event we issued press releases to all our local papers and also made contact with the local radio station. Having some form of a local celebrity is very useful in attracting the press. Here again we were lucky in that The Honourable Member for Shoreham and Worthing, Tim Loughton, is a social member of the Southwick club and came along for an hour on the Saturday morning. We played a short game and then we posed for the usual photo through the hoop, lining up a peel. Completely trite but it achieved its objective, croquet got on the front page of one of the locals.

Southwick had already arranged an open week in May but this



*Never miss a photo opportunity, no matter how staged.*

was some four weeks away. Due to the responses we had to hastily arrange further open days during the following week. Some interested people turned up at the club two days later despite horrendous weather conditions. If we repeat the exercise next year or anyone else tries the same approach, we would strongly recommend that open days at the club itself immediately after such a presentation are an absolute 'must'. You must strike whilst interest remains. Our experience would indicate that early season is the ideal time to mount such a presentation.

A very interesting point with several of the children who tried a 'taster'; many of them, without any suggestion from the club members present, immediately went for the Solomon grip. I suppose it is natural when the mallet is nearly as big as they are. Very few of the adults who have since become interested actually wanted a try on the mat itself and waited until they arrived at the club.

It was noticeable that some of our new converts said that they had been interested in croquet for some time but had seen very little published about the facilities that were available. Is our general publicity that bad???

The photographs give some flavour of our event but I would be quite happy to talk to any other clubs who would like to try this form of promotion.