

The Croquet Gazette

A man in white croquet attire stands on a green lawn, holding a mallet. A croquet ball and a sticket are visible on the grass. The background features a dense green hedge and trees.

Issue 273 ~ May 2001

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LETTERS NEWS & INFORMATION TOURNAMENT ROUND-UP

TALKING CROQUET EQUIPMENT NEWS SPORTS INJURIES



J A Q U E S

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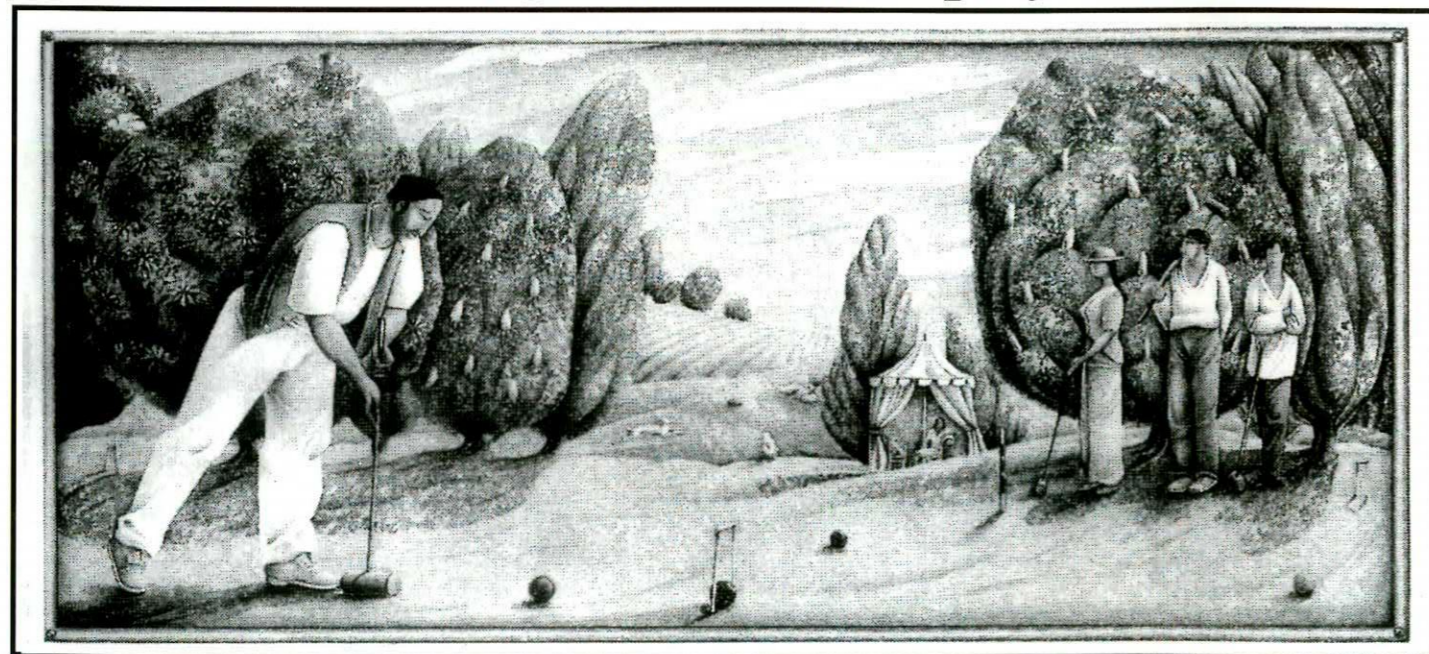


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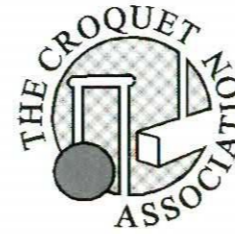
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Specific Questions & Queries

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

Copy Details

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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



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Front Cover:

There's another fine mess I've got my self into.
(Photo by Northern Humour Press)

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Disclaimer

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

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CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

Winter has been a busy time for me.



Following the disappointment of my talk to the South West Federation being cancelled, it was good to arrive at Surbiton and find a gathering of some 50 people for the South East Federation meeting. A full agenda had been planned with the AGM first, chaired by an urbane Richard Hilditch. This was followed by yours truly, then lunch. In the afternoon Bill Arliss talked about Golf Croquet matters then Stephen Mulliner about the new laws.

A week later I headed north and east to the East Midlands meeting near Nottingham. On this occasion, the event, chaired by Lawrence Whittaker, was a special one just for me, so I had rather more time to give the talk. As a consequence the discussion was more lively.

The week after, I went to London for a Management Committee meeting - just for a change!

A short respite, then a marathon trip to the north. We (Faith & I) set off on the Wednesday 7th March for Newcastle-upon-Tyne. It was a long journey - 280 miles - where I was to give my presentation to Croquet North the next day. This time it was not a special meeting but one of a series which C.N. hold during the winter. Derek Trotman officiated. Before that, however, we were treated to a very nice meal. I than had to give some prizes out, followed by the talk. There were about 45 people there and again it went well, with quite a few questions.

On Friday we travelled from the north-east to the north-west, about 160 miles directly but rather more for us as we took the scenic route. On Saturday we made our way to Culcheth Sports Hall where the meeting was. Another good meeting, the liveliest so far. About 35 people were there. Again the format was different, it was their Spring meeting so my talk was followed by business, chaired by Neil Williams. Apparently I was the first Chairman to visit the Federation in all of its 24 years. I suspect this might well be true for other Federations. After the Federation business, we had lunch and made our way home.

A few days at home then off to Winchester. It was a highly amusing arrival. As I walked in the Chairman, Jolyan Kay said "Are you anything to do with croquet?!" Nigel Graves and Alan Oldham, who were there found this most amusing! Well, he hadn't seen me before!

After that was settled we sat down for the rest of the meeting and then had lunch. At 2.0 I

started my talk. There was a bit of a hiatus when a lady expressed herself dissatisfied with the golf situation but I understand that Bill Arliss has now spoken to her. After that the meeting settled down again and went quite well. About 20 were there which wasn't bad for such a small federation.

The Eastern Federation meeting was at a pub a few miles south of Cambridge. They held their AGM followed by my talk. About 45 were there. Another fairly lively meeting, chaired by Judy Anderson.

After all that the next weekend was a Council meeting - roll on the season!
Don Gaunt

EDITORIAL

At the penultimate issue. Bliss.

My successor, lucky chap, is James Hawkins, and I am sure you will all wish him well and support him in his efforts to produce future issues of the Gazette. I hope to persuade James to promote some of his ideas and the future of the Gazette in the next issue.

In the March issue of the Gazette I asked if readers could follow the breakbuilder series featured in the coaching section with or without diagrams. Unfortunately the response has not been conclusive. However, my casting vote says that they probably would benefit from diagrams, but I need someone to create said diagrams. So if you can draw some simple line diagrams either using Word, or neatly with a black fine liner pen, then please get in touch. I would happily forward the series in batches for you to illustrate.

In recent issue there has been much talk of the '14 point game', but no real clarification of which version of the 14 point game is being discussed. There are after all two distinctly different versions, one played under advanced rules with lifts/contact after hoops 3 and 4, as well as the handicap version of the game. So far no correspondents have made clear which version of the 14 point game is being discussed, and I believe that this is an important omission given the differing nature of the games.

At the end of the day and all of the discussions what is important is that all players have a format(s) of the game that they wish to play available to them, what they don't want is force feeding with forms of the game that they don't want to play.

Gail Curry

~ OBITUARY ~

Enid Ross - Sussex County C.C.

It is with much sadness that "Southwick" records the death on 6th February, of Enid Ross in her 90th year.

She joined the Club in 1978 and very soon made herself noticed by getting involved in all aspects of club life. By 1982 she had been elected to the management committee and then immediately to the Catering sub-committee, where almost single-handedly she provided lunches and teas over two years for tournaments. Since that time she had been involved with all aspects of catering and many other supportive activities that clubs rely on to survive. In spite of an accident in 1999 and two replacement hip operations, she was still helping in the gardens this winter!

In the mid 1980's, she recognised that both our main buildings were deteriorating rapidly whereupon she planned a renovation programme and set up a building fund to finance it, then negotiating with builders and supervising their work. Always generous where the Club was concerned her final contribution to the building programme came this winter when she paid for the materials to renew the cladding at the rear of the pavilion.

In the early 1990's she re-started regular sessions of golf croquet, particularly for beginners which has been responsible in part for our increasing membership and now leaves the club well placed to take a prime role in the recent upsurge of Golf Croquet. She qualified as a CA coach and has undertaken a major role in the coaching of newcomers and beginners, usually on a one to one basis.

Her unique contribution to the Club was recognised at the last Club AGM when she was elected an honorary life member; followed last November with the award of the newly instigated CA Diploma.

A memorial Service was held at the Church of the Holy Cross, Hove on March 5th when over 40 members joined family and friends. This was followed by a lunch for over 100 guests at the clubhouse generously provided by her daughter Gilian Fitzhugh and sons Peter and David Ross. It is hoped that next winter a third substantial building can be constructed in her memory to replace two smaller ones and provide workshop facilities, in addition to much needed storage space.

While thanking Gilian, Peter and David for the moving memorial service and a splendid lunch, the club president, John Solomon spoke for all the club members when he said "Enid will never be forgotten."

NEWS & INFORMATION



Croquet Painting On Show and Sale at Christies

Christie's the auctioneers are to hold a sale of Victorian paintings on 12th June. The star of the sale is a painting by Geroge Elgar Hicks, titled 'The Croquet Match', which is dated 1864. The painting, along with others will be on display to the public prior to the sale. For those who may be interested in purchasing the painting the estimated sale price is £60,000 - £80,000

Juniors/Student Development Plan

The CA is very keen to promote the development of juniors with potential. Eventually we want to see some new faces in our Great Britain team. I have the responsibility for organising our activities. The CA has allocated a budget to help with travel and accommodation associated with this development. A number of top players including Robert Fulford, David Maugham and Martin Murray have agreed to help with coaching and development. It is our intention to hold events either coaching days or special tournaments at locations and dates convenient to our juniors.

Our first step is to identify juniors/students who already play the game and are keen to improve. We aim to arrange a number of events during the summer. So if that sounds like you or if you know of someone who fits this description please contact David Openshaw david@open123.demon.co.uk or 01494680184.

Credit Card Facilities Now Available at the CA Shop

The CA shop can now accept all major credit cards for purchases from the shop. NOTE This facility ONLY applies to commercial purchases from the shop and subscriptions from overseas members.

Search for New Photo for HomePage of Web Site

New croquet "action" shot required for home

page of the CA Web site. Submissions must be made electronically to webmaster@croquet.org.uk Format should be jpeg and image size not greater than 450 pixels wide. Prize of £20 CA shop vouchers for selected image.

Fixture Book Correction

Sussex County Croquet Club. August Tournament. Page 83
Event 4. Mixed Handicap Doubles. Combined handicap will be 6 and above and not 10 as presently listed.

Attention Club Secretaries

Will all club secretaries who use the individual club page on the web site for their club, please ensure that the details are up to date, particularly where you have shown subscriptions.

Disciplinary Matters

The Tournament Committee have received a report that a competitor in the 2000 Spencer - Eil Eights Tournament left the event without completing his last game thus necessitating the whole of the results from his second series of matches being eliminated from the competition. Having considered the report and a letter of explanation from the competitor, the Committee decided that he was knowingly in breach of Condition 7 of the event (Competitors must make themselves available for all hours of play and no leave can be given in any circumstances). A ban from the 2001 Eights events has therefore been imposed and the CA Selection Committee who make the selections for these events has been informed of the decision.

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Charterhouse Honours John Solomon

The museum at Charterhouse School has a new exhibit recording the unparalleled achievements in the sport of croquet of one of its former pupils, the President of the Croquet Association, John Solomon. An alert visitor to the school had remembered from a past *Croquet Gazette* that John is a Chartusian. The Curator of the museum, Dr David Holloway, readily agreed to his suggestion that a Solomon exhibit should be created alongside that of another famous old boy, Peter May, the former England star batsman and Captain.

The Solomon exhibit includes a 1947 photograph of the then 15 year old John Solomon as a member of his house cricket team captained by the afore-mentioned Peter May. Dr Holloway is now enthusiastically arranging for croquet to be added to the school's sporting curriculum with the support of the South East Federation and the Guildford & Godalming Croquet Club.

John Solomon with Dr David Holloway, Curator of the museum at Charterhouse School (open to members of the public by appointment Tel: 01483 421006)



Enterprise Fund

At the last count there are some sixty croquet players on twenty CA committees and working parties who beaver away helping to run our sport. They do a great job but don't claim to have all the answers when we come to think about how best the CA can help its members - clubs as well as individuals - in the future.

Recognizing this, Council is looking for new ideas, and the people who would like to help put them into practice. Initially £8,000 has been allocated to the Enterprise Fund for new projects and, if existing know-how will help, our committees are available to work alongside those who volunteer. We will do our very best to put the emphasis on fast track action, not lengthy meetings.

The first step is to pick up the phone, e-mail or even send a letter to the Secretary, Nigel Graves, outlining your idea and how you would like to get involved. Do it now! Whether you are an individual, a club or Federation committee, or any other group, tell us about the idea that you may have been nurturing for some time, thinking no-one in the CA would be interested. Tel/fax 020 7736 3148, caoffice@croquet.org.uk, or The Croquet Association, c/o The Hurlingham Club, Ranelagh Gardens, London SW6 3PR. Nigel will point you in the right direction so we can give you a swift response and get things moving.

To trigger your ideas . . .

Anything that will help croquet (all variations) to develop, with priority on ideas for the sport as a whole, not those specific to one club, such as: Tournaments and other events, coaching, coaches, referees, managers, lawns, equipment, club facilities, new clubs, membership, recruitment

and retention (clubs and the CA), sponsorship, marketing, communications, publications, web sites, commercial activities, administration (in clubs, Federations and the CA).

An outline proposal is all that is required. And little ideas are just as valuable as big ones.

Handicap Card Changes

At a recent meeting of Council, it was ratified that the 14 point game for handicap and level play matches, but not short croquet, should be included on the handicap card.

The index change will be 5 points for the handicap matches, and on a sliding scale for level play as detailed below:

Steps	Higher Wins	Lower Wins
0	5	5
1 - 2	6	4
3 - 4	7	3
5 - 6	8	2
7+	9	1

The winner's index increases by the value in the table, the loser's index decreases by the same amount.

The Handicap Committee is reviewing the guide lines for handicappers and a survey of their locations is being carried out, so that there will be an adequate number in all areas. In the meantime, it should be pointed out that all Clubs should ensure that their handicapper check the status of all players at least once a season. 'Bandits' are more a reflection on their club and its handicapper than on themselves.

It's Been A Long Winter

It is ironic really, that during January and February, Cheltenham Club members spent quite a bit of time raising money to send to Hunstanton to help with the rebuilding of their Club following an arson attack. In March, the large pavilion in the centre of Cheltenham's grounds known



as the Bridge Room, was attacked on two succeeding Friday nights. On the first occasion the windows were broken and on the second, the structure was set on fire. All that remains at the time of writing is a charred skeleton with a few roof tiles clinging to unsafe roof timbers and occasionally blowing off in the direction of people playing on lawns 2 and 7. We are still anxious over the safety of our main pavilions and the police are taking the incident very seriously. The 17th March was earmarked for a seasonal working party to carry out necessary maintenance and repair work around the club, instead, we spent the morning picking up the million shards of shattered roof tiles which had exploded over lawns 2,7, 1 and 8.

The Bridge Room was put up early last century as a temporary structure and remained largely unaltered until 1994, when it was deemed to be unsafe. Club labour helped with the dismantling and some materials

Continued on page 10

Letters . . .



Dear Editor

In response to Wee Johnnies puzzle, issue 272. Funnily enough I had this exact situation happen with me, Chris Clarke and a chap called John.

I won the lottery but, being hopeless at Maths, choose to go first (I once tried to buy a Maths degree with a lawn mower). John had next choice and chose to go third.

Nervous at the thought of all that money, I missed. Chris then knocked over his target and John was eliminated. John handed over his 100 cursing his luck and left without witnessing the rest of the competition. I realised at this point that my wrist had been strained last shot and we agreed a draw.

Come to think of it, I never did ask Chris why he winked at me at the start of the competition.

Robert Fulford

Wee Johnnies Answer

(synopsis) : 3 croquet players have a wager. Two hit 90% of the time, one 50%

On the way to the lawns Chris and Robert have identical thoughts.

"This shouldn't be too hard. Obviously I had better, if I have the chance, remove the other good player first - probably 50-50 - then deal with Gail (almost certainly). Since I stand to gain £280.00 and only lose £180 the odds would suggest that I will gain overall."

Gail, however has been analysing the situation.

"If I win the toss, who do I shoot at? If I hit either bisque then the other player, who is a good shot, will most likely (95% chance) hit mine and I will lose. It therefore would seem better if I miss! let the other two fight it out and then have first shot at the winner."

Let the wars begin....

Chris and Robert start shooting at each other's bisque. Eventually one of them hits their target. The probability of either player winning (by symmetry) is 1 in 2 (0.5).

Gail now comes into the fray and the final shots are made. Due to Gail's strategy she will always shoot first. The chance of her winning = p(Gail hits) + p(Gail misses, Oppo misses, Gail Hits) + p(Gail misses, Oppo misses, Gail misses, Oppo misses, Gail hits) ... etc.

Working this out mathematically p(Gail wins) = 0.5 + (0.5 * 0.1) * 0.5 + (0.5 * 0.1) * (0.5 * 0.1) * 0.5 + ... This is a geometric formula. If we let S = total probability, A = 1st item in the series and R = common ratio then S = A/(1-R)

Then S = 0.5/(1-.5*.1) = 0.5/ (.95) = 0.526 (approx)

Thus Gail would expect to win just over half the time and Robert/ Chris to win just less than a quarter.

If the total stake were £360.00 then Gail should have paid in £189.48 and Robert and Chris £85.26 So Gail expects to be a BIG winner - she only paid in £100. A good way to earn money to buy Guinness...

Wee Johnnie

(Just as well betting in croquet is now illegal then! Ed)

The 14-Point Game

Dear Editor,

I read our President's report in the last issue with some interest and found his comment on the 14-point game remarkable. If players can't play 3 games in a day then they should not be forced to, personally I like as many games as possible and find the time spent waiting for lawns at handicap tournaments an issue - if lawns are occupied by players who would rather not be there then there is a more obvious solution than to invent a new game!

Managers at Cheltenham have collected masses of data on tournament games and have used it to determine methods to shorten games based upon the sum of particular handicaps in each game rather than prescribing the same short game for all.

In a regular handicap tournament, an 18-handicap player will play a scratch player and receive 18 bisques, and then they play a fellow 18-handicap and have to struggle around with no bisques, usually until time is called. Games only take too long when two high handicap players play each other with no bisques, that's inevitable, and shortening the game for all other players will make no difference to that. I would rather see more use of full bisque play, which has proved unpopular for no clear reason.

Seeing two handicap-18s playing a full game with no bisques is not croquet and no amount of fiddling with the number of hoops to be run will make a difference - give them some bisques so they can set up breaks, play the game as intended and get it finished in a reasonable amount of time.

John went on to discuss the triple peel as if every A-class player were doing them with eyes closed. This is simply not the case. Only the top few players in the world regularly finish with a

triple peel - look at the statistics collected by Chris Williams, made available on the CA web site, rather than listening to the bar room gossip. The straight triple is rare and even more rarely worth the risk to the result. The 14-point game is likely to remove peeling turns from all but the most advanced level.

The 14-point game does not have a place for handicap play other than as a shortened game for two high handicaps if you must condemn them to play without bisques. It may have a place as a decider at the very highest level where the possibility of breaking down in a long break is almost zero, i.e. for the top 5-10 players in the world - hardly worth even discussing I would say.

John also mentioned that the naming of the second six hoops is confusing for the casual spectator - so don't name them! I have always found a description of the courses as "round the outside and up through the middle, then back round the outside the other way and up through the middle" quite adequate.

Yours sincerely

Dave Kibble

Time for practice now

Dear Gail

I have played for five seasons, have a handicap of five, prefer to play advanced events (normally six each year) believe myself to be competitive and am no longer in the first flush of youth!

It's no fun to drive to a tournament and have no opportunity to warm up before the first shot of the day. No other sport has a similar culture. Time taken in warm up is maybe at a premium, but the games might well be speeded up by the loss of the initial attrition period which I have experienced in most tournaments. I should like to see practice periods, strictly controlled in all tournaments, with starting times adjusted sufficiently to limit impact on total playing time. Initial warm up only

I have been surprised by the advocacy of the fourteen point game, apparently on the grounds of the time sometimes taken in playing three games a day in tournaments. It seems to me that the shape of the game is destroyed for the benefit of speed. One of the great aspects for me of croquet is the sustained concentration required and the exciting opportunities which present themselves in the swing of the pendulum between the adversaries. I suppose much of one's view must hang on the attitude taken to competitiveness.

No one could have objection to the fourteen point game as such - it is in the context of tournament play that I would find it a disappointing substitute for the present format. More and quicker games will only cater for some competitors since many are ready to play three games, usually within less than three and a half hours each as indicated in the article!!

Yours Sincerely,

Tony Doughty, Bath and Cheltenham

The Excelite Cup

I recently acquired a silver croquet trophy of rose bowl design. Engraved on one of the eight petals: EXCELITE CUP ESSEX COUNTY CROQUET CLUB ROMFORD OPEN SINGLES OCTOBER 1905

I was intrigued and asked on the Nottingham croquet board for information. Thanks to John Prince, Michael Heap, and especially William Prichard and D.M.C. Prichard's The History of Croquet, the following was unearthed.

In 1905 the Eclectic Company, makers of the Excelite composition croquet ball, sponsored a trophy for the open singles at this short lived club tournament. The winner of the trophy Miss. M. Averay Jones was a tournament player active in England at the turn of the 19th century and into the early part of the 20th century. She was a Silver Medalist (awarded to finalists and semi-finalists in all open events with 16 entries) in 1897, Women's Champion of the South of England Championship in 1899 and runner up in the same event in 1901. We know she won the Excelite Cup for the Open Singles at Romford in 1905. I am sure more information about her accomplishments is available in Lawn Tennis and Croquet.

In 1898 the composition balls were on the market, competing with the less durable boxwood balls. I am sure as part of a marketing strategy the Eclectic Company must have sponsored other Excelite Cups in England. Are any more to be found?

In 1906 composition balls became compulsory in all CA events. The Eclectic Company's Excelite ball came in two versions; coarse milling similar to the present ball or less coarse (almost smooth) with fine milling. We don't know which version was used at Romford in 1905.

A few other facts about the Excelite croquet ball, from an advertisement on the back pages of Modern Croquet Tactics by C.D. Locock, The Holmesdale Press, London, 1907. It was the ball used in 1906 in the following tournaments: Peels Memorials; The Open Championships; Challenge Cups; Gold Medals; Beddow Champion Cup and at all leading tournaments.

One final bit of croquet nonsense: The Isthmian Library published a series of books on various sports, No. XII published in 1899 being on croquet. It was written by Dr. Leonard B. Williams, the author of many books on medical matters. I happen to have acquired Miss Maud Drummond's personal signed copy. She had glued inside the front cover the obituary of the author. I have to quote from this obituary to give all of us a flavor of the eccentrics who were (still are?) part of croquet's history.

"As a public speaker he attracted attention by his dogmatic assertions. He declared that most people were grossly over-clothed, that high heels caused thick ankles, that tight neckwear was a curse, and that central heating and tobacco

were enemies of the human race.

He thought the nudist cult silly, traced the conduct of various historical personages to glandular defects, and lamented that at too many schools "sadistic, embittered mistresses were responsible for making girls unhappy by forcing them to play strenuous games."

Last year, in an outburst of fitness in middle age, he remembered that a man who was a "bald-headed, pot bellied, bibulous, gluttonous, smoke-sucking beast" deserved all he got and more in the way of gout, high blood-pressure, arthritis and a nagging wife.

Speaking of women, he condemned "the paint-bedizened, cocktailing, bridge-playing, smoking shapeless flounder who so often disfigures race meetings and the front row of the stalls."

They don't write obituaries like they used to!
Tremaine Arkley, U.S.A.

Is Your Club History Safe?

Dear Editor

The recent horrific fires at Hunstanton and Cheltenham clubs have, among other losses, caused the sad destruction of irreplaceable archive material - photographs and other mementos going dating back almost 100 years.

Whilst we all hope that there will be no further fire tragedies such as these clubs have suffered, it would be foolish not to take action to preserve other historic material that still survives in clubs around the country. To this end, I urge all clubs that own old photographs, books and other croquet memorabilia to protect it against fire and other damage.

Old photographs can be professionally copied- sometimes with an improvement of quality on the original - and it seems prudent to place the copy on show, keeping the original safely out of harm's way. It might be wise to remove other items of historic value and replace them with an alternative display, or even a photo of the original, which can then be kept safely by a bank or elsewhere by a member of the club.

The loss of any croquet material is a loss not just for the club concerned, but for all enthusiasts. We cannot afford to see our history destroyed by vandals who care nothing for it. Please take action soon!

Paul Campion

Indoor Croquet Success

Dear Editor

About a year ago, when Croquet North was showing an interest in winter croquet, I invited Tyneside C.C. and Belsay Hall C.C. committee members to visit Dalton Village Hall to assess its potential as an indoor centre for use by both Clubs. Opinion was favourable and with the help of Derek Trotman (Chairman of Croquet North), as Referee, I went ahead with a lottery application under the Millennium "Awards for All" scheme. In the consultations that took place it was eventually felt that the Application should go forward in the name of the Hall, whose

Constitution was known to be "safe", rather than in the name of one of the croquet clubs since there was uncertainty at that time about each of our Club Constitutions, particularly in respect of clauses about Membership and Dissolution. In the event it became clear we had made the right decision when in September last year the grant was awarded. Play commenced on the 18th of October 2000 and has continued weekly ever since.

At the moment there are four sessions of play over two days. Session 1 Association Croquet (Wednesday mornings) for players with a handicap of 12 and under; Session 2 (Association Croquet (Wednesday afternoons) for players with a handicap of 12 and over; Session 3 Coaching for Beginners (Thursday mornings) including local residents; and Session 4 Golf Croquet (Thursday afternoons).

Over the same period, an initial application made to the same fund, by another Croquet North club - Auckland C.C., the recently announced winners of the 2000 Townsend Award - was turned down by the lottery authorities on a constitutional point. I am pleased to say, however, that Auckland has succeeded with a second application and has taken the trouble to revise its constitution in consultation with the "Awards for All" scheme's local officers. Under Croquet North's current development plan we envisage that we could soon have a Winter Croquet Indoor Centre in the north of the region, at Dalton, and a similar centre with access to schools and the local community and, of course, user clubs in the south of the region, at Bishop Auckland.

John Grant

Development Officer, Croquet North.

Retention of Members

Dear Editor

I was interested to read in the Marketing committee's report that almost 10% of our membership was lost last year. I think the figure is fairly constant each year; and yet we have no idea why people leave! In the commercial world it's well known that it is considerably easier to retain than to recruit new customers, so why don't we apply the same logic to croquet?

Many clubs are able to recruit new members on an annual basis who stay 1-3 years and then disappear for no known reason - do we fail to coach them beyond beginner level? Is there something that could be done to make them more likely to stay?

I suggest that clubs make a concerted effort to collect these reasons - even if only from a few leavers - and pass them on to the marketing committee to look for patterns.

Yours sincerely

Dave Kibble

SPORTS INJURIES FOR CROQUET PLAYERS

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



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

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

5. JOINTS

Joints are the points around which all body movements take place. In addition to the major joints of the body, knee, shoulder, hip, elbow etc., there are very many smaller joints all essential to normal function and movement. In the spine, for example, there are four facet joint surfaces on each of the twenty four vertebrae, twenty four joints where ribs attach and twenty four "disc" joints. Quite a lot of joints to go wrong!

The body has many different types of joint, ranging from some that hardly move at all to very mobile joints such as the shoulder. The majority of joints in the body, those that move the most, are called synovial joints. This group includes all of the joints in the upper and lower limbs and the forty eight facet joints in the spinal column. Synovial joints are surrounded by a capsule that has a membrane lining called the synovium. This membrane secretes a fluid which lubricates and feeds the joint surfaces. On the ends of the bones, where they meet to form the joint, there is a lining called articular cartilage. When the joint moves this cartilage articulates with the cartilage on the other surface to produce smooth almost frictionless movements. (fig. 1.)

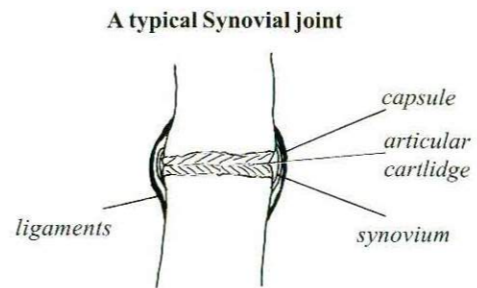


Fig. 1.

The two bones that form the joint have strong inelastic strap-like structures called ligaments holding the joint together and preventing unwanted movement. These ligaments are sometimes thickenings on the capsule and sometimes extra to it.

Joint Injuries

These fall into two main categories, acute and chronic. The acute injuries are those that damage the soft tissue of the joint, capsule, ligaments, tendons etc. and can happen at any time. A classic example is a twisted ankle. Chronic injuries are those that rupture, that cannot or have not been successfully repaired, or those that damage the articular surface. For example a fracture that damages the articular cartilage.

Acute Injuries

These fall into two further categories, those that happen as a result of a single incident (twisted ankle) and those that are a result of excessive or over use (swollen wrist after a week long tournament on heavy lawns). In the former the tissues are damaged suddenly, in the latter the inflammation is the result of cumulative micro trauma that do not have time to recover before they are repeated.

In both cases the synovial membrane becomes inflamed and over secretes fluid into the joint. This causes the joint to swell, the swelling results in increased pressure within the joint and this in turn causes pain and stiffness. The swelling is an evolutionary protective mechanism to prevent the joint being used and creating further damage whilst it is repairing.

In the single incident injury, ligaments will also be damaged together with possible tendon and muscle injuries. In over use type injuries there will often be additional inflammation of the

tendon and tendon sheaths (tendonitis).

Treatment

The aims of treatment are to reduce the inflammation and return the joint to normal function. If ligaments have been stretched, care should be taken to strap the joint in a position where the damaged ligaments are fixed in their shortest position. This will prevent them healing elongated thus causing the joint to be unstable in the future.

For the first 24 hours the R.I.C.E. regime should be followed (as discussed in a previous article). This will limit the swelling and minimise further inflammation. If it is a weight bearing joint, no weight whatsoever should be transmitted through the joint. As pain and swelling allow, the joint should be gently mobilised until full function is restored. Depending on the severity of the injury this could be anything from a few days to a few months. Exercises should be undertaken to restore a full range of movement to the joint and also to maintain the strength and efficiency of the muscles that control it. Anti-inflammatory medication will also help at this stage.

Chronic Injuries

These are injuries that have caused the articular cartilage on the ends of the bones to be damaged, either by direct trauma or gradual wear and tear. When this happens the cartilage is gradually worn away until the bone rubs on the opposite joint surface causing the soft tissues around the joint to become inflamed. Unfortunately once the cartilage has gone it cannot regenerate, and extremely painful osteo-arthritis will set in.

Acute injuries that have not been correctly treated and have resulted in lax ligaments will often lead to osteo-arthritis in later life. This is due to the abnormal movement of the joint over a long period of time. To prevent such problems developing later it is important to ensure correct treatment of all acute injuries at an early stage.

Treatment

Treatment of chronic joint conditions consists of anti-inflammatory and pain killing medication together with gentle exercise. In extreme cases joint replacement or other surgical procedures may be considered. All such options must be discussed with your GP.

The exercises should be designed to move the affected joint and work the muscles that control it without putting stresses through the joint surfaces. If it is a weight bearing joint, for example the knee, exercises should be performed in a non-weight bearing position. Hydrotherapy exercises are very useful as the water supports the weight of the body and provides resistance to the movements. When undertaking an exercise regime it is important that the person prescribing the exercise understands the medical implication of the condition. This will ensure that no further damage is done and eliminate unnecessary pain and discomfort. Don't just follow an exercise programme given to you at the local gym.

Continued from page 6

were saved and used by the builder in creating a near identical building. A weather vane in the silhouette of and in memory of the late Club President Edgar Jackson was affixed to the East Gable, and is still aloft the ruin.

To a spectator the Bridge Room offered the the opportunity to watch closely the play on any of four lawns, and when play was less than riveting, a quiet snooze in the relative warmth was welcome.

The summer of 2001 will no doubt be spent deciding what will provide shade and shelter for members and visitors to Cheltenham. We thank all those who have contacted us and offered commiseration and/or help. Fortunately we were insured, an interesting story in itself, and barring further catastrophes we will be in full swing throughout the season.

Talking of catastrophes, why did we decide to renovate three lawns during the wettest year ever recorded? We had been hoping to obtain Lottery funding two years ago to carry out the work but without success. With outstanding financial support from our members, we were able to start the work immediately after the Millennium Doubles at the beginning of September 2000. After seven days, the heavens opened and have stayed open ever since. Although it must dry up soon, and work resume, the new lawns will not be in use until very much later in the season. So we start the official 2001 season with three less lawns and a burnt out central pavilion. For those players who have been unable to gain places in our tournaments, we are sorry and hope to be back in full working order next year.

In the wider audience of the Gazette readership I would like to pay tribute to our Chairman and Lawns Manager, Derek Bradley. Living not far from the Club he visits on an almost daily basis and not often to play croquet either. His dedication over the last ten years as lawns manager to be rewarded with this last year of miserable weather is just not fair. Derek as Chairman and ever willing Club Member has also borne the repercussions of the vandalism and arson attack, organising what needs to be done, heading up the work parties and liaising with the police. Thank you Derek, you're a good'un.

Eileen Magee

Secretary, Cheltenham Croquet Club.

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

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Email Hobbsmall@aol.com

ARE YOU LOOKING AFTER YOUR SKIN?



PROTECTION FROM THE SUN

By Alan Pidcock & Lawrence Whittaker
(Equipment Committee)

Pale complexions evolved to enable the sun's UVA (low energy ultraviolet) radiation to synthesize vitamin D in the skin of our Northern cereal-fed ancestors. Since modern diets are adequate in vitamin D, the downside of exposure of light skins to sunlight has become more evident, especially as the intensity of UVB (high energy ultraviolet) solar radiation has risen with the depletion of the ozone layer. Although the amount of UVB reaching our skins is much less than the amount of UVA, it is 1000 times more damaging for a given quantity. Medical opinion now recognizes that there is nothing healthy about a suntan and identifies over-exposure to UV radiation as the principal cause of the doubling of the incidence of skin cancer - now the second most common cancer - over the past 20 years. Skin cancer is a significant cause of death even in otherwise healthy 26-35 year olds. Celts with fair Type 1 skin (always burns, never tans) are at particular risk and the hours between 11am and 3pm are the most hazardous. Prudent croquet players may wish to take evasive action!

Fortunately, there are a number of simple things you can do to minimize the risk.

First, take a long lunch break!

Second, when not in play sit in the shade. Remember that only half the radiation comes directly from the sun; the remainder comes from

the sky, so umbrellas are less useful than trees or structures which block out a significant portion of the sky. The provision of shade for outplayers is highly desirable and is commended as a serious issue, particularly for clubs on the tournament circuit. Most clubs have provided shelter from rain, but this is not always a suitable protection from the sun. The attractive appearance of croquet in play would surely be enhanced still further by a tasteful scattering of coloured gazebos!

The on-court player will often be exposed to full sun, but then there is, perhaps, an incentive for quicker play and longer breaks - a point which should raise a smile from those who know the authors' play!

Third, cover up! Wide brimmed hats are especially recommended and arms and legs should be covered. Close-weave fabric offers more protection than open weave, and we would expect natural fibres to be better than untreated synthetics. Fabrics can be treated with UV-absorbing material to improve their performance still further. Wet fabrics offer less protection than dry and, unfortunately for croquet players, dark colours are better than white. Although we are at present required to wear predominantly white clothing for tournaments, it would seem better to wear coloured clothing for ordinary club play. Although some clothing is advertised with a claimed sun protection factor (SPF), there is at present no British Standard to substantiate the claims. Despite this lack of quantitative assurance, there is no doubt that suitable clothing can give a high level of protection with little inconvenience or discomfort. It is to be hoped that a suitable labelling scheme will be forthcoming in the not too distant future.

The eyes are susceptible to various forms of attack by solar ultraviolet and the use of sunglasses to BS 2724:1987 is recommended. Wearers of prescription spectacles with glass lenses already have a good degree of protection.

Finally, for those areas of skin which are still unprotected, use a sunscreen lotion! They are rated in terms of sun protection factor (SPF) and a lotion of SPF 15 enables the user to stay in the sun 15 times longer provided that the amount used is the same as that in the rating test (2 mg per sq. cm; a quarter of a bottle per application for a bikini clad figure!) and that it is left on top of the skin and not rubbed in. Application an hour before exposure is also recommended. Most people use very much less than the proper amount and currently users of sunscreens have a greater risk of melanoma, the most serious form of skin cancer, than non-users, probably because they overestimate the degree of protection their thinner coating of lotion provides. It is suggested that the nominal SPF rating is divided by three to allow for a more typical rate of application.

Croquet Balls: Current Difficulties with Quality and Supply

By Alan Pidcock A.P. (C.A. Equipment Committee)

Many readers will be aware that production of the Jaques Eclipse croquet ball came to an abrupt end in May 1997 in a devastating fire that resulted from ignition of the celluloid used for the surface coating. In the intervening period Jaques have been developing a solid plastic ball under the 'New Eclipse' logo and, as the person responsible for issuing CA (and hence WCF) 'Championship Approval' of balls, I have been involved in testing and commenting on the balls at intervals during their development process.

Sadly, it has now to be reported that Jaques have terminated this project for reasons which Christopher Jaques has explained in a letter recently presented to the CA Council. In essence Jaques discovered that as the ball neared 'Approval' standard and after they had purchased

about 5000 balls to fund the development, the agent who was having the ball made for them in SE Asia was making strong efforts to sell the ball under other logos on a worldwide basis. Since the world market for 'Championship Approved' balls is relatively small and the proliferation of sources would make a price war almost inevitable, Jaques decided that the project had become financially unviable and they were in any case unwilling to continue to deal with the agent concerned. At present Jaques are investigating the possibility of producing the ball elsewhere, but it is clear that it will now be some time before any 'New Eclipse' can be expected.

Those with Internet capabilities can read a full account of this somewhat tangled web on www.CroquetWorld.com where statements or letters from key parties are given in full. The agent in Taiwan, Richard Wu (Sunshiny Corp.), has emphasised that there was no exclusive arrangement with Jaques and has protested that he would always seek to protect suppliers of his balls within their own sphere of operations. Whilst the latter assertion cannot be refuted by any evidence I have to hand, it is, nevertheless, a fact that both I (as Manor House Croquet) and John Beech (as Woodlands Croquet) were offered supplies of what we later discovered to be 'the Jaques ball' some months before Jaques found out what was going on. At the time of writing (April 2001), the 'Sunshiny' ball has been submitted directly for 'Approval' but has not yet reached the required standard.

To add further to our woes in relation to croquet balls, the Barlow GT balls which have done so much to raise our expectations of durability and quality in recent years, failed the tests when they were resubmitted following expiry of their 3 year Approval in October 2000. It appears that over time their moulds had deteriorated and the two hemispheres of the resulting balls had become slightly offset with an easily observed effect on the direction of rebound when the ball was dropped on the stepped region of the equatorial line. Barlow's response to the problem has appeared to me to be exemplary: although at the time of writing 'Approvable' balls have not been received, it is clear that strenuous efforts are being made to rectify the problem and in the meanwhile there has been no attempt to fulfill orders from the defective moulds. We can all hope that GTs that are fully up to their original standard will be available again soon - perhaps, indeed, before this article reaches you.

These difficulties have revealed a serious problem with the CA's (and by adoption the WCF's) approval process. A single set of balls is submitted and if they prove to satisfy the test requirements in weight, roundness, milling and rebound, Approval is given and is valid for 3 years. Second colour balls have never been officially tested, and in tests of old Barlow GT balls it was noteworthy that a greater proportion of second colour balls were out of specification. Also, manufacturers appear to produce relatively small batches of balls essentially in response to orders from their selling agents, and currently there is no independent monitoring process to guarantee that these batches are either internally consistent or have properties that are closely similar to those of the Approved set. Nor, in general, do clubs or Federations have facilities for screening new balls for departures from the Approved standard. Whilst it would not be difficult to write a set of stringent regulations for gaining and maintaining Approval, implementation would face at least two major difficulties. The amount of testing required would increase well beyond the capacity of the current single set of rigs (and particularly its operator) in Preston, and if the costs of monitoring the standard of batches of balls were somehow to be transferred to the maker, would the manufacture of 'Championship Approved' balls continue to be feasible financially?

Suggestions and comments would be welcome - the Equipment Committee contact details are on the masthead page.

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
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ROAD, BARNOLDSWICK, BB18 6HH
phone/fax 01282 813070

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

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2000**

INCOME FROM:					
Subscriptions:	individuals				
	clubs				
Levies					
Surplus of income from -					
	commercial activities				
	tournaments				
	coaching				
Advertising and royalties					
Investments					
EXPENDITURE ON:					
Publications					
Marketing and development					
Grants to clubs and federations					
International activities					
Sponsorships					
Central administration costs					
Salary costs					
Office overheads					
Office services					
Council members' travel expenses					
Accountancy					
Sundry expenses					
Total expenditure					
TOTAL SURPLUS FOR YEAR BEFORE TAX					
Provision for corporation tax					
SURPLUS FOR YEAR AFTER TAX					
Net transfers to special funds					

**SURPLUS FOR YEAR ADDED TO
GENERAL FUND**

THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION					
BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2000					
	2000	1999	Notes	2000	1999
	£	£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS					
Croquet and office equipment					
at written down value					
Trophies at valuation					
Investments at cost			1		
CURRENT ASSETS					
Stocks held for resale					
Loans to clubs					
Debtors and prepayments					
Cash at bank and in hand					
CURRENT LIABILITIES					
Subscriptions received in advance					
Creditors and accrued expenses					
Provision for taxation					
NET CURRENT ASSETS					
NET ASSETS					
Financed by:					
GENERAL FUND					
Balance at 1 January 2000					
Surplus for year					
retained in General Fund					
SPECIAL FUNDS					

Signed by:
Don Gaunt, Chairman
Roger Bray, Treasurer

THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

1. LISTED INVESTMENTS AT COST

	2000	1999
	£	£
£10,019 7.00% Treasury Stock 2001	9,988	9,988
£10,395 6.75% Treasury Stock 2004	10,027	10,027
£15,409 4.125% Index-Linked Treasury Stock 2030	18,810	18,810
	£38,825	£38,825
Market Value	£51,513	£50,465

2. SPECIAL FUNDS

	Devel- opment	Enter- prise	Bene- factors	Inter- national	Duffield Bequest	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Balance at: 1 January 2000	6,300		29,079	23,982	21,169	80,530
Transfers from General Fund:						
Investment Income			1,375	1,134	531	3,040
Donations			258			258
General allocation	3,000	5,000		4,000		12,000
	9,300	5,000	30,712	29,116	21,700	95,828
Transfers to General Fund:						
General allocation	2,500			4,000	2,473	8,973
Balance at: 31 December 2000	6,800	5,000	30,712	25,116	19,227	86,855

ACCOUNTANT'S REPORT

In accordance with Council's instructions we have examined the attached accounts for the Croquet Association for the year ended 31 December 2000, together with the accounting records maintained for that year. We obtained such further information as we considered necessary to assist us in our review.

Although we have not conducted an audit of the accounting records, in our opinion the attached accounts summarise and are in agreement with the accounting records and information obtained relating to that year.

15 Blanford Road
Reigate
Surrey RH2 7DP

John
Knight & Co
Chartered Accountants

Comments on the 2000 Accounts

When Council set the budget for the year 2000 there was little prospect of finding a Commercial Agent, and hence of being able to generate more than a paltry income from sales. We are thus enormously grateful to David Collins for stepping into the breach and creating a magnificent profit of £11,000. This accounts for the bottom line surplus of income over expenditure of the same magnitude.

The year included the cost, £6,500, of sending the British MacRobertson Shield team to New Zealand. This was met from the International Fund and accrued income from the Duffield Bequest. Only a few years ago such a cost was a major undertaking for the CA and it was not uncommon to appeal for donations from members for this purpose. It is a sign of strength in the CA's financial position that such demands are now met from the CA's reserves without significantly weakening them.

A new Enterprise Fund has been established with an allocation of £5,000 from General Funds in 2000 (and a further £3,000 in 2001). Council is keen to encourage initiatives which are of clear potential benefit to the CA or to the game generally, whether they are proposed by CA committees, or from clubs or individuals. The new fund is designed to provide financial support for such ideas speedily and with the minimum of fuss. All that is needed is a good development plan and the people to take it forward. So if you think you have a good idea, please get in touch with the CA Secretary.

A more detailed commentary on the accounts is available on request from the CA Office (please send an SAE). It will also be distributed at the AGM in October.

Roger Bray
Treasurer

MARKETING & PUBLICITY SOME INITIAL THOUGHTS

Jonathan Isaacs - Chairman Marketing Committee

Having spent the last 30 years marketing food products, turning ones hand to Croquet Marketing certainly represents a new if not daunting challenge.

One factor both food & croquet marketing have in common is that to be successful you have to get your consumer to want to try the product. Having achieved this the product should have met or exceeded their expectations if they are to become regular consumers.

With Croquet are we doing enough to create awareness of what the game can offer? Have those people who have tried the game found that it has met or exceeded their expectations and become regular players?

Tony Fathers has been a great help during his hand-over to myself & I'm very pleased that he is staying on the Marketing committee as a very active member. I'm sure you will join me in thanking him most warmly for his efforts in pushing forward ideas & promoting the game in all its forms.

One of Tony's latest initiatives has been to target U3A as a potential source of recruits? To find organisations in your area I suggest that your first stop is the internet. There is a very informative site which will give you your local contacts at <http://www.u3a.org.uk> Other sources of information include telephone directories and your local library.

Tony in his article in the March 2001 Gazette makes the point that national advertising doesn't work & even national PR actually generates very few leads for local clubs. I'm sure he's right, however the sustained use of PR can do a lot to raise the profile of the game and regular exposure through local media will help to create an awareness of your club's existence.

To help identify media contacts at local level the CA has purchased a media directory which lists virtually every local & national publication as well as Radio & TV contacts. If you need any help contacting these people ask the CA office at Hurlingham.

As an experiment this year we are going to organise a media day at Roehampton approximately 2 weeks before the World Championships, we are planning to give them some "hands on" experience & a demonstration by two of our national players. The day will be aimed at both local and national media. Apart from getting the media to Roehampton in the first place the key to success will be the follow up of the leads created on the day. The CA will do this for the World Championships & in addition we will pass on local contacts to the appropriate clubs.

The CA needs the help of a Public Relations Officer to do a limited amount of work in issuing releases, building up contacts as well as helping clubs & federations improve media coverage at local level. If there are any members who would be interested in helping could they contact Nigel Graves at the CA office.

Since taking on the role of Marketing Officer recruiting new members has been a hot topic. When it comes to identifying who we should be recruiting, views vary wildly. Here are a few of the statements made:

"We must get young people into the game."

"We're wasting our time recruiting young people, they see it as an old fogies game."

"We should be aiming for pensioners who have the time to play."

"Get them when they come off active sports in their 40's."

I believe it is important that we clearly identify who we are aiming to recruit & make sure that the correct environment exists to ensure that

having recruited we keep them.

Whatever group of people we are aiming to convert, are we sure that the right environment exists to ensure that they stay in the game. Can we learn from Club's experiences? Your experience & views would be greatly appreciated.

COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE DECISIONS

This report is based on unconfirmed minutes of the CA Council meeting held on 24th March 2001. 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.

Coaching

New qualification levels ('Club Coach' and 'Golf Croquet Coach') are being introduced and new badges will be issued. The Club Coach qualification will apply to persons who coach beginners.

A new edition of the "Coaching Manual" is being prepared for publication in 2002 and it will include golf croquet.

Development

The Development Committee will continue to have Council's authority to make grants to member clubs up to £500. Applications for grants exceeding this amount will be considered by this Committee and their recommendations will be made to the Management Committee for a decision.

Council authorised the use of the CA's Benefactor Fund to give development support to large clubs. Priority will be given to projects that benefit croquet generally, not just individual clubs. Lawn renovation (but not maintenance) at clubs that host CA tournaments will qualify for support.

The Management Committee is meeting representatives of large clubs and will then propose a support policy for all types of member clubs.

A working party is being set up to consider all aspects of introducing Gateball within the CA's domain.

Equipment

Championship Approval for Barlow GT balls expired in October 2000 and, at 24th March, had not been renewed. However, it is anticipated that formal Approval will again be given in the near future.

Golf Croquet

A new guide to the game has been produced and one copy will be distributed free of charge to all member clubs.

CA 'Law 15' (Alternative laws) tournaments are being held mid-week in 2001.

Handicap Co-ordination

The Automatic Handicapping system will, in future, include 14 point games (not Short Croquet). The index change will be 5 points for handicap games and on a sliding scale for level play. Details will be circulated to member clubs.

International

The CA's proposals for changing the World Croquet Federation's constitution have been submitted to the WCF.

The WCF has agreed to consult the CA before it sanctions future croquet events in our domain.

The CA is bidding to hold the 2005 Association Croquet World Championships in England.

The CA has proposed to the WCF that one set of Rules for Golf Croquet, suitable for club and international play, should be adopted.

Plans are in hand to identify potential elite junior players so that they may be offered coaching support.

Laws

The International Laws Committee hopes to publish soon the first edition of the "Official Rulings on the Laws of Croquet" (ORLC) on the web.

Management

An 'Enterprise Fund' of £8,000 has been established by Council to encourage initiatives from members who are also willing to help the Association achieve its objects more quickly. New proposals that do not necessarily fit with the CA's committee structure, but are of clear potential benefit to the sport, will be welcomed.

Proposed changes to the Rules of the Association have been approved by Council and will be submitted to the AGM later this year. They concern discipline, electronic communication between the CA office and members, the way in which the Laws of the games may be amended, and the investment of CA funds.

New procedures have been agreed to ensure that members are informed annually about Council's objects, priorities and progress that has been made.

It is intended to continue to hold AGM's in London as, though this is not convenient to everyone, experience has shown that it is the only place reasonably accessible from all parts of the domain.

Marketing

A budget has been agreed for PR activities in 2001; these include a media day prior to the World Championships.

Membership

Subscription rates for 2002 will remain unchanged for Individual Associates and will be increased by the amount needed to match inflation for Member Clubs.


A working party will consider the long-term effects of external changes (such as the Internet) on the CA's revenue sources including members' subscriptions, commercial activities and the levy.

Tournaments

Overseas entrants to the 2001 World Championships will be granted honorary CA membership from 1st June 2001 until the end of the Championships to enable them to enter CA Calendar Fixtures to 'warm up'.

Quiller Barrett

March 2001



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Coaches Qualification Course (CQC) Report

By Michael Hague

Seventeen students attended the CQC sponsored by the South East Croquet Association held at Surbiton CC on 21/22 April 2001 to learn how to plan a croquet coaching course, how to prepare and plan a lesson and how to teach skills and tactics to students at different levels. The emphasis was firmly on the "how"; both instructors and students often had to check themselves from getting diverted into discussing aspects of play especially when Teaching Tactics was the subject of the lesson.

The range of handicaps of students ranged from 24+ to -1°, 50% being in single figures. The wide disparity of playing abilities was a bit of a handicap for course instructors; on the other hand the mix brought home to the better players the problems faced by beginners and high bisquers. It was felt that on balance no limitation regarding handicaps should be laid down for this course. There is a need in many small/new clubs to have a one-eyed king in the kingdom of the blind to help others to get started.

Whatever their handicaps, all students confirmed that the course objective had been met and all but one reported that not only had the course been beneficial to them as coaches but it had actually helped them with their own game. The balance of 27% formal instruction and 63% practical work in syndicates with lesson preparation being required as homework at the end of the first day, was thought to be just about right. Attendees received a course Certificate and will be awarded by the CA the new (yellow) Club Coaches badge once manufactured. It is hoped that many of the graduates will after further experience seek assessment for qualification as Grade 1 to 3 according to their playing ability.

The CQC run at Surbiton can now be fine-tuned in the light of the experienced gained from actually running the course and of students' comments and suggestions. The training package so created can be used with confidence in other Federations if required, to teach coaches how to get the best results for their own satisfaction, for the benefit of their pupils and for the good of the sport.

BREAK BUILDER 2

The second of John McCullough's Break Builder tips, first published in the Gazette starting in the autumn of 1986, set this puzzle. This time you want to get a break started for Red for Hoop 1 and you are prepared to use one bisque, when Red is on the South Boundary near the right hand end of A-baulk, Yellow is on the North Boundary outside Corner III, and the opponent balls are Blue halfway between Hoop 2 and Hoop 6 and Black just in front of Hoop 1?

As always, 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 1, a pivot, and a pioneer for Hoop 2 (next-but-one, thinking ahead). Of these the most immediately important is a good placing for the pioneer at Hoop 1.

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 2.

More importantly, as the strength of the six-yard roquet straight onto Black will disturb its ideal position, and as the distance in itself may carry a risk of missing, the short shot is spurned, and the choice is made to shoot at partner near Corner III, going into the Corner if missing.

2 Take the bisque and rush Yellow along the boundary towards Blue and Hoop 2 – the distance is not critical as long as it passes the mid-point of the North Boundary if possible. There is a choice now depending on the position of Yellow, and where the simplest croquet shot will put the Red ball near Blue. If the straight shot puts Yellow towards the middle, then the roquet on Blue will move it near Hoop 2, from which a take-off to Black is next. If the easier shot croquets Yellow to Hoop 2, then the roquet on Blue is towards the middle, and the take-off to Black is shorter.

3 If by chance the shot into Corner III hits the Yellow ball, then rolling both towards the middle, ensuring that Red can next hit Blue, is the shot

to take. Then roquet Blue and croquet it towards Hoop 2 – use the bisque to ensure both Blue as pioneer and Yellow as pivot are accurately placed before the take-off to Black is completed.

Balls just off the yard line, as Yellow in this case is off the East Boundary, provide excellent opportunities for break-building using bisques. You can shoot at them knowing that, if you miss, you have a short rush away from that Boundary at the cost of one bisque.

Summary

- 1 Red shoots at Yellow in the corner.
- 2 If miss, take the bisque and rush Yellow along the Boundary.
- 3 Option 1 - Croquet Yellow into the middle going to Blue.
- 4 Red roquets Blue towards Hoop 2.
- 5 Option 2 – Croquet Yellow to Hoop 2 going to Blue.
- 6 Red roquets Blue towards the middle of the lawn.
- 7 In either case, take off from Blue going to

Black at Hoop 1.

8 If first shot at Yellow is hit, roll Yellow towards Blue nearer the middle.

9 Red roquets Blue.

10 Croquet Blue accurately to Hoop 2.

11 Use the bisque to place Blue and Yellow more accurately in turn.

12 Take off to Black at Hoop 1.

The four-ball break exists for one bisque.

Note that there is only a small difference if Yellow is right in Corner III, as the croquet shot will be roll to Blue 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 Blue would be better. Then you can rush it towards Hoop 2 before taking off back to Black. The four-ball break is not so tight yet because the Hoop 2 pioneer is less accurate, but the possibilities of continuing are as high.

TALKING CROQUET

No. 10 GAIL CURRY
Editor of The Croquet Gazette

by Neil Williams

There are only two living players, I suggest, who will be known to everyone in croquet in this country - unless they happen to have spent the last few years on Mars. One is, of course, the Man Himself, John Solomon, and the other is Gail. (We needn't add the surname.)

Although I thought I'd asked quite tactfully (and it was just for the record, you understand), Gail wouldn't tell me how old she is: "You can say I'm 14 years older than when I started to play croquet in 1986. Really, I always feel 19."

The youngest in the family, she went to school at the local Tynemouth comprehensive. What was that like?

"I couldn't wait to get out, and I was the pupil from hell - you name it, I did it. My final report read: 'Gail has been a pupil at Ralph Gardner for the last 5 years, during which time she has conducted herself entirely to her own satisfaction.'"

With that kind of send off, whatever next?

"I spent a year as an archaeological assistant, but only learnt about betting and horse racing. I then went to catering college for two years during the day to train as a chef, and worked at night training to be a youth leader - well I couldn't make my mind up. The youth work finally won out and then social work training and I finally settled into working in residential special education and did an Open University degree."

So how did croquet come into the picture?

"I have my mother and a badly written set of rules to thank for that. We had a garden set but nobody could make sense of the rules. Fortunately, within a week or so of buying the set there was an advert in the local



Gail between issues in play at Southport

press for a 'Come and Try it' session at Tyneside Croquet Club. I was dragged along to keep my mother company.

"I picked the game up quite quickly - I've always been good at whatever sports I've played. But it was late in the season and I was just getting the hang of it when winter put an end to playing croquet. Or it should have done. Not so for me. I can remember going to the library and taking out Solomon's book and Arthur Ross's, and spending many hours trying to follow their thoughts with coloured tennis balls on the carpet. It all seemed straight forwards after a winter's reading. The problem was putting it into practice - but I think I did all right."

I wondered if she still thought that practice and trying things out were important. As it is for most players, time was the problem for Gail. Like most readers of the *Gazette*, I have never understood how for the last 6 years she has combined a job, tournament play up and down the country and editing 6 numbers per year of the *Gazette*. Despite that, Gail does think practice matters, and would like about an hour a week, covering 3-ball breaks, with and without rushes, to begin with. Hoop approaches would always figure - about 10 minutes on these. She also sees 2-ball breaks as useful, but there is one skill she leaves alone:

"I never practise shooting, because I don't believe it makes any difference. Shooting is all down to confidence - a good relaxed swing,

and no thinking about what happens if you miss. Concentrate on hitting."

As a player Gail probably still has her best seasons ahead of her, since last year she was virtually unbeatable, and she must already be among the finest lady players in the game, ready to make her mark at the very highest levels. She denies any great ambitions: "I just want to be a better player and I want to continue to enjoy playing."

Her wonderful form in the 2000 season she puts down to "a change of attitude", and I am keen to know what that involved:

"If you had asked me about the psychology of the game before last season I don't think I would have had anything to say. But the last two years have convinced me that a positive mental attitude to life in general is the key to playing croquet, or doing anything else well. I hadn't been enjoying playing and very nearly gave it up. Instead, I decided to give it one more year to see if I could rekindle my appetite for playing."

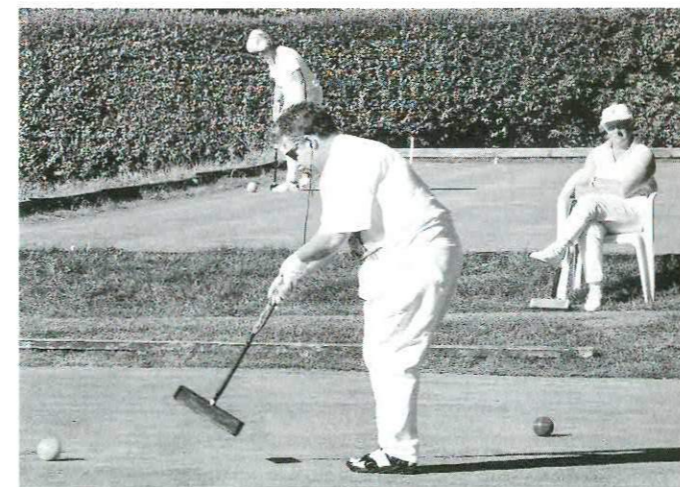
"I made my mind up that I would be more positive and take on the shots I had previously wanted to play but had often talked myself out of in favour of safety. It wasn't an easy thing to do for the first few games, but the results kept going my way so my confidence grew and the thought of missing or playing bad shots never enters my head. Of course I do still get things wrong or miss some shots, but not as often, and it's much more exciting to go for shots and get them right than to play safe and still not win. I always remember an article that Colin Irwin wrote a few years ago. The bottom line was: you can either play to win or you can play not to lose. I know which philosophy I follow now."

I ask if there are special games or croquet occasions she remembers particularly well. Gail's sense of humour and her refusal to take it all too seriously now resurface:

"I find it easiest to remember the comic occasions for some reason, and there have been enough of those to fill a book. There was the "Umbrella Incident" at Cheltenham, where a certain player was responsible for sitting on another player's hat - it was no accident. Then there was David Goacher



A Jack Shotton Cartoon of Gail from an early Tyneside CC Magazine.



Gail in play against Frances Ransom, it takes a brave manager to schedule that match.

playing quickly to avoid lightning strikes during a storm, also at Cheltenham, strangely. I remember my jacket being hoisted up the flagpole as a "Gale Warning" after my first triple - Cheltenham too. And when I was partnering John Solomon at Doubles I asked him if he called 'The Solomon Grip' 'the Solomon grip' or 'my grip'. Then there was the tournament I organised and persuaded all the players to play with every mallet but their own - very very funny.

"I suppose," Gail added, "the record ought to be set straight here about the infamous Women's final of 1995. The manager foolishly told Frances Ransom and myself to take as long as we liked to play our best of three. Needless to say, we took him at his word and our finals lasted only minutes short of 24 hours in playing time. We could have played more quickly. We just chose not to."

Do you have favourite clubs and events?

"I have quite a few, for all sorts of reasons. I always have a good time at Budleigh in August and treat that as my annual holiday. The Inter-Counties is a special event. It is a great occasion, made by the croquet, the company and the gossip. As to favourite places to play, well call me biased if you like but I don't think there are better lawns in the country than the two we have at Tyneside. So home is my favourite place for quality of lawns. For surroundings and friendly hosts I would choose Crake Valley in the Lake District. [Gail was not paid to say this, nor did I, a member at Crake, twist her arm. Much.] For sentimental reasons too many to list I've always had a soft spot for Southport. I owe a lot to some of the members of that



Another day at the office - after the day job

club who made me feel most welcome when I was starting out. And they still do."

And so to Gail's time as Editor of the *Gazette*. I remind her that one of her predecessors had told me that her "least favourite memory" of croquet was her time as Editor. How did Gail feel now she had decided to retire?

"There is a disclaimer at the front of this issue isn't there? Can I phone a friend?"

I moved on. Well are there things you wish you had done as Editor but haven't? And are there things you regret?

"I wish I had been tougher from the start and laid down my way of producing the *Gazette*. I'm sure that more than a few people see me as a bit of a bull in a china shop. Someone who speaks first and thinks afterwards. Better that than talking round the table and doing nothing, though."

"In an ideal world I think the Editor's position should be a full time post, combined with that of a national publicity officer. I would then want a 'reporter' in each Federation, responsible for collecting the news from their own patch. The Australians have that kind of framework and

it works. They get a great deal more grass roots news than any others do."

What about a message to your successor? [Not appointed when we did the interview, so nothing personal here, of course.] Gail then quotes Forrest Gump:

"Don't expect anyone to help you. If they do, that's fine. If they don't, file it away."

Do you think we are doing enough to bring on a new generation of players?

"I'm not prepared to comment on what others have done or are doing. If I were in charge of getting more youngsters into croquet I would target school children. I would want them to start with golf croquet and then move into one-ball. Kids can't stand around: they have to keep on the move. I would also ensure they were shown the game by young people who are enthusiastic and can challenge the children. Croquet must be seen as a sport, not an uncool pastime for people too old to do anything else. I would put together a video and a teachers' pack, and I would then

look for the groups that had started to play to publicise the sport to others."

Finally, the regular question Gail herself said we should ask all interviewees in our *Talking Croquet* series: If you could change one thing about croquet, what would it be?

"I have spent hours thinking about this. There are lots of things that could be changed just for the sake of change, but change should be for a reason: ideally, progress. For that reason, the change I would make would be to put a stop to all the argument and bickering between croquet and golf croquet, high handicaps and low handicaps, Associations and World governing bodies. They should work together, not against each other."

Not for me to write her final report as Editor, but I'm sure I speak for many when I suggest that it should read:

"Gail has been Editor of the *Croquet Gazette* for 6 years, during which time she has conducted herself entirely to our satisfaction. We wish her continued success in the future. After all, she's only 19, so she has made a very promising start."

THE SOUTHWICK CENTENARY

By Brian Teague

Sussex County Croquet Club (SCCC), the biggest in the World according to the Guinness Book of Records, provides 11 croquet courts at Southwick, West Sussex which is about 5 miles from Brighton. It is now effectively an autonomous club though still a part of the Sussex County Croquet and Lawn Tennis Club. This is the title of the main club, which oversees the two separate clubs and through Trustees, which it appoints, has custody of the land.



Captain Drummond

The land extends to just over 5 acres, leased originally from 1st January 1901 in three stages and on which 12 croquet courts were laid out in tiers in time for a tournament in September 1901. In 1908 an option to purchase the land was taken up by means of a mortgage for £2000 and £525 of debentures taken up by members. In 1902 the levelling was improved and four tennis courts were also laid out, but the name of the club was not changed to include tennis until 1906.

Whereas we are now celebrating 100 years of croquet at Southwick, the story does not begin here since there was a forerunner, also a SCCC formed in 1869 and playing on the lawns of the Royal Pavilion, Brighton. As at Wimbledon, Tennis was added, but the club had disappeared by about 1882, the year that Wimbledon ousted Croquet.

One of the major figures along with Walter Peel, responsible for the revival of croquet and the formation of the Croquet Association, was **Captain Drummond**, the Chief Constable of West Sussex. He had kept croquet going during the years 1880 to 1900 by private games and tournaments on his own lawns – having five courts in his "garden" at Horsham to which he moved in 1898.

The five people given credit for the founding of the club include Captain Drummond, General Kenyon-Stow, Colonel Borton, Captain



Major Harold Jellicorse

Jellicorse (later Major) and Mr W H Abbey. The latter was probably the prime mover in the early days and was surprisingly the only "civilian" on the original 8-man committee. He was the first club treasurer and tournament secretary for the first few tournaments. He also handled the purchase in 1908.

The first or inaugural Autumn Tournament was actually held in 1900 at the Sussex County Cricket ground, at Hove, with Mr. Abbey in charge. A photograph of his illustrious tournament committee hangs in our club canteen. Four of the

five founders are present and two ladies, but not Captain Jellicorse.

F W Croft who had helped setting up the tournament and J E Willis both top players, are in the photograph. It was Willis, the open champion of 1897 who won, with Croft third. This is the same Willis who was responsible for the court setting of six hoops and one peg that we use today. The event was a resounding success even though the courts were on a slope and had been well worn by a Tennis Tournament the week before.

Besides laying out 12 courts on the first plot of 3 acres, a clubhouse had also been constructed in time for the second September Tournament in 1901. That tournament too, was an enormous success with over 100 competitors, 53 pairs in the doubles, a large number of visitors and the Duke of Cambridge to present the trophies.

Thereafter the club prospered, increasing its membership to over 250 and having to limit tournament entries after a near debacle in 1903 when 585 entries were accepted leading to very restrictive time limits. Membership did fall as WW1 approached but the popular Brighton Tournaments as they were then called, were expanded to include a full week in May, another in July and the September event was extended to



The Tournament Committee of 1927

two weeks. Up to 14 courts could be provided by making use of tennis courts.

The clubhouse included a kitchen with gas installed by 1902, but usually a marquee was erected near the Mulberry tree by court 7, to provide refreshments at tournaments. The pavilion was extended in 1906 to include enlarged ladies' room, stabling for two ponies and a shelter for dogs! Ponies with protective footwear would have pulled the large mower and "lawn renovator" since it was not until 1925 that a motor mower was purchased – an ATCO for £95. Three years earlier a second building had been added, namely the canteen by purchasing an army hut for £45, probably one of many that had covered Southwick Green when occupied by the Army in 1917.

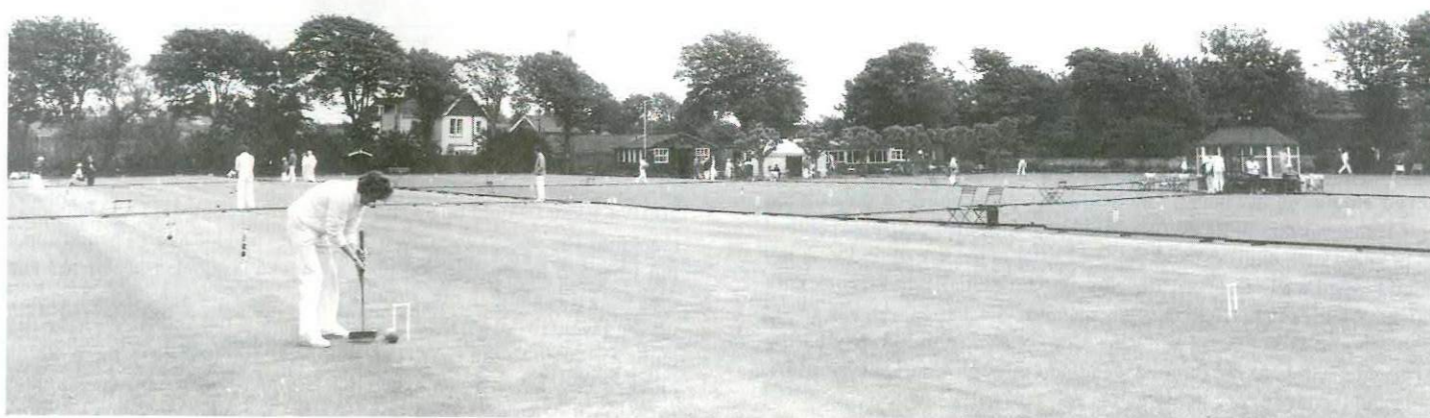
During the war neither club competitions nor tournaments were held even though the initial policy from the CA was "Cancelling tournaments will not remotely assist in subduing the enemy".

In 1918 the committee had proposed allowing ladies on the Committee but this was not ratified until 1920 and the first lady to be included is not known. There have been times during the period 1930 to 1950 for example when ladies have predominated, more recently it has usually been well balanced.

Land was leased nearby in the mid-1920s to form a 'motor park' and also to augment Croquet and Tennis with Archery. In 1931 the lease had to be given up and with it Archery and also lawn 12 for a new car park – which is still in the same position, off Kingston Lane.

After WW1 membership of the club, like that of the CA, fell sharply and the Depression of the 1926-1932 years took further toll of membership and club fortunes. By 1932 the club was said to be in financial straits, only to be saved by the foresight, energy and initiative of **Major Jellicorse**, who held the offices of president and chairman from 1932 to 1949. By lowering fees, scrapping entrance fees and by having several "at home days" the membership had reached 100 croquet and 100 tennis by 1935. At the outbreak of WW2 the club was again riding high and had in 1939 invested in the latest sprinkler system with water laid on to all 11 courts.

During WW2 club competitions and some tournaments continued



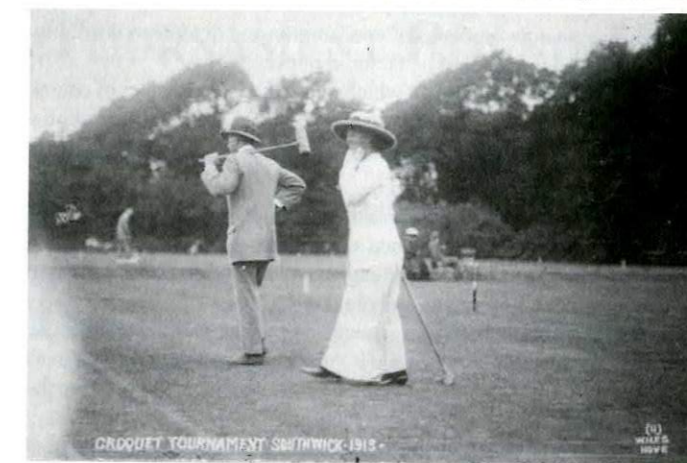
Southwick during the 1960's

but membership did fall and the mortgage had still not been paid off. Six or seven courts were kept open but the three next to the railway line were covered with barbed wire and were said to have been damaged by mines and bombs! From 1944 no visitors were allowed because of D-day preparations.

After WW2 the courts were repaired and tournaments restored for 1946 with May and August fixtures, the latter down to 10 days. The highly regarded Southwick catering had to wait until 1949 before lunches could be provided due to the continuation of food rationing. However, by 1953, Southwick was providing the best 3-shilling lunch in England according to the May tournament report. Not surprisingly, Committee minutes show that catering was losing money

even when the price was raised to 3s. 6d.

In 1958 the mortgage and remaining debentures were paid off when



A tournament in progress in 1913

loss of development rights were compensated by the Ministry of Town & Country Planning, following the annexing of land along Kingston lane for road widening. Roy Wadhurst, a tennis member was the bright spark that alerted the Club committee to this action.

Southwick has been a favourite venue for many well-known personalities. Maurice Reckitt did not miss an Autumn tournament between 1909 and 1969 and continued to visit when too frail to play. After WW2, EPC Cotter was a regular contender for the Gold Cup winning it on seven occasions. He also managed this tournament several times and in 1968 was making his 21st consecutive appearance. Dorothy D Steele made her first appearance in 1925 and she too won the Gold Cup, which had been donated in 1922 by the club chairman E R Harrison. She was to win the Gold Cup on six further occasions. After WW2 she won the May Tournament in 1954 but thereafter came to manage either the May or Autumn (in August!) programme.

One of the most successful competitors was another top class player - Leslie Kirk-Green who apparently was loath to play in London or even in the President's Cup. Between 1952 and 1965 he won the Gold Cup 4 times, the Simeon Cup 12 times and the Abbey Challenge Cup 10 times. Over the period 1950 to 1985 the Club struggled to maintain its membership in the range 65 to 80 though just about made ends meet by tournament income and generous benefactors. Much time and effort over these years was used up in repeated attempts to disassociate Croquet and Tennis, which did not fully materialise until 1990.

As late as 1990, the Club was thinking of relinquishing 3 courts and sought planning approval for housing, to improve solvency. The once jibed "moribund club" however picked itself up, and now is in its best financial state since 1907.

In 1982 the Inter-Counties Championship was moved from Hurlingham to Southwick as an experiment, which is still continuing, since the facilities were able to match the increase in the number of counties wanting to play. This event now "spills over" to Compton and in 1993 to Worthing. The income so generated was a factor in our revival.

A second major Tournament which requires a large number of courts, is the Veterans' Championships which since 1994 has been shared on a two year alternate cycle with Budleigh Salterton.

The Club Today

Since 1997 the club has dispensed with the services of a groundsman and most of its lawn maintenance equipment and instead employs a contractor. This has proved more expensive, but the results are plain to see, namely better quality turf and playing surface.

The club in 1999-2000 sought Lottery assistance to remedy the one weakness in the lawns, namely levels at the perimeters but was unsuccessful. A programme of gradual improvement is planned for the next few years.

We are proud to have John Solomon, now living locally, as a member and our President. He joins his wife Barbara who has been a club member since 1976. Our two longest serving, still active members are Freddie Reynold and Patricia Shine who joined us in 1969 and 1972 respectively. Freddie is a Trustee of the Club and served on the committee from 1975 until 1997 the final 10 years as chairman. Pat joined the committee in 1976 since when she has given stalwart service, taking on tournament management and the job of tournament secretary for 15 years or so, while also sitting for 10 years on the CA Council.

Membership is at its highest since pre WW1 and we offer 6 open



Southwickas it is today

tournaments each year, which still includes one of 6 days, as in 1901. Top class players are returning to the Open weekends at the beginning and end of the season. The club is also at the forefront in the promotion of Golf Croquet, as a serious and exciting alternative to Association Croquet. We also have an increasing number of improving players, quite a few approaching scratch handicap.

We support the SE Federation by hosting tournaments and also provide most of the formal coaching in the Region as well. These include Improvers, Bronze, and Silver Courses, added to which we host the annual week long Summer School attracting up to 28 people.

The original wooden building of 1901, extended in 1906, provides a reminder of our beginnings and the army hut purchased in 1922 still provides good food, good cheer and both buildings have had a face lift in recent years, most of the work being undertaken by members.

A warm welcome awaits all visitors and our lunches and teas still receive the highest praise. Our 3-day Centenary Event in September will provide an occasion to recall the elegant affairs held on these grounds 100 years ago to which as many CA members that we can squeeze in, will be very welcome.



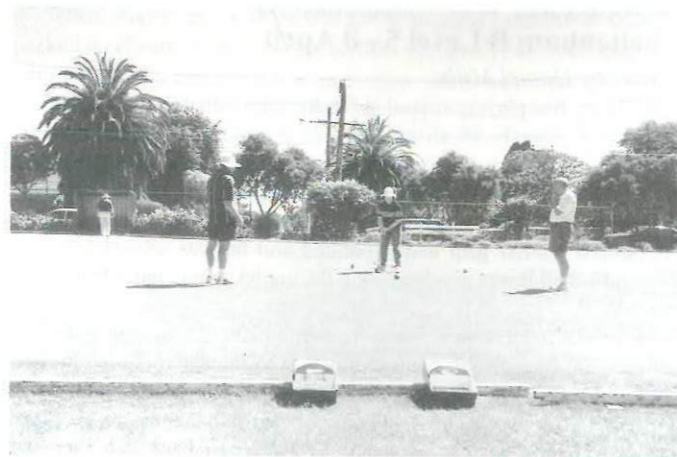
Peter (pictured left) with Ian at the Noosa Club in Queensland

2001? Crikey I would be 67 and if I wanted to compete I had better get cracking. The season was now over. Charles had me as a 12 handicapper but I needed to practise and play advanced croquet. But where? Did they play this game in other countries?

So I went to the net then "croquet.org.uk" - link clubs - we have 139 clubs affiliated to the CA. Then link New South Wales - there are 68 clubs in New South Wales. Then link Croquet West - there are 23 clubs in Western Australia. Then link SACA - there are 50 clubs in South Australia. Then link Victoria - there are over 100 clubs in Victoria! Then

link Queensland C.A. - there are 42 clubs in Queensland. A total of 250 clubs in a country who's population is just 20 million!

Obviously Australia was the place to go. I have a loathing of long distance flying and we had only been to Australia in February 2000. Yes at this point I should mention Barbara, my long suffering wife, who also plays but more of a social game. Could we minimise those 12 hour ordeals. So what about Johannesburg, Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Auckland and home! Did they play croquet in Jo'burg and New Zealand? Back to the web and of course they do. A point to note is that New Zealand, who have an excellent web site, are not linked to the C.A. site, but they can be found through Ian Plummer's Oxford site.



Play in progress at the Essendon Club, Melbourne

So I had the basis of a plan but how could I arrange matches? Back to the web sites. Got the E mail addresses of the various association secretaries and through them other contacts. To cut a long story short whilst everyone was slightly taken aback at this odd 12 handicapper Englishman doing a world croquet tour they all, without exception, joined the spirit of the thing and I succeeded in playing 29 matches at 27 clubs in 10 cities in 3 countries in 5 weeks. They also took Barbara under their wing and whilst she only played a few she came on leaps and bounds. I won more than I lost, the experience was invaluable and it was also great fun.

I would like to thank :- Judith Hanekom and Mike Meyers in Jo'burg. Perth - Patricia McGee, Terry Speers, Helen Eagle, Glenys Brookes, Phyllis Abbot, Bob Harewood, Tim Green, Terry Brogden and Guna Verdi. Adelaide - Ray Nottage, Jane and Ivorine, Wendy King, Mac, Colin Pickering, Morag and Max. Melbourne - George Latham, Elaine and John, Maire and Roy McIntosh, Joan England.

Sydney - Lorraine Le Blang, Katherine Love, Pat Roach, Charles McGilchrist, Jim Farr, John Hanseome, Bruce McCormack and Eric. Queensland - Beryl Phillips, Margaret and Bill Woff, George Chapman, Keith Nichols, Elizabeth Dolby, Ray and Ann Styants, Ian, Patrick Harrison, Ena Adcock, Paul, Wendy Colman, Clare Burke and Isobel McLaren. New Zealand - Malcom Cawley, Merle and Ivan Pash, John Wards, Jean Hogan, and Ray Puckett.

I made a promise to all those I met that, should they or any other of their club members, ever come to the UK and want a game, just to Email me on "peter.mcdermott1@ntlworld.com" with their handicap and I will put them in touch with the right person at the right club. Regarding handicaps, Ian Plummer's Oxford site has tried to compare other countries with the UK but there is no precise correlation however I can confirm that a UK 12 matches an Aussie 9 and a NZ 6.

Of course our own CA site "croquet.org.uk" will lead overseas players directly to clubs and contacts. From my experience it is far better if every club lists all those players, with their handicap, Email address and telephone nos., who would enjoy a challenge not just from across the world but also in the UK. Whenever I got that reply "You are on mate" it always led to the best matches. If you check-out the Middlesbrough site "middlesbroughcroquet.org.uk" you will see that all members with

their handicap are listed and those who are open to a challenge include their contact details.

And the clubs themselves? Without exception excellent club houses and amenities, beautiful settings with innovative methods of lining [string, metal strips, burning], hoop setting and storing of equipment. The lawns, remember the huge variations in climate, used a variety of different grasses but were all well manicured. Strangely not so fast as one might think excepting the championship lawns in Perth and Noosa which would match anything we have here. Of the 27 clubs I played at none had less than 2 full size lawns and 20 clubs had 3 or more lawns but I estimate the average membership to be under 30.

And the people? Well just generosity personified. Our thanks to you all

TOURNAMENT ROUND-UP

Royal Tunbridge Wells October Tournament

Report by Jill Carpenter

Royal Tunbridge Wells extended a warm welcome to all the players, who came mostly from the South and South East, someone from Shropshire, and a special visitor Bruce Tabrum from Hamilton East Croquet Club, New Zealand. This club is affiliated to The Waikato King Country Association.

We all played hard through the wet and cold of the first day and the sunshine of the second. After almighty struggles on various lawns the clear winner was Peter Highton of Medway. He was presented with a silver photo frame. The runner up was John Hobbs of RTW's.

Christopher Crowhurst of Winchester Croquet Club won his bronze medal. Congratulations Christopher. There were two handicap changes. Peter Highton went from 16 to 14, and Christopher Crowhurst from 9 to 8.

Special thanks to the manager Peter Howell, and to Audrey Howell who provided refreshments throughout. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves and appreciated the wonderful hospitality that one always associates with Royal Tunbridge Wells Croquet Club.

The Winchester One-Ball Championships 21st-22nd April 2001

Report by Kevin Carter

As usual, this finale to the winter variation attracted a full entry. However, we saw some new faces, including reigning world champion, Robert Fulford, and Rutger Beijderwellen, from the Netherlands.

After a week's dry weather the courts were playing fast and with Winchester's undulations being accentuated, along with hoops set firmly in the ground, the conditions proved to be a real test.

Saturday's handicap event was run as a nine-round Swiss and by lunchtime local player Chris Crowcroft was the only undefeated player, with Geoff Cuttle being the only one yet to open his account. How a little hot food and a couple of beers changes things - Chris did not win another match all day and Geoff won all his!

Robert Pennant-Jones emerged as the final victor, with a fine seven wins. No fewer than five players tied for second, with a lengthy 'quality of opponents' calculation resulting in second prize going to Lionel Tibble and third to Kevin Carter, followed by last year's winner, Gerald Mitchell, Ruth Carter, playing off 24 (12 less than her true handicap...), and Pam Arliss.

For Sunday's advanced level event the hoop gap was reduced to a maximum of 1/16th of an inch. Winchester was delighted that Robert

THE JOURNAL OF A TRAVELLING CROQUET PLAYER

By Peter McDermott

Like a lot of other men I had played all sports but with every passing decade the body's wear and tear forced me to drop out of each in turn. I was left with tennis which I thought would see me through but at 65 an arthritic knee put paid to that. Then a pal, who knew I had played croquet in my back garden with my sons and their pals during their teenage years, noticed that Middlesbrough had a croquet club. I never knew such clubs existed. So last Easter at the age of 66 I took my round headed well preserved 20 years old Jaques mallet to Prissick Park and met Charles Waterfield the club's chairman. Charles who has a +1/2 handicap and is number 139 in the U.K., was a godsend. My earlier experience had held me in good stead and through Charles I learnt the shots and the tactics of the big game.

Then I discovered there were tournaments - too late, but probably fortuitously as I was such a novice, for me to enter. But what about

Fulford should support its event, but the paparazzi had to be warned on more than one occasion that their 'up the nose' shots put them in danger of a broken ankle.

Robert adapted to the difficult conditions quickly and eased through the first two rounds of the best-of-three knock-out, while number one seed, Lionel Tibble, had some anxious moments against Bill Arliss. Local ace and fourth seed Ken Smith missed out on a semi-final place to an ever-strengthening Geoff Cuttle. However, Lionel quickly extinguished his challenge to book an early place into the final.

Meanwhile, Robert got into trouble against third seed Roger Jenkins, who comfortably won the first game and was ahead nine to three in the second before the world champion pulled a seven-hoop break out of the hat, then did exactly the same - almost an identical sequence of strokes - in the third.

The full, four-ball game is rarely a spectacle, but one-ball played at the highest level can be a tremendous spectator sport. And so it was in the Tibble-Fulford final of 2001. A journalist present, who had never before seen a full game, sat entranced and vowed not only to return, but also to take up the sport.

The first game was very long and tactical. Both players knew the other was likely to hit any shot less than 20 yards, so no risks were taken. Over one hour later Robert emerged the narrow winner. In the second Lionel hit in after four, rolled up to five and finished the game with the best exhibition of control yet seen during the entire weekend.

After two solid days of one-ball you can get into a groove. Lionel was in such a groove, giving nothing away and taking a significant lead in the third and final game. However, this time Robert hit in and finished by making a nine-point break in the arduous conditions look ridiculously easy.

So, Fulford collected the engraved decanter, Tibble again had to settle for the runner-up spot and a consolation Egyptian was scooped by Bill Arliss.



Jenny Williams, winner of the lower bisquer prize at Pendle & the Cheltenham B Level

Surbiton Easter Open

Report by Ian Bond

With the two lawns re-laid last year still under water, and another having progressed no further than losing its turf before the bad weather set in last September, we were reduced to only four lawns for this tournament and an entry of 24 to keep entertained in typically bitter Easter weather.

But we somehow got through six rounds for half the field and five

for the rest, and - no - Fulford did not win the event yet again. He started well, with a sextuple against Paul Castell, before falling victim to this enthusiasm and Gaunt, who went round in the third turn, jumped the hoop to hit in with his forward ball after the sextuple leave and finished off in the seventh after a missed lift from Fulford.

The early running was made by Richard Knapp, belying his handicap of 3, until he fell to Andrew Johnson; and he in turn finally succumbed in the last round to a fourth triple of the weekend from Dyer, to leave a three-way tie. This was resolved by a one-ball knockout, with Dyer seeing off Fulford in the first round and Johnson again in the decider, to win the Robert Prichard trophy.

Wet, yes. Cold, yes. But it's good to be back in action and looking forward to a WCF World Championship year.

Cheltenham B Level 5 - 8 April

Report by Daniel Mills

Thirty five players arrived in Cheltenham full of the joys of spring, and eagerly awaiting the first tournament of the season. Unfortunately the weather was not as kind to us as we had hoped. The combination of an icy cold wind and driving rain was not enticing. Indeed Abdul Ahmad was forced to leave the tournament early because his mallets leather grip had expanded and he was unable to dry it overnight. Still it was good to swing the mallet again, better than being at work.

We did also have some good weather and there was some excellent croquet played. Special mention must go to our international players Jonathan Lamb from Brussels (originally Salisbury) and Fernando de Ansorena from Spain. The food as always at Cheltenham was excellent and we were all made very welcome. Well done Richard Wainman who wore shorts throughout and John Moore who was determined to wear them for at least one day.

The tournament was smoothly managed by Rick Davis of Nottingham, with Eileen Magee as ROT. Rick cleverly devised two events, the idea being that two different people would win, but of course these things don't actually go to plan! Event 1 was Egyptian with each player starting on 50 points. Event 2 was based on points gained on the Automatic Handicapping System. Well done to Jenny Williams of Bowdon with 73 points in event 1 and a gain of 97 points in event 2. Abdul Ahmad of Pendle & John Moore of Tyneside shared 2nd place in event 1 with 68 pts. John also gained 82 points on the AHS. Mike Hoggett of Cheltenham scored 67 AHS points and Bruce Rannie won his silver award.

Cheltenham Easter Handicap

Report by Sue Makay

Cheltenham's Easter tournament was reduced to eight lawns and four American Blocks of 9 due to winter rain washing away their lawn improvement programme. Arsonists had recently destroyed the Bridge Room but the consensus was that while the vandalism was to be deplored the resultant view through to the back four lawns was actually very good!

Block A was seemingly won convincingly by Keith Davis (8/8) but he had at least two +1(T) results. Block B went to a rapidly improving Debo Forrington (7/8). Bruce Rannie had made the longest journey and was rewarded with Block C (7/8), and Block D went to Michael Rangely (6/8).

Lawns good, food superb, play indifferent. Greatest excitement when Sue Mackay had a high-speed blowout on Friday 13th while passing Junction 13 of the M5. Manager Alan Bogle considered a concrete lawn 9 as two carloads of croquet players in whites called in late from the hard shoulder!

Pendle Easter Tournament

Report by Harry Midgley

The annual Easter Tournament was held at the Pendle Club over the Easter Weekend [Friday pm to Monday evening]. For once the weather was relatively kind with two days being sunny, one

somewhat mixed and one fairly wet. The weather forecasts provided by Alice Fleck's husband who used to work in the Met office were 'surprisingly' accurate.

The five lawns were in excellent playing condition for so early in the season and were a tribute to David Pollitt and his team of groundsmen.

Twenty-four contestants took part and all had a very enjoyable weekend managing 199 games between them. Alice Fleck won the trophy for the most games played (11).

Contestants came from far and wide. Two players earned CA awards, Jenny Williams, Silver and Harry Midgley, Bronze [in a match with David Maugham!].

There were many amusing and not so amusing incidents in an action packed weekend. Lawn 1 saw a serious riot when two male spectators who were biting and spitting at each other had to be moved on much to the disgust of the hen goose who was enjoying the attention from the two drakes. Possibly they were looking for the **Wooden Spoon**, but Liz Frazer was already staking her claim to that trophy and finally succeeded in receiving it.



Prize winners at the Pendle Easter Handicap.

Brian Medley was hard at work on his Outplay and discovered that the clouds in the north were moving southwards and the clouds in the south were moving northwards. Perhaps they were going for a roquet? But that's East Lancashire.

The competition was intense with most matches going the full three hours and in fact one 'sudden death' [or lingering death] play off lasted 40 minutes. Many other games had the usual croquet ending when defeat was snatched from the jaws of victory.

The referee was David Maugham ably assisted by his team who willingly rushed from lawn to lawn as needed.

The final victors were **Pendle Easter Handicap Trophy**, David Hoyle [14] who is a member at Pendle but is now resident in Pickering and starting a club there. The runner-up was Jenny Williams [2] and third place, David Walters [3] both from the Bowdon Club. The **Low Handicap** winner was Jenny Williams who was the outstanding lady player and left after four days of super play saying she had learnt a lot! The **High Handicap** winner [much to his delight] from Pendle was Steve Biggs [22].

The tournament was ably managed by John Beech [who could not be there on Sunday as he was away preaching what he practices] and even more ably assisted by Abdul Ahmad and Peter Wilson. Abdul was unflappable and unflinchingly courteous reserving his darkest looks for those who dared not to fill in their card. The Vice President of Pendle

Club, Betty Brierley, presented the trophies and also supervised the team of ladies who produced such excellent meals throughout the weekend.



Woking's Chairman, Bill Wood-Roe presents Kevin Carter with his ill-gotten gains.

Woking One Ball Tournament March 11th 2001

Head groundsman, David Shrimpton, jealously guards his two outstanding courts at Woking, which he maintains with diligence and loving care. This year however he finally succumbed to the relentless pressure of the croquet members to join the growing trend for winter croquet and set up a court for the second half of the winter on one of the tennis courts used in the normal season to double the number of courts available for tournaments.

David had the last laugh in the end though, as the endless rain reduced any chance to use the new facility to a handful of occasions. Even so a one ball mini-tournament was held in March on a very cold but uniquely bright day to prove once again that croquet can be fun when temperatures are low.

Jeff Dawson demonstrated the potential dangers of quadruple banking with his fierce hitting in across the width of the court. But even he could not stop the invincible Kevin Carter, a guest player from Winchester, who had the temerity and scant regard for normal standards of etiquette to win unbeaten Woking's historic, first ever winter tournament.

Manor House Mallets

The originators of carbon fibre shafted mallets now offer a **comprehensive range**: from the 'Basic' (£70), the well established R- and T-series (£100/115), and the 2000 mallet at £132.50 (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.

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2001 WORLD CROQUET CHAMPIONSHIPS 29TH JUNE - 8TH JULY



The World Croquet Championships will take place between 29 June and 8 July in London in conjunction with the Open Championships. This promises to be a mouthwatering festival of croquet, and perhaps the strongest field of players ever assembled at any one event.

Reigning World champion Robert Fulford will be hoping to retain his title, while Stephen Mulliner, who was runner up to Robert, and Reg Bamford the No.1 player in the world will be hoping to relieve Robert of his title. Numerous other players will also be hoping to end the English domination of the sport; watch out for a strong contingent from Ireland lead by Ed Cunningham, and Bob Jackson of New Zealand should never be ruled out of any event.

This may be a once in a lifetime opportunity to see croquet played at the very highest level, and as always spectators will be made very welcome at all of the venues.

Make sure you put the dates in your diary and if you can, come along to watch and enjoy

this feast of croquet.

The schedule of play is as follows.

29 June - 1 July Doubles Open Championship (all rounds to the Qtr final Stage)
2 July - 4 July World And Open Championship Block Play (There will be 8 blocks of 10 players with the top 4 in each block going through to the Knock out stage)

5 - 6 July Knock out stage best of three games and plate games

7 July Semi Finals of Singles and Doubles

8 July Finals

Play on the first eight days will be at all four venues Hurlingham, Parsons Green, Roehampton and Surbiton.

The semi finals and finals will take place at Hurlingham. Spectators are very welcome. Entry is free for CA associates. Entry to Hurlingham for non associates is £8. Come and see the best players in the World from 20 different countries, support your local favourites or why not come to watch and learn.

Thursday 28 June (the day before the doubles event starts) and may continue on one or more of the doubles days (29 June to 1 July). Players entering this qualifier will also be able to play in the doubles. The exact format and duration of the qualifier will depend on the number of players wishing to play. Players entering the qualifier will also be able to enter the plate competition. This qualifier will be open to those who applied for a wild card place but were not accepted and those who applied for a CA place but were not accepted by ranking. There will be an entry fee of no more than 10 pounds for the qualifier. Play on Thursday will be at Surbiton Croquet Club.



Reg Bamford will be challenging for the title

Due to a very high number of entries for both the 8 wild card places and the 32 CA places for the World Championships. (64 entries in total) the Organising Committee considered a number of alternatives.

In order to give more players to opportunity to play in the event we have decided that two places would be available through a qualifying competition. This means that we will have 7 wild cards places, 31 CA places and 2 Qualifier places. Details of the 7 wild card places and the 31 CA places will be available within the next few days.

The qualifier competition will be held on



Stephen Mulliner - looking to go one better than runner-up

The Competitors:

Champion

and Runner-Up

Fulford R

Mulliner S

Players nominated by their Countries

Australia

Fleming B

Meatherington S

Bassett T

Clarke M

Sands A

Belgium

Lamb

Canada

McBride Leo

Egypt

El Mahdi A

England

Maugham

Clarke C

Irwin

Comish S

Avery M

Germany

TBA

Guernsey

TBA

Ireland

Ed Cunningham

M McInerney

R McInerney

Isle of Man

K Wells

Italy

TBA

Japan

T Nozaki

Jersey

Burrow M

Netherlands

TBA

New Zealand

Garrison T

Jackson B

Parkinson P

Bryant G

Davis S

Palestine

TBA

Scotland

Bond I

South Africa

Bamford

Spain

Juan Ojeda

Switzerland

Sexton I

USA

Fournier J

Osborn J

Kelley R

Cherry B

Wales

Burridge I

Other Entries

Cordingley P

Brown R

Suter (SA)

Dyer J

Trimmer P

Williams S

Hort P

Dawson J

Fathing C

Openshaw D

Heap M

Johnson A N (NZ)

Aiton K M H

Le Moignan T

Burge T

Patmore C

Curry Ms G

Tudor S

Wilkins T

Death JF

Williams C

Noble G

Hobbs(SA)

Vincent I

Hall T(Aus)

Tibble L

Mrozinski A

Gibbons J

Dawson Ms C (Aus)

Magee D

Fitzgerald P

Wynand L (S Africa)

Bulloch D (NZ)

Ruby B (USA)

Kirby J

Nel L (Canada)

Cumming B (Canada)

Bent D (USA)