

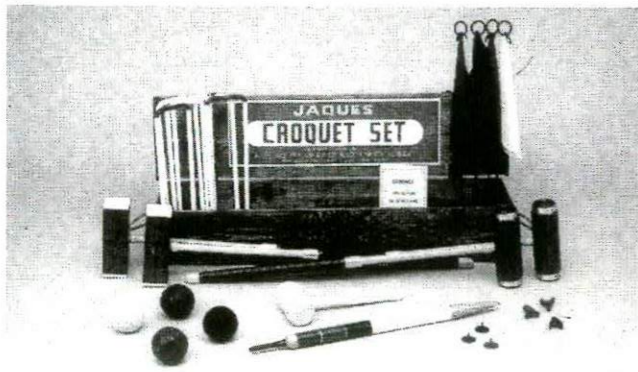
The Croquet Gazette

Issue 274 ~ July 2001



IN THIS ISSUE

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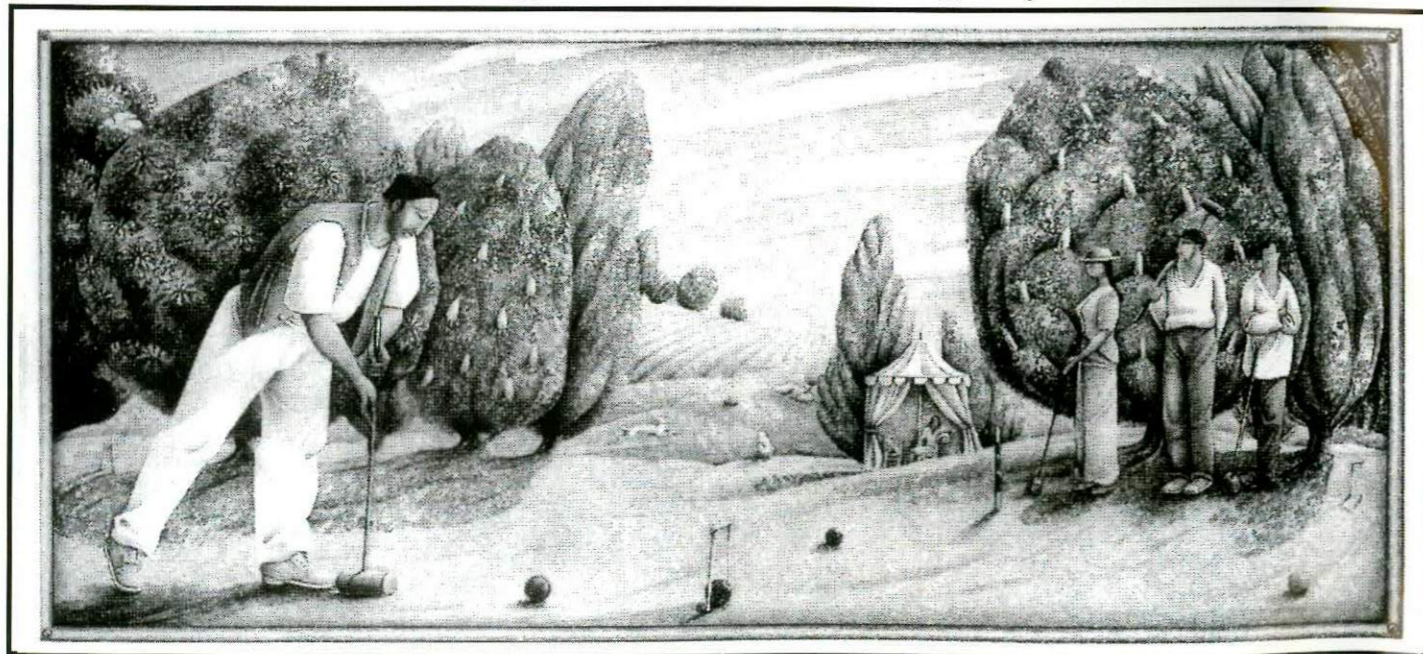
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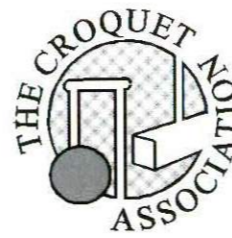
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Specific Questions & Queries

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

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

Photographs are always required. Both black and white or colour prints can be used. Slides are no longer accepted. Photocopies of pictures cannot be used. If using digital photography please send me a jpeg or tif format file. Prints of digital photos cannot be scanned. Please detail on the reverse of all photos the subject of the picture, and if you require the photographs to be returned please include your address on the reverse.

Tournament Results & Reports

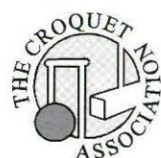
Tournament results should be reported on the tournament return sheet.

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

Delivery Queries

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

THE CROQUET GAZETTE



Issue 274 July 2001 £3.00

Front Cover: Prize winners at the Peels Memorial Tournament. LtoR: Derek & Sheila Watts - Doubles winners. Neil Williams - Vice President and presenter. Bob Burnett - winner of the Mens singles, and runner up in the doubles with partner Ann Belcher. Barbara Young - winner of the Ladies singles. Ray Belcher - silver award winner. David Maddocks - consolation event winner.

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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.

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	4
CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN	4
NEWS & INFO	5
LETTERS	6
THAT SNOBS GAME	7
CHARTS EDGE	8
NOTICE OF A.G.M.	9
PROPOSED RULE CHANGES	10
VOTING PAPER	11
LETTERS CONTD.	13
MEET THE NEW EDITOR	13
BREAK BUILDER NO.3	14
TOURNAMENT ROUND-UP	16

EDITORIAL

At last, after six years and 38 issues, I am writing my final contribution as Editor. I never envisaged being in the hot seat for this length of time, my original thought was for perhaps a year or two—but we all know about the best laid plans. I stayed on because there were still things that I wanted to do with the Gazette, and it is amazing how quickly the issues pass by. There is still room for change and improvement, but I now know that I am not going to complete that journey, it is more an evolution than a revolution that is required, and I am sure that James is the right person to take us down that road if he is given sufficient support and encouragement from the readers and officials.

I have been very lucky in some respects that I have had some help and support in the production over the years. At this point I feel that I have to single out a few individuals for a special mention here, because they always replied to my requests positively, so to Liz Taylor-Webb, Roy Wallis, David Drazin and Neil Williams – thanks, and if you can, keep up the good work. I would also like to thank the readers who made a contribution, no matter how small, whether or not it was published. Some accepted their non-publication with good grace others did not, alas. This is not the start of the sour grapes column on my behalf, but more a gentle reminder on my successors behalf, that the editors position is a part-time one, we do the best we can given the time and resources to produce the Gazette. By all means please continue to make suggestions, as to what you would like to see in the Gazette, but bear in mind that 'someone' has to write the articles you suggest, and that 'someone' can be very elusive to find. So please be patient or perhaps even find a writer for the articles you want.

Now to those people who didn't meet my deadlines, refused to co-operate and offered no help – my successor knows who you are.

What am I going to do with all my spare time now? Play more croquet, put a few more miles on my bike, set up a web site and ignore the first piece of advice I was given by Mr Dorke in issue 237 – the day job is going too and I am going to try my hand at living abroad for a while. Hasta Leugo

Gail Curry
Ex-editor

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

First of all, an apology. I had intended to start off this column by welcoming all those who are coming to England for the World Championships.

I now realise that this issue is probably going to be read when you have all gone home! That's the problem with writing something so far in advance. So instead, I hope that you all had a very enjoyable visit.

I have just come back from the Inter-Counties. Lots of faces, old and new, although it was sometimes difficult to see them through the mist! As is so often the way, excitement was kept up right to the last match. Not this time to see the winners as that had been plain for a fair time, especially in division 1. This time the tension was to see who got relegated to division 2. At the finish there were 5 teams on 5 wins - amazing! I will leave actual names for you to read in the tournament report and simply congratulate the winners and commiserate with those relegated. I will, however, add my own thanks to those of the winning Captain regarding the huge volume of work carried out by the Manager, Chris Williams and the unsung heroes and heroines of Southwick and Compton clubs.

Although this will be read after the Worlds, at the moment they are still in preparation. As Chairman I am in a position to observe just how many people, are devoting time, effort and often their own money into making this event a success. I pay tribute to their work. I am very confident that I can write in anticipation, saying when this is read "Congratulations on a job well done".

Finally, also when this is read, I will have managed the Jersey Championships. I just hope they are saying the same about me!

Don Gaunt

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NEWS & INFORMATION

New Croquet Headquarters Sought

I regret to have to tell you that after over 40 years, the Hurlingham club have informed me that they can no longer give a home to the headquarters of the Croquet Association. This is not because of any disagreement between us. It is due to the Hurlingham Club's undertaking extensive re-structuring which has severely limited their available space. In addition, the extra administration accommodation that had been planned is not now going to be built, owing to planning restrictions.

I can assure you that there is no loss of good-will between us and Hurlingham, and that there is every intention that major events such as the Opens will continue to be held there as before.

I would like to record here, our gratitude to Hurlingham for the immense amount of support and assistance that they have given to us over the last four decades. This help has been given in time, money and expertise and in large amounts of all of them. Thank you, Hurlingham.

We have been given 12 months, which may seem a long time, but it is not really, when one considers all that is going to have to be done. Furthermore, it will be in our interests not to have to leave things to the last minute as it would mean moving in the middle of the next season. Ideally we need to be in place before the 2002 season starts.

This is going to be a formidable task for us, so besides informing you of the situation, in this letter I am also seeking your help. This help can be in any form - ideas, expertise in office relocation, offers of help, offers to serve on the relocation working party we are setting up, suggestions on location (including where you think it should NOT be), even money!

So what needs to be done? There are two offices presently at Hurlingham, the administration office and the commercial office. The administration office presently consists of a Portakabin with just enough room for two/three staff and their associated equipment. We also have a considerable amount of stuff stored in the basement of Hurlingham House. The commercial office is about a third of the size of the administration office, and again is barely large enough to hold the stock needed.

It is probably not essential that the two offices be located at the same place; there are arguments for and against this. It does however need to be borne in mind that the office staff, Nigel & Janet, and the commercial agent David, all live in various locations within reach of Hurlingham. Any relocation far from there could well mean the loss of one or more of

them.

Please direct all offers of help, in whatever form, via the Secretary. Although this is, undeniably a serious problem, with a bit of luck and a lot of goodwill, we may turn a problem into a success story.
Don Gaunt, 5th July 2001

Tournaments in South Africa

THE ANDY KNOX "SNOWBIRD" TOURNAMENT

Start your season in style, join us in sunny Cape Town for this inaugural two-day tournament which has been specially designed as a relaxing warm-up to the ever popular Western Province Tournament.

Organised by Rondebosch Croquet Club in memory of our much-loved Late President, the tournament will be played as two blocks of six, all twelve players meeting in a composite final. The winner will receive a beautiful floating trophy and, together with the runner-up, will take home a permanent award.

Play will be on Tuesday and Wednesday 5th & 6th March 2002 with an optional day trip to the Winelands on Thursday and a sunset cruise round Table Mountain and back to the Waterfront on Friday evening. Every participant will play five full games and will be entitled to two days free practice before the WP tournament. We will also arrange entertainment for the non-croquet playing partners if they would like. For this first year we are limiting entries to the first 12 players to apply.

Western Province Croquet Tournament

This popular tournament is to be played at Rondebosch Croquet Club from Saturday 9th March to Saturday 16th March 2002. The Golf Croquet Tournament is to be played at Somerset West Croquet Club from Thursday February 28 to Sunday 3rd March.

For entry forms for both tournaments please contact Carole Knox on caroleknox@freemail.absa.co.za or at 0027-21-794 6567. Alternatively at 10 Rustenvrede Avenue, Constantia, 7806, Cape Town, South Africa.

PS. Don't forget the Brits vs RCC Champagne Farewell on Sunday March 17th followed by lunch at Rhodes Memorial.

Change of CA Tournament Dates 2002

The Governments decision to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee in 2002 by adding an extra day to the late May Bank Holiday and then putting the whole holiday back a week to 3rd & 4th June has caused considerable problems to the agreed Tournament Programme for that year. With the consent of the Clubs involved the Tournament Committee have approved the following changes to the dates of the Inter-Counties and the Men's & Women's :

21st - 26th May 2002 at Cheltenham - Men's & Women's Championships.
1st - 4th June 2002 at Southwick and Compton - Inter - Counties Championship.

It has not been found necessary to change the dates of any other CA event.

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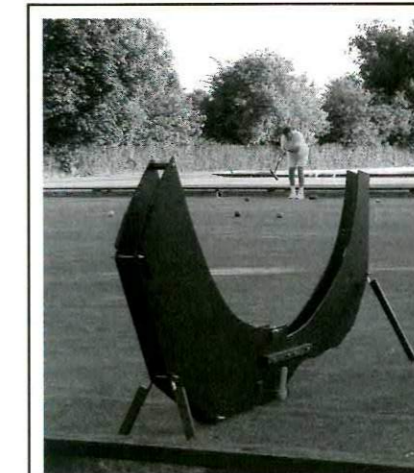
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WHAT IS IT AND WHAT DOES IT DO?

FIND OUT IN THE NEXT ISSUE. YOU MAY JUST WANT ONE.

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ASSOCIATION
WEB SITE @
<http://www.croquet.org.uk/>

LETTERS ...

Bisque Taking & Handicap Play

Dear Editor

In handicap play where large numbers of bisques are on offer the fate of the provider is often pitiable, particularly with a slow opponent. He may sit for the whole morning with a vast quantity of bisques in front of him, his only exercise being to reach forward and uproot them. He might still be in this position as lunch approaches, having had a most boring morning. No wonder low bisquers don't like such games. My solution is simple, if controversial. At the start of the game the low bisquer might hit in and have a long break, but from the moment from when the first bisques is taken there should be a strict time limit before the last is removed (I would suggest 90 minutes).

The advantages of this system may be obvious. The good player will probably have a much greater chance of being on court himself. The bisques taker would be compelled to use them more constructively, or he might not be able to use them at all: the whole game would be speeded up; and finally the good player would be much more inclined to enter a handicap tournament. Progressive clubs might give it a try perhaps?

Andrew Potter

Dear Editor

I write in part in response to the President's remarks and the subsequent discussion on over-long days of play and the fourteen point game. It seems we are confusing two issues that could not be further apart. One is the boredom of the very best players in the middle section of an advanced twenty six point game and the other is the inability of the less talented or new players to finish a handicap twenty six point game in the time allowed. Both problems that need addressing, but at different ends of the spectrum. For the very best players the fourteen point game may be the answer, if the majority want it. For the high handicappers, what they need is a system that allows them to finish a game, played in a way that is going to improve their break building abilities, within a reasonable time. After all, this is what the CA award scheme is all about.

Once a break is in progress, provided there is enough bisques, it does not take long to play an extra six hoops. Therefore reducing the number of hoops to be run is not the answer, providing the ability, and incentive, to run those

hoops is. Everyone would agree that two twenty handicappers playing each other without bisques is ridiculous. Nothing they do bears any resemblance to the game as it should be played as they cannot set up and maintain a break without bisques. On the other hand a twenty handicap playing a scratch player knows he has to set up a break and go for broke. What is needed is a system that allows the twenty handicap to play the same attacking game in each scenario.

The problems many high and middle handicappers (who are not rapid improvers) have in playing an attacking game depend, in part, on the ability of their opponent.

1) If playing someone slightly better than themselves they will often try to conserve whatever bisques they have for an emergency. Often setting up a near perfect break but failing to get hoop position from the final croquet stroke. Rather than take a precious bisque to tidy up the break and continue they will use the continuation shot in a negative manner.

2) If playing someone of equal ability they will be fearful of setting up a break, (thereby committing their partner ball into the lawn), and then breaking down leaving the break for their opponent. They often therefore try to play a three-ball break leaving their partner ball close to a boundary to "go back to if things go wrong". Which they invariably do after one or two hoops because their break is a ball short.

3) If giving bisques the strategy seems to be to play defensively, giving nothing away, until the bisques have gone.

Whatever justification is used for playing this way, it is still very boring and frustrating both for spectators and the opponent. It does not improve their croquet or give them practice at playing all round breaks. Invariably they will win or lose by a few hoops on time. Precisely the problem we are addressing. When they play an A class player they know they have to get round quickly or lose. In other words they have to play two all round breaks, something they are not familiar with or practised at doing in competition.

Full bisque games are not the answer, they are equally unattractive, there is little thought to tactics and it is often a question of winning the toss, getting the fourth turn and going round. The local bandit however is likely to take one ball

round on turn three and his second ball on turn five. I know, I've done it, and I've had it done to me.

At first sight a handicap base would seem to be the answer but an arbitrary base, wherever it is set, is disproportionate in its advantage. The base needs to be different for different pairings of players. If the base were set at half the average handicap of the two players, this would give middle and high handicappers bisques each, with which to play attacking croquet. The lower the handicap of their opponent the more bisques they would have.

If they have a few more bisques, and they know their opponent has a few also, it is going to concentrate the mind and encourage them to get on with it. The system is simple; it requires no complicated maths, the handicap base is always half the average handicap of the two players.

The bisque system will make no difference to low handicap players playing middle bisquers in handicap games. It will be no different than the present bisque difference system for high handicappers playing A class players. Where it will be different is for high and middle handicappers playing each other, it will give both players bisques (the number will vary depending on their opponent) and enable both to play attacking croquet and finish a game within a reasonable time.

Bob Burnett

Omega Hoops

Dear Editor

I have just finished playing in the Bristol Tournament (16/17 June), my first experience of the new, spanner adjustable hoops. In this case they had been carefully and meticulously adjusted by Hamish Hall at a clearance of 3/32ths.

Wonder of wonders, in five games I only got stuck in a hoop on three occasions, a record! Discussion with other competitors left me with the feeling that most of us with handicaps of 10 or over fared noticeably better with these hoops than usual. I can only assume that this was due to their remarkably smooth surface. Otherwise the critical dimensions of the hoops, particularly the weight and the diameter of the uprights, seemed the same as the old type when we compared them during the tournament.

If this characteristic is commonly experienced (and perhaps further comments would be welcomed), the effect is to make life easier for high bisquers. An argument therefore exists for reducing the clearance for handicap games to 1/16 and seeing what happens.

Tony Backhouse

Continued on Page 13

THAT SNOBS GAME

Class, Education, Challenge & Croquet

By Ian Beecroft

What yer playin that snobs game for? That was the comment of a parent to the children and myself as we played croquet on the front lawn of our junior school one lunch-time.

I wonder what proportion of the readership of *The Croquet Gazette* actually realise that this is perhaps the most widely held view of their beloved game outside the cognoscenti. To be fair, at my new school, slightly more up-market, toffs game is the view presented to me (not just by parents, but by staff, incredulous at my appetite for lunch-time after lunch-time of introducing, supervising and coaching croquet), though their private view is probably much the same as in the previous mining village.

I am a Primary School teacher in the metropolitan borough of Rotherham. The two schools at which I have undertaken croquet as an extra-curricular activity are both in former mining villages on the outskirts of the borough. They have very stereotypical white, working-class communities, following well-tried and expected activities: local football teams, crown green bowls, and, particularly, cricket and snooker; these revolving around the local clubs - usually miners welfare clubs. A few of the more aspirant locals play golf at local municipal courses. What is their experience of croquet? Well, before I arrived, virtually nil - especially if you discount plastic, seaside sets! And yet, they have a view of it. A negative, class-based, inverted-snobbery-ridden antipathetic view. Most of the children to whom I have introduced the game, however, love it.

I have been playing croquet for about ten years, now. I have never played in a competition, nor yet on a full-sized court. I have only been a C.A. member since last year, visited my first club (Brodsworth Hall, near Doncaster) and played through (with difficulty) championship hoops for the first time last year. I was introduced to croquet at Felden, the Boys Brigades National Training Centre in Hemel Hempstead and found it a fascinating game. My first set was bought from my fencing coach - a Wimbledon set by F.H. Ayres - certainly an inter-war set as it had both turning and winning pegs, wooden balls, the best clips I've seen (still), ash mallets with slightly under-sized heads, corner flags and a good weight of hoop, though a little generous in their width through years of spreading. This satisfied me in the back garden for a few years, (it's still my favourite set) then I came across a boxless, namelss set, of good quality at a farm sale for £10. So, then there were two. I was still a student at this time but began using these sets with children at our annual B.B. summer camps near Skegness.

After I qualified as a teacher and found myself in the the mining village of Thurcroft in the summer of 1994. It seemed quite an ordinary thing for me to offer it to the Y6 children at lunch-time. We had a fairly nice lawn in one of the quads and off we went. Over the years above a couple of hundred children have been able to experience "proper" croquet at Thurcroft Junior School. For the last couple of years I got a set of cheap plastic balls to protect my wooden ones, and used both sets out on the front lawn, where the illuminating incident of the title took place. I have always played a version of Association croquet, as I have always felt that the children deserved and would cope with, the more complex game. My adaptations are based on time, space and pupil restrictions: hence in a lunch-time only the 14pt game is played, the playing area is usually substantially less than even a short croquet court - about 10 x 8yds - and always in pairs, to give as many children as possible an opportunity to play. In addition, when starting children off, we play in strict colour order, so that everyone has a turn relatively frequently and they can get used to thinking about leaves knowing which colour must play next. (Purists please note that proper, above, was in inverted commas!)



Scott, Josh, Matthew and Karl enjoying a game of croquet.

That the children quickly pick up the general rules of play relating to turns, roquet, croquet, continuation and breaks, I feel is a vindication of the decision to play Association (however corrupted) rather than simplistic golf croquet. Many of the children, particularly, but not exclusively, the boys see similarities with both snooker and golf and the challenge of making a break of even two or three hoops is very exciting to them, as are long roquets and long hoop runs. The transfer of elements found in golf and snooker help to dispel preconceptions that some of the children have, from their own or inherited view of croquet as depicted in modern (or colonial) life. I'm sure that even those parents who may view the playing of croquet as class-desertion, would find, on playing, that it has much more appeal than might be immediately apparent to an unsympathetic spectator. The children playing on the afternoon of the utterance of the title were shaken to their roots by such an assertion from a parent. Their faces told of many different feelings.

They were not shocked, as you might suppose, by the language - such is commonplace in 'better off' areas let alone in mining villages. They were slightly embarrassed for my having to witness it; some stated with certainty that it wasn't such a game, whereas others asked if it was - wondering if I had betrayed them by getting them to play a game that was unmanly. We discussed that if we enjoyed it and thought it was a good game, what did it matter what other people thought about it. But of course, these things do matter - not just to children. How, though, are we to break down these views in such places/communities unless we get the game to children before they have cemented their opinions, prejudices and preferences? It's my view that part of my responsibility as a teacher, particularly in areas less privileged in education, wealth and culture, is to open the children's minds to a world outside their own experiences and offer them the chance of following whatever life-path they wish; not being constricted by parental, social or even academic expectations. The playing or not of croquet is a mere drop, however symbolic, in this tempestuous ocean.

For croquet, however, what can we learn from these experiences? Certainly that if the croquet community really want their sport to grow and achieve serious consideration, then to take the game to children - not dumbed-down - whilst at a receptive age is crucial. This is so, even if they don't have much opportunity to follow up their experience outside school. But what real support is there? Is this general or selective support, as the parents of my class might suggest?

Since moving schools last September - from one mining village to another - I was faced with a minor dilemma. Would croquet die at my previous school? How would I be able to continue at my new school and still keep it going at the former? I had only two sets and one me. Two staff at the old place showed a willingness to keep it up if I could provide the equipment and a refresher session for them. Fine, but one set in each school - four children at a time - is a very slow way of doing it. Also, without practice, rules are forgotten and no improvement is made. Then



Carl, Luke & Danny enjoying their break.

I saw a plea in The Gazette for people to apply for schools grants. So I did. My aim was to cobble together enough equipment, second hand if need be, to have two games going at each school. I had made four mallets and bought a couple of others from antique shops in the interim, so what I really needed were a couple of sets of balls and hoops (having four pegs already).

What became of my application? Not even a formal reply, never mind any grant. Instead I did receive support & advice from Mike Evans at Beverley, along with the loan of a set of decent balls, hoops and cut-down mallets which have been a great help. However, what message does it send to people in the real world to not even receive a written reply to my application from the C.A. let alone financial assistance? - South Yorkshire? Frightful place, what? Don't even have a proper club, yknow? Ghastly mining villages with all those dreadful little oicks in their beastly

terraced houses without so much as a decent striped lawn between them? Oh, they'll never make anything of it or join a club when they're older; probably just use the mallets to smash up bus shelters dont you think? In the end I have been fortunate to drop on Riley who have stopped making croquet equipment and were able to offer me good prices on some remaining stock. I now have six sets, one lent to Thurcroft, and they bought a set themselves for £155. I daren't calculate what I ended up spending. Today, however, with the arrival of another set of hoops from Riley, we had twenty-four children all playing croquet on half of the sports field, which I cut at the weekend with my father's Suffolk Punch motor-mower.

We will never get a club in Sheffield at which these children might continue their interest if support is not forthcoming for initiatives which bring croquet to children. They may not play again until they are perhaps at college, or maybe when they have a house and garden of their own and consider buying a set, but from their experience in their formative years they will, at least, I hope, think more of croquet than that f*ckin poofs game.

Ian Beecroft

Treeton C. E. Primary School, Wood Lane, Treeton, Rotherham S.Yorks, S60 5PN



Charts Edge

By Tremain Arkley (USA)

I recently acquired a watercolor painted in 1857 which documents croquet played in England at this early date.

In this year an unknown amateur Victorian painter, Kathleen Fry, painted a watercolor showing croquet being played on the grounds of Chart's Edge.

This was the residence of her aunt, Mrs. W. C. Sheatfield (sic). Chart's Edge, a Victorian house, is located in Kent, 1/2 mile south of Westerham on B2026 towards Chartwell. Today it stands on 7 acres of gardens and grounds, is privately owned and open for garden tours.

The watercolor is in pristine condition; the colors bright and crisp with no fading. The unframed image measures 4 7/16 x 7 3/4 inches. Two adults and two children are watching one boy in play on the croquet lawn in front of the house which is shown in fine detail. A large grove of deciduous trees in the background edges the long drive ending in a circular area in front of the house.

The croquet mallets are fantastic; longer than the players and the balls are oversized. The court setting is random, the hoops not in any recognizable order. This is a fine example of early out players actually watching play rather than a jumble of players on the court at the same time being social, the men gloating over exposed ankles and/or petticoats!

THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION NOTICE OF MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of The Croquet Association will be held at the Hurlingham Club on Saturday 13 October 2001 commencing at 11.00am.

Coffee will be served beforehand from 10.15am.

AGENDA

1. Minutes of the previous meeting held on Saturday 14 October 2000. These were published in *The Croquet Gazette* no. 271, (January 2001). Copies will be available at the meeting and will be sent to Home Members on written request to the Secretary.

2. Chairman's Report.

3. Accounts for the year to 31 December 2000 and Treasurer's Report. These accounts and a brief commentary were published in *The Croquet Gazette*, no. 273, (May 2001). Copies will be available at the meeting and a more comprehensive report will be sent to Home Members on written request to the Secretary.

4. Election of Treasurer.

Dr RW Bray offers himself for re-election.

5. Election of Reporting Accountant.

6. Election of Council Members.

The following five members retire under Rule 18 (a)(i):

Messrs AG Fathers, DK Openshaw, Prof. A Pidcock and Dr IG Vincent by rotation.

Mr J Isaacs, who had been chosen to fill a casual vacancy on Council under Rule 24(a).

Two further vacancies arise from the resignations of Messrs DL Gaunt and PWP Campion.

All retiring members seek re-election under Rule 18(a)(i). There have been no other nominations.

Consequently there are five candidates for the seven vacancies on Council and an election will not be necessary.

7. MOTIONS OF THE COUNCIL

Motion 1.

That the Rules of the Croquet Association be amended to establish formal Disciplinary and Appeals Procedures.

Motion 2.

That Rule 11(a)(ii) be amended.

Motion 3.

That in order to permit the use of electronic mail by the Association the Rules of the Croquet Association be amended.

Motion 4.

That Rule 28 of the Croquet Association be amended.

Motion 5.

That Rule 27 of the Croquet Association be amended.

The full text of all additions and amendments to the Rules is shown on the voting paper accompanying this Agenda.

Motion 6.

That SN Mulliner be elected a Vice-President of the Association.

8. Benefactors' Book.

The names of the Benefactors will be read.

9. Presentation of the Apps and Steel Memorial Bowls.

10. Presentation of Croquet Association Diplomas.

11. Any other business.

12. President's Closing Address.

Nigel Graves

Secretary

1 July 2001

Proposed changes to the CA Rules

Members are being sent voting papers concerning Motions of the Council that are concerned with changing the Rules of the Croquet Association at the AGM in October. You may find this guide to the proposals useful. The changes can be grouped under three headings:

DISCIPLINARY AND APPEALS PROCEDURES

The changes arise from the recommendations of a disciplinary working party that was asked to review the CA's procedures in this area. Its overall assessment was that disciplinary problems in croquet are comparatively rare and most are easily resolved when tempers have cooled, though a number of social changes seem likely to increase the number of incidents. However, there was concern that it would only take one person with sufficient means to take the CA to court over defects in its current procedures, to bankrupt the Association or place an intolerable burden on the volunteers who run it. This is not a purely hypothetical risk, as the governing body of British Athletics had to be dissolved as a result of such a case.

The working party therefore recommended changes in the CA Rules and Tournament Regulations to bring the CA's procedures in line with current practice in other sports. The changes to the Tournament Regulations were made last autumn (see, for instance, Reg. P2(c) (misconduct), P2(b) (gambling) and C3(d) (refusal of entries); the changes to the Rules are described below. The hope, of course, is that these procedures will rarely need to be used, but their existence will act as a safety valve to prevent problems escalating out of control.

Rules 5 and 8

These existing rules, which give Council power to expel an Individual Associate or Member Club subject to appeal to a General Meeting, were felt to be unworkable in all except the most extreme case. In particular, they did not provide for any form of hearing or lesser sanction than expulsion, and there was no mechanism for an individual to lay a complaint. They are to be replaced by a more flexible procedure outlined in the new Rule 8.

The provisions in new Rule 8 cover both individuals and clubs. Paragraph (a) deals with complaints by one individual or club against another (but note that the last sentence excludes purely internal club disputes), (b) deals with complaints by individuals or clubs against the CA and (c) allows the CA to take action against its members. In all cases, they direct that attempts should be made to resolve the issue informally, but if this fails the matter should be referred to a panel which will deal with it under the procedure set out in Appendix 1. Note particularly the last sentence of 8(b), which provides that complaints against the CA will be resolved in the last resort by arbitration, rather than the courts.

Rule 25

The addition empowers Council to establish disciplinary and appeals panels. The intention (expressed in amendments to Council's standing orders) is that a list of people willing to serve will be maintained, from which panels will be constituted if required.

Appendix 1

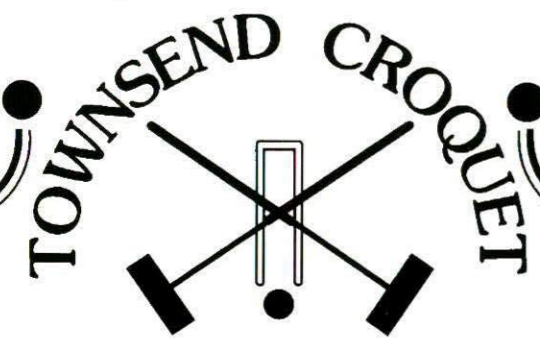
This sets out in general terms the procedures for the panels. Paragraph (a) specifies how complaints should be made, (b) gives the powers of the panels, (c) provides for appeals, (d) for arbitration and (e) for publication of decisions.

Ian Vincent

Administration

Rule 11(a)(ii)

Council recognizes that the existing Rule has some minor defects: among other things it does not properly incorporate all that was agreed at the Special General Meeting in 1993. These defects are now being removed by proposing: (a) that the amount by which subscriptions may be raised will be based on the annual change in the April Retail Price Index, rather than the present July RPI, to allow Council to decide and notify members



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of new rates by 1st August, and (b) to allow rounding up to the nearest 5p, which is a reinstatement of the situation that prevailed up to 1999.

Rules 13, 14, 15(c) and 19(a)

Council proposes to give the Secretary the option to communicate electronically with Individual Associates and Member Clubs, subject to their prior agreement (Rules 13, 15(c) and 19(a)), or request (Rule 14). In the future, this is likely to reduce the Association's costs.

Rule 28

The addition of the words "or held in any other legally acceptable manner" will make it possible for Council to have a more active investment policy, if it so wishes. Currently all the Association's securities are in the name of Trustees and this may prove to be problematic if, for example, it is necessary for signatures to be obtained within a few days when Trustees may be abroad or indisposed.

Laws and Regulations

Rule 27(a) and (c)

It is proposed to recognize that international bodies on which the Association is represented, may now propose amendments to the Laws of Association and Golf croquet, and they may issue rulings and a commentary on the Laws.

Rule 27(b)

Council has delegated the authority to adopt temporary variations in the regulations for tournaments from itself to relevant Council committees. The text in the present Rule stating that Council has this authority has now been deleted.

Quiller Barrett

Voting Paper

Motions of the Council to be proposed at the AGM on 13 October 2001

Please vote for or against by ticking the appropriate box after each Motion.

Motion 1.

That the Rules of the Croquet Association be amended as under to establish formal Disciplinary and Appeals Procedures:

Rule 5 *Delete the text. To maintain the existing numbering of the Rules, substitute the word "Deleted".*

Rule 8 *Substitute:*

DISCIPLINARY AND APPEALS PROCEDURES

(a) If an Individual Associate or Member Club believes that they have been adversely affected by the conduct of another Individual Associate or Member Club which is in breach of the Association's Rules or Tournament Regulations, or which is injurious to the character or interests of the Association, they should first attempt to resolve the matter informally, failing which they may lay a complaint before a disciplinary panel by following the procedure set out in Appendix 1 of these Rules. A disciplinary panel shall not consider any matter that it decides should be the sole concern of a Member Club.

(b) If an Individual Associate or Member Club believes that they have been adversely affected by maladministration by the Council, its Committees or Officers, they should first attempt to resolve the matter informally, failing which they may appeal against it by following the procedure set out in Appendix 1 of these Rules. It is a condition of membership of the Association, for both individuals and clubs, that this procedure, which includes provision for arbitration, is their sole remedy against the Association.

(c) If the Council, its Committees or Officers, believes the conduct of an Individual Associate or Member Club to be in breach of the Association's Rules or Tournament Regulations, or to be injurious to the character or interests of the Association, it should first attempt to resolve the matter informally, failing which it may refer the matter to a disciplinary panel under the procedure set out in Appendix 1 of these Rules.

Rule 25 *Substitute for heading:*

COUNCIL: COMMITTEES AND PANELS

Insert additional paragraph at end:

The Council may appoint disciplinary panels consisting of members of the Council and other Individual Associates, and appeals panels consisting of current and past Presidents, Vice-Presidents, Chairmen of the Association and if necessary other Individual Associates.

Rules

App 1 *Insert at end of Rules:*

Appendix One

PROCEDURES CONCERNING COMPLAINTS,

DISCIPLINARY AND APPEALS PANELS

The procedures that any of the parties named in Rule 8 may invoke, and the consequences that follow, are as given below and as provided for in any procedural guidelines the Council may authorise:

(a) Complainants

Complainants should inform the Secretary in writing about the complaint or matter in dispute giving details of the specific instance(s) of an alleged breach of the Association's Rules, Laws or Regulations or conduct that is alleged to be injurious to the character or interests of the Association.

(b) Disciplinary Panels

Disciplinary panels shall have the power to make declarations, issue warnings, exclude players, teams or clubs from selection or participation in certain events, suspend or terminate membership of the Association. If membership of the Association is terminated all subscriptions paid by the member shall be forfeited.

(c) Appeals Panels

Any of the parties concerned, or the Council itself, may refer the decision of a disciplinary panel to an appeals panel by informing the Secretary in writing of the matter that is the subject of the appeal. Appeals panels may also consider written complaints alleging one or more specific instances of maladministration detrimental to the complainant, or complaints about the decisions of the Association's Officers or Committees. Any reference to an appeals panel must be made within three months of the original decision of the disciplinary panel.

Appeals panels shall have the power to uphold or vary the findings and decisions in the case of a disciplinary appeal, and to make recommendations to Council in the case of an administrative appeal.

(d) Arbitration

If complainants are dissatisfied with the way in which the decision of the appeals panel has been reached they undertake to agree to binding arbitration by the Sports Disputes Resolution Panel, Francis House, Francis Street, London SW1P 1DE.

(e) Publication of decisions

The Association shall publish decisions of disciplinary and appeals panels.

For Against

Motion 2.

That Rule 11(a)(ii) of the Croquet Association be amended to read as follows:

Substitute

The subscription of a Member Club is based on a per capita rate which shall not, without the approval of a General Meeting, be raised by an amount greater than that needed to match inflation in the period since the current rate first applied except that it may be rounded up to the nearest 5p. The value of the Retail Price Index (all items) for the April immediately preceding the coming subscription year compared to the value of that Index for the April immediately preceding the subscription year to which the current subscription rate first applied, is to be used as the measure of inflation.

For Against

Motion 3.

That in order to permit the use of electronic mail by the Association the Rules of the Croquet Association be amended as follows:

Rule

13

Substitute:

GENERAL MEETINGS: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

A General Meeting of the Association shall be held annually in October at such time and place as the Council shall determine. The Secretary shall give at least 24 days notice of the meeting, accompanied by an agenda, either in the official journal of the Association or by post to every Home Member. As an alternative to use of the post the Secretary may, with the prior agreement of the member, transmit the information to the member electronically.

14 *Substitute for the second sentence:*

Copies shall be available before the meeting and on request shall be sent by post or may be transmitted electronically to Home Members.

15(c) *Substitute:*

The Secretary shall give at least 21 days notice of the meeting, accompanied by an agenda, either in the official journal of the Association or by post to every Home Member. As an alternative to use of the post the Secretary may, with the prior agreement of the member, transmit the information to the member electronically.

19(a) *Substitute:*

If notice of motion has been given under Rule 16 (c) or a Special General Meeting has been called or requisitioned, a voting paper shall be issued to all Home Members either with the Association's official journal or by post not less than 24 days before an Annual General Meeting or 21 days before a Special General Meeting, giving the terms of each motion to be proposed thereat. As an alternative to use of the post the Secretary may, with the prior agreement of the member, transmit the information to the member electronically.

For Against

Motion 4.
That Rule 28 of the Croquet Association be amended by the addition of the words "or held in any other legally acceptable manner" after the first appearance of the word "Trustees".

For Against

Motion 5.
That Rule 27 of the Croquet Association be amended to read as follows:

Substitute
LAWS AND REGULATIONS

(a) Amendments to, or new editions of, the Laws of both Association and Golf Croquet may be submitted to the Council for approval by an international body on which the Association is entitled to be represented or by a Council committee. If the Council is satisfied that adequate opportunity has been given for Individual Associates and Member Clubs to comment on the proposal, the Council may approve it by passing, with a majority of at least 6 to 4, a resolution specifying the date on which it is to take effect, which fact shall be published in the Association's official journal. Such approval by the Council of alterations to the Laws shall apply within the Domain under the provision of Rule 1(b).

(b) The Council shall have power to authorise the adoption of temporary variations in the Laws.

(c) The Council shall, for both Association and Golf Croquet, appoint one of its members to decide questions arising on the interpretation of the Laws and Regulations. The Council may additionally delegate power to issue rulings and commentary on the Laws to an international body on which the Association is entitled to be represented.

For Against

Motion 6.
That S N Mulliner be elected a Vice-President of the Association.

For Against

Print Name..... Signed.....

(If signing on behalf of a Member Club, please print the name of the club, and indicate the capacity in which you sign)

Date..... Please send to arrive no later than first post on 3 October 2001

To The Secretary, The Croquet Association, c/o The Hurlingham Club, Ranelagh Gardens, London SW6 3PR

Continued from page 6

Well Done C.A.

Dear Editor
I wish to extol the virtues of the C.A. The two latest brochures on Association and Golf Croquet look good, feel good and by-golly they should do us good. I think they are well presented and simple to understand with some great graphics. It is nice to see the photographers getting credit but how about whoever did the text. He, she, they definitely deserve a mention. Well done.

Len Hawkins

The 14pt Game

The 14 pt games is most appropriate for high bisquers, and handicap doubles. Some players dislike the 14pt game as they have less bisques, but will play a 26 point game and finish 14 - 12 on time by playing defensively.

The low handicap player suffers, as in effect they are giving too many bisques in an unfinished game.

I would like to suggest a new ruling for bisque taking, i.e. using only half the allocation for the first 14 points of a game, and then the rest can be used.

I do agree the use of handicap cards for 14 point games, with the five point move.

Iris Dwerryhouse

Curvy Bottomed Mallet

Dear Editor
For the past ten years I have been playing with a Walker 11 inch mallet, with a flat bottom, fitted with a fibre glass shaft and my stop shots have been great - even if I say so myself. Having been presented with an 11 inch

RPM mallet with a curved base, my stop shots are now going too far. Grounding the heel of the mallet means that the front comes up too high. To counteract this I stand closer to the ball and ground the centre of the mallet but this loses some of the 'stop'. Has anybody else faced the same problem and found a solution?

Having read Guy Towlson's paper on "moment of inertia in designing the heads of croquet mallets" I cannot confirm his mathematics but I can confirm that the peripheral weighted head of the RPM Mallet really works. The swing feels so right and after having been accustomed to a hexagon shaft, the round soft grip does not pose a problem. The swing momentum means that one just grips it in the right place. It's fantastic but why the curved bottom? Is it just a gimmick or is there another mathematical reason?

Len Hawkins



Editors new and old, James Hawkins and Gail Curry discussing Gazette issues. (Photo by The CA)

Meet the New Editor

James Hawkins, from Liverpool, came to the Association game in 1985, as a member of Southport and Birkdale Croquet Club, later joining Bowdon.

He has played for many years on the CA Tournament Circuit, at both handicap and advanced level. He successfully captained the winning Southport Longman Cup team in 1992. His work as Publicity Officer for the 1994 WCF World Championship at Carden Park resulted in widespread coverage for the game both in print and on radio. Playing regularly at Championship level, he is the current Captain of the Lancashire Inter-Counties Association Team, and a member of the Lancashire Inter-Counties Golf Croquet Team. He was formerly Development Officer for the North West Federation, and is a CA handicapper, Grade 1 coach, tournament referee and championship manager. He is currently Chairman of the Tournament Committee at Southport Croquet Club. An advocate of both short croquet and golf croquet as well as handicap and advanced play, he has recently been appointed to the CA Working Party investigating the introduction of Gateball to the UK.

His objectives for the future of the Gazette are to see coverage of the game which is less focused on play at a particular level, and to broaden the magazine's appeal to all Associates. "Since I've become involved, I've had a huge amount of feedback from other Associates. My main task is to satisfy everyone's demands, hopefully with a mix of news and features. What I can't promise now is radical change. I'd like to think that I can allow the Gazette to develop much further along the lines which Gail has laid out over the last six years."

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BREAK BUILDER 3

The third of John McCullough's Break Builder tips, first published in the Gazette in the spring of 1987, set this puzzle. This time you want to get a break started for Red for Hoop 4 and you are prepared to use one bisque, when Red has a short rush on Yellow five yards in front of Hoop 4, and the opponent balls are Blue on the East Boundary level with Hoop 4 and Black also on the East Boundary just south of Hoop 3?

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 4, a pioneer for Hoop 5 (next-but-one, thinking ahead), and a pivot, this time midway between Hoop 4 and Hoop 6, i.e. a couple of yards southeast of the peg. Of these the most immediately important is a good placing for the pioneer at Hoop 4.

The proposed solution is based on three principles:

1 You should avoid the temptation of making Hoop 4 using Yellow BEFORE trying to set up the break. If the pioneer at the next Hoop is good, and you intend to use a bisque, always try to set up the break before making the hoop. In addition, the option of the seven-yard shot, Red at Blue, should also be turned down. (If Black were in Corner II this is probably the only option.) If you do hit it, and croquet it to Hoop 5, you may still be able to roquet Yellow, make Hoop 4 and continue with the three-ball break. However, you should always invest one bisque for a four-ball break, rather than the chance of having to use one for the three-ball break should you miss Blue.

2 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, Yellow will be used in that role, and so Blue and Black will become pivot and pioneer for Hoop 5. Therefore the first shot is to rush Yellow into an accurate position. Take off to Blue and roquet it. Then comes the critical shot – play a thin take-off from Blue towards Black along the boundary, pushing Blue a couple of feet into the lawn. Roquet Black, and play a half-roll, pushing Black into the pivot position required, bringing Red into the lawn as well. Now you take advantage of the adjustment of Blue, by shooting off the lawn, so that, when the ball is replaced on the yard line, you have a rush on Blue towards Hoop 4.

3 Take the bisque and rush Blue halfway towards Yellow. The croquet shot is a stopshot, and it will put Blue to its pioneer position for Hoop 5, with Red as near Yellow as you can get it with that shot. Wherever possible you should arrange to despatch pioneers with stopshots, so the striker's ball has little distance to travel, and there is only a small chance of it being out of range of its next object ball.

Summary

- 1 Red rushes Yellow as accurate pioneer for Hoop 4.
- 2 Take off to Blue.
- 3 Red roquets Blue.
- 4 Croquet Blue with thin take-off to Black, moving Blue two feet into the lawn.
- 5 Red roquets Black.
- 6 Half-roll Blue into pivot position bringing Red well into the lawn.
- 7 Shoot off the East Boundary so that, when replaced, there is a rush on Black towards Yellow.
- 8 Take the bisque, and Red roquets Black halfway to Yellow.
- 9 Stopshot Blue accurately to Hoop 5, ending with Red near Yellow at Hoop 4.

The four-ball break exists for one bisque.

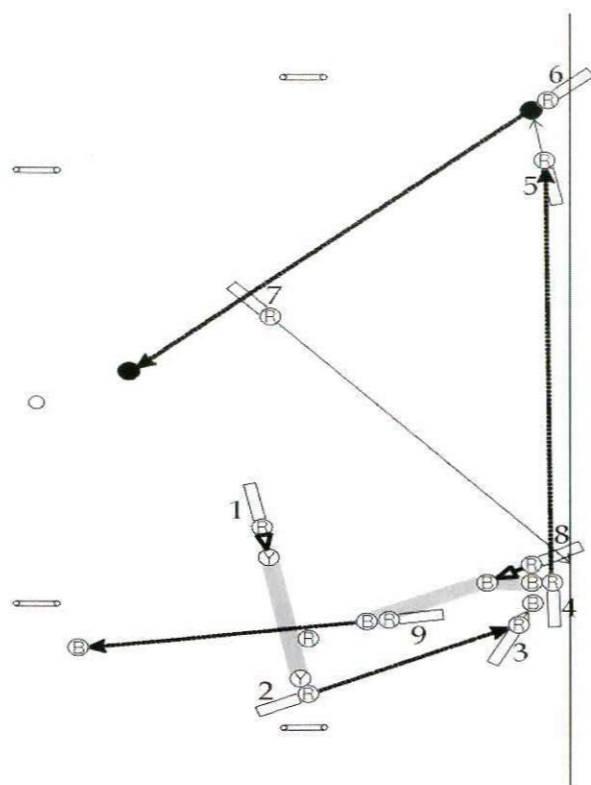


Diagram for BREAK BUILDER 3



The break has been constructed without having to use any difficult strokes. The half-roll is probably the hardest one included, but the ball positions at the end of that stroke are not critical – Black has to be somewhere in the middle, although there is a position for it suggested, and you do not want too oblique an angle in shooting Red off the boundary behind Blue. You may consider that the three-ball break for Hoops 4, 5 and 6 is within your capabilities most of the time, but ensuring you get round the six/one-back turn is most important, and you are much better off with all four balls in good positions well before then.

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TOURNAMENT ROUND-UP

MEN'S AND WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIPS 5 - 10 JUNE Report by David Magee

In stark contrast to last year's event, the 2001 Championships were attended by many of the country's top players, using the event as a work up to the World Championships. Overseas representation was equally strong for the same reason and all this increased interest led to 32 entries in the Men's and 12 entries in the Women's Championships which put a strain on the reduced numbers of lawns at Cheltenham.

Mixed Doubles entries were also up which could mean players prefer the Tuesday start. However, it does lead to an untidy situation as the Event cannot be completed before the start of the Singles and rounds of doubles have to be scheduled on the evenings of Thursday, Friday and Saturday to guarantee a result before everybody goes home. Anyway, to the event itself.

The Draw and Process progressed with few surprises apart from the Antipodean pairing of Bob Jackson and Creina Dawson not reaching the final stages in either half; falling to Keith Aiton and Jenny Williams in the semi-final of the Draw and to James Death and Gail Curry in the first round of the Process. The Champions, Dave Kibble and Louise Bradforth, got as far as the final of the Process but lost to the eventual winners of the tournament. As they had lost to the same pair in the first round of the Draw, there was no chance of a repeat success so the Silver Challenge Cups would definitely have new names engraved on them. But would it be those of James Death & Gail Curry or Keith Aiton & Jenny Williams?

Thursday saw an influx of players for the singles events. There is little to report from the early rounds, apart from the freak storm in the afternoon which left the lawns covered in a white carpet of hail stones and lead to the forlorn sight of Sue Stenhouse, continuing to play throughout, waving her mallet in the despairing attempt to induce a referee to abandon shelter and watch a hampered shot, and the mixed fortunes for our visitors from Australia and New Zealand. Trevor Bassett suffering from the combined effects of jet-lag and good play by Tony Hall became the first seed to fall and Bob Jackson had a real fright in his opening match with



qualify. David did qualify so his only problem was apologising to Rosemary Gugan, the driver and Roger Jenkins, a co-passenger, for keeping them waiting so long and late into the evening.

Sunday dawned with a veritable feast of croquet in prospect with the Women's final on lawn 1, the Men's on lawn 8, the Du Pré knockout

John Davis but recovered to win in three. In the Women's event Louise Bradforth's defence of her title came unstuck in a marathon struggle with Rosemary Gugan, eventually losing by 3 in the third game when time began to be a significant factor. Both seeds, Gail Curry and Creina Dawson made straightforward progress through to the semi-finals but then had to fight hard to reach the final; Gail eventually beating Beatrice McGlen +6, -4, +21 and Creina winning against Rosemary Gugan +26, -10, +14.

In the Men's event the 4 semi-final places were filled, as expected, by Robert Fulford, Reg Bamford, Stephen Mulliner and Bob Jackson and thus brought together the four best players in the world. The semi-

finals were played as best-of-five and the spectators were treated to a feast of croquet befitting the status of the competitors. The first game between Robert and Bob highlighted the contrast in styles between the two, especially in the 2-ball end game. Bob Jackson, having completed the triple-peel on Robert's ball and pegged it out, eventually pegged out his own ball when his second ball was for one-back; Robert's ball still being for the first hoop. Bob then played with extreme caution and had not made a hoop by the time Robert approached hoop 5. Even then he spurned the opportunity to shoot which proved to be a fatal mistake as Robert continued to rein in the deficit before winning by 3. Bob won the second game +26tp but Robert took the

third and fourth games with the same score. The second semi-final brought together the finalists of the Coles Cup that had been held at Cheltenham the previous month but, this time, the final position was reversed with Reg Bamford running out the winner against Stephen Mulliner in 4 games.

As last year the Du Pré was played in two stages with everyone challenging for the slots in the knockout phase which was to be played on Sunday. This year it had been decided to take the top eight but the scrabble for contention was no less intense as Saturday evening deadline loomed. The leader board changed continually and gave added pressure to the players as they had to decide whether to risk all on a last game or not play further and trust to luck. Jeremy Dyer trusted to luck and unfortunately missed the cut; David Goacher (who else) finally persuaded Tim Wilkins that he ought to play. The outcome was that Tim was very late for dinner, lost the game and did not

Mixed Doubles Champions Gail Curry & James Death, Winner of the Du Pré, Patrick Hort with Bernard Neal. Womens Champion Creina Dawson of Australia being presented by WCF President Tony Hall. Robert Fulford, runner-up, with Mens Champion Reg Bamford. (Photos by the C.A.)



Trevor Bassett of Australia, winner of the consolation 'Z' Egyptian at the Men's & Women's Championships, being presented with his prize by Tony Hall.

on lawns 2 and 7 and the final of the Mixed Doubles to come. The problem was what to watch and how to stop being distracted by other games. Fortunately the players came to the aid of the spectators and the manager: Creina Dawson won the Women's final in two straight games and, with Keith Aiton being knocked out of the Du Pré, the Mixed Doubles final was able to start after tea. Gail, putting aside her disappointment, restrained an exuberant James Death to ensure that she left Cheltenham with some silverware; she and James winning in relatively quick time by 8. Indeed, they almost finished before the Men's final which went to a full 5 games and 8" hours. The two top-ranked players in the world, both playing well, entertained a growing crowd to a spectacle of croquet. Debate may rage among the cognoscenti about the merits of the sextuple leave at Cheltenham but it certainly added excitement to the proceedings. Reg Bamford also showed that even the best players are vulnerable to lapses of concentration when he managed to completely wire one of Robert's balls on one such leave and thus hand Robert the break. It was unfortunate that, in the end, a cruel twist of fate may have decided the outcome of such a skilful and absorbing match. Reg, having broken down at 2-back gave Robert a straight-forward, 6-yard shot from A-baulk at the ball by 2-back. A gasp from the crowd and a look of sheer disbelief from Robert followed the action of his ball as it proceeded to jump about 4 inches straight over the intended target. Reg then went on to win the match and win the title for the third year in a row. Lawn 7, meanwhile, was the venue of the final of the Du Pré and to a litany of errors and failed triples by both players, Patrick Hort emerged victorious over David Harrison-Wood to ensure that his name was re-engraved on the cup. 8pm thus saw the conclusion of this year's Championships and the whole show prepare to move to London in a month's time.

Inter County Championships 2001 Southwick & Compton 26 - 29 May

Report by Sue Mackay & Chris Williams

Northumberland ran away with the Inter Counties Championship this year. Their team of David Appleton, Robin Brown, Gail Curry, Mike Hammelev, David Magee, John Moore and Bruce Rannie all sported navy baseball caps emblazoned with Northumberland CA (Gail had burnt the midnight oil unpicking seven Ss from local Schools Cricket Association caps) and they proved to be lucky caps indeed as the team won their first eight matches. Victory was thus assured by tea on the third day, though in fact they lost their last two matches.

The two division format has proved very successful, however, and any excitement lost on the last day of the tournament by knowing the winner was more than made up for by the battle to avoid relegation. Surrey, after a disastrous first day, were runners-up with 6 wins and one

County	W	L	D	T	P	W	L	D	T	P
Northumberland	8	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0
Essex	7	1	0	0	0	7	1	0	0	0
Warwickshire	6	2	0	0	0	6	2	0	0	0
Northamptonshire	5	3	0	0	0	5	3	0	0	0
Suffolk	4	4	0	0	0	4	4	0	0	0
Bedfordshire	3	5	0	0	0	3	5	0	0	0
Sussex	2	6	0	0	0	2	6	0	0	0
Cheshire	1	7	0	0	0	1	7	0	0	0
Wiltshire	0	8	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0
Gloucestershire	0	9	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	0
Worcestershire	0	10	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0
Derbyshire	0	11	0	0	0	0	11	0	0	0
Yorkshire	0	12	0	0	0	0	12	0	0	0
Leicestershire	0	13	0	0	0	0	13	0	0	0
Hampshire	0	14	0	0	0	0	14	0	0	0
Gloucestershire	0	15	0	0	0	0	15	0	0	0
Worcestershire	0	16	0	0	0	0	16	0	0	0
Derbyshire	0	17	0	0	0	0	17	0	0	0
Yorkshire	0	18	0	0	0	0	18	0	0	0
Leicestershire	0	19	0	0	0	0	19	0	0	0
Hampshire	0	20	0	0	0	0	20	0	0	0
Gloucestershire	0	21	0	0	0	0	21	0	0	0
Worcestershire	0	22	0	0	0	0	22	0	0	0
Derbyshire	0	23	0	0	0	0	23	0	0	0
Yorkshire	0	24	0	0	0	0	24	0	0	0
Leicestershire	0	25	0	0	0	0	25	0	0	0
Hampshire	0	26	0	0	0	0	26	0	0	0
Gloucestershire	0	27	0	0	0	0	27	0	0	0
Worcestershire	0	28	0	0	0	0	28	0	0	0
Derbyshire	0	29	0	0	0	0	29	0	0	0
Yorkshire	0	30	0	0	0	0	30	0	0	0
Leicestershire	0	31	0	0	0	0	31	0	0	0
Hampshire	0	32	0	0	0	0	32	0	0	0
Gloucestershire	0	33	0	0	0	0	33	0	0	0
Worcestershire	0	34	0	0	0	0	34	0	0	0
Derbyshire	0	35	0	0	0	0	35	0	0	0
Yorkshire	0	36	0	0	0	0	36	0	0	0
Leicestershire	0	37	0	0	0	0	37	0	0	0
Hampshire	0	38	0	0	0	0	38	0	0	0
Gloucestershire	0	39	0	0	0	0	39	0	0	0
Worcestershire	0	40	0	0	0	0	40	0	0	0
Derbyshire	0	41	0	0	0	0	41	0	0	0
Yorkshire	0	42	0	0	0	0	42	0	0	0
Leicestershire	0	43	0	0	0	0	43	0	0	0
Hampshire	0	44	0	0	0	0	44	0	0	0
Gloucestershire	0	45	0	0	0	0	45	0	0	0
Worcestershire	0	46	0	0	0	0	46	0	0	0
Derbyshire	0	47	0	0	0	0	47	0	0	0
Yorkshire	0	48	0	0	0	0	48	0	0	0
Leicestershire	0	49	0	0	0	0	49	0	0	0
Hampshire	0	50	0	0	0	0	50	0	0	0

more game than the Channel Islands, last year's winners of the Second Division, also on six wins. Suffolk and Bedfordshire were relegated with three and two wins respectively, leaving no fewer than six teams on five wins vying for the third relegation place. Quite a few nails were being bitten throughout the last day! Sadly for the 1997 and 1998 champions it was Avon who lost out, despite winning both their matches on the final day, as they had won one less game than Cheshire. Nottinghamshire won the Second Division with 8 wins. Their team of Keith Aiton, Jed Allen, Gary Bennett, Gordon Hopewell, Nick Hyne, Beatrice McGlen and Richard White finished just ahead of Sussex and Middlesex, who also gained promotion to the top flight next season. Hertfordshire, winners of the wooden spoon for three of the last four seasons, had a much improved team and finished fourth, with this year's wooden spoon going to Northamptonshire. One of the mysteries of the tournament was what has happened to the wooden spoon - Chris Williams had to fetch one from the kitchen to present to Lionel Tibble at the end of the tournament.

Reg Bamford (Middlesex) completed a three-ball triple and there



County Champions 2001 - Northumberland. L to R David Magee, Mike Hammelev, Robin Brown, John Moore, David Appleton, Gail Curry (Capt.) and Bruce Rannie.

were several quads. Robert Fulford (Essex) embarked on a sextuple, just failed to position the peelee in front of four back and completed the final three peels posthumously. Mark Avery (Suffolk) then hit in and started a septuple, but the return roquet after 1-back just missed the target ball, rebounded off the hoop and came to rest half an inch from the ball, giving Guy Willard of Essex a very easy finish.

Surprising results kept cropping up. Middlesex (with Bamford playing for the first two days) had an impressive four 3-0 victories on the trot and then lost 0-3 to Nottinghamshire. Nottinghamshire thus went top of the table and promptly lost to Berkshire, at that point languishing without a win at the bottom of the table. The Second Division also saw the closest match of the tournament. Warwickshire and Glamorgan were tied 1-1 and when time was called in the deciding game both sides had missed the peg-out with the forward ball and pegged the other one out. With only two balls left on the lawn there followed an exciting 'golden peg' competition, which Paul Swaffield of Warwickshire eventually won by adopting golf green tactics and aiming three inches to the right of the peg.

Thanks are once again due to all at Southwick and Compton for their hard work with lawn preparation and catering, and to Chris Williams for managing the tournament. An enjoyable time was had by all.

Sidmouth B Level 13 - 15 April

Report by Deborah Latham

Sidmouth itself, Parkstone, Tyneside, Budleigh Salterton, Colchester, Bristol and the mysteriously named "N/A" were the clubs contributing players for the modified Hands Ladder contested near the sea front under Elaine Woodward's gracious style of management. It had to be more modified even than planned due to only 13 being able to participate come the day, forcing a total of seven games rather than the eight intended for some players: given the determinedly English Sping-like behaviour of the weather ('unsettled' is the word forecasters favour in these circumstances) this was not perhaps the deprivation it could have been!

That the lawns were so playable following the harrowingly wet winter Devon has suffered was a great credit to Terry Riding. In most clubs the groundsmen seem, in the manner of the shoemakers' elves, to work their magic while rarely if ever being seen by those who benefit from their labours. Terry not only does a wonderful job with the Sidmouth Lawns, he is also much in evidence during the tournaments engaging in banter with the players, and now that he also sees to the bar, I hereby dub him indispensable!

Bristol members (and ex-members) had a strong influence on the results, Frances Ransom and Laurence Latham sharing collective fourth place with local resident Jonathan Coombs, and Marion Hilton and Bob Scott both contenders to win. That honour, however, went to Tyneside's John Moore, winning on the 'who beat whom' rule as well as engaging in behaviour best described as 'swooping and scooping' (swooping from 4.5 to 3.5 and scooping his silver award) over the course of the weekend. If he maintains that rate of progress, the rest of us can take heart from the fact that he is very unlikely to be eligible to play in a B level before the year is out!

Colchester Spring Handicap 27 - 29 April

Report by Pat Hetherington

A happy group of 19 eager players (the twentieth player forgot she had entered!), typical Spring weather - heavy showers, bright sunshine and cold winds - and immaculate if somewhat damp lawns, made an enjoyable Egyptian tournament.

There were several instances of playing a wrong ball and forgetting bisques, but also two openings when hoops 1 and 2 were run from the baulk line at the start, and two double peel endings. The overall winner was Steven Woolnough (Reading) with runner-up Paul Harbord (Rondesbosch), while Nigel Gardner (Dunfermline) took third place. Colchester's Gerry Vardell, happily recovering from a stroke earlier in the year, won his bronze award.



John Moore, winner of the Sidmouth B Level. Photo By Deborah Latham.

Western Championship, Parkstone 5 - 7 May

Report by John Gibbons

The lawns at Parkstone had been well prepared and were to prove faster than many players expected. The facilities had been lovingly maintained by dedicated club members and the weather conditions were to be kind to us despite a bracing north-easterly breeze. Saturday saw the arrival of the Mayor of Poole with their escort, while Patrick Hort had assumed a kneeling position on lawn 3 lining up a 4-back peel. A quizzical and sadly unidentified voice was heard to ask 'Is he praying?'

David Maugham was managing in his usual forthright style, having survived a tricky moment concerning an alleged lack of notification of time limits. Details of same were subsequently found cunningly hidden at the head of the results sheet on the display board.

Sunday could be described as colder and

faster as the continuing breeze further dried out the lawns. Tony Le Moignan had to be the unluckiest player of the weekend. Having drawn Robert Fulford in round one, losing 2 - 0, he then took a swipe at a difficult close quarter hoop run and split his ankle with his mallet, thus putting himself out of action for the rest of the tournament.

David Kibble consoled himself after his exit from the main event by opening the betting in the 'guess the number of practice swings' competition. At the same time we were treated to the surreal sight of Jersey Dyer and David Harrison-Wood locked in a titanic struggle on lawn 2 as darkness descended. They were accompanied by the loud throb of Caribbean music, a barbeque next to laws 2 and 3 and a small group of dancing teenagers dressed in grass skirts and beachwear.

To summarise Robert Fulford and Colin Irwin contested the final in which apart from a short interchange of errors in game 2 there were few mistakes. Robert was the winner by a margin of +26TP, +23 and retained his title from last year. In the plate event Terry Burge returned from his year off to win 2 - 0 in the final against Tom Weston.

Peel Memorials, Southport, 10th - 13th May

Report by The Angels of The North

The weather was kind to those who travelled to Southport for this most enjoyable and unusual tournament, with the events being men's handicap singles, ladies handicap singles and handicap mixed doubles.

Last years winners, Gail Curry and John Wilkinson had returned to defend their title but were not as clinical this year, and we won't mention the grievous peg out. Bob Burnett and his very brave twenty handicap partner Ann Belcher fought hard to make it into the finals, with both parties proving they had nerves of steel. Meanwhile Derek & Sheila Watts played steadily



Players with the Mayor & Mayoress at the Western Championship, held at Parkstone.

to make their way to the final to face Bob and Ann. For a considerable amount of the final it looked as though Bob and Ann were going to lift the trophies, but a lengthy break in the last half hour changed the face of the game to secure victory for the Tyneside Pair of Derek & Sheila. In the singles events Bob Burnett played well off the lowest handicap in the men's event and forged his way into the final by ignoring bisques, or punishing those who did not use them constructively. His opponent in the final was Derek Watts, and there were hopes of a Tyneside double, but Bob had an even bigger idea of revenge – and took the final with more of the above.

In the ladies singles Gail Curry seemed undeterred by the bisques she had to give out, but even having completed a TPO on eventual winner Barbara Young she was still beaten with bisques remaining. The smart money was probably going on either Sheila Watts or Barbara Young. The game was not a classic but eventually Barbara won through and indeed did go on to win the event with some competent break play. As usual the catering and socializing was superb and all the visitors enjoyed their visit to this most friendly of venues.

Colchester Open 12-13 May

Report by Richard Hilditch

Hot sunny weather with a slight breeze was described as perfect for croquet by several of the players. The winter rain had improved the hard Colchester lawns (unlike some other clubs) and we can look forward to them regaining their national pre-eminence for the Easterns. Dave Mundy took the A block going undefeated, this was particularly elegant as he had won the B block last year, also going undefeated, sadly the trophy was unavailable. The B block was won by Richard Smith (again without a loss) despite close attention from Ken Wheeler.

Budleigh Salterton 14 – 19 May

Report by Hamish Hall

It was almost as though it would be the usual May tournament at Budleigh Salterton. The faithful had foregathered, the sun shone and the wind blew.

People laboured, sieving and then spreading bone dry top dressing on the newly renovated court 5. The seed was sewn, watered – and then it rained! Happily the bowlers allowed us to use the bowling green, quite the best court, as Chris the groundsman explained.

David Purdon had had a serious fall whilst setting the hoops on Sunday, and one player at least noted a changed standard in that direction. Others had no problems, not least David Harrison-Wood, who chalked up three triples and Cliff Jones, who donned the ROT's mantle and managed one. Jane Babbage, using only one bisque hammered one of her opponents by 26 and Malcolm Hooper won his silver – so clearly



Ann Belcher & Bob Burnett relax during their mixed doubles final at the Peels. Photo by the C.A.

conditions were not too bad.

Still lacking in match play, the Pirates of Penzance, (Tony Backhouse and Malcolm Hooper) were denied their third successive doubles victory – but they put up a stoic fight against Jean Powell and Alan Pidcock. Playing with his latest Manor House 2001 mallet, Alan had his work cut out against his much improved Cornish opponents – a suitable prelude to the final against Bowdon's Michael and Sylvia Steer. Having three bisques, the Steers fought valiantly, making their first point after nearly two hours! Half an hour later, the first bisque was taken, but



Alan Pidcock, winner at Budleigh and now a scratch player. Photo by Christine Bagnall.

in the time turn, Alan made rover, winning by 1. In the Y event Brian and Mary Smith had an equally tense match, just losing out to the New Zealander and Jane Matthews.

In the final of the Godfrey Turner Challenge cup, Alan Pidcock having won all his block games met Brian Smith. Spectators witnessed the cruellest fluke of the tournament. Brian had hit in, and appeared to be comfortably set to go round, having croqueted Alan's ball to hoop two, when inexplicably he blobbed hoop one. Firing at the forward ball, Alan missed, ran hoop 2-back, and roqueted!

The pirates met in an entertaining final in division two. Each had won 6/7 block games, but Malcolm managed to hold his nerve, to take home the J K Brown cup.

The third division taxed Mac Burnie-Wood's managerial skills. Ainsley Jones, Jane Matthews and Mary Smith were the contenders in block E and Bunny Porter, Vera Henderson and Michael Steer in block F. All had 5 wins. Ainsley won through on the who beat who rule, whilst Vera qualified on points. For the first time the Pat Turner cup was won by a local player. Happiness abounded as David Purdon, the chairman of the club, was sufficiently recovered to present Ainsley with the trophy.

Parsons Green One Ball, 20 May

Report by David Wedmore

One ball croquet is an entertaining, active variant in which a substantial tournament can readily be completed in a single day, but for which tournaments are scarce. The Championship tournament at Winchester (won this year by Robert Fulford) fills up very quickly, and others are found only as components of the SW Championship week at Budleigh and Compton's Three-Legged Race. Parsons Green are thus to be congratulated on bringing their 1-ball tournament to the Fixtures Calendar.

The two blocks of eight players were quadruple banked on the two courts, so there was no waiting for a court, and the first five rounds were completed in the three hours before lunch. With only eight balls on each court the games flowed as well as in conventional double banking, and the handicaps (1/3rd of CA) yielded reasonable even results over the very large (-1/2 to 18) handicap range. Further interest lay in the hoops, accurately and very firmly set by Kevin Carter. The 'Omega' adjustable hoops on court one seemed easier to run than the solid hoops on the other court, and some balls hitting the legs behaved in a surprisingly helpful manner, all presumably owing to the springiness of the legs.

The final between block winners resulted in an impressive triumph for Brian Rees of Roehampton over his doubles partner Lilian Shayek and over the painful 'bad back day' he was experiencing. Management was in the capable and kindly hands of Pauline Healy; and a more friendly and happy occasion is hard to imagine.

Southport & Birkdale Handicap 26-28 May
Report by Stuart McKendrick

This year attracted an entry of 21 competitors including several visitors, notably three from Shrewsbury and two from Edinburgh. Paul Stoker excellently managed the three day event as a knockout competition and a Swiss.

For the first two days the weather was mixed but generally dry and the highlights of play involved some good recoveries. Brian Christmas seemed determined to be involved in nail-biting finishes – winning from hoop 3 and rover against Stuart McKendrick on rover and peg, but losing the following day from peg and rover to Brian Durward who had both balls on hoop 1. In the most exciting game for the spectators, Barbara Haslam capitalised on a failed peg-out by Ray Belcher, survived an unsuccessful claim by Ray for a wiring lift and came back from the dead to win the three ball game.

Unfortunately a heavy downpour on Sunday night restricted early play on the final day. The semi-finals of the Swiss were played as short croquet with Brian Lewis (Southport) and Jim Penny (Shrewsbury) prevailing over their fellow club members, respectively, Ray Belcher and Alan Knight. The final was played on a full lawn and Jim (14) kept up his consistency to beat Brian (9), giving him 6 wins out of 7 overall.

The knockout final was between two home-based players, Barbara Haslam and Keith Roberts. Keith had his chances but could not quite maintain his good form of the previous two days and Barbara played well to win +10.

As ever, the Southport club provided excellent hospitality, including introducing their guests to a wide selection of beers and pizzas at a local hostelry. In return, it was up to the two Scots to try out, and recommend to the locals, a marvellous Lebanese restaurant in the town centre. Finally, particular thanks to John Haslam who bravely tried to explain the rules of Gateball – none of us understood a word of what he said – but Brian Durward emerged as the highest scorer in our game (4 points) and therefore we assume became European champion.

Seniors Championship, Surbiton 30 May – 3 June

Report by Hans Van Noord

As a South African rookie in croquet which I learned to play on a holiday some 30 years ago, but could only play once a year while on holiday, in 1997 I discovered that there was a club in Johannesburg, after some enquiries I was joined up and started to play the game properly. Unfortunately we have very few active members. I wanted to broaden my horizons in the game and tried my luck last year in the Seniors Championship at Surbiton. This was an eye opener for me and I realized that I

still had a lot to learn. Chris Osmond asked if I would like to come and play again. I thought I had had a bit more experience having won a couple of tournaments in South Africa, only to find out that the tournament was overbooked, at the last moment there were some cancellations and I was accepted on condition that I would be scribe.

The weather was favourable, mostly sunny days but cool. Four of the courts were in good condition, but oh if you were directed to court 6 or 7 they were like deserts with all manner of sand pits. Everybody had to have a turn on them, and in some instances it was hilarious to play on them. Of course there were moans and groans, so what, it was the same for everybody. The tournament was played in good spirits by all. The catering was as always in the good hands of Hazel and her team.

Frances Low made the perfect twelve hoop break with her second ball against me to gain her silver merit award, and Bruce Rannie used his new Pidcock mallet to great effect to win the handicap event.

The block winners were: Paul Castell, Richard Hoskin, Mary Knapp and Quiller Barrett.

Well done to you all, better luck next time to the losers.

Edgbaston Trophy 2-3 June

Report by Andrew Gregory

The final could have been over after 90 minutes, as Lionel Tibble embarked on his second Triple Peel. But at last an error at hoop 5 allowed Kevin Carter some play and eventually the second game. In the decider Carter had the first ball round, and Tibble gamely tried to triple out his opponent. Three peels were made, but he was fatally hampered after rover. Carter then played to set up a break for his backward ball. Failing to do this, he played to peg out the opponent. His peg-out from eight feet went straight - too straight, as his own ball unintentionally trickled on to the peg. This left two balls: Carter on hoop 3 v Tibble on hoop 1. The only break of the endgame saw Tibble convert his deficit into a 2-point lead. Carter's last error was to fail a difficult 3-back, when taking position was prudent. The lost tempo proved critical as Tibble ran penult and then hit Carter at 3-back. The game was soon over. Tibble had successfully defended his trophy.

Misplaced enthusiasm for pegging out was endemic. Nick Evans is so keen on the idea that with his opponent on rover and rover he determined to remove one of the opponent's balls. He got away with that, but in the third game of his semi-final with Carter he conceded contact to peg out Carter's ball, with the backwards clips on 1 (Evans) and 2-back (Carter). Maybe most of you would have done that (not me, I like at least 4 balls on the lawn). But Evans subsequently seemed to lose his nerve, and allowed Carter to get home one hoop at a time. Martin Granger Brown reached peg & peg v 6 & 4-back, missed his peg-out and decided to

remove one ball. This means that he had forfeited his right to lifts under advanced play, and Henry Fellows allowed him just two long shots before recording +1. In the decisive game of the consolation event Fellows pegged out Swaffield with the other clips on 4-back (F) and rover (S). This proved to be a fatal misjudgment.

The shot of the tournament also happened in a pegged out ending. Roger Schofield had one ball left. He ran rover, turned round and went back through the hoop to hit the peg.

House Party at Nailsea - 2nd & 3rd June

Report by Tony Doughty

Warm early summer weather in elegant tree lined surroundings and a total entry of six, including the manager, made this Advanced Level tournament an occasion to be remembered. Lunch and tea were taken by all at the same time adding to the sociability. Despite a handicap range of -1 to 7 play was of a highly competitive standard. It seemed uncanny to play in a relaxed, peaceful environment with no double banking - voices across the courts being no more than a murmur. Hospitality standards were even better than the weather and the play.

Manager's Notes by Peter Dyke

With only six entries the tournament was run as a single American Block, with the agreement of the competitors, rather than an Egyptian as advertised. The order of play was arranged so that the two most successful players did not play each other until the last round. They then played a best of three final. We also had a one-ball competition, which players fitted in when they were free. This was not completed, but it was decided that the winner was the player with the most wins. Several Triples were attempted, but none were successfully completed. The closest to completing a triple was Paul HARBORD going for his maiden triple in the first game of the final. He successfully completed the three peels but failed to get position in front of rover.

The Ramsgate Open Golf Croquet 9 – 10 June

Report By Bill Arliss

This event held over the weekend of 9/10 June was billed as an International event and attracted two entries from Belgium, one from Germany and two from Palestine.

The initial stages of the competition was block play with four blocks of six players, the best two from each block going through to a final knockout stage. There were several surprises in the block results and only a very late recovery from eventual winner Derek Old against Ramsgate's Les Coppas prevented Derek from being eliminated in the initial stages. Roy Ware from Ramsgate and Colchester's Chris Sheen dominated their blocks with five wins from five

games. The final eight for the knockout were Jeremy Hackett and John Moore in block 1, Roy Ware and Tom Weston in block 2, Ian Price and Don Beck in block 3 and Chris Sheen and Derek Old in block 4.

Roy Ware, Chris Sheen, Tom Weston and Derek Old survived the first round of the knockout providing semi-finals between Roy Ware/Chris Sheen and Derek Old/Tom Weston. Both semi-finals were very close with 10-9 scores leaving Derek and Roy to contest the final which was best of three 13 point games. In the first game of the final Derek appeared to dominate the match with a quick win of 7-3 but the situation was totally reversed in the second with Roy scoring a 7-2 win. The decider was much closer and could have gone either way but Derek managed to take the thirteenth and final hoop.

For the lesser able mortals who did not manage the final knockout there was a consolation doubles event. By some strange and mysterious process known only to Manager John de Jeffry, we were all paired off for the doubles knockout. After four games, local members Tony Mockett and David Dray were declared the winners.

This is possibly the most sponsored croquet tournament in the UK which allowed the astronomical (in croquet terms) prize money of £500 for the singles winners and £200 for the doubles pair. The major sponsor was local member, Marion Hoff but local stores and the Thanet District Council also supported the event.

Congratulations must go to the organising committee, the fleet of ball boys from the local schools and the smartly dressed referees must certainly have attracted public attention for the game of croquet. Also well done to the club on the improvements to your facilities. Ramsgate was the venue for my first ever croquet tournament and I quickly learnt that a contour map for the lawns was a necessary requisite for all tournament players at Ramsgate. This is no longer the case and I can recommend your lawns to anyone. Also the club house redecoration has provided a very pleasant location to relax after play.

Golf Croquet Open Championships, Budleigh Salterton 14 – 17

Report By Bill Arliss

In the second staging of this competition at Budleigh Salterton 14-17 June, Stephen Mulliner retained his title beating Derek Old in the final 7-2, 4-7, 7-2. Derek had the distinction of being the only player to take a game from Stephen in the whole competition.

The Singles Championship started as three American blocks of eight with the top two in each block through to the final knockout plus the next two players with the highest hoop score average per game. The eight through to the final knockout were Derek Old, Trevor Bassett (Aus), John

Moore, Tony Hall (Aus), Chris Sheen, Ivor Brand, James Hawkins and Stephen Mulliner. In the semi finals Derek Old beat John Moore and Stephen Mulliner beat Chris Sheen. The concept of highest hoop score to separate players with equal number of wins was introduced by Manager Bill Arliss to stimulate aggressive play. In the final of the consolation singles event for the Hobbs Mallets Champagne, David Hopkins beat Jeremy Hackett.

The doubles event was played as a six round Swiss with each match being a single 19 point game. The tournament arrangement stipulated that if there were two pairs with an equal number of wins, there would be a playoff and this was the case. In the final playoff for the Barlow and Woodlands trophies, Tony Hall and Trevor Bassett beat David Hopkins and Samantha Curry

Hunstanton Over 50's Handicap 15th -17th June

Report by Nick Harris

Ignoring adversity (fire, wind, rain, thunder, lightning, sun, and chemical toilet) 15 players reported each day to play using the Irwin Rating System. The Manager and ROT also became a full time player owing to a no-show and, due to an oversight, the Scribe too!

As usual there were winners and losers with David Tutt making a strong early showing with 5 straight wins to reach 121 until John Christmas 26'd him and Ken Wheeler also gained 5 points at David's expense to reach 110 by Sunday morning, however David still played the most games!

Margaret Anderton lost to Neil Chalmers in her first game but then used her bisques to her advantage and put herself in contention on the Sunday with 112 whilst Neil had reached 111. Also in the running were Terry Sparks and Ken Anderton. All of these players had a +/- 5 rating point game in the morning to set up the afternoon's playoffs. Ken W and Margaret played at least 30 minutes extra time for a "Golden Hoop" (2 back was eventually run in order by Ken) leaving the Mobile Caterers - lead so ably by Sarah Hampson, concerned over the cooling soup.

In the afternoon Neil, on 116 played Ken W, 115, and Ken A, 115, played Terry, 114. Yours truly was spared the problem of a tie when Neil won +23. Ken A finished second.

Thanks must go to the Visitors who came to play and also to Hunstanton Club members who supported the Tournament with players, caterers, refurbished equipment and by setting out the Lawns each morning, always a problem without a Clubhouse. I am pleased to report that the new Clubhouse has reached the "Today, we are mainly putting up scaffolding" stage and the roof trusses have been delivered.

Finally, two tips for would be Managers,

appoint your reporter early and if it looks like rain, give your next opponent an hours leave!

Bristol - Latham Cup Handicap June 16 – 17

Report by Christopher Crowcroft

Twelve players gathered at Bristol to contest the Latham Cup. Handicaps ranged from 1 to 16, divided into 2 blocks, with the block winners contesting the final. The courts had been playing fast all week but heavy showers on Friday and Saturday meant that the lawns were classed as "easy" throughout the 2 days of competition.

Omega hoops were in use. For many players this was their first experience of the new hoops. The general consensus was that the Omegas (grounded very firmly and set at 3/32") made hoop-running easier than Townsends or Jaques, and this gave a distinct advantage to the higher bisquers. While physicists may disagree, it seemed (particularly on the wetter Saturday) that the moisture made the uprights sticky and tactile. On entering the jaws, the balls seemed to be sucked in and then squirted out, even when struck from quite sharp angles. As a consequence there were very few blobbed hoops and those with low handicaps effectively conceded a couple of extra bisques to their opponents.

The eventual block winners were Eric Bevan (runner-up David Gillett) and Christopher Crowcroft (runner-up Allan Knight), with Crowcroft winning the closely-fought final. Special thanks to Hamish Hall and to all those involved with the excellent catering.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

*Don't forget to send your
contributions to James
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