

The Croquet Gazette

Issue 272 ~ March 2001

THE JOYS OF CROQUET

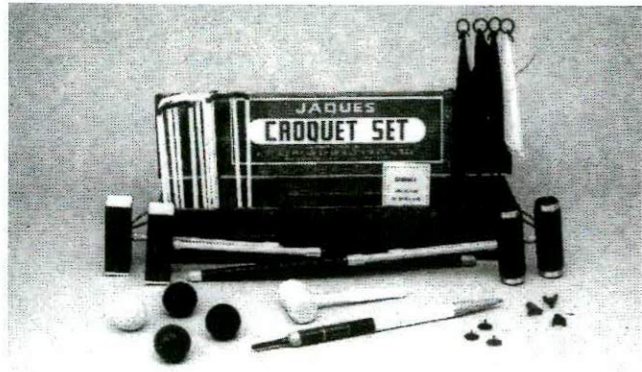


IN THIS ISSUE

LETTERS CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN NEWS & INFORMATION

COACHING 2001 TALKING CROQUET CA NEWS

A GUIDE TO THE NEW LAWS HOW MUCH IS A NEW MEMBER WORTH



J A Q U E S

L O N D O N

John Jaques ESTD 1795
THE OLDEST SPORTS & GAMES MANUFACTURER IN THE WORLD

John Jaques II won a place in sporting history - and a Gold Medal - for introducing croquet into England at the Great Exhibition in 1851. His display there attracted such wide attention that the game speedily became the vogue and over the years developed into the absorbing sport enjoyed by so many world-wide.

Today, Jaques sell their products to tournament and garden players alike, all of whom can rely on their dependable quality and the company's unmatched after sales service.

Complete Croquet sets range in price from £80 to £800 and mallets from £25 to £150. Full specifications and colour brochure available on request.

JUBILEE CROQUET SET

One of the range of twenty or so sets we produce in our South London factory suitable for beginners right through to tournament players.

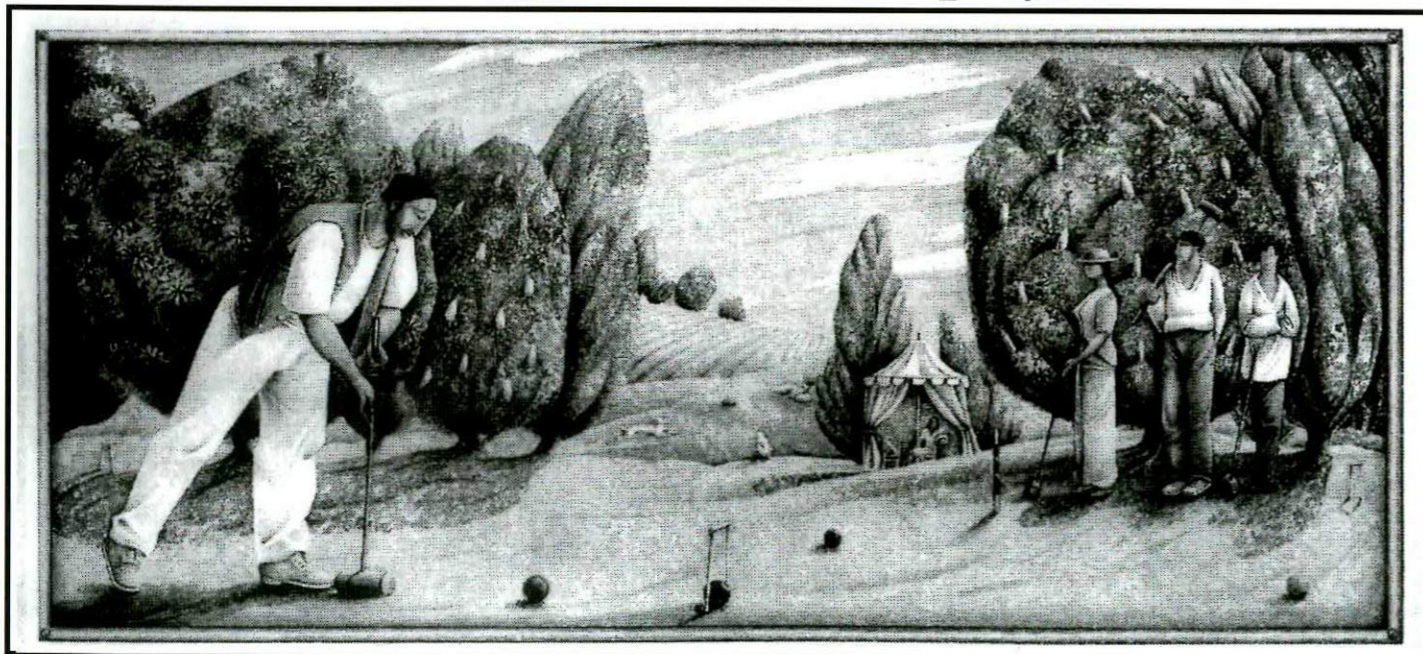
CRAFTSMAN

One of Jaques' team of wood-turners and craftsmen who make an extensive range of high quality mallets using English and foreign hardwoods.

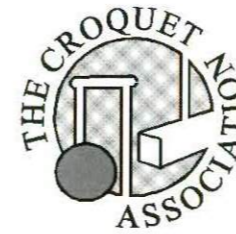
Ask for details of the latest Tuftex, twin-faced "long life" mallets - ideal for all standards of play.



"We taught the world to play...."



John Jaques & Son Ltd, The House of Jaques, 1 Fircroft Way, Edenbridge, Kent, TN8 6EU
Telephone : 01732 500200 Fax : 01732 500111



~ Croquet Association ~ Contacts

Secretary

Nigel Graves
The Croquet Association, The Hurlingham Club,
Ranelagh Gardens, London SW6 3PR
Tel: 020 - 77363148
E-mail caoffice@croquet.org.uk

President

John Solomon
Kingswood Place, Horsham Road, Findon, West
Sussex BN14 ORG. Tel: 01903 873921 (H)
E-mail johnsolomon1@compuserve.com.uk

Chairman of Council

Don Gaunt, 5 Rosedale Avenue, Stonehouse,
Gloucs, GL10 2QH
Tel: 0145-3822507 (H) 07974927505 (M)
E-mail dongaunt@compuserve.com

Treasurer

Dr Roger Bray
Street Cottage, Polstead Hill, Polstead,
Colchester, Essex CO6 5AH
Tel: 01206 263405 (H)

Gazette Editor

Gail Curry
33 Percy Gardens, Tynemouth, Tyne & Wear
NE30 4HQ. Tel: 0191 - 2579045
E-mail gail@cgazette.demon.co.uk

Management

Quiller Barrett
16 Frinton Court, Hardwick Green, London W13
8DW Tel: 020 89985453 (H & F)
rqb@dircon.co.uk

Tournament Committee

Derek Trotman
3 High Stobhill, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61
2TT. Tel: 01670 - 518228
E-mail derek.trotman4@virgin.net

Laws Committee

Ian Vincent
29 Thoresby Road, Bramcote Hills, Beccston,
Nottingham NG9 3EN
Tel: 0115 9253664
E-mail ian.vincent@nottingham.ac.uk

Handicap Coordination Committee

Douglas Gurney
17 Staveley Road, London W4 3HU
Tel: 020 8994 3069 (H) 020 8876 1877 (O)

Coaching Committee

Bruce Rannie
7 Keswick Drive, Cullercoats, North Shields,
Tyne & Wear NE30 3EW Tel: 0191 - 2529739

International Committee

David Openshaw
Bridge House, 45 Baring Road, Beaconsfield,
Bucks, HP9 2NF. Tel: 01494 680184 (H)

01494 680321 (O & F)

E-mail david@open123.demon.co.uk

Administration Committee

David Magee
Hurstwood, Moorend, Hartpur, Gloucester
GL19 3DG. Tel: 01452 - 700353

Development Committee

Bill Sidebottom
Malthouse, 6 Malthouse Lane, Kenilworth,
Warwickshire CV8 1AB
Tel: 01926 - 852638

E-mail bill@sidemalt.demon.co.uk

Golf Croquet Committee

Bill Arliss
30 Hove Park Villas, Hove, East Sussex BN3
6HG. Tel: 01273 728204
E-mail arliss@mistral.co.uk

Selection Committee

David Openshaw
Bridge House, 45 Baring Road, Beaconsfield,
Bucks, HP9 2NF.

Marketing Committee

Anthony Fathers
613 Upper Richmond Road W, Richmond,
Surrey TW10 5DU
Tel: 020 - 88769923 (H&F)

Magazine Committee

Bruce Rannie
7 Keswick Drive, Cullercoats, North Shields,
Tyne & Wear NE30 3EW Tel: 0191 - 2529739
E-mail bruce.rannie@tinyworld.co.uk

Equipment Committee

Alan Pidcock
The Manor House, 1 Barn Croft, Penwortham,
Preston PR1 0SX
Tel: 01772 743859
E-mail pidcock@manorh.u-net.com

Regional Representatives

On Council

East Midlands

Patricia Duke-Cox
171 Witham Road, Woodhall Spa, Lincoln, LN10
6RB Tel: 01526 354878 (H) 01507 522232 (O)
E-mail dukecox@aol.com

East Anglia

Nigel Gray
7 Firs Close, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG5 2TX
Tel: 01462-436430

London & South East

Quiller Barrett
16 Frinton Court, Hardwick Green, London W13
8DW Tel: 020 89985453 (H & F)
rqb@dircon.co.uk

North West

John Beech
Woodlands, Skipton Road, Barnoldswick BB18
6HH. Tel: 01282 813070 (H & F)

Croquet North

Bruce Rannie
7 Keswick Drive, Cullercoats, North Shields,
Tyne & Wear NE30 3EW Tel: 0191 - 2529739

South West

David Magee
Hurstwood, Moorend, Hartpur, Gloucester
GL19 3DG. Tel: 01452 - 700353

Southern

Bob Smith
33 Donegal Close, Caversham, Reading, Berks
RG4 5DT. Tel: 0118 9478802 (H)

West Midlands

Bill Sidebottom
Malthouse, 6 Malthouse Lane, Kenilworth,
Warwickshire CV8 1AB

Tel: 01926 - 852638 (H) 01926 864074 (F)

E-mail billsidebottom@sidemalt.demon.co.uk

Yorkshire & Humberside

Mike Evans
12 Middlehowe Green, Walkington, Beverley
HU17 8TE Tel: 01482 - 882936

Publication Details

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

Publication Schedule

Copy should reach the editor BEFORE 10th December, 10th February, 10th April, 10th June, 10th August and 10th October, unless otherwise informed.

Advertising

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

Specific Questions & Queries

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

Copy Details

General copy and contributions should be sent direct to the editor. 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 used. Slides are no longer accepted. Photocopies of pictures cannot be used. If using digital photography please send me a jpeg or tif format file. Prints of digital photos cannot be scanned. 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

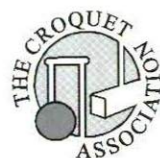
Tournament results should be reported on the tournament return sheet.

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 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 272 March 2001 £3.00

Front Cover: Winners at the Hurlingham August Week, celebrations at the Challenge & Gibley at Compton, and making mud pies at Wrest Park.

Next Issue Published 14th May

Copy Deadline 12th April

Disclaimer

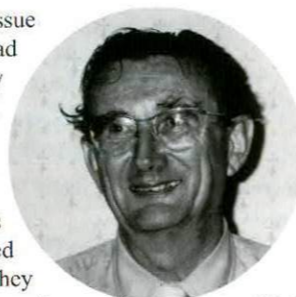
The opinions expressed in The Croquet Gazette are those of the editor and contributors. The Croquet Association is not responsible for statements other than those clearly defined as being made on behalf of the Croquet Association.

CONTENTS

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN	4
NEWS & INFO	5
LETTERS	6
OBITUARIES	7
A PLAYERS GUIDE TO THE NEW LAWS	7
COACHING 2001	7
TALKING CROQUET	13
GOLF CROQUET PLAYER AWARDS	16
HOW MUCH IS A NEW MEMBER WORTH?	16
CA NEWS	18
TOURNAMENT REPORTS	19

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

The theme of my column in this issue is communication. As you read this, I should be mid-way through my talks to the Federations. I say should, because apart from the fact that I don't know exactly when you are going to read this, as I write it (mid Jan), the first of these talks (South West) has been cancelled or at least postponed because only 8 people indicated that they were going to come. This is a most discouraging start and obviously makes me wonder if anyone really cares what the CA Council does.



It really is important that we talk to each other. I believe that we on Council have done our best to communicate to you. We have the Gazette which provides a forum for the discussion of croquet topics as well as having articles and information on a whole range of subjects, the Secretary's newsletter to clubs (how many of you read this? How many clubs do not even pin it up on the notice board?) For those of you on the internet we have our own Web Site, of which more later, with regular news updates.

How many of you though, when you have a gripe, go about things the right way? Suppose that you were unhappy with the way that a competition was being run. Do you

- Moan at anyone who will listen, at this and other tournaments,
- Write to the Gazette
- Write to or ring the Secretary
- Write to or ring the Chairman of Council
- Write to or ring the Chairman of the Tournaments Committee whose address may be found at the front of every issue of the Gazette.

I hope you recognise that generally speaking, (e) is the correct procedure and that (a) is an incorrect one. Should (b) to (d) ever be used?

Writing to the Gazette might be an appropriate way forward if your problem is one where other peoples opinion would be valuable e.g. I think that the format for the mens and womens is wrong and should be..... Normally the Secretary should not be bothered with these matters although he will of course help if there are any problems locating the correct contact point. He will also forward letter to the appropriate person.

Only contact the Chairman of Council if all other channels have failed. If your complaint to the appropriate committee is not dealt with to your satisfaction, your next step up is to contact the Chairman of the Management Committee. Only if this fails, should you seek the Chairman's help.

Many of you will know that we have a CA Web site and hopefully will have used it. There is no doubt that the importance of this site will grow. What would YOU like to see on there? If you do not have or use the internet, what would persuade you to do so? Send your comments to the letters section of the Gazette. Why the Gazette? Because a lot of you are not on the internet and your views (including "why I will never use the internet!") are wanted. I can assure you that our Webmaster will read them and may well respond.

Still on communication, I am in the throes of producing a 2 day course called coaching for coaches. The purpose of this is to help those who would like to coach but have been scared of standing up in front of people and talking. It will take place on the lovely island of Jersey in July. For details, contact Jersey CC.

Don

NEWS & INFORMATION

Important Fixture Book Corrections

Please note that the correct email address for Michael Heap, the Essex County Organiser is michaelheap@roundhouse38.fsnet.co.uk The following corrections are from the fixture book:

Page 4 The dates of the May tournament at Nailsea are 12/13 May.

Pages 5 & 9 Add June 9-10 Nailsea Golf Croquet Champ. Heats.

Page 30 Championship of Surrey; Nelson Morrow's address is incorrect. Correct address may be found under Surbiton Club entry on page 81.

Page 45 Peter Dyke's Tel. no. should be 01275 545178

Page 47 The dates for the Golf Croquet Open Champs. are 14-17 June.

Page 89 The Silver Coaching Course is at Dulwich on 5-6 May, not Southwick 6-7 May.

Page 89 Add Bronze Course For: Handicaps in the range 12-18.

Open to Associates, and to any player who is a member of a Club affiliated to any Federation. Arranged by: South West Federation Venue: Nailsea & District Croquet Club Dates: 21-22 April. Manager: Peter Dyke, 23 Broom Farm Close, Nailsea, Bristol, BS48 4YJ (Tel: 01275 545178) Entry Fees: £20 Cheques made payable to South West Federation of Croquet Clubs.

Add Gold Course

Venue: Cheltenham

Date: 2-3 June 2001

Lead Coach: Steve Comish

Manager: Ray Ransom, 36 Old Sneed Avenue, Bristol, BS9 1SE. Tel: 0117 9682255

Important Gazette corrections

Please note that the silver coaching course advertised in the last issue of the Gazette stated that the course would be held on 5- 6 May at Southwick and the lead coach would be Brian Teague. This was incorrect. The silver course will be held at Dulwich, on 5 - 6 May, and the lead coach will be David Collins.

The Gazette also stated that the Bronze course would be held at Dulwich on 12 - 13 May, and that the lead coach would be David Collins. This is incorrect. The Bronze course will be held on 12 - 13 May at Southwick, and the lead coach will be Brian Teague.

The John Hobbs Mallet

Stephen Mulliner won the Opens with his

Hold the handle at whatever angle suits your style, then if the head is out of line you can twist it and lock it tight, so all shots go as accurately as you are capable of achieving.

New feature - a curved bottom to 12" heads so that you have the greater accuracy but don't dig in

Light aluminium shaft, nylon shock absorber, variable weight heads - details from: <http://members.aol.com/Hobbsmall>

John Hobbs, Kingsbury, Argos Hill, Rotherfield, East Sussex TN6 3QH Tel & Fax 01892 852072 Email Hobbsmall@aol.com

Notice of annual general meeting

At the next AGM, which will be held on Saturday 13 October, five members of Council will have completed their terms of office, all of whom have indicated their wish to stand for re-election. Don Gaunt and Paul Campion have given notice that they intend to resign from Council, giving rise to two further vacancies

The names of any Associates who wish to stand for election to Council should be notified to the Secretary of the CA by 1 June. In addition it would be helpful if notice of any motions to be put to the AGM could be given to the Secretary by that date.

Nigel Graves
Secretary, The Croquet Association
c/o the Hurlingham Club, Ranelagh Gardens, London SW6 3PR
Tel/Fax 020 7736 3148 Email caoffice@croquet.org.uk

Golf Croquet Tournaments

In previous editions of the Gazette we promised that arrangement for the tournaments played to the alternative format of golf croquet as detailed in law 15 would be published early in the new year. I must apologise for the delay but due to the heavy loading in many club's programmes, the Golf Croquet Committee were unable to find suitable weekend venues. The committee have therefore decided to run these events midweek and have already obtained provisional venues which they hope can be confirmed shortly. The programme for alternative rules tournaments will be published in the next CA newsletter sent to all clubs. Norma Rayne who is a member of the committee will be coordinating these events.

Bill Arliss

Chairman, Golf Croquet Committee

LOOKING FOR A DIFFERENT HOLIDAY THIS YEAR?

WHY NOT TRY

THE GAIL CURRY SUMMER SCHOOL

6th ~ 10th August 2001

The Southport & Birkdale Croquet Club



Lots of players want to improve, but don't know where to start, don't have the time, or don't have the coaches or experienced players to ask for help. This summer school is for players who want to know more about the game and improve their play, in a relaxed and informal week of workshops, with like minded players and experienced players and coaches.

strictly limited to 20 places in order of receipt

For Further Information Please Contact:
John Haslam 3 Bradley Street, Southport,
Merseyside PR9 9HW Tel: 01704 547875
Email bjhaslam@hotmail.com





LETTERS

The 14 point game

Dear Editor
Following John Solomon's presidential address in which he called for a greater emphasis on the 14-point game, Don Gaunt asked for comments to be sent to you. My view that the short game is much superior to the full game may be known, at least to those who remember my 'Television Croquet' paper, or the article in issue 231 (admittedly somewhat more revolutionary than the 14-point game as currently played). I am aware that it is a view shared by others. But perhaps there is no harm in a recapitulation.

The most interesting parts of a game of Croquet are the start and the end. There is little fun 'stodging', in the words of Nigel Aspinall, around to four-back once an initial break is established, and even less fun if you are the out player. Standard 17-point triple peel turns are only slightly more enthralling. The principal feature of the 14-point game is that it is 'all start and end' and, as such, almost every stroke is critical. Furthermore, as John has observed, its short duration makes it more practical for expert players to complete a match of five games in a day, and for less expert players to complete a match of three games before dusk falls.

Where my view differs from that of John is in respect of the principal calendar events such as the Open and the Eights. I would say let us adopt the 14-point game throughout, relegating the full game to the status of a 'variant' to be played for nostalgic reasons, or because the 14-point game might be regarded as too 'exciting' for those with dickie hearts.

There would inevitably be considerable resistance before the 14-point game was universally accepted as the 'main' game. Overseas associations might complain that we were moving the goalposts, but let us in the UK take a lead in this matter at least for a trial period of several years. Overseas bodies could hardly complain that our representative teams would gain an advantage by having played the shorter game, and what we adopt for home events should not be their concern.

Eric Solomon (No relation)

Dear Editor

I was delighted to read the President's closing address in the January Croquet Gazette. I have advocated the 14 point game at our local club for a long time and agree wholeheartedly with John Solomon's views. Being a long bisquer myself with a handicap of 22, I have not finished a game lasting 3 or more hours for many years. I have an arbitrary cut-off point when either one

or other players happens to be ahead at a given time seems absurd and, as the President says, three games of this length in one day is calculated to dampen all enthusiasm for the game.

John Leach

Okay the great fourteen point debate has been restarted - cast your votes now. Current standing 3 in favour 2,997 against. Then again you could save yourself a stamp or a phone call and just play the game that you want to. Ed.

Short croquet reinstated

The Tournament Committee have reconsidered their decision and have decided to reinstate Short croquet competitions for the year 2001. Last year there was a very poor entry and a number of players due to play in the finals pulled out at the last minute. Should this re-occur I will have no option but to suggest to the Tournament Committee that the events are discontinued. It is now up to the Clubs to encourage their members to play.

Bury Croquet club have kindly agreed to host the Final of the Team Competition on the weekend of the 8th September 2001 with Geoffrey Young as manager of the overall event. The Individual Finals will be held on the 15th September at the Solihull Club, managed by the Ashby Club.

Club entries should be sent to the CA Office as usual.

Douglas Gurney, Handicap Committee

Apps Memorial and Steel Bowls

Nominations are required by the Handicap Committee for these awards. The latter for the most improved lady player for last season, whilst the former is for men.

Any Associate can nominate another Associate, and this should initially be sent to the Secretary of the Croquet Association by 1st April, 2001.

Douglas Gurney, Handicap Committee

Wee Johnnie's Puzzle

Once upon a time two world class croquet players - Chris and Robert - were discussing in a clubhouse which of them was the best shot. On over hearing them a third player - Gailsuddenly declared that she could outshoot them both. The two laughed as they pointed out that in their estimation they were twice as good as she was in that they would hit virtually every

shot (Chris felt he and Robert would hit 9 out of 10) whilst she would probably miss one in two. Gail therefore suggested a wager. She would put up £100 as stake money whilst they would each put up £180 (being nearly twice as good) - winner take all.

The rules of the tournament were agreed.

Each player would place a bisque in the ground forming a 12 yard equilateral triangle. The order of the player's turn would be decided by lot and the object was to knock a player's bisque out of the ground. If the bisque was knocked out then that player was out and the remaining player would have the next shot.

Each player would have sufficient croquet balls available to complete the competition.

- 1) What is Gail's best strategy?
- 2) Who would be most likely to win?
- 3) What should the stake money have been?

John Portwood

Golf Croquet - Time for Unity

Dear Editor

I think it might be helpful for new and existing players of Golf Croquet if the CA Golf Croquet Committee, which reported some of its deliberations in the January issue, could come off the fence and stop backing two similar, but different in detail, sets of rules. Whilst there is still a need to have an alternative game defined by law 15, I would hope that in the fullness of time this alternative will be phased out.

I should like the CA Golf Croquet Committee to consider giving a lead by stating that it prefers the new WCF rules. It should not be encouraging the perpetuation of the old rules by agreeing to sponsor two events in 2001, using these rules.

Surely it is all in our best interests for the future of the Golf Croquet that eventually we have one set of rules which are nationally, as well as internationally, recognised?

Richard Mills

As all our major golf croquet competitions, national and open championships, inter club and inter counties are run in accordance with the main rules I would hardly call that sitting on the fence. If your reader would care to go back several issues he will find that the survey at the end of the 1999 season showed that there was a very large number of players who still preferred the hoop in one approach. The Golf Croquet Committee (GC) believe that the vast majority of tournament players prefer the newer format of the game but the role of the CA and its committees is not simply to look after tournament players but all followers of the game. This is why we formally recognised the alternative form of the game in our new laws and will continue to organise some tournaments to the alternative format as long as players express a need.

The WCF did a good job in promoting the new format of the game but their rules were targeted at major events, which is why the CA introduced their own version. We agree that the situation will be improved with only one set of laws but to be accepted internationally by the major croquet associations, they must be applicable to all standards of the game. The GC intend to actively pursue this aim with the WCF.

Bill Arliss

Chairman Golf Croquet Committee

Croquet in the Algarve

Dear Editor

For those CA members that may go to Portugal for their holidays I have been having a running battle with the management of the Vale do Lobo holiday complex, near Almansil in the Algarve. This complex boasts two golf courses and 12 tennis courts and says it offers croquet in its brochure.

On staying there last year I asked where the croquet courts were and was told that there were none. I felt this merited a stiff letter to the manager but regretfully no reply was received. I thereupon wrote another letter with a copy to the chairman of the complex.

Surprise, surprise in January I received a reply informing me that the croquet lawn had been turned into a putting green. However following my letters they say they now have the facility of a croquet lawn in conjunction with a bowling green.

Accordingly I would be obliged if any croquet fanatics are staying in the Algarve and would like to follow this up I would be delighted to hear from them. I am sure that unless demand for croquet is forthcoming the facilities will disappear again. My telephone no is 01229-885420.

Bob Vaughan

CA Membership Cards

With effect from the 2001 season, C Membership cards will bear membership category descriptions i.e. T - Tournament, TS - Tournament Spouse, J - Junior, NT - Non Tournament, NTS - Non Tournament Spouse, O - Overseas.

It is important to note that all categories of member, except NT/NTS are allowed to play in CA Fixtures Book events. Tournament Managers are authorised to check cards at these events and spot checks on membership may be made during the season.

John Beech, Membership Committee

Can you help?

Dear Editor

The CA Croquet Coaching Manual published in 1991, refers on page 3 to plastic cards produced by the CA, that act as an aide-memoire for coaches teaching the six lessons of the Grade 1 (Beginners) course.

I would be grateful to anyone who would let me have sight of one or all of these cards.

Michael Hague, Woking LTCC

~ OBITUARY ~

Aubrey Vincent Camroux

Aubrey Vincent Camroux, who died in November 2000, joined Rochampton Club in the early fifties and the Croquet Association in 1956. Given a handicap of 12 in 1958, he then made rapid progress and won the Peel Memorials in 1961 at the handicap of 3.5. He played in the Spencer Ell cup several times and won it in 1974 after the second series was washed out. He might have achieved even greater success had he not suffered a technical twitch - a slightly crooked backswing.

He was regularly seen at Inter-County championships, and much of his later playing time was devoted to much effort in starting up Fulham Palace and The Medway Club, as well as teaching his wife, Betty, to play.

Outside the world of croquet he was the finance officer to the London Ambulance Service, retiring early when the GLC was abolished. He was a keen and strong chess player,

and was treasurer of the Medway Philately Society when he moved to Rochester to accommodation organised by the Huguenots (from whom he was descended).

We extend our sympathy to Betty and his family.

Philip Dwerryhouse

Sidmouth croquet players were saddened to learn of the death of Philip Dwerryhouse on December 16th 2000, aged 86.

A keen sportsman, Phil had played tennis at the Sidmouth multisports club since 1960. In 1968 he helped his wife, Iris, to revitalise the croquet section, and he joined in 1974 on his retirement. He played at Sidmouth and at other clubs making and meeting many friends. At Sidmouth he was a member of the committee of the main club on which he held the offices of Secretary and President.

Phil was a coach and referee until he became too ill two years ago, and he will be remembered too for his interest in the game and his sense of humour.

Our sympathies go to Iris and their family.

Sue Rogers

A PLAYERS' GUIDE TO THE NEW LAWS

by Ian Vincent, Chairman, CA Laws Committee

If you call for a referee this year, you should see them consulting a blue book, not a red one, as new laws are now in force. Please be patient if it is an unusual situation, because they will probably need to spend a bit of time reading the new laws until they get to know them thoroughly.

So what is in this new book? It needn't be a mystery, because you can buy a copy, either from the CA shop or possibly from your Club if they have laid in a stock. However, for those of you who learn the laws by experience, rather than reading them, this is a brief guide to the changes that are most likely to affect you.

1) In a game that is free from errors

a) A ball going off or ending up in the corner

M C PERCIVAL MALLETS

HAND MADE TOP QUALITY MALLETS

available in a wide range of well proven mallet designs of various sizes and weights, fitted with a traditional wooden shaft or the increasingly popular lightweight carbon fibre tube with its amazing strength and torsional rigidity. A variety of comfortable grips and top quality mallet bags also available. **Alterations and repairs undertaken to any mallet.** please ring for a quotation.

Contact Mike Percival, Gosbeck House, Gosbeck, Ipswich, Suffolk IP6 9RZ Tel: 01449760480 Email: mike@croquetmallets.com

square is no longer treated specially when it comes to replacing it on the yard line. In all cases, if you can't put e.g. Blue back on the yard-line directly opposite where it went off or came to rest because of another ball, e.g. Red, you put Blue in contact with Red on either side of it as you choose. If another ball, e.g. Yellow, prevents you putting Blue on one side of Red, you can put Red in contact with the far side of Yellow instead. Thus three balls successively missing into a corner can end up in a straight line.

b) If you need to hunt for a ball in a shrubbery (or stream!) before you can replace it at the end of your turn, you can invite your opponent to play while you look for it if its absence would not affect his play. Similarly, once your opponent has played all his strokes and replaced the balls and clips if necessary, you can get on with your turn without waiting for him to quit the court (though obviously you should take care that none of the balls hit him if he is walking off with his back to you!).

c) If, at the start of your turn, two or more balls are mutually in contact, you don't become committed to playing one of them (or taking croquet from one of the others) until you actually play the stroke.

d) If a ball needs to be tested to see whether or not it has run its hoop or gone off the court, it is not replaced if it moves before the test is made. Otherwise, once a ball appears to have been stationary for 5 seconds, it is replaced if it subsequently moves.

e) Mallet shafts may not be moulded with an

impression of the hands.

f) If you peg out a ball in a croquet stroke and are about to peg your own ball out, you needn't remove the pegged out ball before you do so.

2) Faults

a) By far the biggest change in practice is in what happens after a fault. Unless the striker is about to take a bisque, in which case the balls are replaced, the opponent has the choice as to whether the balls stay where they ended after the fault was committed, or are replaced. No points are scored in either case.

b) If you repeatedly swing over the ball before hitting it, accidental contact with a ball is not a fault if it happens before you have passed the striker's ball on your last intended backswing.

3) Other Errors and Interferences

a) The law about when you must and mustn't forestall has been clarified. You must forestall immediately you notice that the striker has committed, or suspect that he is about to commit, an error, unless he is about to run the wrong hoop, play with the wrong ball, or take croquet from a dead ball (one that he has already used since he last ran a hoop or started his turn; this is a new fatal error).

b) If you commit a minor error, like not taking croquet when you should do, taking croquet when you shouldn't, or from a different live ball, and it is noticed before the next stroke but one, then the balls go back to where they should have been before you committed the error. However, you can only continue your turn if it hadn't ended for some other reason before the error was discovered.

c) If you play with a wrong ball, either your partner ball (in singles, but not in doubles) or your opponents, and the error is not noticed until after someone has started a turn playing a correct ball, then any hoop (but not peg) points scored for that, or any other ball, stand.

d) You may now be entitled to a replay if the outcome of your stroke was affected because of interference with the position of the balls by an outside agency (usually a double banker!). Similarly, you may get a replay if your are misled because a double banker or errant referee misplaces the clips.

e) Special damage can be repaired instead of moving balls to avoid it.

But for these, if you carry on as you did last year, you shouldn't be far out. If you have any questions about the new laws, then I suggest you ask a referee. If they can't help (or you are a referee!), then consult the "Official Rulings on the Laws of Croquet" (ORLC), which contains commentary as well as rulings and should be available on the CA web site by the time this is published. If you want a definitive opinion, the laws committee can be contacted at laws@croquet.org.uk.

COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE DECISIONS

This report is based on unconfirmed minutes of the CA Council meeting held on 16th December 2000. Some decisions and news from recent committee meetings are also included. If you would like more information on any item, please contact the CA Secretary, Nigel Graves.

Treasurer's Report

The CA's surplus for the year 2000 is more than budget, thanks largely to the contribution from commercial activities. Congratulations were offered to David Collins.

Administration

Amendments are being drafted to the CA's Rules to allow the Association to communicate with members by electronic mail.

The Directory of Members will be available on a CD-ROM.

Coaching

Don Williamson (North West Federation) is Coach of the Year, 2000.

Development

A grant of £500 has been made, and a loan of £10,000 has been offered, to the Hunstanton CC to help this member club finance the rebuilding of their clubhouse after a disastrous fire.

Equipment

A loan of £2,000 has been offered to Mr T J Goleworthy to help finance the production of the first sets of his newly designed 'Omega' hoops.

Executive

David Openshaw has been elected to join Don Gaunt (chairman), Quiller Barrett, Roger Bray and David Magee on this committee.

Golf Croquet

Entrants to the Ascot and Ranelagh Cup in 2001 must be members of the CA, but not necessarily tournament members. The entry fee for non-tournament members will be £10, and for tournament members £5.

A sub-committee will be set up to consider revisions to the laws of golf croquet.

Handicap Co-ordination

Guidelines will be published regarding the role and status of a CA Handicapper.

International

A deficit budget has been agreed for staging the WCF World Association Croquet Championships concurrently with the CA Open Championships in 2001. After allowing for the purchase of balls and the loss of a surplus from the Opens, the cost to the CA is expected to be £3,800.

Magazine

A photograph library is being established for use by the editor of the Gazette and others.

Management

An editorial policy for the news pages on the CA's web site has been agreed.

Marketing

Jonathan Isaacs is taking over from Tony Fathers as chairman of this committee in February 2001.

Tournaments

The Fixture Calendar & Tournament Regulations book is on schedule for publication in January 2001.

A fourth 'Eight', 5-day tournament will be introduced in 2001, to be known as 'The Treasurer's Tankard'.

Feasibility Study

David Hopkins is preparing a feasibility study for the establishment of a national croquet centre.

Quiller Barrett

ADVICE TO ALL NEW TOURNAMENT PLAYERS

By Sue Strong, Mary Knapp & Dick Knapp

C
O
A
C
H
I
N
G

Well here you are, ready (?) to play in your first tournament. You've practised and you've played a few friendlies, but you know this will be different. You are understandably anxious about making a good showing and more importantly, not making a fool of yourself by doing something unbelievably stupid. Relax! All the unbelievably stupid things have already been done. My own 'most embarrassing moment' came during my first real competitive game in a Federation B league. The plan was that my 20 handicap would be very handy in the doubles, and my partner would be able to advise me as to what to do. Unfortunately due to some slip up I had to play singles and consequently my bisques were not of much use since I didn't really know what to do with them. The low point came when I had just run hoop 5 and tried to peg out my opponent, who was for peg! What follows here is some advice and information that will hopefully save you any such moments.

PRIOR TO PLAY

1. Some say it is a rule, some call it a convention, and others call it folklore. Whatever they call it most players agree that not being able to practise on the day of a match doesn't make much sense. However, it is the accepted thing and therefore it is best not to do it. There is an exception: if you are playing a match which has a starting time, and your opponent has already played a match, ask the manager for some practise time before you start your match.
2. Verify that the tournament manager has your correct handicap. Check your opponent's handicap and calculate the number of bisques one or other is entitled to. When you and your opponent agree, the lower bisquer counts out the bisques.
3. The lower bisquer is also responsible for tossing the coin and the higher bisquer calls.

ETIQUETTE

1. You might occasionally like to shriek with delight or howl with pain but players on your lawn or nearby lawns would prefer that you play quietly.
2. When you have finished your turn and quit the lawn do not 'hover' near your opponent or stand in his line of sight or near a ball he is attempting to roquet. The best course of action is to go immediately to a seat provided on the sidelines.
3. If your opponent plays a croquet shot and one of the balls appears from your vantage point to be off the lawn, do not run down to verify that fact. Your opponent is a joint referee of the game and if he says "it is on" that should be sufficient. More than 99% of players are honest, and if you run into one that isn't, chalk it up to experience.

REFEREE OR UMPIRE

Any player can act as an umpire. His function generally, is to watch any ball which you are attempting to roquet which is close to the peg or a hoop and which might move, not because you've hit the ball, but because you hit the peg or

the hoop which then caused the ball to move. A referee, on the other hand, is one who has passed an examination which entitles him to settle questions of law. 90% of the referee's work consists of watching hampered strokes, i.e. when the striker's ball is in close proximity to a hoop or the peg, or the swing is impeded by another ball. The tournament manager will post a list of qualified referees. It is safer and wiser to call for an umpire or referee than to allow anyone to think you have played an improper shot. To call for an umpire you should hold your mallet horizontally above your head. To call for a referee you should hold your mallet vertically above your head.

DOUBLE BANKING

Double banking is a little distracting until you get used to it. Some players are notorious for "always being in play". That is, they seem to be oblivious to the other game on the lawn and play on as though they were alone on the lawn. Don't be one of those, but on the other hand if you stop play or give way when it really isn't required you will slow down your game unnecessarily. A good rule of thumb: give way to a player who is in the middle of a break and expect the other player to give way if you are in a break. Keep in mind that 15 minutes will normally be added to double banked games and this is usually more than enough time to allow for the disruptions in play which often do occur.

Always mark a ball from the other game if it is likely to interfere with the completion of your shot. It is as easy to mark a ball accurately as inaccurately, so do it right. Any experienced player will show you how. When the player from the other game is not in the middle of a shot ask his permission to mark the ball(s). If the ball you wish to mark is in a critical position, e.g. in the jaws of a hoop resting on a wire etc. let the players from the other game mark it or ask a referee to do it for you.

LAWS

Most of the laws are a bit mystifying but a few noteworthy ones should be mentioned here.

1. If you say you are going to take a bisque and then, before you play your next shot, you decide not to take it, that is o.k. and you may leave the lawn, bisques intact. On the other hand if you say that you are not going to take a bisque, you may not change your mind and then take a bisque. Additionally, once you have left the lawn you may not take a bisque so be sure you do not quit the lawn until you are absolutely certain you do not want to take a bisque.
2. Any bisques not taken before time is called may not be used until the extension period has elapsed and you are still level, so use your bisques while there is still time on the clock.
3. As a joint referee of the match you should watch your opponent when he plays: even the best players make the occasional mistakes. You must not warn your opponent if he is about to make one of those mistakes, such as playing the wrong ball, but if he does, you must stop play immediately because the balls must be replaced and your opponent's turn ends. You are also entitled to forestall play if your opponent is about to play a shot which, in your opinion, requires a referee in attendance. Do not be shy about this because once the shot has been played it is too late to do anything about it, even if you feel certain that a fault was committed.
4. To peg a ball out in a handicap game both the striker's ball and the ball to be pegged out must have already run rover. This differs from advanced play where the striker's ball, even if it is the only ball which has run rover, can be pegged out.

POST GAME

The winner reports the result to the manager and gets to buy the drinks. Both players should complete their handicap cards, and in the event of a handicap change get the manager to initial your card and report the change at the end of the event.

Manor House Mallets
 The originators of carbon fibre shafted mallets now offer a **comprehensive range**: the 'Basic' (£80), the well established T-series (£125), and the 2000 mallet at £142.50 (inc. head wrap). All have heads of fine hardwood with screwed and glued double faces, inlaid sight lines and a high quality finish. Sustainably managed timbers.

A successful extra: superb hollow head with brass plate extreme end-weighting (£17.50 extra)

Mallet bags (£25) Head wraps (£7.50)

For details or discussion, contact Alan Pidcock,
 Tel 01772 743859
 e-mail pidcock@manorh.u-net.com

The Manor House, 1 Barn Croft, Penwortham, Preston PR1 OSX

SWINGS & ROUNDABOUTS

A CLOSE LOOK AT THE SWINGING OF A CROQUET Mallet - PART II

by Neil Williams

[The words "to be continued" were omitted from the end of Part 1, published in January, 2001 (no.271). Part 2 is meant to be read in the light of the earlier piece.]

A friend sent me the following account of a game played in 1999:

The Match

The Start

I arrive at the club for my first match of the tournament in good time. I'm feeling both apprehensive and excited. I've checked with the Manager and found the name of my opponent, Chris. He's someone I've played before - just once - and he beat me in that game.

We are due to play on a distant lawn at the far end of the club grounds, and Chris waves to me to hurry up. He's already halfway down the path, and I find I'm scurrying along behind. Am I late after all? Does he need to leave early? I notice that the other pair we're double-banking with look very composed and relaxed.

Chris is very keen to start our game. His every movement seems to be saying, "Come on. Come on." Somehow, all this - starting before we even got to the lawn - is undermining any clear sense of purpose I might have had.

When we start, my mallet feels awkward, inflexible, too clumsy for the job. I win the toss, but have no real plan. I'm still thinking about why

Chris hustled and bustled. Perhaps I have a reputation as a slow player and he feels he must get me moving.

The Middle and End Game

I'm surprised after the standard opening to see how poorly Chris is playing. He's missed several easy shots and hasn't built a break from fairly good chances.

The trouble is, I can't make anything of this. I'm caught up in some kind of downward spiral of confidence.

Suddenly, Chris makes a bad mistake. He thumps his mallet on the ground in frustration. I somehow feel it's my fault and that he's blaming me. I imagine him saying,

"I should be beating this chap hollow. He's so tentative and slow."

"Now you've got him," says one of the double-bankers. He may be trying to encourage me, but I take it as ironical.

Out there in the middle of the lawn, with everything handed to me on a plate, I have no feel for the mallet; the grass seems too dry and too fast; the sun too hot. I know that over-hitting will wreck my chances. But when I try consciously to hit gently, I underdo it. I'm snatching at shots, hacking, not swinging. But I don't know how to stop.

I make only limited progress and end the turn with a weak, defensive move. Even though the game drags on for another hour or so, Chris duly wins. I try to be cheerful on the way back to the pavilion, but that's the limit of my ability to rally. I want the tournament to end right there.

COMMENTARY

Analysis of the game

The above is an account of an actual game, though the names are changed.

Whatever was going on in this game, it was not only or even primarily a failure of technique or tactics that led to my friend's (let's call him Keith) defeat. Things were going wrong on the inside. His inner game had collapsed.

Even if Chris, his opponent, really was trying-on a few bits of Gamesmanship - the hustling and mallet-banging, for example - that just means that he, too, needed help. Still, whatever Chris's problems might be, let's stick with Keith.

No one would dispute the suggestion that Keith was assailed with self-doubt. It is a condition more basic than just anxiety or tension or fear of failure. Its first symptom is weakness. Notice how Keith could not really hold or handle the mallet any more. His knees and wrists feel weak; he is experiencing a general loss of feel and of muscle memory. His self-doubt has incapacitated him.

Keith has, in other words, lost command of his own inner resources, and this is shown in his physical symptoms. The signs are all there: *Inattentiveness* - he is distracted by the state of the lawn, the weather, his own shortcomings; *lack of motivation* - there is no way he thinks he can win this game, or any other in the tournament; *lassitude* - he has no energy.

Furthermore, fighting his self-doubt has led to mental tension and conflict. Keith's attempts to play gently and with some control - to try harder, in other words - do not work. In these circumstances, the "trying harder" mode fails. TRYING FAILS.

No amount of tips or technical advice would have helped. What he currently lacks are the three primary Inner Game skills of concentration, confidence and will-power. Or, in a single phrase, he needs to be coached in **Awareness**, and pointed towards the many approaches - well-developed in other sports - that would be useful.

Awareness and Concentration

In Part I of this look at coaching, I have described how two observations led me to a number of discoveries about my own play. I was able to make these discoveries because they focused my attention on particular, specific small points. I found, that is, the ability to concentrate fully.

I found I was both playing and observing at the same time. My

body was being allowed to get back to playing, as it knew it could, without the interference from my conscious self that had produced only an incapacitating anxiety. I did this by giving my conscious mind a specific job to do: to ensure my shoulders stayed still. Doing that kept my conscious mind occupied - like a bone the burglar throws to the dog to keep it quiet so he can carry on bagging up the silver from the sideboard.

Put simply, the state I had achieved during my practice-session was that in which we all give our best performances. Some top players, for example, describe their experience of winning major events - particularly for the first time - as feeling as if someone else was playing. Their memories of the match are hazy. They were playing as if on automatic pilot. Relaxed but concentrated, they felt no need to interfere consciously, allowing the body to organise, co-ordinate and carry out the necessary actions, so that the game played itself.

It happens occasionally to us all. The judgment of distances and angles comes naturally, and that distinctive sound the mallet makes on the ball when the timing of strokes is right makes it all seem worthwhile. When these matches are over, we know we have rediscovered croquet.

I am reminded of descriptions of the great D.D.Steel in play 70 and 80 years ago. It was, apparently, almost hypnotic, and had an unstoppable inevitability to it - the fluency, the softness of her tread on the grass, the measured pace with which she moved, the rhythm of her strokes. It is the very image of real concentration - the opposite of teeth-gritting determination to force the mallet to behave as you want it to, followed by red-misted rage when it doesn't.

In looking at my own practice-session in Part I of this piece and at Keith's game, I have been shining a torch into what appears to me to be unexplored country as far as croquet coaching is concerned. Yet much of what I have written about Keith simply paraphrases or quotes directly from material that has been around since the 1970s and 80s.

I am far from an expert in following any of the paths that the torch lights up. What little knowledge I have has come from books on other sports, notably tennis, archery and golf. I have also looked at current coaching approaches in athletics, swimming and sport in general.

The message seems to be the same in all cases, namely that to look at issues such as these - they amount to nothing less than the whole inner game of croquet - is not only possible but very useful, rewarding and too-long delayed. What is needed is not so much separate courses added to the current list of what the CA offers, but a building-in to all coaching courses of ideas such as how performance is shaped by internal factors like concentration and confidence, and how those factors can be influenced and changed for the better.

BREAK BUILDER - No. 1

The return of John McCullough's Break Builder tips, first published in the Gazette starting in the summer of 1986, begins with a puzzle. How do you, handicap 14, get a break started for Red for Hoop 3 using one bisque, when your two balls are near Corner I without a rush, and the opponent balls are Blue just outside Corner II and Black just northwest of the peg?

John's suggested play went like this - the principles are as sound today as they were then.

Before constructing a break using bisques, you should picture where you need the other three balls. In this case, we need a pioneer for Hoop 3, a pivot, and a pioneer for Hoop 4 (next-but-one, thinking ahead). Of these the most immediately important is a good placing for the pioneer at Hoop 3.

The proposed solution is based on three principles:

1 Where possible, use the ball nearest the critical hoop as the potential pioneer, as this is likely to be the most accurate. In this case therefore, Black will be used in that role, and so Blue and Yellow will become pivot and pioneer for Hoop 4.

2 High handicappers will not normally use big split shots if the position of both object balls is critical. In this case, after roqueting Yellow, there is no attempt to send Yellow to Hoop 4 while going to the Black ball in

the middle, as the shot is too difficult, and the risk of failure too great. (A-Class or B-Class players may have to carry this shot out, however, to promote the usefulness of Yellow, with the aim of getting a rush from Black either straight to Hoop 3, or into Corner II behind Blue.) Instead, roll both Red and Yellow into the middle, where the position of Yellow is not critical but the position of Red is such that roqueting Black is guaranteed.

3 Balls just off the yard line, as Blue is in this case, provide excellent opportunities for break-building using bisques. You can shoot at them knowing that, if you miss, you have a short rush into the middle of the lawn at the cost of one bisque. Therefore again we spurn the big split shot, croqueting Black towards Hoop 3 whilst getting behind (or near) Blue, as being too risky, rather concentrating on a straight croquet shot placing Black as accurately as we can as the Hoop 3 pioneer. Then turn and shoot at Blue. If you miss, then you take the one bisque allowed in this puzzle, and rush the Blue towards Yellow, croquet Blue as the pioneer for Hoop 4 ensuring you can roquet Yellow, take the roquet from the new pivot, and take off to Black to run Hoop 3, and the four-ball break is set up. If you hit, then you roll the balls towards Yellow, play the continuation shot so that you can hit Blue again, take the one bisque, roquet Blue, croquet it as the accurate pioneer for Hoop 4, and we are in the same position as before, using Yellow as the pivot to get to Black.

Summary

- 1 Red roquets Yellow.
 - 2 Roll Yellow to middle, Red going to Black.
 - 3 Red roquets Black.
 - 4 Croquet Black accurately to Hoop 3.
 - 5 Red shoots at Blue.
 - 6 If hit, roll to Yellow, play continuation, take the bisque and play Blue again.
 - 7 If miss, take the bisque and rush to Yellow.
 - 8 Croquet Blue accurately to Hoop 4, getting to Yellow.
 - 9 Red roquets Yellow.
 - 10 Take off to Black at Hoop 3.
- The four-ball break exists for one bisque.

Note that there is little difference if Blue is right in Corner II, as the croquet shot will be roll to Yellow whether or not you have taken the bisque after shooting. However if you have had to use the bisque in the corner, rolling into the middle short of Yellow would be better. Then you can rush it towards Hoop 4 before taking off back to Black. The four-ball break is not so tight yet because the Hoop 4 pioneer is less accurate, and the pivot is now Blue, but the possibilities of continuing are as high.

(Of those readers that found the 'Breakbuilder' useful, could you let me know if you could follow it with text only or whether you would prefer diagrams with future 'Breakbuilder' articles. Ed.)

Coaches Qualification Course (CQC)

The first formal CQC will take place on Saturday 21 April and Sunday 22 April 2001 at Surbiton Croquet Club. Subject to final Council approval, all new CA recognised coaches at any level will have had to attend such a course. Attendance on a CQC will qualify participants in the new CA Coaching Category of "Club Coach" and to be awarded the appropriate (yellow) badge.

A Club Coach will be authorised to instruct beginners and improvers in his or her own club. Those qualified at one of the three existing coach Grades or being assessed for one of those Grades will continue to be authorised to coach outside of their club eg at the Summer School at Southwick.

For the time being, any currently recognised "Club Coach" may qualify for the new category on the recommendation of the appropriate Federation Coaching Officer but to progress to the Grade 1 level, attendance at a CQC will be necessary. The Golf Croquet Committee is looking to establish a similar qualification for Golf Croquet.

LOOKING FOR A CHALLENGE OR A TOURNAMENT WITH MORE APPEAL?



THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION HAS TWO TOURNAMENTS YOU REALLY SHOULD CONSIDER

The Peel Memorials - First Played 1898
Southport & Birkdale 10th ~13th May
Handicap Singles events for Men & Women, as well as Handicap Mixed Doubles.

The Challenge & Gilbey - First Played 1900
Budleigh Salterton 30th Aug - 2nd Sept
Handicap singles & Advanced or level singles.

See page 39 of the Fixture Book for More Info



The emphasis of the course on 21/22 April will be on how to coach rather than what to coach. It will include the planning of a course, lesson preparation and instructional techniques. Most sessions will involve participants in practical work, teaching strokes and tactics in syndicates. Syndicate Directing Staff will be David Collins and Ron Welch.

Further details are available from Michael Hague Tel: 01483 776190. To reserve a vacancy, send to him at Homewood House, Pond Road, Woking GU22 0JT, a SAE and cheque for the course fee of £15, made out to the SE Croquet Federation. There is no restriction on handicaps for attendees.

NEW BADGES FOR CA MERIT AWARDS SCHEME

By Bruce Rannie

All Bronze, Silver and Gold Merit Award Badges sent out this year will show the new CA logo, keeping the scheme right up to date as the tangible indicator of your progress towards becoming an A-class player.

The Awards Scheme works as follows. There are three Badges that can be obtained; each one is a signal of measurable improvement in competitive play. The match has to be in one of the recognised CA Calendar Tournaments or competitions, or in a representative event, with hoops set correctly. You also have to win the match to qualify for any of the Awards.

BRONZE Badge

The first one in the series is the Bronze Badge, awarded for making a ten-hoop break, using bisques if necessary. This is the usual target once you have grasped the idea of tidy controlled croquet, and the use of bisques to build and continue a break is becoming your normal practice. You will no longer be using bisques only in rescue or defensive positions, and will be starting to attack opponents positively and confidently.

The Bronze Badge is often won after a player has attended one of the Regional Bronze or Improvers Courses, which concentrates on setting up and maintaining breaks, and positive use of bisques. Nearly 40 were awarded in 2000.

SILVER Badge

The second one is the SILVER Badge, and this comes at the point in your development where you are conceding bisques most of the time, or are taking the first steps into the Advanced game. This award is given for achieving a twelve hoop-point break, sometimes with one or two peels, without using bisques either to set up the break or to continue it, while winning the game.

A typical example of this is when you make the first hoop with one ball, but then have to exit. Later you get the second ball all the way round stopping at rover – a normal leave if you're giving bisques. Then you get another opportunity with the first ball, starting at hoop two and completing the rover peel for the twelfth point (the peg points do not count in the qualification criterion for the Award) and ultimate victory.

Both the National Silver Course and the Silver-Gilt (Introduction to Advanced Play) Course concentrate on the kind of break management and tactics that naturally lead the player to win the Silver Badge. More than 30 were awarded in 2000, including both Bronze and Silver to Marcus Evans of Nailsea Croquet Club, who achieved his first Award in a qualifying round of the All-England Championship, and his second whilst winning the event at Nottingham.

GOLD Badge

The third Award is the GOLD Badge, which is for your first Triple Peel in qualifying competitions. The manoeuvre is by definition a winning one, as it comprises peeling your first ball through four-back, penult and rover, while playing the appropriate break with the second ball, and pegging both out for the victory.


It is more often seen in Advanced Play, as one of the standard tactics to avoid giving one of the lifts or contact, but it is also one of the weapons in the armoury of the experienced player faced with a fence-ful of bisques in a Handicap Tournament. Naturally bisques cannot be used to hit in, or to set up the break, or to carry it out, but that does not preclude qualification in a game in which the player has previously used bisques.

The National Gold Course is designed to prepare players to achieve this, setting out the tactics for the standard triple, and the delayed triple, and the attacking leaves after the first ball has reached four-back, in order to make the lift shot as difficult as possible for the opponent. 8 Gold Badges were awarded in 2000, to Michael Blackwell, David Brydon, Paul Duckworth, John Gibbons, Jonathan Lamb, Ian Lines, Samir Patel and Brian Smith.

Progress into 2001

The aim of the CA Coaching Committee is always to encourage enterprising play. We make a similar number of awards each year, and it is pleasing for the current Coaching Committee, including the Regional Coaching Officers, that your keenness and desire to improve continues apace.

I would like to see even more of you claiming the Badge in 2001 after successes in Tournaments, because that is one obvious measure of the success of the Coaching policy and of the Coaches themselves. The more players that can show that the enterprising play being taught does lead to success, the better placed we will be in producing a continuance of top class players for individual and team World Championships well into the new century.



TOWNSEND CROQUET LIMITED

For a comprehensive range of Croquet Equipment, Mallets, Balls, Hoops, Winning pegs, Clips, Corner flags, Corner pegs, etc.

All at competitive prices.

Ask for Townsend Croquet equipment at your local shop.

TOWNSEND CROQUET LTD.
VALLEY BRIDGE ROAD
CLACTON ON SEA
ESSEX CO15 4AE
Tel: 01255 427717 Fax: 01255 474241

TALKING CROQUET

No. 9 LIONEL WHARRAD

Vice-President of the CA, 90 this year - and still passionate about croquet

by Quiller Barrett

You know how it is after a game. You are sipping a drink and feeling a little elated – or annoyed with yourself – as the case may be. I can't remember which it was at Southwick last year, but, sitting outside the clubhouse, I got into conversation with Lionel Wharrad as we idly watched others still battling it out.

I had known Lionel for a few years as someone to be reckoned with at Council meetings but, as I am a relative newcomer to the sport, I didn't know much more about him than that. It turned out we had things in common: both born of English parents in Wales, both members of the left-wing Fabian Society in our younger years and both concerned about the health of English croquet. Our conversations continued and I discovered what a remarkable Vice-President the CA has.

Radical by nature

Lionel Wharrad is 90 this year. He was born two years after Bleriot first flew the Channel, yet he played 122 tournament games in the last twelve months with a handicap of 7. Born before the First World War, he embodies old-world courtesy and good manners. But Lionel is radical by nature. Brought up in south Wales he developed an early interest in politics, "I could not understand (nor can I now) why, in a so-called civilized society, plenty of food and undernourished children could be allowed to exist side by side. Nor why those deprived of both work and food did not simply rise up *en masse* and take what they wanted."

Lionel has always favoured change and he has led a lot of the innovations that have been introduced into English croquet in recent times: home internationals, short croquet, advanced handicap croquet, the full bisque game, Wharrad turns -as well as his early work developing clubs. Quite a record. "At the end of the 1970's I was on Council and there was a lot of talk about the need to expand" he says. "For some years I became unofficial, unpaid development officer and Council seemed glad that there was somebody willing to take on this role."

Andrew Hope, who later followed Wharrad as chairman of Council, remembers those days. "The CA was still a pre-WW2 operation - some would say pre-WW1 or even Boer War – and Lionel's changes did upset a few die-hards. But the old ways, the consequence of which was a downward spiral in membership, could not have continued. Lionel was a man with vision and the CA was extremely fortunate that he chose croquet – and just in the nick of time."

The war and politics

After a grammar school education Lionel's first job, in 1928, was working for a Russian-owned petrol company in the UK. He moved on to become sales manager of a London-based large multiple in the 1930's. Then in 1940 Lionel was commissioned in the RAF but poor eyesight ruled out flying. "I joined the Maintenance Branch, and was sent to the Ministry of Aircraft Production in London with the redoubtable Lord Beaverbrook in charge. He was a close confidant of Churchill and he had seemingly



unlimited power which he exercised ruthlessly in pushing the industry to provide more aircraft at a critical time of the war. Much to the relief of a lot of people, the Beaver relinquished his ministerial job after a year or so and a more conventional minister took over."

Wharrad moved to the Air Ministry and spent the rest of the war involved in managing large-scale data processing techniques on Hollerith machines. He finished the war as a Wing Commander.

After the war Lionel joined the research arm of the Labour Party, the Fabian Society, and was soon attending meetings in the House of Commons. "I became aware, probably belatedly, that the most eminent of politicians can be as irrational and silly as the rest of us. I found this comforting."

By now earning his living as a consultant with the English equivalent of IBM, Wharrad was advising Government departments and the newly nationalized industries. In 1948 he became director of administration at one of the latter: the Raw Cotton Commission in Liverpool. He was appointed a JP a few years later and in 1950, aged 40, Lionel became a parliamentary candidate for the new constituency of Runcorn. The next general election resulted in the Attlee government having a tiny majority but the Commons did not include Lionel. He remembers, "My wife was pleased that I was not elected, and I was somewhat relieved too, because my salary as an MP would have been about a quarter of what I was then earning. I am ashamed to say that I had not given a moment's thought to how we would live had I been elected". During the election Lionel met Harold Wilson, then a young President of the Board of Trade, "I found him to be a much nicer man than one would have thought by reading the press during his subsequent premiership."

In 1952 the second Churchill government was formed and it soon closed the Raw Cotton Commission. Lionel had, meantime, approached the founder of the John Lewis Partnership, Spedan Lewis, who took him on as a Managing Director designate. He eventually left the Partnership in 1963 by which time he was a director of John Lewis and Co as well as MD of Peter Jones in Sloane Square. During this time Lionel met Hugh Gaitskell who asked him to help form an Industrial Advisory Group. But by the time it was up and running Gaitskell was dead and the group was handed over to Harold Wilson who shortly became Prime Minister. The Gaitskell-inspired body soon became redundant because as Lionel put it, "The PM has such power that he can command almost anyone to work for him. Indeed people line up in the hope of being chosen: the honours system is a great magnet."

Discovering croquet

From John Lewis our future Vice-President went to the Booker McConnell conglomerate: a significant move as Lionel discovered croquet on a business trip to Zambia in 1970. There and then he decided he would take up the game seriously when he retired. So in 1975 Lionel wrote to

the Secretary of the CA to ask where he could play. "I wish I had kept the reply," Lionel says. "It was hand written by this charming, old-fashioned gentleman who examined my request with great gravity and length. He concluded that I should not join either Hurlingham or Roehampton but would probably find Woking the best answer. So I looked for a house near the Woking club and moved there."

Lionel was a 1970's bandit. He went on the circuit of the southern clubs - Budleigh, Cheltenham, Parkstone, Southwick, Eastbourne etc - but his handicap was down to 1 when he won the beautiful Gold Cup at the Eastbourne Men's Southern Championship. By 1978 Derek Caporn had interested Lionel in the CA Council and put his name forward. He was elected and started work on development and publicity. "I was convinced then that founding new clubs, and trying to expand the membership of existing clubs, were the priorities - and I still do. We managed to get some publicity in the national press and to generate enquiries, which led me to the idea of trying to find a person in each area of England who would do the follow-up work. One of the outstanding appointments was that of Judy Anderson who still does such sterling work for the sport."

Sponsors, television and short croquet

At about this time some PR people thought that croquet could be a big television success. Pimms were interested in sponsoring the game as they thought it fitted in well with their product; they wanted to move fast and they wanted to interest television. So Lionel came up with the concept of having home internationals: three countries and three matches at three different locations was the plan. The sponsors were delighted with the idea and Pimms continued their involvement with croquet for a few years. But, despite their, and the CA's, best efforts the publicity coverage did not materialize.

After a number of trials the problem of televising croquet became apparent: in order to follow the progress of the game it was necessary to be able to see the whole of the court, but then the hoops and balls were too small on the screen. It occurred to Lionel that it was possible to enjoy tennis with fixed cameras behind the server that allowed the viewer to see the whole of the court and the ball. "This gave me the idea of trying to make a game that could be played on a lawn the size of a tennis court. So was born Short Croquet."

Lionel headed a small group to consider the matter. "We decided that to be successful the game had to be much shorter than the standard one, it had to be difficult enough to persuade top players to take part, and it should depart as little as possible from the standard laws. Hence the 14 point game with compulsory peels for the top players, and full bisque play for the handicap players." This was tried out by commercial television but failed to deliver sufficient numbers of viewers. Lionel remembers taking the TV sports commentator, David Vine, to watch the Opens. "After following a game for some time he said 'I can't see this working on television even if you reduce the size of the court - the outplayer often doesn't even watch the play, and the scoring shot is an anti-climax. How can a commentator inject any excitement into a game that fundamentally lacks any?'"

Richard Hilditch, who played in the 1986 Granada TV short croquet event, was concerned that the rules had not been sufficiently trialled. "The idea of using a smaller area and 14 point play is fine but there are a number of problems that, even after 15 years, have still not been addressed. The wiring rule encourages Aunt Emma play, and mandatory peels are appalling for spectators and are nowhere near as strong as bisques for balancing play."

Developing the sport

Some other sponsors, including Mateus Wines and Anchor butter, still thought they could get some publicity mileage from croquet. Their interest did not last very long but croquet did get some publicity that attracted potential players. At about this time the national Sports Council commissioned a wide-ranging publicity campaign aimed at encouraging the over-50's, and especially women, to take up a sport. Croquet fitted the bill perfectly and Lionel was soon talking to them, an approach that

ultimately resulted in the CA receiving a handsome grant that financed a full-time development officer.

The start of Surbiton

Wharrad helped to get Crawley and several other clubs started and he was convinced that croquet needed a major club in the London area. He had approached various local authorities without much success but one day, when looking around for possible locations in the Kingston area, he stumbled upon a row of derelict tennis courts in Surbiton. Kingston Council was soon persuaded that croquet would be a useful source of revenue for them and Lionel negotiated a 42-year lease that was taken up by the CA. The late Derek Caporn did all the work to bring the Surbiton club into existence.

Handicap games

Lionel has always felt keenly about the needs of handicap players. "Most of the things I have done have been directed to their interests. It led me to introduce Advanced Handicap croquet. Originally I hoped this would lead to croquet becoming one game, played either level or with bisques, so that everybody would become familiar with lifts and contact from the start. I still believe there are compelling arguments for us to work to this end."

Full bisque croquet - and frustrations

Wharrad instances his introduction of full bisque croquet as an example of Council's ineffectiveness. "The idea was well received but, like so many other ideas in those days, Council had no mechanism to ensure its agreed policy was properly implemented. Years passed before the laws and tournament regulations contained any mention of the game." The successful businessman, used to getting his own way, was often frustrated by committees. Martin Murray remembers, "Lionel was certainly very persistent and dogged. He could tend to grind down the opposition by dint of his own perseverance; others would eventually let him have his way just to have a quiet time. Maybe that's why some of his ideas took a long time to be accepted."

Lionel is still persistent. He says, "I believe our failure to make full bisque the normal handicap game still results in high bisquers playing each other from scratch - an absurdity pointed out by John Solomon long ago. I still live in hope that when both players have a handicap of more than 6, the accepted standard will be that games are played to a base of 6. It should become a requirement of the CA tournament regulations."

Wharrad turns - and eventually getting his way

There was more frustration for Lionel when he introduced the idea of what has become known as 'Wharrad turns'. Council refused to consider the matter until it had been tried out in some depth, and it took several years before the concept was incorporated into tournament regulations. Though Roger Wheeler in the south-west gave impetus to the idea which many managers now use, not everyone approved. Hilditch again: "To my mind having a normal time limit, plus a fixed number of turns per side, does not prevent negative play as time approaches (the clever player can encourage more turns by, for example, using wide joins) and it prevents the manager having any control over when the game will end. This is ludicrous - the whole point of time limits is for the benefit of the manager and the other players who want to get on the lawn. I believe Lionel may have a tendency to invent things just for the sake of it. While an ideas man is great, he needs to be tempered in an organization. This happens inside a company but in a voluntary environment an individual can develop an idea unchecked."

The name Wharrad is remembered in some croquet circles for reasons other than 'turns'. Richard Hilditch remembers the derivation of the term 'Wharrad' for a take-off that is short. "Some of the Cambridge guys were at Southwick in the early 80's and one of them saw Lionel take off across a slow lawn to the oppo's. He came up about ten yards short and retired to mummy. The oppo failed to hit and Lionel repeated the shot, only to end up even shorter. You can use the term as

a noun or an adjective, 'Wharradic'. By extension the term can be applied to anything diminutive, so Ronnie Corbett could be described as Wharradic."

Being a chairman

Lionel was chairman of the CA Council from 1984-6. Andrew Hope, who was Wharrad's vice-chairman of Council in 1984, says, "Lionel is a person of high intellect coupled with a large amount of self-motivation. In the 1980's he knew what he wanted and, although he would ask opinions, he would usually go his own way because he knew he was right - which of course he was. He mostly managed this without his colleagues realizing it, but occasionally he had to 'come on strong'."

Stephen Mulliner says simply, "Lionel was the best chairman of Council the CA has had in recent times."

In 1996 Stephen Badger set up a re-organization committee chaired by Wharrad. It came to three tentative conclusions: Council was not an appropriate body to deal with detail; committees should have the power to implement their own decisions; the CA needed a paid chief executive to manage its affairs and implement decisions. Lionel now observes, somewhat tartly, "I was glad to see the Constitution Working Party that was set up in 1998 as though the earlier committee had never existed, at least concurred with some of this."

90th year reflections

Talk to Lionel about the future of association croquet and his passion soon surfaces. "It is a marvellous game. People on committees should be getting out and telling people why." So, what is it about croquet that so appeals to him? "I used to play golf and snooker - but in golf you just play yourself. I have always liked the fact that in a croquet game your opponent can interfere and complicate matters, and I like the cerebral content too. There are also those occasional times when the brain and the muscles work in tune, every shot seems to be easy and a competent break results. It is this, I suppose, which keeps us hooked on the game."

Mention golf croquet and the reaction is one of barely contained hostility about the harm this variation of croquet might do to 'the proper game'. "Golf croquet has been a parasitical development," he says. The superiority of the association game is so obvious to Lionel that I don't dwell on the subject too long. "I realize that occasionally a club will be desperate for revenue and will fall back on the recruitment of golf croquet players in order to keep going, but I regard this as the option of last choice" is the nearest he gets to accepting that golf croquet has a place in the CA's firmament.

Wharrad agrees with John Solomon about the advantages of the 14-point game, at least for the top players who are interested in triple, and more, peeling. "It could well be the game of the future for them," he says.

Reflecting on the CA's activities in recent years, Lionel points to a battery of statistics that show a very small increase in clubs and players, whichever way you look at them. "I am disappointed the CA hasn't made more progress. Perhaps we try to do too much, looking after the needs of individual members as well as clubs. Why not leave clubs to be responsible for their members so there are just clubs as members of the

The CA Shop

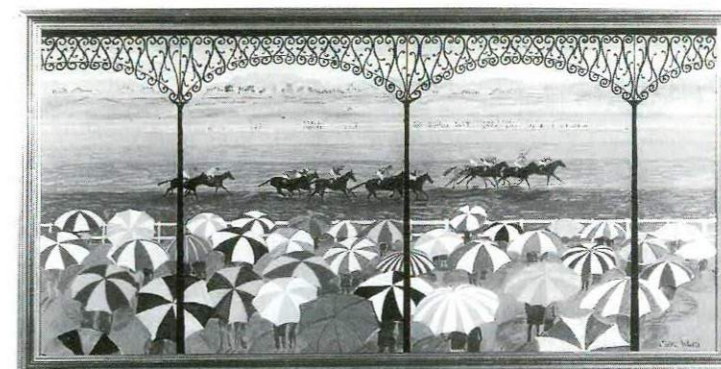
Powder coated metal clips in 1st & 2nd colours £10 set

Blue canvas padded 9" mallet bags £25 each

Green canvas padded 10"/11" mallet bags £28 each

Prices include postage within the UK.

Also books, Hogan mallets and all your equipment needs
Telephone 020 7736 3148 e-mail caoffice@croquet.org.uk



One of Lionel's many other talents and loves is painting.

Association?" That radical side of our Vice-President surfaces once more.

Now for 2001

After some recent health problems, Lionel feels that towards the end of last season his game was improving again. Recent *Gazette* reports show that LW is still a force to be reckoned with - as those who play in club tournaments at Woking and Surbiton well know. "I'm less effective on slow lawns nowadays so I'm looking forward to getting my handicap down this year if we get a good summer." And L. Wharrad will be entering as many tournaments as he did in 2000, but not the Veterans: "I don't like playing against those old things..."

In between tournaments one of Lionel's other passions fills his days: painting. An accomplished artist, who has been selling his pictures for many years under the *nom de plume* of Marc Ward, Lionel's imaginative brushes will be busy again this year.

And, still looking forward, Lionel reminded me, "Born in Wales of English parents, I can claim dual nationality. So I can play croquet for either England or Wales. I still await invitations."

CROQUET BALLS FOR CHAMPIONSHIPS, TOURNAMENTS AND CLUBS

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

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

The CLUB ball, known as the 'C' (formerly known as the Championship ball), will continue to be available as the most economical ball conforming to the CA Championship requirements.

GARDEN croquet balls available in primary colours only.

current prices

'GT' £139 per set 16oz Garden £42 per set

'C' £97 per set 12oz Garden £38 per set

Add £5 per set for postage, packing and insurance.

Special postage rates for multiple orders.

Advice available from John Beech by phone
WOODLANDS CROQUET, WOODLANDS, SKIPTON
ROAD, BARNOLDSWICK, BB18 6HH
phone/fax 01282 813070

Send for a full list of Top Quality Croquet Equipment and Sets.

SPORTS AWARDS FOR GOLF CROQUET PLAYERS

On the 8th Dec 2000 Derek Old of Belsay Hall Croquet Club (Northumberland) was awarded the Newcastle Building Society Shield for Senior Sportsman. The award is open to all sports (male) by the Castle Morpeth Sports Council and was presented by Mike Harris (triathlete) before 320 guests including the Mayor Coun Frank Harrington at the Morpeth leisure centre. This crowns another good year which saw Derek come 2nd in the Lancashire open, win the Ramsgate open doubles with Koen Heidbuchel (Belgium), win the British open doubles with Chris Sheen (England), come 2nd in the National Golf Croquet Championships, semi finalist in the Yorkshire open and then to go to Cairo to play in the Golf Croquet World Championships finishing 21st.



Following a very successful year, Chris Sheen has just been elected Male Sports Personality of the year by Colchester & District Sports Council Team. The award is for Outstanding Achievement in 2000 and was open to men from the Colchester area participating in all sports. The nomination listing Chris's achievements was as follows: Chris specialises in the variation of Croquet known as Golf Croquet and has achieved some notable successes at National and International level in 2000.



- The inaugural British Open Singles and Doubles Golf Croquet Championships were held in June. Chris won the Doubles event (partnered by Derek Old of Belsay Hall), and was a semi-finalist in the Singles
- July saw the finals of the National Golf Croquet Championships, attended by winners of qualifying heats throughout the country. Chris again won the Doubles event (this time partnered by his brother Roderick), and again reached the semi-finals in the Singles
- In August he captained the Essex team to victory in the Inter-Counties championship, winning every one of his individual games
- In September he won the Italian Open Golf Croquet Championship in Milan, against a strong international field
- He was invited to play in the World Championships in Cairo in October, and finished in a creditable 17th position out of a field of 64 competitors.

Chris is Treasurer of Colchester Croquet Club and gives unstintingly of his time in that capacity. In addition to excelling at the Golf Croquet variation of the game, he is also no mean talent at Association Croquet, having one of the lowest handicaps in the club. The award was presented at Colchester Town Hall on 29th January.

HOW MUCH IS A NEW MEMBER WORTH?

By Kevin Carter

This paper describes a study undertaken in December/January to determine how much value a croquet club should put on a new member.

The need to do this was born during 2000, when Tony Fathers, chairman of the CA Marketing Committee, said that "clearly £3000 should not be spent on an advertisement campaign which only generated ten new members". This sounds intuitively right, but what if the cost were £1000 - is £100 per member good value? Or if £3000 generated 50 new members - is £60 per member good value? It would be useful to both the CA and clubs to know the answer.

Many might disagree with an approach which regards croquet and each club primarily as a business, with income, expenditure, margins and profits (or losses!). There is far more to it than that, but it is sometimes useful to measure one special aspect of 'the business' in isolation.

Variable income, fixed expenditure

When a club recruits a new member it will have income from subscriptions, club tournament fees, perhaps catering and a bar and possibly other sources. These sources of income are mainly 'variable' - in direct proportion to the number of members.

However, most of a club's expenditure is 'fixed'. Leasing land, maintaining lawns and a clubhouse, etc. are, in the main, independent of the number of members. A club will need a minimum number of members to cover its fixed costs and most income above that will be 'profit'. Now, we know that clubs plough back this 'profit' into developing new or better facilities, but in a business sense that reserve is still effectively bottom-line profit (or technically 'net operating margin').

If we understand better this relationship between income, expenditure and membership we shall be able to put a value on an incremental new member. This will, in turn, assist in justifying where effort is put and how much is invested to attract new members into clubs.

Secretaries and treasurers of sixteen clubs helped to provide data for this exercise and we are very grateful to them.

Financial models

Most croquet clubs are independent and are seeking to increase their membership. This is where the net value of an incremental new member is at its highest and it is this model which we concentrate on. There are, however, others. When a multi-sport club has a croquet section most of the income will probably go into the running of the whole entity, and so the benefit 'to croquet' will be less obvious. It is interesting that some examples of clubs operating like this, such as Sidmouth and Winchester, are very successful at recruiting members, not only because of very good, shared facilities, but also they are motivated to recruit in order that they 'compete' for space and attention among the other sports.

Other financial models occur when a club's expenditure is directly linked to the number of members - such as Ealing and Crawley, which pay their council landlords a rent based on membership numbers, and when a club is full, such as Bristol or Bowdon, where this is less financial

Clubs which provided data

- Bowdon
- Bristol
- Caterham
- Cheltenham
- Compton
- Crawley
- E. Dorset
- Ealing
- Guildford
- Pendle
- Ramsgate
- Sidmouth
- Surbiton
- Sussex
- Winchester
- Woking

incentive to recruit.

We found that the number of members per lawn is generally in the range 10-20. Below ten is barely viable and it is generally reckoned that 25-30 members per lawn represents maximum capacity. So, most clubs are looking for new members.

Income

In our survey we found that total income per (playing) member averages £192, but varies greatly, from £120 to £280 per year. Members' subscriptions averaged £112 pa for a playing member and subscriptions generally represent between 40% and 70% of a club's total income. Fees for tournaments and catering/bar profits, usually made up most of the balance. The proportion of total annual income which is related purely to the number of members averages £122 and is generally in the range £80 to £180.

Expenditure

On the other hand, expenditure, is mostly fixed - that is unrelated to the number of members. The lawns still have to be cut, the pavilion painted, the rates paid, whether there are two or two hundred members. Indeed, expenditure on maintenance averages £1700 per lawn.

Total expenditure per (playing) member (excluding capital investments) averages £152 and is usually in the range £100 to £200. However, the proportion of expenditure which does vary with the number of members is very small, averaging only about £8 per year.

The 'value' of a new member

So, these figures together tell us that, on average each year, an incremental new member is worth £122-£8=£114 per year to a club (in terms of 'net operating margin').

Summary of Accounts for a Typical Four-lawn, 60-member Club

Income	
subscriptions (all, plus coaching fees, visitors, etc.)	£ 6,000
tournaments (internal and external)	£ 1,500
catering & bar (net)	£ 2,000
other (investments, hire out, fund-raising, etc.)	£ 2,000
Total	£11,500

Expenditure	
lease / rent / rates	£ 1,000
maintenance (of grounds and clubhouse)	£ 6,000
utilities (electricity, gas, water, telephone)	£ 600
professional services (insurance, bank, accounting, etc.)	£ 500
croquet-related (equipment, trophies, etc.)	£ 500
other (postage, cleaning, etc.)	£ 500
Total	£ 9,100

Surplus to reserves £ 2,400

Averages per (playing) member: income £192, expenditure £152
 % related directly to the number of members: income 64%, expenditure 5%
 Effect of one incremental new member: +£122 -£8 = £114

If we look at this in a purely business sense - as, say, a mobile phone company might regard this information - we know that each year we shall lose a few customers (members), so we are interested in the average period we keep them and in the income (or, technically, the 'net present value') over that period.

The typical membership profile of a club shows that once members have tried croquet and decide to join a club, most then stay for a very long time (as one of our respondents put it "for 10, 15 or 20 years or until they die!"). Our calculations, taking into account all reasons for resigning from a club, show an

average period of membership of 8-10 years.

However, let us be conservative and take into account only the first five years of membership, but, for simplicity, ignore inflation and the cost of money (technically the 'discount rate'). Five years of an average financial benefit of £114 pa gives us £570. This is a crude but justifiable calculation for the value of a new member to a typical club. Perhaps Tony Fathers' £3000 advertisement campaign bringing in ten new members would not be bad value after all....

The value of this data

But, what is the practical use of this analysis? First and foremost it is to be hoped that clubs will take on board just how valuable new members can be. Not all have a proper recruitment drive each year, not all have a committee member specifically responsible for recruitment, and certainly many are not prepared to invest significantly - either money or time - in recruitment activities that will yield this massive return. For instance, how many clubs are putting aside a weekend in the Spring to borrow the CA mini-carpet? How many will offer members a significant incentive for introducing a friend who subsequently joins?

Let us delve a little deeper. Marketing activities do not directly produce members; they produce enquiries. Then there is a conversion rate, of enquiries to members, which depends upon many factors, not least the welcome they are given, the quality of coaching and how well new members are integrated into the mainstream club.

In our survey we found a wide range in the ratio of enquiries to joiners - from 30% to 70%! It is notable how well those with a high conversion rate manage their enquiries. Those that do not generally have a good reason; for instance: "we cannot find anyone who is prepared to take on coaching". Well, if a new member is worth £570 why not hire a coach to run weekly sessions? It might cost, say, £500 in a season. So what, if it brings in three, five or ten new members?

Then, some clubs still adhere to this strange practice of charging a 'joining fee', on top of the first year's subscription. When one secretary was asked for its justification his answer was just: "we have always done it". Isn't about time we dismantled barriers to recruiting new members?

The overall conclusions to this exercise are that it will pay clubs to re-examine their attitude to recruitment, to re-evaluate - in the light of our findings - the financial benefit of each new member and to become more business-like in the execution of their marketing activities.

Publications available from the CA Shop

- Know the Game £4.95
- Croquet - The Skills of the Game by Bill Lamb £10
- Croquet by John Solomon £9
- Plus One On Time by Don Gaunt £10
- Expert Croquet Tactics by Keith Wylie £14
- Croquet Management by Gaunt & Wheeler £11.50
- Croquet Coaching Manual £11.50
- The Principles of Handicapping by Bill Lamb £2.50
- Challenge & Gilbey book by Alan Oldham £3
- Tissot 'Croquet Girl' all purpose cards, 8 inc. envelopes £4.50

All prices include P&P to UK addresses

C.A. NEWS

Cheltenham Win the 2000 Millennium Award Auckland Win the 2000 Townsend Shame About the Apps Heley

The Millennium Award.

Cheltenham and Sussex County applied to become the first winner of the Millennium Award. It was a very difficult choice for the Development Committee to make.

The key criterion for the Award was to assess which club had made the best contribution to the C.A. and the sport during 1999 and 2000. The applications demonstrated the immense contribution both clubs make to croquet. The major and regular tournaments, the coaching events and the support both clubs gave to other clubs and their Federations made the choice difficult. Cheltenham was finally voted the club to receive the Award, but Sussex was not seen as a loser – both were winners, though, in the end we had only one Award.

Cheltenham will retain the new Millennium Shield for two years and receive an inscribed plaque to keep, plus a cash award of £100.

The Townsend Award.

With six applications – Ashby, Enfield, Rother Valley, Woking, Woodhall Spa and Auckland competition was gratifyingly strong, with several outstanding contenders.

The key criterion was which club had made the greatest advancement in its development in the years 1999 and 2000. Two clubs in particular – Ashby and Woking have impressive development plans underway, but their completion lies in 2001 and 2002. Woodhall Spa has probably the most comprehensive schools development programme in the land from a base of three short-lawns. The two outstanding development achievements in 1999/2000 were by Rother Valley and Auckland. Rother Valley, formed as Fittleworth in 1994, opened a new 2-lawn site in May 2000, with a membership of 26. Auckland, formed in 1998, with small lawns in Auckland Castle, had to re-locate and now have two lawns, and a membership of 40. Auckland was the club voted to receive the year 2000 Townsend Award.

Auckland will retain the Townsend Trophy for two years and receive an inscribed plaque plus a cash award of £100.

The Apps Heley Award.

Sadly, none of the clubs with three or four lawns who qualify to apply for the Apps Heley Award applied.

Croquet Association Grants

The Development Committee at the meeting on the 10th February 2001 approved the following grant applications –

Southport. A £500 club-grant to assist with the club's programme of developing into a 12-lawn club.

Schools Development Grants

Woodhall Spa Club
Himley Club

Grants approved for Gordon School, Surrey, and Brighton College through the S.E. Federation and Woking Club.

Kiwi-type sets for schools have been allocated to Woodhall Spa and

Budleigh Salterton.

Lottery Update

Sussex County has re-applied for a lottery grant following the rejection of their first application.

Blewbury has applied for a capital grant for their planned development of a new 2-lawn site.

Holderness – a Yorkshire club which used to be called Hornsea has received an "Awards for All" lottery grant of about £3,500 to establish a new lawn. The rather remarkable feature is that the club has only 8 members! If they can obtain a lottery grant, then why not many more clubs?

Auckland has applied for an "Awards for All" grant to cover the cost of a mini-carpet.

Why is it that so few southern clubs are applying for "Awards for All" lottery grants? Perhaps they are but their success or failure is not being reported.

Bill Sidebottom, Chairman of Development Committee

Marketing & Publicity

1. New Chairman

By the time you read this I will have retired as Chairman, handing over to my successor Jonathan Isaacs at the marketing meeting on 3 February. Jon I know will do a great job.

2. Club Membership

"You keep banging on, Tony", a croquet friend said to me the other day, "about membership. Why do clubs need more members? Why can't we stay as we are?" Part of the answer is that, on average, clubs lose 10% of their members every year. The 27 clubs who returned their membership questionnaire lost 122 members out of their starting total of 1,244, a loss of 9.8%. Assuming this performance were the same for the other 90 CA clubs (and why should it be different?) then in six years our national figure of 4000 club members would have declined to 2,000. Many clubs would have ceased, the sport itself would scarcely be viable. But of course most clubs do recruit and obtain more members. The 27 clubs mentioned above recruited 251 new members (+20%). Even after their loss of 122 members this left a net increase of 129, over 10% from the beginning to the end of the season. Assuming this performance were the same for the other 90 CA clubs, then in six years our national figure of 4,000 club members will have increased to over 7,000. This seems to me a worthwhile target of itself: so many more people playing and enjoying our splendid game. But in addition it will bring more money into the sport, money which could be spent on improving the facilities, mainly lawns, which in many clubs are barely adequate. This leads me to

3 Plans for 2001

We have no delusions of grandeur in the CA. we know that national advertising does not work, and even that national PR (though important in keeping our sport in front of the public) actually generates very few "leads" for clubs. We know in fact that the only way club membership will increase is through the efforts of club committees. This is not to be negative, leave alone pessimistic. It is simple realism.

What we can do, and are doing, is to tell clubs about the successes of other clubs. Two tried and tested ideas which we hope will feature in the activities of every club in 2001 are:

- the mini carpet
- U3A (University of Third Age)

If any club official wants further information about either or both these procedures, I am at the end of a telephone as is Jon Isaacs. And finally,

4. The Format of the Game

Five years ago Roehampton played no golf-croquet, no one ball, hardly any 14 point, virtually no planned winter games activity. Then we had 15 croquet members.

Today play all versions of the game. We have 40 croquet members.

Out of our 40 members about a dozen play only golf and one ball. Their view is that they enjoy these versions of the game because they are quick, conceptually simple, and require no sitting out. I am not knocking the 26 point game I am saying that if clubs wish to recruit and retain more members then more attention needs to be given to one ball, 14 point, and golf-croquet versions of the game.

TOURNAMENT REPORTS

Hunstanton Annual Tournament 26-29 August 2000

Report by Andrew Davies

Twenty six players, including 6 ladies, convened on Saturday for four days of the usual combination of exhilaration, heartache, frustration and fun that us croquet addicts seem to enjoy. The weather held off better than the forecasters led us to believe with several showers, but nothing too serious. The lawns were in excellent condition, thanks to the hard work of Geoff Race the groundsman.

The highlights included Justin Davies' victory during the sudden death period after time, by peeling his ball through rover without realising that he had won. John Reeve won a game from three clips on peg and one on hoop one with a twelve hoop break to peg out. Several times the comment was heard from spectators that "they wished they could do that shot with both hands" when watching Jonathan Toye (who plays with one arm). Bryan Saddington, who only started to play this season, won the D block and was runner up to Andrew Davies in the Egyptian big handicap event, a notable achievement. Malcolm O'Connell achieved the only two triple peels of the weekend including his first straight triple, with a highly ambitious and successful ending including a jump clean over his peeler in the jaws of rover. He won the A block despite losing the final game to George Noble, who attempted a triple peel on the opponent but cross-wired himself at 3-back. A couple of turns later he completed the task and won by 8 points.

Tunbridge Wells Advanced 9 - 10 September 2000

Report by Mick Belcham

As there's no such thing as a generic croquet player, I have tried to report on the happenings in Tunbridge Wells with a little bit of something for everybody. For those wanting the facts, start at the top. For those wanting commentary, a little further down. For those interested in events off the lawns, further down still. And for those simply wanting scuttle-but, ignore all the boring stuff and go straight to the raunchy bit at the end.

Headline 1: John Low Clear Winner at Tunbridge Wells

John Low of Southwick was the clear winner here on Sunday, winning 5 of his 6 games against some very strong competition. The battle for second and third places was fierce. Don Cornelius (Newport), Paul Castell (Preston Park) and Tim Wilkins (Surbiton) all had 4 games and had all "beaten each other". On points, though, Tim became a clear second with Paul just ahead of Don for third.

Headline 2: The Difference a Day Makes!

John Low must have slept well on Saturday night, though I can't think why. His three games on Saturday were hardly those of a winner in waiting. He squeezed by Nick Harris of Norwich +1 on time, he saw off Dave Mundy of Medway (just) and then succumbed to the maestro skills of John Greenwood of the host club to wrap up the day. But there he was on Sunday morning positively bursting with enthusiasm, sinking Don Cornelius, Tim Wilkins and Paul Castell by ever increasing margins. What's your secret, John. Was it a good night's sleep - or something

more intoxicating?

Headline 3: International Relations Take Centre Stage

The town of Tunbridge Wells has never been known for its cosmopolitan outlook but on Saturday its Croquet Club excelled themselves by playing host to two visitors from across the pond - to be more precise from Minnesota ("Land of 10,000 Lakes"), US of A. While John Low was slugging it out on the lawns in front of them, a number of players and even the manager himself (Peter Howell) took time out to explain something of the intricacies of the game to these two passers by. Perhaps it all fell on deaf ears however. The concept of double-banking visibly shocked them ("We've never tried that with baseball, have we hon?"). But they were duly appreciative of all the attention they got. I only hope that they realised that they were watching Croquet, not Cricket which to them is probably an equally inexplicable sport.

Headline 4: "My House is Burning Down!"

Opinion is seriously divided in the Croquet community this week concerning an event that took place at Tunbridge Wells on Sunday. Mick Belcham of the host club had the audacity to ask Sam Symonds of Surbiton, his first opponent of the day if the clock could be stopped while he checked that his house was not on fire. While Sam accepted the validity of the request with good grace (having been the first to notice the billows of smoke on the horizon) there are others that see such an excuse as setting an ugly precedent. Will this mean that those players who are not home-owners will be at a disadvantage? And does this mean that players from a Home Club have more opportunities for calling for time-outs? This discussion is set to run for some time.

Headline 5: "Player Returns to Lawn of High Embarrassment"

Of all the players visiting Tunbridge Wells for the September



A tournament in progress at Wrest Park.

Advanced Tournament, one particularly had every reason to remember his previous visit to the club. With crystal clarity!

Imagine the scene. An inter-club friendly 5 or so years ago. A lovely day. Pleasant company. No problems. And you're a high-bisquer (as I was then) duly awed by the class of the opposition and the meticulousness of their play. This particular visitor (no names, no pack-drill!) was especially impressive when he lined up for, I think, a Rover peel. He backed up the centre of the lawn towards the peg to check his line and stopped and then crouched down.

The only sound to break the silence that followed was a single concerted intake of breath from the several spectators of the game. (Contrary to the player's own memory of the moment, none in fact guffawed).

When he stood up again - quickly I might add - and turned around to view what had caused his discomfort, he was astonished to see that the top of the peg was now missing. We could see it, but he couldn't! I'm sure I wasn't the only one there who had a tough time resisting the

impulse to follow the old pantomime routine and call out "It's behind you!". However, after a few fruitless searches around his feet he came to the obvious conclusion concerning the whereabouts of the offending piece of furniture, retrieved it and replaced it in its correct position from which he had so heroically extracted it.

Suffice it to say I was glad to see him fit and well this weekend back in Tunbridge Wells - and still attempting Rover peels!

PS. Peter, thanks for a good tournament - a grand couple of days

Southwick Advanced September 30 / October 1

Report by Nick Harris

The wide range of comestibles on offer for lunch at Southwick was on a par with the weather they also provided -excellent on both days. Firm hoops and beautifully prepared lawns encouraged good croquet from the 27 players entered for the seeded Advanced Knockout Tournament.

Paul Smith, undaunted by being drawn in the top half of the draw, won +26TP in the first round, +11 in the second and came back +3 in two turns from 4 back and 4 against Peg and Rover to go through to the semifinal against the Number 1 seed, Dave Kibble. (Round 1, bye; Round 2, +22; Round 3, +26TP). Here Paul, despite only managing only 1 peel of his TP, took full advantage of a couple of Dave's errors to win +16 and prevent a repeat of last year's all "ibble" final.

In the final Paul got a ball round to 4 back but Lionel Tibble, the number 2 seed, having won through +26, +17, +6 and +13, continued on his winning ways with a +17TP.

Simon Tuke's astute management of the wide range of Handicaps in the Consolation Egyptian gave everyone winning opportunities resulting in a 3-way tie between your reporter, John Lowe and David Kibble. David sneaked the resulting one ball play-off with a 7 hoop break to 2 back and then finished from 4 back.

Three-legged Race 2000 October 6 - 8

Report by Roy Wallis

It's not often that the result, Poland 2 - Ireland 1 is recorded in Eastbourne, but so it was when Kay Poland beat Osmund Ireland, both of the home club in the single-ball match on the final day of the three-day tournament held at Compton on October 6-8. The event, called the Three-legged Race Tournament because players enter as a pair and play three different forms of croquet each day, a doubles, two singles and two sets of three single-ball matches, is the closing fixture of the season. The format was devised by Roy Wallis, who managed the tournament and provided the trophies, made from two halves of a croquet ball. Despite continuous rain on the middle day, the full programme of 135 games was completed. Great relief was felt by all that the dismal weather forecast for the last day was totally wrong and players enjoyed a pleasant, sunny day. The trophies were carried off by Celia Steward & Martin Leach, while the runners-up position was shared by David Mundy & Paul Miles and Mike Hammelev & Hugh Smorfit. A highlight of the weekend was two attempted sextuples by David Harrison-Wood which so nearly succeeded. The format of the tournament, the firm hoops and the good condition of the lawns contributed to the declared enjoyment of the participants, as did Hugh's dog, Meg, who spent the whole weekend vainly trying to catch the nimble Saffrons squirrels. Meg, it is believed, has now signed up for evening classes in tree-climbing.

Northampton Handicap 7 - 8 October 2000

Report by Owen Bryce

The Two Day Open Handicap Tournament held on the lawns at St. Andrews Hospital over the week end of October 7th/8th attracted 19 contestants from as far as Budleigh Salterton and Colchester. Eight members of Northampton Croquet Club also played in one day of non stop pouring rain and the next in good windless sunshine.

A closely run contest took the form of two groups playing in Egyptian blocks. Jane Evans and Tim King from Ashby de la Zouche were runners up in their respective blocks while Ian Mantle from Lechworth and James



The quiet surroundings of Northampton

Skelton of Kettering were winners who fought a not very close battle in which James Skelton came out overall winner, this for the second year running.

High spot of the Tournament was provided by two shots from Ian Mantle taken after Lionel Tibble had pegged out his blue ball. Ian shot his black at Rover from just beside Penultimate to make Rover, leaving him with a longer than comfortable shot at peg. To sensational applause he made it,

As James Skelton is a member of Northampton Croquet Club the prize of £20 to winners from outside clubs will be held over for next year's open handicap tournament, a total of £40

Evelyn Martin from Ashby de la Zouche and Jean Birdseye from Budleigh Salterton were among the players.

The contest was managed by the Club's chairman Lionel Tibble with assistance from Nick Evans and Owen Bryce.

New Editor of "The Croquet Gazette"

The Croquet Association seeks a new Editor to take over from Gail Curry from the January 2002 edition, after a planned overlap covering the September and November issues in 2001. The job description and benefits, which include provision on loan of a suitable PC and software, are available from Bruce Rannie, Chairman of the Magazine Committee, to whom initial enquiries in confidence should be made, to bruce.rannie@tinyworld.co.uk or by telephoning on 0191 2529739

With the setting up of the CA News pages on the CA Website, the new Editor may have the opportunity of developing the CA's flagship Magazine, by building on the features introduced by Gail, like the profile interviews, and other ideas, using the pages that previously have been taken up with news copy.

So, if you have the writing and publishing flair, not necessarily with experience so far, and want to take the Gazette onwards and upwards, please put your name, and ideas, forward before Easter. Detailed discussions will take place during the early summer, so that the CA Executive Committee can confirm the agreement with the new Editor before the end of July 2001.