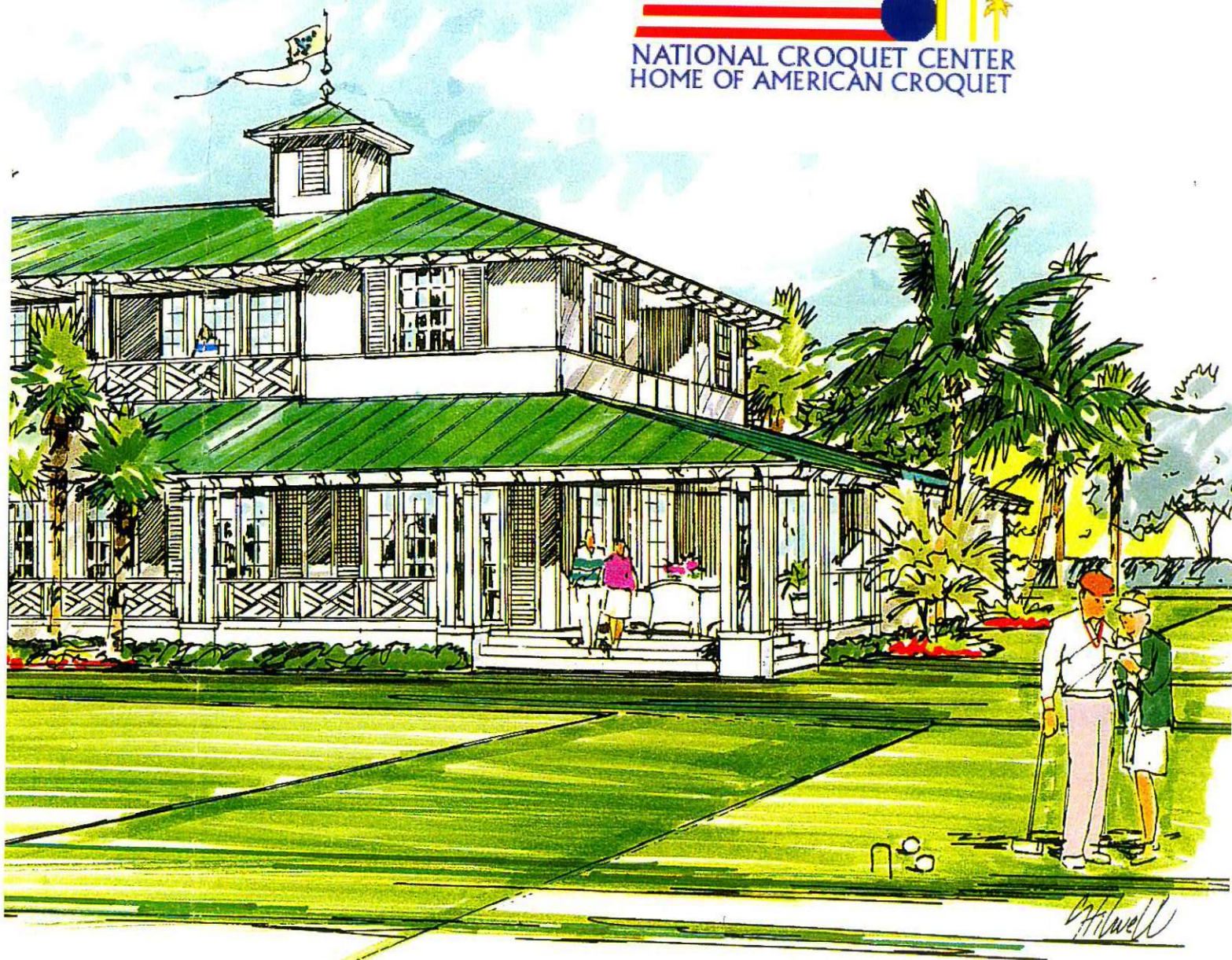
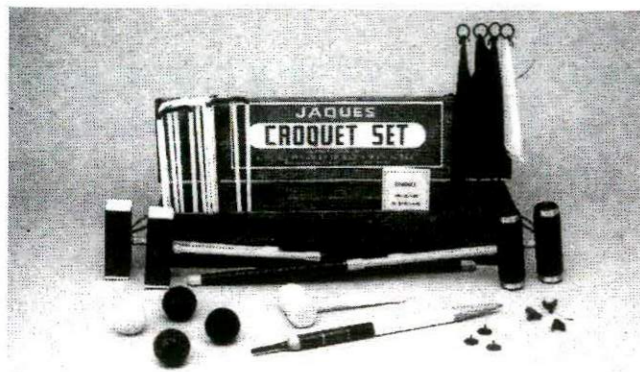


The Croquet Gazette

Issue 269 ~ September 2000

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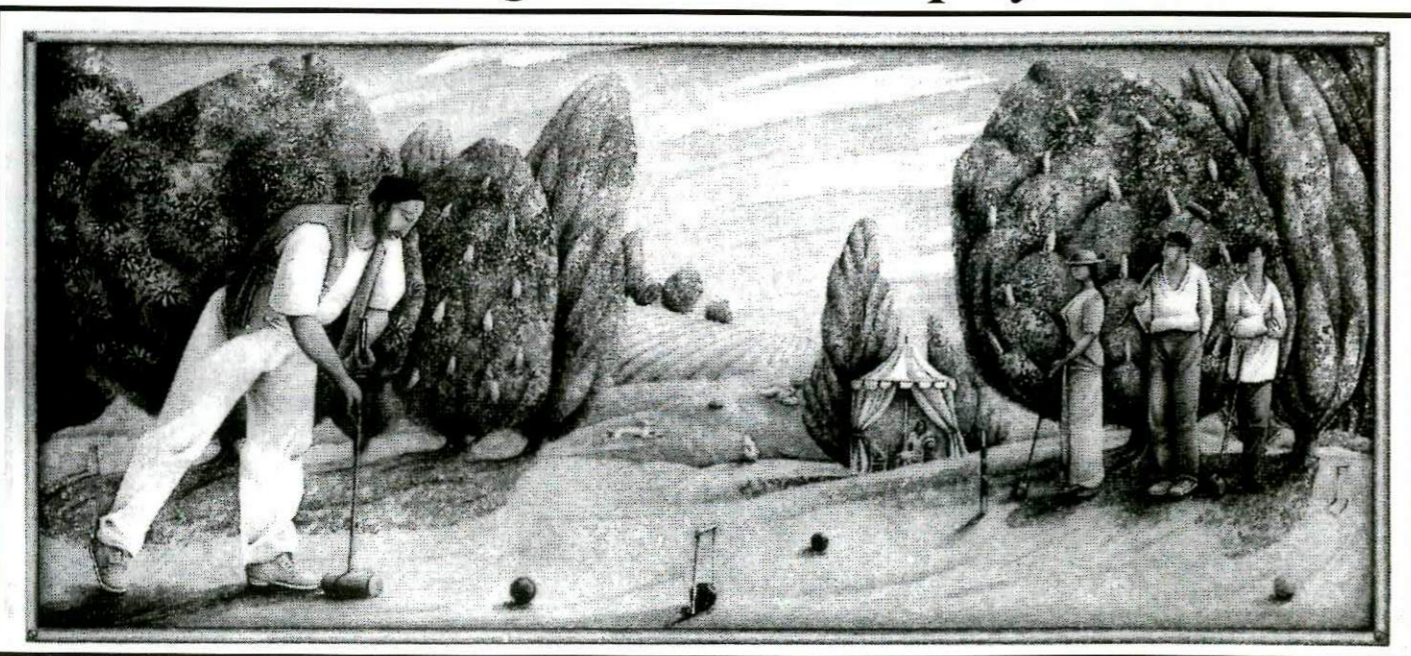


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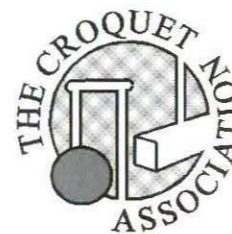
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Advertising

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Specific Questions & Queries

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

Copy Details

General copy and contributions should be sent direct to the editor. Email contributions, including tournament reports, should be sent direct to the editor, or copied to the editor if they are being posted to the Nottingham List.

Photographs are always required. Both black and white or colour prints can be utilised as well as slides. 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 and that all relevant details are submitted.

Tournament reports should be written and sent to the editor within FOURTEEN DAYS of the completion of a tournament. Failure to comply with this guideline will result in reports failing to be published. Hand written reports are no longer to be accepted.

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.

THE CROQUET GAZETTE



Issue 269 September 2000 £3.00

Front Cover: The plan of the new national croquet centre in America, due to open shortly.

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Disclaimer

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

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CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

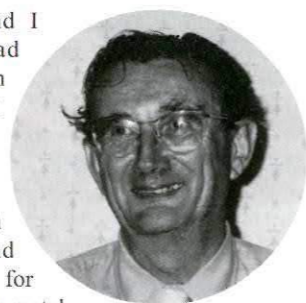
Faith and I have had a n interesting set of travels over the last 7 weeks. We have driven to Switzerland for me to play for the CA in their match v s Switzerland. We then travelled across France to St Malo where we crossed to Jersey in time for me to coach in the Jersey Summer school and play in the Jersey week. No great shakes in the singles for me but with Anne Van der Vliet as my partner, we won the handicap doubles after 6 years of trying! After this we had a terrific holiday culminating in the "Battle of Flowers" in which we helped a little by de-heading some flowers for a float. Finally we travelled back to England via France. A wonderful time.

On my return, amongst the pile of mail, electronic and otherwise, were some messages regarding acknowledgements and thank you letters. The gist was that not enough thanks and recognition is given by the CA to those who give their time and effort. As Chairman I must accept the brunt of this criticism, particularly as it is a point I have raised myself in the past. So to everyone who has helped, is helping and will help to further croquet this season, a heartfelt thank you and an apology to anyone who feels that their work has gone unacknowledged. Now, some advance pleading. It looks very much as though a vacancy will exist on Council. So, all of you out there. Please think "could I help to contribute to the running of my chosen sport?" Maybe you have thought about it but have been reluctant to step forward. Step forward right now! If you want to know more about how things are done and what sort of commitment there might be, get in touch with me by whatever means you want.

If you cannot give the time to be a full CA Council member, it could well be that you have a particular expertise that could be employed in a one-off situation. Just give me a call. Particular areas that are likely to need support are those involving Junior and Schools croquet development, targeted development projects, work related to international projects and financial matters. There will certainly be others.

I'm not sure if this column will beat the AGM, but if it does, I hope to see you all there.

Don



EDITORIAL

One of m y g r e a t e s t disappointments would have to be the lack of enthusiasm or interest in the workings and decisions of t h e croquet world. The vast majority of players seem quite happy to play their own games within their own clubs, and so long as nothing interrupts that they are quite happy to let others run their sport. A minority of players take a passing interest in what is happening in the larger croquet world, and the remaining tiny percentage attempt to run it. Over the past month or so I have been to many tournaments and a common piece of conversation has been that of complaint or disappointment at the way the game is administered. Lack of judgement and lack of thought seem to come high up the list, but the bottom line is that croquet cannot afford to disillusion its own minority of supporters. Here is a selection of items that have caused such comment.

- Rumours there are moves afoot to stop paying travelling expenses to Council members. Are we to go back to the 'good old days' where everything was run by those either with money or those living in within commuting distance of Hurlingham?

- In the July issue of the Gazette, the mistake of comparing the cost of golf with the cost of croquet, in an attempt to justify increasing the costs of an average days croquet. Perhaps those lucky enough to live within commuting distance of their seasons chosen events would not mind, but not everyone is so lucky to have so many events within an hours drive. Many players have to consider additional costs, such as travel and accommodation. It may cost Tony between £4.68 and £5.58 per day to play, but an average tournament can cost me between £52.68 and £53.58 (inc accommodation at £30 per night and £18.00 for travel). After all even if such an increase was universally applied one third of it would go to the CA, but perhaps that is why the suggestion was made. Maybe we would all be keener to put more money into the croquet purse if was to be spent wisely.

- In total contrast to the comment to raise prices universally, it has been agreed that entries to the Golf Croquet Championships next year need not be individual members of the CA,



unless they qualify for the finals, in which case they will be asked to join. This is fundamentally wrong. All entries to CA events for individuals should require individual membership of the CA. In the past year there has been a tremendous amount of work put into new and existing events for golf croquet players, why should all this work be done for free for all but finalists. What would happen if players were invited to join and then declined so that there were no finalists?

- Communication, the lack of it and the choice of its medium also appears to be a problem. The internet and email are wonderful time saving inventions, but as yet not everyone has the capacity to use them, so phone calls and written communication still need to be used. However, on the occasions where official announcements are to be made by CA officials, I would like someone to explain to me why they are made on the Nottingham List as opposed to the official CA website (www.croquet.org.uk). Surely the whole reason for having a web site was for members to be able to look in one place for the information they needed or wanted, the same cannot be said for the Nottingham 'discussion' list, which is at times little more than an intercontinental mud slinging forum.

- Is there any point in the Secretary's Shield continuing as an inter-club event? The Longman Cup offers competitive handicap play across a very broad spectrum of players, and may well have offered the first real competitive experience for numerous players. The Mary Rose encourages competitive play for players moving into advanced play. Thinking of the Secretary's Shield, it is difficult to think of a positive reason for the competition to remain, perhaps someone can.

- Why do clubs enter club events, such as the Longman Cup, Golf Croquet Inter-Club, or indeed any other team event and then either withdraw because they don't have a home match, or want a half-way fixture. Such behaviour is becoming more common. Is it time clubs had to give an undertaking to travel where ever they are drawn to play, so that every club can enjoy the prospect of a home match at some point?

Would anyone care to comment?

NEWS & INFORMATION

Make sure your news gets through

Please send your match reports, tournament reports, results and other news, however humble, to news@croquet.org.uk for publication on the CA's web site www.croquet.org.uk. Managers - make sure your reporter knows they can send the report electronically.

By sending your news to the address above your information is automatically sent to the office, Gazette and news desk on the web site, for just one email.

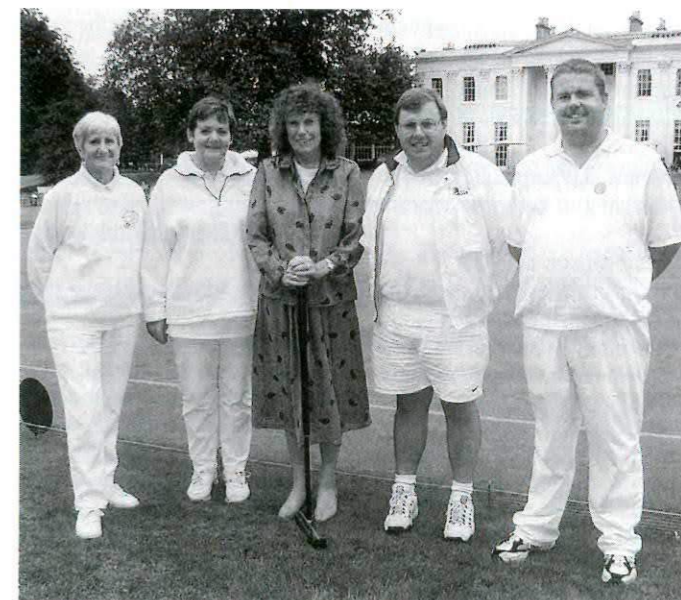
New Laws adopted

Following the decisions by the CA Council and the Australian governing body in March, New Zealand and the United States have also adopted the new edition of the Laws prepared by the ILRC, thus completing the process, with effect from 1st September, 2000 in the southern hemisphere and 1st January, 2001 in the north. The text is currently being prepared for printing.

The Tournament and Laws Committees have agreed that only the Tournament Regulations relating to refereeing will be printed in the CA's new Laws Book; the remainder are being merged with the General Conditions and will appear in the Fixtures Book, which is to be renamed the CA Tournament Regulations and Calendar.

A new Trophy for Golf Croquet.

Through the generosity of Barlow Croquet and Woodlands Croquet a new trophy has been presented to the Croquet Association for the Open Golf Croquet Championship Doubles event. The trophy is in the form of a pair of sterling silver sweet dishes made in Birmingham in 1917. Small mahogany stands for the dishes have been made by Roger Jackman of Cheltenham.



The grateful thanks of the Association go to all the individuals concerned for this attractive addition to the CA's trophy collection. The first winners of the new trophy at the event held on June 13th at Southwick were Derek Old and Chris Sheen.

New referees

Congratulations to the following players who have qualified to act as referees:

Assistant Referee:

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| Louise Bradforth | Paul Pristavec |
| Bob Whitaker | Andrew Cowing |
| Sue Edwards | Craig Edwards |
| Gordon Weir | Alison Thursfield |
| Eileen Magee | Penny Crowe |

Referee: Jenny Williams

Minister for sport visits Open Championship

Kate Hoey, Britain's Minister for Sport, visited the Open Championships at Hurlingham on 5th July at the invitation of David Openshaw.

The Minister was impressed by the successes of individuals and teams from Great Britain in croquet's world events and congratulated those concerned.

Kate Hoey chatted to a number of players and officials including Sarah Burrow, Rob Fulford, Pauline Healy, Richard Hilditch, David Maughan and David Openshaw.

Quiller Barrett (standing in for Chairman of Council, Don Gaunt who was abroad) and Nigel Graves discussed with the Minister the Government's policy towards "minor" sports like croquet: no change is planned. Kate Hoey promised to see if she could persuade Sport England to look again at the CA's application for helping to fund our hosting of the 2001 Association Croquet World Championships that has recently been turned down.

The Minister for Sport took a genuine interest in croquet and left the door open for the CA to have further contact with her.

~ OBITUARY ~

Desmond Willetts 1928 - 2000.

Des Willetts died on June 25th after a long battle against severe illness. He was a founder member and sole Chairman of Stourbridge Croquet Club. He had also held the positions of Chairman of the West Midlands Federation and Hinley Croquet Club and was a keen supporter of the Black Country Olympics.

In 1968 the Central Council of Physical Recreation ran a croquet course on Mary Stevens Park in Stourbridge. Des attended that course and together with other participants, including his wife Susan, a club was started on the park. Des was indefatigable in spreading the word and gave help and encouragement to new clubs starting up in the region. As well as enjoying his own games he was an enthusiastic coach, showing endless patience with beginners.

As competitions manager for Stourbridge, Des arranged friendly matches as far away as Bristol and Cheltenham giving members a wider experience of the game. Stourbridge even played matches against Glasgow when hospitality was offered on alternate years leading to an enjoyable social occasion as well as competition on the lawns.

In Stourbridge, Des is remembered by many

as the friendly postman, who never wore a jacket except in the most Arctic conditions. He had been an excellent water polo player in his youth and enjoyed cycling in the countryside. He shared a love of folk dancing with his wife and ran a local group for many years until his death.

Over the last few year's Des' health had precluded him travelling to C.A. tournaments but he still enjoyed coming to the lawn when he was well enough. He even made a few hoops two days before his death. There was a large attendance at his funeral service. Many people in the croquet world will remember his cheerful disposition and mourn his death.
M. E. Broome.

Lieutenant-Commander Sir Godfrey Style, CBE, DSC. (1915 - 2000).

Few present day associates will have known Godfrey Style who died on April 21st, 2000 but he should be remembered for the significant contributions he made to the management of the affairs of the Croquet Association in the 1960's. Having joined the C A in 1956 he became a member of the Council in 1957 and served in that capacity until 1967, being Hon. Treasurer from 1962 until 1967. Despite a severe physical handicap he played a good game of croquet and attained a handicap of 5. He played chiefly at Compton and Devonshire Park.

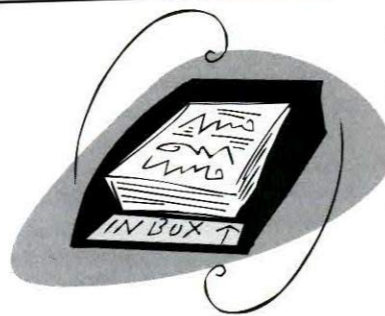
Godfrey Style had joined the Navy in 1933.

The Times obituary of him relates how as a young officer in the Royal Yacht Victoria and Albert in 1938 he was deputed to look after the young princesses Elizabeth and Margaret when they sailed in her with their parents, King George VI and the present Queen Mother. The Queen never forgot the young man who had kept her and her sister amused with games of hide-and-seek during the days at sea.

Godfrey Style's disablement came during the war, losing his left hand when his ship was bombed in Malta in 1942. After he was invalided out of the Navy in 1945 he devoted much of his life to seeking ways to help disabled people to find work. His efforts were recognised in 1961 in his appointment as CBE which was followed by a knighthood in 1973.

Although he was a charming man Godfrey Style, as might be expected, still had "a bit of the quarterdeck about him" even in civilian life. I recall that when he was the Hon Treasurer of the C A and I made some critical comments relating to the accounts his reply, while acknowledging the validity of the comments, went on to invite me to put up for the Council, join it and see what it was like to "face the enemy's fire". When I succeeded him as Hon. Treasurer he wrote me a long epistle containing much useful advice about the treasurer'ship - of which I generally took heed.
A J Oldham.

LETTERS



The cost of poor comparison

Dear Editor,
I was amazed and somewhat appalled to see some of the comments printed in the report from the CA Marketing and Publicity Committee. In an issue of the Gazette which reports dwindling numbers for established events such as the Coles and the Peel Memorials, it is surprising to see an advocating of a doubling of the entry fees for tournaments.

The repeated comparison between a day's golf and a day's croquet exposes the fallaciousness of his argument. Croquet clubs, almost without exception, employ no full-time ground staff, professional coaches, bar staff, caterers or administrators. The fabric of a typical croquet clubhouse (being more modest) requires not a fraction of the maintenance cost of a golf clubhouse. There is no doubt that croquet is cheaper than golf, though this discrepancy alone cannot justify an increase in a day's croquet playing costs. We must believe that croquet can

stand on its own feet in the sports marketplace. We have our own culture, our own target market, and our own playing ethos. I, for one, don't wish to see the game promoted as a poor (or, indeed, any) cousin of golf. And we certainly should not decide our pricing structures purely on the basis of what other sports are doing.

Financial considerations aside, equating the two sports on any level is dangerous. The infrastructure of golf is such as to allow competitive play at any level within clubs. Croquet has no such luxury. If we as Associates wish our game to develop, we must encourage play outside the confines of clubs. Not only does this allow individuals to meet as wide a variety of opponents as possible, but it provides otherwise unattainable experience for members of newer clubs. The report's proposal seeks to erect a barrier against potential tournament players, and against the development of croquet

at large.

To suggest that a major source of income should be from tournament fees is somewhat naive. As many clubs realise, a greater amount of money derives from catering, rather than the fees incurred from players. And all that is irrelevant for the majority of clubs, without the benefit of tournament-quality lawns.

Whatever the case, I do not believe the setting of tournament entry fees is any concern of the CA's Publicity Committee. That Mr Fathers chooses to express such specious nonsense in what appears to be an official report from that Committee is regrettable.

James Hawkins

Golf problems

Dear Editor,

May I relate a fictitious (but based on recent problems) incident in a game illustrating troubles in the interpretation of the rules of the new Golf Croquet. Perhaps others have had similar incidents in their games and would appreciate guidance by a more experienced player within the columns of your magazine.

It is Bill's turn, his blue ball lies awkwardly near the hoop. In its present position Reg, playing red might well knock it into the jaws of the hoop if he tried to stop-shot it away.
Bill : "I deem it a hit."
Reg : "You can't, Rule 6b, the ball must

move!"

Bill taps the ball with his mallet, the ball moves slightly, then rocks back to its same position.

Bill : "The ball did move - it's your turn!"
Is Bill correct?

Later again Bill's turn; in preparing for his strike, Bill's mallet touches his ball, it does not move.

Reg : "Your mallet touched your ball, your turn ends!"

Bill : "The ball did not move, it is still my turn!"

Is Bill correct?

John Smith.

Yes Bill is right, the law is quite clear. If a ball is seen to move a shot has been made. It is totally irrelevant that the ball finishes where it started from. On the second point, lets be practical. The only way we can really judge if a mallet has actually touched a ball rather than passed in the general direction of a ball is if the ball is seen to move. If it does not move I would say it has not been touched.

Bill Arliss, Chairman Golf Croquet C'tee

Dear Editor,

1. THE HANDICAP SYSTEM.

What System? The South East Golf League Matches are played LEVEL. The team day was played LEVEL. The Kent Cup was played LEVEL and nobody asked me about my handicap. I guess they could tell I was a SIX!! And I must admit I never asked anybody else about their handicap either. Obviously NOTHING went on the Golf Handicap Cards. What Handicap Cards do you say?

Well we at Ramsgate, being in the forefront of technology and innovation, have our own pretty coloured ones that we use for Club Tournaments. We made them different so we could tell them apart from the Association ones without hunting for our "specs"!

As the majority of us know at Association Handicap Tournaments the Manager will sometimes ask to see your card before the start. At the end everyone is diligently filling them in hoping to get their handicap down. Do you think this will ever happen with Golf?

I hope so as more players are taking the game seriously, as it is now faster, more aggressive and exciting to watch.

2. THE LAWS

a. In both sets WCF & C A I think the outcome of a CRUSH SHOT should be altered. i.e. Blue is close to the wire with Red in a good position to run the hoop if Blue moves slightly. It is too easy and tempting for Blue to risk a crush shot when attempting to run the hoop. If the Referee says foul the ball is replaced and Red is still unable to run the hoop. Crush or no crush - BLUE WINS.

I think it would be fairer if the opponent had the choice of having the ball

replaced or played from where it finished with no point being scored if a foul is called. Then Red could score the hoop - BLUE LOSES.

b. I STILL think that if you win the TOSS you should have the option of going FIRST or SECOND, still starting with the Blue Ball. There is not another game in the World where you do not have a choice and I think it is VITAL to have an option in DOUBLES.

I shall not tell you why or you will all be doing it!

Len Hawkins

The main difference between Association and Golf Croquet is that the majority of competitive golf croquet players only seem to want to play level. As you know the SE Federation voted at the AGM that all Federation games should be played level. For an automatic handicapping, system to work nationally all players must be willing to fill in cards for all singles games they play. This is not helped when the majority of club games are social doubles as at my own club, Southwick. The Golf Croquet Committee would be pleased to administer a national handicap scheme, but it must be supported by the majority of clubs if it is to be viable. We did offer to supply handicap cards at the beginning of the season, but not a single taker.

On the laws question, it is not practical to consider a single fault for special treatment. You appear to be forgetting the jump shot is now allowed and will let you score a hoop with the opposition sitting in the jaws. Please also do not forget that in the CA laws, if a player commits a striking fault using a ball that has started to run the hoop, that same ball has to start running the hoop afresh before it can score that hoop. This give his opponent plenty of scope for removing the ball completely. This is one of the few differences between the CA and WCF laws and we believe it is a good deterrent against committing faults.

Hitting the first ball at the start of a game is a big advantage. If the first ball can be put in a hoopable position then the opposition has to make a 20 yard roquet or lose the first hoop. Surely the vast number of players who won a toss would always go first. As this is part of both the CA and WCF laws, you will have to come up with a better reason if a change is to be considered. I can see no real argument for changing the present laws.

Bill Arliss, Chairman Golf Croquet C'tee

Hamish Hall, years ahead of his time?

Dear Editor,

Old age comes all too quickly, without a helping hand from one's friends. Well before he reached his 80th birthday, my husband was referred to, in a tournament report by Hamish Hall, as "Octogenarian Ted Owen" we protested mildly, too mildly it would appear, since he has now done the same for me! In his report in the

July Gazette on the Budleigh Salterton May Tournament, he mentions his long standing friends, the " Octogenarian Owen's", running round the court. Just as well that he then went on to comment quite favourably on our croquet! Please Hamish, if you want to remain my long standing friend, do not accelerate my slide into senility. It was a happy game and we were glad to give you and Margaret Pena some amusement. We hope to live long enough to have another doubles against you.

Esme' Owen

Croquet for the disabled - has anyone any information?

Dear Editor

Our club is making a bid for a National Lottery grant, to build two new croquet courts. Any advice that any club can give us on this will be greatly appreciated. The CA has already been very helpful.

But we are particularly concerned at the received wisdom that particular pains should be taken to make the game accessible to the disabled. Does any club have useful experience in this area? Has any club tried to organise play in wheelchairs? What are the problems? Is there a source of suitable wheelchairs? Does one have to limit them to Golf Croquet? Are there any modifications that need to be made to the Rules?

We'd like to have a go. If it can be done for tennis then it can be done for croquet. For that matter, if the blind can go skiing, croquet should be a doddle. But is it?

Jolyon Kay, Blewbury CC

Regarding an unusual mallet

Dear Editor

I was interested to read about GDH Rushant's unusual mallet. I would guess that as it was made by Slazengers it was almost certainly made in the 30s, possibly the 20s. Its unusual specification suggests it was made as a special request and is almost certainly unique.

I would strongly urge that the mallet is not altered in any way. To reduce the length of the shaft by about 6 inches from 42.5 would totally upset the balance of the mallet. With a weight of 3lbs 8 ozs the extra length of the shaft would probably give a fairly good balance - about one fifth up from the head would be about right. To reduce the shaft would almost certainly make it head heavy.

The thought occurs that this might give rise to a new generation of mallets of such length or even longer. A number of professional golfers now play with putters almost as tall as themselves, some with great success. A mallet with a shaft of some 5 feet might be great for hoop strokes, but I wonder how it might work for all the other strokes, because of course croquet players can't change their mallet in a turn apart from bona fide damage. Perhaps someone would care to experiment?

John Solomon

SPORTS INJURIES FOR CROQUET PLAYERS



By Bob Burnett, Dip RGRT, MSCP, SRP Chartered Physiotherapist

Bob Burnett is a Chartered physiotherapist who has specialised in sports injuries at his Private Practice in Southport for the past 20 years. He has been playing Croquet for three and a half years, is currently handicap 3.5, a Grade one coach and an assistant referee.

In this series of articles he will be outlining the most common injuries affecting croquet players, their management and treatment. They are not written for medics and do not contain a lot of detail. Their purpose is to give the non-medical player an insight into what may be wrong and the course of action to be taken. It must be remembered however that if diagnosis is unsure or if symptoms persist a medical opinion should be sought.

3. LOW BACK PAIN

Pathology

More working days are lost and more performances are cancelled in all sports through low back pain than all other injuries combined. Not many people reach middle age without suffering from backache at some time in their lives.

The causes of low back pain are many varied. They range from mild strains in muscles and joints to dislocation of the vertebrae leading to paralysis.

The basic problem is one of evolution. In four legged animals the spine forms an arch supported by two pillars (fig. 1).

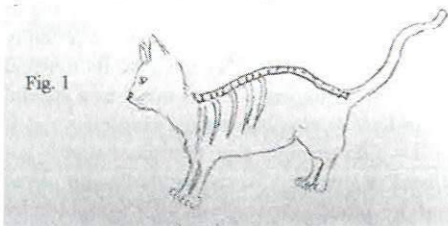


Fig. 1

In bipeds, one set of pillars has been removed and the arch stood on end with a compensatory secondary curve at the lower end (fig. 2). It's no wonder it aches!

As we get older the spine suffers wear and tear, osteoarthritic changes occur in the facet joints, the discs between the vertebrae become less elastic and the relative positions of the components of the spinal column alter their alignment due to postural changes brought about by muscle imbalance and altered body shape. All these changes make it easier for joints to become inflamed and muscles and ligaments to be strained.

Injuries to the lower back are generally accompanied by protective muscle spasm. This spasm is a reflex protective mechanism intended

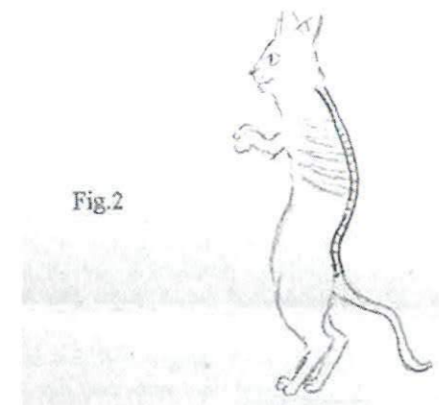


Fig. 2

to cause pain and stiffness and stop you using your back thereby preventing any further damage. It is very effective and very painful. With the appropriate management however the muscle spasm can be relaxed and most conditions will settle down and, with time, movement will return to normal.

The condition that attracts most publicity and causes most long term pain and discomfort with pain often radiating down the leg sometimes requires surgical intervention before symptoms are adequately relieved. Fortunately it is not as common as people would have you believe. It is of course a prolapsed intervertebral disc or "slipped disc".

The disc is composed of an inner pulpy core surrounded by fibrous outer shell, (fig. 3).

This arrangement enables the disc to perform a shock absorbing function for the spinal column. Problems occur when the disc bulges backwards into the space occupied by the spinal cord and the nerve roots branching off it. This causes pain in the back "Lumbago" and referred pain down the back of the leg "Sciatica". It is usually caused by trying to straighten the back from a flexed position whilst under strain. This results in compression force on the disc forcing the pulpy

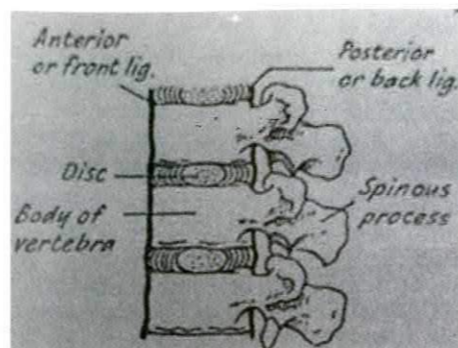


fig.3

core backwards against the shell which may cause it to bulge or prolapse.

It is very important with back problems to obtain an accurate diagnosis of the specific condition. Inappropriate treatment can often make the problem worse and spinal manipulations, although useful for certain conditions, are not suitable for all. Always ensure that whoever you may consult is fully qualified to carry out the treatment that they prescribe.

MANAGEMENT AND TREATMENT

As stated above the treatment required will depend on the individual diagnosis but some general rules apply to all. The more mobility you have in the movements of your spine the greater the chance of avoiding injury. You will all remember how easy it was to look behind you when reversing the car in your youth, now you probably have to use the mirrors! The more pain free movement you have the greater margin you have before you hit the range that hurts. Gentle mobility exercise, performed regularly, in all ranges of movement will help you avoid trouble. If you do injure your back, try not to make the pain worse. Always move within the pain free range, if it hurts stop. If the muscles do go into spasm, apply heat to the area of spasm (hot water bottle). This will increase the blood flow and cause the muscles to relax. Try to perform gentle, non weight bearing mobility exercises, but only within the pain free range. Combine this heat and mobility with rest in whatever position is most comfortable. Most conditions will start to resolve within a few days but if the back pain is accompanied by pain down either leg, make an appointment to see your doctor.

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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.7 Part I:

Betty Prichard & "The History of Croquet"

It is now near enough 20 years since Cassell published David Prichard's book, The History of Croquet. For students of the game it is one of the two or three most important books on croquet ever to be published. (You can name the others for yourself.) Without it the whole context in which we play would be lost for ever. Even if anyone were to summon up the energy and commitment displayed by David Prichard, it would almost certainly be too late for the history to be written. Many sources of information - people as well as material - have now gone, the people dead and the papers dispersed or discarded.

David himself is now dead, but in talking to Betty, his widow, I realise how much she and their sons contributed to his work. As the whole family also formed a powerful group at the heart of the English croquet world, they were extraordinarily well-placed to take on the job.

Although William was away in the Army, both other sons, Robert and Colin, played important parts in the proof-reading and indexing. Betty helped with research and editing. But as far as turning the material into a coherent and continuous narrative was concerned, David took on the whole task: "David wrote the whole book by hand - then re-wrote it by hand, and then typed it himself." (One-finger typing, too.)

The John Hobbs Mallet Stephen Mulliner won the Opens with his

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There was already a kind of History in existence - Maurice Reckitt's legendary unpublished manuscript, held in the CA office, a work compiled largely by combing through every issue of the Gazette in the search for significant morsels. Maurice knew that he could take things no further himself. Painstaking research was now needed in the British Museum and wherever else the trail led. Betty told me that Maurice first approached her, not David, to write the definitive book. It would be a completely fresh start, and Maurice was convinced that Betty could do the job, since she had been editor of the Gazette ("my least favourite memory of croquet"), was expert on the Laws (an Examining and Championship Referee) and a successful tournament player. However, having been, as she put it, "over-persuaded" to edit the Gazette, she "balked" at the prospect of what lay ahead, and David stepped in:

"He was a scholar and had an astounding memory, and he had pertinacity - equally important for an author - and a great sense of humour."

Having been invalided from the Army in 1956, Lt.Col.D.M.C.Prichard had moved back to Wales. Betty said, "It was a toss up whether we built a maze or laid a croquet lawn. By a stroke of luck he got a book from the library - it was Maurice Reckitt's - from which he discovered the existence of the CA and joined immediately. He bought a book on the Laws and joined Cheltenham, about 40 miles away. He soon became a member of the Council and later was given the task of simplifying the Baillieu 1961 revision of the Laws."

He turned to the task of writing the History with the same passion he had shown in his youth for cricket and history: "David and I spent many days at the British Museum searching in Country Life, Land and Water and The Field, and photocopying every mention of croquet in the 1870s, 80s and 90s. David did all the writing and typing. I read everything and cut out surplus words. (We were restricted as to the length of the book)."

In fact, the most absorbing research took place far from London - at Chastleton House in Oxfordshire. Still a private house at the time of the Prichards' visit, and still occupied by the Clutton-Brock family, relatives of the Whitmore Joneses, it was here that Walter Jones Whitmore, the Victorian croquet pioneer, had lived and worked on the codification of the Laws, his book on croquet tactics and where he planned and fought his battles to turn croquet into a worthwhile game.

Readers of the Gazette will recall that the house is now in the hands of the National Trust and that the NT and the CA put up a plaque in honour of Walter in the garden at Chastleton in the summer of 1999. It was partly Prichard's account of his work in The History of Croquet

that led to the CA initiative.

If it all now begins to sound like The Raiders of the Lost Ark, or Lord Caernarvon stumbling across the tomb of Tutankhamen in Upper Egypt, well, it was. For the Prichards were led to a bedroom where was standing a chest of drawers stuffed with Whitmore's papers. All his papers were intact and more or less where he had left them, 100 years after his death. The drawers, Betty says, "were packed with school reports, rows with an uncle [a rich uncle, on whom Whitmore was counting for an inheritance], rows with the War Office, letters quarrelling about money, and croquet trivia".

This wonderful archive provided David and Betty with material for a whole chapter - one of their most fascinating. More importantly: "David's first draft of the chapter on Walter was what made Cassell agree to publish. But they said he must cut it down as otherwise there wouldn't be enough space to include more recent times. The more names mentioned of people who are still alive, the better the sales." Most importantly of all, however, they were able to examine unique, first-hand material on the earliest years of croquet - just in the nick of time, too.

Alan Clutton-Brock, who gave them access to this treasure, "was a delightful man," Betty said, "and had even made a start on writing a book about Walter - but not because of croquet." Betty also told me of her attempt, made as soon as the NT took over, "to see if they would think about having a museum of early croquet memorabilia at Chastleton. But they weren't interested at the time."

But the papers? What about those irreplaceable papers? "Well, I asked about the furniture - especially the chest of drawers - but they said that all that had been cleared out."

Not good news.

In passing, I picked up on a reference Betty had made to that great figure from croquet's past, the formidable D.D. Steel, and was amazed to learn not only that she was still playing and managing tournaments when David and Betty were, but also that she was a house-guest with the family, and that David had been picked as her Doubles partner at Cheltenham.

"She was 80-ish when we knew her and she usually picked a long bisquer - 'someone too good for his bisques,' she used to say - and David, early in his playing life, had been just the thing. No one argued with her, and as well as playing croquet, she had, when younger, hunted regularly in the Shires. She was a brilliant horsewoman, and often hunted young stockbrokers' horses when they were otherwise engaged. We liked her a lot."

Finally, something that Betty did not tell me, but that I gathered from another source. I should be interested in who else knows about the coded message in the Index to The History of Croquet. The Index was prepared by the late Robert Prichard, and, as far as I know, no one wrote to the publishers to point out Robert's gentle rebuke - I won't say of what or whom - still there to be discovered.

[Copies of The History of Croquet, now out of print, are in very short supply. Mrs. Prichard has asked me to enquire if anyone has any unwanted copies. I will pass on the information so that the copies can be re-sold. N.W.]

**Part II: Liz Neal & Barbara Meachem
"Two Ladies of Little Importance"**

Few of us knew it at the time, but in the winter of 1970 the end of civilisation was nigh:

"The Council of the CA is negotiating a scheme with the Central Council for Physical Recreation whereby the CCPR has two representatives, Mrs. Neal and Mrs. Meachem, paid £250 each with

expenses which include 10 1/2d per mile car travelling allowance, who will, encumbered with an expensive film-strip projector, scour the countryside (Mrs Neal in the South and Mrs Meachem in the North), spreading the gospel of croquet wherever they go....If the Croquet World sells out to vague 'progressive' phantasies it will find it has sold its birthright for a mess of unpalatable egalitarian pottage."

So there we had it. Brian Lloyd-Pratt, then Editor of the Croquet Gazette, had Named and Shamed. If you should happen to see the two ladies, arrest them. They were turning our birthright into a Mess of Unpalatable Egalitarian Pottage. They were touting Vague Progressive Phantasies on a film-strip, and had probably spent 10 1/2d already.

The two ladies - they were also branded, in contradictory fashion, "Two Ladies of Little Importance" - were Liz Neal and Barbara Meachem. "The silly thing is," said Liz, "that we neither of us thought we were in the least bit important. And I liked Brian."

Their actual brief - Roger Bray played a big part in drawing this up, Liz told me - was first to sort out the lists of CA members and of registered and unregistered clubs - lists which bore no relation to the facts. "Many of the 'members' on the lists were dead," said Liz. Then, after that, she and Barbara were to try to "start a few clubs" and bring existing clubs into contact with each other. "We sort of muddled along. We both went all over the place."

Their progress is charted in subsequent editions of the Gazette through to 1976, when Liz published their final report. By then they had started 12 new clubs, "discovered" many unregistered clubs, some of which Time had forgot, and taken the total of (real) clubs from 75 in 1971 to 125 (registered and unregistered) in 1976. Neither Barbara nor Liz now finds these figures easy to accept, but there they are in the December, 1976, number of the Gazette.



Barbara Meachem (seated) looks on as the demonstration continues at Ellesmere.

They had organised and helped to run courses for beginners and non-beginners, for referees and for coaches. They had put on 12 demonstrations up and down the country. They had also begun to set up the present system of regional Federations. Quite good for a pair of "muddlers".

The raw statistics hide the actual work that went on. Visits by Liz or Barbara - and sometimes both - energised the locals by their enthusiasm and practical support, not least the loan of equipment. No doubt the M1 and the M6 soon lost their charms, but Liz was, and remains, convinced that "personal contact" should be the top priority. They both did actually turn up when they said they would - in Birmingham, Hull, Brighton, Worksop, Manchester, Chalfont St. Giles, Edinburgh, Trawscoed,

Newcastle....The list could go on and on.

Liz still recalls some of these individual visits. One was to Bowdon, where the club had worked with Liz and Barbara to set up a demonstration game between John Solomon and Bernard Neal, Liz's husband. The turn-out was very good - about 100 people.

"I was sitting watching the game, and I heard some people behind me muttering, 'We could do as well as these two'. What they didn't know was that the lawn was the heaviest John and Bernard had ever played on and they were struggling to adjust." (A far cry from the present excellent lawns at Bowdon.)

Both Liz and Barbara believed in personal contact and they believed that "If you start something, something else happens. Weekend tournaments were coming in around the same time, which has probably done more for croquet than anything else. And double-banking came in, so more players could be accommodated".

One important spin-off was announced in Liz's 1973 Report:

"Clubs in the North West and West Midlands which singly might have had little influence have welded themselves into two strongholds by forming two Federations of Croquet Clubs."

These were the first two Federations, the start of the pattern which we now take for granted across the whole country. It was Barbara's great achievement in her North West and West Midlands regions, and one of her happiest memories of the whole enterprise.

By now, the original Development Scheme was coming to an end. What followed was built on its foundations but was organised differently. It had gone on for 6 years and given a lasting boost to croquet - even if it is now little-remembered by most current players. Although they would be the first to deny that they had done anything at all, Liz Neal and Barbara Meachem played a major part in re-drawing the map of croquet in this country. For good.

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CA NEWS

Marketing and Publicity Report

by Tony Fathers

1. Marketing our sport

Just back from Southwick where I spent a joyful two days as part of the coaching team for the South East Croquet Federation's Summer School. You might think that 32 improvers with handicaps in a range 14 to 24 would be quite a handful. But David Collins had it all superbly organised. With his organisation and the efficiency of the Club the whole thing went like clockwork: most impressive. This was further evidence that coaching is something most clubs do well, and it is an aspect of our sport that all of us should emphasise when we try to recruit new members.

During lunch and refreshment breaks the talk naturally turned to our sport in general terms: bisques and a base (rather than the difference); format of the game (more emphasis on golf, one ball and 14 point; the difficulty of recruiting new people. Inevitably I was asked "What is Marketing's objective?" Before answering there slipped into my mind the famous political question "What's the main plank in our platform" to which the blunt answer was "It's the economy, stupid!" - so that I nearly blurted out "More club members, stupid!" But that - leaving out the word Stupid - is what croquet marketing is about. Just that: more club members. So measured against this benchmark, how are we doing in the year 2000?

2 ChildLine

A success. No fewer than 44 clubs signed up with ChildLine to hold a croquet day (I had previously told the organiser that 35 would be good). A few clubs (half a dozen) did not do well, despite their own efforts. However, most were pleased, among which:-

- Ipswich** "Very impressed by the efficiency and friendly atmosphere of ChildLine"
- Llanfair** "Lots of people, between 60 and 70 ... a very happy and successful day."
- Pendle** "Twenty one visitors during day"
- Woking** "Fantastic success raising nearly £2,000 for ChildLine"

The season is not yet over, but my current estimate is that we will have raised £7,000 for Childline, obtained 100 more club members, and achieved a lot of local publicity for the sport.

3. The Oldie

A failure. A lot of advertising cheaply bought, but ineffective in the event.

4. U3A

An initial success. U3A stands for the University of the Third Age. It is an organisation with over 400 branches and 100,000 members. All these people are active retired or semi-retired, and all are interested in learning or taking up new things. An ideal market for us.

Michael Hague of Woking has tested the market with outstanding

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

THE GOLF CROQUET OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS

Southwick 12 - 17 June

Report by Sam Curry

Sussex County Croquet Club, Southwick, the venue for the first British Open Singles and Doubles Golf Croquet Championships. Croquet has been played on the Southwick site since 1901. The accounts at Southwick of 1923 show the "sale of ponies - £13", expenditure was then transferred to mowing machines instead of stabling and fodder! One recent modern visitor noted "It is always a pleasure to drive into the car park at Southwick and gaze across the lawns to the Club-house sited among the trees.

John Eardley-Simpson in his well written history of S.C.C.C. notes "Golf Croquet keeps cropping up in the Summer programmes but does not seem to have been a regular activity!" Also Eardley-Simpson notes "that it is often expressed that golf croquet steers a club towards obscurity and stagnation rather than vitality!"

Well there was plenty of vitality at Southwick as play commenced on the 13th June 2000 for four days! Over this four day event 218 games were played between 7 doubles pairs and 13 singles entries. A great test of stamina as best of 3, 13 point games were played.

What was that cry "we go to Golf Croquet Events and never seem to get enough play!" Bill Arliss put paid to that!

The standard of play was awesome. Time limits were not imposed on any matches, a great risk to take, one which paid off. With so many courts available to us and a good period of days to complete the tournament the plan worked. However there were some very weary croquet players on day 4!

Mental weariness came into the equation as more and more tactical and defensive play could be used without fear of a time limit. Stunning stymie after stymie made for great spectator enjoyment. How wonderful to hear spectators applauding fantastic clearances from one end of the court to the other and death defying hoop running and jump shots! Would we ever have thought that we would hear a crowd at the side of a croquet court "ooing" and whooping with delight at the magnificence of the speed and accuracy of a shot?

The courts gave tremendous food for thought, reading various borrow and take for touch shots and hoop running was extremely difficult. The very hard hitters managing to iron out a lot of these problems at the appropriate times.

The Doubles on day one was an excellent championship with illustrious pairings such as Tony Hall, President of the World Croquet Federation and our very own Croquet Association President John



John Moore watches his shot intently during play at Southwick.



Stephen Mulliner relaxing at the Golf Opens.

Solomon. Bill Arliss and Daphne Gaitley gave a spirited performance with four wins out of six. The highly consistent pairing of Derek Old of Tyneside and Chris Sheen of Colchester was almost unbeatable, the only match they didn't win was against the Northern Pair John Moore and Malcolm Gibson. Old and Sheen with 5 wins took the Trophy and well deserved Championship win for them.

So on to the singles where of course Old and Moore would always threaten with consistently excellent play over the last two years.

How wonderful to see someone of the calibre of Stephen Mulliner entering The British Open Golf Croquet Singles. How sad to hear from Robert Fulford after his dynamic win at the Ramsgate Open, that he simply could not give up yet more time to enter the singles at S.C.C.C. Chris Clarke also in the same boat as Fulford with work commitments counting him out of The Tournament.

Stephen Mulliner's dedication, motivation and accuracy are without question and he remained unbeaten with 11 wins right up to the final. John Moore was his final opponent, and Moore certainly rose to the occasion taking Mulliner to one all and then to 5-1 up in the third. Mulliner pulled it back to take the title with astonishing clearances and hoop running. Mulliner has that wonderful Egyptian touch of gaining a lot of advantage to the next hoop after running his objective hoop.

John Solomon brought his ultimate style, technique and charm to the singles championship taking 3rd place with Chris Sheen of Colchester in fourth place.

The Championships were a resounding success, if a little low on entries this time round. As the tournament Manager said in his closing speech, spectators were truly absorbed in the games, clapping and congratulating, real audience participation.

John Solomon's closing words were so apt when he talked of the two disciplines being able to survive side by side quite happily. Stephen Mulliner proved to all players that skills from association contribute to Golf Croquet and vice versa. The presence of the great players at The British Open and The Ramsgate Open prove that Golf Croquet is back, and its here to stay. May both disciplines of these great games flourish and neither one slip into obscurity.

Thanks to Southwick for the warm welcome and care and attention to players through. The Championships.

RESULTS- Doubles The Barlow and Woodlands Trophies

Single block of 7 pairs, each match single 19 point game

1st Derek Old and Chris Sheen 5/6, 2nd Bill Arliss and Daphne Gaitley 4/6,

Singles- The Delves Broughton Trophy

Single block of 13 players, top 4 entered knockout. Each match best of 3, 13 point games. **Semi-finals** John Moore beat John Solomon 7-5, 7-3. Stephen Mulliner

beat Chris Sheen 7-5, 7-5 **Final** Stephen Mulliner beat John Moore 7-3, 2-7, 7-6

3rd/4th place play off John Solomon beat Chris Sheen 10-7

THE NATIONAL GOLF CROQUET CHAMPIONSHIPS

Nottingham 28 - 29 July

Report by Bill Arliss

This year the finals of the Ascot and Ranelagh Cups moved to a new and larger venue at Nottingham. Use of four of the Nottingham lawns allowed a much larger entry to the finals with four blocks of five for the singles and two blocks of six pairs for the doubles. Winners of each block then played semi-finals and finals as appropriate.

The lawns at Nottingham were moderately fast but of more importance, the hoops were set in very firm in dry ground and were most unforgiving. In many "certain" hoops the ball remained on the same side as it started from. The scoring of hoops from 10 foot and greater were rather rare. Although there was a few short showers on Saturday, the weather was quite good for most of the event.

Saturday was singles day and double banking was necessary to fit in all the matches. Block 1 was somewhat weakened by the withdrawal of Stephen Mulliner and the non arrival of one of the players but two substitutes were quickly found and made up a full block. Ivor Brand emerged as winner with four wins from four. On paper, block 2 was possibly the strongest. Unfortunately John Moore did not show the same form as he had done in the Opens, Pendle and Ramsgate tournaments and we ended up with a three way tie of Richard Brand, David Openshaw and Don Beck, each with three wins from four. As the who beats whom could not be applied, the manager had to resort to the net points ruling and David Openshaw narrowly won by a margin of 3. In block 3 and 4, Chris Sheen and Derek Old won their blocks with 100% records.

The semi-finals were both quite close with Derek Old beating Chris Sheen 7-5 and David Openshaw beating Ivor Brand 5-4. The final was played as best of three with David Openshaw winning 7-5, 7-2. For once Derek's usual first class hoop running deserted him whilst David's Openshaws ability to remove Derek from scoring positions was almost 100% and won him the title. Ivor Brand won the 3/4th place play off 7-3, 3-5, 7-6.

Sunday was doubles day with only single banked games limited to 40 minutes. Initial games were rather slow and only two of the first 12 matches were completed on time. Although the event regulations required that the hoop in play was completed after time if the score difference was one or less, the delays in the programme were not significant and the final between Chris Sheen partnered by his brother Roderick against John Moore and Sam Curry started just after four. Both pairs had come through their respective blocks without loss. The brothers Sheen showed their experience as a regular doubles pair with a quick 7-3, 7-1 win.



John Solomon presents Derek Old & Chris Sheen with their trophies for the Open Doubles championship.



Derek Old executes a jump shot to take a hoop, as David Openshaw looks on.

The greater numbers involved in this year's finals certainly appeared to give more stature to the event and are worthy of repeating in future years.

However I believe that the golf croquet committee will have to give some consideration to the extremely slow and defensive play in the doubles as only just over 25% of games were completed on time. Perhaps a second criteria for deciding block winners should be based on gross hoops scored. This may reduce the on-court conferences.

GOLF CROQUET INTER-COUNTIES

Wrest Park 12 - 13 Aug 2000

Report by Bill Arliss

After three years, the Kent stranglehold on the Inter Counties Golf Croquet Championship was broken by Essex during the weekend of 12/13 Aug at Wrest Park. However Essex did have use of the services of previous Association World Champion Chris Clarke to help them claim the title. The weather was very kind with glorious sunshine for the first day and only a slight rain shower during the presentation on the second day.

Eight counties took part in this first two-day format for the event and Manager Don Beck had set an all play all format followed by a similar format for the top and bottom fours. Each inter-county match comprised two singles and one doubles match with all competitors playing doubles and singles alternatively, singles and doubles roles being reversed when teams met again in the second stage. Time limits were set for each game and after time had been called only four further shots were allowed and as such tied games were a possible result.

After the first session on Sunday morning the four leading counties were Essex, Northumberland, Sussex and Kent with Lancashire, Bucks/ Beds, Warwickshire and Oxford forming a second division. In the second stages Essex very quickly put themselves into an unassailable position with 2-1 wins over Northumberland and Sussex but this left the second position wide open for the remaining three counties. After the final round all three remaining counties had a total of six wins each and Kent, Northumberland and Sussex were declared joint second place.

The lack of rain prior to the event had produced some very fast lawns and with the very firm but not tight hoop settings, long range hoop running was very rare and a large majority of games went to time. Players rapidly recognised that tactics and extreme accuracy rather than power was the name of the game.

The two day format appeared to be very well received and will be repeated next year, hopefully with even more counties.

success. Contacting the Chairman of the local branch, he arranged an introductory course for 11 local U3A members at the Woking Club. Eight remained at the end and Michael is confident that at least six (perhaps all eight) will stay on as members next season.

I have contacted the National Secretary of U3A. She has accepted my invitation to an introductory croquet lesson at my Club, and agreed to send out a note about croquet to all 430 branches.

I have written to all Clubs about what is clearly a terrific opportunity for us to get new club members. I must emphasise that U3A, although a national organisation, has no national programme of classes. Each local branch is responsible for its own programme. It is therefore up to each croquet club to contact the local U3A branch and to sell the idea of an introductory croquet course. Quote the success of Woking and the support of Lyn Jonas (National Secretary of U3A). But – if you want more club members – contact your local U3A branch.

5. THE CARPET


A growing success. But not growing fast enough. Following Bill Artiss' effort in the local shopping centre, resulting in 24 more club members for his club, there have been other successes but not frankly as many as I would have expected. So clubs that have not yet tried the carpet as a way of getting more members speak to me or to Bill to learn about this sure fire way of getting more club members.

Development Committee Report

By Bill Sidebottom

Lottery News

Chester Croquet Club have been successful in their application for a Lottery Grant of 3000 pounds to provide three full size lawns. Their initial application was part of a large City initiated sports complex application which was turned down. Not put off, the club made a direct application. They put a lot of careful and thorough preparation into the submission.



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Mrs Janet Davies, the club secretary stresses their view that the precise wording of the application and the echoing of the recommended key phrases is of some importance. The result of a strengthened Chester club is very good news for croquet in the North West.

The lesson for the best chance for success is that given by Janet Davies plus getting to know the people involved with the assessment process.

Awards

A reminder that the Townsend, the Apps/Heley and the new Millennium Awards will all be made at the end of this season. Entries to be received by the C.A. Office by the end Dec. 2000.

Full details in the Club Handbook and on the C.A. website-www.croquet.org.uk

Grants

The question - what does the C.A. do for us?, is not infrequently asked, sometimes by members of clubs who have received grants or loans from the C.A. Or where clubs have been supported by their Federations who have had Federation grants from the C.A., for example, for coaching support or the purchase of equipment to loan to new or growing clubs. The summary facts for C.A. financial support during the past five years are as follows:-

On average, grants of 500 pounds have been given in each year to 4/5 clubs. In 1998, seven clubs were given grants of 500 pounds. 1998 was the only year that the allocated grant budget was fully applied for. In each of the other years support for clubs from the C.A. was below budget because too few clubs applied for grants. Of course, not all clubs need financial support and the Development Grant Budget is intended to focus on new and developing clubs. Grant support has become an important element of lottery applications, demonstrating the backing for the application by the C.A.

In addition to development grants the C.A. has approved a number of much larger loans for large projects.

In 1999, nine clubs were given small grants for schools development and five clubs in 2000. Again, finance could have been made available if more applications had been received.

After five years experience on the Development Committee, it is clear that the resource in shortest supply for the progress and development of croquet is not money but people able and willing to be involved. This conclusion will be no surprise to anyone involved in running a club.

Schools, students & juniors

Considerable efforts have been made in recent years by clubs, the Federations and the C.A. to encourage and develop young players. Sadly, with a few exceptions, the results have been disappointing or short-lived. The pressures on educational establishments, the wide range of choices available and the increasing costs of transportation are making the situation more difficult. However, it is the current policy of the C.A. to encourage young players wherever possible. One promising school trial carried out this year by Michael Hague through the Woking club was with a Kiwi Croquet set brought back from New Zealand by David Openshaw. See Coaching 2000. The age group covered was seven to nine. The possibility of loaning such sets to schools through clubs is being considered.

The Development Committee would welcome any suggestions and ideas which could improve the position in the future. These should be sent to Nigel Graves at the C.A. Office. Nigel will then circulate as appropriate.

Tournament Committee Report

by Derek Trotman

An extra meeting of the Tournament Committee was arranged during July in order to have time to discuss in detail a number of changes that were being considered for the format and running of several CA tournaments. These good intentions were however somewhat overtaken by a request from Council for the Committee to consider how we should deal with Tournament Regulations now that the LAWS of Croquet had been revised and were about to be re printed.

The problem as we saw it was that the LAWS were unlikely to be revised and reprinted in less than five years and to print the Tournament Regulations with them committed the regulations to the same time scale. Approved alterations could be printed in the Gazette but this was hardly a quick source of reference in the future.

The Committee have therefore made the following recommendations:

1) Those regulations pertaining to the LAWS, i.e. Referees, umpires and time limits, should be retained with the Laws

2) The remaining regulations which apply mainly to the organisation and running of tournaments should be published in the Fixture Book.

3) The regulations in the Fixture Book should be revised to encompass both the Association and Golf Croquet games, the present General Conditions and any other new additions under consideration.

Subject to Councils approval these changes will be made before the new LAWS Book and the 2001 Fixture Book are published.

A knock - on effect of this will be a Fixture Book containing a lot of additional information and it is considered appropriate that its name should be changed to

'CA Tournament Regulations and Calendar'.

The decisions resulting from the discussions during the remainder of the meeting are listed below.

a) Titles for tournaments. The Committee has been worried about the titles that have recently appeared for some of the new tournaments and have agreed a series of definitions that will be enforced in the future. These will be circulated to clubs by the CA Secretary with a request for the preliminary details of their 2001 tournaments.

b) Championships. The criteria for grading Championships has been revised so that only the CA controlled events will receive Class A grading. These will be the OPEN, British Men's & Women's, and the four Divisional Championships.

Class B events are championships designated by the CA. They will be advanced play, use championship hoops and be the best of three knockout or draw and process format.

Class C will be other championship events sponsored or approved by the CA. Entries may be restricted to a particular class of entries. Special conditions may apply.

c) Inter- counties. We have decided to revert to the previous rule which used the criteria of total games won to decide the league position of counties having the same points total.

The other rule change involves Eligibility of players where the Residential Qualification now reads 'Permanent residence' and that for membership of a club in the county now reads 'two years fully paid membership'. The latter therefore now excludes country membership.

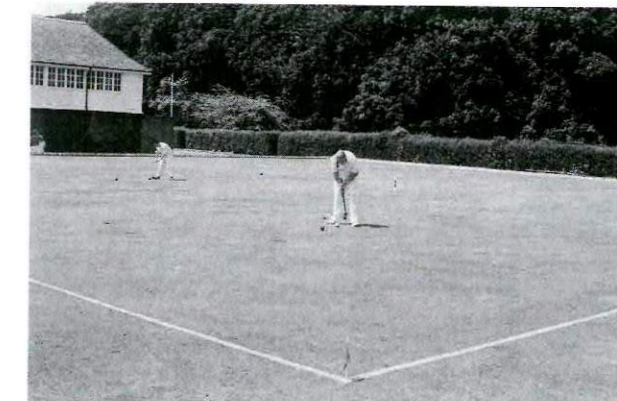
d) Continued poor entry to a number of CA events has resulted in a decision to discontinue them in 2001 pending a policy decision by Council on their future. These events are the National Short Croquet - Individual and Team events, National Junior Championship and the National Schools Championship.

e) Indoor Championship. The cost of hall hire is such that this tournament is no longer viable without sponsorship. This matter has also been referred to Council but in the meantime no event is planned for 2001.

f) Website. It was agreed that Tournament Regulations would be put on the CA Website as soon as they were agreed. In addition the draft Calendar we plan to circulate to clubs in September will also be flown on the website.

If any members have any comments on the above or wish for further information please contact me (01670 518228) or any other member of the Tournament Committee.

CLUB NEWS



Quiller Barrett in play on the new Lawn at Ealing.

Ealing Club gets second full-size court

Report by Colin McKenzie

On 29 July, Ealing Croquet Club played its first ever home match, in the 14th season since it was founded. We were able to play our Longman Cup match against Roehampton at home because we have at last acquired a second lawn. We now occupy two of the three bowling greens in Lamas Park, leaving the bowlers only one.

After many years of aspiring to a second lawn, it was surprisingly easy when it happened. The council wanted to stop maintaining one of the bowling greens, as an economy measure, and the bowlers had become resigned to losing it.

For the bowlers, letting us have the lawn was better than leaving it unmaintained. The council agreed to give it to us on the basis that Croquet lawns are cheaper to maintain than bowling greens.

So now we have two flat, fast courts, one of which is convertible to four short croquet courts. We still can't run a calendar tournament, but otherwise we feel we're finally come of age as a Croquet Club.

And the match? Roehampton won 5-2.

What have you left at Cheltenham?

Cheltenham Croquet Club are slowly sinking beneath the weight of abandoned clothing. Here is a list of all of the items now apparently ownerless. If nobody claims them by the end of the year, they will be disposed of according to their condition.

White V necked pullover with black/white bowls motif (L), lovat green golf-type jacket (M), mid blue sweatshirt Casual Club (M), beige sweatshirt M&S (M), cream mens sweater with 3 button opening (L), orange long sleeved ladies jumper, white casual jacket with navy and green trim (L), cream knitted cable sweater with dark blue trim on v neck (M/L), ladies medium cream Emsmorn waterproof jacket (M), white Welkin waterproof jacket (L), white Botra waterproof jacket (L), white brim cotton sun hat (M), black cotton Nike cap, white cotton Helly Hansen cap, 2 blue towels, 1 green towel (hers), red telescopic umbrella, grey Adidas size 6 trainers, pair brown mens T bar sandals, pair brown mens lace up shoes, pair mens black slip ons, pair black next lace up shoes, pair white plus 3 trousers made by Bleunners, pair blue/grey mens twill slacks Ralph Lauren, pair navy cord trousers 36R Principles, navy cord trousers M&S, blue plastic mac (S), yellow bum bag.

If you wish to claim any item please contact Eileen Magee 01452 700353.

HOOP APPROACHES FOR BEGINNERS

by Andrew Bennet

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Why do so many players talk about the hoop approach as if it were a special sort of shot? It is simply a croquet stroke, played from (one hopes) a short distance.

I suppose it is because so many beginners, having failed to obtain a position close to the hoop with their roquet, often have to resort to a "bend-down-and-shove" shot, with the intention of taking a bisque if hoop-running position is not obtained. Some become so adept at getting hoop position with a "scoop" that they fail to realise, as their game improves, that a "scoop" is not the only way to approach a hoop, and that a greater variety of simple strokes should be applied to the hoop approach. A former holder of the Ladies' Field Cup admits to this limitation, and I have seen it even in the President's Cup, as it used to be.

The "scoop to the hoop" is an awkward shot, always unsightly and often illegal, because you are much more likely to commit a double-tap or push fault in a short roll than in a big one.

Ideally, the hoop approach should be a short drive or stop-shot, so you should start practising these from two or three feet in front of the hoop, very slightly to the side. Experiment with the strength until you can make the striker's ball finish six inches in front of the hoop. The croqueted ball should end up at least three feet behind it. First, experiment with straight drives shots, then try from progressively further to the side, but still well in front. Remember what your coach told you about splitting the angle. Stick to your line of aim. If you have difficulty with an imaginary aiming line, find a point on that line to aim at (a daisy, a fence post, the drainpipe on the clubhouse or whatever), and don't change your stance after aiming. You want to put the croqueted ball a long way behind the hoop, much further than the long-bisquer often imagines, for reasons that will become apparent later.

After this, practise from still further to the side. The hoop approach from the side will *never* be a roll, because of the wide angle of split. Stand upright and aim at the hoop. Generally, you will obtain a better position if you aim slightly towards the non-playing side of the hoop. As before, decide on your line and strike in that direction. Remember not to change your stance once you have decided on the line.

From behind the hoop, your approach will be a take-off. Place your ball so that the right-angle makes your ball miss the hoop by a large enough margin to be sure of missing the near upright, then aim at this upright!

We now come back to the approach from nearly in front. Why do you need to have the croqueted ball so far behind the hoop? Think about what you are going to do after going through. If you have set things up correctly, you will have a ball at your next hoop. Even if

you have not, a rush pointing towards your next hoop is always useful. You want a rush so that your croquet stroke will be as short and simple as possible. You do not see the top players having to do enormous split rolls once they have a break established, so why should you have to? So let's think a bit more about the rush after the first hoop.

It's a long way from hoop 1 to hoop 2. Let's assume that you have used your bisques correctly to set things up, so you have a ball somewhere in the middle and one near the second hoop. After running first hoop, you should now be able to knock the ball behind it towards the ball in the middle, or at least some way down the court. A simple stop-shot or drive is then all you need to send the croqueted ball to hoop 3 while landing within easy distance of the ball in the middle. Roquet this and take off to the ball waiting at hoop 2.

When you approach hoop 2, you want the croqueted ball to be not only behind the hoop, but some way to the right, so that you can be sure of knocking it either towards the ball in the middle or towards the ball at third after running the hoop. Many top players, when approaching hoop 2 on a fast lawn, like to put the croqueted ball about a foot short of the yard-line, so that they can blast through the hoop and be sure of a useful rush into the court, but we'll leave that sort of precision to them for the moment. As long as you can knock it towards the middle of the court, you make the next shot easier and cut down on the number of bisques you will use to keep going. Sending a ball to hoop 4 while getting close to your pivot in the middle is so much easier when you are halfway there following a useful rush.

All the odd-numbered hoops should be approached as the first, with the croqueted ball at least three feet behind, to help you get that rush ahead. The even-numbered hoops should be approached as the second, putting the croqueted ball not only behind but well to the side. It is usually obvious which side, but there is one exception: hoop 6.

When you approach hoop 6 in a textbook 4-ball break (in other words, when your pivot ball is in the middle of the court), your croqueted ball should go to the right of the hoop, not towards the next hoop. This is because you will then have a much straighter shot to send a ball to 2-back while getting near to the ball in the middle. 1-back and 2-back are the places where many breakdowns occur because of lack of thought in approaching hoop 6.

Now, get your coach to talk you through a 4-ball break, with careful attention to the hoop approaches. Move the balls as necessary to practise the standard shots and avoid awkward splits. Your bisques are there to allow you to keep to easy strokes until you improve - then you lose the bisques.

Above all, *think* before you stoop and scoop!

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CATCH 'EM YOUNG WITH KIWICROQUET

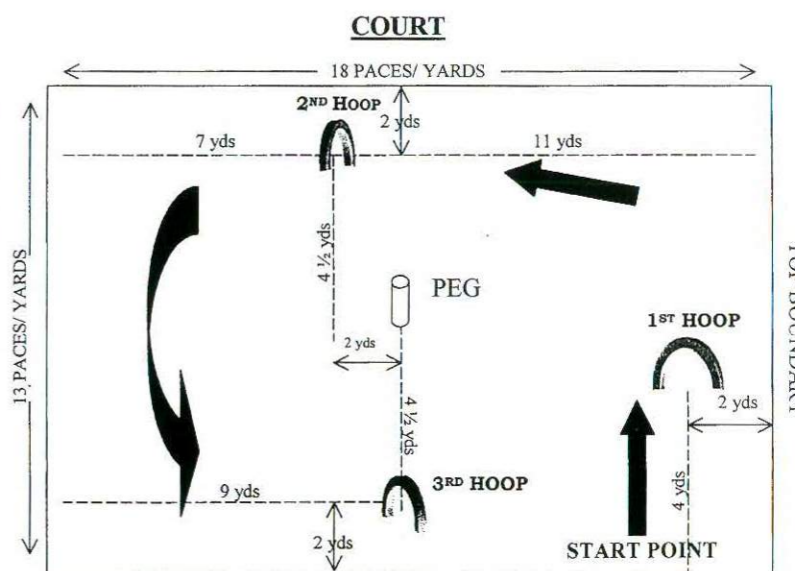
By Michael Hague

Kiwi Croquet was created in New Zealand and developed over the past three years for youngsters in the 7 to 13 year old bracket. It serves as a vehicle to get school children interested in croquet at an early age for the long term benefit of the sport. The England Captain, David Openshaw, brought a Kiwi Croquet set back to England following his team's retention of the MacRobertson Shield earlier this year. Woking LTCC arranged a trial of the game at a local school during the summer term 2000.

The game is designed to involve eight players in a fast moving, easy to learn but nevertheless challenging bit of fun. Two teams of four go round three generously sized (222cm wide) hoops to peg, scoring one point per hoop and two for peg (maximum five points per player). The team first scoring 20 points wins or the one ahead on points after 30 minutes. Each team has its own set of mallets and balls in the same colour. The 28inch mallets and 2 1/2 inch diameter balls are numbered 1 to 8. The basic game is played like Golf and in the advanced version players are allowed one croquet per turn. The single croquet limit was introduced to avoid one player having a long innings whilst the remaining seven got bored.

The trial was set up through the sports master who was keen to add another activity to the choice offered to his pupils. Throughout the summer term the school had two groups of eight to ten pupils between seven and nine years of age playing the basic game and after four or five weeks the advanced version on different afternoons under the same master. The weekly one hour sessions were supplemented by practise during the lunch hours when the pupils were allowed to take out the equipment. When more than eight players turned up, one or two had to share a mallet. The playing area was sloped but this did not prove a hindrance. The important thing was that the grass was kept short. The game may seem to be simplicity itself but try hitting a 2 1/2 in ball with a 1 1/2 in square mallet face. Its not that easy!

Woking provided a coach to start things off and then once a



fortnight. One hour per session was enough as it was not easy to hold the attention of the group just practising basic shots. They wanted to get on and play a game. Maintaining control was hard work! For instance before demonstrating and explaining, it was advisable to get the class to sit down, preferable without mallet or balls. It is essential that a teacher is put in charge and attends practices. He/she will require a full sized mallet as demonstrating with a 28inch mallet is hard for an adult. One of the garden set type will do (about £28). Ideally he/she should be invited to the club and taught the basic techniques and the rudiments of the game. The aim is to make the school self-sufficient as quickly as possible so that another school can be targeted.

The pupils who took part in the trial maintained their enthusiasm for the game throughout. The CA Kiwi Croquet set was withdrawn from the school at the end of the trial and is now available for loan to another. The school intends to buy its own Kiwi set before the start of the next summer term at a cost of about £150. Any club willing to help to a local primary school to take up Kiwi Croquet should contact Bill Sidebottom, Chairman of the Development Committee (Tel: 01926852638), about borrowing a Kiwi Croquet set from the CA.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Florida's National Croquet Center - a milestone in marketing the sport

Report by Bob Alman, USA

In the greater world of sport, it's not that big a deal: ten acres in West Palm Beach, Florida, with twelve courts surrounding a 19,000 square foot building housing a museum, staff headquarters, pro shop, members lounge, restaurant, and meeting rooms. The truly remarkable thing is that the sport is croquet. This groundbreaking facility, owned by the Croquet Foundation of America, is wholly dedicated to significantly expanding the player base of American croquet.

Chuck Steuber, 79, is the man who made it all happen, and there's nothing at all vague about his vision for the future of the sport. He will tell you precisely what numbers he has in mind: 30,000 members of the United States Croquet Association by the year 2010, and 2,500 affiliated clubs throughout the Americas.

Steuber made his fortune building and managing a fleet of chemical tankers. After retiring, he started playing more golf and discovered croquet. Like many croquet-playing American millionaires, Steuber has two upscale homes - the winter place in Boca Raton (a few miles south of Palm Beach), and his summer abode in Rye, New York (near the Big Apple).

Steuber was not widely known in croquet circles outside his native stamping grounds until a couple of years ago when the president of the Croquet Foundation of America, Ellery McClatchy, asked Steuber to succeed him in that office. In accepting, Steuber announced that his goal as president of this organization - started by USCA founder Jack Osborn in the late seventies - would be to establish a national headquarters for the USCA, a property that would be owned and controlled by the croquet establishment. Up to that time, the office staffs of the USCA and the CFA had always been housed - sometimes rather shabbily - at a sponsoring croquet facility, such as PGA National or, as has been the case for several years, Palm Beach Polo, a large development with more golfers and horses than croquet players.

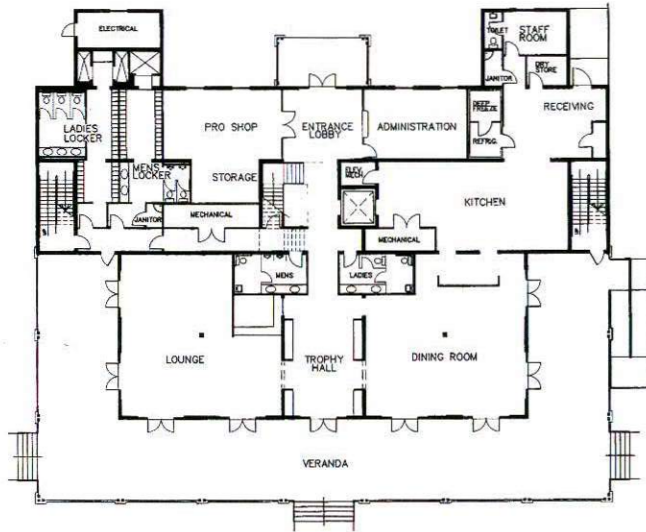
When Steuber made his announcement, people nodded politely and privately commented that he surely meant well, but there was no way it would ever happen. When he persisted by elaborating his vision of the physical space the USCA and CFA would occupy - a large building, surrounded by many lawns - few people took this very seriously. How would the money be raised? Who would donate the five million dollars

or more it would take to build this pipe dream?

But late last year, Steuber upped the ante by actually buying a 10-acre site in West Palm Beach which he donated to the Croquet Foundation of America. He hired the noted British-born architect Digby Bridges to design a gracious gabled building in the Florida Keys style - surrounded by 20-foot verandas - which is a visual metaphor for the way Steuber believes the sport of croquet should be enjoyed. Bridges endorsed and fulfilled that vision vividly in his design. He has said that the atmosphere created will be reminiscent of that of Hurlingham, where Bridges played his first serious croquet.

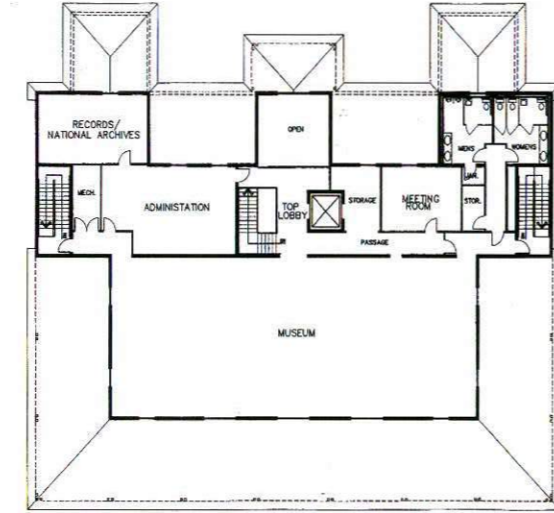
Since then, a national fund-raising campaign has hit full speed with more than a hundred donors, including several in the "underwriting" category with contributions of \$100,000 or more.

The final permit approvals came through in August and foundation concrete was poured for the main building, while the lawns - complete with elaborate irrigations systems - were prepared for double-sprigging. The lawns will be ready for play on November 1, 2000. A packed calendar of events for the "Launch Season" (November/December/January) has been published in a special issue of the USCA CROQUET NEWS and on the USCA Website, www.CroquetAmerica.com. A new Website, www.CroquetNational.com, will debut in September.



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

1/8"=1'-0"



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

1/8"=1'-0"

more member associates and affiliated clubs - it will likely be presaged at the National Croquet Center in West Palm Beach, in full view of the entire croquet world. And if it works in America - where the sport was organized fewer than 25 years ago - it could work in other countries as well.

Anyone can plan a visit to the National Croquet Center to reserve play on its lawns and gauge its potential firsthand. Space will be abundant in November and December, while much of the facility will still be under construction. In those two "launch" months, a special monthly membership in the National Croquet Club can be arranged for only \$100, conferring the privilege of unlimited play on one or another of the twelve lawns. Reserved space will become more scarce in January, which is already heavily booked with special events including the Launch Week Celebration beginning January 21.

Sooner or later, everyone who is anyone in the sport of croquet will go to America's National Croquet Center. It will be the venue of choice for all major national and international events in North America - including the next MacRobertson Shield.

Already being discussed for November, 2001, is a three-week Croquet Festival to show off the finished National Croquet Center and to celebrate the sport in the broadest variety of games and formats ever displayed in a single event.

"We're going to have every kind of croquet at the National Center, all in one place, going on at the same time."

The resort-class resident club - the National Croquet Club - will be only a small part of the action at the National Center. There will also be free and low-cost public programs organized through the West Palm Beach Parks and Recreation Department, to provide a model for the further expansion of croquet through municipal parks. (Unlike croquet in the Commonwealth countries, the sport still has relatively few public venue courts.) Special marketing initiatives for golf and sports clubs are being developed for testing in November and December. Initially, much of the marketing effort will be directed to corporate Golf Croquet.

How to effectively publicize and market the sport of croquet is a perennially hot topic of debate among croquet players around the world and a recurrent theme on the email Nottingham Board. The National Croquet Center will inevitably provide insight into this debate that will go far beyond "what if?" speculation. The ultimate significance of the National Croquet Center is not as a big and luxurious place to play croquet, but as a laboratory for exploring every one of those hotly debated issues. It is designed as a national showcase that highlights the programs, the events, and the formats that work best to build the sport.

If there is a bigger future for this sport - one that can be measured in

THE OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP, HURLINGHAM 3 - 9 JULY

Report by Richard Hilditch

Mulliner sweeps all before him to take 2000 Opens

It was out with the old and in with the even older as Stephen Mulliner regained the Open singles title after a gap of 10 years. In the process he overcame most of the top names (Clarke, Fulford and Bamford who put out Maugham). Together with Bamford he also regained the doubles title. While Mulliner's victory was well earned and provided a break from the younger players' domination, there is a glaring lack of really young British players preparing to nip at the heels of the current masters. If this continues for ten years we will lose our position of world supremacy.

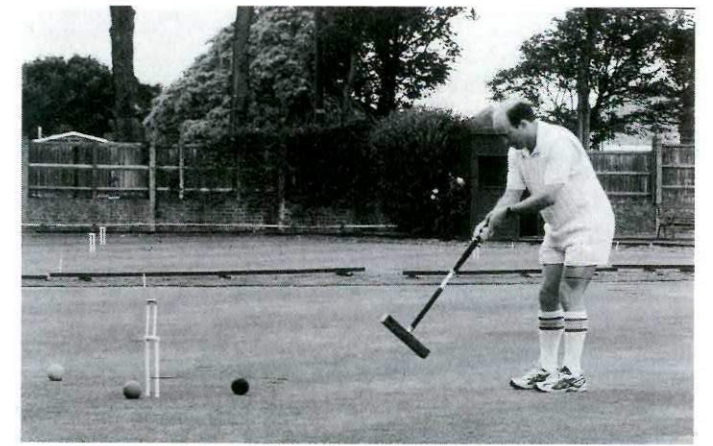
The event was again played at Hurlingham (whose sponsorship is most welcome in our relatively poor sport) over a 7 day period and as well as most of the top English players we welcomed visitors from New Zealand, South Africa, Ireland and Jersey. In contrast to the English, our overseas visitors were mostly under the age of 30, with a couple of lively promising teenagers from the Carrickmines club in Dublin, Mark McInerney and Ronan Rogerson. The selectors had even been gracious enough to seed the two New Zealanders, Toby Garrison and Shane Davis. Although we only had actual rain for one day of the event, the humidity, cloud cover and overnight rain contributed to slow lawns that provided little test for the very best players throughout.

Monday's play in the doubles threw up no surprises, although Patrick Hort (playing with Phil Cordingley) looked strong finishing with a 5th turn triple in the second game against the luckless Michael Heap and Matthew Burrow. Reg Bamford took the opportunity of conditions and weak opponents to complete his first sextuple of the week, it was not a classic break involving several long rushes to hoops. The singles started on Tuesday and Mark McInerney showed his quick flamboyant style in beating Graham Gale in 3 games. Mark Avery also showed some panache in completing a 3 ball triple against Colin Southern leaving a ball in corner 4 (the pedants were pointing out that the only real 3 ball triples occur on turn 3 or after a ball has been pegged out).

The match between David Openshaw and Mark Suter (returning to the opens after a 12 year gap and now representing South Africa) was closely fought on the most difficult lawn 9. When the match resumed at one game all on Wednesday morning we were treated to a tight pegged out game. After Openshaw (with 2 balls) failed after penult Suter forgot his lift and instead played a more difficult break and was unable to make his last hoop letting in Openshaw for a classic Openshawian +2 result. After his strong first showing McInerney came up against Stephen Mulliner and the Irishman made too many mistakes for the efficient Mulliner who won in straight games. Steve Comish against Bamford was the best quality match of the 3rd round, with barely a mistake or missed shot between them. Comish even hit a sextuple leave to win the second game but eventually was unable to win the hitting contest. A comprehensive 2 game victory in only 11 turns was provided by Robert Fulford (everyone's favourite for the event) as he produced a sextuple peel against Tony LeMoignan including finishing with a straight quadruple. Out on lawn 9 Phil Cordingley did well to beat Davis, although he had not played much in the last year, the other 7 seeds survived to the quarter-finals. It has to be mentioned though that Hort was on a finishing triple in the third against Mulliner before sticking at hoop 4, it certainly gave Mulliner a scare.

On Thursday the singles event was rested as the doubles and plate were played. All of the seeded pairs won through to the semi-finals, the most resistance was provided by Avery and Openshaw against Bamford and Mulliner, the third game started carefully but eventually Openshaw was forced to take a long shot which was missed. Clarke and Fulford won fairly easily but the current bad form of Chris Clarke was in evidence as he made several errors.

As usual the quarter-finals of the singles were played best of 5 (to



ensure enough play for the top players). The most eagerly awaited fixture between Clarke and Mulliner (who had recently overtaken Clarke in the rankings) was on lawn 4 for the spectators to keep an eye on. In the event it was something of an anti-climax once Mulliner hit the sextuple leave in the third game (with an unseemly shout of 'tea-lady'). Clarke was just not hitting his long shots. Bamford overcame Cordingley although the third game provided the most interesting refereeing (or not) incident of the tournament. Bamford had won the first two games quite easily and was playing a fairly routine sextuple in the third game on lawn 3. Cordingley was up near the manager's notice board behind lawn 4 resigned to his fate and chatting to a few of the other players. Bamford made the 4th (4-back) peel to a ball nearby rushing it to 2-back, he made 2-back and then rushed back up to near 4-back and proceeded to finish with a straight double peel but making 4-back as his next hoop! Some of the players talking with Cordingley spotted the problem. But Cordingley did not and they certainly knew not to interfere. I myself did not notice the error but simply assumed he had peeled 4-back going to 3-back when he approached 4-back. Sadly one of the spectators came up to me and told me in a very loud voice about the error, I had to put him down twice, the second time with a some sarcasm. Cordingley of course was the model of correctness (he could not take advantage of the information obtained from a spectator, law 49(a)) and made sure to rush on to shake hands with Bamford (and thus seal the result) the moment that he pegged out his 11 hoop sextuple. The fact that the spectator was an ex-Tory MP who claimed that he played the game and knew the rules does not bode well for the standard of our leaders. The new law 50(a)(3) would require Cordingley to determine if the error had occurred and to forestall, these laws will come into effect at the start of 2001 in Britain.

Meanwhile David Maugham had a fairly easy win over Mark Avery, taking full advantage of his excellent shooting. The match between Fulford and Garrison proved to be the closest with the first 4 games being split. In the deciding game Fulford Robert elected to peg out 2 balls after doing a TPO leaving both balls on hoop 1. This proved to be a successful strategy to defend against Garrison's shooting as Fulford soon completed a tight 12 hoop 2-ball break.

The first semi-final saw Mulliner beat Fulford in three straight games as Fulford was totally unable to hit in (his only hoops coming off a Mulliner mistake). The second match saw Maugham repeat the 2-ball TPO tactic to win the second game against Bamford, Maugham finished with 2 2-ball breaks that could best be described as beastly. Later trailing 2 games to 1 Maugham failed a routine triple at 2-back and Bamford only let him have the long shot (which Maugham had hit in the third game) before finishing with a sextuple.

The final day brought rain that was quite strong at times. Bamford and Mulliner were faced with the possibility of 8 games as they had to play a best of 3 doubles match followed by a best of 5 singles match. In the event only 7 games were required and these were completed in about 7 hours. The warm up of the doubles final started with two TPO errors, the first from Maugham after 2-back in the first and the second from Mulliner before over in the second. The final game was a simple TP for Bamford with Comish missing the lift.



John Solomon relaxing with Reg Bamford at the Opens.
Picture by Quiller Barrett

After a quick lunch we were ready for the singles final which looked to be quite one sided on paper, Bamford was the holder and had played virtually without error so far in the event. Mulliner was the old timer who was prone to error and had even made a really silly error that very morning in the doubles. Mulliner had not won the event for 10 years during which time Bamford had won 4 times. However it was Mulliner's will to win and incredible shooting that determined the outcome of this match. The first game saw Mulliner hampered after hoop 1 allowing Bamford to eventually take control. Mulliner again made an error in the second game (sticking in hoop 1), Bamford was unable to capitalise and Mulliner proceeded to get the TPO. He won the careful 3-ball game eventually. As we started the third game the rain really picked up and Bamford decided to stop at 1-back after Mulliner had had the first break to 4-back. Mulliner carefully took aim at the 33 yard shot from hoop 1 to corner 3 and hit in confidently and finished with a triple peel. The fourth game saw Bamford get the first break again to 1-back and incredibly Mulliner hit the tea lady shot yet again (the third time on that lawn in 3 days) and finished in two turns for a well deserved victory.

As usual the plate final between Comish and Suter was disturbed by the presentation ceremony, it proved to be a suitably strong game with a 4th turn TPO from Suter and 7th turn finish from Comish from the squeeze. The Y doubles was taken by Jeff Dawson and Tony Mrozinski.

Next year we hope to welcome many more overseas players as we are planning to combine a world championship with the Open championships.

Results: Singles (Main Event) : 1st round: T Garrison bt C Bennett +26TP +24TP, M McInerney bt G Gale -5 +26TP +26, D Kibble bt C Farthing +19 -26 +26TP, S Davis bt G Noble +26 +1, J Dyer bt M Heap +16 +9. 2nd Round: R Fulford bt C Patmore +26TP +24TP, A Le Moignan bt J Guest +17 +26TP, Garrison bt A Mrozinski +26TP +2, I Vincent bt R White +22 +21TP, C Clarke bt J Dawson +13 TP +26TP, D Openshaw bt M Suter -13 +7 +2, S Mulliner bt Mc Inerney +15TP +17TP, P Hort bt Mrs P Healy +24TP +16, D Maugham bt A Hobbs +25 +21QP, M Burrow by R Rogerson +21 +25TP, Kibble bt Mrs S Burrow +23 +11, M Avery bt C Southern +15 +25TP, Davis bt W Coles +25TP +8, P Cordingley bt E Solomon +23TP +17, R Bamford bt Dyer +17TP +14TP, S Comish bt D Foulser +3 TP +26TP. 3rd Round: Fulford bt Le Moignan +26TP +26SXP, Garrison bt Vincent +3 +17TP, Clarke bt Openshaw +26TP +13TPO, Mulliner bt Hort +26 -17 +13TP, Maugham bt Burrow +26TP +26TP, Avery bt Kibble +25TP +16TP, Cordingley bt Davis -6 +13 +26, Bamford bt Comish +16TP -20TP +17TP. Quarter-finals: Fulford bt Garrison +26TP -17 -26TP +16 +13TPO, Mulliner bt Clarke +12TPO -26TP +20 +26TP, Maugham bt Avery +26TP +26TP -16TP +26TP, Bamford bt Cordingley +26TP +12TPO +26SXP. Semi-finals: Mulliner bt Fulford +26TP +17 +26TP, Bamford bt Maugham +26TP -11TPO +17TP +9SXP. Final: Mulliner bt Bamford -25TP +9TPO +20TP +20TP.

Singles (Plate Event) Draw: Semi-finals: Dawson bt Davis +26, Comish bt Heap. Final: Comish bt Dawson +26TP. Process: Semi-finals: Hobbs bt Comish +17, Suter bt Le Moignan +17TP. Final: Suter bt Hobbs +5. Play-off: Comish bt Suter +14OTP.

Doubles (Main Event): 1st Round: Avery & Openshaw bt Hobbs & Suter +24 +26TP, Cordingley & Hort bt Noble & Vincent +21 +17, Dyer & Gale bt Morrow & Stephens +14 +10. 2nd Round: Avery & Openshaw bt Farthing & Patmore +25TP +26, Bamford & Mulliner bt Le Moignan & White +26TP +23SXP, Foulser & Kibble bt Bennett & Southern -8 +13 +24, Cordingley & Hort bt Burrow & Heap +25TP +26TP, Comish & Maugham bt Coles & Guest +25TP +26, Dyer & Gale bt Mrs Burrow & Mrs Healy +26TP +26, Clarke & Fulford bt McInerney & Rogerson +16TP +25TP. Quarter-finals: Bamford & Mulliner bt Avery & Openshaw +25TP -26TP +26TP, Davis & Garrison bt Foulser & Kibble +26TP +16, Comish & Maugham bt Cordingley & Hort +15TP +13TP, Clarke & Fulford bt Dyer & Gale +17TP +17. Semi-finals: Bamford & Mulliner bt Davis & Garrison -7OTP +9TP +17TP, Comish & Maugham bt Clarke & Fulford -13TP +6OTP +13TPO. Final: Bamford & Mulliner bt Comish & Maugham +19 -15 +25TP.

Doubles (Plate): Semi-finals: Dawson & Mrozinski bt Farthing & Patmore +25, Burrow & Heap bt Coles & Guest +14TP. Final: Dawson & Mrozinski bt Burrow & Heap +4TP.

MENS & WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP, CHELTENHAM 6 - 11 JUNE

Report by David Magee

The early excitement of this year's Championship concerned only the Manager as, in the days leading up to the event, he awaited with interest to see who, not in the draw, felt they should have been included and who, in the draw, now felt that they would rather not take part. A draw, a redraw and an amended draw later we arrived at the novel position of having two 'foreigners' as the top seeds in the British Men's Championship. Reluctant to question the propriety of this too closely with the Tournament Committee, the Manager contented himself with the fact that everyone he was eventually led to expect, arrived. For the first year in a long time, only two of the top ten ranked players entered. One assumed, initially, that duty with the Shield team had used up all leave entitlement but was then surprised to learn that the Golf Croquet tournament at Ramsgate was heavily blessed with our top players. Could the generous prize money have had something to do with this and is money now more of an incentive than one of the top trophies?

Anyway, to the event itself. The entry for the Mixed Doubles was an improvement on previous years and it will be interesting to see whether the Tuesday start will encourage even more entries in the future. The draw and process progressed with few surprises except that last year's beaten finalists made an unexpectedly early departure from both halves. My hopes were pinned on the Ransoms, who won each of their first three games +1T, to go all the way with the same score and thus



Lousie Bradforth & David Kibble being presented with the mixed doubles trophies by Bernard Neal, with Manager David Magee looking on.

repeat last year's result with what would have been an interesting statistic. However, they dashed my hopes by losing the final of the Draw to Louise Bradforth and Dave Kibble. But then Louise and Dave were in determined mood throughout and never seriously looked like losing their grip on the trophy which they duly retained with a fairly comfortable win over Heather Pritchard and Paul Smith on Sunday afternoon. This bout of doubles play on Sunday robbed Dave Kibble of competing in



Patrick Hort being presented with the Du Pre Trophy by Bernard Neal.

the final stages of the Du Pré and might necessitate another look at the format of the week. But I am jumping ahead of myself so back to the main events.

Thursday saw an influx of players for the singles events. Well, more of a dribble really with only 22 men and 8 women. Patrick Hort certainly raised the curtain in spectacular fashion by being game and break up before the coffee trolley was loaded and it was only Edward Dymock hitting the lift that prevented the match being over within the hour. Elsewhere, things were proceeding at a more normal pace and little excitement apart from Roger Jenkins snatching defeat from the jaws of victory and allowing David Foulser to come through -5, +2, +22. In the Women's event Louise's progress also looked as though it was going to stutter to a complete stop. Frances Ransom won the first game and was making steady progress in the second as time began to be a significant factor. Eventually though Louise started to move on all cylinders and came through -11, +10T and +11T. Beatrice McGlen also had to struggle hard against newcomer Samantha Symonds but, having lost the first game, eventually justified her seeding.

With the warming sun and drying breeze, the lawns began to quicken on succeeding days and triples started to flow more readily. Unlike last year, falling seeds in the Men's event were a rarity and the only casualty



Reg Bamford with the Men's championship trophy

was Peter Trimmer whose knee demands that he either wins quickly or loses more slowly and in considerable discomfort. His opponent Robin Brown then went on to beat Don Gaunt to replicate the Coles final and do battle once again with Reg Bamford. Unfortunately for Robin, the result was the same though he did take a game this time. In the other half of the draw, Phil Cordingley was playing some nice croquet and reached the semi-final with a win, in a very good quality match, against David Openshaw -17tp, +17, +17tp. His semi-final match against Toby Garrison was worth watching: good quality play with just enough imperfections to keep the outcome in the balance. Indeed the early money was definitely on Phil but Toby obviously does not lie down easily and ran out the winner -26tp, -17, +17, +26tp, +17. Meanwhile, in the Women's Championship, Louise and Beatrice had proceeded in relative comfort to their proscribed meeting in the final, which was played on Saturday. Both players seem to suffer from the odd attack of nerves,



Lousie Bradforth being presented with the Women's Championship trophies for the first time.

which affected the quality of the match, but Louise eventually ran out the winner in two straight games.

This year the Du Pré was played in two stages with everyone challenging for the four slots in the knockout phase which was to be played on Sunday. The scramble for contention became more intense as the Saturday evening deadline loomed and the contrasting approaches to qualification amused the manager. David Goacher sought to widen the selection field to ensure that he qualified whereas Peter Trimmer just sought out opponents to increase his win ratio. One might have thought he was pressing his luck in challenging Reg Bamford, especially as it proved to be unnecessary but his win did a lot for his confidence and ranking, if not for his poor knee. Both approaches were successful in that each qualified for the final stages, along with David Harrison-Wood and Patrick Hort. But I think Patrick had set his eyes on the cup from day one and, under the eye of his girlfriend, carried off his prize with yet another triple in double-quick time.

The main event on Sunday, though, was the final of the Men's Championships, duly contested by Reg Bamford and Toby Garrison. Reg won the first game +26tp and, in the end, the second +1. As can be imagined, the score illustrates misfortune for Toby in that, having peeled his partner ball through Rover, he then suffered the frustration of seeing his striker's ball ever so, ever so gently roll into its partner after running Rover itself. Try as he might Toby could not achieve a peg out and then eventually lost the game. But again showing his fighting instincts, Toby shook off all angst at that happening to win the third game +26tp. But Reg was not to be denied and retained the trophy with a win in the fourth game +26tp. So in the end the absence of the top players did not detract from the quality of the Championship. On the evidence of his performance, it is doubtful whether anyone would have wrested the trophy from Reg and Toby Garrison took away a slice of the cedar tree to remind him of his quality contribution to the Event.

TOURNAMENT REPORTS

Edgbaston Open Weekend 4 - 5th June

Report by Chris Bennett

This tournament has a regular and loyal following headed, as this year, by Kibble & Tibble. It was also good to see the return of Ken Jones to the tournament scene not least in his capacity as Edgbaston's new President. The event was played as a draw & process with a consolation. David Kibble was just a tad off his usual form and the quality of the rest of the field was high enough to take advantage. A newcomer to Edgbaston was David Mundy. Last seen by me as a respectable 3 in SA in February he appeared as a pretty smooth 1.5 in early June and left as 1 with quite a few index points in hand. He and Nick Ross saw off Kibble's challenge but Lionel Tibble finished with 8/8 to sweep all before him.

Edgbaston's lawns are becoming seriously good and as the Lawns Officer was doing the catering it was not necessary to decide which was the better. A close call nonetheless.

81st Annual Tournament 9 - 11th June 2000

Report by Christine Bourn

Ryde Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club was delighted to welcome a number of players from Ipswich and Colchester to their 81st Open Tournament. Mick Belcham from Tunbridge Wells and Jonathan Isaacs from Southwick also added their colourful contribution to a very enjoyable weekend.

The soggy Friday morning gave way to splendid weather for the remainder of the Tournament. Players were divided between two blocks based on their handicaps and the event was run as an Egyptian to facilitate the different ambitions and energy levels of those attending. The spring rain meant the lawns proved heavy for some of the players, but the Manager, Philip Kennerley, kept them as short as possible by bouts of energetic mowing between organising the order of play.

With one round of matches remaining, there were still four possible winners of the A Block. However, Steve Comish's win over Philip Kennerley meant he snatched victory. Colin Hemming was second and Mick Belcham came third.

Ipswich took the double when Martin Leach won the B Block. Two local players, Liz Hooper and Christine Bourn, took second and third places respectively.

Croquet is taken seriously, but never solemnly, at Ryde and the repartee at lunch and dinner was up to standard. We look forward to seeing old and new visitors at our future Tournaments.

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Ken Jones present Linel Tibble with the winners spoils at Edgbaston.

Northampton Handicap Tournament, 17 - 18 June

Report by Bryan Porteous

This two day Open Tournament was played in the idyllic setting of St Andrew's Hospital under clear blue skies with temperatures in the 80s. This meant that hats and sun-cream were as essential as mallets, although a gentle breeze and the club's new gazebo helped to keep heads cool. A regular flow of drinks, lunches and teas provided by supportive members also contributed to a very pleasant weekend.

The manager, Norma Hicks, assembled players with handicaps ranging from -1/2 to 16, and there was no necessity for double banking as all four of the club's lawns were used. This was a full bisques event played off base 6 and the first day's play was in two blocks, with each player having three games. The result was that on Sunday morning Philip Shaw, after three wins including an impressive +19 over Norman, played one semi-final against Bryan Porteous while Charlie Askew, having narrowly beaten Owen Bryce as well as Jane Evans, played the other semi-final against Derek Humphrey.

This resulted in a final between Charlie(9) and Bryan(16) on Sunday afternoon. The first part of the game went pretty well according to expectations with Charlie getting his first ball round without a bisque while Bryan needed several of his 10 to do the same. Before long the situation was exactly even, each player having one clip on rover, one on 2-back and one bisque in the ground. Then Charlie, having played so far very steadily and accurately succumbed to the tension and missed a short roquet at 2-back. A lucky hit in from corner 4 let Bryan in to get his second ball to rover and later, by an extraordinary accident, to peel his forward ball through rover from some ten yards away, run the hoop and peg out to win +8. Bryan, also, won sufficient index points by the end of the tournament to trigger 14 - very well deserved. At the same time the game between Philip Shaw and Derek Humphrey to decide third place was won by Philip +9.

Meanwhile the Egyptian event was continuing and when points were finally added up Nick Evans was the winner with Owen Bryce a close second while Norman "managed" third place, avoiding the wooden spoon despite the distraction of having organised a splendid weekend.

Championship of the East Midlands, Nottingham, 23rd - 25th June

Report by Patrick Hort

Proceedings started on Friday at 5am: The new Junior Groundsman arrived to set the hoops, only to have to wait until 7am for his colleague to turn up with the key! Undaunted, he did a fantastic job of setting them on the five main lawns plus a sixth one on the bowling green next door. Despite excellent lawns and lots of games for everyone, the hoops humbled even the best of them - giants were slain, giant killers abounded and vast numbers of index points changed hands. Of the three attempted

sixtuples I witnessed, the total peel count was 1, and there were but a handful of (completed!) triples.

Expertly managed by Ian Vincent on an array of laptops, the draw was won by Nick Evans, the process by Dave Kibble, and in the final Dave Kibble beat Nick +18 (Nick Evans gets a Silver Medal). Richard White and Patrick Hort played off for third place with Patrick winning +4. The Swiss was won by Lionel Tibble, but in my opinion the overall winner for the tournament was most definitely a certain Mr J R Groundsman.



James Death in play at the Student Championships.

The Student Championships, Oxford University 23 - 25 June

Report by Jenny Williams

The 2000 Student Croquet Championships, held in the Oxford University Parks, were won by James Death (Exeter University, Student Open Champion) and Cambridge University (Student Team Champions). The event was sponsored by The Croquet Association and Oxford University Croquet Club.

Team Event. Three teams entered the team competition this year: one from Cambridge (Jonathan and Paul Kirby) and two from Oxford (Gabrielle Higgins with Jack Bertram, and Jenny Williams with John Taylor). All teams played each other once and, inevitably, A beat B beat C. A typical nightmare for the manager, John Taylor, OUCC's President. Cambridge University, having the highest net points, were declared winners, and retained the Team Championship title and the Edmund Reeve trophy.

The singles event was played as a 2-block event with semis and a best-of-5 final. James Death won Block A comfortably, and completed 2 TPs and 1 QP. Block A's result in order: Death, Williams, Bertram, Taylor, Philip Livermore (Oxford). Block B was less clear-cut, with Higgins beating the group favourite Chris Dent (Loughborough). The group matches ended with 3 players having 2 wins. Resorting again to net points, the order of Block B was: Dent, Higgins, J Kirby, Nic Farhi (Oxford).

Semi-finals: Dent bt Williams +15, Death bt Higgins +26TP. 3rd place play-off: Williams bt Higgins +10 Final: Death bt Dent -26, +6, +6, +4.

Many thanks to Alan Oldham and Hamish Hall of the Croquet Association who attended the finals and to Alan for presenting the winners' trophies.

Crake Valley B Level 24 - 25 June

Report by Barbara Haslam

Gail Curry beat Mike Sandler in the final to retain the Cumbria Cup at Crake Valley Croquet Club. Gail had a superb weekend beating all who

played her. The Crake club provides an excellent setting for this event. It is the largest club in the Lake District and well worth a visit. The ambience of the club is outstanding and all the members make you very welcome. The lawns are good with the catering being first class. I understand that next season's event could have an increase in entries. What a super way to play croquet and see the Lakes!

Norwich Inaugural Handicap 1-2 July 2000

Report by Colin Hemming

The CA calendar has gained another delightful venue. The mature trees and ornamental gardens that surround the courts at Eaton Park in Norwich in many respects bring to mind the splendour of Wrest Park, and the impression is reinforced by the ten-minute walk (or two-minute bike ride) which is necessary from time to time during the day. Whilst the faded splendour of Eaton Parks Rotunda, with its central bandstand and balustraded rooftops, is not quite a match for the Bedfordshire mansion, it boasts in addition to the basic facilities a splendid caf offering fast food, cold drinks and ice cream.

Twelve players, with a handicap range from 4 to 18, had entered for Norwich Croquet Clubs first CA tournament and met to do battle on its two courts (or strictly speaking, its one court and borrowed bowling green). The Egyptian event was well managed by Terry Sparks, who somehow managed to fit in a total of 19 games on the Saturday and a further 13 on the Sunday. Only two of these games went to time, helped by the easy pace of the courts and hoop settings which, whilst not a "pushover", were not particularly demanding. No matter: the whole event went with a swing and was enjoyed by all the competitors.

Rain threatened from the outset on the first day, but held off until 5 o'clock, and lasted little longer than it took for the players to don their wet-weather gear. The sun eventually appeared at 7 o'clock just as the days play was finishing. The overnight leader was Alec Bell from Bury St Edmunds, with 4 wins from 4 and a rating of 119. Not bad considering he had had his mallet stolen from his car a couple of weeks before and was playing with a mallet bought from a car boot sale for 50 pence! Alec's first two victories had been relatively easy, but in both of the last two he had had to play his get-out-of-jail-free card to come from 20 points behind to take victory. Chasing Alec in second and third places were local man Neil Chalmers on 114 and Martin Gill from Dulwich on 108.

Rain never threatened the play on Sunday, and there was periodic sunshine throughout the day. Alec and Martin (both with a late start) were drawn to play each other. Martin took an early lead and got to rover with both balls before Alec had run a hoop. Alec made a valiant effort to come from behind again but had run out of luck (or get-out-of-jail-free cards) and was unable to get beyond 4-back with one ball before Martin ran out the winner.

In his final game Martin played Feargal Smith of Norwich who had been making steady progress from his overnight sixth place and although he could not win the tournament himself he could deny Martin victory. Martin quickly, and perhaps rashly, took his first ball to the peg, and nearly came to regret it when, after some sparring, Feargal also took a ball round and pegged Martin out. Nevertheless, Martin hit in and finished with a well-controlled 3-ball break from hoop 6 to take the game and the tournament with a final rating of 119. Alec was in second place with 118 and Neil third with 104. William Windham gained his bronze award on the Sunday morning with a splendid 12-hoop break, using 1 bisque.

A thoroughly enjoyable and relaxing weekend. Let us hope that Norwich continue to receive sufficient support to ensure that this



World Champion Donates Prize Money to Charity.

Robert Fulford, World Champion won the exhibition match against Jeff Dawson of England and Woking and was presented with a cheque for £550 by Richard Snape, partner at Curchods, Woking's leading estate agent and sponsor of the Fun(d) Raising Day at Woking Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club on Saturday 1st July 2000. He immediately passed his winnings to Bill Wood-Roe, chairman of the croquet section of the club for donation to ChildLine, the charity providing a free national helpline for children and young people in trouble or danger. He said that the Woking LTCC had done a great job in organising a worthwhile and enjoyable day in support of ChildLine. He was glad to have been able to make his own small contribution in playing the Exhibition Match and would much prefer that the prize money went directly to ChildLine.

The fun(d) Raising Day collected £2000 for ChildLine and Woking LTCC thanks Curchods and all those individuals and local firms who gave their generous support. Woking LTCC offers temporary membership, free lessons and the use of club mallets to anyone interested in trying out croquet. Contact Malcolm Bigg Tel 01483 714002.

Sussex County Croquet Club meets the shoppers!

Report by Pam Mason.

On Friday and Saturday, the 5th & 6th May, the Sussex County Croquet Club laid the C A indoor mat in a busy shopping atrium between Marks & Spencer, Tesco and MacDonalDs. The mat was surrounded by garden furniture, tables, chairs, parasols and ChildLine banners and balloons. Club members manned a rota from 8.00 am to late afternoon on both days giving demonstrations and encouraging the general public to try their hand at Croquet. The ChildLine tins were well placed and participants encouraged to make a donation. The venture attracted much interest in the game of croquet, fourteen new players joined the club and the beginners' coaching sessions - all of whom have now paid their annual subscription and are enjoying their first season. Added to which the S.C.C.C raised a wonderful £400 for ChildLine.

